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NO: 16682- Friday, October 30, 2015

## PLANTING IN YOUR BACKYARD



By Ben Garcia

This time of the year in Kuwait is the best season for planting and growing vegetables and ornamental plants, both indoors and outside. The government provides land for those who want to grow vegetables both in Wafra and Abdally. Many Kuwaitis have utilized this opportunity and have been maintaining and tilling lands for many years, producing vegetables for their own use and for commercial purposes.

But growing veggies and other flowering plants in Kuwait needs special attention, as Kuwait's soil doesn't suit many plants, because it cannot hold or sustain the needed water. Moreover, soil in many parts of Kuwait is lacking in nutrients, Dr Dalal Al-Khazemi, Assistant Professor at the College of Food Science and Nutrition, told Kuwait Times.

Khazemi maintains a garden in her backyard at home in Kuwait City. "I like growing edible vegetables in an organic or natural environment. I don't like greenhouses because they are not natural at all," she said. "In Kuwait, you can grow almost everything as long as you have the knowhow or knowledge to treat the soil or prepare it for planting," she said.

Khazemi shares her gardening techniques through Instagram. "Coming from a country like Kuwait, I never had any background in gardening. But being with the soil makes me feel happy and better, so I started planting vegetables. When I have free time, I go to my backyard and plant something. I have tomatoes, peppers, berries, kale, watermelon etc. I also have a flowering garden," she said.

### Environment

Khazemi got her master's and doctorate degrees in Canada after graduating with a degree in nutrition in the United States. "When I was in Canada, I was involved in population surveys, and I learned a lot from it. I started relating everything to Kuwait, the environment and the way we live. How we have to be connected with the environment and how we could use our natural environment for our benefit. I learned a lot about diets by studying many bio-markets.

Continued on pages 4 & 5



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Photos

of the day



**KUWAIT:** Lightning strikes in the sky over Kuwait City before a rain-storm hits the country early yesterday morning. Cloudy skies and rain are forecast for the entire weekend. — Photos by Yasser Al-Zayyat



Local Spotlight

VIRUSES IN SCHOOLS

By Muna Al-Fuzai

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The death of a student at a private school allegedly due to pneumonia a few weeks ago sparked anger. Some parents said that it was cholera, while some were reluctant to send their children to school. This is scary news, no doubt. Parents are right to be concerned for the safety of their children in schools, while the school also has a right to defend itself before everyone. Also, it is the duty of the ministry of health to ensure the safety of students and their health and make sure they are free from infectious diseases, especially when we talk about a disease such as cholera.

The ministry must be involved in verification of all these issues - it is natural that news of the spread of a deadly virus will arouse fear even among those who do not send their children to this particular school. It shouldn't be ignored to please any party.

The principal of the private school denied the allegation that any student of the school died of pneumonia. The principal also said the health ministry had examined the schoolchildren and denied the spread of any epidemic amongst them. I completely understand the situation of the school administration. They have every right to defend their reputation and business.

The school administration stressed that the school is safe. The ministry of health denied the spread of cholera or pneumonia in any school. Representatives of the ministry of health from the departments of preventive medicine and school health visited the school and denied any epidemic within it. But the parents expressed their dissatisfaction with the school administration and its failure to take preventive measures to protect their children. Some even prevented their children from going to school until the issuance of an official report from the ministry of health confirms it is free from any viruses or infectious diseases.

It's good that this incident opened people's eyes and encouraged them to talk publicly about the kind of academic environment provided by private schools to students, the majority of whom are expatriates. In this particular incident, the owner of the school showed up and tried to speak to the parents. He was told about the need to clean the school and improve ventilation.

A lot of parents complain frequently about the large number of students in classes at private schools, but no one responds. The number of students can reach up to 40, and the likelihood of the spread of viruses, even if it is just common cold, increases. Some children have weak immune systems which increases the possibility to catch viruses.

Anyway, the MoH is insisting there is no infectious virus and the parents are raging. The ministry of education needs to verify the authenticity of the matter, as the death of a young student should not go unnoticed. I also believe that exaggeration has no justification, and people must wait for the final report and then decide to be angry or not...

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**VENUE:** Hawally - Adsani Complex  
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**التاريخ :** 3, 4, 5 نوفمبر 2015  
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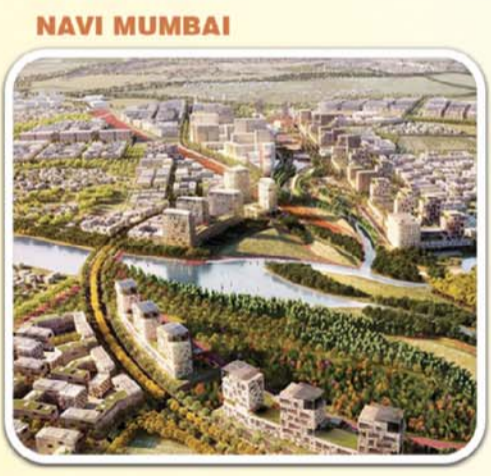
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# Planting in your backyard

Photos courtesy: Dalal

**Continued from Page 1**

In Canada, they stressed a lot to individuals on how they can make use of every space available. There, people care about what they eat and the government is involved in how they lead their lifestyles," she mentioned.

"When I returned to Kuwait, I started talking about nutrition and shared my thoughts on these issues. I used social media to reach out to people when I was still in Canada," Khazemi stated. Her love for gardening started in Canada, as she was fascinated by gardening and growing vegetables because everything there looked green and cool. "My fascination with plants started in Kuwait when I was in elementary school. I always wanted to plant something - I volunteered and participated in tree planting projects, but my passion for planting and growing veggies started in Canada. I had a big piece of land there as my garden, so I utilized it. Wherever I have time, you'll see me in my garden," she said.

**Hobby**

"When I came back from studies in Canada, I felt I was missing something. So I asked my husband to help me in cultivating the big plot of land at our place in Kuwait. My husband and I talked about how we could make use of the land. He said we should only plant something that we could eventually eat. So we experimented with edible plants in my garden. My



husband and I would read many articles about organic gardening, and he had some experience in agricultural techniques like grafting and so on. Gardening has become a hobby for him too - it's not something we studied formally, although we took some short courses, seminars and workshops," she explained.

Her husband started digging up the backyard. "My husband treated the soil and replaced it with organic soil. He replaced the sandy soil with manure and compost. The sandy soil cannot hold water and maintain moisture, so the result will be bad if you will not do something. We changed the soil so we could grow plants; and we can grow some



pumpkins and watermelons even in summer. September and October is the right time to prepare the soil for many edible veggies, so expect abundant tomatoes, cucumber, kale and the likes in these cooler months, ready to harvest by December, January, February and March. We have space and we have knowhow so we could get something from our backyard. Now we are sharing the techniques through Instagram," she said.





### Preparing the soil



**Step 1**  
Before planting the bed, prepare the soil by digging at least 8-12 inches and turning over shovelfuls to loosen and aerate it. Add in organic matter, such as compost or manure. The more organic matter you mix in, the better. Then run lines of string to establish a grid. The grid will help you position young plants at the proper distance from one another.

**Step 2**  
Gently remove the seedling from its container, then grasp the leaves to guide it while supporting the root ball. Set the plant in the hole at the same depth at

which it was growing in its container. Firm the soil gently over the roots around the stem. This will help put the roots in contact with the soil. Make evenly spaced depressions in the soil with your finger if you are planting seeds. Be sure to follow the recommendations on the seed packet to know how deep to make the depressions.

**Step 3**  
Water well. For transplants, apply a gentle shower using a watering can or hose-end sprayer. For seeds, use the lightest setting on a hose-end sprayer to avoid disturbing the soil.

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## Are your plants safe for kids and pets?

By Athoob A Al-Shuaibi

The weather is changing, and homeowners and apartment residents are flocking to plant nurseries in Rai looking for the perfect plants to decorate their homes, windows or balconies. The perfect plants, according to those shoppers, have to look admirable, waft a beautiful scent, be low maintenance or simply flowering. But the first thing they should be more concerned about is the traits and characteristics of these plants. Are they safe for children and pets?

"The problem is that younger children and dogs and cats have faster metabolism than human adults. Therefore, their body will have a quicker reaction to toxins. The younger the pet, it is more likely to be as curious as a young child and will try to put anything in its mouth to explore. The problem with cats and dogs is that when they feel that their body has a lot of worms, they clean it by eating grass. If they can't find grass, they are going to eat any plant," said Dr Nelson Gomez from the International Veterinary Hospital (IVH). "The most common toxic plant for pets in Kuwait is aloe vera. The plant is commonly used in beauty and personal care products, but it's very toxic for cats and dogs. It can damage the kidney, cause vomiting and diarrhea," he added.

Another common plant in Kuwait is amaryllis, also known as lily, which is poisonous to children and cats. It can also cause kidney damage and diarrhea in pets. The flower is beautiful to have at home, but recommended to be kept out of reach. Equally toxic are decorative palms, but these are not as popular in Kuwait as date palms. "Usually, the signs of poisoning are very difficult to know because we can't determine the cause. We start asking until we can get a diagnosis," Gomez explained. "When you bring a pet in the house, you are responsible to read about it. If you get a plant, it's the same - you should read about it. All the plants that are toxic to children are unsafe for pets too," he warned.

But nursery owners and employees do not educate their customers, or intentionally hide any useful information because they are apprehensive of losing business, while some of them do not have sufficient information about their plants. Nurseries that permitted Kuwait Times to take pictures of some toxic plants did not wish to be named.



Dr Nelson Gomez. — Photos by Athoob Al Shuaibi

- 1. Lilies (Lilium, all spp.):** Ingesting any part of the plant can cause complete kidney failure in 36-72 hours. First symptoms appear in a few hours and may include appetite suppression, lethargy, vomiting. Cats are especially sensitive to lily poisoning, so be very careful to keep your cats away from lilies of any kind, including the Amaryllis, Easter lilies, and Stargazer lilies so often found in homes around the holidays.
- 2. Lily of the Valley (Convallaria majalis):** Ingesting any part of the plant can cause cardiac dysrhythmias, vomiting, diarrhea, confusion, weakness, and even death.
- 3. Anemone (Anemone and Pulsatilla, family Ranunculaceae):** Irritating to the mucus membranes, and can cause blisters, hemorrhagic gastritis, shock, convulsions, and death.
- 4. Aloe Vera (family Liliaceae):** Vomiting, depression, diarrhea, anorexia, tremors, change in urine color.
- 5. Amaryllis (family Amaryllidaceae, incl. Hippeastrum spp.)** All species, including Belladonna Lily, are toxic, and especially

### Toxic Plants For Pets

dangerous to cats. The bulbs are the toxic part of the plant. The "Amaryllis" commonly seen during the December holidays are Hippeastrum species. Symptoms include vomiting, depression, diarrhea, abdominal pain, hypersalivation, anorexia, tremors.

- 6. Asparagus Fern (family Liliaceae):** Allergic dermatitis, gastric upset, vomiting, diarrhea.
- 7. Daffodil (Narcissus):** Vomiting, diarrhea. Large ingestions cause convulsions, low blood pressure, tremors, cardiac arrhythmias.
- 8. Philodendrons:** Irritation, intense burning and irritation of the mouth, lips, tongue, excessive drooling, vomiting, difficulty swallowing.

- 9. Jade Plants (Crassula argentea):** Vomiting, depressions, ataxia, slow heart rate.

- 10. Chrysanthemums:** Vomiting, diarrhea, hyper salivation, incoordination, dermatitis.

- 11. Cyclamen (Cyclamen persicum):** The tubers or rhizomes contain the toxic glycoside cyclin, a terpenoid saponin. Ingestion can cause excess salivation, vomiting, diarrhea, heart rhythm abnormalities, seizures, or even death in rare cases.

- 12. Cycads (including Sago palm; cardboard palm; etc.):** The "Sago palm" is a cycad, not a true palm, and all parts of the plant are poisonous. Symptoms include vomiting, lethargy, melena (black "tarry" feces), icterus (jaundice), increased thirst, hemorrhagic gastritis, bruising, coagulopathy, liver failure, and death.

Source: UC Davis School of Veterinary Medicine  
[http://www.vetmed.ucdavis.edu/ccah/health\\_information/plants\\_pets.cfm](http://www.vetmed.ucdavis.edu/ccah/health_information/plants_pets.cfm)

Crime

Report



## PROSTITUTION RING BUSTED

By Hanan Al-Saadoun

**KUWAIT:** Residency detectives arrested a Chinese woman for running a prostitution ring and holding some Chinese women captive, forcing them to practice prostitution for money. Undercover sources said the Chinese madam's Hawally flat was raided, and five girls and a man were arrested. Three liquor bottles were also confiscated.



Weapons found

Weapons detectives arrested a citizen for possessing unlicensed weapons and ammunition. Detectives found an AK-47 machinegun, a 9 mm pistol and rounds hidden in his Mutlaa ranch.

### Fire dept on alert

Kuwait Fire Services Directorate's public relations department said that its leaders are on partial mobilization until weather conditions improve. PR director Colonel Khalil Al-Amir said 122 calls were received within 24 hours that varied between fires, rescuing people trapped in their cars and some families stuck in their homes as water flooded their basements. Rescue personnel worked on getting them out.

# ECONOMY CONTRACTS ON FALLING OIL PRICES

## GDP SHRANK 1.6% IN 2014

**KUWAIT:** Kuwait's economy contracted last year for the first time since 2010 as the state suffered the consequences of the global drop in oil prices, the Central Bank said yesterday. The country's total Gross Domestic Product (GDP) shrank 1.6 percent in 2014, mainly because oil-generated GDP contracted 1.7 percent, the Central Bank said in its annual economic report. Analysts have been warning of the effects on oil-dependent

countries of the drop of oil prices by more than half since the beginning of last year, to below \$50 a barrel.

Like other Gulf nations, Kuwait has been struggling to diversify its economy to compensate for oil price fluctuations. The Central Bank said non-oil GDP grew 2.1 percent last year. Kuwait's economy had been recovering after contractions of 7.1 percent in 2009 and 2.4 percent in 2010, according to World Bank figures.

In 2013, the economy grew by 1.1 percent, the Central Bank report said. The emirate has managed to weather past economic falls, having built up fiscal reserves of some \$600 billion.

Kuwait has the fourth-largest Gulf economy after Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates and Qatar. The state has a native population of 1.3 million and is also home to about 2.9 million foreigners. It pumps around 2.8 million barrels a day. —AFP

## FINAL REPORT OF BEDOONS HANDED TO STATE OFFICIALS

**KUWAIT:** Chairman of the Central Agency for Remedying the Status of Illegal Residents Saleh Al-Fadhalah announced late Wednesday that the agency has presented its final report on the matter to senior state officials.

In statements to reporters at the National Assembly, Fadhalah said that the agency has finished the first stage of its mission by submitting the final report to state officials. He added that the second stage would start later and focus on implementing a roadmap to resolve the problem.

Fadhalah estimated the total number of illegal residents (bedoons) who were registered in the national census of 1965 at 34,000. Being registered in 1965 does not mean that they are automatically eligible for naturalization, he said, explaining that some of them have already left the country, or had passports of certain countries and some others have security problems. —KUNA

## NOD TO GOVT TO PRIVATE VISA TRANSFER SEEN

By Meshaal Al-Enezi

**KUWAIT:** Informed sources said Social Affairs and Labor Minister and State Minister for Planning and Development Affairs Hind Al-Subaih will issue a decision to allow the transfer of residencies of workers registered on government contracts to the private sector. The decision stipulates that KD 300 must be paid for each worker, and the company owner must have vacancies in his labor needs record.



**KUWAIT: Sadu weaving - a heritage of the desert that is seen in most Kuwaiti homes. - KUNA**

## EXPAT ARRESTED FOR BRIBING OFFICIAL

**KUWAIT:** Policemen arrested a Bangladeshi expat for attempting to bribe the secretary of Jahra security director to release three women arrested in violation of residency law. The suspect met secretary of Col Waleed Shihab and pleaded to release the three

Filipinas, offering him KD 1,500. He was arrested while giving part of the bribe.

### Couple suspected

An expat was arrested at the Palace of Justice when he was reported by other people there for laugh-

ing and behaving suspiciously with a girl in one of the corridors. Security men caught the two, but did not find anything illegal with them. The man was arrest for being wanted on a civil case and was sent to concerned authorities. —Al-Rai



## TANBURA: CLASSICAL KUWAITI MUSIC ART WITH AFRICAN ROOTS

**KUWAIT:** The classical art of tanbura is a musical style which was and still popular amongst Kuwaitis especially with its danceable African beats and upbeat melody.



Having roots in African music, fann a-tanbura was exported to Arabia from Yemen which had contact with several African countries through the red sea, said Yousef Dokhi in his book "Kuwaiti songs". This style of music made its way to Kuwait around 150 years ago through African migration to the what is now known as the GCC region, said Dokhi, noting that pioneers of the art, such as Ahmad Al-Roumi,

Saleh Marjan, Mohammad Al-Rashed, and Yousef Farhan Al-Dokhi made tanbura popular in Kuwait.

Regarding the instruments used in tanbura music expert Dr Hamad Al-Habbad said that this kind of music was based around a six-string instrument called tanbura which pre-dates several Arabic musical instruments like the oud. The tanbura player would sit on the floor due to the heavy weight of the instrument while his notation is dictated by some five to six percussionists, said Habbad, who added that some tanbura sessions included singers and dancers.

He said that usually tanbura music is played with a slow beat with one or two individuals assigned to wear a sort of a dress called al-manjor made of goat hooves or other material which produces a sound similar to an egg shaker instrument. Tanbura performances in Kuwait dates back to the 1800s with many delivered at public squares and open spaces back then. —KUNA

## COURT OF APPEALS ADJOURNS MOSQUE BLAST CASE TO NOV 5

**KUWAIT:** The court of appeals, presided over by Judge Hani Al-Hamdan, has postponed hearings in the case of the Imam Al-Sadeq Mosque blast to Nov 5 in order to listen to civil claimants' pleadings. On Oct 25, the Court of Appeals heard the testimony of defendant Abdulrahman Aidan who was sentenced to death by the criminal court, where he and other defendants retracted their previous confessions. The criminal court had sentenced seven suspects to death, eight to two to 15 years in prison, but acquitted another 15 suspects.

The defendants are accused of spreading terror, committing murder, joining an internationally-banned group that promotes toppling the ruling system with illegitimate means, namely terrorism, thus threatening the country's national unity. The court had held its first session on the explosion on Aug 4 to look into the cases presented against seven Kuwaiti defendants, five Saudis, three Pakistanis, 13 bedoons and one fugitive with unidentified nationality.

The public prosecution had demanded tough sentences against the defendants, as the prosecution's representative had presented thorough details on the case. They also provided visual evidence on the role of the 29 defendants in the blast, including hiding vital evidence and helping the driver, Eidan, to escape. The terrorist attack took place on June 26 during the holy month of Ramadan, leaving 26 worshippers dead and 227 others wounded. The blast sparked wide-scale condemnations from Arab, Muslim and world countries, which rejected all forms and manifestations of terrorism. —KUNA

# GULF LABOR LAWS QUESTIONED AFTER INDIAN MAID LOSES ARM

**DUBAI:** Kasthuri Munirathinam, a 55-year-old mother of four from southern India, was plunged into debt after borrowing money to marry off her daughters. Like many before her, she was recruited through an agency and promised an opportunity to earn 1,000 Saudi riyals (\$267) a month by working as a live-in maid in Saudi Arabia, the Arab region's largest economy where domestic help is in high demand. On Sept 29, just a few weeks after arriving in the kingdom, she tried to escape from her employer's house, using two of her saris to fashion a rope and climb from a third-floor window.

What happened next is unclear and disputed. What is clear, however, is the price Munirathinam is paying for trying to leave. She lost her most of her right arm and is now lying in a hospital bed in the Saudi capital of Riyadh. The incident highlights the precarious situation migrant workers across the Gulf face under a sponsorship system that ties their livelihood and residency visas to their employer. Rights researchers say domestic workers, who number at least 2.4 million across the Gulf, are among the most vulnerable because the majority are women and live with their sponsor. Labor laws in Gulf Arab nations often exclude domestic workers from their protections.

Munirathinam's sisters, speaking by telephone to The Associated Press in India, say her employer was overworking her and not feeding her enough. In calls to her family, Munirathinam told relatives that when she complained to Saudi authorities about her treatment, her employer punished her by locking her in a room. According to her relatives, Munirathinam alleges that she lost her arm as a result of her employer's actions. But a Saudi police spokesman said their investigation showed she fell from her makeshift rope and that the amputation of her arm resulted from injuries from her fall.

### Blame

"She feared that they might try to harm her or kill her, so she tried escaping through the window," her sister Vijayakumari Shankar said. "The recruitment agency told her that she would be able to make a lot of money and help her family out of poverty." Munirathinam's older sister Mallika Jayavel says the sponsor is alleging she jumped from the window because she is mentally ill. "This is completely untrue," she said. "They are trying to put the blame on her instead of admitting their guilt."

India's Foreign Ministry has pressed for an independent inquiry and for the employer to be charged with attempted murder. The family is demanding she receive compensation since she will no longer be able to work. She also underwent back surgery as a result of the fall. Across the Middle East, domestic workers typically hail from the Philippines, India, Bangladesh, Nepal, Sri Lanka, Indonesia and Ethiopia. More than 2.8 million Indians work in Saudi Arabia mostly in lower-paying jobs, including some 60,000 maids. Last

year, India and Saudi Arabia signed a labor cooperation agreement to secure the rights of domestic workers and their employers.

But Rothna Begum, a researcher on women's rights in the Middle East for Human Rights Watch (HRW), said actual application of the law often lags behind the formal legal protections on paper. "There isn't a sort of task force to check if domestic workers are being afforded their rights or not," she said. "The problem is the system is designed to where that leaves (the worker) trapped and tied to her employer."

In some cases, domestic workers who try to leave an abusive situation can be found guilty of breaching immigration laws because residency visas are tied to the employer, who has to give consent for a worker to transfer employment. There are also no shelters to turn to. Migrant workers can either try to seek refuge at their home coun-

ers rights such as a weekly day off, 30 days of annual paid leave and a 12-hour working day with rest, HRW said in a report. Bahrain includes domestic workers under its labor law, but excludes them for a vast majority of its provisions, such as limits on working hours. Begum says in Oman, the UAE and Qatar, the country's labor laws do not apply to domestic workers, though the UAE and Qatar are working on drafting laws to provide legal protections beyond the employment contract.

Rights group Amnesty International said last year that under Qatari law there are no limits on working hours for the country's 84,000 female domestic workers and no requirement to allow them a day off. On Tuesday, Qatar announced new legislation aimed at reforming residency policies for its large population of migrant workers. The Qatar News Agency



**CHENNAI:** In this Oct 24, 2015, photo, Malliga, sister, and Mohan, son of Kasthuri Munirathinam, display his mother's photograph. —AP

try's embassy or head to a deportation center, but Begum says "that's not really a viable place to be in to pursue a claim against your employer."

The kingdom issued a bylaw in 2013 for domestic workers that allowed for protections such as one day off a week and a paid vacation every two years. However, other workers under Saudi labor law are limited to eight hours of work daily - compared to domestic workers who could be required to work up to 15 hours. According to the International Labor Organization (ILO), Saudi Arabia is one of the largest employers of domestic workers in the world, with approximately 784,500. The ILO says that around a third are men, who take on jobs such as driving or gardening, while the majority are women working on average about 64 hours a week.

### Domestics in Kuwait

Kuwait has the second highest number of domestic workers in the Gulf with around 660,000, according to HRW. This year, Kuwait's parliament approved a law giving domestic work-

reported that the new law dealt with "the regulation of the entry and exit of expatriates and their residency." It did not provide further details, and it remained unclear whether the new law would apply to domestic servants.

James Lynch, deputy director for the Middle East and North Africa at Amnesty International, said domestic workers face additional forms of discrimination that put them at greater risk because most are women and are physically living with their employers. At times, it is the workers' own embassies that tell them to walk away from pressing charges because the system might be skewed or the process too complex. Standards for proving sexual assault, for example, are much higher in Muslim countries where capital punishment is levied on rapists. Women who report being raped could face charges of taking part in "illicit relations" until the rape charge is proven. "There simply isn't the kind of follow through and careful investigation that you can expect," Lynch said. "It can give the impression that the legal system is protecting sponsors from scrutiny." —AP

Friday Times

# International

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BEIJING: In this file picture taken on Dec 1, 2008, newborn babies lie on a hospital bed. —AFP

## CHINA ENDS ONE-CHILD POLICY

### MANY COUPLES STILL STICK TO ONE DUE TO COST

**BEIJING:** China announced the end of its hugely controversial one-child policy yesterday, after decades of strict, sometimes brutal enforcement left it with an ageing population and shrinking workforce, heightening the challenges of slowing growth. All couples will be allowed two children, the official Xinhua news agency reported, citing a communique issued by the ruling Communist Party following a four-day meeting in Beijing. The historic change was "intended to balance population development and address the challenge of an ageing population", Xinhua said.

Campaigners welcomed the move, but stressed that a "two-child policy" still meant that China would retain population control mechanisms - while demographic changes will take decades to have an effect, and previous loosening led to fewer extra births than expected. The policy, instituted in the late 1970s, restricted most couples to only a single offspring and for years authorities argued that it was a key contributor to China's economic boom.

It was enforced by a dedicated national

commission with a system of fines for violators and often forced abortions, leading to heartrending tales of loss for would-be parents. But China's population - the world's largest at 1.37 billion - is now ageing rapidly, gender imbalances are severe, and its workforce is shrinking. The concerns led to limited reforms in 2013, including allowing a second child for some couples in urban areas, but relatively few have taken up the opportunity.

Human rights organisations welcomed the change to the deeply unpopular policy, but expressed reservations about remaining controls. It was "good news for the couples who wish to have a second child," Maya Wang of Human Rights Watch told AFP, but "the restrictions on reproduction rights remain in China". "As long as the quotas and system of surveillance remains, women still do not enjoy reproductive rights," she said, adding that change in policy was for "primarily economic reasons". Amnesty International's William Nee said on Twitter: "'Two Child Policy' won't end forced sterilisations, forced abortions, gov control over birth permits."

#### Intense Pressures

The Communist leadership met in Beijing to discuss ways to put the country's stuttering economy back on a smooth growth path as it struggles with structural inefficiencies and social policies left over from an era before it embraced market reforms. Known as the fifth plenum, the conclave discussed the next Five-Year Plan for China - the 13th since the People's Republic was founded in 1949. Over four days of meetings the 205 members of the Central Committee, plus around 170 alternates, examined the specifics of the plan, which was largely worked out through a process of national consultations before the leaders even set foot in the capital.

The country's rubberstamp legislature will officially approve the resulting document next year. China has enjoyed a decades-long boom since the ruling party embraced market economics and opened up to the rest of the world from the late 1970s. The process has transformed the livelihoods of hundreds of millions of people and propelled the country to global prominence. The meeting reiterated the Communist Party's goal to double 2010 GDP by

2020, as part of its aim to achieve a "moderately prosperous society" by the 100th anniversary of its founding.

But growth has been slowing for several years, and analysts say it needs to embrace further liberalization to avoid falling into the stagnation of the "middle income trap", when developing countries fail to fulfil their full potential. Yong Cai, a sociology professor at University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill and expert on the one-child policy, said the change announced yesterday was "at least 10 years later than it should be". "But better than never," he added.

Chinese social media met the announcement with a collective shrug. As the country has grown wealthier, couples have increasingly delayed having even one child as they devote more time to other goals, such as building their careers. A second child, many commentators noted, would only add to the already intense social and financial pressures attached to reproduction. "I will have four parents to take care of, along with two children," one commenter noted. "This is too great a responsibility". —AFP

## CUT OFF BY IS, RESIDENTS STRANDED IN ALEPPO

**DAMASCUS:** Hundreds of thousands of Aleppo residents are stranded and prices for basic goods are soaring after a jihadist advance cut the sole route to regime-held areas of Syria's second city. The Islamic State group last week severed a road south of the city that formed part of the only remaining way out for residents of the government-held west of Aleppo. With the route cut, the cost of everything from tomatoes to petrol has skyrocketed before the eyes of frustrated Aleppans. "Within five days it has gotten to the point of madness," Salaheddin, 45, a real estate agent from the Saif al-Dawla neighbourhood, told AFP by telephone.

"A kilo of tomatoes today goes for between 900 and 1,000 Syrian pounds (around \$3), seven times more than before," the father-of-four added. "There are hardly any fruits and vegetables in the city, and

there are no cars in the streets because the petrol stations are closed." Once Syria's economic hub, Aleppo has been ravaged by war and divided between government control in the west and rebel control in the east since shortly after fighting there began in mid-2012.

The main Aleppo-Damascus highway out of the city has been cut by rebels since then, but last year regime troops opened another route running through the towns of Safireh and Khanasser to government-controlled Hama and Homs. Last week an IS advance severed the route south of Khanasser, and on Tuesday IS forces also pushed into the outskirts of Safireh on the road.

**'My bride and I are Waiting'**  
The advances have stranded some in

Aleppo, like 30-year-old Ahmed Rami, who moved from the city to Egypt with his family three years ago but was back visiting friends and family when the road was cut. "The road was severed the day before I was due to travel to Beirut to continue my journey back to Cairo from the airport there," the trader told AFP. "Since then I've been waiting impatiently for news that it has been reopened."

He said basic goods were no longer available in the city - which before Syria's conflict was famed for the food and spice markets of its Old City. "There's no gasoline so it's hard to move around the city, and the lack of fuel oil (for generators) means the city is going to be plunged into darkness." Several residents accused shop owners and traders of seeking to exploit the crisis by hoarding goods and letting prices rise.

"Everyone knows that there are food reserves, but there are traders who are capitalising on the crisis to monopolise goods so that prices increase," said Anas Shaaban, a 28-year-old publishing house employee. "The traders of Aleppo are known for their monopolies and trying to profit from crises," added Salaheddin.

Even people outside Aleppo have been affected by the crisis, including Damascus resident Ihab Al-Sayed, who was due to marry his fiancée from Aleppo on Wednesday. "I've been forced to postpone my wedding," he said. "This is the fourth time I've delayed it, but in the past it was because of the economic crisis, and debts and costs," the telecommunications employee said. "This time it's because the road to Aleppo is closed. They've told us it will open soon, and my bride and I are waiting." — AFP

## ISRAELI FORCES KILL TWO PALESTINIANS

**JERUSALEM:** Israeli security forces shot dead two Palestinian assailants in the occupied West Bank yesterday, police and the army said, as a month-long spate of stabbing attacks showed no signs of abating. The latest assaults, like other recent stabbings, took place in Hebron, a city in the West Bank, signalling that violence was shifting to that territory from Israel and Jerusalem, where police have set up roadblocks in Palestinian neighbourhoods that were home to many of the alleged assailants.

A paramilitary policeman shot dead a Palestinian in Hebron who had stabbed and lightly wounded a soldier, police said. Hours later, at a nearby location, a second Palestinian was shot and killed by Israeli troops when he tried to knife a soldier, who was unhurt, the army said. This month's wave of violence, the worst since the 2014 Gaza war, has in part been spurred by religious and political tensions over a Jerusalem site sacred to both Muslims and Jews.

Increased visitor numbers by religious Jews to Jerusalem's al-Aqsa mosque plaza - Islam's holiest site outside Saudi Arabia and revered in Judaism as the location of two destroyed biblical temples - have spurred Palestinian allegations that Israel is violating a "status quo" by which Jewish prayer there is banned. Israel has pledged to abide by the long-standing arrangement at the site in Jerusalem's walled Old City and has said false allegations by Palestinian officials, echoed in Arab social media, that it intends to encroach on Muslim rights of worship have been inciting violence.

