

SUBSCRIPTION

# Kuwait Times



THE FIRST DAILY IN THE ARABIAN GULF

SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 6, 2016

RABI ALTHANI 27, 1437 AH

No: 16778

Ahmadi launches national celebrations

4



37 dead after bus plunges into river in India

9



Local swimming academy trains future champions

47



150 Fils

## KUWAITI MAN ABDUCTED IN LEBANON RELEASED

### INTERIOR MINISTER THANKS LEBANESE SECURITY FORCES



Min 03°  
Max 25°

## AMIR MEETS QUEEN ELIZABETH

**LONDON:** HH the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah yesterday paid a visit to Queen Elizabeth, holding a meeting with her attended by Prince Philip, Duke of Edinburgh, at Sandringham House. The Amir had taken part in co-chairing the Fourth International Donors Conference on Syria, hosted by the British capital on Thursday.

The Kuwaiti and British sides held cordial conversations on the deeply-rooted historic friendship between Kuwait and the United Kingdom. The discussions also dealt with means for strengthening these ties for service of joint interests, realizing greater progress and prosperity for the two countries and the friendly peoples of Kuwait and the UK. Later, Queen Elizabeth held a luncheon at the palace on the occasion of HH the Amir's visit to the friendly United Kingdom. — KUNA



**NORFOLK:** HH the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah meets Queen Elizabeth and Duke of Edinburgh Prince Philip at Sandringham House yesterday. — KUNA

**KUWAIT:** Deputy Prime Minister and Interior Minister Sheikh Mohammad Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah yesterday expressed deep gratitude to Lebanese security authorities for their efforts that led to unconditional release of Kuwaiti citizen Mohsen Barrak Falah Majed. Releasing the Kuwaiti national was the fruit of constructive and continuing cooperation between the Kuwaiti and Lebanese security authorities, he said, stressing that he was set free without conditions.

Necessary measures are being taken to bring him home, said Sheikh Mohammad in a ministry statement, indicating that the Kuwaiti authorities have been involved in making arrangements for his return. Majed, born in 1967, was taken hostage in eastern Lebanon on Jan 17. Abdulaal Al-Ginaee, Kuwait's Ambassador to Lebanon, said that he had been abducted by unidentified gunmen in the eastern Bekaa Valley. The Kuwaiti diplomatic mission in Beirut had been in constant contact with the local authorities to try to pinpoint his whereabouts and free him. Official Lebanese media had reported that Majed was snatched at gunpoint from his farm in the town of Qebb Elias in the Bekaa. — KUNA



**Mohsen Majed**

## ASSANGE HAILS 'VICTORY' FROM EMBASSY BALCONY

**LONDON:** WikiLeaks founder Julian Assange hailed a UN panel opinion on his confinement yesterday as a "victory" in an emotional speech from the balcony of Ecuador's embassy in London where he has been holed up since 2012. "How sweet it is! This is a victory that cannot be denied. It is a victory of historical importance," he told a scrum of journalists and supporters outside. Referring to his children, the 44-year-old Australian campaigner said: "It's time that they had their father back. That will happen one way or the other."

It was one of only a handful of times that he has appeared in public in three-and-a-half years of self-imposed confinement in a cramped office. Assange has said he fears for his personal safety if he comes out on to the balcony, citing unspecified threats. Brandishing a hard copy of the panel's opinion, he was dressed in a charcoal suit and tie and squinted in the daylight as he spoke.

He paused frequently, apparently overwhelmed. "I'm tough, I'm hardened by this process and I can take it. However, what right does this government or the US government or the Swedish government have to deny my children their right to their father for five years?" he said, referring to the first time he was arrested in 2010 due to a rape accusation in Sweden.

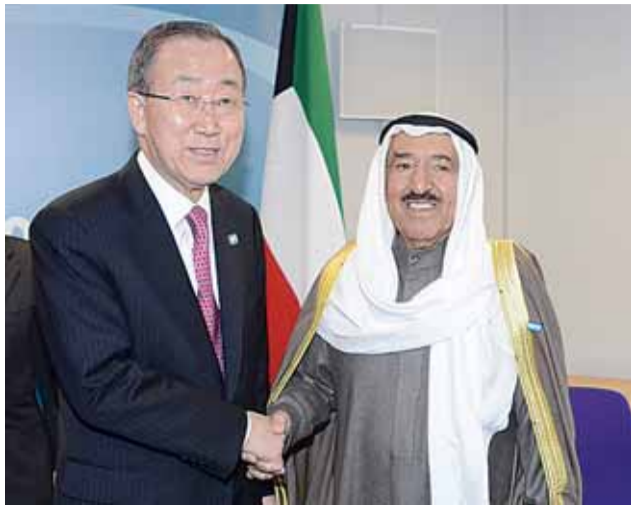
Assange claimed that he was under an "illegal, immoral, unethical detention" after British police said they would arrest him as soon as he sets foot outside the embassy onto British soil to extradite him to Sweden.

In a statement, the UN panel said it had adopted an opinion that considered Assange "arbitrarily detained by the governments of Sweden and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland." It added: "The working group also considered that the detention should be brought to an end and that Mr Assange should be afforded the right to compensation." Assange's legal representative Baltasar Garzon called it "one of the strongest judgements" ever issued by the body.

But Britain and Sweden sharply condemned the panel's findings and said they would change nothing. Hammond called Assange "a fugitive from justice". "This is frankly a ridiculous finding by the working group and we reject it," the foreign secretary added. Sweden's foreign ministry said that it "does not agree" with the assessment. "Mr Assange is free to leave the embassy at any point and Swedish authorities have no control over his decision to stay at the embassy," the ministry added. — Agenices



**LONDON:** WikiLeaks founder Julian Assange addresses the media holding a printed report of the judgement of the UN's Working Group on Arbitrary Detention on his case from the balcony of the Ecuadorian embassy yesterday. — AFP



**KUWAIT:** His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah meets UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon in London, where His Highness participated in the Fourth International Donors Conference on Syria. —KUNA



**His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah meets UN special envoy to Syria Staffan de Mistura.**

# AMIR THANKS BRITISH PM FOR HOSPITALITY

**LONDON:** His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah has expressed gratitude to British Prime Minister David Cameron for the elaborate reception of His Highness and his accompanying delegation at the Fourth International Donors Conference on Syria, hosted by the British capital on Thursday.

In a cable addressed to Cameron, His Highness the Amir expressed deep admiration and utmost satisfaction for the generous and glamorous hospitality accorded to His Highness and his delegation of senior officials. His Highness Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad also noted that he was greatly pleased for co-chairing the conference with Prime Minister Cameron, German Chancellor Angela Merkel and Norwegian Prime Minister Erna Solberg. He appreciated the friendly UK's hosting of this significant conference, praising its good results, namely pledged generous contributions, declared for aiding the brotherly Syrian people.

Moreover, His Highness the Amir, in the cable to Cameron, expressed content for results of their bilateral meeting on the sidelines of the event, during which they exchanged views on various issues concerning the two friendly countries, namely bilateral relations and means of cementing mutual cooperation in diverse sectors.

His Highness Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad, in conclusion, expressed good wishes to Cameron and his nation. He also hoped to see further promotion of the historic bilateral relations between

the State of Kuwait and the friendly UK.

## Positive initiatives

Meanwhile, Norway's Prime Minister Erna Solberg lauded Kuwait's "positive" initiatives carried out by His Highness the Amir to alleviate the ongoing suffering of the Syrian people. Solberg told KUNA on Thursday that without His Highness the Amir's support and Kuwait's three donors conference, giving assistance to the Syrians would have been difficult.

She added that raising funds alone is not enough to help the Syrians; there should be a political solution to end this crisis and the bloodshed that has been happening for more than five years. Norway pledged \$1.17 billion, to be paid over four years, to aid the Syrians in their plight.

The International Organization of Migration's (IOM) Director General William Lacy Swing also expressed appreciation to His Highness the Amir's efforts in encouraging world leaders to raise funding essential to provide life-saving aid to the Syrian people affected by the instability of their country. Swing told KUNA that Kuwait's co-chairmanship of London donors' conference was evident of His Highness's influential leading role in humanitarian action.

The UN honoring of naming His Highness the Amir as a Humanitarian Leader and Kuwait as Humanitarian center was only befitting, he pointed out. The conference's final pledge of \$10 billion will only build up on previous

achievements that were done in Kuwait's three donors' conferences, he added.

## Int'l participation

Kuwait's First Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah meanwhile lauded international participation in raising more than \$10 billion in response to Syria's humanitarian crisis.

Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled made this remark on Thursday during a joint press conference with UK Prime Minister David Cameron, UN chief Ban Ki-moon, Germany's Chancellor Angela Merkel, Norway's Prime Minister Erna Solberg, Lebanon's Foreign Minister Tammam Salam, Turkey's Prime Minister Ahmet Davutoglu and Jordan's Foreign Minister Nasser Judeh.

The Kuwaiti top diplomat praised the success of London's conference in providing the right to education and jobs creation in Jordan and Turkey, noting that this success only builds on previous achievements made in Kuwait's three donors meetings, where similar decisions were made for the benefit of Syrian refugees in Iraq and Egypt.

"[Thursday's] conference was successful in meeting the immediate life-saving needs for the Syrians," hoping that soon there will be "a political solution" to this ongoing crisis, Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled said. Co-host countries agreed to follow-up, with a number of UN agencies, on the outcome of the meeting in the future, specifically in a meeting that will be held in Istanbul next May. —KUNA

## UN CHIEF VISITS KUWAIT'S PAVILION AT CONFERENCE

**LONDON:** UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon lauded Kuwait's "unmatched" efforts in supporting those affected by the ongoing Syrian crisis. Ki-moon made those remarks on Thursday during a special visit to Kuwait's Ministry of Information's pavilion at an exhibition organized on the sidelines of Syria Donors Conference in London.

The UN chief expressed his appreciation to Kuwaiti civil societies, NGOs, and humanitarian groups for extending a helping hand to the Syrians in their critical situation, head of the media delegation to the exhibit Sara Al-Diyein told KUNA. She added that Ban took a walk down memory lane when he looked at the photographs that formed a panoramic scene of Kuwait's "successful" endeavors in helping the Syrians since their misfortune started five years ago. —KUNA



**LONDON:** UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon visits Kuwait's Ministry of Information's pavilion at an exhibition organized on the sidelines of Syria Donors Conference in London. —KUNA

## \$300M PLEDGE NOT OUT OF BUDGET: MINISTER SALEH

**LONDON:** Kuwait's pledge of \$300 million over the next three years to support the Syrian people will come out of independent institutes, not out of the country's general budget, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance Anas Al-Saleh said Thursday.



**Anas Al-Saleh**

Saleh, who is also Acting Oil Minister, told KUNA and Kuwait TV that despite rough financial times due to continuing fall of oil prices, Kuwait made it a top priority to participate in the fourth edition of Syrian donors' conference, held in London, to help Syrian refugees and those internally displaced. During previous conferences, Kuwait was committed to honor its pledges, which were paid through independent and charity venues, such as Kuwait Fund for Arab Economic and Development. Kuwait's pledge stemmed out of "sheer" desire to help the unfortunate, the Kuwait minister stressed. Saleh hoped for the Syrian crisis to end soon and for no other donor conference to take place next year. —KUNA

## GCC NAVAL OPERATIONS CENTER ACHIEVES MILITARY COORDINATION: OFFICIAL

**MANAMA:** Kuwait's Deputy Chief of Staff Lieutenant General Sheikh Abdullah Al-Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah stressed on Thursday that inauguration of the GCC joint naval operations center contributes to achieving further military cooperation among GCC member states.

Sheikh Abdullah made the statement on sidelines of the center's inauguration. He said the center is considered a developed military one in the region and plays a key and effective role in facing challenges, adding that the center is established upon directives of the top GCC leaders.

"We were briefed on military preparations and operations of the center which reflected its developed level to be in favor of GCC countries," he said, expressing his hope that the center would achieve the desired goals.

The center will monitor regional naval activities, coordinate tasks among

the GCC countries' navies, analyze data, exchange information and provide legal consultations. The center was inaugurated under the auspices of Bahrain's King Hamad bin Issa Al Khalifa, and attended by some chiefs of staff of GCC countries and Secretary General Abdullatif Al-Zayani. —KUNA



Children perform on stage during the event.



Sheikha Sheikha Al-Abdullah Al-Sabah inaugurates the 9th Kuwaiti Project for the Disabled.



## SHEIKHA HOPES FOR MORE JOB OPPORTUNITIES FOR DISABLED

### 9TH KUWAITI PROJECT FOR THE DISABLED HELD

By Nawara Fattahova

**KUWAIT:** The 9th Kuwaiti Project for the Disabled was held at the Sheraton Hotel on Thursday, with the attendance of many disabled children. The project is being held in cooperation with the higher committee of UNESCO and the Kuwait Foundation for the Advancement of Sciences.

Honorary President of the Kuwait Sports Club for the Disabled Sheikha Sheikha Al-Abdullah Al-Sabah noted that the Kuwaiti government is keen to provide special care for the disabled. "This is a useful project that aims to integrate the disabled in the community. Disabled persons in Kuwait have made many achievements, and I hope they find good job opportunities at all institutions. I also hope the employment quota of the disabled is respected so they get employed. I wish even more success for the organizers of this project," she said during the launch ceremony. Rafat Subhi, executive director of the organizing committee, said the project aims to help the disabled from all categories. "We aim to bring the disabled together and communicate with them and help them integrate in the society. Furthermore, we work on rehabilitating them and their family members in addition to providing their daily needs," he pointed out.

#### National partnership

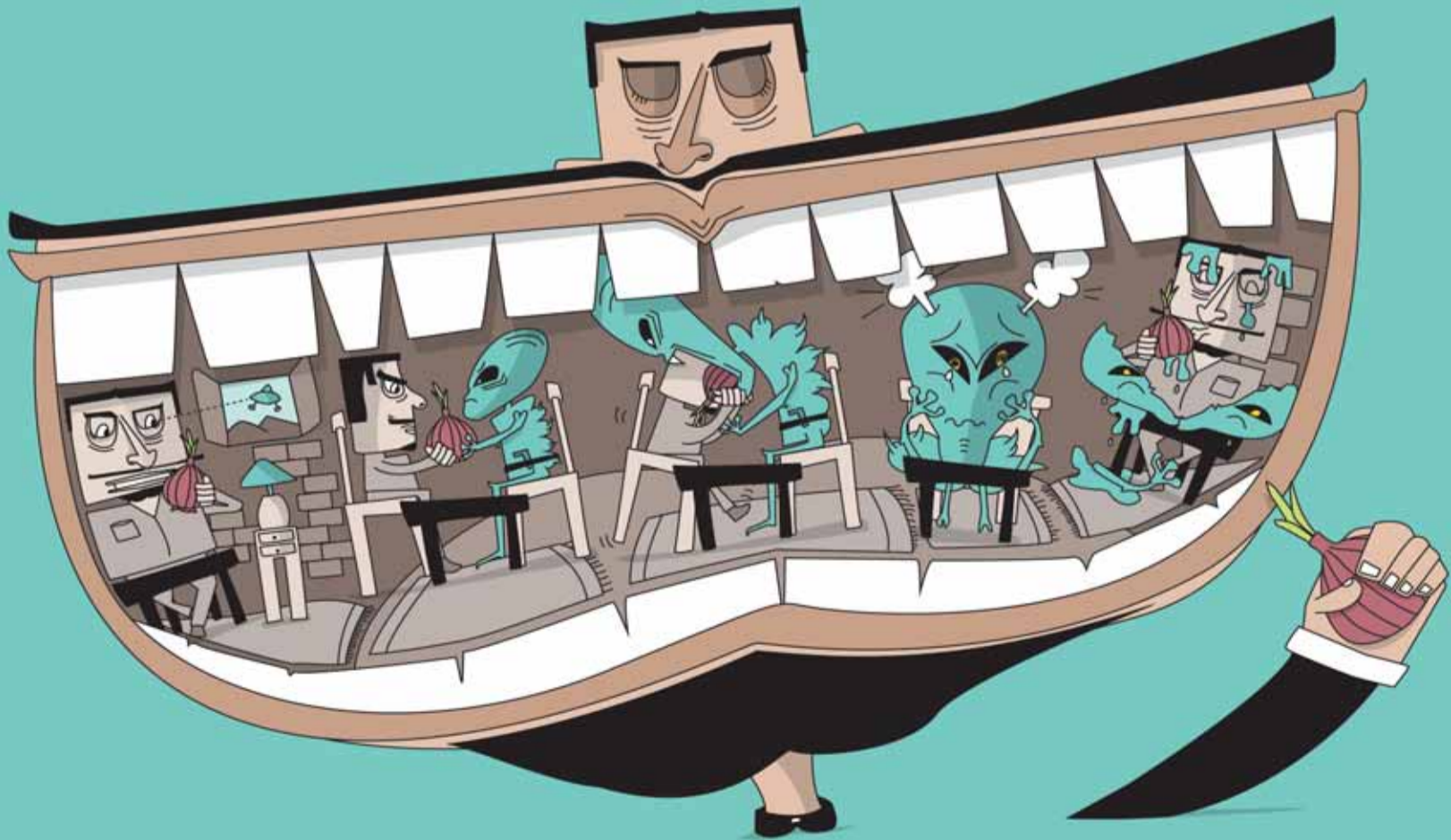
Head of the education department at the Public Authority for the Handicapped (PAH) Dr Badr Al-Barrak noted that the authority strongly



**KUWAIT:** Sheikha Sheikha Al-Abdullah Al-Sabah speaks at the inauguration of the 9th Kuwaiti Project for the Disabled. —Photos by Joseph Shagra

supports this project, as the Kuwaiti government supports such projects as part of the national partnership between the nongovernmental organizations, the private sector and public institutions. "This is the goal of the PAH as part of its strategy to expand its services for the disabled," he stated.

He also said that the integration of the disabled in the community is one of the most important projects for the disabled. "PAH is keen to be present in all national celebrations to strengthen the sense of belonging of the disabled. We are always cooperating with the ministry of education to improve the curriculum. Inspectors of PAH frequently check schools to make sure there are no violations," added Barrak.





**KUWAIT:** Ahmadi Governor Sheikh Fawaz Al-Khaled Al-Sabah participates in an 'Ardha' traditional during the governorate's National Holiday's celebrations.



A man takes a picture using his phone for a portrait of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah. — Photos by Joseph Shagra

# AHMADI INAUGURATES NATIONAL CELEBRATIONS

**KUWAIT:** The Ahmadi Governorate launched National Holidays' celebrations during a ceremony held last Thursday at Kuwait Oil Company's November 6th Park. Ahmadi Governor Sheikh Fawaz Al-Khaled Al-Sabah attended the inauguration of the two-day event, which featured several displays and activities.

In a statement to reporters, Sheikh Fawaz greeted His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah, His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah, His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-Sabah and the Kuwaiti people on the 55th Independence, 25th Liberation and 10th anniversary of His Highness the Amir's assumption of power. The Governor also expressed gratitude to public and private sector institutions which contributed to make Ahmadi's celebrations a success. — KUNA

**KUWAIT:** Ahmadi Governor Sheikh Fawaz Al-Khaled Al-Sabah participates in the governorate's National Holiday's celebrations.





Scenes from Ahmadi Governorate's National Holidays' celebrations.



A tanker truck whose driver was arrested for dumping hazardous material near Kabd stables.



Liquids described as 'hazardous material' dumped near Kabd stables.

# INTERIOR MINISTRY EMPLOYEE ARRESTED ON FORGERY CHARGES

## OFFICER HELPED COMPANY ISSUE PERMITS ILLEGALLY

By Hanan Al-Saadoun

**KUWAIT:** The Interior Ministry's relations and security information department said residency detectives in cooperation with the Manpower Public Authority (MPA) arrested two forgers, a citizen and an expat. The department learned about the forgery in the estimation of the number of workers a company needs. The forgers accessed the MPA's database and altered the maximum number that the company is allowed to hire, and increased it in order to obtain visas that they can sell to workers illegally. Investigations uncovered the forgery on the computer, which led to the arrest of a citizen who works in an interior ministry department, and an Arab mandoub (company representative). The citizen confessed that he made an agreement with the company owner to issue residency per-

mits for the company in exchange of KD 80,000. The mandoub's role was limited to coordinating with a social affairs and labor ministry employee to increase the number of workers, and succeeded in increasing the number of from 39 to 200. Their action was discovered when they were able to obtain 60 work permits and the company owner received KD 1,500 for each in two installments. All involved were sent to concerned authorities.

### Hazardous material

Environment police arrested the driver of a tanker truck who dumped hazardous industrial material near Kabd stables, while another driver did the same and escaped.

### Duo deported

Najda police referred two Asians who were caught cutting plants near the spe-

cial forces camp to the environment police, who took the necessary measures based on instructions by Lt Gen Suleiman Al-Fahd to deport them due to the crime they committed and repeated warnings not to violate the environment law.

### Liquor factory

Ahmadi security team, headed by Brig Abdullah Al-Mulla, raided a liquor factory in Sabah Al-Ahmad where they found 113 full drums and four distillation drums.

### U-turn bridge

Traffic department announced the opening of a two-lane U-turn bridge on the 87th kilometer mark of King Fahd Road starting from Sunday. The department said that all vehicles can pass through except trucks that are 10-m long and weigh 50 tons, unless they have a special permit from the traffic department.

## AID WON'T BE DELIVERED FOR 650 PEOPLE AS OF FEBRUARY: MINISTER



Hind Al-Subaih

**KUWAIT:** Social aid will not be delivered for 650 people as of February in accordance with initial results of revealed by concerned committees to make sure that aid is given to needy people, said Minister of Social Affairs and Labor Hind Al-Subaih.

Subaih, also Minister of State for Planning Affairs and Development, made the statement during a press statement on Thursday, adding that the results

showed that these people earn about KD 300,000 monthly and about 590 of them get social aid although they have commercial licenses.

This runs counter to the terms of social aid, she said, adding that about 60 persons with disabilities get social aid from two government bodies. A panel will be formed to uncover the causes of granting social aid for un-needy people and punish officials for illegal acts, she noted.

A survey is being conducted on these cases in order to review data whether the assistance was delivered illegally so as to take necessary legal measures against people responsible for the illegal act, she stressed. The illegal sum should be retrieved as it is part of the public funds, she said. — KUNA

## CAMPAIGNS INSTRUMENTAL TO DIMINISH CRIME: MINISTER

**KUWAIT:** Snap security campaigns were instrumental to a diminish crime rate and bringing lawbreakers to justice, Interior Minister Sheikh Mohammad Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah said on Thursday, noting that such campaigns will persist. Sheikh Mohammad Al-Khaled, who is also Deputy Prime Minister, made the comments in a press statement issued by the Ministry of Interior (Mol).

The Interior Minister said that recent Mol accomplishments are a source of great pride, and "any decline in performance levels will not be accepted, in order to ensure continued progress." Moreover, Sheikh Mohammad Al-Khaled raved about Mol plans of inaugurating modern facilities that aim to safeguard citizens and expatriates alike, underscoring the need of further developing the services provided by these facilities, the statement said. The Interior Minister also singled out retirees as amongst a segment of society that "will always remain in our hearts and minds." "We owe them a debt of gratitude for their service," he added.

Mol Undersecretary Sulaiman Al-Fahad assured that the security apparatus will spare no effort to uphold peace and security in the country, saying that recent security developments are part of an encompassing, strategic plan. A number of senior Mol officials expressed support of ongoing efforts to curb crime and preserve security in the country, the statement noted. — KUNA

## Crime

Report

### Ex-con arrested for mugging

**KUWAIT:** Mubarak Al-Kabeer police arrested a Kuwaiti ex-convict after he beat a man and robbed KD 500 from him in front of a bank. A security source said the Syrian man told Mubarak Al-Kabeer police that he went to the bank and withdrew KD 600, and when he returned to his car, he was surprised by the man who attacked him and took the money before fleeing on foot. The suspect was arrested in Adan. In a separate case, a Bangladeshi funds collector sustained a broken nose and bruised eye when he was attacked by four men, who took the money he collected for his company. The victim took a medical report to Qairawan police station where he filed a complaint, telling them the suspects stole KD 2,387.

### Fatal accident

A 41-year-old Indian man was killed when he lost control over his sponsor's all-terrain vehicle (ATV) and it flipped over. Criminal evidence took his body to the coroner.

### Body found

The coroner recovered the body of a 28-year-old Filipina woman who was found dead in her Khaitan apartment. Authorities are investigating the cause of death.

### Missing sisters found in camp

Farwaniya detectives arrested two sisters inside a camp in south Jahra who were reported missing a year ago. A security source said detectives received information from an undercover agent about the whereabouts of the sisters, so police obtained a warrant and arrested them.

### Woman presses charges against husband

A citizen accused her husband of stealing KD 4,000 from her account without her knowledge. The woman was abroad with her mother for treatment, and when she returned, her husband told her he needed the money and withdrew it. Police are investigating.

### Drug possession

A fight between two persons led to the discovery of 58 illicit tablets with one of them. Both were arrested and sent to concerned authorities. Interior Ministry operations received a call about a bloody fight in Jahra, so police responded and arrested the two, and the drugs were found during a precautionary search. Separately, Capital detectives arrested a citizen in her forties with heroin and drug paraphernalia near a park. She was sent to the Drugs Control General Department. The arrest was made when the woman was noticed acting abnormally while driving. She was also found wanted on a breach of trust case.

### Fugitive caught

A man wanted for attempted murder resisted arrest on the southern roads and attempted to escape, but policemen arrested him and sent him to the criminal detectives department. A security source said the patrols got suspicious about the man who seemed nervous, so his ID was checked and data revealed he was wanted.

### Car theft

An Indian deliveryman insisted on receiving two dinars; the price of a meal he delivered, but lost his car to a thief when he ran after the man who took the meal without paying. A security source said the driver arrived at the address where two persons appeared - one snatched the meal and ran away, so the deliveryman ran after him. Meanwhile, the other person got in the delivery car and drove off. Hadiya detectives are investigating.

### Bootleggers arrested

Ahmadi security arrested several expats for brewing local liquor in Sabah Al-Ahmad. Police found 200 full bottles, six bags of yeast, 46 bags of sugar and a large number of drums. — Al-Rai and Al-Anbaa

# International

SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 6, 2016

**Thousands flee as Russian offensive threatens Aleppo**

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**37 perish in India as bus plunges into river**

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**Cameron woos Poland as 'Brexit' deal draws closer**

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**JAKARTA:** Indonesian bomb squad police clear the area as they examine a suspicious box which turned out to contain a cake, on a main road sidewalk, in Jakarta yesterday. Indonesian extremist groups received international financing from Australia and Syria, the country's security minister said, adding to fears that jihadists are targeting the world's most populous Muslim nation. —AFP

## INDONESIAN TRIO VIE FOR IS GLORY

### TERROR ATTACKS, VIOLENCE LOOM

**JAKARTA:** A power struggle among three Indonesian-born Islamic State militants in Syria could have a violent ripple effect in Southeast Asia, senior police warn, as a deadly game of one-upmanship threatens to cause more Jakarta-style attacks. A crackdown in the wake of January's gun and suicide assault on the Indonesian capital has uncovered a complex web of small militant cells working at the behest of competing ringleaders in Syria, shedding light on the nature of IS infiltration far from its Middle East heartland. The trio in Syria-Bahrumsyah, Abu Jandal and Bahrn Naim-were all suspected of plotting attacks throughout 2015. Police initially fingered Naim-a high-profile extremist from Central Java known for his online radicalism-as the mastermind of last month's outrage.

Each of these influential figureheads has been encouraging their Indonesian cells to independently wage jihad back home, providing cash and guidance in the hope of impressing IS with a spectacular operation. "These three are competing to win praise from IS central command by undertaking attacks," Jakarta police chief Tito Karnavian, a seasoned frontline officer who helped dismantle Indonesian militant networks during the 2000s

said. "Once they get it, they will be endorsed for the IS leadership for Indonesia, and with that comes money and power." Competition among the Syria-based trio has kept police very busy in Indonesia, with militant activity spiking dramatically in recent months.

Police attention has shifted away from Naim to Aman Abdurrahman, a jailed ideologue linked to one of Naim's competitors in Syria, and one of the first Indonesians to pledge allegiance to IS. Abdurrahman's success at home has increased pressure on his rivals to carry out attacks "as soon as possible", the Institute for Policy Analysis of Conflict (IPAC) said in a February report. One of the trio even rang an associate in Indonesia shortly after the Jakarta assault demanding a similar attack be carried out immediately, according to the report. "More terrorist attacks in Indonesia are likely as local ISIS leaders compete at home and abroad to establish their supremacy," the report concluded.

#### IS eyes Southeast Asia

Top policeman Karnavian said IS would "turn to Indonesia" as it sought to establish a Southeast Asia branch-the Jakarta attack was the first in the

region claimed by the brutal militant group and proved there were fighters willing to unleash violent jihad in the world's fourth-most populous country. The ensuing police sweep has seen about 20 suspected militants arrested, and exposed a tangled web of splinter cells, some operating alone but many with complex and at times competing allegiances to armed insurgent groups, jailed radicals and influential leaders in Syria.

#### Law too weak

Many of these groups had been actively plotting attacks for years, police said, with some committing robberies to bankroll operations and others identifying police targets as far back as 2010. Others had deep links inside prisons, fertile ground for indoctrinating and recruiting new footsoldiers. Prisons pose a unique challenge as jailed extremists are using their time inside to recruit hardened criminals and hatch new plans, Karnavian said. Afif, one of the Jakarta attackers who, like many Indonesians goes by one name, had pledged allegiance to IS while behind bars, before launching the deadly assault that left him,

three other militants and four civilians dead.

One cell busted south of Jakarta had recruited an inmate trusted by jail wardens to steal guns and ammunition from the police armoury behind bars. A police source said his girlfriend hid the weapons in an insulated lunchbox and smuggled them to militants on the outside. This group, a counter-terror police source told AFP, was on the brink of launching an attack, with targets identified in Jakarta and Bali, a popular resort island frequented by foreigners. Strikes against embassies of nations fighting against IS in Syria and Iraq were also being assessed.

Monitoring outside prison is tricky too. In 2014, before Bahrumsyah-one of the Indonesian ringleaders in Syria-left for the Middle East, he led 1,000 followers in a mass pledge of allegiance to IS leader Abu Bakar Al-Baghdadi. Counter-terror officials complain the law is too weak and allows radicals returning home to slip through the cracks, something the government is seeking to amend with new legislation. "History will be repeated when those militants return from Syria," Ansyad Mbai, the former head of the National Terrorism Mitigation Agency said. —AFP

## SHEBAB FIGHTERS CAPTURE SOMALI PORT

**MOGADISHU:** Somalia's Shebab insurgents yesterday retook their stronghold of Merka from African Union troops who had held the key port since 2012, in one of the biggest setbacks for the multi-national force. The loss of Merka, the state capital of Lower Shabelle, is one of the most dramatic reverses for the AU force in its nearly decade-long battle against the Shebab. "The AU troops pulled out of the town and Shebab militants entered and have secured control without fighting," Ibrahim Adam, governor of the Lower Shabelle region told reporters. The historic port, some 100 kilometers south of the capital Mogadishu, was captured in August 2012 by African Union troops.

It is one of the first major towns the Shebab have seized back and it gives them access to a sea port again. There was no immediate response from the AU force,

known by its acronym AMISOM, or government officials. Residents confirmed the takeover, saying heavily armed Shebab fighters swept into the town with Islamist black flags, before addressing residents. "AMISOM forces moved out at midday and the local administration and all other Somali security forces left a few minutes later - and then heavily armed Shebab militants entered the town," said Ibrahim Mumin, a local. "They have been addressing residents at the district headquarters."

### Fears jet blast was bomb

The loss of Merka comes as foreign investigators probe a blast on a commercial airliner that ripped a hole in its fuselage, 15 minutes after take-off from Mogadishu on Tuesday, which the pilot and experts fear was a bomb. One passenger, named by the government as Abdulahi Abdissalam Borle,

was killed, apparently sucked out through the ragged hole ripped in the metal. The Shebab have not claimed responsibility so far and Minister for Transport Ali Jama Jangeli has called on people to await the results of the investigation.

But the seizure of Merka, as well as recent high profile Shebab attacks on AU bases, appears part of an offensive after months of apparent retreat, amid reported splits between factions allied to Al-Qaeda and some splinter groups favoring Islamic State. The Shebab are fighting to overthrow the internationally-backed government in Mogadishu, which is protected by 22,000 AU troops. The insurgents have lost ground since being routed from Mogadishu in 2011 but continue to stage regular shooting and suicide attacks, and in recent months have staged a series of brazen raids on AU bases.

### Car bomb kills three

Last month they stormed a Kenyan army base at El-Adde in southwest Somalia, in the latest incident of an AMISOM base being overrun, before retreating. In September, Shebab fighters stormed a Ugandan AMISOM base in Janale district, southwest of Mogadishu in the Lower Shabelle region. Kenyan President Uhuru Kenyatta, speaking at an AU summit last month, called for more "resources for the forces in Somalia so that AMISOM can have robust power on land, air and the sea." AU troops have been hampered by a lack of air power-including attack helicopters-leaving their bases often isolated and supply lines vulnerable to attack by Shebab gunmen controlling surrounding rural areas. A car bomb also exploded in Mogadishu yesterday, killing three people, although the airport official it was apparently targeting escaped unharmed. — AFP



**AZAZ:** Syrians fleeing the northern embattled city of Aleppo wait in a field in the town of Iqda, next to the city of Azaz in northern Syria yesterday. — AFP

## THOUSANDS FLEE AS RUSSIAN-BACKED OFFENSIVE THREATENS BESIEGE ALEPPO

### IRANIAN GENERAL KILLED ON FRONT LINE

**BEIRUT:** Tens of thousands of Syrians fled an intensifying Russian assault around Aleppo yesterday, and aid workers said they feared the city which once held two million people could soon fall under a full government siege. Iran reported one of its generals was killed on the front line assisting government forces, direct confirmation of the role Tehran is playing along with Moscow in what appears to be one of the most ambitious offensives in five years of civil war.

The government assault around Aleppo, and advances in the south of the country, helped to torpedo peace talks this week in Geneva. President Bashar Al-Assad's forces and their allies are making a new bid to achieve victory on the battlefield after Russia's intervention ended months of stalemate. The last 24 hours saw government troops and their Lebanese and Iranian allies fully encircle the countryside north of Aleppo and cut off the main supply route linking the city - Syria's largest before the war - to Turkey. Ankara said it suspected the aim was to starve the population into submission. Aleppo would be the biggest strategic prize in years for Assad's government in a conflict that has killed at least 250,000 people and driven 11 million from their homes.

Video footage showed thousands of people, mostly women, children and the elderly, massing at the Bab al-Salam border crossing. Men carried luggage on top of their heads, and the elderly and those unable to walk were brought in wheelchairs. Some women sat on the side of the road holding babies and awaited to be allowed into Turkey. "It feels like a siege of Aleppo is about to begin," said David Evans, Middle East program director for the US aid agency Mercy Corps, which said the most direct humanitarian route to Aleppo had been severed. The leader of a prominent rebel group active in northwestern Syria confirmed that government-allied forces were tightening their grip on the northern Aleppo countryside, and that heavy Russian bombing carried on unabated.

### Non-stop Russian strikes

"The Russian (air) cover continues night and day, there were more than 250 air strikes on this area in one day," Hassan Haj Ali, head of Liwa Suqour Al-Jabal, a group that fights under the umbrella of the Free Syrian Army said. "The regime is now trying to expand the area it has taken control of ... Now the northern countryside (of Aleppo) is totally encircled, and the humanitarian situation is very

difficult," he said. Syrian state TV and a monitoring group said the army and its allies had seized the town of Ratyan north of Aleppo, building on gains made earlier in the week. Haj Ali said the town had not yet fallen, but that there were "very heavy battles". The Syrian army and its allies broke a three-year rebel siege of two Shiite towns in Aleppo province on Wednesday, cutting off a major supply line from Turkey to Aleppo. Aleppo, Syria's commercial hub, has been divided for years between a section under government control and areas that are in the grip of rebels. Much of Aleppo, including a UNESCO heritage old city, is largely in ruins.

Haj Ali said most of the fighters on the government side were "Iranian and from Hezbollah, or Afghan". Iran's semi-official Tasnim news agency said Revolutionary Guard Corps Brigadier-General Mohsen Ghajarian has been killed in Aleppo province, as had six Iranian volunteer militiamen. The five-year civil war pits a government led by Assad, a member of the Alawite sect derived from Shiite Islam, against a range of insurgents who are mainly Sunni Muslims, backed by Saudi Arabia, other Arab states and Turkey. Western countries have also lined up in opposition to Assad. — Reuters

## LONE GAZA TRAVEL AGENCY RECALLS THE 'GOLDEN' 50S

**GAZA:** Nabil Shurafa's travel agency in Gaza was once packed with clients booking flights to London, Paris, New York or cities across the Arab world. These days, he's lucky if anyone comes in, as so few people can get out. The posters of the Eiffel Tower, the Statue of Liberty and a map of the world look out of place on the walls, given the sense of isolation that pervades Gaza, a narrow strip of land hemmed in by Israel on two sides, Egypt to the south and the blockaded Mediterranean to the west.

