

Philippines schools can again enroll students



North Korea fires missiles, three reach Japan waters



Female Saudi horse trainer sees hope for women



Women football in Kuwait seeking a better future



AMIR AGREES TO REINSTATE REVOKED CITIZENSHIPS: MPs

LAWMAKERS SHELVE THREATS TO GRILL PREMIER

150 FILS
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KUWAIT: HH the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah is granted an honorary doctorate for his major national, Islamic and international accomplishments on the political, economic, social and humanitarian levels yesterday during the 2015-2016 Kuwait University student graduation ceremony. (See Page 2)

By B Izzak

KUWAIT: A large number of lawmakers said after meeting HH the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah yesterday that he has agreed to reinstate citizenships of opposition figures that were stripped by the government in the summer of 2014. "Thanks to the generous gesture of the Amir for reinstating the revoked citizenships," opposition Islamist MP Mohammad Al-Dallal said on Twitter. He said the move was the result of efforts by a number of MPs and the Assembly Speaker Marzouq Al-Ghanem. He also thanked Prime Minister HH Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-Sabah.

The announcement came after Ghanem and 13 MPs representing various groups met HH the Amir. Ghanem told reporters that a number of issues including the revoked citizenships were discussed with the Amir and "his response to the issue of citizenship was positive". The speaker said the Amir assigned him and the prime minister to follow up the issue of citizenship and present it in full to the Amir. Almost all the lawmakers who took part in the meeting with the Amir confirmed that a decision has been made by the Amir to restore the citizenships.

In a crackdown on the opposition in 2014, the government decided to withdraw Kuwaiti citizenship from a number of opposition figures and dozens of their family members. They included former Islamist MP Abdullah Al-Barghash and 57 members of his family, owner of Alam Al-Youm newspaper Ahmad Jabr Al-Shemmari, Islamic preacher Sheikh Nabeel Al-Awadhi and former spokesman of the Popular Action Movement Saad Al-Ajmi, who was later deported to Saudi Arabia.

Continued on Page 13



KUWAIT: Former MP Abdullah Al-Barghash (left) receives guests at his residence yesterday after his citizenship and that of his family was reinstated on the orders of HH the Amir of Kuwait. — Photo by Yasser Al-Zayyat



Min 12°
Max 27°
High Tide
07:55 & 17:57
Low Tide
00:44 & 12:27

KUWAIT PENALIZES 8 'TERROR SUPPORTERS'

MOCI UNDERSECRETARY DIES OF HEART ATTACK

KUWAIT: Undersecretary of the Ministry of Commerce and Industry Khaled Al-Shemali, aged 47, died late Sunday after a heart attack in Washington. Shemali was on an official trip accompanied by Acting Minister of State for Youth Affairs Khaled Al-Roudhan, who is heading a Kuwaiti delegation for meetings with high-ranking officials from the International Bank. — KUNA



Khaled Al-Shemali

KUWAIT: Kuwait has taken punitive measures against eight citizens listed by the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) as "supporters of terrorism", a foreign ministry official announced yesterday. "All necessary measures have been taken against the eight Kuwaitis who support terrorism," said Ambassador Nasser Al-Sebeeh, the Assistant Foreign Minister for Development and International Cooperation, in a statement. He was answering a question by journalists about the punitive action taken by the government against these citizens listed by the Security Council after he took part in a workshop about human rights at the national level.

The penalties, in harmony with the relevant UNSC resolution, include suspending their banking accounts, banning the eight Kuwaitis from travel and prohibiting them from "engaging in any activity inside and outside the country", explained Sebeeh.

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WASHINGTON: (From left) US Secretary of State Rex Tillerson, Attorney General Jeff Sessions and Homeland Security Secretary John Kelly arrive to deliver remarks on visa travel at the US Customs and Border Protection Press Room in the Reagan Building yesterday. — AFP

TRUMP PRIVATELY SIGNS NEW TRAVEL BAN, LEAVES IRAQ OFF

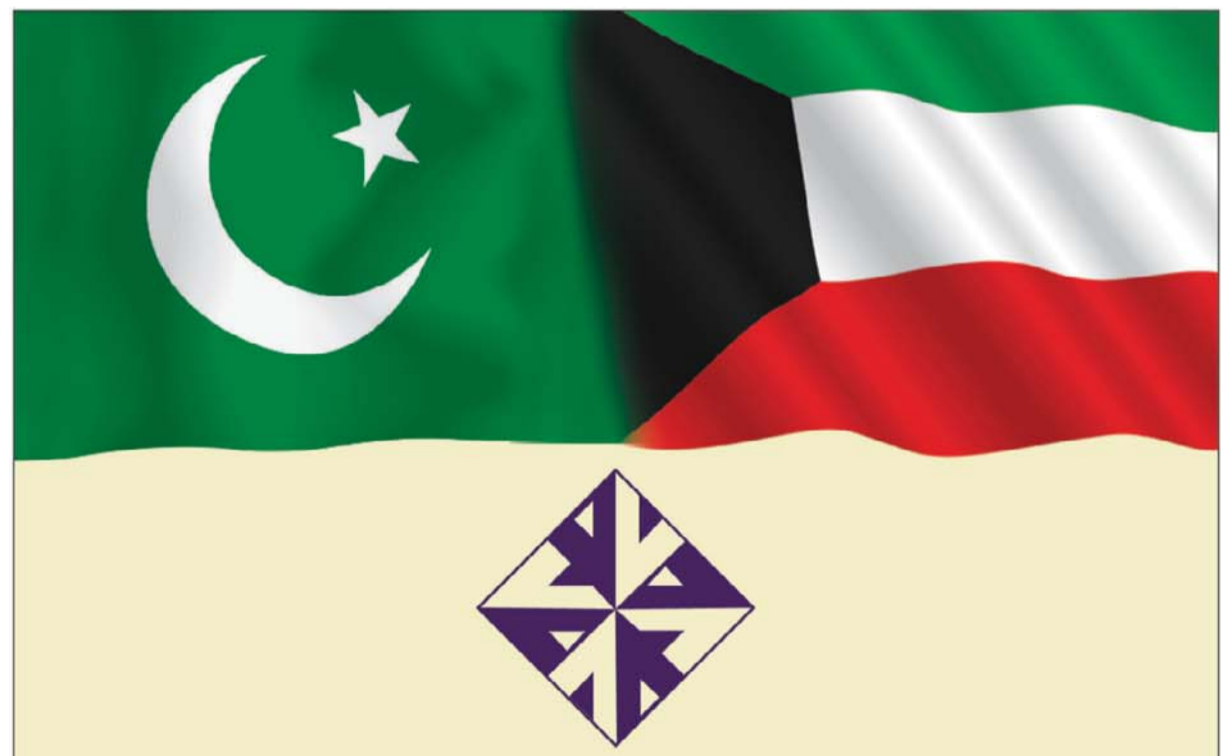
WASHINGTON: US President Donald Trump yesterday signed a revised ban on travelers from six Muslim-majority nations, scaling back the order to exempt Iraqis and permanent US residents. After his first wide-ranging and controversial restrictions were slapped down by the federal courts, Trump signed an order freezing new visas for Syrians, Iranians, Libyans, Somalis, Yemenis and Sudanese citizens. The White House said Trump signed the order behind closed doors "this morning". The measure is due to come into effect on March 16.

Secretary of State Rex Tillerson called the executive order "a vital measure for strengthening our national security". Attorney General Jeff Sessions added at a joint

press conference that it "responsibly provides a needed pause so we can carefully review how we scrutinize people coming here from these countries of concern". "Three of these nations are state sponsors of terrorism," Sessions added, referring to Iran, Sudan and Syria, adding that others had served as "safe havens" for terror operatives.

The first version temporarily closed US borders to all refugees and to citizens from seven mainly Muslim countries. The State Department initially cancelled 60,000 visas, and hundreds of people were reportedly detained at US airports. The new order explicitly exempts Iraqis, legal permanent residents and valid visa holders.

Continued on Page 13



The Chairman, Members of the Board of Directors and the Staff of

National Industries Group Holding Company and Subsidiaries

Extend their

HEARTIEST Welcome to the

PRIME MINISTER OF THE ISLAMIC REPUBLIC OF PAKISTAN

His Excellency

Mohammad Nawaz Sharif

AS THE HONORABLE GUEST OF

His Highness THE AMIR OF KUWAIT
SHAIKH SABAH AL-AHMAD AL-JABER AL-SABAH

Wishing His Excellency and the Accompanying delegation

the best of their stay in Kuwait

May Almighty Allah Bless the Arab and Islamic Nations

with Peace & Prosperity



KUWAIT: His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah is greeted after he was granted an honorary doctorate by Kuwait University yesterday. —Kuwait University photos



His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, Minister of Education and Minister of Higher Education Dr Mohammad Al-Faris, Kuwait University President Professor Dr Hussain Al-Ansari and other KU officials pose with KU graduates.

AMIR PATRONIZES, ATTENDS KU GRADUATION CEREMONY

HIS HIGHNESS GRANTED HONORARY DOCTORATE



His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah watches the unveiling of a commemorative shield to mark Kuwait University's golden jubilee.

KUWAIT: His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah yesterday patronized and attended the 2015-2016 Kuwait University (KU) student graduation ceremony. The event was attended by His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, National Assembly Speaker Marzouq Al-Ghanem, Sheikh Jaber Al-Abdullah Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, Sheikh Faisal Al-Saud Al-Mohammad Al-Sabah, His Highness Sheikh Nasser Al-Mohammad Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah, His Highness Prime Minister Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-Hamad Al-Sabah and first Deputy Premier and Foreign Minister Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah. Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Defense Sheikh Mohammad Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah, Deputy Minister of Amiri Diwan Affairs Sheikh Ali Jarrah Al-Sabah, Deputy Prime Minister and Interior Minister Sheikh Khaled Al-Jarrah Al-Sabah, ministers, senior state officials, high-ranking commanders of the army, police and National Guard, graduates' families and citizens were also present at the meeting.

Achievements

Addressing the ceremony, Kuwait University President Professor Dr Hussain Ahmad Al-Ansari voiced much thanks and appreciation to His Highness the Amir for patronizing and attending the event. He said the ceremony came to celebrate the new graduates of the Kuwait University for the academic year 2015-2016, to mark the university's golden jubilee and to grant His Highness the Amir the honorary doctorate thanks to his major national, Islamic and international accomplishments on political, economic, social and humanitarian levels.

Ansari recalled that the university was officially inaugurated on November 27, 1966, under the patronage and in the presence of the late Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Salem Al-Sabah. The university was deemed a pioneering idea at the time and national dream for achieving development. The inauguration was a major launching point for educational development and a cultural shift that has paved the way for science, culture and knowledge for ambitious young generations, he added.

For half a century now, the KU has made high-profile and considerable achievements in the scientific, research and societal domains that have effectively contributed to serving and developing the society in all fields, he boasted. He highly commended the State's total and permanent support to the country's only national university.

Responsibility

Addressing the university's new graduates, the president urged them to shoulder national responsibility by working hard to preserve and safeguard their dear nation and to maintain national unity. He also called on them to cherish the great values of sincerity, dedication and perseverance in order to serve the nation.

On behalf of the university's new graduates, Dalal Faisal Al-Qimlas thanked His Highness the Amir, His Highness the Crown Prince and other top state officials for attending the gala. The student vowed that she and other graduates would do their utmost to develop and serve the nation, and to promote knowledge and science in the country. At the conclusion of the ceremony, a documentary of the KU's history was shown and then top graduates were awarded.

Jubilation

Meanwhile, Kuwait University's professors have voiced profound jubilation and satisfaction for His Highness the Amir's patronage of the KU 2015-2016 students' graduation ceremony. Dr Humoud Al-Gashaan, Dean of the College of Sociology, said the university has sought for 50 years to maintain continuous development of education, noting that this ongoing process has won His Highness' blessing and close care. Dr Suaad Abdulwahab, Dean of the College of Arts, noted the faculty's role in student's educational promotion.

Omar Al-Azmi, a graduate, said he was overwhelmed with happiness due to His Highness' gracing of the graduation ceremony. His sentiments were echoed by his fellow graduate, Nafsa Al-Herbesh, who said she was pleased with His Highness' honoring. Nof Al-Slaifi indicated that she viewed His Highness' patronization as "a plaque of pride on chests of the graduates." Abdullah Al-Shemali indicated His Highness the Amir's sponsorship of the activity would nudge him and his peers to persevere for service of Kuwait. — KUNA



Kuwait University President Professor Dr Hussain Al-Ansari welcomes His Highness Prime Minister Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-Hamad Al-Sabah to the venue.



Kuwait University President Professor Dr Hussain Al-Ansari welcomes His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah to the venue.



KUWAIT: Ministers Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Sabah and Sheikh Mohammad Al-Abdullah Al-Sabah pose with some of the winners. — KUNA

SHEIKH MUBARAK AL-HAMAD JOURNALISM EXCELLENCE AWARD HONORS WINNERS

KUWAIT: Sheikh Mubarak Al-Hamad Journalism Excellence Award Honorary Committee concluded their ninth session activities with a grand ceremony honoring the prizewinners at KUNA's headquarters. The event, held late on Sunday, was patronized and attended by the Minister of State for National Assembly Affairs and Acting Minister of Information Sheikh Mohammad Al-Abdullah Al-Mubarak Al-Sabah, representing His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Jaber Mubarak Al-

Hamad A-Sabah. It was also attended by First Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Foreign Affairs Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah.

The Foreign Minister expressed pleasure for attending the ceremony, thanked the Higher Committee and the evaluation committee for the remarkable role they played in holding this contest. Moreover, Sheikh Mohammad Al-Abdullah expressed honor to "see a large number of professional journalists being honored."

Meanwhile, KUNA Board Chairman and Director General Sheikh Mubarak Al-Duaij Al-Ibrahim Al-Sabah welcomed the attendees in his speech at the ceremony. In a speech, delivered by KUNA's Deputy Chairman for Administrative, Financial and Communications Affairs Abdulhamid Malik on behalf of KUNA Chief, underlined the importance of distinguished journalists in this competition, especially the talented young journalists. —KUNA



KUWAIT: Ministers Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Sabah and Sheikh Mohammad Al-Abdullah Al-Sabah pose with some of the winners. — KUNA

FINANCE MINISTER DEFENDS ECONOMIC REFORM DOCUMENT

KUWAIT: Kuwaiti Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance Anas Al-Saleh defended yesterday the government's document of financial and economic reforms as being based on reliable studies and genuine figures. The minister made the press remark in response to claims that the document was not based on correct studies, confirming that it was an outgrowth of detailed deliberations and discussions attended by experts. He emphasized that when it comes to financial and economic issues, accuracy and objectivity should be fully observed.



Finance Minister Anas Al-Saleh

However, he said efforts were being exerted to develop the way the document's programs are promoted, dismissing any change in its contents or components. Saleh noted that consultations and deliberations were still being conducted by various governmental agen-

cies for putting financial and economic plans in place. The minister lauded the government's retrenchment measures as having saved an estimated amount of KD 1.1 billion (around \$3.5 billion) for the FY 2015-2016. Recent discussions by economists have unequivocally reflected all involved parties' keenness on the promotion and development of governmental performance mechanisms, he boasted.

Initiatives presented for pushing forward economic and financial reforms are primarily intended to eventually provide a decent life for citizens and cut governmental expenses, he added. It is not imperative for Kuwait and other oil-exporting countries to address economic challenges amid the current world economic changes and fluctuations, the minister pointed out. —KUNA



KUWAIT: His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-Hamad Al-Sabah chairs the Cabinet's meeting yesterday. — KUNA

CABINET MULLS CEILING FOR STATE BUDGET EXPENDITURE

KUWAIT: The Cabinet examined yesterday a proposal by the Ministry of Finance with regards to placing a ceiling for the state budget expenditure, with aim of tightening the belt and pressing ahead with economic development, as well as slashing the budget deficit. The Cabinet charged the ministry with doing whatever necessary to ensure success of the adopted approach for attaining the aspired goals.

This came during the Cabinet's weekly regular session held yesterday at Bayan Palace, and chaired by His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-Hamad Al-Sabah. Following the session, Minister of State for Cabinet Affairs and Acting Minister of Information Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah Al-Mubarak Al-Sabah read a statement saying that the session got started with a briefing about a message addressed to His Highness the Amir from the French president.

The French leader invited His Highness to the ministerial donors' meeting due on March 20th at the Louvre Museum for supporting the International Fund on Endangered Cultural Heritage, to be co-organized by France and the UAE. The government welcomed a forecast visit to the country by the Pakistani premier, hoping it would contribute to cementing the good ties between the two friendly countries. Ministers were briefed by the First Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah about outcome of the talks he had held with the UN envoy for Yemen, Ismail Ould Cheikh Ahmed, dealing with international efforts to resolve the crisis in Yemen.

Meanwhile, the Cabinet expressed robust

support for the Kingdom of Bahrain in combating terrorism. The Cabinet praised the Bahraini authorities' recent clampdown on a terrorist network comprising 54 persons and confiscating large caches of arms and explosives.

The State of Kuwait re-affirms its stance on side of the brotherly Kingdom of Bahrain and supporting Manama in all measures that it has

taken to face the peril of terrorism and wipe it out, according to a statement read following the session. Such terrorist schemes target not only security of the Kingdom but also security of all other GCC states. Moreover, the Kuwaiti Cabinet urged the international community to exert intensive efforts in facing all forms of terrorism. — KUNA



KUWAIT: Assistant Foreign Minister for Development and International Cooperation Nasser Al-Sebeeh (center) speaks during the workshop. — KUNA

FOREIGN MINISTRY SEEKS TO PROMOTE KUWAIT'S HUMAN RIGHTS' STATUS

KUWAIT: The Ministry of Foreign Affairs diligently seeks to promote the State of Kuwait's significant regional and international status in the field of human rights, said Ambassador Nasser Al-Sebeeh, the Assistant Foreign Minister for Development and International Cooperation, yesterday.

Addressing a workshop themed 'national plan for implementing recommendations of international human rights' mechanisms', Ambassador Sebeeh said that the UN's honoring of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah as the humanitarian leader and Kuwait as

the humanitarian center "place enormous responsibilities on our shoulders at various levels." The workshop is held within framework of the permanent committee, affiliated to implementation of the five-year development plan and the foreign ministry's programs for boosting Kuwait's role at the human rights' levels.

It aims at working out a national strategy for implementing the State recommendations related to human rights. This approach, he explained, aims at showing Kuwait's commitments to following up on the relevant recommendations. — KUNA

CYBERCRIMES POSE GRAVE DANGER ON CHILDREN, YOUNGSTERS: OFFICIAL

KUWAIT: The recent growing use of social media by children and youth have led cybercrimes to evolve astoundingly and, subsequently, pose a grave threat on those youngsters, an official said yesterday. The hazards resulted by repeated misuse of social media have also dangerous dimensions, in the long run, on the Kuwaiti society and all communities that live in the country, Lieutenant Dr Muath Al-Mulla, assistant professor of penal code at Saad Al-Abdullah Academy for Security Sciences, said in a press statement.

The Ministry of Interior (MOI) is to hold Kuwait's first Regional Conference on Children Protection from Social Media Hazards on March 21st under the auspices of His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-Sabah, noted Mulla, who is also a member in the conference's scientific committee.

The three-day event aims at boosting the community's role, as well as cooperation and integration by all members of the society to contribute in finding real solutions for issues that threaten the country's future, he added. The conference will feature several workshops that aim to raise public awareness about social media perils, and to look into the effective ways of protecting children from relevant risks and instilling noble values into their minds, Mulla noted.

A number of countries are to take part in the event, including Kuwait, Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) states, Egypt, Jordan, Algeria, Palestine, Morocco, Sudan, the United States, and Mexico, he said, adding that the conference will also see participations by an elite of academic experts and technicians, in addition to Kuwaiti official state bodies and institutions. —KUNA

Bu Shanab Restaurant

Let's Doner...

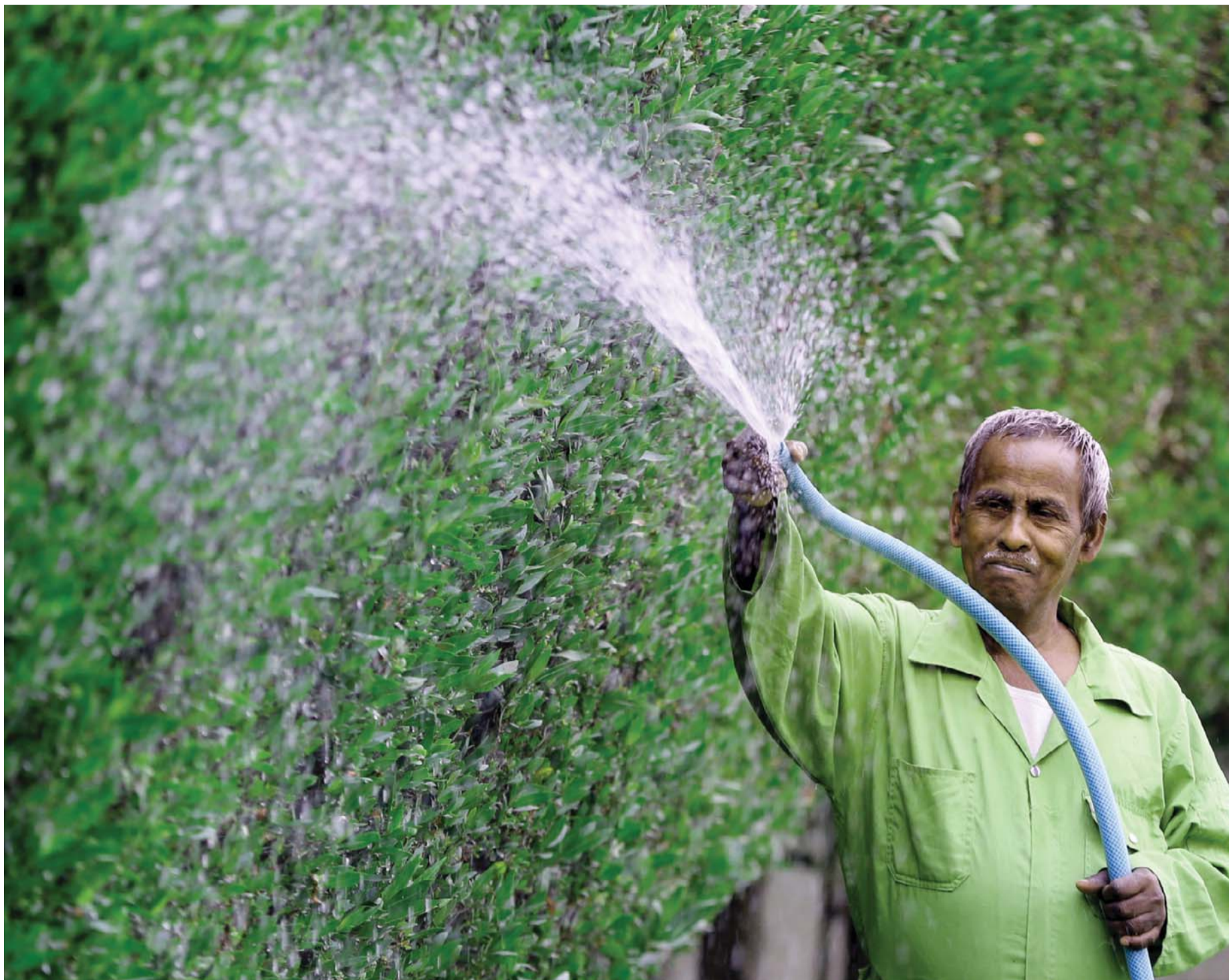
Home Delivery
22279555

Catering
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Al-Jabriyah - Al-Salmiya - Bnaider

Photo

of the day



KUWAIT: A gardener waters plants near a street in Kuwait City. — Photo by Yasser Al-Zayyat



KUWAIT: The participants pose with officials at the education training center in Jabriya. — Photo by Joseph Shagra

US EMBASSY CONCLUDES ENGLISH-LANGUAGE WORKSHOP

IN COLLABORATION WITH THE MINISTRY OF EDUCATION

By Ben Garcia

KUWAIT: A six-day English-language workshop concluded yesterday at the Ministry of Education Training Center in Jabriya. The workshop was organized by the US Embassy in Kuwait in collaboration with the Ministry of Education. The event was attended by the US Embassy Counselor for Public Affairs Charles G Cole, who lauded the role of Kuwaiti English teachers in molding pupils in proper English and preparing them for a more challenging reality, especially if they want to continue

their studies in the United States.

"This was a workshop for English teachers conducted for six days. It was for public school teachers, so they can easily prepare their students for standardized tests in the US, such as TOEFL, required for students to study in America," he said.

About 30 teachers participated from various schools in Kuwait, mostly high school and senior high school teachers. "We want to prepare Kuwaiti student for exams that they need to pass. They are teaching English, and this is part of our collaboration projects with

the Ministry of Education in Kuwait and the Education Department in America, just a few of many education exchanges between us," Cole said.

In mid-Feb, the US Embassy brought a well-known director who conducted an acting workshop for Kuwaiti youth. According to Cole, 15,500 Kuwaiti students are studying in America, and the Kuwaiti government sends students to universities as scholars.

"The students and parents are taking this option, while the ministry of education in Kuwait is also taking decisions. For example, it recently increased the number of approved registered schools for women in the US. So the chance for women to study in the US has increased, as only 20 percent of students studying in the US are women. The new development to increase the number of registered schools can encourage more women to register and get a US education," he said.

Liz England, of Liz England and Associates, conducted the workshop. "I made the workshop more relevant for today's students' needs for communicating using English. The participants were all veteran English teachers - they shared their experiences and I was also able to get information I needed during the six-day workshop," she said.

England admitted though that it is not surprising to learn why the students are not so eager to learn English. "We are talking about students from public schools. It is difficult learning a second language and students expect something quickly, for example to pass their English exams, so some will cheat. These were just a few problems we talked about with regards to students. The project we worked for in this workshop was higher standards, so they learned a lot," she said.

KUWAITI YOUTH DAY TO LAUNCH NEXT WEEK

By Faten Omar

KUWAIT: Under the patronage of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, the Public Authority for Youth (PAY) announced the launch of Kuwaiti Youth Day activities on March 13. The opening night will be held at the Sheikh Jaber Cultural Centre's Drama Theater at 7:30 pm.

During a press conference held yesterday at Sheikh Jaber Cultural Centre, Director General of PAY Abdulrahman Al-Mutairi said there have been a lot of developments during the last five years towards the youth since the launch of the national project 'Kuwait Hears' that was delivered from the youth to His Highness the Amir in 2012 and the establishment of the youth affairs office in Jan 2013.

He noted that the allocation of March 13 every year to celebrate Kuwaiti Youth Day comes as another sign to highlight the importance of youth in social and economic development, and the provision of opportunities for youth, where the Kuwaiti youth represent more than two-thirds of the local population. "This change contributes to the involvement of the youth in the development process based on the philosophy of work and productivity and changes the concept of young people towards themselves and their energies to make them stronger towards leadership," he said.

Mutairi noted that the authority's vision of development is producing creative youth who are partners in the leadership of Kuwait. It sees young Kuwaitis as leaders of the future. "PAY determined during the foundation stage to support and invest in the energies of young people and to involve them in the implementation of

its strategic plan for the years 2016/2017-2020/2021. It held seminars in six governorates in which interviews were conducted with approximately 1,454 young men and women in 55 discussion sessions, as well as 194 programs, activities, and events provided by the authority for young people, which has benefited more than 500 Kuwaitis," he said.

He pointed out that Kuwait's quantum leap from the 110th spot to the 56th in the Commonwealth's Global Youth Development Index (YDI), describing this as a remarkable accomplishment. "Choosing Kuwait as 'Capital of Arab Youth 2017' came because of Kuwait's effort in investing in youth," Mutairi added.

Najat Al-Sayegh, spokeswoman of PAY, said: "Public Authority for Youth aspires to build a new generation of talented Kuwaiti youth in art so that they can become ambassadors of Kuwait in international forums." Regarding Kuwaiti Youth Day, she added that these programs are a kind of support and encouragement for young Kuwaiti that was adopted by the Public Authority for Youth through the creation of spaces to highlight their talents.

"There will be musical, poetic and singing shows, in addition to plays, which will include a group of young stars such as Faisal Shah, Majid Al-Khalidi, Abdulrahman Al-Mahmeed and Salah Al-Erjani. We believe in the existence of the talents of youth that must be supported and secured through the creation of opportunities for them, the implementation of the action plan, developing their abilities to meet their aspirations and create enough space to review their skills," Sayegh added.

KJA ORGANIZES UMRAH FOR MEMBERS, FAMILIES

KUWAIT: Kuwait Journalists Association (KJA) will organize its annual four-day Omra trip for members and their families in the period of April 12-15, 2017. Applications can be made from today until Thursday, March 23, 2017 for non-Kuwaitis, and Thursday, March 30, 2017 for Kuwaitis. The total cost per member will be KD 275 in double or triple rooms and KD 375 in single room. The total cost for non-members will be KD 375 per person in double or triple rooms and KD 475 in single room.

The cost includes economy class round trip flight ticket to Jeddah, stay at Dar Al-Tawheed Hotel in Makkah in addition to fees of meals, transportation to and from the airport, and departure. KJA also announced that a bus trip will be organized for pilgrims wishing to visit Medina on Thursday, April 13.

The bus will embark in the morning and return the same evening.

In addition, KJA stressed that interested Kuwaiti members will have to fill in a form, provide copies of their passports and civil IDs (with minimum six month validity), while non-Kuwaiti will have to fill in the form, provide original passports with a residency valid for at least six months, in addition to Omra visa.

Application and inquiries will be made at KJA secretariat during official working hours 9:00 am -1:00 pm and 5:00 pm - 8:00 pm (Sundays-Thursdays) at KJA's temporary headquarters on the main press street, Shuwaikh Industrial Area at the Al-Balagh printing Press Building, second floor. Inquiries can be made by calling : 99202402, 24843351 and 24841033.



KUWAIT: Director General of the Public Authority for Youth Abdulrahman Al-Mutairi (center) and Najat Al-Sayegh, spokeswoman of the authority (right) attend the press conference. — Photo by Yasser Al-Zayyat

PHILIPPINES SCHOOLS CAN ENROLL STUDENTS AGAIN

By Meshaal Al-Enezi

KUWAIT: Minister of Education and Minister of Higher Education Mohammad Al-Fares issued a decision yesterday to allow students to enroll back at Philippines schools in Kuwait. Registration of new students at schools running the Philippines curricula had been suspended since May 26, 2007 because the old educational program in the Philippines used to consist of only 10 stages. The Philippines has since adopted a new educational system in 2013 dubbed the 'K-12 Program' consisting of 12 stages, which is the minimum number required for schools to be approved by the Ministry of Education in Kuwait.



Education Minister Mohammad Al-Fares

Meeting adjourned

The Municipal Council's Vice Chairman Meshaal Al-Jowaisri yesterday adjourned the council's meeting that was due to discuss a letter from the Interior Ministry pertaining with five council members who ran in the 2016 parliamentary elections. The session was adjourned for lack of quorum. Notably, clause 2 of article 13 of law number 33/2016 pertaining with the municipality states that 'a member is deemed resigned from the council in case of filing a candidacy to run for parliamentary elections.' The adjourned meeting's agenda also included adjusting West Abdullah Mubarak's borders, allocating a location to build the civil defense center in Dajeej, the police consumer society, a request from Al-Tadhmon Sports Club to annex an adjacent piece of land and a request from the National Guard

to build parking spaces at its Fourth Ring Road premises.

Not guilty

The criminal court yesterday acquitted Sheikh Malek Al-Humoud Al-Sabah, Chairman of the Oil and Petrochemicals Industries Workers Confederation Saif Al-Qahtani and Chairman of Kuwait Oil Company's Employees Union Salah Al-Marzouq of charges of attributing some statements to His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah during an oil workers' strike last year.

New expressway

The Central Tenders Committee (CTC) approved a tender to build North Abdaly Expressway between Mutlaa City and the northern regional highway filed jointly by a local company and an international one offering to execute the project for KD 88,499,000.

PNC EXTOLLS SPEAKER'S BID AGAINST ISRAEL'S IPU MEMBERSHIP

AMMAN: The Palestinian National Council (PNC) and the Jordanian parliament's committee on Palestine Monday supported efforts exerted by Kuwaiti parliament speaker Marzouq Al-Ghanem to suspend Israel's Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) membership. This came during a meeting between PNA Chairman Salem Al-Zanoun, the head of the parliamentary committee on Palestine, Yehia Al-Saoud, and several Jordanian MPs, held at the PNC headquarters in Amman.

During the meeting, they discussed how to support the Kuwaiti speaker's efforts against the Israeli Knesset due to its role in legitimizing Israeli settlement in

occupied Palestinian territories, the PNC said in a press release.

They called on Arab leaders to give more heed and backing to the Palestinian cause during their coming summit due in the Jordanian capital late this month, it added. They also agreed to promote Palestinian-Jordanian parliamentary cooperation at regional and international parliamentary events, mainly the forthcoming IPU congress in the Moroccan city of Rabat on March 20, it noted. The Kuwaiti speaker had called during a recent Arab Parliament meeting for exerting Arab efforts to suspend Israel's IPU membership. — KUNA

MINISTRY COMMITTEE VISITS RAMALLAH NEXT MONTH TO HIRE NEW TEACHERS CONTRACTED TEACHERS CAN BRING FAMILIES TO KUWAIT

By A Saleh

KUWAIT: The Palestinian Embassy to Kuwait stressed that a Ministry of Education (MoE) committee will visit Ramallah in the period of April 9-15 to hire Palestinian mathematics, physics, chemistry, biology and geology teachers. The embassy explained that the committee members will enter Palestinian territories from Jordan via the Al-Karama border crossing, where they will be assigned a liaison officer and a representative from the Palestinian ministry of education to facilitate their entry.

The embassy said that entry procedures would be done in direct collaboration with Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas' office

and that the liaison officer would coordinate with the Israeli side to finish the entry procedures within 15 minutes without stamping the committee members' passports with any Israeli stamps throughout their stay.

Moreover, the embassy underlined that the Palestinian teachers hold degrees from Palestinian universities accredited in Kuwait and that none of them hold any Israeli degree. The embassy also stressed that none of the teachers belongs to any political bloc and that the Palestinian authority had conducted full security investigations on them.

In addition, the embassy highlighted that the teachers hold passports issued by the Palestinian Authority and that Kuwait residen-

cy stamps would be pasted on those passports without having any Israeli stamp on them. Finally, commenting about the contract's value, the embassy said MoE will make its offer and that it would be up to the teachers themselves to accept or reject it, but hoped that the contract conditions would help Palestinian teachers lead decent lives in Kuwait and support their loved ones back home. The embassy also noted that it had been agreed that contracted teachers would be able to bring their families to Kuwait. The Interior Ministry gave MoE permission last month to hire 400 hundreds teachers from Palestine after Kuwait finally recognized the Palestinian passport in October 2016.

KUWAIT'S JUDICIARY INDEPENDENT: TOP JUDGE

KUWAIT: Kuwait's judiciary is independent and there is no authority above the judges, according to the National Constitution, affirms Head of the Higher Judicial Council Justice Yousef Al-Mutawaa. The chief judge made the assertion in a statement on the sidelines of a meeting with the visiting President of the Turkish Court of Cassation Ismail Rustu Cirit.

Judge Cirit's companions made presentations about development of the Turkish judiciary, mechanisms of appointing judges, their promotion and works of assisting divisions. Judge Al-Mutawaa affirmed the Turkish delegation's visit to the country is aimed at boosting judicial cooperation.

He quoted Cirit as lauding His Highness the Amir's great humanitarian role, particularly his aid for the Syrian refugees in Turkey.

Mutawaa said he expressed readiness to visit Turkey in response to an invitation addressed to him by the delegation, and declared that the two sides agreed on forming a judicial committee to tackle cooperation at this level. Cirit for his part said he conveyed greetings from President Recep Tayyip Erdogan to His Highness. Ankara, he says, is seeking to bolstering judicial and legal cooperation with Kuwait for facilitating issues at the investment and commercial levels. — KUNA



KUWAIT: Head of the Higher Judicial Council Justice Yousef Al-Mutawaa meets with President of the Turkish Court of Cassation Ismail Rustu Cirit. — KUNA



Head of the Higher Judicial Council Justice Yousef Al-Mutawaa



President of the Turkish Court of Cassation Ismail Rustu Cirit

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Crime

Report

NURSES QUESTIONED IN PATIENT'S DEATH

KUWAIT: Six nurses at the psychiatric hospital are being interrogated by Shuwaikh detectives over a case involving a patient who allegedly committed suicide inside her room; a case that the public prosecution has later classified as a 'homicide'. The Indian woman was sent to the hospital by her company, and the death was reported earlier as a suicide. The coroner then sent a report to the public prosecution, which decided to reclassify the case as a homicide after the report showed evidence of foul play being involved. The nurses are being questioned to find out who visited the woman, how the crime was discovered and other related information.

Service center thieves caught

Detectives arrested two thieves who entered a Doha service center and removed an ATM with an estimated KD 21,000 inside. The suspects, bedoons (stateless), also stole 25 blank passports during the heist. An undercover agent identified one of the suspects and investigations led to the arrests.

Driver charged with theft

A university student told Zahra police that her family driver stole her personal clothes along with KD 300 and disappeared. Detectives are looking for the suspect for questioning.

Murder threat

A citizen accused a motorist of pointing his weapon at him during a traffic dispute and threatened to kill him. When police inquired about the car, it was found rented by a citizen who is being sought by police.

Fight

A teenager was stabbed five times by a citizen during a fight in Fintas. Sabahiya detectives arrested the suspect and he is being questioned. The victim, 14, was rushed to Adan Hospital where he was admitted inside the intensive care unit.

Smuggling foiled

Airport custom officers arrested an Asian man with possession of five bags of shabu. He was sent to Jleeb Al-Shuyoukh's police station and charged accordingly. Airport custom officers also foiled an attempt by an Egyptian to smuggle a bag of marijuana on returning from his country. He was sent to concerned authorities.

Traffic dispute

Two Indians beat an Egyptian man badly following a dispute over the right of way, and both were detained at Salmiya police station. The Egyptian was sent to Mubarak Hospital for treatment as police are investigating.

Charges dropped

A traffic policeman dropped charges against a citizen who insulted him while being held and asked the policeman to take off "his uniform and meet him outside". The suspect later apologized and asked for forgiveness. —Al-Rai



Donations

Al-Jarida

النبا

Al-Anbaa

I AM THE PEOPLE

By Salah Al-Sayer

We earnestly seek a parliamentary life that we describe as 'democracy'. We even brag in front of others that we practice elections and that the Kuwaiti people select its legislatives to monitor the performance of the executives. We have been racing to ballots ever since independence. We have been always applauding the constitution. Our hearts almost broke when our parliament was suspended for a while. Our faces looked dark, hearts were heavy, tears were shed and many people wailed as if the country had been stricken by a devastating earthquake.

The funny thing that really calls for more thought is that despite our obsession with parliamentary life, we no longer accept election results. As soon as ballots are counted, one would start hearing loud objections expressing dissatisfaction. We also start wailing across the country if the parliament gets down to work, as if we elect lawmakers to be indignant with them and curse them.

We give candidates our votes to make them win, then start sharpening our knives to slaughter them in a most peculiar parliamentary experiment. We cry over the absence of the parliament and cry when it is in office, just like a child who cries to get a doll and once he does, he breaks it and then starts crying for destroying it!

It is a fantasy that even the best sociopolitical scientists cannot explain, because the people believe that democracy is the 'rule of the people'. But our people get angry if the people rule. It is a puzzle-like maze. It would be understood people feeling dissatisfied with a government they had not chosen and that was imposed on them. However, it is incomprehensible how people get angry at a parliament they had elected and taken the trouble to go to ballots in a most surrealistic scene that can only be explained by the assumption that each citizen deeply thinks that he or she alone is the people!

Despite our obsession with parliamentary life, we no longer accept election results

— Translated by Kuwait Times

النبا

Al-Anbaa

95 PERCENT CORRUPTION

By Ahmad Al-Sarraf

The problem of Kuwait roads and its 'flying gravel', which cost me personally hundreds of dinars so far, is five percent problem and 95 percent corruption. The Ministry of Public Works announced that it plans to spend \$10 billion to renovate the second and third ring roads, as well as some other roads whose fate will be the same as our current roads as far as corruption in building and negligence in maintenance is concerned. Spending nearly \$10 billion on roads in a country that is suffering from reduction in income is a crime against the country.

Building a road and maintaining it are not a new issue for Kuwait, which knew road projects since the 1940s. The current bad conditions of roads have nothing to do with the nature of the material used - and there is evidence of this. There are roads, even if they are few, that are still in good condition although many years have gone by since their construction, when consciousness at the public works ministry was more alive compared with the condition of the rest of our roads which became bad, although it has not been long since they were constructed. So how did this happen?

The reason is that the former were subjected to strict supervision and were void of "buttering up" while their material was being prepared and paved. The latter received what other state projects have received in the form of "corruption". I still remember that the roads of Kuwait Oil Company in Ahmadi before the arrival of some 'paisa (old Indian currency) swallows' to manage it, were very beautiful.

An expat friend said the quality of roads in the past were the result of joint work supported by research and accumulated experiences, and strict implementation of ingredients, manufacturing and execution by specialists in various fields of making asphalt roads. He said even the contractors' tools and vehicles were subjected to testing, as far as number and usability are concerned, before signing the contract with him, and this is what is not being done currently.

The process of constructing roads is a highly complicated process as far as raw materials, specifications, manufacturing and paving are concerned. The Ministry of Public Works (MPW) in the 1970s, during the time of late Humoud Al-Nisf established the 'Roads Research Center' and it had a major role in ensuring quality, which has now disappeared along with the center.

In a laughable irony, Kuwait's Ambassador in Vienna presented \$100,000 in support of "corruption fighting" activities. If he had paid such an amount to a clean personality and experienced engineer Ali Al-Abdullah, the person formerly responsible for roads at MPW, to supervise roads construction work, starting from the source of raw material and all the steps they go through and ending the process of paving, we would have saved millions and would have gotten much better roads.

— Translated by Kuwait Times



KUWAIT: Kuwait Army concluded a training exercise dubbed 'Decisive Fist' at the Saleh Al-Mohammad Brigade - 94. Army Chief of Staff Lieutenant General Mohammad Al-Khadher, Deputy Chief of Staff Lieutenant General Sheikh Abdullah Al-Nawaf Al-Sabah and other army officials attended the concluding ceremony.



NBK HOSTS AL-BAYAN BILINGUAL SCHOOL STUDENTS

KUWAIT: National Bank of Kuwait (NBK) recently hosted students from Al-Bayan Bilingual School, as part of NBK's corporate social responsibility efforts. NBK public relations team accompanied the students on their tour of the bank's various departments including the banking hall and different banking units to learn about the banking industry and the day-to-day work of the bank's various departments. Students also were introduced to NBK's safety deposit boxes.

The students had the chance to learn about the broad range of NBK financial and banking products and

services. As part of the tour, the students visited NBK museum where they had the chance to learn about Kuwait's history and important national historical events in addition to NBK's establishment story.

The tour is part of NBK's ongoing commitment to its corporate social responsibility program and to promoting the education and development of the country's youth. NBK regularly hosts students on field trips from both public and private schools in Kuwait and provides them with information about the banking industry and career opportunities.





Modi battles for hearts and minds in India's holy city

BAD LAWS UNDERPIN GLOBAL 'RAPE EPIDEMIC'

NORTH KOREA FIRES FOUR BALLISTIC MISSILES
3 MISSILES LAND NEAR JAPAN; ANOTHER CHALLENGE TO TRUMP

SEOUL: Nuclear-armed North Korea launched four ballistic missiles yesterday in another challenge to US President Donald Trump, with three landing provocatively close to America's ally Japan. Seoul and Washington began annual joint military exercises last week that always infuriate Pyongyang, with the North's military warning of "merciless nuclear counter-action". Under leader Kim Jong-Un, Pyongyang has ambitions to develop an inter-continental ballistic missile (ICBM) capable of reaching the US mainland which Trump has vowed will not happen.

Seoul said four missiles were fired from Tongchang County, North Pyongan province into the East Sea—its name for the Sea of Japan. The missiles travelled around 1,000 kilometers and reached an altitude of 260 kilometers, said a spokesman for South Korea's Joint Chiefs of Staff, adding they were unlikely to be ICBMs. Regional and world powers lined up to condemn the launches. Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe said three of the North Korean missiles came down in Tokyo's Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) - waters extending 200 nautical miles from its coast. "This clearly shows North Korea has entered a new stage of threat," Abe told parliament.

The North's repeated launches "clearly violate UN Security Council resolutions", he said. "We can never tolerate this." Pyongyang carried out two atomic tests and a series of missile launches last year, but yesterday was only the second time its devices had entered Japan's EEZ. After an emergency meeting of South Korea's National Security Council, acting president Hwang Kyo-Ahn called the North's nuclear and missile provocations "immediate and real threats" to his country.

"Considering the North Korean leadership's brutality and recklessness shown through the murder of Kim Jong-Nam, the results of the North having a nuclear weapon in its hands

will be gruesome beyond imagination," he said. Seoul has blamed Pyongyang for the killing of the half-brother of the North's leader by two women using VX nerve agent at Kuala Lumpur's international airport last month. Hwang called for "swift deployment" of a US missile defense system, THAAD, a proposal which has infuriated neighboring China, the North's key diplomatic protector and main provider of trade and aid.

'Big, big problem'

In Washington, the State Department condemned the launches, saying the US was ready to "use the full range of capabilities at our disposal against this growing threat". "We remain prepared and will continue to take steps to increase our readiness to defend ourselves and our allies from attack," acting spokesman Mark Toner said in a statement. Yesterday's launch came ahead of a trip to Japan, China and South Korea by new US Secretary of State Rex Tillerson this month, pointed out Dongguk University professor Kim Yong-Hyun. Pyongyang was "trying to send a message early on in Trump's term that North Korea will not be dragged around by his administration", he said. The North is barred under UN resolutions from any use of ballistic missile technology.

But six sets of UN sanctions since Pyongyang's first nuclear test in 2006 have failed to halt its drive for what it insists are defensive weapons. Three years ago, Barack Obama ordered the Pentagon to increase cyber attacks against North Korea to try to sabotage its missiles before launch or just as they lift off, the New York Times reported at the weekend. Several of the North's devices have failed soon after launch. Kim Dong-Yup, an analyst at the Institute for Far Eastern Studies at Kyungnam University, noted that unlike previous launches the three missiles that reached Japan's EEZ were fired in different directions.



TOKYO: A PAC-3 surface-to-air missile launcher, used to engage incoming ballistic missile threats, is seen in position on the grounds of the defense ministry in Tokyo yesterday. Japan's Prime Minister Shinzo Abe said three of the four missiles North Korea launched landed in Japanese-controlled waters, calling the development a 'new stage of threat'. — AFP

"North Korea may have attempted to show it can strike US bases in Japan simultaneously," he said. Trump has described the North as a "big, big problem" and vowed to deal with the issue "very strongly".

'Exercise restraint'

Yesterday's missile firings were unlikely to be testing a newly developed device but were aimed instead at protesting the military drills

in the South, analysts said. Seoul and Washington launched the annual Foal Eagle exercises last week, with the North's military warning a day later of "merciless nuclear counter-action" against enemy forces. North Korea has regularly taken action to protest against the drills, firing seven ballistic missiles during the exercises last year.

Beijing has become increasingly frustrated with Pyongyang's nuclear and missile activities,

and last month announced a suspension of all coal imports from the North until the end of the year—a crucial source of foreign currency. China's foreign ministry said it remained opposed to missile launches by the North that violate UN resolutions, but also voiced concerns about the military exercises, with spokesman Geng Shuang telling a briefing: "Relevant parties should exercise restraint and avoid anything that would provoke each other." — AFP

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SUDANESE REBELS FREE 125 PRISONERS

ENTEBBE: Sudanese rebels have released at least 125 prisoners they had captured in fighting with government forces, most of them soldiers, an AFP journalist said. Their release was secured thanks to mediation from Uganda, while the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) played a facilitating role. The rebel Sudan People's Liberation Movement-North (SPLM-N) had captured the prisoners in Blue Nile and South Kordofan states, where the group has been fighting Sudanese government forces for years.

The longest-held prisoners had been captured in June 2009 and the most recent about six months ago. While the ICRC said 125 people had been freed, Sudanese military spokesman Brigadier Ahmed Khalifa Al-Shami put the number at 127 - including 109 soldiers and 18 civilians. "The Sudanese army recognizes this as a positive

step towards achieving peace in the country," Shami said in a statement. Ethnic minority rebels in Blue Nile and South Kordofan have been fighting government forces since 2011, accusing President Omar Al-Bashir's Arab-dominated government of politically and economically marginalizing the two regions.

Fighting in the two areas and in Darfur has left tens of thousands of people dead and displaced millions. Khartoum announced a unilateral ceasefire in June 2016 in all three conflict zones, which it extended by six months in January. UN officials say that for years Blue Nile and South Kordofan have been no-go areas for aid officials, leaving thousands of people without access to humanitarian relief.

In a statement, the ICRC said it had "facilitated the release and repatriation of 125 people." The agency said it had transported the released prison-

ers from South Sudan to Entebbe in Uganda and onward to Sudan. "The entire transfer operation took place over four days," the ICRC said, adding that it had followed a request from Kampala, Khartoum, Juba and the SPLM-N. "We are very pleased that these people will finally return to their families," the ICRC's head of delegation in Sudan, Gerard Peytrignet, said.

'No bad treatment'

Speaking to AFP, SPLM-N Secretary General Yasir Arman described the prisoners' release as a humanitarian gesture of goodwill, "to bring happiness to their families." Mohamed Saied Hassan of the Sudanese foreign ministry told a press conference that 19 of the men were civilian miners caught up in an internal SPLM-N dispute over control of gold mines in Blue Nile state. However,

Arman claimed that the 19 men were members of a militia allied to the government.

The prisoner release negotiations were chaired by officials from the Ugandan government and included direct talks between Ugandan president Yoweri Museveni and Bashir. Thanking the Ugandan government for mediating the release, Hassan said: "This operation paves the way for more cooperation between the two countries." Speaking to AFP on the tarmac at Entebbe airport about 35 kilometers from Kampala as he and his men prepared to board the flight to Khartoum, Colonel Lirifat Abdala Ahmed, the most senior captive officer, said he had been treated well since his capture in May 2013. "There was no bad treatment, no bad behavior. I have served 25 years in the Sudanese army and now I want to go home to rest," a smiling Ahmed said. — AFP



ISTANBUL: Young supporters in old military uniforms greet Turkey's President Recep Tayyip Erdogan as he arrives to address a meeting in Istanbul. — AP

ERDOGAN COMPARES GERMAN BEHAVIOR WITH 'NAZI PERIOD'

SOURD RELATIONS COULD HURT TURKISH ECONOMY

ISTANBUL: Turkish President Tayyip Erdogan yesterday accused Germany of "fascist actions" reminiscent of Nazi times in a growing row over the cancellation of political rallies aimed at drumming up support for him among 1.5 million Turkish citizens in Germany. German politicians reacted with shock and anger. German Justice Minister Heiko Maas told broadcaster ARD that Erdogan's comments were "absurd, disgraceful and outlandish" and designed to provoke a reaction from Berlin.

But he cautioned against banning Erdogan from visiting Germany or breaking off diplomatic ties, saying that such moves would push Ankara "straight into the arms of (Russian President Vladimir) Putin, which no one wants". The deputy leader of Chancellor Angela Merkel's Christian Democratic Union (CDU) party said the Turkish president was "reacting like a wilful child that cannot have his way", while a top leader of the CDU's Bavarian sister party described Erdogan as the "despot of the Bosphorus" and demanded an apology.

German authorities withdrew permission last week for two rallies by Turkish citizens in German cities at which Turkish ministers were to urge a "Yes" vote in a referendum next month on granting Erdogan sweeping new presidential powers. Berlin says the rallies were cancelled on security grounds. However, Turkish Economy Minister Nihat Zeybekci spoke at large events in Leverkusen and Cologne on Sunday while protesters stood outside.

The row has further soured relations between the two NATO members amid mounting public outrage in Germany over the arrest in Turkey of a Turkish-German journalist. It has also spurred

growing demands for Merkel to produce a more forceful response to Erdogan's words and actions. A poll conducted for the Bild am Sonntag newspaper showed that 81 percent of Germans believe that Merkel's government has been too accommodating with Ankara. Germany, under an agreement signed last year, relies on Turkey to prevent a further flood of migrants from pouring into Europe.

Defiant

The lead article in German news magazine Der Spiegel on Sunday urged Merkel to free herself from the "handcuffs of the migrant deal". A defiant Erdogan said he could travel to Germany himself to rally support for the constitutional changes to grant him greater power. "Germany, you have no relation whatsoever to democracy and you should know that your current actions are no different to those of the Nazi period," Erdogan said at a rally in Istanbul. "If I want to come to Germany, I will, and if you don't let me in through your doors, if you don't let me speak, then I will make the world rise to its feet," he told a separate event.

Neither Merkel's office nor the foreign ministry had any immediate comment. Erdogan says he needs the proposed new powers to tackle Kurdish rebels, Islamist militants and other political enemies in a land with a history of unstable coalition governments. Critics, meanwhile, argue that a "yes" vote in the April 16 referendum would abolish checks and balances that have already been eroded over 15 years of his rule. Germany and other European countries have grown increasingly concerned about mass arrests and dismissals in the army, judiciary and

civil service across Turkey after a failed attempt to topple the president in July.

Economic ties

The remarks by Erdogan - a man admired by many for his rhetorical flourishes - could win support among those who see Turkey threatened by militant attacks and abandoned by putative allies, but they could damage economic ties at a time when Turkey faces rising unemployment and inflation. Ten percent of Turkish exports go to Germany, while Germany accounts for about 11 percent of Turkish imports. The confrontation has also fanned anger across the European Union, which Turkey had aspired to join but with increasingly subdued conviction of late. Austrian Chancellor Christian Kern called for an EU-wide ban on campaign appearances by Turkish politicians to avoid member countries such as Germany coming under pressure from Ankara.