Since the latest wave of unrest began on Oct 1, at least 62 Palestinians have been shot dead by Israelis in the West Bank and in Gaza. Of those, 35 were assailants armed mainly with knives and in some cases with guns, Israel said, while others were shot during anti-Israeli protests. Many were teenagers. Eleven Israelis have been killed in stabbings and shootings.

### Bodies Withheld

The Jerusalem Legal Aid and Human Rights Center, a Palestinian institution based in the West Bank city of Ramallah, said information from families and the Palestinian Health Ministry showed Israel was holding 29 bodies of Palestinians killed in the violence, including at least 17 from Hebron. Asked about the figures, the Israeli military declined comment, referring queries to the Prime Minister's Office, where a spokesman could not immediately be reached. Hebron's Palestinian governor, Kamel Hmeid, said the failure to release bodies to the families was stoking anger in the city, where stone-throwing anti-Israeli protests have been raging. "Everyone is awaiting the handover of bodies ... Organisers of protests have made clear they will not rest before the bodies of martyrs are released to their families (for burial)," Hmeid said. Amnesty International says some of the killings of Palestinians were unjustified and that Israeli forces were using "extreme and unlawful measures". Israel says it has a right to use lethal force to stop attempts to kill its citizens. A US-promoted Jordanian plan announced on Saturday to set up cameras to monitor the flashpoint Al-Aqsa mosque compound has not been implemented. Palestinians have voiced concern that Israel would use such footage to arrest suspected militants. — Reuters



**DOUMA, Syria:** Syrians inspect damaged buildings following an air strike by Syrian government forces in this rebel-held area east of the capital Damascus. — AFP

## SYRIAN OPPOSITION, REBELS NOT INVITED TO VIENNA TALKS

### REBEL SAYS TALKS TO 'EXPOSE' IRAN

**BEIRUT:** Syria's main political opposition body and representatives of the armed opposition have not been invited to international talks on the country's war, an opposition politician and a rebel leader said. The Syrian government in Damascus has meanwhile yet to issue any official comment on the meeting in Vienna today that will bring together about a dozen countries including Saudi Arabia and Iran, which back opposing sides in the conflict. The Syrian opposition has objected to Iran's participation in the talks - the first time it has attended such a meeting on Syria - because of its military support for President Bashar Al-Assad.

George Sabra, a member of the Syrian National Coalition, told Reuters the failure to invite Syrians showed a "lack of seriousness". Asked whether the coalition had been invited to the talks, he said: "That didn't happen." "It is a big weak point in the meeting, because it will discuss the issues of the Syrians in their absence." The talks will include regional oppo-

nents Saudi Arabia and Iran. "The Saudi regime has committed war crimes and its presence in the multilateral Vienna talks on Syria is dubious and illegitimate," Major General Hassan Firouzabadi, head of Iran's armed forces, was quoted as saying by state news agency IRNA.

Tehran and Moscow have provided crucial support to Assad's government, while his regional opponents including Saudi Arabia, Qatar and Turkey demand his departure. Assad has stuck by his long-held position that "eliminating terrorism" must come first, after Moscow called on Syria to prepare for parliamentary and presidential elections. Assad says all the groups fighting him are terrorists. Bashar Al-Zoubi of the Yarmouk Army, a group affiliated to the Free Syrian Army, told Reuters that representatives of the armed opposition had not been invited to the Vienna meeting.

"Iran is part of the problem and not the solution, and its participation in the meeting will prove that to the world," Zoubi said. "This meeting was accepted by Saudi Arabia and

Turkey to expose Iran." The coalition's Sabra reiterated his objection to Iran's participation, saying it could not play a mediation role. "It's officers are fighting every day on Syrian fronts," he said.

### A Way 'Out of Hell'

US Secretary of State John Kerry, who arrived in Vienna early yesterday, cautioned that this week's talks would not secure an immediate political solution, but represented the best hope available. "While finding a way forward on Syria will not be easy - it's not going to be automatic - it is the most promising opportunity for a political opening we have seen," Kerry said just before he set off for Austria. "The challenge that we face in Syria today is nothing less than to chart a course out of hell," he added. Kerry was also to meet Austrian Foreign Minister Sebastian Kurz and the UN's envoy on Syria, Staffan de Mistura, in a bid to possibly set up additional meetings with key players later in the day. — Agencies

## ELECTION A HIGH-STAKES GAMBLE FOR ERDOGAN

**ISTANBUL:** His June election setback sparked headlines proclaiming “the beginning of the end”. But Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan is fighting back, desperate to restore his absolute grip on power in a new vote Sunday after his Justice and Development Party (AKP) lost its majority five months ago. The opinion polls are almost unanimous, however: Despite the fallout from this month’s massive Ankara bombing and the revival of the bloody Kurdish conflict, Turks are likely to vote on Sunday as they did on June 7.

And Erdogan has shown no signs of rolling back on what critics see as an increasingly autocratic rule, again going on the offensive to silence rivals and critical media. Riot police on Wednesday stormed television stations owned by a conglomerate accused of links to Erdogan’s arch-rival, US-based cleric Fethullah Gulen, a move that alarmed Turkey’s allies as well as rights groups.

“The persecution of the critical media outlets has reached an extremely worrying level because of the elections,” said Johann Bihl of Reporters Without Borders.



Recep Tayyip Erdogan

If the conservative, Islamic-rooted AKP fails to win a majority on Sunday it will have to forge a partnership with one or more of the other parties that wins enough votes to sit in parliament - or call yet another election. “Will Erdogan allow

power to slip from his hands?” columnist Murat Yetkin wrote in the Hurriyet Daily News. “The answer... will be directly related to the quality of democracy in Turkey. Only in democracies do governments bow to the will of the people and have respect for what they are told through the ballot box.”

After 13 years of single-party government, the June result was a stunning blow for the charismatic but abrasive Erdogan, the most powerful leader since modern Turkey’s founding father Mustafa Kemal Ataturk. It damaged, at least temporarily, his ambition to push through constitutional changes that would see Turkey shift from a parliamentary to a presidential system and give him greatly expanded powers.

### Torpedoed Coalition Efforts

Refusing to admit defeat, Erdogan torpedoed efforts in the weeks that followed to form a coalition government, and

declared there was nothing for it but to hold fresh elections. “I didn’t get here by falling out of the sky,” Erdogan said recently. “I was prime minister for 11 and a half years. There are still projects in progress, we have a duty to follow them through.”

But experts warn that Erdogan, who became Turkey’s first directly elected president in 2014 after more than a decade as premier, will not be willing to join forces with anyone who might act as a brake on his power. Even the party that shares the AKP’s conservative voter base - the Nationalist Movement Party (MHP) - is demanding that Erdogan step back from daily politics as a condition for joining any coalition. “The (idea of an) executive presidency proposed by the head of state was widely rejected in June,” Marc Pierini, visiting scholar at the Carnegie Europe think-tank and former EU ambassador in Ankara, told AFP. —AFP



**ISTANBUL:** Supporters of the Turkish president attend a rally on Istiklal Avenue yesterday ahead of the Nov 1 general elections. —AFP

## TURKISH OPPN NEWSPAPERS BLOCKED AFTER TV RAIDS

### ACTION PROVOKES ALARM AS ELECTION NEARS

**ISTANBUL:** Two Turkish newspapers critical of President Recep Tayyip Erdogan failed to appear yesterday, a day after riot police stormed their sister television stations and forced them off air. The action has provoked alarm among Turkey’s Western allies and global rights groups over the state of media freedom just days before the country’s most crucial election in years. Riot police firing tear gas and water cannon stormed the Istanbul offices of two television stations linked to a bitter Erdogan rival and pulled the plug Wednesday, triggering brawls with staff and demonstrations in Istanbul.

The spectacular raids targeted the media operations of the multi-billion dollar Kozi-Ipek conglomerate, which is accused of financing US-exiled preacher

Fethullah Gulen, a one-time Erdogan ally turned arch-foe. The group’s two stations, Bugun TV and KanalTurk, remain off air while its two newspapers, Bugun and Millet, were prevented from appearing today after court-appointed administrators moved in.

Millet published the front page of what would have been its Thursday edition on Twitter with a photograph of a bloodied press card and the headline “A bloody putsch”. Bugun editor-in-chief Erhan Basyurt, who was sacked along with two reporters, said they were initially informed there were technical problems preventing the paper from being printed. “Then they told us we could not print, that there was a written ban.”

Critics accuse the government of trying

to quash dissent ahead of Sunday’s vote, which opinion polls say is unlikely to deliver Erdogan’s Justice and Development Party (AKP) the clear victory it so desperately desires. “The government has shown today what will happen to this country if we do not put a halt to this oppression on Sunday,” Eren Erdem, a lawmaker with the opposition Republican People’s Party (CHP), said on Twitter.

Turkey is holding its second election in five months after the AKP, which has dominated for 13 years, lost its majority in a stunning election setback in June. Prime Minister Ahmet Davutoglu failed over the subsequent weeks to form a coalition, forcing a new election, but opinion polls are predicting little change from the June outcome.—AFP

## TODDLER DIES AS RAINS WREAK HAVOC IN IRAQ

**BAGHDAD:** Torrential rain caused chaos across several parts of Iraq yesterday, with flood waters sweeping a toddler to her death and damaging camps for displaced people. The storm that hit Baghdad Wednesday evening was unusually violent and the first after a long, dry summer. According to a spokesman for the meteorological department, 54 mm of rain fell on the Baghdad region in 24 hours, causing thigh-high flooding on some streets. A three-year-old girl died when she was swept away by the water at a camp for displaced people near Tuz Khurmatu, about 220 km north of Baghdad, officials said.

Hospitals in Baghdad as well Najaf, to the south of the capital, reported hundreds of cases of patients checking in with respiratory ailments caused by humidity. The poor condition of infrastructure in Baghdad, the Arab world’s second-largest city with an estimated population of more than eight million, resulted in spectacular flooding. The government declared yesterday a national holiday, knowing that many residents would be unable to reach work due to the effect on transportation.

Many motorists were unable to move their vehicles, stranding them on the roadside in the most flooded areas as others were marooned in the middle of deep pools of water. In one video posted on social media, the staff in a Baghdad hospital were seen wading knee-deep in water. Residents of some neighbourhoods of the capital spent most of the night bailing rain mixed with sewage water from the ground floor of their homes.



**YOUSSIFIYAH, Iraq:** Internally displaced Iraqis leave a refugee camp submerged in rainwater yesterday near Baghdad. —AP

# SLOVENIANS DISGRUNTLED IN EYE OF MIGRANT CRISIS

**DOBOVA, Slovenia:** As a helicopter whirrs over the Slovenian village of Dobova, discomfited residents look out over a rubbish-strewn enclosure where refugees sleep, play and try to keep warm by small fires. A disused textile factory in the centre of the usually sleepy settlement has become a hectic halfway house for streams of migrants on their way to northern Europe - and not all the neighbors are happy. "I think that it's crazy. There's too many of them," said 18-year-old student Alan Zibert, whose small family garden is lined with police and army vehicles and the coming and going of Red Cross workers, volunteers and reporters.

Zibert's mother, Sonja, said she "didn't have a problem" with the migrants themselves, most of whom are desperately trying to escape war or poverty. "But it's too loud and we aren't used to the noise," she told AFP on her front porch, just across from the makeshift camp. "I just hope it will be finished quickly." Since Hungary closed its border with Croatia to migrants less than two weeks ago, around 90,000 have been rerouted through Slovenia, overwhelming the tiny Alpine nation of just two million people.

### Nervous Wait

Until Tuesday, the migrants were forced to enter the country by foot, trudging from a train station in Croatia across the border - their path still evident from trails of litter and discarded blankets. Improved cooperation between Croatia and Slovenia means trains now bring them directly across - but still the travellers must disembark at Dobova in the country's east, register with the authori-

ties and wait for another train to Austria. "They want to get through the bureaucracy, it's slow motion and they're nervous," said Miroslav Cunjak, a father-of-three and volunteer with Adra, a Slovenian NGO. "We are full of empathy, but there's a part of Slovenian society that is extremely against anything that's unusual

returning to normal thanks to the improved train service. Home to cabbage patches, tractors and roaming turkeys, the village had at the weekend looked more like the scene of a military operation, descended on by international media - and their cameras on drones - as well as huge army trucks. "Now we can sleep at

more screaming. A little village needs peace," she said.

At a makeshift kitchen set up for passing migrants, volunteer Maria Linke said the villagers had been "really supportive" of their efforts to help the travellers. But Vesna seemed less convinced. "The end of Europe," she said simply as she went indoors. Other residents in the village declined to talk to AFP, while a police-woman still standing guard said they had been getting their homes sprayed with disinfectant. "People are very happy for now," she said.

### 'Loud and Dirty'

Down the road in Dobova, meanwhile, the latest train pulled up from Croatia carrying around 1,000 men, women and children - some flashing peace signs from open windows and shouting hello to journalists by the tracks. At the former factory turned reception centre, migrants waved their papers at police and a translator in a bid to get on their way more quickly, while Red Cross workers wheeled an ailing woman on a stretcher into their van.

Piles of donated clothes and blankets were stacked around, with people occasionally driving up with more offerings. One harried NGO worker said self-organised volunteers were so numerous and keen that they were adding to the chaos, rather than helping to control it. But in the nearby Katic bar, as a circle of men played card games in the corner, bartender Danijela Klenovsek said villagers had "nothing good" to say about the crisis situation. "I hope for peace for us, because this town is very kind, quiet and clean. Now it's loud and dirty." —AFP



**RIGONCE, Slovenia:** About 1,000 migrants are escorted by Slovenian police officers from the border crossing with Croatia on Oct 22, 2015 near this village to Dobova. —AFP

to their way of life."

About two kilometres away in the small village of Rigonce, earlier the first port of call for migrants arriving by foot, residents expressed relief that things were

night," said a woman in wellington boots, who gave her name as Vesna, passing through her garden gate with a litter-picker after tidying up along the road. "People are happy because there's no



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## RUBIO DOWNPLAYS BUSH RIVALRY, AIMS AT CLINTON AFTER DEBATE

**ATLANTA:** Republican presidential candidate Marco Rubio is downplaying his rivalry with Jeb Bush after the third GOP debate, instead focusing his criticism on Democratic favorite Hillary Rodham Clinton. But Rubio's testy exchange with his former mentor helped define Wednesday night's two-hour event, and it could help reshape the GOP race as Rubio tries to capitalize on Bush's ongoing struggles.

Bush, the former Florida governor who helped guide Rubio as a rising state legislator, told his one-time protege during the debate's opening act that he should resign from the U.S. Senate to campaign, rather than continue to miss votes.

"What is it, like a French work week?" Bush said. Rubio rebuffed him, saying, "My campaign is going to be about the future of America; it's not going to be about attacking anyone else on this stage." He repeated the higher-road theme yesterday, telling ABC's "Good Morning America" that he has "admiration" for Bush and wants only to underscore policy differences between the two. Bush was scheduled to campaign in New Hampshire, which his aides have identified as his top priority among early voting states. The son and brother of presidents, Bush maintains a financial advantage, mostly due to the "Right to Rise" Super PAC backing his bid. But he's mired in single digits in most polls and recently announced pay cuts for his campaign staff. Rubio is widely seen as a likely beneficiary of Bush donors and supporters should they defect.

The senator's aggressive night - along with multiple instances of candidates blasting CNBC's debate moderators and the debate in general - overshadowed the two men who are leading many national polls: businessman Donald Trump and retired neurosurgeon Ben Carson.

### Biggest barbs

In his interviews, Rubio took veiled shots at the two outsider candidates who have never held public office. "This campaign gives everybody a chance to learn about these issues and express themselves. ... We haven't seen that sort of discussion from some of the candidates," Rubio said. "That doesn't mean they can't or they won't. I know that I have." But he saved his biggest barbs for Clinton. On CBS's "This Morning," Rubio stuck to his claim in the debate that Clinton and other Obama administration officials lied about the nature of the 2012 attack on the US mission in Benghazi, Libya, when Clinton was secretary of state. The attack killed US ambassador Chris Stevens and three others. A central Republican argument is that Obama, Clinton and others did not identify the attack as a terrorist act in order to protect the president as he sought re-election. "It was clear from the very early moments of that attack that it was not a spontaneous uprising," Rubio said yesterday. "It was a planned attack." In fact, the day after the attack, President Barack Obama called it an "act of terror," a phrase he would repeat several more times. Clinton, in her testimony last week before a House panel, said the intelligence community was receiving conflicting information in the hours after the attack and she was concerned about demonstrations in capital cities in other countries over an inflammatory video. Clinton also said the suspected Libyan militant accused in the attacks, Ahmed Abu Khattala, has cited the video as a factor.

David Axelrod, Obama chief political strategist in 2012, said yesterday on CNN that Rubio and other Republicans continue to peddle "mythology" about the attack. "There was great concern about what happened," in Libya, Axelrod said of the Obama administration and re-election campaign. "But there was no great concern about the politics of that at the moment."

Regardless, Clinton remains an obvious foil for Republican hopefuls trying to appeal to conservative voters. New Jersey Gov. Chris Christie spent much of Wednesday night and Thursday morning targeting Clinton. "I'm tested. I'm ready, I'm mature, and I'm a fighter," he said on CNN. "I'm the kind of person you're going to want on the stage, you're going to need on the stage to take on Hillary Clinton next November." Carly Fiorina, a former technology executive, argued on CNN that Clinton's and Obama's economic policies hurt women. Fiorina, the only woman among the GOP contenders, said she's best positioned to make that argument in a general election.

Several candidates also continued to accusing CNBC's debate moderators of not focusing on issues that matter. Former Arkansas Gov. Mike Huckabee explained why he called attention to the "Donald Trump tie" he was wearing when he was asked a question about Trump. Huckabee told CNN's Chris Cuomo that the question was "silly." So, he recalled, "I said, 'Let's make this even sillier.'" South Carolina Sen. Lindsey Graham, meanwhile, told MSNBC's "Morning Joe" that voters missed serious discussion "with all this clown stuff." But Graham said blame also rests with the Republican National Committee, which set the debate schedule and selected host networks. "The RNC is off their game," Graham said. — AP



**WASHINGTON:** Newly-elected House Speaker Paul Ryan, escorted by House Minority Leader Nancy Pelosi of California, and House Majority Leader Kevin McCarthy of California, walks into the House Chamber on Capitol Hill in Washington yesterday following the resignation of John Boehner. —AP

# HOUSE REPUBLICANS, SEEKING UNITY, ELECT RYAN SPEAKER

## BUDGET VOTE UNDERSCORES RYAN'S CHALLENGE

**WASHINGTON:** Republicans rallied behind Rep Paul Ryan to elect him to the powerful post of House speaker yesterday as the splintered party turned to the youthful but battle-tested lawmaker to mend its self-inflicted wounds and craft a conservative message to woo voters in next year's elections.

In a roll call, 236 Republicans called out the Ryan - a former Republican vice presidential candidate - as their pick for the top job. That put Ryan second in line to the presidency and atop a chamber that has been awash in tumult ever since defiant conservatives hounded Rep John Boehner, into announcing his resignation from that post last month.

Just nine hard-line conservatives voted against Ryan, instead backing a little known Florida lawmaker. Most of them, including members of the rebellious House Freedom Caucus, backed Ryan, though it was clear that future tensions between them and Ryan could not be discounted.

Ryan planned to ask both parties for a period of healing and to focus on working families, said an aide who described the remarks on condition of anonymity ahead of the lawmaker's acceptance speech. "If you have ideas, let's hear them. A greater clarity between us can lead to a greater charity among us," Ryan was planning to say, said the aide, in what seemed a bid for Republican reconciliation.

Ryan's ascension came as Congress nears completion of a bipartisan accord to avert a jarring federal default next week and likely prevent a December government shutdown by setting spending levels for the next two years. The House approved the bill Wednesday 266-167, with final Senate passage on track in a few days, despite opposition from conservatives including senators

seeking the Republican presidential nomination.

### Challenge

The budget vote underscored Ryan's challenge in leading Republicans who often have scant interest in compromise, especially with a Republican presidential contest dominated by candidates who vilify Washington insiders. Republicans opposed the budget deal by 167-79, but Democrats supported it unanimously. Conservatives complain that Boehner has been excessively powerful, forcing bills to the House floor without rank-and-file input, dictating committee chairs and punishing rebels. One leader of the right-wing Freedom Caucus, Rep. Raul Labrador, said conservatives expect Ryan to alter that.

"We're going to have his back for the next few months and make sure that we

give him the opportunity to show that he can be the leader that we hope he can be," Labrador said. Amiable and just 45, Ryan has been in Congress 17 years and has strong ties with all wings of the Republican Party. Past chairman of the House Budget Committee and current head of the Ways and Means panel, he's put his imprint on deficit reduction, tax, health and trade legislation - prime subjects that have raised his stature and put him at the center of many of Congress' highest profile debates.

Many Democrats like Ryan but none hesitate to attack him as a symbol of Republican policies they consider harsh. These include efforts to pare taxes for the rich, reshape Medicare - the government health care system for the elderly - into a voucher-like program and squeeze savings from Medicaid - the health care program for the poor. — AP



**WASHINGTON, DC:** US Rep Paul Ryan's wife Janna Ryan (right) and family attend the House of Representatives chamber at the US Capitol yesterday in Washington, DC. — AFP

## MANHUNT INTENSIFIES FOR KENTUCKY FUGITIVE

**WHITE HOUSE, TENNESSEE:** A Kentucky fugitive accused of shooting at police in two states remained on the run, despite a five-day manhunt and a chaotic scene at a small-town Tennessee gas station that ended early yesterday with the arrests of two of his friends.

Floyd Ray Cook, a 62-year-old convicted rapist and robber, has eluded police since Saturday afternoon, when he allegedly shot and wounded a Tennessee police officer.

Two of Cook's known associates, both with lengthy criminal histories of their own, were arrested after a violent confrontation with US Marshals in White House, Tennessee, on Wednesday night, Tennessee Highway Patrol Lt. Bill Miller told reporters.

Marshals, who joined the search for Cook earlier this week, spotted a car they believed to be associated with him at the gas station, just off Interstate 65 north of Nashville, according to the US Marshal Service. An investigator approached the car and the driver attempted to flee, ramming two police cruisers and narrowly missing an officer on foot.

The officer fired a shot at the car. The Tennessee Highway Patrol initially reported Wednesday that the occupants of the car, which they then believed to include Cook, fired at the marshals. Miller said early Thursday that was inaccurate. Cook was not in the car at the time and the occupants did not fire on police.

The car careened down a dead-end street, through a fence and into a ravine, Miller said. The two people inside fled on foot into the surrounding cornfields. Dozens of federal, state and local officers, along with helicopters and K-9 units, descended on rural Robertson County to aid in the hunt.

Police announced earlier this week that they believed Cook was traveling with 50-year-old Troy Wayne, described as an "associate" from Raywick, Kentucky, a town of 134 people 50 miles south of Louisville where Cook was last known to live.

The search team Wednesday night first found Wayne's girlfriend, 35-year-old Katy McCarty, drenched in water and mud in the field, Miller said. They later found Wayne in a nearby neighborhood. Both were arrested, though police did not specify the charges. Cook's whereabouts remained unknown. Cook is accused of shooting and wounding Algood, Tennessee, police Officer Ahscari Valencia during a traffic stop Saturday afternoon. Valencia was saved by his bullet-proof vest.

Just over an hour later, a Kentucky State Police trooper recognized Cook's car and tried to stop him in rural Cumberland County, just beyond the Tennessee state line. Cook tried to speed away, but hit a tree and jumped from the truck on foot. He allegedly opened fire on the officer, missed and fled on foot into the woods. Cook, with a criminal record that includes burglary, assault and rioting, was already wanted by the law. He was convicted of raping a 19-year-old in Marion County, Kentucky, in 1971, records show. He was required to register as a sex offender and remains on parole.

Cook's sex offender registration form lists an address in Lebanon, Kentucky. Several months ago, the Marion County Sheriff's Office, making routine checks on the sex offenders in the county, discovered he was no longer living there, said Sheriff Jimmy Clements. Deputies there took out a warrant for his arrest and started searching for him. They discovered he was living at an address in Raywick. They staked out the home but were never able to catch him.

Cook was also indicted in July on charges of first-degree trafficking in methamphetamine and tampering with physical evidence, according to Hardin County court records in Kentucky. He was scheduled for arraignment in August but did not appear. He is now also wanted on suspicion of attempted murder of a police officer in Tennessee and the manhunt stretched into a sixth day. A swath of the border between Kentucky and Tennessee has been gripped with fear of the man authorities described as "armed, dangerous and desperate." A Kentucky school district has canceled classes all week, afraid their students might cross his path while waiting for the bus. —AP

# RUNAWAY US BLIMP WREAKS HAVOC IN PENNSYLVANIA

## MILITARY SCRAMBLES 2 ARMED F-16 FIGHTER JETS TO KEEP WATCH

**EXCHANGE, Pa/WASHINGTON:** A high-tech US military blimp designed to detect a missile attack came loose on Wednesday and wreaked havoc as it floated from Maryland into Pennsylvania while dragging more than a mile of cable and knocking out power to thousands. The US military scrambled two armed F-16 fighter jets to keep watch as the massive blimp traveled into civilian airspace after coming untethered from its base at Aberdeen Proving Ground, a US Army facility 40 miles (65 km) northeast of Baltimore.

Pentagon officials said they were unsure why the 242-foot-long blimp broke free at 12:20 pm (1620 GMT). Military officials wrestled for hours over the best way to bring it down safely, but eventually it deflated on its own.

The blimp, part of a \$2.8 billion Army program, landed in a rural, wooded area in Exchange, Pennsylvania, a community outside Bloomsburg, about 150 miles (240 km) north of the Aberdeen Proving Ground.

John Thomas, a spokesman for Columbia County emergency management agency, said there were no reports of injuries but had no more details about the landing.

Pennsylvania police and military officials guarded a wide safety perimeter around the blimp, which settled amid farmland in the remote area. Residents, including members of an Amish community, watched them work under steady rainfall.

The blimp's travels caused widespread damage, officials said. At one point, 30,000 Pennsylvania residents were without power, the governor's office said. "The tether attached to the aircraft caused widespread power outages across Pennsylvania," said a statement from Governor Tom Wolf's office.

The blimp's travels were a sensation on social media, with hashtags like #Blimpflood and #Blimpmemes ranking among the top trending topics. At least two Twitter parody accounts sprung up, gaining nearly 2,000 followers in just under two hours.

The attention was unlikely to be welcomed by the Army, which calls the program the Joint Land-Attack Cruise Missile Elevated Netted Sensor System, or JLENS. The program was restructured after it overran cost estimates, the Government Accountability Office said in 2014.

The program is comprised of two blimps,

each 242 feet long. The second blimp will be grounded until the military inspects it and finishes an investigation into the unmooring, said Navy Captain Scott Miller, a spokesman for the US military's North American Aerospace Defense Command, or NORAD.

The system itself is still in a testing phase. Manufacturer Raytheon Co's website says it would become part of the defenses that help protect the metropolitan Washington, DC, area.

Raytheon's website says the blimps are meant to be tethered to the ground by a "11/8 inch thick super-strong cable," which should withstand 100 mile-per-hour (160 kph) winds. Electricity runs up the cable and powers the radar, the website says. NORAD said the blimp became untethered while at an altitude of 6,600 feet, far below its maximum recommended altitude of up to 10,000 feet.

By early afternoon, it had climbed to 16,000 feet as it traveled into Pennsylvania. NORAD said the system was designed to defend against threats beyond cruise missiles, to include drone aircraft and "surface moving targets" such as swarming boats and tanks. — Reuters

# SUPERSTORM SURVIVORS STILL CAN'T GO HOME

## THREE YEARS, THREE VOICES

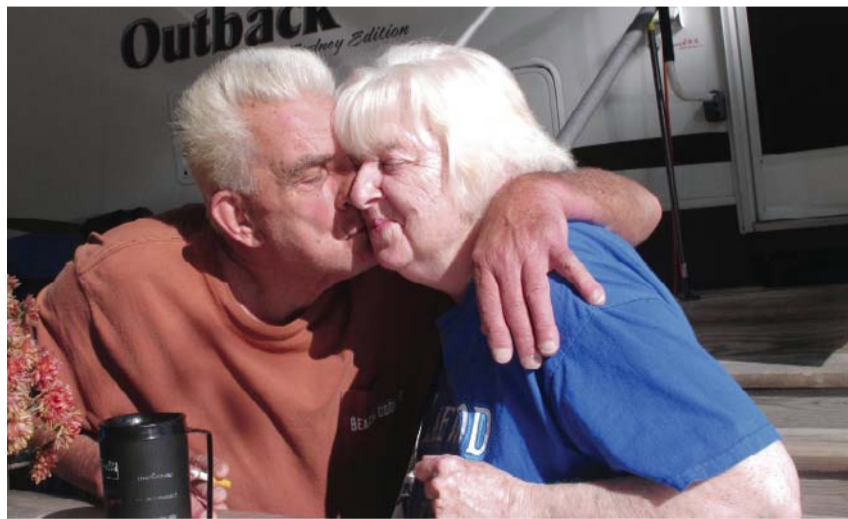
**TOMS RIVER, NJ:** Three years ago, Superstorm Sandy slammed the New Jersey shore, destroying homes, splintering boardwalks, wrecking businesses and displacing thousands of people. Three years later, several thousand still cannot get back home due to bureaucratic red tape with government aid programs, disputes with contractors and insurance companies, and just not having enough money to complete the job. A recurring theme among these people is their sense of having been forgotten three years after the storm. The stories of three such people:

### HOME IS A TRAILER

"This is paradise," Bob Collis said, sitting under the awning of a portable trailer stuffed to the brim with many of his family's possessions; his clothes are all in plastic storage bins wedged underneath the trailer because they won't fit inside.

Collis and his wife, Katherine, loved the little ranch house they had in Toms River, in a tight-knit waterfront community near Barnegat Bay called Snug Harbor. But Sandy wrecked the home they lived in for 45 years. Now the 72-year-old couple lives in a trailer at a mobile home park in Berkeley Township, a few miles south, where Katherine is recovering from a series of strokes, one of which predated the storm and two more that came soon after it. Their biggest problems, they said, have been an unresponsive bureaucracy, a period of agonizing over whether to elevate their damaged house or knock it down and start over, and a severe shortage of funds that has left them still \$150,000 shy of what they need to get back into a house for their

remaining years together. The couple got a



**BERKELEY:** Bob Collis (left) kisses his wife Katherine (right) in front of their trailer in Berkeley Township, NJ. They have been unable to return to their home in Toms River, NJ, since Superstorm Sandy damaged it three years ago. — AP

\$150,000 grant from New Jersey's main storm rebuilding program but had to sign a contract to elevate their house. They spent \$10,000 on preliminary work toward raising the house before deciding to raze it. They say their elevation contractor delayed too long to save the house; the contractor says it did more than \$10,000 worth of work but never got the go-ahead from Collis to proceed with more work.

The trailer has cost them \$30,000, including rent. Collis never imagined he'd still be living in temporary shelter three years later. He said they got the runaround from state recovery agencies, a common complaint among Sandy victims. Lisa Ryan, a spokeswoman for the state Department of Community Affairs,

said the agency speaks with Sandy victims each day and is mindful of their struggles.

Katherine Collis, when asked her feelings about their situation, can only cry. That's something Bob often feels like doing, too.

### HOME FOR CHRISTMAS?

Michelle Petrow, a single mother of three, needs a kidney transplant and is still rebuilding after years of fighting with insurers, contractors and state aid programs.

