

Kuwait Space Agency: Pipedream or reality?



Gulf Bank records KD 43m in profits



Iranian biker blazes trail for women



Barca clinch miracle win to reach Champions League quarters



150 FILLS
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KUWAIT HAS HIGHEST COST OF LIVING IN ARAB WORLD

INDEX RANKS KUWAIT 21ST MOST EXPENSIVE COUNTRY GLOBALLY



Min 13°
Max 28°
High Tide 10:31 & 20:55
Low Tide 03:50 & 15:20

KUWAIT TURNS SILK ROAD INTO MASSIVE CAUSEWAY

KUWAIT: Kuwait is building one of the world's longest causeways to its remote north where it will pump billions into "Silk City", aiming to revive the ancient Silk Road trade route. The state is eager to inject life into the uninhabited Subbiya region on its northern tip that has been chosen as the location for Silk City. The plan is to reinvigorate the ancient Silk Road trade route by establishing a major free trade zone linking the Gulf to central Asia and Europe.

The 36-km bridge, three-quarters of it over water, will cut the driving time between Kuwait City and Subbiya to 20-25 minutes from 90 minutes now. Investment in the Silk City project is expected to top \$100 billion, and a 5,000-megawatt power plant has already been built in Subbiya. At a cost of KD 904 million (\$3.0 billion), the Sheikh Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah Causeway is one of the largest infrastructure ventures in the region. It is already nearly three-quarters completed.

Completing the causeway and harbor projects will pave the way for transforming the area into a commercial and investment hub with a free trade zone planned on five small islands nearby. The causeway project consists of the main bridge north to Subbiya and a 12.4-km bridge running west, dubbed the Doha Link. The two bridges start from the same point at Shuwaikh Port, the country's main commercial port. The Silk City project itself has been proceeding at a slow pace, but the government recently sent a draft bill to parliament to establish a special authority to oversee development in the area. Parliament is expected to start debating the bill soon. — AFP (See Page 3)



KUWAIT: This photo taken on Feb 11, 2017 shows a worker standing at a construction site of the Sheikh Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah Causeway, one of the largest infrastructure projects to be constructed. — Photo by Yasser Al-Zayyat

By Ahmad Jabr

KUWAIT: It is more expensive to live in Kuwait than in France, Canada, the United Kingdom, the United Arab Emirates, Germany and many other countries - according to an international online index. The latest 'Cost of Living' index released by Numbeo - a database of user-contributed data about cities and countries worldwide - ranks Kuwait as the 21st most expensive country in the world, one spot ahead of France, six spots ahead of Canada and eight spots ahead of the UK. It also ranks Kuwait first among Arab countries (second in the Middle East behind only Israel); nine spots ahead of Qatar (30th worldwide) and 10 ahead of the UAE (31st).

According to data in the index, which were last updated this month, Kuwait's cost of living index rate reached 75.24 points, compared to 69.20 and 67.98 in Qatar and the UAE respectively. Meanwhile, Kuwait ranked 16th worldwide in the rent index with 37.82 points, and 18th in the cost of living plus rent index with 57.31 points. In comparison, the UAE and Qatar rank fourth and fifth respectively worldwide in the rent index, and eighth and ninth respectively in the cost of living plus rent index, putting them higher than Kuwait when rent is factored in.

As for other statistics, Kuwait recorded 81.88 points in the groceries index (ninth worldwide), 45.79 points in the restaurants index (44th) and 69.68 in the local purchasing power index (46th). Furthermore, the index indicates that the cost of living in Kuwait is 1.60 percent higher than in the United States, while the rent in Kuwait is 7.65 percent lower than in the US (on average).

Numbeo gathers its data through crowdsourcing - a specific sourcing model in which individuals or organizations use contributions from Internet users to obtain needed services or ideas. In addition to cost of living, it records consumer and property prices, crime rates, healthcare quality, quality of life, as well as pollution, traffic, and travel statistics.

News

in brief

Marzouq: OPEC output cuts exceed target

KUWAIT: OPEC compliance with oil output reductions has exceeded the target because of higher Saudi cuts, Kuwaiti Oil Minister Essam Al-Marzouq, head of a committee overseeing the decreases, said yesterday. Non-OPEC compliance, however, has so far been modest, the minister told reporters outside parliament. Under a deal signed last year, OPEC and non-OPEC countries agreed to reduce output by around 1.8 million barrels per day (bpd) as part of a concerted effort to curb a global oil glut. "OPEC's compliance with the cuts has been excellent in February," said Marzouq, adding that it exceeded the target of 1.2 million bpd. He said that non-OPEC compliance was between 50 percent and 60 percent.

Iran foreign minister in rare visit to Qatar

DOHA: Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif held talks yesterday with the emir of Qatar, on his first visit to the Gulf state since July 2015. Zarif and Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al-Thani discussed "regional developments" and bilateral relations, QNA state news agency said. Tasnim news agency said Zarif also met his Qatari counterpart during the trip to Doha. Last month, Iranian President Hassan Rouhani visited Kuwait and Oman in a lightning tour aimed at mending ties with his country's Arab neighbors in the Gulf.

Saudi police shoot dead IS suspect, officer killed

RIYADH: Police in Saudi Arabia have shot dead an Islamic State group member, and an officer was gunned down in a separate incident, the interior ministry said yesterday. Officers were called at 6:00 pm yesterday to an apartment in Riyadh's Al-Rayyan district where a suspect was "flaunting his support" for the IS extremist group, the ministry said in a statement. "He started to resist and waved a gun which he was carrying," forcing police to eliminate "the threat he posed", the ministry added. Another suspect was arrested. Shortly before Tuesday's incident, a policeman was killed in Qatif on the kingdom's Gulf coast, a separate ministry statement said.

19 killed in fire at Guatemala shelter

GUATEMALA CITY: At least 19 people were killed in a fire yesterday in a Guatemalan home for abused children, a spokesman for firefighters said. The Virgen de Asuncion home is in the municipality of San Jose Pinula, some 25 km southwest of the capital Guatemala City and houses children of up to 18 years old. Oscar Franco, spokesman for the voluntary firefighters, told reporters 19 people had died and at least 25 had been injured. Guatemalan media said that on Tuesday, about 60 minors escaped from the home.

MPs SLAM GOVT, RAISE JUVENILE AGE

By B Izaak



KUWAIT: MPs are seen during a raucous session of the National Assembly yesterday. — Photo by Yasser Al-Zayyat

KUWAIT: The National Assembly yesterday overwhelmingly passed its first legislation to increase the juvenile age from 16 years to 18 years, scrapping the existing law that was passed by the previous pro-government Assembly. Opposition MPs strongly lashed out at the government and the former interior minister for using the previous pro-government Assembly to pass legislation for political purposes like the one that reduced the juvenile age from 18 to 16 years despite breaching the constitution and international treaties.

During the debate, pro-government and opposition MPs traded harsh words and blamed each other for the wrong decisions. MP Abdullah Al-Roumi said the reduction of the juvenile age in the previous Assembly was politically motivated and aimed at confronting the young people who took part in opposition-led protests to reject the single-vote law and the issue of political bribes. He said legislation should not be issued as a reaction.

MP Waleed Al-Tabtabaei said the juvenile legislation was aimed at cracking down on

teenagers who took part in processions and public rallies. He charged the government and the previous Assembly of having what he called "legislation diarrhea" for issuing a large number of defected laws that the current Assembly must rectify.

MP Hamdan Al-Azemi said he opposed the juvenile law in the previous Assembly and accused the government of being contradictory. He said the government is continuing with its policy in the previous Assembly and is not respecting the current Assembly, adding that it appointed former information minister Sheikh Salman Al-Hmoud Al-Sabah as head of the civil aviation after he was forced to resign by MPs.

MP Adel Al-Damkhi said a host of laws like the DNA test law, increasing the detention period and the juvenile law, which were passed by the previous Assembly, all need to be amended. Islamist opposition MP Jamaan Al-Harbash said the Assembly has not passed any legislation so far because "we decided to start with the key laws that influence political life in the country and that is why we are facing stiff resistance".

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SAUDI WOMEN JOIN FORCES TO CHAMPION ROLE OF WOMEN

RIYADH: In Saudi Arabia, a group of women are preparing an unusual event to mark International Women's Day - a campaign to highlight the changing role and economic potential of women in the deeply conservative Islamic kingdom. Saudi Arabia is well known as the world's most gender-segregated nation, where women live under the supervision of a male guardian, cannot drive, and in public must wear head-to-toe black garments.

But since 2011 when the late King Abdullah declared women could join the government advisory Shura Council, the situation for women has started to change in line with moves to diversify the economy, get more women working, and cut reliance on oil. Women can now work in certain retail and hospitality jobs and were allowed to compete in the Olympics for the first time in 2012. Last year a new women's section was set up at the sports authority and this year the Saudi Stock Exchange appointed its first female chair, Sarah Al-Suhaimi.

In light of the changes, Alwaleed Philanthropies, a charity aiming to help empower women, is running a conference on March 11, creating a website, and planning other initiatives under the banner "Saudi Women Can" to promote women's evolving role. "It is the right time ... we are more aware of the importance of women's participation in jobs, in different sectors," Princess Lamia bint Majed Al-Saud, secretary general of Alwaleed Philanthropies, told the Thomson Reuters Foundation. "Women have achieved a lot in our country and we are

very proud of this, achievements the outside community does not know about. Like any other country we have obstacles, we acknowledge that ... but we are doing our best to make it better."

While changes are emerging, many are impatient to speed up the pace of reforms which are promoted as important for the economy rather than emancipation, with proponents wary of pushback from the country's hardline religious establishment. Saudi Arabia is ranked 141 out of 144 countries in the Global Gender Gap 2016, an annual report by the World Economic Forum which measures how women fare in areas such as economic and political participation, health, and education.

Critics say the guardianship policy is the root of most of the problems as women need approval from a man to travel, study and get some health treatments. A state policy of gender segregation between unrelated men and women is rigorously enforced. But Salma Al-Rashid, chief program officer at the Al-Nahda Philanthropic Society for Women, said there had been significant change in the past 18 months in line with economic shifts.

The government's Vision 2030 released last April was deemed encouraging by committing to develop women's talents to enable them to play a greater role in the economy with a target to lift women in the workforce to 30 percent by 2030 from 22 percent. Last year prominent Saudi Prince Alwaleed bin Talal called for an end to

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ISRAELI MPs APPROVE BILL QUIETING AZAN

JERUSALEM: Israel's parliament gave preliminary approval yesterday to two controversial measures that would limit calls to prayers from mosques, including one prohibiting the use of loudspeakers at all hours, after shouting matches between lawmakers. The bills - the second of which would ban loudspeakers in urban areas between 11:00 pm and 7:00 am - will eventually have to be reconciled, with three more readings required before they can become law.

They were approved after a heated discussion that turned into shouting matches between ruling coalition members and Arab lawmakers, some of whom tore copies of the legislation and were ejected from the chamber. The bills passed 55-48 and 55-47 in the Knesset, or parliament. While the bills in theory would apply to any religious place of worship, Muslims say it is clearly meant to silence the traditional call to prayer at mosques.

The measure has become commonly known as the "muezzin law" after the Muslim official charged with calling the faithful to prayer, often through powerful speakers mounted on minarets. The notion of Israeli legislation silencing mosques has sparked outrage around the Arab and wider Muslim world. Supporters of the move say it is needed to prevent daily disturbance to the lives of hundreds of thousands of non-Muslim Israelis.

Last month, government ministers endorsed the softer version of the bill prohibiting loudspeakers overnight, which limits its scope to the first of the five daily Muslim calls to prayer just before dawn.

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KUWAIT: His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah honors a graduate as Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Defense Sheikh Mohammad Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah and Army Chief of Staff Lieutenant General Mohammad Al-Khudher look on. —Amiri Diwan photos



His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah arrives to the venue.



His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah signs on the guestbook.



Officers perform during the ceremony.

AMIR ATTENDS OFFICERS GRADUATION CEREMONY

KUWAIT: His Highness the Amir and the Supreme Commander of the Armed Forces, Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah attended and patronized the graduation ceremony of the 44th batch of officers from the Ali Al-Sabah Military Academy.

His Highness the Amir was received by Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Defense Sheikh Mohammad Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah, Army Chief of Staff Lieutenant General Mohammad Al-Khudher, and other military personnel.

The ceremony was attended by His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, Speaker of the National Assembly Marzouq Al-Ghanem, Sheikh Jaber Al-Abdullah Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, Deputy Chief of the Kuwait National Guard (KNG) Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, His Highness Sheikh Nasser Al-Mohammad Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah, His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-Hamad Al-Sabah, Chief of the Supreme Judicial Council, President of the Cassation Court, and President of the Constitutional Court Justice Yousef Jassem Al-Mutawa, First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of



An army officer delivers a speech during the ceremony.

Foreign Affairs Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah, Deputy Minister of the Amiri Diwan Sheikh Ali Jarrah Al-Sabah, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Interior Sheikh Khaled Al-Jarrah Al-Sabah, other senior state officials, and families of the graduating officers.

Speaking at the graduation ceremony, head of the Academy Major General Bader Al-Awadhi welcomed the Kuwaiti leadership, high-ranking state officials, and families of the grad-

uating officers to the event which reflected the nation's strong will to protect itself against any possible aggression.

He affirmed that the 44th batch of graduates have dedicated themselves to the security and protection of their land, Kuwait, stressing that their graduation could have not happened without the blessing and support of the Kuwaiti leadership. His Highness the Amir's regional and international experiences had resolved various security challenges that faced Kuwait, said the Al-Awadhi who affirmed that the Ali Al-Sabah Military Academy will work under the leadership of the country to fend off any danger that might face Kuwait.

The official took the chance to thank the leading staff of the academy for their efforts in helping the officers to graduate from the facility, saying that they were the reason for the development of the security and defense of Kuwait. After the speech, His Highness the Amir proceeded to honor the graduating officers. The 44th batch of the academy included officers from Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, Qatar, Jordan and Yemen. —KUNA



The newly-graduated officers parade during the ceremony.

ARAB FMS THANK AMIR FOR SUPPORTING YEMEN TALKS

CAIRO: Arab Foreign Ministers have voiced their gratitude and appreciation to His Highness the Amir of Kuwait Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah for his key role in supporting Yemeni people and hosting Yemen's peace talks. In a final communique issued on Tuesday at the conclusion of the 147th session of the Council of the Arab League in Cairo, the ministers affirmed importance of stability, security, unity and territorial integrity of Yemen.

They also stressed their support for the constitutional legitimacy represented in Yemen's President Abd Rabbuh Mansour Hadi, the communique said. The conferees also affirmed the peaceful solution in Yemen in line with the three references agreed upon; the Gulf initiative and its implementation mechanism, the outcomes of the comprehensive national dialogue conference and the relevant UN Security Council resolutions. They praised efforts of UN Special Envoy for Yemen Ismail Ould Cheikh Ahmad aimed to resume the peaceful process in line with the three references, the communique stated.

The ministers condemned measures taken unilaterally by the putschists that included the formation of the so-called political council and the illegitimate government, and their rejection of releasing prisoners and others. They called on the international community and all human rights organizations to take a rapid and strict step against violations by the putschists in Yemen, it said. According to the communique, the meeting condemned Iran's interferences in Yemen's affairs which affect badly the country's stability, security and sovereignty, urging the international community to press Tehran so as to halt its hostile acts towards Yemenis.

The ministers appealed to the international com-

munity to provide financial, economic and security support to Yemen in order to combat challenges and meet humanitarian needs urgently so as to ensure stability and fulfill arrangements regarding the transitional period, it concluded.

Two-state solution

Meanwhile, the Arab foreign ministers renewed full commitment to the Arab peace initiative of 2002 to settle the Mideast conflict based on a two-state solution. In a statement at the conclusion of their meeting, the ministers reaffirmed the inalienable rights of Palestinian people to self-determination, having an independent viable state, releasing their prisoners and returning of their refugees to their country as per the international law and the UN and Arab summits resolutions. They called for galvanizing international support to issue a UN Security Council resolution supporting the two-state solution and setting a timetable for ending the Israeli occupation.

They urged the international community to put into effect the UNSC resolution No. 2334 of 2016 termed the Israeli settlement activities in the occupied Palestinian land a blatant violation of the international law and an obstacle to Mideast peace. They asked all world countries to abide by the UNSC resolutions No. 476 and 478 of 1980 which annulled the Israeli legalization of its annexation of the occupied Jerusalem and discouraged the opening or transferring of diplomatic missions or embassies to Jerusalem. The ministers tasked Arab diplomats in the UN to intensify efforts to press the UNSC to shoulder its responsibility towards the Palestinian people and to stop the Israeli illegal settlement activities. They called on the UNSC to provide protection to the

Palestinian people as per its resolutions No. 904 of 1994 and 605 of 1987 and to apply the international humanitarian law and Geneva Convention.

They expressed full support to the Palestinian government efforts to join international organizations and treaties. They reiterated rejection to recognize Israel as a Jewish state. They also voiced opposition to any proposal for a Palestinian state with temporary borders or that separate Gaza Strip from the Palestinian state. The ministers warned Israel against provoking sentiments of Arabs and Muslims worldwide through its illegal and ruthless efforts to change the Arab character of the occupied Jerusalem and to divide Al-Aqsa Mosque.

Such acts risk prompts a religious conflict in the region, they warned. They also said that Palestinian refugees are the core of the Palestinian cause, nobody could give up their right to return to their home country. In this regard, they opposed any attempt to settle Palestinian refugees in their hosting countries or deprive them from their right to return. They demanded all warring parties in Syria to protect Palestinian refugees there and not to consider them part of the civil conflict. They underlined the need to continue politically and financially supporting the Palestinian government.

To achieve this goal, they called for aiding the Palestinian government with \$100 million every month to allow it to carry out its responsibilities. The ministers thanked Kuwait for planning to host an international conference on the suffering of Palestinian children under the Israeli occupation next May. They called for sustained support for UNRWA to be able to continue performing its mandate and responsibilities in the relief and works of Palestinian refugees at all levels.

Cooperation with UNSC

In the meantime, Arab League Ministers agreed on an initiative to form a consultative framework for promoting cooperation and establishing effective partnership between Arab League and UN Security Council, with the aim of achieving stability and security in the region.

The ministers approved a draft resolution proposed by Egypt on the framework action which includes exchanging visions on dealing with issues related to peace and security in the Arab region. It includes the consistency of Security Council resolutions on the Arab conflicts with the vision of the Arab League and its member states in terms of managing and settling these conflicts.

The initiative aims to help build capabilities of the Arab League so as to deal with issues of peace and security, and predict an eruption of possible conflicts in the region and settle them early. It also includes organizing training courses and programs to help staff of specialized departments deal with crises at the Arab League. The draft resolution calls for holding an annual consultative meeting on an alternative basis; at the Arab League in Cairo and the United Nations' headquarters in New York.

Unrest in Libya

Furthermore, the Arab League's Council expressed profound concern over the latest developments of the security situation and the terrorist threats in Libya. The council urged respect for the unity, sovereignty and territorial integrity of Libya, and called on the Libyans "to unite under the civilian leadership of the presidential council." The Arab foreign ministers reject all forms of foreign intervention in Libya unless such

interventions are requested by, and coordinated with, the government of national accord, according to a resolution adopted by the council. The resolution denounced the expansion of the militant groups in the country. It called for unfreezing the Libyan assets at foreign banks and appropriating the financial resources of the Libyan people for meeting urgent needs of the people. It reiterated support to the government of national accord as the sole legitimate government in Libya, and warned against offering any kind of support to parallel entities.

The resolution called for offering all kinds of material and moral support to the Libyan military and civilian institutions belonging to the presidential council of the government of national accord in keeping with the relevant UN Security Council resolutions.

It underscored the importance of the roles of the neighboring countries, the League and the troika mechanism, suggested by the League's secretary-general to coordinate the efforts of the League, the UN and the African Union (AU). In a related development, Secretary-General Ahmad Abul Gheit called on all parties in Libya to maintain self-restraint and return to the course of political dialogue to resolve the crisis. He is following up with deep concern the serious escalation of the conflict in the Oil Crescent region according to a statement issued by the League following the Arab ministerial council meeting.

Abul Gheit reaffirmed the commitment of the League to helping "the brothers in Libya" restore peace, security and stability, and maintain the country's unity and sovereignty. Separately, the Arab foreign ministers' council adopted a resolution to condemn the abduction of Qatari nationals in Iraq after legally entering the country. —KUNA

Kuwait turns Silk Road into a massive causeway



This file photo taken on February 11, 2017 shows a general view in Kuwait City of a construction site of the Sheikh Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah causeway.



KUWAIT CITY: Ahmad Al-Hassan (left), assistant undersecretary for road engineering at the public works ministry and project engineer Mai Al-Messad walk at the construction site of the Jaber Causeway in Kuwait City on February 11, 2017. —Photos by Yasser Al-Zayyat

\$100 billion, 36 km bridge cuts driving time to Subbiya to 20 minutes

KUWAIT: Kuwait is building one of the world's longest causeways to its remote north where it will pump billions into 'Silk City', aiming to revive the ancient Silk Road trade route. The oil-rich state is eager to inject life into the uninhabited Subbiya region on its northern tip that has been chosen as the location for Silk City.

The plan is to reinvigorate the ancient Silk Road trade route by establishing a major free trade zone linking the Gulf to central Asia and Europe. The 36-kilometer (22-mile) bridge, three-quarters of it over water, will cut the driving time between Kuwait City and Subbiya to 20-25 minutes from 90 minutes now. Investment in the Silk City project is expected to top \$100 billion, and a 5,000-megawatt power plant has already been built in Subbiya.

At a cost of 904 million dinars (\$3.0 billion), the Sheikh Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah Causeway, named after the Amir who died in January 2006, is one of the largest infrastructure ventures in the region. It is already nearly three-quarters completed. Despite the sharp drop in oil income which made up 95 percent of public revenues, the emirate has pledged to keep spending on capital projects almost intact.

'A strategic link'

Kuwait boasts a \$600-billion sovereign wealth fund, and is in the middle of a five-year development plan stipulating investments worth \$115 billion. "The causeway project is a strategic link connecting Kuwait City to the northern region," said Ahmad Al-Hassan, assistant undersecretary for road engineering at the public works ministry.

He added that in addition to the fully integrated residential Silk City, other economic ventures are planned for Subbiya and its surroundings. A large container port is also under construction on nearby Bubiyan, Kuwait's largest island.

Completing the causeway and harbor projects will pave the way for transforming the area into a commercial and investment hub with a free trade zone planned on five small islands nearby. The causeway project consists of the main



bridge north to Subbiya and a 12.4-kilometre (7.7-mile) bridge running west, dubbed the Doha Link.

The two bridges start from the same point at Shuwaikh Port, the country's main commercial port. "If we take the Subbiya bridge alone, it is the fourth longest in the world," Hassan said. The Lake Pontchartrain Causeway in the United States is the world's longest bridge over water, stretching 38.44 kilometers (23.8 miles). The two Kuwaiti bridges are scheduled for completion in November next year, project engineer Mai Al-Messad said.

Economic gateway

"We have already completed 73 percent of the project and hope to finish it ahead of the contractual period," Messad said. The Subbiya bridge sits on more than 1,500 piles with a diameter of up to three metres (10 feet) each, some of which have been driven as deep as 72 metres (240 feet) into the loose clay seabed, Messad said.

The bridge is between nine metres and 23 metres (30 feet and 75 feet) above sea level. The Silk City project itself has been proceeding at a slow pace, but the government recently sent a draft bill to parliament to establish a special

authority to oversee development in the area. Parliament is expected to start debating the bill soon. Under the original blueprint, the city's completion date was 2030 and was to include a 1,001-metre (3,284-feet) tower and a population of 700,000.

In late 2015, the cabinet gave the green light to establish a free economic zone on the five islands near Subbiya and the coastlines of Iraq and Iran. It is hoped that once complete, the zone, spread over several thousand square kilometers (square miles), will become the economic gateway to the northern Gulf. However, nothing tangible has yet been done to advance



Ahmad Al-Hassan, assistant undersecretary for road engineering at the public works ministry talks to reporters at the construction site of the Jaber Causeway.



Project engineer Mai Al-Messad talks to reporters at the construction site of the Jaber Causeway.



Ongoing works at the construction site in Kuwait City of the Sheikh Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah Causeway.

In Brief

PROMOTING TEACHER PROGRAMS

KUWAIT: Participants in the "Teachers' Integrated Vocational Development" conference yesterday recommended a review of the teachers programs to cope with the modern educational methods. Organized by the National Center for Educational Development (NCED) and the Colleges of Education and Basic Education, the conference wrapped up discussions yesterday. The event called for reactivating the role of teachers' license, and expanding field training, which is currently confined to the final year as well enhancing the dissemination of the culture of competence. — KUNA



GCC HEALTH TEAM MEETS

RIYADH: The specialized work team from health ministries in GCC States held its first meeting in the Saudi Capital, GCC Secretariat General said yesterday. The meeting studied the recommendations resulted from the youth workshop that was held in August 2014 in Dubai, UAE, entitled "Health, Sport and Entertainment Industry", the Secretariat General said in a press statement. It also discussed the recent implementations of the workshop's recommendations regarding Gulf youth health, and review health ministries' experiences and activities on their efforts in boosting youngsters' health. — KUNA



\$1 MILLION PROJECTS

DOHA: Qatari Red Crescent (QRC) said Tuesday it was implementing \$1 million-worth of projects in collaboration with Kuwait Red Crescent Society (KRCS) for the internally-displaced persons (IDPs) in Syria. The first project, it said in a statement, was distribution of aid to counter the cold weather in the west of Aleppo and Idleb. QRC and KRCS, part of their 2016-17 "warm winter" campaign, provided 250,000 liters of heating oil in besieged areas in eastern Ghouta, suburbs of Homs, and IDPs' camps in Idleb and suburbs of Hama. —KUNA



Photo

of the day



KUWAIT: A case of Tom & Jerry spotted at an apartment block in Salmiya. The mice population in Kuwait is reportedly on the increase, with rates of infestation as high as 62 percent in some areas. There have also been increased sightings of the Norwegian rat (commonly known as brown or street mouse). — Photo by Yasser Al-Zayyat

SCHOOL EVACUATED FOLLOWING FIRE SCARE

FIVE STUDENTS HOSPITALIZED WITH SMOKE INHALATION

By Hanan Al-Saadoun

KUWAIT: Firemen in Jahra put out a fire in a classroom at Um Mubasher Al-Ansariya girls high school yesterday. Cautionary evacuation procedures were carried out by the school's rapid intervention team. There were cases of smoke inhalation and fainting among students who are aged between eight and 10 years. Paramedics handled with all medical cases. The fire was put out, and investigations are underway to find out the cause of the fire, the Public Relations and Information Department at Kuwait Fire Services Directorate (KFSD) said. The Ministry of Education later confirmed the case, saying that five students were transferred to a nearby medical facility for treatment. Separately, a fire broke in a Khaitan building, prompting Farwaniya fire center to respond. The blaze, which was in third-floor apartment, was extinguished and no injuries were reported.

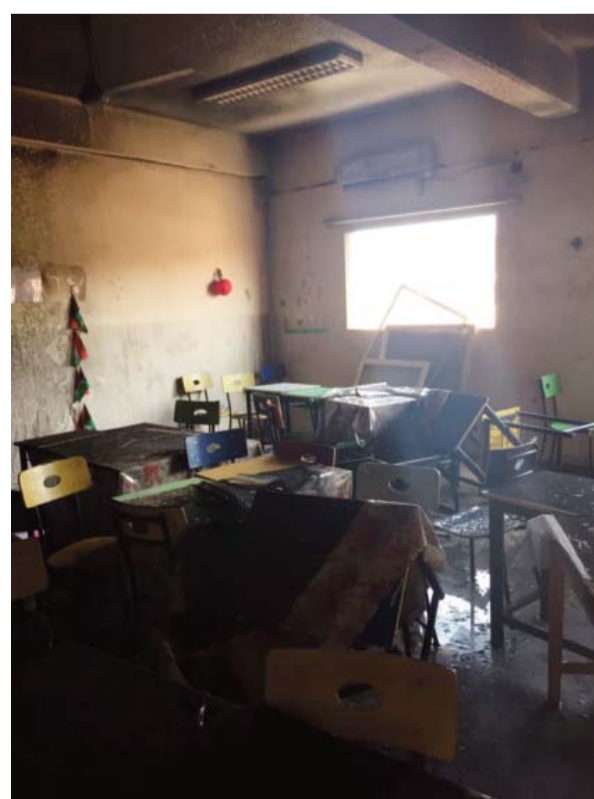
Child protection

Director General of Relations and Security Information Department at the Interior Ministry Brigadier Adel Al-Hashash said Kuwait's First Regional Conference for the Protection of Children from the dangers of social media is the first step on the right path to confirm the social role of the security establishment; a role that that is increasing day after day in order to protect society members. Under the patron-

age of His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-Hamad Al-Sabah, the conference is scheduled to be held on March 21, 2017, reflecting the state's interest in protecting children and care for their rights, he said. Hashash said that a team was formed, headed by Director General of investigations general directorate Major General Dr Fahd Ibrahim Al-Dousary to prepare for the conference, decide the main aspects of work and select the scientific committee for it. He said the department began a media campaign to draw the attention of citizens and expats to the importance of the conference in order to prevent any risks their children may face.

Ceremony

Committee of families of prisoners in Guantanamo held a ceremony honoring personalities who contributed to the release of their Kuwaiti children who were held there. The ceremony was attended by Interior Ministry's Assistant Undersecretary for State Internal Security Affairs Major General Essam Al-Naham. Committee Chairman Khalid Al-Oudah thanked His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah and His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah, who followed the case. He also thanked Interior Ministry representatives for their effective contributions in the matter.



Crime

Report

MAN STABBED IN TRAFFIC DISPUTE

KUWAIT: A man damaged a motorist's vehicle following a traffic dispute, then stabbed him in the back after trading insults with him. The incident took place on Fahaheel Road, and the victim, Egyptian, was taken to the hospital following the accident while the attacker, Kuwaiti, was arrested and taken to the police station.

Sheep stolen

Three persons climbed over the fence of a citizen's farm and stole 17 sheep after assaulting the keeper. The Asian keeper's hands and legs were tied by the three intruders, who kept him inside a tent and then stole the sheep. The citizen untied the keeper and took him to the police station where he lodged a complaint.

Assault

An Egyptian couple asked a taxi driver to take them to an area, but got into an argument with him, so they were asked to leave the car, but things escalated and blows were exchanged. Passersby informed the interior ministry operations about the incident, and as each accused the other of assault, they were taken to the police station. The driver obtained a medical report and went back to the station, but the couple did not show up. Police charged them with assault and detectives were asked to arrest them.

Search for 'friends'

A female citizen accused her two friends of beating her inside her house and stealing her phone. The citizen told Bayan police that her two friends, who happen to be sisters, stormed her house and beat her then stole her phone and escaped. Detectives are looking for the two women.

Accident

A female citizen was hurt when her car fell down at the Amiri Hospital's parking lot. People who heard a 'bang' rushed to the car, got the driver out and sent her for treatment. A security source said the woman lost control when she was driving towards the upper levels.

Weapon stolen

A policeman in Farwaniya stole an M16 rifle and its rounds as he wanted to sell it to a citizen and a Syrian man who is wanted on a felony. A corporal who was counting for weapons at the police station noticed a rifle missing, and informed his superior, accusing a policeman who left quickly after his shift of stealing the weapon. The officer was summoned for questioning but he denied the accusations. The shift officer found the weapon in the suspected policeman's car, after which he confessed that he stole it with the intention intended to sell it. He added that the buyers were waiting at a cooperative society; where police headed and placed them under arrest. The three were sent to the public prosecution for further action.

—Translated from the Arabic press



KUWAIT: Dr Hala Al-Jassar poses with a number of her students working in the field. — KUNA photos

Kuwait Space Agency: Pipe dream or reality?

KUWAIT: "That's one small step for [a] man, one giant leap for mankind." With these few words, American astronaut Neil Armstrong - the first man to set foot on the moon in 1969 - sparked humanity's dream in conquering the final frontier-space. A number of Kuwaitis have started to wonder whether it was feasible to have a national space program and they dared to contemplate the possibility of turning this pipedream into a reality.

This renewed interest stemmed from the UAE's attempts to actualize its dream in an efficient regional space program through the Mohammed Bin Rashid Space Centre (MBRSC) that was founded in 2006 and the UAE Space Agency, established in 2014. The Emirates is planning to send an unmanned orbiter to Mars by 2021. Establishing a



Assistant Professor at the Physics Department of Kuwait University (KU) Dr Hala Al-Jassar

space agency/program is not a fantasy, it is the way of the future, which will bring numerous economic and scientific benefits, Assistant Professor at the Physics Department of Kuwait University (KU) Dr Hala Al-Jassar said during an interview with Kuwait News Agency (KUNA). While attending the recently held Abu Dhabi Space Congress, Dr Jassar said that she was amazed and intrigued by one of the participants' contributions to the event. The participant laid out that the ingredients of a successful space program, which must include strong leadership, a sizable budget, available talents, and thorough training programs, said the academic.

No leadership

"We have the budget, the talents, the expertise, and outstanding graduates from the best universities," said Dr Al-Jassar who pointed out that the lack of clear leadership was one of the main challenges for the establishment of a space agency. Even with the lack of a unified leadership, Kuwait University - supported by the Kuwait Foundation for Advancement of Science (KFAS) - succeeded in joining the Soil Moisture Active Passive (SMAP) initiative launched by the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA), she said.

Dr Jassar revealed that one of the many benefits of the NASA SMAP project was to provide accurate weather forecasts as well as improved monitoring of droughts and floods amongst other things. She added that Kuwait University provided monthly data to NASA SMAP to understand the planet's ecology, noting that Kuwait was the only Arab partner in the program.

"When we start a space program, we will not be starting from scratch," Dr Jassar affirmed, revealing that many Kuwaiti entities such as the Kuwait Institute for Scientific Research (KISR) is cooperating with NASA on a Jet Propulsion Laboratory (JPL) project, another space related endeavor. Though things appeared to be on the positive side according to Dr Jassar's statements, perhaps the most pressing question might be whether it was necessary for Kuwait to pursue a space program and the answer for that question might lie within the purpose of such venture.

Sense of purpose

Having a sense of purpose is necessary and that could never been clearer than the tense space race that existed several decades ago between the US and the former Soviet Union (Russia) in which supremacy over world affairs was the ultimate goal. Providing his input on this matter, Program Manager at Kuwait Foundation for Advancement of Science (KFAS) Dr Bassam Al-Feeli stressed that the most important thing for a Kuwaiti space program was "to bring people together to create a critical mass... Enough people to push it [the idea of a space agency] forward." "It has to be a national priority," affirmed Dr Feeli, adding that the proposed space program should come with a sense of purpose just like in the case of the UAE, which launched its program to show the world that it was among the most advanced and developed countries.

There are other issues more urgent to the leadership and people of Kuwait such as the future of energy resources as well as matters like housing, said Dr Feeli who affirmed that the KFAS - as a funding entity - would provide

its full support once there was a body willing to execute plans for space exploration. KFAS supported KU on the NASA SMAP project, which is a small step towards the grand goal, said Dr Feeli, affirming that understanding reality was as important as setting the ship on course.

Furthermore, Dr Feeli explained that educating the younger generation on the values of space science and exploration was the key to the future. The idea of a 'space camp' is one of the ways to drive the curiosity of young children, he said, revealing that a small group of youngsters from Kuwait spent ten days of summer at the Belgium-based Euro Space Center learning about space and living the experience of astronauts. Dr Feeli's point on preparing the next generation for the possibility of space exploration is a valid one and as the Arabic proverb says, "What is learned in youth is carved in stone."

Determination

Displaying the vigor of youth and talent for science, student Hamad Abdulwahab Al-Hendi, a physics major at Kuwait University, expressed - with full conviction - the possibility of a space program being developed in Kuwait through the passion and determination of the right people, as well as creating the right conditions for this goal. Hendi, who is in his final years in colleague, worked with his mentor Dr Jassar to develop several interesting projects, such as a drone that is used in aerial photography, a robotic fish that measures sea levels and salinity, as well as other devices that could be used in various scientific fields including space exploration.

"I have taught myself to use a 3D printer after realizing that NASA sent materials to its astronauts using this method," said Hendi who actually managed to 3D-print a miniature model of NASA's Curiosity Rover to show the efficiency of such a tool. Hendi indicated that he was driven by an interest and willingness to learn, adding that having a national space program will have an immense positive impact on Kuwaiti youth, allowing them to utilize their true potential for the welfare of their country. "Kuwait has an abundance of intellectuals, but what we need, as a country, is more people asking 'what is the theory of relativity?' Rather than knowing that Albert Einstein was behind it," stressed Hendi.

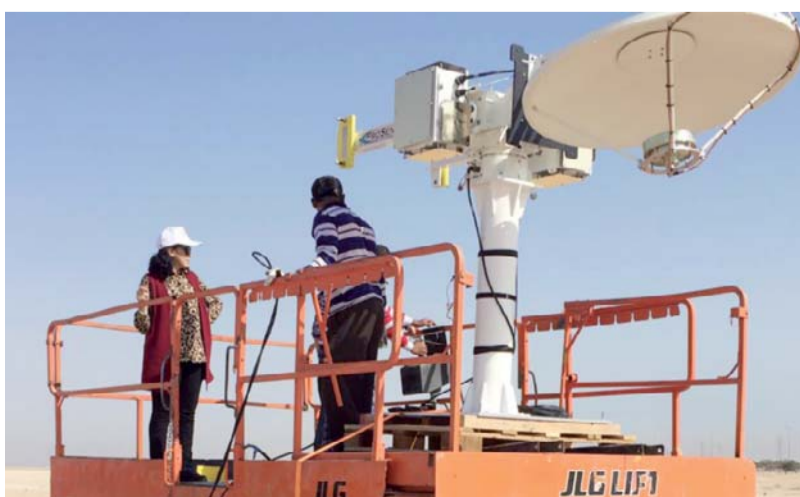
Hendi's conviction reflects hope in the future and despite the reality of things, it seems that passion and determination by a dedicated group of people and scientists will one day allow a Kuwaiti astronaut to carry out a spacewalk or, even better, set a foot in a newly discovered alien world. — KUNA



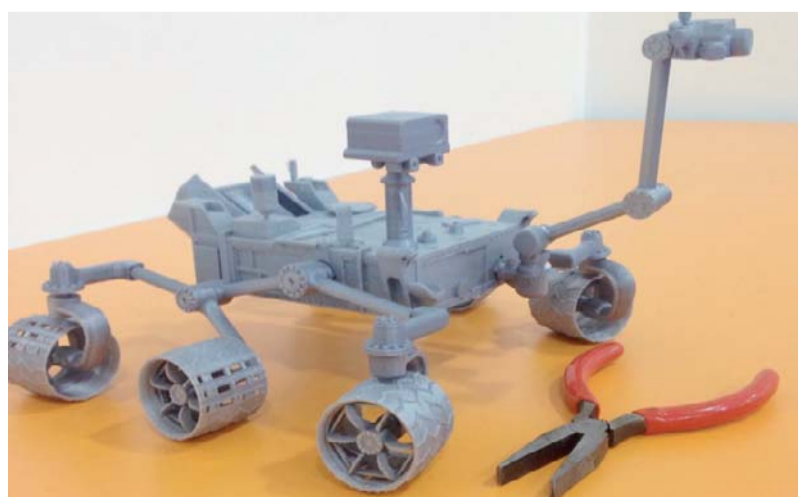
Kuwaiti University physics student Hamad Abdulwahab Al-Hendi.



Program Manager at Kuwait Foundation for Advancement of Science (KFAS) Dr Bassam Al-Feeli.



Dr Hala Al-Jassar inspects data related to the NASA SMAP project.



Hamad Al-Hendi's 3D print of NASA's Curiosity Rover which is operating on Mars.



Hen 2-437 Planetary nebula as captured by Hubble Space Telescope, operated by NASA and the European Space Agency.

In my view

THE NATIONAL ANNIVERSARIES



By Abdullah Bowair

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Kuwait recently celebrated its 56th National Day and 26th Liberation Day anniversaries, which are the two most cherished occasions to the heart of every Kuwaiti. The Iraqi army had occupied its neighbor Kuwait and declared it part of Iraqi soil. However, thanks to the wisdom of its Amir, Kuwait managed to defeat the occupation forces with the help of an international alliance formed through UN resolutions. Kuwaitis have been celebrating the National Day for the past 56 years commemorating what their ancestors had done to help Kuwait move from a prosperous present into a brighter future.

The Independence Day

Kuwait Independence was declared on June 19, 1961 during the reign of Sheikh Abdullah Al-Salem Al-Sabah who had come to power on February 25, 1950. Thus, it was agreed to merge both occasions and celebrate Kuwait Independence on that date.

The British protectorate agreement

When Sheikh Mubarak Al-Sabah came to power in Kuwait on May 17, 1896, a new phase in the history of Kuwait began. This phase was characterized by international interest in its territory, the inauguration of railway projects, such as Berlin-Baghdad railway, and coal stations. From the beginning, Sheikh Mubarak Al-Sabah realized the threat approaching from the Ottoman Empire, the greatest Islamic government at that time, so he took a decisive step to protect his country from direct or indirect Ottoman intervention. In February 1897, he asked to meet Colonel Meade, the British Political Resident in the Arabian Gulf to ask for British protection to prevent the dominance by the Ottoman Empire over his country. A meeting was made on September 2, 1897 between Kuwait Ruler, Sheikh Mubarak Al-Sabah and the assistant British Political Resident, Jackson during which Sheikh Mubarak did not hesitate to ask for British protection explaining that the Ottoman Empire wishes to devour Kuwait though no agreements had been made with it. He added that in order to prevent the Ottoman empire control over Kuwait, he wished to get British Protectorate.

However, in 1898 many elements incited Britain to reconsider its policy towards Kuwait. Such as the Ottoman military activities near Basra, and the Russian and German plans that were threatening British interests in the region of the Arabian Gulf in addition to plans to extend a railway from the Mediterranean to Kuwait on the Arabian Gulf via Tripoli in addition to Berlin Railway Line to Baghdad, for which Germany wanted to get a few miles of the Kazema Bay.

Thus, on the basis of a decision from Lord Curzon, the British viceroy in India, British Political Resident Mead concluded a protectorate agreement with the ruler of Kuwait, Sheikh Mubarak Al-Sabah on January 23, 1899, by powers of which Britain became responsible for protecting Kuwait's foreign affairs without interfering in its domestic affairs and, thus, Britain was willing to use force to face any Ottoman or other intervention in Kuwait.

Declaring the Independence

Sheikh Abdullah Al-Salem Al-Sabah realized that the protectorate agreement was no longer appropriate after the changes that had taken place in the conditions of Kuwait. At that time, Kuwait was heading for independence and had already taken large strides on its way. The Kuwaiti people no longer accepted the restrictions imposed by the protectorate agreement, though they realized very well that this protectorate had many advantages in this period. Yet, circumstances had changed, which necessitated cancellation of the agreement. Thus, the ruler of Kuwait, Sheikh Abdullah Al-Salem Al-Sabah, expressed his desire to replace the old agreement with a new friendship agreement that went along with the development and changes that had taken place.

Reaction of the British government

The British government accepted the Kuwaiti demand. Diplomatic notes were exchanged between Sir William Luce, the British Political Resident in the Arabian Gulf at that time, and Sheikh Abdullah Al-Salem Al-Sabah, the ruler of Kuwait, on June 19, 1961. According to this agreement the following terms were carried out:

- The agreement of January 23, 1899 was terminated as being inconsistent with the independence and sovereignty of Kuwait.
- Relations between the two countries should continue to be governed by a spirit of close friendship.
- And thus, Kuwait Independence was declared on June 19, 1961.

Occupation, resistance and liberation

The aggressor Iraqi troops marched into Kuwait on August 2nd, 1990 and occupied it for seven months during which they were severely resisted and rejected by Kuwaitis who fought with all possible military and civilian means. Military resistance teams were formed and managed to deal heavy losses to the Iraqi occupying troops. In addition, civilian resistance in the form of abstaining from work in various ministries and government establishments, student not going to schools and university. The Kuwaiti people also refused changing their vehicles' license plate numbers or IDs with Iraqi ones.

Kuwaitis resistance and cooperation

Many Kuwaiti families have suffered the cruelty of the occupants and their barbarianism. Many citizens were tortured. Others were killed and some were held captive by the invaders, which made Kuwaiti families more united following the footsteps of their ancestors. They took part in distributing food, clothes and money to the needy.

Liberation and regaining sovereignty

All GCC states, Arab countries and international friendly countries supported Kuwait against the occupation and condemned it. The international community urged Iraqi troops to withdraw but the regime did not respond. Therefore, the Security Council decided using force against the Iraqi regime and on January 17, 1991, the liberation war started and Kuwait was liberated on February 26, 1991.

The adversity of the Iraqi invasion highlighted how far the Kuwaiti people were united, solid, and resistant to the occupation, in addition to their support to their legal government and leadership. Kuwait sovereignty, independence and the safety of its land were never compromised. Such solidarity was admired by the whole world though the Kuwaiti people had been taken by surprise and found itself facing a mighty well-armed army.

Iraqi invasion on the Kuwait land in 1990 is unforgotten memory and a very difficult test to the will of Kuwaiti people in their strength and steadiness. That date witnessed a bright birth of people who stunned the world by their strength, determination and courage in defending their country and dignity. They were taken by surprise when they found themselves before an army replete with the latest machines of death and destruction. The confrontation of the Kuwaiti people against Saddam invasion formed a unique phase in the course of this homeland and its people struggle, nevertheless, the history tells us that this event was nothing but one of the several bright pages of this people, which is full of wonderful examples that reveal the depth of values in the minds and thinking of the Kuwaiti citizen. The building of the 3 gates by Kuwaiti people is an evidence of their readiness to defend the integrity and unity of their homeland in every phase of history.

Seeking to maintain the great value of martyrdom, recognizing the work of heroic martyrs and culminate the wonderful heroic epic of this people. His Highness Sheikh Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, the Late Amir, issued Amiri decree number 38 of the year 1991 in June 19, 1991 to establish The Martyrs' Bureau.

His companion His Highness Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, Amir of Kuwait, has completed this patronage and sought to achieve the lofty goals crystallized in honoring martyrs, as well as their heroism and sacrifice in defending their homeland and its dignity, in addition to the patronage of His Highness to their families in all aspects of life, affirming his appreciation and the Kuwaiti Society of martyrdom value. The distinguished patronage was not restricted to the Kuwaiti martyrs' families, it included all those who sacrificed their lives and shed blood for the sake of the country's independence. The bureau took care of families from approximately 15 different nationalities in our beloved Kuwait.



KUWAIT: MP Safa Al-Hashem (left) smiles after she handed over roses to Minister of Social Affairs and Labor and Minister of State for Economic Affairs Hind Al-Sabeeh (right) on the occasion of the International Women's Day, during yesterday's parliament session. — Photo by Yasser Al-Zayyat

MINISTER SUPPORTS FULL GENDER EQUALITY

By Meshaal Al-Enezi

KUWAIT: Minister of Social Affairs and Labor and Minister of State for Economic Affairs Hind Al-Sabeeh said that Kuwait is keen on celebrating the International Women's Day with the entire world, which is annually held on March 8th. The event is held under the slogan of 'Women in the Changing World of Work: Planet 50-50 by 2030' this year. Sabeeh stressed that this year's slogan focuses on accelerating work towards achieving the 2030 vision of implementing full gender equality in terms of having access to fair quality education. Sabeeh added that the International Women's Day provides an opportunity to assess the progress made so far towards having women participate in making their countries' history. She added that it also indicates respect and appreciation for women in general as mothers, sisters, wives, daughters and co-workers.

Landlines

The Ministry of Utilities urged landline telephone subscribers to pay off their bills to avoid programmed service disconnection due to be in effect this month. The ministry explained that a warning message will be sent on Sunday followed by another on the following Sunday, after which the service would be disconnected for those who do not pay by Sunday, March 26. The ministry also explained that the limit for the programmed service cut to take place is KD 50 for domestic landlines and KD 100 for commercial lines in addition to lines rescheduled to pay off previous debts by monthly installments if they fail to pay them. The ministry said that the service will be cut for subscribers who have not paid annual subscriptions for over six months.

22,000 CITIZENS WAITING FOR A JOB

By A Saleh

KUWAIT: The total number of citizens waiting for a job is 22,000 and that the number is expected to increase within a few days with openings for more applicants to register, the Civil Services Commission (CSC) announced. A new window for applications will be open until March 17 through the CSC website or by calling the hotline 133, it explained. CSC also noted that current registration is open to Public Authority for Applied Education and Training (PAAET) and Kuwait University graduates. CSC statistics also showed that the number of female applicants reached 17,000, while males reached only 5,000, including 28 percent with university degrees, six percent with high school diplomas and 18 percent with only intermediate school certificates.

No termination

Meanwhile, Ministry of Education's (MoE) Undersecretary Haitham Al-Athari strongly denied issuing any decisions on terminating three acting educational zone directors. "I have not heard of

Al-Arabi magazine

The Information Ministry issued 10,000 copies of the March issue of Al-Arabi magazine after a slight delay over the past few days of because of a shortage in the paper needed. Accordingly, Minister of

any such decisions and all directors are doing their jobs well," he stressed, noting that the ministry was, on the contrary, keen on addressing CSC to have them officially appointed in their positions to have more stability.

Solid waste

Kuwait Municipality's Director Ahmad Al-Manfuohi called for cancelling the Municipal Council's decisions issued on June 17, 2002 and Jan 23, 2006 pertaining with a tender for processing solid municipal waste. In a letter sent to the Municipal Council's Chairman, Manfuohi said in meeting number 2/2016 held on March 14, 2016, the council's legal and financial affairs committee asked for legal advice on the cancellation, especially since no contracts had been signed with either of the two companies that won the tender.

In my view

THE RIGHT TO EDUCATION



By Labeed Abdal

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Over 13 million Arab children are living under hard conditions in some Arab countries, and have been denied access to schools, according to a recent report released by the Arab League Educational, Cultural and Scientific Organization (ALESCO). This is something that I believe crosses the line, simply because educating children is a God-given right and a global demand.

Involving Arab regions in proxy wars without paying much attention to the consequences that go as far as endangering children lives is a real threat to both the Arab and Islamic nations. ALESCO is committed to the 2022 plan through contribution to international programs designed to protect innocent children from such harsh and violent circumstances.

ALESCO also focuses on limiting poverty and ensuring sustainable education for all people. It also helps provide, in collaboration with the UN, more opportunities towards educating women, girls and children in general, and activating sustainable development plans with an ultimate goal of achieving many aspirations. The hardships Arabs are going through are not isolated from history nor international power equations, namely the division of the security council in terms of what the West and the East sees best.

The Jaber Al-Ahmad Specialized Dentistry Center will start receiving Kuwaiti patients from Qossour, Adan, Qurain, Mubarak Al-Kabeer, Hitteen, Al-Salam, Zahra, Shuhada and Siddiq from Sunday, said a letter sent from the Ministry of Health's Assistant Undersecretary for Dentistry Affairs Dr Yousif Al-Dowairi to the center's manager.

Dentistry Center

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'TASTE OF KUWAIT' FOOD FEST TO SHOWCASE INT'L CELEBRITY CHEFS

By Ben Garcia

KUWAIT: The stage is set for the 3rd 'Taste of Kuwait Food Festival' to be held from March 16-18 at 'The Boulevard' in Salimiya. The event will be organized by Production Media and Events under the supervision of managing partner Michelle Lambros. Several local and international celebrity chefs will be showcased at the event, with live shows and cooking demos. "We have invited celebrity chefs from various countries and TV networks. It will be a delicious and mouthwatering 3-day event, open to everyone free of charge. The food will be from over 50 local and international restaurants," said Lambros.

The chefs will be performing throughout the festival in front of guests. People visiting the venue can win a chance to cook alongside their favorite chef at a cooking demo. Kuwaiti Chef Adlah Al-Sharhan will showcase her skills and love for cooking. She is a well-known chef and has her own culinary art school in Kuwait. She is well-

loved by many Kuwaitis, which is reflected through her Adoola Instagram account.

Another participating chef is Anabele Karmel, UK's No.1 children's cookery book author, best-selling international author and a world-leading expert on devising delicious and nutritious meals for babies, children and families. She received an MBE in the Queen's Birthday Honors for her outstanding work in the field of child nutrition, and she has since become a leading media commentator and celebrity speaker.

'Taste of Kuwait' will also host celebrity chef Dean Brettschneider, Jenny Morris, Margarita Sofia Rangel Calderon, Samar Ayoub, Shelina Permalloo, Tarek Ibrahim and Tim Hollands. The venue is located in the parking area of The Boulevard mall and park (near gate 2). Lambros said she expects around 35,000 visitors for the three-day event. The first Taste of Kuwait food festival was held in March 2015 at the Kuwait International Fairgrounds, and saw approximately 18,000 visitors. The second edition was held at



KUWAIT: Michelle Lambros speaks to Kuwait Times. —Photos by Joseph Shagra

Marina Crescent, with 21,000 attendees. "The venue is new. We have enough parking spaces, so we expect a higher number of attendees this year," she said.

KFH OFFERS MOBI BAITAK VEHICLES TO CUSTOMERS IN ABU FATIRA

BEST SERVICES TO CUSTOMERS WITH SPECIAL NEEDS

KUWAIT: Kuwait Finance House (KFH) has offered Mobi Baitak vehicles on a daily basis to customers and residents in Abu Fatira area. This initiative emanates from KFH's ongoing commitment to address customers' needs and in an attempt to be more accessible to them in different areas.



Abu Fatira residents applaud KFH's initiative in offering Mobi Baitak vehicles.

The Mobi Baitak vehicles serve as mobile ATM machines. They are located at Abu Fatira Cooperative Society. The Chairman of the Cooperative Society expressed his thanks and gratitude to KFH for this initiative that contributes to residents' satisfaction, while reflects the continuing efforts of KFH to be accessible everywhere in Kuwait. This service was highly applauded by residents of the area.

These satellite-monitored vehicles offer cheque books, change of password, and other regular banking services, such as cash withdrawal and the deposit of cash and cheques, in addition to balance statements in a secure and easy manner. It is worth noting that Mobi Baitak vehicles are subject to flexible schedules to cover various vibrant areas in Kuwait, mainly the remote areas.

Special needs

Meanwhile, KFH announced the commencement of operation of 10 ATMs provided specially for the blind in various areas of Kuwait in appreciation of their conditions and difficulties and to ensure that they avail the best services that suite their circumstances.

KFH gives the priority to customers with special needs at its branches and showrooms as it provides a

team of employees equipped with sign language skills to communicate with this important segment of customers. KFH is keen on providing banking services to various tiers of customers and provide all means to obtain such services smoothly and easily. The ATMs allocated specially for blind people in its branches are located in Keefan - Rawda - Shaab - Zahraa - Mubarak Al-Kabeer - Dhaher - Fahaeel - Rihab - Saad Al-Abdullah and Jahraa, Mikhyal Mall.