Dutch nationalist Geert Wilders, expected to make huge gains in a March 15 election, said on Sunday that he would declare "the whole cabinet of Turkey persona non grata" and described Erdogan an "Islamofascist". Julia Kloeckner, deputy leader of Merkel's Christian Democratic Union, told Bild newspaper: "The Nazi comparison is a new high point of intemperance." Andreas Scheuer, general secretary of the Bavarian CSU party, said that Erdogan's remarks marked a new low point in ties between the two allies and demanded an apology. "This was a monstrous gaffe by the despot of the Bosphorus," Scheuer told the Passauer Neue Presse. "The Nazi comparison is outrageous and preposterous. An apology is in order." — Reuters

ANTI-IS ASSAULTS GAIN GROUND IN IRAQ, SYRIA

MOSUL: Iraqi forces advanced in west Mosul and fighters in neighboring Syria seized a key supply route to Raqqa yesterday, as twin US-backed offensives gained ground against the Islamic State group. Supported by the US-led anti-IS coalition, Iraqi government forces and a Kurdish-Arab alliance in Syria are battling to push the jihadists from Mosul and Raqqa, the last two major urban centers under their control. Intense fighting in recent days has forced tens of thousands of people from their homes, raising fears for many more civilians still trapped in areas of IS's so-called "caliphate".

In Iraq, security forces advanced towards a compound of jihadist-held government buildings and a bridgehead, on the second day of a renewed push in west Mosul. The operation to retake west Mosul began on February 19, but had slowed amid several days of bad weather until a fresh drive began on Sunday. A senior Iraqi commander said that interior ministry forces, backed by artillery and air support, were advancing in three west Mosul neighborhoods with the aim of taking the compound.

AFP reporters in west Mosul witnessed intense clashes, with heavy automatic weapons fire and clouds of black smoke billowing over the city. Lieutenant Colonel Abdulmir Mohammedawi of the interior ministry's elite Rapid Response Division told AFP its forces were "advancing in the Al-Dawasa and Al-Danadan areas to liberate the government buildings and secure a route for families to leave".

Bridge in sights

Its sights were also set on the nearby Al-Hurriyah Bridge, he said, but Rapid Response had "not yet" reached it. Mosul is divided by the Tigris River, and while the series of bridges crossing it have either been damaged or destroyed, they would provide a link between the Iraqi government-held east and IS-held west Mosul if they can be repaired or otherwise bridged.

IS imposes dress code

Activists and the Observatory said, meanwhile, that IS has imposed an "Afghan-style" dress code in Raqqa to help its fighters blend into the civilian population. Abu Mohamed, an activist with the "Raqqa is Being Slaughtered Silently" group, said the aim was to "make it harder for airplanes and the Kurdish forces... to distinguish between civilians and Daesh (IS)". "Anyone who does not comply faces prison and a fine," he said. The SDF began its offensive against Raqqa in early November and has since seized swathes of territory in northern Syria from the jihadists. Last month its forces made a major incursion into Deir Ezzor, an oil-rich province almost completely held by IS, to encircle and besiege the jihadists in Raqqa which is located further west. — AFP



MANBIJ: A convoy of US forces armored vehicles drives near the village of Yalanli, on the western outskirts of the northern Syrian city of Manbij. — AFP

EAST LIBYAN FORCES MOBILIZING FOR COUNTER ATTACK AT PORTS

LIBYAN WAR PLANES STRIKE RAS LANUF, ES SIDER

BENHAZI: East Libyan forces carried out fresh air strikes yesterday and said they were mobilizing ground forces as they attempt to win back two of Libya's largest oil ports, military officials said. Forces loyal to the eastern-based Libyan National Army (LNA) lost control of the ports of Sider and Ras Lanuf on Friday to a rival faction known as the Benghazi Defence Brigades (BDB), and have been unable to dislodge them with air strikes and ground operations since then.

The escalation risks reversing a recent recovery in Libya's oil production and reigniting conflict between military factions based in eastern and western Libya that have been fighting on and off for the past three years. LNA forces are currently stationed at Al Uqaylah, about 70 km southeast of Ras Lanuf, military spokesman Akram Buhaliqa said. LNA war planes conducted strikes near Ras Lanuf and Es Sider early yesterday, he said. The LNA took over the ports of Es Sider, Ras Lanuf, Brega and Zueitina in September, allowing the National Oil Corporation (NOC) to end a long blockade in the area and more than double national output.

Al Uqaylah lies about 40km southwest of Brega, and about 120 km southwest of Zueitina, both still under LNA control. LNA spokesman Ahmed Mismari urged citizens in the region to restrict their movements, and appealed to forces that captured Sirte, about 180

km east of Es Sider, from Islamic State last year, to stay within the coastal city to avoid being hit by air raids. "There is a very large air and ground mobilization of (LNA) forces to drive back the terrorist gangs in the Oil Crescent," he said in a statement. — Reuters



RAS LANUF: An anti-government rebel sits with an anti-aircraft weapon in front an oil refinery in Ras Lanuf, eastern Libya. — AP

WORLD MARKS WOMEN'S DAY WITH RIGHTS UNDER ATTACK

PARIS: No self-congratulations but calls to action will mark many celebrations of the 40th International Women's Day tomorrow, as the fight for equality faces new threats. Murders of women in Latin America, anti-abortion movements in Europe, and machismo talk from men in power are among the growing concerns that have brought millions of women into the streets of world capitals these past few months to defend their rights.

"March 8 is not only to commemorate suffragettes and to celebrate successes from the past, but more to reflect on the present situation," said Barbara Nowacka, a Polish politician and representative of the committee "Save Women". "There is still a lot to do concerning women's role in the labour market, society, politics," she said ahead of the global day highlighting women's rights started by the United Nations in 1977. Some recent developments have feminists worried about such key issues as abortion rights, pay equity and gender-based violence.

In Nowacka's own country, the ruling conservative party is trying to curtail laws on abortion rights, already among the most restrictive in Europe one of several signs of rising anti-abortion movements across the continent. These groups "are uniting, are very present on social media and have political weight," said Christine Mauget, in charge of international matters at France's Family Planning agency. "In 2017, there is still a major problem of machismo," Mauget added. "It is difficult to move things forward, but we try to prevent them from going backward."

Anti-Trump marches

The worries about women's rights in the face of sexist

male attitudes were on display in the huge women's marches following the inauguration of US President Donald Trump in late January. Two million women took to the streets in cities around the globe, especially in Washington, where protesters in pink "pussy hats" voiced their opposition to Trump's policies and his sometimes sexist and vulgar comments about women seen on videotape during the campaign. Two days after those marches, Trump acted on his anti-abortion stance when, surrounded by male advisors, he signed a decree banning the financing of international charities that support abortions. "The problem isn't abortion but unwanted pregnancies," said Mauget, calling for more extensive sex education to help prevent such circumstances.

Paychecks, abuse

When it comes to women's pocketbooks, the long-running struggle for equal pay still has a way to go. Worldwide, women earn on average 23 percent less than men. At that pace it would take 70 years to close the gap, according to the International Labour Organization (ILO). The statistics are also dire regarding violence against women. According to the United Nations, about 35 percent of women around the world have been victims of physical or sexual violence.

Some 200 million women and girls have been subjected to a form of genital mutilation and 700 million have been married before the age of 18. All over Latin America in October the movement #NiUnaMenos ("Not one less") rose up against "femicide" and abuse of women after the brutal murder in Argentina of a teenage girl who was drugged and gang raped. — AFP

PENTAGON PROBES 'MARINES UNITED' NAKED PICTURES

WASHINGTON: The US Defense Department is investigating allegations that Marines distributed nude pictures of female service personnel taken without their knowledge, officials said yesterday. The explicit photos, shared on a secret Facebook page which has since been taken down, reportedly showed female Marines and other women in various states of undress. Posts on the website, called "Marines United," also contained lewd comments about some of the women. "The Marine Corps is deeply concerned about allegations regarding the derogatory online comments and sharing of salacious photographs in Marines United, a closed website. This behavior destroys morale, erodes trust and degrades the individual. The Marine Corps does not condone this sort of behavior, which undermines its core values," the United States Marine Corps (USMC) said in a statement on its website. Any Marine who "shared a photo of another

person that was taken without that person's consent and under circumstances in which that other person had a reasonable expectation of privacy... could be subjected to criminal proceedings or adverse administrative actions," the statement added. Fox News reported that those with access to the site included active-duty and retired male Marines, navy personnel and British Royal Marines. CNN said yesterday that the scandal is being investigated by The Naval Criminal Investigative Service. The head of the US congressional committee that oversees the military called the website "unacceptable." "Revelations of this sort of treatment against fellow Marines are troubling," said Mac Thornberry, chairman of the House Armed Services Committee. "Degrading behavior of this kind is entirely unacceptable. They and the nation deserve better. I expect the Marine Corps to investigate this matter fully with appropriate consequences for those who willingly participated." — AFP



RENTON: Men and women attend Sunday services at the Gurudwara Singh Sabha of Washington, a Sikh temple in Renton, Wash. A Sikh man said a gunman shot him in his arm, as he worked on his car in the driveway and told him 'go back to your own country.' — AP

SIKHS RESPOND TO SHOOTING NEAR SEATTLE WITH FEAR AND DISBELIEF

'GO BACK TO YOUR OWN COUNTRY,' GUNMAN SHOUTED

KENT: Fear, hurt and disbelief weighed on the minds of those who gathered at a Sikh temple after the shooting of a Sikh man who said a gunman approached him in his suburban Seattle driveway and told him "go back to your own country." "Everybody who is part of this community needs to be vigilant," Satwinder Kaur, a Sikh community leader, said as several hundred people poured into a temple in Renton for worship services about one mile from Friday night's shooting. "It is scary," she added. "The community has been shaken up."

Authorities said a gunman approached the 39-year-old Sikh man as he worked on his car in his driveway in the city of Kent, about 20 miles south of Seattle. The FBI will help investigate the shooting, authorities said. Kent Police Chief Ken Thomas said Sunday the department is investigating the shooting as a hate crime. He said no arrests have been made yet after the victim was shot in the arm but that he did not believe anyone was in imminent danger.

"This is a top priority investigation, and we are doing everything possible to identify and arrest the suspect," Thomas said in an email, adding that residents in the city of about 125,000 should "be vigilant" but also not let the shooting hurt their quality of life. The FBI's Seattle office said in a statement Sunday that it is "committed to investigating crimes that are potentially hate-motivated," the Seattle Times reported.

The shooting comes after an Indian man

was killed and another wounded in a recent shooting at a Kansas bar that federal agencies are investigating as a hate crime after witnesses say the suspect yelled "get out of my country."

Friday night's shooting was on the minds of many who gathered at a Sikh Temple in nearby Renton Sunday morning for worship. Women in colorful saris and headscarves and men wearing turbans sat on the floor on opposite sides inside the worship space. As they entered and left the services, many expressed fear that one of their own was targeted and said they're scared to go to the store or other public places. Some said they have noticed an uptick in name-calling and other racist incidents in recent months. Still others expressed hurt and disbelief at the lack of understanding and ignorance.

"Sikhism teaches about equality and peace," said Sandeep Singh, 24. "It's sad to see that's what it has come to," he said of the violence. "This is our country. This is everyone's country." Gurjot Singh, 39, who served in the Marine Corps and is an Iraq war veteran, said he was dismayed that people think others who look different aren't equal or don't contribute equally to the community. "This is equally my country as it is your country," he said. "It doesn't anger me. It hurts me." Hira Singh, a Sikh community leader, said there have been increasing complaints recently from Sikhs near Seattle who say they have been the target of foul language or other comments.

"This kind of incident shakes up the whole community," he said, adding that about 50,000 members of the faith live in Washington state. Kent Councilwoman Brenda Fincher went to the temple Sunday to show support for the community. "When a hate crime happens, we have to stand up and make sure everyone knows it's not acceptable," she said. Kent police have not identified the man or released other information. But India's foreign minister, Sushma Swaraj, identified the victim on Twitter early Sunday, saying, "I am sorry to know about the attack on Deep Rai, a US national of Indian origin."

She said she had spoken to Rai's father, who told her Rai is out of danger and recovering in a hospital.

Rai told police a man he didn't know came up to him Friday night and they got into an argument, with the suspect telling Rai to go back to his homeland. He described the shooter as 6 feet tall and white with a stocky build, police said. He said the man was wearing a mask covering the lower half of his face. "All of the information that I have available at this time suggests that the information provided by the victim is credible," Thomas, the police chief, wrote. Sikhs have previously been the target of assaults in the US after the Sept 11, 2001, attacks, the backlash that hit Muslims around the country expanded to include those of the Sikh faith. Men often cover their heads with turbans, which are considered sacred, and refrain from shaving their beards. — AP

PANTSUIT NATION DRAWS LIBERAL WOMEN AND ALLIES IN DIVIDED US

WASHINGTON: The secret Facebook group sprung up in the final days of the 2016 presidential election, bringing together Hillary Clinton supporters who simply wanted to champion their candidate among fellow enthusiasts. Now numbering just under four million members, Pantsuit Nation is a space for progressive women and their allies to share personal stories - many uplifting, others heart-breaking - in a nation divided under President Donald Trump.

"It's easy to get hopeless as supporters of Secretary Clinton, as liberals and Democrats, (and) to feel alone," founder Libby Chamberlain said. "We have so many members who live in communities or families where they don't have like-minded individuals... they can't go next door to commiserate with the neighbor about what's happening at the national level, but they can go to this space online." The 33-year-old runs Pantsuit Nation from a spare bedroom in her home in tiny Brooklin, Maine, a coastal town of 800 residents primarily known for boat-building.

She started the Facebook group on October 20, while working two part-time jobs at nearby high schools. Her idea was to encourage Clinton supporters to wear pantsuits - the Democratic former secretary of state's go-to outfit - to the polls on November 8. Overnight, the group ballooned to 24,000 people as members added friends, who then added their friends. By November 5, Pantsuit Nation

had grown to a million members, reaching 3.1 million by the end of Election Day.

Photos of exuberant pantsuit-clad women at polling sites quickly gave way to posts brimming with anger and despair following Trump's electoral win. These days, Pantsuit Nation's content centers around Trump's conservative agenda, with members describing the real-life effects of his moves to restrict immigration, tear up health care laws or remove protections for transgender people. "I think there is a hunger in this country for personal stories that humanize the impact of policy that is happening at the national, state and local level," Chamberlain said. "It feels immediate and human and it allows people to hold onto something," she said.

'Double whammy'

Darla Barar, a 30-year-old marketing copywriter in Austin, Texas, wrote on Pantsuit Nation about her late-term abortion and voiced opposition to a measure in Congress seeking to define human life as beginning at fertilization. "This bill really hit us hard because the wording is such that it would essentially put a ban on IVF procedures as well as abortion," said Barar. "It was a double whammy for us." She was expecting twins, conceived through IVF, when a scan at the midpoint of her pregnancy revealed one of her daughters had grave issues including a neural tube defect that was allowing brain matter to leak out of her skull. — AFP



SAN JOSE DE ORIENTE: Members of the FARC leftist guerrilla dance at a camp in a demobilization zone in the municipality of San Jose de Oriente, Cesar department, northern Colombia. — AFP

EQUALS IN THE JUNGLE, COLOMBIA'S WOMEN GUERRILLAS BRACE FOR NEW, MACHO WORLD

SAN JOSE DE ORIENTE: Armed with an AK-47, Gladis was expected to fight on the frontline alongside her FARC guerrilla comrades, hoist heavy loads and stand guard, just as the men in rebel ranks did. That's real gender equality, said 42-year-old Gladis who has fought with the Marxist rebel group, the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC), for more than two decades. "We are all equal here. Everyone is treated the same," said Gladis, at a mountaintop demobilization zone in northern Colombia where around 160 FARC fighters have gathered to disarm. "Men respect us here. There's no machismo," she said.

Ending half a century of war, the FARC are handing in their weapons after signing a peace deal with the government last year. Women make up about a third of the 7,000 FARC fighters set to demobilize over the coming months. The government, former rebels who deserted and rights groups have said gender inequality played out in the jungle as it did elsewhere, and women suffered abuse in FARC ranks, including forced abortions and being commanders' sex slaves. But guerrilla life as told by six FARC women and two commanders interviewed by the Thomson Reuters Foundation in Colombia's northern mountains offers a different view, and the chance, rebels say, to counter false propaganda spread by their enemies.

Defying gender roles

Women rebels say they are not vic-

tims or sex objects and were not discriminated against because of their gender or race. "I think taking up arms was the best decision I ever made," said Gladis, wearing a sparkly silver top. "I'm proud to be a guerrilla." The FARC says its women fighters were treated as equals. Women held important jobs, were appointed as commanders, and the FARC brought several women to the negotiating table during four-year long peace talks with the government.

Women were particularly sought after for intelligence gathering and radio communications, forming the backbone of guerrilla operations. "The participation of women has been indispensable," said Solis Almeyda, a veteran FARC commander, who still uses his nom de guerre. "Women could go undetected when carrying out intelligence gathering." Yet demobilized women guerrillas may struggle to enjoy such equality once they reintegrate into civilian life in a society known for its patriarchal and macho culture. In parts of mainly rural Colombia, women are often viewed as child-bearers and are expected to stay at home.

"We hear women are paid less than men and that it's difficult for women to hold top positions," said 37-year-old Sara Narvaez, who has spent two decades in the FARC. Women rebels point out that camp chores were equally shared. "The men cook too. Everyone washes their own clothes here," said rebel fighter

Adriana. Women say they were given opportunities to learn skills, such as nursing and dentistry, which would have been off-limits to them in the rural communities they came from. "I've learnt things I would never have had the opportunity to do," said Kelly Martinez, a 42-year-old FARC nurse, who performed first aid and amputations on wounded rebels. "I feel valued and useful here," she said, wearing silver hooped earrings.

Abuse

But the perception of gender equality among the rebels is just a veneer, the government and rights groups have said. In 2015, Colombia's attorney general said it was investigating 150 cases of former women guerrillas who had given testimonies saying they were forced to end their pregnancies. The FARC deny forcing women and girls to undergo abortions and using women as sex slaves for commanders. "Commanders don't choose women. Women are free to choose (their partners)," said Almeyda. Still couples had to get prior approval from their commander before starting a relationship and be allowed to share a tent. The government and rights groups have collected scores of testimonies from women, mostly from civilians living in areas once controlled by the FARC, that they were victims of sexual violence at the hands of rebel fighters - crimes FARC commander Almeyda denied. — Reuters

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BAD LAWS UNDERPIN GLOBAL 'RAPE EPIDEMIC'

LONDON: From Lebanon where a rapist can escape punishment if he marries his victim to India where rape within marriage is legal, bad laws are underpinning a global "epidemic of sexual violence", legal experts said yesterday. A survey of laws in 73 countries found rapists could avoid punishment if they married their victim in at least nine jurisdictions, including Bahrain, Iraq, Philippines, Tajikistan and Tunisia.

Marital rape is permitted by law in at least 10 of the countries studied by campaign group Equality Now, including Ghana, Lesotho, Oman, Singapore and Sri Lanka. In four of these, marital rape is even allowed when the "wife" is a child and the marriage illegal, researchers said. "We are challenging governments to take a good hard look at their laws and whether or not they are protecting girls from sexual violence," said Antonia Kirkland, head of the group's legal equality program. "We want governments everywhere to transform their laws and policies, firstly to prevent sexu-

al violence, and secondly, if it does happen, to provide better access to justice for the victims."

UN data suggests a third of women worldwide have suffered sexual or physical violence, and one in 10 girls have been raped or sexually assaulted. "Unless governments fix their laws on rape and sexual assault and implement them effectively ... we are unlikely to see an end to the worldwide abuse of women and girls any time soon," Equality Now's executive director Yasmeen Hassan said in the report launched on International Women's Day. The group, which is writing to every jurisdiction examined in the report, said sexual violence prevented girls realizing their potential and had drastic effects on communities and the broader economy.

Driven to suicide

The research - assisted by the International Bar Association also highlights laws that allow perpetrators of

sexual violence to walk free on reaching a settlement. In a recent case in Somalia that made international headlines, a group of teenage boys who posted a video online of themselves raping two girls tried to avoid jail by paying for their crime in camels. Campaigners said laws that allow rapists off the hook don't just deny justice to their victims, but send a message that rape is not a serious crime and can be bargained away.

"It sends a signal from the highest level of society that it's okay for women and girls to be violated," Kirkland said. She said reforming laws could help change wider social attitudes. "We really believe that laws are the first step and they can transform social mores," she added. "Without equality in the law it can be very difficult to change the mindset." The report also analyses laws that undermine the investigation or prosecution of sexual assault, including those requiring witness corroboration or overly burdensome evidence. — Reuters



MANILA: Filipino students hold slogans against sexual harassment and alleged increase in cases of violence committed against young women during a rally outside their school in Manila, Philippines yesterday. The protest is part of events leading to the March 8 International Women's Day. — AP



LONDON: A Union flag and a sign reading 'Sale on' are pictured near the Elizabeth Tower, better known as 'Big Ben', and the Houses of Parliament in central London yesterday. — AFP

BATTLE-HARDENED IN BRITAIN AS MAY PREPARES FOR BREXIT TALKS

PM TAKES FIRM STAND, REFUSED TO GIVE GROUND TO REBELS

LONDON: British Prime Minister Theresa May is unlikely to bow to political expedience in Brexit negotiations but will make up her own mind about what she believes is best and refuse to give ground - that's if past form is anything to go by. May, who backed the campaign to stay in the European Union in last June's referendum, will have to carry or quell the eurosceptics in her ruling Conservative Party as she formulates her negotiating priorities and strategy. The 60-year-old - often described as "sphinx-like" in the British press - has revealed little in her first eight months as leader about how she will approach divorce talks with Brussels, perhaps wary of weakening her hand.

But her previous experience of trying to win the support of the eurosceptics who drove Brexit could offer some clues about her modus operandi: two

years ago when as interior minister she sought to opt back into the European Arrest Warrant against the wishes of many in her party. May got her way in the end after a bruising encounter over the warrant, which speeds extradition between member states. She did not backtrack an inch and forced it through parliament. Her conduct and strategy present a picture of a stubborn negotiator who sticks as firmly as possible to what she believes is in Britain's best interests.

Several government aides and a lawyer with knowledge of the matter said she was driven by a conviction she was right - that Britain needed to adopt the warrant and other EU justice measures - and, while acknowledging their shortcomings, would not let anything stand in her way. Supporters say her ultimate success offer evidence of her political steel, know-how and negotiating

skills. Critics say the self-belief that drove her to open a rift in her party and face down a rebellion could be a weakness if it becomes inflexibility that hinders Britain striking winning the best deal.

"If you believe in what you're doing, that's key. If you do believe you're doing the right thing, that gives you resilience," May told the BBC's Desert Island Discs program less than two weeks after the fight. She steadfastly refused to allow lawmakers a vote on the arrest warrant which she said was in "our national interest", reneging on a pledge to the outrage of the eurosceptics, instead offering only a vote on a broader package of justice measures. In a rare admission that her strategy may have been misjudged, she added in the BBC interview: "If I was starting it again now, would I do it in a different way? Given the understanding of how parliament felt then, perhaps I would."

'Not showy'

May spent six years as home secretary, or interior minister, before taking over from David Cameron as prime minister last year following the June 23 referendum when Britons backed leaving the EU by 52 percent to 48 percent. The premier, who describes herself as "not a showy politician", is something of an anomaly in a porous political scene rife with secret press briefings.

Her closest aides, loyal since she became home secretary in 2010, ensure very little leaks. One government aide called her team "one of the most effective in Westminster". She has said she will trigger Article 50 of the Lisbon Treaty, launching two years of divorce talks, by the end of this month. Parliament is expected to approve legislation to start the negotiations by mid-March. She will enter the EU negotiations with a long and broad wish list - wanting the closest possible trading conditions, maintaining security cooperation, regaining control over immigration and restoring sovereignty over British laws.

It is an opening negotiating stance - one British government source, who spoke on condition of anonymity, asked why would anyone start talks with anything less. Another British official said any strategy would evolve, depending on what the EU came up with and how the other 27 member states approached the talks. But with EU officials balking at granting her a good deal, fearing other European countries might follow suit, May will have to find a path to compromise.

'Steel yourself'

The so-called Brexiteers, or eurosceptic lawmakers in her party, will watch her every step closely as Britain negotiates a deal, to make sure they have scrutiny of all aspects. May will work hard to keep them on side. "At the moment we have just been negotiating with ourselves," said a veteran politician now in the upper house of parliament. Once Britain starts negotiating with the EU, he said, the "very dysfunctions Brexiteers complained about are the same dysfunctions allowing them or not to arrive at a deal". — Reuters

IN RUSSIA, WOMEN'S DAY PILES PRESSURE ON MEN

MOSCOW: In offices across Russia, the countdown to International Women's Day is a whirl of last-minute meetings and dashes for gifts as men race to prepare festivities for their female colleagues. "We've sent out loads of emails, we've analysed the market, we've pooled ideas, and we've just got one more meeting ahead of the launch of Operation Women's Day today," confided Sergei Krakhmalyev, who works at Rosbank, a major Russian bank. "This year we've decided not to spend money on gifts that are useless, shall we say, but to organize a buffet," he said.

Krakhmalyev, who is in his 40s, works in a team of eight men and 35 women. He calculates that this year's celebration will cost about 25,000 rubles (\$430). "It's expensive," he says, "but it's a Soviet tradition that I think it's important to keep up." A public holiday in the Soviet Union since 1965, March 8 is an opportunity for Russian men to "remember the importance of women" in society, he says. International Women's Day is also a public holiday, so office celebrations are held the day before.

This year's events are expected to be relatively low-key in comparison to the oil-boom years, when many companies spared no expense. "The company used to allocate a big budget for this holiday and took as many as 500 women out to a restaurant," recalled Irina, who works in human resources at a major Russian company. "That was before the 2008 economic crisis," said Irina, 40, who asked not to disclose her surname. "Now the men have a whip-round to buy us flowers and chocolates." Nevertheless the holiday "cheers up the atmosphere in the team," she said.

In Russia, it is also widely seen as a counterpart to the Day of the Defender of the

Fatherland, on February 23, which is nominally for those who served in the army but is considered the male equivalent. In offices, this holiday is often an occasion for celebrations that take an unconstructed approach to gender roles. "This year we organized a fake army recruitment drive" for the defender holiday, Irina said. "We gave our colleagues a medical and some of us were dressed up as sexy nurses." "Now the men are under pressure. They have to try to do better than us, even if we know that's impossible," she added with a smile.

Bonanza for florists

Some men, however, including Vitaly Konyayev, a project manager in the southern Russian city of Saratov, find it hard to get into the holiday spirit. "This year my colleagues didn't give me anything for February 23, so they can whistle for a gift on March 8," he said. The March 8 holiday "only means something if you give flowers to a woman you love and respect - not those you are forced to rub along with at work," he said. He complained that he had to pay almost 1,000 rubles for a bunch of flowers for the holiday, which brings a bonanza for florists.

Flower prices often double ahead of the March 8 holiday and orders double as well, said Florence Gervais d'Aldin, a French flower grower and importer who has worked in Russia for more than 20 years. Her business, which specializes in scented roses, sells more than 8,000 roses on March 7 and 8, compared with her usual sales of 600 per day. "It's a day for mothers, for sweethearts, for colleagues, all together," Gervais d'Aldin said, with its popularity "far higher" than that of St Valentine's Day, on February 14.



PARIS: Supporters of conservative presidential candidate Francois Fillon waves French flag, during a rally in Paris. — AP

FRANCE'S CONSERVATIVES IN DISARRAY; FILLON CLINGS ON

PARIS: Former French Prime Minister Alain Juppe ruled out a run for the French presidency yesterday, boosting embattled rightwing party colleague Francois Fillon whose campaign has been thrown into chaos by a fake job scandal. Juppe, 71, was the most likely candidate to replace Fillon and try to unite their deeply divided Republicans party only seven weeks from the start of the two-stage election. Polls suggest Juppe would be more popular with voters, but the centrist is considered too soft on immigration and other social issues for many of Fillon's supporters and the right flank of the party. "I confirm for a final time that I will not be a candidate to be president of the republic," Juppe said in a downbeat statement that criticized Fillon and said France was "sick" and suffering from a "profound crisis of confidence."

His decision removes a major rival for Fillon, who is sticking with his bid for power despite the prospect of criminal charges later this month, mounting criticism within the party and falling poll numbers. The conservative 63-year-old was once the favorite to be France's next leader but his campaign is mired in accusations he used public funds to pay his wife hundreds of thousands of euros for fake parliamentary jobs. "No one today can prevent me being a candidate," Fillon told France 2 late on Sunday, emboldened by a rally of tens of thousands of supporters on Sunday afternoon in Paris.

Party leaders are to meet for crisis talks

yesterday evening. The infighting in the Republicans party and Fillon's chaotic campaign have made an already unpredictable election even harder to call. The disarray appears to have benefited centrist pro-business candidate Emmanuel Macron in particular, as well as far-right leader Marine Le Pen, who are shown by polls as the top two candidates in the first round on April 23. Polls suggest that Macron, 39, would beat Le Pen in the decisive second round on May 7 - but after Donald Trump's victory and Britain's vote to leave the European Union, analysts caution against bold predictions.

Juppe bows out

"Never under the fifth republic have we had an election in such confused conditions," Juppe said, stressing the dangers of Le Pen's "anti-European fanaticism" and Macron's "political immaturity". Fillon's defiance and accusations that the government, justice system and media were plotting against him "had led him into a dead-end," Juppe added in one of several criticisms of his colleague. Both Le Pen and Macron-one a far-right anti-establishment figure, the other an independent who founded a new political movement last year-have tapped into widespread anger at France's political class. "French people want a profound renewal of their politics," Juppe, a veteran politician with a conviction over a party finance scandal, told a press conference in his hometown of Bordeaux. "Evidently I do not embody this renewal," he said. — AFP

UKRAINE ACCUSES RUSSIA OF TERRORISM IN TOP UN COURT

THE HAGUE: Ukraine urged the UN's top court yesterday to help bring stability to its war-torn east, seeking to convince judges that Russia is "sponsoring terrorism" in Kiev's conflict with separatist pro-Russian rebels. "Today I stand before the court to ask for the protection of the basic human rights of the Ukrainian people," Kiev's deputy foreign minister Olena Zerkal told the International Court of Justice in The Hague. "Thousands of innocent Ukrainians have already suffered deadly attacks," she said. Nearly three years of conflict have claimed about 10,000 lives in eastern Ukraine and led to Russia's seizure of Ukraine's southern peninsula of Crimea in 2014 - pushing ties between Moscow and the West to their lowest point since the Cold War.

"Today I stand before the world to seek protection for the Ukraine from the Russian Federation," Zerkal added, saying all Kiev was seeking was "a measure of stability and calm in an unpredictable and dangerous situation." Ukraine's representatives are asking the ICJ to impose emergency measures ordering Russia to stop its alleged funneling of money, weapons and personnel into the east, and to halt what it called "discrimination" against minorities in Russian-occupied Crimea. It is also seeking compensation for attacks on civilians during the conflict.

'Human rights emergency'

Moscow has long denied arming the rebels and has said the case is motivated only "by political interests". It has also claimed that Kiev has "shown a lack of will to hold a concrete dialogue." Ukraine lodged its case against its former Soviet master at the ICJ in mid-January,

saying it had protested for several years against Moscow's alleged financing of separatist rebels battling Ukrainian government forces. Kiev says Moscow has "largely failed" to respond to its efforts to resolve the dispute and that "further negotiations would be futile."

Ukraine now "respectfully requests the court to adjudge and declare that the Russian Federation bears international responsibility by virtue of its sponsorship of terrorism... for the acts of terrorism committed by its proxies in Ukraine," it said in papers before the court. "Russia must stop the flow of weapons and assistance across its borders to groups that launch terrorist attacks against civilians," said Harold Hongju Koh, another of Kiev's representatives. Ukraine was facing a "human rights emergency," he said, adding that "in Crimea, Russia must cease its campaign of cultural erasure." Since Russia insists it has not violated any conventions if it "will not refrain, it must be because its behavior is neither innocent, nor legal," added Koh, a professor in international law.

Failed talks

Rare talks between Ukrainian President Petro Poroshenko and Russian counterpart Vladimir Putin over last month proved "fruitless", the Ukrainian presidency said in a statement Thursday. Poroshenko hailed the start of the four days of hearings, calling it "a historic moment" on his Facebook page. "The truth is stronger than weapons!" he wrote. The hearings come after an upsurge in the violence which killed 35 people in early February, centered around the government-held town of Avdiivka near the rebel bastion of Donetsk. — AFP

News

in brief



LONDON: High heels are on display in a store in London. British lawmakers are due to debate banning mandatory high heels in the workplace, in response to a petition started by a receptionist who was sent home for wearing flat shoes. —AP

Are high heel dress codes sexist? British MPs debate

LONDON: British lawmakers are focusing on footwear, asking whether employers should be able to make women wear high heels as part of corporate dress codes. Members of Parliament yesterday will debate banning mandatory workplace high heels, in response to a petition by a receptionist who was sent home for wearing flat shoes. Nicola Thorp was told in December 2015 that her shoes were unacceptable while on assignment in London with finance firm PwC, and was sent home without pay. After she launched an online petition, the Portico employment agency said it was changing its policy to allow workers to wear flat shoes if they prefer. Thorp's petition, which calls formal workplace dress codes "outdated and sexist," gathered more than 150,000 signatures, making it eligible for a non-binding debate in Parliament.

11 Malian soldiers killed in attack on border base

BAMAKO: At least 11 soldiers were killed in Mali on Sunday in an attack on an army base near the border with Burkina Faso, as rival armed factions surrounded the flashpoint city of Timbuktu. The jihadist attack on the border village of Boulekedji killed 11 troops and wounded five more, according to an official toll from the defense ministry read out on national television. "One of our positions was attacked early Sunday morning by terrorists, on the border with Burkina Faso," a highly-placed Malian military source told AFP on condition of anonymity earlier Sunday. French forces stationed in the troubled west African nation sent helicopters to help Malian forces assess the attack site, the source later added, and 20 soldiers had crossed into Burkina territory to flee the violence. A regional security source said the attack was carried out by Ansarul Islam, a jihadist group that claimed an attack in December in which 12 Burkinabe soldiers were killed.

Turkey launches security operation in south-east

DIYARBAKIR: Turkish security forces yesterday night launched one of their largest "anti-terrorist" operations in recent years in the restive south-east against Kurdish militants, security sources said. Some 7,000 gendarmes—who look after domestic security - 600 Special Forces and dozens of tanks and helicopters were used in an operation in Lice in the largest Kurdish-majority province of Diyarbakir, sources said. In Lice, 18 villages were placed under strict curfew until further notice, the Diyarbakir governorate said in a statement. The aim of the operation, the governor's office said, was to "neutralize" members and accomplices of the outlawed Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK). The PKK is proscribed as a terrorist organization by Turkey, the European Union and the United States. More than 40,000 people have been killed since 1984 in the conflict between the PKK—which seeks greater rights and autonomy for Turkey's Kurdish minority—and the army. Fighting renewed after a two-and-a-half-year ceasefire collapsed in the summer of 2015.

Five Pakistan troops and 10 militants die in border raid

ISLAMABAD: Five Pakistani soldiers and 10 militants were killed in a coordinated overnight raid at several border posts on the frontier with Afghanistan, the military said yesterday. The fighting took place in Mohmand, one of Pakistan's so-called tribal districts that form a buffer zone between the two countries, where the military has been battling Islamist militants for over a decade. Pakistan's military issued a brief statement providing casualty figures, without mentioning which militant group was involved. "Effective presence, vigilance and response repulsed (the) terrorists' attempt," it said. Army chief General Qamar Javed Bajwa "hailed the sacrifices" of the Pakistan soldiers and called for greater numbers to man the border, according to the statement. The toll could not be immediately verified since the area is remote and journalists are denied access.



AL WALAJAH: Relatives of Bassel Al-Aaraj, a 31-year-old Palestinian man who was reportedly killed in an exchange of fire with Israeli troops in Ramallah, mourn during his funeral yesterday. — AFP

Palestinian killed in West Bank firefight

JERUSALEM: A Palestinian was killed in an exchange of fire with Israeli troops in the West Bank city of Ramallah, the Israeli army said yesterday. The man, whom Israeli police named as 31-year-old Bassel Al-Aaraj, opened fire at soldiers who came to arrest him at his home Sunday night and was shot dead. Two other Palestinians were wounded by gunfire in subsequent clashes with Israeli troops, Palestinian hospital sources said. Two weapons were later found on the property, according to an army spokeswoman. A police spokeswoman said Al-Aaraj was "the head of a cell planning attacks against Israeli targets." Since a wave of violence broke out in October 2015, 254 Palestinians, 40 Israelis, two Americans, one Jordanian, one Eritrean and one Sudanese have been killed, according to an AFP count. Most of the Palestinians who lost their lives were carrying out knife, gun or car-ramming attacks, according to Israeli authorities, with others killed during protests, in clashes or during air raids on Gaza.

MODI BATTLES FOR HEARTS AND MINDS IN INDIA'S HOLY CITY

VARANASI: Varanasi boat owner Prabhu Sahani backed Narendra Modi as his MP in the 2014 general election. But the Indian prime minister will not be getting his vote when the ancient city on the Ganges goes to the polls again tomorrow. "He doesn't understand Varanasi," complained Sahani, 34, whose boats ferry tourists and pilgrims along the holy river. "We run the oldest transportation in the city, going back generations, and he didn't consult us about his plans (to clean up the Ganges and modernize the city)."



UTTAR PRADESH: Indian commuters are stuck in a traffic jam in Varanasi city. Varanasi boat owner Prabhu Sahani backed Narendra Modi as his MP in the 2014 general election. But the Indian prime minister will not be getting his vote when the ancient city on the Ganges goes to the polls again on March 8. — AFP

Modi's decision to stand in the sacred Hindu city in Uttar Pradesh rather than his home state of Gujarat in 2014 paid off with an overwhelming victory that he celebrated with a prayer on the banks of the Ganges. Now his Hindu nationalist Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) is trying to consolidate its grip on power by seizing control of India's most populous state, which stretches from the high-rise outer edge of the national capital in the west to the city on the Ganges where Hindus go for salvation in the east. It faces stiff competition from the locally ruling Samajwadi Party (SP) in a state where caste, family and religious affiliations run deep.

Leader and current chief minister of Uttar Pradesh, Akhilesh Yadav, has rejuvenated the SP's image since he toppled his

ageing father this year, forging an alliance with the national opposition Congress Party, and campaigning alongside its equally youthful deputy leader Rahul Gandhi. Tomorrow's vote will be the final stage of a bitter weeks-long battle for the state that analysts say is too close to call. It is a key test of Modi nearly three years after he came to office pledging inclusive government and a "shining India" that

would provide jobs for a growing youth population.

'Smart heritage city'

As voting day approached in Varanasi, one of the world's oldest cities, the once putrid banks of the Ganges were certainly shining brighter. Locals said cleaners now came four times a day to sweep the ghats, where bodies are brought to be cremated

according to centuries-old Hindu tradition. Modern changing cabins have sprung up along the river, although most stood empty as ritual bathers stripped off next to them in the open, just as they have always done. "You used to see dead bodies of animals and sometimes even people floating in the river. Now that has decreased," said boatman Suresh Sahani, who planned to vote BJP, as he touted for customers in the hot sun. Away from the river, however, there were few signs of the "smart heritage city" that Modi promised.

Work has begun on underground cables to replace the tangle of electricity wires that hang precariously over the city's narrow streets. But for now that only worsens the congestion, forcing honking cars, rickshaws and bicycles into an angry single lane of traffic that is often brought to a standstill by a stray cow. Varanasi's BJP Mayor Ram Gopal Mohley blamed the state government for the pace of progress, saying hundreds of millions of dollars had been provided from federal coffers to develop the city's infrastructure. "They have been creating all the hurdles, but not for long. We will form the government on March 11 and things will change," he said. "Whatever Modiji (ji is an Indian honorific) is doing for his constituency is good." —AFP

AS US AID, INFLUENCE SHRINKS IN PAKISTAN, BEIJING STEPS IN

FRUSTRATED US POLICYMAKERS SEE PAKISTAN AS TERRORIST HAVEN

WASHINGTON: Pakistani leaders often wax lyrical about their "sweeter than honey" relations with all-weather friend China. There's no romance about their marriage of convenience with America. As the Trump administration plots its policy toward a key partner, it will find Pakistan being drawn deeper into Beijing's embrace and its promise of \$46 billion in energy, infrastructure and industry investments by 2030. The money could transform the Muslim nation's economy.

Washington, by contrast, is losing faith in how much its largesse can influence Pakistan. Many frustrated US policymakers see Pakistan as a terrorist haven that some \$30 billion in security and economic assistance since the 9/11 attacks has failed to fix. But an American retreat could have broad implications for its ability to maintain stability in a regional powder keg of extremism, weak governance and various potential conflicts. "I get the sense that we are the dispensable ally once again," Bilawal Bhutto, a Pakistani opposition party leader and son of the slain former prime minister, Benazir Bhutto, said during a recent visit to Washington.

US assistance to Pakistan has been declining since 2011 when American commandos killed Osama bin Laden inside Pakistan, straining relations. And as the US troop presence in neighboring Afghanistan has shrunk, Pakistan has become a lower priority. Aid could decline further as President Donald Trump proposes drastic cuts to diplomacy and foreign aid budgets. Still, Trump's vow to protect America from violent extremism may make it difficult for him to turn his back on Pakistan, a nuclear-armed nation where Al-Qaeda leader Ayman Al-Zawahiri is suspected to be hiding and which could hold the key to an Afghan peace settlement.

The 8,500 US troops still deployed in Afghanistan means the US retains a high interest in seeing Pakistan rein in cross-border attacks by Taliban militants, whatever Washington's larger regional objectives may be. China is also concerned about militancy in Pakistan, particularly by ethnic Uighur groups that have reportedly sought refuge in the Pakistan-Afghanistan border region and forged links with Al-Qaeda and the Taliban. But above all, China sees strategic and economic opportunities in Pakistan.

The unlikely alliance is a critical part of China's ambitious "One Belt, One Road" project to link markets in Asia and Europe. Pakistan's offer of access to the Indian Ocean could reduce China's reliance on the chokepoint of the Malacca Strait in Southeast Asia for oil imports from the Mideast, and help spur development in China's land-locked far west. Ahsan Iqbal, Pakistan's planning and development minister, called the investment a "blessing." The nation of 200 million people is blighted by power shortages and other failings, and has struggled to attract foreign firms because of persistent extremist violence.

Chinese private investors are planning \$35 billion in energy generation and transmission projects, he said. Some 10,000 megawatts of power is slated to come online by 2018. That can hugely boost the country's generation capacity of just 22,000 megawatts, or a little more than the capacity of Switzerland, which has 1/25th of Pakistan's population. Chinese loans also will fund more than \$10 billion in roads, rail and facilities at a deep sea port. "The story



BEIJING: In this file-pool photo, Pakistani Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif (left) and Chinese President Xi Jinping shake hands before their meeting at the Great Hall of the People in Beijing, China. Pakistani leaders often wax lyrical about their 'sweeter than honey' relations with all-weather friend China. — AP

of Pakistan is changing," Iqbal told a Washington think tank last month. He asked, rhetorically, of the United States: "We are ready. Are you ready?"

Government spin aside, volatile, coup-prone Pakistan has enjoyed several years of relative political stability, allowing the economy to claw back from crisis. The Karachi stock market rose by 46 percent in 2016. GDP is set to grow by about 5 percent this year, helped by low oil prices. Violence remains pervasive, however. The military has pressed offensives against the Pakistani Taliban, but a recent spate of suicide bombings killed 125 people. The Islamic State group claimed responsibility.

While Trump hasn't outlined any Pakistan approach, Congress is laying down markers. Last year, lawmakers blocked US funding for sales of F-16 fighter jets to Pakistan and for this year are withholding \$400 million in coalition support funds until the US defense secretary certifies that Pakistan has taken action on a Taliban faction long favored by the nation's military and intelligence services. Pakistan's archrival, India, is an increasingly close US partner. It similarly accuses Pakistan of selectively fighting terror and is trying to isolate Islamabad diplomatically. Such maneuverings are having the effect of pushing Pakistan closer to China, which once fought its own border war with India.

"If everything goes to plan then Pakistan could enjoy a bonanza of benefits from easing its energy crisis to providing badly needed infrastructure," said Michael Kugelman, a South Asia expert at the Wilson Center in Washington. But

he cautioned that Pakistan may overestimate how much China, which prioritizes its own interests, will ultimately commit. To provide reassurance, Pakistan's government is guaranteeing payments to Chinese producers in case local electricity distribution companies fail to compensate them once power plants go online. To address security concerns, Pakistan is reportedly deploying 15,000 forces to protect workers on Chinese projects.

Critics say the Chinese deals are opaque, leaving uncertainty about how impoverished local communities will benefit. And India fears that an increasingly assertive Beijing wants to use Pakistan's deep sea port at Gwadar as a base for China's navy in the Indian Ocean. Pakistan's military ties with China are deepening. Their joint production of the JF-17 Thunder fighter jet suggests that China could eclipse the US as Pakistan's favored source of high-end defense equipment, said Jonah Blank, South Asia expert at the RAND Corp.

China is already its main source of low-tech military gear. On the economic front, US assistance has failed to leave a "footprint" like China's investment, said Ishrat Hussain, a former Pakistani central bank governor. Hussain said the benefits of China's investment will take at least a couple of years to be felt but could end power outages that have crippled industry and establish road and rail links to spur the nation's neglected western flank. He urged America to focus on fostering science and technology in Pakistan. —AP

AGE IS NOT A BARRIER: ELDERLY INDIAN WOMEN GO TO SCHOOL

PHANGANE: A little before 2 pm each day, when residents of Phangane village in India's Maharashtra state usually take a quick nap in the heat of the day, elderly women in bright pink sarees head towards a colorful hut, clutching satchels and plastic bags. Inside the hut, festooned with streamers and flowers, the women gingerly sit cross-legged on cotton rugs on the mud floor, and pull out slates, notebooks, chalk and pencils. Minutes later, a younger woman leads them in a prayer song before they begin reciting the Marathi alphabet after her.

The Aajibaichi Shala, or grandmothers' school, is perhaps the only one in India for uneducated, elderly women. Set up by a charitable trust and Yogendra Bangar, a teacher at the village's primary school, the school teaches the women to read and write, and basic arithmetic. "These women did not have the opportunity to study when they were young," said Bangar. "It's not as if they want to go to college or work in an office now. But they do want to be able to read and write, and sign their names, like everyone else in their families."

Literacy levels in India have steadily risen over the past decades as the economy expanded and greater emphasis was placed on education. But women still lag men, particularly in rural areas, where girls are often not sent to class or are pulled out after primary school so they can work at home or in the fields. While 79 percent of India's rural men are literate, the rate for women is only 59 percent, according to offi-

cial data. Aajibaichi Shala was set up last year for women over 60 to mark the International Women's Day on March 8. It was first run out of the home of the woman who was the sole teacher, 30-year-old Sheetal More. The opening day was celebrated like a festival, with entire families accompanying the women to their first day of school, More said. Since then, classes have been moved to a purpose-built hut in her backyard, in the shade of a large mango tree. "At first I was a bit nervous about teaching such elderly women. Even my mother-in-law comes to class," said More, who has finished high school. "But they are all so eager, and behave just like little children in class. Every other teacher teaches children; only I have the opportunity to teach elderly women," she said.

Chores

There is little to distinguish Phangane from other villages in the western state, one of India's wealthiest. About 120 km from the bustling financial hub of Mumbai, the village of 70 families is a tidy enclave, with clean mud roads and brick homes divided by fences and gardens. During the day, women go about their chores, cleaning, cooking and tending to the livestock and young grandchildren. About 30 women aged 60 to 90 years attend classes for two hours in the afternoon, six days a week. In the past year, they have learned the Marathi alphabet, numbers and can write their names, Bangar said. — Reuters

INDIA POLICE FIND 19 FEMALE FOETUSES DUMPED IN SEWER

MUMBAI: Indian police said yesterday they had found 19 aborted female foetuses dumped in a sewer in the western state of Maharashtra, highlighting the country's problem of female foeticide. Prenatal sex tests are illegal in India, a policy designed to stop unborn girls being aborted by parents desperate for a boy. But the tests are still thought to be common, particularly in poor rural areas, and sex ratios are skewed towards males across India.

"We have recovered 19 foetuses and are trying to arrest the doctor, who is absconding," Dattatray Shinde, a police superintendent in Maharashtra's Sangli district said. He said the foetuses were found late Sunday wrapped in blue plastic bags in a sewer next to a clinic run by doctor Babasaheb Khidrapure in the village of Mhaisal. Officers made the discovery after a 26-year-old woman died during a failed abortion attempt at the surgery, Shinde said. "We have arrested the victim's husband Praveen Jamdade for pressuring her into an abortion," he said. Parents and doctors can be jailed for up to five years for requesting or conducting a pre-natal sex test.

A 2011 study in the British medical journal The Lancet found that up to 12 million girls had been aborted in the last three decades in India. India had 940 females for every 1,000 males, according to the last official census published in 2011, up from 933 in 2001. In Sangli, where the foetuses were found, there are just 867 girls per 1000 boys, the figures show. Women in India can face pressure to produce male children, who are seen as breadwinners. — AFP

CITING LACK OF PROOF, SENATORS END DUTERTE 'DEATH SQUAD' INQUIRY

MANILA: Philippine senators abruptly ended a hearing yesterday into allegations by a retired policeman that a "death squad" operated under President Rodrigo Duterte when he was mayor of Davao City, citing no proof that it even existed. Arturo Lascanas admitted to lying in October during another Senate inquiry into alleged extrajudicial killings by a hit squad linked to Duterte, but said he did so for his family's safety and because police had warned him to "deny everything". He said he had personally killed 300 people, about 200 as a member of a "Davao death squad" of which Duterte had full knowledge.

But few fresh claims emerged in yesterday's proceedings and the senators, several of whom are Duterte loyalists, challenged his credibility and demanded proof. "We don't see any point of pursuing the investigation," Senator Panfilo Lacson, head of the Senate panel, told reporters. "There's no independent evidence other than what he had already testified on." Lascanas broke down when he told his story to reporters two weeks ago and is the second person to testify

before lawmakers on Duterte's alleged links to a clandestine hit squad. The hearing was much anticipated after Lascanas had written in the final line of his sworn affidavit that his allegations were just "the tip of a bloody iceberg".

But little more came during yesterday's inquiry. Lascanas cited one time when Duterte had personally instructed him to kill and said the death squad's instructions were usually relayed by senior policemen, or Duterte's bodyguard. Lascanas said he shot dead nine of 11 arrested Chinese drug suspects on orders that came indirectly from Duterte. He also alleged Duterte's son and current Davao vice mayor, Paulo Duterte, had links to the drug trade. The president's allies say the testimony is part of a broader plot to discredit him. His chief lawyer, Salvador Pano, said Duterte's alleged involvement in extrajudicial killings was "a fabrication".

Tormented by killings

Lascanas had in October denied the death squad existed. Yesterday he said he was tormented by what he had done

and wanted the truth to set him free. He said he spoke out because of "the fear of God". "I wanted to clear my conscience," he added. Duterte denies ordering summary executions, either as president or during his 22 years as Davao mayor. His top police commander, Ronald dela Rosa, a former Davao police chief, calls the death squad "fiction" created by the media. Human rights groups documented about 1,400 suspicious killings in Davao while Duterte was mayor and critics say the war on drugs he unleashed as president has the same hallmarks.

More than 8,000 people have been killed since Duterte took office eight months ago, mostly drug users killed by mysterious gunmen in incidents authorities attribute to vigilantes, gang members silencing informants, or unrelated murders. Police reject activists' allegations that they are behind most killings and say they are responsible for 2,555 of the deaths, when suspects had resisted arrest. Yesterday, dela Rosa announced the re-launch of police anti-narcotics operations after a month-long suspension of police involvement in the campaign. — Reuters



MANILA: Retired police officer Arturo 'Arthur' Lascanas takes his oath during a Senate hearing in Manila yesterday. The former police aide of Philippine President Rodrigo Duterte said he was part of a 'death squad' that took part in over 300 killings when Duterte was a city mayor. — AFP

MALAYSIA CHIDES NORTH KOREA, AS 'RUDE' ENVOY SENT PACKING

EXPELLED ENVOY FIRES FINAL SALVO FROM AIRPORT

KUALA LUMPUR: Malaysian Prime Minister Najib Razak rebuked North Korea yesterday as his government expelled its envoy for casting doubt over the impartiality of the investigation into the bizarre murder of the North Korean leader's estranged half brother. If North Korean agents did kill Kim Jong Nam, as US officials and South Korean intelligence suspect, the decision to assassinate him on Malaysian soil could cost the isolated, nuclear-armed state one of the few friends that it has.

Malaysia's outrage over last month's killing of Kim Jong Nam at Kuala Lumpur International Airport was heightened by the assassins' use of VX nerve agent, a chemical so toxic that it is on a UN list of weapons of mass destruction. North Korea has refused to accept that the victim of the Feb 13 murder was leader Kim Jong Un's half brother, and Ambassador Kang Chol accused Najib's government of colluding with external forces and said the investigation could not be trusted. Najib had branded Ambassador Kang "diplomatically rude" and, angered by the lack of an apology, the Malaysian government on Saturday gave him 48 hours to leave. "They should have apologized. So based on principles, we have declared him persona non grata," Najib told reporters at parliament yesterday. "There is no one who can undermine us or disrupt us as they please."

Parting shot

The expelled ambassador fired a parting shot at the Malaysian authorities as he pre-



KUALA LUMPUR: Journalists surround a car of North Korean Ambassador to Malaysia Kang Chol leaving the embassy in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia yesterday. — AP

pared to leave from the same airport where Kim Jong Nam was killed. "I express grave concern over the extreme measures taken by the Malaysian government, doing great harm to the bilateral relations which have a history of more than 40 years," he told reporters. Kang said his statements were a stand taken against a "pre-targeted investigation by the Malaysian police." Later yesterday, the North's KCNA news agency said the Malaysian ambassador to Pyongyang had also been designated persona non gra-

ta and had to leave the country within 48 hours of 10 am on Sunday.

The move appeared to be a tit-for-tat formality as Malaysia had already recalled its envoy on Feb. 20, a week after the killing. Kim Jong Nam, who had been living in the Chinese territory of Macau under Beijing's protection, had spoken out publicly against his family's dynastic control of North Korea. So far, Malaysian prosecutors have charged an Indonesian woman and a Vietnamese woman with the murder of Kim

Jong Nam. But police have identified eight North Koreans, including a senior embassy official and state airline employee, wanted for questioning in the probe. Police say that four of the North Koreans they want to interview left Malaysia in the hours after the murder. Only one North Korean suspect was apprehended, but after several days in custody, Ri Jong Chol was deported on Friday after being released due to insufficient evidence.

