

NEW

SET YOUR SENSES ON FIRE





RED HOT CHICKEN SANDWICH

WITH RED CHILI BUN

FOR DELIVERY 24/7

1 888 333



150 FILS
NO: 17173
40 PAGES

LIVESTOCK TRADERS WARNED FOR ARTIFICIAL PRICE INFLATION

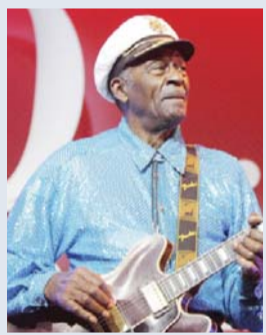
PANEL TO PROBE FIRMS HALTING IMPORTS TO CREATE SHORTAGE



Min 17°
Max 24°
High Tide 05:08 & 16:03
Low Tide 10:20 & 23:31

ROCK 'N' ROLL PIONEER CHUCK BERRY DIES AT 90

NEW YORK: Chuck Berry, who duck-walked his way into the pantheon of rock 'n' roll pioneers as one of its most influential guitarists and lyricists, creating raucous anthems that defined the genre's sound and heartbeat, died on Saturday at his Missouri home. He was 90.



Chuck Berry

Police in St Charles County, outside St Louis, said they were called to Berry's home by a caretaker and found him unresponsive. Efforts to revive him failed and he was pronounced dead at 1.26 pm local time. Considered one of the founding fathers of rock 'n' roll, Charles Edward Anderson Berry was present at its infancy in the 1950s and emerged as its first star guitarist and songwriter - a nearly 30-year-old black performer whose style electrified young white audiences and was emulated by white performers who came to dominate American popular music. Although Elvis Presley was called the king of rock 'n' roll, that crown would have fit just as well on Berry's own carefully sculpted pompadour. — Reuters (See Page 36)



KUWAIT: A herd of sheep is moved to a livestock market in Kuwait. — Photo by Yasser Al-Zayyat

By Sara Ahmed

KUWAIT: Government officials issued a stern warning against an alleged plot to manipulate the prices of sheep ahead of Ramadan by some traders after news leaked that traders were planning to limit imports of certain livestock in order to inflate prices.

On Saturday, concerned authorities including Minister of Commerce and Industry Khaled Al-Roudhan, Minister of State for Municipal Affairs Mohammad Al-Jabri, head of Consumer Protection Agency (CPA) Bandar Al-Lafi and other senior officials met to discuss the problem.

Minister of Awqaf and Islamic Affairs and Minister of State for Municipal Affairs Mohammad Al-Jabri condemned a number of livestock importing companies which announced intentions to increase the prices of meat before Ramadan. The companies have reportedly signed an agreement with each other calling for a collective increase of prices; something that the minister described as 'tampering with food security' in Kuwait.

"Manipulating food security is a crime that will not go unaccounted for," Jabri warned, noting that a special committee had been formed to investigate the matter and that companies found to be engaged in price manipulation would face severe penalties.

The Public Authority for Agriculture Affairs and Fish Resources (PAAFR) also warned that legal action would be taken against companies trying to establish a monopoly over the [livestock] market. In a statement published by KUNA, PAAFR noted that such maneuvers are illicit and prohibited by law, referring to tactics in which some companies dupe consumers into purchasing food commodities at inflated prices.

Continued on Page 13



TOULOUSE: People attend a memorial ceremony in Toulouse yesterday dedicated to the three children Arieh and Gabriel Sandler, and Myriam Monsonego who were killed outside a school in a murderous spree in the French city of Toulouse in 2012. — AFP

FRENCH POLICE PROBE MOTIVES OF ATTACKER

PARIS: French investigators were yesterday trying to establish whether the man shot dead after holding up a soldier at Orly airport in Paris had planned the attack or acted on impulse. Saturday's assault by 39-year-old Ziyed Ben Belgacem caused a major security scare, leading to the temporary closure of the

capital's second-busiest airport and the cancellation of dozens of flights.

By yesterday morning the situation had nearly returned to normal. Ben Belgacem, who was born in France to Tunisian parents, said he wanted to "die for Allah" and that others too would die

Continued on Page 13

WHITE HOUSE SECURITY BOOSTED AFTER ARREST

WASHINGTON: The US Secret Service bolstered security at the White House late on Saturday after a man was arrested after making threats at one of its checkpoints, an official said. CNN reported that the man made a threat claiming he had a bomb in his car, and that he was immediately arrested and the car in which he was travelling seized. President Donald Trump was away in Florida at the time

"On March 18, 2017 at approximately 11.05 pm, an individual drove a vehicle up to a Secret Service checkpoint located at 15th Street and E Street NW," a Secret Service spokesman said in the latest of a series of White House security concerns. "Upon contact with the individual, US Secret Service Uniform Division Officers detained the individual and declared his vehicle suspicious. In accordance with proper protocols, Secret Service personnel increased their posture of readiness," he added. Just hours earlier, a person was arrested after jumping over a bike rack in an apparent bid to reach the fence outside the White House, the Secret Service said.

The individual was detained immediately and criminal charges are pending, the agency said in a statement, without identifying the suspect.

Continued on Page 13

ASSEMBLY PANEL DEBATES ANTI-CORRUPTION LAWS

By B Izzak

KUWAIT: National Assembly legal and legislative committee yesterday discussed a number of draft laws for fighting corruption in light of the dispute within the Anti-Corruption Authority, head of the panel said.

MP Mohammad Al-Dallal said the discussion also comes after Kuwait's position in the international Corruption Perception Index (CPI) has dropped and following a challenge to the constitutional court calling that judges should not be subjected to the Anti-Corruption Authority.

Continued on Page 13



KUWAIT: Vehicles move slowly on a rain-soaked highway yesterday. Sporadic rains accompanied by gusty winds and lightning lashed many parts of Kuwait yesterday prompting motorists to drive cautiously on slippery roads. — KUNA



Strategic Partner



ESTABLISHED 1961
THE FIRST DAILY IN THE ARABIAN GULF



Sponsored By

The Middle East's Largest Students' Art Competition

Sponsored By



JW MARRIOTT
KUWAIT CITY

Today See page 20



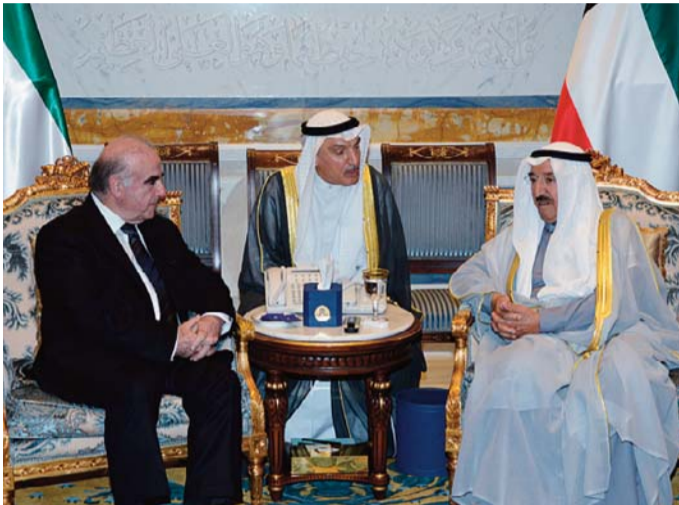
Jazeera AIRWAYS



KUWAIT: His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah meets with Deputy Prime Minister and Interior Minister Sheikh Khaled Al-Jarrah Al-Sabah and the newly appointed officials. —KUNA photos



KUWAIT: His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah meets with the newly appointed officials.



KUWAIT: His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah meets with Malta's Foreign Minister Dr George Vella.



KUWAIT: His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah meets with members of the diwans' association.



KUWAIT: His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-Hamad Al-Sabah meets with the Malta's Foreign Minister Dr George Vella.

AMIR STRESSES EFFORTS TO MAINTAIN KUWAIT'S SECURITY

KUWAIT: His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah received Deputy Prime Minister and Interior Minister Sheikh Khaled Al-Jarrah Al-Sabah at Bayan Palace yesterday.

During the meeting, the minister introduced Sheikh Salman Sabah Al-Salem Al-Humoud Al-Sabah in his new capacity as Chairman of the Directorate General of Civil Aviation, retired Lieutenant General Suleiman Fahad Al-Fahad in his new capacity as the Advisor of the Deputy Premier and Interior Minister, Sheikh Mubarak Salem Al-Ali Al-Sabah, the Chief of the State External Security Apparatus, Major General Mansour Al-Awadhi, Assistant Undersecretary for Security Border Checkpoints, Major General Sheikh Salem Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah, the Assistant Undersecretary for Administrative Affairs, on the occasion of their appointments.

His Highness the Amir urged them to work hard to serve the nation and maintain Kuwait's security and rule of law. The senior officials later met with His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah and His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-Hamad Al-Sabah.

Meanwhile, His Highness the Amir received the Republic of Malta's Foreign Minister Dr George Vella, on the occasion of his visit to the country. First Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Sabah attended the meeting. The visiting minister also met with His Highness the Prime Minister. In other news, His Highness the Amir received members of the diwans' association. The hosted members are Abdulrahman Al-Me'jel, Issa Mohammad Al-Mazidi and Raja Al-Hujailan Al-Mutairi. —KUNA



KUWAIT: His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-Hamad Al-Sabah meets with the newly appointed officials.

You are all the inspiration I ever need mother.

Celebrate your loving mother.
Happy Mother's Day.
162 KWD

+965 99694196 | damasjewellery.com

damas

KUWAIT, MALTA INK CULTURAL, ART DEALS



KUWAIT: First Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah and his Maltese counterpart Dr George Vella sign one of the agreements. —KUNA photos

KUWAIT: Kuwait and Malta yesterday signed an agreement to boost cultural and artistic cooperation between both nations. Kuwait's First Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah and his Maltese counterpart Dr George Vella were the signatories of the deal.

The proceedings were attended by Deputy Foreign Minister Ambassador Khaled Al-Jarallah, Assistant Foreign Minister for European Affairs Ambassador Waleed Al-Khubaizi, Assistant Foreign Minister for the affairs of the First Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister's office Ambassador Sheikh Dr Ahmad Nasser Al-Sabah, Assistant Foreign Minister for the affairs of the Deputy Foreign Minister's office Ambassador Ayhem Al-Omar and Kuwait's Ambassador to Malta Faisal Al-

Adwani, along with senior Foreign Ministry officials. Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled held talks earlier with his Maltese counterpart which focused on strategies for closer bilateral ties. The meeting also tackled issues of mutual concern, in addition to regional and international developments.

Separately, Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled met with US Ambassador to Kuwait Lawrence Silverman. The meeting was attended by Deputy Commander of the US Central Command' Operations and Intelligence and Combined Joint Task Force Major General Scott A Kindswater. During the meeting, they discussed coordination over several issues pertinent to the latest regional and international developments and issues of mutual interest. —KUNA



KUWAIT: First Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah meets with US Ambassador to Kuwait Lawrence Silverman. —KUNA

Legalese

LOCATION, BRANDING AND GOVT SUPPORT FOR SMES

By Attorney Fajer Ahmed

After the success of my previous articles regarding starting of a business in Kuwait, I decided to continue answering your questions regarding establishing a business in Kuwait. I have to say I am really proud of the amount of talent in Kuwait and the GCC, we have really moved forward in the past 10 years, in different sectors.

I know that the legal process can be confusing at times, but it is becoming simpler by the day, so please don't be discouraged. So many people have obtained licensing in Kuwait and have succeeded and we all have something special to offer and unique that we can share with the community. I have mentioned this before but I think it is important to get the information out there, since a lot of people still don't know about it. Please visit Kuwait Business Center if you are thinking of starting a business they are there for your support.

Physical space

Question: If I am starting a business and the operations are going to be entirely online. Do I require a physical space to obtain a commercial license under Kuwaiti law? What do I need to know before renting a space?

Fajer: A physical location/space is a requirement to obtain a license under Kuwaiti law, even for non-commercial licenses a physical space is required. Like I said in my previous article, the Kuwaiti government is trying to encourage SMEs by possibly allowing them to start home businesses in Kuwait soon, with a draft law being discussed currently. I hope that in the future there will be a new law that allows companies that operate entirely from the world wide web to not need a physical location in order to obtain a commercial license.

Branding

Question: Can someone else own my branding? How do I ensure that other companies do not use my branding?

Fajer: If you have copyrighted your branding, i.e. your trademark, slogan and so on, then even if someone else does use your branding you can prevent them from continuing to do so and ask for compensation should any damages occur to your business. In May 2014, a new GCC Trade Mark law was promulgated so now you can trademark your logo in the GCC and not just Kuwait. You can also trademark your logo in different regions around the world but you should know that there will be a different cost for every region and it could get expensive for SMEs.

To register your trademark in Kuwait you can visit <https://www.e.gov.kw/sites/kg0English/Pages/HomePage.aspx> for more information or the Ministry of Commerce.

Social Security

Question: As a Kuwaiti that owns a business, can I still get Social Security payments?

Fajer: Yes, you can register under section number five according to Public Institution for Public Security. You will have to pay your own social security insurance every month since you are the owner of the business but you can still receive monthly support through the Manpower and Government Restructuring Program. There are different amounts for different specialization or degrees.

I hope the above has helped. If you have any further questions or you would like to know more please email me at ask@fajerhelawyer.com.



KUWAIT: Officials attend a panel discussion held as part of the forum. —Photo by Yasser Al-Zayyat

KIPCO HOSTS PARTNERSHIP FORUM

Faten Omar

KUWAIT: The Kuwait Projects Company (KIPCO) kicked off the third Sharakah (partnership) Forum and Workshops at Salwa Al-Sabah Ballroom yesterday, under the patronage and the attendance of the Minister of Social Affairs and Labor and Minister of State for Economic Affairs Hind Al-Sabeeh. The event is held in cooperation with the Kuwait Foundation for the Advancement of Sciences (KFAS).

The forum gives opportunity to companies and state departments to meet and discuss cooperation on potential partnership projects, said Abeer Al-Omar, Group CSR Manager at KIPCO. "International

experts will give presentations that will help non-profit organizations in developing the society," she added.

Meanwhile, Minister Sabeeh talked about the 'New Kuwait 2030' vision, saying that it is a vision where the civil society, government and private sectors are participating in the evaluation of government's projects. "This year, all parties will participate in projects that will develop the State of Kuwait," she said. "Many non-profit organizations offered good ideas that will be taken into consideration at the Ministry of Economic Affairs." Minister Sabeeh affirmed that real partnership happens when all parties involved can share their ideas and

experiences, which reflects on the quality of products or projects.

Evolution

Defining the meaning of 'Sharakah', Faisal Hamad Al-Ayyar, Vice Chairman of KIPCO, said that the civil society has evolved. "We can see nowadays the evolution of partnership between the government and the civil society. We made sure today to get all parties involved to discuss ideas and better serve the community."

Sheikha Al-Zain Al Sabah, the Ministry of State for Youth Affairs' Undersecretary, noted that partnership, either locally or globally, means to participate to achieve the main collective goals. "Partnership between two sides

is about being clear and honest in order to achieve maximum benefit and face the challenges ahead," she explained.

Dr Adnan Shihab-Eldin, Director General of Kuwait Foundation for the advancement of sciences (KFAS), said that "the importance of partnership is what we are seeking today in this forum; which provides a solid infrastructure to build good ideas. Like we do in KFAS, we choose special people to be our partners. We are very proud to be leading the way in this arena, and hope to be able to contribute effectively to emphasize the role of partnerships in development." Two panel discussions were featured at the forum, addressing cross-sector partnerships and sustainable development as a driver for innovation.



KUWAIT: National Assembly Speaker Marzouq Ali Al-Ghanem, accompanied by a delegation of the parliamentary caucus, leave for the Moroccan capital Rabat yesterday. —KUNA

KUWAIT PARTAKES IN ARAB CONFERENCE

KUWAIT: National Assembly Speaker Marzouq Ali Al-Ghanem, accompanied by a delegation of the parliamentary caucus, headed for the Moroccan capital Rabat on Sunday to partake in the 24th conference of the Arab Inter-Parliamentary Union (AIU) due to kick off later today.

Al-Ghanem's delegation was seen off at the airport by Deputy Speaker Essa Al-Kanderi, Moroccan Ambassador to the State of Kuwait Jaafar Hakim and the assistant secretary general for sessions, Essa Al-Loghani.

The speaker will take part in a consultative meeting of the Arab parliaments' chairmen, scheduled later today, and will address the Kuwaiti delegation statement at the conference on Monday.

Moreover, he is scheduled, along with his companions, to proceed to Sweden, on Tuesday, on a two-day official visit, in response to an invitation from his Swedish counterpart, Urban Ahlin. Speaker Al-Ghanem, during his stay in the European nation, will also meet senior officials namely King Carl XVI Gustaf.

The delegation includes Undersecretary of the Parliamentary Caucus, Rakan Al-Nisf, Caucus Secretary Dr Odah Al-Ruwaiee, Treasurer Walid Al-Tabtabaei, members of the Caucus Executive Committee Omar Al-Tabtabaei and Yousef Al-Fadhalah in addition to MPs Saif Al-Hashem, Al-Humaidi Al-Subaiee and Ali Al-Deqbasi.

Also in the escort are National Assembly General Secretary Allam Al-Kanderi, Assistant General Secretary for Media and Public Relations Abdulhakim Al-Sabti and Assistant General Secretary for the National Assembly Guards' Affairs, Khaled Al-Wqait. —KUNA

BEDOON NURSES, AMBULANCE DRIVERS TO GET EXTRA ALLOWANCES

By Meshaal Al-Enezi

KUWAIT: Bedoon nurses and ambulance drivers will now receive an additional KD 70 per month as extra allowances for infection risk and hazard pay. According to Marzouq Al-Rashidi, assistant undersecretary for administrative affairs at the Ministry of Health, the Civil Service Commission approved the request to provide the extra allowances for Bedoon staff in the nursing and ambulance roles. The allowance includes KD 35 per month for infection risk and KD 35 per month hazard pay. The allowances will be retroactively paid from August 9, 2016. Bedoons are stateless Arabs who live in Kuwait but do not hold Kuwaiti nationality. Thousands of these stateless residents work in the public sector including in the ministries of health, interior and other ministries.

Automated boarding

Director of the Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA), Yousif Al-Fouzan announced that automated boarding and check-in services for passengers without luggage would be launched soon at Kuwait International Airport though nine ticket machines. Fouzan added that the electronic parking fee payment machines were already in use at the airport with the aim of reducing crowds and long queues. "Those two services are designed to serve the public and help develop the Kuwait airport to match airports in advanced countries," he said. Fouzan also noted that two special lounges were opened for transit passengers and for the MOI to receive arrivals on visit and other visas. Further, Fouzan said that DGCA would soon sign a contract to build a third three kilometer long runway with a consortium including a local company and an international one. In addition, Fouzan said that 30 percent of the construction works in the new airport has been completed so far and that construction was scheduled to be concluded by November 2017.

Al-Ajmi citizenship case returned

In other news, a Kuwait court of appeal annulled a sentence passed by the court of first instance concerning the withdrawal of Saad Al-Ajmi's citizenship and decided to return the case to the lower court. Al Ajmi, a former spokesman for the opposition Popular Action Movement and a former correspondent for Al-Arabiya news channel, had his citizenship revoked in 2014. He was deported to Saudi Arabia. Though born in Kuwait, Ajmi was one of nearly 20 people who had their citizenship revoked during the period of political upheaval in Kuwait from 2012 to 2014.

Espionage case adjourned

The court of cassation yesterday adjourned hearing a case filed against a number of citizens over charges of espionage for Iran and Hezbollah plus the possession of weapons and explosives (The Abdali cell case) to another hearing on March 26. Twenty-five Kuwaiti citizens and one Iranian national were charged in 2015 with spying for Iran and Hezbollah when authorities uncovered a huge cache of weapons at a farm in Al-Abdaly, in northern Kuwait near the border with Iraq. Several of the accused were alleged to have received military training in Lebanon. Two were sentenced to death, including the Iranian (in absentia) and almost all the others were found guilty of various crimes and given varying jail terms. The men have denied the charges. All have appealed their convictions.

Mosque abolition to be investigated

Kuwait Municipality said that Minister of Awqaf and Islamic Affairs, Minister of State for Municipal Affairs Mohammed Al-Jabri referred for investigation the demolition of a mosque and Awqaf ministry employees residence in Sulaibiya, to the public prosecution bureau. Notably, the investigations were ordered upon a letter from the Awqaf ministry undersecretary reporting that a manager in a Jahra municipality department ordered the demolition.

CAR THIEVES ARRESTED

By Hanan Al-Saadoun

KUWAIT: Police arrested multiple suspects yesterday on charges of stealing cars from Shuwaikh. Detectives had identified one of the suspects during investigations in several theft cases reported recently. Investigations had revealed that the man and his partners used tow trucks to steal cars left in open spaces for repair.

Police arrested the prime suspect first, then apprehended his accomplices. They were sent to the proper authorities to face charges.

Fish destroyed

Kuwait Municipality inspectors confiscated and destroyed 110 kilograms of fish from the fish market yesterday, after it was found to be unfit for human consumption.



CHARITY MARKET FOR GIFTED KUWAITI STUDENTS

KUWAIT: Sheikha Fadia Saad Al-Abdullah Al-Sabah, the chair of Al-Saad Charity Foundation for Knowledge and Scientific Research,

announced plans to organize its first charity market at the late Shiekha Mariam Saad Al-Abdullah Al-Salem Al-Sabah's Hall in Qadisiya, and that from the 25th to the 31st of March 2017. Hosting this event reflects the charity's keenness on developing the skills of female Kuwaiti students and encouraging them to take part in social development, she said. The market will be held under auspices of Sheikha Hala Bader Mohammad Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah, she said, adding that the revenues of the market would be allocated for supporting gifted and creative female Kuwaiti students doing scientific research.



Sheikha Fadia Saad Al-Abdullah Al-Sabah

NO NEW DRAMAS TO HELP CUT COSTS

By A Saleh

KUWAIT: The information ministry is not expected to produce any new drama for Kuwait TV (KTV) or Al-Qurain TV Channel; a historical channel launched on February 25, and instead will settle with showing works from KTV archives. Informed sources said that this decision is expected to take effect starting from April, adding that it came after surveying social media to gauge the public reaction to the programs broadcasted at the new channel, including feedback from former media icons. Since the information ministry owns an abundance of historical works that date back to KTV's creation in 1961, it decided to suspend producing new shows as a cost-cutting measure, the sources explained.

Photo

of the day



KUWAIT: Children play by a fountain at Shaheed Park in Kuwait City. — Photo by Yasser Al-Zayyat

Strategic Partner **ZAIN** Sponsored By **Canon** **JAZEERA AIRWAYS** طيران الجزيرة

Organized By **Kuwait Times** Shoot & Win **KUWAIT SCENERY & NATURE PHOTOGRAPHY COMPETITION** Canon

March 12th, 2017 Till April 6th, 2017

First prize
 • Canon Camera EOS 5D MARK II BODY + free Bag.
 • One Economy class ticket Kuwait - Dubai - Kuwait by Jazeera Airways*.

Second prize
 • Canon Camera EOS 80D +18-55MM IS STM + free Bag.
 • One Economy class ticket Kuwait - Dubai - Kuwait by Jazeera Airways*.

Third prize
 • Canon Camera EOS 750D 18-135 IS STM + free Bag.
 • One Economy class ticket Kuwait - Dubai - Kuwait by Jazeera Airways*.

Fourth prize
 • EOS 750D 18-55 IS STM + Free Bag.
 • One Economy class ticket Kuwait - Dubai - Kuwait by Jazeera Airways*.

Fifth prize
 • EOS 750D 18-55 IS STM + Free Bag
 • One Economy class ticket Kuwait - Dubai - Kuwait by Jazeera Airways*.

Sixth prize
 • Canon Camera Dsc Ixus 310 HS + Free Bag.
 • One Economy class ticket Kuwait - Dubai - Kuwait by Jazeera Airways*.

Seventh prize
 • Canon Camera PSD 30 BLUE + free Bag.
 • One Economy class ticket Kuwait - Dubai - Kuwait by Jazeera Airways*.

Eighth prize
 • Canon Camera PSD 30 BLUE + Camera Bag.
 • One Economy class ticket Kuwait - Dubai - Kuwait by Jazeera Airways*.

Ninth prize
 • Canon Camera IXUS 180 BLACK + free Camera Bag.
 • One Economy class ticket Kuwait - Dubai - Kuwait by Jazeera Airways*.

Tenth prize
 • Canon Camera IXUS 180 BLACK + free Camera Bag.
 • One Economy class ticket Kuwait - Dubai - Kuwait by Jazeera Airways*.

Rules & Conditions
 The photo contest begins on March 12, 2017 and ends on April 6, 2017. To ensure eligibility for the contest, please submit files in high resolution:
 • **Photographic Camera:** Please submit original files (entries should include metadata if possible) in jpg format on CD or flash memory with hard copy on photo paper (size 300 x 400 millimeters or 11.81 x 15.75 inches)
 • **Mobile phone or tablet Camera:** Please submit original files in jpg format on CD or flash memory with hard copy on photo paper (A4 size - 210 x 297 millimeters or 8.27 x 11.69 inches).
 • **ALL photographs** should accurately reflect the subject matter and the scene as it appears. 'High Dynamic Range' images are acceptable. Photos that have been digitally altered beyond standard optimization (removal of dust, cropping, reasonable adjustments to exposure, color, contrast, etc.) will be disqualified.
Caption information should include:
 • Location - Detailed caption of subject matter
 • If you choose to include people in your submission, you are responsible for obtaining the necessary permissions from the individuals depicted, and must be able to provide copies of these to Kuwait Times upon request.
 • **Kuwait Times & Jazeera Airways** has all rights to use the photograph in internal and external communications materials including but not limited to websites and web publications, fact sheets, fundraising publications, advertising, multimedia, presentation and membership services, annual reports and Kuwait Times' magazines, or by other individuals and organizations for Kuwait Times' use in news stories, newsletters, reports, displays, web pages, videos, membership premiums and the like.
 • Winners will be chosen by a panel of independent judges.
 • **Original coupon should be stuck on the back of each photo with complete information of the participant.**

* For all Jazeera Airways tickets terms and conditions are applied

Participation Form
 If you are interested in participating fill in the form and send it to Kuwait Times.

• Name:
 • Tel: • Civil ID:
 • e.mail:
 • DSLR Camera • Mobile phone or tablet camera
 • Caption information:

For more information contact Kuwait Times
 Tel: 24835616/7 Fax 24835620/1 or send an email to: ads@kuwaittimes.net

For more information and updates please visit
 facebook/kuwaittimesc twitter/TimesComp

For a Limited Time Only All Participants Can Get A Special Discount Of 15% For A High Definition Prints, Including Delivery To Their Door Step. Act Now And Use Discount Code (SHOOTWIN) During Checkout. Download Our Free App For Mac and PC at www.albumil.com. For More Information Contact Albumil At (69302526)



Hawalli Governor Sheikh Ahmad Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah (center) and Warba Bank's CEO Shaheen Hamad Al-Ghanim (left) inaugurate the new branch. — Photos by Joseph Shagra

WARBA BANK OPENS ITS 11TH BRANCH IN SHUHADA

KUWAIT: In line with Warba Bank's vision of strategic expansion in the most dynamic and distinctive areas of Kuwait, the bank established a new branch in the Shuhada area to provide the best pioneering sharia compliant banking services and solutions that are specifically designed to meet the needs of the bank's customers.

The ribbon cutting ceremony was attended by Hawalli Governor Sheikh Ahmad Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah, Warba Bank's CEO Shaheen Hamad Al-Ghanim as well as a large number of local dignitaries of the Shuhada area and a number of the bank's senior officials. With the inauguration of this new branch, Warba Bank now has 11 branches throughout Kuwait allowing it to reach as many customers as possible.

The new branch is characterized by its wide area and distinctive designs that are in line with the vision of the bank. It is equipped with the latest amenities and technology providing its diverse customers with a distinctive, high-class banking experience. The new branch provides all banking services using high technology, based on its five-year strategic plan to develop the bank's technical structure and to design banking tools that cope with technological developments, adding high value to the bank's branches. Warba Bank also offers its clients with special needs a great deal of care and attention. It offers them a range of banking services, including opening accounts, issuing bank cards and personal finance solutions. Moreover, the staff at the new branch has been trained on sign language for hearing impaired and printing Braille contracts for the blind. Furthermore, the new branch provides them with special entry platforms to facilitate their access to the branch. In addition, it includes a special needs ATM in order to provide them with more convenience and speed when conducting cash withdrawals. The bank also pays attention to its female clients and it has created a female-only section within the new branch in



Hawalli Governor Sheikh Ahmad Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah tours the branch.



Warba Bank officials pose for a group photo in front of the new branch.

order to provide women with more privacy while performing their banking transactions.

The highly professional bank staff will provide all its various sharia-compliant services and products to all its customers, including: opening savings accounts, current accounts, personal finance services, and transfers, just to name a few. Priority will be given to Al-Safwa Account customers in completing all transactions as a bank employee has been dedicated

primarily for those clients. To confirm Warba Bank's expansion plan, Ghanim said, "the bank management has taken the decision to open the Shuhada area branch as a strategic step to serve the bank's customers wherever they are, and to strengthen its local branch network by opening more branches in different areas of Kuwait. This enhances our presence in the Islamic banking sector in the Kuwaiti market, and enables us to expand our clientele and attract more customers."

"Thanks to its structure and services, the Shuhada branch represents the new model that Warba Bank plans to adopt in other existing and future branches to be established in the framework of our five-year expansion plan. We will offer a unique model that provides convenience and an integrated banking experience for our customers so as to meet their expectations and help them carry out their transactions smoothly," Ghanim added.

The opening of the new branch is a complementary step to the bank's strategic plans, which are constantly striving to improve the level of banking and financial services offered to customers and to develop them according to the highest standards. That the new branch is located in Block 4, next to Shuhada Cooperative Society.



KUWAIT: Warba Bank's newest branch in Shuhada area.

AMIR STARTS OFFICIAL VISIT TO TURKEY TODAY

KUWAIT/ANKARA: His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah will start an official visit to Turkey today. During his visit, His Highness the Amir will hold talks with Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan over efforts to boost bilateral relations and cooperation in various domains.

His Highness the Amir's visit to Turkey is the second in less than a year as he led Kuwait's delegation to the World



**Turkish Presidential Spokesman
Ambassador Ibrahim Kalin**

Humanitarian Summit in Istanbul in May 2016. The Turkish President also paid a state visit to Kuwait in April 2015. The repeated visits and meetings between the two leaders showed the remarkable and accelerated progress in relations between the two friendly countries over the past years.

Difficult times

The strength of the ties was reflected clearly in difficult times. Thus, when the foiled coup attempt was carried out in July 2016, Kuwait was one of the first countries to express support to the Turkish government and people. His Highness the Amir sent a

cable to President Erdogan to congratulate him on the failure of the coup attempt and the victory of democracy and will of Turkish people. The Kuwaiti-Turkish relations are not new but deeply-rooted. The State of Kuwait had initiated its diplomatic ties with Turkey in 1969 where the first diplomatic relations between the two countries were established through coordination with the Embassy of the Republic of Turkey in Beirut and then moved to the Embassy of Turkey in Kuwait which was opened in 1971.

Kuwaiti-Turkish relations have been characterized by mutual respect over time, but have developed rapidly after the supportive stance taken by Turkey in response to the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait in 1990, in addition to its contribution along with the coalition forces in the liberation of Kuwait, and putting its military bases at the disposal of the coalition forces to oversee the monitoring of the no-fly zone in northern Iraq.

Since the first hours of the Iraqi invasion, Turkey had condemned this barbaric act and considered it an act of aggression and assault on international law and the principle of international legitimacy, and declared its solidarity with Kuwait to demand the return of sovereignty and independence to it.

After liberation of Kuwait, His Highness the late Amir Sheikh Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah visited Turkey in November 1991 and expressed the appreciation of Kuwait and personal gratitude for Turkey's stance towards the Iraqi invasion and its solidarity with the just right of Kuwait.

His Highness Sheikh Jaber had said during the visit that the Turkish people had culminated the close and well-established ties binding the two countries for many years and opened a new chapter in the constructive and fruitful cooperation for the best interest of both peoples. After that, visits between the two sides had continued at var-

ious levels and many agreements were signed in a number of areas.

Agreements

In 2008, His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad paid his first visit to Turkey. During this visit, seven agreements were signed for beefing up mutual cooperation in various domains including economy, science, arts, manpower, and health. Moreover, a joint ministerial committee for cooperation was formed. In 2013, His Highness the Amir visited Turkey again and during his visit eight agreements of cooperation in the domains of diplomacy, civil aviation, air transport, higher education and scientific research, health, animal resources, defense industries, and culture and artistic were inked. Both sides also agreed on entry-visa exemption for diplomatic and special passport holders.

In 2014, then Turkish president Abdullah Gul visited Kuwait and his visit witnessed the signing of several agreements for military training and marine transport cooperation. The two countries hammered out two protocols for cooperation in the fields of media and journalism and manuscripts. Moreover, both sides have signed a memorandum of understanding for military training and joint maneuvers, and an agreement for supplying a Turkish refinery with Kuwaiti crude.

Economic cooperation between Kuwait and Turkey have been evolving quickly in the past years. The Kuwait Investment Authority has huge investments in real estate, shopping centers, banking sector, stock markets and air transport in Turkey. In 2015, official statistics estimated Kuwaiti investments in Turkey at \$5 billion.

Furthermore, Kuwaitis ranked third on the list of foreign investors in Turkish real estate sector, according to an official report issued in January 2017. Turkey imports plastic and chemical materials from Kuwait and exports



ANKARA: His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah is pictured with the former Turkish president Abdullah Gul during a previous visit to Turkey. — KUNA

foodstuff, carpets, jewelry, vehicles, steel, medicine, construction materials to Kuwait.

Turkey is one of top tourist destinations for Kuwaiti travelers. The number of Kuwaiti visitors to Turkey jumped from 20,000 in 2010 to 70,000 in 2014. Trade exchange surged from \$700 million to over \$2 billion.

Landmark visit

His Highness the Amir's landmark visit to Turkey will crown our brotherly relations, Turkish Presidential Spokesman Ambassador Ibrahim Kalin said yesterday. He added that the visit is taking place at a time when the

entire region is confronted with grave challenges like terrorism and armed conflicts will offer an opportunity to exchange views on how best we can address them. The two countries enjoy very close partnership in various fields including trade, investments, tourism and military cooperation share a common will to develop their relations even further. I believe that the visit by His Highness will be very fruitful in that respect. The agreements to be signed during the visit on a wide range of areas are manifestation of our close partnership and will open up new avenues of cooperation, Kalin added. — KUNA

KUWAIT, TURKEY COOPERATE TO ALLEVIATE SUFFERING OF SYRIAN REFUGEES: AMBASSADOR



**Kuwaiti Army's Chief of Staff Lieutenant General
Mohammad Al-Khoder**

KUWAIT-US MILITARY EXERCISES KICK OFF

KUWAIT: The military exercise, "Eagles Resolve 2017" is one of the most monumental drills at both regional and international levels, the Kuwaiti Army's Chief of Staff Lieutenant General Mohammad Al-Khoder said yesterday. In a speech during a preliminary meeting to set the stage for the exercise, Khoder said that the drill aims to boost defense cooperation between the Gulf region and the United States. Moreover, he noted that senior officials from across the defense spectrum will partake in the exercise, where meticulous preparations have been in place for a year due to the enormity of the event.

Meanwhile, Director of the Operations and Planning Unit General Mishaal Abdullah revealed that the exercise is made up of various phases, noting that as the host of the military drill, Kuwait will stand to gain from the defense knowhow that the event will exhibit. The annual military drill brings together the armies of Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) nations and the US.

Martyrs' children

In other news, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Defense Sheikh Mohammad Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah ordered concerned personnel to examine a proposal to enroll in the ministry sons of martyrs and those who had taken part in 'Arab wars' as well as the war for the liberation of Kuwait.

The ministry said in a statement that the proposal concerns sons of personnel who had served for 30 years and registered in the 1965 census, in appreciation for their devotion and sacrifices for serving the homeland.

The proposal has been introduced "due to current circumstances and new projects that require additional manpower," the ministry statement said. This issue has been considered at a meeting of top officers-chaired by the Minister Sheikh Mohammad Al-Khaled. Chief of the National Service Authority Maj. Gen. Ibrahim Salem Al-Omairi briefed participants about Law 20/2015 concerning the national military services, to be effective on May 10th.

Meanwhile, the assistant chief of staff for manpower, Major General Khaled Madhi Al-Shemmari, presented information about the army manpower, combat readiness and statistical figures about applicants for the service over the past three years. In this respect, the minister has given instructions to "remove all obstacles" to pave way for execution according to schedules, as stipulated by relevant laws. — KUNA

ANKARA: Kuwait and Turkey share similar stances of several political issues and cooperate effectively in addressing humanitarian consequences of the Syrian crisis, Kuwait's Ambassador to Turkey Ghassan Al-Zawawi has stated. "Kuwait, under His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, has been playing a pivotal and decisive role in dealing with the humanitarian repercussions of the Syrian conflict," Zawawi said. Kuwait hosted three consecutive international conferences for Syria donors and financed the establishment of a village for Syrian refugees in the southern Turkish city of Kilis, he added.

He pointed out that Kuwaiti government and non-government humanitarian and relief agencies have been exerting relentless efforts to help Syrian refugees in Turkey and relieve the heavy burden on the back of Turkish government in this regard. He argued that Turkey bears the burden of hosting three millions of Syrian refugees and providing them with their basic needs.

On His Highness the Amir's visit, Zawawi noted that Turkish government and people are delighted by the expected visit of His Highness Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad. On the visit agenda, the ambassador clarified that it includes a summit meeting between His Highness the Amir and Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan, high-level talks between the accompanying senior Kuwaiti delegation



**Kuwait's Ambassador to
Turkey Ghassan Al-Zawawi**

and their Turkish counterparts, and a ceremony for signing a number of cooperation agreements in the fields of defense, Islamic Affairs and tourism as well as agreements between the Kuwait Fund for Arab Economic Developments and Turkish institutions for financing several development projects in various Turkish governorates.

Zawawi stated that Kuwait and Turkey have a "very good" relations at all levels, especially in economy. There are huge Kuwaiti investments in Turkey in various sectors especially banks, real estate, Tourism, he said, adding that there are great opportunities for increasing such investments in the future, he pointed out. He reiterated Kuwait's support for stability in Turkey and condemnation of the terrorist attacks and the recent foiled coup attempt. — KUNA

CONDOLENCES

The Management and Staff of
EQUATE Petrochemical Company
wish to offer their heartfelt
condolences to

Mr. Arumugam Veeraswamy

(Utilities Department)

On the sad demise of his

Father

May his soul rest in peace and may
God grant comfort and strength to the
bereaved family members during this time

RAISE YOUR YELLOW FLAG BEFORE IT TURNS RED.

Endometriosis is a painful disease that affects 1 in 5 women in Kuwait, and is still misdiagnosed. **Dr. Salma Kayani**, Head of OBGYN Department at Taiba Hospital, is the only doctor in the region specialized in treating this disease, and she is also the Director of Endometriosis Centre.

Endometriosis Awareness Session
Yarmouk Cultural Centre
Dar Al-Athar Al-Islamiyyah
Saturday 25th March 2017
5:00 PM - 8:00 PM

Register now at
www.taibaendomarch.com

Crime

Report

YOUNGSTERS FIGHT IN FAMOUS CAFE

KUWAIT: Several young men were detained in Salwa police station after a violent fight in a famous cafe. The men caused extensive damages inside the place. Preliminary investigations indicate that the fight started when one person confronted another for allegedly 'staring provocatively' at him, and the two were soon joined by their respective friends.

Scam

Investigations are underway to arrest a con artist who scammed a citizen into paying money for pieces of land that he never provided. In her statements to police, the woman said that she was drawn to an ad promoting pieces of land that can be used to build residential compounds on. She contacted the number given, and arranged to meet the advertiser. She agreed to pay a deposit after checking the land she intended to buy. However, the man never transferred ownership over the land as promised, and refused to return back the money when she asked him to do so, therefore she filed a case with police.

Assault

Juveniles prosecution ordered the arrest of two Juveniles, Somali and Yemeni, for assaulting an Egyptian teenager in Khaitan. The victim obtained a medical report from Farwaniya Hospital showing injuries he said that he sustained during the assault as he filed a case with local police.

Absconding

Police arrested two Ethiopian women who were reported absconding by their employers. The two who worked for a beauty shop in Salmiya were stopped late night by police as they left the shop. Police checked their civil IDs and discovered that they were reported absconding over six months before. They were arrested and sent to concerned authorities.

Suicide

An Asian man hanged himself to death inside a laundry shop in Mahboula in an apparent suicide. His body was recovered by the coroner as police are investigating the case.

Harassment

Detectives are looking for three persons who harassed a female citizen in Fintas. The woman was near a restaurant in the area when the three approached her and made indecent remarks towards her. The three then chased her when she ignored them, and forced her to stop. She then screamed for help which prompted them to escape, according to her statements to police. — *Translated from the Arabic press*



Al-Anbaa

CAMELS AND SHEEP

By Saleh Al-Shayji

I do not know how to describe the effect this piece of news had on me when I first heard it from a friend. I tried to verify it through many sources and friends in various countries and unfortunately, they confirmed it. The news says that the so-called Islamic Schools in Europe and America have banned teaching music. I do not know if the ban is also applied in all non-Muslim countries, though I know it is most likely done. The reason for my shock is how far ignorance and bad ideas that tend to get tougher, darker and uglier in life are controlling us and even spreading to the countries of light, liberty, science, art, beauty and all

What makes me furious is that those countries allow such a thing to happen

virtue of good and peace. I do not care who founded those schools because they are more money oriented than they are concerned with spreading science and religion. What makes me furious is that those countries allow such a thing to happen and be silent about banning music; which purifies souls and make children happier in schools operating on their own soil and under their supervision.

How will these countries portray us and Islam as a religion if the owners of the schools and those funding them convey this message that teaching music is Haram in Islam? This question is to all the hypocrite jugglers and religion enemies and to the countries funding them: Doesn't every Muslim country have a National Anthem played by army, police or other bands? Are such anthems played with musical instruments or with swords, daggers and pots? Aren't the thousands of TV and Radio stations in your countries filled with songs and music? Don't they show 'disgusting scenes of half-naked women?' Why then would you deprive future generations from learning music? Are you, by doing this, not replacing Halal with Haram and beauty with ugliness? I am also amazed at those parents who left their home countries and settled in the West. How come they still have the same ideas pulling them backwards? Ladies and gentlemen, if you are so keen and proud of your habits and traditions, then why not stay in your original country herding camels and milking sheep? — *Translated by Kuwait Times*

MARCH 21ST

Al-Anbaa

By Dr Nermin Al-Houti

In a few days it will be March 21st. This day is celebrated as 'Family Day,' 'Mother's Day' and 'Childhood Day.' We try to interpret the meaning behind those names, and imagine the meanings they hold, as we convey our feelings through gifts - regardless of their value. This day is not to be celebrated through parties or conference, but rather in memories held in our hearts and mind every day. Some people may think that I am among those who reject celebrations and reviving memories, but on the contrary; I am among the supporters of celebration, because a human being without feelings is lifeless. I would like to shed light today on some groups of people who use these occasions as a means to add to their personal interests while ignoring the core meaning of this day. On 'Family Day' as it is called by some people, many family members buy gifts, hold lunch or dinner gather-

ings and invite friends and relatives for a 'social show' to reflect their family's cohesiveness. But in reality, some families in our society are contrary to what they show. They live like strangers under one roof, and do not remember that they are a family except on March 21st. On 'Childhood Day,' and although children do not enjoy their childhood despite what people say about it in arenas and conference, those same children have to appear with a smile on this day in order to complete the 'media show' through which state departments claim that children receive their full attention. It is true that the child receives attention in the Arab World, but that only happens on March 21st. Mother's Day, what a beautiful day, and how sublime is the meaning. A mother used to mean everything for people in the past, but today, she is only 'March 21' for some people. — *Translated by Kuwait Times*

OFFICIAL PRAISES KFH PARTICIPATION IN GCC'S UNIFIED TRAFFIC WEEK 2017

KUWAIT: Assistant Undersecretary for Traffic Affairs Major General Fahad Al-Shuwaie praised efforts of Kuwait Finance House (KFH) in successfully concluding the Gulf Cooperation Council GCC's Unified Traffic Week 2017. He applauded the bank's commitment towards assume the social responsibility, yet hailed its sponsorship to the GCC's Unified Traffic Week 2017 for the 8th consecutive year. Shuwaie's statement was made during his speech on the occasion of the Week's closing ceremony. KFH's sponsorship comes in line with its endeavors and keenness to support

the official authorities' efforts while participating in the society-oriented activities as part of its corporate social responsibility and pioneering role in serving the society. The event took place from 12-17 March. It is aimed at increasing the awareness and achieving safety and security for the residents and citizens of the GCC countries as safety and security traffic is important factor in achieving development and prosperity in any country. KFH has firm belief in the importance of synergy and concerted efforts of both private and public

sectors for the sake of urging drivers and pedestrians to adhere to traffic rules and respect the law, which highlights the country's civilized face. Moreover, the bank hails the efforts of the Ministry of Interior, underscoring the key role of policemen in minimizing traffic congestions and achieving the highest levels of traffic security. The GCC traffic week is filled with activities that encompass workshops, seminars, distributing leaflets and awareness brochures for road users in collaboration and coordination with ministries and official bodies.



ZAIN ORGANIZED 15TH ANNUAL 'EMPLOYEE OMRAH TRIP'

KUWAIT: Zain, the leading telecommunications company in Kuwait, recently organized the 15th Omrah trip for employees and their families to visit the Sacred House in Mecca. This annually held trip aims at enriching bonding and closeness between Zain employees out of the office atmosphere. Zain organizes this spiritual trip on an annual basis to reflect its keenness in supporting and enhancing the spiritual aspects of its human resources. The trip saw a large number of Zain employees and their families visiting the Sacred House in Mecca, and it came in line with the company's continuous efforts to enrich communication with its own staff in one family atmosphere. The travelers were accompanied by Sheikh Dr Badr Al-Hajraf, who was present throughout the whole trip to share his experiences through lectures and seminars about the

rituals of Omrah as well as aspects of the history of the Islamic civilization. Dr Al-Hajraf's participation added value to the trip, enriching the informative aspect of it. Zain was keen to diversify the content of the trip, as it was not only restricted to the religious aspect. Many activities were organized that included historic and cultural programs as well as a visit to the Kaaba Kiswa Factory in Mecca. In addition, cultural contests were held to test the participants' knowledge and add a joyful flavor to the trip. The company considers its employees the main pillar of its overall success, and thus caters to the many different aspects of their lives. This annual initiative comes as part of Zain's CSR commitment towards its human resources, especially after the positive feedback it received previously. Zain will always put the development of the cultural and spiritual aspects of its employees at the forefront of its priorities.



ABK SPONSORS SPORTS DAY AT HOPE SCHOOL FOR SPECIAL NEEDS

KUWAIT: In line with its Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) focus, Al-Ahli Bank of Kuwait (ABK) recently sponsored Sports Day at Hope School for Special Needs where a total of 250 students engaged in a two day sports program. The event was held at the Kuwait Disabled Club in Hawally, on the 15th and 16th of March, 2017. The students from Hope School for Special Needs took part in various

activities such as basketball, volleyball, hockey and shooting the target. The event was held in an effort to promote sports and healthy living among individuals with special needs. The two day event was concluded with an honoring ceremony, where Sahar Al-Therban, Senior Manager Corporate Communications at ABK, received a trophy on behalf of the Bank as a token of appreciation for its

support and all outstanding students were presented with medals in recognition of their efforts and enthusiasm. ABK is keen to make a difference in the lives of individuals with special needs, by raising awareness of this segment and supporting events and activities that promote equality and grant these individuals with the fair chance to experience and lead healthy and active lives.

ES

LEXUS
EXPERIENCE AMAZING

AMAZINGLY INVITING



The ES, a truly great car, inside and out. Whether it's the inspired contours, quiet, quality interiors or the intelligent technology and the very best-in-class safety systems, the ES provides a smooth driving experience that is as unparalleled as it is premium, and is now available with the following Luxurious Benefits Package :

- 1 year Comprehensive Insurance
- Lexus service of 50,000km or 5 Years (whichever comes first) including free brake pads replacement

Starting from

KD 12,725

BOOK A TEST DRIVE TODAY

The image displayed is for advertising purposes only. Terms & Conditions apply.

2017/472 - 3 - 2



MOHAMED NASER AL-SAYER & SONS EST. CO. W.L.L.
ONE OF THE AL-SAYER GROUP HOLDING COMPANIES.

ASK ABOUT LEXUS
LEASING



Tel. 1830030

www.lexus.com.kw
@fTwitter LinkedIn LexusKW

IN COOPERATION WITH:
بنك الخليج
GULF BANK



West Mosul battle looks to be deadliest yet for Iraqis

TRUMP ESCAPES THE BELTWAY AS CHALLENGES MOUNT



LUCKNOW: Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi, second right and Yogi Adityanath, in saffron robes, greet with folded hands as Bharatiya Janata Party president Amit Shah, center and others wave to the audience after Adityanath was sworn in as Uttar Pradesh state chief minister in Lucknow, India, yesterday. —AP

IS MODI MOVING TOWARDS A HINDU INDIA?

BJP WINS BIGGEST MAJORITY IN 40 YEARS

NEW DELHI: A saffron-robed Hindu holy man was sworn in yesterday to lead India's most populous state, sealing what appears to be a shift in course by Prime Minister Narendra Modi that could redefine the world's largest democracy as a Hindu nation. The choice as Uttar Pradesh chief minister of Yogi Adityanath, a firebrand Hindu ascetic with a history of agitation against minority Muslims, stunned observers who said it marked a departure from the platform of development for all on which Modi rose to national power in 2014.

"Modi is saying India is a Hindu country and shall remain so," veteran journalist and commentator Shekhar Gupta said. "Hindus will rule, so you had better behave." A spokesman for Modi's Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) however said the government did not make any distinction between citizens on the basis of religion. Adityanath, 44, was elected by state lawmakers on Saturday, a week after the BJP won a landslide victory in Uttar Pradesh by mobilizing the Hindu vote. The BJP won the biggest majority for any party in the state legislature in 40 years.

He took the oath of office at an open-air ceremony in the state capital Lucknow yesterday, before shaking hands with Modi and other BJP elders who attended. After the ceremony, Modi said in a tweet: "Our sole mission and motive is development. When UP develops, India develops." The BJP fielded no candidates from the Muslim minority that makes up 19 percent of the population in a state with a population of 220 million that is home to 15 percent of the world's poor. If it were a country, Uttar Pradesh would be the world's fifth-most populous.

India's 1.3 billion people are about 80 percent Hindu and 14 percent Muslim, with the rest made up of Christians, Sikhs and other minorities. It is officially a secular nation, but the BJP has for years fought elections on a Hindu nationalist agenda, with party members in the past being accused of making anti-Muslim statements to polarize Hindu voters. "Modi and the BJP had promised the poor of India good times to come," said Paranjay Guha Thakurta, editor of the Economic & Political Weekly. "When they fail to create jobs, revive the economy or lift investment, they are going to fall back more on the majoritarian agenda." Modi, in his victory speech after the Uttar Pradesh triumph, had called for the creation of a "New India" by 2022, effectively staking a claim to a second term at the general election that is due to be held in two years.