Her home in Manasquan was damaged by Sandy and had to be torn down. The new one, some 15 feet higher off the ground than the old one, is still under construction, and she's living in a nearby rental. — AP



**KATHMANDU:** Nepal's newly elected president Bidhya Devi Bhandari (center) arrives to take oath in Kathmandu yesterday. Nepalese lawmakers elected a longtime women's rights campaigner to become the country's first female president Wednesday as the Himalayan nation pushes for more gender equality in politics and work life. —AP

## NEPAL TURNS TO CHINA AFTER INDIA RESTRICTS FUEL SUPPLY

### KATHMANDU SIGNS DEAL WITH BEIJING

**KATHMANDU:** Fuel-starved Nepal has signed an agreement with China to import gasoline, diesel and cooking gas, effectively ending a monopoly on supply from India, which has restricted fuel convoys as a result of political protests in the Himalayan nation.

The decision to import Chinese oil amid severe shortages has brought China a step closer to Nepal, which traditionally is more influenced by India in the south. The two Asian giants have been jostling for influence in landlocked Nepal.

Nepal sent a team of officials this week to Beijing, where they signed a memorandum of understanding Wednesday with China National United Oil Corp, said Nepal Oil Corp

official Deepak Baral. Details on how much fuel Nepal will receive, prices and other arrangements still need to be worked out, Baral said, but he confirmed the supply would be on a regular basis. It would be the first time for Nepal to import Chinese fuel. It has so far relied exclusively on India for its energy needs.

Indian External Affairs Ministry spokesman Vikas Swarup declined comment on Nepal's agreement with China. An Indian Oil Corp. official said he did not know what Nepal and China were agreeing to, but that Indian supplies were moving again, with 35-40 percent of normal shipments sent into Nepal over the past few days. The

official spoke on condition of anonymity because he was not authorized to speak with reporters.

India usually sends 100,000 tons of fuel every month, including diesel, kerosene and LPG, aboard trucks sent by Nepal.

Weeks of violent protests by ethnic Madhesis against the newly adopted Nepalese Constitution have blocked the main border crossing between Nepal and India and severely strained the traditionally close ties between the two Hindu-majority nations. While other border crossings were free of protests, India did not use them to deliver fuel or other key supplies including medicine and food.

New Delhi has demanded that Nepal guarantee more rights for traditionally marginalized ethnic groups. The protesters want a bigger state than they were given in the new constitution and more government positions and seats in parliament.

No agreement was reached in talks yesterday between the government and the main protesting group. They are to meet again on Sunday. The halt in fuel shipments has also jeopardized Nepal's efforts to rebuild and recover after a set of massive earthquakes in April and May destroyed hundreds of thousands of homes nationwide and left thousands dead. Aid groups have said that, without enough fuel, they've been unable to deliver food, blankets and other supplies to remote areas now threatened by the coming winter weather. China has shown keen interest in recent years in investing in Nepal, according to Investment Board Nepal.

Earlier this week, China announced it would give Nepal 1.3 million liters (340,000 gallons) of gasoline to help ease the shortages. The fuel, which is expected to reach the capital by early next week in about 100 tanker trucks, would normally be enough for four days but will be rationed for vehicles. — AP

## INDIAN AIRLINE BLOCKS WOMAN IN SHORT DRESS FROM FLIGHT

**MUMBAI:** A female passenger was prevented from boarding a domestic flight in India because she was showing too much leg, the budget carrier IndiGo and newspaper reports said yesterday.

The woman travelling from the western city of Mumbai to India's capital New Delhi was not allowed to board Monday's flight because her dress was too short, the Indian Express reported. An official at IndiGo, who asked not to be named, told AFP that the dress had stopped above the knee, in violation of rules issued to employees and relatives of staff. The woman was formerly employed by the airline and was travelling on a special ticket because her sister worked for the company, the official said.

"Employees and the nominated family members are required to maintain a specific dress code, as and when they fly with the airline under the staff leisure travel privileges," read an IndiGo statement. "Keeping in mind this policy, the Mumbai ground staff followed the protocol to brief this passenger on the dress code policy," it added. The Indian national changed her attire and was allowed onto a later flight, the official said, stressing that the dress code was not for ordinary customers.

IndiGo is India's only consistently profitable airline and commands almost 40 percent of its home market, the biggest share of any airline. It is currently seeking to raise \$460 million through an initial public offering. — AFP

## DESPERATION GROWS AS AFGHAN-PAKISTAN QUAKE VICTIMS WAIT FOR AID

**CHITRAL, PAKISTAN:** Rescuers said yesterday they believed they have reached most of those affected by the powerful earthquake that ripped across Pakistan this week, but thousands of desperate survivors now face a race to rebuild with winter fast approaching.

Rugged terrain, severed communication lines and an unstable security situation have impeded relief efforts since Monday's 7.5 magnitude quake killed more than 390 people in Pakistan and Afghanistan and levelled thousands of homes.

But yesterday Pakistan's National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) said it believes it has reached "most of the affected area". A spokesman said helicopters are still searching for any survivors in the most remote, inaccessible areas of the mountainous region.

Pakistan's confirmed death toll so far stands at 272, with more than 1,900 people injured and nearly 14,000 homes damaged, though the spokesman said the NDMA was still in the process of estimating a final toll. Desperate victims, meanwhile, appealed for aid, expressing fears for children in particular who were forced to sleep outside in sub-zero temperatures as winter sets in.

"After November 15 there will be three to four feet of snow here and we have nothing to protect us," said Mir Wali, whose village Charun Ovir rests 10,000 feet (3,000 metres) up the mountainside in the northwestern district of Chitral. Dust is still rising from the mountain after the earthquake caused cracks in it, leaving villagers fearing a landslide or collapse.

"Whatever the government has to do, it should do before the snowfall," he said. "After that the roads will be blocked and we won't be able to save our children."

### Taliban hindering access

In Afghanistan, authorities have put the toll at 121 people with some 8,000 houses damaged-but there are fears the number of dead could still spike, with charities warning that the Taliban presence was hindering access to many of the affected areas.

UNAMA official Mark Bowden said it appeared NGOs had the capacity to help after the quake, but that access to the areas "varies from one (insurgent) commander after another".

Desperate survivors were left marooned on mountaintops in Badakhshan, the remote province where the epicentre of the earthquake was located and where much of the territory is controlled by the insurgents. In Sawkay district in the badly-hit Afghan province of Kunar, residents said Wednesday that no officials had yet appeared.

"The government has not asked what happened to us," said resident Mohammad Akram. "No government official visited us."

The quake was centred near Jurm in northeast Afghanistan, 250 kilometres (160 miles) from the capital Kabul and at a depth of 213.5 kilometres, the US Geological Survey said.

Aid agencies have stressed the need for greater disaster preparedness in war-torn Afghanistan-but it has been a low priority for the nation as it struggles to end a 14-year war against the Taliban insurgents.

### First floods, then quake

Local officials in Chitral, in Pakistan's worst-hit province of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, said they had few supplies to hand after the region was devastated by floods just three months ago. "We usually have our own stock but we already consumed it during the floods," said Muhammad Bahadur, an official in the village of Darosh. Bahadur's village had just 70 tents on hand when the quake struck, he said. — AFP

"Around 2,500 houses have been completely destroyed... Imagine



**CHITRAL:** Pakistani earthquake survivor girls sit in the midst of the rubble of destroyed homes in Charun Avir village, some 65 km north of Chitral yesterday. — AFP



# MODI, MUGABE PRESS FOR UN REFORM

## REFLECT THE GROWING POWERS OF EMERGING NATIONS: INDIA PM

**NEW DELHI:** India's Prime Minister Narendra Modi said yesterday that India and Africa must join forces to call for reform of the United Nations to reflect the growing power of emerging nations on the global stage. In a speech to the India-Africa Forum Summit in New Delhi, Modi said the UN and other global institutions "risked becoming irrelevant" if they did not adapt to a changing political and economic landscape.

As the UN celebrates the 70th anniversary of its charter this month, the Indian premier said India and Africa should "speak in one voice" to seek "reforms of the United Nations, including its Security Council". India and Africa are together home to a third of the world's population, but neither India nor any African country has a permanent seat on the UN Security Council, which is made up of China, Russia, the United States, the United Kingdom and France.

"The world is undergoing political, economic, technological and security transition on a scale and speed rarely seen in recent history," Modi said, in a wide-ranging speech. "Yet our global institutions reflect the circumstances of the century that we left behind, not the one we are in today... unless they adjust to the changing world, they risk becoming irrelevant." His comments were echoed by Zimbabwean President Robert Mugabe, who took to the stage directly afterwards to say that India and Africa had remained "underdogs" in the UN.

Mugabe, also the current African Union chairman, called for Africa to have greater representation on the Security Council, which he described as "defective".

"We are saying that we demand equality... We are saying, let's amend the charter of the UN," he said.



**NEW DELHI:** Standing bottom left to right are Chad President Idriss Deby Itno, Swaziland's King Mswati III, Zimbabwe's President Robert Mugabe, Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi and African Union Commission chairperson Nkosazana Dlamini-Zuma along with other leaders of African nations during the India Africa Forum Summit at the Indira Gandhi sports complex in New Delhi yesterday. — AP

### Bright spots

Modi described India and Africa as bright spots of hope and economic opportunity and offered technology and credit in an effort to match rival China's influence over the continent at a summit with more than 40 African leaders yesterday.

As Modi opened the meeting in the Indian capital, he said Africa was now more settled and stable and "its initiatives are replacing old fault lines with new bridges of reforms and economic integration."

Modi said in less than a decade India's

trade with Africa has topped \$70 billion and that the continent is a major destination for Indian business investment. India has committed \$7.4 billion in low-interest credits and \$1.2 billion in grants since the first India-Africa Summit in 2008. It is developing infrastructure, public transport, clean energy, irrigation, agriculture and manufacturing capacity across Africa, he said. African energy helps fuel the Indian economy and African prosperity offers a growing market for Indian products, he said.

In exchange, India hopes for a share of Africa's vast natural resources to power its

own growth. It also wants to ensure it is not completely overshadowed on the continent by China, which has plowed billions of dollars into Africa, building roads, bridges and power installations in return for access to markets and resources.

India's major imports from Africa are resources and minerals, including crude oil, coal, gemstones and gold. African countries are a big market for Indian-made pharmaceuticals, motor vehicles and processed petroleum products, with trade growing quickly.

Modi shared Africa's concern for secu-

urity, especially from terrorism and extremism, and said he had confidence that African leaders and people would rise to those challenges.

Several countries, including Cameroon, Nigeria, Niger, Chad and Benin, sought Indian assistance in dealing with Islamic extremism. They want India to help build their defense capacity so the military forces that are now fighting Boko Haram can be strengthened, said Sanjiv Kohli, an Indian External Affairs Ministry official. India has promised to help train soldiers in counterterrorism and counterinsurgency tactics, Kohli said. — Agencies

## US ENVOY URGES THAI JUNTA TO LIFT CURBS ON FREE SPEECH

**BANGKOK:** Washington's envoy to Thailand called on the junta yesterday to reduce its draconian restrictions on free speech and assembly that have stifled debate and dissent in the kingdom since last year's coup.

The relationship between the United States and Thailand—historically a staunch Washington ally—has been strained since generals seized power in a coup last year that toppled the democratically elected administration of Yingluck Shinawatra. The human rights situation has since rapidly deteriorated with critics locked up, exiled or pressured into silence. Newly appointed US ambassador Glyn T. Davies met with junta leader Prayut Chan-O-Cha yesterday afternoon, their first since the diplomat took up his posting last month.

Davies said Prayut "spoke at length about his experience and his aspiration for a return to democracy here." "I for my part... talked about our hopes as a friend of Thailand, our hopes that Thailand would continue on this path, that there would be an opening up of some space for greater public participation in this debate about Thailand's future," he told reporters. Public protests and political gatherings are still largely banned in Thailand, while critics are often arrested or hauled in by the military for so-called "attitude adjustment" sessions.

The number of prosecutions under Thailand's

controversial and draconian lese majeste law have also skyrocketed, with some suspects sentenced to more than 20 years in jail. Washington has repeatedly called for a swift return to democracy and criticised the coup. But it is also wary about pushing away a regional ally—particularly towards China's sphere. Beijing swiftly recognised Prayut's government and has shown no qualms about doing business with it, sending a number of high level military delegations.

Junta spokesman Major General Werachon Sukondhapatipak said Prayut agreed with the ambassador's suggestion that "silent voices" should have more of a say in the country's political future. "Prayut agreed and will study how to do it," he said.

But on Wednesday Prayut delivered a two-hour long speech in which he lambasted his detractors and vowed to further crackdown on critics. "We summoned them for attitude adjustment and they just criticise it as a violation of human rights so next time no attitude adjustment, go direct to prison it's easier," he said.

The military says it was forced to seize power to restore order after years of violent street protests.

But critics accuse it of launching a coup to reinforce the political power of the military establishment and the country's largely Bangkok-based royalist elite. — AFP

## MYANMAR STUDENT LEADER ARRESTED IN CRACKDOWN

**YANGON:** Myanmar police arrested yesterday the leader of a student movement crushed in March after he spent more than six months in hiding, a human rights monitoring group said, amid increasing signs of a crackdown on dissent ahead of a Nov 8 election. Kyaw Ko Ko, 34, head of the All Burma Federation of Student Unions (ABFSU), organized a march on the country's biggest city, Yangon, in February and March to protest against an education bill the students said would stifle academic freedom.

The police forcefully dispersed the students in the town of Letpadan, about 140 km (90 miles) north of Yangon, after a standoff of more than a week with security forces blocking their way to Yangon. Kyaw Ko Ko is the latest activist caught up in a crackdown on dissent as Myanmar heads towards a historic election, when the military-backed ruling party will compete with the main opposition National League for Democracy of Nobel laureate Aung San Suu Kyi in the first free national vote in 25 years.

"Yes, that's true. Kyaw Ko Ko was arrested," Bo Kyi, an official with the Assistance Association for Political Prisoners (AAPP), told

Reuters, adding he was detained in Yangon.

Bo Kyi said Kyaw Ko Ko was being held at a high-security police station in north Yangon run by the feared police Special Branch. The police station is normally used to interrogate political activists.

Police officers contacted by Reuters declined to comment. The United States and the European Union, which have backed Myanmar's move towards democracy after half a century of military rule, condemned the heavy-handed police tactics against the students in March. Rights groups say authorities are increasingly bringing cases against students, land rights campaigners and other activists, who also complain of increased monitoring by the Special Branch.

It is a marked change from the mood when the military relinquished full power in 2011, and about 1,300 political prisoners were released as part of reforms. In early 2014, there were just 29 political prisoners, most involved with ethnic minority insurgencies, according to the AAPP. By September, the number has risen three-fold, with 466 activists awaiting trial for political action, the watchdog group said. — Reuters

## S KOREAN FERRY FIRM HEAD SENTENCED TO 7 YEARS OVER SINKING

**SEOUL, South Korea:** South Korea's highest court yesterday sentenced the head of a ferry operator to seven years in prison over a ship sinking last year that killed more than 300 people.

The Supreme Court upheld a lower court ruling that sentenced Kim Han-sik, president of Chonghaejin Marine Co., to seven years in prison on charges including manslaughter. The court found Kim responsible for failing to prevent the overloading of cargo and improper stor-

age on the ship that judges said contributed to the sinking.

Four other Chonghaejin officials were sentenced to two-and-a-half to four years in prison on similar charges, the court said in a statement.

A total of 304 people died when the ferry Sewol sank off South Korea's southwest coast in April 2014 in one of the country's deadliest maritime disasters in decades. Most of the victims were teenagers from a single high school.

Divers recovered 295 bodies from the wreckage before the government stopped underwater searches last year. Nine victims remain missing. The Supreme Court couldn't confirm when it will be able to make a verdict on Sewol captain Lee Joon-seok, who appealed after a regional high court convicted him of homicide and sentenced him to life in prison in April.

The Gwangju High Court ruled that Lee committed "homicide by willful neg-

ligence" because he fled the ship without making any evacuation order, though he, as a captain, is required by law to take some measures to rescue his passengers.

South Korea is now paying \$74 million to a consortium led by China's state-run Shanghai Salvage Co. to handle the difficult and potentially dangerous operation of salvaging the 6,800-ton Sewol. The government expects the ship to be raised by around July next year. —AP

## SE ASIA BREATHES SIGH OF RELIEF AS RAINS EASE SMOG CRISIS

**KUALA LUMPUR:** Persistent rains have cleared the air across vast stretches of Southeast Asia that have choked for weeks on hazardous smoke from Indonesian fires, with officials expressing hope yesterday the crisis could soon end.

Parts of Indonesia, Malaysia, and Singapore enjoyed the cleanest air in two months, while affected areas of the Philippines and Thailand also gained a respite from pollution that has sickened hundreds of thousands, disrupted air travel and fuelled anger at Jakarta.

"We can see clouds again!" Singapore Defence Minister Ng Eng Hen gushed in a Facebook posting that include a picture of now-unfamiliar blue skies taken from his office. "I am sure that all of us in Singapore woke up this morning and felt so good that we had clear blue skies again."

Malaysia's top weather forecaster declared the region's rainy season-crucial to putting out the annual outbreak of smoke-belching Indonesian forest and agricultural fires-had begun. "We should have blue skies and no more haze," Che Gayah Ismail, director-general of the country's Meteorological Department, told AFP, adding that any further smoke would be blown away from the region.

The fires and resulting region-wide pollution occur to varying degrees each year during the dry season as vast Indonesian plantation lands are illegally cleared by burning.

### Rains 'welcomed with joy'

Experts had warned that this year's outbreak was on track to become the worst yet due to bone-dry conditions caused by the El Nino phenomenon, which alters weather patterns across the Pacific basin. Fears had grown that the rainy season could be delayed for months, prolonging the health and environmental disaster.

Indonesian authorities say 19 people have died either fighting the fires or due to the smoke, and that half a million Indonesians are suffering from respiratory illness. Indonesian officials are yet to declare that the corner had been turned in the battle against the haze.

But its disaster agency spokesman Sutopo Purwo Nugroho said recent rainfall on the huge islands of Sumatra and Borneo-where hundreds of fires have smouldered since July-has dramatically reduced the smoke, and that more precipitation was expected. Affected communities "welcomed this with joy and said grace after two months of being held captive to haze", Sutopo said in a statement.

The rains there included both natural and artificially induced showers from cloud-seeding, he added. The semi-annual crisis brings recurring pressure on Indonesia, which has failed over the years to rein in the planters accused of starting the fires.

Jakarta agreed earlier this month to accept international help after failing for weeks to douse the blazes, and has employed dozens of planes and thousands of personnel on the ground in a fire-fighting campaign.

Residents of Palangkaraya, an Indonesian city on Borneo where the intense fires have created eerie yellow skies and unbreathable air, expressed relief at seeing patches of blue up above for the first time. Schools that were closed for health reasons have begun reopening, and children in uniforms were seen riding bikes without masks. —AFP



**BEIJING:** German Chancellor Angela Merkel (second left) and Chinese President Xi Jinping (right) attend a meeting at the Diaoyutai State Guesthouse in Beijing yesterday. —AP

## CHINA WARNS IT WILL RESPOND TO US SHIPS WITH ALL MEANS

### MERKEL URGES BEIJING TO RESOLVE SEA ROW IN COURTS

**BEIJING:** China's military will take "all necessary" measures in response to any future US Navy incursions into what it considers its territorial waters around islands in the South China Sea, a Defense Ministry spokesman said yesterday.

The statement by Col Yang Yujun followed the sailing of a US guided missile destroyer within the 12-nautical mile (22-kilometer) territorial limit of one of the islands newly created by China in the strategically vital region. The US refuses to recognize the man-made islets as deserving of sovereign territory status. The Chinese side took no forceful action during the USS Lassen's sail-by on Tuesday, but strenuously protested the maneuver. China's reaction fits the pattern in similar such incidents in recent years. Yang offered no details on how Beijing might respond differently in the future.

"We would urge the US not to continue down the wrong path. But if the US side does continue, we will take all necessary measures according to the need," Yang said. China's resolve to safeguard its national sovereignty and security interests is "rock-solid," he added.

China claims virtually the entire South China Sea and its islands, reefs and atolls as its sovereign territory, an assertion challenged by five other regional governments.

While the US takes no formal position on sovereignty, it insists on freedom of navigation and has urged China to cease

its ambitious project to construct new islands complete with buildings, harbors and airstrips.

Yang reiterated Beijing's claim that the USS Lassen violated Chinese sovereignty and international law, although the sail-by appeared to fall under internationally allowed "innocent passage" rules. Yang gave no details of China's claims. Yang said a pair of Chinese navy ships had shadowed the Lassen, monitored its actions and issued warnings. The spokesman said China supported the right to freedom of navigation and overflight, but accused the US of abusing those for its own interests.

"We are strongly against any kind of effort in the name of freedom of navigation that might damage the interests and security of the littoral states," Yang said.

### Merkel concern

German Chancellor Angela Merkel expressed concern yesterday about a territorial dispute between the Chinese and US navies in the South China Sea, and suggested China go to international courts to resolve the row. On a two-day visit to China, Merkel said it was essential that sea trade routes remain open despite the dispute, which flared up after a US warship challenged China's territorial assertions in the disputed waters this week.

"The territorial dispute in the South China Sea is a serious conflict. I am

always a bit surprised why in this case multinational courts should not be an option for a solution," Merkel said in speech in Beijing. "Nevertheless, we wish that the sea trade routes stay free and safe, because they are important for all."

Beijing rebuked Washington for sending a guided-missile destroyer within 12 nautical miles of one of China's man-made islands in the Spratly archipelago on Tuesday, saying it had tracked and warned the USS Lassen and called in the US ambassador to protest.

Merkel and Chinese Premier Li Keqiang earlier addressed the situation in Syria, and agreed there must be a political solution to the crisis there.

Russia last month began air strikes on targets in Syria in a dramatic escalation of foreign involvement in the civil war. This has been criticised by the West as an attempt to prop up Syrian President Bashar al-Assad, rather than its purported aim of attacking Islamic State militants.

A big focus of Merkel's China trip is trade and she keen to shore up German business interests challenged by Volkswagen's emissions scandal and the flurry of deals clinched during President Xi Jinping's visit to Britain last week.

Her visit paid dividends, with China and Germany signing a deal that will see Chinese airlines buy 130 jets manufactured by European planemaker Airbus Group SE. —Agencies

FRIDAY, OCTOBER 30, 2015

Kuwait Times  
THE FIRST DAILY IN THE ARABIAN GULF

# Lifestyle

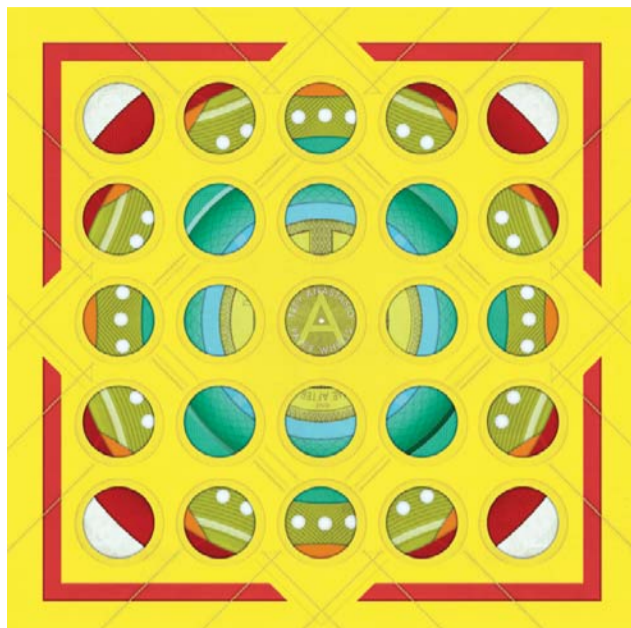
[www.kuwaittimes.net](http://www.kuwaittimes.net)

Berry amends divorce after  
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A model displays a creation by Fitri Aulia during Jakarta Fashion Week 2016 in Jakarta, Indonesia, yesterday. — AP

Music Review



Trey Anastasio finds groove on 'Paper Wheels'

When Phish frontman Trey Anastasio settles into a groove, his latest solo record "Paper Wheels" shines. Anastasio, on his first solo record in three years and 10th of his career, produces a tune, aptly titled "The Song," that is not only the best track on "Paper Wheels" but also serves as a mission statement for the 51-year-old rocker. "And the hands on the clock keep ticking, just rolling along," he sings. "In the end, all that's left is the song."

Moments like those help make up for weak spots, like backing vocals relying too much on la-la-la-ing and ah-ah-ah-ing that mar other tracks like "Never" and "Flying Machines." Let's face it, Phish and Anastasio aren't known for lyrical dexterity. So it's not too surprising there are some clunkers here. But when he focuses on the riff and groove, songs like "In Rounds" are hard to resist. Those are the moments that Anastasio fans look for in concert, and that are harder to replicate on record, but they can be found on "Paper Wheels." You just have to be patient in waiting for them to roll around. — AP



In this June 28, 2015 file photo, Sam Sarpong arrives at the BET Awards at the Microsoft Theater, in Los Angeles.—AP

Actor-model Sarpong dies of apparent suicide

London-born model and TV actor Sam Sarpong has died in Southern California after jumping to his death from a bridge. Sarpong, who was 40, died Monday afternoon in Pasadena, where he lived. The Los Angeles County coroner's office says the case is being investigated as a possible suicide. But the official cause of death must await results of toxicology testing. Pasadena police say a 40-year-old man jumped from the Colorado Street Bridge following seven hours of attempts to talk him down.

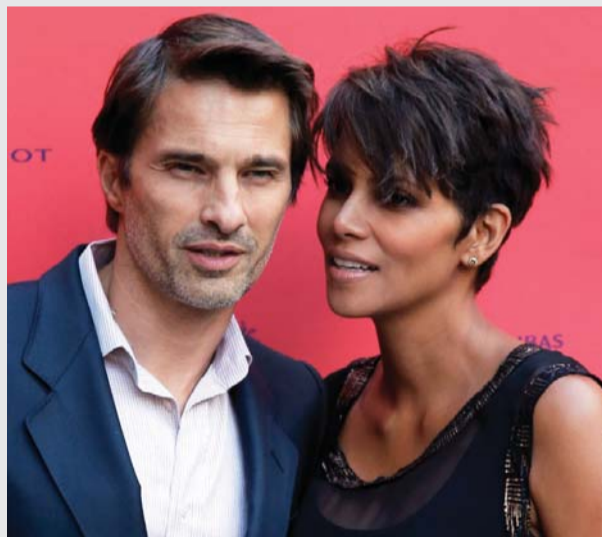
Sarpong had a series of small roles in movies and TV shows, including "Bones" and "Boston Public" and co-hosted MTV's 2006 show, "Yo Momma." He also modeled for Tommy Hilfiger and other fashion brands. He is survived by his father and his sister June Sarpong, an English TV presenter. — AP

Keith Urban to be focus of new country museum exhibit

Country star Keith Urban's path from Australia to Music City will be the focus of a new exhibit at the Country Music Hall of Fame and Museum. The exhibit, called "Keith Urban So Far," will open on Nov 20 and will show the history of one of country's biggest global ambassadors through his memorabilia, instruments and documents from his childhood.

The Grammy-winning artist released his self-titled debut album in 1999 and has gone on to sell more than 20 million albums in his career. Some of the items to be displayed will include his 1989 Fender Telecaster, a Levinson Blade electric guitar played on his first No. 1 song, a shirt he wore on the debut album cover and handwritten notes. The exhibition will run through May. — AP

In this April 18, 2015 file photo, Keith Urban performs at 'ACM Presents: Superstar Duets' in Arlington, Texas. — AP



File photo shows actor and president of the Champs-Élysées Film Festival Olivier Martinez, left, poses with Actress Halle Berry prior to the screening of the film 'Things We Lost in the Fire'. — AP

Berry amends divorce after using fake names 1st time

Halle Berry has amended her divorce filing from actor Olivier Martinez, this time using their real names. The Oscar-winning actress filed for divorce on Monday using the names "Hal Maria" and "Oliver Martin," but her new filing Wednesday lists their legal names. Martinez filed his own divorce petition on Tuesday, hours after the couple issued a joint statement confirming they were getting divorced.

Aside from listing their legal names, Berry's new petition lists the same details. She cites irreconcilable differences for the breakup and states the pair has a prenuptial agreement and the actors should share the costs of raising their 2-year-old son equally. Both actors are seeking joint custody. Berry's attorney, Stephen Kolodny, did not return a message Wednesday about why the divorce was initially filed using false names. — AP

Stewart, Sevigny to star in Lizzie Borden Movie

Kristen Stewart and Chloe Sevigny are in talks to star in a drama about notorious murderess Lizzie Borden. Pieter Van Hees ("Waste Land") will direct the psychological thriller from a screenplay by Bryce Kass. Sevigny will play Borden, who was acquitted in 1892 for murdering her father and stepmother with an ax. She was set to take on the same character in an HBO miniseries from Tom Hanks that never came together. Stewart will assume the role of Bridget Sullivan, the Borden's live-in maid who testified at the trial as she was home when the murders were committed.

The still-untitled film explores the true events that led up to the infamous double murder. Borden's story has already been adapted for the big and small screen, including Christina Ricci's 2014 TV movie, "Lizzie Borden Took an Ax." It also inspired the children's rhyme with the same title: "Lizzie Borden took an ax/and gave her mother 40 whacks/when the job was finally done/gave her father 41."

Naomi Despres is producing the gothic thriller and Playtone is executive producing. The Solution will sell the film at the upcoming American Film Market, while WME is representing



Kristen Stewart and Chloe Sevigny

the project in the US Stewart, best known for the "Twilight" franchise, most recently starred in the drama "Still Alice" and action comedy "American Ultra." Her sci-fi film "Equals" played at the Venice and Toronto film festivals and recently sold to A24 and DirecTV. She also has the Ang Lee pic "Billy Lynn's Long Halftime Walk" and a Woody Allen movie on the horizon. —Reuters



Japanese film director Koji Fukada, fourth right, American actress Bryerly Long, center, and others pose for photographers during the opening ceremony of the 28th Tokyo International Film Festival in Tokyo. — AP photos

## Robot star illuminates human themes in nuclear disaster film

The film set in Japan after a nuclear catastrophe depicts greed, discrimination, loyalty, beauty - traits made more heartbreakingly human by the cast's inhuman star - a robot. In this eerie film, aptly called "Sayonara," people fearfully wait to be picked for evacuation abroad to flee radiation. Politics is involved. The sick, people with criminal records and foreigners are doomed. The android, created by robot researcher Hiroshi Ishiguro, steals the show. The director Koji Fukada refers to the robot as "actress," and it's listed as a member of the cast. The robot, called Geminoid F, speaks in flat tones, wheels instead of walks, and apologizes for not understanding emotions.



In this image created by 2015 'Sayonara' Production Committee and released by Phantom Film, a robot owner performed by American actress Bryerly Long, right, sits with her robot in a scene from Japanese director Koji Fukada's 'Sayonara' shown at the Tokyo International Film Festival. — AP

And by sticking by its owner, with a quiet mechanical loyalty, the robot proves a machine might be far more human than some real-life people. "Sayonara," shown in the competition section of the Tokyo International Film Festival, which closes Saturday, is a stark commentary on the inhumanity of society. And it's a sobering reminder of the realities of post-Fukushima Japan. The reactor meltdowns at the coastal nuclear plant following the March 2011 earthquake and tsunami became the worst nuclear disaster since Chernobyl. Keeping the reactors stable still requires tons of water daily, and tens of thousands of displaced people may never be able to return to the heavily radiated communities nearest the plant.

