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**Kuwaiti youths embrace western popular music**

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**Russia's Putin blasts Turkey amid tension**

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**Amir to inaugurate Jaber Stadium**

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# Mourinho 'sacked'

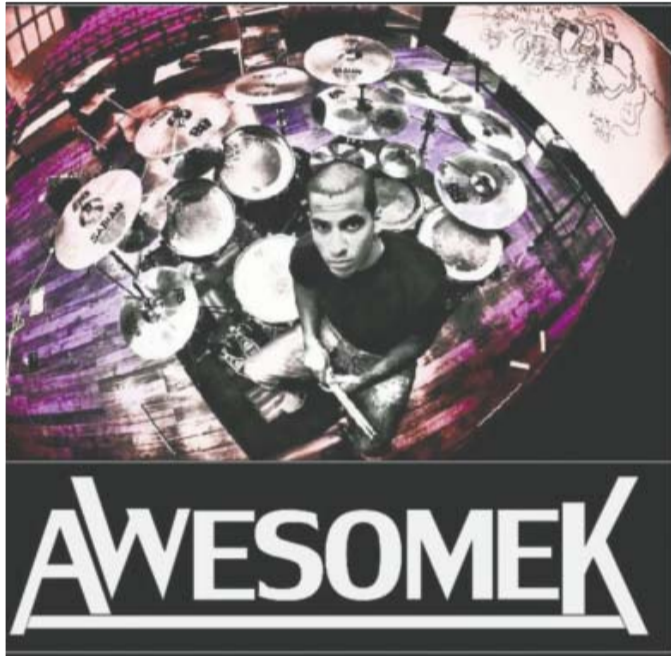
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# Smells like Kuwaiti spirit

By Ahmad Al-hamili

**KUWAIT:** Similar to their global peers, Kuwaiti youth having been embracing western popular music, injecting it with a bit of a local flavor. Being aware of the youths' love of Rock, Rap, Reggie, Jazz, Pop, and Hip Hop music is one thing; however, having an in-depth knowledge of how the local scene operates is another. Speaking to KUNA, a number of musicians and procedures poured their hearts out, explaining how they operate, what are the challenges they face and their hopes for the future.

As for Rock music, the period starting from the mid-1990s had seen the emergence of several local artists playing music that would for lack of better terms "rock your socks off!" Being representatives of almost two decades of Rock, Zakariya "Zak" Al-Mousawi and Hashim Al-Nasser both played a pivotal role with other musicians in shaping the Rock scene. Producing an album titled (And Finally) in 1997, Zak Al-Mousawi paved the way for countless others that followed. Remembering the process, Zak said that the audio engineer at a local studio was at first baffled with the project, but gradually was more involved after seeing all the live instruments assembled.



Awesome K studio and record Label

recording technologies, the emergence of social media networks, and the support of some private entities. "With the rise of the social media side of things, I could finally start hearing about all these bands putting music out," said Al-Hashim, adding that nowadays anyone could promote his (or her) music through cyberspace.

### Pro-and-cons

Social media came with its 'pro-and-cons', said the musician, indicating that the process of importing diverse musical styles to Kuwait came along with a package of somewhat controversial imagery that led to some social rejection. "It's enough hard to get music out of the community of musicians ... Now thankfully we are getting more chances to perform," said Al-Hashim. Al-Hashim said that to sustain music in Kuwait, musicians should make the time for their art, noting that dedication and mutual support amongst musicians will keep the scene moving forward. On other hand, despite that fact that Hip-Hop and Rap are spreading like wildfire among youth in Kuwait, the lack of social



Zakariya (Zak) Al-Mousawi - pioneer of Rock music in Kuwait — Photos by KUNA

### 'Do It Yourself'

Zak went on recording the album with fellow musicians and also embarked on a "Do It Yourself" promotion spree that had him go to almost every cassette store in Kuwait to market the album. "They (the stores owners) were all willing to help," Zak said about the process, adding "To me, the album did fantastic. I sold around 200-300 copies." After studying abroad, Zak returned to Kuwait only to be surprised that the album still had people talking about it. "It's not about the money," said Zak, when discussing his album, stressing that he was happy that his input, which took hours of grueling effort, made people think that they too can do it.

When asked about whether Kuwait will have its distinct style of Rock, Zak said that "I think we (the musicians) should work on it," stressing that finding a correlation between Rock and Kuwaiti music was a matter of time and effort. On his part, musician Hashim Al-Nasser, whose band credentials include Jellyshot, Afterthought, his solo project Jivan, and many others, said that the current generation of musicians benefited from the advent of current



Rock Musician Hashim Al-Nasser at his home studio



Khalid Al-Mansour - Awesome K studio and record Label owner



Ali - a young Kuwaiti rapper

acceptance led some young artists to use pseudonyms to keep their identity a secret. "The ability to easily incorporate Arabic words and poetry is a huge part of the lure that attracts the youth to Rap," asserted Ali, a young rapper who started his career in 2009.

### Contrary to popular belief

Ali affirmed that "Contrary to popular belief, Rap music's main focus was not on violence and other social misconducts, because such messages could be delivered through various other means." He added that the youth are trying to deliver a social conscience message through Rap and as far as the instrumentation goes, the style made it very accessible for musicians to inject their own local flavor. "Hopefully the day will come that rappers in Kuwait will receive much needed social acceptance as well as moral and financial support," he said. Recording music is often perceived as a process done at big studios with sophisticated analog machines; however, that image is far from the truth.

Nowadays with the advent of Digital Audio Workstations (DAWs), the average person could have a home studio with a reasonable budget. Awesome K studio and record Label owner, musi-

cian Khalid Al-Mansour had been making an impact on the scene, putting out albums of various genres. After playing the drums and guitar for a number of bands, Al-Mansour said that he dabbled with digital music software. "We've recorded one song for our project 'Eyeseris' with a local producer. For the second song, the producer asked us to practice the material beforehand due to time constraint," said Al-Mansour, indicating that he thought he could do the process himself, kickstarting his own career.

"After receiving positive feedback from the studio's initial releases, I decided to pursue more recording ventures," Al-Mansour said. Through his studio, Al-Mansour documented his own original music and several of other local bands and artists such as Jellyshot, Reset String, and Hamad Artie to name a few. He stressed that recording and producing music is a never-ending process of knowing what each genre required and how to mix each style. "A shoestring budget for a home studio is about KD 100-150 which includes a PC and a DAW with its various plugins that helps in mixing and mastering music," Al-Mansour clarified, stressing that anyone, with enough willpower, could learn the art and continue to improve their craft as they continue. — KUNA

Conspiracy Theories

# I CAN'T LIVE WITHOUT A PHONE



By Badrya Darwish

badrya\_d@kuwaittimes.net

**G**uys I feel awful. I'm lost. I'm disorientated. I cannot think. I reached the newspaper to write an article but my head was clouded. Something is wrong. You know what?... you will laugh. I just realized I left my mobile phone at home. Fifteen years ago, no one cared much about mobiles. I had one which I barely bothered to carry because few people had mobiles that time - so what's the point. There was no Whatsapp, no Facebook, no Twitter, no Instagram, no Snapchat, no SMS, no Messenger. So in those days, I hardly even used it. I may be carrying for a few times just to boast that I have it. How silly.

But now, it's totally a different story. You cannot live without a phone. You contact your family with it. You follow up your work; you book your flights; you research your articles; you send photos and receive photos; you receive news on it and you stay up to date on it. You can do pretty much all your business on the phone - whether you're in Timbuktu or New York City.

How did it change so much in such a short time? If you can call 15 years a short time - we have changed really. Not only me, but the whole world. I'm sure many of you would panic if you leave your phone or worse, lost it. So honestly speaking, I feel lost without my phone. Now I have to decide - should I go back home and get my phone or just settle for something like the old days for an hour or two and then write my article? Darn it, I got to go.

Local Spotlight

# COEDUCATION IN KUWAIT



By Muna Al-Fuzai

muna@kuwaittimes.net

**T**he ban on coeducation in Kuwait is still a controversial topic amongst young people in Kuwait. The most important question is why? To prevent sin, I guess. So, regardless of any other possible problems we face now with education in Kuwait, this law, in the minds of some, will make the future of education better and save the lives and future of young Kuwaiti students. Is it intended to make society virtuous? What about the mixing of genders in ministries, markets and parking lots? Honestly, I can't believe how some people think here!

Just for the record, the scrapping of the coeducation ban will save the state nearly a billion dollars, which is the cost of new buildings needed to separate the students in Sabah Al-Salem University City. In addition, the segregation process will cost the state considerable material costs in terms of classrooms, laboratories, equipment and teachers, and will cause a delay in the graduation of some students. As for economic reasons, educating a student cost KD 2,500 dinars during the era of coeducation, but after the adoption of segregation, it costs around KD 7,000. These amounts can be used to build new buildings and the provision of services to students.

Throughout the years, Kuwait University has been suffering from administrative and academic problems. Will the problems increase or decrease with the complete separation of the sexes? I think the problem will get bigger. The imposition of such a law is alien to Kuwait and possibly was pushed by

political Islamist and conservative groups. To prevent coeducation seems to me contrary to the Kuwaiti constitution, which rejects discrimination on grounds of sex. The Kuwaiti constitution gave the right to the individual to choose the kind of education he wants, and people are equal before the law. This is the real spirit of law and justice. This is a curious contradiction sought by hardliners here and we should not be dragged into it. I am surprised at the endorsement by the Ministry of Education of the whole issue. Coeducation means that students meet in classrooms and public places at the university, and I do not see this as suspicious or worthy of the hype. Also, preventing the mixing of genders is useless, as the confluence of sexes is ubiquitous in any society.

One of the problems in Kuwait is that laws are proposed that affect the community, such as this one, only to satisfy some MPs or others, especially from conservative Islamist groups. It is really a pity. Does it make sense that Kuwait, which has large financial surpluses and many capabilities, has only one public university? Luckily, we now have a small number of private universities, which has brought about some change.

I would like to see education not getting involved with politics, with more discussion about the importance of the adoption of the public universities law, in addition to removing all obstacles to the establishment of new private universities. But I don't think the debate on this issue will end anytime soon.

Photo of the Day



**KUWAIT: Venders sell old Kuwaiti currencies in the local bazaars.**  
— KUNA

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# Being a kid every day

## 'Artist and animator shares his passion with Kuwait'

By Faten Omar



Saad Abdulwahab  
Al-Wuhaib

**M**any of us miss the days of our childhood, when all we cared about was our favorite cartoons and not the newest technology, as we see today. Saad Abdulwahab Al-Wuhaib, an animator, is one of such people, working to bring '80s cartoons to life. He also has a collection of retro toys. Kuwait Times spoke to Wuhaib to know more about his passion for being forever young.

**Kuwait Times: Tell us more about yourself.**

**Saad Al-Wuhaib:** I'm a 31-year-old Kuwaiti man who loves his work as an animator.

**KT: Growing up, did you draw a lot? What style do you like the most?**

**Wuhaib:** I began drawing from the early stages of my life, and my parents noticed that I loved sketching, coloring, watching cartoons and reading comics. Because I was a huge fan of cartoons, I wanted very badly to have all the characters, but I couldn't. So using creative ways to solve the problem, I decided to draw them when I was a kid, then cut them out and play with them.

**KT: Do you have a natural talent or was it a skill you had to push yourself to learn and acquire?**

**Wuhaib:** I believe I was born with a talent for drawing, so I didn't need any degree to learn how to draw. Regardless of the level of achievement, I always look forward to further my creativity in this field.



**KT: Tell us more about Danqos?**

**Wuhaib:** Danqos is a mini drawing of me. I created him to narrate my daily life on Instagram in a funny way. He is a simulation of the reality of my own routine to interact with my fans.

**KT: What was the first project you ever worked on? How did you get it?**

**Wuhaib:** My first official project was working on the first Kuwaiti anime series for a Kuwait TV production in 2014, which began work in 2013. I designed the hero "Hassan the Fox". I drew Hassan for 30 episodes with 3,000 frames for this character. I also worked on some other minor characters in the series.

I got this job because of my account on Instagram. Kuwait TV invited me to take a capability exam and I passed the test in drawing the main character. It is such a big responsibility to complete 30 episodes of this animated series when you are just an amateur and not a professional. But I learned from my mistakes. During my work, I benefited a lot from reading comics and watching animation, and what made me continue is this challenge to accomplish my childhood dream.

**KT: Have you considered making animated films?**

**Wuhaib:** Yes of course. I would love to work in making animated movies with a professional team to gain experience and learn more.

**KT: What does a typical day look like for you?**

**Wuhaib:** I spend my day often at home, specifically in my room, where I practice painting and receiving my clients' requests. In my free time, I read stories, watch anime movies or play video games.

**KT: What part of your job do you like best and why? What makes it so awesome?**

**Wuhaib:** I enjoy all the formal stages of drawing - from the foundation to the coloring till the final touch. The best thing that I like about doing this work is that I have the chance to be a kid every day.



**KT: What are some of your favorite projects you're proud to have been a part of?**

**Wuhaib:** I have a lot of animation work that I am proud of, but the most important one is my first "digital drawing" in 2004. I participated in a special art exhibition in college. Back then, no one knew how to make a digital painting or had even participated in an art exhibition with a digital painting in Kuwait. So I got an award for my painting as the most creative and new idea in that exhibition.

**KT: What does your animation workflow look like?**

**Wuhaib:** It is hard to be accurate, so I have to be careful because one cannot afford any mistakes while drawing by hand, as it is hard to edit and redo. I make sure that a painting is free of errors.



**KT: Tell us a little about the tools that you are using. What are your preferences?**

**Wuhaib:** For freehand drawing, I use pencils and ink, and for coloring, I always use Copic markers.

**KT: What do you think about Japanese animation? Are you a fan or do you prefer good old American animation?**

**Wuhaib:** Actually, I really love all types of animation - old and new. But I adore Walt Disney and '80s cartoons.

**KT: What projects have you been involved with?**

**Wuhaib:** "Story Board" for Ooredoo in Kuwait, "Story Board" for Kia Motors, "Story Board" for Ooredoo in Qatar, and designing logos for various official bodies, such as a gas company in Qatar. I also drew characters for seven children story-books.

**KT: Lastly, is there any advice you can give to an aspiring animation student or an artist trying to get into the animation business?**

**Wuhaib:** I recommend that those who have the talent to refine their talent by working hard and observing movements and expressions in order to get many ideas to apply in their artworks.



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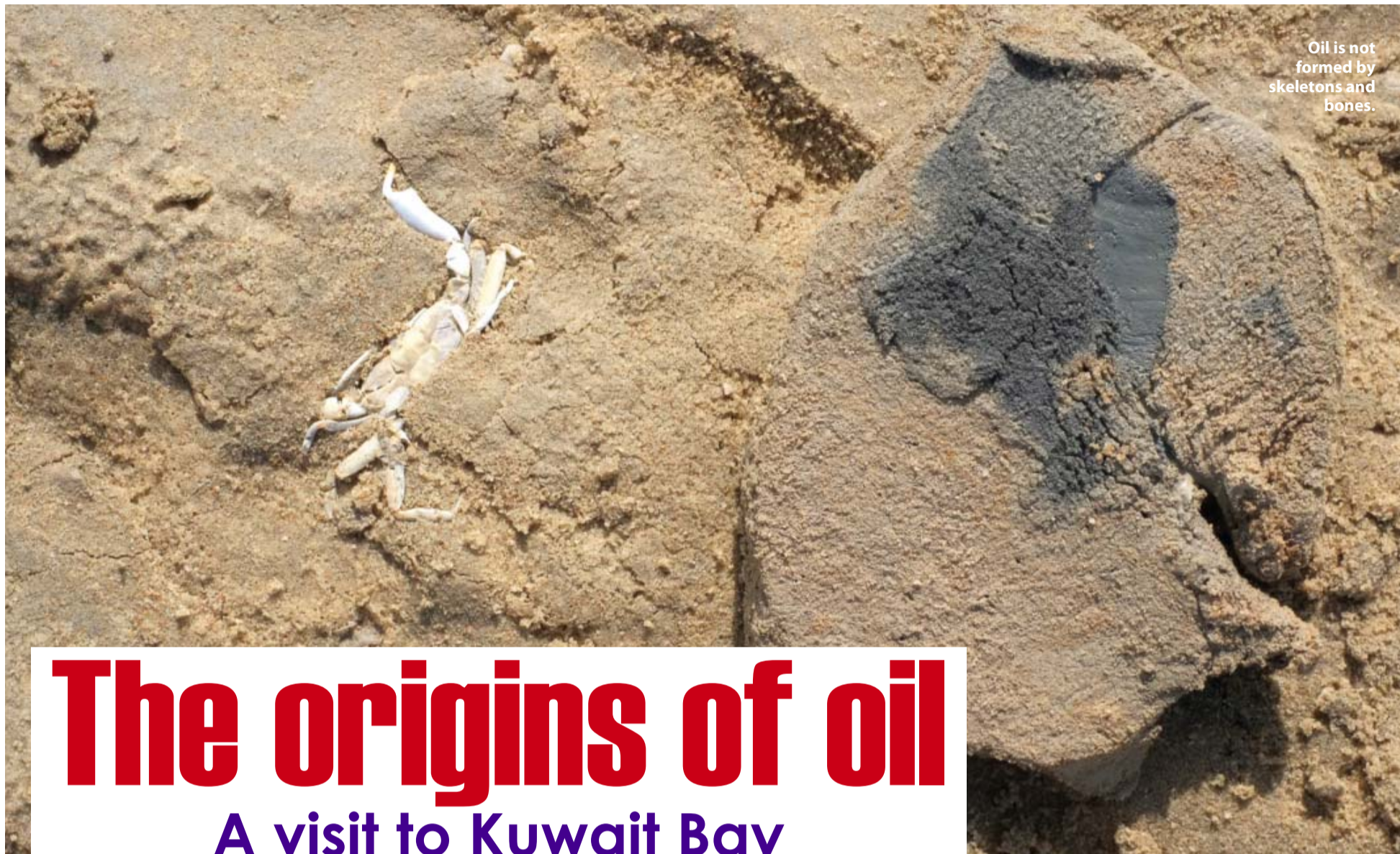
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Oil is not formed by skeletons and bones.

# The origins of oil

## A visit to Kuwait Bay



Human, car and bird imprints

Story and photos By Athoob A Al-Shuaibi

**H**is goal was to teach me something I didn't know. Something scientific yet enchanting. How oil is being formed over millions of years and why the land of Kuwait is a fertile environment for the most famous natural resource and continues to provide the world with oil. Many people mistakenly think that oil is a

product of the decomposition of the bones of dinosaurs and trees. Bones, the trees and leaves turn to coal. On this part of Kuwait (Kuwait Bay) where sea meets the desert lives an open laboratory for the miraculous production of oil. My brother, Dr Arafat Alshuaibi, an assistant professor in geology at Kuwait University, took me in a one hour trip to Subaiya desert to discover Kuwait Bay. However, what I've discovered was something beyond sand and oil.



Oil is not formed by skeletons and bones. These parts are driven by seawater and stick with each other later creating a rocky casing to protect oil.



Visible layers of greyish mud formed as a result of millions of thinner layers which will become oil by pressure and time.



A closer shot of the mud layering process.



Kuwait map  
puddle made by nature

As soon as we arrived, I heard a welcoming hymn sung by the wind. It was as tranquil as a children's choir. One long exhale came out of me and with it all the tension. The first thing I said to my company was: "Thank You". "Enjoy" He replied. "But don't be tricked by tranquility, millions of creatures are working every single second for the future of earth and for humanity. Then, he tried to squeeze his knowledge in order to give me a simple, layman's explanation of an intricate scientific process: how oil is formed.

**The chemical processes**

"When phytoplankton, cyanobacteria, algae and other marine organisms die, they drift to the seafloor, collectively forming sedimentary drifts of decaying organic matter. These get lodged in places where tectonic plates are subsiding. Over time, more sediment layers accumulate, the bottom layers containing the previously mentioned organisms will be compacted bearing down on them. Over geologic time, turning up the heat catalyzes the chemical processes that cause extremely heavy and complex molecules called kerogens to assemble from the dismantled components of organic molecules.

These kerogens, along with long-lasting lipids and scant leftover bits of cell wall, make up the raw material that will turn into petroleum/oil. Oil will migrate upward through rocks porosity (such as sandstone) or in areas where the pressure is low until it is trapped or sealed by a non-porous layer (such as evaporites, ie, salt)." Dr Alshuaibi added: "Kuwait Bay has great potential for forming oil



**A skeleton of Stingray Fish found in the desert**

after millions of years. If the rhythmic, interlayered cyanobacteria (the greyish zone) and the sand sediments (the reddish zone) is subjected to burial, eventually kerogens will form. Subsequently, oil will form."

The skeletons of numerous marine creatures and shells lay scattered over the muddy land. But, finding a skeleton of a stingray was beyond my expectations. No wonder that the whole area smelled like fish. Kuwait Bay is also inhabited by mudfish, birds, crabs, worms, and a strange shellfish that seemed to look like cigarette butt ends. And if you carve into the mud, you will notice tidy layers of shades of grey. And if you try to play with a piece of mud, you will find it so elastic yet coherent. It felt like playing with a stress ball. For the

first time in my life, I felt that our national wealth goes beyond the concept of an energy source and can expand to a psychological and spiritual value for someone like me. Someone who needed a break from everything, from the stress of the city.

When you feel that the air of the world is not enough to breathe, when you feel that your steps are markedly sluggish while everyone around you is moving forward, when you feel that the Earth's gravity draws you down, do not resist. Go down and listen well, perhaps it's been inviting you to a date in a place far away. Far to the degree of isolation that enables you to hear the voices of harmonious creatures, playing melodies and vibrant work without complaint nor boredom since the beginning of cre-



**Crab hole and sand balls made by crab after digging its hole.**



**This mud is elastic - yet coherent**

ation. Accept the invitation and go on explore. Do something you have never done before leaving behind all the congested roads, ticking clocks and do-lists. A good cup of coffee and a windproof jacket is all you need to make your date with earth complete.



Al-Ahmadi City (1963)



Residence of Kuwait Oil Company (KOC) personnel

## AL-AHMADI - THE SOURCE OF EVOLUTIONS

**KUWAIT:** Al-Ahmadi City is associated with the glorious development of Kuwait in the modern era, as it is known in the initial exploration and expansion of the petroleum production. The city forms an important part of Kuwait's economy as Burgan oil field was discovered there during the reign of Sheikh Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, the tenth Ruler of Kuwait, who established the city for the oil company employees.

With the success of oil exploration in Burgan field and export of the first shipment of oil from Al-Ahmadi port in June, 1946, Al-Ahmadi began to grow and prosper, and became central in the petroleum industry while hosting headquarters for the oil companies.

Al-Ahmadi's name was given to the port located on the Arabian Gulf, between Fahaheel village and Al-Shuaiba, and before the completion of the city, the British expats named it "the Arab village." The city sits on a ridge, which rises 400 feet above



Sheikh Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah

sea level, few miles from the Gulf, and as a result of this location, Kuwait Oil Company transferred its operations to the city where a network of gathering lines connects between the storage tanks and the Gulf coast.

With the growing numbers of the employees in the oil company, there was a need to build proper houses instead of tents, and that was the starting point for the emergence of Al-Ahmadi city. The residents of the city were a mixture of various Arab nationalities in addition to European expats who formed a large majority which had the impact on the nature and the layouts of the city.

Al-Ahmadi has become over the years an integrated city in terms of the convenience and variety of services and a home of Kuwait Oil Company (KOC), including sports clubs and the Petroleum Training Center as well as many amenities such as Al-Ahmadi Health Center. — KUNA



Events at Gulf heritage festival.

### SABAH AL-AHMAD VILLAGE OPENS ITS DOORS OFFICIALLY

**KUWAIT:** The Sabah Al-Ahmad village will open its doors officially tomorrow as part of the Gulf heritage festival - an event which will begin today and continue on till March 2016. The festival's organizing committee said the village, named after His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, will start receiving visitors by today in a festivity to celebrate the Gulf heritage. Cattle, camel, and horse shows will be held during the course of the festival in addition to other activities highlighting the culture of the GCC region. The committee thanked all state bodies and partners for their participation in the festival. — KUNA

## KUWAIT TO ESTABLISH A FREE ECONOMIC ZONE ON ISLANDS

GOVT BUILDING A MULTI-BILLION-DOLLAR HARBOR IN BUBIYAN

**KUWAIT:** Kuwait said it will establish a free economic zone on five islands close to the shorelines of regional heavyweights Iraq and Iran with large investments open to the private sector. The decision was taken by the Gulf state's supreme planning council which met late Wednesday, the state-run KUNA news agency reported. Planning Minister Hind Al-Sabeeh said the project is based on inviting local, regional and international private sectors to finance, execute and operate the zone. She said the zone will be the economic gateway for the northern Gulf once completed.

The new venture comes amid a sharp fall in oil income which contributes over 90 percent of Kuwait's revenues. Bubiyan, the emirate's largest island where Kuwait is already building a multi-billion-dollar container harbor, is part of the project.

The first phase of Bubiyan's state-of-the-art port is due to come on line soon. The islands spread over an area of

several thousand square kilometers and are in close proximity to Kuwait's planned Silk City project in Subbiya. Work is underway on a 25-kilometre (16-mile), \$2.6 billion causeway linking the capital with Subbiya.

Kuwait has awarded projects worth a record \$30 billion so far this year despite falling oil revenues, according to Middle East Economic Digest (MEED).

MEED said Kuwait, which gave contracts worth \$24 billion in 2014, has projects worth more than \$251 billion planned or underway. In February, parliament approved a five-year development plan that envisages spending the equivalent of \$112 billion.

Planned projects include a metro system worth \$18.5 billion, a railway project as part of the GCC railway link at \$6.6 billion and a \$8-billion power plant. Last month, Kuwait awarded contracts worth \$13 billion to foreign firms to build a 615,000-barrel per day refinery. — AFP





**KUWAIT:** Minister of Education and Minister of Higher Education Dr Bader Al-Essa is pictured while attending to students during his official tour to schools.

## MINISTRY OF EDUCATION TIGHTENS SCREWS ON CHEATERS

**KUWAIT:** The Ministry of Education (MoE) is working hard to fight using modern technology to cheat in exams, and that there "are many solutions to eliminate any signs of a cheating," Minister of Education and Minister of Higher

Education Dr Bader Al-Essa said yesterday. Exams are running smoothly, especially after cancelling some difficult questions from the curriculum, Dr Al-Essa said after his tour in some schools to check high school's second term

tests. The Ministry is prepared to face any new ideas and to cheat and would "tighten the screws on cheaters," he warned. The ministry has a plan for the development of educational methods from the primary to high school, in

accordance with modern systems, he added. For her part, Director of Al-Asimah Educational Area Badriya Al-Khaldi said around 10,956 students are performing the mid-term exams in all Al-Asimah high schools. — KUNA

## GULF ARAB DEFENSE SPENDING DROPS FOR FIRST TIME IN DECADE

**DUBAI:** Low oil prices are eating into defense spending in the Gulf region, one of the world's largest arms markets, with budgets trimmed for the first time in a decade this year and deeper cuts expected in 2016, according to a report published yesterday.

Overall spending fell to \$81.6 billion in 2015 from \$86.7 billion last year, London-based global intelligence firm IHS said, despite Gulf Arab military interventions in Yemen and Libya, arms supplies sent to Syrian rebels and air strikes against Islamic State in Syria.

Military spending dropped in Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Bahrain, Qatar and the United Arab Emirates, while Oman spent only slightly more, IHS said in the report. Despite this year's fall, spending on arms remains substantially higher than four years ago when it was ramped up in the wake of uprisings across the Arab world which alarmed the region's conservative rulers. Gulf Arab states have also built up missile defences against regional rival Iran.

Those security concerns, along with record oil revenues, had propelled the Middle East to become the fastest growing regional weapons market. Gulf spending surged in 2012, up to \$71.9 billion from \$59.1 billion in 2010, according to the IHS data.

This year's cuts come as part of a broad effort to rein in state spending as lower oil prices strain finances in the major oil-exporting countries. Oil prices trade now around \$37 a barrel, down from a peak of \$115 last year.

The resulting budget constraints mean Gulf states are scaling back ambitions on big-ticket items like warplanes and missile defense, instead focusing on more immediate needs like ammunition. Led by the Gulf trend, spending in the broader Middle East also dropped in 2015, but is likely to remain largely flat at \$170 billion over the next two years, the report projected. Saudi Arabia still spends the most on defense in the region, some \$46.3 billion, accounting for more than half of the Gulf's military budgets and making it the eighth-largest defense spender in the world, according to IHS. — Reuters



**KUWAIT:** Cloudy weather with scattered light showers seen along the Arabian Gulf Sea. — KUNA

## TEMPERATURE TO VARY BETWEEN 7-22 CELSIUS

**KUWAIT:** Limited expansion of the Sudanese low pressure, accompanied by clouds, is expected to prevail in most of the country's areas as of today, said Acting Director General of Kuwait Meteorological Center Sami Al-Othman.

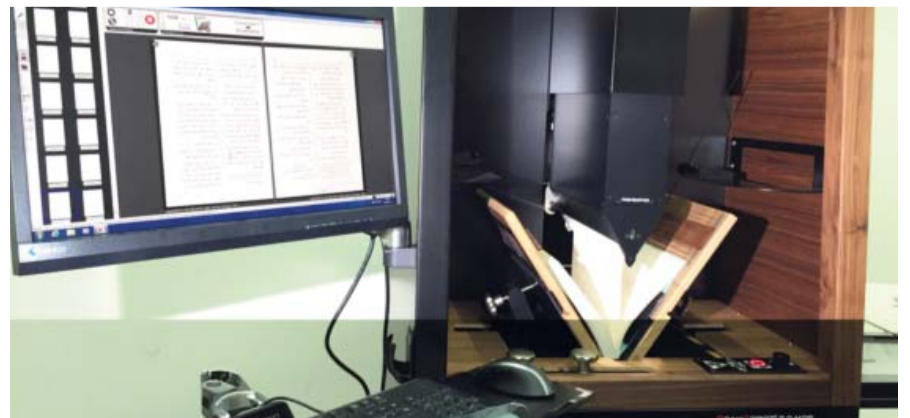
He added in a statement to KUNA that the weather was generally stable over the

past days, due to impact of the European high pressure, accompanied by relatively northwesterly winds, expected to drop as of tonight. He added that tonight's weather will be cloudy and cold, with chances of showers on several areas. Temperature will drop to 7-10 degrees. At sea, there will be light waves of one to two feet in height. Today, the

weather will be cloudy with chances of showers accompanied by southeasterly winds. The highest temperature will be in the range of 18-22 degrees. Tomorrow morning, it will be sunny with northwesterly winds, and the highest heat will reach 19-22 degrees. However, it will turn cold at night, touching the 8-11 degrees' level. — KUNA

## KUWAIT NATIONAL LIBRARY TURNS DIGITAL

**KUWAIT:** Kuwait National Library has installed an electronic system as part of a project to upgrade its documentation and services. The library general director, Kamel Al-Abduljeli, said in a statement that the electronic project is aimed at preserving the national literary and intellectual heritage, including history and culture books and references. With installment of the electronic network, the library will be a reference for the national archive, following example of top libraries worldwide. Contents of valuable books have been loaded into the digital system, he explained. The project also includes assembling documents, maps, manuscripts, as well as stamps, old currencies and coins. — KUNA



**The process of digitizing Kuwait National Library's books.**

# International

FRIDAY, DECEMBER 18 2015

**Libyan lawmakers to sign peace agreement**

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MOSCOW: Russian President Vladimir Putin gestures during his annual news conference. — AP

## PUTIN FURIOUSLY LASHES OUT AGAINST TURKEY

### BROADLY BACKS SYRIA PEACE PLANS WITH US

**MOSCOW:** Russia's Vladimir Putin subjected Turkey to a furious tirade yesterday, using barack-room language to wonder aloud whether it had shot down a Russian warplane last month to curry favor with the United States.

Addressing almost 1,400 reporters in a cavernous hall inside a Moscow conference centre, the Russian president dedicated a chunk of his annual news conference to spelling out why he saw no prospect of a rapprochement with Ankara. "If someone in the Turkish leadership decided to lick the Americans in a particular place I don't know whether they acted correctly or not and I don't know ... whether the Americans needed that," said Putin, referring to the shooting down. Putin said he could imagine a scenario where there was a deal for Turkey to shoot down a Russian plane in return for Washington turning a blind eye to Turkish troops entering Iraq. "Perhaps there was such an arrangement," he said.

**'Creeping Islamisation'**

Turkey's downing of a Russian SU-24 fighter

bomber near the Syrian-Turkish border on Nov 24 prompted Putin to impose economic sanctions on Turkey who he claimed had stabbed Russia in the back. Turkey said it was acting to defend its airspace. Moscow said its plane had not overflowed Turkey. Putin made clear Russian sanctions would stay in place for some time, saying it was hard for the Kremlin to reach any kind of agreement with the current Turkish leadership, whom he accused of "creeping Islamisation" that would have the secular state's founder, Kemal Ataturk, turning in his grave. "Maybe, they thought we would run away from there (Syria).

But Russia is not such a country," said Putin. Putin, speaking on the eve of a meeting of world powers in New York on Friday to discuss Syria, was more conciliatory towards the United States, saying he broadly supported US plans to try to push forward the Syrian peace process. Even though differences between Moscow and Washington remained, he said he backed a US plan to prepare a UN resolution on the peace process.

But though he said there was agreement that a new constitution needed to be drawn up and an election held to determine the fate of the conflict-torn country, he signaled Moscow was not yet ready to withdraw its support for Syrian President Bashar Al-Assad.

"We believe that only the Syrian people can decide who should govern them," said Putin, saying Moscow would continue its air strikes in Syria for as long as the Syrian army continued its own military operations.

**Troubled state**

Putin, 63, a former Soviet KGB officer, has ruled Russia as either president or prime minister for 16 years. He has not yet said whether he intends to stand for a fourth presidential term in 2018. If he did, he could remain in power until 2024. He used the news conference, a set-piece of Russian political life, to try to reassure voters over the troubled state of Russia's economy.

Buffeted by Western sanctions imposed over the Ukraine crisis, falling oil prices, and a weak-

ening rouble, Russia's economy is forecast to shrink by around 4 percent this year, its sharpest contraction since the global financial crisis. The crisis has hit ordinary Russians hard, cutting real incomes, pushing up prices of day-to-day products, and halving their buying power in the West. With a ban on direct flights to Egypt and Kremlin sanctions on Turkey, two of their favorite holiday destinations have also been pushed further out of their reach. "The Russian economy has passed the crisis. At least, the peak of the crisis," said Putin. Despite the economic pain, polls show Putin's ratings, which were boosted by his decision to annex Ukraine's Crimea last year and to launch air strikes in Syria, remain at around 85 percent, not far off their record highs of almost 90 percent in October. Answering a question about Ukraine-with which relations remained strained over a shouldering conflict in eastern Ukraine and Crimea-Putin appeared to confirm the presence of Russian Special Forces in east Ukraine for the first time. — Reuters

## UN MOVES TO TIGHTEN NET OVER IS FINANCES

**UNITED NATIONS:** The UN Security Council holds its first-ever meeting of finance ministers yesterday to adopt a wide-ranging draft resolution aimed at ramping up sanctions against the Islamic State group and cutting off its revenue flows.

US Treasury Secretary Jacob Lew will lead the 15-member council for the vote that comes amid a major diplomatic push to end the war in Syria, where IS jihadists control a large swath of territory and have installed their de facto capital. The draft resolution is expected to win unanimous backing from the council, including Russia, Syria's ally which is now in the third month of its air campaign in support of President Bashar Al-Assad.

The measure builds on a previous resolution setting up an Al-Qaeda blacklist, which will be renamed the "ISIL (Daesh) and Al-Qaeda sanctions list" to signal the UN's stronger focus on the IS extremists. It calls on governments to ensure they have adopted laws that make the financing of IS and of foreign fighters who join its ranks a serious criminal offense.

The measure urges countries to "move vigorously and decisively to cut the flow of funds, and other financial assets and economic resources" including oil and antiquities to the IS group, and to "more actively" submit names to the sanctions list. A Russian-drafted resolution on cutting off the extremists' revenue streams was adopted in February, but diplomats complain that countries have been slow to take action to choke off sources of funding.

The latest measure would require all countries to report within 120 days on steps taken to target IS financing. UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon will be asked to prepare a sweeping report in 45 days on the IS threat and its revenue streams. "If we can get at ISIL's wallet and its financial coffers in an intensified and even more aggressive way, that's going to have a material effect on their ability to prosecute war," US Ambassador Samantha Power said, using an alternative acronym for the IS group.

### Earning millions per month

According to the London-based IHS analysis firm, the Islamic State group is pulling in \$80 million per month, but Russian and US coalition air strikes on oil facilities are putting a strain on its finances.

About half of IS revenues come from extortion and looted property, 43 percent from oil sales and the remainder from drug smuggling, electricity sales and donations, according to IHS. The UN measure will give countries "more flexibility to go after those who are helping ISIL, whether to move funds, to store funds or to earn funds," said Adam Szubin, a senior US Treasury official. Countries will be asked to boost information-sharing and in particular reach out to the private sector to enlist them in the financial war against IS.

A UN sanctions committee made up of the 15 Security Council member states can impose an assets freeze, travel ban and arms ban on individuals and entities linked to IS extremists. The United States, which holds the council presidency this month, is hoping that the high-profile meeting will spur countries to take action, in particular in the region.

"What we most need now is for states to do what they have to do," said a UN diplomat. French Finance Minister Michel Sapin said it will send a "very strong political message: the fight against the financing of terrorism is one of the priorities of the United Nations' members and every state must take the necessary measures."