Ties won't be same

Until this week Malaysia was one of the few countries that North Koreans could enter without a visa. But that privilege has been revoked. Asked whether Malaysia, which had recalled its ambassador to Pyongyang for consultations, would be reviewing diplomatic ties with North Korea, Najib was noncommittal. "We will see. We'll take it one step at a time." Malaysia also asked for an Asian Cup soccer qualifier match against North Korea to be moved to a neutral venue as tension escalated. "The relationship has already been affected, it won't be the same," Deputy Foreign Minister Reezal Merican told reporters. The case has also cast a spotlight on North Koreans living in Malaysia, with authorities vowing to investigate North Korea-linked companies that are suspected of operating a sanctions-busting arms business in Malaysia. Reuters reported this week that a front company run by North Korean intelligence agents ran an arms operation out of Malaysia. — Reuters



SEOUL: Anti-government protesters take part in a march in Seoul. Tens of thousands of South Korean protesters held rival mass rallies over the impeachment of President Park Geun-Hye as judges prepare to rule on the scandal that has rocked the country. — AFP

SOUTH KOREA PROSECUTOR PAVES WAY FOR CHARGES AGAINST PARK

SEOUL: South Korean President Park Geun-hye colluded with a friend to take bribes from Samsung Group aimed at cementing Samsung Chief Jay Y Lee's control of the conglomerate, the special prosecutor's office said yesterday, paving the way for Park to be prosecuted if removed from office. The findings of the 70-day probe directly accuse the impeached Park of wrongdoing on several charges, including the bribery conspiracy implicating Samsung. Lee goes on trial for bribery and embezzlement on Thursday amid a corruption scandal that has rocked South Korea and led to the impeachment.

Park, 65, has had her powers suspended since her impeachment by parliament in December. Should the Constitutional Court uphold the impeachment, she would become the country's first democratically elected president to be thrown out of office, triggering an election in Asia's fourth-largest economy. A decision is expected as early as this week. South Korean law does not allow a sitting president to be indicted unless she is accused of treason. No formal charges can be brought against her until she is either removed from office or her term ends as scheduled in late February 2018.

Her removal from office would subject her to a fresh investigation by

state prosecutors. "Bribery charges related to the president, and the culture blacklist case ... have been transferred to the prosecutors' office," special prosecutor Park Young-soo told a televised news conference. The special prosecutor also said the president was instrumental in blacklisting more than 9,000 artists, authors and movie industry professionals and excluding them from government assistance that constituted an abuse of power. In a statement detailing the findings of its investigation, the special prosecutor's office said the National Pension Service voted in favor of a merger of two Samsung Group affiliates in 2015, despite anticipating a 138.8 billion won (\$119.87 million) loss.

Charges against Park 'fiction'

"Samsung Group vice chairman Lee Jae-yong colluded with others including the corporate strategy office chief Choi Gee-sung to bribe the president and Choi Soon-sil with an aim to receive support for his succession by embezzling corporate funds," special prosecutor Park told a televised news conference, referring to the Samsung chief's Korean name. Choi is President Park's long-time confidant.

Lee, 48, pledged 43 billion won (\$37.19 million) in return for support from Park and Choi for a variety of

steps including a merger of two Samsung affiliates in 2015 and the 2016 domestic listing of a loss-making drug maker Samsung Biologics Cfo Ltd., the special prosecutor said. Park, Choi and Lee have all denied wrongdoing. Park's lawyer said yesterday that the special prosecutor's charges against her were "fiction" and that she did not receive illicit favors from Samsung. "Future court proceedings will reveal the truth," Samsung said in a statement, reiterating it did not pay bribes or make improper requests seeking favours.

The investigation looked into an influence-peddling scandal involving Park, who was impeached after accusations she had colluded with Choi to pressure big businesses to donate to two foundations set up to back the president's policy initiatives. The state prosecutor's office said in a statement that it had re-grouped the team of investigators which indicted Choi in November to take over and "conduct the probe according to law and principle without prejudice". Lee, a third-generation leader of the Samsung tech giant "chaebol", and four other executives, were last week charged with bribery and embezzlement over the corruption scandal. Based on the main charges levied against Lee, he could face more than 20 years in prison if convicted. — Reuters

VIOLENCE IS 'THE BIGGEST' CHALLENGE FACING WOMEN

NEW YORK: Violence is the biggest challenge facing women around the world as progress in gender equality is erratic and at times a baffling contradiction, said the top official at UN Women ahead of International Women's Day. Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka, executive director of UN Women, said despite decades of pushing for equal rights, no one nation could call itself gender equal with countries making advances in some areas yet backsliding in others. Mlambo-Ngcuka described the global gender pay gap of 24 percent as "the biggest robber" of women. UN Women is launching a global coalition to tackle pay inequality during the meeting of the UN Commission on the Status of Women next week.

But Mlambo-Ngcuka said the biggest difficulty facing women is violence. One in three women suffer physical or sexual violence during their lifetime, and half of female murder victims are killed by partners or family members, according to UN Women. Some 120 million girls worldwide, roughly one in 10, have experienced forced intercourse or other sexual acts, the group says. "Obviously, class and geography help some women to survive this issue differently, but everywhere in the world the big issue of violence against women is a reality, whether you are rich or poor, in a developed or developing country," she said.

"Even countries that have the highest indicators on gender equality like Iceland, they still have to confront the issue of violence against women," Mlambo-Ngcuka told the Thomson Reuters Foundation in an interview. Iceland was shaken in January by the violent death of a 20-year-old woman in Reykjavik. A crewmember from a Greenlandic trawler has been arrested in connection with her death. Mlambo-Ngcuka, a South African, has since 2013 headed the United Nations' body charged with promoting gender equality and women's empowerment. She was a member of parliament in South Africa's first democratic government and the nation's first female deputy president.

She said global advances in women's rights, from equal pay to boosting women in leadership and lowering rates of violence, were spotty and unequal. "Countries have constitutions that pride themselves in being democratic, constitutions that define equality, but no one fights for women to be paid equally," she said. "It is contradictory," she said. "How do you explain to me that Afghanistan has more women in parliament than the Congress in the United States?" Women hold 28 percent of the seats in the Afghan parliament, compared with 19 percent in the US Congress, according to World Bank 2016 statistics.

Mlambo-Ngcuka cited Colombia, emerging from a 52-year civil war that killed more than 220,000 people and displaced millions, as an example of one nation moving ahead of its neighbors. Colombia's Congress and rebel insurgents in November reached a peace agreement that pledges land and property rights for women and prosecution of rapes committed by military forces and rebel fighters. "In that peace agreement, they have made really good strides that address gender equality," Mlambo-Ngcuka said. — Reuters

News

in brief

Panama bus crash kills at least 18; 33 injured

PANAMA CITY: At least 18 people died and 33 were injured in Panama Sunday when a bus veered off a highway and flipped into a ravine and then a river, the authorities said. Civil Defense officer Jose Donderis said the bus headed from the Bocas del Toro province on the Caribbean Sea to a ranch in Chame—a town on the Pacific Ocean some seven hours away—crashed near Cienaga Vieja in Anton, Cocle province, southwest of Panama City, around 1900 GMT. "It is a really dramatic accident," he said, adding that the cause was not yet known. "The entire bus, the inside part of the bus, was squeezed into the part where the driver would be and a lot of people were trapped there." Many of the injured were in critical condition, Donderis said. He had previously reported 10 people died in the crash. Other passengers drowned when the bus fell into the river, Donderis added.

Myanmar army accuses rebels of deadly attack

YANGON: At least six police officers were killed yesterday in a surprise pre-dawn raid by ethnic minority rebels on a town in a restive region of Myanmar bordering China, an army source said. Artillery and small arms fire continued throughout yesterday in Laukkai, a main town in the Kokang region of the northeastern state of Shan. Fighting in 2015 in Kokang, which is dominated by the Chinese-speaking Kokang ethnic minority, left scores dead as the area emerged as a new centre of violence. Myanmar is already torn by various ethnic insurgencies and the Kokang clashes raised tensions with neighboring China. Aung San Suu Kyi's government is desperate to end the decades-long borderland conflicts, but intensifying fighting threatens peace efforts. Rebels from the Myanmar Nationalities Democratic Alliance Army (MNDAA) struck a police station and killed six traffic police officers, an army source said, requesting anonymity.



NAGANO: Rescuers work near the helicopter crashed in mountains in Nagano prefecture, central Japan. — AP

Japan helicopter crash leaves nine people dead

TOKYO: All nine people aboard a helicopter that crashed during a mountain rescue drill in Japan over the weekend were killed, police said yesterday. Six bodies were found in the morning inside the wreckage in the central prefecture of Nagano, a Nagano police spokesman said. Three others, including the pilot, were confirmed dead on Sunday after a police helicopter located the crash site on a snowy mountainside. Bad weather halted rescue operations yesterday. The government will send investigators to the area where the helicopter went down on Sunday, public broadcaster NHK reported. The nine people on board the aircraft were rescuers and local government officials involved in a mountain rescue exercise, according to NHK and other media. Aerial footage from NHK showed the badly damaged helicopter on the wintry mountainside.

Fifth night of US raids targets Yemen Qaeda

ADEN: Yemen was hit by a fifth consecutive night of suspected US air strikes targeting Al-Qaeda members in the impoverished nation, a Yemeni security source said yesterday. The source said the early dawn raid hit the town of Al-Nasl in the southern Abyan province, which has been the target of air strikes as well as an Al-Qaeda attack on the army in recent days. There were no immediate reports of casualties in yesterday's raid. Washington on Thursday launched a series of air and drone raids on Yemen, focused on the southern provinces of Abyan and Shabwa as well as Baida, slightly to the north. Gunmen suspected of belonging to Al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP) meanwhile launched two separate attacks on Yemeni troops in recent days, killing at least 10 soldiers in Abyan and the southern Hadramawt province. AQAP on Sunday evacuated suspected members from more than one area hit by the raids, including one town where top AQAP commander Abdulrahman Al-Dhahab had reportedly been in hiding.



A young boy plays as the sun sets over El Tunco beach in La Libertad, 34 km south of San Salvador, on Sunday. — AFP

KUWAIT PENALIZES 8 'TERROR SUPPORTERS'

Continued from Page 1

Kuwait as a matter of policy takes all necessary measures to clamp down on supporters and financiers of terrorist groups, he affirmed. The UNSC penalties commission called for taking punitive measures against these

Kuwaiti nationals, freezing their assets and banning them from travel or trading in arms.

The international commission has sanctioned such penalties against terrorist organizations, the so-called Islamic State (IS) and Al-Qaeda, as well as against individuals, factions, institutions and entities affiliated to them. —KUNA

AMIR AGREES TO REINSTATE REVOKED...

Continued from Page 1

The decision was strongly criticized by opposition groups and local and international rights organizations, which accused the government of revoking citizenships for political purposes. Those who lost their citizenship took the fight to courts, which gave contradictory verdicts, as some courts said they were not competent to rule on sovereign issues while others ordered the citizenships to be given back.

Opposition MP Mubarak Al-Hajraf said that in return over the restoration of the citizenship, MPs agreed to halt the use of constitutional tools against the prime minister

and to work to achieve political stability. MP Riyadh Al-Adasani however said he has not given any promise not to file to grill the prime minister if it was necessary. MP Al-Humaidi Al-Subaei said the deal includes the return of Ajmi from Saudi Arabia and expected that he could come back to Kuwait within the next two days.

Three of the opposition figures included in the move issued brief statements in which they thanked HH the Amir and all those who exerted efforts to resolve the issue. None of the lawmakers who were involved in the issue gave a timeframe for the restoration of the citizenships. Subaei however said that they were told that Ajmi will have to wait for one year after coming back to get back his citizenship.

TRUMP PRIVATELY SIGNS NEW TRAVEL BAN...

Continued from Page 1

Iraq's inclusion had risked scuttling cooperation between Baghdad and Washington in fighting the Islamic State group. The US and Iraqi militaries are currently fighting side-by-side in northern Iraq, trying to wrest the city of Mosul from jihadist control. The Iraqi foreign ministry yesterday expressed its "deep satisfaction" with the new executive order, and described it as an "important step" in strengthening relations between Baghdad and Washington.

Trump's first order had sparked a legal, political and logistical furor. There was chaos at major airports and mass protests while several district courts moved to block its implementation and lawmakers expressed opposition. The troubled rollout also dominated the first weeks of his administration, leaving many with the impression that it was badly planned and badly implemented. Trump has argued that the ban is needed to prevent Islamic State and Al-Qaeda fighters from reaching US soil.

Polls show that American public opinion is deeply divided on the issue. Most indicate a slight majority of voters opposed, with strong support among Trump's political base. The Republican president criticized a court order suspending the ban as "a very bad decision, very bad for the safety and security of our country. The rollout was perfect." He vowed to challenge the matter in the courts, but appears to have eased away from that claim.

The new order is meant to address complaints raised by the federal judges that parts of the first version were unconstitutional. But Democrats and organizations like the American Civil

Liberties Union again voiced outrage. "The only way to actually fix the Muslim ban is not to have a Muslim ban," said Omar Jadwat, director of the ACLU's Immigrant Rights Project. "Instead, President Trump has recommitted himself to religious discrimination, and he can expect continued disapproval from both the courts and the people." Senate Democratic leader Chuck Schumer said the measure should be repealed, adding: "A watered down ban is still a ban."

Whatever the legal outcome, Trump's new ban is likely to polarize opinion further and be immensely popular with his hardcore of supporters. The new order is also likely to sow further confusion about US immigration policies. Yesterday, Nigeria advised its citizens against all but essential travel to the United States, citing the lack of clarity on new immigration rules. "In the last few weeks, the office has received a few cases of Nigerians with valid multiple-entry US visas being denied entry and sent back to Nigeria," said special adviser to the president Abike Dabiri-Erewa.

According to travel data firm Forwardkeys, travel from the United States to the Middle East has also fallen sharply. The firm said round trips to the United Arab Emirates were down 19 percent and trips to Saudi Arabia were down 40 percent in the month following the ban. "Since imposition of the travel ban, Middle East markets have been the most affected, with bookings for departure in the next three months falling 25.4 percent behind the equivalent time last year," the firm said in a report released yesterday. — AFP

Kuwait Times

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Factbox

ATTACKS PUSH YEMEN
TOWARDS STARVATION

Cruise missiles, floating mines and a remote-controlled boat have been deployed to attack ships in Yemen in recent months, changing the dynamics of the two-year-old war and pushing the country closer to famine, shipping and aid officials say. The weapons have targeted military vessels from a Saudi-led coalition which is fighting Iranian-allied Houthi rebels in the impoverished state on the tip of the Arabian peninsula, part of the same regional power struggle that is fuelling Syria's war.

The conflict in Yemen, which Al-Qaeda has exploited to thrive amid turbulent conditions, has left four-fifths of the population in need of aid. Relief officials say food reserves will run out in two to four months. Increasingly innovative maritime raids near the narrow Bab Al-Mandab maritime passage, which connects the Red Sea with the Gulf of Aden and the Arabian Sea, add to already severe difficulties getting aid and commercial supplies to a country that imports 90 percent of its food and fuel by sea.

Saudi-led air strikes close to vital ports in the Houthi-controlled north are also curbing imports, shipping sources say. Both sides deny hampering aid. "The potential for merchant ships to be caught up in this as collateral damage is high," said Phillip Belcher, marine director with INTERTANKO, an association which represents the majority of the world's tanker fleet. "Several of the attacks on military operated vessels have taken place in close proximity to merchant ships," he said. With nearly 4 million barrels of oil shipped daily to Europe, the United States and Asia plus commercial goods via the waterway, the stakes are high for ships sailing through the strait and for those making stops at ports in Yemen.

Saudi Frigate Hit

A Saudi frigate was attacked on Jan 30 close to the Red Sea port of Hodeidah in which two crew members were killed and three wounded, Saudi official media reported, blaming Houthis for the attack. The US Navy said an unmanned remote controlled boat laden with explosives rammed the Saudi navy vessel, the first known strike by a "drone" attack boat, adding it was likely the Houthis were responsible, using technology supplied by Iran. Iran rejects accusations made by Saudi Arabia and its regional allies that it gives financial and military support to Houthis in Yemen, blaming the deepening crisis on Riyadh.

"Riyadh and its allies are responsible for the bloodshed in Yemen," a senior Iranian official told Reuters. "All those claims about Iran's involvement are baseless and fabricated news." There was no immediate comment from the Houthis or from Iran's Revolutionary Guards, which operates hundreds of small military craft. James Burnell-Nugent, former commander in chief of Britain's Royal Navy, said the use of an unmanned vessel introduced a new complication to maritime security in the region.

"Both the Bab and Hormuz are crisscrossed by lots of small vessels, often travelling at speed. Most of them are non-hostile, carrying contraband such as cigarettes. Amid this constant traffic, it is already very difficult for navies to pick out who is hostile and who isn't," he told Reuters. Al-Qaeda may also have carried out its first attack off Yemen's shores in more than a decade, security specialists say. On Oct 25 unknown assailants opened fire on the Galicia Spirit gas tanker close to the Bab Al-Mandab. The vessel's owner said the attackers were also carrying a substantial amount of explosives.

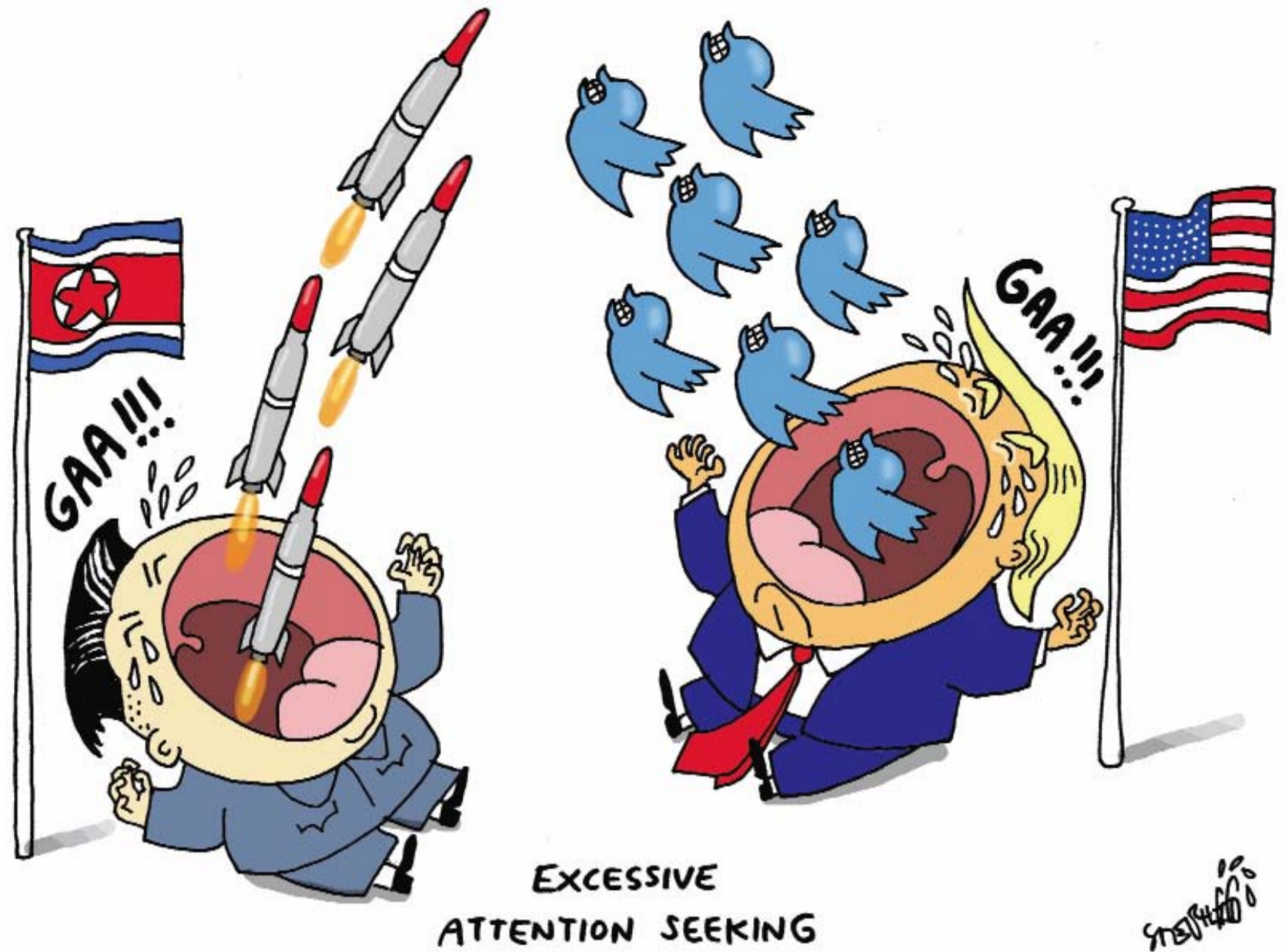
There has been no claim of responsibility for the attack. Gerry Northwood, of maritime security firm MAST and a former British Royal Navy captain with experience commanding warships in the region, said he suspected the attack showed al Qaeda's ability to carry out seaborne strikes on tankers.

Cruise Missiles

Other incidents have included an attack on Oct 1 on a United Arab Emirates craft with what some Western experts say appears to have been an anti-ship cruise missile. The Houthis said they attacked the ship but have made no comment on the weapons used. The Houthis denied they were behind a series of failed missile attacks in October on the US navy destroyer USS Mason, actions which drew retaliation in the form of US cruise missile strikes on coastal radar sites in Houthi-controlled territory.

Shipping industry sources say shipping firms were becoming more reluctant to deliver goods to Houthi-controlled Hodeidah port together with the neighboring port of Salif also on the Red Sea. Robert Mardini, regional director for the Near and Middle East with the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), said it had stopped using Hodeidah, which is one of the major gateways for goods into Yemen. — Reuters

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ITALY LAGS ON RETURNS AS MIGRANTS JUMP

Italy is promising to send more migrants who do not qualify for asylum back home, either by force or with their consent, as a fourth year of mass arrivals of migrants by sea began at a record-setting pace. The number of migrants setting off to reach Italy by boat from Africa has risen more than 50 percent so far this year, after half a million people arrived during the past three years. The registration of all the newcomers and new border restrictions mean increasing numbers of irregular migrants are staying in Italy rather than moving onto wealthier Northern Europe as they have done in the past.

The center-left government's push to ramp up returns is meant both to deter migrants from risking the dangerous journey and to stem criticism from far-right parties like the Northern League that are capitalizing on anti-immigrant sentiment a year ahead of a national vote. For similar reasons, the European Union's executive is pressing all 28 member states to return more migrants ahead of elections this year in the Netherlands, France and Germany, where far-right parties, which are also anti-EU, are gaining support.

"The goal is to increase forced returns very significantly and send a strong message to anyone thinking of migrating to Europe," Italian Interior Minister Marco Minniti said on Thursday, confirming plans to build new detention centers to keep migrants from disappearing before being deported. Italy deported 5,800 people last year and a similar number in 2015, a fraction of the 335,000 people, both refugees and migrants, who arrived during that period.

But very few were sent home voluntarily, though it is a decades-old practice that is both cheaper and easier than using force, because Italy only launched its program to help those who volunteer to go home in September. So-called assisted voluntary returns do not require heavily guarded detention centers and a nightmare of red tape as with forced deportations, which also can lead to ugly scenes of people being dragged onto planes.

Far more migrants in Germany and Sweden went home voluntarily last year, often with money in their pockets, than were shipped home empty handed, evidence that Italy missed an opportunity to reduce the number of irregular migrants - estimated at a half million - living here. "We were late," Minniti said of the delay in setting up an assisted returns program. Amounts and procedures for assisted returns vary from country to country but the idea is the same - that if word spreads in the countries people are setting out from that some are

choosing to come home, others will not make the risky and expensive journey in the first place.

Hungry

Seydou Fall is one of only dozens of migrants in Italy to have signed up to the voluntary returns program so far. He lives near a sparkling beach in Carrara, Tuscany, but can't wait to go home to Senegal. His Italian asylum request was rejected, like more than 50,000 others last year, and he scrapes a living hawking towels on the beach in summer and umbrellas or sunglasses in winter on the streets of nearby Massa, backed by mountains streaked with white from ancient marble quarries.

Life in Italy is much grimmer than he had imagined. "One has dreams, but when you see the reality here, if you are not strong, you will have problems," said Fall, 39. "I know lots of migrants who are hungry." The program will pay for his flight and he will get €400 (\$421) in cash and €1,600 to invest in a livelihood at home - in his case, growing peanuts on his father's farm.

Only about a third of migrants who reach Italy qualify for asylum, leaving the rest in limbo. Legal appeals to asylum rulings can take years and the economy is chronically sluggish, providing few opportunities to new arrivals. Germany, which has registered more than a million would be asylum-seekers since 2015, offers assisted returns to those unlikely to qualify for international protection in exchange for them dropping their asylum requests.

Last year Germany completed 80,000 returns - half of all of those in the EU - and 70 percent were voluntary. "Experience shows that voluntary returns are most cost-effective and easier to organize," a German interior ministry spokesman said. Sweden, where a generous refugee program attracted tens of thousands of people, also had far more voluntary deportations than forced deportations after it toughened rules last year, at 16,000 compared with 2,500 forced to return home.

Italy has put aside €16.4 million for assisted returns this year, 10 million euros more than it had planned last year. Some of this has been matched by EU funds. The German budget increased this year from €50 million to €90 million. Valeria Carlini, a spokeswoman for the Italian Council of Refugees (CIR) in Rome, which is organizing Fall's trip home, said the key to boosting voluntary returns was making migrants aware of the option.

"Unfortunately, Italy has not made a big effort to publicize voluntary assisted returns," she said. "There

needs to be a push to provide information in places where migrants gather - from call centers to ethnic restaurants to police stations - and it needs to be a massive effort." Germany widely advertises its program, even handing out a leaflet about voluntary returns with asylum rejection notices. Italy is now about to launch a major promotional campaign of its own, an Interior Ministry source said.

'Living Like a King'

Voluntary returns might be a hard sell, unless the only alternative is forced deportation. Many migrants have paid people smugglers thousands of euros to come to Europe, and fear even worse poverty at home and the humiliation of going back with little to show. Aliou Mbaye, a 52-year-old Senegalese who sells sunglasses at a central Rome metro stop, acknowledges that life in Italy is tough. However, although he had never heard of Italy's assisted returns program, he thought he would never use it. "There's nothing for me (in Senegal). And if I went back everyone would expect me to have got rich here. They think I'm living like a king," he told Reuters.

Until recently the typical profile of an immigrant who returns home voluntarily was that of Myriam Chiriboga, an Ecuadorian woman who has been living legally in Italy for 20 years and has decided finally to rejoin her family. She came to escape an abusive partner, leaving her young daughter and son in Ecuador with relatives. With the money she earned, she bought a home in Ecuador and paid for her children's education. When she returns home in March, she plans to open a pizzeria near the university in Riobamba. "I miss my children and my sister," she said. "I'm tired of spending Christmas by myself."

But CIR's Carlini said the number of rejected asylum seekers choosing voluntary returns was increasing, with more than a quarter of those it handles asking to go home. "We've seen people who arrived two, three months ago and found out that Italy is much different from what they expected," she said. Fall needs no convincing. Instead of living in his dark, one-room apartment with a friend and trolling the streets for buyers of Chinese goods, "it is better to return home to the fields where you can live with dignity," he said.

His message to young Africans who want to come to Europe is very simple. Don't. "I know what I'm talking about. It hasn't been easy for me. I don't have papers or a job," he said. "If they understand, they will say, 'Thank you, brother.'" — Reuters

MIGRANTS GET THREE MINUTES TO CALL HOME

After an 11-month journey across desert and sea, Mohamed finally hears his mother's voice once more thanks to a Red Cross camper that travels across Italy to help migrants call home. From the border crossing of Ventimiglia in the country's north to the southern island of Lampedusa, this white converted camper van has offered hundreds of freshly-arrived migrants a three minute call to their nearest and dearest.

Last stop was the capital Rome, where it pottered to a halt Monday in front of a Red Cross tent camp which houses up to 200 people plucked from unseaworthy vessels in the Mediterranean before they are sent to reception centers. Mohamed, a 27-year-old from Senegal, takes his place at one of the tables manned by volunteers laid out in the sunshine, as others from Bangladesh, Eritrea, Pakistan and West Africa crowd around, some unable to believe their luck.

It can take time: numbers might not work, there may be network issues, or the phone rings off the hook. But often, a mother, brother or neighbor picks up on the other side of the world, and the distance drops away. "I have not spoken to my mum for five months, I heard her voice and it was like a blow to the heart, a blow of madness. I'm happy," Mohamed tells AFP with a wide smile.

Tears, celebrations

He left home in April 2016, crossed the Sahara desert, was held hostage in Libya, before escaping and setting out to sea, where he was rescued by a Norwegian ship

operating under the European border agency Frontex. He was brought to Sicily on Sunday, and was driven to the capital overnight and given a bed at the Red Cross camp. Mohamed used his three minutes - as the seconds tick down on a timer clock beside him - to thank his elder sister, who gave him the money for the journey. He also urgently wants to warn his friends: "Never try what I did. I risked my life."

It is not the first time the Red Cross vol-

unteers have seen people warning loved ones. A few weeks ago in Pozzallo, Sicily, an Ivorian woman used the phone call to beg her mother to stop other young women leaving. "Libya is hell," she sobbed according to the Red Cross, describing how she was raped by men holding her captive there. "My head was there in the village, mother, it was only my body that was with those men," she was quoted as saying.

The calls can be difficult when migrants

discover someone back home has died. Others are moments of celebration, such as one in which a Malian man finally got through to his wife only to be told she had given birth to their baby boy. In either case the calls work wonders, says project manager Francesco Montrone, who since mid-January has overseen over 1,500 calls, 60 percent of which have been successful.

Mood changer

"The mood in the centers changes a lot once the migrants call home. They calm down, the atmosphere is more relaxed," Montrone said. The project was launched a year ago in the Netherlands by the Vodafone Foundation which finances the camper and pays for the calls. The unit, which has spent two months on loan to the Italian Red Cross, will now return to tour Dutch reception centres, but Montrone hopes it won't be the last Italy sees of this mobile psychological lifeline.

Reception centers are obliged to provide migrants with telephone cards, but those waiting to be transferred from first responder camps do not have this privilege, nor do those living in informal settlements at the borders. A shy young Nigerian sits down at one of the tables, shivering in his threadbare clothes. The volunteer assigned to take care of him runs to get him a body warmer before helping him dial his father's number. At the next table, a Pakistani who arrived last week reassures his brother he is well until an alarm clock sounds: The three minutes are up. — AFP



A migrant makes a phone call with the help of a member of the Italian Red Cross yesterday outside the "Tracing Bus" in Rome. — AFP

LEVERKUSEN APPOINT KORKUT UNTIL END OF THE SEASON

BERLIN: Bayer Leverkusen yesterday named former Hannover and Kaiserslautern coach Tayfun Korkut as manager until the end of the season after the weekend sacking of Roger Schmidt. Former Turkish international Korkut, 42, has been tasked with steadying the ship at Leverkusen following a wretched recent run which culminated in Saturday's 6-2 Bundesliga thrashing at Borussia Dortmund and saw Schmidt fired the next day. He was the ninth coach to be dismissed by a Bundesliga club this season. Defeat left Leverkusen mired in mid-table but they are still in the Champions League, albeit 4-2 down to Atletico Madrid with the last-16 second leg on March 15. "With him we want to overcome the difficult current phase we are going through and finish the season well," managing director Michael Schade said in a statement of Korkut's appointment. —AFP

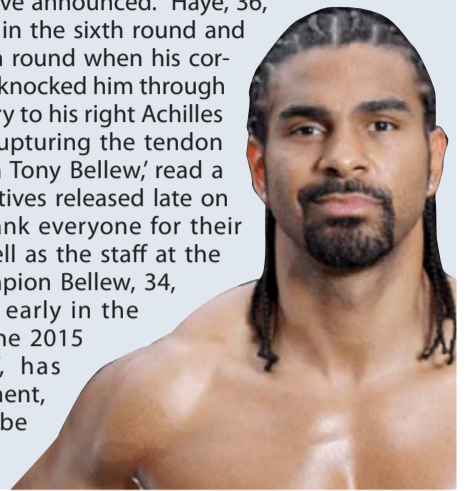


BCCI EX-CHIEF APOLOGISES OVER COURT CONTEMPT

NEW DELHI: The Indian cricket board's former president Anurag Thakur gave an "unconditional apology" yesterday to the Supreme Court which had ordered his dismissal from the game's most powerful body in January. Thakur faces a court petition later this month for allegedly obstructing the implementation of a series of recommendations from a panel led by a retired judge to reform the administration of the board. But at a session of court where the date for the full hearing was set for April 17, Thakur's lawyer P S Patwalia read a statement in which his client "tendered my unconditional and unqualified apology". "I had not intended to file any false information," the statement added, which was delivered by Patwalia as Thakur sat alongside him. Thakur was dismissed at the start of the year after the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) consistently stalled on implementing the reforms proposed by a former top judge, Rajendra Mal Lodha, and which had been endorsed by the court. The proposals included setting age and term limits on office bearers within the board. — AFP

HAYE UNDERGOES ACHILLES SURGERY

LONDON: David Haye has undergone surgery on the Achilles tendon he ruptured during Saturday's heavyweight defeat by fellow Briton Tony Bellew, his representatives have announced. Haye, 36, sustained the injury after slipping in the sixth round and fell to a surprise defeat in the 11th round when his corner threw the towel in after Bellew knocked him through the ropes. "David underwent surgery to his right Achilles this afternoon, after completely rupturing the tendon during Saturday night's fight with Tony Bellew," read a statement from Haye's representatives released late on Sunday. "David would like to thank everyone for their many messages of support, as well as the staff at the hospital! WBC cruiserweight champion Bellew, 34, has revealed he broke his hand early in the fight. Bellew, who appeared in the 2015 'Rocky' franchise film 'Creed', has revealed he is considering retirement, but says a big-money fight will be difficult to turn down. —AFP



SHOOTING

AL-NAMSHAN, AL-HARBY, HEBBA IRZOUQI, AL-ASOUSI, REEM WIN GOLD PUBLIC AUTHORITY FOR SPORT SHOOTING TOURNAMENT

By Abdellatif Sharaa

KUWAIT: Tournament of the Public Authority for Sport (PAS), held at Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Olympic Shooting Complex and organized by Kuwait Shooting Sports Club in 10m air pistol and rifle, 50m prone rifle and Olympic archery concluded on Sunday in the presence of Secretary General of Arab and Kuwait Shooting Federations Obaid Al-Osaimi, KSSC board member Eng Hussam Al-Roumi, Lt Colonel Salaf Al-Hurajji from National Guard and fans of the sport. Nearly 120 shooters participated in the tournament which lasted three days.

Al-Osaimi pointed out the great interest PAS pays to shooting under the leadership of Director General Sheikh Ahmad Al-Mansour Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah and his deputies, through providing all that is necessary to continue the success Kuwait Shooting had enjoyed locally, regionally and internationally.

Final results of the tournament are:

In the men's 10m air pistol: Hamad Al-Namshan won first place and the gold medal followed by Ali Khalid Al-Subaie second and Hassan Al-Mulla third.

In the 50m men prone rifle: Abdallah Al-Harby took first place, Khalid Share Al-Subaie second, and Mohammad Shateel third.

In the 10m air rifle women: Heba Irzouqi first, Iyat Hassan Al-Duwaikhi second and Maryam Irzouqi third.

10m air rifle men juniors: Suleiman Al-Asousi, Mushari Al-Marta and Saud Duhaiman Al-Subaie.

10m air rifle women juniors: Reem Al-Bughaili, Batoul Ashkenani, Yara Khalaf.



ATHLETICS

MERRITT AMONG OLYMPIC STARS TO WIN US INDOOR TITLES

WASHINGTON: Former Olympic 110m hurdles champion Aries Merritt signaled a return to form after a 2015 kidney transplant by winning the 60m hurdles crown Sunday at the US Indoor Track and Field Championships. Merritt captured his first US Indoors title since 2012, the year he also won the world indoor and Olympic hurdles titles, in 7.51 seconds edging Aleec Harris by .03 of a second. "I'm just happy to come out here and get the win," Merritt said. "It proves I've still got it and I'm going to give it all I've got."

The 31-year-old from Chicago, who holds the 110m hurdles world record of 12.80, said he was in some ways "relieved" after missing last year's Rio Olympics because his trail leg was in pain the entire 2016 season.

The three-day meet at high altitude in Albuquerque, New Mexico, concluded with wins by a host of US Olympic standouts plus some impressive newcomers. Ronnie Baker, coming off World Indoor Tour wins at Torun and Birmingham, matched the sixth-best time ever clocked to win the 60 meters in 6.45 seconds.

"I had the notion I could do something pretty special," Baker said. "We've been practising for this ever since October. My biggest goal right now is to make the world championship team

this summer and make the Olympic team in 2020." Also taking a first US Indoor 60m crown was Rio 4x400 US gold medal relay member Morolake Akinosun, who ran 7.08 to edge Dezerea Bryant by .03 for the women's win. "I had a really great start," she said. "I stayed focused on my drive and I know I can really race well so I just stayed with it."

Reigning Olympic and world indoor champion Michelle Carter won her fifth consecutive US indoor crown with an effort of 19.03m. She is the daughter of former NFL player Michael Carter, a three-time Super Bowl champion with San Francisco who won shot put silver at the 1984 Olympics. Another NFL daughter to win Sunday was 2016 world indoor high jump champion Vashti Cunningham, who cleared 1.96m to defend her US title. She is the 19-year-old daughter of retired quarterback Randall Cunningham. "My dad is so used to everything. He has been through it already," she said. "He tells me everything I need to know and everything I have to do for every obstacle I come to."

Rio Olympic and 2016 world indoor runner-up Sandi Morris defended her US Indoor women's pole vault crown by clearing 4.70m. "So happy to take home my second USA

Indoor Title! Not happy with my mark," she tweeted. "Using this indoor as learning experience. Reset-attack outdoor!"

Shelby Houlihan captured the two mile in 10:19.14 less than 24 hours after winning the mile crown. "I wasn't sure what to expect," she said. "When we went out slow it was playing into my hands a little bit."

Ajee Wilson, a three-time US 800 indoor champion, won the 600 in 1:23.84 with a strong finishing kick while Charlene Lipsey took the 1,000 in 2:37.97 with her own late push. "I knew I had a kick," Lipsey said. "I told myself just try and control the first four laps and in the last lap go."

MURPHY WON'T LEAVE IT LATE

Rio Olympic 800m bronze medalist Clayton Murphy won the 1,000m in 2:18.60, but made sure he was ahead and in control well before the end. "I learned my lesson at Rio not to hang back too long," he said. "I wasn't going to make the same mistake twice." Keni Harrison won the women's 60m hurdles in 7.81, edging Jasmin Sowers at the line. Tori Franklin won the women's triple jump on her final leap of 13.86m while Alex Young used his first effort to capture the men's weight throw at 24.02m. —AFP

AL NASSER LAUNCHES FAT OR FIT THEME

KUWAIT: Al Nasser, the Kuwait leading Gym equipment retailer in Kuwait has recently launched its national special offer campaign under the umbrella of the Fat or Fit theme on its various Home and Professional Gym equipments and across in all branches.



An initiative oriented towards encouraging a healthier style of living and the necessity to integrate sports within our daily routines by offering a wide range of articles on promotion but mainly to raise the awareness of the benefits of incorporating an active regime into our daily stressful existence.

This initiative falls under the umbrella of Al Nasser corporate responsibility to provide a healthier approach to life with a clear message that offers a choice between a hale and hearty well-being or a choice of life concentrated on an incessantly disturbed lifestyle leading to unhealthy and deteriorating consequences. Advices, directions and professional support accompanied the initiative with professionals in the sports fields who assisted the visitors

with guidance leading to a complete understanding of their requirements and what solutions fits best their need.

Fit or Fat was launched with a healthier lifestyle message in mind to convey but as well to feature an opportunity to all those aiming at enhancing their shapes and look for the upcoming season to benefit from a combination of an advanced and professional advice with a guidance on the various methods to reach their goal for the new season assorted with a significant reduction on Gym equipments to avail the immediate solution in their hands. A campaign that highlighted the offered special prices alongside the quality and the value for money such an investment is adding positively to the lifestyle of any potential sporty body with a warranty that accompanies any product.

'PAKISTAN WINS TODAY' AS FINAL PASSES OFF PEACEFULLY

LAHORE: Pakistan yesterday hailed the successful staging of the Pakistan Super League final as a step towards restoring international cricket in the country after a deadly attack on the Sri Lankan team in 2009. With nerves jangling after a recent resurgence of militant violence, tight security blanketed Lahore's sold-out Gaddafi Stadium but the game went off peacefully with Peshawar Zalmi beating Quetta Gladiators by 58 runs.

Fans held up banners proclaiming "Pakistan wins today", reflecting a mood of defiance. The rest of the Twenty20 tournament was played in the United Arab Emirates for safety reasons.

"Peshawar Zalmi on Sunday may have won the Pakistan Super League (PSL) but the real victory was that of the country, which after years of terrorism and turmoil was able to stage a landmark international event in Lahore," the Express Tribune said.

Thousands of police and troops patrolled the area around the Gaddafi Stadium and military helicopters whirred overhead in heavy security more commonly associated with visiting heads of state.

It was outside the same ground almost exactly eight years ago that Pakistan cricket suffered its worst blow when Islamist militants opened fire on a bus carrying Sri Lankan cricketers, killing eight people and wounding nine, including six visiting players. The attack effectively snuffed out Pakistan's home international sporting fixtures, with no major teams visiting the country since.

Holding the final in Pakistan had drawn criticism from some quarters, after a series of militant attacks in February left 130 people dead and broke a long lull in violence that had encouraged authorities.

Fears of a fresh incident threatened to overshadow Sunday's final, as top players such as Quetta's Kevin Pietersen and Luke Wright pulled out ahead of the clash over security concerns.

But the West Indies' Darren Sammy bucked the trend to captain Peshawar Zalmi to victory, after replacing Pakistan's Shahid Afridi who was forced out with a

hand injury. "My good friend Lala (Afridi) said: 'If we get to the final you should come to Lahore,'" Sammy told the crowd.

"I am glad I came to experience the atmosphere here. Even though Peshawar came out on top, cricket was the real winner in Lahore," he added.

#CRICKETCOMESHOME

Fans around the country watched the match on giant screens placed in marketplaces, while many tweeted under the hashtag #CricketComesHome.

Legendary pacesman Wasim Akram called it a "momentous occasion for Pakistan", while fans at the ground said they had sent the militants a message.

"I felt no fear and I just came to give a message to terrorists that Pakistanis are not afraid of their cowardly acts," said Mohammad Nauman, who paid \$40 for his ticket. Peshawar Zalmi rode on a 32-ball 40 by the in-form Kamran Akmal, who clobbered six fours and a six to reach 148 for six off their 20 overs.

Skipper Sammy hit two sixes in his 28 not out, while fellow West Indian pacesman Rayad Emrit took 3-31 for Quetta.

In reply, Quetta were shot out for 90 after being rocked by left-arm spinner Mohammad Asghar, who finished with three for 16 in his four overs.

Eight security experts attended the game, including officials from the International Cricket Council.

Delegates from Sri Lanka and Bangladesh, who are rumoured as possible candidates to tour Pakistan, were also at the ground. "We will give good news to fans soon that an international team will come to Pakistan," said tournament chairman Najam Sethi, although similar statements in the past have gone unfulfilled.

The final of the Super League's second edition brings a successful conclusion to a tournament which began inauspiciously with two players suspended and more questioned over alleged spot-fixing. Afridi tweeted: "truly appreciate the arrangements&security. It was a success4Pakistan!" —AFP



BANGALORE: Indian batsman Cheteshwara Pujara plays a shot on the third day of the second Test match between India and Australia at The M. Chinnaswamy Stadium in Bangalore yesterday. — AFP

CRICKET

PUJARA LEADS INDIA'S REVIVAL IN 2ND TEST

BANGALORE: Australian seamer Josh Hazlewood yesterday acknowledged the second Test hung in the balance after India's Cheteshwar Pujara hit an unbeaten half-century to lead the hosts' fightback on day three in Bangalore.

The hosts were 213 for four at stumps, leading Australia by 126 runs in their second innings after the tourists' hopes of building a big lead were undermined by an outstanding bowling performance from Ravindra Jadeja. Pujara on 79 and Ajinkya Rahane on 40 were batting at close of play. Hazlewood claimed three wickets.

The pair put together a stubborn 93-run partnership for the fifth wicket to lift India from a wobbly 120-4 at Bangalore's M Chinnaswamy Stadium. "It feels pretty level at the moment. They fought back really well in that last session," Hazlewood told reporters.

"Credit to the two guys out there. They stuck to their plans and scratched away for quite a bit of amount of runs," Hazlewood said after India scored 91 runs in the last session without losing a wicket. Pujara led the way with his controlled knock as he kept a persistent Australian attack at bay, prompting skipper Steve Smith to rotate his bowling options.

Rahane was equally resolute in his resolve to give the visitors a daunting fourth innings chase. He hardly played a loose shot during his 105-ball stay. The 29-year-old Pujara, who recorded his 14th Test fifty in his 46th Test, capitalised on a dropped chance by Smith at first slip off Nathan Lyon when he was on four.

Off-spinner Lyon, who had grabbed a career-best Test haul of 8-50 in the first innings, went wicketless on a day when Indian spinner Jadeja claimed six wickets.

Hazlewood though praised his team's spinners after Lyon gave away just 69 runs in his 27 overs and Steve O'Keefe got the key wicket of opener Lokesh Rahul (51). "I think the spinners bowled really well again," he said. Hazlewood rattled the Indian top-order with his three wickets, including the prized scalp of skipper Virat Kohli in the afternoon session.

KOHLI'S BIG WICKET

Hazlewood trapped Kohli lbw for 15 with a shooting inswinger and a review did not help the star batsman as he walked back to a stunned silence. "I think it's hard work scoring runs on these couple of wickets. So you just have to stick to your plans against him and we've been quite successful," said Hazlewood on keeping Kohli down to just 40 runs in his four innings of the series so far.

India's move to promote all-rounder Jadeja up the batting order also backfired when the left-hander was bowled by Hazlewood for two to leave the hosts reeling at tea.

India's troubles began when opener Rahul fell to left-arm spinner O'Keefe after hitting his third Test fifty. Rahul, who top-scored with 90 in India's first innings, put on 45 with Pujara after Abhinav Mukund (16) was bowled by Hazlewood early in the lunch session.

O'Keefe lured Rahul into a drive outside off stump and a diving Smith took a brilliant one-handed catch at first slip.

In the morning session, left-arm spinner Jadeja returned with figures of 6-63 to help dismiss Australia for 276 in their first innings, a lead of 87. India's batting coach Sanjay Bangar praised the team's ability to bounce back, insisting it remains a tough battle between two top sides. "We fought really well over the past two days after having a setback of not scoring enough runs (189) in the first innings," Bangar said. "All in all it is very hard Test match. What lies ahead could be exhilarating stuff. If India can put up a better show with the bat for the next two sessions we are likely to have our nose ahead." Australia lead the four-match series 1-0 after humbling the hosts in the first match in Pune. — AFP

SCOREBOARD

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

India 1st innings 189 (Rahul 90; Lyon 8-50)	Bowling: Sharma 27-8-48-1 (3nb), Yadav 24-7-57-1 (1nb), Ashwin 49-13-84-2, Jadeja 21.4-1-63-6, Nair 1-0-7-0
Australia 1st innings (overnight 237-6; Wade 25 not out, Starc 14 not out)	
D. Warner b Ashwin	33
M. Renshaw st Saha b Jadeja	60
S. Smith c Saha b Jadeja	8
S. Marsh c Nair b Yadav	66
P. Handscomb c Ashwin b Jadeja	16
M. Marsh lbw b Sharma	0
M. Wade lbw b Jadeja	40
M. Starc c Jadeja b Ashwin	26
S. O'Keefe not out	4
N. Lyon lbw b Jadeja	0
J. Hazlewood c Rahul b Jadeja	1
Extras (b14, lb3, nb5)	22
Total (all out, 122.4 overs)	276
Fall of wickets: 1-52 (Warner), 2-82 (Smith), 3-134 (Renshaw), 4-160 (Handscomb), 5-163 (M. Marsh), 6-220 (S. Marsh), 7-269 (Starc), 8-274 (Wade), 9-274 (Lyon), 10-276 (Hazlewood)	
India 2nd innings	
L. Rahul c Smith b O'Keefe	51
A. Mukund b Hazlewood	16
C. Pujara not out	79
V. Kohli lbw b Hazlewood	15
R. Jadeja b Hazlewood	2
A. Rahane not out	40
Extras (b10)	10
Total (4 wickets; 72 overs)	213
Fall of wickets: 1-39 (Mukund), 2-84 (Rahul), 3-112 (Kohli), 4-120 (Jadeja)	
Bowling: Starc 10-0-45-0, Hazlewood 16-0-57-3, Lyon 27-2-69-0, O'Keefe 16-3-28-1, M. Marsh 3-0-4-0	
Still to bat: K. Nair, R. Ashwin, W. Saha, I. Sharma, U. Yadav.	



LAHORE: Cricketers of Peshawar Zalmi celebrate their victory over Quetta Gladiators in the final cricket match of the Pakistan Super League (PSL) at The Gaddafi Cricket Stadium in Lahore on Sunday. — AFP

PREVIEW

SA ATTACK BOLSTERED AHEAD OF NZ TESTS

WELLINGTON: South Africa will miss AB de Villiers following his decision to opt out of Test cricket this year but their ranks have been bolstered by the return of Morne Morkel and Vernon Philander for the three-match series against New Zealand.

Both players missed the limited-overs fixtures of the ongoing tour, with Morkel having recovered from a career-threatening back injury and Philander dealing with a nagging ankle problem. South Africa have won their last three test series and will head to England for a full tour starting in May. Their three-match series in New Zealand, which kicks off at University Oval in Dunedin on Wednesday, could be a chance to work Morkel and Philander back into test form. South Africa coach Russell Domingo said that while the absence of influential batsman de Villiers would be keenly felt in the test series, they had no option but to move on.

De Villiers's flashing bat produced 262 runs in the five one-day matches at an average of 87.33, while his calm assuredness guided the side through several tense moments in New Zealand.

"Anybody, any coach, would want AB de Villiers in their side but he has made a decision and we respect that decision," he said. "We all definitely wanted him to stay but it's a decision he has made for family life."

"He will be missed but we've gone through a series against Sri Lanka and a series in Australia without him so the game goes on. As good as anyone is, the game goes on."

Should Morkel and Philander replicate past form against New Zealand, however, de Villiers may not be missed much at all. Morkel's best bowling in an innings of 6-23

came against New Zealand and while is career average is 29.33, against the hosts it is 20.94.

Philander's career best bowling of 6-44 also came against New Zealand, with an average of 15.53. His career average is 21.40. The pair are likely to join Kagiso Rabada in an impressive pace attack after the 21-year-old showed in the final one-day international in Auckland on Saturday that he was warming to New Zealand conditions. On several occasions he got the ball to jump off a length and caused discomfort with the rising delivery, a tactic that will be used far more often in the longest format of the game.

South Africa will also be without fast bowler Dale Steyn, who is still recovering from a broken shoulder. New Zealand have an abysmal record against South Africa, having won just four of the previous 42 test matches. The Proteas have won 24.

Just one of New Zealand's wins has been at home, in Auckland in 2004 when right-arm swing bowler Chris Martin took a career-best 11-180 to lead his side to a nine-wicket victory.

Williamson's team are still looking to find their right mix, with Henry Nicholls establishing himself in the number five batting position. Martin Guptill is looking to reinvent himself as a middle-order test batsman, though, having struggled to transfer his limited overs form as an opener into Tests. Selectors are also still debating on the all-rounder role, with Colin de Grandhomme and Jimmy Neesham in competition for Dunedin while Mitchell Santner's left-arm spin is still developing, earning a recall for off-spinner Jeetan Patel. —Reuters

ROOT HAILS ENGLAND'S STRENGTH IN WINDIES WIN

ST JOHN'S: Joe Root smashed an undefeated 90 as England claimed a four-wicket win over the West Indies on Sunday but he was quick to salute Chris Woakes and Jason Roy who also hit impressive half centuries.

All-rounder Woakes was not out on 68 while opener Roy made 52 to help England chase down a 226-run target and claim the second one-day international and the three-match series having won the opener by 45 runs at the same venue on Friday. "Jason set the tone, and got us miles ahead of the rate," said man of the match Root. "I just told Chris to take his time to get in, and build together. He played exceptionally well, and it's a sign of a good team that we don't rely on one or two players."

England were centering towards their target on the back of Roy's belligerent half-century at 108 for two in the 21st over. But then the specialist spinners got the West Indies back into the match, triggering a slide which saw four England wickets tumbling for 16 runs. Ashley Nurse returned his best-ever figures of three for 34 while Devendra Bishoo claimed two for 43. However with fast bowler Shannon Gabriel unavailable after an opening three-over spell because of a side strain, captain Jason Holder resorted to part-time spinners on a helpful track without success.

Woakes, the more adventurous of the seventh-wicket pairing in a stand that put on an unbroken 102 runs, was missed at long-on by substitute fielder Rovman Powell off Carlos Brathwaite in what was the West Indies' last real chance of staying in the game and squaring the series. He was dropped again, by Holder at mid-off off Kraigg Brathwaite in the 47th over, by which time

England were on the verge of victory.

Root struck just three boundaries in a controlled innings, his only blemish being an edge off Bishoo between the wicketkeeper and slip. "It was just about staying calm because we were so far ahead of the required rate," added Root. "Chris (Woakes) took a lot of the pressure off me with his aggression."

Fresh from claiming career-best ODI figures (4 for 40) in the first match, seamer Liam Plunkett played a key role in stifling West Indies' quest to accelerate on a bright morning. He removed top-scorer Jason Mohammed (50) and Jonathan Carter (39) before adding the scalp of Nurse to finish with three for 32.