Don't prejudice
 Adityanath, elected five times to the federal parliament from Gorakhpur in eastern Uttar Pradesh, has been magnanimous in victory, pledging to uphold Modi's slogan of 'sabka saath, sabka vikas' ('all together, development for all'). "Everyone who is prejudging the decision is doing it at their own peril - these arguments were also used in the case of Prime Minister Narendra Modi," BJP spokesman Nalin Kohli said. "Almost three years down the line there is no departure from 'sabka saath, sabka vikas'; there is no let up in providing governance and improving delivery to the poorest; and there can be no distinction between citizens on the basis of their faith, region or identity." Kohli also dismissed suggestions that Adityanath's election would undermine the secular basis of Indian democracy.

There are precedents for Hindu devotees taking high office, he said, including Uma Bharti, a former chief minister of Madhya Pradesh state who is now Modi's water resources minister. A source close to the powerful Hindu nationalist umbrella group to which the BJP belongs, the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS), said Adityanath would undergo a complete image makeover to repackage him as a moderate reformer.

Love jihad
 Adityanath has in the past accused Muslim men of waging "love jihad", or a love war, to entrap Hindu women and convert them to Islam. He drew a reprimand from the election authorities for exhorting Hindus to convert 100 Muslims for every Hindu that adopted Islam. Further, he disclosed in his 2014 election affidavit that he faced criminal cases including attempted murder; intimidation; promoting religious enmity; defiling a place of worship; rioting; and trespassing on burial places.

Such cases are common in India's rough-and-tumble politics. Although judges have taken cognizance of three cases against Adityanath, no formal charges have been filed. As the month-long Uttar Pradesh poll progressed, the rhetoric used by Modi and his campaign chief Amit Shah struck an increasingly harsh tone: In one speech Modi said villages with graveyards should have crematoriums too - a veiled reference to the different burial practices of Muslims and Hindus.

One of India's most prominent Muslim politicians, former Jammu and Kashmir state chief minister Omar Abdullah, said in a tweet that Muslims in Uttar Pradesh "must be terrified of what the future has in store for them." —Reuters

CLASHES IN SYRIA CAPITAL AFTER SURPRISE REBEL ASSAULT

BEIRUT: Heavy clashes rocked eastern districts of the Syrian capital yesterday as rebels and jihadists tried to fight their way into the city centre in a surprise assault on government forces. The attack comes just days before a fresh round of UN-brokered peace talks in Geneva aiming at ending Syria's six-year war. Rebels and government forces agreed to a nationwide cessation of hostilities in December, but fighting has continued across much of the country, including in the capital.

Steady shelling and sniper fire could be heard across Damascus as rebel factions allied with former Al-Qaeda affiliate Fateh al-Sham Front launched an attack on regime positions in the east of the city. The attack began early in the day "with two car bombs and several suicide attackers" in the Jobar district, said Rami Abdel Rahman, head of the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights monitoring group. Rebels seized several buildings in Jobar and advanced into the nearby Abbasid Square area, seizing part of a large bus station and firing a barrage of rockets into multiple neighborhoods, Abdel Rahman said.

Regime warplanes have targeted rebel positions with more than 30 air strikes since the morning, he added. State media denied that rebel groups had entered the Abbasid district, however, reporting that the army had successfully "blocked an attack by terrorists on military points and residential buildings in Jobar". State television aired footage from Abbasid Square, typically buzzing with activity but now empty because the army had ordered residents to stay inside.

Army sends in reinforcements

AFP correspondents in Damascus said army units had sealed off the routes into the square, where a thick column of smoke rose into the cloudy sky. The few people out on the street moved quickly between buildings, but many stayed in their homes in fear of stray bullets and shelling. Several tanks were seen entering east Damascus as reinforcements ahead of a possible counter-offensive. Several schools in the capital announced they would stay closed today.

Control of Jobar-which has been a battleground for more than two years is divided between rebels and allied jihadists and government forces. According to the Observatory, the Islamist Faylaq al-Rahman rebel group and the Fateh al-Sham Front-known as Al-Nusra Front before it broke ties with Al-Qaeda-have a presence in the area. Government forces have long sought to push the rebels out of Jobar because of its proximity to the city centre. But with Sunday's attack, Abdel Rahman said, "rebels have shifted from a defensive position in Jobar into an offensive one".

"These are not intermittent clashes-these are ongoing attempts to advance," he said. The Observatory said the rebel assault sought to relieve allied fighters in the nearby districts of Barzeh, Tishreen and Qabun. "Nine regime forces and at least 12 Islamist rebels were killed" in those districts over the past 24 hours, the monitor said. In recent months, the Syrian regime has sought to secure territory around the capital with renewed offensives on besieged rebel towns along with local "reconciliation" deals.

Israel threatens defense systems

Under such agreements, the government agrees to end bombardments and stop besieging towns in exchange for a rebel withdrawal. Yesterday, dozens of rebels and civilians who had been bused out of the last opposition-held district of Homs city reached northern Aleppo province. An AFP photographer saw men, women and toddlers peeking out from behind curtains as the buses headed to Jarabulus, a town on the Syrian-Turkish border.

More than 320,000 people have been killed and millions have been displaced since Syria's conflict erupted six years ago with protests against President Bashar al-Assad's rule. After a government crackdown, the uprising turned into an all-out war that has drawn in world powers on nearly all sides. —AFP



AL-BAB: Rebel fighters and Red Crescent members wait for busses of Syrians who were evacuated from Waer, the last opposition-held district of Homs, to arrive in the northern Syrian town of al-Bab yesterday, under a controversial Russian-supervised deal to bring Syria's third city under full government control. —AFP

TURKEY SLAMS GERMAN SPY CHIEF FOR GULEN COUP LINK SKEPTICISM

ISTANBUL: Turkey lashed out yesterday after Germany's intelligence chief said he was unconvinced by Turkish assertions US-based Islamic preacher Fethullah Gulen was behind the failed coup of July 15. Presidential spokesman Ibrahim Kalin said Europe was seeking to "whitewash" Gulen's group, while Defense Minister Fikri Isik said the comments raised questions about whether Berlin itself was involved in the putsch.

In an interview with Der Spiegel published on Saturday, Germany's foreign intelligence chief Bruno Kahl said Ankara had repeatedly tried to convince Berlin that Gulen was behind the coup "but they have not succeeded". Turkey accuses Gulen of heading a group called the Fethullah Terror Organization (FETO) which masterminded the coup with the aim of ousting Erdogan from power. "This is an operation to whitewash FETO

in Europe," Kalin told CNN-Turk television of Kahl's claims.

And Isik told Kanal 7 television that Kahl's remarks were a "most unfortunate statement". Some Turkish officials mooted the idea that Western powers could have been involved in the coup and Isik suggested Kahl's comment would raise questions about Germany's role. "The fact that the head of German intelligence made such a statement will

increase doubts about Germany and give rise to the question 'was German intelligence behind the coup?'" he said. Isik said German politicians must address the matter or risk questions arising over Berlin's possible role in the coup.

Following the putsch, Ankara launched an unprecedented purge of alleged Gulen supporters, with some 43,000 people jailed and awaiting, or on, trial. Kahl said that the coup was

launched by "a part of the military" who expected trouble from government purge which was already under way beforehand. Tensions are already running high between Berlin and Ankara after German authorities refused to allow some Turkish ministers to campaign in the country for a "yes" vote ahead of the April 16 referendum on handing Erdogan an executive presidency.—AFP

TURKEY'S REFERENDUM CAMPAIGN UNFAIR, ERDOGAN OPPONENTS SAY

ANKARA: Opposition figures in Turkey say they have faced threats, violence, arbitrary detentions, a lack of TV airtime and even sabotage in the campaign for a referendum on expanding the president's powers. The complaints come even as Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan himself has slammed European countries for not letting his ministers campaign on their soil for the April 16 vote on giving his office more power. Politicians campaigning against the constitutional changes proposed by Erdogan also say the state of emergency in Turkey since a failed coup attempt in July prevents them from getting their message out ahead of the vote.

"Those who advocate for a 'no' vote are faced with a series of obstructions," said Utku Cakirozer, a former journalist who is now a lawmaker for the opposition Republican People's Party, or CHP. While he, too, criticized moves by Germany and the Netherlands to stop Turkish ministers from campaigning to Turkish citizens abroad, Cakirozer said "our democracy bar has been lowered a great deal and needs to be raised rapidly." At stake are changes that would usher in an executive presidential system, merging the powers of the prime minister and the president.

Erdogan argues that a strong presidency will make Turkey better equipped to deal with economic and security challenges. Critics say it would give Erdogan too much control and further erode the democratic separation of powers in the country. With opinion polls suggesting the outcome of the tight race could be determined by yet-undecided voters, "no" campaigners say they face an uphill battle because Turkey's TV channels are either pro-government or refrain from broadcasts critical of the government for fear of reprisals.

'No' campaigner

Erdogan and members of the government have dominated the airwaves, holding twice-daily campaign speeches that are televised live in their entirety on all channels. Inauguration ceremonies and state-funded official trips also frequently turn into "yes" campaign events. Meanwhile, the pro-government media largely ignore campaign rallies by the "no" camp. Even state-owned media, which is obliged to be neutral, cuts away early from speeches delivered by CHP leader Kemal Kilicdaroglu. Ibrahim Kalin, Erdogan's spokesman, disputed claims of an uneven playing field, saying the opposition was allowed to campaign freely.

"Just because the president and the prime minister's rallies attract more numbers and it looks like only 'yes' campaigning, that's not true. It's a misperception," he told journalists last week. The CHP says it has counted more than 100 incidents of obstructions to the "no" camp, ranging from physical assaults and death threats to

detentions by police. Sinan Ogan, a "no" campaigner who broke away from a nationalist party that backs Erdogan, was interrupted in mid-speech this month at a university in Istanbul by a man who ran on the stage and knocked down the podium, sparking scuffles in the hall.

Vote 'yes'

"It's either our electricity cut (during rallies) or leaflets torn apart, or (the rally venue) is being restored at the last moment, or the podium is attacked, or there is an interruption attempt so that we cannot speak," he said. "And even if you do speak, no TV station will air it." His political ally, Meral Aksener, was forced to hold a campaign event in the dark after the electricity at her venue in the city of Canakkale was cut off. Erdogan, who called the Dutch and German governments Nazis and fascists for barring Turkish ministers from campaigning in those countries, has said those who oppose the constitutional changes include terrorists and coup-plotters.

"That is why I believe my citizens, my brothers, will vote 'yes,'" he said. Turkey's state of emergency allows the government to rule by decree and to suppress demonstrations and gatherings. Some 41,000 people have been arrested and tens of thousands of others dismissed from public sector jobs for alleged links to the coup attempt or alleged ties to terror groups. Those in jail include some 150 journalists and a dozen legislators from Turkey's pro-Kurdish party, which also opposes the constitutional changes.

A decree issued under the emergency powers has eliminated the High Electoral Board's ability to slap fines on TV stations that don't devote equal campaign time to opposing sides. During a visit to Ankara last month, German Chancellor Angela Merkel called for election observers to be allowed to monitor the vote. European institutions have also expressed concerns over the campaign process, including the restrictions on the freedom of expression and the right to assembly.

"If a constitutional referendum must absolutely be held during a state of emergency, restrictions on political freedoms have to be lifted," the Venice Commission, a legal advisory body of the Strasbourg, France-based Council of Europe, said in a recent report. "If the restrictions may not be repealed, the constitutional referendum should be postponed until after the state of emergency."

The Sozcu newspaper, one of the few remaining outlets critical of the government, said in a front-page article Wednesday that what the Netherlands did was "wrong," but questioned what was going on at home. "The country's system of governance is changing but those who say 'no' are given no space to breathe," it wrote.—AFP



MOSUL: Iraqi forces, consisting of the Iraqi federal police and the elite Rapid Response Division, hold a position as they advance in the Old City in western Mosul yesterday, during the offensive to retake the city from Islamic State (IS) group fighters.—AFP

WEST MOSUL BATTLE LOOKS TO BE DEADLIEST YET FOR IRAQIS

MORE THAN 300 KILLED OVER THE LAST MONTH

MOSUL: As Iraqi forces pushed into southwestern Mosul, four Islamic State fighters moved into Omar Khudair's home and took up positions on the roof. The 17-year-old, his parents and siblings took cover in his aunt's house next door, and for the next half hour they huddled in a back room as the battle raged overhead. Then the airstrikes came, blowing up a cluster of houses, killing not only the fighters, but 18 members of Khudair's extended family. The teen was one of the few to survive, left covered in burns and shrapnel wounds.

The fight for the western half of Mosul could be the deadliest yet for civilians. Iraqi forces have increasingly turned to airstrikes and artillery to clear heavily populated, dense urban terrain, and residents running out of food and supplies are fleeing their homes at higher rates than previously seen in the Mosul operation. More than 750 civilians have been killed or wounded since the fight for western Mosul began a month ago, front-line medics say, a number they expect to spike as Iraqi forces push into the old city.

They spoke on condition of anonymity in line with regulations. By comparison, some 1,600 civilians were killed or wounded during the 100 days of fighting to recapture Mosul's less densely populated east, according to reports from nearby hospitals. Mosul's east was declared fully liberated in January. Airwars, a London-based group that tracks civilian deaths from airstrikes targeting IS in Iraq and Syria, estimates the number of casualties to be much higher, claiming more than 300 civilians have been killed in western Mosul over the last month.

Once beautiful, now a battle ground

The Pentagon, which has yet to release casualty figures from the last month, has acknowledged 220 civilian deaths from coalition airstrikes in Iraq and Syria since the US campaign against IS began in 2014. Of the nearly 300,000 people who have fled Mosul since the operation to retake Iraq's second largest city began in October, more than 100,000 have left in the past month alone, according to the United Nations. Many are fleeing because they have no more food, said Azher Adnan, a local pharmacist volunteering as a medic at a clinic just south of the city.

"Every one of my patients, the first thing they say when they approach my clinic is 'I'm hungry,'" he said. Civilians who have escaped said food began to run low in October as the wealthy hoarded what they could. By January, grocery store shelves were completely bare. "The population of Mosul's west is different from the east," Adnan said. "Here you have more people in poverty, they couldn't afford to prepare for the siege."

In eastern Mosul, most militants withdrew in the face of the assault, leaving small contingents of four or five fighters to pin down troops in urban combat. But Lt. Gen. Sami al-Arathi, of Iraq's special forces, said the fighters cornered in west Mosul have nowhere to run. "Now, they are forced to fight to the death," he said. Faced with heavier resistance in more dense urban terrain, Iraqi forces are relying even more on airstrikes and artillery, heightening the risk to civilians and leaving scenes of devastation in their wake.

"This area used to be so beautiful," said Mohammed Ali of the Federal Police, which have been battling their way up the Tigris along what used to be a scenic riverside boulevard, leaving behind mangled park benches and shattered flower boxes. Ali, who hails from a town just outside Mosul, remembers spending time on the cornice as a teenager. "Families and girls would come here," he said, laughing. "We used to follow the girls, but they never gave us any attention."

Disregard of human life

US Army Maj. Gen. Joseph Martin, the commander of coalition ground forces in Iraq, said the coalition is "probably" launching more airstrikes in western Mosul than in the east because more coalition troops have been authorized to approve air support for Iraqi forces. "We're going to strike ISIS wherever we can so that the Iraqis can be successful," Martin said, referring to the extremist group by another acronym. He said changes to the US rules of engagement are allowing the coalition to strike faster and more accurately.

Martin said Iraqi commanders are still trying to preserve infrastructure and minimize civilian casualties - but that the militants have other ideas. IS has fired at least 4,284 mortars, rockets, and artillery rounds "indiscriminately" in western Mosul since January, showing "complete disregard of human life," he said. Humanitarian organizations warn that the destruction, displacement and civilian casualties are likely to spike as Iraqi forces push into Mosul's old city, where streets are the width of alleyways.



ISTANBUL: In this photo, a Turkish man supporting the 'NO' vote for the upcoming referendum holds a Turkish flag and a placard, reading in Turkish: 'No to unemployment' as he chants slogans in central Istanbul.—AP

THREE US SOLDIERS WOUNDED IN AFGHAN INSIDER ATTACK

KANDAHAR, Afghanistan: Three American troops were wounded yesterday when an Afghan soldier opened fire in southern Helmand province, officials said, in the first known "insider attack" on international forces this year. No insurgent group has so far claimed responsibility for the attack in Camp Antonik in Washer district, which highlights long-simmering tensions between Afghan and foreign forces.

"Three US soldiers were wounded this afternoon when an Afghan soldier opened fire on them at a base in Helmand province. Coalition security forces on the base killed the soldier to end the attack," a spokesman for US forces in Afghanistan said. "The US soldiers are receiving medical treatment at this time and we will release more information when available."

An Afghan soldier was also killed in the shootout, provincial spokesman Omar Zwak said. The Pentagon has said it would deploy some 300 US Marines this spring to Helmand province, where American forces engaged in heated combat until they pulled out in 2014. The Marines will head to the poppy-growing province this spring to assist a NATO-led mission to train Afghan forces, in the latest sign that foreign forces are increasingly being drawn back into the worsening conflict.

So-called insider attacks when Afghan soldiers and police turn their guns on their colleagues or on international troops have been a major problem during the more than 15-year-long war. In May last year, gunmen wearing Afghan military uniforms shot dead two Romanian soldiers in neighboring Kandahar province.—AFP

TWO GIVEN DEATH PENALTY FOR GAZA DRUG SMUGGLING

GAZA CITY: A Hamas military court yesterday sentenced two Palestinians to death for drug smuggling in the Gaza Strip, in the first punishment of its kind in the enclave. "The Gaza military court announced the death penalty for two civilians from Rafah, in the southern Gaza Strip, for selling narcotics," the Hamas-controlled interior ministry said in a statement. It said a third suspect was sentenced to hard labor.

Authorities have seized drugs with a street value of around \$1 million (900,000 euros) over the past few months, the ministry said. They seized 1,250 packets of cannabis and 400 pills of Tramadol—a powerful opiate-based painkiller—in January alone, it said. Until yesterday, only people guilty of spying for Israel or murder had received the death penalty in Gaza, controlled by Islamist Hamas since 2007.

All Palestinian death sentences in theory have to be approved by president Mahmoud Abbas, but Hamas has long refused to accept his legitimacy. The Palestinian Centre for Human Rights (PCHR) said Sunday's sentences were a "serious precedent" and that bringing civilians before a military court was a breach of Palestinian law. It said that one of the two men was condemned to death by hanging and the other was to hang.

The PCHR said in an English-language statement that to carry out the sentences would be "extra-judicial killing, and those (who) participated or contributed to issuing them should be held accountable on grounds of extra-judicial killing and abuse of power." "Applying this penalty in drugs cases is very dangerous, particularly in absence of fair trial guarantees and presence of many reports exposing widespread use of torture during the interrogation period, especially in drugs crimes," it added. The centre said that around a dozen death sentences have been passed down in Gaza since the start of 2017.—AFP

ARAB ISRAELI MP RESIGNS AFTER JAIL PHONES PLEA BARGAIN

JERUSALEM: An Arab Israeli lawmaker who admitted to smuggling mobile phones to Palestinian prisoners resigned yesterday, a parliament statement said. Basel Ghattas had said he would step down after striking a deal with prosecutors that saw him plead guilty to handing phones and SIM cards to Palestinian detainees in return for a reduced sentence. "I decided (to accept) after consultation with my lawyers and taking into account my personal and family situation," he said on Friday.

Ghattas, who could have faced up to 10 years in prison, applied instead for a two-year term. Israeli media have reported that 12 mobile phones were found on two separate prisoners in searches after Ghattas visited the high security Ketzioz prison in December. The 60-year-old Christian allegedly used his parliamentary immunity to avoid being searched. One of the prisoners is serving time for the kidnapping and murder of an Israeli soldier in 1984, the Ynet news website reported.

Ghattas said in an earlier statement his action was motivated by his "humanitarian and moral positions towards prisoners and he is ready to assume full responsibility for it". Lawmakers of the Joint List, the third largest bloc in parliament with 13 seats, frequently clash with Israeli authorities. Arab Israelis make up some 17.5 percent of the country's population and are descended from Palestinians who remained on their land after the creation of Israel in 1948. They hold Israeli citizenship but most see themselves as Palestinians.—AFP

IRAQ PREMIER VISITS US AS FORCES PRESS ANTI-IS ASSAULT

BAGHDAD: Iraqi Prime Minister Haider Al-Abadi left for Washington yesterday to meet President Donald Trump as his forces press an assault to recapture west Mosul from the Islamic State jihadist group. The premier's office said Abadi would also meet Vice President Mike Pence and Secretary of State Rex Tillerson, without giving specific dates. On Wednesday, the prime minister is to take part in a ministerial meeting of the 68-nation coalition lined up against the Islamic State group.

Iraqi authorities in October launched an offensive to retake the northern city of Mosul from IS with the support of US-led coalition air strikes. They retook the east side of Mosul in January before setting their sights on the more densely-populated west of the city, the last major urban centre held by IS in Iraq. The Iraqi government earlier this month welcomed its nationals' exemption from a revised travel ban drawn up by Trump as an "important step" that strengthens ties between Baghdad and Washington.—AFP

TRAVEL BAN FIGHT PERSONAL FOR HAWAII'S SCHOLARLY GENTLEMAN

HONOLULU: Growing up in Washington state, Douglas Chin says he was the stereotypical "smart Chinese kid that got straight As." His parents taught him not to stick out too much and used to say "don't poke the lion." So when Chin, now the Hawaii attorney general, was deciding on whether to challenge the Trump administration's latest travel ban, he understood those who said that it wasn't the state's fight.

But the Stanford University-educated lawyer stepped into the spotlight, making Hawaii the first state to challenge President Trump's revised travel ban - and convince a federal judge to temporarily block it before it took effect. His motivation was personal, he said. Chin said he felt as if he was invisible during his time in an overwhelmingly white suburban Seattle high school, and wanted to fight for an invisible minority in Hawaii: Muslims.

"It really hits home with me," he said. "It worries me about this society and what's happening." Before his appointment as attorney general, Chin, 50, was Honolulu's managing director (who would serve as acting mayor when the

mayor was out of town) and a prosecutor. People who know and worked with him say he is nice, smart and a fast walker. Some, however, criticized him for challenging the travel ban.

"Let's allow the big states with more resources to fight this issue," Republican state Rep. Gene Ward said in a statement. "My sense is that the people of Hawaii would rather see potholes fixed rather than trying to lead the nation against an executive order." Those who have worked with Chin say the reason he is fighting the ban is simple: He's kind. Jean Ireton was a fellow Honolulu prosecutor with Chin, who started out in traffic court. He had "some of the toughest, most god-awful trials that we had there," she said.

Humanity at its worst

Those kinds of cases showed her the worst in humanity, she said, but Chin didn't see them that way: "He's just a kinder person than I am. I don't have as much faith in people as he does." Ireton and Chin have differing views on the travel ban. "I do have a problem with the amount of vetting they're able to do in those countries," she said. "Doug sees it

from a people perspective. He sees it from people who are suffering."

US District Judge Derrick Watson on Wednesday blocked the federal government from enforcing its ban on travel from six mostly Muslim countries and its suspension of the nation's refugee program. The judge agreed with Hawaii that the travel ban amounts to discrimination based on nationality and religion. Trump called the ruling an example of "unprecedented judicial overreach" and called his new travel ban a watered-down version of the first one. He said the order was a necessary measure to prevent terrorists from entering the country.

For Chin, the issue of immigration is a personal one. He is named after the Christian missionary doctor who sponsored his Chinese parents' immigration to Washington state, where Chin was born. His middle name Shih-Ging means "scholarly gentleman, which is weird," Chin said. "I think that's where you probably can catch a spark of a personal sense of duty about this whole travel ban," he said, describing his parents emigrating in 1957 at a time when US immigration policy still imposed nation-based quotas.

Muslims: Invisible minority

Chin eventually moved to Honolulu in 1989 as part of a job transfer with IBM, and was exposed to Hawaii's diversity. "All of a sudden I wasn't in this place where I felt invisible anymore so that was really empowering," he said. Chin's career after IBM took him to the University of Hawaii law school and then various stints in the Honolulu prosecutor's office and private practice.

On a bookshelf in Chin's office is a newspaper front page from a murder conviction he won in 2010. A 15-year-old boy who was tried as an adult and convicted of murdering his 51-year-old neighbor is one of Chin's most memorable cases. Near the shelf are portraits of Chin's children and wife, who is white and from New York. He describes his daughter, 18, and son, 16, as "hapa," a Hawaiian term that locals use for mixed-race people.

Former Honolulu prosecutor and former mayor Peter Carlisle recalled first meeting him at Chin's church while Carlisle was campaigning. Carlisle said he was so impressed with Chin's public speaking, he told him to look him up if he ever needed a job. Chin attends Oahu

Church of Christ, a nondenominational Christian church that meets in rented spaces at the university or an elementary school. At church, Chin arranges music and sings acapella - he has perfect pitch, he notes sheepishly.

He found the time to go to Sunday services the week of the Honolulu hearing. After the hearing, Chin stopped at his office and then to Waikiki where he was hosting a meeting of the Conference of Western Attorneys General because he's the group's chairman. Chin has also spent a lot of time giving interviews to news organizations nationwide about his lawsuit. Part of the reason he does that is to educate - even those who live in Hawaii.

"It's a no-brainer why we have to object to this. I totally know how there's another segment of the population that to them it just doesn't connect," he said. "What does the Middle East have to do with Hawaii?" The answer, he said, is Hawaii's some 5,000 Muslims are the invisible minority and Chin knows firsthand what that feels like. "People in Hawaii don't know how to process a Muslim other than what they see on TV," he said.—AP

TRUMP ESCAPES THE BELTWAY AS CHALLENGES MOUNT

TRUMP TO PASS NEW HEALTH CARE PLAN

NASHVILLE: US President Donald Trump is returning to the road, rallying supporters to recapture the enthusiasm of his campaign and reassuring them about his tumultuous early days in the White House. It's a welcome distraction for a president whose first months in office have been dominated by self-inflicted controversy and roadblocks, courtesy of federal courts and a divided Congress. "We have done far more, I think maybe more than anybody's done in this office in 50 days, that I can

On the trip back to Washington that night, Trump bounded back to the press section of Air Force One to share his excitement. "Quite an event, huh?" he said, appearing without warning, with no staff in tow. "It was a big crowd. Great crowd. That was a great crowd. Great people, great spirit." He said he plans to continue the events, holding rallies every two weeks. Throughout the campaign, Trump relied on his rallies to speak directly to his supporters. Networks often carried the events live,

working citizens of our country," he told the crowd.

Rally stage: Natural habitat

He'd spoken earlier to an enthusiastic audience of auto workers at a rally not far from Detroit, and passed by throngs of people lining the streets as he drove through Nashville. He'll be in Louisville, Kentucky, for another rally Monday night. "It's good for all of us to get out of the bubble and remind ourselves it's a huge country out there, and

Trump's campaign committee, which maintains an active operation. Executive director Michael Glassner said that Trump's rise was driven by his ability to draw consistently large crowds. "If your candidate - and now your president - has the ability, and his supporters have the desire and the drive to see him in the way that you can stage events like this, why would you stop?" he asked. "It energizes the president, it energizes the supporters."

Glassner said that while the campaign runs the rallies, the White House determines their locations. But White House spokeswoman Sarah Huckabee Sanders said the rallies are planned, coordinated and executed by the campaign, not the White House, and declined to comment further. So far, the locations have raised some eyebrows. The decision to visit Louisville, Kentucky, appears part of an effort to pressure state lawmakers, including US Sen. Rand Paul, to support the GOP health plan. But some feel he'd be better served spending time in the districts of vulnerable Democrats or Republicans at risk of someone running against them in a primary.

Outstanding job

Conway disagreed: "Nobody's thinking about political campaigns," she said, noting that Tennessee was a state where consumers have few health care exchange options. Trump's supporters appreciate the visits nonetheless, and thousands waited for hours Wednesday in a line that stretched more than a mile. Many say they remain true believers and think the president is delivering on his campaign promises, including getting tough on illegal immigration, saving American jobs and repealing and replacing "Obamacare." The rallies, they say, are a way for Trump to talk over a mainstream media that many view with disdain. "What he's doing is he's going directly to the people," said Jim DeVellier, a 68-year-old pathologist from Roxboro, North Carolina. DeVellier says Trump is doing "an outstanding job" and fulfilling campaign promises, including nominating a conservative to sit on the US Supreme Court. "It's as if he made a checklist of items for the people of the United States, and he's going down that checklist of his promises and he's saying, 'Ok, I've done this, I'm working on this, and how's this going?' And I appreciate that," he said.—AP



NASHVILLE: In this file photo, US President Donald Trump speaks at a rally in Nashville, Tennessee. —AP

tell you," Trump said to cheers from thousands of supporters at a campaign rally in Nashville, Tennessee.

In Trump's rally telling things in Washington are going great. He's been cracking down on illegal immigration, is "way ahead of schedule" on his southern border wall and is on the verge of passing a new health care plan that "does so much for you." He railed against a federal judge for once again stymieing what he called a "watered-down version" of his travel ban an hour before he took the stage, but assured supporters he'd take the case to the Supreme Court and win. The crowd roared.

giving Trump what were essentially free 50-minute infomercials watched by millions.

The events also energized Trump, who thrives on the rush of performing to adoring crowds. On Wednesday night, he seemed transported back to the campaign - a time of promise and fewer responsibilities. The event had all the trappings of his rallies of old: the eclectic soundtrack, the chants of "Lock her up," aimed at former rival Hillary Clinton, who has long since faded from the headlines. "There's no place I'd rather be than with you here tonight, with the hard-

it's filled with people who support the president and are rooting for his success," said Kellyanne Conway, a top Trump aide. Conway said the rally stage has "always been a natural habitat" for Trump, giving him a platform to take his case directly to his people. "That's always been where he's most comfortable," she said.

The distraction is especially important for a president whose anger can lead to tweets - and self-inflicted political wounds. The ramp-up comes as staffers have worked to keep Trump away from critical television programs that work him up. The events are run by

THEO LACY: FEARED US JAIL FOR UNDOCUMENTED IMMIGRANTS

ORANGE, United States: In fluorescent uniforms, dozens of inmates blink in the afternoon sun as they line up in the yard for lunch, the low murmur of their chatter punctuated suddenly by a solitary plaintive cry. "This is horrible!" the voice cries out, before another quickly follows: "We aren't criminals!" The two inmates are among 524 undocumented immigrants in the Theo Lacy Facility in the Californian city of Orange, which AFP visited this week on a tour for journalists. The visit was organized after inspectors found illegal immigrants were being subjected to severe punishment and rotten food.

"We treat them seriously," said head guard Jason Park, underlining the rigid discipline but respectful treatment inmates can expect at the jail, which can house more than 3,000 prisoners. He ushered journalists into the giant facility stretching over 11 acres, where everything was clean, in order and quiet. Park barred reporters from talking to the inmates, who passed by, hands behind backs, dressed in yellow if they were detained undocumented immigrants, or otherwise in orange.

Theo Lacy, located about 30 miles south of Los Angeles, is named after a 19th century rancher turned sheriff who was the chief lawman when Orange County arrested its first murderer. Operated by the Sheriff's Department of Orange County, the jail serves as a detention center for the US Department of Homeland Security's Immigration

and Customs Enforcement. ICE is set to become more powerful under President Donald Trump, who took office in January after campaigning to deport an estimated 11 million illegal immigrants.

The Detention Watch Network, a national coalition of watchdogs, slammed Theo Lacy in 2012 for alleged verbal and psychological abuse, medical neglect and racism against immigrants. DWN's organizing director Danny Cendejas says things haven't changed. "It's one of the worst jails for immigrants," he told AFP, indicating that the problems are longstanding and feared to be getting worse with Trump's crackdown plan.

Killers and rapists

Some of the immigrant detainees who are mostly from Mexico, Honduras and El Salvador are finishing sentences for non-immigration crimes and hope to be deported. Others have violated US immigration laws. The prisoners are triaged according to risk, some placed in blocks with no individual cells. The most dangerous are held in cells that lead into a communal locked area, resembling a guarded fishbowl.

AFP witnessed one inmate pressing a sheet of paper on which he had scrawled "HELP" against the window in his door. ICE officers noticed the protest and rushed to his cell. The average detention for a migration case is 121 days. Former inmate Jesus - his family name is concealed for security reasons - had been in and out

of jail before he came to the attention of immigration officials, who decided his record made him a candidate for deportation. The 33-year-old Mexican spent 100 days in Theo Lacy in 2013 before being released on bail, although he still faces deportation.

Jesus is deaf and, as a result, found himself housed on a wing for the mentally deficient, where he says he was unable to sleep, afraid and plagued by paranoia. Among his jail mates, he says, were killers and rapists, among them Scott Dekraai, who shot and killed eight people at a beauty salon in Seal Beach, Orange County, in 2011. Inmates were "banging my glass wall," he said, adding that he experienced panic attacks when he was sleeping, reading or using the bathroom. He remains on medication.

Tour vs. report

Theo Lacy's objective for the media visit was to show inconsistencies in the Department of Homeland Security's report, such as the finding that disciplinary action did not comply with ICE detention standards. Park showed off what appeared to be the exemplary solitary confinement cell complete with Bible, comb and a folder containing legal documents - in a block in which five immigrants without papers were being kept. He wasn't able to explain what they had done to end up in solitary, but their time there is expected to be more comfortable than the average inmate's. —AFP



BUDAPEST: A cook job advertisement is seen in front of a restaurant in Budapest. —AFP

LABOR DROUGHT IN EUROPE'S EAST AS WORKERS GO WEST

BUDAPEST: A decade ago, business was booming for Hungarian construction firm owner Geza Borgulya. He was making an annual profit of some five million euros (\$5.4 million) and had around 60 staff including surveyors and bricklayers. Now, the 44-year-old has barely a dozen employees left. "I'm glad if I make a million in earnings," he told AFP in the central town of Rakve. Borgulya largely blames the decline on Hungarian workers heading to neighboring Austria where wages are significantly higher.

"Those who work in western Europe easily earn 70 euros a day, we can't keep up with that here," said Borgulya. Once an eldorado of cheap labor, companies in eastern and central Europe are struggling to fill thousands of jobs as workers up sticks and head to wealthier EU nations. A staggering 20 million people have moved from the region to western Europe since the early 1990s, many of them headed for Germany and Britain, according to the International Monetary Fund (IMF).

The exodus, coupled with low birth rates and rapidly ageing populations, has left gaping holes in job markets across the region. From healthcare and computer technologies to manufacturing and food industries, few sectors have been exempt from the drought. The Diaspora, which began with the fall of the Iron Curtain, was exacerbated by ex-communist countries' accession to the EU and the financial crisis. Some 400,000 Hungarians have emigrated from the nation of 10 million since 2008, official figures show.

Perks and problems

"I have lost at least twelve people over the past three years, who have gone to England, Austria and Sweden," said a restaurant owner in Budapest, who did not want to be named. The situation is even more acute in neighboring Romania, the EU's second-poorest country after Bulgaria. Three million Romanians, or 15 percent of the population, have left in recent years, with a majority of working age. Hospitals are particularly hard hit.

"We don't know what to do anymore to attract new recruits," said Ionela Danet, who runs a hospital in the city of Curtea de Arges in southern Romania. She has been trying to hire at least 20 doctors. "We have state-of-the-art equipment, we're on a tourist route, the region is beautiful and not far from Bucharest. Yet no one's applying," Danet said. The exodus from the region has "exacerbated shortage" of labor and "lowered potential growth" in workers' home countries, the IMF found in a report last year. It's also forced companies to bump wages, increasing costs without boosting productivity.

Although eastern and central states have the EU's fastest-growing economies and unemployment rates are relatively low, employers fear that the labor shortage will soon turn into a serious obstacle for foreign investment. While the Czech Republic has 140,000 vacant jobs primarily in the manufacturing sector, car-making hub Slovakia needs technicians while Bulgaria is desperate for engineers. "Large companies are worried that if the issue isn't resolved, it will create... insuperable problems for their future projects," Bulgaria's economy ministry warned this month.

Brexit anxiety

To remedy the situation, corporations are trying to lure back workers with generous perks. In Hungary, burger giant McDonald's is offering free accommodation to out-of-town staff, while cashiers can earn close to 1,000 euros at German budget supermarket chain Lidl - a salary equivalent to that of an expert in chemical engineering. Meanwhile Polish companies have turned to foreign workers from Ukraine to help fill the void left by the recent departure of some 2.4 million nationals.

An estimated one million Ukrainians are residing in Poland, making up a large chunk of restaurant and shop employees in the capital Warsaw. "Without the Ukrainians, the Polish economy would be in deep trouble, particularly regarding less skilled positions," said Maciej Witucki, president of Work Service, one of Poland's largest employment agencies.—AFP

HAITI PRESIDENT PROMISES PROBE AT FUNERAL FOR 38 BUS CRASH VICTIMS

GONAIVES, Haiti: Haitian President Jovenel Moise on Saturday told the grief-stricken relatives of 38 people killed in a bus collision last week that he would bring order to the country's roads, vowing to carry out an investigation into the crash. Speaking at an emotional mass funeral in the northern city of Gonaives, attended by roughly 2,000 relatives, friends and local politicians, Moise pledged to investigate the incident and bring justice to those affected.

"We will bring order to the traffic of Haitian streets," Moise said, promising to install vehicle inspection points throughout the country. "We must know how this vehicle was able to kill people and how the driver was able to flee justice." The incident occurred late last Saturday evening when a bus, traveling from Cap-Haitien to the capital Port-au-Prince, hit two people in a town outside Gonaives, killing one. The driver then fled and crashed into three "rara" parades in nearby Mapou.

Rara parades, which usually take place around Easter, are groupings of musicians playing traditional instruments who are often joined by passers-by. After being released from custody, the bus driver fled, and remains a fugitive, police say. At the service on Saturday, people close to the victims slowly filed into the square, where flags for Haiti and Gonaives hung at half-mast. Some stopped to see the white and gold caskets, all labeled with the name of the person inside and decorated with wreaths of white, red and yellow flowers.

Victims' loved ones mostly wore black and white, while others wore T-shirts bearing tributes to the deceased. Some attendees writhed on the ground, screaming tearfully. "He wasn't ready! He wasn't ready!" one woman yelled. Quico Bien-Aime had come to mourn the death of his brother, Dupito. "It was the music he loved," Bien-Aime said, referring to his younger brother's love of rara. "He loved music a lot." —Reuters

GERMANY'S SCHULZ TO SET OUT PLAN FOR TAKING DOWN MERKEL

BERLIN: Martin Schulz will yesterday officially become Chancellor Angela Merkel's chief challenger in Germany's September general election and lay out his plans for unseating the world's most powerful woman. The bearded Social Democrat, already credited with giving his ailing party a strong shot in the arm, will be anointed SPD leader and standard bearer at a one-day congress in Berlin. German media predicted he could garner more than 90 percent of the vote from the country's oldest political party.

In a speech to the SPD rank and file, Schulz will attempt to harness his momentum against Merkel, whose conservatives just a few months ago had an apparently invincible lead in the polls. Schulz's decision to leave the European Parliament, which he headed

for five years, and run to lead Germany has given the Social Democrats a new lease of life since party leader Sigmar Gabriel asked him to take the reins in January. "It's been encouraging to see in the last few weeks that people are hopeful again that the Social Democrats have a shot," Schulz told Berlin public radio RBB this week.

"My intention to pursue policies that make the lives of hard-working people a little better is apparently finding a lot of support." Opinion surveys have recorded a 10-point jump for the SPD in recent weeks and some polls put it ahead of the conservative bloc of Merkel, who is trying to win a fourth term. The congress will fire the starting gun for the national election campaign and the race for three state polls, the first of which

will be held in Saarland on the French border on March 26.

Fired-up fans

The Social Democrats, junior partners in Merkel governments for nearly eight of the last 12 years, long withered in Merkel's shadow. But Gabriel, now Germany's foreign minister, told supporters this month that Schulz's entry into the race as a Berlin outsider appealed to many SPD voters who are tired of the "grand coalition." "He embodies the feeling of Social Democracy, in his head and above all in his heart," Gabriel said.

For his part Schulz, 61, attributes his surge to a sharpened focus on their classic bread-and-butter issues including wealth redistribution, free education and gender equality. He has in the process

become something of a social media phenomenon, inspiring a raft of affectionate hashtags and viral videos among his fired-up fans.

Heal the divisions

Schulz's unique life history—he wanted to be a professional footballer, didn't finish high school, beat alcoholism before opening a bookstore and taught himself five languages—gives him a common touch. He has faced attacks by conservatives that he has adopted a "populist" tone but he dismisses the charges as elitism. "I speak in a way so you can tell me apart from my rivals, and I try to make complex ideas understandable for my audience," he insists.

Party members are hopeful Schulz can help heal the divisions stemming

from a program of labor market reforms known as Agenda 2010 and passed by the last SPD chancellor, Gerhard Schroeder, who lost to Merkel in 2005. The unpopular measures were successful in driving down unemployment but also a key factor in the party's bitter and lasting gulf between centrists and leftists.

Schulz, stressing his humble roots, has pledged to soften some of its key planks, including lengthening the period of time the jobless are entitled to full benefits. Meanwhile Merkel, a frequent winner of Forbes magazine's most-powerful woman ranking, said she was not troubled about the wind in the SPD's sails, noting that there had always been potential in its "very meager poll ratings." "Competition enlivens things," she told Friday's Saarbruecker Zeitung.—AFP



WASHINGTON: US President Donald Trump and Germany's Chancellor Angela Merkel shake hands after a press conference in the East Room of the White House in Washington, DC.—AFP

TRUMP DID NOT REFUSE TO SHAKE MERKEL'S HAND

BERLIN: Donald Trump's spokesman has denied that the US president refused to shake hands with German Chancellor Angela Merkel as they say side-by-side in the White House last week. "I don't think he heard the question" posed by Merkel when she suggested they shake hands, in full view of press cameras, spokesman Sean Spicer told German weekly Der Spiegel published yesterday. The quote was translated into English from Der Spiegel's online German website.

The veteran German chancellor had arrived for her first meeting with Trump at a snowy White House hoping to reverse a chill in relations after Trump's incendiary election rhetoric, in which he called Merkel's acceptance of refugees a "catastrophic mistake" and suggested she was "ruining Germany." The visit on Friday began cordially, with the pair shaking hands at the entrance of the White House. But later, sitting side-by-side in the Oval

Office, Merkel's suggestion of another handshake went unheard or ignored by Trump—an awkward moment in what are usually highly scripted occasions.

German media pointed to the incident as another marker of the meeting's general icy mood between the cautious German chancellor and impulsive US president. In a frequently awkward joint press conference in the East Room, Trump and Merkel showed little common ground as they addressed a host of thorny issues including NATO, defense spending and free trade deals.

For most of the 30 minutes, Merkel was stony-faced as Trump ripped into Washington's NATO allies for not paying for their "fair share" for transatlantic defense and demanded "fair and reciprocal trade" deals. Yesterday, Germany's biggest-selling daily Bild said that throughout the White House meeting, not once did Trump look her in the eye.—AFP

FRENCH VOTE SEEN FROM ABROAD: LE PEN STEALS THE LIMELIGHT

ELECTION REFLECTS BATTLE BETWEEN POLITICS AND POPULISM

LONDON: Marine Le Pen's far-right rhetoric, Francois Fillon's survival tale and Emmanuel Macron's novel style: The ups and downs of the French presidential election have captured international attention. The main focus: The rise of populism.

Who can beat Le Pen?

In Brexit Britain, the French electoral campaign is being closely-watched. Many, from the media to leaders and Londoners still stunned by the result of the referendum on European Union membership, wonder whether Le Pen could actually come out on top. Ian Bond, director of policy at the Centre for European Reform think tank, said the election reflects "the battle between mainstream politics and populism."

It will reveal whether populism "will take another step forward or if it has reached its peak, and if more reasonable politicians will be able to reassert themselves in Europe," he said. The UK Independence Party's former leader Nigel Farage, a leading campaigner for Brexit, said that an election victory for Le Pen and her far-right National Front (FN) would "bring down" the European Union.

In Germany, the prospect of a Le Pen victory is worrisome and a "real danger" according to Sigmar Gabriel, the minister for foreign affairs. "The only question that matters, is who can beat Marine Le Pen," the weekly news magazine Der Spiegel wrote. In the United States, where many focus on whether the "Trumpism" wave will grow or fizzle out, Marine Le Pen's name is the only one to really stand out.

However, as the Richmond Times-Dispatch highlighted, there are differences between the US President and the aspiring French candidate, most notably, her "constancy and coherence," which Trump lacks, according to the newspaper. As the CNN journalist Anderson Cooper pointed out, Le Pen is a "professional politician". In Russia, Le Pen is the clear media favorite and her manifesto is presented as the best. Yesterday, the popular "Vesti Nedeli" television show hailed her anti-immigration policies before delving into allegations about moderate candidate Emmanuel Macron's assets. The show labeled him President Francois "Hollande's creature".



METZ: French far-right Front National (FN) party candidate for the presidential election Marine Le Pen delivers a speech during a campaign rally in Metz, eastern France.—AFP

Macron: France's answer to Trump

Macron is often found intriguing and, sometimes, charming. German media praise "the blue-eyed boy who reads Goethe"—a recent headline from the liberal Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung. The left-wing Tagesspiegel is more critical, describing Macron as "the elites' candidate" but also as "the last defense against the National Front". In London, where he met with Prime Minister Theresa May and held a rally for thousands of supporters, his liberal views are attractive. The daily Independent newspaper said: "It is Emmanuel Macron, not Marine Le Pen, who will come to be known as France's answer to Donald Trump." Unsurprisingly, Russia expresses little love for him. The Kremlin-backed Sputnik, which aims to gain a foothold in France, denounced what it views as the French media's "favorable" treatment of Macron. It also said the "satanic trio" of NATO, the European Central Bank and the European Union want to "impose their Macron".—AFP

Fillon: A question of ethics

The other candidate to find favor in Russia is Francois Fillon. The right-wing presidential hopeful, charged for misusing public funds, is described as the "victim of persecution" by Vesti Nedeli. But his "Russian friendships" could end up working against him, the state news agency RIA Novosti said. Elsewhere, the former PM's continued candidacy is a source of incredulity and ridicule.

"I can't see that in the UK," Bond said, adding: "If such a case arose, senior figures in any political party would give him a bottle of whisky and a revolver." "Apparently, he drank the whisky and gave them the gun back". In Germany, where politicians' ethics are under strong public scrutiny, Fillon's persistence has caused shock. Der Spiegel said the Fillon "saga" not only affects the political elite but also seriously damages "the reputation of the republic and its institutions".



PARIS: Members of the RAID, (Research, Assistance, Intervention and Deterrence), France's elite police force, leave Orly airport, south of Paris.—AP

FRANCE'S DEFENSE A KEY ISSUE FOR COUNTRY'S NEXT PRESIDENT

PARIS: France's presidential election campaign is taking note of an attack on a military patrol at Paris' Orly Airport by a suspected Islamic extremist who was shot dead by soldiers. Most notably, the party of far-right National Front candidate Marine Le Pen sought to make political hay from Saturday's attack, accusing previous administrations and Socialist President Francois Hollande's current government of being weak in the face of security threats.

France's military is on the front line of the fight against terrorism - one of the biggest challenges for the country's next president. French troops are engaged in operations against Islamic extremism in Syria, Iraq and Africa's Sahel region, as well as on its own territory since terror attacks in 2015. Here's a look at the defense proposals of major candidates in France's two-round, April-May presidential election:

Boosting defense spending

Leading presidential candidates are proposing increasing the French defense budget to at least 2 percent of GDP by the mid-2020s, up from 1.78 percent now - in line with NATO targets. Le Pen promises a more "substantial" financial effort to reach 3 percent of GDP, adding 50,000 more soldiers, a second aircraft carrier

and more jets, ships and armored vehicles. Independent centrist candidate Emmanuel Macron, as well as conservative candidate Francois Fillon and the Socialist Benoit Hamon, have vowed to keep the number of troops stable. France's military currently has about 200,000 soldiers.

European defense vs. French defense

With Britain's upcoming exit from the 28-nation European Union, France will remain a major military force in the bloc. Le Pen wants France to be militarily independent and to leave NATO's command to avoid being "drawn into others' wars." Far-left presidential candidate Jean-Luc Melenchon also wants to completely leave the NATO alliance. Fillon and Hamon, however, suggest France should get financing from European partners to help pay for its security operations abroad, while Macron is pushing for a European defense.

Troops on the streets

France's Sentinelle operation that put military patrols on the country's streets and public sites was launched two years ago after Islamic extremists attacked the satirical magazine Charlie Hebdo in Paris and a kosher supermarket

in 2015. The Orly Airport patrol that was attacked Saturday by Ziyed Ben Belgacem - who was shot and killed after taking a soldier hostage - was part of the Sentinelle force. It can mobilize up to 10,000 troops but is costly in terms of men and equipment. Macron says the operation will have to be "adapted" according to the threat level. Fillon proposes a re-think of Sentinelle to allow the army to focus on operations abroad rather than on French soil.

What about a draft?

France abolished compulsory military service for men in 1996. Yet some presidential candidates are talking about bringing it back, in revised forms, in the wake of attacks that have killed more than 235 people in France since 2015. Le Pen wants to establish a 3-month minimum military service to "unite French youth."

Macron proposes a one-month mandatory service for all young men and women - about 600,000 people per year - to help improve relations between France's military and its citizens. Melenchon wants to make some military service possible, but not compulsory. The first round of France's presidential vote will take place on April 23, and the top two vote-getters then will go into a presidential runoff on May 7.—AP

FRENCH TEENS CHARGED OVER SCHOOL SHOOTING

GRASSE, France: A 16-year-old boy who opened fire at his school in southern France, slightly wounding four fellow pupils and a teacher, was charged over the attack Saturday along with an alleged accomplice. The heavily armed teen appears to have been motivated to launch Thursday's assault by "bad relationships" with his classmates and aimed to kill up to 14 of them, authorities said.

The shooter, who has not been named because he is a minor, was charged with attempted homicide, and an accomplice was charged with helping him. Both are behind bars. Investigators said the boy, a student at the Alexis de Tocqueville high

school in the hillside town of Grasse, was carrying a small arsenal of weapons as well as a homemade explosive device in a bag.

Authorities have not detailed their evidence against the 17-year-old alleged accomplice, and he refused to speak to investigators. However, his parents recently reported him to authorities for writing a letter to an American prisoner in the state of Ohio who is serving a sentence for committing three murders at a high school. The head teacher and four pupils wounded in the attack were not the intended targets of the shooter, said local prosecutor Fabienne Atzori.—AFP

ROW ERUPTS OVER MYSTERY BREAK-IN AT S AFRICA COURT

JOHANNESBURG: South African politicians traded accusations yesterday over a mysterious break-in at the Johannesburg offices of the country's top judge a day after his court severely criticized the ANC government. Burglars targeted Chief Justice Mogoeng Mogoeng's offices early on Saturday, stealing 15 computers containing sensitive information about 250 judges, officials said. Senior opposition Democratic Alliance (DA) lawmaker John Steenhuisen accused State Security Minister David Mahlobo of being behind the break-in.

"My money's on Mahlobo... Intimidation of judiciary," Steenhuisen wrote on Twitter, vowing to fight against "corruption and abuse of state power." "It is highly suspicious that the break-in occurred the day after the Constitutional Court handed down a damning judgment," a party statement said.

The ruling ANC accused the DA of "wild allegations (and) frivolous conspiracy theories" and called for police to track down the thieves. The radical leftist EFF party also alleged Mahlobo was involved in the burglary.

Police described the break-in as "an attack on the judicial system" and vowed

to catch the criminals. The burglars reportedly only took computers from the human resources department, leaving other computers and valuables behind. The theft occurred hours after the Constitutional Court, which is headed by Mogoeng, delivered a scathing ruling against the ANC government over welfare payments. It criticized the "extraordinary conduct" of ministers, saying they had shown no interest in solving a contractual dispute that put at risk payments to millions of South Africa's poorest citizens.

