

Arts council champions cultural events in Kuwait



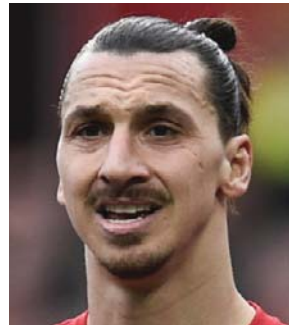
Malaysia expels North Korea ambassador over Kim murder



Jackman slices and dices one last time as Wolverine



Trouble for Ibrahimovic as Manchester United held



BAHRAIN BUSTS IRAN-LINKED GROUP INVOLVED IN ATTACKS

25 OUT OF 54 MEMBERS ARRESTED, WEAPONS CACHE SEIZED



Min 14°
Max 28°
High Tide 04:40 & 18:08
Low Tide 10:31 & 23:27



150 FILS
NO: 17158
40 PAGES

ZAIN POWERS 8 KUWAITI TECH SMES AT MWC17



BARCELONA: Zain Group's Vice Chairman Bader Al-Kharafi (center) is seen with young Kuwaiti entrepreneurs at Zain's dedicated booth at the 4YFN Startup Conference at the 2017 Mobile World Congress (MWC).

KUWAIT/BARCELONA: Zain, the leading telecommunications company in Kuwait, powered eight young Kuwaiti entrepreneurs in its dedicated booth at the 4YFN Startup Conference during the 2017 Mobile World Congress (MWC) held last week in Barcelona. MWC is the world's leading telecom event, gathering innovative tech small and medium sized enterprises (SME) from around the globe.

Zain's initiative is aimed at supporting and empowering Kuwaiti SMEs that specialize in technology innovation. The company is keen on highlighting the competencies and potential of Kuwaiti entrepreneurs, especially during an event as significant as MWC where tech innovators, manufacturers, developers and operators of the telecom and IT sectors from around the world gather.

Zain selected eight Kuwaiti tech SMEs and traveled with them to MWC 2017, where it facilitated their showcasing of their innovations through participation in the 4YFN Startup Conference, which welcomes the global investment community. This initiative was in partnership with Kuwaiti startup accelerator Brilliant Lab, and in line with Zain's corporate sustainability strategy towards the youth and entrepreneurs in Kuwait. Zain Group's Vice Chairman Bader Al-Kharafi, who was present at Zain's booth during MWC, expressed his admiration and pride in the competencies and potential displayed by the

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DUBAI: Bahrain said yesterday that it had arrested 25 suspects accused of involvement in unrest in the kingdom, including a deadly jailbreak. The authorities said they were part of a "terrorist organization" that includes 54 members, some of them fugitives in Iraq and Iran - accused repeatedly by Manama of meddling in its internal affairs.

The alleged members include 10 former inmates who escaped in the Jan 1 storming of Jaw prison, Bahrain's general prosecutor Ahmed Al-Hammadi said in a statement carried by state news agency BNA. One of them was shot dead last month along with two men as they allegedly tried to flee the country by boat. The 25 detainees have been charged with "joining a terrorist organization" and "training on using explosives and firearms to commit terror attacks," Hammadi said.

They are also accused of killing two police, including one during the Jan 1 jailbreak, and the attempted murder of others, as well as importing and possessing explosives and firearms. The suspects were also accused of escaping from jail or helping others to flee and hide. The statement said four suspects denied the charges, while the rest confessed to being guilty. Police found "large quantities of explosives, detonators and hand grenades," in addition to four AK-47 assault rifles and seven pistols, the statement said.

One of the suspected members of the organization lives in Germany and has "arranged travel for members of the organization to Iran and Iraq to train on using explosives and machine guns," Hammadi said. He said the training took place in the bases of Iran's Revolutionary Guards with the aim of "preparing to carry out terrorist crimes inside the country." Twelve fugitives remain in Iran and Iraq, the statement said.

Bahrain in February executed three men convicted in the death of three policemen, including an Emirati officer, in a 2014 bomb attack. Bahrain frequently accuses Iran of being behind bomb attacks targeting security services and fomenting protests. Iran denies interfering in Bahrain, although it acknowledges support for opposition groups seeking greater rights. — Agencies



ORLANDO, Florida: US President Donald Trump listens to school principal Latrina Peters-Gipson during his visit to St Andrew Catholic School on Friday. With the president (from left) are Florida Gov Rick Scott, Florida Sen Marco Rubio, fourth-graders Janayah Chatelier and Landon Fritz, US Secretary of Education Betsy DeVos, Trump son-in-law Jared Kushner, daughter Ivanka Trump and their daughter Arabella. — AP

TRUMP ACCUSES OBAMA OF 'TAPPING' HIS PHONE

WASHINGTON: US President Donald Trump yesterday accused Barack Obama of "tapping" his phone during last year's White House campaign, without providing evidence of the explosive charge, in his most virulent attack yet on his predecessor. "I'd bet a good lawyer could make a great case out of the fact that President Obama was tapping my phones in October, just prior to Election!" Trump wrote on Twitter. "How low has President Obama gone to tapp (sic) my phones during the very sacred election process. This is Nixon/Watergate. Bad (or sick) guy!" he wrote in another tweet, referring to the political scandal that toppled president Richard Nixon in 1974.

Top Obama advisor Ben Rhodes issued a searing response on Twitter. "No President can order a wiretap. Those restrictions were put in place to protect citizens from people like you," Rhodes wrote. "Neither President Obama nor any White House official ever ordered surveillance on any US citizen. Any suggestion otherwise is simply false," Obama spokesman Kevin Lewis said in a statement. Trump leveled the charges in a flurry

of tweets shortly after dawn, as his administration remains mired in controversy over communications between Russian officials and some of his senior aides, including Attorney General Jeff Sessions.

Trump and Obama frequently traded barbs on the campaign trail, and the Republican real estate magnate was a driving force behind the so-called "birther" movement that questioned whether Obama was born on US soil and eligible to be president. The two men initially adopted a cordial tone as Trump took office, though the president has stepped up accusations against Obama in recent weeks, blaming his predecessor for being behind damaging leaks to journalists.

Since US intelligence took the unprecedented step of publicly accusing Russia of trying to swing the November election in Trump's favor, questions have swirled about whether some in Trump's campaign colluded with Moscow. A slew of associates, including Sessions and already fired national security advisor Michael Flynn met Russian Ambassador Sergey Kislyak before Trump took office.

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JORDAN EXECUTES 15 CONVICTS

News in brief

KAC launches daily direct flights to NY

KUWAIT: Kuwait Airways announced scheduling a daily flight to New York on the sidelines of launching its new Boeing 777-300ER aircraft. The number of passengers flying to New York through Kuwait Airways has increased prominently last year, said the company in a statement yesterday. The company's market share of flights to North America was recorded at 20 percent, it added. Meanwhile, it said the New York flights will not include transiting at Shannon Airport in Ireland, adding that the company aims to provide direct flights only.

Iran S-300 air defense system 'operational'

TEHRAN: Iran's advanced S-300 air defense system, delivered by Russia following a July 2015 nuclear deal after years of delay, is now operational, state television reported yesterday. Iran had been trying to acquire the system for years to ward off repeated threats by Israel to bomb its nuclear facilities, but Russia had held off delivery in line with UN sanctions imposed over the nuclear program. "The S-300 air defense system has been tested... in the presence of government and military officials," the television said. It said that the test at a desert base had seen several targets, including a ballistic missile and a drone, intercepted.

AMMAN: Jordan hanged 15 death row prisoners including convicted "terrorists" at dawn yesterday, its information minister said, in a further break with a moratorium on executions it observed between 2006 and 2014. Ten of those put to death had been convicted of terrorism offences and five of "heinous" crimes including rape, Mahmoud Al-Momani told the official Petra news agency. The attorney general for Amman district, Ziad Al-Dmour, said the executions represented "a clear message to anyone who tries to

undermine the security of the nation". Amnesty International, however, expressed shock at the hangings of 15 prisoners - the largest number to be put to death on a single day in Jordan. "The horrific scale and secrecy around these executions is shocking," said Amnesty's deputy director at the group's Beirut regional office, Samah Hadid. Momani said all those executed were Jordanians and were hanged in Swaqa prison, south of the capital Amman.

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AMMAN: This file photo taken on Oct 18, 2005 shows the gallows at Swaqa prison, south of the capital. — AFP

ARNIE QUILTS 'APPRENTICE' OVER TRUMP TIES

LOS ANGELES: Arnold Schwarzenegger said on Friday he will not be back for another season of NBC's reality show "The Celebrity Apprentice," blaming US President Donald Trump's ongoing role as executive producer for low ratings. Action movie star Schwarzenegger took over as host of "Celebrity Apprentice" last year. His first season, which premiered in January, has been watched by around 4 million to 5 million viewers. "Everyone - from the celebrities to the crew to the marketing department - was a straight 10, and I would absolutely work with all of them again on a show that doesn't have this baggage," Schwarzenegger said in a statement.

The actor's representative said

Schwarzenegger would not be returning for a second season. NBC, a unit of Comcast Corp, did not comment on Schwarzenegger's decision not to return for another season, or the show's future. There was no immediate comment from Trump or the White House on Friday. Schwarzenegger, a Republican who served two terms as California governor but said he did not vote for Trump as president, told British film magazine Empire in an interview published on Friday that he was leaving the show due to Trump's involvement.

News that Trump will retain an executive producer credit on the show, which usually involves a payment, caused a media furor in December about potential conflicts of interest.

Schwarzenegger told Empire that the show was "a really great opportunity, but "under the circumstances I don't want to do it again". "When people found out that Trump was still involved as executive producer and was still receiving money from the show, then half the people (started) boycotting it," Schwarzenegger said.

New York businessman Trump, who took office in January after winning November's presidential election, became a household name as the host of "The Apprentice" and "The Celebrity Apprentice" for 14 seasons, where contestants would compete in business challenges.

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THE UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF STATE'S REPORT

Kuwait is a constitutional, hereditary emirate ruled by the Al-Sabah family. While there is also a democratically elected parliament, His Highness the Amir holds ultimate authority over most government decisions. The parliamentary elections held on November 26 were generally free and fair with several members of the opposition winning seats. Civilian authorities maintained effective control over the security forces. Principal human rights problems included limitations on citizens' ability to choose their government; restrictions on freedom of speech and assembly, especially among foreign workers and a stateless population referred to as 'bidoon;' and lack of enforcement of laws protecting labor rights within the foreign worker population, especially in the domestic and unskilled service sectors, resulting in higher risk of human trafficking. Other human rights problems included reports of limitations on freedom of religion; and restrictions on freedom of movement for certain groups, including foreign workers and bidoon. Kuwaiti and non-citizen women, as well as bidoon and other noncitizens, faced social and legal discrimination. Domestic violence against women remained widespread and unreported, as did violence against domestic workers, all of whom were noncitizens. There were frequent reports of arbitrary arrest and extrajudicial deportation of foreign workers. The government took steps in some cases to prosecute and punish officials who committed abuses, whether in the security services or elsewhere in the government. Impunity was sometimes a problem in corruption cases.

Section 1: Respect for the integrity of the person, including freedom from:

- Arbitrary deprivation of life and other unlawful or politically motivated killings: There were no reports that the government or its agents committed arbitrary or unlawful killings.
- Disappearance: There were no reports of politically motivated disappearances.
- Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman, or Degrading Treatment or Punishment: The law prohibited torture and ill treatment, although the UN's Committee Against Torture (CAT) during its third periodic review of Kuwait in July expressed concerns about: "consistent reports of torture and ill-treatment in particular during prolonged detention of persons by police and security forces" in cases relating to terrorism and peaceful protests by human rights defenders and members of minority groups. For example, according to Amnesty International, several defendants in the Imam Sadeq mosque bombing in June 2015 stated in court that they had been "tortured or otherwise ill-

Parliamentary elections were generally free and fair with several members of the opposition winning seats

reated" in pretrial custody, including beatings, electric shocks and placement in stress positions. The UNCAT also cited allegations of insufficient investigation of torture allegations. Several persons claimed police or Kuwait State Security (KSS) force members beat them at police checkpoints or in detention. In March 2015 authorities arrested a human rights activist, Nawaf al-Hendal, during a protest at al-Erada Square in front of the National Assembly and charged him with slandering the rulers of a neighboring country and for participating in an illegal rally. Media reports stated police arrested and beat Hendal and nine other demonstrators. Subsequently, the government imposed a travel ban on Hendal. In March Hendal stood trial and was acquitted, along with nine other demonstrators, and freed. The government stated it investigates complaints against police officers resulting in disciplinary action. Disciplinary actions included fines, detention, and some being removed from their positions or termination. Although the government did not make public all the findings of its investigations or all punishments it imposed, it stated it sentenced a police officer in May to two months' detention for sending a noncitizen worker to the detention center without cause. The government, responding to a complaint filed by the worker's mother, investigated the complaint, took disciplinary action against the officer, and ensured the release of the worker from the deportation center. Although the government investigation does not lead to compensation for victims of abuse, the victim can utilize government reports and results of internal disciplinary actions to seek compensation via civil courts.

Prison and detention center conditions: There were no significant reports regarding prison or detention center conditions that raised human rights concerns. Physical Conditions: The Central Prison Complex housed the country's three prisons: a men's prison for pretrial detention or those convicted of minor offenses, another men's prison for those convicted of more serious crimes, and a women's prison for those in pretrial detention, convicted, or awaiting deportation. There were approximately 5,400 inmates in the Central Prison. Cells in the male prison held four to 12 persons and cells in the female prison held four to six; inmates reportedly lived in moderately overcrowded conditions. There were reports of overcrowding at the women's

prison. A nursery complex was provided for female inmates with children under two years of age. Officials stated the prison was not designed to facilitate prisoners with disabilities as, by law, any convict with a significant disability cannot be held in the central prison.

There is a separate detention facility for juveniles up to 18 years of age. The juvenile detention facility contains classroom, vocational workshops, and private meeting rooms for visiting family members. As of September, the center housed 33 juveniles.

The deportation center at Talha, the only one in the country, housed on average 700 persons. The overall detainee population was unknown, although observers reported some overcrowding at times and poor sanitation, mostly the consequence of the age of the facility. Noncitizen women pending deportation were kept at the Central Prison due to lack of segregated facilities at the deportation center.

Administration: There were no serious problems in the administration of the prison and detention center system although ombudsmen were not available to respond

except in cases of hot pursuit or observing the commission of a crime. There were numerous reports of police arresting and detaining foreign nationals without a warrant, primarily as part of the government's action against unlawful residents. The courts usually do not accept cases without warrants issued prior to arrests. Authorities generally informed detainees promptly of the charges against them and allowed access to their lawyers and family members.

In July the government amended the

Part I

national detention laws. Police may hold a suspected criminal at a police station without charge for as long as four days for commission of a felony and up to 48 hours for a misdemeanor, during which time lawyers and family members may visit the defendant upon approval from authorities. During detention, authorities permitted lawyers to attend legal proceedings but did not allow

favor of citizens. While no legal provisions prohibit women from appointment as judges and public prosecutors, the only path to those positions is through work in the prosecutor's office. In August the Supreme Judicial Council ruled that women prosecutors would be eligible to serve as judges. Under the law questions of citizenship or residency status and various provisions of immigration law are not subject to judicial review, so noncitizens arrested, for example, for unlawful residency, or those whose lawful residency is canceled due to an arrest, have no access to the courts. The law subjects noncitizens charged with noncriminal offenses, including some residency and traffic violations, to administrative deportations that cannot be challenged in court; however, noncitizens charged in criminal cases face legal deportations, which can be challenged in court.

Trial procedures: The constitution provides for the presumption of innocence and the right to a fair public trial and the judiciary generally enforced this right. The law for

individuals. The United Nations also expressed concern over the "compulsory

Lack of enforcement of laws protecting labor rights

nature and sweeping scope" of required DNA sampling, and the lack of safeguards and mechanisms for appeal before a court. In October His Highness the Amir ordered a review of the DNA law to ensure compliance with the constitution, and in November the Amir said that the DNA law would only apply to convicted felons. The law forbids marriage between Muslim women and non-Muslim men and requires male citizens serving in police or the military to obtain government approval to marry non-nationals. Nevertheless, the government offered only nonbinding advice on such matters and generally did not prevent marriages between Muslims and non-Muslims. According to an official, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs prohibited the country's diplomats from marrying noncitizens without the diplomat being asked to resign. The government may deny a citizenship application by a bidoon resident based on security or criminal violations committed by the individual's family members. Additionally, if a person loses citizenship, all family members whose status derives from that person also lose their citizenship and all associated rights.

Section 2: Respect for civil liberties, including:

- Freedom of speech and press: The constitution provides for freedom of speech and press, although these rights were violated. The courts convicted approximately two dozen individuals for expressing their opinions, particularly on social media. The law also imposes penalties on persons who create or send "immoral" messages and gives unspecified authorities the power to suspend communication services to individuals on national security grounds. On September 22, the public prosecutor ordered the arrest and detention for 21 days, under state security charges, of the activist Sara Al-Drees for postings she made on social media protesting government actions that suppressed freedom of expression. She turned herself in on September 25, and on October 6, the Criminal Court released her on bail of 500 dinars (\$1,650) pending trial.

Freedom of speech and expression: The 2006 Press and Publications Law establishes topics that are off limits for publication and discussion, and builds on the precedent set by the Penalty Law 16/1960. Topics banned for publication include religion, in particular Islam; criticizing His Highness the Amir; insulting members of the judiciary or displaying disdain for the constitution; compromising classified information; insulting an individual or his/her religion; and publishing information that could lead to devaluing of the currency or creating false worries about the economy. The law mandates jail terms for anyone who "defames religion," and any Muslim citizen or resident may file criminal charges against a person the complainant believes has defamed Islam. The government generally restricted freedom of speech in instances purportedly related to national security, which included criticism of the emir. Any citizen may file charges against anyone the citizen believes defamed the ruling family or harmed public morals.

In November, Human Rights Watch published a report highlighting laws that Gulf governments, including Kuwait, use to limit freedom of expression. The accompanying interactive website profiled 140 prominent Gulf-based social and political rights activists, including 44 from Kuwait, who have struggled against government attempts to silence them. The courts convicted approximately two dozen individuals for insulting His Highness the Amir, the judiciary, neighboring states, or religion on their social media sites. In April a criminal court found activist Sara al-Drees innocent of contempt of religion charges after she was sued by a group of private citizens when she posted messages about her religious opinions on social media.

Press and media freedoms: Independent media were active and expressed a wide variety of views generally without restriction. All print media were privately owned, although their independence was limited. The government did not permit non-Islamic religious publishing companies, although several churches published religious materials solely for their congregations' use. The law allows for large fines and up to 10 years in prison for persons who use any means (including media) to subvert the Amir's system of government. The Ministry of Commerce and Industry may ban any media organization at the request of the Ministry of Information. Media organizations can challenge media bans in the administrative courts. Newspaper publishers must obtain an operating license from the Ministry of Information. In October the government banned media coverage of tribal caucuses in order to enforce the law from 1996 banning them. Broadcast media are a mix of government and privately owned stations, subject to the same laws as print media. Before the annual international book fair held in November, the Ministry of Information requires publishers to submit a list of books they might offer at the event. Censor officers at the Ministry of Information



to complaints on behalf of prisoners.

Independent Monitoring: The Ministry of Interior permitted independent monitoring of prison conditions by some nongovernmental observers and international human rights groups and required written approval for visits by local nongovernmental organizations (NGOs). Authorities permitted staff from the International Committee of the Red Cross and the UN High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR) to visit the prisons and detention centers. The government also allowed local NGOs to visit the prison upon approval from the Ministry of Interior. The Kuwait Society for Human Rights and the Kuwait Association for the Basic Evaluation of Human Rights were allowed to visit prisoners during the year. A government official stated that approximately 70 local and international NGOs visited prisons during the year.

Improvements: In September the government opened a special family visiting facility within the prison complex to allow male and female inmates with good behavior records to spend up to 72 hours with visiting family members in a private setting.

d. Arbitrary Arrest or Detention: The law prohibits arbitrary arrest and detention. There were numerous reports, however, that police arbitrarily arrested individuals, principally as part of sustained action against persons in the country illegally.

Role of the police and security apparatus: Police have sole responsibility for the enforcement of laws not related to national security, and the KSS oversees national security matters; both are under the purview of civilian authorities at the Ministry of Interior. The armed forces (land forces, air force, and navy) are responsible for external security and are subordinate to the Ministry of Defense. The Kuwait National Guard is a separate entity that is responsible for critical infrastructure protection, support for the Ministries of Interior and Defense, and for the maintenance of national readiness. The Kuwait Coast Guard falls under the Ministry of Interior. Civilian authorities maintained effective control over all security forces, and the government had effective mechanisms to investigate and punish abuse and corruption. Police were generally effective in carrying out core responsibilities. There were reports some police stations did not take seriously criminal complaints, especially those of foreigners, and by both citizen and noncitizen victims of rape and domestic violence. In cases of alleged police abuse, the district chief investigator is responsible for examining abuse allegations and refers cases to the courts for trial.

According to the government, during the first five months of the year, individuals filed 655 complaints against the Ministry of Interior, mostly involving investigative law enforcement personnel. Complaints included contesting traffic violations, verbal and/or physical maltreatment, and unlawful detentions. Disciplinary action resulted from 201 of the complaints. Police responded only to the most serious cases of violence between family members, such as spousal and child abuse, and to emergency calls by domestic workers who reported abuse.

Arrest procedures and treatment of detainees: A police officer generally must obtain an arrest warrant from a state prosecutor or a judge before making an arrest,

direct contact with their clients. The law provides the detained person the right to a prompt judicial determination about the detention's legality. If authorities file charges, a prosecutor may remand a suspect to detention for an additional 10 days for a misdemeanor and 20 days for a felony. Prosecutors also may obtain court orders for up to six months' detention pending trial by the judge in the case. There is a functioning bail system for defendants awaiting trial. The bar association provides lawyers for indigent defendants; in these cases, defendants do not have the option of choosing which lawyer is assigned to them. There were no reports of suspects being held incommunicado. The Ministry of Interior investigates misdemeanor charges and refers cases to the misdemeanor courts as appropriate. The undersecretary in the Ministry of Interior is responsible for approving all administrative deportation orders.

Arbitrary arrest: The law prohibits arbitrary arrest and detention, and the government observed these prohibitions for citizens. There were reports that police during raids arbitrarily detained non-nationals, including some who possessed valid residency permits and visas and who claimed to be bystanders.

Pretrial Detention: Arbitrary lengthy detention before trial sometimes occurred. Authorities held some detainees beyond the maximum detention period of six months. Excessive detention in the deportation center, where there are no maximum time limits on detention prior to deportation, was also a problem, particularly when the detainee owed money to a citizen or was a citizen from a country without diplomatic representation in the country to facilitate exit documents. Detainees' ability to challenge lawfulness of detention before a court: Detainees, and those convicted by a court, were able to challenge their detention. In August a prominent bidoon activist convicted of conducting an illegal protest and of assaulting police successfully challenged his detention, resulting in his release pending further adjudication of his case.

e. Denial of fair public trial: The law and the constitution provide for an independent judiciary, and the government generally respected judicial independence if the judge. The Supreme Judicial Council nominates all prosecutors and judges and submits nominees to the emir for approval. Judges who were citizens received lifetime appointments until they reached mandatory retirement age; judges who were noncitizens held one to three year renewable contracts. The Supreme Judicial Council may remove judges for cause. Noncitizen residents involved in legal disputes with citizens frequently alleged the courts showed bias in

bid physical and psychological abuse of the accused. Under the law defendants also enjoy the right to be present at their trial, as well as the provision of prompt, detailed information on charges against them. Criminal trials are public unless a court decides "maintenance of public order" or the "preservation of public morals" necessitate closed proceedings. The bar association is obligated upon court request to appoint an attorney without charge for indigent defendants in civil, commercial, and criminal cases, and defendants used these services. Defendants have the right to adequate time and facilities to prepare a defense. Defendants and their attorneys generally had access to government-held evidence, but the general public did not have access to most court documents. The Ministry of Justice generally provides defendants with interpreters from the moment charged through all appeals. Defendants have the right to confront their accusers, to confront witnesses against them, and to present their own witnesses, although authorities did not always allow defendants this opportunity. Defendants cannot be compelled to testify or confess guilt. Defendants have the right to appeal verdicts to a higher court, and many persons exercised this right. Under the new domestic labor law, domestic workers are exempted from litigation fees. If foreign workers had no legal representation, the public prosecutor arranged for it on their behalf, but with little or no involvement by the workers or their families. When workers received third-party assistance to bring a case, the cases were often resolved when the employer paid a monetary settlement to avoid a trial.

Civil judicial procedures and remedies: The law provides for an independent and impartial judiciary by individuals or organizations in civil matters regarding human rights violations, but authorities occasionally did not enforce rulings for various reasons, including the influence of involved parties or concern for possible political repercussions. Authorities also occasionally used administrative punishments in civil matters, such as instituting travel bans or deportations. Individuals were able to appeal adverse domestic court decisions to international human rights bodies if they chose to do so.

f. Arbitrary or unlawful interference with privacy, family, home, or correspondence:

The constitution and the law prohibit such actions, and there were no reports that the government failed to respect these prohibitions. Cybercrime agents within the Ministry of Interior regularly monitored publicly accessible social media sites and sought information about owners of accounts, although foreign-owned social media companies denied most requests for information.

Following the bombing of the Imam al-Sadeq mosque in June 2015, authorities required all citizens to transition to an electronic passport. Citizens were given one year in which to provide a DNA sample at one of the three processing centers. In July 2015 the government passed a DNA law requiring all persons entering the country, including citizens and noncitizens, to submit DNA samples for security purposes. Human Rights Watch criticized the law as a violation of privacy, expressed concern over potential misuse of personal information broadly to track

Domestic violence against women and domestic workers remained widespread and unreported

ON HUMAN RIGHTS PRACTICES FOR 2016: KUWAIT

review books to determine if content is appropriate. If an officer determines that a book should be censored, the book is referred to a censor committee consisting of 9 to 10 members who determine the appropriateness of the book. The author can appeal the censor committee findings to an appeals committee comprising four to five members. If the appeals committee upholds the censoring, the author has final recourse to appeal the finding in the courts. Members of both committees are selected by the under secretary and assistant undersecretaries on an annual basis and also includes members of the academic community and members of the writers guild. In November the government added more than 100 books to a list of banned books, including the book *Smile* due to its depiction of gender integration. Most of the books on the banned list revolved around religion, politics, and public morality.

Throughout the year publishers reportedly received pressure from the Ministry of Information, resulting in the publishers often restricting which books are made available in the country. According to the Ministry of Information, the Ministry of Awqaf and Islamic Affairs reviewed books religious in nature. The government did not impose additional restrictions on online newspapers or journals. Censorship or content restrictions: The Ministry of Information censored all imported books, commercial films, periodicals, videotapes, CDs, DVDs, and other materials deemed illegal per the guidelines enumerated for speech and media. Media outlets exhibited a range of opinions on topics relating to social problems, but most self-censored, avoiding critical discussion on topics like the emir, foreign policy, and religion, to avoid criminal charges or fines or to keep their licenses. Discussions of certain social topics, such as the role of women in society and sex were also self-censored. Authorities censored most English-language educational materials that mentioned the Holocaust and required education material either to refer to Israel as 'Occupied Palestine' or to remove such references, although authorities did not censor these topics in news media. Widely available satellite dishes and virtual private networks allowed unfiltered media access.

National Security: The law forbids publication or transmission of any information deemed subversive to the constitutional system on national security grounds. The government prosecuted online bloggers and social media outlets under the new cybercrime law, the Printing and Publishing Law, and the National Security Law.

Internet freedom: In July 2015 the government passed a cybercrime law that criminalizes online activity to include illegal access to IT systems; unauthorized access to confidential information; blackmail; use of the internet for terrorist activity; money laundering; and utilizing the internet for human trafficking. The law was implemented in January with the publishing of the law in the National Gazette. Fines ranged from 3,000 dinars (\$9,900) and a three-year prison term for online blackmail to 50,000 dinars (\$165,000) and a 10-year prison sentence for money laundering.

The government monitored internet communications, such as blogs and discussion groups, for defamation and generalized security reasons. The Ministry of Communications continued to block websites considered to "incite terrorism and instability" and required internet service providers to block websites that "violate [the country's] customs and traditions." The government prosecuted and punished individuals for the expression of political or religious views via the internet, including by e-mail and social media, based on existing laws related to libel, national unity, and national security. The government prosecuted some online bloggers under the 2006 Printing and Publishing Law and the National Security Law. In July the government implemented the Electronic Media Law that establishes regulations and oversight for online commercial and private internet websites and activities. The law requires individuals to procure a license to establish internet sites and businesses and identifies the Ministry of Information as the regulatory body. The law states an individual must be at least 21 years old to apply for a license. As of September the government had issued 148 licenses with 126 applications pending.

The government filtered the internet to block pornography primarily, as well as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and intersex (LGBTI) material, some secular sites, and sites critical of Islam. The country had a high internet penetration rate due in large part to pervasive ownership of smart phones. The World Bank reported an internet penetration rate of 82 percent.

Academic freedom and cultural events: The law provides for the freedoms of opinion and research, but self-censorship limited academic freedom, and the law prohibits academics from criticizing the emir or Islam. The Ministry of Interior reserved the right to approve or reject public events and those it considered politically or morally inappropriate.

b. Freedom of Peaceful Assembly and Association

Freedom of assembly: The constitution

provides for freedom of assembly, but the government restricted this right in the case of noncitizens. The law prohibiting them from demonstrating or protesting. Officials sometimes also restricted the location of planned protests to designated public spaces, citing public safety and traffic concerns. Courts tried and sentenced participants in unlicensed demonstrations to as many as two years in prison for their involvement, and authorities also administratively deported dozens of noncitizens for participation in rallies.

Freedom of association: The constitution provides for freedom of association, but the government restricted this right. The law prohibits officially registered groups from engaging in political activities. The government used its power to register associations as a means of political influence. The Ministry of Social Affairs and Labor can also reject an NGO's application if it deems the NGO does not provide a public service. There were approximately 120 officially licensed NGOs in the country, including a bar association, other professional groups, and scientific bodies. Dozens of unlicensed civic groups, clubs, and unofficial NGOs had no legal status, and many of those chose not to register due to bureaucratic inconvenience or inability to meet the minimum 50-member threshold. The Ministry of Social Affairs and Labor rejected some license requests, contending established NGOs already provided services similar to those the petitioners proposed. Members of licensed NGOs must obtain per-

As of April the Central Agency had more than 96,000 bidoon citizenship requests under review

mission from the ministry to attend international conferences as official representatives of their organization.

c. Freedom of movement, internally displaced persons, protection of refugees, and stateless persons: The constitution generally provides for freedom of internal movement, but numerous laws constrain foreign travel. The government generally cooperated with UNHCR and other humanitarian organizations in providing protection and assistance to refugees, returning refugees, asylum seekers, stateless persons, or other individuals of concern. Foreign Travel: Bidoon and foreign workers faced problems with, or restrictions on, foreign travel. The government restricted the ability of some bidoon to travel abroad by not issuing travel documents, although it permitted some bidoon to travel overseas for medical treatment and education, and to visit Saudi Arabia for the annual Hajj (Islamic pilgrimage). The Ministry of Interior has not issued "Article 17" passports (temporary travel documents that do not confer nationality) to bidoon except on humanitarian grounds since 2014. The law also permits travel bans

Shemmari, the former owner of opposition media Alam Al-Youm newspaper and television station, after the Court of Cassation ruled that the courts had jurisdiction over citizen revocation cases. Persons who had their citizenship revoked, and any family members dependent on that individual for their citizenship status, became stateless individuals. Authorities can seize the passports and civil identification cards of persons who lose their citizenship and enter a 'block' on their names in government databases. This 'block' prevented former citizens from traveling or accessing health care and other government services reserved for citizens. There were no known revocations of citizenship during the year. The law prohibits the granting of citizenship to non-Muslims, but it allows non-Muslim male citizens to transmit citizenship to their descendants. According to the law, children derive citizenship solely from the father; children born to citizen mothers and non-national fathers do not inherit citizenship. Female citizens may sponsor their non-national children (regardless of age) and husbands for residency permits, and they may petition for naturalization for their children if the mother becomes divorced or widowed from a noncitizen husband.

Protection of refugees: Access to asylum: The law does not provide for granting asylum or refugee status. There is no system for providing protection to refugees, and the government did not grant refugee status or asylum during the year. According to UNHCR, there were more than 3,000 registered asylum seekers and recognized refugees in the country. Most of these were from Syria, Iraq, and Somalia, and many were either employed with access to basic services or supported by human rights groups pending resolution of their asylum request.

Stateless persons: The law does not provide noncitizens, including bidoon, a clear or defined opportunity to gain nationality. The judicial system's lack of authority to rule on the status of stateless persons further complicated the process for obtaining citizenship, leaving bidoon with no access to the judiciary to present evidence and plead their case for citizenship. According to government figures, there were approximately 96,000 bidoon in the country, while Human Rights Watch estimated the bidoon population at more than 105,000. The naturalization process for bidoon is not transparent, and decisions appeared arbitrary. As of April the Central Agency had more than 96,000 bidoon citizenship requests under review.

According to bidoon activists and government officials, many bidoon were unable to provide documentation proving ties to the country sufficient to qualify for citizenship. The government alleged that the vast majority of bidoon concealed their 'true' nationalities and were not actually stateless. According to the government, as of September, 8,004 bidoon have adjusted their legal status since 2011 claiming Saudi, Iraqi, Syrian, Iranian, Jordanian, and other nationalities. In April the government stated that 32,000 bidoon were qualified for consideration for citizenship but that only 8,000 would be eligible due to their security status and criminal records.

There were numerous reports of police arresting and detaining foreign nationals without a warrant

on citizens and non-nationals accused or suspected of violating the law, including nonpayment of debts, and it allows other citizens to petition authorities to impose one. This provision resulted in delays and difficulties for citizens and foreigners leaving the country. Numerous domestic workers who escaped from abusive employers reported waiting several months to regain passports, which employers illegally took from them when they began their employment.

Exile: While the constitution prohibits exile of citizens, the government can deport foreigners for a number of legal infractions. While the constitution states the "emir is the head of state and shall be immune and inviolable," it also states, "No Kuwaiti may be deported from Kuwait."

Citizenship: By law the government is prohibited from revoking the citizenship of an individual who is born a citizen unless that individual has obtained a second nationality, which is against the law. Nevertheless, the government can revoke the citizenship of naturalized citizens for cause, including a felony conviction, and subsequently deport them. During 2014 the government revoked the citizenship of at least 33 individuals—some dual nationals, some not-including opposition activists, a media owner, a Salafist cleric, and several tribal members. The government justified the revocations by citing a 1959 nationality law that permits withdrawal of citizenship from naturalized Kuwaitis who acquired citizenship dishonestly or threatened to "undermine the economic or social structure of the country." Additionally, if a person loses citizenship, all family members whose status derives from that person also lose their citizenship and all associated rights. In April the Court of Cassation scheduled a hearing to consider the legality of the revocation of citizenship of former MP Abdullah Al-Barghash and his family (Barghash was one of the 33 who had his citizenship revoked in 2014). In May the court suspended dealing with the case until a request for a new judge could be resolved. In October an administrative court restored citizenship to Ahmad Jabr Al-

travel documents. This restriction resulted in some bidoon children from the household working as street vendors to help support their families and not receiving an education. Many bidoon children who attended school enrolled in substandard private institutions because only citizens may attend public school. In May 2015, however, the government approved the transfer of 5,000 bidoon students from private to public schools due to their families' service in the military. Many bidoon families depended on charity to assist with medical and educational expenses. The government announced it issued 35,844 identification cards to Bidoon as of May.

The government allowed bidoon to work in some government positions, as dictated in the 2011 decree, including in the military. In March the government announced there were 2,030 bidoon, who were children of Kuwaiti mothers, in the army. Since the government treats them as illegal immigrants, bidoon do not have property rights.

In 2014 a high-level official in the Ministry of Interior announced a proposal to give "economic citizenship" of the small island country of Comoros to the bidoon. At the time rights groups were concerned that the government might force them to take another, illegitimate nationality and potentially be vulnerable to deportation. As of September, the Comoros plan remained under deliberation.

Section 3: Freedom to participate in the political process:

Citizens had only limited, indirect control of the executive branch because the constitution stipulates the country is a hereditary emirate. The 50 elected members of the National Assembly (along with government-appointed ministers) must, by majority vote based on universal and equal suffrage and conducted by secret ballot guaranteeing the free expression and the will of the people, approve the emir's choice of crown prince (the future emir). The crown prince must be a male descendant of Sheikh Mubarak Al-Sabah and meet three additional requirements: have attained the age of majority, possess a sound mind, and be a legitimate son of Muslim parents. The National Assembly may remove the Amir from power by a two-thirds majority vote if it finds that any of these three conditions is or was not met.

Elections and political participation: Recent elections: Observers generally considered the 2016 parliamentary election free and fair and found no serious procedural problems. The election followed the emir's October 2016 order to dissolve the National Assembly because of "mounting security challenges and volatile regional developments." Most opposition politicians and their supporters who boycotted the 2013 election returned and participated without incident. Official turnout for the 2016 elections was approximately 70 percent.

Political parties and political participation: The government did not recognize any political parties or allow their formation, although no formal law bans political parties. National Assembly candidates must nominate themselves as individuals. Well-organized, unofficial blocs operated as political groupings, and MPs formed loose alliances. Some tribes held illegal primaries to maximize their members'

chances for election to the National Assembly. In June the National Assembly amended the election law to bar those convicted of insulting the emir and Islam from running for elected office. Voters register to vote every February upon reaching voting age of 21. Prosecutors and judges from the Ministry of Justice supervise election stations. Women prosecutors served as supervisors for the first time during the 2016 elections.

Participation of women and minorities: Although women gained the right to vote in 2005, they still faced cultural and social barriers to political participation. For example, some tribal leaders excluded women from tribal primaries. In the 2016 elections, 15 women filed candidate application. One candidate withdrew resulting in 14 women standing for election with one woman successfully winning a seat. Women voted at a higher rate than men. No laws or cultural practices prevented minorities from participating in political life. In the 2016 parliamentary elections, candidates from the Shia community, which comprised approximately one-third of the citizen population, won six seats in parliament.

Section 4: Corruption and lack of transparency in government:

The law mandates criminal penalties for corruption by government officials, but the government did not implement the law effectively. Government observers believed officials engaged in corrupt practices with impunity. There were numerous reports of government corruption during the year.

There were many reports that individuals had to pay intermediaries to receive routine government services. Police corruption was a problem, especially when one party to a dispute had a personal relationship with a police officer involved in a case. Widespread reports indicated that police favored citizens over noncitizens. There were several reports of corruption in the procurement and bidding processes for lucrative government contracts. All judicial officers received training on corruption and transparency obligations as part of the Judicial Institute's official

curriculum.

Corruption: The Audit Bureau is an

The government did not recognize any political parties or allow their formation

agency responsible for supervising public expenses and revenues and for preventing any misuse or manipulation of public funds. The government distributes reports by the Audit Bureau annually to His Highness the Amir, prime minister, head of parliament, and minister of finance. The public did not have access to these reports. The parliamentary Committee on the Protection of Public Funds frequently announced inquiries into suspected misuse of public funds, but none resulted in prosecution during the year.

A 2012 law establishing an Anti-Corruption Authority (ACA) was overturned by the Constitutional Court in 2015 because the law was based on emergency decree. In January the National Assembly passed a new draft bill to re-establish the ACA, which was implemented in November. The law charges the ACA with receiving and analyzing complaints and forwarding complaints to the appropriate authorities in either the Public Prosecutor's Office or police for further investigation or action.

Media and government officials reported cases of widespread, visa-related corruption, namely selling visas or visa fraud, at the Ministry of Social Affairs and Labor and Ministry of Interior. Several officials at the Ministry of Interior faced prosecution after their arrests on charges of falsifying labor import documents to profit from the sale of visas. In October 2015 media reported the government ordered the arrest of a key visa trafficker who recruited 1,500 foreign workers on fake work permits.

In September 2015 the minister of electricity, water, and public works resigned after his conviction, along with 14 other officials, in a corruption case dating to 2007. The group was later acquitted in an appeals court decision, and the minister was reappointed in February. Financial disclosure: In November government officials began filing financial disclosure statements with the ACA after the law came into effect.

Public access to information: The law provides for public access to unclassified government information by citizens and noncitizens alike. Unclassified information was available through requests to the relevant government ministry, and the government was responsive to requests.

Section 5: Governmental attitude regarding international and nongovernmental investigation of alleged violations of human rights:

The government imposed some limits on the operations of domestic and international human rights groups. A number of domestic and international human rights groups generally operated with limited restrictions, investigating and publishing their findings on human rights cases. The law permits the existence of NGOs, but the government continued to deny registration to some. NGOs may not engage in political activity or encourage sectarianism. Officially registered groups must demonstrate that their existence is in the public interest. Official NGOs must show they will conduct business beneficial to the country; their work cannot undermine cultural values and norms as defined by the government. Major local independent NGOs dedicated specifically to human rights included the Kuwait Human Rights Society and the Kuwaiti Society for Fundamental Human Rights. The Kuwait Trade Union Federation was the local affiliate of the Solidarity Center. In May 2015 the government closed the chapter of Transparency International, accusing the NGO of exaggerating the level of corruption in the country.

Locally licensed NGOs devoted to the rights or welfare of specific groups—such as women, children, prisoners, and persons with disabilities—operated with little government interference, as did a few dozen local, unregistered human rights groups. The government and various National Assembly committees met occasionally with local NGOs and generally responded to their inquiries.

Government human rights bodies: The National Assembly's Human Rights Committee, which operated independently of the government, is an advisory body that primarily hears individual complaints of human rights abuses. The committee visited the Central Prison and the central deportation center throughout the year to review overcrowding, prison and detainee treatment, and the condition of both facilities. The committee had adequate resources and was considered effective. It did not issue reports during the year. In December 2015 the Ministry of Foreign Affairs established an office of human rights funded by and under the authority of the ministry's legal department. The office's purpose is to produce human rights reports and respond to such reports produced by international organizations and governments that reference Kuwait.

The deportation center at Talha housed an average 700 persons

Local spotlight

DESERT PANTHERS



By Muna Al-Fuzai

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If a terrorist squad attempts to cross the northern Kuwaiti border, the 'desert panthers' will eliminate them completely. The army recently carried out a military training exercise titled 'Desert Panthers'. With a ground force from Qatar and a battalion of the Kuwaiti National Guard, with support from Apache helicopters, this training was a huge success and achieved its goal. The exercise was attended by the Kuwaiti chief of staff and his Qatari counterpart.

The exercise simulated a terrorist horde of 250 militants trying to cross our northern border. The ministry of interior requests backup and support of the National Guard, and with support from Apache helicopters that provide air cover, tanks move towards the enemy. The enemy is completely annihilated and the ports and borders are secured with coordination between the forces.

Joint exercises between friendly countries and allied forces are important in order to exchange experiences and get acquainted with new methods of combat and weapons systems, especially the latest equipment and advanced military technology and expertise. Usually, the training evaluates the security measures to be taken and develops them on an ongoing basis, and this is the benefit of military exercises.

At the end of the drills, the Kuwaiti chief of staff told the press that this bilateral exercise is the first, but certainly will not be the last, and will be held every two years. He added that this exercise aims to raise the combat efficiency of every unit in the army and gauge the time needed and the extent of joint coordination to deal with any events. He stressed that Gulf security is indivisible and the security of every Gulf state is a shared responsibility of all Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries.

I liked this statement because it sends an important message to all hostile parties, whether against Kuwait or other Gulf states, that we will not allow any infringement on the borders of the Gulf, regardless if the border is of Kuwait or any other Gulf state. Usually, military exercises are a measure of the readiness of military teams for any possible emergency. That is an important message in the light of the regional tension and the continuation of the war against IS members and supporters who may try to sneak across our borders. They will be eliminated.

Another reason is the fact that such joint exercises reflect the brotherly and close relations between the GCC states, especially with regards to the security issue. The Kuwaiti chief of staff announced the intention to carry out another military exercise in March next year under the title 'Integration 1', which will be held for the first time in Kuwait with the participation of all Gulf armies.

It is worth noting that the Kuwaiti army participated in the Arab wars of 1967 and 1973, as well as as part of the Arab coalition in Saudi Arabia during the war to liberate Kuwait in 1990. The army is always trained for the worst during the performance of their duty to protect the homeland. Thank you Kuwaiti army! It is always good to know that we are safe and secure.

KUWAIT SUFFERS HIGH DIABETES PREVALENCE

'FEEL YOUR FEET' CAMPAIGN LOWERS FOOT AMPUTATION RATES

By Ben Garcia

KUWAIT: Foot ulcers as a result of excessive sugar in the body have led to many foot amputations in Kuwait, Dr Atef Ali, Medical Director of the Central Gulf Medical Company, told Kuwait Times as he announced the launch of the 'Feel your Feet' project tomorrow at Movenpick Hotel Al-Bidaa. The event will be hosted by popular Cuban professor J Berlanga. The number of Kuwaitis with diabetes is very high, according to Ali - in fact, about 13 to 14 percent of Kuwait's population is suffering from diabetes.

"Kuwaitis in 2013 recorded about 141 foot amputations - this excludes foot amputations of expatriates. This is growing in number. We have a record 59,000 Kuwaiti diabetic patients currently. Worldwide, there are 670 million diabetic patients," he said. "We will be launching on March 6 'Herberprot-P', a novel treatment for diabetic foot ulcers. This will surely help our patients who are set to undergo amputations, because through this technology, we are giving them a chance to walk again without the stressful process of amputation," he said.

Dr Ali told Kuwait Times that the launch was the highlight of lengthy preparations. "The ministry of health in Kuwait conducts a series of tests before it approves any product. We have registered this product, and it is now available in Kuwait and has the approval of the ministry. It will help diabetic patients a lot," Ali said.

Cooperation

According to Cuban Ambassador to Kuwait Andres Gonzalez Garrido, a memorandum of understanding between Kuwait and Cuba on health related issues signed in 2012 has finally succeeded with the upcoming launch of the 'Feel your Step' project in Kuwait. "I personally expressed gratitude to Kuwait's unwavering support and complete trust laid upon the Cuban health technology sector. It has been our continuing desire to enter the Kuwaiti health market since signing the MoU with the Kuwaiti

health ministry in 2012. This will of course further strengthen our cooperation, especially in the area of health," the envoy said. He added Cuba will also send some medical practitioners in Kuwait including doctors and nurses.

"Diabetes prevalence has been rising more rapidly in middle- and low-income countries. About 35-40 percent of sufferers have chronic diabetes, and if they have a foot ulcer as a result of diabetes, it could be amputated. In 1999, Cuba discovered a technology that can prevent amputation through biotechnology, and we are proud that this technology has a high rate of healing compared to other technologies available in the market," said Professor Dr Jose Fernandez from the Institute Angiologia Y Cirugia Vascular.

"The wounds of diabetic patients are not similar to normal wounds, so the technology will help heal these extraordinary wounds quickly. Usually, the wound as a result of diabetes cannot be healed, but because of this Cuban technology, we were able to give more hope to diabetic patients," Fernandez noted.



KUWAIT: Dr Atef Ali, Medical Director of the Central Gulf Medical Company speaks to the Kuwait Times. —Photo by Joseph Shagra

684 KUWAITIS APPLIED FOR PUBLIC JOBS, 161 FOR PRIVATE JOBS THIS YEAR

By A Saleh

KUWAIT: The Public Authority for Manpower explained that a neutral consultancy firm has been assigned to merge the authority with the Manpower and Government Restructuring Program (MGRP) to become a single government body. The authority added that the company was the same one that prepared the economic reform study and recommended the merger. Meanwhile, the MGRP announced that the total number of citizens awaiting recruitment registered since the beginning of this year till March 2 was 845, including 684 applying for public sector jobs and 161 applying for private sector jobs.

Lack of quorum

Although Municipal Council Chairman Muhahel Al-Khaled has invited members to hold an ordinary meeting tomorrow after concluding the spring vacation, observers expect that the meeting will not be held because of a lack of quorum, since the chairman will not be able to declare the five seats of members who had resigned to run for parliamentary elections vacant. Observers added that the meeting - that has been suspended for long - has a busy agenda, including requests made by the Minister of Social Affairs and Labor to allocate land to build two wedding halls in Jahra, in addition to many other requests from various ministries and government bodies.

Ports authority

Director of the Kuwait Ports Authority Sheikh Yousif Al-Abdullah said the authority is keen on supporting youth and that it had recently advertised job vacancies for newly

graduated and experienced engineers. Applications are open until March 7. Sheikh Yousef said over 93 percent of the authority's staff are Kuwaitis and he hoped the percentage would reach 100 percent soon. Sheikh Yousef also noted that the authority has prepared special training programs for new recruits at the world's finest marine academies and ports.

Health ministry

Health Minister Dr Jamal Al-Harbi issued a ministerial decision appointing Dr Khaled Al-Enezi as manager of the minister's technical office. Harbi also issued a decision authorizing his own office to phrase ministerial decisions instead of the office of the assistant undersecretary for legal affairs. In another concern, the ministry's physiotherapy services department will hold a workshop tomorrow on the treatment and rehabilitation of patients suffering from nervous system disorders, during which visiting doctors from India will speak on special disorders.

Palestinian teachers

The Ministry of Education's Undersecretary Dr Haitham Al-Athari said the ministry plans on forming a committee headed by an assistant undersecretary to travel to Ramallah, Palestine on April 9 to hire 180 Palestinian mathematics and physics teachers for the 2017-2018 school year. Athari said that the Ministry of Education's assistant undersecretary for public education Fatima Al-Kandari met Palestinian Ambassador Rami Tahboub last Wednesday to discuss the arrangements the Palestinian government would provide to the Kuwaiti delegation due to enter Ramallah via Amman.

MINISTER HIGHLIGHTS TRANSPORT COOPERATION WITH SOUTH KOREA

KUWAIT: Kuwait and South Korea have been cooperating in major transport project like the giant Sheikh Jaber Al Ahmad Causeway Project, and the two links of Doha and Subbiyah, and the Saad Al-Abdullah city, Minister of Public Works Abdurrahman Al-Muttawa said yesterday.

Muttawa made the statement to reporters during an inspection visit with the South Korean Minister of Land, Infrastructure and Transport Hoin Kang to the vital Sheikh Jaber Causeway Project. The minister praised the Korean expertise and technology employed in these projects, expressing hope for further bilateral cooperation. According to Muttawa, the Sheikh Jaber Al Ahmad Causeway is scheduled to be accomplished by 2018.

Meanwhile, Undersecretary of the Ministry of Public Works Eng Ahmad Al-Hassan, said that the ministerial visit to the causeway project aimed to get acquainted with the rate of achievement there, which has already hit 74 percent. Referring to the closure of Al-Ghazli Bridge, Al-Hassan said that it was necessary to complete the link with the main causeway.

On the project of developing the Fifth Rind Road, the undersecretary said that they had started with the western part, where 15 percent of work has been accomplished.

Housing

Separately, Minister of State for Housing Affairs and Services Yasser Abul said that the current visit to Kuwait by the South Korean Minister reflects the Koreans' particular interest in Kuwait's mega ventures. Minister Abul made the statement following an aerial tour with Hoin over site of South Saad Al-Abdullah City's project.

Moreover the visit is in implementation of agreements that had been signed by His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-Hamad Al-Sabah to South Korea in May. He indicated that South Korea's technical expertise might be employed in execution of the large project.

The minister also indicated that the planning and designing contract would be inked and feasibility studies for the project would be worked out in the coming days; to be followed with setting up a joint company for execution. — KUNA



KFAS SIGNS MOU WITH ASHRAE GLOBAL SOCIETY

KUWAIT: The Kuwait Foundation for the Advancement of Sciences (KFAS) signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the American Society of Heating, Refrigerating and Air-Conditioning Engineers (ASHRAE) global society. The purpose of the MoU is to promote the mutual benefits between the two parties in several areas of common interest.

The MoU was signed on Wednesday, March 1, 2017 by KFAS Director General Dr Adnan Shihab-Eldin and Dr Bjarne Olesen ASHRAE President-elect at KFAS's head office. The ceremony was attended by many officials from the two sides in addition to several researchers from Kuwait University and members of ASHRAE Kuwait Chapter.

Dr Adnan Shihab-Eldin expressed the importance of this MoU in the promotion and dissemination of research as well as providing opportunities to finance joint research and facilitating periodic meetings with ASHRAE and attending scientific conferences as well as benefiting from the experts to enhance understanding for the deployment of modern technologies, in addition to promote joint research for the development of standards and policies related to energy conservation in buildings and educate decision-makers on these policies.

Dr Bjarne Olesen expressed his pleasure for signing the MoU, which encourages exploring opportunities for cooperation with KFAS to achieve the objectives and

activities of mutual interest, such as developing curricula or training programs to benefit from the integrated experience between ASHRAE and local relevant institutions. The agreement also encourages the participation in technical committees and teams to develop policies and standards with the cooperation of the global network of ASHRAE Chapters to achieve common goals and objectives. In addition, the two parties will explore the possibility of the production of books and publications of mutual benefit along with the ability to translate ASHRAE publications to Arabic.

Founded in 1894, ASHRAE advances the arts and sciences of heating, ventilating, air-conditioning and refrigeration to serve humanity and promote a sustainable world. ASHRAE is a diverse organization representing professionals who specialize in building systems and industrial processes with around 57,000 members from more than 132 countries, with Chapters all over the world, including Kuwait. The Kuwait Chapter, with around 130 members, offers many important scientific activities such as lectures and seminars specialized in energy conservation in buildings as well as studies related to air conditioning, refrigeration and ventilation efficiency. Currently, the branch is keen to communicate with all the air conditioning, refrigeration and ventilation companies to incorporate new related technologies to the State of Kuwait.



KUWAIT: An aerial view of the Sheikh Jaber Al-Ahmad Causeway project. — KUNA

From the Heart

GREETING TO THE RULING PRESS



By Mohammad Al-Husseini

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For more than 50 times, President Donald Trump has tweeted out the phrase 'the failed New York Times', but the question to be raised is: Does a failed newspaper require from the president of the greatest country in the world to keep reminding us of its failure?

Now after assuming office more than one month ago, it seems that President Trump has not achieved any success in his effort to destruct the deep-rooted fame of his country's mainstream journalism. He also has not been able to shake its credibility even though he armed himself with tens of millions of his fans through social media, which he considers as an alternative way to convey the truth, according to him.

Exactly on the contrary, it seems that the ropes of the New York Times and the Washington Post are being continuously wrapped around his administration, shackling it with matchless influence to one scandal after another.

The president described the reports prepared by professional journalists in above mentioned newspapers as fabricated and fake, then he declined and acknowledged that they are illegal leaks of classified information. But these reports made dangerous repercussions which led to the resignation of his national security adviser. These reports are circling the Attorney General now, and may include others in the future. And this is the strongest response to the skeptics who throw doubt on the influence of the traditional press and its role.

The headlines of these two newspapers which are characterized by sedate and seriousness, and the reports of their teams provide the main material to other audio and video media outlets, and to other sites, online forums and social media. This material shapes in fact the American and International public opinion in a way that it became a nightmare anxiously watched by the White House every morning in a politically hotter than ever America.

The torrent of Trump's tweets, his intensive speeches and repeated TV appearances have not worked in reining the two newspapers as it is evident that they decided not to surrender and go on with their battle till the end. These two newspapers are still circulating, in spite of the economic challenges which face traditional press, as hundreds of thousands of issues still hit the stands every day. This goes in parallel with their thriving websites which readers cannot fully reach without paid subscription.

Taking an anti-press position is nothing but complete madness, and it is a misadventure which involves a lot of irrelevance and miscalculation on the part of the US President as the first constitutional amendment in the United States calls since over two centuries ago for the freedom of speech and.

In fact, expression cannot be free unless it is crowned by a periodical professional press that is represented by permanent and regular control which deserves then the title of 'the Fourth Authority' as it has always been termed.

Mr Trump cannot go on in his intransigence and insistence on waging a desperate war. If only his media team advises him to review his costly position. Now after the new president's first weeks in the White House, we can say that there are two newspapers that govern Washington's decision and affect it more than the President himself! A greeting to the ruling press.

LABOR-RELATED FORGERY CASE DISCOVERED

By Hanan Al-Saadoun

KUWAIT: Residency detectives discovered that a farm's owner had manipulated the farm's labor assessment records in official records and managed to hire more workers than he is legally allowed to. Investigations revealed that he sponsored 200 workers instead of the maximum number of 115 allowed. Security sources said the owner denied all charges, adding that an Arab representative working for him was responsible for the forgery. The representative confessed to using fake documents to change the assessment figure. A case was filed and further investigations are in progress.

Smuggling foiled

An Ethiopian woman was arrested on arrival at Kuwait International Airport with possession of five kilograms of qat concealed in her luggage.

Meat destroyed

Kuwait Municipality's imported food department seized and destroyed 1,045 kilograms of meat (129 heads) imported from an African country for not conforming to standard health specifications and being expired.

COOPS TO HIRE 3,000 KUWAITIS

KUWAIT: The Union of Consumer Cooperative Societies (UCCS) plans to employ up to 3,000 citizens at the cooperative markets and hire non-Kuwaitis for jobs for which nationals show no interest. Fahaid Al-Htaith, the federation deputy chairman, indicated in a statement yesterday that the decision was taken following a recent meeting that grouped officials from Ministry of Social Affairs and Labor, Public Authority for Applied Education (PAAET), Manpower and Government Restructuring Program and representatives of societies.

Talks at this meeting dealt with plans to rehabilitate the new Kuwaiti employees, providing them with insurance, regular payment raises and sustainable work contracts. A meeting will be held soon at headquarters of the Civil Service Commission headquarters for organizing training courses for the Kuwaitis who would be hired for the jobs at the societies. The cooperative union was established in 1971. —KUNA

Special Report

National Council champions cultural progress in Kuwait

NCCAL official talks goals, achievements, difficulties

By Nawara Fattahova

KUWAIT: Kuwait is a pioneer in art and cultural activities in the region, and hundreds of events are held every year. The National Council for Culture, Arts and Letters (NCCAL) is in charge of organizing and holding most of these activities. This institution was founded in 1973 and includes various departments. Kuwait Times met Dr Bader Al-Duweesh, Assistant Secretary General of the Arts Sector at NCCAL to learn more about the department.

Without freedom, creativity will not exist, and freedom cannot exist without democracy

"Kuwait is the cultural lighthouse of the Arab world. This was proven by establishing cultural centers like the Jaber Al-Ahmad Cultural Center and the Abdullah Al-Salem Cultural Center. It also realizes the vision of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah to turn Kuwait into a financial and commercial center," Duweesh said.

The official publications of Kuwait are very popular in all Arab countries. "For instance, Al-Arabi Magazine, which was first published in 1958, played a great role in shaping Arab thought and cultural development. It represents the meeting point of elite Arab minds, who participate with their written works or pieces of advice. This proves its important role," stressed Duweesh. The publications also affect the reader's personality and knowledge. "Publications of NCCAL such as 'Alam Alfikr' (World of Thought) magazine, 'Alam Almarifa' (World of Knowledge) series, 'World Theater', 'Funoon' (arts) magazine, 'Ibda'at Thaqafiya' (Cultural Creations) and 'Ibda'at Alamiya' (Global Creations) all express the leading role of our culture," he added.

Qurain Festival

The activities of NCCAL start in January every year with the Qurain Cultural Festival. "This is the most important festival held by NCCAL in Kuwait.

Kuwait is the cultural lighthouse of the Arab world

Al-Arabi Magazine played a great role in shaping Arab thought and cultural development

This event presents a cultural panorama over 21 days, and is held under the patronage of the prime minister. The activities of this festival are approved by the Cabinet, which reflects the government's interest in this event," Duweesh told Kuwait Times.

This is followed by more festivals held during the year. "There is the Future Generations Festival, then the Arab Festival for Child Theatre that's held in May, followed by the Child and Youth festival and the Summer Cultural festival in the summer months. In September, we hold the Theater Nights festival, followed by the Local Theater festival in December. Also, the International Book Fair is held annually in November, which is a very important event," he noted.

NCCAL is not only concerned about spreading knowledge and improving skills, but also focuses on entertainment. "We recently approved a film festival, but the cultural department hasn't prepared the details yet. It would be the first film festival-

The Qurain Cultural Festival presents a cultural panorama over 21 days

val held by the NCCAL. We are interested in this festival as it is a window to change and to keep pace with international events. It is part of our strategy," Duweesh added.

Continuous development

After its foundation, the various sectors and departments of NCCAL were formed and developed successively over time, according to the needs of the society. The arts sector of the NCCAL is in charge of theater, formative arts, music and folklore activities. The council also set a strategy called 5-5-4 that kicked off in 2014 and will end in 2019.

"Strategies were set for vital sectors including art, culture, Dar Al-Athar Al-Islamiya, monuments and museums and the Kuwait National Library. Strategies were also set for supporting sectors that include the general secretariat, financial and



KUWAIT: Dr Bader Al-Duweesh, Assistant Secretary General of the Arts Sector at NCCAL speaks to Kuwait Times. — Photo by Joseph Shagra

administrative affairs, communications and information and studies and researches. This strategy aims to support talented people and improve their skills, improve reading skills, establish cultural centers in the six governorates and preserve monuments and heritage," Duweesh told Kuwait Times.

"Although we have a very limited budget, Kuwait was named as the Capital of Islamic Culture for 2016. NCCAL presented its vision of what product Kuwaiti would like to present to the world. Kuwait deserved to acquire this title for various factors, including democracy and freedom. Without freedom, creativity will not exist, and freedom cannot exist without democracy," explained Duweesh.

The second factor was the awarding of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah the title of Humanitarian Leader and naming Kuwait a Humanitarian Center by the United Nations. "This is an unprecedented title for the leader and the people of Kuwait worldwide for their humanitarian work and role without any discrimination, which helped many people and participated in developing their societies through building universities and hospitals," he pointed out.

The third factor is cultural. "This was realized in establishing modern centers including Jaber Al-

Hosting a film festival in Kuwait is part of our strategy

Ahmad Cultural Center and Abdullah Al-Salem Cultural Center, which expresses Kuwait's cultural position. Both centers were built according to international criteria, and will promote cultural tourism in Kuwait. Also, the above mentioned publications reflect the high cultural level of the country," stressed Duweesh.

