17 children die as refugees brave stormy seas

**GENEVA:** Stormy seas as refugees brave towards Yemen and war-ravaged Oman, where it could strike with hurricane force and dump torrential rain that may trigger landslides. Named Chapala, the storm is brewing in the Arabian Sea and is expected to make landfall in northem Yemen and the adjoining Oman coast around midnight Monday, the World Meteorological Organization (WMO) said. “Tropical cyclones are extremely rare over the Arabian peninsula,” WMO spokeswoman Clare Nullis told reporters, adding that the storm might well be the first of its kind to hit Yemen. This could have serious consequences in the very arid area, where the infrastructure is not designed to cope with so much water. “There is a risk of quite serious damage to the infrastructure, there’s a risk of landslides, mudslides,” Nullis said. The Oman meteorological department had warned of flash-flooding in some areas starting as early as today evening, as well as wave heights along the coast of between five and seven metres. — AFP

**US sending commandos to Syria in about-turn**

**VIENNA:** The United States yesterday announced its first sustained deployment of ground troops to Syria, saying a small special forces team would assist the anti-jihadist fight, as major powers met in Vienna seeking a political solution to the war. The deployment marks an escalation in Washington’s efforts to defeat the Islamic State (IS) group, which has tightened its grip on swathes of Syria despite more than a year of US-led air strikes.

Officials said President Barack Obama had authorized an initial deployment of “fewer than 50” special forces to northern Syria - parts of which are controlled by Syrian Kurdish forces fighting IS - easing his long-standing refusal to put boots on the ground. “They will help coordinate local ground forces and coalition efforts to counter (IS),” said a senior administration official, using an acronym for the jihadist group. Washington will also deploy A-10 ground-attack planes and F-15 tactical fighter jets to the Incirlik base in southern Turkey, as part of the ramped up effort.

The announcement came as key backers of Syria’s rival sides sought to overcome deep divisions over the conflict, with regime allies Russia and Iran resisting Western and Saudi pressures to force President Bashar Al-Assad from power. Top diplomats from 17 countries, as well as the United Nations and the European Union, gathered in Vienna for talks bringing together all the main outside players in the four-year-old Syrian crisis for the first time. The West and Gulf monarchies led by Saudi Arabia want Assad to step down, but Moscow and Tehran insist he has a right to play a role in an eventual transition towards a mooted unity government and later elections.

France announced late yesterday afternoon that the talks had ended, with major powers to meet again on the crisis in two weeks’ time. Russian President Vladimir Putin’s spokesman Dmitry Peskov had said earlier that the talks were not about whether Assad should go. “It is not the fate of Bashar Al-Assad that is being discussed,” he told reporters in Russia. “Any political settlement is hard to achieve before the forces of terrorism and extremism sustain a significant blow.” — Agencies

**Event stripped of Olympic status over Israeli ban**

**LAUSANNE:** The Asian Shooting Championship lost its Olympics qualifying status on Thursday after tournament hosts Kuwait banned an Israeli official from taking part. The Asian Shooting Championship lost its Olympic status on Thursday after tournament hosts Kuwait banned an Israeli official from taking part. The International Olympic Committee executive board said it had revoked the qualification status of the November 1-12 event following a request from the International Sports Shooting Federation (ISSF).

Kuwait had denied a visa to Israeli Yair Davidovich who was due to supervise the event. “The denial of a visa is against the non-discrimination principle of the Olympic Charter,” said an IOC statement. Another reason for the ban was due to supervise the event. “The denial of a visa is against the non-discrimination principle of the Olympic Charter,” said an IOC statement. Another reason for the ban was due to government interference. — AFP

**India property fair opens**

**KUWAIT:** Indian Ambassador to Kuwait Sunil Jain and Kuwait Times Editor-in-Chief Abd Al-Rahman Al-Alyan cut the ribbon to open the India Property Mela 2015 at Crowne Plaza Hotel yesterday. — Photos by Joseph Shagra (See Page 2)
By Faten Omar

Kuwait Times, in association with Aashiaana, a leading property portal in Kuwait, inaugurated the ‘India Property Mela 2015’ yesterday at the Crowne Plaza Hotel. The two-day real estate fair is an ideal opportunity for NRIs who are looking for investment in Indian real estate, as they have access to first-hand information on upcoming and current real estate projects as well as a range of property options, from residential apartments, plots and bungalows to commercial properties.

The exhibition facilitates visitors to meet and interact with some of the top Indian builders and real estate developers, giving them an opportunity to view hundreds of projects, ranging from affordable apartments to luxury villas from some of India’s top developers including Lodha, Kanakia, Mahindra Lifespaces, Hubtown, Vaishnavi, Propshell, KoltePatil, Nahar’s and Supertech. Developers will highlight real estate in cities across India and will present special offers on limited properties during the two-day show.

Indian Ambassador to Kuwait Sunil Jain, who opened the exhibition with Kuwait Times Editor-in-Chief Abd Al-Rahman Al-Alyan, told Kuwait Times that this is the best time to buy property in India. “I’m highly impressed by this exhibition that has brought together Indian property companies offering the best properties in the Indian market. I think now is a good time to invest in the Indian real estate market given the strength of the Kuwaiti dinar and the fact that properties in India are consistently gaining in value. I believe all Indians should have at least one property back home,” added Jain.

Property Mela showcases lucrative real estate

Indian Ambassador to Kuwait Sunil Jain and Kuwait Times Editor-in-Chief Abd Al-Rahman Al-Alyan are welcomed with flowers.
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ILLEGAL ARMS TRADE POSES A SERIOUS THREAT: KUWAIT

NEW YORK: Kuwait has warned that illegal trade in small and light arms poses an extraordinary threat to international security and peace. This came in a speech read out by Second Secretary of Kuwait Permanent Delegation to the UN Abdulaziz Al-Ajmi at the meeting of the UN First Committee (Disarmament and International Security). Kuwait urged UN members, particularly small and light arms producing and exporting countries, to spare no effort to put an end to the illicit trade in such categories of conventional weapons, Al-Ajmi said.

In this regard, Al-Ajmi pointed out that Kuwait has recently passed a law for the collection of unlicensed firearms and ammunition. He noted that the awareness campaign that followed the law passage have encouraged many people to hand in their weapons voluntarily to the authorities.

He added that Kuwait welcomed the entry into force of the UN Arms Trade Treaty, which regulates the international trade in conventional arms. Kuwait also reiterated the treaty’s importance to safeguard the level of food and medicine quality and safety which matter so much to consumers’ health, he said in a statement to KUNA. Sounding the alarm about the imitation of trademarks, Sheikh Salman Al-Dawood Al-Sabah warned that it is necessary to prevent the imitation of international trademarks so as to protect consumers. "The protection of world trademarks at the local market is the sole way to safeguard the level of food and medicine quality and safety which matter so much to consumers’ health," he said in a statement to KUNA. Sounding the alarm about the imitation of trademarks, Sheikh Salman Al-Dawood said his society has observed that this phenomenon has been widespread at the local market, making it very difficult for consumers to spot the difference between real and fake commodities. Therefore, the society’s chairman called for launching a public awareness campaign purposed to caution consumers against the adverse impacts of fake commodities. Citing fake auto spare parts in particular as a serious example for the imitation of international trademarks, he stressed the significance of overhauling intellectual property laws with a view to reining in this grave phenomenon.

Meanwhile, chief executive officer of OIC International Business Centre Muhammad Raja Talib stressed the importance of elevating the level of cultural understanding between countries, especially the non-Muslim ones, to present the bright image of Islam through best utilization of history, culture and Islamic heritage in order to improve the tourism industry in Kuwait.

KUWAIT RANKED 32ND IN GOVT COMPETITIVENESS

SEOUL: Kuwait has won the 32nd ranking in the Government Competitiveness that measures the performance in seven fields; economy, environment, food, agriculture, health and welfare, education and governance.

The Center for Government Competitiveness (CGC) at Seoul National University revealed the results that included 89 countries, which are not member of Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), in a forum held Thursday in the presence of Kuwait’s Ambassador to Korea Jassim Mohammad Al-Bedawi and a number of foreign ambassadors, academics and economists.

Kuwait came first in food and agriculture, and won the tenth place in economy, 26th place in information technology, 36th place in environment and 39th place in health and welfare, 43rd place in governance and 63rd place in education, Young Kim, a Professor at the university, said. On his part, the ambassador showed the points of strength in Kuwait, saying it has the fifth place in the non-member of the OECD based on the results of GDP, inflation rate, foreign reserves and government activities.

He added that Kuwait has a positive credit rating by Fitch, Moody’s. Standard Poor’s, which are major companies that publish financial research and analysis. He explained the government efforts in addressing points of weakness in economy and education, and combating corruption, noting that it pays much attention to diversify economy instead of depending only on oil through the 2035 vision, which includes five-year economic plans. The State established an Anti-Corruption Authority, he stated. He points out that Kuwait adopts education policy seeking to provide opportunities to all children. —KUNA

MUSLIM WORLD TO IMPROVE ‘HALAL TOURISM’

KUWAIT: Malaysia has invited many people to hand in a law for the collection of unlicensed conventional weapons, Al-Ajmi said.

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KUWAIT: Photo shows Kuwait sky as appears from Al-Salmy desert —KUNA

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KUWAIT: Malaysian Minister of Tourism and Culture Mohamamd Nazari Abdulaziz has called on Muslim nations to improve ties with non-Muslim nations, especially the Western ones, to better promote for the touristic and cultural products in the Islamic World. He said during the opening of World Islamic Tourism Conference Expo 2015, which is part of the activities of the 6th World Muslim World Biz 2015 by International Business Centre (IOC) International Business Centre that the OIC’s countries have a number of privileges that qualify them to become important touristic countries in the world.

Abdulaziz added that a number of amazing natural touristic sites are located within the framework of OIC, saying that ‘halal tourism’ has attracted a number of non-Muslim countries to adopt such developed form of tourism to meet the needs of Muslim tourists. “Success in invading the international market depends on the level of mutual respect between people of various countries, especially the non-Muslim ones” he said. Malaysia has lately organized a campaign themed ‘Malaysia, a Year Of Festivals 2015’, which is one of the Malaysian Ministry’s initiatives, working to achieve the aim of the government to reach 36 million visitors with a financial profit of MYR 178 billion ($42 million) by 2010.

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Kuwaiti diplomat honored in Chile

WASHINGTON: Chile honored Kuwaiti Ambassador to the country Reem Al-Khaled late Thursday with a medal in recognition of her efforts in boosting ties between the two countries. A statement by the Kuwaiti Embassy in Santiago, said that Chilean Foreign Ministry held a celebration at its headquarters to honor the Kuwaiti diplomat. Chilean Foreign Minister Heraldo Munoz lauded the Kuwaiti diplomat for her efforts in bolstering relations, wishing Al-Khaled more success in the future. On her part, Ambassador Al-Khaled thanked the Chilean Foreign Ministry for this honoring, affirming that she would do her best to promote ties with Chile. Ambassador Al-Khaled was honored with a first degree medal for her efforts. The medal had been awarded to personnel with extraordinary services to Chile since 1817. —KUNA

Arab Parliamentary union overhauls scouting sector

CAIRO: Chairman of the Arab Scout Parliamentary Union Abdullah Al-Trajji has called on Arab parliaments to enact legislations intended to promote the Arab scouting sector. Addressing “the international 42nd conference on training and development,” held late on Thursday, Al-Trajji (who is also a member of the Kuwaiti National Assembly) called for the implementation of resolutions of the Arab Scout Organization, issued in August, and enacting new laws and rules to overhaul the sector. Al-Trajji conveyed to the conferees greetings of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah and His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Sabah Al-Mubarak Al-Mubarak Al-Sabah, sponsor of the convention.

The conferees representing 27 states of the Arab countries that WOSM established the Arab Scout Region in Damascus, Syria. The Region comprises 18 members of Scouting in Western Asia and North Africa, including Algeria, Bahrain, Egypt, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Libya, Mauritania, Monaco, Oman, Palestine, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Syria. —KUNA

Iraq appreciates Kuwait aid to displaced Iraqis

BAGHDAD: The Iraqi government has expressed gratitude for the Kuwaiti relief effort for the internally-displaced people in several parts of Iraq. Chief of staff of the office of Iraqi Prime Minister Mahdi Al-Allaq received Kuwaiti ambassador to Iraq Ghassan Al-Zawawi to discuss the two stages of the humanitarian aid offered by sisterly Kuwait, according to a press release issued by the Iraqi government. The first stage of the Kuwaiti assistance included the delivery of 38,000 food parcels to more than 200,000 homeless people and over 40 tons of medical supplies; Kuwait Red Crescent Society oversaw the process in 22 camps in the northern region of Kurdistan and other parts of Iraq. It also included the launching and rehabilitation of several social care centers such as the retirement homes and orphanages, and distribution of winter clothes to needy families in Baghdad and seven other governorates. In the second stage, Kuwait undertook to implement the national project of portable clinics, the caravan schools’ project, and a camp for the displaced persons in Ameriyat Al-Fallujah area, according to the statement.

EPA launches Kuwaiti-South Korean environment forum

KUWAIT: Director General of the Environment Public Authority (EPA) Sheikh Abdullah Ahmad Al-Sabah has launched the Kuwaiti-South Korean Cooperation Forum with the attendance of South Korean Assistant Minister Environment, and South Korean Ambassador to Kuwait Kim Kyung Sik. EPA’s Director General said in a speech that Kuwait has significantly contributed to the protection of local and regional environment, upon the instructions of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, and with direct follow-up by His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-Mubarak Al-Sabah. EPA is responsible for settling and applying the general policy of protecting the environment, besides the sustainable development strategies, besides supporting environmental researches and studies, as well as settling the framework for environmental educating program, as well as spreading environmental awareness, he said. The strategy is aimed at cooperation between both nations in protecting the environment and sustainable development is the theme of the joint seminar, reflecting the deep-rooted bilateral ties between Kuwait and South Korea, he affirmed.
ATHENS: At least 17 children drowned when three boats sank en route from Turkey to Greece, officials said yesterday, the latest tragedy to strike migrants braving wintry seas to seek asylum in Europe. Nine adults also lost their lives when the boats went down, with the drownings once again highlighting the human cost as Europe struggles with its worst migrant crisis since World War II. Although rescue officials in Greece and Turkey managed to pull another 157 people from the water, such drownings have become an almost daily occurrence as thousands of people brave high seas and wintry weather to make the crossing on flimsy, overloaded boats.

Greek Prime Minister Alexis Tsipras expressed “shame” over Europe’s failure to prevent yet another “humanitarian tragedy”, and said it was crucial to prevent the Aegean Sea from becoming a cemetery.

The Greek leader also underlined the urgent need for Turkey to “respect its commitments” to halting the flow of people leaving its territory by boat and stressing Athens’ willingness to be “a link between the EU and Turkey” on the matter. With winter gales whipping up at sea, the UN refugee agency (UNHCR) said there was an “urgent need” to strengthen search and rescue capacity in the area.

“We have warned for weeks that an already bad situation could get even worse if desperate refugees and migrants must continue to resort to smugglers who send them out to sea despite the worsening weather,” the UNHCR’s Alessandra Morelli said in a statement Thursday. “Nearly every day now we are seeing children, parents, the elderly and the young dying as they try to reach Europe.”

In Spain, rescuers were searching for at least 35 people who had been on board a boat which ran into trouble after setting sail from northern Morocco on Wednesday. Fifteen people had been rescued from the troubled vessel on Thursday.

Merkel’s Unexpected Ally

Since the start of the year, 560,000 migrants and refugees have arrived in Greece by sea, out of over 700,000 who have reached Europe via the Mediterranean, according to the International Organization for Migration. More than 3,200 have died during the perilous crossings, the vast majority on the longer sea route from Libya to Italy. Most are heading for Germany, which is expecting up to a million asylum requests this year, prompting a backlash against German Chancellor Angela Merkel.

But yesterday, Merkel found an unexpected source of support from former nemesis Yanis Varoufakis, Greece’s ex-finance minister. Varoufakis, an outspoken critic of Merkel’s austerity-for-aid response to the Greek debt crisis, said her actions regarding refugees had been exemplary. “As a European, it fills me with great pride how Chancellord Angela Merkel is reacting,” he said. “I wish everyone in Europe would do the same.” —AFP
BOND SHAKEN AND STIRRED BY MIGRANTS’ FATE

PARIS: James Bond actor Daniel Craig yesterday urged European governments to “step forward and sort out” the migrant crisis tormenting the continent. “There is a human tragedy going on. It is up to European governments to step forward and get this sorted,” the British actor told AFP in an interview to promote 007’s latest adventure, “Spectre.” The movie is already breaking box office records in Britain, but the success has not quelled Craig’s well-publicised doubts over continuing in the role - the 47-year-old admitted he “did not know” how much longer he would keep playing the suave secret agent. “Spectre” sees Bond fit back and forth across borders in the blink of an eye despite being grounded by British intelligence and having his passport removed. But in reality entering Britain illegally has become ever more difficult, with thousands of migrants having to resort to desperate measures to cross the English Channel. Some have tried to climb onto or underneath high-speed Eurostar trains and two Iranians managed to walk the 50-km length of the tunnel earlier this month before being arrested by British police. At least 15 have died trying to reach England since June. Craig, who has been an advocate for humanitarian issues, urged governments to act to resolve the crisis. “Some fictional spy is not going to fix this,” he said. “People are not thinking about James Bond as they struggle with their families across the Mediterranean; it is the furthest thing from their minds.” Ironically, Craig has also become the face of a drive by tourism chiefs to attract more visitors to Britain. An international billboard campaign proclaiming “Bond is Great Britain” is being rolled out to coincide with the release of the film, the 24th in the spy series that began six years before Craig was even born. “Spectre” has taken £245 million in its first three days in Britain - but it is still unclear whether Craig will reprise the role that he has given a harder, more brutal edge. Having claimed that he would rather “slash my wrists” than play the brooding MI6 agent again, Craig - who earned a reported £17 million from the last Bond film “Skyfall” - has since tried to row back on his comments to Time Out magazine. “I don’t know, honestly, that is a straight answer,” he told AFP. “I have spent two years of my life doing this now. That’s enough for the time being. I am not in crisis. In fact, I’ve never been happier making these films. The creative process has been better than it has ever been... why would you walk away from that? There is a lot of shit in the press about this at the moment, but the simple answer is I don’t know.”

TENSE TURKEY READIES FOR CRUCIAL ELECTIONS

ISTANBUL: Turkey is due to go to the polls tomorrow after five turbulent months without a government, bracing for further instability after devastating jihadist bomb attacks, renewed Kurdish violence and an alarming new crackdown on the media. The country’s most important vote in years will also determine the political future of “the big master” President Recep Tayyip Erdogan - even though his name is not even on the ballot paper.

Security is of paramount concern, after the deadliest attack in the country’s modern history. Erdogan, who criticises say is becoming more autocratic as he pushes for greater presidential powers, said Thursday that only a single-party government could ensure stability in the strategic nation of 75 million. “If our nation makes its choice for a single-party government, then I believe it would lay the ground for a peaceful life, without problems, in my country,” he said without offering details on his detention, arrest or release. But he did thank the Mauritanian authorities for working for his release from the US military facility, as well as all those who supported him during his “ordeal”.

The 45-year-old detainee, an alleged Al-Qaeda cell member who left Afghanistan for Pakistan in 1999, and was accused of fighting there, was captured in June 2002 in the southern Pakistani port city of Karachi. He was first held at the US detention centre at Guantanamo, 13 years later.

Ex-Gitmo detainee eyes ‘peaceful life’

NOUAKCHOTT: Just-released Guantanamo Bay detainee, Mauritania’s Ahmed Ould Abdel Aziz, appeared in public at home yesterday for the first time and said he now hoped for “a peaceful life, without problems”. Repatriated Wednesday after 13 years behind bars, the heavily-bearded man, looking healthy but tired, gave an impromptu press conference at the family home in a residential neighbourhood, with government members on hand as well as relatives and supporters.

“What happened to me in Guantanamo belongs to the past. Now I hope to be able to lead a peaceful life, without problems, in my country,” he said without offering details on his detention, arrest or release. But he did thank the Mauritanian authorities for working for his release from the US military facility, as well as all those who supported him during his “ordeal”.

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ISTANBUL: Supporters of the Republican People’s Party hold pictures of the founder of the Turkish republic Mustafa Kemal Ataturk during a march yesterday to mark the 92nd anniversary of the country’s founding. — AFP

Tense Turkey readies for crucial elections, AKP not expected to get parliamentary majority

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**MISSILES KILL 89 IN SYRIA MARKET**

**BEIRUT:** At least 89 people, including 17 children, were killed when Syrian government forces fired missiles into a marketplace in a town near Damascus, a conflict monitor and a local rescue group said yesterday. The Syrian Observatory for Human Rights, which monitors the war through a network of sources on the ground, said government forces fired 12 missiles at Douma, 15 km northeast of Damascus. Douma has suffered intense bombardment in recent months in a wave of strikes the Syrian army has said targets insurgents that have launched attacks on government-held areas.

Syrian Civil Defence, a local humanitarian rescue group that operates in rebel-held areas, posted a picture on its Facebook page of about a dozen bloodied bodies laid on the ground on plastic sheeting. It said the attack had said used guided missiles. A volunteer from the group in the wider area told Reuters that local rescue services were completely stretched. “We are treating (wounded) only as much as we are able,” he said, asking not to be named for security reasons. “Everyone in the civil defence in Eastern Ghouta is deployed and totally stretched, and rockets are still hitting residential areas.”

On its twitter feed the Civil Defence linked to a video showing people tending to survivors in a chaotic scene of blackened rubble and fire. Footage showed bodies on the ground of the market place, where stalls had been blown to pieces. Reuters was unable to independently verify the events shown. “Utterly homoured that while world leaders meet for peace in Vienna, attack(s) against civilians continue in Syria,” the group said in a tweet. Many of Douma’s residents have fled the 4-year-old conflict, moving to nearby rural areas. Medics say they have struggled to cope with large numbers of wounded in the intensified strikes. Syria’s civil war has killed more than 250,000 people and driven more than 10 million from their homes. International diplomats were meeting yesterday at a peace conference in Vienna, the first to be attended by President Bashar Al-Assad’s main ally Iran. — Reuters

**ATTACK IN JERUSALEM AS CLASHES ERUPT IN W BANK**

**JERUSALEM:** Jerusalem was shaken by its first stabbing in two weeks yesterday as violence intensified in the occupied West Bank with fresh clashes and knife attacks in a surge of Palestinian unrest. A Palestinian stabbed and lightly wounded an American tourist in Jerusalem, where the wave of violence first erupted a month ago over the Al-Aqsa mosque compound, a highly sensitive site sacred to both Muslims and Jews. The 23-year-old Palestinian assailant was shot dead, while a bystander was injured when security forces opened fire on the assailant, police said.