Yesterday, the State Security Agency issued a statement dismissing "the baseless accusations made by some insinuating our involvement" in the break-in. The burglary "should be a concern to all and not a matter of ridicule," it added. President Jacob Zuma's ANC government has been hit by multiple corruption scandals and court setbacks.

The party, which led the struggle against apartheid, came to power in 1994 under Nelson Mandela but has lost support in recent years, posting its worst election results in local polls last year. South Africa holds its next general election in 2019.—AFP

FOREIGN MINISTER WANG YI MEETS THE PRESS

On 8 March 2017, the fifth session of the 12th National People's Congress held a press conference, where Foreign Minister Wang Yi answered questions from domestic and foreign media on China's foreign policy and external relations.

Wang Yi: Friends of the press, good morning. Every year, the NPC schedules my press conference for 8 March. This gives me an opportunity to extend festive greetings in person to all the female journalists in this room.

Indeed, I want to wish all women, happiness and good luck. I also want to say a big thank-you to all members of the press. You have made an important contribution by building a bridge between the Chinese diplomacy and the public at home and abroad. Thank you for a job well done. Now I'm ready to take your questions.

Al Jazeera: The situation in the Middle East is becoming ever more complicated. As a permanent member of the UN Security Council, what role will China play on the regional issues?

Wang Yi: Once again the situation in the Middle East has reached a crucial crossroads

with both risks of growing instability and the promise of peace.

In China's view, to nudge the regional situation in the right direction, three things are of crucial importance. First, we need to maintain the important consensus on fighting terrorism. Second, we need to adhere to the right goal of seeking a political settlement of the regional issues. And third, we must put the UN in the driver's seat of the Middle East peace process.

The Iranian nuclear agreement is a fine example of settling disputes by political and diplomatic means. The relevant parties should all honor their commitment, fulfill their obligation and effectively implement that agreement. The issue of Palestine is an open wound in the Middle East. Peace may be delayed, but justice cannot be denied. China firmly supports the two-state solution and will continue to do what we can to help restart the peace talks.

Xinhua News Agency: In May, China will host the Belt and Road Forum for International Cooperation. Why does China want to hold the forum at this moment in time and what does China hope to achieve?

Wang Yi: In about two months' time, we'll hold the Belt and Road Forum for International Cooperation in Beijing. We fore-

see that the heads of state and government from over 20 countries, the leaders of over 50 international organizations, over 100 ministerial-level officials and around 1,200 delegates from different countries and regions participating in the forum.

In addition to the Leaders Roundtable, there will also be a High-Level Dialogue and six parallel panel discussions on the connectivity of policy, infrastructure, trade, finance and people. Beijing will once again be the center of global attention; the Belt and Road Initiative will continue to be a hot topic around the world. The Belt and Road is China's initiative, but it belongs to the world. The idea came from China, but the benefits will flow to all countries.

In the over three years since President Xi announced the initiative, the idea has caught on and cooperation has flourished. It has become the most popular public good and the international cooperation platform with the brightest prospects. The Belt and Road Initiative has been so successful because it meets the partner countries' urgent desire for more mutually beneficial cooperation and follows the open and inclusive principle of planning together, building together and benefiting together.

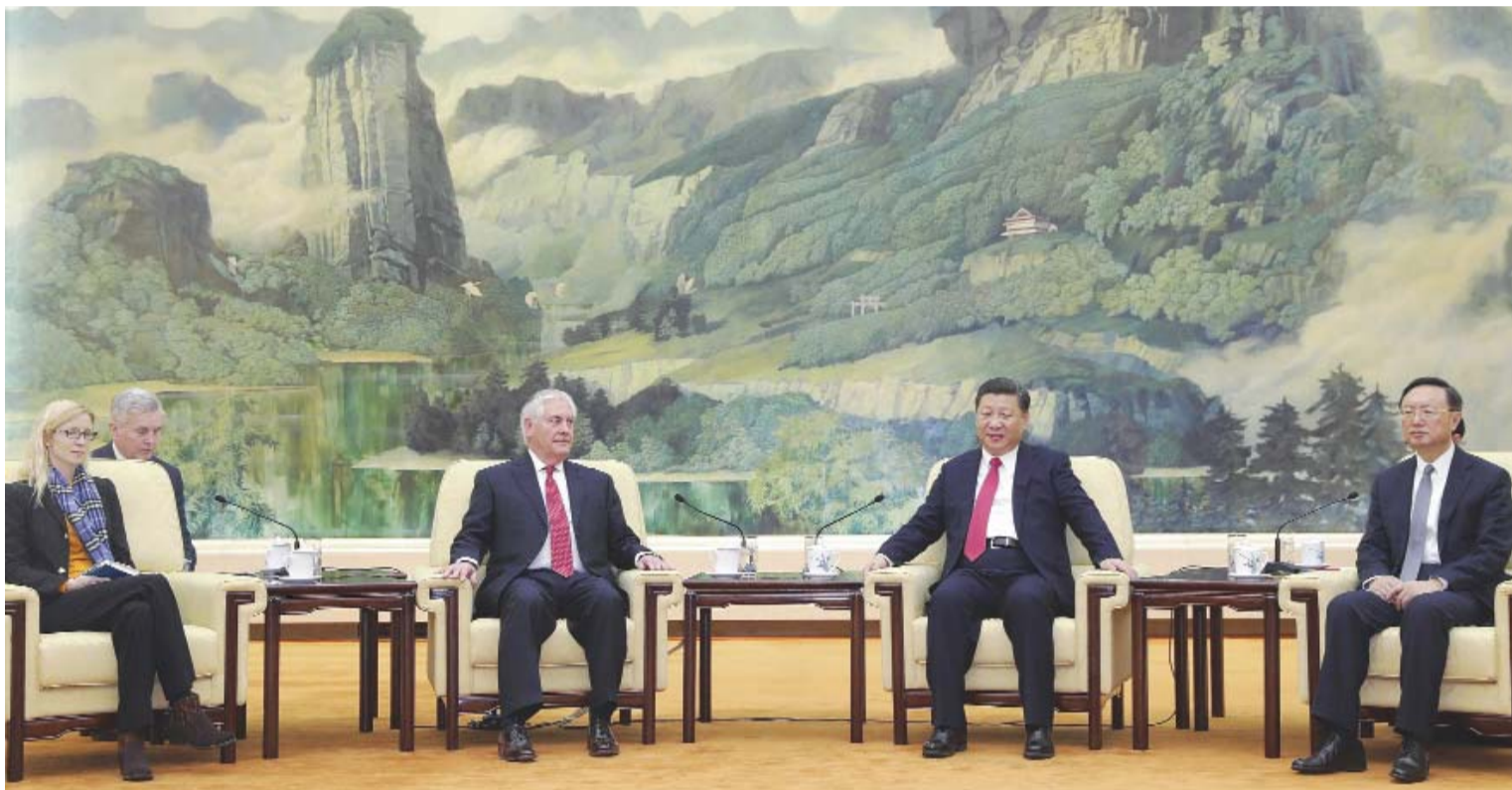
With protectionism and unilateralism on the rise, the Belt and Road Initiative is a common cause where the participating countries roll up their sleeves and pitch in together. The initiative will help to rebalance economic globalization and make it more inclusive and equitable. It also represents an important attempt at building a community of shared future for all humankind. We hope the forum will accomplish three things.

First, review and build consensus, enhance the complementarities of countries' development strategies and set the goal of combining their strengths and achieving common prosperity. Second, examine key areas of cooperation and identify a number of major projects concerning physical connectivity, trade and investment, financial support and people-to-people exchange. Third, announce medium- to long-term initiatives, explore the establishment of an effective cooperation mechanism and build a closer and result-oriented network of partnerships.

TASS: After Trump became US President, the world has made a lot of commentary on Russia-China-US relations. Do you think there will be any change in the triangular relationship?

Wang Yi: Let me tell you at the outset that China-Russia relations are in excellent shape and we have great confidence in this relationship. We have a comprehensive strategic partnership of coordination not because it's convenient; it's a strategic decision reached by both sides on the basis of our fundamental interests. The relationship has stood the test of international vicissitudes. It is as strong as it's ever been and our mutual trust has reached a historic high.

The relationship will not be affected or weakened by any external factor. We welcome any improvement in Russia-US relations, which will be an important piece of good news for the world. This year, the Presidents of China and Russia will have multiple face-to-face meetings, which will take our relationship to new heights. China and Russia will also improve strategic coordination on international and regional issues and act as a stabilizer in the otherwise turbulent world. As for the China-US-Russia relationship in the new era, it should not be "a seesaw game". The three countries should work with rather than against each other. We should pursue win-win rather than zero-sum outcomes. The three countries can develop a positive and healthy relationship, so that we can jointly fulfill our responsibilities for world peace and development.



BEIJING: Rex Tillerson, Xi Jinping, Margaret Peterlin, Yang Jiechi US State of Secretary, Rex Tillerson, center left, attends talks with China's President Xi Jinping, center right, at the Great Hall of the People in Beijing, China, yesterday.—AP

XI, TILLERSON SEEK STRONGER TIES AS NORTH KOREA HAILS ROCKET PROGRESS US TO TAKE POSSIBLE MILITARY ACTION AGAINST N KOREA

BEIJING: Chinese President Xi Jinping and US Secretary of State Rex Tillerson pledged in talks yesterday to work to strengthen a relationship strained by disputes over North Korea and trade. Xi met Tillerson in Beijing just hours after nuclear-armed North Korea tested the US-China relationship anew by announcing a provocative rocket engine trial, and with delicate negotiations under way for a Xi summit with President Donald Trump.

Xi told Tillerson that he and Trump had resolved in a phone call last month "to make joint efforts to advance China-US cooperation and we believe that we can make sure the relationship will move ahead in a constructive fashion in the new era." "I'm confident that as long as we can do this the relationship can surely move in the right direction," Xi said. En route to Beijing, Tillerson visited US allies Japan and South Korea where he declared Washington would drop the "failed" approach of "strategic patience" with Pyongyang—adding that US military action against the North was possible.

That marked a sharp break with China, which favors careful diplomacy over heated rhetoric. Relations have also been strained by China's fierce opposition to a US missile defense system being rolled out in South Korea and Trump's Twitter accusation on Friday that China was not doing enough to control Pyongyang, its neighbor and historic ally. Trump has also repeatedly accused China of unfair trade practices. But Tillerson has made nice while in Beijing.

"We know that through further dialogue we

will achieve a greater understanding that will lead to a ... strengthening of the ties between China and the United States and set the tone for our future relationship of cooperation," he told Xi. Earlier yesterday North Korean state media said the isolated regime had tested a powerful engine hailed by leader Kim Jong-Un as a "new birth" for its rocket industry, which experts view as cover for developing intercontinental ballistic missiles.

Rocket rebirth

The announcement's timing appeared intended to sour Tillerson's China visit. On Saturday Tillerson said after talks with his Chinese counterpart Wang Yi that tensions on the Korean peninsula had reached a "dangerous level". Tillerson and Wang pledged to work together to denuclearize Kim's rogue regime, but offered no clear way forward. Wang, however, chided Tillerson over his recent tough talk, saying "we hope all parties, including our friends from the United States, can size up the situation in a cool-headed" fashion. It was not clear whether Xi and Tillerson discussed North Korea.

The North's state news agency KCNA said Kim oversaw the rocket engine test and "emphasized that the whole world will soon witness what eventful significance the great victory won today carries"—a possible veiled warning to Pyongyang's adversaries. Ruling party newspaper Rodong Sinmun splashed photos across its front page showing a beaming, baton-wielding Kim looking on as flames roared out of the engine. State TV also showed Kim meeting sol-

diers and scientists at the site and hugging and giving a piggy-back to an aged soldier who appeared to be bursting into tears in joy.

KCNA said the new engine could be used to launch satellites, but rockets are easily repurposed to carry warheads. North Korea is banned by the international community from pursuing nuclear and missile programs but has defiantly ploughed ahead. It staged its two latest nuclear tests last year and recently fired off missiles which it described as practice for an attack on US bases in Japan. Kim said the successful engine test signified "a new birth" of North Korea's rocket industry.

Summit in the works

Xi met Tillerson as the two sides haggle behind closed doors over a summit with Trump, a frequent China critic. A successful meeting could be crucial in setting the tone for the relationship between the world's two largest economies in coming years. Officials who spoke on condition of anonymity have said that Trump has tentatively agreed to host Xi at his Mar-a-Lago resort in Florida in early April.

But they said the plan was running up against differences over North Korea, what "deliverables" can emerge, and anger over leaks about the planning. It remained unclear whether Tillerson's apparently cordial Beijing visit would now pave the way. Tillerson mentioned "the opportunity for a visit in the future" but otherwise gave no further details. He left China without speaking to media. — AFP

TOXIC MYSTERY BEHIND KIM JONG-NAM'S ASSASSINATION

KUALA LUMPUR: More than a month after Kim Jong-Nam was murdered in Kuala Lumpur, experts are struggling to make sense of Malaysia's findings that the lethal nerve agent VX was used to kill him without apparent harm to anyone else. Malaysian police have released virtually no forensic evidence connected to the high-profile assassination of the estranged half-brother of North Korea's leader Kim Jong-Un.

Scientists are confounded by how VX—a toxin so deadly it is classed as a weapon of mass destruction by the UN—was deployed in an international airport without causing serious injury to the assailants, first responder medics or other travelers. "We are building speculation upon speculation" to explain what happened, said Jean-Pascal Zanders, an expert on disarmament who focuses on chemical and biological weapons.

Airport CCTV footage on February 13 shows two women approaching the 45-year-old victim and apparently rubbing his face with a cloth. He died minutes later, according to police, who found traces of VX on his face. Indonesian Siti Aisyah, 25, and Doan Thi Huong, 28, from Vietnam, have since been charged with his murder and have told diplomats they were duped into believing they were participating in a TV prank show. Police have rejected those claims but have not released any evidence to explain how the women were able to handle one of the world's deadliest toxins without suffering severe harm. Here are some key questions and answers about the attack:

What is VX?

VX is an organophosphate compound that strikes the nervous system, over-stimulating glands and muscles till they tire and stop working. People exposed to high doses of the toxin experience seizures, heart failure and a shutdown of the respiratory system. Since it evaporates slowly, it can potentially contaminate areas for long periods of time.

A global treaty signed by more than 160 countries that went into force in 1997 prohibits the production, stockpiling and use of VX. North Korea, which is not among the signatories to the treaty, has been blamed by Seoul for Kim's assassination, with the South saying the regime's leader wanted to eliminate a potential rival.

Why are experts confounded?

Experts have expressed skepticism about Malaysia's findings, with one UK-based scientist telling AFP that "there are aspects of this that do not 'add up'." Simon Cotton, a specialist in molecular chemistry at the University of Birmingham, added: "I cannot see how the accused women would have administered a fatal dose of VX directly to the victim without sustaining corresponding life-threatening injuries themselves." "There is also no report of any trace of VX - or of any cloths or containers carrying traces of it - at the 'crime scene'."

So VX wasn't deployed?

Not so fast. Some experts have put forward a hypothesis that the killing was carried out using a binary version of VX known as VX2. In that case, the assassins would have separately applied two chemicals to his face, using a precursor which is not severely toxic on its own but lethal once combined with sulphur. The theory would also explain why two women were used for the attack. "The simplest explanation is that it was binary," said Matthew Meselson, a professor at Harvard University and member of the national advisory board at the US-based Center for Arms Control and Non-Proliferation. As the two chemicals combined on Kim's face to create VX, the assailants would have been unharmed while the delayed reaction would have allowed him to continue walking as shown in the CCTV footage. It is also easier to transport VX across borders when it is broken down into two seemingly innocuous components.

Why use VX instead of other toxins?

Experts believe Pyongyang made a considered decision to use VX instead of the more commonly deployed Sarin. "Sarin kills indiscriminately—there's a heavy risk of collateral damage. To use it in a foreign country would have been an act of war," said Vipin Narang, an expert on nuclear strategy at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. Unlike Sarin, which evaporates quickly whether deployed as a gas or liquid, VX vaporizes slowly, giving authorities time to cordon off affected areas before large numbers of people are exposed to it. —AFP



KUALA LUMPUR: A Royal Malaysian Police vehicle is parked inside the forensics wing of the Hospital Kuala Lumpur, where the body of Kim Jong-Nam is being held, in Kuala Lumpur yesterday.—AFP

BRIDGE NAME MAKES TROUBLED WATERS FOR MYANMAR'S SUU KYI

YANGON: Thousands of people protested in eastern Myanmar yesterday against plans to name a bridge after Aung San Suu Kyi's father, the latest flashpoint between her administration and the country's restless ethnic minorities. The issue highlights some of the deep distrust among Myanmar's patchwork of minorities towards the Bamar ethnic majority from which Suu Kyi and most of the political establishment hail.

Thousands hit the streets of eastern Mon State yesterday, the biggest rally yet against plans to rename the local Thanlwin bridge spanning the wide Salween River. Lawmakers from Suu Kyi's National League for Democracy (NLD) party have proposed calling it the Bogyoke Aung San bridge. Aung San was Suu Kyi's father, seen as the founder of post-colonial Myanmar who was assassinated before the country won its independence from Britain.

Many of those protesting yesterday said locals felt their wishes to keep the old name were being ignored. "The NLD is powerful in the parliament and nowadays they

can do whatever proposal as they like," demonstrator Lin Htet, 34, said. "But for us and for all ethnic people, we value many things in our culture and they should listen

what the local ethnics want." Saw Kyaw Moe, who hails from the nearby Karen ethnic group, was part of a contingent of protesters who joined in support of the Mon.



YANGON: Monks and ethnic Mon shout slogans during a rally in Mawlamyine in Myanmar's Mon State yesterday.—AFP

Plagued by insurgencies

He said many minorities felt Suu Kyi's government was deaf to their wishes. "The MPs should listen to the wishes of the people who appointed them as MPs but now they don't listen the voices of the people," he said. The fight over the bridge's name is seen as more than just a symbolic designation, but part of a larger fight for ethnic self-determination. Suu Kyi's father Aung San is regarded as a national hero, especially among the Bamar majority.

But many ethnic groups see him as a more controversial figure who failed to deliver on promises of greater autonomy and federalism for them. — AFP

BANGLADESH CLEARS EXECUTION FOR TOP EXTREMIST LEADER

DHAKA: Bangladesh's highest court yesterday rejected the final appeal by a top extremist leader to overturn his death sentence, all but paving the way for his execution within weeks. The Supreme Court upheld a 2008 order to execute Mufti Abdul Hannan and two associates for an attack on a shrine that left three dead and injured the British high commissioner at the time. The decision comes just weeks after armed militants attempted to free Hannan in a daring ambush as police transferred the high-profile extremist between prisons.

The appeal dismissal leaves Hannan and his associates no further legal avenues to escape the gallows and they could be hanged within a week, said Attorney General Mahbubey Alam. "They can still beg for their lives to the president," he told AFP, though there is no

such precedent of an Islamist extremist being granted clemency in Bangladesh. The trio were sentenced to death for masterminding a 2004 grenade attack that killed three and injured scores more, including then British high commissioner (ambassador) Anwar Choudhury.

It was among the most high-profile attacks orchestrated by the Harkat-ul Jihad Al Islami (HuJI) group, headed by Hannan, across Bangladesh in the mid-1990s. By the time Hannan was arrested in late 2005 more than 100 people had been killed in attacks by HuJI on a church, secular gatherings and mosques used by Islam's minority sects. His supporters attempted to free their influential leader in early March by hurling hurl bombs at police vans transporting Hannan, but failed to secure his release. —AFP

FRENCH POLICE PROBE MOTIVES OF ATTACKER

Continued from Page 1

after grabbing a female soldier, putting a gun to her head and seizing her rifle.

The attack comes with France still on high alert following a series of jihadist attacks that have claimed more than 230 lives in two years. Security is one of the key issues in France's two-round presidential election on April 23 and May 7. Ben Belgacem's father insisted the assailant who had spent time in prison for drugs and armed robbery and been investigated for links to radical Islam was "not a terrorist" and was acting under the influence of drink and drugs.

The father was released from custody late Saturday after being questioned. Investigators were continuing to quiz Ben Belgacem's brother and cousin for clues as to whether the gunman had planned a terror attack or whether the airport attack was the unhinged epilogue to a shooting spree.

'Drink and cannabis to blame'

"My son was not a terrorist. He never prayed and he drank," his father, whose first name was not given, told Europe 1 radio, blaming "drink and cannabis" for his son's actions. An autopsy was to be carried out on Ben

Belgacem's body yesterday to determine if alcohol or drugs were a factor.

Paris prosecutor Francois Molins said he appeared to have become caught up in a "sort of headlong flight that became more and more destructive". The shooting took place on the second day of a visit to Paris by Britain's Prince William and his wife Kate, which was unaffected.

Ben Belgacem's standoff with the security forces began at around 6.30 am (0530 GMT) in the gritty northern Paris suburb of Garges-les-Gonesse, where he lived. After spending the night in a bar, he was pulled over by police for speeding. Ben Belgacem drew a gun and fired at the police, slightly injuring one officer.

His father told Europe 1 his son phoned him shortly after the confrontation "in a state of extreme agitation". "He said to me: 'Daddy, please forgive me.'"

Ben Belgacem then drove to Orly airport, stopping off first in a bar where he had been drinking hours earlier and firing more shots and then stealing another car. On the departures floor of the airport, he grabbed a soldier patrolling with two colleagues under the Sentinelle anti-terror operation that has mobilized thousands of troops since January 2015. — AFP



PALM BEACH: US Coast Guard patrol watches Lake Worth Lagoon as President Donald Trump returns to his Mar-a-Lago estate in Palm Beach, Fla yesterday. Trump and his family are spending their weekend at his resort in Palm Beach, Florida. —AP

WHITE HOUSE SECURITY BOOSTED AFTER ARREST

Continued from Page 1

A Secret Service official speaking on condition of anonymity said the person was not found to be carrying any weapons. The arrest came about a week after a more serious incident that called into question security outside the White House.

Just before midnight on March 10, a man scaled three barriers outside the White House—a perimeter fence, a vehicle gate and then another fence—and

walked around the grounds of the executive mansion for 16 minutes before being arrested. That time Trump was inside the building.

The White House has seen a string of high-profile trespassing incidents in recent years. In one notable incident in 2014, while Barack Obama was president, an army veteran described as mentally disturbed made it into the White House grounds, sprinted across the lawn and entered the building with a knife in his pocket before being tackled and arrested. — AFP

ASSEMBLY PANEL DEBATES ANTI-CORRUPTION...

Continued from Page 1

The lawmaker said the committee discussed draft laws on conflict of interests to deal with the illegal bank deposits and draft laws related to transparency and disclosures. The committee must complete its discussion and present its report to the assembly by April 7, Dallal said.

The meeting was attended by head of the Anti-Corruption Authority and a board member who spoke about the previous experiment of the Authority which has been experiencing a bitter division between its top officials.

It was also attended by Justice Minister Faleh Al-Azeb and representatives of civil societies dealing with corruption, said Dallal, adding that the committee is considering whether to have one or several laws on the issue and whether the conflict of interests law should be part of the anti-corruption law or the penal code.

In the meantime, MP Riyadh Al-Adasani criticized Dallal for refusing to discuss the conflict of interests draft law, which he submitted, as a standalone bill and not as part of other legislation. Adasani had submitted the draft law to close legal loopholes that prevented the prosecution of current and former MPs who were accused of receiving millions of dinars of bribes.

Also, Deputy Speaker Issa Al-Kandari called on the justice minister to stop interfering in the affairs of the anti-corruption authority, saying that the minister has repeatedly pressured officials at the authority to step down. Kandari said the minister's actions represent a flagrant interference in the affairs of the Authority and urged the prime minister to intervene.

In the meantime, the financial and economic affairs committee yesterday approved a draft law to lower the retirement age for both male and female government employees.

The draft law stipulates that female employees can have retirement after serving for 20 years provided their age is above 45 and that male employees can go on retirement after a 25-year service provided they have reached 50 years of age.

The government had rejected such laws in the past because of their heavy financial cost on the country's social security institution.

MP Safa Al-Hashem yesterday submitted a proposal calling to advance the clock in Kuwait by two hours starting from April 1 and until end of September every year. She said the proposal will help the population in the summer months when temperature hits above 50 Degrees Celsius.

LIVESTOCK TRADERS WARNED FOR ARTIFICIAL...

Continued from Page 1

False shortage, inflated prices

The government noted that already it seems some companies have halted imports of 'certain goods' in efforts to create an artificial shortage and push prices higher, a measure the statement slammed as completely illegal and a threat to national food security. According to official statistics, around 1.5 million sheep are imported annually by some 30 companies, while PAAFR raises around 450,000 cattle to buoy food security.

Minister Al-Roudhan submitted an official request to Consumer Protection Agency to investigate the alleged monopoly plan and fine violators, reported KUNA. Al-Roudhan also directed concerned parties in the ministry to follow up periodically amounts of available livestock, and chilled and frozen meat, and submit a report on the matter.

He asked CPA to receive complaints and prevent consumers from being exploited by traders through either

raising prices or controlling amounts of meat at markets. He urged consumers not to hesitate to send complaints to the ministry if there is a rise in prices, promising that he would follow up the implementation of law to make sure that prices are stable in the holy month of Ramadan. Live sheep prices often skyrocket during Ramadan and especially during Eid Al-Adha.

The Kuwait Livestock Transport and Trading Company (KLTT) reassured the public that it has completed preparations for the upcoming holy month of Ramadan by importing more than 200,000 head of live sheep to cover market needs.

CEO Osama Khaled Boodai said the company is fully up to its responsibilities towards providing local markets with needs of meat. Boodai also stressed that KLTT was ready to provide extra amounts of meat if needed. He also explained that KLTT provides all kinds of fresh, cooled, frozen and processed meats and that sheep prices start at KD 35 per head at KLTT butcheries and through home delivery service and mobile phone application.

To see your ad here, call:
+965 248 35 616 / 617
E MAIL: info@kuwaittimes.net
ads@kuwaittimes.net
Website: www.kuwaittimes.net

BEST PRICE

KC-A40SA/B
Air Purifier

Applicable Area = 26m²

- Inverter Operation
- Timer
- 3 Speed
- Humidifying function

107 KD
127 KD
20% OFF

KC-A60SA/B
Air Purifier

Applicable Area = 40m²

- Inverter Operation
- Timer
- 3 Speed
- Humidifying function

147 KD
950

FU-A80SA-W
Air Purifier

Applicable Area = 62m²

- 3 Manual Speed
- Automatic
- Not Washable HEPA filter

133 KD
163 KD
29% OFF

IG-BC2A-BF
Ion Generator

Best YouSifi

Credit: Start from SKD • Up to 48 month • Instant approval

Shop Online www.best.com.kw Free Delivery

1809 809

- Kuwait 1 (the New str.)
- Kuwait 2 (Panasonic Tower)
- Hawalli 1 (Tunis str.)
- Hawalli 2 (Bln Khaldon str.)
- Shuwalkh (4th Ring road)
- Al-Rai (4th Ring road)
- Salmiya (Salem Al-Mubarak str.)
- Farwaniya (Behind police Station)
- Fahaheel (Opp. General Parking)
- Jahra (Opp. Main Co-op.)
- Alrport (Departure Hall)

OUR DEALS ARE THE BEST .. STARTING KD 35 MONTHLY !

Mazda CX-9
2012 Model

Mazda6 Ultra
2012 Model

Mazda2
2012 Model

Peugeot 301
2014 Model

Emgrand EC7
2013 Model

AS GOOD ... AS NEW

• 1 Year or 20,000 km Warranty • Low Installments • No Down Payment* • Company Serviced as per Manufacturer Recommendation

الشركة الكويتية لاستيراد السيارات ذ.م.م
Kuwait Automotive Imports Co. W.L.L.

97390909 - 69011429 - 66884163

KAICO App
ios & Android
Install it for free & use it!

* Subject to Credit Approval

Kuwait Times
THE LEADING INDEPENDENT
DAILY IN THE ARABIAN GULF
ESTABLISHED 1961

Founder and Publisher
YOUSUF S. AL-ALYAN

Editor-in-Chief
ABD AL-RAHMAN AL-ALYAN

EDITORIAL : 24833199-24833358-24833432
ADVERTISING : 24835616/7
FAX : 24835620/1
CIRCULATION : 24833199 Extn. 163
ACCOUNTS : 24835619
COMMERCIAL : 24835618

P.O. Box 1301 Safat, 13014 Kuwait.
E MAIL: info@kuwaittimes.net
Website: www.kuwaittimes.net

Focus

SYRIAN REFUGEES AVOID SEA, HEAD TO ITALY 'PRONTO'

By Maya Gebeily

Just before midnight in a sleepy district of Beirut, dozens of Syrian refugees huddle in small groups around bulging suitcases, clutching their pinging cellphones and one-way tickets to Italy. "Torino! Pronto! Cappuccino!" They practice random Italian words in a schoolyard in the Lebanese capital's eastern Geitawi neighborhood, waiting for the buses that will take them to the airport, and onwards to their new lives in Italy. Under an initiative introduced last year by the Italian government, nearly 700 Syrian refugees have been granted one-year humanitarian visas to begin their asylum process in Italy.

The program is the first of its kind in Europe: a speedy third way that both avoids the lengthy United Nations resettlement process and provides refugees with a safe alternative to cramped dinghies and perilous sea crossings. Compared to fervent calls for "extreme vetting" of refugees most famously made by US President Donald Trump, this "humanitarian corridor" is like a godsend.

"Turin is the city I've been dreaming of," says Mohammed, 24, a Syrian refugee who has lived in southern Lebanon for five years and is travelling to the northern Italian city with his pregnant wife. After poring over pictures on Google, Mohammed says Turin looks like a "beautiful" industrial hub where he hopes to work. "This trip is a leap into the future. I can build my life anew," he says as he fires off updates by phone to relatives anxious to hear about his journey. "The most important thing we packed? Baby clothes."

'Safe and legal'

For 34-year-old Soha and her toddler Angelo, Italy will be an escape from the trauma of Syria's six-year war. "Four years ago a rocket hit our house and killed both my sons, Antoine and Michael... We want to start a new life. This is all for my son," Soha says. Another refugee, Michel, was smuggled into Lebanon earlier this year after being shot in the chest and shoulder in Syria.

"I'm going to Rome. I'm looking forward to a new life there, far far away from the difficult lives we've led so far," he says. Tapping his foot nervously as the airport buses pull in, Michel admits he is relieved to be flying directly to Italy because "I don't have to get smuggled again and be humiliated".

Hundreds of thousands of people landed last year on Europe's shores after crossing the Mediterranean, but some 4,500 also died trying. A country of just four million people, Lebanon hosts more than one million Syrian refugees. For members of Mediterranean Hope, the four-person team coordinating Italy's resettlement efforts from Lebanon, "humanitarian corridors" are the future of resettlement. The group interviews refugees many times before recommending them to the Italian embassy, which issues humanitarian visas for a one-year stay during which they begin the asylum process for permanent resettlement.

"It's safe and legal. Safe for them, legal for us," says Mediterranean Hope officer Sara Manisera. "After people cross the Mediterranean on the journey of death, they are put into centres for months while they wait. But with this program, there are no massive centres, it costs less, and refugees can keep their dignity," she said.

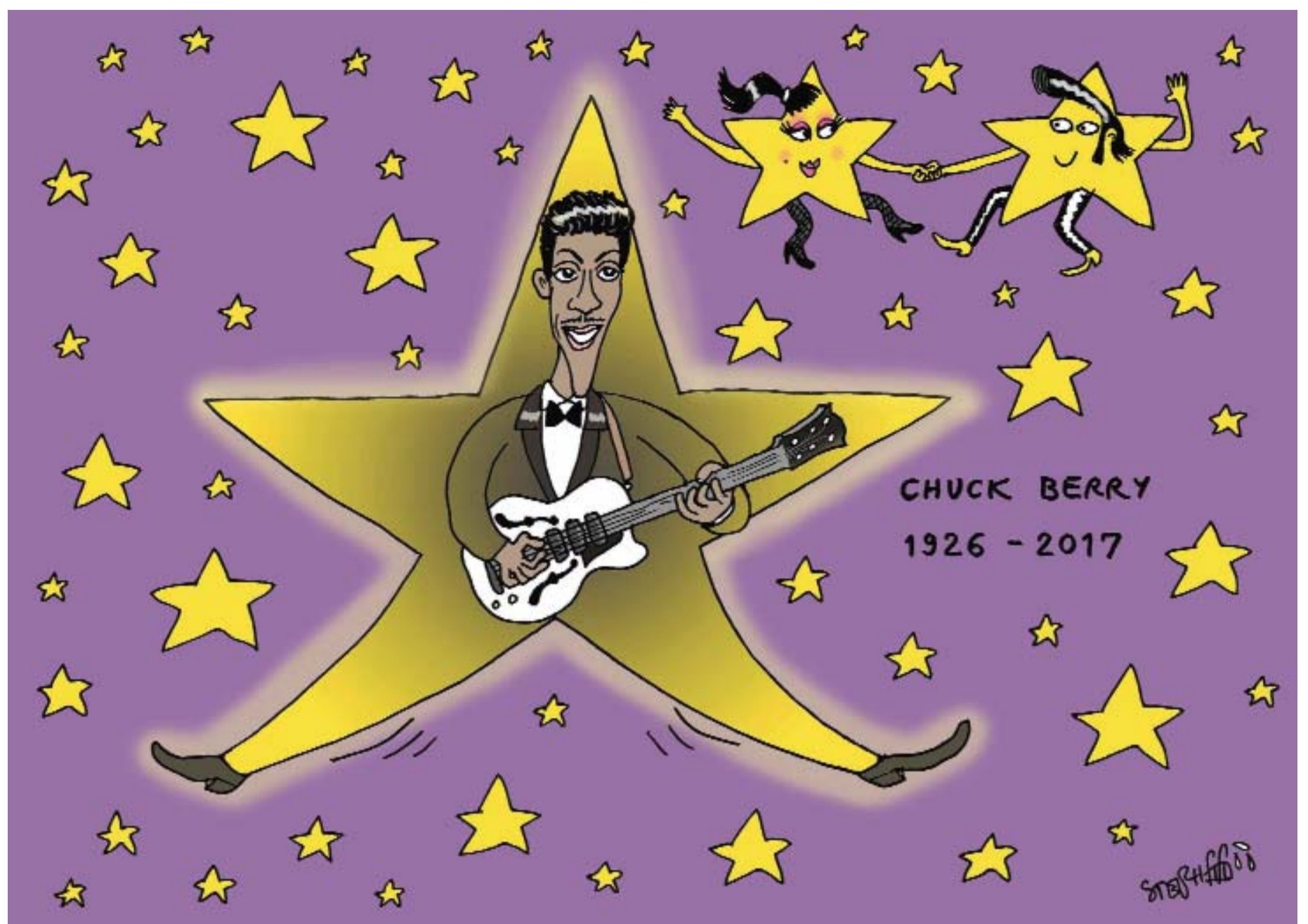
'Cross over into life'

The initiative is co-organized by Italy's Catholic Community of Sant'Egidio, the Federation of Evangelical Churches and the Valdese Evangelical Church. Mediterranean Hope says it wants people to stop looking at refugee resettlement through the lenses of security and counter-terrorism.

On Wednesday, a federal court in Hawaii halted Trump's reworked travel ban, which again sought to bar all refugees from the US for 120 days and halt visas for 90 days for nationals of six Muslim-majority countries.

And earlier this month, Hungary voted to systematically detain all asylum-seekers. "Of course we can continue to build walls as Hungary and the US are doing, but the cost will be much higher for everyone. Which kind of world do we want to live in?" asks Manira. At Beirut airport, Mohammed Khalaf can hardly believe he will start a new life in Rome in just a few hours. "Honestly, it's indescribable. I was in one country, doing everything possible to leave, and suddenly I'm going to be in another," says the slight 21-year-old from Damascus. Khalaf is travelling alone. While he is open about his weeks-long detention in two of Syria's most notorious prisons, he grimly refuses to talk about what happened to his family. — AFP

All articles appearing on these pages are the personal opinion of the writers. Kuwait Times takes no responsibility for views expressed therein. Kuwait Times invites readers to voice their opinions. Please send submissions via email to: opinion@kuwaittimes.net or via snail mail to PO Box 1301 Safat, Kuwait. The editor reserves the right to edit any submission as necessary.



GREEK ISLANDS TURNING INTO 'PRISONS'

By Ulrich Von Schwerin, Catherine Boitard

Somali refugee Abdulaziz says he is "suffocating" in an overcrowded camp on the Greek island of Lesbos, where he shares a tent with a dozen other Africans. The 30-something resident of the Moria camp had been hoping to reach Germany when he set off on his journey, but instead is stuck on this Greek island off Turkey's western coast waiting for his asylum claim to process.

"It's like a prison here... I'm suffocating," said Abdulaziz who has been languishing in the camp for the past eight months. "There is always someone screaming, always fights," said Abdulaziz, who was injured in the leg while fleeing from Turkish police. He is just one of the thousands of migrants and refugees stranded on Greek islands a year after Turkey signed a landmark agreement with the European Union to substantially reduce migrant flows.

Ankara and Brussels forged the deal on March 18, 2016. In the agreement, which took effect two days later, Ankara pledged to take back all illegal migrants landing in Greece in order to help stem migrant flows to the EU. The deal helped put the brakes on a massive influx of migrants and refugees, especially from Syria, Iraq and Afghanistan,

which had mushroomed into a combustible political and social issue in Europe. Turkey's pledge, in exchange for more aid, visa-free travel and the speeding up of Ankara's long-stalled EU accession talks, was also aimed at deterring migrants from making the perilous sea crossing in the first place, knowing they could be sent back.

Some 1,183 migrants were returned to Turkey in the year ending in January, Greek police figures show. But, along with a series of border closures in the Balkans and eastern Europe last year, the EU-Turkey deal has transformed the Greek islands into vast holding pens for refugees and migrants. Many of the camps are overcrowded and there are frequent clashes, with those inside tired of the long wait for asylum papers and fearful of being returned to Turkey. On Lesbos, there are nearly 5,000 people in camps nominally built to hold 3,500, according to government figures.

The Greek immigration ministry has refused to permit large-scale relocation from the islands to the mainland, fearing that such a move could jeopardize the EU-Turkey agreement that has helped stem further arrivals to the continent.

'Uncertainty and fear'

Conditions at Moria, a camp that has

long been plagued by poor living standards and overcrowding, have improved, said Achilles Tzemos, a field coordinator with Doctors Without Borders (MSF). The relocation of the most vulnerable, including unaccompanied migrant children and torture victims, has accelerated with at least 10,000 moved elsewhere, according to the UNHCR. But those who stay suffer with uncertainty at the very least. "Not knowing what awaits them subjects them to a great deal of fear," Tzemos said.

According to MSF there has been a "sharp increase" in self-mutilations and suicide attempts. The United Nations children's agency on Friday said the EU-Turkey agreement had increased suffering notably among children, despite curbing migrants flows.

"While there has been a major decrease in the overall numbers of children on the move into Europe since last March, there has been an increase in the threats and distress refugee and migrant children endure," UNICEF's migrant crisis coordinator Afshan Khan said in a statement.

'Information is essential'

In the past year, 851 people whose asylum claims were rejected or who simply gave up, were returned to Turkey, accord-

ing to Greek police figures. Even people entitled to international protection gave up, lawyers said, because they didn't understand the procedural mechanisms, or because they needed to escape the misery of the camps. "Information is essential" for refugees, said Philip Worthington, a project coordinator at the European Lawyers Association in Lesbos.

During one asylum interview, he said an Iraqi exile highlighted his qualities as a truck driver rather than the persecutions he suffered because of his Christian religion. The EU is starting to cope with the situation, which refugees' rights organizations have criticized as a humanitarian scandal. Rising tensions between residents and migrants, media images of flimsy tents crushed under heavy snow falls, and the deaths of three migrants at the Moria camp in January, for reasons still unclear, have galvanized Greek authorities.

The war of words between the EU and Turkey over the migrant deal has escalated in recent days after Ankara blasted Germany and the Netherlands for preventing Turkish ministers from campaigning ahead of a key April referendum. The EU said it expects Turkey to honor the deal after Ankara threatened to bin it. —AFP

FEAR AND OPTIMISM AMONG US MUSLIMS

By Nova Safo

In a sprawling banquet hall, Ahmed Rehab walked to a lectern facing a glittering group of diners and launched into a searing speech excoriating the Donald Trump administration. "This fight is not just our fight, it is America's fight," Rehab told the packed room of 1,200 attendees - mostly American Muslims at a fundraiser for the Chicago chapter of the Council on American Islamic Relations (CAIR), which Rehab heads.

"As you look at those who are trying to ban good people from coming to this country," Rehab continued, "people who've committed no crime whatsoever other than in their minds the crime of being Muslim... we will have none of it." The room broke into applause.

The president's efforts to institute a ban on travelers from certain Muslim-majority countries have been met with a strong response from Muslim Americans and their supporters. But there is also fear that Islamophobia is on the rise, and that the Trump administration may still target Muslims. "There's a real dread of what's coming next, what's going to happen, who will be targeted," said Louise Cankar, president of the Arab American Studies Association, and author of a book that examined how Arab and Muslim Americans were affected by policies following the September 11 attacks. "There's a sense that they're going to once again go after civic organizations, possibly surveil mosques, things that have been done in the past," she said. What is different now, she said, is that Muslim and Arab groups have established ties with other communities and demonstrations against Trump's rhetoric now draw a mix of people from various faiths and backgrounds. "This is new, and this is really energizing people," she said.

'It's just scary'

At the banquet hall, those listening to Rehab's speech had mixed reactions some concerned, others optimistic because of the sense of cooperation with outside groups. "My kids are all American citizens," explained Fraheen Hashmi, a 36-year-old pharmacist with four young children. "It's just scary to raise them in this environment," she said, worried that they might grow up embarrassed of their heritage or afraid to identify as Muslim. Zayna Saadeh was worried, too. The 59-year-old Palestinian immigrant has lived in the United States for 40 years. But now, she keeps the front door of her clothing store locked for fear of xenophobic attacks. She unlocks only when someone rings the doorbell.

"We're not stranger(s)," in the United States she said, but "that's how we feel a lot of times right now." Advocacy groups have reported a sharp rise in hate crimes. Anti-Muslim groups nearly tripled last year, according to an annual census by the Southern Poverty Law Center. And in 2015, hate crimes against Muslims increased 67 percent,

according to the FBI. Those numbers may be going up, amid increasing reports of new incidents. Last month, an arson fire damaged a Florida mosque, and a Kansas man was accused of shooting two Indian immigrants who he perceived as Middle Easterners, killing one. This week, the Islamic Center of Tucson reported that a vandal had scattered ripped up copies of the Quran, Islam's holy text, around the mosque.

'Best of America'

But there has also been a rallying response from Muslim groups and supporters, as Muslim-Americans have felt more scrutiny and threats. During his speech at the banquet hall, Rehab pointed to new allies in the room - non-Muslim lawyers who helped travelers during Trump's ill-fated first attempt at a ban that triggered chaos at American airports until it was halted by US courts. "My friends, you are the best of America," he said. Other attendees echoed that optimism. "The negative could be turned into a positive, and I think that's what we're seeing now," said Akif Ali, a 36-year-old born in Houston. "The best part is that the American public themselves have become very generous to us," added Saqib Khan, a US-born lawyer of Pakistani descent.

'Rapidly mobilizing'

One evidence of the growing support was a gathering at Chicago's Grace Place Episcopal Church, where about 30 people-many community activists for various other causes-attended a presentation billed as a teach-in about Islamophobia. Sofia Sami, dressed in the traditional Muslim head covering known as the hijab, stepped in front of a projection screen to help lead the group.

They watched samples of news coverage, discussed their own perceptions, and considered ways rhetoric shapes policies. Two hours later as people cleared out, Sami reflected on how American politics are changing. "A lot of people who aren't Muslims are watching the news and seeking ways to support," said the 24-year-old first generation American of Indian descent. CAIR, Rehab's group, has expanded its capacity in Chicago to take on hundreds of new volunteers, grown its network of schools, mosques and community centers and held know-your-rights training sessions.

"These are definitely times that are rapidly mobilizing the Muslim community, or co-strugglers of color and allies," said CAIR spokeswoman Hoda Katebi. — AFP



CHICAGO: Sofia Sami (24) conducts training on Islamophobia at Chicago's Grace Place Episcopal Church on February 15, 2017. "A lot of people who aren't Muslims are watching the news and seeking ways to support," she said. —AFP

SCHUMACHER JNR EYES DRIVING LICENCE

BERLIN: He's already been a star behind the wheel in Formula Four, but Michael Schumacher's teenage son Mick turns 18 on Wednesday and can finally qualify for a driving licence. Michael Schumacher, the seven-times Formula One world champion, continues to recover at the family home on Lake Geneva, Switzerland, from the serious head trauma he suffered in a skiing accident in December 2013. But his son, who is studying for his driving test, is looking forward to finally being old enough to get his licence in Switzerland, despite already having a Formula Four career. "I can hardly wait for the day when I can put my foot down not just on the race track," the 17-year-old told German daily Bild. Once he passes his test, Schumacher Jnr will be able to drive himself to appointments and races. According to Bild, Mick Schumacher is set for a junior ambassador's role with Mercedes Benz. Following a successful stint in karting he finished second in last year's Formula Four Drivers' championship, a big improvement from 10th in 2015, and seems destined to be a future Formula One star. —AFP



TOUR DE FRANCE LOSES ANOTHER FORMER CHAMPION

PARIS: The Tour de France has lost its third former champion in as many months with the death aged 77 yesterday of 1967 winner Roger Pingeon. Pingeon succumbed to a heart attack at his home in the Ain region, local mayor Georges Gouly told AFP. On December 30 Switzerland's 1950 Tour de France champion Ferdi Kubler died at the age of 97, then on February 7 Roger Walkowiak, the 1956 winner, passed away aged 89. "He was a man of great humility... this year he was celebrating the 50th anniversary of his triumph," Gouly said of Pingeon. Two years after his greatest triumph Pingeon finished second in the Tour to Belgian cycling legend Eddy Merckx, but as consolation he won that season's Vuelta in Spain. The deaths of Pingeon, Kubler and Walkowiak leave 23 surviving winners of cycling's blue riband, the celebrated group led by 88-year-old Federico Bahamontes, the 1959 champion. —AFP

SRISAKET UPSETS UNBEATEN GONZALEZ

NEW YORK: Thailand's Srisaket Sor Rungvisai captured the WBC super fly-weight title Saturday with a stunning majority decision over Roman Gonzalez at Madison Square Garden. Fighting on the undercard of the Gennady Golovkin-Daniel Jacobs card, the former star muay Thai fighter continued his amazing boxing run by handing Gonzalez the first loss of his star-studded career. Srisaket has now won 41 or his last 42 fights as he improves to 42-4 overall with one drawn and 38 knockouts. Nicaragua's Gonzalez, who goes by the nickname "Chocolatito", is considered one of the best pound-for-pound fighters in the world and was a heavy favourite going into the 12-round fight. He suffered a couple of cuts over his right eye which bled profusely throughout much of the fight and hampered his vision. Gonzalez, who dropped to 46-1, immediately left the ring after the decision was announced without making any comments. Former WBC champion Srisaket's only loss since 2010 came three years ago when he fell to Mexico's Carlos Cuadras. —AFP



TIGERS OUTFIELDER JD MARTINEZ SPRAINS FOOT, OUT SEVERAL DAYS

DETROIT: Detroit Tigers outfielder J.D. Martinez sprained his right foot making a shoestring catch Saturday and is expected to be sidelined for several days. X-rays were negative. Martinez left the Tigers' complex in Lakeland, Florida, in a protective boot for precautionary purposes. "We'll see about it tomorrow," he told reporters. "I know as much about it as you guys do. It's good that I'm able to move on it." Martinez will likely be out of the lineup until late next week. Martinez hit .307 with 22 home runs and 68 RBIs in 120 games last season. The 29-year-old right fielder was hurt as he came running in for a fly ball against Miami. Martinez said he rolled his foot, causing him to tumble. The Tigers said the sprain was in the mid-foot area and that he will be re-evaluated Saturday.

out three and walked two. Jake Bauers connected off Latos for his fourth home run this spring and is hitting .423. Chase Whitely struck out four in four shutout innings, allowing two hits and a walk.

ASTROS 5, NATIONALS 4

Charlie Morton gave up two unearned runs on three hits over four innings, striking out seven for Houston. Trea Turner hit an RBI single and scored on the same play after three Astros errors. Joe Nathan, trying to make the Washington bullpen at 42, pitched a perfect inning.

PIRATES 13, PHILLIES 8

Tyler Glasnow went four innings and allowed a run on four hits and two walks, striking out five. Eury Perez, who has not homered in 156 career plate appearances, and John Jaso homered for Pittsburgh. Maikel Franco hit a grand slam and Aaron Altherr drove in three runs for the Phillies. Starter Jeremy Hellickson was tagged for eight runs - five earned - on nine hits and a walk over five innings.

RED SOX 12, TWINS 5

AL Cy Young winner Rick Porcello gave up five runs on nine hits and three walks over four innings in his third appearance of the spring. Pablo Sandoval hit two home runs for Boston, Mitch Moreland doubled twice and Dustin Pedroia had two hits. Brian Dozier got three hits for Minnesota. Starter Ryan Vogelsong gave up two runs on four hits and two walks in three innings.

RANGERS (ss) 8, INDIANS (ss) 4

Texas starter Dillon Gee gave up three runs on six hits and two walks over 3 1/3 innings. Indians starter Mike Clevenger walked four and gave up a hit and three runs in 1 1/3 innings.

BREWERS 13, CUBS (ss) 7

Milwaukee catcher Manny Pina hit a three-run homer and Travis Shaw had three hits. Anthony Rizzo homered and singled for the Cubs.

INDIANS (ss) 4, ROYALS 4

Royals starter Travis Wood gave up two runs on five hits and a walk, striking out four in five innings. Alex Gordon drove in a run with a double. Shawn Morimando went three innings for the Indians, allowing three hits and a run in three innings.

CUBS 6, JAPAN 4

John Lackey went five innings and allowed one run on three hits and a walk, giving up Ryosuke Kikuchi's first-inning homer. Jason Heyward had two hits and drove in two runs for the Cubs. Ben Zobrist hit an RBI triple. —AP



SAN DIEGO: Venezuela infielder Rougned Odor, top, throws first for the double play as Puerto Rico's Angel Pagan (16) slides in late to second base during the sixth inning of a second-round World Baseball Classic baseball game Saturday, in San Diego. Puerto Rico's Enrique Hernandez was out at first on the play. —AP

BASEBALL

PUERTO RICO WINS 6TH STRAIGHT IN WBC, ROUTS VENEZUELA 13-2

SAN DIEGO: Carlos Correa, Carlos Beltran and Team Puerto Rico are heading up the freeway in fine shape. Already assured a spot in the World Baseball Classic semifinals, Puerto Rico beat Venezuela 13-2 Saturday for its sixth straight tournament win. Mike Aviles got four hits and drove in three runs to pace the team's 17-hit attack at Petco Park.

"Ever since we started practicing in Arizona, we have visualized doing what we need to do," Puerto Rico manager Edwin Rodriguez said. "We need to complete the uncompleted task from 2013." Puerto Rico, runner-up to the Dominican Republic in the 2013 WBC, will play the Netherlands on Monday night at Dodger Stadium.

"We're focused to do what we are here to do," Rodriguez said. "We've done our celebrating and now we go to LA." Kennys Vargas hit a two-run homer and Angel Pagan added a double and two singles. A day earlier, Correa, Beltran and Yadier Molina helped Puerto Rico hold off the United States 6-5. "I feel super great," said Vargas, who was among the backup Puerto Rico players getting a chance on Saturday. "It's great to help the team offensively so we can obtain our goal."