### Theme of death

The nuclear catastrophe in "Sayonara" is even more deadly, requiring the entire nation to be evacuated. "Even though contaminated water is leaking, our nation's leader claims things are under control," Fukada said of the Fukushima disaster. "I find it extremely disturbing that it's as though the accident never happened." Bryerly Long, an American from Washington, DC, who has lived in Japan for five years working with a theater troupe, delivers a touchingly forlorn portrayal as the robot's owner. Seriously ill and unprotected as a foreigner, her character can only wait for a lonely death, abandoned even by her Asian lover. Long recalled that her favorite scene is when her character realizes the woman-shaped robot's sensibilities of beauty were acquired from herself. "That is the most heartbreaking scene in this film: The thought that the person whom I was dialoguing with, this robot - actually, I was only dialoguing with myself," she said. Shot in a surprisingly efficient 10-day period in what Fukada calls the perfect "Andrew Wyeth landscape" of Nagano prefecture, the film depicts the theme of death, he said, by juxtaposing a dying woman with a machine that will never die.

### Human and machine

"Even if you have a family, no matter how many friends you may make, even if someone is right next to you, even if you're holding hands, a human being is trapped in the physical body and alone," said Fukada, an unpretentious man who vows to keep directorial powers to a minimum to encourage creativity from the other participants. Fukada believes it's not far-fetched to think a robot-loving society like Japan will use them more and more as companions. Fukada added the nuclear element to the original script, which was based on a 2010 play that explored human-robot relations, also starring Long and Geminoid F. He purposely avoided computer graphics to drive home his point about the ambiguous, perhaps perilous, border between human and machine. Directing the android was easier than directing people, although he said with a laugh he had to watch to not break the robot as its repairs would come with a 10 million yen (\$100,000) bill. "The android doesn't complain, never gets hungry and doesn't need to sleep at all," he said at the film festival office. As the film shows evacuees who are able leaving Japan in droves, the woman and her robot stay in a tiny house, sitting in a stretch of gray - a withering grassy terrain of solitude. Part of their routine is visiting a bamboo grove hoping for a miracle - a glimpse of a flower seen only once in a century. When the robot still searches, after its master's death, Fukada's vision leaves the viewer with a painful hopelessness. "Sayonara" opens in Japan on Nov 21. Overseas screenings are undecided. — AP

## New wave filmmakers turn an uncensored lens on Myanmar

Unshackled from decades of censorship by military rulers that choked creativity along with dissent, a new generation of Myanmar filmmakers are turning their cameras on to subjects once deemed taboo. Once home to one of the most prolific movie industries in Southeast Asia, Myanmar's film studios atrophied under nearly half a century of junta control. But in the four years since outright army rule ended, a crop of emerging documentary-makers are telling long-neglected tales of daily life from homosexual relationships to the marginalization of refugees.

Freedom of expression, although still imperfect inside a country where authorities retain a repressive reflex, is one of the clearest gains of the reforms so far. Young filmmakers are hopeful the November 8 elections will be a watershed moment, with Aung San Suu Kyi's pro-democracy opposition tipped to make major gains, raising hopes for greater opportunities to debate the nation's issues through the arts. "We have to reveal the true situation of our country. There are many hidden problems and sorrows which people keep to themselves," said 36-year-old film student Nway Zar Che Soe at the nation's only film school in Yangon.

Her documentary tackles land grabbing, an incendiary issue in Myanmar where the state and its powerful business allies are accused of displacing tens of thousands of people without due process. Yet boundaries remain and two topics in particular remain too sensitive for the silver screen: the military and religion. In a country where the army still holds sway over the quasi-civilian government and radical Buddhism is on the rise, free speech has once again been cramped in recent months. In October an activist was arrested over a satirical Facebook post about the military, while a bar manager from New Zealand languishes in jail over a cheap drinks promotion that used an image of the Buddha wearing headphones.

### 'Creative intelligentsia'

Repressive military rule and censorship ended

Myanmar's post-independence 'golden age' of cinema, which ran from the 1950s through to the mid-1970s. Now filmmakers are again questioning subjects that would have been unthinkable before 2012, when the government abolished a pre-publication censorship regime that straddled newspapers, song lyrics and even fairy tales. Breakout magazines and journals are now filling newstands, art galleries are flourishing and new voices are also entering Myanmar's film landscape.



Myanmar filmmaker Lamin Oo, 30, working on a documentary in Bago, 90 kilometers from Yangon.

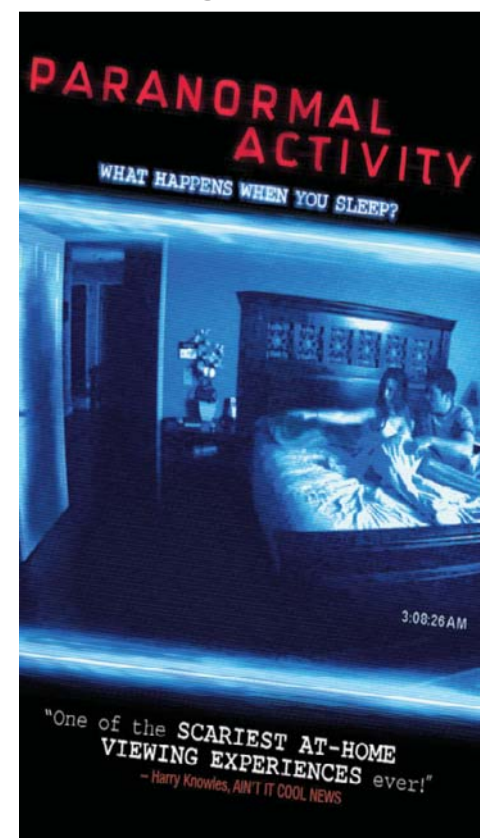
Technology is guiding the pace of change. In a Yangon apartment, preparations were in full swing recently for Myanmar's first-ever mobile phone film festival due to be held later this year in a nation where cellphones were a luxury until recently. "Many people now have a mobile phone and it is a powerful weapon to tell stories," said organizer Zaw Zaw Myo Lwin who also runs a film production company, as he sifted through entries on his compute. Film is also stirring critical thinking in a nation schooled on rote-learning and army PR. "We grew up on military government propaganda films... through documentary films we can let people think and discuss," said Thu Thu Shein, who launched Myanmar's original film festival four years ago.—AFP

## New horizon for horror as 'Paranormal Activity' gives up the ghost

For six years, horror fans have wondered what the supernatural entity is scaring the "Paranormal Activity" movie franchise, but as they get their answer with the final film, ghosts could be cast aside for horrors rooted in reality. "Paranormal Activity: The Ghost Dimension," which opened last weekend just in time to entice the Halloween revelers, concludes the tale that began in 2009 with Katie and Micah, a couple who are stalked at home by a supernatural entity.

"Paranormal Activity," a found-footage, or pseudo documentary style, horror made for around \$15,000 and acquired by Paramount Pictures, revolutionized the horror movie genre after grossing \$193 million worldwide. Katie's possession by a demon named 'Toby' led to four more films and a spin-off, and brought a slew of ghost-centric micro-budget movies, replacing the gory fare that dominated horror in the 2000s, such as "Saw" and Eli Roth's "Hostel."

"Horror has been more supernatural than bloody, and I think that had a lot to do with the 'Paranormal Activity,'" franchise producer Jason Blum told Reuters in an interview. But as "Paranormal Activity" wraps up with "Ghost Dimension," Blum believes horror may be taking a more psychological and human turn. The producer suggested that his 2013 movie "The Purge," about a society in which all crime is legal for 12 hours, may usher in an era of psychological horror that humans can inflict on each other. —Reuters



# Lanvin designer Elbaz quits fashion house after 14 years

**A**lber Elbaz is to leave Lanvin after 14 years as its creative director, the Paris-based fashion house said Wednesday, fuelling rumors he might take over the vacant seat at Christian Dior. "Lanvin and Alber Elbaz have ended their collaboration after 14 years," a company spokesman told AFP, confirming a report in the industry publication WWD that the 54-year-old Moroccan was to leave. A later statement from Lanvin thanked Elbaz for the "chapter he wrote in a 125-year history".

French and American media carried a letter from the stylist confirming he had left Lanvin due to "a decision made by its majority shareholder", Chinese billionaire Shaw-Lan Wang. In it he wishes Lanvin the "bright future it deserves among the biggest French luxury brands". His departure comes less than a week after Raf Simons quit Christian Dior and will add to industry speculation that Elbaz might be seeking to fill his shoes at another of France's biggest fashion names.

Elbaz succeeded Spanish designer Cristina Ortiz at Lanvin-France's oldest fashion house still in operation-in 2001. The same year, cosmetics giant L'Oreal sold the brand to a group of investors headed by Wang. It is believed Elbaz-praised for his draped styles for Lanvin and admired for his affable demeanour in the high-strung fashion world-held talks with Dior when it was seeking a replacement for British designer John Galiano.

He was sacked in 2011 following an anti-Semitic outburst at a Paris cafe. But WWD reported that those talks came to nothing because Elbaz had a stake in Lanvin through a holding controlled by Wang, which proved to be a stumbling block to a deal. The departures of Elbaz and Simons cap a turbulent year in the haute couture sector. In October, Balenciaga named German wunderkind Demna Gvasalia as its new creative director to replace American designer Alexander Wang. — AFP



A file photo taken on September 27, 2012 shows Moroccan fashion designer Alber Elbaz for Lanvin acknowledging the public at the end of the Spring/Summer 2013 ready-to-wear collection show in Paris. — AFP

JAKARTA FASHION WEEK 2016



Models display creations by Kelly Vallerie.



Models display creations by Diana.



Models display creations by Fitri Aulia during Jakarta Fashion Week 2016 in Jakarta, Indonesia yesterday. — AP/AFP photos

## China Fashion Week



Models parade creations from the Silk Road Star Cheng Yingfen Collection designed by Cheng Yingfen at China Fashion Week in Beijing yesterday. — AP/AFP photos



# Why mess with mashed potatoes? Because Parm improves them

By Katie Workman

**P**lain old mashed potatoes are always brilliant, and it's hard to imagine a Thanksgiving table without them. Still, every once in a while we like to change things up. But not too much. Here, a small amount of Parmesan cheese adds earthiness and nuttiness to the classic smooth, creamy potatoes, and turns a traditional side into something inspired with no extra work.

Just be sure to go easy on the salt, and taste at the end. Parmesan adds a bit of saltiness to this dish.

Also, when you add the milk mixture to the crushed potatoes and stir, you will think, "Wait! That's too much liquid!" Don't worry. As the potatoes cook and sit they will thicken up. If you make them ahead of time you can reheat them gently over low heat, adding some more hot milk as necessary and stirring frequently.

You have several options for mashing the potatoes. You can use an old-fashioned potato masher, which will probably yield some lumps (which some of us like). You also can use a potato ricer, which looks kind of like an oversized garlic press. You put the potatoes in, press them through the fine-holed disk at the bottom, and the potatoes come out a bit like grains of rice, though they quickly turn into creamy mashed potatoes when you mix them with the remaining ingredients.

There also is a food mill, which works similarly, only you crank the potatoes through the holes on the bottom disk with a handle. This tool also is good for pureeing things like cooked tomatoes or berries, as it strains out the seeds and skins, only allowing the smooth fruit mixture to pass through.



## MASHED POTATOES WITH PARMESAN CHEESE

### Ingredients

Start to finish: 30 minutes  
Servings: 6  
salt  
8 large Idaho or Yukon Gold potatoes (3 to 3 1/2 pounds total), peeled and halved  
1 cup whole milk  
1/2 cup light or heavy cream or half-and-half  
4 tablespoons unsalted butter, cut into pieces, room temperature  
1/4 cup finely grated Parmesan cheese  
Ground black pepper

### Preparation

Fill a large stockpot with water and bring to a boil over high heat. Add a generous amount of salt, return to a boil, then add the potatoes. The water should cover the potatoes by at least 2 inches. Bring to a simmer, then reduce heat to medium and cook for 15 or so minutes, partially covered, until the potatoes are very tender when pierced with a knife.

Drain the potatoes and return them to the pot. Set the pot over medium-low heat. Toss the potatoes in the hot pan occasionally for 3 minutes or so until the moisture is all gone and the potatoes have begun to dry out (but not to brown). Remove the pan from the heat and put the potatoes through

a ricer or a food mill, or mash with a potato masher until they are smooth, or as smooth as you like them.

Meanwhile, heat the milk and the cream together in a microwave safe bowl or pitcher for about 1 minute, or in a small saucepan on the stovetop, until hot. Add the hot milk and cream mixture to the potatoes along with the butter and stir with a wooden spoon or a whisk until well combined. Blend in the Parmesan. Season with salt and pepper, and stir over medium-low heat until everything is hot and well blended. — AP



# It's time to give a veggie main dish its due at Thanksgiving

By Alison Ladman

**T**his year we decided to reverse engineer the vegetarian Thanksgiving. Traditionally, diners who ditch the turkey are forced to cobble together a "main dish" by picking and choosing from the foods everyone else considers sides. But this year, we decided to create a vegetarian main dish that not only can stand up next to the turkey, but that also is delicious enough that all

the carnivores at the table will want it, too (and can treat it as a side dish).

This harvest roast is bold and substantial, just the vegetarian anchor you need to go alongside the mashed potatoes, stuffing and Brussels sprouts. You can bake it up as a loaf (similar to meatloaf) or for a more impressive presentation it can be stuffed into a squash or small pumpkin, then roasted. Delicious either way.

## VEGETARIAN HARVEST ROAST



### Ingredients

Start to finish: 2 hours (1 hour active)  
Servings: 12  
4 tablespoons butter, divided  
2 large leeks, white and light green parts, diced  
2 medium yellow onions, finely diced  
1 medium carrot, finely diced  
4 cloves garlic, minced  
2 stalks celery, finely diced  
16 ounces mixed mushrooms, finely diced  
2 tablespoons vegetarian Worcestershire sauce  
1 tablespoon minced fresh sage  
1 tablespoon minced fresh thyme  
2 tablespoons minced fresh rosemary  
1 cup chestnuts, finely chopped  
1 cup walnuts, finely chopped  
1 cup pecans, finely chopped  
1 cup cooked barley or brown rice  
1 cup cooked lentils  
1 cup cottage cheese  
4 eggs, lightly beaten  
8 ounces shredded Gruyere or manchego cheese  
Salt and ground black pepper

2 small sugar pumpkins, about 1 1/2 pounds each (optional)  
1 tablespoon all-purpose flour  
2 cups chicken-flavored vegetarian broth or mushroom broth  
2 tablespoons minced oil-packed sun-dried tomatoes, drained

### Preparation

In a large, deep skillet over medium-high, melt 3 tablespoons of the butter. Add the leeks, onions, carrot, garlic, celery and mushrooms. Cook, stirring regularly, until browned and very tender, 10 to 12 minutes. Scrape the bottom of the pan to loosen any browned bits. Stir in the Worcestershire sauce, sage, thyme and rosemary. Cook for 2 to 3 minutes, or until the liquid is evaporated.

Measure out 1 cup of this mixture and set aside. Transfer the rest to a large bowl and add the chestnuts, walnuts, pecans, barley, lentils, cottage cheese, eggs, cheese, 1 teaspoon salt and 1/2 teaspoon black pepper. Mix well. The recipe can be made ahead to this point and the mixture can be refrigerated for up to 48 hours.

When ready to bake, heat the oven to 375 F. Coat 1

large loaf pan or 2 smaller loaf pans with cooking spray and line with kitchen parchment. Alternatively, cut each pumpkin in half top to bottom. Scoop out and discard the seeds and membranes from the pumpkin halves, then set them on a baking sheet lined with kitchen parchment. Trimmed the rounded sides as needed to stand upright. Press the mushroom-barley-nut mixture into the loaf pan(s) or the pumpkins, mounding it as necessary to use all the mixture.

Bake for 60 to 70 minutes, or until the mixture is set up and firm, like a meatloaf. The temperature at the center of the loaves should reach 165 F. If you're roasting in pumpkins, you want the pumpkins to also be tender.

While the roast is cooking, make the sauce. In a small saucepan over medium-high, melt the remaining 1 tablespoon of butter. Stir in the flour and cook for 2 minutes, stirring continuously. Whisk in the broth and return to a simmer. Add the sun-dried tomatoes and the reserved mushroom mixture. Stirring constantly, cook until thickened and no trace of starchy taste remains, 2 to 3 minutes. Pour into a blender and carefully puree until completely smooth. Adjust the seasoning with salt and pepper. Serve warm alongside the roast.

# Friday Times Movies

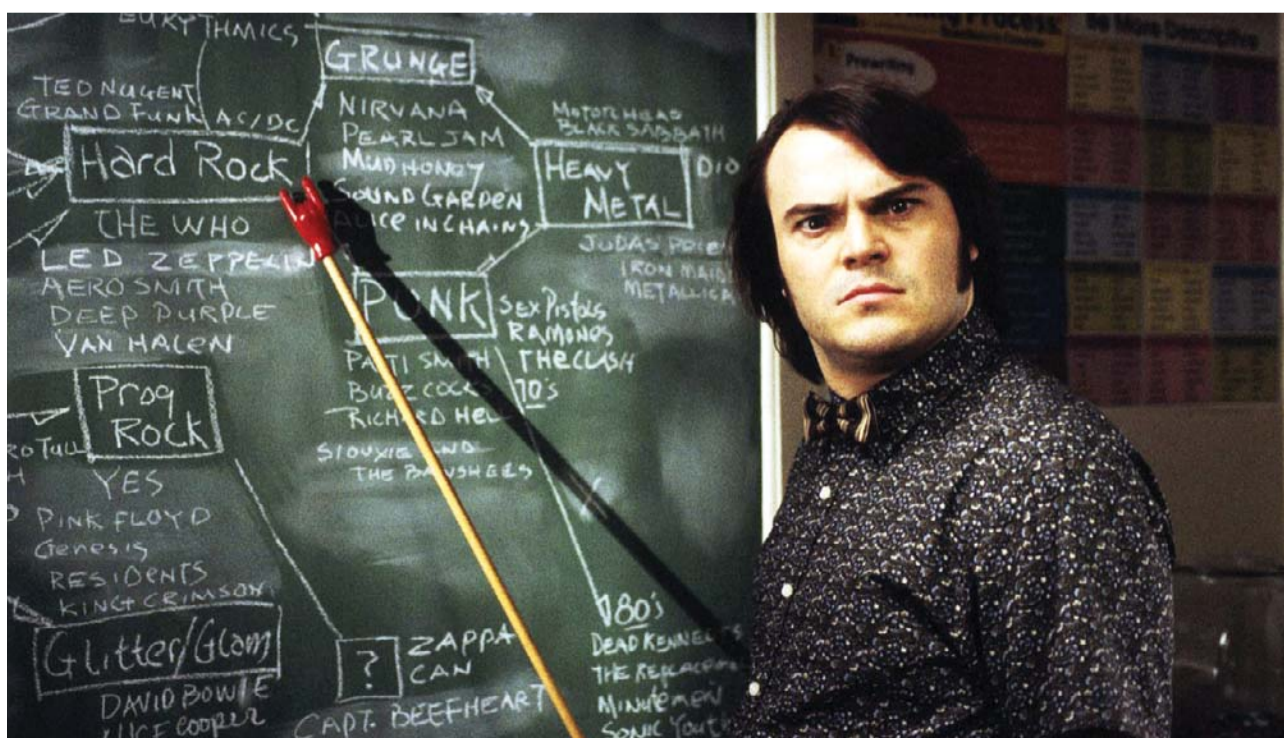
Jack Black returns to theaters as kidlit legend RL Stine in *Goosebumps*, and in anticipation of his first foray into family-friendly comedy-horror, take a loving look back at some of his many memorable film and television roles. Whether you're a longtime fan or just looking to get acquainted, there's something here for everyone's queue, so let's get started.



## HIGH FIDELITY (2000)

They've always been popular, but book-to-film adaptations are always an iffy proposition, too; no matter how successful they might be with movie audiences, film versions of beloved books often can't help but suffer in comparison to their invariably more fleshed-out counterparts. Still, every once in awhile, an adaptation works so well that almost no one complains about the changes that were made - and 2000's *High Fidelity*, about the emotional travails of a music-

obsessed sensitive soul with a checkered romantic past (John Cusack), is a perfect example. Aside from catering gracefully to its leading man's cinematic strengths, the script (which Cusack co-wrote) made plenty of room for scene-stealing supporting players, led by Black as a cranky record store employee whose stereotypical snobbery is leavened by the hyperactive, wide-eyed overconfidence Black would soon be asked to bring to bear on a long list of comedies. He'd been in plenty of TV shows and films prior to this, but after *High Fidelity*, Jack Black was finally on his way to becoming a star.



## SCHOOL OF ROCK (2003)

Jack Black has starred in a number of fine films over the course of his career, but no matter how long he continues making movies, it's unlikely a project will ever fit his unique combination of talents as snugly as *School of Rock*. Inspired by a series of recordings culled from a Canadian elementary school project during the 1970s, screenwriter Mike White concocted the story of Dewey Finn (Black), a singer and guitarist whose delusions of grandeur get him kicked out of his band - thus beginning a chain of events that soon sees him jump-starting a local school's music program while impersonating a substitute teacher. A fat box-office hit whose tangy blend of comedy, drama, and rock 'n' roll turned it into a consistent favorite that's gone on to inspire a stage musical and TV adaptation.



## TENACIOUS D IN THE PICK OF DESTINY (2006)

**Y**ears before he reached his cinematic breakthrough, Black caught the eye of discerning HBO subscribers through Tenacious D, a series based around the fake musical exploits of the real-life “mock rock” duo he’d co-founded with fellow actor-musician Kyle Gass. The pair filmed a trio of episodes with Mr. Show’s David Cross and Bob Odenkirk, and although the first episode didn’t set the world on fire when it aired in 1997 - HBO neglected to broadcast the other two until 2000 - Tenacious D’s act contributed to the steadily growing cult around the “band’s” brash frontman, and when they finally got around to releasing their debut LP in 2001, it cracked the Top 40 and paved the way for their big-screen debut, 2003’s Tenacious D in The Pick of Destiny, co-starring Ronnie James Dio as himself and Dave Grohl as Satan.

## KING KONG (2005)

**B**lack’s obviously quite adept at getting laughs, but his gift for playing creeps also lends itself to drama - as director Peter Jackson obviously recognized while casting his big-budget remake of King Kong, tapping Black to play Carl Denham, the financially tenuous (and morally bankrupt) filmmaker whose quest for a hit sets in motion the chain of events that brings a certain giant gorilla to New York and unleashes a hail of CG-assisted destruction. The original Kong remains a towering classic, and Jackson’s version was destined to remain in its shadow long before cameras rolled, but it still acquitted itself fairly admirably; in fact, as far as some critics were concerned, it might even deserve to be considered a classic in its own right.



## BE KIND REWIND (2008)

**F**or film fans of a certain age, the phrase “be kind rewind” will forever conjure memories of the stickers affixed to VHS rentals begging customers not to return their tapes without rewinding them first - but by 2008, VHS had been all but consigned to the format graveyard, making Be Kind Rewind the perfect title for a movie about a hapless video store clerk (Yasin Bey) whose knuckleheaded friend (Black) accidentally erases every single tape in stock right after the owner (Danny Glover) leaves town. Forced to act fast, the duo set about remaking (“swedeing”) movies on the fly, inadvertently sparking a neighborhood craze for their unintentionally hilarious low-budget attempts to recreate films like Ghostbusters and Rush Hour 2 - and single-handedly reviving the financial fortunes of the store just as it’s set to meet the wrecking ball at the hand of a heartless building owner intent on gentrifying his property.

## KUNG FU PANDA FRANCHISE

**T**he humor potential inherent in casting a husky funnyman as an unlikely martial arts enthusiast is as obvious as it is deceptively tricky to unlock - witness Chris Farley in Beverly Hills Ninja - so DreamWorks Animation casting Jack Black to voice a rotund panda who becomes a kung fu master might have seemed a little on the nose when Kung Fu Panda was announced. Sometimes the obvious choice is the best one, however, and that’s clearly been the case for Black in the role of Po, the panda whose journey from noodle shop to prophecy-fulfilling glory has expanded to fill three theatrical features, a TV series, animated shorts, a video game, and even a planned live show - not to mention critical acclaim and more than a billion in box-office receipts.



## BERNIE (2012)

**U**nder the right conditions and parceled out in the proper doses, Black’s stereotypical on-screen persona can be irresistible, which is probably why he’s so rarely been asked to step outside that box over the years - but when he does, the results can be extremely gratifying, as he proved with his starring turn in Bernie. A uniquely twisted, fact-based drama that reunited Black with his School of Rock director Richard Linklater, Bernie led viewers through the incredibly odd story of a Texas mortician whose surprising friendship with a cantankerous widow (Shirley MacLaine) comes to a very bad end - and opens one of the odder chapters in modern small-town American jurisprudence. ([www.rottentomatoes.com](http://www.rottentomatoes.com))



## TROPIC THUNDER (2008)

**B**en Stiller’s experiences as a bit player on Empire of the Sun inspired him to write this barbed Hollywood satire about a group of pampered actors (led by Stiller, Jack Black, and Robert Downey, Jr. in blackface) whose entitled behavior leads their exasperated director (Steve Coogan) to try using a little cinema verite on their war movie, with decidedly unintended results. Each of the stars embodies a particular type of stereotypical Hollywood excess; for Black, portraying the drug-addled comedian Jeff Portnoy offered an opportunity to lampoon the self-serious efforts of lowbrow (and filthy rich) comics who try to prove their depth by “going serious.”



Friday Times

FRIDAY, OCTOBER 30, 2015

# Travel



Escaping  
modern China:  
Unwind in historic  
Hui Zhou



*It is said that an immortal from the north flying on a goose was so taken by the scenery at Huizhou's West Lake that she landed and turned into Flying Goose Mountain. This is how Huizhou got its term of endearment, "City of the Goose". Located on the eastern periphery of the Pearl River Delta in Guangdong province, Huizhou can feel a world apart from the surrounding industrial region of the Pearl River Delta - China's manufacturing powerhouse. Urban upstart cities like nearby Dongguan and Shenzhen might outsize and outpace Huizhou (sounds like 'hway-joe'), but old Goose Town's lakes, waterways, and verdant hills, not to mention its many historic attractions, make it the perfect antidote from the rush and clamour of modern China.*

**Poet's path**

The delight most feel when first confronted with Huizhou's West Lake is not unique. The Song Dynasty scholar Su Dongpo (also known as Su Shi) was equally awestruck. Su hailed from Sichuan province, but had grown to prominence in the Song capital, Hangzhou, only to be exiled from the court for his contrarian views. In those days, anywhere south of the Nanling Mountains - which long sequestered far south China culturally and geographically from the rest of the country - was deemed barbarous, a malarial swampland on the very edge of civilization. Yet Su was genuinely taken by his

home-of-exile, waxing lyrical about the local scenery, wine, tea and exotic fruits. Over his three-year stint in Huizhou, beginning in 1094, Su penned more than 500 verses ode to Huizhou and its people.

Today, Su's lyrical endorsement is celebrated in the Huizhou West Lake Scenic Area. His poems have been carved into sculptures lining the Su Embankment, which leads towards Huizhou's must-have photo, the Sizhou Tower - an 80-metre-high, seven-storey, hexagonal Buddhist pagoda first constructed during the Ming dynasty.

In and around the Su Dongpo Memorial

Hall, there are several sculptures depicting the wise and benevolent scribe enjoying southern life. The hall itself houses a collection of Su's calligraphic verse. There's limited English language information, but it's a pleasant place to walk around, as its design is based on the classical Chinese gardens synonymous with the Song dynasty.

Opposite the Memorial Hall, one can follow the Jiuqu ('nine bends') Bridge across Diancui and Fenghua Islands. The islands afford shade from the subtropical sunshine and are a great place to watch people potter about on pedal boats.

**Religion and revolution**

On the lake's north shore, there's more history to uncover, both religious and revolutionary. Tucked away in an old, mottled neighborhood is Yuanmiao Temple, which was first constructed in 748 during the Tang dynasty, though it was damaged during the Cultural Revolution. Rebuilt again in 1990, this is incense-imbued homage to Lao Tzu, the philosopher at the heart of the Taoist tradition, is very much a living temple and a place where Huizhou folk come to venerate the gods (and presumably pray for some good fortune).





Indeed, exploring the Revolutionary Martyrs Park located just behind the temple, one is struck by how outmoded the striving proletarians appeared when compared with the temple's saintly effigies. Taosim might be far older than Maoism, but as China reasserts itself, ancient culture is enjoying a renaissance, while socialist realism is alas, very much yesterday's look.

As if to reinforce this opinion, a reconstruction of the Ming Dynasty city gate serves as another bold symbol that Huizhou is back in business. Walking through the gate, confronted by the surging Dong River and the gilded new district of Jiangbei across the water, lie the remnants of the original Ming wall preserved along the riverfront. This is clearly the boundary between the old and new, the China of scribes and temples within, the China of malls and manufacturing beyond.

The final piece of Goose Town's historic jigsaw - a statue of Sun Yat-sen - is located in a park just behind the old wall. The revolution-

ary credited with toppling China's last dynasty, the Qing, Sun is now revered as "the father of the nation" (though he was not a communist). Intensely proud southerners revere Sun mostly because he hailed from Guangdong province; Sun even led a popular uprising from Huizhou in 1900.

#### Golden belt road

It can be thirsty work circumnavigating West Lake. Luckily, not far from the entrance to the Scenic Area is Miss X's Café, a quaint, two-storey coffee shop decorated with local furnishings.

Over a +30 fruit juice, the friendly patron Miss Xia will offer advice about the surrounding laneways. The adjacent alleyway, Jindai Jie ('Golden Belt Road'), is among Huizhou's most historic streets.

First constructed in 1389, the winding old lane was once the commercial hub of Huizhou. Family houses and ancestral shrines line the route, affording a rare glimpse of a

way of life fast fading from view in modern China. Now earmarked for tourism, the street has a line of antiques shops, selling everything from Mao Zedong posters to Ming porcelain.

In Su Dongpo's poem, Huizhou Yi Jue, Mount Luofu is lionized, making for an easy excursion from Goose Town.

Two hours by bus through disconcertingly messy industrial hamlets does little to invoke much anticipation: clearly, times have changed since Su's day. But the mountain, now a quintuple-A tourist site, is spell-bindingly beautiful. The tapestry of history one finds around West Lake is also weaved into the experience here. The central attraction is the beguiling atmospheric Chongxu Temple, first founded by Taoist abbot Ge Hong in 327, though it was rebuilt during the Qing dynasty.

#### Make it happen

It's extraordinary to think a temple stood here in Su Dongpo's day. Su is said to have first

tasted lychee here, a spot now commemorated in the Lychee Virtue Garden. In summer, the tropical climate can make climbing the mountain unappealing, but there is a chair lift to the top. The ride up offers a birds-eye of the abounding forest, making it hard to believe you are still in the heart of China's manufacturing region. During the final ascent on foot towards Luofu's summit, you can't help but feel a bit like poetry in motion.

Regular buses depart from Chen Leng in Hong Kong, Luohu Bus Station in Shenzhen and Tianhe Bus Station in Guangzhou. Huizhou is on the Xiamen-Shenzhen high-speed railway line. The Dongguan to Huizhou intercity railway is scheduled to open at the end of 2015.

City Inn Yuandong Branch (octhotels.com) is a clean, mid-range hotel with a central location and affordable rooms. Kande International Hotel is a luxury hotel with an unrivalled location opposite West Lake.