After the finance ministers' meeting yesterday, the Security Council on Friday will bring together foreign ministers to adopt a separate resolution endorsing steps toward a political transition in Syria to end the nearly five-year war. —AFP



**TRIPOLI:** The president of the Tripoli-based General National Congress, Nuri Abu Sahmein (center top), leads a parliament session in the Libyan capital, ahead of the expected signing of a UN plan for a national unity government. — AFP

## LIBYAN LAWMAKERS TO SIGN DISPUTED PEACE AGREEMENT

### RIVAL LEADERS SAY DEAL HAS NO LEGITIMACY

**TRIPOLI:** Libyan lawmakers are set to sign a disputed UN-sponsored agreement on a unity government yesterday despite a warning from the heads of rival parliaments that the deal has no legitimacy. World powers have urged the country's warring factions to break a political deadlock that has allowed jihadists and people-smugglers to flourish since the fall of Dictator Moamer Gaddafi in 2011.

A group of Libyan parliamentarians is due to sign the UN-backed deal in a ceremony in the Moroccan resort of Skhirat at 1100 GMT. It follows a gathering in Rome of a US- and Italian-led group of world powers and regional players that called on the two sides Sunday to lay down their arms and back the new unity government. But Nouri Abusahmein, who heads the militia-backed General National Congress in Tripoli that is not recognized by the international community, said Wednesday that the signatories did not represent the parliaments.

"Whoever has not been commissioned by the GNC to sign or initial a deal on its behalf is, and will remain, without legitimacy," he said before the legislature in the capital. A government such as that proposed by the United Nations "is

not the subject of consensus and does not even guarantee the minimum required to ensure its effectiveness", he added.

On Tuesday in Malta, Abusahmein met Aguila Saleh who heads the internationally recognized parliament based in Tobruk in the east near the border with Egypt. It was the first time they had met since the rival administrations were formed in 2014.

At a joint news conference, both men said that those who sign the agreement represent only themselves. Even so, Martin Kobler, the UN envoy to Libya, said the Moroccan ceremony would proceed as planned. "A large number of Libyan participants and high-level international participants, including many foreign ministers, have committed to attend," Kobler said in a statement on Wednesday.

### Rival peace process

At the beginning of October in Skhirat, delegations from both sides approved a draft agreement negotiated under the auspices of the UN, but it was later rejected by their parliaments. Abusahmein and those MPs who support him are not against an agreement,

but say they want more time to negotiate it.

On December 6, members of the two bodies launched an alternative process in Tunis by signing a "declaration of interest" on a unity government, and this process is backed by the two parliament heads. The country has been mired in chaos since the 2011 overthrow and killing of long-time dictator Gaddafi.

On Wednesday, Kobler met the recognized government's controversial army chief General Khalifa Haftar. Haftar said that he was not satisfied with the UN deal, which stipulates that if the rival authorities fail to agree on who should head the army within 10 days, a new military chief will be appointed. But he said he would not "boycott" the agreement.

Many members of the Tripoli parliament oppose Haftar. Kobler for his part said that there must be a unity government before an arms embargo on the country is lifted. The recognized government says the embargo is hampering the battle against IS, which seized control of the coastal city of Sirte in June. Kobler said that there might be "external assistance" in fighting extremism in Libya if an eventual unity government requests it. —AFP

## SAUDI FOILS MASSIVE FUEL SMUGGLING BID

**RIYADH:** Saudi Arabia, whose subsidized fuel prices are among the world's lowest, said yesterday it foiled a large-scale attempt to illegally export diesel fuel. Nine million liters (around two million gallons) of the fuel in 450 tankers "had been prepared at a number of locations" in Riyadh and the Eastern region before movement to Dammam port, the oil ministry said,

quoted by the official Saudi Press Agency.

No details were given on the planned destination of the fuel, or whether any arrests were made. The ministry said it was the largest attempt to smuggle diesel since it introduced technology to "mark" the fuel. SPA said the large difference between the domestic and external price of fuel motivates such smuggling

attempts.

Saudi petrol prices are the cheapest in the Gulf. Motorists in the kingdom can fill their tanks for around \$6 (5.53 euros) for a sedan or \$18 for an SUV. Oil and gas-dependent Gulf economies are coping with plunging revenues after world crude prices fell by more than 60 percent since early last year. Saudi neighbor the United

Arab Emirates ended subsidies on fuel in July, in a move expected to conserve billions of dollars annually. It raised the price of petrol but lowered pump prices of diesel. In October, Saudi Oil Minister Ali Al-Naimi said the kingdom was considering raising domestic energy prices, but last month said his country is not in "dire need" to cut energy subsidies. — AFP

## YEMEN RIVAL PARTIES SWAP HUNDREDS OF PRISONERS

**ADEN:** Yemeni pro-government forces and rebels completed an exchange of hundreds of prisoners yesterday, an official said, amid a shaky ceasefire on the third day of UN-sponsored peace talks in Switzerland. "We have successfully completed the process of exchanging the prisoners," said Mokhtar Al-Rabbash, a member of the prisoners' affairs committee, which is close to the government.

The swap involved 370 Houthi rebels and 285 pro-government fighters. It took place in the Yafaa district of the southern province of Lahj, along the border with the central Bayda province, witnesses said. The swap was slowed down by concerns over security along the route linking the two exchange points, Rabbash said.

The International Committee of the Red Cross in Sanaa, which was involved in a previous swap, said earlier that the organization was "not aware of such an exchange". Little information has emerged from the open-ended talks in Switzerland aimed at ending Yemen's devastating conflict. "The talks are still ongoing and progressing," UN media advisor Charbel Raji said without elaborating.

Delegates said they had been asked not to talk to the media. A fragile ceasefire declared by forces loyal to embattled President Abedrabbo Mansour Hadi, began on Tuesday. It remained shaky, with reports of sporadic violations on the ground. The Saudi-led coalition supporting Hadi accused Houthi Shiite rebels of flouting the ceasefire immediately, and acknowledged that it had "responded to these violations".

Heavy clashes erupted overnight in Marib province, east of rebel-held Sanaa, between pro-government Popular Resistance fighters and the insurgents, military sources said. Pro-Hadi forces stormed a military base that was controlled by rebels in northern Marib, following clashes that left an unspecified number of casualties on both sides, the sources said.

An officer said the rebels "did not adhere to the ceasefire" and used the base to fire at pro-Hadi forces. The Houthis and allied renegade troops loyal to former president Ali Abdullah Saleh were also accused by residents of bombing areas controlled by pro-Hadi forces in the flash-point city of Taz. More than 5,800 people have been killed in the country-about half of them civilians-and more than 27,000 wounded since March, according to the UN. —AFP



**SANAA:** Supporters of Shiite Houthi rebels and militiamen shout slogans raising their weapons during a rally against the Saudi-led coalition, which has been leading the war against the Iran-backed rebels. — AFP



**SANLIURFA:** Syrian refugee children attend a class on December 14, 2015, at a school in the Sanliurfa province near the Syrian border.— AFP

## NOT ALL SYRIANS IN TURKEY 'DYING TO GO TO EUROPE'

### 'I HAVE NO DREAMS OF GOING TO EUROPE'

**OSMANIYE:** Mohammed, 22, has lived in Turkey for four years since fleeing Syria, just months after the civil war erupted that has torn his homeland apart. But unlike hundreds of thousands of others who this year crossed the Aegean Sea in search of better lives in Europe, he has no plans to leave.

"I have no dreams of going to Europe," Mohammed, from the Syrian coastal region of Latakia, said in the Osmaniye refugee camp in southern Turkey. "I will continue my education with God's permission and start a life here before returning to Syria once the war is over," added Mohammed, whose own relatives left and went to Belgium.

Mohammed attended Turkish language classes and was found eligible in 2013 to attend university in the southeastern city of Mardin. He says he now wants to graduate and build a new life in Turkey. The European Union wants to see more cases like Mohammed-people who find the right conditions to live in Turkey rather than travelling to Europe, and want to return to Syria when the time is right.

Grappling with the influx of migrants, Brussels struck a deal in November with Ankara for Turkey to help stem the flow of migrants in return for three billion Euros (\$3.2 billion) in aid for Syrian refugees. Yesterday, German Chancellor Angela Merkel will lead a meeting on the migrant crisis, Europe's worst since World War II, of eight European states and Turkey.

**'Make Turkey more attractive'**  
Turkey is home to at least 2.2 million

Syrian refugees after President Recep Tayyip Erdogan declared an open door policy at the onset of the war. But it has long complained of being given next to no financial help to look after them, despite spending some \$8 billion itself.

EU ambassador to Turkey, Hansjorg Haber, who AFP accompanied on a visit to the Osmaniye camp, said there would be a new focus with the injection of fresh funds under the Ankara-Brussels deal. "I think we have to rely on two things. One is making staying in Turkey more attractive" for the Syrian refugees in the country.

"And the other is that we have to suppress human trafficking at the border with the help of Turkish police," he told AFP. Only around 260,000 Syrians stay in camps near the border, with the vast majority scattered throughout the country including big cities like Istanbul.

Refugees in camps have access to basic services like education and health-care. But many families bank on young men working outside to earn a living and many youth work as cheap laborers well below the average wages. "We cannot survive without working outside," said 35-year-old Azimet Tusuz, carefully examining the prices of different brands of cooking oil at the supermarket.

### 'Nothing like home'

Education is one of the main challenges. In September, the Turkish government promised to double the number of Syrian refugees at school, from the current 230,000. "It is an ambitious one. We are working very closely with the education ministry to make sure this

target is realised," Philippe Duamelle, Turkey representative for the UN Children's Fund (UNICEF), told AFP.

He said UNICEF faced a double challenge to keep up standards in the widely-praised camps and to look after the more than 85 percent of the refugees living outside the camps. "Therefore, there's a need to scale up the services for both."

Adding to the challenge, some 150,000 Syrian children have been born in Turkey since the start of the crisis. Maha Abdullah, 38, waiting for her 12-year-old daughter at a training centre for Syrian girls in the city of Sanliurfa founded with EU funds, said earning a living was a priority. "We have no problem with schools," she said. "But rent, electricity, water bills are the biggest problem."

The World Food Programme (WFP), which has rolled out electronic vouchers for Syrian refugees to shop at supermarkets, is hoping to utilize more funds after the Ankara-Brussels agreement to reach out to the most vulnerable Syrians living outside the camps. "If we cannot provide them with minimum assistance they might be likely to move again. We are not politicians. It's not our job to stop migration," WFP's Turkey representative Jean-Yves Lequime said.

Some refugees are angry with their fellows who risked their lives to go to Europe. "People are dying to go to Europe, while some are dying for their homeland in Syria. I don't want to go to Europe. There's nothing like your homeland," Ahlem Hanefi, 33, said at the Osmaniye camp. —AFP

# MIGRANTS SELL 'WISH WE WEREN'T HERE' POSTCARDS

## TRYING TO MAKE BEST OF LIFE IN MUD

**CALAIS:** It is France's newest and most unwanted town, with its own market, makeshift restaurants, church, library and even theatre. Now Calais' "Jungle" has its own set of postcards. Migrants living in the notorious camp on the country's north coast have produced a series of "Wish we weren't here" cards to sell to tourists.

The poetic and often humorous scenes include refugees cart-wheeling on the beach as well as police tear gassing the camp, and an abandoned boat on the rail line leading to the Channel Tunnel captioned, "Cinderella has a brother." The refugees behind the idea told AFP they wanted to show how they are trying to make the best of life in the mud of the shanty town as they bide their time hoping to find a way to get to Britain.

"We photograph the beautiful things as well as the suffering," said Syrian teacher Baraa Halabieh, 31, who fled his home in Hama earlier this year for the quagmire of the former rubbish dump on the outskirts of the port, now home to 4,500 people. "I want them to be postcards to (the) future," he added. "I dream of a time when people will drive past here and the Jungle will be gone and people will never believe that such a terrible place existed. All that there will be will be these postcards."

### Growing hostility

With Calais' mayor—who this month banned migrants from using the town's swimming pool—complaining that bad publicity about the "Jungle" had destroyed its tourist trade, the postcards make a point of showcasing the town's breathtaking beaches.

In a nod to the British street artist Banksy, who secretly visited the camp last week, one card subtly features an image he left behind



**CALAIS:** A French anti-riot police (CRS) officer tries to prevent illegal migrants from hiding in trucks heading for England in the French northern harbor of Calais on June 17 2015. —AFP

on a wall near the beach showing a child with a suitcase peering longingly at the British coast through a telescope.

Although Banksy graffiti can fetch hundreds of thousands of dollars on the art market, the image has since been covered up by the town's authorities. Photographer Severine Sajous, who set up the Jungle group of refugees to document life in the camp on Facebook, said she hoped to persuade the town's tourist office to stock the postcards. "The idea is meant to be a bit funny of course, but it is also to open people's eyes to what life is like here. Lots of people project their dark-

est fantasies onto the Jungle."

With hundreds of migrants being rounded up by police in recent weeks as French authorities clamp down on the camp, many are fearful about venturing outside the camp during daylight, she said. Local hostility to the migrants has been growing, with the anti-immigrant National Front (FN) taking nearly half the votes in Calais in regional elections last weekend, their highest score in France.

### Semi-permanent air

With fewer and fewer migrants succeeding in making it to Britain, the camp with its bar-

ber shop, bars, Afghan biryani houses, Eritrean Orthodox church and Muslim prayer rooms, has taken on a semi-permanent air.

Nineteen refugees from the camp have died in the attempt to reach Britain since June, with one postcard showing a protest in the camp after a 16-year-old Sudanese boy called Joseph was killed earlier this month trying to get onto a lorry. To mark International Migrants Day, refugees will also conduct tours of the camp. Another Banksy graffiti in the camp of former Apple boss Steve Jobs carrying a bin bag of his personal possessions will be part of the tour. — AFP

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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 5000-12000 Watts</li> <li>• Flux: 470-670 gms/hr</li> <li>• Automatic Shut off</li> <li>• Fuel: Butane/Propane/LPG Gas</li> <li>• Anti Tilt Switch for safety</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 5000-12000 Watts</li> <li>• Flux: 470-670 gms/hr</li> <li>• Automatic Shut off</li> <li>• Fuel: Butane/Propane/LPG Gas</li> <li>• Anti Tilt Switch for safety</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Patio Heater</li> <li>• 5000-12000 Watts</li> <li>• Flux: 940 gms/hr</li> <li>• Automatic Shut off</li> <li>• Fuel: Butane/Propane/LPG Gas</li> <li>• Anti Tilt Switch for safety</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 5000-12000 watts</li> <li>• Flux: 940 gms/hr</li> <li>• Fuel: Butane/Propane/LPG Gas</li> </ul>

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## DUTCH REFUGEE CENTRE OPENING TURNS VIOLENT

**THE HAGUE:** Dutch police fired warning shots and arrested 14 demonstrators when a protest by hundreds of people against the opening of a refugee centre turned violent, leaving several injured, officials said yesterday.

Two policemen were among those hurt late Wednesday when demonstrators began throwing stones, bottles and firecrackers to protest against a planned centre for 1,500 migrants in the small Dutch village of Geldermalsen. District police chief Lute Nieuwerth said "the atmosphere badly deteriorated" when a group of about 70 to 80 people began to attack the

officers called to the scene. Riot police fired warning shots into the air and charged the crowds to disperse them. "I'm totally shocked over such a violent incident," Nieuwerth told a press conference in the village yesterday. Demonstrators also overturned barriers and tried to storm the town hall where a meeting was to be held to discuss the opening of the centre. The meeting was cancelled and some 300 people were taken to safety away from the crowds.

Europe is grappling with its biggest influx of refugees since World War II with more than 800,000 people having arrived

on its shores, most fleeing conflicts in Syria and Iraq, and poverty in Africa. The crisis has polarized opinion in the Netherlands, which by mid-November had already taken in a record 54,000 asylum seekers and is expecting thousands more by the end of December. Those figures break the last record set in 1994 at the height of the Balkans conflict. Local and national debates over how to handle the migrants have in past months become increasingly heated, at times deteriorating into violence. Geldermalsen mayor Miranda de Vries also denounced Wednesday's violence.

"It doesn't matter what idea or propos-

al is under discussion in the council, we should be able to debate it with each other," she said. "Yesterday's violence only leaves us more divided," she said. "In a democracy, in our society, we debate with words." All of the 14 people detained were local residents, and the police chief appealed to onlookers to hand over any video recordings of the incident so they can pinpoint the instigators. "There are some limits we shouldn't cross," said deputy justice minister Klaas Dijkhoff, quoted by Dutch television yesterday, although he acknowledged it was a "difficult" issue. — AFP



**BRUSSELS:** Britain's Prime Minister David Cameron speaks to the media as he arrives at the European Council to take part in the final European Union (EU) summit of the year. — AFP

## MIGRANT CRISIS, BRITAIN REFORM DOMINATE EUROPEAN SUMMIT

### ONE OF THE TOUGHEST YEARS IN EU HISTORY

**BRUSSELS;** European leaders tackled the migration crisis and Britain's reform demands at a summit yesterday, twin challenges threatening EU unity as one of its toughest ever years draws to a close. The leaders of Germany and several other nations met the Turkish prime minister before the full summit to discuss a plan to resettle thousands of Syrian war refugees directly from camps in Turkey.

But an EU report due to be presented at the summit yesterday meanwhile said a three-billion-euro (\$3.2-billion) deal with Turkey in November had so far had little effect, with only a "slight reduction" in the number of migrants crossing to Greece. The full summit of 28 leaders will also debate a plan by the European Commission for a new force that could intervene in countries without their consent, to stem a record flow of nearly one million migrants this year.

EU president Donald Tusk said the "controversial" plan was necessary to shore up Europe's borders and protect its passport-free Schengen zone, under threat as some states reintroduce border controls. "Europe cannot remain vulnerable when Schengen states are not able to effectively protect their borders. If we reject the Commission's proposal, we will have to find another, but I'm afraid, an equally

painful solution," he said.

#### 'Unacceptable' demands

Meanwhile British Prime Minister David Cameron faced an uphill battle as he prepared to set out his EU reform demands for the first time to his counterparts, ahead of a referendum due by the end of 2017. The debate promises to be stormy as the other 27 leaders are almost unanimously opposed to Cameron's main demand—a four-year wait before EU migrants working in Britain can claim welfare benefits.

Tusk warned that some of Cameron's demands "seem unacceptable" but hoped for a solution that would give a "real chance" of a deal at the next summit in February to prevent a "Brexit" from the EU. European Commission President Jean-Claude Juncker said that he hoped to hear "other options to the single one proposed" by Cameron for the benefits ban.

"We want a fair deal with Britain but this fair deal with Britain has to be a fair deal for the other 27 too," Juncker told reporters ahead of the summit. The debate in Britain has also been fuelled by concerns over the migration crisis—the worst of its kind in Europe since World War II.

The summit wraps up an 'annus horribilis' for the EU with overlapping crises—the

Ukraine conflict, Greece's euro crisis, migration, the Paris attacks and Britain—that have threatened the post-war dream of a unified continent.

In many cases the root problem has been the same—ideals of monetary and geographical union without the political foundation. But calls for "more Europe" fly in the face of an increasingly sceptical European electorate.

#### Border sovereignty fears

Amid rising populism, security fears in the wake of the Paris terror attacks and concerns about Schengen, a divided EU has held an unprecedented 12 summits this year to find solutions. On migration, the latest scheme is a new border and coastguard force with 1,500 quick-reaction agents and the "right to intervene" in states that are not protecting their borders properly—whether or not that country agrees.

Many states are worried about a loss of sovereignty to Brussels, including Greece, the country that has seen by far the biggest number of migrant arrivals. "You cannot give national sovereignty to some technicians (technocrats). These are highly political decisions. We say that the state must give consent," said Greek European Affairs Minister Nikos Xydakis. — AFP

## BRAZILIAN COURT BLOCKS WHATSAPP

**SAO PAULO:** A Brazilian court has ordered cellular service providers nationwide to block the popular WhatsApp smartphone application for two days until midnight Saturday, in a move roundly denounced by parent company Facebook. The unprecedented 48-hour blockage served to implement a Sao Paulo state court order that had requested WhatsApp cooperate in a criminal investigation.

Authorities say they cannot disclose details of the criminal investigation because it is an ongoing case. WhatsApp is causing a headache to Brazil's telecoms because it offers a free alternative to the country's high cell phone rates, especially for youths and the poor. The blockage took effect at midnight (0200 GMT) yesterday but it was not immediately clear if service providers would follow the order.

Facebook chief Mark Zuckerberg said "we are working hard to get this block reversed." "This is a sad day for Brazil," he said, noting the country's history of support for an open Internet. "I am stunned that our efforts to protect people's data would result in such an extreme decision by a single judge to punish every person in Brazil who uses WhatsApp."

He urged the court to "quickly reverse course" and asked Brazilians to echo that call. Zuckerberg also recommended that users turn to Facebook Messenger in the meantime. The court said WhatsApp had been asked several times to cooperate in a criminal investigation, but had repeatedly failed to comply.

A judge in Piaui state had tried but failed earlier this year to block the app. Instant messaging service Telegram, backed by Russian entrepreneur Pavel Durov, said it had registered some 1.5 million new users in several hours due to the blockage. "1,500,000 and counting, SMS-Gateways overloading. Hang on, your codes are coming! We've got all hands on deck to accommodate the crazy load," it said on Twitter. — AFP



**RIO DE JANEIRO:** A screen shot of the popular WhatsApp smartphone application is seen after a court in Brazil ordered cellular service providers nationwide to block the application for two days. — AFP

## TRUMP SAYS HE'S BEEN 'A LITTLE BIT DIVISIVE'

**LOS ANGELES:** One day after a debate clash with Jeb Bush, Donald Trump said he's been "a little bit divisive" and wants to see Republicans come together. In an appearance on Jimmy Kimmel's late-night show Wednesday, the GOP presidential candidate looked relaxed as Kimmel queried him about campaign issues.

Trump, who has argued for temporarily banning Muslims from entering the United States, said he's gotten calls of thanks from friends who are Muslim. "Those may have been crank calls," Kimmel replied, smiling. The ABC host

then turned to immigration, using the example of his on-air sidekick, Guillermo Rodriguez, to question Trump's call for mass deportation.

Kimmel said Rodriguez came to the United States illegally from Mexico but went through the legalization process. He suggested to Trump that people who are willing to risk everything to get to the United States are good for the country.

Trump was unfazed, calling Hispanics "unbelievable people" but not backtracking on his position. He called for a Mexico-US border wall with "a big

beautiful door" for legal entry. Kimmel said it appeared Trump had made an effort to be nicer to his fellow candidates in the debate, including lauding Sen Ted Cruz's temperament after previously calling him a something of a "maniac."

"I would like to see the Republican party come together, and I've been a little bit divisive in the sense of hitting people hard," Trump replied. That didn't stop him from repeating his characterization of Jeb Bush as low-energy, although he added he was a "nice person."

Bush, well behind front-runner Trump in national polls, said during the debate that the billionaire couldn't insult his way to the presidency and called him a "chaos candidate." Kimmel ended the interview by sharing a mock children's book, in the style of Dr Seuss, which he said he'd ghost-written for Trump. "Here are some frogs I do not like at all. We must kick these frogs out and then build a wall," Kimmel read from one page. Trump had canceled a previously scheduled appearance on "Jimmy Kimmel Live," but Kimmel didn't make an issue of being stood up. — AP



ARIZONA: Republican presidential candidate Donald Trump speaks at a campaign rally. — AP

## GOP CANDIDATES STRUGGLE TO DEFINE THEIR FOREIGN POLICY

### FAULT LINES REFLECT A PARTY STILL IN FLUX

**WASHINGTON:** For Republicans, this week's presidential debate highlighted a brewing fight to define the party's foreign policy posture, exposing divisions among candidates about the US role in fostering regime change in the Middle East and tactics to prevent terror attacks at home.

The fault lines reflect a party still in flux long after George W Bush's unpopular Iraq war damaged Republicans' standing on international issues. While there's little appetite among GOP candidates for the sweeping military intervention and nation-building Bush championed, most are wary of being pegged as isolationists, particularly given Americans' heightened fears of terrorism following attacks in Paris and San Bernardino, California.

"The fundamental debate is, well, if Bush did too much and Obama did too little, what's the right amount of international engagement?" said Richard Fontaine, a former foreign policy adviser to Sen. John McCain, R-Ariz, and current president of the Center for New American Security think tank.

While foreign policy rarely decides presidential elections except in times of war, national security concerns are likely to remain a top issue for Americans at least

through the early voting contests that begin in February. As GOP leaders eye the general election, they believe voters disappointed with President Barack Obama's foreign policy stewardship will be reluctant to elect his former secretary of state, Hillary Clinton, the front-runner for the Democratic nomination. First, though, Republicans must work out their own divisions, which could be viewed most clearly in Tuesday's debate through the prism of the rivalry between Florida Sen Marco Rubio and Texas Sen Ted Cruz.

#### Striking contrasts

One of the most striking contrasts between the senators centered on how aggressive the US should be in seeking to topple Middle East dictators, some of whom have been bulwarks against Islamic extremists. Cruz cast himself as a realist, arguing that while autocrats like Syrian President Bashar Assad don't share American values, their potential cooperation in fighting extremism is preferable to taking a chance on whoever might replace them.

"If we topple Assad, the result will be ISIS will take over Syria, and it will worsen US national security interests," said Cruz, referring to the militant group that claimed responsibility for the attacks in Paris and

appears to have inspired the California shooting. Cruz was backed by GOP front-runner Donald Trump and Kentucky Sen. Rand Paul, who both said the US has higher priorities than ousting Assad.

Rubio's view was more in line with both the Bush and Obama administrations' calls for backing the spread of democracy in the Middle East. He argued that Assad's iron grip on power in Syria has allowed the Islamic State to thrive and said he "will not shed a tear" if he is pushed from power.

The Florida senator reiterated his position Wednesday during a campaign stop in New Hampshire, saying, "This idea that we can lead from behind, or in the case of Senator Cruz, not lead at all, will just leave more of these vacuums in other parts of the world."

Rubio and Cruz also had opposing views on what authorities the government should have to monitor Americans' communications. Cruz defended his vote for a new law requiring the government to request call data from telephone companies instead of collecting the information on its own, saying the National Security Agency can now access more phone numbers. Rubio said the legislation stripped the National Security Agency of valuable tools to track terrorists. — AP

## OBAMA TO MEET WITH BERNARDINO VICTIMS

**WASHINGTON:** Continuing a grim ritual of his time in office, President Barack Obama plans to meet with families of victims of the mass shooting in San Bernardino, California, the White House said Wednesday. The meeting in Southern California is set for Friday. It was added to Obama's long-scheduled trip to Hawaii for Christmas vacation.

"While he is en route to Honolulu, the president will stop in San Bernardino, California, to visit privately with the families of the victims of the terror attack in San Bernardino that occurred earlier this month," White House press secretary Josh Earnest said.

Fourteen people were killed and 21 others were injured at a workplace holiday party in San Bernardino on Dec 2 by a gun-wielding husband-and-wife team. Federal authorities say the pair had become self-radicalized in the years before Syed Rizwan Farook, 28, and his wife, Tashfeen Malik, 29, opened fire on Farook's co-workers. The couple was killed during a subsequent shootout with police.

During a televised address in the anxious days after the shootings, Obama said authorities had found no evidence that the American-born Farook and his Pakistani wife had carried out instructions from an overseas-based terrorist organization or that they were part of a broader conspiracy based in the US.

"But it is clear that the two of them had gone down the dark path of radicalization, embracing a perverted interpretation of Islam that calls for war against America and the West," Obama said from the Oval Office. "So this was an act of terrorism, designed to kill innocent people." The shootings closely followed the Nov 13 attack on Paris that left 130 people dead and for which the Islamic State group has claimed responsibility.

#### Public fears

Both attacks have heightened public fears about future attacks on US soil, concerns that Obama has tried to allay with the rare Oval Office address on administration efforts to counter the threat from the Islamic State group, as well as a series of public appearances by the president this week. Obama met with his national security team at the Pentagon on Monday, instead of their usual location in the White House Situation Room.

He followed the meeting with a public update on the effort to counter IS, saying the US and its partners were going after the group "harder than ever." Obama also plans to visit to the National Counterterrorism Center in suburban Virginia on Thursday for an annual, pre-holiday briefing that in past years has been held at the White House.

The pair of attacks has also led to calls for tighter visa screenings for people entering the US and for the immigrant brides-to-be of American citizens. Malik came to the US in 2014 on a K-1, or fiancée visa. Obama has also called on Congress to pass legislation to block firearm sales to people whose names are on the federal no-fly list for air travel. Obama has vowed to call for new gun-control measures after every mass shooting. The White House is considering acting to expand gun background checks without congressional approval. — AP

## MYANMAR'S SUU KYI SENDS MPs TO PARLIAMENT SCHOOL

**YANGON:** Aung San Suu Kyi is sending her newly-elected MPs on a crash course on Myanmar's parliament as they prepare to take their seats for the first time early next year, her party said yesterday. The veteran campaigner's National League for Democracy party won a thunderous majority in landmark November polls that are set to tip the balance of power away from the military for the first time in decades.

Some 390 NLD MPs will flood into parliament in February, mostly political newcomers with no experience of the Naypyidaw legislature, which itself has only been in operation since a quasi-

civilian regime replaced military rule in 2011. "The new MPs do know about politics but they need to learn more about the parliament," party spokesman Win Htein told AFP.

He said a series of classes would teach the budding politicians about the operations of the legislature as well other key topics like the country's controversial army-drafted constitution to help "improve their performance" as MPs. The tutorials will be held in batches in Naypyidaw and later in Yangon in the coming weeks as the NLD prepares for its historic new role after a quarter century of opposition to military rule.

### Slew of challenges

Suu Kyi and her party will face a slew of challenges when they take the helm, building on the reforms of recent years to revive Myanmar's fortunes after nearly half a century of isolation and mismanagement under the former junta.

They will also have to work with the military, which continues to hold a quarter of parliament seats and control over key ministries. But NLD MPs hoping to hear educational pearls of wisdom from Suu Kyi herself will be disappointed. "She has not got time to teach the class," Win Htein said, adding that the Nobel laureate was tied up with her duties in the cur-

rent parliament, which resumed after the elections for a lame duck session that ends in January.

The first task of the new MPs will be to elect a president to replace Thein Sein, a former general lauded for steering the country's stunning political opening since 2011. Suu Kyi is barred from becoming leader by a constitutional clause banning those with foreign close relatives from top political office. Her sons and late husband are British. She has indicated that she will pick a puppet president and rule "above" them, without explaining how this would work or revealing a candidate for the role. — AFP



**TOKYO:** A Japanese man reads an extra edition newspaper reporting on a story about Japan's Sankei Shimbun journalist. — AFP

## JAPANESE JOURNALIST ACQUITTED OF DEFAMING S KOREAN LEADER 'FREEDOM OF PRESS MUST BE RESPECTED'

**SEOUL:** A Japanese journalist was acquitted yesterday of defaming South Korean President Park Geun-Hye over his report on her whereabouts at the time of a fatal ferry disaster, in a case that strained diplomatic relations. Tatsuya Kato, former Seoul bureau chief for Japan's Sankei Shimbun daily, was put on trial in December last year on a charge of criminal libel for an article he wrote questioning where Park was on the day the Sewol passenger ferry sank, killing 300 people.

The article picked up unproven rumors circulating in the South Korean media that the unmarried Park had disappeared for a tryst with her former aide when the boat sank off South Korea's southern coast. A Seoul court said yesterday Kato's article had defamed her as "an individual", but accepted his argument that it was intended to serve the public interest and found him innocent of the defamation charge.

"The court declares the accused was not guilty of defaming Park in the capacity of the president as she is a public figure and her activities are the subject of public attention," the Seoul Central District Court said in the verdict. It added the freedom of the press

"must be respected to the full" for the development of democracy, although the rumors over Park's whereabouts turned out to be false.

Seoul prosecutors had demanded a guilty verdict and an 18-month jail term for Kato, arguing he had intended to defame Park. Kato and the newspaper welcomed the verdict, saying prosecutors should respect the court's decision and give up any attempt to appeal. "This is the outcome I expected," Kato told journalists in Seoul before flying back home.

A statement from the Sankei Shimbun said: "We call on the South Korean prosecution to refrain from appealing the case by respecting the will of the court, which calmly assessed the argument of the defense...from the perspective of democracy and freedom of speech." There was no immediate comment from prosecutors as to whether they would appeal, but they are widely expected to do so.

### Decades of bickering

At the beginning of the trial, Senior Judge Lee Dong-Geun presiding over a three-judge

panel read a request from South Korea's foreign ministry that the court consider positively Japan's appeal for leniency. The ministry noted that this year marks the 50th anniversary of the normalization of diplomatic relations between the two neighboring countries and their ever-frozen ties now showed signs of thawing.

After being banned from leaving South Korea for nine months, Kato was finally allowed to return to Tokyo in April, but kept his word to present himself to the court for the verdict. The trial had further irritated already inflamed ties between the South and its former colonial power Japan, which have for decades bickered over history and territorial disputes. Relations have showed signs of improvement in recent months, including with a summit between Park and Prime Minister Shinzo Abe in Seoul in November.

Abe said yesterday he hoped the verdict would help push Japan-South Korea relations forward. Abe told reporters in Tokyo that he welcomed the verdict, saying he was hoping that the acquittal would have "positive effects" on ties. Seoul also voiced hope for an improvement in relations. — AFP

## N KOREA WARNS US OF 'CONSEQUENCES'

**SEOUL:** North Korea has warned the United States of "unimaginable consequences" from its "hostile" policy toward the nuclear armed state, urging Washington to accept its long-standing demand for a peace treaty. The warning was made in a statement from the North's foreign ministry late Wednesday in reaction to fresh sanctions imposed by Washington last week. The sanctions would "only heighten the spirit of self-reliance and increase the strenuous efforts" among the workers of its munitions industry and boost the proportion of materials for weapons production, the foreign ministry spokesman said.

"If the US persistently pursues its anachronistic hostile policy toward the DPRK (North Korea) this way, this would only entail unimaginable consequences quite contrary to what the US desires," the spokesman was quoted as saying by Pyongyang's state Korean Central News Agency. He did not elaborate on the "unimaginable consequences", stopping short of reiterating Pyongyang's habitual threats to bolster its nuclear arsenal.

The spokesman also urged "the conclusion of the peace treaty with the US in order to put an end to the hostile policy", which he said was "the root cause of all problems". "Lasting peace and stability are possible on the Korean Peninsula only when the US hostile policy toward the DPRK is brought to an end and hostile relations between them are defused", he said.

The United States last week imposed financial sanctions against six North Korean individuals and several companies linked to arms proliferation. They included North Korea's Strategic Rocket Force, which had carried out multiple ballistic missile tests in 2014, two banks and three shipping companies allegedly involved in the arms trade, according to the US Treasury. The sanctions bar American citizens or companies from engaging in transactions with the designated individuals and companies, and freezes any US-based assets they may have. — AFP



**PYONGYANG:** North Koreans bring floral tributes to Mansu Hill, where bronze statues of their late leaders Kim Jong Il and his father Kim Il Sung, stand. Thousands visited the site yesterday to mark the fourth anniversary of Kim Jong Il's death. — AP



## WORKER DIES 'AFTER BEING SUCKED INTO JET ENGINE'

**MUMBAI:** A technician working for Air India has died after being sucked into a jet engine as the plane pushed back for take-off at Mumbai airport, the airline and reports said. The freak accident happened on Wednesday evening when the co-pilot of flight AI 619 to Hyderabad in India's south mistook a signal from ground staff and started the engine.

It sucked in Ravi Subramanian, who

was standing close by, the Press Trust of India reported, quoting anonymous sources at Air India, the Asian giant's national carrier. The airline wrote on its official Twitter handle that one of its technicians had "died in a mishap during pushback of flight AI 619", without specifying exactly what happened.

"The incident is being investigated. Our heartfelt condolences to the

bereaved family," said the tweet. Air India's chairman and managing director Ashwani Lohani said "we are deeply saddened & regret the tragic incident" at Mumbai's Chhatrapati Shivaji airport, according to the post late on Wednesday. The state-run carrier, which has not reported an annual profit since 2007, has been hit by a string of technical glitches and other embarrassing incidents, including

staff turning up late for flights.

In April, the airline made headlines when it had to ground two of its pilots after a fight erupted between the pair just before takeoff. Wednesday's incident comes a week after a turboprop plane belonging to budget carrier SpiceJet hit a group of wild boars and skidded as it came into land at Jabalpur airport in central India. — AFP

## CONGRESS MAY EXPLOIT GANDHIS' DAY IN COURT

**NEW DELHI:** Indian opposition leaders Sonia and Rahul Gandhi will appear in court tomorrow to defend themselves against graft allegations in a case they hope to turn to their advantage by energizing their party faithful against Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

The mother and son are the political heirs of the Nehru-Gandhi dynasty, that ruled India for most of its post-independence history, but suffered a humiliating election defeat last year at the hands of Modi's Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP). The case was brought by a BJP leader who says the Gandhis misused party funds to acquire properties. The Gandhis deny wrongdoing and would seek bail yesterday, a senior Congress leader said.

The Congress accuses Modi of pursuing a political vendetta against the family. Party workers said there would be uproar if the court treated the pair harshly, which would back-fire on Modi. "If the judiciary makes a call to detain them for a day, it will be an across-the-board tsunami, but that tsunami is bound to work in our favor in the upcoming state elections," said a Congress party official.

Modi's top aides have denied any involvement in the case. The court hearing comes after Modi's defeat in a state election last month raised doubt about his popularity and dimmed chances he would be able to win more states to consolidate power in parliament's upper house, where he lacks a majority.