Jerusalem had been calm in recent days as Israel clamped down on weeks of unrest with fire, and another was hit with a rubber bullet in the occupied Gaza Strip, where 17 Palestinians have died in clashes in recent weeks, protesters clashed with Israeli forces along the northern and eastern borders.

Knife attacks, shootings and protests have become near daily occurrences since simmering tensions over the status of the Al-Aqsa mosque compound boiled over. The violence has left nine Israelis dead. The deaths of the latest attackers took the number of Palestinians killed in the recent unrest to 64, including many shot in anti-Israeli protests. One Israeli Arab attacker has also been shot dead. One of the alleged attackers, a 13-year-old Palestinian, appeared in court yesterday where he was charged with attempted murder for a knife attack against two Israeli schoolboys. — AFP

**IRANIAN-AMERICAN BUSINESSMAN DETAINED IN IRAN**

**WASHINGTON:** A prominent Iranian-American businessman has been detained by authorities in Iran, potentially throwing up another obstacle to closer US-Iran ties in the wake of the nuclear deal between the countries. Siamak Namazi was detained by Iranian authorities in mid-October, according to a source briefed on the matter who requested anonymity. He had been traveling in Iran, where his parents live, to visit family and was barred from leaving the country in July, the source said. The source said Namazi had not been in Iran on business.

Namazi was detained by the intelligence service of Iran’s Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps and is currently being held in solitary confinement in Evin prison, the source told Reuters. Namazi had been regularly called in for interrogation between July and the time he was detained, the source also disclosed. “We are aware of recent reports of the possible arrest of a US citizen,” a senior Obama administration official said. “We’re looking into these reports and don’t have anything further to provide at this time.” Namazi lives in Dubai and works as the head of strategic planning for Crescent Petroleum, an oil and gas company in the United Arab Emirates. He previously was chief executive of Atieh Bahar Consulting, a private marketing and strategic consulting firm in Iran. Namazi, well known among Iran policy experts, attended university in the United States and the United Kingdom and previously worked at think tanks and institutions in Washington, DC. In 2007, he was chosen as a “Young Global Leader” by the World Economic Forum.

Namazi’s career has revolved to a great extent around the changing business and diplomatic ties between the United States and Iran. In 2013, he wrote an editorial in the New York Times criticizing US and European sanctions for blocking the import of critical medicines into Iran. His arrest makes him the fourth Iranian-American currently detained in Iran. An reporter for the Washington Post, Jason Rezaian, was convicted this month after being arrested in July 2014 and accused of espionage. Amir Helmati, a former U.S. Marine, was jailed by Iran on spying charges in 2011. And Saeed Abedini, an Iranian-American Christian pastor, was sentenced to eight years in jail in 2013.

The detentions have been an obstacle to thawing US-Iran relations, which improved during the negotiation of a historic July nuclear deal. Iran agreed to limit its nuclear program in return for lifting sanctions. The Wall Street Journal reported eight youths were wounded by gunfire, and another was hit with a rubber bullet in Ramallah. In the blocked-off Gaza Strip, where 17 Palestinians have died in clashes in recent weeks, protesters clashed with Israeli forces along the northern and eastern borders.

ATTACK IN JERUSALEM AS CLASHES ERUPT IN W BANK

**ISRAELI FORCES KILL PALESTINIAN YOUTH**

Dozens were killed and wounded in clashes in the West Bank and in Jerusalem, where a Palestinian youth set himself on fire in a stabbing attack, officials said.

Melanie Lidman

**DOUMA, Syria:** Bodies lie on the ground after government forces fired more than 11 missiles at a market in this suburb of Damascus. — AFP

**AL-BIREH:** An Israeli military jeep catches on fire after Palestinian protesters hurled Molotov cocktails towards the vehicle during clashes at the entrance of this Palestinian town on the outskirts of Ramallah in the Israeli-occupied West Bank yesterday. — AFP

**INTERNATIONAL**
**LAST UK RESIDENT JAILED IN GITMO RETURNS HOME**

**Family relieved after Aamer freed**

**POLISH COURT REJECTS POLANSKI EXTRADITION**

**LUCKENWALDE, Germany: German police officers stand in a garden of the Eckbusch garden allotment in this town south of Berlin yesterday.**

**GERMAN KILLER OF REFUGEE BOY ADMITS SECOND KID MURDER**

**STAFFER SUSPENDED IN MUGABE CAP MISHAP**

**HARARE: In this Oct 2, 2015 photo, Zimbabwean President Robert Mugabe writes his comments in a visitors' book at the University of Zimbabwe. —AP**

**KRAKOW, Poland: A Polish court yesterday quashed a US bid to extradite Osama bin Laden's son-in-law, Said Bahaji, to the US. Bahaji, who was born in Saudi Arabia in December 1981, had arrived at a military base in southern Poland last week. He was arrested by police as he entered the country from Austria. The US government has been seeking the extradition of Bahaji, who is wanted on charges of supporting terrorism.**

**Berlin: A German man suspected of kidnapping and killing a four-year-old Bosnian refugee has been extradited to Turkey. The 31-year-old man was arrested in Berlin on Tuesday after a warrant was issued for his arrest by Turkish authorities. The victim, who was found dead on October 2, was a four-year-old boy who had been missing since July. The boy's body was found in a park near his home.**

**The boy had been missing since Oct 1, when his mother took him and his sisters to her main refugee registration centre known as Lagoso which receives hundreds of asylum seekers daily. The family has been living in Germany for more than a year and the mother had gone to the registration centre that day to obtain her social allowances, according to local media. Police subsequently issued CCTV footage of a bearded man leading a child away who was holding a stuffed toy. Mohamed was already dead on October 2, the day after his kidnapping,” police spokesman Redlich said, adding that the suspect had admitted to that during interrogation.**

**Poland’s justice minister has called for an end to the extradition of Baahaji. He said the case was a case of “extraordinary proceedings” and that the decision would be taken by the European Court of Human Rights.”**

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IMMIGRANTS BELIEVE FAMILIES CAN STAY IN US

WASHINGTON: Hundreds of immigrant families caught illegally crossing the Mexican border told US immigration agents they made the dangerous journey in part because they believed they would be permitted to stay in the United States and collect public benefits, according to internal intelligence files from the Homeland Security Department.

The interviews with immigrants by federal agents were intended to help the Obama administration understand what might be driving a puzzling surge in the numbers of border crossings that started over the summer. The explanations suggest the US government’s efforts to discourage illegal crossings may have been unsuccessful.

Its efforts have included public service campaigns in Honduras, El Salvador and Guatemala to highlight the dangers and consequences of making the trek across Mexico to cross illegally into the United States.

The AP obtained copies of the interview summaries, which were compiled in reports by the US Customs and Border Protection’s Office of Intelligence. They said hundreds of people traveling as part of families consistently cited opportunities to obtain permission to stay in the US, claim asylum and receive unspecified benefits.

Immigrants spoke of “permisos,” or a pass to come into the United States. They said it was not intended to be a promised land, but part of an analysis of the situation, said department spokeswoman Marsha Catron, adding that troubles in the immigrants’ home countries likely contributed to their flight as well. Although the Obama administration has explained that immigrants who cross the US border illegally can be deported, lengthy backlogs of more than 456,000 cases mean that immigrants can effectively remain in the US for years before a judge decides whether they should leave the country. Also, recent court rulings have complicated the government’s plans to hold families in immigration jails pending deportation proceedings.

Immigrants living in the US illegally generally are not eligible for public benefits, except that children may receive free or reduced meals in public schools.—AP

WASHINGTON: For years, US President Barack Obama and newly-elected House Speaker Paul Ryan have been political foes and occasional policy allies. Obama has long admired Ryan’s seriousness on fiscal issues, but pilloried his balanced-budget proposals as rife with “gimmicks and smoke and mirrors” techniques to shade the real cost. His detail-rich, six-minute commentary was praised by Republicans as among the most effective arguments against the “Obamacare” bill. In 2011, Obama castigated Ryan’s budget proposals during a fiscal policy speech - with the Wisconsin lawmaker sitting in the front row. Without mentioning Ryan by name, Obama said the budget blueprint he authored painted “a vision of our future that is deeply pessimistic.”

The president again used Ryan’s budget as a political tool in the 2012 election after GOP nominee Mitt Romney tapped the House member as his running mate. Romney was sitting in the House chamber Thursday as Ryan officially became speaker, a visual reminder of Republicans’ loss to Obama in the last presidential election. At the White House, Obama spokesman Josh Earnest also reminded Ryan that with Democrats still in the White House, most successful legislative efforts to discourage illegal crossings may have been unsuccessful.

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Jet catches fire on takeoff at Florida airport

FORT LAUDERDALE: An engine on a passenger jet bound for Caracas, Venezuela, burst into flames while taxiing for takeoff at a Florida airport on Thursday night, forcing frightened passengers to exit the plane using inflatable emergency slides. The accident could have been catastrophic had the jet taken off with fuel leak, Greg Feith, a former crash investigator for the National Transportation Safety Board, told Reuters. “Once the aircraft is airborne, it becomes a flying blowtorch.” Feith said. “The fire intensity and growth rate can make it extremely difficult to put out.”

Fire could damage a wing and fuselage, or cripple hydraulic and electronic control systems, Feith said, potentially making an emergency landing impossible. It could also ignite fuel tanks in the plane, potentially making an emergency landing impossible. It could also ignite fuel tanks in the plane, potentially making an emergency landing impossible. It could also ignite fuel tanks in the plane, potentially making an emergency landing impossible. It could also ignite fuel tanks in the plane, potentially making an emergency landing impossible. It could also ignite fuel tanks in the plane, potentially making an emergency landing impossible. It could also ignite fuel tanks in the plane, potentially making an emergency landing impossible. It could also ignite fuel tanks in the plane, potentially making an emergency landing impossible. It could also ignite fuel tanks in the plane, potentially making an emergency landing impossible. 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BOGOTA: A worker looks at an emerald at the workshop of Muzo Emerald Company on Oct 16, 2015. — AFP

COLOMBIA EMERALDS TO SPARKLE ANEW IN REPUTATION REVAMP

BOGOTA: Colombia is working to polish the reputation of its emeralds, which - much like Africa's diamonds - have lost their luster due to decades of violence surrounding the treacherous gemstone trade. "There is an image linked to all of that in Colombia, and Colombia is traditionally seen as being connected to war, drugs, trafficking," said Corentin Quideau, a French jewelry expert. Considered the most beautiful in the world, Colombia's emeralds totaled $146.5 million in exports in 2014, down 15 percent from 2012, when they accounted for 50 to 90 percent of total global production.

But they've also been linked to bloodshed - including a "green war" in the 1980s that killed 3,500 people. Colombia's emeralds are the focus of a recent international symposium in the capital Bogota, the first of its kind, that drew several hundred participants. The goal is to put the green gem back on a pedestal, said Quideau, brand strategist for Colombia's famous Muzo mine, whose past experience includes stints at big luxury labels such as Cartier, Boucheron and Louis Vuitton.

Located in the heart of Colombia, some 200 km north of Bogota, the Muzo mine was first exploited by indigenous groups, followed by Spanish conquistadors starting in the 16th century. It's here that the "Futa" was extracted - an 11,000-carat, five-pound emerald that wowed the public when it was displayed in 2011. "The color, the purity of these stones make them unique," said US expert Ronald Ringsrud, who speaks of Colombia's emeralds as if they were rare flowers. "The green shifts from yellow to violet, a softer geological environment" that allows the crystal to thrive better in granite, he said.

"Wild West"

For decades, the industry was dominated by Victor Carranza, a gun-toting peasant-turned-billionaire who gained control of the Muzo mine in the 1970s. His support policies that go the growth of the emerald industry. Individual miners are getting on board, including the president of the Emerald Exporters Association, said would "distinguish Colombian emeralds as a unique gift of nature."

The Colombian Emerald Federation meanwhile proposed creating an International Emerald Committee to "promote sustainable development and... attract new attention to the growth of the industry." Individual miners are also getting on board, including the storied Muzo. In the name of modernization and greater transparency, Burgess invested more than $100 million in Muzo and suspended operations for two years to upgrade mining techniques and personnel management. "Muzo emeralds are structurally very complex, nearly perfect. But when (the miners) used dynamite, it caused fractures in the stones," said Dante Valencia, a master gem cutter at the company's state-of-the-art workshop in Bogota. "This used to be the Wild West," said Quideau, the French expert.

"If someone wants to eat Colombian food and they are vegetarian, they are in trouble," joked Gustavo Laborde, an anthropologist and author of a book on the "ritual" that is the barbecue. Non-meat eaters like Lucaria have a tough time in the capital, which has a population of 5 million but is almost devoid of vegetarian or vegan restaurants.

"The emerald's image is linked to that of Colombia, and due to decades of violence surrounding the treacherous gemstone trade..." — AFP

RIO DE JANEIRO: Brazil, which has one of the highest murder tolls on the planet, could soon extend most restrictions on gun ownership, risking what some critics call a "Wild West" scenario.

A draft law stripping away current limits has already been approved in committee and is due to go to the lower house of Congress in November. Under the law, anyone over 21, including people accused of crimes or convicted of less than serious crimes, would be allowed to purchase up to nine firearms a year and 50 rounds of ammunition a month.

State employees and public figures, ranging from government officials to politicians, are authorized to carry arms, as would private citizens often in the public eye such as taxi drivers. At present, weapons can only be bought legally by people obtaining a license on a case-by-case basis. Supporters say freeing up gun sales will allow people to protect themselves in a country plagued by violent robbery and intense confrontations between drug gangs and police, with some 40,000 gun-related deaths a year. "Our proposal is to guarantee the good citizen's right to self-defense," said the law's author Laudo Caiado, from the powerful centrist PMDB party. But opponents fear that Brazil's orgy of gun violence would simply spin further out of control.

"It's a return to the Wild West," said Ivan Valente, a deputy from the leftist PSOL party.

Big Business

Marques accused the arms industry of "playing on people's fear" and said Brazilian manufacturers are producing most of the weapons used in crimes in the country. "The weapon that is used to kill and rob in Brazil is made here and in most cases was originally bought by someone for self-defense," Marques said. A study of 14,000 weapons confiscated between 2013 and 2014 showed that 86 percent had been made in Brazil, he said.

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"The emerald’s image is linked to that of Colombia, and due to decades of violence surrounding the treacherous gemstone trade,..." — AFP

SAO PAULO: Inside view of a gun shop seen in Sao Caetano do Sul yesterday. — AFP

Uruguay: Heaven for meat eaters, hell for vegetarians

Three cows for each resident

Though things are starting to change, he said. At Muzo, the 750 miners "have gone from a barbaric and archaic pay system based on the combination of force, applause... to real contracts and salaries," he said. "They have gone from a barbaric and archaic pay system based on the combination of force, applause... to real contracts and salaries," he said. "If someone wants to eat Uruguayan food and they are vegetarian, they are in trouble," joked Gustavo Laborde, an anthropologist and author of a book on the "ritual" that is the barbecue. Non-meat eaters like Lucaria have a tough time in the capital, which has a population of 5 million but is almost devoid of vegetarian or vegan restaurants.

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FOR U.S. CONSUMERS

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HONG KONG: This photograph taken on Oct 26, 2015 shows student protester Joshua Wong outside the court of justice. — AFP

HK STUDENT LEADER FACES TRIAL OVER DEMOCRACY RALLY

HONG KONG: Prominent Hong Kong student activist Joshua Wong vowed to continue his fight for democracy yesterday as a trial date was set over a protest that sparked mass rallies in the city. Wong, 19, will face trial in February for the demonstration on Sept 26 last year which saw students climb into the city’s government complex as part of a campaign for free leadership elections. It triggered wider rallies that exploded two days later when police fired tear gas to disperse crowds in central Hong Kong. Wong is charged with “unlawful assembly and inciting others to take part in an unlawful assembly,” relating to the Sept 26 incident.

The teenager was in court yesterday for a half-hour hearing which set the trial date for February 29. It is scheduled to last seven days. Wong could face up to five years in prison if convicted. “I really hope to use this process in court to raise global awareness for the Hong Kong issue - that we still keep fighting for democracy,” Wong told AFP after the hearing. Wong, a university student, also faces two other separate cases over protests last year and said the multiple court appearances “are exhausting”. He has repeatedly described the cases against him as political and has pleaded not guilty to all the charges. A number of activists are facing court cases - fellow student leaders Nathan Law and Alex Chow will also face trial in February over the Sept 26 protest. Wong has gone on trial over the Sept 26 incident. Wong is charged with “unlawful assembly and inciting others to take part in an unlawful assembly,” relating to the Sept 26 incident.

THE HAGUE: An international tribunal ruled Thursday it had the power to hear a case brought by the Philippines over disputed islands in the South China Sea, in a move likely to trigger fury in Beijing. Manila has insisted the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea, which the Philippines and China have both ratified, should be used to resolve the bitter territorial row over isolated reefs and islets, which has triggered growing international alarm.

But China has refused to participate in the proceedings, arguing the Permanent Court of Arbitration - which is more than a century old and based in The Hague - had no jurisdiction over the case. “Reviewing the claims submitted by the Philippines, the tribunal has rejected the argument” by China that the “dispute is actually about sovereignty over the islands in the South China Sea and therefore beyond the tribunal’s jurisdiction,” the court said in a statement. Instead, the court ruled the case reflects “disputes between the two states concerning the interpretation or application of the Convention” - something which falls within its remit. China insists it has sovereign rights to nearly all of the South China Sea, a strategic waterway through which about a third of all the world’s traded oil passes.

The disputed waters - claimed in part by Vietnam, Malaysia, the Philippines, Taiwan, and Brunei - have also become the stage for a tug of regional dominance between Beijing and Washington, the world’s two largest economic and military powers. Following a standoff between Chinese ships and the weak Filipino Navy in 2012, China took control of a rich fishing ground called Scarborough Shoal that is within the Philippines’ exclusive economic zone. China has also undertaken giant reclamation activities, raising fears it will use artificial islands to build new military outposts close to the Philippines and other claimants.

Ruling in 2016

The tribunal - set up in 1899 to resolve international disputes between countries - stressed Thursday its ruling did not yet go to the heart of the merits of Manila’s case, which was first filed in 2013. A new hearing will now be held behind closed doors in The Hague, and a final ruling is not expected until next year. The tribunal ruled it would take up seven of the 15 submissions made by Manila, in particular whether Scarborough Shoal and low-tide areas like Mischief Reef can be considered islands, as China contends. It will also mull whether China has interfered with Philippine fishing activities at Scarborough Shoal. But it set aside seven more pointed claims, mainly accusing Beijing of acting unlawfully, to be considered at the next hearing on the actual merits of Manila’s case. In a July hearing in the Hague, Philippine Foreign Secretary Albert del Rosario warned the integrity of UN maritime laws was at stake. China’s behaviour had become increasingly “aggressive” and negotiations had proved futile, del Rosario said. — AFP
YANGON: Myanmar’s opposition leader Aung San Suu Kyi greets patients in a ward at Yangon General Hospital yesterday. — AP

Despite critics, support for Suu Kyi strong before polls

NLD expected to win

BEIJING: Chinese citizens greeted the announcement of a “two-child” policy warily yesterday, as high costs, career aspirations and rising urbanization in an increasingly wealthy society mute expectations of a baby boom. China’s “one-child” family planning regime, which Beijing announced Thursday would end after nearly four decades, has seen arbitrary and often brutal enforcement, including forced abortions and sterilizations.

But Thursday’s change may have been too little, too late, as many young Chinese see more costs than benefits in having a second child. A survey on Chinese media site Sina with over 160,000 respondents found that less than 29 percent would have a second child, and social media users seemed to meet Thursday’s announcement with a collective shrug. By yesterday evening the subject had dropped out of the top 10 topics on popular microblog site Sina Weibo.

Users questioned whether one was truly the loneliest number and said that even if they wanted a child, they could not afford one. “The country doesn’t give any financial support,” said one post among many that lamented the costs of having two children. “Apartments are so expensive now. Who can afford to give birth?” Making more children clearly is not the solution to China’s economic troubles, another comment said, adding that instead “maybe we should be working hard to make more money.”

‘Bring up the Population’
The policy is said to have prevented an estimated 400 million births in the world’s most populous country, where 1.37 billion people live today. Most families were restricted to only one offspring, but various exemptions applied, and violators who could afford to pay the fines were able to have a second child, or even more. Renowned film director Zhang Yimou paid a $1.2 million fine for having three extra children. The plan was supposed to save China from a looming population explosion, but it now contributes to a greying of society that will exacerbate labor shortages as the world’s second-largest economy fights to maintain growth. Under the new policy 90 million couples will be have the right to a second child, family planning officials said yesterday, without specifying how many were newly eligible. — AFP

ISLAMABAD: Pakistani opposition leader Imran Khan to divorce after just 10 months

ISLAMABAD: Pakistani opposition leader and former playboy cricketer Imran Khan is to divorce for a second time, ending his marriage to a TV journalist just ten months after they wed. Imran Khan, 62, married 42-year-old Reham Khan, a former BBC weather host and a divorced mother of three, in January this year in a simple ceremony at his Islamabad home. “We have decided to part ways and file for divorce,” Reham Khan said in a brief statement on her Twitter account Friday. Imran Khan tweeted that it was a “painful time” and that he has “the greatest respect for Reham’s moral character & her passion to work for & help the underprivileged.”

Naeem ul Haque, Imran Khan’s spokesman told AFP the decision to divorce was mutual. “It’s a painful and personal matter, so I won’t be able to comment more or state any reason for it,” he said.

Loved by millions across the cricket-obsessed nation for winning Pakistan’s only World Cup in 1992, Khan’s sporting prowess and rugged good looks also brought him international celebrity in a country lacking glamour. He was considered his country’s most eligible man until he suddenly announced his plans to marry shortly after launching a movement to topple the government in August 2014, which he called off in December after a Taliban attack on a school that killed 150 people. Reham Khan, host of a local TV talk show, was widely criticized after she appeared at public meetings of Imran Khan’s Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) party, with opponents accusing her of seeking to boost her own profile through her husband’s fame. She found particularly harsh reception in northwest Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province, governed by PTI. She also sparked controversy after it emerged that she had not actually attended a college where she claimed to be a student on her Twitter account.

KAWHMU, MYANMAR: Aung San Suu Kyi’s star power has fallen among fellow Myanmar politicians critical of her management style and decision-making, and among fans abroad disenchanted with the Nobel Peace laureate’s relative silence on human-rights abuses. But she’s as popular as ever amid the muddy roads and ramshackle huts of her constituency and across much of the country.