The ATM machines were distributed in various areas of the country in order to serve the largest number of customers bearing in mind that such machines have highly sophisticated specifications to suite blind people needs.

The machines have common specifications i.e. enable the blind to write by using Braille letters, taking voice instructions to facilitate procedures for all users. ATM machines are placed in easy to reach locations to ensure that users do not suffer any difficulties, bearing in mind that the machines are fully secured and monitored. Also, customers with special needs and the blind can now take advantage of the specifications of the new website that provides the auto reader feature. This allows them with assistance of their companions to take advantage of 150 free e-services.



Women's March organizers call for 'A Day Without a Woman'

GERMANY HOPEFUL RELATIONS WITH TURKEY CAN NORMALIZE



MANILA: Filipino women display a mock American flag with the portrait of US President Donald Trump on it as they march for a rally at the US Embassy to mark International Women's Day. — AP

WILL TRUMP DECREE PASS LEGAL MUSTER ON BAN?

GROUPS GATHER EN MASS TO OPPOSE NEXT ATTEMPT

WASHINGTON: States' attorneys general, civil liberties groups and others are already lining up to challenge President Donald Trump's revised ban on refugees and travelers from six mainly Muslim countries. But can they succeed in overturning a measure that was deliberately crafted to remove the red flags raised by US courts over the first attempt? That may be more difficult.

The White House has rolled out a process that aims to avoid a repeat of the confusion caused by its first travel ban, imposed with no notice and little preparation one week into Trump's presidency. This time, it's unlikely there will be a backdrop of airport chaos and mass detentions to help lawyers make the case that people's rights are being trampled.

The new order issued Monday suspends US entry for all refugees for 120 days, and suspends the issuing of new visas for nationals of Syria, Iran, Libya, Somalia, Yemen and Sudan for 90 days. Although similar to the first travel ban, it has been changed in significant ways to pass muster with the courts.

For one, the new restrictions do not go into effect until March 16, giving travelers 10 days to prepare for the changes. Crucially, the new order exempts permanent US residents and existing visa-holders and allows for waivers on a case-by-case basis. It also drops Iraq from the list. The strategy appears designed to address the situations that ignited outrage and made the earlier travel ban politically radioactive.

Among the prominent cases was that of an Iranian baby who could not travel for specialized medical treatment in the United States. That could now be dealt with using a waiver. Foreign students and Silicon Valley executives were also stranded abroad, and entire families detained at airports. As long as they have visas under the new rules, they should no longer face that risk.

Muslim ban?

Lawyers for the state of Hawaii on Tuesday told a US district court there of their plan to file a challenge to the revised ban on Wednesday, which would probably make it the first legal test.

The state has asked for an expedited process to consider a motion for a temporary restraining order on the ban. If the judge agrees, "this schedule will allow the court to hear the state's motion before the new travel ban goes into effect on March 16," Hawaii's attorney general Douglas Chin said in a statement. The federal judge who blocked the first ban in the state of Washington last month was persuaded by the argument of two state attorneys general that it was causing "irreparable harm." It is less clear those arguments would prevail the next time around. "We are carefully reviewing the new executive order to determine its impacts on Washington state and our next legal steps," Washington state Attorney General Bob Ferguson said Monday. He said he was still concerned but needed two or three days to decide on next steps.

'Backdoor ban'

Camille Mackler, director of legal initiatives at the New York Immigration Coalition, called Trump's new order a "backdoor Muslim ban." "We

still think it's as problematic as the first travel ban," she said. "It didn't happen in a vacuum, it happened within the context of the comments that have been made before and since the election, this sort of broader war on immigrants that the Trump administration is fighting."

The next wave of legal challenges will have to directly confront the question of whether the immigration order constitutes a Muslim ban, an issue the courts have so far set aside. "While the White House may have made changes to the ban, the intent to discriminate against Muslims remains," New York attorney general Eric Schneiderman said.

The administration has tried to make it harder to prove religious discrimination by stripping out language that would have given preference to religious minorities once refugees are allowed in again. Critics had said the preference benefiting Christians underscored that the ban was directed at Muslims. "I believe the new order will withstand legal challenges as it's drafted in a fashion as to not be a religious ban, but a ban on individ-

uals coming from compromised governments and failed states," said Republican Senator Lindsey Graham. The Trump administration considers three of the nations targeted-Iran, Sudan and Syria-as state sponsors of terrorism, and the other three as "safe havens" for terror operatives. Its critics question the list, which includes countries whose citizens have never been involved in terror attacks in the United States. And they point to Trump's own past campaign statements promising to bar entry to Muslims as evidence of animus that will be difficult to shake.

"The clear intent is to convince the courts that the ban is the result of careful deliberation rather than religious animus," said Elizabeth Goitein, co-director of the Brennan Center for Justice's Liberty and National Security Program. "But the tactical tweaks in this latest edition cannot rescue the order's constitutionality," she added. "Underneath the softened rhetoric and other adjustments lies the same poisonous policy: an effort to restrict Muslims' entry into the United States." — AFP

LANKA FREES INDIANS AMID TENSION OVER FISHERMAN KILLING

COLOMBO: Sri Lanka will release Indian fishermen held for poaching as the two countries try to defuse tension along their maritime border after the killing of a fisherman, an official said yesterday. Local authorities will free 85 Indian fishermen held in custody since early this year without pressing charges, with India expected to reciprocate and release all 19 Sri Lankans in their custody.

"Both sides have decided to release all those fishermen in their custody," a senior government source said, speaking on condition of anonymity as he was not authorized to talk to the media. The move follows Sri Lanka's announcement Tuesday that it had agreed to a joint investigation into the killing of an Indian fisherman in the narrow strip of sea between the two countries.

The victim, who was reported to be 21, was shot dead Monday and Indian fishermen have said the Sri Lankan navy was responsible, an allegation Colombo has flatly denied. Fishermen from the two countries often stray into each others' waters, creating diplomatic difficulties, though most are detained. It was the first death in six years. The latest incident was the worst since two Indian fishermen were shot dead in Sri Lankan waters in January 2011.

It has triggered protests in the Indian coastal town of Rameswaram where the victim was from. India and Sri Lanka are separated by the narrow Palk Strait, which is a rich fishing ground. In 2014 Sri Lanka passed the death penalty on five Indian fishermen convicted of drug smuggling, but they were later released to Indian custody. — AFP

VIDEO EMERGES OF MAN CLAIMING TO BE MURDERED N KOREAN'S SON

SEOUL: A man claiming to be the son of the slain, estranged half-brother of North Korea's leader said he was lying low with his mother and sister, in a video posted online by a group that said it helped rescue them following the murder a month ago. The governments of the Netherlands, China, the United States, and a fourth unnamed country provided emergency humanitarian assistance to protect the family, the group, called Cheollima Civil Defense, said in a statement released yesterday along with the video.

An official at South Korea's National Intelligence Service said the man in the video is Kim Han Sol, the 21-year-old son of Kim Jong Nam, who was killed at Kuala Lumpur International Airport on Feb. 13 by assassins who Malaysian police say used a super-toxic nerve agent. The intelligence official declined to go beyond identifying Kim Han Sol. During the 40-second video posted yesterday, the man says his father was killed a few days ago.

"I'm currently with my mother and my sister..." he said, speaking in English, without disclosing his location or who he was living with. "We hope this gets better soon," he added. Reuters could not independently

verify the video. But the man closely resembled Kim Han Sol, who was last interviewed on camera in 2012 by former Finnish defence minister Elisabeth Rehn. Kim Han Sol is the son of Kim Jong Nam's second wife, who had been living in the Chinese territory of Macau with Kim under Beijing's protection after the family went into exile several years ago. South Korean intelligence officers say North Korean leader Kim Jong Un had issued standing orders for the elimination of his elder half-brother.

Dutch envoy thanked

The statement released on the website of Cheollima Civil Defense said the organization responded last month to an emergency request by Kim Jong Nam's family members for "extraction and protection". It is not clear who is behind the group, which says it can help high-level North Koreans escape the isolated country and hides its digital footprint.

The website on which the statement and video was posted was registered on Saturday, according to WHOIS database records, which disclose website ownership. The WHOIS database shows the group used a Panama-based protection

service to hide ownership of its website address. The authors of the statement encouraged people to join their organization by writing to an email address hosted by a Switzerland-based encrypted email service, and they requested donations via the digital Bitcoin currency.

The group thanked the Netherlands ambassador to North and South Korea, Lody Embrechts, for his "timely and strong response" to the group's request for help. Embrechts, who is based in South Korea, declined to comment on the statement, as did the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs. "We are aware of these reports. The MFA cannot comment on them," a spokeswoman said.

"The three family members were met quickly and relocated to safety. We have in the past addressed other urgent needs for protection," the Cheollima Civil Defense statement said, adding that the whereabouts of the family will not be addressed. "Cheollima" is the name given to a mythical horse in Chinese and Korean folklore, said to be able to travel over great distances. The term is used in North Korean propaganda to symbolise rapid economic development, as well as to name streets, restaur-

ants and other domestic brands. In the video, Kim held up a black North Korean service passport in the video and opened it. The details were edited out, but a North Korean state stamp is visible on one page, as is a line of English text which said the passport's validity had been extended. North Korean service passports are issued to government officials. They are black and embossed with gold text which says "PASSPORT (FOR OFFICIAL TRIP)".

South Korean intelligence and US officials say Kim Jong Nam's murder was an assassination organized by North Korean agents. Malaysian police have identified eight North Koreans wanted for questioning in the case, but the only people charged with the murder so far are an Indonesian woman and a Vietnamese woman who police say wiped the VX nerve agent on the victim's face.

Malaysia is still waiting for DNA samples of the next of kin to officially verify the identity, but no family member has made contact yet. The Southeast Asian country has said it would only release Kim's body to the next of kin, refusing demands from North Korea to hand over the body without an autopsy. — Reuters

2 DEAD IN BOMBING OF SYRIA REBEL BASTION DESPITE TRUCE

BEIRUT: Two people were killed yesterday in bombardment of a Syrian rebel bastion near Damascus, a monitor said, less than 24 hours after Russia announced a freeze in fighting there. "A young man and a woman were killed in air strikes on Douma," the largest town in the Eastern Ghouta region, said Rami Abdel Rahman, head of the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights.

Raids also hit the town of Arbin, and regime artillery hit Harasta, leaving nearly two dozen people wounded in Eastern Ghouta. "These are the first air strikes since the truce was announced" on Tuesday afternoon, Abdel Rahman said. An AFP correspondent

in Douma told AFP that a warplane had struck the town and that residents who were outside had rushed back into their homes. "The situation is tragic—the heavy shelling is ongoing," said Zeina, a resident of Douma who spoke to AFP via the internet.

Russia's defence ministry on Tuesday declared a two-week "regime of silence" in Eastern Ghouta, the last opposition stronghold near the Syrian capital. Hamza Bayraqdar, a spokesman for the Army of Islam, told AFP on Tuesday that the faction had not been notified about the ceasefire, but would not "reject any agreement to stop the bloodshed and suffering of our

people". And senior Army of Islam official Mohammad Allouh lambasted regime ally Moscow yesterday after the strikes. "Russia's announcement of a cessation of hostilities in Eastern Ghouta is a political announcement—militarily, it's not being executed," he told AFP. "Russia wants to present itself as neutral and a sponsor of a political solution (to the Syrian conflict), but on the ground it's a different case," he said.

"This announcement came late. It was supposed to be announced on March 5, but the regime didn't commit to it. Even with this announcement, there is no agreement from the regime on a freeze." Eastern

Ghouta has been under a devastating government siege since 2012, but has also been the target of a blistering regime offensive in recent months. It is the last remaining opposition stronghold near Damascus, where a string of local "reconciliation deals" have seen villages and towns brought back under the control of President Bashar al-Assad's government. Russia and rebel backer Turkey sponsored a nationwide truce between Assad's forces and opposition fighters in December, but fighting has continued across swathes of Syria. More than 310,000 have been killed since Syria's conflict began in March 2011. — AFP

FIGHT IS, START 'REVOLUTION': FOREIGNERS JOIN SYRIA KURDS

QAMISHLI: Captivated by the idea of fighting jihadists, or dedicated to starting a "revolution," foreigners have diverse reasons for joining the Kurdish People's Protection Units (YPG) in northern Syria. The group is the key component of the US-backed Syrian Democratic Forces alliance, now advancing on the Islamic State group's stronghold of Raqa. Hundreds of foreign fighters have fought alongside the YPG in Syria, of whom at least 25 have been killed, the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights monitor says.

Kimmy

Kimmy Taylor, a 27-year-old British citizen, travelled to northern Syria in 2016 to write about women's rights after studying politics at university in Sweden. She had planned a 10-day visit but, after just three days, she decided to stay. Kimmy says she fell in love with the system of "autonomous administration" Kurdish authorities have implemented across northern Syria, describing it as "an answer to everything that I've seen wrong with the world".

"I thought, why am I reading books in Sweden about politics when I can live in a revolution?" she tells AFP excitedly, a checked black-and-white scarf wrapped around her head. Kimmy has taken courses in the Kurdish language, "the ideology of democratic confederalism" and military affairs with the YPG's female arm, the YPJ.

"After I was on the front line for some months, I joined the YPJ media team and now we're in Raqa" province, she says, describing her daily routine of taking, editing, and publishing photos of the battle. She says witnessing IS lose Raqa city "would be a dream". "Maybe this hasn't happened in history before—that normal people have... created a people's army and defeated a group that is like Daesh. It's incredible," she says, using an Arabic acronym for the group. Although she misses her family, friends, and good chocolate, Kimmy has no plans to leave: "I know if I return to Europe, I'll be bored after one week."

Firas

Firas Vancouver, 23, was working as a correctional officer in a high-security prison in Victoria, Canada when he started learning about the YPG. "It was a tough job, you see kind of the dark side of humanity," Vancouver says. "One of the main factors of me coming here, getting on a plane and joining the revolution, was seeing the struggle through internet, on TV, on the news," he adds.

Sporting short spiky hair and some stub-

ble, Vancouver says he emailed the YPG directly, who responded encouraging him to travel to northern Syria. "It was probably less than a month from when I sent the first email that I was on a plane to start my journey," says Vancouver. He says he hopes the presence of foreigners alongside the Kurdish fighters will force Western governments to pay attention and provide "more support for Rojava and the struggle here with YPG and YPJ". Rojava is the Kurdish name for Kurdish-majority parts of northern Syria. "We weren't forced to come here. We volunteered to come here. And the Kurdish people—you can tell they see that and show us a lot of love," he says.

Roger

At 20, Roger Benjamin—now known as Jakdar Kawa, or Fighter Kawa in Kurdish—is one of the youngest known foreign fighters. His thick curly black hair swept up in a voluminous do, Roger tells AFP there are three reasons he left the United States a month ago for northern Syria.

"Number one, any kind of medical help I can give. I have some kind of experience with that. Number two, fight IS, cause seriously they're very bad people," he says. "And number three, just to see what direct democracy is like. If you look around at the village, the people, the culture, whatnot. Take it in. I want to see how it works, this political system." He speaks quickly, hitting his fist into his hand for emphasis: "So far, they're really pounding it in about ideology and language. They really want us to assimilate to the culture, to get to know the Kurdish people, who they are, the YPG." Benjamin says he admires YPG fighters killed in battle because "they're dying fighting for what they believe in". "If there's any way I could die, it would be that."

Maxime

Maxime, a French citizen, is in northern Syria for his second stint with the YPG. The 27-year-old fought alongside the group in 2015 in Tal Abyad, near the Turkish border, but broke up with his girlfriend in December to return for a longer stay. "If I have to stay a year, two years, three, or even 10, I will stay for 10 years to support this revolution and help people," he says. The YPG facilitated his entry into Syrian territory, where he joined the International Freedom Battalion, a unit of foreign fighters. "We're not here to impose our ideas, whatever they are, but the people are asking for us to liberate them," he says. "We will liberate them and try to establish a more humane system." — AFP



MOSUL: Three roadside bombs laid by Islamic State group militants explode in a western Mosul neighborhood, killing one of the Iraqi engineers attempting to diffuse the devices. — AP

IRAQ FORCES HUNT FOR BOMBS, JIHADIST HOLDOUTS IN MOSUL

SETTING THE STAGE FOR OFFENSIVE AGAINST THE OLD CITY

MOSUL: Iraqi forces worked to clear bombs and flush out any remaining jihadists in recaptured areas of west Mosul yesterday to set the stage for an offensive against the Old City. Supported by US-led coalition air strikes, the forces have made steady progress in their battle to retake Iraq's second city from the Islamic State group, announcing the recapture of two more areas on yesterday.

Prime Minister Haider Al-Abadi vowed that he would "not hesitate" to strike jihadists in neighboring countries as well if they posed a threat, after Baghdad carried out air raids in Syria last month. Iraqi forces have recaptured a series of neighborhoods in Mosul as well as the provincial government headquarters and the museum where IS militants infamously filmed themselves destroying priceless artefacts. The jihadists are under mounting pressure from twin US-backed ground offensives targeting Mosul and their other main stronghold, Raqa in Syria. IS overran large areas of both countries in 2014, declaring a cross-border "caliphate" in territory it controlled, but has since lost ground. Iraqi forces launched the massive operation to retake Mosul on October 17, first recapturing its eastern side before setting their sights on its smaller but more densely populated west. The jihadists have fought back with suicide car bombs, roadside bombs, snipers and weaponised drones.

'Important step'

The focus on yesterday was on clearing the newly retaken areas and defusing bombs in booby-trapped houses, Lieutenant Colonel Abdulmir Al-

Mohammedawi of the elite Rapid Response Division told AFP. The battle for the Old City may see some of the toughest fighting of the operation to retake west Mosul.

"The liberation of the city centre is a first and very important step for beginning the liberation of the Old City," Mohammedawi said, referring to an area near the Old City that Iraqi forces have recaptured in recent days. "The Old City is a very difficult area" of narrow streets and closely spaced houses, he said. Hundreds of thousands of civilians are believed to still be trapped under jihadist rule in the Old City, where Abu Bakr Al-Baghdadi made his only public appearance as IS leader and proclaimed a "caliphate" in July 2014.

Iraq's Joint Operations Command announced Wednesday that the elite Counter-Terrorism Service had recaptured the neighborhoods of Al-Mansur and Al-Shuhada Al-Thaniya in west Mosul. The fighting in the city's western districts has forced more than 51,000 people to flee their homes, according to the International Organization for Migration. But 750,000 people are believed to have remained in west Mosul under IS, whose fighters have used civilians as human shields to defend themselves from approaching forces. "We couldn't go outside because of the IS fighters," said Manhal, a 28-year-old resident of Al-Danadan, a district now under Iraqi control. "Those who went out were taken hostage. The fighting was very violent. Mortar rounds fell on our roof and inside our yard," he added.

Federal police commander Lieutenant General Raed Shakir Jawdat said anti-IS forces

were now setting up defenses in recaptured areas of Mosul as they eyed the next phase. "Bermes and barriers were set up to protect (the) forces and they began search operations in Al-Dawasa and Al-Danadan and Al-Agaidat areas to find (IS) remnants to prepare for the completion of offensive operations," he said.

In neighboring Syria, a US-backed alliance of Kurdish and Arab fighters has been advancing on Raqa and on Monday they reached the Euphrates River cutting the main road to the partly IS-held city of Deir Ezzor downstream. Turkish troops and their Syrian rebel allies meanwhile have pushed south from the Turkish border and driven IS out of the northern town of Al-Bab.

And Syrian government troops have swept eastwards from second city Aleppo with Russian support and seized a swathe of countryside from the jihadists. According to the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights monitoring group, heavy Russian bombing struck IS positions near the town of Al-Khafsah, where regime forces retook a key water pumping station on Tuesday.

An AFP correspondent saw dozens of trucks and cars full of suitcases and bedding waiting on the road between Al-Khafsah and the town of Manbij. "The shelling began and we fled wherever we found somewhere safe, we'd settle there," said Abu Hammoud, an elderly man who left his home near the water pumping station. "We need help for the children. They're sleeping in the open air. There's no food here. Everyone can see us, but no one is doing anything." — AFP



KHUNAYZ: Kimmy Taylor, a 27-year-old British citizen who joined the Kurdish People's Protection Units (YPG), talks with her comrades near Khunayz on the northern outskirts of Raqa. — AFP

ARMENIA PREZ URGES PRESSURE ON AZERBAIJAN TO AVERT WAR

YEREVAN: Armenia's President Serzh Sarkisian has urged international powers to step up pressure on Azerbaijan to avoid all-out war over the disputed Nagorny Karabakh region, accusing his nation's arch-foe of military "blackmail". "The danger of a new war is constant and will persist until Azerbaijan is persuaded that there is no military solution to the conflict," Sarkisian told AFP in an interview ahead of a visit to France.

Fears that the decades-long Nagorny Karabakh dispute could escalate have risen since sporadic firing across the volatile frontline surged last April into the worst violence since a 1994 truce. A ceasefire brokered by Moscow stilled several days of bloodshed but long-standing mediators from Russia, the United States and France have since struggled to restart a stalled peace process.

Sarkisian—who will meet French President Francois Hollande in Paris on Wednesday—accused his Azerbaijani counterpart Ilham Aliyev of sabotaging any progress by threatening to start fighting unless he gets his way. "He said Azerbaijan will not start a war if Armenia fulfils its demands.

I said that this is blackmail, not a compromise," the Armenian leader said.

Sarkisian urged Paris, Moscow, and Washington to "show what price one of the sides will pay if it initiates an attack." "That will have a sobering effect," he said.

'A matter of time'

Baku and Yerevan have feuded over the Nagorny Karabakh region since Armenian separatists seized the territory from Azerbaijan in a war that claimed some 30,000 lives in the early 1990s. Energy-rich Azerbaijan, whose military spending exceeds Armenia's entire state budget, has repeatedly threatened to take back the breakaway region by force but Moscow-allied Armenia has vowed to crush any military offensive. The war ended in a fragile 1994 truce but the two sides never signed a firm peace deal and Sarkisian warned that fears of a new surge in fighting are growing.

"Public opinion in Armenia is that the resumption of hostilities is a matter of time—maybe weeks or months—and the commander-in-chief and defense minister must be prepared that a war could start tomorrow," Sarkisian said. "I don't think a fresh war is an immediate threat, but nothing is ruled out when one deals with an unpredictable neighbor." — AFP

LEBANON RAIDS FINANCIAL OFFICES OVER IS TRANSFERS

BEIRUT: Lebanese authorities carried out raids yesterday against currency exchange offices and money transfer companies on suspicion they sent huge sums to the Islamic State group, a judicial source told AFP.

The source said the raids started Tuesday and were continuing yesterday against several institutions "on suspicion they transferred huge sums of money to areas controlled by IS in Raqa and elsewhere," referring to a jihadist stronghold in Syria. The source added that a number of people had been detained for investigation but were not yet formally under arrest.

"Information is being gathered on the value of the money that was transferred," the source added. Lebanese media reported that as much as \$20 million had been transferred to the jihadist group, which holds territory in Syria and Iraq, as well as Libya. But the judicial source dismissed that figure as "exaggerated" while conceding the suspected sum was nonetheless "huge."

Yesterday afternoon, an AFP photographer saw security forces raiding three offices on bustling Hamra Street in the west of Beirut, and seizing documents and computer equipment. Afterwards, the raided premises were sealed with red wax and a sign from the military prosecutor warning against their reopening "under penalty of prosecution." There was no official statement on the raids, or details on the number of companies that had been targeted. Lebanon's Central Bank imposes strict rules on financial institutions



BEIRUT: A unit from Lebanon's Security Forces carry out raids at banking institutions and financial companies in the commercial Hamra district of Beirut as part of an investigation into cash transfers to the Islamic State (IS) group. — AFP

intended to prevent money laundering and terrorism financing, including caps on the amount that can be transferred overseas without additional supporting paperwork. Lebanon has been heavily impacted by the war in neighboring Syria

since it erupted in March 2011. Security forces have on several occasions arrested suspected IS members, including in February, when two men were detained on accusations they were planning an attack in central Beirut. — AFP

SCARRED SURVIVORS INSPIRE ITALY TO COMBAT VIOLENCE ON WOMEN

ROME: Lucia Annibali's face was rebuilt for the price of atrocious pain and 18 surgeries after an acid attack ordered by her ex-boyfriend corroded her eyelids, cheeks and forehead almost to the bone and left her nearly blind. The man she enraged with a breakup, like her then a lawyer in an Adriatic resort town, is now serving a 20-year sentence for attempted murder. Prosecutors allege that after he failed to kill Annibali by tampering with a gas line in her apartment, he engaged two men to douse her with sulfuric acid when she got home the evening of April 16, 2013.

While she lay in agony in a hospital emergency room, Annibali made a vow to her ex. "I swear to you that I will make it," she told him in an imaginary conversation. "If you wanted to annihilate me, know that you didn't succeed." Annibali, now 39, kept her promise. She also proudly forged a new role for herself in what is an expanding cadre of courageous muses who are determined to inspire fellow women in Italy to rebel against violence at the hands of controlling men.

A photo of a smiling Annibali, her nostrils deformed and the grafted skin from her groin and thigh pulling at her reconstructed eyelids and cheeks, graces the cover of her memoir "Io Ci Sono" ("I Am Still Here."). The book became the basis of a movie shown on Italian state TV. Another scarred survivor working to fight gender-

based violence in Italy is a one-time beauty pageant winner and former aquatic park star. Jessica Notaro, her face still swathed in bandages and her eyesight put at risk when two months ago the 27-year-old was doused with acid in an attack, similar to the one on Annibali, forms a heart with her fingertips in a photo to well-wishers. Her former boyfriend has been arrested.

Inspiring the fight

Slain women are inspiring the fight, too. Hundreds of women, and some men, marched in Sara Di Pietrantonio's memory last June, a few days after the Roma Tre university student was strangled and her corpse set afire, allegedly by a former boyfriend who was furious she was seeing another man. The rebellion marks a stunning turnaround. A generation ago, the Italian penal code prescribed prison sentences as short as three years for men who killed women out of jealousy. Until 1981, the law sanctioned leniency for male defendants who murdered to preserve "family honor."

Recent years have brought about "a Copernican revolution in mentality and approach" to addressing violence against women, lawyer Lorenzo Puglisi said. Puglisi established a website, SOS Stalking, for those seeking help to protect themselves from jealous or vengeful husbands, boyfriends and acquaintances. Parliament

passed anti-stalking legislation in 2009. Since 2010, hundreds of women, many fearing for their lives, have contacted his Milan office for assistance, including obtaining restraining orders.

However, the harsh condemnation Italy received last week from the European Court of Human Rights underscores how deeply attitudes that leave women at the mercy of men still permeate Italian society. The Strasbourg, France-based tribunal ruled Italy had violated a woman's rights by underestimating the danger posed by her husband, who beat her and attacked her with a knife in separate incidents in 2012. The husband fatally stabbed their teenage son while trying to assault her with a knife again the next year.

The woman, who survived with multiple stab wounds, had gone to stay at a women's shelter for a few months but returned home when the center ran out of space. Too often, police still "confuse violence with conflict," Titti Carrano, one of the lawyers who presented the woman's complaint to the rights court, said. Despite the end of laws weighted in favor of men, "there is a culture in Italy which still justifies violence" against women, Carrano said.

Gender-motivated murders

Italy recorded 108 gender-motivated murders of women, sometimes referred to as "femicide," last year, 111 in 2015 and 117



ROME: In this photo taken on Tuesday, Feb 21, 2017, Lucia Annibali, victim of an acid attack, walks in Rome. A rebellion against gender violence, slowly taking root in Italian society, marks a stunning turnaround. — AP

in 2014, according to state police statistics. The slight dip mirrors an overall decline in murders in the past few years, national police official Maria Carla Bocchino stressed. Unfortunately, "the incidence of

female victims in a family or romantic context has stayed level," hovering at about 65-70 percent of cases in which women are slain, Bocchino said.

Acknowledging the toll on society, the Chamber of Deputies last week approved legislation to help orphans of femicide. The bill would establish a 2 million-euro fund for school scholarships or job training, and simplify the vital records bureaucracy so children no longer have to carry the surname of the father who killed their mother. On Valentine's Day, Senate President Pietro Grasso, a former anti-Mafia prosecutor, promoted a public awareness campaign in which empty chairs will be draped with a red cloth in all public buildings to highlight femicide, until these killings are ended.

Sociologist Franca Garreffa of the University of Calabria said that what is happening in Italy "considering all this cultural baggage, is an epochal change." But she ventured that Italian women's growing refusal to tolerate violent men could put them at even greater danger unless they get prompt, adequate protection from the state. "The men have always been used to being dominant, both in the family and in society," Garreffa said in an interview in Rome, where she was attending a presentation of a report in the Chamber of Deputies on the economic costs to society of violence against women. — AP

FEMINIST ACTIVISTS DETAINED FOR PROTEST NEAR KREMLIN

MOSCOW: A group of feminist activists was detained in Moscow yesterday, International Women's Day, after protesting by the Kremlin walls with a banner reading "Men have been in power 200 years, down with them!" OVD Info, a website that monitors detentions of activists, wrote that seven people were detained including two journalists from Novaya Gazeta opposition newspaper and a photographer and taken to a police station for questioning.

Rights lawyer Mari Davtyan wrote on Facebook that eight had been detained including journalists. One of the detained activists, performance artist Yekaterina Nenashva, posted a video of the protest on Facebook showing the activists standing on top of an artificial grotto in a park by the Kremlin walls, holding smoke flares. "Moscow and St Petersburg feminists who

seized the Kremlin congratulate you on March 8," Nenashva wrote.

The activists' banner referred to the fact that Russia's last female ruler was Catherine the Great, who died in 1796, more than 200 years ago. TV Rain independent channel reported that the women also carried banners reading "A woman for president" and "We are the majority." The protest resembled those by punk group Pussy Riot, who in 2012 lit flares and sang a song about President Vladimir Putin on a platform on Red Square.

March 8 is a public holiday in Russia but is mainly celebrated by giving flowers and chocolates to women rather than stressing the need for gender equality. In a video address to the nation's women, Putin said that he and other men "will do all we can so that our beloved women are lavished with care and attention and smile more often." — AFP



WASHINGTON: In this Jan 21, 2017 file photo, Gloria Steinem, center right, greets protesters at the barricades before speaking at the Women's March on Washington during the first full day of Donald Trump's presidency. — AP

WOMEN'S MARCH ORGANIZERS CALL FOR 'A DAY WITHOUT A WOMAN'

THOUSANDS ACROSS COUNTRY SIGNAL THEIR SUPPORT

PHILADELPHIA: Organizers of January's Women's March have called for women to take the day off and encouraged them not to spend money to show their economic strength and impact on American society. "A Day Without a Woman" is the first major action by organizers since the nationwide marches held the day after President Donald Trump's inauguration that drew millions of women into the streets in protest against misogyny, inequality and oppression. Though it is unclear how many women could participate, thousands across the country have signaled their support and interest online and to employers.

The event coincides with the UN-designated International Women's Day, and organizers say they want to "stand with women around the globe" who supported their efforts Jan 21 with similar protests in cities around the world. Spokeswoman Cassidy Findlay said organizers were inspired by the recent "Day Without an Immigrant" protests held last month. She said the action is aimed at highlighting the effect of women on the country's socio-economic system and would demonstrate how the paid and unpaid work of women keeps households, communities and economies running.

"We provide all this value and keep the system going, and receive unequal benefits from it," Findlay said. Findlay said it is important for white women to be in solidarity with minority women. "Throughout history, the strikes that have the biggest impact are the ones when people who are already the target of oppression participate," she said. "It's when women of all backgrounds strike and stand together that we're really going to see the impact."

Love and sacrifice

Unlike the Women's March, yesterday's protest focuses on the absence of women, who are being steered to local rallies and community groups and away from work or shopping in stores or online.

Organizers also are asking women to wear red to signify love and sacrifice. More than a million people, mostly women, turned out nationwide for the Women's March. In New York, organizers are planning a gathering in Central Park at noon. International Women's Day rallies also are planned in Philadelphia, Baltimore, Milwaukee, Washington and Berkeley, California.

School districts including Prince George's County in Maryland, the Alexandria City Public Schools in Virginia and Chapel Hill-Carrboro Schools in North Carolina, have canceled classes in anticipation of employee participation. In Utah, as many as 1,000 women are expected to gather at the Capitol to remind lawmakers they are watching their actions on women's issues.

In Providence, Rhode Island, the municipal court plans to close because the demonstration in the city would leave the court without enough staff to open. Lovely Monkey Tattoo, a woman-owned tat-

too parlor in Whitmore Lake, Michigan, is offering female-centric tattoos with messages like, "Nevertheless, She Persisted" for \$50 to \$100, with proceeds going to the Ann Arbor chapter of Planned Parenthood. Some businesses have said they will either close or give female employees the day off. The event website provides templates for "out of office" emails, and an employer letter. The site has had more than a half-million visitors, and more than 60,000 had clicked on the letter template by Tuesday afternoon. Organizers noted that only a fourth of participants in the Women's March signed up in advance to participate.

The role of women in American society is significant. According to the US Census, women make up more than 47 percent of the workforce and are dominant in such professions as registered nurses, dental assistants, cashiers, accountants and pharmacists. They make up at least a third of physicians and surgeons, as well as lawyers and judges. Women also represent 55 percent of all college students. Still, American women continue to be paid less than men, earning 80 cents for every dollar a man makes. The median income for women was \$40,742 in 2015, compared with \$51,212 for men, according to census data. — AP

TRAFFIC LIGHTS SET TO PROMOTE GENDER EQUALITY IN AUSTRALIA



MELBOURNE: New traffic signals designed to equal the gender balance guide pedestrians across Swanston Street near Flinders Street railway station on International Women's Day. — AFP

MELBOURNE: Pedestrian traffic lights showing female figures rather than male have been installed in Melbourne to reduce "unconscious bias" and promote gender equality, officials said on International Women's Day yesterday. Ten stop/go lights depicting a figure in a dress were switched on at one of the city's busiest intersections, though some questioned the point of the 12-month trial.

"The idea behind this equal crossings initiative ... is to promote gender equality and reduce unconscious bias through changing some of the iconography we see every day," Martine Letts from advocacy group The Committee of Melbourne, told the Australian Broadcasting Corporation. The move met with a mixed response, with some poking fun.

"I like to think of Melbourne's new traffic lights as little green men in drag," tweeted Thomas John Jaspers. Melbourne Mayor

Robert Doyle questioned the value of the initiative. "I'm all for doing anything we can for gender equity, but really?" he told reporters. "Unfortunately I think this sort of costly exercise is more likely to bring derision rather than support to what is a very important issue."

Advocates insist no taxpayer money was spent on the trial. Victoria state's Minister for Women Fiona Richardson threw her support behind the gender-adjusted lights, saying they would help to tackle sexism. "There are many small-but symbolically significant-ways that women are excluded from public space," she said.

"A culture of sexism is made up of very small issues, like how the default pedestrian crossings use a male figure, and large issues such as the rate of family violence facing women." "We are a government working towards gender equality for all women," she added. — AFP



CAIRO: The first Egyptian female pilot to fly EgyptAir's biggest jet airliner, the Boeing 777-333, Magda Malek, adjusts her cap, at her home, on International Women's Day. — AP



KIEV: Ukrainian women shout slogans during a march as part of International Women's Day. — AFP

FEMINISTS URGE UKRAINE TO RECLAIM WOMEN'S DAY

KIEV: Around a thousand people marched through Kiev yesterday, International Women's Day, calling for a return to the original feminist meaning of a holiday now largely associated with flowers and gifts. March 8 was celebrated in the Soviet Union and is still one of the most widely marked holidays in Ukraine, but activists say the emphasis on flowers and compliments to women runs counter to the concept of gender equality.

"I came to the march just to revive the original meaning of March 8," said Alina Zabryuko, a 22-year-old student. "From the beginning it was a day for women's rights, not a day for flowers." Marchers shouted slogans including "Woman's rights are human rights!" and held banners saying "Sexism isn't sexy" and "Don't give flowers, give safety". Protesters said they

were marching to highlight domestic violence, mistreatment of women in maternity hospitals and bullying in the armed forces.

"Today in Ukraine violence is being used against women. It is often invisible-it takes place in families, in hospitals, at work. It is not given enough attention," said 27-year-old protester Diana Poladova, who works for an NGO called the Expert Centre for Human Rights. Police detained three counter-protesters after they attempted to throw bright green disinfectant at the activists.

One of those detained told journalists he wanted to "protest against actions that divide Ukrainian society". "They are alienating Ukrainian women from Ukrainian men," the young man told the crowd as he was grabbed by police officers. — AFP

BBC'S THAI TRANSMISSION TOWERS FALL SILENT AS JUNTA TALKS FALTER

BANGKOK: The BBC World Service has stopped broadcasting from one of its major global transmission stations situated in Thailand, AFP has learned, after talks broke down with a junta ruled by its uncensored coverage. Sources with knowledge of the negotiations said the BBC's Thai-language output was an obstacle in discussions about renewing the 20-year lease on the complex, one of the network's main shortwave broadcast stations for Asia.

The suspension comes as the World Service rolls out its largest foreign-language expansion for decades. The centre's large red and white transmission towers in Nakhon Sawan 150 miles north of Bangkok beamed local language news into tightly-controlled countries such as China and North Korea, and into places where many still rely on radio like Pakistan and Afghanistan but it went off air on January 1 following the expiry of the lease.

"Despite extensive negotiations, we have been unable to reach an agreement to re-commence trans-

missions," the BBC said in a statement. The BBC World Service, part-funded by the British government but editorially independent, currently produces uncensored news in 29 languages. The Asia transmission station moved to Thailand from Hong Kong in 1997 after the city was handed back to China. The BBC did not give details of why the talks broke down. But two sources said its Thai-language service had become a sore point. Thailand's royalist establishment was incensed by a profile of new King Maha Vajiralongkorn which the BBC Thai service published following the October death of his father King Bhumibol Adulyadej.

Unvarnished reporting

Thailand's monarchy is protected from scrutiny by a ferociously enforced lese majeste law, forcing media inside the kingdom to heavily self-censor. The unvarnished profile was published out of the BBC's London office. It went viral in a country unused to seeing

unfiltered reporting of its monarchy. A dissident student leader was charged with royal defamation for sharing the profile, the first prosecution under Vajiralongkorn's reign. Sansern Kaewkumnerd, head of Thailand's government Public Relations Department, confirmed discussions had faltered but did not say why. "It is still unclear whether the contract would be extended or not extended," he said.

But foreign ministry spokesman Sek Wannamethee said there were "no sticking points" and that the BBC had made a "unilateral decision to terminate the negotiating process without consulting the Thai side". Thailand's 2014 coup brought to power a group of ultra-royalist generals who stamped down on dissent and cramped media freedoms.

Thitinan Pongsudhirak, a Thai politics expert at Chulalongkorn University, said Thailand had become a "more problematic place for media companies"; a trend that has worsened under the latest military government. "The longer the military regime is

entrenched, the more damage we'll see to basic Thai freedoms," he said.

Its statement the BBC said it had been able to absorb the fallout of the closed Thai station by "transmitting non-English services via shortwave from other locations". Within Asia, the network owns transmission sites in Singapore and Oman. The timing of the closure comes as the World Service plans to increase its output to 40 foreign languages, near its post-World War II peak of 45.

After years of slashing funding, the British government announced an additional \$352 million for the 2015-2020 period. The move was partly a response to the huge expansion of state-sponsored media competitors in countries like Russia, China and the Middle East. The extra money is aimed at increasing local-language broadcasts to countries like North Korea, Ethiopia, Eritrea and Russia. The cash injection also went towards hiring extra BBC Thai staff, both in Bangkok and London. — AFP



LEIDEN: A person walks in front of electoral posters. — AFP

DUTCH 'TRUDEAU' AIMS TO STEM FAR-RIGHT PARTY ELECTION HOPES

THE HAGUE: Some call him the "Justin Trudeau" of Dutch politics, others see an echo of a young John F Kennedy, while his detractors call him arrogant. But GroenLinks (Green-Left) party leader Jesse Klaver is on a mission to put his own stamp on the Dutch political landscape in the March 15 polls as an antidote to rising right-wing xenophobia. As the only child of an absentee father of Moroccan descent and a Dutch-Indonesian mother, Klaver, 30, knows what growing up in The Netherlands as an outsider is like.

"I was shocked to be told on Twitter to go back to my own country, or told 'I will not vote for you because you are Moroccan'," Klaver said during a debate late Sunday. "So many people have faced these kinds of comments. We should be judged based on what our future represents, not on the basis of our origins." While far-right politician Geert Wilders campaigns on an anti-immigrant, anti-Islam platform including calling some Moroccans here "scum", Klaver is sending a message of tolerance. Since taking over as party leader in May 2015, he has boosted his party's fortunes. Polls predict it may leap from six MPs in the outgoing parliament to possibly 18. Although unlikely, some even give the bright-eyed Klaver an outside shot at becoming the next Dutch prime minister depending on how coalition talks go.

'Immigrant country'

The country's youngest-ever party leader, Klaver was raised mainly by his grandparents in social housing, in a sprawling flatlands suburb of the southern city of Roosendaal. Unlike "what certain politicians will lead you to believe, The Netherlands is an immigrant country," Klaver told AFP in a recent interview. "I am a product of that immigration," added the curly-haired, olive-skinned Klaver.

His campaign mainly focuses on stopping what Klaver calls "the right-wing wind that's blowing through all of Europe". And the Dutch vote is being seen as a key litmus test of the rise of populist and far-right parties ahead of other national elections in Europe this year.

Klaver first rose to prominence in 2009 when at just 23 he was elected the youngest-ever member of the influential Social and Economic Council of The Netherlands, which advises government and parliament on key policy. Six years later, he was elected unopposed as the leader of GroenLinks, which had been hemorrhaging voters since a disastrous 2012 campaign. With Prime Minister Mark Rutte's Liberal VVD party only slightly ahead of Wilders's Freedom Party in the polls, the young Klaver could emerge in a "kingmaker" role. He has already called for closer cooperation between leftwing parties like Labour, the progressive D66 and the Socialist Party, seeking to form a powerful bloc against any potential government led by Rutte's Liberals, who will need a majority coalition to reign in the 150-seat house.

'JFK'

Often compared to Canada's liberal Prime Minister Justin Trudeau, to whom Klaver bears a striking resemblance, he calls John F. Kennedy his biggest inspiration. Even his full name, "Jesse Feras Klaver" echoes the initials of the famous US president, assassinated in Dallas in 1963. Kennedy "was a man who said you should stand by your norms and principles," said Klaver, who has several pictures of a youthful Kennedy on his office walls alongside those of his own wife and two young sons. But some of his critics are not impressed by his youthful assertiveness-Labour Party leader Lodewijk Asscher has called him a "touch arrogant".

Klaver subscribes to many of the ideas of celebrated French economist Thomas Piketty—the author of an unlikely bestseller on capitalism-including that globalization has created an unequal society and an unequal concentration of wealth. "We need to make Europe work for everybody, not just for a small group of rich people who have been lucky and are just getting richer," Klaver said. He is reminded every morning of his mission as he clasps his coffee mug, engraved with JFK's words: "One person can make a difference, and everyone should try." — AFP

GERMANY HOPEFUL RELATIONS WITH TURKEY CAN NORMALIZE ERDOGAN ACCUSED GERMANY OF 'NAZI PRACTICES'

BERLIN: Germany's foreign minister expressed cautious optimism yesterday that Berlin and Ankara may begin to slowly reel diplomatic relations back to normal, following an escalation of tensions that culminated with Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan accusing Germany of "Nazi practices." Foreign Minister Sigmar Gabriel said talks at a Berlin hotel over breakfast with Turkish Foreign Minister Mevlut Cavusoglu, the first face-to-face official meeting since the diplomatic crisis began last week, were "good, honest and friendly, but also hard and contentious."

Over the past week, German municipalities have canceled several events in which Turkish Cabinet ministers had planned to address rallies in Germany in support of a national referendum on constitutional reform that would give Erdogan more powers. Officials have cited issues of overcrowding and fire safety, among other things. Some rallies have gone ahead, most recently with Cavusoglu himself addressing a crowd in Hamburg late Tuesday night, though not at the venue initially planned.

This does not fit democracy

Germany's federal government has expressed increasing irritation over Turkish officials using Germany as a campaign platform, though it emphasized that it wasn't involved in blocking the rallies and couldn't intercede with the municipalities that did so. About 1.4 million people of Turkish descent living in Germany are eligible to vote in the referendum. Setting the stage for Wednesday's meeting, Cavusoglu repeated Erdogan's assertion late Tuesday, saying Germany's "practices are similar to those of the Nazi era."

"There are lines that should not be crossed, and one of those is the comparison with Nazi Germany," Gabriel said. Cavusoglu toned down his rhetoric after yesterday's meeting, saying only that it seemed Germany was allowing anti-Erdogan campaigners to express their opinions while preventing his supporters from doing so. "This does not fit democracy," he said at a Berlin trade fair. "Germany should not take sides." Cavusoglu told reporters that the meeting was fruitful and the two sides had agreed to meet again in Turkey at a later date.

"We shared our views in a very sincere atmosphere. We expect to continue this dialogue," he said. Adding to the tensions, Turkey arrested German newspaper reporter Deniz Yucel, whom



BERLIN: Turkish Foreign Minister Mevlut Cavusoglu (C) visits his country's hall at the Internationale Tourismus-Boerse (ITB) international travel trade show. — AFP

Erdogan has accused of being both a German spy and a "representative" of the outlawed Kurdish rebel group PKK - a claim Germany has dismissed as "absurd" - and has not yet allowed any German consular access to him.

Yucel, a reporter for Die Welt, was detained in Istanbul on Feb. 14 over his reports about a hacker attack on the email account of the country's energy minister. Gabriel said he pushed for access to Yucel, who has both Turkish and German citizenship, and lobbied for his release. Even before the current rift, relations already were strained between the two countries over Germany's criticism of Erdogan's crackdown following a failed coup as a flow of Turkish diplomats and soldiers sought asylum in Germany.

'Become a shelter'

Germany has suggested it may not extradite suspects wanted by Turkey in cases it considers politically motivated, which has prompted Erdogan to accuse Germany of having "become a shelter" for terrorists and having no regard for other countries' national security issues. The strife comes at a time when the European Union

is relying on a migrant deal with Turkey that has significantly cut down the number of migrants crossing into Europe. Erdogan has several times threatened to quit the deal when expressing anger at the actions of European countries. Germany also has reconnaissance aircraft deployed at a NATO base in Turkey as part of the alliance's fight against the Islamic State group.

Yesterday, a top German intelligence official said the domestic disputes in Turkey are affecting the security situation in Germany. Hans-Georg Maassen, the head of Germany's BfV domestic intelligence service, said the splits seen in Turkish society are being mirrored among Turks in Germany. "There is a danger that proxy conflicts between supporters of the PKK and nationalist/far-right Turks will escalate," he said, citing the "high threat potential on both sides." Following his meeting with Cavusoglu, Gabriel told reporters that "we agreed that neither side has an interest in permanently damaging the relationship." He noted that Germany and Turkey had longstanding ties, and said he hoped their initial meeting would help "bring us step by step back to a better relationship." — AFP

MACRON WINS MORE HIGH-PROFILE BACKING

PARIS: Centrist French presidential candidate Emmanuel Macron won the backing yesterday of Socialist former Paris mayor Bertrand Delanoë, in a boost to a campaign that is fast attracting support. The pledge adds to a growing list of backers from both the left and centre for the 39-year-old former economy minister who is trying to upend France's traditional politics. "The candidate who is closest to my convictions as a Socialist, a reformist, a European and a realist, is Emmanuel Macron," Delanoë told France Inter radio.

Delanoë, who oversaw the French capital from 2001 to 2014, said he had backed Macron because it was essential to "throw the most weight possible behind the candidate who can beat Madame (Marine) Le Pen in the first round". According to current polls, Macron would qualify for the May 7 run-off along with far-right leader Le Pen if the first round of the election was held now. Voting takes place on April 23.

The former investment banker who quit the Socialist government in August to prepare a bid for the presidency, has risen fast in opinion polls, but has never won elected office. An already unpredictable French election has become even harder to call given the legal woes afflicting the conservative challenger Francois Fillon, who is embroiled in a "fake jobs" scandal.

In another blow, the investigative paper Le Canard Enchaîné published new claims late Tuesday that the scandal-hit Fillon had failed to declare an interest-free loan of 50,000 euros (\$53,000) from a billionaire friend. Once the frontrunner in the race, Fillon has slipped down to third in the polls and the gap between him and Macron and Le Pen appears to be widening.

'Forgotten' middle classes

The high-flying Macron has already forged an alliance with Francois Bayrou, a 65-year-old centrist who finished third in the 2007 presidential election. Delanoë's support for the Macron campaign is a blow for the Socialist candidate for the presidency, Benoit Hamon, whose hard-left policies have led some commentators to dismiss him as unelectable. Macron still has his detractors



PARIS: French presidential election candidate for the "En Marche!" (On the Move) movement Emmanuel Macron gestures as he speaks during an Assembly of the French Departments (ADF). — AFP

though, with veteran conservative former prime minister Alain Juppe describing him this week as "politically naive".

Macron told AFP in an interview Tuesday that he will defend France's middle classes, which he says have been ignored by left and right. Macron claimed that both the outgoing Socialist government under President Francois Hollande—in which he served—and their rightwing opponents have let down the middle classes, assailed by job cuts and an increasing tax burden.

"The contract with the middle classes, which are both the political and economic bedrock of our democracy, has been broken," Macron said. "The right talks about the France that is succeeding, the left talks about the workers who are struggling the most," he said. "They have forgotten the middle classes which are working for France, the France that is fighting to succeed."

Macron claimed that snubbing middle earners had led to Britain's Brexit vote and Donald Trump's

victory in the United States. "Democracies that have succeeded economically by depending only on the classes that succeed... while forgetting the middle classes, are shattered by the rise of extremes," he said. "It's what happened with Brexit, it's what happened with Trump."

Macron suffered a blow to his campaign on Tuesday when he confirmed a report by Le Monde newspaper that a member of his team had quit over an apparent conflict of interest. Jean-Jacques Mourad, a cardiologist, is said to have made nearly 60 business visits and appearances at conferences between 2013 and June 2016, paid for by the Servier pharmaceutical company, during which he ran up tens of thousands of euros of expenses. Mourad was a member of a working group on health issues in the Macron campaign. Macron also said he had asked his party's ethics committee to ask all contributors to working groups to flag up any possible conflicts of interest. — AFP

UN RIGHTS CHIEF CLAIMS US NEEDS BETTER LEADERSHIP

GENEVA: The UN human rights chief took aim at President Donald Trump yesterday, saying the United States needed better leadership to meet challenges like surging xenophobia and religious discrimination. In a keynote speech to the United Nations rights council's main annual session, Zeid Ra'ad Al Hussein said he was "concerned by the new administration's handling" of key issues.

"Greater and more consistent leadership is needed to address the recent surge in discrimination, anti-Semitism, and violence against ethnic and religious minorities," Zeid added. Zeid warned that Washington's "vilification of entire groups such as Mexicans and Muslims" as well as "false claims" about higher crime rates among migrants "fuel xenophobic abuses." And, taking direct aim at Trump personally, Zeid said he was "dismayed at attempts by the president to intimidate or undermine journalists and judges."

Major media organizations as well as press freedom groups have accused Trump of demonizing journalists in an unprecedented manner for a president, including by describing the media as "the enemy of the people." The United States holds a seat on the 47-member rights council and had been an active member through much of Barack Obama's eight-year term. But, representing the Trump administration last week, assistant secretary of state Erin Barakat told the council its work was often at odds with core American values, notably over its criticism of Israel.

Zeid had been the first top UN figure to

speak out against Trump's initial travel ban and on Wednesday blasted a revised executive order that bars entry of people from six mainly Muslim countries. The rights chief said the measure raised the risk of potentially illegal deportations. "Expedited deportations could amount to collective expulsions... in breach of international law," Zeid said, stressing his concern about its impact on children and "families torn apart."

In a broader condemnation of attitudes toward migrants, Zeid accused European politicians of spreading fearful messages that portray vulnerable foreigners as "criminal invading hordes." "Many ordinary people in Europe have welcomed and supported migrants, but political leaders increasingly demonstrate a chilling indifference to their fate," Zeid told the council, specifically noting migrants who have reached Europe via the Mediterranean.

The UN leader then singled out Hungary, where parliament on Tuesday approved the systematic detention of all asylum-seekers in container camps, a move urged by Prime Minister Viktor Orban. Referencing Orban's claim last month that "ethnic homogeneity" was vital for the Hungary's economic success, Zeid said: "No society is homogenous, least of all in Central Europe." "These toxic notions of so-called ethnic purity hark back to an era in which many people suffered atrociously," he added. Separately, Zeid called for the UN's highest level probe-known as a Commission of Inquiry-into abuses against civilians in the Democratic Republic of Congo. — AFP

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INDIAN POLICE SHOOT DEAD MAN WITH ALLEGED IS LINK

LUCKNOW: Indian police yesterday shot dead a suspected Islamic State sympathizer who they said was involved in a train explosion that injured 10 people. Police said they ended a nearly 12-hour stand-off in the early hours by storming the house where the suspect, identified as Saifullah, was holed up in northern Uttar Pradesh state.

"We had received information that an ISIS-related group was being formed here and a suspect linked to it could be hiding here," Aseem Arun of India's anti-terror squad told reporters,

referring to the Islamic State group. "When we entered the room, he fired upon us and we also retaliated. About four to five bullets hit him and then Saifullah died," he said.

Six other suspects have been arrested over the explosion on a train on Tuesday in which at least 10 people were injured. Closed-circuit television footage from near the train explosion site in neighboring Madhya Pradesh state helped police identify the suspects. Police reportedly recovered eight pistols and more than 650 rounds of ammunition, explosives, gold and passports from the house, on the outskirts of state capital Lucknow. Television footage showed police carrying a body wrapped in a white sheet from the house.

Rahul Srivastava, spokesman for the director general of police in Uttar Pradesh, said they were investigating Saifullah's links to IS. "The level of his involvement with ISIS or the extent to which he was radicalized, is a matter of investigation," he said. "Given his involvement in the train blast incident in MP (Madhya Pradesh), the

material, including weapons and ammunition, recovered from him, being part of a bigger group, and based on other inputs, he doesn't seem to be merely inspired by ISIS." India's leaders say the IS group does not have influence in the country of over 1.2 billion people, which has a large but traditionally moderate Muslim population. There have been some reports of Indians going to fight for the group in Iraq and Syria, but the numbers are low relative to the size of the population. — AFP



KABUL: Afghan policemen leap from a vehicle as they arrive at the site of an explosion. — AFP

GUNMEN DRESSED AS DOCTORS ATTACK KABUL ARMY HOSPITAL

IS MAKES INROADS INTO WAR-BATTERED COUNTRY

KABUL: Gunmen dressed as doctors stormed Afghanistan's largest military hospital yesterday, officials said, in a six-hour attack claimed by the Islamic State group as it makes inroads into the war-battered country. The assault on the Sardar Daud Khan hospital left at least three people dead and 66 others wounded, health officials reported, with explosions and gunfire rattling Kabul's diplomatic district as dense clouds of smoke rose in the sky.