Problems

"Limited budget is the main problem that we are facing. We held over 900 activities in 2016 within our budget, which was a great challenge for us. The Islamic Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (ISESCO) praised the council for its role and named Kuwait as the Capital of Islamic Culture. Most of our activities are held annually, but new activities are added depending on international events," he said. "Although our budget is limited, all our activities are free. We are now facing a recession, and maybe it will reach us as well. But even if we had to charge fees, they will definitely be symbolic."

Kuwait was named as the Capital of Islamic Culture for 2016 despite a limited budget

NCCAL participates in bringing nations together, as it works in cooperation with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. "This is the reason behind having great international relations with all countries. Some groups in the community and MPs are trying to impose their tutelage on our activities, but we don't accept such visions and opinions, as the Kuwaiti community is open-minded and tolerant to other cultures, and at the same time preserves our moral values and heritage. This is how we choose our activities, as we are part of this community. There are laws and rules behind the organization of these activities," concluded Duweesh.



The Jaber Al-Ahmad Cultural Center, a modern facility that NCCAL hopes will help promote cultural tourism in Kuwait.

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Crime

Report

EMPLOYER STABS MAID DURING ARGUMENT

KUWAIT: A citizen rushed a Filipina to Amiri Hospital with injuries she sustained after being stabbed by a knife. Security sources said the citizen told the hospital security authorities that his sister had stabbed the woman, a domestic worker, while arguing in the kitchen. The woman was summoned and further investigations are underway.

Fraud

A female citizen accused a real estate company of fraud after she paid KD 54,000 to purchase two apartments in the UAE, which never materialized. The citizen explained that after paying the money and being notified that the deal was complete, she travelled to the UAE to view the apartments, where she was told that the company had not paid the price. But this was denied by the local company in Kuwait. A case was filed and further investigations are in progress

Smuggling

A citizen was arrested on arrival from an Arab country at Kuwait International Airport with possession of hashish and some illicit pills. The man claimed to have mistakenly carried the drugs with him and had not intended to smuggle them. A case was filed.

Officer assaulted

A traffic police officer dispatched to stop reckless drivers from harassing and annoying others in Salwa had to fire warning shots in the air when the suspects, who had blocked a main road - endangering their own lives as well as those of others - gathered around him in an attempt to assault the officer. Security sources said the officer provided his colleagues with some of license plate numbers after the assaulters fled the scene. A case was filed pending further investigations.

Insult

A retired national guard agent filed a complaint accusing someone who had blocked his way in a Fahaheel lot parking of allegedly insulting the state's leadership and policemen when he blamed him for what he did. A case was filed and further investigations are in progress. Separately, a female citizen working at Qairawan clinic filed a case against another female citizen accusing her of insulting her while on duty.

Suicide attempt

A 14-year-old Kuwaiti girl was rushed to hospital after she fainted at her school in Ali Sabah Al-Salem. Security sources said doctors found the girl had taken 16 food supplement pills. An attempted suicide case was filed.

Family dispute

A senior citizen filed a complaint against her son, an army soldier, accusing him of shouting at her and threatening her during a family argument. The mother added that she was afraid her son might actually carry out his threats. — Translated from the Arabic press



MARIE ANTOINETTE RETURNS

By Mohammad Al-Husseini

With her attempt to criticize the negative phenomena associated with the national anniversaries' celebrations, a fellow TV presenter asked her guest: "Would you send your kids to the parade along with the maid and the driver, with all due respect?" Such an insulting phrase is usually used in Kuwait while talking about low-class things. This indicates a great deal of cruelty and disrespect that surely calls for an apology.

It is absolutely unacceptable now that we are living in the twenty first century, to blame people for doing low-class jobs and look down upon them, as long as they are doing their jobs honestly to make a decent living. This calls for reviewing cultural backgrounds that consider such jobs inferior and look down upon domestic helpers despite all the educational and religious efforts exerted to counter such ideas. We no longer live in the days of Marie Antoinette's who wondered, while in her ivory towers, why the poor were revolting against her husband, and when she was told that the people cannot find bread, she simply said "let them eat cakes!"

Generally speaking, we do hope that the phrase was a slip of tongue that was said spontaneously and unintentionally because the colleague does trust both her maid and driver to take care of her children. In addition, last year, Kuwait passed a law for domestic helpers protecting their rights and minimum wages and limiting their working hours, vacations and indemnities. The story does not end here. What really surprised me were the comments made on the news and all the filthy talks and insults that showed lack of proper manners. Those who believe in human dignity and preach about it should not unleash their tongues towards a lady, even though she made a mistake and expressed herself wrongly. Where are your manners and good advice? Is it proper to insult others and call them names? It is definitely right to lecture about manners provided you yourself possess them. —Translated by Kuwait Times

This calls for reviewing cultural backgrounds that consider such jobs inferior

CELEBRATORY WATER WARS

By Yousif Abdul Rahman

Kuwait has recently witnessed a celebratory water war to commemorate the National and Liberation days. The war took place along the Arabian Gulf and coastal roads, and even extended to Nuwaiseeb, Sulaibikhat and the Northern deserts, where citizens, expats and GCC visitors consumed massive amounts of water that they sprayed at each other, or by throwing water-filled balloons. This calls for a serious action by all state departments as we are not a country with ice-topped mountains providing water supplies, nor do we have rivers or lakes. We receive fresh water from very costly water desalination plants.

In the past, our country used to purchase fresh drinking water from Shatt Al-Arab, received it from the two underground water wells we have in Roudhatain and Um Al-Aish, or from some smaller ones in Shamiya, Hawalli and Fintas. Water cost is very dear nowadays and one has to pay KD 0.8 per 1000 gallons while all state facilities get it subsidized for KD 0.25.

Our Prophet Mohammad (PBUH) ordered us to avoid squandering water during ablution even if we were doing it at the bank of an affluent river. I have to emphasize that I do rejoice for commemorating the National and Liberation days' anniversaries but I am strongly against such a phenomena where huge amounts of water are unnecessarily wasted, not to mention the disrespect the process involves when kids humiliate people by pointing their water guns at them that are, sometimes, filled with urine.

What kind of parents arm their kids with all sorts of water guns to use them in annoying others and disrespecting them with the excuse of celebrating? I find the government fully responsible for this because it allows importing such gear in the first place. A real water-based war can be seen approaching and Kuwait still annually consumes 180 billion gallons of water with a very large cost.

The parliament has to allocate a session to discuss this water absurdity, especially since lawmakers had approved a law allowing the government to increase the prices of electricity and water consumption on expats and companies while exempting citizens. I believe it is high time for launching government and parliament-supported national awareness campaigns using social media networks to start spreading a new culture for celebrating national anniversaries because what I witnessed along the coastal line was so disgraceful.

The bottom line is that it is absolutely unacceptable to violate others liberties because this is a trait of barbarian people. Your freedom ends when you violate the freedom of the people around you. At least this is what we have learnt and we can all see how the people of UAE and Oman celebrate similar occasions among various races of people without offending anyone's dignity. Allah Almighty will hold us accountable for wasting water and I do hope we will stop this habit. —Translated by Kuwait Times

KIB SPONSORS LECTURE IN YOULEAD LEADERSHIP FORUM

KUWAIT: As part of its ongoing strategy to invest in youth and promote their personal growth and development, Kuwait International Bank (KIB) recently sponsored a lecture by renowned counselor and author Professor Hala Kazim, which took place as part of the YouLead Leadership Forum.



Nawaf Najia

Professor Kazim - founder of "Journey Through Change", a positive transformation program dedicated to improving the lives of women - presented a lecture dedicated to exploring the benefits of adopting a more positive outlook towards life, entitled "How to Love Yourself?".

The award-winning Kazem, who was named the Mohammed bin Rashid "Best Businesswoman in the UAE" in 2013, focused mainly on the topic of improving

communication between mother and daughter. In her lecture, she showcased the importance of open and honest communication and how that can benefit interpersonal relationships, both on a personal and professional level.

Nawaf Najia, Manager of the Corporate Communications Unit at KIB, stated: "KIB has always maintained an all-inclusive approach when it comes to social responsibility, aiming to engage with all the different segments of the Kuwaiti community. In particular, the Bank devotes special attention to connecting with youth, as we believe this segment to be one of the main pillars of society."

He added: "This lecture promotes family stability and strong family connections, which will inevitably reflect on the stability of the Kuwaiti community as a whole. We believe that by concentrating our efforts on supporting the up-and-coming generations, and equipping them with the tools needed to excel in both their personal and professional lives, we will help nurture the future leaders of Kuwait."



KIB STRATEGIC SPONSOR OF AL-FARSI KITE FESTIVAL

KUWAIT: As part of its diverse program of National Day celebrations, Kuwait International Bank (KIB) recently provided its strategic sponsorship to Al Farsi Kite Festival 2017, which was held during the period of February 23rd to February 26th in Bneider.

Returning for its 15th year to celebrate National and Liberation days, the festival featured an array of activities - including live entertainment acts, creative workshops and several competitions - offering something for people of all ages. The festival also included 23 international kiting acts from 11 different countries. The bank also took part in flying a giant kite which included the logo. Furthermore, this year's celebration also featured a special open day hosted by KIB for its customers and staff.

Speaking about KIB's participation in the event, Nawaf Najia, Manager of the Corporate Communications Unit at KIB, said: "KIB is keen on participating in and supporting various national festivities and events, as we always seek to strengthen social bonds between people in our community and promote a greater sense of national pride. Our sponsorship of this festival is a prime example of that, as it has managed to achieve overwhelming success over the past years - garnering a huge following within the community and becoming one of the most eagerly awaited National Day celebrations in Kuwait."

Najia also pointed out that KIB has always prided itself on its position as a leading national financial institution in Kuwait. The Bank seeks to support all kinds of national events and initiatives, offering comprehensive financial and moral support to various programs that seek to promote sustainable economic and social development in Kuwait.



1.3 MILLION VIEWS ON KFH COMMERCIAL LAUNCHED TO CELEBRATE NATIONAL, LIBERATION DAYS

KUWAIT: Kuwait Finance House (KFH) Commercial launched to celebrate the 56th National Day and 26th Liberation Day anniversary achieved remarkable views of 1.3 million. The commercial was launched as part of KFH's firm belief in the importance of its social and national role.

The add lyrics, which has been produced using human voices as per Islamic Sharia, hail the solidarity among Kuwait's people. It reveals the secret of the cohesion of the Kuwaiti national fabric, which is the kindness of its people.

The lyrics narrate "there is a secret in this land, it is in the people... Their kindness and big heart". These words incarnate the unity of Kuwaiti people, which forms impenetrable dam that saves Kuwait from any harm. The lyrics also affirms the strength of Kuwait's people and their ultimate love to their land "no matter what we have been through, and all the challenges we faced, our solidarity has been protected by God... to that we are forever grateful."

KFH is keen on embracing its social responsibility, while participating in

every event of importance to the society, primarily the national events. This affirms KFH's prestigious status and underlines its unremitting efforts in pushing other private sector institutions to follow suit in shouldering the social responsibility in all its fields.

It is worth noting that the ad was aired and published on TV channels, newspapers, KFH social media accounts and radio. This includes KTV1 and Alrai TV, Quran Radio Kuwait, KFH accounts on social media; Instagram, Twitter, YouTube, Snap Chat and Facebook.

NBK LAUNCHES ITS PAINTING COMPETITION 'DRAW A SMILE' FOR ALL CREATIVE TALENTS

KUWAIT: National Bank of Kuwait (NBK) launches its painting competition 'Draw a smile' for all creative talents and artists. The winning paintings will be displayed in the first of a kind Stem Cell Therapy Unit donated by NBK to all sick children with cancer.

The competition will run during the month of March and is open to all artists and creative in Kuwait of age 15 and above. The participants are free to choose the content and the subject of their paintings, taking into consideration that their theme is suitable for a children's environment. All paintings must be the participant's own and no elements of it should be copied from others. The results of the competition will be announced in an exhibition which will be announced later. The submissions will be evaluated by a professional jury from Kuwait Arts Association.



Farah Bastaki

Members from the Kuwait Arts Association will choose the three winning paintings which will be awarded valuable cash prizes from NBK. to the best three paintings as follows: first place: KD 750, second place: KD 500 and third place: KD 250. Participants can visit NBK.com/Paint page for registration. The painting should be on a canvas sized between 100x80cm minimum and 200x200cm maximum.

"NBK is keen on sharing the society and encouraging everyone to engage in social work," NBK Social Media Specialist, Farah Bastaki explained. "NBK wants to encourage talents to use their creativity to come up with interesting ideas to celebrate the opening of the first of a kind Bone Marrow Transplant Center for Children in Kuwait."

"Anyone currently living in Kuwait is eligible to submit their paintings. This competition is an opportunity for us all to be part of our community issues and to participate in reflecting the civilized and cultural face of our beloved country," added Bastaki.

The paintings submitted must include the participant's name, contact number, title of the art piece. All submissions should be sent to on 26-27-28 March 2017 from 9:00am to 2:00pm NBK Public Relations office at Arraya 2 - 34th Floor.



US airstrikes hit Qaeda in Yemen

110 PEOPLE DIE OF HUNGER IN SOMALIA



MOSUL: Iraqi families walk down a road as they flee Mosul yesterday, during an offensive by security forces to retake the western parts of the city from Islamic State (IS) group fighters. — AFP

US SNUBS LAUNCH OF OWN RIGHTS REPORT
 REPORT PAINTS A BLEAK PICTURE OF THE SITUATION IN MANY COUNTRIES

WASHINGTON: Low-profile US Secretary of State Rex Tillerson came under attack on Friday for failing to appear in public to launch his own department's annual human rights report. President Donald Trump's chief diplomat, who has all but dropped from public view since taking office a month ago, penned a brief preface to the survey of the rights record of 199 countries. But there was no event or news conference to mark the report's launch, and the State Department provided only an anonymous "senior administration official" to respond to reporters' questions.

The report itself paints a bleak picture of the situation in many countries, but there is no attempt to draw out a global theme or to say whether things are generally getting better or worse. Traditional American foes like Iran are, as every year, accused of arbitrary detention, torture and killing of detainees-and friendly Saudi Arabia is tasked with "pervasive gender discrimination." Rival great powers are not spared. China is accused of the "repression and coercion" of civil society groups, and Russia is said to have tortured Ukrainian citizens detained on its territory.

"The report speaks for itself. We're very, very proud of it," the senior official said, speaking on condition of anonymity. A former colleague was happy to go on the record to express his concern. "Every Sec State since at least Warren Christopher personally released the human rights reports," declared Tom Malinowski, who was assistant secretary for human rights under the previous US administration. In a Tweet, Malinowski dubbed Tillerson "MIA"-missing in action-and warned that this was "bad for him and for the country."

International watchdog Human Rights Watch linked Tillerson's no-show to what it fears is a broader decision by Trump's administration to downplay America's leadership role on the issue. "Trump's anti-Muslim refugee policy and hinted cuts to foreign aid have heightened concerns that the US won't be a vocal player on human rights issues abroad," HRW Washington director Sarah Margon said. Tillerson's absence, she added "reinforces the message to governments, rights activists and at-risk minorities that the State Department might also be silent on repression, abuse and exploitation."

Even before the report-a large database of country chapters on the State Department site-was released, a senior lawmaker from Trump's own Republican party had expressed concern about the launch. "For first time in a long time

@StateDept #humanrights report will not be presented by Secretary of State. I hope they reconsider," tweeted Senator Marco Rubio, a member of the foreign relations committee.

Human dignity

The annual "Country Reports on Human Rights Practices" does not have any legal status. The United States continues to supply weapons and foreign aid to many of the countries criticized every year. But hundreds of US diplomats in missions around the world contribute to what they see as a major tool for informing and lobbying policy-makers and encouraging rights activists at home and abroad.

In his preface, Tillerson argues that this year's report demonstrates "the United States' unwavering commitment to advancing liberty, human dignity and global prosperity." Asked why the secretary did not appear in public or before a camera to reaffirm this commitment, the official pointed to his testimony at his confirmation hearing in January. At this hearing, the former oil executive said US leadership "requires moral clarity" and that "American values are our interests when it comes to human rights and humanitarian assistance."

But he added: "It is unreasonable to expect that every foreign policy endeavor will be driven by human rights considerations alone, especially when the security of the American people is at stake." Trump himself said several times both before and after his election victory that he personally favors subjecting terrorist suspects to torture through waterboarding and "a hell of a lot worse." But he also now says that he will defer to the judgment of his defense secretary, James Mattis, a retired Marine general who has argued that torture does not work.

Extrajudicial killings

Rights advocates have also been concerned by Trump's attempt to ban visas and refugee resettlements from seven mainly Muslim countries, and by his warm words for Russia's autocratic regime. And Tillerson drew criticism at his confirmation hearing when he refused to say whether Philippine President Rodrigo Duterte's drugs war-which has claimed 6,500 lives-amounts to rights abuse. Friday's report, however, is clear on this, saying: "Extrajudicial killings have been the chief human rights concern in the country for many years and they increased sharply over the past year." — AFP



An announcement to invitation no. (KAC/PP/7/2016) for soliciting quotations for leasing two (2) new buildings for KAC staff accommodation in the State of Kuwait

Kuwait Airways Company is pleased to invite all local individuals, companies and corporations to participate in soliciting quotations regarding lease of two (2) new buildings, adjacent or separated, located in Farwanya Governorate, Farwanya Area is an advantage for KAC Staff accommodation.

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A preliminary meeting will be held to answer all inquiries received from the participating entities concerning the tender, at **10:00 am, this day Monday, corresponding to 13/03/2017**, at the Meeting Hall of Housing and Supplies Department located at the Ground Floor, KAC Head Office at Al-Dajeej Area, near Kuwait International Airport. In the event of the quotation provider's absence, all discussions, decisions, and recommendations included in minutes shall be binding upon the quotation provider.

If you have any further questions, please contact:
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WASHINGTON: Secretary of State Rex Tillerson (right) stands with Indian Foreign Secretary Subrahmanyam Jaishankar at the State Department in Washington on Friday, March 3, 2017. — AP

FIGHTING FOR LIBYA'S RESOURCE WEALTH INTENSIFIES

FORCES OF EAST LIBYA STRONGMAN CONCEDE LOSS OF OIL PORT



RAS LANUF: Photo shows a general view of an oil refinery in Libya's northern town of Ras Lanuf. The forces of eastern Libya's military strongman Khalifa Haftar conceded yesterday, the loss of a key oil export port they seized last year as fighting for the country's resource wealth intensifies. — AFP

BENHAZI: The forces of eastern Libya's military strongman Khalifa Haftar conceded the loss yesterday of a key oil export terminal they seized last year as fighting for the country's resource wealth intensifies. The capture of Ras Lanuf and the other three eastern oil ports in September enabled Haftar to keep up his challenge to the authority of the UN-backed government in Tripoli and demand a major role in a replacement administration.

Exports from the four ports are Libya's main source of hard currency income and without them Libya's once huge currency reserves are being rapidly depleted. The spokesman for Haftar's forces, Colonel Ahmad Al-Mismari, said that they had lost control of Ras Lanuf's main airfield to forces led by Islamists of the Benghazi Defense Brigades.

"The attackers were armed with modern tanks," Mismari said. "We lost two men. But the battle is ongoing. The situation in the Oil Crescent remains under control."

There are four ports along the Oil Crescent on the eastern part of the Gulf of Sirte which account for the lion's share of Libya's oil exports. Haftar's forces seized Zueitina, Brega, Ras Lanuf and Al-Sidra in a lightning offensive last September that dealt a major blow to the UN-backed Government of National Accord. Haftar dominates a rival adminis-

tration based in the east that continues to defy the GNA's authority. He has backing from neighboring Egypt, from the United Arab Emirates and increasingly from Russia. Russia has been trying to broker talks in Egypt between Haftar and the GNA that would see it reformed with a major role for the strongman but so far they have not borne fruit.

'Military escalation'

An array of forces, most of them loyal to the UN-backed government in Tripoli, have been involved in efforts to oust Haftar from the oil ports. But the Tripoli government on Friday evening denied any involvement in the latest offensive, condemning it as a "military escalation". The Benghazi Defense Brigades are an Islamist militia that controlled Libya's second city until Haftar's forces ousted them from nearly all of it in an offensive launched in 2014.

They are allied with eastern tribes opposed to Haftar and members of the Petroleum Facilities Guard which controlled the oil ports before Haftar's takeover. The Benghazi Defense Brigades carried out a similar attack on the Oil Crescent in December, but were forced back by Haftar's forces. And in January, powerful militias from Libya's third city Misrata, who are allied with the Tripoli government, joined another such attack. — AFP

US HITS QAEDA IN YEMEN

AMERICAN TROOPS 'NOT INVOLVED' IN GUN BATTLES

WASHINGTON: The United States carried out a second day of air strikes against Al-Qaeda in Yemen on Friday, US officials said, in the latest sign of increasing US military focus on a group whose strength has grown during Yemen's civil war. Since a January commando raid, the United States has shown a desire to both strike Al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP) and to recover from what US officials acknowledge has been an intelligence shortfall about the group since Yemen's civil war forced the closure of the US Embassy in 2015.

"We have a lot of gaps in our understanding of the organization," a US defense official said, adding the pullout of US personnel two years ago "certainly did not help our understanding of the situation." Pentagon spokesman Captain Jeff Davis said at a news briefing that the United States had carried out more than 30 strikes over the past two days in Shabwah, Abyan and Al Bayda provinces. The US military did not disclose how many Al-Qaeda fighters were killed on Friday although Reuters reported that Thursday's strikes, using manned and unmanned aircraft, left at least nine militants dead. The US military did not rule out further strikes in the days ahead. "I don't want to telegraph future operations but this is part of a plan to go after this very real threat and ensure they are defeated," Davis said at a Pentagon news briefing.

Vital intelligence?

America's military strategy in Yemen has become a political lightning rod issue after the

late January raid against AQAP, authorized by President Donald Trump, resulted in the death of one of the commandos, US Navy SEAL William "Ryan" Owens. Critics questioned the value of the mission. That prompted a fierce rebuttal from Trump, who said during a televised address to Congress that "large amounts of vital intelligence" was seized in the operation. Trump's speech featured a standing ovation for Owens' widow.

The US defense official, who spoke to reporters on condition of anonymity on Friday, shied away from describing the intelligence as "vital," saying that was a subjective term. The official said the intelligence was "good" and "potentially actionable," suggesting that phone numbers and other information about AQAP's network seized in January would require analysis or development before leading to new US strikes or raids. "It's definitely helping us understand the network and further develop it out ... This has been good information," the official said, adding the United States seized "an awful lot of telephone numbers."

Strikes over the past two days have not been based on intelligence from the January raid, the Pentagon says. After its pullout in 2015, the US military started returning to Yemen in small numbers last year to support a successful April push orchestrated by the United Arab Emirates, with support from Saudi Arabia, that ejected AQAP from Mukalla, home of Yemen's third largest port, where AQAP had raised tens of millions of dollars. The US defense official said losing Mukalla degraded AQAP but also cautioned

the group did not leave its money or many of its recruits behind.

Gun battles

Residents told Reuters on Friday that US air strikes were accompanied by gun battles, which they thought involved US soldiers on the ground in Yemen. The Pentagon denied US involvement in any ground combat and it was unclear if one of the United States' Gulf allies might have been engaged in gun battles. US intelligence and military officials still view AQAP as a real threat to the United States, as do allies like the United Arab Emirates and Saudi Arabia. The group has plotted to down US airliners and claimed responsibility for 2015 attacks on the office of Charlie Hebdo magazine in Paris. AQAP also has boasted of the world's most feared bomb makers, Ibrahim Hassan Al-Asiri, and the Pentagon estimates it has between about 2,000 and 3,000 fighters.

The defense official said the group was well armed and US strikes since Thursday have included AQAP's heavy weapons. "We would expect that they certainly have light anti-aircraft and they possibly have MANPADS, that is a possibility we have seen," the official said, referring to man-portable air defense systems. Davis noted that al Qaeda, even more than the Iraq- and Syria-based Islamic State, had US blood on its hands. In 2000, Al-Qaeda bombers steered a boat full of explosives into the side of the USS Cole, a US Navy destroyer, while it refueled in the Yemeni port of Aden, killing 17 US sailors and wounding about three dozen others. — Reuters



PRISTINA: A Kosovo Albanian holds a picture of ex-premier and wartime guerrilla commander Ramush Haradinaj during a protest organized by the Kosovo opposition in support of Haradinaj, who is awaiting a French court's decision on Serbia's request for his extradition, yesterday. — AFP

KOSOVAR PROTESTERS WANT RELEASE OF FORMER LEADER

PRISTINA: Thousands of protesters gathered in the Kosovo capital Pristina yesterday calling for France's release of Ramush Haradinaj, a former rebel leader accused of war crimes by Serbia. Haradinaj, an ex-prime minister of Kosovo, has slammed his January arrest in France over alleged atrocities committed during Kosovo's 1998-99 war for independence as an "abuse of the law".

"We call on France's justice system to disregard Serbia's false accusations," Muje Rugova, a prominent university professor, told the crowd in Pristina. The rally's organizers also played a video message from Haradinaj, who thanked the crowd "with all his heart" while standing in front of an Albanian flag. The 48-year-old, detained on the basis of a Serbian arrest warrant, was released on bail by a French court but must remain in France pending a ruling on an extradition request from Belgrade.

On Thursday, the French authorities asked Serbia for additional information to support its extradition request, and they will review his case again on April 6. Haradinaj, an ex-commander in the Kosovo Liberation Army, has already been

tried and acquitted by the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia (ICTY) after allegations of crimes stemming from 1998.

But Serbia is pursuing separate charges of violence against Serbian civilians in Kosovo in June 1999. Haradinaj, a lawmaker and opponent of Kosovo President Hashim Thaci, is considered a war hero by many Kosovars. Also at the demonstration yesterday, Pristina's mayor, Shpend Ahmeti, called on the national government to spurn an agreement reached with Montenegro on new border lines.

Montenegro is seeking official ownership of thousands of hectares in the Rugova mountains that have traditionally been used as pastureland by Kosovar shepherds. The mayor was responding to comments earlier yesterday by Federica Mogherini, the EU's foreign policy chief, who told Kosovo "it is time to ratify" the border accord, the final condition for obtaining visa-free travel in the European Union.

"We are ready, but it's up to this country's Parliament to take the necessary steps," Mogherini said. — AFP



PALMYRA, Syria: Photo shows a Syrian army T-62 tank at the damaged site of the ancient city of Palmyra in central Syria. Syrian troops backed by Russian jets have completed the recapture of the historic city of Palmyra from Islamic State (IS) group fighters. — AFP

THOUSANDS FLEE CLASHES BETWEEN SYRIA ARMY, IS

MANBIJ: Tens of thousands of Syrian civilians have fled ferocious fighting between Russian-backed regime forces and Islamic State group jihadists over the past week in the country's ravaged north. Supported by Russian air power and artillery, Syrian government forces have waged a fierce offensive against IS, seizing around 90 villages since mid-January. They took eight yesterday alone, a military source told state news agency SANA, "expanding our control in northeast parts of Aleppo province". Their aim, according to the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights, is IS-held Khafsah, the main station pumping water into Aleppo.

Residents of Syria's second city have been without mains water for 47 days after the jihadists cut the supply. The fighting over the past week has sparked an exodus of "more than 30,000 civilians, most of them women and children", Observatory head Rami Abdel Rahman said yesterday. Most of the displaced went to areas around Manbij, held by the US-backed Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF), an alliance of Kurdish and Arab fighters also fighting IS. An AFP correspondent in Manbij saw dozens of families speeding towards the relative safety of the town on motorcycles and in small buses and cars. Many looked exhausted as they lined up at

a checkpoint manned by the Manbij Military Council, the SDF unit that controls the town, to be searched and get permission to enter.

'Difficult circumstances'

Ibrahim Al-Quftan, co-chair of Manbij's civil administration said that as many as 40,000 displaced had arrived in recent days. "The numbers of displaced people here are still rising because of the clashes between the Syrian regime and Daesh (IS)," Quftan said. "These people are suffering very difficult circumstances." Manbij already hosts "tens of thousands of displaced people that fled previous clashes in the area and are living in difficult circumstances", according to Abdel Rahman. "This will make it difficult (for local authorities) to welcome a new wave of displaced people, given their inability to tend to their pressing needs." Since civil war broke out in Syria in March 2011, more than half of its pre-war population has been forced to flee their homes.

The northern province of Aleppo hosts tens of thousands of displaced Syrians, many in camps near the border with Turkey. Rebel backer Ankara sent its own troops into Syria in August to fight both IS and Kurdish units in operation "Euphrates Shield". Turkey considers the Kurdish People's Protection Units (YPG),

which makes up most of the SDF, a "terrorist" group because of its ties to outlawed Kurdish militia in southeast Turkey. On February 23, the Turkish-backed rebels of Euphrates Shield captured the town of Al-Bab, which was IS's last bastion in Aleppo province. They have since set their sights on Manbij, with Turkish Foreign Minister Mevlut Cavusoglu this week threatening to bomb YPG fighters unless they leave the town. The Observatory yesterday reported escalating violence and shelling between Euphrates Shield rebels and the SDF.

'Rational, balanced agenda'

More than 310,000 people have been killed since Syria's conflict erupted with protests against President Bashar Al-Assad's rule, but international efforts at stemming the violence have so far failed. Another round of UN-brokered peace talks ended Friday in Geneva, with envoy Staffan de Mistura hoping to convene another session later this month that would include the issue of counter-terrorism. Chief regime negotiator Bashar Al-Jaafari told journalists in Geneva yesterday the new inclusion indicated the government had successfully "imposed a rational, balanced agenda" on the talks. — AFP

12 TREATED FOR CHEMICAL WEAPONS AGENTS IN MOSUL

BAGHDAD: Twelve people, including women and children, are being treated for possible exposure to chemical weapons agents in Mosul, where Islamic State is fighting off an offensive by US-backed Iraqi forces, the United Nations said yesterday. The UN's World Health Organization has activated with partners and local health authorities "an emergency response plan to safely treat men, women and children who may be exposed to the highly toxic chemical," the agency said in a statement.

It said all 12 patients had been received since March 1 for treatment which they are undergoing in Erbil, the capital of Iraq's Kurdish region, east of Mosul. Four of them are showing "severe signs associated with exposure to a blister agent". The patients were exposed to the chemical agents in the eastern side of

Mosul. The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) said on Friday that five children and two women were receiving treatment for exposure to chemical agents. The ICRC statement did not say which side used the chemical agents that caused blisters, redness in the eyes, irritation, vomiting and coughing.

Iraqi forces captured the eastern side of Mosul in January after 100 days of fighting and launched their attack on the districts that lie west of the Tigris river on Feb 19. The eastern side remains within reach of the militants' rockets and mortar shells. Defeating Islamic State in Mosul would crush the Iraqi wing of the caliphate declared by the group's leader, Abu Bakr Al-Baghdadi, in 2014, over parts of Iraq and Syria. The UN Humanitarian Coordinator in Iraq, Lise Grande, called for an investigation. — Reuters



MOSUL: Iraqi families walk down a road as they flee Mosul during an offensive by security forces to retake the western parts of the city from Islamic State (IS) group fighters. — AFP

DISGRACED JOURNALIST CHARGED WITH MAKING BOMB THREATS

NEW YORK: A disgraced former journalist was charged on Friday with making a wave of bomb threats to Jewish organizations while posing as an ex-girlfriend in retaliation for breaking up with him. Juan Thompson, 31, was arrested in St. Louis, the first case to emerge from a federal investigation into a surge of threats against Jewish Community Centers (JCCs) and schools that has rattled American Jews.

Federal prosecutors described a vicious, months-long harassment campaign in which Thompson allegedly used fake email accounts to accuse the woman of possessing child pornography, driving drunk and, finally, making bomb threats targeting Jewish groups. US authorities are examining more than 100 threats made against JCCs by phone this year, which appear unrelated to the Thompson allegations. Federal Bureau of Investigation Director James Comey met with Jewish leaders on Friday to discuss the ongoing investigation.

A criminal complaint unsealed in Manhattan accused Thompson of threatening organizations including a Jewish museum in New York and the Anti-Defamation League (ADL). All occurred after the first flood of phone threats in early January. The hoax threats against JCCs have stoked fears of



ROCHESTER: Vandalized stones are scattered at Stone Road or Waad Hakolel Cemetery in Rochester, New York. Vandals tumbled and defaced headstones at a Jewish cemetery in Rochester, New York, local officials confirmed yesterday - the third such cemetery in the United States to suffer damage in a surge in apparent anti-Semitic acts. —AFP

a resurgence in anti-Semitism and forced the evacuation of many centers, including some with day care for young children. Prosecutors said Thompson wanted to portray his ex-girlfriend as

an anti-Semite, a characterization he repeated on Twitter. It was unclear if he shared those sentiments, and his recent posts did not include explicit anti-Semitism.

But the ADL said he had been "on the radar" due to his past activities, including "rants against white people." Thompson was a reporter for the Intercept, a news website, until he was fired last year for allegedly inventing sources and quotes. Intercept editor Betsy Reed said the website was "horrified" by his arrest. Thompson made an initial appearance on Friday in US court in St. Louis on one count of cyber stalking, where a judge ordered that he remain in federal custody, according to media reports. He is likely to be extradited to New York to face prosecution. His court-appointed lawyer was not immediately available for comment.

'Nasty racist white girl'

The Intercept said in February 2016 that Thompson employed a fake email account to pose as a source and try to hide his fabrications. After his girlfriend broke up with him in July 2016, prosecutors said, Thompson used the same technique during months of increasingly vicious harassment. A day after the breakup, Thompson sent an email purportedly from a news producer to her boss at a New York social service company, according to the complaint. The email claimed she had been pulled over for drunk driving and sued for spreading a sexually transmitted disease. — Reuters

US' BID TO PLUG LEAKS CREATES UNEASE AMONG CIVIL SERVANTS

WASHINGTON: President Donald Trump's Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin used his first senior staff meeting last month to tell his new aides he would not tolerate leaks to the news media, three sources familiar with the matter said. Current and former officials said that in a departure from past practice, access to a classified computer system at the White House has been tightened by political appointees to prevent some professional staffers from seeing memos being prepared for the new president.

And at the Department of Homeland Security (DHS), some officials said they believe a search is under way for the leaker of a draft intelligence report which found little evidence that citizens of seven Muslim-majority countries covered by Trump's now-suspended travel ban pose a threat to the United States. Washington career civil servants say the clampdown appears designed to try to limit the flow of information inside and outside government agencies charged with foreign policy and national security and to deter officials from talking to the media about topics that could result in negative stories.

The White House did not immediately comment on Friday about why it is trying to crack down on leaks. Trump, who has been infuriated by some news reports of government dysfunction, has expressed his intention to prevent unauthorized disclosures to the media. "We're going to find the leakers. They're going to pay a big price for leaking," he said in response to a reporter's question during a meeting with lawmakers on Feb. 16. At a news conference the same day, Trump said he had asked the Department of Justice to look into leaks of "classified information that was given illegally" to journalists regarding contacts between some of his aides and Russian officials.

Several officials in different government agencies who spoke to Reuters on condition of anonymity said some employees fear their phone calls and emails may be monitored and that they are reluctant to speak their minds during internal discussions. Reuters has no independent evidence of this happening. In another effort to deter leaks, White House spokesman Sean Spicer demanded that some aides there surrender their phones so they could be checked for calls or texts to reporters, Politico reported on Sunday. Word of the inspection quickly leaked. Trump said later he supported Spicer. He added "I would have handled it differently than Sean. But Sean handles it his way and I'm OK with it," he said in an interview with Fox News. On Friday, Spicer did not respond to requests for comment on his reasons for demanding the phones from his staff.

Efforts to plug leaks

Two sources familiar with Mnuchin's

first meeting with senior Treasury staff said he told them that their telephone calls and emails could be monitored to prevent leaks. One of the sources said that staff were told that monitoring could become "policy." Asked about Mnuchin's comments to his senior staff, a Treasury spokesman said: "Secretary Mnuchin had a discussion with staff about confidential information not being shared with the media nor any other sources. In the course of that conversation, the idea of checking phones was not discussed."

Asked in a follow-up email whether Mnuchin had raised the possibility of monitoring phones or emails as a matter of policy, the Treasury spokesman replied: "It was not discussed." Attempts by Republican and Democratic presidents to limit leaks are not new. During Republican Richard Nixon's administration, the FBI wiretapped White House aides and journalists. Trump's predecessor, Democrat Barack Obama, aggressively pursued leaks to try to "control the narrative," as White House aides put it.

New York Times reporter James Risen, whose articles led to investigations of leaks, said the Obama administration prosecuted nine cases involving whistleblowers and leakers, compared with three by all previous administrations combined. Leonard Downie, a former executive editor of the Washington Post, said it was too early to make historical comparisons. He said it is rare to learn about an administration's internal efforts to impose message discipline.

'Climate of intimidation'

At the State Department, the fear of getting caught in a leak investigation or running afoul of White House positions is so acute that some officials will discuss issues only face-to-face rather than use phones, email, texts or other messaging applications, two State Department officials said. "There is a climate of intimidation, not just about talking to reporters, but also about communicating with colleagues," said one official, speaking on condition of anonymity.

Acting State Department spokesman Mark Toner did not respond directly to the officials' statements but said Secretary of State Rex Tillerson aimed to foster an open climate where new ideas are raised and considered on their merits. "There does have to be some degree of trust among colleagues in order to have those kinds of conversations," Toner said. There also is high anxiety in parts of DHS, three officials there said. They said some officials fear phone calls and emails are being monitored to try to find who leaked the draft intelligence report to the Associated Press. Reuters has no independent evidence that this is the case. —Reuters



NEW YORK: Supporters of Amnesty International gather inside Grand Central Terminal to protest President Donald Trump's immigration policies on Friday, March 3, 2017, in New York. — AP

AGENTS IN AGGRESSIVE SWEEP FOR UNAUTHORIZED MIGRANTS

CRACKDOWN SPREADS PANIC AND OUTRAGE

NEW YORK: US immigration agents increasingly are detaining unauthorized migrants in or near places once considered "safe" like courthouses and churches, spreading panic among migrants and outrage among activists. Since taking office on an "America First" agenda, President Donald Trump has made immigration a policy cornerstone, granting Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) agents broad authority to detain and deport unauthorized migrants.

The massive deportations feared under Trump have not materialized in fact, deportation numbers are similar to those under former president Barack Obama. However, ICE agents are now targeting places that used to be respected as sanctuaries of sorts, and have dropped guidelines urging a focus only on serious criminals. The result: all undocumented migrants can be equally targeted. One recent high-profile detention was of 'Dreamer' Daniela Vargas, 22, who was born in Argentina and came to the United States as a child. When ICE agents came to her home to arrest her father and brother, both undocumented migrants, Vargas escaped by hiding in a closet. The agents however got a second chance on Wednesday after Vargas spoke out against deportations at a press conference in Jackson, in the southern state of Mississippi.

'Disturbing'

"Disturbing that ICE may have followed her

from an immigration news conference," wrote Democratic Senator Ricard Durbin on Twitter, commenting on Vargas' quick arrest. Vargas had been living in the United States protected by a 2012 decree signed by Obama known as DACA. The decree authorizes people who were brought into the country as children, and grew up as Americans, to remain and work in the United States.

Some 750,000 young people, known as 'Dreamers,' signed up for the program. Vargas, however, let her 'Dreamer' status expire, and was working to save money to pay the renewal fee when ICE agents swooped in and detained her. According to Vargas's attorneys, ICE agents plan to deport her without a hearing with an immigration judge. "ICE has no shame," said Yatziri Tovar, another 'Dreamer' who works for the pro-immigrant NGO Make the Road New York. "This rogue agency has now detained another Dreamer ... apparently, for exercising her First Amendment rights," she said, a reference to the right under the US Constitution to freedom of expression.

Trump has said contradictory things about the DACA program since taking office on January 20. During the presidential campaign he insisted that he was not ready to give them an "illegal amnesty," but in mid-February he said he will "show great heart" in dealing with 'Dreamers.' "Donald Trump can try to confuse people as much as he likes by saying nice things about

Dreamers," said Tovar, "but the fact is that the agency he oversees is now targeting immigrant youth and tearing them from their families." Her group demands Vargas' "immediate release." The government says that Vargas is not entitled to a hearing because "she's a visa waiver program overstayer," attorney Patricia Ice, who heads a local immigration rights group said. US immigration authorities did not respond to AFP's request to comment on the case.

'Blank check'

Emboldened by Trump's decree which authorizes immigration agents to deport even undocumented people suspected of crimes they have not been charged with-authorities recently detained people seeking shelter on a cold winter day at a church in Alexandria, Virginia, just outside the US capital. Also taken into custody for deportation: a woman who went to court in El Paso, Texas to file a complaint about domestic abuse.

In another recent case agents boarded a domestic flight that landed at New York's JFK airport and checked every passenger's identification documents. "There is certainly a more aggressive attitude by immigration agents as they feel they will no longer be held accountable if they target 'sensitive areas' as churches, schools, etc were often called," said Cesar Vargas, the first openly undocumented New York attorney. — AFP

COLOMBIA 'DRUG TRIANGLE' PUTS HOPE IN CHOCOLATE

GUERIMA: Isidro Montiel arrived in Colombia's lawless "drug triangle" in 1982 hoping to get rich farming coca, the raw ingredient for cocaine. Today, with the country perched at the edge of a new era, he is betting instead on cacao, the little brown seeds used to make chocolate. "I had heard that planting coca was a good living," Montiel, a stout 57-year-old farmer, said of his decision 35 years ago to move to the remote triangle of jungle between the villages of Guerima, Chupave and Puerto Principe, in the eastern department of Vichada.

Back then, notorious drug lord Carlos Lehder was building clandestine airstrips across this territory, which is roughly the size of Iceland, to fly cocaine to the United States. Demand in the US was booming, and "a huge amount of cocaine was being shipped by air," said Colombian air force commander Jean Paul Strong, who heads a special task force in the region. Word quickly spread around Colombia that Lehder-the co-founder of the Medellin Cartel, along with Pablo Escobar-needed workers to build this cocaine empire.

But soon after Montiel arrived, the situation took a dramatic twist. Escobar tipped off authorities to Lehder's whereabouts, leading to his arrest and extradition to the United States in 1987. That left a power vacuum in the triangle that was soon filled by the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia, or FARC, a Marxist guerrilla group at war with the government since 1964. The FARC imposed a "tax" on coca paste, the substance produced by farmers like Montiel. Taking a cut of the lucrative drug trade quickly

became one of the rebels' main funding sources, along with ransom kidnappings.

Drugs and violence

In Colombia, the world's top cocaine producer, that nexus between leftist rebels and drug traffickers has fueled a half-century conflict that has killed more than 260,000 people and left 60,000 missing. It also translated into a bleak reality for farmers like Montiel. "It was humiliating. It was either pay up or pay up-no alternative. It's not right, having to work and then give away your product," said Montiel. He said the

FARC used to extort more than 30 percent of the \$760 he made on each kilo of coca paste. But then history shifted beneath his feet again.

In 2012, the FARC entered peace talks with the government, eventually signing a historic peace deal that saw the rebels begin laying down their arms this week. That same year, Montiel signed up for a new government program to encourage coca farmers to switch to legal crops. It subsidizes cacao farming, and also gives producers direct deals with chocolate manufacturers so they can sell at the market price-no middleman to take a cut. — AFP



GUERIMA, Colombia: Children sit on sacks of cocoa beans set to be loaded onto a Colombian Air Force plane at the Guerima village airstrip in the municipality of Cumaribo. — AFP

3 TEENAGE GIRLS KIDNAPPED BY EL SALVADOR GANG IN HOUSTON

HOUSTON: Two MS-13 gang members from El Salvador, both in the United States illegally, held three teenage girls against their will and killed one of them in a satanic ritual, authorities in Houston said Friday. Miguel Alvarez-Flores, 22, and Diego Hernandez-Rivera, 18, have been arrested and charged with aggravated kidnapping and murder - both first-degree felonies punishable by up to life imprisonment. Bonds totaling \$300,000 have been set for each, but immigration detainees will keep both behind bars.

The 15-year-old girl's body was found Feb. 16 with gunshot wounds to the face and chest. Homicide detective Sgt. Chris Sturdivant said the girl's identity has not been officially determined but that investigators are confident they know who she is - a girl reported missing in January in nearby Jersey Village, Texas. The captives were three "young, impressionable women" ranging in age from 14 to 16 who succumbed to the allure of gang life before being taken to an apartment and held there against their will, Sturdivant said. The 14-year-old girl told investigators that they were fed drugs and alcohol and forced to have sex.

The girl said the 15-year-old was killed

in a satanic ritual because she had struck the gang's shrine to a satanic saint, according to investigators. She told investigators that Alvarez-Flores made a peace offering to the figure in the form of a cigarette. "He returned from the statue and told the entire group that the beast did not want a material offering but wanted a soul," state District Judge Maria Jackson said during the men's initial court appearance Wednesday.

The 14-year-old said she later awoke to find the 15-year-old gone, according to investigators. The case comes as President Donald Trump is promoting concerns over criminal immigrants in the United States illegally. He has announced that he plans to create an agency, called Victims of Immigration Crime Engagement or VOICE, to serve victims of immigrant crime and their relatives. It will be part of the Department of Homeland Security. "The majority of the MS-13 members we come into contact with are here illegally," Sturdivant said.

Attorneys for Alvarez-Flores and Hernandez-Rivera did not immediately return calls Friday night. Sturdivant said both men admitted their involvement in the abductions and killing after their arrests Monday. — AP

110 PEOPLE DIE OF HUNGER IN SOMALIA

MOGADISHU: Somalia's prime minister announced yesterday that 110 people have died from hunger in the past 48 hours in a single region as a severe drought threatens millions of people across the country. It was the first death toll announced by Somalia's government since it declared the drought a national disaster on Tuesday. The United Nations estimates that 5 million people in this Horn of Africa nation need aid, amid warnings of a full-blown famine. Prime Minister Hassan Ali Khaire spoke during a meeting with the Somali National Drought Committee. The death toll he announced is from the Bay region in the southwest part of the country alone.

Somalia was one of four regions singled out by the UN secretary-general last month in a \$4.4 billion aid appeal to avert catastrophic hunger and famine, along with northeast Nigeria, South Sudan and Yemen. All are connected by a thread of violent conflict, the UN chief said. The UN humanitarian coordinator, Stephen O'Brien, was expected to visit Somalia in the next few days. Thousands have been streaming into Somalia's capital, Mogadishu, in search of food aid, overwhelming local and international aid agencies. Over 7,000 internally displaced

people checked into one feeding center recently.

The drought is the first crisis for Somalia's newly elected Somali-American leader, President Mohamed Abdullahi Mohamed. Previous droughts and a quarter-century of conflict, including ongoing attacks by extremist group Al-Shabab, have left the country fragile. Mohamed has appealed to the international community and Somalia's diaspora of 2 million people for help. About 363,000 acutely malnourished children in Somalia "need urgent treatment and nutrition support, including 71,000 who are severely malnourished," the US Agency for International Development's Famine Early Warning Systems Network has warned.

Because of a lack of clean water in many areas, there is the additional threat of cholera and other diseases, UN experts say. Some deaths from cholera already have been reported. The government has said the widespread hunger "makes people vulnerable to exploitation, human rights abuses and to criminal and terrorist networks." The UN humanitarian appeal for 2017 for Somalia is \$864 million to provide assistance to 3.9 million people. But the UN World Food Program recently requested an additional \$26 million plan to respond to the drought. —AP



MOGADISHU: Displaced Somali girls who fled the drought in southern Somalia stand in a queue to receive food handouts at a feeding center in a camp in Mogadishu, Somalia. — AP



BELFAST: A picture shows a section of the 'The Peace wall', between the Catholic Falls road and the Protestant Shankill road in Belfast, Northern Ireland. — AFP

BRUISED DUP EDGES BUOYANT SINN FEIN IN NORTHERN IRELAND ELECTION

DUP WINS 28.1% OF VOTE, SINN FEIN 27.9%

BELFAST: The pro-British Democratic Unionist Party narrowly remained Northern Ireland's largest party after edging Irish nationalists Sinn Fein by a single seat in snap elections ahead of arduous talks to resurrect their power-sharing government. Voters turned out in their highest numbers in two decades on Thursday in the first regional election in the United Kingdom since its vote to leave the European Union as nationalists who favor a united Ireland and unionists who want the province to remain British jostle for influence.

The DUP won 28 of the 90 seats as a surging Sinn Fein almost wiped out the 10-seat advantage the DUP secured in elections a year ago. Just over 1,000 votes split the main parties from the 800,000 ballots cast in the closest ever assembly election. "Let us now move forward with hope, hope that civility can return to our politics," outgoing first minister Arlene Foster of the DUP told supporters after her reelection on Friday. "There is work to be done to quickly mend the relationship which has been frayed by the discord of this election." Foster's conciliatory tone after her party's disappointing result was in stark contrast from an acrimonious campaign where, despite pleas from Dublin and London to avoid a further

souring of relations, the two parties rallied their sectarian bases.

Sinn Fein's leader Michelle O'Neill told journalists it was an "amazing day" as her party benefited from a jump in turnout to 65 percent, the highest since the first elections immediately after the 1998 Good Friday peace agreement. It was the closest nationalists, traditionally backed by Catholics, had ever come to becoming the largest party in the Protestant-majority province. Unionists candidates, who tend to be favored by Protestants, captured less than half of the seats for the first time. The DUP's failure to win at least 30 seats also means it no longer has the power to veto legislation on its own, something the conservative party has done to block extending gay marriage to the province.

Power-sharing

The two largest parties will have three weeks to form a new power-sharing government to avoid devolved power returning to the British parliament at Westminster for the first time in a decade. But with relations at their lowest point in a decade, Sinn Fein insists among its demands for re-entering government that Foster must step aside while months

of investigations begin into a botched green energy scheme she established.

The former political wing of the Irish Republican Army, who accused the DUP of not treating it as equals before collapsing the previous administration in January, will be further buoyed by their strong showing. "The prospect of a devolved government being formed, which was already slim anyway, is very remote. I just don't see it happening," said Jon Tonge, professor of politics at Liverpool University. No one predicts the impasse will bring a return to the violence that killed 3,600 people in the three decades before the peace agreement.

But some are warning there could be a deterioration in community relations coupled with government paralysis, as Brexit talks determine the province's political and economic future. Sinn Fein President Gerry Adams said he could not guarantee that the return of Northern Ireland's 1.8 million people to direct rule from London could be avoided. "That would be a total failure of the politicians of Northern Ireland," Peter Hain, the last British minister for Northern Ireland to oversee direct rule in 2007, told Sky News. "To effectively hand power back to London would I think be a disaster for devolution and a serious setback for progress in Northern Ireland." — Reuters

US CONSIDERING SEPARATING WOMEN, CHILDREN AT BORDER

WASHINGTON: Women and children crossing together illegally into the United States could be separated by US authorities under a proposal being considered by the Department of Homeland Security, according to three government officials. Part of the reason for the proposal is to deter mothers from migrating to the United States with their children, said the officials, who have been briefed on the proposal.

The policy shift would allow the government to keep parents in custody while they contest deportation or wait for asylum hearings. Children would be put into protective custody with the Department of Health and Human Services, in the "least restrictive setting" until they can be taken into the care of a US relative or state-sponsored guardian. Currently, families contesting deportation or applying for asylum are generally released from detention quickly and allowed to remain in the United States until their cases are resolved. A federal appeals court ruling bars prolonged child detention.

President Donald Trump has called for ending "catch and release," in which migrants who cross illegally are freed to live in the United States while awaiting legal proceedings. Two of the officials were briefed on the proposal at a Feb 2 town hall for asylum officers by US Citizenship and Immigration Services asylum chief John Lafferty. A third DHS official said the department is actively considering separating women from their children but has not made a decision. HHS and the White House did not respond to requests for comment.

In a statement to Reuters, DHS said: "The journey north is a dangerous one with too many situations where children - brought by parents, relatives or smugglers - are

often exploited, abused or may even lose their lives. "With safety in mind, the Department of Homeland Security continually explores options that may discourage those from even beginning the journey," the statement said. US Representative Henry Cuellar, a Texas Democrat whose district includes about 200 miles of the border with Mexico, slammed the proposal. "Bottom line: separating mothers and children is wrong," he said in a statement. "That type of thing is where we depart from border security and get into violating human rights," he said.

About 54,000 children and their guardians were apprehended between Oct. 1, 2016, and Jan. 31, 2017, more than double the number caught over the same time period a year earlier. Republicans in Congress have argued women are willing to risk the dangerous journey with their children because they are assured they will be quickly released from detention and given court dates set years into the future. Immigrant rights advocates have argued that Central America's violent and impoverished conditions force mothers to immigrate to the United States and that they should be given asylum status.

Legal considerations

Implementing the new policy proposal "could create lifelong psychological trauma," said Marielena Hincapie, executive director at the National Immigration Law Center. "Especially for children that have just completed a perilous journey from Central America," Hincapie said the US government is likely to face legal challenges based on immigration and family law if they decide to implement the policy. — Reuters



Photo shows a section of the border fence on the US/Mexico border in Tecate, California. — AFP

FRANCE'S FILLON BATTLES TO KEEP CAMPAIGN AFLOAT

CONSERVATIVE CANDIDATE UNVEILS POLICY PLATFORM

PARIS: French conservative candidate Francois Fillon battled to keep his presidential bid afloat yesterday by unveiling his policy platform in the eye of a storm over a fake jobs scandal. Marking his 63rd birthday, Fillon is trying to turn the page on a nightmare week that saw scores of defections from his camp after he admitted he will face criminal charges in the case. Such is the

onetime election frontrunner's growing isolation that the left-leaning Liberation daily wrote: "It is no longer the rats leaving a sinking ship, but the ship leaving the rat." Accusations that Fillon gave bogus parliamentary jobs to his wife Penelope have engulfed his tilt for power.

As the defections mounted, seven weeks before the first round of the two-stage vote

takes place on April 23, the entourage of 71-year-old veteran Alain Juppe said he was prepared to take over as champion of the Republicans party. Juppe, a former premier who was given a suspended jail sentence in 2004 over a party funding scandal, was beaten by Fillon in the conservative primary in November. Fillon will try to wrest back the initiative with yesterday's policy speech, followed by a rally today near the Eiffel Tower.

Despite a forecast of heavy rain, Fillon's campaign is hoping for massive turnout, helped by the organizing prowess of groups such as Manif Pour Tous, which staged a huge protest against gay marriage in October. Fillon is a devout Catholic and his surprise win in the Republicans' November primary was widely attributed to his conservative social views. In an upbeat online video message urging supporters to attend Sunday's rally, Fillon said only he could "restore France's strength." But pressure ratcheted up on him after he revealed this week that he would be charged over allegations that Penelope was paid hundreds of thousands of euros for parliamentary work over more than two decades.

Before the allegations first surfaced in January, Fillon was the clear leader in opinion polls. But he has been overtaken by the youthful pro-business centrist Emmanuel Macron and far-right candidate Marine Le Pen-whose poll numbers are largely holding up despite her own fake jobs scandal. Defying much of mainstream opinion, Fillon has claimed to be the victim of a "political assassination" attempt, declaring he will place his future in the hands of the French people. His headline policy is a pledge to cut public spending by slashing half a million civil servants' jobs. — AFP



AUBERVILLIERS: French presidential election candidate for the right-wing Les Republicains (LR) party Francois Fillon delivers a speech to present his program during a campaign meeting in Aubervilliers, outside Paris yesterday. — AFP

US TO SUSPEND AIRLINE TRANSPARENCY REVIEW

WASHINGTON: The Trump administration said it is suspending action on an Obama administration decision in October to probe a long-time practice by some airlines of preventing various travel websites from showing their fares and whether to require transparency in airline baggage and other fees. The US Transportation Department said in a notice Friday it is suspending a public comment period on the review of the practices to "allow the president's appointees the opportunity to review and consider this action."

Airlines generated \$3.8 billion in baggage fees in 2015 and the Obama administration said in October it was formally exploring requiring airlines and ticket agents to provide consumers with prices that include service fees for baggage and other services alongside fares at points of sale.

Separately, the Trump administration is also extending the compliance date for a new regulation requiring reporting of data for mishandled baggage and wheelchairs in aircraft cargo compartments for one year - until Jan 1, 2019. Airlines for America, the industry trade group representing American Airlines Group Inc, United Continental Holdings Inc, Southwest Airlines Co and others, praised the decision. "Today's action is a common sense measure rein-

forcing that the airline industry is capable of making the decisions that best serve our customers, our employees and the communities we serve," the airlines' group chief executive Nicholas Calio said in a statement.

The group added the "airline industry operates under 13,000 regulations across 13 agencies, many of which are outdated, obsolete and in need of reform." President Donald Trump met with airline chief executives last month and asked them to identify regulatory hurdles preventing job growth in the industry. A study commissioned by a travel agencies' trade group, the Travel Technology Association, in 2014 found that restricting the ability to compare-shop would result in ticket prices increasing more than 11 percent. Airline shares rose on the news.

JPMorgan said in a research note Friday that the "the protections never mattered in the first place - the financial impact of the Obama protections was largely irrelevant, in our view." The Obama administration efforts were very modest, JPMorgan said, and did not propose limiting airlines' ability to pursue ancillary revenue, such as an outright ban on bag fees. But JPMorgan added: "US airlines appear to increasingly have the ear of a sympathetic, regulatory-averse administration." — Reuters

News

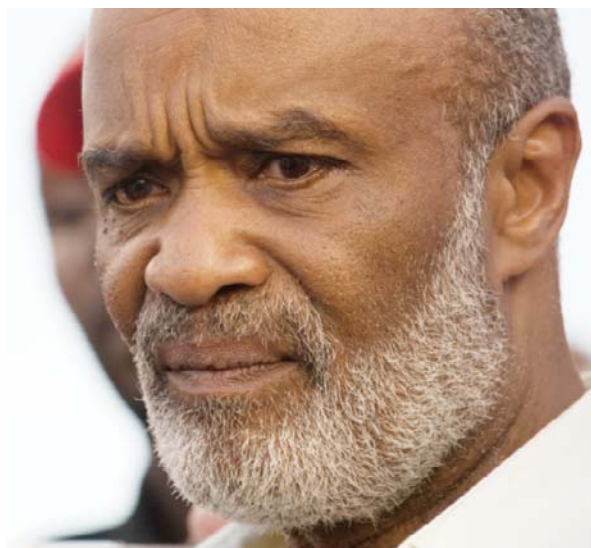
in brief

Egypt police kill four militants in shootout

CAIRO: Egyptian police have killed four suspected Islamist militants believed to have been planning a "major attack" in a shootout near Cairo, the interior ministry said. The "takfiri" cell—an Arabic word for extremists who declare other Muslims disbelievers—had been meeting when police raided their hideout in Giza province, southwest of Cairo, the ministry said in a statement on Friday. "When the terrorist cell sensed the police drawing near they began shooting at them, which prompted the police force to fire back," the statement said. The suspects' affiliation was not immediately clear but police often describe jihadists with links to the Islamic State group or Al-Qaeda as "takfiris". They were "preparing to execute a major attack in the coming period," the statement said. The Islamic State group's Egyptian branch has killed hundreds of policemen and soldiers in attacks, mostly in the Sinai Peninsula but also in Cairo.

12 die, dozens injured in Senegal road crash

DAKAR: Twelve people were killed and almost 50 injured in western Senegal when a bus crashed into a minibus late Friday after the driver reportedly fell asleep. The accident occurred near Dinguiraye in Kaolack region, and it came after the government recently unveiled reforms to try and crack down on dire road safety. "There were 10 dead recorded at the site of the accident, one victim lost their life while being transferred to hospital, and another at the hospital itself," doctor Saliou Tall of the El Hadj Ibrahima Niass Hospital told the official APS news agency. The west African nation is filled with vehicles in poor condition and a lack of training for drivers is common. The driver of the bus fell asleep at the wheel the agency reported, citing witnesses. Local firefighters gave the number of injured as 48, 10 of whom were in a serious condition. Senegal plans mandatory driving lessons, point-based penalties and more stringent testing of old vehicles, especially taxis, that use its roads.



Haiti's former president Rene Preval

Haiti former president Rene Preval dies at 74

PORT-AU-PRINCE: Former Haitian President Rene Preval, 74, the first leader in Haiti's history to win a democratic election, serve a full term and peacefully hand power to a successor, has died, the government of the Caribbean nation said on Friday. The cause of death for the two-time president was not made public. A defining moment of his second presidency was in 2010 when an earthquake destroyed much of the capital Port-au-Prince, killing more than 200,000 people. "I was touched to learn of the death of former President Rene Preval," President Jovenel Moise said on Twitter, describing him as a "dignified son of Haiti." Haiti's politics has been turbulent for much of its history since winning independence from France in 1804, punctuated by dictatorships, coups, invasions and natural disasters. Preval a soft-spoken agronomist, won support from Haiti's poor majority when he first won the presidency in 1996, after a bout of instability that saw his ally, former President Jean-Bertrand Aristide, toppled in a coup, then brought back to power with the help of US troops.

Hundreds rescued in the Mediterranean

ROME: Rescuers plucked around 900 migrants from boats in the Mediterranean on Friday while hundreds more were brought to Sicily, as Italian figures showed far more people are braving the crossing from North Africa this year than last. A Norwegian ship working for European Union border agency Frontex and a vessel from aid group SOS Mediterranean rescued migrants packed into four large rubber boats and six smaller vessels on Friday, Italy's coastguard said in a statement. Meanwhile more than 800 people from African countries including Eritrea and Somalia, who were rescued on Thursday, were brought to the port of Augusta in southeastern Sicily. "These people had a very difficult journey," Save the Children spokeswoman Giovanna Di Benedetto said at the port. "Many of the minors are unaccompanied, including small children. Some of them are very small indeed." Since the beginning of the year, 14,319 migrants have been brought to Italy, according to the Interior Ministry.

India's child protection officers held in trafficking investigation

KOLKATA: Two child protection officers have been arrested for alleged links with a trafficking gang that ran illegal adoption centres in eastern India selling children to foreign couples, police said yesterday. Investigators said children aged between six months and 14 years were sold in illegal adoptions to couples from Europe, America and Asia for between \$12,000 and \$23,000 and taken out of the country.