In big cities and remote rural corners, the red flag of Suu Kyi’s National League for Democracy is more common sight than signs of support for the ruling party. She’s expected to carry the NLD to victory in parliamento elections Nov 8, even though the 70-year-old is barred by the constitution from holding such a post after her party boycotted the 2010 vote, and among fans abroad increasingly critical of her management style and decision-making, and among fans abroad disenchanted with the Nobel Peace laureate’s relative silence on human-rights abuses. But she’s as popular as ever amid the muddy roads and ramshackle huts of her constituency and across much of the country.

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In big cities and remote rural corners, the red flag of Suu Kyi’s National League for Democracy is more common sight than signs of support for the ruling party. She’s expected to carry the NLD to victory in parliamentary elections Nov 8, even though the 70-year-old is barred by the constitution from holding such a post after her party boycotted the 2010 vote, and among fans abroad increasingly critical of her management style and decision-making, and among fans abroad disenchanted with the Nobel Peace laureate’s relative silence on human-rights abuses. But she’s as popular as ever amid the muddy roads and ramshackle huts of her constituency and across much of the country.
NEW YORK: Slowing US production is unlikely to offer much respite to low oil prices into next year as high OPEC output feeds a persistent supply glut, a Reuters survey showed yesterday. Benchmark North Sea Brent crude is expected to average $58.52 a barrel in 2016, marginally down from last month’s poll and above $55.94 seen so far this year, the survey of 32 analysts showed.

This is the lowest average 2016 forecast in the polls conducted this year. US crude is projected to average $54.44 a barrel next year, up slightly from last month’s forecast of $54.10. Production in the United States will continue to decline in response to cheaper oil, but this is not likely to translate into higher prices, the analysts said. “We think prices will grind slowly higher over the next few years, which should help to ease the falls in production but we don’t expect a sharp rally in prices or a surge in output,” Thomas Pugh of Capital Economics said. The oversupply scenario could also be aggravated by an emerging trend of build-ups in refined products. Influential Wall Street bank Goldman Sachs said crude prices could drop sharply as storage sites for refined products come close to maximum capacity.

Goldman’s head of commodities research, Jeff Currie, said in October he did not expect oil to break above $50 a barrel next year and saw the chances of a drop to $20 at below 50 percent. The bearish mood in the market was aggravated by a drop in refining profitability while demand growth slowed, analysts at Jefferies said in a note. Most analysts expect the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries to stick to its stance of maintaining record-high production when it meets on Dec. 4, a year after it chose to defend market share rather than prices.

The exporter group is “about to reap the fruit of last November’s tough decision not to cut production”, Giorgos Beleris, senior analyst with Thomson Reuters GFMS, said. OPEC would want US oil production to decline further so the supply glut is reduced without any decline in its share, said Rahul Prithiani, director at CRISIL Research. Bernstein had the highest 2016 forecast for Brent at $86 a barrel, while Natixis had the lowest at $48.50.

Output drops

OPEC oil output has fallen in October from the previous month, a Reuters survey found yesterday, as declines in top producers Saudi Arabia and Iraq outweighed higher supply from African members. The drops are not indicative of deliberate supply cuts to prop up prices, sources in the survey said, and the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries is still pumping close to a record high as major producers focus on defending market share.

OPEC supply has fallen in October to 31.64 million barrels per day (bpd) from a revised 31.76 million in September, according to the survey, based on shipping data and information from sources at oil companies, OPEC and consultants. With one day left in October, the final figures could be revised. Even so, OPEC has boosted production by almost 1.5 million bpd since the November 2014 switch to defending market share. Despite the decline this month, output is not far below July’s 31.88 million bpd, the highest since Reuters records began in 1997.

The OPEC increase has added to ample supplies, which have helped cut prices by more than half from June 2014 to below $50 a barrel. Still, with reductions in capital spending by oil companies expected to curb future supply, analysts see signs that OPEC’s strategy will deliver. “Clearly, OPEC’s long-game strategy is working,” said Harry Tchilinguirian, global head of commodity strategy at BNP Paribas. “In the end, OPEC’s strategy is creating the conditions for higher prices for longer in a couple of years’ time.”

The biggest supply drop in October has come from Saudi Arabia, which trimmed output due to reduced use of crude in domestic power plants and refineries, sources in the survey said, despite higher exports. “Supply to the market is down,” said a source who tracks Saudi output, “Exports are up but this has been more than offset by lower refinery runs due to maintenance and lower direct burn.”

Direct burn - the use of crude in Saudi power plants - usually drops in cooler months due to reduced air-conditioning needs. Maintenance was being carried out at the Saudi Yasref refinery, reducing crude consumption.

Saudi output, at 10.10 million bpd, remains not far below the record high of 10.56 million bpd it pumped in June. Exports from Iraq’s main outlet, its southern terminals, were higher for much of October - reaching a record 3.1 million bpd in the first 27 days of the month - but have slowed since as poor weather delayed cargoes, shipping data showed.

Shipments from Iraq’s north by the Kurdistan Regional Government via Ceyhan in Turkey have edged lower, while those by Iraq’s State Oil Marketing Organization have fallen to zero from about 20,000 bpd in September, the survey found. Smaller increases have come from OPEC’s two west African producers, Nigeria and Angola, and from Libya.

Angola and Nigeria exported more crude this month, but a force majeure on shipments of Nigeria’s Forcados limited the increase from that country. Libyan output rose slightly, the survey found, but remains a fraction of the pre-conflict rate. Output in Iran, OPEC’s second-largest producer until sanctions forced a cut in exports in 2012, continues to edge up, the survey found. A lifting of sanctions on Iran has the potential to boost OPEC output further in 2016. — Reuters

OPEC-fueled oil glut to offset US output

Cartel’s October output falls led by Saudi, Iraq

Nasiriyah: Iraqi labourers work at an oil refinery in the southern town Nasiriyah yesterday. South Oil Company (SOC) has raised production at Nasiriyah oil field from 40,000 barrels per day to between 65,000 and 70,000 barrels as it aims to reach 100,000 barrels by the end of next month. —AFP

Benchmark North Sea Brent crude is expected to average $55.94 seen so far this year, the survey of 32 analysts showed.
LONDON: Brent crude held close to $49 a barrel yesterday, poised to post the first weekly gain in three weeks despite a supply glut that has tested storage capacity and hammered oil company results.

The potential gain, driven by smaller-than-expected builds in US oil stocks, was widely viewed as a temporary boost in a market that is awash with oil and staring down sluggish economic growth in key markets such as the United States and China. Brent crude was trading 15 cents higher at $49.15 a barrel at 1220 GMT, set for a more than 2 percent weekly rise. US crude was trading 15 cents higher at $46.21 a barrel, on track to post a gain of nearly 4 percent on the week. "Looking at the bigger picture, there is still lots of oil in the United States," PVM Oil Associates analyst Tamas Varga said. "We should see a softer market in the coming days."

Traders said a 3.4 million barrel crude build reported by the US Energy Information Administration provided the primary support for the weekly increase. The build fell short of some analysts' expectations and sparked a nearly $3 rally in US crude. A Reuters survey showed October OPEC oil output falling from the previous month, as declines from Saudi Arabia and Iraq outweighed increases from African members.

Also, China's Ministry of Commerce announced a doubling in the country's crude oil import quota for 2016. But OPEC production remained close to record highs as major producers focus on defending market share, and widespread concerns persisted over China's shaky economic growth.

Bearsish data from the United States also tempered gains. US economic growth braked sharply in the third quarter as businesses cut back on restocking warehouses to work off an inventory glut. Analysts said prices were effectively flat. "We are treading water," said Gareth Lewis-Davies, director of energy commodity strategy at BNP Paribas. "Prices are trading in a very narrow range."

China's closely watched Purchasing Manager Indexes (PMIs), which will be released next week, could give more direction. Lewis-Davies said sharp cuts in oil company spending, and the pain of US shale oil producers, could spark a more balanced market in 2016. "These price levels are sufficiently low enough to cut into the cost curve of US shale oil producers," he said. — Reuters

NEW DELHI: A aircraft belonging to the Indian carrier Air India rolls past the main terminal of the Indira Gandhi International airport prior to take-off in New Delhi. New Delhi yesterday announced a plan to make air travel affordable for millions more Indians, with schemes to revive airports and connect rural areas that it said would "take flying to the masses". — AFP

INDIA GOVT UNVEILS PLAN TO 'TAKE FLYING TO THE Masses'

AIRLINES TO BE REVIVED TO CONNECT RURAL AREAS

NEW DELHI: New Delhi yesterday announced a plan to make air travel affordable for millions more Indians, with schemes to revive airports and connect rural areas that it said would "take flying to the masses".

The long-awaited draft policy aims to bring down airfares to 2,500 rupees ($40) per hour of flying on many regional routes through a slew of tax incentives, subsidies and a two percent levy on international and some domestic routes.

It outlines plans to revive India's dilapidated airports and airstrips, of which only about 75 out of 476 are in regular use, and setting up a fund to improve access to rural areas. Air travel in India is mostly confined to the third of the population that lives in cities, putting it out of the reach of hundreds of millions. "The prime minister has said... it should be a policy which takes flying to masses, it should no longer confine flying only to the elite," Secretary for Civil Aviation Rajiv Nayan Choubey told reporters.

"We should promote regional connectivity in a manner which makes it possible for the ordinary middle-class Indian to start flying," Choubey said, adding the scheme would start in April 2016. "We will be giving several incentives in order to bring down the cost of flying as much as we can." Only 70 million of India's 1.2 billion citizens flew domestically in 2014-15, according to the Sydney-based Centre for Asia-Pacific Aviation (CAPA), making it one of the world's most under-penetrated markets. The government said it aims to increase domestic ticket sales to 300 million by 2022, up from 200 million in 2015.

Easing regulations

India's aviation industry has criticized the government in the past for failing to reform rules-into and within India.

The move to increase flights-which are opposed to scrapping the 2004 rule, saying it would favour cash-rich international airlines over domestic carriers. "Prices are trading in a very narrow range," said Lewis-Davies. "It's a very tight market."

In the cramped Mumbai office of the DRT, a tribunal considered far more cases than the courts, a Ministry of Finance letter on the notice board urged officials to move faster, as cases were "in many cases taking more than four years". Inside, officials complained they had little power to draw a line under languishing cases. "They are all dead horses," said one, gesturing to the day's case list. "They are never going to run any races, but you have to keep the dead stock."

Chief among the problems is that for a single troubled company, creditors and owners can all initiate competing proceedings in different courts, tribunals and states. Current legislation - especially the Sick Industrial Companies Act of 1985 - is geared towards reviving companies, so appeals frequently follow a wind-up order.

The Official Liquidator system is a disaster. It takes a minimum of five years and can take 10 years, by which point there is usually no value left in the asset," said Bahram Yavari, partner with law firm A2B & Partners in Mumbai and a member of the reform committee. "There is a crying need (for change). That system has completely broken down."

Another committee member, M R Umarji, a consultant at the Indian Banks' Association and former central bank official, said staffing constraints meant it could take 15 to 20 years to wind up a company: "There are very limited numbers of persons available and there are hundreds, thousands of companies to be wound up." — Reuters

CRUDE OIL SET FOR WEEKLY GAIN DESPITE SURPLUS

India's aviation industry has criticized the government in the past for failing to reform the heavily regulated market. With the aviation industry in debt and its shares now worthless, but creditor banks seized his former Mumbai headquarters only this year. The fate of his Gaan villa is still uncertain. The airport ranks 130 out of 169 in the World Bank's Easy of Doing Business report, below Lesotho and Cameroon, not least because of its poor performance in resolving insolvency. The World Bank reported that 10 procedures in India now average, more than twice as long as in China, with an average recovery of 25.7 cents on the dollar, one of the worst among similar size economies.

"DEAD HORSES"

Troubled companies in India, or their creditors, largely turn to the Official Liquidator, a government-appointed officer attached to the company, who seeks to sell assets, including data and office equipment, to recoup losses on the sale of a defunct company. The airline was grounded in 2012 with some $1.5 billion in debt and its shares are now worthless, but creditor banks seized his former Mumbai headquarters only this year. The fate of his Gaan villa is still uncertain. The airport ranks 130 out of 169 in the World Bank's Easy of Doing Business report, below Lesotho and Cameroon, not least because of its poor performance in resolving insolvency. The World Bank reported that 10 procedures in India now average, more than twice as long as in China, with an average recovery of 25.75 cents on the dollar, one of the worst among similar size economies.

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**OBAMA WELCOMES BUDGET AND DEBT DEAL TO KEEP GOVT OPEN**

**WASHINGTON:** President Barack Obama said he's eager to sign the two-year budget deal passed by the Senate in the pre-dawn hours early this morning that averts a partial government shutdown and avoids the specter of a catastrophic default. The deal allowed members of both parties to look ahead toward next year's presidential and congressional elections. Republican leaders were particularly concerned that failure to resolve this vexing issue could reflect poorly on their ability to govern.

Departing House Speaker Rep. John Boehner made the budget deal his top priority in his final days before making way for Rep. Paul Ryan, who took over the leadership Thursday as House Republicans tried to move beyond deep internal divisions.

In a statement issued by the White House early yesterday, Obama said the deal shows Congress can “help, not hinder” the nation’s progress. He urged lawmakers to work on other needed spending measures in the future “without getting sidetracked by ideological provisions that have no place in America’s budget process.” There was significant opposition in the Senate, nevertheless, as Paul and Cruz made it a point to be on the floor to register their concerns.

In an hour-long speech that delayed the final vote to around 3 a.m., Paul said Congress is “bad with money.” He railed against increases in defense dollars supported by Republicans and domestic programs supported by Democrats.

“These are the two parties getting together in an unholy alliance and spending us into oblivion,” he said. Cruz said the Republican majorities in both the House and Senate had given Obama a “diamond-encrusted, glow-in-the-dark Amex card” for government spending. — AP

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**GASSED PARTNERS TO APPEAL RULING IN $18BN TARIFF ROW**

**OSLO:** A group of international investors will appeal against a ruling by an Oslo court regarding Norway’s decision to cut natural gas pipeline tariffs, a decision the investors said would cost them 15 billion crowns ($1.8 billion) in lost earnings by 2028. Challenging Norway’s reputation as a predictable place to do business, four firms owned by funds including Allianz, UBS, the Abu Dhabi Investment Authority and the Canada Pension Plan Investment Board, argued that Norway illegally cut fees on the 8,000-km (5,000-mile) Gassled gas pipeline network.

Solveig Gas, Njord Gas Infrastructure, Silex Gas and Infragas, which hold a combined 45 percent stake in Gassled, were appealing. Solveig Gas said in a statement to the London Stock Exchange.

Infragas CEO Knud Noerve said: “When it comes to investments the Energy Ministry had not provided full information to the buyers and outside of Gassled, it is not something we’re looking at for the future.”

Infragas and Njord Gas Infrastructure would continue to invest in the project in accordance with contractual commitments, but could shy away from new investments, their chief executives said after the ruling.

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**BOJ HOLDS OFF ON STIMULUS DESPITE STALLING INFLATION**

**TOKYO:** Japan’s central bank kept its monetary policy unchanged yesterday, but hinted it could expand its already expansive stimulus in the future to counter slowing exports and other threats to growth.

The decision came despite fresh evidence that the Bank of Japan is making little headway in its unprecedented effort to spur inflation in the world’s third-largest economy. Data for September showed the core inflation rate, which excludes volatile food prices, was minus 0.1 percent while household incomes and spending also fell.

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**TOKYO:** Residents look at items for sale in a commercial district in northern Tokyo yesterday. Japanese consumer prices fell 0.1 percent in September year-on-year, official data showed yesterday, keeping open the possibility of more stimulus by the central bank. — AFP

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**TOKYO:** Governor of the Bank of Japan (BoJ) Haruhiko Kuroda speaks during a press conference at the BoJ headquarters in Tokyo yesterday. — AFP
**Wall St flat; indexes set for best month in 4 years**

NEW YORK: US stocks were little changed yesterday as investors paused on the last trading day of what could be the best month for the three major indexes in four years. Energy majors Exxon and Chevron reported better-than-expected results, helped by strong refining margins. Exxon shares were up 1 percent, while Chevron rose 1.9 percent. The consumer staples sector was down 1 percent, followed by the health care and technology. The Dow Jones industrial average was up 0.77 points, or 0.04 percent, at 20,900.18 and the Nasdaq composite index was up 17.91 points, or 0.14 percent, at 5,819.56.

**Eur zone exits deflation but pressure for ECB boost persists**

BRUSSELS: Eurozone inflation rose to zero percent and out of negative territory in October, official data showed yesterday, but the level is still low and will press the European Central Bank to pump up its stimulus. ECB head Mario Draghi hinted heavily that the central bank will boost its contested bond-buying program given low inflation levels across the 19 countries that share the euro.

The step up to zero percent from negative 0.1 percent a month earlier will do little to reverse Draghi’s course, analysts said. The EU’s Eurostat statistics agency also said eurozone unemployment dropped to 10.8 percent in September, the lowest level since January 2012. Across the EU’s 28 members, the rate stood at 9.3 percent, it said.

"Although today’s inflation and unemployment data for the eurozone revealed small improvements, they are still very weak by past standards, suggesting that the ECB cannot afford to delay increasing its policy support much longer," said Jessica Hinds, European economist at Capital Economics.

In March, the ECB launched a more than one-trillion-euro stimulus plan running through to September next year in order to get inflation closer to its 2.0 percent target.

‘No taboos’

Despite that, the ECB’s chief economist this week told AFP that there is a growing risk that inflation in the euro-

**Frankfurt: President of European Central Bank (ECB) Mario Draghi speaks during a press conference of the ECB in Frankfurt, Germany. — AP**

zone will not return to levels conducive to healthy eco-

nomic growth, thus opening the door to more central bank action.

“The are no taboos,” Peter Praet, said on the measures needed to push inflation back to more suitable levels. The ECB has defied deflation since the steep fall in the oil prices, by oil, slowed in October to 8.7 percent annually instead of 8.9 percent the previous month, the data showed. ING analyst Teunis Brosens said the inflation data made the “inflation anxieties” expressed by the ECB last week seem “old”.

“it is possible that inflation levels are merely an excuse to talk down the euro exchange rate last week,” Brosens said, referring to the euro’s strong trading against the US dollar that hurts Europe’s exporters.

Unemployment in the eurozone has fallen steadily from the 12.1 percent peak reached in 2013, but diver-

gences across the monetary bloc remain wide. Crisis-hit Greece again posted the highest rate of unemployment in the eurozone at 25.0 percent in July, the latest data avail-

able. Just weeks ahead of elections, Spain posted a still high 21.6 percent, though this was down from 24.0 percent a year ago. Youth unemployment in Spain stood at 46.7 per-

cent, but steeply lower than 53.7 percent a year earlier.

In Italy, the rate was 11.8 percent last month, down from 11.3 percent in August. Even with the signs of an improvement in Italy, “the path toward levels of employ-

ment close to the rest of Europe seems to be an extremely long and difficult one,” Riccardo Padovan, head of re-

search institute Swinez told Bloomberg. French unem-

ployment crept lower to 10.7 percent from a month earlier but was still up from 10.4 percent a year ago. In Germany, unemployment remained at historically low levels of 6.7 percent, as measured by Eurostat, down from 5.0 percent a year earlier. — APF

**Oil market is experiencing volatility and flash events**

CFTC CHIEF WARNS OF DETERIORATION IN LIQUIDITY

LONDON: Crude oil prices have been more volatile this year than at any time since the financial crisis of 2008/09 and before that, 1991, according to standard measures of price variability.

Some of the increase in volatility is more apparent than real, however, as every $1 per barrel move translates into a larger shift in per-

centage terms now that prices have halved from $100 per barrel to less than $50.

The chief of the US Commodity Futures Trading Commission (CFTC) warned a confer-

ence last week the oil market had already experienced 35 “flash events” since the start of the year. CFTC Chairman Timothy Massad defined flash events as occasions on which

prices moved by at least 200 basis points within

an hour but returned to within 75 basis points of the starting position within the same hour (“Evolution structure of the US Treasury market” Oct 21).

The definition, which Massad acknowled-

ged was “somewhat arbitrary”, was derived from the significant round-trip move in the price of US Treasury notes and bonds in October 2014. The large move and retrac-


On previous occasions, big moves in bond prices coincided with significant policy announcements, but this time there was no obvious cause for the surge in volatility and deterioration in liquidity.

Sudden and unexplained flash crashes have been observed in other markets includ-

ing the US stock market (May 6, 2010) and crude oil (May 5, 2011 and Sept. 17, 2012). Flash-events can occur on any scale from sec-

onds and minutes to hours, days or even weeks with many of the same forces at work.

Flash crashes are simply a very compressed version of the wider phenomenon of financial market bubbles and crashes which includes the stock market crashes of 1929, 1987 and 2007.

But the definition must be handled with care and should be adjusted to scale with the different levels of volatility ordinarily present in different asset markets.

**Complex systems**

The possibility of extreme events in com-

plex systems has been extensively explored by researchers in fields as diverse as behavioural economics, finance, electrical engineering, computer science, psychology, chaos theory and population biology. Perhaps the best treatment of extreme events in finan-


Flash crashes in financial markets share many similarities with the cascading blackouts that periodically cause electricity grids to col-

lapse, most famously in the United States and Canada in August 2003.

Contacts between a handful of power lines and overgrown trees one afternoon in Ohio led to a chain of events that cut power to 60 million people across the United States and Ontario in less than five minutes. In complex systems characterized by non-linear relation-

ships and positive feedback, small changes to the initial condition of the system can result in very large shifts in outcomes.

The idea that small causes can produce large effects is often referred to as the human mind’s sense of orderliness (which wants cause and effect to be roughly proportional) but is actually quite common.

It helps explain why commodities and other financial markets exhibit far more very large price movements than would be expected if price moves followed a Gaussian or normal distribution.

The non-normal behaviour of commodity prices was identified by Benoît Mandelbrot in the 1960s following a study of more than 100

years of cotton markets (“The variation of cer-

tain speculative prices” 1963).

**Definition stretch**

The CFTC was correct to identify the events of Oct. 15, 2014 in the US Treasury market as a “flash event” and to note that other markets have experienced flash crashes. But it was wrong to stretch the flash event label to cover $5 moves in the US crude futures market since the start of 2015.

Applying a threshold for identifying flash events in the oil markets (crude oil, sugar, corn, wheat) to another market (WTI) fails to account for the important differences between them. Commodity prices are much more volatile than bonds. Price moves that are highly unusual in the US Treasury bond market are actually commonplace in oil and other commodities.

The standard deviation of daily price moves in the oil futures market for WTI has been around 2.4 percent since 1990. Very large moves are extremely rare and surprisingly fre-

quent over the last 25 years.