Medical staff hunkered down in the hospital wards posted desperate messages for help on social media, with local television footage showing some of them trapped on the ledge of a top floor window. "Attackers are inside the hospital. Pray for us," a hospital staff member wrote on Facebook. Hospital administrators told AFP three gunmen wearing white laboratory coats began spraying bullets after a suicide bomber on foot blew himself up at the backdoor entrance, sparking chaos inside the 400-bed facility.

"I saw one of the attackers, armed with an AK-47 and dressed as doctor, shooting at patients and guards on the third floor," hospital nurse Abdul Qadeer told AFP. "They shot my friend but I managed to flee... I had to jump over the barbed wire to escape." At least two other loud explosions-including what the

defense ministry called a car bomb in the hospital's parking lot-were heard as Afghan Special Forces launched a clearance operation that lasted around six hours. The assailants were gunned down after Afghan Special Forces landed on the roof of the hospital in a military helicopter. "The attackers have been killed. We are still assessing the damage," interior ministry spokesman Sediq Sediqqi told AFP in a brief statement.

'Criminal act'

Afghanistan's warring parties, including government forces, have repeatedly targeted medical facilities, decimating the country's fragile health system and preventing conflict-displaced civilians from accessing life saving care. "This is a criminal act. Nothing can justify an attack on hospitals," Afghan Chief Executive Abdullah Abdullah said of the latest attack. "We will never forgive these criminals. Unfortunately, this attack has resulted in some casualties."

Islamic State jihadists claimed the attack via a verified Telegram account. The more powerful Taliban said they were not behind the attack. The militant group, Afghanistan's largest, is known to distance itself from attacks on medical facilities or those that result in high civilian casualties. The assault comes just a

week after 16 people were killed in simultaneous Taliban suicide assaults on two security compounds in Kabul.

Dozens of others were wounded as a suicide car bomber struck an Afghan police precinct in western Kabul and a five-hour gun battle ensued after another attacker snuck in. In the second attack, a suicide bomber blew himself up at the gates of an Afghan intelligence agency branch in eastern Kabul. The carnage underscores rising insecurity in Afghanistan. The country is bracing for an intense fighting season in the spring as the government's repeated bids to launch peace negotiations with the Taliban have failed.

Afghan forces, already beset by record casualties, desertions and non-existent "ghost soldiers" on the payrolls, have been struggling to beat back insurgents since US-led NATO troops ended their combat mission in December 2014. Kabul last month endorsed US general John Nicholson's call for thousands of additional coalition troops in Afghanistan to fend off the militants before the spring offensive. Extra troops were needed to end the stalemate in the war, Nicholson, the top US commander in Afghanistan, told the US Congress in what could be President Donald Trump's first major test of military strategy. — AFP

PM NAJIB SOFTENS LINE IN BID TO GET MALAYSIANS OUT OF N KOREA

KUALA LUMPUR: Malaysian Prime Minister Najib Razak struck a softer tone with North Korea yesterday, a day after accusing it of treating Malaysians as "hostages" amid a diplomatic meltdown over the murder of the estranged half-brother of the North's leader.

Malaysian police have identified eight North Koreans wanted for questioning in connection with the killing of Kim Jong Nam who was killed at Kuala Lumpur International Airport on Feb. 13 by assassins who Malaysian police say used a super-toxic nerve agent that killed him within 20 minutes. Police say three of them are hiding at the North Korean embassy. In a bid to "ensure the safety" of its diplomats and citizens in Malaysia, North Korea retaliated on Tuesday by banning Malaysians from leaving the country until the case was "properly solved."

Najib initially denounced that move as an "abhorrent act" while ordering a reciprocal ban. In Malaysia's Borneo state of Sarawak, 37 North Koreans were detained on Tuesday at a construction site for overstaying their visas, a state government source said. They were among 176 North Koreans working in Sarawak. Those who overstayed, would be given 30-day extensions, however, an immigration source said. But faced with the priority of securing the release of the 11 Malaysians stuck in North Korea, Najib sounded more conciliatory in parliament on Wednesday, saying there were no plans to cut diplomatic ties.

No threat to safety

"We are a country that's friendly to them," Najib said, after reassuring MPs that there was no threat to the safety of the three embassy staff, six family members, and two other Malaysians in North Korea. "We didn't pick a quarrel with them but when a crime has been committed, especially when chemical weapons have been used in Malaysia, we are duty bound to protect the interest of Malaysians."

Najib declined to elaborate on what action he would take to bring back his citizens: "If there's any negotiations, we can't do it through the media." North Korea is in danger of losing one of the few friends it has outside of China. On Monday, Malaysia expelled North Korea's ambassador for questioning the impartiality of the murder investigation and ended visa free travel for North Koreans.

Last week, Malaysia said it would investigate North Korea front companies after a Reuters report showed that Pyongyang's spy agency was running an arms network in the country. The UN has called for calm and urged the two countries to settle their differences through "established diplomatic practice".

Video purportedly of son

North Korea says the dead man is not Kim Jong Nam, and has suggested the victim died from a heart attack. Najib said his identity is yet to be verified: "It's been hard for us to do the DNA verification as no one has come forward. Maybe they're scared to come forward." Malaysia has said it would only release Kim's body to the next of kin, refusing demands from North Korea to hand over the body without an autopsy.

A man claiming to be Kim Jong Nam's son said he was lying low with his mother and sister in a video posted online by a group that said it helped rescue them following the murder a month ago. The governments of Netherlands, China, the United States, and a fourth unnamed country provided emergency humanitarian assistance to protect the family, the group, called Cheollima Civil Defense, said in a statement released yesterday along with the video.

An official at South Korea's National Intelligence Service said the man in the video is Kim Han Sol, Kim's 21-year-old son. "I'm currently with my mother and my sister..." the man says during the 40-second video, without disclosing his location. "We hope this gets better soon." Reuters could not independently verify the video. Kim Han Sol is the son of Kim Jong Nam's second wife, who had been living in the Chinese territory of Macau with Kim under Beijing's protection after the family went into exile several years ago.

'Extraction and protection'

South Korean intelligence officers say North Korean leader Kim Jong Un had issued standing orders for the elimination of his elder half-brother. The statement released on the website of Cheollima Civil Defense said the organization responded last month to an emergency request by Kim Jong Nam's family members for "extraction and protection".

US officials and South Korean intelligence suspect North Korean agents were behind the assassination of Kim Jong Nam, who had been living in Macau under China's protection. He had spoken out publicly against his family's dynastic rule of North Korea. The only people charged for the murder so far are a Vietnamese woman and an Indonesian woman, accused of smearing the victim's face with VX.

The police are pressing to question up to three men believed to be hiding in the North Korean embassy, but said they would not raid the building. Police have said that four other North Koreans fled Malaysia hours after the airport murder. The only one to have been detained was released and deported on Friday due to insufficient evidence. — Reuters

MISSILE TESTS PUT N KOREA ON TRUMP'S FRONT BURNER

WASHINGTON: President Donald Trump is facing his biggest foreign policy challenge yet after North Korea fired a ballistic missile salvo in a supposed training run for an attack on US bases in Japan. Pyongyang blasted at least four missiles across the ocean toward its eastern neighbor on Monday, and three of the rockets splashed down into waters within Japan's Exclusive Economic Zone.

The latest tests mark the end of what had been a quiet spell in North Korean weapons testing-with little activity since Trump's election in November-and propels the long-simmering issue to the White House front burner. Trump in January had tweeted that North Korea's stated goal of building a long-range nuclear missile to hit the US mainland "won't happen"-but he never provided details.

After North Korea said the missile launches were training for a strike on US bases in Japan, where about 50,000 American troops are sta-

tioned, Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe and Trump spoke by phone and warned the threat from North Korea had "entered a new stage." Trump must now define what exactly that means, and what America's response will be.

"We are in a very tenuous situation with not a lot of leverage, not a lot of initiative in terms of negotiations," a senior defense official told reporters recently. "So as you might imagine we are preparing for contingency operations to the degree we need to," the official said. Secretary of State Rex Tillerson is traveling to South Korea, Japan and China next week, his first visit to the region. He will discuss "strategic coordination to address the advancing nuclear and missile threat from North Korea," State Department acting spokesman Mark Toner said. "Given North Korea's continuing provocative behavior and actions, the US is actively engaged with its partners and allies in the region to address the threat posed," he added.

Anti-missile technologies

Further ramping up regional tensions is the deployment of an American anti-ballistic missile battery called THAAD, a successor to the Patriot system. China is furious about the move, even though the interceptors can only be used for defense and cannot directly engage Chinese missiles. Beijing worries THAAD's radar system will give the United States precision tracking capabilities of China's own missiles, and weaken its deterrence against America.

"This is somewhat exaggerated as a threat but the full capabilities of the THAAD system are classified so it can't be entirely discounted," said John Schilling, an aerospace expert and consultant at the 38 North program of the US-Korea Institute at Johns Hopkins University. Experts say Pyongyang's simultaneous firing of at least four missiles is possibly an attempt to overcome anti-missile systems by overwhelming them.

The Patriot system could supposedly stop up to 16 missiles at a time, and THAAD is thought to only build on that number. But trying to stop a missile with another missile is far from infallible. North Korea analyst Joseph Bermudez said Pyongyang potentially has enough mobile launchers to fire at least 36 ballistic missiles of various types at the same time. Monday's missiles were either enhanced extended-range Scuds or medium-range No Dong ballistic missiles that date back to the 1990s and can't reach mainland America.

Fresh start

Privately, the North Koreans had been sending signals they wanted a fresh start with the Trump administration, said Joel Wit, a co-founder of the 38 North program. But the start of US military drills with Seoul this week ended that chapter. "That posture wouldn't last forever and the US-(South Korea) joint exercises that are taking place now were signaled as possibly ending that quiet period," Wit said. — AFP



KUALA LUMPUR: Malaysian Prime Minister Najib Razak, center, prays during the launching of east coast railway trains event. — AP

PHILIPPINE FOREIGN SECRETARY DUMPED OVER US CITIZENSHIP

MANILA: Philippine Foreign Secretary Perfecto Yasay was sacked yesterday after lawmakers ruled he lied to them over his American citizenship, ending an eight-month stint that ironically featured outbursts against the United States. In an extremely rare move, members of a congressional body unanimously voted to reject Yasay's nomination as foreign secretary following tense confirmation hearings in which he admitted to misleading the lawmakers.

"He was not telling the truth. He was not being forthright in the question and answer portion of the (confirmation) hearings," Senator Panfilo Lacson told reporters after announcing the decision. President Rodrigo Duterte appointed Yasay, a former roommate at university decades ago, at the start of his administration on June 30 last year.

Following the Commission on Appointments' ruling, Duterte's spokesman released a statement confirming Yasay would step down, saying the president would announce an acting

foreign secretary. Yasay told an initial confirmation hearing last month that he had never been an American citizen. But on Wednesday Yasay faced the commission again and was grilled over documents that showed he obtained US citizenship in 1986.

'America has failed us'

The documents also showed Yasay renounced the American citizenship at the US embassy in Manila days before his appointment as foreign secretary. Yasay, who worked as an immigration lawyer while living in the United States, insisted he never lied about his citizenship but apologized for "inadvertently misleading" the commission.

"I may not have fully disclosed what was required in my answering this question but this is really normal in a process like this," Yasay said. "You get nervous, you somehow come up with answers that you do not intend." Lacson said Yasay could not be reappointed and warned he may face perjury charges. — AFP



SEHNYANG: This photo taken on March 6, 2017 shows a Chinese visitor posing for photos next to a wax figure of North Korean leader Kim Jong-Un. — AFP

TECH SECTOR SCRAMBLES AFTER CIA HACKING

FRANKFURT: Tech companies must rapidly step up information-sharing to protect users from prying eyes, a security software executive said yesterday after WikiLeaks released a trove of data purporting to show that the CIA can hack all manner of devices. Dozens of firms rushed to contain the damage from possible security weak points following the anti-secrecy organization's revelations, although some said they needed far more information on what the US intelligence agency was up to before they could thwart suspected but previously hidden attacks.

Sinan Eren, vice president of Czech anti-virus software maker Avast, called on mobile software makers Apple and Google to supply security firms with privileged access to their devices to offer immediate fixes to known bugs. "We can prevent attacks in real time if we are given the hooks into the mobile operating system," Eren said in a phone interview from Silicon Valley, where he is located. "If we can drive a paradigm shift where mobile platforms don't shut off access, we'll be better able to detect when hackers are hiding in a mobile (phone)," he said.

Avast, which counts more than 400 million users of its anti-virus software worldwide, was named in the WikiLeaks documents as one of the security vendors targeted by the CIA in a leaked page labelled "secret" but lacking further details. The leaks - which WikiLeaks described as the biggest in the Central Intelligence Agency's history - had enough technical details for security experts and product vendors to recognize that widespread compromises exist. However, they provided few specifics needed to offer quick fixes.

Reuters could not immediately verify the validity of the published documents, but several contractors and private cyber security experts said the materials appeared to be legitimate. The 8,761 leaked documents list a wealth of security attacks on Apple and Google Android smartphones carried by billions of

consumers, as well as top computer operating systems - Windows, Linux and Apple Mac - and six of the world's main web browsers.

Apple said in a statement that nearly 80 percent of iPhone users run its current iOS software with the latest security patches. "Many of the issues leaked today were already patched in the latest iOS; we will continue work to rapidly address any identified vulnerabilities," Apple said on Tuesday. The statement made no reference to attacks on its computer software. Google declined to comment, while a Microsoft spokeswoman said: "We're aware of the report and are looking into it."

Widely-used routers from Silicon Valley-based Cisco were listed as targets, as were those supplied by Chinese vendors Huawei and ZTE and Taiwanese supplier Zyxel for their devices used in China and Pakistan. Cisco security team members said in a blog post that because WikiLeaks has not released any of the actual hacking exploits, "the scope of action that can be taken by Cisco is limited".

Omar Santos, a principal engineer in Cisco's security response unit, said malware appears to be targeting whole families of Cisco devices but is designed to remain hidden so as to steal data unnoticed. He said Cisco assumes WikiLeaks will eventually disclose the hacks, allowing it to fix them. Huawei declined to comment. ZTE and Zyxel were not immediately available to respond.

Stay of Execution

Messaging apps protected by full software encryption also appear to be vulnerable to hacking of the smartphones themselves, communications app provider Telegram said in a blog post. But one positive outcome may be that device and software makers will be able to close up these holes, it said. "This is not an app issue. It is relevant on the level of devices and

operating systems like iOS and Android," Telegram stated, adding: "The good news is that for the moment all of this is irrelevant for the majority of Telegram users. If the CIA is not on your back, you shouldn't start worrying just yet."

The WikiLeaks collection contains a mix of copious data and empty files marked "secret" that promised more details to come on attacks against more than 15 security software firms. U.S. cyber security expert Robert Graham said WikiLeaks provided enough detail to recognize some known vulnerabilities. "One anti-virus researcher has told me that a virus they once suspected came from the Russians or Chinese can now be attributed to the CIA, as it matches the description perfectly to something in the leak," Graham said in a blog post.

Some security experts said the CIA's possible use of tools from other spy agencies raised the risk of false attribution for targeted cyber attacks by the US intelligence agency. He said CIA cyber spying efforts could

be set back years. The CIA and White House declined comment. "We do not comment on the authenticity or content of purported intelligence documents," CIA spokesman Jonathan Liu said in a statement.

WikiLeaks said it aims to provoke a political and legal debate about the CIA's cyber arsenal. However, it was holding back, for now, much of the technical documentation that would allow other hackers and cyber criminals to exploit the hacks - while putting vendors on notice to expect further revelations. The organization said in a statement it is "avoiding the distribution of 'armed' cyber weapons until a consensus emerges on the technical and political nature of the CIA's program and how such 'weapons' should be analyzed, disarmed and published". It described sophisticated tools for targeting the devices of individual users, in contrast to the revelations by former National Security Agency contractor Edward Snowden of mass data collection on millions of web and phone users worldwide. — Reuters

MPS SLAM GOVT, RAISE JUVENILE AGE

Continued from Page 1

He said amending legislation like the nationality law, barring convicts from running for public office and amending the voting system all will impact the political setup. Harbath warned that if the interior minister does not end the so-called security checkups on young people seeking jobs, he will be questioned.

During the debate, MPs Khalil Abul and Tabtabaei

clashed over criticizing the previous Assembly and Deputy Speaker Essa Al-Kandari adjourned the session after he could not establish law and order in the Assembly chamber. The lawmakers also clashed with Justice Minister Faleh Al-Azab over the Anti-Corruption Authority, with MP Riyadh Al-Adasani saying he will propose that the authority come under the National Assembly instead of being under the government. The next session will be held next week.

ISRAEL MPS APPROVE BILL QUIETING AZAN

Continued from Page 1

That version would apply to mosques in annexed east Jerusalem as well as Israel, but not to the highly sensitive Al-Aqsa mosque compound, Islam's third holiest site, according to an Israeli official.

An earlier draft limiting volumes throughout the day had been rejected because it might have silenced the siren sounded in Jewish areas at sunset on Friday to mark the start of the Sabbath. However, the stricter measure was revived by members of the hardline Yisrael Beitenu party, part of Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's coalition, leading to Wednesday's two votes. It was not immediately clear if that version would apply to Al-Aqsa, located in mainly Palestinian east Jerusalem.

One of the sponsors of the less rigid bill, Motti Yogev of the far-right Jewish Home, said the proposal was "a social law that aims to enable people to sleep".

"Loudspeakers have not been here forever, and in recent decades there are alarm clocks for whoever wants to wake up for the mosque," he said. Ahmad Tibi of the predominantly Arab Joint List alliance of lawmakers called the measure "a racist act". "This is an important Muslim religious ceremony, and (the Knesset) has never intervened in a Jewish religious event," he said.

Opposition has not only come from Arabs and Muslims. Israeli President Reuven Rivlin has spoken out against the move, saying existing noise pollution regulations provide a solution. Government watchdog groups have called the measure an unnecessary provocation that threatens freedom of religion. At yesterday's debate, Environmental Protection Minister Zeev Elkin said the new law was necessary since the existing rules set a low fine that causes police to disregard noise violations. The new proposed law sets a fine of 10,000 shekels (\$2,714) on transgressors. — AFP

SAUDI WOMEN JOIN FORCES TO CHAMPION ROLE...

Continued from Page 1

the driving ban as an economic necessity so women can get to work as many cannot afford to pay drivers. "Things are changing so fast, little things here and there ... but there is still a lot of work to do on cultural attitudes and at the policy level," said Rashid. "If women are just at home it's a cost to the family and to the country so a big part of this is an economic drive but it is also down to globalization (via both travel and social media)."

While the changes are welcomed by many, experts cautioned that optimism should be tempered. Peter Salisbury,

senior research fellow in the Middle East and North Africa program at think-tank Chatham House, said the changes and more open discussions were mainly benefiting one group, the educated elite, many of whom spent time abroad. But he said the moderately educated, lower middle class families were the ones feeling the pinch of women not working. The biggest threat to women's progress? Men, he said. "You could get to a situation where you get a backlash from less well educated, less able men, who feel entitled to a job and who resort to a claim on societal tradition and join with the religious establishment to block women's progress," he said. — Reuters

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Focus

TURKEY USES ROW TO
STIR UP NATIONALISM

Turkish politicians are using a spate of cancelled rallies in Germany to stir up nationalist feeling ahead of next month's referendum on boosting President Recep Tayyip Erdogan's powers, analysts say. Since last week, German and Turkish politicians have traded barbs over the banning of events by Turkish officials visiting Germany in a bid to boost support ahead of the April 16 vote on whether to create an executive presidency in Turkey.

Although Berlin has insisted the rallies were cancelled by local authorities for logistical reasons, Turkish officials have hit back repeatedly, with Erdogan even comparing such actions to "Nazi practices". In an attempt to maintain its relations with Ankara - a crucial partner to halt the influx of refugees and migrants into Europe - Germany has refrained from further exacerbating the tensions, urging Turkey to "keep a cool head".

But the spat has provided fodder for those working for a 'Yes' vote in the April referendum. "This tension serves Erdogan's referendum campaign," said Ahmet Insel, a political scientist and academic. "They have difficulty finding themes to fill their campaign and have difficulty mobilising the 'Yes' camp," he said. According to Insel, the move to prevent such rallies in Germany and elsewhere in Europe has allowed Erdogan to resort to "the discourse of victims and (to) fuel anti-European resentment".

The academic said that 300,000 to 400,000 'Yes' votes from Turks abroad could represent a difference of one percentage point in the referendum, "especially if participation was lower in Turkey". In the 2015 elections, the ruling Justice and Development Party (AKP) which Erdogan co-founded, won the backing of 60 percent of Turks living in Germany. Back home, it secured just under 50 percent of the vote.

A valuable target

Erdogan's AKP is running the 'Yes' campaign, saying the changes would bring political stability and avoid the potential confusion from a two-headed system with both a president and prime minister. While the outcome of the referendum seems uncertain, the government is trying to "seize every opportunity to gain a political advantage," said Sinan Ulgen, head of the Istanbul-based Centre for Economics and Foreign Policy (EDAM). Turkish leaders attach an importance to these rallies, Ulgen said, not only because of the influence on Turkish voters in Germany but also because, through the media coverage, they "can possibly influence the nationalist vote in Turkey".

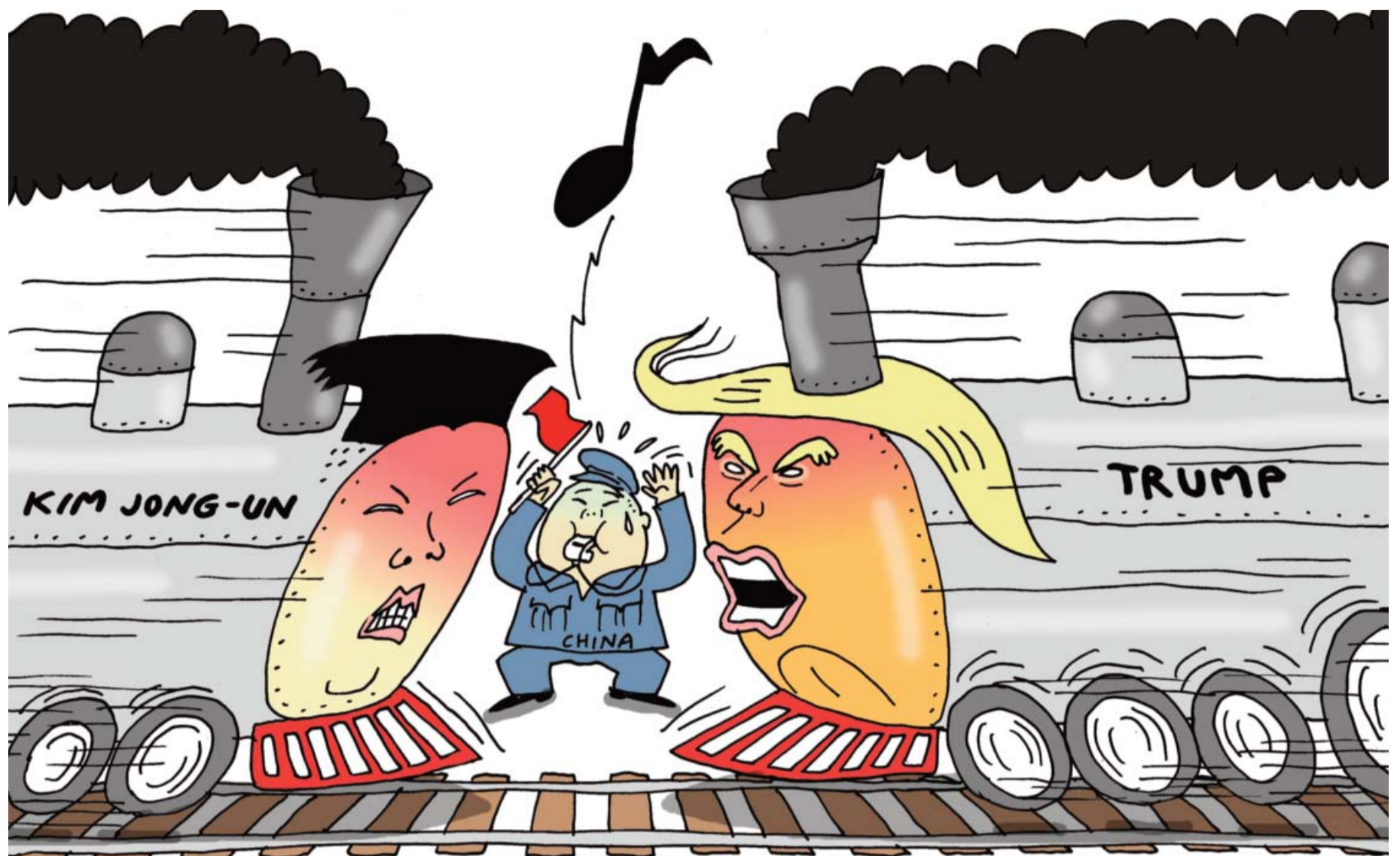
Germany is home to the largest Turkish diaspora outside of Turkey with 1.4 million people who are eligible to vote in the referendum. Although the community only represents about 2.6 percent of Turkey's 54 million eligible voters, it represents an attractive target for campaigners. But Erdogan's latest diatribes recalling Germany's Nazi past may have been a broadside too far, Ulgen said. "It is not certain that the (Turkish) population, and especially the economic circles - since Germany is a major trading partner for Turkey - is inclined to support rhetoric as fierce as the comparison with the Nazi regime."

'Isolating itself... again'

Jean Marcou, a Turkey expert at Sciences Po in the French city of Grenoble, said the referendum's outcome could be tighter than expected. He said Erdogan's strategy of "defiance" could cause concern among some parts of the electorate "because Turkey is, again, isolating itself completely". "Erdogan enjoys the dispute with Germany. He seeks external enemies useful in domestic politics to win his referendum," Omid Nouripour, an MP and foreign policy spokesman for the German Green party, told Germany's Bild daily.

Turkey has also been sharply criticized by other European countries including Austria and the Netherlands for seeking to campaign abroad. Despite the furore, two Turkish ministers have visited Germany in recent days in defiance of European opposition and the prevention of meetings in which they were to have taken part. "The government could ban the arrival of Turkish politicians, but would that be smart to give Turkey the role of martyr and to give Erdogan the voices missing for this referendum?" asked Julia Kloekner, vice president of the Christian Democrats (CDU), Chancellor Angela Merkel's party. "I doubt it," she said. — AFP

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N KOREA GOES 'MY WAY' WITH TWIN ROWS

Dealing with a notorious murder by detonating a huge diplomatic row, and firing missiles as a practice assault on US bases in Japan - North Korea's recent actions demonstrate its willingness to escalate tensions whatever the consequences, say analysts. Pyongyang on Tuesday banned all Malaysian citizens from leaving North Korea, its latest move in an increasingly heated feud over the assassination of leader Kim Jong-un's half-brother in Kuala Lumpur.

Malaysian police are investigating the death of Kim Jong-Nam, who was killed last month by two women using VX nerve agent, but all fingers have pointed to Pyongyang as the culprit behind the murder. The North has denied any involvement, denouncing the Malaysian probe as a "smear campaign" to tarnish the country, before the two engaged in tit-for-tat expulsions of their ambassadors. Daniel Pinkston, an analyst at Troy University in Seoul, said the North's belligerent response followed its textbook method of using force to handle political disputes. "There is a famous quote in their literature: if someone brings a pistol, bring a cannon. That's how they operate," he said.

The travel ban on Malaysians came on the same day that Pyongyang described the launch of four missiles - three of which came down in waters that are part of Japan's exclusive economic zone - as a practice drill for a strike on US military bases in the country. The direct challenge to Washington comes with a new, famously unpredictable president in the White House who is still formulating his approach to North Korea.

On the campaign trail, Donald Trump at times implied that negotiations could be an option, but in phone calls Tuesday reaffirmed Washington's "ironclad commitment" to allies Japan and South Korea and warned of "very dire consequences" for Pyongyang. "It would seem common sense to behave well before Trump sets his policy, but North Korea is just going its own way regardless of the consequences," said Koh Yu-Hwan, a professor of North Korea studies at Dongguk University. "Trump talks of achieving peace through strength and the North seems to be applying the same logic, although it can't compete in terms of strength," Koh added.

'Dire consequences'

Being blamed for Kim's killing - Malaysian authorities are still seeking to question seven North Koreans over it - could mean tougher international sanctions, including being put back on Washington's list of state sponsors of terrorism. Analysts say the feud with Kuala Lumpur is a calculated move before Malaysia announces the final results of its probe. "This is obviously destroying bilateral relations with Malaysia but I think at the end of the day, that falls fairly low on North Korea's list of priorities," said John Delury, a professor of international relations at Yonsei University.

In any case, he added: "Once Malaysia comes to a conclusion and they deny it, they are at loggerheads and having a public fight about it." The quadruple missile launch came shortly after South Korea and the US started annual joint exercises that always infuriate Pyongyang, which sees them

as practice for invasion and regularly mounts protest actions - with seven missile launches last year.

But the explicit targeting of Japan - only the second time a North Korean missile has landed in its EEZ - represented an escalation. It drew strong global condemnation with the UN Security Council scrambling to discuss additional measures against the North. Kim Kwang-Jin, a researcher at the Institute for National Security Strategy, said: "It's probably all based on a calculation that they can't hope for any concession or change from the Trump administration. Compared to his father Kim Jong-il, Kim Jong-un is much more aggressive

in dealing with a new US administration. It's under tougher sanctions but ignoring all of them."

But some analysts warn the North's strategy could go horribly wrong. Trump could take a much more "hardline" stance than the Obama administration, potentially reintroducing nuclear weapons to the South, said Choi Kang, an analyst at the Seoul-based Asan Institute for Policy Studies. "Obama couldn't openly talk about bringing in tactical nuclear weapons because of his pledge for a nuclear-free world but Trump will be uncompromising," he told AFP. "After all, he called Obama's 'strategic patience' a failed policy." — AFP

TRUMP PUSHES AHEAD
WITH N KOREA REVIEW

Faced with a growing test of resolve for a new US president who vowed while campaigning to get tough on North Korea, Donald Trump's aides are pressing to complete a strategy review on how to counter Pyongyang's missile and nuclear threats. Pyongyang's latest missile launches and the assassination in Malaysia of North Korean leader Kim Jong-un's estranged half-brother have added urgency, driving home the need for Washington to confront the security challenge.

All options are on the table, ranging from tighter sanctions aimed at pushing North Korea back into disarmament talks, to a return of US nuclear weapons to South Korea, and even pre-emptive air strikes on North Korean missile installations, senior US administration officials said. They added a consensus was forming around relying for now on increased economic and diplomatic pressure - especially by pressing China to do more to rein in North Korea - while deploying advanced anti-missile defenses in South Korea and possibly in Japan, as well.

Among the other possibilities, one US official said, was returning North Korea to the US list of countries that support terrorism. That would be a response to the suspected use of nerve gas to kill Kim's brother at a Malaysian airport last month. It would subject Pyongyang - already heavily sanctioned by the United Nations and individual states, so far to little effect - to additional financial sanctions that were removed when it was taken off the list in 2008.

For now, US officials consider pre-emptive military action far too risky, given the danger of igniting a regional war and causing massive casualties in Japan and South Korea and among tens of thousands of US troops based in both allied countries. Such ideas could gain traction, however, if North Korea proceeds with a threat-

ened test of an intercontinental ballistic missile capable of hitting the United States. Just before he took office in January, Trump tweeted: "It won't happen!" when Kim said North Korea was close to testing an ICBM. Trump also could opt for escalating cyber attacks and other covert actions aimed at undermining the North Korean leadership, a US government source said.

Review Could be Completed this Month

The review is expected to be completed by the end of the month, officials said. Decisions could be held up, however, by the slow pace at which Trump has been filling national security jobs. Trump is known to have little patience for detailed foreign policy discussions, but officials said he seemed to have heeded a warning from his White House predecessor, Barack Obama, that North Korea would be the most urgent international issue he would face - so much so that he requested intelligence briefings on the issue.

While officials have stressed the need to persuade China to do more to pressure North Korea, Trump's first concrete response to North Korea's missile tests has been to start installing an advanced anti-missile defense system in South Korea, which has incensed Beijing. Diplomats said the move might reassure US allies but could backfire by antagonizing China, which regards the system as a threat, and make it less willing to step up sanctions on its neighbor.

"You have to adjust and calibrate all the options based on the facts on the ground," said an administration official, who added that media reports highlighting military options were overblown. "The ability to have sanctions that pack some punch and are more dynamic than we have had in the past is going to be dependent to some extent on Chinese cooperation," he said. — Reuters

EU TRIES TO CONTAIN SCHISM AS BREXIT BITES

As Britain hands the European Union its formal notice to quit this month, Brussels is resigned to losing part of the EU's western flank but is increasingly stressed that upset in the east is pulling the survivors further apart. Poland, the biggest of the ex-communist eastern states to join after the Cold War, has picked a fight over the fairly minor matter of who chairs EU summits. Symptomatic of a mounting east-west friction, the spat will overshadow a meeting this week that was meant to forge post-Brexit unity.

Brexit has not created that friction but made it worse, as leaders struggle to quell popular disaffection with the EU that is by no means confined to Britain. Westerners are talking up faster integration, even if that means leaving nationalistic easterners behind in a "multispeed Europe". When Chancellor Angela Merkel, raised in East Germany and a key defender of eastern allies, joined her French, Italian and Spanish peers at Versailles on Monday to ram home a message that unless some states press ahead the EU will stall and break, Polish ruling party leader Jaroslaw Kaczynski hit right back.

"The decisions made in ... Versailles ... aim to reinforce the process of European union disintegration which has started with Brexit," he said on Tuesday. Kaczynski will not be in Brussels for Thursday's summit but his prime minister, Beata Szydlo, will give voice to his refusal to endorse the reappointment of her centrist predecessor Donald Tusk as European Council president. Tusk and the right-wing Kaczynski are old and bitter rivals in Polish politics.

Brexit Hole

Brexit deprives the easterners, unwilling to see diktat

from Brussels or Berlin replace rule from Moscow, of their strongest ally against EU centralization and euro zone domination. It also leaves a big hole in the EU budget for paying the subsidies that fund a large slice of public spending in the east - cash that has kept voters there sold on EU membership and which Brussels fears London may now use to court eastern favor and divide the EU to extract better Brexit terms.

On Friday, leaders will work on plans for a March 25 summit in Rome where they hope to use 60th anniversary celebrations of the bloc's founding treaty to pledge a new unity after Brexit. Yet the road to Rome has been marked with division over the push by founding powers and the EU executive led by Jean-Claude Juncker for more differentiated EU integration. "The key message of Rome must be the unity of the 27," said a senior EU official involved in looking for compromises to ease the friction. "The political context of Brexit should not be a multispeed Europe. That would be completely out of tune."

Neither side is pushing for a split and all insist they must pull together against challenges from Russia and uncertainty about US support under President Donald Trump. For that reason, officials say, the words to come out of the Brussels and Rome summits will stress unity and soft-pedal the differences.

Friction Growing

But east-west friction has heated up in the past two years. There are rows over eastern reluctance to take in Syrian refugees and Kaczynski's new policies that Brussels calls undemocratic. New border controls to curb migrants

inside the passport-free Schengen zone have fueled eastern fears of losing travel freedoms cherished since the fall of the Berlin Wall.

And there is a brewing crisis over what eastern leaders see as hypocritical protectionism inside the EU single market by western governments trying to impose their own national minimum wages on enterprising - and cheap - eastern "posted workers", who offer services like trucking and construction in the west. Last week Poland and its allies demanded Brussels crack down on the "double standards" of firms that offer lower quality versions of western food brands in eastern markets.

It is not just outspoken Poland and Hungary who fret at fragmentation. The worry runs from the Baltic to the Black Sea. Eastern diplomats fear a new gap could open up along the old Iron Curtain that may never close, especially if the rich states play up to voters and refuse to fill the EU's Brexit budget gap. Prime Minister Robert Fico told Slovakia's parliament on Wednesday he was sceptical of the Union's future once Britain leaves in 2019. "I'm afraid the EU will be divided by the money issue after 2020...In the spirit of Trump's 'America first', we can expect to hear 'Germany first', 'France first' etc."

Noting that current EU arrangements already allow for states to deepen their cooperation - the euro is just one of many examples - a senior diplomat from an eastern member state said he was suspicious of assurances from Merkel and others that any new moves would always be open to any member state to join. "The only new thing they can mean is that this has changed," he said. "They are saying 'No, you are not welcome any more.' This is very dangerous." — Reuters

JADEJA JOINS ASHWIN AT TOP OF RANKINGS



BANGALORE: Ravindra Jadeja joined his fellow Indian spinner Ravichandran Ashwin at the top of the world rankings yesterday after his seven wickets in India's series-levelling second-Test win over Australia. Ashwin had been out on his own as the number one Test bowler, but Jadeja's performance has put the pair on the same level of points, the International Cricket Council said. Left-arm spinner Jadeja returned with figures of 6-63 in Australia's first innings to help spark India's comeback during their 75-run win in Bangalore on Tuesday. Off-spinner Ashwin also played a match-winning role by taking six wickets in the Australian second innings as India squared the four-match series. Despite the disappointment of losing the second Test, Australian skipper Steve Smith remains at the top of the batting rankings while his opposite number Virat Kohli has slipped one place to third, behind England's Joe Root. —AFP

OWEN SADDLES UP FOR ASCOT CHARITY RACE

LONDON: Former Liverpool, Real Madrid and England striker Michael Owen is to try his hand at horse racing in a charity race taking place in November this year. Owen, who won the 2001 Ballon d'Or, has long shown a keen interest in horse racing and has built up a five-star training establishment near his home in Cheshire, northwest England. He only rode a horse for the first time earlier this year, but plans to race in an event at Ascot organised by The Prince's Countryside Fund on November 24. "It has been a long-term ambition of mine to learn how to ride and race, but as a professional footballer it was not possible," Owen, 37, said in a press release issued yesterday. "Now I have set myself the target of competing in The Prince's Countryside Fund Charity Race on Friday 24th November 2017 at Ascot. "It's a brilliant cause and I can't wait to get started; it is going to take a lot of hard work over the next few months, but I am really looking forward to it." Owen made 89 appearances for England, scoring 40 goals, and also played for Newcastle United, Manchester United and Stoke City. —AFP

BOTTAS STREAKS CLEAR AS TESTING TIMES DROP

BARCELONA: Flying Finn Valtteri Bottas left the competition trailing in his wake when setting the fastest time yet in 2017 pre-season testing yesterday morning in Barcelona. Bottas bettered his previous best time from last week by nearly four tenths of a second in 1min 19.310 as defending champions Mercedes had meanwhile reasserted their dominance at the top of the timesheets. Felipe Massa was surprisingly fastest for Williams on Tuesday, and the Brazilian posted another promising time just over a tenth of a second slower than Bottas in second fastest. Ferrari's Kimi Raikkonen was nearly a second back in third, but on slower soft tyres compared to the supersoft and ultrasoft compounds used by Bottas and Massa respectively. In a familiar tale of the first six days of testing, 2005 and 2006 world champion Fernando Alonso endured another frustrating day in the beleaguered McLaren MCL32. The Spaniard lagged last among the 10 drivers on the track after posting just 27 laps in a series of truncated outings. —AFP



Late Sheikh Abdullah Al-Mubarak Al-Sabah



Duaij Al-Otaibi

LATE SHEIKH ABDULLAH AL-MUBARAK SHOOTING TOURNEY BEGINS TODAY

By Abdellatif Sharaa

KUWAIT: Annual tournament of the late Sheikh Abdullah Al-Mubarak Al-Sabah will be launched today (Thursday) in the Olympic skeet, trap and double trap events for men, women and juniors.

President of Kuwait and Arab Shooting Federations Eng Duaij Al-Otaibi said Kuwait Shooting Sport Club is proud organizing the tournament each year because it carries memories of one of Kuwait's sincere men, who has given so much and con-

tributed to Kuwait's advancement. He said the late Sheikh Abdullah Al-Mubarak Al-Sabah was an outstanding leader, who had Kuwait's interest in front of him and put it above all. Adding, he was keen on Kuwait's security, and that KSSC remembers this personality and takes his example in life. Al-Otaibi concluded his statement by thanking the family of the late Sheikh Abdullah Al-Mubarak Al-Sabah on behalf of the board members for their support of the sport's community. The closing ceremony will be held Saturday March 11, at the club at 5:00 pm.



Zain Group's Vice Chairman Bader Nasser Al-Kharafi honors Kuwaiti jet ski champion Yousef Al-Abdulrazzaq.

BADER AL KHARAFI HONORS JET SKI CHAMPION YOUSEF AL ABDULRAZZAQ FOR GUINNESS WORLD RECORDS FEAT

KUWAIT: Zain Group's Vice Chairman, Bader Nasser Al-Kharafi, honored Kuwaiti Jet Ski champion Yousef Al-Abdulrazzaq, who was recently registered in the Guinness World Records for achieving the World Championship title three times.

The achievement, the first of its kind for any Jet Ski racer, was listed under the State of Kuwait's name. Zain has been Yousef Al-Abdulrazzaq's main sponsor over the past 10 years. The Union International Motonautique (UIM), the world's governing body for all Power boating activities, officially declared Al-Abdulrazzaq a Guinness World Record holder by attaining the International Jet Sports Boating Association's (IJSBA) World Championship title three times. The Kuwaiti

champion proudly attained the three titles during 2013, 2015, and 2016.

Al-Kharafi, expressed his admiration in this national achievement that adds to Kuwait's international accolades: "We are extremely proud of supporting Kuwaiti champions in international arenas; what Yousef Al-Abdulrazzaq achieved is a pride for all the people of Kuwait".

Al-Kharafi added: "Zain considers the support of Kuwaiti sports and athletes a priority within our corporate sustainability strategies. Our support to Kuwaiti champion Yousef Al-Abdulrazzaq during the past 10 years has proven to be fruitful, resulting in this historic achievement".

Zain's role not only concentrates on eco-

economic and business activities, but also extends to contribute significantly in various areas within the Kuwaiti society, including sports. The company has endless confidence in the competencies of Kuwaiti athletes and their capabilities in excelling in different fields, on both regional and international levels. It is worth noting that Al-Abdulrazzaq represented Kuwait throughout the past years in several local and international competitions, winning a number of prominent titles, which encouraged Zain to continue supporting him. Most recently, Al-Abdulrazzaq competed against professionals from across the globe, and achieved the first place titles in Runabout GP1 and Ski Ladies categories in late 2016.

BOXING

PACQUIAO-KHAN FIGHT OFF

LOS ANGELES: A potentially money-spinning bout between Philippine boxing icon Manny Pacquiao and Britain's Amir Khan has collapsed, The Los Angeles Times reported on Tuesday.

Pacquiao's long-time promoter Bob Arum told the newspaper that the proposed \$38 million fight staged by the United Arab Emirates in April had proven to be "pie in the sky."

"When they contacted me, I told them it was pie in the sky, that this is crazy, it's not going to happen," Arum said. "Manny wanted to roll the dice. He rolled the dice and it came up snake eyes. If something is too good to be true, it's too good to be true." Arum still held out the possibility of a fight between Pacquiao and Khan later this year, for "realistic numbers", stating that the suggested purse for the UAE fight had never been likely.

In the meantime, welterweight champion Pacquiao was likely to revert to an original plan to fight Australia's Jeff Horn at a venue to be determined, the Times reported. Both Pacquiao and Khan had announced their fight within minutes of each other on Twitter last month.

"My team and I have agreed terms with Manny Pacquiao and his team for a super fight #pacquiaoakhan #April23rd", Khan tweeted on February 26. Khan, 30, has not fought since being knocked out by Mexico's Canelo Alvarez last May.

Pacquiao, 38, announced a brief retirement last year but made a successful comeback against Jessie Vargas in Las Vegas in November, saying he still felt like a youngster. Pacquiao had said he was retiring to focus on his new role as Philippine senator, after winning elections last year on the back of his sporting fame.

Meanwhile, New Zealand's Joseph Parker will defend his World Boxing Organisation (WBO) heavyweight title against Britain's Hughie Fury in Auckland on May 6, his promoters said yesterday.

It will be Parker's first defence of the belt he won in December after it was vacated by Tyson Fury, Hughie's cousin.

"Joseph loves fighting at home in front of his Kiwi fans so we really wanted to give him that opportunity against a truly dangerous, gifted young opponent in Hughie Fury," Parker's Duco Events promoter David Higgins said. Both young fighters are undefeated, with 25-year-old Parker boasting a 22-0 record, 18 by knockout, and Fury, 22, at 20-0, with 10 knockouts.

Most interest in the fight will be on who the winner meets next, with potential unification bouts looming involving Britain's IBF champion Anthony Joshua or American WBC title holder Deontay Wilder.

Higgins confirmed Duco had already been in discussions with representatives for Wilder and Joshua-who fights ex-champ Wladimir Klitschko in London next month-although he insisted Parker's main focus was Hughie Fury.

Further complicating the heavyweight scene, Tyson Fury this week hinted he would return against an unknown opponent on May 13. Duco said Tyson-who surrendered his belts in October after admitting taking cocaine to combat depression-was expected to join his cousin's entourage in Auckland. In a promotional video released by Duco to coincide with the Parker fight announcement, Hughie Fury spoke of creating a heavyweight dynasty with his cousin. "I'll win this title, then Tyson can come back and we can both rule the heavyweight division together," he said. —AFP



Manny Pacquiao (left) and Britain's Amir Khan.

DOPING WHISTLEBLOWERS NEED POLICE PROTECTION: WADA

LONDON: Whistleblowers are "desperately needed in the war on doping in sport, the World Anti-Doping Agency (WADA) chief said yesterday, calling for police to protect them from those intent on revenge.

WADA and the International Olympic Committee (IOC) are under pressure to stamp down on drug cheats with Russia in particular in the spotlight for what WADA calls state-sponsored doping across multiple sports over several years. WADA Director General Olivier Niggli said whistleblowers such as the Russian athlete Yuliya Stepanova and her husband Vitaly-who fled to the United States because of fear of reprisals-were invaluable sources of information to help bust the drug cheats.

But he said others contemplating following their lead needed to know they would be safe. "Anti-doping agencies can only do so much in the fight against doping," the Swiss lawyer Niggli, who replaced the long-serving David Howman in July last year, told journalists after appearing on a panel at the Tackling Doping in Sports conference in London.

"We desperately need whistleblowers. But to encourage their cooperation and so on we can only do so much.

"We need law enforcement on our side to help provide protection to the whistleblowers and they are the only ones who can do it." Niggli said that helping expose the drug cheats came with personal risks for those who go public. "I would think in most cases before a whistleblower becomes exposed you would have secured necessary protection with relevant law enforcement in the particular jurisdiction," he said. "That should be the right process going forward." The Stepanovs are the most high-profile to come forward, playing a

major part in blowing open doping across Russian sports. Vitaly, who worked for the discredited Russian Anti-Doping Agency (RUSADA), and his runner wife fled Russia fearing for their safety following their revelations in 2014 about widespread doping in the country.

Russian President Vladimir Putin referred to her as "Judith" but the Russian track and field team was barred from last year's Rio Olympics and there was a total ban on Russians at the Paralympics.

"The Stepanovs was the first case of its kind and was done differently in that it was exposed by the media first," said Niggli, warning those contemplating following their

example should avoid going to the press with their revelations as it blows their cover instantly and puts them in danger. "The recent Russian whistleblower decided to do it on TV," said Niggli, referring to the runner Andrey Dmitriev, who spoke to German media.

"It was his call and we were not interfering with that. We will take the information but after that he is not of any use as no one is talking to him anymore in Russia.

"Once he is out there it is unlikely he will get anymore information. "We would certainly not encourage them going public until everything is secured because once they are out there it is far harder to protect them." —AFP



LONDON: This file photo taken on June 20, 2016 shows Olivier Niggli, Chief Operating Officer and General Counsel speaking at the 2016 World Anti-Doping Agency (WADA) media symposium at Lord's cricket ground in London. More whistleblowers like Yuliya Stepanova are desperately needed in the ongoing war on doping in sport said Olivier Niggli the director general of the World Anti Doping Agency (WADA) yesterday. — AFP



DALLAS: Dirk Nowitzki #41 of the Dallas Mavericks makes a free throw shot against the Los Angeles Lakers at American Airlines Center on Tuesday in Dallas, Texas. — AFP

BASKETBALL

WESTBROOK HITS 58 IN VAIN BLAZERS THWART THUNDER

LOS ANGELES: Russell Westbrook exploded for the highest-scoring game of his career with 58 points, but it was not enough to stop the Oklahoma City Thunder from falling to a pulsating defeat against Portland on Tuesday. The Trail Blazers squeezed home with a 126-121 victory in a thrilling battle at the Chesapeake Energy Arena that Westbrook appeared to be attempting to win single-handedly.

Ultimately, however, his virtuoso display came up short against the multi-faceted Blazers, who finished with seven players in double figures. Allen Crabbe led the scoring for the visitors with 23 points while Damian Lillard finished with 22 points. C.J. McCollum scored 21 points.

Westbrook meanwhile made 21 of 39 shots but could not add to his remarkable season tally of triple doubles. Tellingly, Westbrook was the only Thunder starting player to make an assist. Only two other

Thunder players made double figures—Victor Oladipo with 16 points and Enes Kanter with 11 points—as Oklahoma City slid to its fourth-straight defeat. Blazers power forward Meyers Leonard said Portland had suspected they would be able to exploit Oklahoma City's reliance on Westbrook.

"Russ is incredible, no doubt about it," he said. "Extremely talented, able to make plays for others. Able to score the ball obviously, rebound, defend, everything." "But with that being said, it sometimes becomes a one-man show," he added. "Now he is capable of that. But I think it's to our credit, top to bottom we had a lot of guys contribute. We were sharing the ball, we believed in what we were doing, we believed in each other. This was a very big win for us."

sons by scoring 18 points, and reached the hallowed mark on a 15-foot fadeaway jumper from the baseline over Larry Nance Jr. with 10:58 remaining in the second quarter. Nowitzki scored all of his 25 points - one shy of his season high - in the first half to send the Mavericks to a 31-point lead in the third quarter. This was the Lakers' first visit to Dallas since setting a franchise record with a 49-point loss, a 122-73 blowout on Jan. 22. Dallas extended a franchise record with its 14th straight win over the Lakers, who got a triple-double from Julius Randle with 13 points, 18 rebounds and 10 assists in their eighth straight loss.



OKLAHOMA CITY: Oklahoma City Thunder guard Russell Westbrook (0) shoots over Portland Trail Blazers forward Al-Farouq Aminu, left, in the second quarter of an NBA basketball game in Oklahoma City, Tuesday. — AP

NBA Results/Standings

Dallas 122, LA Lakers 111; Portland 126, Oklahoma City 121.

Eastern Conference					Western Conference				
Atlantic Division					Northwest Division				
	W	L	PCT	GB					
Boston	40	24	.625	-	Utah	40	24	.625	-
Toronto	37	26	.587	2.5	Oklahoma City	35	29	.547	5
NY Knicks	26	38	.406	14	Denver	29	34	.460	10.5
Philadelphia	23	40	.365	16.5	Portland	27	35	.435	12
Brooklyn	11	51	.177	28	Minnesota	25	37	.403	14
Central Division					Pacific Division				
Cleveland	42	20	.677	-	Golden State	52	11	.825	-
Indiana	32	31	.508	10.5	LA Clippers	38	25	.603	14
Detroit	31	32	.492	11.5	Sacramento	25	38	.397	27
Chicago	31	32	.492	11.5	Phoenix	21	43	.328	31.5
Milwaukee	29	33	.468	13	LA Lakers	19	45	.297	33.5
Southeast Division					Southwest Division				
Washington	38	24	.613	-	San Antonio	49	13	.790	-
Atlanta	34	29	.540	4.5	Houston	44	20	.688	6
Miami	30	34	.469	9	Memphis	36	28	.563	14
Charlotte	28	35	.444	10.5	Dallas	27	36	.429	22.5
Orlando	23	41	.359	16	New Orleans	25	39	.391	25

WIZARDS 131, SUNS 127

Bojan Bogdanovic scored 29 points, setting a franchise record for free throws made by going 16 of 16, and Washington opened a five-game western trip with a victory over pesky Phoenix. Bradley Beal had 27 points and John Wall added 25 points and 14 assists in a victory that ended the Suns' three-game winning streak, their longest since November 2015.

Eric Bledsoe scored 30 points for the Suns, who erased a 22-point, first-half deficit, were tied at 110 with 5:16 to play and challenged the Wizards in the final two minutes before Wall finally clinched it with two free throws with 6.5 seconds to play. Devin Booker scored 25 for the Suns, nine in the final 21 seconds. —Agencies

NOWITZKI PASSES 30,000 POINT MARK TO JOIN ELITE CLUB

DALLAS: Dallas Mavericks forward Dirk Nowitzki joined an elite club by surpassing the 30,000 point mark in

Tuesday's match against the Los Angeles Lakers, becoming just the sixth player in NBA history to reach

the milestone. The German sharpshooter earned his 30,000th point on a step back jumper early in the second quarter, then went past the mark on a three-pointer that sent the Dallas American Airlines Center crowd into a frenzy with 9:54 left in the first half.

"Sort of surreal, 30,000 is amazing," Nowitzki told reporters. "It's a lot of points, obviously. Every milestone makes you reflect a little bit."

"It makes you reflect on the people that have helped you and been with you all of this way."

Nowitzki had entered the night 20 points shy of the feat and exploded early to treat the fans who had cheered him during a video tribute.

Mavericks team mates, along with owner Mark Cuban, mobbed Nowitzki during a timeout and the 13-time NBA All Star acknowledged the crowd as his accomplishment was announced over the public address system. "Just an amazing experience," the 19-year veteran said.

"After every basket I made, I felt a buzz in the crowd," Nowitzki joined Kareem Abdul-Jabbar, Karl Malone, Kobe Bryant, Michael Jordan and Wilt Chamberlain as the only players to have accumulated 30,000 points.

His big night elicited reactions from around the league.

"I gotta congratulate Dirk Nowitzki on putting up 30,000 points. I'm watching the game right now. Congratulations," LeBron James said on a video tweeted by Uninterrupted.

"There's no way I was missing this moment. Hopefully I can join you at some point, big fella. Salute." NBA Commissioner Adam Silver also offered his congratulations.

"Throughout his 19 seasons with the Mavericks, Dirk has been a model player and terrific ambassador for our game," he said in a statement. "This latest accomplishment further establishes his legacy as one of the NBA's greatest players." — Reuters

RUGBY

LIONS TOUR NOT ON WELSH PLAYERS' MINDS: HOWLEY

CARDIFF: Wales dominated the last British and Irish Lions squad in their winning tour to Australia, but interim head coach Rob Howley insists his misfiring team are focused solely on victory over Ireland tomorrow.