While India has an estimated 30 million orphans, legal adoption is rare because of strict rules governing the practice and there is a thriving illicit market. Police arrested two Darjeeling child protection officials, Mrinal Ghosh and Debashish Chanda, on Friday "for their links with the adoption scandal", Nishat Parvej of the state's Criminal Investigation Department said. He said three more government officials had "absconded", as the widening inquiry into the adoption racket embroils political and administrative figures. So far six people have been nabbed over the scandal, including Juhi Choudhury, a senior member of Prime Minister Narendra Modi's party in West Bengal.

The head of the adoption centre at the heart of the scandal, Chandana Chakraborty, told investigators that Choudhury had been involved in child trafficking for several years. Police arrested Chakraborty, a retired school principal, and her deputy Sonali Mondal last month after a tip-off from the federal adoption agency. The pair ran the Bimala Sishu Griha centre where children were sold abroad through forged documents to couples for as much as 1.5 million rupees (\$23,000).



KUALA LUMPUR: Journalists film outside the North Korean Embassy in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, yesterday. Malaysia said it expelled North Korea's ambassador for refusing to apologize for his strong accusations over Malaysia's handling of the investigation into the killing of the North Korean leader's half brother. —AP

MALAYSIA EXPELS NORTH KOREA AMBASSADOR OVER KIM PROBE

N KOREAN CHEMIST ACCUSED POLICE OF THREATENING TO KILL HIS FAMILY

KUALA LUMPUR: Malaysia said it expelled North Korea's ambassador yesterday for refusing to apologize for his strong accusations over Malaysia's handling of the investigation into the killing of the North Korean leader's half brother. Foreign Minister Anifah Aman said a notice was sent to the North Korean Embassy at around 6 pm declaring Ambassador Kang Chol persona non grata. The notice said Kang must leave Malaysia within 48 hours.

Earlier in the week, Malaysia demanded that North Korea formally apologize for Kang's accusations over the investigation into the Feb 13 killing of Kim Jong Nam at Kuala Lumpur's airport, including that "the Malaysian government had something to hide and that Malaysia has colluded with outside powers to defame" North Korea, Anifah said in a statement. He said that no apology had come and none appeared forthcoming, and that North Korean Embassy officials also failed to turn up for a meeting yesterday at the foreign ministry, so Malaysia decided to expel the ambassador.

"It should be made clear - Malaysia will react strongly against any insults made against it or any attempt to tarnish its reputation," Anifah said. The death of Kim, the estranged half brother of North Korean leader Kim Jong Un, has unleashed a diplomatic battle between Malaysia and North Korea. Authorities said Kim was killed within 20 minutes after two women smeared his face with VX, a banned nerve agent considered a weapon of mass destruction.

Kang's expulsion came just days after Malaysia said it would scrap visa-free entry for North Koreans and expressed concern over the use of the nerve agent. Anifah had said this was an "indication of the government's concern that Malaysia may have been used for illegal activities." Earlier yesterday, a North Korean chemist deported from Malaysia accused police of threatening to kill his family unless he confessed to killing Kim. Ri Jong Chol, who was released after police said there was insufficient evidence to charge him, spoke to reporters in Beijing while on his way to Pyongyang.

Ri said that he wasn't at the airport the day Kim was killed, but that police accused him of being a mastermind and presented him with "fake evidence." He said they showed him a picture of his wife and two children, who were staying with him in Kuala Lumpur, and threatened to kill them. "These men kept telling me to admit to the crime, and if not, my whole family would be killed, and you too won't be safe. If you accept everything, you can live a good life in Malaysia," Ri said. "This is when I realized that it was a trap ... they were plotting to tarnish my country's reputation." Malaysia's national police chief, Khalid Abu Bakar, said he would hold a news conference on Tuesday to respond to Ri's comments.

Ri was detained four days after Kim died, but police never said what they believed his role in the attack was. Two women - one Indonesian, one Vietnamese - have been charged with murder in the case, although both

reportedly say they were duped into thinking they were playing a harmless prank. Malaysia is looking for seven other North Korean suspects, four of whom are believed to have left the country on the day of the killing. Three others, including an official at the North Korean Embassy and an employee of Air Koryo, North Korea's national carrier, are believed to still be in Malaysia.

On Friday, police issued an arrest warrant for the Air Koryo employee, Kim Uk Il, but didn't say why he is a suspect. Police say he arrived in Malaysia on Jan. 29, about two weeks before Kim was killed. North Korea earlier had rejected Malaysia's autopsy finding that VX killed Kim. Ri Tong Il, a former North Korean deputy ambassador to the United Nations, said he probably died of a heart attack because he suffered from heart disease, diabetes and high blood pressure. Malaysia's finding that VX killed Kim boosted speculation that North Korea orchestrated the attack.

Experts say the oily poison was almost certainly produced in a sophisticated state weapons laboratory, and North Korea is widely believed to possess large quantities of chemical weapons, including VX. North Korea is trying to retrieve Kim's body, but has not acknowledged that the victim is Kim Jong Un's half brother, as Malaysian government officials have confirmed. Kim Jong Nam reportedly fell out of favor with his father, the late Kim Jong Il, in 2001, when he was caught trying to enter Japan on a false passport to visit Tokyo Disneyland. —AP



IMPHAL: Indian security personnel stand guard as Manipuris stand in a queue to cast their votes in state assembly elections at a polling station in Sekmai, outskirts of Imphal yesterday. — AFP

BODIES GO UNBURIED IN MANIPUR

IMPHAL: The body of Pausuan Lian has lain in a hospital mortuary for more than 500 days since he was shot dead during a land protest in India's Manipur state but his family is still refusing to allow his burial. "All nine martyrs, including my son, will stay in the morgue until justice is done," his mother Hau Lian Ching said ahead of a two-phase state election in Manipur which begins yesterday.

"The demands of our people must be met before we can bury them." The 18-year-old was one of six people who were killed in August 2015 when police opened fire at a rally in the mainly tribal Churachandpur district against three land bills that had been introduced in the state assembly. A subsequent flare-up in violence left another three locals dead and further highlighted the tensions in the remote northeastern state, a three-hour flight from New Delhi.

Like much of the northeast, Manipur—which shares its eastern border with Myanmar—has long been plagued by sporadic separatist unrest and ongoing feuds between different tribal and ethnic groups. But the deaths in Churachandpur have heightened the anger of tribal groups who had already come to regard the land

bills as part of a plot by the majority Meitei community to deprive them of their ancestral rights. A group from one of the state's largest minority tribes, the Naga, launched a blockade of the main highway into the state capital Imphal in November, leading to shortages and big price hikes for basic commodities.

Military airlifts

The government has even had to deploy military aircraft to deliver fuel and other essential supplies. But the most poignant protests have been at Churachandpur hospital morgue where relatives such as Haulian Ching and her other son Kailunlai steadfastly refuse to leave the side of their loved ones. "Until we receive guarantees that our land will not be touched we will continue with our vigil," said Kailunlai, a farm laborer. "The government tried to steal our land and take away our rights ... We are only asking for what we are entitled to under the Indian constitution."

Supporters of the bills at the centre of the controversy say the legislation will regularise a system of buying and selling land. But opponents say it will effectively end the tribal groups' sovereign rights over their land which they

argue is enshrined in the Indian constitution. While the bills have been passed by the Manipur state legislature, where the centre-left Congress party has a majority, they have yet to be approved by President Pranab Mukherjee. Opponents are pinning their hopes on the elections as a way to get the bills blocked for good. The main threat to Congress comes from the right-wing Bharatiya Janata Party led by Prime Minister Narendra Modi who has pledged to end the blockades without clarifying his position on the land bills.

"Congress will have to answer for all the sufferings of the people due to blockade," Modi said at a rally in Imphal last weekend.

"When the BJP forms the next government in Manipur, we will not allow any blockade and show how to run a government." The Hindu nationalist BJP's main support base has traditionally been in northern and western India, but it won power in the largest northeastern state, Assam, last year.

But while Congress is struggling on a national level, the three-time Chief Minister Okram Ibobi Singh remains Manipur's most popular politician which could help his party get over the line. —AFP

8 AFGHAN CIVILIANS DIE IN ALLEGED AIR STRIKE

KABUL: At least eight Afghan civilians, including four children, were killed in an attack late Friday night in western Farah province, according to Afghan officials. However there is disagreement over what exactly caused the deaths. Mohammad Naser Mehri, spokesman for the provincial governor, said Saturday that the incident was a roadside bomb explosion which took place in the Bala Buluk district. But family members of the victims are claiming they were hit by an airstrike. Gen. Dawlat Waziri, a Defense Ministry spokesman, told The Associated Press that an investigation of the incident is underway.

"We are aware of the allegations made by the local people, right now an investigation is going on into the incident in Farah," Waziri said. Dr Abdul Hakim Rasouli, director of Farah Hospital, said that 22 others are wounded in the attack. Three of the wounded are in critical condition and will be transferred to another hospital in neighboring Herat province for their further treatment, he said.

Farah's Bala Buluk district has been the site of several recent clashes between Afghan security forces and armed insurgents. One resident, a 30-year-old mother of four named Salima, said two of her children were killed and a third wounded. In a phone interview with The Associated Press, Salima, who like many Afghans goes by only one name, said her family was attacked by a helicopter. "I don't want to be alive anymore while I don't have my children with me," she said, crying. The Afghan security forces operate helicopter gunships, as does the U.S.-led military coalition in Afghanistan. —AP



KABUL: Afghan security forces investigate the aftermath of suicide attack and shooting in district police headquarters in Kabul, Afghanistan. —AP

N KOREA HITS OUT AT US OVER POSSIBLE TERROR LISTING

SEOUL: North Korea warned yesterday the US will "pay dearly" if it puts Pyongyang on a terror list over the killing of its leader's half-brother, as a suspect in the murder claimed he was the victim of a conspiracy. Kim Jong-Nam, 45, was poisoned in Malaysia last month with VX, a nerve agent so deadly that it is classed as a weapon of mass destruction. The dramatic killing at Kuala Lumpur airport prompted an international probe, lurid stories of North Korea's Cold War-style tradecraft and a bitter war of words between Malaysia and Pyongyang.

South Korean and Japanese media, citing diplomatic sources, have since reported that the US has been mulling placing the North back on its terror list,

which includes Iran and Syria. "The US will keenly realise how dearly it has to pay for its groundless accusations against the dignified North if it puts it back on the terror list, the regime's foreign ministry spokesman told state-run news wire KCNA. The spokesman maintained that Pyongyang opposed "all forms of terrorism" and accused the US of trying to tarnish its reputation. South Korea has blamed the North for the murder, citing what they say was a standing order from leader Kim Jong-Un to kill his exiled half-brother who may have been seen as a potential rival.

However, the only North Korean arrested over the assassination yesterday denounced Malaysia's probe into the

murder as "a conspiracy to impair the dignity of the Republic (North Korea)". Ri Jong-Chol, who was released and deported Friday due to lack of evidence, said that police had offered him a comfortable life in Malaysia in return for a false confession. "But no way. No matter how good a life it could be, it is still not as good as my own motherland. How could I forget the motherland that raised me and fed me to this point?" he said to media in Beijing.

Airline employee wanted

Ri's release came days after two women—one Vietnamese and one Indonesian were charged with murdering Kim Jong-Nam. Airport CCTV footage

showed the women approaching the heavyset 45-year-old and apparently smearing his face with a cloth. Police say he suffered a seizure and died less than 20 minutes later. Swabs of the dead man's face revealed traces of VX nerve agent. On Friday police issued an arrest warrant for a North Korean airline employee, Kim Uk Il, 37, in connection with the murder. They also requested that Hyon Kwang Song, second secretary at the North Korean embassy, assist the probe. Both are believed to be in Malaysia. Four others are thought to have fled to Pyongyang on the day of the assassination. North Korea, which has not acknowledged the dead man's identity, has vehemently protested the

investigation, saying Malaysia is in cahoots with its enemies.

In response, Malaysia has cancelled a rare visa-free travel deal with North Korea—a key conduit to the outside world—and recalled its envoy to Pyongyang. The nuclear-armed North was first designated a state sponsor of terrorism by the US in 1987 when its agents bombed a South Korean plane killing all 115 on board. But it was taken off the list in 2008 after Pyongyang took steps toward freezing its nuclear facilities. However, since then the North has resumed its activities, conducting four atomic tests and numerous missile tests despite the fact that they are banned under several UN Security Council resolutions. — AFP

ROW ESCALATES; TURKEY ACCUSES GERMANY OF AIDING ITS ENEMIES

ANKARA: Turkish leaders have condemned Germany for cancelling rallies of Turkish residents due to be addressed by Ankara's ministers and accused Berlin of giving "shelter" to Turkey's enemies. As the diplomatic spat between the two countries became increasingly angry, Turkish President Tayyip Erdogan said a German journalist being held in Turkey was a "German agent" and a member of an armed Kurdish militant group.

A source in Germany's foreign ministry on Friday night told Reuters those accusations were "absurd". Earlier, comments in Berlin by Turkey's Justice Minister Bekir Bozdag, who had been scheduled to address a meeting in the southwestern town of Gaggenau until it was cancelled on Thursday, reflected a broader souring of relations between the two NATO allies. "Let them look back at their history," Bozdag said in a speech. "We see the old illnesses flaring up." The city of Cologne also

isn't because a correspondent of Die Welt was arrested," Erdogan told an awards ceremony in Istanbul.

"It is because this person hid in the German embassy as a member of the PKK and a German agent for one month. When we told them to hand him over to be tried, they refused." "So, they won't let our justice minister and economy minister speak," Erdogan added. "They need to be tried for helping and abetting terrorism."

Gaggenau would have been part of efforts to garner support among 1.5 million Turkish citizens for an April referendum expanding Erdogan's powers - something he has sought with increased urgency since an army bid to topple him. Erdogan has accused West European countries of failing to condemn the July putsch quickly or strongly enough. West European countries have expressed concern about his subsequent crackdown on journalists, judiciary, academics and others.

On Friday evening the Dutch government said plans by Turkish authorities to hold a referendum campaign rally in Rotterdam were "undesirable". The leader of an association of Dutch Turks said Turkish Foreign Minister Mevlut Cavusoglu was planning to attend the March 11 rally, hoping to persuade the Netherlands' hundreds of thousands of dual citizens to vote for the new constitution giving Erdogan greater powers. Authorities in Gaggenau evacuated the city hall for hours on Friday after receiving a bomb threat, its mayor told n-tv German television. Asked if it was linked to the cancellation, mayor Michael Pfeiffer said: "We presume this at the moment, but we don't know for sure."

In a phone call between Turkish Foreign Minister Mevlut Cavusoglu and his German counterpart Sigmar Gabriel, the ministers agreed to meet in Germany on March 8 to discuss tensions between the two countries, foreign ministry sources in Ankara said. Journalist Yucel, a German-Turkish dual national, is charged with propaganda in support of a terrorist organization. The German foreign ministry said it had not yet been granted consular access to Yucel or five other Germans arrested since the July 15 coup attempt. German Justice Minister Heiko Maas sent Bozdag a sharply worded letter after Bozdag cancelled their Thursday meeting.

"When journalists, judges and attorneys are arrested simply because they are doing their jobs, simply because they are fulfilling their role in a constitutional state, then each arrest marks a degradation of the rule of law," he wrote. "It is the role of the state to protect journalists and not burden them with repressive measures." Erdogan accuses an exiled cleric of masterminding the coup, describing his organization as the FETO terrorist group.

Turkey also complains that Germany and other West European countries give succor to militant leftists and PKK Kurdish militants. Germany is wary of rising tensions, seeking continued Turkish commitment to arrangements preventing large movements of refugees from Turkey to Europe. — Reuters



ISTANBUL: Turkey's President Recep Tayyip Erdogan addresses a meeting in Istanbul yesterday. — AP

blocked an event where Turkey's Economy Minister Nihat Zeybekci was to speak on Sunday. Police said shortly after that a second gathering he had been due to attend in the western town of Frechen was also cancelled.

Zeybekci said he still planned to go to Germany. "We say the victory is God's...I will go from cafe to cafe, house to house," he said. "Nobody should worry, we will still meet with our citizens in Germany." Chancellor Angela Merkel, speaking in Tunis, said her government had played no part in steps taken by city councils who, according to one mayor, acted purely on security grounds. She renewed her criticism of Turkey's arrest of Deniz Yucel, a correspondent for German newspaper Die Welt. "We support freedom of expression and we can criticise Turkey," she told reporters. The German foreign ministry urged Ankara to refrain from "pouring oil on the fire".

Germany 'abetting terrorism'

Erdogan said in Ankara the cause of the tensions between the two countries was Germany's support for Turkey's enemies. "It



GAGGENAU: Police guard near the town hall in Gaggenau, Germany. German authorities say they have evacuated the town hall in Gaggenau after receiving a bomb threat, one day after the town withdrew permission for a local venue to host a rally by Turkey's justice minister. — AP



BEIJING: Bus ushers leap as they pose for a group photo at Tiananmen Square during a plenary session of the National People's Congress in Beijing yesterday. China will raise its defense budget by about 7 percent this year, a government spokeswoman said, continuing a trend of low-growth amid a slowing economy. — AP

CHINA'S DEFENSE BUDGET TO RISE ABOUT 7% IN 2017

TRUMP ADMINISTRATION PROPOSING 10% RISE

BEIJING: Defying pressure for a strong increase in defense spending, China said yesterday its military budget this year would grow about 7 percent, its slowest pace since 2010. Last year, with China's economy slowing, the defense budget recorded its lowest increase in six years, 7.6 percent, the first single-digit rise since 2010, following a nearly unbroken two-decade run of double-digit increases. With the administration of new US President Donald Trump proposing a 10 percent jump in military spending in 2017, and worries about potential disputes with the United States over the South China Sea and the status of Taiwan, some in China had been pressing for a forceful message from this year's defense budget.

This week influential state-run tabloid the Global Times called for a rise of at least 10 percent to deal with the uncertainty brought by Trump, and a retired senior general told Hong Kong and Taiwan media that 12 percent would be needed to match the US rise. "It's not enough," a source with ties to senior Chinese officers told Reuters. "A lot of people in the military won't be happy with this."

Parliament spokeswoman Fu Ying, who announced the increase, said defense spending would account for about 1.3 percent of GDP, the same level as the past few years. The actual number for defense spending will be released on Sunday, when China's largely rubber-stamp parliament begins its annual session. China's economic growth target for 2017 is expected to

be lowered to around 6.5 percent from last year's 6.5-7 percent when Premier Li Keqiang gives his work report to parliament. Last year normally talkative military delegates to parliament largely declined to talk to foreign media about the slowing rate of military spending, saying they had been ordered not to speak to foreign reporters.

Nerves rattled

China's military build-up has rattled nerves around the region, particularly because China has taken an increasingly assertive stance in its territorial disputes in the East and South China Seas and over Taiwan, which China claims as its own. Taiwan's defense ministry expects China to continue to strengthen its military, spokesman Chen Chung-chi told Reuters, while a senior official at Japan's defense ministry said the spending rise was still large and lacked transparency. Takashi Kawakami, professor of international politics at Japan's Takushoku University, said the small rate of increase showed China was taking a cautious approach with the new US government, especially as Presidents Trump and Xi could meet soon.

"There was a view that China would increase its defense budget in line with the rise of the defense budget in the United States. But the fact China kept it at this level means it's in a wait-and-see mode regarding the Trump administration." Spokeswoman Fu dismissed concerns about China's military. "Look at the past decade

or so; there have been so many conflicts, even wars, around the world resulting in serious, large numbers of casualties and loss of property, so many refugees destitute and homeless. Which one has China caused?" she said.

There are other concerns for China's military, including how to deal with the 300,000 troops President Xi Jinping announced in 2015 would be cut, mainly by the end of 2017.

Last month Chinese military veterans demonstrated in central Beijing for two consecutive days, demanding unpaid retirement benefits in a new wave of protests highlighting the difficulty in managing demobilized troops. "It's not yet certain what is going to happen to these people, and the military is clearly hoping for more money to deal with them," one senior Beijing-based Asia diplomat said before this year's defense budget was announced.

The defense budget figure for last year, 954.35 billion yuan (\$138.4 billion), likely understates its investment, according to diplomats, though the number is closely watched around the region and in Washington for clues to China's intentions. A 7 percent rise for this year based on last year's budget would bring the figure to 1.02 trillion yuan, still only a quarter or so of the US defense budget. The White House has proposed a 10 percent increase in military spending to \$603 billion, even though the United States has wound down major wars in Iraq and Afghanistan and is already the world's pre-eminent military power. — Reuters

MASS SOUTH KOREA RALLIES AS FINAL PARK IMPEACHMENT RULING LOOMS

SEOUL: Thousands of South Korean protesters held rival mass rallies yesterday over the impeachment of President Park Geun-Hye as judges prepare to rule on the scandal that has rocked the country. Park was impeached by parliament last December over a major influence-peddling scandal that prompted millions to take to the street for months to call for her resignation. The case has also engulfed South Korea's biggest business, with the heir to the Samsung empire and four other top executives indicted Tuesday on multiple charges including bribery and embezzlement.

Park—currently holed up in the presidential palace with her power suspended—expressed "belated regret", as the Constitutional Court wrapped up its hearings on Monday, with a decision expected in March. Her lawyers maintain that she was not aware of any wrongdoing and blamed her secret confidante Choi Soon-Sil, who is accused of using her presidential ties to force local firms to "donate" nearly \$70 million to non-profit foundations.

The case has bitterly divided Park's supporters and detractors, who have regularly taken to the streets. Tens of thousands of anti-Park protesters rallied in Seoul yesterday, some waving banners of the president in prison uniform and chanting in unison "Constitutional Court, impeach Park immediately!" Several blocks away, another much smaller demonstration demanded the court reject the impeachment against the "poor innocent president". The mostly middle-aged or eld-



SEOUL: Mass protests in Seoul ahead of final ruling on Park impeachment. Anti-government protesters take part in a march in Seoul. — AFP

erly supporters waved signs urging the military to "rise up" and dismantle parliament. While the court's deliberations could technically take up to six months, local media reports predict the judgment could come as early as next week. The impeachment motion needs approvals from at least six judges to take effect, after which a presi-

dential election will be held within 60 days. If it is rejected, Park could return to work and stay until the end of her term in February 2018. Choi is on trial for coercion and abuse of power.

The two women became close through Choi's father, a shady religious figure who was Park's mentor for years. — AFP



Camel herders scoop up water in plastic buckets from one of the few watering holes in the area to water their animals near the drought-affected village of Bandarero near Moyale town on the Ethiopian border in northern Kenya on Friday. UN humanitarian chief Stephen O'Brien toured Bandarero village on Friday and called on the international community to act to "avert the very worst of the effects of drought and to avert a famine to make sure we don't go from what is deep suffering to a catastrophe". — AP

ARNIE QUILTS 'APPRENTICE' OVER TRUMP TIES

Continued from Page 1

Trump mocked Schwarzenegger and the 43 percent fall in the coveted 18-to-49-year-old audience for the show's January premiere, sparking a Twitter fight between America's two biggest celebrities-turned-politicians.

"Wow, the ratings are in and Arnold Schwarzenegger

got 'swamped' (or destroyed) by comparison to the ratings machine, DJT," tweeted Trump. "I wish you the best of luck and I hope you'll work for ALL of the American people as aggressively as you worked for your ratings," Schwarzenegger tweeted back. Some 20 million Americans watched the first year of "The Apprentice" but viewership dropped to around 6 million in 2015 for Trump's final episode of "The Celebrity Apprentice." — AFP

ZAIN POWERS 8 KUWAITI TECH SMES AT MWC17

Continued from Page 1

Kuwaiti entrepreneurs among other participants from around the world.

Bader Al-Kharafi said, "We strongly believe in the competencies of Kuwaiti youth and are keen on empowering them. This significant portion of our community has much to offer through technological innovations, helping turn Kuwait into a leading emerging market for digital developments and startups. We need more than just ideas and visions to achieve sustainable development, and that's why we are keen on spreading the culture of entrepreneurship and promoting those who are determined to turn their ideas into reality". Kharafi continued: "The most recent successful stories reveal that early investment in tech startups puts corporations at the heart of the modern world, and further progresses the wheel of development. If we don't take this early risk, we will face hardships later as the world around us evolves."

As a leading telecom operator, Zain has sought to utilize technology to overcome challenges and will continue to in the future. Zain Kuwait's support of the startups at 4YFN is aligned with its strategic direction and long-term focus on technology and innovation. The telco aims to be a driver and active participant in creating local change in the Kuwaiti tech scene. After years of developing many startups via Zain Great Idea and watching them grow from seed to small businesses, Zain aspires to lead again and represent the leading startups on a global platform. The startups had the chance to pitch, develop and seek further capital injection. The eight projects supported by Zain at MWC 2017 were as follows:

Boutiqaat's

Seeks to become the No. 1 shopping destination for personal care products. It does not only save time and effort, but also offers the chance to select from world brands and names under one roof. A new application at the website was recently launched for iPhone and Android, and the company provides numerous offers and discounts for the marketed products.

Bleems

Traditionally floral, bakery, chocolate and gift shops used to receive and deliver their orders, until Bleems was born. Bleems enables customers to choose amongst the best possible floral

and bakeries arrangements in the market.

Ghinwa

Ghinwa is the first and the largest application for Arabic karaoke. The app aims at sharing singing talent across all social platforms. Ghinwa acts as a platform for talented singers to express themselves legally. It supports the young artists and singers.

Bookr

Bookr is the best guide for health-maintenance providers in Kuwait. The carefully selected guide enables subscribers to receive needed health services. Appointments and subscriptions to prepaid services can also be made. Through data analysis and ads tools, the Bookr cloud management system helps health-maintenance service providers monitor work flow and manage relations with clients.

Tktti

Tktti is a user-friendly website application available 24/7 dedicated to easing events organizers' market reach, and providing data analysis based ticket purchases. The platform's backend allow event organizers to post events with multiple and specialized tools specifically designed for their convenience. As a user, just a few simple steps gain access to the desired event.

Diwaniya Labs

Diwaniya Labs has created handcrafted online multiplayer experiences based on local card games. Apps are available on a range of devices (iOS, Android, macOS). Diwaniya Labs is focused on the industry and development of entertainment-based digital content.

Tap

Tap now supports over 1,000 businesses and major corporations and has had a (digital) hand in securing tens of thousands of transactions easily and efficiently for consumers all around the world.

Ghaseel

Ghaseel is the first marketplace for car wash services on-demand. The easiest and quickest way to get a car washed at the desired location, delivering variety of offers and discounts.

TRUMP ACCUSES OBAMA OF 'TAPPING' HIS PHONE

Continued from Page 1

The businessman-turned-politician, who has accused his political foes of conducting "a total witch hunt," yesterday directed his Twitter tirade at his Democratic predecessor.

"Terrible! Just found out that Obama had my 'wires tapped' in Trump Tower just before the victory. Nothing found," Trump wrote a day after departing Washington for a weekend getaway at his Mar-a-Lago Florida resort for the fourth time in five weeks. The president compared the alleged action to Senator Joe McCarthy's campaign in the 1950s to root out alleged Communists and sympathizers, which was marked by improper investigative techniques. "Is it legal for a sitting President to be 'wire tapping' a race for president prior to an election? Turned down by court earlier. A NEW LOW!" Trump said, again providing no proof of Obama's efforts to seek a court order to spy on the then-candidate.

Trump delivered a well-received address to Congress late Wednesday, but the White House was plunged back into turmoil the following morning after it confirmed a

news report that Sessions failed to disclose two meetings with ambassador Kislyak during last year's election campaign. Trump has repeatedly denied having any personal ties to the Kremlin, and his aides have denied or downplayed contacts with Russian officials.

But the accusations have continued amid almost daily leaks revealing new details about connections between Moscow and senior Trump officials. One such revelation in the Washington Post about a meeting between Sessions and Kislyak prompted the Republican former US senator to recuse himself from any investigations into the presidential election campaign. Sessions had told a Senate committee under oath that he "did not have communications with the Russians," but reporters found that he had actually met the Russian ambassador twice in the months before taking up his post as attorney general, the top US law enforcement officer.

Trump has expressed his displeasure over the charges and the leaks that led to them. On Friday he lashed out in tweets directed at the top Democrats in the Republican-led Congress, Senator Chuck Schumer and Representative Nancy Pelosi. — AFP

JORDAN EXECUTES 15 CONVICTS

Continued from Page 1

Among the terrorism offences were a 2006 attack on tourists at Amman's Roman amphitheater that killed a Briton and a June 2016 attack on an intelligence service base north of the capital that left five agents dead.

They also included the Sept 2016 murder of Christian writer Nahed Hattar as he stood trial for publishing a cartoon deemed offensive to Islam.

King Abdullah II had said in 2005 that Jordan aimed to become the first Middle Eastern country to halt executions in line with most European nations. Courts continued to hand down death sentences but they were not carried out. However, public opinion blamed a rise in crime on the policy and in Dec 2014 Jordan hanged 11 men convicted of murder, drawing criticism from human rights groups.

Opinion hardened after the murder by the Islamic State (IS) group of captured Jordanian pilot Maaz Al-Kassabeh whose plane had crashed in a jihadist-held region of Syria in Dec 2014 while serving with a US-led coalition. Grisly footage posted in February the following year of him being burnt alive in a cage outraged the public. Swiftly afterwards, Jordan hanged two people convicted of terrorism offences, one of them Sajida Al-Rishawi. She had taken part in a 2005 suicide attack on

luxury hotels in Amman organised by IS's forebear, Al-Qaeda in Iraq, but her explosives failed to detonate.

According to judicial sources, 94 people remain on death row in Jordan, most of them convicted of murder or rape, following Saturday's executions. Dmour, the Amman attorney general, said executions were "the fate of all those who carry out criminal offences". But Amnesty International warned that the death penalty was not the way to improve security. "This is a major step backwards for both Jordan and efforts to end the death penalty - a senseless and ineffective means of administering justice," Hadid said in a statement. "Jordan had for years been a leading example in a region where recourse to the death penalty is all too frequent... Hanging people will not improve public security," Hadid added.

Jordan, which hosts hundreds of thousands of refugees from the conflict in Syria, carries out air strikes on IS in both Syria and Iraq as a member of the US-led coalition. The pro-Western kingdom fears a spillover of the jihadist threat and closely monitors thousands of Jordanians suspected of being IS or Al-Qaeda sympathizers. In June 2016, a car bomb at a crossing from Syria, claimed by IS, killed seven Jordanian security personnel. Amman has responded by sealing the border. — AFP



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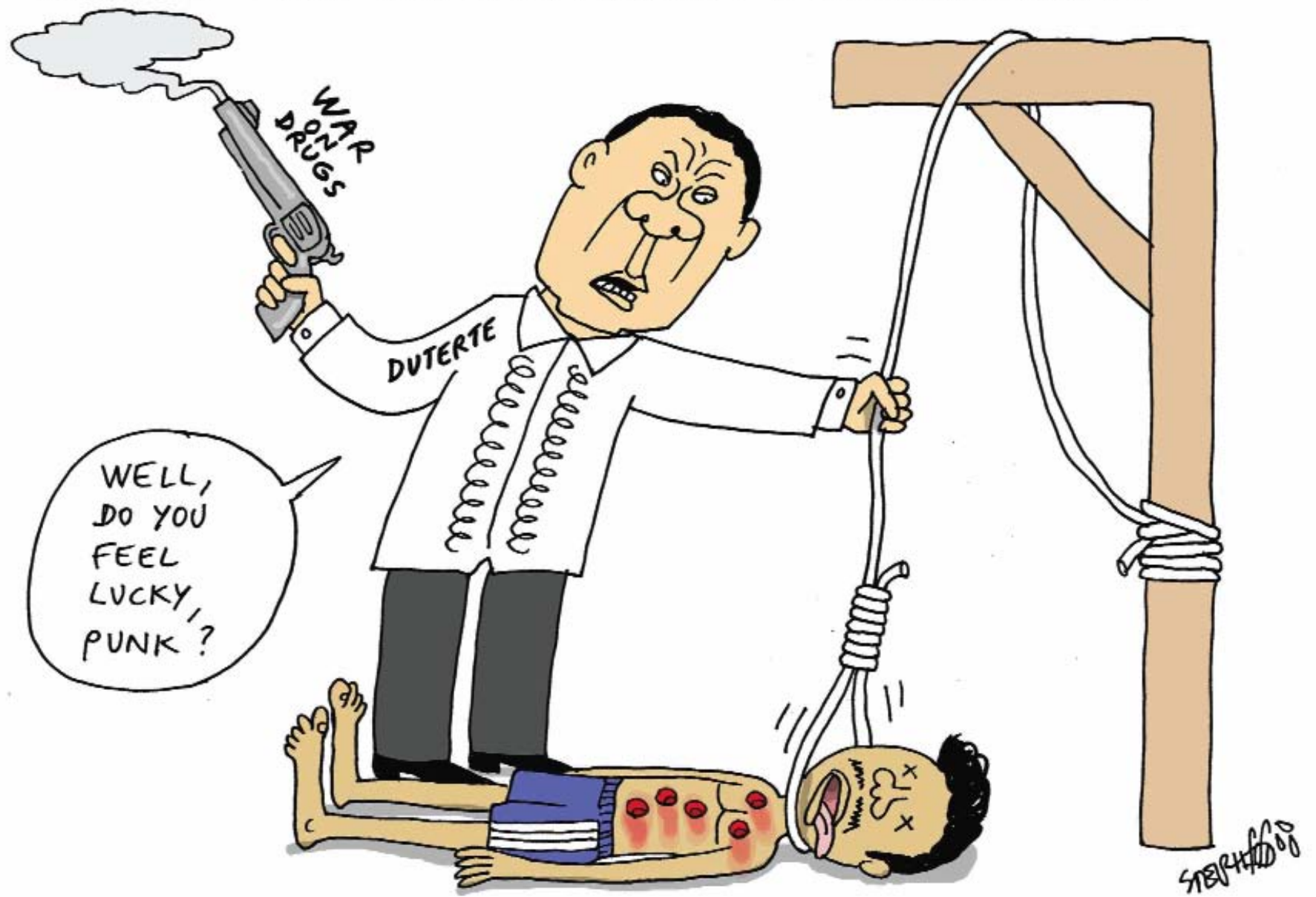
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PHILIPPINES MOVES CLOSER TO REINSTATING DEATH PENALTY ...



TEA PARTY PARALLEL? LIBERALS TAKING AIM AT THEIR OWN PARTY

Four days after Donald Trump's surprising White House victory, the liberal organization CREDO Action fired off a frantic warning to its 4.6 million anxious supporters. Their worry wasn't the new president. It was his opposition. "Democratic leaders have been welcoming Trump," the email said. "That's not acceptable. Democratic leaders need to stand up and fight. Now."

Amid a national surge of anti-Trump protests, boycotts and actions, liberals have begun taking aim at a different target: Their own party. Over the past few weeks, activists have formed a number of organizations threatening a primary challenge to Democratic lawmakers who offer anything less than complete resistance to the Republican president. "We're not interested in unity," said Cenk Uygur, the founder of Justice Democrats, a new organization that's pledged to replace "every establishment politician" in Congress. "We can't beat the Republicans unless we have good, honest, uncorrupted candidates."

While party leaders have urged Democrats to keep their attacks focused on Trump, the liberal grass roots sees the fresh wave of opposition energy as an opportunity to push their party to the left and wrest power from longtime party stalwarts. The intraparty pressure is reminiscent of the tea party movement, where conservative activists defeated several centrist Republican incumbents. Their efforts reverberated through the 2012 and 2016 presidential elections, forcing candidates to the right on economic issues.

Like Uygur, many founders of the new groups are supporters of Sen. Bernie Sanders' presidential campaign, eager to continue their effort to remake the Democratic Party. Uygur's group says they've already found 70 possible candidates who will refuse corporate campaign donations while running for Congress - challenging elected Democrats if needed. Those people are now going through candidate training. Democratic officials from more conservative states worry that those primary contests will result in the party holding even less power in Washington.

Sen Joe Manchin, a West Virginia Democrat likely to face a tough re-election fight in a state won overwhelmingly by Trump, said the effort will make Democrats a "super minority" in the Senate. A coalition named "WeWillReplaceYou" is urging Senate Democratic leader Chuck Schumer of New York to remove Manchin from his role in the party leadership after Manchin expressed openness to working with Trump. "If you want to go ahead and beat me up in a primary then go ahead," Manchin said. "All it does is take the resources from the general."

Even without primaries, the party faces a challenging political map in 2018. Republicans will be defending just eight Senate seats, while Democrats must hold 23 - plus two filled by independents who caucus with them. Ten of those races are in states Trump carried last November. The activists say they're willing to trade power for conviction. "I'd rather have 44 or 45 awesome Democrats who are lockstep together than 44 or 45 really awesome Democrats and three to four weak-kneed individuals who are going to dilute the party," said Murshed Zaheed, CREDO's political director.

Shift

They point to a postelection shift among Democrats as a sign that their efforts are working. Initially, Schumer and even liberals such as Sanders and Massachusetts Sen Elizabeth Warren cautiously spoke of working with Trump on certain issues. After the wave of liberal fury, most Democrats have shifted into full opposition mode. "Democrats have a reflexive instinct to compromise," said Ben Wikler of MoveOn.org, which has directed its members to protest at Democratic as well as Republican congressional offices. "At this moment of successive Trump crises, resistance rather than compromise is what the country needs."

Democratic leaders say the path to victory next year depends on a strong economic message, one that casts Trump as betraying the working-class voters who boosted him to victory. "What we have in common, whether you're West Virginia or Massachusetts or Kansas is a commitment to economic opportunity," said Tom Perez, the newly elected Democratic National Committee chairman. A memo this past week from Priorities USA gave Democrats a "10-point checklist" for criticizing Trump's economic policies and conflicts of interest, saying the party cannot simply count on the president to remain "his own worst enemy." — AP

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Factbox

Washington Watch

DISAPPOINTED, BUT NOT DISTRAUGHT

By Dr James J Zogby

Like many other progressives, I was disappointed that Congressman Keith Ellison lost the election to be the next Chair of the Democratic National Committee to former Labor Secretary Tom Perez. I was disappointed, but not distraught. Here's why. It was clear from the outset that Keith wouldn't have an easy go of it. The party insiders, operatives, and major corporate donors were never going to surrender the reins of control without a fight.

During the course of the campaign, the Congressman was subjected to deeply disturbing and even vicious attacks. Some disgustingly questioned why Democrats would want to elect an African American Muslim as Chair when the party needed to win votes from the "white working class". It was equally troubling that conservative elements in the Jewish community baited Keith as anti-Israel and shamefully quoted articles he had written as a young student, terming him "extremist", "anti-Semitic" or "a bigot". Building on these attacks, some then questioned whether with all these "strikes against him", he could raise the funds the party would need to win elections.

Despite this slander, Keith won 200 votes out of 435 votes cast in the contest. Many who cast their ballot for him were repulsed and embarrassed by the attacks and wanted to send a strong message of support for and confidence in Keith's leadership. They understood that he represented a new generation of Democrats and that he was a principled progressive leader who could unify the party and an effective organizer who knew how to win elections.

While those who slandered Keith are now gloating over his defeat, in fact, it is they who were the losers in this contest. Because the Congressman took the high

road and did not sink to the level of his attackers, he emerged as the leader and unifier, while they have been exposed as dividers and bigots. By naming Keith Ellison as Deputy Chair, Tom Perez delivered the ultimate repudiation. Another reason not to be distraught is because this was never an ideological contest between competing political philosophies. Progressive ideas didn't lose. Listening to the debates among those who ran for the several leadership positions being contested in this election, it became clear that the "Bernie agenda" of the 2016 presidential race has become the dominant program of the party. It has eclipsed the now discredited Clinton-era centrist agenda.

The new Chairman, Tom Perez, will be a champion for change. He and Keith Ellison will join together to advocate for policies that will: support workers' rights and women's rights; protect the environment; support quality health care for all; improve the public education system; bring justice to the criminal justice system; and advocate for policies that keep the American people safe and secure, while protecting their civil and political rights.

When some Democrats said that they wanted the Chair to be a full-time job, Keith Ellison responded that, if elected, he would resign from his seat in Congress. It's important that Keith will not now be forced to honor that pledge. He will remain in Congress where his voice as a leader of the Progressive Caucus is needed more than ever. In many ways this campaign has served to catapult Keith into a national leadership role. He didn't lose. Instead, he has become a leader in the party and will now be an even stronger voice in Congress.

Beginning

Finally, there's no reason to be distraught because the fight to change the party and our politics is just begin-

ning. As I noted, this contest was not about differences in policy. It was a continuation of the insurgent campaign run by Bernie Sanders that was focused on reforming our politics and making the Democratic Party more responsive to its grass roots and less attentive to its donor class. As Bernie demonstrated in 2016 by raising over \$200 million from small donors, it is possible for Democrats to be competitive by relying on principled ideas, trusted leadership, and grass roots organization.

This movement continues to manifest itself almost daily, as evidenced by the mass demonstrations: that greeted the inauguration of Donald Trump; that gathered in airports to welcome refugees and immigrants in defiance of Trump's Executive Orders; that have denounced the new Administration's Islamophobia and tolerance of anti-Semitism; and that have challenged Republican efforts to gut health care reform.

Led by Our Revolution and other progressives, this movement is currently running and winning elections on the local level and in contests for party leadership posts in Blue, Red, and Purple states across the country. They are creating, from the bottom up, a new Democratic Party, the significance of which will become clear in the years to come.

Given this, I can't feel distraught. Instead, I'm hopeful. Democrats have a progressive chair and deputy chair; a true progressive retains his position in Congress; and the movement for change is alive and well. The donor class and party "establishment" may have had their last hurrah. Despite the claim of some in this crowd who boast that they won - their boasts are hollow. The country and the party are changing and there's no going back to the "good old days".

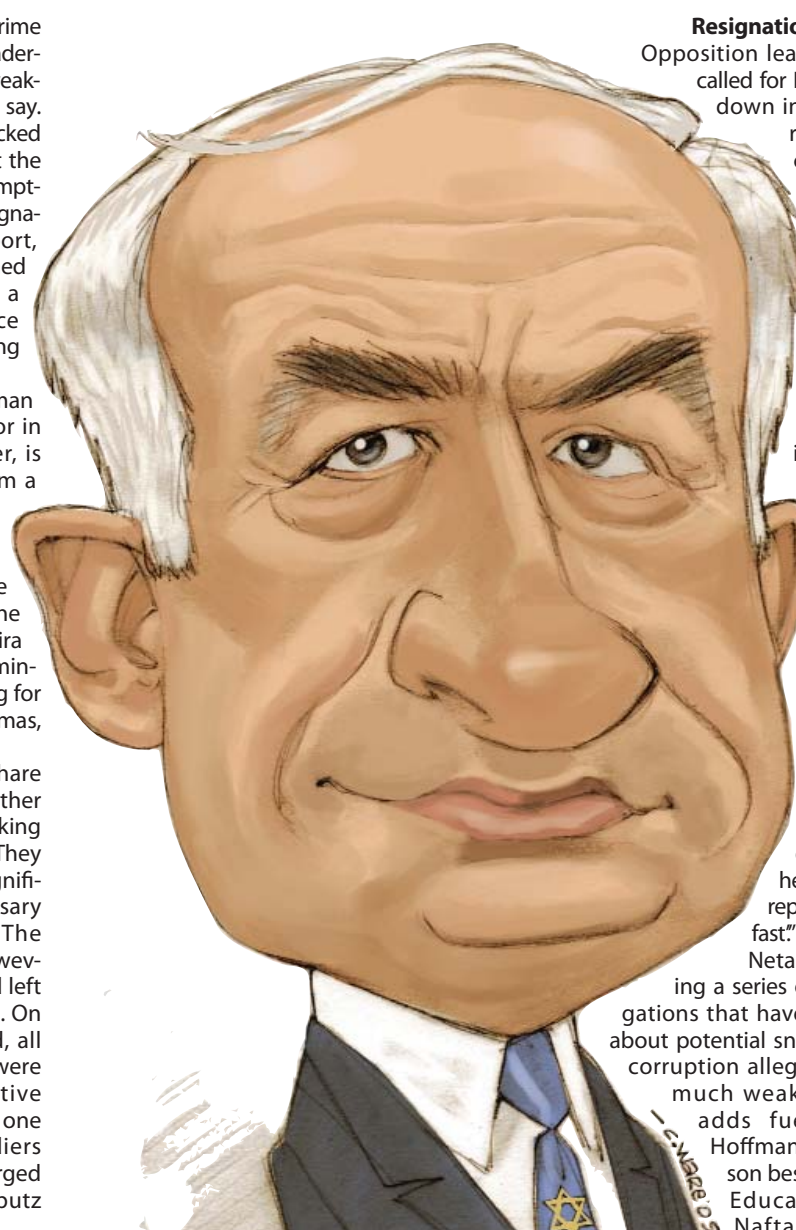
NOTE: Dr James J Zogby is the President of the Arab American Institute

GAZA REPORT RISKS 'MR SECURITY' REPUTATION

A report severely criticizing Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's leadership in the 2014 Gaza war may weaken the self-styled "Mr Security", analysts say. The state inquiry published Tuesday attacked Netanyahu's governing style throughout the war in which 68 Israeli soldiers died, prompting opposition figures to demand his resignation. Netanyahu lashed out at the report, accusing the state comptroller who penned it of attacking the army, but cancelled a planned public speech at short notice Wednesday evening, with his office saying he was unwell.

The report comes as Netanyahu, a man with a reputation as a political survivor in his eighth consecutive year as leader, is seeking to limit potential damage from a series of corruption investigations. Analysts said while the report was unlikely to bring about his resignation, Netanyahu's reputation for being the best man to protect Israel was at risk. The report by state comptroller Yossef Shapira accused Netanyahu and then-defense minister Moshe Yaalon of not fully preparing for the threat of attack tunnels dug by Hamas, the Islamist party that runs Gaza.

It said the two men did not fully share information they had on tunnels with other members of the security cabinet, speaking instead in "sparse and general" terms. They also failed to provide ministers with "significant and essential information," necessary to make "well-informed decisions". The report did not call for resignations, however. The war killed 2,251 Palestinians and left 100,000 homeless, according to the UN. On the Israeli side, 74 people were killed, all but six of them soldiers. The tunnels were among the Palestinians' most effective weapons during the 50-day conflict. In one particularly notable attack, five soldiers were killed when a Hamas fighter emerged from a tunnel near the Nahal Oz kibbutz inside Israel on July 29, 2014.



Resignation call

Opposition leader Isaac Herzog called for Netanyahu to step down in the wake of the report. Gil Hoffman, chief political correspondent at The Jerusalem Post, said that was unlikely immediately but it would damage the prime minister's reputation. Netanyahu won the last elections in 2015 in large part because he was seen as the most competent leader for Israel's security, Hoffman said. "Netanyahu has persuaded Israelis that he and only he can make them feel safe," he told AFP. "If there is a security figure running in the election next time he can just wave the report and say 'not so fast'."

Netanyahu is also facing a series of corruption allegations that have fed speculation about potential snap elections. "The corruption allegations make him much weaker and this just adds fuel to the fire," Hoffman added. The person best placed to gain is Education Minister Naftali Bennett, who

consistently accused Netanyahu of not sharing information during the war. "The report gives credit to Bennett (saying) he was asking the right questions," Yossi Mekelberg from the London-based Chatham House think tank said. "He didn't get proper answers." Bennett, seen as a major rightwing challenger to Netanyahu, has remained silent, though his colleague in the Jewish Home party Ayalet Shaked backed the report's findings. Itamar Yaar, former deputy head of Israel's National Security Council, defended Netanyahu and the military's concerns about Bennett. He told AFP the Jewish Home leader had a reputation for leaking, making Netanyahu and military leaders wary that information shared with him would get into the public domain.

Critical mass

In 2007 a preliminary report into the 2006 war with Lebanon severely criticized then-prime minister Ehud Olmert and defense minister Amir Peretz. Netanyahu himself, then leader of the opposition, called on Olmert to resign and encouraged protests, with tens of thousands turning out on the streets. "Those who failed at war cannot be those who correct the failures," Netanyahu said at the time. Olmert hung on but resigned a year later amid corruption allegations, in what Hoffman said was a parallel of current events.

Liran Ofek from Israel's Institute for National Security Studies said however that while 2006 was seen as a failure, in the eyes of most Israelis 2014's Gaza war was relatively successful. "We look at 2006 and the Yom Kippur war of 1973 as failures, we lost in those wars," Ofek said. "(In 2014) Israel did not destroy Hamas but it was weakened." Mekelberg said he expected Netanyahu to continue to try to brush off the report and corruption allegations. "The question is at which point there is a critical mass in Israel that say enough is enough." — AFP

OZIL PRAYS IN TURKISH DURING GERMAN ANTHEM

BERLIN: Arsenal midfielder Mesut Ozil has revealed in his autobiography that he prays in Turkish on the pitch during the German national anthem before international matches. "Just before kick-off, I pray. It's become a tradition of mine. It's always the same text. I pray in Turkish," he writes in his autobiography 'Die Magie des Spiels' (The Magic of the Game), released on March 16 in German. "I learnt these prayers as a child from my parents," he added. "I say then after getting up, after eating and during the national anthem." The 28-year-old Gunners star, a devout Muslim, was born in Gelsenkirchen and his parents are Turkish immigrants. He has been criticised for not singing while the German anthem is played, but reveals that during that time he prays for guidance in the match. "Even as a small boy, I prayed on the football pitch before playing and I have kept doing it, because it gives me a lot of strength and confidence," he said. The 2014 World Cup winner made his debut for Germany in 2009 and has since made 83 appearances, scoring 21 goals. —AFP



RUGBY

MILNER-SKUDDER GRABS HAT-TRICK AS HURRICANES HAMMER REBELS

WELLINGTON: Nehe Milner-Skudder grabbed a hat-trick of tries in a brilliant return from injury as the Wellington Hurricanes destroyed the Melbourne Rebels 71-6 in their Super Rugby match yesterday.

Sidelined for a year after shoulder surgery, the fleet-footed All Blacks back grabbed the Hurricanes' first try early and crossed twice late in the game to continue the defending champions' rampaging start to the season.

Inside centre Ngani Laumape and winger Vince Aso each scored a brace of tries, with Matt Proctor, Reed Prinsep, Ardie Savea and his brother Julian also touching down in the 11-try rout at Wellington Regional Stadium.

The Hurricanes, who obliterated Japan's Sunwolves 83-17 in a Super Rugby record victory in Tokyo last week, have now scored 24 tries from their opening two matches of the season. "It's obviously been a pretty good start," Hurricanes captain Dane Coles said at the sunbathed stadium.

"It was just good how we carried on that attack from last week ... I thought when we were direct and kept things simple we opened them up."

The Hurricanes started slowly and trailed 6-0 after the ninth minute following penalties to Rebels inside centre Reece Hodge. But it was all downhill from that point for the visiting Rebels, who were similarly belted by the Auckland Blues at home in the season-opener last week.

Milner-Skudder scored with one of his first touches in the 17th minute, jinking through two defenders to canter over the line near the right post after flyhalf Beauden Barrett set him up with an incisive run and pass.

Minutes later, Barrett created the next try, too, with a deftly placed kick that Aso pounced on and bolted 40 metres up the touchline to cross at the right corner.

Laumape then crashed through a defensive hole off the side of a scrum in the 27th minute, with Aso grabbing his team's fourth try in a 15-minute burst.

Aso set up Proctor for the Hurricanes' fifth a minute before halftime, drawing two defenders out wide before a sumptuous off-load to the outside centre near the right touchline.

Barrett's conversion put the home side 31-6 up at the break and the carnage continued after half-time. Ardie Savea was the beneficiary of an explosive run from his brother Julian two minutes into the second half, with Prinsep grabbing another 15 minutes later.

Julian Savea was rewarded with a try of his own in the 65th minute. After grabbing his second in the 71st minute, Milner-Skudder had his third gift-wrapped four minutes later by a quality off-load from replacement back Jordie Barrett.

Laumape completed the Rebels' humiliation by intercepting a pass and running 90 metres for the Hurricanes' final try three minutes from the final hooter. —Reuters

SOCCER LAWMAKERS MULL TENNIS-STYLE PENALTY SHOOTOUT

LONDON: Soccer's lawmakers are looking to make penalty shootouts even more unpredictable by adopting the format used for tiebreakers in tennis. Teams currently alternate in shootouts, but the International Football Association Board says research shows the first team taking kicks has a 60 percent chance of winning. IFAB is seeking trials in the lower-levels of soccer with a new pattern that would see the order mixed up between teams A and B to ABBAABBAAB. This mirrors tennis, where after the first point in tiebreaks - with the score 6-6 at the end of sets - the opponent then serves the next two points and so on. "We believe that the ABBA approach could remove that statistical bias and this is something that we will now look to trial," Scottish Football Association chief executive Stewart Regan said after Friday's IFAB meeting. "It would mean the first 10 kicks are taken under the ABBA system and then when it gets to next-goal-wins then it would revert to alternate penalties." There is a more immediate change coming to soccer on regular penalties in matches from June, with yellow cards no longer awarded for "stopping a promising attack" if there was a clear attempt to play the ball. —AP

GOGGIA WINS OLYMPIC TEST EVENT IN KOREA

JEONGSEON: Italian skier Sofia Goggia stormed to her first World Cup victory in the downhill yesterday, beating Lindsey Vonn and Ilka Stuhec to win the 2018 Olympic test event at Jeongseon. Goggia clocked one minute, 38.80 seconds to edge out American star Vonn after the former Olympic champion set the early pace with a time of 1:38.87. She also prevented Stuhec from clinching the downhill World Cup at least mathematically by moving to within 97 points of the Slovenian at the top of the standings before the final race later this month. Stuhec, the recently crowned world champion, finished third in 1:39.03 and barring a major upset should wrap up the World Cup title at Aspen, Colorado on March 15. "I sincerely didn't think I could win today so I am pretty happy," Goggia told reporters after denying Vonn a 78th World Cup win. "I'm so honoured to ski with a legend-she inspires me," she added, referring to Vonn, who unusually chose to ski first after setting the fastest times in both practice runs at the venue for next year's Pyeongchang Olympics. "Today beating her, I am super touched." —AFP



KRANJSKA GORA: Austria's Marcel Hirscher, center, winner of an alpine ski, men's World Cup giant slalom, celebrates on the podium with second-placed Norway's Leif Kristian Haugen, left, and third-placed Sweden's Matts Olsson, in Kranjska Gora, Slovenia, yesterday. —AP

ALPINE SKIING

HISTORY-MAKER HIRSCHER WINS SIXTH W CUP TITLE

KRANJSKA GORA: Austrian Marcel Hirscher wrote himself into the history books yesterday, his victory in the giant slalom guaranteeing him a record sixth consecutive overall World Cup title. Hirscher's sixth crystal globe bettered the record of Luxembourg's Marc Girardelli (1985, 1986, 1989, 1991, 1993) and equalled the ladies' mark set by Austrian Annemarie Moser-Proll (1971-1975, 1979).

In winning the rain-hit giant slalom in the Slovenian resort of Kranjska Gora, Hirscher also walked away with the discipline's title, becoming only the third man to win the GS globe at least three seasons in a row, following Gustav Thoni (1970-1972) and Ingemar Stenmark (1975-1981).

Hirscher, who won the slalom/giant slalom golds at last month's St Moritz world championships, topped the first run with a

massive 0.96sec lead over Norway's Henrik Kristoffersen.

But the 28-year-old Salzburg native was made to wait for his triumph as rain and fog swept in, leading to very bad visibility in the upper section of the course.

The race was interrupted after the first 20 skiers down the second run in the hope of the fog lifting and to allow course workers time to add salt in a desperate bid to harden the surface. Hirscher watched on as Kristoffersen and Switzerland's Justin Murisier, third after the first run, both lost crucial time in the poor visibility to eventually drop down the field. The Austrian also lost a full second in the top section, but regathered his nerve to turn on the afterburners and maintain his lead, coming in 0.46sec ahead of Norwegian Leif Kristian Haugen

with a combined time of 2min 24.31sec. It was his third victory in the Slovenian resort and 44th on the World Cup circuit Sweden's Matts Olsson rounded out the podium, at 0.67sec. "Conditions were definitely not easy," Hirscher said. "There was a lot of waiting in the rain. It was a pretty hard and tough fight, that second run. You try your best as every athlete does," Hirscher said, adding: "I'm super, super happy. What a day."

His victory left him on 1,375 points in the overall standings, an unsurmountable 504 ahead of Norway's Kjetil Jansrud. France's Alexis Pinturault blew any chance of pushing for the giant slalom globe by having another day to forget, skiing out on the first descent. Hirscher now has 633pts in the giant slalom standings, 194 ahead of the Frenchman. —AFP

LATE TRY SEALS WIN FOR SHARKS OVER BRUMBIES

CANBERRA: Outside centre Lukhanyo Am scored in injury time to give the Coastal Sharks a gritty 27-22 win over the ACT Brumbies in their Super Rugby clash in Canberra yesterday. Am scooped up a kick ahead from replacement fullback Curwin Bosch and crashed over with the last play of the game to consign the Brumbies to two consecutive losses to start their season. After a narrow loss to the Queensland Reds in the opening week when captain Pat Lambie missed a last minute penalty attempt, the Sharks will head back to Durban full of confidence for their clash against the NSW Waratahs next weekend. "You could see the excitement in our group when we scored that try at the end," Lambie said. "We needed to get the win here."

The Brumbies got away to the perfect start when winger Henry Speight crossed out wide after only two minutes following a crisp backline move. The Sharks were dominating possession and hit back 10 minutes later through a Lambie penalty, but they were stunned midway through the half when Brumbies hooker Josh Mann-Rea crashed over at the back of a rolling maul. A Wharenui Hawera penalty made it 15-3 to the home side before Springbok

veteran Tendai Mtawarira bulldozed his way over next to the posts to narrow the gap. Lambie converted the try then kicked his second penalty to make it 15-13 at the break. The Sharks started the second half the stronger of the two sides and took the lead for the first time with Lambie's third penalty. With the Sharks dominating possession and territory, the Brumbies began to feel the pressure and two more penalties saw the visitors skip away to a 22-15 lead midway through the second half.

But the Brumbies slowly worked their way back into the game and were back on level terms when Wallabies centre Tevita Kuridrani crossed next to the posts 10 minutes from fulltime. However, despite having possession and field position the home side couldn't finish the Sharks off and when they lost the ball deep in attack right on fulltime the Sharks swept downfield.

Bosch took the ball 30 metres out and just as he was about to be bundled into touch he chipped infield for Am, who made no mistake. "We had our opportunities in those last 10 minutes and we weren't good enough," Brumbies captain Sam Carter said.

"It's tough losing like that but full credit to the Sharks—they played the full 80 minutes and deserved to win." —AFP

KINGS OVERRUN SUNWOLVES TO WIN IN SINGAPORE



SINGAPORE: Japan's Sam Wykes, of the Sunwolves holds on to the ball while being tackled by South Africa's Southern Kings during their Super Rugby match yesterday, in Singapore. —AP

SINGAPORE: South Africa's Southern Kings rebounded from last week's loss to the Jaguares to register their first Super Rugby win away from home since 2013 with a 37-23 victory over Japan's Sunwolves yesterday.

Despite suffering a heavy injury toll and struggling to cope with Singapore's stifling humidity, the Kings outmuscled and outsmarted the Sunwolves to triumph in a high-scoring clash between the bottom two sides from last season.

The Kings got two first half tries from replacements Rudi van Rooyen and Chris Cloete against the run of play and two more in the second term from number eight Ruan Lerm and impressive winger Malcolm Jaer as they asserted their dominance.

The Sunwolves, whose only win in their debut Super Rugby season last year was against the Jaguares, showed a marked improvement on last week's humiliating 83-17 loss to the Hurricanes in Tokyo but coughed up too much ball and kicked away too much possession to mount a sustained challenge.

They did manage a first half try from bustling centre Timothy Lafaele and two late consolation touchdowns from Kenji Fukuoka and Takaaki Nakazuru but trailed throughout the match.

The Kings sprinted 90 metres to score the

opening try on the counter-attack when the Sunwolves failed to clean up their own ruck ball after launching a promising raid.

Jaer scooped up a loose ball and darted down the blindside before offloading to replacement scrumhalf van Rooyen to score near the posts. The Sunwolves hit back almost immediately and were rewarded for one of the few times in the match that they chanced their arm, when they opted for a quick tap and spun the ball wide to Lafaele who stepped inside a defender and crashed over the line.

Jaer, who caused the Sunwolves plenty of headaches every time he got the ball, set up a second try for another replacement just before the break. He split the defence off the back of a lineout and was dragged down inside the Sunwolves quarter, and Cloete, who had just come on the field, was the first to the breakdown and strolled through to score unopposed.

Lerm put the result beyond the doubt when he barged over from a rolling maul before a frantic ending which saw three tries in the last five minutes. Fukuoka scored off an intercept then Baer was rewarded for his fine efforts all night when he dived in the left corner before Nakazuru finished off the scoring with a try out wide on the siren. —AFP

STADIUM HEAVILY GUARDED AS PAKISTAN HOSTS CRICKET FINAL

LAHORE: Lahore prepared to host the Pakistan Super League cricket final today as Gaddafi Stadium turned into a fortress amid security fears.

The Punjab provincial government gave the go-ahead to the domestic Twenty20 match between Peshawar Zalmi and Quetta Gladiators. Doubts were raised over the eastern city of Lahore hosting the final when a wave of new attacks hit Pakistan last month. At least 13 people were killed in Lahore when a suicide bomber targeted police escorting a rally by pharmacists.

But the Pakistan Cricket Board hopes the final will be an opportunity to show it is safe to resume international cricket

in the country. Cricket-mad fans have welcomed the final being staged in Pakistan after all its league matches were organized in the United Arab Emirates, where Pakistan's national team also plays its 'home' matches.

"It's a super decision of PCB, I haven't got the ticket for the final but even then I will cheer ... and watch the match on television at home," said 18-year-old student Afaq Elahi.

The provincial government promised to provide more than 8,000 security personnel in and around the sports complex where Gaddafi Stadium is located and the teams' route to the stadium.

Armed police and soldiers guarded

the stadium on Saturday, which was off limits to even the media.