"Once borders are closed, things switch off," said Shurafa with a sense of resignation. A plastic model of a passenger plane stands on his desk, next to the silent phones. When Shurafa's father opened the bureau in 1952, it quickly earned a reputation as a helpful and reliable agency. Back then, Gaza was governed by Egypt and there was not much of a border to speak of. Gazans could book a plane ticket and take a four-hour bus or train to Cairo to catch their flight.

The agency had a close relationship with BOAC, the forerunner of British Airways, and Air France and is general sale agent for each. It remains a member of IATA, the International Air Transport Association. "The era from 1952 to 1967 was a golden one," Shurafa, 53, told Reuters. People used to travel to Gaza as well, at least until the 1967 Middle East war, when Israel captured Gaza from Egypt and the West Bank from Jordan.

"Gaza was like a duty-free zone, with Egyptians coming to buy goods brought by merchants from Lebanon," he recalled. There was also a boom in the late 1990s, after the Oslo peace accords between Israel and the Palestinians, and Gaza opened Yasser Arafat International Airport in 1998.

But the years since have seen a steady decline in business as Gaza has become more and more cut off from the world. When the second Palestinian uprising erupted in 2000, the airport's runway and control tower were bombed by Israel and it remains in ruins. Since 2007, when the Islamist group Hamas seized control of the territory following a brief civil war with the Western-backed Fatah movement, entry to and exit from Gaza have become even more restricted, both by Egypt and by Israel.

### Links to the world

Israel does allow around 1,000 Gazans to cross into its territory every day, for work, medical treatment or other humanitarian reasons. But it is a far cry from the thousands that could pass through the vast border terminal Israel built in the mid-2000s, before Hamas took over. Egypt meanwhile has kept its crossing with Gaza mostly closed over the past five years, citing security concerns and to put the squeeze on Hamas. Human rights groups say 95 percent of Gaza's 1.95 million people cannot get out of the enclave. Even those that are able to cross into Israel cannot easily travel from there.

They need special dispensation to fly out of Tel Aviv's Ben Gurion airport or to travel to the West Bank and on to Jordan to catch a flight. Jordan, too, has started restricting visas for Palestinians from Gaza. Every few months, Egypt lets around 3,000 Gazans leave via Rafah, but the arrangements are a lottery.

The crossing stays open only for two or three days, so no one can be sure they will get across. They call Shurafa once they are over the border and the agency then scrambles to book them flights or hotels. There are currently 15,000 Gazans who have registered requests to travel across Rafah, Palestinian officials say, including 3,000 who say they need medical treatment. — Reuters



## 37 PERISH IN INDIA AS BUS PLUNGES INTO RIVER

**AHMEDABAD:** A packed passenger bus plunged off a bridge into a river in western India yesterday killing at least 37 people, an official said, in one of the deadliest road accidents in recent years. The incident happened when the driver lost control and veered off the road into Purna river in Navsari district, some 285 kilometers (180 miles) from Ahmedabad, the main city of Gujarat state. "The death toll has risen to 37. At least 24 others are admitted to hospital for treatment," senior

administrative official Remya Mohan in Navsari said.

Television images showed locals and rescuers in the water, using their bare hands to carry people to ambulances in bedsheets and remove parts of the mangled bus wreckage. The Gujarat government announced 400,000 rupees (\$5,900) in compensation for the families of those killed. Fatal traffic accidents are common in India, which has some of the world's deadliest roads. In October, 15 members of a wedding party, including

three children, were killed when a vehicle they were travelling in collided with a bus in southern India. In 2013, a speeding bus exploded in a ball of flames after crashing into the central reservation of a southern Indian highway, killing 45 passengers as they slept. The number of deaths on Indian roads—more than 231,000 every year, according to a World Health Organization in 2013—is disproportionately high.

India owns only one percent of global vehicles but accounts for 15

percent of traffic deaths around the world, according to the World Bank. Campaigners say commercial drivers are largely unregulated, meaning many work long hours overnight which raises the danger of falling asleep at the wheel. Transport analysts attribute the huge number of accidents to poor roads, badly maintained vehicles and reckless driving. The government has put forward proposals for new legislation to make roads safer by stiffening lax traffic regulations. — AFP



**USTKA:** An air-cushion vehicle goes toward the beach as NATO troops participate in the NATO sea exercises BALTOPS 2015 that are to reassure the Baltic Sea region allies in the face of a resurgent Russia, in Ustka, Poland. — AP

## ARMED WITH NEW US MONEY, NATO TO STRENGTHEN RUSSIA'S DETERRENCE

GERMANY, FRANCE, UK AGAINST NEW NATO BASES IN EAST

**BRUSSELS:** Backed by an increase in US military spending, NATO is planning its biggest build-up in eastern Europe since the Cold War to deter Russia but will reject Polish demands for permanent bases. Worried since Russia's seizure of Crimea that Moscow could rapidly invade Poland or the Baltic states, the Western military alliance wants to bolster defenses on its eastern flank without provoking the Kremlin by stationing large forces permanently. NATO defense ministers will next week begin outlining plans for a complex web of small eastern outposts, forces on rotation, regular war games and warehoused equipment ready for a rapid response force. That force includes air, maritime and special operations units of up to 40,000 personnel.

The allies are also expected to offer Moscow a renewed dialogue in the NATO-Russia Council, which has not met since 2014, about improved military transparency to avoid surprise events and misunderstandings, a senior NATO diplomat said. US plans for a four-fold increase in military spending in Europe to \$3.4 billion in 2017 are central to the strategy, which has been shaped in response to Russia's annexation of Crimea from Ukraine in 2014. The plans are welcomed by NATO whose chief, Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg, says it

will mean "more troops in the eastern part of the alliance ... the pre-positioning of equipment, tanks, armored vehicles ... more exercises and more investment in infrastructure."

Such moves will reinforce the message from US President Barack Obama, in a speech he delivered in Estonia in 2014, that NATO will help ensure the independence of the three Baltic states, which for decades were part of the Soviet Union. Lithuanian Defense Minister Juozas Olekas openly described Russia as a threat in comments to Reuters last June, but many European countries in the North Atlantic Treaty Organization are wary of upsetting the continent's biggest energy supplier. With such concerns paramount, diplomats and officials say NATO will not back requests for permanent bases by Poland, which has a history of fraught relations with Russia.

"I am a great proponent of strong deterrents and to improve our resilience, but I do think that the best way to do it is to do it on a rotational basis," Dutch Defense Minister Jeanine Hennis-Plasschaert said. Stoltenberg has also said he will not be "dragged into an arms race." Russia has made clear it would regard any moves to bring NATO infrastructure closer to its borders a threat and the Kremlin has warned it would take "reciprocal steps." Western

powers' relations with Russia have deteriorated over the almost two-year-old conflict in Ukraine but the West also need Russia's help in dealing with terrorism and the battle against Islamic State in Syria and Iraq.

### Persistent, not permanent

If approved by Congress, Washington says one US armoured brigade combat team's vehicles and equipment will be stored in warehouses in Germany and the east, from Bulgaria to Estonia. Moving equipment nearer a potential front is seen as crucial to be able to combat quickly Russia's surface-to-air missile batteries and anti-ship missiles in its Kaliningrad exclave that can prevent forces from entering or moving across air, land and sea.

A study by the RAND Corporation, a US defense think tank, found that Russia could overrun the Baltic states of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania within three days, leaving NATO and the United States no good options to respond. While avoiding a return to the Cold War when 300,000 US service personnel were stationed in Europe, NATO generals describe it as a "persistent" but not a "permanent" presence, and want to adhere to a 1997 agreement with Moscow not to station substantial combat forces on the NATO-Russia border. — Reuters

## TOP IRAQ SHIITE CLERIC TO END POLITICAL MESSAGES

**BAGHDAD:** Iraq's top Shiite cleric will no longer provide weekly Friday political messages that have had a major impact on politics and security, an apparent sign of frustration with the government. Grand Ayatollah Ali Al-Sistani, who is revered by millions, has used messages delivered by his representatives at Friday prayers to call Iraqis to arms against the Islamic State group, push for anti-corruption reforms, and urge unity in a deeply divided country.

Each Friday, "we would read, in the second sermon, a written text representing the perspectives and opinions of the supreme religious authority on Iraqi affairs," Sistani's representative Ahmed al-Safi said in the Shiite shrine city Karbala. But it has been "decided that this will not happen every week at this time," and rather only as circumstances require, said Safi, who did not give a reason for the decision.

Hayder Al-Khoei, an associate fellow at the Chatham House think-tank, said the end of the regular messages is a sign of Sistani's frustration with Prime Minister Haider Al-Abadi and his government. "Sistani is clearly still livid with the government over the abysmal failure of its reform program," Khoei said.

"His decision to not continue with a weekly political sermon indicates obvious frustration that his constant and consistent messages pushing for reform are not being listened to," he said. Sistani has repeatedly called for the Iraqi government to implement measures aimed at fighting the rampant corruption plaguing the country, and warned politicians not to undercut them. But while Sistani's calls gave Abadi the political cover needed to pursue reforms, opposition from across the political spectrum remained a major challenge and little in the way of deep, lasting change has been effected.

### 'Half-closing the door'

Khoei said a cleric from Najaf told him that with this decision, "Sistani is half-closing the door in Abadi's face." Sistani is a follower of the "quietist" tradition of Shiite Islam that eschews involvement in politics, as opposed to the much more active role advocated by clerics such as Iran's revolutionary leader Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini, who directly led the state. But Sistani has had a major impact at key moments in Iraqi history in the years since the 2003 US-led overthrow of Saddam Hussein.

His timely return to Najaf in August 2004 from London, where he had been undergoing medical treatment, settled a deadly confrontation between the US military and Moqtada Al-Sadr's Mahdi Army. Sistani also pressured the US to expedite the path to democratic elections, and has repeatedly urged people to vote.

And both at the height of the Sunni-Shiite sectarian conflict in Iraq and in later years, Sistani has urged unity among both Iraqi citizens and politicians. The ageing cleric's most influential pronouncement of recent years was a call for all able-bodied Iraqis to take up arms as part of the security forces to combat IS, which overran large parts of the country in 2014.

That call led to the formation of the Hashed Al-Shaabi, or Popular Mobilization units, which played a major role in halting and later pushing back the jihadists' advance. But while these forces are ostensibly under state control, they are dominated by Iran-backed Shiite militias that operate with a great deal of autonomy, and have been repeatedly accused of human rights abuses. — AFP

## FRENCH PURISTS VEXED AT DEMISE OF CIRCUMFLEX

**PARIS:** French linguistic purists voiced online anger Thursday at the loss of one of their favorite accents—the pointy little “circumflex” hat that sits on top of certain vowels. A change in the spelling of some 2,000 French words will come into effect in new primary school textbooks being released for the start of the school year in September, the education ministry and publishers announced. The circumflex accent will become optional for many words, as will other spelling changes which have purists rubbing their eyes—much like the effect of peeling an onion, which can now be spelled “ognon” as well as the traditional “oignon”. However the changes, which have caused uproar on French Twitter, were first approved by the prestigious guardians of the French language, the Academie Francaise, in 1990.

Since then both versions have been accepted, but the new spellings only began appearing in official

documents in the past few years. And the 2015 official “bulletin on new school teaching curricula” refers to the 1990 changes as the gold standard for teaching spelling. “What is new is a more explicit reference” to the reformed spelling in official material, said Sylvie Marce of the textbook publisher Belin. Some publishers had already made the changes. The changes were made to fix spelling anomalies and inconsistencies, according to a website devoted to the recommended spelling, [www.orthographe-recommandee.info](http://www.orthographe-recommandee.info).

It adds hyphens, takes them away, tweaks spellings and removes the circumflex from the ‘i’ and the ‘u’ where the accent makes no change to accent or meaning. The circumflex is “one of the main causes of errors and its usage is random,” said the website. But many are not convinced. “I will continue to use the circumflex, and to judge those who don’t,” wrote one Twitter user. The hashtag #JeSuisCircumflex (I am cir-

cumflex), a nod to the Je Suis Charlie phrase which swept social media after a jihadist attack in January last year, went viral in France. In other changes, “week-end”, becomes “weekend” as in English, but the word “leader” takes on a more French spelling of “leadeur” in the recommended spelling.

“This has been the official spelling in the Republic for 25 years. What is surprising is that we are surprised,” said Michel Lussault, president of the school curriculum board. “There were strange spelling anomalies linked to historic shifts so the Academie really made sure these changes were understandable,” he said. It was not an upheaval, he added, more a “clean-up”. When making the new spelling recommendations in 1990, the then “perpetual secretary” of the Academie Francaise Maurice Druon wrote that “language is a living thing,” adding: “Work should begin again in 30 years, if not earlier.” —AFP



**MAIDUGURI:** Soldiers look at a burnt vehicle during a visit to the village of Dalori village, some 12 kilometers from Borno state capital Maiduguri, northeastern Nigeria, after an attack by Boko Haram insurgents on the village left at least 85 people dead. —AFP

## RESCUED FROM BOKO HARAM, 16-YEAR-OLD HANKERS FOR LIFE WITH MILITANT HUSBAND

**ABUJA:** Almost a year after she was rescued from Boko Haram captivity by the Nigerian army, 16-year-old Zara John is still in love with one of the Islamic militants who abducted her. She was delighted to discover that she was pregnant with his child following a urine and blood test carried out by a doctor in the refugee camp to which she was taken after her rescue. “I wanted to give birth to my child so that I can have someone to replace his father since I cannot reconnect with him again,” said Zara, one of hundreds of girls kidnapped by Boko Haram militants during a seven-year insurgency in northeast Nigeria.

But any decision over the baby was taken out of her hands. Her father drowned during flooding in 2010 so her uncles intervened. Some were adamant they did not want a Boko Haram offspring in their family and insisted on an abortion. Others felt the child should not be blamed for its father’s crimes. In the end, the majority carried the vote and Zara was allowed to keep her child, a son she named Usman who is now about seven months old. “Everybody in the family has embraced the child,” Zara told the Thomson Reuters Foundation in a telephone interview, asking that her location remain undisclosed. “My uncle just bought him tins of Cerelac (instant cereal) and milk.” Zara was aged 14 when Boko Haram militants fighting to establish an Islamist state raided her village of Izge, in northeast Nigeria, in February 2014. They razed homes in the village, slaughtered men, and loaded women, girls and children into trucks. Two of Zara’s brothers were out of town when the militants struck in one of a wave of hit-and-run attacks on villages as well as suicide bombings on places of worship or markets. Zara’s mother fell off one of the overloaded trucks but tried to chase after the vehicle that was ferrying away her only daughter and her four-year-old son but was unable to keep up as the truck headed 22 km road journey to Bita.

### Enslaved by militants

At the time, Bita and other surrounding towns close to the Sambisa forest, were in Boko Haram control. “As soon as we arrived, they told us that we were now their slaves,” Zara recalled. Her days were spent doing chores and learning the tenets of her new religion, Islam, until, two months later, she was given away in marriage to Ali, a Boko Haram commander, and moved into from a shared house to his accommodation. “After I became a commander’s wife, I had freedom. I slept anytime I wanted, I woke up anytime I wanted,” she said. “He bought me food and clothes and gave me everything that a woman needs from a man,” adding that he also gave her a mobile phone with his number plugged in and tattooed his name on her stomach to mark her as a Boko Haram wife.

Ali assured her that the fight would soon be over and they would return to his home town of Baga where he intended his new wife to join his fishing business. He told her that he had abandoned his fisherman trade and joined the militant group after his father and elder brother, both fishermen like himself, were killed by Nigerian soldiers. In a June 2015 report based on years on research and analysis of evidence, Amnesty International said the Nigerian army was guilty of gross human rights abuse and extra judicial killing of civilians in parts of northeast Nigeria, calling for an investigation into war crimes. —Reuters

## CAMERON WOOS POLISH LEADERS AS ‘BREXIT’ DEAL DRAWS CLOSER

### POLES LIVING IN BRITAIN WILL ENJOY ‘FULL PROTECTION’

**WARSAW:** British Prime Minister David Cameron yesterday appeared to have come a step closer to sealing a contentious EU-wide deal on reforms to prevent a “Brexit”, as a key Polish leader said he was “very pleased” with the outcome of bilateral talks. Poland’s influential governing party leader Jaroslaw Kaczynski said “we’ve gained a great deal” after talks with Cameron tackling a controversial proposal to curb benefits to European Union migrants in Britain. Kaczynski told reporters that Poles living in Britain will enjoy “full protection” of their rights to benefits, including a controversial “allowance for children living in Poland.”

He is widely seen as the real deal-maker in Prime Minister Beata Szydlo’s right-wing populist Law and Justice (PiS) government that took office after winning an unprecedented majority in October’s election. Kaczynski also hailed Britain’s “readiness for wide-ranging cooperation on security.” Rattled by Russia’s 2014 annexation of Ukraine’s Crimean peninsula, Warsaw is lobbying NATO allies like Britain to boost troop numbers along the alliance’s vulnerable eastern flank at a July summit in the Polish capital.

Cameron yesterday launched two weeks of

high-stakes diplomacy aimed at reaching a deal to avert a “Brexit.” He must convince his fellow 27 European Union leaders to back controversial reform proposals at a leaders’ summit in Brussels on February 18-19. The risks were underlined yesterday by a new poll showing 45 percent of Britons now want to leave the EU—up three percentage points from a week earlier—with only 36 percent who want Britain to remain in the 28-member club.

Ahead of talks with Cameron in Warsaw, Szydlo told Britain’s The Times that the benefits proposal “doesn’t make me happy”. Her tone mellowed at a press conference with the British leader who stressed their countries’ “shared interests” and “strategic partnership,” in both the EU and NATO. But while saying it was “very important” to Poland for Britain to stay in the EU, she added: “There are always topics that need to be ironed out.”

### ‘Red card system’

“Over a million Poles live and work in Britain. Their work is growing Britain’s GDP and we want them to enjoy the same kind of opportunities for development as Britons,” Szydlo said. Sources close to the negotiations told AFP on

Thursday that so far no European leaders are satisfied with a draft agreement for a deal to avoid a “Brexit.”

The so-called Visegrad Four—the central European states of Poland, the Czech Republic, Hungary and Slovakia—say they will not accept any plan that discriminates against hundreds of thousands of their citizens working in Britain. Central Europeans have flocked to Britain in search of jobs and a better life since their poorer ex-communist countries joined the EU in 2004. While many are gainfully employed, the influx has nonetheless prompted criticism that the migrants are draining Britain’s generous welfare system.

A draft agreement unveiled on Monday by EU president Donald Tusk—a former Polish premier—includes a four-year “emergency brake” limiting welfare payments to migrants, as well as a “red card” system for national parliaments to overrule draft EU laws. Initial reactions from European capitals show that “nobody’s happy” with it, one European source said on Thursday. If Cameron gets an agreement by the EU summit, he will campaign for Britain to remain in the EU in an in-out referendum that is likely to be held in June. —AFP

## NEPAL QUAKE VICTIMS FIGHT FREEZING TEMPERATURES

**LAPRAK:** Nine months after a massive earthquake hit Nepal, thousands of survivors are now fighting sub-zero temperatures in flimsy temporary shelters, awaiting government help to rebuild their homes. The threat of landslides had forced families in the remote village of Laprak, close to the quake's epicentre in western Nepal, to relocate to a site a thousand meters higher.

Rajani Gurung was among those who trekked to safety, carrying her newborn son and her two daughters. The 7.8-magnitude quake which struck Nepal on April 25, killing nearly 9,000 people, reduced their house to rubble. But her new shelter of tin roof and tarps offers little protection against the snow that now blankets the settlement overnight.

Bone-chilling wind whistle through the gaps and drops of water seep in as the snow melts, wetting her bedding and blankets. "Life is difficult here because of the cold but we don't have another option. We cannot go back to our old village," the 28-year-old said.

Nepal's reconstruction authority (NRA), which is meant to oversee the rebuilding, was only set up in December last year after months of political bickering, despite donor pledges of billions in aid. Quake victims have so far received just \$150 in compensation per household, while the government has promised an additional \$2,000 once the NRA is able to disburse funds.

The NRA is now conducting a detailed assessment of the quake-hit areas and hopes to begin rebuilding before April. But the survivors of Laprak and thousands of others like them cannot wait that long. Bis Bahadur Gurung, another villager, said they are ready to protest if the government does not respond soon.

"If the government takes longer to help us reconstruct our homes we are ready to go and sit in front of the officials in Kathmandu and protest," the 50-year-old said. "We have enough clothes, blankets (and) relief items. But it's difficult because we don't have homes ... We hope the government helps us build homes soon." —AFP



**LAPRAK:** This photo taken on January 21, 2016 shows two young residents standing among temporary shelter in the Nepalese village. —AFP

## AFGHAN TALEBAN CLOSE RANKS AROUND LEADER

### NEW LEADER HOPES TO STRENGTHEN RESOLVE

**KANDAHAR:** Afghanistan's Taliban are closing ranks around their new leader after months of infighting that followed the death of Mullah Mohammad Omar, which could allow the insurgents to speak with one voice in hoped-for peace talks but will also strengthen them on the battlefield.

The Afghan government's announcement last summer that Mullah Omar, the reclusive one-eyed founder of the group, had died two years earlier in Pakistan aggravated longtime rifts within the movement. Many senior figures said his deputy-turned-successor, Mullah Akhtar Mansoor, had deliberately misled them.

The upheaval led to the collapse of Pakistan-brokered face-to-face talks between Kabul and the Taliban after just one round, and clashes flared between Mansoor loyalists and a splinter group led by Mullah Mohammad Rasool, which declared him the leader of the Taliban in November.

But Abdul Rauf, a Taliban commander close to Rasool, said senior Taliban figures who had objected to the rapid and secretive succession are now reluctantly returning to the fold. "We all took a stand against Mullah Akhtar Mansoor, but now one by one we are joining with him without demanding any changes," he said.

#### Drop objections

Relatives of Mullah Omar, notably his brother Manan and son Yaqub, had objected to the selection of Mansoor, which was done by a small inner circle of senior Taliban leaders. But they were persuaded last year to drop their objections and publicly declared their loyalty to Mansoor.

Rauf said Abdul Qayum Zakir, a military commander sacked by Mansoor in 2014, and former Rasool loyalists Abdullah Jan and Niaz Mohammad, had also reconciled with Mansoor. Mullah Hassan Rahmani, who was governor of southern Kandahar province when the Taliban ruled Afghanistan from 1996 to 2001, issued a statement last month saying he too would support Mansoor.

The Taliban's former foreign minister, Mohammad Ghaws, said he hoped the united front would help future peace talks succeed. "I am not in favor of or against any faction," he said, but if Rasool had continued to oppose Mansoor and the majority allied with him it would have

brought "no good to the Taliban or to Islam."

While Rasool has yet to reconcile, Mansoor had sent his representatives to meet with him in western Farah province, Ghaws said. "There is no religious reason for him (Rasool) not to come with the majority, and so I believe we will be fully united very soon." The Taliban's growing unity - brokered by religious scholars within the movement - has raised hopes that the group can be brought back into peace talks to end 15 years of war.

these two world powers have a great influence on Afghanistan and Pakistan, and can pressure both countries to encourage the armed opposition to come to the negotiating table," said Abdul Hakim Mujahid, a senior member of Afghanistan's High Peace Council, which is tasked with negotiating an end to the war.

Political analyst Nazar Mohammad Mutmaeen said the Taliban's newfound unity would be "effective and useful" for the peace process. But it could also make them even more formidable on the battlefield.



**FARAH PROVINCE:** In this Tuesday, Nov 3, 2015 file photo, Afghan Taliban fighters listen to Mullah Mohammed Rasool, unseen, the newly-elected leader of a breakaway faction of the Taliban. —AP

Afghanistan, Pakistan, the United States and China plan to hold a third round of talks on Saturday to lay the groundwork for the renewal of direct talks between Kabul and the Taliban. The Taliban's top leadership is widely believed to be based in Pakistan, and Islamabad is seen as having a key role in bringing them to the table.

#### Islamic rule

Afghanistan has vowed to wipe out any insurgents who do not join the peace process, while the Taliban have adhered to their demands for the withdrawal of all foreign forces, the release of Taliban prisoners and the establishment of some form of Islamic rule.

"Hopes for peace are increasing because the United States and China are involved -

The Taliban have advanced on a number of fronts since the US and NATO formally ended their combat mission and shifted to a supporting role more than a year ago.

As the snow melts in the rugged mountains along the Afghanistan-Pakistan border in the coming months, the insurgents are expected to launch their annual springtime offensive.

Even with all the infighting, the Taliban managed to seize the northern city of Kunduz last year and hold it for three days, marking the insurgents' biggest foray into a major urban area since 2001. "The Taliban leadership is fragile, but the movement is not," said a Western official in Kabul who has seen intelligence reports on the group. The official was not authorized to brief media on the subject so spoke on condition of anonymity. —AP

## PAKISTAN OBSERVES 'KASHMIR DAY'

**ISLAMABAD:** Pakistani Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif yesterday called for resolving the lingering issue of Kashmir in accordance with UN Security Council resolutions, saying the credibility of the global organization will be at stake if it fails to implement its own resolutions.

Sharif spoke to lawmakers in Muzaffarabad, the capital of Pakistan's part of Kashmir, as Pakistanis celebrated "Kashmir Day." Pakistan observes the day by holding rallies and arranging seminars on the issue of Kashmir, which is divided between Pakistan and India. "Only implementation of United Nations Security Council resolutions can amicably resolve the Kashmir issue. Until then peace in the region will remain an

elusive dream," he said.

He also expressed his hope for early resumption of bilateral talks between Pakistan and India, which were to be held in January but were delayed following an attack on an Indian air base. Seven Indian soldiers and all six attackers were killed in the assault in Pathankot, close to India's border with Pakistan. Indian investigators at the time said phone intercepts suggest that the gunmen in the assault came from Pakistan. Pakistan denounced the attack and detained several suspects for questioning.

Meanwhile, Sharif in a separate statement paid tribute to Kashmiris for showing resilience "in their struggle for free-

dom from Indian subjugation." He urged the international community to take notice of human rights violations in the Indian part of Kashmir.

The nuclear-armed neighbors have fought two of their three wars over Kashmir after gaining independence in 1947. UN security council resolution 47, adopted in 1948, calls for a vote among Kashmir residents to determine the disputed region's fate. But the resolution was non-binding and has never been implemented. India accuses Pakistan of arming and training Kashmir insurgents in its portion of Kashmir. Pakistan says it only provides moral and diplomatic support. —AP

## AIRLINE CREW GROUNDED OVER CROONER'S MID-AIR CONCERT

**NEW DELHI:** India's Jet Airways has grounded five crew members for allowing a Bollywood singer to perform over the in-flight announcement system, an airline spokesman said yesterday, prompting a social media backlash against the decision. The temporary suspension of the crew comes after a video showing singer Sonu Nigam's impromptu performance last month went viral, prompting an investigation by authorities.

"All cabin crew on the flight have been

taken off from flight duty for enquiry and corrective training to reinforce strict adherence to operating procedures," a Jet Airways spokesman said in a statement. The video showed the celebrity singer crooning to chart-topping Bollywood songs with other passengers joining in on a chartered flight from the western city of Jodhpur to Mumbai on January 4.

Following its probe, government officials asked the airline to take action against the cabin crew for violating regulations and

misusing the in-flight announcement system. The crew's suspension was trending in India on Friday with Twitter users lashing out at the authorities for suspending the crew. "Never knew Sonu Nigam would be such a bad music to ears of Jet Airways. Suspending 5 lovely ladies for good sense of music.. Seriously??," user Yashwant Deshmukh tweeted. "Wah! He made the passengers smile.. and jet airways suspended the crew.. great!! Get well soon Jet Airways," tweeted Sana Sheikh. However,

many netizens supported the carrier's decision, saying such actions could jeopardise flight safety.

"I'm glad @jetairways has suspended [its] crew for allowing Sonu Nigam to 'misuse' the announcement system. It is unacceptable & dangerous," tweeted Tehseen Poonawalla. In 2014, Spice Jet, another private airline, suspended cabin crew and two pilots after a video went viral, showing the staff dancing in mid-flight to celebrate the Hindu festival Holi. — AFP

## MISSING HK BOOKSELLERS HELD IN CHINA: POLICE

**HONG KONG:** Chinese police have said for the first time that they are holding three Hong Kong booksellers who went missing on the mainland last year, sparking accusations that Beijing has "total contempt" for the law.

The admission confirms what many in the quasi-independent territory have suspected, and will reinforce fears that rights guaranteed under the principle of "One Country, Two Systems" are being eroded. The three men all work for the Mighty Current publishing house, based in Hong Kong and known for salacious titles critical of the Chinese government.

Five booksellers from the firm have disappeared since October. All have now turned up in China, drawing international criticism. Campaign group Amnesty International said yesterday Chinese authorities had "total contempt for due process and the rule of law". "The Chinese authorities need to end their smoke and mirrors strategy and come clean with a full and proper explanation," said Amnesty's China researcher William Nee.

Washington called on Beijing Monday to explain the disappearances, with a State Department spokesman saying the incidents "raise serious questions about China's commitment to Hong Kong's autonomy". Booksellers Lui Por, Cheung Chi-ping and Lam Wing-kee disappeared in southern mainland China in October. A fourth missing member of the company, Gui Minhai, a Swedish national, was paraded weeping on Chinese state television in January, where he said he had turned himself in for a fatal driving accident 11 years ago. Gui had failed to return to Hong Kong from a holiday in Thailand in October.

In a letter to Hong Kong police, the Interpol Guangdong Liaison Office, part of the southern Chinese province's public security department, said the three men being held "were suspected to be involved in a case relating to a person named Gui, and were involved in illegal activities on the mainland." "Criminal compulsory measures were imposed on them and they were under investigation," said the letter, released by Hong Kong police late Thursday.

### 'Let them go home'

Enclosed was also a letter from the fifth missing bookseller, Lee Bo, Hong Kong police said. Lee's case has sparked the strongest backlash as he was the only one of the men to have disappeared while in Hong Kong. Lee was last seen at a book warehouse in his home city in December.

Lawmakers and activists have accused mainland authorities of snatching Lee from the city, contravening Hong Kong's laws which do not allow Chinese police to operate within the territory. The new letter from Lee said Chinese authorities had told him Hong Kong police wanted to meet with him on the mainland, according to the Hong Kong police statement.

"He stated that he did not need to meet with police at the moment. He would contact police should he need to meet with police," the statement said. It added that Lee's wife had confirmed the letter was in her husband's handwriting.

Some supporters of the booksellers believe they were targeted over a new book they were about to publish on the love life of Chinese leader Xi Jinping. The author of the book, Chinese writer Xi Nuo, based in the US, urged China to release the men. "They are not responsible for this. I'm responsible for this. I want to... tell the Chinese government: let the five guys go home," the author told the BBC. Hong Kong police have asked the Guangdong authorities to "assist in following up the situations" of the three booksellers revealed to be under investigation, and to reiterate to Lee that Hong Kong police wanted to meet with him, the statement said. Hong Kong was handed back to China by Britain in 1997 and its freedoms and way of life are protected under a 50-year agreement. The disappearances have added to already simmering tensions over the erosion of those freedoms after attacks on journalists, increasing self-censorship and accusations of interference in the city's education institutions. — AFP



**TOKYO:** In this Thursday, Feb 3, 2016 photo, visitors stand next to a religious ornament with the "manji" symbol, which comes from the ancient Sanskrit and is widely used for centuries to denote Buddhist temples on maps and elsewhere, at a temple. — AP

## JAPAN TO CHANGE TEMPLE MAP ICON TO AVOID NAZI CONFUSION

### COUNTRY FACING A CULTURAL DILEMMA

**TOKYO:** As Japan gears up to host the 2020 Tokyo Olympics and caters to a surging influx of foreign visitors, the country faces a cultural dilemma: Should it stop identifying Buddhist temples on maps with the traditional "manji" symbol that is often confused with a Nazi swastika?

The symbol, from ancient Sanskrit, means happiness and prosperity. It has been used for centuries by Hindus and Buddhists, and has turned up in archaeological digs in Europe. But many Western tourists associate it with anti-Semitism and the Holocaust because the emblem was adopted by Nazi Germany to try to enhance a sense of ancient lineage. The swastika in Japan - which usually points counter-clockwise, the reverse of the Nazi symbol - has been used for centuries in Buddhist decorations and to denote Buddhist temples on maps.

At Sensoji Temple, a top tourist destination in Tokyo, a big gold "manji" emblem appears on a pair of lotus-shaped bronze ornaments, while smaller, more subtle ones decorate roof tiles. It's even an official emblem for Hiroshima, a city in northern Japan. In a report released last month, a government panel at the Geospatial

Information Authority proposed a three-tiered pagoda symbol to replace the swastika. It is one of 18 suggested icons for landmarks like hospitals and convenience stores for foreign-language maps, part of a broader push to create user-friendly maps for the growing number of foreign tourists, which jumped more than 40 percent last year to a record 19.7 million.

### 'Hooked cross'

A final decision is expected in late March following a period of seeking public comment. Japan's main Buddhist group is nonchalant because the change doesn't affect domestic maps and therefore likely won't alter perceptions at home. "We are aware that some people say the 'manji' symbol could remind them of the 'hak-enkreuz' symbol, which was created much later in history," said Ryoka Nishino, a spokesman for Japan Buddhist Federation, referring to the "hooked cross" term often used to denote the Nazi emblem.

"Even though we have more foreign visitors, our symbol that decorates each temple will stay," he said. Public opinion seems divided on Twitter and other social networks. Supporters for the change say it

would help avoid confusion among tourists, while opponents say there is no need to change the ancient sign just to cater to foreigners. Instead, they say, the symbol should be kept as a way to teach people about the ancient history behind it. Others point out that the "manji" symbol turns the opposite way from the Nazi symbol, so it is different. The objective is to make symbols easier to understand, said geospatial authority mapping officer Takayuki Nakamura. "A good symbol on the map should be able to tell a visitor what it is at the first glance," he said. "The question is whether one can easily tell it's a temple by looking at the current symbol." The recommendation was based on survey results collected from more than 1,000 foreigners, including embassy officials, exchange students as well as tourists.

Other symbols that would be altered for foreign maps include the one for a hotel, which currently looks like the symbol for helipads, and a saluting policeman would replace the current giant X sign supposedly representing a pair of clubs for police station. The maps would add a new symbol for convenience stores, which are ubiquitous in Japan - a sandwich and water bottle. — AP

# CLINTON GOES ON ATTACK AGAINST SURGING SANDERS

'WE SHARE SOME VERY BIG PROGRESSIVE GOALS'

**DURHAM:** Hillary Clinton mounted a sharp attack on White House rival Bernie Sanders Thursday, accusing her Democratic challenger of waging a smear campaign and warning his promises of revolution "don't add up." The nearly two-hour debate at the University of New Hampshire in Durham comes five days before the state votes in the first primary of the 2016 election race, after Clinton clinched the narrowest victory in Iowa caucus history against Sanders this week.

While most expect Clinton to ultimately secure her party's nomination, she faces a much steeper uphill climb than once imagined as the 74-year-old senator from Vermont whips up passionate support

among young voters-earning him a double-digit poll lead in neighboring New Hampshire.

In their first one-on-one duel, the former secretary of state made a play to woo Sanders's fan base by presenting herself as a battle-hardened progressive who can improve the lives of struggling Americans-and whose experience makes her far better suited to the job. "Senator Sanders and I share some very big progressive goals," the former first lady said. "But the numbers just don't add up from what Senator Sanders has been proposing."

Sanders, who identifies as a democratic socialist-unique for a US presidential candidate-hammered home his opposition to

what he believes is the corrosive power of Wall Street on American democracy. He insisted Clinton cannot claim to be both a moderate and a progressive, criticizing her for raising \$15 million from Wall Street-and prompting some of the night's sharpest exchanges. "Enough is enough," Clinton said. I don't think these attacks are worthy of you."

**'Artful smear'**

"I think it's time to end the very artful smear that you and your campaign have been carrying out in recent weeks," the 68-year-old added to a smattering of boos among the in-house audience of 600. "You will not find that I ever changed a view or a vote because of any donation that I ever received." Sanders hit back by insisting that billionaires undermine democracy in the United States by spending unlimited funds on election campaigns. "We need a political revolution where millions of people stand up and say loudly and clearly that our government belongs to all of us and not just a handful of wealthy campaign contributors," he said.

Sanders presented himself throughout as a fresh voice championing a political revolution to raise the voice of working Americans and young voters, offering universal health care and free public colleges. The more moderate Clinton advocates incremental change: slow but steady reforms on Wall Street, tweaks to Obama's Affordable Care Act and expanding university scholarships. —AFP



**DURHAM:** Democratic presidential candidates former Secretary of State Hillary Clinton and US Sen Bernie Sanders (I-VT) during their MSNBC Democratic Candidates Debate at the University of New Hampshire. —AFP



**PORTSMOUTH:** Republican presidential candidate Donald Trump speaks at a rally at the Great Bay Community College. —AP

# TRUMP SHOWS OTHER SIDE AFTER IOWA LOSS

**EXETER:** Stung by his second-place finish in Iowa, Donald Trump is facing new pressure to prove he can translate his massive crowds and poll leads into election wins. And his team appeared intent to demonstrate on Thursday that they'd learned from any past mistakes.

Trump's campaign increased the day's planned events for New Hampshire from two to five - the most he'd ever advertised on the trail. He visited with local business owners, answering questions and signing autographs, then offered a pep talk to several dozen local police. That was in addition to two of his usual large-scale events, less than a week before next Tuesday's primary. A handful of reporters were also invited into his campaign headquarters to chat with staff and volunteers as he held a private meeting - a move that would have been unheard of in Iowa, where his team imposed a strict "radio silence" policy and shrouded its operation in secrecy. Trump has blamed his second-place finish in Iowa on a long list of factors, including, at times of reflection, his own missteps. He's conceded he could have done better if he'd spent more time and money in the state.