Howley has taken the reins for a second time, with Warren Gatland again seconded to Lions duty ahead of the three-Test, 10-match summer tour to New Zealand.

Gatland plumped for 15 Welsh players in his initial 37-man squad in 2013, but Wales' recent performances have raised the prospect of this year's tour being dominated by high-flying England, with a raft of Scottish and Irish players also having put their hand up.

Howley, himself a Lion in 2001 having missed the 1997 tour due to injury after initial selection, insisted ahead of tomorrow's Six Nations match against the Irish that thoughts of potential Lions berths had not been used as a motivating factor. "No not at all," the former scrum-half said after naming an unchanged team from the one that imploded against Scotland last time out, leaking 20 unanswered second-half points in a woeful showing. "Ultimately, wearing the Welsh jersey, performance in the national jersey is first and foremost for me," he said.

"You know it's Lions year, you know there's an opportunity at the end of the year. But you know you have to get your performance on the field for a period of 12 months, and that's for your club, region and Wales."

Howley added: "The Six Nations takes a huge focus on their performances. The players in all countries know that over the next couple of games that if you haven't played well, at the level you thought you should have played, you have the opportunity to play well." Wales, who opened their campaign with a romp over Italy before falling to unbeaten England and then the Scots, wrap up their Six Nations campaign away to France on March 18.

CONCENTRATE ON FRIDAY'S GAME

Welsh skipper Alun Wyn Jones has also tasted life as a British and Irish Lion, first touring in 2009 to South Africa before also going to Australia four years ago.

Standing in for the injured Sam Warburton, Jones skippered the Lions in their tour-deciding third Test against the Wallabies, the lock guiding the home unions team to a memorable 41-16 victory.

But straight-talking Jones is not one to be carried away by nostalgia. "Hopefully people have that ambition," he said of his teammates' view of potentially playing under Gatland in New Zealand. "We're very conscious of where we are and where we aren't, that's probably more important. From a player's point of view it's pretty worrying if you're worrying about something at the end of the season when we've got a game in two days we really need to concentrate on." —AFP



Tai Tzu Ying

BADMINTON

TAI YING DIGS DEEP IN ALL-ENGLAND OPENER

BIRMINGHAM: World number one Tai Tzu Ying overcame an early wobble to reach the second round of the All-England Open in Birmingham yesterday. The World Super Series champion from Taiwan came from 16-18 down in the first game against Nitchaon Jindapol to record a professional 21-16, 21-14 victory over the world number 16 from Thailand. Tai has yet to win a title in European conditions, though she won notable events in Indonesia, Taiwan, Hong Kong and Dubai last year, but the way she adapted to cooler, slightly drifty conditions augured well.

"I made a few mistakes," Tai acknowledged. "But I tried to get more control. I improved and I want to improve some more." Her disguise and creativity also began to blossom in the second game, in which she moved rapidly to leads of 11-4 and 14-7.

She eventually finished in a more relaxed vein, perhaps giving her more confidence ahead of a second-round collision with Minatsu Mitani, the world number 28 from Japan.

Although Tai appears to be altering and enhancing her ability to perform well in unfamiliar conditions, she is not changing her attitude to what many regard as her greatest achievement. Tai has said the number-one ranking does not mean much to her, but might mean a lot to her family. Asked if that really represented her feelings, Tai replied: "Maybe not so much to them either, but perhaps to the people of Chinese Taipei." Almost simultaneously the new young hope from China, He Bingjiao, joined her in the second round, where she could meet the Olympic champion Carolina Marin.

He had to save two game points in

the second game of a 21-12, 22-20 success against Kim Hyo Min, the South Korean world number 48, but showed herself as a potential high-level danger with her angular left-handed attacks. Another Chinese player, Tian Houwei, the seventh men's singles seed, dealt capably with a dangerous first-round win against Tommy Sugiarto, the Asian champion from Indonesia.

Tian produced a consistently athletic game of containment against Sugiarto's ambitious attacks and recovered from a 14-18 first-game deficit to win 21-19, 21-18. Earlier it took a mere five points for the first seeded player to depart. Son Wan Ho, the fourth men's singles seed from South Korea, retired with an unspecified injury after only a handful of rallies against Sony Dwi Kuncoro, the former world silver medallist from Indonesia. — AFP

LATE WICKETS GIVE S LANKA EDGE OVER BANGLADESH

GALLE: Bangladesh's Soumya Sarkar and Tamim Iqbal shared a century opening stand before Sri Lanka took two late wickets to tighten their grip on the first Test at Galle yesterday.

The visitors were 133-2 at stumps on the second day and trailing by 361, after Kusal Mendis (194), Niroshan Dickwella (75) and Dilruwan Perera (51) had swelled the hosts' total to 494.

Soumya was leading the response for Bangladesh with an unbeaten 66 after his 118-run opening stand ended with a bizarre run-out for his partner, Tamim, who made 57 off 112 balls with six fours.

Sri Lankan wicketkeeper Niroshan Dickwella had appealed for a caught behind off Lakshan Sandakan and dislodged the bails quickly once his appeal was turned down as Tamim walked out of the crease. Bangladesh coach Chandika Hathurusinghe, echoing Australia's Steven Smith on another occasion, said Tamim appeared to have had "a brain fade". "He hasn't spoken to me yet but... (we were) very disappointed because we were cruising at that time," he told reporters.

Perera then had number three Mominul Haque plumb lbw for seven to give Sri Lanka the edge in the contest at the Galle International Stadium.

Both Soumya and Tamim benefited from sloppy Sri Lankan fielding. Perera dropped Soumya on four at gully and Dickwella missed a catch off Tamim on 28.

Earlier, Mendis was agonisingly denied a maiden double century as he tried to reach his milestone in style. Tamim caught him on the long-on boundary off teenage off-

spinner Mehedi Hasan as the right-hander attempted an audacious six.

WONDER CATCH

Tamim ran backwards to take the catch, lobbing the ball back into the field as his feet crossed the boundary ropes and then pouncing it again.

Mendis struck 19 fours and four sixes in his seven-and-a-half-hour stay at the crease. The 22-year-old, who was unbeaten on 166 overnight, was earlier granted a reprieve by a no-ball on the first delivery he faced. He was also almost dismissed when he struck his first six of the morning, as Mustafizur Rahman took a catch off the bowling of Subashis Roy but stepped on the rope on the fine leg boundary.

"I wanted to hit a six and be positive. It's a batting pitch," Mendis said after the day's play. "It keeps low and I just wanted to play straight or use the sweep. 'I felt really bad when I edged first ball, but... it was a no-ball and that was nice," he said.

Spinner Mehedi ended with four wickets for 113 runs. Apart from Mendis, he dismissed Dickwella when the wicketkeeper-batsman gave a catch to Mahmudullah at midwicket after making 75 off 76 balls.

Dickwella, who hit six fours and a six in his quick-fire innings, put on 110 with Mendis for the fifth wicket off just 124 balls.

Mustafizur then removed Rangana Herath for 14 and Suranga Lakmal was run out for eight to give Bangladesh some respite. Mehedi trapped Perera leg-before on 51 before taking a stunning catch off Shakib Al Hasan to send last man Sandakan packing.—AFP



DUNEDIN: South Africa's Faf du Plessis, right, runs to make his ground as New Zealand's Mitchell Santner watches as the ball is thrown at the stumps during the first cricket Test at University Oval, Dunedin, New Zealand, yesterday.—AP

CRICKET

ELGAR GRINDS OUT 'TOUGHER' DAY TO RESCUE SOUTH AFRICA

DUNEDIN: Century maker Dean Elgar described the opening day of the first Test against New Zealand yesterday as one of the toughest of his career after he rescued South Africa from a woeful start.

After batting throughout the day at Dunedin's University oval, the opener was unbeaten on 128 with South Africa 229 for four at stumps. His unbeaten 81-run stand for the fifth wicket with Temba Bavuma (not out 38) put South Africa in a position of relative strength after losing three quick wickets in the morning session.

"It was one of the tougher days of Test cricket so far in my career," said the 29-year-old left-hander who was dropped by wicketkeeper BJ Watling on 36 before going on to complete his seventh Test century. "I nicked it and BJ dropped it and happy days. I'm sitting with a smile on my face at the end of day one.

"We were looking at (a total of) about 250-280 at tea time and now, being in a good position of not losing a wicket in the last session, we can re-adjust. I think maybe 450 on that wicket."

Elgar, who went into the match with an average of 38.60 from 50 Test innings, said he had to rely on his stubbornness at the crease to get through the day.

"I'm not very talented and free-scoring like others guys are, so you've got to use your advantages and that's obviously my ability to guts it out and grind it," he said.

Elgar admitted to being surprised New Zealand had dropped "their trump card" in strike bowler Tim Southee to make room for an extra spinner. It was a decision which New Zealand coach Mike Hesson said was not taken lightly but with the state of the wicket he was hoping to have batted first and have two spinners available in the fourth innings. "I think South Africa's slightly ahead. Four down in a day's Test cricket is a pretty good effort," he said.

"When you play two spinners you obviously want to bowl last but I thought the spinners did a good job on day one of the Test match in terms of a holding role."

WAVERING FORTUNES

After South Africa's early slump, Elgar set the tone for the revival with a 126-run stand for the fourth wicket with captain Faf du Plessis before being joined by Bavuma just before tea.

On a day of wavering fortunes, there was nothing normal about the start of the Test where even the brown-green wicket was not the customary emerald top expected in New Zealand.

When du Plessis won the toss he became the first captain in 23 Tests to bat first. New Zealand dropped regular bowling spearhead Southee for the first time in five years to make way for Jeetan Patel. It was the first time in seven years they had fielded two spinners on a home wicket. The miserly Patel was brought into the attack in the sixth over and conceded only eight runs in his first 10 overs with South Africa restricted to 63 for three in the first session. But as the New Zealand bowlers tired, South Africa added 90 for the loss of one wicket in the middle session and 76 without loss after tea. Left-armers Trent Boult and Wagner did the early damage for New Zealand with Boult's first nine overs claiming the wicket of Stephen Cook and yielding only eight runs.

South African-born Wagner, returning to top level cricket for the first time since breaking a finger on his bowling hand five weeks ago, removed Hashim Amla and JP Duminy in one over on his adopted home ground. Jimmy Neesham was New Zealand's other successful bowler taking the valuable wicket of du Plessis for 52. Although the pitch offered little support for the bowlers, for the batsmen it was a constant struggle to score with 30 maidens among the 90 overs bowled.—AFP

SCOREBOARD

GALLE, Sri Lanka: Scores at stumps on the second day of the first Test between Sri Lanka and Bangladesh at Galle International Stadium yesterday.

Sri Lanka 1st innings (321-4 overnight)		Bowling: Mustafizur 25-5-68-2 (nb1), Taskin 21-3-77-1 (nb2, w2), Roy 24-4-103-1 (nb2, w1), Mehedi 22-1-113-4, Shakib 32.1-5-100-1, Soumya 3-0-9-0 (w1), Mahmudullah 2-0-10-0.	
D. Karunaratne b Mehedi	30		
U. Tharanga b Roy	4		
K. Mendis c Tamim b Mehedi	194		
D. Chandimal c Mehedi b Mustafizur	5		
A. Gunaratne b Taskin	85		
N. Dickwella c Mahmudullah b Mehedi	75		
D. Perera lbw b Mehedi	51		
R. Herath c Soumya b Mustafizur	14		
S. Lakmal run out	8		
L. Sandakan c Mehedi b Shakib	5		
L. Kumara not out	0		
Extras (b4, lb10, w4, nb5)	23		
Total (all out; 129.1 overs)	494		
Fall of wickets: 1-15 (Tharanga), 2-60 (Karunaratne), 3-92 (Chandimal), 4-288 (Gunaratne), 5-398 (Mendis), 6-432 (Dickwella), 7-457 (Herath), 8-480 (Lakmal), 9-494 (Perera), 10-494 (Sandakan).			

Bangladesh 1st innings	
Tamim Iqbal run out	57
Soumya Sarkar not out	66
Mominul Haque lbw b Perera	7
Mushfiquur Rahim not out	1
Extras (lb1, w1)	2
Total (two wickets; 46 overs)	133
Fall of wickets: 1-118 (Tamim), 2-127 (Mominul)	
To bat: Mahmudullah, Shakib Al Hasan, Liton Das, Mehedi Hasan, Taskin Ahmed, Mustafizur Rahman, Subashis Roy.	
Bowling: S. Lakmal 5-0-15-0, L. Kumara 7-0-38-0 (w1), D. Perera 13-3-32-1, R. Herath 11-01-30-0, L. Sandakan 10-5-17-0.	



GALLE: Sri Lankan cricketers unsuccessfully appeal for a Leg Before Wicket (LBW) decision against Bangladesh batsman Soumya Sarkar (C) during the second day of the opening Test cricket match between Sri Lanka and Bangladesh at The Galle International Cricket Stadium in Galle yesterday.—AFP

FOREIGN PLAYERS HAIL PAKISTAN SECURITY

HONG KONG: Foreign players have tentatively endorsed the return of international cricket to Pakistan after their whirlwind trip to Lahore for Sunday's heavily guarded Pakistan Super League final. Players including winning captain Darren Sammy detailed a journey involving bullet-proof buses and closed roads, before they were rushed straight back to the airport with no time for celebrations.

The blanket security, deploying thousands of troops, military helicopters and armed guards on horseback, came after a deadly militant attack in 2009 on Sri Lanka's team halted visits by top-level cricket teams. The rest of the Pakistan Super League was played in the United Arab Emirates, but Sunday's incident-free final has opened the door to more international cricket with a World XI now scheduled to visit in September. Several foreign players, including England's Kevin Pietersen and Luke Wright, skipped the final over safety fears, but Sammy praised the arrangements in Pakistan.

"Security was really tight," the West Indian told AFP in Hong Kong, where he is playing this week's T20 Blitz competition.

"I only thought about security when I was on the bus," added the two-time World Twenty20-winning captain, who led Peshawar Zalmi to a lopsided victory over Quetta Gladiators.

"Peshawar is like a family—once one foreign player was going there we were all going. It's like a brotherhood." A resurgence of attacks—including a suicide blast which killed 14 in Lahore—had raised concerns, but the final's successful staging was widely praised in Pakistan as a stand against militancy. Asked whether international cricket should now return, Sammy replied: "It's not in my jurisdiction.

"Playing in Lahore was like playing

anywhere in the world once I was in the stadium. The fans are just as passionate. "That's a small step in the right direction—time will tell."

'AIRPORT, HOTEL, STADIUM, AIRPORT'

Team-mate and England international Chris Jordan said he weighed his decision carefully and spoke with his family before opting to play in Lahore. Jordan said, "You have to ask the bigger heads over there" about playing more games in Pakistan. But he said he would be happy to return "with the same set-up".

"That level of security did help to put the guys' minds at ease so that we could get on with the game and put on the performance that we did," said Jordan. "That level (of security) is a level that made everyone as comfortable as they needed to be."

Sammy said the journey was "airport, hotel, stadium, airport. 3am to 3am. It was more or less in and out".

Another Peshawar player, West Indies all-rounder Rayad Emrit, was a late replacement for the final and travelled for 25 hours to play in Lahore. "There's always risk if you're playing in Pakistan. But to be honest when we got there I felt safe," he said, calling the sold-out Gaddafi Stadium "electrifying". "We had armoured vehicles, took us straight to the hotel. They closed off all the streets and then back to the ground where they did the same thing. "From the game we headed straight to the airport... No time (to celebrate)." None of the players said they had heard remarks from Pakistan legend Imran Khan, who in a leaked video called the final's foreign players "third-class" and anonymous, drawing a heated response online. Khan later defended his comments, saying Sammy is "not a big player" compared to his fellow West Indian Chris Gayle, or Pietersen.—AFP

SCOREBOARD

DUNEDIN, New Zealand: Scoreboard at stumps on day one of the first Test between New Zealand and South Africa at University Oval in Dunedin yesterday.

South Africa 1st innings		Extras:(b4, lb1, w1)	
S. Cook lbw Boult	3	Total: (4 wickets; 90 overs)	6
D. Elgar not out	128	Fall of wickets: 1-10 (Cook), 2-20 (Amla), 3-22 (Duminy), 4-148 (du Plessis)	229
H. Amla b Wagner	1		
J. Duminy c Taylor b Wagner	1		
F. du Plessis c Boult b Neesham	52		
T. Bavuma not out	38	Bowling: Boult 22-10-44-1 (1w), Wagner 20-4-59-2, Patel 24-9-60-0, Santner 18-5-32-0, Neesham 6-2-29-1.	

AUSTRALIA DEFEND SMITH AS 'CHEAT' ROW ESCALATES

BANGALORE: Australia's and India's cricket boards sprang to the defence of their respective captains yesterday amid a spiralling war of words that soured the aftermath of the dramatic second Test.

India's 75-run victory on Tuesday in Bangalore, after Australia crashed to 112 all out, has left the four-match series between the world's top two sides tantalisingly poised at 1-1. But yesterday's headlines were dominated by Indian skipper Virat Kohli's accusation that Steve Smith abused the decision review system (DRS), after he was seen looking to the Australian dressing-room while considering appealing against his dismissal for lbw. The rules forbid players to consult with anyone off the pitch about whether to seek a review from the umpires, particularly as support staff have access to television replays in the dressing room.

At the post-match press conference, Smith—who was quickly waved off the field by the umpire—admitted he had been at fault, but put it down to a one-off "brain-fade". But an angry Kohli said that rather than being an isolated incident, "it's been happening for the last three days".

Although Kohli stopped short of accusing Smith of being a cheat, Indian newspapers were less diplomatic. "Smith Caught Cheating," said an Indian Express headline while The Times of India dubbed the episode "Cheatgate". Cricket Australia's chief executive James Sutherland said any questioning of Smith's integrity was "outrageous". "Steve is an outstanding cricketer and person, and role model to many aspiring cricketers and we have every faith that there was no ill-intent in his actions," said Sutherland, who was in Bangalore.

'BRAIN FADE'

Coach Darren Lehmann also threw his weight behind Smith, saying the current crop of tourists was well aware of their responsibilities after previous spats between the two teams. "He (Kohli) has his opinion and we have ours, but at the end of the day we play the game the right way," Lehmann said on Cricket Australia's website.

'BLATANT BREACH'

Amid a clamour among former Indian players for Smith to be sanctioned, the Indian board (BCCI) said it had raised his behaviour with the International Cricket Council while launching its own defence of Kohli. "Mr Virat Kohli is a mature and seasoned cricketer and his conduct on the field has been exemplary," the BCCI said in a statement. "BCCI has requested the ICC to take cognizance of the fact that the Australian skipper Mr Steve Smith in his press conference admitted to a 'brain fade'.

"BCCI sincerely hopes that the rest of the matches are played in the true spirit of crick-



NEW DELHI: Australian former cricket captain Steve Waugh speaks at a press conference in New Delhi yesterday. Waugh said embattled Australian skipper Steve Smith would "probably be embarrassed" after being accused of cheating in the second Test against India, amid calls for disciplinary action.—AFP

et." Smith's cause was not helped when his predecessor Michael Clarke voiced doubt over whether it was really a one-off, given that the non-striker Peter Handscomb seemed to suggest he consult the dressing-room. "If what Virat Kohli is saying is true and Australia are using their support staff to help them decide on a DRS decision then that's not on, that's unacceptable," Clarke told the India Today network.

"I think Steve Smith respects the game and will always uphold the integrity of the game and if it is just a one-off then it is a brain-fade and he's made a mistake.

"My concern, my worry is, that when you look at the footage at what happened, Peter Handscomb... actually suggests to Steve Smith to turn around and have a look to the support staff. "Now if it is only a one-off, I don't think that would have happened."

Steve Waugh, another former Australian captain, said Smith would "probably be embarrassed" by what had happened.

"Obviously he can't do that, and it's not in the spirit of the game. I've just got to believe him when he says it was a one off and it was an honest mistake," Waugh told reporters in Delhi. While there was no word from the ICC, record-breaking Indian batsman Sunil Gavaskar said Smith should be punished for a "quite blatant" breach of the rules. The row is the latest in a series of spats between the teams in recent years, including in the 2008 Sydney Test when Indian spinner Harbhajan Singh was accused of calling Andrew Symonds a monkey. The next Test begins in Ranchi on March 16.—AFP

MOTOR RACING

ALONSO CHIDES HONDA FOR LACK OF PACE AND POWER

BARCELONA: A frustrated Fernando Alonso let rip at McLaren's engine partners Honda yesterday after another difficult afternoon of pre-season testing.

Spanish and Italian media quoted the two-times Formula One world champion as saying that everyone in the team was ready to win "apart from Honda".

Speaking to Sky Sports television, the Spaniard left no doubt about his state of mind after ending the day 12th of the 14 drivers in action and with only 46 laps on the board—less than a race distance—compared to 102 for Red Bull's Max Verstappen.

"Tough, tough test so far - the first week and this week," he said. "We need to improve right now if we want to arrive in Australia ready. "We are not fully ready to complete a grand prix yet," continued Alonso. "The power unit has too many problems that we need to deal with... we cannot say that we are happy. We are frustrated and disappointed."

"I am driving at my best... I feel the best driver out there, I just need an engine that can run as quick as the others on the straights." Alonso estimated the McLaren was giving away 30kph to rivals on the straights

and it was hard to have a real feeling of the car with so few laps strung together. "It is not a surprise, last week was not ideal for us," he said. "Today more or less we knew we were in front of a tough day so we tried to learn as much as we can." Honda's return to Formula One in 2015, when they renewed a previously successful partnership with former champions McLaren, has been traumatic.

In 2015, McLaren had their worst ever season and finished ninth overall with just 27 points after suffering endless reliability problems with the power unit.

They finished sixth last year, with 76 points but still no closer to winning a race for the first time since 2012, but had raised hopes for 2017 after the rules on engine development were relaxed. Testing so far has been more reminiscent of 2015, although Alonso said the situation was different because Honda had far more data to work on.

"Probably this year is a bit more frustrating because the change of regulations and things like that, you have higher hopes when you think you can close that gap over the winter," said the Spaniard. The season starts in Australia on March 26. — Reuters

SOCCER

FRANCE ROUT US WOMEN TO LIFT SHE BELIEVES CUP

WASHINGTON: Camille Abily scored twice as France stunned world champions the United States 3-0 to win the She Believes Cup four-nation tournament on Tuesday.

Needing only a draw to win the round-robin competition, France got off to a dream start when Abily stroked her first goal home from the penalty spot at RFK Stadium after only eight minutes.

The French women then doubled their lead barely a minute later when a speculative long ball forward caused all sorts of panic in the US defensive ranks. Eugenie Le Sommer latched onto the pass and tied US defender Allie Long in knots before picking her spot to tuck away a low finish.

That double salvo rocked the US women, who struggled to gain a foothold in the contest against a skilful French outfit, who had already drawn with Germany and beaten

England earlier in the tournament.

Abily applied the coup de grace on 63 minutes for France, sidefooting home Eve Perisset's low cross from the right flank to make it 3-0. The victory capped a fine tournament France as they build toward this year's Women's Euro in the Netherlands, where they will be among the favourites.

Earlier Tuesday, Germany finished their campaign with a win after Anja Mittag's first-half strike sunk England. Mittag bundled home the winner in the 44th minute as Germany secured their first win following a draw with France and defeat against the United States in their opening games last week. Germany held on for the victory despite a furious late onslaught from England, who came closest to equalising in injury time when Toni Duggan went clear on goal only to be denied from close range. —AFP



WASHINGTON: Members of France's team celebrate after defeating the United States to win the She Believes Cup at RFK Stadium on Tuesday in Washington, DC. — AFP

CHAPECOENSE SAVOR WIN ON INTERNATIONAL RETURN

MARACAIBO: Brazilian football team Chapecoense yesterday promised more surprises after an emotional 2-1 victory in their first international match since a plane crash wiped out their squad. The side's new team, rebuilt with 22 new signings since last November's crash, surprised the crowds with their quality in beating Zulia FC of Venezuela in the Copa Libertadores on Tuesday night.

The scorer of the winning goal, midfielder Luiz Antonio, 25, promised Wednesday there was more to come after their winning start to their campaign in the group stage of Latin America's top club competition. "I have a dream of helping Chapecoense to go far, and we will get there bit by bit," the ex-Flamengo player told reporters. "We are going to surprise a lot of people."

The side had to rebuild virtually from scratch after the crash killed 19 of their players and staff in November, turning a fairytale rise into a nightmare. The disaster destroyed a team that had surged in seven years from Brazil's fourth division to the

final of the Copa Sudamericana regional tournament. Tuesday night's away match in the Venezuelan city of Maracaibo was an emotional release for the team scarcely three months after they buried their teammates. "The pressure was great, but we managed an important win," said Antonio. Winger Reinaldo, 27, scored Chapecoense's first goal in front of a crowd of 36,000 in Maracaibo's Pachenco Romero stadium. The side's new coach Wagner Mancini said ahead of the match that winning it would be the "best tribute" possible to those affected by the accident. "The distressed city of Chapeco deserved a victory," he told a news conference after the match.

"It is not just the victory, which gives us three points, but the way we won it," he said. "We won it by playing well." The disaster cut short Chapecoense's dream as they flew to Colombia on November 28 to play against Atletico Nacional. The crash in the Colombian mountains killed 71 people, including 19 of the team's players and numerous staff. — AFP



MARACAIBO: Brazil's Chapecoense Niltoninho, top, fight for the ball with Venezuela's Zulia FC Juan Arango during their Copa Libertadores soccer match in Maracaibo, Venezuela, Tuesday. — AP



ST PAUL: Patrik Berglund #21 of the St. Louis Blues and Marco Scandella #6 of the Minnesota Wild skate after the puck during the second period of the game on Tuesday at Xcel Energy Center in St. Paul, Minnesota. The Blues defeated the Wild 2-1. —AFP

NHL

BOBROVSKY GETS 3RD STRAIGHT SHUTOUT AS JACKETS BLANK DEVS

COLUMBUS: Sergei Bobrovsky made 33 saves for his third consecutive shutout and the Columbus Blue Jackets handed the New Jersey Devils their eighth straight loss with a 2-0 victory on Tuesday night. Bobrovsky shut out the Devils for the second time in three days as he made 20 saves in a 3-0 win on Sunday. Tuesday's shutout was his career-high sixth this season. Bobrovsky has not allowed a goal since the Canadiens' Alex Galchenyuk scored in overtime on Feb 28. Oliver Bjorkstrand and Cam Atkinson scored third-period goals for Columbus, which leads Pittsburgh by two points for second place in the Metropolitan Division.

BLUES 2, WILD 1

Vladimir Tarasenko and David Perron scored and Jake Allen made 32 saves and the Blues edged the Wild. Allen was 10.5 seconds away from a second straight shutout before Wild center Mikko Koivu threw a puck on net from near the blue line which bounced past Allen. Allen's scoreless streak had reached 159 minutes, 8.5 seconds as St. Louis won back-to-back games after losing five in a row. Perron scored his 13th goal of the season and Tarasenko added his 29th of the season to help new Blues coach Mike Yeo to his first win against his former team. Devan Dubnyk made 18 saves for Minnesota, which has lost two of its past three games.

FLYERS 6, SABRES 3

Radko Gudas had a goal and two assists, and the Flyers continued their late-season playoff push with a win over the Sabres. Jordan Weal and Travis Konecny had a goal and assist each, and Claude Giroux scored to snap a 12-game goal drought and cap a three-goal second-period outburst. Matt Read also scored while Steve Mason stopped 31 shots. The Flyers improved to 3-0-1 in their past four and vaulted ahead of idle Tampa Bay into 11th place in the Eastern Conference standings. Jack Eichel had two goals and assist for Buffalo to extend the NHL's longest active point streak to 11 games. Evander Kane had a goal and assist for the Sabres, who continued losing ground in the standings by dropping to 1-5-2 in their past eight. Robin Lehner stopped 24 shots and has allowed 24 goals in his past six games.

RANGERS 5, PANTHERS 2

Henrik Lundqvist made 43 saves to earn his 30th win of the season and lead the Rangers over the Panthers. Nick Holden, Kevin Hayes, and Chris Kreider scored goals for the Rangers. Tanner Glass had a goal and an assist. Pavel Buchnevich added an empty-net goal. Aaron Ekblad and Thomas Vanek scored for the Panthers and James Reimer allowed four goals on 19 shots before being replaced by Reto Berra with 6:46 left in the second. Berra, seeing his first NHL action since Dec. 9, 2015, stopped eight shots. New York won its fifth straight road game and is 24-8-0 on the road while Florida has won just once in its past six home games.

MAPLE LEAFS 3, RED WINGS 2

James van Riemsdyk broke out of a scoring slump, and the Maple Leafs snapped a five-game losing streak with a victory against the Red Wings. Alexey Marchenko and Nazem Kadri also scored for the Maple Leafs, who were 0-2-3 in their previous five games. Rookie Mitch Marner and Tyler Bozak each had two assists. Gustav Nyquist scored twice for the Red Wings, while Henrik Zetterberg extended his point streak to seven games with an assist on both goals. Frederik Andersen made 22 saves. Petr Mrazek, making his eighth straight start for Detroit, stopped 25 shots.

AVALANCHE 3, HURRICANES 1

Gabriel Landeskog and Tyson Barrie scored goals 46 seconds apart in the second period and the Avalanche beat the Hurricanes. Barrie also added two assists and Calvin Pickard had 25 saves for Colorado, which got a rare home win. The Avalanche are 9-21-2 at Pepsi Center and had lost 12 of their past 14 overall before rallying

NHL results/standings

Montreal 2, Vancouver 1 (OT); Anaheim 4, Nashville 3 (SO); Colorado 3, Carolina 1; NY Islanders 4, Edmonton 1; St. Louis 2, Minnesota 1; Philadelphia 6, Buffalo 3; Toronto 3, Detroit 2; NY Rangers 5, Florida 2; Columbus 2, New Jersey 0.

Western Conference					Eastern Conference									
Central Division					Atlantic Division									
W	L	OTL	GF	GA	PTS	W	L	OTL	GF	GA	PTS			
Minnesota	42	16	6	213	151	90	Montreal	38	21	8	185	166	84	
Chicago	42	18	5	198	164	89	Ottawa	36	22	6	170	167	78	
Nashville	32	24	10	195	188	74	Boston	34	26	6	182	174	74	
St. Louis	33	27	5	178	183	71	Toronto	29	22	14	197	195	72	
Winnipeg	30	31	6	200	209	66	Tampa Bay	30	26	9	179	181	69	
Dallas	27	29	10	186	211	64	Florida	29	25	11	162	183	69	
Colorado	18	44	3	126	215	39	Buffalo	27	28	12	169	196	66	
Pacific Division					Metropolitan Division									
San Jose	39	19	7	180	152	85	Washington	44	14	7	212	139	95	
Edmonton	35	23	8	188	174	78	Columbus	42	17	6	207	149	90	
Anaheim	34	22	10	172	168	78	Pittsburgh	40	16	8	223	180	88	
Calgary	36	26	4	179	182	76	NY Rangers	43	22	2	216	175	88	
Los Angeles	31	28	6	161	164	68	NY Islanders	31	23	11	192	194	73	
Vancouver	28	30	8	153	188	64	Philadelphia	31	26	8	170	193	70	
Arizona	23	35	7	157	210	53	Carolina	26	27	10	156	183	62	
Eastern Conference					New Jersey									
Atlantic Division					25					29	12	147	189	62

to beat the Hurricanes. Justin Faulk scored for the Hurricanes and Eddie Lack stopped 22 shots. Carolina is 2-5-3 in its past 10 games and is tied with New Jersey for last place in the Metropolitan Division.

ISLANDERS 4, OILERS 1

Anders Lee scored a pair of goals and the Islanders earned a victory over the Oilers. Joshua Ho-Sang, with his first career NHL goal, and Andrew Ladd also scored for the Islanders, who snapped a two-game losing skid.

Zack Kassian scored for the Oilers, who had a two-game winning streak snapped. The Islanders kicked off the scoring with 2:37 left in the first period as Ho-Sang scored on a power-play shot from the point that beat Oilers goalie Cam Talbot up high.

DUCKS 4, PREDATORS 3, SO

Patrick Eaves scored the only goal of the shootout in the fifth round, and Jonathan Bernier capped a 24-save performance with a perfect shootout in the Ducks' victory over the Predators. Rickard Rakell scored the tying goal late in the second period for the Ducks, who rallied

from a pair of two-goal deficits for a key victory in their playoff surge. Ryan Getzlaf had a goal and two assists, and Nick Ritchie also scored for Anaheim. Filip Forsberg scored a short-handed goal and Pekka Rinne made 39 saves for the Predators, who have lost three straight. Colin Wilson and Ryan Ellis scored early goals as the Predators opened a three-game California road trip with their fifth straight regular-season loss at Honda Center.

CANADIENS 2, CANUCKS 1

Paul Byron scored at 1:13 of overtime and the Canadiens extended their winning streak to six games with a victory over the Canucks. Torrey Mitchell also scored the Atlantic Division-leading Canadiens, who are 7-2 since head coach Claude Julien was hired. Montreal won 3-0 at home against the Canucks on Nov. 2. Goalie Carey Price made 27 saves. He has a shutout and only five goals allowed in his past five games - all wins. Michael Chaput scored for the Canucks, who had a modest two-game win streak snapped and are seven points back of St. Louis for the second wild-card spot. Vancouver goalie Ryan Miller made 36 saves. —AP

DEBATE RAGES ABOUT RONALDO, BENZEMA, BALE DESPITE REAL WIN

BARCELONA: Real Madrid coach Zinedine Zidane's insistence on Cristiano Ronaldo, Karim Benzema and Gareth Bale featuring together is under scrutiny after the Champions League holders were outplayed for long periods at Napoli despite reaching the quarter-finals. Real's expensively assembled attacking trio, nicknamed the 'BBC', made just seven passes between themselves during the 3-1 come-from-behind win in Tuesday's last 16 second leg, with Ronaldo and Bale not passing to each other once.

Despite a 3-1 lead from the first leg, Real struggled to cope with an onslaught of pressure from the Serie A side in a frenzied San Paolo stadium and trailed at halftime to Dries Mertens' strike after 24 minutes.

The 11-time European champions were stronger after the break and drew level with a header from a corner by inspirational captain Sergio Ramos six minutes into the second half.

An own goal by Mertens six minutes later, triggered by another Ramos header, put Real 2-1 up. Bale, who has recently returned from a three-month layoff with an ankle injury, was replaced by Lucas Vazquez 11 minutes later and Benzema came in the 77th for Alvaro Morata, who got their third in added time, sealing a 6-2 aggregate win.

Real's ragged performance despite the

result contrasted with a fluid display in the 4-1 La Liga win at Eibar on Saturday, when Benzema started alongside Marco Asensio and Lucas Vazquez in the absence of the injured Ronaldo and suspended Bale.

Vazquez and Asensio's work rate provided relief for Real's midfield and full backs, who are often overworked when Bale and Ronaldo are both on the pitch.

Real have conceded seven goals and taken five points in their three league games since Bale returned to the lineup.

The season-long debate in the Spanish media about whether Benzema, Bale and Ronaldo can be accommodated in the same team resurfaced before the return leg at Napoli, a poll on the website of the daily AS (As.com) showing the real fans were overwhelmingly against the trio starting together in Naples. Benzema reacted angrily to criticism of the attacking trio after the game, telling reporters: "They always focus on us three but we don't just score goals, we work very hard for the team, but every time there's a bad game they blame us."

Zidane also leapt to the defence of his forwards. "I don't agree that Bale didn't help out the defence or that Cristiano didn't help out on the wing, everyone is at fault for us not starting well," he said. — Reuters

GERMANY, TURKEY THE ONLY BIDDERS TO HOST EURO 2024

ZURICH: Germany and Turkey are the only bidders for the right to host soccer's 2024 European Championship finals, continental governing body UEFA announced yesterday.

The football federations of the two countries were the only ones to submit a declaration of interest before the March 3 deadline, UEFA said in a statement. "The respective national associations were both present at UEFA's headquar-

ters in Nyon to make their declarations official," UEFA added.

Denmark, Norway, Sweden and Finland had explored a joint bid but did not proceed. The potential hosts will now have to produce a full bid dossier by April next year with UEFA choosing the winner the following September.

Turkey has never hosted a major senior soccer tournament while West Germany hosted the 1974 World Cup

and 1988 European Championship and a re-united Germany staged the 2006 World Cup.

Turkey unsuccessfully bid to host Euro 2008 jointly with Greece and the 2012 finals on its own. It had also intended to bid for Euro 2020 before UEFA decided to spread the tournament around 13 cities across Europe.

"It's clear that there will be two strong bids for UEFA's showcase national

team competition, and it will be a tough decision to make," said UEFA general secretary Theodore Theodoridis. "UEFA is committed to a transparent bidding process."

Germany federation (DFB) president Reinhard Grindel said that "with our vast experience, our current stadium infrastructure and the basic conditions in Germany, we can stage an economic, first-class tournament."

His opposite number Yildirim Demirenen was hoping it would be fourth time lucky for his country. "Over the last few years, around 32 new stadiums have been built or are currently being constructed around the country," he said.

"With this level of investment, Turkey is proving that it is one of the world's leaders in its commitment to football infrastructure." — Reuters

NEWCASTLE DRAW LETS BRIGHTON CUT GAP

LONDON: Newcastle United's lead at the top of England's second-tier Championship was cut to three points after they could only draw 0-0 at Reading on Tuesday.

Second-place Brighton and Hove Albion bounced back from successive defeats with a 2-0 win at bottom club Rotherham United, while third-place Huddersfield Town beat Aston Villa 1-0.

Huddersfield trail Newcastle by nine points and Brighton by six, but have a game in hand, with the top two teams guaranteed automatic promotion. "The main thing for us is we have to be happy to take seven points from the past three away games," Newcastle manager Rafael Benitez told the BBC. "Today was a pity as I think in the first half we had so many clear chances that there could've been three points there." Newcastle striker Daryl Murphy saw a header cleared off the line at the Madejski Stadium, but Garath McCleary almost snatched an injury-time winner for Reading with a shot that grazed the bar.

Brighton went in front early in the second half through Anthony Knockaert at Rotherham, with substitute Solly March adding a second goal 11 minutes from the end. Huddersfield kept up the pressure on the leading pair thanks to defender Tommy Smith's 69th-minute goal at home to Villa. Leeds United remain fourth, three points

below Huddersfield, after a stoppage-time Tom Cairney goal saw them held to a 1-1 draw at Fulham. Tim Ream's own goal had given Leeds the lead at Craven Cottage, but midfielder Calvin Phillips's dismissal gave the home side the initiative and they levelled through Cairney at the death.

Sheffield Wednesday remain sixth, two points behind Reading, following a 1-1 draw at home to Burton Albion, who earned a share of the points through Jackson Irvine's sweet volley.

Ross Wallace had put Wednesday in front from long range effort in the 16th minute. Second-bottom Wigan Athletic boosted their survival hopes with a 1-0 win at Birmingham City that left them two points from safety. Third-bottom Bristol City fought back to draw 1-1 with Norwich City, while Blackburn Rovers claimed a 1-1 draw at home to Cardiff City courtesy of Derrick Williams' last-minute equaliser.

Wolverhampton Wanderers continue to sit one place above the drop zone after a goalless draw at Ipswich Town, but they retain two games in hand on most of the teams around them. Lasse Vibe scored twice as Brentford edged Nottingham Forest 3-2, Queens Park Rangers beat Barnsley 2-1 and Tom Barkhuizen's injury-time strike earned Preston North End a 1-1 draw at Derby County. — AFP



ROSTOV: Manchester United's players take part in a training session on the eve of the UEFA Europe League round of 16, first leg match between FC Rostov and Manchester United in Rostov yesterday. — AFP

SOCCER

NO ROONEY, NO GOALS AS UNITED SEEK EUROPEAN SALVATION IN RUSSIA

ROSTOV-ON-DON: With no Wayne Rooney and a squad looking for confidence, Manchester United head for the uneven Olimp-2 stadium surface to take on Rostov today and keep alive hopes of becoming one of the few teams to have won all three European cups.

United fans have been told not to wear their team's red colours in the Russian city to avoid re-igniting hooligan violence and Rostov coach Ivan Danilants promised a "classy performance" against the illustrious English side.

United won the European Cup in 1968, the Cup Winners' Cup in 1991 and Champions League in 1999 and 2008. But they have never won the Europa League nor the old UEFA Cup.

If successful this year, United would join Juventus, Ajax, Bayern Munich and Chelsea, who have already lifted all three European club trophies. Having won their first trophy under Jose Mourinho with a 3-2 win over Southampton in the League Cup final, United need a strong performance in the first leg in Rostov to open the road to the quarter-finals. That would take them into the draw with the winners from key ties such as Lyon v Roma, the all-German Schalke v Borussia Monchengladbach, Copenhagen v Ajax and Olympiakos v Besiktas.

Mourinho never lost in Russia with his previous clubs (Chelsea, Inter Milan and Real Madrid), but he is not happy going to Rostov, last season's Russian league runners-up, to play on the bumpy pitch.

ROSTOV WARNING

"It's a bad draw in every aspect. It's far and it's difficult," Mourinho told Man United official site. "It's far and comes in a very bad period for us, difficult because they're a very difficult team." United won their first trophy under Mourinho when they took the English League Cup final 3-2 against Southampton. But Mourinho admitted they were lucky and at the weekend saw his side held 1-1 by unfancied Bournemouth.

United are far from the Champions League qualifying places and Mourinho has expressed his disappointment at United's low scoring rate.

"We need to score goals - other teams with less chances score goals," Mourinho told his club's official site. "Against Southampton in the League Cup final, we had five chances and scored three but, against Bournemouth with more than 10 chances, we scored one goal."

Today the Reds will be without Eric Bailly, who was sent off in their round of 32 1-0 win at Saint-Etienne. United midfielder Juan Mata said it would be "a long trip that is going to test the strength of the team in every sense. The Russian side is particularly strong at home: this season they have defeated Bayern Munich and Ajax, for instance. That gives you an idea of how tough they are." Mourinho left Rooney and leftback Luke Shaw at home along with Bastian Schweinsteiger. Armenian forward Henrikh Mkhitaryan returns to the 20-man squad after recovering from an injury incurred just after scoring the St Etienne winner. Rostov sent a clear warning to the Red Devils when they routed Tomsk 6-0 on Friday. Rostov showed no signs of rustiness in their

first domestic match after the long winter break. But head coach Danilants said he and his men realised that Manchester United will be a completely different story. "Man United are a top-class team and to oppose them is an honourable and a pleasant task," he told the press. "It demands full mobilisation and colos-

sal responsibility. Hopefully, we will come into this match on top, both physically and mentally. The match is sold out and we're set to give our fans a classy performance."

Rostov will likely be at full-strength except for doubts over injured first-choice goalkeeper Soslan Dzhanyayev. — AFP

MINGS GETS FIVE-GAME BAN FOR IBRAHIMOVIC STAMP

LONDON: Bournemouth defender Tyrone Mings has been given a five-match ban for stamping on the head of Manchester United striker Zlatan Ibrahimovic, the Football Association said yesterday. Bournemouth said they were "extremely disappointed" with the decision, which they described as "extraordinary". Mings, 23, trod on Ibrahimovic's head during the first half of Bournemouth's 1-1 draw at United in the Premier League last Saturday. Ibrahimovic retaliated by elbowing Mings in the head, for which he accepted a three-game ban on Tuesday.

"AFC Bournemouth's Tyrone Mings will serve a five-match suspension, following an Independent Regulatory Commission hearing today," the FA said in a Twitter post.

"Mings was charged with violent conduct in relation to an incident in or around the 44th minute of the game against Manchester United." A Bournemouth statement said: "We will study the detailed reasons of the commission once they become available, but find it extraordinary that the charges can be

described as 'proven' when there is absolutely no evidence to prove the incident was intentional. "It is our strongly held belief-backed up by our relationship with the player and knowledge of his background and character-that it was an accidental collision. "Tyrone twice apologised to Ibrahimovic during the match for the accidental collision and also reiterated that there was no intent straight after the final whistle in a series of television interviews."

Match referee Kevin Friend did not spot either incident involving Mings and Ibrahimovic. As a result, they were referred to a panel of three former elite referees, who unanimously concluded that both offences merited red cards. Mings denied deliberately stamping on Ibrahimovic, saying: "That's not in my game. Hard and fair is how I like to tackle, but off-the-ball stuff like that isn't part of my game." He will miss Bournemouth's league games against West Ham United, Swansea City, Southampton, Liverpool and Chelsea and will not be available until the trip to Tottenham Hotspur on April 15. —AFP

PRESSURE MOUNTS AS WENGER MULLS ARSENAL FUTURE

LONDON: Arsene Wenger is under unprecedented pressure to end his storied 21-year tenure as Arsenal manager following their humiliating 10-2 aggregate defeat by Bayern Munich in the Champions League. Tuesday's abject 5-1 defeat in the second leg was preceded by a fan protest and ended in front of swathes of empty red seats at the Emirates Stadium. Yesterday's sports headlines spoke of "humiliation" and an "all-time low", while the players who helped Wenger turn Arsenal into the super-club they are today said the time for change had finally come.

"He looks like a lost man," Ian Wright, Arsenal's second-highest goal-scorer, said on BT Sport. "It just seems to be mounting up. You've got the fans, the protests. It's imploding." Though noisy, the pre-match protest was a low-key affair, attended by only around 200 fans, but the banners held and slogans chanted revealed the extent of the divisions within Arsenal's fan base over Wenger. The protestors' banners bore messages including "ENOUGH IS ENOUGH", "STUBBORN. STALE. CLUELESS" and, in reference to the two-year deal for Wenger that is reportedly on the table, "NO NEW CONTRACT". Some fans even chanted: "Arsene Wenger, you're killing our club!" Wenger, 67, has said he will make an announcement about his future either this month or next.

He is not thought to be under any pressure from above, with American majority shareholder Stan Kroenke said to be happy with Wenger given his repeated success in qualifying Arsenal for the Champions League. The retiring Kroenke, known as 'Silent Stan', was also the target of protests during the rout by Bayern, angry supporters urging him to "get out of our club".

But as Arsenal's most successful manager, Wenger will be allowed to determine the timing and nature of his departure. While he refused to be drawn on his future in Tuesday's post-match press conference, he gave an upbeat assessment of the club's current health. "I think this club is in great shape, but we're just going through a very

difficult situation at the moment," said the Frenchman.

SMIRKING SANCHEZ

The signs of stasis, however, have become impossible to ignore. Arsenal have gone out of the Champions League in the last 16 for the past seven seasons running and it is now 13 years since they last lifted the Premier League trophy.

The signings of Mesut Ozil and Alexis Sanchez, coupled with back-to-back FA Cup successes in 2014 and 2015, hinted at a return to former glories, but the two players have come to symbolise the current malaise. Ozil has become a ghost-like figure, seemingly incapable of rising to the big occasion, and while Sanchez continues to produce the goods on the pitch, he is becoming problematic off it.

The Chile forward was reported to have clashed with team-mates in training last week-reports Wenger denied-and was pictured supposedly smirking on the bench after being taken off against Bayern.

Both he and Ozil are stalling over new contracts. Publicly, the players continue to put on a united front, with right-back Hector Bellerin declaring "the whole team is behind the manager". But Britain's football writers believe the Bayern embarrassment represented a thrashing too far in the story of Arsenal and Arsene. "Arsene Wenger must go" was The Sun's stark verdict, while the Daily Mirror's chief football writer John Cross, who published a biography of Wenger in 2015, said the Bayern rout "must represent the endgame". With Arsenal having slipped out of the top four in the Premier League, and amid competition for places that is fiercer than ever, qualifying for the Champions League for a 19th successive season will be a battle. In the meantime, Arsenal return to the Emirates on Saturday for an FA Cup quarter-final against non-league Lincoln City. Wenger is chasing a record seventh triumph in the competition and, it seems increasingly likely, a glorious farewell. —AFP



FARO: Netherlands' players celebrate after scoring a goal during the Algarve Cup football match between Japan and Netherlands at Algarve stadium in Faro yesterday. — AFP



ANGERS: French former football player Dominique Colonna (C) speaks to the press as he arrives to attend a funeral ceremony of French football legend Raymond Kopa yesterday at the Saint-Maurice cathedral of Angers, western France. Kopa, winner of three European Cups with Real Madrid (1957, 1958, 1959) and laureate of the best player of the year award in 1958, died on March 3, 2017 at the age of 85. — AFP

Sports

Westbrook hits 58
in vain as Blazers
thwart ThunderFrance rout US
women to lift
She Believes Cup

THURSDAY, MARCH 9, 2017

AUSTRALIA DEFEND SMITH AS 'CHEAT' ROW ESCALATES Page 17



BARCELONA: Barcelona's Argentinian forward Lionel Messi (L) shoots against the Paris Saint-Germain players during the UEFA Champions League round of 16 second leg football match FC Barcelona vs Paris Saint-Germain FC at the Camp Nou stadium in Barcelona yesterday. — AFP

BARCA HIT PSG FOR SIX IN HISTORIC FIGHTBACK

BARCELONA: Sergi Roberto scored in the fifth minute of stoppage time as Barcelona capped a sensational Champions League fightback to thrash Paris Saint-Germain 6-1 and reach the quarter-finals yesterday.

Despite Luis Suarez's early opener, a Layvin Kurzawa own goal and Lionel Messi's penalty, Barca, who lost the first leg 4-0, looked down and out when Edison Cavani volleyed home what seemed to be the vital away goal for PSG. However, Neymar restored Barca's belief as he firstly fired home a sensational free-kick two minutes from time and then converted from the penalty spot.

And Roberto capped the biggest comeback in Champions League history when he stretched to turn home Neymar's dinked cross to the delight of a near 100,000 at a rocking Camp Nou, making the score 6-5 on aggregate.

Barca also enter the record books by reaching the quarter-finals for a 10th straight season.

Outgoing Barca coach Luis Enrique warned the French champions on Tuesday that his side were capa-

ble of scoring six and they needed the full 95 minutes to pull of a miracle revival.

No side had ever come back from a 4-0 first leg deficit in the Champions League, but after much pre-match hype of a historic turnaround, Barca truly believed when Suarez opened the scoring after just three minutes. The PSG defence was stationary as Marquinhos headed Rafinha's cross high into the air and Suarez nipped in ahead of the flapping goalkeeper Kevin Trapp to nod in despite Thomas Meunier's best efforts to clear off the line.

In a role reversal from the first leg, Barca's high pressing wasn't allowing the visitors any respite, whilst PSG failed to take advantage of the huge spaces in behind the Barca defence on the counter-attack.

Neymar inches away from delivering a spectacular second when he drilled just wide from well outside the area before Trapp easily collected a Suarez effort from an acute angle.

However, Barca's hopes were further raised five min-

utes before the break thanks to more shambolic PSG defending. Andres Iniesta reached Suarez's hopeful through ball and his backheel provoked Kurzawa into shanking the ball into his own net on his weaker right foot. The second period started just as the first ended as Barca edged closer to the history books when Neymar was clipped by the prone Meunier and, after consultation with one of his assistants, German referee Deniz Aytekin pointed to the spot.

Messi made no mistake with the penalty to rifle home his 11th Champions League goal of the season. Only when 3-0 down did PSG begin to come out in search of the crucial away goal and were nearly rewarded immediately as Meunier got to the by-line and his low cross was turned onto the post by Cavani.

The Uruguayan had to wait just 10 minutes more, though, to find the net. Kurzawa made amends for his earlier error by heading down a free-kick and Cavani connected sweetly on the volley to register his 38th and seemingly most important goal of the season.

PSG were then to rue to huge missed chances to put the tie completely beyond Barca. Firstly, Cavani should have had his second as he was played in by Draxler, but this time Marc-Andre ter Stegen stood up to block with an out-stretched leg.

PSG's two-goal hero from the first Angel di Maria had started on the bench, but the former Real Madrid man should have rubbed salt in Barca's wounds five minutes from time when he somehow skewed wide with just Ter Stegen to beat. Just when Barca looked down and out Neymar restored hope when he curled home a sensational free-kick high into the top corner. And as the match entered stoppage time, Barca were awarded a second controversial penalty when Suarez tumbled under a challenge from Marquinhos.

Neymar this time took responsibility to send Trapp the wrong way. And the Brazilian also showed a cool head amongst a mad final minute when he cut inside before chipping into the box for substitute Roberto to extend his right leg just enough to beat Trapp and leave PSG floored. — AFP

AUBAMEYANG HAT-TRICK SENDS DORTMUND THROUGH

DORTMUND: A hat-trick by Pierre-Emerick Aubameyang and Christian Pulisic's dazzling display fired Borussia Dortmund into the Champions League quarter-finals with a 4-0 thrashing of Benfica yesterday.

The result saw Dortmund win the round-of-16 tie 4-1 on aggregate after Aubameyang's early goal cancelled out Borussia's 1-0 defeat in Lisbon last month.

The Gabon hot-shot has now scored seven times in his last three games and has seven Champions League goals in as many matches this season.

He is on 28 goals for the season as Dortmund reached the last eight in Europe for the first time since 2013/14. But it fell to US international Pulisic, who only turns 19 in September, to net the Germans' crucial second on 59 minutes, which put Dortmund ahead for the first time on aggregate.

Pulisic, in for injured Germany winger Marco Reus, claimed his first Champions League goal and set up Aubameyang's opening goal in an impressive all-round display. After Kostas Mitroglou sealed Benfica's 1-0 first-leg victory, Dortmund took just four minutes to cancel out the advantage.

Ousmane Dembele's corner was flicked on by Pulisic to Aubameyang, who headed home at the far post to delight the sell-out Signal Iduna Park crowd.

It was redemption for the Gabon striker, who had a

night to forget in the first leg, missing four clear chances including a penalty in Lisbon.

After a strong start from the hosts, Benfica clawed their way back with captain Luisao heading straight at Dortmund goalkeeper Roman Burki from a free-kick midway through the half.

Dembele showed his youth, needlessly picking up a booking from English referee Martin Atkinson late in the first half for bitterly complaining after conceding a free-kick with a push on Andreas Samaris.

Benfica grew in confidence as the half wore on and Dortmund's defence wobbled, but it finished 1-0 at the break. Dortmund had a big let-off soon after when Lukasz Piszczek failed with a clearance, which Franco Cervi snapped up on the edge of the box, but his shot was blocked.

Aubameyang then squandered three golden chances at close range before Pulisic finally got the breakthrough. The US starlet chipped his shot over the advancing Ederson on 59 minutes after Piszczek's superb pass into the area.

Aubameyang grabbed his second just two minutes later when he stabbed home Marcel Schmelzer's pass.