Starter Jose De Leon pitched 2 2/3 scoreless innings for the win. Martin Perez took the loss. "That's the first time I had seen Jose pitch live," Rodriguez said. "I am very impressed with his fastball and his secondary pitches. He will be pitching in the big leagues this year, I am confident of that."

'NO ONE IS HERE ON VACATION'

Venezuela lost to Puerto Rico for the second time in this year's WBC. It fell 11-0 in an abbreviated first-round game shortened because of the mercy rule.

"I think we didn't play the baseball that I expected or that people expected," Venezuela manager Omar Vizquel said. "Sincerely, we thought we were going to play better ball." Puerto Rico put the game out of reach with a five-run seventh after Venezuela pulled to within 5-2 on Rougned Odor's two-run homer in the sixth. "One of the qualities of the team is the profound commitment it has," Rodriguez said. "They played well and showed off quite a bit. That is the beauty of our team."

Reymond Fuentes' RBI double and Pagan's run-scoring single made it 5-0 in the sixth. "Everyone has a role," Rodriguez said about

some of his reserves coming through. "No one is here on vacation. Everyone has role and understands their role." Aviles' two-out single pushed Puerto Rico to a 3-0 lead in the fifth. Correa, who had walked for the second time, scored on the hit. Correa doubled in the third and scored an unearned run when T. J. Rivera's slow roller to the right side was fielded cleanly by first baseman Hernan Perez, who made an errant throw to Martin Perez at first.

Venezuela loaded with the bases loaded and one out in the second. Hernan Perez lifted a shallow fly ball to left, but Victor Martinez was late returning to third base to tag up. Martinez attempted to score, but he was an easy out at the plate on Pagan's throw.

It was another indicator things weren't going to go Venezuela's way. "Clearly the group I led was extraordinary," Vizquel said. "They allowed me to do my job, and obviously, things didn't turn out the way we wanted to."

Rodriguez is surprised the way Puerto Rico has shined during the tournament. "I expected us to do well, but the level of competition here is very high," he said. "I knew we were going to have a good team but I don't know if I expected us to do this well." — AP

GOLF

MCILROY CHARGES BUT US DUO LEADS AT BAY HILL

MIAMI: Rory McIlroy made a charge into contention but Charley Hoffman closed with a 70-foot birdie putt to match Kevin Kisner for the lead after Saturday's third round of the Arnold Palmer Invitational.

Hoffman curled in the shot of the tournament at the US PGA event on Orlando's famed Bay Hill course to cap a closing run of three consecutive birdies to join his US compatriot on 11-under 205 through 54 holes. McIlroy, preparing his bid for a Masters win next month that would give him a career Grand Slam, fired a seven-under par 65 to stand on 210 in a share of eighth after a 74-71 start to the week.

"At least I've given myself a decent chance," McIlroy said. "At least I'm in with a shout and if I get off to a fast start I can be right in there."

"Hopefully the wind starts to get up and I can be somewhere close to the lead tomorrow." And it was a good sign as he looks toward a possible fifth major title and quest for a first green jacket in just three weeks at Augusta National.

"It's sort of a score I was waiting for," McIlroy said. "I felt like it was in there. It was just a matter of putting it all together and today it did that." After short birdie putts at the par-5 fourth and sixth holes, McIlroy roared into the hunt with three consecutive birdies to begin the back nine, the last of them a 20-footer at the par-5 12th.

World number three McIlroy closed his bogey-free round with a 15-foot birdie putt at 17 and a 12-foot birdie putt at 18. "I can take a lot from today," McIlroy said. "I put it in the right positions. I drove it better, gave myself a lot of looks, was smart when I

needed to be. "If I can continue to do that then hopefully I do have a good chance." Warmer and calmer conditions compared to the first two days helped McIlroy go low.

"Conditions changed a little bit," he said. "You've gone out the last couple days, it was a little bit cold. It was breezy, tough scoring conditions. I thought the guys that got up to like 10-under, they did really well."

"But today it presented us with an opportunity to go low, not much wind, warmer, the golf course played a little shorter as well. You could take it back and reach it at the par-5s. I just played better. I gave myself a lot of looks and holed some putts, which was nice to see."

'NO PROTECTING A LEAD'

Kisner missed the green to bogey at the par-3 second but answered with four birdies over the next six holes, his longest birdie putt in the run from 18 feet at the third. Kisner opened the back nine with another birdie and added another at the par-5 16th but missed a seven-foot par putt in bogeying the 18th.

"There's no protecting a lead out here," Kisner said. "You've got to go out there and keep making birdies and that's what I'm going to attempt to do tomorrow."

"It's almost a perfect combination of playing tough but you can still have it if you can keep it in the fairway."

Kisner's last-hole mishap opened the door for Hoffman, who opened with back-to-back bogeys and added another pair at 14 and 15 before ending with a seven-foot birdie at 16, a 12-footer at 17 and his shocker at 18. —AFP

VIVA REAL MADRID SOCCER ACADEMY TO ANNOUNCE THE 16 WINNERS SOON

KUWAIT: VIVA, Kuwait's fastest-growing and most developed telecom operator, VIVA, concluded tryouts to choose elite players who will have the chance to participate in "VIVA Real Madrid Soccer Academy" in Madrid, for the third year in a row.

The tryouts focused on different technical aspects, such as dribbling, short passing, turning and finishing. Kuwait Football Association certified coaches shortlisted 32 players among 400 participants and 16 players were selected (to be announced soon) based on their skills and fitness to go to Real Madrid Soccer Camp for world-class training in Spain during the summer.

Real Madrid Football Club is one of the most successful football clubs in the world, and has received many accolades, including: The best club of the 20th Century FIFA Trophy, 10 Champions League, 3 Intercontinental cups, 32 Spanish La Liga titles, 2 European Super cups, 2 Super European cup, amongst others.

To find out more about VIVA's partnerships, latest offers and promotions, visit one of the 73 VIVA branches, or the VIVA website at www.viva.com.kw



PAKISTAN'S CAPTAIN MISBAH WANTS LIFE BANS FOR FIXERS

KARACHI: Pakistan's Test captain Misbah-ul-Haq yesterday called for life bans on anyone found guilty of fixing, adding that an investigation into five players threatened years of work to clean up the country's image. The Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) has provisionally suspended Sharjeel Khan, Khalid Latif, Mohammad Irfan, Shahzaib Hasan and Nasir Jamshed on charges linked to spot-fixing and failure to report approaches by bookmakers during the recently-held Pakistan Super

League. The case, which is being investigated by a judicial commission, has revived memories of a 2010 scandal that involved the national team and deprived it of three top players including paceman Mohammad Amir, who has since made a comeback. Misbah was appointed captain in the aftermath of that tainted series in England, and set about rebuilding the team with an ethos that emphasised discipline and integrity. His team steadily climbed world

rankings and rose briefly to number one last year. Speaking about the latest suspensions to reporters yesterday, he said: "Obviously it's disappointing and there should be a law that once you have done something wrong you should not return to this field again." Pakistan's rehabilitation on the international circuit had appeared to be complete last year when Misbah led the team on its first tour of England since the 2010 scandal, in a series praised for its sportsmanship. The 42-year-old was subse-

quently awarded the International Cricket Council's Spirit of Cricket award-testament to the high regard in which world cricket holds him. "We did our best to clean the game up and the seven years of hard work and our image is now spoilt to a great extent. You cannot afford this again and again," he said. Earlier this month Misbah shelved plans to retire and will now lead his team in next month's three-match Test series in the West Indies starting on April 22. Pakistan are

desperate for a turnaround after suffering whitewashes in their last two series. "It will be a tough series and we will not take West Indies lightly because they gave us a tough time in all three Tests last year," said Misbah of Pakistan's 2-1 win in the United Arab Emirates. "The conditions there will be tough and the ball will spin so you can't relax," he added. Pakistan will play four Twenty20 and three one-day internationals against West Indies before the Tests. — AFP

PUJARA, SAHA PUT INDIA ON TOP IN THIRD TEST

RANCHI: Cheteshwar Pujara said yesterday the spinners should win the third Test for India after his double century and a marathon partnership with centurion Wriddhiman Saha put the hosts on top against Australia. After declaring their first innings on 603 for nine late in the final session on day four in Ranchi, the hosts rattled Australia with two strikes including the key scalp of David Warner (14). Ravindra Jadeja disposed of both Warner and nightwatchman Nathan Lyon (2) in an absorbing final session of play. The tourists, 152 behind on the first innings, ended the day on 23-2. Before bamboozling the Australian batsmen with his left-arm spin, Jadeja also scored an unbeaten 54. "I am very confident our spinners (Ravichandran Ashwin and Jadeja) will bowl really well. There is rough, there are cracks (on

the pitch)," said Pujara. The day belonged to Pujara (202) and Saha (117), who put on 199 for the seventh wicket to frustrate an Australian bowling attack that failed to take a wicket in the first two sessions. Pujara recorded his third Test double-century in his 47th match and Saha posted a career-best Test knock to take India way past Australia's first innings score of 451. Pujara, who resumed the day on 130, hit 21 boundaries in an otherwise sedate innings which lasted for 525 balls—the longest innings by an Indian Test player in terms of balls faced. "I have the experience of scoring big runs in domestic cricket," said Pujara, who recently scored a century during a 300-plus stand with Saha in the final of a domestic competition. "Experience matters a lot. When I was batting, I thought we just wanted to get close to their total... I could have played more shots but I had to control myself." The 29-year-old whose top Test score is 206 not out against England in 2012 — got to his double century with a flick to square leg off Nathan Lyon. He pumped his fist in a rare show of emotion as his teammates cheered from the balcony.

But he was out in Lyon's next over, lobbing a catch to midwicket. He walked back to the pavilion to a standing ovation and a few handshakes from the opposition players. Saha, who hit seven fours and a six, soon followed his overnight partner after falling to left-arm spinner Steve O'Keefe. "This is the best among the three (Test hundreds) I have," Saha told reporters. "We badly needed a partnership. Pujara has so much patience... he is always at the top of his game," said Saha, adding that "every Indian bowler would be effective" come day five.

PLAN TO COMBAT JADEJA

Jadeja came in at number nine and played a useful cameo, putting on 54 for the ninth wicket with Umesh Yadav (16).

Pat Cummins claimed four wickets while left-arm spinner O'Keefe took three. Australia's coach Darren Lehmann said Steven Smith's side has the mettle to last three sessions against the Indian spinners.

"Going to have to come up with a plan to combat Jadeja, but we've worked on that and you'll probably see it tomorrow. I would think," said Lehmann. "Once the ball gets a little bit softer it plays pretty well so there's no real demons in the track." — AFP



RANCHI: India's batsman Cheteshwar Pujara (L) is watched by Australian wicketkeeper Matthew Wade (C) as he plays a shot over a close fielder during the fourth day of the third Test cricket match between India and Australia at The Jharkhand State Cricket Association (JSCA) Stadium Complex in Ranchi yesterday. — AFP

SCOREBOARD

RANCHI, India: Scoreboard at stumps on the fourth day of the third Test between India and Australia in Ranchi yesterday.

Australia 1st innings 451 (S. Smith 178 not out, G. Maxwell 104; R. Jadeja 5-124, U. Yadav 3-106).	(Kohli), 4-276 (Rahane), 5-320 (Nair), 6-328 (Ashwin), 7-527 (Pujara), 8-541 (Saha), 9-595 (Yadav)
India 1st innings (overnight 360-6; Pujara 130 not out, Saha 18 not out)	Bowling: Hazlewood 44-10-103-1, Cummins 39-10-106-4, O'Keefe 77-17-199-3, Lyon 46-2-163-1, Maxwell 4-0-13-0.
L. Rahul c Wade b Cummins 67	Australia 2nd innings
M. Vijay st Wade b O'Keefe 82	D. Warner b Jadeja 14
C. Pujara c Maxwell b Lyon 202	M. Renshaw not out 7
V. Kohli c Smith b Cummins 6	N. Lyon b Jadeja 2
A. Rahane c Wade b Cummins 14	Extras 0
K. Nair b Hazlewood 23	Total (2 wickets; 7.2 overs) 23
R. Ashwin c Wade b Cummins 3	Fall of wickets: 1-17 (Warner), 2-23 (Lyon)
W. Saha c Maxwell b O'Keefe 117	Bowling: Ashwin 4-0-17-0, Jadeja 3.2-1-6-2
R. Jadeja not out 54	Still to bat: S. Smith, S. Marsh, P. Handscomb, G. Maxwell, M. Wade, S. O'Keefe, P. Cummins, J. Hazlewood
U. Yadav c Warner b O'Keefe 16	
I. Sharma not out 0	
Extras (b14, lb5) 19	
Total (9 wickets dec; 210 overs) 603	
Fall of wickets: 1-91 (Rahul), 2-193 (Vijay), 3-225	



COLOMBO: Bangladesh cricketer Sabbir Rahman (R) plays a shot past a fielder as Sri Lankan wicketkeeper Niroshan Dickwella (C) looks on during the fifth and final day of the second and final Test cricket match between Sri Lanka and Bangladesh at The P. Sara Oval Cricket Stadium in Colombo yesterday. — AFP

CRICKET

BANGLADESH PULL OFF HISTORIC WIN OVER LANKA

COLOMBO: Opener Tamim Iqbal top-scored with 82 runs in the second innings as Bangladesh pulled off a historic four-wicket win over Sri Lanka in the second Test in Colombo yesterday. The rare win for Bangladesh-just their fourth away from home and first against Sri Lanka in 18 attempts-ended the two-Test series in a draw after the visitors endured a 259-run loss in the opener in Galle. Chasing a target of 191, teenage batsman Mehedi Hasan hit the winning run after an anxious half hour in the final session on the fifth day, getting Bangladesh across the line in 57.5 overs. Tamim laid the groundwork with his 22nd Test fifty, teaming up with Sabbir Rahman who made 41 runs and shared 109 for the third wicket with the left-hander. Sri Lanka struck in phases through spinners Dilruwan Perera and skipper Rangana Herath, who grabbed three wickets each, but lacked the cutting edge to deny Bangladesh from celebrating their 100th Test match in style.

Bangladesh began looking nervous when Tamim—who faced 82 balls and hit seven fours and a six—hoisted a catch to Dinesh Chandimal off Perera just before the tea break.

Perera then removed Sabbir through a successful review after the bowler's initial appeal for a leg-before was rejected, giving Sri Lanka an outside chance for a win.

Mushfiqur Rahim and Shakib Al Hasan got Bangladesh through to the tea break with 35 runs still needed, but Herath got a lucky breakthrough soon after the resumption as Shakib dragged a ball to stumps on 15.

Mushfiqur remained unbeaten on 22 to take Bangladesh home with some support from debutant Mosaddek Hossain, who made 13 runs during the crucial period. Skipper Herath earlier

SCOREBOARD

COLOMBO: Scoreboard at the end of the second Test between Sri Lanka and Bangladesh at the P. Sara Oval Stadium in Colombo yesterday.

Sri Lanka 1st innings 338 (D. Chandimal 138, Mehedi Hasan 3-90)	Mustafizur 23-3-78-3, Shakib 36.2-9-74-4, Mosaddek 3-0-10-0, Tajjul 11-1-38-1.
Bangladesh 1st innings 467 (Shakib Al Hasan 116, Mosaddek Hossain 75, Soumya Sarkar 61, Mushfiqur Rahim 52; R. Herath 4-82, L. Sandakan 4-140)	Bangladesh 2nd innings
Sri Lanka 2nd innings (overnight 268-8)	Tamim Iqbal c Chandimal b Perera 82
D. Karunaratne c Soumya b Shakib 126	Soumya Sarkar c Tharanga b Herath 10
U. Tharanga b Mehedi 26	Imrul Kayes c Gunaratne b Herath 0
K. Mendis c Mushfiqur b Mustafizur 36	Sabbir Rahman lbw b Perera 41
D. Chandimal c Mushfiqur b Mustafizur 5	Shakib Al Hasan b Perera 15
A. Gunaratne lbw b Shakib 7	Mushfiqur Rahim not out 22
D. de Silva c Mushfiqur b Mustafizur 0	Mosaddek Hossain c Dickwella b Herath 13
N. Dickwella c Mushfiqur b Shakib 5	Mehedi not out 2
D. Perera run out 50	Extras (b4, lb1, w1) 6
R. Herath lbw b Tajjul 9	Total (six wickets; 57.5 overs) 191
S. Lakmal c Mosaddek b Shakib 42	Fall of wickets: 1-22 (Soumya), 2-22 (Imrul), 3-131 (Tamim), 4-143 (Sabbir), 5-162 (Shakib), 6-189 (Mosaddek)
L. Sandakan not out 0	Did not bat: Tajjul Islam, Mustafizur Rahman, Subashis Roy
Extras (b4, lb8, w1) 13	Bowling: Perera 22-1-59-3, Herath 24.5-2-75-3, de Silva 2-0-7-0, Sandakan 6-1-34-0, Lakmal 2-0-7-0 (w1), Gunaratne 1-0-4-0
Total (all out; 113.2 overs) 319	Result: Bangladesh won by four wickets
Fall of wickets: 1-57 (Tharanga), 2-143 (Mendis), 3-165 (Chandimal), 4-176 (Gunaratne), 5-177 (de Silva), 6-190 (Dickwella), 7-217 (Karunaratne), 8-238 (Herath), 9-318 (Perera), 10-319 (Lakmal)	Series result: Two Test series 1-1 draw
Extras 13	
Total (all out; 113.2 overs) 319	

in the morning thought to have given Sri Lanka some control once he picked up two wickets in two balls to leave Bangladesh struggling at 38-2 at the lunch break.

Herath claimed his first wicket when opener Soumya Sarkar, charging down the pitch, was deceived by a turn and lofted a catch to Upul Tharanga at mid-off for 10. Imrul Kayes edged the next ball to slip fielder Asela Gunaratne for a

duck. Perera and Suranga Lakmal frustrated Bangladesh for more than an hour with the bat as Sri Lanka added 51 runs to their overnight 268-8 before finishing up for 319 in their second innings. Perera hit his fourth Test fifty off 174 balls while tail-ender Lakmal smashed 42 off 48 balls. The duo shared 80 runs for the ninth wicket before Bangladesh separated them through a run out. — AFP

CURRY SCORES GAME-HIGH 28 PTS AS WARRIORS BEAT BUCKS 117-92

OAKLAND: Stephen Curry scored 28 points with six 3-pointers and the Golden State Warriors overcame a sluggish start to beat the Milwaukee Bucks 117-92 on Saturday night. Draymond Green added eight points, eight rebounds and 10 assists, Klay Thompson scored 21 points and Matt Barnes made back-to-back 3-pointers to spark a big run in the second quarter and help the Warriors complete a season sweep of the Bucks. Golden State improved to an NBA-best 55-14 with its second straight win by 25 points or more. It was also the Warriors' third consecutive victory overall following a season-high, three-game losing streak. The win came on the heels of news that All-Star Kevin Durant, out since spraining a knee ligament on Feb. 28, has progressed to taking jump shots, an encouraging sign for a team trying to hold on to the top spot in the West.

CLIPPERS 108, CAVALIERS 78

Blake Griffin scored 23 points and collected eight rebounds in three quarters, as the Los Angeles Clippers snapped a three-game losing streak with a victory over the short-handed Cleveland Cavaliers on Saturday at Staples Center. DeAndre Jordan had 13 points and 17 rebounds and J.J. Redick scored 16 points for the Clippers (41-29), who have a half-game lead over

the Oklahoma City Thunder for the No. 5 seed in the Western Conference. Jamal Crawford also had 13 points while Chris Paul was held to five points on 0 of 8 shooting. Cavaliers coach Tyrone Lue decided to sit LeBron James, Kyrie Irving and Kevin Love against the Clippers to rest them. However, all three are expected to play Sunday against the Los Angeles Lakers.

ROCKETS 109, NUGGETS 105

James Harden had 40 points, 10 rebounds and 10 assists, notching his 19th triple-double in the Rockets' victory. Harden has 11 games of 40 or more points and did it this time after scoring 41 on Friday. Clint Capela had 16 points for the Rockets (48-22), who won despite a season-low in 3-point attempts (24) and makes (five). Gary Harris had 17 points, Nikola Jokic 16 and Jameer Nelson 15 points and 11 assists for the Nuggets, who now lead Portland by 1 1/2 games for the No. 8 seed.

GRIZZLIES 104, SPURS 96

Mike Conley scored 19 points, Zach Randolph added 18 and Marc Gasol finished with 16 as Memphis extended its winning streak to four games. The Grizzlies (40-30) led for all but 48 seconds in the second half to hand the Spurs (52-16) their ninth road loss this season. San Antonio,

which had won 11 of its previous 13 games, got 22 points from Kawhi Leonard and 21 from LaMarcus Aldridge.

BULLS 95, JAZZ 86

Jimmy Butler scored 23 points and distributed seven assists to help Chicago end a two-game losing streak. Bobby Portis scored 22 points in 30 minutes off the bench for the Bulls. Rookie Denzel Valentine joined Portis off the bench to post his first career double-double, with 11 points and 12 rebounds. George Hill led the Jazz with 18 points to go along with seven rebounds. Gordon Hayward added 14 points on 5-for-16 shooting. Utah (43-27) lost for the second straight game and the third time in the past five contests. The Jazz were swept by the Bulls in a two-game season series.

TRAIL BLAZERS 113, HAWKS 97

The Trail Blazers snapped a five-game losing streak to the Atlanta Hawks as they continued their quest to overtake the Nuggets for the final playoff spot in the Western Conference. Portland led by 23 points just 10 minutes into the game and rolled to victory behind 27 points from Damian Lillard and 22 from fellow guard CJ McCollum. The Trail Blazers, who are 7-2 in March, made 13 of their first 15 from the floor and shot 76.2 percent in the first quar-

ter to 16 percent for the Hawks (37-32) while going up 40-18. Ersan Ilyasova, starting for the Hawks (37-32) in place of Paul Millsap, had 23 points. Millsap experienced left knee tightness warming up and was a late scratch.

THUNDER 110, KINGS 94

Thunder guard Russell Westbrook scored 28 points to go along with 10 assists and eight rebounds, leaving him two rebounds shy of his 36th triple-double. Doug McDermott came off the bench to score 21 points on 8-of-9 shooting for the Thunder, which won its fifth straight game. Georgios Papagiannis led the Kings with 14 points and 11 boards.

HORNETS 98, WIZARDS 93

Cody Zeller scored 19 points on 8-of-10 shooting, and the Hornets snapped a three-game losing streak. The Hornets trailed at halftime but built the lead up to as many as nine midway through the fourth quarter and then held on down the stretch. The Wizards got as close as three in the final 20 seconds, but the Hornets' Marvin Williams hit two free throws with 9.6 seconds left and two more with 7.3 seconds left. John Wall led the Wizards with 19 points and eight assists, but he was just 5 of 16 from the field. — Reuters

NBA results/standings

Golden State 117, Milwaukee 92; Houston 109, Denver 105; Chicago 95, Utah 86; Memphis 104, San Antonio 96; LA Clippers 108, Cleveland 78; Charlotte 98, Washington 93; Portland 113, Atlanta 97; Oklahoma City 110, Sacramento 94.

Eastern Conference				
Atlantic Division		PCT	GB	
W	L			
Boston	44	25	.638	-
Toronto	40	29	.580	4
NY Knicks	27	42	.391	17
Philadelphia	25	43	.368	18.5
Brooklyn	13	55	.191	30.5
Central Division		PCT	GB	
Cleveland	45	23	.662	-
Indiana	35	33	.515	10
Milwaukee	34	35	.493	11.5
Denver	33	36	.478	12.5
Chicago	33	37	.471	13
Southeast Division		PCT	GB	
Washington	42	27	.609	-
Atlanta	37	32	.536	5
Miami	34	35	.493	8
Charlotte	30	39	.435	12
Orlando	25	45	.357	17.5
Western Conference				
Northwest Division		PCT	GB	
Utah	43	27	.614	-
Oklahoma City	40	29	.580	2.5
Denver	33	36	.478	9.5
Portland	31	37	.456	11
Minnesota	28	40	.412	14
Pacific Division		PCT	GB	
Golden State	55	14	.797	-
LA Clippers	41	29	.586	14.5
Sacramento	27	42	.391	28
Phoenix	22	47	.319	33
LA Lakers	20	49	.290	35
Southwest Division		PCT	GB	
San Antonio	52	16	.765	-
Houston	48	22	.686	5
Memphis	40	30	.571	13
Dallas	29	39	.426	23
New Orleans	28	41	.406	24.5

Brazilian Superstar Inspires Young Talents through Red Bull Neymar Jr's Five

Neymar Junior: The Present and Future of Brazilian Football



NEYMAR
DA SILVA SANTOS JUNIOR
05 February 1992 | São Paulo, Brazil | 175cm

CLUB DOMESTIC

LIBERTADORES	2010
CONMEBOL	2010
CONMEBOL	2011
CONMEBOL	2012
CONMEBOL	2013
CONMEBOL	2014
CONMEBOL	2015
CONMEBOL	2016
CONMEBOL	2017

CLUB INTERNATIONAL

CONMEBOL	2010
CONMEBOL	2011
CONMEBOL	2012
CONMEBOL	2013
CONMEBOL	2014
CONMEBOL	2015
CONMEBOL	2016
CONMEBOL	2017

NATIONAL

CONMEBOL	2010
CONMEBOL	2011
CONMEBOL	2012
CONMEBOL	2013
CONMEBOL	2014
CONMEBOL	2015
CONMEBOL	2016
CONMEBOL	2017

285 GOALS
475 APPEARANCES

© REDBULLKUWAIT | @REDBULLKUWAIT | #NEYMARJR5



Brazil is known for being the home of excellent football; every now and then, a new homegrown star is being catapulted to the European and international limelight. Neymar Junior is undoubtedly Brazil football's present and future and the country's top-notch player but his wild desire to encourage emerging talents all the way makes him a one of a kind superstar.

From this perspective, Neymar has put his signature on Red Bull Neymar Jr's Five championship, which is set to take place in more than 50 countries around world this year including Kuwait. Following the norms of last year, the finals will be held in Brazil in the presence of Neymar Junior himself.

The 25-year-old Brazilian player became popular as he joined Santos FC throughout 4 years between 2009 and 2013 and played 103 games during which he scored 54 goals. Neymar captained Santos FC to win Copa Libertadores for South America clubs, beating Uruguay's Penarol, and played in under-17 football teams until he was upgraded to the Brazil senior team in 2010. Since then, he played with the team 75 games during which he scored 50 goals.

Neymar, who made a good debut with the team in August 10th, 2010 as he scored the first goal against the United States (20-) in a friendly match, does not

like to be compared to football stars in Brazil and especially Pelé. Nonetheless, he does not seem to be annoyed by hints suggesting he resembles Garrincha, Brazil national team's star from 1950 to 1960 who is regarded to be the best right winger and dribbler in football history. His journey with the team suffered a setback in 2014 when he was injured in the quarter-final against Colombia and was not playing with "Selecao" in the semi-final match during which his teammates suffered a stunning 7-1 loss to Germany. However, he is proud to have won two titles for his country, the first being the 2013 FIFA Confederations Cup and the second in the Olympic Games that were hosted by the city of Rio de Janeiro, Brazil in 2016. Let alone that "Selecao" tops the 2018 FIFA World Cup qualification with 27 points scored in 12 played games, while Uruguay ranks 2nd with 23 points.

There is no doubt that Neymar's transfer to Barcelona has significantly contributed to his fame on the global arena as of 2013; At Camp Nou, he formed an attacking trio with Argentina's Lionel Messi and Uruguay's Luis Suárez. In the Catalan club, he won La Liga twice (2015 and 2016), Copa del Rey twice (2015 and 2016), Supercopa de España once (2013), UEFA Champions League once (2015) and FIFA Club World Cup once (2015). Neymar is currently seen as the player who is qualified to be the best worldwide in the next few years. He was the 3rd best player in the world in 2015. In spite of his numerous titles and his wide reputation and although he wears the shirt of one of the best clubs ever, Neymar did not forget his debut which cost him tremendous efforts and sacrifices. Hence, he did not hesitate to offer his support to Red Bull Neymar Jr's Five championship.

The tournament's debut year was in 2016 with more than 10,000 teams and 65,000 players in 47 countries, including Kuwait, vying for overall victory. The 2017 version promises to be even bigger as regional qualifying rounds are scheduled to take place in at least 50 countries. Neymar offers thousands of young athletes (between 16 and 25) the opportunity to take part in the tournament which will kick off before the end of this month, each team consisting of five players. In Kuwait, six qualifying rounds will be held in three sites: Goal Courts (March 21st-22nd), Premier Sport Academy playgrounds in Bayan (March 26th-27th) and Hassan Abul courts in Dasma (April 3rd-4th). The national final is scheduled take on April 6th in Al Kout Mall, and Neymar will endeavor to meet with the team who will win the world title as he is adamant on encouraging all talents.

TENNIS

FEDERER, WAWRINKA TO MEET IN ALL-SWISS INDIAN WELLS FINAL

INDIAN WELLS: Roger Federer and Stan Wawrinka set up an all-Swiss showdown for the ATP Indian Wells Masters title on Saturday with straight-sets semi-final victories. Federer, who won his 18th Grand Slam title at the Australian Open, subdued 17th-seeded American Jack Sock 6-1, 7-6 (7/4) to earn a crack at a record-equalling fifth Indian Wells title.

US Open champion Wawrinka, past the quarter-finals in the California desert for the first time, knocked out Spain's Pablo Carreno Busta 6-3, 6-2. Federer went into his clash with Sock well-rested after ailing Aussie Nick Kyrgios pulled

out of their highly anticipated quarter-final. Federer, who had trounced old foe Rafael Nadal 6-2, 6-3 in the fourth round, picked up right where he left off as he raced through the first set in 21 minutes.

But Sock, winner of two titles already this year at Auckland and Delray Beach, raised his game in the second set, saving a break point in the seventh game as it went on serve to the tiebreaker.

The American energized US fans on Stadium Court when he zinged a backhand winner past Federer for a 3-1 lead in the decider. But Federer won six of the next seven points, including the last

three, as he sealed the contest on his first opportunity. "I think I definitely played great in the first set, came out and really saw the ball well," Federer said.

"I think Jack didn't have his best first set, but I found a way to take advantage of that quickly, hardly made any mistakes and was able to press. "The second set was more like what I expected the first set to be. It was hard to break and return well off Jack's heavy serve. I maybe dropped my level just a bit, as well, as he lifted his.

"I had to rely a lot on my second serve. I'm happy it was there. Things got

a bit more complicated, but it was definitely a good feeling to get through in two sets." Sock said he had little to regret in the loss to the player he considers the greatest of all time.

"I didn't play my service games really the way I wanted to in the first," said the 24-year-old, who was in the first Masters semi-final of his career. "But I gave myself chances in the second.

"The room for error is so little," he said of the challenge posed by Federer. "Especially on his serve, he doesn't give you anything." Federer hasn't been broken in the tournament, and in fact has

faced just one break point, against Nadal. The closest Sock got was a deuce in the eighth game of the second set, and Federer quickly dispersed the whiff of danger with two forehand winners. Federer has won 19 of 22 career meetings with Wawrinka, including a semi-final win at the Australian Open in January. Wawrinka's path to the final, just his fourth at the elite Masters level, included a close shave against lucky loser Yoshihito Nishioka in the fourth round and a third-set tiebreaker against rising Austrian talent Dominic Thiem in the quarter-finals.—AFP

NHL

TALBOT MAKES 33 SAVES, OILERS BLANK CANUCKS

EDMONTON: Vancouver Canucks came to Edmonton on a five-game losing streak and were 18 points behind the Oilers in the standings, but it didn't seem to matter much when the puck dropped. They gave the Oilers all they could handle and then some but still fell on Saturday at Rogers Place. After Connor McDavid broke open a scoreless tie late in the second period, the Oilers couldn't exhale until Mark Letestu scored on a power play with 4:38 left. Cam Talbot, appearing in his 11th straight game, posted his sixth shutout of the season. The win lifted Edmonton (38-24-9) out of the first wild-card spot and past the Calgary Flames in the Pacific Division playoff race.

DUCKS 2, SHARKS 1

The Anaheim Ducks appear determined to make it a race for the Pacific Division. Never mind that the visitors played the night before while the hosts were idle. The Ducks came into a sold-out SAP Center and dictated play en route to victory over the San Jose Sharks. Anaheim moved to within four points of San Jose after completing a 3-0-2 series domination. Backup goaltender Jonathan Bernier continued his stellar work with injured John Gibson on the sideline. He made 33 saves while his teammates provided just enough support.

CANADIENS 4, SENATORS 3

Alexander Radulov's shootout goal gave Montreal a 4-3 victory over Ottawa in a battle for first place at Canadian Tire Centre on Saturday night. The victory allowed Montreal to increase its lead to two points over Ottawa atop the Atlantic Division. Andrew Shaw, Phillip Danault and Brendan Gallagher scored for the Canadiens. Carey Price made 28 saves. Derick Brassard, Ryan Dzingel and Erik Karlsson each had goals for the Senators. Craig Anderson, who missed the previous two games with a lower-body injury, stopped 29 shots. Danault and Gallagher scored 31 seconds apart in the third period to give Montreal a 3-2 lead. Karlsson tied the game with 4:57 left in regulation, taking a low wrist shot from the

point that avoided traffic and beat Price low on the glove side.

CAPITALS 5, LIGHTNING 3

Justin Williams and John Carlson scored third-period goals to break a tie as Washington became the first team to clinch a playoff berth. T.J. Oshie registered a hat trick and added an assist and Nicklas Backstrom had four assists for the Capitals. Braden Holtby stopped 26 shots as the first-place Capitals maintained their two-point lead over Columbus in the Metropolitan Division. Nikita Kucherov had two goals and Alex Killorn scored for the first time in a month for Tampa Bay, which lost in regulation in consecutive games for the first time since Jan. 31-Feb. 2. Andrei Vasilevsky finished with 30 saves.

BLACKHAWKS 2, MAPLE LEAFS 1 (OT)

Ryan Hartman scored at 4:43 of overtime to lift Chicago to its fourth straight victory. John Hayden scored his first career NHL goal for the first-place Blackhawks, who increased their lead to five points over Minnesota in the Central Division. Corey Crawford stopped 25 shots for Chicago. Auston Matthews scored for Toronto, which maintained its one-point lead for the second wild-card spot in the Eastern Conference. Frederik Andersen made 37 saves and kept the Maple Leafs in the game during spells of the third period.

RANGERS 3, WILD 2

Oscar Lindberg had a goal and an assist, and Antti Raanta made 25 saves as New York won for the seventh time in its last eight road games. Brady Skjei also scored, and Jimmy Vesey recorded the winning goal late in the second period for the Rangers, who lead the NHL with 26 road victories. They have won 19 of their past 23 away from home. Eric Staal and Matt Dumba scored for Minnesota, which has lost a season-high four games in a row. Devan Dubnyk stopped 27 shots for the Wild, who returned home after a 1-4-0 trip and lost for the sixth time in seven games. — Reuters

ALLEGRI ERUPTS AS CUADRADO SAVES JUVENTUS BLUSHES

MILAN: A first-half header from Juan Cuadrado delivered a 1-0 win for a jittery Juventus at Sampdoria yesterday during which infuriated coach Massimiliano Allegri kicked kit bags on the touchline. Juve's 24th league win of the campaign moved the champions 10 points clear of Napoli after their earlier 3-2 win at Empoli, while Roma can restore an eight-point deficit with a home win against Sassuolo later in the day. But, days after sealing a mouthwatering Champions League quarter-final match-up with Barcelona following a 1-0 win over Porto, it was a far from trademark Juventus performance at the Luigi Ferraris stadium. Cuadrado rose to meet a great delivery from Kwadwo Asamoah after just seven minutes to put Juve ahead, but after losing playmaker Paulo Dybala to injury early on the Turin giants laboured for the remainder. Injuries in midfield and defence forced Allegri to ring the changes, Claudio Marchisio and Alex Sandro joining defenders Giorgio Chiellini on the bench while Leonardo Bonucci was rested to avoid a ban ahead of an upcoming clash with Napoli.

Asamoah started at left-back, and the Ghanaian seized the day with a great delivery that Cuadrado rose to head confidently past Christian Puglionni. Stepping in for suspended Sampa' keeper Emiliano Viviani, Puglionni made amends by stopping Gonzalo Higuain from close range after the Argentine

pounced on a Karol Linetty error.

But the 27th minute loss of Dybala, who hit the winner from the spot over Porto on Tuesday, due to a muscle problem upset Juve's plans. Bruno Fernandes' volley tested Gianluigi Buffon in the Juve net while at the other end Puglionni flew to fingertip Pjaca's angled drive around the post on the stroke of half-time.

If Allegri hoped for improvement, he was to be left disappointed by a messy second half. Former Juve striker Fabio Quagliarella tested Buffon five minutes after the interval, and at the other end Higuain was offside when he volleyed over from six yards.

Allegri's nerves were frayed when Asamoah panicked while under pressure in the area, Sampa regaining possession for a cross that saw Buffon forced into action at his far post. On the counter, Luis Muriel cut inside Daniele Rugani to unselfishly slip through for Patrik Schick, who tripped as he battled for possession with Asamoah.

The errors were piling up for Juve in attack too, Higuain collecting Pjaca's ball from the left only to overhit his pass for Cuadrado. Cuadrado was replaced moments later by Mario Lemina, whose first task was to head clear a dangerous Quagliarella ball into the area. Allegri was growing more frustrated, and erupted 12 minutes from the end when Dani Alves came off worst in a fair challenge with Vasco Regini. — AFP





GENOVA: Juventus' Gabonese midfielder Mario Lemina (C) controls the ball during the Italian Serie A football match Sampdoria versus Juventus yesterday at the Luigi Ferraris stadium in Genova. — AFP



LONDON: Southampton's Irish striker Shane Long (L), Tottenham Hotspur's English midfielder Harry Winks (C) and Southampton's Spanish midfielder Oriol Romeu run for the ball during the English Premier League football match between Tottenham Hotspur and Southampton at White Hart Lane in London, yesterday. — AFP

SOCCER

SPURS BEAT SOUTHAMPTON TO KEEP UP CHELSEA CHASE

	Tottenham	2
	Southampton	1

LONDON: Second-placed Tottenham Hotspur kept up the distant chase of Premier League leaders Chelsea with a hard-earned 2-1 victory over Southampton to cut the gap to 10 points yesterday.

Tottenham coped well without injured 19-goal striker Harry Kane with Christian Eriksen's superb 14th-minute shot putting them ahead before Dele Alli stroked home a first-half penalty.

James Ward-Prowse pulled a goal back after the break but Tottenham held on for a 10th successive home league victory— their longest run

since they won 14 in a row in 1987. Tottenham's 59 points is their best performance after 28 games of a top-flight season since they won the league and FA Cup double in 1960-61.

Impressive as they are, Tottenham's hopes of reeling in Chelsea look slim although they are seven points above fifth-placed Manchester United and nine ahead of bitter north London rivals Arsenal in the battle for a top-four finish.

"I think it was a great opportunity today," manager Mauricio Pochettino told reporters. "Yes, you will always miss your main striker but what we can do if he is injured is to win the game and score goals. (It) was fantastic to keep our place in the table."

Questions had been asked about how Tottenham would cope without Kane, who injured his ankle in the 6-0 FA Cup win over Millwall last week, but they were answered after 14 minutes when Mousa Dembele found Eriksen and the Dane looked up and flashed a low shot beyond Fraser Forster.

Southampton striker Manolo Gabbiadini was inches away from an equaliser with a shot that skimmed the side-netting but the Italian limped off shortly afterwards with a groin injury.

As he was trudging off in the 30th minute Dele Alli was fouled in the area by Southampton skipper Steven Davis and Alli picked himself up to stroke home a penalty to put Spurs two up.

It was no cruise though for the hosts as Southampton halved the deficit six minutes after the break when former Saints defender Toby Alderweireld failed to cut out Nathan Redmond's cross and Ward-Prowse prodded a shot past Hugo Lloris.

Tottenham were edgy after that as Southampton sensed a route back in but despite their prodigious work-rate the visitors could not carve out many goalscoring chances. Substitute Vincent Janssen nearly calmed Tottenham's jitters with a ferocious blast that Forster beat away while at the other end Sofiane Boufal rifled a shot just wide in the last minute. — Reuters

BOXING

GOLOVKIN EDGES JACOBS IN UNANIMOUS DECISION

NEW YORK: Gennady Golovkin earned a unanimous decision over Daniel Jacobs on Saturday to retain his middleweight belts but not before boxing's knockout king was taken the distance for the first time.

Golovkin was forced to go 12 rounds as Jacobs gave the middleweight superstar all he could handle in front of a boisterous crowd of 19,000 at Madison Square Garden.

Golovkin retained his WBC and WBO belts as two of boxing's pre-eminent punchers put on an entertaining show against the best opponents of their respective careers. "I couldn't destroy him," said Golovkin. "He is a very clean, very good fighter. It is my first test for 12 rounds." Judges Don Trella and Steve Weisfeld both scored the fight 115-112 and Max DeLuca had it 114-113 for Golovkin. Cancer survivor Jacobs was an underdog going in but he used his 10-pound weight and reach to his advantage and possibly provided the blueprint for Canelo Alvarez to use against the 35-year-old Kazakh in a future title fight. Golovkin, who improved to 37-0, floored Jacobs early in the fourth round with two rapid fire overhand rights to record the only knockdown of the fight.

Golovkin denied suggestions that he should have thrown more punches in the early rounds. "This is sport. I am a boxer, I am not a killer. I respect his game," Golovkin said. Golovkin had won 33 of his previous 36 fights by knockout as his 23 fight knockout streak, which dated back to 2008, came to a halt. He has a 92 percent knockout rate, the best ratio of any middleweight in boxing history.

Golovkin's IBF title was not on the line

because Jacobs declined to attend the Saturday morning weigh in. Jacobs needed to be within 10 pounds of Friday's official weigh-in weight or lose the chance to fight for the IBF title. The 30-year-old Jacobs decided the extra weight in the ring was more important than fighting for all of Golovkin's titles and the gamble almost paid off. He dropped to 32-2, with 29 knockouts. "At times I stood toe-to-toe with him to see what the power was like, what everybody was talking about,

and it wasn't that bad," Jacobs said.

Jacobs is nicknamed "Miracle Man" after his career was almost ended in 2011 because of osteosarcoma, a rare form of bone cancer. He made a full recovery but spent 19 months out of the sport while battling and recovering from cancer. Jacobs felt he won the fight but said the judge's favoured the champion. "Daniel Jacobs got X-ed out," he said. "I won the fight by at least two rounds." —AFP



NEW YORK: Gennady Golovkin, of Kazakhstan, celebrates after winning a middleweight boxing match against Daniel Jacobs, left, early yesterday, in New York. — AP

Sports

Puerto Rico wins 6th straight in WBC, routs Venezuela 13-2



Golovkin edges Jacobs in unanimous decision



MONDAY, MARCH 20, 2016

BANGLADESH PULL OFF HISTORIC WIN OVER LANKA

Page 16



MIDDLESBROUGH: Manchester United's Marouane Fellaini, left, scores his side's first goal of the game during their English Premier League soccer match against Middlesbrough at the Riverside Stadium, Middlesbrough, England, yesterday. — AP

UNITED MOVES UP AS FELLAINI STRIKES

	Middlesbrough	1
	Man United	3

MIDDLESBROUGH: Marouane Fellaini scored his first Premier League goal for 15 months as Manchester United extended their unbeaten Premier League run to 18 games to move up to fifth with a 3-1 victory at relegation-threatened Middlesbrough yesterday.

Jesse Lingard added a stunning second and Antonio Valencia a stoppage-time third after an embarrassing mistake by former United keeper Victor Valdes as Jose Mourinho's side ended a 19-

week stay in sixth by climbing a place.

Their latest victory as they became the first club to record 600 Premier League wins puts them a distant 17 points behind leaders Chelsea but two points ahead of their nearest rivals Arsenal and Everton in seventh, boosting their hopes of a top-four finish in the race to qualify for a place in next season's Champions League.

Middlesbrough pulled a late goal back through substitute Rudy Gestebe, but they remain second-bottom, five points adrift of safety after an 11th league game without victory as caretaker manager Steve Agnew tasted defeat in his first match following the departure of Aitor Karanka. Gestebe initially appeared to bite defender Eric Bailly in a stoppage time melee on the edge of the visitors' area in an altercation missed by referee Jon Moss and his assistants.

Replays showed there was no contact as the

pair engaged in an angry clinch, but punches appeared to be thrown afterwards in the players tunnel as both sides left the pitch.

United were last beaten in the league at the end of October, a record which rarely looked under threat once they took a deserved 30th minute lead through Fellaini. The Belgian international midfielder had scored his previous league goal in a 2-1 defeat at Bournemouth in December 2015, but had few problems in ending that barren run with his third goal of the season.

Ashley Young cut in from the left to send over a searching cross to the far post, and as Valdes and former Manchester United defender Fabio hesitated, Fellaini was left with the simple task of heading the ball into an unguarded net from close range. Valdes had kept his side in the contest with a stunning double save to keep out a point-blank Marcus Rashford effort from Juan

Mata's cross, before recovering to block the follow-up from Valencia.

ASTUTE

The former Barcelona keeper had already denied Rashford with a fine block after the forward out-paced his marker Bernardo to Valencia's astute through-ball.

David De Gea was called into action just once before the break, saving well from Gaston Ramirez, who along with Stewart Downing and Alvaro Negredo was restored to the starting line-up by Agnew, the trio having previously fallen out of favour with Karanka. The injured Wayne Rooney was again unavailable for the visitors as Mourinho made seven changes from the midweek Europa League victory over Rostov.

With Zlatan Ibrahimovic suspended and Paul Pogba ruled out by a hamstring problem, it was

only the third time this season neither had featured on the team-sheet. United made light of their absence as Lingard doubled the lead in spectacular style in the 62nd minute. The England international picked up possession just inside the Middlesbrough half, and as Bernardo stood off inviting the midfielder to advance, he did just that to send an unstoppable shot into the top corner from 20 yards. Negredo went close with two second-half headers, before Gestebe made the most of an error from Chris Smalling to reduce the arrears from close range with his first league goal since a move from Aston Villa in January to end his side's eight-and-a-half hour wait for a league goal.

It gave the hosts hope of salvaging a point in the final 13 minutes, but Mourinho's side held out without further alarm, Valencia pouncing on a slip by Valdes to walk the ball into an unguarded net to embellish the margin of victory. —AFP

SERGIO AGUERO LEVELLER KEEPS LIVERPOOL AT BAY

	Man City	1
	Liverpool	1

MANCHESTER: Sergio Aguero netted a 69th-minute equaliser in a gripping 1-1 draw with Liverpool yesterday to prevent Manchester City losing ground in the battle for a top-four Premier League finish. Liverpool looked poised to leapfrog City into third place after James Milner silenced the boos from fans of his former club to give the visitors the lead with a penalty early in the second half. But Aguero's strike kept City a point above their rivals, who have played a game more, and provided a moment of solace after their mid-week Champions League elimination at Monaco's hands. Both sides had chances to win the game in a breathless finale, Kevin De Bruyne hitting a post for City and Adam Lallana horribly miscuing with only the goalkeeper to beat.

Pep Guardiola had come in for criticism after City's 3-1 loss at Stade Louis II, but his side will approach back-to-back trips to Arsenal and Chelsea on the back of a seven-game unbeaten run in the league. While Jurgen Klopp failed to become the first manager to do a league double over Guardiola, his Liverpool team are now unbeaten in 10 games against their fellow top-six sides this season. A rain-slicked pitch and two attack-minded teams made for a furious first half at the Etihad Stadium, characterised by City possession and Liverpool counter-attacks. City unambiguously

targeted the flanks, Leroy Sane on the left and ex-Liverpool man Raheem Sterling on the right whipping a succession of low, pacy crosses across Simon Mignolet's six-yard box. Twice, Aguero felt he had been unfairly impeded as he tried to get on the end of them, first by Joel Matip and then Ragnar Klavan.

The latter incident, in the 43rd minute, also saw Sterling taken out by a despairing Milner as the pair stretched for David Silva's low cross, with Fernandinho sliding the ball wide at the back post. City's clearest opening of the half saw Silva thrash the ball inches wide of the left-hand post after Mignolet had jutted out his left foot to fend off a drive from Sane.

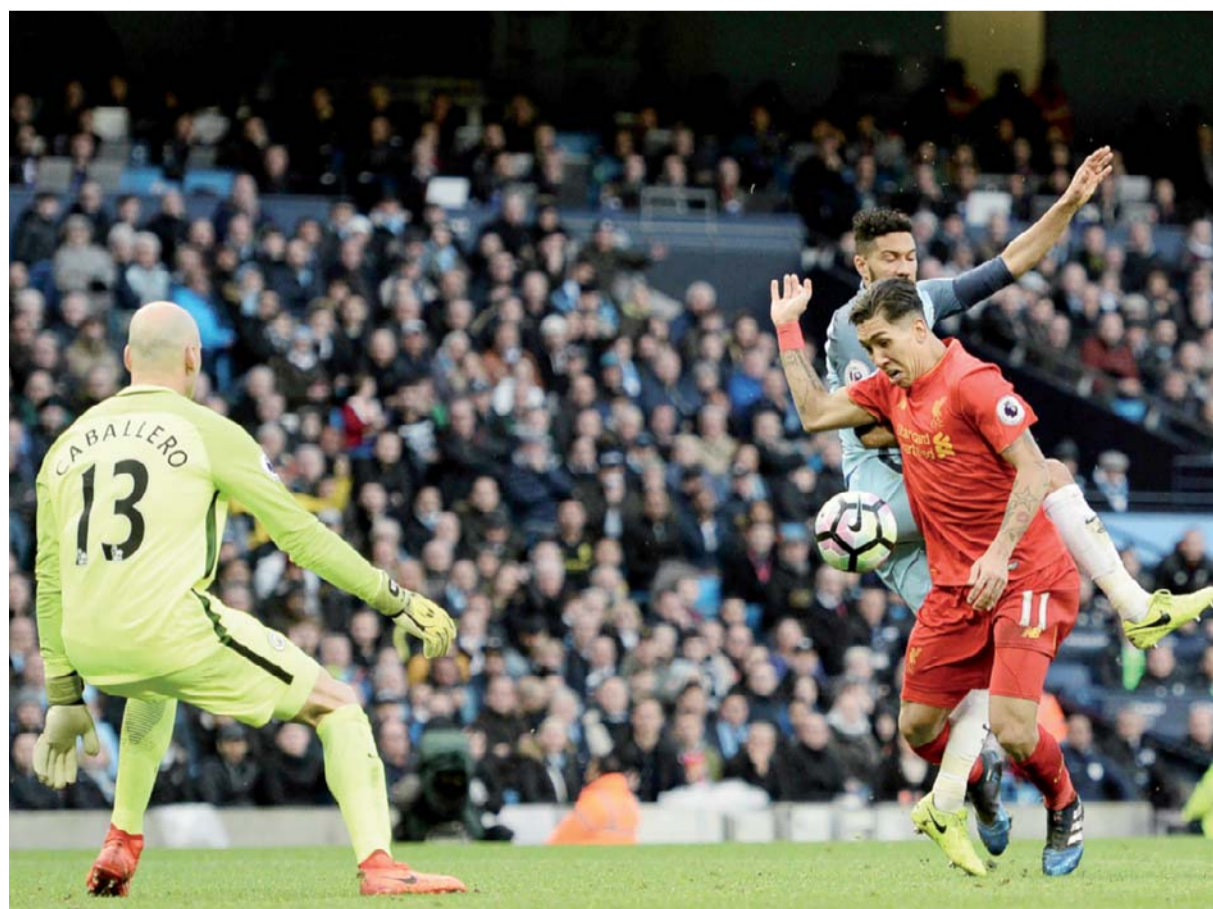
LALLANA MISSES KICK

But the best chances of the first period were all Liverpool's. An under-hit John Stones back-pass let in Sadio Mane, only for an authoritative sortie by goalkeeper Willy Caballero, allied to a subtle tug from Nicolas Otamendi, to save the day. Philippe Coutinho bent a shot just over, Matip headed wide at a free-kick and Caballero showed agility to claw away a Roberto Firmino curler and touch over a thumping Lallana volley.