### Soured relations

The legal battle has also soured relations between the BJP and Congress in parliament and has apparently scuppered the chances of them working together to clear legislation for landmark tax reform critical for economic growth. Two other Congress sources said they believed the Gandhis' court appearance would help turn the public mood against Modi.

"Showing up in court and attempting to play victim, in a highly public way, is a way of rebuilding morale among the rank-and-file," said Milan Vaishnav, a political expert at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace. Former prime minister and Sonia's mother-in-law, Indira Gandhi, chose to go to jail in a case brought by her rivals in 1977, using it to win sympathy and launch a comeback.

BJP leader Subramanian Swamy, who has brought the lawsuit, accuses the two of setting up a shell company to illegally gain control of properties worth \$300 million. The assets were owned by a firm that published a newspaper founded by Rahul's great grandfather, Jawaharlal Nehru. Congress workers are gearing up for protests. Sanjay Nirupam, the party's chief in Mumbai, said workers were ready to face arrest tomorrow. Swamy said he would not be cowed. "I don't like this mob behavior, these Congress party demonstrations and all," the 76-year-old told Reuters. "If they launch massive protests, then I can say they are unfit to live in a civilized society and should be sent to jail." — Reuters



**NEW DELHI:** In this photograph taken on November 25, 2015, Indian participants attend a Sanskrit class at the Sanskrit Samvadshala. — AFP

## INDIA'S SANSKRIT SPEAKERS SEEK TO RESURRECT 'DEAD' LANGUAGE

### 'AIM TO TAKE SANSKRIT TO THE MASSES'

**NEW DELHI:** In a tiny flat in a rundown alley in New Delhi, Rakesh Kumar Misra is working against the odds to bring India's ancient Sanskrit language to the country's millions. The 4,000-year-old classical language was traditionally used by Brahmin intellectuals and Hindu priests. Rarely spoken as a mother tongue in India, Sanskrit is often dismissed as a dead language. But Misra is undeterred, spending up to 12 hours a day hunched over his computer, translating and writing articles for a weekly 16-page newspaper in the script.

"My aim is to take Sanskrit to the masses, to make it accessible to everyone," Misra, who has a masters in Sanskrit studies and sees the language as indelibly linked to India's heritage, said. Hopes of a Sanskrit revival, long pushed by Hindu hardliners, have been rising since India's Hindu nationalist Prime Minister Narendra Modi stormed to power at last year's general election.

Several ministers, although not Modi himself, took an oath of office in the revered language and a national "Sanskrit week" was later declared to promote its teaching in schools. The first Sanskrit movie made in more than two decades (and only the third ever) was shown at a leading film festival in November in the tourism state of Goa.

Vinod Mankara, director of "Priyamanasam", about a 17th century-poet from the southern state of Kerala, said he

hoped to secure government help to show the film overseas to "mesmerise foreigners" with the language. "It's been my desire from long back to propagate the beauty of the Sanskrit language," he said.

### Intolerance rising

But the focus on Sanskrit has sparked a debate about its role in India, which has 22 official languages, many spoken by sizeable minorities. Critics fear Hindu hardliners are promoting Sanskrit as a way of imposing Hindu superiority on the country's religious and linguistic minorities. Mankara has rejected criticism that his film promotes Hindu ideology, calling it "pure art".

It comes at a time of raging controversy over whether the Modi government is failing to uphold India's tradition of secularism and diversity, amid rising fears of growing intolerance towards Muslims and others. Education Minister Smriti Irani, responsible for promoting the language, denies the right-wing government has any hidden agenda and describes Sanskrit as the "voice of India's soul and wisdom". But she faces an uphill battle popularising it in schools, where it is offered as an optional language, and where some believe it's linked with India's past not its future.

"There are a lot of languages on offer and it's difficult to deliver it everywhere," KC Tripathi, head of languages at the National

Council of Educational Research and Training, a government body that advises on school curriculums. Tripathi said the council was forming a new education policy, at the Modi government's request, that includes updating and improving the way Sanskrit is taught in schools.

### India's heritage

Only 14,100 people speak Sanskrit as their main language, according to the latest census figures, less than one percent of India's 1.25 billion population. Still used in Hindu prayers and chants in temples, Sanskrit is the root of many but not all Indian languages and descends from the Indo-Aryans. It was used thousands of years ago by India's intellectuals whose manuscripts covered everything from philosophy to astronomy and medicine, not unlike Latin or Greek in the West.

"You can't think about India without thinking of Sanskrit. The intellectual heritage of India for the last 5,000 years is rooted in Sanskrit," said Ramesh Bhardwaj, head of Delhi University's Sanskrit department, the world's largest with 4,000 undergraduate students. "This is not a dead language," he added. Bhardwaj said he is disappointed the government has not done more to revive Sanskrit, including making it compulsory in schools, so younger generations can understand India's roots. — AFP



This file photo taken on September 4, 2003 shows a Standard surface-to-air missile being launched from a Perry-class frigate of the Taiwan navy during war games in the waters off Litzechien, northeastern Ilan county. — AFP

## CHINA SUMMONS ENVOY OVER SALE OF WARSHIPS

### PART OF MASSIVE \$1.8BN ARMS PACKAGE

**BEIJING:** China has summoned the US envoy to protest Washington's sale of warships to Taiwan, as part of a massive \$1.8 billion arms package, Beijing said yesterday. Taipei will get an array of missiles, amphibious assault vehicles and two frigates in the latest deal, which comes as the United States looks to shore up its Asian friends and allies in the face of growing Chinese assertiveness.

"China staunchly opposes America's sale of arms to Taiwan," a statement from the country's foreign affairs ministry said, as US charge d'affaires Kaye Lee was called in for a dressing down. It said Beijing would impose sanctions on any companies involved in the sale, and warned Washington to cancel the deal to "avoid causing further damage to Sino-US relations". Although it has been governed separately since the end of a civil war in 1949, China considers Taiwan a renegade province awaiting reunification.

It regularly lashes out at Washington and other powers for their dealings with Taipei, which it labels "interference" in Chinese domestic affairs. The US weapons sale—the first to Taiwan in four years—comes at an increasingly febrile time in East Asia, where China's aggressive position on territorial disputes with its neighbors has raised anxiety levels in the US and among allies from Japan to the Philippines.

#### Assert control

Beijing is building islands with military-grade airstrips in the South China Sea, part of what observers say is an

attempt to assert control over almost the whole of the body of water. Several countries—along with Taiwan—also claim parts of the sea. The US and its allies have carried out high-profile overflights of the sea, nearing the artificial islands, in what they say are routine "freedom of navigation" exercises in international waters.

Beijing says they are provocations and infringements of Chinese sovereignty. In their meeting on Wednesday, Vice Foreign Minister Zheng Zeguang told Lee the weapons deal "severely goes against international law and the basic norms of international relations", adding that it "severely harms China's sovereignty and security interests".

"US companies' involvement in arms sales with Taiwan constitutes a severe infringement of China's sovereignty and security interests", foreign ministry spokesman Hong Lei said during a regular press briefing, adding that "the Chinese government and companies will not conduct cooperation of business with those kinds of companies."

Washington, which is bound by domestic laws to supply defence materials to Taiwan, played down the impact of the agreement. State Department spokesman John Kirby said the deal was in keeping with long-held American policy and would not affect relations with Beijing.

"As for our relationship with China, that remains an important relationship that we're going to continue to work at," he said. "There's no other message that needs to be taken away from this, other than we take seriously our commitment

to the defense needs of Taiwan."

#### 'Self-defense capabilities'

Relations between Beijing and Taipei have warmed under current Taiwanese President Ma Ying-jeou. China's leader Xi Jinping and Ma met for a historic summit in November, the first leaders' summit since the 1949 split. That meeting, and the generally pro-Beijing posture of Ma's administration, has caused disquiet in Taiwan, where many people fear the growing reach of the world's second largest economy.

Taipei said the deal was a testament to its right to self-defense. "The US pays heed to Taiwan's need to defend itself and would like to help Taiwan maintain sufficient self-defense capabilities," the island's defence ministry statement said in a statement.

Observers said the Chinese reaction was predictable bluster from Beijing. The deal is unlikely to have a significant impact on Sino-US relations, said Bonnie Glaser, a senior adviser for Asia at the Washington-based Center for Strategic and International Studies. "China threatened to impose sanctions on US defence companies who were responsible for the sale the last time the US announced an arms sale to Taiwan, but they didn't follow through", she said.

She added that Beijing will likely stop short of taking steps this time for fear that Washington might retaliate with its own sanctions. The deal includes two Perry-class frigates, Javelin anti-tank missiles, TOW 2B anti-tank missiles, AAV-7 Amphibious Assault Vehicles and a range of other military equipment. — AFP

## NEW STORM APPROACHES AFTER TYPHOON KILLS 20

**MANILA:** A new storm was threatening to dump heavy rain on the southern Philippines today, as people in northern farming regions battled floods from deadly Typhoon Melor, authorities said. A tropical depression, locally named "Onyok", was heading for the southern island of Mindanao as Melor moved further out to the South China Sea after claiming at least 20 lives, the government weather bureau reported yesterday. Melor tore in from the Pacific Ocean and hit the eastern Philippines on Monday, then caused major flooding across the central and northern regions of the archipelago throughout the week. Although the typhoon left the Philippines on Wednesday, floodwaters about a meter deep still covered farming regions about an hour's drive north of Manila, the national capital.

Local disaster management officer Angie Blanco said these floods were expected to rise further as waters from other parts of the main island of Luzon flowed into the floodplain. "Maybe tonight, it will hit four to five feet," Blanco said. "But people are not leaving unless they are forced to do so. They are used to this situation."

In the riverside town of Macabebe, about 42 kilometers north of Manila, men with rolled up trousers and women holding up their skirts waded through knee-deep waters, carrying sacks of groceries and bottles of drinking water on their shoulders. "Their houses are built high so they don't think they need to evacuate but disaster control personnel are on standby if the waters rise further," Blanco said.

On the mainly rural southern island of Mindanao, which will be hit by Onyok, preparations were underway for the depression which is forecast to hit today. Although Onyok is only a tropical depression, it is forecast to bring heavy rain to areas not used to fierce weather. The Philippines is hit with about 20 major storms a year, many of them deadly, but they normally strike north of Mindanao. But some of the storms have in recent years tracked further south, catching residents unprepared with horrific consequences. — AFP



MANILA: A Filipino tries to bike along a flooded street caused by heavy rains from Typhoon Melor. — AP

## SINGAPORE PM WINS \$106K IN DAMAGES FROM BLOGGER

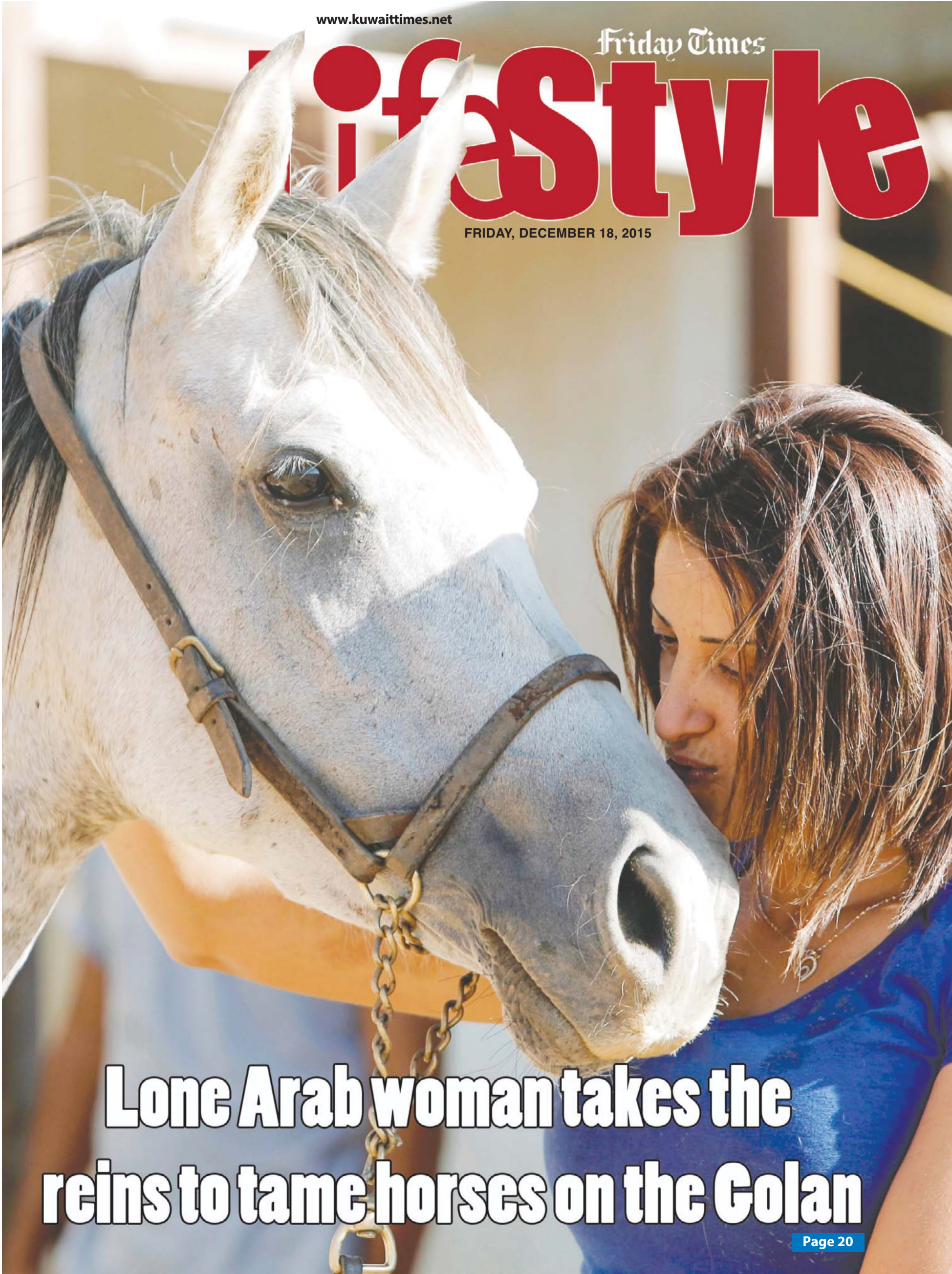
**SINGAPORE:** An activist blogger was ordered yesterday to pay Singapore's Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong Sg\$150,000 (\$106,000) in damages for accusing him of stealing state funds. Roy Ngerng, a former government employee, had accused Lee of criminally misappropriating money from the Central Provident Fund (CPF), the city-state's multibillion-dollar pension system, Judge Lee Seiu Kin ruled at Singapore's High Court.

"I have found the defendant to have acted out of malice," he said in a written ruling. "He had, to put it simply, called the plaintiff a thief when what he wanted to do was to criticize the CPF policy of the government headed by the plaintiff." Singapore has consistently ranked highly in surveys as one of the world's least corrupt countries, but rights groups say its leaders have used financially ruinous defamation suits to silence critics and political opponents. Singaporean leaders maintain that the lawsuits are necessary to protect their reputations from unfounded allegations.

Ngerng, 34, had originally been found guilty in November 2014 in the first such ruling in Singapore over a purely online article. He had admitted that his May 15, 2014 blog accusing the prime minister, who is also chairman of state investment fund GIC, of misusing the CPF was false and without foundation. He offered Sg\$5,000 as compensation to Lee, who rejected the amount. After being sued by Lee, Ngerng, who has also led public protests over the CPF issue, was fired from his government hospital job for administrative reasons which he did not contest. — AFP

# LifeStyle

FRIDAY, DECEMBER 18, 2015



**Lone Arab woman takes the reins to tame horses on the Golan**



Druze horsewoman and trainer Rajaa Kheir battles to saddle on a stray horse yesterday at her ranch—the only Arab centre in the area—in the Druze town of Majdal Shams. — AFP photos



Rajaa Kheir leads a horse back to the stables.



Rajaa Kheir leads a horse at her ranch.



Rajaa Kheir rides a stray horse at her ranch.

## Lone Arab woman takes the reins to tame horses on the Golan

The grey horse rears its head, rocking left and right, kicking its legs wildly. Sensing danger, Raja Kheir throws herself off and rolls on the ground. The slender, brown-haired 32-year-old in white jacket and jeans tames horses—not in itself unusual on the picturesque plains of the Israeli-occupied Golan Heights. What makes Kheir different is that she is an Arab woman, among the few, or perhaps even the only one from the area taking the reins. Born into a conservative family of Druze—an offshoot of Shiite Islam—in the Israeli village of Beit Jann in the Upper Galilee, she now lives and works in Majdal Shams near Syria.



Rajaa Kheir rolls on the ground as she trains a stray horse.

Horses are an important part of the culture in the region's ranches and cattle farms spread among the rugged hills and plains. Since dawn, Kheir has been in a battle with three-year-old Qamar—the moon in Arabic—and eventually succeeds in getting a saddle on her. When she rides Qamar for the first time, she focuses all her concentration but the horse bucks, causing her to throw herself to the ground. Hours later, Kheir is making progress. She places her feet in the stirrups and digs her feet gently into the horse's side, repeating this several times while at the same time tapping the animal's stomach. "It is not enough to put a saddle on a horse to tame it. The important step is to ride it," she tells AFP.

### Days in the wilderness

Qamar still isn't ready to listen fully, and many attempts end with another roll on the ground. But Kheir, who has been riding since she was six, is not discouraged. When she was a child, "every-



Rajaa Kheir trains a stray horse.

one called me a tomboy because I wasn't afraid of anything," she says. She used to spend days in the wilderness near her grandfather's home in Beit Jann, where horses roamed. There, she says, "my relationship with riding began". Her journey into taming horses really started eight years ago, when she took a course in the town of Pardes Hanna near Haifa in northern Israel. Since then she has earned multiple diplomas: she can ride horses, train them and teach them dressage.

Along with a partner, she decided to set up a taming and training centre. Most of her clients are families who have bought horses and need someone to train them for them. She also trains stray horses found in the Golan. With Qamar, a stray who arrived only a few days ago, Kheir is in the initial stages—convincing the horse to accept her presence and to enter the stable. Horses "like to be free. They don't like to have anything on their backs," she says. "So when I ride her for the first time she is afraid of me and I am also afraid of her. She doesn't know my reaction and I don't know her. "When I feel she is going to hurt me, I throw myself off."

### 'Courage above all else'

Once this hurdle is overcome, the slow process begins of teaching them to be ridden. "After you place the saddle on a horse it takes two to three weeks to tame them, though not to be able to ride them," she says. It can take many more weeks for a former stray to get used to everyday things such as the sound of cars. Kheir awakes at dawn every day to feed the 15 horses at her school in the Golan, near where several other centers are based. They need to be fed by 7:00 am at the latest, she says, because something as simple as a late meal can upset a horse's stomach and even in rare cases be fatal.

For Kheir, the most important asset in a trainer is courage. "If a horse feels your fear it will not accept you," she says. "But if he feels you love him, he will protect you." Once confidence is gained, the rider then has control, she says. Being a woman and from the Druze minority, she admits it can be difficult in the Israeli equine world which is dominated by Jewish Israelis and men. When she and her partner set up the ranch—the only Arab center in the area—they even faced acts of sabotage, with a horse and a foal poisoned and pressure put on some people not to sell to them. "There was a real war against us," Kheir says, deliberately not naming the alleged culprits. "But we've got all the official papers and our school continues." — AFP



Rajaa Kheir battles to saddle on a stray horse.



Michael Tran and Katie Rodriguez pass a cyclist on their Hoverboards while displaying ease of use on the Venice Beach Boardwalk. — AFP photos



Michael Tran and Katie Rodriguez use their hoverboards while displaying ease of use on the Venice Beach Boardwalk.

## 'Hoverboards' hot for the holidays despite concerns

Riding a "hoverboard" will zip you around town and make you the coolest person in the neighborhood. But it might also be risky. These self-balancing electric scooters are surging in popularity in the first season where they have been available at relatively affordable prices—as low as \$300 for some models. The trend is gaining traction despite multiple concerns: Some cities say they pose a hazard for street or sidewalk traffic, in addition to safety issues for riders; and some reports say poorly designed chargers can lead to fires or explosions.

Washington real estate investor Raphael Vargas, who uses his hoverboard daily, calls them "cool" and "a real conversation starter." "It beats walking and it's a lot of fun," he said. While his daily commute is too far for the scooter, Vargas said he brings it in his car and then rides from the parking lot to his workspace with it. "I took it to the mall and it made shopping a breeze," he said. To be sure, these are not the flying "hoverboard" from the film "Back to the Future" but rather two-wheeled electric scooters which are like a small, lightweight version of the Segway.

In recent years, technology has allowed the devices to be made lighter—as little as 25 pounds (11 kilos) — and to travel at speeds up to 12 miles (19 kilometers) per hour. With self-balancing gyroscopes, similar to what is used in the Segway, the devices are designed to avert falls and allow riders to get comfortable in a matter of minutes, according to hoverboard marketers.

### 'So easy to use'

"I got on and I learned in 10 minutes," said Tony Le, who saw his first hoverboards at a trade fair in China and decided to open his own retail operation in New Jersey under the brand Glitek. Hoverboards are among the top items on wish lists for kids looking for a bit of adventure. But some also see a potential to fulfill the urban transportation role envisioned by the Segway, which failed, as consumers shunned the bulky, expensive devices. "I think of this as revolutionary. It's so easy to use," Le said. "This is something that will be in the trunk of everyone's car."

Michael Tran, co-owner of the Ooverboard rental and sales outlet in Venice Beach, California, said the devices are catching on

fast. "Demand is very high and supply is low," he said. An important feature, Tran said, is that they are intuitive to use. "It acts like an extension of your leg. It's not like a vehicle," he said. Juan Rodriguez, owner of Miami Hoverboard, said his beachside rental operation is full almost every day and that he is considering expanding to nearby locations.

Rodriguez, whose firm also sells retail, said the hoverboard is a good urban transport option. "It's small. You don't need parking. You can go to a restaurant, put it under the table and you're ready to go," he told AFP. Hoverboards have gotten an added boost from celebrities ranging from Chris Brown to Justin Bieber, who is seen riding one in a YouTube video.

### Are they 'vehicles'?

But it's not all good news for hoverboard buffs. Australia's state of New South Wales banned them from roads, saying they are vehicles which cannot be licensed. New York City has taken a similar position. "Motorized self-balancing devices, such as

Segways, hoverboards, and other 'personal transporters, are prohibited in New York City," the city's police department said in a statement.

State law "requires all motor vehicles to be registered... Since none of them may be registered they are not permitted." Some college campuses have also banned hoverboards, including the University of California system. There is also a risk of explosion or fire from charging systems. The US Consumer Product Safety Commission said it has received 11 reports of hoverboard fires in 10 states. Online retailer Overstock said on December 9 it would stop selling hoverboards, and offered refunds to consumers who had already bought them, citing safety concerns.

British authorities seized 15,000 hoverboards this year, saying the charging systems could be hazardous. The British branch of Amazon has also warned customers that some models of the device were unsafe because of "non-compliant" plugs-making them a potential fire hazard—and urging them to throw away defective boards. Le said the safety issues reported so far have been linked to off-brand devices with substandard batteries and components, and that reputable brands have passed safety checks.

Patent disputes have also arisen over the technology used in the boards. Segway, which is now owned by a Chinese firm and produces its own version, filed suit against one rival, and US manufacturer Razor has sued another competitor. Some argue the hoverboard is a wave that cannot be held back. Le, who talks frequently with manufacturers, says he believes at least one million hoverboards have been sold so far this year. Razor, the manufacturer, says only that "this is going to be one of the hottest items of the season." "More hoverboards will mean less cars, less pollution," said Miami's Rodriguez. "We can't resist the future. We have to adapt." — AFP



Michael Tran uses his hoverboard on the Venice Beach Boardwalk.

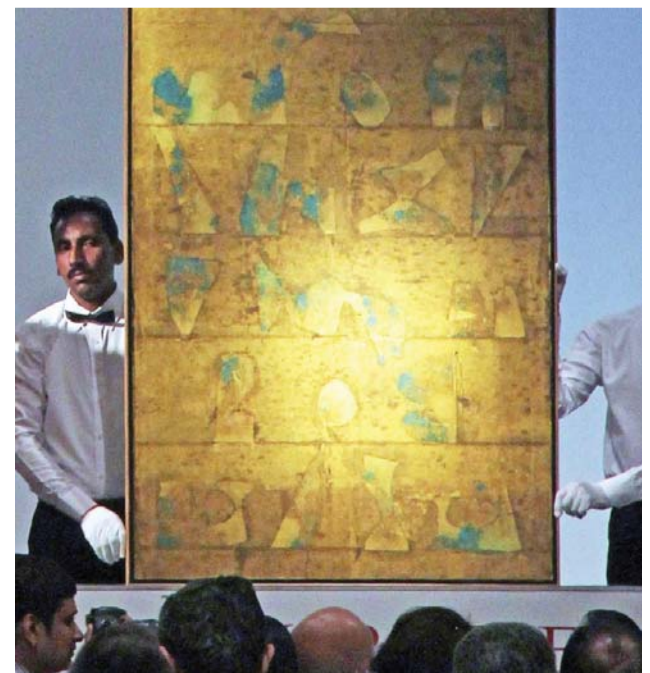
## Indian painting sells for record \$4.4 mn at Christie's auction

**MUMBAI:** An oil painting by abstract artist Vasudeo S Gaitonde sold for 293 million rupees (\$4.4 million) at a Christie's auction in Mumbai on Tuesday, setting a new world record for Indian artwork. Gaitonde's untitled painting from 1995 broke the previous record of \$4.01 million paid for a Francis Newton Souza work at a sale in New York earlier this year, the London-based auction house said. The Gaitonde canvas was purchased by an anonymous "international collector", Christie's said following the auction at the luxury Taj Mahal Palace Hotel in the western Indian city.

"It achieved a world record for any Indian work of art sold at auction," Christie's international head of world art William Robinson said of the piece by Gaitonde, who is considered one of India's greatest abstract painters of all time. Gaitonde, who died in 2001, had previously set the record for the most expensive Indian artwork when his untitled piece from 1979 sold for 237 million rupees at Christie's first sale in India in 2013.

It held the record for two years before the sale of Goan artist Souza's artwork in September. Tuesday's auction was Christie's third sale in India as the auction house looks to tap into the Asian giant's increasingly affluent middle class. Robinson said the total value of the sale, which included 100 lots, was 980 million rupees. "It is the highest total that Christie's has ever achieved in India and that beats our previous record for the highest sale ever in India," he told reporters. — AFP

In this photograph, Indian abstract artist Vasudeo Gaitonde's untitled painting is displayed as William Robinson, lead auctioneer (unseen) seeks bids during the third Christie's India Sale at Taj Mahal Palace in Mumbai.—AFP





In the April 23, 2015, file photo, N.W.A. members Dr Dre, left, and Ice Cube, two of the subjects of the upcoming biographical drama 'Straight Outta Compton,' appear onstage to promote the film at the Universal Pictures presentation during CinemaCon 2015 at Caesars Palace in Las Vegas. — AP photos



British rock band Deep Purple present their golden record they received in West Berlin for the sales of their latest album, "Deep Purple in Rock," in West Germany.



In this April 4, 2013, file photo, James Pankow, Walter Parazaider and Lee Loughnane of Chicago perform at Hard Rock Live! in the Seminole Hard Rock Hotel & Casino, in Hollywood, Fla.

## Gangsta rap pioneers N.W.A. win Rock Hall of Fame nod

Gangsta rap pioneers N.W.A., who shocked white America with their no-holds-barred denunciations of police brutality, won recognition yesterday for their historical role as they were named to the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame. The museum to popular music said it will also induct Midwestern US rockers Cheap Trick and Chicago, British hard rock forerunners Deep Purple, and psychedelic bluesman Steve Miller as its 2016 class. N.W.A. had been nominated three previous years without winning approval, but the group enjoyed renewed attention in August with the biopic film "Straight Outta Compton," which opened at the top of the US box office.

The film was named for N.W.A.'s debut 1988 album that featured the track "F\*\*\*k tha Police," a searing indictment of officers' treatment of young African-American men like the group members, who grew up in the rough Los Angeles-area city of Compton. N.W.A.—which stands for Niggaz Wit Attitudes—set the stage for the genre of gangsta rap and raised the political profile of hip-hop, now a frequent means of protest around the world. "N.W.A.'s improbable rise from marginalized outsiders to the most controversial and complicated voices of their generation remains one of rock's most explosive, relevant and challenging tales," the Hall of Fame said in its announcement.

The induction comes amid renewed criticism of police tactics after a series of killings of African-Americans. N.W.A. gave rise to the solo careers of Ice Cube, the late Eazy-E and Dr Dre, who went on to become a multimillionaire entrepreneur employed by Apple. "Our impact is to show the people that you have a voice. You can say something; you don't have to just sit back and let it happen," Ice Cube told AFP ahead of the movie's release. Public Enemy, arguably the rap group best known for turning hip-hop into a political tool, entered the Hall of Fame in 2013.

### Reunions for N.W.A., Deep Purple?

The Rock and Roll Hall of Fame determines inductees through

voting by more than 800 music figures, with a fan poll contributing one ballot. The Cleveland-based museum will honor the new members at an April 8 ceremony in New York that is sure to renew talk of a long-rumored N.W.A. reunion. N.W.A. performed together in June in Los Angeles, but Dr. Dre did not join. Deep Purple still tours but without 70-year-old guitarist Ritchie Blackmore, who parted in 1993 and has since pursued folk music.

Blackmore is the force behind one of rock's most distinctive openings—the blues riff adapted to electric guitar that begins "Smoke on the Water." "Only Beethoven's Fifth Symphony gives it a run for the money as far as recognizability and badassness," the Hall of Fame announcement said. Deep Purple joins two other British groups already in the Hall of Fame—Led Zeppelin and Black Sabbath—that together spawned hard rock.

### Midwesterners win on first try

Chicago, who won the fan ballot, grew out of the jazz tradition of the band's namesake city, bringing the genre's free-flowing melodies to pop. While initially taking up political themes, Chicago turned into the quintessential soft rock band with a slew of radio-friendly ballads such as "If You Leave Me Now," "Hard to Say I'm Sorry" and "You're the Inspiration." Cheap Trick, also from the state of Illinois, developed a style of heartland rock with guitar-driven anthems such as "Surrender."

Cheap Trick discovered an early fan base in Japan where the band recorded a classic 1978 live album at the Budokan arena. Steve Miller, while born in Wisconsin, became a leading force in the cultural mix in San Francisco in the 1960s as he experimented with jazz, blues and other American roots music. But the Steve Miller Band also achieved commercial success, notably with 1973 song "The Joker."

Miller, Cheap Trick and Chicago all won the first year they were nominated. Other first-time nominees, including pop star Janet Jackson and Mexican-American trailblazers Los Lobos, were passed over. Disco sensations Chic maintained a losing streak after a record 10 nominations. Chic's co-founder Nile Rodgers recently told AFP he did not want to "get weird" about the lack of recognition but added, "I've written more hit records than almost everybody in the Hall of Fame. Come on, guys!" — AFP



In this Aug. 30, 2013, file photo, Rick Nielsen of Cheap Trick performs at the Harley-Davidson 110th Anniversary celebration, in Milwaukee.

## James Woods happy to be alive after Colorado crash



In this Wednesday, Feb 29, 2012, file photograph, actor James Woods takes questions from reporters during a news conference in Providence, R.I. — AP

Actor James Woods says he's happy to be alive after crashing on an icy highway in Colorado. The accident happened Monday on Interstate 70, where it cuts through the scenic Glenwood Canyon in western Colorado. The stretch of road has steep cliffs on either side. In a series of tweets, Woods said another person driving over 75 mph spun out and that he hit a wall along the highway to avoid that driver.

Woods said that after hitting the wall on the other side of the road, he slid backward going 60 mph. He said a guardrail kept his Jeep Grand Cherokee from dropping 100 feet to the Colorado River below. Woods praised the police, firefighters, tow truck drivers and everyone else who helped him. He also apologized for rambling and said he had a "little concussion." On Tuesday, Woods said he was back on the road again. — AP

## Eagles of Death Metal announce tour, including Paris date



File photo shows Jesse Hughes of Eagles of Death Metal performs at Riot Fest & Carnival in Douglas Park in Chicago. — AP

The US rock band Eagles of Death Metal has announced dates for a rescheduled European tour, including a return to Paris. The band was performing at the Bataclan in Paris on Nov 13 when 130 people were killed in the city. The band will play at the Olympia Theatre in Paris on Feb 16, 2016. Concertgoers who attended the Bataclan show will earn free tickets to the upcoming Paris show.

Jesse Hughes, Eagles of Death Metal's frontman and co-founder, says not returning to finish the band's set was never an option. Says Hughes: "We look forward to coming back in February and continuing our mission to bring rock 'n' roll to the world." The band's The Nos Amis Tour starts Feb 13, 2016, in Stockholm. — AP



Malaysian Muslim women pose for pictures with members of Malaysia's Star Wars Fan Club dressed as various characters before watching 'Star Wars: The Force Awakens' at a cinema in Subang, outside Kuala Lumpur yesterday. — AP/AFP photos



Members of the Star Wars "Star Wars Fans Nuernberg" fan club dressed as "Stormtrooper" characters pose for a photo at a cinema in Nuremberg, southern Germany.

# 'Star Wars: The Force Awakens' powers up second best opening in France

**"S**tar Wars: The Force Awakens" powered up the biggest non-holiday opening ever in France, and the country's second best opening of all times behind "Spectre." Sources are reporting that "Star Wars: The Force Awakens" has sold just under 500,000 admissions according to provisional figures for an estimated 3.5 million Euros (\$3.8 million). Rentrak, one of the main sources of intel for box office reports, held off the release of official figures this morning-some exhibitors have not yet reported their theaters' admissions.

"Spectre," the opening day champion in France, had scored 850,297 admissions on its first day, November 11, which is a national holiday in Gaul. In dollar terms, however, "Star Wars: The Force Awakens" may be a winner since the movie in showing mostly in 3D and some cinemas in France have boosted advance ticket prices way above the regular average of 7.5 Euros for 3D pics. The largest theater in Paris, the Rex, for instance, is selling 50 Euros tickets for VIP seats. Other theaters are hosting "Star Wars"-related activities in between screenings and are charging more for it.

Although "Star Wars: The Force Awakens" was expected to earn more on its French roll-out, the movie

still has great chances to be a record breaker in Gaul by the end of weekend, per Jocelyn Bouyssy, the boss of CGR, one of the country's biggest multiplex chains. CGR sold 65,000 tickets across its 46 sites in France and usually represents 10% of the country's market share. "Many people decided to wait a bit to discover the film because theaters were full due to the advance tickets sales," said Bouyssy.

Another key factor which will certainly fuel the B.O. of "Star Wars: The Force Awakens" in France is the Christmas holiday kicking off on Friday evening. "Typically, when a movie opens three days before the beginning of a school break, young folks and families hold off to watch it on the weekend or later during their vacation," added the exhibitor. Insiders predict "Star Wars: The Force Awakens" could score between 8 and 10 million admissions (60 million Euros-70.5 million Euros) in France. "Star Wars VI" sold about 7 million admissions. John Hopewell contributed to this report. — Reuters



A cleaner walks past a poster advertising "Star Wars: The Force Awakens" in Hong Kong.



Local fans dressed as Christmas-themed Stormtroopers pose with a child during a toy exhibition in Taipei.

## AP's top 10 movies of the year led by 'Carol,' 'Mad Max'

Associated Press film writers Jake Coyle and Lindsey Bahr's favorite movies of the year span blockbusters, art house and, yes, even "Star Wars."

### Jake Coyle

1. "Carol," Todd Haynes' gorgeous 1950s film with a dreamy score about hidden romance.
2. "About Elly," an Iranian psychological thriller from Asghar Farhad set at a Caspian Sea resort.
3. "Phoenix," a haunting, Hitchcockian drama set in post-World War II Germany, directed by Christian Petzold.
4. "Spotlight," Tom McCarthy's workmanlike procedural about the Boston Globe's investigation into the Catholic Church.
5. "Chi-Raq" and "99 Homes," issue films from Spike Lee and Ramin Bahrani that bristle with palpable rage.
6. "Stray Dog," a documentary by Debra Granik about a haunted, motorcycle-riding Vietnam veteran with American history written all over him.

7. "Anomalisa," stop-motion animation from screenwriter Charlie Kauffman that captures more soulful emotions than most films even contemplate.
8. "Creed" and "The Force Awakens," fun yet respectful restorations of the durable American myths "Rocky" and "Star Wars," born six months apart in the late 1970s.
9. "45 Years," Andrew Haigh's disquieting drama about a long-together couple.
10. "Diary of a Teenage Girl" and "Testament of Youth," two tender coming-of-age stories, worlds apart, led by tremendous newcomers. Honorable mentions: "Heart of a Dog," "Bridge of Spies," "'71," "Mad Max: Fury Road," "Kumiko, the Treasure Hunter," "Going Clear," "Inside Out," "It Follows," "The Salt of the Earth."

### Lindsey Bahr

1. "Mad Max: Fury Road," George Miller's riveting, post-apocalyptic action film.
2. "Clouds of Sils Maria," Olivier Assayas' brilliant

- and atmospheric drama about art, life and aging.
3. "Ex Machina," a thrilling and intense sci-fi spectacle from Alex Garland.
4. "Tangerine," Sean Baker's boisterous and alive story about transgender sex workers.