Pakistan has been a no-go zone for all major test-playing nations for the last eight years since gunmen killed seven policemen in an attack on the Sri Lanka team bus at Lahore in 2009. Several players were also injured.

Spectators will have to walk through at least three checkpoints before entering the stadium today. A temporary hospital of 25 beds was also established at a nearby hockey stadium in case of emergency. The two finalist franchises have convinced foreign players, including West Indian Darren Sammy and Marlon Samuels, to travel to Pakistan.

Both West Indians are expected to fly in from Dubai late Saturday night along with England's Chris Jordan and Dawid Malan as Peshawar's four overseas players. Last year's finalist, Quetta brought in five new foreign players - Morne van Wyk of South Africa, Anamul Haque of Bangladesh, Elton Chigumbura and Sean Ervine of Zimbabwe, and Rayad Emrit of West Indies - after four key players declined to travel to Pakistan due to security fears.

Coach Moin Khan told The Associated Press that his team was still "hopeful" of winning the title despite the withdrawal of England's Kevin Pietersen, Luke Wright and Tymal Mills along with South African

Rilee Rossouw after Quetta qualified for the final by beating Peshawar Zalmi in the first playoff. Their overseas players are expected to arrive in Lahore later Saturday. At least three former test cricketers - including Imran Khan and Javed Miandad - have criticized PCB's decision to bring the PSL final to Lahore.

Imran called it "madness" and warned that any incident could delay the return to Pakistan of international cricket for another 10 years. Away from security concerns, Peshawar has lost its star attraction Shahid Afridi for the final. The flamboyant all-rounder injured his right hand while fielding during the knockout match against Karachi Kings in Dubai. —AP

LYON'S 8-50 FLOORS INDIA IN 2ND TEST

BANGALORE: Off-spinner Nathan Lyon yesterday said he studied India's Ravichandran Ashwin to excel in Indian conditions after his career-best haul of eight wickets helped Australia take opening day honours in the second Test in Bangalore.

Lyon, whose figures of 8-50 became the best by a visiting bowler on Indian soil, wreaked havoc in the final session of play as India were bowled out for a paltry 189.

Australia were 40 for no loss at stumps with openers David Warner (23) and Matt Renshaw (15) at the crease. The visitors trail India by 149 runs in the first innings.

Lyon, who got the key wickets of India's Virat Kohli (12) and top run-getter Lokesh Rahul (90), eclipsed former South African pacer Lance Klusener's show of 8-64 at Kolkata in 1996.

"Obviously I have studied a lot of what (Indian off-spinner) Ashwin does very well over here. He is the best spinner of the world and if I can learn off him then so good," Lyon told reporters.

"It's finally very satisfying to get some rewards for the hard work that you put in," said Lyon, also giving credit to former Victoria wicketkeeper Darren Berry and Australia spin consultant John Davison, with whom he has worked at different phases during his career.

This was the third successive time in the four-match series that the world's number one Test side failed as a batting unit after they scored 105 and 107 during their opening loss.

But the pitch in Bangalore, which has an average first innings score of 451 in the last seven Tests, seemed to have no demons like the turning track in Pune that was rated poor by the match referee.

Lyon struck shortly after lunch to get Kohli trapped lbw for 12, as the batsman once again offered no shot to an Australian spinner. He was bowled by left-arm spinner Steve O'Keefe in the first Test.

"Interesting wicket. It's what we expected over here. We knew we weren't going to have much grass on the wicket," said Lyon, who bettered his previous best of 7-94 at

Delhi in 2013.

"I didn't expect so many cracks on day one but they're there. I'll reassess the wicket after both teams bat on it," he added.

KOHLI'S PRIZED SCALP

Kohli, who had a rare flop in Pune with scores of 0 and 13, faltered again after choosing to pad up Lyon's off-spin that headed straight onto the stumps and was adjudged lbw.

Kohli, who was bowled by left-arm spinner Steve O'Keefe in the second innings of the first Test, wasted a review as the replays agreed with the umpires call and the star batsman walked back with pin drop silence at the ground.

"He is one of the best players of the world. To take his wicket today was exceptional but we know it's a long series. We expect him to bounce back," said Lyon.

Earlier pacemen Mitchell Starc, who got opener Abhinav Mukund for nought, and Josh Hazlewood bowled probing spells to rattle the Indian batting early in the first session.

Rahul, who has survived two dropped catches on 30 and 61 at his home venue, did grind his way against the Aussie attack but got little support from the other end.

Rahul, who recorded his third Test fifty in his 15th match, finally got out to Lyon. The batsman injured his shoulder during an ugly slog against Steve O'Keefe in the latter part of his innings.

Rahul's 61-run second wicket stand with Cheteshwar Pujara (17) seemed to be the only bit of resistance in the Indian batting. Karun Nair also contributed with 26.

"Like I said, the cracks are opening up and it's only getting harder to bat on this wicket," said Rahul of the Bangalore track.

Rahul also backed Ashwin, the world's top Test bowler, to come back hard against the Australian batsmen on the second day.

"We know Ash (Ashwin) is a top class bowler and once he gets a couple of wickets and gets into that rhythm then he is going to run through the Australian batting line-up, which we are very confident of," he said. —AFP

SCOREBOARD

BANGALORE, India: Scoreboard at stumps on the opening day of the second Test between India and Australia in Bangalore yesterday:

India 1st innings		Australia 1st innings	
L. Rahul c Renshaw b Lyon	90	D. Warner not out	23
A. Mukund lbw b Starc	0	M. Renshaw not out	15
C. Pujara c Handscomb b Lyon	17	Extras (2nb)	2
V. Kohli lbw b Lyon	12	Total (no loss; 16 overs)	40
A. Rahane st Wade b Lyon	17	Bowling: Sharma 5-0-8-0 (1nb), Yadav 4-1-16-0	
K. Nair st Wade b O'Keefe	26	(1nb), Ashwin 6-0-11-0,	
R. Ashwin c Warner b Lyon	7	Jadeja 1-0-5-0	
W. Saha c Smith b Lyon	1	Still to bat: S. Smith, S. Marsh, P. Handscomb, M.	
R. Jadeja c Smith b Lyon	3	Marsh, M. Wade, M.	
U. Yadav not out	0	Starc, S. O'Keefe, N. Lyon, J. Hazlewood.	
I. Sharma c Handscomb b Lyon	0		
Extras (b12, lb 4)	16		
Total (all out; 71.2 overs)	189		
Fall of wickets: 1-11 (Mukund), 2-72 (Pujara), 3-88 (Kohli), 4-118 (Rahane), 5-156 (Nair), 6-174 (Ashwin), 7-178 (Saha), 8-188 (Jadeja), 9-189			



BANGALORE: Australian batsmen David Warner (R) and Matthew Renshaw run between the wickets during the first day of the second cricket Test match between India and Australia at The M. Chinnaswamy Stadium in Bangalore yesterday. — AFP



AUCKLAND: South Africa celebrate after winning the one-day international cricket match between New Zealand and South Africa at Eden Park in Auckland yesterday. — AFP

CRICKET

S AFRICA CRUSH NZ, WRAP UP SERIES 3-2

AUCKLAND: Faf du Plessis led South Africa to a resounding six-wicket victory over New Zealand in their crunch one-day international finale in Auckland yesterday to wrap up the series 3-2. South Africa needed less than 33 overs to overhaul New Zealand's 149 with du Plessis ending the game with a boundary which also brought up his half century. The New Zealand innings folded at the start of their 42nd over and while South Africa lost early wickets in reply, du Plessis (51 not out) held the innings together with partnerships of 40 with AB de Villiers and an unbeaten 63 with David Miller.

De Villiers' 23 was his lowest score and only the third time he was dismissed in the series where he averaged 87.33. But he was at the crease long enough to assist de Plessis in turning the innings around after South Africa, like New Zealand, started out losing wickets cheaply.

A swash-buckling David Miller then belted 45 off 35 deliveries to partner du Plessis through to the end. After New Zealand's thumping seven-wicket victory in game four to level the series at 2-2, South Africa looked to stamp their mark early. When De Villiers won the toss and opted to bowl, the world's number one spinner Imran Tahir and Kagiso Rabada led a disciplined attack that decimated the New Zealand batting.

Tahir's 10 overs produced two for 14, while Rabada took three for 25 off 7.1. South Africa's response was not all plain sailing with Quinton de Kock (six), Hashim Amla (eight) and JP Duminy (three) out early to have the tourists three for 48 in the 16th over, comparable to New Zealand's four for 51 at the same stage.

But from there du Plessis and de Villiers

SCOREBOARD

AUCKLAND, New Zealand: Scoreboard yesterday from the fifth one-day cricket international between New Zealand and South Africa at Eden Park:

New Zealand		South Africa	
Martin Guptill b Rabada	4	Quinton de Kock c Williamson b Patel	6
Dean Brownlie lbw b Phehlukwayo	24	Hashim Amla c Santner b de Grandhomme	8
Kane Williamson run out	9	Faf du Plessis not out	51
Ross Taylor lbw b Phehlukwayo	8	J.P. Duminy c Santner b Patel	3
Luke Ronchi c de Kock b Morris	8	A.B. de Villiers c Ronchi b Neesham	23
James Neesham c Duminy b Rabada	24	David Miller not out	45
Mitchell Santner run out	24	Extras (5lb,9w)	14
Colin de Grandhomme c de Kock b Rabada	32	Total (for four wickets)	150
Tim Southee c and b Tahir	6	Overs: 32.2.	
Jeetan Patel lbw b Tahir	0	Fall of wickets: 1-6, 2-35, 3-48, 4-88.	
Trent Boult not out	0	Did not bat: Dwain Pretorius, Kagiso Rabada, Andile Phehlukwayo, Chris Morris, Imran Tahir.	
Extras (5lb,5w)	10	Bowling: Jeetan Patel 5-0-26-2 (1w), Trent Boult 9.2-0-44-0 (2w), Tim Southee 10-1-40-0 (2w), Colin de Grandhomme 4-0-16-1 (3w), Mitchell Santner 2-0-9-0, James Neesham 2-0-10-1 (1w).	
Total (all out)	149	Result: South Africa won by six wickets and the five-match series 3-2.	
Overs: 41.1.			
Fall of wickets: 1-17, 2-42, 3-42, 4-51, 5-72, 6-87, 7-132, 8-140, 9-147, 10-149.			
Bowling: Kagiso Rabada 7.1-1-25-3 (2w), Chris Morris 9-0-34-1 (3w), Imran Tahir 10-0-14-2, Andile Phehlukwayo 7-1-35-2, Dwaine Pretorius 8-0-36-0.			

pushed the score up to 88 before being joined by Miller through to the end.

New Zealand's best performer with the bat was Colin de Grandhomme who made 32 batting at number eight, while Dean Brownlie, Jimmy Neesham and Mitchell Santner all made 24 and were the only other batsmen to reach double figures. Martin Guptill, who tormented South Africa with his match-winning 180 in the previous encounter, was first out for four in a brief 16-ball stay. Kane Williamson (nine) and

Santner were both run out while Brownlie and Ross Taylor (eight) fell lbw to Andile Phehlukwayo. In the closing stages, with New Zealand desperate to prolong their innings, Jeetan Patel was the ninth wicket to fall when he walked on an lbw appeal by Tahir.

New Zealand had a review left but chose not to use it although replays subsequently showed the ball would have missed the stumps. The two sides start a three-Test series in Dunedin next Wednesday. —AFP

MORGAN TON LIFTS ENGLAND TO WIN OVER WI IN FIRST ODI

ANTIGUA: England captain Eoin Morgan blazed a fluent 107 to help secure a 45-run victory over West Indies in the first one-day international at a windy Sir Vivian Richards Stadium on Friday.

Having been sent in to bat, England posted 296 for six in their 50 overs before the hosts were bowled out for 251 in 47.2 after never quite managing to stay up with the required run-rate.

England found themselves in early difficulty at 29 for two after Jason Roy (13) and Joe Root (four) fell in quick succession, but Morgan and Sam Billings (52 from 56 balls) steadied the innings. Ben Stokes (55 from 61 balls) blasted three sixes as he added 110 with Morgan for the fifth wicket, before the latter was run out with three balls remaining in the innings. Morgan brought up his second century in three innings, and 10th in ODIs, off 108 balls having stroked 11 fours and two sixes. He now has the most tons by an England captain in the 50-over format with five, surpassing Andrew Strauss and Alastair Cook.

Jason Mohammed compiled 72 from 91 balls as the anchor of the West Indies reply, his career-best score in just his third game, while Jonathan Carter bludgeoned 52 from 47 deliveries.

When the pair added 82 for the fifth wicket the home side were in the game but Roy held on to a fine catch off the bowling of Liam Plunkett (4-40)

to dismiss Carter and Steve Finn (0-49) used his big boot to run out Mohammed on his follow-through. Chris Woakes (4-47) did the damage at the top of the order by removing both openers, with all-

rounder Stokes not asked to bowl in the innings by Morgan. The second ODI will be played at the same venue tomorrow, before the series finale in Barbados on Thursday. — Reuters

SCOREBOARD

NORTH SOUND, Antigua: Scoreboard Friday in the first one-day international between West Indies and England at Sir Vivian Richards Stadium:

England		West Indies	
Jason Roy lbw b Gabriel	13	Evin Lewis c Billings b Woakes	21
Sam Billings c CBrathwaite b Nurse	52	Kieran Powell c Roy b Plunkett	1
Joe Root b Gabriel	4	Shai Hope c Finn b Rashid	31
Eoin Morgan run out	107	Jason Mohammed run out	72
Jos Buttler c Carter b Nurse	14	Jonathan Carter c Roy b Plunkett	52
Ben Stokes c Holder b Bishoo	55	Jason Holder c Buttler b Plunkett	4
Moeen Ali not out	31	Carlos Brathwaite c Root b Woakes	12
Chris Woakes not out	0	Ashley Nurse lbw b Woakes	21
Extras (7lb, 12w, 1nb)	20	Devendra Bishoo not out	12
Total (for 6 wickets)	296	Shannon Gabriel c Buttler b Plunkett	0
Overs: 50		Extras (4lb 7w)	11
Did not bat: Adil Rashid, Liam Plunkett, Steven Finn.		Total (all out)	251
Fall of wickets: 1-23, 2-29, 3-96, 4-129, 5-239, 6-292.		Overs: 47.2.	
Bowling: Jason Holder 9-1-46-0, Shannon Gabriel 10-0-58-2, Carlos Brathwaite 10-1-54-0, Ashley Nurse 10-0-57-2, Devendra Bishoo 6-0-49-1, Jason Mohammed 5-0-25-0.		Fall of wickets: 1-36, 2-37, 3-39, 4-108, 5-190, 6-201, 7-210, 8-224, 9-250, 10-251.	
West Indies		Bowling: Steven Finn 9-0-49-0, Chris Woakes 9-1-47-3, Joe Root 5-0-31-0, Liam Plunkett 8.2-1-40-4, Moeen Ali 7-0-37-0, Adil Rashid 9-1-43-1.	
Kraigg Brathwaite c Rashid b Woakes	14	Result: England wins by 435 runs.	

ADAM SILVER SAYS NBA ALL-STAR FORMAT WILL CHANGE FOR 2018

LOS ANGELES: Change is coming to the defense-optional All-Star Game, and NBA Commissioner Adam Silver wants to hear ideas. Silver and players' union President Chris Paul of the Los Angeles Clippers have spoken about how to make the game more competitive. No decisions have been made, but the Western Conference's 192-182 win over the Eastern Conference last month in New Orleans underlined such a need.

Some All-Stars said that night they would like to see a more authentic game, and the league apparently agrees. "We will change it by next year," Silver said. "It shouldn't be playoff intensity, but the guys should be playing." Next year's game is in Los Angeles. Silver spoke Friday at the Sloan Sports Analytics Conference, hosted by MIT. He even shared an email address - Adam@NBA.com - in case anyone wants to share suggestions with him.

"You hear people talking about 4-point shots, something that's not about to happen in the NBA, but maybe in an All-Star Game," Silver said. "Maybe there's a few spots on the floor where it's a 4-point shot. Maybe there's a halfcourt shot in the last minute that's 10 points. I don't know. Those are crazy ideas."

New Orleans' Anthony Davis scored an All-Star record 52 points in this year's game, 10 points more than the mark by Wilt Chamberlain that stood for 55 years. The West has flirted with 200 points in each of

the last two seasons - 196 in 2016, 192 this year. Giannis Antetokounmpo had 12 dunks by himself, and LeBron James was taking (and once, made) shots from the midcourt area.

"We collectively want to try to make All-Star weekend better for the fans," Paul told reporters in Milwaukee on Friday. "All the way around. Even in CBA talks and stuff like that, that was one of the things that the players, the owners and everybody was talking about. Trying to fix that, spice it up a little bit to keep it interesting."

Bucks coach Jason Kidd, a perennial All-Star as a player, is confident the league will find the right fix. "Adam's a very smart man," Kidd said, "and they'll figure it out."

For this year's game, the voting process was changed - fan votes were no longer the sole basis for selecting starters, but instead part of a formula that also took player and media balloting into account. The player-voting element in particular was criticized by some NBA coaches like Golden State's Steve Kerr, who said it wasn't taken as seriously as it should have been.

"In an All-Star game like this, guys aren't trying to get hurt," Cleveland's Kyrie Irving said after the All-Star Game. "We all enjoy the company of each other's presence. But at the same token, us as competitors, when it starts getting close, you can feel it. For me, I would love to play in a competitive game." —AP

OLYMPICS

IOC ETHICS COMMITTEE LOOKS INTO RIO PAYMENT CLAIMS

RIO DE JANEIRO: Organisers of the 2016 Rio Olympics denied on Friday that vote buying helped to secure the Games after a French newspaper reported that a Brazilian businessman made payments to the son of an International Olympic Committee (IOC) member before the vote.

Le Monde said a company linked to Brazilian businessman Arthur Cesar de Menezes Soares Filho paid \$1.5 million to Papa Massata Diack, son of Lamine Diack who was then International Association of Athletics Federations (IAAF) president, three days before the 2009 decision on the host city for the 2016 Games.

Rio lost the first vote to Madrid but bounced back to win the nomination on a third ballot, by 66 votes to 32. A representative for Menezes Soares Filho could not be immediately reached for comment.

Le Monde also reported that Papa Massata Diack had paid almost \$300,000 to prominent IOC member Frankie Fredericks, who said he has done nothing wrong and that the money was for "services rendered" to promote the sport in Africa.

The IOC said on Friday that its commission has started investigating the allegations. "The IOC remains fully committed to clarifying this situation, working in co-operation with the (French) prosecutor," the organisation said in a statement.

Rio 2016 Games spokesman Mario Andrada told Reuters: "The vote was clean. Rio's victory was very clear. The French investigation concerns six members of the IOC and six members would not have changed the result at all."

Le Monde said that three days before the October 2009 vote in Copenhagen, Pamodzi Consulting, a company owned by Papa Massata Diack, received the \$1.5 million payment from Matlock Capital Group, a holding company based in the British Virgin Islands. Diack, whose father Lamine is awaiting trial in France on aggravated money laundering and corruption charges, also received \$500,000 from Matlock Capital Group through a Russian bank account, Le Monde added.

Papa Massata Diack was banned for life from athletics last year over multi-million dollar corruption claims. He was not immediately available to comment but has previously denied any involvement in bribery or corruption and says his father Lamine is also innocent. Le Monde said Papa Massata Diack transferred almost \$300,000 to a company linked to Fredericks, a multiple Olympic and world medallist over 100 and 200 metres. Namibian Fredericks, now a member of the IAAF's ruling Council who also heads the IOC evaluation commission for the 2024 Olympic bids, told Le Monde the money was paid for work he did to promote athletics in Africa between 2007 and 2011. "The payment has nothing whatsoever to do with the Olympic Games and I was not an IAAF board member at the time and did not breach any regulation or rule of ethics," he told Le Monde.

The IOC said: "As far as Mr Fredericks is concerned, he informed the IOC and explained the situation and emphasised his innocence immediately upon being contacted by the journalist." —Reuters



SINGAPORE: Michelle Wie of the United States checks her lines on the putting green of the 8th hole during the HSBC Women's Champions golf tournament held at Sentosa Golf Club's Tanjong course yesterday, in Singapore. — AP

GOLF

MICHELLE WIE SHOOTES 67, TAKES LEAD IN SINGAPORE

SINGAPORE: Michelle Wie shot a 5-under 67 yesterday to lead the HSBC Women's Champions tournament by two strokes after the third round.

The American followed up her previous rounds of 66 and 69 to reach 14-under 202 and lead an LPGA event after 54 holes for the first time since she won the 2014 U.S. Open. Top-ranked Lydia Ko birdied the last hole for a 67 to end the day in a three-way tie for second. She was joined by last year's British Open champion Ariya Jutanugarn (69) and the big-hitting Park Sung-Hyun (68). Rio Olympic gold medalist Inbee Park shot a 71 to finish three shots behind Wie and tied with the defending champion Ha Na Jang (68). Plagued by injuries and a loss of form, Wie needed a sponsor's invitation just to get a start in the \$1.5 million tournament. But she's been in vintage touch since arriving in Singapore.

Wie took just 32 shots to reach the turn. Despite making her first bogey in 35 holes on the tricky par-3 15th, she made her sixth birdie of the day on the next hole and put herself in great position to end a three-year title drought.

"There definitely is some butterflies out there, but it's exciting getting that feeling again and being in this position," Wie said. Ko is in a slight drought, by her lofty standards. The 19-year-old, who has not won an LPGA title since July, birdied the last hole with a long putt from the fringe.

"It's always nice to come off with a birdie," Ko said. "I started off really hot today, I didn't really continue the momentum after the 10th hole, but I tried to hang in there. I made a clumsy bogey on 17, but it was nice to bounce back with the birdie on the last."

Inbee Park, playing only her second tournament in six months because of a thumb injury, led by a shot overnight. She had early bogey to lose her place at the top of the leaderboard and never got going.

"My ball striking was consistent, but I just could not hole like one putt out there," she said. "But I'm not far back, and obviously at this golf course, if you can drop some putts, there are a few birdies out there. I'm just going to go out there tomorrow and just play aggressively and hopefully the putts can drop." — AP



ATLANTA: Cleveland Cavaliers forward LeBron James (23) shoots past Atlanta Hawks forward Kent Bazemore (24) and forward Ersan Ilyasova (7) in the second half of an NBA basketball game, Friday, in Atlanta. — AP

BASKETBALL

CAVS SET NBA THREE-POINT RECORD IN WIN OVER HAWKS

ATLANTA: Kyrie Irving scored 43 points, LeBron James had 38 and the Cleveland Cavaliers set an NBA regular-season record with 25 3-pointers in a 135-130 victory over Atlanta on Friday night. After Paul Millsap's baseline jumper over James cut Cleveland's lead to 124-123, Kyle Korver - who was traded from Atlanta to the Cavaliers on Jan. 7 - hit the record-breaking 3-pointer to pad the lead. Cleveland made 25 of 46 3s to break a record that stood less than three months. Houston made 24 treys in a 122-100 win over New Orleans on Dec. 16. Tim Hardaway Jr. made five of nine 3-pointers and led the Hawks with a career-high 36 points. Millsap had 27 points.

RAPTORS 114, WIZARDS 106

DeMar DeRozan scored 32 points, including a key 3-pointer late, and grabbed 13 rebounds in Toronto's victory over Washington. Norman Powell added a season-high 21 points, including 14 in the fourth quarter, to help the Raptors pulled back into a tie with the Wizards for third place in the Eastern Conference. Toronto also secured a 2-1 victory in the season series, a potential tiebreaker for playoff seeding, two days after losing to Washington 105-96 in the first game of a home-and-home set. John Wall scored 30 points, and Bradley Beal added 27 for Wizards.

SUNS 118, THUNDER 111

Eric Bledsoe had 18 points and Phoenix helped celebrate broadcaster Al McCoy's induction into the team's Ring of Honor with a victory over Oklahoma City. Russell Westbrook had 48 points, 17 rebounds and nine assists for the Thunder. Alan Williams added 14 points and 13 rebounds for Phoenix. The 83-year-old McCoy was honored at halftime. He's in his 45th season calling Suns games. Eight of 14 other Suns Ring of Honor inductees were present, including Charles Barkley, who offered brief remarks.

SPURS 101, PELICANS 98, OT

Kawhi Leonard scored 31 points, Patty Mills hit a pair of pivotal 3s in overtime, and San Antonio outlasted New Orleans. LeMarcus Aldridge had 21 points and 15 rebounds for San Antonio. The Spurs won their sixth straight while dropping New Orleans to 0-4 with DeMarcus Cousins in the lineup. Cousins had 19 points and 23 rebounds, but missed a step-back 3-pointer that could have tied it as overtime ended. Anthony Davis had 29 points, and Jrue Holiday 26 for the Pelicans. Mills finished with 15 points, and Pau Gasol added 13.

CELTICS 115, LAKERS 95

Isaiah Thomas scored 18 points and Boston rode a 70-point first half. Jae Crowder scored 10 of his 14 points in the first half, when the Atlantic Division-leading Celtics shot 51 percent on the way to opening their trip 2-0. Jordan Clarkson led the Lakers with 20 points. They have lost six straight.

76ERS 105, KNICKS 102

Justin Anderson made the go-ahead basket with 24.3 seconds left and matched his career high with 19 points in Philadelphia's victory over New York. Acquired from Dallas last week in the deal that sent Nerlens Noel to the Mavericks, Anderson hit his first seven shots and forced Knicks star Carmelo Anthony into 5-for-18 shooting. Dario Saric had 12 of his 21 points in the fourth quarter, and Robert Covington added 16 points. The 76ers snapped a three-game losing streak, winning their first game since announcing Wednesday that Joel Embiid was done for the season with a knee injury. Lance Thomas had a season-high 21 points for the Knicks.

MAVERICKS 104, GRIZZLIES 100

Seth Curry scored 24 points, and Nerlens Noel had 15 points and tied a career high with 17 rebounds in his first start since coming to Dallas in a trade. The Mavericks held on despite going scoreless for more than five minutes in the last half of the fourth quarter. The drought ended when Dirk Nowitzki made a free throw after

Memphis coach David Fizdale was called for a technical with Dallas leading 94-90 with 46 seconds left. Mike Conley scored 30 points, and Zach Randolph had 24 points and 10 rebounds for Memphis.

BUCKS 112, CLIPPERS 101

Giannis Antetokounmpo had 24 points and eight assists, and Milwaukee squandered an early 23-point lead before finishing strong to hold off turnover-prone Los Angeles. Greg Monroe also had 24 points for the Bucks. They watched their early edge dwindle to 77-74 late in the third quarter following four 3s in the period by Chris Paul. The Bucks reasserted control with a 15-2 run for a 92-76 lead with about 9 minutes left. Paul and Blake Griffin each had 21 points for the

Clippers. They had a season-high 23 turnovers.

JAZZ 112, NETS 97

George Hill scored a season-high 34 points and Utah beat Brooklyn. The Jazz snapped a two-game losing streak and extended their lead for the No. 4 Western Conference playoff spot. Utah put the game away with a 19-5 stretch in the third quarter. Quincy Acy scored a season-high 18 points for the Nets.

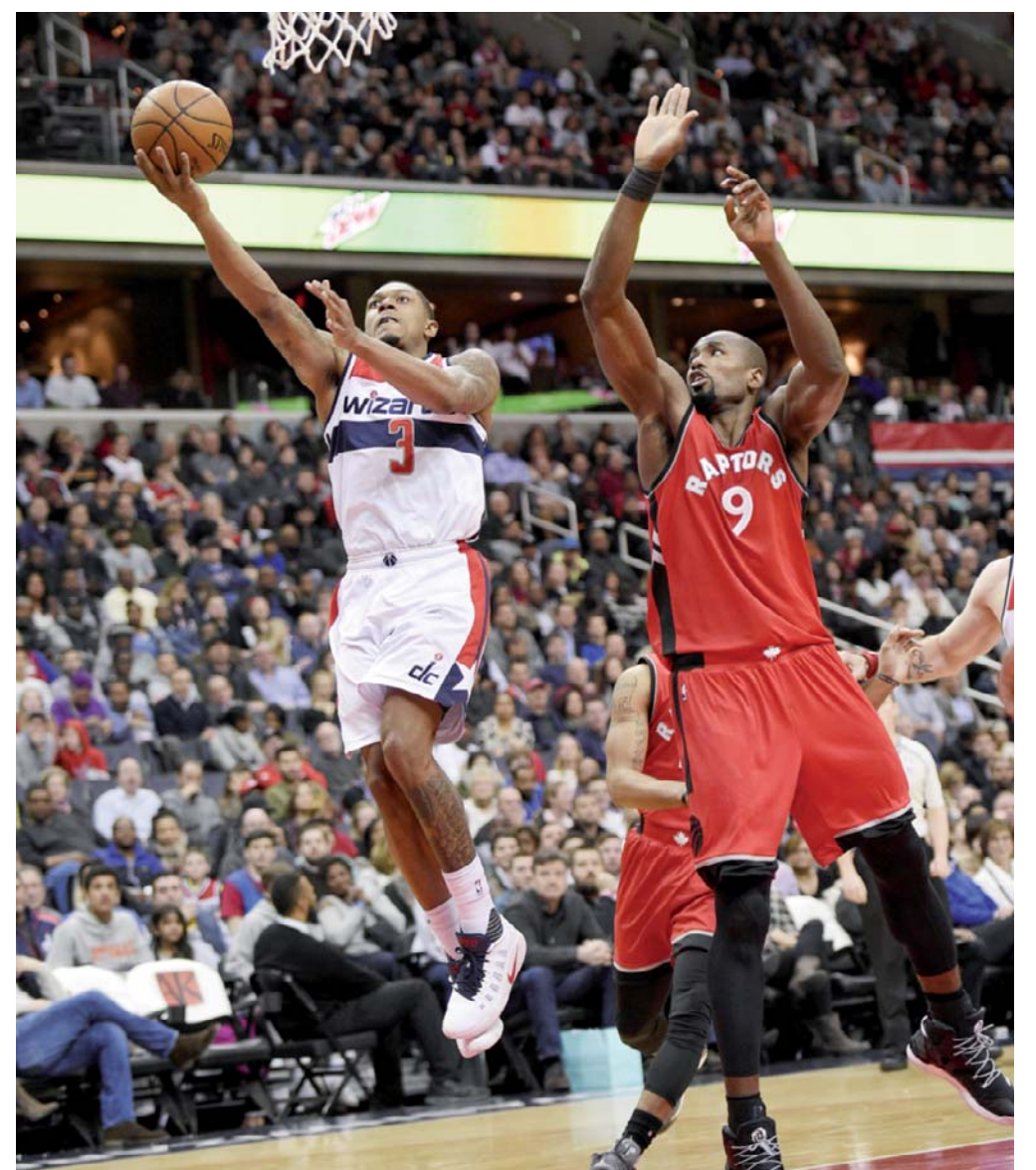
MAGIC 110, HEAT 99

Nikola Vucevic scored 25 points and Aaron Gordon had 21 points and 10 rebounds to help Orlando beat Miami. The Magic beat the Heat for the third straight time to win the season series 3-1. James Johnson led Miami with 19 points. —AP

NBA results/standings

Dallas 104, Memphis 100; Milwaukee 112, LA Clippers 101; Cleveland 135, Atlanta 130; Philadelphia 105, NY Knicks 102; Toronto 114, Washington 106; Orlando 110, Miami 99.

Eastern Conference				Western Conference				
Atlantic Division				Northwest Division				
W	L	PCT	GB					
Boston	40	22	.645	Utah	38	24	.613	-
Toronto	37	25	.597	LA Clippers	35	27	.565	3
NY Knicks	25	37	.403	Denver	28	33	.459	9.5
Philadelphia	23	38	.377	Portland	25	35	.417	12
Brooklyn	10	50	.167	Minnesota	25	36	.410	12.5
Central Division				Pacific Division				
Cleveland	42	18	.700	Golden State	50	11	.820	-
Chicago	31	30	.508	LA Lakers	36	25	.590	14
Indiana	31	30	.508	Sacramento	25	36	.410	25
Detroit	29	32	.475	Phoenix	20	42	.323	30.5
Milwaukee	27	33	.450	LA Lakers	19	43	.306	31.5
Southeast Division				Southwest Division				
Washington	36	24	.600	San Antonio	47	13	.783	-
Atlanta	34	27	.557	Houston	43	19	.694	5
Miami	28	34	.452	Memphis	36	26	.581	12
Charlotte	26	35	.426	Dallas	25	36	.410	22.5
Orlando	23	39	.371	New Orleans	24	38	.387	24



WASHINGTON: Washington Wizards guard Bradley Beal (3) goes to the basket against Toronto Raptors forward Serge Ibaka (9) during the second half of an NBA basketball game, Friday, in Washington. The Raptors won 114-106. — AP

Boxing

FRAMPTON FORM NO WORRY TO HAYE AS BELLEW AWAITS

LONDON: David Haye has rejected the idea that stablemate Carl Frampton's recent high-profile defeat means he is under more pressure for his all-English heavyweight grudge match against Tony Bellew in London later on Saturday.

The 36-year-old Haye weighed in at 16st 9oz (101 kg) for Saturday's fight at London's O2 Arena against 15st 3lbs 8oz (96.6 kg) for Bellew, who will fight at heavyweight for the first time.

Their much-hyped bout follows Frampton's defeat by Leo Santa Cruz in Las Vegas, just a second career loss for trainer Shane McGuigan, who also oversees Haye. Haye, however, said Friday: "I don't feel any additional pressure to get a win for a stable."

"Getting a win for myself is more than motivation enough. The more success I have, the more Carl has, the younger guys feel the energy and it spurs everyone else on: the success of a

big fight. "The morale in the camp isn't low, though. It was low that day, but Carl Frampton's in good health. It's just moved on to the next fight and this is the next fight."

"The next day (after Frampton-Santa Cruz) we flew to Miami and when we got there, started training straight away. We didn't have time to feel down." McGuigan's instructions in the corner and Frampton's tactics against Santa Cruz were criticised after their January

28 fight in Las Vegas.

This week saw Bellew's trainer, Dave Coldwell, suggest Haye had become a worse boxer now he is trained by McGuigan, the son of former world champion Barry McGuigan, rather than Adam Booth.

But Haye said: "Shane needs to speak to his fighter in a way he'll understand, and the layman on the street might not understand instructions. If Shane believes he's won a round or lost a

round he may say the opposite, to get the best out of Carl."

"Although it was a long unbeaten run that was never going to last forever, particularly when you move into world-class fights, when there's nothing in it."

"It (also) won't help Dave Coldwell and Tony Bellew's morale (that their stablemate David Price recently lost). He's the big, powerful guy in the gym, who was going to knock out Anthony Joshua." —AFP

Soccer

GABBIADINI MAKES HISTORY AS SAINTS WIN THRILLER

 Southampton	4
 Watford	3

WATFORD: Manolo Gabbiadini became the first Southampton player to score in his first three Premier League matches for the club as his goal helped down Watford 4-3 yesterday.

The Italian took his tally to six goals in four games in all competitions since joining Saints from Napoli in the January transfer window following a seven-goal thriller at Vicarage Road.

A week ago, his brace almost helped Saints produce a major upset against Manchester United in the League Cup final before Zlatan Ibrahimovic gave the Red Devils a late 3-2 victory.

Nathan Redmond added two for Saints and Dusan Tadic also scored while Troy Deeney, Stefano Okaka and Abdoulaye Doucoure netted for Watford as both sides remained in mid-table.

An already thrilling game exploded into life with four goals in the final 10 minutes including Gabbiadini's historic strike. Southampton appeared to be suffering from a League Cup hangover as they conceded after just four minutes.

Deeney played a one-two with Italian Okaka before volleying past goalkeeper Fraser Forster from close range. It was Deeney's 105th goal for Watford, taking him up to joint fourth in the club's all-time scorers list.

Saints were dominating possession and duly equalised just before the half-hour mark as Tadic drilled home from 18 yards following a poor clearance from the home team. Gabbiadini was twice thwarted by Watford goalkeeper Heurelho Gomes but Southampton still went into the break leading after Redmond started and finished a flowing move in time added on at the end of the first half.

With a quarter of an hour to go, Okaka wasted a great chance to equalise after being teed up by Tom Cleverley, who had robbed a dallying Oriol Romeu.

Okaka, though, made amends five minutes later, prodding home from six yards after Nigerian Isaac Success put the ball on a plate for him.

Yet just four minutes later Gabbiadini punished Watford after Okaka had missed the chance to give the hosts the lead. Gomes was at fault as he spilled a shot from Sofiane Boufal into Gabbiadini's path.

Two minute slater, Redmond sealed the win as he punished a tired defence with an individual goal. Yet, there was still time for a final goal deep into injury time as Doucoure tapped home M'Baye Niang's cross from close range. — AFP



WATFORD: Southampton's Manolo Gabbiadini scores his side's third goal, during the English Premier League soccer match between Watford and Southampton, at Vicarage Road, in Watford, England, yesterday. — AP

LLORENTE DOUBLE LIFTS SWANSEA

 Swansea	3
 Burnley	2

SWANSEA: Spain striker Fernando Llorente scored a double for Swansea in a precious 3-2 win over Burnley yesterday overshadowed by a controversial penalty.

Llorente headed in the winner after 92 minutes after opening for the hosts on 12 minutes as Swansea pulled five points clear of the bottom three. An Andre Gray double, either side of goals from Llorente and Martin Olsson, had looked like handing Burnley a first away win of the season.

But the match was overshadowed by a 20th-minute penalty awarded by referee Anthony Taylor for a handball in the box with replays showing the ball had actually come off the arm of Burnley's Sam Vokes.

Gray slotted in the resulting spotkick amid furious protests from Swansea players and manager Paul Clement.

Clement had made one change from last weekend's 3-1 defeat at Chelsea, with Dutch winger Luciano Narsingh handed his first start. Burnley manager Sean Dyche made three changes from their 1-1 draw at Hull with Paul Robinson replacing Tom Heaton in goal and midfielder Jeff Hendrick and Wales striker Vokes starting.

Swansea's Alfie Mawson hit the woodwork twice in the opening minutes before Leroy Fer curled across to the onrushing Llorente who headed in from close range after 12 minutes. After converting the penalty, Gray doubled his tally on 61 minutes with his eighth goal of the season after picking up a Vokes cross.

Just a minute later Olsson put Swansea back in the match as he finished off an

extraordinary back heeled kick from Gylfi Sigurdsson. But it was Llorente who once again proved Swansea's saviour after goals against Liverpool and Crystal Palace this season as he rose to head in the winner two minutes into injury time.

Burnley, who beat Swansea in their opening match of the season at home, have only claimed two points on the road, and are just four points ahead of Swansea in 12th. The victory is a boost for Swansea's survival hopes with trips to Hull and Bournemouth to come and a home match against Middlesbrough. — AFP



WALES: Burnley's Andre Gray, left, and Swansea City's Federico Fernandez battle for the ball during their English Premier League soccer match at the Liberty Stadium, Swansea, Wales, yesterday. — AP



CHICAGO: Members of the Chicago Blackhawks and the New York Islanders mix it up in front of the Islanders goal in the third period at the United Center on Friday in Chicago, Illinois. The Blackhawks defeated the Islanders 2-1 in a shootout. — AFP

NHL

BLACKHAWKS BEAT ISLANDERS 2-1 FOR 6TH STRAIGHT WIN

CHICAGO: Artemi Panarin scored with 1:14 left in regulation and then had the clinching goal in the shootout, helping the Chicago Blackhawks beat the New York Islanders 2-1 on Friday night for their sixth consecutive victory. Jonathan Toews also scored in the tiebreaker as Chicago pulled within one point of idle Minnesota for the top spot in the Western Conference. Corey Crawford made 31 saves in his first start since Feb. 23. After Toews beat Thomas Greiss with a wrist shot, Crawford turned away Joshua Ho-Sang. Patrick Kane was stopped by Greiss and Nikolay Kulemin shot it off the right post before Panarin finished off the victory for the Blackhawks. Greiss made 30 stops for New York, and Brock Nelson scored his 14th goal in the second. The Islanders had won four of five, including a 5-4 victory at Dallas on Thursday night.

PENGUINS 5, LIGHTNING 2

Mark Streit made an instant impact in his debut with Pittsburgh, beating Peter Budaj early in the third period to lift the Penguins over Tampa Bay. Evgeni Malkin scored twice off assists from Phil Kessel and added an assist of his own in his 700th career game as Pittsburgh snapped a two-game losing streak. Justin Schultz had a goal and an assist and Tom Kuhnhackl put in an empty-netter for the Penguins as they swept the season series from the Lightning. Matt Murray finished with 27 saves as Pittsburgh pulled back into a tie with Columbus for second place in the crowded Metropolitan Division. Adam Erne picked up his first NHL goal for Tampa Bay and Nikita Kucherov collected his 28th, but the Lightning lost precious ground in the scramble for the last playoff spot in the Eastern Conference. Darren Helm also scored for Detroit. The Red Wings opened the night 10 points out of a playoff spot and last in the Eastern Conference.

FLAMES 3, RED WINGS 2, OT

Mikael Backlund scored in overtime after Detroit's Tomas Tatar tied it with 1.8 seconds left in the third period, and Calgary beat the Red Wings for its sixth straight win. After Michael Frolik and Johnny Gaudreau nearly scored earlier in OT, Backlund blasted a shot past Petr Mrazek 3:56 into the extra session. Kris Versteeg and Matthew Tkachuk also scored for Calgary, and Brian Elliott made 35 saves. The Flames are six points up on Los Angeles and seven points ahead of St. Louis for the first wild card in the Western Conference. Darren Helm also scored for Detroit. The Red Wings opened the night 10 points out of a playoff spot and last in the Eastern Conference.

DUCKS 5, MAPLE LEAFS 2

Rickard Rakell scored twice, Jonathan Bernier made 37 saves and Anaheim returned from its bye week with a win over Toronto. Sami Vatanen and Jakob Silfverberg also scored to help the Ducks get their third straight win at home and maintain a two-point lead over Calgary for third in the Pacific Division. Patrick Eaves added an empty-net goal with 1:14 remaining for his first since being acquired from Dallas. Nazem Kadri scored on the power play, Zach Hyman added his ninth goal of the season and Curtis McElhinney made 31 saves as the Maple Leafs dropped their fifth in a row.

JETS 3, BLUES 0

Connor Hellebuyck stopped 29 shots for his fourth shutout of the season and the Winnipeg Jets beat the St. Louis Blues 3-0 on Friday night. Blake Wheeler scored twice, including on a first-period power play, and the Jets handed the Blues their fifth consecutive loss. Bryan Little added an empty-netter for his 18th of the season with 2:16 remaining in regulation, and Wheeler added another empty-net goal about a minute later. Hellebuyck improved to 21-15-3 in his ninth straight start. Blues netminder Carter Hutton made 37 saves.

Coyotes 4, Hurricanes 2

Jordan Martinook scored midway through the third period to lift Arizona over Carolina. Shane Doan added a power-play empty-net goal with 58 seconds left and also had two assists. Christian Dvorak and Alex Goligoski also scored for Arizona, which snapped a five game skid against Carolina and a two-game slide overall. Louis Domingue made 32 saves. Carolina got goals from Lee Stempniak and Jordan Staal to erase an early 2-0 deficit, but still lost its fourth straight. Cam Ward stopped 18 shots. — AP

NHL results/standings

Chicago 2, NY Islanders 1 (SO); Winnipeg 3, St. Louis 0; Arizona 4, Carolina 2; Pittsburgh 5, Tampa Bay 2.

Western Conference							Eastern Conference						
Central Division							Atlantic Division						
W	L	OTL	GF	GA	PTS	W	L	OTL	GF	GA	PTS		
Minnesota	41	15	6	209	148	88	Ottawa	34	22	6	163	163	74
Chicago	41	18	5	193	161	87	Boston	33	25	6	177	168	72
Nashville	32	23	9	189	179	73	Toronto	28	22	14	194	193	70
St. Louis	31	27	5	173	182	67	Florida	29	23	11	159	176	69
Winnipeg	29	30	6	192	205	64	Tampa Bay	29	26	8	177	179	66
Dallas	25	29	10	180	208	60	Buffalo	27	26	11	162	184	65
Colorado	17	42	3	122	205	37	Detroit	25	26	11	155	183	61
Pacific Division							Metropolitan Division						
San Jose	38	18	7	176	147	83	Washington	43	13	7	208	134	93
Anaheim	33	21	10	167	163	76	Columbus	40	16	6	200	146	86
Edmonton	34	22	8	183	167	76	Pittsburgh	39	16	8	219	177	86
Calgary	35	26	4	174	180	74	NY Rangers	41	21	2	209	169	84
Los Angeles	31	27	6	158	160	68	NY Islanders	30	22	11	186	188	71
Vancouver	26	30	7	146	182	59	Philadelphia	30	26	7	163	188	67
Arizona	23	34	7	156	208	53	New Jersey	25	26	12	145	181	62
Eastern Conference							Carolina	25	26	10	153	179	60
Atlantic Division							Note: Overtime losses (OTL) are worth one point in the standings and are not included in the loss column (L).						
Montreal	36	21	8	179	164	80							

PULIS FEELS PAIN AS OLD CLUB PALACE EDGE TO SAFETY

 West Brom	0
 Crystal Palace	2

WEST BROMWICH: Goals by Wilfried Zaha and Andros Townsend made it a miserable day for former Crystal Palace manager Tony Pulis as the Eagles moved out of the Premier League bottom three with a 2-0 win over West Brom. For the Palace hierarchy the victory will be extra sweet-aside from crucial points in their battle to stay up-as West Brom boss Pulis owes them almost £4 million (\$4.9m, 4.6m euros) over his acrimonious departure in 2014.

Victory-their second in as many matches after losing six of their previous seven-lifted Palace three points clear of the relegation places as manager Sam Allardyce's magic touch seemed to return-he has never been in

charge of a relegated club. Palace had an early chance to break the deadlock but Christian Benteke's downward header was cleared off the line by Chris Brunt, the near miss reflecting the Belgian international's woeful luck in front of goal with just one goal in his last 11 Premier League matches. At the other end, on loan Liverpool defender Mamadou Sakho proved his worth with two crucial clearances, preventing Salomon Rondon from putting the hosts ahead and then again to deny Brunt.

Despite West Brom dominating, the Palace defence held firm and it was the visitors who ended the stalemate, Yoann Cabaye's wonderful metronomic 40 yard pass finding Zaha in the box and the Ivory Coast star made no mistake slotting it past Ben Foster.

Zaha's effort sparked Palace into a sustained period of dominance, Jason Puncheon going closest when his shot scraped the post.

The visitors, though, were not to be denied a second and Townsend duly obliged with a wonderful solo effort, completely bamboozling Northern Irish veteran defender Gareth McAuley before firing home. — AFP

FIFA CHIEF 'CONFIDENT' OF VIDEO OFFICIALS AT W CUP

LONDON: Video assistance for referees could be a reality at next year's World Cup finals despite teething problems when they were tested at the Club World Cup, FIFA President Gianni Infantino said on Friday.

Speaking at Wembley Stadium after the Annual Meeting of the International Football Association Board (IFAB), Infantino said all the referees likely to officiate in Russia next year had been tested with VAR technology.

"The signs are encouraging. The little hiccups we have seen are to do with the training of the referees," Infantino told reporters. "It is realistic (for the World Cup) because of the experiences we had at the Club World Cup in Japan in December.

"For the top referees it is not a big change and they have learned very quickly. I'm very confident about it.

"Using VAR would not allow perfection in decisions but there are no negatives. Whenever it's used you know the right decision will be taken."

IFAB, the game's law-making body, agreed to live trials of VAR last year. It allows match referees to consult a video official in four "game-changing" scenarios: when a goal has been scored, penalty decisions, sendings-off and mistaken identity. Video referees are already used in rugby and cricket.

The experiment with VAR at FIFA's Club World Cup in December will be remembered for a farcical incident when Cristiano Ronaldo's strike for Real

Madrid, his 500th career goal, against Club America was initially given, potentially ruled offside, then allowed to stand after video analysis.

AVOIDING INJUSTICES

Ronaldo voiced his disapproval but there is a shift towards avoiding the kind of injustices that often blight big games.

Twenty competitions around the world will host "live" VAR trials this year, while the English FA said it hoped to use VAR for next year's FA Cup, from the third-round stage.

"FIFA were nervous about it for a number of years," FA chief executive Martin Glenn told reporters.

"But the evidence of the testing is

really encouraging. I would expect to see video assistant referees from the FA Cup third round next season.

"It's not the technology that's the issue. It's behavioural, we don't want to become like American football...we want to keep the fluidity of football."

Glenn also confirmed that this season's FA Cup quarter-finals will see the introduction of a fourth substitute in extra time. The trial, announced last year subject to approval by the IFAB, will be a first in England, although the format was used at last year's Copa America and then the Rio Olympics.

"With the Cup now adopting a straight knockout format from the quarter-finals onwards, the introduction of a fourth substitute in extra time will bring

extra intrigue," Glenn said.

The quarter-finals are scheduled for March 11-13 with holders Manchester United visiting Chelsea in the standout tie. Among other issues discussed on Friday by the heads of the four British FAs and FIFA's delegation were modifications to allow national associations more freedom to tweak the laws.

One proposal, to allow temporary dismissals (sin bins) for yellow card offences, was approved for youth, grassroots and disability football in Britain.

IFAB also said it would look at making the system for penalty shootouts fairer, adding that at the moment the team who take the first spot-kick have a 60 percent chance of winning. —Reuters

BENZEMA PUTS RONALDO-LESS REAL MADRID BACK ON TOP

MADRID: Real Madrid boss Zinedine Zidane praised his side's reaction to a slump in form as Karim Benzema scored twice in the absence of Cristiano Ronaldo and Gareth Bale in a 4-1 win at Eibar yesterday. Victory took Madrid back top of La Liga after losing their grip on the title race after defeat to Valencia and a thrilling 3-3 draw with Las Palmas in two of their previous three outings.

"I am happy with our reaction," said Zidane. "In the course of a season there are moments when you have to suffer and it is normal that you can't always play well. "We started very strongly and at a high tempo, which is very important away from home."

Indeed, Madrid were 3-0 up inside half an hour as Benzema finished twice from close range before teeing up James Rodriguez for the third. "Benzema had a part in all four goals. I am happy for him, he had a great game," added Zidane.

Marco Asensio grabbed Madrid's fourth before Ruben Pena pulled back a consolation for Eibar. Madrid lead Barcelona by two points, but the Catalans can go back to La Liga's summit with victory at home to Celta Vigo later on Saturday. Despite the absence of Ronaldo and Bale through injury and suspension respectively, Madrid boss Zinedine Zidane rested a host of other first-team regulars ahead of Tuesday's Champions League last 16, return leg away to Napoli. Madrid travel to Italy carrying a 3-1 lead, but Zidane took no risks as Marcelo, Dani Carvajal and Toni Kroos were left on the bench. Those coming in rewarded Zidane's faith in the depth of his squad

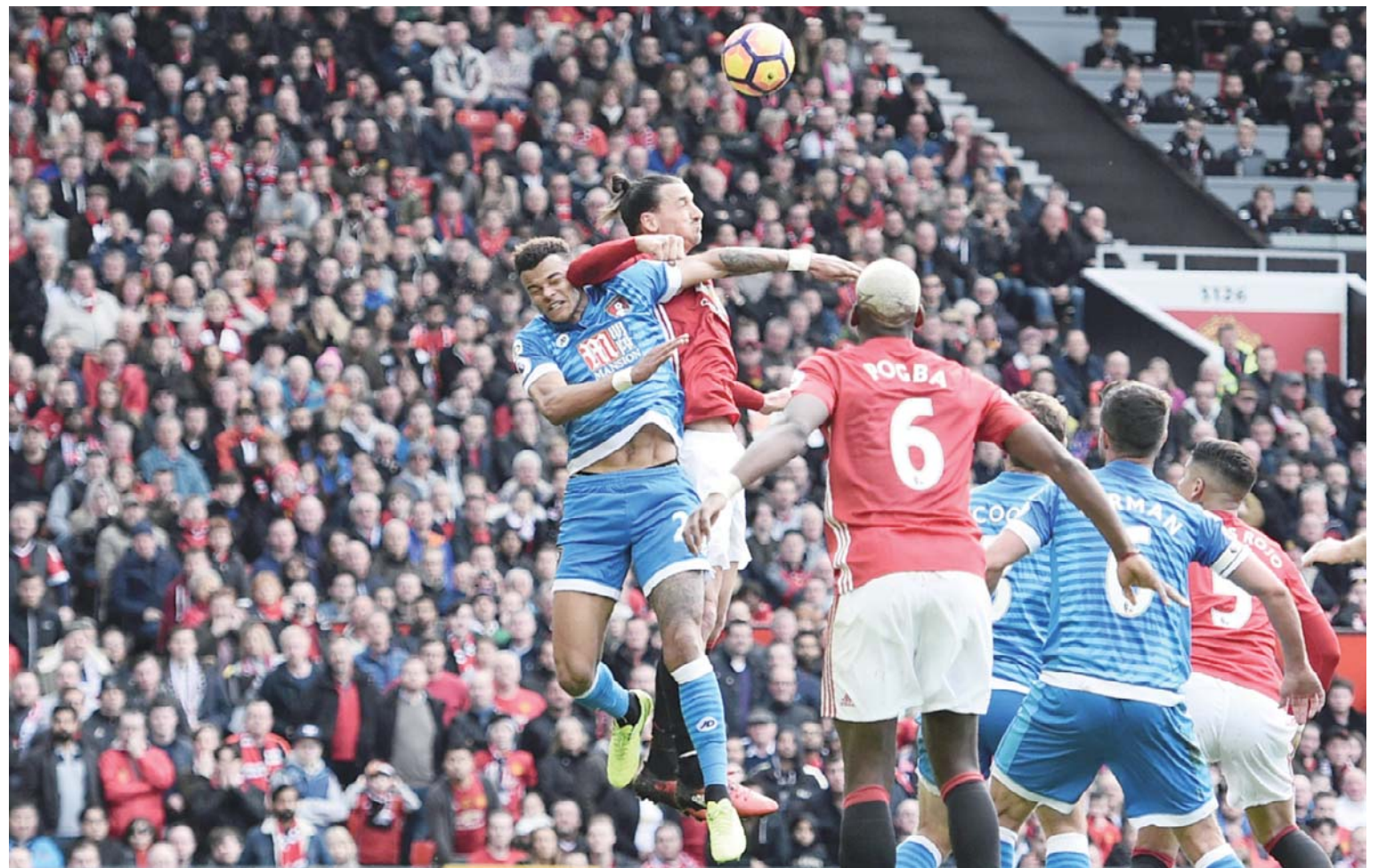
with the often sidelined Rodriguez a constant threat. The opener arrived on 14 minutes when Asensio was played in down the left by Rodriguez and his low cross found Benzema unmarked at the far post. Benzema's first effort was well saved by Yoel, but the Madrid number nine followed up to register just his second league goal since October. The visitors nearly had a second moments later when Rodriguez's low cross was just flicked out of Benzema's reach by the Eibar goalkeeper. However, Madrid did soon double their advantage when Rodriguez's wicked in-swinging free-kick left Benzema with the simplest of tasks to knock the ball home from point-blank range.

Four minutes later the roles were reversed as this time Benzema's low cross was swept into the far corner on the stretch by Rodriguez for his fifth goal of the season. Only Yoel prevented Eibar, who had come into the game in fine form in seventh in the table, from further punishment before half-time as he made a fine double save from Benzema and Asensio.

Benzema should have had his first hat-trick of the season three minutes into the second-half but pulled his shot well wide from Nacho's cushioned header.

Asensio had unselfishly squared to Rodriguez in the move for the fourth goal, but after the Colombian's effort came off the post, Asensio expertly dispatched the rebound from a narrow angle.

Eibar did finally have something to cheer 18 minutes from time when Pena beat Daniilo to Pedro Leon's cross to the far post to fire in a consolation. —AFP



OLD TRAFFORD: Manchester United's Swedish striker Zlatan Ibrahimovic (2L) clashes in the air with Bournemouth's English defender Tyrone Mings (L) during the English Premier League football match between Manchester United and Bournemouth at Old Trafford in Manchester, north west England, yesterday. — AFP

SOCCER

TROUBLE FOR IBRAHIMOVIC AS MANCHESTER UNITED HELD

	Bournemouth	1
	Man United	1

MANCHESTER: Zlatan Ibrahimovic was at the centre of controversy as Manchester United were held 1-1 by 10-man Bournemouth in an extraordinary Premier League match at Old Trafford yesterday.

Ibrahimovic, United's 26-goal top scorer, was fortunate not to be sent off before seeing a penalty saved as Jose Mourinho's side missed the opportunity to move into the Champions League places.

Marcos Rojo gave the home side the lead with his first league goal for the club, before former United forward Joshua King equalised from the penalty spot five minutes from the end of the first half.

But the match centred on a series of incidents in quick succession at the end of the half, in which both Ibrahimovic and Tyrone Mings were lucky to escape red cards.

Bournemouth defender Mings appeared to stamp on the head of the former Paris Saint-Germain forward. Ibrahimovic, already on a yellow card, then elbowed the centre-back in the face seconds later, but received only a telling off from referee Kevin Friend. Both Ibrahimovic and Mings are likely to face retrospective disciplinary action from the Football Association.

In the ensuing melee, Bournemouth midfielder Andrew Surman shoved Ibrahimovic and was shown a second yellow card. But Surman was only shown a red card after United left-back Luke Shaw reminded Friend he had already been booked.

Artur Boruc, the visitors' 37-year-old goalkeeper, had a fine game, making a series of saves against a United side who dominated. His best moment was keeping out Ibrahimovic's penalty with just under 20 minutes to go, getting down low to his right to push the ball aside. The point means United remain in sixth place, where they have remained since early November, while Bournemouth ended a run of four successive league defeats.

Bournemouth looked as if they would be overwhelmed in the first half-hour of a match that reached boiling point as the interval approached.

INCREASINGLY HEATED

United created a host of chances, with the recalled Wayne Rooney, Paul Pogba and Anthony Martial going close.

The visitors' resistance was broken midway through the half as Rojo deflected in Antonio Valencia's cross-shot to score his first league goal for United.

But Bournemouth, who had spurned one early chance as Benik Afobe slipped when clear,

drew level five minutes before half-time. King struck a penalty into David de Gea's top right-hand corner after Phil Jones had brought down Marc Pugh.

Boruc then made further fine reaction saves to deny Rooney and Ibrahimovic, before the match's two key flashpoints occurred in the final moments of the half.

Ibrahimovic's battle with Mings had become increasingly heated and the former Sweden striker was fuming after his opponent appeared to stamp on the side of his head amid a scramble. Ibrahimovic responded seconds later by elbowing Mings in the face. Having already been booked, the striker escaped with just a lecture from Friend. Bournemouth's sense of injustice was then heightened as Surman, booked for an earlier challenge on Shaw, was dismissed.

Jason Tindall, the Bournemouth assistant manager, first ranted at the assistant referee, then marched onto the field at half-time to usher his players away from Friend.

Rooney saw a clever shot on the turn deflected just over and Gosling was relieved to see a header back towards his own goal drop just wide. Boruc was then alert once more, flying to his left to tip aside Pogba's 25-yard curler as it headed towards the top corner. Mourinho made a triple substitution with 20 minutes to go in an attempt to force the win, sending on Jesse Lingard, Marouane Fellaini and Marcus Rashford for Shaw, Michael Carrick and Rooney.

Within seconds, United were awarded a penalty as Adam Smith handled Pogba's header back across goal. Ibrahimovic stepped up, but Boruc saved superbly. —AFP



EIBAR: Real Madrid's Mariano Diez Mejia, center, heads the ball during the Spanish La Liga soccer match between Real Madrid and Eibar, at Ipurua stadium, in Eibar, northern Spain, yesterday. Real Madrid won the match 4-1. — AP

BAYERN GO SEVEN PTS CLEAR IN GERMANY

BERLIN: Bayern Munich went seven points clear at the top of the Bundesliga with a 3-0 win at Cologne on Saturday in a perfect warm-up for their midweek Champions League trip to Arsenal. Spain internationals Javi Martinez and Juan Bernat gave Bayern a comfortable two-goal lead before substitute Franck Ribery netted a third on 90 minutes.

The result allowed Bayern to extend their lead over second-placed RB Leipzig, who drew 2-2 at Augsburg on Friday. Bayern now head for Arsenal on Tuesday for their Champions League last 16 second leg tie, holding a 5-1 first-leg lead.

"We're happy, because that was an important result for us," said Bayern coach Carlo Ancelotti. "We had problems at the start, because they were well organised, but we made more room after going 1-0 up and put in a good second-half performance." Cologne earned a 1-1 draw in Munich last October, but there was no denying Bayern this time.

Martinez headed home Arturo Vidal's cross after Bayern worked a short-corner routine on 25 minutes. Bayern doubled their lead when Thomas Mueller spotted Bernat unmarked to shoot home with the help of a deflection on 48 minutes. Bernat then turned provider just before the final whistle when his cross was driven home by Ribery.

Borussia Dortmund will be without Germany winger Marco Reus for Wednesday's Champions League last 16 return leg at home to Benfica after he limped out of Saturday's 6-2 thrashing of Bayer Leverkusen.

Pierre-Emerick Aubameyang scored twice to leave him with 21 league goals in as many games, two ahead of Bayern's Robert Lewandowski, but the win was dampened by a suspected tear to Reus' left hamstring. —AFP

Live Matches on TV (Local Timings)

ENGLISH PREMIER LEAGUE		
Tottenham v Everton	16:30	beIN SPORTS 2 HD
Sunderland v Man City	19:00	beIN SPORTS 2 HD
SPANISH LEAGUE		
Gijon v Deportivo	14:00	beIN SPORTS
Atletico v Valencia	18:15	beIN SPORTS
Las Palmas v Osasuna	20:30	beIN SPORTS
Bilbao v Malaga CF	22:45	beIN SPORTS
ITALIAN CALCIO LEAGUE		
Atalanta v Fiorentina	14:30	beIN SPORTS 4 HD
Udinese Calcio v Juventus	17:00	beIN SPORTS 4 HD
Torino v Citta di Palermo	17:00	beIN SPORTS
Empoli v Genoa CFC	17:00	beIN SPORTS
Cagliari v Internazionale	17:00	beIN SPORTS
Crotone v Sassuolo Calcio	17:00	beIN SPORTS
Bologna FC v SS Lazio	22:45	beIN SPORTS
GERMAN BUNDESLIGA		
Eintracht v Freiburg	17:30	beIN SPORTS
Hamburger SV v Hertha	19:30	beIN SPORTS
FRENCH LEAGUE		
Lorient v Olympique	17:00	beIN SPORTS
Toulouse v Lille OSC	19:00	beIN SPORTS
AS Monaco FC v Nantes	23:00	beIN SPORTS 6

MAHREZ MAGIC HELPS LEICESTER BEAT HULL

	Leicester	3
	Hull	1

LEICESTER: Leicester's revival following Claudio Ranieri's shock sacking gathered pace as Riyad Mahrez inspired a crucial 3-1 win over fellow strugglers Hull yesterday.