Leg-spinner Adil Rashid, apart from showing a safe pair of hands with the catches to dispose of both Mohammed and Carter, also accounted for dangerous big-hitters Holder, via a steeping catch of his own bowling, and Carlos Brathwaite. Fast bowler Steven Finn did the early damage to the West Indies innings on the same pitch used for the series-opener. Poor shot selection contributed to Evin Lewis' demise, a leading edge giving a simple catch to Sam Billings at cover, while a miscued pull by new batsman Kieran Powell presented Finn with the catch off his own bowling that took him to the milestone of 100 ODI wickets.

Reaching the landmark in his 67th match, he is the third-fastest Englishman to the feat behind Darren Gough and Stuart Broad. "We need to seize the opportunities that come our way," Holder noted in reflecting on batsmen failing to capitalise on good starts and also chances missed in the field in both matches in Antigua. "We keep losing too many wickets to poor shots at the top." — AFP



ST JOHN'S: England's cricketer Chris Woakes (L) and Joe Root celebrate their victory during the second of the three-match One Day International series between England and West Indies at the Sir Vivian Richards Stadium in St John's, Antigua, on Sunday. — AFP

TYRON WOODLEY CHOOSES SMARTS OVER SLUGFEST, KEEPS UFC BELT

LAS VEGAS: Tyron Woodley understood the booring that thoroughly drowned out his words when he spoke to the fans following his tactical victory over Stephen Thompson at UFC 209.

"I know this is a sport where you guys love to see knockouts," Woodley said. "You guys love to see the gore. You love to see the blood, guys getting beat up, and then they find a way to come back. I love watching it as well.

"But guess what? I love being the world champion, and sometimes it's not the sexiest fight on Earth." The 34-year-old UFC welterweight champ simply felt

he couldn't risk his belt or his livelihood in another emotional brawl with Thompson, the unpredictable karate fighter who nearly finished him four months ago in their wild first bout in New York. Thompson exercised the same caution in their Vegas rematch, and Woodley eked out a cerebral, largely action-free victory that left both fighters thinking they had won.

It also left many fans wishing they hadn't paid to watch a chess match in a cage. "I would say a stalemate is probably the proper term," Woodley said. Woodley (17-3-1) and Thompson (13-2-

1) had the same solution to a common dilemma for high-profile mixed martial artists and boxers in big bouts: They can either fight intelligently, or they can entertain the fans who come to see blood. Georges St. Pierre and Floyd Mayweather Jr. became stars without becoming brawlers, but most fighters don't have the athleticism or the personality to reach big paydays and worldwide recognition without going a bit wild. By the time the T-Mobile Arena crowd chanted "Fight! Fight! Fight!" out of desperation in the fifth round, Woodley and Thompson had made their

preferences clear - for this difficult matchup, at least.

The first two rounds had zero significant action as two talented counter-punchers circled and waited to capitalize when the other threw a lazy, obvious strike. It never happened.

"I didn't realize he was going to be as hesitant in this one," Thompson said. "He was backing up a lot. I knew he was waiting for me to come in. You want to go out there and get a spectacular knockout, but when you get in there, it's a different feel. I think only fighters can understand that." Indeed, Woodley didn't

make UFC 209 boring by himself: Thompson fought the same tactical fight, showing little of his usual creativity in attack. They landed only a combined 136 total strikes over five rounds.

By contrast, co-main event fighters David Teymur and Lando Vannata landed 174 strikes in their three-round slugfest, earning \$50,000 Fight of the Night bonuses.

The final 35 seconds of the fifth round contained essentially all of the main event's thrills: Woodley dropped Thompson with a straight right hand and pummeled him on the ground.—AP

ALGERIA WOMEN FOOTBALLERS WAVE RED CARD AT STIGMA

ALGIERS: When Fathia was seven years old, she would wait each day for classes to end, throw down her schoolbag and rush to play football with the boys from her neighbourhood.

Now in her twenties, Algerian international Fathia plays for all-female club Afak Relizane, where love for "the beautiful game" has trumped gender stereotypes and even militant threats in the conservative yet football-mad North African nation.

Coach Sid Ahmed Mouaz helped to launch Afak in 1997 in the middle of Algeria's blood-soaked civil war at a time when armed Islamists prohibited all women's sport.

"The terrorists sent me a letter demanding that I stop girls' football," Mouaz recalls. But he refused to be intimidated. Midfielder Fathia has gone on to triumph in multiple domestic and regional tournaments with her club.

Mouaz admits that his passion for football verges on the obsessive, but that drive has allowed him to assemble his squad of 15, who play and train despite the social stigma in Algeria of women playing sports.

"The girls have been insulted, people spit at the entrance to the stadium," he says. For many families around Relizane, a town in Algeria's agricultural heartland west of the capital, even today, "a good woman doesn't play football".

"Go home and make dinner", or "find yourself a husband" are refrains heard frequently by players, according to the coach.

The squad meets at the town's stadium for two-hour training sessions each day. Despite modest facilities, the sessions are intense, in keeping with Mouaz's mantra that his recruits must have "football in the blood". Ten of the players live full-time in club accommodation, fitted out with bunk beds, wardrobes, a television and stereo system. A cook prepares meals for the players as freshly washed kits hang drying on the line outside. When they aren't training, they enjoy one amenity above all: wi-fi. The players stare into their smartphones, ear-

phones in, and communicate with the outside world over Facebook.

Women's football is an amateur sport in Algeria, with about 10 female clubs. One of the first set up, the Relizane club encourages the girls to study or work when not playing or training.

'FOOTBALL OR MARRIAGE'

In spite of the team's runaway success, local parents are often reluctant to allow their daughters to pursue football into adulthood.

"I'm proud of my daughter but I would be calmer if she stopped playing, got married and wore the veil like other women around here," says Fathia's mother, Fatma.

Whenever one of the girls is approached by a suitor, the player faces the same question: "Football or marriage?"

Mouna, a striker, is getting married next month and will probably have to give up the game. "If they're motivated, they will continue to play even after they marry," says Mouaz.

Another restriction is money. Despite a heaving trophy cabinet and the town pride over its club's successes, few locals turn out even for home games.

The squad, which plays in green and white, has no sponsor or outside financing.

"There are no funds for a women's football team in Relizane," is a common complaint among players.

Six club members have represented Algeria at international level but their reward for winning a league game for Afak is the equivalent of 12 euros (\$12.7) "a pittance", says Mouaz.

After their latest victory, a local official invited the girls for a reception in their honour, where the players were hoping for some financial reward.

Instead, each girl received a sports bag and a tracksuit.

But, as one club member defiantly puts it: "Love of football is stronger than backward attitudes, even after all that's been done to break up this team." — AFP



PITTSBURGH: Pittsburgh Penguins goalie Marc-Andre Fleury (29) blocks a shot by Buffalo Sabres' Evander Kane (9) in the third period of an NHL hockey game in Pittsburgh, Sunday. — AP

NHL

FLEURY STANDS TALL IN RELIEF, PENGUINS RALLY BY SABRES 4-3

PITTSBURGH: Connor Sheary scored with 2:56 left in regulation as the Pittsburgh Penguins erased a three-goal deficit Sunday for a 4-3 win over the Buffalo Sabres at PPG Paints Arena. Justin Schultz set up Sheary's goal on a back-door play and finished with a goal and two assists. Evgeni Malkin added a goal and an assist for Pittsburgh. Buffalo took a 3-0 lead in the first period but lost for the sixth time in seven games (1-3-3) as its playoff hopes continue to dwindle. Goaltender Matt Murray started for the 17th time in the Penguins' past 21 games but was replaced by Marc-Andre Fleury after giving up three goals on 21 shots in the first period and his team trailing 3-0. Fleury (16-8-5) stopped all 28 shots he faced. Anders Nilsson (9-9-4) stopped 42 of 45 Penguins shots. Jake Guentzel tied it for Pittsburgh 3-3 at 16:14 of the third when he tipped the puck past Nilsson.

HURRICANES 2, COYOTES 1

Derek Ryan knocked in a rebound off a fortunate bounce with 3:57 left in regulation and backup goalie Eddie Lack made 24 saves as Carolina snapped a four-game losing streak. Peter Holland scored the lone goal for Arizona, which got 33 saves from Mike Smith but wasted three power-play opportunities in the third period and lost for the fifth time in its last seven games. Ryan scored the winner when Jeff Skinner's initial shot deflected off Jakob Chychrun, off the far post and then back into the crease with Smith sprawled on the ice out of position. The Coyotes took the lead when Lack couldn't squeeze a rebound of Luke Schenn's slap shot between his pads after Arizona's Anthony Duclair deflected it. Holland was waiting near the crease to sweep the loose puck into the open net behind Lack for his third goal of the season and his second goal in his last four games at 3:23 of the second period. Carolina tied the score at 4:46 of the second period when right winger Teuvo Teravainen deflected Jaccob Slavin's slap shot past Smith for his 12th goal of the season, which is one off his career high set last season with Chicago.

BLUE JACKETS 3, DEVILS 0

The Blue Jackets persevered behind a 20-save shutout by goaltender Sergei Bobrovsky and two points apiece from Oliver Bjorkstrand and Sam Gagner. Columbus is now 4-1-1 in its last six games, while the Devils suffered their seventh consecutive defeat. Boone Jenner scored the only goal Columbus needed with 13th goal at 2:45 of the second period.

FLAMES 5, ISLANDERS 2

The Flames scored four goals on five shots in the first period and skated away with their seventh consecutive win. Michael Frolik, TJ Brodie, Micheal Ferland and Sean Monahan scored in a 4:40 span in the first, and Kris Versteeg added a goal in the third for Calgary. John Tavares and Jason Chimera replied for the Islanders. Calgary's Brian Elliott made 33 saves for his seventh win in his past eight starts. Islanders goalie Thomas Griess was pulled after surrendering four goals on 21 shots in the first period.

WILD 3, SHARKS 1

The Wild scored a pair of early goals and held off the Sharks in a meeting of two Western Conference powers. Eric Staal scored twice and

NHL results/standings

Carolina 2, Arizona 1; Vancouver 2, Anaheim 1; St. Louis 3, Colorado 0; Minnesota 3, San Jose 1; Columbus 3, New Jersey 0; Pittsburgh 4, Buffalo 3; Calgary 5, NY Islanders 2.

Western Conference						Eastern Conference						
Central Division						Atlantic Division						
W	L	OTL	GF	GA	PTS	W	L	OTL	GF	GA	PTS	
Minnesota	42	15	6	212	149	90	Montreal	37	21	8	183	165
Chicago	42	18	5	198	164	89						
Nashville	32	24	9	192	184	73						
St. Louis	32	27	5	176	182	69						
Winnipeg	30	30	6	198	206	66						
Dallas	26	29	10	182	209	62						
Colorado	17	44	3	123	214	37						
Pacific Division						Metropolitan Division						
San Jose	38	19	7	177	150	83	Washington	44	13	7	210	135
Edmonton	35	22	8	187	170	78	Columbus	41	17	6	205	149
Anaheim	33	22	10	168	165	76	Pittsburgh	40	16	8	223	180
Calgary	36	26	4	179	182	76	NY Rangers	41	22	2	210	173
Los Angeles	31	28	6	161	164	68	NY Islanders	30	23	11	188	193
Vancouver	28	30	7	152	186	63	Philadelphia	30	26	8	164	190
Arizona	23	35	7	157	210	53	Carolina	26	26	10	155	180
							New Jersey	25	28	12	147	187

Note: Overtime losses (OTL) are worth one point in the standings and are not included in the loss column (L)

Zach Parise got things started in the first period for Minnesota, which moved back into first place in the Central Division, ahead of idle Chicago. The Wild got 20 saves from Devan Dubnyk to win for the third time in their past four games. Staal added an empty net goal for the Wild with 1:49 to play. San Jose, which leads the Pacific Division, got a goal from Melker Karlsson.

BLUES 3, AVALANCHE 0

Jake Allen made 27 saves for his third shutout of the season, and the St. Louis Blues picked up two valuable points. Paul Stastny, Kyle Brodziak and Patrik Berglund collected the goals for the Blues, who stopped a five-game skid and moved past the idle Los Angeles Kings for the second wild-card slot

in the Western Conference. Jeremy Smith stopped 22 shots for Colorado, which was shut out for the 11th time this season and has just two goals in the past four games. The Avalanche have lost four straight and seven of their past eight.

CANUCKS 2, DUCKS 1

Vancouver goalie Richard Bachman stopped 43 shots to win his season debut. Bo Horvat and Markus Granlund scored for the Canucks, who earned their second victory in as many nights after losing six of their previous seven games. Patrick Eaves scored for the Ducks, who got 25 saves from goalie Jonathan Bernier but fell into a tie for third place in the Pacific Division and the first wild-card spot-with the Calgary Flames. —Reuters

JAPAN OLDIE MIURA SURPASSES ENGLAND'S MATTHEWS RECORD

TOKYO: Twinkle-toed Japanese footballer Kazuyoshi Miura has racked up another astonishing landmark by eclipsing former England great Stanley Matthews in the record books with his second professional appearance since turning 50. Miura, who last week became the first fiftysomething to grace the J-League, played in Yokohama FC's 1-1 draw against V-Varen Nagasaki on Sunday at 50 years and seven days-two days older than Matthews was when he turned out for Stoke City against Fulham in 1965.

"(Matthews) was a legendary player for us," golden oldie Miura told local media. "I don't actually feel like I've gone past a legend. I may have surpassed him in longevity but I won't ever be able to match his statistics and the career he had," added the former Japan striker, dubbed "King Kazu" by his legion of fans.

"It's not so much about numbers anyway, it's more about how you play." Miura lasted 54

minutes at Nagasaki and failed to get in a shot on goal after playing for just over an hour in last weekend's 1-0 home win over division two rivals Matsumoto Yamaga.

"It didn't get a sniff," said Miura, now looking to become the first fiftysomething to score a J-League goal. Though the pin-up looks have been replaced by a few tell-tale wrinkles and greying hair, Miura has signalled his intent to play until he's 60. Miura shot to fame in the early 1990s as Asia's best-known footballer, helping to put the Japanese game on the map after the professional J-League was launched in 1993. He blazed a trail for Japanese players when he joined Italy's Genoa in 1994 and scored 55 goals in 89 games for Japan. Matthews enjoyed an illustrious 33-year career and won 84 England caps, including two appearances for Great Britain. The former Stoke and Blackpool winger remains the only man to have played in England's top flight at 50.—AFP



RELIZANE: Afak Relizane's players attend a training session on February 16, 2017, in the Algerian city of Relizane. — AFP



RELIZANE: Fethia Bekhedda of "Afak Relizane" poses for a picture with her medals at her home on February 17, 2017, in the Algerian city of Relizane. — AFP

KUWAIT TIMES NBA POWER RANKINGS

By Ahmad Jabr

KUWAIT: In addition to its usual coverage of the NBA, Kuwait Times introduces a new feature this year: the NBA Power Rankings. It is a weekly list ranking each team based on its performance during the week. This week, the Warriors were dethroned from the top spot which they have held for six consecutive weeks. (For any comments or suggestions, e-mail the writer at: a.jabr@kuwaittimes.net)

1- San Antonio Spurs (48 - 13) Last week: 2 - The Spurs have clinched a place in the postseason for the 20th straight season, and already seem to be in play-offs mode as they entered yesterday on a seven-game winning streak and have won nine of their last ten matches.

2- Houston Rockets (44 - 19) Last week: 4 - Not only does Houston have an MVP candidate in James Harden, but they also have two players who could compete for the Sixth Man of the Year Award: Eric Gordon (who recently broke the league's record for most three-pointers for a bench player in a season) and new acquisition Lou Williams.

3- Golden State Warriors (51 - 11) Last week: 1 - The Warriors needed Sunday's win over the Knicks to shake off its previous two losses to the Bulls and Wizards, as well as the bad news regarding the injury of Kevin Durant who is out indefinitely with what has been diagnosed as a 'Grade 2 MCL sprain and a tibial bone bruise in his left knee'.

4- Cleveland Cavaliers (42 - 19) Last week: 3 - The Cavs made an NBA-record 25 three-pointers in their 135-130 win over the Hawks on Friday. It was also the first game a team has had six players make at least three three-pointers (per Elias Sports Bureau).

5- Utah Jazz (39 - 24) Last week: 5 - Utah's extension talks with starting point guard George Hill hit a stalemate last week, and they hope resign him in the offseason. Hill scored 34 and 15 points in his last two games; victories over the Nets and Kings respectively.

6- Boston Celtics (40 - 23) Last week: 8 - Isaiah Thomas has led the Celtics in scoring for 27th straight games and counting. It is the longest mark in a single-season since Kevin Durant recorded 25 of such games for the Thunder in 2009-10.

7- Washington Wizards (37 - 27) Last week: 9 - A thin bench was Washington's weakest point this season - up until the trade deadline. Since then, they added Bojan Bogdanovic via trade, signed free agent Brandon Jennings and got Ian Mahinmi back from injury, and suddenly they have a very balanced lineup heading into the latter part of the regular season.

8- Toronto Raptors (37 - 26) Last week: 7 - The Raptors were already bad at passing prior to Kyle Lowry's injury, but has since become worse; dropping to dead last in the league in assists per game following his injury. His absence also puts pressure on fellow All-Star DeMar DeRozan, and forces the coaching staff to explore other options on offense which relies heavily on the backcourt's performance.

9- Oklahoma City Thunder (35 - 28) Last week: 6 - Russell Westbrook has 30 triple-doubles so far this season as he continues his pursuit of joining Oscar Robertson as the only players to average a triple-double for an entire season. To put his current record in perspective, it is worth noting that Michael Jordan recorded 28 triple-doubles in his entire illustrious career.

10- Los Angeles Clippers (37 - 25) Last week: 11 - Point guard Chris Paul recorded his seventh game with at least 15 assists and no turnovers last week. That is tied with Muggsy Bogues and Steve Nash for 2nd-most since turnovers were first recorded as a stat in 1977-78 (via Elias Sports Bureau).

11- Memphis Grizzlies (36 - 27) Last week: 10 - While Chandler Parsons admitted that he needs to work harder to live up to the high hopes pinned on him when he was signed last summer, coach David Fizdale continued to lobby for Zach Randolph to win the Sixth Man of the Year Award in his first year as a reserve with the Grizzlies.

12- Miami Heat (29 - 34) Last week: 12 - Amid the stellar play of Goran Dragic and solid contributions from Dion Waiters and Hassan Whiteside, the great ability of coach Erik Spoelstra to maximize his team's offensive potential is often overlooked when discussing the Heat's late success this season.

13- Atlanta Hawks (34 - 28) Last week: 13 - 'Pistol' Pete Maravich became the fifth player in Hawks' history to have his number (44) retired by the franchise where he played his first four seasons. Maravich averaged 24.3 points per game playing for the Hawks from 1970 to 1974.

14- Milwaukee Bucks (28 - 33) Last week: 14 - Giannis Antetokounmpo is one of only two players in Bucks' history to record at least 500 rebounds, 100 blocks and 100 steals in a season. The other player is none other than NBA Hall of Famer Kareem Abdul-Jabbar.

15- Dallas Mavericks (26 - 36) Last week: 19 - Yogi Ferrell earned West rookie of the month honors after he averaged 12 points and 4.7 assists per game during February. Meanwhile, Nerlens Noel became the first Maverick to record at least 15 points and 15 rebounds in his

first start with the team. Furthermore, Dallas is 15-9 since Seth Curry became a regular starter.

16- Chicago Bulls (31 - 31) Last week: 15 - The Bulls win over the Warriors last Thursday proved that Jimmy Butler and company can get the job done when the stakes are high. This could be the key for a deep playoffs' run that might happen despite a shaky performance throughout the regular season so far.

17- Detroit Pistons (30 - 32) Last week: 16 - The Pistons have averaged nearly 111 points per game in their last five matches, including a season-high 136 points in Saturday's win over the 76ers - a positive shift from their offensive woes earlier this season.

18- Indiana Pacers (32 - 30) Last week: 17 - The Pacers beat the Hawks Sunday by a margin of one point after Glenn Robinson III made the game-winning three-pointer, and that four days after losing by one point to the Spurs in their ongoing road trip that ended last night at Charlotte.

19- Denver Nuggets (28 - 34) Last week: 18 - It is hard to think of anyone more deserving of the Most Improved Player of the Year Award than Nikola Jokic this season. The second-year center recorded his second consecutive triple-double on Wednesday, and his fourth since February 1st, while he had none before that.

20- Portland Trail Blazers (26 - 35) Last week: 20 - The Blazers won their last two games entering yesterday home against the Thunder and Nets after finishing a four-game road trip with a 1-4 record. Meanwhile, it was reported that their marquee summer acquisition Festus Ezeli will undergo surgery on his left knee that will involve the use of a cadaver donor.

21- Minnesota Timberwolves (25 - 37) Last week: 21 - Karl-Anthony Towns and Andrew Wiggins continue to shine in the absence of Zach LaVine. The duo averaged 57.4 points per game in February, the most by any duo in the league that month. (per ESPN Stats and Information).

22- New Orleans Pelicans (25 - 38) Last week: 25 - The Pelicans' win over the Lakers on Sunday was their first with DeMarcus Cousins in the lineup, but a narrow win over a struggling team means that there is still a lot more that needs to improve in order for them to compete for a playoffs' spot.

23- Charlotte Hornets (27 - 35) Last week: 26 - The Hornets returned home last night following a grueling seven-game road trip that they ended with a 3-4 record. They play most of their remaining regular season games at home, which is good for them as they face tough competition in the race towards the postseason.

24- Phoenix Suns (21 - 42) Last week: 28 - Not only are the Suns on a three-game winning streak entering Monday, but they have overcome tough tests and beaten teams including the Celtics and Thunder. They have one of the most promising groups of young talent in the league.

25- Philadelphia 76ers (23 - 39) Last week: 24 - Despite the 76ers' announcement that he will miss the remainder of the season due to injury, Joel Embiid remains a heavy favorite to win the Rookie of the Year Award. The center averaged 20.2 points, 7.8 rebounds, 2.5 blocks and 25.4 minutes in 31 games played this season.

26- New York Knicks (25 - 38) Last week: 23 - At this point, it likely needs a huge turnaround for the Knicks combined with a massive meltdown for all other Eastern Conference playoffs contenders in order for New York to be able to make it to the postseason this year.

27- Orlando Magic (23 - 40) Last week: 27 - When Aaron Gordon started at small forward earlier this season, the idea was that his quickness would allow him to guard smaller wings, but the experiment did not go well as planned. Now that he is back in his natural power forward position, his agility enables him to surge past opposing bigs and create more space for himself.

28- Sacramento Kings (25 - 37) Last week: 22 - Have the Kings finally come down to earth following mild success after trading away DeMarcus Cousins? They lost their last four games, including a defeat to the Nets that ended Brooklyn's 16-game losing streak.

29- Brooklyn Nets (10 - 51) Last week: 30 - Brooklyn needed 59 games to finally record their 10th win of the season. Their current eight-game road trip continues with games against the Grizzlies, Hawks and Mavericks this week.

30- Los Angeles Lakers (19 - 44) Last week: 29 - The Lakers are struggling both on court (they entered Monday on a seven-game losing streak) and off the court with a power struggle that reportedly saw controlling owner Jeanie Buss thwart the attempt of her brothers Jim and Johnny to take over the franchise last week.

BASKETBALL

CURRY BOUNCES BACK TO LEAD WARRIORS OVER KNICKS 112-105

NEW YORK: Stephen Curry broke out of a shooting slump with 31 points and moved into the top 10 on the NBA's career 3-point list as the Golden State Warriors recovered from consecutive losses to beat the New York Knicks 112-105 on Sunday.

Klay Thompson added 29 points to help the Warriors end their first regular-season losing streak in nearly two years. The Splash Brothers had dried up as Golden State dropped two in a row following Kevin Durant's knee injury, but they regained their touch Sunday. Curry hit five 3-pointers, passing Chauncey Billups for 10th place, and added eight rebounds and six assists. Thompson had a 3-pointer and two other baskets during a late surge that allowed Golden State to pull away after leading by one midway through the fourth quarter.

Derrick Rose scored 28 points, and Kristaps Porzingis had 24 points and 15 rebounds for the Knicks.

SUNS 109, CELTICS 106 PHOENIX (AP) - Rookie Tyler Ulis threw in a 3-pointer at the buzzer after a Boston turnover and the Phoenix Suns came away with a wild victory. The Suns' Eric Bledsoe tied it at 106 with a reverse layup with four seconds to play. Isaiah Thomas, who scored 35 points but missed a free throw with 11.9 seconds left, took the inbounds pass and the Suns' Marquese Chriss knocked the ball away. Ulis, listed at 5-foot-10 but probably not that tall, grabbed it and tossed it up as the buzzer sounded.

Ulis scored a career-best 20 points. Bledsoe had 28 to help the Suns win three in a row for the first time this season.

JAZZ 110, KINGS 109, OT Rudy Gobert tipped in George Hill's missed jumper as time expired in overtime on a play that was initially ruled goaltending, lifting the Utah Jazz to a thrilling victory over Sacramento. After Willie Cauley-Stein made two free throws to give the Kings a 109-108 lead with 8.9 seconds remaining, Hill took an off-balance jumper from just outside the key. Gobert, positioned underneath the hoop, reached up and tipped the ball in as the buzzer sounded.

One official initially called goaltending on Gobert. But after a meeting near midcourt, the referees went to the scorer's table to review the play and counted the basket.

Gobert finished with 16 points and 24 rebounds, Rodney Hood scored a season-high 28 and Gordon Hayward added 23 with five assists for Utah.

Ty Lawson scored 19 points for Sacramento, which lost its fourth straight and fell to 1-4 since trading All-Star DeMarcus Cousins.

MAVERICKS 104, THUNDER 89 Seth Curry scored 22 points and Dirk Nowitzki had 18 points and 12 rebounds as the Dallas Mavericks beat the Oklahoma City Thunder.

Russell Westbrook had 29 for the Thunder after scoring more than 40 in each of his last four games. He had six rebounds and five assists, but the Mavericks frustrated him into both a



NEW YORK: Klay Thompson #11 of the Golden State Warriors heads for the net as Kristaps Porzingis #6 of the New York Knicks defends while teammates Courtney Lee #5, Willy Hernangomez #14 of the Knicks and James Michael McAdoo #20 of the Warriors look on in the first half at Madison Square Garden on Sunday in New York City. — AFP

technical foul and a flagrant-one foul. Both came in the midst of a 21-4 third-quarter run that allowed Dallas to blow the game open. Westbrook picked up a technical with 8:15 to go in the third quarter when he bounced the ball angrily in referee Marat Kogut's direction after being called for an offensive foul. Then he got his flagrant with 4:27 to go in the quarter for shoving Harrison Barnes.

Barnes made the flagrant free throws and then another to give the Mavericks their biggest lead at 81-57. He finished with 17 points.

Nowitzki tied his season high for rebounds and is 20 points away from becoming the sixth player to score 30,000. He'll likely set the mark at home, where Dallas plays its next three games.

PACERS 97, HAWKS 96

Glenn Robinson III hit a 3-pointer with 0.6 seconds left and Paul George scored 34 points as Indiana rallied to beat Atlanta. Jeff Teague, in his first game back at Philips Arena after spending his first seven seasons with the Hawks, added 16 points and six assists. Tim Hardaway Jr. scored 24 points, and Paul Millsap had 23 points and 10 rebounds for Atlanta. Millsap's 3-point attempt fell off the rim at the buzzer.

WIZARDS 115, MAGIC 114

Bojan Bogdanovic scored 15 of his 27 points in the fourth quarter and

made a career-high eight 3-pointers as the Washington Wizards came back from 17 down to beat Orlando.

Bradley Beal led Washington with 32 points, and John Wall had 19 points and 10 assists as the third-place Wizards moved a game ahead of Toronto in the Eastern Conference standings. Otto Porter scored 11 points, and more importantly spotted Bogdanovic in the corner for his final 3 to give the Wizards the lead for good with 48.6 seconds left. Terrence Ross scored 20 points to lead seven players in double figures for the Magic.

PELICANS 105, LAKERS 97

DeMarcus Cousins had 26 points and 15 rebounds as the New Orleans Pelicans won for the first time with him in the lineup, beating the spiraling Los Angeles Lakers whose fourth-quarter rally fell short.

Anthony Davis added 31 points for the Pelicans, who swept the season series for the second straight year and just the second time ever.

The Pelicans improved to 1-4 with Cousins, who joined the team in a trade from Sacramento on Feb. 20. They won a game while he was serving a one-game suspension after earning his 18th technical of the season. Nick Young led the Lakers with 19 points. They fell to 0-7 since the All-Star break, a game away from equaling the team's worst skid of the season. They've also lost five in a row at Staples Center.—AP

NBA results/standings

Phoenix 109, Boston 106; Washington 115, Orlando 114; Golden State 112, NY Knicks 105; Indiana 97, Atlanta 96.

Eastern Conference					Western Conference				
Atlantic Division					Northwest Division				
	W	L	PCT	GB					
Boston	40	23	.635	-	Utah	39	24	.619	-
Toronto	37	26	.587	3	Oklahoma City	35	28	.556	4
NY Knicks	25	38	.397	15	Denver	28	34	.452	10.5
Philadelphia	23	39	.371	16.5	Portland	26	35	.426	12
Brooklyn	10	51	.164	29	Minnesota	25	37	.403	13.5
Central Division					Pacific Division				
Cleveland	42	19	.689	-	Golden State	51	11	.823	-
Indiana	32	30	.516	10.5	LA Clippers	37	25	.597	14
Chicago	31	31	.500	11.5	Sacramento	25	37	.403	26
Detroit	30	32	.484	12.5	Phoenix	21	42	.333	30.5
Milwaukee	28	33	.459	14	LA Lakers	19	44	.302	32.5
Southeast Division					Southwest Division				
Washington	37	24	.607	-	San Antonio	48	13	.787	-
Atlanta	34	28	.548	3.5	Houston	44	19	.698	5
Miami	29	34	.460	9	Memphis	36	27	.571	13
Charlotte	27	35	.435	10.5	Dallas	26	36	.419	22.5
Orlando	23	40	.365	15	New Orleans	25	38	.397	24

MARINERS SAY GOODBYE TO BIG NAMES FOR WBC

PEORIA: Robinson Cano, Nelson Cruz and Jean Segura were in a bit of a hurry after playing part of a spring training game. The three Seattle Mariners had a plane to catch Saturday to Florida, where their teammates from the Dominican Republic World Baseball Classic team are convening in preparation to defend their 2013 title.

Segura is in the WBC for the first time. "It's going to be really fun for us being around those guys," Segura said of his countrymen. "It's something we're going to give our all to, for sure." Saturday and Sunday saw an exodus of Mariners to WBC camps in Florida, or a few miles away in Arizona. Come Monday, it'll be baseball as usual for the Mariners at spring training. Only without some big names. With the conclusion of Sunday's games, the Mariners sent 12

players, both major leaguers and minor leaguers, to the WBC. That group, which became a dozen when shortstop Segura was added to the Dominican Republic roster last week in place of Hanley Ramirez, is the largest contingent in the Cactus League. The departures mean the Mariners won't have their starting middle infield (Cano and Segura), designated hitter (Cruz) and ace (Venezuela's Felix Hernandez) for anywhere from eight to 18 days. Additionally, two more starting pitchers are in the WBC, though Drew Smyly won't go unless Team USA makes the second round, and closer Edwin Diaz will join Team Puerto Rico at its camp in nearby Scottsdale.

"The one thing I can say to the guys going to the WBC is have fun, enjoy yourself, don't get hurt," Mariners manager Scott Servais said.

"We have a big year ahead of us, they know that. They're in good shape, they're ready to go play. Opportunities for other guys to step up." If there is any positive to losing so many players, it's that there will be more innings for the youngsters in spring training games in the days to come. Hernandez made his final start Sunday before heading to nearby Surprise to work out with Team Venezuela. After his three innings and 50 pitches to Oakland - in which he allowed two runs on four hits and struck out five - Hernandez is set to start the WBC opener for his country against Puerto Rico on Friday in Jalisco, Mexico.

He took part in the 2009 WBC, missed 2013 when he landed his big contract and is back this year. "It's going to be a fun tournament," Hernandez said.—AP



ATLANTA: Midfielder Alex Muyl #19 of the New York Red Bulls dribbles in front of defender Greg Garza #4 of Atlanta United during the game at Bobby Dodd Stadium on Sunday in Atlanta, Georgia. — AFP

RED BULLS SPOIL ATLANTA UNITED DEBUT WITH 2-1 WIN

MIAMI: The New York Red Bulls spoiled Atlanta United's Major League Soccer bow as a Daniel Royer header and Anton Walkes own goal lifted them to a 2-1 win over the expansion club on Sunday.

Atlanta were off to a dream start in front of home fans in their first ever match, leading 1-0 thanks to Yamil Asad's 25th-minute opener. But a mistake from Alec Kann gave the Red Bulls a corner and Royer rose to head home Sacha Kljestan's effort in the 76th minute.

Six minutes later, Kemar Lawrence played a ball toward Bradley Wright-Phillips that deflected in to stun the 55,297 in attendance for Atlanta's MLS debut.

The goal was eventually ruled an own-goal by on-loan Tottenham prospect Anton Walkes, who had come on for injured defender Leandro Gonzalez Pirez.

Atlanta's frustration was evident when midfielder Carlos Carmona was shown the first red card in the 88th minute. Atlanta will try to bounce back next weekend at Minnesota in a clash of first-year expansion clubs. In Orlando, Cyle Larin's header in the 15th minute was enough to let Orlando City SC open their new stadium with a 1-0 victory over New York City FC.

It wasn't all good news for Orlando, however, as Larin's header came minutes after Brazilian veteran Kaka limped off with a left hamstring injury that coach Jason Kreis described as "potentially serious".

He was replaced by Giles Barnes, who took advantage of his opportunity with a

deft cross to set up Larin's goal. "I saw Giles get the ball and he looked up once, and, as soon as he did, I knew he was going to cross it back post," Larin said. "Obviously I wanted a goal, but I wanted the win more and that was the most important thing - winning the game for the fans and this organization."

After giving up the early goal, a New York team featuring new additions Maxi Moralez of Argentina, forward Rodney Wallace and goalkeeper Sean Johnson controlled the run of play but saw chance after chance go begging.

New York's European imports David Villa and Andrea Pirlo created several scoring opportunities but were thwarted by Orlando goalkeeper Joe Bendik, who finished with seven saves.

Sean Okoli nearly grabbed an equalizer in the 86th minute, but his shot from 25 yards was pushed wide by Bendik as Orlando withstood a last press from New York. Orlando and New York City both entered the league as expansion clubs in 2015 and played their inaugural game against one another. Orlando played their first two seasons in the ageing Citrus Bowl stadium built for American football before unveiling their new 25,500 capacity state-of-the-art home.

In a first for MLS the venue features a specially designed "safe standing" terrace for fans who prefer to be on their feet and an area where smoke cannisters can be set off. — AFP

SOCCER

GUARDIOLA TELLS CITY IT'S 'MUST-WIN' TIME

SUNDERLAND: Pep Guardiola has told his Manchester City side they are now into "must-win" territory in their three-pronged bid for silverware this season.

City top-scorer Sergio Aguero's 23rd goal of the campaign and a third in as many matches from German midfielder Leroy Sané sealed a comfortable 2-0 Premier League win at struggling Sunderland on Sunday as Guardiola's team reclaimed third place and were left eight points behind leaders Chelsea. Victory at home to Stoke City on Wednesday will push Manchester City into second place, above Tottenham Hotspur, in what promises to be a tense final two months to the season, with Guardiola's men still in both the Champions League, where they take a 5-3 first-leg last 16 advantage to Monaco, and the quarter-finals of the FA Cup, where they face Middlesbrough. The former Premier League champions have hit form at just the right time, with seven wins in their last eight games boosting their hopes of ending the campaign with another trophy to add to the growing collection at the Etihad Stadium.

"We're coming into some good form and making results, and that's important at this stage of the season," said Manchester City manager Guardiola, whose side have lost just one of their 11 games in 2017. It's an impressive run the Spaniard feels City have to maintain in their quest to cut the significant deficit on Antonio Conte's league leaders, who can extend their advantage with victory at West Ham on Monday. Guardiola added: "We're coming to a stage of the season now in March and April where with every game if you win you stay, if you lose, then you're out. Be that in the Premier League, in the Champions League or the FA Cup. "The players know that, we know, and the club knows that if we don't win the next game, then we'll be out."

'DON'T IMAGINE BIG TARGETS'

City face a pivotal trio of league fixtures against Liverpool, Arsenal and Chelsea starting later this month that will have a massive bearing on their hopes of landing their latest domestic title. "That's why we have to continue on this run," Guardiola added. "Up next comes Stoke City and that's so important for us and we'll need our supporters right behind us so that we can reach the games against Liverpool, Arsenal and Chelsea with this unbeaten record and try to



SUNDERLAND: Manchester City's Spanish manager Pep Guardiola gestures on the touchline during the English Premier League football match between Sunderland and Manchester City at the Stadium of Light in Sunderland, north-east England on Sunday. — AFP

maintain that level against the good teams in the Premier League." He refused to rule out catching Chelsea, saying: "It's up to others to judge our performance. We don't think to imagine the big targets and the big objectives, we just try to win the next game." Even in a low-key display, City had too much quality against a Sunderland side who remain bottom, six points adrift of safety, after winning just one of their last 10 Premier League games. They face another game in March, before a key run of fixtures in April that will go a long way to deciding their fate in what is a fifth consecutive relegation battle for the northeast club, who have made a habit of escaping the drop into the Championship in recent years.

"April looks to be a really big month for us," said Sunderland manager David Moyes after seeing his side stretch their wait for a home league win to more than three months.

"We don't want to be adrift by then, but we've only got one more game left in March

with the way the fixtures have fallen. "The heartening thing is that by the start of April we will hopefully have some key players back, the likes of Victor Anichebe, Lee Cattermole and Jan Kirchhoff," the former Everton and Manchester United manager explained. "If we can get the troops together in the final six or seven weeks of the season, then I think we've got a good chance of staying up." — AFP

Live		Matches on TV	
		(Local Timings)	
UEFA CHAMPIONS LEAGUE			
SSC Napoli v Real Madrid	22:45		
beIN SPORTS 1 HD			
Arsenal v Bayern Munich	22:45		
beIN SPORTS 2 HD			

PER MERTESACKER ADMITS TENSION IN ARSENAL SQUAD

LONDON COLNEY: Arsenal captain Per Mertesacker admitted to tension in the dressing room yesterday and said his struggling team haven't shown enough fight, on the eve of their Champions League mission impossible.

Arsene Wenger's side crashed to a third defeat in their last four Premier League games on Saturday as Liverpool beat them 3-1 at Anfield and the Arsenal manager has had to dismiss reports of a training-ground bust-up involving star forward Alexis Sanchez.

Wenger dropped Sanchez against Liverpool, only introducing him at half-time when his team already trailed by two goals.

It was the worst possible preparation for Arsenal's Champions League last-16 second leg against Bayern Munich today, when they face the almost impossible task of overturning a 5-1 deficit.

And to make matters worse, German defender Mertesacker conceded Arsenal haven't been willing to put their bodies on the line. "I think we saw on a lot of occasions that we absolutely weren't ready for a fight," Mertesacker told reporters at the club's training base.

"That is what I want to see tomorrow. That we are up for a fight, to challenge for something. We haven't competed a lot in recent games and we need to turn that around. "At Liverpool we had a chance to

go for it, to push it, even without our best player on the pitch." Arsenal's troubles have brought renewed criticism of Wenger from fans and pundits, with many claiming it is time for the Frenchman to step down after almost 21 years with the north Londoners.

Mertesacker, who has been with Arsenal since 2011, admitted the current dip has led to a fraught atmosphere, but he insisted the players still support Wenger.

"It's hard for the manager to select the team but he does it with the best intention. We trust him," Mertesacker said. "It's a little bit tense but it's normal in a stretch like that. We want to change it and you can feel that in every training session."

"We need to make the first step to get the fans on board again."

Mertesacker refused to be drawn on reports that Sanchez has become isolated from the rest of the squad after apparently criticising his team-mates following the Bayern first leg. Amid suggestions Sanchez wants to leave, Mertesacker was asked how the Chilean was regarded by the players.

"I don't understand the question. Every single day we try to train," Mertesacker said. "The manager has 25 options so it is difficult for him to decide who is in the squad. Everyone wants to push to be in that starting line-up. "All these questions about one player are very distracting to our team. The club will not be about one single player." — AFP

DETERMINED RODRIGUEZ OUT TO PROVE HIS REAL CREDENTIALS

MADRID: James Rodriguez has struggled to find a place in Real Madrid under Zinedine Zidane, but he has not given up hope of forcing his way in.

Rodriguez remains at the Santiago Bernabeu, even though he's had offers from other clubs and was considering leaving after he was overlooked for the Club World Cup final. Although Zidane rarely gives him opportunities - he has started just six La Liga games this season and come on as a substitute in seven more - when he gets his chances he usually takes them.

Saturday's 4-1 away win at Eibar saw the attacking midfielder sparkle, scoring himself and setting up a goal for Karim Benzema, as Madrid got their title chase headed in the right direction after some recent slip-ups.

"When I am given opportunities, I always try and do well. This is all I think about," Rodriguez said after the game. "I want to always be here [at Madrid]. It's clear that in life and football you never know what is going to happen but I want to remain here." Despite his struggles,

Rodriguez is convinced he can triumph in the Spanish capital. He signed for Real Madrid for 80 million euros in the summer of 2014, and the Madrid newspaper AS says he wants to extend his contract, which expires in 2020. The club's FIFA transfer ban ends in the summer, so Rodriguez will be out to prove his worth to Zidane as the campaign winds down.

When he's asked about Rodriguez's frequent absences from his line-ups, Zidane has always said he has a squad full of talented players so some will end up unhappy no matter what. It is lack of defensive diligence that seems to be costing Rodriguez.

Madrid's three attacking superstars, Cristiano Ronaldo, Gareth Bale and Karim Benzema usually start when they are fit. That leaves little room for other players who appear not to pull their weight.

Despite his impressive showing against Eibar, the 25-year-old is not assured of a start on Tuesday night, either, when defending champions Madrid head to Naples for the second leg of that tie, bidding to reach the quarter-finals. — Reuters



SAN JOSE: US footballers celebrate with the trophy after winning the U-20 Concacaf final football match against Honduras at the National stadium in San Jose on Sunday. — AFP

AFRICAN STARS MAHREZ, AUBAMEYANG ON TARGET

PARIS: African Footballer of the Year Riyad Mahrez and his predecessor, Pierre-Emerick Aubameyang, were among the goal scorers in the major European leagues at the weekend. Algerian Mahrez claimed the second goal as a Leicester City revival continued with a 3-1 win over English Premier League strugglers Hull City. Aubameyang bagged a brace when Borussia Dortmund thrashed Bayer Leverkusen 6-2 and the Gabonese remained the leading German Bundesliga scorer with 21 goals.

ENGLAND

RIYAD MAHREZ (Leicester City)

Was at the heart of much of the Foxes' best play as the champions recorded back-to-back Premier League wins for the first time since last April in a 3-1 victory at home to Hull City, a result that gave his side six points out of six since the controversial sacking of former manager Claudio Ranieri and bolstered their hopes of top-flight survival. Algeria winger Mahrez has largely failed to hit the heights of last season, but he showed some of the flair that propelled Leicester to a 5,000/1 title triumph in scoring their second goal against Hull just before the hour mark, evading several defenders with a jinking run before beating Eldin Jakupovic with a low shot

WILFRIED ZAHA (Crystal Palace)

Often accused of only showing glimpses of his unquestioned talent, the forward demonstrated just what he was capable of as Palace climbed out of the bottom three with a 2-0 win at West Bromwich Albion. Having tormented home right-back Craig Dawson almost from the kick-off, it was the Ivory Coast international who opened the scoring with a superbly-taken goal. Receiving the ball on his chest following a long pass from Yohan Cabaye, his next touch with his left foot took Chris Brunt out of the game and he then struck a low shot past Baggies goalkeeper Ben Foster into the corner of the net.

YAYA TOURE (Manchester City)

The Ivory Coast midfielder demonstrated his

ending class and power by initiating the move that led to City's opening goal in a 2-0 win at bottom-of-the-table Sunderland. It was his run towards the end of the first half that put Sunderland on the defensive, with his pass finding David Silva, who in turn released Raheem Sterling to provide a deflected cross turned in by Sergio Aguero.

VICTOR WANYAMA (Tottenham Hotspur)

The midfielder may not make headlines in the manner of a Harry Kane or Dele Alli, but he is becoming an increasingly important figure as second-place Spurs continue their quest for the Premier League title. In a 3-2 win against Everton at White Hart Lane, he was unlucky not to put Spurs 2-0 in front when a curling shot from distance grazed the post.

SPAIN

AISSA MANDI (Real Betis)

Algeria captain Mandi scored with a spectacular acrobatic volley against Real Sociedad for his second goal of the season. The centre-back hooked Dani Ceballos's cross into the far corner despite having his back to goal to level the scores at 1-1, but Sociedad eventually ran out 3-2 winners.

CEDRIC BAKAMBU (Villarreal)

Democratic Republic of Congo striker Bakambu thought he had scored his fifth goal of the season, but ultimately his strike was credited as a Diego Lopez own-goal as the ball ricocheted off the post and in off the unfortunate Espanyol goalkeeper as Villarreal won 2-0.

ITALY

MOHAMED SALAH (Roma)

For reasons known only to Roma coach Luciano Spalletti, on-form Salah started on the bench for a crucial home clash with Napoli that ended in a morale-crushing 2-1 defeat and blew a hole in Roma's title hopes. Salah only replaced Stephan El Shaarawy with 20 minutes remaining, but his impact was immediate and, later, had Spalletti hint-

ing he'd perhaps made a selection blunder. Thanks to two-goal hero Dries Mertens, Napoli had taken their lead to 2-0 by the time Salah arrived on the scene. The Egyptian brought much-needed pace and energy to Roma's sluggish game but, agonisingly, saw a late strike come off Pepe Reina's post. Roma remain second, eight points behind Juventus.

FRANCE

CHEIKH NDOYE (Angers)

The Senegalese midfielder scored his first goal since December as Angers climbed into the top half of the table with a 3-2 win at Caen-the club's fourth victory in a row. Ndoye, 30, headed in a cross from compatriot Issa Cissokho to put Angers ahead for the second time on 21 minutes. SERGE AURIER (Paris Saint-Germain)

The Ivorian full-back won a controversial late penalty as Paris Saint-Germain ground out a 1-0 win at home to Nancy. The visitors were furious when Aurier went to ground under minimal contact from goalkeeper Sergey Chernik, with Edinson Cavani converting the resulting spot-kick.

GERMANY

PIERRE-EMERICK AUBAMEYANG (Borussia Dortmund)

Dortmund's Gabon hot-shot netted twice in Borussia Dortmund's 6-2 thrashing of Bayer Leverkusen to leave him as the league's top scorer with 21 goals in as many games. He is two clear of Bayern Munich's Robert Lewandowski. Despite his goals, 'Auba' could be in trouble with Dortmund's bosses for facing Leverkusen with a red Nike logo dyed into his hair when the club is sponsored by Puma. NABY KEITA (RB Leipzig)

The Guinea midfielder's stellar season continues as he weighed in with an assist-his eighth of the season-in RB Leipzig's 2-2 draw at Augsburg. The 22-year-old playmaker slid his pass through the defence to Timo Werner for RB's top scorer to beat two opponents and bang home his 14th league goal this season. Keita then picked up a booking for a foul on Dominik Kohr. — AFP

Algeria women
footballers wave
red card at stigmaGuardiola tells
Man City it's
'must-win' time

TUESDAY, MARCH 7, 2017

'PAKISTAN WINS TODAY' AS FINAL PASSES OFF PEACEFULLY

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KUWAIT: Kuwaiti women football team with their coach. — KUNA

WOMEN FOOTBALL IN KUWAIT SEEKS BETTER FUTURE

KUWAIT: Some 19 years have passed since the formation of the Kuwaiti

women football team and despite this progressive fact, the squad's various participations in regional and international competitions have been marred by defeats and disappointments due to the lack of preparation and planning.

Though the women football team was established in 1989, athletes and managing staff alike felt it was time to usher a renaissance that will enable to put women footballers on the winner's podium.

Speaking to KUNA, Zainab Al-Khabaaz and Hanan Al-Rashed said that they were glad to represent their country in global tournaments,

affirming that they took this with a sense of pride and duty. The two players expressed their willingness to give more to the team, revealing that the solution to their problems lies in giving leave for players from work and study to pursue football perfection in addition to more training camps and international participation.

Despite the presence women football being recent in Kuwait, the athletes are willing to show what they are made of, said head of the women football committee of Kuwait Football Association (KFA) Nahed Al-Fahad.

The official said that in order to develop the sport, the committee "would need to work with the ministry of education to scout for talents at a

very young age, establishing tournaments, and developing football staff and coaches abilities."

Progress for the national women's team will only be made once there was a solemn effort to bring women football to the national consciousness, Al-Fahad affirmed.

Picking on the last portion of Al-Fahad's statement, deputy head of the committee Anwar Al-Nouri stressed it was important to inform the public on the necessity of women sport especially in football. Pushing and supporting women football will surely lead to the success of plans for future development, she affirmed.

Meanwhile, chairperson of the women's sports committee and member of the board

Kuwait Olympic Committee Fatma Hayat said that the committee had hired international experts to look into developing Kuwaiti women football. While scouting for young talents is necessary, establishing a senior team of coaches with experience would also be a priority, said the official who indicated that workshops and more football matches would lead to the development of the sport in Kuwait.

Though it may seem that the road is long for Kuwait women to achieve excellence in the field of football, hopefully one day, the captains of Kuwait's women football will carry regional and international trophies and championships. — KUNA



Fatma Hayat

SANCHEZ RESPONDS TO SPAT REPORTS WITH 'TRUE WARRIOR' REMARK

LONDON: Arsenal striker Alexis Sanchez posted a cryptic comment online yesterday following reports he was dropped from the starting lineup after training ground spat, invoking a century old saying about a warrior.

Manager Arsene Wenger is sticking to the line that Arsenal's top scorer was omitted at Liverpool on Saturday for tactical reasons. But after publicly shaking hands on the training field yesterday and dismissing suggestions of a rift, Wenger did say the Chilean's behavior can be "excessive."

The reports of splits in the camp come with Arsenal in trouble on the field. The team dropped to fifth place in the Premier League by losing at Liverpool and faces Champions League elimination today unless it can overturn a 5-1 deficit against Bayern Munich.

Several newspapers and the BBC reported on Sunday that Sanchez walked out of a training session last week and was involved in an angry exchange with teammates.

In his only public response, Sanchez brought up a 1911 maxim by G.K. Chesterton in an Instagram posting. "The true warrior fights not because he hates the ones in front of him, but because he loves those behind him," Sanchez wrote, slightly adjusting Chesterton's original wording. "Let's go Gunners. The only failure is not trying."

Sanchez's online comment came less than an hour after Wenger insisted there have been no significant problems with the player who has scored 20 goals this season. "I decided to go for a more direct option in the game (at Liverpool). That was the unique reason," Wenger said. "For the rest, his attitude. He is a committed player and sometimes with excessive behavior, but you have seen that many times in history in every squad." Wenger described the reports about the training squabble involving the former Barcelona player as "completely false."

"I understand you have to feed the newspaper and we respect that," a calm Wenger said. "When you don't win the games it's not always down to real stories and we have to accept that."

Sanchez, who is in the final 15 months of his Arsenal contract and has yet to sign a new deal, has been linked with a move to Paris Saint-Germain. "The decision if he is here next season will depend on Arsenal and nobody else," Wenger said. — AP



LONDON: Arsenal's Chilean striker Alexis Sanchez (R) attends a training session ahead of their UEFA Champions League round of 16 second leg football match against Bayern Munich at Arsenal's London Colney training ground yesterday. — AFP

IBRAHIMOVIC, MINGS CHARGED OVER OLD TRAFFORD CLASH

LONDON: Manchester United striker Zlatan Ibrahimovic and Bournemouth defender Tyrone Mings were charged with violent conduct yesterday over two incidents in Saturday's 1-1 draw. Mings appeared to deliberately stamp on Ibrahimovic's head as he jumped over him late in the first half at Old Trafford and the Swedish striker seemed to retaliate moments later by elbowing the defender in the head.

Both players would ordinarily face three-game bans, but England's Football Association said in Mings's case the standard punishment was "clearly insufficient".

"Zlatan Ibrahimovic and Tyrone Mings have both been charged with alleged violent conduct following the Manchester United versus AFC Bournemouth game on Saturday," the FA said in a statement.

"The players were involved in two separate incidents in or around the 44th minute which were not seen by the match officials at the time but caught on video." Furthermore, the FA has submitted a claim that the standard punishment that would otherwise apply for the misconduct committed by the Bournemouth defender is "clearly insufficient".

The two players have until 1800 GMT on Tuesday to respond to the charges. Match referee Kevin Friend spoke to Ibrahimovic, who had already been booked, following his elbow on Mings, but neither player was cautioned. As a result, the incident was referred to a panel of three former elite referees, who unanimously concluded that both offences merited red cards. Ibrahimovic, United's top scorer with 26 goals, denied deliberately elbowing Mings, saying: "I jump up and jump high and he jumps into my elbow. It is not my intention to hurt someone."

A three-game ban would see Ibrahimovic miss United's trip to Chelsea in the FA Cup quarter-finals as well as Premier League games with Middlesbrough and West Bromwich Albion. Mings said he had not intentionally stamped on Ibrahimovic's head. "I would never do that. That's not in my game," he said. "Hard and fair is how I like to tackle, but off-the-ball stuff like that isn't part of my game." At the very least, Mings stands to miss league matches against West Ham United, Swansea City and Southampton. — AFP

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GENEVA: Jean-Philippe Imparato, Peugeot Brand CEO, with the winner's trophy, poses next to Peugeot 3008 model after it was elected "Car of the Year 2017", ahead of the 87th Geneva International Motor Show in Geneva yesterday.—AP

PSA BUYS OPEL FROM GM, SETS NEW GOALS

DEAL VALUES OPEL AT 2.2BN EUROS, MARKS GM'S EXIT FROM EUROPE

PARIS/FRANKFURT: PSA Group has agreed to buy Opel from General Motors in a deal valuing the business at 2.2 billion euros (\$2.3 billion), the companies said yesterday, creating a new regional car giant to challenge market leader Volkswagen.

The maker of Peugeot and Citroen cars vowed to return Opel and its British Vauxhall brand to profit, targeting an operating margin of 2 percent within three years and 6 percent by 2026 underpinned by 1.7 billion euros in joint cost savings. PSA shares jumped 4 percent after Chief Executive Carlos Tavares said GM's European arm could be turned around using some of the lessons from the French group's own recovery.