He hit his third goal of the night on 85 minutes when Erik Durm's run and cross from the right handed him a simple tap-in. — AFP



DORTMUND: Dortmund's Pierre-Emerick Aubameyang celebrates after scoring his side's fourth goal during the Champions League round of 16, second leg, soccer match between Borussia Dortmund and Benfica in Dortmund, Germany, yesterday. — AP



DOLLAR STEADIES AS INVESTORS EYE US JOBS DATA, ECB



(From left to right) Nabil Abdelmalek, Sadeq Al Sarraf, Omar Alghanim, Antoine Daher are pictured during the meeting. — Photo by Yasser Al-Zayyat

GULF BANK RECORDS A PROFIT OF KD 43M

KUWAIT: Gulf Bank concluded its Annual General Meeting at the Jumeriah Messilah Hotel Kuwait yesterday. Shareholders approved the Bank's audited financial statements for the year ended 31 December 2016 and endorsed the Board of Directors recommendation of a cash dividend of 7 fils per share, an increase of 75% compared to 4 fils per share in the prior year.

Gulf Bank recorded a net profit of KD 43 million for the year ended 2016, a 10% increase over the previous year. Loan quality continued to improve; gross credit cost (specific provisions plus write-offs) declined by 16% to KD 72 million compared to 85 million in 2015. Non-performing loans (NPLs) reached KD 93 million or 2.4% NPL ratio, levels that have not been seen since 2007. The Bank's capital adequacy ratio is 18.5%, which is well above the regulatory requirement of 14%.

The capital of the Bank was enhanced by the successful issuance of KD 100 million of Tier II capital in May 2016. The assets of the Bank were steady at KD 5,467 million, while total shareholders' equity was up by 7% to KD 573 million. In terms of profitability, the Bank's earnings per share for the year ended 2016 was 15 fils compared to 13 fils in 2015. The return on average assets was 0.79% compared to 0.72% in 2015, and the return on average equity was 7.73% compared to 7.43% for the previous year.

Commenting on the 2016 results, Omar Kutayba Alghanim, Chairman of Gulf Bank, said: "It is my pleasure to report to you on the performance of Gulf Bank in 2016, we have transformed the Bank quite dramatically in the last several years and we continue to achieve significant milestones and meet key strategic goals. Today, our Bank has strong revenue-generating capacity as well as a clean and sound balance sheet. We have a growing Consumer Banking franchise and a more diversified Wholesale Banking business; we have reduced our concentrations in the real estate and non-Bank financial sectors, reduced non-performing loans, and increased our loan loss coverage."

Alghanim continued: "As you can see this has resulted in a much stronger capital base with a higher level and quality of earnings. For the third consecutive year, the Bank achieved double-digit net income growth in a very competitive industry and a challenging economic environment. We increased our cash dividends by 75% to 7 fils per share. Our capital adequacy is strong at 18.5% and is well above the regulatory requirement. For the first time in the last nine years, non-performing loans fell below KD 100 million or 2.4% of total loans. Additionally, we continue to enjoy an "A" rating from the top three international rating agencies. Gulf Bank is well positioned to continue its progress and growth."

Gulf Bank Rated 'A'

Gulf Bank is rated (A3) Moody's Investors Services; (A+) Fitch Ratings; and (A-) Standard & Poor's -S&P. During this year, all three rating agencies affirmed the Bank's ratings, its stable outlook and revenue generating ability. These affirmations confirm our dedication to creating value for our stakeholders and building a strong and safe bank.

Innovative Products

Part of Gulf Bank's growth strategy is its commitment to developing and launching products and services that resonate with our corporate clients and retail customers. On the corporate side, by developing a robust transaction banking platform, the Bank enabled the automation of corporate and customer employees' salary processing, corporate transaction approvals, as well



The attendees at Gulf Bank AGM

as trade finance transactions and cash management requests through an online portal. This automation has led to further improved customer service and a reduction in operational risk.

On the retail side, in the second quarter of 2016, Gulf Bank launched its new mobile banking application and digital banking portal, raising the market standard for security and ease of use. The Bank's face recognition mobile banking app was not only the first of its kind in Kuwait, but was unique in recording a 156% increase in the Bank's digital customer base. Additionally, the Bank's customer loyalty program, Gulf Rewards and the Gulf Bank Entertainer Application, continued to exceed expectations. It is driving growth in the credit cards business, increasing market share, as well as winning a 'Best in the Middle East' award for its simplicity and breadth of customer benefits. To better serve customers with special needs, we have started installing special ATM machines and have trained select branch staff to communicate in sign language.

Awards

Gulf Bank's growth and soundness was strongly acknowledged by the financial services and banking industry on regional and international levels. Gulf Bank won The Asian Banker regional awards for: "Best Credit Card Product in the Middle East for Gulf Rewards"; "Internet and Mobile Security Technology Implementation of the Year in Middle East and Africa"; and "Enterprise Risk Technology Implementation of the Year in Middle East and Africa." Furthermore, at the end of 2016, Gulf Bank was notified by Guinness World Records that it would win the 'largest prize linked to a bank account' in the world for its Al Danah account's KD One Million prize. Gulf Bank received the award during the annual Al Danah draw that took place on 5 January 2017.

Human Capital Initiatives

Gulf Bank strongly believes in investing in human capital and is proud that 66% of its workforce is Kuwaiti. The Bank is committed to growing that percentage, increasing gender parity, and a workplace in which advancement is based on per-

formance and measured on achievement. The Bank's Ajjal Graduate Development Program, delivered in cooperation with Institute of Banking Studies (IBS) Kuwait, identifies and nurtures young Kuwaiti talent early in their careers to develop them into 'holistic bankers' and prepare them for future leadership positions. Two classes have successfully completed the intensive 9-month program and another class has begun their training.

Corporate Social Responsibility

Gulf Bank's corporate social responsibility remains dedicated to serving all the people of Kuwait and contributing to the development of our beloved country. Its focus continues to be on education, entrepreneurship, heritage, and women's empowerment.

INJAZ- Kuwait

To address one of the major challenges facing our region, the Bank continues to sponsor INJAZ-

Kuwait to deliver Arabic and English language education programs on entrepreneurial and leadership skills to help young people build successful careers.

Gender Diversity

As Gulf Bank is committed to gender parity and to further understand key motivating factors and challenges women face in the workplace, the Bank held the "Women in the Corporate World" non-profit conference in May 2016. Leading international, regional and local speakers and participants attended; the Bank believes that initiatives such as this conference not only improve internal company cultures, but also positively reflect on society and advance the region both economically and in a socially responsible direction.

Memorial Pearl Diving Journey

Sponsorship of the Memorial Pearl Diving Journey continues to form a key part of the

Bank's long-term commitment to preserving the heritage and continuing the traditions of Kuwait. Recreating a pearl diving journey each year helps to remind young Kuwaitis of the difficulties and challenges faced by their forefathers and helps uphold the traditions and values of our ancestors.



Omar Alghanim, Gulf Bank Chairman

Now in its second year, the 'Gulf Bank 642 Marathon' continues to highlight the importance of health and fitness. This event caters to all levels of fitness and to families, with four different distance categories (5km, 10km, 21km, 42km), and had record turnout.

Participants included individuals, families, teams of walkers and runners from various backgrounds and organizations. This is the only marathon in Kuwait to have its 21km and 42 km distance categories internationally accredited, meaning those races appear in the international calendar of races.

This year the 'Gulf Bank 642 Marathon' partnered with the UNHCR (United Nations High Commissioner on Refugees), also known as the UN Refugee Agency, and its 'Voices for Refugees' initiative. This online awareness and fundraising campaign is to stand with refugees to make their voices heard and humanize their plight. In conclusion, Alghanim said: "I would like to thank our valued customers for their continued trust in Gulf Bank. I would also like to extend our sincere appreciation to our Shareholders, Board of Directors, the Central Bank of Kuwait and the Capital Markets Authority for their ongoing support throughout the year. Moreover, I thank our staff for their dedicated service and for being part of the Gulf Bank family."

SAUDI ENERGY MINISTER KEEPING CLOSE EYE ON US OIL PRODUCERS

HOUSTON: Saudi Arabia's Energy Minister says OPEC production cuts are working to bolster crude prices and his country will look at whether other oil-producing nations are living up to their promises to curtail pumping before deciding whether to extend the cutbacks beyond this summer. In a nod to America's ability to offset much of the OPEC cuts by pumping oil from shale formations, Khalid Al-Falih said Tuesday that he is watching the US producers closely after US oil production bounced back quickly as prices rose last year.

OPEC, whose members account for about one-third of global oil output, agreed to cut production beginning in January by 1.2 million barrels a day. Other countries joined in, pushing the total to nearly 1.8 million barrels. By independent accounts, those targets have mostly been met, although some producers, like non-

OPEC Russia, have fallen short. "Some have not lived up to expectations," Al-Falih said, "but as a whole if you look at the totality the agreement is working well."

According to the Energy Department, US production rose to an average of 8.8 million barrels a day in the fourth quarter after dropping below 8.7 million barrels in the third quarter. The department forecast increases to 9.2 million barrels a day this year and 9.7 million - a possible record - in 2018 in a market outlook issued Tuesday. Oil prices have stabilized above \$50 a barrel - a rebound from early 2016, when they plunged below \$30 a barrel - although some analysts had expected closer to \$60. The US benchmark closed at \$53.14 a barrel Tuesday, while the global benchmark ended at \$55.92.

Saudi Arabia is the world's biggest producer and is carrying the heaviest load of production

cuts. While other OPEC members such as Venezuela and Nigeria are in far worse shape economically, the Saudis too feel the pinch. The kingdom needs the money to pay for social programs, raising questions about how long and how low it will go with production cuts, which expire in July. In deciding whether to favor extending the cuts, his country will look at global oil inventories as the midyear deadline approaches, Al-Falih said. Speaking at a conference known as CERAWEEK by IHS Markit, he also said growth in developing nations means that demand for oil will remain strong for the year despite efforts to curb carbon emissions, advances in energy efficiency, and competition from renewable energy. OPEC Secretary-General Mohammad Barkindo of Nigeria met during the Houston conference with CEOs of several leading US shale-oil operators. — AP

ADM AND ALMARAI AMONG COMPANIES EYEING SAUDI GRAINS AGENCY ASSET SALE

CASILLO, TAV, AL RAJHI ALSO POTENTIALLY INTERESTED

ABU DHABI: A partnership of US agribusiness giant Archer Daniels Midland Co and Saudi foods group Almarai is among potential bidders for Saudi Grains Organization's milling operations, the kingdom's sole supplier, sources aware of the matter said. Italian wheat supplier Casillo Group and a partnership of Turkey's TAV Group, a construction and airports conglomerate, and Saudi Arabia's Al Rajhi Holding Group, a real estate concern, are also considering bids, the sources said.

The state-owned Saudi Grains Organization (SAGO), which handles the kingdom's grains purchases, is preparing to sell off its milling operations by placing them in four specially formed corporate entities while retaining other functions. No details of the likely price of the milling operations were yet available, and it was hard to be precise as SAGO had never been run for profit, according to the sources.

Saudi Arabia is selling off parts of several state bodies in a bid to deal with lower oil prices and diversify its economy under its "Vision 2030" reform plan. SAGO, one of the world's largest wheat and barley buyers, is expected to be among the first to conduct asset sales, making it a model for how others might proceed.

Both SAGO and its financial adviser HSBC declined to comment on the agency's privatization plans. Almarai had no comment. ADM declined to comment on "rumors or speculation". Representatives from the other companies said to be considering bids were not immediately available for comment.

Deadline

SAGO is considering a deadline of as early as the third quarter of this year for pre-qualification of bidders, although that could change, the sources said. One of the sources said the kingdom was keen for Saudi entities, in partnership with international companies with technical expertise, to be part of the bidding process. SAGO said in January it had set up four milling companies in advance of a privatization planned for later this year. This came after the Saudi cabinet in 2015 approved the establishment of four joint-stock companies bundling the SAGO's wheat and feed milling operations, to be overseen by the state-owned PIF, Saudi Arabia's sovereign wealth fund, in coordination with SAGO.

According to a document by consulting group strategy& posted on SAGO's website, the

agency would divide up its milling operations between those companies. SAGO would turn itself into a regulator and retain control of wheat purchasing and storage, it said. A separate, more recent draft of the privatization plan seen by Reuters added that the four companies would be expected to buy wheat from the government at subsidized rates and sell the output at fixed prices. SAGO's 12 mills currently have a combined milling capacity of 13,980 metric tons per day, it said. According to the strategy& document, two more milling operations are expected to be on stream by 2025.

Saudi Arabia has become a major importer of wheat and barley since abandoning plans for self-sufficiency in 2008, as farming in the desert drained scarce water supplies. One of the primary aims of the SAGO privatization drive is to allow it to expand its grain storage operations in order to cater to the kingdom's fast-growing population, one of the sources said. The agency currently imports the kingdom's entire wheat supply of around 3.5 million metric tons a year. It has said that demand for wheat is expected to grow at an annual rate of 3.2 percent to reach 4.5 million tons a year by 2025, largely due to population growth. —Reuters



F-150 'DEPENDABILITY AWARD'

KUWAIT: American truck owners who value Built Ford Tough pickups are taking in some more great news: Ford F-150 is JD Power's 2017 Vehicle Dependability Study award recipient for large light duty pickup. "All customers demand quality vehicles, and truck customers depend on toughness and reliability most of all," said Bennie Fowler, Ford group vice president for quality. "That's why Built Ford Tough is much more than a slogan. It's how we develop the F-150 and how we deliver on our promise to customers to continuously improve America's favorite pickup truck."

In January, Ford celebrated a major milestone as F-Series became the top-selling truck in the United States for the 40th consecutive year and the best-selling vehicle for 35 years. Ford has sold more than 26 million F-Series trucks since January 1977. Ford research shows F-150's dependability - paired with its capability and toughness - is a key differentiator for the truck over the competition. Truck shoppers say they prioritize a pickup truck's quality above all other attributes.

In addition to F-150 ranking highest among large light duty pickups, Ford takes home second most-improved brand in a tie in the annual J.D. Power Vehicle Dependability Study. To explore the 2017 Ford F-150 truck line up, please visit the Alghanim Auto New Vehicle Showroom in the Shuwaikh Industrial Area, opposite from the Classical Car Museum and Sirbb Circuit. Working hours are 9AM to 10PM from Saturday to Thursday and 2PM to 8PM on Fridays. For more information, please call the customer care center at 1898900; visit www.fordalghanim.com; or on social media @FordAlghanim.



National Bank of Kuwait Financial Markets Daily Report								
At 02:00 PM Previous Day								
Global Stock Indices								
Index	Previous Close	Last Price	Change	Daily Performance %	Yearly Performance %			
Dow Jones	20,954.34	20,924.76	-29.58	▼	-0.14	5.88		
NASDAQ	5,849.18	5,833.93	-15.25	▼	-0.26	8.37		
S&P 500	2,375.31	2,368.39	-6.92	▼	-0.29	5.79		
Financial Times	7,338.99	7,335.40	-3.59	▼	-0.05	2.70		
DAX	11,966.14	11,999.22	33.08	▲	0.28	4.51		
CAC 40	4,955.00	4,949.91	-5.09	▼	-0.10	1.80		
Swiss	8,623.97	8,614.21	-9.76	▼	-0.11	4.80		
Nikkei 225	19,344.15	19,254.03	-90.12	▼	-0.47	0.73		
Topix	1,555.04	1,550.25	-4.79	▼	-0.31	2.08		
Hang Seng	23,681.07	23,782.27	101.20	▲	0.43	8.10		
Straits Times	3,130.44	3,145.29	14.85	▲	0.47	9.18		
MENA Stock Indices								
Index	Previous Close	Last Price	Change	Daily Performance %	Yearly Performance %			
Kuwait	6,665.90	6,651.65	-14.25	▼	-0.21	13.77		
Saudi Arabia	6,993.13	6,966.09	-27.04	▼	-0.39	-3.01		
Dubai	3,502.36	3,530.59	28.23	▲	0.81	-0.81		
Abu Dhabi	4,591.52	4,590.76	-0.76	▼	-0.02	0.99		
Bahrain	1,332.98	1,336.53	3.54	▲	0.27	9.22		
Qatar	10,416.89	10,361.49	-55.40	▼	-0.53	-0.19		
Oman	5,795.71	5,801.27	5.56	▲	0.10	0.22		
Lebanon	1,227.04	1,230.48	3.44	▲	0.28	1.18		
Jordan	2,213.15	2,201.16	-11.99	▼	-0.54	1.97		
Egypt	12,677.55	12,701.19	23.64	▲	0.19	2.69		
Morocco	11,946.11	11,947.41	1.30	▲	0.01	2.59		
Tunisia	5,575.42	5,583.79	8.37	▲	0.15	1.58		
Global Currencies Exchange Rate								
Currency	Kuwaiti Dinar	Saudi Riyal	US Dollar	Euro	Sterling Pound	Swiss Franc	Japanese Yen	Australian Dollar
Kuwait Dinar		12.1582	3.2557	3.0834	2.6798	3.2977	371.32	4.3048
Saudi Riyal	0.08225		0.2678	0.2536	0.2204	0.2712	30.54	0.3541
US Dollar	0.30715	3.7344		0.9471	0.8231	1.0129	114.05	1.3222
Euro	0.32432	3.9432	1.0559		0.8691	1.0698	120.46	1.3976
Sterling Pound	0.37316	4.5369	1.2149	1.1506		1.2311	138.60	1.6071
Swiss Franc	0.30324	3.6868	0.9873	0.9348	0.8123		112.62	1.3054
Japanese Yen	0.00269	0.0327	0.0088	0.0083	0.0072	0.0089		0.0116
Australian Dollar	0.23230	2.8243	0.7563	0.7155	0.6222	0.7661	86.26	
MENA Currencies Exchange Rate								
Currency	US Dollar	Kuwaiti Dollar	Saudi Riyal	Bahraini Dinar	Qatari Riyal	Omani Riyal	Emirates Dirham	Egyptian Pound
US Dollar		0.30715	3.7344	0.3740	3.6268	0.3831	3.6574	17.7900
Kuwaiti Dinar	3.2557		12.1582	1.2177	11.8079	1.2474	11.9075	57.9196
Saudi Riyal	0.2678	0.08225		0.1002	0.9712	0.1026	0.9794	4.7638
Bahraini Dinar	2.6736	0.82119	9.9842		9.6965	1.0243	9.7784	47.5630
Qatari Riyal	0.2757	0.08469	1.0297	0.1031		0.1056	1.0084	4.9052
Omani Riyal	2.6101	0.80169	9.7471	0.9762	9.4662		9.5461	46.4333
Emirates Dirham	0.2734	0.08398	1.0211	0.1023	0.9916	0.1048		4.8641
Egyptian Pound	0.0562	0.01727	0.2099	0.0210	0.2039	0.0215	0.2056	
Global Interest Rates								
Currency	1-Week	1-Month	3-Month	6-Month	1-Year			
Kuwaiti Dinar	0.75	1.19	1.44	1.75	2.06			
US Dollar	0.71	0.85	1.10	1.42	1.79			
Euro	-0.40	-0.39	-0.35	-0.24	-0.11			
Sterling Pound	0.24	0.26	0.35	0.50	0.72			
Swiss Franc	-0.79	-0.79	-0.72	-0.66	-0.50			
Australian Dollar	1.57	1.63	1.61	1.63	1.68			
Japanese Yen	0.00	-0.06	-0.02	0.02	0.13			
Global Bond Yields								
Country	2-Year	5-Year	10-Year	30-Year				
United States	1.33	2.07	2.54	3.13				
Europe	-0.89	-0.45	0.35	1.16				
United Kingdom	0.08	0.57	1.19	1.79				
Commodities								
Index	Previous Close	Last Price	Change	Daily Performance %	Yearly Performance %			
Kuwait Oil	53.57	52.99	-0.58	▼	-1.08	0.67		
Brent	54.42	53.91	-0.51	▼	-0.94	-0.44		
West Texas	52.73	52.63	-0.10	▼	-0.19	-1.93		
Gold	1215.57	1213.35	-2.22	▼	-0.18	5.24		
Silver	17.49	17.41	-0.07	▼	-0.42	8.85		

EXCHANGE RATES

AL-MUZAINI EXCHANGE CO.

ASIAN COUNTRIES

Japanese Yen	2.697
Indian Rupees	4.597
Pakistani Rupees	2.921
Sri Lankan Rupees	2.026
Nepali Rupees	2.880
Singapore Dollar	218.270
Hongkong Dollar	39.463
Bangladesh Taka	3.823
Philippine Peso	6.092
Thai Baht	8.737

GCC COUNTRIES

Saudi Riyal	81.775
Qatari Riyal	84.224
Omani Riyal	796.388
Bahraini Dinar	814.270
UAE Dirham	83.490

ARAB COUNTRIES

Egyptian Pound - Cash	21.800
Egyptian Pound - Transfer	17.398
Yemen Riyal/for 1000	1.231
Tunisian Dinar	134.260
Jordanian Dinar	431.710
Lebanese Lira/for 1000	2.043
Syrian Lira	2.185
Morocco Dirham	30.799

EUROPEAN & AMERICAN COUNTRIES

US Dollar Transfer	306.450
Euro	325.300
Sterling Pound	375.550
Canadian dollar	229.380
Turkish lira	83.620

Swiss Franc	303.870
Australian Dollar	234.280
US Dollar Buying	305.250

GOLD

20 Gram	249.690
10 Gram	127.690
5 Gram	64.690

DOLLARCO EXCHANGE CO. LTD

Rate for Transfr	Selling Rate
US Dollar	306.100
Canadian Dolla	228.900
Sterling Pound	374.925
Euro	324.880
Swiss Frank	311.915
Bahrain Dinar	811.445
UAE Dirhams	83.730
Qatari Riyals	84.955
Saudi Riyals	82.555
Jordanian Dinar	432.905
Egyptian Pound	17.640
Sri Lankan Rupees	2.027
Indian Rupees	4.592
Pakistani Rupees	2.919
Bangladesh Taka	3.852
Philippines Peso	6.088
Cyprus pound	168.095
Japanese Yen	3.690
Syrian Pound	2.430
Nepalese Rupees	3.870
Malaysian Ringgit	69.700
Chinese Yuan Renminbi	44.805
Thai Bhat	9.715
Turkish Lira	82.900

BAHRAIN EXCHANGE COMPANY WLL

CURRENCY

BUY	SELL
British Pound	0.367030 0.377030
Czech Korune	0.003949 0.015949
Danish Krone	0.039442 0.044442
Euro	0.317933 0.326933
Norwegian Krone	0.032145 0.037345
Romanian Leu	0.071088 0.071088
Slovakia	0.009195 0.019195
Swedish Krona	0.029913 0.034913
Swiss Franc	0.295573 0.306573
Turkish Lira	0.077967 0.088267

Australasia

Australian Dollar	0.224187 0.236187
New Zealand Dollar	0.206924 0.216424

America

Canadian Dollar	0.222951 0.231951
Georgina Lari	0.138411 0.138411
US Dollars	0.302350 0.306750
US Dollars Mint	0.302850 0.306750

Asia

Bangladesh Taka	0.003505 0.004089
Chinese Yuan	0.042940 0.046440
Hong Kong Dollar	0.037372 0.040122
Indian Rupee	0.002640 0.004737
Indonesian Rupiah	0.000018 0.000024

Japanese Yen	0.002608 0.002788
Kenyan Shilling	0.002980 0.002980
Korean Won	0.000257 0.000272
Malaysian Ringgit	0.065174 0.071174
Nepalese Rupee	0.002967 0.003137
Pakistan Rupee	0.002644 0.002934
Philippine Peso	0.005999 0.006299
Sierra Leone	0.000038 0.000044
Singapore Dollar	0.211775 0.221775
South African Rand	0.017583 0.026083
Sri Lankan Rupee	0.001661 0.002241
Taiwan	0.009802 0.009982
Thai Baht	0.008390 0.008940

Arab

Bahraini Dinar	0.806293 0.814793
Egyptian Pound	0.012922 0.022175
Iranian Riyal	0.000085 0.000086
Iraqi Dinar	0.000195 0.000255
Jordanian Dinar	0.426566 0.435566
Kuwaiti Dinar	1.000000 1.000000
Lebanese Pound	0.000153 0.000253
Moroccan Dirhams	0.020184 0.044184
Nigerian Naira	0.000403 0.001038
Omani Riyal	0.789553 0.795233
Qatar Riyal	0.083363 0.084813
Saudi Riyal	0.080633 0.081933
Syrian Pound	0.001300 0.001520
Tunisian Dinar	0.129989 0.137989
Turkish Lira	0.077967 0.088267
UAE Dirhams	0.082011 0.083711
Yemeni Riyal	0.000996 0.001076

PHILIPPINES AIMS FOR 'GOLDEN AGE OF INFRASTRUCTURE'

MANILA: Desperately needed airports and trains are part of Philippine President Rodrigo Duterte's envisioned "golden age of infrastructure", but graft, red tape and other perennial problems threaten the \$170-billion plan. Unprecedented influxes of money from China and Japan are key planks of the hoped-for building frenzy, which aims to rectify decades of under-spending that has been one of the main anchors on the Philippine economy. Decrepit light rail lines in the capital of Manila, which snake above ever-worsening traffic that has come to be known as "Carmageddon", are among the most obvious symbols of the infrastructure problems.

"The city is really suffering now from lack of mobility, not only in terms of mobility, it's really the total absence of infrastructure," Duterte said last week as he described Manila as "decaying". Duterte and his aides have repeatedly said the six years of his administration will be the "golden age of infrastructure", with a record \$168 billion to be spent on 5,000 projects across the nation.

If the plans come to fruition, infrastructure spending would reach 7.2 percent of the gross domestic product by 2022, when Duterte is due to step down a huge increase from 1.8 percent in 2011. The Philippines ranks 95th out of 138 countries for quality of infrastructure, and behind most of its Southeast Asian neighbors, Japanese-based financial services group Nomura said in a recent report. It said the lack of infrastructure was a huge drag on economic development, citing a Japan International Cooperation Agency estimate of traffic costs in Manila alone as equivalent to four percent of GDP.

Ambitions curtailed

Infrastructure spending started to rise



MANILA: Workers are seen on scaffolding at a construction site for an expressway in Manila yesterday. — AFP

during the administration of Benigno Aquino, who stepped down last year, but his much more ambitious plans were curtailed by many problems that will also confront Duterte. "Financing is the least of the problems," transport and infrastructure consultant Rene Santiago told AFP, pointing to an abundance of government funds plus cashed-up local businesses and eager foreign investors. "The biggest obstacle is the implementation capacity of the government infrastructure agencies." Santiago, chief executive of Manila-based business consultancy Bellweather Group, said the government did not have enough personnel with the capabilities or experience to oversee such a massive spending plan.

Another major issue is corruption. Aquino was heavily criticized in some quarters for not spending more on infrastructure, but he said he had to slow down the contract-awarding process in an effort to increase transparency and minimize graft. About 10 to 30 percent of an infrastructure project's cost is typically lost to corruption, according to Vincent Lazatin, executive director of the Transparency and Accountability Network in Manila.

Lazatin said this rose to 50 percent when congressman were directly involved in allocating national funds in a system known as "pork barrel". In a massive corruption scandal unearthed during the Aquino administration, 200 lawmakers were implicated in such scams. But, as part of an infamous "culture of impunity", few have been brought to justice. Lazatin warned that infrastructure projects financed by foreign partners would also be vulnerable to corruption. "It is in the negotiation process (between the Philippines and the donor nation) that deals can be made that are off the books," Lazatin said. — AFP



HUAIBEI: Chinese employees work on micro and special motors for mobile phones at a factory in Huaibei, east China's Anhui province. — AFP

CHINA POSTS FIRST MONTHLY TRADE DEFICIT IN 3 YEARS; IMPORTS SOAR

DEFICIT COMES AS TENSIONS WITH US GROW

BEIJING: China unexpectedly posted its first trade gap in three years in February as a construction boom pushed imports much higher than expected and as increasing US protectionist rhetoric casts a spotlight on the export giant's trade position. The upbeat import reading reinforced the growing view that economic activity in China picked up in the first two months of the year, adding to a global manufacturing revival.

That could give China's policymakers more confidence to press ahead this year with oft-delayed and painful structural reforms such as tackling a rapid build-up in debt. "We suspect that this largely reflects the boost to import values from the recent jump in commodity price inflation, but it also suggests that domestic demand remains resilient," Julian Evans-Pritchard at Capital Economics said in a note. The surprise monthly deficit also comes as US President Donald Trump focuses increased attention on China's large and persistent run on trade surpluses with the US and as global efforts to ward off trade protectionism face growing difficulties.

China's imports surged 38.1 percent from a year earlier, the biggest increase since February 2012, official data showed yesterday, while exports unexpectedly fell 1.3 percent. That left the country with a trade deficit of \$9.15 billion for the month, the General Administration of

Customs said. Most analysts, however, attributed the rare trade gap to distortions caused by the long Lunar New Year celebrations, which began in late January this year but fell in February in 2016.

Many businesses shut for a week or more and factory production and port operations can be significantly affected. "All deficits since 2005 have been in either the Lunar New Year month or in one of the months around the Lunar New Year month," ING's Chief Asia Economist Tim Condon wrote in a note. "Like those earlier ones, we expect February's to be a one-off and the full-year trade surplus will be close to 2016's 3.4 trillion yuan."

Still, combined January and February data showed China's trade rose 13.3 percent from the same period a year earlier, suggesting real improvement in underlying demand at home and abroad. That also jives with strong China factory activity surveys which showed growth in both output and orders is accelerating. "Looking ahead, we expect external demand to remain fairly strong during the coming quarters which should continue to support exports," Evans-Pritchard said. But he added that it was unlikely the current pace of import growth can be sustained as the impact of higher commodity prices will start to drop out of the calculations in coming months.

Analysts polled by Reuters had expected

February shipments from the world's largest exporter to have risen 12.3 percent in dollar-terms, an improvement from a 7.9 percent rise in January. Imports had been expected to rise 20 percent, after rising 16.7 percent in January. That would have produced a trade surplus of \$25.75 billion in February, roughly half that recorded in January. China's February trade surplus with the United States fell to \$10.42 billion, the smallest since February 2014. China exports to the US fell 4.2 percent, while its imports from the US rose 38 percent.

Commodity boom

China's first-quarter economic growth could accelerate to 7 percent year-on-year, from 6.8 percent in the last quarter, economists at OCBC wrote in a note on Monday, while adding that the pace may start softening in spring. As the government ramps up infrastructure spending and developers rush to complete new housing projects, steel mills are consuming more iron ore and coking coal to meet demand. With the economy on much steadier footing than a year ago, the government has trimmed its economic growth target to around 6.5 percent this year, Premier Li Keqiang said in his work report at the opening of parliament on Sunday. The economy grew 6.7 percent last year, the slowest pace in 26 years. — Reuters

JAPANESE GDP REVISED UP AS CAPEX RISES AT FASTEST IN ALMOST 3 YEARS

GROWTH PICTURE IMPROVES, BUT RISKS REMAIN

TOKYO: Japan's economy grew more than earlier estimated in the fourth quarter as capital expenditure grew at its fastest in almost three years, welcome news for policymakers as they begin to discuss how to wind

down years of massive stimulus. The economy grew an annualized 1.2 percent in October-December, less than the median estimate for 1.6 percent annualized growth but more than the preliminary reading of a 1.0 percent

annualized expansion. The figure translates into quarter-on-quarter growth of 0.3 percent, versus a preliminary reading of 0.2 percent growth and the median estimate for 0.4 percent growth. A stronger pace of growth will be a boon to the government as policymakers have been counting on an increase in business investment to drive future expansion and increase low productivity.

However, growth is still not robust enough to generate sustained inflation that the Bank of Japan wants, and the risk of rising protectionism could discourage Japanese exporters from raising wages, seen as key to boosting consumption and economic activity at home. "The economy will remain in recovery mode, because we are seeing the benefits of capital expenditure from manufacturers and the construction sector," said Shuji Tonouchi, senior market economist at Mitsubishi UFJ Morgan Stanley Securities.

"I am a little worried about the strength of consumer spending. I am still not sure how protectionism will materialize, but this is also a potential risk." Private consumption registered no growth in October-December, the same as preliminary data. Sluggish household spending has kept the country in prolonged deflation and been a key challenge for the BOJ in meeting its 2 percent price goal via its massive bond buying program. Households cut spending for the 11th straight month in January even as the job market tightened further, separate data showed earlier this month. Private consumption accounts for around 60 percent of GDP.

Stronger capex

The capital expenditure component of GDP rose 2.0 percent from the previous quarter, which was more than the forecast for 1.7 percent growth, and faster than the preliminary 0.9 percent. The revised data showed capital expenditure grew at the fastest since a 2.3 percent quarterly rise in January-March 2014. Increased investment from the real estate sector, construction companies, food processing companies and electronics makers drove gains in capex, a Cabinet Office official said. Some economists expect capital expenditure to increase further as companies will soon have to start investing in more efficient equipment to deal with a shrinking pool of workers as the population ages. — Reuters



TOKYO: Cars are driven out of a cargo ship at a pier in Tokyo. Japan's economy expanded by a revised 0.3 percent in the last quarter of 2016, government data showed yesterday. — AFP

UK SEES BRIGHTER 2017

LONDON: Britain has raised its forecasts for economic growth this year but is more downbeat about the following three years, finance minister Philip Hammond said in the first full budget since the referendum decision to leave the European Union. Delivering his budget statement just weeks before Prime Minister Theresa May is expected to kick off the process of leaving the EU, Hammond said Britain's economy had "continued to confound the commentators" with its growth in 2016.

"As we start our negotiations to exit the European Union, this Budget takes forward our plan to prepare Britain for a brighter future," Hammond told parliament. "It provides a strong and stable platform for those negotiations." Britain's economy is now expected to grow by 2.0 percent in 2017, up sharply from a forecast of 1.4 percent made in the latest round of official forecasts in November, according to the Office for Budget Responsibility (OBR).

However, the growth outlook for this year remained lower than a forecast of 2.2 percent made a year

ago, before the unexpected Brexit vote which is expected to weigh on the economy in the years ahead. Furthermore, the forecasts for growth 2018, 2019 and 2020 were lowered from November's outlook. Hammond has previously said that rather than use the better outlook to spend more, he will focus on eliminating what remains one of the biggest budget deficits among the world's rich nations, something he is aiming to do in the first half of the next decade.

Hammond, nicknamed 'Spreadsheet Phil' for his unflashy approach to running the economy, wants to build up a reserve fund in case he needs to help Britain's economy through a Brexit slowdown ahead. The Brexit vote in June, which will separate Britain from the EU which buys about half of its exports, had been expected to deliver a quick and heavy blow to the economy. Instead, consumers continued to spend heavily and helped the economy to grow by 1.8 percent, faster than all other Group of Seven economies in 2016 bar Germany. — Reuters

Touristic Enterprises Company

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Proposals are to be submitted as per the terms stipulated in the RFP to TEC Main Building from Sunday until Thursday, from 9:00 am to 1:00 pm, Thursday 30 March 2017 will be considered as the last day of submission.

This announcement shall not commit, nor bind TEC in any manner to proceed to the next stage or award contract. TEC reserves the rights to, at any time, disregard all submissions and to terminate the submission process, or amend it, or proceed with the Project in some other manner or not at all, with no liability whatsoever.

DOLLAR STEADIES AS INVESTORS EYE US JOBS DATA, ECB

ECB SEEN KEEPING POLICY EXPANSIVE DESPITE RISING INFLATION

LONDON: The dollar steadied yesterday, with investors broadly taking a "wait-and-see" approach ahead of a US labor market report later in the week, which follows a European Central Bank policy meeting. The greenback last week hit a two-month high against a basket of currencies, as hawkish comments from US Federal Reserve officials drove a dramatic revision of investors' expectations of a March hike, from around a 30 percent chance to around an 87 percent chance now.

But having rallied almost 2.5 percent over the past five weeks, the US currency is now

sitting in a narrow range, with a rate increase next week seen essentially as a done deal, and Friday's non-farm payrolls report therefore seen as unlikely to move the dollar much. It was flat against the basket yesterday at 101.89. While the Fed looks set to hike rates for the third time in 18 months, the ECB looks likely to keep its monetary policy expansionary when it meets today, despite rising inflationary pressures.

The euro, which has fallen almost 5 percent against the dollar since the election of US President Donald Trump, inched down 0.1

percent yesterday to \$1.0557, staying comfortably within the \$1.0450-\$1.0850 range it has traded in for the past two months. "We're just waiting for tomorrow now - the ECB - and then after tomorrow we're going to be waiting for next week and the Fed," said DZ Bank currency strategist Sonja Marten, in Frankfurt.

"The ECB is the more interesting of the two, because with the Fed it's clear that they're going to hike rates," she said. "The inflation rate is finally rising (but)... my best guess is that (ECB President Mario) Draghi is

going to succeed tomorrow to keep things on a fairly even keel." The Swiss franc was little changed at 1.0135 per dollar after retreating to 1.0170 overnight, its weakest since Jan 11, hurt by a rise in the Swiss National Bank's foreign exchange reserves, and statements from SNB Chairman Thomas Jordan that the franc was "significantly over-valued."

The dollar was also flat at 113.96 yen after rising modestly to 114.160 overnight. The greenback has had a difficult time staying above the 114 yen

threshold amid uncertainty about Washington's potentially protectionist trade stance. Trump's administration is expected to react should the dollar gain strongly against the currencies of major trade partners such as Germany, Japan and China. Masafumi Yamamoto, chief forex strategist at Mizuho Securities in Tokyo, said coming events including the US Treasury's semi-annual currency report in April are events that "could push the trade theme to the fore" for the US administration. — Reuters

Daily Kuwait Stock Exchange Report						
Wednesday 08 March 2017						
Index	Change	Closing	Last Closing	High	Low	
Price Index	▼ -14.25	6,651.65	6,665.90	6,684.97	6,613.75	
Weighted Index	▲ 0.06	421.11	421.05	422.41	419.21	
KSX 15	▼ -1.87	965.97	967.84	971.07	960.97	
Trades						
Security	High	Low	Volume	Value (KD)	Trades	Last Change
MARIN	65	65	100	7	1	65 ▲ 3.0
IPG	425	400	127,035	50,840	6	425 ▲ 25.0
NAPESCO	1,220	1,160	32,500	38,860	10	1,220 ▲ 40.0
ENERGYH	40.5	37.0	262,500	9,744	19	37.5 ▼ -2.0
GPI	47.5	45.0	7,557,937	348,046	181	45.0 ▼ -2.5
ABAR	87	87	10,000	870	1	87 ▼ -5.0
Oil & Gas			7,990,072	448,367	218	974.70 ▲ 14.41
KFOUC	305	285	139,300	40,660	15	295 ▲ 5.0
BPCC	580	570	89,297	51,286	7	570 — 0.0
ALKOUT	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	700 — 0.0
ALQURAIN	345	335	1,487,334	507,151	36	340 ▼ -5.0
Basic Materials			1,715,931	599,097	58	1306.67 ▼ -2.38
KCEM	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	490 — 0.0
KBMM	500	485	270,100	133,160	45	495 ▼ -25.0
SHIP	222	216	10,060	2,173	3	218 ▼ -8.0
PCEM	1,060	1,060	84,936	90,032	6	1,060 — 0.0
PAPER	425	400	21,000	8,425	4	400 ▼ -20.0
MRC	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	78 — 0.0
ACICO	305	300	230,340	69,107	9	305 ▲ 5.0
GMCM	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	325 — 0.0
HCC	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	196 — 0.0
KBMM	140	130	6,700	872	5	130 ▼ -20.0
NICBM	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	208 — 0.0
EQUIPMENT	54	51	982,245	50,987	42	51 ▼ -3.0
NCCI	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	50 — 0.0
GYPSON	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	95 — 0.0
SALBOOKH	72	71	139,500	9,954	11	72 ▲ 2.0
AGLTY	590	580	222,588	130,819	24	590 — 0.0
EDU	202	202	150	30	1	202 ▼ -8.0
CLEANING	51	49.0	203,975	10,179	11	50 — 0.0
KGL	65	63	329,490	20,910	13	63 ▼ -2.0
KCCP	180	168	120	21	6	168 ▼ -6.0
HUMANSOFT	3,040	3,040	85,002	258,406	5	3,040 ▲ 40.0
NAFAIS	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	220 — 0.0
GFC	59	53	423,160	22,610	18	59 ▲ 1.0
MAYADEEN	29.0	28.0	1,868,510	52,587	44	28.0 ▼ -1.0
CGC	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	500 — 0.0
MTCC	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	56 — 0.0
UPAC	850	830	8,000	6,640	3	830 ▲ 10.0
ALAFAP	246	246	1,500	369	1	246 ▲ 2.0
MUBARRAD	75	71	2,632,200	192,567	50	75 ▼ -1.0
LOGISTICS	70	68	571,460	39,333	22	70 — 0.0
SCEM	87	86	20,100	1,729	2	87 — 0.0
GCEM	87	86	141,600	12,189	7	87 — 0.0
QIC	85	85	5,000	425	1	85 — 0.0
FCEM	89	89	95,059	8,460	1	89 — 0.0
RKWC	102	102	2,000	204	1	102 ▲ 2.0
SPEC	88	83	273,122	23,023	48	84 ▼ -3.0
Industrials			8,627,917	1,145,212	383	1488.46 ▼ -4.69
KSH	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	184 — 0.0
NSH	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	59 — 0.0
PAPCO	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	112 — 0.0
CATL	242	234	11,100	2,608	5	234 ▼ -10.0
DANAH	95	90	14,791,549	1,371,879	338	90 ▼ -4.0
FOOD	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	2,620 — 0.0
Consumer Goods			14,802,649	1,374,487	343	1192.49 ▼ -12.24
MHC	375	375	1,000	375	1	375 ▲ 25
ATC	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	920 — 0
YIACO	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	265 — 0
Health Care			1,000	375	1	1471.03 ▲ 54.19
KCIN	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	1,580 — 0
KHOT	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	250 — 0
SULTAN	68	65	185,001	12,361	16	67 ▼ -1
CABLETV	25.5	22.5	176,282	4,091	12	25.5 ▲ 1
EYAS	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	385 — 0
IFAH	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	192 — 0
OULAFUEL	130	126	77,832	9,792	19	128 — 0
MUNTAZAHAT	85	82	25,050	2,054	2	85 ▼ -1
JAZEERA	580	570	10,228	5,832	3	580 ▲ 10
SOOR	130	128	103,699	13,436	21	130 — 0
FUTUREKID	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	124 — 0
ALRAI	176	174	25,810	4,457	4	176 — 0
ZIMAH	55	50	1,673,674	88,791	98	51 ▼ -3
Mezzan	1,000	1,000	10	10	1	1,000 ▲ 20
Consumer Services			2,277,186	140,824	176	947.57 ▼ -2.01
ZAIN	485	475	2,099,498	1,006,436	91	475 ▼ -10
QOREDOO	1,180	1,180	3,305	3,900	1	1,180 — 0
HITSTELEC	49.0	46.0	4,289,002	199,341	130	46.0 ▼ -3
VIVA	850	820	35,823	29,686	36	820 ▼ -10
Telecommunications			6,427,628	1,239,363	258	627.44 ▼ -12.16
NBK	760	740	1,743,630	1,307,566	41	750 — 0
GBK	248	246	1,678,259	414,360	41	248 — 0
CBK	450	425	4,050	1,740	3	450 ▲ 25
ABK	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	305 — 0
ALMUTAHED	445	440	33,261	14,745	5	440 — 0
KIB	242	238	781,046	187,826	23	238 ▼ -4
BURG	335	330	1,608,349	538,359	64	335 ▲ 5
KFIN	620	600	1,054,490	642,904	63	610 — 0
BOUBYAN	425	420	542,911	228,227	18	420 — 0
AUB	244	240	3,009,512	727,007	65	244 ▲ 4
ITHMR	48.0	47.0	27,892,442	1,325,156	368	47.0 ▼ -3
WARBANK	265	260	962,202	253,897	99	260 ▼ -5
Banks			39,310,152	5,641,786	790	951.73 ▼ -0.89
KINS	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	310 — 0
GINS	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	550 — 0.0
AINS	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	490 — 0.0
WINS	104	102	25,392	2,616	5	102 — 0.0
KUWAITRE	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	186 — 0.0
FTI	64	57	500,671	30,849	66	63 ▲ 4.0
WETHAQ	54	52	897	47	3	54 — 0.0
BKIKWT	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	355 — 0.0
Insurance			526,960	33,512	74	1107.94 ▲ 7.78
Trades						
Security	High	Low	Volume	Value (KD)	Trades	Last Change
SOKOUK	44.0	41.5	3618991	153,849	90	42.0 ▼ -1.0
KRE	73	71	1,101,899	78,928	21	73 ▲ 1.0
URC	96	94	1,780	171	2	96 — 0.0
NRE	104	102	489,511	50,328	30	102 ▼ -4.0
SRE	380	380	400,000	152,000	3	380 ▼ -10.0
TAM	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	450 — 0.0
AREEC	182	174	62,000	10,804	4	174 ▼ -2.0
MASSALEH	45.5	45.5	11,779	536	5	45.5 ▼ -2.5
ARABREC	39.5	36.5	7,482,123	277,287	157	36.5 ▼ -2.5
ERESCO	46.0	41.0	1,466,701	61,408	47	41.0 ▼ -2.5
MABANEE	840	840	53,448	44,896	6	840 ▲ 10.0
INJAZZAT	90	90	50,000	4,500	1	90 — 0.0
INVESTORS	28.0	26.0	11,954,156	320,906	136	27.0 ▼ -0.5
IRC	34.5	32.5	1,616,849	53,552	42	34.5 ▼ -0.5
ALTJARIA	85	84	120,037	10,147	6	85 ▲ 1.0
SANAM	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	56 — 0.0
AAYANRE	83	80	1,801,364	145,882	34	81 ▼ -1.0
AQAR	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	76 — 0.0
ALAQARIA	40.0	40.0	52,500	2,100	1	40.0 — 0.0
MAZAYA	128	124	410,925	52,036	21	128 — 0.0
ADNC	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	11.0 — 0.0
THEMAR	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	90 — 0.0
TLARA	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	62 — 0.0
TAAMEER	30.0	28.0	3,210,967	92,470	86	28.0 ▼ -2.5
ARKAN	86	83	3,928	329	4	86 ▲ 2.0
ARGAN	196	174	3,050	532	4	174 ▼ -20.0
ABYAR	31.0	28.5	25,154,746	739,775	289	29.0 ▼ -1.5
MUNSHAAT	59	57	417,100	23,948	16	59 ▲ 1.0
FIRSTDUBAI	57	55	773,787	43,387	29	57 — 0.0
KBT	54	53	901,505	48,080	29	53 ▼ -1.0
REAM	550	550	65	36	3	550 ▲ 50.0
MENA	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	32.0 — 0.0
ALMUDON	43.0	40.5	7,423,946	304,305	181	41.0 ▼ -2.0
MARAKEZ	42.5	37.5	261,600	10,251	28	37.5 ▼ -2.5
REMAL	70	66	697,077	47,137	24	66 ▼ -4.0
AWJ	95	94	144,500	13,653	3	95 — 0.0
Real Estate						

G20 DRAFT NO LONGER REJECTS PROTECTIONISM

ASIAN G20 MEMBERS WORRY OF PROTECTIONISM RHETORIC

BRUSSELS: The world's financial leaders may no longer explicitly reject protectionism or competitive currency devaluations, a draft communique of their meeting next week showed, promising only to keep an "open and fair international trading system". Finance ministers and central bank heads from the Group of 20 major developed and developing economies will meet on March 17-18 in the German town of Baden Baden to discuss the world economy.

It will be the first meeting of G20 finance ministers attended by representatives of the administration of US President Donald Trump, who has more protectionist policy views on trade. The draft communique seen by Reuters, which may change before March 18, appears to accommodate the new US position. The draft, dated March 1, drops the phrase adopted by G20 finance ministers last year to "resist all forms of protectionism".

A warning against protectionism has appeared in G20 communiqués for more than a decade.

"The lack of any reference to protectionism in the draft is strange," said one official close to the preparations for the meeting. "Maybe it is a minimum that everybody could agree on." The draft also no longer contains the sentence, used in previous statements, that the G20 should "refrain from competitive devaluations" and should not "target our exchange rates for competitive purposes." Instead, it says: "We will maintain an open and fair international trading system" and "We reaffirm our previous exchange rate commitments."

G20 communiqués last year began including a phrase that was part of Group of 7 language for years: "Excess volatility and disorderly movements in exchange rates can have adverse implications for economic and financial stability. We will consult closely on exchange markets." This sentence is now also missing from the draft. Japanese policymakers would not confirm if the language on currencies will change but said any modification won't mark a departure from the G20's stance on exchange rates. "Germany may want to shorten this part of the communique... We shouldn't read too much into it," said a Japanese government official with knowledge of the G20 deliberations.

"Currencies are important, but it's too early for me to say any more," another government official said. "We're still debating what signal we want to send. Whatever it is, we want to make sure it's not misunderstood by markets." Japan, as well as some other Asian G20 members, fret more about Washington's protectionist rhetoric and its impact on the G20 debate. "Protectionism has become the new tsunami and we all have to endeavor to protect ourselves from it," said an Indian government official who deals with G20 negotiations.

Deflecting protectionism

G20 countries "are fighting a rearguard action to deflect the protectionist approach" of the Trump administration, said Eswar Prasad, the former head of the International Monetary Fund's China department who is now a trade and economics professor at Cornell University. "The G20 is clearly struggling to find a way to stick to its previous policy statements on these issues in the face of hostility from the new US government," Prasad added. Trump's trade adviser Peter Navarro said on Monday the \$65 billion US trade deficit with Germany, which holds the G20 presidency this year, was "one of the most difficult" trade issues. Bilateral discussions were needed to reduce it outside of European Union restrictions, he said.

Navarro's comments followed his complaints last month that Germany was exploiting a weak euro to gain a trade advantage, an accusation Berlin rejected since the euro exchange rate is set by markets, mainly in reaction to the monetary policy of the independent European Central Bank. Trump has threatened German car companies with a border tax of 35 percent on vehicles imported to the United States, arguing that would make them create more jobs on American soil. His protectionist views have alarmed German politicians and managers because Europe's biggest economy gets nearly half its economic output from exports. The United States is Germany's single most important trading partner, taking nearly 10 percent of its exports. — Reuters

WARBA BANK MAIDEN SUKUK ISSUE ACHIEVES INTERNATIONAL SUCCESS

KUWAIT: Warba Bank, the best investment bank in Kuwait as well as the best corporate advisory, achieved international success in its maiden sukuk issuance exercise - the issuance of USD 250 million Tier 1 Mudaraba Capital Certificates. A one week marketing campaign succeeded in attracting investor interest worth approximately \$1.3 billion from Kuwait, Dubai, Hong Kong, Singapore and London attaining an oversubscription of more than 5 times the sukuk issuance size. The bank's CEO, Shaheen Hamad Al-Ghanem, said that Warba Bank's success in attracting such diverse and deep investor interest reflected the confidence of the investment community in the bank's performance and its future as crafted in its 2017-2021 Strategic Plan.

short period of time been able to leave its fingerprints and impact through its local, regional and global investments in addition to providing arrangements for financing of big companies and institutions locally and internationally.

Al-Ghanem confirmed that the high traffic in underwriting in Warba Bank sukuk is a tangible proof that they consist a good opportunity for beneficial investment; he also assured that the sukuk will be posted in the Irish stock market and Nasdaq Dubai. Al-Ghanem further confirmed that, in view of the bank's achievements during the past six years and the gratifying growth rate it managed in both the assets or deposits, coupled with the gains made, Warba is stepping steadily towards achieving a leading position in the Islamic banking sector.

Al-Ghanem also explained that the bank has entered into agreement with a leading international consultancy company to put together a new strategy for the bank until 2021. This new strategy is based on paving the way for Warba to be the Islamic champion bank in Kuwait for corporate and investment banking as well as digital first retail business by boosting its digital infrastructure capabilities; the strategy focuses on consolidating the bank's operations in the sectors of corporate and investment while expanding in the local market by means of services and products that target individuals and corporate in an appealing distinctive way. Warba new strategy is tailor-made to consolidate the bank's market share amongst other Islamic banks in the local market, in particular, and in the banking sector in general; that is in addition to maintaining a solid financial position that secures and protects its shareholders.

Al-Ghanem concluded that Warba Bank will continue during the year 2017 to design new creative Islamic financing solutions, catering to the need of the corporate and investment sector in Kuwait. It is worth mentioning that Warba Bank has earlier obtained the approval of Kuwait Central Bank and the CMA, which authorized the bank's board of directors to issue sukuk and other financing tools in line with the rules and regulations that meet the Islamic Sharia and in accordance with the Islamic banks' standards concerning capital (Basel III) with full conformity with the laws and ministerial orders relevant to the matter subject to approval of supervisory and monitoring authority).



ATHENS: People beat a police vehicle with sticks as Greek farmers protest against higher taxes outside the Agriculture ministry in Athens yesterday. — AFP

FARMERS CLASH WITH GREEK POLICE

GREEK ECONOMY STAGNATED

ATHENS: Greece's debt-ridden economy stagnated in 2016, the national statistics agency said in a first estimate yesterday, two days after quarterly data pointed to a small contraction.

"GDP in volume terms recorded 0.0 percent annual rate of change in 2016," Elstat said, adding that the figure was derived from non-seasonally adjusted quarterly levels plus updated data. On Monday, Elstat had released fourth-quarter figures for 2016 that indicated an annual contraction of 0.05 percent.

This is in sharp contrast with the European Commission's estimates that the Greek economy would actually register slim growth of 0.3 percent in 2016. 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. There are already deep divisions between Brussels and the Washington-based lender, which believes that the Europeans' expectations of Greece's economic performance are too ambitious.

Farmers protest

Meanwhile, Greek farmers clashed with police in central Athens yesterday when a protest against tax and pension reforms mandated by the country's multi-billion-euro bailout turned violent. Waving shepherd crooks, about 1,300 farmers who had arrived in Athens from the island of Crete overnight headed to the agriculture ministry, which was sealed off by police buses. Tempers flared after reports spread among the assembled crowd that officials had refused to see a delegation from the farmers, witnesses said.

A number of farmers charged the building and smashed windows of two parked police buses, with police responding by using tear gas, dispersing crowds into sidestreets. At one point some police were cornered by men who pounded their riot shields repeatedly with sticks. Riot police remained at the scene, with some demonstrators occasionally appearing to hurl stones at them. One demonstrator punched a hole in a police bus window, placing a large blue-and-white Greek flag in it.

Shops in the area, a commercial district in downtown Athens, were shuttered. Farmers have been engaged in a long-running feud with Greek authorities over social security laws introduced in mid-2016 which force them to pay on imputed earnings upfront, and higher pension contributions. While most Greeks bore the impact of the adjustment, it hit farmers particularly hard since many previously did not make pension contributions. "The state is taking 75 percent of my income... we all need meds to endure this," said Manolis Bobodakis, 42.

Greece is now engaged in discussions with creditors on additional economic reforms required to meet bailout obligations.