Picture shows Tom Hardy, as Max Rockatansky, in Warner Bros. Pictures' and Village Roadshow Pictures' action adventure film, 'Mad Max: Fury Road,' a Warner Bros. Pictures release. — AP

5. "Kumiko, The Treasure Hunter," the spellbinding tale of a Japanese girl who believes the movie " Fargo " is real.
6. "Brooklyn," about an Irish immigrant girl in early-1950s New York just figuring out what she wants in life.
7. "The Diary of a Teenage Girl," Marielle Heller's story about a girl who gets swept up in an affair with her mother's boyfriend.
8. "Carol," Todd Haynes' exquisitely composed romance involving a 1950s shop girl and the housewife she falls for.
9. "The Big Short," a darkly humorous film from Adam McKay about the collapse of the housing bubble.
10. "Spy," Paul Feig's riotously funny comedy with heart that serves as a perfect showcase for the talents of Melissa McCarthy. Honorable Mentions: "The Hateful Eight," "Steve Jobs," "Spotlight," "The Mend," "Love & Mercy," "Sicario," "I'll See You In My Dreams," "45 Years." — AP



# 30 MINUTES OR LESS

Fast, healthy, tasty: Every day salad cooking ideas



## Tomato, Corn, and Avocado Salad

### INGREDIENTS

- 1 ear corn (husk and silk removed; tip cut off)
- 2 pints cherry, grape, or pear tomatoes, halved (or quartered if large)
- 1 avocado, halved, pitted, peeled, and diced
- 2 scallions, thinly sliced
- 2 tablespoons fresh lime juice
- 1 tablespoon vegetable oil, such as safflower
- Coarse salt and ground pepper

### DIRECTIONS

1. Stand ear in a large wide bowl; with a sharp knife, carefully slice downward to release the kernels. Discard cob. Add tomatoes, avocado, scallions, lime juice, and oil to bowl. Season with salt and pepper, and toss gently to combine.



## Orange and Avocado Salad

### INGREDIENTS

- 3 navel oranges
- 2 tablespoons vinegar
- 2 tablespoons olive oil
- Coarse salt and freshly ground pepper
- 1 large head of red leaf lettuce, torn
- 1 avocado, thinly sliced
- 6 to 8 radishes, cut into wedges

### DIRECTIONS

1. Cut off ends of oranges; using a paring knife, remove peel, pith, and outer membranes, following the curve of the fruit. Working over a bowl to

catch the juices, cut between sections to remove whole segments; add segments to a large bowl. Squeeze juice from membranes into a bowl; measure out 3 tablespoons juice; reserve remaining juice for another use.

2. In a small bowl, whisk together reserved orange juice, vinegar, and olive oil; season with salt and pepper. To bowl with oranges, add lettuce, avocado, and radishes. Toss with dressing, and serve immediately.

## Apple, Grape, and Celery Salad

### INGREDIENTS

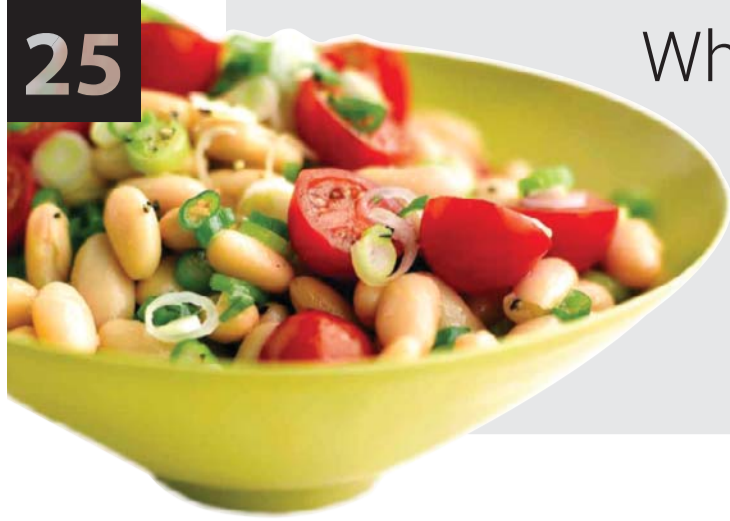
- 1/4 cup coarsely chopped pecans
- 2 celery stalks, thinly sliced on the diagonal, plus leaves for garnish
- 1 apple, cored, halved, and thinly sliced
- 1 cup seedless red grapes, halved
- 1 tablespoon vinegar
- 1 tablespoon extra-virgin olive oil
- Coarse salt and ground pepper

### DIRECTIONS

1. Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Spread pecans on a rimmed baking sheet, and bake until lightly browned, 4 to 6 minutes.
2. In a large bowl, combine celery, apple, grapes, vinegar, and oil. Season with salt and pepper, and toss to combine. Garnish with celery leaves.







## White Bean-and-Tomato Salad

18 FRIDAY  
DECEMBER 2015

### INGREDIENTS

- 1 can (14 ounces) cannellini beans, rinsed and drained
- 1 pint grape tomatoes, halved
- 4 scallions, thinly sliced
- 2 tablespoons olive oil
- 1 tablespoon fresh lemon juice

- Coarse salt and ground pepper

### DIRECTIONS

1. In a medium bowl, toss together beans, tomatoes, scallions, oil, and lemon juice; season with salt and pepper.
2. To store, refrigerate up to 1 day.

## French Potato Salad

### INGREDIENTS

- 2 1/2 pounds fingerling or small new potatoes, halved (quartered if large)
- Coarse salt and ground pepper
- 1/4 cup olive oil
- 3 tablespoons Dijon mustard
- 2 tablespoons sherry vinegar
- 1 small shallot, minced (2 tablespoons)
- 3 tablespoons chopped fresh parsley
- 1 teaspoon chopped fresh thyme
- 1/4 small red onion, sliced

### DIRECTIONS

1. Place potatoes in a large pot; cover with cold water by 1 inch and season generously with salt. Bring to a boil; reduce to a simmer and cook until potatoes are tender, about 15 minutes. Run under cold water to cool slightly, then drain.
2. Meanwhile, in a large bowl, whisk together oil, mustard, vinegar, shallot, parsley, and thyme; season with salt and pepper. Add potatoes and onion and toss to combine. Serve at room temperature. To store, refrigerate, up to overnight.



## Cucumber and Sweet-Onion Salad

### INGREDIENTS

- 3 English cucumbers, halved lengthwise and thinly sliced on the diagonal
- 1 medium sweet onion, such as Vidalia, halved and thinly sliced
- 1/2 cup fresh dill, coarsely chopped
- 3 tablespoons olive oil
- 3 tablespoons fresh lemon juice
- 2 tablespoons vinegar
- Coarse salt and ground pepper

### DIRECTIONS

1. In a large bowl, toss together cucumbers, onion, dill, oil, lemon juice, and vinegar; season with salt and pepper.
2. In a large bowl, toss together cucumbers, onion, dill, oil, lemon juice, and vinegar; season with salt and pepper.



## Minted Watermelon Salad

### INGREDIENTS

- 1 small (2 1/2 pounds) seedless red watermelon
- 1 small (2 1/2 pounds) seedless yellow watermelon
- 2 ounces ricotta salata
- 1/2 teaspoon coarse sea salt, preferably Maldon
- 3 tablespoons sliced fresh mint

### DIRECTIONS

1. Using a sharp knife, cut off rinds from watermelons. (You should have a total of 2 pounds peeled fruit.) Quarter each melon, and then cut into 3-inch-long, 1/4-inch-thick slices. Arrange slices on a serving platter.
2. Using a vegetable peeler, shave paper-thin slices of ricotta salata over watermelon. Sprinkle with salt and mint, and serve immediately.



## Cherry Tomato Salad

### INGREDIENTS

- 2 tablespoons vinegar
- 1 tablespoon olive oil
- Coarse salt and ground pepper
- 2 pints cherry or grape tomatoes, halved
- 1/4 cup finely chopped red onion
- 2 tablespoons finely chopped fresh parsley

### DIRECTIONS

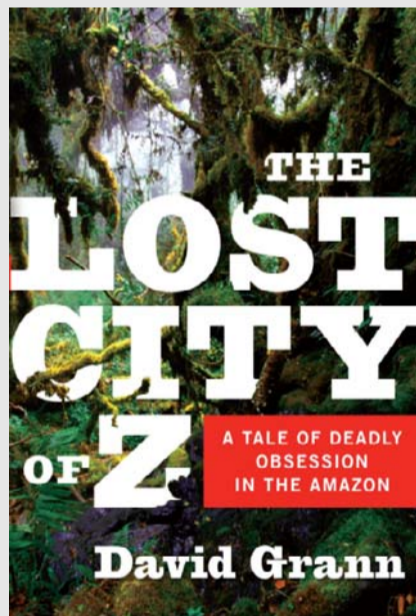
1. In a medium bowl, whisk together vinegar, olive oil, 1/2 teaspoon salt, and 1/8 teaspoon pepper until combined and thickened. Add tomatoes, red onion, and parsley; toss to combine all ingredients.





# Best books to read (before they become movies)

There are always going to be books that are being made into movies, and we love to read them before they get the big-screen treatment as much as you do. If you like being able to say the book was better (isn't it always?), then we have some novels to dive into. Read through and see which books you need to add to your shelf ó before they get to the theater.



## The Lost City of Z by David Grann

**What it's about:** In this true tale, Grann tells the story of how British explorer Percy Fawcett got lost searching for an ancient, fabled civilization in the Amazon in 1925.

**Who's starring:** Charlie Hunnam will play Fawcett, and Robert Pattinson and Sienna Miller will costar in the film, which will be directed by James Gray.



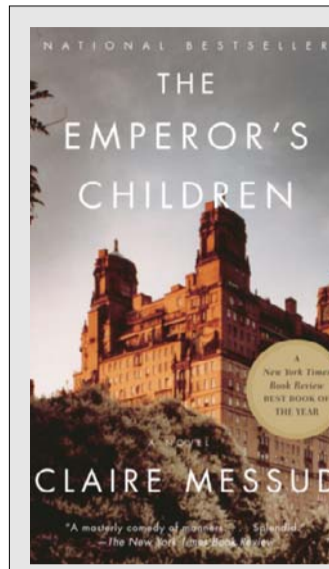
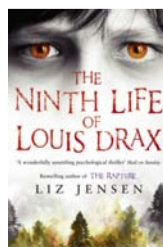
## Get Her Off the Pitch by Lynne Truss

**What it's about:** Despite the fact that she knows nothing about sports, the author is sent to cover the World Cup - and ends up writing about major sports events, which affects both her work and her personal life.

## The Ninth Life of Louis Drax by Liz Jensen

**What it's about:** This sci-fi thriller follows a young boy after he suffers a near-fatal fall on his ninth birthday.

**Who's starring:** Aaron Paul is playing Peter, and Jamie Dornan is playing Dr. Pascal.



## The Emperor's Children by Claire Messud

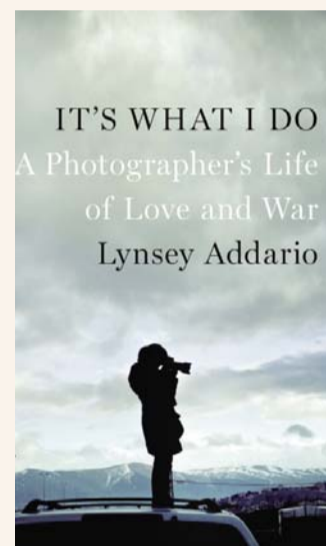
**What it's about:** The dramedy follows three Brown University graduates in an examination of their lives after 9/11.

**Who's starring:** Jeff Bridges will play Thwaiter, and Lake Bell will direct the adaptation.

## It's What I Do by Lynsey Addario

**What it's about:** War photographer Lynsey Addario recounts her exploits in wartime and battle-ridden places like Afghanistan.

**Who's starring:** Jennifer Lawrence will play Lynsey, and Steven Spielberg will direct.



## Six Years by Harlan Coben

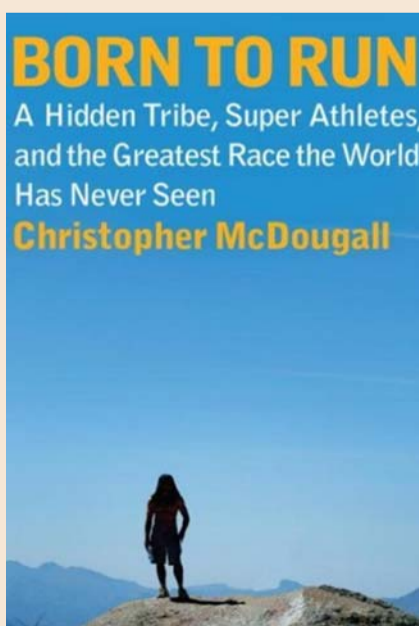
**What it's about:** The recently released book tells the story of Jake, a man who seeks out the love of his life when her husband passes away, only to find that the widow at the funeral isn't actually her.

**Who's starring:** Hugh Jackman will star in the film adaptation.

## Born to Run by Christopher McDougall

**What it's about:** A journalist examines extreme runners to figure out how the Tarahumara Indians were able to run for miles - and often barefoot - without injury.

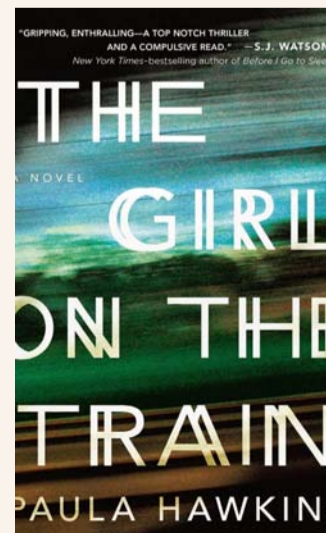
**Who's starring:** Matthew McConaughey is set to star.

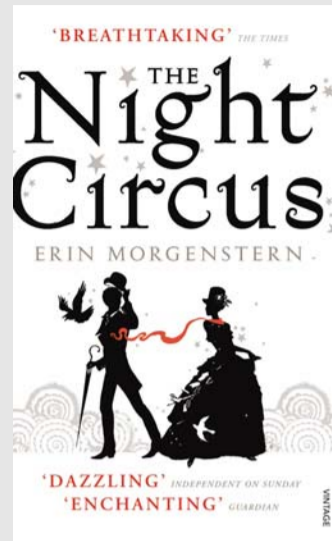


## The Girl on the Train by Paula Hawkins

**What it's about:** In this mystery, a woman thinks she may know something about a crime involving a couple she sees on her train commute every day.

**Who's starring:** Emily Blunt is starring, and The Help's Tate Taylor is directing.



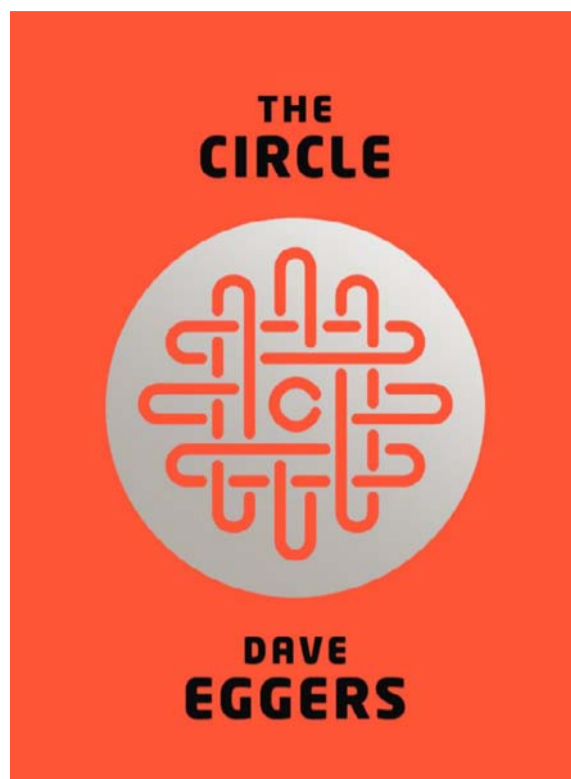


## The Night Circus

by Erin Morgenstern

**What it's about:** The magical series follows two magicians who compete in a mysterious circus that runs from nightfall to dawn.

**Who's starring:** There hasn't been any casting news yet, but Jane Eyre writer Moira Buffini will pen the script.

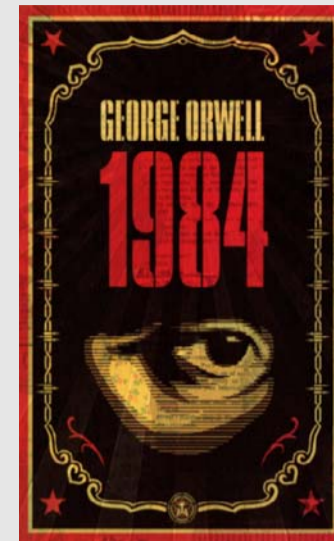


## The Circle

by Dave Eggers

**What it's about:** A young woman, Mae Holland, takes a job at a Google-like tech company, where she quickly climbs the corporate ladder.

**Who's starring:** Emma Watson is starring as Mae, alongside Tom Hanks. James Ponsoldt is directing



1984

by George Orwell

**What it's about:** This high school reading classic explores a dystopian society in which a totalitarian government, AKA Big Brother, lords over the nation.

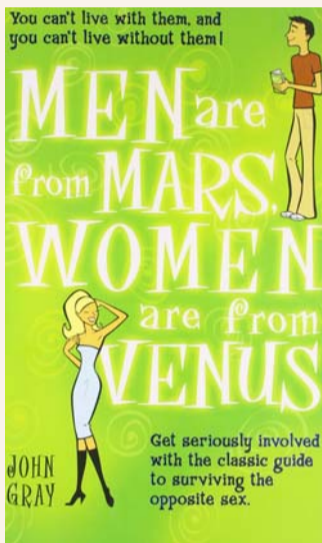
**Who's starring:** No one has been cast yet, but Paul Greengrass is directing.

## Men Are From Mars, Women Are From Venus

by John Gray

**What it's about:** This bestseller argues that the most common relationship problems can be attributed to fundamental personality differences between guys and girls.

**Who's starring:** Reese Witherspoon is set to headline the film.

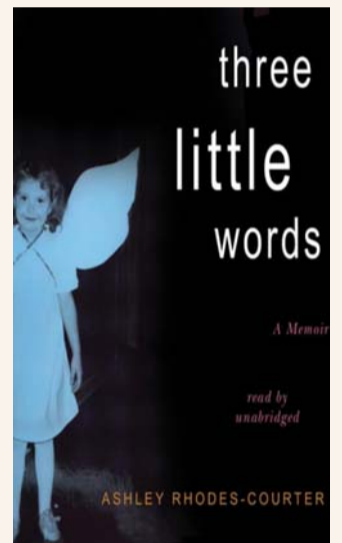


## Three Little Words

by Ashley Rhodes-Courter

**What it's about:** It's the true story of Ashley, a woman who spent nine years in the foster care system, moving between nine homes and struggling to find herself in a difficult, abusive world.

**Who's starring:** Reese Witherspoon will star in the film adaptation, and Amanda Seyfried is set to costar.

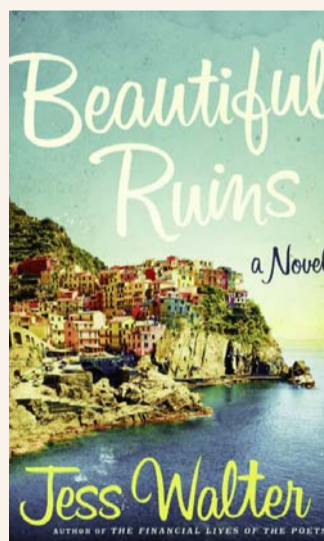


## The Great Gilly Hopkins

by Katherine Paterson

**What it's about:** A young foster girl, Gilly, idolizes her real mother and attempts to reunite with her.

**Who's starring:** The Book Thief's Sophie Nélisse will play Gilly, with Julia Stiles as her mom.

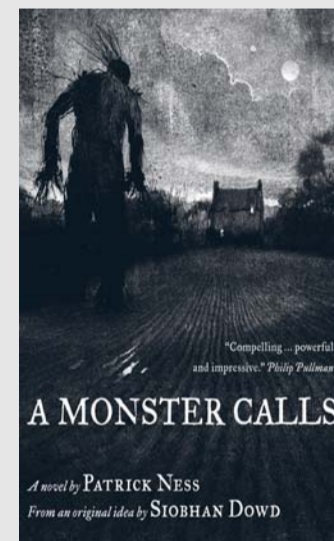


## Beautiful Ruins

by Jess Walter

**What it's about:** Spanning decades, the book kicks off in 1962 on the Italian coast, following the ups and downs of a love affair that ends in Hollywood years later.

**Who's starring:** Imogen Poots will play Dee Moray, and Todd Field will direct the film adaptation.



## A Monster Calls

by Patrick Ness

**What it's about:** A young boy deals with bullying and his mother's illness by inventing a fantasy world filled with monsters and other creatures.

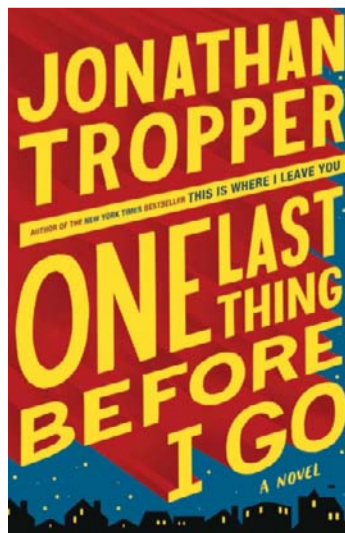
**Who's starring:** Felicity Jones will play Mum, with Liam Neeson and Sigourney Weaver costarring.

## One Last Thing Before I Go

by Jonathan Tropper

**What it's about:** When Drew finds out he'll need a life-saving heart surgery, he decides not to have the operation, choosing instead to live in the moment and reconnect with his estranged daughter.

**Who's starring:** There hasn't been any casting news yet, but Mike Nichols is set to direct the film.

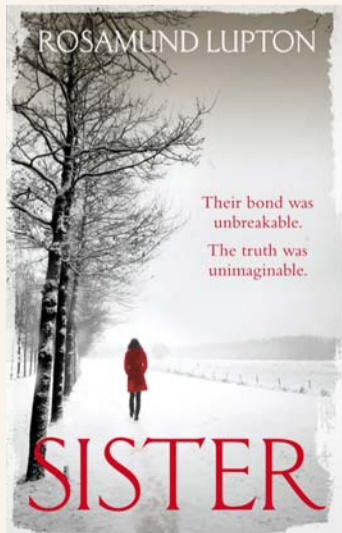


## Sister

by Rosamund Lupton

**What it's about:** A London woman, Beatrice, investigates her young sister's death, which was ruled a suicide.

**Who's starring:** Emily Blunt will play Beatrice.



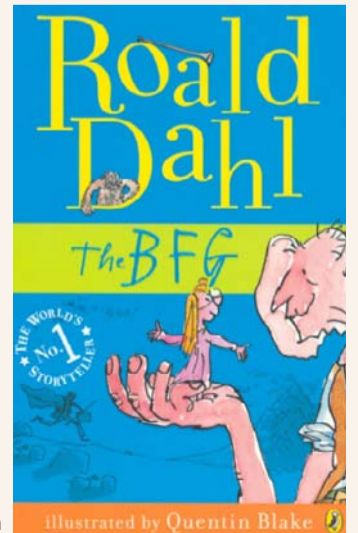
## The BFG

by Roald Dahl

**What it's about:** In the children's classic, a young girl, Sophie, befriends the titular big friendly giant.

**Who's starring:** Bill Hader is playing the Giant, and Steven Spielberg will direct the live-action adaptation.

— [www.popsugar.com](http://www.popsugar.com)



**Friday Times**

FRIDAY, DECEMBER 18, 2015

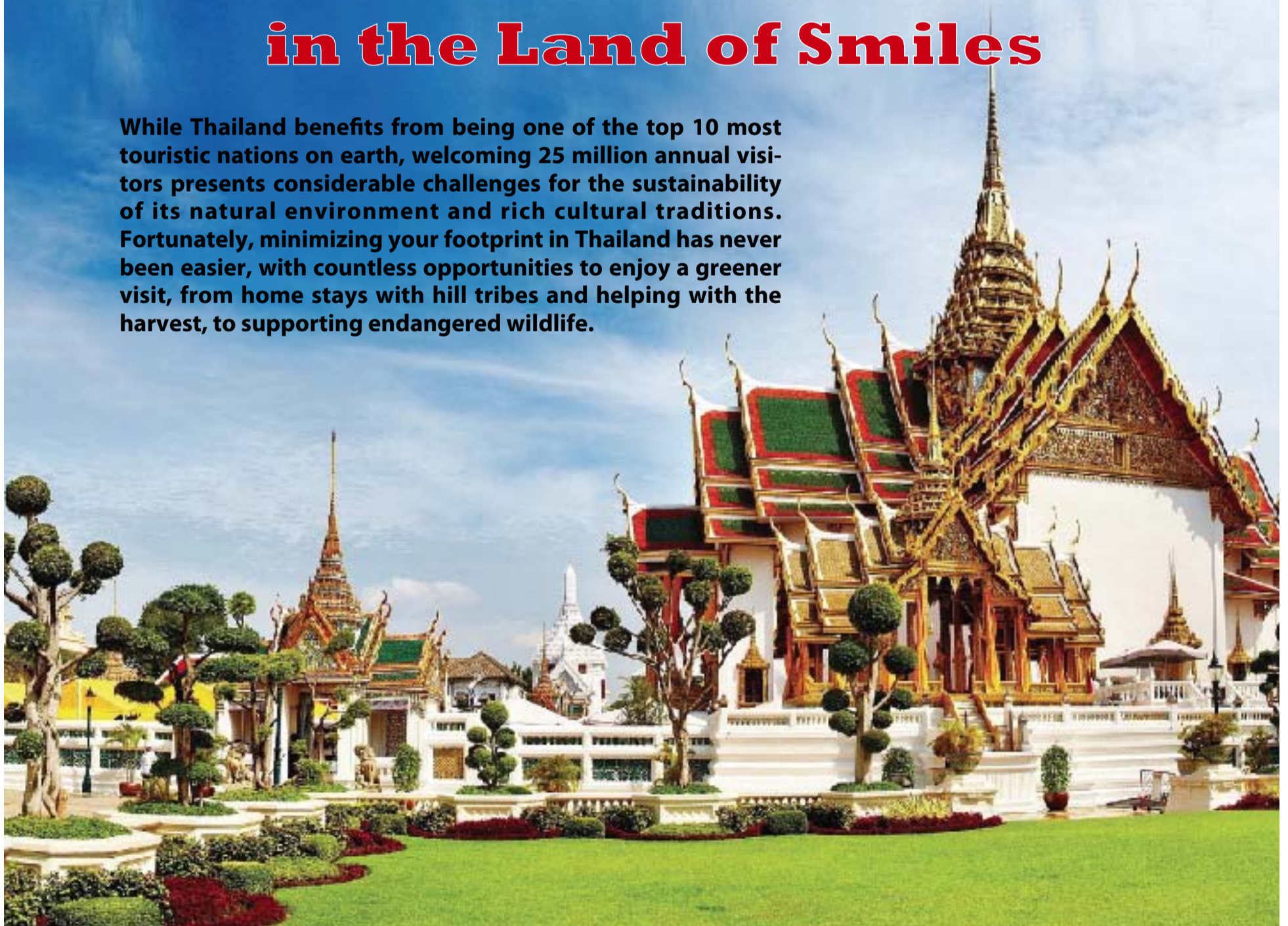
# Travel



## Thailand's ecotourism

**Sustainable travel  
in the Land of Smiles**

While Thailand benefits from being one of the top 10 most touristic nations on earth, welcoming 25 million annual visitors presents considerable challenges for the sustainability of its natural environment and rich cultural traditions. Fortunately, minimizing your footprint in Thailand has never been easier, with countless opportunities to enjoy a greener visit, from home stays with hill tribes and helping with the harvest, to supporting endangered wildlife.





### Green spaces

There is perhaps no better way to appreciate Thailand than its raw, natural state, and with more than 100 national parks dotted around the country, there are plenty of options to do so. The kingdom's first protected swathe of jungle, Kho Yai National Park, is also its most popular. With around 50 kilometers of hiking trails, you can choose from easy rambles to more challenging multi-day treks led by a park ranger. The park is home to a vast expanse of increasingly rare monsoon rainforest and some of Thailand's last remaining wild tigers, gibbons and elephants. And with almost 400 species of bird, it's a twitcher's paradise.

Khao Sok National Park in southern Thailand is another top pick. One of the oldest evergreen rainforests in the world, it also provides a haven for a host of wildlife, including Asian black bears, leopards and several species of monkey. Many of these animals are notoriously elusive, but there is plenty more to see - set on the eastern slopes of the Tenasserin Mountain Range, the park's heavy rainfall creates spectacular waterfalls.

The inspiration behind cult backpacker film *The Beach*, Ang Thong National Marine Park is an archipelago of 42 jewel-like islands and limestone karsts, around 30 kilometers

west of Ko Samui. Once a hangout for pirates, its pristine beaches and coral reefs are now protected and a shelter for dolphins and sea otters, as well as birds, including swiftlets, whose homes are the main ingredient in bird's nest soup. For more information on Thailand's parks see Department of National Parks ([dnp.go.th/parkreserve](http://dnp.go.th/parkreserve)).

When visiting national parks in Thailand or elsewhere, be sure to take out everything you bring in, and resist the temptation to pocket a souvenir (including seashells) or feed wild animals, which can make them aggressive (especially monkeys).

### Wildlife spotting and interactions

For many years, riding an elephant in Thailand was synonymous with the visitor experience. However, there is now growing evidence to prove that the practice is harmful for the pachyderms, with elephant charities comparing it with poaching and the ivory trade in terms of impact. While nothing beats the thrill of spotting an elephant in the wild, fortunately there are a growing number of elephant sanctuaries in Thailand that offer more ethical interactions such as walking with and bathing the gentle giants. For a roundup of Thailand's more sustainable operators, see Lonely Planet's guide to interacting ethically



with elephants in Thailand. If you've always wanted to get up close and personal with a tiger, it's also worth reading up on the disturbing animal welfare issues involved. Animal welfare groups have condemned popular Thai operations such as Tiger Temple (Kanchanaburi) and Tiger Kingdom (Phuket), and called for the animals to be housed in much larger enclosures and to stop all physi-

cal contact between them and visitors. Often billed as 'sanctuaries', tiger petting zoos have not only been linked with the illegal wildlife trade and animal abuse, but also present great risk to visitors - an Australian tourist was seriously mauled at Tiger Kingdom in 2014, while a monk was attacked by a tiger in his 'care' at the Tiger Temple in 2015.

Thailand's gibbons have also paid the price for what many tourists consider a harmless happy snap - more than half of Thailand's white-handed gibbon population has been wiped out in the past 30 years, with babies taken from their mothers to be kept as pets and pimped out as photo props. The Gibbon Rehabilitation Project (GRP), set in tropical forest around the Bang Pae waterfall in Phuket, rescues abandoned and mistreated animals and helps them return to the freedom of the forest. Swing by to see these adorable, acrobatic gibbons in action before they're released (sadly, depending on their injuries, not all of them can be) or go a step further and volunteer with GRP or other local organizations, such as Soi Dog ([soidog.org](http://soidog.org)), also in Phuket. Asia's largest animal foundation, Soi Dog works with domestic animals and has sterilized and vaccinated over 81,500 dogs and cats to date, making Phuket officially rabies-free.





**Agrotourism**

Agriculture has been a major part of the Thai way of life for centuries. And thanks to a growing number of agrotourism projects, you can try your hand at everything from bringing home the catch-of-the-day to helping with the rice harvest. Doi Inthanon National Park in Chiang Mai Province is home to Thailand's highest peak and some of its most spectacular scenery. It's also home to one of the pioneering Royal Projects set up by King Bhumibol Adulyadej. His aim was to encourage the Karen Thai and Hmong hill tribes to switch from an opium crop to legal and more lucrative produce, and visitors wanting to help can

stay at the Royal Agricultural Station Inthanon ([royal-inthanon.com](http://royal-inthanon.com)) or at a homestay in a nearby village. At Chiang Rai's Ban Mae Chan Tai Agro-tourism Centre ([akhaama.com](http://akhaama.com)), the three-day Coffee Journey will take you from bean to cup, as well as giving you an insight into the lives of the coffee farmers. And on a tour of Jim Thompson Farm ([jimthompson-farm.com](http://jimthompson-farm.com)) in northeastern Thailand (held from mid-December to mid-January every year) you'll learn about the life cycle of the silkworms and the silk farming process.

**Eco-friendly accommodation**

Opting for a homestay over a big resort

(even for just a portion of your visit) will give you the chance to experience a more traditional way of life in Thailand. It also puts control over tourism back into the hands of the locals, along with your Baht (if organized through the right people). The Community Based Tourism Institute ([cbt-i.org](http://cbt-i.org)) has helped set up numerous homestay projects around the country, offering stays on a hill tribe farm in the north to a fishing village in the south. On the un-spoilt island of Koh Yao Noi, just a ferry-hop from Phuket, the project has helped fund a successful local conservation campaign, forcing factory ships to fish elsewhere.

Homestay accommodation can be basic

but you don't have to sacrifice luxury to be eco-friendly. Behind the five-star service at the Six Senses Yao Noi, there's an impressive sustainability program in place, including clean water, waste recycling, tree planting and educational projects.

Even among the skyscrapers of Bangkok you can find a sustainable place to stay. The Bangkok Tree House is a boutique hotel built on stilts on the island of Phra Pradaeng, known as the city's 'green lung', where you can cycle with the locals along raised walkways and enjoy a more relaxed slice of city life.

([www.lonelyplanet.com](http://www.lonelyplanet.com))



WORD SEARCH

Pet Dog

Find and circle all of the words that are hidden in the grid. The remaining 26 letters spell a secret message.

N D R E T A W O H O U S E G C  
H O F E E D C O L L A R S H L  
A R I S L I A N M I R T E I E  
R E L N B P O V K L A W C F A  
N V G G A L L S E N T K E Y S  
E O R F R P O A H O I T O L H  
S L O O K O M Y Y A C A U U E  
S L W O B S O O A H M F R P N  
U O L D T N C M C L H P E T I  
E R W A G T A I L T E E O O N  
N S E D O Y H A I R L N I O A  
J R A W T P P A W S B O N E C  
T U N H A P F D N E I R F E I  
O E M N C U G U A R D N A L K  
R L T P Y P H T A B I D T A G

- BARK FEED ID TAG PUPPY  
BATH FETCH JUMP ROLL OVER  
BONE FOOD KENNEL SHAMPOO  
BOWLS FRIEND LEASH SLEEP  
CANINE GROOM LICK TRAIN  
CHASE GROWL LOYAL TREATS  
CHEW TOY GUARD OWNER TRIM NAILS  
COLLAR HAIR PANT WAG TAIL  
COMPANION HARNESS PAWS WALK  
FAITHFUL HOUSE PLAY WATER

Yesterday's Solution

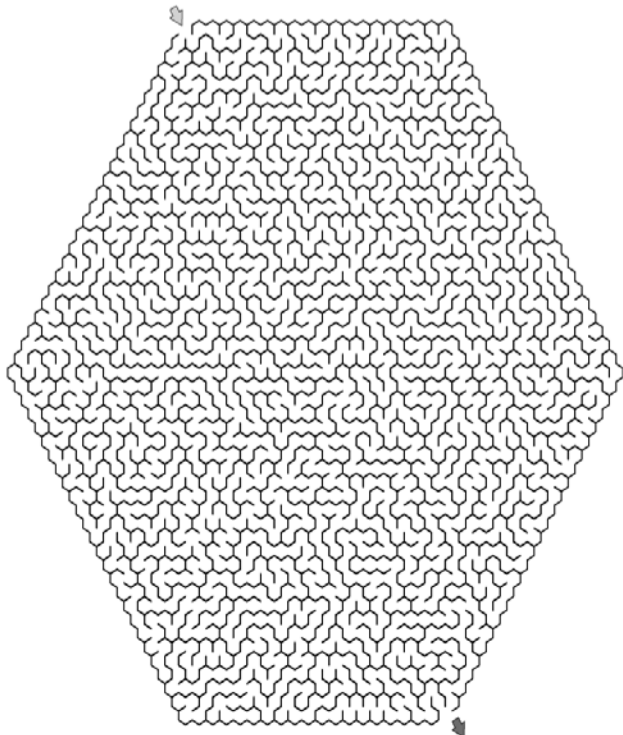
Old West 1

LLIHTOOBESROHWOLF A  
JUGGERKANSELTIRH A S I G  
OODDOPHHTTLEWCRIGH  
ROGGOPIFAARNIARTRP  
RNSMIRHIRHIAOOTOPT  
SBAIAGOPEDRUCLEIMUN  
ERTERNALMDEANKR I I Y O E R  
DOOARENELGGGLK E K K O E R T  
CAGUAE S A A I B U D O A C H E  
T I P O H T I P U L A N T M A B T O A K  
A R A K A L E A L W S L S Y L P S Y C K E  
T R O S H I O W A S H O R E F A L L B E R T  
D G N O O L A S S G W H E G D I D L L B R I F E  
N E B A N K E R M A M U R R I D L I B A Z L E  
A R L I V E S T O C K N A P I L E L E  
B T S H O P K E E P E R L E E E S

- BANKER FARRIER LAWMAN SALOON  
BARKEEP BARKEEP SHERIFF  
BILLY THE KID FURS MINER SHOPKEEPER  
BOOT HILL GOLD MINE OUTLAW GANG SITTING BULL  
BRAND GOLD PANNING PISTOL STAGECOACH  
CAMPFIRE GRAZE PLOW HORSE TELEGRAPH  
CATTLE DRIVE HIRED GUN POSSE TRACKER  
CHAPARRAL HOGS RAILROAD TRAIN  
COAL HOMESTEAD RANCH TRAIL  
CORRAL HOTEL RATTLE SNAKE UNDERTAKER  
COWBOY JUDGE RIFLE WATER TANK  
DOC HOLLIDAY LARIAT SADDLE WELL

The hidden message is: A GOOD HORSE MAKES SHORT MILES

CHALLENGING MAZE



CROSSWORD 1113

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	
15			16								17			
18			19			20								
21		22			23					24				
			25		26	27			28	29				
30	31	32								33		34	35	36
37							38	39	40				41	
42					43		44			45	46			
47					48	49			50		51			
52		53	54			55					56			
			57		58	59				61				
62	63	64			65	66				67	68	69	70	
71					72			73	74	75		76		
77					78	79		80			81		82	
83					84			85					86	
87					88									89

ACROSS

1. The elementary stages of any subject (usually plural).  
4. Resembling or characteristic of or appropriate to an elegy.  
11. Any small compartment.  
15. The longer of the two telegraphic signals used in Morse code.  
16. Small bitter fruit of the marasca cherry tree from whose juice maraschino liqueur is made.  
17. A member of the Siouan people inhabiting the valleys of the Platte and Missouri rivers in Nebraska.  
18. A flat wing-shaped process or winglike part of an organism.  
19. Title for a civil or military leader (especially in Turkey).  
20. An occurrence of something.  
21. English theoretical physicist who applied relativity theory to quantum mechanics and predicted the existence of antimatter and the positron (1902-1984).  
24. A member of the Pueblo people living in northern New Mexico.  
25. A woody climbing usually tropical plant.  
28. (British) An open river valley (in a hilly area).  
30. A member of a North American people formerly living in the Colorado river valley in Arizona.  
33. Desert shrub of Syria and Arabia having small white flowers.  
37. Rich in decorative detail.  
38. A particular geographical region of indefinite boundary (usually serving some special purpose or distinguished by its people or culture or geography).  
41. Water frozen in the solid state.  
42. Very small species of shrubs of southern hemisphere.  
44. A colorless and odorless inert gas.  
45. To fix or set securely or deeply.  
47. A chronic skin disease occurring primarily in women between the ages of 20 and 40.  
48. A landlocked mountainous republic in southeast central Asia north of Afghanistan.  
51. A river in northern England that flows southeast through West Yorkshire.  
52. A city in western Germany.  
55. Small European freshwater fish with a slender bluish-green body.  
56. A Chadic language spoken south of Lake Chad.  
57. In bed.  
60. An imaginary elephant that appears in a series of French books for children.  
62. A mark left by the healing of injured tissue.  
65. Airtight sealed metal container for food or drink or paint etc..  
67. The Mongol people living the the central and eastern parts of Outer Mongolia.  
71. On or toward the lee.  
72. A member of a North American Indian people of the Klamath river valley in northern California.  
76. A branch of the Tai languages.  
77. Capital and largest city of Iraq.  
80. Fig tree of India noted for great size and longevity.  
82. A master's degree in business.  
83. Being one more than two.  
84. A person with the same name as another.  
86. Tag the base runner to get him out.  
87. Resonance of protons to radiation in a magnetic field.  
88. The condition of having no arms.  
89. A loose sleeveless outer garment made from aba cloth.