"We're confident that the Opel-Vauxhall turnaround will significantly accelerate with our support," he said. By acquiring Opel, PSA leapfrogs French rival Renault to become Europe's second-ranked carmaker by sales, with a 16 percent market share to VW's 24 percent. Last year, PSA and GM Europe recorded a combined 72 billion euros in revenue and 4.3 million vehicle deliveries.

GM will receive 1.32 billion euros for the Opel manufacturing business - 650 million euros in cash and 670 million in PSA share warrants. An additional 900 million euros will be paid by the Paris-based carmaker and BNP Paribas for Opel's financing arm, to be operated jointly and consolidated by the French bank. The sale of Opel seals

GM's exit from Europe. Eight years after coming close to a sale to Canada's Magna International, the Detroit auto giant has faced renewed investor pressure to offload the business and focus on raising profitability rather than chase the global sales crown currently held by VW.

After fending off 2015 merger overtures by Fiat Chrysler with support from her board, GM boss Mary Barra agreed to target a 20 percent minimum return on invested capital and pay out more cash to shareholders. PSA shares were up 4 percent at 19.83 euros as of 0814 GMT. GM shares closed 1.2 percent higher on Friday after Reuters reported a deal had been struck.

The two carmakers, which already share some production in an existing European alliance, confirmed last month they were negotiating an outright acquisition of Opel by PSA, sparking concern over possible job cuts. PSA said yesterday the targeted savings would come from purchasing and research and development - avoiding plant closures - as the Opel lineup is redeveloped with PSA technology and vehicle architectures. An ambitious technical convergence push will begin with the Opel Corsa, Tavares indicated, as earlier reported by Reuters.

The next version of the popular subcompact will be delayed by a year to 2020 as it goes back to the drawing board, according to presentation slides shown to analysts.

Stellar recovery

"Our planning teams are already working on that," Tavares said when asked about the model. Another five PSA-based Opel models will follow by 2023.

For PSA, the Opel deal caps a stellar two-year recovery under Tavares, which avoided bankruptcy in 2014 by selling 14 percent stakes to the French state and China's Dongfeng, to match a diluted Peugeot family holding. Tavares has since cut about 3,000 French assembly line jobs each year through voluntary departures to reduce the wage bill to 11 percent of revenue from the 15 percent level he inherited - which is where Opel's labour costs stand today.

PSA reiterated pledges to run Opel as a distinct German subsidiary and honor existing job guarantees to unions, which tend to cover production plans for existing models. Beyond those horizons, however, the outlook for Opel plants may be less certain. "Tavares wants to create healthy competition between the plants," said one person involved in the discussions. "They will be competing for workload." With Europe's auto market near a peak, some analysts predict the combined company may need to close two or three plants in the next five years. Britain's European Union exit adds to the uncertainty over Vauxhall's UK plants at Ellesmere Port and Luton.

But Tavares said exports could help fill Opel plants, adding that UK manufacturing



PARIS: Chairperson and CEO of General Motors Company Mary T Barra (left) and chairperson of the managing board of French carmaker Groupe PSA Carlos Tavares take part in a press conference about the acquisition by PSA of General Motors' European subsidiary, which includes the Opel and Vauxhall brands, yesterday in Paris.—AFP

brought opportunities as well as risks in the event of a "hard Brexit" in which Britain leaves the EU without a free-trade deal. "This may look to you a little bit romantic," he conceded. The transaction also sees GM retain most of Opel's pensions deficit, estimated by analysts at \$10 billion. Earlier in the talks, the US carmaker had sought to offload a

larger share of the liabilities, sources said. Some smaller pension funds will be transferred to PSA, along with a 3 billion euro payment to cover their full settlement, the companies said yesterday. GM will also take an accounting charge of \$4 billion to \$4.5 billion in relation to the deal, which is expected to close in late 2017.—Reuters

DEUTSCHE BANK SHARES FALL ON NEWS OF CAPITAL HIKE

FRANKFURT AM MAIN: Shares in Germany's biggest lender Deutsche Bank fell as much as 6.0 percent as the Frankfurt market opened yesterday, hours after the bank announced it would raise cash by issuing new shares. The bank's shares were trading down 5.9 percent at 18.01 euros (\$19.15) at 0910 GMT, making Deutsche the worst performer in the Dax index of leading German companies, which was down 0.75 percent.

Sunday's announcement that the banking giant would raise new capital is a turnaround for CEO John Cryan, who until recently insisted no such move was needed. "We expect that large shareholders will sign up to the capital increase. The environment seems stable enough," analyst Ingo Frommen of LBBW bank wrote. Nevertheless, "Deutsche Bank has further years of tough restructuring ahead of it," he went on. "The revised strategy is no guarantee of success." Deutsche reported a net loss of 1.4 billion euros for 2016, after it agreed with US authorities around \$7 billion in fines and compensation over its role in the sub-prime mortgage crisis.

Shares in the bank plunged at several points throughout last year, including when news of an initial \$14 billion US fine demand became public in September and when several hedge funds later withdrew investments. Sunday's announcement included a revised plan to offer investors a 19 euro cents per share dividend at the annual general meeting, although executives had initially said there would be no payout. But the prospect of a dividend has failed to calm investors' fears for the future of Deutsche.—AFP



WASHINGTON: Boeing 737 MAX winglets, which sweep up and down from the wingtip and differ from the current 737 model with its single upward wingtip sweep, stand already painted in the Lion Air livery as the wing is assembled at Boeing's airplane production facility in Renton, Washington.—AP

US FACTORY ORDERS UP 1.2% IN JANUARY

WASHINGTON: US businesses increased their orders in January, although a key component that tracks business investment spending fell for the first time in four months.

Factory orders rose 1.2 percent, led by a jump in demand for aircraft, the Commerce Department reported yesterday. Orders had risen 1.3 percent in December.

A category that serves as a proxy for business investment edged down 0.1 percent in January after three months of solid gains. It was the first setback since a 1.5 percent decline in the category in September. American manufacturing has been under stress for nearly two years as a strong dollar cut into export sales and a big plunge in oil prices triggered cutbacks by energy companies. Manufacturers are expected to see stronger sales in 2017.

Demand for durable goods, items ranging from bicycles to battleships that are expected to last at least three years, rose 2 percent. That was even better than the initial estimate of a 1.8 percent gain made in an advance report

on Feb. 27. Demand for nondurable goods, everything from paper products to chemicals and food, rose 0.4 percent in January after a 3.4 percent jump in December.

The strength in January reflected a surge in orders for commercial aircraft, which jumped 69.8 percent, and a 62.2 percent rise in orders for military aircraft. Demand for motor vehicles and parts rose 0.8 percent, while orders for ships and boats fell 33.7 percent. Orders for machinery rose 0.9 percent. Demand for primary metals such as iron, steel and aluminum fell 1.5 percent.

Manufacturing firms have struggled since 2015 with a rising value of the dollar, which makes exports more expensive in foreign markets, and a plunge in oil prices which triggered big reductions in investment by US energy companies. But economists are hopeful that energy investment will begin rising now that oil prices are rebounding, and they believe export demand should also improve now that the dollar has stabilized.—AP

OOREDOO KUWAIT NAMES AL-BASSAM AS CHRO

KUWAIT: Ooredoo, Kuwait's fastest network, appointed Omar Al-Bassam as its Chief Human Resources and Administration Services Officer. Al-Bassam's appointment is effective immediately. In his new position, Al-Bassam is tasked with translating the company's strategy, vision and mission in its human resources and administration services department.

Ooredoo's CEO and General Manager Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdullah Al-Thani expressed his firm belief in Al-Bassam's ability to lead the company towards more successful milestones, stressing on the importance of the investment in its human capital. Al-Thani also noted that the appointment of the new CHRO is an extension to the company's firm belief in investing in national talent,



and promoting from within. Al-Bassam has over 18 years of professional experience in Human Resources. He graduated from the University of Portsmouth, UK. He attended several leadership executive development programs in reputable business schools such as London Business School and Harvard Business School.

Additionally, he holds certification from established entities such as SHL certification in occupational testing, assessment development & development center design, occupational personality questioning and compe-

tency based interviewing. He joined Ooredoo Kuwait in March 2014, as the Director of Human Resources. During his tenure, he has successfully managed four divisions: Recruitment, Learning and Talent Management; HR Governance; Performance Management, and HR Systems. In addition, he has initiated significant cultural and transformational projects.

Ooredoo's operations in Kuwait date back to December 1999 when it launched wireless services as the second operator. The company today provides mobile, broadband internet and corporate man-

aged services tailored to the needs of customers and businesses.

Ooredoo is guided by its vision of enriching people's lives and its belief that it can stimulate human growth by leveraging communications to help people achieve their full potential. Ooredoo is a leading international communications company delivering mobile, fixed, broadband internet and corporate managed services tailored to the needs of consumers and businesses across markets in the Middle East, North Africa and Southeast Asia. As a community-focused

company, Ooredoo is guided by its vision of enriching people's lives and its belief that it can stimulate human growth by leveraging communications to help people achieve their full potential.

Ooredoo has a presence in markets such as Qatar, Kuwait, Oman, Algeria, Tunisia, Iraq, Palestine, the Maldives, Myanmar and Indonesia. The company was named "Most Innovative Company of the Year - MEA Region" at the 2015 International Business Awards.

The company reported revenues of US\$ 9.1 billion in 2014 and had a consolidated global customer base of 114.9 million customers as of 30 September 2015. Ooredoo's shares are listed on the Qatar Stock Exchange and the Abu Dhabi Securities Exchange.



Omar Al-Bassam



SHANGHAI: Workers are seen on a construction site of a high rise building in Shanghai yesterday. —AFP

IN CHINA DISPLACED COAL, STEEL WORKERS LOSE HOPE AND VOICE

CHINA CUTTING OVERCAPACITY IN COAL AND STEEL INDUSTRIES

SHUANGYASHAN, China: After protests by unpaid coal miners made headlines around the world last year as China's parliament was meeting, a \$15 billion assistance fund offered by the ruling Communist Party became a symbol of the government's need to ensure social stability. As the National People's Congress gathers again a year on, the number of protests has dropped sharply and authorities are promising to create more jobs for workers in China's northeastern belt, where the employment outlook is more grim than in many other parts of the country.

China is pledging to cut further excess and inefficient capacity in its mining sector and "smoke-stack" industries this year as part of an effort to upgrade its economy, but the move threatens to throw millions more out of work. Dozens of coal miners and laid-off workers in Shuangyashan, in northeastern Heilongjiang Province near Russia, said they were underemployed and underpaid, sometimes earning only a fifth of what they used to, despite rising living costs.

They said a heavy police presence was discouraging further mass protests. "Security has become much tighter since last year's protests, the police are everywhere, watching everything," said Li, 53, who works at the nearby Dongbaowei coal mine.

"The government could owe me one year's worth of wages and I wouldn't protest again. It's just not worth it for us miners," said another worker who said he was owed five months' pay. He also declined to give his full name. With a twice-a-decade leadership transition looming later this year, Beijing has focused on curbing mass unrest, including the \$15 billion fund for retraining, relocating and early retirement of an estimated 5-6 million affected people.

"We were expecting a lot of possible unrest but it seemed that something happened after

Shuangyashan that stopped major waves of protests," said Keegan Elmer of Hong Kong-based China Labor Bulletin (CLB), which tracks workers' strikes in China. The number of mining protests in China dropped from a high of 37 in January 2016 to 6 in December, CLB figures showed.

So far, China has not released any comparison of its success rates with employment programs nationwide, and analysts say there is little transparency on how the funds are being spent.

But workers in some other parts of China have similar tales to tell. In Hebei province, over 2,000 km (1,200 miles) to the south, a 55-year-old former steelworker said he now makes 1,000 yuan (\$145) a month, a quarter of his previous salary, as a security guard.

But the man, who only identified himself as Wang, said he was luckier than most. Other laid-off workers said they had to return to their farms, where they could hope for little more than subsistence.

Underemployed, underpaid

This year, new jobs will be found for half a million steel and coal workers as capacity is cut in those industries, China's labor minister said on Wednesday. "As overcapacity is cut, we must provide assistance to laid-off workers," Premier Li Keqiang said at the opening of the annual meeting of parliament on Sunday.

But unlike the more affluent south, China's rustbelt has few other jobs to offer, prompting some local governments to offer menial work while state firms keep staff on but pay much less. Longmay, the state coal producer in northeastern Heilongjiang, received more than 800 million yuan from the new fund last year to help it deal with coal output cuts and reallocating workers to other jobs, according to a govern-

ment document. "This isn't a job, at least not a real job," said Peng Jianting, 51, who used to earn 3,000 yuan a month working in a coal mine and now earns 500 yuan as a street sweeper.

The company declined to comment. In Shanxi province, which accounts for a quarter of China's coal production, the deputy governor says the province's state-owned enterprises owed 5.46 billion yuan in outstanding wages, state news agency Xinhua reported.

"The state sector acts as a semi-safety net. Rather than lay off a lot of workers, they typically will freeze wage increases, so you don't get the same levels of unemployment as you would in other economies when there's a downturn," said Julian Evans-Pritchard, an economist at Capital Economics. China's official unemployment rate - which only accounts for urban, registered residents - has held around 4 percent for years, despite a slowdown that has seen growth cool from the double-digits to quarter-century lows of under 7 percent.

"The (assistance) fund was never really big enough to cope with the number of workers that has been shed in these sectors," said Evans-Pritchard. "It doesn't surprise me that a lot of workers aren't benefiting from the fund. I think they need to increase the scale significantly." Media said last year that more than half a million laid-off workers were now driving for ride-sharing services, in line with a government for them to become a part of the "new" economy.

But that option doesn't exist for Wu Yilin, a coal miner in Shuangyashan who moved to an office job after he lost his thumb in a workplace accident. "We're told to be start our own businesses, but we just become street cleaners instead. You need money, connections to become an entrepreneur. It's not as if everyone can do it." —Reuters

S KOREA'S LOTTE REPORTS STORE CLOSURES IN CHINA AMID POLITICAL STAND-OFF

SEOUL/SHANGHAI: Chinese authorities have closed nearly two dozen retail stores of South Korea's Lotte Group following inspections, ramping up pressure on the conglomerate amid a diplomatic standoff that has cast a chill over business ties between the two nations.

Lotte said yesterday that 23 of its China supermarket stores had been shut, reaching from Dandong on China's North Korean border to the wealthy east coast and southern Changzhou, marking a wide clamp-down on the group in its biggest overseas market. A Lotte Mart spokesman could not provide further details, but workers at three stores said the closures - which they said were temporary - were fire-safety related. The three people asked not be identified due to the sensitivity of the issue.

The Anhui fire department said in a post on its Sina Weibo microblog account yesterday it had temporarily shut two Lotte Mart stores due to fire risks, part of a broader regional sweep over the last month that had led to the closure of 30 stores belonging to a range of companies including Lotte. The Lotte closures are the latest in a series of incidents affecting South Korean companies in China after cyberattacks and a ban on sales of travel tours to South Korea. Lotte Mart had 115 stores in China as of January contributing to group sales there of over 3 trillion won (\$2.6 billion) in 2015.

The incidents come after Lotte approved a land swap outside Seoul last week that will allow South Korea to install the US Terminal High Altitude Area Defense (THAAD) system, in response to missile threat from North Korea. South Korea's military earlier yesterday said North Korea fired four ballistic missiles into the sea prompting acting president Hwang Kyo-ahn to call for THAAD's swift installation. But China's government has objected to the deployment of THAAD, saying it has a radar capable of penetrating its territory, while state media has called for a boycott of South Korean goods and services.

Declared war

On Chinese social media yesterday, photos and videos circulated of protests outside Lotte stores, while others showed Lotte outlets with their steel grates pulled shut. Outside one store, a red banner with large white characters read: "South Korea's Lotte has declared war on China. Lotte supports THAAD. Get the hell out of China." The protests come days after Lotte Duty Free on Thursday said a cyber attack using Chinese internet protocol (IP) addresses had crashed its website. It is currently back online.

Political risk experts say the chill facing South Korean firms demonstrates Beijing's playbook for hitting back at the corporate interests of trade partners it disagrees with through state media and tightening regulations. The Lotte Group in a statement on Sunday said it was seeking assistance from the South Korean government regarding the issues it was facing in China, where it employs around 20,000 people - a third of its overseas staff.

On Monday, shares in Lotte Shopping Co Ltd, of which Lotte Mart is a business division, fell as much as 4 percent compared with a near-flat benchmark share price index. The stock regained some ground in afternoon trading. Lotte's troubles expanded to other South Korean firms on Thursday as China's tourism ministry instructed tour operators in Beijing to stop selling trips to South Korea from March 15.

The order has since spread to other regions across the mainland, an official at Korea Tourism Organization said yesterday. The moves have prompted backlash from South Korea, whose trade minister Joo Hyung-hwan said on Sunday he had "deep concerns over a series of actions in China".

China's foreign ministry said yesterday it welcomed South Korean companies to invest and operate in China, but added these firms "must operate in accordance with the law and compliance". — Reuters



This photo taken on Sunday shows a Lotte Mart in Hangzhou, east China's Zhejiang province. — AFP

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

Rate for Transfr	Selling Rate
US Dollar	305.950
Canadian Dolla	229.450
Sterling Pound	377.705
Euro	326.590
Swiss Frank	309.890
Bahrain Dinar	811.050
UAE Dirhams	83.690
Qatari Riyals	84.915
Saudi Riyals	82.515
Jordanian Dinar	432.690
Egyptian Pound	18.998
Sri Lankan Rupees	2.025
Indian Rupees	4.578
Pakistani Rupees	2.918
Bangladesh Taka	3.853
Philippines Peso	6.079
Cyprus pound	168.015
Japanese Yen	3.680
Syrian Pound	2.425
Nepalese Rupees	3.865
Malaysian Ringgit	69.665

Chinese Yuan Renminbi	44.915
Thai Bhat	9.735
Turkish Lira	83.985

BAHRAIN EXCHANGE COMPANY WLL

CURRENCY	BUY	SELL
Europe		
British Pound	0.371110	0.381110
Czech Korune	0.004006	0.016006
Danish Krone	0.039611	0.044611
Euro	0.320647	0.329647
Norwegian Krone	0.032258	0.037458
Romanian Leu	0.084889	0.084889
Slovakia	0.009188	0.019188
Swedish Krona	0.029998	0.034998
Swiss Franc	0.297928	0.308928
Turkish Lira	0.077243	0.087543
Australasia		
Australian Dollar	0.224867	0.236867
New Zealand Dollar	0.210059	0.219559
America		
Canadian Dollar	0.223828	0.232828
Georgina Lari	0.138343	0.138343
US Dollars	0.302200	0.306600
US Dollars Mint	0.302700	0.306600
Asia		
Bangladesh Taka	0.003503	0.004087
Chinese Yuan	0.042983	0.046483
Hong Kong Dollar	0.037407	0.040157
Indian Rupee	0.002653	0.004750

Indonesian Rupiah	0.000018	0.000024
Japanese Yen	0.002602	0.002782
Kenyan Shilling	0.003032	0.003032
Korean Won	0.000255	0.000270
Malaysian Ringgit	0.065062	0.071062
Nepalese Rupee	0.002965	0.003135
Pakistan Rupee	0.002681	0.002971
Philippine Peso	0.005996	0.006296
Sierra Leone	0.000068	0.000074
Singapore Dollar	0.211876	0.221876
South African Rand	0.017517	0.026017
Sri Lankan Rupee	0.001667	0.002247
Taiwan	0.009867	0.010047
Thai Baht	0.008401	0.008951
Arab		
Bahraini Dinar	0.805895	0.814395
Egyptian Pound	0.013829	0.023082
Iranian Riyal	0.000085	0.000086
Iraqi Dinar	0.000190	0.000250
Jordanian Dinar	0.426354	0.435354
Kuwaiti Dinar	1.000000	1.000000
Lebanese Pound	0.000158	0.000258
Moroccan Dirhams	0.020168	0.044168
Nigerian Naira	0.001270	0.001905
Omani Riyal	0.789163	0.794843
Qatar Riyal	0.083321	0.084771
Saudi Riyal	0.080593	0.081893
Syrian Pound	0.001299	0.001519
Tunisian Dinar	0.129774	0.137774
Turkish Lira	0.077470	0.087770
UAE Dirhams	0.081970	0.083670
Yemeni Riyal	0.000996	0.001076

FED AND ECB GO THEIR SEPARATE WAYS

FRANKFURT: Two of the world's biggest central banks are likely to find themselves with a bigger policy gap by the end of the coming fortnight. The European Central Bank on Thursday will resist calls to start tightening policy against surging inflation but robust US jobs data on Friday could seal the case for another Federal Reserve hike the week after. So, let's say minus 0.4 percent rates in Europe and more than 0.75 percent in Washington. With just weeks to go before contentious French and Dutch elections, the ECB will be keen not to rock the boat, so it is likely to give just a token nod to robust growth figures, steering clear of any policy hint that may give emerging populist movements ammunition.

A Reuters poll showed unanimity for no change. But the balancing act may be more difficult than it looks. With growth on its best run since before the financial crisis and inflation peeking just above the ECB's target, calls

are mounting, particularly in Germany, for the bank to scale back its 2.3 trillion euro (\$2.42 trillion) bond buying scheme and raise its negative interest rates.

Doves hold a comfortable majority among the policymakers, however, so any shift will come at the margins. In practice that could mean increased inflation forecasts, letting an ultra-cheap lending scheme to banks expire as scheduled, and dropping a reference to the risk that growth may disappoint. Still, ECB President Mario Draghi will probably avoid any discussion about winding down asset buys, even pushing back on calls by some rate setters to tweak the ECB's guidance, giving up its reference to further rate cuts, a possibility markets have already priced out.

"If the French presidential election also passes without turbulence, and growth and inflation data remain solid, the ECB might turn more hawkish in its meeting on June 8,"

Reinhard Cluse, economist at investment bank UBS, said. "This would then leave the meeting on July 20 for preparing the markets for the tapering (off asset-buying) on September 7."

For now though, Draghi will stick to his line that the inflation surge is temporary, growth is fragile and political risks clouds the outlook, requiring stimulus, a Reuters poll of analysts showed. Having tightened policy in 2011 just months before the euro zone debt crisis started spiralling out of control, the ECB will be desperate not to move too early, even if it risks being called out by some for moving too late.

US jobs

The Fed, meanwhile, must deal with what Draghi dubbed a high-class problem: solid growth, full employment and returning inflation. Non-farm payrolls, due on Friday, are expected to show an increase of 186,000

jobs, probably enough to push the Fed to move. Unemployment benefits already fell to near a 44-year low late last month, indicating further tightening of the labor market.

Indeed, markets have now almost fully priced in a hike in March, the third since rates bottomed out at the height of the crisis, and two more increases could still come before the end of the year.

Robust jobs growth threatens to overheat the labor market, just as inflation is heading higher, with the Fed's preferred measure now in the upper end of the range central bank officials in December estimated would be reached this year. Manufacturing growth is also firming, offsetting relatively weak consumer demand, good enough for even the most dovish Fed officials to argue for a hike sooner rather than later.

Soothing global growth fears, meanwhile, China is expected to report another set of

strong figures for both exports and imports, indicating that even if overall growth is slowing and debt is rising fast, the slowdown remains under control, mitigating the risk for emerging market economies.

Indeed, China's factory activity expanded faster than expected in February, firming arguments for the central bank to raise short-term interest rates by a another 10 basis points as soon as March. Data due on Wednesday are expected to show Chinese exports up by 10 percent in February while imports could have risen by 20 percent, a boon for countries like Australia, which supply China with raw materials.

Indeed, the Reserve Bank of Australia may signal on Tuesday that policy easing is done, given the economy's convincing rebound last quarter, rising commodity exports and a robust increase in household debt levels. — Reuters

UK INSURER STANDARD LIFE BUYS ABERDEEN FOR £3.8BN

LONDON: British financial services group Standard Life has agreed to buy Aberdeen Asset Management for £3.8 billion to create one of the world's biggest fund managers, the pair said yesterday.

The deal, worth \$4.7 billion or 4.4 billion euros, was presented as a merger but Standard Life shareholders will have overall control with a 66.7-percent stake in the new firm, according to a joint statement. Aberdeen will hold the rest. The combined business will have a stock market capitalization of £11 billion and oversee assets worth £660 billion-making it one of the largest investment managers in the world and the biggest in Britain. The news sent Standard Life's share price more than seven percent higher in early morning London trade, while Aberdeen stock gained almost six percent.

"The boards of Standard Life plc and Aberdeen Asset Management plc are pleased to announce that they have reached agreement on the terms of a recommended all-share merger," said the statement. The transaction "has a compelling strategic and financial rationale through combining Standard Life's and Aberdeen's complementary strengths to create a world class investment group". They added the deal would "harness Standard Life's and Aberdeen's complementary, market leading investment and savings capabilities".

The new business will be headquartered

in Scotland and have 9,000 staff worldwide. "We have always been clear that it is Standard Life's ambition to become a world-class investment company and that this would be achieved through continued investment in diversification and growth, coupled with a sharp focus on financial discipline," said Standard Life Chief Executive Keith Skeoch.

"We are therefore delighted that this announcement marks another important step towards achieving that ambition." He added: "We strongly believe that we can build on the strength of the existing Standard Life business by combining with Aberdeen to create one of the largest active investment managers in the world and deliver significant value for all of our stakeholders."

The two groups, which had announced that they were in talks over the weekend, aim to complete the merger in the third quarter subject to regulatory and shareholder approvals. "This merger brings financial strength, diversity of customer base and global reach to ensure that the enlarged business can compete effectively on the global stage," added Aberdeen Chief Executive Martin Gilbert.

Rebecca O'Keeffe, head of investment at stockbroker Interactive Investor, said: "The move by Standard Life to buy Aberdeen is a major attempt to try to build their defenses as the active management industry comes under increasing pressure from lower-cost passive managers." — AFP



LONDON: The Canary Wharf financial district is seen in east London yesterday. British Chancellor of the Exchequer Philip Hammond has said he will keep chopping away at the deficit to get Britain fit to face Brexit, as he prepares to deliver his budget tomorrow. — AFP

GREEK ECONOMY TAKES NEW BLOW, IN THE RED IN 2016

ATHENS: Debt-laden Greece's economy suffered a new blow, contracting by 1.2 percent at the end of 2016, according to revised figures released yesterday, meaning it remained in recession for the eighth straight year.

The figure by the national statistics agency Elstat compared with an earlier estimate of a seasonally adjusted 0.4 percent drop in the final three months of 2016 against the previous quarter. It was the worst quarter since the height of the country's financial woes in latter half of 2015 when Greece came close to default and appeared to be on the verge of being kicked out of the eurozone. The revised figures mean that Greece's economy remained in recession for the eighth straight year, with GDP contracting by 0.05 percent in 2016 according to calculations made by Greek



ATHENS: A Greek policeman stands on a flyer reading in French, "The true terrorists are technocrats," thrown by a small group of leftists protesting the awarding of an honorary doctorate from the University of Athens to EU Finance Commissioner Pierre Moscovici, in Athens. — AP

media. The Elstat agency also said GDP fell by 1.1 percent in the fourth quarter in 2016 against the same quarter in 2015. The new figures come at a time when Athens is locked in crucial bailout talks with the IMF and the European Union for its crisis-battered economy. Following a long standoff between the EU and the International Monetary Fund over debt relief and budget targets, talks between Greek officials and representatives from its creditors aimed at freeing up fresh funds resumed in Athens last week.

The Washington-based lender believes demands on Greece sought by the Europeans are too ambitious. But if the eurozone is going to stick with its plans, then the IMF wants the necessary tax hikes and pension cuts to meet them implemented before it will lend further to Athens. — AFP

CHANCES FOR A US TAX AUDIT HAVE RARELY BEEN THIS LOW

WASHINGTON: As millions of Americans file their income tax returns, their chances of getting audited by the IRS have rarely been so low. The number of people audited by the IRS in 2016 dropped for the sixth straight year, to just over 1 million. The last time so few people were audited was 2004. Since then, the U.S. has added about 30 million people.

The IRS blames budget cuts as money for the agency shrunk from \$12.2 billion in 2010 to \$11.2 billion last year. Over that period, the agency has lost more than 17,000 employees, including nearly 7,000 enforcement agents. A little more than 80,000 people work at the IRS.

IRS Commissioner John Koskinen said budget cuts are costing the federal government between \$4 billion and \$8 billion a year in uncollected taxes. "We are the only agency if you give us more people and money, we give you more money back," Koskinen said in an interview. So is it safe to cheat on your taxes? Not necessarily, according to tax experts. "I don't think it's open season for people to cheat," said Joseph Perry, a partner at the accounting firm Marcum. "I think there are a certain group of people that will always try to push the envelope to get away with things that they think they can get away with."

As Koskinen put it: "If you're a taxpayer, you don't want to roll the roulette wheel and have the little white ball land on your number because then we're not very happy." Most people don't have much of an opportunity to cheat on their taxes because the IRS collects a lot of information to verify taxpayers' finances. Employers report wages, banks report interest, brokerages report capital gains and lenders report mortgage interest.

In 2016, the number of people audited

by the IRS dropped by 16 percent from the year before. Just 0.7 percent of individuals were audited, either in person or by mail. That's the lowest audit rate since 2003. The higher your income, the more likely you are to be audited. The IRS audited 1.7 percent of returns that reported more than \$200,000 in income. Agents audited 5.8 percent of returns that reported more than \$1 million in income.

Both audit rates were steep declines from the year before. The most well-known audit in Washington is one on President Donald Trump, who has cited it in refusing to release his tax returns. The IRS, however, has said an audit would not prevent an individual from releasing the returns. Corporate audits were down by 17 percent last year. Just 0.49 percent of corporations were audited, the lowest rate in at least a decade. Republicans in Congress began cutting money at the IRS after they took control of both the House and Senate in the 2010 elections. They became more enthusiastic about the spending cuts after it became public that the agency had improperly singled out conservative political groups for extra scrutiny when they applied for tax-exempt status during the 2010 and 2012 elections.

Koskinen was not at the IRS when the political groups were mistreated, but some Republicans in Congress have been unhappy with his cooperation in their investigations. When asked about IRS money, many Republican lawmakers inevitably mention the mistreatment of conservative groups. "Go look at all the areas where they've wasted money, mismanaged taxpayer resources," said Rep Jim Jordan, R-Ohio. "Not to mention the fact that, you know, one of the reasons we went after them so hard is they did target people for their political views." — AP

NIGERIA ADDING CAPACITY TO PROVINCIAL AIRPORT BEFORE ABUJA CLOSURE

KADUNA, Nigeria: Two days before Nigeria shuts down Abuja's airport for repairs to its dilapidated runway, workers still need to fit electric, seating and toilets to a new terminal at Kaduna, which will handle the capital's air traffic but lacks capacity. International airlines that fly into Abuja have already refused to use Kaduna, a provincial city airport, because of security worries, and domestic passengers could face major delays if the new terminal is not ready, discouraging travel and isolating the capital. Most floor and ceiling tiles have been fitted and all air conditioning units have been installed, but electrical fittings are unfinished, chairs for the arrival and departure areas lie strewn about and a car park expansion is incomplete.

"Contractors are working day and night," said an official from the Federal Airports Authority of Nigeria (FAAN) who is not authorized to talk publicly on the matter. A contractor said staffing levels at the terminal building site had increased since mid-February. A Reuters reporter who visited the site several times between March 3-5 counted about 50 builders on the site, compared with about 30 in January.

Kaduna airport officials have said the existing terminal will be used if the new site is not ready and can handle up to 500 passengers at any one moment - equivalent to three or four short-haul jets. Some critics of the plan say that number is inflated. The road network in Nigeria, Africa's largest economy covering an area about twice the size of California, is in poor condition and more affluent travellers rely on air travel to cover the long distances.

In a sign of the logistical challenges ahead, data from Nigeria's airport authority shows Abuja airport handled 4,859 domestic flights in December compared with the 171 that flew in or out of Kaduna. Kaduna airport is located in a restive area plagued by insecurity and kidnappings. Airlines including British Airways, Lufthansa and South African Airways have refused to fly into Kaduna. Ethiopian Airlines has said it will use the alternative airport. "Roads leading to the airport have undergone renovation," said the FAAN official, adding that extra police had already been deployed along the main road on which passengers will be able to travel in buses, guarded by security. — Reuters



BERLIN: A fence shields the main terminal of the new Berlin Brandenburg International Airport named Willy-Brandt-Flughafen in Schoenefeld near Berlin. A member of Berlin's state government, Engelbert Luetke Daldrup, yesterday took over the helm from Karsten Muehlenfeld who left the job prematurely after an endless series of cost overruns and technical and personnel problems that have led to ongoing delays in the opening of the new airport, which was initially touted as a national prestige project. — AP

COURT MEETS ON UKRAINE TAX CHIEF'S \$74 MILLION EMBEZZLEMENT CASE

MINSK, Belarus: A court in Kiev was hearing motions yesterday on the \$74 million embezzlement case against Ukraine's top tax official. Roman Nasirov, chief of the Ukrainian Fiscal Service, was detained over the weekend and instantly reported heart problems. His detention expired late Sunday, and Nasirov, lying on a stretcher, spent the night in the courtroom. Outside, dozens of protesters who feared he would flee have been blocking the building.

The Ukrainian government suspended Nasirov pending an investigation alleging that the tax chief defrauded the state of 2 billion hryvnias (\$74 million). The National Anti-Corruption Bureau said Nasirov signed

off on grace periods for number of taxpayers - including companies linked to former lawmaker Oleksandr Onishchenko, who fled abroad last year while facing a corruption investigation. Opposition lawmakers have campaigned for Nasirov's resignation, accusing him of covering up large-scale bribery and tax dodging. The Nasirov affair is arguably the highest-profile corruption investigation since a pro-Western government assumed power in Ukraine in February 2014. The 38-year old Nasirov, who has occupied his post for two years, is an ally of President Petro Poroshenko. It is not immediately clear if the president is going to be damaged in the fallout. — AP



NEW YORK: In this Jan 12, 2017 photo, traders work on the Mizuho Americas trading floor in New York. Stocks opened lower on Wall Street yesterday, led by declines in materials companies and banks. — AP

EUROPEAN EQUITIES SLIDE AS DEUTSCHE BANK DRAGS

LONDON: European stocks sank yesterday after Germany's troubled Deutsche Bank unveiled plans over the weekend to raise 8.0 billion euros (\$8.5 billion) in fresh capital.

Sentiment also remained downbeat as investors took profits from last week's surge, which was rooted on hopes of a public spending splurge under US President Donald Trump. "The Deutsche Bank drag on the banking sector, as well as the continued weariness following last Wednesday's record-breaking surge, continued to set the tone of trading," said analyst Connor Campbell at trading firm Spreadex.

Shares in Germany's biggest lender dived 6.37 percent to 17.92 euros, topping the

Frankfurt fallers board, after announcing Sunday it would raise cash by issuing new shares. The announcement marked a U-turn for CEO John Cryan, who until recently insisted no such move was needed. "European shares have begun the week on the back foot with the financial sector weighing," noted analyst David Cheetham at brokerage XTB.

"News over the weekend that Deutsche Bank will reverse course less than two years into CEO John Cryan's strategy has been met with a negative reaction from investors." Royal Bank of Scotland shares slid 1.9 percent and Lloyds shed 1.5 percent in London, while BNP Paribas and Societe Generale dropped 0.6 percent and 0.5

percent respectively. London won a partial boost, however, after British financial services group Standard Life agreed to buy Aberdeen Asset Management for £3.8 billion (\$4.7 billion, 4.4 billion euros) to create one of the world's biggest fund managers. The combined business will have a stock market capitalization of £11 billion and oversee assets worth £660 billion-making it one of the largest investment managers in the world and the biggest in Britain.

The news sent Standard Life's share price 5.68 percent higher, while Aberdeen stock gained almost five percent. In Asia, Tokyo stocks fell and the safe-haven yen advanced after North Korea fired four missiles—three of them landing in

Japanese waters—fueling fresh geopolitical concerns. But Asia's other markets started the week with gains after another positive lead from Wall Street and remarks by Federal Reserve boss Janet Yellen that US interest rates would move more than likely be hiked this month as the economy continues to improve.


Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe warned the threat from North Korea had "entered a new stage" following the missile launch, which came after Pyongyang fired a rocket last month.

Hong Kong stocks rose 0.2 percent and Shanghai finished 0.5 percent higher.

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Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe warned the threat from North Korea had "entered a new stage" following the missile launch, which came after Pyongyang fired a rocket last month. "Investors seem to be reacting to the North Korean missile launch," Hiroaki Hiwada, a strategist at Toyo Securities, told Bloomberg News. — AFP

Daily Kuwait Stock Exchange Report												
Monday 06 March 2017												
Index	Change	Closing	Last Closing	High	Low							
Price index	▼ -53.80	6,750.76	6,804.56	6,810.87	6,727.59							
Weighted Index	▼ -0.17	425.72	425.89	426.21	424.00							
KSX 15	▲ 1.20	978.18	976.98	978.56	971.99							
<table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Volume</th> <th>204,815,264</th> </tr> <tr> <th>Value (KWD)</th> <th>19,285,244</th> </tr> <tr> <th>Number of Trades</th> <th>5,091</th> </tr> </thead> </table>							Volume	204,815,264	Value (KWD)	19,285,244	Number of Trades	5,091
Volume	204,815,264											
Value (KWD)	19,285,244											
Number of Trades	5,091											
Trades												
Security	High	Low	Volume	Value (KD)	Trades	Last	Change					
MARIN	62	62	100	6	1	62	▲ 4.0					
IPG	420	405	124,500	50,790	2	420	▼ -10.0					
NAPESCO	1,360	1,240	307,955	406,413	96	1,240	▼ -100.0					
ENERGYH	43.0	41.0	225,120	9,337	25	42.0	▼ -1.5					
GPI	50	48.5	4,283,639	211,843	92	48.5	▼ -1.5					
ABAR	95	91	7,223	672	8	91	▲ 1.0					
Oil & Gas			4,948,537	679,062	224	1004.34	▼ -40.21					
KFOUC	320	315	28,272	8,938	4	315	▼ -5.0					
BPCC	570	570	1,038	592	1	570	— 0.0					
ALKOUT	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	700	— 0.0					
ALQURAN	325	325	401,976	159,892	17	325	— 0.0					
Basic Materials			521,286	169,422	22	1303.91	▼ -4.38					
KCEM	490	490	88,460	43,345	3	490	— 0.0					
CABLE	530	510	340,081	178,493	31	530	▼ -10.0					
SHIP	228	214	5,114	1,096	3	228	▲ 4.0					
PCEM	1,060	1,060	50,000	53,000	6	1,060	▼ -20.0					
PAPER	445	425	510	217	2	445	▲ 25.0					
MRC	75	74	58,669	4,368	5	74	▼ -5.0					
ACICO	300	300	120,000	36,000	4	300	▼ -5.0					
GMCC	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	325	— 0.0					
HCC	196	188	51,040	9,654	3	196	▲ 8.0					
BMMCC	150	150	1,500	225	1	150	▼ -10.0					
NICBM	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	204	— 0.0					
EQUIPMENT	57	55	158,260	8,971	7	55	▼ -2.0					
NCCI	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	50	— 0.0					
GYPSUM	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	95	— 0.0					
SALBOOKH	72	71	131,000	9,332	8	71	▼ -1.0					
AGLTY	590	580	744,290	438,581	46	590	— 0.0					
EDU	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	210	— 0.0					
CLEANING	52	51	1,032,422	53,482	24	52	▼ -1.0					
KGL	66	64	230,781	14,772	6	64	▼ -1.0					
KCCP	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	184	— 0.0					
HUMANSOFT	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	3,000	— 0.0					
NAFAS	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	220	— 0.0					
GFC	55	51	175,913	9,266	10	55	▲ 5.0					
MAYADEEN	32.0	30.0	3,087,261	94,079	51	30.0	▼ -1.5					
CGC	500	500	100	50	1	500	— 0.0					
MTCC	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	56	— 0.0					
UPAC	850	820	4,990	4,092	2	820	▼ -10.0					
ALFACO	246	246	75,000	18,450	5	246	▼ -2.0					
MUBARRAD	79	76	3,283,180	255,709	85	76	▲ 1.0					
LOGISTICS	72	71	565,250	40,231	15	72	— 0.0					
SCEM	88	87	52,000	4,542	3	87	▼ -1.0					
GCEM	88	87	439,950	38,366	16	88	▼ -1.0					
QIC	85	85	2,083	177	1	85	— 0.0					
FCEM	89	89	120,000	10,880	3	89	— 0.0					
RKWC	100	100	4,462	446	1	100	— 0.0					
SPEC	88	86	28,000	2,408	3	86	▼ -1.0					
Industrials			10,850,316	1,330,301	347	1497.88	▼ -0.83					
KSH	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	184	— 0.0					
NSH	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	59	— 0.0					
PAPCO	112	110	22,816	2,535	3	112	▲ 2.0					
ZIMAH	244	234	14,015	3,291	18	234	▼ -10.0					
DANAH	102	98	7,305,500	732,222	231	99	▼ -3.0					
FOOD	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	2,620	— 0.0					
Consumer Goods			7,342,331	738,048	252	1208.10	▼ -9.32					
MHC	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	350	— 0.0					
ATC	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	920	— 0.0					
YIACO	285	265	25	7	2	285	▼ -5					
Health Care			25	7	2	1437.07	▼ -5.06					
KCIN	1,580	1,420	1,010	1,438	2	1,580	▲ 100					
KHOT	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	250	— 0.0					
SULTAN	71	67	562,200	38,180	36	69	▼ -1					
CABLETV	24.0	21.5	210,643	4,625	20	23.0	▼ -1					
EYAS	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	385	— 0.0					
IFAHR	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	192	— 0.0					
OULAFUEL	132	128	1,356,615	175,742	77	128	▼ -2					
MUNTAZAHAT	86	86	99,400	8,548	3	86	— 0.0					
JAZERA	580	570	480	275	2	570	▼ -20					
SCOR	134	130	198,608	26,400	28	132	— 0.0					
FUTUREKID	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	124	— 0.0					
ALRAI	176	174	170,143	29,945	9	176	▼ -2					
ZIMAH	61	57	2,074,503	121,105	82	58	▼ -2					
Mezzan	1,000	990	125,731	124,513	12	990	▼ -1					
Consumer Services			4,799,633	530,749	271	951.47	▲ 1.48					
ZAIN	485	480	241,240	116,049	35	485	— 0.0					
OOREDOO	1,200	1,160	8,501	10,081	4	1,200	— 0.0					
HITSTELEC	52	51	1,280,900	65,885	42	52	▼ -1					
VIVA	830	820	40,249	33,143	47	830	▲ 10					
Telecommunications			1,870,890	225,158	128	649.73	▲ 0.95					
NBK	760	760	3,402,896	2,595,201	71	760	— 0.0					
GBK	255	248	2,423,391	605,891	35	255	▲ 7					
CBK	450	425	1,110	472	2	450	▲ 20					
ABK	305	305	40,000	12,200	1	305	— 0.0					
ALMUTAHED	445	440	85,662	37,741	5	440	— 0.0					
KIB	244	244	927,955	226,421	34	244	— 0.0					
BURG	335	330	637,011	213,314	22	335	— 0.0					
KFIN	620	610	609,595	373,885	34	620	— 0.0					
BOURAYAN	430	425	414,251	176,070	21	425	— 0.0					
AUB	242	240	1,414,644	339,974	48	240	▼ -2					
ITHMR	58	53	12,421,370	677,075	178	54	▼ -1					
WARBANK	275	270	1,360,353	367,455	149	275	— 0.0					
Banks			23,738,238	5,616,680	600	974.16	▲ 1.06					
KINS	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	310	— 0.0					
GINS	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	600	— 0.0					
AINS	500	500	40,000	20,000	1	500	— 0.0					
WINS	102	102	9,400	959	3	102	▼ -2.0					
KUWAITRE	186	186	4,793	891	1	186	— 0.0					
FTI	65	60	277,961	16,959	37	62	▼ -3.0					
WETHAQ	56	53	1,238,445	86,057	70	54	▲ 2.0					
BKIKWT	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	365	— 0.0					
Insurance			1,568,599	104,866	112	1124.50	▼ -0.41					
Trades												
Security	High	Low	Volume	Value (KD)	Trades	Last	Change					
SOKOUK	46.0	44.0	152,8536	68,563	50	44.0	▼ -2.0					
KRF	74	73	2,008,000	147,793	34	74	▲ 1.0					
URC	97	95	109,287	10,589	9	97	▲ 1.0					
NRE	106	102	625,536	65,626	33	106	▲ 2.0					
SRE	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	390	— 0.0					
TAM	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	450	— 0.0					
AREEC	172	172	10,000	1,720	1	172	▼ -8.0					
MASSALEH	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	49.0	— 0.0					
ARABREC	43.0	40.5	5,064,139	209,292	137	41.0	▼ -2.0					
ERESCO	46.5	45.5	344,664	16,882	14	46.0	▼ -1.0					
MABANEE	840	840	1,309	1,100	1	840	▼ -10.0					
INIAZZAT	91	90	250,000	22,650	4	91	▼ -1.0					
INVESTORS	29.5	27.0	24,233,099	689,322	189	28.0	▼ -1.5					
IRC	37.0	36.0	510,800	18,500	18	37.0	— 0.0					
ALTJARIA	85	84	677,956	57,290	11	84	— 0.0					
SANAM	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	57	— 0.0					
AAYANRE	84	83	365,500	30,349	18	83	— 0.0					
AQAR	81	76	8,757	666	3	76	▼ -5.0					
ALAQARIA	43.5	42.0	115,000	4,898	5	42.0	▼ -2.0					
MAZAYA	128	126	2,426,550	306,534	47	128	▲ 2.0					
ADNC	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	11.0	— 0.0					
THEMAR	90	90	50,000	4,500	1							




Monthly Rewards


On a monthly basis, the top 30 recruiters will be awarded for their sourcing and hiring activities on Bayt.com




You will be featured on the monthly leaderboard of the top 30 recruiters.




Your individual Bayt.com profile will be upgraded to a 3-month Premium package.



You will be invited to exclusive Bayt.com office events.




You will receive a branded gift and certificate of appreciation.




Annual Rewards


At the end of each year, the top 80, with the most points accumulated throughout the year, will be also rewarded. The gifts include:




An all-expense paid trip to Dubai to attend the Bayt.com Annual Top Employer event



A 6-month upgrade to an individual Elite Profile on Bayt.com



Recognition by featuring you in a Bayt.com press release



A personalized certificate of appreciation and a gift from Bayt.com's CEO

BAYT.COM LAUNCHES REVOLUTIONARY PROGRAM TO ENCOURAGE HIRING A NEW PROGRAM BY BAYT.COM WILL REWARD RECRUITERS FOR THEIR TALENT

DUBAI: Bayt.com, the Middle East's #1 job site, has recently launched a new rewards program to show appreciation for recruiters and employers in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region. The more often recruiters connect with job seekers, the more points and rewards they will receive on a monthly and annual basis. The program is in line with Bayt.com's mission of empowering people and fueled by the jobsite's desire to empower employers who are committed to hiring in the MENA

region. It encourages more companies to play a part in tackling unemployment.

All recruiters and employers using Bayt.com are automatically eligible for the program. They will be able to collect points based on their day-to-day activities, including advertising jobs, searching CVs, viewing applications, inviting job seekers to apply, contacting job seekers, and, of course, hiring job candidates.

"This program is our thank you to employers who create employment

opportunities, a thank you to them for hiring people and for making the region and the world a better place," said Ola Haddad, Operations Manager at Bayt.com. "We want to encourage all recruiters and employers to be even more active and engaged with the 28 million professionals who are currently registered on Bayt.com. The Recruiter Rewards program is yet another initiative from Bayt.com to improve the connections between job seekers and employers and empower them all in leading their careers of choice."

"We are firmly committed to providing the most effective hiring solutions and ensuring that job seekers and employers in our region are able to connect and swiftly fulfill their professional needs," said Suhail Masri, Vice President of Employer Solutions, Bayt.com. "We currently serve over 40,000 organizations who use our platform for finding and hiring their talent. With that in mind, we launched the Recruiter Rewards Program to recognize and appreciate the efforts of the individuals

behind the employment process." Monthly and annual rewards will be issued to the most active recruiters on the leaderboard. Those with the most rewards annually will be gifted an all-expense paid trip to Dubai to attend the Bayt.com Annual Top Employers event. In addition, recruiters will have access to exclusive Bayt.com events, upgrade to an Elite Profile, receive personalized certificates of appreciation; a gift from Bayt.com's CEO; and media recognition by Bayt.com.



In this March 1, 2017, file photo, Exxon Mobil Corporation Chairman & CEO Darren Woods (third from left) joins the applause during opening bell ceremonies at the New York Stock Exchange. —AP

NEW EXXON CHIEF ENTERS THE MARKET, CAUTIOUSLY

HOUSTON: Darren Woods, the new CEO of Exxon Mobil, is a veteran of the more cautious refining side of the oil business who is likely to focus relentlessly on controlling costs.

Woods may take a more hesitant approach to deal-making than his predecessor, Rex Tillerson, who hailed from the more swashbuckling exploration side and famously did business with Russian President Vladimir Putin. It's unclear whether Woods will be any more successful than Tillerson in achieving peace with environmental critics. The early signals are mixed.

Woods was little known outside the company even after emerging as Tillerson's heir apparent. Two months after taking over, Woods is making his first public rounds, meeting with investors last week and speaking yesterday at a major energy conference in Houston. Woods, 52, joined Exxon in 1992 and has spent most of his career in chemicals and refining, the so-called downstream part of the business.

"There is a different psychology in downstream than there is in oil and gas wildcatting," said Cowen analyst Sam Margolin. "Downstream is very much about managing costs and trying to get the most out of the least effort." Tillerson left Woods plenty to work on. Exxon Mobil Corp. earned a record \$45.2 billion in 2008 and nearly matched that in 2012. With oil prices slumping, profit has tumbled, falling to \$7.8 billion last year - the company's smallest gain since 1998.

Along the way, Exxon lost its coveted AAA credit rating. Lower oil prices forced it to write down assets. At Exxon's size, replacing oil reserves is always challenging.

Woods also faces pressure from shareholders to protect the dividend and revive share buybacks. At last week's investor event in New York, he vowed to grow dividends and buy back stock when possible.

Woods detailed a growth plan that relies heavily on drilling in the Permian Basin of Texas and New Mexico and the Bakken shale formation in North Dakota, balancing that with big, long-term projects around the world.

After spending \$19 billion in 2016, Exxon plans to invest \$22 billion in the business this year and raise that to an average of \$25 billion a year from 2018 through 2020. Still, those budgets look disciplined in comparison to the free-wheeling years of 2010 through 2015, when spending topped \$30 billion every year. Woods spoke to investors only briefly about the company's Russian operations, which became a controversy for Tillerson during his cabinet-confirmation

process. Woods indicated Exxon is confident about the prospects for its huge Sakhalin project on Russia's eastern coast. Other work, which was stopped by sanctions imposed after Russia annexed Crimea, will be re-examined if sanctions are lifted, he said.

It's difficult to judge the style of a new CEO right away. Most grow into the role over time. In New York, Woods was careful and scripted. He looked down as he read a long speech, remembering occasionally to look up at the audience.

Wolfe Research analyst Paul Sankey contrasted Woods' "owlish" demeanor with the "imperial and intimidating" force of Lee Raymond, the longtime CEO who preceded Tillerson.

Raymond could be gruff and abrasive. He would seem dismissive of analysts, reporters or shareholders who asked questions that he considered ill-informed or combative. In contrast, Woods answered a range of questions in a soothing, matter-of-fact tone, which was easier because none of the questioners were particularly critical or skeptical of the company's actions.

That won't be true in May, when Woods presides over the annual shareholder meeting that is often notable for activists who denounce Exxon for, as they see it, obstructing action against climate change. The activists say they're still trying to figure out the new CEO.

"He is an Exxon Mobil lifer who flew under the radar, but he seems to be following in the footsteps of Rex Tillerson," said Kathy Mulvey, an official at the Union of Concerned Scientists. "His line on climate change seems pretty similar."

In a blog last month, Woods acknowledged that climate change poses risks and that business, governments and consumers should address them, and he has repeated Exxon's support for a carbon tax. Then in an interview with Forbes, he said that fossil fuels bring great benefits and are needed to raise living standards for poor people around the world.

Mulvey, whose group is aiding state investigations into Exxon, said Woods is perpetuating a false choice - we can either continue burning fossil fuels or leave many people in poverty. "That's not true if we develop alternatives," she said.

State officials in New York and Massachusetts are investigating whether Exxon hid its knowledge of climate change for financial gain. The company denies the accusations, which it says are politically motivated, and it has fought back aggressively in the courts. —AP

GERMANY WARNS UK OVER TRADE, SEES FRANKFURT GAIN

MINISTER SAYS FRANKFURT CAN TAKE EURO TRADING FROM LONDON

FRANKFURT: Britain would be "naive" to expect generous trade deals when it quits the European Union, the German minister responsible for its financial centre said yesterday, adding that Frankfurt would grab business from London. While France has long made no secret about its ambition to take business from London, German politicians have largely avoided such statements and Tarek Al-Wazir's show a desire in Germany to profit from Brexit, potentially complicating Britain's attempt to strike a trade deal with the EU.

Al-Wazir, a minister in the state of Hesse, in Germany's industrial heartland, told Reuters that British politicians were unrealistic in hoping for generous terms for future trade deals.

"It is naive to believe that countries are simply waiting to strike trade deals with Great Britain after Brexit," he said. "Whoever wants to attract companies with tax cuts cannot expect to be rewarded with generous trade deals. It won't happen."

Earlier this year, British Prime Minister Theresa May, when announcing that Britain would quit the European Union's single market, hinted that it could use tax breaks to fight to attract businesses if the EU imposed punitive tariffs. Al-Wazir said he expected the clearing of trades in euros, a multi-trillion-euro business, to move from London to centres including Frankfurt, which he is responsible for promoting. "It is hard to imagine that most business in euros will be booked in London after Brexit. Europe needs access if anything goes wrong. From the ECB's point



BERLIN: German economy minister Brigitte Zypries walks away from the media scrum after giving a statement outside Bundestag in Berlin yesterday on the takeover of the German car maker Opel by French auto maker PSA. —AFP

of view, London is offshore after Brexit," he said, referring to the need for the European Central Bank to have oversight of the business.