**'Better ground game'**

"You know, I think in retrospect we should have had a better ground game," he said in an interview this week on MSNBC. Trump's New Hampshire organization has, for months, appeared more robust than the operation he'd put together in Iowa. He's racked up dozens of endorsements, and his Manchester campaign headquarters is large and brimming with staff and volunteers placing calls. —AFP

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**CIUDAD JUAREZ:** Police walk in front of a banner welcoming Pope Francis at the main entrance of the city prison. —AFP

## 'JUAREZ IS LOVE': CITY HOSTING POPE SHEDS VIOLENT IMAGE

**CIUDAD JUAREZ:** Billboards with pictures of Pope Francis welcome the pontiff to Mexico's former murder capital with the inviting phrase "Juarez is Love," as the northern border works to shed its violent image. Ciudad Juarez, just across from El Paso, Texas, is striving to show that it is no longer a gangland battleground or the dark place where hundreds of women have been senselessly murdered. Life has returned on the streets while inmates at the state prison put a coat of fresh paint on the penitentiary's church as they prepare for the pope to visit them on February 17. The prison is a symbol of the city's violent past, but also of its recovery.

Some 30 inmates in orange jumpsuits arranged plants and painted the church this week in biting-cold temperature as they spruced up a place where some 100 prisoners died in riots and brawls in 2010. "There used to be groups in here that would cause problems between them. As an inmate, you would have to run to your cell," said Joel Torres, a former soldier who has served 15 years at the Number Three state prison for murder.

"This doesn't happen anymore. They take away even the smallest nail. It's very secure," Torres said as his face lightened up at the thought of the pope's visit to the prison. Outside the prison grounds, the city was once engulfed in a bloody turf war between the Sinaloa drug

cartel of captured kingpin Joaquin "El Chapo" Guzman and the Juarez gang. The murder spree peaked at more than 3,000 homicides in 2010, but it fell in the following years, dropping to around 300 last year, according to official figures. The local government has attributed the improvements to the arrival of a hardnosed police chief and a crime prevention program. But security experts and law enforcement sources say violence dropped because the Sinaloa drug cartel won the turf war and focused again on getting drugs across the border.

### Missing girls

But the city's violent past has left scars that have not healed despite the message of love for the pope, which contrasts with the pictures of missing girls and women pasted on walls. "This city is recovering because that's what God wants, and the pope is coming to give us words of encouragement because many families are suffering," said Susana Montes, a 46-year-old woman who could not hold back tears as she remembered the tragic afternoon of January 31, 2009. That fateful day, her 17-year-old daughter, Maria Guadalupe, disappeared when she went downtown to buy tennis shoes. Montes did her own investigation because she did not believe that the authorities were doing their job. After several months, she learned that a criminal

group kidnapped her daughter, held her in a hotel and forced her into prostitution along with other girls. Maria Guadalupe's dismembered body was found later in a creek, near a military facility, along with 11 other girls who are among more than 400 women who have been victims of "femicides" since 1993.

### Pope's visit a 'gift'

Violence is not the only problem that has lacerated Ciudad Juarez. In the 1980s, the city's proximity to the United States attracted many foreign companies that built factories, known here as "maquiladoras," which prompted thousands of Mexicans to travel here to work for low salaries. But competition from China caused some manufacturers to move out, and those that have stayed face workers seeking better conditions.

Around 100 workers of US printer maker Lexmark have set up camp outside the factory, accusing the firm of firing them for forming a union and demanding a wage increase from their \$38 weekly salaries. While the pope will hear from some factory workers, one of his central messages at a cross-border mass will be directed at migrants whose quest for the "American Dream" has turned into a nightmare of deportation and separation from their families. —AFP

## NYPD PLANS TO WAKE UP SNOOZING PASSENGERS

**NEW YORK:** Even in the city that never sleeps, there's at least one place New Yorkers value a little shuteye. On late-night and early-morning subway rides, it's common to see passengers dozing off (or passing out) on the way home. But New York City's police commissioner is sounding the alarm. More than half of all subway crime in the past year involved a sleeping victim. And now he's instructing police officers to wake sleeping passengers in an effort to keep them safe.

Prudent idea? Maybe. But Bratton's shake-and-wake plan wasn't sitting well with some passengers. Being able to doze during a commute - if you can get a seat - is one of the little luxuries that sets New York life apart from the car-centric suburbs, where a drowsy nod behind the wheel can mean disaster. "Who does it hurt" asked John Fernandez, 26, who lives in Manhattan and occasionally catches a quick nap during his 40-minute subway commute. "Sometimes you just want to close your eyes."

Police Commissioner William Bratton insists "subways are not for sleeping" and snoozing passengers are putting themselves at risk. "If you are sleeping on the subway, you make yourself a very easy victim," Bratton said. "Why would you put yourself at that risk?" Subway crime in New York City is a world away from the dark days of the transit system, when people were afraid to ride after dark. But a recent spate of newspaper headlines over slashings and stabbings has drawn attention to subway safety. The idea to nudge passengers awake is not new. Transit officers in 2012 noticed a spike in subway-related thefts and went car-to-car on the late shifts making sure people weren't asleep.

### Property theft

Police are now focused on the late-night and early-morning trains when people are often alone in a car asleep. On Tuesday, a passenger who dozed off on an early-morning subway train in Manhattan was jolted awake around 3 am when he felt a tug on his pants, police said. When he woke up, he saw another man standing over him with a razor in his hand and realized his pants had been cut around the pocket. The would-be robber threw a punch, then ran off empty handed.

New York City Mayor Bill de Blasio downplayed the safety fears, but also backed the so-called sleep sweep. "Almost six million people take the subway, and there are approximately six or seven crimes committed in the subway each day," he said in a radio interview Thursday. "And most of those are property theft. Most of those are someone taking an iPhone or some other kind of electronic." The city's subway rules do not prohibit someone from sleeping on the train unless they take up more than one seat or cause a disturbance.

As she waited to board the subway at New York's Pennsylvania Station on Thursday, passenger Yvette Johnson called the idea that police would wake people, "ridiculous." "Sometimes you just can't stay awake," she said. "You come home late and you just need a quick nap." Sure, sometimes there are creeps on the subway, she said. "But I still don't want to be jolted awake when there isn't even anybody else on the train." —AP

## POLICE INVESTIGATE BODIES FOUND IN CHICAGO HOME

**CHICAGO:** Chicago police are investigating what led to the deaths of four men, a woman and a child whose bodies were found with signs of trauma inside a home on the city's South Side. Officers discovered the bodies Thursday, and police said the case was being treated as an apparent multiple homicide.

Interim Chicago Police Superintendent John Escalante told reporters the case appeared to be an isolated incident and there was no wider threat to the community, but police added extra patrols in the neighborhood as a precaution. Asked whether it could have been a murder-suicide, he said it was "a possibility."

Police spokesman Anthony Guglielmi said later Thursday that

police were "not yet" searching for suspects. There were "signs of trauma to the bodies," Escalante said, without giving further details. The medical examiner's office has not yet released a cause of death.

Standing in the street in the Gage Park neighborhood, Escalante said police checked the house Thursday afternoon after receiving a call from a co-worker worried about someone who lived there. The person had missed two days of work, which was "highly unusual and very suspicious," Escalante said.

Police arrived at the single-family brick home just after 1 p.m. They looked inside and saw one body, entered and found five

more. Authorities were still working to identify the dead. Escalante said it's probable they were all family members and police were trying to locate relatives. He said the child was thought to be 10 to 12 years old.

### 'They were a normal family'

Six people lived in the home - a couple, their son, their daughter and the daughter's two children - a relative said. "They were a normal family. Everything was fine," Noemi Martinez, 29, said from Dallas during a phone interview in Spanish. She said her husband was a nephew and cousin of the home's residents. —AP

# Kuwait Times BUSINESS

Wars, cheap oil hurt  
Middle East growth

17 Toyota net profit jumps  
to \$16bn, raises forecast

18 Some Chinese workers  
ditch holidays to protest

20

SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 6, 2016



19  
US job growth slows,  
unemployment rate  
at eight-year low



**MARDIN, Turkey:** Turkish Prime Minister Ahmet Davutoglu waves to the crowd yesterday in this city in southeastern Turkey. Davutoglu promised to invest the equivalent of eight billion euros in Turkey's Kurdish-dominated southeast, which has been battered by decades of fighting between rebels and the military. — AFP

## BREAD, MEAT AND A BLAME GAME

FOOD PRICES FUEL TURKEY INFLATION • ECONOMISTS SEE STRUCTURAL PROBLEMS

**ISTANBUL:** Standing amid a jumble of food stalls in an Istanbul market, 61-year-old Gulsen Yuce wonders how she can stretch an already tight budget to make ends meet as food prices rise week after week. Inflation has become Turkey's biggest economic challenge, hitting the pockets of ordinary people even as President Tayyip Erdogan and the ruling party have built their reputation largely on economic growth and stability.

"A head of lettuce is 5 lira and I have difficulty paying that much for it. I live on my own, I get by on fish or poultry instead of red meat," said Yuce, one of the 10 million Turks who scrape by on pensions as low as 1,000 lira (\$330) a month. Global food prices have fallen to their lowest in nearly seven years, but Turkey has consistently struggled with food costs overshooting headline inflation - at a rate that has at times outpaced other emerging markets.

Ankara's inability to cool the rise has fuelled a blame game among food producers and retailers, with each accusing the other of hiking prices. Industry officials and economists say there are deeper structural problems, from the lack of a long-term agricultural policy to a supply chain hindered by middlemen and arcane bureaucracy.

"Turkey sticks out like a sore thumb among the major emerging markets whose inflation rates are sig-

nificantly above target," said Nicholas Spiro of Laourea Advisory, an economics and property consultancy. "There's little indication that monetary policy will be tightened sufficiently any time soon to curb inflationary pressures, which are particularly prevalent in food despite the sharp decline in global food prices." Annual inflation hit 9.58 percent in January - the highest since the middle of 2014 - fuelled by an 11.69 percent rise in food prices, data showed this week. The central bank has hiked its food inflation estimate for this year to 9 percent, from 8 percent. By contrast, South African food prices rose 5.9 percent last year, just a touch more than the overall inflation rate of 5.2 percent. Turkey also outpaced Russia, where the food price increase was 1.1 percent greater than overall inflation.

### Bread and Meat

Central Bank Governor Erdem Basci has cited the surging cost of bread and red meat as the main culprit and asked a government-run food committee to take measures to limit the impact on overall inflation, but it remains unclear what the committee can do. Food and beverages account for the largest portion of Turkey's inflation basket, at 24 percent. The price of a loaf of bread increased in Istanbul by 25 percent at the beginning of this year, while the annual

increase in red meat averaged 21 percent nationally last year. The economy minister has said Ankara will allow more red meat imports to keep prices down. But Turkey has already imported about \$4 billion in meat and livestock over the last decade and that has done little to fight inflation. Industry officials and analysts said boosting imports would be a short-term remedy at best. The bigger problem, they say, lies with scattered farm ownership that prevents large-scale farming, outdated agricultural technology and unpredictable harvests borne of poor planning.

Both the head of the red meat producers association, Bulent Tunc, and the chairman of the bakers association cited a web of middlemen as a major cause of price pressure.

"There is a problem in the supply chain," Tunc said. In Turkey, the food business is riddled with intermediaries. Farmers' costs include bureaucratic formalities such as imposts, pesticide tests and quality certification, all of which are usually handled by informal middlemen.

To reduce the impact of middlemen, the government enacted a law in 2012 to remove some informal intermediaries and give farmers direct access to retailers. That helped lower wholesale prices by almost 20 percent, but had little impact on retail prices, a central bank study found in 2015. "The power of big retailers

to set prices seems to be the reason for that gap," the study concluded.

### Urban Legend

Retailers dismiss the idea that they have vast pricing power. "That's an urban legend," said Nihat Ozdemir, chairman of Turkey's main association of food retailers, citing stiff competition in fresh produce. "There isn't a single retailer who can say they profit from fresh food." They argue that they are saddled with high transport, distribution and wastage costs for fresh food, while profit margins are razor-thin. Mehmet Nane, the chief executive of Carrefour, one of Turkey's largest supermarket chains, blamed speculators for driving up the price of grains and meat, and said the government-run food committee should take action. "The food committee should prevent those who are collecting products in advance and selling them when prices rise," he said. Food expenditures account for nearly 22 percent of the budget of the poorest fifth of the population, official data shows. Food inflation has blunted the positive impact of a recent minimum wage hike for the poor, said Muammer Komurcuoglu, economist with Istanbul based Is Invest. That argument resonates with Yuce, the pensioner. "We are paid with a spoon and they take from us with a ladle," she said. — Reuters

## TOP UK RESTAURANTS DITCH A LA CARTE MENUS

**LONDON:** In the name of reducing waste and freeing up chefs' creativity, top British restaurants are doing away with long menus to give diners a limited selection of dishes or no choice at all. "It is we who decide," said Mikael Jonsson, head chef at Hedone in the district of Chiswick in west London. Last summer, the 49-year-old Swede decided to scrap the menu, after four years of observing customers' tastes.

"More and more regular customers do not want to see the menu, and want a personalized menu drawn up by me," Jonsson told AFP in his restaurant dining room. Hedone has had a Michelin star since 2012, a year after it opened, and has been included in the world rankings of the "50 Best Restaurants" since 2013. "Some wanted the surprise, others did not know what to order," he added. Now, Jonsson decides what diners will eat, though customers are asked about their preferences when they make a booking.

From a personal point of view, "it's super interesting to work this way," Jonsson said. "No two days are the same." Jonsson uses ingredients available on the day to create a menu of seven to 10 dishes each evening, something which allows the use of higher quality and rarer ingredients. "If we offer bass on a menu which is changed every two months, it is impossible to offer exceptional bass every day. Now, if I can't find a bass I'm happy with I will offer turbot or another fish," Jonsson said. "It allows me to serve woodcock at one table and hare at another because I don't have enough for everyone."

Another advantage in ditching the menu is that it reduces waste, as less ingredients are needed to be kept in stock. "We notice the difference, especially with seafood and pastry which you can now prepare at the last minute."

### Less Waste

Hedone reflects a wider trend, according to "50 Best" director William Drew. This is driven by customers' interest in being surprised by dishes, in an era when they will often be familiar with the restaurant's fare from Instagram. "I think the idea of not having a menu is growing," Drew said. "It plays to the idea of diners having a 'bespoke experience' which is tailored to their wants and needs, but in practice it also allows the chefs to have more freedom based on availability of ingredients and so forth."

The shift has also been noted in France and New York, but is likely to remain confined to gastronomic centres. "I'm not sure it really works in restaurants that are not destinations for foodies already," Drew said. "You have to earn the right to work on this basis, to have built a formidable reputation so that the diners trust the judgement of the staff and the chef." Restaurants following the trend in London include sushi restaurant Araki, which has two Michelin stars and offers a unique set menu, and the two-Michelin-starred Hibiscus which offers a surprise tasting menu in the evening. But others are following outside the capital. The Checkers, in Montgomery in Wales offers between five and nine dishes a day in a tasting menu. "With an a la carte menu there will always be a degree of wastage," said Kathryn Francis, who manages the Michelin-starred restaurant. "This new format gives our kitchen team greater control over what they need to prepare." It also makes sense financially in a sector where margins are tight, Francis added. "Many fine dining restaurants now offer tasting menus only - it is a reflection of the need to be minimizing wastage - offering your guests the very best you can and maintaining a profitable and healthy business." —AFP



**LONDON:** Swedish chef Mikael Jonsson poses with a tray of woodcock, a type of wading bird, in his restaurant Hedone in Chiswick in west London on Jan 27, 2016. —AFP

## STOCKS, BONDS FALL AS US REPORT MUDDLES OUTLOOK

### DOLLAR REBOUNDS FROM RECENT LOSSES

**NEW YORK:** Global stocks and bond prices fell after a key US jobs report painted a mixed picture of the US labor market and left investors with a muddled view on rate hike prospects. The dollar rose, rebounding after two days of losses that forced the unwinding of large bets in favor of the greenback against other currencies worldwide. Oil prices dipped and were set to end the week lower after two weeks of gains. While US non-farm payrolls increased by just 151,000 jobs last month, well below forecasts of 190,000, the unemployment rate fell to 4.9 percent, the lowest since February 2008, and a sharp rise in wages suggested the labor market recovery remained on track.

Despite the weak headline figure, the rest of the report was taken hawkishly by markets. Fed funds futures contracts showed traders boosted chances of a Fed rate hike in December to about 40 percent. Before the report, they expect-



**NEW YORK:** A trader works on the floor of the New York Stock Exchange yesterday. —AP

ed the Fed to wait until well into next year before raising rates. The increase in hourly wages and decline in the unemployment rate "serves as a caution to markets that it is too early to take a Federal Reserve March hike completely off the table," said Mohamed El-Erian, chief economic advisor at Allianz in Newport Beach, California.

Wall Street was lower, led by weakness in technology shares after poor results from data company Tableau Software and networking platform LinkedIn. The S&P 500 information technology sector fell 2.7 percent. The Dow Jones industrial average fell 195.04 points, or 1.19 percent, to 16,221.54, the S&P 500 lost 30.29 points, or 1.58 percent, to 1,885.16 and the Nasdaq Composite dropped 119.48 points, or 2.65 percent, to 4,390.08.

After a weak service-sector business sentiment report on Wednesday and dovish comments from New York Federal Reserve chief William Dudley, US money markets shifted to forecast no move in official interest rates this year. The Federal Reserve's own forecasts, meanwhile, still suggest four increases by year-end, a pace many consider unlikely, which is likely to be addressed by Fed Chair Janet Yellen next week when she appears before Congress for semi-annual monetary policy testimony.

The dollar index rose 0.6 percent to 97.05, having endured a pretty rough week. The dollar has shed 2.7 percent this week as expectations that the Fed would raise rates at least once this year evaporated on signs of domestic weakness and broader concerns over global growth. The dollar's decline was spurred by traders unwinding complicated cross-market bets that involved borrowing in euro and yen and buying US assets.

US bond yields rose after the jobs report, with the 10-year yield rising to 1.87 percent, though shorter-dated Treasuries had a more dramatic move, causing the yield curve to flatten, a signal of concern about economic slowdown. The 10-year yield has still fallen by 10 basis points since the start of this month. Crude oil was lower. Brent crude was down 0.3 percent at \$34.38 a barrel, while US crude fell 0.6 percent to \$31.58 a barrel. —Reuters

## OIL PRICES STEADY

**LONDON/SINGAPORE:** Crude oil futures steadied yesterday after earlier losses, as bearish fundamentals weighed on markets at the end of a volatile week that saw prices seesaw over 10 percent within a day. International benchmark Brent crude futures were trading at \$34.37 per barrel at 0917 GMT, down 9 cents from their last settlement after dipping below \$34 earlier in the session. U.S. West Texas Intermediate (WTI) crude futures were up 8 cents at \$31.80 a barrel.

"The surplus situation continues to weigh on the front end while the softer dollar has been able to support the longer-term contracts, at least in Brent crude," Bjarne Schieldrop, chief commodities analyst with SEB in Oslo, said. Traders said liquidity had been low during Asian business hours due to the Lunar New Year holiday which will last for most of next week. Oil prices have been extremely volatile since the start of the year, and in particular this week, as a string of bullish indicators like a slump in the dollar and potential talks on output cuts clashed with bearish reports of record US crude inventories, higher output and a slowing global economy.

"We expect that volatility could remain elevated especially on upward moves from short covering; net length in WTI is at its lowest level since 08/01/2013 implying a large short position," investment bank Jefferies said yesterday. —Reuters

## GOLD SLIPS AFTER MIXED US DATA

**LONDON:** The price of gold slipped back from three-month highs yesterday as a mixed US jobs report prompted investors to reassess the outlook for US interest rates this year and pushed the dollar higher. US non-farm payrolls rose by 151,000 in January, well below a Reuters poll forecast for a rise of 190,000 and down sharply from December, but hourly wages surged and the unemployment rate fell to an eight-year low, suggesting the labor market recovery remains on track.

Spot gold initially rose after the jobs report to \$1,161.31 an ounce, its highest since Oct 29, but it then fell to a session low of \$1,144.96. By 1524 GMT it was down 0.5 percent at \$1,149.5 an ounce. The price has advanced nearly 3 percent this week as investors started to doubt that the US will raise rates this year after a top Fed official, William Dudley, said there was a need to consider the weakening global outlook in framing US monetary policy. —Reuters



## RIYAL DEVALUATION CARRIES MAJOR POLITICAL RISK

**RIYADH:** A devaluation of Saudi Arabia's currency could cause such political instability that Riyadh has little choice but to stick to its promise to use vast foreign exchange reserves to defend the riyal's 30-year-old peg to the US dollar. Currency traders have been betting against the Saudi peg, and those of other regional oil producers, in the wake of oil's price collapse. Societe Generale said on Thursday it saw at least a 25 percent chance of a near-term devaluation or 40 percent if oil prices stay at current levels throughout 2016.

But in Saudi Arabia's largely dollar-denominated economy breaking the peg would immediately raise the price of goods, hitting living standards. Combined with other pending painful economic reforms, this could lead to unrest in a country where the unwritten social contract

swaps citizens' obedience and allegiance to the king for good government services and a share in oil wealth. "Devaluation of the currency or depegging would self-inflict destructive economic pain. It would be catastrophic," said John Sfakianakis, a Riyadh-based economist.

### Insulated

Some diplomats living in Saudi Arabia say privately that a break in the peg is the single biggest political risk facing a country already embroiled in a war in Yemen and suffering periodic deadly attacks by militants. The biggest Arab economy has only a small manufacturing base and almost all goods come as dollar-priced imports, so a cheaper riyal would instantly make normal Saudis feel poorer without providing any benefit to the wide economy

via cheaper exports.

Saudi citizens have so far been mostly insulated from the impact of lower oil prices. The cost of fuel is cheap, even after a 50 percent rise in petrol prices, and the cuts in spending have yet to be felt in employment. But change is coming. Riyadh promised in its 2016 budget statement to slow increases in the state payroll, meaning few new government jobs, and as Saudi private sector growth closely tracks government spending, this means few private sector jobs.

The impact of a sudden rise in living costs and a collapse in purchasing power in such circumstances from a devaluation could be explosive. "Especially at this time, because of the difficult reforms coming down the road, it would be very hard to sell to the public," said Jamal Khashoggi, head of al-Arab news channel. —Reuters

## EGYPT CANCELS NEW WHEAT TENDER AS FUNGUS UPS PRICES

**HAMBURG/ABU DHABI:** Egypt cancelled a tender to buy wheat yesterday after receiving only four offers that were well above prices quoted in an Algerian deal this week, suggesting Cairo continues to suffer from the confusion over its import regulations. Egypt's agriculture ministry shocked grain traders last month when it said it would not accept wheat containing any traces of ergot, a fungus common in wheat worldwide, after rejecting a 63,000-tonne shipment of French wheat.

After traders boycotted a tender on Tuesday, the ministry changed tack on Wednesday and said it would allow wheat imports with up to 0.05 percent levels of ergot. But the low number of offers in Friday's tender for an unspecified amount of wheat, and the high prices quoted, suggest traders remain wary. "We have still not received an official confirmation from the agriculture ministry that it will allow the 0.05 percent ergot tolerance level in wheat imports and this is making it too risky to offer," one European trader said. "There is still great uncertainty among the international trading houses."

Egypt is the world's biggest importer of wheat and supplies are a hot-button issue as they are critical to a bread subsidy program that feeds tens of millions. When Egyptians rose up against autocrat Hosni Mubarak in 2011, a signature chant was "Bread, freedom and social justice". Egypt's state grain buyer, the General Authority for Supply Commodities (GASC), said yesterday it had cancelled the tender because the prices on offer were too high.

One Cairo-based trader said those who participated in the tender put a risk premium on their offer. "The spread in prices is between \$16 to \$20 above market," he said. The lowest offer was \$186.64 a tonne FOB, or 195.44 a tonne including shipping costs (C&F) for wheat sourced from France, traders said. They said the lowest offer was well above the price of about \$178 a tonne c&f paid by Algeria in a wheat purchase reported on Thursday. "The extra commercial risk because of the ergot problem is being reflected in higher offers which will raise the cost of Egypt's imports," one trader said. "There would be big costs if shipments are refused after all."

Participation in the tender was also lower than the seven trading houses that offered in a tender on Jan 21, while 16 companies took part in GASC's tender on Dec 23 before the ergot issue intensified. —Reuters



**DAMASCUS:** A Syrian man sits inside his handicraft shop in the Syrian capital on Thursday. —AFP

## WARS, CHEAP OIL HURT MIDDLE EAST GROWTH

### SYRIAN, YEMENI CITIES IN RUINS

**WASHINGTON:** The World Bank said on Thursday that 2015 economic growth in the Middle East and North Africa likely came to just 2.6 percent, falling short of a 2.8 percent forecast in October as war, terrorism and cheap oil took their toll. In a new report, the bank said five years of war in Syria and spillovers to neighboring countries have cost the region some \$35 billion in lost output measured in 2007 prices, equal to Syria's gross domestic product that year.

The plunge in oil prices to around \$30 a barrel from over \$100 two years ago is causing major problem for the region's oil exporters, with government revenue falling sharply and budget deficits growing. The World Bank said Saudi Arabia's public debt would reach 20 percent of GDP in 2017, 10 times its level of 2.2 percent in 2013.

"The richest oil exporters in the region, Saudi Arabia, Qatar, Kuwait and United Arab Emirates, have large reserves that will enable them to run deficits over the coming years, although not far beyond that," the World Bank said in the report. "At current levels of spending, and an oil price of \$40 per barrel, Saudi Arabia will exhaust its reserves by the end of the decade."

The report was issued as the World Bank is in talks on financing with some oil producers in other regions, including Azerbaijan, Nigeria and Angola. The report cited World Bank estimates of \$3.6 billion to \$4.5 billion in physical damage to just six cities in war-torn Syria: Aleppo, Daraa, Hama, Homs, Idlib and Latakia. The damage was assessed to housing, health, education, energy, water, transport and agriculture infrastructure.

A similar assessment in Yemen, also hit by war, found \$4 billion to \$5 billion in damage to four cities: Sanaa, the capital; Aden; Taiz and Zinjibar. But the wars there and elsewhere may be extracting a bigger toll on human capital, as Syrian refugees languish with little or no work, the bank said, while educational gains are being reversed. More than half of school-age children in Syria were prevented from attending school during 2014-2015, it said.

"A peace settlement in Syria, Iraq, Libya and Yemen could lead to a swift rebound in oil output, allowing them to increase fiscal space, improve current account balances and boost economic growth in the medium term with positive spillovers to the neighboring countries," said Lili Mottaghi, World Bank economist for the region and the author of the report. —Reuters

## VW DELAYS 2015 RESULTS, SHAREHOLDERS' AGM

**FRANKFURT:** Embattled German auto giant Volkswagen said Friday it would postpone publishing its 2015 annual results, as well as its shareholder meeting due to an ongoing probe into a global emissions-cheating scandal. The earnings news conference had been scheduled for March 10 and the shareholders' annual general meeting (AGM) for April 21, but new dates for both events "will be announced as soon as possible," VW said in a short statement.

The carmaker will "set a new date for the publication of the annual accounts for fiscal year 2015 due to remaining open questions and the resulting valuation calculations relating to the diesel emissions issue," it said. The reasoning behind the postponements is to "achieve the best possible transparent and reliable outcome for its shareholders and stakeholders," the

carmaker added. VW is currently engulfed in the deepest crisis in its history after it was forced to admit in September that it had installed so-called "defeat device" software into 11 million diesel engine vehicles worldwide.

The sophisticated software skews the emissions data during regulatory testing. The revelation sent shockwaves across the automobile sector around the world. It appears to be hurting VW sales and could cost the former paragon of German industry untold billions in regulatory and legal fines.

### Costs Still Unclear

In 2015, VW's own-brand sales fell five percent to 5.82 million vehicles worldwide, the first decline in 11 years, the company revealed. VW owns 12 brands in all, including marques such

as Audi, Porsche and Skoda, and overall group sales were down two percent last year at 9.93 million vehicles, the first fall since 2002. On top of lost earnings, VW is also facing a barrage of different legal complaints related to the scandal.

Aside from a lawsuit filed by the US Justice Department, US vehicle owners are expected to seek billions of dollars in damages. Germany's financial sector watchdog, Bafin, is also investigating whether VW breached disclosure rules. And last month, a German law firm said it was suing VW on behalf of a British pension fund for compensation for the plunge in its shares in the wake of the scam.

Nevertheless, VW insisted yesterday that group operating profits were expected to hold steady "within the expected range for fiscal year 2015".

The carmaker said a report following its own internal investigation into the emissions affair would not be affected by the delays. "The timing of the report clarifying the background and responsibilities connected to the diesel emission issue is not affected by this decision. "Volkswagen is sticking to the timing and plans to publish the findings in the second half of April," it said.

The engine-rigging scam, which first came to light in the US, has hit VW shares hard. At one point, the carmaker lost nearly 40 percent in market capitalization, but its shares have come back off their lows since then. In mid-afternoon trading yesterday, VW shares were the biggest gainers on the blue-chip DAX 30 index on the Frankfurt stock exchange, rising 3.12 percent to €104.15 in a slightly firmer market. — AFP

## TOYOTA NET PROFIT JUMPS TO \$16BN, RAISES FORECAST

**TOKYO:** Toyota yesterday said nine-month net profit jumped nearly 10 percent to 1.9 trillion yen (\$16 billion), despite falling sales in most regions, with the world's top automaker focused on squeezing more productivity out of its plants. The Corolla and Prius maker also slightly raised its fiscal year profit forecast to 2.27 trillion yen, but unit sales were down in most regions, including Europe and Japan, while North America rose.

The region has stood out for Japanese automakers, with rival Honda last week saying it was a bright spot that helped offset sluggish sales at home. Toyota and its domestic rivals have benefited from healthy growth in the US where low interest rates proved a boon to consumers, although the slim possibility of rate hikes this year could dampen sales. Weakening demand in emerging markets such as Thailand and Indonesia, as well as a planned consumption tax hike in Japan next year, could also eat into the market, analysts said.

Sales in China, the world's top vehicle market, ticked up, Toyota said, adding that demand for its RAV4 sport utility vehicle was strong in North America. "A further slowdown in emerging economies may affect (Toyota's) sales overseas, and an expected rate hike in the United States would dampen customers' appetite" for new cars, said Shigeru Matsumura, analyst at SMBC Friend Research Center. "These are potential risks."

The weaker yen has made Japanese automakers relatively more competitive overseas and inflated the value of repatriated overseas profits, although the unit has strengthened recently. Toyota has said all its domestic parts plants would shut for a full day next week, expanding a production suspension that is set to be its longest since the March 2011 earthquake and tsunami disaster.

### 'Winning Volkswagen Customers'

The move was due to a components shortage following an explosion at a supplier. It was not clear if the temporary



**TOKYO:** Toyota Motors managing officer Tetsuya Otake speaks during the company's press conference on the third quarter financial results at its Tokyo headquarters yesterday. — AFP

production shutdown would affect results in the current quarter. "We are going to take all the necessary measures for a speedy recovery of production," Toyota managing officer Tetsuya Otake told a news briefing. "The impact of the suspension is not taken into account in our forecasts - it is difficult to evaluate for the time being."

Also this week, Toyota said it will drop its Scion brand, the often-quirky line of cars it launched in the United States more than a decade ago targeted at younger Americans. The company said the move was driven by a market shifting away from small cars and by changes in buying habits. Yesterday's report comes after Toyota last month kept the title of world's top automaker for the fourth straight year after saying it sold 10.15 million vehicles globally in 2015, driving past Volkswagen and General Motors.

In the first half of 2015, the German giant, whose other brands include Porsche and Audi, was set to take the crown as it rode momentum in emerging

economies. But then it posted its first drop in annual sales for more than a decade after being hammered by a massive pollution cheating scandal. "Volkswagen is in a severe situation," said Rakuten Securities analyst Yasuo Imanaka. "Japanese automakers can take advantage of the slump by winning Volkswagen customers. It could be a plus for Japanese firms."

Toyota has been focusing on squeezing out productivity gains and better using existing plants - it put on hold building new factories for several years. The company began operating a new Thai plant in 2013, but then halted investment as the global car market struggled with oversupply and weak demand. It has since announced it was ending the construction freeze as it unveiled plans for a \$1.0 billion plant in Mexico, while it is overhauling its operations in China. It also wants to overhaul its production methods, vowing to slash development costs to try to offset any downturn in the market. — AFP

## ARCELORMITTAL TO MINE STOCK MARKET AFTER MASSIVE LOSS

**PARIS:** ArcelorMittal said yesterday it would ask shareholders for fresh funds, sell assets and slash costs after falling commodity prices pummeled its performance last year, leaving a gaping hole in its accounts. The world's largest steelmaker reported a net loss of \$7.95 billion for 2015, more than four times the previous year's net loss of \$1.86 billion in 2014. To help fill the shortfall, ArcelorMittal said it would tap into shareholders' pockets via a capital increase of \$3 billion by mid-2016, and also sell its stake in Spanish automotive company Gestamp, roughly netting another \$1 billion.

The company's shares plunged on the Paris stock exchange in anticipation of the cash call, dropping by over 6 percent in morning trading. "Having already seen its market capitalization decline in recent years, ArcelorMittal now can't avoid a big dilution for shareholders with this capital increase of \$3 billion," brokers Aurel BGC said in a note. Analysts at Societe Generale called the cash call "disappointing, but certainly a reflection of very difficult market conditions".

Over half of the 2015 loss was due to writing down in its books the value of its mining operations to reflect the currently lower value of its iron ore, but even excluding exceptional items ArcelorMittal was \$300 million into loss, compared to \$400 million in 2014. Chief executive Lakshmi Mittal acknowledged in a statement that "2015 was a very difficult year for the steel and mining industries... Prices deteriorated significantly during the year as a result of excess capacity in China".

However, he said the mining business "is fully focused on adapting to this low price environment and has reduced cash costs by 20 percent compared with an initial target of 15 percent". Mittal said a further 10 percent reduction in mining costs is targeted for 2016. Sales dropped 20 percent to \$63.6 billion, which mostly reflects falling prices as the company's iron ore production and steel shipments only dipped marginally. Net debt dipped to \$15.7 billion at the end of 2015 from \$15.8 at the end of 2014. Earnings before taxes, depreciation and amortization (EBITDA) fell by 28 percent to \$5.2 billion.

The company announced a new restructuring plan that aims to raise EBITDA per tonne to above \$85, irrespective of changes in raw material prices. It fell from \$86 per tonne in the fourth quarter of 2014 to \$56 in the fourth quarter of 2015. Overall the latest plan aims to improve structural EBITDA by \$3 billion by 2020. For 2016, the company said that based on current market conditions it expects EBITDA in excess of \$4.5 billion this year. ArcelorMittal also announced it had sold its 35 percent stake in the Spanish company Gestamp, which manufactures steel parts for automakers, for Euros 875 million. — AFP

## NYT EYES MORE CHANGES TO MEET DIGITAL CHALLENGE

**NEW YORK:** The New York Times is eyeing further changes to its newsroom to meet the growing challenges of digital, it said Thursday, as the company reported a rise in profits. On the heels of its quarterly report, the prestigious daily - seeking to navigate a shift to digital readership - said executive editor Dean Baquet and longtime journalist David Leonhardt would lead a review of operations.

"We need to develop a strategic plan for what The New York Times should be and determine how to apply our timeless values to a new age," Baquet said in a memo to staff cited by

the newspaper. "Although our digital revenue is growing strongly, we continue to feel the impact of declines in parts of our print business. That means the company must continue to carefully manage its costs."

During a conference call to discuss earnings, New York Times Co chief executive Mark Thompson indicated some shifts were coming. He said that in the coming months "we will take a close look at our existing cost base, even as we make targeted investments in our digital future". "We know that success for us depends on the quality of journalism we offer our users here

and around the world, and we must maintain that quality. Nonetheless, we believe that alongside investment in our newsroom and elsewhere, there is scope for further structural savings across our cost base."

The company reported profit rose to \$51.7 million in the fourth quarter from \$34.9 million a year earlier. Revenue held unchanged at \$444.7 million. The earnings report said operating costs were trimmed 4.1 percent in the quarter. Circulation revenues got a lift from growth in digital subscriptions and an increase in home-delivery prices, which offset a decline

in print copies sold. The number of paid digital-only subscribers rose to 1,094,000 as of the end of the fourth quarter, a rise of 53,000 in that period and up 20 percent from a year earlier.

Print advertising revenue decreased 6.6 percent while digital advertising revenue increased 10.6 percent in the quarter. Digital accounted for 24 percent of total ad revenue. The daily has made strong gains in paid online readership. But in terms of overall online visitors it was overtaken last year by The Washington Post, owned by Amazon founder Jeff Bezos since 2013. — AFP

## US JOB GROWTH SLOWS UNEMPLOYMENT RATE AT 8-YEAR LOW

**WASHINGTON:** US employment gains slowed more than expected in January as the boost to hiring from unseasonably mild weather faded, but surging wages and an unemployment rate at an eight-year low suggested the labor market recovery remains firm. Nonfarm payrolls increased by 151,000 jobs last month and the unemployment rate slipped to 4.9 percent, the lowest since February 2008, the Labor Department said yesterday. Data for November and December was revised to show 2,000 fewer jobs created than previously reported. Economists polled by Reuters had forecast employment increasing by 190,000 in January and the jobless rate steady at 5 percent.