The crisis-hit country signed up to a new credit lifeline worth 86 billion euros in mid-2015, its third since 2010. Farmers have also been hit by high production costs triggered by the removal of tax breaks on items such as fuel and fertilizer, coupled with low prices. "It's killing us," said Panagiotis Koutsomikis, 47, a beekeeper. — Agencies



The callable \$250.0 million perpetual sukuk was issued at a coupon rate of 6.50% with the first call date set for 14 March 2017. Al-Ghanem indicated that the success of the bank in covering the underwriting of the sukuk which aims at consolidating the bank's base capital through the first tier of the capital, represents an indication of the local and international investors' trust in the bank's future, based on the successes Warba has realized over the past few years; the bank has been able to establish an advanced concept of Islamic industry and reinforced its investment measures since its inception.

Al-Ghanem also announced, "We see in the success of Warba Bank in marketing its sukuk a great achievement, not only for the bank, but as well to the Islamic monetary exchange sector. It constitutes an assurance of the sound investment environment and context of Kuwait, which represents attractive factors for international investors through providing new venues and opportunities for investments that meet their aspirations and wishes."

He added, "Warba Bank has within a

FLYDUBAI CELEBRATES WOMEN'S DAY WITH AN ALL-FEMALE CREW

KUWAIT: Flydubai yesterday celebrated International Women's Day with an all-female crew operating flights FZ001/FZ002 between Dubai and Doha. Captain Isabel Gonzalez from Spain and First Officer Vaidehi Chavhan from India were joined by Cabin Crew from Korea, Moldova, Morocco, Tunisia and Zimbabwe welcoming flydubai's passengers onboard this special flight celebrating women in aviation.

A group of flydubai's female employees from across different departments welcomed the flight crew upon their return to the company's headquarters in Dubai: leading women from the airline's Commercial, Commercial Systems, Engineering, Flight Operations, Human

Resources, Inflight Services, Legal, Maintenance, Materials, Network Control, Network Planning, Revenue Management where represented.

"We celebrate women empowerment every day at flydubai and I am proud of all of our more than 1,400 female professionals who contribute to the growth and success of the airline. International Women's Day is a great occasion to thank the female workforce in the airline for their hard work and dedication," said Ghaith Al Ghaith, CEO at flydubai. More than a third of the 3,770 employees at flydubai are female with more than 1,000 female Cabin Crew members and more than 30 female Captains and First Officers.



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CBK MARKS MOTHER'S DAY

KUWAIT: In collaboration France's famous Boucheron Jewelry and Watches Boutique, the Commercial Bank of Kuwait (CBK) launched a special offer for its 'Premier Banking' clients this month so that they can purchase special gifts for the Mother's Day.

Boucheron has a special variety of valuable jewelry and watches specially designed for Kuwait and inspired by its nature and landmarks. The offer is valid till March 31 at Boucheron's luxurious store - the Prestige Zone, the Avenues Mall.



HUAWEI LAUNCHES KUWAIT INNOVATION AND TRAINING CENTER

KUWAIT: Huawei, a leading global Information and Communication Technology (ICT) solutions provider, yesterday launched its landmark 'Huawei Kuwait Innovation and Training Center' to advance local ICT skills and provide Kuwaiti youth with hands-on experience on the latest technologies. Huawei also signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with Kuwait's Communication and Information Technology Regulatory Authority (CITRA) that will see Huawei and CITRA boost cooperation in the ICT field through knowledge sharing, technology support and consultancy to achieve the target of Smart Kuwait. The inauguration ceremony took place at Huawei Kuwait headquarters.

Huawei's new Training and Innovation Center is aimed at demonstrating and testing new and known solutions such as Smart City and Safe City that will be the pillar of the future society, relevant to both the public and the private sector. The partnership with CITRA builds on Huawei's long-term commitment to creating a better connected Kuwait and sees both par-

ties working collaboratively to develop the local ICT industry in alignment with Kuwait Vision 2035, as set by HH the Amir.

"Huawei is committed to Kuwait's vision of becoming a Smart City and to deliver true ICT innovation that will see the government empowered to meet the needs of its society. We will achieve this through our technology-driven services and our new Training and Innovation Center, which will showcase the benefits of our technology in all aspects of the society," said Trevor Liu, CEO of Huawei Kuwait. "As Kuwait's ICT sector continues to grow and becomes a driving force in job creation and capability, Huawei will be right there supporting the government's vision to spearhead innovation and advance the ICT skills of the local population," he concluded.

The new Innovation and Training Center was inaugurated in the presence of the Minister of Social Affairs and Labor and Minister of State for Economic Affairs, HE Hind Subaih Barak Al Subaih; the Chairman and CEO of Kuwait's Communication



and Information Technology Regulatory Authority (CITRA), HE Salim Alozainah; the Ambassador of the People's Republic of China to the State of Kuwait, HE Wang Di; Huawei Global Region's President and Board Member, Xiang Yi; Huawei Middle East President, Charles Yang, alongside senior Huawei executives, media representatives and other VIP guests.

Designed to serve as an ICT incubator and multi-function training center, the 1,000 square-meter facility will provide ICT training to more than 1,000 trainees a year which will include public sector employees, partners, customers and students. The training center will deliver advanced ICT training capability while creating a platform for Huawei to share its latest innovations. Guests at the inauguration ceremony were given a tour of the facility which showcased Huawei's solutions for Smart City, Safe City and Smart Energy. They were also presented with Huawei's digital financial solutions, and cloud data center which fuels the digital transformation of all industries.

TRUMP'S GENIAL PRIVATE MEETINGS WITH CEOs JAR WITH PUBLIC ATTACKS

WASHINGTON: When the bosses of some of the world's largest pharmaceutical companies headed to Washington in January to meet US President Donald Trump, it had all the makings of a potentially hostile meeting. Just weeks before, Trump had sent drug stock prices plummeting after accusing the companies of "getting away with murder" by charging too much for medicines. But the Trump who greeted chief executives of Johnson & Johnson, Novartis, Merck, Eli Lilly, Celgene and Amgen on Jan. 31 was a surprisingly genial host who even gave them a personal tour of the Oval Office, according to several participants in the breakfast.

"There is no question that it was better than it could have been or we thought it could be," said one industry insider familiar with the meeting. Trump did not repeat his public attacks on the industry. Instead, he focused on "outdated" regulations that drive costs up for drugmakers, according to participants interviewed by Reuters. The CEOs left with Trump's word that he would streamline regulations and reform the high US corporate tax rate.

Since taking office on Jan 20, Trump has held at least nine meetings with groups of business leaders, including automakers, airlines, retailers and health insurers. In early morning or late-night tweets and in speeches, Trump has lambasted many of these companies for cost over-runs, or high prices, or foreign manufacturing, often knocking down their share prices. But Reuters interviews with nearly a dozen executives and lobbyists who have taken part in these meetings or have been briefed on them reveal a Trump who is very different from his uncompromising and demanding @realDonaldTrump Twitter handle.

Flexible and inquisitive

When he meets the nation's top chief executives in person, he is a mix of charm and cajoling. This Trump is flexible and inquisitive, a schmoozer who remembers birthdays and often lavishes praise on their companies, said the people, who spoke on condition of anonymity so they could freely discuss private meetings. This private side of Trump sheds light on why many CEOs have expressed confidence that the Republican president is good for business, despite his share-denting public attacks. As recently as Tuesday, Trump tweeted he was working on a system to increase competition in the health industry and lower drug pricing, sending pharma shares lower.

In the White House meetings, Trump focuses much of his talk on cutting regulations, the sources said, underscoring one of his administration's key priorities - getting rid of rules imposed by his predecessor Barack Obama. He typically asks which regulations are holding businesses back from adding new jobs and promises to resolve the issues, executives say. "He said one thing for the cameras and the door shuts and then it's like kumbaya," said one person who was briefed on a meeting between Trump and a group of CEOs.

"He likes to be seen as engaging and buddy buddy with other big important business leaders," said this person. A former businessman, Trump runs his closed-door meetings with CEOs as if they were a corporate board meeting, attendees said. In contrast to his doctrinaire tweets, he likes to seek input from everyone at the table, and compared to former presidents Barack Obama and George W. Bush, conversations are less scripted.

Trump's approach to these meetings is "one of listening and not lecturing," said a

senior White House official who has participated in industry meetings. "I've seen a president who is listening and asking questions to get to how he can create a thriving economy," the official said. An Amgen spokeswoman said Trump made it clear that he wanted to work with the company on US job creation and biotech innovation. Representatives of the other drugmakers declined to comment.

Showing off the drapes

Because so little is known about how Trump interacts privately with CEOs, trade groups and company officials have begun to swap tips on how to approach their meetings with him. "There is this undercurrent of information sharing about what to expect, what to do," said one trade group official who prepared CEOs for a recent meeting with Trump. He said he has gotten a flurry of calls from other industries next in line for a White House visit.

At the end of most meetings, Trump leads CEOs into the Oval Office, showing off paintings, sculptures and the furniture, as well as the rug and curtains he has picked out. He also points out a bust of Martin Luther King Jr., which he inherited from Obama. Then he takes a group photo behind the desk. "He becomes tour guide and brings them over to the Oval Office," the same official said. "He's very proud of the Oval Office." The White House official said Trump recognized the "awe" of the Oval Office.

Birthday wish for Ford

Chief executives of Detroit's top three automakers - General Motors Co, Ford Motor Co and Fiat Chrysler Automobiles NV - were pleasantly surprised when they went to the White House for a breakfast with Trump on Jan 24. Since his election, Trump has frequently attacked the car companies for building in Mexico and warned US firms would no longer be able to move US jobs abroad "without consequences." When Trump entered the Roosevelt Room, he greeted GM CEO Mary Barra with a playful tap on the shoulder as he gently prodded her to add jobs in the United States and later pulled out her chair before the meeting started, a review of the video transcripts of the first part of the meeting shows.

He greeted Ford CEO Mark Fields with a "Happy Birthday. It's his birthday ladies and gentlemen." Trump said it was a "great honor" to see Fiat Chrysler CEO Sergio Marchionne. Trump did not specifically ask them to build plants in the United States - as he had tweeted he would before the meeting - but instead listened to their complaints about regulations and indicated a willingness to help them, people briefed on the meeting said. Ford declined to comment and referred to Fields' comments to dealers in January that Trump had asked for a list of regulations that automakers wanted cut or kept.

GM CEO Mary Barra said in a speech last week that Trump "really listened" to the automakers, while Marchionne told reporters at the Geneva auto show on Tuesday that Trump was "quite willing to make our lives easier" in terms of compliance and taxes in order to encourage US job creation. Trump has been complimentary of his high-profile guests - and at times playful. After Denise Morrison, chief executive of Campbell Soup, introduced herself in one of those meetings, Trump quickly responded: "Good soup." At another, after Target Corp CEO Brian Cornell spoke, Trump responded by pronouncing the name of the company as "Tar-Jay," a common joke to make the retailer sound more fancy. — Reuters

PROJECT BLACK S

- A new high-performance titanium twin exhaust system to maximize the efficiency of air flow through the powertrain
- Deep body stamping from the Q60's manufacturing process allows the Project Black S concept to retain the sports coupe's deep creases and flowing lines
- The Project Black S is finished in matt grey and black - while a smoked chrome trim replaces the finish found on the standard Q60
- A production car with Formula One-inspired performance hybrid technology would benefit from instant, lag-free acceleration
- INFINITI and the Renault Sport Formula One Team have collaborated on the development of a performance hybrid powertrain
- Large fixed rear wing - also made of carbon fiber - maximizes downforce at speed
- Project Black S features 21-inch wheels and wider, high-performance tyres
- Flared wheel arches improve aerodynamic efficiency and result in a daring - even aggressive - design execution
- Carbon fibre parts minimize weight and maximize aerodynamic efficiency
- Bespoke air intakes help to cool the engine and brakes while also assisting in aerodynamic efficiency

RENAULT SPORT FORMULA ONE TEAM TECHNICAL PARTNER

INTRODUCING 'PROJECT BLACK S'

AN EXPLORATION OF A NEW INFINITI HIGH-PERFORMANCE MODEL LINE

KUWAIT: Featuring Formula One-inspired technology, 'Project Black S' is an exploration of a new INFINITI high-performance model line. Developed in collaboration with the Renault Sport Formula One Team, Project Black S will be revealed for the first time globally at a special media event on the eve of the Geneva International Motor Show.

A radical reinterpretation of the Q60 coupe, Project Black S features a stand-out, aerodynamic design, and hints at how a unique-for-the-road performance hybrid powertrain could significantly enhance the dynamics of an INFINITI production car. "INFINITI is the premium car manufacturer within the Renault-Nissan Alliance, and a technical partner to the Renault Sport Formula One Team, so it is natural that we come together to explore the possibility of bringing innovative high-performance hybrid technology to our customers. INFINITI has constantly led the way in making innovative new powertrain technology available, and we're extremely excited by the potential of Project Black S."

Roland Krueger, President of INFINITI - The performance hybrid powertrain being explored through Project Black S features an 'energy recovery system' (ERS) to harvest energy, deploying recovered electric power to boost power and torque. The result is instant, significant, lag-free



acceleration. Inspired by the dual-hybrid system proven in Formula One, the technology does not yet exist in a current road car. The reveal of

Project Black S in Geneva will help to gauge potential public interest in high-performance derivatives of INFINITI cars.

GET YOUR CAR READY WITH FREE CHECK-UP

KUWAIT: Abdulmohsen Abdulaziz Al-Babtain Company the authorized dealer of Infiniti vehicles in the state of Kuwait offers their loyal customers an amazing safety checkup offer with a free 13 points checkup, 15% discount on labor & 30% discount on parts only during the month of March in its Al-Rai service center. This campaign is a great opportunity for Infiniti owners of 2014 and older models to do the complete check-up on their vehicles at Infiniti's service center to ensure a safer drive. This offer

does not include body shop repairs. Infiniti Al Babtain is keen to always provide the best offers, especially vehicle maintenance and services to meet the increasing demand of Infiniti vehicles and to achieve the brands goal to always be on top and to be one of the leading automotive brands.

Infiniti Al-Babtain also ranked first in the After-Sales service category for the 4th consecutive year in 2016, Service Hero. Through this achievement, Infiniti Al Babtain preserves the

trust in dealing with their customers and as a result always gain their complete satisfaction. This service is one of the main pillars of the aftersales program provided by Infiniti Al-Babtain for its customers. This unique awarding is a result of Infiniti Al-Babtain's continuous strive to succeed, and is an incentive for continuing its progress in developing its services and offers to meet the needs of all community members. Hence, Infiniti launched the march After-sales offer for its customers to enjoy.

CRASH TEST DUMMIES SACRIFICE LIVES FOR CAR SAFETY

WASHINGTON: Clad in a blue t-shirt and shorts, the average-size "man" is belted into a luxury Tesla Model S for a very short ride with a very abrupt end. The collision sounded like an explosion and left the pristine electric car destroyed, glass and debris scattered around the sad remains. The "man"—a technology-packed, 180-pound (80 kg) crash test dummy—was the victim of a single-car crash at 40 miles per hour (65 kilometers per hour) into a solid wall.

But the destruction is for the greater good. The dummy's sensors send a vast array of data to show how he fared. They tell how hard and how fast his head and body hit the steering wheel; the extent to which airbags cushioned the blow; how well the seat-belt worked; and whether any other body parts suffered injuries. The results are used by automakers to make safer vehicles, and the process has dramatically reduced the number of deaths in traffic accidents.

Traffic deaths rising

But contemporary driving habits are challenging traditional efforts to keep the death rate on a downward trajectory. In 2015, traffic deaths showed the biggest increase since 1966, and were up even more in the first half of 2016, climbing by over 10 percent, according to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration. Distracted driving, including texting or talking on a cell phone while driving, accounted for over 3,000 deaths in 2014, with over 400,000 injured, NHTSA said.

Automakers need to figure out how to avoid accidents resulting from things like driver inatten-

tion, said Joseph Noland, senior vice president of vehicle research at the Insurance Institute for Highway Safety. Carmakers are adding features like electronic stability control, forward collision warning and autonomous emergency braking. "These technologies are coming very, very quickly, and our studies show that many of them are very effective," Noland said.

But testing those new technologies is "really going to be a challenge for us," he said. Of the new technology features, IIHS so far only tests the automatic emergency braking. IIHS, which is funded by the insurance industry, and NHTSA, a federal agency, are the only organizations in the United States that conduct crash tests. With a budget of just over \$5 million for the 80 high-speed crashes it conducts each year, IIHS estimates its test programs have contributed to a dramatic decline in death rates: fatalities were cut by more than half between 1990 and 2012, to just 65 for every one million vehicles from 143.

Real-world crashes

"We look at the types of crashes that are injuring and killing real people right now on the roads, and then we develop tests to replicate that." The test that was used for the Tesla Model S, was a "small overlap" crash test first introduced in 2012 to simulate a crash into a pole or a tree. IIHS says many automakers have struggled with it. The Tesla Model S did not receive the top rating of "good" in the initial test last year, so the company requested a retest. Manufacturers have to earn good ratings in all five



RUCKERSVILLE: A Tesla car is seen after a crash test at the Insurance Institute of Highway Safety in Ruckersville, Virginia. — AFP

crash tests to be considered an IIHS Top Safety Pick. In last year's test, the driver crashed into the steering wheel hard, because the seatbelt spooled out too far, IIHS said. Tesla made changes to the design for vehicles built after October in an effort to address the problems.

For the tests, IIHS technicians send the car down a 1,400-foot tunnel pulled by a cable, a system similar to a ski lift, and just before impact, it is released from its tether. To the casual observer, the Tesla crash

looked terrifying, but the IIHS analysis will not be available for a week or two, at which point it will be clear whether Tesla was able to address the flaw and get a coveted top rating. Jack R Neraid, vice president at car reviewer Kelley Blue Book, told AFP the safety ratings are key for automakers because consumers gravitate towards the safer vehicles. "They have changed car design very, very significantly. From the second they first hit the computer screen, the ratings are very important." — AFP



LANGLEY: This photo shows the seal of the Central Intelligence Agency at CIA headquarters in Langley, Va. An alleged CIA surveillance program disclosed by WikiLeaks purportedly targeted security weaknesses in smart TVs, smartphones, personal computers and even cars, and enabled snooping that could circumvent encryption on communications apps such as Facebook and WhatsApp. — AP

CIA TARGETING EVERYDAY GADGETS FOR SNOOPING

NEW YORK: Maybe the CIA is spying on you through your television set after all. Documents released by WikiLeaks allege a CIA surveillance program that targets everyday gadgets ranging from smart TVs to smartphones to cars. Such snooping, WikiLeaks said, could turn some of these devices into recorders of everyday conversations - and could also circumvent data-scrambling encryption on communications apps such as Facebook's WhatsApp. WikiLeaks is, for now, withholding details on the specific hacks used "until a consensus emerges" on the nature of the CIA's program and how the methods should be "analyzed, disarmed and published." But WikiLeaks - a nonprofit that routinely publishes confidential documents, frequently from government sources - claims that the data and documents it obtained reveal a broad program to bypass security measures on everyday products.

More privacy clashes

If true, the disclosure could spark new privacy tensions between the government and the technology industry. Relations have been fraught since 2013, when former National Security Agency contractor Edward Snowden disclosed secret NSA surveillance of phone and digital communications. Just last year, the two sides feuded over the FBI's calls for Apple to rewrite its operating system so that agents could break into the locked iPhone used by one of the San Bernardino attackers. The FBI ultimately broke into the phone with the help of an outside party; the agency has neither disclosed the party nor the nature of the vulnerability, preventing Apple from fixing it.

According to WikiLeaks, much of the CIA program centered on dozens of vulnerabilities it discovered but didn't disclose to the gadget makers. Common practice calls for government agencies to disclose such flaws to companies privately, so that they could fix them. Instead, WikiLeaks claims, the CIA held on to the knowledge in order to conduct a variety of attacks. As a result, tech companies such as Apple, Google and Microsoft haven't been able to make the necessary fixes. "Serious vulnerabilities not disclosed to the manufacturers places huge swaths of the population and critical infrastructure at risk to foreign intelligence or cyber criminals who independently discover or hear rumors of the vulnerability," WikiLeaks wrote in a press release. "If the CIA can discover such vulnerabilities so can others."

A big yawn to some

Not everyone is worried, though. Alan Paller, director of research for the cybersecurity training outfit SANS Institute, said the case boils down to "spies who use their tools to do what they are paid to do." He said criminals already have similar tools - and he's more worried about that. Rich Mogull, CEO of the security research firm Securosis, said that agencies gathering intelligence on other organizations and

governments need, by definition, technical exploits that aren't public.

If they're authentic, the leaked CIA documents frame a stark reality: It may be that no digital conversation, photo or other slice of life can be shielded from spies and other intruders prying into smartphones, personal computers, tablets or just about device connected to the internet. "It's getting to the point where anything you say, write or electronically transmit on a phone, you have to assume that it is going to be compromised in some way," said Robert Cattanach, a former US Department of Justice attorney who now specializes in cybersecurity and privacy for the law firm Dorsey & Whitney.

Sidestepping encryption

WikiLeaks claims the hacks allowed the CIA to collect audio and other messages from data scrambling communication apps such as WhatsApp, Signal, Telegram and Confide by intercepting data before it is encrypted or after it's decoded. The CIA didn't appear to compromise the apps themselves, but rather the phone's underlying operating system. WikiLeaks says the CIA had separate teams looking for vulnerabilities in iPhones and Android phones and also targeted tablets such as iPads. According to WikiLeaks, the vulnerabilities were discovered by the CIA itself or obtained from other government agencies and cyberweapon contractors.

Cars, trucks and TVs

WikiLeaks also claims that the CIA worked with U.K. intelligence officials to turn microphones in Samsung smart TVs into listening devices. The microphones are normally there for viewers to make voice commands, such as requests for movie recommendations. If the TV is off, there's no listening being done. But WikiLeaks claims that a CIA hack makes the target TV appear to be off when it's actually on - and listening.

WikiLeaks says the audio goes to a covert CIA server rather than a party authorized by Samsung. In such cases, audio isn't limited to TV commands but could include everyday conversations. Other tools in the CIA's arsenal target PCs running Microsoft's Windows system, according to WikiLeaks, which says many of the attacks are in the form of viruses designed to spread through CDs and USB drives.

WikiLeaks also says the CIA was also targeting control systems used by cars and trucks. Although WikiLeaks didn't have details on how that might be used, it said the capability might allow the CIA to "engage in nearly undetectable assassinations." Microsoft said it was aware of the reports and was looking into them. Apple, Google and Samsung didn't immediately respond to requests for comment. In a statement, General Motors said it would be premature to comment on the documents, including its authenticity. But GM added that it knew of no injuries or death resulting from the hacking of a vehicle. — AP

HOW CAN I STOP MY TV FROM SPYING ON ME?

NEW YORK: The publication by WikiLeaks of documents it says are from the CIA's secret hacking program describe tools that can turn a world of increasingly networked, camera- and microphone-equipped devices into eavesdroppers. Smart televisions and automobiles now have on-board computers and microphones, joining the ubiquitous smartphones, laptops and tablets that have had microphones and cameras as standard equipment for a decade. That the CIA has created tools to turn them into listening posts surprises no one in the security community.

How worried should we be?

The intrusion tools highlighted by the leak do not appear to be instruments of mass surveillance. So, it's not as if everyone's TV or high-tech vehicle is at risk. "It's unsurprising, and also somewhat reassuring, that these are tools that appear to be targeted at specific people's (devices) by compromising the software on them - as opposed to tools that decrypt the encrypted traffic over the internet," said Matt Blaze, a University of Pennsylvania computer scientist. The exploits appear to emphasize targeted attacks, such as collecting keystrokes or

silently activating a Samsung TV's microphone while the set is turned off. In fact, many of the intrusion tools described in the documents are for delivery via "removable device."

What can be done?

Not much if you don't want to sacrifice the benefits of the device. "Anything that is voice-activated or that has voice- and internet-connected functionality is susceptible to these types of attacks," said Robert M. Lee, a former US cyberwar operations officer and CEO of the cybersecurity company Dragos. That includes smart TVs and voice-controlled information devices like the Amazon Echo, which can read news, play music, close the garage door and turn up the thermostat. An Amazon Echo was enlisted as a potential witness in an Arkansas murder case. To ensure a connected device can't spy on you, unplug it from the grid and the internet and remove the batteries, if that's possible. Or perhaps don't buy it, especially if you don't especially require the networked features and the manufacturer hasn't proven careful on security. Security experts have found flaws in devices - like WiFi-enabled dolls - with embedded microphones and cameras.

I use whatsapp

But exploits designed to infiltrate the operating system on your Android smartphone, iPhone, iPad or Windows-based computer can read your messages or listen in on conversations on the compromised device itself, though communications are encrypted in transit. "The bad news is that platform exploits are very powerful," Blaze tweeted. "The good news is that they have to target you in order to read your messages." He and other experts say reliably defending against a state-level adversary is all but impossible. And the CIA was planting microphones long before we became networked.

I'm not high-value target

It may sound boring, but it's vital: Keep all your operating systems patched and up-to-date, and don't click links or open email attachments unless you are sure they are safe. There will always be exploits of which antivirus companies are not aware until it's too late. These are known as zero-day exploits because no patches are available and victims have zero time to prepare. The CIA, National Security Agency and plenty of other intelligence agencies purchase and develop them. But they don't come cheap. And most of us are hardly worth it. — AP

WIKILEAKS FALLOUT: SHOULD YOU WORRY ABOUT ALLEGED CIA HACKS?

NEW YORK: So, you use messaging apps like WhatsApp or Signal or have smart TVs and PCs. Should you worry that the CIA is listening to your conversations? The short answer is no. The long answer is maybe, though it's still unlikely you need to be too concerned. WikiLeaks revelations describing secret CIA hacking tools allegedly used to break into computers, mobile phones and even smart TVs could certainly have real-life implications for anyone using internet-connected technology. In particular, the WikiLeaks documents suggest the CIA has attempted to turn TVs into listening devices and to circumvent - though not crack - message apps that employ protective data scrambling.

But for people weary of a seemingly constant revelations of hacks, government spying and security worries, the news came as no surprise. "Today's leaks definitely concern me, but at this point I have accepted that security risks

are an inherent part of our modern technology," Andrew Marshello, a soundboard operator from Queens, New York, said by email. "Since that tech is so integrated into our society, it's hard to take the reasonable step - cutting out smart devices, messaging apps, etc. - without sacrificing a part of social life."

While he's "definitely worried" about deeper implications of governmental hacking and surveillance, Marshello says he won't cut his iPhone or modern messaging apps out of his life. But he doesn't have a smart TV and doesn't plan to get one, he keeps his microphone unplugged and camera covered when he's not using his PC and he has voice recognition turned off on his phone. He's not alone. Last year, Facebook CEO Mark Zuckerberg was photographed with his laptop camera and microphone covered with tape. Some online called him paranoid; others suggested he was just being smart.

Why it matters

"What everybody should be asking is whether any of this was shared with local law enforcement," said Scott Vernick, a partner at the law firm Fox Rothschild who focuses on data privacy and security. Meaning, whether the CIA shared any of the techniques with the FBI and with other domestic law enforcement agencies that could employ them domestically.

Ed Mierzwinski, consumer program director at consumer advocacy group US PIRG, said the news should alert consumers to how vulnerable internet-connected devices are. "You shouldn't be too concerned about the CIA hacking you unless you're doing something illegal," he said. "But this should be a wakeup call for the average consumer." He recommended changing passwords on smart TVs, cameras and other connected devices as often as you change computer passwords. "Whether it's your

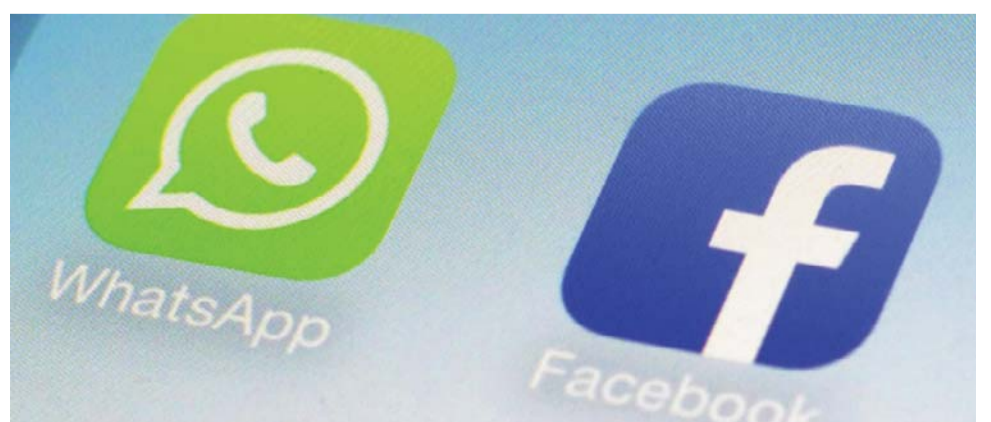


Photo shows WhatsApp and Facebook app icons on a smartphone in New York. — AP

refrigerator, smart lights you program from your phone or your baby monitor, the security systems in most 'internet of things' products are actually dumb, not smart."

Privacy fatigue

"At this point, I am so used to reading stories about accounts getting hacked that it is to be expected," Matt Holden, an editor and social

media coordinator in Dallas, Texas, said via email. Holden worries about the safety of personal information like his social security number and financial details, but says he's less concerned about the security of his messaging apps. "So long as I conduct myself in a way that would mean I have nothing to hide, then I'm not worried about the government taking a look," he said — AP



AL-SAYER MEDICAL SPONSORS DENTAL CONFERENCE

Al-Sayer Medical Company, one of Al-Sayer Group of Companies, held the 5th Kuwait Dental Administration Conference and Exhibition at Health Ministry under the patronage of HE Jamal Al-Harbi, Minister of Health and 48 specialists and lecturers from around the world spoke at the conference. The conference was an opportunity to engage with internationally renowned specialists and professors from different areas of dentistry through lectures and workshops of cosmetic dentistry, orthodontics, surgery, dental implants, gum treatment and root canals treatment.

The conference was also a platform to explore the latest products across these specializations at the exhibition within the conference. An exclusive booth was set up and allocated for Al-Sayer Medical Company to display its wide range of dental products from the world's largest medical companies. The booth attracted large number of visitors and attendees, who inquired about the different products and services of the company.

Al-Sayer Medical Company was represented by Mr. Bader Musaed Al-Sayer - Secretary to the Board and Group's Business Director, Dr. Hossam Afify, General Manager of Al-Sayer Medical

Company and a team of professionals who guided and assisted the visitors in addition to clarifying technical information and details of such products.

On this occasion, Dr. Hossam Afify, General Manager of Al-Sayer Medical Company said: "First of all, we would like to congratulate HE Dr. Jamal Al-Harbi, Minister of Health and Assistant Undersecretary for Dentistry and Conference chairman Dr. Youssif Al-Douwairi on the success of the conference, which became one of the most scientific conferences in dentistry in the region that contribute to the developments of dentistry services in Kuwait and

give the opportunity for those working in the field to exchange expertise and the latest in the dentistry field.

"This year's participation in the conference reflects Al-Sayer Group Holding commitment to its social responsibility for continuous development of health care in all departments, in addition to support Ministry of Health's efforts to enhance the health services provided to citizens and residents as per Al-Sayer Medical strategy to find integrated medical solutions through our partnership and representation of many world's leading medical companies," added Dr. Hossam.



SAN FRANCISCO: In this photo, Michael Fasman sits with his dog Hudson outside his home in San Francisco. —AP

POT FOR PETS: OWNERS TREAT SICK ANIMALS WITH CANNABIS

CANNABIS SAFE AND EFFECTIVE FOR TREATING ANIMALS

SAN FRANCISCO: As more states legalize marijuana for humans, more pet owners are giving medical-cannabis products to their furry companions to treat a range of ailments, including arthritis, anxiety, seizures and cancer. But veterinarians say there isn't enough scientific data to show that

cannabis is safe and effective for treating animals. Medical marijuana is legal in 28 states but remains illegal under federal law, so there has been relatively little research into its potential health benefits for humans or animals.

Veterinarians in California and other states

are legally barred from prescribing or recommending cannabis. They risk losing their veterinary licenses if they do. Despite the lack of scientific data or veterinary guidance, many pet owners are convinced that cannabis has improved their animals' health and well-being, based on their own observations. —AP

AUSTRALIA'S EXTREME SUMMER A SIGN OF THINGS TO COME

SYDNEY: Climate change was responsible for breaking more than 200 Australian weather records over the past three months, researchers said yesterday, a glimpse of conditions to come that will likely threaten energy security and agriculture. Much of Australia's east coast endured its hottest summer on record, the independent Climate Council said, while torrential rain in Western Australia caused flash flooding.

The sort of unseasonable conditions seen between Dec. 1 and Feb. 28 would likely be recurring regularly in future, the council said.

"I would say by 2025 or 2030, the odds are we will see another hot summer record set in Sydney and in other places," said Will Steffen, professor of environmental studies, Australian National University and lead author of the Climate Council report. The expected climate will strain the country's energy sector, the council said, threatening yet more blackouts.

Australia saw several power out-

ages in different parts of the country after temperatures soared regularly above 40 Celsius, with demand for air-conditioning strained supplies. Australia's changing climate also threatens one of the main pillars of its economy, with agricultural production vulnerable. "A really bad year can just demolish crop yields," said Phin Ziebell, agribusiness economist, at the National Australia Bank.

Australia exported a record A\$50 billion (\$37.98 billion) worth of agricultural produce last year, government data shows, which helped soften the blow of a slowdown in its dominant mining sector. The Climate Council report comes days after another independent report warned the impact of climate change had caused permanent damage to Australia's environment. Australian scientists said recently mass coral bleaching, caused by climate change, has destroyed at least 35 percent of the northern and central Great Barrier Reef. —Reuters

APHRODISIAC PERFUMES LIKELY FAKE: STUDY

PARIS: Many animal species are known to give off chemical signals to attract sexual partners, but scientists still debate whether pheromones used in aphrodisiac perfumes actually play any role in human mating. Yesterday, Australian researchers added fuel to the fire by stating that two naturally occurring steroids widely thought to be appeal-boosting human pheromones have no impact on "mate perception." The chemicals-estratetraenol (EST) or androstadienone (AND) — are already a component of perfumes that promise to leave the opposite sex weak at the knees.

But the titillating effect may be all in the mind, researchers wrote in the journal Royal Society Open Science. "AND and EST are unlikely to be human pheromones," said a research quartet from the University of Western Australia. They tested whether those chemicals—the lead contenders for human pheromone status—had any effect

on 94 heterosexual men and women in two lab experiments. In the first stage, participants were asked to indicate whether a "gender neutral" face, created by computer-fusing photos of people from both sexes, belonged to a man or a woman.

In the second, they had to rate faces for attractiveness, and whether they thought the person had an adulterous nature or not—part of what makes up "mate perception."

Being exposed to either AND or EST during the experiments made no difference to the participants' choices as they would have done if they truly were pheromones, the researchers found.

In previous research, men and women reported that a person's scent affected their sexual interest, and women often say they place more importance on a man's smell than his looks. —AFP

BACON, SODA AND TOO FEW NUTS TIED TO BIG PORTION OF US DEATHS

CHICAGO: Gorging on bacon, skimping on nuts? These are among food habits that new research links with deaths from heart disease, strokes and diabetes. Overeating or not eating enough of the 10 foods and nutrients contributes to nearly half of US deaths from these causes, the study suggests. "Good" foods that were under-eaten include: nuts and seeds, seafood rich in omega-3 fats including salmon and sardines; fruits and vegetables; and whole grains.

"Bad" foods or nutrients that were over-eaten include salt and salty foods; processed meats including bacon, bologna and hot dogs; red meat including steaks and hamburgers; and sugary drinks. The research is based on US government data showing there were about 700,000 deaths in 2012 from heart disease, strokes and diabetes and on an analysis of national health surveys that asked participants about their eating habits.

Most didn't eat the recommended amounts of the foods studied.

The 10 ingredients combined contributed to about 45 percent of those deaths, according to the study. It may sound like a familiar attack on the typical American diet, and the research echoes previous studies on the benefits of heart-healthy eating. But the study goes into more detail on specific foods and their risks or benefits, said lead author Renata Micha, a public health researcher and nutritionist at Tufts University. The results were published Tuesday in the Journal of the American Medical Association.

Micha said the foods and nutrients were singled out because of research linking them with the causes of death studied. For example, studies have shown that excess salt can increase blood pressure, putting stress on arteries and the heart. Nuts con-

tain healthy fats that can improve cholesterol levels, while bacon and other processed meats contain saturated fats that can raise levels of unhealthy LDL cholesterol. In the study, too much salt was the biggest problem, linked with nearly 10 percent of the deaths.

Overeating processed meats and under-eating nuts and seeds and seafood each were linked with about 8 percent of the deaths. The Food and Drug Administration's recent voluntary sodium reduction guidelines for makers of processed foods and taxes that some US cities have imposed on sugar-sweetened beverages are steps in the right direction, Micha said.

A journal editorial said public health policies targeting unhealthy eating could potentially help prevent some deaths, while noting that the study isn't solid proof that "suboptimal" diets were deadly. The study's recommended amounts, based on US government guidelines, nutrition experts' advice, and amounts found to be beneficial or harmful in previous research.

Good ingredients

- Fruits: 3 average-sized fruits daily
- Vegetables: 2 cups cooked or 4 cups raw vegetables daily
- Nuts/seeds: 5 1-ounce servings per week - about 20 nuts per serving
- Whole grains: 2 1/2 daily servings
- Polyunsaturated fats, found in many vegetable oils: 11 percent of daily calories
- Seafood: about 8 ounces weekly
- Bad ingredients
- Red meat: 1 serving weekly - 1 medium steak or the equivalent
- Processed meat: None recommended
- Sugary drinks: None recommended
- Salt: 2,000 milligrams daily - just under a teaspoon.—AP



VIRGINIA: In this photo, Canadian certified organic farm-raised King Salmon filets are placed on a tray in a store in Fairfax, Virginia. —AP

CHINA TO LAUNCH LUNAR SPACE PROBE BEFORE YEAR'S END

BEIJING: China announced plans on Tuesday to launch a space probe to bring back samples from the moon before the end of the year, in what state media cast as competition to US President Donald Trump's ambitions to revitalize US space exploration. The Change-5 lunar probe is undergoing a final round of tests and is expected to be on standby for launch from August, the official People's Daily said, citing the China National Space Administration.

The launch will involve new challenges for China in sample collection, taking off from the moon and high-speed reentry to

the Earth's atmosphere, making it "one of China's most complicated and difficult space missions", Hu Hao, an official from China's Lunar Exploration Program, told the paper. Chinese President Xi Jinping has called for China to become a global power in space exploration.

"Not long ago, the United States' Trump Administration revealed an ambition to return to the moon. Our country also announced a series of deep space exploration plans," said the official Science and Technology Daily. "The moon is the first stop for humanity's march towards deep space," the paper said. —Reuters

REQUIREMENT TO RAISE AWARENESS OF RARE DISEASE AMONG CHILDREN IN KUWAIT

KUWAIT: As Rare Disease Day approaches, Lucy Jenkins Director of the Regional Genetics Laboratories and Head of Service for Molecular Genetics based at GOSH reports that "taken collectively, 'rare' diseases are, in fact, quite prevalent. With over 6,000 rare diseases, one in 17 people will be affected in their lifetime. Rare diseases can also affect children, and very sadly, 30 percent of patients with rare diseases will die before their fifth birthday."

A rare disease is a condition, often caused by a genetic defect, which affects fewer than 5 in 10,000 of the general population and includes diseases such as childhood cancers, cystic fibrosis and muscular dystrophy. However, several conditions that are seen in relatively low numbers around the world and are classed as a rare disease have high prevalence in the Middle East.

Kuwait has the highest rate of Bardet-Biedl Syndrome in the world which is reported to affect 1 out of every 13,500 infants in Kuwait. This is a rare genetic disorder, which affects many parts of the body including vision loss, obesity and growth of extra fingers or toes. Like Bardet-Biedl Syndrome, the symptoms of rare disease can often be very serious, making patient's very sick or causing disabilities that impact on how long they will live and their quality of life.

Reports state that there is an urgent need to raise interest in genetic testing and research in Kuwait and other Arab countries. The number of individuals identified with rare disease is continuously increasing because of high consanguinity and the improvement of diagnostic methods in health care centers in the Arab world.



Lucy Jenkins



Khalifa after Gene Therapy



Kuwaiti baby being treated at GOSH

To address this urgent need, this year's theme for Rare Disease Day is 'with research, possibilities are limitless'. In line with this theme, Lucy Jenkins believes that research underpinned by translation into service is the key in unlocking the answer to many rare diseases and will, in turn, help an increasing number of patients from the MENA region.

"In the future, we hope to see rarer and genetic diseases mapped out through research so that clinical scientists like myself can provide a diagnosis for even more families worldwide," said Lucy Jenkins. GOSH is home to 19 nationally commissioned services for rare diseases and helped to treat nearly 100 children from the Middle East with immunology problems last year. Furthermore, collaboration between the UCL Great Ormond Street Institute of Child Health, GOSH and between researchers and experts in the Middle East will further advance the field.

An example of research offering new hope to young patients with rare diseases can be seen in the recent breakthrough case of four-year-old Khalifa Al-Qemzi from the UAE who was one of the first children in the region to be treated using the pioneering technique of gene therapy at GOSH. At 6 months old, Khalifa was diagnosed with severe combined immunodeficiency (SCID); a primary immune deficiency caused by a genetic defect, which caused Khalifa to have very little or no immune system and unable to fight off infections.

After being diagnosed with SCID at 6 months old, Khalifa was transferred to GOSH age 11 months, in order to evaluate the possibility of gene therapy to treat his condition. Over the course of a week, bone marrow cells were taken out of Khalifa, the faulty gene was corrected, and then given back. Seven months on from receiving gene therapy, Khalifa's immune cells came back and his immune system is

now functioning properly. With 75 percent of rare diseases affecting children, Lucy Jenkins discusses the frustration families can have waiting for a diagnosis; "with the nature of rare disease, it may be that one doctor, or one institution may only ever see one patient with a rare disease and so they don't necessarily know what symptoms to look for which means children are left undiagnosed and therefore, untreated."

At GOSH, specialists see children from all around the world, including 1,500 children from the Middle East every year. Specialists gain exposure and work with children suffering with complex rare diseases on a frequent basis. By specializing in treating a number of rare diseases and investing in pioneering research, the cumulative

experience builds up over the years allowing experts to diagnose conditions and care for children in a safer and more effective way.

Quick facts on rare diseases:

- A disease or disorder is defined as rare when it affects fewer than 5 in 10,000 of the general population.
- About 5000-8000 rare diseases are believed to exist around the world.
- 75 percent of rare diseases affect children.
- Arab nationals suffer from one of the highest rates of genetic disease in the world with an estimated 25 million people affected.
- In Kuwait, a recent study shows that an average of over 65 out of every 1,000 diagnosed newborn babies suffer from genetic diseases.

FARMERS IN SAHEL LEARN WAYS TO AVOID DROUGHT DISASTER

DAKAR: Seydou Walaga, a grey-haired farmer in western Niger, lifts the hatch of his grain silo, a round hut made of sticks and straw, to reveal piles of sorghum and millet. The crops were harvested nearly seven months ago, the longest a season's yield has ever lasted him in the drought-prone region of West Africa's Sahel, a semi-arid belt below the Sahara stretching from Senegal to Chad.

"My family is still eating the grain I harvested last year," Walaga told the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), which has taught him and other farmers methods for increasing crop yields. "In the years before, my crop only fed us for two months," USAID quoted Walaga as saying in a case study.

The main difference, the farmer said, is a technique he started using called zai, pits dug in hardened farmland and filled with compost and manure. Seeds are planted inside at the start of the rainy season, and the pits boost crop productivity by concentrating scarce water and nutrients around the plants. Zai is one of many techniques experts say have made communities across the Sahel better prepared to withstand drought since the last major dry spell in 2012 left 18 million people in need of assistance.

Following that emergency, many relief and development agencies in the region shifted their focus toward helping people prepare for and survive drought, rather than only providing aid after each recurring crisis. Five years on, experts say the results are promising. Thousands of farmers have learned to use methods such as zai and stone bunds - low walls that slow run-off - to boost crop yields and restore large swathes of degraded land.

Scientists have also created new ways to collect and distribute climate data, setting up effective early warning systems for drought. At the same time, the Global Alliance for Resilience (AGIR) set up by the European Union and regional bodies - has pushed African governments to engage more

in agricultural issues. But the approach has been scattered and food insecurity remains high in the region. Many experts say the next step is to scale up successful programs to a national or regional level, requiring more long-term funding and government support.

Averting disaster

Scientists say programs that track weather patterns are critical for farmers in Africa where traditional methods of predicting the weather have become less reliable due to climate change - and are a top candidate for increased investment. In Senegal, a project to provide detailed rainfall forecasts to farmers via radio programs made a significant difference during a 2014 drought, according to Robert Zougmore of the Climate Change, Agriculture and Food Security (CCAFS) program, which worked on the initiative with Senegal's meteorological agency.

The service notified farmers before planting time that the season would be dry, and advised them to substitute their regular crops with varieties that required less water. "It helped to avert a major disaster," Zougmore, CCAFS' West Africa program leader, said. The program has since expanded to reach up to 7 million rural people in Senegal, with similar projects underway in Burkina Faso, Mali and Niger.

While climate information services are crucial in the Sahel, the interventions that work best come from the communities themselves and are low-tech, Zougmore said. Often the techniques have been around for decades but farmers need support to implement them or training to make them more effective and sustainable, experts say. For example, in Chad and Niger, the World Food Program (WFP) has paid villagers with cash or food to build dams and dykes, dig zai, and implement other projects that maximize water resources.

Nearly 1.5 million acres of dry farmland have been restored in the past three years, much of it for use by the

very poor, said WFP Niger country director Benoit Thiry. In parts of Niger, WFP is even beginning to phase out food assistance because people have become self-sufficient, he said. "We have been able to measure some improvement in the resilience of the population," Thiry told the Thomson Reuters Foundation. "But there are lots of challenges."

Long-term commitment

Directors of international aid and development programs say they would like to work with communities over a longer period but struggle to obtain funding to match. To create lasting change requires at least 15 to 20 years of support, said Sibiri Jean Zoundi, deputy director of an Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) platform that oversees West African resilience network AGIR. But five years is a more typical time-frame for programs such as USAID's Resilience in the Sahel-Enhanced (RISE) project, launched after the region's devastating drought in 2012.

Through RISE, USAID has spread conservation farming techniques and helped communities set up irrigation systems in especially exposed regions of Burkina Faso and Niger. Some of the agencies with the longest history of working to combat drought in the Sahel are not international aid agencies but regional organizations such as the Permanent Interstate Committee for Drought Control in the Sahel (CILSS), founded in 1973.

CILSS scientist Seydou Traore said drought resilience has been gradually improving since before the 2012 crisis. Nevertheless there has been greater national and international attention on resilience to drought since 2012, according to Zoundi of the AGIR network. "It is too early to say whether most countries could overcome or prevent a drought, but they know what needs to be done," Zoundi said. "We have some very good practices in the region. We just need support to scale them up."—Reuters

AUSTRALIA GRANTS FIRST CANNABIS FARM LICENSE

SYDNEY: Australia's first medical marijuana farm received its growers' license yesterday, opening up domestic production of the drug for people seeking relief from serious illnesses. The Cann Group, who last month received a cannabis research license, was awarded the cultivation permit after a "rigorous on-site security assessment." "This major development will lead to improved access to domestically produced medicinal cannabis products for Australian patients," said Health Minister Greg Hunt.

"We are now making it easier to access medicinal cannabis products more rapidly, while still maintaining strict safeguards for individual and community safety," he added, with more licenses expected soon. While recreational use of cannabis remains illegal in Australia, federal laws were changed 12 months ago to allow its use for medical purposes, in a move broadly supported.

Currently the government imports medicinal marijuana from international suppliers, with yesterday's announcement the beginning of a domestic supply line. Research, including findings published in 2015 in the Journal of the American Medical Association, showed marijuana has some effectiveness in helping treat chronic pain. But there are concerns about side effects and the issue of whether or not it works remains a matter of debate globally. —AFP

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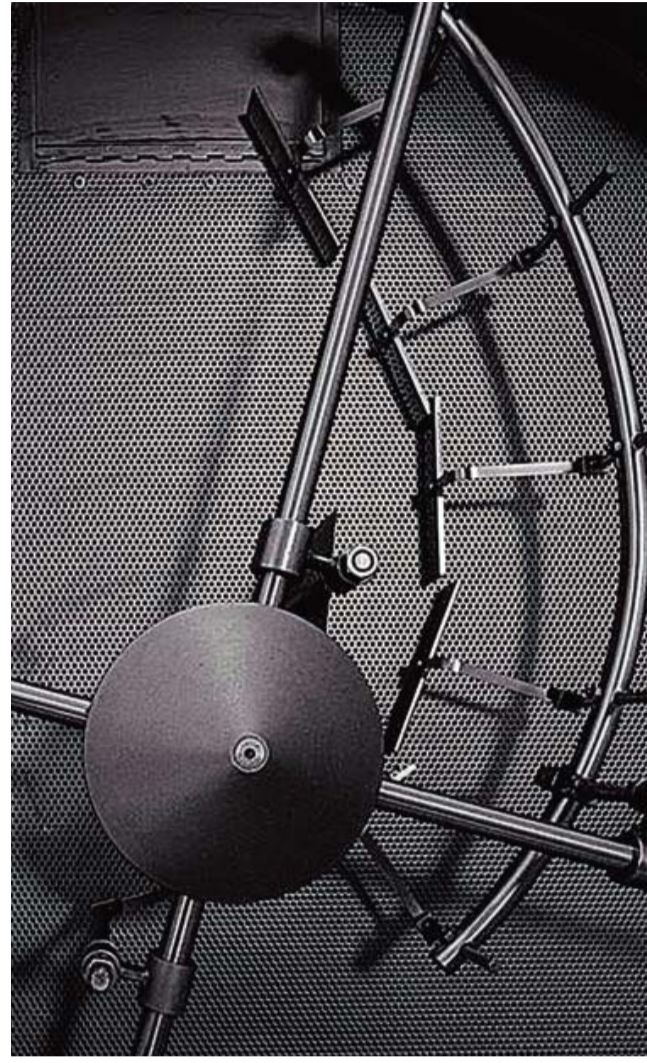
ITALIAN EMBASSY HOLDS 'ITALIAN DESIGN DAY'



1st Place



2nd Place



3rd Place

In the framework of the first "Italian Design Day" conference, held at the Khaldiya Camp of the University of Kuwait on March 5th, 2017, HE the Ambassador of Italy, Giuseppe Scognamiglio, announced the winners of the Photo Contest "Italian Style", a competition launched last November on the occasion of the "Italian Week". The announcement came after a speech by a famous naval designer, Barbara Amerio, who illustrated the concept of excellence permeating Italian design.

The "Italian Style" Photo Contest was aimed to highlight the inner beauty of interior design - whether it was furnishings, lighting, household utensils or other items - and its relationship with the surroundings, in terms also of the emotional atmosphere generated by the interiors.

Specifically, participants took a photo of any piece of Italian furniture or design situated in a Kuwaiti house, trying to convey its impact on the surrounding environment. All photos matching the aforesaid criteria were examined by a jury composed of Kuwaiti and Italian experts in the field of photography and design.

1st place: Manal Ahmad Ibrahim
The participant was awarded one airplane return ticket for the route Kuwait-Rome-Kuwait with Kuwait Airways plus a purchasing coupon worth 100 KD at all 360 Style shops plus one invitation to a lunch/dinner for four persons worth 50 KD at "la Margherita" Restaurants.

2nd place: Sadek Ali Hashim
The participant was awarded one airplane return ticket for the route Kuwait-Rome-Kuwait with Kuwait Airways plus a purchasing coupon worth 100 KD at all 360 Style shops.

3rd place: Ali Jawad Hussain
The participant was awarded a purchasing coupon worth 200 KD at all 360 Style shops.



GUST WINS TOP TIER POSITION IN THE STARTUP KUWAIT CHALLENGE

Gulf University for Science and Technology's students won a top tier position at the final round of the Startup Kuwait National Innovation and Entrepreneurship Challenge for Fall 2016/2017, held earlier this month at the Kuwait Chamber of Commerce & Industry. The challenge rounded up the top teams from different schools across the country, after several qualifying rounds, to compete.

Seven teams from institutions and universities around the country participated, including Kuwait University, Arab Open University, and the Public Authority for Applied Education and Training (PAAET), qualified for this round after a grueling selection process. The remaining four teams were from GUST.

The winning team from GUST was Techno Fun Games, composed of Meshari Alabdulhadi, and Abdulmohsen Alfulaj; was mentored by Dr Ali

Roumani. Techno Fun Games is a gaming studio which sells smartphone games and helps aspiring game developers learn how to prepare and sell their own games. A game created by their studio, called Pass the Torch, has been played more than 15,000 times, by more than 5,000 people in more than 100 countries, and managed to score a rating of 4.1/5 by users. Pass the Torch was selected as the winner of Kuwait Imagine Cup competition held by Microsoft last year.

GUST Vice President of Academic Affairs, Salah Al-Sharhan, said "The university prides itself in fostering and developing our students' talents. This competition is just one of the ways in which we can help develop not only our students' ideas, but also specific skills such as conducting presentations, nurturing innovative business ideas, entrepreneurship and teamwork. We are extremely

proud of our winners, and also proud of our students who went out of their comfort zone, and participated in this event."

GUST students who also made it to the finals include: Duaa Al-Mousawi, Fajer Al-Qadeeri, Heba Al-Arradi, Lana Aboalnaaj, Saleh Al-Najem and Shahad Al-Shenifi, and their supervisors Dr Mohamed Elian, Dr Ali Roumani, and Muhammad A B Ilyas.

Startup Kuwait is an initiative launched by Global Centre at Kuwait University to encourage students to understand the challenges and opportunities of entrepreneurship, and be able to work on and launch their own business ideas. As part of this initiative, students are encouraged to work on innovative ideas which can be successfully turned into real businesses. The ideas go through several rounds of filtering before qualifying for the final round.



ZUGZWANG WIZKID SPRING CAMP 2017

ZugZwang (r) Academy Bangalore, India is excited to bring world class mind-development programs for children to Kuwait. Founded in 2012 by Bharath Divyang, a young IIT-IIM Alumni, ZugZwang Academy has traversed eons in "Helping Children Succeed" through his passion in Chess. Team ZugZwang has grown to offer expert coaching on Robotics, Problem Solving, Coding, Math and Language development among our courses. Children learn important life skills at ZugZwang to work in

teams, analyze, plan and execute strategies at our programs, sharpening them to use all their skills, knowledge and resources in their pursuit of success. With over 1500 children trained, ZugZwang is one of the most popular enrichment education academies in India.