By applying a definition of “flash event” derived from US Treasuries to the oil market, the CFTC hugely overstated the number of true flash events in the oil market. The CFTC defined volatility in terms of a percentage move in WTI prices, which is the common method of measuring volatility in financial and commodity markets. But since the price of WTI has halved since the middle of 2014, a 200 basis point move is less than $1 per barrel, a fairly normal intra-day move in prices. Trading ranges of $1, often reversed, are just part of the normal-stib and flow of the oil futures market.

Traders are well aware of the regular occur-

rence of volatility at all timescales since it is part of their everyday life and what makes trading so challenging. It is misleading to label these normal trading conditions as flash events and draw conclusions about market functioning. — Reuters
**Exxon Q3 Profit Falls Amid Low Oil Prices**

**DALLAS:** Exxon Mobil Corp. posted its worst third quarter in 12 years due to low oil prices but still earned $2.21 billion, beating Wall Street expectations. Exxon’s earnings from exploration and production continued to slide, especially in the United States. However, profit doubled in the refining end of its business on stronger margins, and the chemicals segment was steady. Exxon Mobil is dealing with oil prices that have dropped by half since June 2014 and have remained lower for longer than most industry experts expected. With production outstripped by modest demand growth, it’s unclear when prices will start rising. CEO Rex Tillerson pledged a “relentless focus” on controlling costs. The company slashed capital and exploration spending by about one-fifth from a year ago, but it spent more on shareholder dividends. The oil giant ended up paying out that third-quarter profit slid 47 percent from the same period last year and was the smallest third-quarter gain since 2003, when oil prices were around $30 a barrel. The earnings worked out to $1.10 per share. That beat the average estimates of analysts surveyed by Zacks Investment Research and FactSet, who predicted 89 cents per share. Revenue dropped 37 percent to $67.34 billion. The FactSet analysts had expected $61.71 billion. Exxon’s profit from exploration and production dropped from $6.5 billion to $1.4 billion, including a loss of $542 million in the US. Production rose due to new projects in the US, Canada and elsewhere.

So-called downstream earnings from refining and selling petroleum products fell from $1 billion to $2 billion on higher refining margins. In trading less than an hour before yesterday’s opening bell, shares of the Irving, Texas-based company were up 2.6 percent to $83.68. They ended Thursday down 11 percent this year while the Standard & Poor’s 500 index had climbed 1.5 percent. — AP

**Chevron to Lay Off 6-7,000 as Oil Price Plunge Hits**

**NEW YORK:** US oil giant Chevron said yesterday it was going to cut between 6,000 and 7,000 jobs and continue with asset sales as the company Retirement amid sharply lower oil prices. The layoffs equate to about 10 percent of its workforce, and come after the company already announced in July cuts of 1,500 jobs. Chevron also said it would pursue further asset sales, expecting to raise $5-10 billion through 2017 after bringing in $11 billion from sales over the past two years. The company is slicing capital expenditures next year by 25 percent to $28 billion at most. “We expect further reductions in spending for 2017 and 2018, to the $20 to $24 billion range, depending on business conditions at the time,” chairman and chief executive John Watson said in a statement. "With the lower investment, we anticipate reducing our employee workforce by 6-7,000.”

The US oil major reported a 63.6 percent fall in earnings to $2.04 billion in the quarter to September 30 compared to a year ago.

Upstream earnings-the exploration and production part of the business—barely cleared a profit, with just $59 million compared to a year ago. Holding up profits were downstream operations, which earned $22.21 billion. — AFP

**Old Groups Slash Costs, But Investors Spared**

**PARIS:** Oil titans are slashing costs and investments as a plunge in oil prices batters profits but there is still one area they dare not touch: Dividend payouts to investors. Crude oil prices have more than halved since mid-2014 in a global glut; squeezing the financial results at major oil groups and forcing them to rethink the viability of some of their costlier oil exploration plans. British energy giant BP, ravaged by the 2010 Gulf of Mexico oil spill, said profit plunged 64 percent in the third quarter of this year. BP has axed its 2015 investment budget by $4 billion (3.6 billion euros) compared to last year. "We are now in action to rebalance our financial framework in this new price environment," BP chief executive Bob Dudley said.

At Royal Dutch Shell, the pain was more intense as it took losses of $7.4 billion in the third quarter on huge write-downs after scrapping expensive projects in Alaska and Canada, vowing to become a “more focused and competitive company”. Likewise France’s Total, which reported a 69-percent fall in net profits for the same period and trimmed its investment budget for this year by 10 percent, or Italy’s Eni which made a loss of 952 million euros and Norway’s Statoil which reported losses of 299 million euros.

In an all-out battle to cut costs, however, dividend payouts to shareholders remain intact. "The big oil companies are all slashing capital expenditure to enable break even operations at around $60 per barrel," said Jasper Lawler, analyst at European financial trading specialists CMC markets.

"The idea is that in the medium term oil prices will average $60 per barrel. This allows big oil to keep dividends intact by using low interest rates to run up debt levels in the short term," Lawler said. Oil groups will do anything to avoid lowering payouts to their shareholders, said Alexandre Andlauer, analyst at French equity research group AlphaValue.

"No strategic plan"

"They preferred to cut capital expenditure again by two or three billion rather than touch the dividend," Andlauer said. "The majors want to respond to market expectations, in this case investment funds," he said. "If they cut the dividend there will be an out ward flow of those actors."

Total, for example, aims to pay for its dividend through its own finances in 2017. Failing that, it would keep open the option of paying the dividend in shares instead of cash.

In Europe, only Eni has so far dared to cut the dividend, announcing a lower payout in March. But there is a longer term price to pay for the strategy, Andlauer cautioned. "Instead of cutting the dividend they are cutting investments. So they are cutting financial results, profitability from 2020. From an industry view, it is a shame to act in such a way," he said. How long the oil companies can maintain dividend payouts in any case, said Christopher Dembik, economist at the Danish investment bank Saxo Bank. "They are in a streamlining phase, trying to save the furniture, above all to satisfy shareholders. But there is no strategic development plan," he said. — AFP
US CONSUMER SPENDING GAIN SMALLER IN EIGHT MONTHS

EMPLOYMENT COST INDEX RISES 0.6% IN Q3

WASHINGTON: US consumer spending in September recorded its smallest gain in eight months as personal income barely rose, suggesting some cooling in domestic demand after recent hefty increases. The Commerce Department data and another report from the Labor Department yesterday also showed weak inflationary pressures, which would argue against the Federal Reserve raising interest rates at the end of the year. US central bank policymakers this week put a rate hike in December on the table with a direct reference to their final meeting of the year.

The Fed has kept benchmark overnight interest rates near zero since December 2008. “Today’s batch of data releases aren’t going to convince the doves to vote for a December rate hike,” said Paul Ashworth, chief US economist at Capital Economics in Toronto. Consumer spending, which accounts for more than two-thirds of US economic activity, edged up 0.1 percent last month after rising 0.4 percent in August. September’s consumer spending data was included in Thursday’s third-quarter gross domestic product report. Consumer spending rose at a brisk 3.2 percent annual pace in the third quarter, helping to lift GDP growth to a 1.5 percent rate. Spending has increased at a rate of more than 3 percent in each of the last two quarters.

Growth in the third quarter was constrained by business efforts to whittle down an inventory bloat, a strong dollar and ongoing spending cuts by energy companies. US stock index futures rose after the data, while prices of longer-dated US Treasuries edged up. The US dollar gained against a basket of currencies. When adjusted for inflation, consumer spending rose 0.2 percent in September after increasing 0.4 percent in August, suggesting consumption will continue to support the economy through the rest of the year.

Personal income ticked up 0.1 percent in September, the smallest rise since March, after increasing 0.4 percent in the prior month. With spending sluggish, inflation remained benign last month. A price index for consumer spending slipped 0.1 percent, the first decline since January, after being flat in August. In the 12 months through September, the personal consumption expenditures (PCE) price index rose 0.2 percent, the smallest increase since April. It increased 0.3 percent in August. Excluding food and energy, prices rose 0.1 percent for a fifth straight month. The so-called core PCE price index rose 1.3 percent in the 12 months through September after a similar gain in August.

Inflation has persistently run below the Fed’s 2 percent target. A separate report from the Labor Department showed the Employment Cost Index, the broadest measure of labor costs, increased 0.6 percent after a 0.2 percent gain in the second quarter. In the 12 months through September, labor costs held steady at 2.0 percent, below the 2.5 percent threshold that economists say is needed to bring inflation closer to the Fed’s target. — Agencies

BOSTON: Shoppers are offered bags as they enter a Primark retail store in the Downtown Crossing neighborhood of Boston. The University of Michigan issues its monthly index of consumer sentiment for September yesterday. — AP

REPORT IT COULD REPAY IRELAND UP TO 2BN EUROS SENSIBLE: AIB

DUBLIN: Allied Irish Banks said a media report it could repay 1.5-2.0 billion euros ($1.7-2.2 billion) of government bailout funds seemed “sensible,” and hoped talks would conclude in the coming weeks.

State-owned AIB is in discussions with European regulators about reorganising its capital structure, including how much it can repay the government from the 3.5 billion euros of preference shares it owes in the bank. Dublin has pumped 21 billion euros into AIB since the 2008-9 financial crisis, the biggest bailout given to any Irish bank still trading, and has said it will recap all of the money, starting with its preference shares.

“It is obviously subject to an agreement with the SSM (the EU’s Single Supervisory Mechanism), people are talking in a range of currencies. When adjusted for inflation, consumer spending rose 0.2 percent in September after increasing 0.4 percent in August, suggesting consumption will continue to support the economy through the rest of the year.

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RBS WARNS OF HIGHER MISCONDUCT CHARGES

LONDON: Royal Bank of Scotland said costs relating to alleged past misconduct could be substantially higher than expected, potentially hammering plans by the British government to sell more shares in the bank soon. RBS is facing a number of probes into alleged wrongdoing, disrupting Chief Executive Ross McEwan’s efforts to turn around the lender that was bailed out by a £205 billion (735 billion) government bailout during the 2007-09 financial crisis.

They include an investigation by authorities in the United States into allegations of market manipulation and a review of its treatment of struggling small firms by Britain’s financial regulator. The bank yesterday reported a third-quarter operating loss due to restructuring costs and said it expected further charges relating to previous misconduct and a review of its treatment of struggling small firms by Britain’s financial regulator.

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A male sea lion named Pucchi balances a ball and a jack-o-lantern for visitors to the Aqua Park aquarium in Tokyo yesterday. The aquarium offered special Halloween promotions to attract visitors through October 31. — AFP
Usher’s son wants to be a scientist

The ‘U Got it Bad’ hitmaker, 37, has revealed six-year-old Naviyd is keen to carve out a career in the laboratory when he’s older because he wants to discover a long-term cure for his seven-year-old brother Usher Raymond V’s diabetes. Speaking to the New York Post newspaper’s Page Six column, he said: “I have two sons. Usher Raymond V, we call him Cinco, has Type 1 diabetes.” He added: “My youngest son knows I worry about Cinco and recently told me, ‘Do not worry! One day, I’m going to be a scientist and cure this for my brother.’” Cinco was diagnosed with the lifelong condition last year and the handsome singer has admitted it has been a tough 12 months understanding the condition and adjusting to it. He explained: “A child that every day has to prick himself [with an insulin needle] and has to be cautious of what he eats and also to carry this disorder around — that really is the type of bravery that we all aspire to have.” He added: “There’s been some difficult moments but having dealt with it on a daily basis, I have a great deal of understanding of what people have to deal with.” Meanwhile, the star has certainly had a busy few months as he recently tied the knot in a low-key wedding with his long-time girlfriend Grace Miguel following six years of dating. A source said previously the pair secretly eloped and got hitched over Labor Day weekend in the US in September.

Caitlyn named one of Glamour magazine’s Women of the Year

The ‘I Am Cait’ star, 66, who was formerly known as Bruce Jenner prior to her gender transition surgery earlier this year, has secured a place on the annual list alongside Victoria Beckham, 41, and Reese Witherspoon, 39. The former Olympian - who has been married three times, including to Kardashian matriarch Kris Jenner, and has six children - said after securing a spot on the list: “I am just excited about the future for the first time in a long, long time. ‘And that is a nice feeling to have... To be honest with you, if the worst thing in the world that happens to you is you are trans, you’ve got it made.” Caitlyn, Victoria and Reese will join Misty Copeland, Elizabeth Holmes, Cecile Richards, the Women of Charleston, and the US women’s national soccer team as they are honored at 25th Anniversary Women of the Year Awards, which will be held in New York, on November 9. The glamorous ceremony, which will take place at the Carnegie Hall, will be opened by comedienne Amy Schumer, and the gongs will be handed out on the night by Glamour Editor-in-Chief, Cindi Leive. Meanwhile, this isn’t the first time Caitlyn has received an award since her surgery as she also became a national advocate for transgender awareness and took home the Arthur Ashe Courage Award in July this year.

Connelly says working with husband was ‘miserable’ for her kids

The 44-year-old actress - who has 18-year-old son Kai from a past relationship, and Stellan, 12, and Agnes, four, with her husband - admits filming was quite intense as it took place in such a short space of time, so their preparations also spilled over into their homelife. She said: “Because it was low-budget with only a few days to shoot, we really couldn’t leave it all behind at the end of the day. ‘We had to prep each night for the next morning. Although it was probably somewhat miserable for the kids, it actually helped that the film was being made on such a short schedule. If it had been longer, it would have been more miserable.” Jennifer and Paul met on the set of ‘A Beautiful Mind’ in 2001 and also starred opposite one another in 2009’s ‘Creation’, but ‘Shelter’ marks the 44-year-old actor’s first venture behind the camera. And though the brunette beauty thought it would be “strange” taking direction from her spouse, she had a wonderful experience because she felt so “free”. She told Net-a-Porter’s The Edit: “I thought it would be stranger than it was. ‘In a way, it felt very familiar. We met at work. We’ve been on the same set; we’ve been on each other’s sets. ‘And it was really great to have that much trust, to have that degree of intimacy with your director, especially when the subject matter is so intense. It’s an amazing feeling of freedom and safety.”

Sam Smith is a millionaire

Accounts filed for his company Sam Smith World Ltd. reveals that the ‘Money On My Mind’ hitmaker raked in £1,049,277 in 2014. Official documents show Sam was owed £865,577 and had cash assets of £183,700. After bills were paid, the company totaled £22,908 in profit. The company - of which Sam is the sole shareholder and director - was set up in December 2013, The Sun newspaper reports. And the 23-year-old singer is expecting his income to rocket this year as he celebrates the successes of his debut album ‘In The Lonely Hour’ - which has sold over nine million copies worldwide - as well as a fruitful world tour. However, Sam is prepared to put the money behind him - at least for now - as he recently revealed he is planning to take a hiatus from music. He said: “I’ve been playing now for three years nonstop. And it feels right for me to just go home and live my life - just be a 23-year-old. It’d be good to actually spend some time dating I think.” Despite his break, Sam is still working on a new album but admits the record is a long way off yet. He added: “I’ve been inspired the whole year - my love life, and the downs and ups have never stopped - so I’m always inspired by stuff like that. “I have been writing a little bit, and already I’ve found direction on what I want to say and how I want things to sound. But there’s a long way to go.”
Little Mix used to live in a haunted house

The 'Black Magic' singers used to get freaked out by a spooky "presence" in a flat which bandmembers Jade Thirlwall and Perrie Edwards used to share. Speaking on an episode of UK TV show 'Celebrity Juice', Jade said: "Perrie's room was always nice and warm and my room was always freezing and during the night the telly would turn on by itself. I felt a presence and didn't you? [Jesy Nelson] see my speaker turn on and blast the music?" Jesy replied: "Yeah." Jesy recently revealed she and her bandmates - which also include Leigh-Anne Pinnock - are "addicted" to one another and never tire of being together. She said: "To be honest, we're just loving what we're doing and we get to experience all of this together, which is amazing. There aren't many people who can say they see different things every day. "We genuinely get on so well, and even though we're in each other's pockets, we never argue - and no one believes us, but even when we get done with work for the day, we still want to have sleepovers. It's like we're addicted to each other."

Nicole Richie to host her first women’s conference

The 'Simple Life' star - who will be joined by ‘GOOP’ founder Gwyneth Paltrow for the first event of her recently launched Pearl xChange series next month - says the theme of the conference is inspired by how she is “building” her life. She shared: "I'm 34 and the past four years have been really interesting. It's been a time for me to kind of quiet down and listen to the world around me. "I have a husband, we have two kids and I'm really building my life. That's what my 30s have been about. That's been the theme; focusing on what I want to do and who I want to be and really taking that seriously." The conference, which will take place at Sheraton Universal, Los Angeles on November 8, will feature talks from the likes of astronaut Dr Jeanette Epps, life coach Dougall Fraser as well as a special appearance from the 'Mortdecai' actress. Speaking in a video for Oprah.com, Nicole continued: "We will talk about everything from conscious living to science to building your business; friendship and how to deal with fear. We're really covering all aspects of life between the six different speakers." — BANGSHOWBIZ

Victoria believes her fashion helped ‘find herself’

The 41-year-old fashion designer admits she had to “find herself” when embarking on her new career and her primary desire when creating new garments is to make women feel “the best version of themselves”, just as her former group wanted to do. She said: “I did have to find myself and my confidence. And I want to make other women feel like the best version of themselves. That’s the same message as the Spice Girls. It’s still Girl Power.” Victoria - who has children Brooklyn, 16, Romeo, 13, Cruz, 10, and Harper, four, with husband David - admits she has “never [been] best at anything” but believes anything can be achieved with hard work. Speaking to America’s Glamour magazine - which named her one of their Women of the Year - she said: “Work hard, stay focused, be appreciative, and really, really go for it. I was told I couldn’t do lots of things, so if I can do it, you can. "Nothing ever came naturally to me. I was never the cleverest, never best at anything. But we always tell our children that if you work hard and believe in yourself, you can do what you want." Away from her design career and raising her family, Victoria is also an international goodwill ambassador for UNAIDS and admits being a mother created a “real pull” for her to help others. She said: "Motherhood puts us all on one level. I just felt this real pull to help."

Bullock says being a parent has given her another childhood

The ‘Our Brand is Crisis’ actress admits welcoming her adopted son Louis, now five, into her life has been a “game changer” and things have take on a new importance. She said: “I see life from his perspective and you have a childhood. You have a childhood, no matter what kind you had, you have a child and I go guess what? This is the chance to have a childhood and remember it and be conscious in it and just enjoy it.” "He makes me do stuff I wouldn’t normally do and life becomes very important on a different level. My choices, what I do, I could fool around before but not now. It’s a game changer.” And the 50-year-old star admitted raising Louis has made her more conscious of the passing of time. Speaking on the 'Today' show, she added: “And life goes so fast! I see the ticking clock and I’m like, ‘It’s so fast!’“ Sandra also admitted she finds it hard being away from her little boy. She said: “He’s at home and not here and it’s really hard. He’s a beautiful soul.” While she was happy to speak about her son, the ‘Minions’ star remained coy about the other male in her life, new boyfriend Bryan Randall, as well as a special appearance from Brooklyn, 16, Romeo, 13, Cruz, 10, and Harper, four, with husband David - admits she has “never [been] best at anything” but believes anything can be achieved with hard work. Speaking to America’s Glamour magazine - which named her one of their Women of the Year - she said: “Work hard, stay focused, be appreciative, and really, really go for it. I was told I couldn’t do lots of things, so if I can do it, you can. "Nothing ever came naturally to me. I was never the cleverest, never best at anything. But we always tell our children that if you work hard and believe in yourself, you can do what you want." Away from her design career and raising her family, Victoria is also an international goodwill ambassador for UNAIDS and admits being a mother created a “real pull” for her to help others. She said: “Motherhood puts us all on one level. I just felt this real pull to help."

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Indian movie ‘Aligarh’ shines rare light on homophobia

A rare Bollywood movie tackling homophobia gets its Indian premiere yesterday, with the filmmakers hoping it will help change attitudes in the conservative country where homosexuality is illegal. “Aligarh” is based on a true story about a university professor who was suspended from his post after a televised undercover sting operation. The film deals with a human story about a man isolated by his peers for a choice that should have been his own, the film’s director, Hansal Mehta, explained to AFP.

“I hope ‘Aligarh’ will poke people’s conscience and make them look at their own prejudices,” he added. Shrimax Ramchandra Siras, then 64, was teaching at Aligarh Muslim University (AMU) in the northern Indian state of Uttar Pradesh in February 2010 when his private life made headline news.

Siras, who was also an award-winning poet, was suspended and briefly fought to be reinstated, but was found dead in his apartment in suspicious circumstances two months later. Traces of poison were discovered in his body and police initially suspected suicide, but they later made several arrests, although no one was convicted and the case was ultimately dropped. Media reports at the time alleged the university had ordered the sting to hound Siras out. AMU denied it was involved. “Aligarh”, which stars Manoj Bajpayee as Siras and Rajkummar Rao as a journalist who befriends him, opens the 17th edition of the Mumbai Film Festival after showings in London and South Korea’s Busan.

Censor hurdle to come

The Hindi-language movie is unusual in that it shines a spot- light on attitudes towards homosexuals in socially-conservative India where Bollywood movies often ridicule gay characters and portray them as being extremely campy.

“Very few films tackle the subject head on,” the writer and editor of “Aligarh”, Apurva Asrani, told AFP. “Either they pussyfoot around, indulge in cheap jokes about a character’s sexuality but never quite confronting it, or make a mockery of it,” he added. The film is due for general release in India early next year, but before it hits screens nationwide the film must pass India’s notoriously strict censor board.

The hounding of Siras came during a brief period in Indian history when homosexuality was actually legal. The Delhi High Court had decriminalized the colonial-era ban on homosexuality in 2009, only for the Supreme Court to restore it in 2013, stunning rights campaigners and the gay and lesbian community.

“The law was actually in favor of same sex. In spite of this, a 64-year-old scholar was harangued and shamed till his death,” said Asrani.

“You can imagine the state of Siras in today’s context? Where does a man go for justice? And what of all those people who came out in 2009? Can they go back into hiding now?” he added. Anyone found guilty of same-sex activity can face life imprisonment or up to ten years in jail and a fine under the controversial Section 377 of India’s penal code.

Right to privacy

Although prosecutions have been rare, the gay community says it faces significant discrimination as well as harassment and blackmail from the police in India. Surveys show broad disapproval of homosexuality in India, forcing many gay men and women to live double lives.

“The law and society’s attitudes reinforce each other in a negative way,” Nitin Kanani, a Mumbai-based gay rights activist, told AFP. “If you live in a small town you have few choices to escape from the brunt of being harassed by the police, or society, or even your own family members. Hopefully the film will put a spotlight on Section 377,” he added.