Also taking the sting from the softer payrolls number, employers increased hours for workers. Manufacturing, which has been undermined by a strong dollar and weak global demand, added the most jobs since Aug 2013. "That ... serves as a caution to markets that it is too early to take a Federal Reserve March hike completely off the table," said Mohamed El-Erian, chief economic advisor at Allianz in Newport Beach, California.

The dollar rose against a basket of currencies on the data as traders saw more rate hikes this year. Prices for US Treasury debt fell and US stock futures extended losses. Tightening financial market conditions had undercut the case for a Fed interest rate hike next month. The US central bank raised its short-term interest rate in December for the first time in nearly a decade. Federal Reserve Chair Janet Yellen has said the economy needs to create just under 100,000 jobs a month to keep up with growth in the working age population.

The sharp step-down in job gains from the fourth quarter's brisk clip largely reflected payback after the warmest temperatures in years bolstered hiring in weather-sensitive sectors like construction. January employment also lost the lift from the hiring of couriers and messengers, which was buoyed in November and December by strong online holiday sales. Coming in the wake of an abrupt slowdown in economic growth in the fourth quarter and a sharp stock market sell-off, the fairly upbeat details of the closely watched employment report could ease concerns about the economic outlook.

### Full Employment

The economy grew at a 0.7 percent annual rate in the fourth quarter, restrained by headwinds that included the strong dollar and efforts by businesses to sell off inventory. Even with slower job growth, wages rebounded sharply after holding steady in December. Average hourly earnings increased 12 cents or 0.5 per-



**WASHINGTON:** This file photo taken on April 03, 2015 shows a worker standing with a sign at a construction site. — AFP

cent. That left the year-on-year gain in earnings at 2.5 percent as the unusually strong wage gains seen in January 2014 dropped out of the picture. But with the jobless rate in a range most economists associate with full employment, wage growth is expected to pick-up this year.

With its January employment report, the government published its annual "benchmark" revisions and updated the formulas it uses to smooth the data for regular seasonal fluctuations. It also incorporated new population estimates. The government said the level of employment in March of last year was 206,000 lower on a seasonally adjusted basis than it had reported. The shift in population controls means figures on the labor force or number of employed or unemployed in January are not directly comparable to December.

The labor force participation rate, or the share of working-age Americans who are employed or at least looking for a job was at 62.7 percent, near four-decade lows. Low participation could crimp job growth as the supply of labor shrinks, unless a significant rise in wages lures more people back into the labor force. In January, all the employment gains were in the private sector, which added 158,000 jobs. The services sector dominated the payrolls increase last month, with 118,000 jobs created. Mining lost 7,000 more jobs, while the embattled manufacturing sector surprisingly added 29,000 positions. Mining payrolls have decreased by 146,000 since peaking in Sept 2014. About three-fourths of the job losses over this period have been in support activities for mining. — Reuters

## US TRADE DEFICIT GROWS IN 2015 AS EXPORTS FALL

**WASHINGTON:** The US trade deficit grew in 2015 as exports fell for the first time since the recession amid a slowing global economy, while the gap with China hit a record. The US trade shortfall in goods and services widened 4.6 percent from a year ago to \$531.5 billion, the largest since 2012, the Commerce Department said Friday. Exports fell for the first time since 2009, and outpaced the decline in imports as a strong US dollar and weak foreign demand weighed on the world's largest economy.

Exports dropped 4.8 percent to \$2.2 trillion, the lowest level since 2012. Imports fell 3.1 percent to \$2.8 trillion. "The US economy remains resilient to global weakness and will expand through 2016, driving stronger demand for imports," said Emily Mandel of Moody's Analytics. She said that stronger US consumption likely would stimulate economic activity overseas this year, particularly in Europe and Asia. China became the largest US goods trading partner in 2015, with \$598.1 billion in goods and services, pushing Canada into second place.

The 28-nation European Union, as a bloc, continued to eclipse China, having \$698.7 billion in goods trade with the US. But the trade gap with China hit a record \$365.7 billion in 2015, up 6.2 percent from 2014. US lawmakers have long criticized the Chinese government for keeping the yuan currency undervalued to gain an unfair trade advantage. The trade gap with the EU also increased to a new record at \$153.8 billion, up 7.7 percent from 2014. The shortfall with Canada narrowed slightly to \$14.8 billion.

The year ended with a return to the widening trend in the US trade deficit. After shrinking in November, the trade gap increased to \$43.4 billion in December, in line with analyst estimates. The November reading was slightly revised down to \$42.2 billion. December exports of \$181.5 billion were down 0.3 percent from November, while imports rose 0.3 percent to \$224.9 billion.

Exports of automobiles and parts, industrial supplies and food fell. Automotive imports posted the biggest gain in December imports. "On balance, the official December trade data support our view that the stronger dollar and weak foreign growth will prove a persistent drag on US growth," said Barclays analyst Jesse Hurwitz. — AFP

## CHINA P2P INVESTORS FACE \$7.6BN LOSSES

**SHANGHAI:** When Wang Dehong saw the female boss of a Chinese online lender interviewed on state television CCTV, promising both safety and high returns, the stay-at-home mum thought she had found her ideal investment. So she put her savings of 180,000 yuan (\$27,000) into the financial products of Ezubao, or "easy rent treasure", one of hundreds of peer-to-peer (P2P) lending firms in China that match lenders and borrowers through the Internet. For six months, she received regular messages on her smartphone showing payments into her Ezubao account, earning her as much as 12.8 percent annually - far more than she could hope to get from a bank.

In December, they stopped. Now the firm has collapsed, with police saying it bilked 900,000 investors out of \$7.6 billion - among the biggest financial frauds in recent history. The state broadcaster this week paraded some of the 21 arrested executives involved with Ezubao - including the same executive it interviewed in May last year - confessing the business was



**BEIJING:** Investors in Chinese online peer-to-peer lender Ezubao chant slogans during a protest on Thursday. — AFP

nothing more than a "Ponzi scheme". The scandal highlights both poor regulation in the world's biggest P2P market, and how China's small investors fail to recognize financial risk. With China's one-year bank

deposit rate now standing at just 1.5 percent and few choices for investment in the face of a volatile stock market, declining currency and weak property values, customers flocked to Ezubao's "guaranteed"

return of principal and interest rates of 9.0 to 14.6 percent. "It all looked very reliable, compared with the rest of the investment channels I saw," said Wang, the mother of a five-year-old son, who has turned back to the Internet to sell shrimp from her native Shandong province at 64 yuan a kilogramme to make ends meet.

### 'Typical Ponzi Scheme'

CCTV's interviewee was Zhang Min, the president of Ezubao's parent firm, who said its products were better and safer than other assets. In a television advertisement also shown on CCTV, Zhang appeared in a white jacket and tan skirt with a slogan urging investors to "have success" with Ezubao. Clad in an orange prison uniform, a tearful Zhang said in a broadcast on the same television network on Monday: "It was a typical Ponzi scheme." Such public confessions while in custody are a regular event in Communist-ruled China, with critics saying there is no way to tell whether the detainee is speaking under duress. — AFP

## SOME CHINESE WORKERS DITCH HOLIDAYS TO PROTEST UNREST RISES AMID ECONOMIC SLOWDOWN

**QIAN'AN/DONGGUAN, China:** This year, laborer Fan Fu and 20 or so colleagues working on the Zixia Garden apartment complex in Hebei province have not joined China's legion of migrant workers returning home to celebrate new year with their families. Instead, they have camped in the offices of the property developer's subcontractor, demanding almost a year's unpaid wages and too angry and proud to go back to native towns and villages empty-handed. With China's economy growing at its slowest in 25 years, more workers face Fan's predicament and labour unrest is on the rise, a concern for Beijing as it seeks to avoid social unrest even as financial pressures build.

"The developer has kept using the fact that they have no money as an excuse. As of now they haven't paid us a single penny," said Fan, who brought others from his home town in the western province of Sichuan to work on the apartments. "We really don't have any other options," he told Reuters in the subcontractor's offices, crowded with

bedding and personal possessions. The group had earlier petitioned local authorities for redress and staged protests outside government offices in Qian'an, a city in Hebei in China's north.

When water and electricity were cut to the dorm where they lived, the subcontractor allowed them to move in temporarily. Fan and about 530 other workers on the apartment project are owed paychecks of between 20,000 and 50,000 yuan (\$3,000-\$7,500). They said the government had offered each non-local labourer 2,000 yuan in cash if they left for the holidays. The developer, Qianan City Xinyuan Real Estate, did not respond to Reuters' requests for comment on the protests and the unpaid wages. The Qian'an government said they were looking into the issue but declined to give details.

While the housing sector is among the worst-hit in China's economic slowdown, the pain is being felt by blue- and white-collar workers in other industries. According to

Geoffrey Crothall of the Hong Kong-based group China Labour Bulletin, which tracks worker issues, there was a spike in protests in the last quarter of 2015. Its data show that in December and January, there were 774 labour strikes across China, from 529 in the previous two months, most of them over wage arrears.

### Fearful

At a printing factory in the western city of Chongqing, a Reuters reporter was present when a local official visited last week to make sure the boss paid his workers before the Year of the Monkey begins. The official declined to speak with Reuters, although the boss later said it was an attempt to prevent unrest. "That's (unrest) what the government is most fearful of," said the factory owner, who did not want to be named. Chongqing authorities gave no immediate response to faxed requests for comment.

China's senior Communist Party leaders, including President Xi Jinping, have long championed workers' rights, and are often photographed visiting factories. The government is concerned that protests over issues like unpaid wages could spill over into broader dissatisfaction at its rule, as it has derived much legitimacy over the past decades from delivering a higher standard of living. Before the holiday, Beijing issued a notice calling on local authorities to "seriously investigate all incidents of wage arrears, so that migrant workers would be paid in a timely manner and in full," the state-run Workers Daily newspaper reported.

Over the past few months, however, authorities have arrested at least seven labor activists in Guangdong province in the largest crackdown on organized labor in China in recent years. China's state Xinhua news agency accused the men of running illegal non-governmental organizations that had been "severely disrupting social order". China's Foreign Ministry said the cases would be handled "in accordance with the law". — Reuters



**JAKARTA:** A street vendor waits for customers along a street in downtown Jakarta yesterday. — AFP

## INDONESIA ECONOMY GROWS AT SLOWEST RATE IN SIX YEARS

**JAKARTA:** Indonesia's economy grew at its slowest pace for six years in 2015, data showed yesterday, as it was hit by plunging commodity prices and falling exports to key markets including China. Southeast Asia's largest economy grew 4.79 percent last year, the first time it has fallen below five percent since 2009 at the height of the global financial crisis, and well short of the government's seven percent target. It grew 5.02 percent in 2014.

However, a slight uptick in October-December - with 5.04 percent year-on-year growth - beat expectations and raised hopes the country can kick on in 2016 as President Joko Widodo rolls out economy-boosting measures. "There is an improvement in the fourth quarter, so we hope the growth will increase in the future, especially this year," Statistics Agency chief, Suryamin, who goes by one name, said. With the global economy suffering a painful slowdown - most startlingly in China - demand for the country's key exports coal and palm oil slackened, hammering revenues.

The crisis led Widodo - known as Jokowi - to introduce a string of measures to lift the economy including a drive to attract much-needed foreign investment, ramping up infrastructure projects and introducing bureaucratic reforms. And last month the central bank slashed interest rates by 25 basis points for the first time since February 2015, with signals that further reductions are likely in the future. The finance ministry has targeted 5.3 percent growth this year.

Analysts welcomed the end-of-year pick-up. "Prospects for Indonesia's economy appear to have improved over the past few months," Capital Economics said in a statement. But it added: "While recent economic reforms should provide a boost to confidence, they will need time to take effect." The group forecast 5.0 percent for this year and next. — AFP



**CHANGZHOU, China:** A woman walks in a park decorated with red lanterns ahead of the Lunar New Year on Thursday. — AFP

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# Weekender

Kuwait Times

SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 6, 2016



## Funk legend Maurice White of Earth, Wind & Fire dead at 74

A model presents a creation by new designer Cristina Granero during the SIMOF (International Flamenco Fashion Show) in Sevilla. —AFP

SEE PAGE 25



# Bieber has a new dog named Phill

The 'What Do You Mean?' singer showed off his new black Labrador puppy in a series of Instagram posts which showed the cute canine exploring his new home. In the first picture, Justin wrote: "New addition to the family his name is Phil (sic)" But the 22-year-old star ensured his other dog, Esther, wasn't feeling left out as he also shared a number of pictures of him showering the pooch with affection. On one, he wrote: "Can't make Esther too jealous." Justin

also shared a short video of the two dogs together. Though he hasn't lived with his famous owner for long, Phill already has his own Instagram account. However, @PhilltheCutie has ensured his account is private so far, but fans willing to check out the two pictures he's already posted should have no problem getting accepted to his followers list. A message on the page reads: "Phill To be ACCEPTED go on my dad @justinbieber & comment 'justins dog page is @phillthecutie'"

I'm checking! (sic)" Esther - who the 'Sorry' hitmaker welcomed into his home last May - also has her own Instagram account, EsthertheCutie. Phill so far only has 149 followers, so he has a long way to go to meet the 516,000 acquired by his new doggy pal. It seems Justin may already be having problems with his new pooch's name as he has spelled it varyingly 'Phil' or 'Phill' on his posts, and in one caption even referred to the more formal 'Philip'.

## Taraji P Henson loves shopping

The 45-year-old actress admits running her own errands, such as visiting the discount store, have grown increasingly more difficult since her role as Cookie Lyon on TV show 'Empire' propelled her to global fame but she's also embracing the perks of her position. She said: "I love to shop at Target and I love to do my own shopping, but that's become difficult... with the paparazzi. It's like, 'Where were y'all, like, 10 years ago?' You have got to take the good with the bad. The good side is I can get into any restaurant... last-minute." The 'Curious Case of Benjamin Button' star admits it is "weird" how her life has changed since she accepted the role on 'Empire' as she's been acting for so long but managed to stay relatively low-key. She told 'Extra': "It's weird because I've been doing this for so long and it took a character like Cookie to expose me to the world in a way that I've never been exposed before." Taraji recently scooped the Golden Globe Award for Best Actress in a Television Series - Drama and was thrilled to win. She said: "That is our soul we expose to the world, so whenever people receive it and people go, 'Oh, we want to give you something,' it always feels good." Though she's enjoying so much success now, the actress is already thinking about slowing down. Asked where she sees herself in five years, she said: "Hopefully, I don't want to say 'retired,' but a little slowed down. Maybe just picking and choosing projects I want to do. Maybe enjoying the fruits of my labor."



## Longoria to host 'couples' war' on Valentine's Day

The 'Desperate Housewives' star - who got engaged to Jose 'Pepe' Bastun in Dubai in December - won't be spending the romantic day with just her new fiancé as they'll also have pals staying for an "insane" weekend of "competitive" play. She said: "We always have a Valentine's Day weekend - a couples' war weekend. So we invite a lot of couple friends of ours and we have this insane competition of like minute-to-win-it games. It's a fun weekend but it's definitely a competitive weekend." Meanwhile, the brunette beauty - who has been married twice before - hasn't even thought about where she'll hold her nuptials or who she's going to invite. However, she knows she wants the day to be "simple" without "pomp and circumstance" because José and herself have married before. She told People magazine: "[There's] no theme or location. No guest list.



You know, I guess I keep advocating for eloping. I think we're going to do something really, really simple. We've both been married before, so there's not going to be a lot of pomp and circumstance." However, one thing she's got covered his her wedding dress, which she's enlisted close pal Victoria Beckham to help with. Eva, 40, previously shared: "Victoria is helping me pick the perfect dress. She always knows exactly what looks good on me and is one of the only people in the world who will tell me the truth and if something looks hideous."

## Jessie J doesn't take antibiotics

The 27-year-old singer has lived with Wolff-Parkinson-White syndrome, a heart condition that can cause an irregular heartbeat, since she was nine and last year she had to cancel a string of Australian tour dates after a health scare related to the condition. Jessie lives as healthy a lifestyle as she can due to her past medical issues and refuses to take antibiotics or other prescription medications because she wants her body to be strong without help. Speaking to the new issue of Women's Health magazine, she revealed: "I'm healthy because I have to look after myself. I like to feel everything I feel based on purity. So, if I'm sick, I won't just take antibiotics, I will try to get through it myself." Jessie - who is currently single after splitting from her boyfriend, R&B star Luke James, last October - also revealed she has become more guarded about her personal life since finding fame. Although the 'Bang Bang' hit-maker would like to be more open she has learned to keep certain things private. She said: "I wish I could be more open about certain things, but as the years have gone by, I've definitely become less so. All the things my personality had that made me become the person who felt confident enough to be Jessie J, fame just takes away. Like spontaneity, honesty, openness. Just being completely transparent." Although she doesn't currently have someone special in her life, Jessie is thinking about starting a family and talks about her future kids all the time. She said: "I talk about my children every day even though they don't exist. It sounds really weird, but I do. I put into the universe that I love them ... who knows when it's going to happen?"





## George and Amal 'try not to go too long' without meeting

The 'Hail, Caesar!' believes the secret to the pair's relationship is never having "huge gaps" without seeing each other, even when their careers take them to opposite ends of the world. Speaking about their relationship, he is quoted by the Daily Mirror newspaper as saying: "FaceTime - we will do that but mostly it is trying to not go too long without being apart, and you do the best you can. We spend an awful lot of time

together. We don't have huge gaps. "We are able to manage, so far. Between my work and her work and the things we have been doing, we have been able to manage it pretty well." Meanwhile, George - who wed the human rights lawyer in September 2014 - previously revealed he feared putting out his hip when he got down on one knee to ask Amal for her hand in marriage. He shared: "I got down on my knee and said, 'I couldn't imag-

ine spending the rest of my life without you.' And she kept looking at the ring and she was looking at me and she was like 'Oh my God.' "And we now know because there is a playlist, so we know how long it actually took, and it's like 25 minutes, 25 minutes! Finally I literally said, 'Look, I hope the answer's yes, but I need an answer. I'm 52 and I could throw out my hip pretty soon'. And she said, 'Oh, yes' and it worked out really well."



## Jade Thirlwall is dating Jed Elliott

The Little Mix star has reportedly been enjoying a romance with The Struts bassist for the last month and the pair have already been seen on a string of dates including a weekend away in the city of love, Paris. A source told The Sun newspaper: "Jade and Jed have been friends for a while but they've been enjoying some down time together in January when they've been in the same country. It's early days but they are having fun." During their trip to Paris, the pair visited the Eiffel Tower and the Louvre before returning back home to watch a football match at The Emirates stadium towards the end of last

month. Meanwhile, Jade previously admitted she has struggled in the past to find a boyfriend who's with her for the "right reasons". She shared: "I've been on dates where we've sat there and the first thing they've asked me is, 'What's it like being in Little Mix?' I'm like, 'Game over'. It's hard to find someone who's in it for the right reasons." However, Jade's bandmate Jesy Nelson - who is engaged to Rixton's Jake Roche - insists the group don't get much "male attention". She said: "We don't get that much male attention, we get a few wolf whistles which is lovely and then backstage we're all like, 'Oh my God, did you hear that wolf whistle?'"

## Rose McGowan has split from her husband

The former 'Charmed' star has filed for divorce from artist David Leavitt - who she married in October 2013 after less than two years of dating - citing "irreconcilable differences", TMZ reports. The couple have no children and the 42-year-old actress - who is worth an estimated \$18 million - has asked the judge to reject any claim for spousal support. It is unclear whether the pair had a pre-nuptial agreement, but the court documents state there will be a "stipulated judgment", which is believed to mean they have already reached a settlement. Rose - who previously dated rocker Marilyn Manson and director Robert Rodriguez - hasn't spoken out about the split, but she recently slammed the "boring" industry and claimed she stepped away from life in front of the camera because there are not enough "intelligent and daring" films. In an Instagram



post, she wrote: "Thoughts on the current state of tent pole films aka superheroes. I'd like to petition for other stories to be added to the slate. Where are the human stories? I don't want green goblins and tight outfits. I want intelligence, daring, work that drives society forward. I want a mirror, not every cliché regurgitated ad nauseum. From Scarface, to Lebowsky, to M, to Anchor Man, to the sublime Carol, to Chinatown, to Sullivan's Travels-. Let's bring complexity back. Let's be the badassess we used to be. — Bangshowbiz"

## Wiz Khalifa releasing range of marijuana products

The 27-year-old rapper has teamed up with Colorado-based RiverRock Cannabis to create and manufacture a line of regulated marijuana strains, products and concentrates and is hoping his new venture will help end prohibition of the drug. He said: "These products have taken years to perfect. "I'm really excited to finally share them with the public and to work with RiverRock to raise awareness and end cannabis prohibition nationwide." Wiz also has a partnership with RAW Rolling Papers, which sells smoking products. The 'Black and Yellow' hitmaker isn't the only star to cash in on the marijuana business. Last November, it was revealed Rihanna was launching her own brand called MaRihanna, which would feature marijuana flowers, edibles and concentrates for vaporizers in flavors including Karibbean Kush, Haitian Haze and Jamaica High Grade." A statement on smokers website 18KaratReggae says: "MaRihanna by Rihanna is truly the first mainstream cannabis brand in the world



and proud to be a pioneer." Rihanna's range of products will be available this year in the four American states where recreational cannabis use is legal - Colorado, Washington, Oregon and Alaska. And last year, 'Drop It Like It's Hot' rapper Snoop Dogg launched his own line of cannabis products named Leafs By Snoop. He said in a statement recently: "It's a true blessing that I can share the products I love so much with y'all today. From the flower, to the concentrates, and edibles - it's all hand-picked by yours truly so you know it's the hottest product out there. It's the real deal and you gotta get out to Colorado to try it first!"

## Indian filmmaker battles taxman over 'evil' gay movie



In this photo taken on February 1, 2016, Indian filmmaker Kiran Kumar Devmani poses inside his office in Ahmedabad. — AFP

When Kiran Kumar Devmani decided to make a film about homosexuality, he braced for a fight with India's notoriously conservative censors, but he never imagined he would have to battle the tax office. Three years after finishing the project, Devmani is still embroiled in a struggle with tax bureaucrats who claim his film could provoke a law and order problem in India where gay sex is a criminal offence.

"What is controversial about homosexuality?" Devmani, an ayurvedic doctor-turned filmmaker asked in his small office in a shopping mall in the western city of Ahmedabad. "My film does not have a single scene where gay men are shown even holding hands. The film is basically about the struggles of homosexual men in society in different stages of life," the 30-year-old said.

Like all filmmakers, Devmani wants a tax exemption for his independent movie before its release, an application that is routinely granted to avoid artists losing money on their projects. But the government in Gujarat, Prime Minister Narendra Modi's home state, has knocked back his request on the grounds that "Meghdhanushya - The Colour of Life" could send a "negative signal" that the administration endorses "such ideology".

India's film censor board has already approved the film, giving it an Adults Only rating, and the Gujarat High Court has ruled in Devmani's favour over the exemption. But the government has dug in its heels, appealing the ruling to the Supreme Court, a lengthy process in India's notoriously clogged legal system.

Devmani's fight comes as India's gay community this week celebrated the Supreme Court's decision to review the national law banning gay sex that dates back to the 19th century. The review by a special bench of judges sparks hope among campaigners that the colonial-era legislation which enables homosexuals to be jailed will eventually be overturned.

### 'Ignorance of gays'

The announcement is small comfort for Devmani who says he is being victimised in a socially conservative country where homophobic tendencies abound and gays regularly suffer harassment and violence. "The arguments by the state government for not granting tax relief reflects their attitude towards gays in our society," he said.

The tax office declined to comment to AFP, saying the matter is sub judice. But it has argued in court that the film "promotes" an illegal activity "which is also a social evil" and should therefore be denied exemption from entertainment tax. It also says the film could disturb law and order by fostering friction between those who support and those who oppose homosexuality.

Devmani has won the backing of gay groups and Gujarat's openly gay prince, Rajpipla Manvendra Singh Gohil, who says more such films should be encouraged to educate society about gays and lesbians. Gohil, the descendant of a centuries-old royal family in Rajpipla, a former princely state in Gujarat, narrates sections of Devmani's film.

The 50-year-old was shunned not just by his local community but by his own family when he first came out and is now committed to fighting the spread of HIV/AIDS through his charity. — AFP



This image released by Lionsgate shows Teresa Palmer, left, and Benjamin Walker in a scene from "The Choice." — AP photos

Film Review

## 'The Choice'

A Sparks romance with a side of cheese

Now pay attention, because I'm about to tell you the secret of life." These would be hard opening lines for any film to live up to, but when spoken at the beginning of "The Choice"—the latest, and quite possibly worst, tissue-thin weepie to issue forth from the Nicholas Sparks page-to-screen assembly line—the gulf between what's promised and what's delivered is wide enough to be spotted from space. Beginning as a merely mediocre retread of standard Sparksian tropes, veering off into self-parody around the hour-mark, and finally concluding with one of the most brazenly cynical climaxes recently committed to film, "The Choice" presents audiences with a fairly easy decision at the multiplex.

In spite of his status as a critical punching bag, Sparks is usually a successful storyteller. At least, successful stories have been told with his assistance. Nick Cassavetes' 2004 adaptation of "The Notebook," to cite the most obvious example, tells a strong story successfully.

Those who faulted its contrivances, its sentimentality or its heartstring tugging missed the point—in a Sparks story, those are features, not bugs. But director Ross Katz's "The Choice," which mimics "The Notebook" in everything but meaningful conflict, believable characters, style and emotional honesty, is a very unsuccessful story.

Where does it go so wrong? It's not the hospital-set prologue, in which our narrator brings flowers to a mystery woman before the film flashes back seven years. (The phrase "hospital-set prologue" is roughly synonymous with "Nicholas Sparks movie.") Nor is it the characters, stock types drawn broadly enough to allow maximum viewer projection. It's not even the aggressively wholesome setting along the scenically sun-dappled North Carolina coastline, where modern, smartphone-owning

characters in the 21st century measure time in "two-and-a-half shakes" and respond to accusations that a single lady is "crushin' on you" with a fulsome "Hogwash!"

Nor is the fault with star Benjamin Walker, who at best manages to evoke a Tar Heel Eric Bana as protagonist Travis Shaw. Travis has a pretty good life: a cottage whose lawn opens onto the sea, a faithful dog, a boat, a motorcycle, a job as a trainee veterinarian at his father's clinic, abs on which a waiter could grind peppercorns, and a gorgeous on-and-off girlfriend named Monica (Alexandra Daddario, deserving of better), who brings him beers on the porch and dutifully disappears whenever her presence might prove inconvenient. A ladies' man of the most harmless caliber, Travis throws regular barbecues with a clutch of good-looking buddies, who together resemble a gathering of commercial extras, having recently aged out of Budweiser spots, killing time until Cialis comes calling.

His life is marginally complicated by the arrival of a new neighbor, Gabby Holland (Teresa Palmer), an upper-crust, flustered medical student who storms over to complain about Travis' music. Travis offers teasing banter, Gabby responds with huffy, wide-eyed exasperation, and Travis' salty sister (Maggie Grace) wastes no time in telling him, "You're in trouble." Gabby does have a steady boyfriend in local doctor Ryan (Tom Welling), but when he conveniently skips out of state for several weeks (months? years?) on business, all bets are off.

So far, so Sparks. But without a single memorable exchange or arresting image-aside from d.p. Alar Kivilo's postcard-ready shots of the Carolina coast—this romance trudges through the motions. As adapted by scripter Bryan Sipe (whose upcoming "Demolition" promises much better), Travis and Gabby's flirtations are vacuously slack,

and neither actor possesses the magnetism to power through them. At times, their interplay resembles a pair of improv actors stuck in a pickle, volleying the same lines back and forth waiting for the other to give them something to work with, and one waits impatiently for a line of any consequence to emerge.

Or, for that matter, an actual conflict to arise. Ryan and Monica finally do arrive back on the scene, but the romantic quadrangle is resolved with comical speed. It's not until the final act, when we learn the identity of the woman Travis is visiting in the hospital, that any significant stakes are raised, and it's here that the film stumbles most spectacularly. It would be impossible to explain exactly how craven the ending is without spoiling it completely; but in an earlier scene, the film seems to offer a pre-emptive defense of the trick it's going to pull, if not a mea culpa.

Midway through, Travis spots his father (Tom Wilkinson, deserving of much, much better) in the backroom of the pet clinic, discreetly replacing a dead lizard with another, identical-looking live one. Travis calls him out on it, at which point his father offers him a choice: Would he rather walk out into the waiting room and explain to a sweet 10-year-old girl that her beloved pet reptile has bought the farm? Or would he rather err on the side of well-meaning dishonesty, and emerge heroically with the little lizard appearing to have made a miraculous recovery? Travis opts for the latter.

That may be a defensible decision when it comes to little girls' geckos. But when that same principle is applied to storytelling, as it very much is here, the narrative descends into the most manipulative variety of kitsch. This film trusts its audience no better than Travis trusts a 10-year-old's maturity, and if viewers don't find that at least a little offensive, they should. —Reuters



# Funk legend Maurice White of Earth, Wind & Fire dead at 74

Earth, Wind & Fire founder Maurice White, whose feel-good funk anthems packed arenas, broke down racial barriers and made him among his generation's best-selling artists, has died. He was 74. Brought up in Chicago, White saw himself as an heir to the jazz greats but developed a fresh sound of tight pop tunes that brought in elements of R&B, rock, soul and funk.

The band sold close to 100 million albums, ranking among the most successful acts of the 1970s, on the back of hits such as "September," "Shining Star," "After the Love Has Gone" and "Boogie Wonderland." White's death is the latest among a string of prominent musicians who have passed away since the start of 2016.

White, who suffered for years from Parkinson's

disease, forcing him to stop touring, died Wednesday at his home in Los Angeles, his brother and a representative for the band said. "My brother, hero and best friend Maurice White passed away peacefully last night in his sleep," his brother and bandmate Verdine White wrote Thursday on Facebook.

"While the world has lost another great musician and legend, our family asks that our privacy is respected as we start what will be a very difficult and life-changing transition in our lives." The band was one of the early acts to break the color barrier in pop music, winning a white fanbase while remaining favorites within the African-American community. In 1979, the band became the first African-American act to sell out New York's Madison Square Garden, then as now one of the most prestigious concert venues.

## 'Voice of my generation'

Maurice White formed Earth, Wind & Fire in Chicago in 1969 and quickly became known for his skill at songwriting as he crafted readily danceable tunes that borrowed heavily from the city's R&B scene, but kept a concise structure in line with pop.

While never disappearing completely, Earth, Wind & Fire enjoyed a career resurgence after the election of President Barack Obama, who invited the band as one of the first entertainers when he entered the White House in 2009. Attorney General Loretta Lynch mourned the death of White on Twitter, calling him "the voice of my generation."

Basketball legend Magic Johnson on Twitter described Earth, Wind & Fire as "the greatest group in history." The Recording Academy, which has awarded White seven Grammys over his career out of 21 nominations, hailed his skills on stage and in the studio. "His unerring instincts as a musician and showman helped propel the band to international stardom, influencing countless fellow musicians in the process," it said in a statement. Earth, Wind & Fire had been due to receive a lifetime achievement Grammy in the coming months. Coincidentally, this year's honorees include Jefferson Airplane, whose co-founder Paul Kantner died last week, also at 74.

## Channeling positive thoughts

Earth, Wind & Fire helped bring together the races by leading through example rather than direct activism. Unlike contemporary funk greats Sly and the Family Stone, who brought a subtle political edge to their songs, Earth, Wind & Fire had no interest in provocation and often sang simply about dancing-helping the band triumph in the disco era. White, in a 1985 interview with the Chicago Tribune, said he wanted his music to inspire hope and give people "a positive image of self." "There are a lot of things wrong on this planet-starvation, poverty, negative thoughts, racism, a lot of weirdness," he said. "So somebody has to communicate something to try and balance that, if it's possible." White's desire for positive energy led him on a spiritual quest as he grew interested in ancient Egypt



This file photo taken on March 5, 2011 shows singer Maurice White arriving at the 42nd NAACP Image Awards held at The Shrine Auditorium in Los Angeles, California. — AFP photos

and toured indigenous ruins in the Americas.

The song "Serpentine Fire" references yoga's concept of Kundalini energy. It appears on the 1977 album "All 'n All," which features Brazilian rhythms and cover art from pharaonic Egypt. Earth, Wind & Fire won acclaim not only for songwriting but for energetic live shows, led by a forceful horn section and featuring a kalimba, an African percussion instrument played by plucking metal tines.

White, a tenor, alternated on vocals with Philip Bailey, who offered a quickly recognizable falsetto. White also served as a producer for artists including Barbra Streisand, Chaka Khan and The Emotions, a three-woman R&B trio from Chicago. — AFP



This file photo taken on March 6, 2000 shows Maurice White (center) reacts to the crowd as his group, Earth, Wind and Fire, are inducted into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame during the 15th annual induction ceremony at the Waldorf-Astoria Hotel in New York City.

## Madonna embroiled in Taiwan-China row over flag

Pop diva Madonna has waded into the war of words over Taiwanese identity after draping herself in the island's flag, sparking ire in China, where any suggestion of independence is scorned. Taiwan's Apple Daily and Liberty Times newspapers ran photos of Madonna with the flag over her shoulders as she sang an encore Thursday on the Taipei leg of her global Rebel Heart Tour.

The move was greeted enthusiastically

by many on Taiwanese Internet forums, who saw it as a boost to their quest to protect the island's sovereignty in the face of increased influence from Beijing. "Madonna supports Taiwan with her acts. Taiwan loves Madonna too," read one message on Apple Daily's website. But posts on China's Twitter-like Weibo responded angrily.

"Is Taiwan a country? I am laughing to death... you are just a region," said one.

"Madonna draped the flag and you think you are going to be recognized by the UN? So funny," said another, referring to Taiwan's lack of international status. Taiwan has been self-ruling since splitting from China in 1949 following a civil war, but Beijing still views it as part of its territory awaiting reunification. As Beijing's influence has grown globally, Taiwan has hemorrhaged allies, losing its place at the UN to Beijing and is now only recognised by 22 countries.

## Instagram backlash

China supporters also voiced their anger on Madonna's Instagram account, responding to a picture which showed her face superimposed on a blue sun motif similar to the white sun on Taiwan's flag, attracting 2,000 messages.

"Shut up, people of Taiwan province of China," one message read. "Madonna was just creating a talking point and some Taiwanese people thought she was speaking up for Taiwan independence? So funny," said another.

Others hit back at the critical Instagram posts. "Someone holds the flag and you are barking like a dog. So low class. If you like China so much, go back to use your weibo," one comment read. The Asian leg of the Rebel Heart Tour includes dates in Hong Kong and Macau, but not mainland China. —AFP



This photo received on February 5, 2016 from a member of the public and distributed by AFP as a service to clients shows US singer Madonna (left) with the Taiwan flag over her shoulders as she sings an encore on February 4, 2016 on the Taipei leg of her global Rebel Heart Tour in Taipei. — AFP



This file photo taken on July 8, 2013 shows US musician and singer Maurice White (right) and Philip Bailey (center) of US band "Earth Wind and Fire" US bassist Verdine White (left) perform on stage at the Nice Jazz Festival. — AFP

## Earth, Wind & Fire's greatest hits

Look back at Earth, Wind & Fire's highest charting songs following the passing of founding member Maurice White, who died Wednesday at age 74:

"Boogie Wonderland": Inspired by the film "Looking For Mr Goodbar," Earth, Wind & Fire teamed up with The Emotions for this 1979 disco hit that reached No. 6 on the Billboard singles chart. The groovy tune was later featured in such movies as "Caddyshack," "Happy Feet" and "The Mirror Has Two Faces." "Sing a Song": White produced and wrote with Al McKay this peppy 1975 track that peaked at No. 5 on the Billboard singles chart. He said the genesis of "Sing a Song" was completely unintentional. Earth, Wind & Fire actually came up with the song while goofing around during a sound check.

"Let's Groove": With catchy lyrics and an unforgettable bassline, White and Earth Wind & Fire proved disco wasn't totally dead with this 1981 smash that reached No. 3 on the Billboard singles chart. The trippy music video for "Let's Groove" famously featured the band decked out in colorful space suits. —AP



A reveler strikes a pose during the Banda de Ipanema carnival block party in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil.



Two revelers dressed as mosquitoes take part in a street carnival in the Brazilian city of Sao Paulo.

## For Brazil's Carnival fans, even Zika can't stop the party

**B**razilian Carnival could be called a hungry mosquito's dream - five days of non-stop street parties that bring together millions of revelers in an inviting mass of bare ankles, uncovered legs and denuded torsos. So the mosquito-borne Zika virus might be expected to dampen this year's debauchery.

But despite warnings to cover up and slather on repellent, many insist the show will go on as it always has, in just a sprinkling of sequins and a few puffs of feather. Pants, long-sleeve shirts and bug spray, they say, are antithetical to the hedonistic, out-of-control spirit of Carnival. "We need joy," said Angela Pessanha, a self-described "Carnival nut" and owner of a home furnishings store. "And Carnival is the easiest way of doling out a stiff dose of joy to everyone."