Following Ranieri's ruthless dismissal last week, Leicester have finally recaptured the form that carried them to the Premier League title last season.

In severe danger of being relegated, they ended a run of five successive league defeats with a 3-1 victory over Liverpool on Monday and followed that with a come-from-behind success against Hull at the King Power Stadium.

Sam Clucas put Hull ahead but Christian Fuchs equalised before half-time and Mahrez struck in the second half.

Tom Huddlestone's own goal capped an encouraging day for Leicester, who are five points clear of the bottom three and can breathe easier after a turbulent period.

Hull remain second bottom and are four points from safety after their winless run in away league fixtures stretched to 13 games.

Amid reports that former England manager Roy Hodgson has spoken to Leicester's Thai owners about succeeding Ranieri, interim boss Craig Shakespeare has made it clear he wants the job. Ranieri's former assistant has been backed by several of Leicester's stars and they boosted his job prospects by securing succes-

sive league wins for the first time this season.

The hosts should have been ahead early on when Mahrez's free-kick picked out Wes Morgan, only for the unmarked Leicester defender to head wide. Leicester's shoddy finishing could have been costly as Clucas gave Hull a surprise lead in the 14th minute.

Oumar Niasse found Kamil Grosicki and his cross from the touchline was poked home from close range by Clucas for the midfielder's first goal of the season. But the champions were unfazed and Fuchs bagged just his second goal in two seasons with Leicester in the 27th minute. Jamie Vardy carved open the Hull defence with a penetrating raid and from his cross, Fuchs pounced on the loose ball to fire home. Unable to turn their first half dominance into further goals, Leicester narrowly avoided falling behind again when Hull's Harry Maguire headed against the crossbar from Grosicki's corner early in the second half.

But Hull have not been out of the relegation zone since Marco Silva took over in early January and the Tigers were destined to spend another weekend in the bottom three.

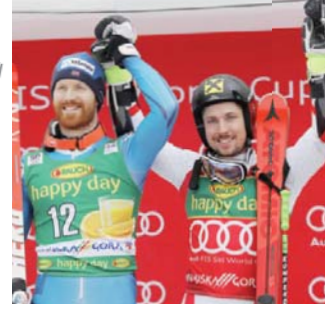
Mahrez, a major disappointment this term after being voted player of the year last season, had gone close twice in quick succession before the Algeria winger hit the target in the 59th minute.

Working space on the edge of the penalty area, Mahrez drilled a low shot that eluded a weak attempted save from Hull goalkeeper Eldin Jakupovic at his near post. It was the first time Mahrez had scored in open play in his last 28 league appearances.

Leicester wrapped up the points in the final moments when Hull midfielder Huddlestone headed into his own net from Wilfred Ndidi's flick. —AFP

Sports

History-maker
Hirscher wins
sixth W Cup title



Benzema puts
Ronaldo-less
Madrid back on top



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S AFRICA CRUSH NZ, WRAP UP SERIES 3-2

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LIVERPOOL: Arsenal's English striker Danny Welbeck (R) vies with Liverpool's Brazilian midfielder Roberto Firmino (2nd R) during the English Premier League football match between Liverpool and Arsenal at Anfield in Liverpool, north west England yesterday. — AFP

LIVERPOOL PUNISH WENGER GAMBLE



LIVERPOOL: Arsenal manager Arsene Wenger's surprise decision to drop star player Alexis Sanchez backfired as Liverpool won 3-1 in the English Premier League at Anfield to reignite its ambitions of Champions League qualification yesterday. Sanchez, the league joint-top scorer with 17, was left on the bench until halftime - by which time a rampant Liverpool side was 2-0 ahead thanks to goals from Roberto

Firmino and Sadio Mane. Arsenal was much improved with Sanchez on the field and he set up Danny Welbeck's goal in the 57th minute with a pass through the heart of Liverpool's defense.

Liverpool sealed victory in stoppage time through Georginio Wijnaldum's goal on the break to clinch only its second win in eight league matches in 2017. It lifted Jurgen Klopp's team into third place in the fight to reach the Champions League.

Arsenal dropped out of the top four on another tough day for Wenger, whose future at the club is up in the air with his contract over at the end of the season. His decision to leave out Sanchez will be debated long and hard and was clearly a mistake, considering the impact the forward had when he came on.

Wenger said he selected Olivier Giroud over Sanchez as

the starting striker to offer a direct, physical option in attack. Quite why he dropped him completely, instead of simply playing him out wide instead, was startling considering Sanchez's importance to the team.

With playmaker Mesut Ozil also missing because of illness, Arsenal's starting lineup was lacking star quality - and perhaps a sign of things to come next season - and was picked apart by Liverpool in the first half.

Slicker with its passing and faster to the ball, Liverpool cut through Arsenal repeatedly and went ahead when Mane's skewed shot from the right was missed by Coutinho and went straight through to Firmino at the far post. Firmino took a touch and fired high into the net from close range.

He repaid the favor in the 40th. He collected Wijnaldum's inside pass, turned Francis Coquelin and opted against shooting to slide a pass across to the unmarked Mane, who

lashed in a low angled drive.

So poor was Arsenal that its fans chanted sarcastically "We've had a shot" after Granit Xhaka blazed a long-range effort over the crossbar toward the end of the half. Sanchez's introduction at halftime completely changed the game. Arsenal was suddenly more dangerous with its 17-goal forward on the field and Liverpool finally had an opponent to fear.

Stationed on the left wing, Sanchez ran at Liverpool's defense immediately and the atmosphere became tense. He showed great vision by playing a ball through for Welbeck, who chipped over advancing goalkeeper Simon Mignolet. The game was in the balance until the first minute of injury time, when Divock Origi was set free down the right and the substitute crossed low for Wijnaldum to steer

home a calm finish. — AP

MURRAY CLAIMS 45TH CAREER TITLE WITH DUBAI TRIUMPH

DUBAI: World number one Andy Murray won his first title of 2017 with a 6-3 6-2 victory over unseeded Spaniard Fernando Verdasco in the Dubai Tennis Championships final yesterday.

Murray lost his first two service games of the match but overcame that poor start to win in Dubai for the first time.

"Obviously I'm very happy to do it here for the first time. It's been a good start to the year," Murray told the BBC. "Often when you get through matches like that (quarter-final against Philipp Kohlschreiber when I saved seven match points) it settles you down for the rest of the tournament."

"It's been quite a few late finishes this week. Maybe the last couple of matches, I didn't start as well as I would like. It's been the same for all the players, a bit tricky with the rain. Once I got going today, I was moving well and I finished strong. This year has given me great momentum."

Murray, who had won 12 of his past 13 matches against the Spaniard, started slowly and was broken in the first game before breaking back in what was a nervous start by both players.

The heavy-hitting Verdasco cracked a series of powerful winners to break an uncomfortable-looking Murray again in the third game and consolidated to hold for a 3-1 lead. Despite a shaky serving performance, Murray, helped by a string of Verdasco errors, reeled off five successive games to

take the first set 6-3. Murray continued in the same vein in the second set and slowly began to dictate from the baseline on the back of an improved serve to open up a 3-1 lead which he did not relinquish.

The three-times grand slam winner, who cut a frustrated figure throughout an uncharacteristically sloppy performance, sealed victory with a powerful serve to claim his 45th career title.

Meanwhile, in Acapulco, Mexico, two-time champion Rafael Nadal raced past third-seeded Marin Cilic 6-1, 6-2 to reach the ATP Mexico Open final, where his perfect Acapulco record will be put to the test by Sam Querrey.

Querrey ousted Nick Kyrgios 3-6, 6-1, 7-5 to bring the sixth-seeded Australian's giant-killing run to a halt a day after Kyrgios stunned world number two Novak Djokovic in straight sets. Second-seeded Nadal, playing his first tournament since falling to Roger Federer in an epic five-set final at the Australian Open in January, has won all 14 matches he has played in Acapulco, where he lifted the trophy in 2005 and 2013.

Nadal roared through the opening set against Cilic, building a 5-0 lead before the former US Open champion, who advanced to the semi-finals on a walkover when scheduled opponent Steve Johnson withdrew, showed signs of life with a service hold for 5-1. — Agencies



DUBAI: World number one Andy Murray (R) of Great Britain and Spain's Fernando Verdasco celebrate with their respective first and second-place trophies after the conclusion of their ATP final tennis match during the Dubai Duty Free Championships yesterday. Murray clinched his first title of 2017 and 45th of his career as he dominated Spain's Fernando Verdasco 6-3, 6-2 to win the Dubai Tennis Championships. — AFP

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KFH wins 4 prestigious awards from IFN

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KUWAIT STOCKS COME UNDER SELLING PRESSURE

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CHICAGO: Traders in the Standard & Poor's 500 stock index options pit at the Chicago Board Options Exchange (CBOE) fill orders Friday in Chicago, Illinois. While speaking in Chicago Fed Chair Janet Yellen hinted that an interest rate hike is on the way later this month. —AFP

YELLEN SIGNALS MARCH FED RATE HIKE

SPEECH REFLECTS MOOD OF STRENGTHENING ECONOMY, JOB MARKET

WASHINGTON: Federal Reserve Chair Janet Yellen signaled Friday that the Fed will likely resume raising interest rates later this month to reflect a strengthening job market and inflation edging toward the central bank's 2 percent target.

Yellen also said in a speech in Chicago that the Fed expects steady economic improvement to justify additional rate increases. While not specifying how many rate hikes could occur this year, Yellen noted that Fed officials in December had estimated that there would be three in 2017. Yellen's signal of a likely rate hike this month reflects an encouraging conclusion by the Fed: That nearly eight years after the Great Recession ended, the US economy has finally regained most of its health.

At a separate appearance Friday in New York, Vice Chair Stanley Fischer added his voice to a series of Fed officials who have indicated this week that they would likely favor raising rates at the Fed's next meeting March 14-15. Asked whether there had been a conscious effort by Fed officials to signal a probable rate hike at that meeting, Fischer said, "If there has been a conscious effort, I'm about to join it." Many economists now say that barring an unexpectedly disastrous monthly jobs report next Friday, a Fed rate increase this month appears certain.

"The Fed will hike unless next week's payroll report is calamitous," said Ian Shepherdson, chief economist at Pantheon Macroeconomics. "That's unlikely, so we expect rates to rise."

At the March 14-15 meeting, Yellen said the Fed's policymakers will "evaluate whether employment and inflation are continuing to evolve in line with our expectations, in which case a further adjustment of the federal funds rate would likely be appropriate." Friday's remarks from Yellen and Fischer echoed those made earlier this week by several other Fed officials, including Lael Brainard, a board member who had been a leading voice urging caution in raising rates.

What has shifted the sentiment of most Fed officials decisively toward a rate increase has been a wave of robust economic data - notably on job growth, manufacturing and consumer confidence - along with surging stock prices. On Thursday, for example, the government reported that first-time applications for unemployment benefits - a proxy for the pace of layoffs - fell last week to their lowest level in nearly 44 years.

The stock market has been setting a string of record highs, fueled by confidence that President Donald Trump's plans for cutting taxes and boosting spending will win congressional approval.

And inflation, which had been lagging at chronically low levels, has been edging steadily up, reflecting in part a rebound in gasoline prices and higher wages. The Fed's preferred inflation gauge showed that prices rose 1.9 percent over the 12 months that ended in January. That was the largest 12-month gain in nearly five years and just below the Fed's 2 percent target for inflation.



CHICAGO: Federal Reserve Chair Janet Yellen participates in a Q&A with Executives' Club CEO Ana Dutra on Friday at the club's luncheon in Chicago. —AP

Yellen was asked during a question-and-answer period about the Fed's likely response to Trump's forthcoming economic stimulus program, the details of which remain unclear. Yellen said Fed officials are inclined to wait to see which measures are approved by Congress.

"I think most of my colleagues have decided that we

should just be patient and wait to see what happens," Yellen said. In December, the Fed raised its benchmark rate by a quarter-point to a range of 0.5 percent to 0.75 percent. It was its first increase since December 2015, when the Fed raised its key rate from a record low. In estimating three rate hikes for 2017, the Fed was indicating a quickened pace of increases. In her speech, Yellen sought to explain why the Fed has been slow to raise rates in the past two years. She pointed to the prolonged drop in oil prices that started in 2014 and slowed spending by energy companies. And she noted a sizable rise in the value of the dollar, which depressed inflation and hurt export sales by making American goods costlier overseas.

Other disruptive events last year led the Fed to proceed cautiously. They included anemic US economic growth early in the year, global fears about a sharp slowdown in China and Britain's vote to leave the European Union. Despite all that, Yellen said, "The US economy has exhibited remarkable resilience in the face of adverse shocks."

She said she saw no evidence to suggest that the Fed has been excessively slow to raise rates or that inflation is threatening to rise too quickly. "I therefore continue to have confidence that a gradual removal of accommodation is likely to be appropriate," Yellen said.

At the same time, she added: "Unless unanticipated developments adversely affect the economic outlook, the process of scaling back accommodation likely will not be as slow as it was during the past couple of years." —AP

DRIVERS REBEL AGAINST UBER'S PRICE-CUTTING QUEST FOR GROWTH

DETROIT: The face-off between Uber CEO Travis Kalanick and driver Fawzi Kamel illustrated a conflict between Uber, with its effort to grow by cutting prices to beat competitors, and drivers who have seen their pay reduced. The video of the argument - caught on dashcam and now viewed more than 3 million times on YouTube - includes yelling and profanity, and ends with a combative Kalanick dismissing an agitated Fawzi's claims that sharp reductions in fares forced the driver into bankruptcy.

Harry Campbell, who drives for Uber in California, says driver pay has gone down while Uber's corporate valuation has grown to over \$60 billion. "I think a lot of drivers feel that Uber always looked out for themselves first and foremost and relegated drivers to a second tier," he says. "What we're looking at in that video is 21st-century mobility technology and 19th-century labor relations," said Harley Shaiken, a labor expert and professor at the University of California, Berkeley.

The video exchange comes after a month of trouble for the ride-hailing behemoth including sexual harassment allegations from a female engineer, a lawsuit alleging technology theft, and a social media campaign encouraging riders to delete Uber's app over claims that the company tried to capitalize when New York taxi drivers protested against President Trump's immigration order.

Uber's rivals claim that drivers have been defecting since Uber's problems started piling up. Business experts expect more defections among Uber's 400,000 drivers, and even some riders, after the Kalanick video, despite his public apology. Some rivals boast of better pay for drivers, and some allow tips through their apps, unlike Uber. Still, drivers say they get more business with Uber because of its greater size and reach. In the dashcam video obtained by Bloomberg News, Kalanick and Kamel are seen discussing Uber's business model. The driver for Uber's luxury service, Uber Black, argues that Kalanick is lowering fares, costing him money.

Kalanick denied that Black fares had been cut, but conceded that prices were reduced for Uber's general service, UberX, due to competition. "Otherwise you go out of business," he says. The 40-year-old CEO begins shouting at Kamel claims again the Uber Black prices were reduced. Kamel claims to have lost \$97,000. "I'm bankrupt because of you."

"Bull—!" Kalanick shouted. "Some people don't like to take responsibility for their own s—."

They blame everything in their life on somebody else. Good luck," he says, slamming the door. Campbell, the California driver, says most drivers aren't surprised by Kalanick's behavior. "We always knew that the CEO was pretty ruthless when it comes to drivers." Campbell, like a number of drivers, works for both Uber and its

biggest rival, Lyft. He won't stop driving for Uber, but may shift more business to Lyft. Lyft said its ridership and driver applications have grown significantly since the first of the year, while Fasten, a smaller ride-hailing competitor in Boston and Austin, Texas, said its business has boomed since the "Delete Uber" campaign started in late January. Fasten said its ridership rose 25 percent in Boston the first week of the campaign. New riders are up 10 percent.

Amelia Serafine, a Ph.D. candidate in Chicago, says she had been driving for both Uber and Lyft for about a year before deleting her Uber driver app in February after the sexual harassment allegations became public. She was tempted to return to Uber for money to supplement her university stipend but decided against it when the Kalanick video surfaced.

"The people (drivers) that I talk to already think that Uber treats them like garbage," Serafine said. "That's why the driver confronted the CEO." Shaiken, the University of California professor, says Uber is squeezing its drivers on prices, refusing to recognize them as employees and dictating terms such as pricing without their input. Uber declined comment on the controversies but points to a survey showing that 73 percent of its drivers don't want to be employees. More than 60 percent drive fewer than 10 hours per week, the company says. —AP

UK NOT LEGALLY BOUND TO PAY INTO EU BUDGET IF NO BREXIT DEAL: MPs

LONDON: If Britain leaves the European Union without agreeing an exit deal it will not be legally obliged to contribute to the bloc's budget post-Brexit, a committee of members of Britain's upper house of parliament said yesterday. Money is likely to be one of the most contentious elements of the upcoming divorce talks. Other EU nations want Britain to pay its share of budget commitments—estimated informally by EU officials at roughly 60 billion euros.

British Prime Minister Theresa May has said only that the government would consider paying into the EU to participate in "some specific European programs". Under Article 50 of the EU's Lisbon Treaty, Britain has two years to agree a deal with the EU after which time it will leave without one unless all member states agree to extend negotiations. "If agreement is not reached, all EU law - including provisions concerning ongoing financial contributions and machinery for adjudication - will cease to apply and the UK would be subject to no enforceable obligation to make any financial contribution at all," the

House of Lords EU Financial Affairs committee said in a report.

The report also concludes that, in return, Britain will not be in a position legally to claim a share of the EU's assets on exit unless they are included in a withdrawal agreement. Negotiating what Britain owes is one of the EU's priorities for this year, with EU officials saying the bloc wants to agree with Britain a formula for calculating the amount rather than defining a concrete sum in advance.

Britain will have to weigh up the financial and political costs of making payments to the EU in return for agreement on things such as EU market access, the committee said.

"If the government wishes to include future market access on favorable terms as part of the discussions on the withdrawal agreement, it is likely to prove impossible to do so without also reaching agreement on the issue of the budget," it said. "The political and economic consequences of the UK leaving the EU without responding to claims under the EU budget are likely to be profound." —Reuters

US JUSTICE TARGETS EXECUTIVES IN WELLS FARGO PROBE

WASHINGTON: A US Justice Department probe into a phony accounts scandal at Wells Fargo & Co is asking whether executives hid details from the company board and regulators as the problem grew over years, sources familiar with the review said. The move carries into the Trump era an investigation started under the Obama administration, and could result in criminal charges against bank employees involved.

The Justice Department this week was due to interview federal bank examiners in Charlotte, North Carolina, and ask whether low-level employees broke the law by opening accounts without customer knowledge and if company executives took part in a conspiracy. A grand jury convened in the Northern District of California has also sent subpoenas to witnesses, including former Wells Fargo employees, the sources said.

The third-largest US lender on Wednesday said even more customers may have been affected by the scandal than previously believed. Wells Fargo disclosed in a \$190 million settlement with regulators in September that staff opened as many as 2.1 million checking, savings and credit card accounts without customer consent over several years to satisfy managers' demands.

The sources declined to be identified because they were not authorized to speak about an open investigation. A bank spokesperson declined to comment on account-related probes but said Wells Fargo is trying to move past the scandal. Officials are seeking to find out if executives shared everything they knew about the phony accounts to the Wells Fargo board of directors and the Office of the Comptroller of the Currency, the lead regulator for national

banks. Even if executives are not charged with criminal misconduct, they could face civil penalties including fines or a ban from the banking industry. Wells has already fired some executives and clawed back portions of their pay. Wells CEO John Stumpf resigned after the accounts scandal broke and former chief of retail banking Carrie Tolsted retired. The bank has fired four mid-level executives and thousands of lower level employees.

Officials will decide what charges to bring once the Justice Department finishes its investigation, work that is expected to wrap later this year, depending on how quickly Justice attorneys can proceed.

The assistant US attorney leading the Wells Fargo case in San Francisco is busy preparing an unrelated criminal case tied to Hewlett Packard's \$11 billion buyout of Autonomy Corp.

OPEN CASE

To be sure, Wells faces a slew of other investigations from individual states, agencies and US Congress, though criminal charges are what could rock Wells Fargo. Wells told investors in an annual securities filing on Wednesday that its legal costs could exceed what it has set aside by as much as \$1.8 billion.

"We remain focused on providing the accountability and oversight that customers, team members, and investors expect and deserve," Wells Fargo spokeswoman Jennifer Dunn said. The US Securities and Exchange Commission's Philadelphia office, meanwhile, wants to know whether Wells Fargo misled investors by inflating the tally of customers who sought multiple accounts and whether the bank wrongfully went after whistleblowers, according to a person familiar with the

matter. US Representative Jeb Hensarling, the Texas Republican at the head of the House Financial Services Committee, in September summoned four Wells Fargo executives for interviews and threatened to subpoena others, though that review is expected to conclude quietly in the face of the criminal investigations.

A separate review by the Wells Fargo board of directors is examining how the company handled the phony accounts spree that it first believed went on for four years from mid-2011 but may have gone on longer. A report on those findings is due by early April, Wells Fargo has said. Several states, including Connecticut and Florida, have active investigations into the bank. California issued a search warrant for Wells Fargo's corporate offices in October, but declined to comment on the status of its review. — AP

CLEAN ENERGY OFFERS MASSIVE POTENTIAL FOR GCC: REPORT

RE PLANS FOR ELECTRICITY SECTORS COULD RESULT IN SAVINGS OF 87BN

KUWAIT: Shifting to clean and renewable energy presents a very strong potential for oil-producing GCC countries to maintain global leadership in the energy sector despite the current market slowdown, while reaping massive savings of up to \$ 87 billion as well as potentially reducing up to one gigaton of carbon emissions, according to a new report. "Clean Energy in the GCC" highlights the array of benefits for the GCC economy and the global environment if the region would focus and take advantage of the growth potential in clean and renewable energy.

The report was released recently by Orient Planet Research, an Orient Planet Group venture.

Scaling up renewable energy in the GCC countries would reap multiple benefits across the region, the report noted, adding what Gulf countries would stand to gain in terms of job creation, fossil fuel savings, and reduction in carbon emission, among others.

Achieving the RE plans for the region's electricity sectors, for instance, could result in an overall savings of USD 55 to 87 billion, depending on oil and gas prices. Carbon emissions could also be reduced by one gigaton (Gt) by 2030, leading to an 8 per cent cut in the region's per capita carbon footprint.

The figures were based on the findings of the Abu Dhabi-based International Renewable Energy Agency (IRENA), which added that as more renewable power plants are brought online every year, fossil fuel savings in the power and water sectors could peak at around 400 million barrels of oil equivalent by 2030.

In the case of Saudi Arabia, the region's largest consumer of fossil fuels for power production, the Kingdom would save around 170 million barrels of oil and gas resources by 2030, or 44 per cent of the GCC-wide savings. The IRE-

NA analysis indicates that the fulfillment of renewable energy targets can cut power sector fossil fuel consumption in Saudi Arabia by 25 per cent by 2030.

Other recent findings contained in the report include: Saudi Arabia says solar contributing 76 per cent of its sustainable energy plans by 2040, with wind at 17 per cent

- Water use could be cut by 16 per cent in the power sector in the region

- In the UAE, fuel consumption in water and power industries could be cut 50 per cent if targets are met

- Fuel use would drop 23 per cent in Saudi Arabia and 21 per cent in Kuwait

Nidal Abou Zaki, Managing Director, Orient Planet Group, said: "Rapid industrialization, population growth, and an increased rate of water desalination are all contributing to burgeoning energy demand. Right now, more fossil fuels are being used to meet the rising energy requirement but there is now a growing need to transform towards a more sustainable future. The prospects are bright for GCC countries in this regard especially because the region has a strong potential to be a net exporter of electricity generated from solar power in the future. This is only one aspect which GCC governments can capitalize on moving forward."

The development of fossil fuel reserves and their exportation has led to wide economic growth, bringing prosperity and development to the region. The GCC economies' position in global energy markets over the past 40 years has been shaped by their role as oil and gas producers. Rapid socio-economic growth over the past decade is positioning them as one of the world's highest growth markets.

"However, now is the time to study and

explore sustainable alternative. Pursuing renewable resources in the Gulf is highly practical as it is as richly endowed with renewable resources as it is with hydrocarbons.

The region, as the report notes, boasts of abundant year-round sunshine, the space to develop large solar power plants, significant wind and geothermal resources, and biomass derived from urban waste. There is no better time to pursue clean energy than now when the industry is experiencing significant growth worldwide," Abou Zaki added.

In terms of job creation, meanwhile, the report highlights that the estimated 5.7 million employed directly or indirectly in the global renewable energy industry in 2012 could triple by 2030, with the solar segment expected to account for 85 per cent, followed by waste-to-energy at 14 per cent.

The report also cited that renewable energy will help GCC countries produce 116,000 jobs annually. Such considerable job opportunities are crucial as global economies continue to struggle with economic boom-bust cycles. Unemployment and its associated social and economic impacts remain a key concern and an instrumental driver of public policy. Moreover, RE power generation is becoming more cost effective. Improving technology and growing competition have seen RE costs drop dramatically. In addition, solar power generation fits very well with demand patterns in a geography such as the GCC, where air conditioning dominates the electricity demand curve.

Overall, the report states that RE offers the region an important opportunity to be at the forefront of optimizing clean energy to efficiently and effectively meet increasing power demand in a sustainable manner.



WASHINGTON: (FILES) This file photo taken on January 18, 2017 shows Business investor Wilbur Ross, Jr., testifying during his confirmation hearing for Secretary of Commerce before the Senate Commerce, Science and Transportation committee in Washington, DC. — AFP

US COMMERCE SECRETARY: WTO NEEDS 'FINE TUNING'

WASHINGTON: The World Trade Organization is necessary but needs "fine tuning" to improve the dispute settlement procedure between countries, new US Commerce Secretary Wilbur Ross said Friday. In a report released on Wednesday, the Trump administration harshly criticized the WTO, accusing it of being "incapable" of sanctioning unfair trade practices and saying its decisions are not to be binding on the United States.

"The WTO is in some ways very necessary. You probably do need an arbiter of some sort if you're going to have international trade," Ross said in an interview with CNBC. The new official, however, said questions remain about how the WTO operates

and whether its dispute settlement procedure is "fair." "From the point of view of the United States, there's some fine tuning at least that I think should be needed at the WTO," Ross said.

During his campaign, President Donald Trump described the global trade referee as a "disaster" and promised a more aggressive approach to open up foreign markets to US companies, including threatening to unilaterally imposing tariffs. Ross acknowledged that the United States could be exposed to trade retaliation by its partners. "You can assume that whatever overt action we take, there'll be some kind of counterpunch coming from whoever is the other party," he predicted. —AFP

CATERPILLAR IS SUED BY A SHAREHOLDER AFTER FEDERAL RAID

NEW YORK: Caterpillar Inc was sued on Friday for allegedly deceiving shareholders about its business, one day after federal law enforcers raided three of its buildings in connection with a probe into the heavy machinery manufacturer's offshore tax practices.

In a complaint filed in Chicago federal court, Jacob Newman accused Caterpillar of defrauding him and other shareholders in regulatory filings by touting its commitment to good ethics, while concealing how it "unlawfully used foreign subsidiaries" to avoid paying billions of dollars of US taxes.

Caterpillar did not immediately respond to requests for comment after business hours. Shares of Caterpillar fell 4.3 percent on Thursday, wiping out more than \$2.4 billion of the Peoria, Illinois-based company's market value.

The company said it believed the raid by officials from agencies including the Internal Revenue Service's criminal

investigation division, the Department of Commerce and the Federal Deposit Insurance Corp was connected with an IRS probe related to a Swiss parts unit, Caterpillar SARL.

Caterpillar has been fighting an IRS demand that it pay \$2 billion in taxes and penalties for shifting profit to the Swiss unit to lessen its US tax bill. Newman is seeking unspecified damages in his proposed class-action lawsuit on behalf of Caterpillar investors from Feb. 19, 2013 through March 1.

The lawsuit also names Caterpillar Chief Executive Jim Umpleby, Chairman Douglas Oberhelman and Chief Financial Officer Bradley Halverson as defendants. Oberhelman preceded Umpleby as chief executive.

Companies often face US lawsuits accusing them of securities fraud shortly after unexpected negative news causes a decline in their stock prices. It is unclear how many lawsuits Caterpillar might face. — Reuters

JOHANNESBURG: Nigeria wants Royal Dutch Shell to reopen one of its main pipelines but the oil multinational is resisting, analysts say, for fear it could once again be bombed by militants.

The Trans Forcados Pipeline, the main feed to the 400,000-barrel-a-day Forcados export terminal, has been shut for all but three weeks of the past year, Lagos-based SBM Intelligence said in its weekly risk analysis published Friday. In their most sophisticated attack, militants used divers to blow up an underwater section of the pipeline in the Atlantic a year ago. Defying militant death threats, Shell flew in underwater engineers who took seven months to get the pipeline operational.

Two days later, the militants bombed it again. Shell Nigeria lost \$3 billion during the seven months of repairs, Africa Confidential newsletter estimated at the time. "Nigeria wants Royal Dutch Shell to reopen a major export pipeline in the Niger Delta but the oil major wants better protection first, to avoid having it blown up yet again," SBM Intelligence said, quoting unidentified officials and industry sources.

Shell Nigeria said only that one of its priorities is to secure the pipeline, while indicating it is still working to contain leaks. "Our focus on the Forcados leaks is on containment, spill recovery and securing the line," spokesman Precious Okolobo told The Associated Press yesterday.

Petroleum Minister Ibe Kachikwu announced last month that Nigeria, one of Africa's top oil producers, lost between \$50 billion and \$100 billion in oil revenues because of militant attacks last year. At the worst point, he said, production was cut to 1.2 million barrels a day - a loss of 1 million barrels a day and the lowest rate of production in 30 years. The Forcados terminal handles nearly one-quarter of Nigeria's exports. So experts are puzzled by the state oil company's declaration this week that production has risen to 2.1 million barrels a day - near optimal production of 2.2 million.

"Nigeria has given differing figures for its oil output in recent weeks ... without giving an explanation," said SBM Intelligence, quoting figures between 1.7 million to 2.2 million barrels a day. With Nigeria confronting its worst recession

in 25 years, "We certainly hope the figures are true," the analysts said. Oil militants say careless production in the southern Niger Delta has brought nothing but misery, with pollution from oil spills destroying farmlands, fishing grounds and millions of livelihoods.

At one point, all three of Nigeria's biggest export terminals were closed for repairs from militant attacks: Forcados, ExxonMobil's Qua Iboe and Eni's Brass River. Qua Iboe, the biggest terminal, was shut for more than three months before quietly resuming exports in October. It is not clear if Brass River is operating. Oil companies are reluctant to divulge information for fear of more attacks.

There has been no major attack since an August cease-fire to allow negotiations between the government, representatives of militants, community leaders and oil companies operating in the Niger Delta. Community leaders have expressed confidence in Vice President Yemi Osinbajo's visits and promises of a comprehensive plan to help residents benefit from oil production. — AP

EXCHANGE RATES

AL-MUZAINI EXCHANGE CO.

ASIAN COUNTRIES	
Japanese Yen	2.689
Indian Rupees	4.571
Pakistani Rupees	2.919
Sri Lankan Rupees	2.034
Nepali Rupees	2.866
Singapore Dollar	216.060
Hongkong Dollar	3.946
Bangladesh Taka	3.831
Philippine Peso	6.132
Thai Baht	8.756

GCC COUNTRIES	
Saudi Riyal	81.694
Qatari Riyal	84.142
Omani Riyal	795.608
Bahraini Dinar	813.470
UAE Dirham	83.408

ARAB COUNTRIES	
Egyptian Pound - Cash	20.450
Egyptian Pound - Transfer	17.537
Yemen Riyal/for 1000	1.230
Tunisian Dinar	134.810
Jordanian Dinar	431.290
Lebanese Lira/for 1000	2.041
Syrian Lira	2.183
Morocco Dirham	30.924

EUROPEAN & AMERICAN COUNTRIES	
US Dollar Transfer	306.150
Euro	327.180
Sterling Pound	384.680
Canadian dollar	234.780
Turkish lira	83.310

Swiss Franc 307.460
 Australian Dollar 237.110
 US Dollar Buying 304.950

GOLD
 20 Gram 252.060
 10 Gram 128.950
 5 Gram 65.320

DOLLARCO EXCHANGE CO. LTD

US Dollar	305.900
Canadian Dolla	233.425
Sterling Pound	382.105
Euro	324.700
Swiss Frank	310.650
Bahrain Dinar	810.915
UAE Dirhams	83.680
Qatari Riyals	84.900
Saudi Riyals	82.500
Jordanian Dinar	432.620
Egyptian Pound	19.484
Sri Lankan Rupees	2.012
Indian Rupees	4.574
Pakistani Rupees	2.917
Bangladesh Taka	3.854
Philippines Pесо	6.088
Cyprus pound	167.990
Japanese Yen	3.700
Syrian Pound	2.425
Nepalese Rupees	3.855
Malaysian Ringgit	69.655

Chinese Yuan Renminbi 44.905
 Thai Bhat 9.735
 Turkish Lira 85.835

BAHRAIN EXCHANGE COMPANY WLL

CURRENCY	BUY	SELL
British Pound	0.376029	0.386029
Czech Korune	0.003923	0.015923
Danish Krone	0.039340	0.044340
Euro	0.317172	0.326172
Norwegian Krone	0.032605	0.037805
Romanian Leu	0.071312	0.071312
Slovakia	0.009185	0.019185
Swedish Krona	0.030062	0.035062
Swiss Franc	0.296735	0.307735
Turkish Lira	0.079075	0.089375
Australian Dollar	0.226999	0.238999
New Zealand Dollar	0.212865	0.222385
Canadian Dollar	0.227782	0.236782
Georgina Lari	0.138321	0.138321
US Dollars	0.302150	0.306550
US Dollars Mint	0.302650	0.306550
Bangladesh Taka	0.003584	0.004148
Chinese Yuan	0.043138	0.046638
Hong Kong Dollar	0.037368	0.040118
Indian Rupee	0.002683	0.004906

Indonesian Rupiah	0.000018	0.000024
Japanese Yen	0.002613	0.002793
Kenyan Shilling	0.002951	0.002951
Korean Won	0.000258	0.000273
Malaysian Ringgit	0.064973	0.070973
Nepalese Rupee	0.002996	0.003166
Pakistan Rupee	0.002673	0.002963
Philippine Pесо	0.006026	0.006326
Sierra Leone	0.000038	0.000044
Singapore Dollar	0.210343	0.220343
South African Rand	0.017298	0.025798
Sri Lankan Rupee	0.001683	0.002263
Taiwan	0.009820	0.010000
Thai Baht	0.008407	0.008957

Arab		
Bahraini Dinar	0.805763	0.814263
Egyptian Pound	0.014131	0.023384
Iranian Riyal	0.000085	0.000086
Iraqi Dinar	0.000187	0.000247
Jordanian Dinar	0.426284	0.435284
Kuwaiti Dinar	1.000000	1.000000
Lebanese Pound	0.000152	0.000252
Moroccan Dirhams	0.020163	0.044163
Nigerian Naira	0.000403	0.001038
Omani Riyal	0.789033	0.794713
Qatar Riyal	0.083308	0.084758
Saudi Riyal	0.080580	0.081880
Syrian Pound	0.001299	0.001519
Tunisian Dinar	0.130050	0.138050
Turkish Lira	0.079075	0.088375
UAE Dirhams	0.081956	0.083656
Yemeni Riyal	0.000996	0.001076

KFH WINS 4 PRESTIGIOUS AWARDS FROM IFN



Waleed Mandani receiving the awards

KUWAIT: Kuwait Finance House (KFH) won 4 prestigious awards from Islamic Finance News Magazine (IFN), which are "Best Islamic Bank in Kuwait", "Syndicated Deal of the Year" where KFH was an arranger and part of EGA (Emirates Global Aluminum) US\$4.9 billion Commodity Murabaha based Syndicated Term Financing Facility, "Kuwait Deal of the Year" where KFH was an arranger and part of Boubayan Tier 1 \$250 million Sukuk, in addition to "US Deal of the Year" award for KFH acquiring office tower in US for \$165 million.

Group Chief Retail and Private Banking Officer, at KFH, Waleed Mandani stated on the sidelines of receiving the awards in the award ceremony held in Dubai in presence of Abdullah S. Al-haddad Senior Vice President - Investment Banking Division, and Saleh T. Al-Khamees Senior Vice President- Real Estate Division from KFH-Capital, that the awards culminate the bank's efforts in offering highest standards of Islamic financial services in

different geographies where KFH operates. The awards confirm KFH's pioneering position in the Islamic finance industry. They are an impetus for further achievements and success towards better addressing the customers' needs and ambitions.

He added that KFH attaches great importance to the service quality and integration among group banks. KFH managed to offer an integrated system of technical, financial, and banking services. The bank has vast experience in balancing Sharia requirements with the latest banking technology.

He emphasized KFH's leadership in the field of Islamic banking, since it was the first Islamic bank in Kuwait, and highlighted the bank's fruitful efforts in expanding in various markets.

Mandani stressed the importance of operating as per strategy and plans in all markets, while focusing on the local market, indicating that all of KFH's global success would have

never been attainable, if the bank did not have a solid platform and high level of professionalism.

KFH has an impeccable record in arranging sukuk deals and leading financing for development projects in several vital sectors, which contributes in boosting the national economy. It is noteworthy that KFH has been selected for the awards by IFN's judging panel that groups a number of experts in the Islamic banking industry through an intensive evaluation process according to a set of principles and financial indicators.

IFN is a well renowned institution in the Islamic banking industry which publishes various studies and articles around the banking sector. It is affiliated to REDmoney, the foremost global provider of specialized Islamic financial media services across three core divisions of events, publishing and training. Established in 2004, the firm has offices in Dubai and Kuala Lumpur.

RUSSIA REAL ESTATE DEALS NEVER MATERIALIZED FOR TRUMP

MOSCOW: He visited imperial palaces and construction sites. He presided at a Miss Universe pageant. He hobnobbed with city officials at gala functions and seemed to particularly enjoy dining on Russian sausage. But Donald Trump did not strike any real estate deals here.

The New York real estate tycoon has his name on hotels, resorts and other properties from South Korea to Turkey to Panama, but none in Russia, though he repeatedly said he wanted to build a Trump tower in Moscow and discussed various deals in three visits dating back to 1987. He has spoken glowingly of Moscow and President Vladimir Putin. Now that Trump is in the White House, his relationship with Russia is coming under increased scrutiny, especially since US intelligence agencies have concluded that the Kremlin meddled in the 2016 election in his favor.

Investing in the post-Soviet real estate market was a high-risk gamble, with many businessmen put off by the uncertainties of the legal system amid an atmosphere of organized crime. It appears Trump made only one deal, and it wasn't in real estate: While a co-owner of the Miss Universe beauty pageant, he signed an agreement with billionaire Aras Agalarov to hold the event in Moscow in November 2013. Agalarov told the Russian edition of Forbes that his company spent about \$20 million on the pageant.

Real estate did come up, however, while Trump was in Russia for the pageant. "He was thinking of building the Trump tower in Moscow," Agalarov told The Associated Press. "We offered him our site ... and showed him how it all looked on the map. He was considering this, but it didn't come to signing any deals."

White House spokeswoman Hope Hicks and Trump Organization spokeswoman Amanda Miller did not answer questions from the AP about why he had decided not to do business in Russia. They said in separate emails that the president has never had anything to do with Russia. Trump himself also said at a recent news conference that he's never made a business deal or taken out a loan in Russia. "The president has nothing to do with Russia and never has," Hicks added.

Trump's first visit to the country took place in 1987 when Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev's perestroika reform program was in full swing, although private property was still outlawed. The brash real estate mogul was one of many Western celebrities including Billy Joel and Robert De Niro who came to peek behind the Iron Curtain four years before the collapse of the Soviet Union. Photos from the visit show Trump and his first wife, Ivana, squinting in the sunlight at the Peterhof Palace outside St. Petersburg, then called Leningrad.

In November 1996, Trump made his second visit. He spent three days looking for a site for a "super-luxury residential tower, which I think Moscow desperately wants and needs," he told The Moscow Times. The main stop was a former tobacco factory in northern Moscow where the cigarette company, Liggett-Ducat, had built an office block and was planning another. The decision raised eyebrows among real estate professionals because the site was far from Moscow's landmarks - not a normal place for a luxury hotel. Scott Antel, a former senior partner and head of the hospitality and leisure sector

at a law firm in Moscow from 1993 to 2015, said he saw the move more as a play for publicity than a serious effort. "Most hotel groups don't want any press until the deal is finally signed," said Antel, who advised hotel owners and developers in emerging markets.

In the freewheeling 1990s, Russian officials were very welcoming to foreigners - some were simply star-struck - although not necessarily willing to help them do business.

Trump visited construction sites in 1996, met with city officials and was feted at a banquet, said Igor Tabakov, a photographer who covered the event and added that Trump seemed partial to Russian sausage. Trump's representative told reporters that he and Moscow's deputy mayor held very preliminary discussions on investing in two of the city's famous but troubled hotels. One of them was the Moskva, next to Red Square, which would need renovations costing about \$200 million, according to the respected business daily Kommersant.

Alexander Khomenko, an assistant to the deputy mayor, told the newspaper in 1997 that Trump said he did not have enough money to renovate the property. "Trump told us: 'I'm really interested in this project but I don't have enough funds and I will need to look for outside investment.' He has a big name and people normally give him money for his name," Khomenko was quoted as saying.

That nothing came of the deal was not surprising: The hotel business was one of the most mob-riddled sectors of Russia's nascent economy. Those who eventually succeeded came to the market poised to roll up their sleeves and tackle a rough-and-tumble environment.

"If you do a project here, you have to have a very long horizon, invest a very large amount of time, be willing to appoint a very professional team," Antel said. "That doesn't sound like it could match up with Trump and his approach." Antel also said Trump's "zero-sum approach" - negotiations that leave only one clear winner must have rattled the Russians, many of whom used the same tactic. Kommersant reported that Trump was essentially offering only to license his name instead of investing in real estate projects in Russia. In the late 1990s, the Moscow market was booming and needed investors to provide cash to build properties, rather than high-profile foreigners helping to sell them.

When Trump returned to Russia in 2013 for the Miss Universe pageant, he was hosted by Agalarov, the Azerbaijan-born billionaire with whom he had forged a close friendship. The Moscow meeting with Trump was moderated by German Gref, chief executive of Russia's largest bank, Sberbank, which sponsored the 2013 pageant. Neither Agalarov nor Gref would give details of the meeting or the guests. Gref, a former government minister whose relationship with Putin dates back to the 1990s, told the Vedomosti daily in December that he had a "very positive" impression from talking to Trump, whom he called "a president of change."

Agalarov offered a detailed itinerary of Trump's Nov 7-9 visit to Moscow, which appeared to be an attempt to show that his American friend had no time for the activities described in a dossier compiled by a former British spy that was published in January. — AP

MEXICO'S ECONOMY SECRETARY SLAMS TRUMP, PUSH FOR TARIFFS

DETROIT: Mexico's economy secretary said Friday that he looks forward to starting negotiations with the US to update the North American Free Trade Agreement, but his country does not want to see tariffs imposed on goods produced in his country.

"It makes no sense to introduce a trade agreement (with) border restrictions or tariffs," Economy Secretary Ildefonso Guajardo told the Detroit Economic Club. "It would be a move to the past. We have to move to the future." President Donald Trump has threatened to establish a border tax on vehicles imported from Mexico as a way to discourage automakers and others from moving jobs there. A GOP plan in Congress would slap a 20 percent tax on all imported goods.

Auto executives and economists say either plan would wreak havoc on the industry, which has gradual-



DETROIT: Ildefonso Guajardo Villarreal, Mexico's Secretary of the Economy, speaks at the Economic Club of Detroit on Friday. —AP

ly moved parts-supply and auto-assembly factories to Mexico since NAFTA took effect in 1994.

Guajardo said he hopes negotia-

tions can begin in the middle of June, but that means the White House would have to notify Congress no later than March 15.

He was guarded when asked by the media after the speech about Trump's plan to build a wall between the countries to block illegal immigration. "Mexico may not like the idea of having walls," he said. "But the US has the sovereign right to build whatever they want on the US side. We believe more in bridges and making the border work better and improving technologically to make it safe and efficient."

At the beginning of his remarks, Guajardo drew laughter as he talked about how he wasn't prepared for the surprises that came with Trump's election. "Even my reading habits have changed," he said. "(On) my booklist, there is a book that has moved to the top: (Trump's) 'The Art of the Deal.' I had to really get acquainted with that book very quickly. My next couple of years in office are going to be very interesting to say the least." —AP

SAGER ABDULAZIZ AL-MANAE WINS KD 125,000 IN NBK'S AL-JAWHARA MONTHLY DRAW

KUWAIT: National Bank of Kuwait (NBK) announces the winner for February's KD 125,000 Al-Jawhara monthly prize, Sager Abdulaziz Al-Manae. The draw was conducted live on Marina FM 90.4 on Tuesday 28th February under the supervision of the Ministry of Commerce and Industry. Al-Manae is the fourth winner for the month of February, where 3 lucky customers each have won KD 5,000 in Al-Jawhara's weekly draws.

Since the start of the Al-Jawhara program, more than 11,000 winners have already been announced. Al-Jawhara continues to be the most popular prize-giving account in Kuwait and prizes are automatically credited to the winners' accounts the day after the draw.

NBK customers have chances to win KD 5,000 weekly, KD 125,000 monthly and a grand prize of KD 250,000 quarterly. Each KD 50 in a customer's account entitles them one entry into the draw, thus more money in an account means more chances into each draw. This feature enables Al-Jawhara Account holders' to double their chances when maintaining their balance without withdrawing. Customers can easily calculate their number of chances in the draw by accessing a customized calculator on nbk.com.

Al-Jawhara account is available for both Kuwaitis and expats and can be opened at any of NBK's numerous branches around Kuwait, or safely and easily through NBK's website for existing customers.

FRANCE TO ENCOURAGE BANKS TO WORK WITH IRAN

TEHRAN: France wants to encourage the "normalization" of banking relations with Iran to improve economic relations with the Islamic republic, French Economy Minister Michel Sapin said yesterday in Tehran. "We can't work on developing our economic relations if we don't also normalise our banking relations," he said after meeting his Iranian counterpart Ali Tayebnia.

"Over the past few months, relations (between Iran and France) have considerably developed. There are projects being realized, contracts being signed," he said. But "financial circuits need to be normalized. It's our aim, our will-even if it can't be done in a day." Trust must be built "to allow companies-if they so wish-to have financing chan-

nels that are safe and efficient", Sapin said. French and other European companies have returned to Iran since the partial lifting of international sanctions in January last year when a landmark nuclear deal with world powers came into force. But international banks have not re-established financial circuits with Iran, fearing reprisals from Washington which has maintained some economic sanctions against the country.

Tensions have mounted since the January inauguration of US President Donald Trump, who has repeatedly slammed the July 2015 nuclear deal. Washington last month imposed new sanctions on individuals and companies supporting Iran's ballistic missile program and on its elite Revolutionary Guards. — AFP

INVESTORS BET TRUMP-FUELED TECH RALLY FAR FROM OVER

SAN FRANCISCO: Technology companies have been a driving force behind the US stock market's recent record rally, and despite mounting evidence of stretched valuations the sector remains a top pick for investors expecting a wave of capital expenditures by US corporations.

Corporate tax cuts and reduced regulations planned by President Donald Trump will give companies reason to spend more on cloud computing, factory automation and smart connectivity that will directly benefit Silicon Valley, many on Wall Street believe.

"The tax cuts are going to promote business investment across all industries, and the business investment is largely going to be in technology," said Doug Cote, chief market strategist at Voya Investment Management in New York. Strong performances from big names including Apple Inc and Facebook Inc

have helped make technology the strongest S&P 500 sector so far this year, surging 10 percent compared to the broader index's 6 percent rise.

In the past month, investors have poured \$325 million into the US-listed Technology Select Sector SPDR Fund, according to ETF.com, which tracks fund flows. "We may be due for a little bit of a pullback, but we're still buyers on weakness because we like the longer-term outlook over the next two to three years," said Terry Sandven, chief equity strategist at US Bank Wealth Management.

The proliferation of smart, connected devices in homes, factories and stores is leading to the collection unprecedented amounts of data and creating demand for more computing power to analyze it. Spending on cloud computing will grow by 21.5 percent a year through 2020, almost seven times as fast as overall IT

spending, according to a recent estimate by market research firm IDC.

PRICIEST OF THE PRICEY

Improved employment and consumer confidence have also been behind investors' optimism about tech, helping offset concerns about lofty valuations. After an eight-year US stock market rally, nearly all sectors are trading at earnings multiples above their long-term average, but none more so than technology, according to Thomson Reuters Datastream. The tech sector's strong performance has left it trading at 17.9 times expected earnings, compared to its 10-year average of 14.5 times expected earnings.

The S&P tech sector's price-to-earnings multiple has been above its own long-term average for about a year, and during that time the sector has surged about 28 percent. Tech bulls believe earnings

momentum is growing for the sector. S&P 500 tech earnings expanded 12.3 percent in the fourth quarter, more than any other sector, according to Thomson Reuters data. Analysts on average expect 13.6 percent growth for the March quarter.

Recent upbeat quarterly reports and commentary from Broadcom Ltd, Skyworks Solutions Inc and Applied Materials Inc suggest semiconductors are poised for strong growth, said Wedbush trader Joel Kulina.

Micron Technology Inc jumped 3.5 percent on Friday after raising its 2017 forecast the day before, helped by healthy demand for its memory chips.

"I can't remember a time when we've seen this much excitement," Kulina said. "Semiconductors aren't as cyclical as they used to be, where quarters were driven by PC demand. Now it's automotive, it's data center, industrial automation." — Reuters

SECTORS' WEEKLY TRADING ACTIVITY					SECTORS INDICES PERFORMANCE				
Sector	Volume	To Market %	Value	To Market %	Sector	Last Week Closing	Previous Week Closing	Weekly Ch. %	Annual Ch. %
OIL & GAS	27,483,664	2.63%	2,485,179	2.26%	OIL & GAS	1,009.31	886.90	13.80%	29.29%
BASIC MATERIALS	2,993,385	0.29%	1,175,348	1.07%	BASIC MATERIALS	1,303.91	1,321.85	-1.36%	29.77%
INDUSTRIALS	55,598,211	5.33%	9,628,324	8.75%	INDUSTRIALS	1,501.48	1,521.13	-1.29%	11.71%
CONSUMER GOODS	31,401,432	3.01%	3,324,778	3.02%	CONSUMER GOODS	1,194.32	1,162.50	2.74%	6.16%
HEALTH CARE	139,063	0.01%	42,197	0.04%	HEALTH CARE	1,442.13	1,323.63	8.95%	15.89%
CONSUMER SERVICES	8,633,140	0.83%	951,745	0.86%	CONSUMER SERVICES	961.52	964.90	-0.35%	4.00%
TELECOMMUNICATIONS	12,110,112	1.16%	3,776,722	3.43%	TELECOMMUNICATIONS	645.32	662.02	-2.52%	1.44%
BANKS	171,309,760	16.42%	39,955,120	36.31%	BANKS	971.36	994.44	-2.32%	16.02%
INSURANCE	5,722,391	0.55%	348,241	0.32%	INSURANCE	1,105.65	1,167.49	-5.30%	11.20%
REAL ESTATE	372,972,276	35.74%	19,103,108	17.36%	REAL ESTATE	1,064.68	1,074.80	-0.94%	22.35%
FINANCIAL SERVICES	352,487,468	33.78%	28,913,653	26.27%	FINANCIAL SERVICES	761.67	776.65	-1.93%	27.57%
TECHNOLOGY	2,755,596	0.26%	339,232	0.31%	TECHNOLOGY	870.90	880.77	-1.12%	43.44%

BOURSA KUWAIT EQUITIES SUBDUED

BAYAN WEEKLY MARKET REPORT

KUWAIT: Kuwait Stock Exchange (KSE) ended last week in the red zone. The Price Index closed at 6,767.04 points, down by 0.63 percent from the week before closing, the Weighted Index decreased by 0.61 percent after closing at 424.54 points, whereas the KSE-15 Index closed at 970.49 points down by 0.12 percent. Furthermore, last week's average daily turnover decreased by 25.19 percent, compared to the preceding week, reaching KD 27.51 million, whereas trading volume average was 260.90 million shares, recording a decrease of 28.47 percent.

As far as the Boursa Kuwait performance over the past week, which had only four sessions; the three indices recorded different losses affected by the continued profit collection operations executed on the listed stocks of leading and small-cap ones, especially the stocks that witnessed large increases as a result to the revival state lived by the Boursa during the few first weeks of the current year. The Boursa witnessed such performance in light of the decreased trading indicators of the value and the volume and executed deals during the week, where the total value dropped by 40.15 percent to reach KD 110.04, and the volume decreased to 1.04 billion stock, down by 42.78 percent.

Boursa Kuwait initiated the first session of the last week with grouped loss to the three indices, affected by the profit collection operations executed on some leading and operational stocks, especially in the Banks sector, in addition to the selling pressures that targeted some small-cap stocks being traded below its book or par values. The market witnessed such performance in light of a declined trading indicators compared to the previous session, where the cash liquidity dropped at the end of the session by around 15 percent, and the volume decreased by approximately 22 percent. On the next session, the three Boursa indices witnessed a fluctuated performance, as the Price Index was able to realize some increase by the end of the session supported by the return of the active speculative operations executed on the small-cap stocks, while the Weighted and KSE-15 indices continued recording losses for the second consecutive session due to the continued profit collection operations' control over the dealing of the leading and heavy stocks. Such variance came amid a slight increase in the trading indicators compared to the previous session, where the value recorded a growth of approximately 1.5 percent, and the volume increased by approximately 13 percent.

Wednesday's session witnessed a return of the three indices to close in the red zone, where the Price Index returned once again to the losses zone after some small-cap stocks being subject to quick profit collection operations, especially after the gains it realized in the previous

session, while the profit collection operations that been targeting the leading and heavy stocks since the beginning of the week, continued on affecting the Weighted and KSE-15 indices, which caused it to decline for the third consecutive session. On the end of week session, the three market indices returned to close in the green zone, as a result to the random purchasing operations that included many listed stocks of both leading and heavy ones; where the market witnesses such performance despite the decline in the trading indicators of both the cash liquidity or the volume of the traded stocks, where the value dropped by approximately 31 percent, while the volume decreased by about 7 percent.

Moreover, Boursa Kuwait lost around K.D. 170 million of its market value during the last week, or 0.60 percent compared to the previous week's closings, while its gains since the beginning of the year contracted to 11.02 percent, compared to its level at end of 2016, where it was then K.D. 25.41 billion. For the annual performance, the price index ended last week recording 17.73 percent annual gain compared to its closing in 2016, while the weighted index increased by 11.69 percent, and the KSE-15 recorded 9.66 percent growth.

Sectors' Indices

Nine of Boursa Kuwait's sectors ended last week in the red zone, while the other three recorded increases. The Insurance sector headed the losers list as its index declined by 5.30 percent to end the week's activity at 1,105.65 points. The Telecommunications sector was second on the losers' list, which index declined by 2.52 percent, closing at 645.32 points, followed by the Banks sector, as its index closed at 971.36 points at a loss of 2.32 percent. The Consumer Services sector was the least declining as its index closed at 961.52 points with a 0.35 percent decrease.

On the other hand, last week's highest gainer was the Oil & Gas sector, achieving 13.80 percent growth rate as its index closed at 1,009.31 points. Whereas, in the second place, the Health Care sector's index closed at 1,442.13 points recording 8.95 percent increase. The Consumer goods sector came in third as its index achieved 2.74 percent growth, ending the week at 1,194.32 points.

Sectors' Activity

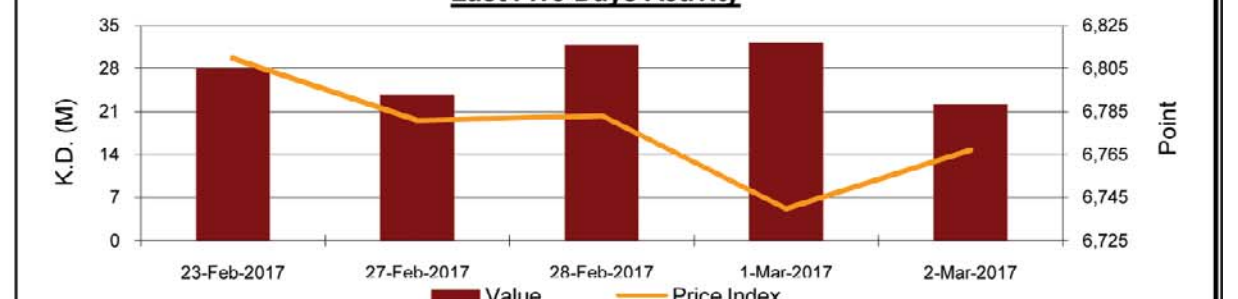
The Real Estate sector dominated a total trade volume of around 372.97 million shares changing hands during last week, representing 35.74 percent of the total market trading volume. The Financial Services sector was second in terms of trading volume as the sector's traded shares were 33.78 percent of last week's total trading volume, with a total of around 352.49 million shares.

BOURSA KUWAIT INDICES				
		Price Index	Weighted index	KSE 15
Weekly	Last week	6,767.04	424.54	970.49
	Previous week	6,809.78	427.14	971.66
	Change (Point)	-42.74	-2.60	-1.17
	Change (%)	-0.63%	-0.61%	-0.12%
Annual	Last year	5,748.09	380.09	885.02
	Change (Point)	1,018.95	44.45	85.47
	Change (%)	17.73%	11.69%	9.66%

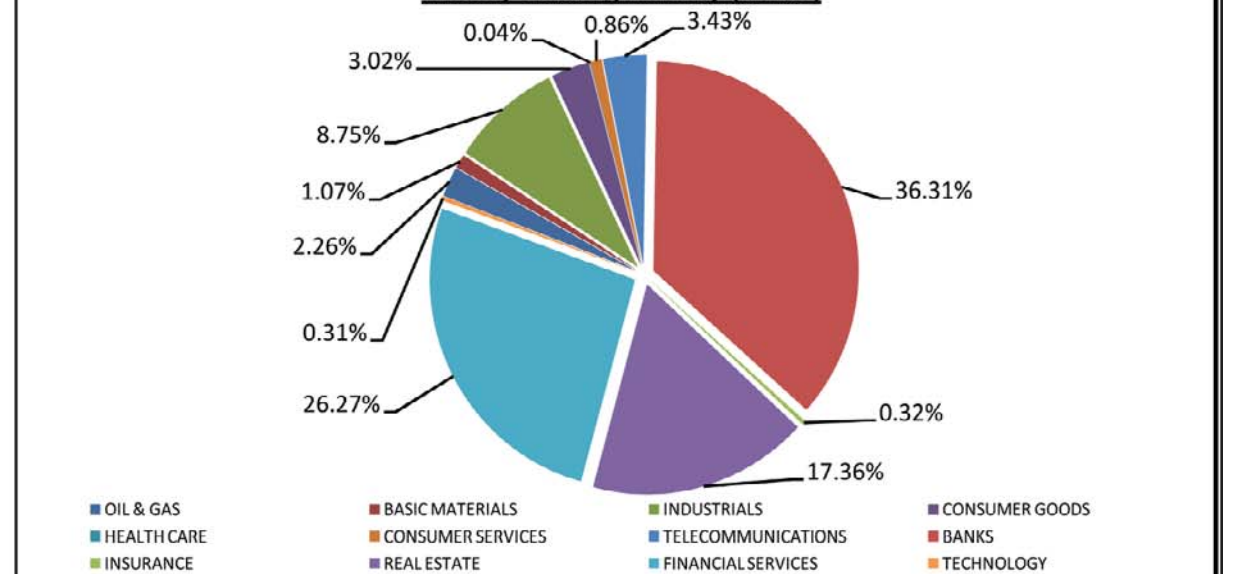
Indices Weekly Performance



Last Five Days Activity



Weekly Trading Activity (Value)



MARKET ACTIVITY			
	Last Week	Previous Week	Ch. %
Volume	1,043,606,498	1,823,762,629	-42.78%
Value (K.D)	110,043,648	183,860,607	-40.15%
Deals	25,328	38,320	-33.90%

MARKET CAPITALISATION (K.D.)			
Last Week	Previous Week	Weekly Ch. %	Annual Ch. %
28,206,067,148	28,375,404,436	-0.60%	11.02%

TOP GAINERS OF THE WEEK				
Company	Last Week Closing	Previous Week Closing	Ch. (fils)	Ch. %
NAPESCO	1,240.00	920.00	320.0	34.78%
AMWAL	44.00	34.00	10.0	29.41%
REAM	475.00	375.00	100.0	26.67%
MHC	350.00	300.00	50.0	16.67%
INJAZAT	92.00	83.00	9.0	10.84%

TOP LOSERS OF THE WEEK				
Company	Last Week Closing	Previous Week Closing	Ch. (fils)	Ch. %
WETHAQ	48.50	62.00	-13.5	-21.77%
CABLETV	24.00	30.00	-6.0	-20.00%
GFC	51.00	61.00	-10.0	-16.39%
ALSHAMEL	385.00	460.00	-75.0	-16.30%
FIRSTDUBAI	59.00	70.00	-11.0	-15.71%

BANKS, HEALTH CARE FIRMS LEAD STOCKS SLIGHTLY HIGHER

WALL STREET WEEKLY REPORT

NEW YORK: A late wave of buying helped nudge US stock indexes slightly higher Friday after a day of mostly listless trading. Banks and health care stocks climbed the most as investors priced in an increasing likelihood that interest rates will rise in the coming months.