DOWN

1. (Babylonian) God of storms and wind.  
2. An island in Indonesia east of Java.  
3. A human female who does housework.  
4. Cause to grow thin or weak.  
5. The act of slowing down or falling behind.  
6. A period marked by distinctive character or reckoned from a fixed point or event.  
7. A rare silvery (usually trivalent) metallic element.  
8. Goddess of fertility.  
9. (of complexion) Blemished by imperfections of the skin.  
10. Dried bark of the cascara buckthorn used as a laxative.  
11. A short close-fitting coat.  
12. An inactive volcano in Sicily.  
13. Informal or slang terms for mentally irregular.  
14. The sediment from fermentation of an alcoholic beverage.  
22. Lessen the intensity of.  
23. Type genus of the Majidae.  
26. Someone who copies the words or behavior of another.  
27. A silvery soft waxy metallic element of the alkali metal group.  
29. A white soft metallic element that tarnishes readily.  
31. A mountain range in western Russia extending from the arctic to the Caspian Sea.  
32. A mountain range in South America running 5000 miles along the Pacific coast.  
34. The inner and thicker of the two bones of the human leg between the knee and ankle.  
35. Sour or bitter in taste.  
36. (Greek mythology) A princess of Colchis who aided Jason in taking the Golden Fleece from her father.  
39. The seventh month of the Moslem calendar.  
40. Any plant of the genus Erica.  
43. A highly unstable radioactive element (the heaviest of the halogen series).  
46. A state in southeastern India on the Bay of Bengal (south of Andhra Pradesh).  
49. A public promotion of some product or service.  
50. God of the earth.  
53. Worn or shabby from overuse or (of pages) from having corners turned down.  
54. A soft gray ductile metallic element used in alloys.  
58. An international organization of European countries formed after World War II to reduce trade barriers and increase cooperation among its members.  
59. East Indian tree bearing a profusion of intense vermilion velvet-textured blooms and yielding a yellow dye.  
61. A state in northwestern North America.  
63. An assertion of a right (as to money or property).  
64. A high wave (often dangerous) caused by tidal flow (as by colliding tidal currents or in a narrow estuary).  
66. Greek mythology.  
68. A genus of Lamnidae.  
69. Cubes of meat marinated and cooked on a skewer usually with vegetables.  
70. Jordan's port.  
73. (computer science) A kind of computer architecture that has a relatively small set of computer instructions that it can perform.  
74. Large elliptical brightly colored deep-sea fish of Atlantic and Pacific and Mediterranean.  
75. Small deciduous Asiatic tree bearing large red or orange edible astringent fruit.  
78. (Irish) Mother of the ancient Irish gods.  
79. A light touch or stroke.  
81. A unit of length of thread or yarn.  
85. A form of address for a man.

Yesterday's Solution

B	O	O		A	L	E	C	O	S	T		L	A	S	H			
A	P	C		B	U	C	H	L	O	E		A	K	H	A			
A	E	C		A	N	C	I	E	N	T		B	A	I	L			
S	C	A	B		A	M	M	O		R	H	I	N	A	L			
				M	R		C		E		B	A	A	L				
B	B			I	Y	Y	A	R			I	O	N	E	S	C	O	
Y	E	N	T	A			B	A	S	S					P	O	W	
P	L	A	S	M			B	L	I	T	Z		C	R	A	N		
A	I	D		A	D	O		G	R	A	P	H	I	T	E			
S	K	I	L	L	E	T			N	O	N	R	I	G	I	D		
T	E	R	E	T	E			O			T	O	N					
				A	U	D	A	D			M	A	T	O	A	K	A	
A	T	A	R				D	E	F	A	C	E			R	E	D	
K	A	N	N	A	D	A			A	T		A	M	E	B	A		
E	R	N			N	O	G	U	C	H	I			S	C	A	N	
E	P	A					T	H	E	R	E	S	A		B	A	B	A

Daily SuDoku

		5	7	4	9			
				8		1		
	4		5	2				8
						1		7
	2						4	
3		9						
4				7	2			6
	1		8					
		2	4		9	8		

Yesterday's Solution

8	9	3	4	2	1	7	5	6
2	1	7	3	5	6	9	4	8
5	4	6	8	7	9	3	2	1
7	3	8	2	9	5	1	6	4
9	6	5	1	4	8	2	7	3
1	2	4	7	6	3	8	9	5
6	8	2	5	1	7	4	3	9
4	5	1	9	3	2	6	8	7
3	7	9	6	8	4	5	1	2



00:20 Fast N' Loud  
 01:10 Predators Up Close With Joel Lambert  
 02:00 Deadly Islands  
 02:50 Amish Mafia  
 03:40 Auction Hunters  
 04:05 Property Wars  
 04:30 Storage Hunters UK  
 05:00 Americarna  
 05:30 How It's Made  
 06:00 Dynamo: Magician Impossible  
 06:50 Mythbusters  
 07:40 The Carbonaro Effect  
 08:05 The Carbonaro Effect  
 08:30 You Have Been Warned  
 09:20 Ed Stafford: Into The Unknown  
 10:10 Dual Survival  
 11:00 Predators Up Close With Joel Lambert  
 11:50 Deadly Islands  
 12:40 Cuban Chrome  
 13:30 Misfit Garage  
 14:20 Wheeler Dealers  
 15:10 Cuban Chrome  
 16:00 Cuban Chrome  
 16:50 Cuban Chrome  
 17:40 Cuban Chrome  
 18:30 Cuban Chrome  
 19:20 Cuban Chrome  
 20:10 Manhunt With Joel Lambert  
 21:00 Misfit Garage  
 21:50 Wheeler Dealers  
 22:40 Cuban Chrome  
 23:30 Outlaw Empires

05:45 The Hive  
 05:50 Mouk  
 06:00 Lolirock  
 06:25 Hank Zipzer  
 06:50 Girl Meets World  
 07:15 H2O: Just Add Water  
 07:40 H2O: Just Add Water  
 08:05 Austin & Ally  
 08:30 Austin & Ally  
 08:55 Sabrina: Secrets Of A Teenage Witch  
 09:20 Sabrina: Secrets Of A Teenage Witch  
 09:45 Jessie  
 10:10 Jessie  
 10:35 Teen Beach 2  
 12:20 Hank Zipzer  
 12:45 I Didn't Do It  
 13:10 I Didn't Do It  
 13:35 Liv And Maddie  
 14:00 Liv And Maddie  
 14:30 H2O: Just Add Water  
 14:55 First Class Chefs  
 15:20 Austin & Ally  
 15:45 Austin & Ally  
 16:10 Violetta  
 17:00 I Love Violetta  
 17:10 An Extremely Goofy Movie  
 18:30 Miraculous: Tales Of Ladybug And Cat Noir  
 18:55 Frozen Fever  
 19:05 H2O: Just Add Water  
 19:30 Violetta  
 20:20 I Love Violetta  
 20:30 The Princess Diaries 2: Royal Engagement  
 22:25 Sabrina: Secrets Of A Teenage Witch  
 22:50 Sabrina: Secrets Of A Teenage Witch  
 23:10 Wolfblood  
 23:35 Wolfblood

04:20 Calimero  
 04:35 Zou  
 04:45 Loopedidoo  
 05:00 Art Attack  
 05:25 Henry Hugglemonster  
 05:35 Calimero  
 05:50 Zou  
 06:00 Loopedidoo  
 06:15 Art Attack  
 06:35 Henry Hugglemonster  
 06:50 Calimero  
 07:00 Zou  
 07:20 Loopedidoo  
 07:35 Art Attack  
 08:00 Calimero  
 08:10 Zou  
 08:25 Limon And Oli  
 08:35 Jake And The Neverland Pirates  
 09:05 Sofia The First  
 09:30 Mickey Mouse Clubhouse  
 10:00 Mickey Mouse Clubhouse  
 10:30 Doc McStuffins  
 11:00 Sofia The First  
 11:30 Jake And The Never Land Pirates  
 11:55 Miles From Tomorrow  
 12:25 Henry Hugglemonster  
 12:55 Loopedidoo  
 13:10 Sheriff Callie's Wild West  
 13:35 Mickey Mouse Clubhouse  
 14:00 Sofia The First  
 14:30 Henry Hugglemonster  
 14:45 Calimero  
 15:00 Doc McStuffins  
 15:30 Zou  
 15:45 Mickey Mouse Clubhouse  
 16:15 Sofia The First  
 16:45 Jake And The Never Land Pirates  
 17:10 Aladdin  
 17:40 Adventures Of The Gummi Bears  
 18:10 Chip n Dale Rescue Rangers  
 18:40 Jake And The Never Land Pirates  
 18:55 Cars Toons  
 19:00 Miles From Tomorrow  
 19:30 Sofia The First  
 19:55 Doc McStuffins  
 20:15 Jake And The Never Land Pirates  
 20:45 Sheriff Callie's Wild West  
 21:05 Mickey Mouse Clubhouse  
 21:35 Sofia The First  
 22:00 Aladdin  
 22:30 Adventures Of The Gummi Bears  
 23:00 Chip n Dale Rescue Rangers  
 23:30 Lilo & Stitch

01:25 Keeping Up With The Kardashians  
 02:20 E! News  
 03:15 Giuliana & Bill  
 04:10 E! Entertainment Special  
 05:05 E! Entertainment Special  
 06:00 Keeping Up With The Kardashians  
 06:55 Keeping Up With The Kardashians  
 07:50 Style Star  
 08:20 E! News  
 09:15 Giuliana & Bill  
 10:15 Giuliana & Bill  
 11:10 The Grace Helbig Show  
 11:35 The Grace Helbig Show  
 12:05 E! News  
 13:05 Christina Milian Turned Up  
 14:05 Keeping Up With The Kardashians  
 15:00 Keeping Up With The Kardashians  
 16:00 Dash Dolls  
 17:00 Dash Dolls  
 18:00 E! News  
 19:00 Hollywood Cycle  
 20:00 WAGs  
 21:00 Fashion Bloggers  
 21:30 Fashion Bloggers  
 22:00 E! News  
 23:00 House Of DVF



00:00 Diners, Drive-Ins And Dives  
 00:30 Diners, Drive-Ins And Dives  
 01:00 Rev Run's Sunday Suppers  
 01:30 Rev Run's Sunday Suppers  
 02:00 Siba's Table  
 02:30 Siba's Table  
 03:00 Man Fire Food  
 03:30 Man Fire Food  
 04:00 Diners, Drive-Ins And Dives  
 04:30 Diners, Drive-Ins And Dives  
 05:00 Guy's Grocery Games  
 06:00 Chopped  
 07:00 Roadtrip With G. Garvin  
 07:30 Roadtrip With G. Garvin  
 08:00 Chopped  
 09:00 Guy's Grocery Games  
 10:00 The Kitchen  
 11:00 Barefoot Contessa: Back To Basics  
 11:30 Barefoot Contessa: Back To Basics  
 12:00 Chopped  
 13:00 Guy's Big Bite  
 13:30 Guy's Big Bite  
 14:00 Diners, Drive-Ins And Dives  
 14:30 Diners, Drive-Ins And Dives  
 15:00 Roadtrip With G. Garvin  
 15:30 Roadtrip With G. Garvin  
 16:00 Chopped  
 17:00 The Kitchen

18:00 Jenny And Reza's Fabulous Food Academy  
 18:30 Grandma's Secret Cookbook  
 19:00 Chopped  
 20:00 Guy's Grocery Games  
 21:00 Follow Donal... To Vietnam  
 21:30 Follow Donal... To Vietnam  
 22:00 Bite This With Nadia G  
 22:30 Bite This With Nadia G  
 23:00 Girl Eat World  
 23:30 Girl Eat World



01:05 Autopsy: The Last Hours Of...  
 02:00 Emmerdale  
 02:25 Coach Trip  
 02:55 Coronation Street  
 03:25 Midsomer Murders  
 05:15 Come Date With Me Australia  
 05:40 Come Date With Me Australia  
 06:10 Autopsy: The Last Hours Of...  
 07:05 Coronation Street  
 07:30 Midsomer Murders  
 09:20 Peter Andre's 60 Minute Makeover  
 10:10 Autopsy: The Last Hours Of...  
 11:05 Derren Brown - The Great Art Robbery  
 12:30 Come Date With Me Australia  
 12:55 Come Date With Me Australia  
 13:25 Emmerdale  
 13:50 Emmerdale  
 14:20 Coronation Street  
 14:45 Peter Andre's 60 Minute Makeover  
 15:35 The Chase: Celebrity Specials  
 16:30 Paul O'Grady: For The Love Of Dogs  
 17:00 Paul O'Grady: For The Love Of Dogs  
 17:25 The Syndicate  
 18:20 Come Date With Me Australia  
 19:10 Coronation Street  
 19:35 The Chase: Celebrity Specials  
 20:30 Paul O'Grady: For The Love Of Dogs  
 21:00 Paul O'Grady: For The Love Of Dogs  
 21:25 The Syndicate  
 22:20 Coronation Street  
 22:50 Emmerdale  
 23:15 Emmerdale  
 23:40 Derren Brown - The Great Art



00:10 Ultimate Airport Dubai  
 01:00 The Border  
 02:00 Engineering Connections  
 02:55 Megastructures  
 03:50 Ultimate Airport Dubai

04:45 Man V. Viral  
 05:40 Hard Time  
 06:35 Inside Cocaine Wars  
 07:30 Dog Whisperer  
 08:25 Inside Combat Rescue  
 09:20 Man V. Viral  
 10:15 Locked Up Abroad  
 11:10 Ancient X-Files  
 12:05 Cosmos: A Spacetime Odyssey  
 13:00 Inside Combat Rescue  
 14:00 Dog Whisperer  
 15:00 Wild Case Files  
 16:00 Locked Up Abroad  
 17:00 Ancient X-Files  
 18:00 Survive The Tribe  
 19:00 Wild Case Files  
 20:00 Drugs Inc  
 20:50 Ancient X-Files  
 21:40 Survive The Tribe  
 22:30 Wild Case Files  
 23:20 Hard Time



00:10 The Food Files  
 00:35 A Marriage Of Flavours  
 01:00 Hook It, Cook It  
 01:25 Hook It, Cook It  
 01:50 Food School  
 02:15 The Food Files  
 02:40 Ariana's Persian Kitchen  
 03:05 Ariana's Persian Kitchen  
 03:30 Tales From The Bush Larder  
 03:55 Eat Street  
 04:20 Hotel India  
 05:10 Dream Cruises  
 06:00 Food School  
 06:25 The Food Files  
 06:50 Hook It, Cook It  
 07:15 Hook It, Cook It  
 07:40 Food School  
 08:05 The Food Files  
 08:30 Ariana's Persian Kitchen  
 08:55 Ariana's Persian Kitchen  
 09:20 Tales From The Bush Larder  
 09:45 Eat Street  
 10:10 Hotel India  
 11:00 Dream Cruises  
 11:50 Food School  
 12:15 The Food Files  
 12:40 David Rocco's Dolce Vita  
 13:05 Hook It, Cook It  
 13:35 My Sri Lanka With Peter Kuruvita  
 14:30 Ariana's Persian Kitchen  
 14:55 Ariana's Persian Kitchen  
 15:25 Tales From The Bush Larder  
 15:50 Eat Street  
 16:20 The Peninsula: The Making Of A Gala  
 17:15 Dream Cruises  
 18:10 The Great Food Revolution  
 19:05 Ariana's Persian Kitchen  
 19:30 Tales From The Bush Larder  
 20:00 Eat Street  
 20:25 The Peninsula: The Making Of A Gala  
 21:15 Dream Cruises  
 22:05 The Great Food Revolution  
 22:55 David Rocco's Dolce Vita  
 23:20 Hook It, Cook It  
 23:45 My Sri Lanka With Peter Kuruvita



00:20 72 Dangerous Animals Australia  
 01:10 Ultimate Animal Countdown  
 02:00 Game Of Lions  
 02:50 Built For The Kill  
 03:45 The Incredible Dr. Pol  
 04:40 Secret Life Of Predators  
 05:35 Game Of Lions  
 06:30 Built For The Kill  
 07:25 The Incredible Dr. Pol  
 08:20 World's Wildest Encounters  
 09:15 Wild Russia  
 10:10 Wild Cambodia  
 11:05 Ultimate Animal Countdown  
 12:00 Fish Warrior  
 12:55 Ultimate Animal Countdown  
 13:50 I, Predator  
 14:45 The Incredible Dr. Pol  
 15:40 World's Wildest Encounters  
 16:35 Wild Mississippi  
 17:30 Elephant Queen  
 18:25 Ultimate Animal Countdown  
 19:20 The Incredible Dr. Pol  
 20:10 World's Wildest Encounters  
 21:00 Wild Mississippi  
 21:50 Elephant Queen  
 22:40 Ultimate Animal Countdown  
 23:30 Fish Warrior



00:35 Mythbusters  
 01:20 How It's Made  
 01:44 How It's Made  
 02:08 How The Universe Works  
 02:55 What Could Possibly Go Wrong?  
 03:42 How The Universe Works  
 04:29 Mythbusters  
 05:16 How The Universe Works  
 06:03 What Could Possibly Go Wrong?  
 06:50 Nyc: Inside Out  
 07:37 How It's Made  
 08:00 How It's Made  
 08:23 Mythbusters  
 09:08 How The Universe Works  
 09:53 Nyc: Inside Out  
 10:38 How It's Made  
 11:00 How It's Made  
 11:23 Strip The Cosmos  
 12:08 What Could Possibly Go Wrong?  
 12:53 Nyc: Inside Out  
 13:38 Mythbusters  
 14:23 How It's Made  
 14:46 How It's Made  
 15:10 How The Universe Works  
 15:57 Strip The Cosmos  
 16:44 What Could Possibly Go Wrong?  
 17:31 Nyc: Inside Out  
 18:18 How The Universe Works  
 19:05 Mythbusters  
 19:50 Mighty Ships  
 20:40 What Could Possibly Go Wrong?  
 21:25 How It's Made  
 21:50 How It's Made  
 22:15 How The Universe Works  
 23:00 Mighty Ships  
 23:45 What Could Possibly Go Wrong?

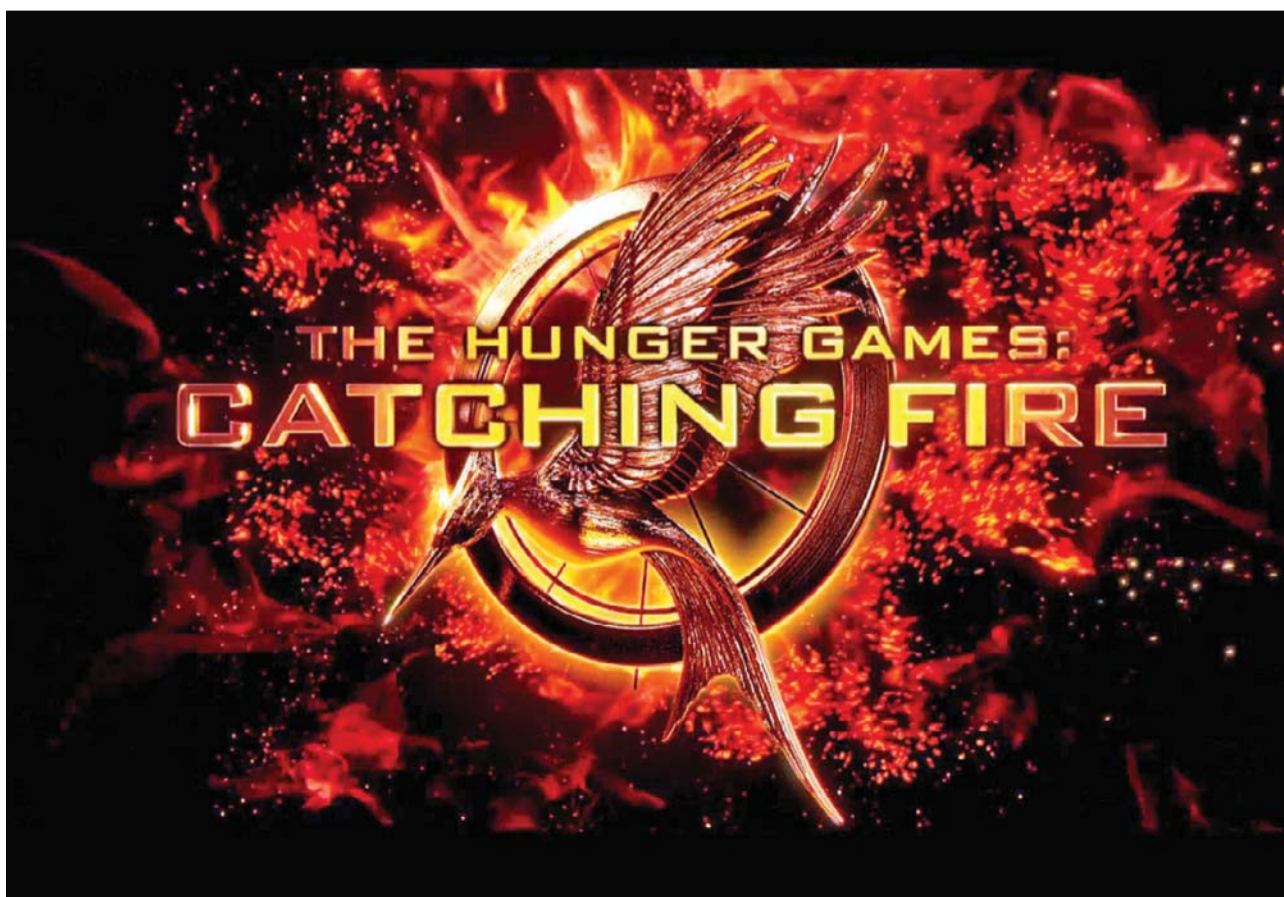


00:00 Violetta  
 00:45 The Hive  
 00:50 Sabrina: Secrets Of A Teenage Witch  
 01:15 Sabrina: Secrets Of A Teenage Witch  
 01:40 Wolfblood  
 02:05 Wolfblood  
 02:30 Violetta  
 03:15 The Hive  
 03:20 Sabrina: Secrets Of A Teenage Witch  
 03:45 Sabrina: Secrets Of A Teenage Witch  
 04:10 Wolfblood  
 04:35 Wolfblood  
 05:00 Violetta



00:00 Nina Needs To Go  
 00:05 Henry Hugglemonster  
 00:20 Calimero  
 00:35 Zou  
 00:50 Loopedidoo  
 01:05 Art Attack  
 01:30 Henry Hugglemonster  
 01:45 Calimero  
 02:00 Zou  
 02:15 Loopedidoo  
 02:30 Art Attack  
 02:55 Henry Hugglemonster  
 03:05 Calimero  
 03:20 Zou  
 03:30 Loopedidoo  
 03:45 Art Attack  
 04:10 Henry Hugglemonster

00:00 Christina Milian Turned Up  
 00:55 The Grace Helbig Show



THE HUNGER GAMES: CATCHING FIRE ON OSN MOVIES ACTION



FRIDAY, DECEMBER 18, 2015

**OSN FIRST HD**  
COMEDY

- 00:30 Hot In Cleveland
- 01:00 The Nightly Show With Larry Wilmore
- 02:30 You're The Worst
- 03:30 2 Broke Girls
- 04:30 The Tonight Show Starring Jimmy Fallon
- 05:30 Last Man Standing
- 06:00 I Hate My Teenage Daughter
- 06:30 My Name Is Earl
- 07:00 Late Night With Seth Meyers
- 08:30 Last Man Standing
- 10:30 My Name Is Earl
- 11:00 The Tonight Show Starring Jimmy Fallon
- 12:00 I Hate My Teenage Daughter
- 12:30 \$#! My Dad Says
- 13:00 Last Man Standing
- 13:30 My Name Is Earl
- 14:00 2 Broke Girls
- 15:30 Hot In Cleveland
- 16:00 The Nightly Show With Larry Wilmore
- 16:30 I Hate My Teenage Daughter
- 17:00 Late Night With Seth Meyers
- 18:00 Fresh Off The Boat
- 18:30 Black-ish
- 19:00 About A Boy
- 20:00 The Tonight Show Starring Jimmy Fallon
- 21:00 Hot In Cleveland
- 21:30 The Nightly Show With Larry Wilmore
- 23:00 You're The Worst
- 23:30 Late Night With Seth Meyers

**OSN FIRST HD**

- 00:00 Bates Motel
- 01:00 Blindspot
- 02:00 Empire
- 03:00 Secrets And Lies
- 04:00 Franklin & Bash
- 05:00 The Ellen DeGeneres Show
- 06:00 Unforgettable
- 07:00 Franklin & Bash
- 08:00 Graceland
- 09:00 Secrets And Lies
- 10:00 Unforgettable
- 11:00 Franklin & Bash
- 12:00 Emmerdale
- 13:00 The Ellen DeGeneres Show
- 14:00 Graceland
- 15:00 Unforgettable
- 16:00 Emmerdale
- 17:00 The Ellen DeGeneres Show
- 18:00 Graceland
- 19:00 C.S.I. Cyber
- 20:00 Blindspot
- 21:00 Grey's Anatomy
- 22:00 Survivor: Cambodia
- 23:00 The Strain

**OSN FIRST**  
MORE

- 00:00 The Ellen DeGeneres Show
- 01:00 Good Morning America
- 03:00 Tyrant
- 04:00 Helix
- 05:00 Good Morning America
- 07:00 Emmerdale
- 08:00 The Ellen DeGeneres Show
- 09:00 Red Band Society
- 10:00 Emmerdale
- 11:00 The Ellen DeGeneres Show
- 12:00 Drop Dead Diva
- 13:00 Once Upon A Time
- 14:00 Red Band Society
- 15:00 Live Good Morning America
- 17:00 Drop Dead Diva
- 18:00 Once Upon A Time
- 19:00 Red Band Society
- 20:00 Drop Dead Diva
- 21:00 Once Upon A Time
- 22:00 Tyrant
- 23:00 Helix

**OSN MOVIES ACTION**

- 00:00 Lone Survivor
- 02:15 Seal Team 8: Behind Enemy Lines
- 04:00 The Hunger Games: Catching Fire
- 06:30 Left Behind
- 08:30 Big Ass Spider
- 10:00 A Stranger In Paradise
- 11:30 The Hunger Games: Catching Fire
- 14:00 Jaws III
- 16:00 Left Behind
- 18:00 The Prince
- 20:00 G.I. Joe: The Rise Of Cobra
- 22:00 Hummingbird



**BRUCE WILLIS JASON PATRIC JOHN CUSACK AND RAIN**

# THE PRINCE

THE PRINCE ON OSN MOVIES ACTION HD

**OSN MOVIES HD**  
ACTION

- 00:15 Seal Team 8: Behind Enemy Lines-18
- 02:00 The Hunger Games: Catching Fire-PG15
- 04:30 Left Behind-PG15
- 06:30 Big Ass Spider-PG15
- 08:00 A Stranger In Paradise-PG15
- 09:30 The Hunger Games: Catching Fire-PG15
- 12:00 Jaws III-PG15
- 14:00 Left Behind-PG15
- 16:00 The Prince-PG15
- 18:00 G.I. Joe: The Rise Of Cobra-PG15
- 20:00 Hummingbird-PG15
- 22:00 Punisher: War Zone-18

**OSN MOVIES HD**  
COMEDY

- 00:00 Delivery Man
- 02:00 The Nutty Professor (1996)
- 04:00 Major Payne
- 06:00 Roommates
- 08:00 Until She Came Along
- 10:00 Major Payne
- 12:00 The Nutty Professor (1996)
- 14:00 Streetdance: All Stars
- 16:00 Until She Came Along
- 18:00 Last Vegas
- 20:00 Think Like A Man Too
- 22:00 Without Men

**OSN MOVIES**  
DRAMA

- 01:00 United Passions-PG15
- 03:00 Inside Llewyn Davis-PG15
- 05:00 The Signal-PG15
- 07:00 Crawl-PG15
- 09:00 Breathless-PG15
- 11:00 United Passions-PG15
- 13:00 Breathe In-PG15
- 15:00 Middle Of Nowhere-PG15
- 17:00 Breathless-PG15
- 19:00 Begin Again-PG15
- 21:00 Decoding Annie Parker-PG15
- 23:00 The Riot Club-18

**OSN MOVIES HD**  
FESTIVAL

- 01:00 Pawn
- 03:00 The Immigrant

- 05:00 Jack And The Cuckoo Clock Heart
- 06:30 Far And Away
- 09:00 See Girl Run
- 11:00 Jack And The Cuckoo Clock Heart
- 12:45 Great Expectations
- 15:00 Grace Of Monaco
- 17:00 See Girl Run
- 19:00 How I Live Now
- 21:00 Thank You For Smoking
- 23:00 Donnie Brasco

**OSN MOVIES HD**

- 01:15 Two Mothers-18
- 03:00 The Single Moms Club-PG15
- 05:00 Step Up All In-PG15
- 07:00 Pompeii-PG15
- 09:00 Blended-PG15
- 11:00 The Boxtrolls-PG
- 12:45 Into The Woods-PG
- 15:00 Draft Day-PG15
- 17:00 Blended-PG15
- 19:00 Edge Of Tomorrow-PG15
- 21:00 The Maze Runner-PG15
- 23:00 The Equalizer-18

**OSN MOVIES HD**  
KIDS

- 01:15 Bamse And The City Of Thieves
- 02:45 The Heart Of The Oak
- 04:15 Ghatothkach - Master Of Magic
- 06:00 Back To The Sea
- 08:00 Tiny Heroes
- 11:30 Jelly T
- 13:00 The Heart Of The Oak
- 14:30 Blackie And Kanuto
- 16:00 Tarzan
- 20:00 The Dragon Pearl
- 22:00 Blackie And Kanuto
- 23:30 Tarzan

**OSN MOVIES HD**  
PREMIERE

- 00:00 Nurse-18
- 02:00 Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles-PG15
- 04:00 Police Story-PG15
- 06:00 A Gift Of Miracles-PG15
- 08:00 The Package-PG15
- 09:45 The Past-PG15

- 12:00 Tinker Bell And The Pirate Fairy-FAM
- 14:00 Alexander And The Terrible... Very Bad Day-PG
- 15:45 The Package-PG15
- 17:30 Captain America: The Winter Soldier-PG15
- 20:00 Welcome To The Punch-PG15
- 22:00 The Interview-18

**OSN NEWS**

- 01:00 Live MSNBC Mtp Daily
- 02:00 Live MSNBC News
- 03:00 Live NBC Nightly News
- 03:30 ABC World News With David Muir
- 04:00 Live MSNBC All In With Chris Hayes
- 05:00 Live MSNBC The Rachel Maddow Show
- 06:00 Live MSNBC The Last Word W/ Lawrence O'Donnell
- 07:00 NBC Nightly News
- 07:30 ABC World News With David Muir
- 07:57 NBC Nightly News
- 08:18 ABC World News With David Muir
- 08:39 Live ABC Nightline
- 09:06 MSNBC The Rachel Maddow Show
- 10:00 MSNBC The Last Word W/ Lawrence O'Donnell
- 11:00 Live ABC World News Now
- 11:30 Live ABC World News Now
- 12:00 Live NBC Early Today
- 12:30 Live ABC America This Morning
- 13:00 Live ABC America This Morning
- 13:30 Live ABC America This Morning
- 14:00 Live ABC America This Morning
- 14:30 MSNBC First Look
- 15:00 Live NBC Today Show
- 18:57 MSNBC Hardball W/ Chris Matthews
- 19:38 MSNBC The Rachel Maddow Show
- 20:19 MSNBC The Last Word W/ Lawrence O'Donnell
- 21:00 Live MSNBC Live With Thomas Roberts
- 23:00 Live MSNBC Live With Kate Snow

**AMC**

- 04:50 Big Screen
- 05:05 Waking Up In Reno
- 06:40 The Crocodile Hunter: Collision Course
- 08:10 Teen Witch
- 09:40 The Hills Run Red
- 11:10 Pork Chop Hill
- 12:45 Big Screen
- 13:00 The Great Escape
- 15:50 The Watsons Go To Birmingham
- 17:20 Pieces Of Dreams
- 19:00 Impromptu
- 20:45 Big Screen
- 21:00 FX
- 22:50 Be Cool
- 00:50 Blown Away
- 02:50 Doubt

**ANIMAL PLANET HD**

- 03:35 Tanked
- 04:25 Bull Shark: World's Deadliest Shark...
- 05:15 Gator Boys
- 06:02 Treehouse Masters
- 06:49 Charles & Jessica: A Chimp Tale
- 07:36 Call Of The Wildman
- 08:00 Call Of The Wildman
- 08:25 Bull Shark: World's Deadliest Shark...
- 09:15 Gator Boys
- 10:10 Treehouse Masters
- 11:05 Tanked
- 12:00 Dog Rescuers
- 12:30 Dog Rescuers
- 12:55 Bondi Vet
- 13:50 Dr. Jeff: Rocky Mountain Vet
- 14:45 Bull Shark: World's Deadliest Shark...
- 15:40 Treehouse Masters
- 16:35 Tanked
- 17:30 Charles & Jessica: A Chimp Tale
- 18:25 Bull Shark: World's Deadliest Shark...

- 19:20 River Monsters
- 20:15 Tanked
- 21:10 Roaring With Pride
- 22:05 Treehouse Masters
- 23:00 River Monsters
- 23:55 The Lion Queen
- 00:50 Gator Boys
- 01:45 Call Of The Wildman
- 02:15 Call Of The Wildman
- 02:40 River Monsters

**BBC entertainment**

- 03:00 Starlings
- 03:50 The Cafe
- 04:10 The Weakest Link
- 05:00 Teletubbies
- 05:25 The Green Balloon Club
- 05:50 Charlie And Lola
- 06:00 Teletubbies
- 06:25 The Green Balloon Club
- 06:50 Charlie And Lola
- 07:05 The Weakest Link
- 07:50 Frankie
- 08:40 Doctors
- 09:10 Eastenders
- 09:40 Up The Women
- 10:10 Starlings
- 10:55 Call The Midwife
- 11:50 The Weakest Link
- 12:35 Frankie
- 13:30 Starlings
- 14:15 Call The Midwife
- 15:10 Frankie
- 16:05 Doctors
- 16:35 Eastenders
- 17:05 The Weakest Link
- 17:50 Frankie
- 18:40 Doctors
- 19:10 Jack The Ripper: Prime Suspect
- 20:00 Sherlock
- 21:30 Alan Carr: Chatty Man
- 22:15 Stewart Lee's Comedy Vehicle
- 22:45 Watson & Oliver
- 23:15 The Weakest Link
- 00:00 Doctors
- 00:30 Jack The Ripper: Prime Suspect
- 01:20 Sherlock
- 02:50 Watson & Oliver



### Aries (March 21-April 19)

Working on a project today, you will find progress satisfactory. Later this afternoon, employees may be preparing for a special visitor; this could be the owner or it could be an investor. Whatever the case, all will work to everyone's advantage. You will show honest and sincere appreciation and arouse an enthusiastic attitude with all who come across your path. Someone older than yourself could be engrossed in a conversation with you this afternoon. Others may find you a patient listener. Figuring out some new ways to communicate or an easy manner will make dialogue and interactions go well. A difficult child this evening or a difficult neighbor brings you the opportunity to demonstrate your problem-solving abilities; cool.