After Mane had seen a shot blocked by Stones, Liverpool went ahead in the sixth minute of the second half.

Gael Clichy was penalised for a high, untidy challenge on Firmino as the Brazilian chested down Emre Can's flighted pass and Milner swept the penalty into the bottom-left corner.

Firmino looked poised to double the visitors' lead from Coutinho's measured through ball, but Caballero stood up well to save. Eight minutes later it was all square as De Bruyne's brilliantly measured cross from the right was unerringly dispatched by Aguero. —AFP



MANCHESTER: Manchester City's French defender Gael Clichy (R) fouls Liverpool's Brazilian midfielder Roberto Firmino to give away a penalty during the English Premier League football match between Manchester City and Liverpool at the Etihad Stadium in Manchester, north west England, yesterday. — AFP

Strategic Partner



Sponsored By

SAMSUNG

Organized By

Kuwait Times

The Middle East's Largest Students' Art Competition

KUWAIT BEAUTIFUL & GREEN STUDENTS ART COMPETITION

March 19th Till April 20th, 2017

HELLO ARTISTS...

Welcome to the Student's Art Competition. I hope you are ready to paint a beautiful painting and win wonderful prizes. The theme for your painting must be related to planting and greening, basically anything pertaining to our environment. We are looking for a great painting. So, please pick up your color pencils, paint brushes, crayons or whatever you prefer and start drawing and painting.

Good luck to you, our young artists.

- Competition is open to ages from (6 - 8) (9 - 11) (12 - 14) (15 - 17) and Special needs.
- The competition is open for all schools in Kuwait (Government and Private)
- **The competition will start on March 19th and will continue till April 20th 2017.**
- 10 winners from each category will receive valuable prizes.
- All participants will receive a certificate of appreciation.
- All schools participating in

- the competition will receive an appreciation plaque.
- Any school or individual interested to participate in this competition is welcome to visit the office of Kuwait Times and collect the drawing sheets.
- Drawing sheets will be given to schools FREE of charge.
- Only drawing sheets provided by the Kuwait Times will be allowed.
- You can use any kind of color pencils, paint brushes or crayons.

* For all Jazeera Airways tickets terms and conditions are applied



* For more information and updates please visit



facebook/kuwaittimesc



twitter/TimesComp



Sponsored By

JW MARRIOTT KUWAIT CITY



Kuwait Times Participation Form

If you are interested to participate fill the form and send it to Kuwait Times.

From: We would like to confirm our participation in the above mentioned activity with the total number of participating student's so the corresponding number of drawing sheets can be delivered to our school.

School:
 Tel: Fax:
 Address:
 Total number of interested students are
 6 - 8 years 9 - 11 years 12 - 14 years 15 - 17 years Special need
 Name: Signature:

For more information contact Kuwait Times Tel: 24835616/7 Fax 24835620/1 or send an email to: ads@kuwaittimes.net

Kuwait Times ^{55th Anniversary} Kuwait Times BUSINESS

MONDAY, MARCH 20, 2017

NBK Weekly Report

Page 22

Inside the deadly world of Venezuela's illegal mines

Page 23



Ooredoo presents achievements during general meeting

Page 23

TAX HIKE, STAGNANT WAGES SPARK PROTESTS IN BEIRUT

Page 25



RAWANG: A motorcyclist rides under the floating umbrella decorations at commercial business park in Rawang outside Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. —AP

INDIA HUNTS HIDDEN CASH IN CORRUPTION BLITZ

HUNDREDS OF SUSPICIOUS BANK ACCOUNTS UNDER INVESTIGATION

NEW DELHI: Mansions owned by maids, gardeners and drivers until now have aroused little suspicion in India, where the wealthy have long hidden fortunes in the names of lowly-paid staff to avoid paying tax. But as the government broadens its crackdown on corruption, a new law promises to end the widespread practice and hundreds of suspicious bank accounts are under investigation.

"There's been an overnight change in the system," real estate lawyer Naresh Gupta told AFP, describing the new rules as "very draconian". "Investigators can question anyone and ask any government department for information about suspects." The law banning so-called "benami" transactions, making it illegal for assets to be hidden in another's name, came into effect in November as part of a twin strike by the government to flush out undeclared "black money" hoarded by tax evaders.

It followed a shock decision by Prime Minister Narendra Modi to withdraw high-value bank notes from circulation, compelling millions to join the formal banking sector for the first time. Previously, around 90 percent of everyday transactions in India were in cash. Holding real estate in someone else's name has been a particularly popular avenue for those seeking to legitimize black money and dodge their tax dues.

Those caught out could have their wealth seized, face a seven-year jail term and pay hefty fines equivalent to 25 percent of the asset's value. Government officials say 235 suspicious accounts were under investigation for alleged benami activity in mid February, with more than half frozen and properties seized. But Modi, who was elected in 2014 on a pledge to wipe out corruption and kickstart the economy, has promised more scalps as the dragnet widens. "It has some very tough provisions. Those holding such property should start consulting their (accountants)," he said in a February speech.

'They will go after everything'

The law was in step with November's controversial "demonetization", which forced Indians to turn in their old, devalued banknotes in exchange for new ones. Those declaring suspiciously-large sums were red flagged for audit by the tax department, which often uncovered complex and implausible webs of benami holdings. In one case, the department said 33 million rupees (\$500,000) were hidden in the name of a woman who wasn't even aware the account existed.

In another instance, \$9 million was spread across 20 fictitious accounts. A network of jewellers, mean-

while, was busted spiriting black money into shell companies ostensibly owned by a day labourer, local media reported. "Even within families, people want to hide their assets from others so will purchase it in someone else's name," said Abhishek Goenka from tax and audit firm PwC India.

One businessman bought a sprawling mansion in a swish Delhi postcode and registered the deed under a company whose CEO also happened to be his maid. A young couple meanwhile purchased a \$1.2 million house under someone else's name to avoid explaining how two civil servants could afford such a place, a person close to the transactions told AFP.

"By registering the property in someone else's name, unaccounted income gets accounted for," said Goenka. "If at a later date it's then sold on to a benami buyer, the cycle perpetuates." There is no hard data on what percentage of transactions in India are benami and could fall foul of this law. But experts agree the practice is rife and long overdue for scrutiny. "After the note ban, this was the natural next step," said Uday Ved, a Mumbai-based tax advisor and former KMPG head of tax, in reference to the Modi government's anti-benami blitz. "Now the law is in effect they will go after cash, real estate, gold, everything." —AFP



NEW DELHI: In this photograph taken on January 12, 2017, Indian lawyer Naresh Gupta walks from a recently constructed building. —AFP

SCOTS WEIGH UNCERTAINTY OF INDEPENDENT FUTURE

ABERDEEN: The prospects for Scotland's economy after Brexit are at the heart of the battle between its pro-independence first minister and British Prime Minister Theresa May, who wants Britain to stay united as it leaves the EU. Nicola Sturgeon has warned that leaving the bloc's single market will cause tens of thousands of job losses in Scotland, while May has said she will aim for the "best possible deal" with Brussels for Scotland too.

Going it alone raises a host of doubts about Scotland's economy including what currency it would use and how it could reduce a budget deficit of 9.0 percent of gross domestic product worse than crisis-hit Greece. But the future of the North Sea oil sector-centered on the city of Aberdeen, where Sturgeon's Scottish National Party held its conference this weekend-is the key concern. World oil prices have declined in recent years and the offshore stocks are depleting. Deirdre Michie, head of Oil & Gas UK, the leading association for the North Sea industry, told AFP the sector was going through "quite a sustained downturn". The oil industry employs around 330,000 people across the UK, including around 38 percent based in Scotland-many of them in Aberdeen.

'Continued uncertainty'

Aberdeen's business community is wary about another constitutional confrontation just

three years after the last independence referendum in which Scotland voted to remain a part of Britain by 55 percent. Sturgeon's announcement last week of her plans for a referendum generates "continued uncertainty and it's just a matter of fact that business doesn't like uncertainty," said James Bream, research and policy director at Aberdeen & Grampian Chamber of Commerce.

But Bream said he was not surprised by the announcement since "the argument about independence has never gone away" despite the result of the 2014 plebiscite. The unionist campaign in that vote was heavily focused on the economic benefits of being a part of the United Kingdom.

The argument emphasized the "broad shoulders" of the union, which can cushion Scotland from shocks such as a financial crisis or oil price crash, as well as raising doubts about Scotland's ability to manage on its own. As Scots face up to the prospect of a new referendum-the arguments on both sides are being rehearsed.

Sturgeon has said she wants to prevent Scotland, which voted strongly to remain in the European Union in last year's Brexit vote, being "dragged out" against its will. She is widely expected to get the Scottish parliament's support for her quest in a vote on Wednesday but still needs the agreement of the British govern-

ment to proceed. Alex Kemp, head of the Aberdeen Centre for Research in Energy Economics and Finance, said Scotland "comes out quite well" in economic comparisons to European Union countries, particularly to poorer Eastern Europe.

Budget deficit 'for sure'

Scotland's gross domestic product per capita of \$41,239 (38,360 euros) is roughly equivalent to that of Belgium or Finland, and higher than the British average, according to data reported on the Scottish government's website earlier this month. The comparison members of the world's leading economies group, the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, took into account "a geographic share of offshore oil and gas output" for Scotland.

But the data is from 2014 statistics and in many ways Scotland is now in a worse position. The oil price fall has blasted a hole in its public finances, creating a major deficit. "As things stand at the moment, the Scottish economy would have a budgetary deficit for sure," Kemp said. "We have modeled the oil tax revenues, and for some years ahead they are really quite modest and the only thing that would change that would be a major, and really quite unexpected, increase in the oil price." —AFP



ABERDEEN: Scottish National Party (SNP) leader, and Scotland's First Minister, Nicola Sturgeon makes her closing speech during the Scottish National Party (SNP) Spring Conference. —AFP

THE FED DELIVERS A DOVISH HIKE

WEEKLY MONEY MARKET REPORT



In a highly anticipated move, the FOMC raised interest rates last week pushing fed rates to a range of 0.75 to 1%.

On the economic front, global activity gained momentum as the accelerating inflation in other blocks such as the Euro zone has increased the probabilities of higher rates globally.

The Euro had a more positive week despite the rising interest rates differential compared to the USD. After depreciating to a low of 1.0597, the currency reversed it losses on the back of the Netherlands elections results.

The Japanese Yen opened on Monday at 114.87 and traded in a narrow range until Thursday's Bank of Japan meeting. Although Governor Kuroda said that an uptick in inflation towards 1% will not immediately trigger an interest rate hike, markets interpreted the news as the BoJ backing away from the extreme monetary policy.

On the commodities front, having witnessed increasing prices throughout the past six months despite the global bleak demand compared to the increasing supply, oil prices were under heavy pressure at the start of last week on concerns those supplies have outweighed demand.

The Fed delivered a dovish hike and after US crude oil inventories fell to a 10-week low, crude prices changed momentum and closed the week at \$48.78.

Mixed US data continues to support Fed hikes

Wholesale inflation continues on the rise increasing by 0.3% in February on the back of rising services costs. On a yearly basis, producer price index jumped 2.2%, the strongest reading since March 2012.

The latest data continue to point to higher inflationary pressure not just due to higher energy prices but also in a sign of a stronger economy. On a different front, US consumers decreased their spending in the month of February and recorded their smallest gain in six months.

EUROPE & UK

The Euro zone final estimates of annual CPI came in at 2% in February, up from 1.8% in January. This compared to last year's figures at -0.1%.

Germany's economic outlook in the month of March slightly improved, however missed market expectations. In details, the ZEW Indicator of Economic Sentiment rose by 2.4 points to 12.8 in March well below the long term average of 23.9 and the expected level of 13.0.

Political uncertainty clouding Germany's outlook

As the UK develops its plan to leave the European Union, the unemployment rate fell by 0.1% to 4.7% in February, marking the lowest level since 1975 and employment remained steady at a record of 74.6%.

The UK starts to feel the "Brexit" effects

As the UK develops its plan to leave the European Union, the unemployment rate fell by 0.1% to 4.7% in February, marking the lowest level since 1975 and employment remained steady at a record of 74.6%.

On the monetary policy front, the Bank of England kept its interest rate at a record low of 0.25% by an 8-1 vote and made no changes to its asset purchases as the committee debates on how to tackle rising inflation.

ASIA

Chinese Data sending mixed signals

China's industrial production grew more than anticipated at 6.3% in February compared to last year's 6% boosted by stronger data from imports, credit, coal production, construction equipment, property sales and from last year's fiscal and monetary stimulus policies.

A weaker report showed on the other hand retail sales falling dramatically over the year to 9.5% in January and February, the lowest figures recorded since May 2003 due to the increase in taxes on small engine cars.

BoJ remains in negative territory

Bank of Japan monetary policy remained in an expansionary mode with the board voting 7-2 to keep its target purchases for the 10-year Japanese government bond to keep yields at around the zero bound.

During their press conference, Prime Minister Abe stated "I don't see the need to raise our yield target just because a central bank of another country raises rates ... Currency rates move on various factors, not just on interest rate differentials."

New Zealand GDP misses estimates

New Zealand GDP expanded by 0.4% in the final three months of 2016 against estimates of 0.7% and down from 0.8% in Q3 2016. The figures were the weakest quarterly expansion since June quarter of 2015.

GCC BENCHMARK INTEREST RATE RISES

The Federal Reserve (Fed) raised the fed funds rate for the second time in three months and for the first time in 2017, by 25bps on 15-March to a range of 0.75%-1.00%, from a range of 0.50% - 0.75%.

Focus shifts back to oil price

The USD cooled off post the FOMC Meet on 15 March 2017 following the dovish stance from the Fed. Nevertheless, KAMCO Research expects fresh long positions in the USD to build up again, in anticipation of more policy action and a more hawkish stance at the FOMC meet in June-2017.

Kuwait 5-Yr CDS drops 47% post bond sale

Oman (USD 5 Bn) and Kuwait (USD 8 Bn) issued their bonds in 2017 on better terms prior to the rate hike. GCC sovereigns are likely to further tap into the international market sooner than later in order to take advantage of lower borrowing costs.

Oil price environment becomes relevant

GCC interbank rates rose broadly following the rate hike by the Fed and respective central banks. Nevertheless, a host of measures adopted by SAMA have reined in interbank rates in Saudi Arabia from Q4-2016, as SAIBOR tightened until March-2017.

Forecasts for US broadly unchanged

The Fed broadly retained its economic projections over 2016-19 and for the longer run, reaffirming their optimism of forecasts for real GDP, employment and personal consumption expenditures (PCE) inflation.

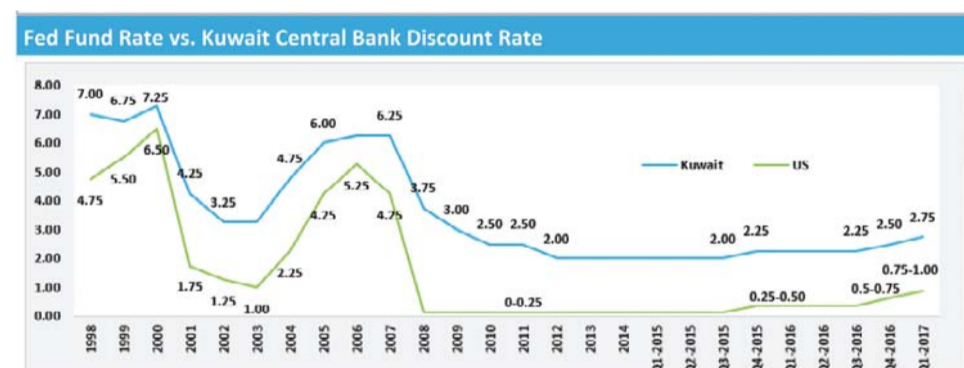
Post 2017, the Fed kept expectations of benchmark rates in the US reaching above 3%, unchanged to an upper end of the range of 3.4% by as early as 2018, as was the case for expectations of longer term rates post 2019, which remained at 3.8% on the higher end.

KAMCO REPORT

interbank rates also rose for Saudi Arabia, UAE, Kuwait and Qatar.

The USD cooled off post the FOMC Meet on 15 March 2017 following the dovish stance from the Fed. Nevertheless, KAMCO Research expects fresh long positions in the USD to build up again, in anticipation of more policy action and a more hawkish stance at the FOMC meet in June-2017.

Oman (USD 5 Bn) and Kuwait (USD 8 Bn) issued their bonds in 2017 on better terms prior to the rate hike. GCC sovereigns are likely to further tap into the international market sooner than later in order to take advantage of lower borrowing costs.



Data indicates end-of-period target rates/ranges. Source: US Federal Reserve, Central Bank of Kuwait

and USD 4.5 Bn 10-year sold at a yield of 2.8% and 3.6% respectively, even as the issue witnessed an equally strong USD 29 Bn of bids reportedly. Given the backdrop of slowing credit growth prevalent in the GCC, with likely more tightening on the cards, we expect the development of oil price and oil revenue receipts in the near term to become more relevant for GCC countries until diversification measures take effect.

Forecasts for US broadly unchanged

The Fed broadly retained its economic projections over 2016-19 and for the longer run, reaffirming their optimism of forecasts for real GDP, employment and personal consumption expenditures (PCE) inflation.

EXCHANGE RATES

AL-MUZAINI EXCHANGE CO.

Table with columns for Asian Countries (Japanese Yen, Indian Rupees, etc.), GCC Countries (Saudi Riyal, Qatari Riyal, etc.), Arab Countries (Egyptian Pound, etc.), and European & American Countries (US Dollar, Euro, etc.).

Table with columns for Dollarco Exchange Co. Ltd. including Gold prices (20 Gram, 10 Gram, 5 Gram) and Rate for Transfr (US Dollar, Canadian Dolla, etc.).

Table with columns for Bahrain Exchange Company WLL including Currency (British Pound, Czech Korune, etc.) and Buy/Sell rates for various currencies.

Table with columns for various international currencies including Indonesian Rupiah, Japanese Yen, Kenyan Shilling, etc.



Board members attend general assembly meeting



Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdulla Al Thani



Sheikh Saud bin Nasser Al Thani

OOREDOO PRESENTS ACHIEVEMENTS DURING GENERAL MEETING

KUWAIT: Ooredoo Kuwait, a member of the international Ooredoo Group, has presented its achievements and financial results for 2016 during its annual general meeting and extraordinary general meeting, which were held at the company's headquarters in Kuwait City yesterday. The meeting was attended by the company's Chairman, Sheikh Saud bin Nasser Al Thani, board members and General Manager and CEO, Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdulla Al Thani and witnessed an attendance of 93.33% of the shareholders. The Chairman of the Board of Directors declared that the Board agreed to distribute cash dividends to the Company Shareholders valued 85% of the nominal value of share, which is equivalent to 85 Fils.

In a statement made to the press, the Chairman of the board Sheikh Saud bin Nasser Al Thani reiterated that success of Ooredoo in the past year, noting that the company fared well despite challenge in the market. He said: "During the year 2016, Ooredoo consolidated its leading position across key markets, with customer base increasing 6% to reach more than 25 million. Ooredoo maintained a stable EBITDA of KWD 240 million for the year ended 2016. In a highly competitive market, Ooredoo Kuwait cemented its position as a leading ICT company with the acquisition of FASTtelco, a Kuwait based ISP, through which it can expand its offer of advanced fixed broadband and mobile services." He added: "Ooredoo Kuwait delivered a 5% increase in Revenues and maintained a healthy EBITDA of KWD 51 million. A significant development for the year, Ooredoo Kuwait deployed more LTE sites and by the end of 2016 it had successfully covered the entire populated area of Kuwait."

Successful marketing strategies

Meanwhile, Ooredoo's CEO and General Manager expressed his pride in the company's performance in the past year, saying: "We acquired FASTtelco in 2016, an internet service provider with a comprehensive portfolio of offerings to the market in different segments. We have also launched a data center offering a variety of cloud-based services for customers. This aims to be a one-stop shop for customers from all sectors."

In Algeria, the 6% growth in customer base was supported by successful marketing strategies, network upgrades and deployments. With the launch of 4G and continued expansion of the 3G network, Ooredoo Algeria covered a vast majority of the population by the end of the year. Due to continued currency depreciation and challenges associated with the slowdown of tourism, Ooredoo Tunisia saw a slight decrease in Revenue.

Despite these challenges, Ooredoo maintained its market leadership and grew its customer base by 6% to 8 million at the end of 2016. In local currency terms Revenue actually increased by 4% year on year. Ooredoo Maldives increased Revenues by 33% to reach KWD 32 million and showed significant growth in profitability, EBITDA increased 56% to KWD 17 million in 2016. Ooredoo Maldives is well positioned to continue delivering growth as it is preparing for the public listing in 2017 on the local stock exchange. Wataniya Palestine also strengthened its market position, growing customer numbers by 10% number serving now more than three quarters of a million customers. Wataniya Palestine maintained profitability and delivered Revenues of KWD 25 million for the year ended 2016.



THE FEDERAL RESERVE REASSURES INVESTORS

By Hayder Tawfik

At last the Federal Reserve decided to make its long-awaited move and raised its benchmark lending rate by 0.25%. Its chairwoman Janet Yellen offered investors some assurance that the Federal Reserve move is going to be gradual and well measured as not to tilt the fine balance that has been pursuing for a quite a while.

The Federal Reserve understands the new US President would like to see US economic growth doubles in the next few years. To achieve this, the Federal Reserve has a big and difficult job on its hand. That is why Janet Yellen offered its assurance to investors, that its latest interest rate increase wasn't a paradigm shift to a trigger-happy policy driven by fears of faster inflation. She also said that the Federal Reserve is willing to tolerate inflation temporarily overshooting its 2 percent goal and that it intended to keep its policy accommodative for some time.

In their first forecasts in three months, Fed policy makers penciled in two more quarter-point rate increases this year and three in 2018, unchanged from their projections in December. Investors have been speculating for a while that the Federal Reserve will mount an aggressive tightening policy to counter any risk of higher inflation. The expectations were further fueled by news of rising inflation.

Stocks rose and bond yields fell as investors viewed the statement from the Federal Open Market Committee and Yellen's remarks afterward as a sign that the Fed isn't in a hurry to remove monetary stimulus. The US economy has mostly met the central bank's goals of full employment and stable prices, and may get further support if President Donald Trump delivers promised fiscal stimulus. A US economy that is growing and with the Federal Reserve continue having an accommodative monetary policy can only be good for equity investors. Investor and business confidence has soared since Trump won the presidency in November, buoyed by his vows to cut taxes, lift infrastructure spending and ease regulations.

Forecast inflation

The potential risk for the Federal Reserve is in waiting for more concrete policy plans to emerge from the Trump administration before adapting monetary policy in reaction. There is great uncertainty about the timing, the size and the character of policy changes that may be put in place, Yellen said. If in the coming months inflation behaves the way, the Federal Reserve wishes to see then the waiting is worthwhile. However, the risk could shift to investors sentiment and that might take a negative view of the market.

Policy makers forecast inflation will reach 1.9 percent in the fourth quarter this year, and 2 percent in both 2018 and 2019, per quarterly median estimates released with the Federal Open Market Committee statement. The Fed's preferred measure of inflation rose 1.9 percent in the 12 months through January, just shy of its target. Core inflation is the one that Janet Yellen is monitoring closely. Core inflation continues to run somewhat further below 2 percent. That rate, which strips out food and energy costs, stood at 1.7 percent in January. The Fed's new forecast for the core rate at the end of this year edged up to 1.9 percent, from 1.8 percent in December.

In the short term, a gradual increase in the Federal Reserve's official rates could mean losses for bond investors or at least a cap on higher bond prices, as higher rates drive bond prices down. This has happened over the past couple of weeks as markets have adjusted. However, over the coming months, higher rates allow reinvestment to generate better returns, so the impact may be minimal. My advice for bond investors is to have a diversified bond portfolio with shorter maturity duration. Higher rates could mean that bond investors are finally could see higher returns in the long term.

Investors should remember that, higher rates are, in fact, a positive sign for both the economy and the stock market. Of course, there is going to be some volatility and possible turbulence ahead, but the good fundamentals remain positive, and the Fed's decision to raise rates only ratifies that fact.

As for the stock market, higher rates should mean lower stock prices at least in theory and that does happen eventually. Early in a rate increase cycle, however, higher rates are good for the stock market. This is because rising rates, early on, signal an improving economy, and the faster growth more than compensates for the higher rates. Equity investors should feel positive that gradual increase in the Federal Reserve rates will not weaken economic growth and can only be positive for the stock market.



INSIDE THE DEADLY WORLD OF VENEZUELA'S ILLEGAL MINES

EL CALLAO: Barefoot and shirtless in the cavernous belly of an illegal gold mine, Ender doesn't flinch when a piece of rock falls through the darkness and breaks the silence. Working in the dangerous and violent underworld of illegal mining in eastern Venezuela, the skinny teenager is used to taking his life in his hands every day.

The narrow mine shaft is filled with puddled water and the smell of gases, and the handmade wood supports staving off a collapse look precarious at best. But Ender Moreno is unfazed. At 18 years old, he has already been doing this job for eight years. "I'm not afraid," he said as he climbed through the pitch black, his headlamp lighting the way through the hazardous maze 30 meters (100 feet) underground. "I'll probably do this till I die."

The inside of the mine is no scarier than the outside. There is a bloody mafia war raging for control of the unlicensed, artisanal gold mines in the Venezuelan state of Bolivar. Miners regularly turn up dead, their bodies mutilated or riddled with bullets. Shootouts with assault rifles are common currency in the region. Two weeks ago, three young men Ender knew were killed in his neighborhood of El Callao.

The day before, he had been dancing with them at the annual carnival celebrations in the city, the cradle of a gold rush that started in 1870 and has recently intensified. "They were miners, but they started running around with gangsters," he said. Ten months ago, his boss at the mine was killed. The miners say it is because he refused to let mobsters take over the business. Two months before that, 28 workers were massacred at a nearby mine, in what authorities called a turf war between rival gangs.



EL CALLAO: Ender Moreno looks for gold at La Culebra gold mine in El Callao, Bolivar state, southeastern Venezuela. — AFP

Gold fever

The head of the Venezuelan Mining Chamber, Luis Rojas, estimates that 90 percent of the gold produced in the South American nation comes from illegal mines. In a country where a crushing economic crisis has fueled an epidemic of violent crime, such mines are "primarily in mafia hands," he said. At the nearby Nacupay gold mine, workers dig the earth from the bed of a contaminated river as others pour mercury into pans of extracted sediment. The open-pit mine is known as one of the most violent and polluting in the region. Few people are willing to talk openly about the "vaccines," or extortion money, that miners and shopkeepers have to pay their mafia overlords in this lawless area.

"It's like a parallel government," said one miner, who asked AFP not to use his

name for fear of reprisals. "This place belongs to one group. The others have to keep their hands off it. Each group has its territory," said miner Argemis Tarazona. "Whoever breaks the rules, whoever robs, they kill him or beat him up," added Tarazona, 47.

He left his five children three years ago to try his luck as a gold miner, after finding he could no longer support them on his salary as an industrial mechanic. Tens of thousands of Venezuelans from across the country have flocked to this region as President Nicolas Maduro's socialist government has struggled with a three-year recession, spiraling inflation and food shortages. Workers are bused in to the mines every morning, their pickaxes and shovels slung over their shoulders and their pans perched on their heads like hats.

Others sleep on site in malaria-ridden camps built with sheets of black plastic. They make somewhere between 260,000 and one million bolivars a month (\$95 to \$360 at the black-market exchange rate), they say—far higher than minimum wage.

"I've got no other choice. I was working as a porter, but I couldn't support my three kids," said Gilberto Urrieta, 32, who arrived four months ago. "Now I send them 150,000 bolivars a month." After riding a worn green rope back to the surface, Ender contemplated his future during a short break. "My mom says this is no kind of life. But I can't stop because I need the money to help her," the teenage miner said. "I'm young and I want to enjoy life. But when your time is up, it's up. Everyone has to die sometime." — AFP

JAPAN PM LEAVES FOR EU FOR SECURITY, TRADE TALKS

TOKYO: Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe headed yesterday for a four-day trip to Europe, hoping to discuss security issues and make progress on trade as regional tensions soar over accelerating North Korean threats. Abe's trip, which will take him to Germany, France, Belgium and Italy, comes a few days after US Secretary of State Rex Tillerson visited Tokyo for talks on North Korean nuclear and missile threats.

The top US diplomat also travelled to Seoul and Beijing after Tokyo. Japan has been on edge over North Korean launches since a mid-range ballistic missile flew without warning over the northern part of the country and into the western Pacific in 1998. The pace of the North's missile development has intensified and its projectiles have since last year been landing ever closer to Japan's coast, with

three of the four missiles launched earlier this month falling in the Sea of Japan (East Sea) off Akita prefecture.

"I want to exchange opinions openly with G7 leaders," Abe told reporters at a Tokyo airport before his departure. "We hope to closely cooperate with the EU on issues the international community is facing such as the problems on North Korea and free trade," he said. Abe's itinerary includes a visit to technology show CeBIT in Hanover followed by a summit with German Chancellor Angela Merkel and a meeting with French President Francois Hollande in Paris.

Abe will hold talks with European Commission head Jean-Claude Juncker and freshly re-elected European Union President Donald Tusk in Brussels as the EU aims to close a free trade deal with Tokyo this year. The Japanese premier will return

to Tokyo on Wednesday after meeting with Italian Prime Minister Paolo

Gentiloni, chair of this year's Group of Seven industrialized countries. — AFP



HANOVER: People stand at the stand of Japan in one of the exhibition halls of the upcoming IT trade fair CeBIT in Hanover, Germany, Sunday, March 19, 2017. Japan is this year's partner country. The five-day event will have over 3000 exhibitors from 70 countries. — AP

BEIJING SHUTS LAST COAL POWER PLANT IN SWITCH TO NATURAL GAS

BEIJING: The last large coal-fired power plant in Beijing has suspended operations, with the city's electricity now generated by natural gas, the state news agency reported as smog enveloped the Chinese capital this weekend. The shuttering of the Huangneng Beijing Thermal Power Plant comes on the heels of China's annual legislative sessions, where Premier Li Keqiang promised to "make our skies blue again" in his state-of-the-nation speech.

According to Xinhua, Beijing has become the country's first city to have all its power plants fuelled by natural gas, an objective laid out in 2013 in the capital's five-year clean air action plan. The Huangneng plant is the fourth to be closed and replaced by gas thermal power centers between 2013 and 2017, cutting nearly 10 million tons in coal emissions annually. Xinhua reported the move the night before municipal authorities issued a blue alert for heavy air pollution yesterday. Smog has cloaked the capital for several days and is expected to continue through the week.

Since last Wednesday's closing of the National People's Congress, the annual meeting of China's rubber-stamp parliament, PM2.5 (harmful particulate) levels

have remained between 200 and 330 micrograms per cubic meter—well above the World Health Organization's recommended maximum average exposure of 25 micrograms per cubic meter in a 24-hour period.

The pollution often vanishes during prominent events like the legislative sessions and the 2008 Summer Olympics as authorities order factories to halt activity and force cars off the road. During the 2014 gathering of the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation in Beijing, this clear air phenomenon was dubbed "APEC blue." During the one-week-and-a-half period of the NPC, average PM2.5 levels hovered between 50 and 80, despite exceeding 200 micrograms per cubic meter just one day before the opening of the parliamentary sessions on March 5.

In response to a reporter's question about this disparity at his annual press conference last Wednesday, Li repeated his pledge to target coal-burning and vehicle emissions. "We may not be able to control the weather, but we can adjust our behavior and our way of development," he said. "Blue skies should no longer be a luxury, nor will they be." —AFP



WROTHAM: Workers plant salad crops in a field in Wrotham, south east England. —AFP

IN PRO-BREXIT KENT, FARMERS COUNTING ON EU WORKFORCE

RESENTMENT ABOUT THE SCALE OF IMMIGRATION LINGERS

MAIDSTONE: The accusation that immigration drives down wages is one that irritates Gabriela Szomoru, a 31-year-old Romanian who has worked her way up to an office job at a farm in southeast England. Szomoru came to Britain 10 years ago and started out picking strawberries before being promoted to her current job at a 600-hectare salad farm just outside Maidstone, the main town in the county of Kent.

"Driving wages down? No, we don't offer less than the minimum wage. If the government decides this is the pay rate, we just follow," Szomoru said. "It's a very hard job. You start at five o'clock in the morning, up to 10 hours every day, six days a week." Szomoru is married to a tractor driver from Hungary. The two see their future in Britain and are planning to buy a house in the area, even as the government prepares to implement last year's Brexit vote.

Resentment about the scale of immigration helped determine the result in Kent, known as the "Garden of England", where many of the seasonal workers in the sprawling orchards and fields come from eastern Europe. At the farm where Szomoru works, all 150 seasonal workers and 15 of the 30 permanent employees are non-British for a total proportion of 92 percent.

'Drives wages down'

In Kent, about 59 percent voted for Britain to leave the European Union—higher than the national figure of

52 percent. The anger of local residents, who have been particularly concerned about arrivals of undocumented immigrants who have crossed the Channel from France, is still palpable nine months after the referendum. "I don't like people jumping on lorries and coming over here working illegally. That needs to be sorted out. It drives wages down," said Valerie Fuller, 80, a retired teacher.

In a country where 4.7 percent unemployment rate is the envy of its European neighbors, the argument that immigration weighs on wages was widely used by pro-Brexit campaigners. The theory, however, often does not stand up to scrutiny. "The short answer is no. It doesn't have any effect on wages at all," said Jonathan Wadsworth, a senior research fellow at the London School of Economics.

He said it could have a "very, very small" effect on low-skilled jobs, amounting to a decline of just one percentage point or less. "The big falls in wages after 2008 are due to the global financial crisis and a weak economic recovery, not to immigration," Wadsworth said.

Britons 'too lazy'

Local farmers in Kent say they rely heavily on foreign workers because they cannot find enough Britons willing to do the required jobs. But Eddie Powell, a business owner in Kent and a local representative for the anti-establishment UK Independence Party (UKIP), said

British people were "fed up being branded as lazy." "It's unfair to those people who sometimes put in 60 or 70 job applications and don't even hear back from the employer," he said. "Some jobs are only advertised in the countries where the (migrant) workers are coming from," he said. James Bish, an 18-year-old Briton working at the Costa coffee chain, disagreed, saying that his compatriots were "too lazy".

"Migrants are coming to do the jobs the British people don't want to do," he said. "It is quite easy to get a job as long as you're determined enough and you're looking in the right places," he said. "The immigrants I do know are some of the hardest working people I know." Nick Ottewill, the director of the farm where Szomoru works, said he had received insults for making comments about the need for immigrants in the local press.

Ottewill said sectors like farming, healthcare and construction "wouldn't function" without them. At his farm, seasonal workers get the minimum wage of £7.50 an hour (8.60 euros, \$9.15) and can live in caravans with showers and kitchenettes that rent for £42 a week, including water and electricity. Ottewill, whose farm produces 9,000 tons of salad a year, said he once took part in a government scheme to hire 10 people from the local unemployment office. "I ended up with one person turning up on the farm, and he ended up causing me problems," he said. —AFP



SEOUL: In this March 16, 2017 photo, a visitor walks by signs displaying foreign currency exchange rates between South Korea and China, center and other Asia countries. —AP

MONEY TRANSFER FIRM MAY TAKE ON ORANGE MOBILES IN AFRICA

DAKAR: When Senegalese money transfer firm Wari agreed to buy the local mobile arm of Luxembourg-based Millicom International Cellular last month, it set the stage to challenge Orange's hold on mobile phones in French-speaking West Africa. Wari plans to list on the West Africa stock exchange (the BRVM) in Ivory Coast this year, after the \$129 million deal to buy mobile operator Tigo from Millicom is done, its CEO told Reuters in an interview.

Wari is Senegal's top money transfer service, a low-cost alternative to Western Union that allows customers to transfer cash and pay bills at gas stations, banks and even roadside stands. The deal will give Wari the capability to transfer money on mobile phones, a rapidly-expanding service that is dominated in the region by French company Orange. Orange has nearly 8 million mobile users in Senegal, twice as many as runner-up Tigo.

While the deal will only give Wari a telecoms license in Senegal, it could use it as a starting point for a push for greater competition in other French-speaking countries in West Africa such as Mali, Guinea and Ivory Coast. "For the last mile, we needed to be able to connect the population. This is where the idea came from of looking for a telecom vehicle, and we found (it) ... with Tigo," Wari Chief Executive Kabirou Mbodje said. He brushed off a question about Orange.

"At the end of the day what's important is do we offer the best services to the population, do we meet their needs, do we design the service to be the most cost-effective. These are the kind of things we're thinking about, not competition, and then the public will decide," he said. An Orange spokesman declined to comment about competition in West Africa.

Mobile money is a sector with deep potential: millions of people in West Africa lack bank accounts and use cash transfers or mobile money for everything from utility bills to receiving pension payments and receiving remittances from families abroad. The number of mobile money transaction points in West Africa grew twice as fast in 2015 as in any other region in the world. Mbodje estimated the company will be worth "a couple of billion dollars" when listed, a process he said he has started. An official at the BRVM told Reuters it had not yet received an application. The Tigo deal, announced last month, must still be approved by Senegalese authorities.

Changing market

Mbodje has a relevant background for trying to capture some market share from Orange. He studied telecommunications in France and then launched several digital start-ups before creating Wari in Senegal in 2008. Wari has grown rapidly and now operates in 62 countries

including 40 in Africa, with a particularly strong presence in Senegal and its West African neighbours.

Orange, formerly France's national network France Telecom, has dominated telecoms in Senegal and other former French colonies in Africa for years. It is still expected to stay the market leader for home internet and fixed line phones which Tigo does not offer. But experts say it could lose ground in mobile phones. "Orange should be worried," said West Africa IDC analyst

Oluwole Babatope. "The market is changing. You need to be very strategic and understand the terrain." Orange's mobile market share fell from 56 to 52 percent in 2016, according to the Senegalese telecoms regulator, while Tigo's grew from 22 to 26 percent. A third player, West African company Expresso, a subsidiary of Sudan's Sudatel, also gained ground. A deputy Orange CEO told Reuters last month that revenue growth had halved last year across the Middle East and Africa and he expects slow growth this year. Nevertheless, the company is still growing in Africa. Orange completed its rebranding of Bharti Airtel's mobile business in Burkina Faso last week after buying it last year. It also completed an acquisition of Tigo in the Democratic Republic of Congo last year.

'Wari me money'

Orange highlights Orange Money, the rival to Tigo Cash, as a new business driver. It was almost 30 percent of turnover growth for its West African partner firm Sonatel in 2016, Sonatel's latest report says "it is not thinking about a telco in terms of voice and data. They see mobile money as where the growth is," said Moussa Dabo, a Dakar-based investment officer at AFIG Funds. He said Orange's hold on the market will be hard to beat because it has better infrastructure even though Tigo will likely be strengthened by the acquisition.

Adding to its challenges, Orange Money had to suspend transfers between France and three West African countries in February, when West Africa's central bank said it was not authorised to transfer money outside the currency zone, the bank said this week. Mbodje said the Wari brand will be Tigo's main strength. "Wari me money" is a common phrase in Senegal, where many professionals send money back home to poorer rural relatives.

Boubacar Ndiaye, a 45-year-old taxi driver in Dakar, said he uses both Orange Money and Wari for money transfers in the capital, but Wari is the only one present in his home village. "Orange is the good network," he said. But when he learned that Tigo was Senegalese-owned, he said he would buy a sim card and use both. "A man has to be proud of his country," he said. —Reuters



BEIRUT: A Lebanese woman raises her fist as she shouts slogans during a protest in downtown Beirut against the Lebanese Parliament's newly approved taxes. —AFP

SAFAT HOME LAUNCHES BIGGEST SANITARY AND TILES CAMPAIGN

KUWAIT: Safat Home, Kuwait's leading home furnishing retailer, launched the biggest Sanitary and Tiles campaign in an event held today at its showroom in Shuwaikh and attended by special guests and local press, announcing valuable offers and a fully accommodated trip for two to Rome to be won during the duration of the campaign. Customers have until March 31st to spend at least KD 350 on tiles and/or sanitary to automatically enter a draw to win two tickets to the city of ceramics, Rome, offered in partnership with Alghanim Travels. The winner of the draw will be announced on April 2nd.

Redecorating its showroom in an Italian theme, Safat Home aims to attract visitors to the quality products it offers, including renowned brands such as Kludi, KludiRak and TOTO for sanitary ware and Sintesi Ceramica and Ceramica Portinari for tiles, amongst many international brands. Customers can explore the many options and ranges available at one of the Safat Home showrooms, located in the Shuwaikh area near Yusuf A. Alghanim Service and Maintenance Center.

TAX HIKE, STAGNANT WAGES SPARK PROTESTS IN BEIRUT

BEIRUT: Demonstrators in downtown Beirut pelted Lebanese Prime Minister Saad Hariiri's car with water bottles yesterday as protests against new taxes and a stagnant public wage scale jolted the city. Hariiri got out of his armored convoy behind the police line at the demonstration facing the government's headquarters but could get no closer as protesters began throwing bottles and harriving him with cries of "Thieves!"

With water bottles falling around him and his bodyguards shielding him with their arms, Hariiri told TV cameras: "It's true there is waste and corruption in the country, but we will fight it." He then left the area on foot. Thousands of people came to the city center to protest a broad tax hike they say is unfairly targeting the working class.

Demonstrators said the government has squandered public funds through shady public-private contracts and should plug the budget deficit by addressing corruption instead. Parliament approved some tax hikes on

Wednesday. The government is paralyzed over a budget proposal that would hike over a dozen tax rates to fund a salary increase for teachers and civil servants. Parliament has not authorized a new budget since 2005.

The demonstrations are the latest display of mounting discontent with Lebanon's political elite. The politicians, many of whom led the militias that tore the country apart in the 1975-1990 civil war, are widely seen as corrupt and out of touch. Demonstrators poured into the streets in 2015 to protest a collapse in the country's waste management sector that left trash piling up across the capital district.

Yesterday's demonstration was called by the Communist and Phalangist parties, and joined by civil activists campaigning against corruption. "We are going to topple any unjust government," vowed Naamat Badreddine, an activist with the group We Want Accountability. The parliament has twice extended its own term over disagreements on how to hold elections. —AP



NISSAN AL-BABTAIN LAUNCHES NEW CROSSOVER 'KICKS' IN SHOWROOMS

KUWAIT: Abdulmohsen Abdulaziz AlBabtain Company (AABC), the authorized dealer of Nissan vehicles in the State of Kuwait, has launched the All-New Nissan Kicks compact crossover in its showrooms, its latest addition to the crossover segment.

On this occasion Mohammed Shalaby - Chief Operating Officer for Al-Babtain Group said: "The arrival of the All-New Nissan Kicks to the Kuwaiti market is an added value, as it combine suburban driving environments and combines a robust exterior and elevated driving position with compact dimensions for agile performance and maneuverability. This is in addition to fuel efficiency, thanks to its engine developed capacity of 1.6 liters along with lightweight to combine driving comfort and savings for all groups." The body features an advanced aerodynamic design, which optimizes fuel consumption and minimizes noise. Nissan Kicks is also one of the first models to realize the concept of

Nissan Intelligent Mobility. Nissan Intelligent Mobility uses smart, relevant technology to make the driver's life easier while also making advances towards Nissan's long term goal of zero emission and zero fatality motoring. Nissan Kicks targets young people who are early adopters of such technology and who appreciate and embrace the way it can both simplify urban driving and connect them more easily to what matters. The Intelligent Mobility technology present in Kicks aims to reduce stress for drivers through innovations such as the Around View Monitor (AVM) and the Moving Object Detection system (MOD).

Abundance of tech

Using four cameras, placed at the front and rear of the car and in both door mirrors, AVM creates a bird's eye 360-degree view of the car which can be displayed on the central monitor and used as a parking aid. When

the MOD system detects a moving object - a pedestrian, for example - a warning is sounded to alert the driver to the hazard and prevent a potential accident.

Technology-loving Kicks owners will relish the convenience and simplicity of the suite of systems that are accessible via the centrally mounted 7-inch color touch screen. These functions include navigation, audio, and Bluetooth phone connections. Complementing the touch screen, and ideally located in front of the driver, a further screen in the main cluster of dials relays information from the on-board drive computer, audio system and navigation systems, as well as displaying warnings. Vehicle settings can be easily adjusted using the four-way selector on the steering wheel.

Among a host of comfort and safety technologies included in Kicks, its chassis control, supported by advanced electronic systems known as Active Trace Control, Active

Ride Control and Active Engine Brake, is a truly outstanding feature. Active Trace Control is an innovation that intervenes during driving through corners to ensure the intended trajectory is maintained by discreetly applying brakes to wheels individually. This has the effect of preventing a sudden loss of grip or stability.

Similarly, Active Ride Control, applies the brakes for a split-second after the car has encountered large undulations in the road, to reduce the "bounce" effect on the suspension. This simple, effective solution is lighter and less complex than expensive and heavy adaptive damping systems. To counter the "coasting" effect often associated with automatic and CVT gearboxes, Kicks is equipped with Active Engine Brake. When the accelerator is released, typically approaching a corner, engine braking is applied to stabilize the speed.

In terms of its visual appeal, Kicks fea-

tures established Nissan design signatures such as the V-motion grille which dominates the car's front end. Also present are the boomerang head and taillights, and the "floating" coupe-style roof with a "wrap-around visor" look to the windscreen and side glass. The spacious interior too, is instantly recognizable as a Nissan design thanks to the "gliding wing" shape stretching the width of the dashboard. Underlining the car's crossover stance and inherent strength is its generous ground clearance (200mm), which helps provide a commanding driving position and a high eye point for excellent all round visibility. Nissan Kicks has class-leading fuel efficiency thanks to its advanced 1.6-liter engine and lightweight platform. Power is rated at 88kW (118HP) and torque of 149Nm. For more information about the All-New Nissan Kicks, you can visit the Nissan Al-Babtain showroom in Al Rai and Ahmadi.

AUB GIVES CUSTOMERS CHANCE TO WIN CASH BACK WITH AUB CREDIT CARDS

KUWAIT: Ahli United Bank (AUB) announced today the launch of its new 100%+50% cash-back campaign with a maximum amount 1500 KD to be paid to each winner. The new campaign offers customers the chance to win a range of valuable prizes through monthly draws, allowing 13 winners every month and 39 winners through the 3 months campaign. Three customers could win 100% cash-back of their total credit card spend, and 10 customers could win 50% cash-back of their total spend, during the month.

AUB said in a press release, "We are excited to launch our new campaign, which aims at creating the best value proposition for our cardholders. Anyone using AUB's credit cards is eligible to become a winner in the new campaign. The new campaign reflects our underlying commitment towards rewarding our customers and to delivering innovative initiatives that add value to their overall banking experience."

The Bank added, "To become eligible for the 100% cash-back draw, cus-

tomers are required to spend KD 500 or above during one month. In addition, customers wishing to participate in the 50% draw must spend KD 150 and above in the same time period. Customers spending KD 500 and above in any month during the campaign will be eligible to enter both draws and have chances to win up to KD 1,500." For each draw, customers' chances are calculated based on the statement cycle over the period of one month. For every KD 50 spent on their credit cards, customers will earn one chance in the draw.

Alongside this great new campaign, customers will continue to earn travel rewards through the "Pearl Awards" program, which is offered to AUB's credit card holders. They will receive 3 pearl points against every 1 KD spent in any of the establishments participating in the discounts program around the world. These points can be converted to air miles and used at Kuwait Airways, Qatar Airways or Gulf Air. Customers may also receive free travel and medical insurance during

emergencies anywhere around the world when using their Ahli United Bank credit cards to purchase their airline tickets.

The Pearl Awards program also provides a wide range of valuable instant discounts for the Bank's customers that cover multiple sectors, in line with customer needs. The Pearl Awards Program reflects the Bank's desire to develop and deliver new products and services. The new instant Pearls Award discount program delivers real value for the Bank's credit card and prepaid card holders who will receive discounts and rewards without being tied to a specific limit on purchases from major retailers across Kuwait.

The customers will enjoy unique benefits and discounts. Offering the best deals and rewards, AUB's campaigns continue to be popular with customers. The Bank's credit cards provide convenience and flexibility for customers in their day-to-day transactions at shopping malls, restaurants any time including holidays abroad.

GBK ANNOUNCES ITS THIRD RED ACCOUNT DRAW DATE

KUWAIT: Gulf Bank announced yesterday that the third red(tm) account draw is due to be held on Thursday 30 March 2017! Three new winners will be notified of their prizes and welcomed into Gulf Bank's head office to meet with the Bank's team and receive their gifts personally. Each month, an iPhone 7, an iPad Pro, and an Apple Watch will be gifted to three lucky winners. The draws will run until January 2018 and the next draw dates are as follows:

- April 24, 2017
- May 22, 2017
- June 29, 2017
- July 24, 2017
- August 21, 2017
- September 28, 2017
- October 23, 2017
- November 20, 2017
- January 11, 2018

Gulf Bank's red(tm) is an account for high school students, college and university students aged between 15 and 25. Eligible customers will get the chance to enter the draw automatically and on a monthly basis, upon transferring their student allowances. In addition to the Apple prizes, students will

have the opportunity to win a Fiat 500c-Model 2017 at the annual car draw, upon transferring their allowance! Also, movie tickets at all Cinescape theatres will be available for only KD 2 seven days a week by simply being a red(tm) account holder; not to mention the exclusive shopping offers from the USA and US by

"Edfa3ly," an international internet shopping services company that provides mail boxes for internet shopping from their website: <https://kw.edfa3ly.co/GulfBank>. Gulf Bank invites all young students to take part of the red(tm) draw on 30 March 2017, as they may be the lucky winners.

X-CITE AWARDS 2017 HONDA CIVIC CAR FOR 'CELEBRATE KUWAIT' COMPETITION WINNER

KUWAIT: X-cite by Alghanim Electronics, Kuwait's largest electronic retailer, announced the lucky winner of a 2017 Honda Civic car in its nationwide "Celebrate Kuwait" competition which was launched on their social media platforms to mark the Liberation Day and in an aim to give back to customers and the active online community.

Rewarding its customers and fans regularly and always aiming to exceed customer satisfaction by continuously improving its services and providing value to the customer, X-cite invited its followers to guess the number of balls that were placed inside the Honda Civic car. Over 21,000 followers participated in the competition, with 1,500 followers answering correctly. The correct answer was 1991, the year that marked the Liberation Day. Receiving his 2017 Honda Civic, the winner, Amr Abdoh Mohammad Alabtah, said, "I am so happy to have actually won a car! I never thought I would have with all the participants in this contest."

SYLHET WELCOMES FLYDUBAI

KUWAIT: Dubai-based flydubai's inaugural flight to Sylhet landed yesterday and was greeted by a traditional water cannon salute. Upon arrival, a flydubai delegation led by Sudhir Sreedharan, Senior Vice President Commercial for GCC, Subcontinent and Africa, was met by HE Rashed Khan Menon, Minister of Civil Aviation and Tourism, along with local officials from



the Ministry of Finance, Ministry of Civil Aviation and Tourism, the Civil Aviation Authority and local members of Parliament. A traditional ceremony took place as the delegation disembarked the aircraft.

The flight marks the start of a four times weekly direct service between Dubai and flydubai's third destination in Bangladesh, which will increase to six flights a week from 16 May 2017. The operation to Sylhet Osmani International Airport is in partnership with Bangladesh carrier Regent Airways.