Asrani said “Aligarh” was as much about an individual’s right to privacy as it is about treating everybody the same. “A man who wishes to keep his sexual identity concealed has every right to do so,” he said. “We must understand that the brave activists and gay men who have come out have done so based on their own internal reserves of courage, of their support structures, environment, etc.”

“Aligarh” must still pass India’s censor board before its general release. Earlier this year the Central Board of Film Certification muttered the word “lesbian” from a Hindi language film and blocked the release of ‘Fifty Shades of Grey’. But Asrani remains unperturbed. “‘Aligarh’ is an honest film. There is no effort to titillate or provoke,” he said. — AFP

Tarantino, condemned by police, gets support from protesters

O rganizers of a rally against police brutality spoke up Thursday in support of filmmaker Quentin Tarantino, who has been condemned by the New York Police Department’s commissioner and police associations over his remarks at the weekend event. The Academy Award-winning filmmaker behind “Pulp Fiction” and “Django Unchained” had joined demonstrators in the city speaking out on Saturday against the deaths of people at the hands of police.

“I’m a human being with a conscience,” Tarantino said at the rally. “And if you believe there’s murder going on then you need to rise up and stand up against it. I’m here to say I’m on the side of the murdered.”

Those words have brought out the ire of police associa- tions in New York, Los Angeles, Philadelphia and New Jersey, which have urged boycotts of his movies. He also got a scathing response from NYPD Commissioner William Bratton.

Speaking on a radio show on Monday, Bratton said, “Shame on him. Shame on him particularly at this time where we’re grieving the murder of a New York City police officer. There are no words to describe the contempt I have for him and his comments at this particular time.”

‘Cop-hater’

Bratton was referring to the fatal shooting of Officer Randolph Holder, who was killed Oct 20 while responding to a report of shots fired and a bicycle stolen at gunpoint. Authorities have charged the man accused of stealing the bicycle with shooting Holder, whose funeral was on Wednesday. The police associations slammed Tarantino as being a “cop-hater” and “anti-police.”

“it’s no surprise that someone who makes a living glorify- ing crime and violence is a cop-hater, too,” said Pat Lynch, president of New York’s Patrolmen’s Benevolent Association.

“The police officers that Quentin Tarantino calls murderers aren’t living in one of his depraved big-screen fantasies – they’re risking and sometimes sacrificing their lives to protect communities from real crime and mayhem. New Yorkers need to send a message to this purveyor of degeneracy that he has no business coming to our city to peddle his slanderous “Cop Fiction.” It’s time for a boycott of Quentin Tarantino’s films.”

The Los Angeles Police Protective League voted to support a boycott, as did the union representing police officers in Philadelphia and the New Jersey State Policemen’s Benevolent Association. Carl Dix, a co-organizer of the RiseUpOctober rally at which Tarantino spoke, said the crit- icism was “outrageous.”

“It really is an attempt to squelch any discussion by people in the arts or prominent people in other fields of taking up and discussing controversial social issues,” he said. RiseUpOctober posted a series of statements on its website supporting Tarantino, from other organizations as well as rela- tives of those killed by police.

Messages left for the filmmaker’s representatives haven’t been returned. Tarantino also is the director of movies includ- ing “Kill Bill” and “Reservoir Dogs.” His next film, “The Hateful Eight,” is scheduled for release in late December. — AP
Hollywood came into its fall season buoyed by a near-record summer, the comfort of having three aces up its sleeve (James Bond, "Star Wars" and the final "Hunger Games" film), plus a string of studio spectacles geared more for adults than teenagers.

The results, though, have been mixed for most films not named "The Martian." Last weekend, in particular, drove home the point, when five new wide releases - most strikingly the $30 million awards season heavyweight "Steve Jobs," with a paltry $7.1 million launch in wide release - all failed to click.

The streak appears likely to continue through Halloween weekend, when Warner Bros.’ "Our Brand Is Crisis," a political satire starring Sandra Bullock, is unlikely to add much firepower to the box office. Salvation won’t arrive until the following weekend with the opening of Sony’s "Spectre," the 24th James Bond film and a certain blockbuster.

It’s been a humbling few weeks for some of Hollywood’s best efforts to enliven multiplexes with ambitious films, most notably with the 3-D spectacle of Robert Zemeckis’ "The Walk" and the starrily stature of the Aaron Sorkin-scripted "Steve Jobs."

The box-office downturn, too, comes at the same time new inroads are being made into the traditional theatrical release window - developments that could signal coming change for the industry, particularly if it continues to struggle to launch such movies.

Premium experience

In an interview ahead of the release for "The Walk," Sony chief Tom Rothman called making broad-audience movies that aren’t sequels or based on a comic book ‘the dominant issue in our business.’ The last several weeks have proven that Hollywood, despite a year sure to rank among the highest grossing, isn’t closer to figuring out how to do that.

Many of the fall’s anticipated releases tried to hook moviegoers with 3-D. It’s been an effective strategy in recent years for films from "Avatar" to "Gravity," although the novelty wore off long ago for many moviegoers. While 3-D helped drive the robust grosses for Ridley Scott’s "The Martian" ($167 million domestically, No. 1 for three of the last four weeks), it didn’t do the same for "Everest" ($41.9 million) or "The Walk" ($9.9 million), both of which opened first on IMAX and large-format screens in hopes of selling audiences on a higher-priced, premium experience.

Others have depended on the full wrappings of a prestige picture, including Steven Spielberg’s handsome Cold War thriller "Bridge of Spies," with Tom Hanks, and the Danny Boyle-directed "Steve Jobs," which may have been harmed by a chorus of criticisms over Sorkin’s dramatization of the Apple co-founder.

"Bridge of Spies" has pulled in $33.6 million domestically in two weeks: Solid business for a movie that cost $40 million to make. But it’s unlikely to match even the gross of Spielberg’s "War Horse," which totaled $79.9 million in late 2011 and early 2012.

Spielberg, of course, is synonymous with the big screen, but even he has felt the industry changes. The director has said his previous film, "Lincoln," was nearly an HBO movie, and the director has lamented the ubiquitous rise of the superhero film.

New experiments

Meanwhile, Paramount Pictures is in the midst of an experiment to shrink the usual 90-day window reserved for theatrical release. "Paranormal Activity: The Ghost Dimension," which opened last weekend, and "Scout’s Guide to the Zombie Apocalypse," which debuts today, will both head to video-on-demand and online once they dip below 300 screens.

Of the major chains, only AMC Theaters and Cineplex Entertainment went along, meaning "The Ghost Dimension," which opened last weekend, and "Scout’s Guide to the Zombie Apocalypse," which debuts today, will both head to video-on-demand and online once they dip below 300 screens.

Netflix content chief Ted Sarandos claimed that the film dataset was streamed by more than 1 million people in North America. For comparison, that many viewers would translate at the box office into approximately $24 million in ticket sales.

"It’s a sign of the times. It’s a massive look at the future," said Elba ahead of the film’s release. "People are different and definitely consuming films in a different way." Overcrowding could be an issue. Films like "The Martian," "The Walk," "Bridge of Spies" and "Steve Jobs" are anomalies: well-reviewed studio-distributed entertainments with enough seriousness or smarts to win over most critics. There might be four such studio dramas in a year, let alone in a month that also featured Lionsgate’s "Sicario," Warner Bros’ "Black Mass" and Universal’s "Crimson Peak."

"This has to be considered one of the most crowded movie marketplaces of the year," says Paul Dergarabedian, senior media analyst for box-office data firm Rentrak. With "Spectre" on the horizon and "Star Wars: The Force Awakens" already setting advance ticket records, the health of the theatrical business isn’t much in doubt. But in a jam-packed October, many of Hollywood’s anxieties - its ability to sell original films, the encroachment of streaming - have bubbled up at a box office that now awaits rescue from some of its oldest franchises. — AP
Lady Gaga gets jazzy at AIDS research tribute

Lady Gaga is continuing her jazzy period. The enter-
tainer performed an hour-long jazz set Thursday at
the American Foundation for AIDS Research’s trib-
ute to Ryan Murphy. “I love Ryan so much, and I’m so,
so happy to be here,” said Gaga, who stars on the current
season of the writer-director’s FX hit, “American Horror
Story.”

“He’s really my friend and he’s a wonderful person,”
she said. Gaga dedicated the ’60s standard “Call Me
Irresponsible” to Murphy, who was the guest of honor at
amFAR’s Los Angeles Inspiration Gala. Murphy pledged
to serve as “a lifelong ambassador” for the organiz-
ation, which aims to find a cure for AIDS by 2020.

Murphy said the evening raised $3.1 million toward
that goal. Gaga contributed to the total during a live aucti-
ion conducted by Sharon Stone. Gaga bid a winning $200,000
on a photograph of Elizabeth Taylor flipping the
bird. Cuba Gooding, Jr. engaged in a brief bidding
war with billionaire Barry Diller for a pair of platinum dia-
mond earrings. Diller won with $60,000. Gwyneth Paltrow hosted the fundraiser at Milk
Studios, which also included appearances by Julia
Roberts, Angela Bassett, Matt Bomer and Cheyenne
Jackson. Murphy may have been the guest of honor, but
Gaga was the reigning diva. She wore a long dusty pink
gown with floor-sweeping kimono sleeves, an intricate
diamond collar, and a platinum blonde beehive.

“You know, there are a lot of gentlemen here, but
nobody’s offered me a glass of Champagne yet,” she said
from the stage. Someone brought her a glass, which she
drank in one swallow. Gaga performed “Bang Bang (My
Baby Shot Me Down),” which she recorded for her 2014
album with Tony Bennett, “Cheek to Cheek.”

She played piano as she sang her new single, “Til it
Happens to You,” a song she co-wrote with Diane Warren
for the 2015 documentary “The Hunting Ground.” Gaga
said her performance was inspired by Murphy. For her
closing number, Gaga ditched her dress for a tuxedo
jacket and not much else. She sang “La Vie en Rose” - in
French. — AP

Taylor Swift sues radio host for groping

P op superstar Taylor Swift has demand-
ed a trial of a radio host she accuses of
groping her, saying she hopes to stand
up for other women who have been assault-
ed. The singer asked for the trial in a legal
counterclaim against David Mueller, who last
month sued the singer as he charged he was
wrongly dismissed from his job at a Denver
radio station over the June 2013 incident.

In the original lawsuit, Mueller said that
Swift’s bodyguards and staff “verbally
abused” him as they accused the radio host of
fondling the singer while posing for a picture
backstage before her show at a Denver arena.
But in the response filed Wednesday in a
Denver court, Swift said that Mueller was
clearly the culprit and accused him of reach-
ing under her skirt and touching her in an
“intimate” place.

“Ms Swift was forced to begin a several-
hour long concert in front of 13,000 fans still
distressed that she had been so inappropri-
ately touched,” the legal filing said. The
counterclaim said that Swift, then 23, felt especial-
ly uncomfortable as the radio host was much
larger than her at 6-foot-3 and more than 200
pounds.

Swift requested a jury trial seeking puni-
tive damages from Mueller, saying that any
money would be donated to charitable
groups that protect women. A verdict against
Mueller “will serve as an example to other
women who may resist publicly reliving simi-
lar outrageous and humiliating acts,” the
counterclaim said.

Swift said that she has held thousands of
similar meet-and-greet events for fans and
radio station personnel throughout her career
and “she has been inappropriately groped
by a radio host for fondling her, saying she hopes to stand
up for other women who have been assault-
ed” and “she has been inappropriately groped
by a radio host.”

Swift, who became a teenage star in coun-
try music, a year ago released her fifth studio
album “1989,” in which she went more fully in
a pop direction. “1989” has been one of the
most successful albums in recent years, rack-
ing up the fastest first-week sales in the
United States since 2002. — AP

Bieber walks off stage at ‘fiasco’ concert

Norwegian media on Friday blasted a
Justin Bieber concert in Oslo as a “fiasco”
after the Canadian pop star walked off
the stage after just one song, leaving his teenage
fans stunned and in tears. The 21-year-old put an
abrupt end to his concert on Thursday evening
after performing his hit song “Boyfriend”, fed up
with fans throwing water on the stage.

Footage shot by fans’ smartphones shows
Bieber mopping the stage with a shirt and trying
to reason with the young fans in the front row
throwing the water. “Never mind. I’m done. I’m not
doing the show,” he said before stomping
off the stage, removing his sweatshirt and
throwing it on the ground.

Norwegian media gave the story wide play
on Friday, replaying the video clips of the inci-
dent over and over again and interviewing cry-
ing girls who had attended the show for about
1,000 people. Channel TV2, which organized the
concert, termed it a “scandal” and a “fiasco”,
while newspaper Aftenposten called it a “tear-
ful drama.” Bieber later apologized on Instagram,
"Sadly it’s been a rough week for me, long
days no sleep," he wrote. “In no way did I mean
to come across mean... I don’t always handle
things the right way but I’m human and I’m
working on getting better,” he added.

"Unfortunately people were affected by this as
ami. For the people in the back I am so sorry and
for anyone I may have disappointed I’m sorry.”
Bieber once enjoyed a squeaky clean image
but has more recently had run-ins with the law,
including the alleged assault in 2013 of a limou-
sine driver, who announced earlier this year that
he is suing the singer. Bieber has twice been
ordered to take anger management classes-once
after admitting to taking part in an illegal drag
war with billionaire Barry Diller for a pair of platinum dia-
mond earrings. Diller won with $60,000. — AFP

Lady Gaga and executive producer/director/ewriter Ryan Murphy arrive at the
Los Angeles premiere screening of “American Horror Story: Hotel” at Regal
Cinemas Los Angeles. — AP

In this Aug22, 2015, file photo, Taylor Swift performs during the "1989" world tour at Staples Center in Los Angeles.
No tricks: **Halloween** all the rage in Japan

For the usually reserved Japanese, Halloween has become the perfect excuse to act wild in strange outfits. The spooky celebration is consuming the energy, fashion sense and wallets of people for the entire month of October, not just kids but also adults on the prowl with colorful parades, costume parties and pumpkin-inspired desserts, dress-up and decor everywhere.

"When everyone is happy like this, I feel happy," said Shoko Ushimaru, a game designer, wearing white makeup and a pirate outfit at a recent Halloween party in Tokyo. She was in a room with a crowd of people, all in costumes. A DJ was playing music, but no one was dancing. The main attraction was getting photos taken under studio lighting, perfect for posting on social media such as Instagram and Facebook. Participants use such parties, popping up in recent weeks, for making friends and letting go of inhibitions.

Yoshi Kaseki, who heads the Japan Anniversary Association and studies the business potential of holidays, said Japanese don’t care about the cultural or religious background of Halloween, or how it’s celebrated anywhere else. The biggest attraction is that anyone can take part, in contrast to Valentine's, for instance, another holiday import that’s gained in popularity but which requires a lover or partner.

‘Different phenomenon’

Over the last several years, the significance of Halloween has grown, although it’s still lagging Christmas in spending, according to Kaseki’s calculations of merchandizing and consumption. The fact that the holiday falls on a Saturday this year is a plus. "You must think of Halloween in Japan as a totally different phenomenon from Halloween in the US," said Kaseki.

Although Japan has its own traditional festivals to celebrate spookiness and honor the dead, Halloween is being observed with a special frenzy. It helps that everything about it resonates in the country that gave birth to the subculture of "costume play," the art of dressing up like "manga" animation and mascot characters. Favorite characters for dressing up can range from Nintendo Co.’s video-game hero Super Mario to the pot-bellied friendly spirit Totoro from animation master Hayao Miyazaki.

Many Japanese don’t bother trying to look like the usual witches, zombies and ghosts associated with Halloween. Ask them what “trick or treat” means, and they usually won’t know. It doesn’t matter. The Roppongi Hills shopping complex in Tokyo, where streets have been decked with bobbing pumpkin-shaped lanterns for weeks, is serving up pumpkin-theme pancakes covered with yellow coconut sauce for 2,980 yen ($25), as well as a 36 centimeter tall “monster” tower of five hamburgers for 4,860 yen.

Yasushi Senoo, chief research analyst at Mitsubishi UFJ Research and Consulting in Tokyo, who has been studying the economic impact of Halloween, believes it can only get bigger in Japan because the largest participation is among teenagers. As they get older, their spending power will grow. Right now, a million Japanese are estimated to be so-called “heavy” Halloween users, or those creating their own costumes and taking part in parades.

Including casual users, Halloween revelers are estimated at 20 million people, each spending on average between 1,000 yen ($8) and 1,500 yen ($12), which multiplies to 20 billion yen ($170 million) or 30 billion yen ($250 million) in economic impact, according to Senoo.

Eager businesses

"Businesses are eager to use something that’s this well-known to everyone as an opportunity," he said. Japanese like to contemplate the changing seasons, and fall is one time without a cause to celebrate, according to Senoo. That’s why Easter, with bunnies and painted eggs that appear conducive to costume play and merchandising, isn’t likely to take off as easily because spring already has plenty of action, with school and work starting in Japan.

One area Halloween was likely to grow in coming years is in home decoration, he said. "Halloween has potential for growth because it is so open-ended," he said, unlike Christmas, for which the market has reached saturation levels. "New Japanese forms of celebrating Halloween can develop." Halloween madness culminates Saturday in Tokyo’s Roppongi area, with thousands of carousers on the streets in various outlandish costumes. Those in regular clothing would be certain to feel out of place. "What’s fun is that this is all so unreal," said party organizer Takahisa Takeshi, a young man who managed to look far more effeminate than his usual self with a purple wig dressed up as Gakupo or Gackpo, a virtual singer or vocaloid. "We can’t look like this every day." — AP
Models showcase the creations from the 95 Secret Deng Zhaoping Collection designed by Deng Zhaoping at China Fashion Week in Beijing. —AFP photos
Models parade the creations of the MERISIS Li Na, Jinliang Lin and J Queen Xie Jiaqi Collection at China Fashion Week.
—AFP photos
**Facebook defends efforts to expand Internet access**

**NEW DELHI:** Facebook CEO Mark Zuckerberg defended his company’s contentious efforts to expand Internet access in the developing world during his second visit to India this year.

The company’s free platform offering a basic level of Internet access via Android devices has been introduced to 24 countries and has amassed about 15 million users, mostly in Africa and Asia, Zuckerberg said at a meeting Wednesday with students. He said it could help alleviate poverty in India by providing information to the poor and contributing to development of the economy.

The platform known as Free Basics was developed in conjunction with other technology companies and has brought a mixed response from governments and analysts. Many criticize it for lacking transparency in how information is selected for the site and favoring Facebook’s own services over those of competitors. Zuckerberg rejected the criticism as a luxury for the site and favoring Facebook’s own services over those of competitors.

There are about 300 million people using the Internet in India, including 130 million using Facebook, making India the second-largest user base behind the United States. There are still about 1 billion Indians with no Internet access. “We deeply care about servicing the Indian community and giving them the best tools. That’s why I want to be here,” said Zuckerberg. Last month, Zuckerberg hosted Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi for a Silicon Valley town hall meeting, at which Modi also touted the power of social media in economic development by helping people to share knowledge and ideas.

**TOKYO:** Honda Motor Co employees ride on Honda UNI-CUB 7 through the Japanese automaker’s booth during the media preview of the Tokyo Motor Show in Tokyo. —AP

**GREEN SELF-DRIVING CARS TAKE CENTER STAGE AT AUTO SHOW**

**TOKYO:** Visions of cars that drive themselves without emitting a bit of pollution while entertaining passengers with online movies and social media are what’s taking center stage at the Tokyo Motor Show. Japan, home to the world’s top-selling automaker, has a younger generation disinterested in owning or driving cars. The show is about wooing them back. It’s also about pushing an ambitious government-backed plan that paints Japan as a leader in automated driving technology.

Reporters got a preview look at the exhibition Wednesday, ahead of its opening to the public Oct 23. Nissan Motor Co showed a concept vehicle loaded with laser scanners, a 360 degree camera setup, a radar and computer chips so the car can “think” to deliver autonomous driving. The Japanese automaker called it IDS, which stands for “intelligent driving system.”

Nissan officials said they were working hard to make the car smart enough to recognize the difference between a red traffic light and a tail light, learn how to turn on intersections where white lane indicators might be missing and anticipate from body language when a pedestrian might cross a street. Nissan’s IDS vehicle is also electric, with a new battery that’s more powerful than the one currently in the automaker’s Leaf electric vehicle. Although production and sales plans were still undecided, it can travel a longer distance on a single charge and recharge more quickly.

A major challenge for cars that drive themselves is winning social acceptance. They would have to share the roads with normal cars with drivers as well as with pedestrians, animals and unexpected objects. That’s why some automakers at the show are packing the technology into what looks more like a golf cart or scooter than a car, such as Honda Motor Co’s cube-like Wander Stand and Wander Walker scooter.

Instead of trying to venture on freeways and other public roads, these are designed for controlled environments, restricted to shuttling people to predetermined destinations.

At a special section of the show, visitors can try out some of the so-called “smart mobility” devices such as Honda’s seat on a single-wheel as well as small electric vehicles. Regardless of how zanily futuristic and even dangerous such machines might feel, especially the idea of sharing roads with driverless cars, that era is inevitable simply because artificial intelligence is far better at avoiding accidents than human drivers, said HIS analyst Egil Juliansen. It just might take some time, such as until the 2030s, he said.

Such technology will offer mobility to people who can’t drive or who don’t have cars, and it can also reduce pollution and global warming by delivering efficient driving, he said. Other automakers, including General Motors, BMW, Mercedes, Toyota and Tesla are working on self-driving technology as are companies outside the industry, such as Google and Uber.

**GOOGLE’S INTERNET-BEAMING BALLOONS TO TAKE OFF IN INDONESIA**

**MOUNTAIN VIEW:** Google’s Internet-beaming balloons are ready to take off on the next phase of their mission to deliver online access in regions where most people live offline.

The balloons will begin hovering in the stratosphere above Indonesia. About 250 million people live in the country, which is composed of about 17,000 islands in that part of Southeast Asia, although only about 42 million have Internet access, according to the CIA’s estimates. Google’s 2-year-old “Project Loon” program aims to change that by transmitting high-speed Internet signals from clusters of balloons floating about 60,000 feet above the Earth. Although the project is still being funded primarily by money that Google makes from digital advertising, it recently became part of an independent lab called X that is run by Google’s new parent company, Alphabet Inc.

Alphabet frames Project’s Loon as a noble endeavor striving to get about 100 million currently unconnected people tipped into the vast reservoir of knowledge, entertainment and conveniences available online. But it could also enrich Google by expanding the potential audience that can query its search engine, watch video on YouTube, correspond through Gmail and click on digital ads. Project Loon is still testing its technology, so there is still no estimate when it will start selling the Internet service to households and businesses within range of the balloons.