Federal Reserve Chair Janet Yellen helped stoke those expectations in a speech in which she said an improving job market and rising inflation would likely prompt the central bank to increase borrowing costs. "The real takeaway here is if the Fed is willing to start moving, they see the economy as not only doing better but likely to do better going forward," said Brad McMillan, chief investment officer at Commonwealth Financial Network. "The Fed is notorious for waiting until the evidence of growth is absolutely undeniable." The Dow Jones industrial average rose 2.74 points, or 0.01 percent, to 21,005.71. The Standard & Poor's 500 index gained 1.20 points, or 0.1 percent, to 2,383.12. The Nasdaq composite index added 9.53 points, or 0.2 percent, to 5,870.75. Small-company stocks fell. The Russell 2000 index slipped 1.54 points, or 0.1 percent, to 1,394.13.

Speaking in Chicago on the Fed's economic outlook Friday, Yellen said the Fed will likely resume raising interest rates later this month to reflect a strengthening job market and inflation edging toward the central bank's 2 percent tar-

get rate. Yellen added that the central bank expects steady economic improvement to justify additional rate increases. While not specifying how many rate hikes could occur this year, Yellen noted that Fed officials in December had estimated that there would be three this year.

Investors' expectations of a rate hike this month had been building in recent days as remarks by other Fed officials signaled the central bank is ready to resume raising rates as soon as its next two-day meeting of policymakers on March 14-15. That's one reason the major indexes moved little before and after Yellen's speech. Still, the increased likelihood of higher interest rates gave several stocks a modest lift, including banks, which stand to make healthier profits from lending as rates rise. Bank of the Ozarks added \$1.09, or 2 percent, to \$56.24, while Signature Bank rose \$2.79, or 1.7 percent, to \$162.24.

Not faring as well were real estate, utilities and phone company stocks, which tend to lose favor among yield-seeking investors when interest rates rise. "If yields are going up you don't need to buy those stocks to get your yield, you just buy 10-Year Treasury notes," said John Canally, chief economic strategist for LPL Financial.

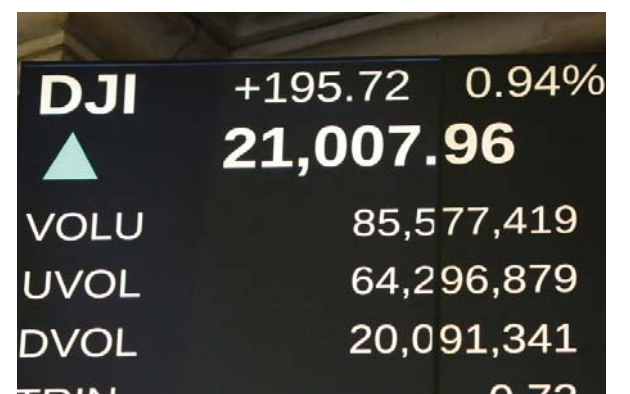
Bond prices were little changed after pulling back from an early climb. The 10-year Treasury yield held steady at 2.48

percent. Wall Street's slight gains on Friday left the stock market hovering near its latest record highs set on Wednesday. Stronger-than-expected earnings from companies, continued improvement in the US economy and expectations for business-friendly policies from Washington have helped propel the market this year to new highs. Should investors be nervous about a pullback?

"In the very short term there is some risk of a pullback," said Randy Frederick, vice president of trading and derivatives at the Schwab Center for Financial Research. "I wouldn't say it's likely to approach anything close to a correction, or a 10 percent pullback. Long-term, we continue to think we're solidly in a bull market." Airlines were among the stocks that notched solid gains Friday. American Airlines Group rose \$1.10, or 2.4 percent, to \$46.82, while Alaska Air Group added \$2.58, or 2.7 percent, to \$98.94. United Continental picked up \$2.31, or 3.2 percent, to \$75.59.

Disappointing company earnings and outlooks pulled down several stocks. Costco fell \$7.72, or 4.3 percent, to \$170.26. Firearms manufacturer American Outdoor Brands, formerly called Smith & Wesson, declined 55 cents, or 2.8 percent, to \$18.83. Revlon slid \$1.40, or 4.1 percent, to \$32.65, while L Brands, the parent of Victoria's Secret, fell \$1.07, or 2 percent, to \$52.34. Macy's also fell sharply, one of

several retailers that closed lower Friday. The department store chain declined the most among stocks in the S&P 500, skidding \$1.45, or 4.4 percent, to \$31.77. Big Lots bucked the trend, climbing 3.8 percent after the discount retailer reported a larger profit than analysts expected. —AP

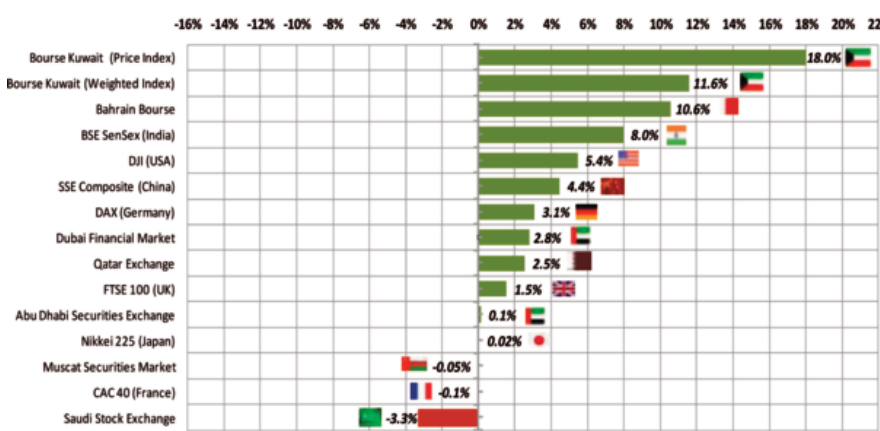


NEW YORK: A board above the trading floor of the New York Stock Exchange shows the Dow Jones industrial average above 21,000. — AP

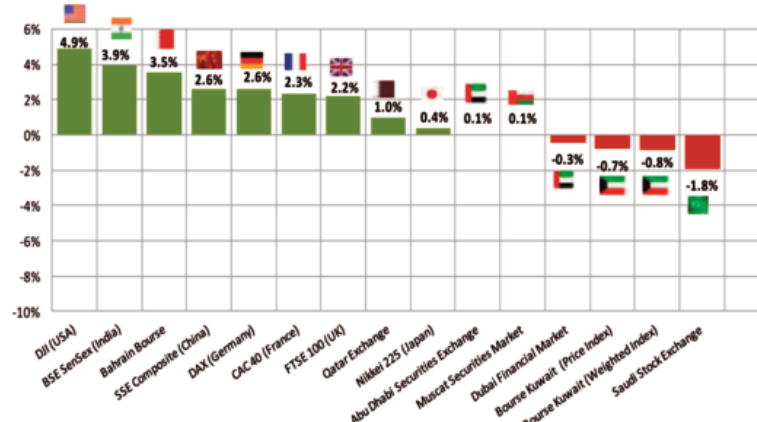
KUWAIT MAY POST KD 5BN BUDGET DEFICIT

AL-SHALL WEEKLY ECONOMIC REPORT

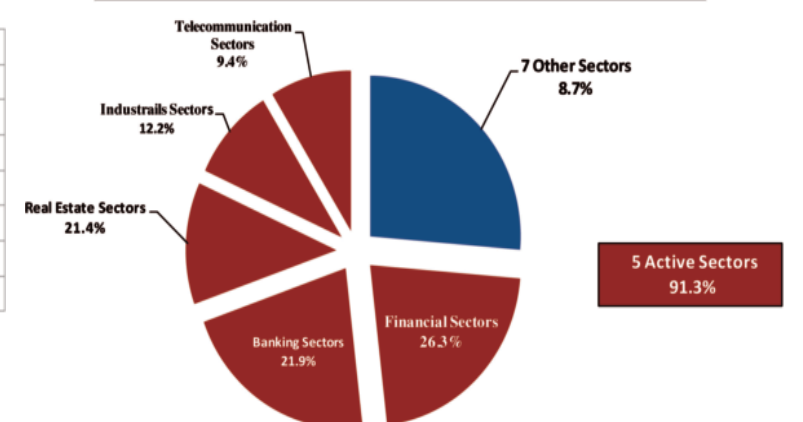
Performance of Selected Stock Markets during the month of February 2017 compared to the end of 2016



Performance of Selected Stock Markets during the month of February 2017



Distribution of liquidity among sectors of the bourse



KUWAIT: By the end of February 2017, the 11th month of the current fiscal year 2016/2017 ended and for the third consecutive month oil prices continued their consolidation around \$50 per barrel. The average price for Kuwaiti oil for February was \$52.4 per barrel. Consequently, the average price of the Kuwaiti barrel of oil during the 11 months period of the current fiscal year from April 2016 to February 2017 - was \$44.3, which is \$9.3 per barrel, 26.6 percent, higher than the hypothetical price estimated for the current budget at \$35 per barrel. The past fiscal year 2015/2016 which ended on March 31, 2016 scored an average price for Kuwaiti oil of \$42.7 per barrel. This means the average price of oil for the past part of the current fiscal year is 3.7 percent higher than the average price of the barrel for the past fiscal year.

Kuwait is supposed to have achieved actual oil revenues in February about KD 0.9 billion. As such, it is assumed to have achieved oil revenues until the end of February -11 months- in the amount of KD 11.3 billion. Assuming that production and prices would continue at the current levels, Kuwait's oil revenues would score about KD 12.3 billion in oil revenues for the entire current fiscal year, which is 43 percent higher than the value of oil revenues estimated for the budget at KD 8.6 billion.

Adding an amount of KD 1.6 billion in non-oil revenues, projected budget revenues would score KD 13.9 billion for the entire current fiscal year. If that is achieved, and assuming spending all estimated expenditures in the budget at KD 18.9 billion, and without deducting what is transferred to the future generations reserve — it is meaningless in case of a deficit funded by the general reserve or by borrowing guaranteed by the future generations reserve — the actual deficit would score about KD 5 billion. However, this figure would be more or less subject to developments in oil prices during the last month of the current fiscal year. It naturally will be reduced by any cuts in the estimated expenses in the budget when actual expenses are reviewed in the final account. Under all circumstances, the current fiscal year will end with achieving real and continued deficit, and for the second consecutive year, where it is expected to be estimated at KD 4-5 billion when the final account is issued.

Bourse Kuwait

The performance of February was less active than that of January 2017, which all indexes of value, volume, number of transactions and the general index (AlShall index) dropped. The bourse total liquidity scored about KD 866.4 million in February 2017. Making the Bourse total liquidity in two months at KD 2.052 billion (i.e. in 41 working days), or 71.4 percent of total liquidity in 2016. The daily average trading value scored about KD 50 million, less by about 7.1 percent than the daily average trading value for January 2017 (i.e. in 22 working days), while it rose strongly by about 4.3 times compared with the daily trading average value for 2016 and about 3.1 times compared to the daily trading average value for 2015. Liquidity trends since the beginning of the year still indicate that half of listed companies did not get except 3.1 percent only of that liquidity, including 50 companies there from which got about 0.2 percent only of that liquidity and 6 companies remained without any trading. 15 liquid companies, whose capitalization value is equal to 2 percent only of the value of listed companies, got 22.3 percent of the bourse liquidity. This means that the high liquidity activity still deprives about half of the listed companies from it, on the contrary, it strongly goes to valueless companies, presenting an unhealthy condition. The distribution of liquidity among the four categories of companies was as follows:

The Highest 10 percent in Liquidity:

18 listed companies contributed by 44.5 percent to Bourse Kuwait capitalization value while they took about 53.3 percent of the Bourse liquidity, including 12 big companies which contributed by about 43.6 percent of the Bourse capitalization value and got about 77 percent of the liquidity of that category, and 6 small companies took 23 percent of the liquidity of that category whose capitalization value did not exceed 0.9 percent only of the value of all Bourse Kuwait companies. While some big companies obtained high deserved liquidity, deviation is still substantial towards small companies, a matter that should be monitored.

The Highest 10 percent in capitalization value:

This category contributed 70.6 percent of the Bourse capitalization value and took 31.9 percent of its liquidity. However, 10 companies within it contained obvious liquidity deviation which captured about 91.5 percent of the liquidity of that category leaving

approximately 8.5 percent of the category liquidity for 8 other large companies.

The Lowest 01 percent in capitalization value:

The category contributed by 0.3 percent to the Bourse capitalization value but took 2.9 percent of Bourse liquidity. Six companies within this category captured 96.2 percent liquidity of this category, while 12 other small companies got only 3.8 percent of the category liquidity. That liquidity deviation in this category suggests a very high dose of speculation on some of its companies.

Bourse Kuwait sectors liquidity

There are 5 active sectors in the bourse that contribute 87 percent to its capitalization value and got 91.3 percent of liquidity suggesting conformity between liquidity and the weight of those sectors in the bourse value. But within those sectors there was deviation in the direction of liquidity. The financial services sector received 26.3 percent of bourse liquidity, equivalent to about 2.6 times its contribution to its capitalization value. The real estate sector got 21.4 percent of bourse liquidity which equals 2.7 times its contribution to its value. Note that the two sectors are speculative ones.

The banking sector got 21.9 percent of bourse liquidity which accounts for 45.5 percent only of its contribution to its capitalization value. This means its share of liquidity is less than half of its contribution to value. The banking sector is the more disciplined and more solvent and the more beneficiary from rising assets prices. The remaining 7 sectors, liquid and non-liquid all scored liquidity ratios close to their contribution to the bourse value.

Comparative performance for selected markets

By the end of February, the second month of 2017 ended and still prevailed positive performance for the sample markets, in February, the performance of 11 markets was positive and only 3 markets achieved negative performance compared with January when 9 markets' performance was positive and 5 markets achieved negative performance. The outcome for the first two months of the current year was positive performance for 11 markets and 3 markets achieved negative performance. This means that 2 markets moved from the negative zone in the end of January to the positive zone by the end of February. The main gainer in February was the American market which gained 4.9 percent in one month and broke its record numbers. Most support came from President Trump's promises of expansionist financial policies, i.e. increasing public spending coupled with reduced taxes despite warnings of the Federal Reserve to start contracting monetary policies, i.e. to accelerate the increase of the interest rate.

The second gainer was the Indian market which achieved the highest economic growth rates among emerging economies. The third gainer was the Bahraini market which continues its strong positive performance since last January. The ranking of the biggest gainers in the first two months of the current year came slightly different. If Kuwait price index gains in two months (18 percent) was excluded because it is a wrong measurement index, the Kuwaiti market remains the biggest gainer, whose weighted index achieved gains by 11.6 percent, despite losses of February followed by the Bahraini market by 10.6 percent gains and then Indian market by about 8 percent.

The biggest loser in February was the Saudi market whose index lost -1.8 percent continuing January losses. The second biggest loser was the Kuwaiti market whose weighted index lost about -0.8 percent.

The third loser was Dubai market whose index lost -0.3 percent. Which means that the three market losers in February were all from Gulf markets. The outcome of the negative zone markets since the beginning of the current year were losses by -3.3 percent for the Saudi market to occupy the bottom of the negative zone, then the French market, and the Muscat market though with slight losses by -0.1 percent and -0.05 percent respectively.

Performance of selected stock markets during the month of February 2017 Reading through the performance of the first two months of the current year does not help us to reach a logical conclusion; the Kuwaiti market leads the gainers list and the Saudi market lies at the bottom of the negative zone. The remaining markets include the rest of the Gulf markets and the advanced ones with overlapping performances between them. The most affected markets hypothetically by the new American Administration's policies are close in ranking performance.

American market came fifth in the positive performance, the Chinese came sixth, and the German came seventh while the

Japanese and the French are among the last 4 positions. This in our opinion reflects a case of absence in the ability of dealers to be aware of prospects of developing total variables together with hedging against risks to achieve gains in the short term.

Performance does not seem to differ in March. The end of last month speech of the American President was different and tends towards quiescence despite the repetition of the election campaign promises. Therefore, it is likely that the performance in March will be positive for most markets but without big gains or losses for the gainers or losers.

Ahli United Bank financial results FY 2016

Ahli United Bank (AIMutahed) announced results of its operations for the year ending December 31, 2016 which showed that the bank's net profit, after deducting taxes, scored about KD 37.6 million, up by KD 2.7 million, or by 7.8 percent, versus KD 34.9 million in 2015. This rise in the net profit due to a drop in total provisions by KD 3.1 million, or by 7.6 percent. This erased the impact of the slight drop of the bank's operational profit by 0.7 percent. The bank achieved profits for its shareholders by KD 40.3 million, down by KD 2.5 million, or by 5.7 percent, compared with KD 42.8 million.

The bank's total operations incomes increased by less value than the rise in total operational expenditures, i.e. increased by KD 181 thousand, or by 0.2 percent, and scored KD 111.05 million compared with KD 110.87 million. This resulted from the rise in the item of net gain on sale of investments by about KD 2.1 million, to KD 3.5 million vis-à-vis KD 1.4 million, while the other items of operational incomes declined by KD 1.9 million, to KD 107.6 million compared with KD 109.5 million.

Total operational expenditures of the bank rose by KD 687 thousand, or by 2.1 percent, to KD 33.89 million compared with KD 33.2 million in 2015. Percentage of total operational expenditures to total operational incomes scored 30.5 percent versus 29.9 percent in 2015. Total provisions decreased by KD 3.1 million, or by 7.6 percent, as mentioned, and scored KD 37.5 million versus KD 40.6 million. Therefore, the net profit margin rose to 33.9 percent versus 31.5 percent in 2015.

Total bank assets scored about KD 3.692 billion, decreased by 5.4 percent, versus KD 3.904 billion in the end of 2015. Item of cash and balances with banks dropped by KD 300.3 million, or by 87.2 percent, and scored KD 44.1 million (1.2 percent of total assets) compared with KD 344.5 million (8.8 percent of total assets) in the end of December 2015. But item of financing receivables rose by KD 25.7 million to KD 2.706 billion (73.3 percent of total assets) vis-à-vis KD 2.680 billion (68.7 percent of total assets). Percentage of financing receivables to total deposits scored 84.7 percent versus 76.8 percent. Figures indicate that the bank's liabilities (without calculating total equity) decreased by KD 297 million, or by 8.4 percent, and scored KD 3.246 billion (KD 3.543 billion in the end of 2015). Percentage of total liabilities to total assets scored 87.9 percent versus 90.8 percent in 2015.

Results of analyzing the bank's financial statements indicate that most profitability indexes declined compared with the end of 2015. The return on average capital (ROC) dropped to 22.8 percent (23.2 percent). The index of return on average equities relevant to the bank shareholders (ROE) dropped to 10.9 percent (12.5 percent). But the index of return on average assets (ROA) rose slightly to 1 percent (0.9 percent). EPS scored 25.9 fils (27.4 fils in 2015). (P/E) scored 15.8 times (improved- (19.3 times) due to the drop in the EPS by 5.5 percent compared with a bigger decline in the share market price by 22.6 percent. (P/B) scored 1.6 times versus 2.3 times in the end of 2015. The bank announced intentions to distribute cash dividends by 12 percent of the nominal share value, i.e. 12 fils per share, and to distribute 8 percent as shares dividends. This means the share achieved cash yield by 2.9 percent on the closing price in the end of December 2016 at 410 fils. The cash distributions reached 5 percent in 2015 and distribute shares dividends by 10 percent.

The weekly performance of Bourse Kuwait

The performance of Bourse Kuwait for last week (4 working days due to the Liberation day holiday) was less active compared to the previous one, where all indexes showed a decrease, the traded value index, the traded volume index, number of transactions index, and the general index. AlShall Index (value weighted) closed at 407.7 points at the closing of last Thursday, showing a decrease of about 0.2 points or about 0.05 percent compared with its level last week, while it increased by 44.7 points or about 12.3 percent compared with the end of 2016.

	31/12/2016 (Thousand KD)	31/12/2015 (Thousand KD)	Value	Change	%
Total Assets	3,692,161	3,904,303	(212,142)	-5.4%	↓
Total liabilities	3,246,473	3,543,468	(296,995)	-8.4%	↓
Total Equity attributable to the equity holders of the bank	385,048	356,158	28,890	8.1%	↑
Total Operating Incomes	111,053	110,872	181	0.2%	↑
Total Operating Expenses	33,891	33,204	687	2.1%	↑
Provision	37,492	40,593	(3,101)	-7.6%	↓
Taxation	2,023	2,156	(133)	-6.2%	↓
Net income	37,647	34,919	2,728	7.8%	↑
Ratios					
Return on Average Assets (ROA)	1.0%	0.9%			↑
Return on Average Equity Relevant To The Bank Shareholder (ROE)	10.9%	12.5%			↓
Return on Average Capital (ROC)	22.8%	23.2%			↓
Earnings per share (EPS) – (Fils)	25.9	27.4	(1.5)	-5.5%	↓
Closing price – (Fils)	410	530	(120)	-22.6%	↓
Price to Earnings Per Share Multiplies (P/E)	15.8	19.3			
Price to Book Value Multiplies (P/B)	1.6	2.3			

The following tables summarize last week's performance of Bourse Kuwait

Description	Week 9		Diff
	02/03/2017	23/02/2017	
Working days	4	5	
AlShall index (36 Companies)	407.7	407.9	-0.05%
Bourse Kuwait index (price)	6,767.0	6,809.8	-0.6%
Value Trade (KD)	110,043,648	183,860,607	
Daily average (KD)	27,510,912	36,772,121	-25.2%
Volume Trade (Shares)	1,043,606,498	1,823,762,629	
Daily average (Shares)	260,901,625	364,752,526	-28.5%
Transactions	25,328	38,320	
Daily average (Transactions)	6,332	7,664	-17.4%

Most Active Sectors & Companies		
Description	Value Traded	% of Total
Sectors	KD	Market
ALIMTIAZ INVESTMENT CO. K.S.C.C	13,279,570	12.1%
NATIONAL BANK OF KUWAIT	10,144,575	9.2%
KUWAIT FINANCE HOUSE	8,618,780	7.8%
BOUBYAN BANK K.S.C	6,747,550	6.1%
ITHMAAR HOLDING CO	5,784,878	5.3%
Total	44,575,353	40.5%
Description	Value Traded	% of Total
Sectors	KD	Market
BANKS SECTOR	39,955,120	36.3%
FINANCIAL SERVICES SECTOR	28,912,675	26.3%
REAL ESTATE SECTOR	19,103,108	17.4%
INDUSTRIALS SECTOR	9,629,302	8.8%
TELECOMMUNICATIONS SECTOR	3,776,722	3.4%

ALSHALL INDEX	Week 9		Week 8	
	02/03/2017		23/02/2017	
Increased Value (# of Companies)	9		14	
Decreased Value (# of Companies)	16		17	
Unchanged Value (# of Companies)	11		5	
Total Companies	36		36	

Company Name	THU		DIFF	CLOSE	DIFF
	02/03/2017	23/02/2017			
1 The National Bank Of Kuwait	427.2	415.5	2.8	362.9	17.7
2 The Gulf Bank	201.5	201.5	0.0	195.0	3.3
3 Commercial Bank Of Kuwait	366.8	405.1	(9.5)	349.7	4.9
4 Al-Ahli Bank Of Kuwait	199.7	199.7	0.0	196.4	1.7
5 Kuwait International Bank	254.3	258.4	(1.6)	214.7	18.4
6 Ahli United Bank	396.2	387.4	2.3	361.0	9.8
7 Burgan Bank	307.2	292.9	4.9	283.4	8.4
8 Kuwait Finance House	1343.4	1367.8	(1.8)	1172.1	14.6
Banking Sector	431.8	428.8	0.7	379.3	13.8
9 Commercial Facilities Co	131.4	125.6	4.6	112.6	16.7
10 International Financial Advisors	340.4	376.9	(9.7)	251.3	35.5
11 National Investments	166.1	173.7	(4.4)	119.5	39.0
12 Kuwait Investment Projects	1114.2	1136.5	(2.0)	1114.2	0.0
13 Coast Investment & Development	66.3	68.3	(2.9)	52.6	26.0
Investment Sector	336.0	342.7	(2.0)	311.7	7.8
14 Kuwait Insurance Company	68.4	68.4	0.0	61.7	10.9
15 Gulf Insurance Company	342.2	342.2	0.0	382.1	(10.4)
16 Al-Ahleia Insurance Company	187.8	187.8	0.0	170.9	9.9
17 Warba Insurance Company	85.2	86.9	(2.0)	83.6	1.9
Insurance Sector	145.7	145.8	(0.1)	145.0	0.5
18 Kuwait Real Estate Company	119.8	126.4	(5.2)	100.1	19.7
19 United Realty Company	197.8	203.9	(3.0)	191.7	3.2
20 National Real Estate Company	238.5	252.2	(5.4)	238.5	0.0
21 Salhiyah Real Estate Company	1574.8	1574.8	0.0	1433.4	9.9
Real Estate Sector	209.2	215.3	(2.8)	195.8	6.8
22 The National Industries	130.4	134.0	(2.7)	109.0	19.6
23 Refrigeration Industries Co	738.7	746.2	(1.0)	618.1	19.5
24 Gulf Cable & Electrical Industries	223.8	223.8	0.0	149.9	49.3
25 Contracting & Marine Services Co	35.4	35.4	0.0	39.1	(9.5)
Industrial Sector	209.9	212.5	(1.2)	172.4	21.8
26 Kuwait National Cinemas	941.6	891.4	5.6	778.4	21.0
27 Kuwait Hotels Company	137.5	135.3	1.6	145.8	(5.7)
28 The Public Warehousing Co	2289.7	2406.1	(4.8)	2406.1	(4.8)
29 Mobile Telecommunications Co - ZAIN	744.0	759.6	(2.1)	541.1	37.5
30 Safat Energy Co	16.8	17.4	(3.4)	11.1	51.4
Services Sector	933.7	957.8	(2.5)	822.1	13.6
31 Livestock Transport & Trading Co	205.0	188.3	8.9	178.3	15.0
32 Danah Aalsafat Foodstuff Company	99.2	91.0	9.0	89.0	11.5
33 Kuwait Food Co	2581.6	2581.6	0.0	2561.9	0.8
Food Sector	899.4	894.4	0.6	887.2	1.4
34 Sharjah Cement Co	366.6	362.5	1.1	358.3	2.3
35 Gulf Cement Co	358.9	358.9	0.0	302.4	18.7
36 Umm Al-Qaiwain Cement Industries	640.1	640.1	0.0	551.8	16.0
Non Kuwaiti Companies	238.0	237.5	0.2	222.6	6.9
General Index	407.7	407.9	(0.05)	363.0	12.3

KUWAIT STOCKS COME UNDER SELLING PRESSURE

KFH Capital Report on Stock Market

Most Active Stocks	Current Week ('000 Share)	Prev. Week ('000 Share)	Chng	% Total Mkt	YTD-Turnover	Price Stats- Weekly		
						Current	Prev.	Chng.
Ithmar Bank ®	96,148	124,242	-22.6%	9.22%	42.4%	0.056	0.064	-12.5%
Alintiaz Investment Group Co. ®	77,941	27,222	186.3%	7.48%	60.7%	0.178	0.176	1.1%
Abyaar Real Estate Dev. Co. ®	67,403	112,635	-40.2%	6.47%	163.6%	0.033	0.034	-2.9%
Investors Holding Group ®	66,774	77,046	-13.3%	6.41%	214.3%	0.030	0.030	0.0%
Aayan Leasing & Investment Co. ®	38,618	71,998	-46.4%	3.70%	94.6%	0.047	0.051	-8.8%

Top 3 Gainers	C. Mkt Cap	Pr. Mkt Cap	Change %	% Total Mkt	Price Stats- Weekly	
					Current	Previous
National Petroleum Services Co. ©	71.44	53.00	34.78%	0.245%	1.240	0.920
Amwal International Investment Co.	7.94	6.14	29.41%	0.027%	0.044	0.034
Real Estate Asset Management Co. ®	49.64	39.19	26.67%	0.170%	0.475	0.375

Top 3 Losers	C. Mkt Cap	Pr. Mkt Cap	Change %	% Total Mkt	Price Stats- Weekly	
					Current	Previous
Wethaq Takaful Insurance Co. ®	5.35	6.84	-21.77%	0.018%	0.049	0.062
Kuwait Cable Vision	0.72	0.90	-20.00%	0.002%	0.024	0.030
Kuwait Cable Vision	0.72	0.90	-20.00%	0.002%	0.024	0.030

Islamic Stock © : Compatible Islamic Stock Market Cap is in KWD million. Market Prices are in KWD

Top KSE Islamic Stocks in terms of Market Capitalization (MC)						
Stocks	Current Week	Previous Week	Chg.	% of MUDX	Weekly Volume	YTD-Gain
Kuwait Finance House ®	3,197.34	3,249.75	-1.6%	39.2%	14,109,353	13.0%
Boubyan Bank ®	931.56	931.56	0.0%	11.4%	15,383,565	8.9%
Ahli United Bank ®	779.57	762.24	2.3%	9.6%	532,630	9.8%
GFH Financial Group B.S.C ®	546.09	532.55	2.5%	6.7%	2,964,130	44.0%
Kuwait Telecommunications Co. ®	409.51	424.49	-3.5%	5.0%	144,391	-11.8%

KUWAIT: The Bursa Kuwait Indices witnessed a negative week as indices decreased this week. The Bursa price index closed at 6,767.04 an decrease of 0.63 percent down 42.74 points compared to the previous week. As the MUDX witnessed an decrease this week of 0.79 percent to close at 664.35 for the week. Furthermore, the market blue-chip index the KXS15 closed on an decrease of 1.17 points down 0.12 percent during the week to close at 970.49.

The reported weekly volumes were 1,042.53 million shares compared to 1,820.73 million shares in previous. Among the major contributors, the Financial Services Sector (contributing 33.71 percent) witnessed 351.41 million shares of trading compared to 522.15 million shares in the previous week, while Real Estate Sector (contributing 35.78 percent) witnessed 372.97 million shares of trading compared to 729.42 million shares in the previous week.

The overall Market Cap witnessed an decrease this week as it stood at KD 29.15 billion down 0.6 percent on weekly basis. As for the blue-chips, National Bank of Kuwait - NBK (Mcap - KD 4.28 billion) saw its market cap increased by 2.7 percent during the week. However, Mobile Telecommunication Co - Zain (Mcap - KD 2.048 billion) saw its market cap decreased by 1.04 percent during the week. Ahli United Bank - AUB (Mcap - KD 1.636 billion) saw its market cap decrease by 3.23 percent during the week.

On the total market breadth, Of the 56 Islamic Companies, 10 advanced while 35 declined during the week. The Islamic universe market cap witnessed its market cap an decrease of 0.92 percent to close at KD 8,160 billion. The universe heavyweights Kuwait Finance House - KFH (Mcap - KD 3.197 billion) saw its market cap decrease by 1.61 percent during the week. However, Boubyan Bank (Mcap - KW 931.56 million) saw its market cap unchanged this week. Furthermore, Kuwait Telecommunication Co. - VIVA (Mcap - KD 409.51 million) saw its market decrease by 3.53 percent during the week.

AMERICANS BUY MORE TRUCKS, SUVs IN FEB

CHICAGO: Americans' strong appetite for light trucks and sport utility vehicles helped drive sales higher in February at some automakers, while others struggled with continued weakening demand for sedans and compact cars. GM, Nissan, Honda and Mazda were among the companies posting sales gains last month, while Ford, Toyota, and Fiat Chrysler's US subsidiary reported declines compared to the same period a year ago.

The seasonally adjusted annual sales rate for the month dipped to 17.58 million units, down slightly from the same period last year, according to Autodata. Sales volume, the total number of vehicles actually sold, dropped one percent from the year ago period to 1.33 million—a 17 percent decline from January. The industry is coming off of a record sales year in 2016, and this year's pace is still expected to be robust even if consumer demand weakens. "The sales pace for the industry is healthy, and more importantly, looks to be sustainable as we head into the high volume selling months ahead," industry analyst Tim Fleming of Kelley Blue Book said earlier this week.

GM—the biggest US automaker by sales volume—grew four percent in February. The company expects newly-introduced and recently redesigned crossovers to drive sales in 2017.

"We delivered solid growth in the industry's fastest-growing and most profitable segments," Kurt McNeil, GM's head of US sales, said in a statement. Nissan sales grew by 3.7 percent, with crossovers, trucks and SUVs experiencing 22 percent increase year-over-year. Its Rogue compact crossover was the most popular model for the month, and saw sales surge an eye-popping 54 percent.

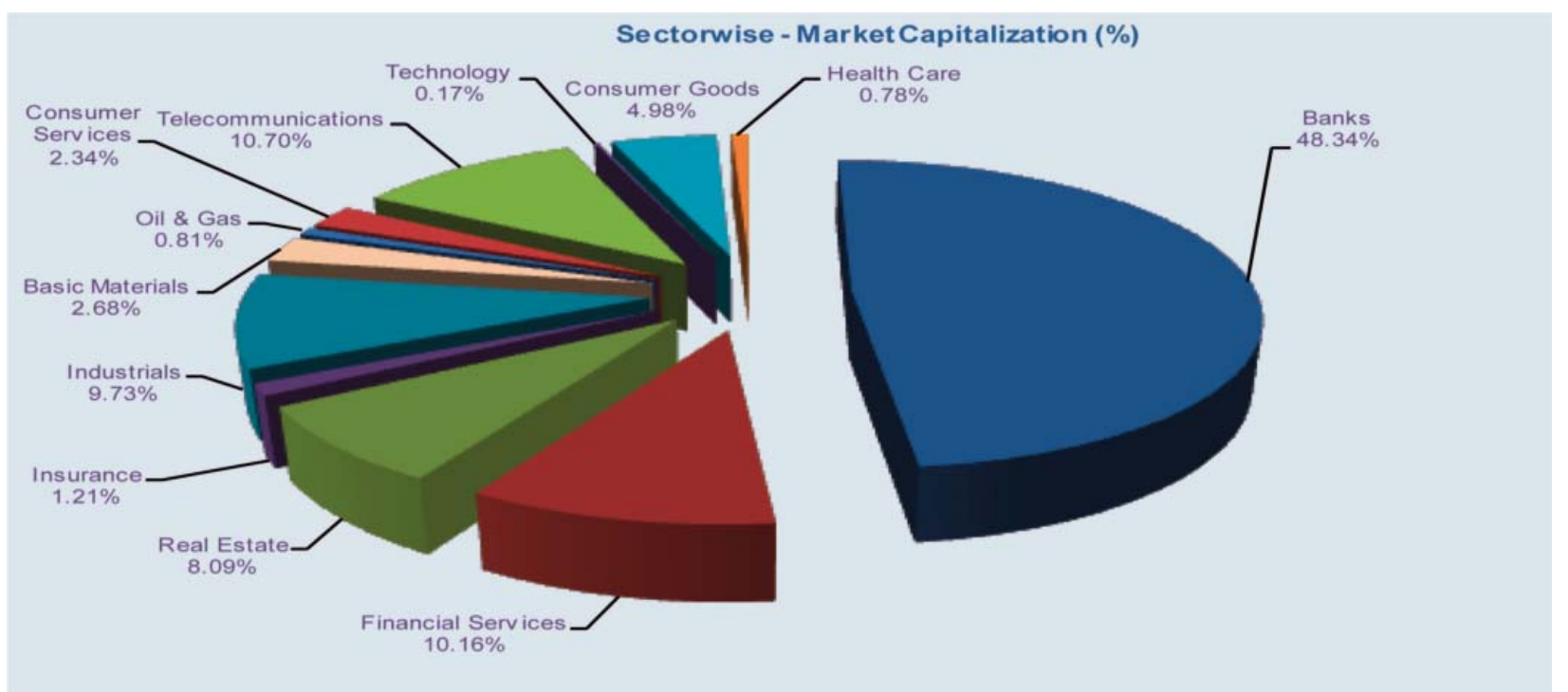
Mazda posted a sales gain of 5.9 percent, led by its crossover SUVs, while Honda grew 2.3 percent on the strength of its popular CR-V SUV.

"February saw continued demand for utility vehicles, and as we move into March, our healthy luxury utility vehicle inventory puts us in an excellent position," Jeff Bracken, chief of Toyota USA's Lexus division, said in a statement. Other luxury automakers saw signs of optimism, too. Mercedes-Benz said it had the best February in the US in its history. Sales were up 6.9 percent, led by its C-Class entry level sedans.

BMW grew a mere 0.3 percent, but-like Toyota-expected better results in March. "March is the real beginning of the automotive selling season in the US and BMW is well positioned for success," Ludwig Willisch, head of BMW's Americas group, said in a statement. Volkswagen showed more signs of recovery from its diesel emissions cheating scandal, which hobbled sales for much of 2016. The company posted a 12.7 percent increase this February compared to last. Its Tiguan SUV sales grew 5.5 percent, and its mid-priced Passat sedan sales jumped 39.6 percent. —AFP

Weekly KSE Statistics				
Key Parameters	Current	Previous	Chg.	%
Volume (Million Share)	1,042.53	1,820.73	(778.20)	-42.7%
Value (KD Million)	110.01	183.75	(73.74)	-40.1%
Deals ('000)	25.24	38.19	(12.95)	-33.9%
Market Cap (KD Bln)	29.15	29.33	(0.18)	-0.6%

Market Movers			
Advance	Decline	Unchanged	Not Traded
35	103	25	16



FASTTELCO LAUNCHES POSTPAID INTERNET PLANS

FIXED HIGH-SPEED UNLIMITED INTERNET STARTING AT KD 11

KUWAIT: FASTtelco, owned by Ooredoo Kuwait, launched new fixed high-speed internet plans on a post-paid basis, breaking away from the limitations of traditional prepaid yearly payment. Starting from KD 11 for an unlimited capacity of internet, the plans range in speed from 10 Mbps to 100 Mbps, making use of the increase number of areas covered with fiber optics.



Nouf Al-Meshaan

Customers who opt for the fixed internet service will enjoy an unparalleled reliable speed of internet at their home, with flexible payment mode on a monthly basis. All plans offer an unlimited capacity of internet with no daily or monthly cap.

FASTtelco's head of retail Nouf Al-Meshaan said in a statement, "Our strategy from launch-



ing this product is to keep up with our customers' mode of usage, and to better serve their needs. We live in a world where the Internet has become an essential and integral part. It has exceeded the role of being a means of business and communication, and is a vital part in every home, whether for video games or streaming entertainment content. We have carefully designed these packages

with the option of committing in a yearly contract for even discounted prices, and we are certain that our new premium and reliable products will exceed our valued customers' expectations."

FASTtelco recently announced its new identity earlier this month, adopting a refreshed look with vibrant colors and a new design. The move comes to change the ISP's market by introducing innovative products and plans that fulfill customers' growing needs through technology. FASTtelco was recently acquired by Ooredoo Kuwait, a member of the international Ooredoo Group, in a move to bolster the telecom service provider's presence in the Kuwaiti market. FASTtelco products can be purchased via FASTtelco's authorized resellers, or on FASTtelco's website www.fasttelco.net.

Starting in 2001, FASTtelco has succeeded to assume the leading position in the Kuwaiti Telecommunication market as an internet service provider to individual and corporate clients. The company was acquired by Ooredoo Kuwait in 2016.

ABK ANNOUNCES WINNERS OF 'DOUBLE YOUR SALARY' DRAWS

KUWAIT: Al-Ahli Bank of Kuwait (ABK) held its 44th 'Double Your Salary' weekly draw on 27th February, 2017 at the Bank's Head Office in the presence of a representative from the Ministry of Commerce, announcing the names of the winners for this week. The promotion includes weekly draws, with two winners per draw. The campaign will run until 27th June, 2017.

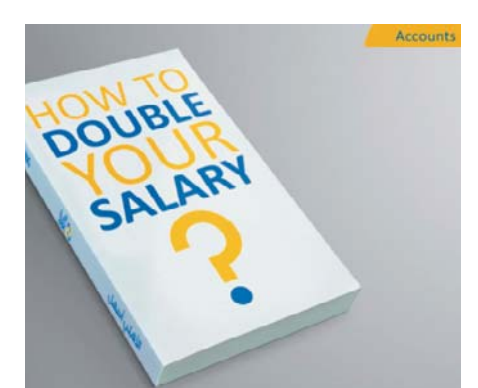
The winners this week are:

* Ahmad Mohammad Abdullah Ahmad, Farwaniya Branch

* Razan Zoffmann, Fahaheel Branch

New customers who transfer their salary to ABK receive KD 100 and will automatically be entered into the weekly draws to double their salaries. Existing customers who are already transferring their salary to ABK are entered into a separate draw.

The next 'Double Your Salary' draw will



be held on 6th March, 2017 where two new lucky winners will be announced. All winners will be contacted personally and a weekly announcement will be made through the media with the winners' names. For more information about Al-Ahli Bank of Kuwait please visit eahli.com.

CISCO TO HIGHLIGHT IMPORTANCE OF DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION

DOHA: Cisco announced its continued support for Qatar's efforts to drive digital transformation by participating in knowledge sharing sessions and workshops on the latest technology innovations at the fourth edition of QITCOM exhibition and conference, to be held at the Qatar National Convention Centre from March 6-8, 2017 in Doha. Cisco will also support the event through its joint presence at partner stands and through its high-profile speakers and panelists, knowledge sharing at multiple forums, and technology showcase of digital, smart and collaboration solutions.

Organized by Qatar's Ministry of Transport and Communications (MOTC) under the theme 'Qatar - Towards a Smart Future', QITCOM is the country's biggest digital event, connecting smart technology with international expertise, industry leadership, key government decision makers, innovators and entrepreneurs. Overall, the event anchors six themes including transport, public sector, digital clusters, health, environment and sports.

"It is critical for governments in the region to be ahead of the technology curve and set the pace for both public sector and private sector organizations to match, thereby yielding huge improvements in citizen services and citizen satisfaction. Cisco is pleased to

QITCOM 2017, Doha

support MOTC in its journey to achieve Qatar's National Vision 2030 and to help boost its digital transformation and smart technology efforts towards a smart future," said Ziad Salameh, Managing Director and General Manager - West Region, Cisco Middle East.

As part of its activities at QITCOM 2017, Cisco will demonstrate its Internet of Things (IoT), collaboration and security solutions at the stand of its partner Salam Technology, QITCOM's strategic sponsor. Technology specialists from both companies will be present at Salam Technology's stand to meet with customers and share their global and regional successes with them.

Cisco is actively supporting Qatar MOTC's initiatives to drive digital technology adoption amongst SMEs by taking part in knowledge sharing sessions and workshops at the 'Digital Masrah'.

Cisco will also showcase its Meraki and collaboration solutions at the 'BizTech Zone' and highlight the technology implementations that are supporting Doha Port's digital journey towards becoming a smart entity at



Ziad Salameh



Bas Boorsma

the Qatar Ports Management Company - Mwani stand at the exhibition. "By being abreast of the latest technologies, the government will also be demonstrating how businesses can make themselves more productive and more relevant with the changing nature of tomorrow's workforce. Cisco is actively engaged in premier events such as QITCOM 2017, where it is important for us to work side by side with our technology partners, customers and

government stakeholders to showcase how technology can create path-breaking improvement in business practices and citizen services," he added.

"In the realm of today's digital transformation, it is imperative that new startup businesses embrace the right mix of mobile, cloud, social, security and collaboration solutions from the beginning. By adapting to these technologies from the initial stages, startups and SMEs can build their workflows and business practices around forward looking solutions, thereby making it easy to get the maximum business and productivity benefits," explained Bas Boorsma, Director of Internet of Things and City Digitization for Cisco North Europe.

Under the patronage of Qatar's Prime Minister and Minister of Interior, Sheikh Abdullah bin Nasser bin Khalifa Al-Thani, the fourth QITCOM Conference and Exhibition marks the launch of the Smart Qatar Program. As part of the Qatar Smart Program, the Qatari government is embarking on a Digital Cluster Strategy which will form alliances with other global digital hubs and foster start up partnerships internationally.

Bas Boorsma, Director of Internet of Things and City Digitization at Cisco North

Europe, will participate in a panel discussion on 'Digital Clusters as Ecosystems to Enable Innovation, which will address how digital clusters are driving economic growth by stimulating innovation and knowledge spill overs. The panel will also shed light into how the relationship between government, private sector and startups can be leveraged to create jobs and attract global talent, as well as how governments can embrace emerging business models and modes of financing to enable innovation through digital cluster strategies.

"Having the right technology mix in place helps attract the most talented workforce, drives the ability to innovate and, perhaps most importantly, helps boost their valuation for private and public investments, a key requirement for business growth and expansion. Cisco is committed to work alongside Qatar's government to enable the digital and smart journey amongst the country's startups and SMEs," added Bas Boorsma.

On day two of the conference Cisco's Engineering Manager, Ihab Farhoud, will deliver a presentation on 'Security for the Digital Economy' at the 'Digital Masrah', highlighting the importance of cybersecurity as a pillar of digital transformation.

DON'T FEAR YOUR MOBILE WALLET

NEW YORK: Smartphones have replaced lots of other accessories - cameras, flashlights, calculators. But many people are still reluctant to swap the wallets in their pockets for their digital counterparts.

A key reason consumers are hesitant to adopt mobile payments like Apple Pay and Android Pay, surveys say, is fear over security: High-profile retailer data breaches have made buyers wary of sharing credit card information. But while there's cause not to rely 100 percent on your mobile wallet just yet - lack of widespread acceptance by merchants, for one thing - security concerns shouldn't be holding shoppers back, experts say.

"I think some people get nervous about this idea of 'This thing is sending telepathic waves to that machine to say that I'm paying,'" says Mark Ranta, head of digital banking solutions at ACI Worldwide, a payment systems company. But your mobile wallet is arguably the safest way to pay, and it offers a few benefits to boot. Here's why this payment method is worth considering.

It's safer than you think

Contactless payment services can offer more security than cash or traditional card usage. "You never have to take out your credit card or debit card, so there's a lot less chance of someone seeing it," says Jason Chaikin, president of biometrics security company Vkansee. "For every transaction, (mobile wallets) create a random, one-time number - a transaction token - and even if someone was able to know that number, it's not valid later."

Samsung Pay, Android Pay and Apple Pay each use this process, called tokenization. Although you load your card into the payment app, the actual card number is not shared with the merchant when you pay. Rather, a temporary code is issued in its place, similar to the way EMV chip cards work. EMV credit and debit cards have chips that create a unique code, or cryptogram, when inserted into a merchant's payment terminal. However, the card is in view while the terminal reads the chip.

Mobile payments provide security measures on top of existing bank protections that chip cards can't match. Full card numbers are not displayed in mobile wallet apps, and users are able to authorize payments with their fingerprints, which can protect your card information in the event your phone is stolen.

It's convenient - when available

Services like Apple Pay let users add multiple cards to their phones or smartwatches, theoretically giving them the option to leave overstuffed wallets and purses at home.

But consumers don't entirely trust

mobile wallets partly because availability is limited, says Ranta. Not all cards and loyalty programs are compatible with the payment services, and some stores are not equipped to take mobile payments. Establishments such as bars and restaurants may accept only cash or plastic. Apple Pay has the highest retailer acceptance rate among the mobile payment services, at 36 percent, according to survey data from the retail consulting firm Boston Retail Partners.

"We're still very much in the early stages of this," Ranta says. "At the end of the day, you're still kind of stuck in this merchant acceptance problem of a two-sided equation. It's still that awkward, 'Do you accept it?' and if (not), then you've got to find an alternative way to pay or just walk out of the store."

But when shoppers can use their mobile wallets, it can mean saving precious time at the register. A common complaint among dissatisfied chip-card users is the slow transaction process, as shoppers wait for the EMV terminal to complete the transaction. Mobile payments can be a quicker alternative. Users open a payment app and hold their device over a terminal; a fingerprint or PIN verifies the purchase.

Shopping online can be faster, too. For example, Apple Pay and Android Pay are accepted on certain websites and in apps like Airbnb, allowing shoppers to make purchases without entering card information - or keeping card numbers on file, which may assuage data-breach fears.

And like some bank apps, a mobile wallet saves your recent transaction history for reference, with the added benefit of allowing you to see all activity in one place even if your cards are from various banks.

You won't miss out on reward

Mobile credit card payments function just like regular credit cards. As long as your card is compatible with the service, you'll continue to earn your usual rewards, like travel points or cash back.

Mobile users can add certain retailer loyalty cards to Android Pay and Apple Pay wallets to seamlessly earn store-specific points. Samsung Pay accepts most membership cards. Samsung also has its own loyalty program, Samsung Rewards. In addition to credit card rewards, members earn points for Samsung Pay purchases; the points are redeemable for rewards like gift cards and fitness trackers.

Mobile payment still has far to go before shoppers begin leaving their old wallets at home. As technology advances, Chaikin says, innovations and improvements in security will likely make the process more comfortable and accessible for consumers and retailers alike. "Our mobile phone revolution is really just at the tipping point." —AP



MOUNTAIN VIEW: An exterior view of St Francis High School Friday in Mountain View, Calif. The red-hot IPO debut of vanishing-photo superstar Snap this week not only placed the Southern California startup at a \$35 billion value. —AP

OH SNAP! SILICON VALLEY SCHOOL MAKES \$24M OFF OF INVESTMENT

FUND PAYS OFF WHEN SNAP BEGAN SELLING SHARES TO PUBLIC

MOUNTAIN VIEW: Bake sales and car washes? Not for one Silicon Valley parochial high school that hit it big this week and, by doing so, highlighted anew gaping economic disparities in the region. St. Francis High School in Mountain View parlayed a \$15,000 investment in the company that developed the Snapchat app into a windfall of at least \$24 million, capitalizing on a unique venture capital fund set up by the school's investment-savvy parents.

The fund paid off when Snap Inc. began selling shares to the public Thursday and the school sold about 1.4 million of the 2.1 million shares at \$17 each. It's holding the remaining 700,000 shares, which were valued at about \$19 million Friday. "Silicon Valley is a pretty amazing place to live," school President Simon Chiu said. "This obviously couldn't have happened anywhere else."

St. Francis High School launched the fund in 1990 at the urging of two of the many venture capitalists with children attending the school. The fund's aim is to tag along with deep-pocketed investors when they make big bets on startup companies. The school takes a small sliver of a venture capitalist's bigger investment in a startup company.

Chiu and other educators say they know of no other school with a similar fundraising scheme. Few, if any other schools, have that sort



Simon Chiu

of advantage, said Stephen Andriole, a professor of business, accountancy and information systems at the Villanova School of Business in Pennsylvania.

"The only way to do this is through a personal relationship," he said. "The probability of success is quite low." About 10 miles north, in East Palo Alto, educators are focused on raising graduation levels in a predominantly Latino community with high pockets of poverty. The city of about 30,000 just a few miles from Stanford University has succeeded in lowering a staggeringly high homicide rate in the early 1990s to the national average and income levels have risen to about \$48,000 for a family of four compared with \$120,000 in next-door Palo Alto. The median income in Mountain View is \$83,000.

But East Palo Alto still struggles with a dropout rate hovering about 50 percent annually. "We don't have the bandwidth to follow the stock market," said Amika Guillaume, principal of the East Palo Alto Academy, which is in one of the poorest cities in Northern California. "It's

tough enough keep kids on track to graduate."

Chiu declined to disclose the size of the school's venture fund, but he said it currently holds investments in about a dozen other companies. He said the money will be added to the school's endowment, which will double it, while administrators decide how to spend the infusion of cash. Generally, the windfall will enable the school to offer scholarships, retain faculty and improve facilities, Chiu said. "I think everyone understands it's a pretty transformational event for our school," he said.

Before the Snap investment, the school's biggest profit from a single investment was \$2 million. Chiu also said the school has lost money on several investments.

The school's Snap saga began at the kitchen table of venture capitalist Barry Eggers. Eggers said he came home from work one day in 2012 and found his children and their St. Francis schoolmates sitting at the kitchen table, giggling over the new Snapchat app, which allows users to easily exchange messages with videos and photographs. Best of all, the images automatically destruct after a few minutes. Eggers researched the company and negotiated a \$500,000 investment with the company founders, including a \$15,000 contribution from the school. "It all started at my kitchen table with my kids," Eggers said. "Only in Silicon Valley." —AP



SAN FRANCISCO: A Google employee gives a demonstration of Android Pay on a phone at Google I/O 2015 in San Francisco. A key reason consumers are hesitant to adopt mobile payments like Apple Pay and Android Pay, surveys say, is fear over security: High-profile retailer data breaches have made buyers wary of sharing credit card information. But security concerns shouldn't be holding shoppers back, experts say. —AP

FIVE TRENDS AT MOBILE WORLD CONGRESS

BARCELONA: The phone industry's largest annual trade fair, the Mobile World Congress which wrapped up in Barcelona on Thursday, was dominated by fast-charging phone batteries, virtual reality and connected objects, from toothbrushes to cars.

Longer lasting batteries and fast charging

Several phonemakers unveiled new smartphones with batteries that can last longer and be charged faster. Huawei, the world's third-largest phone maker after Apple and Samsung, said its new flagship device, the P10, features a 40 percent boost in battery life.

The battery also features "super charge" technology that promises a full day charge in just 20 minutes. BlackBerry's new devices, which bring back the brand's iconic physical keyboard, have the brand's biggest-ever batteries. They also feature a "boost mode" that allows you to get a 50 percent charge in roughly 36 minutes.

Drones and robots

Drones and robots were everywhere at this year's trade show. At Korea Telecom's stand, two robotic arms played the drums, varying

the songs throughout the day. Japanese firm Softbank drew crowds with its human-like robot Pepper which can be employed in shops to greet customers and demonstrate products, while Barcelona-based Pal Robotics displayed two humanoid robot models.

The fair set up a special "drone zone" for the first time to demonstrate their use in the delivery of goods to remote areas or aid to farmers by surveying crop growth.

Virtual reality

Virtual reality (VR) headsets were front and centre, in a sign of the importance placed on the technology by the sector. Samsung unveiled several new innovations including a 360-degree virtual travel app designed to allow people to reminisce about past experiences. Lithuanian mobile app developers TeleSoftas showcased an app which allows business meetings to be held in virtual reality with avatars representing people in different parts of the globe.

Virtual assistants

Following on the heels of the success of Amazon.com's Echo, a hands-free speaker with AI-powered virtual assistant Alexa, several

firms showcased their own version of the technology. Sony unveiled a new version of its Xperia Ear earphones which includes a virtual assistant called the Sony Agent.

Both LG and Motorola presented new flagship smartphones that integrated a virtual assistant while Samsung announced that its new high-end phone which will be presented in New York at the end of the month will also have one. Research firm Garner predicts that by 2019, 20 percent of all our interactions with a smartphone will be carried out via such assistants.

Connected devices

Companies rolled out products based on a future centred on the "internet of things", a network of devices, vehicles and building sensors that collect and exchange data.

Several driverless cars were on display while a small French firm called Kolibree showcased a smart toothbrush that measures how well you brush your teeth and sends the statistics to your smartphone.

An Indian start-up, Lechal, displayed shoes with smart soles which vibrate to guide users to their destination. They work by connecting to the GPS tracker of a user's smartphone. —AP

MEXICAN SEWAGE SPILL FLARES US NOSES AND TEMPERS

IMPERIAL BEACH: For more than two weeks, a stench of feces, ammonium and laundry detergent wafted through the air in the southwestern corner of the continental United States. Residents who contacted

government offices got no answers. Finally, a US official released a report that sparked a furious reaction: Sewer repair work in Tijuana, Mexico, caused an estimated 143 million gallons to spill into the United

States and the Pacific Ocean for 18 days. A Mexican official challenged those findings on Friday after a week of public uproar. The city of Imperial Beach was most affected by what Mayor Serge Medina called "the tsunami of sewage spills."

At a raucous public hearing Thursday night, angry residents shouted at government officials and demanded answers. They said they were kept in the dark too long and are fed up with continued problems with sewage from Mexico that fouls beaches and endangers their health. Who knew what and when is unclear. So, too, is whether the right communication channels were used to alert the public. The International Boundary and Water Commission, a binational office that addresses border disputes over water and other issues, on Thursday promised a report within 30 days. The IBWC said its review will determine how much sewage spilled for how long and identify errors in communication.

Steve Smullen, the IBWC area field operations manager in San Diego who came up with the preliminary spill estimate, said a US Border Patrol official alerted him to the stench Feb 6 and he quickly notified a Mexican counterpart. US officials say they didn't get answers until Feb 23, a day before the public announcement. Roberto Espinoza, representative of the IBWC's Mexican section in Tijuana, said at the community forum in Imperial Beach that he

immediately began asking questions but the Mexican agency responsible for fixing the problem left him in the dark. "There was a failure in the flow of information between the agency and us," Espinoza said in Spanish. "It is very regrettable and painful to us."

The Commission for Tijuana Public Services, an agency of Mexico's Baja California state that did the repairs, says the sewage spill lasted only from Feb 1 to Feb. 4 and that cross-border flows after that were stormwater. Miguel Lemus, the agency's director, said the US official's preliminary estimate was far too high and that foul waters likely got trapped in the United States, producing the stench. Lemus said in an interview that he should have briefed the IBWC's Mexican representative before the repairs. He said he hoped the US and Mexico develop better communication protocols "to avoid misunderstandings and the dissemination of information that is not totally accurate, like what's happening now."

Under an 1848 treaty, the Tijuana River crosses the United States for a few miles through a valley before flowing into the ocean. During high tides when sewage is heavy, residents say foul-smelling water fills an estuary. Cross-border sewage has long been a sore topic in Imperial Beach, a city of about 30,000 that draws surfers and families looking for relatively affordable homes near the beach. As mayor in 1980,

Brian Bilbray, who went on to serve in Congress, used a bulldozer to prevent the Tijuana River from flowing on to city beaches. Spills of more than 10 million gallons a day were common.

A US plant that was completed in the 1990s - combined with improvements to Tijuana's system - alleviated the problem, but the latest spill is a reminder that infrastructure is woefully inadequate. Spills of 1 million gallons or more are still considered routine. David Gibson, executive director of the California Regional Water Quality Control Board in San Diego, on Thursday asked the US Environmental Protection Agency to investigate the latest spill, with a focus on the Tijuana commission's actions. He also wrote the North American Development Bank to ask for more attention to the region's infrastructure.

"I am deeply troubled by the lack of communication that has characterized this event," he wrote the US and Mexican heads of the IBWC. Promises to find answers have gotten a wary reception in Imperial Beach, which was overwhelmed by people entering the country illegally from a nearby canyon in the 1990s, before the US erected one of the most fortified stretches of fence with Mexico. Stephanie Pate, who has lived in Imperial Beach for all of her 37 years, said government hand-wringing over the sewage is "all lip service." "The town is getting better, but the pollution is still bad," she said. —AP



CORONADO: A sign warns of sewage contaminated ocean waters on a beach in front of the iconic Hotel del Coronado in Coronado, Calif. For more than two weeks last month, a stench of feces, ammonium and laundry detergent wafted through the air along Southern California beaches closest to the border. Sewer repair work in nearby Tijuana, Mexico, caused an estimated 143 million gallons to spill into the United States and the Pacific Ocean for 18 days. —AP

OVER 100 MILLION AT RISK OF STARVATION GLOBALLY

102 MILLION PEOPLE FACE ACUTE MALNUTRITION

ROME: The number of people facing severe hunger worldwide has surpassed 100 million and will grow if humanitarian aid is not paired with more support for farmers, a senior United Nations official said. Dominique Burgeon, director of the emergency division at the UN Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) said latest studies showed 102 million people faced acute malnutrition - meaning they were on the brink of starvation - in 2016, up almost 30 percent from 80 million in 2015.

The hike was mainly driven by

deepening crises in Yemen, South Sudan, Nigeria and Somalia, where conflict and drought have crippled food production, he said. "Humanitarian assistance has kept many people alive so far but their food security situation has continued to deteriorate," Burgeon told the Thomson Reuters Foundation in an interview. More investment is needed to help people feed themselves by farming crops and livestock, he added. "We come with airplanes, we provide food assistance and we manage to keep

them alive but we do not invest enough in the livelihood of these people," he said.

"We avoid them falling into famine but we are not good at taking them off the cliff, away from food insecurity." The UN World Food Program said last month more than 20 million people - greater than the population of Romania or Florida - risk dying from starvation within six months in four separate famines. Wars in Yemen, northeastern Nigeria and South Sudan have devastated households and driven up prices,

while a drought in east Africa has ruined the agricultural economy. Famine was formally declared in February in parts of South Sudan, which has been mired in civil war since 2013.

In northeastern Nigeria, once a breadbasket for the country, a seven-year insurgency by Boko Haram militants has uprooted some 1.8 million people, forcing many to abandon their farms. The government says it has clawed back most of the territory it lost to the jihadist group and tens of thousands of refugees are hoping to return to their crops, although security remains a concern. Burgeon said the FAO had raised less than a third of the \$20 million it needs within the next two weeks to support almost 2 million people in the upcoming planting season in Nigeria - an investment he said would save money in the future. "If you don't support those who want to return to their area to crop then you have to agree that you will have to provide massive aid assistance at least until the harvest in 2018, which is unbearable," he said.

Lack of funding was also hampering the agency's response in Syria, where food production dropped to an all-time low in 2016, Burgeon said. "A lot is going to food assistance and barely anything is going to help farmers who have decided to stay on their land," he said. The soaring cost of seeds, fertilizers and tractor fuel was pushing many farmers to leave, making it more difficult to restart the economy once peace or stability returned, he added. "What we need to do is to help them stay and crop their land and be there for the future," Burgeon said. "To survive is not enough." —Reuters



THONYOR: Photo shows a baby getting a Mid-Upper Arm Circumference (MUAC) test for malnutrition. South Sudan, the world's youngest nation formed after splitting from the north in 2011 has declared famine in some regions, saying 100,000 people faced starvation and another million were on the brink of famine. —AFP

FIRST STEP TO HELP PRESERVED ORGANS SURVIVE DEEP FREEZE

WASHINGTON: Deep-freezing donated organs might one day help improve the transplant supply but scientists must first figure out how to thaw the delicate tissue without it cracking. Now researchers are taking a first step toward that goal, using nanotechnology to create super heaters for preserved tissue. University of Minnesota researchers call their approach "nanowarming," and they reported Wednesday that it safely and rapidly thawed larger amounts of animal tissue than today's tools can.