This year's celebrations, come at a time when Brazil has little to celebrate. Latin America's largest country is mired in its worst recession in generations, impeachment proceedings against President Dilma Rousseff are looming, a snowballing corruption investigation of the state oil company has taken down



A reveler enjoys the "Escravos da Maua" block party.

key political figures and rising unemployment and inflation are hurting the pocketbooks of average people. And then there is Zika, a virus that researchers here have linked to a birth defect that can affect the development of

fetuses' brains, leaving newborns with long-lasting health and developmental problems. But, many Brazilians say they are inured to the vagaries of a boom-and-bust economy, unfazed by the near constant stream of corruption scandals and have long lived amid outbreaks of dengue, another virus transmitted by the *Aedes aegypti* mosquito that spreads Zika.

### Not a second thought

"I've put it all out of my mind," said college student Pedro Maciel, as he filled up a shopping cart with 12-packs of beer and bottle after bottle of the cheapest domestic vodka - "fuel" he hoped would see his group of 16 friends, visiting Rio de Janeiro from southern Brazil, through at least the first day of the festivities. "Of course these are all important issues that as a Brazilian I care about, but I won't give them a second thought till the day Carnival ends."

The world's Carnival capital, Rio, has been less hard-hit by the Zika outbreak than the country's poor northeastern region, where most cases both of the virus and the birth defect microcephaly have been concentrated. Still, epidemiologists have called Carnival an "explosive cocktail" for the spread of Zika due to the potent combination of heat, crowds and exposed skin.

This has prompted Rio authorities to step up their efforts against the mosquito. Fumigators have been plying the Sambadrome, where thousands of dancers in ensembles consisting of platform heels, a few strategically placed spandex triangles and sparkly body paint will mesmerize during this weekend's samba school parades.

Health workers will be deployed to many of the city's more than 500 street parties, or "blocos," where thousands of revelers defy the Southern Hemisphere midsummer sun to drink, dance, sweat and rub shoulders - and other body parts.

### Cover up

They're also urging revelers to cover up, but those admonitions appear to be falling on deaf ears, judging by the amount of bare skin on display at the pre-Carnival "blocos" that have flooded the streets in recent days.

Tuesday's announcement by health officials that a person in Texas has become infected with Zika through sex may put another kink into Carnival, where promiscuity is held as a core value. Competitions to see who can rack up the most make-out partners are common, and things often get more hot and heavy than simple snogging.

The party won't be happening everywhere. The 50,000-strong municipality of Capivari in Sao Paulo state has cancelled the City Hall-funded Carnival celebrations, saying it intends to invest the \$25,000 in savings into efforts to stamp out *Aedes*. Official Carnival festivities have also been nixed in dozens of other cities nationwide due to budget constraints.

Even in places where Carnival is rolling on, apparently unscathed by the chaos afflicting the country, this year's festivities are shaping up to be leaner than usual. Regina Rodrigues Alves, who hawks kitty-ear tiaras, pirate eye patches, made-in-China plastic crowns and other Carnival essentials at a stand in Rio's beachfront Ipanema neighborhood, says sales have been appreciably down from last year. "You can tell people are trying to scrimp and save. They're now trying to bargain you down, or not even buying at all," said 58-year-old Alves, adding she's seen revelers dragging along their own portable coolers to save on alcohol.



A man welcomes blasts of artificial snow sprayed on revelers as they dance at the Bicho Maluco Beleza street carnival block party.



**Dancing at dawn**

# S Africa's new pre-work party scene

As dawn breaks over a Johannesburg park, some 300 people dance in silence, some dressed as Batman, Spiderman or Wonder Woman. Others are in tutus, black catsuits or animal "onesies". Many have masks and painted faces. This is "Secret Sunrise"—a new urban craze in which people gather outdoors in the early morning to express themselves to a soundtrack played through headphones.

Later in the day, they will toil at office desks in South Africa's economic

capital, or be students attending lectures, but for a short time they proudly embrace a less reserved way to live. "The point is to get people working towards something that makes the daily grind a little bit less boring," said Cheryl Hudson, who has a job in project finance when she changes out of her purple dance outfit.

"We have it in the week to try to transform the day because after an experience like this, you connect with people. "You get to be a different version of yourself, you go forth, and you

are not grumpy when you get into the office. "As adults, we sometimes forget... that we really need to play.

**'Be ridiculous'**

On Wednesday morning, sleepy participants congregated at 6:00 am in the park in the northern suburbs of the city under a dress theme of "superheroes". "It is an opportunity to go wild, to be ridiculous," said Jamie Beron, a yoga teacher dressed in leopard-print leggings, fishnet gloves and a very tight silver shirt.

"It is a sober, morning dance party... with a little bit of imagination, a whole bunch of crazy people and, most importantly, a lot of fun." Beron, 31, is one of the organizers of the fortnightly event, which follows similar dawn dances in London, Los Angeles, Tokyo and other cities around the world. "I'd

like to invite you to an adventure," Beron told the crowd as they yawned, stretched and slowly came to life. "We are going to another world. It is an opportunity to go back to when you were a child, when you could fly, when you were a superhero." With a rainbow in the sky and against a background of distant skyscrapers, the group soon bursts into energetic moves.

**'Hug people'**

During the hour-long session, they crawl on the ground, form conga lines and run in circles. Two women with their faces hidden behind golden masks jump around together, while a barefoot man with a cape made from a blanket bounces up and down on the spot. The venue of each "Secret Sunrise" is revealed only the day before to build suspense, and tickets costs 100 rand

(\$6.30). The last event in Johannesburg was held on a roof terrace and was a '70s theme that became a tribute to the late David Bowie. At the end, all the dancers hold hands and form a large circle before dispersing. A sweaty Captain America—better known during work hours as Travis Kruger, a 31-year-old used-car salesman—contrasted the experience to a nightclub or rave.

"That is alcohol and smoking. It is healthy here. There is no aggressiveness," he said. "With your earphones, you pretty much block out everything. "You can dance where no one cares if you can dance. Everyone is just happy and free and you get to hug people. "You don't have to say any word to anyone. "I have to go to work after this. Last time I did this, I had the most amazing day at work, so it is just a good start to the day." — AFP



# International Flamenco Fashion Show



Models present the creations of new designer Luis Fernandez during the SIMOF (International Flamenco Fashion Show) in Sevilla. —AFP photos





# MICROSOFT WANTS YOU USING WINDOWS 10, LIKE IT OR NOT

**NEW YORK:** If you're running an older version of Windows, you might suddenly find Microsoft's Windows 10 upgrade already downloaded on your machine. You never requested it, so why are you getting it? The automatic download is part of Microsoft's aggressive push to get Windows 10 on as many devices as possible. Since last July, Microsoft has distributed the free upgrade on request. But starting this week, it's also pushing it out to those who haven't requested it - and who might not want it. Microsoft isn't actually installing Windows 10 automatically, but installation is just a click or two away. If you're not careful, you might suddenly find the new system on your old machine. Is this good for you?

## The benefits of windows 10

Windows 10 has many improvements over its predecessors - especially Windows 8. It's much easier to use than Windows 8, and it offers more modern controls - akin to mobile devices - than Windows 7. (There is no Windows 9.) Windows 10 also paves the way for multiple devices to work together. You might be able to buy an app once to run on your PC, phone and Xbox game machine, for instance. The app's layout would automatically reconfigure to the given screen size. New apps are being designed for Windows 10, so if you have an older system, you might find yourself shut out.

## Benefits for Microsoft

Microsoft is reducing reliance on software sales in favor of services such as the Bing search engine, OneDrive storage and Skype for communications. Windows 10 was designed to steer users to those services. Microsoft makes money from ads and premium features that cost money - such as additional OneDrive storage. Microsoft can also encourage app makers to write more software for Windows 10 if a lot of people are using it. It's similar to how Apple pushes its users to upgrade to the latest iPhone and Mac systems. App developers know they can enable the latest features without worrying about abandoning too many users of older devices.

## Why hold out?

System upgrades aren't always smooth, especially on older machines with slower



In this Jan. 21, 2015, file photo, Microsoft CEO Satya Nadella speaks at an event demonstrating the new features of Windows 10 at the company's headquarters in Redmond, Wash.

processors, less memory and less storage space available. Microsoft's Get Windows 10 app will verify that you meet minimum system requirements - but minimum doesn't mean speedy. Older machines also might have software that won't work on Windows 10, so you'd have to spend money upgrading those programs, if upgrades are available at all. Printers, scanners and other accessories also might need new controlling software, called drivers. If a driver update isn't available, you might find yourself with a dead accessory. And once you upgrade to Windows 10, you might be ceding control over future upgrades to Microsoft. The company is offering incremental updates to Windows 10 on a regular basis, and it won't always give you a choice on whether to accept.

## How to keep the older windows

Microsoft is treating Windows 10 as a type of security update it regularly pushes to users. Microsoft is now reclassifying Windows 10 as "recommended" rather than "optional." In doing so, those who have set their machine to automatically get important updates will get Windows 10, too. You can avoid this by turning off automatic updates in the settings under Windows Update. That's not recommended, though, because

you might miss important security fixes. If you work for a large company, your system administrators are likely monitoring these updates, so Windows 10 won't automatically download without their OK. Plus, Microsoft isn't offering Windows 10 for free to larger companies. Microsoft will support Windows 7 until 2020 and Windows 8 until 2023, after which time it will stop fixing any security problems. By then, it might be time for a new computer anyway.

## If you're ready

To install Windows 10, all you need to do is accept it when prompted. Getting Windows 10 shouldn't affect your photos and other documents, though there's always a risk of a meltdown with any major upgrade. Back up your files first. You can use an online storage service such as OneDrive or DropBox to keep a backup online.

## What if you don't like windows 10?

Microsoft keeps a backup of your system for a month. In the settings, go to "Update & security" and then "Recovery." You'll find the option to return to Windows 7 or 8. Your files should be OK, but you'll lose any apps installed after upgrading to Windows 10. Remember, you have only 31 days to change your mind. — AP

# MICROSOFT SHOWS OFF POSSIBLE FUTURE OF FOOTBALL VIEWING

**SAN FRANCISCO:** Imagine being able to watch all 22 players at the snap with video that expands from your living room television set to the entire wall. Curious about how big Terrence "Pot Roast" Knighton really is, or how 5-foot-11 quarterback Russell Wilson is able to use his high release point to avoid getting passes batted down? Try standing next to a hologram of Knighton right in your den on an NFL Sunday, or watching a hologram of Wilson release the ball right over your outstretched arm.

Wonder why your favorite quarterback just threw an interception, or how a big hole opened for a running back on a

touchdown run? Just load up a 3-D version of the play on your coffee table and zoom it, pause it and rotate it around 360 degrees to see how the cornerback baited the quarterback into a bad throw, or a pulling guard help spring a long run. The designers at Microsoft believe those seemingly far-fetched dreams could one day be a reality in living rooms around the country. Microsoft showed off its HoloLens technology at the Super Bowl this week as the company tries to redefine the experience of watching NFL football at home.

"This stuff is coming," said Brian Rolapp, the executive vice president of

media for the NFL. "It's not a question of if, it's a question of when." The technology is not ready to be released to the public, but Microsoft used a game played between Seattle and San Francisco at Levi's Stadium earlier this year to show the capabilities. With 3-D capable cameras spread around the entire stadium, plays were able to be brought to your coffee table with the press of a button on your phone or the movement of your hands. All 3-D forms of the 22 players were lined up and viewers could walk around the table to see different angles, pause the video or zoom in to certain parts of the field. — AP

# CHINESE USING CARPOOLING APPS TO GET RIDE HOME FOR HOLIDAYS

**SHANGHAI:** The hundreds of millions of Chinese heading home for Lunar New Year have a relatively new travel option this year: Mobile apps to find carpool partners to share costs in what is a novel concept for most Chinese. The apps give an alternative to pricey airfares and hard-to-score train tickets. Software developer Li Jin in Shanghai used one after he had to abort his flight plans because of last-minute work demands, and found that the only train tickets left going to his hometown in northwestern Shaanxi province were for expensive business-class seats.

Then he tried using the Didi Chuxing (pronounced "dee dee choo shing") carpool app and found a driver, real estate agent Chen Xiao, going his way. "She said she still had a free space, so we agreed and now I'm using this way to get home," Li said. Li paid Chen 400 yuan (\$60) for his seat home, roughly the same cost for a second-class train ticket for the same journey. He shared the ride in a BMW sedan with three other passengers, including a child.

The road trip through clogged highways was nearly 23 hours, twice the travel time of an express train, but Li said he appreciated the companionship. "I think I will do the same for my return trip after the new year, because I get to know new friends, and it's an experience," he said. Carpooling is still unusual in China, but government officials welcome the idea as a way to alleviate the enormous burden placed on the public transportation system during the Lunar New Year holidays, China's most important vacation period when hundreds of millions travel to their hometowns. All told, Chinese will make a total of 2.9 billion trips this holiday season, and 2.5 billion of them will be by road, according to official estimates.

"We encourage car-pooling services that are not intended to make profits," transportation official Wang Shuiping was quoted as saying by state media outlets. "We also remind that parties to the services must be clear on each side's rights and obligations to avoid disputes." Leading the nascent inter-city carpooling market is Didi Chuxing, an Uber-like mobile car-hailing service that has been most commonly used for hailing city rides, but the company began to offer carpooling services for city commuters over the past year and, by the end of September, introduced car-sharing services for inter-city trips among 343 Chinese cities.

Users can pick the departure city and destination city and enter the desired date of travel to find private drivers with the same itinerary and an empty seat. "We launched this matchmaking function to help us make this inter-city car sharing service another means of transportation alongside planes, trains and other forms of public transport," Didi Chuxing spokesman Wang Mingze said. Wang said 300,000 used the service in the first week of the holiday travel, which began Jan 24. As the Feb 8 start of the holiday drew closer, the usage jumped to 100,000 per day, and nearly half of the orders involved trips longer than 500 kilometers (310 miles), he said. Wang estimated that the platform would serve more than 1 million people by the end of the 40-day travel period.

Another player in the market is 58 Ganji Group, China's largest online classified ad service, where users have been for years posting carpooling information and which also now has a mobile app. Huang Wei, a vice president, said the site expects to have more than 1 million posts for carpooling this holiday season, up from last year's 700,000 posts, although the company does not track the completion rates. "China does not have a carpooling culture yet, but you see a spike during the holiday season, when the demand goes up because people cannot secure train tickets and seek alternatives," Huang said. — AP



**SHANGHAI:** Real estate agent Chen Xiao (top center in white) poses with passengers before they start their journey back to their hometown for the upcoming Chinese Lunar New Year, in Shanghai, China. They met on the ride-share app Didi Kuaidi, a Chinese transportation network company. — AP

## UNRELIABLE PHONE DATA HELPED CONVICT US MAN IN 'SERIAL' CASE

**BALTIMORE:** The murder conviction of a Baltimore man that explored by the 2014 podcast "Serial" was based in part on unreliable cellphone data, a forensic expert testified at a court hearing on Thursday. Adnan Syed, 35, was convicted in 2000 of kidnapping and strangling his ex-girlfriend Hae Min Lee, 18, and is serving a life sentence. He is seeking a retrial based on new evidence about his case amid questions about the fairness of his conviction raised by the podcast.

Gerald Grant, a communications forensics expert, testified in Baltimore City Circuit Court that jurors should have been told that AT&T cellphone records used to place Syed at the site where Lee's body was buried were flawed. The AT&T engineer who testified in the original trial was not aware that outgoing phone calls were reliable but incoming calls were not, he said. A sheet accompanying the faxed records included that disclaimer but was misplaced or overlooked. "There were instructions that should have been followed," Grant, who examined the case's evidence and files, said under questioning from C. Justin Brown, Syed's lawyer.

The engineer in the original trial has filed an affidavit saying that if he had known about the disclaimer, his findings might have been different Grant said during the second day of the three-day hearing that Syed's case was among the first to include cellphone location technology. A second witness, Asia McClain Chapman, a high school classmate of Syed's, testified that he was calm when she met him at a library and told him Lee was missing. She said she was never contacted to provide a possible alibi at his trial. Prosecutor Thiru Vignarajah pressed McClain Chapman about her recollections and focused on letters she wrote Syed after his arrest.

In one, she wrote, "I have reason to believe in your innocence." McClain Chapman also denied that Syed had helped McClain write a second letter which contained details of the case. Lee's slaying was the subject of "Serial" which began in October 2014 and was released by Chicago public radio station WBEZ. The Maryland Court of Special Appeals returned the case to Baltimore City Circuit Court last year for post-conviction proceedings. The hearing will weigh potential evidence that was not used in previous proceedings or may have been misinterpreted, and the court could order a new trial. — Reuters

# APPLE IS ACCEPTING BANGED-UP IPHONE

## APPLE ASKS TOP US COURT TO REJECT SAMSUNG APPEAL

**NEW YORK:** Apple for the first time is accepting banged up iPhones as a trade-in from those wanting to upgrade. Until now, Apple offered credit to iPhone owners only if the device had an intact screen and working buttons. Apple hopes that with more leeway, applicable only to iPhone 5 and later models, more people will upgrade to new iPhones. Apple has told investors that it may book its first revenue decline in 13 years when it reports quarterly earnings in April due in part to weakness in the global economy.

But the smartphone market has matured as well after a years-long streak of blistering hot demand. Apple relies on the iPhone for two-thirds of its revenue. Tech blogs have speculated about an iPhone 7 to be released in the fall with dual cameras and wireless earbuds. Apple pays up to \$350 for phones without cracked screens or broken buttons. For damaged phones, it will pay \$50 for a 5s, \$200 for a 6 and \$250 for a 6 Plus. The changes, first reported on the tech blog 9to5Mac as well as in-

store installation of screen protectors, were confirmed Friday by Apple spokesman Nick Leahy.

### Samsung appeal

In another development, Apple has asked the US Supreme Court to dismiss Samsung's appeal in the blockbuster patent case between the two smartphone giants, saying the ruling followed "well-established" legal precedent. A filing Thursday from the California giant came in response to Samsung's appeal seeking to overturn a \$548 million award for patent infringement related to copying features from Apple's iPhones. "Samsung had its day in court—many days, in fact—and the properly instructed jury was well-justified in finding that Samsung copied Apple's designs and should pay the damages that the statute expressly authorizes," Apple said in its response, first reported by the blog Foss Patents.

"While this litigation may be high-profile, it is legally unexceptional, and Samsung has shown no reason for this court to prolong it." Attorneys for the

South Korean consumer electronics titan argued in December that the massive payout was not warranted, because smartphones "contain countless other features that give them remarkable functionality wholly unrelated to their design." "Even if the patented features contributed one percent of the value of Samsung's phones, Apple gets 100 percent of Samsung's profits," the appeal said.

The arch-rivals have battled in close to a dozen countries, with each accusing the other of infringing on various patents related to their flagship smartphone and tablet products. Florian Mueller, who publishes the Foss Patents blog, said the case could present an opportunity for the top court to review the issue of "design patents," a key element of the case. "The Supreme Court hasn't heard a design patent case in about 122 years," he wrote. "It's so obvious that a lot of things have changed during that period, and the role design patents play in connection with complex technology products really needs to be adjudicated again." — Agencies

# LINKEDIN SHARES TUMBLE

**SAN FRANCISCO:** LinkedIn shares plunged as much as 28 percent in after-hours trading Thursday after the company reported better-than-expected results for the fourth quarter but provided a weak forecast for 2016. The professional networking service's adjusted earnings and revenue beat Wall Street's estimates for the last three months of 2015, thanks to strong demand for its hiring and recruiting software. But it issued a forecast that was far below what analysts were expecting.

LinkedIn also said it will phase out a new online advertising product that hasn't worked out as planned, which will cause it to forego roughly \$50 million in near-term revenue. Mountain View, California-based LinkedIn Corp. reported a loss of \$8.4 million, compared with a \$3 million profit a year earlier. That amounted to a loss of 6 cents a share in the latest quarter, but the company said it earned 94 cents a share after adjusting for stock compensation and other one-time items. Analysts surveyed by FactSet were expecting adjusted earnings of 78 cents a share on revenue of \$857 million.

Fourth-quarter revenue rose 34 percent to \$862 million. Despite the strong finish for 2015, the company disappointed investors by forecasting adjusted earnings for the current period will be 55 cents a share on revenue of roughly \$820 million. Analysts were



**CALIFORNIA:** LinkedIn CEO Jeff Weiner speaks during the company's second annual 'Bring In Your Parents Day,' at LinkedIn headquarters in this file photo. — AP

expecting first-quarter adjusted earnings of 75 cents a share on sales of \$868 million. The company also forecast revenue for the full year will be \$3.6 billion to \$3.65 billion, lower than analysts' estimates of \$3.9 billion. Among other things, LinkedIn said growth in a key segment of its "Talent Solutions" division, which provides software tools for employers and recruiters, will slow from 30 percent

last year to mid-20 percent in 2016. It blamed an economic downturn in Europe and Asia.

The online company also said a new advertising program called "Lead Accelerator" would be discontinued because it "required more resources than anticipated." LinkedIn is often described as a social-networking service like Facebook or Twitter, which make money primarily from digital

ads. But LinkedIn has a different business model: It gets more than 60 percent of its revenue from fees that employers and recruiters pay to use its platform, while advertising and premium subscriptions contribute the rest.

The company has seen steady revenue growth over the last five years, but it often reports a net loss because of big stock grants that it awards to employees. Shares of LinkedIn have been on a roller-coaster over the last year. The stock plunged last spring when the company lowered its revenue forecast and warned of short-term costs associated with its \$1.5 billion purchase of online education company Lynda.com. Shares surged again in the fall, but dropped more than 20 percent again in the last three months.

LinkedIn's membership grew 19 percent in the last quarter, to 419 million, and executives say they expect to continue growing in China and other markets. They're also counting on more revenue from online training courses and software that commercial sales representatives can use to drum up business from their LinkedIn contacts. But analysts warn LinkedIn could face more competition from companies like GlassDoor, which shows job postings and workers' ratings of companies, or Facebook, which recently launched a service for workers to communicate with their colleagues. — AP



00:50 River Monsters  
01:45 Call Of The Wildman  
02:15 Call Of The Wildman  
02:40 Big Fish Man  
03:35 Tanked  
04:25 Gangland Killers  
05:15 Gator Boys  
06:02 Treehouse Masters  
06:49 Big Fish Man  
07:36 Call Of The Wildman  
08:25 Treehouse Masters  
12:55 Austin Stevens: Snakemaster  
13:50 Gangland Killers  
19:20 Rugged Justice  
20:15 Bugging Out  
20:45 Bugging Out  
21:10 Dinosaurs In The Outback  
22:05 Dr. Dee: Alaska Vet  
23:00 Rugged Justice  
23:55 Austin Stevens: Snakemaster



00:00 Violetta  
00:45 The Hive  
00:50 Sabrina Secrets Of A Teenage Witch  
01:40 Hank Zipzer  
02:05 Binny And The Ghost  
02:30 Violetta  
03:15 The Hive  
03:20 Sabrina Secrets Of A Teenage Witch  
04:10 Hank Zipzer  
04:35 Binny And The Ghost  
05:00 Violetta  
05:45 The Hive  
05:50 Mouk  
06:00 Lolirock  
06:25 Sofia The First  
06:50 That's So Raven  
07:15 Gravity Falls  
07:40 Jessie  
08:05 Shake It Up  
08:30 Shake It Up  
08:55 That's So Raven  
09:20 That's So Raven  
09:45 Jessie  
10:15 I Love Violetta  
10:25 Bad Hair Day  
12:00 Violetta Recipes  
12:15 Whisker Haven Tales  
12:20 Jessie  
12:45 Jessie  
13:10 Liv And Maddie  
14:00 Austin & Ally  
14:55 Lolirock  
15:20 I Didn't Do It  
16:10 Best Friends Whenever  
17:00 Girl Meets World  
17:50 I Love Violetta  
18:00 The Lion King  
19:30 Gravity Falls  
19:55 Dog With A Blog  
20:20 Mako Mermaids  
20:45 Good Luck Charlie  
21:10 Good Luck Charlie  
21:35 H2O: Just Add Water  
22:00 Binny And The Ghost  
22:25 Sabrina Secrets Of A Teenage Witch  
22:50 Sabrina Secrets Of A Teenage Witch  
23:10 Hank Zipzer  
23:35 Binny And The Ghost



00:00 House Of DVF  
00:55 The Grace Helbig Show  
01:25 Fashion Police  
02:20 E! News  
03:15 Keeping Up With The Kardashians  
04:10 The E! True Hollywood Story  
05:05 The E! True Hollywood Story  
06:00 Keeping Up With The Kardashians  
06:55 Keeping Up With The Kardashians  
07:50 Style Star  
08:20 E! News  
09:15 #RichKids Of Beverly Hills  
10:15 #RichKids Of Beverly Hills  
11:10 New Money  
11:35 Fashion Police  
12:05 E! News  
13:05 Botched  
14:05 Hollywood Cycle  
15:00 Hollywood Cycle  
16:00 WAGs  
17:00 WAGs  
18:00 E! News  
19:00 Keeping Up With The Kardashians  
20:00 Dash Dolls  
21:00 Christina Milian Turned Up  
22:00 E! News  
23:00 House Of DVF



00:00 Diners, Drive-Ins And Dives  
01:00 Ching's Amazing Asia  
02:00 Australian Food Adventures With Matt Moran  
03:00 Roadtrip With G. Garvin  
04:00 Diners, Drive-Ins And Dives  
05:00 Guy's Grocery Games  
06:00 Chopped  
07:00 Roadtrip With G. Garvin  
08:00 Chopped  
09:00 Amazing Wedding Cakes  
10:00 The Pioneer Woman  
11:00 Siba's Table  
12:00 Chopped  
13:00 Guy's Big Bite  
14:00 Diners, Drive-Ins And Dives  
17:00 Chopped  
18:00 Siba's Table  
19:00 Staten Island Cakes  
20:00 Chopped

21:00 Diners, Drive-Ins And Dives  
21:30 , Drive-Ins And Dives  
22:00 Man v Food  
23:00 BBQ Crawl



00:10 Coach Trip  
01:30 Pick Me!  
02:30 Emmerdale  
05:00 Coronation Street  
07:10 Shetland  
08:05 Pick Me!  
10:50 Midsomer Murders  
12:30 The Chase: Celebrity Specials  
13:20 The Jonathan Ross Show  
14:15 Shetland  
15:10 Vera  
16:45 The Jonathan Ross Show  
17:40 Chasing Shadows  
18:35 Coach Trip  
19:00 Vera  
20:45 The Jonathan Ross Show  
21:40 The Chase: Celebrity Specials  
22:30 Coach Trip  
23:00 Coronation Street



00:10 4 Babies A Second  
01:00 Mystery Files  
02:00 Seahorses: Wanted Dead Or Alive  
02:55 Wild Case Files  
03:50 Air Crash Investigation  
04:45 Megastructures  
05:40 How To Win At Everything  
06:35 Planes That Changed The World  
07:30 Taiwan: Island Of Fish  
08:25 Dog Whisperer  
09:20 4 Babies A Second  
10:15 Lawless Island  
11:10 Big Fish, Texas  
12:05 Zeb's River Journey Thailand  
13:00 Planes That Changed The World  
14:00 Mega Factories: Supercars  
15:00 Man vs Ride  
16:00 How To Win At Everything  
17:00 Beyond Magic  
18:00 The Border  
19:00 Man vs Ride  
20:00 How To Win At Everything  
20:50 Beyond Magic  
21:40 The Border

22:30 Man vs Ride  
23:20 Planes That Changed The World



01:00 The Nightly Show With Larry Wilmore  
01:30 Louie  
02:00 Sex & Drugs & Rock & Roll  
02:30 The Big C  
04:00 Men At Work  
04:30 The Tonight Show Starring Jimmy Fallon  
06:00 Til Death  
06:30 Community  
07:00 Late Night With Seth Meyers  
08:00 Men At Work  
08:30 Cristela  
10:30 Community  
11:00 The Tonight Show Starring Jimmy Fallon  
12:00 Til Death  
12:30 Men At Work  
13:00 Cristela  
13:30 Community  
16:30 Til Death  
17:00 Late Night With Seth Meyers  
18:00 The Muppets  
18:30 Dr. Ken  
19:00 Last Man Standing  
19:30 Life In Pieces  
20:00 The Tonight Show Starring Jimmy Fallon  
22:00 Saturday Night Live  
23:00 The Big C  
23:30 Late Night With Seth Meyers



00:00 Salem  
01:00 Grey's Anatomy  
02:00 Dominion  
03:00 The Strain  
04:00 Good Morning America  
06:00 Parenthood  
07:00 Backstrom  
08:00 American Crime  
09:00 American Idol  
11:00 Backstrom  
12:00 Parenthood  
13:00 The Ellen DeGeneres Show  
14:00 American Idol  
16:00 Live Good Morning America  
17:00 The Ellen DeGeneres Show  
18:00 American Crime  
19:00 Grey's Anatomy

20:00 Stitches  
21:00 Criminal Minds  
22:00 The Blacklist  
23:00 Minority Report



02:00 The Exorcism Of Emily Rose  
04:00 Oblivion  
06:15 Dying Of The Light  
08:00 Don't Look Back  
10:00 Jurassic Attack  
12:00 Snitch  
14:00 Born To Race: Fast Track  
16:00 I Am Legend  
18:00 Special ID  
19:45 The Italian Job (2003)  
21:45 Battleship



00:00 The Exorcism Of Emily Rose  
02:00 Oblivion-PG15  
04:15 Dying Of The Light-PG15  
06:00 Don't Look Back-PG15  
08:00 Jurassic Attack-PG15  
10:00 Snitch-PG15  
12:00 Born To Race: Fast Track  
14:00 I Am Legend-PG15  
16:00 Special ID-PG15  
17:45 The Italian Job (2003)-PG15  
19:45 Battleship-PG15  
22:00 The A-Team-PG15



00:00 For A Good Time, Call  
02:00 50 First Dates  
04:00 The Misadventures Of The Dunderheads  
06:00 The Nutty Professor (1996)  
08:00 Dunston Checks In  
09:45 The Misadventures Of The Dunderheads  
11:45 50 First Dates  
13:45 Space Dogs  
15:30 Dunston Checks In  
17:15 Renaissance Man  
19:30 Identity Thief  
21:45 The Five Year Engagement



00:20 World's Scariest  
01:10 Fast N' Loud  
02:00 Street Outlaws  
03:40 How Stuff Works  
06:00 Misfit Garage  
10:10 Gold Rush  
11:50 Catching Monsters  
12:40 The Liquidator  
14:45 Storage Wars Canada  
15:10 Auction Hunters: Pawn Shop Edition  
16:50 Siberian Cut  
17:40 Alaska: The Last Frontier  
18:30 Mythbusters  
19:20 You Have Been Warned  
20:10 You Have Been Warned  
21:00 Siberian Cut  
21:50 Alaska: The Last Frontier  
22:40 Railroad Alaska  
23:30 Chaos Caught On Camera



00:35 Weird Or What?  
01:20 How It's Made  
01:44 How It's Made  
02:08 Alien Mysteries  
02:55 How The Universe Works  
03:42 Mythbusters  
04:29 Weird Or What?  
05:16 Alien Mysteries  
06:03 How The Universe Works  
06:50 Prototype This  
07:37 How Do They Do It?  
08:00 How Do They Do It?  
08:23 How It's Made  
12:08 How Do They Do It?  
12:30 How Do They Do It?  
12:53 Food Factory  
15:57 How The Universe Works  
19:50 Strangest Weather On Earth  
20:40 Storm Chasers  
23:45 Mythbusters



00:40 Who On Earth Did I Marry?  
01:30 The Haunted  
02:20 Ghost Lab  
03:10 Serial Killers  
04:00 Deadly Devotion  
04:45 Who On Earth Did I Marry?  
05:30 The Haunted  
06:20 Deadly Affairs  
07:10 True Crime With Aphrodite Jones  
08:00 Fatal Encounters  
08:50 Disappeared  
10:30 On The Case With Paula Zahn  
12:10 The Will  
13:50 California Investigator  
14:40 Dr G: Medical Examiner  
15:30 On The Case With Paula Zahn  
17:10 Disappeared  
18:50 California Investigator  
19:40 Deadly Affairs  
23:00 Swamp Murders  
23:50 Deadly Sins



THE EXORCISM OF EMILY ROSE ON OSN MOVIES ACTION HD



**OSN MOVIES**

**DRAMA**

- 01:00 Still Mine-PG15
- 03:00 Inside Llewyn Davis-PG15
- 05:00 One Chance-PG15
- 07:00 I'll Follow You Down-PG15
- 09:00 The Truth About Emanuel-
- 11:00 One Chance-PG15
- 12:45 For Greater Glory-PG15
- 15:15 The Dependables-PG15
- 17:00 The Truth About Emanuel-
- 19:00 Zulu-PG15
- 21:00 Ask Me Anything-PG15
- 23:00 The Riot Club-18

**OSN MOVIES HD**

**FESTIVAL**

- 01:15 Upside Down
- 03:15 Men Of Honor
- 05:30 Escobar: Paradise Lost
- 07:30 The Doctor
- 09:30 Till Human Voices Wake Us
- 11:15 Escobar: Paradise Lost
- 13:15 Mood Indigo
- 15:30 Safe Haven
- 17:30 Till Human Voices Wake Us
- 19:30 Calvary
- 21:30 True Colors
- 23:30 Carlos

**OSN MOVIES HD**

- 01:15 Rage-PG15
- 03:00 Transcendence-PG15
- 05:15 Jack And The Cuckoo Clock Heart-PG
- 07:00 Believe-PG15
- 09:00 Transcendence-PG15
- 11:00 The Two Faces Of January-
- 12:45 Million Dollar Arm-PG15
- 15:00 The Fault In Our Stars-PG15
- 17:15 Project Almanac-PG15
- 19:00 Winter's Tale-PG15
- 21:00 Suite Francaise-18
- 23:00 The Skeleton Twins-18

**OSN MOVIES HD**

**KIDS**

- 01:15 Egon And Donci
- 02:45 Dixie And The Zombie Rebellion
- 04:15 Blue Elephant 2
- 06:00 K-9 Adventures: Legend Of The Lost Gold
- 08:00 Hatching
- 09:30 Hook
- 12:00 Ice Age: The Meltdown
- 13:30 Dixie And The Zombie Rebellion
- 15:00 Marco Macaco
- 16:30 Ernest & Celestine
- 18:00 Hook
- 20:30 Pororo: The Racing Adventure
- 22:00 Marco Macaco
- 23:30 Moomins And The Comet Chase

**OSN MOVIES HD**

**PREMIERE**

- 00:15 The Silent Storm-PG15
- 02:00 The Signal-PG15
- 04:00 Happy Feet-PG
- 06:00 Searching For Sugar Man
- 08:00 The Numbers Station-PG15
- 10:00 The Mark-PG15
- 12:00 Happy Feet-PG
- 14:00 Blended-PG15
- 16:00 The Numbers Station-PG15
- 18:00 No Good Deed-PG15
- 20:00 The Judge-PG15
- 22:30 Whiplash-PG15



- 00:45 The Day I Almost Died
- 01:35 An Hour To Save Your Life
- 02:25 My Strange Addiction
- 02:50 My Strange Addiction
- 03:15 Obsessive Compulsive Cleaners...
- 04:05 Secret Eaters
- 05:00 Secret Eaters
- 06:00 Say Yes To The Dress
- 06:25 Dare To Wear
- 07:15 The Autistic Gardener
- 08:05 Randy To The Rescue



**THE ITALIAN JOB ON OSN MOVIES ACTON HD**

- 08:55 Randy To The Rescue
- 09:45 Obsessive Compulsive Cleaners...
- 10:35 7 Little Johnstons
- 11:25 Jon & Kate Plus 8
- 13:30 My Big Fat Fabulous Life
- 13:55 My Big Fat Fabulous Life
- 14:20 Belief
- 15:10 Cake Boss
- 17:15 The Autistic Gardener
- 18:05 Oprah: Where Are They Now?
- 18:55 Cake Boss
- 19:20 Curvy Brides
- 19:45 Curvy Brides
- 20:10 Born Without Limbs
- 21:00 Belief
- 21:50 Oprah's Lifeclass
- 22:40 Long Island Medium
- 23:05 Body Bizarre



- 00:00 Raging Bull
- 02:05 Hide
- 03:35 Road House
- 05:30 Everybody's Fine
- 07:10 Of Mice And Men
- 09:00 Beachhead
- 10:30 Miracles
- 11:55 Billy Two Hats
- 13:35 Les Miserables (1998)
- 15:45 Robinson Crusoe
- 17:15 Fuzz
- 18:45 Seven Years In Tibet
- 21:00 Fear The Walking Dead
- 22:00 Breaking Bad
- 23:00 Peggy Sue Got Married



- 00:15 Doctors
- 00:45 Doctor Who: The Time Of The Doctor
- 01:50 War And Peace
- 02:40 Luther
- 04:35 Doctors
- 05:05 Father Brown
- 06:00 Doctors
- 07:30 Eastenders
- 09:35 Casualty
- 14:10 Doctors
- 15:15 The Musketeers
- 18:00 Doctors
- 18:30 Eastenders
- 19:05 Father Brown
- 20:00 Doctor Who: The Husbands Of River Song
- 21:00 Dickensian
- 21:50 War And Peace