### Taurus (April 20-May 20)

Because you have been able to stay ahead of the delays or cancellations in the workplace, you may be looking at a little bonus this year. If there is not a financial bonus for you, it will be something you like. Today you give a lot of thought to your goals and whether you need to change anything that might not be working in your life. A neighborhood planning committee may want your suggestions on some city proposal. Someone will realize just how much your creative and intuitive mind benefits you and others—your ideas are supported. Good things come as a result of your efforts. This could be in the form of college help for the teenagers in your neighborhood or just taking turns to be available for tutoring. Dare to be diverse.



### Gemini (May 21-June 20)

A better understanding of your financial affairs and an urge to invest may find you around banks and accounting offices today. You may feel rushed into making decisions. However, it would be a wise choice to take all the information you have obtained under advisement for a few days. You will eventually be able to make an excellent choice for your investment. While gathered near a warm fireplace this evening, you find yourself in a position to entertain a small audience. You can really jump in and enjoy telling your bizarre stories, especially if you want to make a point. Lots of people enjoy your version of a particular holiday story. Perhaps it is a bible story or a story from Dickens—whatever the case, you enjoy captivating an audience—small or large.



### Cancer (June 21-July 22)

You have good practical problem-solving techniques on the job today. You are able to communicate to your superiors just what you see that needs improvement or eliminating. You have a talent for taking action and getting things taken care of, with very little fuss or muss. You obviously make it a point to show a great deal of understanding and sensitivity to other people's needs. You may take a young person under your wing and help with moving through some difficult situation. You can turn the difficulty into some very pleasant results. Let yourself have the pleasure of dreaming this afternoon. There is an opportunity to let your imagination loose. Think about the sun, moon and stars. It might be fun to have a personal horoscope prepared.



### Leo (July 23-August 22)

Self-expression works quite well now and should lend itself to your special ideas and thoughts. You should find others responding to your way of thinking because you are very eloquent in speech and communication. Expect to hold a pleasant conversation with someone you love today. You somehow seem to understand what others want at this time. You could find yourself making some decisions that affect others today. People value your ability to make such commonsense determinations on their behalf. Your emotions are very present and under control. Stability and dependability take care of a deep emotional need. You may feel the need to be entertained later today—if you hold your chin just right, a loved one will follow you anywhere.



### Virgo (August 23-September 22)

The folks around you are going to give you some extra recognition or support today. You should be feeling very happy and in harmony with others at this time; the lines of communication are wide open and the support you need is there. Someone that trusts your judgment asks you for help in resolving some very personal issues. You will have no problem in understanding and will be able to offer a great deal of assistance in handling this potentially volatile material. It's your ability to cut through the red tape and to get at what is beneath and behind that allows you to be so helpful. It should be an exceptionally nice time, as you are very much in touch with your emotions. Tonight, you begin to plan some changes for your home.



### Libra (September 23-October 22)

Expect yourself to be challenged in some way. The situation you find yourself in will have a positive end with your decisive action. Respect is an important issue and boundaries may need defining. This could be with people, property, job identity, etc. Financial security is extremely important to you now. It is time to reassess your progress along this line and to perhaps make some new goals. Your intuitive powers are predominant at this time and you may be getting some insight into some new computer software that will help you work more efficiently. It might be wise to check with your employer regarding the guidelines and rules pertaining to personal and creative ventures you might want to enjoy apart from the workplace.



### Scorpio (October 23-November 21)

Don't be at all surprised if you find someone complimenting you on your tastes or belongings. It should not be hard for you to enjoy and value your own life situation today or to feel kindly toward a friend or loved one. For accomplishments to happen quickly, you may find yourself in a position to take the first step. You should enjoy a great deal of support from those around you. Your health is good and your energy is high—great for accomplishing your goals. Being among friends and working together should be a very pleasant experience for you now. Someone who calls the shots could come to you for help on a special project. This could bring about an opportunity to have some bargaining power—but don't. You could be directing others today.



### Sagittarius (November 22-December 21)

Fortunately, your childhood was sprinkled with people from whom you could learn and develop an honorable character. You have become an idea person with a talent for reaching a broad scope of people. It is possible that you will reach many people through your art, but it is also possible that you will lead people with your organizational skills. People accept your ideas easily. In midlife, you will find your self-expressive personality attracts many rewards. Money, business and domestic problems are solved with your ability to change a concept. Enjoy a bit of reflection this evening, perhaps looking through the photo albums or creating a bit of poetry as you think about the people that made a difference in your life.



### Capricorn (December 22-January 19)

You have a really good heart when it comes to helping your friends and knowing that one of them is likely to come to you for advice and guidance in regard to a very personal and emotional matter. You are able to listen, discern what the problem really is and get at what lurks beneath and behind. Your intuitiveness and understanding will be instrumental in helping your friend resolve some very frustrating issues. Your friends could return your kindness by putting some of your talents to good use or putting you in touch with someone who can help you. It may be necessary for you to consider reorganization of some kind and being more conservative in the long run. You may seem a bit on the quiet side this evening, but it is for creative thinking.



### Aquarius (January 20-February 18)

You may be feeling a kind of spiritual wanderlust tugging at you now, as you long to expand your horizons and reach for the utmost. There could be an assortment of areas that come into play now such as travel—perhaps internationally as well as domestically—politics, religion, education and something in law enforcement. As you reach out into the world, you may find yourself loosening the constraints that bind and allowing your more unusual qualities to emerge. Surprisingly enough, you may be enlightened at who chooses to understand and support you in your efforts. You may find new solutions or inventions because of allowing your creative and intuitive sides to come forth. You may believe there is no security on this earth—there is opportunity.



### Pisces (February 19-March 20)

Financial gains are possible through a job-related event. A shared belonging or stock could bring in monetary gains. Be sure to discuss any desire to sell or profit by this gain with a partner—if ownership is shared. Failure to do so could create some really bad vibrations. This would be the perfect time to schedule a meeting for planning your next adventure; now you can afford one. This could also mean that you are earning enough to move into a nice home for growing a family. Do something that will help you improve yourself in the future. Learn a musical instrument, sew your own clothes or volunteer to help a needy person or charity. Music is more than likely to play an important role for you now as part of a listening audience this evening—relax.

## COUNTRY CODES

Afghanistan	0093	Kuwait	00965
Albania	00355	Kyrgyzstan	00996
Algeria	00213	Laos	00856
Andorra	00376	Latvia	00371
Angola	00244	Lebanon	00961
Anguilla	001264	Liberia	00231
Antigua	001268	Libya	00218
Argentina	0054	Lithuania	00370
Armenia	00374	Luxembourg	00352
Australia	0061	Macau	00853
Austria	0043	Macedonia	00389
Bahamas	001242	Madagascar	00261
Bahrain	00973	Majorca	0034
Bangladesh	00880	Malawi	00265
Barbados	001246	Malaysia	0060
Belarus	00375	Maldives	00960
Belgium	0032	Mali	00223
Belize	00501	Malta	00356
Benin	00229	Marshall Islands	00692
Bermuda	001441	Martinique	00596
Bhutan	00975	Mauritania	00222
Bolivia	00591	Mauritius	00230
Bosnia	00387	Mayotte	00269
Botswana	00267	Mexico	0052
Brazil	0055	Micronesia	00691
Brunei	00673	Moldova	00373
Bulgaria	00359	Monaco	00377
Burkina Faso	00226	Mongolia	00976
Burundi	00257	Montserrat	001664
Cambodia	00855	Morocco	00212
Cameroon	00237	Mozambique	00258
Canada	001	Myanmar (Burma)	0095
Cape Verde	00238	Namibia	00264
Cayman Islands	001345	Nepal	00977
Central African Republic	00236	Netherlands (Holland)	0031
Chad	00235	Netherlands Antilles	00599
Chile	0056	New Caledonia	00687
China	0086	New Zealand	0064
Colombia	0057	Nicaragua	00505
Comoros	00269	Niger	00227
Congo	00242	Nigeria	00234
Cook Islands	00682	Niue	00683
Costa Rica	00506	Norfolk Island	00672
Croatia	00385	Northern Ireland (UK)	0044
Cuba	0053	North Korea	00850
Cyprus	00357	Norway	0047
Cyprus (Northern)	0090392	Oman	00968
Czech Republic	00420	Pakistan	0092
Denmark	0045	Palau	00680
Diego Garcia	00246	Panama	00507
Djibouti	00253	Papua New Guinea	00675
Dominica	001767	Paraguay	00595
Dominican Republic	001809	Peru	0051
Ecuador	00593	Philippines	0063
Egypt	0020	Poland	0048
El Salvador	00503	Portugal	00351
England (UK)	0044	Puerto Rico	001787
Equatorial Guinea	00240	Qatar	00974
Eritrea	00291	Romania	0040
Estonia	00372	Russian Federation	007
Ethiopia	00251	Rwanda	00250
Falkland Islands	00500	Saint Helena	00290
Faroe Islands	00298	Saint Kitts	001869
Fiji	00679	Saint Lucia	001758
Finland	00358	Saint Pierre	00508
France	0033	Saint Vincent	001784
French Guiana	00594	Samoa US	00684
French Polynesia	00689	Samoa West	00685
Gabon	00241	San Marino	00378
Gambia	00220	Sao Tome	00239
Georgia	00995	Saudi Arabia	00966
Germany	0049	Scotland (UK)	0044
Ghana	00233	Senegal	00221
Gibraltar	00350	Seychelles	00284
Greece	0030	Sierra Leone	00232
Greenland	00299	Singapore	0065
Grenada	001473	Slovakia	00421
Guadeloupe	00590	Slovenia	00386
Guam	001671	Solomon Islands	00677
Guatemala	00502	Somalia	00252
Guinea	00224	South Africa	0027
Guyana	00592	South Korea	0082
Haiti	00509	Spain	0034
Holland (Netherlands)	0031	Sri Lanka	0094
Honduras	00504	Sudan	00249
Hong Kong	00852	Suriname	00597
Hungary	0036	Swaziland	00268
Ibiza (Spain)	0034	Sweden	0046
Iceland	00354	Switzerland	0041
India	0091	Syria	00963
Indian Ocean	00873	Taiwan	00886
Indonesia	0062	Tanzania	00255
Iran	0098	Thailand	0066
Iraq	00964	Toga	00228
Ireland	00353	Tonga	00676
Italy	0039	Tokelau	00690
Ivory Coast	00225	Trinidad	001868
Jamaica	001876	Tunisia	00216
Japan	0081	Turkey	0090
Jordan	00962	Tuvalu	00688
Kazakhstan	007	Uganda	00256
Kenya	00254	Ukraine	00380
Kiribati	00686	United Arab Emirates	00976

# US HIGH SCHOOLS LISTENING TO SCIENTISTS, LETTING TEENS SLEEP

TEENS SHOWING UP TO CLASS BEFORE 8 AM ISN'T GOOD FOR HEALTH

**SEATTLE:** More school districts around the US are heeding the advice of scientists who have long said that expecting teens to show up to class before 8 am isn't good for their health or their report cards.

The Seattle school board voted last month to adopt an 8:45 am start time beginning next year for all of its high schools and most of its middle schools, joining 70 districts across the nation who adopted a later start time in recent years.

The movement still has a long way to go: There are more than 24,000 US high schools. Supporters expect that such decisions will be made more quickly now that people have mostly stopped debating the underlying science.

Proponents of later start times got a boost last year when the American Academy of Pediatrics said that while starting later isn't a panacea for teen health and academic problems, it can improve students' lives in many other ways.

"Essentially, across the board, any domain that you look at improves pretty dramatically," said Dr. Judy Owens of Boston Children's Hospital and author of the academy's policy statement on teen sleep. After the report, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention also pushed for later bell times.

Research studies have shown later start times help combat sleep deprivation in teens, who naturally fall asleep later than their parents would like, and improve academic success, attendance, mental health and cut sleep-related car accidents.



**SEATTLE:** A student leans on a table in the cafeteria during first period at Roosevelt High School in Seattle. More school districts around the US are heeding the advice of scientists who have long said that expecting teens to show up to class before 8 am isn't good for their health or their report cards. — AP

"We're going to look back on this time period and wonder why it took so long," said Phyllis Payne of Start School Later, which helps parents groups advocate for later bell times. She said 49 new local groups have started in the last three years.

The obstacles to change are mostly financial. St. Paul, Minnesota, public schools delayed the adoption of later start times for all its high school students, even after seeing great results in a one-school pilot, because of transportation issues.

The district could not overcome parent complaints about earlier start times for elementary students, which were

made necessary because of the new later times for high school students. It would cost St. Paul about \$8 million to add more buses, explained Jackie Statum Allen, assistant director for strategic planning and policy.

"It would be much better to put that in the classroom rather than the gas tank," Allen said. In Seattle, officials encountered the same resistance. Some parents of younger children objected when bus schedules were flipped and their kids were put on an earlier schedule for next year. Some argued that later start times will get in the way of after-school activities like football practice. — AP

# BULGARIA TO TACKLE 'NIGHTMARE' HEALTH SYSTEM

**SOFIA:** Bulgaria's medical system is causing a serious headache for all in a country-despite massive healthcare investments and the most hospitals per capita in the European Union, it has the highest death rate across the bloc. With 15 deaths per 1,000 people, Bulgaria has held the top spot in the EU's mortality ranking for nearly a decade, according to the National Statistics Institute.

But it is hoped fresh, ambitious reforms to better distribute public funds and crackdown on corruption will improve matters. "This system needs a painful overhaul," Health Minister Petar Moskov told AFP in an interview. "Health spending keeps rising while life expectancy falls and hospital stays and mortality rates are increasing." At 74 years, life expectancy is also among the bloc's lowest. Even worse, Bulgarian children under the age of five are twice as likely to die as their European peers—a "nightmarish figure", said Moskov.

The situation is particularly alarming among the country's Roma minority where an average 20 out of every 1,000 toddlers died in 2014.

Moskov's reforms aim to cut the death rate by 20 percent by 2020 and overhaul the way hospitals are financed.

### 'Extreme inefficiency'

A 53-percent rise in public spending over the past five years has brought no "tangible improvement in the quality of care", said Vladislav Goranov, finance minister in the conservative government.

The services in place are a prime example of "extreme inefficiency," he added. They also put a huge burden on patients in what already is the EU's poorest country. One in five Bulgarians lives below the poverty line, earning just 323 leva (165 euros, \$180) a month.

"Poor people from the villages sell their horses and carts to find money to pay for treatment of an illness," said kidney specialist Ivan Georgiev from the northern town of Pleven.

The World Bank recently voiced alarm over the "disproportionately high" fees Bulgarian patients are charged for healthcare and medications—a share it said hit 43 percent in 2013, the highest in Europe.

"I have patients with hypertension who refuse to buy a more expensive and efficient drug and ask for something cheaper, running the risk of worsening their condition," general practitioner Hristo Nikolov told AFP. Currently, only 25 percent of the cost of hypertension drugs is reimbursed, said Nikolov, and even kidney dialysis—a lifesaver for some patients—is not entirely covered. Meanwhile, many new hospitals have sprung, draining public funds and feeding what health minister Moskov called a trend of "over-hospitalization", with 40 percent more people hospitalized in Bulgaria than in other EU countries.

"I spent three days in hospital for a simple intestinal examination that took half an hour, but had I left earlier, the private hospital would not have been reimbursed," said Rositsa Smilova, a saleswoman from Sofia. — AFP

CLINIC  
PAGE



Kuwait Times

Dr. Fahad Al-Mukhaizeem  
 د. فهد علي المخيزيم  
 Consultant Pediatrician استشاري أطفال  
 M.B. Bch. FRCPC. FAAP. PEM

Al-Jabriya - Block 1A - St. 1 - Mazaya Building - 15th Floor - Clinic B - Tel.: 22269369 - Fax: 22269368



## KNCC PROGRAMME FROM THURSDAY TO WEDNESDAY (17/12/2015 TO 23/12/2015)

**SHARQIA-1**  
IN THE HEART OF THE SEA 12:30 PM  
DILWALE - Hindi 3:00 PM  
DILWALE - Hindi 6:00 PM  
DILWALE - Hindi 9:00 PM  
STAR WARS: THE FORCE AWAKENS 12:05 AM

**SHARQIA-2**  
STAR WARS: THE FORCE AWAKENS 12:30 PM  
THE GOOD DINOSAUR 1:30 PM  
STAR WARS: THE FORCE AWAKENS 3:30 PM  
STAR WARS: THE FORCE AWAKENS 6:30 PM  
STAR WARS: THE FORCE AWAKENS 9:30 PM  
STAR WARS: THE FORCE AWAKENS 12:30 AM

**SHARQIA-3**  
THE GOOD DINOSAUR 12:00 PM  
DARK MOUNTAIN 2:15 PM  
THE GOOD DINOSAUR 4:15 PM  
THE GOOD DINOSAUR 6:30 PM  
DARK MOUNTAIN 8:45 PM  
DARK MOUNTAIN 10:45 PM  
DARK MOUNTAIN 12:45 AM

**MUHALAB-1**  
THE GOOD DINOSAUR 12:30 PM  
THE GOOD DINOSAUR 2:45 PM  
DILWALE - Hindi 5:00 PM  
DILWALE - Hindi 8:00 PM  
DILWALE - Hindi 11:00 PM

**MUHALAB-2**  
DARK MOUNTAIN 11:45 AM  
DARK MOUNTAIN 1:45 PM  
DARK MOUNTAIN 3:30 PM  
DARK MOUNTAIN 5:15 PM  
LOAFER - Telugu 4:00 PM  
LOAFER - Telugu 7:00 PM  
STAR WARS: THE FORCE AWAKENS 7:00 PM  
LOAFER - Telugu 10:00 PM  
DARK MOUNTAIN 10:00 PM  
DARK MOUNTAIN 12:05 AM  
DARK MOUNTAIN 1:00 AM

**MUHALAB-3**  
STAR WARS: THE FORCE AWAKENS 12:00 PM  
STAR WARS: THE FORCE AWAKENS 3:00 PM  
STAR WARS: THE FORCE AWAKENS 6:00 PM  
STAR WARS: THE FORCE AWAKENS 9:00 PM  
STAR WARS: THE FORCE AWAKENS 12:05 AM

**FANAR-1**  
STRIKE ONE 1:15 PM  
THE GOOD DINOSAUR 3:15 PM  
THE GOOD DINOSAUR 5:30 PM  
THE GOOD DINOSAUR 7:45 PM  
STRIKE ONE 10:00 PM  
STRIKE ONE 12:05 AM

**FANAR-2**  
DARK MOUNTAIN 12:00 PM  
DARK MOUNTAIN 2:00 PM  
DARK MOUNTAIN 4:00 PM  
DARK MOUNTAIN 6:00 PM  
DARK MOUNTAIN 8:15 PM  
DARK MOUNTAIN 10:15 PM  
DARK MOUNTAIN 12:15 AM

**FANAR-3**  
IN THE HEART OF THE SEA 1:00 PM  
STRIKE ONE 1:30 PM  
DILWALE - Hindi 3:45 PM  
STRIKE ONE 6:45 PM  
IN THE HEART OF THE SEA 9:45 PM  
LOAFER - Telugu 3:45 PM  
LOAFER - Telugu 6:45 PM  
LOAFER - Telugu 9:45 PM  
IN THE HEART OF THE SEA 12:45 AM

**FANAR-4**  
STAR WARS: THE FORCE AWAKENS -3D 12:30 PM  
THE GOOD DINOSAUR -3D 1:30 PM  
STAR WARS: THE FORCE AWAKENS -3D 3:30 PM  
STAR WARS: THE FORCE AWAKENS 6:30 PM  
STAR WARS: THE FORCE AWAKENS -3D 9:30 PM  
STAR WARS: THE FORCE AWAKENS 12:30 AM

**FANAR-5**  
DILWALE - Hindi 11:30 AM  
DILWALE - Hindi 2:30 PM  
DILWALE - Hindi 5:30 PM  
DILWALE - Hindi 8:30 PM  
DILWALE - Hindi 11:30 PM

**MARINA-1**  
DILWALE - Hindi 12:15 PM  
DILWALE - Hindi 3:30 PM  
DILWALE - Hindi 6:45 PM  
DARK MOUNTAIN 8:45 PM  
DARK MOUNTAIN 10:45 PM  
DARK MOUNTAIN 12:45 AM

**MARINA-2**  
STAR WARS: THE FORCE AWAKENS 11:45 AM  
STAR WARS: THE FORCE AWAKENS 2:45 PM  
STAR WARS: THE FORCE AWAKENS 5:45 PM  
STAR WARS: THE FORCE AWAKENS 8:45 PM  
STAR WARS: THE FORCE AWAKENS 11:45 PM

**MARINA-3**  
THE GOOD DINOSAUR 11:30 AM  
STAR WARS: THE FORCE AWAKENS 1:45 PM  
THE GOOD DINOSAUR 4:45 PM  
THE GOOD DINOSAUR 7:00 PM  
STAR WARS: THE FORCE AWAKENS 9:15 PM  
STAR WARS: THE FORCE AWAKENS 12:15 AM

**AVENUES-1**  
DILWALE - Hindi 12:45 PM  
STRIKE ONE 2:00 PM  
DILWALE - Hindi 4:00 PM  
LOAFER - Telugu 4:00 PM  
DILWALE - Hindi 7:00 PM  
LOAFER - Telugu 7:00 PM  
DILWALE - Hindi 10:00 PM  
LOAFER - Telugu 10:00 PM  
STRIKE ONE 1:00 AM

**AVENUES-2**  
DARK MOUNTAIN 11:30 AM  
DILWALE - Hindi 1:30 PM  
STAR WARS: THE FORCE AWAKENS 4:45 PM  
DILWALE - Hindi 7:45 PM  
STAR WARS: THE FORCE AWAKENS 11:00 PM

**AVENUES-3**  
THE GOOD DINOSAUR -3D 12:00 PM  
THE GOOD DINOSAUR 2:15 PM  
THE GOOD DINOSAUR -3D 4:30 PM  
THE GOOD DINOSAUR 6:45 PM  
THE GOOD DINOSAUR 9:00 PM  
DILWALE - Hindi 11:15 PM

**AVENUES-4**  
THE GOOD DINOSAUR 11:45 AM  
DILWALE - Hindi 2:00 PM  
DILWALE - Hindi 5:15 PM  
Special Show "DILWALE - Hindi" 5:15 PM  
DILWALE - Hindi 8:30 PM  
STAR WARS: THE FORCE AWAKENS 11:45 PM

**AVENUES-5**  
STAR WARS: THE FORCE AWAKENS 1:15 PM  
THE GOOD DINOSAUR -3D 1:45 PM  
STAR WARS: THE FORCE AWAKENS -3D 4:15 PM  
STAR WARS: THE FORCE AWAKENS 4:15 PM  
STAR WARS: THE FORCE AWAKENS 7:15 PM  
STAR WARS: THE FORCE AWAKENS 7:15 PM  
STAR WARS: THE FORCE AWAKENS -3D 10:15 PM  
DARK MOUNTAIN 1:15 AM

**AVENUES-6**  
DILWALE - Hindi 11:30 AM  
DILWALE - Hindi 2:30 PM  
DILWALE - Hindi 5:45 PM  
DILWALE - Hindi 9:00 PM  
DILWALE - Hindi 12:15 AM

**AVENUES-7**  
IN THE HEART OF THE SEA 1:45 PM  
IN THE HEART OF THE SEA 4:30 PM  
IN THE HEART OF THE SEA 7:15 PM  
IN THE HEART OF THE SEA 10:00 PM  
IN THE HEART OF THE SEA 12:45 AM

**AVENUES-8**  
STRIKE ONE 1:15 PM  
STRIKE ONE 3:30 PM  
ZINZANA (Emirati Film) 6:00 PM  
STRIKE ONE 8:00 PM  
STRIKE ONE 10:15 PM  
STRIKE ONE 12:30 AM

**AVENUES-9**  
STAR WARS: THE FORCE AWAKENS -3D 11:30 AM  
STAR WARS: THE FORCE AWAKENS 2:30 PM

STAR WARS: THE FORCE AWAKENS -3D 5:30 PM  
STAR WARS: THE FORCE AWAKENS -3D 8:30 PM  
STAR WARS: THE FORCE AWAKENS 11:30 PM

**AVENUES-10**  
DARK MOUNTAIN 12:45 PM  
DARK MOUNTAIN 2:45 PM  
DARK MOUNTAIN 4:45 PM  
DARK MOUNTAIN 6:45 PM  
DARK MOUNTAIN 8:45 PM  
DARK MOUNTAIN 10:45 PM  
DARK MOUNTAIN 12:45 AM

**AVENUES-11**  
STAR WARS: THE FORCE AWAKENS 12:30 PM  
STAR WARS: THE FORCE AWAKENS 3:30 PM  
STAR WARS: THE FORCE AWAKENS 6:30 PM  
STAR WARS: THE FORCE AWAKENS 9:30 PM  
STAR WARS: THE FORCE AWAKENS 12:30 AM

**360°1**  
STAR WARS: THE FORCE AWAKENS -3D 12:00 PM  
STAR WARS: THE FORCE AWAKENS -3D 3:00 PM  
STAR WARS: THE FORCE AWAKENS -3D 6:00 PM  
STAR WARS: THE FORCE AWAKENS -3D 9:00 PM  
STAR WARS: THE FORCE AWAKENS 12:05 AM  
STAR WARS: THE FORCE AWAKENS -3D 2:00 PM  
"STAR WARS: THE FORCE AWAKENS" 6:00 PM  
"STAR WARS: THE FORCE AWAKENS" 9:30 PM  
STAR WARS: THE FORCE AWAKENS 12:30 AM

**360°2**  
STRIKE ONE 12:15 PM  
STRIKE ONE 2:30 PM  
STRIKE ONE 4:45 PM  
STRIKE ONE 7:00 PM  
STRIKE ONE 9:15 PM  
STRIKE ONE 11:30 PM

**360°3**  
IN THE HEART OF THE SEA 12:45 PM  
IN THE HEART OF THE SEA 3:30 PM  
IN THE HEART OF THE SEA 6:15 PM  
IN THE HEART OF THE SEA 9:00 PM  
IN THE HEART OF THE SEA 11:45 PM

**AL-KOUT.1**  
STAR WARS: THE FORCE AWAKENS 12:15 PM  
STAR WARS: THE FORCE AWAKENS 3:15 PM  
STAR WARS: THE FORCE AWAKENS 6:15 PM  
STAR WARS: THE FORCE AWAKENS 9:15 PM  
STAR WARS: THE FORCE AWAKENS 12:15 AM

**AL-KOUT.2**  
DARK MOUNTAIN 12:45 PM  
DARK MOUNTAIN 2:45 PM  
DARK MOUNTAIN 4:45 PM  
DARK MOUNTAIN 6:45 PM  
DARK MOUNTAIN 8:45 PM  
DARK MOUNTAIN 10:45 PM  
DARK MOUNTAIN 12:45 AM

**AL-KOUT.3**  
STRIKE ONE 11:30 AM  
STRIKE ONE 1:30 PM  
STRIKE ONE 3:30 PM  
THE GOOD DINOSAUR 5:45 PM  
THE GOOD DINOSAUR 8:00 PM  
STRIKE ONE 10:15 PM  
STRIKE ONE 12:15 AM

**AL-KOUT.4**  
STAR WARS: THE FORCE AWAKENS 1:00 PM  
IN THE HEART OF THE SEA 1:30 PM  
STAR WARS: THE FORCE AWAKENS 4:00 PM  
STAR WARS: THE FORCE AWAKENS 7:00 PM  
IN THE HEART OF THE SEA 10:00 PM  
IN THE HEART OF THE SEA 12:30 AM

**BAIRAQ-1**  
STAR WARS: THE FORCE AWAKENS -3D 11:45 AM  
STAR WARS: THE FORCE AWAKENS -3D 2:45 PM  
STAR WARS: THE FORCE AWAKENS -3D 5:45 PM  
STAR WARS: THE FORCE AWAKENS 8:45 PM  
STAR WARS: THE FORCE AWAKENS 11:45 PM

**BAIRAQ-2**  
IN THE HEART OF THE SEA 12:30 PM  
THE GOOD DINOSAUR 3:00 PM  
THE GOOD DINOSAUR 5:15 PM  
THE GOOD DINOSAUR 7:30 PM  
IN THE HEART OF THE SEA 9:45 PM  
STAR WARS: THE FORCE AWAKENS 12:15 AM

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- Commis I, II, III
- Demi Chef De Partie
- Chef De Partie
- Bakery Chef
- Drivers (Heavy & Light duty cense)
- Production Crew
- Butcher / Head Butcher
- Sales Representative (related to food only)
- Storekeeper

Qualified individuals, with good Communication Skills English & Arabic and Minimum 2 yrs. Experience

Venue : Al Seif Hall, Le Royal Hotel, 5<sup>th</sup> Floor, Arabian Gulf Road, Benid Al Gar, Kuwait.

Date : 21<sup>st</sup> & 22<sup>nd</sup> December 2015

Time : 10.00 AM to 2.00 PM

Walk In with your :

- Updated CV
- Passport copy with resident page
- Civil ID copy
- Work Permit copy
- Health Permit (If Applicable)
- Driver's License (If Applicable)

Those who are not able to walk In Please Forward your CV's to : [recruitment@aamalholding.com](mailto:recruitment@aamalholding.com)

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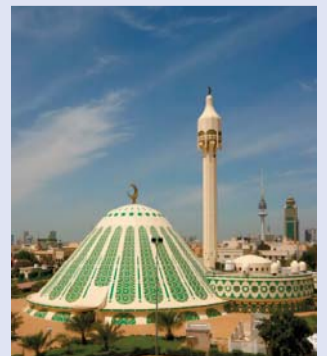
**Toyota Aurion - Grande -** 2011, full options, km 85000, white color, KD 2650. Mob: 50994848. (C 5097)

**KIA Mohave jeep - (6 clr)** 2013, white color, excellent conditions, km 87000, KD 3100. Tel: 66729295. (C 5098) 15-12-2015

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### Prayer timings

**Fajr:** 05:07  
**Shorook** 06:32  
**Duhr:** 11:41  
**Asr:** 14:31  
**Maghrib:** 16:50  
**Isha:** 18:13



# Friday Times BUSINESS

FRIDAY, DECEMBER 18, 2015

## GULF SOVEREIGNS TIPPED FOR RECORD FUNDING



Fosun disappearance stokes worries among China CEOs

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MANILA: People stand in front of advertising for an IT and BPO services provider in Manila yesterday. The Philippines is poised to race Asia's fastest-growing economies as a booming services sector overshadows losses from routine typhoons, the country's economic planning secretary said yesterday.—AFP

## GULF STATES RAISE RATES IN TUNE WITH FED MOVE

### GLOBAL MARKETS REACT POSITIVELY TO FED DECISION

**KUWAIT:** Energy-rich Gulf states Saudi Arabia, Kuwait and Bahrain raised their interest rates Wednesday after a landmark decision by the US Federal Reserve to hike its rates.

The move by the Gulf countries came despite the sharp decline in oil prices and forecasts of a sluggish economic growth. The world's top oil exporter Saudi Arabia raised its overnight reverse Repo rate by 25 basis points to 50 basis points but left its benchmark Repo rate unchanged at 2.0 percent, the official SPA news agency reported.

The Saudi Arabian Monetary Agency, or the central bank, said the decision was taken in light of developments in local and international financial markets. The decision is effective immediately. The Central Bank of Kuwait said it had decided to raise its benchmark discount rate by 25 basis points to 2.25 percent.

Governor Mohammad Al-Hashel said the increase is to ensure the "competitiveness of the national currency", and support the national economy, the official KUNA news agency reported.

It became effective from yesterday. Bahrain also raised its overnight interest rate by 25 basis points to 0.5 percent and its rate for one week by a similar value to 0.75 percent, the Bahrain News Agency reported.

The kingdom however kept Repo rate

unchanged at 2.25 percent. The three countries are members of the six-nation Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) alliance. Other members are Qatar, United Arab Emirates and Oman. All the GCC states except Kuwait peg their currencies to the US dollar and have normally followed US decisions on interest rates. Kuwait links its dinar to a basket of major currencies, the composition of which is kept confidential, but it is believed that the greenback accounts for more than 70 percent of its weight.

Earlier Wednesday, the Fed raised the benchmark federal funds rate by a quarter point to 0.25-0.50 percent, its first interest rate hike in more than nine years, saying the economy was growing at a moderate pace and should accelerate next year.

The subsequent rate decisions of the GCC states came despite the sharp decline in the price of oil which contributes to over 90 percent of public revenues. The International Monetary Fund has cut its projections on economic growth for GCC states and forecast that all six nations will end up this year with a budget deficit.

Oil prices have continued their recent decline, falling by around 60 percent since mid-2014. IMF has projected the GCC states would lose around \$275 billion in revenues as

a result. The Fed move, which has repercussions across the global financial system, also imprinted Janet Yellen's personal stamp on US monetary policy after nearly two years as Fed chair spent plotting to reverse course from the easy-money stance bequeathed by predecessor Ben Bernanke.

The Fed raised its benchmark federal funds rate, locked near zero since the financial crisis, by a quarter point to 0.25-0.50 percent, saying the world's biggest economy is growing solidly and should accelerate next year to a respectable 2.4 percent pace. "This action marks the end of an extraordinary seven-year period during which the federal funds rate was held near zero to support the recovery of the economy from the worst financial crisis and recession since the Great Depression," Yellen said.

"It also recognizes the considerable progress that has been made toward restoring jobs, raising incomes, and easing the economic hardship of millions of Americans."

The move was widely expected and marked the end of an era in which the Fed pumped trillions of cheap dollars into the devastated US economy to fuel what turned out to be an unexpectedly long rebound.

It kicks off a likely series of rate increases which the Federal Open Market Committee,

the Fed's policy board, promised would be "gradual" and follow the pace of the economy.

FOMC projections showed they expect the rate will rise to about 1.4 percent by the end of 2016, suggesting four more increases over the coming 12 months. "The important question is how far, how fast," said economist Edwin Truman at the Peterson Institute for International Economics.

#### Markets react positively

The announcement, and the Fed's positive outlook for US growth, pushed Asian and US stocks higher, with the S&P 500 finishing with a 1.5 percent gain, most of which came after the Fed's announcement. Stocks in Australia, Tokyo and Hong Kong were all up, and the dollar rose slightly against the euro. The rate increase came amid some criticism from prominent economists that the economy was still vulnerable to slower global growth and that there was no compelling reason-like surging inflation and a tight jobs market-to justify it. But FOMC support for the decision was unanimous. The committee pointed to "considerable" improvement in the labor market and said it is "reasonably confident" in inflation rising over the medium term, to its two percent objective.—AFP

# GULF SOVEREIGNS TIPPED FOR RECORD FUNDING

## LOW OIL PRICES PUSH ISSUERS TOWARDS DEBT

**LONDON:** Bond bankers are scrambling to secure business from beleaguered Gulf sovereigns, which are expected to engage in record breaking fundraising next year to cover widening fiscal deficits.

Countries in the Gulf Cooperation Council are tipped to need more than US\$250bn over the next two years, through a variety of means, as they seek to combat the effects of sliding oil prices.

"We now estimate that the aggregate fiscal deficit of the GCC in 2015-2016 will be close to US\$265bn, higher than previously estimated," Mathias Angonin, an analyst in Moody's sovereign risk group, told IFR. "This does not include debt that needs to be refinanced, so the financing needs will likely be higher than that." While much of that money will be raised through asset sales and new taxes, including a proposed introduction of VAT in the UAE, bond markets will also become an important source of funds.

Bankers say sovereigns could raise at least US\$15bn in the international market next year. That would be more than all GCC sovereign dollar debt issuance from 2013 to the end of 2015.

"Next year we expect more sovereign supply from the region," said Iman Abdel Khalek, a director in Citigroup's Middle East DCM business. "Some borrowers are more price sensitive than others and look at funding opportunistically." Saudi Arabia is likely to steal the show with the sovereign heavily rumoured to make its long-awaited debut in the international

market. The Kingdom's finances are coming under greater pressure with the IMF estimating its budget deficit this year will be 20 percent of GDP. Although it still has US\$640bn in net foreign assets, it can't keep funding its projected deficit forever if oil prices remain depressed.

"Saudi Arabia has about four years left of financing if it only relies on FX reserves and oil stays where it is," said an analyst. Bankers reckon Saudi will seek to raise at least US\$5bn in the international market next year, complementing its funding in the local market, which it tapped for the time since 2007 in July.

The sovereign has since raised SR95bn (US\$16bn) from domestic investors and is borrowing on average SR20bn of new money a month. Saudi's expected foray into the dollar market in 2016 has already got the leading international banks - keen to scoop the coveted mandate - sounding it out, according to sources.

"For Saudi, will US\$5bn make or break anything? Of course not," said a debt capital markets official from a bank rumoured to have already approached the sovereign. "But it is an opportunity to diversify their source of funding."