— (www.lonelyplanet.com)



WORD SEARCH

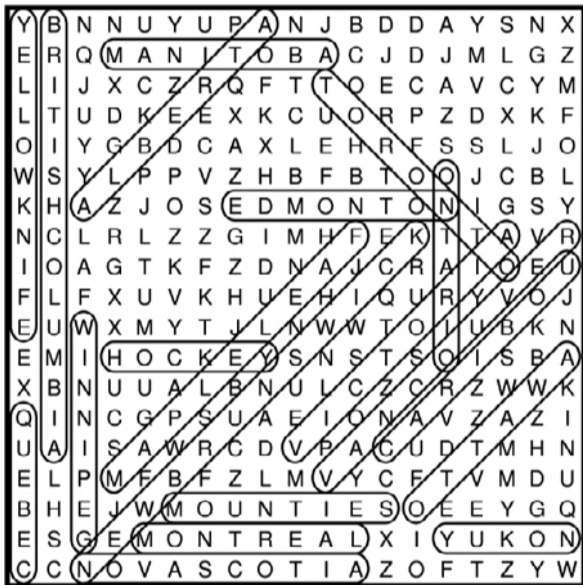
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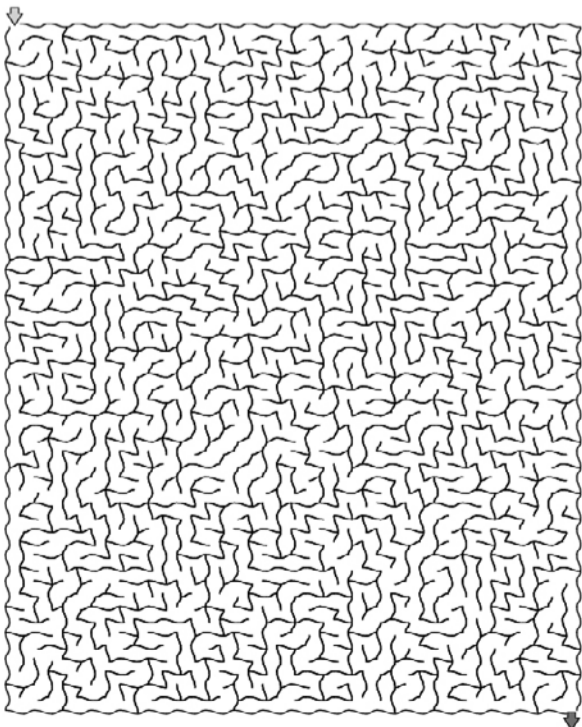
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- FLAT TIRE
- PEDESTRIAN
- TOLL BOOTH
- AUTOMOBILES
- GAS STATION
- REST STOP
- TRAFFIC LIGHT
- BREAKDOWN
- HIGHWAY
- ROAD WORK
- TRAVELERS
- CONVOY
- INTERSTATE
- SPEED LIMIT
- TROOPER
- CROSSWALK
- MOTORCYCLE
- STOP SIGN
- TRUCKERS

Yesterday's Solution

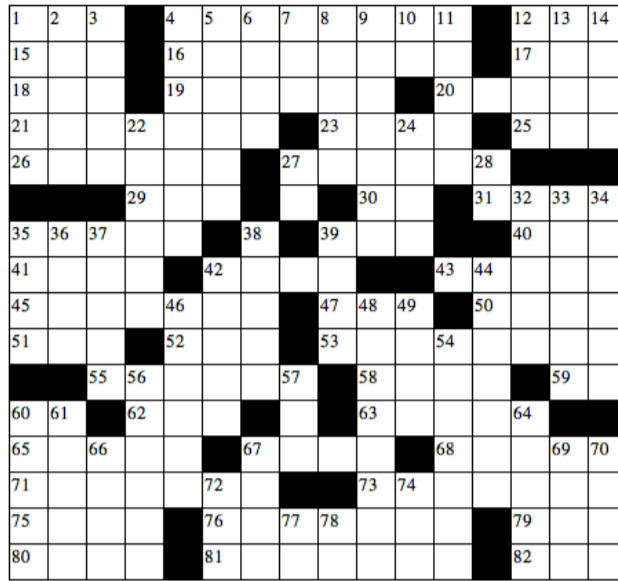
SOLUTION TO OH CANADA! PUZZLE



CHALLENGING MAZE



CROSSWORD 1064



ACROSS

1. Committee formed by a special-interest group to raise money for their favorite political candidates.
4. Genus of large monoecious mostly deciduous trees.
12. (slang) A gangster's pistol.
15. The United Nations agency concerned with the interests of labor.
16. Veloute sauce seasoned with herbs and shallots and capers.
17. A constellation in the southern hemisphere near Telescopium and Norma.
18. Considerate and solicitous care.
19. A mass of ice and snow that permanently covers a large area of land (e.g., the polar regions or a mountain peak).
20. Belonging to or befitting a supreme ruler.
21. Go with, fall together.
23. A flat-bottomed volcanic crater that was formed by an explosion.
25. The elementary stages of any subject (usually plural).
26. A glassy translucent material that occurs in hyaline cartilage or in certain skin conditions.
29. (Irish) Mother of the ancient Irish gods.
30. (Akkadian) God of wisdom.
31. United States newspaper publisher (1858-1935).
35. Locate and correct errors in a computer program code.
40. Used of physical heat.
41. By bad luck.
43. Stout-bodied short-legged omnivorous animals.
45. Prohibited by law or by official or accepted rules.
47. A religious belief of African origin involving witchcraft and sorcery.
50. English essayist (1775-1834).
51. Either of two folds of skin that can be moved to cover or open the eye.
52. (Judaism) Sacred chest where the ancient Hebrews kept the two tablets containing the Ten Commandments.
53. Drawn or written with a pencil.
55. A motley assortment of things.
58. Highly excited.
59. A trivalent metallic element of the rare earth group.
60. A state in southeastern United States between the Atlantic and the Gulf of Mexico.
62. Any of various systems of units for measuring electricity and magnetism.
63. The brightest star in Cygnus.
65. (used of opinions and actions) Far beyond the norm.
68. Bottle that has a narrow neck.
71. Any plant of the genus Gazania valued for their showy daisy flowers.
73. Stem of the rattan palm used for making canes and umbrella handles.
75. Any of various small biting flies.
76. (Sumerian and Akkadian) A demon personifying death.
79. A rotating disk shaped to convert circular into linear motion.
80. The time that has elapsed.
81. (trademark) A piece of soft absorbent paper (usually two or more thin layers) used as a disposable handkerchief.
82. A loose sleeveless outer garment made from aba cloth.

DOWN

1. The property of sound that varies with variation in the frequency of vibration.
2. A mixture containing two or more metallic elements or metallic and nonmetallic elements usually fused together or dissolving into each other when molten.
3. Made from baking chocolate or cocoa powder and milk and sugar.
4. The evaluation of something in terms of its price.
5. A blank gap or missing part.
6. Report or maintain.
7. A local and habitual twitching especially in the face.
8. Small terrestrial lizard of warm regions of the Old World.
9. A genus of the cactus family with scarlet flowers.
10. The local time at the 0 meridian passing through Greenwich, England.
11. Spanish missionary who founded Franciscan missions in California (1713-1784).
12. Mentally or physically infirm with age.
13. An Arabic speaking person who lives in Arabia or North Africa.
14. A fine grained mineral having a soft soapy feel and consisting of hydrated magnesium silicate.
22. (grammar) An expression including a subject and predicate but not constituting a complete sentence.
24. South American armadillo with three bands of bony plates.
27. Being one hundred more than three hundred.
28. A heavy odorless colorless gas formed during respiration and by the decomposition of organic substances.
32. Uncomfortably cool.
33. With honey added.
34. Not subject to change or variation especially in behavior.
36. (Norse mythology) Goddess of old age who defeated Thor in a wrestling match.
37. (Norse mythology) God of light and peace and noted for his beauty and sweet nature.
38. The Mongol people living the the central and eastern parts of Outer Mongolia.
39. A small cut of meat including part of a rib.
42. Found along western Atlantic coast.
44. Deciduous shrub widely cultivated for its white or pink or red flowers.
46. A comedian who uses gags.
48. A person who is paid to pray for the soul of another.
49. English prelate noted for his pessimistic sermons and articles (1860-1954).
54. A flowing together (as of rivers).
56. Expose to fresh air, as of old clothing.
57. A state of southwestern India.
61. An extensive grassy and nearly treeless plain (especially in Latin America).
64. An indehiscent fruit derived from a single ovary having one or many seeds within a fleshy wall or pericarp.
66. A male monarch or emperor (especially of Russia prior to 1917).
67. Any of numerous local fertility and nature deities worshipped by ancient Semitic peoples.
69. Someone who works (or provides workers) during a strike.
70. God of love and erotic desire.
72. A liquid used for printing or writing or drawing.
74. A unit of surface area equal to 100 square meters.
77. A state in New England.
78. A brittle silver-white metalloid element that is related to selenium and sulfur.

Yesterday's Solution



Daily SuDoku

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

Yesterday's Solution

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

FRIDAY, OCTOBER 30, 2015

## BBC lifestyle

00:15 Michela's Classic Italian  
 00:40 Vacation Vacation Vacation  
 01:25 Masterchef: The Professionals  
 01:50 The Roux Legacy  
 02:20 Come Dine With Me  
 02:45 Homes Under The Hammer  
 03:40 Beat My Build  
 04:25 The Roux Legacy  
 05:00 Come Dine With Me  
 05:25 Vacation Vacation Vacation  
 06:10 Homes Under The Hammer  
 07:00 The Roux Legacy  
 07:30 The Roux Legacy  
 08:00 Masterchef: The Professionals  
 08:25 Come Dine With Me  
 08:50 Building Dream Homes  
 09:50 Michela's Classic Italian  
 10:15 Vacation Vacation Vacation  
 11:00 The Roux Legacy  
 11:30 Homes Under The Hammer  
 12:25 Beat My Build  
 13:10 Masterchef: The Professionals  
 13:40 Come Dine With Me  
 14:05 Building Dream Homes  
 15:05 Michela's Classic Italian  
 15:30 Vacation Vacation Vacation  
 16:15 The Roux Legacy  
 16:45 Homes Under The Hammer  
 17:40 Beat My Build  
 18:25 Vacation Vacation Vacation  
 18:50 Building Dream Homes  
 19:50 Rachel Khoo's Kitchen  
 Notebook: Cosmo Cook  
 20:15 Vacation Vacation Vacation  
 21:00 Masterchef: The Professionals  
 21:25 The Roux Legacy  
 21:55 Come Dine With Me  
 22:20 Homes Under The Hammer  
 23:15 Building Dream Homes

## Discovery Channel HD

00:20 Fast N' Loud  
 01:10 Treasure Quest: Snake Island  
 02:00 Fast N' Loud: Demolition  
 Theater  
 02:50 Saint Hoods  
 03:40 Container Wars  
 04:05 Highway To Sell  
 05:00 How It's Made: Dream Cars  
 05:30 How Do They Do It?  
 06:00 Mythbusters  
 06:50 Dynamo: Magician Impossible  
 07:40 What Happened Next?  
 08:05 Superhuman Science  
 08:30 The Pop Illusionist  
 09:20 Marooned With Ed Stafford  
 10:10 Kings Of The Wild  
 11:00 Treasure Quest: Snake Island  
 11:50 Fast N' Loud: Demolition  
 Theater  
 12:40 Car Chasers  
 13:30 Fast N' Loud  
 14:20 Wheeler Dealers  
 15:10 Philly Throttle  
 17:40 Idris Elba: No Limits  
 21:00 Fast N' Loud  
 21:50 Wheeler Dealers  
 22:40 Cuban Chrome  
 23:30 Chris Ryan's Elite Police

## E!

00:00 WAGs  
 00:55 The Grace Helbig Show  
 01:25 Keeping Up With The Kardashians  
 02:20 E! News  
 03:15 Giuliana & Bill  
 04:10 E! News  
 05:05 THS  
 06:00 Kourtney & Kim Take New York  
 06:55 Kourtney & Kim Take New York  
 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 #RichKids Of Beverly Hills  
 14:05 Keeping Up With The Kardashians  
 15:00 Keeping Up With The Kardashians  
 16:00 Stewarts And Hamiltons  
 17:00 Stewarts And Hamiltons  
 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

## itv CHOICE

00:10 The Chase: Celebrity Specials  
 01:05 May The Best House Win  
 02:00 Emmerdale  
 02:25 Eggheads  
 02:55 Coronation Street  
 03:25 Lewis  
 04:20 Agatha Christie's Partners In Crime  
 05:15 Take On The Twisters  
 06:10 Who's Doing The Dishes?  
 07:05 Coronation Street  
 07:30 Lewis  
 08:25 Agatha Christie's Partners In Crime  
 09:20 Who's Doing The Dishes?  
 10:15 I'm A Celebrity Get Me Out Of Here  
 11:35 May The Best House Win  
 12:30 Take On The Twisters  
 13:25 Emmerdale  
 13:50 Eggheads  
 14:20 Coronation Street  
 14:45 The Chase: Celebrity Specials  
 15:35 Who's Doing The Dishes?  
 16:30 Doc Martin  
 17:25 Keep It In The Family  
 18:20 Take On The Twisters  
 19:10 Coronation Street  
 19:35 Who's Doing The Dishes?  
 20:30 Doc Martin  
 21:25 Keep It In The Family  
 22:20 I'm A Celebrity Get Me Out Of Here  
 23:40 Eggheads

## NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC CHANNEL HD

01:00 China To The World  
 02:00 Trekking The Great Wall  
 02:55 The 2000s: The Decade We Saw It All  
 04:45 Science Of Stupid  
 05:10 Science Of Stupid  
 05:40 Hard Time  
 06:35 Locked Up Abroad  
 07:30 World's Most Extreme  
 08:25 Dead Or Alive  
 09:20 Science Of Stupid  
 09:45 Science Of Stupid  
 10:15 The Happenings  
 11:10 Paranatural  
 12:05 Hard Time  
 13:00 Dead Or Alive  
 14:00 World's Most Extreme  
 15:00 Locked Up Abroad  
 16:00 The Happenings

17:00 Paranatural  
 18:00 Taboo USA  
 19:00 Locked Up Abroad  
 20:00 The Happenings  
 20:50 Paranatural  
 21:40 Taboo USA  
 22:30 Locked Up Abroad  
 23:20 Hard Time

## OSN FIRST HD COMEDY

00:30 Last Man Standing  
 01:00 The Nightly Show With Larry Wilmore  
 03:30 Cristela  
 04:30 The Tonight Show Starring Jimmy Fallon  
 07:00 Late Night With Seth Meyers  
 11:00 The Tonight Show Starring Jimmy Fallon  
 14:00 Cristela  
 15:30 Last Man Standing  
 16:00 The Nightly Show With Larry Wilmore  
 17:00 Late Night With Seth Meyers  
 18:30 Cristela  
 20:00 The Tonight Show Starring Jimmy Fallon  
 21:00 Last Man Standing  
 21:30 The Nightly Show With Larry Wilmore  
 22:00 Big Time In Hollywood FI  
 22:30 Big Time In Hollywood FI  
 23:30 Late Night With Seth Meyers

## OSN FIRST HD

00:00 The Americans  
 01:00 Blindspot  
 02:00 Empire  
 04:00 Covert Affairs  
 08:00 Sleepy Hollow  
 09:00 Covert Affairs  
 12:00 Emmerdale  
 12:30 Coronation Street  
 13:00 The Ellen DeGeneres Show  
 14:00 Sleepy Hollow  
 16:00 Emmerdale  
 17:00 The Ellen DeGeneres Show  
 18:00 Sleepy Hollow  
 19:00 C.S.I. Cyber  
 20:00 Blindspot  
 21:00 Grey's Anatomy  
 22:00 Survivor: Second Chance  
 23:00 Devious Maids

## OSN FIRST MORE

00:00 The Ellen DeGeneres Show  
 01:00 Good Morning America

05:00 Good Morning America  
 07:00 Emmerdale  
 08:00 The Ellen DeGeneres Show  
 09:00 C.S.I.  
 10:00 Emmerdale  
 11:00 The Ellen DeGeneres Show  
 12:00 Switched At Birth  
 13:00 Franklin & Bash  
 14:00 Live Good Morning America  
 16:00 C.S.I.  
 17:00 Switched At Birth  
 18:00 Franklin & Bash  
 19:00 C.S.I.  
 20:00 Switched At Birth  
 21:00 Franklin & Bash

## OSN MOVIES ACTION

00:00 The Assault  
 02:00 Dark Water  
 04:00 I, Frankenstein  
 05:45 Gone In Sixty Seconds  
 08:00 Prisoners Of The Sun  
 09:45 The Core  
 12:00 I, Frankenstein  
 14:00 Gone In Sixty Seconds  
 16:15 The Outsider  
 18:15 The Core  
 20:30 Rage  
 22:15 The Last Castle

## OSN MOVIES HD ACTION

00:00 Dark Water-PG15  
 02:00 I, Frankenstein-PG15  
 03:45 Gone In Sixty Seconds-PG15  
 06:00 Prisoners Of The Sun-PG15  
 07:45 The Core-PG15  
 10:00 I, Frankenstein-PG15  
 12:00 Gone In Sixty Seconds-PG15  
 14:15 The Outsider-PG15  
 16:15 The Core-PG15  
 18:30 Rage-PG15  
 20:15 The Last Castle-PG15  
 22:30 The Collection-18

## OSN MOVIES HD COMEDY

00:15 Keith Lemon: The Film  
 02:00 Foodfight!  
 04:00 Admission  
 06:00 Struck By Lightning  
 08:00 Planes, Trains And Automobiles  
 10:00 Admission  
 12:00 Foodfight!  
 14:00 Simon Birch  
 16:00 Planes, Trains And Automobiles  
 18:00 Stand Up Guys

20:00 Malavita  
 22:00 Dumb And Dumber

## OSN MOVIES DRAMA

01:00 Knockout-PG15  
 03:00 Ask Me Anything-PG15  
 05:00 At Middleton-PG15  
 07:00 My Last Day Without You-PG15  
 09:00 Upside Down-PG15  
 11:00 At Middleton-PG15  
 13:00 The Signal-PG15  
 15:00 The Last Days On Mars-PG15  
 17:00 Upside Down-PG15  
 19:00 The Disappearance Of Eleanor Rigby: Him-PG15  
 21:00 Parkland-PG15  
 22:45 Third Person-18

## OSN MOVIES HD FESTIVAL

01:15 Mr. Pip  
 03:15 At Any Price  
 05:00 Grand Piano  
 07:00 Rushmore  
 09:00 Far And Away  
 11:30 Grand Piano  
 13:00 Phantom  
 15:00 Jodorowsky's Dune  
 16:30 Far And Away  
 19:00 71  
 21:00 Blue Ruin  
 23:00 The Postman Always Rings Twice

## OSN MOVIES HD

01:30 Kill The Messenger-PG15  
 03:30 Grace Of Monaco-PG15  
 05:15 JLA Adventures: Trapped In Time-PG  
 06:30 The Hobbit: The Battle Of The Five Armies-PG  
 09:00 How To Train Your Dragon 2-PG  
 10:45 Odd Thomas-PG15  
 12:30 The Hunger Games: Mockingjay Part I-PG15  
 14:45 The Hundred-Foot Journey-PG15  
 17:00 How To Train Your Dragon 2-PG  
 19:00 Guardians Of The Galaxy-PG15  
 21:00 Night At The Museum: Secret Of The Tomb-PG15  
 23:00 Foxcatcher-PG15

## OSN MOVIES HD KIDS

01:00 True Story Of Puss'n Boots  
 02:45 Blue Elephant 2  
 04:30 Daddy I'm A Zombie  
 06:00 The Heart Of The Oak  
 08:00 Jelly T  
 10:00 Ice Age: The Meltdown  
 11:30 Asterix: The Mansions Of The Gods  
 13:00 Blue Elephant 2  
 14:30 The Olsen Gang In Deep Trouble  
 16:00 Back To The Sea  
 18:00 Ice Age: The Meltdown  
 20:00 Goat Story 2  
 22:00 The Olsen Gang In Deep Trouble  
 23:30 Back To The Sea

## OSN MOVIES HD PREMIERE

00:00 The Purge: Anarchy-PG15  
 02:00 Saving Mr. Banks-PG15  
 04:15 The Bag Man-PG15  
 06:15 Billy Elliot The Musical-PG15  
 09:15 Stolen Child-PG15  
 10:45 Searching For Sugar Man-PG15  
 12:15 Captain America: The Winter Soldier-PG15  
 14:45 Tales Of The Night-PG  
 16:15 Stolen Child-PG15  
 18:00 Closed Circuit-PG15  
 20:00 Transit-PG15  
 22:00 Sin City: A Dame To Kill For-18

## STAR MOVIES

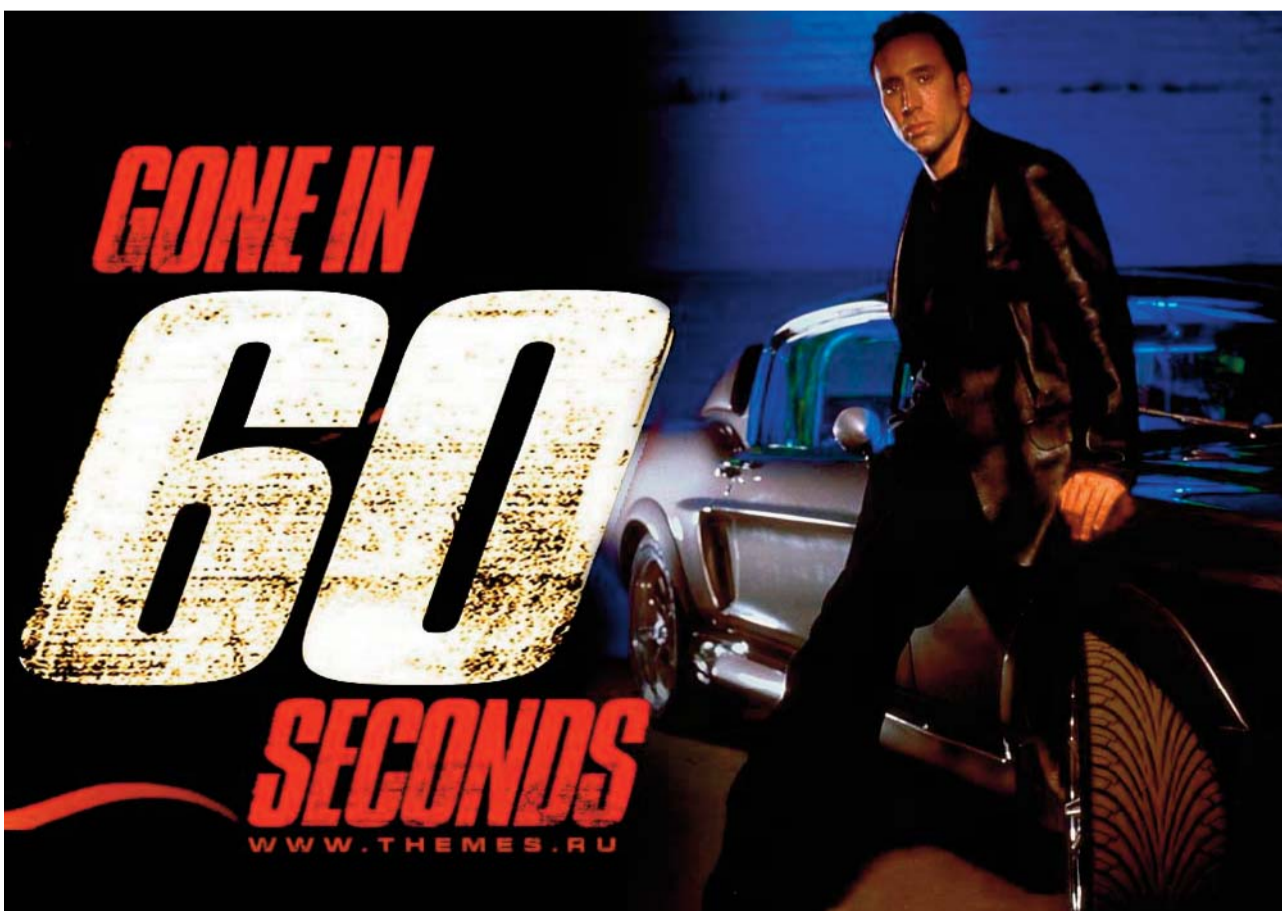
01:15 Six Days, Seven Nights  
 03:00 The Rig  
 04:30 The Longshots  
 06:15 The Joneses  
 07:45 The Raven  
 09:45 Love And Other Impossible Pursuits  
 11:30 Struck By Lightning  
 13:00 From Paris With Love  
 14:30 Hurricane Season  
 16:15 Love Happens  
 18:15 Love And Honor  
 20:00 Fright Night  
 21:45 Instinct  
 23:45 Mrs. Miracle

## STAR WORLD

00:00 Desperate Housewives  
 01:00 MasterChef Australia  
 02:00 The Listener  
 03:00 The Listener  
 04:00 Castle  
 05:00 Happy Endings  
 05:30 Happy Endings  
 06:00 The Simpsons  
 06:30 The Simpsons  
 07:00 Lost  
 08:00 Desperate Housewives  
 09:00 MasterChef Australia  
 10:00 The Listener  
 11:00 The Listener  
 12:00 Castle  
 13:00 Happy Endings  
 13:30 Happy Endings  
 14:00 The Simpsons  
 14:30 The Simpsons  
 15:00 Lost  
 16:00 MasterChef Australia  
 17:00 Cougar Town  
 17:30 Scrubs  
 18:00 Low Winter Sun  
 19:00 The Bridge  
 20:00 72 Hours  
 21:00 Cougar Town  
 21:30 Scrubs  
 22:00 MasterChef Australia  
 23:00 MasterChef Australia

## HISTORY

00:00 Counting Cars  
 00:30 Counting Cars  
 01:00 Lost In Transmission  
 02:00 Ice Road Truckers  
 03:00 Counting Cars  
 03:30 Counting Cars  
 04:00 Lost In Transmission



GONE IN SIXTY SECONDS ON OSN MOVIES HD ACTION







### Aries (March 21-April 19)

Everything is quite simple as long as you don't allow the facts to stand in the way of having fun. The problem is that fantasy continues to rule your world now, even though the truth usually wins out in the end. Luckily, if you can imagine something today, you might actually be able to think it into existence. Nevertheless, cooperating with reality instead of avoiding it makes the road ahead easier to navigate. Taking life a little more seriously leads you down the right path.



### Taurus (April 20-May 20)

It's nearly impossible to clearly define your strengths and weaknesses now, but your lack of objectivity won't impede your success. Even if your current role in the world is a bit muddled, your identity can be based more on your ideal vision rather than on the actual circumstances of your life. Give yourself permission to dream but don't lose track of the truth in the process. Incorporating the most meaningful parts of your fantasies into your daily routine makes life a more joyful experience.



### Gemini (May 21-June 20)

You can't wait to escape into the beauty of an intellectual creation, whether or not you have a captive audience. Try your hand at writing poetry today or find a poem that touches your soul and read it aloud. In fact, music, art or any other creative outlet might do the trick. If you're feeling inspired, you could lose yourself in the moment and consciously invite your imagination to reveal a hidden treasure. Metaphysical riches are waiting beyond the rational world if you're willing to suspend your disbelief and explore the unknown.



### Cancer (June 21-July 22)

Although meditation is a wonderful part of a healthy daily routine, too much contemplation might inadvertently lead you into a deep rut now. This mental trap lures you into experiencing powerful feelings that haven't yet bubbled into awareness. If you become overwhelmed or sad, step outside for some fresh air and a short walk. Gentle movement prevents your imagination from tilting in a negative direction today. Your spirituality can be the source of great inspiration if your head is in the right place.



### Leo (July 23-August 22)

A close friend might send mixed signals today, making it difficult to decipher what is expected of you. Your confusion may impact an intimate relationship or a group dynamic, but you can't waste energy worrying about what others think. Your most sensible course of action now is to clear up any misunderstanding by asking questions and sorting out the facts. Acting on your compassion for those you love while still honoring your responsibilities in the mundane world allows you to cover all the bases. Sleep will have to wait.



### Virgo (August 23-September 22)

It's like you are seeing the whole world through rose-colored glasses today, challenging you to admit that you don't have a clue as to what is real and what is an illusion. Your routine might fall to the wayside as you are enticed to step outside the narrow confines of your commitments. The trick is to realize you have more time than you think to finish up your chores and fulfill your obligations. Exploring the rainbow of possibilities is a lot more fun now than worrying about the logistics.



### Libra (September 23-October 22)

Your admirable intention is to foster peace and harmony on this planet by ensuring that everyone around you is happy. Although others see you as sweet and friendly, you don't feel as if anyone understands your true motivation. The more you want good things to happen, the more resistance you seem to encounter today. Keep your hopes up even if you're not sure that things are going your way now. Above all, remember that the power of positive thinking can help you conquer your doubts and make the world a better place.



### Scorpio (October 23-November 21)

A relationship dilemma currently stems from an imbalance of passion now. You long to share your emotions with someone you love, but everyone seems to prefer splashing around in the shallow end of the pool instead of swimming out into the deeper emotional waters. It's not that you need to hide your feelings, but it's tough to find someone who can match your intensity. Nevertheless, carefully considering the mood of your chosen audience enables you to successfully unburden your heart when the time is right.



### Sagittarius (November 22-December 21)

You thought you knew everything there is to know about your relationship world, but now you realize that a significant piece of information may have been missed in the translation. Toss your old assumptions aside because they are irrelevant to the current circumstances. But all is not lost; everything should work out to your advantage if you can be flexible enough to go with the flow today. Whatever you do, don't try to force reality into your predetermined agenda when the universe has something so much better in store for you.



### Capricorn (December 22-January 19)

It's a perfect day to fall in love with the idea of falling in love, but finding romance in the real world can be a cruel and fickle game. Beauty appears in many forms all around you now, but it's ultimately a reflection of what's within your mind. Be careful about confusing your subjective experience with the objective world. Maintaining a balanced perspective increases your chances of transforming your whimsical illusions into lasting reality. Let your heart shine brightly and others will be drawn to your light.



### Aquarius (January 20- February 18)

Think your plans through extremely carefully if you are considering a major purchase. Unfortunately, you may be a little short on funds or common sense today. Even if you go ahead and open your wallet, remember that you can easily misjudge the value of what you are buying now. Finding something that is aesthetically pleasing is only half the battle. Beauty is in the eye of the beholder, but you still have to pay for your object of desire with real money. Performing a quick reality check will put your priorities in order.



### Pisces (February 19-March 20)

A minor miscommunication between family members could twist the entire day out of shape before you know it. Nebulous Neptune may run amok with your life, but oddly enough, you still should be able to avoid trouble if you remain sensitive to the needs of others. Even if you must backtrack later to clear up a misunderstanding, make sure you straighten out any wrinkles on the home front before moving on. Taking the high road allows your compassionate nature to run the show.

## 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

## NICOLAS THE ALCOHOLIC MONKEY, SYMBOL OF ABUSE IN CHILE

**SANTIAGO:** Escaping the clutches of alcoholism is never easy, and it certainly wasn't for Nicolas, who had to go on anti-depressants to cope with the withdrawal symptoms. But thanks to the timely help of a Chilean treatment center, he has finally been able to get back to what he does best: being a monkey. Nicolas, a tufted capuchin monkey, was abused in captivity by his owners-shopkeepers in the Chilean capital Santiago. They amused themselves by teaching him to smoke cigarettes and giving him alcohol. "They liked to see his reactions when he drank. He became more aggressive, and that made them laugh," said veterinarian Nicole Rivera Helbig. Nicolas, whose owners had his fangs removed, was made to drink so often he became addicted. Today the small brown monkey, who gets camera-shy when journalists film him, is one of about

150 illegally trafficked animals recovering from various forms of abuse at the Primate Rehabilitation Center in Penaflor, on the outskirts of Santiago. After going through a rehab program similar to the ones human addicts undergo, he is now in recovery. But his case is not an isolated one. "Alcohol, cigarettes and drugs are the most common things (abusive owners) give to monkeys, because they see it as a game," said Rivera.

One monkey was even taught to steal jewels from unsuspecting people on the street, while another, an aging female, was subjected to hormone treatments in a laboratory. With lush trees and plants that seek to emulate the monkeys' natural environment, the rehabilitation center today hosts a range of species, from the gangly spider monkey to the pint-sized squirrel monkey. Many bear the scars of mutilation, wounds from choke-hold leashes and other signs of abuse.