- 22:40 Sherlock: The Abominable Bride
- 00:15 Doctors
- 00:45 Doctor Who: The Time Of The Doctor
- 01:50 War And Peace
- 02:40 Luther
- 04:35 Doctors
- 05:05 Father Brown
- 06:00 Doctors
- 07:30 Eastenders
- 09:35 Casualty
- 14:10 Doctors
- 14:40 Doctors
- 15:15 The Musketeers
- 18:00 Doctors
- 18:30 Eastenders
- 19:05 Father Brown
- 20:00 Doctor Who: The Husbands Of River Song
- 21:00 Dickensian
- 21:50 War And Peace
- 22:40 Sherlock: The Abominable Bride



- 00:00 Bill Cosby: The Women Speak
- 01:00 My Crazy Ex
- 02:00 I Was Possessed
- 03:00 Bill Cosby: The Women Speak
- 04:00 Nightmare In Suburbia
- 05:00 I Was Possessed
- 06:00 My Crazy Ex
- 07:00 The FBI Files
- 08:00 Fred Dinenage: Murder Casebook
- 09:00 Fred Dinenage: Murder Casebook
- 10:00 Killers
- 11:00 Killers
- 12:00 Killers
- 13:00 The First 48
- 16:00 Crimes That Shook Britain
- 17:00 Steven Seagal: Lawman
- 20:00 Monster In My Family
- 23:00 The Secret Tapes Of The O.J. Case



- 00:00 Jungle Cubs
- 00:25 Aladdin
- 00:50 Gummi Bears
- 01:20 Lilo And Stitch
- 01:45 Cars Toons
- 01:50 Zou
- 02:05 Henry Hugglemonster
- 02:20 Calimero

- 02:35 Zou
- 02:50 Loopdidoo
- 03:05 Art Attack
- 03:30 Henry Hugglemonster
- 03:45 Calimero
- 04:00 Zou
- 04:15 Loopdidoo
- 04:30 Art Attack
- 04:55 Henry Hugglemonster
- 05:05 Calimero
- 05:20 Zou
- 05:30 Loopdidoo
- 05:45 Art Attack
- 06:10 Henry Hugglemonster
- 06:20 Calimero
- 06:35 Zou
- 06:45 Loopdidoo
- 08:15 Art Attack
- 08:35 Henry Hugglemonster
- 08:50 Calimero
- 09:00 Zou
- 09:20 Loopdidoo
- 09:35 Art Attack
- 10:00 Calimero
- 10:10 Zou
- 10:25 Loopdidoo
- 10:40 Miles From Tomorrow
- 11:05 Sofia The First
- 11:30 Doc McStuffins
- 11:45 Jake & The Never Land Pirates
- 12:35 Doc McStuffins
- 13:00 Sofia The First
- 13:30 Jake & The Never Land Pirates
- 16:50 Doc McStuffins
- 17:15 Zou
- 17:30 Mickey Mouse Clubhouse
- 17:55 Loopdidoo
- 18:10 Miles From Tomorrow
- 18:35 Jake & The Never Land Pirates
- 19:00 Sofia The First
- 19:25 Lion King 2: Simba's Pride
- 21:05 Miles From Tomorrow
- 21:30 Sofia The First
- 21:55 Doc McStuffins
- 22:10 Jake & The Never Land Pirates
- 22:35 Miles From Tomorrow
- 23:00 Mickey Mouse Clubhouse
- 23:30 Sofia The First



- 07:00 Star vs The Forces Of Evil
- 07:25 K. C. Undercover
- 07:50 Supa Strikas

- 08:15 Annedroids
- 08:40 Lab Rats
- 09:10 Kirby Buckets
- 09:35 Gamers Guide To Pretty Much Everything
- 10:00 Supa Strikas
- 13:00 Toy Story 2
- 14:30 Phineas And Ferb
- 14:45 Kickin' It
- 15:10 Disney Mickey Mouse
- 15:15 Rocket Monkeys
- 15:40 Wander Over Yonder
- 16:05 Star vs The Forces Of Evil
- 16:30 Kirby Buckets
- 16:55 Gamers Guide To Pretty Much Everything
- 17:25 K. C. Undercover
- 17:50 Supa Strikas
- 18:15 Lab Rats
- 18:40 Mighty Med
- 19:10 Annedroids
- 19:35 Star vs The Forces Of Evil
- 20:00 Kirby Buckets
- 20:25 Gamers Guide To Pretty Much Everything
- 20:55 K. C. Undercover
- 21:20 Supa Strikas
- 21:45 Lab Rats
- 22:10 Mighty Med
- 22:40 Super Matrak
- 23:05 Super Matrak
- 23:30 Boyster



- 00:45 Caribbean Life
- 01:10 Hawaii Life
- 01:35 World's Most Extreme Homes
- 02:00 House Hunters
- 02:30 House Hunters
- 02:55 Rehab Addict
- 03:20 Rehab Addict
- 03:45 Rehab Addict
- 04:10 Fixer Upper
- 05:05 Caribbean Life
- 05:30 Hawaii Life
- 05:55 Extreme Homes
- 06:45 Million Dollar Rooms
- 07:10 Million Dollar Rooms
- 07:35 Rehab Addict
- 08:00 Extreme Homes
- 08:50 Restoration SOS Virginia
- 09:15 Hawaii Life
- 09:40 Giada At Home
- 10:05 Giada At Home
- 10:30 Beachfront Bargain Hunt
- 11:00 Beachfront Bargain Hunt
- 11:25 Caribbean Life
- 11:50 Hawaii Life
- 12:15 Rehab Addict
- 12:40 Rehab Addict
- 13:10 Curb Appeal

- 13:35 Curb Appeal
- 14:00 Junk Gypsies
- 14:25 Junk Gypsies
- 14:50 Cousins On Call
- 15:15 Killer Kitchen Makeover
- 15:45 Giada's Weekend Getaways
- 16:35 Rachel Hunter's Tour Of Beauty
- 17:25 America's Most Desperate Kitchens
- 18:15 Giada In Italy
- 19:05 Flip Or Flop
- 20:00 Extreme Homes
- 20:55 House Hunters
- 21:45 Hawaii Life
- 22:10 Restoration SOS Virginia
- 22:35 Rehab Addict
- 23:00 Million Dollar Rooms



- 00:20 Hoard Hunters
- 01:10 Leepu & Pitbull
- 02:00 Counting Cars
- 02:25 Counting Cars
- 02:50 Big Rig Bounty Hunters
- 03:15 Big Rig Bounty Hunters
- 03:40 Swamp People
- 04:30 Storage Wars Texas
- 05:00 Inside Hitler's Reich Chancellery
- 06:00 Shark Wranglers
- 06:50 Ax Men
- 07:40 Duck Dynasty
- 08:05 Duck Dynasty
- 08:30 Counting Cars
- 08:55 Swamp People
- 09:45 Down East Dicking
- 10:35 Hunting Hitler
- 11:25 Gold Hunters: Legend Of The Superstition...
- 12:15 The Curse Of Oak Island
- 13:05 American Pickers
- 13:55 Hunting Hitler
- 14:45 Inside Hitler's Reich Chancellery
- 15:35 American Restoration
- 16:25 Storage Wars Texas
- 16:50 Shark Wranglers
- 17:40 Duck Dynasty
- 18:05 Duck Dynasty
- 18:30 Storage Wars: Best Of
- 18:55 Pawn Stars
- 19:20 American Pickers
- 20:10 The Curse Of Oak Island
- 21:00 Outlaw Chronicles: Hells Angels
- 21:50 Ax Men
- 22:40 The Great Martian War 1913

# OSN EXTENDS LONG-TERM PARTNERSHIP WITH DISCOVERY COMMUNICATIONS ACROSS MENA

OSN, the region's leading pay-TV network, announced the extension of its partnership with Discovery Communications across the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region with a new distribution deal that will see the launch of 2 new HD channels exclusively for OSN subscribers, even more hours of new content across Discovery's existing premium portfolio, as well as extended digital rights for OSN's VOD and catch-up services.

Launching on March 31st 2016, Discovery Family HD and IDX HD are the latest premium exclusive channels from Discovery, and will join the flagship channels Discovery Channel HD, TLC HD and now Discovery Science HD, which are also exclusive for OSN across the region. Animal Planet HD will also continue to be carried by OSN, completing this unbeatable line up.

The two new Discovery channels complement the five new channels recently launched on OSN - these include BBC First HD, OSN First HD Home of HBO, OSN Yahala Cinema HD, OSN Movies Family HD and H2 - strengthening OSN's diverse content offering even further.

Emad Morcos, Senior VP - Media Partners and Digital, OSN, said: "The long-term partnership with Discovery Communications further strengthens the 'nowhere else' television experience that we offer to our subscribers. The exclusive launch of two new channels and the introduction of new content, available across all our platforms, gives us a definitive edge as the go-to destination for thought-

fully executed and intensely researched programmes that are a signature of Discovery. The wide breadth of programmes on Discovery Family HD and IDX HD will provide family audiences high quality con-

tent exclusively on OSN. We will continue to bring exceptional television experiences to our subscribers this year, having already expanded our offering through five new channels." "OSN has been our long-standing

partner in the region for several years, and we are excited to extend this relationship further and add 2 new channels to their HD offering," said James Gibbons, EVP & Country Manager, Emerging Business, Discovery Networks CEEMEA. "Discovery Family HD is the destination channel that will bring the whole family together, featuring quality programming that will inspire a new way of learning, while IDX HD will have viewers glued to their seats with glossy reconstructions of real-life mysteries. Combined with an increase of new hours of entertaining content across our flagship premium channels, Discovery's portfolio will now offer even more value for OSN subscribers."

Always engaging, always enriching and always entertaining, Discovery Family HD is the brand-new channel for the whole family. From awesome space adventures and crazy experiments of popular science, to fascinating tales of animals in the wild, Discovery Family HD, which will replace Discovery World

when it launches, is the channel that will spark curiosity and inspire conversation away from the TV box.

IDX HD is the latest mystery and suspense channel from Discovery and replacement for ID: Investigation Discovery, showcasing the best in gripping stories and dramatic reconstructions of real-life mysteries, all filmed in a contemporary and stylish format. From devious housewives to vengeful husbands, IDX will depict intriguing real-life stories of passion and revenge to satisfy the most curious and inquisitive viewer.

Both channels will be fully localized from launch, featuring a mixture of Arabic dubbing and subtitling throughout their schedules to ensure they are accessible for all viewers.

As part of Discovery's committed increase of new programming hours, OSN subscribers can look forward to a number of new, exclusive shows on its flagship channels Discovery Channel HD and TLC HD in 2016, including the highly-anticipated scripted series *Harley & Davidson* and the Bafta-nominated documentary special *Sherpa*, both coming to Discovery Channel later this year. While on TLC, viewers can expect all-new series from popular faces such as *Whitney Thore in My Big Fat Fabulous Life*, plus even more inspirational content from *Oprah Winfrey* who, off the back of her landmark series *Belief*, returns in 2016 with even more celebrity interviews in brand-new *Oprah's Master Class* and *Oprah: Where are They Now?*. For more information, please visit [www.osn.com](http://www.osn.com)



Kumari Pooja Varshini Raja - NRI in Kuwait studying class - XI in Faips performed the classical dance "Bharathanatyam" in the 100-year-old Sri Thiyagabrahma Ganasabha's "Bharatham Festival 2015" At Vani Mahal - (Mini hall).

# MARRIOTT REWARDS' NEWEST MEGABONUS PROMOTION PROVIDES MORE OPPORTUNITIES

**M**arriott Rewards, Marriott International's award-winning loyalty program, launched its new MegaBonus global promotion making it even easier for members to earn bonus points through stays and get more out of their travel experience.

From February 1 to May 15, 2016, members will earn a free night after their second paid stay at over 4,000 participating properties worldwide across 17 different brands. For the first time, members can automatically unlock an additional offer after meeting their initial challenge, becoming eligible to earn bonus points on their subsequent stay. Challenges will vary based on member activity.

Registration is required to participate in MegaBonus and must be completed by April 15, 2016. To sign up for MegaBonus or to join Marriott Rewards and participate in the promotion, visit [here](#).



The Premier Sport Academy in association with Everton F.C. and sponsored by Porsche Centre Kuwait, Behbehani Motors Company, is currently running the Spring Football Coaching Course in Bayan. The weekend sessions are attracting hundreds of young players from as young as 3 years of age. There are also sessions available in Basketball. For details, see [www.PGA-kuwait.com](http://www.PGA-kuwait.com)

## MOSQUITO REPELLANT SALES BOOM IN BRAZIL

**RIO DE JANEIRO:** Fear of the mosquito-borne Zika virus has Brazilians rushing to buy repellent, creating a shortage of some brands on pharmacy shelves and boosting sales for the industry - a trend some producers are preparing for elsewhere as the outbreak spreads. Following the detection of Zika in April, sales of repellent in Brazil rose by one-third last year, according to consumer research firm Nielsen, doubling revenue for the sector to \$55.7 million. Buying was also spurred by an increase in cases of dengue, another virus spread by the *Aedes aegypti* mosquito.

Sales have risen even more sharply since Brazilian authorities in November flagged a potential link between Zika and suspected cases of microcephaly, a condition marked by abnormally small head size in newborns that can result in developmental problems. Raia Drogasil, Brazil's largest chain of pharmacies, said repellent sales in December jumped seven-fold from a year earlier.

Brazil's biggest retailer, the Pao de Acucar Group, said supermarket sales of

repellent were up 120 percent in the first weeks of 2016, compared to the same period a year earlier. The rise was sharpest in the Northeast region at the centre of the outbreak, where sales rose fourfold, and in the Brazil's second city of Rio de Janeiro, where they tripled. In Rio, protection against Zika is a top priority for the city's 6.5 million inhabitants and hundreds of thousands of tourists as the country's biggest Carnival celebration kicks off on Friday. Rio will also host the Olympic Games in August.

Even at small local pharmacies in Rio, waiting lists for the most sought-after repellent, Exopis, stretch to hundreds of names, with expectant mothers and their families rushing from store to store in search of the product. Exopis, developed by France's Osler, has received media attention in Brazil because it is the only brand on the market with the active ingredient Icaridin. Many Brazilians consider it the most effective repellent against the *Aedes* mosquito, though studies suggest its efficacy is similar to brands using DEET. — Reuters



**RECIFE, Brazil:** Daniele Ferreira dos Santos feeds her son Juan Pedro, who suffers from microcephaly, as they wait to be examined at the Altino Ventura Foundation, a treatment center that provides free healthcare, on Thursday. — AP

## IN INDONESIA, AN EXPERIMENT WITH BACTERIA TO TACKLE ZIKA

**YOGYAKARTA/JAKARTA:** A researcher sits in a laboratory in Indonesia, his arms extended over clear plastic boxes buzzing with mosquitoes: Over the next 20 minutes, tiny bumps develop on his skin as the insects bite dozens of times. The voluntary "feeding", at which researchers take turns, is part of a programme in the city of Yogyakarta to try to eliminate mosquito-borne diseases like dengue fever and - scientists now hope, as concerns mount about its spread across Latin America and the Caribbean - the Zika virus too.

The mosquitoes carry a bacteria called Wolbachia, which scientists introduced in earlier generations, and they will eventually be released to breed with wild mosquitoes. The bacteria, as it spreads from one insect to another, reduces the chances of the mosquitoes passing the dengue virus on to humans. Initial findings about the impact of the experiment on the spread of dengue have prompted Indonesian and Australian scientists to scale up this program to include Zika.

"We already have evidence in our labs that the method that impedes the ability of dengue to grow in the mosquito also works with the Zika virus," Scott O'Neill, director of the Eliminate Dengue Program (EDP) told Reuters, adding that the research is pending reviews from peers in the scientific community. Much remains unknown about Zika, including whether the virus causes birth defects.

The World Health Organization (WHO) declared the outbreak an international health emergency on Feb 1, citing a "strongly suspected" relationship between Zika infection in pregnancy to microcephaly, a condition marked by abnormally small head size in babies that can result in developmental problems. There is no treatment or vaccine and the WHO has recommended limiting people's exposure to mosquitoes.

The number of dengue cases at a test site in Yogyakarta where the bacteria method was used fell from 10 in 2015 to just one this year. However, the method



**VILLAVICENCIO, Colombia:** Health worker Javier Lozano empties stagnant water from a tyre during a campaign to destroy potential hatcheries of *Aedes aegypti* mosquitoes that transmit the Zika virus on Thursday. With more than 20,000 cases confirmed in Colombia and fearing that the virus could affect more than half a million people, the government launched a nationwide prevention campaign. — AP

has yet to show conclusive results in the field. "I don't believe there is a single magic bullet," said Adi Utarini, who heads the research in Indonesia. "The new technology that we bring in is not intended to replace all of the existing activities ... prevention is very important."

Indonesian President Joko Widodo this week urged officials to step up preventive measures like health awareness campaigns and fogging with insecticide. The health ministry issued a travel warning for those planning to visit Latin America. Funded partially by the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, EDP is also testing its methods in Vietnam. It is at the most advanced stage in Indonesia, a tropical country that has the world's second-highest number of annual dengue cases after Brazil.

### Under-Reported Zika Cases

Limited testing capabilities and the

usually mild symptoms that accompany the Zika virus have raised concern the number of people infected with the little-known disease may be hugely under-reported in Indonesia, authorities say. The only known case in recent years was that of a man who tested positive in 2015 and is suspected to have contracted the virus locally, on Sumatra island.

"Systematic surveillance needs to be done to determine the prevalence of Zika and at the moment we might be underestimating the number of cases," said Herawati Sudoyo, deputy director of the government-funded Eijkman Institute in Jakarta, adding the health community in Indonesia is still investigating any links to birth defects. "The scientific community may have been caught by surprise by this outbreak. We are catching up on learning about this," she added. — Reuters

## PANAMA LOOKS TO GM MOSQUITOES TO COMBAT ZIKA

**PANAMA CITY:** Panama is mulling releasing millions of genetically modified mosquitoes on its territory to combat the spread of the Zika virus, a prominent health official told AFP on Thursday. The health ministry and a tropical disease research lab, the Gorgas Institute, are evaluating "the viability and feasibility" of repeating and expanding on just such an experiment that took place two years ago, said Israel Cedeno, head of the ministry's epidemiological unit.

As back then, the idea would be to introduce male *Aedes aegypti* mosquitoes whose genes had been altered so that their offspring, after mating with bloodsucking females, die at the larva stage. In 2014, the project, carried out in a town west of Panama's capital, resulted in a 93 percent decline in the mosquito population in the area. Cedeno cautioned however that while the results were encouraging "its cost is high."

Because of that, the government needed to work out if the money would be better spent on genetically tinkering with mosquitoes or boosting public information campaigns to urge eradication of breeding spots for the insects. In Panama there are 50 confirmed cases of Zika infection, all of them in its Caribbean coastal region. The World Health Organization has said it suspects the virus might be behind a sudden spike in birth defects in a part of northern Brazil. — AFP



**PANAMA CITY:** *Aedes aegypti* mosquitoes to be tested for various diseases perch inside a container at the Gorgas Memorial Laboratory on Thursday. — AP

# UTAH LAWMAKER: PORN A PUBLIC HEALTH CRISIS

**SALT LAKE CITY:** A state senator in Utah wants to declare pornography a public health crisis, echoing an argument being made around the US by conservative religious groups as porn becomes more accessible on smartphones and tablets. Republican Sen Todd Weiler, a Mormon, contends children are being exposed at young ages to pornography, leading them to engage in riskier sexual behavior. He has said recent research from the United Kingdom found that people who compulsively view porn showed similar brain activity as seen in drug addicts.

Weiler's proposal wouldn't regulate or ban anything, but it has attracted attention, including being debated on talk show "The View." He said he's been "mocked internationally" but feels it's triggered an important conversation. "It's not just a kooky thing that some, you know, politician from Mormon Utah came up with," Weiler said. "When I was

a kid, people might sneak a Playboy magazine and look at it. Now, you've got all kinds of horrible, graphic images that are available to anyone with an Internet connection one or two clicks away." Utah lawmakers were scheduled to discuss the resolution yesterday afternoon in a legislative hearing in Salt Lake City. Defenders of pornography say critics are spouting hyperbole. There seems to be a consensus that kids have more access to porn than in the past because many have smartphones. But there's not much research to show the effects.

More than half of Utah's 3 million residents belong to The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, among religions in recent years that have worked to shed light on what they consider the harms of pornography. Here, the cultural aversion to scantily dressed women is evident. Magazines or TV commercials featuring women wearing low-cut shirts or bikinis are considered by some to be soft

pornography, and lingerie catalogs have been called "gateway porn".

Republican Gov Gary Herbert supports Weiler's resolution. This week he suggested it may be worth developing a 12-step program for porn addicts. So far no state lawmakers have stepped forward to say they're against Weiler's proposal. Most Utah legislators belong to the Mormon church. But John Stagliano, owner of a California-based porn video company called Evil Angel Productions, said pornography offers a healthy outlet for sexual desires. Stagliano suggests that without that option, people would try to satisfy their needs outside the home and sex crimes would increase.

Dr Carl Shubs, a psychologist in Beverly Hills, California who specializes in issues of sexuality, said calling pornography a public health crisis is "way off on so many levels". Shubs said anything can be addictive, but that many people find pornography enjoyable and use it in a healthy way. Some couples watch it to enhance their relationships, and some without partners view pornography to fill a void, he said. Children viewing pornography is a parenting issue, Shubs said. What people consider pornography varies. "One person's pornography may be another person's eroticism," Shubs said. "One person's art may be another person's pornography." Fighting porn has been a concern of conservative religious groups for decades. But there's been an uptick in concern over the past 10 years given the accessibility the Internet. The US Conference of Catholic Bishops last year expressed distress over what it considers the widespread problem of pornography in American culture. It reiterated that making or watching pornographic videos is a sin. — AP

## 200 MILLION GIRLS, WOMEN LIVING WITH FGM: UNICEF

**UNITED NATIONS:** At least 200 million girls and women worldwide have been subjected to female genital mutilation with half of those living in Egypt, Ethiopia and Indonesia, according to the UN children's agency. Somalia, Guinea and Djibouti continue to show the highest prevalence of FGM globally, but the overall rate in some 30 countries has dropped, said a UNICEF report released ahead of International Day of Zero Tolerance for FGM today.

The United Nations is working to end the practice of cutting women's genitalia by the target date of 2030, a goal set in its new development agenda that was adopted in September by all UN member-states. Of the 200 million FGM victims, 44 million are girls age 14 and younger. In the 30 countries where the practice is most widespread, the majority of girls have undergone FGM before their fifth birthday, said UNICEF which declared the practice a clear violation of children's rights.

"In countries like Somalia, Guinea and Djibouti, the practice is practically universal," said Claudia Cappa, the lead author of the report. "Being born in those countries means you have 9 out of 10 possibilities of undergoing the practice." The prevalence rates for FGM in Somalia stands at a staggering 98 percent for Somalia, 97 percent for Guinea and 93 percent for Djibouti. The new global figure on FGM includes nearly 70 million more girls and women than the last estimate for 2014, largely due to new data provided by Indonesia and population growth in some countries.

### Some Progress

Overall, the prevalence of FGM among teenage girls has dropped in the 30 countries, from 51 percent in 1985 to 37 percent today. There have been major strides in Liberia, Burkina Faso, Kenya and Egypt to end the mutilation of girls. Attitudes are changing, Cappa said, pointing to surveys showing that a majority of people in those countries want the practice to end. "We need to support national efforts to promote the abandonment of the practice," said Cappa, pointing to successes in efforts to "change the way communities see FGM and cutting."

Since 2008, more than 15,000 communities have abandoned FGM including 2,000 last year alone. Five countries have passed laws criminalizing the practice: Kenya, Uganda, Guinea-Bissau and recently Nigeria and Gambia in 2015. The new legislation in Gambia is seen as a major step forward as the country has the highest prevalence of FGM among girls 14 and younger - 56 percent. Some 54 percent of girls under 14 have undergone FGM in Mauritania as have about half of girls 11 and younger in Indonesia. — AFP

## ALBANIA BANS CUTTING DOWN TREES FOR 10 YRS

**TIRANA:** Albania has ordered a 10-year ban on cutting down trees for industrial purposes to avert an "ecological disaster" in the impoverished Balkan country. A law imposing a 10-year moratorium on issuing forest clearing permits was passed late Thursday by 101 lawmakers in the 140-seat parliament. The ex-communist country has also vowed to crack down on rampant illegal tree-felling, to blame for 10 times as much as legal deforestation. "Albania is faced with an ecological disaster and we are obliged to take drastic measures

against forest exploitation for industry and export," said Environment Minister Lefter Koka.

Anyone breaking the law could face up to 10 years in jail. Environmental experts are particularly concerned over deforestation on the banks of rivers because it increases risk of floods throughout the country. Albania's forests have been halved in the quarter of a century since the collapse of communism: they covered 51 percent of the Balkan country before 1990, compared to 25 percent now. — AFP

CLINIC  
PAGE



Kuwait Times  
THE LEADING INDEPENDENT DAILY IN THE ARABIAN GULF

Dr. Fahad Al-Mukhaizeem  
د. فهد علي المخيزيم

Consultant Pediatrician استشاري أطفال  
M.B. Bch. FRCPC. FAAFP. PEM

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



## KNCC PROGRAMME FROM THURSDAY TO WEDNESDAY (04/02/2016 TO 10/02/2016)

|   |  |   |  |
|---|--|---|--|
| <b>SHARQIA-1</b><br>FLIPPED<br>FLIPPED<br>ALVIN AND THE CHIPMUNKS: THE ROAD CHIP<br>FRI+SAT<br>ALVIN AND THE CHIPMUNKS: THE ROAD CHIP<br>ALVIN AND THE CHIPMUNKS: THE ROAD CHIP<br>AMERICAN HERO<br>FLIPPED<br>FLIPPED  | 11:45 AM<br>2:00 PM<br>2:00 PM<br><br>4:00 PM<br>6:00 PM<br>8:00 PM<br>10:15 PM<br>12:15 AM    | ALVIN AND THE CHIPMUNKS: THE ROAD CHIP<br>ALVIN AND THE CHIPMUNKS: THE ROAD CHIP<br>JANE GOT A GUN<br>JANE GOT A GUN<br>JANE GOT A GUN  | 4:00 PM<br>6:00 PM<br>8:00 PM<br>10:00 PM<br>12:05 AM                        |
| <b>SHARQIA-2</b><br>THE FINEST HOURS<br>THE FINEST HOURS<br>THE FINEST HOURS<br>THE FINEST HOURS<br>THE FINEST HOURS<br>THE FINEST HOURS  | 12:00 PM<br>2:30 PM<br>5:00 PM<br>7:30 PM<br>10:00 PM<br>12:30 AM                              | <b>AVENUES-1</b><br>CAPTURE THE FLAG<br>CAPTURE THE FLAG<br>CAPTURE THE FLAG<br>CAPTURE THE FLAG<br>MIN DAHAR RAGEL - Arabic<br>STANDOFF  | 1:00 PM<br>3:15 PM<br>5:30 PM<br>7:45 PM<br>10:00 PM<br>1:00 AM              |
| <b>SHARQIA-3</b><br>JANE GOT A GUN<br>JANE GOT A GUN<br>CAPTURE THE FLAG<br>JANE GOT A GUN<br>JANE GOT A GUN<br>JANE GOT A GUN<br>JANE GOT A GUN  | 12:45 PM<br>2:45 PM<br>4:45 PM<br>6:45 PM<br>8:45 PM<br>10:45 PM<br>12:45 AM                   | <b>AVENUES-2</b><br>AMERICAN HERO<br>STANDOFF<br>AMERICAN HERO<br>AMERICAN HERO<br>STANDOFF<br>AMERICAN HERO<br>AMERICAN HERO   | 12:15 PM<br>2:15 PM<br>4:15 PM<br>6:15 PM<br>8:15 PM<br>10:15 PM<br>12:15 AM |
| <b>MUHALAB-1</b><br>JANE GOT A GUN<br>JANE GOT A GUN<br>NO FRI+SAT<br>ALVIN AND THE CHIPMUNKS: THE ROAD CHIP<br>FRI+SAT<br>ALVIN AND THE CHIPMUNKS: THE ROAD CHIP<br>ALVIN AND THE CHIPMUNKS: THE ROAD CHIP<br>JANE GOT A GUN<br>JANE GOT A GUN<br>JANE GOT A GUN | 11:45 AM<br>1:45 PM<br><br>1:45 PM<br><br>3:45 PM<br>5:45 PM<br>7:45 PM<br>9:45 PM<br>11:45 PM | <b>AVENUES-3</b><br>FLIPPED<br>FLIPPED<br>FLIPPED<br>FLIPPED<br>FLIPPED<br>FLIPPED  | 12:45 PM<br>3:00 PM<br>5:15 PM<br>7:30 PM<br>9:45 PM<br>12:05 AM             |
| <b>MUHALAB-2</b><br>FLIPPED<br>CAPTURE THE FLAG<br>CAPTURE THE FLAG<br>FLIPPED<br>FLIPPED<br>FLIPPED<br>FLIPPED   | 1:00 PM<br>3:00 PM<br>5:00 PM<br>7:00 PM<br>9:00 PM<br>11:00 PM<br>1:00 AM                     | <b>360°-1</b><br>JANE GOT A GUN<br>JANE GOT A GUN<br>JANE GOT A GUN<br>JANE GOT A GUN<br>JANE GOT A GUN<br>JANE GOT A GUN   | 11:30 AM<br>1:30 PM<br>3:45 PM<br>6:00 PM<br>8:15 PM<br>10:30 PM<br>12:45 AM |
| <b>MUHALAB-3</b><br>THE FINEST HOURS<br>THE FINEST HOURS<br>THE FINEST HOURS<br>THE FINEST HOURS<br>THE FINEST HOURS<br>THE FINEST HOURS  | 11:30 AM<br>2:00 PM<br>4:30 PM<br>7:00 PM<br>9:30 PM<br>12:05 AM                               | <b>360°-2</b><br>AMERICAN HERO<br>AMERICAN HERO<br>AMERICAN HERO<br>STANDOFF<br>AMERICAN HERO<br>AMERICAN HERO<br>AMERICAN HERO   | 1:15 PM<br>3:15 PM<br>5:15 PM<br>7:15 PM<br>9:15 PM<br>11:15 PM<br>1:15 AM   |
| <b>FANAR-1</b><br>AMERICAN HERO<br>CAPTURE THE FLAG<br>CAPTURE THE FLAG<br>CAPTURE THE FLAG<br>AMERICAN HERO<br>AMERICAN HERO<br>AMERICAN HERO  | 1:00 PM<br>2:45 PM<br>4:45 PM<br>6:45 PM<br>8:45 PM<br>10:30 PM<br>12:15 AM                    | <b>360°-3</b><br>CAPTURE THE FLAG<br>CAPTURE THE FLAG -3D<br>CAPTURE THE FLAG<br>CAPTURE THE FLAG -3D<br>CAPTURE THE FLAG<br>STANDOFF<br>STANDOFF   | 11:45 AM<br>2:00 PM<br>4:15 PM<br>6:30 PM<br>8:45 PM<br>11:00 PM<br>1:00 AM  |
| <b>FANAR-2</b><br>FLIPPED<br>FLIPPED<br>ALVIN AND THE CHIPMUNKS: THE ROAD CHIP<br>FLIPPED<br>ALVIN AND THE CHIPMUNKS: THE ROAD CHIP<br>ALVIN AND THE CHIPMUNKS: THE ROAD CHIP<br>FLIPPED<br>FLIPPED   | 11:30 AM<br>1:30 PM<br>1:30 PM<br>3:30 PM<br>5:30 PM<br><br>9:45 PM<br>11:45 PM                | <b>AL-KOUT.1</b><br>THE FINEST HOURS<br>THE FINEST HOURS<br>THE FINEST HOURS<br>THE FINEST HOURS<br>THE FINEST HOURS<br>THE FINEST HOURS  | 11:45 AM<br>2:30 PM<br>5:00 PM<br>7:30 PM<br>10:00 PM<br>12:30 AM            |
| <b>FANAR-3</b><br>STANDOFF<br>STANDOFF<br>STANDOFF<br>EVERYTHING ABOUT HER - Filipino<br>MIN DAHAR RAGEL - Arabic<br>MIN DAHAR RAGEL - Arabic   | 1:00 PM<br>3:00 PM<br>5:00 PM<br>7:00 PM<br>9:30 PM<br>12:30 AM                                | <b>AL-KOUT.2</b><br>JANE GOT A GUN<br>JANE GOT A GUN<br>JANE GOT A GUN<br>JANE GOT A GUN<br>JANE GOT A GUN<br>JANE GOT A GUN  | 12:00 PM<br>2:00 PM<br>4:00 PM<br>6:00 PM<br>8:00 PM<br>10:00 PM<br>12:05 AM |
| <b>MARINA-1</b><br>FLIPPED<br>FLIPPED<br>NO FRI+SAT<br>CAPTURE THE FLAG<br>FRI+SAT<br>ALVIN AND THE CHIPMUNKS: THE ROAD CHIP<br>CAPTURE THE FLAG<br>FLIPPED<br>FLIPPED<br>FLIPPED   | 1:00 PM<br>3:00 PM<br><br>3:00 PM<br><br>5:00 PM<br>7:00 PM<br>9:00 PM<br>11:00 PM<br>1:00 AM  | <b>AL-KOUT.3</b><br>CAPTURE THE FLAG<br>CAPTURE THE FLAG<br>CAPTURE THE FLAG<br>CAPTURE THE FLAG<br>AMERICAN HERO<br>MIN DAHAR RAGEL - Arabic<br>AMERICAN HERO  | 11:30 AM<br>1:45 PM<br>3:45 PM<br>5:45 PM<br>7:45 PM<br>9:45 PM<br>12:45 AM  |
| <b>MARINA-2</b><br>THE FINEST HOURS<br>THE FINEST HOURS<br>THE FINEST HOURS<br>THE FINEST HOURS<br>THE FINEST HOURS<br>THE FINEST HOURS   | 11:45 AM<br>2:15 PM<br>4:45 PM<br>7:15 PM<br>9:45 PM<br>12:15 AM                               | <b>AL-KOUT.4</b><br>FLIPPED<br>FLIPPED<br>ALVIN AND THE CHIPMUNKS: HE ROAD CHIP<br>ALVIN AND THE CHIPMUNKS: HE ROAD CHIP<br>FLIPPED<br>FLIPPED<br>FLIPPED   | 1:00 PM<br>3:00 PM<br>5:00 PM<br>7:00 PM<br>9:00 PM<br>11:00 PM<br>1:00 AM   |
| <b>MARINA-3</b><br>JANE GOT A GUN<br>JANE GOT A GUN<br>ALVIN AND THE CHIPMUNKS: THE ROAD CHIP   | 12:00 PM<br>2:00 PM<br>2:00 PM   | <b>BAIRAQ-1</b><br>THE FINEST HOURS -3D<br>ALVIN AND THE CHIPMUNKS: HE ROAD CHIP<br>ALVIN AND THE CHIPMUNKS: HE ROAD CHIP<br>ALVIN AND THE CHIPMUNKS: HE ROAD CHIP<br>ALVIN AND THE CHIPMUNKS: HE ROAD CHIP<br>THE FINEST HOURS -3D<br>THE FINEST HOURS | 1:00 PM<br>1:30 PM<br>3:30 PM<br>5:30 PM<br>7:30 PM<br>9:30 PM<br>12:05 AM   |
|   |  | <b>BAIRAQ-2</b><br>GHAYAL ONCE AGAIN -Hindi<br>NO THU<br>FLIPPED<br>CAPTURE THE FLAG  | 11:45 AM<br><br>12:30 PM<br>2:30 PM  |

### CHANGE OF NAME

**I Amir** Karim Makandar holder of Indian Passport No. F7734039, A/P - 173 Aggani Tal-khed Dist. Ratnagiri, hereby changed my name to Amir Karim Nevarekar. **(C 5129) 6-2-2019**

**I, Kerodawala** Rajani holder of Indian Passport No. M6422448, resident at D.No. 7-79 (B) Kadali village, Razole Mandal, hereby changed my name to Kerodawala Zainab. **(C 5125)**

**Farida** Shabuddin Mukaddam, holder of Indian Passport No. Z3082289, D.O.B 25/08/1963, residing at A/103 Twin Star apartments Rupa Nagar compound near Kapadia Nagar, C.S.T. Road Kurla west Mumbai 400070, India, change my name as Farida Shahabuddin Mukaddam. **(C 5126)**

**Abdul** Gafoor Mukadam Shabuddin, holder of Indian Passport No. G7279549, D.O.B. 12/10/1956, residing at A103 Twin Star apartment Rupanagar compound near Kapadia Nagar, C.S.T Road Kurla west. Mumbai, 400070, India. Change my name as Shahabuddin Abdul Gafoor

Mukaddam. **(C 5127) 3-2-2015**

**I, Abdulla** Khan Munirudeen, S/o Abdulla Khan, holder of Indian Passport No: J5547890, D.O.B. 02.12.1965, residing at No. 204B, 5th block, 7th street, Bharathwaj Nagar, Mudichur, Chennai 600048, shall henceforth be known as Abdulla Khan Kaleem Ullah Khan. **(C 5124) 2-2-2016**

### FOR SALE

**Toyota** Yaris 2013 Saloon, dark grey color, excellent condition. KD 1950. Mob: 50994848. **(C 5123) 2-2-2016**

### ACCOMMODATION

**Sharing** accommodation available for decent executive bachelors/ family at Abbasiya. Separate bathroom/ balcony. Near United Indian School. Contact: 50903076. **(C 5122) 1-2-2016**