"You can expect parts of the clearing business to be spread across many continental locations. I'm confident that Frankfurt can attract part of London's euro clearing business."

The collapse of merger talks between Deutsche Boerse and the

London Stock Exchange, however, could complicate this, with some observers predicting that the LSE is now more likely to move clearing to its Paris-based business.

Although Britain is not one of the 19 countries in the euro currency bloc, London dominates trading in the currency. The trading of euro-based securities spans trillions of euros of derivatives deals as well as the 'repo' market providing short-term funding for

banks - roughly 2 trillion euros of which experts say is based in London. On top of this, there is foreign exchange trading in the currency itself.

The Frankfurt-based ECB wants oversight of this business for a practical reason: if any disaster were to hit these markets like the 2008 collapse of Lehman Brothers bank in the United States, it would be responsible for dealing with it. —Reuters

20 YEARS OF TIE-UPS AND BREAK-UPS AMONG EU CARMAKERS

PARIS: Europe's auto sector has witnessed two decades of takeovers, alliances and break-ups, the latest being PSA's purchase of Opel for 1.3 billion euros (\$1.4 billion).

France's PSA, which owns the Peugeot, Citroen and DS brands, said Monday that it would buy General Motors' European subsidiary, which includes Opel and Vauxhall, to create the second-biggest European automaker, behind Volkswagen. Here is a look at other major deals, some of which floundered, beginning in the 1990s.

DaimlerChrysler, a flop

In 1998 the German group Daimler-Benz struck a deal to fuse the troubled US automaker Chrysler with its prestigious Mercedes brand. It was presented as a merger of equals, but Daimler invested 36 billion euros in the affair, and ran the show from the start.

By 2005, the combination had soured; Daimler boss Juergen Schrempf stepped down and his successor, Dieter Zetsche, announced in February 2007 that Daimler would sell most of its shares in Chrysler. It did so three months later, ceding 80.1 percent to

the US investment firm Cerberus Capital Management for 5.5 billion euros.

Renault-Nissan, an enduring alliance

In 1999, French carmaker Renault acquired a 36.8 percent stake in Nissan, a Japanese group that was close to bankruptcy, and the Romanian brand Dacia. Renault boss Carlos Ghosn succeeded in pulling the three companies together and became head of all of them in 2005. Dacia blossomed from a derided east European carmaker to a respected low-cost brand that contributes regularly to the parent company's bottom line.

A cross-shareholding deal has put 43 percent of Nissan's shares in Renault's hands, while the Japanese group owns 15 percent of Renault. In October 2016, Nissan took a controlling stake in Japan's Mitsubishi Motors, bringing total production for the Renault-Nissan group to nearly 10 million vehicles a year.

Volvo: First to Ford, then Geely

In 1999, when Ford was the most profitable US automaker, it bought Sweden's storied Volvo brand for \$6.45 billion (about 4.64 billion euros at the time). A few years later, how-

ever, a combination of Japanese competition and rising oil and steel prices convinced Ford that it was time to look for a new buyer. In December 2009, it said it would sell Volvo to the Chinese group Geely for \$1.8 billion.

Fiat: If at first you don't succeed

In the late 1990s the ailing Italian group Fiat, which is controlled by the Agnelli family, went looking for a partner. In 2000 it agreed to hand over 20 percent of its shares to US giant General Motors in exchange for six percent of GM's stock, then worth about \$2.4 billion.

But Fiat's situation did not improve, and in February 2005, GM bailed out of the deal, paying \$2.0 billion (1.55 billion euros) to cancel a so-called put option that would have required it to buy the rest of Fiat's equity. In mid-2009 a fitter Fiat struck a deal approved by US president Barack Obama to rescue Chrysler by start purchasing shares in the US group.

Fiat completed its takeover of Chrysler in January 2014, and Fiat Chrysler Automobiles (FCA) now sells about five million vehicles a year. In 2016, FCA's net profit leapt to 1.8 billion euros from 93 million euros in 2015. —AFP



EQUATE OBTAINS RC 14001:2015 CERTIFICATION FROM DNV GL FIRST IN MIDDLE EAST TO GET RESPONSIBLE CARE CERTIFICATION

KUWAIT: EQUATE Petrochemical Company, a global producer of petrochemicals, is the first company in the Middle East in the petrochemical sector to obtain the new Responsible Care (RC) 14001:2015 certification from DNV GL. The certification is aimed at supporting the company's sustainability efforts in Environment, and Health & Safety (EH&S).

RC is an international voluntary initiative of the global chemical industry to address EH&S at all relevant levels for the safe production and handling of chemicals throughout their life cycle, while promoting their role in improving quality of life and contributing to sustainable development. DNV GL a well-reputed organization that assesses companies to advance and improve their EH&S systems for overall sustainability in every relevant field.

EQUATE has embarked on the RC 14001:2015 certification as it sets a clear framework to additionally progress its EH&S management systems, with continuous development as part of the company's DNA. It also provides a tool for environmental performance assessment and identifying improve-

ments. This highlights EQUATE's continuous strategic strive to act as a global citizen through responsibly working in and with the environment in the daily and long-term business operations. In 2011, EQUATE was officially certified as an RC company and became Kuwait's first organization to obtain the RC 14001 accreditation and certification. In 2014, EQUATE was re-certified successfully and received re-confirmation from global experts to maintain the RC certificate. Finally, in 2017, EQUATE became the first petrochemical company in the Middle East to obtain the new RC 14001:2015 certification from DNV GL.

Commenting on this achievement, EQUATE's President and CEO, Mohammad Husain said, "We are very proud to receive the RC 14001:2015 certification as it is a testimony to the hard work we are exerting to being compliant with a universal environmental standards in all our business operations. As a signatory to the RC Global Charter, EQUATE will actively support the initiative through all possible means. EQUATE will always seek innovative ways to develop

best practices at all levels in the company."

Husain added, "As a leading industrial organization with operations in three continents, EQUATE dedicates its utmost commitment and care to overall sustainability wherever it operates. Our focus on sustainability has made EQUATE an inspiring role model within and outside Kuwait. This certification fortifies our four core corporate values which are trust, sustainability, reliability and innovation as we continue to improve our EH&S systems."

In compliance with the requirements of RC, as well as ISO 9001 and ISO 14001, EQUATE maintains the highest standards of environmental, health, and safety practices in its operations. Safety for employees, suppliers, customers, and the community always comes first.

RC is the global chemical industry's unifying commitment to the safe management of chemicals throughout their life cycle, while promoting their role in improving quality of life and contributing to sustainable development.

The EQUATE Group is a global producer of petrochemicals that creates a better world. The Group combines EQUATE Petrochemical Company (EQUATE), its subsidiaries and The Kuwait Olefins Company (TKOC). The EQUATE Group is the world's second largest producer of Ethylene Glycol (EG) with industrial complexes in Kuwait, North America and Europe that produce Ethylene, EG, Polyethylene (PE) and Polyethylene Terephthalate (PET). The products are marketed throughout Asia, the Americas, Europe, the Middle East and Africa. As a leading global enterprise, the EQUATE Group strongly pursues sustainability principles and best practices wherever it operates through partnerships with various stakeholders including employees and customers as well as societies as a whole in fields that includes human development, environment, education, health and public awareness. The EQUATE Group's shareholders include Petrochemical Industries Company (PIC), The Dow Chemical Company (Dow), Boubyan Petrochemical Company (BPC) and Qurain Petrochemical Industries Company (QPIC).

The Group provides reliable services and solutions that enables global customers and stakeholders to grow and attain the success they seek by being "Partners in Success." www.equate.com

Driven by our purpose of safeguarding life, property and the environment, DNV GL enables organizations to advance the safety and sustainability of their business. We provide classification, technical assurance, software and independent expert advisory services to the maritime, oil & gas and energy industries. We also provide certification services to customers across a wide range of industries. Combining leading technical and operational expertise, risk methodology and in-depth industry knowledge, we empower our customers' decisions and actions with trust and confidence. We continuously invest in research and collaborative innovation to provide customers and society with operational and technological foresight. Operating in more than 100 countries, our professionals are dedicated to helping customers make the world safer, smarter and greener. www.dnvgl.com

ZAIN JOINS TIP TO DEVELOP TELECOM INFRASTRUCTURE

FB, INTEL, NOKIA, SK TELECOM, D TELEKOM CO-FOUNDERS

BARCELONA: During last week's Mobile World Congress in Barcelona, Zain Group, the leading mobile telecom innovator in eight markets across the Middle East and Africa, announced that it has joined the Telecom Infra Project, (TIP), an initiative co-founded by Facebook, Intel, Nokia, SK Telecom, Deutsche Telekom and others in 2016.

The primary aim of TIP is to bring mobile operators, infrastructure providers, system integrators, and other technology companies together to collaborate on the development of new technologies and reimagine traditional approaches to building and deploying telecom network infrastructure. Operators and the broader telecom industry need to collaborate, be more flexible, innovative and efficient, and TIP looks to help achieve this goal.

As a pioneer in telecommunications in the Middle East and Africa, Zain brings vast expertise and resources to the initiative as it will leverage its regional footprint and experience in network deployments across challenging territories to support TIP.

TIP is exploring new approaches and technologies across these initial focus areas: access, back-

haul, and core and management. The projects within these areas utilize the unique engineering and operational expertise of each member, focusing on developing new technologies and exploring new approaches to deployment in both developed and emerging markets. Each member contributes to the area of its expertise, while learning from others so that together all parties can collaborate and build better, faster, more efficient systems.

Commenting on becoming a part of the TIP initiative, Scott Gegenheimer, Zain Group CEO said, "It could be argued that scaling traditional telecom infrastructure to meet the ever-increasing demand for broadband data is not moving as fast as it needs to ensure customers receive the mobile experience they demand and deserve. Zain recognizes there isn't a single solution

for this, and that no one company can tackle the problem alone. We firmly believe collaboration in innovation will drive efficiencies in our business and we are keen to be part of such prime opportunities wherever they may arise."

Gegenheimer continued, "Being a staunch advocate of the expansion of connectivity for all, Zain fully appreciates the power the internet has to enhance and empower the communities it serves. There are 4 billion people in the world who still don't have a data connection and we commend Facebook and the other founding companies for kick-starting TIP. We have high expectations that this initiative will result in bridging the digital divide by greater inclusion, and call on for more of our regional and industry peers to join us in this initiative."

Since the launch of TIP in February 2016, the initiative has achieved numerous milestones including the creation of 'TIP Ecosystem Acceleration Centers' that incubate local talent around the world and accelerate product development through support from leading global and local investors.

A 'People and Process Project Group' was also created in order to develop and share cultural and process transformation best practices that can improve operators' key metrics. In addition, Facebook contributed Voyager, the industry's first white-box transponder and IP/MPLS routing solution that was successfully tested. Furthermore, Facebook's OpenCellular designs and schematics are now fully open source within TIP to accelerate the industry's ability to provide wireless access in remote areas of the world.

Driving a faster pace of innovation in telecom infrastructure is necessary to meet new technology challenges and to unlock new opportunities for everyone in the ecosystem. Flexibility will be key in everything TIP does though and the goal is to allow mobile network systems to evolve without having to start over.

Zain, together with other leading industry entities across the globe, are committed to exploring new technologies and approaches that will positively impact mobile users of today and the future.



Scott Gegenheimer



KFH EXPANDS DISCOUNTS FOR HESABI, AL-SUNDUS CUSTOMERS

KUWAIT: Kuwait Finance House (KFH) expanded its discount program for its customers to include Hesabi and Al-Sundus segments. KFH offers exclusive Operational Car Leasing "Lease with Maintenance" discounts up to KD 300 for 1-2 years lease contract in collaboration with 6 prestigious car dealerships.

This offer, which lasts until end March, emanates from KFH endeavors to address customers' needs and meet their aspirations by providing them with unique rewards programs in addition to a plethora of special discounts and offers available on

www.kfh.om. The discount program encompasses different car models: Lexus, Jaguar, Maserati, Toyota, GMC and Honda. KFH offers a wide range of vehicles in efforts to meet the requirements of both Hesabi customers for youth, and Al-Sundus for ladies. Customers can take advantage of these offers when visiting KFH showrooms in Al-Rai, Shuwaikh, Dhajeej and Ahmadi.

KFH offers very attractive advantages to the operational car leasing product including comprehensive insurance and comprehensive Takaful Insurance, alternative car and road assistance round the clock.



ALITALIA ENGINEERS GRADUATE FROM ETIHAD AIRWAYS

ABU DHABI: Etihad Airways Engineering has commended four Alitalia graduate managers returning to Italy after successfully completing two years of intensive on-the-job training in Abu Dhabi.

Fabio di Casola, Stefania Vullo, Davide Benati and Bruno Bridarolli were selected from more than 4,000 candidates for the highly coveted positions at Alitalia which involved being sent to the largest commercial aircraft maintenance, repair and overhaul (MRO) services provider in the Middle East for the first two years of their employment. During their time on the Etihad Airways Engineering Graduate Managers Development Program, the four rotated through different departments in order to gain experience of all facets of the MRO business.

Jeff Wilkinson, Chief Executive Officer,

Etihad Airways Engineering, said: "We have every confidence that our equity partner Alitalia will reap the benefits of their hard work and hands-on experience on the world's most advanced aircraft. In the two years these young engineers spent at our state-of-the-art facility, they acquired skills and a depth of knowledge which will stand them in good stead for their whole career."

"At Etihad Airways Engineering, we invest a great deal in cultivating the technical abilities of our engineers and the graduate engineers program. We continue to invest in infrastructure and technology transforming our premises into a world-class facility on all fronts."

Graduate engineer Davide Benati estimated that he would have had to spend 15 years in the industry to obtain the experience he

acquired in the past two years. "We worked alongside senior management in every department from Fleet Development to CAMO (Continuing Airworthiness Management Organization) to Design & Innovation. This experience has been invaluable for our careers."

Fellow graduate Fabio di Casola listed another benefit of working in the Middle East: "The first thing you notice when you arrive is that it is a very multicultural environment. Working in such a multicultural environment has taught us to relate to a lot of different cultures which is so important in our international industry."

Etihad Airways Engineering has served more than 100 airlines and aviation operators from around the world. The company was named MRO Service Provider of the Year - Middle East at the 2016 Aviation Business Awards.



Jeff Wilkinson, Chief Executive Officer, Etihad Airways Engineering, congratulates Alitalia graduate managers (left to right) Fabio di Casola, Stefania Vullo, Davide Benati and Bruno Bridarolli.

DELL EMC JOINS IDC'S CIO SUMMIT 2017 TO BOOST DIGITIZATION

DUBAI: Dell EMC yesterday announced their participation as a Summit partner at the IDC CIO Summit 2017 Middle East, being held on the Royal Caribbean Cruise from March 6th to 9th. Marking its 10th edition, the summit is slated to bring together 100 of the region's most influential CIOs on board to help them evolve into true digital leaders capable of taking customer experience to unimaginable heights.

Themed 'Enabling Dynamic Change for the Digital Era' the summit is designed to enable CIOs rethink the way they leverage information, harness emerging ICT solutions,

and facilitate organization-wide innovation, with the ultimate aim of making their enterprises more agile, efficient, and productive than ever before. In line with this objective, Magnus Nilsson, CTO Commercial EMEA, Dell EMC, will present a session on March 7th about digital transformation and making IT infrastructure more streamlined and agile to meet the increasingly tough demands of today's customers.

Organizations are coming under immense pressure to deliver agile services that support the changing needs of their customers. According to a research by Dell Technologies,

which surveyed 4,000 business leaders - from mid-size to large enterprises, across 16 countries and 12 industries including UAE and Saudi Arabia, 67 percent of business leaders agree customers want faster access to services, however, only 46 percent of businesses can meet this demand. In addition, the survey reveals that only 29 percent of businesses are capable of delivering a personalized experience to their customers, while 32 percent of business leaders state lack of the right technologies to work at the speed of business.

In light of these findings, Dell EMC's par-

ticipation as the Summit Partner is aimed at helping CIOs gather a clear understanding of digital transformation and enable businesses to explore varied ICT solutions to improve efficiency, reduce costs, increase competitiveness and ensure digital readiness. In addition, through this platform, Dell EMC intends to enable organizations create a modernized, automated and transformed business that supports not just their own business strategies but also helps them spot, identify and leverage new opportunities generated by the digital age.

Dell EMC, a part of Dell Technologies,

enables organizations to modernize, automate and transform their data center using industry-leading converged infrastructure, servers, storage and data protection technologies. This provides a trusted foundation for businesses to transform IT, through the creation of a hybrid cloud, and transform their business through the creation of cloud-native applications and big data solutions. Dell EMC services customers across 180 countries - including 98 percent of the Fortune 500 - with the industry's most comprehensive and innovative portfolio from edge to core to cloud.



This file photo shows an employee holding a cable at the Omerin Group main production division in Ambert. The Omerin Group, located in a remote valley of Auvergne, central France, is a leader in products for extreme conditions, manufacturing special cables and wires for use between -190 °C and +1400 °C. —AFP

SINGLE, SECURE MOBILE APP FOR ALL DIGITAL TRANSACTIONS IN MEA

OG MONEY PROVIDES DIGITAL FINANCIAL SERVICES

KUWAIT: A Kuwaiti-based mobile digital payments app has launched today as a single, secure platform for all digital financial services across the Middle East and Africa. The Og Money platform, formerly known as PayIt, already has 900,000 customers across the region.

Og Money is the next evolution of digital financial services, going beyond digital payments to provide users with mobile wallet capabilities, banking, merchant and checkout facilities, virtual stores and turnkey dealer solutions.

"Og Money serves the banked, under-banked and unbanked with a full suite of mobile and digital financial services. It allows users to receive remittances, wages, and government subsidies, make purchases at stores, provide funds for vouchers and gift cards or pay utility bills and school fees," One Global Founder and CEO Mohammed Al-Rashidi said.

"Og Money acts as a seamless platform to connect consumers, banks, telecommunication operators, foreign exchange providers and merchants, all via the convenience of a mobile phone. Broadening access to financial services through digital platforms like Og Money can help boost trade, reduce poverty, empower women and unlock societal-wide economic benefits." Almost 470 million people and small businesses in the Middle East and Africa transact exclusively in cash and they have no secure method to save money. This lack of access to credit prevents individuals from engaging in economic activities that could transform their lives, something that is taken for granted in more established economies.

A September 2016 report by the McKinsey Global Institute quantifying the economic and social impact of digital finance in emerging economies found widespread adoption and use



Mohammed Al-Rashidi

could increase the GDP of all emerging economies by six percent or \$3.7 trillion by 2025.

Mr Al-Rashidi founded One Global in 2004 and has helped grow Og Money into one of the leading digital payments platforms available in the Middle East. It currently has more than 900,000 regular users, thousands of merchants on the platform and manages millions of dollars of transactions every day through the app.

"Og Money opens up a world of opportunity for people without credit facilities, while also connecting businesses with vast, untapped customers in emerging markets. That's why we have engineered Og Money to be the most secure,

reliable, user friendly and convenient one-stop-shop app for facilitating digital transactions and boosting the cashless economy," said Al-Rashidi.

One Global is a Microsoft partner and Og Money has received official authorization and compliance certification from the Central Bank of Bahrain, Kuwait Finance House, Warba Bank in Kuwait, Bank Misr in Egypt, Tadhamon International Islamic Bank in Yemen and many other banks across the region. It's also PCI/DSS compliant and maintains the highest security level within the financial services industry. Og Money consumer is available for download from the Apple iTunes App Store and Google Play Android market.

OMNESMEDIA.COM PROVIDES DIGITALS SOLUTIONS 1,700 MEDIA PEOPLE IN GCC

DUBAI: Since OMNESmedia.com, a specialized platform that provides innovative digital solutions covering all media sectors across the globe, was launched in the UAE in January, the high-end web portal has received more than 1700 media people from different media organizations across the GCC States. In addition, up to 1000 media and marketing companies have registered for the unique media solutions provider, 67 percent of which are media corporations and 33 percent of which are marketing, advertising and media support services firms. The web portal was launched by BASMA Media, a leading company specializing in media support services.

The UAE accounts for 63 percent of the data registered and compiled in the web portal, a fact which further verifies the considerable base of media, advertising and marketing organisations and agencies hosted by the country. The remainder of the GCC states is responsible for the other 37 percent.

Commenting on the positive interactive environment created by the company recently, Sheikh Sultan Bin Ahmed AlQasimi, Chairman of BASMA Media said, "The UAE, Gulf and Arab media scene is a favorite to thousands of companies and organisations operating in a sector vital to the economy. As such, we are committed to turn OMNESmedia.com into a premier digital platform that represents a reliable and authentic source of information for media people, professionals and all those interested in the marketing and media scene across the region."

He added: "The interactive involvement exhibited by our audience and by different media sectors has reflected the growing importance of having authentic and reliable sources of information that cater to

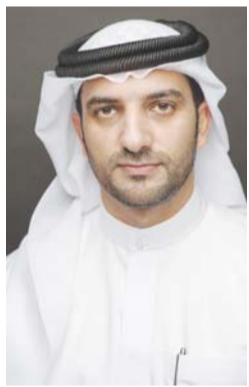
the needs of the media, advertising and marketing services in the region.

And today, we thank God Almighty that OMNESmedia.com covers most of the media organisations in the GCC States. Work is underway to complete and integrate the information and data of private sector companies working in different media fields."

Chairman Sheikh Al-Qasimi noted that OMNESmedia.com has already started compiling media information about companies operating in Egypt, North Africa, Jordan, Lebanon, and Palestine before embarking on the US and Europe markets as per the official expansion plan. On his part, Nasser Al-Sarimi, CEO of BASMA Media, mentioned that OMNESmedia.com, being a high-end smart digital solution provider, offers a variety and depth of information, thus bringing myriad benefits to media organisations and individuals working in the booming industry.

He notes: "We will tirelessly seek to attract different media organisations, companies and high potential individuals working all over the world while continuing to develop new digital solutions over the current year in a way that ensures our continued quest towards distinction and excellence. The entire world is now witnessing a transition toward digital and electronic services, a shift that underlines the significance of our digital platform."

OMNESmedia.Com is a unique state-of-the-art socio-informative web portal that empowers all parties concerned within the media industry, including advertisers, PR professionals and so on to connect, measure and reach their objectives through one single platform that caters to all kinds of media, marketing and advertising requirements.



Sheikh Sultan Bin Ahmed

HACKERS DRAWN TO ENERGY SECTOR'S LACK OF SENSORS, CONTROLS

HOUSTON: Oil and gas companies, including some of the most celebrated industry names in the Houston area, are facing increasingly sophisticated hackers seeking to steal trade secrets and disrupt operations, according to a newspaper investigation.

A stretch of the Gulf Coast near Houston features one of the largest concentrations of refineries, pipelines and chemical plants in the country, and cybersecurity experts say it's an alluring target for espionage and other cyberattacks. "There are actors that are scanning for these vulnerable systems and taking advantage of those weaknesses when they find them," said Marty Edwards, director of U.S. Homeland Security's Cyber Emergency Response Team for industrial systems.

Homeland Security, which is responsible for protecting the nation from cybercrime, received reports of some 350 incidents at energy companies from 2011 to 2015, an investigation by the Houston Chronicle has found (<http://bit.ly/2l0FJgz>). Over that period, the agency found nearly 900 security flaws within US energy companies, more than any other industry.

Steps are being taken to thwart attacks. For instance, the Coast Guard in a joint operation with Houston police patrolled the waters southeast of Houston last year conducting sweeps for unprotected wireless signals that hack-

ers could use to gain access to facilities. The operation was one of the first of its kind in the US concentrating on cyberattacks by sea.

But the vast network of oil and gas operations makes it difficult to secure. Thousands of interconnected sensors and controls that run oil and gas facilities remain rife with weak spots.

Many companies the technology and personnel to detect hackers. Equipment was designed decades ago without security features, and efforts over the years to link computer networks to devices that monitor pressure or control valves have exposed operations to online threats.

"You could mess with a refinery or cause a vessel to explode," Richard Garcia, a former FBI agent who became a cybersecurity specialist, told the Chronicle.

Power, chemical and nuclear facilities must adhere to strict cybersecurity measures, but federal law doesn't impose such standards on the oil and gas sector. And when oil and gas companies have been infiltrated by a hacker, they're not required to report the incident.

More than 20 of the nation's largest oil companies - including Exxon Mobil Corp. and ConocoPhillips, refiner Phillips 66 and pipeline operator Kinder Morgan - declined to comment or did not respond to multiple requests for comment. The American Petroleum Institute, the national trade association for oil and gas, also declined to comment. — AP

ALPHABET LAWSUIT AGAINST UBER CEMENTS END OF UNEASY MARRIAGE

SAN FRANCISCO: When Uber Technologies Inc was raising venture capital in 2013, it was one of the hottest deals around - and no one was more eager to write a check than Bill Maris and David Krane of Google's venture capital arm. Not everyone at Google Ventures, since renamed GV, agreed. The firm already had an investment in a competitor, Sidecar, and Uber was demanding what then looked like a sky-high valuation.

Maris and Krane prevailed, and the deal is now regarded as GV's greatest success. On paper, the firm's initial 2013 investment of \$258 million gained about 14 times its value over the next three years to more than \$3.5 billion. But now Alphabet Inc, Google's corporate parent, is suing Uber for theft of trade secrets, alleging that one of the top engineers in its self-driving car program decamped with thousands of confidential files, including designs that helped him start self-driving truck company Otto and then quickly sell it to Uber. Uber denies those claims.

The lawsuit, filed by Alphabet's self-driving car unit Waymo, has jolted the fast-growing and highly competitive industry that has sprung up around autonomous vehicles and ride services, which are seen as the future of private road transport.

Yet the confrontation was a long time in the making: the complex relationship between the companies was tense from the start, according to people familiar with the situation, and soured further as they increasingly competed with each other. Now, if the Waymo suit damages Uber, GV's investment in the ride-hailing company stands to go down as a Silicon Valley rarity: a large funding deal undermined by the firm's own investors. "Whatever Waymo gains, Google Ventures loses," said Stephen Diamond, associate professor of law at Santa Clara University.

The lawsuit is just one in a series of recent public setbacks for Uber, including allegations of sexual harassment that prompted an internal investigation, a video of Chief Executive Travis Kalanick arguing with an Uber driver that led him to make a public apology, and Uber's admission on Friday that it used a secret track-

ing tool to avoid authorities. "We have reviewed Waymo's claims and determined them to be a baseless attempt to slow down a competitor and we look forward to vigorously defending against them in court," Uber said in a statement in response to the lawsuit. "In the meantime, we will continue our hard work to bring self-driving benefits to the world."

A spokeswoman for GV declined to comment. Deal at any cost

Uber was more than just another investment for then-fledgling Google Ventures, which needed a high-profile deal to put it on the map. Maris and Krane were early Uber fans, but it took about two years for the pair to connect with Kalanick. When Uber investor Benchmark finally brokered a meeting in May 2013, the Google Ventures partners were determined to do a deal at virtually any cost, according to two sources close to the transaction.

With other would-be investors waiting in adjacent conference rooms at Uber's San Francisco offices, Maris and Krane made their pitch to invest. Kalanick pushed for a higher valuation, without a board seat; Google Ventures pushed back, asking for a board observer seat and a liquidation preference for protection if Uber was sold at a loss, one of the sources said.

They finally came to terms, with a \$3.5 billion valuation, and there were signs that a broader alliance could be in the offing. Separately, David Drummond, Google's senior vice president of corporate development, had a social relationship with Kalanick, and he joined the board.

A ride in a self-driving car and a meeting with Google CEO Larry Page, recounted in Brad Stone's recent book "The Upstarts," seemed to bode well for the relationship. But conflicts emerged immediately. Kalanick, a tough negotiator, wanted a discount on the software tools behind Google Maps, the company's ubiquitous mapping software, according to a person close to the transaction. The best Google Ventures could offer was close contact between Uber and Google's mapping team, the person said.



SAN FRANCISCO: This March 1, 2017 photo shows an exterior view of the headquarters of Uber in San Francisco. Uber has been wielding a secret weapon to thwart authorities who have been trying to curtail or shut down its ride-hailing service in cities around the world. — AP

Kalanick also wanted Uber to be featured prominently in Google Maps, eventually giving customers a way to hail an Uber ride directly from Maps, and Google agreed, a source close to Uber said. But Uber felt Google dragged its heels on the integration and found the initial rollout disappointing, the source said. The friction only grew as Uber turned its attention to autonomous driving, an area where Google had already established an early lead. Uber announced its intentions in typically abrupt style in early 2015, poaching 40 faculty and researchers from Carnegie Mellon University to set up a self-driving lab in Pennsylvania.

It bought mapping software firm deCarta and began investing heavily in its own mapping systems. Meanwhile, Google launched an on-demand delivery service, a market Uber is also chasing, and began offering a carpooling service through driving app Waze, which it acquired in 2013. The carpooling feature in particular rankled Uber, a source close to the company said.

"Things escalated from frenemy to now enemy quite quickly," said Anand Sanwal, CEO and co-founder of venture capital research firm CB Insights. The tension bubbled to the surface last August, when Drummond stepped down from Uber's board. Uber declined comment on any of its dealings with Google and did not make Kalanick available for an interview.

Undermined by its own investors?

Uber's aggressive culture was the subject of many conversations at Google Ventures, a source close to the transaction said. Hoping to influence the startup, the venture firm at first encouraged a flow of talent from Google to Uber.

Yet that too ultimately created problems. Anthony Levandowski, a key engineering manager at the self-driving car unit, now called Waymo, began to talk openly about leaving the company as the autonomous vehicle field blossomed, according to Alphabet's lawsuit. In January 2016, Levandowski and some colleagues quit Alphabet to form the self-driving truck start-up Otto, which Uber acquired later that year for \$680 million. Alphabet claims in its lawsuit that Levandowski had been in touch with Uber even before he left Alphabet.

In the lawsuit, Alphabet alleges Levandowski downloaded 14,000 proprietary design documents and used them to create Otto's - and later Uber's - version of a key autonomous vehicle technology called Lidar, which uses light pulses reflected off objects to gauge their position.

Uber and Levandowski deny the allegations. The high-stakes legal showdown over whether vital information was transferred between the two companies is perhaps the logical conclusion of their opaque relationship.

All along, Uber remained mysterious to its Google Ventures investors. Kalanick was adamant from the start that he would share little information, and try as it might, Google Ventures could not gain better visibility over time, two sources said. If anything, Kalanick grew more tight-lipped as his business matured. "It was one of the few companies where we sat there and said, 'Hope it goes well,'" one of the sources said. — Reuters



BANGKOK: People ride a motorcycle on the narrow pathways of Bang Krachao, the so-called 'Green Lung' of Bangkok. —AFP photos



BANGKOK: Photo shows an aerial view of Bang Krachao, the so-called 'Green Lung' of Bangkok.

THE BATTLE TO SAVE BANGKOK'S 'GREEN LUNG'

BANGKOK: Leaping out from Bangkok's vast concrete sprawl is a kidney-shaped green space, home to hundreds of plant and bird species, and where cars are outnumbered by bicycles. But residents and campaigners fear the unique ecosystem and character of the city's so-called "Green Lung" is under threat as developers lure locals with lucrative land deals. Bang Krachao is an artificial island formed by a canal and a bend in the meandering Chao Praya river.

The area stands apart on Google Maps: a swathe of greenery in an otherwise concrete jungle of traffic-choked streets, towering condos and sprawling factories. While the rest of Bangkok has developed at a dizzying pace in the last five decades—often with little thought put into sustainable long-term planning—Bang Krachao remains an oasis of calm. Covering 16 square kilometers, its path-

ways are popular with weekend cyclists and expat daytrippers seeking respite from helter-skelter of Bangkok's streets.

But the fight is now on to stop the concrete consuming Bangkok's last tropical sanctuary. Bang Krachao's abundant space and proximity to the city centre have caught the eye of investors. Soaring land prices are teasing residents into selling up. "I feel bad to sell it but my aunt is ill. She needs the money to take care of her health," Supi Saengta, 62, who has lived in the area her whole life, but is now selling the family's 6400-square-metre plot of land, which could fetch 24 million baht (\$685,000).

More buildings mean more roads—a major change in an area where many residents still get around on a network of raised concrete footpaths that snake through the tropical foliage. Eventually "these paths will be knocked down and replaced by big

roads which block the waterways," said Jakkaphan Thruadmarakha, an environmental campaigner who was born in the area. "We can already see that some of the canals are becoming stagnant and have problems with water drainage," he added, urging future development on the wedge of land to be sustainable.

Green not grey

Those battling to keep the Green Lung green have some powerful backers in their corner. Thailand's revered late King Bhumibol Adulyadej is said to have declared his wish for Bang Krachao to be preserved for future generations. His daughter, the popular Princess Sirindhorn, has made several visits to the area. In the wake of Bhumibol's death last October, the current military government announced a plan to safeguard Bang Krachao's wild character.

The three-year scheme, which involves the Royal Forestry Department, Kasetsart University and the Thai oil firm PTT, aims to renovate public green spaces and ensure that at least 60 percent of the area remains free from development. The difficulty in a country like Thailand, where land is in short supply and corruption rampant, is developers and powerful businesses have long found ways to circumvent, or simply ignore, environmental protections. "If we do nothing, the traditional way of life, with houses in farmland, with mangrove forest surrounding Bang Krachao, will disappear," warns Montathip Sommeechai, a lecturer in Kasetsart University's forestry faculty.

She says many of the environmental challenges facing the district have their roots in the changing lifestyles of those who live there. Whereas most residents once made their living from farming, many now just tend to their gardens in

their free time, so alternative uses for the land need to be found. Montathip hopes that by encouraging organic agriculture, Bang Krachao could become an "urban food bank" for the Thai capital.

Ecotourism is also being touted as a part of a possible sustainable future. And the sleek, eco-friendly Bangkok Treehouse hotel, which opened up on the eastern bank of Bang Krachao five years ago, is leading the way with solar powered rooms. "An important thing is that the atmosphere here is like up-country," says 27-year-old manager Tanaporn Wittayasiripaiboon. "We tried to design the place to blend nature with a modern and unique style." Amid Bangkok's relentless economic and demographic growth, for now Bang Krachao is a throwback to simpler times. But it will take ingenuity and political will to keep the Green Lung breathing. —AFP

US CONFIRMS AVIAN INFLUENZA IN TENNESSEE'S CHICKEN FLOCK

73,500 BIRDS TO BE CULLED TO STOP THE VIRUS

TENNESSEE: A strain of bird flu has been detected in a chicken breeder flock on a Tennessee farm contracted to US food giant Tyson Foods Inc, and the 73,500 birds will be culled to stop the virus from entering the food system, government and company officials said on Sunday. The US Department of Agriculture said this represented the first confirmed case of highly pathogenic H7 avian influenza (HPAI) in commercial poultry in the United States this year. It is the first time HPAI has been found in Tennessee, the state government said.

Tyson, the biggest chicken meat producer in the United States, said in a statement it was working with Tennessee and federal officials to contain the virus by euthanizing the birds on the contract farm. In 2014 and 2015, during a widespread outbreak of HPAI, the United States killed nearly 50 million birds, mostly egg-laying hens. The losses pushed US egg prices to record highs and prompted trading partners to ban imports of American poultry, even though there was little infection then in the broiler industry.

No people were affected in that outbreak,

which was primarily of the H5N2 strain. The risk of human infection in poultry outbreaks is low, although in China people have died this winter amid an outbreak of the H7N9 virus in birds. The facility in Tennessee's Lincoln County has been placed under quarantine, along with approximately 30 other poultry farms within a 6.2-mile radius of the site, the state said. Other flocks in the quarantined area are being tested, it added.

Tyson, the USDA and the state did not name the facility involved. Tyson said that it did not expect disruptions to its chicken business. The USDA should have more information today evening about the particular strain of the virus involved, spokeswoman Donna Karlsons said by email. HPAI bird flu was last found in a commercial turkey flock in Indiana in January 2016. The USDA said it would inform the World Organization for Animal Health (OIE) and international trading partners of the outbreak.

The biggest traditional markets for US chicken meat are Mexico and Canada, which introduced state or regional bans on US broiler exports after the outbreak two years ago, and China, which

imposed a national ban. Tennessee's broiler production is too small to rank it in the top five US producing states but it is the third-largest generator of cash receipts in agriculture for the state. In January, the USDA detected bird flu in a wild duck in Montana that appeared to match one of the strains found during the 2014 and 2015 outbreak.

The United States stepped up biosecurity measures aimed at preventing the spread of bird flu after the outbreak two years ago. Tyson said precautions being taken include disinfecting all vehicles entering farms and banning all nonessential visitor access to contract farms. In recent months, different strains of bird flu have been confirmed across Asia and in Europe. Authorities have culled millions of birds in affected areas to control the outbreaks. France, which has the largest poultry flock in the European Union, has reported outbreaks of the highly contagious H5N8 bird flu virus. In South Korea, the rapid spread of the H5N6 strain of the virus has led to the country's worst-ever outbreak of bird flu. —Reuters



MOYALE: Villagers walk past the carcass of a dead cow in the drought-affected village of Bandarero, near Moyale town on the Ethiopian border, in northern Kenya. —AP

INSURANCE VITAL, BUT NO MAGIC BULLET TO FIGHT AFRICA DROUGHT

LONDON: More developing countries urgently need insurance to cushion their farmers against weather extremes that can worsen poverty, but it is no magic bullet to ward off the escalating impacts of climate change, experts say. The burning question of how to stop drought becoming a major crisis - especially in Africa - has caused many to eye insurance as a possible answer.

"People think sometimes that insurance is the solution for everything. It is not correct," said Mohamed Beavogui, director general of the African Risk Capacity, an African Union agency that helps states plan for natural disasters and climate change, and provides them with insurance through its company, ARC Limited. "Insurance is ... (for) when you have done everything you can and there is still a risk you cannot cover," said Beavogui.

Planning for those risks - such as the number of people a government would be unable to help in a crisis - is vital, he told the Thomson Reuters Foundation. As climate change bites harder, bringing with it worse droughts and floods, demands on donors' purse strings are likely to grow, and experts say development gains - especially in Africa - are at risk of being rolled back. Last year, southern African states appealed for \$2.9 billion in aid when the region was hit with its worst drought in 35 years, affecting 39 million people. Now, drought in the continent's east is pushing millions into hunger.

Insurance can be triggered more quickly than international aid, which can take months to fund. ARC's cover is based on a pre-agreed plan for how the government will use the payout. Since ARC Ltd began issuing policies in 2014, eight nations have taken out insurance and four - Senegal, Mauritania, Niger and Malawi - have received payouts totalling \$34 million. The index-based insurance offers maximum coverage of \$30 million per country per season for drought events that occur with a frequency of one in five years or less. But while drought last year left 6.5 million people in Malawi in need of food aid, Malawi did not receive an ARC payout until January.

Malawi took out insurance based on a crop-long-cycle maize that, as it turned out, most farmers did not grow in the 2015/2016 season. Long-cycle maize survived the drought, while the short-cycle maize most farmers grew did not. In the end, ARC's member states agreed to

an \$8.1 million payout for Malawi - the amount it would have received had the government requested short-cycle maize as the base. "It means that we shouldn't rely only on data the government gives us," Beavogui said. ARC will now also check what farmers are growing with research centers and extension services, among others, he added.

Jury still out

Insurance companies that pay out directly to farmers are still few and far between in many developing countries, and they offer limited services. Where they do exist, they mainly serve commercial farmers because the poorest cannot afford to pay premiums without help from a donor or government, said Andrew Shepherd, director of the Chronic Poverty Advisory Network, based at the Overseas Development Institute, a London-based thinktank. "The jury is still out" on whether insurance can make the poorest farmers more resilient to drought, but it can play an important role in preventing wealthier farmers from becoming impoverished, he said. "All the focus by governments, and often donors, is on getting people out of poverty, and not on preventing people from falling into poverty," he said.

India is one of the few developing countries with a national insurance scheme for farmers, including those with as little as one cow or buffalo, which works through local agents, said Shepherd. Senegal has two kinds of insurance - macro-insurance through ARC, and micro-insurance - both of which paid out when bad drought hit in 2014. The Compagnie Nationale d'Assurance Agricole du Senegal (CNAAS) - set up by the government, insurance companies and international agencies - targets most farmers in rain-fed crop areas with index-based insurance products.

In 2014, Senegal's ARC payout reached people and livestock with aid, getting help to herders within three months, said Mathieu Dubreuil, micro-insurance advisor at the World Food Program (WFP). "It was a good match" between ARC which pays out in a crisis and micro-insurance schemes that pay out more often, he said. WFP, which offers small-scale insurance for farmers, is also exploring taking out ARC insurance, which would give an additional payout to countries, disbursed either by WFP or through the government. —Reuters

FROM NEW BEANS TO ANCIENT PLANTS, DROUGHT-BUSTING CROPS TAKE ROOT

BOGOTA: As farmers worldwide experience more frequent drought and erratic rainfall linked to climate change, the race to find and improve drought-resistant crops grows ever more important. In recent decades, research has increased to see how food crops cope with dry conditions, and scientists are breeding and crossing seeds to make them more drought-tolerant. But major obstacles exist in scaling up their use. "Getting new crop varieties into the hands of a large number of farmers quickly is the challenge," said Robert Asiedu, head of biotechnology and genetic improvement at the International Institute of Tropical Agriculture, a research centre based in Nigeria.

"It can be five to 10 years before large quantities of new varieties reach farmers... That's the main bottleneck now." It is crucial for farmers to grow drought-resistant crops as part of a range of pro-active measures, experts say. For example, soil degradation and deforestation exacerbate the effects of drought because soil loses its ability to retain water, so farmers must improve soil fertility and irrigation practices. Below are some of the drought-tolerant crops and methods farmers across the world are using to combat drought:

Intercropping

Staple food crops like sorghum, cassava, sweet potato, pearl millet, cowpea and groundnut are naturally more drought-tolerant than maize. For centuries, farmers in parts of West Africa have grown maize alongside cassava and sweet potatoes. The practice known as intercropping - growing

two or more crops together - means farmers have another crop to fall back on when maize harvests fail because of poor rainfall. Intercropping was introduced to maize farmers in East Africa in the 1990s.

Cowpea

Cowpea, also known as black-eyed pea, is mainly grown by small farmers in more than 80 countries, from Nigeria to Brazil. Cowpea thrives in parched soils and drought-prone areas where its roots can grow with as little as 300 mm (11.8 inches) of rainfall per year. Once cowpea seeds have enough moisture to take root, the plants can survive drought. The stems and stalks of the high protein grain can also be used as fodder for livestock. Often intercropped with maize and cotton, cowpea plants provide shade and dense cover that help protect soil and preserve moisture. Researchers are trying to map the genes found in cowpea to produce improved drought-resistant varieties.

Chickpea

Chickpea is one of the most important grain legume crops in the world. Thanks to its drought resistance, it is widely grown among small farmers in dryland areas of South Asia and in China. Scientists in Australia are leading the way in research to enhance drought tolerance in chickpeas and to better understand how the food crop adapts to prolonged dry spells.

Early maturing crops

Shifting rainfall patterns, often linked to climate change, have shortened the rainy season in many coun-

tries worldwide. Hardest hit are small-scale and subsistence farmers as they largely depend on rain-fed crops for their livelihoods. To adapt, farmers are increasingly planting new varieties of food crops that take less time to grow. New varieties need 90 to 110 days to mature - against 120 days plus for traditional crops - and can survive without rain for three weeks. In recent years, early-maturing food crops have been adopted by tens of millions of farmers in sub-Saharan Africa.

Ancient plants

Chia, a flowering plant, is grown for its edible seeds and is known to thrive in hot and dry weather. Once widely grown by the ancient Aztecs of Central America, chia is being rediscovered by small farmers across Latin America, including Guatemala, Bolivia, Nicaragua and Ecuador. High in protein, chia seeds can be eaten whole, ground into flour and pressed for oil.

Tarwi

With its brilliant blue blossom, the tarwi pea plant stands out from the rest in the field. Once grown centuries ago by the Incas, more Andean subsistence farming communities, particularly in Bolivia's highlands, are growing tarwi again. The drought-resistant seeds are nutritious, high in protein and a source of cooking oil.

New Maize Varieties

Maize is one of the world's most important cereal crops. In the past decade, farmers - especially in sub-Saharan Africa - have tried new



TOKYO: Photo shows plastic hamburger earrings made at the studio of Fake Food Hatanaka in Tokorozawa, a suburb of Tokyo. —AFP photos



TOKYO: Norihiro Hatanaka, president of Fake Food Hatanaka, introduces plastic food dishes at his company's studio in Tokorozawa, a suburb of Tokyo.

JAPAN'S 'FAKE FOOD' MORE APPETIZING THAN THE ORIGINAL

TOKOROZAWA: They may look good enough to eat, but Japan's mouthwatering food replicas are only for show as restaurateurs compete for the attention of hungry customers. They're common sights in this food-obsessed nation, with everything from sudsy beers and perfectly glazed sushi to hamburgers and deep-fried pork cutlets, known as tonkatsu, on display.

Making fake food is a craft that Noriyuki Mishima has spent the last six decades perfecting. "I haven't counted but I must have made tens of thousands of these dishes," said the 79-year-old, as he painted a plastic roast of beef. "The toughest thing is probably getting the color right." There are no complex machines or special tools at Hatanaka, an eight-person firm in a Tokyo suburb where veterans like Mishima see themselves as artists. It's just simple cutting tools, paint brushes, airbrush guns, and drying ovens at the little company with a "Fake Food Hatanaka" sign out front.

They don't use wax anymore—it's durable silicone these days—but the practice has otherwise changed little since the first replicas were made in Japan about a century ago. During the early 1920s, artists producing models of human organs for doctors, were approached by restaurants to do the same thing for the food they wanted to sell. The idea spread rapidly as eating out soared in popularity and rural people flocked to the cities. Unused to what city restaurants had to offer, the models gave country dwellers and locals alike a quick visual rundown of the chef's specialties.

'Artist's touch'

They're also a handy point-and-order option for foreign tourists in a country where most menus are in Japanese only. "Photos don't really give a sense of volume—the replicas are the actual size so customers know immediately when they go into a restaurant what to expect, even before they're served," said Norihiro Hatanaka, who runs



TOKYO: Photo shows plastic strawberry earrings made at the studio of Fake Food Hatanaka in Tokorozawa, a suburb of Tokyo. In addition to its staple of making fake food the company is pushing into new lines like fake food fashion accessories, such as fruit earrings, fried egg rings, and bacon slice headbands. —AFP

the family company which was founded in the mid-sixties. Hatanaka doesn't worry much about new technologies, such as 3-D printers, taking over the food replica business. "3-D printers cannot recreate an artist's touch and it would ultimately be more expensive because the materials are

pricey and you'd still have to keep painting them," he says. "It's a job for humans who have the creativity that machines lack. They don't know what is beautiful and appetizing." For veteran Mishima some the hardest work is repro-

ducing raw products like sushi. "When it's grilled fish, the characteristic colors are easier to recreate," he said. "But creating the color of freshness—that's tough." Any food can be recreated from a silicone mold, whether it's a spongy cake or sizzling hamburger. Each bit—bun, meat, tomato, cheese—is made separately before they're painted and assembled piece by piece. The last step is a coat of varnish to give food a glistening look sure to catch the eye of peckish passers-by. But replicas don't come cheap. A single dish can cost several hundred dollars, so some restaurants rent food model sets by the month for upwards of 6,000 yen (\$50).

Bacon headbands

Takizo Iwasaki - whose eponymous firm controls about half the market in Japan—is widely credited for turning faux food into what is now a \$90 million business. It's not a growth industry, though. High-end restaurants shun the idea of plastic replicas to display their dishes, and the idea hasn't caught on much outside Japan. But Mishima and his colleagues—three twenty-something women—don't think replicas are going to fade into culinary history just yet. "It's been a childhood dream to make this fake food," said employee Asumi Shimodaira, as she worked on a plate of inedible ravioli. For company president Hatanaka, it's the action models—like a spaghetti-wrapped fork suspended in air—that are his favorite.

But the firm isn't content to stick to old recipes. It is pushing into new lines like fake food fashion accessories, such as fruit earrings, fried egg rings, and bacon slice headbands. They also make pieces for those looking for unique footwear, or fun window displays. One pair of boots, covered in plastic toast and dripping with fake ice cream and fruit sauce, can sell for 36,000 yen. "We're not satisfied just taking the orders from restaurants," Hatanaka said. "We like to make original creations too." —AFP

NO SIGN OF LETUP IN NIGERIA LAND WARS

BAKIN KOGI: Dalami Tukura stands with a long, hand-crafted musket slung over his right shoulder next to his brother's freshly-dug grave, a mound of red earth marked with a cross made of woven grass. The burly 40-year-old maize farmer's brother was killed just days ago when suspected cattle herders attacked his home in northern Nigeria. "He was shot," Tukura said, his voice hoarse with emotion. "I want to protect my home town and my entire family." Tukura's defiance is increasingly common across southern Kaduna state. For the past few months, tit-for-tat attacks in the area by mostly Muslim Fulani herdsmen and Christian farmers have killed hundreds

in a bloody battle for land that shows no sign of stopping.

On February 19, suspected herdsmen descended on Bakin Kogi village at dusk, firing guns, burning houses and stealing mattresses, television sets and food. Tukura's elder brother was one of seven people killed that night. In total, 26 people died in similar twilight raids over the span of two days on neighboring villages. The latest phase of a decades-long conflict over land has claimed at least 200 lives since October last year, according to conservative estimates—more than those killed by feared Boko Haram Islamists in the northeast in the same period.

The land wars have disrupted food production at a time when shortages caused by Boko Haram's insurgency have brought some areas of the remote region to the brink of famine. Without a national strategy in place, the tension between herdsmen and farmers has been building over the past year. Experts blame a heavy-handed, militarised response by the government, and incendiary comments from political and religious leaders for fanning the flames of animosity. Sola Tayo, associate fellow at London-based think tank Chatham House, said that with Boko Haram the conflict "is a lot more clear cut, you know the enemy". However, the fact that the

land wars are "being manipulated by so many different players just fuels violence", Tayo added.

Law and order 'breakdown'

Most of the women and children in Bakin Kogi have left. They have been replaced by military and policemen, who are now stationed in the village and run checkpoints on the major roads. The closest town, Kafanchan, is under a 24-hour curfew. The village reeks of smoke and the spiced honey smell of ginger, one of the region's staple crops heaped in charred piles around the burnt houses. Groups of armed vigilantes hold meetings under

the cool shade of broad mango trees, while others patrol the dusty dirt roads on motorbikes. They look apprehensive, but also resolute. They have heard another attack is coming.

Nigeria's President Muhammadu Buhari—a Hausa-speaking Fulani Muslim—has faced intense criticism for only speaking out about the conflict following an attack in December last year. He is now on indefinite sick leave in London. Kaduna State Governor Nasir El-Rufai's response has been to call in the troops and blame "conflict entrepreneurs" for stoking violence. El-Rufai announced early in February a ramped-up security presence, including two battalions and 10 mobile

units, as well as daily airforce surveillance. But the politicians, who claim Fulani heritage, have struggled to convince the people of southern Kaduna that farmers' interests are being protected as clashes continue to erupt. Meanwhile in Nigeria's largely Christian south, pastors and politicians are calling for farmers to defend themselves in the face of "rampaging herdsmen." Neither the Kaduna government nor the federal government are perceived as impartial arbitrators," Nigerian political analyst Chris Ngwodo said. "It is more accurate to see the southern Kaduna conflict as a subset of a broader crisis of state failure and the breakdown of law and order." —AFP

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استشاري أطفال
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XPRESS MONEY CREDITS PARTNERS FOR KUWAIT GROWTH

Xpress Money, one of the world's most dependable money transfer brands, has credited the collaborative effort of all its agent partners in Kuwait for its steady growth in the country in 2016. Xpress Money felicitated its partners for their efforts in driving business growth, at Conclave 2016 - the brand's annual rewards & recognition program for its partners. Organized for the 3rd consecutive year, Conclave 2016 is a gala event that witnesses the presence of the senior management of Xpress Money and its agent partners in full attendance each year.

"Our agents are the face of the Xpress Money brand and they power our growth in markets worldwide. Conclave is a sign

of our appreciation for our partners who have not only helped us grow our business but have also strengthened our presence in the country by increasing brand recall and customer satisfaction. Our partners in Kuwait have always kept Xpress Money at the forefront of all their endeavors which has helped our brand attain newer milestones, year on year. Conclave 2016 is our sincere effort to felicitate and thank each of our valued partners for their undying support and encouragement. We pledge to continue with the same zeal as we embark on this new phase in 2017," said Arvind Mylar, Vice President - Business Development (MEASA & CIS), Xpress Money.

AASHIRVAAD 2017: THE BLESSING CEREMONY OF ICSK CLASS XII

The Indian Community School, Senior Branch, organized a colorful Blessing Ceremony for 285 outgoing students of Class XII on 16th February, 2017, at the ICSK Senior Branch auditorium. The students were blessed by invited dignitaries and the ICSK fraternity. The chief guest of the occasion was His Excellency Sunil Jain, the Ambassador of India to Kuwait. The Honorary members of ICSK Board of Trustees, Principals and Vice Principals of all the branches of ICSK, Teachers, Parents and special invitees were present on the occasion. The event climaxed with a walk of the graduating students with candles, symbolizing sparks of wisdom, in their hands across the auditorium amid thunderous applause by the audience consisting mainly of their parents.

V Binumon, Principal of ICSK Senior, welcomed the gathering. He exhorted the students to scale the heights of success through persistence and hard work. He reminded the students that blessings were integral in order to achieve success in life,

along with the fruits of hard work one put in. To invoke the blessings of the Almighty, the invited dignitaries lit the ceremonial lamp. A melodious inspirational tune was rendered by the members of the School Choir, Sawranjali. The Chief Guest, His Excellency Mr. Sunil Jain, the Ambassador of India to Kuwait, in his address, recollected his student days with nostalgia. He recalled his ambition and the hard work he put in to achieve the same. He advised the students to work tirelessly to achieve their goals in life. HE Sunil Jain also advised them not to forget our Mother Land India where ever students may reach professionally in their future. The reminisces shared by the student representatives, Vanesa Emilia Swares, Master Akash Ramesh Kumar,

Madhumitha Venugopal and Anjali Santha Kumar brought back the images of bygone years into the minds of all the distinguished members. The principal and teachers eulogized the students for their academic excellence and discipline. They also hoped

they would make their alma mater, parents and friends proud as they grow up further. The guests too wished them all success. All the students were escorted by their parents to the stage to receive the mementoes. The class wise photo session was arranged for the graduates.