"Here, monkeys learn that they are monkeys," said the center's founder, Elba Munoz, a life-long animal lover who runs the facility with her family. "When they're in (abusive) homes they aren't monkeys, they can't develop the normal behaviors of their species. So they're not monkeys. And they're not children either. They're nothing," she told AFP, against the din of her patients' shrieks and howls.

### Dangerous trend

Munoz launched the center in 1994 after adopting a monkey herself. She said it made her realize the horrific treatment exotic animals face at the hands of traffickers and abusive owners. Animal trafficking is a persistent problem in Chile, where exotic pets are seen as chic status symbols. Under Chilean law, trafficking in protected species is punishable by up to 60 days in prison and large fines. But the penalties do not stop a heavy traffic in exotic animals across the Brazilian, Bolivian, Peruvian and Argentine borders.

Monkeys were all the rage in the 1990s, but then the fashion switched to exotic birds like toucans and macaws. The trend of the moment is iguanas, lizards and boa constrictors, said Carlos Munoz, deputy chief of an investigative division tasked with fighting environmental crimes. —AFP



**TALAGANTE, Chile:** A capuchin monkey (Cebus Apella) smells a nut in a cage at a primate rehabilitation centre in Penaflor, 30 km southwest of Santiago, Chile. —AFP



**TALAGANTE, Chile:** Chilean veterinarian Nicole Rivera gives medical treatment to a capuchin monkey.

## TWO-THIRDS OF PEOPLE UNDER 50 HAVE HERPES

**GENEVA:** More than 3.7 billion people under 50 have the highly-infectious and incurable herpes virus that causes sores around the mouth and sometimes on the genitals, a World Health Organization report said. There are two forms of the herpes virus and both are most often transmitted without symptoms, but for those stuck with the lifelong infection, painful and embarrassing sores can be recurring. Two thirds of the global population under the age of 50 are infected with the herpes simplex virus type 1 (HSV-1), which tends to cause cold sores, the WHO said in report published this week.

A full 87 percent of Africans under 50 have the virus which is transmitted by mouth-to-mouth contact or through saliva, as do three quarters of those in the eastern Mediterranean and western Pacific regions. In comparison, "only" 39 percent of men

and 49 percent of women in the Americas, and 61 percent of men and 69 percent of women in Europe have the virus, the WHO said in a statement. HSV-1 mainly causes cold soars and blisters around the mouth, as opposed to HSV-2, which is almost entirely sexually transmitted and causes genital herpes. But new estimates indicate HSV-1 is also an important cause of genital herpes, with some 140 million people between the ages of 15 and 49 infected with a genital variant of HSV-1, the Geneva-based organization said.

"HSV-1 has the potential to be transmitted from the oral area to the genital area through oral sex," WHO medical officer Sami Gottlieb told reporters. Along with the 417 million people believed to have the HSV-2 infection, there are more than half a billion people under 50 who have genital infections caused by the two herpes viruses. —AFP

CLINIC  
PAGE



Kuwait Times  
THE LEADING INDEPENDENT DAILY IN THE ARABIAN GULF

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

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



## KNCC PROGRAMME FROM THURSDAY TO WEDNESDAY (29/10/2015 TO 04/11/2015)

<b>SHARQIA-1</b> PARANORMAL ACTIVITY: THE GHOST DIMENSION PARANORMAL ACTIVITY: THE GHOST DIMENSION PARANORMAL ACTIVITY: THE GHOST DIMENSION PARANORMAL ACTIVITY: THE GHOST DIMENSION PARANORMAL ACTIVITY: THE GHOST DIMENSION PARANORMAL ACTIVITY: THE GHOST DIMENSION	11:45 AM 1:45 PM 3:45 PM 5:45 PM 7:45 PM 9:45 PM 11:45 PM	<b>MARINA-1</b> EYAL HAREEFA EYAL HAREEFA EYAL HAREEFA EYAL HAREEFA EYAL HAREEFA EYAL HAREEFA	12:45 PM 3:00 PM 5:15 PM 7:30 PM 9:45 PM 12:05 AM
<b>SHARQIA-2</b> EYAL HAREEFA EYAL HAREEFA EYAL HAREEFA HOTEL TRANSYLVANIA2 EYAL HAREEFA EYAL HAREEFA EYAL HAREEFA EYAL HAREEFA	1:15 PM 1:30 PM 3:30 PM 3:45 PM 5:45 PM 8:00 PM 10:15 PM 12:30 AM	<b>MARINA-2</b> PARANORMAL ACTIVITY: THE GHOST DIMENSION PARANORMAL ACTIVITY: THE GHOST DIMENSION PARANORMAL ACTIVITY: THE GHOST DIMENSION PARANORMAL ACTIVITY: THE GHOST DIMENSION PARANORMAL ACTIVITY: THE GHOST DIMENSION PARANORMAL ACTIVITY: THE GHOST DIMENSION PARANORMAL ACTIVITY: THE GHOST DIMENSION	12:30 PM 2:30 PM 4:30 PM 6:30 PM 8:30 PM 10:30 PM 12:30 AM
<b>SHARQIA</b> GOOSEBUMPS GOOSEBUMPS GOOSEBUMPS GOOSEBUMPS THE LAST WITCH HUNTER THE LAST WITCH HUNTER	1:00 PM 3:15 PM 5:30 PM 7:45 PM 10:00 PM 12:15 AM	<b>MARINA-3</b> PARANORMAL ACTIVITY: THE GHOST DIMENSION GOOSEBUMPS GOOSEBUMPS GOOSEBUMPS GOOSEBUMPS THE LAST WITCH HUNTER THE LAST WITCH HUNTER	11:30 AM 1:30 PM 3:45 PM 6:00 PM 8:15 PM 10:30 PM 12:45 AM
<b>MUHALAB-1</b> GOOSEBUMPS GOOSEBUMPS GOOSEBUMPS GOOSEBUMPS THE LAST WITCH HUNTER GOOSEBUMPS THE LAST WITCH HUNTER	11:30 AM 1:30 PM 3:45 PM 6:00 PM 8:15 PM 10:30 PM 12:45 AM	<b>AVENUES-1</b> GOOSEBUMPS WAR PIGS GOOSEBUMPS WAR PIGS WAR PIGS WAR PIGS	12:45 PM 3:00 PM 5:00 PM 7:15 PM 9:15 PM 11:15 PM
<b>MUHALAB-2</b> PARANORMAL ACTIVITY: THE GHOST DIMENSION PARANORMAL ACTIVITY: THE GHOST DIMENSION PARANORMAL ACTIVITY: THE GHOST DIMENSION PARANORMAL ACTIVITY: THE GHOST DIMENSION PARANORMAL ACTIVITY: THE GHOST DIMENSION PARANORMAL ACTIVITY: THE GHOST DIMENSION PARANORMAL ACTIVITY: THE GHOST DIMENSION	12:30 PM 2:30 PM 4:30 PM 6:30 PM 8:30 PM 10:30 PM 12:30 AM	<b>AVENUES-2</b> HOTEL TRANSYLVANIA2 HOTEL TRANSYLVANIA2 HOTEL TRANSYLVANIA2 AHWAK AHWAK AHWAK	12:00 PM 2:15 PM 4:15 PM 6:15 PM 8:45 PM 11:30 PM
<b>MUHALAB-3</b> EYAL HAREEFA EYAL HAREEFA EYAL HAREEFA EYAL HAREEFA EYAL HAREEFA EYAL HAREEFA	12:45 PM 3:00 PM 5:15 PM 7:30 PM 9:45 PM 12:05 AM	<b>AVENUES-3</b> BURNT BURNT BURNT BURNT BURNT	12:00 PM 2:15 PM 4:30 PM 6:45 PM 9:00 PM 11:15 PM
<b>FANAR-1</b> GOOSEBUMPS GOOSEBUMPS GOOSEBUMPS GOOSEBUMPS GOOSEBUMPS GOOSEBUMPS	12:00 PM 2:30 PM 4:45 PM 7:15 PM 9:30 PM 11:45 PM	<b>AVENUES-4</b> THE LAST WITCH HUNTER Special Show "AHWAK" PARANORMAL ACTIVITY: THE GHOST DIMENSION PARANORMAL ACTIVITY: THE GHOST DIMENSION PARANORMAL ACTIVITY: THE GHOST DIMENSION EYAL HAREEFA EYAL HAREEFA THE LAST WITCH HUNTER	11:45 AM 11:30 AM 2:15 PM 4:15 PM 6:15 PM 8:15 PM 10:30 PM 12:45 AM
<b>FANAR-2</b> EYAL HAREEFA EYAL HAREEFA EYAL HAREEFA EYAL HAREEFA EYAL HAREEFA EYAL HAREEFA EYAL HAREEFA	11:30 AM 1:30 PM 3:30 PM 5:45 PM 8:00 PM 10:15 PM 12:30 AM	<b>AVENUES-5</b> GOOSEBUMPS GOOSEBUMPS Special Show "GOOSEBUMPS" GOOSEBUMPS GOOSEBUMPS PARANORMAL ACTIVITY: THE GHOST DIMENSION PARANORMAL ACTIVITY: THE GHOST DIMENSION	12:45 PM 3:00 PM 3:00 PM 5:15 PM 7:30 PM 9:45 PM 12:05 AM
<b>FANAR-3</b> BURNT BURNT BURNT BURNT BURNT BURNT	1:30 PM 3:45 PM 6:00 PM 8:15 PM 10:30 PM 12:45 AM	<b>360°- 1</b> PARANORMAL ACTIVITY: THE GHOST DIMENSION PARANORMAL ACTIVITY: THE GHOST DIMENSION PARANORMAL ACTIVITY: THE GHOST DIMENSION PARANORMAL ACTIVITY: THE GHOST DIMENSION PARANORMAL ACTIVITY: THE GHOST DIMENSION PARANORMAL ACTIVITY: THE GHOST DIMENSION SPECTRE PARANORMAL ACTIVITY: THE GHOST DIMENSION PARANORMAL ACTIVITY: THE GHOST DIMENSION	11:45 AM 1:45 PM 3:45 PM 5:45 PM 7:45 PM 9:45 PM 11:45 PM 8:00 PM 11:15 PM 1:15 AM
<b>FANAR-4</b> PARANORMAL ACTIVITY: THE GHOST DIMENSION PARANORMAL ACTIVITY: THE GHOST DIMENSION PARANORMAL ACTIVITY: THE GHOST DIMENSION PARANORMAL ACTIVITY: THE GHOST DIMENSION PARANORMAL ACTIVITY: THE GHOST DIMENSION PARANORMAL ACTIVITY: THE GHOST DIMENSION PARANORMAL ACTIVITY: THE GHOST DIMENSION	11:30 AM 1:30 PM 3:15 PM 5:15 PM 7:00 PM 9:00 PM 11:00 PM 1:00 AM	<b>360°- 2</b> PARANORMAL ACTIVITY: THE GHOST DIMENSION 12:45 PM PARANORMAL ACTIVITY: THE GHOST DIMENSION 2:45 PM PARANORMAL ACTIVITY: THE GHOST DIMENSION 4:45 PM PARANORMAL ACTIVITY: THE GHOST DIMENSION 6:45 PM PARANORMAL ACTIVITY: THE GHOST DIMENSION 8:45 PM PARANORMAL ACTIVITY: THE GHOST DIMENSION 10:45 PM PARANORMAL ACTIVITY: THE GHOST DIMENSION 12:45 AM	
<b>FANAR-5</b> THE GUARDIAN ANGEL THE LAST WITCH HUNTER THE GUARDIAN ANGEL THE LAST WITCH HUNTER THE GUARDIAN ANGEL THE LAST WITCH HUNTER	12:15 PM 2:45 PM 5:00 PM 7:30 PM 9:45 PM 12:15 AM	<b>360°- 3</b> HOTEL TRANSYLVANIA2 HOTEL TRANSYLVANIA2 HOTEL TRANSYLVANIA2	1:15 PM 3:15 PM 5:15 PM

## FOR RENT LUXURY PRIVATE VILLA (2 Floors)

- Contains:
- New Pool
- Garden
- (2 Big Living Rooms)
- 5 Rooms
- 5 Toilets
- 2 Rooms + 2 Toilet for Maids
- Big parking shade + visitors park
- Very quiet area



(Only Foreigners)

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## REQUIRED

# LABORERS

for a Furniture Company

Tel: 24714646

### MATRIMONIAL

Seeking alliance for Marthoma Girl 31, 151 cm, M.A. Teacher, divorced, from educated non alcoholic smoker boys. Email: shaadimeonly@gmail.com (C 5065) 29-10-2015

### CHANGE OF NAME

I, Modapothula Elamma holder of Indian Passport No. G1689507 has converted Islam by name Shaik Ayesha, address 3/65, K.S Agraharam Chitvel, Kadapa, A.P. (C 5064) 28-10-2015

I, Morasudhakar, holder of Indian Passport No. L5934350, R/o Nakkapalli Village, Kumpinipuram Post, Nandalur Mandal, Kadapa Dist, A.P., Changed my name as Muhammad Mora. (C 5063) 26-10-2015

I, Potturi Harshavardhana Naidu, holder of Indian Passport No. M7062597, R/o Diguvalallaguttapalli Village, Guttapalli Post, Sambepalli Mandal, Kadapa Dist, A.P., Changed my name as Muhammad Arshad. (C 5063) 26-10-2015

### SITUATION WANTED

Art Director, Jordanian, BA Graphic Design, 12 years

## Require

# DRIVER

for a small bus with transferable visa

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experience with international agencies (Dubai, Riyadh & Amman) in Marketing, advertising, graphic skills, Web Design, Story boarding, Creative Solution & Mobile Design, Proficient in Adobe Photoshop, Illustrator, Indesign, seeks job in Kuwait, please call +966 582 904 264 or e-mail mamoonalqutob@gmail.com Note: I can visit Kuwait without visa. (C 5059) 25-10-2015

Automated enquiry about the Civil ID card is 1889988

## EMERGENCY

112

### Prayer timings

Fajr:	04:39
Shorook	05:59
Duhr:	11:32
Asr:	14:40
Maghrib:	17:04
Isha:	18:22



# Friday Times BUSINESS

FRIDAY, OCTOBER 30, 2015

SAUDI ECONOMY MAY BE ENTERING DIFFICULT PERIOD

PAGE 38

Page 41



Opportunity  
to connect with something bigger  
to be a partner.

US economy slowed to  
1.5% growth rate in Q3



DUBAI: A photographer takes a photo of Apple watches at the Apple Store ahead of their grand opening in Dubai yesterday. —AP

## APPLE OPENS ITS FIRST STORES IN ARAB WORLD IN UAE OPENING OF STORES COMES AFTER TECH GIANT REPORTED RECORD EARNINGS

**DUBAI:** Apple opened its first retail stores in the Arab world yesterday in the luxury malls of the United Arab Emirates, hoping to sell wealthy consumers on their new high-end smartwatches.

Apple's two new stores, at Dubai's Mall of the Emirates and Abu Dhabi's Yas Mall, find themselves alongside other global luxury brands like Emporio Armani, Fendi and Burberry. And that's no accident, industry watchers say, as Apple wants to give wealthy consumers hands-on experience with its new Apple Watch line, with some of the high-tech timepieces costing as much as \$17,000.

"Apple is trying to position itself, with the watch in particular, as a fashion brand - and a premium fashion brand," said Daniel Gleeson, a senior analyst at IHS. "It is looking to be part of that company alongside Burberry and Armani. ... So moving into that retail slot next to them is not surprising."

The Apple stores in the Emirates have the sleek, modern look of many of the company's other 464 retail shops around the world. At the Mall of the Emirates, 60-foot (18-meter) glass panels open up into a showroom with ficus trees and a skylight. The Apple Watch is

displayed prominently. In a nod to cultural norms in the Muslim country, staff will hold women-only workshops with customers, said Wendy Beckman, a senior retail director at Apple. Beckman gave a presentation to journalists at the Dubai store on Tuesday and refused to take questions.

Apple Inc, based in Cupertino, California, has focused its attention outside of the Arab world since beginning its retail operations in 2001. Resellers and gray-market stores filled the gap for years, with most new iPhones regularly available from mall kiosks across Dubai soon after their US release, some-

times with US mobile phone carrier SIM cards still inside them.

In February 2014, Apple CEO Tim Cook visited Dubai and met with its ruler, Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Al-Maktoum. While specifics of their discussion weren't released, Cook later visited Dubai Mall, raising speculation that Apple would enter a market already home to high-end retail spaces and deep-pocketed consumers.

Van Baker, an analyst at US-based tech research firm Gartner Inc, said the move into the Emirates made sense for Apple. "They tend to expand into new markets only when they are prepared to commit sufficient resources to the region to have a real presence," Baker said. "I suspect that these two stores will be followed shortly by additional stores in the Arab world - assuming the initial two stores are well received."

### Record earnings

The stores' opening comes as Apple reported another quarter of record earnings Tuesday, boosted by strong sales in China despite fears of slowing consumer demand for smartphones worldwide as more and more people already own one. In the Emirates, 67 percent of all mobile phones used are

smartphones, according to the government's Telecommunications Regulatory Authority.

While the iPhone 6 is the most commonly used model of mobile phone in the Emirates, with a 4.9 percent market share, South Korea's Samsung Electronics has become the most common brand with 32.6 percent of the market, according to the government. Microsoft Corp.'s Nokia mobile phones follow closely behind with a 31.5 percent share of the market while Apple ranks third with 14.2 percent. Still, the arrival of the Apple stores this week saw Samsung's local reseller take out a massive newspaper advertisement announcing their own "reopening." But Apple's focus remains on high-end, high-spending consumers, like those willing to pay an average of \$670 for an iPhone rather than buying another brand's \$200 smartphone, Gleeson said.

"Having an extensive retail presence, where you're able to cater to that type of clientele that would be paying that type of money, is an absolute necessity for Apple," Gleeson said. "I think it makes a lot of sense for Apple to have that retail presence in the region now, particularly when it's looking to sell the Apple Watch there." — AP



DUBAI: Journalists checkout the latest features of a mobile phone at the Apple Store ahead of their grand opening in Dubai. — AP



**LONDON: Britain's Chancellor of the Exchequer George Osborne (left) meets with Brazilian Finance Minister Joaquim Levy at Number 11 Downing Street in London yesterday. —AFP**

## SAUDI ECONOMY MAY BE ENTERING DIFFICULT PERIOD

POPULATION GROWTH TO OFFSET CHEAP OIL DRAG: JARIR

**RIYADH:** Strong population growth and rising incomes among women in Saudi Arabia should offset any blow to the economy from low oil prices, according to one of the country's largest retailers. Jarir Marketing Co said it expects to continue expanding robustly as a result. The company, Saudi Arabia's second largest listed retailer by market value, will go ahead with its plan, announced last year, to invest 1.1 billion riyals (\$293 million) over five years to open six to seven new stores on average each year, Muhammad al-Agil, its chairman, told Reuters. The company, which has 39 stores in Saudi Arabia, Abu Dhabi, Kuwait and Qatar, thinks it can achieve the annual net profit growth of 15 percent or more annually which analysts have forecast for it, Agil said in an interview for the Reuters Middle East Investment Summit.

"We have lived this three or four times before since 1980 - we are not concerned by negative sentiment," Agil said of the plunge of oil prices since mid-2014, which has slashed government revenues. "What could happen? Seventy to 80 percent of Saudis work for the government, and the government is not going to change its payroll."

After years in which state spending rose

continuously on the back of sky-high oil prices, the Saudi economy may be in for a more difficult period; many economists expect growth to slow in 2016 from its current rate of roughly 3 percent.

The government is running an annual budget deficit of over \$100 billion, which will exhaust its financial reserves in several years if policies do not change. As a result, officials are considering spending and subsidy cuts and even tax rises, all of which could hurt consumer spending and corporate profits.

However, Agil said: "People can think about it negatively, but we look at it as an opportunity ... This is a time of opportunity for us to increase our market share through stronger marketing and aggressive store opening." Saudi Arabia's young population of about 21 million local citizens has been growing at a rate of over 2 percent annually. Meanwhile, the government has been encouraging women to take jobs. Local media quoted the labor minister last month as saying the number of female workers in the private sector had jumped to 350,000 from 50,000 in 2011.

"We have easy expansion inside Saudi because of increasing population and

growth in household income, thanks to the opening of opportunities for women to work," Agil said. "When an employee gets 6,000 riyals (\$1,600) a month and his wife with a high school degree gets 4,000 riyals, the household income will increase almost 70 percent - this is actually making a difference, and we are seeing it," Agil said.

### COMPANY HEALTH

Jarir reported a 7.6 percent year-on-year increase in third-quarter net profit to 218.5 million riyals. Its shares are up 143 percent since the end of 2010, far outpacing an 8 percent gain for the main market index in that period, though the shares have plunged 32 percent from this year's peak as the outlook for the economy and the market has darkened.

Agil said Jarir's like-for-like store sales were continuing to rise, helped by an aggressive social media campaign; he said the company had 1.98 million Facebook followers and over 1 million Twitter followers. Many Saudi companies are expanding their use of social media in an effort to broaden their consumer bases and obtain cost-free advertising. —Reuters

## ZOHR DISCOVERY TO MAKE EGYPT'S STATUS AS LNG IMPORTER SHORT-LIVED

**LONDON:** The huge Zohr natural gas field discovered by Eni off the coast of Egypt, could tip the country back into exporting liquefied natural gas (LNG), making the bright spot of demand it has created in an oversupplied global gas market short-lived. Once an energy exporter, declining oil and gas production and increasing consumption had turned Egypt into a net energy importer, but the discovery of the largest gas fields ever found in the Mediterranean could reverse this.

Egypt entered the LNG market with a burst of imports earlier

this year, making it one of the world's top growth markets, after leasing a floating storage and regasification unit (FSRU) from Norway's H'egh LNG for five years in April. Just a few months later its fortunes changed with Eni's announcement of the discovery of the Zohr field that potentially contains 30 trillion cubic feet (tcf) of gas.

"We felt comfortable in Egypt's demand for LNG over a five-year period and we still feel that there's a good chance H'egh Gallant will serve for longer, but it all depends on how quickly

## News

in brief

### United Real Estate posts KD 4.87m net profits

**KUWAIT:** United Real Estate Company (URC) announced yesterday that it has posted net profits of KD 4.87 million in the past nine months of 2015, with 4.54 fils earning per share, compared to KD 4.44 million with 4.15 fils earning per share in the same time period of 2014. The total shareholders' equity reached about KD 202 million, compared to KD 192.4 million in 2014, URC said in a statement posted on Kuwait Stock Exchange (KSE) website yesterday. Meanwhile, the company noted that the total assets was recorded at KD 551.6 million, compared to KD 271.7 million in 2014. URC was established in 1973 and was registered in KSE in 1984 with a capital of KD 118.7 million. The company's task is to buy, sell and rent real estate, as well as run private and public real estate projects.

### KGL posts KD 5.4m in profits for 9 months

**KUWAIT:** KGL Logistics Company said yesterday it has posted profits of KD 5.4 million in the past nine months, 0.9 fils earning per share compared to KD 4.37 million, with 0.7 fils earning per share. In a statement posted on Kuwait Stock Exchange's website, KGL Logistics added that the total shareholders' equity has reached KD 83.5 million in the past nine months, which ended last September, compared to shareholders' equity in 2014 which was KD 80.8 million. The statement noted that the company's total assets reached KD 107.4 million, while liabilities reached KD 23.2 million in the past nine months. KGL is a Kuwaiti company listed on the Kuwait Stock Exchange. The company is a key player in the Logistics market, offering warehousing, freight forwarding, transport and stevedoring services in the region, having its headquarter in Kuwait with operations in Qatar and the United Arab Emirates along strategic partners and representation offices all over the world.

### US dollar up against dinar at KD 0.303

**KUWAIT:** The US dollar was up vis-a-vis the Kuwaiti dinar yesterday trading at KD 0.303, whereas the euro dropped to KD 0.331 as compared to Wednesday's rates, according to the Central Bank of Kuwait (CBK). The Sterling pound also was down to KD 0.462, the same case with the Swiss franc which went down to KD 0.304, whereas the Japanese yen remained steady at KD 0.002.

### Egyptian pound steady at dollar sale

**CAIRO:** The Egyptian pound was stable at a dollar sale yesterday, as the central bank sold \$37.8 million at a cut-off price of 7.9301 pounds per dollar, but it weakened on the parallel market. The official cut-off price was unchanged from Tuesday's dollar sale, but one trader said the dollar changed hands at 8.50 pounds in the parallel market yesterday, compared with 8.30 pounds to the dollar on Tuesday. Egypt announced last week that the central bank's governor, Hesham Ramez, will be replaced next month by senior banker Tarek Amer. The move was welcomed by traders, who expect a new approach to the country's currency crisis.

local reserves are developed," said Richard Tyrrell, chief executive of H'egh LNG Partners LP.

In a sign of Egypt's strong import demand, Tyrrell said the H'egh Gallant was probably the best utilised FSRU in the world. Egypt has since added a second FSRU leased from Singapore-based Norwegian gas shipping company BW Gas. Offshore gas fields typically take several years to come on stream, however, as Egypt already has some of the infrastructure in place it's expected to be able to accelerate the process. —Reuters

## CHINESE INVESTORS HELD AFTER EXCHANGE PROTEST PLANS

**BEIJING:** Hundreds of Chinese investors who lost vast sums on a failed metals exchange were detained to stop them mounting a protest in Beijing, several of them said yesterday.

The move to prevent the demonstration against the state-managed Fanya Metals Exchange reveals the authorities' sensitivity to unrest linked to financial losses in China, where stock markets have plummeted in recent months, wiping trillions off valuations. The protest was planned for Monday and would have coincided with the start of a key Communist Party meeting in Beijing.

Yu Haichao was among more than 2,000 investors who travelled to Beijing to take part, but police knocked on the door of her Beijing hotel room around midnight and told her they would take her to a meeting to resolve the dispute, she said.

Instead she was driven to a detention centre on the outskirts of Beijing, where about 300 other would-be protesters had already been corralled, she said.

"I was kept in a cold room with about 100 others without food, water or heat," Yu said. "They used such a show of force, and we didn't even break the law." "I was terrified, I feel completely helpless," she added. "I will never protest again." The protesters were forced by police to sign a pledge that they would not attend any gathering related to protest about the exchange, she said, and the following day officials took her back to her home province Shanxi.

Three other people AFP spoke to gave similar accounts to Yu, while another investor, Klaus Zhu, evaded police after hearing others were being carried off.

While most of the Fanya protesters were sent back to their home towns, accompanied by local government officials, about a dozen have been held by police and formally detained, said Zhu.

Zhu said he had invested one million yuan (\$157,000) in the exchange after seeing state television endorsing the project. The Fanya exchange in southern China offered investors a bet on increased metal prices, promising some double-digit returns on their investments.

Many Chinese financial institutions offer high-return investment schemes based on increasing asset prices, but slowing growth has heightened fears that such products could go bust, potentially sparking social unrest. Fanya's problems date back to before the Chinese stock market plunges that began in June. China's main financial institutions are government-run, and many expect the state to step in when the investments they have chosen go bad.

Last year the government encouraged citizens to invest in shares, and has spent hundreds of billions in recent months to try to prop up the stock market. — AFP

## CHINA SIGNS DEAL FOR 100 AIRBUS A320s

**BEIJING:** China signed a contract to buy 100 A320 aircraft from European manufacturer Airbus yesterday, a spokesman for the firm told AFP, worth \$9.7 billion at list prices. The deal was signed as German Chancellor Angela Merkel met Chinese Premier Li Keqiang at the Great Hall of the People in Beijing.

The European Union is China's biggest trading partner and Merkel's trip comes as European leaders jockey for trade and investment deals with the world's second largest economy.

Airbus—which has an assembly facility in the northern Chinese port of Tianjin—is engaged in a fierce struggle with Boeing of the US for dominance in the crucial Chinese market.

Yesterday's agreement also included the confirmation of 30 options for twin-aisle A330s, which were among a 75-plane deal announced when Li visited Airbus headquarters in the French city of Toulouse in January, the company spokesman told AFP. During Chinese President Xi Jinping's visit to the US last month, Seattle-based Boeing announced a record purchase of 300 aircraft worth around \$38 billion.

China is expected to add 6,330 new aircraft worth \$950 billion to its commercial fleet by 2034, Boeing said in August in its annual China Current Market Outlook. Several major EU countries including Germany, Britain and France are seeking to become hubs for overseas trade of China's yuan currency, and signed up to Beijing's Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank despite US opposition.

Merkel's trip comes between a high profile visit to Britain by China's President Xi Jinping earlier this month, when he stayed at Buckingham Palace in London, and ahead of a trip to China by French President Francois Hollande next week. Merkel said she was "very happy" to know that Xi had paid such a fruitful visit to Britain, stating: "We welcome competition that is conducive to the promotion of business." — AFP

# ALGERIA WILL MOVE TO FREE PRIVATE SECTOR: ECONOMIST MEASURE TO RESPOND TO PLUNGE IN OIL REVENUES

**ALGIERS:** Algeria will take steps to free up its private sector in response to the plunge in its energy earnings, but change will be slow because of entrenched government bureaucracy, former presidential adviser Abdelmalek Serrai said.

"The economic model will change in the short run because of the crisis, but things will move slowly," said Serrai, an economist and consultant who has taken part in discussions with officials on how to manage an era of low oil and gas prices. "Reforms will come at a slow pace due to bureaucracy," Serrai added in an interview for the Reuters Middle East Investment Summit. For decades, Algeria has used its energy revenues, which account for about 60 percent of the state budget, to pay for imports and cope with social problems, by raising the salaries of state employees and subsidizing fuel and food.

But state finances have been deteriorating since mid-2014, when global oil prices started tumbling. The government has announced a 9

percent cut in spending for 2016 and is trying to rein in imports of goods and services. The country posted a trade deficit of \$10.33 billion in the first nine months this year, swinging from a \$4.09 billion surplus a year earlier. Algeria imports almost everything for its 40 million people, from food to medicine and industrial equipment, because of weak domestic production that is partly due to lack of investment. To stabilize the trade balance, the government is restricting import licenses and plans to impose customs duties on some imported products, while encouraging increases in local production.

But officials realize that if local industries are to grow rapidly, the private sector needs to get involved - which means it will have to be liberated from the oppressive regulation and red tape of a state-dominated economy.

"I regularly meet with ministers. There is a political will to improve things," said Serrai. "There have been good indications. The government this year allowed the private sector to

set up and run industrial estates for the first time. This was a taboo.

"I think the government is willing to go further."

### REFORMS

How much further will affect not only Algeria's economic growth but prospects for foreign investors seeking greater access to a wide range of sectors. President Abdelaziz Bouteflika this month ordered the government to draft plans to boost areas including industry, agriculture and tourism via partnerships between state and private firms.

Local analysts said the order amounted to nothing less than an attempt to end the legacy of the Socialist ideology which Algeria adopted after independence from France in 1962.

The government has announced tax cuts for manufacturing firms and plans later this year to submit to parliament a new investment law designed to improve the business climate. — Reuters



**SEATTLE:** The Royal Dutch Shell oil drilling rig Polar Pioneer is towed toward a dock in Elliott Bay in Seattle. Royal Dutch Shell reported a third quarter loss of \$7.4 billion yesterday as it re-organized and canceled projects, including drilling in Alaska, to cope with the plunge in oil prices. — AP

## SHELL REPORTS Q3 LOSS OF \$7.4BN AFTER ARCTIC EXIT

**LONDON:** Royal Dutch Shell reported a third quarter loss of \$7.4 billion yesterday as it re-organized and cancelled projects, including drilling in Alaska, to cope with the plunge in oil prices. The net loss compares with a profit of \$4.5 billion in the same period last year. Shell reported \$7.9 billion in charges, including \$2.6 billion for Alaska and \$2 billion related to the decision to cancel the Carmon Creek project in Alberta, Canada.