### SITUATION VACANT

Part-time housekeeper needed for Western family. Please call 98877192. **(C 5128) 4-2-2016**

## Hospitals

|                                  |                   |
|----------------------------------|-------------------|
| <b>Sabah Hospital</b>            | <b>24812000</b>   |
| <b>Amiri Hospital</b>            | <b>22450005</b>   |
| <b>Maternity Hospital</b>        | <b>24843100</b>   |
| <b>Mubarak Al-Kabir Hospital</b> | <b>25312700</b>   |
| <b>Chest Hospital</b>            | <b>24849400</b>   |
| <b>Farwaniya Hospital</b>        | <b>24892010</b>   |
| <b>Adan Hospital</b>             | <b>23940620</b>   |
| <b>Ibn Sina Hospital</b>         | <b>24840300</b>   |
| <b>Al-Razi Hospital</b>          | <b>24846000</b>   |
| <b>Physiotherapy Hospital</b>    | <b>24874330/9</b> |

## Clinics

|                            |                 |
|----------------------------|-----------------|
| <b>Kaizen center</b>       | <b>25716707</b> |
| <b>Rawda</b>               | <b>22517733</b> |
| <b>Adaliya</b>             | <b>22517144</b> |
| <b>Khaldiya</b>            | <b>24848075</b> |
| <b>Kaifan</b>              | <b>24849807</b> |
| <b>Shamiya</b>             | <b>24848913</b> |
| <b>Shuwaikh</b>            | <b>24814507</b> |
| <b>Abdullah Salem</b>      | <b>22549134</b> |
| <b>Nuzha</b>               | <b>22526804</b> |
| <b>Industrial Shuwaikh</b> | <b>24814764</b> |
| <b>Qadsiya</b>             | <b>22515088</b> |
| <b>Dasmah</b>              | <b>22532265</b> |
| <b>Bneid Al-Gar</b>        | <b>22531908</b> |
| <b>Shaab</b>               | <b>22518752</b> |
| <b>Qibla</b>               | <b>22459381</b> |



# Flight Schedule

## DIAL 161 FOR AIRPORT INFORMATION

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

### Arrival Flights on Saturday 6/2/2016

| Airlines | Flt  | Route                | Time  |
|----------|------|----------------------|-------|
| MSC      | 415  | Sohag                | 00:05 |
| KLM      | 413  | Amsterdam/Dammam     | 00:20 |
| JZR      | 267  | Beirut               | 00:30 |
| JZR      | 539  | Cairo                | 00:40 |
| FDB      | 069  | Dubai                | 00:55 |
| RJA      | 642  | Amman                | 01:05 |
| THY      | 772  | Istanbul             | 01:05 |
| MSR      | 614  | Cairo                | 01:20 |
| SAI      | 441  | Lahore               | 01:30 |
| DLH      | 635  | Doha                 | 01:35 |
| ETH      | 620  | Addis Ababa          | 01:45 |
| PGT      | 858  | Istanbul             | 02:00 |
| UAE      | 853  | Dubai                | 02:30 |
| GFA      | 211  | Bahrain              | 02:30 |
| OMA      | 643  | Muscat               | 02:55 |
| FDB      | 067  | Dubai                | 03:05 |
| MSR      | 612  | Cairo                | 03:10 |
| QTR      | 1076 | Doha                 | 03:15 |
| KKK      | 6507 | Istanbul             | 03:20 |
| ETD      | 305  | Abu Dhabi            | 03:25 |
| JZR      | 503  | Luxor                | 04:25 |
| AGY      | 680  | Alexandria           | 04:30 |
| DHX      | 170  | Bahrain              | 05:40 |
| THY      | 770  | Istanbul             | 05:55 |
| FDB      | 5061 | Dubai                | 06:30 |
| BAW      | 157  | London               | 06:40 |
| JZR      | 529  | Asyut                | 06:50 |
| PAL      | 668  | Manila/Dubai         | 06:55 |
| KAC      | 416  | Jakarta/Kuala Lumpur | 07:15 |
| KAC      | 412  | Manila/Bangkok       | 07:20 |
| QTR      | 1086 | Doha                 | 07:40 |
| KAC      | 204  | Lahore               | 07:40 |
| FDB      | 053  | Dubai                | 07:45 |
| KAC      | 302  | Mumbai               | 07:50 |
| KAC      | 206  | Islamabad            | 08:25 |
| KAC      | 344  | Chennai              | 08:30 |
| KAC      | 352  | Kochi                | 08:30 |
| UAE      | 855  | Dubai                | 08:40 |
| ABY      | 125  | Sharjah              | 09:00 |
| KAC      | 284  | Dhaka                | 09:10 |
| ETD      | 301  | Abu Dhabi            | 09:20 |
| QTR      | 1070 | Doha                 | 09:25 |
| FBA      | 833  | Al Najaf             | 09:30 |
| FDB      | 055  | Dubai                | 09:40 |
| OMA      | 641  | Muscat               | 10:05 |
| GFA      | 213  | Bahrain              | 10:40 |
| UAE      | 873  | Dubai                | 11:05 |
| RBG      | 553  | Alexandria           | 11:15 |
| JZR      | 165  | Dubai                | 11:30 |
| AGY      | 684  | Sohag                | 11:35 |
| IAW      | 157  | Al Najaf             | 11:50 |
| NIA      | 151  | Cairo                | 11:55 |
| MRJ      | 4815 | Mashhad              | 12:00 |
| SAW      | 701  | Damascus             | 12:20 |
| FDB      | 075  | Dubai                | 12:25 |
| MSC      | 401  | Alexandria           | 12:30 |
| UAE      | 871  | Dubai                | 12:50 |
| JZR      | 241  | Amman                | 12:50 |
| MSR      | 610  | Cairo                | 13:00 |
| KAC      | 382  | Delhi                | 13:50 |
| KNE      | 460  | Riyadh               | 13:50 |
| MSR      | 575  | Sharm el-Sheikh      | 13:55 |
| KAC      | 672  | Dubai                | 14:00 |
| QTR      | 1078 | Doha                 | 14:10 |
| FDB      | 057  | Dubai                | 14:10 |
| FBA      | 831  | Al Najaf             | 14:15 |
| JZR      | 175  | Dubai                | 14:45 |
| KAC      | 512  | Mashhad              | 14:50 |
| KAC      | 788  | Jeddah               | 14:50 |
| KNE      | 462  | Madinah              | 14:55 |
| GFA      | 221  | Bahrain              | 15:00 |
| IRM      | 1186 | Tehran               | 15:00 |
| KNE      | 472  | Jeddah               | 15:05 |
| OMA      | 645  | Muscat               | 15:30 |
| NIA      | 251  | Alexandria           | 15:30 |
| KAC      | 562  | Amman                | 15:40 |
| UAE      | 857  | Dubai                | 15:45 |
| ABY      | 127  | Sharjah              | 15:45 |
| JAD      | 301  | Amman                | 15:55 |
| QTR      | 1072 | Doha                 | 16:10 |
| JZR      | 535  | Cairo                | 16:10 |
| FDB      | 051  | Dubai                | 16:30 |
| JZR      | 357  | Mashhad              | 16:30 |
| KNE      | 474  | Jeddah               | 16:35 |
| ETD      | 303  | Abu Dhabi            | 16:40 |
| RJA      | 640  | Amman                | 16:55 |
| KAC      | 542  | Cairo                | 16:55 |
| SYR      | 341  | Damascus             | 17:00 |
| SVA      | 510  | Riyadh               | 17:15 |
| MSR      | 614  | Cairo                | 17:25 |
| GFA      | 215  | Bahrain              | 17:30 |
| KNE      | 470  | Jeddah               | 17:45 |
| KAC      | 540  | Sharm el-Sheikh      | 17:45 |
| JZR      | 325  | Al Najaf             | 17:50 |
| JZR      | 777  | Jeddah               | 17:55 |
| KAC      | 118  | New York             | 17:55 |
| SVA      | 500  | Jeddah               | 18:00 |

|     |      |                   |       |
|-----|------|-------------------|-------|
| UAE | 875  | Dubai             | 18:00 |
| KAC | 502  | Beirut            | 18:00 |
| FDB | 063  | Dubai             | 18:05 |
| JZR | 177  | Dubai             | 18:20 |
| ABY | 123  | Sharjah           | 18:45 |
| QTR | 1080 | Doha              | 18:55 |
| IRA | 669  | Mashhad           | 18:55 |
| KAC | 742  | Dammam            | 19:05 |
| IRM | 1188 | Mashhad           | 19:15 |
| KAC | 774  | Riyadh            | 19:25 |
| GFA | 217  | Bahrain           | 19:30 |
| KAC | 176  | Geneva/Frankfurt  | 19:35 |
| KAC | 618  | Doha              | 19:35 |
| KAC | 104  | London            | 19:40 |
| KAC | 674  | Dubai             | 19:45 |
| FDB | 8055 | Dubai             | 19:55 |
| MSR | 618  | Alexandria        | 20:05 |
| KNE | 480  | Taif              | 20:10 |
| JZR | 189  | Dubai             | 20:15 |
| FDB | 061  | Dubai             | 20:20 |
| OMA | 647  | Muscat            | 20:20 |
| KAC | 786  | Jeddah            | 20:30 |
| ABY | 121  | Sharjah           | 20:35 |
| FDB | 5053 | Dubai             | 20:50 |
| DLH | 634  | Frankfurt         | 20:55 |
| JAI | 572  | Mumbai            | 20:55 |
| QTR | 1088 | Doha              | 21:00 |
| MEA | 402  | Beirut            | 21:20 |
| ETD | 307  | Abu Dhabi         | 21:20 |
| ALK | 229  | Colombo           | 21:25 |
| UAE | 859  | Dubai             | 21:40 |
| GFA | 219  | Bahrain           | 21:45 |
| KAC | 676  | Dubai             | 21:45 |
| KAC | 614  | Bahrain           | 21:50 |
| QTR | 1082 | Doha              | 22:00 |
| KLM | 415  | Amsterdam         | 22:05 |
| AIC | 987  | Chennai/Hyderabad | 22:25 |
| ETD | 309  | Abu Dhabi         | 22:25 |
| KAC | 564  | Amman             | 22:25 |
| FDB | 059  | Dubai             | 22:30 |
| JZR | 185  | Dubai             | 23:15 |
| FDB | 071  | Dubai             | 23:45 |
| THY | 764  | Istanbul          | 23:50 |
| JAI | 574  | Mumbai            | 23:55 |
| MSC | 403  | Asyut             | 23:55 |
| JZR | 125  | Bahrain           | 23:55 |

### Departure Flights on Saturday 6/2/2016

| Airlines | Flt  | Route           | Time  |
|----------|------|-----------------|-------|
| AIC      | 976  | Goa/Chennai     | 00:05 |
| JZR      | 528  | Asyut           | 00:05 |
| BBC      | 044  | Dhaka           | 00:10 |
| PIA      | 240  | Sialkot         | 00:40 |
| FDB      | 072  | Dubai           | 00:40 |
| MSC      | 502  | Alexandria      | 00:55 |
| JAI      | 573  | Mumbai          | 00:55 |
| MSC      | 416  | Sohag           | 01:00 |
| KLM      | 413  | Amsterdam       | 01:35 |
| MSR      | 615  | Cairo           | 02:20 |
| THY      | 773  | Istanbul        | 02:30 |
| SAI      | 442  | Lahore          | 02:30 |
| DLH      | 635  | Frankfurt       | 02:35 |
| ETH      | 621  | Addis Ababa     | 02:45 |
| KAC      | 381  | Delhi           | 03:30 |
| UAE      | 854  | Dubai           | 03:45 |
| PGT      | 859  | Istanbul        | 03:55 |
| OMA      | 644  | Muscat          | 03:55 |
| FDB      | 068  | Dubai           | 04:00 |
| MSR      | 613  | Cairo           | 04:10 |
| ETD      | 306  | Abu Dhabi       | 04:15 |
| KKK      | 6508 | Istanbul        | 04:20 |
| QTR      | 1077 | Doha            | 05:00 |
| THY      | 765  | Istanbul        | 05:15 |
| AGY      | 685  | Sohag           | 05:30 |
| FDB      | 070  | Dubai           | 06:30 |
| JZR      | 164  | Dubai           | 06:55 |
| RJA      | 643  | Amman           | 07:05 |
| THY      | 771  | Istanbul        | 07:05 |
| FDB      | 5062 | Dubai           | 07:10 |
| GFA      | 212  | Bahrain         | 07:15 |
| JZR      | 240  | Amman           | 07:15 |
| FDB      | 054  | Dubai           | 08:30 |
| KAC      | 511  | Mashhad         | 08:30 |
| QTR      | 1087 | Doha            | 08:40 |
| BAW      | 156  | London          | 08:45 |
| KAC      | 671  | Dubai           | 09:15 |
| JZR      | 534  | Cairo           | 09:15 |
| KAC      | 787  | Jeddah          | 09:25 |
| ABY      | 126  | Sharjah         | 09:40 |
| UAE      | 856  | Dubai           | 09:55 |
| KAC      | 101  | London/New York | 09:55 |
| KAC      | 541  | Cairo           | 09:55 |
| KAC      | 561  | Amman           | 10:00 |
| JZR      | 174  | Dubai           | 10:10 |
| ETD      | 302  | Abu Dhabi       | 10:25 |
| KAC      | 501  | Beirut          | 10:30 |
| JZR      | 356  | Mashhad         | 10:30 |
| FDB      | 056  | Dubai           | 10:35 |

|     |      |                  |       |
|-----|------|------------------|-------|
| FBA | 834  | Al Najaf         | 10:45 |
| QTR | 1071 | Doha             | 11:00 |
| KAC | 165  | Rome/Paris       | 11:00 |
| OMA | 642  | Muscat           | 11:05 |
| KAC | 539  | Sharm el-Sheikh  | 11:25 |
| GFA | 214  | Bahrain          | 11:25 |
| RBG | 554  | Alexandria       | 12:00 |
| JZR | 776  | Jeddah           | 12:20 |
| UAE | 874  | Dubai            | 12:30 |
| AGY | 681  | Asyut            | 12:35 |
| NIA | 152  | Cairo            | 12:55 |
| MRJ | 4814 | Mashhad          | 13:00 |
| IAW | 158  | Al Najaf         | 13:05 |
| FDB | 076  | Dubai            | 13:10 |
| MSC | 402  | Alexandria       | 13:30 |
| SAW | 702  | Damascus         | 13:35 |
| JZR | 176  | Dubai            | 13:45 |
| MSR | 611  | Cairo            | 14:00 |
| UAE | 872  | Dubai            | 14:15 |
| JZR | 324  | Al Najaf         | 14:25 |
| KNE | 481  | Taif             | 14:50 |
| PAL | 669  | Dubai/Manila     | 14:55 |
| MSR | 576  | Sharm el-Sheikh  | 14:55 |
| KAC | 785  | Jeddah           | 15:00 |
| KAC | 673  | Dubai            | 15:00 |
| FDB | 058  | Dubai            | 15:10 |
| QTR | 1079 | Doha             | 15:10 |
| FBA | 832  | Al Najaf         | 15:25 |
| JZR | 188  | Dubai            | 15:40 |
| KAC | 617  | Doha             | 15:45 |
| GFA | 222  | Bahrain          | 15:45 |
| KAC | 773  | Riyadh           | 15:50 |
| KAC | 741  | Dammam           | 15:55 |
| KNE | 463  | Madinah          | 16:00 |
| KNE | 473  | Jeddah           | 16:05 |
| IRM | 1187 | Tehran           | 16:15 |
| ABY | 128  | Sharjah          | 16:25 |
| NIA | 252  | Alexandria       | 16:30 |
| OMA | 646  | Muscat           | 16:30 |
| JAD | 302  | Amman            | 16:40 |
| KAC | 563  | Amman            | 16:45 |
| KAC | 675  | Dubai            | 17:00 |
| JZR | 266  | Beirut           | 17:05 |
| KNE | 475  | Jeddah           | 17:25 |
| ETD | 304  | Abu Dhabi        | 17:30 |
| FDB | 052  | Dubai            | 17:35 |
| QTR | 1073 | Doha             | 17:40 |
| JZR | 538  | Cairo            | 17:45 |
| UAE | 858  | Dubai            | 17:45 |
| RJA | 641  | Amman            | 17:55 |
| SYR | 342  | Damascus         | 18:00 |
| SVA | 511  | Riyadh           | 18:15 |
| GFA | 216  | Bahrain          | 18:20 |
| MSR | 614  | Cairo            | 18:25 |
| KAC | 613  | Bahrain          | 18:30 |
| JZR | 184  | Dubai            | 18:40 |
| KNE | 471  | Jeddah           | 18:45 |
| JZR | 238  | Amman            | 18:50 |
| JZR | 554  | Alexandria       | 19:10 |
| FDB | 064  | Dubai            | 19:20 |
| ABY | 124  | Sharjah          | 19:25 |
| UAE | 876  | Dubai            | 19:30 |
| SVA | 505  | Jeddah           | 19:30 |
| IRA | 666  | Esfahan          | 19:55 |
| GFA | 218  | Bahrain          | 20:15 |
| IRM | 1189 | Mashhad          | 20:30 |
| KAC | 283  | Dhaka            | 20:35 |
| KAC | 353  | BLR              | 20:40 |
| KAC | 361  | Colombo          | 20:45 |
| FDB | 8056 | Dubai            | 20:50 |
| QTR | 1081 | Doha             | 20:50 |
| KAC | 351  | Kochi            | 20:50 |
| KAC | 543  | Cairo            | 20:55 |
| JZR | 124  | Bahrain          | 21:05 |
| MSR | 607  | Luxor            | 21:05 |
| KAC | 331  | Trivandrum       | 21:10 |
| KNE | 461  | Riyadh           | 21:10 |
| ABY | 122  | Sharjah          | 21:15 |
| OMA | 648  | Muscat           | 21:20 |
| FDB | 062  | Dubai            | 21:20 |
| DLH | 634  | Doha             | 21:45 |
| FDB | 5054 | Dubai            | 21:50 |
| DHX | 171  | Bahrain          | 21:50 |
| JAI | 571  | Mumbai           | 21:55 |
| QTR | 1089 | Doha             | 22:00 |
| ETD | 308  | Abu Dhabi        | 22:10 |
| KAC | 301  | Mumbai           | 22:10 |
| MEA | 403  | Beirut           | 22:20 |
| ALK | 230  | Colombo          | 22:25 |
| GFA | 220  | Bahrain          | 22:30 |
| UAE | 860  | Dubai            | 22:55 |
| KAC | 345  | Ahmedabad        | 23:00 |
| QTR | 1083 | Doha             | 23:05 |
| KLM | 415  | Dammam/Amsterdam | 23:05 |
| KAC | 205  | Islamabad        | 23:10 |
| ETD | 310  | Abu Dhabi        | 23:15 |
| FDB | 060  | Dubai            | 23:35 |
| KAC | 411  | Bangkok/Manila   | 23:35 |

WORDSEARCH PUZZLE

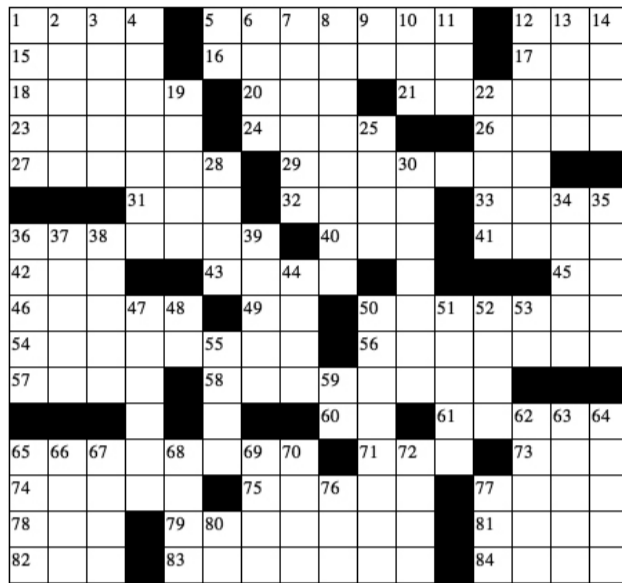
Songs With Girls' Names

Find and circle all of these songs that have a girls name in the title. The remaining letters spell an additional song title.

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

- |             |                |                |
|-------------|----------------|----------------|
| ADIA        | DIANA          | MY SHARONA     |
| ALISON      | ELEANOR RIGBY  | NIKITA         |
| AMANDA      | ELVIRA         | OH SHERRIE     |
| ANGIE       | GLORIA         | PEGGY SUE      |
| BARBARA ANN | JOANNA         | RHIANNON       |
| BETH        | JOLENE         | ROSANNA        |
| BILLIE JEAN | KYRIE          | ROXANNE        |
| BRANDY      | LAYLA          | RUBY TUESDAY   |
| CANDIDA     | LITTLE JEANNIE | SARA           |
| CARRIE ANNE | LUCILLE        | SHERRY         |
| CECILIA     | MAGGIE MAY     | SUSIE Q        |
| CLAIR       | MANDY          | SUZANNE        |
| DELILAH     | MICHELLE       | SWEET CAROLINE |
| DELTA DAWN  |                |                |

CROSSWORD 1160



ACROSS

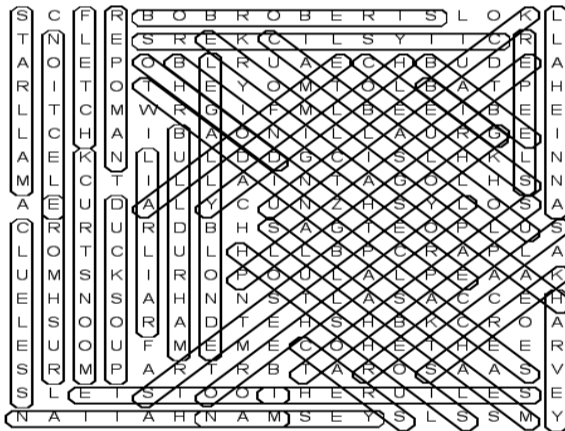
- Male red deer.
- Without compunction or human feeling.
- (prefix) Reverse of or absence of.
- Large long-armed ape of Borneo and Sumatra having arboreal habits.
- The universal time coordinated when an event is received on Earth.
- (Old Testament) Moses' successor who led the Israelites into the Promised Land.
- Out of bed.
- A married woman.
- The last imperial dynasty of China (from 1644 to 1912) which was overthrown by revolutionaries.
- Australian moundbird.
- A channel for the water current that turns a millwheel.
- A river in north central Switzerland that runs northeast into the Rhine.
- The basic unit of money in Uruguay.
- Any culture medium that uses agar as the gelling agent.
- Changed in order to improve or made more fit for a particular purpose.
- (Irish) The sea personified.
- Serving as or forming a base.
- A unit of time equal to 60 seconds or 1/60th of an hour.
- Bony flesh of herring-like fish usually caught during their migration to fresh water for spawning.
- A white metallic element that burns with a brilliant light.
- Come into existence.
- In operation or operational.
- A mountain peak in south central Sri Lanka (7,360 feet high).
- Admit anew.
- A narcotic that is considered a hard drug.
- Give a description of.
- A heavy odorless colorless gas formed during respiration and by the decomposition of organic substances.
- The Mongol people living the the central and eastern parts of Outer Mongolia.
- Island in West Indies.
- Aircraft landing in bad weather in which the pilot is talked down by ground control using precision approach radar.
- A human limb.
- Wild sheep of northern Africa.
- A Hindu prince or king in India.
- The Rutles.
- One of the five major classes of immunoglobulins.
- Dragonflies and damselflies.
- (Islam) The man who leads prayers in a mosque.
- A rapid escape (as by criminals).
- Below the surround or below the normal position.
- A small cake leavened with yeast.

DOWN

- Full of submerged reefs or sandbanks or shoals.
- Brief and to the point.
- Italian violin maker in Cremona.
- A succulent orange-sized tropical fruit with a thick rind.
- A heavy brittle diamagnetic trivalent metallic element (resembles arsenic and antimony chemically).
- Again but in a new or different way.
- Disparaging terms for small people.
- The area of a baseball playing field beyond the lines connecting the bases.
- A soft silvery metallic element of the rare earth group.
- A pilgrimage to Mecca.
- United States musician (born in Japan) who married John Lennon and collaborated with him on recordings (born in 1933).
- Fish-eating bird of warm inland waters having a long flexible neck and slender sharp-pointed bill.
- A word that can be used to refer to a person or place or thing.
- An unforeseen obstacle.
- A former English silver coin worth four pennies.
- Short and fat.
- Other than what is under consideration or implied.
- (Greek mythology) Greek god of war.
- A siren of German legend who lured boatmen in the Rhine to destruction.
- (computer science) American Standard Code for Information Interchange.
- Show a response or a reaction to something.
- English theoretical physicist who applied relativity theory to quantum mechanics and predicted the existence of antimatter and the positron (1902-1984).
- (Jungian psychology) The inner self (not the external persona) that is in touch with the unconscious.
- Fierce wild dog of the forests of central and southeast Asia that hunts in packs.
- Type genus of the Anatidae.
- Small low-growing annual or perennial herbs of temperate and cool regions.
- Half the width of an em.
- Demand as being one's due or property.
- A coffee cake flavored with orange rind and raisins and almonds.
- The content of cognition.
- A metric unit of length equal to one billionth of a meter.
- A condition (mostly in boys) characterized by behavioral and learning disorders.
- Being ten more than one hundred ninety.
- Wild or domesticated South American cud-chewing animal related to camels but smaller and lacking a hump.
- Cubes of meat marinated and cooked on a skewer usually with vegetables.
- Small terrestrial lizard of warm regions of the Old World.
- (anatomy) A fold or wrinkle or crease.
- Severe diabetes mellitus with an early onset.
- A material effigy that is worshipped as a god.
- Beside one another in a row or rank.
- A native or inhabitant of Denmark.
- Of or relating to or characteristic of the Republic of Chad or its people or language.
- A vessel (usually cylindrical) with a wide mouth and without handles.
- A castrated tomat.
- An uproarious party.

Yesterday's Solution

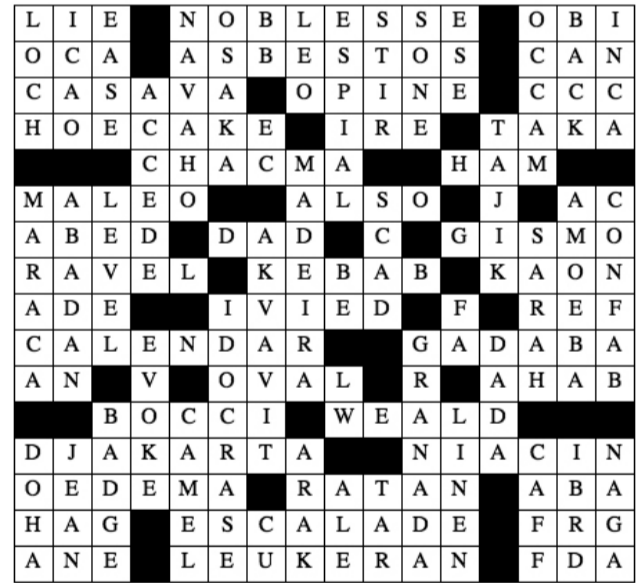
Comedy Movies 1



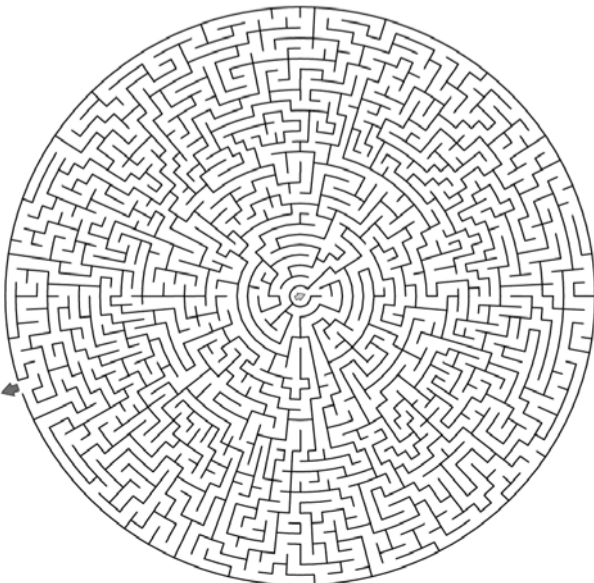
- |               |                |                |
|---------------|----------------|----------------|
| ALL OF ME     | FLECH          | OH, GOD!       |
| ANNIE HALL    | GHOSTBUSTERS   | PLAZA SUITE    |
| BABE          | HAPPY GILMORE  | REPO MAN       |
| BEING THERE   | HARVEY         | RUSHMORE       |
| BIG           | HOLIDAY        | SHREK          |
| BOB ROBERTS   | HOTSHOTS       | SLACKER        |
| BULL DURHAM   | LEGALLY BLONDE | SLAP SHOT      |
| CARS          | LIAR LIAR      | SLEEPER        |
| CAT BALLOU    | LOCAL HERO     | THE RUTLES     |
| CITY SLICKERS | MALLRATS       | TOOTSIE        |
| CLERKS        | MANHATTAN      | TRADING PLACES |
| CLUELESS      | MEATBALLS      | UNCLE BUCK     |
| DUCK SOUP     | MOONSTRUCK     | YES MAN        |
| ELECTION      |                |                |

The hidden movie title is: CLOUDY WITH A CHANCE OF MEATBALLS

Yesterday's Solution



CHALLENGING MAZE



Daily SuDoku

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

Yesterday's Solution

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



# CAPITALS AVOID A THIRD STRAIGHT LOSS

**WASHINGTON:** Alex Ovechkin scored the winning goal in his return from a one-game suspension for skipping the All-Star Game, and the Washington Capitals avoided a third straight loss by beating the New York Islanders 3-2 on Thursday night. Ovechkin scored off a pass from Nicklas Backstrom with 2:40 left to help Washington end a rare two-game skid. The Capitals haven't lost three games in a row all season. TJ Oshie and Andre Burakovsky also scored for the Capitals. Braden Holtby stopped 24 shots for the victory. Jaroslav Halak made 20 saves for the Islanders. Mikhail Grabovski and Josh Bailey had New York's goals in a rematch of a first-round playoff series from last spring.

## PANTHERS 6, RED WINGS 3

Vincent Trocheck scored twice and added an assist, and Jaromir Jagr had a goal and two assists in Florida's victory over Detroit. Roberto Luongo stopped 36 shots for his ninth consecutive win on home ice for Florida, which has won five straight. Brandon Pirri had a goal and an assist for the Panthers, who have scored at least five goals in a franchise-record four consecutive games. Aleksander Barkov and Derek MacKenzie also scored for the Panthers. Rookie center Dylan Larkin had his first two-goal game for Detroit, both coming within a span of 67 seconds bridging the first and second periods. Mike Green added a power-play tally with 7:24 left. Jagr's first assist of the night was his 1,100th in regular-season play, a milestone reached by only five other players - Wayne Gretzky, Ron Francis, Mark Messier, Ray Bourque and Paul Coffey.

## BLACKHAWKS 5, COYOTES 4, OT

Jonathan Toews scored his second goal of the night in overtime in his return from a one-game suspension, lifting Chicago over Arizona. The teams traded scoring chances in the 3-on-3 overtime, leaving players on both sides exhausted. Toews skated in with a burst of energy, beating Louis Domingue with a wrister with 29 seconds left in the extra period. Toews, suspended for missing the All-Star Game, also scored in the second period. Patrick Kane scored his NHL-leading 31st goal in the second and Marian Hossa had a goal and an assist. Michal Rozsival scored his first of the season for the Blackhawks. Oliver Ekman-Larsson had a goal and two assists for the Coyotes. Mikkel Boedker and Jordan Martinook scored two quick goals in the second period, and Shane Doan scored in the third.

## DUCKS 4, KINGS 2

David Perron had a goal and two assists, and Ryan Getzlaf added a goal and his 500th career assist to help streaking Anaheim defeat Los Angeles. Ryan Garbutt scored his second goal in two games and Hampus Lindholm added a power-play goal in Anaheim's fifth straight victory and 12th in 16 games since Christmas. The Ducks chased Jonathan Quick while routing the Pacific Division-leading Kings, who have lost four of six in regulation for the first time this season. John Gibson made 23 saves to win a duel of All-Star goalies. Quick yielded three goals on nine shots before getting replaced early in the second period by Jhonas Enroth. Tyler Toffoli matched his career high by scoring his 23rd goal during a power play for the Kings,



**VANCOUVER:** Columbus Blue Jackets' Rene Bourque, left, checks Vancouver Canucks' Jared McCann during the second period of an NHL hockey game on Thursday, Feb 4, 2016 in Vancouver, British Columbia. — AP

who have lost three straight home games for the first time since the first three games of the season. Alec Martinez scored in the final seconds.

## SHARKS 3, BLUES 1

Joonas Donskoi and Joe Thornton scored in the second period, Martin Jones made 26 saves and San Jose beat St Louis. Matt Nieto added an unassisted goal late in the third to give San Jose insurance. The Sharks, who are 8-1-2 in their last 11 games, improved to 17-7-2 away from home and tied Washington for the most road wins in the NHL. Jay Bouwmeester scored late in the second period for St Louis. Donskoi's goal snapped a shutout streak of 96 minutes, 59 seconds, for Blues goalie Brian Elliott.

## BRUINS 3, SABRES 2, SO

Ryan Spooner scored in regulation and the shootout to lead Boston over Buffalo. Brad Marchand helped the Bruins erase a two-goal deficit, and Tuukka Rask made 26 saves in the win. Evander Kane and Sam Reinhart scored for the Sabres. Spooner had the lone goal in the shootout. Rask denied Brian Gionta, Kane and Ryan O'Reilly.

## RANGERS 4, WILD 2

Derick Brassard set up the tying goal and scored the game-winner early in the third period as New York rallied from a two-goal deficit to beat struggling Minnesota. Rangers defenseman Ryan McDonagh and streaking JT Miller each had a goal and an assist as New York stretched its winning streak at Madison Square Garden to four games. Henrik Lundqvist made 16 saves, including two third-period stops on Marco Scandella after the Rangers took the lead.

Chris Kreider added an empty-net goal with 1:48 to play Ryan Carter and Matt Dumba scored for the Wild, who lost their second straight after the All-Star break and fell to 1-8-1 in their last 10. All-Star goalie Devan Dubnyk made 26 saves.

## STARS 4, AVALANCHE 3, OT

John Klingberg scored 35 seconds into overtime, Antti Niemi stopped a pivotal penalty shot in the third period and Dallas snapped an eight-game skid against Colorado. Klingberg beat Calvin Pickard with a slap shot on a breakaway just moments into overtime. The winner came after Jason Demers scored a power-play goal to tie it with 8:40 remaining in regulation. Before that, Niemi turned aside Nathan MacKinnon's penalty shot. Jason Spezza and Ales Hensky each had a goal for the Stars, who won in Denver for the first time since Feb 4, 2013. Nick Holden, Blake Comeau and Carl Soderberg scored for the Avalanche.

## MAPLE LEAFS 3, DEVILS 2, SO

PA Parenteau's shootout goal lifted Toronto over New Jersey, giving coach Mike Babcock a reason to celebrate his 1,000th NHL game. James Reimer stopped Reid Boucher, Jacob Josefson and Lee Stempniak in the shootout. Peter Holland and Tyler Bozak missed for the Maple Leafs. David Schlemko scored in the third period to give the Devils a 2-1 lead. Bozak beat Keith Kinkaid with a snap shot from the slot with 2:06 remaining to tie it.

## OILERS 7, SENATORS 2

Jordan Eberle scored twice and added an assist to help Edmonton open its four-game road trip with a victory over Ottawa. Mark Fayne, Zack Kassian, Andrej Sekera,

Leon Draisaitl and Brandon Davidson also scored for the Oilers. Rookie sensation Connor McDavid, playing his second game since returning from a broken clavicle, had two assists. Cam Talbot made 26 saves for the win. Ottawa has lost three straight and seven of 10. Craig Anderson allowed three goals on 10 shots before Andrew Hammond came in and gave up four goals on 18 shots. Mike Hoffman and Mark Stone were the only Senators to beat Talbot.

## FLYERS 6, PREDATORS 3

Wayne Simmonds had two goals and an assist, and Claude Giroux also scored twice to lead Philadelphia past Nashville. Matt Read and Brayden Schenn also scored for Philadelphia, which has won three straight. Scott Laughton and Jakub Voracek each had a pair of assists for the Flyers. Ryan Johansen, Calle Jarnkrok and Shea Weber had the goals for Nashville, which has lost consecutive games.

## BLUE JACKETS 2, CANUCKS 1, SO

Alex Wennberg scored the only goal in a shootout to lift Columbus over Vancouver. Scott Hartnell had a power-play goal in the third period for the Blue Jackets (20-28-5), who are last in the NHL and were coming off a 5-1 loss in Edmonton on Tuesday. Joonas Korpihalo stopped 37 shots for Columbus. Linden Vey scored in the first period for Vancouver (20-19-12), which has lost three straight. Ryan Miller made 27 saves. Henrik Sedin returned to his spot on Vancouver's top line after missing four games with a shoulder injury. The game also marked the return to Vancouver for Blue Jackets coach John Tortorella, fired by the Canucks after missing the playoffs in his only season (2013-14) with the team. — AP

## IAAF PROBE CHINESE LETTER POINTING TO SYSTEMATIC DOPING

**SHANGHAI:** World athletics body IAAF said yesterday it would investigate the authenticity of a letter signed by 10 Chinese athletes that says a Chinese Olympic coach ran a systematic doping program up to the mid-1990s. Signatories to the 21-year-old letter, published for the first time on private news portal Tencent Sports, included women's long-distance runner Wang Junxia, an Olympic champion and world record holder. The allegations in the document, which Chinese TV channel CCTV and other state media also reported, date back to before the IAAF presidency of Lamine Diack, who took over in 1999.