The trick: Bathe the pieces of tissue in magnetic nanoparticles and then beam radiofrequency energy to activate them. The nanoparticles act like microscopic heaters, evenly warming the tissue surrounding them, concluded the research published in Science Translational Medicine. Years of additional research are needed before attempting to thaw human organs. "We are cautiously optimistic that we're going to be able to get into a kidney or maybe a heart."

But we are not, in any way, declaring victory here," said University of Minnesota mechanical engineering professor John Bischof, who led the research team.

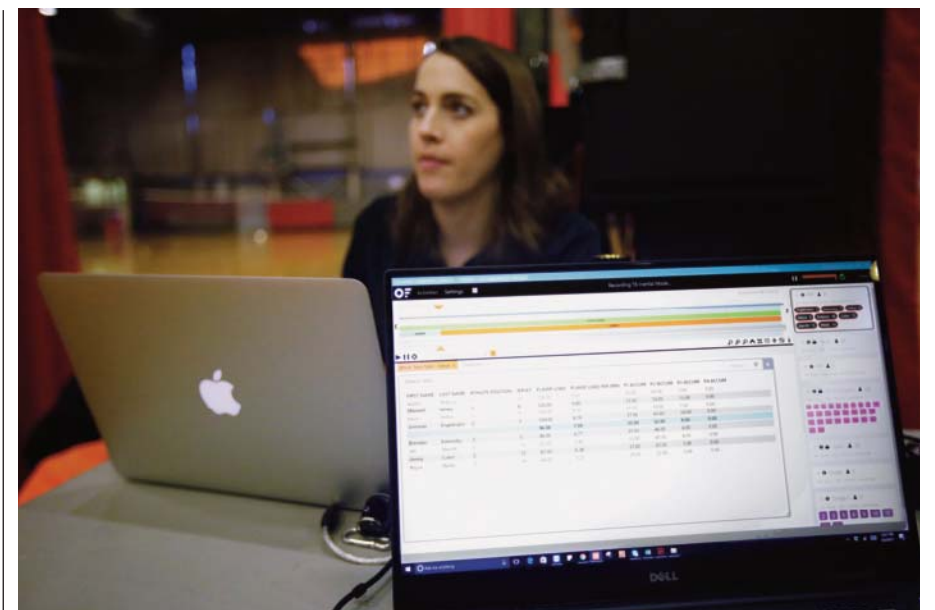
Doctors have longed to create an organ bank much like sperm or heart valves can be frozen and preserved for long periods, and specialists say the new research is an important proof of concept. "If you could pull this off, it would really be transformational," said Dr David Klassen, chief medical officer at the United Network for Organ Sharing, which oversees the nation's transplant system.

About 119,000 people are on the waiting list for an organ transplant, and last year there were 33,599 transplants performed. One of the many challenges is that organs can't be stored for long outside the body - about four to six hours for a heart or lung, for example. And they're stored in a decidedly old-fashioned way for the race to a needy recipient, infused with a cold preservation solution and set with ice inside a cooler, Klassen noted. That's cold enough to slow cellular activity but they're not frozen.

A kind of cryopreservation that uses such a fast, deep freeze that tissue looks glass-like potentially could allow organs to be stored for longer periods. But today's thawing technology only works well with

small or simple types of tissue. Try it in larger, more complex tissue and damaging ice crystals form, even cracking frozen tissue much like an ice cube cracks when it's dropped into water, Klassen explained. Bischof's team turned to metallic nanoparticles - iron oxide - for their new approach. To keep the tissue stable, warming would have to be super-fast and evenly dispersed. The nanowarming could heat 10 to 100 times faster than previously attempted methods, Bischof said.

After nanowarming, small samples of human skin cells and pig arteries were as healthy-looking as those thawed by today's standard heating. Larger samples of pig heart tissue too big for today's heating tools also were thawed by the new technology without signs of damage, the researchers reported. Afterwards, the researchers were able to wash away the nanoparticles. Working with entire organs will require infusing the nanoparticles deeper into nooks and crannies. Already the researchers are testing the approach with frozen rabbit kidneys. A heart may be easier, Bischof said, because of its hollow chambers. —AP



CAMBRIDGE: A laptop screen displays data being collected on basketball players by the Catapult monitoring system as Charlotte Westover, Catapult marketing coordinator, monitors the data in Cambridge, Mass. —AP

TRACKING TECHNOLOGY HELPS TEAMS KNOW WHEN TO PRACTICE AND REST

CAMBRIDGE: It is no longer enough for a basketball team to know how many shots a player makes, or even where he was standing when he made it. Sports data is going biometric, tracking players' heart rates, movements and energy levels to get a better picture of what's going on inside their bodies as they run, jump and even sit on the bench. And, device-makers say, the technology can help coaches decide who needs a rest, who needs more work, or who might be most at risk for injury.

"Do you have eyes on every single athlete, every single session?" said Calvin Torres, a sports scientist with the tracker and data company Catapult, who's heard all the complaints from old-time coaches who insist that they can do the same thing with their eyes and their instincts. "If you put a monitor on them, you do." Catapult is already working with 16 NFL teams, 15 in the NBA and four in the NHL, along with more than a thousand in high school, college, national and pro teams in dozens of countries and sports from rowing to rugby and badminton to bandy.

The company had a booth set up this week at the MIT Sloan Sports Analytics Conference, an annual gathering for those trying to use math and technology to reshape the way games have been played for a century. The conference attracts 3,500 people - many of them math-savvy students trying to break into sports or simply learn about the latest innovations from panelists such as NBA commissioner Adam Silver or data journalism pioneer Nate Silver.

Panel titles included "Football Analytics: Please Stop Punting" - held in the Bill James Room, of course - "Data Driven Storytelling" and "eSports Emergence."

Researchers presented papers on baseball bullpen strategies, "Marijuana as Medicine" and "The Science of Sleep." A day before the two-day conference opened on Friday, Catapult wired up a handful of reporters at MIT's Rockwell Cage, a typical Division III gym with pullout bleachers and the engineering school's mascot of a fierce Beaver decorating center court.

On the other side of a curtain pulled across the middle of the gym, MIT students practiced badminton and archery. After arriving, the reporters were fitted with a harness that was too short to be a tank top but a bit longer than the Seinfeldian "mansiere." In the back at the neck is a pocket for the actual tracker, which is about two inches square. The devices detected movement and effort and broke it down into four different load levels. P1 and P2 were perhaps best characterized as walking and jogging; a full-out sprint put you in P3. No one in the group recorded any of the most extreme kind of effort, or P4. "That's a tough band to get into," Torres said.

According to Torres, an NBA practice - the league doesn't allow players to wear them during games - would hit a total load of 800-1,000. The numbers are broken down by intensity and also tracked to see variation as the session goes on. Torres said those numbers have a lot of potential. If a coach sees a player's load decrease at the end of practice, he might need rest, he might need more work to build up his conditioning or he might be hampered by a small problem that could become a serious injury. "Each team is different, because each coach is different," Torres said. "Knowing how to apply the data makes the average user a really good user." —AP

US SNUFFS POT FANS' PLANS TO PARTY ON A TRIBAL LAND

LAS VEGAS: A federal prosecutor has snuffed out plans by pot fans to celebrate Nevada's new recreational marijuana law by lighting up on an Indian reservation near Las Vegas. US Attorney Daniel Bogden took a hard line in a letter to organizers of a weekend cannabis festival, saying federal law applies and pot smokers could be prosecuted. Bogden wouldn't comment Friday beyond referring to the Feb 16 letter he sent to the Moapa Band of Paiutes.

The warning from the top federal prosecutor in Nevada came while several US senators are airing concerns about the possibility of a Trump administration crackdown on marijuana use in states that have legalized pot for recreational or medicinal purposes. Sen Catherine Cortez Masto of Nevada joined nine other Democrats and one Republican, Alaska Sen Lisa Murkowski, in signing a Thursday letter to US Attorney General Jeff Sessions.

US Sen Dean Heller, R-Nev, sent a similar letter to Sessions on Wednesday. Organizers of the High Times Cannabis Cup festival said there

will still be music, T-shirts and souvenirs at the event at a Moapa Band of Paiutes festival site. But spokesman Joe Brezny said it will essentially be just a concert this year. "We've removed the marijuana," he said. "There will be no smoking area, no edibles competition, no cannabis topicals or lotions." Brezny said more than 10,000 tickets were sold this week for the two-day event Saturday and Sunday at a site about 35 miles north of the Las Vegas Strip. The concert is headlined by hip-hop artist Ludacris.

Robert Capecchi, federal policies chief at the Marijuana Policy Project advocacy group in Washington, DC, said a lot of attendees might be disappointed or upset that they can't smoke on site. But he noted that laws are different in federal areas within the eight states that have legalized recreational marijuana and the 28 states and the District of Columbia where medical marijuana is legal. "There's a different balance between the federal government and Indian tribes and the federal government and the states," Capecchi said. —AP

GOP HEALTH BILL: LESS GOVT; BUT WHAT ABOUT COVERAGE?

WASHINGTON: Health insurance tax credits, mandates, taxation of employer coverage, essential benefits. Mind-numbing health care jargon is flying around again as Republicans move to repeal and replace the Obama-era Affordable Care Act. It's time to start paying attention. The GOP plan emerging in the House would mean less government, and many fear that will translate to less coverage and a step backward as a nation.

Still, there would be new options for middle-class people who buy their own policies but don't now qualify for help under the ACA. Some popular provisions such as allowing young adults to stay on a parental plan remain untouched. Pocketbook alert: People with job-based coverage should keep an eye on a proposal to tax part of the value of the most generous employer plans.

House Speaker Paul Ryan, R-Wis., told Republican lawmakers at a closed meeting Thursday that leaders would work through the weekend to draft "repeal and replace" legislation. Expect the bill to change as backers move forward and encounter pushback. The Senate is seen as a moderating influence. And President Donald Trump, who once promised "insurance for everybody," will have to weigh the specifics of what he's lately acknowledged is a complicated issue. Some questions and answers:

How would GOP dial back?

The plan would get rid of the "Obamacare" tax penalties on individuals who remain uninsured. Similar penalties on larger employers that don't offer coverage would be scrapped as well. Republicans would do away with a requirement that insurers cover 10 categories of "essential health benefits," leaving such regulation to the states. A limit on how much insurers can charge older customers would be eased. Currently older adults can be charged no more than three times what they charge young adults. The new ratio would be 5-to-1.

Medicaid, the federal-state program that currently covers more than 70 million low-income people, would cease to be an open-ended federal entitlement. Though federal funding would be limited, states would get more leeway to run their programs. A richer funding stream for adults

newly covered under former President Barack Obama's law would be eliminated. "Medicaid is a very, very significant issue," said Dan Mendelson, president of the consulting firm Avalere Health. "That forces states to rethink their programs in a fundamental way."

What could happen

Many fear it would lead to rising numbers of uninsured, higher out-of-pocket costs as benefits get skimpier, and less affordable coverage - especially for older adults who are more prone to health problems. For example, the nonpartisan Kaiser Family Foundation recently estimated that tax credits for health insurance in the House GOP plan would be smaller on average than what currently subsidized ACA customers are getting. (GOP credits are based on age, not income.) The study found that lower-income people, older adults, and people living in high-cost areas would get lower subsidies.

"I'm worried that this is going to result in folks losing coverage," said John Meigs, president of the American Academy of Family Physicians. But people with solid middle-class incomes and upper earners who currently don't qualify for help would get assistance. Consumers could also contribute more money to tax-sheltered health savings accounts for out-of-pocket costs. Republicans are hoping their ideas will spur insurers to offer more affordable products tailored to younger people and consumers of modest means. Republican governors, GOP lawmakers in Congress, and the Trump administration are negotiating over Medicaid, with governors who expanded the program trying to keep more federal dollars for low-income people.

The ACA provisions

Among the ACA provisions that appear to be safe are closing the Medicare prescription drug coverage gap, allowing young adults to stay on parental plans until age 26, a ban on lifetime and annual dollar limits on coverage, and maximum limits on out-of-pocket costs. People with pre-existing health problems would be protected against being turned down. But they'd have to maintain "continuous coverage," and a significant break could lead to a 30 percent penalty on top of their premiums, for up to a year. —AP



ALASKA: Photo provided by the US Geological Survey shows a Bluethroat in Nome, Alaska. Growth of shrubs on Arctic tundra as the climate warms will have a mixed effect on breeding birds, federal researchers have concluded. —AP

CLIMATE, PROGRAMS GET DEEP CUTS IN EPA BUDGET PROPOSAL

AGENCY'S FUNDING TO BE REDUCED BY ROUGHLY 25%

WASHINGTON: The Trump administration would slash programs aimed at slowing climate change and improving water safety and air quality, while eliminating thousands of jobs, according to a draft of the Environmental Protection Agency budget proposal obtained by The Associated Press. Under the tentative plan from the Office of Management and Budget, the agency's funding would be reduced by roughly 25 percent and about 3,000 jobs would be cut, about 19 percent of the agency's staff.

President Donald Trump has said he plans to pay for billions of dollars more for the military by cutting spending on domestic agencies and departments. Trump plans to submit his budget to Congress the week of March 13. A spokeswoman for the EPA declined to comment, but a top official said in an internal memo that EPA leaders "will do everything in our power to protect our ability to support the mission of the agency in protecting human health and the environment." A copy of the memo from Acting Assistant Administrator Donna Vizian was obtained by the AP.

Vizian said she could not verify news media accounts, but said any proposed cuts were just the start of a lengthy budget process. A final plan is subject to congressional approval, which likely is months away at the earliest. The White House also declined to comment. The EPA is now under the leadership of Scott Pruitt, a former state attorney general for Oklahoma, who has questioned the scientific consensus that human activities are contributing to global warming and joined lawsuits against the agency's emission curbs.

Climate protection budget

The Trump administration also would cut funding for the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration by 17 percent, The

Washington Post reported Friday, citing a four-page memo from OMB that the newspaper obtained. The scientific agency, which is part of the Commerce Department, studies changes in climate, weather, oceans and coasts. The draft proposal for the EPA would cut its annual budget from about \$8.2 billion to \$6.1 billion. Proposed cuts include reducing the climate protection budget by nearly 70 percent to \$29 million, the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative by 97 percent to \$10 million and environmental justice programs by 79 percent to \$1.5 million.

Also targeted for steep spending rollbacks are the agency's monitoring and enforcement of compliance with environmental laws, as well as regional projects intended to benefit degraded areas such as the Chesapeake Bay, Puget Sound and the Gulf of Mexico. A program dealing with San Francisco Bay that received \$4.8 million last year would be eliminated, as would initiatives for reducing diesel emissions and beach water quality testing.

Former EPA Administrator Gina McCarthy called the proposed budget "a fantasy" that ignores the EPA's mission to protect public health. "It shows the Trump administration doesn't hold the same American values for clean air, clean water and healthy land as the vast majority of its citizens," McCarthy said in a statement. "Our health comes before the special interests of multibillion-dollar industries." Environmental groups said the proposed cuts would threaten thousands of jobs and could harm health and safety protections for millions of Americans. The proposals would especially affect programs to address climate change and enforce clean air and water laws, they said.

"Instead of working to protect American families, President Trump's plans put the interest of big-money special interests over people," said Nat Mund, legislative director of the Southern Environmental Law Center, a Virginia-

based advocacy group. But the Heartland Institute, a conservative think tank, said the proposal didn't go far enough. "If Donald Trump and Scott Pruitt are serious about ending the national scandal that is EPA, they will accept nothing less than a 20 percent cut this year and make this year's cut the first step in a five-year plan to replace the organization," said Joseph Bast, the group's president.

'Outrageous' cuts

The proposal would all but eliminate funding for the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative, a wide-ranging cleanup of the world's largest surface freshwater system that has deep bipartisan support across the eight states adjacent to the lakes, from Minnesota to New York. The program has received around \$300 million annually from the federal budget during former President Barack Obama's tenure - more than \$2.2 billion in all. Under the Trump proposal, it would get only \$10 million. Sen Debbie Stabenow, D-Mich., described the proposed cut as "outrageous." "This initiative has been critical to cleaning up our Great Lakes and waterways, restoring fish and wildlife habitats, and fighting invasive species, like Asian carp," Stabenow said.

"I call on President Trump to reverse course on these harmful decisions." Congress in December authorized continuing the program through 2021 at \$300 million a year, although separate annual votes are needed to provide the money. In a Feb. 8 letter to Trump, the 20-member Congressional Great Lakes Task Force called for maintaining current funding. Among House members signing it were Republicans Bill Huizenga of Michigan, Sean Duffy of Wisconsin and David Joyce of Ohio. EPA staffers are upset about the budget. A Thursday all-hands meeting, organized to calm staff about the budget cuts, only created more anxiety. —AP

FAMILIES ON EDGE OVER WATER CONTAMINATION AT US AIR BASE

PORTSMOUTH: The Pease International Tradeport, which features an airport, hundreds of businesses and several day care centers, has been called a textbook example of how to redevelop an air base. But many who worked or had their children looked after there are coming to terms with a hidden risk: Drinking water contaminated by military fire-fighting foam that contained perfluorinated compounds, or PFCs.

Exposure to the chemicals, found in scores of everyday products like nonstick cookware and stain-resistant carpet and probably occurring at low levels in most people, have been linked in animal studies to low birth weight, accelerated puberty, cancer and thyroid problems, among other maladies, according to the Environmental Protection Agency. But it's far from clear how much those problems also manifest in humans. And the uncertainty isn't sitting well with the Pease parents whose children were found to have elevated levels of PFCs in their blood.

Many, like Andrea Amico, Alayna Davis and Michelle Dalton, who formed the advocacy group Testing for Pease in 2015, said they

have struggled to find doctors who can interpret the test results. None of the three women can definitely say the exposure has been linked to health problems. Still, they wonder whether their children's frequent fevers and infection might suggest the chemicals are affecting their immune systems. "My son looks like a normal 4-year-old boy. He's active. He loves everything that 4-year-old boys love," Dalton said. "But on the inside, it's a different story. His body is constantly fighting." More worrisome, they said, is what the future holds for their children, since the chemicals can remain in the body for years.

"My concern is that their long-term health will be impacted by this significant exposure that they had as small children," said Amico, whose two children attend a Pease day care and have elevated PFC levels. "I'll never stop worrying about their health." Prompted by an EPA advisory issued last year, the Air Force has investigated 190 bases for foam contamination and is treating groundwater or bringing in water at 20 bases, including Pease - a number that could grow. It is also changing the type of foam it uses. —AP

CLINIC PAGE



Kuwait Times
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NAJLA FORUM HOSTS EGYPTIAN DELEGATIONS

The Najla Al-Naqqi cultural and media forum recently hosted two delegations; one from the 'Egypt Lovers Society' headed by Egyptian media figure Tahani Al-Bortoqli, and another from the 'Good Intentions Organization' headed by Egyptian MP Zain Al-Sadat. The two delegations included actresses Afaf Sho'aib, Fadya Abdul Ghani and Fairouz. In addition to singer Nadya Mustafa, media figures, politicians and academics. The forum was also attended by Shiekha Mouza Sabah Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, Sheikha Fatima Al-Humoud Al-Sabah and Sheikha Mariam Al-Sabah. Both delegations discussed boosting bilateral relations between both countries in various fields.



PSA EVERTON RETURN FROM FOOTBALL TOUR TO SPAIN

The Premier Sport Academy in association with Everton FC returned from a successful tour to Spain at the weekend. Players in the Under 12 and Under 16 age groups enjoyed the La Liga footballing experience, attending the Espaniol vs Osasuna match, visiting the Nou Camp Stadium - home of FC Barcelona and completing a series of coaching sessions with La Liga coaches, in addition to playing

matches against several Spanish teams.

The group was based at Futbol Salou in Tarragona along with several other international clubs. State of the art facilities included eight full size football pitches where matches and coaching sessions took place each day. The Under 12 team played several games and recorded two wins and three draws against Spanish opposition with star player Abdulaziz voted player of the week.

Meanwhile, the Under 16s enjoyed a thrilling 3-1 victory against FC Santes Crues, Abdelhadi and Mohammed Mishmish were on the score sheet. Coaching sessions for all the players were conducted by Spanish Academy coaches Marc, Reuben and Gerard and included an insight into the Smart Football program and video match analysis, focusing on player development.

In addition to a packed week of footballing activities,

there was an afternoon of sightseeing in Barcelona on board an open top bus to round off a memorable tour. Players are now eagerly looking forward to the next overseas tournament, taking place in Dubai next month. Daily football coaching sessions are conducted at the PSA Everton venue in Bayan Block 7, Street 302, next to Abdullah Al-Rujaib High School and boys and girls of all ages are welcome to attend.

ACK STUDENTS PARTICIPATE IN ENGINEERS WITHOUT BORDERS INITIATIVE IN INDIA

The Australian College of Kuwait's (ACK) School of Engineering students participated in a Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) initiative at the Humanitarian Design Summit driven by Engineers Without Borders (EWB) in India. The participation was in collaboration with ACK's auspice partner the Central Queensland University (CQU), Australia.

EWB is based on a community centered approach within Australia and Asia using engineering knowledge and resources to bridge self-identified gaps in access to community health, wellbeing and opportunity. They focus on sustained engagement to build strong relationships and best practice models, strategically deploying people to achieve long-term impact through knowledge sharing and sector building.

This Summit was a two-week professional opportunity designed to provide ACK students with experience in developing skills, knowledge and appropriate engineering solutions. ACK students were given the chance to travel to India for this exquisite involvement.

Commenting on this trip, Dr Mohamed Gaith, Head of School of Engineering at ACK

said: "I am very proud of our students with their participation in such an international activity, the sensation of the responsibility and positive attitude is extraordinary."

Johanne Flynn, Manager of CQU international office at ACK commented: "ACK's participation in interactive CSR initiative leverages and achieves overall development growth of student's skills and knowledge as they are getting prepared for their upcoming professional career."

Commenting on their experience ACK student, Talal Al-Dousari said: "The Summit showed me another side of the world and how with my engineering studies at ACK I can make a difference in someone's life."

Meanwhile, Aya Chen said: "This was a great learning opportunity as it is my passion to be part of a humanitarian activity and engineering is a tool that will allow me to commit to help others."

ACK is keen to provide its students similar international opportunities to apply their knowledge and skills gained from their engineering studies and empower them to apply practical learning concepts in order to create long-term change in developing communities.



IDAK CONDUCTS SEMINAR FOR KIDS

The Indian Dentists' Alliance (IDAK) in Kuwait conducted a seminar on 'Oral Healthcare in Children' and a screening camp for close to hundred kids of members of Kerala Arts Lovers Association (KALA), a very prominent organization doing exemplary work in social service in Kuwait. The event was organized by the Community Welfare Committee of IDAK, led by its Chairman Prathap Unnithan, who conducted the Dental Health Awareness seminar as well.

The children were educated on the importance of healthy eating, correct brushing techniques, the need to abstain from sugary sodas and energy drinks, to avoid indulgence in junk food and pastries and measures to take in case of an accident or injury involving fracture or loss of teeth. Much of the information provided were new to the audience and the parents expressed extreme appreciation for this commendable service of IDAK. A team of specialist pediatric dentists were made available by IDAK for screening kids and the service highly benefitted the children and parents who attended.

IDAK wishes to express its sincere gratitude to the team of Pedodontists Shiraz Usman, Rahul Puthalath, Nino John, Simi Bhargavi and Orthodontist Krishnamurthy Gowda for their priceless time and efforts. Subu Thomas and Krishna Rao of the Community Welfare Committee played key roles in the meticulous conducting of the camp. IDAK congratulates Rahil K Mohandas of KALA Kuwait for conceiving the event and joining hands with IDAK for its perfect execution. Those schools and organizations who wish to have similar seminars or camps may send a request letter addressed to the President / Gen Sec of IDAK at idakuwait@gmail.com, with a minimum one month notice period.



The Ministry of Defense's camp hosted children from the Kids' World Bilingual Nursery to an educational program organized recently on the occasion of the National and Liberation days.

OSN MOVIES HD
ACTION

- 00:00 Green Street 3: Never Back Down
- 01:45 Twixt
- 03:45 Fury
- 06:00 Six Days Seven Nights
- 08:00 The Throwaways
- 10:00 Tracers
- 11:45 Ladder 49
- 14:00 Fury
- 16:30 Pompeii
- 18:15 Blown Away
- 20:30 Escape
- 22:00 The November Man

OSN MOVIES HD
THRILLER

- 01:15 Edge Of Winter
- 03:00 The Rich Man's Wife
- 05:00 Pressure
- 07:00 Roadside
- 09:00 Edge Of Winter
- 11:00 Preservation
- 13:00 Glass Chin
- 15:00 Final Girl
- 16:45 Crimson Tide
- 18:45 The Sixth Sense
- 21:00 Comedown
- 23:00 Guilty As Sin

OSN MOVIES HD
FAMILY

- 01:00 Race To Witch Mountain
- 03:00 Secretariat
- 05:00 The Lizzie McGuire Movie
- 07:00 The Wild
- 09:00 Ducktales: The Movie
- 10:30 The BoxTrolls
- 12:30 The Lizzie McGuire Movie
- 14:30 Ducktales: The Movie
- 16:00 Gnomeo & Juliet
- 17:45 James And The Giant Peach
- 19:30 Ice Princess
- 21:30 Batman Unlimited: Animal Instincts
- 23:30 Gnomeo & Juliet

OSN MOVIES HD
FIRST

- 01:15 Digging For Fire
- 03:00 Minions
- 04:45 Concussion
- 07:00 Suffragette
- 09:00 Minions
- 10:45 Concussion
- 13:00 Fathers And Daughters
- 15:00 The Benefactor
- 16:45 Star Wars: The Force Awakens
- 19:00 Victor Frankenstein
- 21:00 10 Cloverfield Lane
- 23:00 Dirty Grandpa

OSN MOVIES HD
COMEDY

- 00:00 Screwed
- 02:00 Baby Mama
- 03:45 The Grand Seduction
- 05:45 Valentine's Day
- 08:00 Baby Mama
- 10:00 The Grand Seduction
- 12:00 Valentine's Day
- 14:15 Three Men And A Little Lady
- 16:15 5 To 7
- 18:15 The Final Girls
- 20:00 The Longest Yard
- 22:00 All The Wrong Reasons

OSN MOVIES HD
FESTIVAL

- 00:00 Tusk
- 02:00 Frankie And Johnny
- 04:00 The Wave
- 06:00 Of Mice And Men
- 08:00 Foreverland
- 10:00 Everything Will Be Fine
- 12:00 Ronaldo
- 13:45 The Express
- 16:00 The End Of The Tour
- 18:00 Chariots Of Fire
- 20:00 Words And Pictures
- 22:00 Suite Francaise

OSN MOVIES HD
KIDS

- 01:00 Bark Ranger
- 02:30 The Tale Of Despereaux
- 04:15 Robosapien: Rebooted
- 06:00 Bonta
- 07:00 Memory Loss
- 09:00 Ploddy Police Car On The Case
- 10:30 Bark Ranger
- 12:15 The Tale Of Despereaux
- 14:00 Bolts And Blip
- 16:00 Ploddy Police Car On The Case
- 17:45 The Adventures Of Don Quixote

- 19:45 Moomins And The Comet Chase
- 21:15 Bolts And Blip
- 23:00 Memory Loss

OSN MOVIES HD

- 00:00 V/H/S 2
- 01:45 Sherlock Holmes
- 04:00 Invictus
- 06:15 The Fugitive
- 08:30 Sherlock Holmes
- 10:45 Louder Than Words
- 12:30 Invictus
- 14:45 Gridiron Gang
- 17:00 Breakdown
- 18:45 Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles
- 20:30 Talladega Nights
- 22:30 There's Something About Mary

OSN MOVIES HD

- 00:00 Tiptoes
- 01:30 Jindabyne
- 03:30 Hollywoodland
- 05:45 The Maiden Heist
- 07:15 Captain America: The Winter Soldier
- 09:30 Human Stain
- 11:15 The Assignment
- 13:00 A Long Way Down
- 14:45 Jindabyne
- 16:45 Deadline
- 18:30 Tiptoes
- 19:30 Breaking Bad Entering
- 22:00 Dr. T And The Women

SUNDANCE TV

- 01:15 Nola
- 02:55 World's Greatest Dad
- 04:35 Writers' Room
- 05:05 Lost Songs: The Basement Tapes Continued
- 07:00 Theatreland
- 07:30 All On The Line
- 08:30 Unknown White Male
- 10:00 Countdown To Zero
- 11:30 Good Night, Good Luck
- 13:05 The Scapegoat
- 15:00 Unknown White Male
- 16:30 Countdown To Zero
- 18:00 Theatreland
- 18:30 All On The Line
- 19:30 Close Up With THR
- 20:30 The Wild Man Of Navidad
- 22:00 The Code
- 23:00 Rake

OSN SERIES HD
COMEDY

- 03:30 Angie Tribeca
- 01:00 Angie Tribeca
- 01:30 Man Seeking Woman
- 02:00 Man Seeking Woman
- 02:30 Veep
- 03:00 2 Broke Girls
- 03:30 Life In Pieces
- 04:00 According To Jim
- 04:30 The Tonight Show Starring Jimmy Fallon
- 05:30 Cougar Town
- 06:00 George Lopez
- 06:30 Hank
- 07:00 Late Night With Seth Meyers
- 08:00 According To Jim
- 08:30 Cougar Town
- 09:00 2 Broke Girls
- 09:30 Modern Family
- 10:00 Modern Family
- 10:30 Hank
- 11:00 The Tonight Show Starring Jimmy Fallon
- 12:00 George Lopez
- 12:30 According To Jim
- 13:00 Cougar Town
- 13:30 Hank
- 14:00 Life In Pieces
- 14:30 Modern Family
- 15:00 Modern Family
- 15:30 Angie Tribeca
- 16:00 Angie Tribeca
- 16:30 George Lopez
- 17:00 Late Night With Seth Meyers
- 18:00 The New Adventures Of Old Christine
- 18:30 The New Adventures Of Old Christine
- 19:00 The Last Man On Earth
- 19:30 Superstore
- 20:00 Wrecked
- 20:30 Wrecked
- 21:00 Angie Tribeca
- 21:30 Angie Tribeca
- 22:00 Saturday Night Live
- 23:30 Wrecked

OSN SERIES HD

- 00:00 Dominion
- 01:00 DC's Legends Of Tomorrow
- 02:00 Supernatural
- 03:00 Bates Motel
- 04:00 Prison Break
- 05:00 Drop Dead Diva
- 06:00 Good Morning America - Weekend

- 07:00 Rush Hour
- 08:00 The Ellen DeGeneres Show
- 09:00 Drop Dead Diva
- 10:00 Prison Break
- 11:00 Rush Hour
- 12:00 The Blacklist: Redemption
- 13:00 The Ellen DeGeneres Show
- 14:00 Drop Dead Diva
- 15:00 Supernatural
- 16:00 Live Good Morning America - Weekend
- 17:00 The Ellen DeGeneres Show
- 18:00 The Blacklist: Redemption
- 19:00 The Art Of More
- 20:00 This Is Us
- 21:00 Scandal
- 22:00 Code Black
- 23:00 Scream Queens

OSN FIRST HD
Home of HBO

- 00:00 From The Earth To The Moon
- 01:00 Queen Of The South
- 02:00 Vice Principals
- 02:30 Vice Principals
- 03:00 An Apology To Elephants
- 04:00 Rome
- 05:00 Yesterday
- 06:45 Bury My Heart At Wounded Knee
- 09:00 RKO 281
- 11:00 My House In Umbria
- 13:00 Into The Storm
- 15:00 Boy Interrupted
- 17:00 My House In Umbria
- 19:00 The Newsroom
- 20:00 Boardwalk Empire
- 21:00 Chance
- 22:00 Becoming Warren Buffett

OSN SERIES HD
COMEDY

- 00:00 Supernatural
- 01:00 Bates Motel
- 02:00 Dominion
- 03:00 DC's Legends Of Tomorrow
- 04:00 Supernatural
- 05:00 Bates Motel
- 06:00 Prison Break
- 07:00 Drop Dead Diva
- 08:00 Good Morning America - Weekend
- 09:00 Rush Hour
- 10:00 The Ellen DeGeneres Show
- 11:00 Drop Dead Diva
- 12:00 Prison Break
- 13:00 Rush Hour
- 14:00 The Blacklist: Redemption
- 15:00 The Ellen DeGeneres Show
- 16:00 Drop Dead Diva
- 17:00 Supernatural
- 18:00 Live Good Morning America - Weekend
- 19:00 The Ellen DeGeneres Show
- 20:00 The Blacklist: Redemption
- 21:00 The Art Of More
- 22:00 This Is Us
- 23:00 Scandal

COMEDY CENTRAL

- 00:00 Important Things With Demetri Martin
- 00:25 Tosh.0
- 00:50 Tosh.0
- 01:15 Tosh.0
- 01:40 Inside Amy Schumer
- 02:05 Chappelle's Show
- 02:30 Ugly Americans
- 03:00 The Daily Show - Global Edition
- 03:25 Catch A Contractor
- 04:15 Lip Sync Battle
- 04:40 Ridiculousness
- 05:05 Ridiculousness
- 05:30 Framework
- 06:20 Hungry Investors
- 07:15 Catch A Contractor
- 08:05 Disaster Date
- 08:30 Ridiculousness
- 08:55 Key And Peele
- 09:20 Disaster Date
- 09:45 Ridiculousness
- 10:10 The It Crowd
- 11:00 Framework
- 11:50 Ridiculousness
- 12:15 Lip Sync Battle
- 12:40 The It Crowd
- 13:05 Catch A Contractor
- 13:55 Ridiculousness
- 14:20 Framework
- 15:10 The Jim Gaffigan Show
- 15:35 Ridiculousness
- 16:00 Ridiculousness
- 16:30 Disaster Date
- 16:55 Lip Sync Battle
- 17:25 Key And Peele
- 17:50 Catch A Contractor
- 18:15 Catch A Contractor
- 18:39 The It Crowd
- 19:03 Lip Sync Battle
- 19:27 Lip Sync Battle
- 19:50 Disaster Date
- 20:13 Key And Peele
- 20:37 Ridiculousness
- 21:00 The Daily Show With Trevor Noah
- 21:25 Catch A Contractor
- 21:30 Comedy Central Presents Comedy 3alwaf
- 22:00 The Half Hour
- 22:23 John Oliver's New York Stand Up Show
- 23:11 The Alternative Comedy Experience
- 23:35 The Daily Show With Trevor Noah

food network

- 00:00 Restaurant Stakeout
- 01:00 Mystery Diners
- 01:30 Mystery Diners
- 02:00 Diners, Drive-Ins And Dives
- 03:00 Man Fire Food
- 04:00 Guy's Grocery Games
- 05:00 Roadtrip With G. Garvin
- 06:00 Chopped
- 07:00 Barefoot Contessa: Back To Basics
- 07:30 Barefoot Contessa: Back To Basics
- 08:00 The Pioneer Woman
- 08:30 The Pioneer Woman
- 09:00 Siba's Table
- 09:30 Siba's Table
- 10:00 Anna Olson: Bake
- 11:00 Man Fire Food
- 12:00 Diners, Drive-Ins And Dives
- 12:30 Diners, Drive-Ins And Dives
- 13:00 Chopped
- 14:00 Barefoot Contessa: Back To Basics
- 14:30 Barefoot Contessa: Back To Basics
- 15:00 The Pioneer Woman
- 15:30 The Pioneer Woman
- 16:00 Siba's Table: Fast Feasts
- 16:30 Siba's Table: Fast Feasts
- 17:00 Anna Olson: Bake
- 17:30 Anna Olson: Bake
- 18:00 Man Fire Food
- 18:30 Man Fire Food
- 19:00 Diners, Drive-Ins And Dives
- 19:30 Diners, Drive-Ins And Dives
- 20:00 Private Chef
- 20:30 Private Chef
- 21:00 Patricia Heaton Parties
- 21:30 Patricia Heaton Parties
- 22:00 Chopped
- 23:00 Food Network Star

Syfy HD

- 00:10 Dark Matter
- 01:00 Stargate SG-1
- 01:50 Stargate SG-1
- 02:40 Stargate SG-1
- 03:30 Stargate SG-1
- 04:20 Stargate SG-1
- 05:10 Face Off
- 06:00 Stargate SG-1
- 06:50 Sanctuary



THE SIXTH SENSE ON OSN MOVIES THRILLER HD

- 07:40 Eureka
- 08:30 Smallville
- 09:20 12 Monkeys
- 10:10 Sanctuary
- 11:00 Stargate SG-1
- 11:50 Eureka
- 12:40 Smallville
- 13:35 Sanctuary
- 14:30 The Exterminators
- 16:00 12 Monkeys
- 16:50 Smallville
- 17:40 Sanctuary
- 18:30 Stargate SG-1
- 19:20 Eureka
- 20:10 Smallville
- 21:00 Face Off
- 21:50 Face Off
- 22:40 Saga: Curse Of The Shadow
- 01:20 Unchained Reaction
- 02:10 Dirty Jobs
- 03:50 Ultimate Survival
- 06:20 How It's Made
- 06:40 How It's Made
- 07:00 Kids vs Film
- 07:25 Kids vs Film
- 07:50 Awesome Adventures
- 08:40 How It's Made
- 12:50 Ultimate Survival
- 16:10 Bear Grylls: Born Survivor
- 17:00 Unchained Reaction
- 17:50 Unchained Reaction
- 18:40 Troy
- 19:30 Wildest Africa
- 20:20 Ecopolis
- 21:10 Rockin' Roadsters
- 22:00 Destroyed In Seconds
- 05:36 How Do They Do It?
- 06:00 Food Factory
- 08:00 How Do They Do It?
- 08:26 What Could Possibly Go Wrong?
- 12:26 Mythbusters
- 16:26 Food Factory
- 18:26 How Do They Do It?
- 20:30 Bad Universe
- 23:00 Nextworld
- 23:50 Origins

WORLD HD

- 00:00 Wedding Band
- 01:00 American Idol
- 02:00 Grey's Anatomy
- 03:00 Grey's Anatomy
- 04:00 Fashion Star
- 05:00 House Of DVF
- 06:00 Cedar Cove
- 07:00 Cougar Town
- 07:30 Cougar Town
- 08:00 Castle
- 09:00 Castle
- 10:00 Grey's Anatomy
- 11:00 Grey's Anatomy
- 12:00 Fashion Star
- 13:00 House Of DVF
- 14:00 Gallery Girls
- 15:00 Cedar Cove
- 16:00 American Idol
- 17:00 American Idol
- 18:00 The Bridge
- 19:00 The Listener
- 20:00 Making Mr. Right
- 21:00 Project Accessory
- 22:00 Switched At Birth
- 23:00 Grey's Anatomy

TLC HD

- 00:20 My 600lb Life
- 01:10 Single Dad Seeking...
- 02:50 Designer Darlings
- 03:35 Sister Wives
- 04:20 Toddlers & Tiaras
- 05:10 Toddlers & Tiaras
- 06:00 Super Soul Sunday
- 06:50 Toddlers & Tiaras: Coach Wars
- 07:40 Designer Darlings
- 08:30 Little People, Big World: Wedding Farm
- 09:20 Kate Plus 8
- 10:10 Love, Lust Or Run
- 10:35 Cake Boss
- 11:00 My Big Fat Fabulous Life
- 11:25 Say Yes To The Dress
- 11:50 Super Soul Sunday
- 12:40 Oprah's Master Class
- 13:30 Too Ugly For Love?
- 14:20 Little People, Big World
- 15:10 Toddlers & Tiaras
- 16:00 Little People, Big World: Wedding Farm
- 16:50 Kate Plus 8
- 17:15 Kate Plus 8
- 17:40 Love, Lust Or Run
- 18:05 Cake Boss
- 18:30 Cake Boss
- 18:55 Cake Boss
- 19:20 My Big Fat Fabulous Life
- 19:45 Say Yes To The Dress: Bridesmaids
- 20:10 Super Soul Sunday
- 21:00 Cake Boss
- 21:25 Cake Boss
- 21:50 Designer Darlings
- 22:40 Alaskan Women Looking For Love
- 23:30 Cake Boss
- 23:55 Cake Boss

ANIMAL PLANET HD

- 00:50 Gator Boys
- 01:45 Earthquake: Panda Rescue
- 02:40 Pandamonium
- 06:49 River Monsters
- 07:36 Going Ape
- 08:00 Going Ape
- 08:25 Dr. Dee: Alaska Vet
- 09:15 Treehouse Masters
- 10:10 The Vet Life
- 11:05 Catching Monsters
- 12:00 Biggest And Baddest
- 12:55 Bondi Vet
- 13:50 Call Of The Wildman
- 14:15 Call Of The Wildman
- 14:45 In Too Deep
- 18:25 Call Of The Wildman
- 18:50 Call Of The Wildman
- 19:20 Treehouse Masters
- 20:15 Dr. Jeff: Rocky Mountain Vet
- 21:10 The Vet Life
- 22:05 Dr. Dee: Alaska Vet
- 23:00 Treehouse Masters
- 23:55 Gator Boys

ci

- 0:00 Britain's Darkest Taboos
- 01:00 The Killing Season
- 03:00 Robbie Coltrane's Critical Evidence
- 04:00 Britain's Darkest Taboos
- 05:00 The Killing Season
- 07:00 The First 48
- 09:00 Killers
- 10:00 My Crazy Ex
- 14:00 Private Crimes
- 14:30 Private Crimes
- 15:00 It Takes A Killer
- 16:30 It Takes A Killer
- 17:00 Homicide Hunter
- 19:00 Fred Dinenage: Murder Casebook
- 21:00 The First 48
- 22:00 Killers
- 23:00 The Real Essex Boys

Discovery Family

- 00:05 Kids Do The Craziest Things
- 00:30 Unchained Reaction

NAT GEO WILD HD

- 00:20 World's Deadliest Animals
- 01:10 The Invaders
- 02:00 World's Deadliest
- 02:50 Dead Or Alive
- 03:45 World's Deadliest Animals
- 04:40 Europe's Wild Islands
- 05:35 Africa's Hunters
- 06:30 Monster Fish
- 07:25 Monster Fish
- 08:20 Wild 24
- 09:15 Survive The Wild
- 10:10 Killer Shrew
- 11:05 Wild Case Files
- 12:00 Dangerous Encounters
- 12:55 Zoo Confidential
- 13:50 Dead Or Alive
- 14:45 Animal Record Breakers
- 15:40 Urban Jungle: Wilderness Rising
- 16:35 Europe's Wild Islands
- 17:30 The Invaders
- 18:25 World's Deadliest Animals
- 19:20 Animal Record Breakers
- 20:10 Urban Jungle: Wilderness Rising
- 21:00 Europe's Wild Islands
- 21:50 The Invaders
- 22:40 World's Deadliest Animals
- 23:30 Dangerous Encounters

D HD

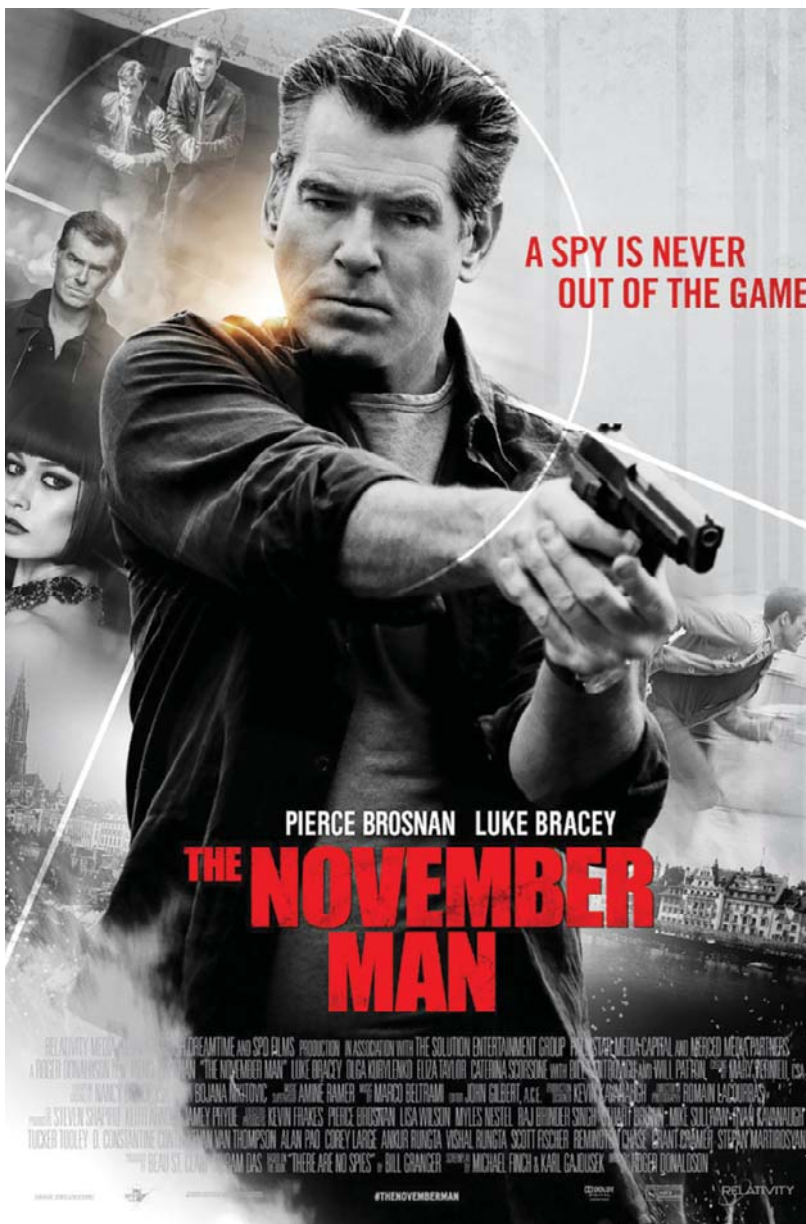
- Discovery HD
- 00:20 Wheels That Fail
- 00:45 Wheeler Dealers
- 01:35 Wheeler Dealers
- 02:25 Wheeler Dealers
- 03:15 Wheeler Dealers
- 04:05 Wheeler Dealers
- 05:00 Wheeler Dealers
- 06:00 Deadliest Catch
- 06:50 Misfit Garage
- 07:40 Fast N' Loud
- 08:30 The Island With Bear Grylls
- 09:20 Storage Wars Canada
- 09:45 How It's Made: Dream Cars
- 10:10 How It's Made: Dream Cars
- 10:35 So You Think You'd Survive?
- 11:25 Legend Of Croc Gold
- 12:15 Manhunt With Joel Lambert
- 13:05 How It's Made: Dream Cars
- 13:30 Storage Wars Canada
- 13:55 Storage Wars Canada
- 14:20 Alaska: The Last Frontier
- 15:10 The Island With Bear Grylls
- 16:00 Deadliest Catch
- 16:50 Fast N' Loud
- 17:40 Misfit Garage
- 18:30 How It's Made: Dream Cars
- 18:55 How It's Made: Dream Cars
- 19:20 The Island With Bear Grylls
- 20:10 Storage Wars Canada
- 20:35 Storage Wars Canada
- 21:00 Rise Of The Warrior Apes
- 22:40 Legend Of Croc Gold
- 23:30 Fast N' Loud

NAT GEO people

- 00:15 Confucius Was A Foodie
- 01:05 Mega Food
- 01:55 Food Lover's Guide To The Planet
- 02:20 Glamour Puds
- 02:45 The Shelbourne
- 03:10 Maximum Foodie
- 03:35 Andy And Ben Eat The World
- 04:00 Raw Travel
- 04:25 Home Strange Home
- 05:20 Cesar's Recruit: Asia
- 06:15 Confucius Was A Foodie
- 07:10 Sara's Australia Unveiled
- 07:35 Sara's Australia Unveiled
- 08:05 The Great Food Revolution
- 09:00 Top Chef Top Table: Seoul
- 09:25 Charlie Luxton's Homes By The Sea
- 10:20 Miguel's Feasts
- 10:50 Eat Street
- 11:15 Eat Street
- 11:45 Valentine Warner's Wild Table
- 12:10 Valentine Warner's Wild Table
- 12:40 Mega Food
- 13:35 Croatia's Finest
- 14:00 My Dubai
- 14:30 The Shelbourne
- 14:55 Maximum Foodie
- 15:25 Andy And Ben Eat The World
- 15:50 Raw Travel
- 16:20 Home Strange Home
- 17:15 Cool Spaces
- 18:10 Cruise Ship Diaries
- 19:05 Maximum Foodie
- 19:30 Andy And Ben Eat The World
- 20:00 Raw Travel
- 20:25 The Shelbourne
- 20:55 Maximum Foodie
- 21:20 Cool Spaces
- 22:10 Cruise Ship Diaries
- 23:00 Mega Food
- 23:50 Croatia's Finest
- 00:40 What Could Possibly Go Wrong?
- 04:48 How Do They Do It?
- 05:12 How Do They Do It?

DISCOVERY science

- 00:40 What Could Possibly Go Wrong?
- 04:48 How Do They Do It?
- 05:12 How Do They Do It?

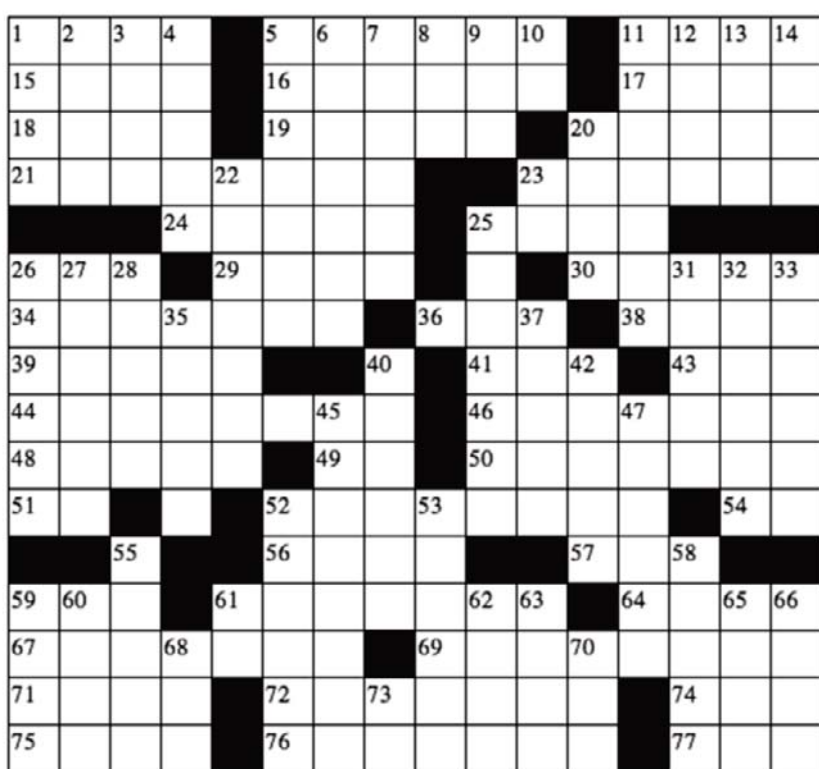


THE NOVEMBER MAN ON OSN MOVIES ACTION HD

nickelodeon HD

- Nickelodeon HD
- 00:12 Henry Danger
- 00:36 Get Blake
- 01:00 Sanjay And Craig
- 01:24 Rabbids Invasion
- 01:48 Breadwinners
- 02:12 SpongeBob SquarePants
- 03:00 Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles
- 03:24 Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles
- 03:48 Henry Danger
- 04:12 Nicky, Ricky, Dicky & Dawn
- 04:36 Breadwinners
- 05:00 Breadwinners
- 05:24 Game Shakers
- 05:48 100 Things To Do Before High School
- 06:12 SpongeBob SquarePants
- 06:36 Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles
- 07:00 The Loud House
- 07:24 Rabbids Invasion
- 07:48 Winx Club
- 08:12 Get Blake
- 08:36 Harvey Beaks
- 09:00 Breadwinners
- 09:24 Sanjay And Craig
- 09:48 Henry Danger
- 10:12 Game Shakers
- 10:36 Get Blake
- 11:00 Winx Club
- 11:24 SpongeBob SquarePants
- 11:48 Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles
- 12:12 The Loud House
- 12:36 Rabbids Invasion

CROSSWORD 1538



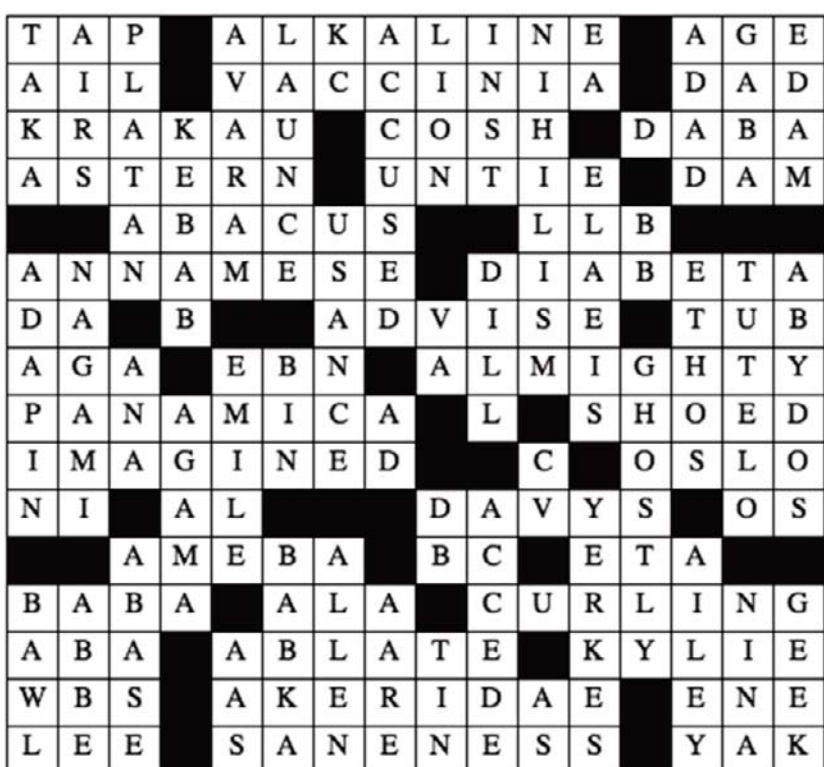
ACROSS

1. A large number or amount.
5. Discrimination in favor of the able-bodied.
11. A secret society of white Southerners to resist Black emancipation.
15. Long green edible beaked pods of the okra plant.
16. Open again or anew.
17. Pleasant or pleasing or agreeable in nature or appearance.
18. Not only so, but.
19. A device that, on receiving radar signals, transmits coded signals in response to help navigators determine their position.
21. Designed for defense against armored vehicles.
24. Payment made to a person in a position of trust to corrupt his judgment.
26. A city in the European part of Russia.
29. Any culture medium that uses agar as the gelling agent.
30. (Mesopotamia) God of agriculture and earth.
34. Causing great physical or mental suffering.
36. A form of entertainment that enacts a story by a sequence of images giving the illusion of continuous movement.
38. Large burrowing rodent of South and Central America.
39. A religious doctrine that is proclaimed as true without proof.
41. Any of several small ungulate mammals of Africa and Asia with rodent-like incisors and feet with hooflike toes.
43. The quantity that can be held in a mug.
44. Locked in by ice.
46. A small fluke.
48. Any of numerous trees of the family Cupressaceae that resemble cedars.
49. The branch of engineering science that studies the uses of electricity and the equipment for power generation and distribution and the control of machines and communication.
50. A passageway between buildings or giving access to a basement.
51. A very poisonous metallic element that has three allotropic forms.
54. An intensely radioactive metallic element that occurs in minute amounts in uranium ores.
56. Cut off the testicles.
57. (computer science) A coding system that incorporates extra parity bits in order to detect errors.
59. A loose sleeveless outer garment made from aba cloth.
64. According to the Old Testament he was a pagan king of Israel and husband of Jezebel (9th century BC).
67. (heraldry) Looking forward.
69. Consider as ideal.
71. A person who possesses great material wealth.
72. Of or relating to a geological eon (longer than an era).
74. Electronic warfare undertaken to prevent or reduce an enemy's effective use of the electromagnetic spectrum.
75. By bad luck.
76. British actress and mistress of the prince who later became Edward VII (1853-1929).
77. The federal agency that insures residential mortgages.

DOWN

1. Spanish painter best known for his portraits (1746-1828).
2. German naturalist whose speculations that plants and animals are made up of tiny living "infusoria" led to the cell theory (1779-1851).
3. A very troublesome child.
4. Formerly a term of respect for important white Europeans in colonial India.
5. Call before a court to answer an indictment.
6. A small cloth bag filled with dried beans.
7. A storage compartment for clothes and valuables.
8. A corporation's first offer to sell stock to the public.
9. A fractional monetary unit of Japan and Indonesia and Cambodia.
10. A hard brittle gray polyvalent metallic element that resembles iron but is not magnetic.
11. A small flat triangular bone in front of the knee that protects the knee joint.
12. A German art song of the 19th century for voice and piano.
13. A unit of area (4840 square yards) used in English-speaking countries.
14. A condition requiring relief.
20. A notable achievement.
22. Someone who betrays his country by committing treason.
23. A radioactive transuranic metallic element.
25. (British) A paved surface on which cars can be made to skid so that drivers can practice controlling them.
27. Solid excretory product evacuated from the bowels.
28. (of complexion) Blemished by imperfections of the skin.
31. United States physicist (born in Russia) who was a proponent of the big-bang theory and who did research in radioactivity and suggested the triplet code for DNA (1904-1968).
32. Nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drug (trade names Acular and Toradol) that is administered only intramuscularly.
33. An industrial city in central Japan on southern Honshu.
35. Cubes of meat marinated and cooked on a skewer usually with vegetables.
37. The capital of Egypt and the largest city in Africa.
40. United States swimmer who in 1926 became the first woman to swim the English Channel (1903-).
42. The place where some action occurs.
45. Proboscis worms.
47. Of or like a cecum.
52. Pertaining to or associated with agony (especially death agonies).
53. Having no employment.
55. The immature free-living form of most invertebrates and amphibians and fish which at hatching from the egg is fundamentally unlike its parent and must metamorphose.
58. Most important element.
60. Any of numerous local fertility and nature deities worshipped by ancient Semitic peoples.
61. The syllable naming the fourth (subdominant) note of the diatonic scale in solmization.
62. Make editorial changes (in a text).
63. A toothed wheel that engages another toothed mechanism in order to change the speed or direction of transmitted motion.
65. United States writer (born in Poland) who wrote in Yiddish (1880-1957).
66. Area around the altar of a church for the clergy and choir.
68. A potent estrogen used in medicine and in feed for livestock and poultry.
70. One or some or every or all without specification.
73. In operation or operational.

Yesterday's Solution



STAR TRACK



Aries (March 21-April 19)

Dynamic, you become aware of new options that make life a little easier in the home place. A recent home show or garden show encourages your creative side. Whatever the case, you are ready for the spring-cleaning, repair, install and cook out-of-doors type of weekend. You may, however, have to just settle for one or two of those activities. Whatever the case, there are large pieces of time available for some of these activities. This is an excellent time to sway others to your way of thinking. Be careful not to take it to extremes in trying to find the logical reason for every event that occurs, especially the action of loved ones. If you are not traveling physically, you certainly will be mentally. This could involve anything from magazines to movies.



Taurus (April 20-May 20)

You are praised for your ability to spring back from disappointment. Your habit is to jump into an activity that demands close attention. How about a round of spring-cleaning this time of month is good for just such a project. This and similar activities like it can bring about much satisfaction. Keeping in touch with friends and relatives is important just now. Your timing should be perfect for whatever needs discussing. This can become a lucky period. You need to be needed and you have an intuitive way about you in knowing when your loved ones have needs. This is a good time to share with a loved one. Stay away from caffeine this evening and enjoy an early, relaxed evening. Consider baking a cake with applesauce instead of oil.



Gemini (May 21-June 20)

You and a loved one may visit a religious group different from your own belief today. Widening the scope of possibilities or enjoying the different rituals, you draw close in the experience. The mystic, the martyr, the sinner and the saint are archetypes that take on a greater importance in your life. If anyone ever does know such things, you will probably come to understand them as this cycle unfolds. This can be a phase of sublime spiritual development, to be sure. You should be aware of any tendencies to believe too quickly, too deeply or to become dependent on things or people that seem to offer quick and easy answers to life's deepest yearnings. Family, home, friends and relatives play a very important part in your life now.



Cancer (June 21-July 22)

Today and tomorrow are the best times this month for you to begin a personal diet or at least, give it a boost. Be careful not to encourage your friends to adopt the same diet methods that you choose for yourself. Steam baths and good massages will keep you feeling at the top of your energy-careful to keep your water intake up. Today you will be able to tackle tasks that require real discipline or organization. Whether you are male or female, the family chores can become quite tedious and boring. You may decide that you can best spend your money by hiring a cleaning person for this day. Someone else in the family springs for dinner out of the house this evening-year! You thoroughly enjoy time with family members this week.



Leo (July 23-August 22)

Don't be too quick to jump into a financial opportunity-further negotiations may be needed. Talk to someone today that will not be afraid to give you negative input regarding this matter. You have a desire for beauty and harmony, stimulating your creativity and imagination-yet making you prone for delusion. You are apt to put a love interest on a pedestal or fall in love with an ideal-careful. This is a good time to get rid of any unrealistic thinking. A love relationship will just naturally get better after the middle of this month-patience. Stamp out the negative emotions now; go with the flow and insert much laughter, a light heart, etc. Brisk walking, bicycling or horseback riding will certainly help to round out your day.



Virgo (August 23-September 22)

Take it easy on yourself and others today-those changes that need to be made around the house or garden do not have to be made in one day. These changes could involve planting, painting or any little repair jobs. A little humor will see you through the rough spots. You will enjoy being with your friends or loved ones later in the afternoon. Most of this is because people may have been out of touch or out of town. Your mind is quick and sharp and you have insight into most situations that help you to portray the truth and help others. Communicating with style is important to you this evening. You could find yourself entering contests or writing poems. Neighbors or brothers and sisters will likely bring all kinds of good experiences your way.