Excluding one-time items and fluctuations in the value of inventories, the company said profit dropped to \$1.8 billion, from \$5.8 billion a year earlier, reflecting the plunge in oil prices.

"Shell's integrated business and our performance drive are helping to mitigate the impact of low oil prices on the bottom line in what is a difficult environment for the indus-

try today," CEO Ben van Beurden said. Energy companies are struggling to adjust to an age of lower prices after oil dropped to a six-year low in August. Brent crude, the benchmark for North Sea oil, averaged \$50.26 a barrel in the third quarter, down 51 percent from a year earlier.

The drop is forcing companies to reconsider the economics of projects. Shell said it decided to discontinue work on the Carmon Creek thermal oil sands project because it "does not rank in its portfolio at this time." In Alaska, Shell had intended to access what the US Geological survey estimated to be some 26 billion barrels of conventionally recoverable oil under Arctic waters. But the company's first drilling produced only minor amounts of oil and gas.

"This, combined with the current eco-

nomical and regulatory environment, has led Shell to cease further exploration activity offshore Alaska for the foreseeable future," the company said.

At the same time, environmental activists had the company in its sights, pledging to thwart the company in the arena of public opinion. Protesters argued that industrial activity would hurt fragile ecosystems and marine mammals. They insisted that the icy Arctic waters could not be cleaned in the event of a spill. Analysts believe the company took the worst of the hit in yesterday's results. "I think the bulk of the assets has been written off," Fadel Gheit, a managing director and senior analyst at Oppenheimer & Co Inc, said in an email. Shell said it would still pay a dividend of 47 cents a share on third quarter earnings. — AP



**TOKYO:** Visitors crowd around vehicles displayed at the media preview of the Tokyo Motor Show in Tokyo yesterday. The biennial exhibition of vehicles in Japan runs for the public from today. —AP

## JAPAN FACTORY OUTPUT UP, EASING PRESSURE ON BOJ

BRISK PRODUCTION OF ELECTRONIC DEVICES, CHEMICAL PRODUCTS

**TOKYO:** Japan's factory output unexpectedly rebounded in September, data showed yesterday, tempering expectations the central bank would unleash more stimulus after a string of weak data from the world's number three economy. Government figures showed industrial production expanded 1.0 percent, after two consecutive monthly falls, thanks to brisk production of electronics devices and chemical products.

The reading beat market forecasts for a 0.5 percent decline and marks a sharp bounce from the previous month, while the economy ministry also lifted its assessment on factory output.

The surprisingly positive data dampened predictions the Bank of Japan would announce an expansion of its huge easing program after a meeting today.

Japan publishes inflation and unemployment figures today morning, which could also be key to the BoJ's decision on whether to unleash more stimulus in the face of slowing global growth.

"Today's data have reduced the chances that the Bank of Japan will announce more stimulus tomorrow," research house Capital Economics said in a commentary.

"However, any signs in tomorrow's inflation and unemployment data that the earlier slowdown in activity has reduced price pressures may still convince policymakers to step up the pace of easing."

Yusuke Shimoda, economist at Japan Research Institute, cautioned that the latest figures were not enough to point to a recovery in the Japanese economy, which has been teetering on the edge of recession. "We have to look at these figures cautiously. Concerns over the slowdown in the Chinese economy are still growing... Considering the environment surrounding Japanese companies, we cannot be optimistic about the prospects for the economy."

Japan has suffered as exports to key trading partner China slumped, with weak inflation and consumer spending at home

also slamming the brakes on growth.

The economy contracted in the second quarter and it is on track for another decline in the three months to September.

The central bank's 80 trillion yen (\$665 billion) annual asset-buying scheme—similar to the Federal Reserve's quantitative easing scheme to pump money into the economy—is a key pillar of Prime Minister Shinzo Abe's growth blitz, dubbed "Abenomics". Abe's drive had promised to drag Japan out of a decades-long slump when it was launched more than two years ago—it helped sharply weaken the yen, lifted exporters' profits and sparked a huge stock market rally.

But the impact on the wider economy has fallen short of expectations and the premier has struggled to make good on pledges to cut red tape and open up the economy. A sales tax rise last year also hammered consumer spending, denting demand for products made by Japanese firms which also faced slowing growth overseas. —AFP

## GERMAN JOBLESS FIGURES SHOW NO SIGN OF 'VW EFFECT'

**FRANKFURT:** Unemployment in Germany remains at record low levels, as recovery in Europe's biggest economy remains on track and no fallout is apparent yet from the Volkswagen scandal, economists said yesterday. But the jobless figures could start to rise in the coming months as some of the huge number of refugees arriving in the country begin to sign on, economists said.

The unemployment rate—which measures the jobless total against the working population as a whole—stood at 6.4 percent in September, unchanged from August, the Federal Labor Office revealed in regular monthly data.

That is the lowest level since west and east Germany reunited in 1990 after the fall of the Berlin Wall the previous year. In concrete terms, the number of people registered as unemployed in Germany declined by a seasonally-adjusted 5,000 to 2.788 million. That was slightly more than the decline of 4,000 that analysts had been expecting. In raw or unadjusted terms, the jobless total decreased by 58,800 to 2.649 million and the unemployment rate fell to 6.0 percent in October from 6.2 percent in September, the office noted. But unemployment tends to fall in the autumn as students who have signed on for jobs over the summer holidays return to school or college or find training places.

Growth of German gross domestic product (GDP) picked up in the second quarter, the labor office said. "The latest indicators point to similar momentum in the third quarter as well .. (and) the labor market continues to develop favorably," it said.

Labor Minister Andrea Nahles said the data showed "the labor market continues to be stable and in good shape." And that was the best possible starting condition for out-of-work Germans as well as people arriving in the country to find work, Nahles said.

But some economists believe the headline jobless could start to rise soon as asylum seekers sign on prior to finding work. Germany is expecting to receive between 800,000 and a million asylum seekers this year. "Unemployment will increase modestly due to a combination of the sheer numbers of refugees and the need to raise their qualification levels first," said IHS Global Insight analyst Timo Klein. —AFP

## LUFTHANSA LIFTS FULL-YEAR FORECASTS AFTER STRONG Q3

**FRANKFURT:** German airline Lufthansa said yesterday it is raising its full-year forecasts after low oil prices and positive passenger numbers lifted profits in the third quarter. "The realignment of the Lufthansa group is now being reflected in good results. There is no question that the low oil price helped us to achieve these," said chief executive Carsten Spohr.

"But our improved earnings rest on more than this alone. We recorded outstanding passenger volumes this summer and significantly improved load factors, too," he boasted. Lufthansa, which owns the subsidiaries Germanwings, Swiss and Austrian Airlines, said that its net profit for the period from July to September jumped by 41.5 percent to 794 million euros (\$867 million).

Third-quarter revenues were up 5.1 percent at 8.939 billion euros. The company's results statement did not mention the crash of a Germanwings jet in March in the French Alps that killed all 150 people on board, and the disputed compensation claims.

Taking the first nine months, bottom-line profits soared by 262 percent to 1.75 billion euros and revenues grew by 7.4 percent to 24.304 billion euros. Looking ahead, Lufthansa "is on course for a significantly improved full-year result," CEO Spohr said, but added that "we cannot expect to fly for too long with a tailwind of low oil prices."

Nevertheless, Lufthansa, which had previously been penciling in underlying operating of more than 1.5 billion euros for the full year, said it was now projecting a figure of between 1.75-1.95 billion euros. —AFP

## AETNA TOPS 3Q PROFIT FORECASTS, RAISES 2015 GUIDANCE AGAIN

**NEW YORK:** Aetna joined a growing list of health insurers topping Wall Street's quarterly profit expectations, and it did so despite higher taxes and a number of acquisitions.

It also raised its 2015 forecast again, saying yesterday that it now expects adjusted earnings to range between \$7.45 and \$7.55 per share. That's up from a per-share earnings forecast of \$7.40 in August, but still short of the \$7.53 that analysts are looking for, according to FactSet.

In the third quarter, Aetna's net income slid 6 percent to \$560.1 million from \$594.5 million in last year's quarter. Adjusted results totaled \$1.90 per share, which is 12 cents better than analysts had projected, according to a survey by Zacks Investment Research.

Operating revenue, which excludes investment gains, rose 2 percent to about \$14.99 billion, which missed average analyst expecta-

tions of \$15.16 billion. Income taxes climbed nearly 16 percent at nation's third-largest health insurer, to \$460.5 million. That's mainly due to a higher, non-deductible health insurer fee levied as part of the healthcare overhaul.

The Hartford, Connecticut, company also booked acquisition-related costs of \$44.4 million in the quarter tied to a handful of deals. The biggest is its pending \$35-billion acquisition of Medicare Advantage coverage provider Humana.

Aetna's report follows Street-topping results released by the nation's largest insurer, UnitedHealth Group Inc., the Blue Cross-Blue Shield carrier Anthem Inc. and Centene Corp.

Shares of Aetna have increased 25 percent since the beginning of the year, while the Standard & Poor's 500 index has climbed 1.5 percent. The stock has climbed 44 percent in the last 12 months. —AP



## RBS SET FOR Q3 LOSS AS RESTRUCTURING

**LONDON:** Royal Bank of Scotland is expected to make a loss in the third quarter, hit by costs relating to past misconduct and restructuring, hampering the British government's plans for a further sale of its shares. RBS was rescued at a cost of 45.8 billion pounds (\$70 billion) to taxpayers during the 2007/09 financial crisis, leaving the government holding a 78 percent stake.

Britain's finance ministry began selling that down in August, with the sale of a 5.4 percent stake at a loss of 1 billion pounds, and is keen to proceed with another sale, possibly as early as December, industry sources say. RBS is expected to report a third-quarter pretax loss of 84 million pounds on Friday, compared with a profit of 1.3 billion pounds in the same period the previous year, according to a poll of seven analysts supplied by the company.

The bank, which is drastically reducing its investment bank and international operations, is expected to report restructuring costs of about 900 million pounds during the period and misconduct charges of around 450 million, analysts forecast.

RBS is facing a number of probes relating to past misconduct which threaten to undermine its turnaround under Chief Executive Ross McEwan. Authorities in the United States are investigating claims the bank misled investors in mortgage-backed securities in the United States. Court documents filed in June suggested it could have to pay \$13 billion to settle the claims.

Meanwhile, Britain's financial regulator is expected to publish findings from an investigation into RBS's treatment of struggling small firms later this year. The bank is accused of pushing viable businesses into its restructuring unit so it could seize their assets and charge higher fees. —Reuters



**ATLANTA:** A customer (bottom) pays for goods while shopping at the Atlanta Farmers Market in Atlanta. The Commerce Department issued the first of three estimates of how the US economy performed in the July-September quarter Yesterday. —AP

## US ECONOMY SLOWED TO 1.5% GROWTH RATE IN Q3

### JOBLESS AID APPLICATIONS FELL TO 42-YEAR LOW IN SEPT

**WASHINGTON:** The US economy slowed sharply in the summer, reflecting a cut-back in businesses' stockpiling of goods, which offset strength in consumer spending.

The Commerce Department said yesterday that the economy, as measured by the gross domestic product, grew at a tepid annual rate of 1.5 percent in the July-September quarter, less than half the 3.9 percent growth rate for the previous quarter.

The major reason for the slowdown was a push by businesses to reduce unwanted stockpiles, which slashed 1.4 percentage points from last quarter's growth. Consumer spending remained solid, rising at a 3.2 percent rate, down only slightly from the previous quarter.

Analysts generally say the summer slowdown will be temporary. Most forecast that businesses will resume building inventories this quarter in response to further gains in consumer spending.

Last quarter's slump marked the latest turn for an economy that began 2015 on a rocky note as a severe winter and West Coast port disruptions essentially stalled growth. The economy rebounded in the April-June quarter before weakening again in the summer. For all of 2015, after all the ups and down, the economy is

expected to expand around 2.3 percent, close to last year's modest 2.4 percent growth. One of the factors that have depressed growth has been a widening trade deficit. A sharp slowdown in China and weakness in other key US trading partners have hurt US exports. A higher-value dollar has compounded the problem by making American-made products costlier abroad.

The slowdown in export sales contributed to the buildup of unsold goods that US businesses have been trying to work down. Still, that reduction in supplies should set the stage for stronger growth in the final three months of the year as businesses restock.

#### Jobs report

The US economy is benefiting in the meantime from a still-solid pace of consumer spending, which drives about 70 percent of economic activity and which analysts expect to continue. Though the pace of hiring weakened over the past two months, steady job growth has helped shrink the unemployment rate to a seven-year low of 5.1 percent. Wages have yet to rise significantly for most people, but more jobs have meant more people have money to spend.

Meanwhile, the number of people

seeking US unemployment aid barely rose last week and the average level of applications in the past month fell to a 42-year low.

The Labor Department said yesterday that weekly applications rose just 1,000 to a seasonally adjusted 260,000, a very low level historically that suggests employers are cutting few jobs.

The four-week average, a less volatile measure, dropped 4,000 to 259,250. That is the fewest since December 1973. The figures indicate that businesses remain confident enough in the economy to hold onto their workers. Growth slowed sharply in the July-September quarter but that has not spurred widespread layoffs, though some large companies have announced job cuts.

Hiring is typically healthy when applications are low. Many economists expect job gains to rebound after slowing in August and September. The number of people receiving benefits also slipped, to 2.14 million, from 2.18 million in the previous week.

As a result, the economy grew at a tepid annual rate of just 1.5 percent over the summer, the Commerce Department said yesterday, down from a much healthier pace of 3.9 percent in the April-June period. —AP

## PFIZER IN TALKS WITH ALLERGAN TO FORGE \$330BN DRUGS GIANT

**LONDON:** Pharmaceutical giant Pfizer Inc has held early talks with Botox-maker Allergan Plc to discuss what could be the biggest takeover deal this year, the Wall Street Journal and Financial Times reported. Shares in Allergan jumped 11 percent in premarket trade to \$320 by 1120 GMT on the reports. The healthcare sector has seen an unprecedented wave of deals since early 2014, from large drugmakers buying up smaller rivals, to consolidation among makers of generic medicines and tie-ups between insurers.

A bid for Allergan, which has a market value of \$113 billion, would be Pfizer's second recent attempt to acquire a big rival, following its unsuccessful courtship last year of Anglo-Swedish pharmaceuticals group AstraZeneca Plc. Combining Allergan and Pfizer, which is worth \$219 billion, would create the world's largest healthcare group with a market value of around \$330 billion, ahead of Johnson & Johnson on \$278 billion. A Pfizer spokesman said it "does not comment on market rumour and speculation". Allergan also declined to comment.

The potential for lowering Pfizer's tax bill by switching its headquarters from the United States to the United Kingdom was touted by Chief Executive Officer Ian Read as a key reason for the proposed AstraZeneca deal. A takeover of Allergan could offer similar advantages given that the Botox-maker is based in lower-tax Dublin. A US attempt to crack down on such tax avoidance deals led to the collapse of AbbVie Inc's bid to buy Shire Plc, but it is unclear whether those rule changes would preclude potential tax advantages from a Pfizer-Allergan deal. —Reuters

## OIL PRICES FALL AFTER FED HINTS AT DEC RATE HIKE

**TOKYO/LONDON:** Crude oil futures fell yesterday as the dollar strengthened on signs the Federal Reserve may raise US interest rates in December. US crude was down 55 cents at \$45.39 a barrel at 1000 GMT. Brent crude fell 58 cents to \$48.47 a barrel.

The dollar held strong near 2-1/2-month highs against the euro yesterday, after the Fed signalled it may not wait until

next year to raise rates, highlighting the divergent monetary policies of the world's most influential central banks. "In just a couple of weeks the Fed seems to be less concerned about China and expectations are therefore again rising for an interest rate hike in December," Petromatrix consultancy's Oliver Jakob said.

On Wednesday, Brent and US crude rose by 5-6 percent - a rally that analysts

struggled to explain even after US government data showed a draw in total stocks. "The US weekly report can be taken on the positive side but the rally of yesterday started before the release of the weekly report and was a sub one-minute affair during which crude oil gained more than \$1 per barrel," Jakob said.

"We are not sure what was behind that one-minute flash surge but it was defini-

tively an unusual trading pattern." US crude stocks rose last week, while gasoline and distillate inventories fell more than expected.

Crude inventories climbed in line with trader expectations but the buildup was less than the 4.1-million-barrel increase reported by the American Petroleum Institute, an industry group, a day earlier. —Reuters

## RUGBY: HOW THE DROP-GOAL GOT THE BOOT

**LONDON:** Joel Stransky's extra-time winner in the 1995 final for South Africa and Jonny Wilkinson's dramatic kick for England in 2003 are just two drop goals that have marked the World Cup. But the drop goal has been forgotten at this World Cup in the relentless drive for the thrill of the try. When New Zealand fly-half Dan Carter struck a drop-goal in the All Blacks' 20-18 semi-final win over South Africa last weekend it was only the sixth scored at this World Cup. The lowest number of drop-goals at a World Cup is 14 at the 2007 edition. The tally is unlikely to be exceeded this year as there is just Friday's third place play-off between Argentina and South Africa and Saturday's Australia-New Zealand final remaining.

But why the relative absence, given the value of a drop-goal remains three points?

Carter's effort at Twickenham, which came early in the second half with the All Blacks a man down and 12-7 behind, was a critical moment in the game, according to South Africa assistant coach John McFarland. "The key turning point for me was the drop-goal with Dan Carter with 14 (men)," McFarland said. "That gave them hope." South Africa fly-half Handre Pollard had kicked drop-goals during South Africa's wins over Scotland and Wales.

"We identified drops as being the key," said McFarland. "If you look at Handre's drops against Scotland and Wales they took us clear on the scoreboard." McFarland was a member of the Springbok backroom staff when Jannie de Beer kicked a Test record five drop-goals in a match during South Africa's 44-21 quarter-final win over England in Paris at the 1999 World Cup. Asked why the drop-goal is

now increasingly rare, he said: "I think the quality of rugby in this tournament has been fantastic. I just think it is going through the fly halves' minds to score tries and not win penalties or drops."

### 'Helpless'

Stransky said the advent of bonus points for tries in the pool phase had made the drop-goal a less attractive option. "The risk is you give the ball away," Stransky told the Daily Telegraph. "And in the modern game if you give the ball away you might not see it again for five minutes." "But done well it (the drop-goal) is difficult to defend against," he added. That was certainly the case for England when de Beer produced his Stade de France masterclass 16 years ago. "It was a helpless feeling ... We couldn't get anywhere

near him," recalled England great Martin Johnson, who four years later found himself lifting the World Cup trophy after Wilkinson's drop-goal exploits against Australia in Sydney. Yet while there was praise for de Beer's skill-two of his drops sailed over from 45 metres-and the tactical planning behind it, his record was also greeted in some quarters with calls for the drop-goal to be reduced to a point, as in rugby league.

De Beer later highlighted why the drop-goal provokes a sense of unease among union purists who see the sport, primarily, as a handling and running game. "The five drop-goals were probably in the space of about 20-30 (second-half) minutes," said de Beer, only starting for South Africa in 1999 because of an injury to first-choice fly-half Henry Honiball. —AFP



**GLASGOW:** Japanese gymnast Kohei Uchimura competes on the parallel bars during the Men's Team event final on the sixth day of the 2015 World Gymnastics Championship in Glasgow, Scotland, on October 28, 2015. —AFP

## UCHIMURA FOCUSING BACK ON 6TH ALL-AROUND TITLE

**GLASGOW:** Kohei Uchimura warned that he would put aside a shaky start and give a perfect performance to claim a sixth consecutive all-around title at the world gymnastics championships in Glasgow today. Uchimura led Japan to a first team title in 37 years on Wednesday night ahead of Britain and China despite falling off the high bar, and he also fell during the floor routine in qualifying. The 26-year-old had made winning the team title his priority in Glasgow, and now that he has given Japan their first gold since 1978 he will be focusing on his personal ambitions.

But he knows there will be little room for error as he bids for a ninth world gold with Oleg Verniaiev of the Ukraine qualifying just 0.433 behind the Japanese star. Verniaiev, 21, continues to grow in confidence after a successful 2014 during which he won the overall World Cup series. And after claiming the

European all-around title he is considered a contender for the crown of 'King Kohei' who has won every world title since 2009. "I really wanted to have a perfect routine, so I feel really bad," said Uchimura of his falls. "I had some mistakes. The next time I don't want to have any mistakes at all."

Britain's Max Whitlock, the 2014 all-around silver medalist and teammate Daniel Purvis will also be looking to add to the hosts' medal tally after a first world men's team medal. China's Deng Shudi and Xiao Ruoteng will be targeting gold after losing their team title to end a 12-year domination of the event. "There is pressure but we'll try to do better in the all-around," said Deng. American Danell Leyva and Uchimura's teammate Kazuma Kaya are also in the chase for the podium along with Russia's David Belyavskiy, after his team finished fourth.

Russia have not won a men's all-around medal since 2009. "I will fight hard in the all-around final, and I hope everything goes for the best. Anything can happen. It's time to move on," said Belyavskiy, 23.

Cuba's Manrique Larduet will be looking to impress on his world championship debut after his silver medal at this summer's Pan American Games. But few doubt that Uchimura will be on the top of the podium despite his errors. "He's in a class of his own this man," said France's Axel Augis. "He knows how to do everything and can do even more, but he has put his personal ambitions aside to help the Japanese team. That in itself is extraordinary." Uchimura has won five Olympic medals including the 2012 all-around gold, and 17 world medals-eight in gold-but is already looking towards Rio 2016 and beyond for the 2020 Tokyo Olympics. —AFP

## ALL BLACKS PIN WORLD CUP HOPES ON MCCAW, CARTER

**BAGSHOT:** New Zealand yesterday named an unchanged side for the World Cup showdown with Australia highlighting the weight they are putting on Richie McCaw and Dan Carter to secure victory. Coach Steve Hansen maintained faith in the team that narrowly beat South Africa 20-18 in their semi-final for tomorrow's Twickenham showdown that has been billed as the battle of the back rows. Flanker McCaw, who led the All Blacks to the 2011 World Cup victory, is "the greatest player who has ever played the game" Hansen said with Carter, the world's leading point scorer a "special player" as well.

Between them they contribute 258 Tests to the combined 1,339 caps of New Zealand's match-day 23. "Experience is massive. There's two types of experiences; the ones you learn from and the ones you don't and hopefully we've learned enough," Hansen said. "Mental fortitude and physical endurance, together with skill execution and sheer desire, will be the key ingredients come tomorrow." McCaw acknowledged the outcome of the final could hinge on the loose forwards where he, Jerome Kaino and Kieran Read will be up against Wallabies expert scavengers Michael Hooper, David Pocock and Scott Fardy. "We realise we need to be on the job and limit their influence as much as possible and hopefully our back row can impose themselves," McCaw said.

### McCaw puts back farewell

The inspirational captain said he has put back a decision on whether to retire until after the final. McCaw, 34, has indicated several times this year he would bow out after the tournament. Team management have also spoken as if tomorrow's final will be his last Test. "I'll make a decision when I get home," he said. "I want to play this weekend and that (retirement) hasn't entered my mind this week. "I've made no secret I'm going to have a good reflect on things after this." McCaw has played a world record 147 Tests.

The unchanged side leaves replacement prop Joe Moody in the run-on side. Wyatt Crockett who suffered a groin injury ahead of the South Africa match, would have been on the bench for tomorrow but broke down again shortly before Hansen unveiled his side. The All Blacks and Wallabies are both seeking to be the first side to win the World Cup three times. The All Blacks are also bidding to win the cup for the first time away from home and to be the first team to win consecutive titles. Australia's two World Cup successes have both been in the northern hemisphere. "The ultimate goal has always been to win it, so we are exactly where we need to be to try and achieve that," Hansen said.

"We came here as contenders for the cup, just like everyone else. In our minds, we have never been defenders. We knew we would have to earn the right to progress through the tournament. "Both teams have arrived at the final by different pathways. We've had the luxury of building game by game throughout the whole tournament, whilst Australia have had to be at their very best right from day one." The Wallabies had to beat four world top 10 sides in their six matches to make the final-Wales, Scotland, England and Argentina. The All Blacks faced Argentina, France and South Africa. —AFP

# ROYALS RIP METS TO STRETCH WORLD SERIES EDGE

**KANSAS CITY:** The Kansas City Royals backed the superb two-hit pitching of Johnny Cueto with a relentless attack to rout the New York Mets 7-1 on Wednesday and take a 2-0 lead in the best-of-seven World Series. Cueto, painting the corners and showing off his wide variety of deliveries, went the full nine innings in posting the first complete game in the World Series by an American League pitcher in 24 years in windy, chilly conditions at Kauffman Stadium. Not since the Minnesota Twins' Jack Morris beat the Atlanta Braves in a 10-inning, Game Seven victory in the 1991 World Series, had an American League hurler turned in such a performance. "He was electric tonight," said Eric Hosmer, who supplied a clutch two-out, two-run single in the fifth inning to give the Royals their first lead of the game.

"It was the type of outing we needed, especially after the way we used our bullpen last night. So just a huge outing from a big time player." Kansas City used seven pitchers in the 14-inning, 5-4 Royals victory in Tuesday's Game One, but Cueto gave the entire bullpen the night off with his dominant performance. The dreadlocked righthander was locked in a pitcher's duel with Mets ace Jacob deGrom until Kansas City came to bat in the fifth after New York had grabbed a 1-0 lead in the fourth. DeGrom had yielded just one hit over the first four innings but a lead-off walk to Alex Gordon got it started and five singles later, three of them after two outs, it was 4-1 for the home team and a three-run burst in the eighth made it a rout.

## Frustrated Mets

Mets manager Terry Collins was frustrated by his pitcher's performance. "It's the World Series. We've got to make pitches and we're not making them," said Collins. "All of a sudden the ball's over the middle of the plate. I don't know why. We win because we ride our starting pitching. When they struggle, we're going to struggle, and that's what's



**KANSAS CITY:** Salvador Perez #13 of the Kansas City Royals douses Johnny Cueto #47 of the Kansas City Royals after defeating the New York Mets 7-1 in Game Two of the 2015 World Series at Kauffman Stadium on October 28, 2015 in Kansas. — AFP

happening." Cueto, added by the Royals in a trade deadline deal in July, retired 15 batters in a row before giving up a two-out walk to Daniel Murphy in the ninth before getting Yoenis Cespedes to fly out to right to end it.

The stocky Dominican had served as an ace with the Cincinnati Reds before the impending free agent was sent to Kansas City in a trade deadline deal in July. Cueto delivered mediocre results for the Royals and was battered by the Blue Jays on the road in the

playoffs, giving up eight runs in two innings. But he was at his best when pitching at spacious Kauffman Stadium, winning the clinching game at home in the AL Division Series against Houston by retiring the last 19 batters in a two-hit outing over eight innings.

Cueto showed again there was no place like home, when he confounded the Mets with his deliveries, turning his back to the batter, sometimes speeding up his motion and other times inserting a hesitation before

unleashing a pinpoint pitch. "Tonight was everything we expected Johnny to be," said Royals manager Ned Yost. "He was on the attack. He kept the ball down. He changed speeds. It was just a spectacular performance by him." The victory took the Royals, who lost last year's World Series in seven games to the San Francisco Giants, halfway to winning their first Fall Classic crown in 30 years with the series shifting to New York for Game Three on Friday. — Reuters

## Badminton

### LEGAL WRANGLE LOOMS OVER REVIVAL OF INDIAN LEAGUE

**NEW DELHI:** The Indian Badminton League (IBL) will return next year with top players from across the world, its organisers said yesterday, but the legal wrangle that has dogged the tournament since its 2013 inception seems far from over. Lee Chong Wei and fellow former men's number one Taufik Hidayat headlined the inaugural edition of the franchise-based six-team tournament which proved a hit with the local crowd. Badminton Association of India (BAI) scrapped the second edition of the league citing scheduling issues before terminating the contract of league promoters Sporty Solutionz, who moved court against the decision. BAI president Akhilesh Das Gupta said the national governing body has got the go-ahead from the court to revive the league, which would now be an annual affair.

"We gave them enough time and wanted to carry on the agreement but they defaulted," Das Gupta told reporters. "We are announcing the Delhi and Lucknow franchises today and have finalised four other teams and

the broadcasters as well. "BAI has conducted badminton events of Asian Games and Commonwealth Games and we also staged the finals of the Thomas and Uber Cup. "From now on, we would conduct IBL ourselves, we don't need to outsource it." Even as Das Gupta spelled out details of the Jan. 2-17 tournament, Sporty Solutionz issued a statement, saying they have moved a fresh petition in the Delhi High Court to protect their intellectual property rights. "We have invested heavily to build the Brand IBL. This is also associated with our goodwill," the company's counsel said in a statement. "We have pleaded in the Hon'ble High Court of Delhi to restrict any other party from using the name, logo, title or any Intellectual Property associated with Brand Indian Badminton League or IBL." Das Gupta, who said talks were on to rope in Chinese great Lin Dan and women's world champion Carolina Marin for the league, dismissed any threat to the tournament. "We got a new logo and I don't see any legal hassles for the tournament," he added. — Reuters

### PIERCY GOES ON BIRDIE BLITZ IN MALAYSIA, BROWN BAGS CAR

**KUALA LUMPUR:** American Scott Piercy made light work of the Kuala Lumpur Golf and Country Club by firing a blistering 10-under-par 62 to grab the first round lead at the PGA Tour's CIMB Classic yesterday. The bogey-free effort gave the Las Vegas born 36-year-old a three-shot lead over Japan's Hideki Matsuyama in the \$7 million co-sanctioned Asian Tour event, the third of the new 2016 PGA Tour season.

Piercy, the world number 42 said a hot putter had been the difference yesterday after a solid but unspectacular tied 25th finish in Nevada last week. "I was really frustrated, especially being at home. I felt like I played absolute worst I could have played and still finished top-25," he told reporters of last week's efforts. "The putts didn't go in last week and lo and behold this week, filled them up pretty good on first day. So, hopefully it continues." While Piercy was dominating the leaderboard, compatriot Scott Brown was picking up the big prize. The 32-year-old walked away with a new sports car after a hole-in-one at the par three 15th.

"I made like three hole-in-ones in the last two years on Tour and walking up looking at the card I thought, man, it would be nice to make a hole-

in-one and win something. Because the other three I made I got nothing," Brown said. "It was 186 to the hole. It was kind of a weird number for me. I was kind of right in between a 6-iron and 7-iron and chose to go 6-iron, took a little off of it and it never left the flag. It hit probably 10 feet short and rolled right in." It helped improve his first round mark to four-under 68, good enough for a share of 16th alongside major winners Adam Scott of Australia, Ireland's Padraig Harrington and Stewart Cink of the US.

The CIMB Classic had been previously played on the Mines Course in the Malaysian capital but the short track proved a birdie fest for the US circuit's finest. But the Kuala Lumpur Golf and Country club, which is hosting for the third time, failed to halt the red numbers with 62 of the 78-man field under par for the first round. Former US PGA champion Keegan Bradley was one who found picking up shots straight forward yesterday as he fired seven birdies and an eagle in a round of 66 to share third spot behind Piercy and Matsuyama. American Ryan Moore, winner of the event in the last two years, was well placed in a tie for eighth at five-under. — Reuters

# WOLVES STORM PAST LAKERS ON THE EMOTIONAL NIGHT

**LOS ANGELES:** Ricky Rubio had a career-high 28 points, and the Minnesota Timberwolves rallied from a 16-point deficit in the second half to beat the Los Angeles Lakers 112-111 Wednesday night in their first game since Flip Saunders' death. Rubio also had 14 assists and Kevin Martin scored 23 points. The Timberwolves played with heavy hearts three days after they lost Saunders, the longtime coach and team president who battled Hodgkin's lymphoma. Minnesota led 111-102 with 2:11 left, but the Lakers finished on a 9-1 run. Lou Williams hit a 3-pointer with 31 seconds left to trim Minnesota's lead to one point. Martin missed a jumper before Williams missed a leaning 4-footer at the buzzer. Kobe Bryant scored 24 points in the first game of his 20th season with the Lakers, breaking John Stockton's NBA record for the most seasons with one team.