True to the spirit of "ZugZwang", a German term in Chess meaning "Compulsion to Move", ZugZwang Academy helps children grow to their full potential through fun and games. ZugZwang is introducing this spirit in Kuwait with a 12 day

Spring camp from 18th - 30th March for children aged 5 - 13 years. Children will attend Chess 101/102, Robotics Training and Problem Solving Games for 4 hours every day with expert coaches from ZugZwang India mentoring & coaching the kids during this camp. Two convenient schedules to choose from are 8 AM to 12 Noon or 1 PM to 5 PM. The course format is specially designed to group participants in similar skill level and ages, limited to 16 students per class, with focus on individual attention and high quality stan-

dards. The camp also offers complimentary transportation, a free Chess kit and 1 year Gold Membership on chesskid.com. Find more about the camp at www.zugzwang.in/WizKid.

The organizers are excited to bring this first-of-its-kind program to Kuwait and present this much awaited opportunity for personal skill development for children. Team ZugZwang is working towards opening a campus in Salmiya, Kuwait by July 2017 where children can pursue and excel in their passion and life.





DR WERNER DAUM PRESENTS 'EGYPT IN AFRICA'

Dr Werner Daum, Germany's ambassador to (South) Yemen, Albania, Sudan, and Kuwait, has authored or edited more than ten books on the cultural history of Yemen, Sudan, and Ethiopia. He curated several major exhibitions, including "Yemen - 3000 Years of History and Civilisation" which attracted 330,000 visitors and was professor

at the University of Pavia (where he taught early Islamic history). Last Monday (6 March 2017), he presented his lecture entitled "Egypt in Africa". His presentation signified the fact that Ancient Egypt was not born in the Nile Valley, but in the desert. The driver of these developments was climate change, and the ensuing popu-

lation movements. During the period of the "Green Sahara", the Nile was a wild, torrential stream, with practically no human settlements. With the aridisation of the Sahara (completed by app. 5300 BCE), some people moved towards the river, others moved southwards, into deeper Africa. Two of the world's major language phyla

thus emerged in the same region to the West of Northern Sudan and Upper Egypt. It is obvious that their close neighborhood and the shared economic and environmental conditions are reflected in their intellectual environment, especially in how they understood rulership, and in their religion. In Egypt, these elements have undergone

considerable development. In the Nilotic world, they have however been preserved in their original form. Anthropological observation of the Dinka (the largest Nilotic tribe) can thus provide us with unique insight into the origins of the intellectual and religious universe that shaped the splendor of ancient Egypt.



REMARKS BY AMBASSADOR LAWRENCE R SILVERMAN ON CHELSEY GREEN AND THE GREEN PROJECT PERFORMANCE

Assalamu Aleykum. Mesa Al-Khayr. Good Evening, Ladies and Gentlemen. Welcome, ahlan wa sahan. It's a pleasure for me to join you here in this beautiful theater-in-the-round in what must be one of the most unique architectural structures in the entire region. The Sheikh Jaber Al-Ahmad Cultural Center is an important national institution for the State of Kuwait. It has put Kuwait on the cultural map in this region, and is a symbol of cultural interaction from which Kuwaitis and others will benefit for generations to come. I applaud the vision that made this center possible and I hope will continue to inspire its use. The Center says its mission is "to become a leading social and creative hub for Kuwait and the region." It is an exciting, unique venue, and we wish it great success. I am delighted to be the first US Ambassador to introduce the first American performers to take the stage here.

This is the group's second stop on a multi-nation tour that started in Egypt. And it's their first stop in the Gulf. You will be taken on a true musical journey tonight. The group that will play here tonight, Chelsey Green and the Green Project, is a four-person contemporary jazz ensemble. In fact, the ensemble's music is as diverse as America is, drawing from multiple musical traditions and styles. The Project plays jazz, funk, classical, R&B, soul, hip hop, and gospel - and I'm probably leaving out a couple of their styles. I understand that Dr. Green herself has described the Project's music as 'classical, shaken and stirred.' Chelsey Green and the Green Project is here thanks to a partnership between the U.S. Government and an organization called the Association of American Voices. Together, they send American musicians around the world to give performances and conduct master classes with music students of all ages. In fact, the Chelsey Green Project has

long dedicated itself to conducting performances and musical workshops for youth and seniors alike. The US Government has been sending American musicians to the Middle East for decades; some of you may be old enough to remember that in 1963, jazz great Duke Ellington performed in the region with his orchestra, on a similar tour. The musicians we sponsor not only perform, but educate and inform, in part to raise awareness about the importance of protecting intellectual property rights, or "IPR." The protection of intellectual property concerns musicians; the illegal piracy of music damages the entire recording industry, potentially denying all of us the benefits of genuine creativity and stealing the fruits of artists' and entrepreneurs' creative property. This is an issue that concerns Kuwaiti musicians, other artists, and software developers.

Programs like the visit of the Chelsey Green Project not only bring great entertainment to new audiences; they help us explain to young people how making a copy or a recording of someone else's work may legally equate to theft and discourages the entertainment and innovation they seek. Having said that, you are free to take photographs and short videos of the band, and of course, we encourage you to share them on Instagram, Twitter, and Snapchat. And you can continue to connect with us in the Embassy; "@usembassyq8." And now it's my honor to introduce our performers to you: D. Chelsey Green, who comes from a truly musical family, on the violin; Kevin Powe Jr, on the bass guitar; Ignatius Perry, Jr on the piano; and Mr. Brian "Spyda" Wheatley on the drums. Together, they are Chelsey Green and the Green Project.

OSN MOVIES
ACTION

- 01:00 Bloodrayne: The Third Reich
- 03:00 Snakehead Swamp
- 04:45 Forbidden Empire
- 07:00 Fast & Furious 7
- 09:30 Christmas Twister
- 11:00 Hudson Hawk
- 13:00 Code Of Silence
- 15:00 Fast & Furious 7
- 17:30 Close Range
- 19:15 Reign Of Fire
- 21:00 The Transporter: Refueled
- 23:00 Pusher

ANIMAL PLANET HD

- 00:00 Insane Pools: Off The Deep End
- 00:55 Gator Boys
- 01:50 Ten Deadliest Snakes With Nigel Marven
- 02:45 Bondi Vet
- 03:40 Yankee Jungle
- 04:35 Tanked
- 05:25 In Too Deep
- 05:50 Escape To Chimp Eden
- 06:15 Gator Boys
- 07:02 Ten Deadliest Snakes With Nigel Marven
- 07:49 Insane Pools: Off The Deep End
- 08:36 Call Of The Wildman
- 09:25 Preposterous Pets
- 10:15 Yankee Jungle
- 11:10 In Too Deep
- 11:35 Escape To Chimp Eden
- 12:05 Tanked
- 13:00 Preposterous Pets
- 13:55 Bondi Vet
- 14:50 Yankee Jungle
- 15:45 Gator Boys
- 16:40 In Too Deep
- 17:05 Escape To Chimp Eden
- 17:35 Tanked
- 18:30 Ten Deadliest Snakes With Nigel Marven
- 19:25 Gangland Killers
- 20:20 The Vet Life
- 21:15 Tanked
- 22:10 Escape To Chimp Eden
- 22:35 Escape To Chimp Eden
- 23:05 Gangland Killers

BBC FIRST

- 00:35 Doctors
- 01:05 Eastenders

- 04:00 The Daily Show With Trevor Noah
- 04:25 Catch A Contractor
- 05:15 Lip Sync Battle
- 05:40 Ridiculousness
- 06:05 Ridiculousness
- 06:30 Lip Sync Battle
- 06:55 Lip Sync Battle
- 07:20 Framework
- 08:10 Catch A Contractor
- 09:00 Disaster Date
- 09:25 Ridiculousness
- 09:50 Ridiculousness
- 10:15 Key And Peele
- 10:40 Disaster Date
- 11:05 Ridiculousness
- 11:30 The It Crowd
- 11:55 Sweat Inc.
- 12:45 IdiotSitter
- 13:10 Lip Sync Battle
- 13:35 The It Crowd
- 14:00 Catch A Contractor
- 14:50 Ridiculousness
- 15:15 Catch A Contractor
- 15:40 Catch A Contractor
- 16:05 IdiotSitter
- 16:30 Ridiculousness
- 16:55 Ridiculousness
- 17:20 Disaster Date
- 17:45 Lip Sync Battle
- 18:10 Key And Peele
- 18:35 Coaching Bad
- 19:25 The It Crowd
- 19:50 Comedy Central Presents Comedy 3alwagef
- 20:20 Comedy Central Presents Comedy 3alwagef
- 20:50 Disaster Date
- 21:13 Ridiculousness
- 21:37 I Live With Models
- 22:00 The Daily Show With Trevor Noah
- 22:30 Key And Peele
- 22:54 The Half Hour
- 23:18 Another Period
- 23:42 Another Period

Discovery Family

- 00:15 Destroyed In Seconds
- 00:40 Bear Grylls: Born Survivor
- 01:30 Prototype This
- 02:20 Wildest Africa
- 03:10 Lost & Found With Mike & Jesse
- 04:00 Destroyed In Seconds
- 04:25 Destroyed In Seconds
- 04:50 Bear Grylls: Born Survivor
- 05:40 How It's Made
- 06:05 How It's Made
- 06:30 Dirty Jobs
- 07:25 Mythbusters
- 08:00 Dick 'n' Dom Go Wild
- 08:25 Awesome Adventures

- 14:40 Hank Zipzer
- 15:05 Star Darlings
- 15:10 Austin & Ally
- 15:35 Jessie
- 16:00 Bunk'd
- 16:25 Kirby Buckets
- 16:50 Sunny Bunnies
- 16:55 The Zhuzhus
- 17:20 Miraculous Tales Of Ladybug And Cat Noir
- 17:45 Elena Of Avalor
- 18:10 Stuck In The Middle
- 18:35 Descendants Wicked World
- 18:40 Girl Meets World
- 19:05 Bizaardvark
- 19:30 Bunk'd
- 19:55 Best Friends Whenever
- 20:20 Disney Mickey Mouse
- 20:25 The Next Step
- 20:50 Austin & Ally
- 21:15 Star Darlings
- 21:20 Shake It Up
- 21:45 Backstage
- 22:10 Liv And Maddie
- 22:35 Cracker
- 22:40 Dog With A Blog
- 23:05 Best Friends Whenever
- 23:30 Jessie
- 23:55 Tsum Tsum Shorts

Disney Junior

- 00:00 Sofia The First
- 00:30 Sofia The First
- 00:55 PJ Masks
- 01:20 Henry Hugglemonster
- 01:35 The Hive
- 01:45 Loopedidoo
- 02:00 Henry Hugglemonster
- 02:15 Calimero
- 02:30 Art Attack
- 02:55 Zou
- 03:05 Loopedidoo
- 03:20 Henry Hugglemonster
- 03:35 Calimero
- 03:50 Zou
- 04:05 Art Attack
- 04:30 The Hive
- 04:40 Loopedidoo
- 04:55 Henry Hugglemonster
- 05:10 Art Attack
- 05:35 Loopedidoo
- 05:50 Calimero
- 06:05 Art Attack
- 06:30 Henry Hugglemonster
- 06:45 Zou
- 07:00 Art Attack
- 07:30 Henry Hugglemonster
- 07:45 Loopedidoo
- 08:00 Zou

- 14:30 Storage Wars Canada
- 14:55 Storage Wars Canada
- 15:20 Alaska: The Last Frontier
- 16:10 The Island With Bear Grylls
- 17:00 Deadliest Catch
- 17:50 Fast N' Loud
- 18:40 Street Outlaws
- 19:30 How Do They Do It?
- 19:55 How Do They Do It?
- 20:20 The Island With Bear Grylls
- 21:10 Storage Wars Canada
- 21:35 Storage Wars Canada
- 22:00 What On Earth?
- 22:50 Legend Of Croc Gold
- 23:40 The Wheel: Survival Games

Disney XD

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

itv HD CHOICE

- 08:00 The Pioneer Woman
- 08:30 The Pioneer Woman
- 09:00 Siba's Table
- 09:30 Siba's Table
- 10:00 Anna Olson: Bake
- 10:30 Anna Olson: Bake
- 11:00 The Kitchen
- 12:00 The Pioneer Woman
- 12:30 The Pioneer Woman
- 13:00 Siba's Table
- 13:30 Siba's Table
- 14:00 Diners, Drive-Ins And Dives
- 14:30 Diners, Drive-Ins And Dives
- 15:00 Chopped
- 16:00 The Kitchen
- 17:00 Anna Olson: Bake
- 17:30 Anna Olson: Bake
- 18:00 Chopped
- 19:00 Guy's Grocery Games
- 20:00 Private Chef
- 20:30 Private Chef
- 21:00 Patricia Heaton Parties
- 21:30 Patricia Heaton Parties
- 22:00 Rev Run's Sunday Suppers
- 22:30 Rev Run's Sunday Suppers
- 23:00 Iron Chef America

itv HD CHOICE

- 00:15 Coronation Street
- 00:40 Coronation Street
- 01:10 The Chase
- 02:00 Emmerdale
- 02:30 Coronation Street
- 03:00 Coronation Street
- 03:30 The Jonathan Ross Show
- 04:25 Paul O'Grady: The Sally Army And Me
- 04:55 Paul O'Grady: The Sally Army And Me
- 05:25 Autopsy: The Last Hours Of...
- 06:15 Home Fires
- 07:10 The Chase
- 08:05 The Jonathan Ross Show
- 09:00 Paul O'Grady: The Sally Army And Me
- 09:30 Paul O'Grady: The Sally Army And Me
- 10:00 Autopsy: The Last Hours Of...
- 11:00 Home Fires
- 11:55 The Chase
- 12:50 The Jonathan Ross Show
- 13:45 Emmerdale
- 14:15 Coronation Street
- 14:45 Coronation Street
- 15:15 The Chase
- 16:10 The Jonathan Ross Show
- 17:00 Don't Tell The Bride
- 18:00 5 Star Family Reunion
- 18:50 Home Fires
- 19:45 Emmerdale
- 20:15 Coronation Street
- 20:45 Coronation Street
- 21:10 The Jonathan Ross Show
- 22:00 Don't Tell The Bride
- 23:00 5 Star Family Reunion
- 23:50 Emmerdale

HQ HD

- 00:00 Ancient Top 10
- 01:00 Ghost Planes And The Mystery Of Flight 370
- 03:00 Cities Of The Underworld
- 04:00 America's Book Of Secrets
- 04:50 Ancient Aliens: The Ultimate Evidence
- 05:40 Ancient Top 10
- 06:30 Ghost Planes And The Mystery Of Flight 370
- 08:10 The Universe
- 09:00 Cities Of The Underworld
- 10:00 America's Book Of Secrets
- 11:00 Ancient Aliens: The Ultimate Evidence
- 12:00 Ancient Top 10
- 13:00 Hangar 1: The UFO Files
- 14:00 Patton 360
- 15:00 Cities Of The Underworld
- 16:00 America's Book Of Secrets
- 17:00 Ancient Aliens: The Ultimate Evidence
- 18:00 Ancient Top 10
- 19:00 Hangar 1: The UFO Files
- 20:00 Patton 360
- 21:00 Cities Of The Underworld
- 22:00 America's Book Of Secrets
- 23:00 Ancient Aliens: The Ultimate Evidence

H HD HISTORY

- 00:30 American Pickers
- 01:20 Battle 360
- 02:10 Counting Cars
- 02:35 Car Hunters
- 03:00 Forged In Fire
- 03:50 Storage Wars
- 04:15 American Pickers
- 05:05 Pawn Stars
- 05:30 Pawn Stars
- 06:00 Mountain Men
- 07:00 American Restoration
- 07:25 American Restoration

EHD

- 00:00 E! News
- 00:15 Mariah's World
- 01:05 Mariah's World
- 01:55 Mariah's World
- 02:50 E! News
- 03:50 Dash Dolls
- 04:45 Dash Dolls
- 05:40 Dash Dolls
- 06:30 Celebrity Style Story
- 07:00 Just Jillian
- 07:55 E! News
- 08:10 Just Jillian
- 09:10 E! News
- 10:10 Rob & Chyna
- 11:05 Rob & Chyna
- 12:00 Rob & Chyna
- 13:00 E! News
- 13:15 Revenge Body With Khloe Kardashian
- 14:10 Revenge Body With Khloe Kardashian
- 15:05 Revenge Body With Khloe Kardashian
- 16:00 E! News
- 16:15 Mariah's World
- 17:10 Mariah's World
- 18:05 Mariah's World
- 19:00 Celebrity Style Story
- 19:30 Celebrity Style Story
- 20:00 E! News
- 21:00 Keeping Up With The Kardashians
- 22:00 Keeping Up With The Kardashians
- 23:00 Keeping Up With The Kardashians

food network

- 00:00 Chopped
- 01:00 Food Network Star
- 02:00 Diners, Drive-Ins And Dives
- 02:30 Diners, Drive-Ins And Dives
- 03:00 Man Fire Food
- 03:30 Man Fire Food
- 04:00 Chopped
- 05:00 Guy's Grocery Games
- 06:00 Barefoot Contessa: Back To Basics
- 06:30 Barefoot Contessa: Back To Basics
- 07:00 The Kitchen



CLOSE RANGE ON OSN MOVIES ACTION

- 01:35 Poldark
- 02:30 Last Tango In Halifax
- 03:25 Ripper Street
- 04:20 Orphan Black
- 05:05 Doctors
- 05:35 Eastenders
- 06:05 New Tricks
- 07:00 Doctors
- 07:30 Eastenders
- 08:00 Holly City
- 08:55 Father Brown
- 09:45 Doctor Who
- 10:35 New Tricks
- 11:30 Doctors
- 12:05 Eastenders
- 12:35 Father Brown
- 13:25 Doctor Who
- 14:15 New Tricks
- 15:15 Doctors
- 15:45 Eastenders
- 16:20 Father Brown
- 17:10 Doctor Who
- 18:05 New Tricks
- 19:00 Doctors
- 19:30 Eastenders
- 20:05 Father Brown
- 21:00 Holly City
- 22:00 Mum
- 22:30 Uncle
- 23:00 The Detectorists
- 23:30 The Detectorists

- 08:50 Bondi Vet
- 09:40 How It's Made
- 10:05 How It's Made
- 10:30 Prototype This
- 11:20 Mythbusters
- 12:10 Bondi Vet
- 13:00 Bear Grylls: Born Survivor
- 13:50 How It's Made
- 14:15 How It's Made
- 14:40 Dirty Jobs
- 15:30 Dick 'n' Dom Go Wild
- 15:55 Awesome Adventures
- 16:20 Mythbusters
- 17:10 Prototype This
- 18:00 NASA's Greatest Missions
- 18:50 NASA's Unexplained Files
- 19:40 Destroyed In Seconds
- 20:05 Destroyed In Seconds
- 20:30 How It's Made
- 20:55 How It's Made
- 21:20 Mythbusters
- 22:10 NASA's Greatest Missions
- 23:00 NASA's Unexplained Files
- 23:50 Destroyed In Seconds

Disney Channel HD

- 00:00 Kirby Buckets
- 00:25 Sabrina Secrets Of A Teenage Witch
- 00:50 Sabrina Secrets Of A Teenage Witch
- 01:10 Hank Zipzer
- 01:35 Binny And The Ghost
- 02:00 Violetta
- 02:45 The Hive
- 02:50 Sabrina Secrets Of A Teenage Witch
- 03:15 Sabrina Secrets Of A Teenage Witch
- 03:40 Hank Zipzer
- 04:05 Binny And The Ghost
- 04:30 Violetta
- 05:15 The Hive
- 05:20 Sabrina Secrets Of A Teenage Witch
- 05:45 Sabrina Secrets Of A Teenage Witch
- 06:10 Hank Zipzer
- 06:35 Binny And The Ghost
- 07:00 Violetta
- 07:45 The Hive
- 07:50 The 7D
- 08:00 Jessie
- 08:25 Jessie
- 08:50 Tsum Tsum Shorts
- 08:55 The Zhuzhus
- 09:20 Elena Of Avalor
- 09:45 Bunk'd
- 10:10 Stuck In The Middle
- 10:35 Wizards Of Waverly Place
- 11:00 Wizards Of Waverly Place
- 11:25 A.N.T. Farm
- 11:50 A.N.T. Farm
- 12:15 Good Luck Charlie
- 12:40 Good Luck Charlie
- 13:05 Shake It Up
- 13:30 Shake It Up
- 13:55 Disney Mickey Mouse
- 14:00 Welcome To The Ronks
- 14:15 Gravity Falls

Discovery Channel HD

- 00:30 Fast N' Loud
- 01:20 Misfit Garage
- 02:10 Made By Destruction
- 02:35 Made By Destruction
- 03:00 How Do They Do It?
- 03:25 How Do They Do It?
- 03:50 Impossible Engineering
- 04:40 Fast N' Loud
- 05:30 Storage Wars Canada
- 06:00 How It's Made: Dream Cars
- 06:30 How Do They Do It?
- 07:00 Deadliest Catch
- 07:50 Misfit Garage
- 08:40 Fast N' Loud
- 09:30 The Island With Bear Grylls
- 10:20 Storage Wars Canada
- 10:45 How It's Made: Dream Cars
- 11:10 How Do They Do It?
- 11:35 Made By Destruction
- 12:00 Made By Destruction
- 12:25 How Do They Do It?
- 12:50 How Do They Do It?
- 13:15 Impossible Engineering
- 14:05 How It's Made: Dream Cars

crime & investigation network

- 00:00 My Crazy Ex
- 01:00 My Ghost Story: Caught On Camera
- 02:00 My Haunted House
- 03:00 I Was Possessed
- 04:00 My Crazy Ex
- 05:00 My Ghost Story: Caught On Camera
- 06:00 My Haunted House
- 07:00 I Was Possessed
- 08:00 Deadly Wives
- 09:00 Deadly Wives
- 10:00 Crimes That Shook Britain
- 11:00 Homicide Hunter
- 16:00 Deadly Wives
- 17:00 Crimes That Shook Britain
- 18:00 Homicide Hunter
- 19:00 Nightmare In Suburbia
- 20:00 It Takes A Killer
- 20:30 It Takes A Killer
- 21:00 The First 48
- 22:00 Crimes That Shook Britain
- 23:00 Deadly Wives

COMEDY CENTRAL

- 00:05 Tosh.0
- 00:30 The Daily Show With Trevor Noah
- 01:00 Inside Amy Schumer
- 01:25 South Park
- 01:50 South Park
- 02:15 Ugly Americans
- 02:40 The Alternative Comedy Experience
- 03:05 South Park
- 03:30 South Park



OCTOBER SKY ON OSN MOVIES HD



TRUST ME ON OSN MOVIES COMEDY HD

- 01:50 Snipping Wars
- 08:15 Shipping Wars
- 08:40 Counting Cars
- 09:05 Car Hunters
- 09:30 Pawn Stars
- 09:55 Pawn Stars
- 10:20 Storage Wars Miami
- 10:45 Storage Wars Miami
- 11:10 American Pickers
- 12:00 Alone
- 12:50 Time Team
- 13:40 Swamp People
- 14:30 Ax Men
- 15:20 Mountain Men
- 16:10 Shipping Wars
- 16:35 Shipping Wars
- 17:00 Counting Cars
- 17:25 Counting Cars
- 17:50 Pawn Stars
- 18:15 Pawn Stars
- 18:40 Forged In Fire
- 19:30 Counting Cars
- 19:55 Car Hunters
- 20:20 Mountain Men
- 21:10 American Pickers
- 22:00 Outlaw Chronicles: Hells Angels
- 22:50 Search For The Lost Giants
- 23:40 Hunting Hitler

OSN MOVIES HD FAMILY

- 01:30 American Girl: Isabelle Dances Into The Spotlight
- 03:30 Marvel Super Hero Adventures: Frost Fight
- 05:00 Black Beauty
- 07:00 Looney Tunes: Rabbit's Run
- 08:30 Marvel Super Hero Adventures: Frost Fight
- 10:00 It Takes Two
- 12:00 Black Beauty
- 14:00 Atlantis: The Lost Empire
- 16:00 Atlantis: Milo's Return
- 18:00 The Princess Diaries 2: Royal Engagement
- 20:00 American Girl: Saige Paints The Sky
- 22:00 Marvel's Iron Man & Captain America: Heroes United
- 23:30 Atlantis: Milo's Return

OSN MOVIES HD COMEDY

- 01:00 Freaks Of Nature
- 03:00 Baby's Day Out
- 05:00 Other Plans
- 07:00 Shanghai Noon
- 09:00 Baby's Day Out
- 11:00 Other Plans
- 13:00 Shanghai Noon
- 15:00 Kicking And Screaming
- 17:00 Under The Tuscan Sun
- 19:00 Trust Me
- 21:00 Crazy On The Outside
- 23:00 Are You Here

OSN MOVIES HD FESTIVAL

- 01:30 The Informant
- 03:30 The Disappearance Of Eleanor Rigby: Her
- 05:15 Love & Mercy
- 07:15 The Sting
- 09:30 Walking On Sunshine
- 11:15 Still Alice
- 13:00 Batkid Begins
- 14:30 Ed Wood
- 16:45 The Man Who Wasn't There
- 18:45 Spotlight
- 21:00 Brooklyn
- 23:00 Carol

OSN MOVIES HD

- 01:15 Down And Out In Beverly Hills
- 03:00 47 Ronin
- 05:00 Quantum Of Solace
- 07:00 Amelia
- 09:00 Wall Street: Money Never Sleeps
- 11:15 October Sky
- 13:15 Quantum Of Solace
- 15:15 Finding Forrester
- 17:30 The Chronicles Of Narnia: Voyage Of The Dawn...
- 19:30 War Of The Worlds
- 21:30 The Hurricane

Discovery Science

- 00:00 How I Live My Life
- 00:50 Kings Of Construction
- 01:40 Mythbusters
- 02:30 How Do They Do It?
- 02:55 Food Factory
- 03:20 How The Earth Works
- 04:10 Close Encounters
- 04:35 Close Encounters
- 05:00 Kings Of Construction
- 05:48 Mythbusters
- 06:36 How Do They Do It?
- 07:00 Food Factory
- 07:24 How The Earth Works
- 08:12 Close Encounters
- 08:37 Close Encounters
- 09:00 How Do They Do It?
- 09:26 Kings Of Construction
- 10:14 Mythbusters
- 11:02 Close Encounters
- 11:27 Close Encounters
- 11:50 How Do They Do It?
- 12:14 Food Factory

NAT GEO people HD

- 00:00 Puh & Co
- 00:25 Dog Whisperer
- 01:15 Sara's Australia Unveiled
- 01:40 Grandma's Boy
- 02:05 Tripping Out With Allie & Georgia
- 02:30 Dog Whisperer
- 03:20 This Is Brazil
- 04:10 Valentine Warner Eats Scandinavia
- 04:35 Maximum Foodie
- 05:00 Confucius Was A Foodie
- 05:50 Rustic Adventure Argentina
- 06:20 Charlie Luxton's Homes By The Sea
- 07:15 The Best Job In The World
- 07:40 Andy And Ben Eat The World
- 08:10 Tripping Out With Allie & Georgia
- 08:35 Dog Whisperer
- 09:30 This Is Brazil
- 10:25 Valentine Warner Eats Scandinavia
- 10:55 Maximum Foodie
- 11:20 Confucius Was A Foodie
- 12:15 Rustic Adventure Argentina
- 12:45 Charlie Luxton's Homes By The Sea
- 13:40 Tripping Out With Allie & Georgia
- 14:05 Dog Whisperer
- 15:00 This Is Brazil
- 15:55 Valentine Warner Eats Scandinavia
- 16:25 Maximum Foodie
- 16:50 Confucius Was

CLASSIFIEDS



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KNCC PROGRAMME FROM THURSDAY TO WEDNESDAY (09/03/2017 TO 15/03/2017)

Time	Channel	Programme	Time	Channel	Programme	Time	Channel	Programme
11:45 AM	HAMAH - Kuwaiti Film	THE HOLLOW POINT	4:00 PM	LOGAN	LOGAN	9:30 AM	KONG: SKULL ISLAND	7:00 PM
2:30 PM	HAMAH - Kuwaiti Film	HAMAH - Kuwaiti Film	5:30 PM	LOGAN	LOGAN	12:15 AM	KONG: SKULL ISLAND	9:30 PM
4:00 PM	HAMAH - Kuwaiti Film	HAMAH - Kuwaiti Film	7:30 PM	LOGAN	LOGAN	12:05 AM	KONG: SKULL ISLAND	12:05 AM
5:45 PM	HAMAH - Kuwaiti Film	HAMAH - Kuwaiti Film	9:00 PM	AVENUES-1	KIKORIKI	1:00 PM	AL-KOUT.2	
7:15 PM	HAMAH - Kuwaiti Film	HAMAH - Kuwaiti Film	10:30 PM	KIKORIKI	THE DEVIL'S DOLLS	1:30 PM	HAMAH - Kuwaiti Film	12:15 PM
8:45 PM	HAMAH - Kuwaiti Film	HAMAH - Kuwaiti Film	12:05 AM	KIKORIKI	THE DEVIL'S DOLLS	3:00 PM	LOGAN	2:00 PM
10:15 PM	HAMAH - Kuwaiti Film	HAMAH - Kuwaiti Film		KIKORIKI	THE DEVIL'S DOLLS	5:00 PM	LOGAN	4:45 PM
12:15 AM	KONG: SKULL ISLAND	FANAR-2	12:45 PM	THE DEVIL'S DOLLS	THE DEVIL'S DOLLS	7:00 PM	LOGAN	7:30 PM
		THE HOLLOW POINT	3:00 PM	THE DEVIL'S DOLLS	THE DEVIL'S DOLLS	9:00 PM	LOGAN	10:15 PM
12:15 PM	HAMAH - Kuwaiti Film	THE DEVIL'S DOLLS	5:00 PM	THE DEVIL'S DOLLS	THE DEVIL'S DOLLS	11:00 PM	THE DEVIL'S DOLLS	1:00 AM
1:45 PM	KONG: SKULL ISLAND	THE HOLLOW POINT	7:00 PM	THE DEVIL'S DOLLS	THE DEVIL'S DOLLS	1:00 AM		
4:15 PM	KONG: SKULL ISLAND	THE DEVIL'S DOLLS	9:00 PM	THE DEVIL'S DOLLS	THE DEVIL'S DOLLS			
6:45 PM	KONG: SKULL ISLAND	THE HOLLOW POINT	10:45 PM	THE DEVIL'S DOLLS	THE DEVIL'S DOLLS			
9:15 PM	KONG: SKULL ISLAND	THE DEVIL'S DOLLS	12:45 AM	THE DEVIL'S DOLLS	THE DEVIL'S DOLLS			
11:45 PM	KONG: SKULL ISLAND	FANAR-3						
		KONG: SKULL ISLAND NO FRI+SAT	1:00 PM					
1:30 PM	LOGAN	KIKORIKI	1:45 PM					
4:15 PM	LOGAN	KONG: SKULL ISLAND	3:30 PM					
7:00 PM	LOGAN	KONG: SKULL ISLAND	6:00 PM					
9:45 PM	LOGAN	KONG: SKULL ISLAND	8:30 PM					
12:30 AM	LOGAN	KONG: SKULL ISLAND	11:00 PM					
12:30 PM	KONG: SKULL ISLAND	FANAR-4	12:30 PM					
1:30 PM	HAMAH - Kuwaiti Film	LOGAN	3:15 PM					
3:00 PM	KONG: SKULL ISLAND	LOGAN	6:00 PM					
5:30 PM	HAMAH - Kuwaiti Film	LOGAN	8:45 PM					
7:00 PM	BADRINATH KI DULHANIA-Hindi	LOGAN	11:30 PM					
10:00 PM	HAMAH - Kuwaiti Film	MARINA-1	12:45 PM					
11:30 PM	KONG: SKULL ISLAND	KONG: SKULL ISLAND	1:30 PM					
		HAMAH - Kuwaiti Film	3:15 PM					
1:00 PM	LOGAN	HAMAH - Kuwaiti Film	6:00 PM					
2:15 PM	HAMAH - Kuwaiti Film	HAMAH - Kuwaiti Film	7:30 PM					
3:45 PM	LOGAN	KONG: SKULL ISLAND	9:00 PM					
6:30 PM	LOGAN	KONG: SKULL ISLAND	11:30 PM					
9:15 PM	LOGAN	MARINA-2	12:00 PM					
12:05 AM	LOGAN	KONG: SKULL ISLAND	2:45 PM					
		KONG: SKULL ISLAND	5:15 PM					
12:00 PM	KONG: SKULL ISLAND	KONG: SKULL ISLAND	7:45 PM					
2:30 PM	KONG: SKULL ISLAND	KONG: SKULL ISLAND	10:15 PM					
5:00 PM	KONG: SKULL ISLAND	KONG: SKULL ISLAND	12:45 AM					
7:30 PM	KONG: SKULL ISLAND	KONG: SKULL ISLAND						
10:00 PM	KONG: SKULL ISLAND	MARINA-3	1:15 PM					
12:30 AM	KONG: SKULL ISLAND	LOGAN	2:30 PM					
		HAMAH - Kuwaiti Film	4:00 PM					
11:30 AM	HAMAH - Kuwaiti Film	FRI	6:45 PM					
1:00 PM	HAMAH - Kuwaiti Film	LOGAN						
2:30 PM	HAMAH - Kuwaiti Film	LOGAN						

The Embassy of the Co-operative Republic of Guyana

Vacancy Announcement

Title of the Post:

Ambassador's Chauffeur / Driver

Skilled Required:

- ◆ 100% fluent in speaking and reading English & Arabic
- ◆ Reads GPS/Google Maps on your own smart phone
- ◆ Translates conversations, runs errands, & solves problems
- ◆ Can work long hours & weekends with a positive attitude
- ◆ Will be truthful, trustworthy and loyal to the Ambassador
- ◆ Salary is a fixed 301KD/month
- ◆ Looks presentable & wears slacks, shirt, jacket, & dress shoes

Send applications and CVs indicating "Post of Ambassador's Chauffeur / Driver"

to the Embassy of the Co-operative Republic of Guyana

Mubarak Abdullah (West Mishref), Block 3

Street 321, villa 3, Kuwait

Email: Secretary.guyanaembassy@gmail.com

LOST

Original document policy No. 633001693 - Hameeda Perveen 633001707 - Mohammad Shabbir DV the State Life Insurance Corporation of Pakistan, Gulf Zone is reported to have been lost. Anyone finding the same or claiming any interest in it should communicate with the Manager Kuwait State Life office - Ph: 22452208. (C 5278) 6-3-2017

CHANGE OF NAME

I Lulusabgari Shaik Shavali S/o Lulusabgari Allabakash holder of Indian Passport No. L0032343 and Civil ID No. 269101009241 has changed my name to Shaik Shafi S/o Shaik Mahaboob Basha. Hereinafter in all my dealings and documents. I will know

by name of Shaik Shafi. (C 5281)

I Murtuza S/o Asger Khanji holder of Indian Passport No. M6718923 and civil ID No. 290061101911 has changed my name to Murtaza Asger Khanji hereinafter in all my dealings and documents. I will be known by name of Murtaza Asger Khanji. (C 5282)

I Husain S/o Asger Khanji holder of Indian Passport N8636914 and Civil ID No. 292083101241 has change my name to Husain Asger Khanji hereinafter to all my dealings and documents. I will know by name Husain Asger Khanji. (C 5282) 8-3-2017

The public is hereby notified that MS. MARIBINI TALUN-GON MOSANIP has filed with the Embassy of the Republic of the Philippines, State of Kuwait, a Migrant Petition for

Change of First Name of her daughter in the Report of 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)

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

Directorate General of Civil Aviation Home Page (www.kuwait-airport.com.kw)



Flight Schedule

DIAL161 FOR AIRPORT INFORMATION

Arrival Flights on Thursday 9/3/2017				Departure Flights on Thursday 9/3/2017			
Airlines	Flt	Route	Time	Airlines	Flt	Route	Time
KLM	411	Amsterdam/Dammam	00:20	KAC	614	Bahrain	13:30
JZR	267	Beirut	00:30	KAC	564	Amman	13:40
JZR	539	Cairo	00:40	KAC	788	Jeddah	13:45
KAC	102	London	00:55	FEG	931	Alexandria	13:55
THY	772	Istanbul	00:55	KNE	231	Riyadh	13:55
MSC	411	Asyut	01:00	QTR	1078	Doha	14:10
RJA	642	Amman	01:05	SVA	500	Jeddah	14:15
QTR	1086	Doha	01:15	FDB	059	Dubai	14:20
SAI	441	Lahore	01:30	KAC	692	Muscat	14:30
THY	764	Istanbul	01:50	KAC	414	Bangkok	14:35
DLH	635	Doha	01:55	GFA	221	Bahrain	14:40
PGT	858	Istanbul	02:00	KAC	672	Dubai	14:50
AXB	395	Kozhikode	02:00	KNE	529	Jeddah	14:55
ETH	620	Addis Ababa	02:05	ETD	303	Abu Dhabi	15:15
GFA	211	Bahrain	02:30	FDB	8053	Dubai	15:15
OMA	643	Muscat	02:55	OMA	645	Muscat	15:35
KKK	6506	Istanbul	02:55	UAE	857	Dubai	15:45
FDB	069	Dubai	03:05	ABY	127	Sharjah	15:50
ETD	305	Abu Dhabi	03:10	KAC	154	Istanbul	15:55
MSR	612	Cairo	03:10	SAW	705	Damascus	16:00
QTR	1076	Doha	03:30	KAC	542	Cairo	16:05
KAC	546	Cairo	03:55	KNE	531	Jeddah	16:05
LMU	510	Cairo	04:00	JZR	535	Cairo	16:10
MSC	501	Alexandria	04:05	JZR	779	Jeddah	16:10
KAC	418	Manila	04:25	QTR	1072	Doha	16:10
FEG	933	Sohag	05:00	FDB	051	Dubai	16:25
JZR	503	Luxor	05:10	KAC	662	Abu Dhabi	16:35
JZR	529	Asyut	05:15	RJA	640	Amman	16:55
KAC	354	BLR	05:20	JZR	787	Riyadh	17:00
DHX	170	Bahrain	05:20	KAC	118	New York	17:00
KAC	332	Trivandrum	05:45	SVA	510	Riyadh	17:15
THY	770	Istanbul	05:55	GFA	215	Bahrain	17:30
KAC	364	Colombo	06:05	JZR	777	Jeddah	17:45
KAC	206	Islamabad	06:20	NIA	251	Alexandria	17:55
KAC	346	Ahmedabad	06:25	UAE	875	Dubai	18:00
BAW	157	London	06:40	FDB	063	Dubai	18:10
QTR	8511	Doha	07:00	JZR	177	Dubai	18:20
PAL	668	Manila/Dubai	07:00	KAC	522	Al Najaf	18:25
KAC	204	Lahore	07:15	MSR	620	Cairo	18:30
FDB	5061	Dubai	07:15	QTR	1080	Doha	18:50
KAC	284	Dhaka	07:35	QTR	1080	Doha	18:50
FDB	053	Dubai	07:50	ABY	123	Sharjah	19:25
KAC	302	Mumbai	08:20	KAC	502	Beirut	19:30
UAE	855	Dubai	08:40	GFA	217	Bahrain	19:30
KAC	382	Delhi	08:45	KAC	674	Dubai	19:45
IRA	667	Esfahan	09:00	FDB	057	Dubai	19:50
ETD	301	Abu Dhabi	09:05	KAC	166	Rome	19:55
ABY	125	Sharjah	09:05	KNE	381	Taif	19:55
KAC	352	Kochi	09:10	KAC	168	Paris	19:55
QTR	1070	Doha	09:30	KAC	562	Amman	20:00
FDB	055	Dubai	09:40	MSR	618	Alexandria	20:05
SVA	512	Riyadh	10:00	OMA	647	Muscat	20:10
AVV	653	Sohag	10:10	JZR	189	Dubai	20:15
IRA	673	Ahwaz	10:10	QTR	1088	Doha	20:35
GFA	213	Bahrain	10:40	DLH	634	Frankfurt	20:45
SYR	341	Damascus	11:00	KAC	616	Bahrain	20:50
KAC	774	Riyadh	11:05	FDB	5053	Dubai	20:50
RBG	553	Alexandria	11:15	KAC	786	Jeddah	21:15
MSC	403	Asyut	11:15	ETD	307	Abu Dhabi	21:20
JZR	165	Dubai	11:30	MEA	402	Beirut	21:20
FDK	801	Damascus	11:45	ALK	229	Colombo	21:25
MEA	404	Beirut	11:55	UAE	859	Dubai	21:40
KAC	744	Dammam	12:10	GFA	219	Bahrain	21:45
KAC	286	Dhaka	12:25	KAC	676	Dubai	21:45
FEG	953	Asyut	12:35	QTR	1082	Doha	22:00
JZR	561	Sohag	12:40	KLM	417	Amsterdam	22:05
JZR	239	Amman	12:45	JZR	125	Bahrain	22:05
FDB	075	Dubai	12:50	NIA	151	Cairo	22:10
UAE	871	Dubai	12:50	ETD	309	Abu Dhabi	22:15
MSR	610	Cairo	13:00	AIC	981	Chennai/Ahmedabad	22:25
AXB	393	Kozhikode	13:10	JZR	241	Amman	22:45
				JAI	574	Mumbai	23:00
				JZR	185	Dubai	23:15
				KAC	156	Istanbul	23:25
				FDB	071	Dubai	23:45

CROSSWORD 1542



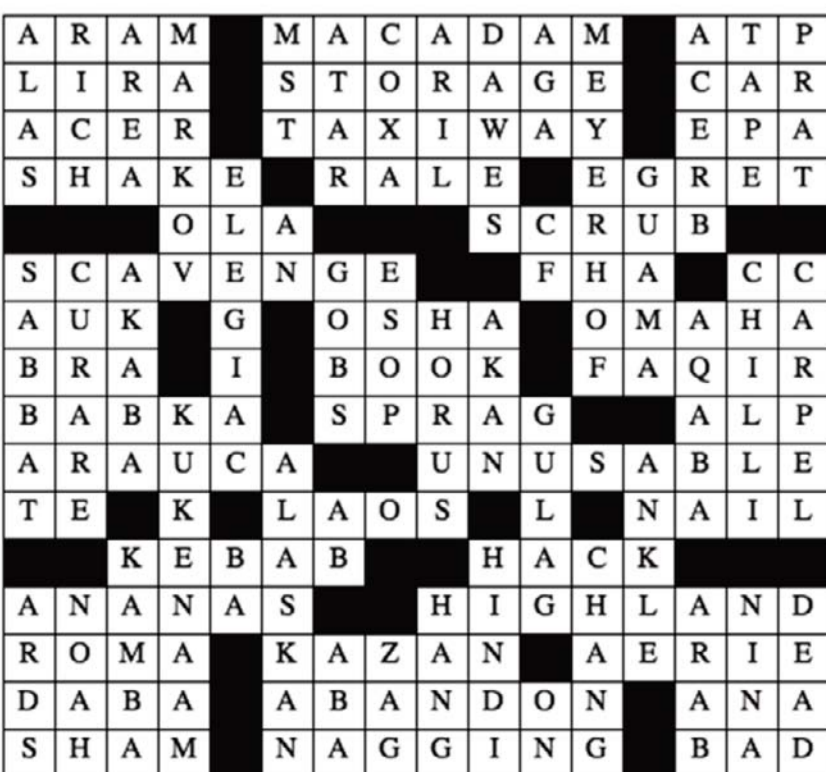
ACROSS

1. A small amount (especially of a drink).
4. A line drawn on a map connecting points having the same numerical value of some variable.
12. The compass point midway between south and southwest.
15. A federal agency established to coordinate programs aimed at reducing pollution and protecting the environment.
16. A distinctive odor that is offensively unpleasant.
17. Group insurance that entitles members to services of participating hospitals and clinics and physicians.
18. Old World nocturnal canine mammal closely related to the dog.
20. The 7th letter of the Hebrew alphabet.
21. A resource.
22. Undergo ulceration.
23. The person who plays that position on a football team.
25. In bed.
26. British artist and writer of nonsense verse (1812-1888).
29. (in Gnosticism) A divine power or nature emanating from the Supreme Being and playing various roles in the operation of the universe.
30. A radioactive element of the actinide series.
32. A highly unstable radioactive element (the heaviest of the halogen series).
33. Goods (or wreckage) on the sea bed that is attached to a buoy so that it can be recovered.
35. An official prosecutor for a judicial district.
37. Combined or joined to increase in size or quantity or scope.
41. American prizefighter who won the world heavyweight championship three times (born in 1942).
45. Mottled curly-grained wood of Pterocarpus indicus.
47. Low stinging nettle of Central and South America having velvety brownish-green toothed leaves and clusters of small green flowers.
50. A hospital unit staffed and equipped to provide intensive care.
51. A broad flat muscle on either side of the back.
52. A gliding joint between the distal ends of the tibia and fibula and the proximal end of the talus.
53. The phenomenon of resistance to motion through a fluid.
56. A Russian river.
58. Destroyed physically or morally.
59. Being ten more than one hundred ninety.
61. A silver-white metallic element of the platinum group that resembles platinum.
62. First in order of importance.
64. Not only so, but.
66. Long-tailed brilliantly colored parrot of Central and South America.
67. Any piece of work that is undertaken or attempted.
71. An alliance made up of states that had been Soviet Socialist Republics in the Soviet Union prior to its dissolution in Dec 1991.
75. The elementary stages of any subject (usually plural).
76. An airfield equipped with control tower and hangers as well as accommodations for passengers and cargo.
78. (formerly) A title of respect for a man in Turkey or Egypt.
79. The longer of the two telegraphic signals used in Morse code.
80. Moving with great speed.
81. An inflated feeling of pride in your superiority to others.

DOWN

1. Large (to 3 feet) blackish yellow-banded South American lizard.
2. A translucent mineral consisting of hydrated silica of variable color.
3. Genus of tropical plants with creeping rootstocks and small umbellate flowers.
4. A hostel for pilgrims in Turkey.
5. Food mixtures either arranged on a plate or tossed and served with a moist dressing.
6. A silvery ductile metallic element found primarily in bauxite.
7. East Indian sparsely prickly annual herb or perennial subshrub widely cultivated for its fleshy calyxes used in tarts and jelly and for its bast fiber.
8. An agency of the United Nations affiliated with the World Bank.
9. An artifact designed to be played with.
10. Edible body of any of numerous oysters.
11. The template for protein synthesis.
12. Building material used as siding or roofing.
13. Perennial mountain rice native to Mediterranean region and introduced into North America.
14. Chief god.
19. Cubes of meat marinated and cooked on a skewer usually with vegetables.
24. A group of Plains Indians formerly living in what is now North and South Dakota and Nebraska and Kansas and Arkansas and Louisiana and Oklahoma and Texas.
27. The sense organ for hearing and equilibrium.
28. (Greek mythology) One of the three Graces.
31. A drug (trade names Calan and Isoptin) used as an oral or parenteral calcium blocker in cases of hypertension or congestive heart failure or angina or migraine.
34. (Babylonian) God of wisdom and agriculture and patron of scribes and schools.
36. (British) A waterproof raincoat made of rubberized fabric.
38. United States songwriter noted for his protest songs (born in 1941).
39. Related on the mother's side.
40. Marked by features of the immediate and usually discounted past.
42. Of the color of black ink.
43. Make amendments to.
44. A heavy brittle diamagnetic trivalent metallic element (resembles arsenic and antimony chemically).
46. United States baseball player and manager (1873-1934).
48. The 1st letter of the Hebrew alphabet.
49. The state capital of South Australia.
54. A cord that is pulled to open the gasbag of a balloon wide enough to release gas and so causes the balloon to descend.
55. All the plant and animal life of a particular region.
57. A river in western Europe that rises in northern France and flows generally east into Belgium where it joins the Neuse at Namur.
60. Tropical American trees with palmately compound leaves and showy bell-shaped flowers.
63. The capital city of Vietnam.
65. United States writer (born in Poland) who wrote in Yiddish (1880-1957).
68. A French abbot.
69. A brace that extends from the rear of the keel to support the rudderpost.
70. Knock unconscious or senseless.
72. An associate degree in applied science.
73. Fleshy folds of tissue as those surrounding the mouth.
74. Call upon in supplication.
77. A hard brittle gray polyvalent metallic element that resembles iron but is not magnetic.

Yesterday's Solution



STAR TRACK



Aries (March 21-April 19)

There are opportunities now for financial growth that were not previously available—eyes and ears open! You are extremely hardworking and ambitious on the professional level. You have also been caught up in a social life and your partner or lover has also enjoyed the activities. Being on the go and keeping a finger to the winds of change made you feel in touch but have certainly taxed the energies lately. Home is where the heart is for the rest of this week. This is the time to begin some innovative changes on the home front. First, set up a time chart where family members can sign up to help. After so many chores, projects or hours served, you will find an appreciation movie or dinner may be in order. Relax this evening, if possible.



Taurus (April 20-May 20)

Your intuition is sharpened and may lead to new insights. Planning out the groundwork for new projects can be quite successful. There are opportunities now to apply your ideas and reap the results of your work. This is a time where relation with a spouse or business partner is on solid ground. This is certainly a time when material things have a great deal of importance. Financial deals are quickly settled now. Your emotions are steady and nurturing during this time and you are willing to change some negative habits into positive ones. Difficult emotional energies may be prevalent—yours or others'. This could be the best time to successfully sort through issues that you may have thought previously had no answer—perhaps in meditation.



Gemini (May 21-June 20)

Teamwork will bring success with a big project this morning. Dealings with higher-ups have favorable results. Negotiations are successful. This is a good day to conference with a teacher about a child's progress. Abstract and spiritual ideas and the ability to present or communicate these to others are present in your life. Pay attention to the expectations you have of others—think about reasonable principles, especially with young people. Ask each family member three things they would like to do before summer and express your own desires as well. Have you been neglecting your friends lately you might contact one or two of your friends and plan to have lunch together soon—perhaps this weekend. Contact with your friends is important now.



Cancer (June 21-July 22)

Keeping your goals in focus helps you to stay on track with what you need to accomplish. Someone may try and persuade you to move in a different direction from your objective, but with your eye on the goal, you will not be moved. You could be in the limelight today, especially with superiors in the workplace. You find you enjoy your job and the responsibilities that come with it. When others interrupt you, you are clearly able to give helpful answers. You may, however, find that an elderly person is critical of your ideas later today. Patience and perhaps a demonstration will bring him or her to your way of thinking. There are some informative as well as fun conversations with the young members of your family this evening. Introduce oysters.



Leo (July 23-August 22)

Check and recheck your work—you are entering a period of emotional change that may appear frustrating. This is a temporary state but it will be the bridge that launches you into new projects. You of all people are good at moving with the flow of energy and others will follow your lead. Where confusion could get out of control, you will create a peace of mind. Be as clear as possible in what you do or say. Since you do so well with change, consider a job that involves consulting. You also do well in jobs that involve assigning jobs and encouraging others. Make sure you have complete information before gambling with an investment that involves purchasing a precious item or stock. When possible, get an item appraised before obligating your money.



Virgo (August 23-September 22)

Your mind is quite able to handle any sort of problem that might occur today. If being involved with the personnel department was not part of your job identification when you started, you might think it is before the completion of this day. You have grown beyond the job you began and you are able to handle more and more responsibilities of late. Changes in your job may not have been expected, but your ability to retain information and adapt to the new changes will create an opportunity for you to request a raise as well as new job experiences. More and more of your time will be freed for people skills now. An important relationship, perhaps with a young person or someone in your near environment, may come into focus today. You are in demand.



Libra (September 23-October 22)

This is a great time to be with others in a working environment. A new piece of equipment may have everyone chatting at odd times. Use your talents to assuage the overflow of conversation so that not too much time is wasted and work is accomplished. You have a natural sense of what to say to people at the most opportune time. Regarding financial opportunities... Be careful when there is a risk financially and take care not to go along with the group just for approval. This afternoon, there is not only a desire for outdoor, physical activity, but there will most likely be ample opportunities to partake in the fun. Domestic tranquility could be enjoyed this evening by listening very carefully and feeding that information back to the other person for clarity.



Scorpio (October 23-November 21)

Don't be in such a hurry to get a quick fix. Some problems are not fixed by pills, food, etc. Consider making a list that has a plus column and a minus column so that you can compare and weigh out your decision. Your professional life is on the upswing! You could be representing your company, lecturing or leading others in some orientation process. Later this afternoon you may be attracted to a few beautiful baubles; be careful that you do not overspend or indulge too much just now, there are better opportunities later. A friend or loved one wants to celebrate some accomplishment and this person longs to hear your words of praise and approval. Bring dinner home or perhaps you might cook. There are fun times with the family or loved ones this evening.



Sagittarius (November 22-December 21)

It becomes clear that authority figures will want to see your work and check your accuracy. Make your days easier by doing your best and you will have nothing about which to worry. Some are impressed at your quick results and may be concerned with accuracy. Superiors, however, are well pleased. The people that criticize you the most are the ones that will soon become your best friends. It is easy for you to communicate and gain other people's confidence. You can be particularly witty, and this afternoon you and your friends enjoy socializing. If you are not romantically involved, you could meet your match through a community organization meeting, party or a club meeting later today. Enjoy new dance music.



Capricorn (December 22-January 19)

You may have serious doubts about the direction in which your life is heading right now. You are entering a period of emotional change and feeling two ways at once without getting too deeply into either polarity. You may find yourself at odds with someone in a meeting today. You may want to go against tradition in your desire to prove a point. Have patience; others will have your same viewpoint soon. Because of this realization, take a different approach and solve the problem before chaos sets in by others. This way you will be able to present another option and not a criticism. Stay away from gossip as you have enough business to tend to today. This evening is marked by increased romantic aspiration. There are unexpected rewards tonight.



Aquarius (January 20-February 18)

Everyone in the workplace seems to be involved in some form of spring fever. The feeling of today can be best summed up by your realization that you need to stop and appreciate the good times so that you will always have a memory of them. Don't feel guilty about taking some time out of your busy day to have lunch and take a walk around the block or building. Make a conscious effort to balance your activities daily. Note on dieting: for your wellbeing and temperament, as well as your health—you actually need a diet that is varied. Weighing and limiting your meals can be very frustrating. Missing a meal can be a real mistake! Your confidence is strong and you will find progress is successful. Your love life is improving.



Pisces (February 19-March 20)

Your frustration level may be a bit high this morning; however, in paying attention to that fact you will actually bring about a focus. With a deep breath to stay focused, work moves along at a nice little pace. Every time you feel your mind taking a little side trip, just take that deep breath and once again you will find progress is easier to accomplish. Listening to your own music or a fun radio station during your break today will help to lighten your efforts. You have an unending quest to discover and uncover fun and exciting things about your world. You may want to visit with a friend or loved one this afternoon and plan the next big fun adventure. Some great family members get your attention this evening, as well as a forgotten hobby.