Speaking at a press conference held at the airport, Sudhir Sreedharan said: "We would like to take this opportunity to thank the Bangladeshi authorities for their support. We began operations to Dhaka and Chittagong in 2011 and have seen a strong demand for flights since. We are confident that our passengers from Sylhet will benefit from our direct and convenient flights to Dubai and beyond, via Dubai's efficient aviation hub connecting over 200 destinations worldwide."

"We thank Regent Airways for their cooperation, and we look forward to the start of this partnership," he added. Since it began flights to Bangladesh, flydubai has carried more than 1.5 million passengers between the two countries. The new service will see flydubai provide up to 27 flights a week to Bangladesh. Flights can be booked from flydubai's website (flydubai.com), 45, flydubai Travel Shops or through travel partners. Further information and details of the carrier's car rental and travel insurance services can also be found on flydubai.com.

GREAT OFFER FROM INFINITI AL-BABTAIN 'THE SYMBOL OF CLASS AND ELEGANCE'

KUWAIT: Abdulmohsen Abdulaziz Al-Babtain Company, the authorized dealer of Infiniti vehicles in the state of Kuwait kicked off with its new March campaign for its loyal clients. The amazing offer entails a bundle of gifts including: two-night stay in the Presidential Villa at Hilton Kuwait, 1 year comprehensive insurance, window tinting and body protection, free maintenance up to 5 years or 50,000 Km, 5 years warranty and a 250 KWD voucher.

The Q50 is available in two versions; the first is the 4-cylinder 2.0 liter turbocharged petrol engine producing 208 horsepower, or the second V6 engine utilizing 3.7 liters achieving a net system rating of 326 horsepower. The sports design of the sleek sedan Q50 attracted new generation of young clients who seek the elegance of Infiniti, which combines strong performance with comfortable spaciousness. Infiniti Al-Babtain invites its

clients to benefit from this promotion through visiting its showroom in Al-Rai.

Infiniti's QX60 continues to deliver in spades on the technology front. Forward Emergency Braking (FEB) with Pedestrian Detection. When combined with the already existing industry first features like Predictive Forward Collision Warning, Backup Collision Intervention and Around View Monitor, it makes for one of the safest 7 seat crossovers in its segment from a technology perspective.

Infiniti is considered to be one of the leading, luxurious, elegant and attractive car brands all over the world. Infiniti vehicles are also known for their power and leading technology, which makes them one of the smartest and most developed. All these values are portrayed in the Infiniti showroom by Abdulmohsen Abdulaziz Al-Babtain, which gives our unique VIP customers a very lavish experience.

NOW BUSINESSES CAN SLEEP EASY BY OPTIMIZING OPERATIONS ON THE CLOUD

By Haider Salloum, SMB Director, Microsoft Gulf

Technology has had an undeniably profound effect on the way business in the Gulf region is conducted. Artificial intelligence, machine-learning, 3D-printing, big data, virtualization, mobility and cloud - all have helped shape a bright new landscape.

These technologies have been around for many years, but as they have become more affordable, they have become even more pervasive. Businesses of all sizes, from all industries, at every point in the supply chain, are using such tools to reinvent operational models, products, services and delivery methods. While internal efficiencies and cost-effectiveness have certainly been boons in the era of digital transformation, customer care has arguably been the greatest beneficiary. Enterprises are now able to delve deeper than ever before into what makes their customers tick, devising all-new ways of personalizing experiences.

Perhaps the greatest challenge faced by smaller companies is the delivery of 100% uptime, as this goes hand in glove with transformative customer experiences. A survey conducted by industry analyst firm Tech aisle, among IT and line-of-business decision makers, showed 87% of midmarket managers

believed cloud solutions would help with growth. But researchers also discovered that a massive 94% of SMBs regard backup and disaster recovery to be of key relevance to their business.

The very nature of cloud allows small businesses to add value very quickly. It is easy, for example, for a hometown retailer to leverage the cloud's cost-effectiveness and flexibility, to create apps for e-shopping, to complement their brick-and-mortar operations. Customers benefit from time saved travelling and hunting for parking spots. With the right service, products and price, previous adopters of this kind of setup have seen sales increases of up to 400%. Digital transformation thus enables smaller, nimbler companies to rethink their go-to-market strategies and tweak cost and operational efficiencies to enhance market share, while larger enterprises can use the new framework to predict and tackle disruptive trends.

Growth vs Unexpected Interruptions

However, to make good on these growth promises, firms must consider the all-important elements of business continuity and security. Small and medium-scale enterprises are especially vulnerable to unexpected interruptions, data loss and security threats. For them, a welcome side effect of cloud computing is the automation of backup and security from

their provider. The ability to restore data in case of failure or accident is vital to a small business, whether it is a product pioneer or part of a hyper-competitive, pre-existing market.

Even before the time of cloud, almost every business used IT systems that were mission-critical. An airline's ability to track flights; an insurance company's ability to manage policy applications and claims; and the financial systems relied upon by accountants in all businesses - if any one of these points fails, operations grind to a halt. It is only prudent, therefore, to consider the operational and financial impacts of downtime and plan for a don't-panic contingency. For critical workloads, disaster recovery systems and regular backups act as a kind of insurance policy against the lost business opportunities and mega-dollar costs that can arise in their absence. Disaster Recovery and data backup packages can cost SMB owners as little as a few hundred dollars per month, and ensure they can get back online in minutes if an outage should occur.

The cloud economy: more with less

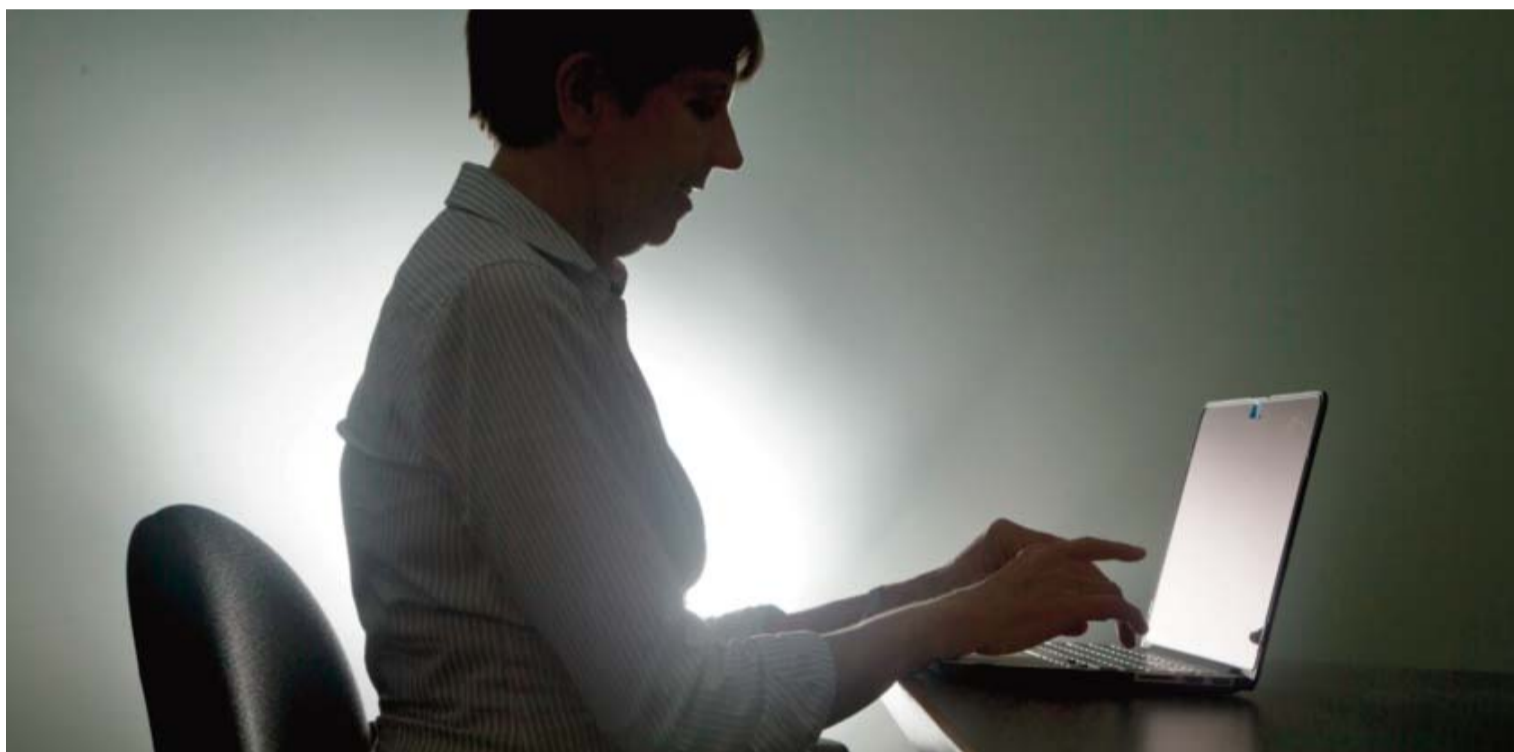
The global decline in oil prices, along with currency fluctuations, and their impact on regional revenues, has led to a renewed focus across the GCC on optimizing operational costs. If serious about competing, no business leader will consid-



er cutting staff, because this will lead to a decline in service. Instead, the focus has been on doing more with less.

The cloud economy is made for this challenge. On-premises infrastructure, such as storage and servers is very expensive to install, configure, operate and maintain. SMBs can hand over all that equipment, and the daily personnel burden associated with it, to trusted cloud providers, which run them in scale-ready data centres. Business costs can drop by 20 to 30%, as clients benefit from providers' economies of scale.

The economies lie in providers' use of virtualization technology. Expensive physical hardware is consolidated into banks of powerful servers running countless virtual machines. SMBs see a marked difference in their IT costs, providing the same systems to employees using less expensive hardware, with a reduction in operational overhead, and with security and business continuity baked in. At the same time, they enjoy enhanced agility and access to the innovative measures delivered by digital transformation. In other words, they can do more with less.



MIAMI: In this, Monday, Dec 12, 2016, photo illustration, a woman types on her laptop. —AP

HOW TO ELUDE RUSSIAN HACKERS WITH DECENT PASSWORD SECURITY

NEW YORK: Details from the Department of Justice indictment of Russian hackers on Wednesday show that many people are still not taking routine precautions to safeguard their email accounts - and hackers are exploiting that. The Russian hackers didn't have to work very hard to break into people's email accounts, even those belonging to government officials or powerful executives. Here's a look at a few simple ways to help safeguard your email account from hackers.

Don't reuse passwords

Many online break-ins result when people have reused a password across, say, their email, social and financial accounts. If it's compromised at any one of those services, the others are suddenly vulnerable. One simple way to avoid this problem is to start with a base password you can remember, and then add on letters and numbers that reference where you're using it. If your base password is "greatsurfer2017" (which isn't particularly secure; more on that in a moment), you could make "greatsurfer2017Y" your Yahoo password, and "greatsurfer2017G" your Google password. If you can't be bothered to do more, this is a base level of security that can help shield you from the most obvious threats. But it's still only a baby step.

Pick a stronger password

You can make things harder for attackers by

making your base password stronger. The more complicated and lengthy a password is, the harder it will be for hackers to guess. The downside: Tougher passwords are also harder to remember. But there are some ways around that. Don't include your kids' names, birthdays or references to any other personal details. Hackers routinely troll Facebook and Twitter for clues to passwords like these. Obvious and default passwords such as "Password123" are also bad, as are words commonly found in dictionaries, as these are used in programs hackers have to automate guesses.

You can make your own strong passwords with randomly capitalized nonsense words interspersed with numbers and characters-like, say, "g1LLy31fl0rp." (Just don't use that one now that it's appeared in this story.) So long as you're making up the words yourself, these are difficult for hackers to crack - and they're easier to remember than you might think, though you might want to practice them a few times.

Have your passwords managed for you

Of course, you can make things easier on yourself by using a password-manager service such as LastPass or DashLane, which keep track of multiple complex passwords for you. Some web browsers such as Apple's Safari and Google's Chrome also have built-in password managers; these work if you switch devices, but not if you switch browsers. After you create a strong password for your password manager, it can create

random passwords for your other accounts - and will remember them for you as well. "It's more secure and it makes your life easier," said Jamie Winterton, director of strategy at the Global Security Initiative at Arizona State University.

Multifactor authentication is a must

The next line of defense is two- or multifactor authentication, which asks users to enter a second form of identification, such as a code texted to their phone, when they log in. It's now commonplace for many email and social media accounts. That way, even if hackers manage to get your password they still need your phone with the texted code. "Having another way for that account to say 'Hey, is that really you?,' and give veto authority is really important," Winterton said.

Keywords matter

According to the indictment, the Russian hackers searched email accounts for keywords like "passwords" to find people's passwords for other accounts. They also searched for "credit card" "visa," among other terms. So think twice before you use common key words that can serve as a road map to sensitive information for hackers. And don't save passwords in old emails. "There's not one single thing out there that can keep you perfectly safe," Winterton said. "But there are a lot of different things out there that can keep you almost perfectly safe." — AP

SECRETS FROM SMART DEVICES FIND PATH TO LEGAL SYSTEM

WASHINGTON: An Ohio man claimed he was forced into a hasty window escape when his house caught fire last year. His pacemaker data obtained by police showed otherwise, and he was charged with arson and insurance fraud. In Pennsylvania, authorities dismissed rape charges after data from a woman's Fitbit contradicted her version of her whereabouts during the 2015 alleged assault.

Vast amounts of data collected from our connected devices-fitness bands, smart refrigerators, thermostats and automobiles, among others-are increasingly being used in US legal proceedings to prove or disprove claims by people involved. In a recent case that made headlines, authorities in Arkansas sought, and eventually obtained, data from a murder suspect's Amazon Echo speaker to obtain evidence.

The US Federal Trade Commission in February fined television maker Vizio for secretly gathering data on viewers collected from its smart TVs and selling the information to marketers. The maker of the smartphone-connected sex toy We-Vibe meanwhile agreed in March to a court settlement of a class-action suit from buyers who claimed "highly intimate and sensitive data" was uploaded to the cloud without permission-and shown last year to be vulnerable to hackers.

'Privacy is dead'

Trying to come to grips with data collected, stored and analyzed by all these devices can be daunting. "When one looks at the expectation of privacy today it is radically different than it was a generation ago," said Erik Laykin, a digital forensics specialist with the consultancy Duff & Phelps and author of a 2013 book on computer forensics. "Privacy is dead."

Laykin has consulted or testified in cases of insurance fraud, divorce and other legal proceedings where digital evidence can be relevant. He said the "always on" nature of "internet of Things" devices means huge amounts of personal information is circulating among companies, in the internet cloud and elsewhere, with few standards on how the data is protected or used.

"The net result of these technologies is that we are forgoing our personal privacy and our personal autonomy and even sovereignty as humans and relinquishing that to a combination of state, harvesters of big data, omnipresent institutions and systems."

A report last year from Harvard's Berkman Klein Center for internet studies pointed out the range of new connected devices that can yield evidence for law enforcement, "ranging from televisions and

toasters to bed sheets, light bulbs, cameras, toothbrushes, door locks, cars, watches and other wearables," which "are being packed with sensors and wireless connectivity."

"The audio and video sensors on IoT devices will open up numerous avenues for government actors to demand access to real-time and recorded communications," the report said. John Sammons, a Marshall University professor of digital forensics and a former police officer, said this new abundance of evidence can be good for law enforcement if investigators can find relevant data.

"You have to be aware it's even there," he said. "Most police officers would not even think to look at a Fitbit or a thermostat." Another problem is the sheer volume of data and computing resources needed to obtain specific data, often requiring weeks of computing time. Sammons presented research on use of connected cars this year at the American Academy of Forensic Sciences, saying newer vehicles with improved connectivity offer "a significant new source of potential evidence" for both criminal and civil litigation.

Privacy in the cloud?

Privacy activists meanwhile worry that these devices can unleash new kinds of surveillance without the knowledge of users, and that the legal system must define limits for constitutional protections against unreasonable searches. Jay Stanley of the American Civil Liberties Union's Speech, Privacy, and Technology Project, said gathering data from connected speakers such as the Amazon Echo should face the same standard as wiretaps, which need a warrant from a judge based on probable cause of a crime, rather than a more streamlined law enforcement subpoena.

"In your house you should have absolute privacy," Stanley said. One gray area in the law is that conversations recorded on home speakers may be sent to the cloud; in that case the holding of the data by a "third party" may wipe away constitutional privacy protection. "We think there needs to be jurisprudential and legislative means of addressing these issues," Stanley said. "The privacy invasions are so significant."

Jules Polonetsky, chief executive of the non-profit Future of Privacy Forum, said that while legal issues are still being debated, "you should always know if you have a device that is sending data elsewhere." Polonetsky said it's important to set a legal and constitutional privacy framework to reassure consumers. "It's critical we get the balance between data utility and law enforcement access right," he said, "or people won't trust these devices." — AFP

TELECOM POLICY TILTS IN FAVOR OF INDUSTRY ON TRUMP'S FCC

NEW YORK: Trumpism is slowly taking hold on your phone and computer, as newly installed federal regulators begin chipping away at hard-fought protections on privacy and competition. These protections, put in place during the Obama administration, had upset the phone and cable industries. The new regime at the Federal Communications Commission says consumers win if businesses face less regulation and have more incentives to invest. But consumer advocates worry these changes give broadband providers that own media businesses more power to favor their own services, among other things.

The changes are small and easily overlooked. But they're the first shots in what could turn into a full-fledged war over Obama-era "net neutrality" rules, which were designed to keep phone and cable giants from favoring their own internet services and apps. Overturning these rules would also likely reverse a privacy measure meant to keep broadband providers from using and selling customer data without permission.

"Death by a thousand cuts is a constantly overused cliché, but that's sort of what they're

aiming for right now," said Matt Wood, the policy director of consumer group Free Press, referring to the Republicans now in power at the FCC. The agency has five commissioners appointed by the president and oversees internet services and the broadcast industry.

Death to net neutrality

It's no secret President Donald Trump's hand-picked FCC chief, Ajit Pai, wants to cut regulations that he believes are holding back faster, cheaper internet. Pai takes special aim at net neutrality rules, which regulate broadband as a utility and bar providers from playing favorites by offering speedier access to, say, their own streaming-video services. Pai considers these rules a mistake that slows investment in internet infrastructure. His goal is to expand internet access, especially in rural areas where choices are limited.

But an aggressive overhaul of net neutrality could be politically and legally difficult. For a telecom policy, net neutrality is popular with consumers, drawing attention from comedian John Oliver and spurring people to flood the FCC with roughly 4 million comments (not all

in support, of course). A federal appeals court upheld the rules in June. This may explain why the FCC has so far opted for a piecemeal attack - an approach that may continue for a while.

Nibbling around the edges

A broad attack on the landmark 2015 net neutrality rules is expected. But under Pai, the FCC has made only some tweaks to the agency's approach. These rules have barred broadband providers from blocking and slowing some websites and creating faster access for their own services. But the rules also gave the FCC broader powers to stop telecom companies from hurting competition and consumers in other ways that weren't spelled out.

When Barack Obama was president, the FCC used those broader powers to go after "zero-rating" plans, which give subscribers free data so long as they stick with their carrier's own streaming-TV service, like AT&T's DirecTV Now. Zero rating may be popular with consumers - hey, free data! - but the FCC under Obama had argued that letting internet providers play favorites undermines streaming-video competition and ultimately leaves consumers worse



WASHINGTON: This June 19, 2015, file photo shows the Federal Communications Commission building. — AP

off. After Pai took office, the FCC reversed that stance and gave a thumbs-up to AT&T and other carriers with zero-rating policies.

The agency also exempted additional smaller broadband providers from a net neutrality regulation that required companies to spell out their pricing, such as specifying how

long promotional rates last and whether services capped monthly data usage. Until the FCC or Congress goes full-bore on net neutrality, the agency will likely "stand down" from enforcing it unless there's a "really extreme" violation, said Marc Martin, technology and telecom attorney with Perkins Coie. — AP

US COMMUNITIES CRUMBLING UNDER AN EVOLVING ADDICTION CRISIS

WASHINGTON: Of the 2,900 babies born last year in Cabell County, West Virginia, 500 had to be weaned off of opioid dependence. In Ohio, counties are renting refrigerated trailers to store the mounting number of bodies of drug overdose victims. In New Hampshire, hospitals have so many overdose patients they have to treat them in operating rooms and neonatal nurseries.

And in Palm Beach County, Florida, where US President Donald Trump spends his weekends, 10 people died of overdoses on Friday alone, likely from a batch of heroin tainted by fentanyl, a powerful, synthetic opioid pain medication. After a decade and hundreds of thousands of deaths, the US opioid addiction crisis is entering a new phase. With the government finally cracking down on the free flow of prescription pain killers fueling the crisis, addicts are turning to heroin pouring in from Mexico. And towns, cities and states are being overwhelmed.

Overdose deaths surging

More than 33,000 people across the country died in 2015 from opioid overdoses, up 15.5 per-

cent from 2014. That equated to a record 10 overdose deaths for every 100,000 people — 10 times the level in 1971, when the US government declared its “War on Drugs” after a surge in overdoses. But whereas six years ago four out of five overdose deaths came from prescription painkillers like oxycodone and hydrocodone, now heroin and heroin-fentanyl deaths account for about half. In Cabell County, the overdose death rate was about 30 per 100,000, not even the highest in West Virginia, the state hit hardest by the addiction crisis. Lawyer Paul Farrell last week filed suit for Cabell and a neighboring county, Kanawha, seeking damages from drug companies for dumping massive amounts of addictive opioids into the state, fueling the addiction epidemic. “My community is dying on a daily basis,” he said. Every sixth baby born

Locally suffers from neonatal abstinence syndrome, in which a mother’s addiction is passed on to her child. “The hospital has to rock these babies 24 hours a day as they scream their way through addiction,” Farrell said. He said counties like his had little choice but to sue to force drug companies to pay for

the present and future costs of the crisis. “What we’re asking for is not only to hold them responsible for blatantly violating federal and state laws, but to fix the damage they caused, so that we stop creating another generation of addicts,” Farrell said.

Hundreds of millions of pills

How prescription opioid producers and distributors fed the crisis is made clear by previously unreleased US Drug Enforcement Agency (DEA) data reported in December by the Charleston (West Virginia) Gazette-Mail. It showed that from 2007 to 2012, those companies sold 780 million opioid painkillers in West Virginia, 421 extremely addictive pills for every man, woman and child in the poor eastern state.

Every state is feeling the impact. On March 1, Maryland Governor Larry Hogan declared the addiction crisis a “state of emergency,” allowing him to draw on funds normally appropriated for natural disasters to deal with the problem. Two weeks ago, New York City Mayor Bill de Blasio announced a sweeping new campaign to cut addiction, after the city’s overdose death toll hit 1,075 last year. “The

pharmaceutical industry for years has encouraged the overuse of addictive painkillers,” he said.

From prescription drugs to heroin

The surge in deaths follows a shift in the nature of the crisis. After the DEA last year ordered a 25 percent cutback in the distribution of prescription opioids, addicts turned to heroin. But that drug is frequently cut with extremely potent fentanyl, causing even more overdoses. “Everybody is starting to see a slowdown of prescription opiates. As you see supply drop, what we are seeing is an equal rise of heroin,” said Farrell. “We are going to see an all-time high transition to heroin abuse in the next five years. To raise funds to deal with it, cities and counties are suing manufacturers like Purdue Pharma, which makes OxyContin, the most prevalent of the opioid painkillers; mega-drug wholesalers McKesson, Cardinal Health and AmerisourceBergen; and pharmacy operators like Rite Aid and Walmart. New Hampshire, the New England state which rivals West Virginia for the rate of overdose deaths, has sued Purdue. “Last year we had 450 overdose deaths” in a state of 1.3 million, Senior — AFP

FOR MANY OLDER AMERICANS, COSTS RISE UNDER HEALTH PLAN

‘A LOT OF PEOPLE JUST WON’T BE ABLE TO AFFORD TO PAY IT’

NEW RINGGOLD, Pennsylvania: Among the groups hardest hit by the Republican plan to replace the Affordable Care Act is one that swung for Donald Trump during last year’s presidential race — older Americans who have not yet reached Medicare age. Many of those who buy their own health insurance stand to pay a lot more for their coverage. That is especially true for the nearly 3.4 million older Americans who have enrolled through the government marketplaces, many of whom receive generous federal subsidies through the health care law enacted under former President Barack Obama.

Health care experts predict those older adults will end up buying skimpier plans with lower coverage and higher deductibles because that’s all they will be able to afford. The Republican plan replaces the subsidies in the Affordable Care Act, which mostly benefit low- and middle-



NORMAN, Oklahoma: Anna Holloway poses for a photo at her home in Norman, Okla. — AP

income earners, with a flat tax credit that does not take into account income or local insurance prices. On top of that, the GOP plan allows insurers to charge older people five times what they charge younger customers, compared to three times under Obama’s health care law.

Disproportionately affected

The Republican plan is still evolving, and many GOP lawmakers have said they want to see changes that reduce the impact on older consumers before they can support it. Based on the current plan, an Associated Press analysis of data from the Kaiser Family Foundation shows older consumers, defined as those age 55 and older, would be disproportionately affected. They could lose thousands of dollars per year in government subsidies for health insurance. The AP analysis also found that on average, the counties with the strongest Trump support will see costs for older enrollees rise 50 percent more than the counties that had the least amount of support for Trump.

“A lot of people just won’t be able to afford to pay it. A lot of people are going to drop out of the market altogether,” said Kaiser’s Cynthia Cox. That includes older voters who helped put Trump into office. Take Schuylkill County, Pennsylvania, an economically struggling former coal-mining center where the New York billionaire won 70 percent of the vote in November. About 40 percent of Schuylkill County’s

Affordable Care Act enrollees are 55 or older, more than 10 points higher than the national average. A 60-year-old making \$30,000 annually here will pay roughly \$8,750 more per year for coverage under the Republican plan moving through Congress, according to the AP analysis. “When it comes to food or insurance, it’s going to be an easy choice,” said Matt Strauss, a health insurance broker in New Ringgold, some of whose customers voted for Trump. Older Americans on both ends of the political spectrum say they are worried about what the future holds. Here are some of their stories:

Trump supporter and longtime Republican Robert Ruscoe, who runs a Florida liquidating business with his wife, said he is not feeling “warm and fuzzy” about the GOP health care plan. He went about five years without insurance because it was financially out of reach. When insurance became available through the Affordable Care Act, the couple was able to get a policy for about \$350 per month, after a \$700 monthly subsidy from the government. “It’s nice to be able to go to the doctor whenever something comes up. It gives you a peace ... especially when you get close to 60,” said Ruscoe, 57, of West Palm Beach. He said he didn’t hesitate to sign up through the Affordable Care Act, a program his party spent years vowing to dismantle.

Big difference

“It doesn’t matter who came up with it. It’s a good thing to be supporting across party lines,” he said. Worried about losing coverage, Ruscoe considered voting for a Democrat for the first time last November. But he ultimately placed his trust in Trump and the GOP. “Obamacare is eventually going to have to be fiscally sound. Otherwise it’s not going to stay,” Ruscoe said. “I figured (a replacement) was coming, anyway.” He said he wants Trump to know that having access to insurance matters. “That coverage made a big difference in a lot of people’s lives, just like me,” he said.

Anna Holloway of Norman, Oklahoma, who takes daily medication for an auto-immune disease, said she is fearful the GOP plan will price her out of the market for health insurance. “I am conscious of just how desperate this is,” said Holloway, 60, fighting back tears. “I try not to let myself feel this way, but to live this way with real terror, real fear that the universe is going to fall apart around me.” She takes home about \$1,150 per month working four part-time jobs. That’s only \$250 more than the monthly premium for a health care plan that includes Holloway and her 23-year-old daughter. Without the government subsidy that makes the policy affordable, she would have to drop it.

The Kaiser analysis estimates a family plan in Norman under the current Republican proposal would cost as much as \$20,000 more for someone in Holloway’s income and age bracket. “I’d go without health care. I would get sicker, and that would make it more difficult to work. I would eventually have to stop working,” said Holloway, a registered Democrat who voted for Hillary Clinton. Holloway said she has contemplated the possibility of selling her home and moving in with a family member in Virginia. She acknowledges sometimes feeling hopeless when she considers how losing her health care would affect her life. “I’m not suicidal, but there are times that I think of the damage that could be done to my daughter and her future if I have to

eat up all my reserves and my house and all that I own,” she said.

Government subsidy

The Affordable Care Act didn’t work for Wendy Kline, a hairstylist in Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, who voted for Donald Trump. Kline tried buying a policy on the federal exchange but found she made a little too much money to qualify for a government subsidy. So she was stuck paying the market rate. Her policy jumped this year from \$630 to \$929 a month. As a result, the 61-year-old isn’t able to save much for retirement. “I try to put as much away as I can, but my health insurance is \$30 less than my mortgage payment,” said Kline, who works two jobs.

The GOP plan is a mixed bag for people like Kline. It gives some higher-income consumers the ability to get tax credits for coverage purchased off the exchange, but it also gives insurers the right to charge older customers like her more than they can under the current law. Kline voted for Trump hoping he would be able to work with Congress “to make it affordable for everyone, across the board.”

She said she still has hope, but is increasingly skeptical. “I’m so tired of the whole thing,” she said. “When they talk, I turn the television down because it just drives me crazy.” Retired factory worker Bob Melton, 63, said the projected cost increases for older Americans mean he and his wife Tammy, 58, would be unable to continue to afford coverage. They now pay \$225 a month after the subsidies they receive through the Affordable Care Act. He was staggered by a projection that the couple’s premiums could go up by nearly \$17,000 under the GOP plan.

Manufacturing jobs

“It’ll put me and my wife out - out of insurance. There’s just no way,” he said. Melton saw a doctor for the first time in 12 years after he and his wife bought a policy through the federal health insurance exchange in 2014. After three appointments and blood tests ruled out more serious ailments, Melton said he learned the nagging pain he suffered in his hands was caused by arthritis. The Meltons live in Morganton, North Carolina, about 75 miles northwest of Charlotte, in a county that has seen an exodus of manufacturing jobs. Trump won more than two-thirds of the vote here. Bob Melton himself used to be a staunch Republican. Now he blames Republicans in North Carolina for what he views as efforts to obstruct the Affordable Care Act from working as intended, by refusing to expand Medicaid coverage.

“There’s no justification for it except for spite. That’s just the way I feel about it,” said Melton, who voted for Clinton. Although he’s grateful for his federally subsidized plan, Melton’s experience highlights the diminishing options that have plagued those trying to buy health insurance on the government exchanges established under the Obama reforms. Last year, Melton’s coverage cost only about \$37 after subsidies through Coventry Health Care, a division of Aetna Inc, but the company has since dropped exchange offerings in the state. His current insurer, Blue Cross and Blue Shield of North Carolina, is the only choice available, and his monthly premium is up nearly \$200. Kennedy reported from Fort Lauderdale, Florida, and Hoyer from Washington, DC Sean Murphy in Oklahoma City, and Emery Dalesio in Raleigh, North Carolina, contributed to this report. — AP



BRAZIL: Darcy de Almeida, right, receives the vaccine against yellow fever as her husband Antonio da Silva holds a piece of cotton on his right arm after being vaccinated, in Casimiro de Abreu, Brazil — AP photos



BRAZIL: Tais da Silva Almeida comforts her 5-year-old daughter as a health worker prepares to inject her with a yellow fever vaccine in a field hospital in Casimiro de Abreu, Brazil.

SMALL BRAZIL CITY ON EDGE AFTER MAN DIES FROM YELLOW FEVER

CASIMIRO DE ABREU, Brazil: This small city in the state of Rio de Janeiro is on high alert after authorities confirmed the death of one man by yellow fever and said they were investigating several other possible cases. Health authorities this week confirmed that 38-year-old Watila Santos died from the illness on March 11. A neighbor of Santos, Alessandro Valença Couto, was infected and sent for treatment to a hospital in the city of Rio de Janeiro, where he is recovering.

Authorities are investigating possible cases involving four relatives of Santos, including a 13-year-old and a 9-year-old. In the city center and rural areas of Casimiro de Abreu, about 93 miles (150 kilometers) from Rio de Janeiro, a large tent has been set up to vaccinate people. Authorities say around 30,000 of the city’s 42,000 people have been vaccinated in recent days. “I’m really scared,” said Tais da Silva Almeida, a mother of two who arrived Friday to get vaccinated. “If adults can’t deal with the illness, imagine the children.”

Yellow fever is transmitted by mosquito and causes fever, body aches, vomiting and sometimes jaundice. Rio de Janeiro’s state Health Department has announced plans to vaccinate its entire population as a preventative measure. It says it will need

12 million doses to reach a 90 percent vaccination rate by year’s end. The vaccinations come as cases continue to be confirmed in several areas nationwide. Brazil’s Health Ministry says that at least 424 people have been infected with yellow fever in the largest outbreak the country has seen in years.

Of those, 137 have died, and more than 900 other cases are under investigation. The vast majority of confirmed cases and deaths have been in the southeastern state of Minas Gerais, which borders the state of Rio de Janeiro. In Casimiro de Abreu, health workers visited houses in rural areas and inspected stagnant water, where mosquitoes lay eggs. The state also sent experts to nearby parks and reserves with monkey populations to monitor the situation with the primates, which are a primary reservoir of yellow fever. Meanwhile, in a group of houses near a lush jungle area a few miles (5 kilometers) from downtown, relatives of Santos wait for news about the four members of the family who may be infected. Wallace Santos, the younger brother of the man who died, said he took solace in knowing that the death raised alarm bells that could save others. “Wherever he is now, he knows that because he died a lot of lives were saved,” said Santos. — AP



BAMAKO: This file photo shows garbage scavengers looking for reusable or recyclable material through a dump in Bamako. — AFP

RAGS, NOT RICHES, DEFINING AFRICA’S URBAN EXPLOSION

BAMAKO: Anarchic architecture, unchecked pollution and high costs of living are the lot of African city dwellers, experts warn, as living standards fail to keep pace with rapid urban growth on the continent. The Bamako Forum, a pan-African think tank, recently considered the phenomenon of African urbanization against the backdrop of a city living the results of rural flight clashing with poor urban planning. At 1.8 million inhabitants Bamako is far from Africa’s largest city. But its 5.5 percent growth rate is the fastest on the continent, outstripping that of established African megapolises like Cairo, Kinshasa or Lagos.

One billion Africans will live in a city by 2040, according to World Bank estimates, compared with almost half a billion today. “Such growth has never been seen globally, and probably never will be again,” said Somik Vinay Lal, the bank’s top urbanization expert, speaking at the forum. Visitors to Bamako’s dusty streets don’t have

long before they chance upon what residents have nicknamed Lafabougou Hill, a pile of stinking rubbish that at one point loomed 20 meters tall in the city centre.

Lacking fuel to transport the trash to depots on the city’s edges, Lafabougou Hill has become a pungent reminder of the municipality’s inability to provide basic services to its rapidly expanding population. “We have protested, burnt tyres, blocked off roads, because this affects the health of the people living in this area,” said Djiri Nimaga, head of a local youth group that held protests last year aimed at rousing action from the authorities in the ACI 2000 commercial district. Until now Lafabougou has not killed anyone directly, but at least 113 people were killed in a giant landslide at Ethiopia’s largest rubbish dump last weekend, including several children.

Vicious circle

The Western perception of poor countries

having low costs of living, true across much of Asia, does not hold true for Africa, where some of the world’s most expensive cities are populated by some of the planet’s poorest people. As a result, manufacturing and services, driven by consumer spending, are all too often absent. “Twenty-three percent of land in Ho Chi Minh City is taken up by industrial and commercial activity, compared with 5.9 percent in Nairobi and 1.1 percent in Addis Ababa,” Lal emphasised.

A World Bank report entitled “Africa’s Cities: Opening Doors to the World”, released in February, said deep-rooted problems with the way land was bought and sold, a lack of investment in infrastructure and an absence of regulation constrained African cities. “Closed to regional and global markets, trapped into producing only locally traded goods and services, and limited in their economic growth,” is how the report characterized cities such as Bamako. — AFP

HOW DO INSURERS DECIDE WHAT MEDICINES TO PAY FOR?

NEW YORK: How do insurance companies decide what medicines to pay for and when to pay for them? Insurers and other payers look first at how well the drug works - not its cost - when they decide whether to cover the latest treatments, according to the nation's largest pharmacy benefits manager, Express Scripts. The price patients eventually pay gets determined later, when an insurance company or pharmacy benefits manager decides where a drug fits on a list of covered treatments called a formulary. The cost of prescription drugs has become a growing source of concern with doctors and

patients, but it's not a factor considered by an independent committee used by Express Script to determine coverage of a new drug, Chief Medical Officer Dr Steve Miller said. That committee - 15 doctors and a pharmacist - reviews the information that federal regulators used to approve a drug and then decides whether it should be covered.

Some payer coverage decisions come with qualifications like a requirement that patients meet specific criteria or try other treatments first. That can limit patient access. Doctors say some patients have had trouble getting a new cholesterol-lower-

ing drug, Repatha, that costs \$14,000 a year, because of the restrictions. Insurers largely use pharmacy benefits managers to set up the lists that determine how much a patient ends up paying. Some lists are divided into tiers, with drugs on the bottom generally being generic or least expensive. Those on the highest tier might include specialty medicines that could cost the patient hundreds of dollars even with coverage.

Whether a drug even gets on the list can depend on whether a similar medicine is already in the market. When the ground-breaking hepatitis C

treatments Sovaldi and Harvoni from Gilead Sciences debuted a few years ago, Express Scripts had to include them. They cost more than \$80,000 for a course of treatment, but the drugs essentially cure a debilitating disease and they had no competition. But once the drugmaker AbbVie produced a third option, Viekira Pak, with a similar cure rate, Express Scripts was able to negotiate a price discount and switched to covering only Viekira Pak. The nation's two largest pharmacy benefits managers, Express Scripts and CVS Health Corp., both say they cover Repatha. — AP

CZECH ENERGY GROUP BUCKS GREEN TREND WITH BET ON COAL

PRAGUE: Bucking a trend set by its European peers to divest from coal, the Czech energy group EPH is buying coal-fired power plants across the continent to the dismay of environmentalists lobbying for a phase-out of fossil fuels. Its annual production of more than 100 million megawatt-hours in its plants in Britain, the Czech Republic, Germany, Hungary, Italy and Slovakia-enough to power around 30 million homes-makes EPH the seventh largest power producer in Europe. Set up in 2009, EPH (Energeticky a Prumyslovny Holding) relies on coal for more than half of its production capacity. It's owner, Czech billionaire Daniel Kretinsky, is undeterred by global efforts under the 2015 Paris Agreement to curb global warming by switching from carbon-intensive fossil fuels like coal and oil to clean energy, especially solar and wind.

"From the practical and moral point of view, we believe it's wrong to reject using resources that are necessary to meet the fundamental needs of European citizens," EPH spokesman Daniel Castvaj told AFP of the company's lack of qualms about coal. The EPH controls about fifty companies with 25,000 employees. Dirty-burning brown coal, also known as lignite, accounts for 30.5 percent of EPH's capacity, while cleaner burning black coal makes up 21.7 percent. Kretinsky, the sixth wealthiest Czech according to the Forbes magazine, controls 94 percent of EPH. It earned 1.64 billion euros (\$1.73 billion) in gross profit in 2015 after taking in 4.57 billion euros in consolidated revenue. Kretinsky also owns the Czech branch of German-Swiss publishing group Ringier Axel Springer Media AG and the top-flight football club Sparta Prague.

Alternative strategy

EPH has been on a shopping spree, snapping up coal-fired electricity plants from European energy giants like E.ON, Enel or RWE, which they are happy to sell. Given the global push to decarbonise "there's a great deal of uncertainty about the future of coal, gas and nuclear power," according to Marek Hatlapatka, an analyst with the Prague-

based brokerage and investment firm Cyrus. "The energy sector is currently divided into two completely different streams with capital intensive 'old energy' on the one hand and 'new energy' on the other, that is more modern, less capital intensive and with a lot of room for renewables," he told AFP.

"This division is putting huge pressure on companies and regulators," Hatlapatka said, adding that it is forcing giants like E.ON or RWE to sell off their fossil fuel-based assets at "relatively low prices reflecting the risk." But there are investors, like EPH, who see opportunities afforded by the low prices of these assets and have been snapping them up, regardless of the uncertainty. Last year the Czech holding acquired German lignite assets from Sweden's Vattenfall. It also bought three coal-fired plants and five mines in eastern Germany and a 50-percent stake in the Lippendorf power station near the German city of Leipzig, accounting for 8,000 megawatts of power in all.

EPH's Castvaj insisted that EPH only buys coal-fired plants in markets where they are "indispensable to cover the needs of the population and industry." Germany's withdrawal from nuclear energy necessarily implies a temporary use of coal," he added, but declined to confirm how much money EPH has poured into its recent acquisitions.

Environmentalists cry foul

According to Petr Kalas, head of the Czech government committee for renewable energy, EPH has "an alternative strategy which is not exactly in line with the Paris Agreement on climate, but is still an option for the market." "It's an investment opportunity for two or three decades," said Kalas, who served as the environment minister in 2006-2007. "Coal will lose its importance, but at present it can still be useful to some extent," he added. EPH's takeover of Vattenfall assets in Germany sparked an outcry among Czech environmentalists. "Along with the mines and power stations, EPH also bought some massive resistance from the public," said Jan Rovinsky, spokesman for Greenpeace's Czech branch. — AFP



FRONT ROYAL, Virginia: In this file photo, animal keeper Vicki Snoberger carries containers with three black footed ferrets at the National Zoo's conservation center in Front Royal, Va, after she and her team rounded-up 26 ferrets for shipment to Fort Collins Colo. — AP photos

TO AID FERRETS, VACCINE TREATS PLANNED FOR PRAIRIE DOGS

CHEYENNE, Wyoming: Feeding peanut butter kibbles to millions of prairie dogs - by flinging the treats from four-wheelers and dropping them from drones - could be the next big thing to help a spunky little weasel that almost went extinct. Slinky with a robber-like black mask across its eyes, the endangered black-footed ferret is a fierce predator. The up to 2-foot-long weasel feeds almost exclusively on prairie dogs, rodents that live in vast colonies regularly decimated by plague outbreaks. The disease keeps threatening the food supply of ferrets bred in captivity and reintroduced on the landscape. Biologists are increasingly optimistic that feeding plague vaccine to prairie dogs can improve the ferrets' success rate.

Starting this fall, they hope to ramp up recent plague vaccination experiments to cover as much as 40 square miles of prairie dog colonies in several states in the West. "We're not attempting to eradicate it. That would be very, very difficult at this point. We're just trying to manage it on selected colonies," said Tonie Rocke, who researches animal diseases with the US Geological Survey's National Wildlife Health Center in Madison, Wisconsin.

They plan to treat prairie dog colonies with blueberry-sized vaccine pellets made with peanut butter, using a specially made "glorified gumball machine" to fling the pellets from all-terrain vehicles. They might also drop pellets from drones to avoid trampling the countryside. "Prairie dogs love it. They gobble it up as fast as they can," said John Emmerich, a retired Wyoming Game and

Fish Department deputy director who chairs Black-Footed Ferret Friends, a group working with the US Fish and Wildlife Service on the project.

At a rate of 40 to 50 pellets per acre, Emmerich figures they will need 1 million or more pellets for the job. A US Department of Agriculture supply depot in Pocatello, Idaho, that also makes rodent poison for farmers will manufacture the pellets. Plague, which killed millions of people in medieval Europe, wasn't a problem for prairie dogs until it arrived in the US over a century ago. The disease now routinely cycles through prairie dog colonies across the ferrets' 12-state historical range.

Captive-breeding program

Habitat loss to farming and poisoning by ranchers also has taken a toll on prairie dogs - and by extension the black-footed ferret, which lives in the rodents' burrows. The ferrets were believed extinct until a ranch dog brought home a dead one near Meeteetse, Wyoming, in 1981. Beginning in the 1990s, efforts to breed black-footed ferrets at a facility near Fort Collins, Colorado, and release them into the wild have been successful in the sense that the black-footed ferret is no longer teetering on the brink. Black-footed ferrets recently have been introduced at the Rocky Mountain Arsenal National Wildlife Refuge near Denver and to the Meeteetse ranch where scientists collected the last known wild ferrets to start the captive-breeding program. Descendants of those ferrets have been reintroduced at 28 sites and eight states,

Canada and Mexico. But plague, which is spread by fleas, remains a threat to the prairie dog colonies where ferrets live, said Fish and Wildlife spokesman Ryan Moehring.

Biologists often treat the colonies with insecticide to combat fleas. Plague vaccine likewise would need to be applied regularly - once a year, because prairie dogs typically don't live more than a few years, and new ones are born every year. But the vaccine could require a lot less work, especially if drones are used. An estimated 300 black-footed ferrets now live in the wild. Getting them off the endangered list would require establishing 3,000 or more breeding adults on half a million acres - 780 square miles - of prairie-dog colonies, according to Fish and Wildlife. — AP



COMMERCE CITY, Colorado: A black-footed ferret belts out warning during a release of 30 ferrets by the US Fish and Wildlife Service at the Rocky Mountain Arsenal National Wildlife Refuge in Commerce City, Colo. — AP



PRAGUE: Czech group EPH has been bucking the green energy trend by buying up coal-fired plants in Europe. — AFP

CLINIC PAGE



Kuwait Times
248 33 199

Dr. Fahad Al-Mukhaizeem
ر. فهد علي المخيزيم

Consultant Pediatrician إستشاري أطفال
M.B. Bch. FRCPC. FAAP. PEM

Al-Jabriya - Block 1A - St. 1 - Mazaya Building - 15th Floor - Clinic B - Tel.: 22269369 - Fax: 22269368



Matthew Lodge, British Ambassador to Kuwait speaks during the event. — Photos by Joseph Shagra

Grant Butler, Country Director of British Council.

Suzanne Jones, Gulf science innovation and Knowledge Economy Program Director at the British Embassy in Abu Dhabi.

BRITISH COUNCIL HOSTS ALUMNI GALA DINNER

By Faten Omar

The British Council of Kuwait organized its annual Alumni Gala Dinner recently at the Movenpick Hotel. More than 180 guests including UK Universities' alumni, various representatives from UK Universities and several guests of honor across various sectors attended the event.

The evening featured Grant Butler, Country Director of British Council Kuwait, as the host. The event started with Mais Montazar, Deputy Director of Partnerships and Programs at British Council Kuwait, who welcomed the guests and speakers, including Matthew Lodge, British Ambassador to the State of Kuwait, and Suzanne Jones, Gulf science innovation and Knowledge Economy Program Director at the British Embassy in Abu Dhabi.

"Communication is important to improve the relationship between people and take it to another level," Ambassador Lodge said in his speech. "The connection between the United Kingdom and Kuwait goes back for years, and we are committed to help Kuwaiti students maintain friendship with their British friends."

Lodge added that the UK seeks to invest in the relationships between countries worldwide through the global language: English. "The UK and Kuwait have an important, long-standing relationship, strengthened through the strong individual connections that many Kuwaitis cherish since they attended UK academic institutions, and we are making sure that relationship will keep growing through the next generations for 100 years," he said.

Meanwhile, Butler noted that more than 40 popular UK universities and colleges participated at the Education UK Exhibition (EDUKEX 2017) that took place late last week.

Furthermore, he announced that the British Council Gulf - UK Alumni Network is now live on LinkedIn. "UK education goes beyond graduation - alumni networks are all about lifelong learning and a community of people that are passionate about contributing to the development of the UK and the Kuwait," he said.

Last year the British Council, together with the British Embassies in the Gulf, created the first network of UK-GCC alumni, which offers networking session, skills development workshops, volunteering and mentorship opportunities to

inspire the next generation of leaders. This year, the British Council launched the 'Gulf UK Alumni online' initiative in partnership with LinkedIn that will see 5,000 alumni across the GCC digitally connected by the end of 2017.

This new online networking group connects UK alumni from the GCC, helping them connect with each other, seek out opportunities, as well as connect with business and trade opportunities between countries in the Gulf and the UK. Membership to the Network is open to all Kuwaitis and expatriates in Kuwait who have graduated from UK

Universities. Meanwhile, Suzanne Jones praised the UK government's commitment to having a successful long-term relationship with Kuwait through communicating with Kuwaiti students in UK's universities. She added that the British Council in Kuwait would like to connect with anyone who has studied in the UK to join the group of alumni. At the end of the event, the British Council offered a variety of activities and games that allowed the alumni to communicate with each other.

UK alumni networks were set up all across the GCC under the 'Next Generation' program to provide opportunities for its members to meet and exchange experiences; to learn and develop their careers; to support and mentor recent graduates and to inspire the next generation of leaders in their countries. The Alumni Gala Dinner is an exclusive event for the Kuwait UK alumni network members as part of this program.

The British Council is the UK's international organization for cultural relations and educational opportunities. They create friendly knowledge and understanding between the people of the UK and other countries. Using the UK's cultural resources we make a positive contribution to the countries we work with - changing lives by creating opportunities, building connections and engendering trust. The British Council works with over 100 countries across the world in the fields of arts and culture, English language, education and civil society. Each year we reach over 20 million people face-to-face and more than 500 million people online, via broadcasts and publications. It founded in 1934, it is a UK charity governed by Royal Charter and a UK public body. They have been working in the Gulf for over 60 years and operated in Kuwait since 1955.



A general view of the audience.

TANG CHAO CHINESE RESTAURANT LAUNCHES NEW MENU

As it is known for their passion to offer everything that delights the guests, Holiday Inn Kuwait - Salmiya announced launching the new menu at Tang Chao Chinese Restaurant that will enrich the guests culinary experience by offering the most authentic Chinese dishes as well as to the chef's modern fusion creations.

The new menu at Tang Chao featuring flavorful new salads, appetizers, main courses and desserts that suits all tastes and tempt all cravings. As for the quality, our chefs are keen on using premium quality products and fresh meats to ensure providing a taste that satisfies every guests.

Tang Chao restaurant is known for its beautiful decoration that is inspired by the great history of the Tang dynasty of China as well as to its spacious capacity that seats up to 150 persons, private dining areas and a terrace overlooking the Hotel's garden, and to further enhance the overall experience, our highly trained service team are dedicated to offer the highest standards of hospitality to make sure that each guest enjoys a memorable time.



MEDICAL CAMP CONDUCTED BY MES-MALABAR GOLD AND DIAMONDS

Hundreds of underprivileged people including from the labor camps in various parts of Kuwait attended the free medical screening camp organized by Muslim Educational Society (MES) - Malabar Gold and Diamonds in association with Indian Doctor's Forum (IDF), Indian Dentists' Alliance, Kuwait Heart Foundation, Kuwait Medical Association on Friday 10th March 2017 at Pakistan Excel English School Abbasiya. Malabar Gold and Diamonds was the Main Sponsor of the event along with Badr Al-Samaa Medical Center and Aster Pharmacy. The camp was inaugurated by Ambassador of India to Kuwait Sunil Jain.

The theme of this year's medical camp was "Care and Aware" and a booklet based on the topic was

released by the Ambassador of India and the first copy received by Afsal Khan - Regional Manager, Malabar Gold and Diamonds.

Experts from various medical specialties including Orthopaedics, ENT, Gynaecology, Ophthalmology, Diabetes, Cardiology, General Medicine, Paediatrics, Dermatology and Dental examined the patients. In addition, many patients utilized the services of ECG, Mammography and Scanning.

The dedication and hard work put in by the MES volunteers helped the participants to avail camp facilities easily. Large quantity of medicines Sponsored by Saudi Pharmaceutical Company, Al-Hajeri Group, Bader Sultan and Aster Pharmacy was distributed under the

supervision of Medical wing convenor Nasaruddeen and hundreds of patients from various nationalities including India, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, Egypt, Pakistan, Nepal ect. and from different walks of life benefited from this noble event.