## CAVALIERS 106, GRIZZLIES 76

Kevin Love had 17 points and 13 rebounds, Richard Jefferson had 14 points and the Cavaliers ruined the Grizzlies' season opener. Cleveland capitalized on Memphis' shooting woes, building a double-digit lead in the first quarter and extending the margin to 32 in the fourth. The Cavaliers lost their season opener to the Bulls 97-95 on Tuesday night. LeBron James, Jared Cunningham and Matthew Dellavedova had 12 points each, with James 4 of 13 from the field. Jefferson was five of six, including all three 3-point tries, part of Cleveland shooting 45 percent from beyond the arc. Zach Randolph and Marc Gasol led the Grizzlies with 12 points apiece.

## THUNDER 112, SPURS 106

Russell Westbrook had 33 points and 10 assists to help Billy Donovan win his NBA coaching debut. Kevin Durant scored 22 points in his first regular-season game since February. He made just 6 of 19 field goals, but hit two critical free throws with 11.5 seconds remaining to put the Thunder in control. Enes Kanter had 15 points and 16 rebounds off the bench for the Thunder. Kawhi Leonard scored a career-high 32 points and grabbed eight rebounds for the Spurs. LaMarcus Aldridge had 11 points and five rebounds in his debut with San Antonio after nine years with Portland.

## HEAT 104, HORNETS 94

Chris Bosh scored 21 points in his first game since getting sick last February, Dwyane Wade added 20 and Miami beat Charlotte in the season opener for both teams. Gerald Green scored 19 off the bench and Luol Deng finished with 13 for Miami, which used a 26-6 run in the second quarter to take control and beat the Hornets for the 14th consecutive time at home. The Heat made 12 of 20 shots from 3-point range, including one from Deng with 38.8 seconds left to help seal the win. Kemba Walker led the Hornets with 19 points, Jeremy Lin scored 17 and Marvin Williams had 10 points and 10 rebounds.

## CLIPPERS 111, KINGS 104

Blake Griffin scored 33 points and Paul Pierce endeared himself to his new teammates by putting the Clippers ahead for good with a late jumper. Chris Paul had 18 points and 11

assists, JJ Redick scored 15 and the Clippers blew a 15-point lead before surviving for the season-opening win. DeMarcus Cousins had 32 points and 13 rebounds in the Kings' final season opener at Sleep Train Arena before moving to their new downtown home next season.

## BULLS 115, NETS 100

Jimmy Butler scored 24 points, Nikola Mirotic had 18 and Chicago won for the second time in two nights to open the season. Pau Gasol added 16 points and Derrick Rose 15 for the Bulls, who followed their season-opening victory over Cleveland by shooting 54 percent and leading by as many as 19. They built a big early lead, blew most of it with a defenseless second quarter and quickly pulled away again in the third. Brook Lopez had 26 points and Andrea Bargnani had 17 for the Nets.

## TRAIL BLAZERS 112, PELICANS 94

CJ McCollum scored a career-high 37 points, including six 3-pointers, and Portland opened with a victory over depleted New Orleans. It was Portland's 15th straight home-opening vic-

tory, surpassing Boston's record of 14 (1979-92). Damian Lillard, Portland's only remaining starter from last season, had 21 points and 11 assists. The Blazers are the third-youngest team in the NBA this season. Anthony Davis had 25 points and 10 rebounds for the Pelicans, who lost 111-95 at Golden State in their opener on Tuesday night.

## RAPTORS 106, PACERS 99

Jonas Valanciunas had 21 points and 15 rebounds, DeMar DeRozan scored 25 and Toronto beat Indiana on opening night for each team. Kyle Lowry scored 23 points and DeMarre Carroll had 14 in his Raptors debut. Luis Scola, who didn't score against his former team, was the only Raptors starter not to reach double figures. Toronto has won its last five games against Indiana. Paul George had 17 points, 12 rebounds and eight assists for the Pacers.

## MAVERICKS 111, SUNS 95

Raymond Felton scored 18 points to lead eight Dallas players in double figures. Dirk

Nowitzki, in his 17th NBA season, scored nine of his 11 points in the third quarter when the Mavericks built a 27-point lead. Phoenix never got closer than 14 again. Deron Williams and Dwight Powell scored 12 apiece for the Mavs in the season opener. Rookie Devin Booker scored 14 points on 6-of-7 shooting for the Suns, all in the second half. Brandon Knight had 15 points, Jon Leuer finished with 14 and Eric Bledsoe 13 for Phoenix.

## NUGGETS 105, ROCKETS 85

Danilo Gallinari scored 23 points and Denver never trailed in a victory over Houston in the season opener for both teams. The Nuggets were up by nine points with about nine minutes remaining when they used a 6-0 run - with four points from Emmanuel Mudiay - to extend the lead to 85-72 and send fans streaming to the exits. James Harden led Houston with 22 points, but made just 6 of 21 shots and was 2 of 12 from 3 point range.

## PISTONS 92, JAZZ 87

Reggie Jackson put Detroit ahead on a driving layup with 17 seconds left, and the Pistons held on for its second straight win to start the season. It's the first time the Pistons have been two games over .500 since they were 33-31 in March of 2009, according to STATS. The Jazz, playing their season opener, scored seven consecutive points late in the fourth quarter and took an 87-86 lead on Gordon Hayward's driving bank shot with 23 seconds to play. After a timeout, Jackson got to the basket quickly and scored to put Detroit ahead to stay. Andre Drummond had 18 points and 10 rebounds for the Pistons.

## KNICKS 122, BUCKS 97

Derrick Williams scored 24 points, 20-year-old Kristaps Porzingis had 16 in his NBA debut, and New York beat Milwaukee in the season opener for each. Williams got easy looks under the basket to help New York open a 12-point halftime lead. He started the fourth quarter with a dunk off an alley-oop pass from rookie Jerian Grant that made it 92-73. Greg Monroe led the Bucks with 22 points and 14 rebounds.

## CELTICS 112, 76ERS 95

Isaiah Thomas had 27 points and seven assists, and Boston beat Philadelphia in the season opener for each. Led by Thomas, Boston's reserves outscored Philadelphia's 67-15. Amir Johnson added 15 points and seven rebounds, and Jared Sullinger had 12 points and seven boards. Jahlil Okafor, the third overall pick in this year's draft, led the 76ers with 26 points. Nerlens Noel had 14 points and 12 rebounds, and Isaiah Canaan scored 18 points.

## WIZARDS 88, MAGIC 87

John Wall hit a floater with 12.7 seconds to play and Washington rallied to defeat Orlando in the season opener for both teams. Bradley Beal led the Wizards with 24 points, followed by Wall with 22. The Magic had a chance to win in the closing seconds, but Nik Vucevic's jumper bounced off the rim as time expired. Victor Oladipo led the Magic with 17 points and 11 rebounds. Harris added 15 points. — AP



**OKLAHOMA CITY:** San Antonio Spurs guard Tony Parker (left) fouls Oklahoma City Thunder guard Russell Westbrook during the third quarter of an NBA basketball game in Oklahoma City, on Wednesday, Oct 28, 2015. — AP

## PENGUINS END CAPITAL STREAK

**WASHINGTON:** Phil Kessel netted the go-ahead goal off Evgeni Malkin's pass less than 2 minutes after Beau Bennett tied it in the third period, and the Pittsburgh Penguins ended Washington's five-game winning streak by beating the Capitals 3-1 on Wednesday night. After a pair of scoreless periods and superb play by both goalies, Capitals center Evgeny Kuznetsov put the hosts ahead about 1 1/2 minutes into the third, when his wrist shot appeared to deflect off the left skate of Penguins defenseman Rob

Scuderi and past Marc-Andre Fleury. All of 24 seconds later, it was tied thanks to Bennett, who missed the past five games with an injury. His initial shot was blocked by Braden Holtby, but Bennett put in the rebound. Soon after, Malkin sent the puck in front of the goal and through defenseman Karl Alzner's legs to Kessel for his fourth goal.

### SENATORS 5, FLAMES 4, SO

Mika Zibanejad scored the shootout winner to give Ottawa its first home win of the season. Zack Smith, Bobby Ryan,

Kyle Turris and Jean-Gabriel Pageau scored in regulation for the Senators, who snapped a four-game losing streak (0-2-2). Ottawa was also 0-2-2 at home. Craig Anderson made 34 saves through overtime. Dougie Hamilton, Joe Colborne, Kris Russell and Sam Bennett scored for the Flames, who have now lost three straight (0-2-1). Jonas Hiller allowed four goals on 18 shots before leaving the game in the third with an injury. Joni Ortio stopped all five shots he faced in relief. Hiller was run into by Ryan in a crazy third period that fea-

tured five goals and two lead changes.

### PREDATORS 2, SHARKS 1

Eric Nystrom scored early, Calle Jarnkrok scored late and Nashville beat San Jose. Pekka Rinne stopped 20 of 21 shots for the win. He had lost four of his previous five games against the Sharks. The Predators rebounded from an overtime loss against Pittsburgh on Saturday. Joe Pavelski scored for the Sharks, who have lost four of five since opening the season with four wins. Martin Jones had 22 saves. — AP

## MARTIAL ARTS: OLYMPIC PAIN DRIVING ROUSEY

**LOS ANGELES:** Mixed martial arts star Ronda Rousey has revealed that the pain of missing out on an Olympic gold medal is responsible for turning her into the most feared female prizefighter on the planet. The 28-year-old from Los Angeles has rapidly emerged as one of the biggest names in combat sport after a series of devastating knockouts in the Ultimate Fighting Championship (UFC) which have earned her comparisons to Mike Tyson. Rousey climbs back into the octagon in Melbourne on November 15 for the latest defence of her UFC bantamweight crown, when she faces former boxer Holly Holm in a fight organisers hope will draw a record crowd of 60,000.

It is the latest step towards global superstardom for Rousey, who has transcended mixed martial arts in the United States to gain mainstream recognition, whether she's appearing on the cover of Sports Illustrated or, as she did this week, boxing bible The Ring Magazine. Rousey has also appeared in Hollywood action movies "The Expendables 3" and "Furious 7" and is set to star in a biopic adapted from her best-selling autobiography "My Fight/Your Fight". But for all the fame and riches it has brought her, Rousey reveals the bitter sting of failing to win Olympic gold at the 2008 Beijing Games continues to motivate her as she prepares for next month's bout in Australia.

"I still get (motivation) from never winning the Olympics," Rousey told a large scrum of reporters at her gym this week. "That was my childhood dream and I spent my whole life in pursuit of that. And I had to give that up. I had to really come to terms that it wasn't going to happen. And I've always really been heartbroken by that. "But in a way I'm grateful because I feel that if I did win the Olympics then I wouldn't have the never-ending source of motivation that I have today. "Every time I defend my title it's another chance to redeem myself. But it's never quite an Olympic gold medal. And that's how I stay motivated."

### Thriving on turmoil

In her last bout, Rousey demolished Brazil's Bethe Correia with a first round victory in Rio de Janeiro, taking just 34 seconds to finish her opponent. "That was my version of dragging the fight out," Rousey said of Correia, who had made the fateful error of antagonising the American by appearing to reference the suicide of her father during the build-up. "It felt good to do it in a specific way," Rousey said of her win. "I really wanted to knock her out." Next month's fight has been overshadowed by a searing attack on Rousey's trainer Edmond Tarverdyan by the fighter's mother, who decried the guru as "worthless."

Rousey declined to comment on her mother's remarks, but said later that she thrived on pre-fight turmoil. "The crazier things get, the more focused I become in the gym," Rousey said. "The more chaotic everything is outside, the better I do in fights. "The best performances I've ever had, I was in emotional turmoil beforehand. And fighting is what I do to fix myself," she said. "(The gym) is my sanctuary from all that. My fighting is my escape."

Unlike the personal animosity that marked the build-up to her fight with Correia, Rousey said she harbors no ill-will towards her next opponent Holm. "She seems like a very, very nice person. She seems like a sweet girl. She's the kind of person, that after I've beaten her and she's made a lot of money, I'll be like 'Good for you! Buy yourself a house with that!'. "I'll genuinely be happy for her. I hope that she takes all the money that she gets from losing and has a great life." — AFP



**SINGAPORE:** Maria Sharapova of Russia hits a return against Flavia Pennetta of Italy during their women's singles round robin tennis match at the WTA Finals in Singapore yesterday. — AFP

## HALEP CRASHES; SHARAPOVA BOOKS SEMI-FINALS AT WTA

**SINGAPORE:** Agnieszka Radwanska sent top seed Simona Halep crashing out of the WTA Finals yesterday with a 7-6 (7/5), 6-1 win which also put a resurgent Maria Sharapova into the semi-finals. But despite her 500th career victory, Poland's Radwanska now faces an anxious wait as she needs the Russian to beat Italy's Flavia Pennetta in straight sets later if she is to enter the semis. "All I can do is watch and cheer for Maria," Radwanska said.

There are no such complex round-robin calculations left for Halep, whose campaign was ended by Radwanska's defensive skills and experience accumulated over seven appearances at the season finale. The Romanian world number two, last year's runner-up to Serena Williams on debut, made a strong start when she immediately broke Radwanska

in the first game. But the Pole broke back to level the match 3-3.

Long rallies led to a tie-break that Halep looked set to wrap up at 5-1 until Radwanska, seeded fifth, made spectacular saves at the net and went on to clinch it 7-5. "That definitely was a crazy set," she said. "I was pretty relaxed and still fighting, still playing. I think when you (are) really relaxed, I think it's sometimes better, as we see," Halep added. The second set became a lopsided affair as Radwanska played with renewed confidence and the now demoralised Halep's energy flagged. "I was done. No energy anymore. I was tired. I felt that I lost the chance to win the first set and probably I lost the chance to win the match in that moment," Halep said. She insisted she was still happy with her injury-marred

2015 season and looked forward to a holiday.

Halep retired at the China Open with a left Achilles tendon problem going into Singapore. Williams, who won a hat-trick at the WTA Finals last year, opted to skip Singapore to rest after losing at the US Open, leaving the field wide open. The WTA Finals features the world's top eight players split into Red and White round-robin pools. The top two in each pool will reach the semis, with the group winner facing the runner-up in the other to determine the finalists. Spain's Garbine Muguruza is on top of White Group, which also includes Germany's Angelique Kerber and Czech players Petra Kvitova and Lucie Safarova. Final standings in the group are to be determined today. —AFP

## MIDDLESBROUGH SHOCK UNITED IN LEAGUE CUP, KLOPP OFF MARK

**LONDON:** Wayne Rooney failed to convert a spot-kick as Manchester United lost 3-1 on penalties to second-tier Middlesbrough in the League Cup on Wednesday, while Jurgen Klopp's Liverpool edged Bournemouth. After 120 goalless minutes at Old Trafford, the fourth-round tie went to penalties and with Rooney, Michael Carrick and Ashley Young all fluffing their lines, Championship side Middlesbrough pulled off a memorable win.

United followed holders Chelsea and Arsenal in exiting the competition, while Middlesbrough set up a home quarter-final with Everton. "You can say it's unlucky, but I said that after the City match also," said United manager Louis van Gaal, whose side drew 0-0 with Manchester City on Sunday. "You have to force the luck, but we didn't do that because we didn't score. That's why I'm disappointed."

A low-key game that saw Van Gaal make nine changes to his starting XI sprang to life mid-way through the second half, with home defender Daley Blind the central figure. The Dutchman was involved in two huge scares for United-first hacking the ball into his own net, only for the goal to be ruled out for offside, and then dispatching a back-pass that stand-in goalkeeper Sergio Romero almost allowed to bobble in for what would have been a comical own goal.

As the game ticked into injury time there was a flurry of chances, with Jesse Lingard hitting the post for United and Romero saving from Grant Leadbitter

and Stewart Downing at the other end. United pair Anthony Martial and Marouane Fellaini each had penalty shouts rejected in extra time and went close with headers, and the home side were left to rue their missed opportunities. Rooney's opening penalty was brilliantly saved by Tomas Mejias and with Carrick blazing over the bar and Mejias also denying Young, spot-kicks from Leadbitter, Downing and Ben Gibson took Aitor Karanka's men through. "I'm very proud of my players," said Karanka. "It was an amazing night for them."

### City breeze through

Liverpool's new manager Klopp tasted victory at the fourth attempt as his side beat Bournemouth 1-0 at Anfield. Liverpool had recorded draws against Tottenham Hotspur, Rubin Kazan and Southampton in Klopp's first three games after succeeding Brendan Rodgers, but Nathaniel Clyne's first-half strike got the German off the mark. "It's better than a draw," Klopp told Sky Sports with a wry smile. "I'm really satisfied tonight because this team never played together since I'm here-young players, new players, players who didn't play for a long time because of injuries and they did really well." Clyne struck in the 17th minute, following up after Joao Teixeira's audacious back-heel had been cleared off the line to score his first Liverpool goal and set up a quarter-final at his former club Southampton.

Premier League leaders Manchester City will host Hull City in the last eight after a routine 5-1 home victory over



**MANCHESTER:** Middlesbrough's Spanish goalkeeper Tomas Mejias (left) is congratulated by Middlesbrough players after saving Ashley Young's penalty in the shoot-out during the English League Cup fourth round football match between Manchester United and Middlesbrough at Old Trafford in Manchester on October 28, 2015. — AFP

Crystal Palace, which came at the cost of an injury to right-back Pablo Zabaleta. Wilfried Bony headed City in front from Aleksandar Kolarov's 22nd-minute corner before Kelechi Iheanacho teed up Kevin De Bruyne to tap in his sixth goal in nine club games shortly before half-time. Zabaleta was stretchered off early in the second half after hurting his knee in a collision with Wilfried Zaha, with

Bacary Sagna replacing him.

City manager Manuel Pellegrini said the Argentine had damaged the medial ligament in his right knee and would undergo tests. Second-half goals by Iheanacho, Yaya Toure, from the penalty spot, and 17-year-old substitute Manu Garcia sealed victory, with Palace replying through Damien Delaney's 89th-minute header. Meanwhile, Aston Villa

began life without sacked manager Tim Sherwood by losing 2-1 at Premier League rivals Southampton, who won courtesy of second-half goals from Maya Yoshida and Graziano Pelle. Tuesday's results opened up the competition, with holders Chelsea losing 5-4 on penalties at Stoke City after a 1-1 draw and a second-string Arsenal team crashing 3-0 at second-tier Sheffield Wednesday. — AFP

## BLATTER CLAIMS BACKROOM DEAL ON RUSSIA WORLD CUP

**PARIS:** Sepp Blatter has claimed there was a deal to give Russia the 2018 World Cup before voting took place, and blamed "bad losers" England and the US for the corruption scandal engulfing the organisation. "In 2010, we (FIFA's 22-strong executive committee) had taken a double decision, we were agreed to go to Russia (in 2018), then in 2022 we'd return to the United States," the outgoing FIFA president told Russian news agency TASS.

If the United States had won the right to host the 2022 World Cup, "all we'd be talking about now would be the marvellous 2018 World Cup in Russia and not about any problem at FIFA," he said Wednesday. Blatter's comments prompted the head of the English Football Association Greg Dyke to say he would look into recouping around £21 million (\$32.2 million, 29.1 million euros) spent on England's failed 2018 bid. Dyke said investigating the claims was a "good idea" as it would be "very nice to get taxpayers' money back."

In further revelations, Blatter hit out at UEFA president Michel Platini and former French president Nicolas Sarkozy, saying they skewered the 2022 plan by cosying up to eventual hosts Qatar. Everything changed, he added, "after talks between Sarkozy and Qatar's prince (Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad bin Khalifa al Thani) who is now running the emirate" - a meeting followed by lunch between the two men and Platini. As a result of that Franco-Qatari summit, at

FIFA's secret ballot in December 2010 "four European votes deserted the United States and the result was 14-8 (to Qatar)", he said.

### Platini defiant

Blatter accused Platini of being the original cause of the crisis at the top of football. "Platini wanted to be FIFA president, but he didn't have the courage to put himself forward," he said, referring to the May 29 election in which Blatter saw off Prince Ali Bin Al Hussein for his fifth term in office. "And now look where we are. And the victim of all this at the end of the day is Platini himself," said the 79-year-old Swiss.

Platini is currently suspended from all football-related activities for 90 days while he is investigated over a clandestine \$2 million payment he received from Blatter on behalf of FIFA in 2011 for consultancy work carried out years before. Platini had been seen as a strong favourite to take over when Blatter announced in June he was standing down. FIFA's Electoral Committee confirmed Wednesday it had seven candidates running to be the new president in a February 26 election, including the Frenchman. FIFA said the applications from the six others would be processed, but Platini's case would only be considered once his ban is lifted.

But the Frenchman was defiant, telling Swiss daily Le Matin: "In all modesty, I am the best-placed to lead world football." In the interview published yesterday he blast-

ed his suspension and the negative effect on his chances, and was adamant he would be cleared. The other candidates are Prince Ali Bin Al Hussein, Musa Bility, Jerome Champagne, Gianni Infantino, Sheikh Salman bin Ebrahim Al Khalifa and Tokyo Sexwale. Former Trinidad and Tobago footballer David Nakhid told AFP that he would appeal against a rejection of his candidacy, issued on the grounds that one of the five national football associations he gave as endorsing him has already backed another candidate.

### Investigations continue

The FIFA scandal erupted when seven officials were among those arrested by Swiss police in Zurich on May 27 as part of a bribery investigation by US authorities. On Wednesday, one of those arrested, former Brazilian Football Confederation president Jose Maria Marin, 83, agreed to be extradited to the United States. Also on Wednesday, the German government confirmed it was looking into corruption allegations in relation to the country's hosting of the 2006 World Cup and an alleged unexplained payment of 6.7 million euros (\$7.43m) made to FIFA by the German Football Association. FIFA's major sponsors have renewed demands for outside figures to lead reform of the scandal-plagued world football governing body, with credit card giant Visa saying it could end its deal if the organisation is not made more accountable. — AFP

## NEYMAR AND SUAREZ KEEP STUTTERING BARCA ON TRACK

**MADRID:** A stuttering Barcelona have had to rely on the devastating duo of Neymar and Luis Suarez to fire the goals and keep them on track as the joint La Liga leaders with Real Madrid now prepare to face Getafe away tomorrow. The Catalan side are missing injured talisman Lionel Messi but the other members of the attacking trident that hit a Spanish record 122 goals between them last season have been able to dig them out of trouble when necessary. Last weekend it was Suarez who celebrated a year since his Barca debut with a hat-trick as they had to come from behind to beat a determined Eibar at the Camp Nou.

It was a difficult start for the Uruguayan following his ban for biting during the World Cup in Brazil but he went on to be an integral figure in their treble success last season and now has a return of 35 goals from 57 games. "I never thought I would win the treble. It is something you would never expect and it has been an incredible year," Suarez told reporters. "While Leo is recovering it is good to be scoring and helping the team to win without him. This year there is a lot of expectation on the team which is normal because we always want more but to win you need to overcome a lot of obstacles." Neymar has been playing in a deeper more creative role and the pair have papered over the cracks with the team lacking their usual slick football and looking fragile at the back.

Along with Messi, Andres Iniesta and Rafinha are also among the injured while the squad has been stretched by the FIFA transfer ban over the last two windows for illegally signing minors. The poor display of a second string in a 0-0 draw away to third tier Villanovense in the first leg of their King's Cup Last 32 tie on Wednesday was further indication that the back-up is unconvincing for coach Luis Enrique. Meanwhile, Real, who are level with Barca on 21 points from nine games, are also having to overcome injury problems. They now face Las Palmas at home hoping that Karim Benzema and Pepe are ready to return but James Rodriguez, Sergio Ramos, Gareth Bale and Dani Carvajal are all set to remain in the treatment room. — Reuters

# DEFENDING MLS CHAMPIONS GALAXY CRASH OUT

**LOS ANGELES:** Seattle midfielder Erik Friberg scored the winner as the Sounders beat Los Angeles Galaxy 3-2 to eliminate the defending champions from the Major League Soccer playoffs on Wednesday. Galaxy did not lack attacking firepower with Robbie Keane, Steven Gerrard and Giovani dos Santos in their ranks but shaky defence proved their undoing.

On the opposite coast, Chris Rolfe scored a late winner as DC United opened the playoffs with a 2-1 comeback victory over the New England Revolution at RFK Stadium to book their place in the Eastern Conference semi-finals. All three Seattle goals resulted from poor defending, with Friberg's 73rd minute match-winning strike coming after Galaxy's AJ DeLaGarza failed to deal with a harmless-looking cross. "It was the perfect time to score the first one of the season," Friberg said after Seattle sealed their spot in the last four in the West. "We need to continue to play as we did in the second half and if we do that I think we're going to go all the way and win the whole thing."

In Washington, a spectacular bicycle-kick from striker Juan Agudelo opened the scoring counted for Revolution, last season's MLS Cup runners-up. Chris Pontius equalised for United on the stroke of half-time when he headed home a free kick. Rolfe missed a penalty in the 76th minute when he hit the post but made amends by slotting home the winner from close range in the 83rd minute. The match ended in controversy when New England midfielder Jermaine Jones was sent off in stoppage time for protesting a handball in the box by DC defender Sean Franklin.

Referee Mark Geiger turned down the penalty appeal and an incensed Jones, who had earlier been booked, sprinted towards the official and was promptly shown another yellow card. The United States international then flung his arms out and appeared to



**SEATTLE:** Seattle Sounders goalkeeper Stefan Frei reaches for, but can't stop a goal kicked by Los Angeles Galaxy's Gyasi Zardes in the first half of an MLS soccer western conference knockout round playoff match on Wednesday, Oct 28, 2015. — AP

make contact with the referee's chest, even before the official could brandish a red card. Jones continued to remonstrate with the referee, grabbing his arm, before being restrained by a team mate. "I think every-

body who came today could see it, it was 100 percent a penalty," MLS.com quoted Jones as saying. "My passion then after maybe went a little bit high, but I think it's normal ... For what happened after, I would

say I'm sorry, maybe because I play with the national team it cannot happen, but it happened. "People who know me, they know that I'm not a good loser. In that moment I was really upset." — Reuters

## ALL EYES ON MOURINHO AS CHELSEA HOST LIVERPOOL

**LONDON:** It would have been crazy to doubt Jose Mourinho's job security when the Premier League kicked off in August but, with 10 games gone, his position at Chelsea is under intense scrutiny ahead of tomorrow's match with Liverpool. Just five months after they romped to the title, Chelsea and their talent-packed squad are hovering above the relegation zone, having already lost five times. The spotlight is now firmly fixed on Mourinho whose erratic behaviour has gone hand-in-hand with his team's spiralling fortunes. Sent to the stands in last weekend's 2-1 defeat at West Ham United, the Portuguese has spent much of the early campaign picking fights.

The club's former doctor, referees, the Football Association, Arsenal manager Arsene Wenger and even some of his own players have been caught in the crossfire of Mourinho's angry outbursts. The Chelsea boss is, of course, no stranger to controversy but his frequent run-ins with the authorities have rarely, if ever, been accompanied by such consistently poor results on the pitch. Chelsea's midweek League Cup defeat at Stoke City on penalties means they go into tomorrow's home game on the back of two consecutive defeats. Bookmakers now make Mourinho an even-money favourite to be the next Premier League supremo to get the sack.

### Second spell

Fans are openly speculating that owner Roman Abramovich, a man who places notoriously high demands on his managers, could call time on Mourinho's second spell at Stamford Bridge if Liverpool can inflict another defeat on the champions. Chelsea's cause will not be helped if striker Diego Costa fails to recover from the rib injury that forced him off at Stoke but Liverpool are also suffering their own injury problems. Christian Benteke missed Wednesday's 1-0 League Cup win over Bournemouth, leaving Liverpool with Belgian Divock Origi as their only fit first-team forward.

New German coach Juergen Klopp is also on the lookout for his first league win since joining the club three weeks ago. Premier League leaders Manchester City will expect to claim all three points when they host Norwich City tomorrow while Arsenal, who trail Manuel Pellegrini's side on goal difference, face a tougher task when they visit Swansea City. Wenger also has to contend with a mounting injury list after Theo Walcott and Alex Oxlade-Chamberlain were early casualties in Tuesday's embarrassing 3-0 League Cup defeat at second-tier Sheffield Wednesday. Fourth-placed Manchester United, two points off the top, visit Crystal Palace tomorrow. — Reuters

### GERMAN LEAGUE PREVIEW

## BAYERN HUNT 11TH LEAGUE VICTORY

**BERLIN:** Runaway Bundesliga leaders Bayern Munich will be battling fatigue plus hosts Eintracht Frankfurt when they hunt a perfect 11 wins from 11 league games today. In a busy period, the Bavarian giants are in the middle of playing five games in two weeks and have just a three-day turn around after their German Cup win at Wolfsburg. Bayern then host Arsenal in the Champions League on Wednesday hunting revenge for their 2-0 defeat in London a fortnight ago—their only defeat of the season.

Pep Guardiola's side knocked holders Wolfsburg out of the cup on Tuesday with a 3-1 second round win. "We need to gather our strength as quickly as possible for Friday," said Dutch winger Arjen Robben. With a seven-point lead at the top of the table, Bayern face an Eintracht side reeling from their shock German Cup defeat by third division Erzgebirge Aue on Tuesday. Frankfurt have won only one of their last seven games, while Bayern have won their last six against Eintracht without conceding a goal.

They are on a record-breaking run of 33 goals after ten matches—no team has ever scored more in Bundesliga history at this stage. Second-placed Borussia Dortmund are also busy and face their sixth fixture in the space of two weeks at Werder Bremen's Weser-Stadion on Saturday. But the Dortmund goal-machine is in full swing with Thomas Tuchel's attack having now hit 61 goals in 19 games so far this season. Dortmund warmed-

up with a 7-1 demolition of second division Paderborn on Wednesday as right winger Gonzalo Castro scored twice and set up two goals.

Top-scorer Pierre-Emerick Aubameyang was left on the bench despite the Gabon striker being the league's top scorer with 13 goals in ten games. Dortmund have a score to settle as Bremen's 2-1 victory last December ensured Dortmund spent the winter break in the relegation zone. Bremen broke a five-game losing streak at Mainz last Saturday to escape the bottom three. Bayer Leverkusen and Wolfsburg clash at the Volkswagen Arena tomorrow with the hosts fourth in the league while Bayer are just a point behind in sixth. Wolfsburg were the only team Leverkusen lost both league matches to last season and the teams last met in a nine-goal thriller in February when Wolves won 5-4. Wolfsburg will be without striker Max Kruse for both the visit of Leverkusen and next Tuesday's away match at PSV Eindhoven in the Champions League. The 27-year-old has a hamstring injury and midfielder Christian Traesch is doubtful with a thigh injury. In-form Hertha Berlin and Borussia Moenchengladbach will clash on Saturday in the capital with Gladbach chasing a sixth straight win under caretaker coach Andre Schubert. The 44-year-old is on the verge of getting the job permanently having taken the team from bottom of the table to seventh. Gladbach were bottom when Schubert stepped in after Lucien Favre quit in September after five straight defeats. — AFP

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## Middlesbrough shock United in League Cup

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MANCHESTER: Manchester United's Marouane Fellaini (right) fights for the ball against Middlesbrough's Ben Gibson (centre) and Daniel Ayala during the English League Cup soccer match between Manchester United and Middlesbrough at Old Trafford Stadium, Manchester, England on Wednesday Oct 28, 2015. — AP