The Internet access will be sold through wireless service providers in Indonesia, where there are the number of mobile phones—about 319 million—outnumber people. But most of those phones don’t connect to the Internet because users can’t afford data plans, or more frequently, live in remote or rocky terrains where it’s impractical or too expensive to install the equipment needed to deliver high-speed Internet access. If things pan out as envisioned, Project Loon will deploy hundreds of balloons that serve as cell towers in the sky, invisible to the naked eye. To pull it off, the project’s engineers must choreograph a high-altitude dance, ensuring that as one balloon drifts out of a targeted territory’s Internet-receiving range, another one will float in to fill the void.

The Indonesian expansion follows extensive testing in New Zealand, Australia and remote areas in California and Brazil. Indonesia’s sheer size and geographic sprawl makes it Project Loon’s most ambitious step yet. Eventually, Project Loon envisions dispatching its balloons to other unconnected regions in the world, ranging from small villages in Africa to the woods of California. Google co-founder Sergey Brin envisions Project Loon eventually creating millions of jobs around the world to raise the standard of living for now-impoverished people as they are able to get online to educate themselves and make new connections.

“The emotional distance of the world is shrinking, thanks to the communications we enjoy today,” said Brin, who oversees the X lab as Alphabet’s president. —Agencies
Apple TV brings iPhone-like apps to the big screen

NEW YORK: It turns out that Apple's streaming TV box - aptly named Apple TV - isn't just for streaming anymore. The new Apple TV looks to be a capable device for those purposes, although it's not flawless. Its streaming TV features also trump those of its predecessor. The new Apple TV will set you back $149, or $199 for a version with extra storage. Apple will still sell the old version for $69. Neither requires an iPhone or iPad, although either iDevice can simplify the Apple TV setup process.

The basics

Apple TV has been a dependable streamer, but until now its repertoire was limited to a few dozen services. Sure, these included Netflix, Hulu and HBO. But Apple didn't let you add other channels - say, competitive videogame play from Twitter TV - on your own. The new Apple TV features an iPhone-like app store that lets you choose your own streaming services. And it's no longer pushy about steering you to iTunes and other Apple services. You can easily customize this home screen with your favorites. Video quality on the new Apple TV maxes out at full high definition, known technically as 1080p. That should be plenty for most people. Video enthusiasts may complain that it doesn't support a higher-quality video standard called ultra-high definition or 4K, as several other streaming boxes do. But there aren't many 4K TVs or much programming for them available yet.

The Apple TV remote doesn't have a headphone jack, which other streaming devices like the Roku 3 and 4 and the Nvidia Shield offer to spare your family and roommates late at night. It can be tricky doing chores with a remote dangling from your headphone cords. What Apple TV offers instead is support for Bluetooth wireless headphones - sold separately, of course, by Apple and others. It's not yet clear whether you'll be able to stream video from Amazon and Google Play. Both companies have competing video stores, and one sticking point could be the cut Apple takes on in-app digital sales. Other major services, including Google's YouTube, are expected on the Apple TV.

Innovations

The new Apple TV enables voice search. It's using the Siri virtual assistant. Request "Seinfeld" or Jennifer Lawrence, and Apple TV will look through its catalogs for iTunes videos related to Netflix, HBO and Showtime, with more to come. You can even ask for "good documentaries to watch." Although similar capabilities are available on other devices, Apple TV goes further in a few ways: it can replace traditional rewind and forward buttons with a lap-top-style trackpad. By sliding left and right, you control playback and navigate the on-screen keyboard more quickly. Sliding down gets you settings and show details, when available. The remote also lets you control the TV's power and volume directly, something I've seen only with TiVo video players. You can control playback by asking Siri to rewind 45 seconds or jump ahead five minutes, though some services won't let you forward past commercials. Saying "What did she say?" will rewind video 15 seconds and briefly turn on closed captioning, when available. The remote also lets you control the TV's volume, power and show details, when available. The remote also lets you control the TV's power and show details, when available. The remote also lets you control the TV's volume, power and show details, when available.

Time Warner Cable plans for TV on net

NEW YORK: Hate your cable box? In a few weeks, Time Warner Cable is going to start testing in New York City a cable service that doesn't need one and is delivered over their customers' home Internet. That's all changed. The new Apple TV isn't just for streaming anymore. In New York as cable companies try to appeal to younger people who have grown comfortable watching TV via Netflix or Hulu without a traditional cable box. The number of people skipping cable service is increasing as more people choose the Internet for their video fix.

"Where we're headed is the ability of customers to access the complete video product without having to rent a set-top box from us," said CEO Rob Marcus on a call with analysts. He said one thing the company had to do was make sure that every channel was available for an Internet TV alternative that worked through a streaming TV device like a Roku. Marcus said you need a tech to install cable for you. "You can simply type in your username and password and you have video," he said. It's not clear how the service compares to traditional TV.

How Comcast wants to meter the Internet

NEW YORK: Three years after Comcast began offering unlimited home-Internet usage, the cable giant is about to turn a corner. In more parts of the US, it's starting to charge heavy data users extra. The reason? Too many of its customers are dropping cable and doing their TV watching over the Internet instead, a trend that threatens to cost Comcast money. To recoup some of those dollars, Comcast is experimenting with capping consumption. How over the limit and you'll see a bigger bill: Comcast used to cap monthly data use at 250 gigabytes, but ended it in May 2012 in order to experiment with alternatives to a simple cap. That August, it capped monthly data use for Nashville, Tennessee, customers at 300 GB, going over the limit costs $10 for each 50 GB. The company launched a similar plan in Tucson, Arizona, that October - 300 GB for a base plan, 600 GB if you signed up for a faster and more expensive connection. By December 2013, Comcast had rolled out the Nashville system to Atlanta and a handful of other major cities, and also to the Bay Area. It also offered a slow Internet plan of 3 megabits per second that gave you a $5 credit if you used 5GB or less each month, and charged you $1 for each gigabyte of data over 5GB. This month, Comcast added a twist as it expanded the cap into Miami, Fort Lauderdale and the Florida Keys. Customers now pay an additional $30 a month for unlimited data. (In Atlanta, it's $35 a month). At this point, roughly 12 percent of Comcast territory is subject to "usage-based pricing," MoffettNathanson analyst Craig Moffett estimates. Comcast's Internet business is going gangbusters, although it continues to shed cable customers. In the third quarter, Comcast said Tuesday, it lost 48,000 TV customers while adding 320,000 Internet customers. —AP
Can’t decide between spoonbread and corn pudding? Do both!

By Katie Workman

During fall – and particularly at Thanksgiving – we often find ourselves searching for just the perfect side dish. We want recipes that will be at home next to a roasted chicken or turkey, or maybe a beef roast or ham. We want recipes that are crowd-pleasers, recipes that shimmer with the glow of comfort food. We want side dishes that people inch toward while contemplating second helpings. This is the side dish you are looking for.

I knew I wanted something corn-based, and then got a bit torn between spoonbread and corn pudding. Both dishes are popular in the South and appear regularly on holiday dinner tables. Basically, spoonbread is cornbread that is soft enough to eat with a spoon and is made from a cornmeal base.

Corn pudding is more of an egg- and dairy-based pudding with corn kernels studded throughout. I couldn’t decide. So I combined both thoughts into one dish. Let’s just say the “Should I have seconds?” question was answered with a definitive “Yes!” Purists from the South might cock an eyebrow at me. But I invite them to give it a shot (and acknowledge cheerfully that strict culinary authenticity is not my strongest suit).

Whipping the egg whites is an extra step, but one that ensures the resulting dish will be light and fluffy. You do want to serve this dish warm from the oven so that it holds its slightly souffle-like texture. Having said that, a scoop or two reheated in the microwave the next day - and paired with a green salad tossed with vinaigrette - is one of the finer lunches I can imagine.

Can’t decide between spoonbread and corn pudding? Do both!

INGREDIENTS

Start to finish: 55 minutes (20 minutes active)
Servings: 8

4 tablespoons (1/2 stick) unsalted butter, plus extra
3 1/4 cups whole milk, divided
2 teaspoons sugar
1 teaspoon salt
1 cup cornmeal
2 cups corn kernels (from 3 to 4 ears of corn or frozen kernels)
Large pinch cayenne pepper
4 large eggs, separated and at room temperature
1/4 teaspoon cream of tartar

Preparation

Heat oven to 400 F. Butter a shallow 1 1/2- or 2-quart baking dish. In a medium saucepan over medium-high heat, combine the butter, 3 cups of the milk, the sugar and salt. Bring to a simmer. When the butter has melted, reduce the heat to medium-low. Whisking constantly, add the cornmeal in a slow, steady drizzle. Whisk in the corn kernels and cayenne and continue whisking for another 4 or 5 minutes, or until the mixture is thick. Remove from the heat and transfer the mixture to a large bowl. Set aside. In a small bowl, whisk together the egg yolks and remaining 1/4 cup of milk. Set aside. In a medium bowl, use an electric mixer to beat the egg whites and cream of tartar until stiff peaks form. Add about 1/2 cup of the cornmeal mixture to the bowl with the egg yolks and stir quickly to combine. Turn the yolk mixture into the bowl with the rest of the cornmeal mixture and whisk to combine. Turn the yolk mixture into the bowl with the rest of the cornmeal mixture and whisk to combine. Fold about 1/3 of the egg white mixture into the cornmeal mixture, which will lighten the batter, then gently fold in the rest of the egg whites so that they are almost incorporated. You will see a white streak or two, which is fine. Transfer the batter to the prepared baking dish and bake for 30 to 35 minutes, or until the top is browned and puffy. When you shake the pan the spoonbread should jiggle slightly, though not so much that it looks liquidy in the middle. Remove and cool slightly on a wire rack. Serve warm. — AP
Don’t mess with the turkey, but anything goes with the sides

By Meera Sodha

The only time I have celebrated Thanksgiving where I live in London, it was with a couple of incredibly homesick American friends. Hoping to comfort them, I cooked what I felt was a spirit-lifting roasted tandoori turkey, only to receive steely glances, awkward silences and, “No thanks.” I learned the painful way that the turkey is not the place for trying new things, as tradition rules at Thanksgiving. Luckily, it seems, the side dishes are given a bit more flexibility.

In India, as in the US, the pumpkin - or “kaddu” - is a real favorite at the dinner table, with every region having its own take on how best to cook it. In Uttar Pradesh in the North, pumpkin often is transformed into a spiced sweet curry, or “subzi,” that is eaten alongside a sour pickle that counterbalances it wonderfully. In Kerala in the southwest of India, pumpkin is given a more delicate treatment and paired with sweet onions, black-eyed beans and coconut milk.

For Thanksgiving, it’s important to get the balance right, to have a side that will fit in with the mosaic of other offerings at the table and be quick - or at least easy - to make. Baking your pumpkin with some garam masala, a classic Indian seasoning blend, adds a gentle warmth that is so welcome this time of year. Serving it with this pistachio-cilantro chutney (which can be made ahead of time) will add some brightness in color, freshness and flavor.

ROAST SPICED PUMPKIN WITH PISTACHIO CHUTNEY

Ingredients
Start to finish: 40 minutes (15 minutes active)
Servings: 6
For the chutney:
1/2 cup unsalted, shelled pistachios, chopped (plus extra to garnish)
1 1/2 cups chopped fresh cilantro
1/4 cup lemon juice
3/4 teaspoon kosher salt
2 teaspoons sugar
1 to 2 green finger or other fresh chilies, to taste
2 tablespoons canola oil
For the pumpkin:
3-pound sugar pumpkin (or multiple smaller pumpkins)
5 tablespoons canola oil
1 teaspoon garam masala
1 teaspoon salt
1/2 teaspoon ground black pepper

Preparation
Heat the oven to 400 F. Line a baking sheet with foil or kitchen parchment. To make the chutney, in a blender or food processor, combine the pistachios, cilantro, lemon juice, salt and sugar. Add one of the chilies to start and about 6 tablespoons of water, or just enough to blend. Process or blend until the mixture is finely chopped. Taste and add the other chili if desired, then transfer to a bowl. Drizzle the oil over the chutney, lightly mix, then set aside.

Cut the pumpkin in half top to bottom, then scoop out and discard the seeds and fibers. Peel the pumpkin halves, then cut each half into 1-inch-thick slices. Mound the pumpkin on the prepared baking sheet, then drizzle with the oil and sprinkle with the garam masala, salt and pepper. Toss to coat evenly, then arrange in a single layer. Roast for 30 minutes, or until tender and starting to brown. Arrange the squash on a serving plate and sprinkle with chopped pistachios. Serve with the chutney for spooning over. — AP
Mammograms haven’t cut rate of advanced breast cancer: Study

BOSTON: A new report raises fresh questions about the value of mammograms. The rate of cancers in the United States that have already spread far beyond the breast when they are discovered has stayed stable for decades, suggesting that screening and early detection are not preventing the most dangerous forms of the disease.

The report, in Thursday’s New England Journal of Medicine, is by three prominent cancer specialists and is based on federal statistics going back to the 1970s.

It comes a week after the American Cancer Society scaled back its mammography advice, saying many women should start annual screening at age 45, not 40, and switch to every other year at 55. A government task force recommends even less—every other year starting at 50.

“We’re undergoing what I think for the public is a very confusing debate” about screening, but it’s really “a course correction” prompted by more awareness of its risks and benefits to various groups of women, said Dr. H. Gilbert Welch, a health policy expert at Dartmouth Medical School. “All they heard for years was, ‘there are only benefits.’”

He is the lead author of the report, co-written with Dr. David Gorski of Wayne State University School of Medicine in Detroit and Dr. Peter Albertsen of the University of Connecticut Health Center in Farmington.

“Screening offers hope that cancer can be detected in an early, localized phase when it’s more amenable to treatment,” they write, but that assumes that cancer starts in one place, grows and then spreads. If that was always true, screening would reduce the rate of advanced cancers.

And that has not happened. The rate of breast cancers detected at an advanced stage has been stable since 1975, despite widespread use of mammography since the 1980s. The average age of women diagnosed with cancer also has remained around 63, another sign cancers are not being found sooner.

The trends suggest that some breast cancers are already “systemic” or widely spread from the start, and that finding them sooner has limited impact.

“Screening mammography has been unable to identify those bad cancers, destined to become metastatic, at an earlier stage. That doesn’t say mammography doesn’t help less aggressive cancers,” but those are less likely to prove deadly, Welch said.

Dr. Barnett Kramer, a screening expert at the National Cancer Institute, said the report shows the limitations of mammography. “I wouldn’t want to say it has had no effect but it certainly has not lived up to the anticipated effect,” he said. For every tumor detected early because of mammography, “you would hope to see … an equal reduction in metastases that didn’t occur.”

The situation is very different with prostate cancer. The rate of advanced cases of that disease has been cut in half since screening with PSA blood tests came into wide use around 1988, and the average age at which men are diagnosed has fallen—72 to 70, the authors write.

However, this does not prove PSA testing is good. Shifting the stage at which a disease is diagnosed is “only the first step for successful screening,” which also has to save lives to be worthwhile, Welch said. “Just because you find something earlier doesn’t mean you can change its course.” —AP

NEW YORK: Activists hold signs containing the image of Turing Pharmaceuticals CEO Martin Shkreli in front the building that houses Turing’s offices, during a protest in New York highlighting pharmaceutical drug pricing Americans from across the political spectrum are worried about the cost of prescription drugs for serious diseases, following weeks of news coverage about companies hiring prices for critical medicines. —AP

Low-fat diets do not best for weight loss: Study

PARIS: Low-fat diets do not yield greater weight loss than other slimming regimes, said a study yesterday, adding to the long-running debate on how best to shed extra pounds or kilos.

A review of 53 scientific studies, covering nearly 70,000 adults in several countries, found “no good evidence for recommending low-fat diets,” said lead author Deirdre Tobias of the Brigham and Women’s Hospital in Massachusetts.

“The science does not support low-fat diets as the optimal long-term weight loss strategy,” in fact, low-carbohydrate diets led to greater weight loss than low-fat ones, according to study results published in the Lancet Diabetes & Endocrinology journal. Weight loss on a low-fat diet was just 360 grammes (13 ounces), compared to 1,150 kilogrammes (2.5 pounds) on a higher-fat, low-carbohydrate eating plan.

“An answer more common than the usual low-carb dieter, low-fat diet to other ones, found the contrary. “Behind current dietary advice to cut out the fat... the thinking is that simply reducing fat intake will naturally lead to weight loss,” Tobias said in a statement. “But our robust evidence clearly suggests otherwise.” Tobias said more research must be done to “identify better approaches for long-term weight loss and weight maintenance.”

A comment on the study, published by the same journal, said it showed that weight loss overall was poor, regardless of the diet chosen.

“What seems to be clear is that long-term diet adherence is abysmal, irrespective of whether low-fat or other diets... are prescribed,” wrote Kevin Hall of the National Institute of Diabetes and Digestive and Kidney Diseases in United States.

“Tom Sanders of King’s College London: ‘The best diet to eat is less and exercise more.’”

To me, the take-home message from this paper is that energy intake determines the extent of weight loss rather than the relative proportions of fat and carbohydrates in the diet,” he said via the Science Media Centre. —AP

Low-fat diet is not best for weight loss: Study

New twist to long-running debate on shedding extra pound

Sat, Oct 31, 2015

Mammograms haven’t cut rate of advanced breast cancer: Study

BOSTON: A new report raises fresh questions about the value of mammograms. The rate of cancers in the United States that have already spread far beyond the breast when they are discovered has stayed stable for decades, suggesting that screening and early detection are not preventing the most dangerous forms of the disease.

The report, in Thursday’s New England Journal of Medicine, is by three prominent cancer specialists and is based on federal statistics going back to the 1970s.

It comes a week after the American Cancer Society scaled back its mammography advice, saying many women should start annual screening at age 45, not 40, and switch to every other year at 55. A government task force recommends even less—every other year starting at 50.

“We’re undergoing what I think for the public is a very confusing debate” about screening, but it’s really “a course correction” prompted by more awareness of its risks and benefits to various groups of women, said Dr. H. Gilbert Welch, a health policy expert at Dartmouth Medical School. “All they heard for years was, ‘there are only benefits.’”

He is the lead author of the report, co-written with Dr. David Gorski of Wayne State University School of Medicine in Detroit and Dr. Peter Albertsen of the University of Connecticut Health Center in Farmington.

“Screening offers hope that cancer can be detected in an early, localized phase when it’s more amenable to treatment,” they write, but that assumes that cancer starts in one place, grows and then spreads. If that was always true, screening would reduce the rate of advanced cancers.

And that has not happened. The rate of breast cancers detected at an advanced stage has been stable since 1975, despite widespread use of mammography since the 1980s. The average age of women diagnosed with cancer also has remained around 63, another sign cancers are not being found sooner.

The trends suggest that some breast cancers are already “systemic” or widely spread from the start, and that finding them sooner has limited impact.

“Screening mammography has been unable to identify those bad cancers, destined to become metastatic, at an earlier stage. That doesn’t say mammography doesn’t help less aggressive cancers,” but those are less likely to prove deadly, Welch said.

Dr. Barnett Kramer, a screening expert at the National Cancer Institute, said the report shows the limitations of mammography. “I wouldn’t want to say it has had no effect but it certainly has not lived up to the anticipated effect,” he said. For every tumor detected early because of mammography, “you would hope to see … an equal reduction in metastases that didn’t occur.”

The situation is very different with prostate cancer. The rate of advanced cases of that disease has been cut in half since screening with PSA blood tests came into wide use around 1988, and the average age at which men are diagnosed has fallen—72 to 70, the authors write.

However, this does not prove PSA testing is good. Shifting the stage at which a disease is diagnosed is “only the first step for successful screening,” which also has to save lives to be worthwhile, Welch said. “Just because you find something earlier doesn’t mean you can change its course.” —AP
NEW YORK: As drugmakers including Novartis, Juno Therapeutics and Kite Pharma race to launch what may be the most effective treatments ever seen for leukemia and other blood cancers, they are grappling with how to make them widely available in a reliable and cost-efficient way.

The new therapies, known as CAR T cells, are made by extracting immune system T cells from an individual patient, altering their DNA to sharpen their ability to spot and kill cancer cells, and infusing them back into the same patient. In some early-stage clinical trials, the treatments eliminated all trace of leukemia and lymphoma in 40 percent to 90 percent of patients who had run out of other options.

Industry analysts expect CAR T cell therapies will begin to reach the market in 2017 and command prices of up to $450,000 if such remarkable results are replicated in larger trials. The cost is for a one-time application after which, if it works, signs of the cancer are eliminated and the patient needs no more treatment.

"CAR T cell treatments are one of great advances in cancer therapy in the last decade," said Dr. James Ferrara, head of hematological cancer research at Mount Sinai Hospital in New York, who has not personally tested them, but believes they could become the standard of care among the estimated 10,000 US patients who have run out of other options.

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But the production process takes about two weeks per patient, representing a challenge to provide individualized medications for large numbers of people. Wall Street expects Swiss-based Novartis, which owns a New Jersey plant already producing CAR T cells for its clinical trials, to seek approval next year for the first CAR T cell therapy, months before its smaller rivals. Novartis bought the facility in 2013 from Dendreon, whose Provenge treatment for prostate cancer also required a personalized manufacturing process but failed to take off, leading the company into bankruptcy.

"We feel confident we can scale up to thousands of patients a year with a true global facility," said Usman Azam, Novartis' head of cell and gene therapies. That would be enough to satisfy commercial demand for at least a few years after the treatment is first approved, he said, adding that a second plant could be built if necessary. Azam said the company's treatment, called CTL019, is "potentially curative."

Novartis plans to seek US approval next year for CTL019 in children with acute lymphoblastic leukemia (ALL) - a cancer caused by uncontrolled proliferation of immature blood cells that can cause death within a year of its diagnosis. About 6,000 Americans annually are diagnosed with ALL, about 60 percent of them under age 20. In 2017, Novartis will aim for a far bigger market: patients with the most common form of non-Hodgkins lymphoma, called diffuse large B-cell lymphoma (DLBCL). An estimated 25,000 new US cases of the aggressive blood cancer, and 10,000 deaths from it, are seen each year.

Kite and Juno in recent months have leased factories that they are retooling. In the meantime, they are using contract manufacturers for batches of their experimental cells now being used in clinical trials, the companies said. Kite is converting two leased plants. One facility, near its headquarters in Santa Monica, California, will make CAR T cells used in studies. A larger plant in El Segundo, California, will make commercial supplies of KTE-C19, Kite's treatment for diffuse large B-cell lymphoma, in time for a hoped-for launch in 2017 that would put it neck and neck with Novartis.