MES conducts medical camps every year and this is the 16th camp organized for the community. IDF arranged more than 50 doctors, which is the largest contingent till date for such a camp, covering almost all specialties. Around 40 skilled para-medical staff assisted the doctors for the preliminary check-ups. Blood sugar tests were also arranged for the public in addition to the blood cholesterol test done by Kuwait Heart Foundation.

The brief inaugural ceremony started with recitation of

versus from Holy Quran. MES President Sadiq Ali welcomed the audience while Medical Wing Convenor Nasaruddeen proposed vote of thanks. The felicitations for the camp were given by Dr AbeyPatwar - President IDF, Dr SayedRahman - IDF, Dr PrathapUnnithan - IDAK, Dr AmeerAhmed (former President - IDF), Ashraf Ayyur - Badr Al Samaa Medical Center, ShanmukhaSundaran - Aster Pharmacy.

MES General Secretary Arshad, former president Mohamed Rafi, Treasurer Dr Mustafa Keyi, Khaleel Adoor, SalehBatha, Zubair MM, Ibrahim, Ashraf PT, Shaheer, O.J. Usman, Advt Gafoor, Mujeeb, Noufal, RameesSaleh, RayeesSaleh, Firoz, Neslin actively coordinated this unique program.



MARRIOTT HOTELS IN KUWAIT CELEBRATE MOTHER'S DAY

Mother's Day is the perfect occasion for family get-togethers. It is a day to show the most important women in your lives how much they are loved and appreciated. It is a day to celebrate and create unforgettable memories.

On the occasion of Mother's Day, the JW Marriott Kuwait and Courtyard by Marriott Kuwait have prepared special treats for guests who want to say 'a huge thank you' to the exceptional and extraordinary women in

their lives. Guests can enjoy up to 35 percent discount in the newly opened 'Crossroads' Restaurant and Atrium Restaurant, on March 21st during dinner time.

Crossroads restaurant at the JW Marriott Kuwait features a wide range of distinctive cuisines, including Italian, Japanese, Chinese, Indian and Mediterranean, all under one roof. And the open kitchen allows guests to watch Marriott's talented chefs perform their mastery while creating gastronomic delights that are second to none. Moreover, Atrium restaurant at Courtyard Kuwait offers a wide range of international buffets to cater

to all tastes and moods.

A superb dining experience can also be enjoyed at The Terrace Grill restaurant at JW Marriott Kuwait, known to be one of the best steakhouses in Kuwait. The restaurant offers an extensive menu of the finest meat cuts and seafood. Other interesting cuisines can be tried at the Japanese Kei restaurant offering sushi and Teppanyaki. The much-celebrated Indian restaurant Soul and Spice in Courtyard by Marriott is well known for serving flavorful Indian dishes, in addition to Sushi restaurant which offers a wide array of mouth-watering Japanese delicacies.



SADU HOUSE ORGANIZES CHILDREN'S HERITAGE FESTIVAL

By Faten Omar

The Sadu House organized the Children's Heritage Festival 'Turathi' on Friday. The event was organized with support from the National Council for Culture, Arts and Letters, and held as part of a youth festival organized by the state. Workshops, games and learning activities for kids were held during the event, said Ksenija Graovac, a volunteer at 'Turathi'. In addition to children aged between five and 12 years, adults were also invited to join the fun. "We aim to promote and celebrate Kuwait's cultural and textile heritage," she said.

Graovac added that the Sadu House prepared a variety of activities such as reading to children, cooking traditional Kuwaiti dishes, as well as traditional Kuwaiti games, where experts taught children how to play. "We have a photo booth, where you can take photos with traditional Kuwaiti customs for your children," she said.

Graovac further noted that the children also participated in making crochet hats to be donated to children of Syria and Yemen. "We offer a program of educational courses and workshops on the techniques of traditional weaving, dying and textile arts and design by some of our weavers and art instructors," she added. "Classes are open to all."

Meanwhile, Wafa Baker Al-Baker, Deputy



Photos by Joseph Shagra

Chairperson of Dhuwa Al-Yaddah Center, told Kuwait Times that in the past, children made their toys from simple materials of discharged objects. They would find them in the house and streets. But many means of entertainment

can be found inside the house today, such as televisions, video games, computers and ready-made toys. "Dhuwa Al-Yaddah Centre is a voluntary organization that aims at preserving the Kuwaiti heritage. Today, we will try to get



children to know more about Kuwaiti old games," she said.

"Today we chose a few games for both boys and girls to play, such as 'Al-Haila' where the girls will be drawing six squares on the ground,"

she added. "One of the players throws a piece of stone in one square and jumps to it, moving it to the next square. Each square successfully reached is considered her own, until she owns all the 'houses.'"



LAPA PRESENTS 'SABILIYAT ISMAEL'

The Loyac Academy for Performing Arts (LAPA) prepares to present 'Sabiliyat Ismael,' a monodrama based on the novel 'Sabiliyat' by veteran Kuwaiti novelist Ismael Fahad Ismael. The performance takes place on the 25th and 26th of March, 2017 at Al-Dasma Theater, starting from 7:30 pm.



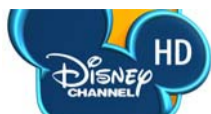


- 00:50 Gator Boys
01:45 In Too Deep
04:00 Escape To Chimp Eden

- 21:00 Gold Rush
21:50 Everest Rescue
22:40 Killing Fields
23:30 Fast N' Loud



- 00:05 Keeping Up With The Kardashians
01:50 El News
02:50 Hollywood Cycle



- 00:10 Hank Zipzer
00:35 Binny And The Ghost
01:00 Violetta
01:45 The Hive



THE GAMBLER ON OSN MOVIES HD

- 20:30 Miles From Tomorrow
21:00 Unbungalivable
21:05 Goldie & Bear
21:35 Mickey Mouse Clubhouse

- 08:50 I Almost Got Away With It
09:40 Deadline: Crime With Tamron Hall
10:30 Blood Relatives



- 00:00 Killers: Behind The Myth
01:00 The Haunting Of...
02:00 My Ghost Story: Caught On Camera



- 00:20 Battle 360
01:10 Pawn Stars
01:35 Pawn Stars Best Of
02:00 Storage Wars: Barry's Best Buys



- 00:20 Henry Hugglemonster
00:35 The Hive
00:45 Loopidoo



- 00:05 Destroyed In Seconds
00:30 Prototype This
02:10 Dirty Jobs



- 00:00 Mystery Diners
01:00 Diners, Drive-Ins And Dives
02:00 Man Fire Food



SHARK LAKE ON OSN MOVIES ACTION HD

- 18:40 Destroyed In Seconds
19:30 How It's Made
19:55 How It's Made
20:20 Mythbusters

- 03:00 Chopped
04:00 Guy's Grocery Games
05:00 Barefoot Contessa: Back To Basics

- 04:50 Calimero
05:05 Art Attack
05:30 Henry Hugglemonster
05:45 Zou

- 11:10 Counterfeit Cat
11:35 Pair Of Kings
12:30 Future-Worm!
12:55 Lab Rats: Bionic Island



- 00:20 Street Outlaws
01:10 Snakelocular
02:00 Fukushima: On The Frontline With Joel Lambert



- 00:15 Close Encounters
03:10 Mythbusters
08:00 How Do They Do It?

- 04:50 Calimero
05:05 Art Attack
05:30 Henry Hugglemonster
05:45 Zou

- 00:15 Charlie Luxton's Homes By The Med
01:05 Testing The Menu With Nic Watt



- 00:15 Charlie Luxton's Homes By The Med
01:05 Testing The Menu With Nic Watt
01:30 Dog Whisperer

- 00:20 Street Outlaws
01:10 Snakelocular
02:00 Fukushima: On The Frontline With Joel Lambert

- 00:15 Close Encounters
03:10 Mythbusters
08:00 How Do They Do It?

- 04:50 Calimero
05:05 Art Attack
05:30 Henry Hugglemonster
05:45 Zou

- 00:15 Charlie Luxton's Homes By The Med
01:05 Testing The Menu With Nic Watt
01:30 Dog Whisperer

- 07:55 Hitler And The Occult
08:25 Nazi Underworld
09:20 Mega Breakdown
10:15 The Border



- 01:45 Shark Lake
03:45 Double Team
06:00 Dracula Untold
07:45 Licence To Kill



- 00:00 Damien
01:00 Scandal
02:00 Code Black
03:00 Scream Queens



- 00:00 My Man Is A Loser
02:00 Camp Nowhere
03:45 After The Ball
05:45 Parenthood



- 00:00 Two Mothers
02:00 The Help
04:30 Healing
06:30 The Search For Freedom



- 00:00 Wrecked
00:30 Community
01:00 Community
01:30 Saturday Night Live



- 00:45 The Gambler
02:45 While You Were Sleeping
04:30 Make Your Move
06:30 Win A Date With Tad Hamilton!



- 01:00 Garfield
02:30 Gatothkach - Master Of Magic
04:30 Pim And Pom: The Big Adventure



- 00:20 Married By Mum And Dad
01:10 Return To Amish
02:00 My Big Fat Fabulous Life
02:25 Say Yes To The Dress: Bridesmaids



- 01:00 Herbie Fully Loaded
03:00 Chilly Christmas
05:00 The Tigger Movie
07:00 A Bug's Life



- 00:10 Wicked Tuna
01:00 Map Of Hell
02:55 Mine Kings
03:50 Wicked Tuna



ORDINARY PEOPLE
DIRECTED BY ROBERT REDFORD



ORDINARY PEOPLE ON OSN MOVIES HD FESTIVAL

CLASSIFIEDS



KNCC PROGRAMME FROM THURSDAY TO WEDNESDAY (16/03/2017 TO 22/03/2017)

Time	Movie	Time	Movie
12:00 PM	BEAUTY AND THE BEAST	1:45 PM	VENGEANCE: A LOVE STORY
2:30 PM	BEAUTY AND THE BEAST	3:45 PM	VENGEANCE: A LOVE STORY
5:00 PM	BEAUTY AND THE BEAST	5:45 PM	VENGEANCE: A LOVE STORY
7:30 PM	KONG: SKULL ISLAND	7:45 PM	HAMAHAH - Kuwaiti Film
10:00 PM	KONG: SKULL ISLAND	9:15 PM	LOGAN
12:30 AM	KONG: SKULL ISLAND	12:05 AM	VENGEANCE: A LOVE STORY
11:30 AM	VENGEANCE: A LOVE STORY	12:15 PM	SLEEPLESS
1:30 PM	BEAUTY AND THE BEAST	4:15 PM	SLEEPLESS
4:00 PM	BEAUTY AND THE BEAST	6:15 PM	SLEEPLESS
6:30 PM	BEAUTY AND THE BEAST	8:15 PM	SLEEPLESS
9:00 PM	BEAUTY AND THE BEAST	10:15 PM	SLEEPLESS
11:30 PM	BEAUTY AND THE BEAST	12:15 AM	SLEEPLESS
12:45 PM	SLEEPLESS	1:30 PM	FANAR-3
2:45 PM	VENGEANCE: A LOVE STORY	4:00 PM	KONG: SKULL ISLAND
4:45 PM	SLEEPLESS	6:30 PM	KONG: SKULL ISLAND
6:45 PM	SLEEPLESS	9:00 PM	BEAUTY AND THE BEAST
8:45 PM	VENGEANCE: A LOVE STORY	11:30 PM	BEAUTY AND THE BEAST
10:45 PM	SLEEPLESS	12:00 PM	BEAUTY AND THE BEAST
12:45 AM	VENGEANCE: A LOVE STORY	2:30 PM	BEAUTY AND THE BEAST
11:45 AM	SLEEPLESS	5:00 PM	BEAUTY AND THE BEAST
1:45 PM	KONG: SKULL ISLAND	7:30 PM	BEAUTY AND THE BEAST
4:15 PM	KONG: SKULL ISLAND	10:00 PM	BEAUTY AND THE BEAST
6:45 PM	KONG: SKULL ISLAND	12:30 AM	BEAUTY AND THE BEAST
9:15 PM	KONG: SKULL ISLAND	12:15 PM	SLEEPLESS
11:45 PM	KONG: SKULL ISLAND	2:45 PM	SLEEPLESS
12:30 PM	BEAUTY AND THE BEAST	5:15 PM	SLEEPLESS
3:00 PM	BEAUTY AND THE BEAST	7:45 PM	SLEEPLESS
5:30 PM	BEAUTY AND THE BEAST	10:15 PM	SLEEPLESS
8:00 PM	SLEEPLESS	12:45 AM	SLEEPLESS
10:15 PM	SLEEPLESS	1:00 PM	BEAUTY AND THE BEAST
12:15 AM	SLEEPLESS	1:30 PM	BEAUTY AND THE BEAST
11:30 AM	BEAUTY AND THE BEAST	3:30 PM	BEAUTY AND THE BEAST
2:00 PM	BEAUTY AND THE BEAST	6:00 PM	SLEEPLESS
4:30 PM	BEAUTY AND THE BEAST	8:00 PM	SLEEPLESS
7:00 PM	BEAUTY AND THE BEAST	10:00 PM	LOGAN
9:30 PM	BEAUTY AND THE BEAST	12:45 AM	SLEEPLESS
12:05 AM	BEAUTY AND THE BEAST	11:45 AM	KONG: SKULL ISLAND
11:45 AM	VENGEANCE: A LOVE STORY	2:15 PM	KONG: SKULL ISLAND

WANTED

COOK FOR FAMILY LIVE-IN

Fluent in English
 Minimum 15 years experience in Middle East and Western Food

Please send your CV and photo to email:
cookrequiredq8@gmail.com
 or Fax: 22454586

ACCOMMODATION

Partition for rent shoon, Hawally, Tunist st. Only for Filipino. Ph: 55195488. (C 5287)

Accommodation available for a Catholic bachelor at Abbassiya near Unique store No. 2, opp Best Bakers from 1st of April 2017. Contact: 66110593 or 24313908. (C 5286) 19-3-2017

CHANGE OF NAME

I, FRANK CORNELIUS GON-SALVES holder of Indian Passport No. G3303149, hereby change my Father name JOSEPH to JOSE SANTANA ARQUIMEDES GON-SALVES and Mother name ROSE to ROSARIA GON-SALVES. (C 5284)

I, Dadi Setty Venkata Ramana S/o Subbaiah, Passport No. N8640361 and Civil ID No. 271081603624 has changed my name to Gobburu Sivaiah S/o Chinna Subbarayudu, hereinafter in all my dealings and documents I will be known by name of Gobburu Sivaiah.

I, Dadi Setty Nagarathamma W/o Dadi Setty Venkata Ramana, Passport No. P1092521 and Civil ID No. 274061210819 has changed my name to Gobburu Nagarathamma wife of Gobburu Sivaiah, hereinafter in all my dealings and documents I will be known by name of Gobburu Nagarathamma. (C 5285) 17-3-2017

SITUATION VACANT

Lady maid is needed to work as a part-timer in a house located in Salmiya. Salary is KD 100 and total working hours (20-24 HRS). Call 66417504. (C 5283) 17-3-2017

PRAYER TIMINGS

Fajr: 04:33
Shorook: 05:53
Duhr: 11:56
Asr: 15:23
Maghrib: 17:59
Isha: 19:16

FOR RENT

Furnished and Unfurnished apartments

The Apartment has 3 bedrooms (2 are Master) + 4 bathrooms + Kitchen

New building (Reception lobby + Swimming Pool +Gym, Car parking in the basement)

Currently available:
 Unfurnished Apartment on the 8th floor, Rent KD 650
 Furnished Apartment on the 13th Floor, Rent KD 950
 Furnished Apartment on the 20th Floor, Rent KD 1000
 Unfurnished Apartment on the 20th Floor, Rent KD 750

Address: Mahboula, Coastal Road, Block 2

For Enquiry: WhatsApp: 66887099

URGENTLY WANTED

Kidney donation

0+ blood type

16 years old girl in need of kidney due to kidneys failure. Doner age should be between 21 and 40 yrs.

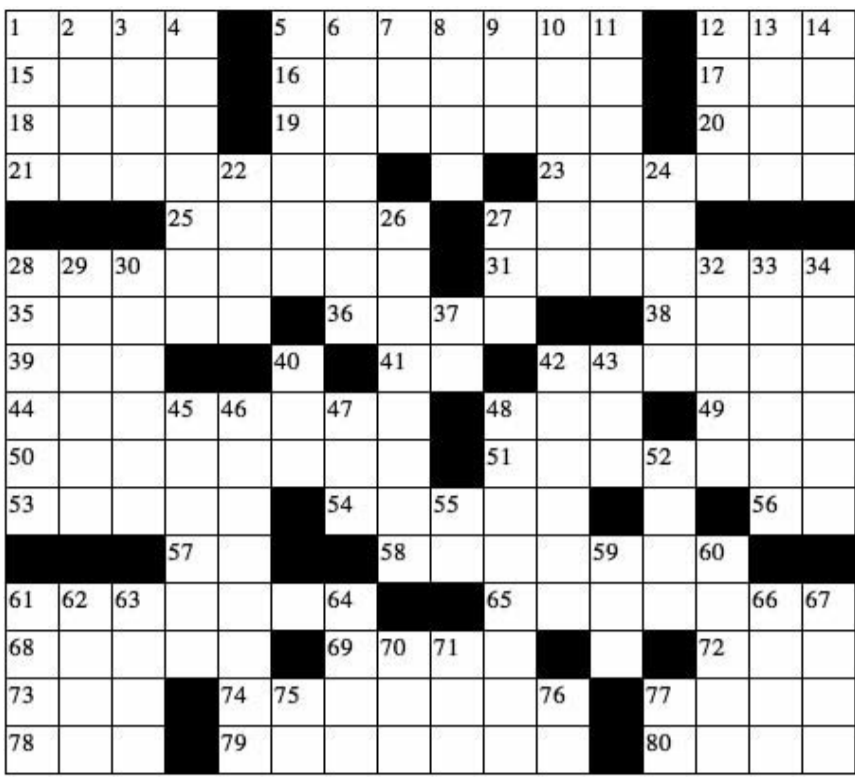
Cont: 99042250

Directorate General of Civil Aviation Home Page (www.kuwait-airport.com.kw)

Flight Schedule

Arrival Flights on Monday 20/3/2017				Departure Flights on Monday 20/3/2017			
Airlines	Fit	Route	Time	Airlines	Fit	Route	Time
KAC	776	Riyadh	00:20	KAC	614	Bahrain	13:30
JZR	267	Beirut	00:30	KAC	564	Amman	13:40
JZR	539	Cairo	00:40	KNE	231	Riyadh	13:55
THY	772	Istanbul	00:55	KAC	672	Dubai	14:00
KAC	102	London	00:55	QTR	1078	Doha	14:10
FDK	803	Damascus	01:00	FDB	059	Dubai	14:20
KAC	742	Dammam	01:00	SVA	500	Jeddah	14:30
RJA	642	Amman	01:05	KAC	692	Muscat	14:30
QTR	1086	Doha	01:15	KAC	414	Bangkok	14:35
THY	764	Istanbul	01:50	GFA	221	Bahrain	14:40
DLH	635	Doha	01:55	KAC	542	Cairo	14:45
PGT	858	Istanbul	02:00	KNE	529	Jeddah	14:55
UAE	853	Dubai	02:30	ETD	303	Abu Dhabi	15:15
GFA	211	Bahrain	02:30	OMA	645	Muscat	15:35
KKK	6506	Istanbul	02:55	UAE	857	Dubai	15:45
OMA	643	Muscat	02:55	ABY	127	Sharjah	15:50
FDB	069	Dubai	03:05	KAC	154	Istanbul	15:55
MSR	612	Cairo	03:10	SAW	705	Damascus	16:00
ETD	305	Abu Dhabi	03:10	QTR	1072	Doha	16:10
CEB	0018	Manila	03:15	FDB	051	Dubai	16:25
QTR	1076	Doha	03:30	KAC	788	Jeddah	16:30
KAC	358	Kochi	03:30	KAC	662	Abu Dhabi	16:35
KAC	418	Manila	04:25	RJA	640	Amman	16:55
FEG	933	Sohag	05:00	KAC	118	New York	17:00
JZR	503	Luxor	05:10	SVA	510	Riyadh	17:15
DHX	170	Bahrain	05:20	GFA	215	Bahrain	17:30
KAC	354	BLR	05:20	JZR	777	Jeddah	17:45
KAC	332	Trivandrum	05:45	UAE	875	Dubai	18:00
THY	770	Istanbul	05:55	FDB	063	Dubai	18:10
KAC	384	Delhi	06:05	JZR	177	Dubai	18:20
KAC	364	Colombo	06:05	KAC	502	Beirut	18:45
KAC	206	Islamabad	06:20	QTR	1080	Doha	18:50
BAW	157	London	06:40	ABY	123	Sharjah	19:25
PAL	668	Manila/Dubai	07:00	GFA	217	Bahrain	19:30
FDB	5061	Dubai	07:15	KAC	674	Dubai	19:45
KAC	284	Dhaka	07:35	KAC	620	Doha	19:50
FDB	053	Dubai	07:50	FDB	057	Dubai	19:50
KAC	302	Mumbai	08:20	KAC	166	Rome	19:55
UAE	855	Dubai	08:40	KNE	381	Taif	19:55
KAC	382	Delhi	08:45	KAC	694	Muscat	20:00
ABY	125	Sharjah	09:05	OMA	647	Muscat	20:10
ETD	301	Abu Dhabi	09:05	QTR	1088	Doha	20:35
KAC	352	Kochi	09:10	DLH	634	Frankfurt	20:45
QTR	1070	Doha	09:30	FDB	5053	Dubai	21:00
FDB	055	Dubai	09:40	KAC	786	Jeddah	21:15
IRA	667	Esfahan	10:00	ETD	307	Abu Dhabi	21:20
GFA	213	Bahrain	10:40	MEA	402	Beirut	21:20
SYR	341	Damascus	11:00	ALK	229	Colombo	21:25
KAC	774	Riyadh	11:05	UAE	859	Dubai	21:40
AXB	889	Mangalore/Bahrain	11:10	GFA	219	Bahrain	21:45
JZR	165	Dubai	11:30	QTR	1082	Doha	22:00
KAC	618	Doha	11:50	JZR	125	Bahrain	22:05
MEA	404	Beirut	11:55	ETD	309	Abu Dhabi	22:15
KAC	744	Dammam	12:10	AIC	975	Chennai/Goa	22:25
MSC	401	Alexandria	12:30	JZR	241	Amman	22:45
FEG	953	Asyut	12:35	ETD	919	Abu Dhabi/Bahrain	22:45
JZR	561	Sohag	12:40	KAC	164	Paris	22:55
FDB	075	Dubai	12:50	JAI	574	Mumbai	23:00
UAE	871	Dubai	12:50	JZR	185	Dubai	23:15
MSR	610	Cairo	13:00	FDB	071	Dubai	23:45
				BBC	143	Dhaka	23:55

CROSSWORD 1553



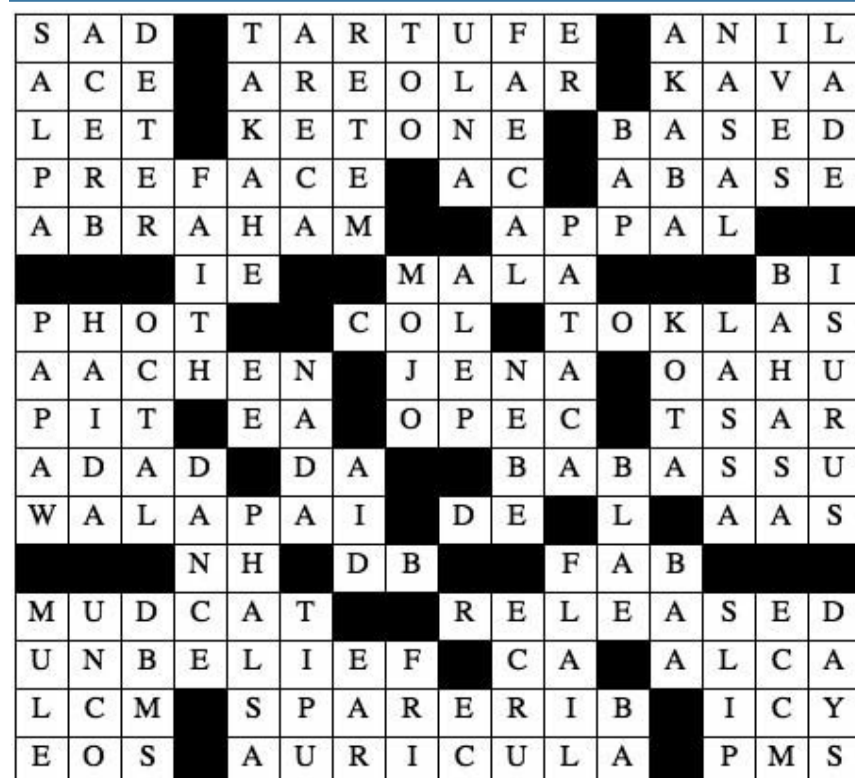
ACROSS

- Made from residue of grapes or apples after pressing.
- Common black-and-gray Eurasian bird noted for thievery.
- (Roman mythology) Goddess of abundance and fertility.
- A particular geographical region of indefinite boundary (usually serving some special purpose or distinguished by its people or culture or geography).
- Russian ballet dancer (1910-1998).
- Committee formed by a special-interest group to raise money for their favorite political candidates.
- A flat-bottomed volcanic crater that was formed by an explosion.
- Morally rigorous and strict.
- Title for a civil or military leader (especially in Turkey).
- The first of the Old Testament patriarchs and the father of Isaac.
- Turned or stirred by plowing or harrowing or hoeing.
- Dyed fabric.
- Italian violinist (1782-1840).
- A sock knitted or woven with a diamond-shaped pattern.
- King of Judea who (according to the New Testament) tried to kill Jesus by ordering the death of all children under age two in Bethlehem (73-4 BC).
- Type genus of the Aceraceae.
- The quality of a person's voice.
- Gone by.
- Unknown god.
- Skintight knit hose covering the body from the waist to the feet worn by acrobats and dancers and as stockings by women and girls.
- A member of the Shoshonean people of Utah and Colorado and New Mexico.
- A port in eastern Georgia near the mouth of the Savannah river.
- Relating to anemia or suffering from anemia.
- Administer an oil or ointment to.
- Possessing or using or characteristic of or appropriate to supernatural powers.
- A New England state.
- Being ten more than one hundred ninety.
- The part of a missile or torpedo that carries the explosive charge.
- British violinist (born in the United States) who began his career as a child prodigy in the 1920s (1916-1999).
- A mask with a filter protects the face against lungs against poisonous gases.
- The mission in San Antonio where in 1836 Mexican forces under Santa Anna besieged and massacred American rebels who were fighting to make Texas independent of Mexico.
- Having come or been brought to a conclusion.
- Aircraft landing in bad weather in which the pilot is talked down by ground control using precision approach radar.
- Support resembling the rib of an animal.
- New World lizards.
- The 19th letter of the Greek alphabet.
- An abstract or general idea inferred or derived from specific instances.
- A small cake leavened with yeast.

DOWN

- Informal terms for a mother.
- An Arabic speaking person who lives in

- Located in or toward the back or rear.
- Water buffalo of the Philippines.
- A tall Brazilian feather palm with a terminal crown of very large leathery pinnatisect leaves rising from long strong stems used for structural purposes.
- Any of various forms of aluminum oxide occurring naturally as corundum.
- 4-wheeled motor vehicle.
- A fabric made by knitting.
- A very small circular shape.
- A new embodiment of a familiar idea.
- (of the moon) "after full moon comes the waning moon".
- A translucent mineral consisting of hydrated silica of variable color.
- Especially one side of a leaf.
- Any of a number of fishes of the family Carangidae.
- The (prehensile) extremity of the superior limb.
- A battle in World War II.
- Something considered choice to eat.
- A room or establishment where alcoholic drinks are served over a counter.
- Of or relating to or characteristic of the prehistoric Aegean civilization.
- A long narrow furrow cut either by a natural process (such as erosion) or by a tool (as e.g. a groove in a phonograph record).
- Someone (physician or clergyman) who substitutes temporarily for another member of the same profession.
- Related to the mother's side.
- Of superior grade.
- (Akkadian) God of wisdom.
- According to need (physicians use PRN in writing prescriptions).
- (anatomy) A structure that resembles a shell in shape.
- A loose sleeveless outer garment made from aba cloth.
- A fine grained mineral having a soft soapy feel and consisting of hydrated magnesium silicate.
- Not having or producing echoes.
- A barrier constructed to contain the flow or water or to keep out the sea.
- A flat wire hairpin whose prongs press tightly together.
- Mild yellow Dutch cheese made in balls.
- A rare silvery (usually trivalent) metallic element.
- The compass point midway between east and southeast.
- (Irish) Chief god of the Tuatha De Danann.
- English essayist (1775-1834).
- (Babylonian) God of wisdom and agriculture and patron of scribes and schools.
- A word that can be used to refer to a person or place or thing.
- Someone who works (or provides workers) during a strike.
- God of love and erotic desire.
- British informal term.
- The compass point midway between northeast and east.
- Functioning correctly and ready for action.
- A highly unstable radioactive element (the heaviest of the halogen series).
- The blood group whose red cells carry both the A and B antigens.



STAR TRACK



Aries (March 21-April 19)

Showcase your talents and abilities as often as possible in order to encourage creative problem solving and satisfy the need to be helpful. Using the creative parts of you encourages a balance in body-mind-spirit. Co-workers are around today because of some special gathering. This may mean an award dinner or perhaps a fun social gathering. Whatever the case, this is one of those days when your mouth hurts from smiling so much. You won't get away by yourself for long, so buckle down and be the best social blender that you can be. One helpful hint-suggest fun activities and get them started in the busy fun. It is in taking chances that you will see big rewards. Lovers, children and other people or things dear to your heart are emphasized tonight.



Taurus (April 20-May 20)

A worry or two on your mind will dissolve quickly this morning. Difficult people seem to be in a good frame of mind today. You may be surprised at the way things develop. The planned activities of this day go along smoothly and difficult conversations are quite productive. Generally, everything seems to go along rather well. You have certainly become more interested in all sorts of things lately. You may come up with some new method or invention and find others accepting and encouraging. Finally, you may feel that you are in touch and in harmony with people that have become very important to you. Ideals and a sense of belonging to something bigger than the merely personal become more important in your life at this time.



Gemini (May 21-June 20)

Someone could be watching you today. You have a lot of energy to pour into your life and are creative as well as practical. Young and old watch and learn from you as you manage your family and home with an open mind and kindness. No person in your family wants to disappoint you so it is important for you to be approving and appreciative as much as possible. Today there are some wonderful surprises that come as recognition. Later today, your concentration may be on writing, studies, classes and conferring with close kin and neighbors. Someone in the family or in your close circle of friends will take on a more communicative way of interacting with you. You could be most influential and expressive in your instructions and the way you communicate.



Cancer (June 21-July 22)

The challenges you face at this time are survivable and negotiable. You have a clear-minded insight into your own plans and methods. Tactfulness is the key activity for this day, especially when pointing out someone's mistakes. Companionship with others is most rewarding at this time and you should take every opportunity to be with them. This afternoon would be a good time to begin a new and regular exercise program to build your strength and stamina. Extreme exercising and overeating can be threats to your health, however. Learn ways in which to keep a positive frame of mind. Negative thoughts and feelings, especially if you are having any difficulties, could have serious consequences for your peace of mind. Recognize the balance.



Leo (July 23-August 22)

Your personal charm is most impressive to others this month. There can be a key to increased attention if you are in business for yourself. Your ideas for advertising are superb. If you have a business in the city, you might think of branching out through the internet. Your energy is high and the creative juices are flowing, ready to be applied to whatever you have set before you. If you give your best effort now, considerable success will certainly follow; you may have instinctively helped a close friend through your efforts. Lovers, children and other people or things dear to your heart are emphasized at this time in your life. Being appreciated and admired for your gifts and talents are powerful needs. Taking chances can bring big rewards.



Virgo (August 23-September 22)

Long-term projects around the house can begin to wind down and become completed. You have an appreciation for responsibilities and duty. Keep an eye on the plumbing and follow up on any problems that could get out of hand. Any problems now are valued for the lessons they represent, rather than perceived as obstacles. You may be sought after for your advice and counsel regarding very personal and emotional issues this afternoon. A good conversation with those you love is most reassuring-you encourage lighthearted conversations. Find a movie or some other activity that everyone can enjoy. A feeling of being at peace and stable on the emotional level comes into play at this time. Music is likely to play an important role for you this evening.



Libra (September 23-October 22)

You may want to take a class or join a club in order to learn something new or enjoy a previous interest. If you are looking to volunteer, you should check all aspects of a project or program to find out where your energies can be best applied. You feel invigorated and ready to conquer the world. You also may find yourself guiding someone younger than you in matters of importance. This is a very nice day, perhaps filled with renewed appreciation for all that is beautiful and fine. Your sense of value and valuing is strong this evening and you may find yourself encouraged to lavish affection on those near you. This may mean a night out at the movies or dinner away from home. Whatever the case, this evening provides the opportunity to express appreciation to others.



Scorpio (October 23-November 21)

A secret admirer may slip and let his or her identity be known. This could happen in some group gathering like some activity with friends. Unusual ideas and fresh ways of expressing yourself plays a bigger than usual part in your life. You will soon be an active participant in the community or in a presentation to the community, such as a performance of some sort. You are most often involved in community activities and many times these activities are because of a benefit. Have you ever thought of working for a charity group to help the charity to grow and be more useful in the attempt to help society you would be an excellent part of any such group. You may also be skillful in introducing a new transportation technology for your area.



Sagittarius (November 22-December 19)

A domestic problem has eased somewhat. You may, however, find yourself a bit impulsive. Your thoughts and ideas may seem repressive and limiting so you consider what it might mean to think outside the box, so to speak. You may decide to shop a little this afternoon and find something special for a loved one's birthday or some other type of gift. You also may consider a day in the future when you will be traveling-it is something that you and a loved one would enjoy. This afternoon you may decide to do a little research of different areas of the country from a comfortable library chair. Although you can become quite involved with whatever holds your interest, you are to be congratulated for your conscious effort to keep family close.



Capricorn (December 22-January 19)

A new phase dawns for you involving the pursuit of social or political power and status. This all has a way of pulling you in a fascinating direction and you should let nothing stand in the way as you are influential and progressive and will carve out positive directions for many. The domestic scene gains new appeal and you enjoy taking the time to dive into your hobbies and possibly tending to a few personal affairs. There is a lot of energy and drive available for whatever you want to accomplish. Some form of safety in the home has your attention later today and you may decide to schedule a fire or police inspection of your home next week to make sure everything is up to standard or if anything needs to be secured. You give family your attention.



Aquarius (January 20- February 18)

Try a new approach with your creative project today. Lady luck seems to be on your side where money is concerned. This is a good thing, as you seem to spend money faster than it comes into your life. Ideas of less financial burdens are helpful and putting new plans into effect will help you get better monetary stability. This may involve a move or an extra job but you will be accountable and take pride in your accomplishments within a short time. Others value you for your independence and unique qualities. Young people come to you when they need guidance. Taking control of your life in the many ways you have planned will create an opportunity to help others learn and grow wise. Perhaps a good book or movie can be enjoyed this evening.



Pisces (February 19-March 20)

As usual, you want to accomplish great things, and that is where your mind navigates back to from time to time today. This is natural on your birthday and you adjust your plans to widen your scope of goals. You have done well and you want to shine when it comes to personnel reviews in your work. A planning folder has been working well as you take time to add new dimensions. The desire to excel in your work is commendable and is promising. Get your calendar out and plot your path-you will be pleased with the results. You have the positive energy working in your favor to succeed at whatever you set out to accomplish in your home and in the workplace. You are also in tune to the comedy of life. Your humor is kind.

Wordsearch Puzzle

Restaurant

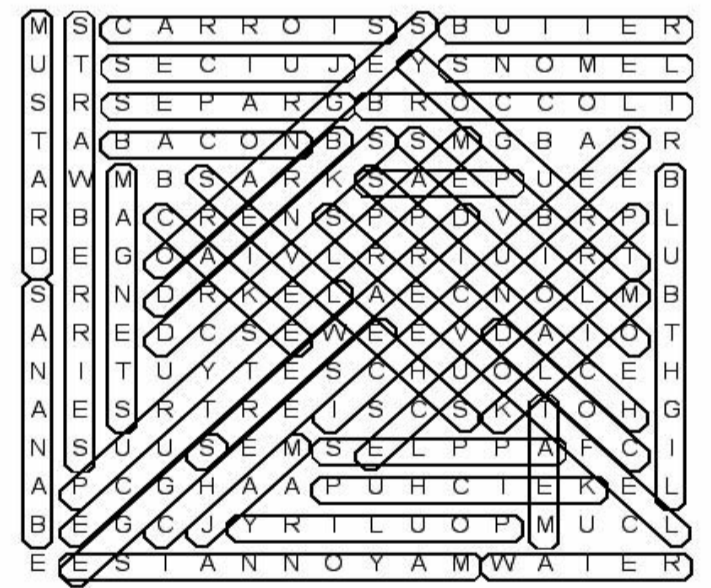
Find and circle all of the Restaurant words that are hidden in the grid. The remaining letters spell an additional word.

R R E M O T S U C E W E S K T
 W A T E R E I H S A C D N N E
 M O S A E R W D I V E C A I A
 E R E L B A A T A S T U P F W
 N D R M I L R F S L Y P P E D
 U E V T A E E E I O A S E N R
 S R E K S N R C B T R S T O I
 E R R S R T A S L E I C I O N
 S T S S I O U G C O H R Z P K
 S A C E A B F U E E T T E S S
 A B O T H I A L F R I H R P O
 L L O A C S L N A P K I N S A
 G E K L D I S H W A S H E R S
 N S S P B C O F F E E R T N E

- | | | | |
|-----------|-------------|---------|------------|
| APERITIF | CUPS | MANAGER | SPOON |
| APPETIZER | CUSTOMER | MEAL | TABLECLOTH |
| BILL | DESSERT | MENU | TABLES |
| BUSBOY | DISHWASHERS | NAPKINS | TEA |
| CASHIER | DRINKS | ORDER | TIP |
| CHAIRS | ENTREE | PLATES | WAITER |
| CHEF | FORK | SALAD | WAITRESS |
| COFFEE | GLASSES | SAUCERS | WATER |
| COOKS | KNIFE | SERVERS | WINE |

Yesterday's Solution

Refrigerator



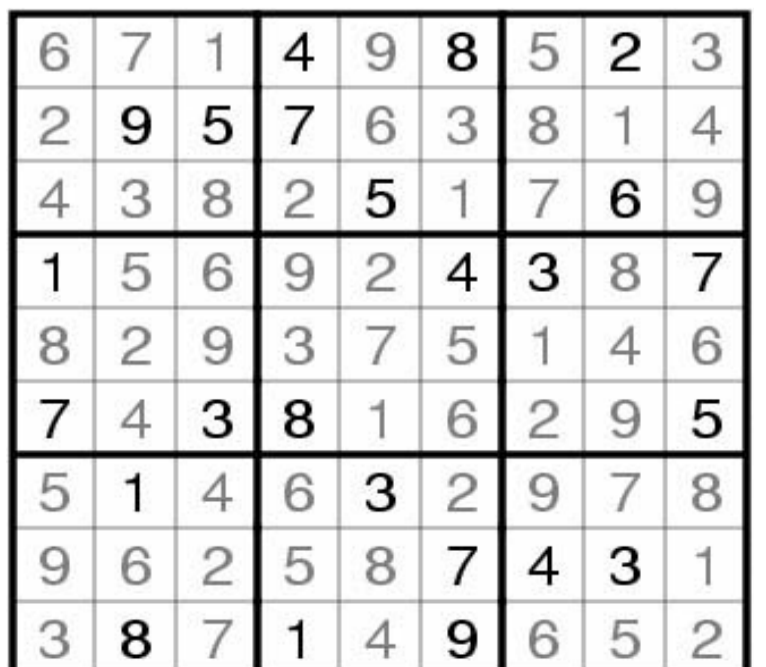
- | | | | |
|----------|-----------|-------------|--------------|
| APPLES | DRAWERS | LETTUCE | ORANGES |
| BACON | DRINKS | LIGHTBULB | PEAS |
| BANANAS | EGGS | MAGNETS | POULTRY |
| BREAD | GRAPES | MAPLE SYRUP | PRODUCE |
| BROCCOLI | ICE CUBES | MAYONNAISE | SHELVES |
| BUTTER | JAM | MEAT | SPINACH |
| CAKE | JUICES | MILK | STRAWBERRIES |
| CARROTS | KETCHUP | MUSTARD | WATER |
| CHEESE | LEFTOVERS | OLIVES | YOGURT |
| COLD | LEMONS | | |

The hidden message is: BARBECUE SAUCE

Daily SuDoku



Yesterday's Solution



For labor-related inquiries and complaints:
Call MSAL hotline 128

Hospitals

Sabah Hospital	24812000
Amiri Hospital	22450005
Maternity Hospital	24843100
Mubarak Al-Kabir Hospital	25312700
Chest Hospital	24849400
Farwaniya Hospital	24892010
Adan Hospital	23940620
Ibn Sina Hospital	24840300
Al-Razi Hospital	24846000
Physiotherapy Hospital	24874330/9

Clinics

Kaizen center	25716707
Rawda	22517733
Adaliya	22517144
Khalidiya	24848075
Kaifan	24849807
Shamiya	24848913
Shuwaikh	24814507
Abdullah Salem	22549134
Nuzha	22526804
Industrial Shuwaikh	24814764
Qadsiya	22515088
Dasmah	22532265
Bneid Al-Gar	22531908
Shaab	22518752
Qibla	22459381
Ayoun Al-Qibla	22451082
Mirqab	22456536
Sharq	22465401
Salmiya	25746401
Jabriya	25316254
Maidan Hawally	25623444
Bayan	25388462
Mishref	25381200
W Hawally	22630786
Sabah	24810221
Jahra	24770319
New Jahra	24575755
West Jahra	24772608
South Jahra	24775066
North Jahra	24775992
North Jleeb	24311795
Ardhiya	24884079
Firdous	24892674
Omariya	24719048
N Khaitan	24710044
Fintas	23900322



PHARMACIES ON 24 HRS DUTY

GOVERNORATE	PHARMACY	ADDRESS	PHONE
Ahmadi	Sama Safwan Abu Halaifa Danat Al-Sultan	Fahaeel Makka St Abu Halaifa-Coastal Rd Mahboula Block 1, Coastal Rd	23915883 23715414 23726558
Jahra	Modern Jahra Madina Munawara	Jahra-Block 3 Lot 1 Jahra-Block 92	24575518 24566622
Capital	Ahlam 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

STATE OF KUWAIT
DIRECTORATE GENERAL OF CIVIL AVIATION
METEOROLOGICAL DEPARTMENT



Tel: (+965) 161 Ext: 6819 - 6817
Fax: (+965) 24348714
www.met.gov.kw

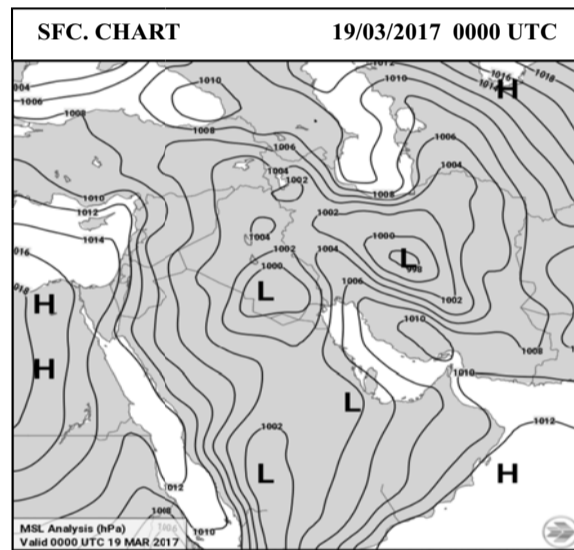


Expected Weather for the Next 24 Hours

BY DAY: Unstable with moderate to fresh south easterly wind, with speed of 25 - 50 km/h causing raising dust with a chance for rain that might be thundery at times

BY NIGHT: Cloudy to partly cloudy with light to moderate freshening gradually at times south easterly changing to north westerly wind, with speed of 20 - 45 km/h causing raising dust with a chance for rain that might be

STATION	MAX. EXP.	MIN. REC.
KUWAIT CITY	24 °C	16 °C
KUWAIT AIRPORT	24 °C	15 °C
ABDALY	28 °C	16 °C
BUBYAN	21 °C	19 °C
JAHRA	26 °C	15 °C
FAILAKA ISLAND	23 °C	19 °C
SALMIYAH	20 °C	16 °C
AHMADI	21 °C	16 °C
NUWAISIB	24 °C	19 °C
WAFRA	26 °C	19 °C
SALMY	26 °C	13 °C



DAY	DATE	WEATHER	Temperatures		Wind Direction	Wind Speed
			MAX.	MIN.		
Monday	03/20	Mostly sunny	26 °C	13 °C	SE	15 - 35 km/h
Tuesday	03/21	Mostly sunny	27 °C	14 °C	VRB	06 - 22 km/h
Wednesday	03/22	Partly cloudy	26 °C	13 °C	VRB-S	06 - 26 km/h
Thursday	03/23	Partly cloudy to cloudy+dust+scattered thunder rain at times	25 °C	12 °C	SE-NW	25 - 45 km/h

PRAYER TIMES	
Fajr	04:33
Sunrise	05:53
Zuhr	11:56
Asr	15:23
Sunset	17:58
Isha	19:15

RECORDED YESTERDAY AT KUWAIT AIRPORT	
MAX. Temp.	26 °C
MIN. Temp.	11 °C
MAX. RH	56 %
MIN. RH	11 %
MAX. Wind	SE 46 km/h
TOTAL RAINFALL IN 24 HR.	.33 mm

INTERNATIONAL CALLS



Afghanistan	0093	Lithuania	00370
Albania	00355	Luxembourg	00352
Algeria	00213	Macau	00853
Andorra	00376	Macedonia	00389
Angola	00244	Madagascar	00261
Anguilla	001264	Majorca	0034
Antigua	001268	Malawi	00265
Argentina	0054	Malaysia	0060
Armenia	00374	Maldives	00960
Australia	0061	Mali	00223
Austria	0043	Malta	00356
Azerbaijan	00994	Marshall Islands	00692
Bahamas	001242	Martinique	00596
Bahrain	00973	Mauritania	00222
Bangladesh	00880	Mauritius	00230
Barbados	001246	Mayotte	00269
Belarus	00375	Mexico	0052
Belgium	0032	Micronesia	00691
Belize	00501	Moldova	00373
Benin	00229	Monaco	00377
Bermuda	001441	Mongolia	00976
Bhutan	00975	Montserrat	001664
Bolivia	00591	Morocco	00212
Bosnia	00387	Mozambique	00258
Botswana	00267	Myanmar (Burma)	0095
Brazil	0055	Namibia	00264
Brunei	00673	Nepal	00977
Bulgaria	00359	Netherlands	0031
Burkina	00226	Netherlands Antilles	00599
Burundi	00257	New Caledonia	00687
Cambodia	00855	New Zealand	0064
Cameroon	00237	Nicaragua	00505
Canada	001	Niger	00227
Cape Verde	00238	Nigeria	00234
Cayman Islands	001345	Niue	00683
Central African	00236	Norfolk Island	00672
Chad	00235	N. Ireland (UK)	0044
Chile	0056	North Korea	00850
China	0086	Norway	0047
Colombia	0057	Oman	00968
Comoros	00269	Pakistan	0092
Congo	00242	Palau	00680
Cook Islands	00682	Panama	00507
Costa Rica	00506	Papua New Guinea	00675
Croatia	00385	Paraguay	00595
Cuba	0053	Peru	0051
Cyprus	00357	Philippines	0063
Cyprus (Northern)	0090392	Poland	0048
Czech Republic	00420	Portugal	00351
Denmark	0045	Puerto Rico	001787
Diego Garcia	00246	Qatar	00974
Djibouti	00253	Romania	0040
Dominica	001767	Russian Federation	007
Dominican Republic	001809	Rwanda	00250
Ecuador	00593	Saint Helena	00290
Egypt	0020	Saint Kitts	001869
El Salvador	00503	Saint Lucia	001758
England (UK)	0044	Saint Pierre	00508
Equatorial Guinea	00240	Saint Vincent	001784
Eritrea	00291	Samoa US	00684
Estonia	00372	Samoa West	00685
Ethiopia	00251	San Marino	00378
Falkland Islands	00500	Sao Tome	00239
Faroe Islands	00298	Saudi Arabia	00966
Fiji	00679	Scotland (UK)	0044
Finland	00358	Senegal	00221
France	0033	Seychelles	00284
French Guiana	00594	Sierra Leone	00232
French Polynesia	00689	Singapore	0065
Gabon	00241	Slovakia	00421
Gambia	00220	Slovenia	00386
Georgia	00995	Solomon Islands	00677
Germany	0049	Somalia	00252
Ghana	00233	South Africa	0027
Gibraltar	00350	South Korea	0082
Greece	0030	Spain	0034
Greenland	00299	Sri Lanka	0094
Grenada	001473	Sudan	00249
Guadeloupe	00590	Suriname	00597
Guam	001671	Swaziland	00268
Guatemala	00502	Sweden	0046
Guinea	00224	Switzerland	0041
Guyana	00592	Syria	00963
Haiti	00509	Serbia	00381
Holland (Netherlands)	0031	Taiwan	00886
Honduras	00504	Tanzania	00255
Hong Kong	00852	Thailand	0066
Hungary	0036	Togo	00228
Ibiza (Spain)	0034	Tonga	00676
Iceland	00354	Tokelau	00690
India	0091	Trinidad	001868
Indian Ocean	00873	Tunisia	00216
Indonesia	0062	Turkey	0090
Iran	0098	Tuvalu	00688
Iraq	00964	Uganda	00256
Ireland	00353	Ukraine	00380
Italy	0039	United Arab Emirates	00976
Ivory Coast	00225	United Kingdom	0044
Jamaica	001876	Uruguay	00598
Japan	0081	USA	001
Jordan	00962	Uzbekistan	00998
Kazakhstan	007	Vanuatu	00678
Kenya	00254	Venezuela	00582
Kiribati	00686	Vietnam	0084
Kuwait	00965	Virgin Islands UK	001284
Kyrgyzstan	00996	Virgin Islands US	001340
Laos	00856	Wales (UK)	0044
Latvia	00371	Yemen	00967
Lebanon	00961	Yugoslavia	00381
Liberia	00231	Zambia	00260
Libya	00218	Zimbabwe	00263
Lesotho	00266		



PRIVATE CLINICS

Ophthalmologists	
Dr. Abdallah Al-Mansoor	25622444
Dr. Samy Al-Rabea	25752222
Dr. Masoma Habeeb	25321171
Dr. Mubarak Al-Ajmy	25739999
Dr. Mohsen Abel	25757700
Dr. Adnan Hasan Alwayl	25732223
Dr. Abdallah Al-Baghly	25732223
Ear, Nose & Throat (ENT)	
Dr. Ahmed Fouad Mouner	24555050 Ext 510
Dr. Abdallah Al-Ali	25644660
Dr. Abd Al-Hameed Al-Taweel	25646478
Dr. Sanad Al-Fathalah	25311996
Dr. Mohammad Al-Daory	25731988
Dr. Ismail Al-Fodary	22620166
Dr. Mahmoud Al-Booz	25651426
General Practitioners	
Dr. Mohammed Y Majidi	24555050 Ext 123
Dr. Yousef Al-Omar	24719312
Dr. Tarek Al-Mikhaizeem	23926920
Dr. Kathem Maarafi	25730465
Dr. Abdallah Ahmad Eyadah	25655528
Dr. Nabeel Al-Ayoobi	24577781
Dr. Dina Abdallah Al-Rfae	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-Katrah	22525888
Dr. Abdallah Al-Duweisan	25653755
Dr. Bader Al-Ansari	25620111
Neurologists	
Dr. Sohal Najem Al-Shemeri	25633324
Dr. Jasem Mola Hassan	25345875
Gastrologists	
Dr. Sami Aman	22636464
Dr. Mohammad Al-Shamaly	25322030
Dr. Foad Abdallah Al-Ali	22633135

Endocrinologist	
Dr. Abd Al-Naser Al-Othman	25339330
Dr. Ahmad Al-Ansari	25658888
Dr. Kamal Al-Shomr	25329924
Physiotherapists & VD	
Dr. Deyaa Shehab	25722291
Dr. Mused Faraj Khamees	22666288
Rheumatologists:	
Dr. Adel Al-Awadi	25330060
Dr. Khaled Al-Jarallah	25722290
Internist, Chest & Heart	
DR.Mohammes Akkad	24555050 Ext 210
Dr. Mohammad Zubaid MB, ChB, FRCP, PACC	
Assistant Professor Of Medicine Head, Division of Cardiology Mubarak Al-Kabeer Hospital	25339667
Consultant Cardiologist	
Dr. Farida Al-Habib MD, PH.D, FACC	2611555-2622555
Inaya German Medical Center	
Te: 2575077	
Fax: 25723123	



This file photo taken on December 31, 2010 shows Chuck Berry performing at the Congress Theater in Chicago, Illinois. — AP/AFP photos



This official White House file photo taken on June 22, 1997 shows the US President Bill Clinton (left) and British Prime Minister Tony Blair (right) posing for photographers with blues guitar legend Chuck Berry after the Summit of the Eight meetings in Morrison, Colorado.