George Swamy, Coordinator for Aashirvaad - 2017 rendered the vote of thanks to all the invitees and the ICSK fraternity. In the exhortation ceremony that followed, Dr Sam T Kuruvilla, the Vice-Principal of Senior Branch, read out the promises to be kept by the newly graduated students. As the students took oath, they received the lit candles that also signify the dispelling of darkness of ignorance as also conveyed by the ICSK motto 'From Darkness to Light'. The ceremony concluded as the students were blessed by teachers as they walked through the 'corridor of blessings', ready to step out of school and face the outside world with hope and confidence. A special dinner was arranged for the students at the end of the program.



BHAVANITE BRINGS LAURELS TO THE MIDDLE EAST

The adjective 'incredible' is merely a lackluster understatement when it is used to describe the little Bhavanite Aaron Dani Prasad and his global achievements. The fourth grader who hails from the state of Maharashtra in India is a wunderkind who has amazed the world with his highest international benchmark score in Mathematics in the entire Gulf region. This proud prodigy is a student of Indian Educational School (Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan) in Kuwait.

Since his Kindergarten days, the little master has shown a great fascination toward Mental Math, Brain Teasers, and number games. This great feat was achieved by this little Math wizard in the international examination conducted by the Brisbane based Australian Council for Educational Research. The examination was

held in various centers in the Middle East in November 2016 and thousands of brainiacs had appeared for this well-admired examination to have their IBT scores assessed in Math, Science, and English.

Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan Kuwait is one of the few Indian schools in Kuwait that provides its students an opportunity to appear for innumerable international assessments in the school itself to help them gain confidence in their pursuit of educational excellence. T Premkumar, the principal, Indian Educational school congratulated Aaron on his astounding success. He also thanked the Department of Mathematics, the primary wing of IES for their zeal and zest that helped many a student bring laurels not only to Bhavan but also to the vast sands of Arabia.



Kuwaiti farmer Yousef Al-Kreibani will be distributing organic vegetables from his farm for free today (Tuesday) at the Boulevard in Salmiya at 4:00 pm.

ANNOUNCEMENT FROM THE EMBASSY OF INDIA

The Government of India has introduced with effect from 1st March 2017, two new categories of visas, titled "Intern visa" for foreigners intending to pursue internship in Indian companies, and "Film Visa" for shooting of feature film or television/cinema and reality TV shows/commercial TV shows and TV serials by a foreign team. The visa fee structure for aforementioned visas for Intern visa is 25KD for a one year/multiple entry visa and 37KD for a Film visa with the same criteria.

Applicants need to provide following information while seeking these visas from the Embassy:

For Intern visa

- Name of company/institute/NGO in India
- Address
- Phone/Fax
- Email
- Duration of internship in months
- Annual remuneration to be received in Indian Rupees

For Film visa

- Approval of Information and Broadcasting ministry for shooting the film
- Type of production
 - Feature Film
 - Reality TV show
 - Commercial TV serial
- Complete address of shooting location
- Phone/Fax
- Email

The Indian Passport & Visa Service Provider, M/s Cox & Kings Services (CKGS), Kuwait has been providing visa services to Kuwaiti nationals and expatriates through their three centers - Sharq (City), Fahaheel and Abbasia (Jleeb Al-Shuyoukh). The above centre functions from 8 AM - 12 noon and from 4 PM - 8 PM on all working days except on closed holidays on Fridays and Saturday, the working hours are from 4 PM-8 PM.

BHASKAR TO ADDRESS MMF CONFERENCE

Veteran Indian journalist and columnist B R P Bhaskar will be the keynote speaker at this year's media conference to be organized by Malayali Media Forum (MMF), Kuwait on March 9, 2017 at the Community auditorium, Jleeb Al-Shuyoukh.



B R P Bhaskar

Indian Ambassador Sunil Jain will be chief guest of the conference. Bhaskar, a senior Indian journalist and a human rights activist, has worked in leading Indian newspapers such as the Hindu, the Statesman, Deccan Herald and Andhra Pradesh Times. Currently he is a columnist with the Gulf Today, which is published from Sharjah. During his keynote address, he will speak on the emerging trends in Indian media in the context of the growing influence of the social media. Bhaskar will also hold a media session on March 10 exclusively for the MMF members. MMF Kuwait is a forum of journalists from Kerala who are currently working in Kuwait.



St Joseph Monday choir group Feb 27th meets the new priests at Holy Family Cathedral Church.



ASSE KUWAIT CHAPTER CONDUCTED 'AUTHORIZED GAS TESTER' TRAINING

American Society of Safety Engineers (ASSE) Kuwait Chapter in coordination with TUV Nord Middle East, organized a training program on "Authorized Gas Tester". The program was conducted on 24th February 2017 at ASSE Kuwait Chapter's training Hall, Souk Sabah, Fahaheel, State of Kuwait.

American Society of Safety Engineers (ASSE) Kuwait Chapter is Kuwait's premier voluntary & non-profit organization providing professional guidance, training and consultancy; in the field of Health, Safety and Environment; to the industrial and social sectors in the region. ASSE Kuwait Chapter continuously organizes training on various HSE related topics, adhering to its solid social commitment by enhancing the knowledge inventory.

The gas tester role is critical to ensure safe working conditions in permit controlled confined space or for hot work activities. This is one of the most needed training by Oil & Gas Companies around the world. It was carried out through a 3rd Party agency which is approved by many Companies in Kuwait and in Middle East.

Ramu Muvvala, Deputy head of ASSE Kuwait Chapter's Training Committee, inaugurated the program & briefed about the day's program. The chapter president, Rama Krishna Chary welcomed the participants and briefed about the chapter's role in enhancing the career among ASSE members, and introduced Mohamed Maher Abd-Elrahman Eltemamy, the trainer for the session. Mohamed Maher Abd-Elrahman Eltemamy, an authorized trainer, has

a Bachelor's in Chemistry and possess many international certification in various HSE training and consulting like (GradIOSH), IDipOSH, NEBOSH EnvDip, Dip.RSA & He is NEBOSH, IOSH, CIEH, IIRSM, IADC, NEHA, NSC.

The training turned out to be very helpful for the safety professionals in their career, especially in Oil and gas industries where the risk of flammable and toxic atmosphere is very high. The participants, who emerged successful in the assessment; received certificate & pocket cards. Twenty three ASSE Members utilized this distinct opportunity and benefited from the program. ASSE Kuwait Chapter would continue bit's strive to do their best for the progress of the society and its members in particular, by organizing such beneficial trainings in future too.





JUMEIRAH MESSILAH REINFORCES SUPPORT FOR KUWAIT DOWN SYNDROME SOCIETY

For the second consecutive year, Jumeirah Messilah Beach Hotel & Spa, Kuwait's idyllic resort, has shown its far-reaching support for the children of the Kuwait Down Syndrome Society. As part of their yearlong sponsorship, the luxurious landmark sponsored the society's celebrations on the occasion of the National and Liberation Days.

General Manager, Hakan Petek, said: "The Kuwait Down Syndrome Society plays a crucial role in so many lives and I applaud their outstanding commitment. A fundamental component of our Social Responsibility culture is to empower and support the local community. It is tremendously rewarding to be part of these initiatives and to be able to contribute to such noble causes."

Greeted by Hessa Al-Baloula, co-founder of the Kuwait Down Syndrome Society, the Hotel's management team attended the event held under the patronage of Sheikhha Al-Sabah, a devoted advocate for special needs in Kuwait. The distinguished guests bonded with around 200 children and their families, relatives and members of the community. Children were overjoyed at the occa-

sion and were happy to receive special gifts from the hotel's management. Carol Roncoletta, Director of PR & Communications, said: "It was a privilege to organize this yearly activity, interact with the children and help support this truly inspirational society. On behalf of Jumeirah Messilah Beach Hotel & Spa, I would like to thank everybody for their significant efforts."

The Kuwait Down Syndrome Society hosts number of workshops and initiatives throughout the year for those with Down syndrome, including arts and crafts and cooking. The activities are meant to empower those with special needs and encourage them to pursue their passions and embolden them to get involved in meaningful community activities.



GUST TO HOLD ITS 19TH ANNUAL CAREER FAIR

Gulf University for Science and Technology (GUST) will hold its 19th Annual Career Fair on the 12th and 13th of March on its campus, which will be under the patronage of Khaled Naser Al-Roudan, Minister of Commerce & Industry and Acting Youth Minister. The event will host close to 40 different entities from various sectors, and aims at connecting GUST students and alumni with potential career opportunities.

This year, the opening ceremony will include a panel discussion titled "Transformation, Development and Career Opportunities for Youth in Kuwait", in which Al Roudan will take part as one of the panel speakers. There will be many other sessions taking place over the two-day period whose goal is to give GUST students and alumni insight, knowledge, and expert opinions on the local labor market and employment.

The businesses sponsoring this year's event are National Bank of Kuwait, Kuwait Finance House, Gulf Bank, Al-Ahli United Bank, Zain, Ooredoo, Viva, Boubyan Bank, Alghanim Industries, Warba Bank, Commercial Bank of Kuwait, Nestle, National Investments Company, Sheikh Jaber Al-Ahmad Cultural Centre, MGRP, and the GUST Student Association. It is also worthy to note that nearly 40 companies from a wide variety of business sectors are scheduled to participate in this year's Career Fair and include: Global Investment House, Ernst & Young, YIACO, Ahli Bank of Kuwait, KOC, ITS, Mabaneq, and Agility Logistics.

Corporations will have a presence for GUST students and alumni to network with and apply to for internships, full-time and volunteer positions on location. Potential employers will offer their services, market insights, advice, collect CVs, help students apply online for possible job

opportunities, and conduct on-site interviews with candidates. The Career Fair is one of the most prominent events the university organizes each year as it helps ensure a smooth transition for students into the work force after graduation. GUST continuously works on improving the fair by providing a wide variety of different employers to cater to graduates' interests and talents, as well as maintain diversity by including institutions from the education, medical, real estate development, technology, public relations, media, and the industrial sector.

GUST President, Professor Donald Bates, said, "At GUST, we understand the importance of equipping our students with all the tools they need for their future, and part of that includes connecting them with the best possible group of future employers. This Career Fair is a golden opportunity for both students and employers alike to make meaningful connections and start their post-GUST lives on the right track."

GUST is also organizing sessions and discussions that will focus on job market inclinations. These the title of "CMA Compliance and Anti Money Laundering", a presentation by the Public Institution for Social Security which aims to clarify certain legal aspects pertaining to their domain, and lastly, a presentation by AIESEC to emphasize the value of volunteering. These sessions will add a distinctive factor to the event, and will prove beneficial to students and alumni.

The Career Fair is a yearly event open to all students and alumni for free. It will be held for a total of two days, and opening times are from 8:30am - 3:00pm. For more real time information, follow @gust_official on Instagram, Twitter, and Snapchat.



Khaled Naser Al-Roudan



QUALITYNET'S QRUN KIDS MARATHON BECOMES KUWAIT'S FIRST CHILDREN'S MARATHON

Qualitynet, Kuwait's #1 ICT, Data Communications & Internet Services Provider conducted Kuwait's First Kids Marathon 'QRUN' at Muroj for kids between the ages of 2 and 9 years. The event which was held in support of Bayt Abdullah's Kids, saw a turn-up of over 300 kids, and was a roaring success.

The QRUN Marathon was divided into 3 age groups, and the top 3 girls and boys from each category were rewarded. The youngest group also called "Tiny Ones", was for ages 2 till 4 years covering a distance of 500 meters. In the girls category, Aayaa Alqallaf came first, while Zeina Elhariry came second and Rasha Abdulsalam came third. In the boy's category, Abdulalla Al-Dashti came first, while Ali Soliman came second and Omar Al-Shukri came third. The mid category called "Little Ones" was for ages 5 till 6 years covering a distance of 750 meters. In the girl's category, Lou-Ann Madelmont came first, while Zainah Al-Saffar came second and Ruqayah Al-Saeed came third. In the boy's category, Fahd Al-Shalfan came first, while Adam Azzouz came second and Waleed Al-Mukaimi came third. The final category, also called "Big Ones", was for ages 7 till 9 years and covered a distance of 1 Kilometer. In the girl's category, Seba Sultan came first, while Bashayer Hamadi came second and Delina Lledos came third. In the boy's category, Ammar Abulkhair came first, while Abdurahman Qanbar came second and James Penkethman came third.

Different nationalities

Mohammed Al-Nusif, CEO - Qualitynet distributed the awards for the winners. In a statement he gave after the event, Mohammed said he was delighted with the great success of the Marathon, a first in Kuwait amid a large number of children from different nationalities including Kuwait,



Egypt, Syria, Lebanon, Saudi Arabia, France, Britain and the US. He especially appreciated the cooperation with Pro-Vision sport Management, who partnered with Qualitynet for the event to support the kids at Bayt Abdullah. "Our goal is to support a healthy and active lifestyle among residents in Kuwait, and we believe the practice should start early in life. As a brand, we invest in Social Responsibility initiatives, and this Marathon is a message to all, stressing on the need to exercise in order to stay healthy and fit, especially in a nation that occupies a high place on nations with high diabetes rates", said Mohammed.

He pointed out that Qualitynet has been actively involved in supporting sports activities aimed at promoting healthy lifestyles. In addition, the company also sponsors a group of individuals who are established and upcoming athletes in various categories of sports. Nevein Saad, Marketing Manager - Qualitynet said the QRUN Kids Marathon brought in a lot of gratitude from the parents of the participating chil-

dren, who thanked the company for the idea of a Marathon for such young children. She also thanked the officers from the Ministry of Interior who came early morning and helped through the event, and the Management and staff from Pro-Vision Sports management, for a successful and flawless event.

Ahmed Majid, Executive Director - Pro-Vision sports Management, said the event saw a great turnout for one that was a first time and also for such a young age group. "Registrations were mostly via our online platform, which we closed 2 days before the event. We also had a few registrations on spot before the event commenced, which started with the first category at 9:30am" said Ahmed. He concluded by expressing his pleasure in working with Qualitynet for an event with such a great cause behind it, and said he looks forward to working together on future projects that promote fitness and a healthy lifestyle.

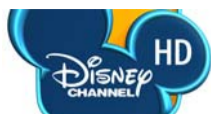


- 00:50 Ten Deadliest Snakes With Nigel Marven
- 01:45 Bondi Vet
- 02:40 Dr. Dee: Alaska Vet
- 03:35 Tanked
- 04:25 In Too Deep
- 05:15 Gator Boys
- 06:02 Ten Deadliest Snakes With Nigel Marven
- 06:49 Dr. Dee: Alaska Vet
- 07:36 Going Ape
- 08:00 Call Of The Wildman
- 08:25 Preposterous Pets
- 09:15 Dr. Dee: Alaska Vet
- 10:10 In Too Deep
- 11:05 Tanked
- 12:00 Preposterous Pets
- 12:55 Bondi Vet
- 13:50 Dr. Dee: Alaska Vet
- 14:45 Gator Boys
- 15:40 In Too Deep
- 16:35 Tanked
- 17:30 Ten Deadliest Snakes With Nigel Marven
- 18:25 Rugged Justice
- 19:20 Catching Monsters
- 20:15 Tanked
- 21:10 In Too Deep
- 22:05 Rugged Justice
- 23:00 Catching Monsters
- 23:55 Gator Boys

- 18:30 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 The Wheel: Survival Games
- 21:50 Rise Of The Warrior Apes
- 23:30 Fast N' Loud



- 00:05 Keeping Up With The Kardashians
- 01:50 E! News
- 02:50 Hollywood Cycle
- 05:30 Fashion Bloggers
- 06:00 Just Jillian
- 06:55 E! News
- 07:10 Just Jillian
- 08:10 Bondi Vet
- 09:10 Rob & Chyna
- 12:00 E! News
- 12:15 Celebrity Style Story
- 12:40 Celebrity Style Story
- 13:10 So Cosmo
- 14:05 So Cosmo
- 15:00 E! News
- 15:15 WAGs
- 19:00 E! News
- 20:00 Celebrity Style Story
- 21:00 Celebrity Style Story
- 21:00 Revenge Body With Khloe Kardashian
- 22:00 Revenge Body With Khloe Kardashian
- 23:00 E! News
- 23:15 Botched



- 00:10 Hank Zipzer
- 00:35 Binny And The Ghost
- 01:00 Violetta
- 01:45 The Hive
- 01:50 Sabrina Secrets Of A Teenage Witch
- 02:40 Hank Zipzer
- 03:05 Binny And The Ghost
- 03:30 Violetta
- 04:15 The Hive
- 04:20 Sabrina Secrets Of A Teenage Witch
- 05:10 Hank Zipzer
- 05:35 Binny And The Ghost
- 06:00 Violetta
- 06:45 The Hive
- 06:50 The 7D
- 07:00 Jessie
- 07:25 Jessie
- 07:50 Tsum Tsum Shorts
- 07:55 The Zuzhus
- 08:20 Elena Of Avalor
- 08:45 Bunk'd
- 09:10 Stuck In The Middle
- 09:35 Wizards Of Waverly Place
- 10:00 Wizards Of Waverly Place
- 10:25 A.N.T. Farm
- 11:15 Good Luck Charlie
- 12:05 Shake It Up
- 12:55 Disney Mickey Mouse
- 13:00 Welcome To The Ronks
- 13:15 Gravity Falls
- 13:40 Hank Zipzer
- 14:05 Star Darlings
- 14:10 Austin & Ally
- 14:35 Jessie
- 15:00 Bunk'd
- 15:25 Kirby Buckets
- 15:50 Sunny Bunnies
- 15:55 The Zuzhus
- 16:20 Miraculous Tales Of Ladybug And Cat Noir
- 16:45 Elena Of Avalor
- 17:10 Stuck In The Middle
- 17:35 Descendants Wicked World
- 17:40 Girl Meets World
- 18:05 Bizaardvark
- 18:30 Bunk'd
- 18:55 Best Friends Whenever
- 19:20 Disney Mickey Mouse
- 19:25 The Next Step
- 19:50 Austin & Ally
- 21:40 Star Darlings
- 20:20 Shake It Up
- 20:45 Backstage
- 21:10 Liv And Maddie
- 21:35 Cracked
- 21:40 Dog With A Friend
- 22:05 Best Friends Whenever
- 22:30 Jessie
- 22:55 Tsum Tsum Shorts
- 23:00 Kirby Buckets
- 23:25 Sabrina Secrets Of A Teenage Witch



DRAGON BLADE ON OSN MOVIES ACTION HD

- 20:30 Goldie & Bear
- 21:00 Unbungalivable
- 21:05 Goldie & Bear
- 21:35 Mickey Mouse Clubhouse
- 22:00 My Friends Tigger & Pooh



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



- 06:00 Gravity Falls
- 06:25 Counterfeit Cat
- 06:50 Atomic Puppet
- 07:15 Star vs The Forces Of Evil
- 07:25 Danger Mouse
- 07:40 Supa Strikas
- 08:10 K.C. Undercover
- 08:35 Star Wars Freemaker
- 09:00 Lab Rats
- 09:25 Lab Rats
- 09:50 Danger Mouse
- 10:20 Supa Strikas
- 10:45 Supa Strikas

- 07:12 Murder Comes To Town
- 08:00 The Locator
- 08:50 I Almost Got Away With It
- 09:40 Deadline: Crime With Tamron Hall
- 10:30 Blood Relatives
- 11:20 Unravelled
- 12:10 Evil Online
- 13:00 The Locator
- 13:50 I Almost Got Away With It
- 14:40 Deadline: Crime With Tamron Hall
- 15:30 Blood Relatives
- 16:20 Murder Comes To Town
- 17:10 Deadline: Crime With Tamron Hall
- 18:00 The Locator
- 18:25 The Locator
- 18:50 I Almost Got Away With It
- 19:40 Deadline: Crime With Tamron Hall
- 20:30 Blood Relatives
- 21:20 Murder Comes To Town
- 22:10 The Vanishing Women
- 23:00 Long Island Serial Killer: People Magazine...



- 00:20 Lion Warrior
- 01:10 Maneater Manhunt
- 02:00 Surviving The Serengeti
- 02:50 Mission Critical
- 03:45 The Invaders
- 04:40 Dr. Oakley: Yukon Vet
- 05:35 Surviving The Serengeti
- 06:30 Mission Critical
- 07:25 The Invaders
- 08:20 Dr. Oakley: Yukon Vet
- 09:15 Wild 24
- 10:10 Dead Or Alive
- 11:05 Moody Beasts
- 12:55 Original Fight Club
- 13:50 Animals Gone Wild
- 14:45 The Invaders
- 15:40 Ultimate Animal Countdown
- 16:35 Wild 24
- 17:30 Survive The Wild
- 18:30 Moody Beasts
- 19:20 The Invaders
- 20:10 Ultimate Animal Countdown
- 21:00 Wild 24
- 21:50 Survive The Wild
- 22:40 Moody Beasts
- 23:30 Shark Nicole



- 00:00 Crimes That Shook Australia
- 01:00 Killers
- 02:00 When Life Means Life
- 03:00 Homicide Hunter
- 04:00 Crimes That Shook Australia
- 05:00 Killers
- 06:00 When Life Means Life
- 07:00 Deadly Wives
- 08:00 Crimes That Shook Britain
- 09:00 Homicide Hunter
- 10:00 Monster In My Family
- 11:00 Deadly Wives
- 12:00 Crimes That Shook Britain
- 13:00 Homicide Hunter
- 14:00 Nightmare In Suburbia
- 15:00 It Takes A Killer
- 16:00 The First 48
- 17:00 Crimes That Shook Britain
- 18:00 Deadly Wives
- 19:00 The First 48
- 20:00 Crimes That Shook Britain
- 21:00 Deadly Wives
- 22:00 The First 48
- 23:00 The First 48



- 00:20 Battle 360
- 01:10 The Curse Of Oak Island
- 02:00 Hunting Hitler
- 02:50 Storage Wars
- 03:15 American Pickers
- 04:05 Pawn Stars
- 04:30 Pawn Stars
- 05:00 Mountain Men
- 06:00 American Restoration
- 06:25 American Restoration
- 06:50 Shipping Wars
- 07:15 Shipping Wars
- 07:40 Counting Cars
- 08:05 Counting Cars
- 08:30 Pawn Stars
- 08:55 Pawn Stars
- 09:20 Storage Wars Miami
- 09:45 Storage Wars Miami
- 10:10 American Pickers
- 11:00 Search For The Lost Giants
- 11:50 Time Team
- 12:40 Swamp People
- 13:30 Ax Men
- 14:20 Mountain Men
- 15:10 Shipping Wars
- 15:35 Shipping Wars
- 16:00 Counting Cars
- 16:25 Counting Cars
- 16:50 Pawn Stars
- 17:15 Pawn Stars
- 17:40 Hunting Hitler
- 18:30 The Curse Of Oak Island
- 19:20 Mountain Men
- 20:10 American Pickers
- 21:00 Ice Road Truckers
- 21:50 Leupu And Pitbull
- 22:40 Swamp People
- 23:30 American Pickers



- 00:30 Unchained Reaction
- 01:20 Baby Animals
- 02:10 Pick A Puppy
- 03:00 Destroyed In Seconds
- 03:50 Bear Grylls: Born Survivor
- 04:40 How It's Made
- 05:30 Dirty Jobs
- 06:20 Mythbusters
- 07:00 Dick 'n' Dom Go Wild
- 07:55 Awesome Adventures
- 08:40 Bondi Vet
- 09:30 How It's Made
- 10:20 Unchained Reaction
- 11:10 Mythbusters
- 11:50 Bondi Vet
- 12:40 Bear Grylls: Born Survivor
- 13:30 How It's Made
- 14:20 Dirty Jobs
- 15:10 Dick 'n' Dom Go Wild
- 16:00 Awesome Adventures
- 16:50 Mythbusters
- 17:40 Prototype This



- 00:00 Mystery Diners
- 01:00 Diners, Drive-Ins And Dives
- 02:00 Man Fire Food



X-MEN: THE LAST STAND ON OSN MOVIES HD

- 17:00 Guinness World Records
- Smashed New Zealand
- 17:25 Guinness World Records
- Smashed New Zealand
- 17:50 Guinness World Records
- Smashed UK
- 18:40 Destroyed In Seconds
- 19:30 How It's Made
- 20:20 Mythbusters
- 21:10 Australia Smashes Guinness World Records
- 21:35 Australia Smashes Guinness World Records
- 22:00 Guinness World Records
- Smashed UK
- 22:50 Destroyed In Seconds
- 23:40 Bear Grylls: Born Survivor

- 03:00 Chopped
- 04:00 Guy's Grocery Games
- 05:00 Barefoot Contessa: Back To Basics
- 06:00 The Kitchen
- 07:00 The Pioneer Woman
- 08:00 Siba's Table
- 09:00 Anna Olson: Bake
- 10:00 The Kitchen
- 11:00 The Pioneer Woman
- 12:00 Siba's Table
- 13:00 Diners, Drive-Ins And Dives
- 14:00 Chopped
- 15:00 The Kitchen
- 16:00 Anna Olson: Bake
- 17:00 Chopped
- 18:00 Guy's Grocery Games
- 19:00 Diners, Drive-Ins And Dives
- 20:00 Man Fire Food
- 21:00 Roadtrip With G. Garvin
- 22:00 Iron Chef America
- 23:00 Diners, Drive-Ins And Dives

- 04:50 Calimero
- 05:05 Art Attack
- 05:30 Henry Hugglemonster
- 05:45 Zou
- 06:00 Art Attack
- 06:30 Henry Hugglemonster
- 06:45 Loopidoo
- 07:00 Zou
- 07:15 Calimero
- 07:30 Loopidoo
- 07:45 Henry Hugglemonster
- 08:00 Minnie's Bow-Toons
- 08:05 Sheriff Callie's Wild West
- 08:15 Jake And The Neverland Pirates
- 08:30 Miles From Tomorrow
- 08:45 Goldie & Bear
- 08:55 The Lion Guard
- 09:20 PJ Masks
- 09:35 Jake And The Neverland Pirates
- 09:50 Doc McStuffins
- 10:00 Goldie & Bear
- 10:15 PJ Masks
- 10:30 Minnie's Bow-Toons
- 10:35 The Lion Guard
- 11:00 Sofia The First
- 11:30 Doc McStuffins Toy Hospital
- 11:55 Mickey Mouse Clubhouse
- 12:20 My Friends Tigger & Pooh
- 12:50 Sheriff Callie's Wild West
- 13:15 Gummi Bears
- 13:40 Sofia The First
- 14:10 Mickey Mouse Clubhouse
- 14:35 PJ Masks
- 15:00 My Friends Tigger & Pooh
- 15:30 The Lion Guard
- 15:55 Unbungalivable
- 16:00 Sofia The First
- 16:30 Doc McStuffins Toy Hospital
- 16:55 Goldie & Bear
- 17:20 The Lion Guard
- 17:50 PJ Masks
- 18:15 Sofia The First
- 18:40 Doc McStuffins Toy Hospital
- 19:05 Jake And The Never Land Pirates
- 19:30 Mickey Mouse Clubhouse
- 20:00 Goldie & Bear



- 00:40 The Detectives Club: New Orleans
- 01:30 Betrayed
- 02:20 Obsession: Dark Desires
- 03:10 How (Not) To Kill Your Husband
- 04:00 The Detectives Club: New Orleans
- 04:48 I Almost Got Away With It
- 05:36 Deadline: Crime With Tamron Hall
- 06:24 Blood Relatives



- 00:15 Carnival Eats
- 00:40 Carnival Eats
- 01:05 Raw Travel
- 01:30 Cesar's Recruit: Asia
- 02:20 The Shelbourne
- 02:45 Wineroads
- 03:10 The Best Job In The World
- 03:35 Miguel's Feasts
- 04:00 A Is For Apple
- 04:25 A Is For Apple
- 04:50 Tripping Out With Allie & Georgia
- 05:20 Sara's Australia Unveiled
- 05:45 Confucius Was A Foodie
- 06:40 Cruise Ship Diaries
- 07:10 Raw Travel
- 07:35 Cesar's Recruit: Asia
- 08:30 The Shelbourne
- 09:00 Wineroads
- 09:25 The Best Job In The World
- 09:55 Miguel's Feasts
- 10:20 A Is For Apple
- 10:50 A Is For Apple
- 11:15 Confucius Was A Foodie
- 11:20 Sara's Australia Unveiled
- 12:40 Raw Travel
- 13:05 Dog Whisperer
- 14:00 Valentine Warner Eats Scandinavia
- 14:30 Wineroads
- 14:55 Miguel's Feasts
- 15:25 Lyndey Milan - Taste Of Australia
- 15:50 World's Best Beaches
- 16:45 Tripping Out With Allie & Georgia
- 17:15 Sara's Australia Unveiled
- 17:40 Confucius Was A Foodie
- 18:35 Cruise Ship Diaries
- 19:05 Miguel's Feasts
- 19:30 Lyndey Milan - Taste Of Australia
- 20:00 World's Best Beaches
- 20:55 Tripping Out With Allie & Georgia
- 21:20 Sara's Australia Unveiled
- 21:45 Confucius Was A Foodie
- 22:35 Cruise Ship Diaries

- 07:30 Highway Thru Hell
- 08:25 Bad Trip
- 09:20 World's Toughest Fixes
- 10:15 Monster Fish
- 11:10 Wicked Tuna
- 12:05 Air Crash Investigation
- 13:00 Migrations
- 14:00 Mars
- 15:00 Filthy Riches
- 16:00 Monster Fish
- 17:00 Wicked Tuna
- 18:00 Air Crash Investigation
- 19:00 Filthy Riches
- 20:00 Monster Fish
- 20:50 Wicked Tuna
- 21:40 Air Crash Investigation
- 22:30 Filthy Riches



- 00:00 The Canal
- 02:00 Sharknado 3: Oh Hell No!
- 04:00 Survivor
- 06:00 Big Game
- 08:00 Apocalypse Pompeii
- 10:00 The Machine
- 12:00 Survivor
- 13:45 Dragon Blade
- 16:00 Rivers Nine
- 17:45 Run All Night
- 19:45 Terminator Genisys
- 22:00 Lucy



- 00:00 Dominion
- 01:00 Homeland
- 02:00 Code Black
- 03:00 Scream Queens
- 04:00 Prison Break
- 05:00 Good Morning America
- 07:00 Agent X
- 08:00 The Family
- 09:00 The Night Shift
- 10:00 Prison Break
- 11:00 Rush Hour
- 12:00 Agent X
- 13:00 The Family
- 14:00 The Night Shift
- 15:00 Live Good Morning America
- 17:00 Prison Break
- 18:00 The Voice
- 20:00 24: Legacy
- 21:00 Quantico
- 22:00 Supergirl
- 23:00 Salem



- 00:00 Army Of Darkness
- 02:00 Sister Act 2: Back In The Habit
- 04:00 Ana Maria In Novela Land
- 06:00 The Golden Child
- 08:00 Sister Act 2: Back In The Habit
- 10:00 Ana Maria In Novela Land
- 12:00 The Golden Child
- 14:00 A Madea Christmas
- 16:00 Overboard
- 18:00 The Bad News Bears (2005)
- 20:00 A Short History Of Decay
- 22:00 Joe Dirt 2: Beautiful Loser



- 00:00 Cobain
- 02:15 Little Accidents
- 04:00 Young Ones
- 06:00 A Perfect Day
- 08:00 The Girl
- 10:00 Rosewater
- 12:00 Days Of Heaven
- 14:00 A Promise
- 15:45 The Blind Side
- 18:00 The Homesman
- 20:00 A Little Chaos
- 22:00 Farewell My Queen



- 00:00 Wrecked
- 00:30 Angie Tribeca
- 01:30 It's Always Sunny In Philadelphia
- 02:00 It's Always Sunny In Philadelphia
- 02:30 Ballers
- 03:00 The New Adventures Of Old Christine
- 04:00 According To Jim
- 04:30 The Tonight Show Starring Jimmy Fallon
- 05:30 Cougar Town
- 06:00 George Lopez
- 06:30 Galavant
- 07:00 Late Night With Seth Meyers
- 08:00 According To Jim
- 08:30 Cougar Town
- 09:00 The New Adventures Of Old Christine
- 09:30 Dr. Ken
- 10:00 The Mindy Project
- 10:30 Galavant
- 11:00 The Tonight Show Starring Jimmy Fallon
- 12:00 George Lopez
- 12:30 According To Jim
- 13:00 Cougar Town
- 13:30 Galavant
- 14:00 The New Adventures Of Old Christine
- 14:30 Dr. Ken
- 15:00 The Mindy Project
- 15:30 Angie Tribeca
- 16:30 George Lopez
- 17:00 The Ellen DeGeneres Show
- 18:00 The New Adventures Of Old Christine
- 19:00 Brooklyn Nine-Nine
- 19:30 New Girl
- 20:00 The Tonight Show Starring Jimmy Fallon
- 21:00 Angie Tribeca
- 22:00 Family Guy
- 22:30 Web Therapy
- 23:00 Web Therapy
- 23:30 Late Night With Seth Meyers



- 00:00 Harley Davidson And The Marlboro Man
- 02:00 Ghostbusters
- 04:00 People Like Us
- 06:00 Just Married
- 08:00 10 Things I Hate About You
- 10:00 X-Men: The Last Stand
- 11:45 X-Men: First Class
- 14:00 A Civil Action
- 16:00 Ghostbusters II
- 18:00 Faster
- 19:45 Casino Royale
- 22:15 Focus



- 01:00 Virus Attack The First Antivirus
- 02:45 Worms
- 04:30 The Heart Of The Oak
- 06:00 Thumbleina
- 07:30 Jungle Book: Mowgli's Adventure
- 09:15 When Marnie Was There
- 11:00 Virus Attack The First Antivirus
- 12:30 Worms
- 14:00 The Nutcracker Sweet
- 16:00 When Marnie Was There
- 18:00 The Boxcar Children
- 20:00 Hotel For Dogs
- 21:45 The Nutcracker Sweet
- 23:15 Jungle Book: Mowgli's Adventure



- 00:20 Married By Mum And Dad
- 01:10 Return To Amish
- 02:00 My Big Fat Fabulous Life
- 02:25 Say Yes To The Dress: Bridesmaids
- 02:50 Love, Lust Or Run
- 03:15 Cake Boss
- 03:35 Designer Darlings
- 04:20 Little People, Big World
- 05:10 Toddlers & Tiaras
- 06:00 Ultimate Shopper
- 06:50 Say Yes To The Dress UK
- 07:40 Cake Boss
- 08:30 Little People, Big World
- 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: Bridesmaids
- 11:50 Ultimate Shopper



- 00:15 The Haunted Mansion
- 02:00 Pooh's Heffalump Movie
- 03:00 Little Women
- 05:30 Frankenweenie
- 07:30 Pooh's Heffalump Movie
- 09:00 Tarzan
- 11:00 Frankenweenie
- 13:00 Mickey, Donald, Goofy: The 3 Musketeers
- 14:30 A Bug's Life
- 16:30 Mars Needs Moms
- 18:30 K-9 Adventures: Legend Of The Lost Gold
- 20:30 Marvel's Iron Man & Captain America: Heroes United



- 00:10 The Border
- 01:00 Highway Thru Hell
- 02:00 Mine Kings
- 02:55 Bugatti Chiron: Super Car Build
- 03:50 The Border
- 04:45 World's Toughest Fixes
- 05:40 Access 360 World Heritage
- 06:35 Filthy Riches



DAYS OF HEAVEN ON OSN MOVIES HD FESTIVAL

CLASSIFIEDS



Kuwait Times
 Now you can browse
www.kuwaittimes.net
 e-mail: info@kuwaittimes.net

Kuwait CINEMA				
KNCC PROGRAMME FROM THURSDAY TO WEDNESDAY (02/03/2017 TO 08/03/2017)				
SHARQIA-1	LOGAN	11:30 AM	HIDDEN FIGURES	10:00 PM
HAMAH - Kuwaiti Film	2:15 PM	HAMAH - Kuwaiti Film	12:45 AM	HAMAH - Kuwaiti Film
HAMAH - Kuwaiti Film	3:45 PM			6:45 PM
HAMAH - Kuwaiti Film	5:15 PM			8:15 PM
HAMAH - Kuwaiti Film	6:45 PM			11:00 PM
HAMAH - Kuwaiti Film	8:30 PM			
HAMAH - Kuwaiti Film	10:00 PM			
LOGAN	11:30 PM			
SHARQIA-2	HAMAH - Kuwaiti Film	12:00 PM		
LOGAN	1:30 PM			
LOGAN	4:15 PM			
LOGAN	7:00 PM			
LOGAN	9:45 PM			
LOGAN	12:30 AM			
SHARQIA-3	ELOISE	1:15 PM		
ELOISE	3:15 PM			
LOGAN	5:15 PM			
LOGAN	8:00 PM			
ELOISE	10:45 PM			
ELOISE	12:45 AM			
MUHALAB-1	ELOISE	12:30 PM		
ELOISE	2:30 PM			
ELOISE	4:30 PM			
ELOISE	6:30 PM			
MERCURY PLAINS	8:30 PM			
ELOISE	10:30 PM			
ELOISE	12:30 AM			
MUHALAB-2	LOGAN	12:15 PM		
LOGAN	3:00 PM			
HAMAH - Kuwaiti Film	5:45 PM			
LOGAN	7:15 PM			
HAMAH - Kuwaiti Film	10:00 PM			
LOGAN	11:30 PM			
MUHALAB-3	LOGAN	1:15 PM		
HAMAH - Kuwaiti Film	2:30 PM			
LOGAN	4:00 PM			
LOGAN	6:45 PM			
LOGAN	9:30 PM			
LOGAN	12:15 AM			
FANAR-1	HAMAH - Kuwaiti Film	12:00 PM		
HAMAH - Kuwaiti Film	1:30 PM			
HIDDEN FIGURES	3:00 PM			
HAMAH - Kuwaiti Film	5:30 PM			
HAMAH - Kuwaiti Film	7:00 PM			
HAMAH - Kuwaiti Film	8:30 PM			
FANAR-2	KIKORIKI. Legend of the Golden Dragon	1:00 PM		
KIKORIKI. Legend of the Golden Dragon	2:45 PM			
KIKORIKI. Legend of the Golden Dragon	4:30 PM			
ELOISE	6:15 PM			
MERCURY PLAINS	8:15 PM			
ELOISE	10:15 PM			
ELOISE	12:15 AM			
FANAR-3	MERCURY PLAINS	12:00 PM		
COMMANDO 2-Hindi	2:00 PM			
ELOISE	5:00 PM			
COMMANDO 2-Hindi	7:00 PM			
MERCURY PLAINS	10:00 PM			
MERCURY PLAINS	12:05 AM			
FANAR-4	LOGAN	1:30 PM		
LOGAN	4:15 PM			
LOGAN	7:00 PM			
LOGAN	9:45 PM			
LOGAN	12:30 AM			
FANAR-5	LOGAN	12:30 PM		
LOGAN	3:15 PM			
LOGAN	6:00 PM			
LOGAN	8:45 PM			
LOGAN	11:30 PM			
MARINA-1	ELOISE	12:00 PM		
ELOISE	2:00 PM			
ELOISE	4:00 PM			
ELOISE	6:00 PM			
HIDDEN FIGURES	8:00 PM			
ELOISE	10:45 PM			
ELOISE	12:45 AM			
MARINA-2	LOGAN	1:00 PM		
LOGAN	1:45 PM			
LOGAN	3:45 PM			
LOGAN	6:30 PM			
LOGAN	9:15 PM			
LOGAN	12:05 AM			
MARINA-3	LOGAN	11:30 AM		
LOGAN	2:15 PM			
HAMAH - Kuwaiti Film	5:00 PM			
AVENUES-1	THE DEVIL'S CANDY	11:30 AM		
A DOG'S PURPOSE	1:30 PM			
THE LEGO BATMAN MOVIE	3:45 PM			
A DOG'S PURPOSE	6:00 PM			
THE DEVIL'S CANDY	8:15 PM			
THE DEVIL'S CANDY	10:15 PM			
THE DEVIL'S CANDY	12:15 AM			
AVENUES-2	LOGAN -2D-4DX	1:30 PM		
LOGAN -2D-4DX	4:15 PM			
LOGAN -2D-4DX	7:00 PM			
LOGAN -2D-4DX	9:45 PM			
LOGAN -2D-4DX	12:30 AM			
AVENUES-3	ELOISE	1:00 PM		
ELOISE	3:00 PM			
ELOISE	5:00 PM			
ELOISE	7:00 PM			
ELOISE	9:00 PM			
ELOISE	11:00 PM			
ELOISE	1:00 AM			
AVENUES-4	LOGAN	1:00 PM		
LOGAN	3:45 PM			
LOGAN	6:30 PM			
LOGAN	9:15 PM			
LOGAN	12:05 AM			
360°-1	ELOISE	12:00 PM		
ELOISE	2:00 PM			
ELOISE	4:00 PM			
ELOISE	6:00 PM			
ELOISE	8:00 PM			
ELOISE	10:00 PM			
ELOISE	12:05 AM			
360°-2	HIDDEN FIGURES	1:00 PM		
HIDDEN FIGURES	1:30 PM			
FRI				
HIDDEN FIGURES	4:00 PM			
HIDDEN FIGURES	6:45 PM			
HIDDEN FIGURES	9:30 PM			
HIDDEN FIGURES	12:15 AM			
360°-3	JOHN WICK: CHAPTER 2	1:45 PM		
JOHN WICK: CHAPTER 2	4:30 PM			
ABY- Malayalam	7:00 PM			

JOB OPPORTUNITIES

A well-known company needs the following;

Optometrists & Sales associates

- 3 years or more experience in Optical retail in Kuwait
- Basic salary + Commission

Send CV to:
abistami@gmail.com

LOST
 Birth filed with the Embassy on 12 May 2016 under Registry Number KT-ROB-475-2016. The First Name of child should read as ELAIZAH instead of ALYAM. Any person having knowledge and/or claiming interest or may be adversely affected by said Petition, file his written opposition with the Embassy within ten (10) working days. (C 5279)

CHANGE OF NAME
 The public is hereby notified that MS. MARIBINI TALUNGON MOSANIP has filed with the Embassy of the Philippines, State of Kuwait, a Migrant Petition for Change of First Name of her daughter in the Report of I Mohammad Nazir Ibrahim Babjani, holder of Passport No. G4376198 & Civil ID No. 274021705032, has changed my name to Mohammad Nazir Ibrahim Babjan Shaikh, hereafter in all my dealings and documents will be known by name of Mohammad Nazir Ibrahim Babjan Shaikh. (C 5280) 7-3-2017

REQUIRED

Ramada Encore Kuwait Downtown

New 4 Stars Hotel Opening in Kuwait Needs the following employees:

- Sales Executive
- Secretary
- Night audit
- Front office supervisor
- Reservation & Visa Agent
- Receptionist
- Bellboy
- Housekeeping Supervisor
- Room Attendant
- Restaurant supervisor
- Chef De Cuisine
- Chef De Partie
- Commis
- Waiters / Waitress
- Chief Engineer
- General Electrician
- / Mechanic
- Plumber
- Pool Attendant
- Drivers

Send your CV with photo & telephone to hr.req8@gmail.com Should have a valid transferable visa and 2 years experienced in hotel business

EMERGENCY 112

PRAYER TIMINGS

Fajr:	04:51
Shorook:	06:10
Duhr:	12:00
Asr:	15:20
Maghrib:	17:50
Isha:	19:06

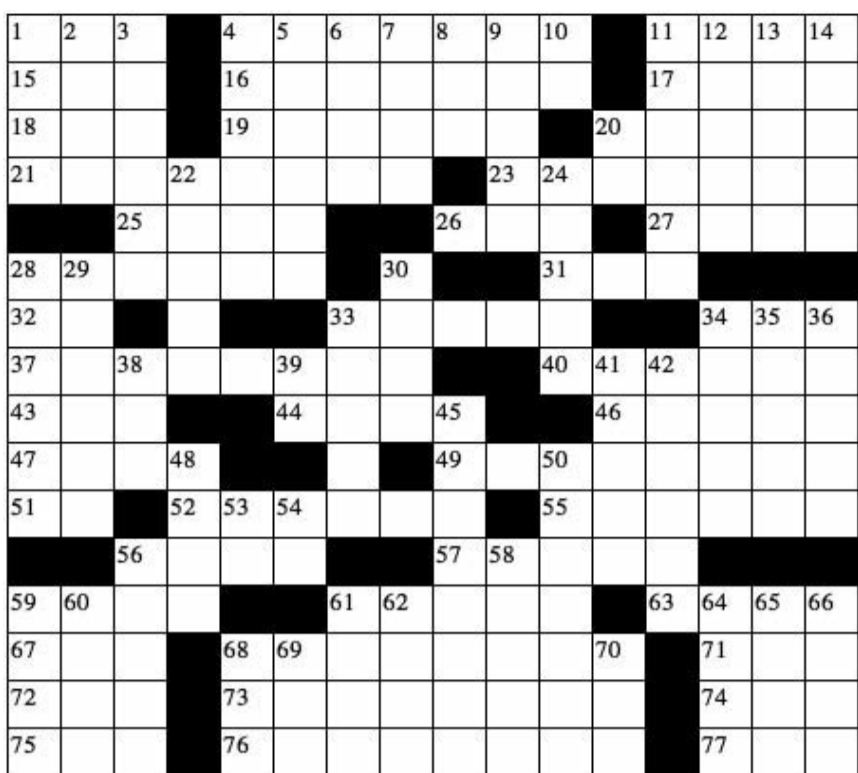
Directorate General of Civil Aviation Home Page (www.kuwait-airport.com.kw)

Flight Schedule

DIAL 161 FOR AIRPORT INFORMATION

Airlines	Fit	Route	Time	Airlines	Fit	Route	Time
MSC	405	Sohag	00:05	KAC	672	Dubai	14:50
JZR	1903	GYD	00:10	KNE	529	Jeddah	14:55
KAC	776	Riyadh	00:20	KAC	618	Doha	15:00
KLM	411	Amsterdam/Dammam	00:25	ETD	303	Abu Dhabi	15:15
JZR	267	Beirut	00:30	OMA	645	Muscat	15:35
JZR	539	Cairo	00:40	UAE	857	Dubai	15:45
THY	772	Istanbul	00:55	ABY	127	Sharjah	15:50
MSC	411	Asyut	01:00	KAC	154	Istanbul	15:55
QTR	1086	Doha	01:15	QTR	1072	Doha	16:10
KAC	102	London	01:25	FDB	051	Dubai	16:25
THY	764	Istanbul	01:50	KAC	662	Abu Dhabi	16:35
DLH	635	Doha	01:55	RJA	640	Amman	16:55
PGT	858	Istanbul	02:00	KAC	118	New York	17:00
AXB	395	Kozhikode	02:00	SVA	510	Riyadh	17:15
ETH	620	Addis Ababa	02:05	GFA	215	Bahrain	17:30
KAC	354	BLR	05:20	JZR	777	Jeddah	17:45
DHX	170	Bahrain	05:20	JZR	325	AI Najaf	17:50
KAC	344	Chennai	05:35	NIA	251	Alexandria	17:55
KAC	332	Trivandrum	05:45	UAE	875	Dubai	18:00
JZR	529	Asyut	05:45	FDB	063	Dubai	18:10
THY	770	Istanbul	05:55	JZR	177	Dubai	18:20
KAC	364	Colombo	06:05	MSR	620	Cairo	18:30
KAC	384	Delhi	06:05	QTR	1080	Doha	18:50
KAC	206	Islamabad	06:20	KAC	746	Dammam	19:10
KAC	346	Ahmedabad	06:25	ABY	123	Sharjah	19:25
BAW	157	London	06:40	GFA	217	Bahrain	19:30
PAL	668	Manila/Dubai	07:00	KAC	502	Beirut	19:30
FDB	5061	Dubai	07:15	KAC	778	Riyadh	19:35
KAC	284	Dhaka	07:35	KAC	674	Dubai	19:45
FDB	053	Dubai	07:50	KAC	514	Tehran	19:50
KAC	302	Mumbai	08:20	FDB	057	Dubai	19:50
UAE	855	Dubai	08:40	KAC	168	Paris	19:55
KAC	382	Delhi	08:45	MSR	618	Alexandria	20:05
ABY	125	Sharjah	09:05	OMA	647	Muscat	20:10
ETD	301	Abu Dhabi	09:05	QTR	1088	Doha	20:35
QTR	1070	Doha	09:30	KAC	562	Amman	20:40
FDB	055	Dubai	09:40	DLH	634	Frankfurt	20:45
SVA	512	Riyadh	10:00	KAC	616	Bahrain	20:50
AVV	651	Asyut	10:10	FDB	5053	Dubai	20:50
GFA	213	Bahrain	10:40	KAC	786	Jeddah	21:15
IRA	675	Lar	10:40	ETD	307	Abu Dhabi	21:20
SYR	341	Damascus	11:00	MEA	402	Beirut	21:20
MSC	403	Asyut	11:15	ALK	229	Colombo	21:25
JZR	165	Dubai	11:30	CLX	8675	Luxembourg	21:35
MEA	404	Beirut	11:55	KAC	172	Frankfurt	21:35
QTR	8511	Doha	12:00	UAE	859	Dubai	21:40
KAC	286	Dhaka	12:25	QTR	219	Bahrain	21:45
MSC	401	Alexandria	12:30	GFA	1082	Doha	22:00
JZR	561	Sohag	12:40	JZR	125	Bahrain	22:05
FDB	075	Dubai	12:50	KLM	415	Amsterdam	22:10
UAE	871	Dubai	12:50	NIA	151	Cairo	22:10
KAC	680	Dubai	12:55	ETD	309	Abu Dhabi	22:15
MSR	610	Cairo	13:00	AIC	987	Chennai/Hyderabad	22:25
AXB	393	Kozhikode	13:10	PIA	239	Sialkot	22:35
KAC	564	Amman	13:40	JZR	241	Amman	22:45
KAC	788	Jeddah	13:45	JAI	574	Mumbai	23:00
KAC	792	Madinah	13:50	JZR	185	Dubai	23:15
BBC	143	Dhaka	14:00	JZR	555	Alexandria	23:20
QTR	1078	Doha	14:10	FDB	071	Dubai	23:45
FDB	059	Dubai	14:20				
KAC	692	Muscat	14:30	Departure Flights on Tuesday 7/3/2017			
SVA	500	Jeddah	14:30	Airlines	Fit	Route	Time
GFA	221	Bahrain	14:40	AIC	976	Goa/Chennai	00:05
KAC	542	Cairo	14:45	JAI	573	Mumbai	00:30
				FDB	072	Dubai	00:40
				ETD	920	Abu Dhabi	00:45

CROSSWORD 1540



ACROSS

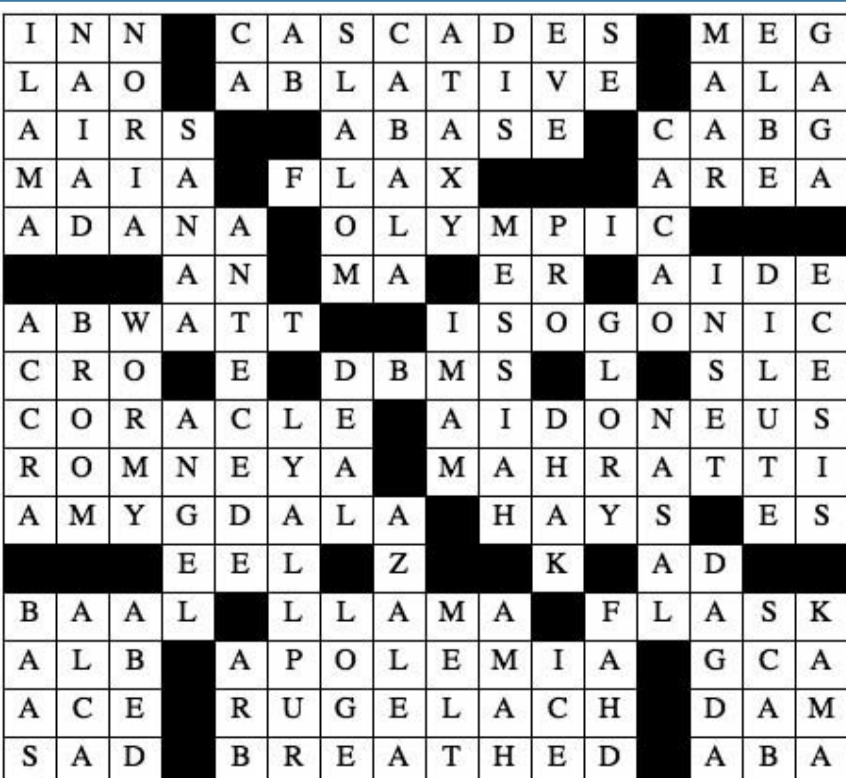
- Floor covering consisting of a piece of thick heavy fabric (usually with nap or pile).
- Separate by abscission.
- Antelope with white markings like a harness and twisted horns.
- A transuranic element.
- Lyrebirds and scrubbirds.
- Small buffalo of the Celebes having small straight horns.
- A plant hormone promoting elongation of stems and roots.
- Grammatical number category referring to two or more items or units.
- A widely distributed perennial sedge having small edible nutlike tubers.
- Pertaining to or characteristic of an ascetic.
- A village in eastern Ireland (northwest of Dublin).
- A federal agency established to regulate the release of new foods and health-related products.
- An Indian nursemaid who looks after children.
- In the same place (used when citing a reference).
- Sexually transmitted urethritis (usually caused by chlamydia).
- A brittle gray crystalline element that is a semiconducting metalloid (resembling silicon) used in transistors.
- (of the feet of some animals) Not webbed.
- Wear away.
- Title for a civil or military leader (especially in Turkey).
- A fraudulent business scheme.
- The greatest possible degree of something.
- A quantity of no importance.
- Be earlier in time.
- A silvery ductile metallic element found primarily in bauxite.
- A clay pipe with a short stem.
- A district of Manhattan.
- Long-tailed arboreal mustelid of Central and South America.
- Any of a number of fishes of the family Carangidae.
- Open-heart surgery in which the rib cage is opened and a section of a blood vessel is grafted from the aorta to the coronary artery to bypass the blocked section of the coronary artery and improve the blood supply to the heart.
- Resinlike substance secreted by certain lac insects.
- The cry made by sheep.
- A drug combination found in some over-the-counter headache remedies (Aspirin and Phenacetin and Caffeine).
- A cut of pork ribs with much of the meat trimmed off.
- A cgs unit of work or energy.
- Seed of a pea plant.
- Large and brightly colored handkerchief.
- A nucleic acid consisting of large molecules shaped like a double helix.