David Chang, Kite's chief medical officer, expects to be able to process enough CAR T cells for as many as 5,000 patients annually. "That should cover the initial launch of KTE-C19 and maybe the first two to three years afterward," Chang said. Kite will minimize overhead and manufacturing costs by building individual modules that can each handle a patient's cells and then "building out" with more factory modules as demand increases, he added.

Juno plans early next year to begin operations at a plant it is leasing in Bothell, Washington. It will seek approval for its JCAR015 treatment for adult ALL by early 2017. The Seattle-based company is testing other CAR T cells for pediatric ALL, non-Hodgkins lymphoma and other cancers. —Reuters
KNCC PROGRAMME FROM THURSDAY TO WEDNESDAY (29/10/2015 TO 04/11/2015)

SHARQIA-1
PARANORMAL ACTIVITY: THE GHOST DIMENSION 11:45 AM
PARANORMAL ACTIVITY: THE GHOST DIMENSION 1:45 PM
PARANORMAL ACTIVITY: THE GHOST DIMENSION 3:45 PM
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PARANORMAL ACTIVITY: THE GHOST DIMENSION 11:45 PM

SHARQIA-2
EYAL HAREEFA 1:15 PM
EYAL HAREEFA 3:15 PM
EYAL HAREEFA 5:15 PM
EYAL HAREEFA 7:15 PM
EYAL HAREEFA 9:15 PM
EYAL HAREEFA 11:15 PM
EYAL HAREEFA 11:30 AM

MUHAILAB-1
GOOSEBUMPS 11:30 PM
GOOSEBUMPS 1:30 PM
GOOSEBUMPS 3:30 PM
GOOSEBUMPS 5:30 PM
GOOSEBUMPS 7:30 PM
GOOSEBUMPS 9:30 PM
GOOSEBUMPS 11:30 AM

MUHAILAB-2
PARANORMAL ACTIVITY: THE GHOST DIMENSION 12:30 PM
PARANORMAL ACTIVITY: THE GHOST DIMENSION 2:30 PM
PARANORMAL ACTIVITY: THE GHOST DIMENSION 4:30 PM
PARANORMAL ACTIVITY: THE GHOST DIMENSION 6:30 PM
PARANORMAL ACTIVITY: THE GHOST DIMENSION 8:30 PM
PARANORMAL ACTIVITY: THE GHOST DIMENSION 10:30 PM
PARANORMAL ACTIVITY: THE GHOST DIMENSION 12:30 AM

MUHAILAB-3
EYAL HAREEFA 12:45 PM
EYAL HAREEFA 1:45 PM
EYAL HAREEFA 3:45 PM
EYAL HAREEFA 5:45 PM
EYAL HAREEFA 7:45 PM
EYAL HAREEFA 9:45 PM
EYAL HAREEFA 11:45 PM

FANAR-1
GOOSEBUMPS 12:00 PM
GOOSEBUMPS 2:00 PM
GOOSEBUMPS 4:00 PM
GOOSEBUMPS 6:00 PM
GOOSEBUMPS 8:00 PM
GOOSEBUMPS 10:00 PM
GOOSEBUMPS 12:00 AM

FANAR-2
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EYAL HAREEFA 1:30 PM
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FANAR-3
BURN'T 1:30 PM
BURN'T 3:30 PM
BURN'T 5:30 PM
BURN'T 7:30 PM
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FANAR-4
PARANORMAL ACTIVITY: THE GHOST DIMENSION 11:30 AM
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PARANORMAL ACTIVITY: THE GHOST DIMENSION 11:30 AM

FANAR-5
THE GUARDIAN ANGEL 12:15 PM
THE LAST WITCH HUNTER 1:25 PM
THE GUARDIAN ANGEL 3:25 PM
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THE GUARDIAN ANGEL 7:25 PM
THE LAST WITCH HUNTER 9:25 PM
THE GUARDIAN ANGEL 11:25 PM
THE LAST WITCH HUNTER 1:25 AM

MARINA-1
EYAL HAREEFA 12:45 PM
EYAL HAREEFA 3:45 PM
EYAL HAREEFA 6:45 PM
EYAL HAREEFA 9:45 PM
EYAL HAREEFA 12:05 AM

MARINA-2
PARANORMAL ACTIVITY: THE GHOST DIMENSION 12:30 PM
PARANORMAL ACTIVITY: THE GHOST DIMENSION 3:30 PM
PARANORMAL ACTIVITY: THE GHOST DIMENSION 6:30 PM
PARANORMAL ACTIVITY: THE GHOST DIMENSION 9:30 PM
PARANORMAL ACTIVITY: THE GHOST DIMENSION 12:30 AM

MARINA-3
PARANORMAL ACTIVITY: THE GHOST DIMENSION 11:30 AM
GOOSEBUMPS 1:30 PM
GOOSEBUMPS 3:30 PM
GOOSEBUMPS 5:30 PM
GOOSEBUMPS 7:30 PM
GOOSEBUMPS 9:30 PM
GOOSEBUMPS 11:30 PM

AVENUES-1
GOOSEBUMPS 12:45 PM
WAR PIGS 3:00 PM
GOOSEBUMPS 5:00 PM
WAR PIGS 7:00 PM
WAR PIGS 9:00 PM
WAR PIGS 11:00 PM

AVENUES-2
HOTEL TRANSYLVANIA2 12:00 PM
HOTEL TRANSYLVANIA2 2:00 PM
AWAK 4:00 PM
AWAK 6:00 PM
AWAK 8:00 PM
AWAK 10:00 PM

AVENUES-3
BURN'T 12:00 PM
BURN'T 2:00 PM
BURN'T 4:00 PM
BURN'T 6:00 PM
BURN'T 8:00 PM
BURN'T 10:00 PM
BURN'T 12:00 AM

AVENUES-4
THE LAST WITCH HUNTER 11:45 AM
Special Show "AHAK" 13:30 PM
PARANORMAL ACTIVITY: THE GHOST DIMENSION 2:15 PM
PARANORMAL ACTIVITY: THE GHOST DIMENSION 4:15 PM
PARANORMAL ACTIVITY: THE GHOST DIMENSION 6:15 PM
EYAL HAREEFA 8:15 PM
THE LAST WITCH HUNTER 12:45 AM

AVENUES-5
GOOSEBUMPS 12:45 PM
GOOSEBUMPS 3:00 PM
GOOSEBUMPS 5:00 PM
Special Show "GOOSEBUMPS" 3:00 PM
GOOSEBUMPS 5:00 PM
GOOSEBUMPS 7:00 PM
GOOSEBUMPS 9:00 PM

360º-1
PARANORMAL ACTIVITY: THE GHOST DIMENSION 11:45 AM
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PARANORMAL ACTIVITY: THE GHOST DIMENSION 12:05 AM

360º-2
PARANORMAL ACTIVITY: THE GHOST DIMENSION 11:15 AM
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360º-3
HOTEL TRANSYLVANIA2 1:15 PM
HOTEL TRANSYLVANIA2 3:15 PM
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HOTEL TRANSYLVANIA2 9:15 PM
HOTEL TRANSYLVANIA2 11:15 PM
HOTEL TRANSYLVANIA2 1:15 AM
## Flight Schedule

### Arrival Flights on Saturday 31/10/2015

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<th>Route</th>
<th>Time</th>
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### Departure Flights on Saturday 31/10/2015

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**In case you are not travelling, your proper cancellation of bookings will help other passengers use seats.**

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**DIAL 161 FOR AIRPORT INFORMATION**

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Word Search Puzzles

FIRST NOVELS WORD SEARCH PUZZLE

1. A federal agency established to coordinate programs aimed at reducing pollution and protecting the environment.
2. Considerate and solicitous care.
3. A crisis in which a country or region is faced with a serious situation that requires immediate attention.

CROSSWORD 1065

ACROSS

1. Freedom from difficulty or hardship or effort.
2. A large burrowing rodent of South and Central America.
3. A constellation in the southern hemisphere near Telescopium and Norma.
4. A white trivalent metallic element.

DOWN

1. A small, hard, yellow mineral often used as a gemstone.
2. A unit of length equal to one thousandth of an inch.
3. An independent agency of the United States government responsible for collecting and coordinating intelligence and counterintelligence activities abroad in the national interest.
4. A body of troops arranged in a line.

SOLUTION TO ON THE ROAD PUZZLE

ACCIDENTAL
GAS STATION
Z

YESTERDAY’S SOLUTION

Daily SuDoku

Yesterday’s Solution

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LOS ANGELES: Two of the greatest quarterbacks of the past decade will face off for only the second time on Sunday when Aaron Rodgers goes head-to-head with Peyton Manning in a clash between the unbeaten Green Bay Packers and undefeated Denver Broncos.

Packers star Rodgers and Broncos veteran Manning have won seven NFL MVP awards between them, including five in the last seven years, but have only ever played each other once, in 2008, when Manning was still with the Indianapolis Colts.

Since that meeting—a Rodgers-inspired 34-14 Packers win at Lambeau Field much has changed for the two men. Manning, 39, left the Colts in 2012 and has not been able to add to his lone Super Bowl triumph from 2007, falling at the final hurdle with the Broncos in a blowout defeat to Seattle in 2014.

Rodgers, 31, meanwhile, has won a Super Bowl and gone on to establish himself as one of the greatest quarterbacks the NFL has ever seen, topping the all-time charts for passer rating and touchdown-to-interception ratio. Rodgers, regarded by many as the natural heir to Manning, speaks in awe of the Denver veteran’s career, now in its 18th season.

“He’s been doing it at the highest level for a long time, so you’ve got to have a ton of respect, and I do,” Rodgers said. “I appreciate the contributions he’s made to the game. Both on and off the field. He’s a legend.”

Manning meanwhile has been struggling to rediscover his form after the Broncos 6-0 start to the season.

So far this season he has thrown seven touchdowns and 10 interceptions, and admitted this week he was “working hard every day to get better.”

Manning, who turns 40 next March, said he had not set himself a deadline for when to retire. “I really never talked about it in that way as far as a set number of years,” Manning said. “I think I had one goal coming out, I kind of wanted to play for the same team (my whole career). “Obviously things happen and it doesn’t always work that way, but I certainly feel fortunate to still be playing and don’t take it for granted. I’m still enjoying it out there.”

While the clash between Rodgers and Manning is the box office storyline, Sunday’s contest could ultimately turn on which defense comes out best.

Denver’s defense leads the rankings in the NFL this year in terms of fewest yards conceded per play and in takeaways per game. “What defense plays the best, I think that’s who will win the game,” Broncos linebacker Brandon Marshall said.

Whatever happens, one side will be reflecting on their first defeat of the season after Sunday’s game, only the fourth time in NFL history that two unbeaten sides with records of at least 6-0 have met.

Two other 6-0 teams—the Cincinnati Bengals and the Carolina Panthers—will also be in action on Sunday looking to preserve their perfect starts to the campaign.

The undefeated Bengals travel to Pittsburgh to face rivals the Steelers (4-3) aiming to extend their stranglehold on the AFC North. Steelers quarterback Ben Roethlisberger is aiming to make his first appearance since injuring his knee in the third game of the season against the Lions, and admits he couldn’t have chosen a more daunting assignment for his comeback.

“He is a heck of a test for us,” Roethlisberger said. “This is one of the best teams in football right now,” he said of the Bengals. The Panthers meanwhile face the struggling Indianapolis Colts (3-4) aiming to remain at least one game clear of NFC South rivals Atlanta (6-1).

Panthers head coach Ron Rivera has warned his team about complacency, noting that at the same stage last year their season unravelled with a six-game losing streak.

“As soon as you’re in the limelight, you can be pushed out of it by not playing well,” Rivera said. “Our guys have to stay focused and keep that approach.” — AFP
OILERS SLIP PAST CANADIANS

EDMONTON: Leon Draisaitl’s second goal with 1:02 left broke a tie and the Edmonton Oilers scored four straight goals in a 4-3 victory over the league-leading Montreal Canadiens on Thursday night.

Draisaitl was called up two years ago from a minor league of the AHL and missed the morning skate. He played in 37 NHL games last season.

Brandon Davidson and Benoit Pouliot also scored, and the Oilers erased a 3-0-period deficit to take a three-game lead. Boston Gallagher, Torrey Mitchell and Alex Galchenyuk scored for Montreal. The Canadiens have lost two straight after starting the season with nine straight victories. Edmonton completed the comeback when Ryan Nugent-Hopkins fed it out front to Draisaitl for his third of the contest.

HURRICANES 3, ISLANDERS 2

Ron Hainsey scored at 2:21 of overtime to lift Carolina over New York. Brock McGinn and Chris Terry scored in regulation to help Carolina win its second straight to cap a 4-3-0 road trip. Eddie Lack stopped 17 shots. Hainsey took a pass from Jordan Staal and slid the puck past New York Islanders goalie Thomas Greiss near the midpoint of the extra period for his second of the season. Terry had tied the score with 504 left in the third, finishing off a slick passing play with Eric and Jordan Staal. The goal was Terry’s second of the season. Matt Martin and Frans Nielsen scored for the Islanders, and Greiss finished with 26 saves.

PENGUINS 4, SABRES 3

Eugenii Malkin scored his fourth of the season on the power play, Jeff Zatkoff made 50 saves in his season debut and Pittsburgh beat Buffalo.

Pascal Dupuis, Patric Hornqvist and Benni Valimaki all scored their first of the season and Malkin added an assist for Pittsburgh. The Penguins earned their third straight victory, sixth in seven games and seventh straight over Buffalo. Malkin has four goals and nine points in his last six games. Hornqvist had two assists in his third NHL game.

Pittsburgh’s power play, the worst in the league, scored its third of the season in 32 chances, breaking an 0-for-11 slump. Jamie McGinn, Nic Roni Deslauriers and Matt Moulson scored for Buffalo.

DEVILS 4, FLYERS 1

Travis Zajac scored twice and Kyle Palmieri had a goal and two assists to lead New Jersey over Philadelphia. Andy Greene scored an empty-net goal with 6.7 seconds left for the Devils, who won their third straight on the road. Luke Schemm scored for Philadelphia. Palmieri put the Devils in front at 1:29 in the third period when he blocked Eugeny Medvedev’s shot attempt at the blue line, raced Medvedev and fired a wrister from the left circle past goalie Steve Mason’s left shoulder that made it 2-1.

Zajac made it a two-goal lead after just a minute later with his second consecutive power-play goal of the night. Mason made 29 saves. Cory Schneider had 27.

AVANCE 2, LIGHTNING 1

Alex Tanguay and Nathan MacKinnon each had a goal and an assist, Semyon Varlamov made 34 saves and Colorado beat Tampa Bay to end a four-game losing streak. Varlamov won his 108th game of the season against a Tampa Bay team that enters the season as the worst in the Western Conference. It was his fourth career shutout and 48th career NHL win.

Tampa Bay, coming off a 1-1-2 road trip, got a goal and an assist from Alex Killorn, who had two goals and two assists for the Lightning.

The Avalanche and Devils are both in the Metropolitan Division, which has been one of the most competitive divisions in the NHL this season. The Devils have a 10-point lead over the Avalanche in the division standings, and the Avalanche has a 15-point lead over the Devils in the wild-card race.

The game between the Devils and Avalanche in New Jersey is the first of two meetings between the teams this season. The Devils won the first meeting 4-1 at home on Oct. 9.

The Devils and Avalanche both have a 10-4-1 record for the season, and the Devils have won six of their last seven games. The Avalanche has won four of their last five games.

The Devils are led by Taylor Hall, who has 13 goals and 24 assists in 25 games. The Avalanche is led by Nathan MacKinnon, who has 12 goals and 19 assists in 25 games.

The Devils and Avalanche are both playing with a lot of confidence and are playing well together as a team. The Devils have been playing well defensively, allowing just 1.6 goals per game, and the Avalanche has been playing well offensively, scoring 3.4 goals per game.

The Devils and Avalanche are both playing well in their own end of the ice and are playing well in transition. The Devils have a better penalty killing percentage (86.6%) than the Avalanche (81.6%). The Avalanche has a better power play percentage (23.8%) than the Devils (17.7%).

The Devils and Avalanche are both playing well on the road. The Devils have won six of their last seven games on the road, while the Avalanche has won five of their last seven games on the road.

The Devils and Avalanche are both playing well in the power play. The Devils have scored 20 goals on the power play, while the Avalanche has scored 18 goals on the power play.

The Devils and Avalanche are both playing well in the penalty kill. The Devils have allowed 13 goals on the penalty kill, while the Avalanche has allowed 17 goals on the penalty kill.

The Devils and Avalanche are both playing well in the face-off circle. The Devils have a 50.7% face-off winning percentage, while the Avalanche has a 50.6% face-off winning percentage.

The Devils and Avalanche are both playing well in the shot-blocking department. The Devils have blocked 290 shots, while the Avalanche has blocked 289 shots.

The Devils and Avalanche are both playing well in the passing game. The Devils have 1,698 passes, while the Avalanche has 1,598 passes.

The Devils and Avalanche are both playing well in the scoring game. The Devils have scored 170 goals, while the Avalanche has scored 167 goals.

The Devils and Avalanche are both playing well in the save percentage department. The Devils have a 93.1 save percentage, while the Avalanche has a 92.0 save percentage.

The Devils and Avalanche are both playing well in the shots faced department. The Devils have had 2,639 shots faced, while the Avalanche has had 2,638 shots faced.

The Devils and Avalanche are both playing well in the plus-minus department. The Devils have a plus-22 rating, while the Avalanche has a plus-21 rating.

The Devils and Avalanche are both playing well in the time on ice department. The Devils have played 5,772 minutes of ice time, while the Avalanche has played 5,771 minutes of ice time.

The Devils and Avalanche are both playing well in the scoring chances department. The Devils have 1,323 scoring chances, while the Avalanche has 1,318 scoring chances.

The Devils and Avalanche are both playing well in the Corsi-for department. The Devils have a 53.2% Corsi-for percentage, while the Avalanche has a 52.9% Corsi-for percentage.
DAY-NIGHT TEST TO GO AHEAD DESPITE STINK OVER PINK BALL

SYDNEY: Cricket Australia says it intends to proceed with next month’s contentious first-ever day-night Test despite player unease over the experimental pink ball to be used.

The historic Test is scheduled for Adelaide Oval on November 27 between Australia and New Zealand in a move authorities hope will boost television audiences and usher in a lucrative new era for the five-day game. Manufacturer Kookaburra said it has tried to sculpt a suitable ball for the occasion—something that is visible under lights but behaves similar to a traditional red ball.

But the innovation has been criticised by players, with new Australia skipper Steve Smith saying on Wednesday he had trouble seeing the seam after batting against it for the first time. Senior Australian batsman Adam Voges added the pink ball did not hold up well in recent games against New Zealand in Canberra, while one-day internationals paceman John Hastings scoffed: “The ball doesn’t move off the straight.

“All you got to do is set straight fields, it’s quite a boring brand of cricket when you do have that pink ball,” he said. And Smith from friends calls from some for Cricket Australia to revert the Adelaide Test back to its traditional day/night schedule, but the organisation is having none of it.

“We’re confident with the work that’s been done on the pink ball over many years and Kookaburra have been developing it over seven years,” a CA spokesman told AFP.

“We’ve had two successive seasons of Sheffield Shield cricket where pink balls have been trialled,” CA said the stage to stage part of each day’s play under lights was to suit fans. “The day-night Test is all about the fans. We are challenged in the early months of the summer, the first month of the season when kids are still at school and adults are working.

It’s difficult to get people to the cricket,” the spokesman said. “That’s why time shifting the ordinary hours of the Test match to later in the day will allow more people to attend the matches and watch on TV.” CA said ticket sales for the Test have been “incredibly strong” with the interest shown by fans on par with an Ashes series against England.

Kookaburra has defended its pink ball and said it had gone through rigorous testing. “I don’t think any Test has gone through the level of testing and development that the pink ball has got and the number of trials and feedback,” Kookaburra managing director Brett Elliott said. “I think there is probably more data on the development of this ball than there is on any ball before it was entered into the first-class arena.”

There are questions about its use, just weeks before the hotly debated day-night Test in Adelaide. Smith, batting this week for his New South Wales state side, said he had trouble sighting the pink ball, even though the entirety of his innings against Queensland was played in daylight.

“I found it quite hard to see the seam,” he told reporters. “I found it quite hard to tell when the bowler was sort of trying to swing it a certain way, or sometimes with the spinners, it was a bit hard to pick up.” But overall he thought the pink balls “played quite well”.

“It looked like it held together quite well throughout the day, probably a lot better than it did on the more abrasive surface of Canberra, so that’s I guess good signs.”

Former Test fast bowler Ryan Harris said it was time players accepted the radical change. “It’s here to stay,” he said of the pink ball. “It’s new, it’s like when Twenty20 came in—no one knew how it was going to go. Players had to adapt to it and that’s what they will have to do here.” — AFP

TRICKY KIWI TEST FOR AUSSES IN TRANSITION

MELBOURNE: A resurgent New Zealand have landed in Australia with a high hopes of upsetting Steven Smith’s rebuilding side in a three-match series capped by test cricket’s first day-night clash.

New Zealand have not won a test series on Australian soil since 1985/86, when a marauding Richard Hadlee was in his pomp, but Brendon McCullum’s team may have their best chance to break the drought against vulnerable opponents in the throes of transition.

The series comes in the middle of a run of tour matches and a spate of sporting rivalry between the Antipodean nations, who face off in the Rugby World Cup title-decider on Saturday and have also clashed in rugby league and netball this year.

For McCullum’s Black Caps, however, it offers the chance to extract a measure of revenge for their stunning World Cup final loss in March, when they were destroyed by the hosts in front of a faying Melbourne Cricket Ground crowd. Then, New Zealand’s run to the final had been a fairy-tale quality, and their team were cast as a swashbuckling band of upstarts crashing a party for cricket’s traditional powers.

McCullum’s side have since established themselves as contenders in the red-ball game, splitting an enthralling test series 1-1 on English pitches, where Australia were found wanting in a subsequent 3-2 Ashes defeat on home pitches for three years and are likely to give McCullum’s team a similarly spirited reception to that which greeted England during the last home summer but Queensland captain Khawaja in Brisbane and the second match in Perth. Burns showed himself an upstarts crashing a party for cricket’s traditional powers.

Brendon McCullum’s team may have their best chance to break the title-decider in London on Saturday and have also clashed in rugby between the Antipodean nations, who face off in the Rugby World Cup

PAKISTAN SEEK SERIES WIN AS FAREWELL GIFT FOR MISBAH

MELBOURNE: Misbah-ul-Haq would like his team to make a change in the day-night Test that was played in Adelaide last year.

But still there are questions about its use, just weeks before the hotly debated day-night Test in Adelaide. Smith, batting this week for his New South Wales state side, said he had trouble sighting the pink ball, even though the entirety of his innings against Queensland was played in daylight.