Not everyone is convinced that Saudi Arabia will pack the punch that bankers are hoping for.

"Saudi has leaked that it is going to do a big deal," said a UAE bond banker. "It wouldn't surprise me if they come with [a smaller deal of] US\$1bn and get an enormous response."

### GCC RUNS DRY

While there is little doubt that Saudi Arabia's rarity in the market and Aa3/A+/AA ratings mean it will sail through even a US\$5bn deal, others may find it tougher. Bankers have touted Oman, Qatar, Dubai, Bahrain and even Kuwait as potential issuers next year.

The fact that GCC sovereigns require the most financing in years comes at a difficult time for the region's investors. Gulf banks have seen liquidity dry up as they too harbour the ill effects of low oil prices. The most notable example is National Bank of Abu Dhabi, which saw government deposits plunge by US\$13bn in the 12 months to October as sovereigns looked to shore up their finances.

The sharp decline in liquidity has had a calamitous effect on new bond placements with Abu Dhabi Commercial Bank the biggest casualty - the issuer had to pull a deal after announcing price thoughts in September.

"Everyone has been talking about it non-stop since it happened," said an analyst. Other deals have struggled, with books more often than not just about fully subscribed. "Liquidity is tightening across the GCC with reduction in the growth rate of deposits, even while credit growth is still high in some countries," said Nitish Bhojnagarwala, a bank analyst in Moody's Dubai office.

Bhojnagarwala cited Qatar as one place where credit growth is particularly high, reaching into the double digits. — Reuters



**KARACHI:** A Pakistani currency dealer counts US dollars at a currency exchange in Karachi yesterday. The dollar extended its gains in Asia after the US Federal Reserve's landmark decision to lift interest rates for the first time in almost a decade. —AFP

## SAUDI STOCKS LIFTED BY BANKS; EGYPT UP

### MIDEAST STOCK MARKETS

**DUBAI:** Bank stocks led gains in Saudi Arabia yesterday, as investors bet interest rate increases would widen lending margins. Egypt rallied as its top bank agreed to sell a unit to a company owned by billionaire Naguib Sawiris. Most Middle East markets rallied after the US Federal Reserve raised interest rates for the first time in more than nine years, a sign of confidence in the world's largest economy.

Gulf currencies are pegged or closely linked to the dollar and Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Bahrain and the United Arab Emirates all swiftly raised their own rates.

In Riyadh, National Commercial Bank climbed 2.4 percent, Al Rajhi Bank jumped 5.4 percent and Samba Financial Group rose 3 percent. Saudi banks' funding costs are perhaps the lowest globally, because most depositors put their money in non-interest paying current accounts for religious reasons, said Hisham Tuffaha, head of equity investments at Riyadh-based Mulkia Investments. Therefore, traders have bought bank stocks on expectations higher rates will increase lenders' margins, he said. Some bank stocks such as SABB, Banque Saudi Fransi and Saudi Hollandi are trading at trailing price to earnings ratios of less than 8.5, Reuters data shows.

"We've not seen PE ratios this low for seven to eight years. Valuations are very attractive even with the low oil price," Tuffaha said. "We don't have listed energy companies - for most sectors, where's the direct link to oil?"

He forecast the Saudi market would bottom out, pointing to a combined PE ratio of less than 13 when the historical average is 16 to 17. The Saudi index rose 2.6 percent to 7,046 points, taking its gains to 5.4 percent since Monday's three-year low.

### EGYPT

Egypt's Commercial International Bank (CIB) rose 5.6 percent after agreeing to sell investment banking subsidiary CI Capital to Orascom Telecom for 1 billion Egyptian pounds (\$127.7 million). Orascom Telecom, whose shares surged 11.1 percent, plans to merge CI Capital with Beltone Financial, which it bought last month for almost 650 million Egyptian pounds. Beltone rose 9.7 percent.

Sawiris previously made a failed bid for EFG Hermes, the largest investment bank in the Middle East. "It's not a surprise to see CI Capital as an alternative way to buy into Egypt's investment banking sector," said Allen Sandeep, director of research at Naeem Brokerage in Cairo. Dubai's index climbed 2.9 percent, rising for a fourth session since Sunday's two-year low to trim its 2015 losses to 18.6 percent.

The market was up more than 10 percent in late July, but retreated as oil prices tumbled and investor worries grew over political instability, with a Saudi-led campaign in Yemen and Syria's civil war showing no signs of abating.

Political risk will be a key factor in determining whether foreign investor activity on UAE markets will increase next year after slipping this year, said Marwan Shurrab, director at Dubai's Vision Investments. — Reuters



**KABUL:** Afghan money changers count banknotes at the currency exchange Sarayee Shahzada market in Kabul yesterday. The Afghani exchange rate is one US dollar equal to 68.40 Afghani which is set by the Central Bank of Afghanistan. —AFP



**BEIJING:** Shoppers stand outside the entrance to a shopping mall in Beijing yesterday. Chinese growth hit a 24-year low in 2014 and has slowed further this year, raising concerns on global markets. — AFP

## CHINA 2015 RETAIL SEEN SLOWING DOWN

**BEIJING:** China's retail sales, a key gauge of domestic consumption in the world's second-biggest economy, is likely to post slower growth this year compared with 2014, the commerce ministry said. Retail sales may expand around 10.7 percent in 2015, Shen Danyang, spokesman at the Ministry of Commerce, told a news conference in Beijing on Thursday, without giving a reason. Retail sales rose 12 percent last year.

In the first 11 months of 2015, retail sales grew 10.6 percent from a year earlier. In November, retail sales increased by an annual 11.2 percent - the strongest monthly expansion this year.

China's external outlook remains gloomy. Chinese companies said global demand this year was worse than that during 2008/09 financial crisis, according to a recent survey by the commerce ministry of more than 6,000 firms in 70 key industries.

Subdued external demand, rising costs, slowing investment growth and the yuan's appreciation have all weighed on China's trade performance this year, Shen said.

"Feedback from firms showed foreign trade was extremely difficult this year," he said. China's net exports are likely to contribute around 12.3 percent to the increase in the country's GDP this year, he said, citing data from a research unit under his ministry.

China's trade remained weak in November with exports falling a worse-than-expected 6.8 percent from a year earlier and imports tumbling 8.7 percent. — Reuters

# FOSUN DISAPPEARANCE STOKES WORRIES AMONG CHINA CEOS

## REPORTS SUGGEST GUO IN POLICE DETENTION

**BEIJING:** The disappearance of Fosun chief Guo Guangchang, dubbed China's Warren Buffett, has stoked fear among captains of industry who thought good behavior and loyalty could protect them from Beijing's ever-expanding anti-graft campaign.

Guo, the billionaire chairman of Fosun International which is one of China's biggest private conglomerates, disappeared from public view a week ago amid reports he had been detained by police in Shanghai.

As the company's stock tumbled around 10 percent, Guo briefly resurfaced Monday, offering a cryptic reassurance to anxious investors that "there will be a better Fosun next year".

The firm said the 48-year-old executive-known as a loyal advocate of the ruling Communist Party-was "assisting in certain investigations" by Chinese authorities, but since then he has dropped out of sight again.

Neither Fosun nor China's authorities will discuss his whereabouts. The strange episode has had a chilling effect on business leaders who thought Guo's reputation for moral probity and outspoken support for the party was a bulwark against trouble.

"It's definitely scared people. (Guo's) a very highly respected, accomplished figure", said Kellee Tsai, an expert on Chinese business at the Hong Kong University of Science and Technology who is in regular contact with business leaders.

### Clean hands

Guo's disappearance is not an isolated case in the corruption campaign launched by Xi Jinping after he came to power in 2012.

Other high-profile business leaders have been caught up in the web of graft investigations, which took a new direction



**Guo Guangchang, the chairman of one of China's biggest private-sector conglomerates, Club Med owner Fosun, attending a conference in Hangzhou.—AFP**

after a stock market rout earlier this year that shook confidence in Beijing's ability to manage the country's slowing economy.

Authorities have since focused their efforts on the financial sector, collaring top executives at Citic Securities, Founder Securities and top brokerage Guotai Junan Securities.

Derek Scissors, an expert on the Chinese economy at the American Enterprise Institute, said well-connected tycoons like Guo are "equivalent to senior government officials" in terms of their standing and insight.

"It is not reasonable for Guo or anyone else to think they can't be held for questioning, whether for information they might possess or for 'improper' behaviour, such as an inadequate Party presence in their companies," he said.

"The Party remains compelled to con-

rol everything and that certainly includes the 'private' sector." An avid tai-chi practitioner with a reputation for clean living, Guo had seemed an unlikely target for Beijing's inquisitors. His disappearance seemed to violate an implicit bond of trust between the government and China's top business leaders whose hard work and financial savvy fuelled China's rise into the world's second-largest economy.

Guo himself said in an opinion piece last year: "As long as you make no mistakes and don't become reckless, the government won't bother you".

But experts say keeping hands clean in China is nearly impossible. State control over property and industry-although substantially loosened since market reforms began in the late 1970s-has made building great fortunes dependent on government cooperation. —AF

# GERMAN BUSINESS CONFIDENCE DIPS

**FRANKFURT:** German business confidence dipped slightly in December, but still remains at high levels, reflecting the ongoing resilience of Europe's biggest economy in the face of numerous challenges, analysts said yesterday.

The Ifo institute's closely-watched business climate index slipped to 108.7 points in December from 109.0 points in November, the economic institute Ifo said in a statement, a fractionally steeper drop than analysts had been expecting. Ifo calculates its headline index on the basis of companies' assessments of the current business environment and the outlook for the next six months.

The sub-index measuring current business fell by 0.6 points to 112.8 points, while the outlook sub-index was unchanged at 104.7 points, the institute said. "Sentiment in the German economy weakened slightly this month. Assessments of the current business situa-

tion declined, but optimism about future business developments remained unchanged," said Ifo president Hans-Werner Sinn.

Nevertheless, all three readings-the headline index and the two sub-indices-are around three points above the respective levels seen in December 2014. The economic situation could hardly be better in the run-up to Christmas," Sinn said.

### 'No warning signal'

"The slight decline in the index is no warning signal for the German economy," said Postbank economist Heinrich Bayer.

But Commerzbank economist Joerg Kraemer was more skeptical. "The underlying trend has for months pointed sideways at high levels. But at present, we would place more trust in order intake, which has been declining since summer, mainly due to slowing demand from emerging markets. German economic growth looks set

to decelerate to 1.3 percent in 2016," he said.

Capital Economics' Jennifer McKeown agreed. "The small fall in the headline index in December left it still at a high level. But the sharper decline in the current conditions component supported evidence from recent hard data that growth may have reached a peak," she said.

"On balance, the Ifo paints a positive picture of the German economy for now. But its fall offers some support to our forecast that growth is likely to slow before the economy has begun to generate any meaningful inflationary pressure," she said.

Berenberg Bank economist Holger Schmieding was much more optimistic. "Steady as she goes as external risks recede a little. This is the major message from German Ifo business climate," he said. "Business climate and its key components remain above their long-term averages. This fits our view that, after a modest dent

in the second half of 2015, German GDP growth will reaccelerate to its trend rate of roughly 1.8 percent over the course of next year."

"German businesses remain a bunch of optimists," said ING DiBa economist Carsten Brzeski.

"Despite another very turbulent year with the Greek crisis, the Chinese slowdown, the refugee influx and increased geopolitical tensions, the German economy continued its solid growth performance. Domestic demand, and in particular private consumption, has become an important growth driver," the expert said.

"Looking ahead, the economy should continue its current positive, though not breathtakingly strong, momentum next year. All in all, the German economy looks set for another solid growth year. However, under the surface of solid growth, uncertainties and problems are increasing," Brzeski concluded. —AFP

## CURRENCY CHANGES PUT ARGENTINE ECONOMY ON NEW PATH

**BUENOS AIRES, Argentina:** Argentina lifted deeply unpopular restrictions on buying US dollars Wednesday, aiming to put an end to a byzantine monetary system that made it difficult for businesses to operate and spawned a booming black market.

The move, a campaign promise of new President Mauricio Macri, was outlined by Finance Minister Alfonso Prat-Gay. The decision, combined with the lifting of export taxes on many agricultural products announced earlier this week, will expose Latin America's third-largest economy to international market forces in ways not seen for a dozen years.

"This system choked the economy for

the last four years," Prat-Gay said at a news conference that was broadcast live Wednesday night. "We are now returning to normal."

Attempting to shore up dwindling foreign currency reserves, the preceding administration of President Cristina Fernandez instituted restrictions on buying foreign currency in 2011. It was one of many protectionist policies instituted during 12 years of governments led by Fernandez and her late husband and predecessor as president, Nestor Kirchner.

Argentines who wanted to buy dollars, a common practice in a South American country with a long history of financial

meltdowns, had to meet several requirements. And most were limited to a few hundred dollars a month - when US currency was available in banks.

The limits, locally called a "cepo," or "clamp," led to dual exchange rates. Over the last year, while the official exchange rate was fixed around 9 Argentine pesos to the dollar, on the black market a dollar fetched as much as 16 pesos.

Businesses, especially those needing to deal in dollars, were deeply affected. While the Fernandez administration insisted that dollars coming into the country trade at the official rate, getting dollars out at that rate, if at all, proved difficult.

"The 'clamp' killed the supply of dollars. It didn't stop the demand," said Prat-Gay.

While the change will be celebrated by international investors and welcomed by many Argentines, there is also much fear about a sharp devaluation of the peso, and what that might do to already soaring prices.

Annual inflation this year is estimated at around 30 percent. Between the time Macri was elected on Nov. 22 and his inauguration last week, many businesses jacked up prices in hopes of protecting themselves against any devaluation. Other businesses, such as factories, simply shut down to wait to see what happens to the peso. — AP



**GUWAHATI:** An Indian woman laborer hangs sheets of rubber to dry at a rubber farm in Thakurkuchi village, some 35 kms from Guwahati, the capital city of the northeastern state of Assam yesterday. The national Rubber Board is looking to make Assam one of the leading states in rubber production in the country. — AFP

# FITCH SLASHES BRAZIL'S CREDIT RATING TO JUNK

## SECOND DOWNGRADE FOR WORLD'S 7TH ECONOMY

**RIO DE JANEIRO:** Fitch cut Brazil's sovereign debt rating to junk status Wednesday, the second downgrade for the world's seventh economy as it struggles through a deep recession and a damaging political crisis. The rating agency lowered Brazil's status from "BBB-" to "BB+", the first step into "speculative" or "junk" territory. Brazilian President Dilma Rousseff is currently fighting calls for her impeachment, and the economy is mired in a worse-than-expected recession.

Both of those things are weighing on the country's ability to honor its debts, Fitch said, adding that its outlook for the rating remained negative. "Brazil's downgrade reflects the economy's deeper recession than previously anticipated, continued adverse fiscal developments and the increased political uncertainty," it said. Rating agency Standard and Poor's had already downgraded Brazilian debt to junk status in early September.

The new downgrade could be painful for the reeling South American giant, since many large investment funds will not buy the debt

of countries given "speculative" status by two or more rating agencies.

"A good number of foreign investment funds already got out and likely took opportune measures to protect themselves from this downgrade, which came as no surprise. But if any funds are still investing in Brazil, they could pull out in the coming weeks," said Andre Perfeito, chief economist at Brazilian consulting firm Gradual Investimentos.

The more immediate problem, he told AFP, is that the downgrade will likely exacerbate "the ongoing bad mood and pessimism in Brazil, adding yet another ingredient to the tense political situation."

Rousseff is fighting for her political life as she stands accused of fudging the government's accounts during her re-election campaign last year. She maintains the budgeting maneuvers were long-accepted practices by previous governments.

Political chaos is adding to the country's economic woes, with GDP down 4.5 percent in the third quarter year-on-year, and the

national currency, the real, down a third against the dollar this year.

The International Monetary Fund expects Brazil to remain in recession for the second straight year in 2016 which, if confirmed, would be its first two-year downturn since 1930 and 1931.

### 'Ongoing deterioration'

Rousseff's administration faces an unsavory combination of recession, fiscal deficit, double-digit inflation and rising unemployment. The president's popularity rating is hovering at a dismal nine percent. Fitch announced its decision hours after the administration sent Congress a 2016 budget that reduces the primary surplus target from 0.7 percent of GDP to 0.5 percent. It also leaves open the possibility of saving nothing next year and instead paying interest on the government's debt, ignoring recent warnings from Finance Minister Joaquim Levy, who said the country will "end up like Greece" if it does not set aside a minimum surplus. — AFP

## JAPAN TRADE GAP NARROWS BUT EXPORTS STILL WEAK

**TOKYO:** Japan's trade balance narrowed last month but exports fell again, particularly to major market China, official data showed yesterday. The disappointing export figures underscore concerns about China's growth, despite signs of a modest pickup in the Japanese economy. The finance ministry said Japan's November trade deficit shrunk by nearly 58 percent from a year ago to 379.7 billion yen (\$3.1 billion), beating market expectations of a 480 billion yen deficit.

In October, Japan posted its first on-year trade surplus in seven months as the value of energy imports slumped on falling oil prices. In the latest figures, shipments by Japanese firms to China dropped 8.1 percent, the fourth straight on-year fall, due to declines in exports of memory chips and other electronics parts.

Total exports fell 3.3 percent, while imports were down 10.2 percent from the same month last year. The figures highlight the challenges facing Tokyo's bid to kick-start the world's number three economy in the face of slowing global growth.

Prime Minister Shinzo Abe has been trying for nearly three years to revitalise the nation's economy through his signature "Abenomics" program based on aggressive monetary easing by the Bank of Japan. Last month, official economic growth figures showed another contraction in the July-September period, suggesting Japan's economy had fallen into its second recession in as many years. But later revised figures actually showed modest growth in the third quarter, as capital spending and factory output picked up.

The data come after the US Federal Reserve on Wednesday raised key interest rates for the first time in nearly a decade, underscoring its confidence in the health of the world's top economy. The move offers some good news for Japanese firms doing business in the key US market, analysts said. "The domestic situation in the US looks good, and if the US is strong, that's positive for Japan," Ayako Sera, market strategist at Sumitomo Mitsui Trust Bank, told Bloomberg News. But Japan's latest trade data point to "broadly stagnant external demand", said Marcel Thieliand from research house Capital Economics. — AFP



**ATHENS:** An elderly woman walks past the labor ministry in Athens after pensioners threw tomatoes and eggs during their anti-austerity rally yesterday in Athens. Greece in July accepted a three-year, 86-billion-euro (\$93-billion) EU bailout that saved it from crashing out of the euro-zone, but the deal came with strict conditions. — AFP



## LAMBORGHINIS VERSUS 'GARBAGE SALARIES'

### THE RICH BECAME RICHER DURING SPAIN'S ECONOMIC DOWNTURN

**POZUELO DE ALARCON, Spain:** On a tree-lined street in the wealthy Madrid suburb of Pozuelo de Alarcon a shiny red Lamborghini, placed in the showroom's prime position, courts the attention of Spain's elite.

The Italian luxury car maker opened its first dealership in Spain in the exclusive neighborhood, home to top footballers and executives, in 2013 as the country was limping out of a steep recession caused by the collapse of a property bubble in 2008.

"It's going very well. We are meeting all our goals. We can't complain," said the dealership's salesman, Alberto Pajuelo Fernandez. Lamborghini's success in Spain is a sign of how the rich have become rich-

er during the country's economic downturn while the ranks of the poor have swelled, a hot-button issue in Sunday's general election.

The dealership, located on the same street as the local headquarters of Spain's ruling conservative Popular Party which is facing a stiff battle to retain power, sold nine cars last year.

Sales in 2015 are on track to match or even surpass last year's figures even though Spain's unemployment rate stands at 21.1 percent, the highest in the European Union bar Greece.

The number of millionaires in Spain-defined as having a fortune of over a million US dollars excluding their main resi-



dence and consumer goods-rose by 40 percent to 178,000 last year from 2008 when the crisis started, according to consulting firm Capgemini.

At the same time the number of peo-

ple living with "severe material deprivation" in the country has doubled since 2007 to just over three million last year, according to a study by anti-poverty agency Oxfam.— AFP



**HONG KONG:** People walk past an electronic board showing Hong Kong share index outside a local bank in Hong Kong yesterday. Global stocks posted broad gains yesterday after the Federal Reserve ended protracted uncertainty by raising interest rates for the first time in nearly a decade and signaling that further increases will be gradual.—AP

## ASIA POLICYMAKERS SPARED FED JOLT, SUPPORT SHAKY ECONOMIES

ECONOMISTS SEE MORE SCOPE FOR MONETARY EASING IN ASIA NEXT YEAR

**JAKARTA:** Asian policymakers yesterday applauded a historic turn in US monetary policy, but analysts warned the region's economies face vulnerabilities, with Taiwan cutting interest rates, although markets took the Federal Reserve rate hike in their stride.

The prospect of the first hike in US rates in almost a decade had kept emerging markets on edge in the weeks before the decision, amid fears investors would redirect capital to higher-yielding US debt in a fresh blow to their shaky economies. However, an initial rally smoothed the brows of Asian central bankers, who were the first to respond to the hike as US policymakers sought to end an era of ultra-low rates that followed the global financial crisis.

"The Fed's action brings an end to the lift-off uncertainty," said Amando Tetangco, the governor of the Philippine central bank, which left interest rates on hold at a monetary policy meeting yesterday.

Taiwan's central bank unexpectedly cut its policy rate by 12.5 basis points, suggesting that worries about the region's sluggish growth, not capital flight, are at the front of policymakers' minds. The relief among policymakers, and investors, comes as the global economy navigates some rough terrain, with

many export-reliant economies hit by cooling growth in China and deflationary pressures rising amid a collapse in commodities.

Add to that mix pedestrian growth in Japan and the eurozone, and it isn't hard to see why many investors were nervous about the prospects of rising borrowing costs in the United States.

Indeed, the more composed initial markets reaction was aided by the fact the Fed had clearly flagged the move in advance, and also said the pace of tightening would be gradual - an important signal for many asset markets adjusting to less stimulus after years of flush Fed liquidity.

Indonesia was at the centre of the "taper tantrum" in mid-2013, when the Fed talked about cutting its bond purchases, and this year its rupiah currency has been one of the region's worst performers.

But the rupiah rallied on Thursday, and other regional currencies rose initially before pulling back, with Indonesia's President Joko Widodo welcoming the Fed's decision "because there is certainty."

Bank Indonesia kept interest rates unchanged on Thursday, as expected, but said it saw more room to lower them next year, although it would monitor market reac-

tion to the Fed hike.

"The effect is positive for us - the stock index rose, the rupiah strengthened, the financial market reacted positively," Widodo told reporters.

#### More easing in Asia

Others, however, cautioned that higher interest rates would pose problems for economies that were too reliant on debt-fueled growth. "The Fed's hike will stiffen the headwinds for growth in Asia," said Fred Neumann, HSBC's chief Asia economist.

"Rising funding costs, especially in highly indebted economies, will slow the leverage cycle on which regional demand has increasingly come to depend," he said.

And despite the Fed hike, policy in much of Asia is set to loosen further in a reflection of the fitful growth in the region. Barclays economist Wai Ho Leong expects monetary easing in the first half of next year to be led by India, China and probably also Indonesia and South Korea. "No one is turning hawkish after the Fed has hiked," he said.

"Most central banks are dovish. This is to counter the effects of the trade recession, which hits Asia disproportionately harder than any other region in the world." — Reuters

## FED RATE HIKE GIVES ECB A WELCOME HELPING HAND

**FRANKFURT:** Just weeks after disappointing investors with smaller-than-expected stimulus, the European Central Bank has got a helping hand from the Federal Reserve with a US rate hike that could limit the need for further action of its own.

The Fed and the ECB are moving in opposite policy directions as the US economy strengthens while Europe struggles with tepid growth, high unemployment and anaemic inflation far from the ECB's target despite its best efforts so far to boost it.

The US hike, the first in almost a decade, immediately started weakening the euro - a move which if prolonged would be a double-blessing for the ECB as it boosted the currency zone's exporters while simultaneously helping to kickstart inflation.

More importantly, the calm market reaction to Wednesday's hike suggests investors accept divergence between the world's top two central banks, allowing the ECB to hold a steady course.

"The ECB will to some extent be able to decouple financing conditions in the euro area from the US," Dirk Schumacher, senior European economist at Goldman Sachs, said. "The divergence story will stay with us." The ECB extended quantitative easing two weeks ago to prop up growth. But its move to shave 10 basis points off the deposit rate and extend but not substantially expand bond-buying was far less ambitious than expected, disappointing markets and pushing the euro more than 3 percent higher on the day.

Some of that is already being reversed, with the euro weakening around 1 percent since the Fed decision. Government bond yields of euro zone members like Germany, France, and Italy, which had risen after the ECB decision, edged down 6-8 basis points for 10-year paper on the back of the Fed's move. That was seen by some as a thumbs-up to the Fed and fixing what some investors saw as a misstep by the ECB: Rising US rates could in theory have raised European borrowing costs so a counter-intuitive yield fall suggests ECB policy is increasingly detached from the Fed.

"We are not seeing any spillover of the US monetary policy in Europe and we will likely not see it because the rate hike was fully priced in," Marco Brancolini, RBS European rates strategist, said.

"More importantly, euro rates are driven by US rates only in the very short term. In the long term, 10-year Bund levels depend on ... (ECB) monetary policy." Danske Bank predicted only a 'slight upward pressure' on eurozone debt yields in the coming six to 12 months.

#### MIXED PICTURE

Others noted that this disconnect would allow the euro to fall further against the dollar.

"There is the potential for a further devaluation in the euro and that's the best thing that can happen to the eurozone," Peter Bofinger, one of the 'wise men' that advise the German government on economic policy. Although the ECB has repeatedly said it was ready to ease policy further if necessary, analysts polled by Reuters only see a 40 percent chance of further action next year.

Indeed, with growth picking up and the euro staying weak or getting weaker, the need for more action could also decrease.

"While the interest rate change doesn't make any difference economically, it has a big psychological impact," said Bofinger.

"If the euro starts to slip, the fall can happen fast - there is no speed limit for devaluations." That said, the picture for the ECB becomes more mixed further out. If a weaker euro remains a key tool for it to boost inflation, that lever could also be compromised as growth in the euro zone gradually starts to improve.— Reuters

## ATHLETES 'HEART' OF LOS ANGELES BID: EVANS

**LOS ANGELES:** Nearly three decades after she dazzled in the competition pool in Seoul Janet Evans finds herself back in the thick of Olympic competition—as part of Los Angeles' bid to win the 2024 Summer Games.

Evans, a Southern California native whose Olympic career spanned three Games, is a staunch believer that Los Angeles can deliver a supreme athletes' experience if given the chance to host the Games for a third time—after staging the global sporting extravaganza in 1932 and 1984.

She was happy to take on the role of leading the bid committee's athletes' commission, recalling how the 1984 Olympics inspired her in her swimming career. "I was a good swimmer, I went to the opening ceremony, I watched Rafer Johnson (winner of the decathlon at the 1960 Olympics) light that cauldron—it moved me," she told AFP. "It made me want to be part of the Olympic movement, it made me want to do anything to be an Olympian.

"It became my passion," she added. "It's what Olympics do, they inspire entire generations of young people who might not be inspired otherwise, that's why we all love the Olympic Games." Four years later Evans's passion was on display in her own Olympic debut in Seoul. Still just 17, she won gold in the 400m and 800m freestyle and the 400m individ-

ual medley.

She added gold and silver medals four years later, and now believes Los Angeles can offer a supreme experience for Olympic competitors. "I do know that these Games will be focused on the athletes," said Evans, who was tapped in October by a Los Angeles committee taking over the US bid after Boston abandoned its campaign.

The International Olympic Committee is set to decide on a host city in September of 2017, with Paris, Budapest and Rome also in the running.

Evans, joined on the Los Angeles bid committee by Los Angeles Lakers legend Magic Johnson—a member of the iconic 1992 US Olympic basketball Dream Team — believes the California city can offer an unparalleled experience for competitors.

"Athletes will come first, will be at the center of these Games, they will have advantages and they will be helped far beyond any other Games," Evans vowed.

"What we have in our plans are incredible, it will be great for the athletes." Evans concluded her Olympic career at the 1996 Atlanta Games—the last Summer Olympics hosted by the United States. She said Olympians' needs have evolved since then, and she believes Los Angeles can cater to them. "Athletes were always first, but I think we can do better for the



Janet Evans

athletes," she said. "We can give them better training facilities, accommodate them nutritionally in the Village, make the facilities even better. "Athletes are at the heart of it." — AFP

## SPANIARDS HELP LORENZO TO DENY ROSSI WORLD TITLE

**PARIS:** Swashbuckling Valentino Rossi accused Spanish riders of ganging up on him as he was denied a career crowning tenth world title in a cut-throat 2015 MotoGP season, won by his dogged Yamaha teammate Jorge Lorenzo.

After a storming start to the season with 12 straight podiums including four GP wins, Rossi's defining moment came in the penultimate race, under relentless pressure from Spanish defending champion Marc Marquez. The Italian appeared to suffer a rush of blood to the head near the end of the Malaysia GP and appeared to kick out at his young rival, who subsequently crashed out, whilst racing neck-and-neck around a chicane.

The ensuing hullabaloo saw politicians, sports press and just about all bike fans join a heated debate as to whether or not Rossi had kicked Marquez, and even whether or not the Spaniard had been happy with this turn of events. The 22-year-old 2014 world champion had clashed with Rossi three times over the season with the 36-year-old Italian first describing him as a "no limits all or nothing kind of rider".

He would soon go much further and accuse Marquez of playing a "dirty game" and refer to the fiery young Spaniard as "Lorenzo's bodyguard", claiming they had forged a pact to help Lorenzo get the title once Marquez had slipped too far down the points rankings to retain it.

The 'kick' earned Rossi a much-debated penalty, meaning he started the final race of the season from the back. His only chance to retain the lead in the championship would be one of the other top riders winning the race to stop Lorenzo from storming to a third world title.

However, Lorenzo led from flag to flag without ever being challenged by



Valentino Rossi

the two Spaniards—Marquez and his Honda teammate Dani Pedrosa—that stood between Rossi and his nemesis as the laps ticked down. For his part, the Italian had stormed through the pack within a handful of laps as race-watchers moved to the edge of their seats for a finale that the Italian couldn't eventually deliver.

Whilst denying that "any pact" existed with Marquez, Lorenzo intimated after the last race that his compatriots had helped him win the title by not passing him. "They knew what I had at stake," Lorenzo said. "The fact they are Spaniards like me helped me.

"In another kind of race they would have tried to overtake, which they didn't. "If Valentino had been in my position and with Italians behind they would have done exactly the same."

Penalty warnings accumulate over a

12-month period with automatic sanctions kicking in once a rider reaches four, as in Rossi's case when he was handed three for his clash with Marquez.

At that point a rider is forced to start from the back of the grid, a penalty which ultimately was to hand the title to Lorenzo, but which many felt was harsh. The president of the Federation of International Motorcycling (FIM) Vito Ippolito now wants to change the rules.

"Motorcycling is not a contact sport, but contact is part of it," Italian Ippolito told AFP. "If not, we would see processions not races. And having seen this case I now feel each case should be judged individually," he said.

Lorenzo and Rossi are both scheduled to ride for Yamaha again next season, while pundits feel that Marquez will have a better-performing Honda next time around. — AFP

## AUSTRALIA RUGBY UNION SEALS BUMPER NEW TV DEAL

**SYDNEY:** The Australian Rugby Union (ARU) has signed off on a massive increase in its share of broadcasting rights for the Super Rugby competition and international matches after announcing a five-year agreement worth A\$285 million (\$206.23 million).

The figure was a 148 percent increase on revenue achieved from previous media rights arrangements, the ARU said, while acknowledging that it paled in comparison with the billion dollar deals achieved by rival Australian football codes. "Anything with a 'B' in front of it is clearly tempting but we are very, very happy with our meagre pickings," ARU chief executive Bill Pulver told reporters in Sydney. "To achieve a 148 per cent growth in revenue from your broadcast outcome, I suspect is the largest increase of any code and it reflects, I think, the growing status that we enjoy in the Australian sporting landscape.

"And I'm confident that that sort of trend will continue. "So, look, it's not for us to try and match those codes in terms of the total broadcast value. "It's up to us to get the right growth we need for the growth of our game and I'm very confident that we've achieved that."

Australia's National Rugby League (NRL) last month announced a new broadcast and media rights deal worth A\$1.8 billion over five years, while the Australian Football League (AFL), which runs the indigenous Australian Rules code, sealed an A\$2.508 billion six-year deal from 2017 in August. Rugby league is the dominant football code in New South Wales and Queensland, while Australian Rules is the most popular sport played in winter in Victoria, South and Western Australia. Soccer, the world's most popular football code, is gaining in popularity but still lags behind in commercial muscle, netting just A\$160 million from the current four-year deal for the Australia national team and A-League matches. Cricket dominates summer sport in Australia and attracted a domestic television deal for 2013/14-2017/18 in June 2013 worth \$590 million.

The agreement, which runs from 2016-20, is the ARU's share of a wider broadcasting rights package still being finalised by the governing body SANZAR, which will expand to include Argentina next year.

Pulver said the overall package, which is expected to be finalised by early 2016, would be close to A\$1 billion. New Zealand Rugby said they had completed an agreement with pay provider Sky Television in New Zealand in Oct. 2014, although they did not announce any details while the overall package was still being negotiated by SANZAR. Britain's Sky Sports also said in October they had secured rights to broadcast southern hemisphere games in the United Kingdom. — Reuters

## WILLIAMSON SHRUGS OFF SUSPECTED BROKEN FINGER

**HAMILTON:** New Zealand master batsman Kane Williamson yesterday said he had no concerns about playing with a suspected broken finger as he looks to maintain his phenomenal form in the second Test against Sri Lanka.

Williamson, averaging 88.58 in Tests in 2015, took a nasty blow to the hand in the first innings of New Zealand's first-Test victory, where he scored 88 and 71 and became only the fifth player to pass 1,000 Test runs this year. Ahead of the second and final Test in Hamilton, which starts on Friday, Williamson described his injury as "part and parcel" of cricket and said he would not seek treatment during the series.

"It's irrelevant if it is or not, nothing will change," said the world's number three-ranked batsman, when asked whether he thought the finger was broken.

"It's part and parcel of cricket I suppose. You get a few knocks on the fingers and when it doesn't get hit it settles a little bit and gets a bit less sensitive."

Williamson said New Zealand will keep their winning combination for the second Test after being presented with another green-top wicket in Hamilton. With conditions ripe for seam and swing bowling, New Zealand ruled out bringing in an extra spinner and opted to maintain their four-pronged pace attack.

New Zealand won the first Test in Dunedin by 122 runs despite losing the toss and being forced to bat first. "We're playing the same (line-up) as the last match, with the look of the surface we will go in with that extra seamer," Williamson said, suggesting New Zealand would likely bowl first if they win the toss. "It's green, Dunedin was green, and we just feel it might be more suited to seam bowling."

Their cause was helped by the inexperienced Sri Lankan attack being unable to capitalise on the conditions, but Williamson does not expect New Zealand to get off so lightly this time.

"I'm sure they would have learned a lot (in Dunedin) and it should be a good game," he said. Sri Lanka will not confirm their line-up until just before the game, but captain Angelo Mathews indicated changes were also unlikely. "The wicket's really green, lots of grass on it, so it's definitely bowl first and if we bowl first we'll look to rectify the mistakes that we did in Dunedin because we were nowhere near our best," he said. "This will do a lot more than Dunedin, it has a lot more grass and the seamers will come into play."

"It doesn't really matter if we lose the series 2-0. We've got to go out there and keep positive right from the word go, not look to be too cautious, just go out there and play good cricket." —AFP

## N ZEALAND TO STICK WITH SEAMERS FOR SECOND S LANKA TEST

**HAMILTON:** New Zealand will keep their winning combination for the second Test against Sri Lanka, batsman Kane Williamson said yesterday after an inspection of the pitch showed another green-top wicket.

With conditions ripe for seam and swing bowling, the possibility of bringing in an extra spinner was ruled out with New Zealand maintaining a four-pronged pace attack when the Test starts in Hamilton on Friday. "We're playing the same (line-up) as the last match, with the look of the surface we will go in with that extra seamer," Williamson said, indicating New Zealand would likely bowl first if they win the toss. "It's green, Dunedin was green, and we just feel it might be more suited to seam bowling."

"It's more important to look at the conditions, horses for courses as they say, and go in with the team best suited." New Zealand won the first Test in Dunedin by 122 runs despite losing the toss and being forced to bat first.

Their cause was helped by the inexperienced Sri Lankan attack being unable to capitalise on the conditions, but Williamson does not expect New Zealand to get off so lightly this time.

"I'm sure they would have got a lot out of that surface and they had quite a new-look side over here as opposed to when we last played them here, so I'm sure they would have learned a lot and it should be a good game," he said. —AFP



**BOSTON:** Brian Dumoulin #8 of the Pittsburgh Penguins defends Brad Marchand #63 of the Boston Bruins during the third period at TD Garden on Wednesday in Boston, Massachusetts. The Bruins defeat the Penguins 3-0. — AFP

# TUUKKA RASK, BRUINS BLANK PENGUINS 3-0

**BOSTON:** Tuukka Rask stopped 34 shots for his fourth shutout of the season and Jimmy Hayes ended a 15-game goal drought as the Boston Bruins beat Pittsburgh 3-0 on Wednesday, keeping new Penguins coach Mike Sullivan winless after his first two games. Max Talbot and Ryan Spooner also scored, while Finland's Rask got his 30th career shutout. Pittsburgh backup goalie Jeff Zatkoff had 26 saves as the Penguins lost for the seventh time in nine games (2-4-3). Sullivan replaced fired coach Mike Johnston on Saturday, and Pittsburgh lost 4-1 to Washington in his debut Monday night. In the day's other game, Braden Holtby made 26 saves to help the Washington Capitals to a 2-1 home win over the Ottawa Senators. Holtby lowered his NHL-best goals-against average to 1.83. He has allowed three goals in his last three games, making 35 saves in a 2-1 victory at Tampa Bay on Saturday night and 44 in Monday's victory over Pittsburgh. Michael Latta opened the scoring in the first period and helped set up John Carlson's second-period goal. Washington's Tom Wilson was hit with a late match penalty, and Bobby Ryan scored for Ottawa on the power play with 4:14 left Eastern Conference-leading Washington has won three straight and four of its last five. Ottawa has lost three of its last four.