DOWN

- The state of being decayed or destroyed.
- Relatively small fast-moving sloth.
- An Indian gum from the dhawa tree.
- A former unit of electric current (slightly smaller than the SI ampere).

- An ugly evil-looking old woman.
- Offering safety.
- A medicine or therapy that cures disease or relieve pain.
- A self-funded retirement plan that allows you to contribute a limited yearly sum toward your retirement.
- Food mixtures either arranged on a plate or tossed and served with a moist dressing.
- 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.
- Any of various rich and elaborate cakes.
- An unreduced or unbroken completeness or totality.
- Region of western Asia Minor colonized by Ancient Greeks.
- All the loaves of bread baked at the same time.
- A white trivalent metallic element.
- The 18th letter of the Hebrew alphabet.
- The capital and largest city of Yemen.
- A region whose eastern part is Bangladesh and western part is included in India.
- An informal term for a father.
- Reconnaissance (by shortening).
- Cud-chewing mammal used as a draft or saddle animal in desert regions.
- A line spoken by an actor to the audience but not intended for others on the stage.
- Desert shrub of Syria and Arabia having small white flowers.
- (often followed by 'of') A large number or amount or extent.
- A bachelor's degree in science.
- Tired to the point of exhaustion.
- A narrow zigzag ribbon used as trimming.
- The site of three famous battles among Greek city-states.
- (Babylonian) God of storms and wind.
- A B vitamin that prevents beriberi.
- A monarchy in northwestern Europe occupying most of the British Isles.
- An official prosecutor for a judicial district.
- Genus of tropical plants with creeping rootstocks and small umbellate flowers.
- Fruit of the oak tree.
- A strip of land projecting into a body of water.
- A series of steps to be carried out or goals to be accomplished.
- Soft white semisolid fat obtained by rendering the fatty tissue of the hog v. 1.
- In bed.
- An outlying farm building for storing grain or animal feed and housing farm animals.
- Mentally or physically infirm with age.
- A state-chartered savings bank owned by its depositors and managed by a board of trustees.
- A federal agency established to coordinate programs aimed at reducing pollution and protecting the environment.
- A loose sleeveless outer garment made from aba cloth.

Yesterday's Solution



STAR TRACK



Aries (March 21-April 19)

A slow, methodical approach to a personal mathematical or accounting problem will show you where a problem has continued for way too long. You may wonder why you put these business issues aside for so long. You mentally agree to do what is needed to get a project completed, no matter how difficult it may seem. You methodically go about accomplishing what others will only stand around staring over. Your relationships, especially female friends, become more harmonious than usual. You could sub as a counselor to someone who needs a listening ear this evening, or perhaps do some tutoring or coaching. You will make a positive difference-just because you care. Keep watch on your evening walk for a fun new animal in the neighborhood.



Taurus (April 20-May 20)

You may decide to ride on the new city transportation system. A sense of adventure creates the desire to go into interesting places and you may make a few plans for some weekend adventure. For today, it is work and making the best progress that you can. You do well as you talk a customer into just the right pair of shoes or just the right piece of furniture. When you take your break, consider a trip to a bookstore-this is a good time to expand your thinking. Books to help you make more sales will give you some of the answers you have been seeking. The memory of a dream is fun conversation this evening. A loved one wants to talk about his or her dreams. A dream diary may be fun for each of you to keep; perhaps there will be a future consideration.



Gemini (May 21-June 20)

The labor of your hard work will show great rewards soon. Perhaps you will be working with some new project this week. Whatever the case, you are interested in getting as much accomplished as possible. You put a lot of effort and forethought into whatever it is you are doing. Your personality is magnetic and is contagious. People love working with you. You will be highly successful in the results that you set out to achieve. Allow your positive energy to work through you now. Emotions today, as well as the feelings of those around you, may become very clear. If you are staying a little later in the workplace this afternoon you will most certainly find yourself chatting and interacting occasionally with friendly co-workers. Enjoy dinner out tonight.



Cancer (June 21-July 22)

By noon you will be receiving praises and rewards for the results of your hard work. You may be giving a lecture, finishing a creative project or baking a cake. Whatever you do now will create rave reviews. Friends this afternoon may unconsciously bring to bear an old issue you thought had become unimportant. Take a look at the things that move or twist your emotions the most and you may shed some light on what is really behind some long-term issue. You may find yourself reflecting on your own youth or some event in the past. This evening you may enjoy a good movie or book or feel like escaping from day-to-day realities for a while. You can appreciate an imaginative approach and may value futuristic ideas.



Leo (July 23-August 22)

You will have several opportunities to express your opinion today. You will be able to put your ideas into practice and enlarge the range of your creativity. This may mean your work is on display. Spend a little time to take care of any last minute details-mental discipline should come easily. Problems should find easy explanations under your keen examination. You share time with a friend this afternoon and find yourself in an ongoing, deep conversation about the story of life and living. You usually share intelligent ideas with friends because your friends are very intelligent, but the conversations this evening are fun and contagious. Avoid addictive behaviors and focus on maintaining that balance that you have worked hard to achieve.



Virgo (August 23-September 22)

This can be a phase of sublime spiritual development, to be sure. You should, however, be aware of the tendencies to believe too quickly, too deeply, or to become dependent on things or people that seem to offer quick and easy answers. Communicating and getting your message across to others is very important, particularly now. You may even find yourself demonstrating your own sign language. While you seem to attract people with opposing viewpoints, it is a good day to study the unusual. Relationships tend to intensify during this time. You may feel unusually affectionate and physical now with a cheerful and optimistic attitude. Romance can be quite enjoyable this evening, especially if you say yes to a dinner date.



Libra (September 23-October 22)

Remain optimistic when you face restrictions, limitations or delays. Acceptance is the key to unlocking the doors of opportunity and growth. Reach beyond your norm and make every effort now to finish what you begin. Your personal popularity is on the upswing. Whatever you are doing, keep it going! In everything you do, create a balance and make sure your energies match the things you strive to achieve. Others credit you for your ability to make practical decisions concerning group issues. You have a true understanding of young people and may be asked to help with some leadership program this afternoon. There is a chance to draw close to a loved one this evening. Consider a dream diary to record your dreams.



Scorpio (October 23-November 21)

You may want to take part in a working partnership or group activities. You appreciate your responsibilities and duty. Problems are valued for the lessons they represent, rather than perceived as obstacles, and you teach others with this attitude. This is a good day to get things done. Good eye-hand coordination and a persistent effort make most tasks run well. You can really get your thoughts and ideas across with good communication. You may feel like exercising different muscles this afternoon. . . Perhaps a bicycle ride with a friend. Marriage and other close relationships give rise to great expectations as a new cycle gets underway. This evening is a good time to enjoy and appreciate your station in life. Life is good.



Sagittarius (November 22-December 19)

You may feel particularly independent today. An early morning run or bicycle ride may help you to gear up for the rest of your day or. . . Just enjoy the ability to be out-of-doors. There is much mental busywork later this morning. Teamwork in the workplace proves to be successful on every level. There is a great deal of growth to be enjoyed, especially in the area of clients. You will want to be showing your gratitude and appreciation for others who share your workday. The clients are happy with the all the results of the group. A heightened interest in health, as well as an urge to get things organized, is strong this afternoon and you may find yourself hiring someone to build racks in the garage and laundry room for a better organized you.



Capricorn (December 22-January 19)

This is a great time to be with others. Your work may be filled with lots of volunteer opportunities. If work is slow, this would be the time to step up and volunteer. If your day is packed full of responsibilities, find one thing that you can share with a co-worker and work together to help eliminate the extra work. Working with-rather than against-the flow should be easy to do. You are at the end of a long phase in your life that will leave you with some real insight into your very own personal growth and development, particularly regarding the spirit. Go with the flow and when you find yourself frustrated, know that you are fighting the flow of life-stop and become quiet. Read about meditation and gently try a few techniques.



Aquarius (January 20- February 18)

A round table discussion may lead to subjects that are outside the realm of your work. It is time to take notes and study the trend of conversation-picking up new ways to become better informed. Later today you could check out the business magazines. Eventually you will be able to communicate ideas about ways to improve current business. There are new techniques that will help you and your company move forward and become more productive. Make sure you have all your information on paper for all to view. This is a good workday and has possibilities for future advancement. This evening is perfect for enjoying your family. Travel can be considered soon. For the immediate future, plan some in-town travel to a public garden or zoo.



Pisces (February 19-March 20)

This birthday you seem to glow. . . You are in good spirits and you may find yourself busy and consumed with the important things that only you can do best. You may buzz around like a bee, tending to the things that are most important down to the little things that catch the eye of a client or customer who navigates to you like honey. You may forget that in part of giving and providing for others, there is receiving. People like to give and they like to feel good about giving so it would be good to be the gracious receiver this day. There are some wonderful adventures coming your way in the coming months and you are ready to participate. Social interaction is informative and fun this evening. Enjoy the attention.

Wordsearch Puzzle

Old West 1

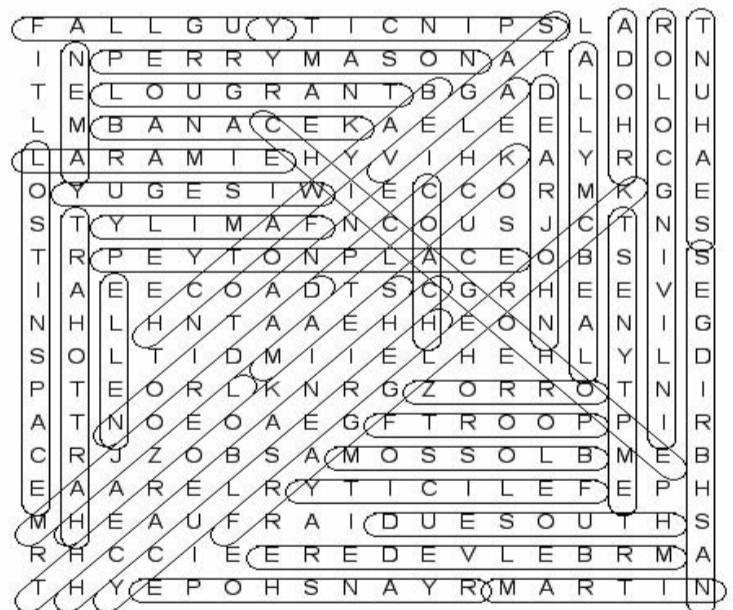
Find and circle all of the words that are hidden in the grid. The remaining 25 letters spell a George Eliot quotation.



- | | | | |
|---------------|--------------|-------------|--------------|
| BANKER | FARRIER | LAWMAN | SALOON |
| BARKEEP | FORT | LIVESTOCK | SHERIFF |
| BILLY THE KID | FURS | MINER | SHOPKEEPER |
| BOOT HILL | GOLD MINE | OUTLAW GANG | SITTING BULL |
| BRAND | GOLD PANNING | PISTOL | STAGECOACH |
| CAMPFIRE | GRAZE | PLOW HORSE | TELEGRAPH |
| CATTLE DRIVE | HURED GUN | POSSE | TRACKER |
| CHAPARRAL | HOGS | RAILROAD | TRAIL |
| COAL | HOMESTEAD | RANCH | TRAIN |
| CORRAL | HOTEL | RATTLESNAKE | UNDERTAKER |
| COWBOY | JUDGE | RIFLE | WATER TANK |
| DOC HOLLIDAY | LARIAT | SADDLE | WELL |

Yesterday's Solution

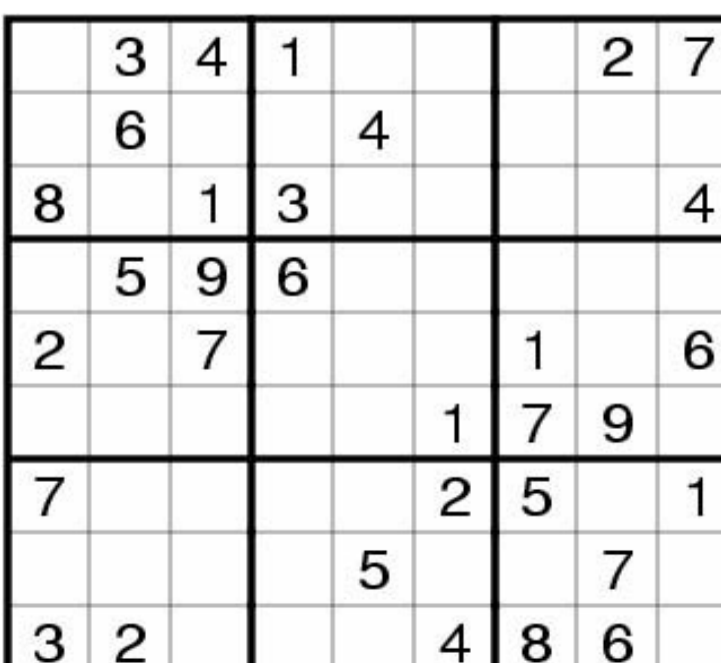
Old TV Shows 4



- | | | | |
|--------------|--------------|-----------------|--------------|
| ALIEN NATION | DUE SOUTH | HERE'S LUCY | PERRY MASON |
| ALLY MCBEAL | ELLEN | IN LIVING COLOR | PEYTON PLACE |
| AMEN | EMPTY NEST | LARAMIE | RHODA |
| BANACEK | F TROOP | LOST IN SPACE | RYAN'S HOPE |
| BAYWATCH | FALL GUY | LOU GRANT | SEA HUNT |
| BLOSSOM | FAMILY | MAJOR DAD | SPIN CITY |
| CHICAGO HOPE | FELICITY | MARTIN | THE ROOKIES |
| CHINA BEACH | FRAGGLE ROCK | MATLOCK | VEGAS |
| COACH | HART TO HART | MR BELVEDERE | WISGUY |
| DEAR JOHN | HAZEL | NASH BRIDGES | ZORRO |

The hidden TV show is: LITTLE HOUSE ON THE PRAIRIE

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
Qadisiya	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 Khaldiya Coop	Fahad Al-Salem St Khaldiya 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

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		

STATE OF KUWAIT DIRECTORATE GENERAL OF CIVIL AVIATION METEOROLOGICAL DEPARTMENT



Tel: (+965) 161 Ext: 2627 - 2630
Fax: (+965) 24348714
www.met.gov.kw

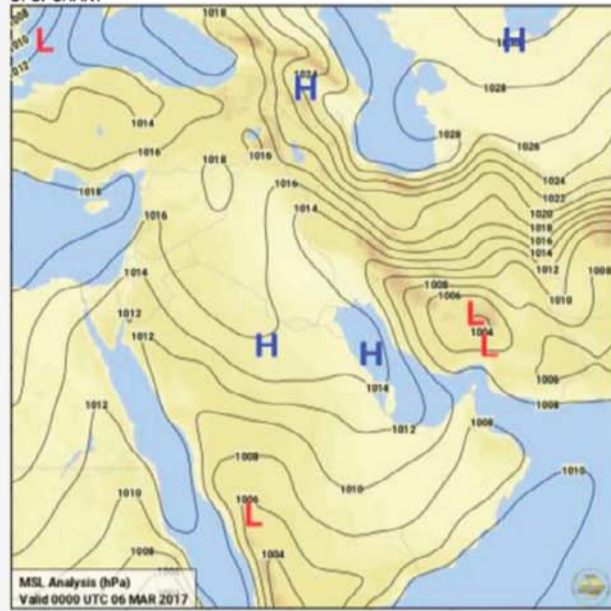
Expected Weather for the Next 24 Hours

Issued 06/03/2017-07:00 LT UTC +3hr

Max Temperature 25 °C

By Day : Sunny with light to moderate freshening gradually north westerly wind, with speed of 15 - 40 km/h causing raising dust over open areas
By Night : Cool with light to moderate north westerly wind, with speed of 08 - 30 km/h

SFC. CHART



Four-Day Forecast

	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
Expected Weather				
Min Temp °C	13	16	15	14
Max Temp °C	27	28	29	29
Wind Direction	north westerly to light variable	north westerly to northerly	north westerly	north westerly
Wind Speed km/h	08 - 30	08 - 32	25 - 50	20 - 45

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	15		27	
KUWAIT AIRPORT	14		25	
ABDALY	11		26	
BUBYAN	12		24	
JAHRA	13		27	
FAILAKA ISLAND	15		27	
SALMIYAH	16		25	
AHMADI	16		23	
JAL ALIYAH	11		25	
QAROH ISLAND	17		22	
UMM AL-MARADEM	16		21	
NUWAISIB	14		25	
WAFRA	13		30	
MANAGISH	11		25	
SALMI	10		23	
MUTRIBA	11		27	

Recorded Yesterday at Kuwait Airport

Max Temp (°C)	27
Min Temp (°C)	13
Max Rel Hum (%)	61
Min Rel Hum (%)	28
Max Wind Speed (km/h) and Direction	50 NW
TOTAL RAINFALL IN 24 HR	0 mm

Prayer Times

Fajr	04:50
Sunrise	06:09
Zuhr	11:59
Asr	15:20
Sunset	17:50
Isha	19:07



PRIVATE CLINICS

Ophthalmologists	Plastic Surgeons	Paediatricians	Endocrinologist
Dr. Abdallah Al-Mansoor 25622444	Dr. Mohammad Al-Khalaf 22547272	Dr. Khaled Hamadi 25665898	Dr. Abd Al-Naser Al-Othman 25339330
Dr. Samy Al-Rabea 25752222	Dr. Abdal-Redha Lari 22617700	Dr. Abd Al-Aziz Al-Rashed 25340300	Dr. Ahmad Al-Ansari 25658888
Dr. Masoma Habeeb 25321171	Dr. Abdel Quttainah 25625030/60	Dr. Zahra Qabazard 25710444	Dr. Kamal Al-Shomr 25329924
Dr. Mubarak Al-Ajmy 25739999	Family Doctor	Dr. Sohail Qamar 22621099	Physiotherapists & VD
Dr. Mohsen Abel 25757700	Dr Divya Damodar 23729596/23729581	Dr. Snaa Maarroof 25713514	Dr. Deyaa Shehab 25722291
Dr. Adnan Hasan Alwayl 25732223	Psychiatrists	Dr. Pradip Gupje 23713100	Dr. Mused Faraj Khomees 22666288
Dr. Abdallah Al-Baghly 25732223	Dr. Esam Al-Ansari 22635047	Dr. Zacharias Mathew 24334282	Rheumatologists:
Ear, Nose & Throat (ENT)	Dr. Eisa M. Al-Balhan 22613623/0	Dermatology	Dr. Adel Al-Awadi 25330060
Dr. Ahmed Fouad Mouner 24555050 Ext 510	Gynaecologists & Obstetricians	Dr. Mohammed Salam Bern University 23845955	Dr. Khaled Al-Jarallah 25722290
Dr. Abdallah Al-Ali 25644660	Dr.Adrian arbe 23729596/23729581	Dentists	Internist, Chest & Heart
Dr. Abd Al-Hameed Al-Taweel 25646478	Dr. Verginia s.Marin 2572-6666 ext 8321	Dr. Anil Thomas 3729596/3729581	DR.Mohammes Akkad 24555050 Ext 210
Dr. Sanad Al-Fathalah 25311996	Dr. Fozeya Ali Al-Qatan 22655539	Dr. Shamah Al-Matar 22641071/2	Dr. Mohammad Zubaid MB, ChB, FRCP, PACC
Dr. Mohammad Al-Daory 25731988	Dr. Majeda Khalefa Aliytami 25343406	Dr. Anesah Al-Rasheed 22562226	Assistant Professor Of Medicine Head, Division of Cardiology Mubarak Al-Kabeer Hospital 25339667
Dr. Ismail Al-Fodary 22620166	Dr. Ahmad Al-Khooly 25739272	Dr. Abdallah Al-Amer 22561444	Consultant Cardiologist
Dr. Mahmoud Al-Booz 25651426	Dr. Salem soso 22618787	Dr. Faysal Al-Fozan 22619557	Dr. Farida Al-Habib 2611555-2622555 MD, PH.D, FACC
General Practitioners	General Surgeons	Dr. Abdalateef Al-Katrash 22525888	Inaya German Medical Center
Dr. Mohamme Y Majidi 24555050 Ext 123	Dr. Amer Zawaz Al-Amer 22610044	Dr. Abdallah Al-Duweisan 25653755	Te: 2575077
Dr. Yousef Al-Omar 24719312	Dr. Mohammad Yousef Basher 25327148	Dr. Bader Al-Ansari 25620111	Fax: 25723123
Dr. Tarek Al-Mikhazeem 23926920	Internists, Chest & Heart	Neurologists	
Dr. Kathem Maarafi 25730465	Dr. Adnan Ebil 22639939	Dr. Sohal Najem Al-Shemeri 25633324	
Dr. Abdallah Ahmad Eyadad 25655528	Dr. Mousa Khadada 22666300	Dr. Jasem Mola Hassan 25345875	
Dr. Nabeel Al-Ayoobi 24577781	Dr. Latefa Al-Duweisan 25728004	Gastrologists	
Dr. Dina Abdallah Al-Rfae 25333501	Dr. Nadem Al-Ghabra 25355515	Dr. Sami Aman 22636464	
Urologists	Dr. Mobarak Aldoub 24726446	Dr. Mohammad Al-Shamaly 25322030	
Dr. Ali Naser Al-Serfy 22641534	Dr Nasser Behbehani 25654300/3	Dr. Foad Abdallah Al-Ali 22633135	
Dr. Fawzi Taher Abul 22639955			
Dr. Khaleel Abdallah Al-Awadi 22616660			
Dr. Adel Al-Hunayan FRCS (C) 25313120			
Dr. Leons Joseph 66703427			

Psychologists /Psychotherapists

Soor Center
Tel: 2290-1677
Fax: 2290 1688

info@soorcenter.com
www.soorcenter.com

Kaizen center
25716707

Noor Clinic
23845955

William Schuilenberg, RPC 2290-1677
Zaina Al Zabin, M.Sc. 2290-1677

Adele confirms marriage to Simon Konecki



The 'Hello' hitmaker revealed she had tied the knot with her long term partner - with whom she shares four-year-old son Angelo - as she performed for fans in Brisbane, Australia. Introducing her song 'Someone Like You', she told the crowd: "I could see in their eyes as they were listening to it on their head-phones that it reminded them of something or someone. I was trying to remember how it was I felt at the beginning of the relationship that inspired that record because as bad as a break up can be, as bitter and horri-

ble and messy as it can be, that feeling when you first fall for someone is the best feeling on earth, and I am addicted to that feeling. "Obviously I can't go through with those feelings because I'm married now. I've found my next person." Adele sent fans in a frenzy at the Grammy Awards when she appeared to reveal she had walked down the aisle, although some wondered if it was just a slip of the tongue as she later called Simon her "partner". Collecting an award, she said: "Grammys, I appreciate it, the Academy, I love you, my manager, my

husband and my son - you're the only reason I do it." Meanwhile, a source previously claimed the couple had planned to marry over Christmas so Simon's daughter - who he has from a previous relationship - could be there. They said: "The plan is to marry in Los Angeles. The wedding will be in one of the school holidays so Simon's daughter can attend. It's looking like it will be Christmas, but they want to keep details under wraps. "Adele is not even wearing her engagement ring. They're a private couple and only want their nearest and dearest there."

Davis had 'chip on her shoulder' growing up



The 'How To Get Away With Murder' star felt her "voice as an artist was being stifled" when she attended Juilliard. Speaking as she collected the 2017 Artist of the Year award during Harvard's Cultural Rhythms Festival, she said: "I spent so many years at Juilliard just wanting to beat somebody up. I think it was the height of my anger; that chip on my shoulder. I'm still trying to take care of that chip on my shoulder, by the way. It was mainly because I felt my voice as an artist was being stifled." Meanwhile, the 51-year-old actress previously admitted she "fears" her daughter Genesis will grow up to be "entitled". She said: "You just listed my number one fear, which is

entitlement. I never had a house; I do shop at Target, I buy all her clothes at Target or H&M. And maybe, if I'm feeling really good, Nordstrom Rack." And Viola says her husband Julius Tennon helps her keep Genesis grounded as he always "holds her accountable" for the things she does. She added: "Julius is really tough. He has two beautiful children and seven grandkids. I came into a relationship where he already had children and grandchildren and raised his kids on his own, so he's tough — he toes the line, but in a very loving way. "He holds her accountable. Me, not so much — I'm the softie. Really, entitlement. Listen, there are poor kids who are entitled. So I pray."

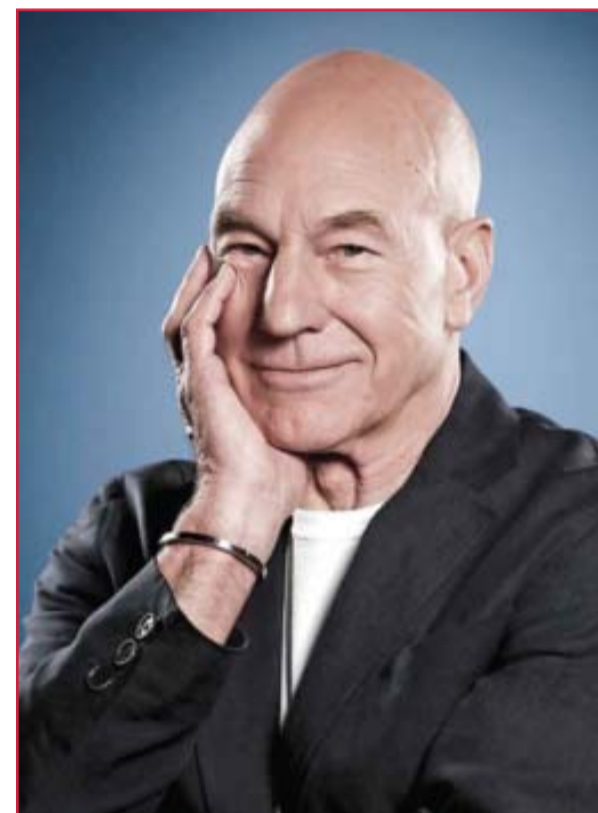
Watson 'very confused' by photoshoot criticism

The 'Beauty And The Beast' star posed in an open crochet top and white lace skirt for a cover interview for the magazine and has hit back at her critics who say she is devaluing feminism by posing in the outfit. She told BBC News: "Feminism is about giving women choice. Feminism is not a stick with which to beat other women. It's about freedom, it's about liberation. It's about equality. I don't know what my t**s have to do with it. It's very confusing. Most people are confused. I'm always just kind of quietly stunned. They were saying that I couldn't be a feminist and have boobs." Meanwhile, Emma recently confessed criticism has "really toughened" her up. She said: "There is a level of criticism that comes with being an actress and a public figure, which I expect but once you take a stance on something like feminism, that's a completely different ball game. It really toughened me up." Emma has been an advocate for women's rights for years but has never professed she knows everything about feminism. The 26-year-old actress has had numerous approaches to write a book on the topic but insists she won't be doing so until later in life. She added: "I need to see and do a bit more first. It's not like I have been reading this material for years and I don't have an encyclopaedic knowledge. It can be a lot of pressure sometimes, as people expect me to know so much. I'm no expert, and when people push me into a corner of 'Here's Emma Watson to lecture you on feminism', it's uncomfortable because I am aware I have a long way to go. I am not sure I deserve all the respect I get yet, but I'm working on it."



Tinie Tempah was 'very nervous' of fame

The 28-year-old musician has admitted he never used to be able to handle his celebrity status and the recognition he would receive from the public if he took public transport, although now he has embraced it and believes people are "more intimidated" by him. Speaking about how he handles his fame to Eurostar Metropolitan magazine, the 'Written In The Stars' hitmaker said: "I took the tube to the airport the other day. I used to be very nervous of fame: shy, head down. Now I've realized people are more intimidated by me than I am by them. "I'm like a spider on the Underground." And the vocalist has revealed he has studied up and coming artists every moment of the day so he can "absorb everything" about them, including the jokes they make, to help him develop his own music and stand out as an individual artist. Tinie - who has been working on his latest album 'Youth' - explained: "Even when I go to bed, I'm still thinking about this. I watch every single type of musician, everything about them: what they wear, how they talk, what their videos like, what jokes they make. I watch and absorb everything. "I'm not trying to be like an American rapper, I'm doing it my own way." And Tinie - whose full name is Patrick Chukwuemeka Okogwu - has hinted he doesn't want to be a celebrity known for "scandals", and has likened himself to a tortoise because he would rather progress slowly with his future than do something to tarnish his title for the sake of being known. He said: "There's a level of scandal that makes you more famous. "Those are the people who are talked about, who break the internet. But form I guess it's a tortoise and hare race."



Sir Patrick Stewart thinks about death 'every day'

The 'Logan' star admits he has thought more about mortality since his friends - which includes Alan Rickman and Alan Howard - passed away in the last few years. He said: "It really has been absolutely brutal. There have been individuals who I've not been able to fully absorb: Alan Rickman, Roger Rees, Alan Howard. They were my contemporaries. My friends ... "[I think about mortality] every day now. It's giving me a focus that I haven't had before ... My wife is half my age. So we talk frankly about it, her career, my career, how we use our time. I mean, why not? We've got to face it." And the 76-year-old actor - who is married to Sunny Ozell - also opened up about his childhood, which saw his father turn to the bottle to cope with his shell shock. He told The Sunday Times newspaper: "Nobody ever talked about it. Nobody knew; my mother, I don't think she knew that he was shell-shocked. Nothing justifies violence against women or children. Nothing. But it puts it into a context that at least makes it understandable ... "It took me years to finally be able to say that this is part of who I am. Now I'm either going to benefit from it, or I'm not. I'm going to take it on board and not deny it and say it never happened ... "One of the great things about living in Los Angeles is you've got access to five-star therapists. They're everywhere ... There's all this s**t there, but that's one of the fortunate things about being an actor: no experience is ever wasted."



Warren Beatty praised for how he handled Oscar drama

The 79-year-old actor and his 'Bonnie & Clyde' co-star Faye Dunaway, 76, were given the wrong envelope at the Academy Awards last month, leading Faye to mistakenly announce 'La La Land' as the winner, instead of 'Moonlight' and Oscars producer Michael De Luca believes Warren is the "unsung hero" of the night. Referring to when Warren hesitated and showed Faye the card with the winner's name, he told The Hollywood Reporter: "I actually think Warren Beatty is the unsung hero here, completely heroic. I think he was showing her [Dunaway] the card, like, 'hey are you seeing what I'm seeing? I think a mistake's been made here.' To me, they are heroes and completely in the clear." And Michael believes PricewaterhouseCoopers accountant Brian Cullinan, who handed Warren the wrong envelope, and his colleague Martha Ruiz, could have done more to smooth things over.

He said: "If I was in that job, and I know I'm Monday morning quarterbacking, which I detest, but I feel like if it's my one job, if I heard the wrong name, I'd walk directly to Warren Beatty and say 'you got the wrong envelope, here's the right envelope', and make a charming moment out of it." Michael also revealed director Steven Spielberg called him to congratulate him on an excellent show, despite the controversy. He said: "I did get one instant phone call from Steven Spielberg, who said he watched the show with friends at a screening room and thought it was great, and it was a real pep talk. I love him for it, it was really appreciated. "I would have loved the story to be 'Moonlight', this little film that has nobody traditional in it but celebrates African-American LGBT culture, won best picture. It's a tremendous landmark and underdog story, and that should have been the lead story."

Dunn always wears black, grey and nude coloured clothing

The 26-year-old model has a select colour palette for the clothes in her wardrobe, which include monochrome shades, pale peach hues and navy blue, because she believes everyone has to have "go-to" fashion choices. Speaking about her style preferences to MarieClaire.co.uk, the brunette beauty said: "I feel like you just have to have your go-tos. You can't go wrong with a pair of skinny jeans, a great hoodie, a vest top, and a bomber jacket with a pair of heels. Or even sneakers. "I'm always in black, grey, nudes, navy blue and white." The catwalk icon believes the key to looking great in athleisure is to feel "comfortable and confident", which is why she relies on a mix of fabrics and styles. She explained: "First, it has to suit you and make you feel comfortable and confident. I like rocking a good mix of fabrics and different styles, like a fleece, high waisted skirt and a pair of heels. I feel like it's all about that balance." Meanwhile the fashion muse - who regularly graces the runway alongside Kendall Jenner, Gigi Hadid and Joan Smalls - has revealed her seven-year-old son, Riley, has met her celebrity friends and colleagues but "wasn't bothered" by their high status. She explained: "No, not really. When he met Taylor Swift and Kendall Jenner and all of that lot, he really wasn't bothered! But then again, I think he was only about five years old! He didn't care."



Bruno Mars, Timberlake shine at iHeartRadio Awards



Justin Timberlake accepts the award for song of the year for "Can't Stop The Feeling!" as presenter Jeremy Renner, left, looks on during the iHeartRadio Music Awards at the Forum on Sunday, March 5, 2017, in Inglewood, California. — AP photos



Ed Sheeran performs.



Katy Perry performs "Chained to the Rhythm".

The 2017 iHeartRadio Music Awards started with Justin Timberlake speaking about inclusion and dedicating his award to children who feel different, and ended with a rousing performance by Bruno Mars that included crowd participation from Florida Georgia Line, Thomas Rhett, Ty Dolla \$ign, Heidi Klum and more. Timberlake won the night's first award, song of the year, for "Can't Stop The Feeling!" - his massive No.1 hit that was nominated for an Academy Award last month.

"I wrote this song because I wanted it to be about inclusion, about being together. And so I guess I want to take this opportunity and speak to young people right now 'cause there's a lot of you looking at me, if you are black or you are brown or you are gay or you're a lesbian or you are trans, or maybe you're just a sissy singing boy from Tennessee, anyone that is treating you unkindly, it's only because they are afraid or have been taught to be afraid of how important you are," Timberlake, who is from Memphis, said to the crowd at the Forum in Inglewood, California. "Because being different means you make the difference," added Timberlake, who ended his speech with an expletive that was bleeped.

"Can't Stop This Feeling!" appeared on the "Trolls" soundtrack and was nominated for the best original song Oscar. Mars, who earned the Innovator Award and closed the show, started his performance with his past hit, "Treasure," and later sang his newest hit, the groovy "That's What I Like." It featured his signature, slick dance moves and all-star band. "Innovator is a very heavy word. ...It's a little ironic for me because I genuinely feel like I'm just getting started," Mars, 31, said onstage, sporting a black suit and sunglasses. "So buckle up. I don't know where we're going yet but we're going. Keep up y'all."

Members of Fifth Harmony from left, Dinah Jane, Ally Brooke, Normani Kordei and Lauren Jauregui, of Fifth Harmony, introduce a performance by Thomas Rhett.



Miley Cyrus introduces a performance by Noah Cyrus and Labrinth.

Other A-list stars were part of the awards show, too: Ed Sheeran started solo and strummed his guitar during "Shape of You" - currently No.1 on the Billboard Hot 100 - and later walked to another stage to perform "Castle on the Hill" with a full band. Sheeran won best lyrics for co-writing Justin Bieber's "Love Yourself." "We started this song on the back of a tour bus," Sheeran said onstage next to co-writer Benny Blanco (Bieber, who didn't attend, also co-wrote the song).

Drake, who didn't attend the show, was the night's big winner with seven awards (he was also the top contender with 12 nominations). The Chainsmokers had 11 nominations and won five awards, including best new artist. The Grammy-winning EDM duo performed "Paris" and "Something Just Like This" with Chris Martin, who ran into the crowd during the performance.

"It's been a really, really tough year, but I hope that somehow this song made the summer a little bit better for you guys despite everything that's been going on," Halsey said onstage after she and the Chainsmokers won

dance song of the year for their ubiquitous hit, "Closer." Martin and his band Coldplay won best tour. He accepted the award onstage with three people - not his band mates - but child background dancers who performed with Katy Perry at the top of the show.

"Hello, we are Coldplay. Thank you so much for this award. We love our job and we love our fans," the young girl read from a paper. "You wouldn't believe it, but we are in our late 30s," Perry, in a bright red blazer, hot pink pants and a short blond haircut, kicked off the show with kid dancers dressed as laborers when she sang "Chained to the Rhythm." Miley Cyrus was ecstatic as she introduced her younger sister, Noah Cyrus, to the stage for a performance. Miley and her parents sang along as Noah per-

formed "Make Me (Cry)" alongside English singer-producer Labrinth.

Pop singer Shawn Mendes, rapper Big Sean and Thomas Rhett - who won country artist of the year - also performed at the show, attended by John Legend, Demi Lovato, DJ Khaled, Ansel Elgort, Macklemore, Jhene Aiko, Joe Jonas and more. Some of the winners were announced on Snapchat, including Rihanna (R&B album of the year), Green Day (rock song of the year) and twenty one pilots (alternative rock artist of the year). Fifth Harmony, whose band member Camila Cabello recently left the group, won best fan army and thanked their feverish fans onstage. Ryan Seacrest hosted the two-hour show, which aired live on TBS, TNT and truTV. — AP



Skip Marley, left, and Katy Perry perform "Chained to the Rhythm".



DJ Khaled speaks as he hold his son, Asahd.



Alex Pall, left, and Drew Taggart of The Chainsmokers, accept the award for best new artist.



In a photo taken on March 3, 2017 members of 'Cheer Mommy', a 30-member cheerleading squad with an average age of 75, practice their routines at a rehearsal room in Samcheok, on South Korea's northeast coast. — AFP photos

Ageing cheerleaders offer glimpse of world's longest-living women

Waving white pom poms in the air, dozens of grey-haired cheerleaders in matching red and white uniforms hop and skip to K-pop music that fills the practice room. Halfway into their two-hour practice session, most of the elderly dancers are panting and sweating, but do not let their bad knees or back pain stop them from what they say is keeping them healthy and youthful.

"Because I come here, I don't need to take any medicine," said 82-year-old Oh Geum-Nyu. "Although I'm ageing on the outside, this keeps me young at heart." Oh is one of the oldest members of Cheer Mommy, a 30-member cheerleading squad with an average age of 75, based in Samcheok, on South Korea's east coast. Life expectancy in Asia's fourth-largest economy is accelerating rapidly, and for women born in 2030 it could stretch to nine decades on average, the longest in the world, according to research published in The Lancet medical journal.

'Second chapter'

The study by researchers at Imperial College London noted improved nutrition and broader access to health care as some of the reasons



This picture taken on March 2, 2017 shows South Korean women, who are students aged 60 and up, looking at text books at a class room after their entrance ceremony for Ilsung Women's School.

Demographic crisis

South Korea's government has rolled out various welfare programmes to accommodate its rising senior population—its men are also set to become the world's longest-lived, according to the Imperial College study—including opening more community centres and organising leisure activities for the elderly. But experts say the cost could become crippling in the face of a looming demographic crisis in the country with the world's lowest birthrate. Around 6.5 million out of the country's 50 million population were 65 years or older in 2015, and in the next 10 years, one out of five South Koreans will be retired, according to a Statistics Korea report in December. The country's working age population started declining last year, it said, and by 2065 it will be overtaken by the number of retirees.

"It's the question of who will cover the increase in social security cost," said Professor Chung. "It wouldn't be a problem if the number of young people were also rising, but that's not the case." Authorities need to consider raising the retirement age, said Ha Jung-Hwa, social welfare professor at Seoul National University. "It's important the government introduces new policies to keep healthy and skilled senior citizens longer in the job market," she said.

Cheer Mommy started out as a local authority leisure programme, but the elderly squad now regularly travels across the country to compete in national tournaments against rivals decades their juniors. With the youngest member aged 63, the choreography lacks dynamic stunts like back flips or somersaults. It takes them twice as long to remember the routines, and instructor Yoon Bok-Ja said: "They are slow like turtles but they don't give up until they are perfect." The bubbly grannies quickly changed into their next uniform — graffiti-printed jerseys, white tracksuit bottoms and black baseball caps for a number set to Gangnam Style star Psy's latest hit Daddy, chanting: "Hip hop! Youth! To 100 years!" — AFP



This picture taken on March 2, 2017 shows South Korean women, who are students aged 60 and up studying at Ilsung Women's School in Seoul, performing during an entrance ceremony for its new students in Seoul.

behind the phenomenon. Some South Korean experts also point to social factors behind longevity. "Their love for informal gatherings and forging new personal bonds can be a source of energy," said Chung Soon-Dool, a social welfare professor at Ewha Women's University in Seoul.

Most South Korean women in their 60s and older spent much of the lives in a strongly patriarchal society where women were expected to stay at home and raise the children. Some are now embracing pursuits of their own choosing for the first time after retiring as the "caretaker". "I was done raising my seven grandchildren when my friend told me about this place," said Cheer Mommy member Ahn Young-Ja, 65.

Lee Pal-Soon, 82, who also takes singing classes when she is not cheerleading, said she was enjoying the "second chapter" of her life after marrying off her five children. Some are choosing to keep their brains active by going back to school, such as 88-year-old Kim Soon-Sil, who is among some 370 students aged 60 and up studying at Ilsung Women's School in Seoul. Kim, who grew up under Japan's 1910-1945 colonial rule of Korea, had to leave school at 13 and it was not until seven decades later that she could fulfill her longing to continue her studies in history and English. "I can feel small changes to my health every day, but if my health permits, I want to enroll in university," said Kim.



In a photo taken on March 3, 2017 members of 'Cheer Mommy', a 30-member cheerleading squad with an average age of 75, practice their routines at a rehearsal room in Samcheok, on South Korea's northeast coast.

Film spotlights human trafficking as Trump promises action

A new documentary is spotlighting human trafficking across the globe, with a focus on the grassroots activists trying to end the scourge. "Stopping Traffic" premieres at the Global Cinema Film Festival in the Boston suburb of Belmont on March 11. The film is the first by Sadhvi Siddhali Shree, a 33-year-old Jain monk, Iraq War veteran and child abuse survivor who intends to distribute it free of charge to universities, nonprofits and government agencies.

The film, which was financed through online donations, comes as President Donald Trump is promising to bring the "full force and weight" of the U.S. government to combat human trafficking. He says he will order the departments of Justice and Homeland Security to closely examine the resources they're devoting to the issue.

Shree gives credit to the Republican billionaire for placing an emphasis on human trafficking early in his tenure, but stressed it still remains to be seen what is actually done. "We need action to back that up," she said. "We will need a lot of resources, legislation and law enforcement."

If Trump is serious about addressing the issue, he should take cues from Canada, Sweden, Norway, Iceland, France, Ireland and other nations that have enacted laws harshly punishing pimps, traffickers and clients, rather than the prostitutes, said Rosi Orozco, an anti-trafficking activist in Mexico.

City who is featured in the documentary. "These are very good words from your president," she said. "This could be most the important issue to unite US and Mexico." Shree, who is spiritual director at the Siddhayatan Spiritual Retreat Center and Ashram in Windom, Texas, acknowledges she wasn't aware of the extent of human trafficking and was shocked at what she learned from Orozco and other activists.

Global issue

Estimates vary, but the International Labour Organization believed some 21 million people were being trafficked worldwide in a 2014 report. The illicit activities earned captors roughly \$150 billion, with nearly \$100 billion coming from commercial sexual exploitation, the report by the Geneva-based special agency of the United Nations found. The remaining \$50 billion came from other forms of forced labor.



In this April 26, 2016 file photo, suspects accused of involvement in child trafficking and pornography are escorted by agents of the National Bureau of Investigation (NBI) in Manila, Philippines. — AP

While trafficking is a global issue, it's also important to remember that America isn't immune - and that it's not just foreigners being trafficked, said Stephanie Clark, executive director of Amira, a Massachusetts nonprofit that helps sexually exploited women but isn't featured in the film. "This is an extremely prevalent issue that is right here, hidden in plain sight," she said. It's not just women being trafficked either. Young men and boys are often abused at far higher rates than what's recorded because many cultures still don't accept the notion that boys can also be rape victims, said John King, a child abuse survivor and activist in Grapevine, Texas, who is featured prominently in the film.

The filmmaker, who became a monk in 2008 after serving as an army medic during the Iraq War, said she deliberately avoided delving deeply into the personal experiences of those recently escaped from trafficking in the final product. The documentary features interviews with activists in Mexico, Philippines and the US cities of New Orleans and Houston, as well as actor Dolph Lundgren and other celebrities who raise awareness about human trafficking. Shree also shares her experience of being sexually abused as a child in the film. "We wanted to show the empowerment, not the sad and suffering side," she said. "It's more about the motivation and the inspiration. That where there's dark, there's also light." — AP

FURY OVER 'DEGRADING' SAINT LAURENT AD CAMPAIGN

A new publicity campaign featuring painfully thin models in "degrading" poses for the French fashion house Yves Saint Laurent sparked outrage yesterday, with calls for it to be banned. The poster campaign across Paris of a reclining woman in a fur coat and fishnet tights opening her legs, and another of a model in a leotard and roller skate stilettos bending over a stool, caused fury on social media.

The French advertising authority said most of the complaints it received were from people who saw the images as an "incitement to rape". Its director Stephane Martin told AFP the brand appeared to have "uncontestedly breached" the rules. "I am not sure that (Saint Laurent's) female clients would like to be associated with these images," he said. "We had a similar type of porno chic (in fashion advertising) a decade ago, and here we have it coming back again which isn't acceptable," Martin added.

He said they would decide on what action to take after meeting the label on Friday. The authority bars all "degrading and humiliating representations of people", and can demand that advertisers withdraw or change their campaigns. France's leading women's group, Osez le féminisme ("Dare to be Feminist"), called for the campaign to be pulled, saying this was not the first time Saint Laurent has crossed the line.

'Objectified and submissive'

It had previously raised hackles with

another campaign that used "a very young hypersexualised woman", said spokeswoman Raphaëlle Remy-Leleu. But she said this time the subtext of the images was "extremely violent". "It ticks all the sexist boxes. The women are objectified, hypersexualised and put in submissive positions," she told AFP.

"How do they think they will sell anything today (to women) with that?" But you have to ask if that wasn't intentional, that this was all about creating a scandal so we would talk about them," Remy-Leleu added. Saint Laurent was not available for comment. Britain's advertising watchdog banned a Saint Laurent advert two years ago that featured an overly thin model whose ribcage was showing.

Martin said the latest campaign had been created by Saint Laurent's in-house team, and questioned if its new young designer Anthony Vaccarello had not gone too far. The Belgian creator has flirted with bad taste in his first two shows for the brand in which he radically ramped up the sex factor. In his latest show last Tuesday he gift-wrapped his models in tight shiny leather mini dresses while his debut collection featured a dress that exposed one breast. "We have a rather young designer known for his rather 'specific' looks," Martin said. It is possible that "in this rather closed world, with its specific codes, that they did not realize" the effect the adverts would have, the regulator added. — AFP

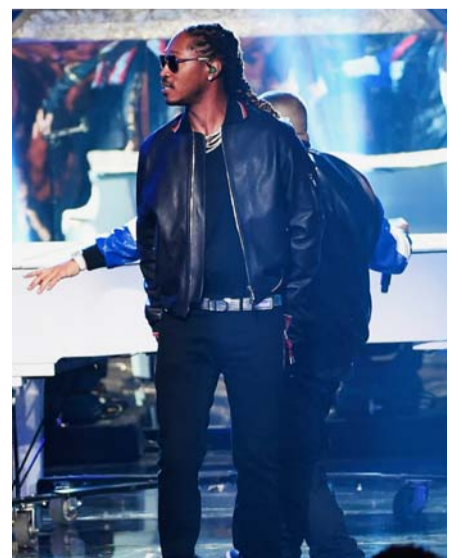
Rapper Future makes history with back-to-back No 1 debuts

The rapper Future made history on Sunday by debuting at number one on the US chart in back-to-back weeks with different albums. The Atlanta rapper had entered at number one on the Billboard sales chart for the week through February 23 with a self-titled album. He returned a week later with a completely new album, "HNDRXX". It debuted at number one for the week through Thursday, pushing the self-titled album to number two.

"HNDRXX" sold 121,000 copies in the United States or the equivalent in streaming or downloads during its first week, according to the tracking service Nielsen Music. It is unusual for artists to release albums with such a short gap, but longstanding promotional strategies have been increasingly evolving—especially in rap and dance music—as streaming shakes up the industry.

The 33-year-old Future, one of the leading forces in Atlanta's rap scene, stays true to his signature style on the self-titled album with tracks that boast of his success and the delights of the rap lifestyle. But the album ends on "Feds Did a Sweep," a tale of a police raid that sets the stage for the more introspective "HNDRXX." On "HNDRXX," Future reflects on his life and apologizes for excesses. The album features appearances by two of the biggest stars in R&B, Rihanna and The

Weeknd. Future had enjoyed a boost in his profile in 2015 when he recorded a mixtape with one of the top names in hip-hop, Drake, called "What a Time to Be Alive." — AFP



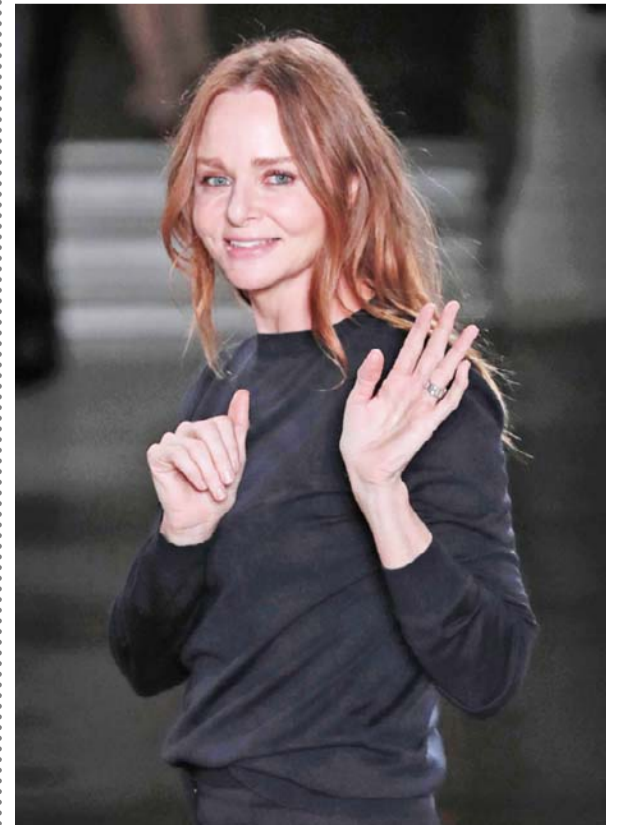
This file photo taken on November 19, 2016 shows rapper Future performing onstage during the 2016 American Music Awards at Microsoft Theater in Los Angeles. — AFP



Paris Fashion Week



Models present the creations of Stella McCartney during the women's Fall-Winter 2017-2018 ready-to-wear collection fashion show, yesterday in Paris.



British fashion designer Stella McCartney acknowledges the audience at the end of her women's Fall-Winter 2017-2018 ready-to-wear collection fashion show. — AFP photos



People watch the sun set at El Tunco beach in La Libertad, 34 km south of San Salvador, on March 5, 2017. — AFP

Female Saudi horse trainer sees hope for women

Dana Al-Gosaibi's passion for horses has been hard to pursue in Saudi Arabia, where conservatives resist women's involvement in sport. But the Islamic kingdom's tentative advancement of women's rights has given the Saudi horse trainer hope that one day she might be able to realize her dream of starting her own business.

"There is this very weird belief that a woman shouldn't ride a horse," Gosaibi says, especially if she is not yet married as "she might lose her virginity".



Dana Al-Gosaibi poses with her horses during a training session.

I came back and I saw all these women working as cashiers, in sales and in offices, Gosaibi says



Dana Al-Gosaibi trains a horse in the Red Sea city of Jeddah. — AFP photos



granting licences for women-only gyms, local media reported. "Even (in) sport they're really encouraging women, which is a very new thing," Gosaibi says, taking heart that the change heralds a more favourable climate for starting her business training horses.

But the horse trainer, who learned her skills in Britain and the United States, says she has faced resistance—"especially with my approach" to the animals.

Horses have been central to Saudi life for centuries, and the kingdom is famed for its strong desert-bred Arabians from which the racing thoroughbreds are descended. The traditional way of training horses in Saudi Arabia requires "a lot of force" including spurs and whips, she says. But Gosaibi prefers to take her time, observing the animal and learning to understand the way it thinks until she "becomes part of the horse's herd".

"You need to establish a certain relationship and understanding because the horse needs to trust you," she says, whether you are preparing a horse for show jumping or rodeo. If she were a man, her unorthodox approach would be taken more seriously, she feels.

'Let women ride'

Many Saudi women are now taking riding lessons, Gosaibi says, "but it's so much more difficult for a woman" with social norms seeking to keep them out of the public eye. Tradition requires women to cover themselves from head to toe when outside the home, and unrelated men and women are usually segregated in public places such as restaurants.

Women need permission from a male guardian to travel or study, and Saudi Arabia is the world's only country that does not allow women to drive.

Gosaibi's solution: "Let women ride horses!" Women rode during the time of the Muslim Prophet Mohammed, she says. Gosaibi keeps two horses at stables in the Red Sea city of Jeddah, where her baseball cap, collared T-shirt, trousers and riding boots contrast with the traditional black abaya robe that normally shields women from public view.

Other women—as well as men—use the facility but its owner doesn't want to draw attention to the fact that he welcomes both sexes. He asked Gosaibi that photographs not feature other visitors or show the name of the stables. "They don't want it known that women are in this place," she says. An entrenched system of male domination makes change difficult, Gosaibi says, but progress is happening nonetheless. "You can't be stuck for ever in these old ways of thinking," she says. "Women are becoming stronger and they have a voice." — AFP

"It's amazing how a lot of people believe these things," she tells AFP ahead of International Women's Day tomorrow. Herself unmarried, Gosaibi, 35, dreams of opening her own stables to focus on "a more gentle" way of training horses than the standard approach in the male-dominated kingdom. Saudi Arabia has some of the world's tightest restrictions on women. But change is under way, says Gosaibi, who returned to Saudi Arabia four years ago after more than a decade living abroad.

"I came back and I saw all these women" working as cashiers, in sales and in offices, Gosaibi says. Since last year, a government plan for social and economic reforms has given more impetus to this trend. The government wants more women in the workforce as part of the Vision 2030 plan to diversify the country's oil-based economy, and is trying to expand sports opportunities for everyone.

'Part of the herd'

Saudi Arabia last year appointed a princess to oversee women's sports in the conservative kingdom. Princess Reema bint Bandar al-Saud in February said authorities would begin