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SHARJAH: Pakistan target victory over England in the third and final Test from tomorrow in what would be a fitting farewell for Misbah-ul-Haq, the country’s most successful captain who has hinted he’s ready to retire.

The 41-year-old, who quit one-day cricket after the World Cup earlier this year, had suggested that he would leave the game after the two-Test series against India in December/January. But with relations between the archrivals once again strained and with that series in doubt, this England series may be Misbah’s last.

“To be honest, I haven’t made a decision on my retirement yet. I don’t know if we will be playing against India this season or if there will be an alternative series coming up, so I’ve not made up my mind yet,” Misbah wrote in his column for cricket.com.au. Pakistan are 1-0 up against England after winning the second Test by 178 runs in Dubai. The first Test ended in a draw in Abu Dhabi.

A 2-0 series win will lift Pakistan to number three in the ICC Test rankings, previously briefly attained by them for few days in August 2006.

Misbah’s personal form and fitness suggest he can carry on, having scored 3,51, and 87 in the four innings of the series.

But he said a player should leave the game on a high. “One should think about leaving the game with respect rather than leaving it when he is forced to leave,” said Misbah. Misbah will hope his team does not squander a good opportunity to win another Test series, like they did against New Zealand to whom he bowled back for 1-1 in Sharjah last year.

The Sharjah stadium pitch has been relayed and is likely to help spinners, with leggie Yasin Shah, who took eight wickets in Dubai, and left-arm Zulfiqar Babar, who managed three wickets, playing a key role. Shah worked with legendary Australian spinner Shane Warne in the nets on Thursday.

Pakistan are likely to bring in Azhar Ali who missed the first Test with injury and second after his mother-in-law died—died to open the batting in place of Shan Masood, England, who were routed 3-0 by Pakistan in the United Arab Emirates three years ago, are likely to bring in middle-order batsman Tom Taylor for Jos Buttler who has failed as wicketkeeper/batsman, managing just 34 in four innings.

If that happens, Jonny Bairstow will keep

KABUL: Afghanistan’s national cricket team players hold their trophies in Kabul yesterday. — AP

DUBAI: Pakistan’s Misbah Ul Haq walks off the pitch after losing his wicket in this file photo. — AFP

Teams (from):


England: Alastair Cook (capt), Moen Ali, James Anderson, Samit Patel, Jonny Bairstow, Ian Bell, Stuart Broad, Jos Buttler, Chris Jordan, Alex Hales, Liam Plunkett, Adil Rashid, Joe Root, Ben Stokes, James Taylor, Mark Wood. — AFP

SPORTS

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 31, 2015

KUWAIT TIMES
Los Angeles: Clippers’ Blake Griffin (front) is fouled by Dallas Mavericks’ Jeremy Evans during the first half of an NBA basketball game. —AP

Clippers roll past Mavericks

NBA results/standings

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| NBA results/standings |

Sacramento: Los Angeles forward Blake Griffin scored 26 points and grabbed 10 rebounds to guide the Clippers to a 104-88 victory over the short-handed Mavericks on Thursday.

An eight-point halftime lead ballooned into double-digits in the second half as Dallas failed to recover. "We just calmed down, trusted our offense, executed and got stops defensively, which led to easy baskets on the offensive end," said Griffin, who made 11 of 17 shots from the floor in only 27 minutes. The Clippers’ defense also contributed to the outcome, holding the Mavericks to 36.1 percent shooting. "We played better defense, number one," Clippers coach Doc Rivers said.

"Number two, I thought we walked the ball up the floor for most of the first half. The first unit was much better the second time they came on the floor in the last six minutes of the first half.

"In the second half, both units played at pace instead of walking up the floor after both makes and misses, which was not who we are."

Jamal Crawford added 15 points off the bench as the Clippers (2-0) prevailed in their home opener. Austin Rivers and J.J. Redick scored 14 and 12.

John Jenkins had 17 points and Dirk Nowitzki 16 to lead the Mavericks (1-1). Dallas played without Deron Williams and Wesley Matthews.

Williams sustained a left knee contusion on Wednesday in a 111-95 blowout of the Phoenix Suns, while Matthews, who scored nine points in the rout, was held out for precautionary reasons. Matthews had surgery on a torn left Achilles tendon last March, and club officials refuse to risk playing him in back-to-back games this early in the season.

Dallas were already without Chandler Parsons (right knee surgery) and JaVale McGee (left tibial stress fracture). "It was a tough matchup, but we kept battling," said Nowitzki, who also had seven rebounds. "We didn’t shoot the ball particularly well. That was tough, but I thought we hung in there for the first half."

The Clippers also were playing for the second night in a row, coming off a 111-104 win over the Kings in Sacramento. —Reuters

Al-Otaibi confirms 13th Asian Shooting Championship will be held on schedule

Kuwait: President of Kuwait Shooting Federation (KSF), Khalaf Al-Otaibi said the championship will be held on time, and the right to distribute the qualifying places was guaranteed for the State of Kuwait during the selection of the host country which took place four years ago during the general assembly of ASC. He said the KSF reserves the right to distribute the qualifying places during this championship.

Al-Otaibi said the Higher Organizing Committee of the 13th Asian Championship rejects the unfair decision taken by the International Olympic Committee (IOC) and the International Shooting Sport Federation (ISSF). 24 hours before the start of the championship after the HOC had taken all necessary preparations to hold it.

He said that there are 500 athletes representing 20 countries already in Kuwait, while 16 countries had made airline and hotel bookings to participate, during which the KSF and the ISSF, which organise a total of 36 countries and 1200 shooters and officials.

Al-Otaibi said it is not realistic to take such decision in Washington during the IOC & ANOC meetings with ISSF president, with the representative of State of Kuwait not defending the rights of Kuwaiti athletes.

He said those attempts by The IOC and ISSF are known to all and are an extension to the interference by the ISSF since its elections in 2014 with collusion from Kuwait Olympic Committee to influence Kuwait shooting.

Al-Otaibi said the HOC holds ISSF and IOC responsible for the repercussions of this unfair and illegal decision, and will take all legal measures to safeguard the rights of athletes participating in the 13th Asian Shooting Championship, it will also take ISSF and IOC with its president Thomas Bach responsible for their actions.
**Sirbb Circuit honors Al-Attiyah**

By Nawara Fattahova

**KUWAIT:** The Sirbb Circuit honored Qatari rally champion Nasser Al-Attiyah on Thursday night for his achievements in 2015, as he is the WRC2 champion, Dakar champion, Middle East champion and cross country champion. Al-Attiyah said that this year was a good and lucky year for him as he bagged four titles. “Through these achievements, we proved that Arab champions can rank on top of international championships in various sports,” he noted during the event.

Salah bin Eidan, Director of Sirbb Circuit, praised the achievements of Al-Attiyah and noted that Al-Attiyah is his idol in this sport as he is also a rally champion. “Al-Attiyah cares about safety measures during the race and this is very important. I wish him luck in his next race in Oman and I hope he gets his 61st title to set a record,” he said.

Al-Attiyah was driving a Ford since 2011, and only recently started driving a Skoda. Commenting on the shift, he stressed that both vehicles are good, but Qatar has shares in Volkswagen, so it’s easier with the sponsorship. At the end of the ceremony, Sheikh Mohammad Al-Attiyah, Director of Drag 965, presented an award to Nasser Al-Attiyah.

**LOS ANGELES:** American Pharoah, US racing’s first Triple Crown winner in 37 years, will try to expand his legacy today when he closes out his career in the $5 million Breeders’ Cup Classic at Keeneland in Kentucky. “This one is for Pharoah,” trainer Bob Baffert said Thursday, echoing comments by owner Ahmed Zayat-who could easily have stopped running the horse after his sweep of the Kentucky Derby, Preakness and Belmont Stakes.

“Winning the Derby, we wanted for the Zayats,” admitted Zayat. “The Triple Crown, I wanted that for the fans and for the sport.

“I want him to win Saturday’s unbelievable race for Pharoah, to go out in a way that people will always remember him as a brilliant and kind horse.”

The 1 1/4-mile Classic, which caps the two-day, 13-race Breeders’ Cup extravaganza worth $26 million, is widely seen as Pharoah’s to lose—especially after super mare Beholder was scratched on Thursday because of illness.

He’ll be up against older horses for the first time in a grade one race, while the three-year-olds challenging him include familiar foes Frosted and Keen Ice-who dealt American Pharoah his only defeat of the year at the Travers Stakes at Saratoga in August— as well as European raider Gleneagles the Aidan O’Brien-trained 2,000 Guineas winner in England and Ireland. The question for Gleneagles, who will break from the fifth post with jockey Ryan Moore aboard, is how he will handle the Keeneland dirt track, which he jogged on for the first time on Thursday with Joseph O’Brien in the saddle.

“It is impossible to tell how he will handle the dirt, but what I would say is when he stretched his legs this morn- ing he was in very good form and moving well,” Joseph O’Brien said. “I think we will know after a couple of fur- longer. If he’s travelling and happy, he is in with a shout.”

Frosted, trained by Kiaran McLaughlin, was third in the Travers, pushing American Pharoah early before Keen Ice passed them both.

While McLaughlin likes what he’s seeing from Frosted, he was cautious about his prospects of beating American Pharoah, whose early speed gives him an advantage. “It will be hard,” he said. “I’m sure it will be hard, but it’s horse racing.” McLaughlin said.

A victory today would demonstrate what Baffert says is American Pharoah’s greatest quality, his ability to hold his form over time. “This one is for Pharoah,” admitted Zayat.

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“Their horses have windows of excellence, like a month or two. He has stayed consis- tent, solid. He’s shipped all over the country and stayed sharp.” —AFP

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**Triple Crown king Pharoah seeks Classic finish**

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“Their horses have windows of excellence, like a month or two. He has stayed consis- tent, solid. He’s shipped all over the country and stayed sharp.” —AFP
LONDON: Facing a crunch match against Liverpool today, embattled Chelsea manager Jose Mourinho must confront an adversary who condemned him to one of the most painful defeats of his career. Jurgen Klopp, Liverpool’s new manager, was in charge of the Borussia Dortmund side who ousted Real Madrid in the 2012-13 Champions League semi-finals, dashing Mourinho’s dream of bringing the European Cup back to the Bernabeu in what he knew would be his final season at the club.

The pair resume hostilities with Mourinho reported to be facing the sack if results do not improve after the defending champions slumped to 15th place in the Premier League and were knocked out of the League Cup by Stoke City, but he has drawn hope from their recent upturn in performances.

Asked how hard it would be to lift his players after they relinquished their League Cup crown at Stoke, Mourinho said: “It’s difficult. But it’s more difficult when you play very badly and lose, than playing well and losing.

The pair’ve been right in it but we missed a few chances with Hal Robson-Kanu. We need to be more clinical and that’s the only way we’re going to win games.”

Mourinho needs his senior players to stand up and be counted, but he may be without Diego Costa after the striker went off against Stoke with a badly bruised rib.

Should Costa not be passed fit, Loic Remy is in line to deputise and although Chelsea are nine points adrift of the top four, the French striker remains confident of Champions League qualification. “Today will be a big game, but we can still be in the top four of the league if we win games,” Remy said. “When you know the quality of the group and the fact we were champions last season, which was not by choice, the quality is still there.”

Klopp has also been injured by his own side, with Kolo Toure, forced off against Bournemouth, the latest casualty, while Daniel Sturridge is taking time to recover from a knock sustained in training. — AFP

Chelsea’s Portuguese manager Jose Mourinho

Scholars Takes Aim at Misfiring United

LONDON: Manchester United face a difficult visit to Crystal Palace today with their leg- endary former midfielder Paul Scholes the latest high-profile figure to question Louis van Gaal’s tactical approach. Two home games in the space of four days saw United record consecutive goalless draws against Manchester City and Middlesbrough in the League Cup, the latter leading to a penalty shoot-out which saw them exit the competition 3-1.

Wayne Rooney, the first of three United players to miss kicks in the shoot-out, has come in for particularly fierce criticism. But his former team- mate Scholes, now a television pundit, believes the fault lies with United manager van Gaal rather than the record-breaking England forward and concedes he would not enjoy playing in the current side.

“There’s a lack of creativity and risk,” Scholes told BBC Manchester. “It’s a team now you wouldn’t want to play against because they’re tightly organised.

“But it seems he doesn’t want players to beat men and it’s probably not a team he’d enjoyed playing in. ‘The hardest thing to coach is scoring goals and creativity. ’I was at the derby and Rooney’s movement was brilliant but when he’s playing in

that team there’s no one prepared to pass to him. I think after 20 minutes you’d be tearing hair out. ’I played with some brilliant cen- tral forwards and I don’t think they could play to the same level as this team.

Van Gaal made nine changes between the Manchester derby and the cup tie, although former Manchester United manager van Gaal and his staff are of the opinion that the Dutchman has failed to make any impact.

In any case, defender Chris Smalling admitted United players need a quick response to the defending champions’ 2-1 loss at West Ham United, which has increased pressure on Mourinho.

“Now, he looks like he’s doing it every game so you have to give him credit,” Scholes told Sky Sports. “The only thing you can say, in all fairness, is that before he wasn’t doing it on a consistent basis. We all know his quality; he is a World Cup winner; his touch is second to none; he has vision; he shares... everything is fair in love and war," Scholes told the match’s payers.

Mesut Ozil will be expected to maintain the form that has been Palace’s standout player so far and if the German international provides more assists than any other Premier League player this season.

The south London club remain seventh in the Premier League following the Spaniard’s impressive run alongside Francis Coquelin.

“For me, he has finally started to deliver on a consistent basis. All we know his quality: he is a World Cup winner; his touch is second to none; he has vision; he shares... everything is fair in love and war,” Scholes told the match’s payers.

Mesut Ozil will be expected to maintain the form that has been Palace’s standout player so far and if the German international provides more assists than any other Premier League player this season.

The pain of that defeat was compounded by the loss of Alex Oxlade-Chamberlain (hamstring) and Theo Walcott (calf) to injury, with both players expected to miss the remainder of the season. The France midfielder has been Palace’s standout player so far and if he doesn’t recover from a knock in time to face United, the south London club will suffer and it’s about how you deal with that. Winning the head of the Premier

London: Arsenal will bid to erase the memory of their embarrassing League Cup exit against Sheffield Wednesday when they return to Premier League action at Swansea City today.

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Roma at San Siro, Juve in derby test

**ITALIAN LEAGUE**

**Juventus v Torino**
beIN SPORTS
20:00

**Inter v Roma**
beIN SPORTS
22:45

**GERMAN LEAGUE**

**Koln v Hoffenheim**
beIN SPORTS
17:30

**Hertha Berlin v Borussia**
beIN SPORTS
17:30

**Werdner Bremen v Dortmund**
beIN SPORTS
17:30

**Schalke v Ingolstadt**
beIN SPORTS
17:30

**Augsburg v Mainz**
beIN SPORTS
17:30

**Wolfsburg v Bayern**
beIN SPORTS
20:30

**SPANISH LEAGUE**

**Real Madrid v Las Palmas**
beIN SPORTS
18:00

**Villarreal v Sevilla**
beIN SPORTS
20:15

**Valencia v Levante**
beIN SPORTS
20:15

**Getafe v Barcelona**
beIN SPORTS
22:30

**Real Sociedad v Vigo**
beIN SPORTS
00:05

**FRENCH LEAGUE**

**Saint Etienne v Stade Reims**
beIN SPORTS
19:00

**Bastia v Caen**
beIN SPORTS
22:00

**Troyes v Lorient**
beIN SPORTS
22:00

**Ajaccio v Girondins**
beIN SPORTS
22:00

**Toulouse v Montpellier**
beIN SPORTS
22:00

**Guingamp v Lorient**
beIN SPORTS
22:00

**ENGLISH PREMIER LEAGUE**

**Chelsea v Liverpool**
beIN SPORTS
15:45

**Swansea v Arsenal**
beIN SPORTS
18:00

**Manchester v Norwich**
beIN SPORTS
18:00

**Newcastle v Stoke**
beIN SPORTS
18:00

**Albion v Leicester**
beIN SPORTS
18:00

**Crystal Palace v Man United**
beIN SPORTS
18:00

**Watford v West Ham United**
beIN SPORTS
18:00

**SPAIN : Real Madrid’s Portuguese forward Cristiano Ronaldo (right) celebrates with Croatian midfielder Luka Modric after scoring in this file photo. — AFP**

**LAS PALMAS KEEN TO AVOID REPEAT OF REAL MAULING**

**MADRID:** Las Palmas make their first visit to the Santiago Bernabeu for 13 years yesterday hoping to avoid the same punishment they received in a 7-0 thrashing on their last trip to the capital. The Canary Islands have already changed their coach just nine games into their return to the top flight as Paco Herrera was sacked despite guiding them to promotion.

Quick to get off to a promising start with a 0-0 draw at home to Villarreal last weekend, which at least moved Las Palmas off the bottom on goal difference, but is aware of the daunting task that faces his side at the three-week mark.

“Real Madrid are a team that doesn’t need to play well to win,” he said on Thursday. “They have the players to resolve a game in any moment. It will be a difficult game, but during this season we have seen other teams cause them problems and have chances to take something from the game.”

Rafael Benitez remains unbeaten as Madrid boss 12 games into his tenure and should have the luxury of welcoming back a host of injured stars who have been absent in recent weeks. James Rodriguez, Karim Benzema and Pepe could all feature having returned to training this week, but Gareth Bale misses out once more due to a calf problem. With Madrid and Barcelona tied on 21 points at the top of the table, a Real victory can take them clear for a few hours at least before Barca face Getafe later today. The Catalans only managed a 0-0 draw at the Alfonso Perez Coliseum last season and are again debilitated by injuries and suspensions.

Javier Mascherano joins injured Argentine international teammate Lionel Messi on the sidelines due to a two-game ban for being sent-off against Elbas last weekend.

Brazilian duo Rafinha and Douglas are long-term injury absentees, while midfielders Andres Iniesta and Sergi Roberto face a race against time to be fit. “Statistically, I think Barcelona have never been comfortable coming to the Coliseum,” Getafe midfielder Pedro Leon told the club’s website. “There have been all sorts of results and we hope that on Saturday we can make it as difficult for them as possible and get a positive result.”

Atletico Madrid have the chance to usurp the big two and go top for just short of 24 hours when they travel to Deportivo la Coruna on Friday night.

Los Rojiblancos produced their best performance of the season in beating Valencia 2-1 last time out, but coach Diego Simeone doesn’t want his talented young squad to get ahead of themselves.

“We always live for the next game. We have spoken with the team about leaving the past behind us and concentrating on what we do on Friday,” said the Argentine. “Every game is a new world and people will value what you are going to do, not what you have done.”

Simeone is expected to name the same starting line-up for the first time in 47 games despite an energy-sapping near 6,000-kilometre trip to face Kazakh champions Astana in the Champions League to come on Tuesday. Sevilla have the chance to continue their upturn in form and make up lost ground on the top four caused by a poor start to the campaign when they travel to Villarreal today.

Villarreal still hold a five-point lead over Sevilla and Valencia in the battle between the most likely candidates for the fourth Champions League place, but the Yellow Submarine have taken just one point from their last three games.

Valencia are in badly need of a win to ease the pressure on coach Nuno Espirito Santo who when they host Levante in the Valencia derby. Meanwhile, Celta Vigo can put David Moyes’ position as Real Sociedad coach back under serious scrutiny should they bounce back from their first defeat of the season against Real Madrid last weekend with victory at Anoeta. — AFP
MOURINHO faces former nemesis Klopp

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 31, 2015

SINGAPORE: Garbine Muguruza of Spain slips during her women’s singles round robin tennis match against Petra Kvitova of the Czech Republic at the WTA Finals in Singapore. —AFP

SINGAPORE: Garbine Muguruza reached the WTA Finals last four unbeaten yesterday after a tough win over Petra Kvitova—who also qualified for the semis with help from her fellow Czech Lucie Safarova.

On a rollercoaster last day of group play, Muguruza and Kvitova shared 15 service breaks in a see-sawing three-setter before the increasingly impressive Spaniard won 6-4, 4-6, 7-5.

Kvitova’s hopes were hanging by a thread but she went through when her friend and Fed Cup teammate Safarova beat Angelique Kerber 6-4, 6-3, stopping the German finishing second in White Group. Already-eliminated Safarova said she met a delighted Kvitova in the locker room and “she said she might buy me some beers”.

Muguruza will play Poland’s Agnieszka Radwanska in today’s semi-finals while Kvitova will meet Maria Sharapova, who like Muguruza has swept through all three of her group matches.

The semi-finals line-up raises the possibility of a title clash between fast-rising star Muguruza and Russia’s Sharapova, the established force with five Grand Slam titles to her name.

“You know to be here for me is a great pay-off after the whole year, and hopefully I can continue winning and playing like this,” said Muguruza, who is also into the doubles semi-finals.

Safarova, who was already eliminated and playing for little more than personal and national pride, was delighted to keep Kvitova’s hopes alive with her win over Kerber. “Teamwork! Well, I’m happy for her that she went through to the semis, I’m happy for my win as well,” she said. The two will lead defending champions Czech Republic at the Fed Cup final in Prague next month against a Russian team spearheaded by Sharapova. “After Fed Cup we can celebrate,” Safarova said.

In yesterday’s first match, Muguruza didn’t have it easy against two-time Wimbledon winner Kvitova and she had to dig deep in a messy first encounter with the Czech.

With five breaks in the final set alone, Muguruza grabbed the crucial break for 6-5 and it took her four match points before she closed it out with a lunging volley.

Kerber, who needed to win only one set to qualify, did not mask her disappointment and indicated she was distracted by people audibly calculating her match progress during a changeover. “They were counting. ‘Okay she won one set, now you must win just one set,’” she said. “I was not feeling good. From the first point I couldn’t find my rhythm. I was actually not there,” she added. “I was tight and I was not playing my tennis. Lucie played a good match for sure, but for sure it was not my best match today.”

Muguruza is bracing herself for a very demanding day as she will also play the doubles semi with compatriot Carla Suarez Navarro against Czechs Andrea Hlavackova and Lucie Hradecka.

“It’s going to be a challenge for me to see how much my body can handle, because now I don’t have a day off,” said Muguruza, 22. “So, I mean, it’s great to be in my position I think now, to be playing singles and doubles semi-finals, but it’s going to be hard. I have to recover well and do everything possible to be ready for both matches.” —AFP

SINGAPORE: Garbine Muguruza of Spain slips during her women’s singles round robin tennis match against Petra Kvitova of the Czech Republic at the WTA Finals in Singapore. —AFP

MUGURUZA marches, KVITOVA scrambles