Libra (September 23-October 22)

Obtaining and exchanging information takes on importance at this time. If you have a significant point to make, now is the best time to make yourself heard. People are in a receptive mood. You have become aware of the need for improvements around the neighborhood and it may be the time to call a neighborhood meeting. You may want to do a little research so that you will have choices to put in your presentation. If your ideas need a vote, there will be choices in how you expect to go about making these improvements. You will be pleased to find an interest among your neighbors to cooperate in the scheduling of meetings and responsibilities. You will be wise to invite a speaker among the police department. He or she can guide you and the group.



Scorpio (October 23-November 21)

Family and friends begin your day with smiles and good feelings. This can be a phase of sublime spiritual development, to be sure. You should be aware of any tendency to believe too quickly, too deeply, or to become dependent on things or people that seem to offer quick and easy answers to life's deepest yearnings. You may find yourself being put to good use by your friends, or it could be that circumstances force you to reorganize and be more conservative. You could be helping friends move or perhaps babysitting for friends while they enjoy an afternoon movie. This should go rather smoothly. Fondness and appreciation for the past and for your roots in life take on a great deal of importance for you now as you enjoy visiting with these young people.



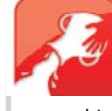
Sagittarius (November 22-December 21)

Set short-term goals along with your long-term goals so that you will actually see that you are making progress with some changes in your home surroundings. A silent auction or some other opportunity to invest may take place this afternoon. Purchasing possessions does not make you better-keep a focus. Although you have a fine eye for investments and you feel you can splurge more often than most, there is a spiritual side of you that may seem stifled. Stay away from the temptation of purchasing new things for now. However, opening yourself up to new experiences is a good thing. Have patience with an elderly individual today. Emotional security, a sense of belonging and nurturing are issues felt instinctively by yourself and others that you love.



Capricorn (December 22-January 19)

You desire a pleasant environment at home today. This fills you with the longing to be with the people you know and love. Having a family get-together may be quite enjoyable at this time. This can be an expansive, creative and even romantic phase, a time you will look back with pride and fondness. Spreading your good thoughts along to others means much to you just now. This is a time of the year to plant seeds of hope. It helps everyone when you walk into a room with the intention of creating a climate of happiness. You could come up with new solutions or inventions since your creative side is working fulltime just now. You may find yourself looking for a little romance this evening or at least enjoying some emotional release.



Aquarius (January 20- February 18)

There may be some serious decisions made about the future of a project at this time. You take this opportunity to be communicative to the associates around you and to listen as well. An exchange of ideas will help you decide on future plans. You draw emotional sustenance and a sense of security from ideals, friends and social involvement. You may become aware of petty problems between you and a friend this evening. Do not try to force an issue during the next few days. Some problems are never what they seem, so listen and keep your opinions to yourself for now. It is time to consolidate your friendships, strengthening them before they wither away. Spending time with close, old friends is advisable now.



Pisces (February 19-March 20)

A senior member of the family may request your presence at a meeting today. Be available to go and be available to listen. You will have time to think situations through and do a bit of research without making a decision right away. You love to study the news reports of science discoveries. Today you may spend quite a lot of time searching the internet and talking with friends about just such things. What-if types of questions come to mind. With your no-nonsense thinking, you question all of those thoughts, but you enjoy the just-suppose sort of conversations this type of subject produces. A short story idea may come to mind later today. After your visit with a family member, you may come home to pleasant surprises.

WORD SEARCH

Old TV Shows 3

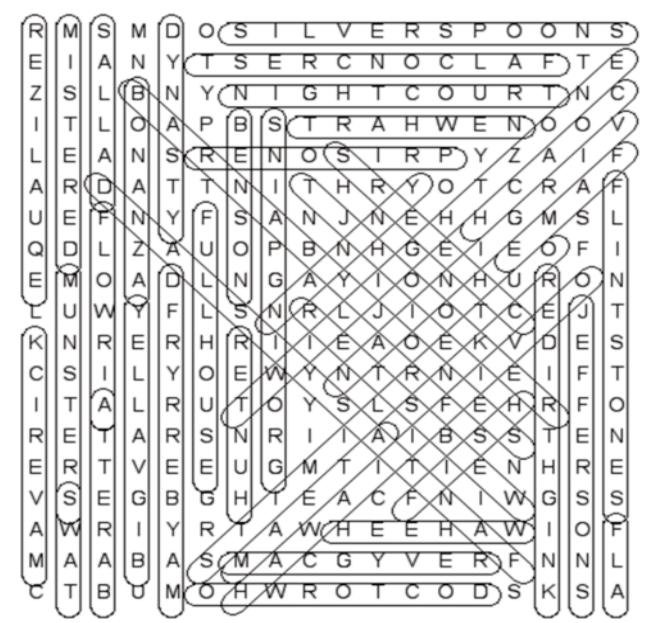
Find and circle all of the old TV shows that are hidden in the grid. The remaining letters spell the name of an additional old TV show.



- | | | | |
|------------------|----------------|---------------|----------------|
| ADDAMS FAMILY | FAMILY TIES | KNOTS LANDING | QUANTUM LEAP |
| AVENGERS | GET SMART | KUNG FU | QUINCY |
| BATMAN | GOLDEN GIRLS | LONE RANGER | ROCKFORD FILES |
| BEWITCHED | GUNSMOKE | MAGNUM P.I. | ROSEANNE |
| BRADY BUNCH | HAPPY DAYS | MANHATTAN | STAR TREK |
| CHARLIE'S ANGELS | HARRY O | MASH | THE SAINT |
| COACH | HIGHLANDER | MCCLOUD | TWIN PEAKS |
| COLUMBO | HOGAN'S HEROES | MONKEES | WINGS |
| COSSBY SHOW | HOTEL | NIGHT GALLERY | WONDER YEARS |
| CYBILL | I LOVE LUCY | PRETENDER | X FILES |
| DRAAGNET | | | |

Yesterday's Solution

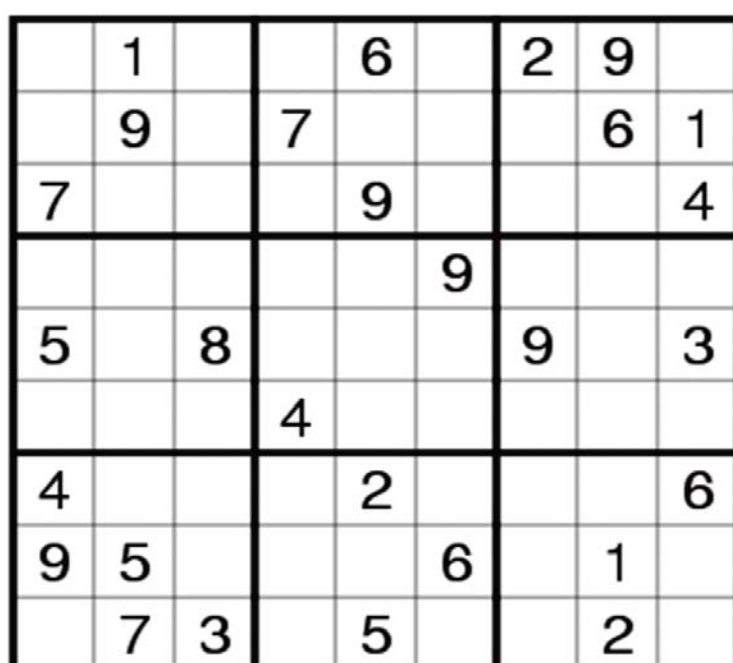
Old TV Shows 2



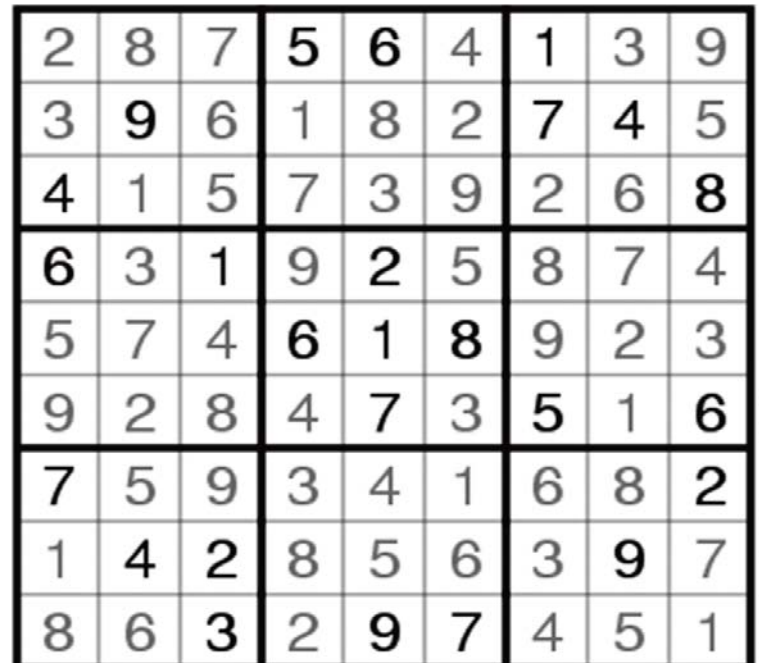
- | | | | |
|---------------|----------------|-----------------|---------------|
| A-TEAM | DOCTOR WHO | HEE HAW | NEWHART |
| ALF | DYNASTY | HUNTER | NIGHT COURT |
| AIRWOLF | EQUALIZER | JEFFERSONS | OUTER LIMITS |
| BARETTA | FALCON CREST | KNIGHT RIDER | PRISONER |
| BARNABY JONES | FAME | MAGGYVER | S.W.A.T. |
| BENSON | FANTASY ISLAND | MAVERICK | SILVER SPOONS |
| BIG VALLEY | FISH | MAYBERRY R.F.D. | T.J. HOOKER |
| BONANZA | FLINTSTONES | MISTER ED | TWILIGHT ZONE |
| CHEERS | FULL HOUSE | MUNSTERS | VIRGINIAN |
| COACH | GROWING PAINS | NANNY | WEBSTER |
| DALLAS | HAWAII FIVE-O | | |

The hidden TV show is: MONTY PYTHON'S FLYING CIRCUS

Daily SuDoku



Yesterday's Solution



For labor-related inquiries and complaints:
Call MSAL hotline 128

Hospitals

Sabah Hospital	24812000
Amiri Hospital	22450005
Maternity Hospital	24843100
Mubarak Al-Kabir Hospital	25312700
Chest Hospital	24849400
Farwaniya Hospital	24892010
Adan Hospital	23940620
Ibn Sina Hospital	24840300
Al-Razi Hospital	24846000
Physiotherapy Hospital	24874330/9

Clinics

Kaizen center	25716707
Rawda	22517733
Adaliya	22517144
Khalidiya	24848075
Kaifan	24849807
Shamiya	24848913
Shuwaikh	24814507
Abdullah Salem	22549134
Nuzha	22526804
Industrial Shuwaikh	24814764
Qadsiya	22515088
Dasmah	22532265
Bneid Al-Gar	22531908
Shaab	22518752
Qibla	22459381
Ayoun Al-Qibla	22451082
Mirqab	22456536
Sharq	22465401
Salmiya	25746401
Jabriya	25316254
Maidan Hawally	25623444
Bayan	25388462
Mishref	25381200
W Hawally	22630786
Sabah	24810221
Jahra	24770319
New Jahra	24575755
West Jahra	24772608
South Jahra	24775066
North Jahra	24775992
North Jleeb	24311795
Ardhiya	24884079
Firdous	24892674
Omariya	24719048
N Khaitan	24710044
Fintas	23900322



PHARMACIES ON 24 HRS DUTY

GOVERNORATE	PHARMACY	ADDRESS	PHONE
Ahmadi	Sama Safwan Abu Halaifa Danat Al-Sultan	Fahaeel Makka St Abu Halaifa-Coastal Rd Mahboula Block 1, Coastal Rd	23915883 23715414 23726558
Jahra	Modern Jahra Madina Munawara	Jahra-Block 3 Lot 1 Jahra-Block 92	24575518 24566622
Capital	Ahlam Khalidiya Coop	Fahad Al-Salem St Khalidiya Coop	22436184 24833967
Farwaniya	New Shifa Ferdous Coop Modern Safwan	Farwaniya Block 40 Ferdous Coop Old Kheitan Block 11	24734000 24881201 24726638
Hawally	Tariq Hana Ikhlas Hawally & Rawdha Ghadeer Kindy Ibn Al-Nafis Mishrif Coop Salwa Coop	Salmiya-Hamad Mubarak St Salmiya-Amman St Hawally-Beirut St Hawally & Rawdha Coop Jabriya-Block 1A Jabriya-Block 3B Salmiya-Hamad Mubarak St Mishrif Coop Salwa Coop	25726265 25647075 22625999 22564549 25340559 25326554 25721264 25380581 25628241

STATE OF KUWAIT DIRECTORATE GENERAL OF CIVIL AVIATION METEOROLOGICAL DEPARTMENT



Tel: (+965) 161 Ext: 2627 - 2630
Fax: (+965) 24348714
www.met.gov.kw

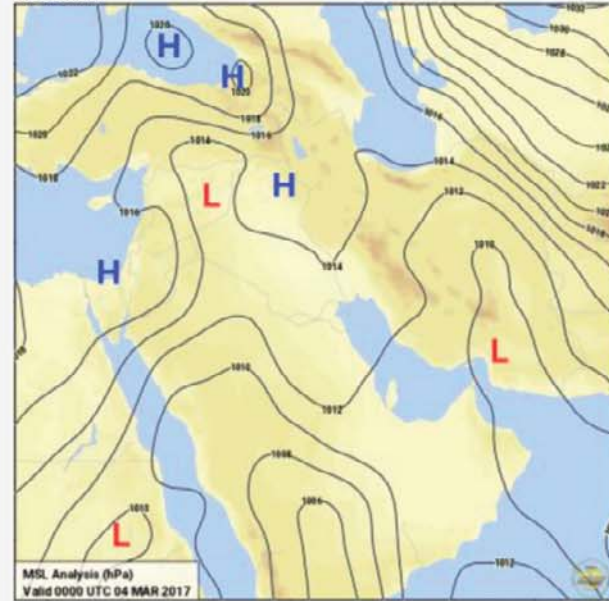
Expected Weather for the Next 24 Hours

Issued 04/03/2017-07:00 LT UTC +3hr

Max Temperature 25 °C

By Day : Sunny with light variable wind changing to light to moderate south easterly later on wind, with speed of 06 - 26 km/h and some scattered clouds will appear later on
By Night : Partly cloudy with light to moderate south easterly to light variable wind, with speed of 06 - 28 km/h with a chance for scattered rain

SFC. CHART



Four-Day Forecast

	Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday
Expected Weather	sunny + scattered rain	sunny + raising dust	sunny	sunny
Min Temp °C	11	11	11	12
Max Temp °C	25	24	25	26
Wind Direction	variable wind changing to light to moderate north westerly	north westerly	north westerly	north westerly
Wind Speed km/h	10 - 30	15 - 40	10 - 32	12 - 35

All times are local time (GMT+3) unless otherwise stated

Warnings & Weather Watches

no warnings or weather watches

Kuwait Forecast

Station	MIN °C REC	Max °C EXP
KUWAIT CITY	17	26
KUWAIT AIRPORT	11	25
ABDALY	10	26
BUBYAN	16	26
JAHRRA	13	26
FAILAKA ISLAND	16	25
SALMIYAH	16	24
AHMADI	17	22
JAL ALIYAH	13	25
QAROH ISLAND	17	20
UMM AL-MARADEM	17	20
NUWAISIB	15	26
WAFRA	12	28
MANAGISH	11	25
SALMY	12	24
MUTRIBA	12	26

Recorded Yesterday at Kuwait Airport

Max Temp (°C)	26
Min Temp (°C)	10
Max Rel Hum (%)	96
Min Rel Hum (%)	32
Max Wind Speed (km/h) and Direction	36 N
TOTAL RAINFALL IN 24 HR	0 mm

Sunrise	06:10
Sunset	17:49

Prayer Times

Fajr	04:51
Sunrise	06:10
Zuhr	12:00
Asr	15:20
Sunset	17:49
Isha	19:06

INTERNATIONAL CALLS



Afghanistan	0093	Lithuania	00370
Albania	00355	Luxembourg	00352
Algeria	00213	Macau	00853
Andorra	00376	Macedonia	00389
Angola	00244	Madagascar	00261
Anguilla	001264	Majorca	0034
Antigua	001268	Malawi	00265
Argentina	0054	Malaysia	0060
Armenia	00374	Maldives	00960
Australia	0061	Mali	00223
Austria	0043	Malta	00356
Azerbaijan	00994	Marshall Islands	00692
Bahamas	001242	Martinique	00596
Bahrain	00973	Mauritania	00222
Bangladesh	00880	Mauritius	00230
Barbados	001246	Mayotte	00269
Belarus	00375	Mexico	0052
Belgium	0032	Micronesia	00691
Belize	00501	Moldova	00373
Benin	00229	Monaco	00377
Bermuda	001441	Mongolia	00976
Bhutan	00975	Montserrat	001664
Bolivia	00591	Morocco	00212
Bosnia	00387	Mozambique	00258
Botswana	00267	Myanmar (Burma)	0095
Brazil	0055	Namibia	00264
Brunei	00673	Nepal	00977
Bulgaria	00359	Netherlands	0031
Burkina	00226	Netherlands Antilles	00599
Burundi	00257	New Caledonia	00687
Cambodia	00855	New Zealand	0064
Cameroon	00237	Nicaragua	00505
Canada	001	Niger	00227
Cape Verde	00238	Nigeria	00234
Cayman Islands	001345	Niue	00683
Central African	00236	Norfolk Island	00672
Chad	00235	N. Ireland (UK)	0044
Chile	0056	North Korea	00850
China	0086	Norway	0047
Colombia	0057	Oman	00968
Comoros	00269	Pakistan	0092
Congo	00242	Palau	00680
Cook Islands	00682	Panama	00507
Costa Rica	00506	Papua New Guinea	00675
Croatia	00385	Paraguay	00595
Cuba	0053	Peru	0051
Cyprus	00357	Philippines	0063
Cyprus (Northern)	0090392	Poland	0048
Czech Republic	00420	Portugal	00351
Denmark	0045	Puerto Rico	001787
Diego Garcia	00246	Qatar	00974
Djibouti	00253	Romania	0040
Dominica	001767	Russian Federation	007
Dominican Republic	001809	Rwanda	00250
Ecuador	00593	Saint Helena	00290
Egypt	0020	Saint Kitts	001869
El Salvador	00503	Saint Lucia	001758
England (UK)	0044	Saint Pierre	00508
Equatorial Guinea	00240	Saint Vincent	001784
Eritrea	00291	Samoa US	00684
Estonia	00372	Samoa West	00685
Ethiopia	00251	San Marino	00378
Falkland Islands	00500	Sao Tome	00239
Faroe Islands	00298	Saudi Arabia	00966
Fiji	00679	Scotland (UK)	0044
Finland	00358	Senegal	00221
France	0033	Seychelles	00284
French Guiana	00594	Sierra Leone	00232
French Polynesia	00689	Singapore	0065
Gabon	00241	Slovakia	00421
Gambia	00220	Slovenia	00386
Georgia	00995	Solomon Islands	00677
Germany	0049	Somalia	00252
Ghana	00233	South Africa	0027
Gibraltar	00350	South Korea	0082
Greece	0030	Spain	0034
Greenland	00299	Sri Lanka	0094
Grenada	001473	Sudan	00249
Guadeloupe	00590	Suriname	00597
Guam	001671	Swaziland	00268
Guatemala	00502	Sweden	0046
Guinea	00224	Switzerland	0041
Guyana	00592	Syria	00963
Haiti	00509	Serbia	00381
Holland (Netherlands)	0031	Taiwan	00886
Honduras	00504	Tanzania	00255
Hong Kong	00852	Thailand	0066
Hungary	0036	Togo	00228
Ibiza (Spain)	0034	Tonga	00676
Iceland	00354	Tokelau	00690
India	0091	Trinidad	001868
Indian Ocean	00873	Tunisia	00216
Indonesia	0062	Turkey	0090
Iran	0098	Tuvalu	00688
Iraq	00964	Uganda	00256
Ireland	00353	Ukraine	00380
Italy	0039	United Arab Emirates	00976
Ivory Coast	00225	United Kingdom	0044
Jamaica	001876	Uruguay	00598
Japan	0081	USA	001
Jordan	00962	Uzbekistan	00998
Kazakhstan	007	Vanuatu	00678
Kenya	00254	Venezuela	00582
Kiribati	00686	Vietnam	0084
Kuwait	00965	Virgin Islands UK	001284
Kyrgyzstan	00996	Virgin Islands US	001340
Laos	00856	Wales (UK)	0044
Latvia	00371	Yemen	00967
Lebanon	00961	Yugoslavia	00381
Liberia	00231	Zambia	00260
Libya	00218	Zimbabwe	00263
Lesotho	00266		



PRIVATE CLINICS

Ophthalmologists	
Dr. Abdallah Al-Mansoor	25622444
Dr. Samy Al-Rabea	25752222
Dr. Masoma Habeeb	25321171
Dr. Mubarak Al-Ajmy	25739999
Dr. Mohsen Abel	25757700
Dr. Adnan Hasan Alwayl	25732223
Dr. Abdallah Al-Baghly	25732223
Ear, Nose & Throat (ENT)	
Dr. Ahmed Fouad Mouner	24555050 Ext 510
Dr. Abdallah Al-Ali	25644660
Dr. Abd Al-Hameed Al-Taweel	25646478
Dr. Sanad Al-Fathalah	25311996
Dr. Mohammad Al-Daory	25731988
Dr. Ismail Al-Fodary	22620166
Dr. Mahmoud Al-Booz	25651426
General Practitioners	
Dr. Mohammed Y Majidi	24555050 Ext 123
Dr. Yousef Al-Omar	24719312
Dr. Tarek Al-Mikhaizeem	23926920
Dr. Kathem Maarafi	25730465
Dr. Abdallah Ahmad Eyadah	25655528
Dr. Nabeel Al-Ayoobi	24577781
Dr. Dina Abdallah Al-Rafea	25333501
Urologists	
Dr. Ali Naser Al-Serfy	22641534
Dr. Fawzi Taher Abul	22639955
Dr. Khaleel Abdallah Al-Awadi	22616660
Dr. Adel Al-Hunayan FRCS (C)	25313120
Dr. Leons Joseph	66703427

Plastic Surgeons	
Dr. Mohammad Al-Khalaf	22547272
Dr. Abdal-Redha Lari	22617700
Dr. Abdel Quttainah	25625030/60
Family Doctor	
Dr Divya Damodar	23729596/23729581
Psychiatrists	
Dr. Esam Al-Ansari	22635047
Dr. Eisa M. Al-Balhan	22613623/0
Gynaecologists & Obstetricians	
Dr Adrian arbe	23729596/23729581
Dr. Verginia s. Marin	2572-6666 ext 8321
Dr. Fozeya Ali Al-Qatan	22655539
Dr. Majeda Khalefa Aliyami	25343406
Dr. Ahmad Al-Khooly	25739272
Dr. Salem soso	22618787
General Surgeons	
Dr. Amer Zawaz Al-Amer	22610044
Dr. Mohammad Yousef Basher	25327148
Internists, Chest & Heart	
Dr. Adnan Ebil	22639939
Dr. Mousa Khadada	22666300
Dr. Latefa Al-Duweisan	25728004
Dr. Nadem Al-Ghabra	25355515
Dr. Mobarak Aldoub	24726446
Dr Nasser Behbehani	25654300/3

Paediatricians	
Dr. Khaled Hamadi	25665898
Dr. Abd Al-Aziz Al-Rashed	25340300
Dr. Zahra Qabazard	25710444
Dr. Sohail Qamar	22621099
Dr. Snaa Maarroof	25713514
Dr. Pradip Gujare	23713100
Dr. Zacharias Mathew	24334282
Dermatology	
Dr. Mohammed Salam Bern University	23845955
Dentists	
Dr Anil Thomas	3729596/3729581
Dr. Shamah Al-Matar	22641071/2
Dr. Anesah Al-Rasheed	22562226
Dr. Abdallah Al-Amer	22561444
Dr. Faysal Al-Fozan	22619557
Dr. Abdallateef Al-Katrash	22525888
Dr. Abdallah Al-Duweisan	25653755
Dr. Bader Al-Ansari	25620111
Neurologists	
Dr. Sohal Najem Al-Shemeri	25633324
Dr. Jasem Mola Hassan	25345875
Gastrologists	
Dr. Sami Aman	22636464
Dr. Mohammad Al-Shamaly	25322030
Dr. Foad Abdallah Al-Ali	22633135

Endocrinologist	
Dr. Abd Al-Naser Al-Othman	25339330
Dr. Ahmad Al-Ansari	25658888
Dr. Kamal Al-Shomr	25329924
Physiotherapists & VD	
Dr. Deyaa Shehab	25722291
Dr. Mused Faraj Khamees	22666288
Rheumatologists:	
Dr. Adel Al-Awadi	25330060
Dr. Khaled Al-Jarallah	25722290
Internist, Chest & Heart	
DR.Mohammes Akkad	24555050 Ext 210
Consultant Cardiologist	
Dr. Mohammad Zubaid MB, ChB, FRCP, PACC Assistant Professor Of Medicine Head, Division of Cardiology Mubarak Al-Kabeer Hospital	25339667
Dr. Farida Al-Habib MD, PH.D, FACC	2611555-2622555
Inaya German Medical Center	Te: 2575077 Fax: 25723123

MOVIES

SUBTLE GAY MOMENT IN NEW DISNEY FILM GENERATES BUZZ

The so-called "gay moment" in Disney's new live-action version of "Beauty and the Beast" is subtle - so subtle that one could easily miss it with an ill-timed sneeze or glance away from the screen. And it may sail over the heads of young viewers. But the cast and director say it is indeed a gay moment - one they're proud of. And advocates are calling it a big step forward for Disney and for youth entertainment.

Mere word of it was also enough to lead one Alabama drive-in theater to cancel plans to show the film - apparently without having seen it, because it doesn't open nationwide until March 17. The scene in question involves the character of LeFou (Josh Gad), the timid and lovable sidekick to the preening villain Gaston (Luke Evans). Without spoiling too much, it's safe to say that LeFou spends much of the film in Gaston's thrall, and toward the end also has a moment - a few seconds, really - where the same-sex theme is more overt.

At the film's Los Angeles premiere on Thursday evening, Gad said he was "very proud" of the scene. "Director Bill Condon did an amazing job of giving us an opportunity to create a version of LeFou that isn't like the original ... but that makes him more human and makes him a wonderfully complex character to some extent," he said. "And there's a moment at the end of the film that I don't want to ruin ... because I want the surprise to be intact, but I'm very proud of it. I think it's an incredible moment and it's subtle, but I think it's effective."

Condon suggested that descriptions of LeFou as the first Disney gay character went too far. "I keep saying it's more like the first gay moment," he said. "Because I think it's a very fluid character." The director added: "You can't help but

wonder in his adoration of Gaston ... (is there something more going on?) The length of the scene - or scenes, since LeFou's fluid orientation is hinted at elsewhere - is not what's important, said Sarah Kate Ellis, president and CEO of GLAAD, the LGBTQ media advocacy group.

Coded gay characters

"It's a wonderful step forward," she said. "And this is incredibly important for the youth of today. They need to see themselves reflected in the media they consume. More and more, as studios want to appeal to youth audiences, they're going to have to include LGBTQ story lines and characters." Ellis noted that in the annual survey that GLAAD puts together on LGBTQ inclusion in movies, "we have struggled year after year to find any content in major studio films. We're usually the punching bag or the laughingstock. So this is an enormous step forward for us."

In the past, many have speculated on what they see as "coded" gay characters, or winking references to gay characters or themes in Disney and other youth-oriented films. Ellis said the difference here is that "we're moving from coded, where you have to put together the pieces, to this being in the spotlight ... It shows the direction America is moving in." A Facebook page that apparently belongs to the Henagar Drive-In Theatre in Henagar, Alabama, announced that the theater won't be showing the film as planned because its operators are "first and foremost Christians" and "will not compromise on what the Bible teaches."

"If we cannot take our 11-year-old granddaughter and 8-year-old grandson to see a movie we have no business watching it," the message said. Theater operators did not immediately respond to emails or phone messages to confirm the Facebook posting. The theater's website continued on Friday to say the film was coming in March. Audra McDonald, the Tony-winning Broadway actress who plays a particularly tuneful supporting character in "Beauty and the Beast," said she was "so honored" to be a part of the moment.



This image released by Disney shows Josh Gad as Le Fou, left, and Luke Evans as Gaston in a scene from, 'Beauty and the Beast'. — AP

"The thing is, Disney's not doing anything all that revolutionary," she said. "LGBTQ people have always existed, interracial couples have always existed. And now they're shining light on

it. So they're just representing the world the way it actually is and I think that's spectacular and necessary." (Interracial couples also appear in the film.) Evans said the scene in question was "about unity. It's about never judging a book by its cover, but digging a little deeper and understanding to not be fearful of things you don't know, people that are a little different to you. Fear is not a good thing to fuel." — AP



This photo shows Turkish actor Reha Beyoglu, who portrays Turkey's president in a biopic titled 'Reis' (The Chief), posing during a gala screening of the movie in Istanbul. — AFP

Erdogan biopic Reis hits screens ahead of referendum

A new film about Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan hit cinema screens on Friday just weeks before a vote that would extend the powers of the country's head of state. "Reis" ("The Chief") stars well-known Turkish actor Reha Beyoglu as Turkey's strongman in his early life. It focuses especially on his childhood in a poor district of Istanbul. The biopic, which will also be shown around Europe, has been criticized as propaganda for the April 16 referendum on constitutional changes passed by parliament.

Under a new constitution, Turkey would have an executive presidency along the lines of France or the United States, including powers to directly appoint top public officials such as ministers. Child actor Batuhan Isik Gurel plays Erdogan as a boy with brief appearances by Turkish actress Ozlem Balcı as his wife Emine in the first ever feature film about Turkey's leader. It begins in September 1961 when then-prime minister Adnan Menderes was executed after a military coup the year before.

Erdogan, who was born on February 27, 1954, would have been seven years old at that time and appears in the film's opening sequence asking his father what has happened. His father, known in the neighborhood as "Kaptan" (captain), explains that a man-Menderes-who would give so much to the country has died. The first time the audience sees Erdogan as an adult is in 1994 when he is campaigning to become mayor of Istanbul-an election he won-and gives his business card to a child who will later ask Erdogan to save his puppy from a well.

During the scene, a man calls one of Erdogan's team to threaten the candidate's life. The threats continue throughout the film during scenes of his campaign although the callers never identify

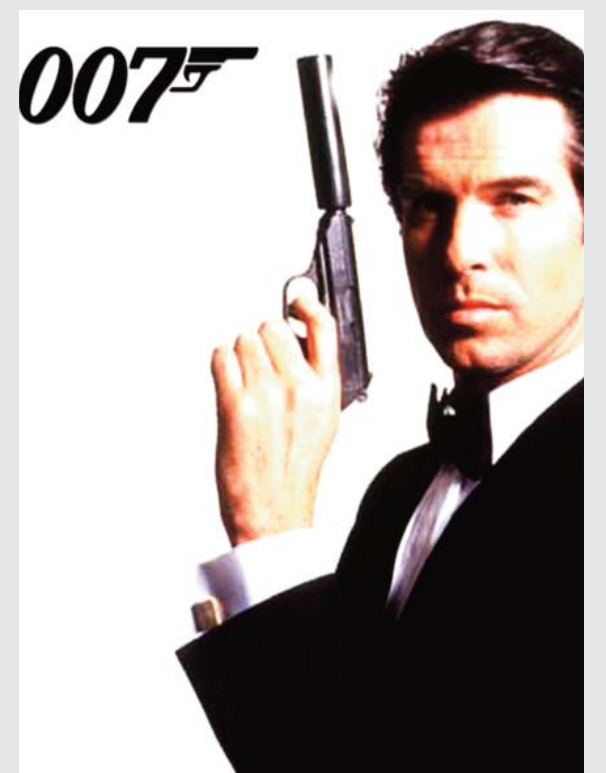
themselves. The film heavily focuses on admirable actions taken by Erdogan, especially as a child. He tries to pay for the cinema ticket of a boy, Ferdi, who has mistreated him in the past but the child is able to enter for free. He later foregoes buying a bike to pay for the schooling of the same boy whose family cannot afford it.

One of us

Leila Basyesil in Istanbul had been waiting excitedly for the film to open. "This morning as soon as we woke up we came here to watch it," she said. In Ankara, a mother, father and daughter told AFP the film was not what they had expected. "I liked it. I thought it was going to be political but it was about his childhood," said the father Mehmet. The film briefly visits the period when Erdogan is mayor with flashbacks and ends with the moment when Erdogan was jailed in March 1999 after he recited a poem deemed to be Islamist.

The four-month imprisonment is still remembered by his supporters as a symbol of the unfair treatment of pious Muslims at that time. "It was realistic. The way neighbors interacted; it took us to our childhood. It was very emotional. We like Erdogan. We saw his history like ours," Mehmet added. His daughter Nesrin said the film showed that Erdogan was "one of us". The family agreed that by focusing less on Erdogan's political history, the film was more powerful than propaganda. But in Istanbul Mehmet Sariyilmaz said he refused to watch the film, saying: "The referendum is coming and for me, I think we can see that movie as propaganda." — AFP

UK cinema-goers asked to become real-life 007s



British film icon James Bond has entertained audiences for over five decades, but now the country's foreign intelligence agency is asking cinema-goers to become spies themselves. MI6 on Friday unveiled a 58-second advertisement-entitled "But She Can" that will be shown in cinemas from tomorrow as part of a recruitment drive to attract budding spies from diverse backgrounds.

"I want everyone to know that, regardless of background, if you have the skills we need and share our values, there is a future for you in MI6," said agency chief Alex Younger as he unveiled the advertisement. "I want people to see our advert and know there is a place for them in our team."

Younger has previously blamed Bond for creating a stereotyped image of a British spy, and is keen to employ more female agents. He said the fictional spy gave a "misleading portrayal" of MI6, and that Bond would "have to change his ways" to survive in the modern agency. — AFP

Rod Stewart sorry for video with mock beheading

With his raspy voice and sex appeal, Rod Stewart has rarely been considered controversial. But after an unlikely online row, the pop star has apologized for a video that some saw as emulating an Islamic State beheading. The singer of "Some Guys Have All the Luck" and "Da Ya Think I'm Sexy?" appeared in a video posted by his wife in which he mockingly pretended to behead a kneeling friend on the beach, evoking for some the grainy but grisly propaganda footage of the extremists.

Confounding matters for some online observers, Stewart was visiting the Middle East and his wife, model Penny Lancaster, had put pictures of herself on Instagram in a veil as she visited a mosque. The 72-year-old British singer, who was knighted by Queen Elizabeth II, said Friday he had no intention of emulating the Islamic State group

and instead was acting out a scene from the fantasy television series "Game of Thrones."

"From re-enacting the Beatles' 'Abbey Road' crossing to spontaneously playing out 'Game of Thrones', we were simply larking about pre-show," Stewart said of the since-deleted video. "Understandably, this has been misinterpreted and I send my deepest apologies to those who have been offended," he said in a statement. The singer-whose hits also include "Maggie May," "Forever Young" and a cover of "Downtown Train"-is touring the United States this summer with Cyndi Lauper, another pop singer best known for her 1980s hits. — AFP



This file photo shows singer Rod Stewart performing during the opening ceremony of the 2014 Commonwealth Games at Celtic Park in Glasgow. — AFP

MOVIES

Jackman slices and dices one last time as Wolverine

After eight movies over 17 years, Hugh Jackman returns this weekend for his final hurrah as Wolverine in "Logan," an edgier, darker take on everyone's favorite hairy, metal-clawed mutant anti-hero. Jackman, 48, had agreed with director James Mangold that if he was going to reprise his iconic role as the cigar-chomping loner one last time, it should be the first R-rated outing in the "X-Men" franchise aimed at a more adult audience. "Hugh and I didn't want to do it if we couldn't do something very different," Mangold said at a preview in Los Angeles of Twentieth Century Fox's 2017 slate.

dark forces. Jackman first played Wolverine in 2000's "X-Men," his acting debut in Hollywood, sparking a re-emergence of superhero movies and kicking off a franchise that has so far clocked up \$4.4 billion in box office receipts.

Director Bryan Singer had considered a number of big names for the part, including Edward Norton, Russell Crowe and Keanu Reeves. He settled on Dougray Scott but the Scottish star had to drop out and Jackman was brought on board at the last minute. Since then, the Australian actor has slipped into Wolverine's skin in "X2: X-Men United" and "X-Men: The Last Stand," before fleshing out the character's back story in the prequel "X-Men Origins: Wolverine."

There was a cameo in "X-Men: First Class" and starring roles in "The Wolverine," and "X-Men: Days of Future Past" before another brief appearance in "X-Men: Apocalypse." The installments have ranged wildly in quality, with "Days of Future Past" receiving almost universally glowing reviews while "Origins" was hammered by the critics. Jackman, however, has been praised for consistently finding Logan's humanity beneath the gruff, scarred exterior.

Road movie

More of a blood-spattered road movie than a traditional superhero film, the latest installment earned its R rating mainly because of the unrelenting, visceral violence which plays out from the opening scene. It is expected to take \$65 million over the weekend to top the domestic box office and \$170 million worldwide. Filmed in the brutal summer heat of Louisiana and New Mexico, "Logan" was heavily influenced by "Shane," the 1953 story of a weary cowboy drawn back into violence after trying to settle down with a homestead family.

"It's a movie about comic book characters but Westerns were made for adults, gangster pictures were made for adults. There's no reason that this genre can't be made, and has been in some cases in the past, for adults," said Mangold, 53. "Deadpool" was one such R-rated comic book film, which raked in nearly \$800 million last year. It starred Ryan Reynolds as a fast-talking, crass mercenary who acquires accelerated healing powers—a character he played in "Origins."

Jackman, a versatile Golden Globe and Tony Award-winning performer as comfortable in stage musicals as blockbusters, has long been open about the fact that "Logan" would be his last Wolverine movie. "He's a warrior. He's billed as a weapon, a killing machine, really. But as we say in the movie—it's a quote from 'Shane'—there's no living with a killing. There's a cost to violence," Jackman told journalists at a screening in New York. "The movie's got something to say and I also think we got to the real bottom of this character and who he is." — AFP

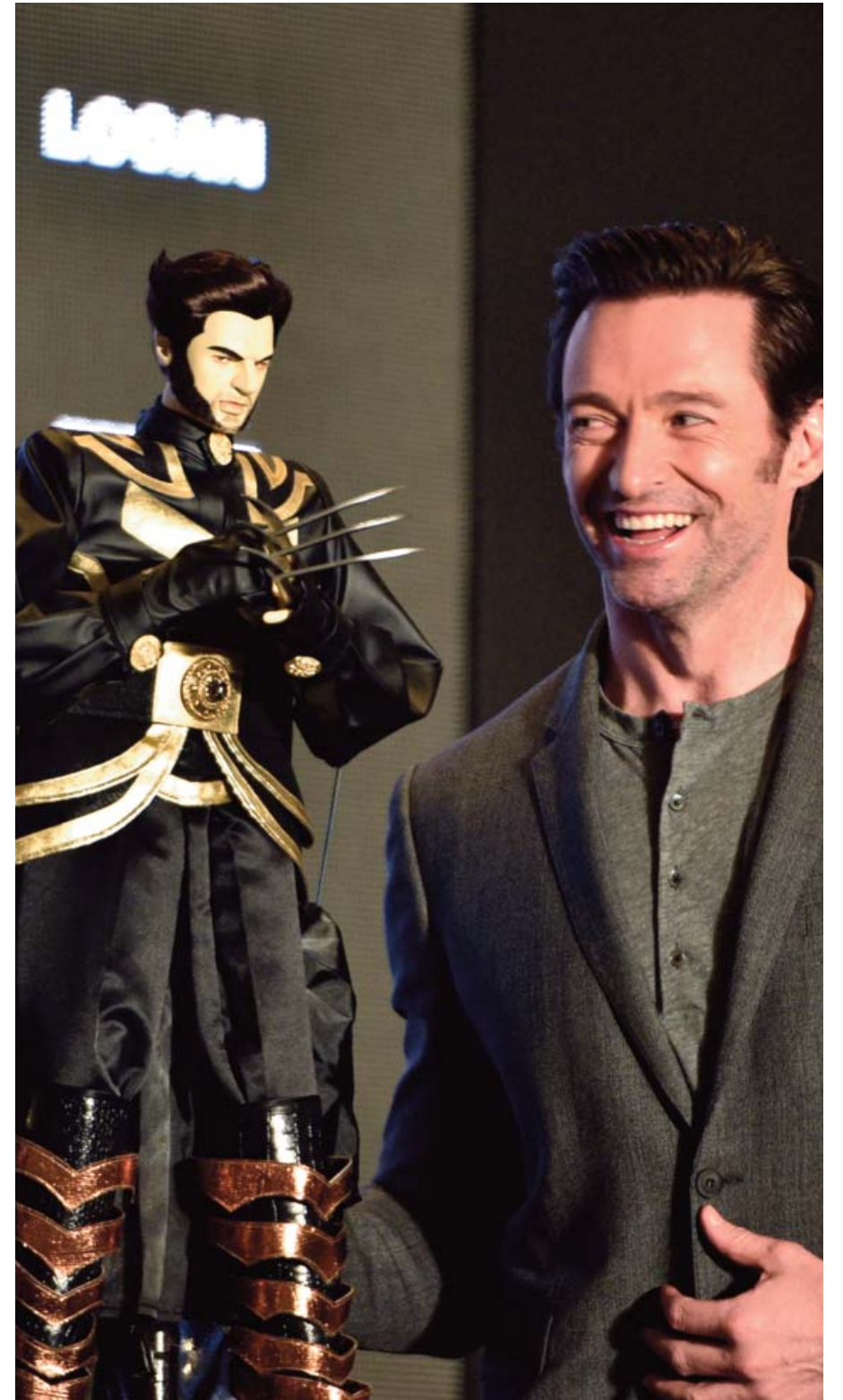


Professor X in the X-Men series' Patrick Stewart poses for photos with a gift of a painting during a press conference for the film Logan in Taipei. —AFP photos

"We both felt like we had made the last movie and we also felt like... there's a slew of comic book themed films, superhero movies—whatever you want to call them—and I, for one, am feeling kind of an exhaustion watching them, generally." "Logan," which takes place more than 50 years after the events of "X-Men: Days of Future Past" (2014), sees Wolverine/Logan aging, weary and vulnerable. Sporting an unkempt gray beard, he drinks his days away on the Mexican border, picking up black market drugs to treat the dying Professor X, played for a seventh—and also final—time by acclaimed British thespian Patrick Stewart.

Humanity

Logan is snapped abruptly out of his torpor when a mysterious woman begs him to protect a young girl—a stunning debut by English-Spanish newcomer Dafne Keen, 11 — who has powers remarkably like his own and is being pursued by



Australian actor Hugh Jackman looks at a gift of a Wolverine puppet during a press conference for the film Logan in Taipei.



This file photo shows actress Natalie Portman arriving for the 89th Annual Academy Awards Nominee Luncheon at the Beverly Hilton Hotel in Beverly Hills, California. — AFP

NATALIE PORTMAN GIVES BIRTH TO A GIRL

Hollywood star Natalie Portman has given birth to a girl, her representative said on Friday. It is the second child for the 35-year-old Oscar-winning actress and her husband, French choreographer Benjamin Millepied, six years after the birth of their son Aleph. "Natalie Portman and her husband Benjamin Millepied welcomed a baby girl, Amalia Millepied, on February 22. Mother and baby are happy and healthy," her representative said in a statement circulated to US media.

Portman attended the Golden Globes and Screen Actors Guild Awards in January but skipped Sunday's Oscars, where she was nominated for best actress for her performance in "Jackie," about the late US First Lady Jackie Kennedy. Critics raved about how accurately Portman managed to capture Kennedy's voice and personality. Portman won a best actress Oscar for 2010's psychological ballet thriller "Black Swan," and it was on the set of the movie that she met Millepied. — AFP

Miriam Colon, iconic US Latina movie, theater actress, dies

Miriam Colon, a pioneering actress in US Latino New York Theater who starred in films alongside Marlon Brando and Al Pacino, died Friday. Her husband, Fred Valle, told The Associated Press that Colon died early Friday in a New York hospital because of complications from a pulmonary infection. She was 80 years old. Colon — whose image appeared on posters throughout the American Southwest for her role in the 2013 movie adaptation of quintessential Chicano novel "Bless Me, Ultima" — had been active as late as 2015 with a cameo appearance on the AMC-TV series "Better Call Saul."

Born in Ponce, Puerto Rico, Colon participated in the theater during her school years and was allowed to audit classes in the drama department at the University of Puerto Rico before she graduated from high school. She came to New York City in the 1950s to study at the Actors Studio and later moved to Los Angeles where she earned small roles in various television shows and films, Valle said. Her roles included appearances in "One-Eyed Jacks" with Brando and in "The Outsider" with Tony Curtis.

In 1967, she founded the Puerto Rican Traveling Theater in New York, where she helped cultivate young Latino actors and writers and staged work that would later be read in Latino Studies classes across the Americas. During her career, she appeared in more than 90 films and more than 250 television episodes on programs including "Bronco," "Bonanza" and "Law & Order." But Colon is widely known as the Cuban-American mother of Tony Montana, played

by Al Pacino, in the 1983 movie "Scarface." Her voice later appeared in underground hip hop songs as her character chided Pacino for his role in the drug trade.

Beautiful role

Colon would go on to star as Tejana restaurateur Mercedes Cruz in the 1996 film "Lone Star." In that film, she played a former immigrant living in the country illegally who lived near the Rio Grande and was quick to call federal immigration authorities on immigrants crossing the border. Colon earned wide acclaim for her role as the New Mexico Hispanic healer Ultima in the movie "Bless Me, Ultima" based on the novel by Rudolfo Anaya. Her character mentored a young boy and taught him about traditional methods of healing and the New Mexico desert.

Posters advertising the popular movie with Colon's image were seen throughout New Mexico. When the movie finally was screened in Albuquerque, audiences were heard crying in reaction to one of the film's final scenes as the film's young boy asked Colon, "Bless me, Ultima." "That was her most beautiful role in my opinion," Valle said. "I saw the movie three times. She was la gran madre in the film." In 2015, President Barack Obama presented the National Medal of Art to Colon for her work as an actress and theater founder. It was an honor Colon cherished, Valle said. "We were married more than 40 years," Valle said. "I was so proud of everything she accomplished." — AP



In this file photo, President Barack Obama awards the 2014 National Medal of Arts to actress, theater founder, and director Miriam Colon of New York during a ceremony in the East Room at the White House in Washington. —AP

Paula Fox, prize winning author, dead at 93

Paula Fox, a prize-winning author who created high art out of imagined chaos in such novels as "Poor George" and "Desperate Characters" and out of the real-life upheavals in her memoir "Borrowed Finery," has died at age 93. Her daughter, Linda Carroll, said that Fox died Wednesday at Brooklyn Methodist Hospital. She had been in failing health. Abandoned as a girl by her parents, a single mother before age 20, Fox used the most finely crafted prose to write again and again about breakdown and disruption, what happens under the "surface of things."

In "Poor George," her debut novel, Fox told of a bored school teacher and the teen vagrant who upends his life. "Desperate Characters," her most highly regarded work of fiction, is a portrait of New York City's civic and domestic decline in the 1960s, a plague symbolized by the bite of a stray cat. "It seems to me that in life, behind all these names and things and people and forces, there's a dark energy," Fox said in 2011.

Her work was out of print for years, but she enjoyed a late-life revival thanks to the admiration of such younger authors as Jonathan Franzen, David Foster Wallace and Jonathan Lethem. She lived for decades in Brooklyn and was a revered figure in the New York City borough's thriving literary community. Her other books included the novels "A Servant's Tale," "The Western Coast" and a memoir about living in Europe after World War II, "The Coldest Winter."

Fox also wrote more than a dozen children's books, including "The Slave Dancer," winner of the Newbery medal in 1974. "Borrowed Finery," published in 2001, was nominated for the National Book Critics Circle award. She might have written more novels, but a head injury sustained from a mugging in Jerusalem in the 1990s left her unable to write long fiction. She instead began working on memoirs and shorter pieces. Born in New York City in 1923, Fox was the daughter of novelist-screenwriter Paul Fox and fellow screenwriter Elsie Fox.



In this photo, author Paula Fox poses for a portrait in New York. — AP

Paula Fox remembered her father as a drunk given to "interminable, stumbling descriptions of the ways in which he and fellow writers tried to elude domesticity." Her mother was a "sociopath" who kicked her out of the house as a young girl. Fox lived everywhere from a plantation in Cuba to a boarding school in Montreal. "My life was incoherent to me," Fox wrote in "Borrowed Finery": "I felt it quivering, spitting out broken teeth."

Overlooked masterpiece

If only she could have gathered all the people she met and placed them in a single room. Living in Hollywood in the 1930s and '40s, she danced with John Wayne and encountered John Barrymore, "yellowing with age like the ivory keys of a very old piano." Marlon Brando was a friend and Courtney Love is her granddaughter, born to the woman Carroll, whom a 19-year-old Fox gave up for adoption. Her brother-in-law, Clement Greenberg, was among the 20th century's most influential art critics.

Although a devoted reader since childhood, she didn't publish until past 40. She worked for years as a teacher and as a tutor for troubled children and was married briefly for a second time, to Richard Sigerson, with whom she had two sons. She finally settled down with her third husband, translator and Commentary editor Martin Greenberg, whom she met after he had rejected a story she submitted for the magazine. In "The Coldest Winter," Fox wrote that living abroad had liberated her mind, "showing me something other than myself." Her early fiction included the stories "Lord Randall" and "The Living," narrated in colloquial style by black characters and published in the mid-1960s by Negro Digest. In "The Slave Dancer," a young boy is captured and forced on to a slave ship. "I've never been a slave. I've never been black. I was never on a ship. But I have a certain narrow understanding of certain kinds of characters, and of evil and kindness and goodness and tenderness," Fox said.

But by the 1990s her work was forgotten by all but her most determined admirers — one of them was Franzen. The future author of "Freedom" and "The Corrections" came upon "Desperate Characters" while at the Yaddo writers colony in 1991. In a Harper's magazine essay about American fiction, he called "Desperate Characters" an overlooked masterpiece.

Author Tom Bissell, then a paperback editor at W.W. Norton, read the essay and wondered why he hadn't heard of the novel. He looked in stores, without luck, and finally got in touch with Fox, who sent him one of her copies. Norton has since reissued all of Fox's adult novels, with introductory essays by Franzen and others. "I'd never heard of Paula Fox, except as an author of children's books, before an editor pushed 'Desperate Characters' at me three years ago. Three years later she's a favorite, and an influence on my own work," Lethem wrote in his introduction to "Poor George," re-published in 2001. — AP



Mao Usami, left, and Alve Lagercrantz, the designer duo behind Sirloin, pose prior their women's Fall-Winter 2017-2018 ready-to-wear collection fashion show at the Madeleine's historical public toilets in Paris. — AFP photos



Models present creations by Sirloin during the women's Fall-Winter 2017-2018 ready-to-wear collection fashion show at the Madeleine's historical public toilets in Paris.



Label flushed by Paris fashion show in a toilet

Paris fashion week shows tend to be held at the city's most opulent addresses, grand chandeliered salons dripping with marble and gilt. But new brand Sirloin gave tradition the bum's rush by presenting its debut collection this weekend in one of the French capital's most well appointed toilets. Designers Mao Usami and Alve Lagercrantz said their odd choice of venue was meant to play tribute to "a place that allows the trivial, silly yet brilliant questions and ideas in life flow free". They said it was time to bring the smallest room out of the closet as models opened the mahogany cubicle doors of the historic Madeleine conveniences to reveal their autumn winter collection. Usami, who has worked for Louis Vuitton and Dries Van Noten, said that toilets were the world's great refuges. They are the place where you go to hide "when you are pretending you are working, but you are just escaping and having a break," she said.

"We encourage everyone to accept their own twisted thoughts and strangest habits. The worse, the better!" The award-winning Shanghai-based pair, who are Japanese and Swedish, said they built their collection from the underwear out, "merging lingerie with ready-to-wear" suits and street wear. Invitations to the show came with a vanity pack of folded toilet paper. The designers insisted, however, that the venue was not a stunt, claiming the collection "focuses on the intellectual questions that every Sirloin girl would ask herself during their brief moments in the toilet." — AFP

FASHION



US actress and model Uma Thurman poses during the photocall before the Christian Dior women's Fall-Winter ready-to-wear collection fashion show in Paris.



British actress Rosamund Pike poses during the photocall before the Christian Dior women's Fall-Winter ready-to-wear collection fashion show in Paris.



British US actress Sienna Miller poses during the photocall before the Christian Dior women's Fall-Winter ready-to-wear collection fashion show in Paris.



Barbadian singer Rihanna poses during the photocall before the Christian Dior women's Fall-Winter ready-to-wear collection fashion show in Paris.

Dior in blue jeans raises the black beret of revolt

The first female designer to lead Dior took her feminist revolution to another level on Friday, unleashing models in workers' blue overalls and Black Panther leather berets. Maria Grazia Chiuri continued her radical shake-up of the fabled French label with a rhapsody in navy blue—the color the label's founder Christian Dior said was "the only one which can ever compete with black". The Italian designer marked her arrival last year with T-shirts bearing the slogan "We should all be feminists."

She took her empowerment message a step further on Friday with a sober and hugely surprising collection that mixed blue jeans with taffeta and velvet. The show's guests were given a white bandana printed with her—and now Dior's—definition of a feminist: "A person who believes in the social, political and economic equality of the sexes." The white bandana has been adopted as a symbol of resistance on fashion catwalks against politicians peddling division, a tilt at US President Donald Trump among others.

The contrast with the dreamy romanticism of Chiuri's first haute couture collection for the label in January could not have been starker. Then she wowed critics with one dreamlike ball gown after another, which the New York Times described as "sheer romance". In contrast, her autumn-winter ready-to-wear collection rarely strayed from navy blue and black, as if to acknowledge the hard word needed to achieve the equality she espouses. Her models were in a big hurry—workers ants out to revolutionize their world.

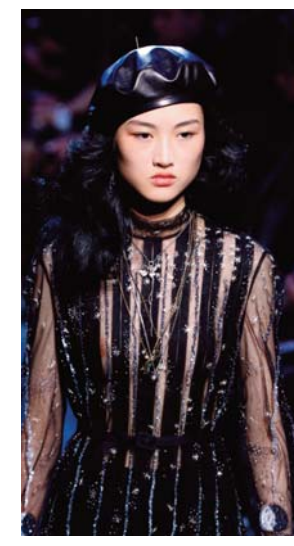
Subversive

Turned-up straight blue jeans were worn with capes and hooded tops inspired by monks' cowls. And Chiuri seemed to revel in the subversive charge of the most daintily feminine of all French brands, rethinking work wear last seen on 1950s car mechanics. Navy as the new black was her starting point for the collection, she said as celebrity guests including the singer Rihanna, actors Uma Thurman, Sienna Miller and Rosamund Pike and supermodel Kate Moss arrived for the show.

"As well as the symbol of the Virgin Mary and of kings, blue is the color of all kinds of uniforms... uniform help(s) to protect people in some way," she said. "There is no specific uniform (in the show), everyone can decide what their personal uniform is. "Uniforms are also about equality," she added. "I am surprised that we have to speak about equality still. If you want more equality, we have to work together for it."

Earlier Friday Vanessa Seward, known for her classic slightly vintage look, sexed up her autumn winter collection with short dresses and knee-length boots. And Jonathan Anderson at Loewe mixed spots, stripes, checks, squares and diamonds, sometimes on the same dress. — AFP

Italian fashion designer Maria Grazia Chiuri acknowledges the crowd following the Christian Dior women's Fall-Winter 2017-2018 ready-to-wear collection fashion show in Paris. — AFP photos



Models present creation by Christian Dior during the women's Fall-Winter 2017-2018 ready-to-wear collection fashion show in Paris.

Lifestyle

SUNDAY, MARCH 5, 2017

Jackman slices and dices one last time as Wolverine

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People look at projections of paintings as part of the exhibition 'The Fantastic and Wonderful world of Bosch', Brueghel, Arcimboldo at the Quarries of Lights (Carrieres de Lumiere) in Les Baux-de-Provence. — AFP

In Belfast, street art battles community rifts

From the art of war to the art of peace: for decades Belfast adorned its walls with huge community murals marking the bloody history of the Northern Irish conflict. But the murals springing up across the city centre have another aim—helping to erase the Catholic-Protestant divide. "I grew up in front of these political murals and I thought that my goal was to take the city and make it look completely different," street artist Glenn Molloy, a former DJ, said.

Instead of guns, paramilitaries and clenched fists, his murals in the city centre feature portraits of celebrities like Jack Nicholson, Bruce Lee and David Bowie. With little hope in sight that this week's elections in Northern Ireland will end a bitter political stalemate, Molloy said his work is aimed at celebrating the positive.

"I wanted to give something positive, bright, cheerful, something that the people could relate to, rather than to be oppressed," said Molloy, who is also well known for painting portraits of the city's homeless population. Painted in black and white—with the contours of their faces defined in red—his portraits have earned Molloy the nickname of "Belfast Banksy," in reference to the famous British street artist.

A powerful message

In the Protestant unionist stronghold of east Belfast, some buildings' facades hark back to the violence that reigned in the British-ruled province from 1969 to 1998. "We seek nothing but the elementary right implanted in every man: the right, if you are attacked, to defend yourself," is written on the facade of a local pub. A 10-metre high painting depicting two paramilitaries wearing balaclavas and armed with a machine gun is right next to the quote.

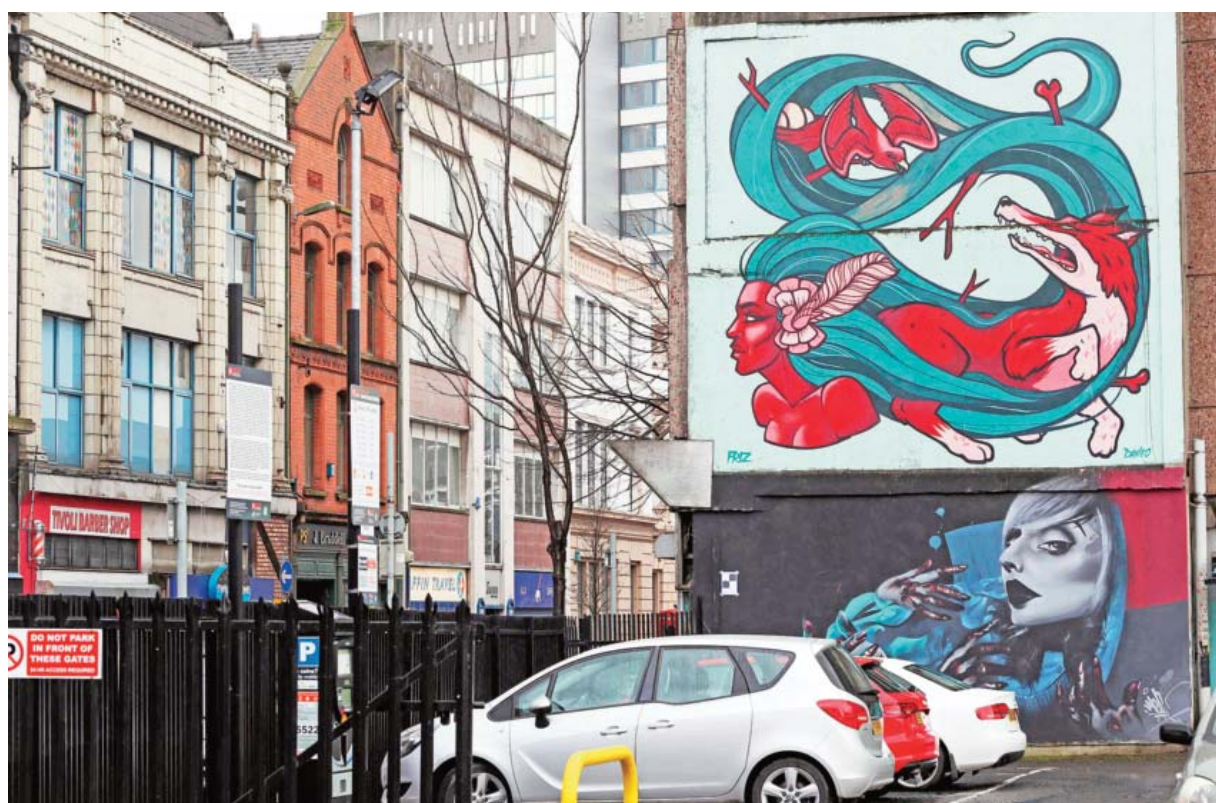
The intimidating theme can be found on other murals several kilometers away in the former north Belfast bastions of the Irish Republican Army. "I don't care if I fall as long as someone else picks up my gun and keeps on shooting"—a quote attributed to guerrilla icon Che Guevara—can be read on a wall next to two bloody clenched fists. Across the city, in both Catholic and Protestant neighborhoods, the colorful murals helped to demarcate territories.

But in the city centre a motley array of colorful and non-political murals has for the past few years given Belfast a new face. One shows a car driving through the night, another enormous work depicts a bearded cook

with a lobster. Further down, a young melancholic girl is painted in blue. Overall, more than 100 pieces of street art have been created by artists from Britain, Ireland and the rest of Europe.

Adam Turkington kick started the movement with a street art festival he created five years ago called "Hit the North." "Being non-political in Northern Ireland is being political. Defending aesthetics, beauty, having fun, making the city look better is a pretty powerful message," he said. "In Belfast, art and especially street art echoes the silent majority, those who are not voting because they are fed up," and "the tyranny of a tiny minority" obsessed by divisions and religion, he said. Although the majority of these murals have no particular message, mysterious French artist MTO, in 2014 painted one of the most political pieces on display.

"The Son of Protagoras" shows a squatting child holding a dove killed by two arrows. One is Catholic, the other Protestant. "Protagoras is the father of agnosticism. MTO's message is that religion is ruining this place," Turkington said. — AFP



Street art is pictured in Belfast, Northern Ireland. — AFP photos