### Capitals 2, Senators 1

Fueled by another fantastic effort between the pipes from goaltender Braden Holtby, the Washington Capitals continued their franchise-best start with a 2-1 triumph over the Ottawa Senators.

Holtby turned away 26 shots, including several highlight-reel stops in the second period, to improve to 12-0-1 in his last 13 games and pick up his league-leading 20th victory of the season.

The Eastern Conference-leading Capitals continued their dominance of the Atlantic Division, now having earned points in 27 of their last 29 games against those teams. The Senators made things interesting late due to a match penalty called on Washington right winger Tom Wilson with 4:40 remaining in the third period. Just 24 seconds later, right winger Bobby Ryan ended Holtby's shutout bid with his 10th goal of the season but Ottawa could not find the equaliser. — Reuters

## NHL result/standings

Washington 2, Ottawa 1.

Western Conference						
Central Division						
	W	L	OTL	GF	GA	PTS
Dallas	23	6	2	107	80	48
St. Louis	18	10	4	82	78	40
Minnesota	16	7	6	79	68	38
Chicago	17	11	4	85	78	38
Nashville	15	10	6	81	81	36
Colorado	15	16	1	88	88	31
Winnipeg	14	15	2	85	95	30
Pacific Division						
Los Angeles	19	9	2	78	66	40
San Jose	15	14	1	78	79	31
Arizona	14	14	2	81	95	30
Calgary	14	14	2	80	104	30
Edmonton	14	16	2	87	96	30
Vancouver	11	13	8	81	92	30
Anaheim	11	13	5	56	73	27
Eastern Conference						
Atlantic Division						
Montreal	20	9	3	101	73	43
Boston	17	9	4	96	80	38
Detroit	16	9	6	79	79	38
Ottawa	16	11	5	98	95	37
Tampa Bay	16	13	3	78	73	35
Florida	15	12	4	81	75	34
Buffalo	13	16	3	74	86	29
Toronto	10	13	6	68	81	26
Metropolitan Division						
Washington	22	6	2	91	64	46
NY Rangers	19	9	4	94	74	42
NY Islanders	18	9	5	90	77	41
New Jersey	16	11	4	76	75	36
Pittsburgh	15	12	3	68	74	33
Philadelphia	13	12	6	66	86	32
Carolina	12	14	5	77	96	29
Columbus	11	19	3	76	100	25

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

## US FANS CELEBRATE WAMBACH'S FINAL GAME

**NEW ORLEANS:** Abby Wambach threatened to score several times in the final game of her extraordinary career, but China shut out the World Cup champion United States 1-0 on Wednesday night to hand the Americans their first loss on home soil in more than a decade.

Wambach played 72 minutes, managing two threatening headers and a shot from inside the penalty area before subbing out of a match for the final time. The career leader in international play - for men and women, with 184 goals - kicked off her cleats and hugged each teammate on the field before walking to the bench, smiling, to embrace her coaches and remaining teammates as the crowd chanted her name. "I love this team," Wambach said in comments delivered on the field to fans after the game. "It has been my pleasure and my honor to represent you all, the fans for as long as I've been able to. ...

The future is so bright. These women are going to kill it." And she made it clear that, despite the loss, it was time to celebrate, saying, "Bourbon Street, watch out," before dropped the microphone on the field walking off alone as her teammates waited behind, applauding with the rest of the crowd.

China scored in the 58th minute, when forward Wang Shuang volleyed in a bounding cross from Wang Shanshan. The US had gone 104 home games without



Abby Wambach

losing since falling 3-1 to Denmark in 2004. Kristine Lilly and Mia Hamm started that 3-1 loss in Philadelphia, while Wambach came in as a sub. The US women had gone 92-0-12 since. The Americans nearly tied it in the 87th minute when Lindsey Horan beat goalkeeper Zhao Lina, but Horan was ruled just a step offside when she received the pass from Christen Press. That was

the closest of several near misses. Horan's header forced a diving save by Lina in the 82nd minute. In the 84th minute, Carli Lloyd's pass sent Press into the penalty area for a hard drive from the left side. But Press, who had subbed in for Wambach, shot it right at Lina. In added time, Emily Sonnett's header went just over the cross bar. The game wrapped up the US's nine-game victory tour in which it went 7-1-1, outscoring opponents 40-3. Wambach got her 10th start of the year in her send-off game and also was designated the captain.

### TRADEMARK HEADERS

It was apparent from the outset that the Americans' plan of attack was based in part on sending high crosses into the penalty area in hopes of connecting with Wambach for one of her trademark headers. She put two headers toward goal in the first 2 minutes, but both were blocked away by defenders.

In the 30th minute, Wambach was able to sidestep a defender and attempt a lunging toe-poke from about 10 yards out, but couldn't muster the power or placement to beat Zhao. Some of the greats in women's soccer were drawn to the Superdome for the game, including Mia Hamm and Brandi Chastain, who starred on the 1999 World Cup-winning squad.

Official US Soccer banners lining field-level walls and covering the tunnels to the locker rooms read, "Only one Abby." And when the teams took the field shortly before kickoff, fans along the sideline held up yellow and black cards with the same slogan.

Before the starting lineups were announced, US Soccer presented Wambach with a rendering of her famous, game-tying head-ball goal against Brazil in the 2011 World Cup.

Just below the image was the word, "POWER." Wambach was ready to take it all in. She appeared to record video as she walked of the field after warm-ups of fans chanting her name, and she paused briefly to wave. A festive crowd of nearly 33,000 acknowledged Wambach at seemingly every opportunity. — AP

# WARRIORS REBOUND TO THRASH SUNS 128-103

**OAKLAND:** Klay Thompson scored 27 of his season-high 43 points in the third quarter as the Golden State Warriors responded to their first loss after a 24-0 start by beating the Phoenix Suns 128-103 on Wednesday night. Stephen Curry added 25 points on 10-of-14 shooting and seven assists as Golden State returned home from its two-week trip that ended with its lone defeat, 108-95 on Saturday night at Milwaukee. That also ended a 28-game overall winning streak by the Warriors, second-longest in NBA history. Draymond Green had 16 points, 11 rebounds and 10 assists for his fourth triple-double this season, while Thompson hit 15 of 22 shots and 8 of 13 3-pointers in his first 40-point game this season. Mirza Teletovic scored 24 points off the bench to lead the Suns, whose poor showing sent the sellout crowd to the exits midway through the fourth.

### SPURS 114, WIZARDS 95

Kawhi Leonard scored 27 points as San Antonio set a club record with its 23rd straight home victory, rolling past Washington. LaMarcus Aldridge added 14 points and Manu Ginobili and Patty Mills each had 11 for San Antonio. The Spurs are 14-0 at home and 22-5 overall. John Wall and Marcin Gortat had 20 points apiece for the Wizards. Gortat grabbed 10 rebounds. Washington was without leading scorer Bradley Beal and fellow starter Nene.

### HEAT 104, NETS 98

Dwyane Wade scored 10 of his 28 points in the fourth quarter, and Hassan Whiteside had 20 points and 13 rebounds to help Miami beat Brooklyn. Goran Dragic added 16 points, Gerald Green had 13 and Justise Winslow 11 for Miami in the Heat's third straight victory. Brook Lopez scored 25 points, and Jarrett Jack had 22 points and 10 assists for the Nets. They dropped the final three games of their six-game homestand. The Nets cut it to 101-98 when Jack made three free throws with 1:01 left. Wade countered with a floater with 43 seconds remaining, and Dragic capped the scoring with a free throw with 5 seconds left.

### CLIPPERS 103, BUCKS 90

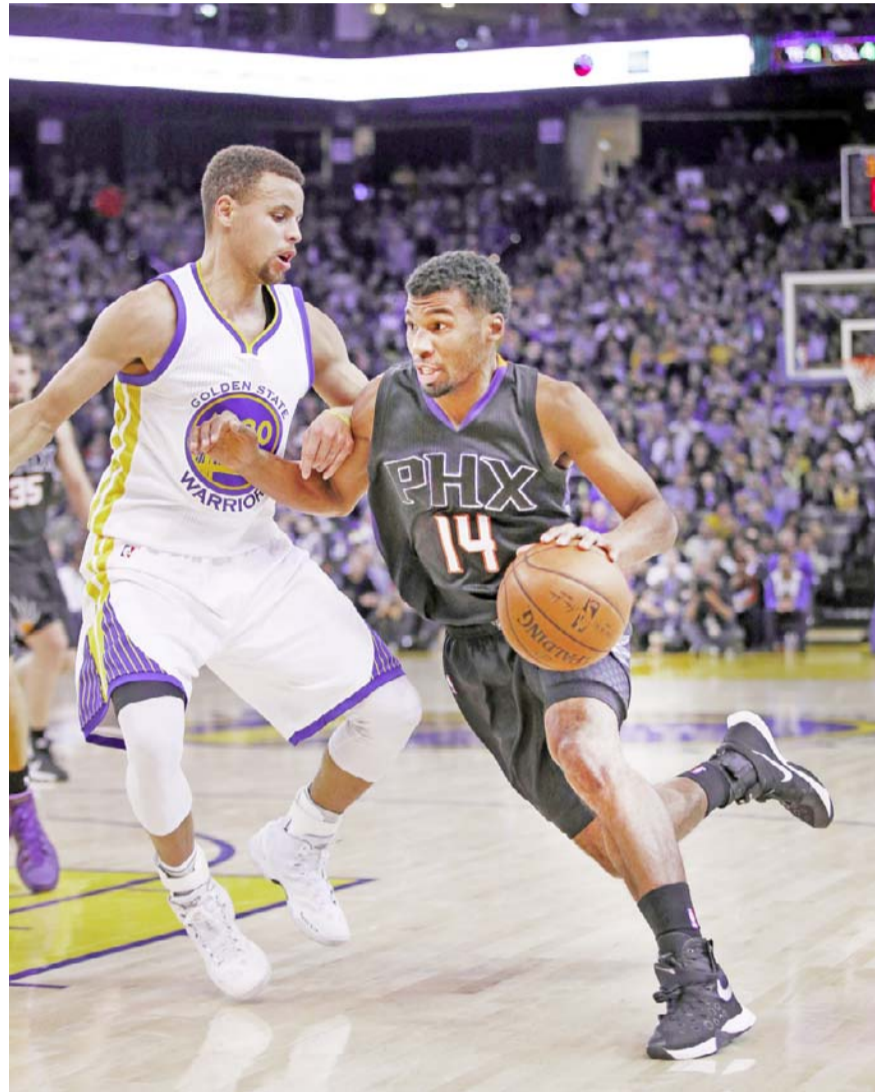
Chris Paul had 21 points and eight assists as Los Angeles overcame center DeAndre Jordan's ejection to beat Milwaukee. Jordan had nine points and eight rebounds in 18 minutes. He left with 6:49 remaining in the third after getting a pair technical fouls from referee Marc Davis with the Clippers leading 66-52. The calls stemmed from a battle over a loose ball with Bucks guard Michael Carter-Williams. J.J. Redick scored 19 points and Blake Griffin added 15 points for the Clippers. O.J. Mayo and Michael Carter-Williams each scored 17 points for the Bucks. They have lost 11 straight on the road.

### KNICKS 107, TIMBERWOLVES 102

Carmelo Anthony had 20 points, 15 rebounds and nine assists, and Arron Afflalo scored 29 points, as New York beat Minnesota. Kristaps Porzingis had 11 points, six rebounds, six blocks and three assists for the Knicks in his first matchup against fellow rookie and No. 1 pick Karl-Anthony Towns. Towns had 25 points and 10 rebounds, Andrew Wiggins had 23 points, and Zach LaVine added 19 points for the Timberwolves.

### THUNDER 106, TRAIL BLAZERS 90

Kevin Durant scored 24 points, leading Oklahoma City past Portland for its sixth straight victory. Dion Waiters scored 18 points, Enes Kanter had 12 points and 13 rebounds,



**OAKLAND:** Ronnie Price #14 of the Phoenix Suns drives on Stephen Curry #30 of the Golden State Warriors at ORACLE Arena on December 16, 2015 in Oakland, California. — AFP

and Steven Adams added 11 points and 11 rebounds for the Thunder. They have held seven consecutive opponents under 100 points. C.J. McCollum scored 24 points and Damian Lillard added 20 for the Trail Blazers, but Lillard was held scoreless on 0-for-9 shooting in the second half.

### BULLS 98, GRIZZLIES 85

Jimmy Butler scored 24 points and Derrick Rose added 19 as Chicago beat Memphis. Butler and Rose shook off recent illnesses, and the Bulls used a big third quarter to tie a season high with their fourth straight win. Doug McDermott scored 17 points - one shy of his career high - and hit four 3-pointers. Pau Gasol added 10 points and 14 rebounds in his 21st game against younger brother Marc. Courtney Lee tied a season high with 18 points for Memphis.

### HAWKS 127, 76ERS 106

Paul Millsap scored 21 points and Jeff Teague added 18 as Atlanta routed Philadelphia to snap a three-game skid. The Hawks had lost 11 of 18 after starting the season 7-1, but they never trailed against the woeful Sixers, who dropped to 0-16 on the road, 1-26 overall. Isaiah Canaan finished with a season-high 24 points for Philadelphia.

### PACERS 107, MAVERICKS 81

Monta Ellis scored 13 of his 19 points in the third quarter, C.J. Miles added 20, and Paul George had 19 to help Indiana beat Dallas. The Pacers trailed 47-45 at halftime, and

outscored Dallas 30-17 in the third quarter. Ellis was scoreless in the first half, but the former Maverick scored six straight points early in the third to ignite the Pacers. Indiana led by 26 in the fourth quarter. Raymond Felton had 16 points for Dallas.

### MAGIC 113, HORNETS 98

Channing Frye had a season-high 17 points in Orlando's victory over Charlotte. Evan Fournier had 15 points, Nik Vucevic had 14 points and eight rebounds, Elfrid Payton had 12 points and nine assists and Tobias Harris had 13 points for Orlando. The Magic led by 25 points in the fourth quarter before turning the game over to the reserves. Reserve Jeremy Lamb led the Hornets with 16 points.

### PELICANS 104, JAZZ 94

Ryan Anderson scored 24 points to lead New Orleans past Utah. Anthony Davis had 17 points and 13 rebounds, and Eric Gordon added 19 points for the Pelicans. Derrick Favors had 16 of his 22 points in the third quarter, added seven rebounds and matched a career high with five assists for Utah. Gordon Hayward had 20 points and six rebounds.

### PISTONS 119, CELTICS 116

Kentavious Caldwell-Pope scored a career-high 31 points as Detroit beat Boston. Reggie Jackson finished with 23 points, including 14 in the third quarter. Andre Drummond had 16 points and 12 rebounds. Jared Sullinger had 17 points and 10 rebounds for Boston. — AP

## PREMIER LEAGUE TITANS ROAR IN BOARDROOM, SQUEAK ON PITCH

**LONDON:** Untold riches will rain down upon the English Premier League in 2016, but for all their resources, the country's leading clubs currently seem incapable of staking claims to the title. The record £5.14 billion (\$7.72 billion, 7.06 billion euros) television rights deal due to kick in next year will reinforce the English top flight's status as European football's financial behemoth. But champions Chelsea have imploded, Arsenal and Manchester City remain hit-and-miss and while Liverpool find their feet under Jurgen Klopp, Manchester United appear to be stagnating under Louis van Gaal. It has fallen to Leicester City to make the early running in what former United captain Gary Neville has described as "the most bizarre league that I have seen in a long time".

The year's first financial shockwave arrived in February, when Sky and BT Sport agreed a new domestic TV rights package for 2016-2019 worth 70 percent more than the deal for the previous cycle.

June brought news that record revenues of £3.26 billion for 2013-14 had enabled Premier

League clubs to post pre-tax profits of £187 million—the first since 1999.

Even before the new TV deal takes effect, Premier League sides have been carrying out essential housekeeping—net debt across the league falling by six percent—as well as splashing out in the transfer market. Total spending across the close-season transfer window reached a record £870 million, according to financial analysts Deloitte, and spending for the calendar year pierced the £1 billion barrier.

City led the way, notably shelling out £55 million for Kevin De Bruyne, while United provoked gasps by signing the relatively unheralded Anthony Martial for a fee that could reportedly reach £58 million. But it was the transfer dealings of the smaller clubs that revealed England's true financial might, from Xherdan Shaqiri leaving Inter Milan for Stoke City to Crystal Palace signing Yohan Cabaye. All the while, the money continued to flow in—United embarking upon a £750 million kit deal with Adidas; Chelsea striking a £200 million shirt sponsorship agreement with Yokohama Tyres;

a Chinese consortium paying \$400 million for a 13 percent stake in City.

### 'TIP OF THE ICEBERG'

The game's current megastars—Lionel Messi, Cristiano Ronaldo, Neymar, Luis Suarez—may play elsewhere, but several Premier League clubs now harbour feasible ambitions of luring them to England. And with oversights TV rights also due to be renegotiated in 2016, the monster shows no sign of being sated. "This new English contract will dominate the market," Bayern Munich chief executive Karl-Heinz Rummenigge predicted in September. "We have just seen the tip of the iceberg. The transfer tsunami will increase in strength and height." But while Europe's major clubs brace themselves for renewed raids from England, the season to date has eloquently demonstrated that money does not solve everything.

Chelsea, champions in May by an eight-point margin, have been sucked into a relegation battle after catastrophically losing nine of their first 16 games, creating a maelstrom of

speculation about Jose Mourinho's future. Doubts persist over Arsenal's backbone in spite of back-to-back FA Cup triumphs, while City have already lost four times in the league, including 4-1 drubbings by Liverpool and Tottenham Hotspur.

Van Gaal, meanwhile, is struggling to convince anyone that he is the man to restore United to the heights of the Alex Ferguson era amid reports of player dissent over the 20-time champions' robotic football. United crashed out of the Champions League in the group phase and although City, Chelsea and Arsenal reached the last 16, there is little faith that England's four-year wait for European glory will end. Tottenham, Palace, West Ham United, Everton, Stoke and promoted Watford have started the season well, but it is Leicester who have created the sensation.

Dogged and hard-working, Claudio Ranieri's team are the antithesis of Premier League glitz and in Jamie Vardy and Riyad Mahrez they boast an attacking duo who cost just £1.4 million between them. —AFP

## JUVE ROUT TORINO TO KEEP DOUBLE ON TRACK

**MILAN:** Simone Zaza struck twice while Paulo Dybala and Paul Pogba added late goals as holders Juventus cruised into the Italian Cup quarter finals with a 4-0 rout of Torino on Wednesday. After a poor start to the season, last year's double winners Juve have enjoyed a Serie A revival to move within six points of leaders Inter Milan with one game remaining before the festive break.

And Massimiliano Allegri's men provided some early Christmas cheer with a comprehensive victory over their bitter city rivals to maintain their chances of a second successive double.

"It was important for us to win this and get to the quarters, but now we're thinking of Sunday's game away to Carpi," Allegri told Rai. "For the quality they have, they are an underestimated side." Zaza, making a rare appearance amid reports of a January move to the English Premier League, put the hosts ahead with a cracking first-time strike on the half hour after great work on the left wing by Alvaro Morata. The 24-year-old doubled Juve's lead six minutes after the restart when he guided a low shot beyond Salvador Ichazo and into the far corner. Dybala has scored in Juve's past two league wins and made it three matches in a row with a well-taken strike in the 73rd minute after replacing Zaza eight minutes into the second half.

### SUPERB FREE-KICK

Pogba wrapped up the win with a superb free-kick eight minutes from time to set up a quarter-final clash with the winner of the Lazio-Udinese tie later.

Both Dybala and Pogba celebrated their goals by lifting their shirts to show respective messages, the Frenchman's for 'Bryan'. "He's an 11-year-old kid who has cancer, we promised we'd dedicate a goal to him," Pogba told Rai. Pogba said his free-kick skills have been honed with the help of ex-Juve star Andrea Pirlo, now at New York City FC in the MLS. "I'm working a lot on my free-kicks given that Pirlo's not here, in fact I have him to thank for teaching me so much."

Earlier, Napoli secured an exciting last eight tie with Inter after a 3-0 win over Serie A basement side Verona at the San Paolo, where Omar El Kaddouri, Dries Mertens and Jose Callejon got on the scoresheet. The quarter-finals will be without two leading Serie A sides, however, as Roma and Fiorentina fell to unheralded opposition. Serie A title hopefuls Roma fell 4-2 on penalties to Spezia after failing to find a way past the second division side after two periods of extra time at the Stadio Olimpico.

Under-fire coach Rudi Garcia hit out: "Today was a complete failure but now we need to keep our heads during the storm. "Above all, we need to show guts, pride and much more besides to show we're capable of much better, starting from Sunday because this is not acceptable." Fiorentina, who sit four points behind Serie A leaders Inter, suffered a 1-0 upset to second-from-bottom Carpi, for whom Antonio Di Gaudio scored a 76th minute winner. —AFP



**YOKOHANMA:** Barcelona forward Luis Suarez (2nd R) scores against Guangzhou Evergrande during their Club World Cup semi-final football match in Yokohama yesterday. — AFP

## SUAREZ SCORES HAT-TRICK AS BARCELONA STROLL INTO FINAL

**YOKOHAMA:** Luis Suarez scored a hat-trick, including an exquisite second goal, as Barcelona strolled into the Club World Cup final with a 3-0 win over Asian champions Guangzhou Evergrande yesterday.

Guangzhou gave the European champions a couple of scares in the first half but the Chinese side were utterly outclassed by the end of a match that often resembled an attack-versus-defence training session. Zou Zheng also suffered a horrific injury in the first half, appearing to break his leg as he fell awkwardly to the clear distress of his team mates.

Even without Lionel Messi, who was taken ill just hours before the game, and the injured Neymar, Barca enjoyed more than 70 percent of possession as they claimed a place in the final against South American champions River Plate.

It was Guangzhou's first defeat under Brazilian coach Luiz Felipe Scolari who took over in June. Barca needed 39 minutes to break down the defence, Suarez pouncing to tuck in the rebound after goalkeeper Li Shaui failed to hold Ivan

Rakitic's long-range drive. The Catalans had a lucky escape just before that when Brazilian Elkesen just failed to make contact with Zheng Zhi's cross. Javier Mascherano also twice made last-ditch tackles to prevent Guangzhou players having a clear run at goal, firstly on Ricardo Goulart and then Zheng Zhi, while Claudio Bravo made his only save just before half-time to tip away Elkesen's header. The game was settled as a contest after 49 minutes when Andres Iniesta sent a beautifully-weighted pass into the area and Suarez caught it on his chest before volleying past Li in one movement. The Uruguayan completed his hat-trick by converting a penalty in the 67th minute.

### MESSI IN PAIN

Barcelona forward Lionel Messi missed yesterday's Club World Cup semi-final against China's Guangzhou Evergrande in Yokohama because of abdominal pain, the Spanish club said. The Argentine wizard, who returned last month after a lengthy knee injury, is suffering from renal colic, a

problem commonly caused by kidney stones. "His future availability will depend on the outcome of further medical tests," said a statement on Barcelona's website. Messi had appeared in good spirits since Barca arrived in Japan on Monday, joking with team-mates and signing autographs for local fans who turned out in their hundreds to watch their idols train.

"Leo is not right," said Barca technical director Robert Fernandez. "It's renal colic and we know what it is, and how painful it is usually. "We will see how he is in the night, how his symptoms develop tomorrow and see if he is fit to play the next game." Brazilian striker Neymar, who has been in a rich vein of form this season, will also miss the game as he recovers from a groin strain suffered in Barca's European Champions League clash at Bayer Leverkusen earlier this month. Luis Suarez, the third member of Barcelona's vaunted strike-force, starts. European champions Barcelona are attempting to become the first side to win the Club World Cup three times. — Agencies

## LATE CAVANI STRIKE PUTS PARIS IN LEAGUE CUP QUARTERS

**PARIS:** Edinson Cavani came off the bench to score a late winner as holders Paris Saint-Germain beat Saint Etienne 1-0 in the League Cup on Wednesday.

Earlier in the evening Bordeaux beat Monaco 3-0 while Lyon won their last ever game at the Stade Gerland, 2-1 over second-tier Tours.

Paris coach Laurent Blanc rotated his side, who drew a home tie with Lyon in the quarter-finals, and Italian goalkeeper Salvatore Sirigu was acclaimed by the crowd as he made only his second start of the season after being displaced by newly arrived

German stopper Kevin Trapp.

PSG's record goal-scorer Zlatan Ibrahimovic almost added to his collection of spectacular strikes when hitting the woodwork with a scissor-kick in the opening period. The Swede looked disgruntled when he made way for Angel di Maria after an hour, but it was a decisive switch.

Di Maria teamed up with fellow sub Cavani to grab the winner after a fine pass and finish in the 86th minute of a tight game as Paris went all out for a goal to avoid extra-time and penalties.

And Cavani's left-foot volley was as beau-

tiful as Di Maria's defence splitting lob that found the Uruguayan running full-pelt into the area before curling a deft shot past Jessy Moulin in the Saint Etienne goal.

Three-time winners Bordeaux also booked their place in the quarter-finals brushing aside Monaco with relative ease. Teenage striker Adam Ounas struck a superb 16th-minute opener for the hosts before Uruguayan forward Diego Rolan curled home a second goal just before the hour.

Bordeaux captain Henri Saivet headed in a third two minutes from time to seal just a second win for Willy Sagnol's men in their

last eight matches.

Two goals from Claudio Beauvue ensured Lyon ran out winners ahead of their move to a new 59,000-capacity stadium in January.

South-coast giants Marseille beat Ligue 2's Bourges 3-2 away to secure their place in the last eight, while other Ligue 1 outfits Lorient, Lille, Guingamp and Toulouse all went through on Tuesday.

### Quarter-final draw:

Paris Saint-Germain v Lyon, Toulouse v Marseille, Bordeaux v Lorient, Guingamp v Lille. Matches to be played on January 12-13. — AFP

## VALENCIA WINS UNDER NEVILLE, ADVANCES IN COPA DEL REY

**BARCELONA:** Gary Neville enjoyed his first win as Valencia coach when his side eased to a 2-0 victory over lower league Barakaldo on Wednesday and booked a place in the King's Cup last 16 5-1 on aggregate. Santi Mina's header put Valencia ahead after eight minutes and Alvaro Negredo slotted home having been played in by Andre Gomes after 31 minutes.

Former England defender Neville, in his third match in charge of the Spanish team, decided against making too many changes despite a 3-1 lead from the first leg against the third-tier side. Eibar overturned a 3-0 first-leg loss as a Mikel Arruabarrena penalty completed a 4-0 win over 10-man Ponferradina.

The top-flight side showed their priority was La Liga by resting nine players from the team that drew with Valencia on Sunday and still won, although the first-half dismissal of Jesus Berrocal made a big difference. Ponferradina started stronger but were reduced to 10 men after Berrocal was given two yellow cards in succession for elbowing Aleksandar Pantic and arguing with the referee. Borja Baston headed Eibar in front from a corner just before halftime and further goals came from Sergi Enrich and Simone Verdi before Arruabarrena converted a penalty.

Second-tier Mirandes knocked out Malaga as Lago Junior's goal secured a 1-0 win on the night and 3-1 aggregate triumph. Oscar De Marcos hit a first-half opener as Athletic Bilbao hammered Linense 6-0 and went through 8-0 on aggregate. Further goals came after the break from Javier Eraso, Xabier Etxeita, Kike Sola, Raul Garcia and Mikel Rico.

Rayo Vallecano advanced on goal difference against Getafe after losing 3-1 having won the first leg 2-0 while Las Palmas knocked out Real Sociedad after a 1-1 draw put them through 3-2 on aggregate. Barcelona reached the last 16 after beating Villanovense in a tie brought forward due to their participation in the Club World Cup and Real Madrid were thrown out of the competition having fielded an ineligible player in their first-leg game against Cadiz. — Reuters



**LOS ANGELES:** In this July 7, 2015, file photo, US women's soccer team midfielder Carli Lloyd acknowledges cheers during a public rally held to celebrate the team's World Cup championship, in Los Angeles. Midfielder Carli Lloyd has been voted the US Soccer Federation's Female Player of the Year after her hat trick in the final led the US to its third Women's World Cup title. The announcement was made Wednesday. — AP



**LONDON:** In this May 24, 2015 file photo Chelsea Manager Jose Mourinho waves to the crowd after the English Premier League soccer match between Chelsea and Sunderland at Stamford Bridge stadium in London. Chelsea was awarded the trophy after winning the English Premier League. Mourinho has left Chelsea with the club languishing one point above the relegation zone just seven months after winning the Premier League title, it was reported yesterday. — AP

## MOURINHO SACKED AS CHELSEA MANAGER

**LONDON:** Chelsea manager Jose Mourinho has left the club "by mutual consent" after a disastrous start to the season, the Premier League champions announced yesterday. "Chelsea Football Club and Jose Mourinho have today parted company by mutual consent," the club said in a statement on their website, confirming earlier media reports. "All at Chelsea thank Jose for his immense contribution since he returned as manager in the summer of 2013." Mourinho, 52, led Chelsea to a Premier League and League Cup double last season, but they are currently one point above the relegation zone after nine defeats in 16 games.

Mourinho is reported to have been informed of his fate in a meeting with club officials on Thursday afternoon, following two days of talks at boardroom level.

He was previously sacked by Chelsea owner Roman Abramovich in 2007, after a richly successful three-year spell in which he won two Premier League titles, two

League Cups and the FA Cup.

"His three league titles, FA Cup, Community Shield and three League Cup wins over two spells make him the most successful manager in our 110-year history," Chelsea said.

"But both Jose and the board agreed results have not been good enough this season and believe it is in the best interests of both parties to go our separate ways. "The club wishes to make clear Jose leaves us on good terms and will always remain a much-loved, respected and significant figure at Chelsea. "His legacy at Stamford Bridge and in England has long been guaranteed and he will always be warmly welcomed back to Stamford Bridge." Juande Ramos, the former Tottenham Hotspur and Sevilla manager, and Dutchman Guus Hiddink have been cited as potential short-term replacements, Hiddink having previously fulfilled the role in 2009. Pep Guardiola, the Bayern Munich coach, former Chelsea manager Carlo Ancelotti,

Atletico Madrid's Diego Simeone and Italy coach Antonio Conte are reported to be possible long-term successors.

"The club's focus is now on ensuring our talented squad reaches its potential," the Chelsea statement added. "There will be no further comment until a new appointment is made." In what proved to be his final Chelsea game, Mourinho's side were beaten 2-1 at Leicester City on Monday—a club managed by Claudio Ranieri, who he replaced at Stamford Bridge when he first arrived in England in 2004. Mourinho was scathing in his assessment of his players' display afterwards, saying: "I feel like my work was betrayed."

With Chelsea having swept to the title by eight points last season, their collapse has baffled pundits. As well as floundering in the league, they were knocked out of the League Cup on penalties by Stoke City, although they have reached the Champions League last 16, where they will face Paris Saint-Germain. — AFP



Khalid Al-Roudhan, Mohammad Ibrahim and Sheikh Mohammad Al-Abdallah.



Fahad Al-Ansari, Mohammad Ibrahim, Capello, Luis Figo, Mohammad Jragh and Nesta.

# AMIR TO INAUGURATE JABER STADIUM

## WORLD CUP STARS TO PLAY IN KUWAIT

By Abdellatif Sharaa

**KUWAIT:** His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah is scheduled to patronize and attend inauguration of Jaber Al-Ahmad International Stadium today. His Highness the Amir will inaugurate the stadium in Al-Ardiah district at 07:30 pm tonight.

During the press conference held prior to the Jaber Stadium opening celebration, Sheikh Mohammad Al-Abdallah Al-Mubarak said that most world soccer stars have arrived, and few others will be here soon. He thanked all those who contributed to the event, and to achieve what HH the Amir instructed us was to make soccer fans happy.

When asked about the withdrawal of some players and whether this will affect the celebration, Sheikh Mohammad said, whenever a star withdrew, we replaced him with another. He said there are those who did not arrive, but already signed contracts and will arrive within hours, and we will reveal a huge surprise before the match, if there are no obstacles on the way.

About FIFA's interference Sheikh Mohammad said it was strange for them to do so. He added that the match, today, will not follow the rules of FIFA, so it is strange for it to get involved in a match that will not be according to their rules.

He said there is no fear for anyone who is participating in this event, because it will not

follow the FIFA rules, and by this, we hope to protect participants in this event.

When asked about the next step following the opening of Jaber Stadium, and what will Kuwait do to solve the sports problem in general, Sheikh Mohammad Al-Abdallah said, that efforts of officials headed by Minister of Information, State Minister for Youth Affairs and Sports Public Authority are ongoing in direct contact with sports bodies. Kuwait confirms that it is a pioneer in the independence of sports, and we believe that there is no clash between our laws and international ones.

I understand that sports clubs sent letters to Kuwait Football Association and the Olympic Committee, and hope all these efforts will remove the hardships Kuwait sports in going through.

### ELITE GROUP OF PLAYERS

The organizing committee of the Jaber Stadium opening ceremony held its second press conference yesterday in the presence of State Minister for Cabinet Affairs, Acting Minister of Electricity and Water, Chairman of the Organizing Committee Sheikh Mohammad Al-Abdallah Al-Mubarak.

Those who attended the conference were Fabio Capello, who will coach the World Stars team, Alessandro Nesta, who is considered an AC Milan team legend, and Portuguese star Luis Figo, representing the World Stars. Meanwhile the Kuwaiti team was represented

by coach Mohammad Ibrahim, Mohammad Jragh and Fahad Al-Asari. Responding to a question coach Fabio Capello said that this is his first visit to Kuwait, and very proud to be here and participate in the stadium opening. He said it is pleasant to "sit next to my colleague the Kuwaiti coach."

Meanwhile, Mohammad Ibrahim said he is honored to coach an elite group of players in this celebration, and thank the organizing committee and those who selected me as coach. It is really our patriotic duty to be involved in this event.

He said many people are waiting for this event, and hope that such fine moments remain forever, and be happy at all times, and thank our guests. Mohammad Al-Ibrahim said jokingly, that he has prepared a defensive plan to play against Ancelotti, but now it will be an offensive plan against Capello.

When asked about FIFA's reaction Capello said we came here to have a fantastic event and play a football game and not get into political problems. Capello said this is his first visit to Kuwait and when he was "asked to manage this group of people who I also managed in different teams, it was my pleasure to oblige.

Mohammad Ibrahim said he was happy to be with the world's elite of coaches and players, adding that "I was following them on TV, and today I am so close to them, and hope to see creativity and good performance in the stadium.

Capello said that "I just finished my venture in Russia, where I was really happy, but now I am working as technical commentator on TV, and as for the future I received several offers, and I cannot say what will happen if I receive an interesting one."

Meanwhile, Italy's Alessandro Nesta said that this his second time in Kuwait, and during the first time the weather was very hot, but today it is much better. I love this country, and I love the people, because they are very friendly, and hope to come again in the future.

### FANTASTIC STADIUM

When asked about the problems Milan is facing, he said it is not a good moment, as they are facing many problems, and "I do not know what the big one is, but Milan spends less money than before and this is the first

problem. I hope Milan can win again in the future. Kuwait's Fahad Al-Ansari said, "I am honored to be with the coach and stars, and honored to be under the leadership of Mohammad Ibrahim for the second time, and thank the organizers of the opening ceremony and the friendly match, as well as those who voted for me to be in this match.

Luis Figo, I visited many countries around the world, Kuwait is a different country but we are similar at the end, we are family loving... many kids... He said "I do not avoid to talk about anything, and do not have any problem to give my opinion but I think the main reason we are here is to launch this fantastic stadium, and it is a historic moment for Kuwait, and it is a pleasure to come back again to this fantastic country where I have a lot of friends, and I feel like being at home. I believe it is a privilege for Kuwait fans to have the opportunity to see their icon in Kuwait."

Mohammad Jragh said he thanked all those involved in the celebration and special thanks to the Kuwaiti fans who voted for him. He said it is an honor to have Luis Figo as an idol.

Figo said he came to Kuwait three times before, all because of football, the first time was on the invitation of Al-Roudhan family. He added that this kind of events is the reason where people show their love of football, and the people of Kuwait can be happy. I hope that tonight the stadium will be full, because the event means a lot, and it is not that every day you open a national stadium, and I am very proud to be involved.

Responding to Kuwait Times about the situation with FIFA, Figo said that he denounces many things he saw when he announced he will be running for FIFA presidency. "It is not a surprise what is coming out right now in the form of corruption and scandals, and like I said when I was candidate I think FIFA needs change in its charter and this means there should be a change of leader. He said right now I support Gianni Infantino, because he can make the changes, otherwise things will continue to be the same.

So, I hope that the local organizations think about what is good for the future of the game come February, and hope that it will be democratic elections of the new FIFA president.



Figo and Nesta during the conference.—Photos by Yasser Al-Zayyat

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# Sports

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(From left) Mohammad Ibrahim, Capello and Luis Figo

## World Cup stars to play in Kuwait