Chuck Berry

The greatest rocker of all time

Chuck Berry, rock 'n' roll's founding guitar hero and storyteller who defined the music's joy and rebellion in such classics as "Johnny B Goode," "Sweet Little Sixteen" and "Roll Over Beethoven," died Saturday at his home west of St. Louis. He was 90. Emergency responders summoned to Berry's residence by his caretaker about 12:40 pm found him unresponsive, police in Missouri's St Charles County said in a statement.

Attempts to revive Berry failed, and he was pronounced dead shortly before 1:30 p.m., police said. Berry's core repertoire was some three dozen songs, his influence incalculable, from the Beatles and the Rolling Stones to virtually any group from garage band to arena act that called itself rock 'n' roll.

Roll Music" was a guidebook for all bands that followed ("It's got a back beat, you can't lose it"). "Back in the U.S.A." was a black man's straight-faced tribute to his country at a time there was no guarantee Berry would be served at the drive-ins and corner cafes he was celebrating. "Everything I wrote about wasn't about me, but about the people listening," he once said. "Johnny B. Goode," the tale of a guitar-playing country boy whose mother tells him he'll be a star, was Berry's signature song, the archetypal narrative for would-be rockers and among the most ecstatic recordings in the music's history.

Commercial calculation

Berry can hardly contain himself as the words hurry out ("Deep down Louisiana chose

to New Orleans/Way back up in the woods among the evergreens") and the downpour of guitar, drums and keyboards amplifies every call of "Go, Johnny Go!" The song was inspired in part by Johnnie Johnson, the boogie-woogie piano master who collaborated on many Berry hits, but the story could have easily been Berry's, Presley's or countless others'. Commercial calculation made the song universal: Berry had meant to call Johnny a "colored boy," but changed "colored" to "country," enabling not only radio play, but musicians of any color to imagine themselves as stars.

"Chances are you have talent," Berry later wrote of the song. "But will the name and the light come to you? No! You have to go!" Johnny B Goode could have only been a guitarist. The guitar was rock 'n' roll's signature instrument and Berry's clarion sound, a melting pot of country flash and rhythm 'n blues drive, turned on at least a generation of musicians, among them the Rolling Stones' Keith Richards, who once acknowledged he had "lifted every lick" from his hero; the Beatles' George Harrison; Bruce Springsteen; and the Who's Pete Townshend.

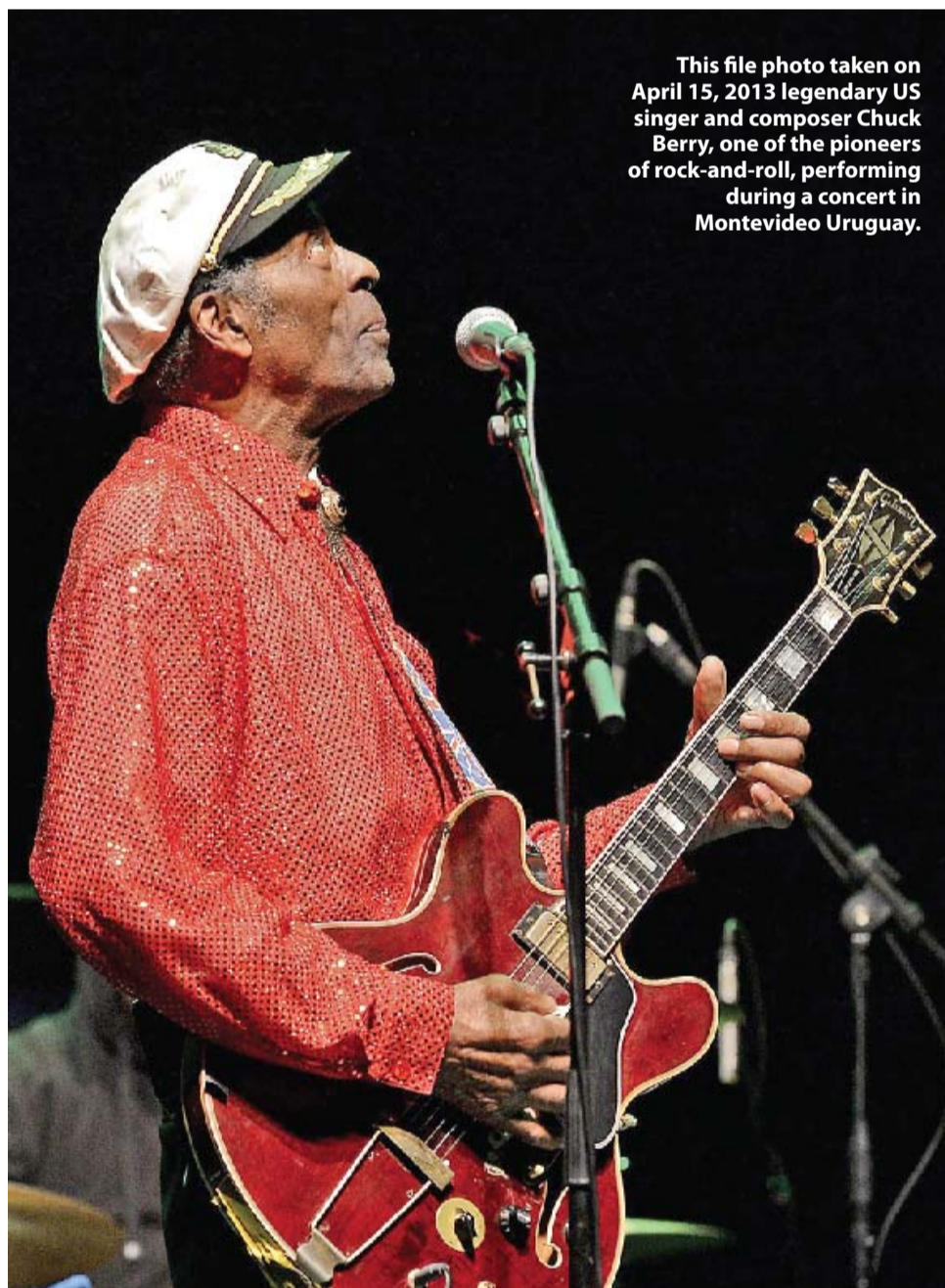
When NASA launched the unmanned Voyager I in 1977, an album was stored on the craft that would explain music on Earth to extraterrestrials. The one rock song included was "Johnny B. Goode." Charles Edward Anderson Berry was born in St. Louis on Oct. 18, 1926. As a child he practiced a bent-leg stride that enabled him to slip under tables, a prelude to the duck walk of his adult years. His mother, like Johnny B. Goode's, told him he

would make it, and make it big. A fan of blues, swing and boogie woogie, Berry studied the very mechanics of music and how it was transmitted. As a teenager, he loved to take radios apart and put them back together.

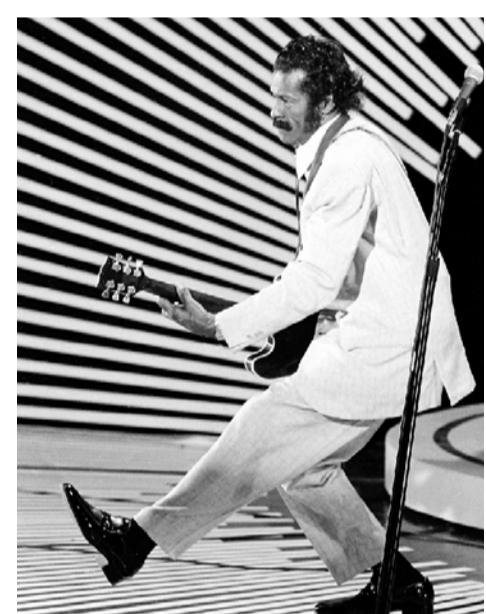
Autobiography

Using a Nick Manoloff guitar chord book, he learned how to play the hits of the time. He was fascinated by chord progressions and rhythms, discovering that many songs borrowed heavily from the Gershwins' "I Got Rhythm." He began his musical career at age

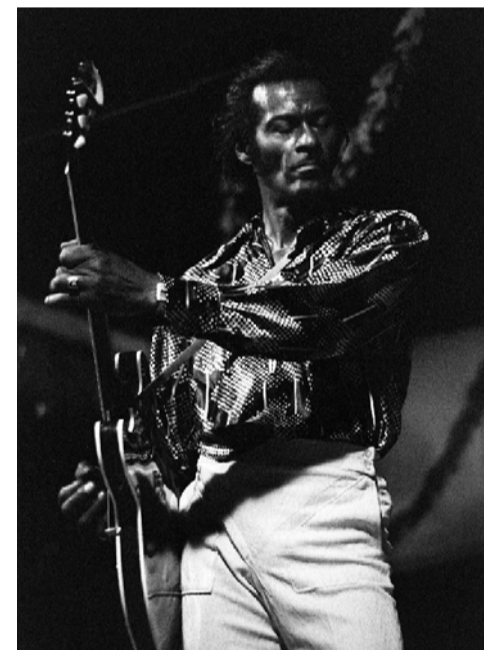
15 when he went on stage at a high school review to do his own version of Jay McShann's "Confessin' the Blues." Berry would never forget the ovation he received. "Long did the encouragement of that performance assist me in programming my songs and even their delivery while performing," he wrote in his autobiography. "I added and deleted according to the audiences' response to different gestures, and chose songs to build an act that would constantly stimulate my audience."



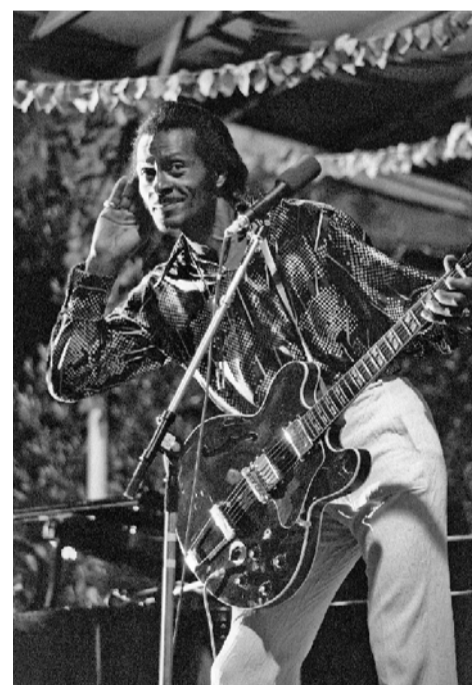
This file photo taken on April 15, 2013 legendary US singer and composer Chuck Berry, one of the pioneers of rock-and-roll, performing during a concert in Montevideo Uruguay.



In this April 4, 1980 file photo, guitarist and singer Chuck Berry performs his "duck walk" as he plays his guitar on stage.



This file photo taken on July 10, 1981 shows US rock singer Chuck Berry performing in Nice, France during the "Grand Jazz Parade".



This file photo taken on July 10, 1981 shows US rock singer Chuck Berry performing in Nice, France during the "Grand Jazz Parade".



David Banks, of St. Louis, Missouri, poses for a photo next to a statue of singer and musician Chuck Berry.

"Just let me hear some of that rock 'n' roll music any old way you use it I am playing I'm talking about you. God bless Chuck Berry Chuck," Beatles drummer Ringo Starr tweeted, quoting some lyrics from a Berry hit. While Elvis Presley gave rock its libidinous, hip-shaking image, Berry was the auteur, setting the template for a new sound and way of life. "Chuck Berry was a rock and roll original. A gifted guitar player, an amazing live performer, and a skilled songwriter whose music and lyrics captured the essence of 1950s teenage life," The Rock & Roll Hall of Fame said in a statement.

Well before the rise of Bob Dylan, Berry wedded social commentary to the beat and rush of popular music. "He was singing good lyrics, and intelligent lyrics, in the '50s when people were singing, 'Oh, baby, I love you so,'" John Lennon once observed. Berry, in his late 20s before his first major hit, crafted lyrics that spoke to the teenagers of the day and remained fresh decades later. "Sweet Little Sixteen" captured rock 'n' roll fandom, an early and innocent ode to the young girls later known as "groupies." "School Day" told of the sing-song trials of the classroom ("American history and practical math; you're studying hard, hoping to pass...") and the liberation of rock 'n' roll once the day's final bell rang.

"Roll Over Beethoven" was an anthem to rock's history-making power, while "Rock and



A woman enters the doorway to the Duck Room at Blueberry Hill, where singer and musician Chuck Berry often played, in University City, Missouri, on March 18, 2017.

Meanwhile, his troubles with the law began, in 1944, when a joy riding trip to Kansas City turned into a crime spree involving armed robberies and car theft. Berry served three years of a 10-year sentence at a reformatory. A year after his October 1947 release, Berry met and married Themetta Suggs, who stayed by his side despite some of his well-publicized indiscretions. Berry then started sitting in with local bands. By 1950, he had graduated to a six-string electric guitar and was making his own crude recordings on a reel to reel machine. On New Year's Eve 1952 at The Cosmopolitan club in East St. Louis, Illinois, Johnson called Berry to fill in for an ailing saxophonist in his Sir John Trio. "He gave me a break" and his first commercial gig, for \$4, Berry later recalled. "I was excited. My best turned into a mess. I stole the group from Johnnie."

Berry's 60th birthday

Influenced by bandleader Louis Jourdan, blues guitarist T-Bone Walker and jazz man Charlie Christian, but also hip to country music, novelty songs and the emerging teen audiences of the post-World War II era, Berry signed with Chicago's Chess Records in 1955. "Maybellene" reworked the country song "Ida Red" and rose into the top 10 of the national pop charts, a rare achievement for a black artist at that time.



Joe Albanese and Diana Kim replace an old mural with a new painting that will feature the album cover of a new Chuck Berry album at Delmar Loop in St Louis on Saturday, March 18, 2017.

According to Berry, label owner Leonard Chess was taken by the novelty of a "hillbilly song sung by a black man," an inversion of Presley's covers of blues songs. Several hits followed, including "Roll Over Beethoven," "School Day" and "Sweet Little Sixteen." Among his other songs: "Too Much Monkey Business," "Nadine," "No Particular Place to Go," "Almost Grown" and the racy novelty number "My Ding-A-Ling," which topped the charts in 1972. Berry also appeared in a dozen movies, using his distinctive bent-legged "duck-walk" in several teen exploitation flicks of the '50s. Richards organized the well-received 1987 documentary "Hail! Hail! Rock 'n' Roll," a concert at St Louis' Fox Theatre to celebrate Berry's 60th birthday. It featured Eric Clapton, Little Richard and Jerry Lee Lewis, who recalled being told by his own mother that Berry, not he, was the true king of rock 'n' roll.

Country, pop and rock artists have recorded Berry songs, including the Beatles ("Roll Over Beethoven"), Emmylou Harris ("You Never Can Tell"), Buck Owens ("Johnny B. Goode") and AC/DC ("School Days"). The Rolling Stones' first single was a cover of Berry's "Come On" and they went on to perform and record "Around and Around," "Let it Rock" and others. Berry riffs pop up in countless songs, from the Stones' ravenous "Brown Sugar" to the Eagles' mellow country-rock ballad "Peaceful Easy Feeling."

Guitar-shaped swimming pool

Some stars covered him too well. The Beach Boys borrowed the melody of "Sweet Little Sixteen" for their surf anthem "Surfin' U.S.A.," without initially crediting Berry. The Beatles' "Come Together," written by John Lennon, was close enough to Berry's "You Can't Catch Me" to inspire a lawsuit by music publisher Morris Levy. In an out of court settlement, Lennon agreed to record "You Can't Catch Me" for his 1975 "Rock 'n' Roll" album.

On his 90th birthday last year, Berry disclosed that he would release his first new



Flowers are placed on Chuck Berry's Hollywood Walk of Fame Star.

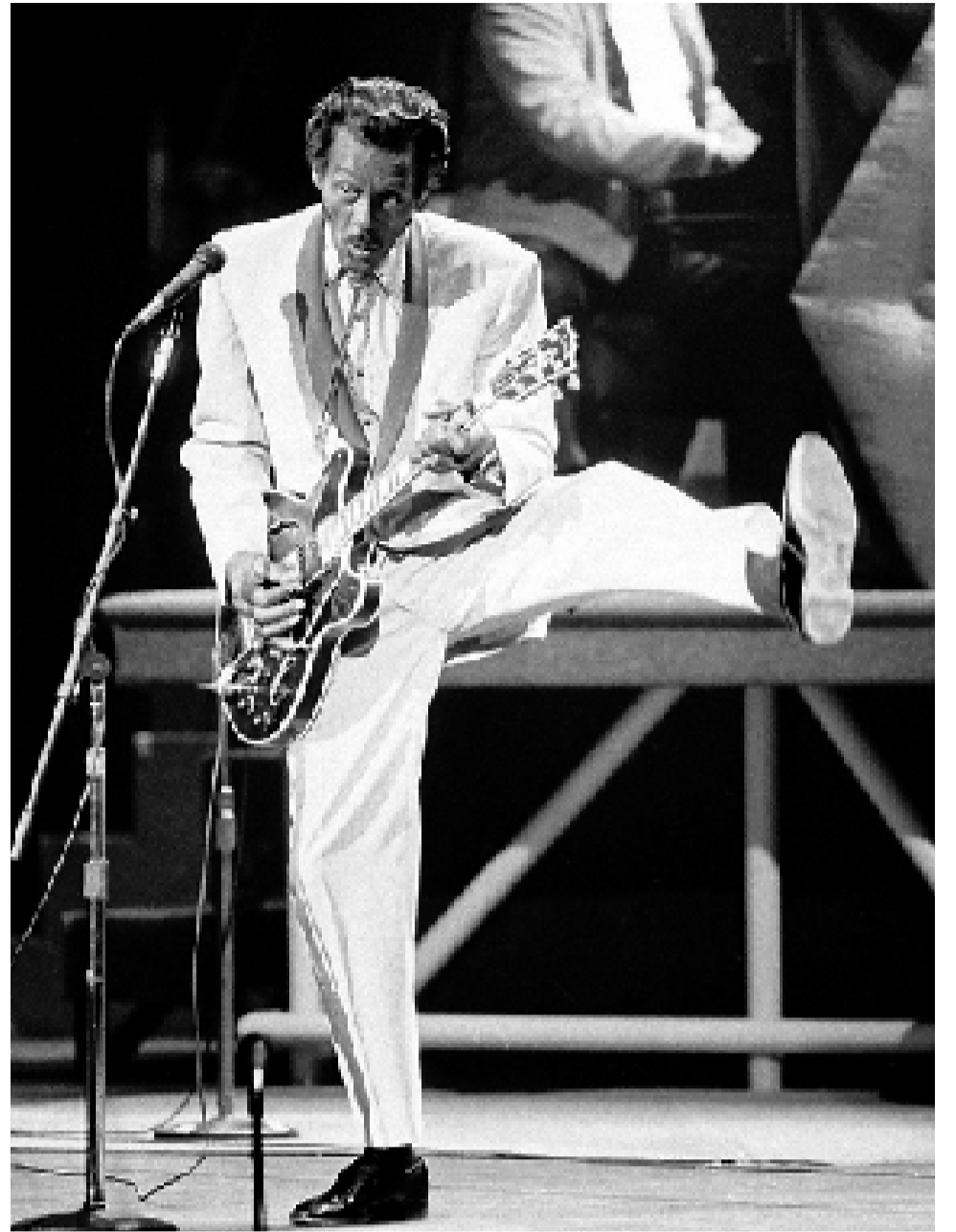
album in 38 years in 2017, titled simply: "Chuck." The announcement said it would be comprised primarily of new, original songs written, recorded and produced by him. In 2000, Johnson sued Berry over royalties and credit he believed he was due for the songs they composed together over more than 20 years of collaboration. The lawsuit was dismissed two years later, but Richards was among those who believed Johnson had been cheated, writing in his memoir "Life" that Johnson set up the arrangements for Berry and was so essential to the music that many of Berry's songs were recorded in keys more suited for the piano.

Openly money-minded, Berry was an entrepreneur with a St Louis nightclub and, in a small town west of there, property he dubbed Berry Park, which included a home, guitar-

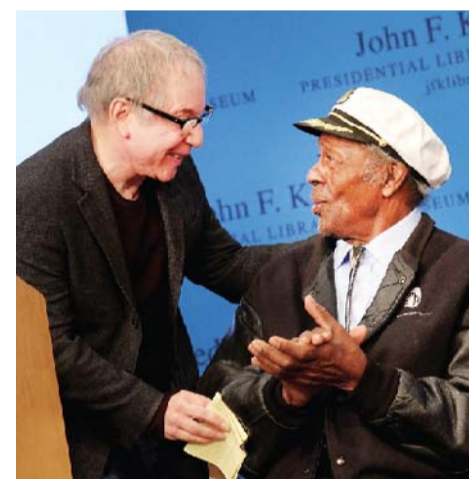
shaped swimming pool, restaurant, cottages and concert venue. He declined to have a regular band and instead used local musicians, willing to work cheap. Springsteen was among those who had an early gig backing Berry.

Big mistake

Burned by an industry that demanded a share of his songwriting credits, Berry was deeply suspicious of even his admirers, as anybody could tell from watching him give Richards the business in "Hail! Hail! Rock 'n' Roll." For the movie's concerts, he confounded Richards by playing songs in different keys and tempos than they had been in rehearsal. Richards would recall turning to his fellow musicians and shrugging, "Wing it, boys." Berry's career nearly ended decades earlier, when he was indicted for violating the Mann



In this Oct 17, 1986 file photo, Chuck Berry performs during a concert celebration for his 60th birthday at the Fox Theatre in St Louis, Mo.



This file photo taken on February 25, 2012 shows Paul Simon (left) and honoree Chuck Berry during the 2012 Awards for Lyrics of Literary Excellence at The John F Kennedy Presidential Library And Museum in Boston, Massachusetts.

Act, which barred transportation of a minor across state lines for "immoral purposes." An all-white jury found him guilty in 1960, but the charges were vacated after the judge made racist comments.

A trial in 1961 led to his serving 1 1/2 years of a three-year term. Berry continued to record after getting out, and his legacy was duly honored by the Beatles and the Stones, but his hit-making days were essentially over. "Down from stardom/then I fell/to this lowly prison cell," Berry wrote as his jail time began. Tax charges came in 1979, and another three-year prison sentence, all but 120 days of which was suspended. Some former female employees later sued him for allegedly videotaping them in the bathroom of his restaurant. The cases were settled in 1994, after Berry paid \$1.3 million. "Every 15 years, in fact, it seems I make a big mistake," Berry acknowledged in his memoir. Still, echoing the lyrics of "Back in the U.S.A.," he said: "There's no other place I would rather live, including Africa, than America. I believe in the system." Suhr reported from Kansas City, Missouri. — AP



Hiroyuki Sanada, from left, Ryan Reynolds, director Daniel Espinosa, Olga Dihovichnaya, Rebecca Ferguson, Ariyon Bakare and Jake Gyllenhaal, arrive for the world premiere of "Life" at the ZACH Theatre during the South by Southwest Film Festival on Saturday in Austin, Texas. — AP

Bromance between Gyllenhaal and Reynolds filming 'Life'

There's a bromance brewing between actors Jake Gyllenhaal and Ryan Reynolds. The Hollywood stars say they hit it off so well during the filming of their new sci-fi thriller called "Life" that a genuine friendship has blossomed. The movie, about a team of scientists aboard the International Space Station who find an alien life form from Mars, is premiering Saturday at the South by Southwest festival in Austin. The "Brokeback Mountain" and "Deadpool" stars were mostly all jokes during rounds of press interviews prior to the film's premier, answering most questions with a back-and-forth comedy shtick. But they turned serious when asked about the connection formed on set.

"You do these films and get to work with really amazing people, really talented people and you think 'oh I'm going to hang out with these people afterward and see them again,'" said Reynolds. "You don't most of the time because you go on living your life. But with this guy, we've stayed friends. That's a lucky thing. It doesn't always happen." Some of the first signs of the newly-forged bond came earlier this week when Reynolds gave high praise to Gyllenhaal on Good Morning America, calling him one of the most interesting actors currently working in Hollywood. Reynolds said Saturday that his co-star is "one of the greatest actors of this generation."

"I loved working with this guy," he said. "I loved spending time with this guy. It's not often you get this experience." Gyllenhaal was equally complimentary, saying Reynolds's role last year as a foul-mouthed superhero is exactly what he strives for - a performance so

authentic that it would be nearly impossible for another actor to duplicate. "We sort of grew up in this business together without knowing each other until very recently," Gyllenhaal said. "It's hard in a business where ... a lot of times we're pretending to get closer to the truth and to find somebody who you feel is genuine. I feel that way about him, so we're friends."

The movie plot draws some notable parallels to Ridley Scott's 1979 classic "Alien," tracking a team of scientists on a spaceship who encounter an alien life form that wreaks havoc.

Their discovery - the first evidence of extraterrestrial life on Mars - turns out to be a threat not only to the crew but to all life on Earth. But even with the backdrop of a sci-fi heart pumper, Gyllenhaal says he and Reynolds found some levity throughout the filming. "This experience of what's happening right now was consistent to what it felt like while we were shooting," Gyllenhaal said in between puns served as answers to questions. "We had really scary situations in the movie and scenes that were really tense, but we were laughing constantly and it was so much fun." — AP



Ryan Reynolds, left, and Jake Gyllenhaal arrive for the world premiere of "Life" at the ZACH Theatre during the South by Southwest Film Festival. — AP

Actor-director Alice Lowe on the mother of all movies

Two things stand out immediately about British actress, filmmaker and rising star Alice Lowe that make her an unusual subject in the rarified but often pretentious world of celebrity interviewing. The first is the venue - a pleasant but utterly run-of-the-mill early 20th century bungalow she has rented to receive journalists in suburban Los Angeles - and the second is that she is breastfeeding.

"We could have gone to a restaurant but I didn't want to be somewhere where I'm like 'stay in your pram and don't fall into the waiter,'" she says, cradling infant daughter Della, who was bawling but has suddenly adopted the blissed out expression of a yogi. Lowe's lack of airs could be explained by the fact that she's hardly A-list yet outside of the British TV comedy circuit. But you get the feeling that she'd be as down-to-earth with an Oscar on the bathroom shelf.

Her profile has been on the rise, in any case, with a starring role and writing credit on Ben Wheatley's exquisite serial killer comedy "Sightseers" (2012) and parts in Edgar Wright's "Hot Fuzz" and "The World's End" as well as Paul King's "Paddington." Lowe, 39, is doing the Hollywood publicity merry-go-round to promote "Prevenge," a horror comedy she wrote and directed, not to mention appearing in every scene, during an intense 11-day shoot while she was heavily pregnant. Another deliciously deadpan bloodbath, "Prevenge" follows delusional Ruth as she embarks on a bloody antenatal assassination mission she believes is being commanded by her unborn fetus to avenge the death of his father.

In the club

If the premise sounds outlandish, Lowe's directorial debut - which is released March 24 in limited theaters and the horror streaming service Shudder - has been lavished with critical acclaim. She was approached to make it while six months pregnant, and realized her initial hesitation was no more than an unconscious attempt to conform to how society expects pregnant women to behave. She ended up making a movie that on one level is a natural heir to the revenge genre exemplified by Park Chan-wook's 2003 noir smash-hit "Old Boy," but one that explores the way society patronizes pregnant women while at the same time limiting their life choices.

"One of the main things I wanted to say is that women are individuals and pregnant women are individuals. Everyone is different. That's one of the things you feel you're losing when you become pregnant," she says. "It's like you're joining a group, some kind of club



This file photo taken on January 18, 2015 shows British actress Alice Lowe at the 35th London Critics' Circle Film Awards in London. — AFP

and there's this one-size-fits-all attitude that you're a mum ... and you're going to feel this way or that way."

Lowe also wanted to challenge the tendency of TV and cinema to reduce pregnant women to nothing more than their baby bump - and the inclination to worry about whether female characters in general are sympathetic. "No one watches 'Taxi Driver' and thinks this is a terrible representation of men, or taxi drivers. You do the same with women and everyone goes 'oh, she was so horrible, such a terrible representation of women,'" she says.

Far from being worn out, Lowe felt "super-human" during the shoot, which includes a Halloween night out on the streets of the notorious Welsh party capital Cardiff, where real drunken revelers took the place of paid extras. "I had guys coming up to me and shouting in my face 'I'm not scared of you!' and I had to say, 'I am actually pregnant, you know. This is a real pregnancy bump,'" she recalls. "I saw some crazy things that night. We walked past a group of about 30 people standing around a fight between three men, one of whom was in a wheelchair. It was insane." — AFP



In this file photo, visitors walking past Angels Flight Railway in Los Angeles. — AP photos



Photo shows a pedestrian walking past a street mural in the Hollywood section of Los Angeles.

Real places that inspired scenes in Oscar-nominated films

Adiner in Miami, a house in Pittsburgh and a pier in Los Angeles: All of them are real places where Oscar-nominated movies were filmed. Part of "Moonlight" was shot in Jimmy's Eastside Diner in Miami. Scenic spots around Los Angeles featured in "La La Land" included the Hermosa Beach Pier. And in Pittsburgh, "Fences" was filmed in a house that perfectly evokes playwright "August Wilson's world," according to his widow.

Other movies with connections to real places include "Manchester by the Sea," filmed in coastal towns near Boston, and "Hidden Figures," about African-American women who worked for NASA in Virginia, where several attractions may be of interest to fans. Here are some details.

La La Land

This musical love letter to Los Angeles includes shots of many recognizable destinations around the city. Among them: Griffith Observatory, the Hermosa Beach Pier and nearby Lighthouse Cafe, the Hollywood Walk of Fame mural, Angels Flight Railway, Grand Central Market and the Smoke House restaurant. There's even a scene staged amid traffic on a freeway overpass.

Moonlight

Much of this story of a young black man coming of age was set and shot in and around Miami's Liberty Square housing project. One of the most tender scenes depicts the protagonist as a child being taught to swim by a drug dealer who serves as a father figure. That scene was shot on Virginia Key beach, a black-only beach during the segregation era on the Rickenbacker Causeway that connects mainland Miami to Key Biscayne. "Moonlight" is structured in three parts. The final segment centers on a reunion shot in a real restaurant, Jimmy's Eastside Diner, where fans can grab breakfast or lunch.

Fences

"Fences," a movie adapted from the August Wilson play, was set and shot in Wilson's hometown, Pittsburgh. Many of the scenes were filmed in a small brick house at 809 Anaheim St Wilson's widow, Constanza Romero, visited the house, escorted by the

film's star and director, Denzel Washington, and told The Associated Press that she felt like she was "inside August Wilson's world ... It was just such a feeling that August's words had become three-dimensional." Wilson's actual childhood home, is about 2 miles away at 1727 Bedford Ave, and is listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

Fans will also want to visit the August Wilson Center, a multi-use performing arts center in Pittsburgh with a theater, art galleries and more. An exhibit with video interviews, costumes and props from the movie runs Jan 28-March 10. The Pittsburgh History & Landmarks Foundation publishes a guidebook called "August Wilson: Pittsburgh Places in His Life and Plays" and various walking tours are available of the city's historically African-American Hill District.

Hidden Figures

This movie tells the story of African-American women who worked at NASA Langley Research Center in Hampton, Virginia, in the early 1960s. Their work helped put John Glenn into orbit. The movie was mostly filmed in Atlanta, but Hampton offers several attractions worth visiting.

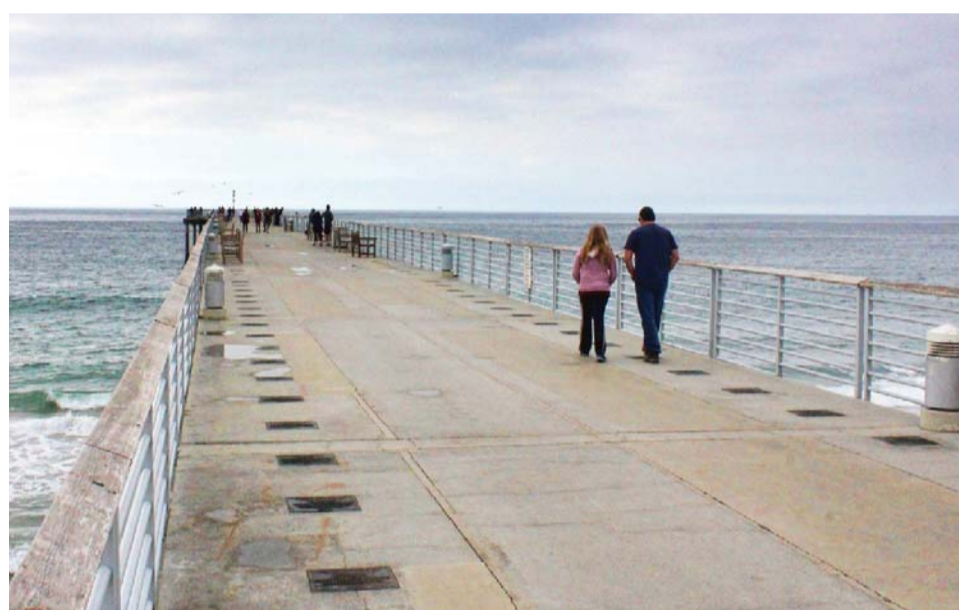


Photo shows visitors walking along on the Hermosa Beach pier in Los Angeles.

A new exhibit called "When the Computer Wore a Skirt: NASA's Human Computers" just opened at the Hampton History Museum. Fans

can also learn more about the work done at Langley at the Virginia Air & Space Center, which is hosting a talk by Margot Lee Shetterly, author of the book "Hidden Figures," on March 7 at 7:30 pm EST. A bench dedicated to one of the women featured in the movie, Katherine Johnson, is located directly across from the Air & Space Center in Carousel Park.

Manchester By The Sea

The movie was filmed in parts of Cape Ann and the North Shore of Massachusetts. Gloucester served as the backdrop for a number of scenes, including the pivotal tear-jerking scene between Michelle Williams and Casey Affleck.

Central Street in downtown Manchester was also in the film, and cemetery scenes were filmed in the Rosedale cemetery. Local spots like the Willow Rest on Holly Street in Gloucester and Fibber McGee's in Beverly also figure in the movie locations.

Hell or High Water

This movie is set in West Texas but was filmed in New Mexico. Bank robbery scenes were shot in Clovis and Portales, and Quay County's Caprock Escarpment also makes an

appearance along with spots in Moriarty and Tucumcari. The Route 66 Casino Hotel in Albuquerque was among the locations.

20th century women

This movie about a mother and her teenage son set in 1979 included many locations in the Santa Barbara, California area. Among them: East Beach, West Beach, Miramar Beach and Ganna Walska Lotusland garden and historic estate in Montecito. An area near Gaviota Pier at Gaviota State Park, with a scene driving through the Gaviota



Photo shows the Route 66 Casino outside of Albuquerque, NM, along the historic Route 66.

Tunnel on Highway 101, was also included. Skateboarding scenes were shot on Ashley Road at East Mountain Drive and San Leandro Lane near Crane School in Montecito.

Fantastic Beasts

This magical romp through 1920s New York City shows many famous landmarks, including the Woolworth Building and the Statue of Liberty. But many of the places shown in the film look very different today, including Times Square, the Central Park Zoo and the Lower East Side. — AP



Photo shows the home at 809 Anaheim Street in the Hill District of Pittsburgh that was used in the filming of "Fences," the film directed by and starring Denzel Washington in the adaptation of a Pulitzer Prize winning play by Pittsburgh born playwright August Wilson.



Open invitation to Greece

Nowadays Greece is considered the most dynamic and the safest tourism destination in Europe. A Greek Tourism Workshop is going to be held on March 22, 2017 at the Kuwait Sheraton Hotel to highlight the interest in this new destination to the Kuwaiti market now that a direct flight operation is going to start this summer linking Greece to Kuwait.

This event is held under the auspices of the Ministry of Tourism of Greece, with the kind support of the Greek National Tourism Organization.

The initiative of this workshop is based on launching the direct flights of Aegean Airlines from Kuwait to Athens and also on the demand of the Kuwaiti market for the famous upcoming Greek destinations which are attracting more and more visitors from Kuwait every year. Upon the request of local authorities in Kuwait, the Health Tourism in

Greece will also be presented at this Event. Greece includes top tourist international destinations that combine exclusive archaeological sites, unique beaches, excellent nature environment, marvelous hotels for luxury tourism, lots of activities for families with children, shopping centers and nightlife in several places and islands such as Mykonos, Santorini, Crete, Athens, Thessaloniki, Peloponnese etc.

As the Greek Organizers highlighted: "Greek Tourism Workshop is unique in its way of promoting the Destination and developing the touristic trends of the Kuwaiti market". The Greek delegation will consist of strictly selected partners of the Greek tourism industry, who would like to meet the elite of the Kuwaiti travel agents who are really interested in the Greek tourism product".

For more information please visit the site www.greektourismworkshop.com

Gulf Bank compliments mothers on their special day

Showcasing the Bank's offerings to its priority customers



Gulf Bank launched a special campaign on Mother's Day for its Priority Banking customers who indulged in a wide selection of international luxury brands from Korloff and Omega Boutiques. The Bank also hosted a priority event to showcase its offerings in both boutiques that are located in 360 Mall, on 15 March 2017. The campaign, which runs from 15 March until 22 March, provides the Bank's Priority Customers with offers and exclusive discounts on collections in Korloff and Omega boutiques.

By only using their premium credit including Visa Infinite, MasterCard World, Visa Signature, Visa Platinum and MasterCard Platinum, customers

benefit from the wide array of privileges and choose opulent gifts tailored to suit all tastes. Gulf Bank also made sure to top the offer with a commemorative souvenir for its clients, as a token of appreciation to all mothers in Kuwait.

Gulf Bank is committed to offering its Priority Banking customers with selective privileges matching their Life style as well gives access to renowned local concierge services from Peacock Concierge. With Gulf Bank Priority Banking, customers enjoy a personalized and preferential treatment coupled with a suite of Banking and investment products and services designed to meet their financial goals. A dedicated

Relationship Manager is assigned to manage customers banking requirements in the comfort of dedicated private floors.

In addition, they will receive a branded ATM card that recognizes their status across Gulf Bank Network, premium credit cards with exclusive privileges, discounted fees and waivers on banking transactions and added value benefits through our premium partner merchants.

To find out more about the Bank's promotions and offers customers can visit one of Gulf Bank's 56 branches, for assistance and guidance. They can also log on to www.e-gulfbank.com, Gulf Bank's bilingual website.



Family and friends of a newlywed couple pull on ribbons attached to a flower bouquet during the couple's wedding reception at the Al-Merouz hotel in Bangkok. — AFP photos



A newlywed couple gets ready to pose for formal portraits during their wedding reception at the Al-Merouz hotel in Bangkok.

Tourism to food, Buddhist Thailand hunts halal gold



A guest watches a couple get married at the Al-Merouz hotel in Bangkok.



A groom (third right) prays with elders before his bride is called onstage to finalize the wedding ceremony at the Al-Merouz hotel in Bangkok.



Employees packing butter at a halal dairy in a biscuit factory in Bangkok.

From hotels with segregated swimming pools to jelly made from seaweed instead of pig bones, Buddhist Thailand is chasing halal gold as it welcomes Muslim visitors and touts its wares to the Islamic world. Inside the cavernous dining hall of the five-star Al Merouz hotel in a Muslim suburb of Bangkok, an elderly man with a wispy beard recites verses of the Quran as a nervous-looking groom awaits the arrival of his bride. The young man bursts into a smile as his soon-to-be wife appears, clad in a brilliant white dress with matching headscarf.

The ceremony is one of dozens of marriages held over the last few months at the Al-Merouz—the city's first entirely halal hotel. Thailand has long been a draw for the world's sun-seekers and hedonists, drawn to its parties, red-light districts, cheap booze and tropical beaches. But it has also seen a huge influx of visitors from Muslim countries, part of a quiet but deliberate strategy by the Southeast Asian nation to diversify its visitor profile. "Considering there are 1.5 billion Muslims around the world, I think this is a very good market," explains Sanya Saenboon, the general manager of the hotel, one of a growing number of businesses serving a boom in Islamic tourists. The hotel opened its doors last year, setting itself apart with its attention to all things Islamic.

For a start there is no alcohol on sale, while the top floor swimming pool and gym has specific times for when men and women can use the facilities. Everything in the building has been ticked off against stringent checklist for practicing Muslims, from bed linen washed in a particular way, to ensuring toiletries are free of alcohol or animal fat — making everyday goods "permissible" for the faithful. Sanya, who is Muslim, says such checks give visitors "peace of mind" so clients never have to ask themselves "can I eat this?"

'Ahead of the curve'

Despite a decade of political turbulence, Thailand has seen an explosion in tourist arrivals, from 13.8 million annual visitors in 2006 to a record 32.5 million last year. Western arrivals have largely remained a constant. The biggest increase in arrivals comes



Guests choose food items during a wedding reception at the Al-Merouz hotel in Bangkok.

from China, skyrocketing from just 949,000 arrivals 10 years ago to 8.7 million visitors in 2016. But Muslim countries are also sending their citizens. An AFP analysis of government figures shows visitors from key majority Muslim nations in the Middle East and Asia have risen from 2.63 million in 2006 to 6.03 million last year.

"Thailand was ahead of the curve," says Fazal Baharden, founder of the Singapore-based Crescent Rating, which rates which countries are most welcoming to Muslim travellers. Thailand routinely places in the top two for non-Muslim majority nations alongside Singapore in Crescent Ratings' annual survey of halal destinations. "They've really recognized the Muslim consumer market is worth tapping into," he explains, adding medical tourism, shopping and high quality hotels are the primary draws.

Baharden says the Islamic travel market is one of the world's fastest growing thanks the growth of cheap flights and booming Muslim

middle classes. He estimates the number of Muslim travellers has surged from around 25 million a year in 2000 to 117 million in 2015. But it is not just at home that Thailand has gone halal.

Food gets halal makeover

From chicken and seafood to rice and canned fruit, the country has long been one of the world's great food exporters. Now a growing numbers of food companies are switching to halal to widen their customer base.

Against a backdrop of humming machines churning out butter, Lalana Thiranusornkij, a Buddhist, explains how her family turned their three factories—under the KCG Corporation banner—halal to access markets in Indonesia, Malaysia and in the Gulf.

But going halal sometimes required some clever workarounds, such as how to avoid animal based gelatin to make jelly.

"In the past we used gelatin from pork but... we changed our gelatin from the pork source

to be from a seaweed source," she said. Thailand's junta has set the goal of turning the country into one of the world's top five halal exporting nations by 2020. Some outsiders might be surprised to see an overwhelmingly Buddhist nation embrace halal. But Dr Winai Dahlan, founder of the Halal Science Centre at Bangkok's Chulalongkorn University, says Thailand was well placed to make the change.

Five percent of its population is Muslim and outside of the insurgency plagued southern border region is well-integrated within the Buddhist majority. It was local Thai Muslims who first began asking for the country's halal testing center, a business that scours products for any banned substances and has since boomed. "Fifteen years ago there was only 500 food plants that had halal certification. Now it's 6,000," Winai told AFP as female lab technicians in headscarves tested food products for traces of pork DNA.

Over the same period the number of halal certified products made in Thailand has gone from 10,000 to 160,000, he added. It's paid off. The government estimates the halal food industry is already worth \$6 billion a year. As Thailand has quickly learned, there's gold at the end of the halal rainbow. — AFP



A newly married couple enter a wedding hall during their wedding reception at the Al-Merouz hotel in Bangkok.



Pastry chefs adorn a wedding cake before a wedding reception.



Guests and family members of a newlywed couple take photos of them during a wedding reception at Al-Merouz hotel in Bangkok.

Lifestyle

MONDAY, MARCH 20, 2017

**Chuck Berry:
The greatest
rocker of all time**

36



RIP Chuck Berry

This file photo taken on April 15, 2013 legendary US singer and composer Chuck Berry, one of the pioneers of rock-and-roll, performing during a concert in Montevideo Uruguay. — AFP

Discount winter getaways at West Virginia resorts

The sky faded toward cobalt over the rolling horizon and its bare hardwood forest, the faux street lamps in the foreground lighting the outdoor walkway and swimming pool. One man lingered in the adjoining Jacuzzi despite the 30-degree chill that blew mist off the heated water. The moon gradually cast a narrow shimmering line across the lake. I sat at high bar table sipping peach moonshine watching through picture windows as winter dusk fell in the Appalachian Mountains.

The state of West Virginia owns this resort, called Stonewall, along with other upscale resorts with golf courses, indoor pools, Adirondack-style lodges and miles of scenic hiking trails for laid-back getaways in the offseason. Thanks to off-season bargains, a stay can be had for as little as \$50 a night. The wood fire in the large stone hearth threw heat into Stonewall's high-ceilinged lodge. Guests drifted in and out, warmed at the fire, or lounged on the sofas. Soft jazz played in the background. A couple nestled in the dark-paneled library next door reading in club chairs under lamps.

Chocolate bars
The downstairs restaurant and tavern were busy. The bartender said she had only two kinds of moonshine at the moment - peach and coffee flavored - and poured the peach into a small cordial glass. Several small distillers produce versions of the liquor in West Virginia, where it traditionally came from corn mash in Prohibition-era stills. The winter cold had driven me and my companion in from the outdoor fire pit, where more wood was burning. Fixings for s'mores were offered: chocolate bars, marshmallows and graham crackers. The s'mores were gratis, like the upgrade we got to a lakeside room, though we'd actually booked an ordinary room at a \$40 discount for \$129. The resort was half-full on the weekend with about 200 people. Staff couldn't have been friendlier. Desk clerks checked us in four hours early. Taxes and a resort fee added \$30 to the bill. Heading to our room later, we saw families still playing in the indoor half of the pool and its adjoining Jacuzzi, kept at 88 and 103 degrees, respectively, same as the water outdoors where we swam earlier. In the sunny

afternoon, we walked out on the boardwalk that crosses part of the lake, heading toward the marina and the campground already booked solid for the summer. We decided against a longer walk on trails through the woods. Instead, we drove 15 minutes to see the sprawling, gothic Trans-Allegheny Lunatic Asylum in Weston. Built in the 1800s as a sanctuary for the mentally ill, it housed 2,500 patients in the 1950s and closed in 1994. It's now a national landmark. We didn't take the tour.

Golf course
Stonewall's golf course with Arnold Palmer's name on it was empty except for a few swans, the golf shop and its restaurant closed until spring. The lodge's health spa was open, taking appointments for facials and massages, discounted to \$50 on Thursdays in March. The resort is a about two-hour drive south from Pittsburgh. That was also the cost of a winter room at West Virginia's Twin Falls Resort State Park, where we stayed in February, after the desk clerk knocked \$25 off our reserved low winter rate and upgraded our room. It's located up a winding road in southern West Virginia's coal country, on a mountaintop surrounded by its own golf course and hiking trails through forests that are a nature preserve. There were few other guests midweek in February. We saw three at breakfast. The lodge has 47 rooms and an indoor pool.

West Virginia has eight other resorts in the state system, all with lodges, most with cabins or cottages and campsites to rent as well. According to state officials, the parks had about 7 million visitors last year and nearly 700,000 overnight guests. Discounts include golf passes for any of the four resort courses, a \$50 rate for any standard room at any lodge in January and package offers updated monthly. A West Virginia friend recommended Pipestem Resort State Park, in the state's southeastern corner, which has two lodges, one open year-round with balconies and views of the Bluestone Canyon gorge, and a second lodge open from May to October and reachable only by an aerial tram. Room rates start at \$75. — AP



Photo shows The Trans-Allegheny Lunatic Asylum. — AP photos



This photo shows the lodge at the Stonewall Resort in Roanoke, WVa.



Photo shows hearth in the lodge at the Stonewall Resort in Roanoke.



A man walks past 'Mao' by US artist Andy Warhol, 1973, an acrylic and silkscreen ink on canvas, during a pre-auction preview by Sotheby's in Hong Kong. — AFP

Warhol Mao portrait goes under the hammer in Hong Kong

An Andy Warhol portrait of former Chinese leader Mao Zedong will be auctioned in Hong Kong in a landmark sale that could fetch \$15 million-but mainland buyers may be wary of putting in a bid. The classic 1973 screen print by the legendary US pop artist will go under the hammer at Sotheby's next month with the highest estimate the auction house has ever seen for a painting in Asia. It comes as demand grows among collectors in the region for a wider variety of high-profile works, driven by appetite in China.

The auction house describes the event as the first "significant" sale of Western contemporary art in semi-autonomous Hong Kong, which was handed back to China by Britain in 1997. But while buyers from mainland China have developed massive market clout, Warhol's images of Mao have drawn controversy there. A major touring retrospective of his works removed pictures of the former leader when it visited Shanghai and Beijing in 2013.

Organizers at the time said it was a mutual decision after concerns were raised by the institutions displaying the show. There is also general sensitivity about any use of Mao's image in China, where he remains a controversial figure.

His legacy as Communist China's founding father makes him inseparable from official propaganda extolling the party's ruling legitimacy, and his huge portrait still overlooks vast Tiananmen Square and appears on Chinese bank notes.

Yet his mistakes, such as disastrous eco-

nomical policies blamed for mass starvation and the political witch hunts of the 1966-76 "Cultural Revolution", left a bitter aftertaste and depictions of him otherwise remain strictly controlled. Sotheby's said it hoped Warhol's artistic merit would outweigh any political concerns. "We hope people won't be stopped by any political issues...we are talking about serious art," Sotheby's Isaura de Viel Castel told AFP, as the portrait was unveiled Friday for the first time in Hong Kong ahead of the sale.

Castel, senior director of modern and contemporary art for Asia, described the work as a "masterpiece". Warhol made hundreds of vibrant images of Mao, using a portrait of the leader from the "Little Red Book" of his thoughts and sayings as a template. The prints piled colour onto Mao's face, adorning him with rouge, eye shadow and lipstick in an irreverent take on China's totalitarian propaganda. The 127cm x 107cm silkscreen portrait to be auctioned by Sotheby's on April 2 overlays his face with a blurred sphere of yellow and daubs his shirt orange. Chinese artists have also depicted Mao in their works, including painter Li Shan, who shows the leader with a lotus flower in his mouth.

Warhol himself visited China in 1982, five years before his death. China's economic slowdown, a corruption crackdown by Beijing and global instability have affected art markets. But auctioneers have always remained optimistic that the highest quality pieces would find homes among the superrich. — AFP