WORD SEARCH

Pet Dog

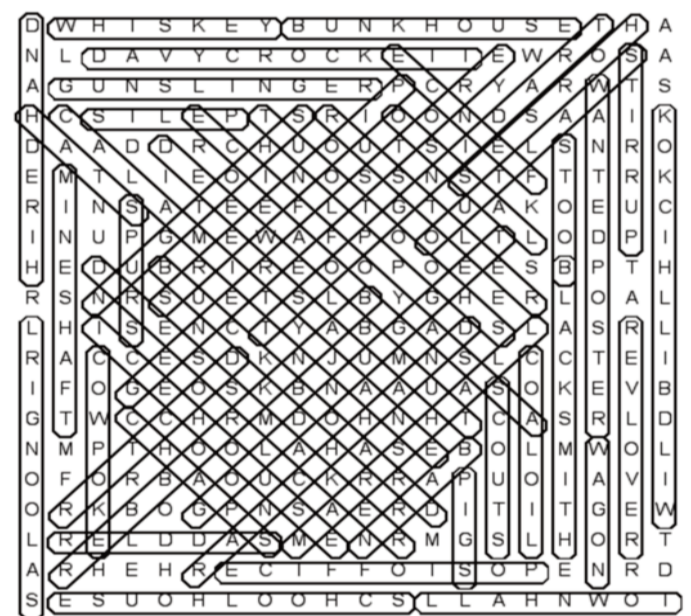
Find and circle all of the words that are hidden in the grid. The remaining 26 letters spell a secret message.



- | | | | |
|-----------|---------|--------|------------|
| BARK | FEED | ID TAG | PUPPY |
| BATH | FETCH | JUMP | ROLL OVER |
| BONE | FOOD | KENNEL | SHAMPOO |
| BOWLS | FRIEND | LEASH | SLEEP |
| CANINE | GROOM | LICK | TRAIN |
| CHASE | GROWL | LOYAL | TREATS |
| CHEW TOY | GUARD | OWNER | TRIM NAILS |
| COLLAR | HAIR | PANT | WAG TAIL |
| COMPANION | HARNESS | PAWS | WALK |
| FAITHFUL | HOUSE | PLAY | WATER |

Yesterday's Solution

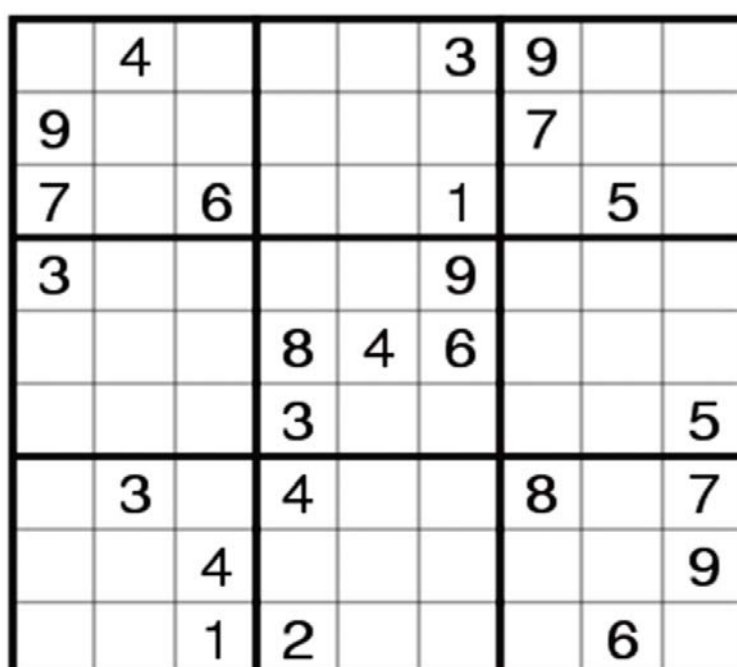
Old West 2



- | | | | |
|---------------|---------------|-------------|------------------|
| ASSAY OFFICE | DOCTOR | MINE SHAFT | SCOUTS |
| BANK ROBBER | DRESSMAKER | OUTLAWS | SHOOTOUT |
| BARN | FENCE | PELTS | SHOTGUN |
| BLACKSMITH | GENERAL STORE | PIGS | SPURS |
| BOOTS | GOLD NUGGET | PIONEERS | STIRRUP |
| BUCKBOARD | GUNSLINGER | POST OFFICE | TOWN HALL |
| BUNKHOUSE | HATS | RANCH HAND | TRADING POST |
| CALAMITY JANE | HIRE HAND | REVOLVER | TUMBLEWEED |
| CHAPS | HORSES | RUSTLER | WAGON |
| COAL OIL | ICE HOUSE | SADDLER | WANTED POSTER |
| COWPOKE | LASSO | SALOON GIRL | WHISKEY |
| DAVY CROCKETT | MARSHALL | SCHOOLHOUSE | WILD BILL HICKOK |

The hidden message is: ALWAYS DRINK UPSTREAM FROM THE HERD

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



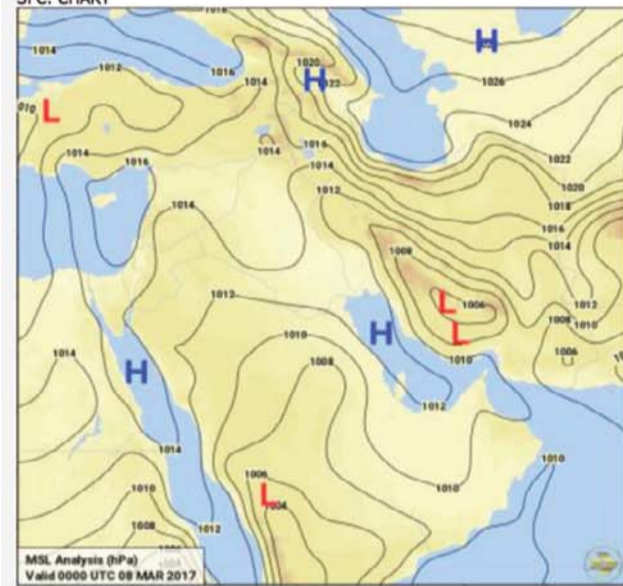
Expected Weather for the Next 24 Hours

Issued 08/03/2017-07:00 LT UTC +3hr

Max Temperature 28 °C

By Day : Partly cloudy with light variable wind, with speed of 06 - 22 km/h with a chance for scattered light rain
By Night : Fair with variable wind changing to light to moderate north westerly wind, with speed of 06 - 28 km/h and some high clouds will appear

SFC. CHART



Four-Day Forecast

	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
Expected Weather	warm	warm + scattered clouds	partly cloudy to cloudy + scattered thunder rain + raising dust	relatively hot + scattered clouds
Min Temp °C	13	13	15	15
Max Temp °C	29	29	31	32
Wind Direction	north westerly	variable wind changing to light to moderate south easterly	south easterly	south easterly changing to north westerly
Wind Speed km/h	12 - 35	10 - 32	20 - 45	12 - 32

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	18		27	
KUWAIT AIRPORT	13		28	
ABDLY	13		27	
BUBYAN	14		25	
JAHRA	15		27	
FAILAKA ISLAND	15		26	
SALMIYAH	17		23	
AHMADI	17		23	
JAL ALIYAH	14		25	
QAROH ISLAND	17		21	
UMM AL-MARADEM	17		22	
NUWASIB	14		26	
WAFRA	13		27	
MANAGISH	13		25	
SALMY	11		25	
MUTRIBA	13		27	

Recorded Yesterday at Kuwait Airport

Max Temp (°C)	27
Min Temp (°C)	10
Max Rel Hum (%)	66
Min Rel Hum (%)	16
Max Wind Speed (km/h) and Direction	28 W
TOTAL RAINFALL IN 24 HR	0 mm

Sunrise	06:05
Sunset	17:52

Prayer Times

Fajr	04:47
Sunrise	06:05
Zuhr	11:59
Asr	15:21
Sunset	17:52
Isha	19:08



PRIVATE CLINICS

Ophthalmologists	
Dr. Abdallah Al-Mansoor	25622444
Dr. Samy Al-Rabea	25752222
Dr. Masoma Habeeb	25321171
Dr. Mubarak Al-Ajmy	25739999
Dr. Mohsen Abel	25757700
Dr. Adnan Hasan Alwayl	25732223
Dr. Abdallah Al-Baghly	25732223
Ear, Nose & Throat (ENT)	
Dr. Ahmed Fouad Mouner	2455050 Ext 510
Dr. Abdallah Al-Ali	25644660
Dr. Abd Al-Hameed Al-Taweel	25646478
Dr. Sanad Al-Fathalah	25311996
Dr. Mohammad Al-Daory	25731988
Dr. Ismail Al-Fodary	22620166
Dr. Mahmoud Al-Booz	25651426
General Practitioners	
Dr. Mohammed Y Majidi	2455050 Ext 123
Dr. Yousef Al-Omar	24719312
Dr. Tarek Al-Mikhaezem	23926920
Dr. Kathem Maarafi	25730465
Dr. Abdallah Ahmad Eyadah	25655528
Dr. Nabeel Al-Ayoobi	24577781
Dr. Dina Abdallah Al-Rafea	25333501
Urologists	
Dr. Ali Naser Al-Serfy	22641534
Dr. Fawzi Taher Abul	22639955
Dr. Khaleel Abdallah Al-Awadi	22616660
Dr. Adel Al-Hunayan FRCS (C)	25313120
Dr. Leons Joseph	66703427

Plastic Surgeons	
Dr. Mohammad Al-Khalaf	22547272
Dr. Abdal-Redha Lari	22617700
Dr. Abdel Quttainah	25625030/60
Family Doctor	
Dr Divya Damodar	23729596/23729581
Psychiatrists	
Dr. Esam Al-Ansari	22635047
Dr. Eisa M. Al-Balhan	22613623/0
Gynaecologists & Obstetricians	
Dr Adrian arbe	23729596/23729581
Dr. Verginia s.Marin	2572-6666 ext 8321
Dr. Fozeya Ali Al-Qatan	22655539
Dr. Majeda Khalefa Aliyami	25343406
Dr. Ahmad Al-Khooly	25739272
Dr. Salem soso	22618787
General Surgeons	
Dr. Amer Zawaz Al-Amer	22610044
Dr. Mohammad Yousef Basher	25327148
Internists, Chest & Heart	
Dr. Adnan Ebil	22639939
Dr. Mousa Khadada	22666300
Dr. Latefa Al-Duweisan	25728004
Dr. Nadem Al-Ghabra	25355515
Dr. Mobarak Aldoub	24726446
Dr Nasser Behbehani	25654300/3

Paediatricians	
Dr. Khaled Hamadi	25665898
Dr. Abd Al-Aziz Al-Rashed	25340300
Dr. Zahra Qabazard	25710444
Dr. Sohail Qamar	22621099
Dr. Snaa Maarroof	25713514
Dr. Pradip Gujare	23713100
Dr. Zacharias Mathew	24334282
Dermatology	
Dr. Mohammed Salam Bern University	23845955
Dentists	
Dr Anil Thomas	3729596/3729581
Dr. Shamah Al-Matar	22641071/2
Dr. Anesah Al-Rasheed	22562226
Dr. Abdallah Al-Amer	22561444
Dr. Faysal Al-Fozan	22619557
Dr. Abdallateef Al-Katrash	22525888
Dr. Abdallah Al-Duweisan	25653755
Dr. Bader Al-Ansari	25620111
Neurologists	
Dr. Sohal Najem Al-Shemeri	25633324
Dr. Jasem Mola Hassan	25345875
Gastrologists	
Dr. Sami Aman	22636464
Dr. Mohammad Al-Shamaly	25322030
Dr. Foad Abdallah Al-Ali	22633135

Endocrinologist	
Dr. Abd Al-Naser Al-Othman	25339330
Dr. Ahmad Al-Ansari	25658888
Dr. Kamal Al-Shomr	25329924
Physiotherapists & VD	
Dr. Deyaa Shehab	25722291
Dr. Mused Faraj Khamees	22666288
Rheumatologists:	
Dr. Adel Al-Awadi	25330060
Dr. Khaled Al-Jarallah	25722290
Internist, Chest & Heart	
DR.Mohammes Akkad	2455050 Ext 210
Consultant Cardiologist	
Dr. Mohammad Zubaid MB, ChB, FRCP, PACC Assistant Professor Of Medicine Head, Division of Cardiology Mubarak Al-Kabeer Hospital	25339667
Dr. Farida Al-Habib MD, PH.D, FACC	2611555-2622555
Inaya German Medical Center	Te: 2575077 Fax: 25723123

German opera singer Kurt Moll dies at 78

German opera singer Kurt Moll, whose deep bass voice and interpretations of Mozart, Wagner and Strauss won him admirers worldwide, has died aged 78, the Bavarian State Opera announced. Moll died on Sunday "after a long and serious illness," it said, without specifying the cause of death. Moll, who originally wanted to be a cellist, was one of the most famous operatic bass singers of the post World War II era. He made his debut in 1968 at the Bayreuth Festival which celebrates the works of Richard Wagner and performed for Pope VI at the Vatican and leading opera houses worldwide.

In 1970, he performed what would go on to be a lifelong signature role for him: Sarastro in Mozart's "The Magic Flute" at the renowned Salzburg Festival. "Kurt Moll could bring the great bass roles from Wagner, Mozart and Strauss to life like no one else," Bavarian State Opera artistic director Nikolaus Bachler said. "His death is a great loss for the Bavarian State Opera and all our colleagues, for his public in Munich, Germany and the whole world." — AFP

Picture shows German singer Kurt Moll after he was awarded the Maximiliansorden order of merit in Munich, southern Germany. — AFP



Rare original drawing from Tintin in America to go on sale

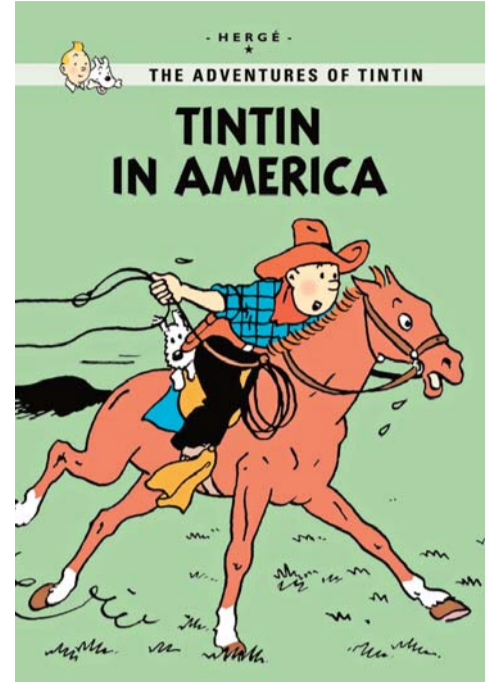
A rare original drawing of Tintin from the comic book album "Tintin in America" will go under the hammer next month, the Artcurial auction house said Tuesday. The 21x15 cm (8.2 x 5.9 inch) China ink drawing by the Belgian cartoonist known as Hergé, one of four color plates of the 1937 edition of the book, is valued at between 600,000 and 700,000 euros (\$635,000 and \$740,000), Artcurial said.

The drawing, to be sold with its color overlay, shows the intrepid boy reporter, revolver in hand, standing on the running board of a speeding taxi chasing evildoers in the streets of Chicago. Hergé color plates-limited to four in each of eight black-and-white albums from "Tintin in the Congo" (1931) to "The Crab with the Golden Claws" (1941) — rarely appear on the market.

The April 8 auction will feature several other Hergé works including a collection of drawings published in the Belgian newspaper ahead of the release of the

album "Red Rackham's Treasure." One of the drawings shows crusty sailor Captain Haddock wearing a plumed hat and brandishing a sword alongside Tintin and his dog Snowy. Original Tintin comic book drawings have been fetching millions at auctions over the last few years.

In November an original drawing from "Explorers on the Moon" sold for 1.55 million euros at Artcurial, setting a record for a single cartoon drawing. The 1954 book is viewed as one of Hergé's masterpieces. Hergé already holds the world record for the sale of a comic strip. A double-page ink drawing that served as the inside cover for all the Tintin adventures published between 1937 and 1958 sold for 2.65 million euros in 2014 (some \$3.6 million at the time) to an American fan. Hergé sold some 230 million Tintin albums by the time of his death in 1983. — AFP



US actress and model Uma Thurman poses during the photo-call before the Christian Dior women's Fall-Winter ready-to-wear collection fashion show in Paris. — AFP

Uma Thurman joins cast of new Lars von Trier thriller

Uma Thurman is to star in Lars von Trier's new serial killer thriller "The House That Jack Built", producers announced Tuesday as shooting got underway in Sweden. The US actress-novelist to gore thanks to her roles in "Pulp Fiction" and "Kill Bill", will appear alongside Matt Dillon and Bruno Ganz for the controversial Danish director's first feature since 2013's "Nymphomaniac", which also starred Thurman.

"Uma and Lars first worked together on Nymphomaniac and complimented each other in an exceptional way; I can't wait to see which character they'll create together this time," producer Louise Vesth said in a statement. Elvis Presley's grand-daughter Riley Keough of "Mad Max" fame has also joined the cast. Due out in 2018, the first stage of filming is taking place in Bengtsfors, close to the western city of Trollhattan which serves as the hub for the Swedish and Danish cinema industries. Shooting will move to Copenhagen in May.

"The House That Jack Built" is set in the 1970s and stars Dillon as Jack, an extremely intelligent serial killer who considers murder to be an art form. "Despite the fact that the final and inevitable police intervention is drawing ever near... he is contrary to all logic-set on taking greater and greater chances," producers said. Known for his black humour and shocking scenes of sex and violence, von Trier has avoided the media since 2011 when he was kicked out of the Cannes festival for telling a news conference he sympathized "a little bit" with Adolf Hitler. He later apologized for the comment. — AFP

Hollywood stars in Warsaw for Holocaust biopic set in zoo

Hollywood stars on Tuesday hit the red carpet in Warsaw for a gala screening of a film about a Polish couple who risked their lives to hide hundreds of Jews in a zoo during World War II.

Based on actual events, "The Zookeeper's Wife" tells the story of then zoo director Jan Zabinski and his wife Antonina, who together saved nearly 300 people, mostly Jews smuggled out of the city's ghetto, by providing them shelter in their villa basement. Thankfully, the Nazi Germans occupying Poland never found out. "Antonina and Jan were ordinary people who risked everything-their safety and the safety of their children-to save others."

They fostered hope in a time that was so dark," Oscar-nominated US actress Jessica Chastain, who plays Antonina, told reporters ahead of the screening. "What Jan and Antonina did was so extraordinary. But they did it for one very simple reason: because it was the right thing to do," director Niki Caro, who was born in New Zealand, told reporters in the Polish capital. Israel's Yad Vashem Holocaust remembrance centre later recognized the Zabinskis as Righteous Among the Nations, an award bestowed upon non-Jews who helped Jews during the Holocaust.

The movie, which hits theatres worldwide in late March, is based on a book of the same name by American author Diane Ackerman, who relied heavily on Antonina's own memoirs from the 1960s.

Caro said she never "really wanted to do a Holocaust movie, but this one was so different." "You know, most of our war movies are about men. But this is one that was about a woman and children and animals and all of those things interest me very much," she said.

Secret tune

While her husband was out most days working with the Polish underground resistance, Antonina took care of their secret guests as well an eclectic collection of pets including a piglet, an otter and a badger. Danger was ever present, as the Nazi Germans were constantly milling around the zoo. Helping Jews-even offering them a glass of water-was punishable by death in occupied Poland. Whenever the Nazis approached, Antonina would warn her secret guests by playing a special tune on the piano and they would escape outside via a tunnel in the basement.

The movie also stars German actor Daniel Bruhl and Belgian-born Johan Heldenbergh, who along with Caro and Chastain said they would join a Warsaw march on Wednesday to mark International Women's Day. Historical records show that six million European Jews died in the Nazi German genocide during World War II. All but two of the people hidden by the Zabinskis survived. — AFP



Flemish actor Johan Heldenbergh, right, and US actress Jessica Chastain attends a press conference prior to the gala screening of "The Zookeeper's Wife" in Warsaw. — AFP



Celebrity Chef Michael Symon to open restaurant

Celebrity Chef and cookbook author Michael Symon plans to open a restaurant at Cleveland Hopkins International Airport this spring. The Bar Symon restaurant planned for the airport is expected to open in April. United Concessions Group, the controlling partner for Bar Symon in airports, confirmed the plans Tuesday. Cleveland's Bar Symon will be the third airport restaurant in the Symon chain.

The first Bar Symon airport restaurant opened at Pittsburgh International Airport in 2012, and a second one opened at Washington Dulles International Airport in 2015. Menu items include several of Symon's comfort-food favorites, including his Lola Burger and Rosemary Fries. There also will be a full bar. The chef is the host of several shows on the Food Network and the Cooking Channel and operates several restaurants. — AP

KRISTEN STEWART EXPLAINS WHY SHE WENT PUBLIC ABOUT LOVE LIFE

Kristen Stewart used to fight like heck to keep her private life private, including her relationship with her "Twilight" co-star Robert Pattinson, but then she came to grips with her celebrity status. In July, she revealed for the first time that she had an on-again, off-again girlfriend, followed most recently by her first hosting gig on "Saturday Night Live," when she joked in a swipe at Republican President Donald Trump, "I'm, like, so gay, dude."

The idea, Stewart said in reports on People and elsewhere, was to spread acceptance, adding to The Sunday Times of London: "Considering I had so many eyes on me, I suddenly realized (my private life) affects a greater number of people than just me. It was an opportunity to surrender a bit of what was mine, to make even one other person feel good about themselves." Coming out publicly, Stewart said, "just seemed important and topical."

Stewart said during a recent round of interviews for her upcoming film "Personal



In this file photo, Kristen Stewart arrives at the 23rd annual ELLE Women in Hollywood Awards at the Four Season Hotel in Los Angeles. — AP

Shopper" that there was another motive behind her Trump-focused riff last month on "SNL": "We just wanted to make the monologue funny." — AP

Friends star Lisa Kudrow on the mother of all parts

Connoisseurs of "Friends" will remember ditzzy, loveable masseuse and occasional folk guitarist Phoebe Buffay's surrogate pregnancy storyline, written into the smash-hit NBC comedy to accommodate Lisa Kudrow's real-life baby bump. Well, prepare to feel old because it is 18 years since 27 million Americans tuned in to see Phoebe give birth to triplets, and Kudrow's son Julian, born a few months before the episode aired, is already preparing to go to college.

"Friends," seen on US television from 1994 to 2004, won dozens of awards and garnered global celebrity for Kudrow and her co-stars Jennifer Aniston, Matt LeBlanc, David Schwimmer, Courteney Cox and Matthew Perry. The 53-year-old Californian has appeared in around two dozen movies and TV series since it ended-the latest of which, DreamWorks animated feature "The Boss Baby," has her reflecting on the challenges of parenthood.

"Whenever I play a mother, I try to draw on my own experience as a mother. There are some pretty universal truths," Kudrow told AFP ahead of the movie's March 31 US release. "The Boss Baby" sees her playing the mother to a newborn like any other, except that he wears a suit, carries a briefcase and speaks with the voice and wit of Alec Baldwin-and turns out to be a fully grown spy in a baby's body.

Imposter

If the premise sounds daft, the high-wire plot weaves in larger themes such as the jolt an only child experiences when an

"imposter" sibling turns up, demanding the love and attention they were once able to monopolize. Kudrow herself disrupted a settled family when she came into the world, the youngest by six years of three children born to a professional couple in California's sun-kissed San Fernando Valley.

She laughs at the suggestion that she might have been something of a manipulative "boss toddler" herself, but admits she would seek special treatment at home. "I think I saw early on if I was irritating my brother and sister, I would just use what I'd heard my parents say-'I'm just little-I don't know,'" Kudrow said. The actress, descended from Jewish immigrants who fled the Soviet Union, graduated in biology and began following the family vocation-her brother David is a neurologist and her father Lee was a physician-as a researcher specializing in headaches.

She was nudged into show business by a comedian family friend. And after a stint in improv theater and a handful of bit-parts, she won an early role as airhead waitress Ursula Buffay on NBC sitcom "Mad About You." The name should sound familiar as Kudrow reprised the character in "Friends," although it was in her main role as Ursula's nicer twin sister, Phoebe, that the actress earned six Emmy nominations, winning the award in 1998.

Awkwardness

Starring parts came in movies "Romy and Michele's High School Reunion," "The Opposite of Sex" and "Analyze This," and

Kudrow found herself facing the dilemma male stars seem largely to avoid-balancing work and home life. She says it wasn't until her son was in fourth grade that she realized she was spending too much time away and cut back on her acting. Kudrow started on "Friends" at \$13,500 per episode, but over five contract negotiations became the highest paid TV actress of all time alongside her female castmates, receiving \$1 million per episode.

The money has allowed her the luxury of picking roles she finds intriguing and often she gravitates towards the same kind of cringe worthy characters preferred by British filmmaker and comedian Ricky Gervais. In acclaimed roles on "Friends," "The Comeback" and "Web Therapy," Kudrow has reveled in the charm of characters whose appeal lies largely in the awkwardness their lack of self-awareness creates. "I think they don't know that they're setting their dignity aside," she says. "They're completely unaware that that's what they're doing for the greater good, however you want to judge their version of the greater good. That stuff makes me laugh." — AFP

This file photo shows Lisa Kudrow attends the red carpet arrivals at the Women's Cancer Research Fund's event 'An Unforgettable Evening' at the Beverly Wilshire hotel in Beverly Hills. — AFP



3rd Qumra commences in Doha celebrating Modern Masters and New Voices in cinema

The third edition of Qumra, the industry initiative by the Doha Film Institute, commenced with a celebration of Modern Masters and New Voices in cinema, with accomplished filmmakers and industry professionals as well as emerging talents converging in Doha for a six-day event that aims to nurture the new generation of filmmakers.

Fatma Al-Remaihi, Chief Executive Officer of the Doha Film Institute, welcomed the international gathering, and highlighted the role of Qumra as "a modern project incubator, and a specially curated industry matchmaker event that brings together global film experts for learning and for sharing experiences."

She said: "We established Qumra as an initiative that represents the culmination of our diverse funding, training and development programmes. Our focus remains to cultivate the exchange of knowledge, ideas, creativity and inspiration, and create a supportive and productive space for projects by emerging filmmakers to benefit from interactions with some of the most experienced industry professionals."

The opening day was marked by the screening of the first Modern Masters screening of Lisbon Story (Germany, Portugal/1994), produced by Qumra Master, the internationally acclaimed producer Paulo Branco. Directed by Wim Wenders, the exquisitely crafted film is regarded as a powerful paean to filmmaking. The screening was followed by a Q&A session with Branco.

The 2017 Qumra Masters include contemporary Iranian master Asghar Farhadi; French auteur Bruno Dumont; Cambodian creative documentary Rithy Panh, Argentina's eminent filmmaker Lucrecia Martel. "The Masters program is at the heart of Qumra, and presents a unique opportunity for emerging talents to

connect with luminaries of modern cinema and find inspiration in their works and experience," said Fatma Al-Remaihi. "By sharing their personal perspectives on filmmaking, the Qumra Masters provide lasting benefit to our emerging filmmakers and make a meaningful impact on their careers."

Another highlight of the opening day was the New Voices Shorts Programme screening - featuring five short films by emerging regional talents including Qatari filmmakers. The films screened were: Kashta (2016) by A J Al-Thani; I Have Been Watching You All Along (2017) by Rawda Al-Thani; Turtles Are Always Home (2016) by Rawane Nassif; RED (2017) by Kholood Mohammed Al-Ali; and Our Time Is Running Out (2017) by Meriem Mesraoua.

"In many ways, these screenings exemplify the Doha Film Institute's work year-round in nurturing emerging talents from Qatar and the wider region. They demonstrate the passion and creativity of our filmmakers, and the support systems that are in place and in action, to further enhance the regional film landscape," added Fatma Al-Remaihi.

On Saturday, Qumra hosted the Modern Master screening of L'il Quinquin (France, 2014) directed by Qumra Master Bruno Dumont, at 7 pm, and the New Voices in Cinema screening of Holy Cow (Azerbaijan, Germany, Romania, Qatar/2015) by Imamaddin Hasanov at 4 pm. Both screenings are at the Museum of Islamic Arts Auditorium. On Saturday, Paulo Branco will also conduct his Master class for the Qumra delegates. Visit www.dohafilminstitute.com for online and in person ticketing details for the screenings.

Qumra hosts leading international filmmakers, producers, industry experts and professionals, for intense brainstorming, knowledge-shar-



ing and nurturing sessions with talents associated with 34 films from 25 countries. Directors and producers attached to 18 narrative feature films, 7 feature documentaries and 9 short films are participating in the event being held until March 8 at Souq Al-Waqif and the Museum of Islamic Arts.

New to Qumra this year are the Accredited Delegates Programme, developed for professionals from diverse backgrounds which will allow 100 local and regional delegates to access more opportunities and be a part of the platform for discovery, and 'Qumra Talks', a series of three specially curated discussions that gathers leaders

from the technology, film, TV and online worlds to share their insights on trending topics impacting the international film industry.



Inmates work in the making of clothes at the Cecilia Orillac de Chiari Women's Rehabilitation Centre in Panama City. — AFP photos

A stitch in time: Fashioning a life behind bars in Panama

In a small room a prison on the outskirts of Panama City, Kathia Thomas carefully presses the screen on a digital sewing machine to choose the colors and embroidery on her next item of clothing. Surrounded by other women, and by threads, patterns and a few religious images, Thomas, a 43-year-old mother of five children, is preparing the next collection behind bars. She is part of IntegrArte, a brand of clothes, accessories and decorative objects—all made by inmates.

Thomas spends eight hours a day in the sewing room, mostly concentrating on embroidery. It goes toward reducing her three-year sentence for dealing drugs. The Cecilia Orillac de Chiari penitentiary where she is kept holds 800 female prisoners, living in houses that feature kitchens, laundries, washrooms and dormitories. "The problem inside is that it triggers many things. That's why you always need something to do to keep the mind occupied," she said. "Making clothes frees you," she added.

A way to feel normal

Twenty-five women work for IntegrArte in the prison, while another 50 receive sewing lessons. So far, the brand has brought out one collection, called Paraiso Etnico (Ethnic Paradise) which combines styles from the 1970s and 1980s with tradi-

tional handiwork typical to Panama. "I love making clothes because it's a way for me to feel totally normal," said a Colombian inmate, Claudia Luna, although she added that in prison "we lack a lot of material and work basically with our fingers, with whatever we have around."

In all, four penitentiaries in Panama offer the same sort of social reinsertion work program, which is backed by the United Nations and which shaves time off sentences. Some 100 inmates take part. In the Cecilia Orillac de Chiari facility, women produce clothes, hats, necklaces and purses. In the other three prisons, men work on household items and handicrafts. Panama's vice president, Isabel de Saint Malo, said the involvement of the women in an economic activity was "fundamental to the efforts toward equal opportunities for men and for women."

Model prisoners

The IntegrArte brand has been registered by the government, but a couple more steps are needed before it enters the market. In the meantime, several ministers—including De Saint Malo—have been wearing its clothes, including those made by Luna, who is also locked up for drug trafficking. "Dressing a vice president is the biggest thing I have ever

done. Outside I would never thought that I would get to know a person like that," Luna said.

Hania Fonseca, the manager of IntegrArte, said: "Each item that we put out carries with it the history of the person who made it."

Locked away, the prisoners cannot hire models to try on their garb, so they do their own runway shows. In a small yard, several inmates, wearing makeup and carefully coiffed, try on different pieces and designs. Some of them used to be among the more rebellious, "climbing on roofs and inciting strikes," explained the prison's director, Lizeth Berrocal. Now, they've become "model" prisoners, focusing on fashion in the hopes of launching catwalk careers once they get released.

"This is an opportunity for someone locked up to show that they can become different, they can change and become better," said one of them, Teresa Santamaria, sporting an embroidered white top. Another inmate, Stefani Edwards, sashayed down the improvised runway to show off a colorful Afro-Caribbean dress. "Modeling was always my dream. But I never had the financial or family backing," she said. "I think when I get out of here that will be my goal."

Other inmates said the clothes-making and the modeling made them discover skills they never knew they had. They also believed that giving themselves over to fashion allowed them to escape, for periods at a time, from the tough reality of living behind bars. Thomas, behind her digital sewing machine, said: "There are women who more than a gift or punishment—just need to have someone listen to them. Here, there are no bad women." — AFP



Inmates wearing creations of the brand IntegrArte, pose at the Cecilia Orillac de Chiari Women's Rehabilitation Centre in Panama City.

Maradona mural celebrates Naples 'Saint Diego'

Diego Maradona fans have another reason to make a pilgrimage to Naples: a new mural of the Argentine legend has gone up to mark 30 years since he led local club Napoli to its first Italian title. Painted by artist Jorit Agoch, the giant, head-and-shoulders depiction of a middle-aged Maradona with grey-flecked hair and beard adorns the side of a building in San Giovanni Teduccio, a tough neighborhood known locally as "The Bronx".

Maradona was already the subject of a famous mural in the city's Spanish Quarter, which portrays him dribbling with ball at his feet in a manner reminiscent of when he was in his prime. That one was restored last year and there are discussions underway about making Maradona an honorary citizen of Naples to mark the May anniversary of the clinching of the 1987 title - a groundbreaking triumph that was repeated, again under Maradona's leadership, in 1990.

Passing in front of the new mural on Tuesday, hours before Napoli's Champions League clash with Real Madrid, retired sailor Giuseppe said Maradona was still revered "like a saint" in the city - despite voicing reservations about the star's run-ins with the Italian tax authorities. "In my opinion he was the greatest player of all time - better even than Pele," he told AFPTV.

"The one thing that's sure is that when he was here, Napoli won a lot, although I don't agree him not paying his taxes when I have to pay them on my pension." Maradona recently visited the city for the first time in four years and he gave the team a pep-talk before their 3-1 first leg defeat by Real in the Champions League last-16 tie.

Cocaine ban, tax conviction

He was not expected to be at yesterday's return leg but another local, diehard fan Mario, said the player would always be with the club in spirit.



A picture shows the unfinished mural of football superstar Diego Armando Maradona by Italian artist Jorit Agoch in a district known as the Bronx in San Giovanni a Teduccio, near Naples, southern Italy. — AFP

Egyptian court orders one-year imprisonment and record fine for television content theft

An Egyptian court ordered a record fine of EP 100,000 and one-year imprisonment for a man found guilty of illegally distributing and selling stolen entertainment content without holding the required licences and without permission of the owners. The Economic Court of Alexandria found the defendant guilty of two charges of setting up an illegal broadcast network as well as breaking intellectual property laws.

The court found that the defendant had been stealing content and illegally re-broadcasting satellite channels via the internet and an illegal cable network in contravention of Egypt's Communications Regulations Law 10 of 2003. General Sharif Abdulhameed, Director of Alexandria Investigation Department, said: "We view content theft seriously and will take stern action against offenders. The court ruling should serve as a reminder that stealing content or illegal sharing, through any channel, is a criminal offence.

We request the cooperation of all, including the public, in refraining from encouraging such acts, which drain our national exchequer and impact our creative industry." OSN, the region's premier entertainment company, whose channels were the subject of the case, welcomed the judgement as a major blow to the criminals who are threatening the creative industry in the region. Sophie Moloney, OSN Chief Legal Officer and spokesperson on Content Protection, said:

"The judges have sent out a very strong message. Stealing content from OSN, and other legal owners, can land you in jail as well as face very big fines in Egypt."

"We are extremely grateful to the Egyptian Police and enforcement authorities for their hard work on this case. Together we can do a lot to thwart the criminals who steal our content, and help to protect the rights of the creative people who make the wonderful entertainment programs and movies we all love to watch." OSN is part of an industry coalition, comprising broadcasters and satellite operators, who meet regularly to share intelligence on content theft, or piracy, and work together to raise awareness across the MENA region of the impact of this illegal activity.

In addition, OSN has built strong relationships with governments and enforcement agencies in Egypt, the UAE, KSA, Jordan, Bahrain, Oman and Kuwait to support legal action against criminals selling illegal satellite set-top-boxes and IPTV decoders, as well as those running illegal online streaming services. To date, OSN has taken down numerous links that shared stolen content and participated in a significant number of raids across the region. OSN uses the latest encryption technology to identify its content and who may be distributing it without permission.



China comfort women history buried as brothels fall



This picture shows two statues symbolizing so-called comfort women in a park in Shanghai.



This picture shows a statue symbolizing so-called comfort women in a park in Shanghai.

With its red-painted window frames and sooty facade, the empty two-storey building on Gongping Road is typical of many of Shanghai's pre-World War II structures-but this one houses dark memories. The crumbling mansion is one of 150 sites in the Chinese metropolis formerly used as "comfort stations", part of the vast system of sexual slavery established by Japan for its invading armed forces before and during World War II.

Around 30 are believed left in the city, but these silent witnesses to history are disappearing amid rapid

issues in its stormy relationship with Japan. There are glimmers of hope. The Gongping Road site was to be razed in a redevelopment plan but was saved last year after historian Su Zhiliang highlighted the building's past and Chinese media amplified it.

Uphill battle

But it remains an uphill battle for Su, of Shanghai Normal University, who has waged a crusade to spotlight "comfort women" suffering. When he first began delving into the issue in the early 1990s, authorities

former "comfort station" in Nanjing, 300 kilometers west of Shanghai, was converted into a museum by local authorities, opening in December 2015.

Su, meanwhile, was granted permission to upgrade his display of archives into a museum, which opened in October in a building on his campus. Just outside, a statue representing two "comfort women"—one Chinese, one Korean—was unveiled. China has also recently made available documents on "comfort women" from its official archives, amid an international effort to include them in the UNESCO International Memory of The World Register.

The effort proposes to recognize the Japanese system as a tragedy comparable to the Holocaust and Cambodian genocide. "The Chinese state has latched onto this issue as a means of getting at Japan," said Edward Vickers, a researcher at Kyushu University in Japan. "For the Chinese Communist Party it serves the purpose of portraying Japan as some kind of international pariah to some extent, now as in the past."

Japan bristles

Japan finally acknowledged in the early 1990s that the "comfort women" system existed. It has apologized repeatedly and offered compensation. It now bristles at growing efforts to shine further light on the matter. In January, Abe called on South Korea to remove a "comfort woman" statue placed defiantly outside the Japanese consulate in the city of Busan. Tokyo also recalled its ambassador in anger.

In a statement to AFP, Japan's consulate in Shanghai condemned Su's museum and the statue outside it as "extremely regrettable." "We do not consider these actions helpful for improving Japan-China relations," it said. Su recently began talks with Shanghai authorities on preserving a building he believes housed the first-ever "comfort station" and converting it to a museum. Flimsy wooden partitions in the building's interior divide it into dimly lit, makeshift apartment spaces.

Treading its creaky floorboards, an elderly woman said she-like many living in or near former Shanghai "comfort stations"—have heard of the buildings' histories. "After the Japanese came they could do whatever they wanted. Who could control them?" she said, peering through thick glasses. City officials did not respond to AFP requests for comment. "That even the first-ever 'comfort station' in the world has still not been fully protected, this is really regrettable, so we need to work hard," Su said. — AFP



This picture shows pictures of so-called comfort women on a wall in a museum in Shanghai.

urban development and China's hesitance to memorialize the painful episode. "All these historical remains are slowly being demolished. There are fewer and fewer," said Bao Xiaolin, an expert on China-Japan relations at the city's Fudan University. Mainstream historians agree that around 200,000 so-called "comfort women", mostly from Korea but also from other Asian nations including China, were forced to work in Japanese military brothels during World War II.

Calls to preserve such sites, and remember their victims' suffering, have until recently been muzzled by China's desire to play down one of the most sensitive

prevented Su from publishing his research. "The Chinese government has really not done enough. This is a wartime human rights issue, but in order to maintain good relations with Japan the government does not give the issue much support," Su told AFP.

He now raises money for survivors, of whom there are only 17 known in China, none in Shanghai. Many were stigmatized and ostracized after the war, receiving no special government assistance. But a rightward shift in Japanese politics under Prime Minister Shinzo Abe, and a more assertive China under President Xi Jinping, are giving oxygen to the issue, experts say. A



This picture shows an abandoned room of the Hainai House, a former military brothel, in Shanghai's Hongkou district. — AFP photos



This picture shows the Hainai House, a former military brothel, in Shanghai's Hongkou district.

DEVELOPMENT PLAN RAISES FEARS FOR MOSCOW LE CORBUSIER GEM

A striking combination of glass, curves and straight lines—the Tsentrosyuz building in downtown Moscow stands as a monument to modernist architecture and the genius of its famed designer Le Corbusier. Completed in 1936 to house the Soviet Union's ministry of light industry, the inventive office block was the first major public commission received by the legendary Swiss-French architect.

It is a symbol of the experimentalism of the early years of Communist rule but conservationists are now worried that the historical building could be overshadowed by a 58-metre tall business centre, being mooted for right next door. For the time being, there is no question of Le Corbusier's creation—renovated in 2013 -- being touched. It is classified as a protected historic monument by the authorities and the current inhabitants—state statistics agency Rosstat—have no intention of moving out.

But the potential destruction of two neighboring late 19th century residential buildings to make way for the new business centre has set some preservationists on edge. "If this project is realized it will change in a very regrettable way the immediate environment of the Tsentrosyuz," Antoine Picon, the president of the Fondation Le Corbusier, wrote in a letter sent in January to Russia's culture minister and the mayor of Moscow. "The design took into account the make-up of the buildings that existed at the time," he wrote. Picon said that he was still to receive a reply to his letter.

Enormous changes

The Moscow building applied some of Le Corbusier's architectural principles, including a curtain-wall facade and flat roof, and was made of concrete and red tuff stone, a type of volcanic rock. One of the fathers of modern architecture, Le Corbusier's ideas about utilitarian concrete buildings have altered the face of cities across the planet and have had an equally profound influence on urban planning.

According to preservation group, Arkhnadzor, the buildings slated to make way for the business centre are owned by Russia's defense ministry, but a private investor, Fin.Kom, now holds the rights to develop the 15,000-square-metre site. When con-

tacted, Fin.Kom did not respond. Moscow's cultural heritage authorities said that they have not yet "received or agreed to" any application for work at the site.

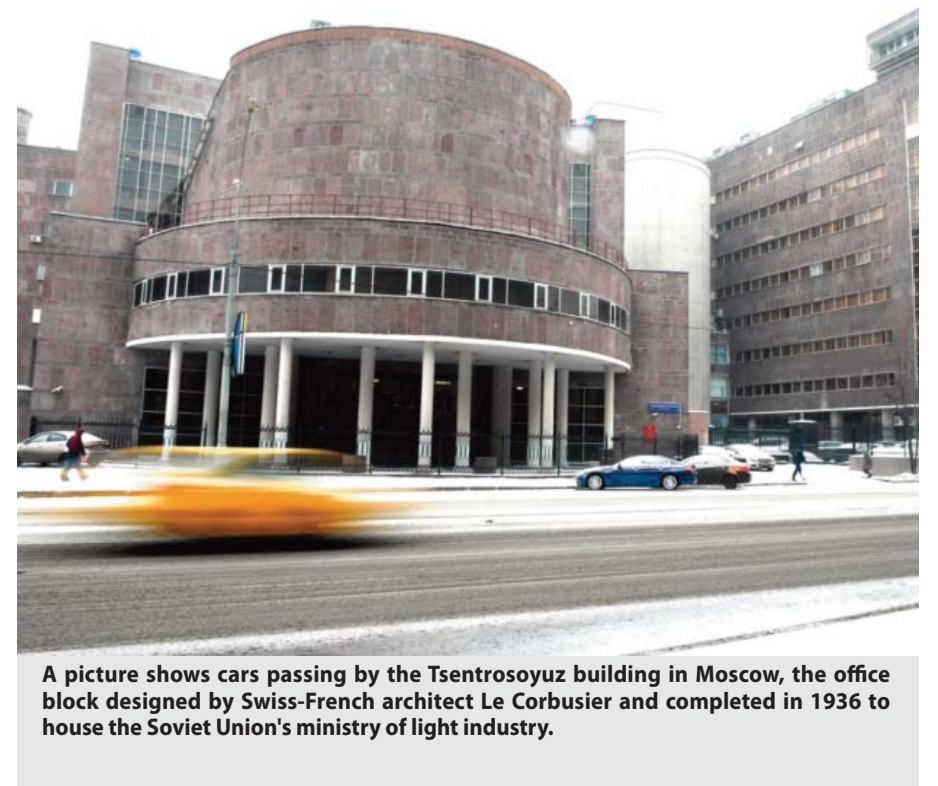
But they confirmed that the buildings were not classified for preservation and could, in principle, be torn down. "We do not currently have knowledge of any threats to the Tsentrosyuz," they added. But in a sign that preparations for the development could be speeding up, a group of state-approved planning experts last year issued a favorable ruling for the developers.

They insisted that, given the "enormous changes that have taken place over the past quarter-century" in the area, the two residential buildings are now "obsolete." City officials must still approve the experts' findings. But in December, city hall published draft development plans that included replacing two old residential blocks with a 58-metre high building. For those fighting to protect Moscow's architectural heritage, these moves are a major blow.

Concentration of riches

Some 17 Le Corbusier projects around the world were added to UNESCO's World Heritage List in 2016 and, while Tsentrosyuz is not among them, it is viewed as a potential future candidate. Experts say erecting the business centre next door would likely dash those hopes. More generally, as the Moscow skyline has changed dramatically in recent years, conservationists complain that the project is symptomatic of official disregard for protecting the historic gems studding the city.

"To put a construction that will be twice as big next to such a building... that means reshaping the whole district and disfiguring its appearance even more," said Konstantin Mikhailov, of Arkhnadzor, which works to preserve Russian heritage. "Moscow is a place where there is a concentration of riches and where there exists a lot of pressure from investors," he said. "Authorities in the city can't always resist this pressure and sometimes they even encourage it themselves." — AFP



A picture shows cars passing by the Tsentrosyuz building in Moscow, the office block designed by Swiss-French architect Le Corbusier and completed in 1936 to house the Soviet Union's ministry of light industry.

FASHION



In this photo, Bangladeshi acid attack survivors walk down the catwalk during the event Beauty Redefined in Dhaka, Bangladesh. — AP photos

Acid victims redefine beauty in Bangladesh fashion show

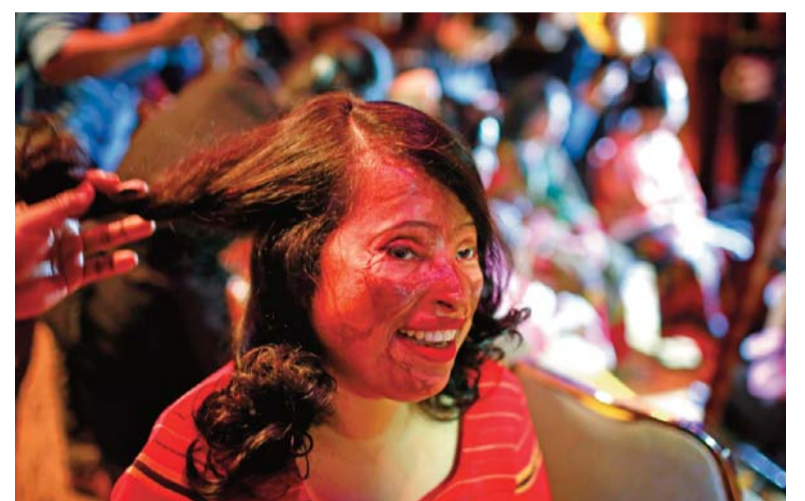
Teen model Shonali Khatun strutted the catwalk as the audience cheered at a fashion show in Bangladesh's capital. But Shonali is no ordinary model, and this was no ordinary show. She and the 14 other models are survivors of acid attacks, common in this South Asian country, where spurned lovers or disgruntled family members sometimes resort to hurling skin-burning acid at their victims. The fashion show, held Tuesday night in Dhaka and attended by fashion lovers, rights activists and diplomats including the US ambassador to Bangladesh, aimed to redefine the notion of beauty while calling attention to the menace of such attacks.

For 14-year-old Shonali, the event was nothing short of empowering. She was attacked just days after she was born amid a property dispute involving her parents, and was left with burn scars on her face and arms. She spent nearly three years in a hospital and under-

went eight operations. Her attacker has never been caught. "I am so happy to be here," she said. "One day I want to be a physician." The models, including three men, walked the catwalk, dancing and singing and showcasing woven handloom Bangladeshi designs. The show was choreographed by local designer Bibi Russel.

Organizers said they hoped to highlight the fact that acid victims, too often overlooked, are a vital part of society. They deliberately chose to hold the event on the eve of International Women's Day. "We are here today to show their inner strength, as they have come a long way," said Farah Kabir, country director of ActionAid Bangladesh, which organized the show. "I often take inspiration from them. Their courage is huge." Bangladesh has struggled to deal with acid attacks in recent decades, and has instituted harsh punishments for the perpetrators, including the death penalty.

The country has also trained doctors to treat such sensitive cases and attempted to control the sale of acid, but has failed to eliminate the scourge entirely. In 2016, some 44 people were attacked with acid in Bangladesh - an annual number that has remained relatively stable. "I am ashamed of having such things in the country," Kabir said. "Unfortunately, in Bangladesh we do have acid victims because of either gender discrimination or violence, or because of greed. And we want to remind everyone the kind of injustice that has been meted out to them." — AP



In this photo, a Bangladeshi acid attack survivor gets her make up applied during the event Beauty Redefined in Dhaka, Bangladesh.



Activists of Efron-e-s feminist movement hold placards reading sexist in an Yves Saint-Laurent shop in Paris. — AFP photos

SAINT LAURENT ORDERED TO REMOVE DEGRADING POSTERS

France's advertising regulator has ordered fashion house Saint Laurent to remove posters of extremely thin models in "degrading" poses after an outcry over their appearance around Paris. The campaign features 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. Stephane Martin, head of advertising regulator ARPP, said Tuesday that his organization had received 120 complaints over the way the posters depicted women.

The authority bars all "degrading and humiliating"

representations of people. It has written to Saint Laurent asking them to "stop the use of these images, to withdraw them or to change them," Martin said, explaining that a more detailed assessment of the campaign would be made on Friday. Britain's advertising watchdog banned a Saint Laurent advert two years ago that featured an overly thin model whose ribcage was showing. The latest campaign was created in-house by Saint Laurent, which is under new young Belgian designer Anthony Vaccarello whose debut collection featured a dress that exposes one breast. Saint Laurent

has declined to comment. Ironically, the label made its name by putting women in men's tuxedos, a gesture that chimed with the rising feminist wave of the 1970s. The poster campaign "ticks all the sexist boxes. The women are objectified, hypersexualised and put in submissive positions," Raphaëlle Remy-Leleu from French women's group, Osez le féminisme ("Dare to be Feminist"), said. — AFP

Scarlett Johansson files for divorce from Romain Dauriac

Scarlett Johansson's husband was "shocked" at the star's divorce filing Tuesday and sees the move as a "pre-emptive strike" in a battle over custody of the couple's toddler daughter, his lawyer said. Johansson filed for divorce from Romain Dauriac in a New York City court Tuesday, saying the marriage was "irretrievably broken." The move follows a January announcement that the couple split last summer after less than two years of marriage.

Johansson is asking for joint custody of their daughter, Rose, but also wants the child to live with her. Dauriac's lawyer, Hal Mayerson, said yesterday that he and Dauriac were taken aback by the request because he has been the "primary parent" for Rose while Johansson has been involved with her career. Dauriac plans to petition the court to take the child to live with him in his native France, Mayerson said, adding that Johansson will have "access to her daughter any time she wants to come to Paris."

"Mr Dauriac is tired of having to run his life and his child's life based on Ms Johansson's shooting schedule," Mayerson said.

The divorce filing notes that the couple signed a prenuptial agreement in September 2014, but Mayerson said the pact does not address custody or financial issues regarding their daughter.

Dauriac is a former journalist who now works as a curator of art shows in New York, Mayerson said. Johansson's representatives and attorneys didn't immediately respond to a request for comment yesterday. This was Johansson's second marriage. She was previously married to actor Ryan Reynolds from 2008 to 2011. — AP



In this file photo, US actress Scarlett Johansson, left, and her partner Romain Dauriac arrive at the 39th French Cesar Awards Ceremony, in Paris. — AP



South African artist Esther Mahlangu, 81, poses at her home in Mabhoko Village, Siyabuswa, Mpumalanga. — AFP



Iranian biker blazes trail for women

Behnaz Shafiei, Iran's path-breaking female motorbike champion, lands a spectacular 15-metre jump on a track near Tehran — all the more astonishing given that this would have been illegal a year ago. At 27, Shafiei has become a symbol of the shifting social norms for women in Iran, realizing her dream of becoming a professional biker despite living in a country where she is not allowed to ride on public roads.



Iranian motorbike champion Behnaz Shafiei rides her motorcycle during a training session in Parand, south-west of Tehran. — AFP photos

It was only around six months ago that the government allowed women to train on private circuits, and only a couple of months since this female-only track opened outside the capital. "Before it was illegal, but today there are around a dozen women that ride professionally," she said proudly, leaning on her Suzuki 250X. The track might be segregated-with large banners reminding men they are not allowed-but Shafiei still trains with a man: motocross veteran Javad Zanjani.

"It's great that women are riding," he said. "It's been 35 years that I've been doing motocross and I never thought it would get so much interest from women." There have already been two female-only competitions-Shafiei won the first-but they also organized a training day that attracted some 50 women. "They came from all over Tehran and the region. There was a 60-year-old woman who came with her 40-year-old daughter to train," he said.

Dressed as a boy

Shafiei was 15 when she first saw a woman riding a motorbike in a small village near Zanjan in northern Iran. "I was surprised and asked her if women had the right to ride motorbikes. She showed me how to do it and I liked it immediately," she recalled. She bought her first bike when she was 22 but had to be sneaky about using it. "For two years, I rode my bike in the evenings behind the house dressed as a boy. "When people realized I was a woman, most were encouraging, but some men said my place was in front of the washing machine or in the kitchen," she said, laughing.

She decided to go full-time with the motocross, and along with Zanjani, badgered the ministry of sport until her perseverance finally won her the permission to train openly. "Many Iranian women complain about the restrictions which stop them doing lots of things in this country, but it's not the whole truth, because many can still shine in spite of the constraints," she says.



Changing traditions

Iranian women are forced by law to cover their hair and neck in public, so Shafiei takes care to tuck her dyed-blond hair neatly into her helmet to pre-empt any criticism from conservatives. She is glad to be an example for young girls in Iran as they push back against long-standing traditions. Women in Iran still have a lower status than men in some respects-particularly in legal disputes over things like inheritance and divorce. But they face far fewer restrictions in daily life than in more conservative countries-permitted to drive and notably out-numbering men in universities.

The traditional black "chador" robe has been increasingly replaced, particularly in wealthier areas, by skinny jeans, make-up and colorful headscarves loosely thrown over the back of the head. Sport remains a flashpoint, with clothing rules effectively barring women from certain events such as swimming. But women are elbowing their way into sports such as karate, athletics and volleyball. Shafiei hopes the next step will be allowing women to ride motorbikes in town. "If we fight for these ideas, we will certainly win," she said. — AFP