Reuters could not independently confirm the authenticity of the letter and was unable to reach Wang or the coach the document named, Ma Junren. The letter, sent in March 1995 to journalist Zhao Yu but never previously publicized, suggests

Ma ran a systematic doping program in China some two decades ago. Reuters was unable to reach Zhao for comment. The IAAF said its first action would be to verify that the letter was genuine. "In this respect, the IAAF has asked the Chinese Athletics Association to assist it in that process," it said. An executive at the Chinese Athletics Association declined to comment. The release of the Chinese letter comes as Diack, the former head of world athletics, is under investigation by French authorities for corruption. According to a World Anti-Doping Agency (WADA) report, Diack ran a clique that covered up organized doping and blackmailed athletes while senior officials looked the other way. The WADA report found a "deeply rooted culture of cheating" in Russian athletics, leading to the country's athletes being banned from the sport indefinitely.

### 'Changing perceptions'

Wang, whose 1993 world records for 3,000 and 10,000 metres still stand, was among a team coached by Ma, who for years had been dogged by doping allegations. "For many years, (Ma) forced us to take large doses of banned drugs, it was true," the letter signed by her and nine others said. "Our feelings are sorry and complex when exposing his deeds. We are also worried that we would harm our country's fame and reduce the worth of the gold medals we have worked very hard to get." Ma has consistently denied the drug claims and said his athletes reached such levels through hard work and natural remedies, including turtle's blood. However, in 2000, Chinese authorities fired Ma from the Olympic team after six of his athletes failed drug tests. The organization confirmed that any athlete admitting to taking an illegal substance at some time prior to setting a

world record would have the mark removed.

Tencent Sports said details of doping had been deleted from a book on Ma that Zhao had published in 1993. However, these details were reinserted in a recent republication. "We (author and editors) previously believed that the doping part was too sensitive, but now it's a better time as Chinese people's perceptions toward sports have changed substantially," Zhao told the news website. In 1993 alone, Ma's team broke 66 domestic and world records, CCTV said. They took all three medals in the 5,000 meters and gold and silver in the 10,000 meters at the Stuttgart world championships. His athletes smashed three world records at the Chinese national championships, with Wang taking 42 seconds off the 10,000 meters mark. She went on to win 5,000m gold and 10,000m silver at the 1996 Olympics. — Reuters

# RESURGENT BRYANT LIFTS LAKERS OVER PELICANS

**NEW ORLEANS:** Kobe Bryant scored 27 points, hitting three pivotal 3-pointers in the last six-plus minutes, and the Los Angeles Lakers won their second straight, 99-96 over the New Orleans Pelicans on Thursday night. Bryant, who scored a season-high 38 points at Minnesota two nights earlier, held his follow-through as his final 3 went through with a minute left to put the Lakers up 98-92, then wagged his index finger as if to say, "Don't doubt me," as he jogged back up court with a good portion of the crowd cheering wildly. Bryant missed a free throw with 6 seconds left that allowed the Pelicans a chance to tie the game with a 3, but Jrue Holiday's shot missed the rim. Anthony Davis scored 39 for the Pelicans, but his missed breakaway dunk in the fourth quarter seemed to define the night for New Orleans, which lost its third straight.

### PISTONS 111, KNICKS 105

Anthony Tolliver and Reggie Jackson made a trio of big 3-pointers late in the fourth quarter, and the Detroit Pistons avoided a colossal collapse, beating the New York Knicks. The Knicks rallied from a 27-point second-quarter deficit, taking a 97-95 lead on a layup by Robin Lopez. Tolliver's 3-pointer put the Pistons back ahead, and Jackson added another to make it 101-97. After a dunk by Lopez cut the margin back to two, Jackson added another 3-pointer, and the Pistons were able to hold on. Jackson finished with 21 points, and Stanley Johnson added 22 and nine rebounds. Andre Drummond had 17 points and 13 rebounds for Detroit. Lopez had 26 points and 16 rebounds for New York, which lost for the seventh time in eight games.

### ROCKETS 111, SUNS 105

Corey Brewer scored 24 points and Trevor Ariza 22 to lead the Houston Rockets past the Phoenix Suns. The Rockets won despite a 4-for-19 shooting night by James Harden, who finished



**NEW ORLEANS:** Los Angeles Lakers forward Julius Randle (30) battles near the basket with New Orleans Pelicans forward Anthony Davis in the second half of an NBA basketball game in New Orleans on Thursday, Feb 4, 2016. — AP

with 17 points, more than 10 under his average. Dwight Howard grabbed 16 rebounds in the 200th meeting between the teams. Archie Goodwin led the Suns with 22 points, while Alex Len added 12 with a career-high 18 rebounds and Devin Booker had 17 points as Phoenix lost its sixth straight.

### RAPTORS 110, TRAIL BLAZERS 103

Kyle Lowry had 30 points, DeMar DeRozan added 29 and the Toronto Raptors snapped Portland's five-game winning streak. Damian Lillard had 27 points and 11 assists, while CJ McCollum

added 21 points for Portland in the matchup between two of the league's dynamic backcourts. The Raptors, who have lost only one of their last 14 games, extended their lead to 94-81 on Lowry's 3 with 6:52 left in the game. Toronto made 12 of 19 3-point attempts in the game, with Lowry scoring seven of them to match his season high. Lillard hit a jumper and Allen Crabbe made a pair free throws to pull Portland within 106-101 with 55.3 seconds left, but McCollum missed a 12-foot jumper and Toronto hit free throws to end the threat. — AP

## AFRICA KINGMAKERS TO DECIDE FIFA RACE

**KIGALI:** Africa's football powerbrokers met in Rwanda on Friday, poised to make or break the dreams of the five men chasing the biggest job in the sport—the presidency of FIFA. With 54 votes at the disposal of the Confederation of African Football (CAF) — the most of any of the world's regional governing bodies—four of the five contenders are in Kigali to find out who Africa prefers to be its standard-bearer. "The executive committee meeting has started, and will last until late," Sarah Kamel, head of the office of the Secretary General of CAF, said around noon.

Sheikh Salman bin Ebrahim al-Khalifa, the president of the Asian Football Confederation (AFC), UEFA's number two Gianni Infantino, South African businessman Tokyo Sexwale and Jerome Champagne, a former assistant secretary-general of FIFA, will all be at the meeting desperate to secure the support required for the February 26 vote. Only Prince Ali bin al-Hussein of Jordan is understood to be staying away from the CAF meeting being held on the sidelines of the African Nations Championship tournament being played in Kigali.

Prince Ali recently denounced a possible attempt to breach the election rules and called for an investigation after CAF signed a January 15 agreement with the AFC to organize tournaments and programs for technical development. But in a strong-worded interview with French sports daily L'Equipe on Thursday, CAF president Issa Hayatou, who is also the acting FIFA chief after the suspension of Sepp Blatter, said Africa will not be pressured into making a decision over who to support in the election.

"We are free to support who we want," said the veteran Cameroonian administrator. "The last time we were behind Blatter and UEFA supported Ali. He said nothing at the time. But who is Prince Ali? If he wants to bark then that's his problem. "We will vote for whoever we want. If today we decide to support Salman, is it a crime? Who can prevent us from doing that?" But CAF's decision has been made tougher by the presence in the race of an African candidate—Sexwale. Sexwale, a former anti-apartheid prisoner alongside Nelson Mandela, insisted at the weekend that he would not quit the FIFA race despite being widely criticised on the continent for his campaign.

"We are in the dark and we do not know as neighbors what his strategies are. Maybe they do not need our vote," said Namibia's Football Association president Frans Mbidi. Sexwale hit back, telling AFP: "I am still running and not running away. I am still in the FIFA race." However, he did raise the possibility of some candidates joining forces. "The time for alliances is... coming, and it's healthy, it's democratic and it's good. Now we are talking... we are brothers, we are colleagues." — AFP

# SHEIKH ABDALLAH AL-MUBARAK AL-SABAH SHOOTING COMPETITION

By Abdellatif Sharaa

**KUWAIT:** Kuwait Shooting Sport Club will hold the closing ceremony of the late Sheikh Abdallah Al-Mubarak Al-Sabah Shooting Competition this evening at Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah. The tournament lasted for three days. Shooters compete in 10m air pistol and rifle and 50m prone rifle and Olympic archery (for all age groups). 80 shooters from the club and National Guard participated. Secretary General of Kuwait and Arab Shooting Confederation Obaid Al-Osaimi thanked the family of the late Sheikh Abdallah Al-Mubarak for their annual patronage and continued support. He encouraged the shooters to continue their successful achievements.

Al-Osaimi lauded the shooter's spirit, adding that the championship coincides with Kuwait celebration of its national days. "We take this opportunity to congratulate HH the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber, HH the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad, HH the Prime Minister and Kuwaitis on this auspicious occasion," he said. The results of the second day are as follows;

**10 Meter Air Rifle Men:**

Abdulla Al-Harbi  
Mohammad Adel  
Sulaiman Al-Asousi



**Obaid Munahi Al-Osaimi**

**10 meter air pistol men:**

Saad Al-Mane  
Ali Al-Mutairi  
Hassan Al-Mulla

**Meanwhile, results of the Public Authority for sports tournament were as follows:**

**Skeet Women:**

Afrah Mohammad  
Sheikha Al-Rashidi  
Eman Al-Shamma

**Trap Women:**

Sarah Al-Hawal  
Shahad Al-Hawal  
Asma Al-Qatami



**Sarah Al-Hawal in action**



**Shooter Afrah Adel**



**Sheikha Al-Rashidi**

## NFL HIT WITH RISING CONCUSSIONS, BRAIN TRAUMA NEWS

**SAN FRANCISCO:** Former quarterback Troy Aikman says he is fortunate to have gotten out of the NFL in good health as news of brain trauma in recently deceased former players is mounting, and he knows others are suffering. "I know there's people that I played with and against and those before me that are really battling some tough times as a result we assume from having played the game," the three-time Super Bowl champion with the Dallas Cowboys told Reuters on Thursday.

"It obviously is a real concern for our game," the Hall of Famer added. An autopsy confirmed that former Minnesota Vikings linebacker Fred McNeill was suffering from chronic traumatic encephalopathy (CTE) when he died last year at 63, CNN reported on Thursday. Two days before, a specialist said a study of former Oakland Raiders quarterback Ken Stabler's brain following his death last year showed signs of CTE, which is closely associated with the repeated head blows common in boxing, hockey, football and other contact sports.

Stabler's brain was the 90th of 94 former NFL players studied by Boston University researchers to show indications of CTE. "It's a violent game. Big physical guys colliding and creating these collisions with the head injuries. As much as the league has done to make the game safer, I saw that this year the concussions were way up," Aikman said. Last week the National Football League said there were 182 reported concussions this past season, a rise of 58 percent over 2014 after two

seasons of declining incidents.

Jeff Miller, NFL vice president for health and safety policy, said the league was exploring reasons for the hike. "The number of players screened for concussions doubled this year," Miller told reporters at the Super Bowl Media Center suggesting increased vigilance as one possible factor. Miller noted the league has instituted nearly 40 rule changes to cut down potential head injuries in recent years and believed that greater attention to the problem by officials and players themselves probably contributed to the rise. He noted increased numbers of medical staff at games keeping eyes trained for signs of concussion, and that players were self-reporting symptoms to team physicians.

"That's a positive trend relating to the culture change," said Miller at an NFL display of research initiatives aimed at improving player safety. "Those are positive developments. Players that need the care from suffering those injuries are getting the care." The NFL Players Association seemed to agree. "When we have players who now step up and self-report, we take that as positive news that players are now empowered, wanting to know what is going on and taking steps to protect themselves," NFLPA executive director DeMaurice Smith said. Executive committee member Matt Hasselbeck, quarterback for the Indianapolis Colts, said: "One thing we're proud of, we tried to change the culture of our game."

"When I got into the game it was a no-no to be honest with the medical profes-



**MARYLAND:** RightEye President demonstrates her company's eye-tracking technology at offices in Bethesda, Maryland. Some technology startups are devising creative new ways of detecting concussions in pro and amateur athletes, using apps, tablets and sensors to monitor the often debilitating brain injury. — AFP

sionals on the sideline. You felt like you were a wimp if you were honest with the team doctor." Aikman, who just turned 34 when he retired after 12 seasons, recounted a scary incident from his own playing days. "I had two significant head injuries. One was my rookie year. I was knocked out for 10 minutes and then one was in the 1993 NFC championship game against the 49ers," he said. "Still to this day I have no

recollection of having played in that game. I have complete amnesia from the game. I stayed the night in the hospital and played the next week in the Super Bowl." "It's obviously a different time. Now if you say you couldn't remember having played in the game the week before, I don't think there's any way I'd be allowed to play in the Super Bowl seven days later. Just tells you how far we've come." — Reuters

## 5 KEYS TO SUPER BOWL 50

**SANTA CLARA:** Five keys which could define the outcome of Super Bowl 50 between the Denver Broncos and the Carolina Panthers tomorrow:

### Denver defense ready for Newton?

Denver's defense has been ruthless all season, with pass rushers Von Miller and DeMarcus Ware terrorizing opposing quarterbacks relentlessly. The Broncos defense managed to sack Tom Brady four times and hit him on 20 occasions during Denver's epic AFC title clash with New England last month—the highest number of hits any NFL quarterback has suffered in a single game since 2006. Denver has also had a stingy run defense, conceding only 3.6 yards per carry during the regular season.

### Newton's unique threat

While Denver's defense has been in merciless form, the Broncos have not faced an offensive unit as multi-faceted as Carolina's. At the heart of Carolina's offense is Cam Newton, who offers an unusually potent dual threat both on the ground and in the air. Newton became the first quarterback in NFL history to throw for more than 30 touchdowns and rush for 10 in the same season (he finished with 35 passing, 10 rushing) and also carved a unique piece of history by passing for 300 yards including five touchdown passes while rushing for more than 100 yards in the same game.

### A different Peyton?

While his mind remains as sharp as any in the league, Peyton Manning's passing is nowhere near as deadly as it once was. The

39-year-old has retooled his game this season to reflect his waning powers, no longer possessing the arm strength to launch big bombs downfield. Instead Manning has been forced to engineer lengthy drives through short, crisp passing to his receiving team. A possible chink in Carolina's armor, with the obvious exception of Josh Norman, is their secondary which has been hit by injuries.

### Kuechly v Manning?

While Denver's defense has garnered all the headlines this season, Carolina's unit are no slouches either. At the heart of the Carolina defense is Luke Kuechly, who marshaled a defense which led the league in forcing turnovers. Kuechly has galloped over for interception touchdowns in every round of the playoffs so far and if he does it again tomorrow he will be the first player to register pick sixes in each round of the post-season. He was ranked as the best defensive player in the league this season with only six missed tackles for the year.

### Born to run?

With Manning's long passing game limited, Denver will need to get their running game mobilized quickly if they are to threaten Carolina. Denver will have arguably one of the best blocking guards in football back in their lineup in the shape of Evan Mathis but will need running back C.J. Anderson to fire on all cylinders if they are to build forward momentum. After a shaky start to the season, Anderson has averaged 3.42 yards per attempt since week 12 of the season.— AFP

## NFL-BRONCOS, PANTHERS SET TO DELIVER SUPER FINISH TO SEASON

**SAN FRANCISCO:** The Denver Broncos and Carolina Panthers are primed to provide a grand finish worthy of a landmark Super Bowl 50 tomorrow and cap a season of celebration by the National Football League. An estimated 190 million Americans and a worldwide TV audience are set to tune in for a game that has the hallmarks of an instant classic as Carolina's top-ranked offense clashes with Denver's number one defense in a Silicon Valley showdown for the Vince Lombardi Trophy.

The game will feature two generational talents on offense with Carolina quarterback Cam Newton on the cusp of greatness and five-time NFL Most Valuable Player Peyton Manning playing what could be his last game, but the victor will likely be determined by the play of the defenses. "Our defense has just been exceptional all season long," praised Manning. "They have led the charge for us to be here from the get-go. "Each game they had stepped up and done the job and they were awesome against Pittsburgh and against New England. "They are the reason we're here and, like I said a couple weeks ago, I'm just glad that I don't have to play against them this year because they are that good."

Still, the spotlight will not stray far from the two quarterbacks who bring contrasting styles and personalities to the championship game. Newton, 26, is a flashy, brash imposing quarterbacking cyborg who can beat an opponent with his arm and his feet. With a victory tomorrow the Panthers would find themselves with an 18-1 record, a Super Bowl and in the discussion about the greatest NFL teams of all-time. Manning, meanwhile, is a cerebral 39-year-old quarterbacking genius with an off-the-charts football IQ who operates primarily from the pocket.

### Intriguing chess match

A Denver defense that led the NFL in sacks can expect a long evening trying to contain Newton while Manning will engage in an intriguing chess match with a Panthers defense spearheaded by All-Pro linebacker

Luke Kuechly that led the league in takeaways. "He (Newton) is a special talent, a rare talent," said Broncos coach Gary Kubiak. "This league has the best of everything. "I mean you look at some of the great throwers in this league with (New England Patriots) Tom (Brady) and (Green Bay Packers) Aaron (Rodgers) and those type of guys and then now you got a guy who's got a combination of everything."

"Not only beating people with his arm but with his feet, his ability to move around. A tremendous athlete that they've molded their offense around." During the regular season, the Panthers were an offensive juggernaut averaging a league-high 31 points a game. In the playoffs, they have been even more explosive in piling up 80 points in two routs, including a 49-15 blowout of the Arizona Cardinals in the NFC Championship game that sent them through to their second Super Bowl. This has been far from a vintage year for Manning, who missed six consecutive starts due to a heel injury and when he did return, for the first time in his Hall of Fame career he stood on the sidelines - as backup to Brock Osweiler.

Manning, who once threw seven touchdowns in a single game, had just nine in 10 games this season offset by 17 interceptions as questions over his age and diminishing arm strength became a recurring storyline. But like every great drama there are twists and in the regular season finale Manning came on in relief of Osweiler to lead the Broncos to a win, then steered Denver to narrow playoff victories over the Pittsburgh Steelers and New England Patriots. "I feel like I have a good understanding of the significance of playing in the 50th Super Bowl," said Manning, who will be appearing in his fourth NFL title game. "This is a unique and special opportunity and obviously we're going to take advantage of it. "There is no question it's important to me, it's very personal to me, and no question this season has had some unique challenges." — Reuters

SPANISH LEAGUE PREVIEW

# NEVILLE ON BRINK OF SACK, BARCA HISTORY

**MADRID:** Gary Neville could take charge of Valencia for the final time should he fail to deliver a league win at the ninth attempt when his side travel to fellow strugglers Real Betis tomorrow. Neville's terrible run of five points from eight La Liga games since taking charge in December was compounded as Valencia suffered their heaviest defeat in 23 years with a 7-0 thrashing at the hands of Barcelona in the Copa del Rey semi-finals on Wednesday. "I need to make sure everything in the players' minds now shifts to Betis.

Be clear, we have to deliver tomorrow," said Neville. "I feel most for fans. It's their club and they suffer very badly. I have to work out how we can get in a positive frame of mind tomorrow." Neville insisted he wouldn't quit in the face of persistent questioning in midweek, however the club's sporting director Jesus Garcia Pitarch refused to give his backing to the former Manchester United captain.

Madrid sports daily AS reported on Thursday that Valencia had already sounded out former coach Rafael Benitez - who won two La Liga titles in three years at the Mestalla between 2001 and 2004 - as Neville's replacement for next season. Valencia's overall winless streak of 11 league games has left them just five points above the relegation zone. However, luckily for Neville's men, Betis are also mired in crisis, three points adrift of Valencia and also without a win in nine games.

**Barca unbeaten record**

At the top of the table, Barcelona, Atletico Madrid and Real Madrid are heavy favorites to pick up wins in the title race. Barca's 2-1 win over Atletico last weekend opened up a three-point lead at the top with Real a point further adrift. Barca also have a game in both clubs from the capital. The 7-0 rout of Valencia in midweek also took the European champions to within a game of matching a club record 28-game unbeaten run set by Pep Guardiola's Barca in 2010/11 ahead of their trip to bottom side Levante. "After the run and number of games we have had until now, we have to congratulate them to be able to see that fluidity and confidence," said Barca boss Luis Enrique. "We have unique players, that is evident and we still have many things to achieve."

Enrique is likely to recall Javier Mascherano and Dani Alves after they were rested in midweek, whilst the deadly trio of Lionel Messi, Luis Suarez and Neymar will continue up front. Atletico have a defensive crisis as they host free-scoring Eibar to the Vicente Calderon. Filipe Luis, Diego Godin and Juanfran are all suspended, whilst Stefan Savic is struggling with a thigh strain. Atletico are also a striker down having sold Jackson Martinez to Chinese side Guangzhou Evergrande for 42 million euros on Wednesday, but Luciano Vietto is expected to return to accompany Antoine Griezmann in attack. —AFP

**Spanish La Liga table**

**MADRID:** Spanish La Liga table ahead of the weekend matches (played, won, drawn, lost, goals for, goals against, points):

|                     |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |
|---------------------|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|
| Barcelona           | 21 | 16 | 3  | 2  | 54 | 17 | 51 |
| Atletico Madrid     | 22 | 15 | 3  | 4  | 31 | 10 | 48 |
| Real Madrid         | 22 | 14 | 5  | 3  | 64 | 20 | 47 |
| Villarreal          | 22 | 13 | 5  | 4  | 29 | 18 | 44 |
| Sevilla             | 22 | 10 | 6  | 6  | 31 | 23 | 36 |
| Athletic Bilbao     | 22 | 10 | 4  | 8  | 33 | 30 | 34 |
| Celta Vigo          | 22 | 10 | 4  | 8  | 33 | 35 | 34 |
| Eibar               | 22 | 9  | 6  | 7  | 35 | 28 | 33 |
| Deportivo La Coruna | 22 | 6  | 12 | 4  | 30 | 27 | 30 |
| Malaga              | 22 | 7  | 6  | 9  | 18 | 20 | 27 |
| Getafe              | 22 | 7  | 5  | 10 | 26 | 32 | 26 |
| Valencia            | 22 | 5  | 10 | 6  | 26 | 23 | 25 |
| Real Sociedad       | 22 | 6  | 6  | 10 | 26 | 34 | 24 |
| Espanyol            | 22 | 6  | 4  | 12 | 20 | 41 | 22 |
| Real Betis          | 22 | 5  | 7  | 10 | 15 | 31 | 22 |
| Sporting Gijon      | 21 | 6  | 3  | 12 | 23 | 35 | 21 |
| Las Palmas          | 22 | 5  | 6  | 11 | 23 | 34 | 21 |
| Granada             | 22 | 5  | 5  | 12 | 24 | 44 | 20 |
| Rayo Vallecano      | 22 | 5  | 5  | 12 | 28 | 47 | 20 |
| Levante             | 22 | 4  | 5  | 13 | 21 | 41 | 17 |

ITALIAN LEAGUE PREVIEW

# STRIKER ZAZA SET TO PAY ON JUVENTUS TRIP TO FROSINONE

**MILAN:** Emerging Italy striker Simone Zaza could pay for a moment of midweek madness when champions Juventus travel to Frosinone tomorrow looking to extend a new club record in a bid to keep tabs on Serie A leaders Napoli. Juve striker Zaza saw red in the final minutes of Wednesday's 1-0 home win over Genoa after a needless challenge from behind on Armando Izzo. Lambasted by Juve coach Massimiliano Allegri, the former Sassuolo front man is expected to be on the sidelines when the Turin giants travel south looking to avenge an early season draw with Roberto Stellone's men.

For Allegri, it is a double dilemma: although forced to punish Zaza, he could be robbing himself of the chance to rest either Paulo Dybala or Alvaro Morata ahead of next weekend's top-of-the-table clash at home to Napoli. But the 48-year-old hinted Zaza, who is among the players fighting to be included in Antonio Conte's Euro 2016 squad this summer, will at least start on the bench. "He has to learn to keep his head, whether he's playing regularly or coming off the bench," Allegri said. "We have some young players at the club who maybe lack the experience of being in a big side like ours.

"But they have to grow up quickly. These kinds of tackles are useless, but Simone is an intelligent lad and he will understand and learn from this." Juve set a new club record of 13 consecutive league wins to improve the previous record of 12 set under former coach Conte in 2013-2014. The Turin giants will be expected to make it 14, but after Wednesday's bruiser, the champions face another rough and tumble encounter. "These kinds of games often serve to remind you that it's never easy to win, they keep your feet on the ground," added Allegri.

If Napoli end their 26-year wait for the title they last won thanks to Diego Maradona, Frosinone coach Stellone will expect a share of the credit. Frosinone held Juve to a 1-1 draw in Turin in their fifth match of the campaign to leave Juve winless after the champions had lost their opening four fixtures. The Canaries boosted their survival hopes with a precious 1-0 win over Bologna in midweek and 38-year-old Stellone is hungry for more points, especially as he has a soft spot for Napoli. "It will be a complicated because they're on a 13-game winning streak and in great form," said Stellone. "But I was once a Napoli player, so hopefully I can give the fans of my old club some joy."

Napoli's hopes of a first title since 1990 seem to gather pace every time Maurizio Sarri's men lace up their boots. Striker Gonzalo Higuain hit his 23rd league goal in as many games in a 2-0 win at Lazio in midweek that was marred by racist chanting aimed at Napoli's French-born Senegalese defender Kalidou Koulibaly. Lorenzo Insigne has hit 10 goals so far and is leading the league in assists (20), just ahead of Slovakian teammate Marek Hamsik (15). The Azzurri will expect to account for struggling Carpi at home, but a seventh consecutive league win on Wednesday wasn't enough for Sarri despite the fact Napoli last achieved that feat in 1988. —AFP

GERMAN LEAGUE PREVIEW

# BAYERN FACE LEVERKUSEN AFTER TURBULENT WEEK

**BERLIN:** Bundesliga leaders Bayern Munich head to Bayer Leverkusen today looking for three points to steady the ship again after a turbulent week. Bayern head to the Rhineland in rude health with an eight-point lead in the table, but there have been plenty of tensions off the field in the last five days. On Monday, football's worst kept secret was confirmed when coach Pep Guardiola announced he will take charge at Manchester City next season in a three-year deal reported to be worth more than £15 million (\$21.5 million, 20 million euros) per year.

Despite chairman Karl-Heinz Rummenigge commenting last Sunday that "there is no quality on the market", Bayern signed Germany international Serdar Tasci on Monday in a loan deal to cover their dearth of central defenders. With Javi Martinez, Jerome Boateng and Medhi Benatia all sidelined, Holger Badstuber is their only fully fit centre-back. Unfortunately, Tasci then suffered a concussion in his first training session on Wednesday — 48 hours after signing until June from Spartak Moscow and will sit out the Leverkusen match. Then magazine Sport Bild alleged midfielder Arturo Vidal was repeatedly drunk during Bayern's January training camp in Qatar and both the club and player have said they will take legal action. Bayern's goalkeeper Manuel Neuer says the squad has blanked out the off-field turmoil and are focused solely on Leverkusen. "The things which they try to stick on the team don't affect us. I can only repeat that we stick together," said Neuer. Bayern has only won six of the last 13 games against Leverkusen, a poor return by their lofty standards, and Bayer beat the Bavarians 2-0 last May when last year's league title was already won.

**'Chicharito on fire'**

Leverkusen are unbeaten in their last six games, dating back to the start of December, and their ex-Manchester United striker Javier 'Chicharito' Hernandez is knocking in goals for fun. 'Chicharito' has hit 13 goals in 16 league appearances while Bayern's Robert Lewandowski has scored 19 goals in 19. The Mexican striker has played in every league game since his arrival last August, and his second-half double in last Saturday's 3-0 win over Hanover 96 left Leverkusen fourth in the table.

"Chicharito was really on fire in the last few minutes and that's why you must never take a player like him off," admitted Leverkusen coach Roger Schmidt after Hernandez has forged a strong partnership alongside Germany striker Stefan Kiessling. "He's always capable of deciding a game on his own." Second plays third in the capital

when Borussia Dortmund visit Hertha Berlin. Third-placed Hertha are unbeaten in their last six games in all competitions and have lost just one of their last nine after their 2-0 loss at Bayern's Allianz Arena in November.

Dortmund have won both of their games in 2016 and are ten points clear of Berlin. Pal Dardai's Hertha will need to try and stop Dortmund's Gabon striker Pierre-Emerick Aubameyang. The hot-shot striker has scored 20 goals in 19 games, two ahead of Bayern legend Gerd Mueller at the same stage of the season when he scored the record of 40 goals in the 1971/72 campaign season. "If I am honest, we only have a small chance of winning," said Dardai, with a sell-out crowd of 74,500 expected in Berlin. "But we'll be playing for the win, and if so many of our fans come, we'll want to go out to attack and not play with five at the back." —AFP

**German League table**

**BERLIN:** German Bundesliga table ahead of this weekend's matches (played, won, drawn, lost, goals for, goals against, points):

|                   |    |    |   |    |    |    |    |
|-------------------|----|----|---|----|----|----|----|
| Bayern Munich     | 19 | 17 | 1 | 1  | 50 | 9  | 52 |
| Borussia Dortmund | 19 | 14 | 2 | 3  | 52 | 24 | 44 |
| Hertha Berlin     | 19 | 10 | 4 | 5  | 29 | 21 | 34 |
| Bayer Leverkusen  | 19 | 9  | 4 | 6  | 29 | 21 | 31 |
| Schalke 04        | 19 | 9  | 3 | 7  | 26 | 26 | 30 |
| Moenchengladbach  | 19 | 9  | 2 | 8  | 35 | 34 | 29 |
| VfL Wolfsburg     | 19 | 7  | 6 | 6  | 29 | 25 | 27 |
| Mainz 05          | 19 | 8  | 3 | 8  | 24 | 24 | 27 |
| Cologne           | 19 | 6  | 7 | 6  | 20 | 25 | 25 |
| Ingolstadt 04     | 19 | 6  | 5 | 8  | 12 | 20 | 23 |
| Hamburg           | 19 | 6  | 4 | 9  | 21 | 27 | 22 |
| Augsburg          | 19 | 5  | 6 | 8  | 21 | 26 | 21 |
| Eintracht         | 19 | 5  | 6 | 8  | 24 | 30 | 21 |
| Darmstadt         | 19 | 5  | 6 | 8  | 19 | 29 | 21 |
| VfB Stuttgart     | 19 | 6  | 3 | 10 | 27 | 39 | 21 |
| Werder Bremen     | 19 | 5  | 4 | 10 | 23 | 36 | 19 |
| Hoffenheim        | 19 | 2  | 8 | 9  | 18 | 28 | 14 |
| Hanover 96        | 19 | 4  | 2 | 13 | 19 | 34 | 14 |

# FATIGUE TAKES TOLL ON OVER-WORKED LIVERPOOL

**LIVERPOOL:** Liverpool manager Jurgen Klopp admits tiredness looks to be catching up with his players ahead of today's Premier League clash against Sunderland. Klopp's side played nine games in all competitions in January before kicking-off their equally hectic February schedule with a lacklustre performance in a 2-0 defeat at league leaders Leicester in midweek. "Leicester had 10 days off and we had three games, so if we could have played at the same intensity, absolutely even, like them then I think they would have done something wrong," said Klopp after two goals from Jamie Vardy handed Liverpool a third defeat in five league games.

The Reds have won just once in that run to slip to eighth place in the table and there is little time for rest with the visit of Sunderland, fighting for their lives as they look to avoid relegation, the first of six games in the space of three weeks, culmi-

nating in the League Cup final against Manchester City on February 28. No major new signings in the January transfer window have reduced Klopp's ability to freshen things up as he continues largely with the squad he inherited from Brendan Rodgers last October. On the plus side, he does have a couple of attacking players on the way back from injury as he looks to keep Liverpool challenging in the league, the FA and League Cups and the Europa League.

Philippe Coutinho and Divock Origi were both due to resume training on Thursday and could be back to face Sunderland, who were beaten 1-0 by the Merseysiders at the end of December. England international Daniel Sturridge has also resumed training following another spell on the sidelines but the injury-hit striker, whose last appearance was at the start of December and who has played only five league games this season, is not expected to return today or for

Liverpool's FA Cup fourth-round replay at West Ham next Tuesday.

## Distraction

Klopp will therefore need to continue to look for goals from elsewhere following a three-match goalless run as Liverpool play their only league game of the month. Some supporters plan a walk-out in the 77th-minute in protest over increased ticket prices, but the players will hope that is not a distraction as they to bounce back from their midweek defeat and record a first home league win since Boxing Day.

"You can't really change anything anymore, so the only thing you have to do is learn from the mistakes you made and take the positives into the next game," said Reds goalkeeper Simon Mignolet. "When we play at home against Sunderland we have to take the three points." Wahbi Khazri insists Sunderland can still avoid relegation as the

24-year-old prepares to make his full debut for the club. The Tunisia midfielder impressed as a second-half substitute in the 1-0 midweek defeat at home to Manchester City that leaves Sam Allardyce's side second bottom and four points adrift of safety with 14 games remaining.

Sunderland's decade-long stay in the top flight is under threat after just two wins in their last 10 matches, but Khazri said: "We're in a difficult position in the league, it's very serious and we need points." But there are still a lot of games left and plenty of points to pick up if we work together. A couple of quick victories will really help us. "We put in a good performance against a top team in City, so let's see if we can do the same against Liverpool." Allardyce reports no fresh injury concerns, with Khazri set to replace Dutch international Jeremain Lens in the starting line-up at Anfield, where Sunderland haven't won in 17 visits since 1983. — AFP



## Matches on TV (Local Timings)

### ENGLISH PREMIER LEAGUE

|                                      |              |
|--------------------------------------|--------------|
| <b>Man City v Leicester City</b>     | <b>15:45</b> |
| beIN SPORTS                          |              |
| <b>Liverpool v Sunderland</b>        | <b>18:00</b> |
| beIN SPORTS                          |              |
| <b>Newcastle v West Bromwich</b>     | <b>18:00</b> |
| beIN SPORTS                          |              |
| <b>Tottenham Hotspur v Watford</b>   | <b>18:00</b> |
| beIN SPORTS                          |              |
| <b>Swansea City v Crystal Palace</b> | <b>18:00</b> |
| beIN SPORTS                          |              |
| <b>Aston Villa v Norwich City</b>    | <b>18:00</b> |
| beIN SPORTS                          |              |
| <b>Stoke City v Everton</b>          | <b>18:00</b> |
| beIN SPORTS                          |              |
| <b>Southampton v West Ham United</b> | <b>20:30</b> |
| beIN SPORTS                          |              |

### SPANISH LEAGUE

|  |              |
|--|--------------|
| <b>Atletico de Madrid v SD Eibar</b>   | <b>18:00</b> |
| beIN SPORTS                            |              |
| <b>Rayo Vallecano v Las Palmas</b>     | <b>20:15</b> |
| beIN SPORTS                            |              |
| <b>Athletic de Bilbao v Villarreal</b> | <b>22:30</b> |
| beIN SPORTS                            |              |
| Tomorrow                               |              |
| <b>Gijon v Deportivo La Coruna</b>     | <b>0:05</b>  |
| beIN SPORTS                            |              |

### ITALIAN LEAGUE

|                                |              |
|--------------------------------|--------------|
| <b>Bologna FC v Fiorentina</b> | <b>20:00</b> |
| beIN SPORTS                    |              |
| <b>Genoa CFC v SS Lazio</b>    | <b>22:45</b> |
| beIN SPORTS                    |              |

### GERMAN LEAGUE

|                                 |              |
|---------------------------------|--------------|
| <b>Hannover 96 v FSV Mainz</b>  | <b>17:30</b> |
| beIN SPORTS                     |              |
| <b>Schalke 04 v Wolfsburg</b>   | <b>17:30</b> |
| beIN SPORTS                     |              |
| <b>Hertha Berlin v Borussia</b> | <b>17:30</b> |
| beIN SPORTS                     |              |
| <b>Eintracht v Stuttgart</b>    | <b>17:30</b> |
| beIN SPORTS                     |              |
| <b>Ingolstadt 04 v Augsburg</b> | <b>17:30</b> |
| beIN SPORTS                     |              |
| <b>Bayer 04 v Bayern Munich</b> | <b>20:30</b> |
| beIN SPORTS                     |              |

### FRENCH LEAGUE

|                                    |              |
|------------------------------------|--------------|
| <b>AS Monaco FC v OGC Nice</b>     | <b>16:00</b> |
| beIN SPORTS                        |              |
| <b>Angers v Olympique Lyonnais</b> | <b>19:00</b> |
| beIN SPORTS                        |              |
| <b>Bastia v ES Troyes AC</b>       | <b>22:00</b> |
| beIN SPORTS                        |              |
| <b>Lorient v Montpellier HSC</b>   | <b>22:00</b> |
| beIN SPORTS                        |              |
| <b>Toulouse FC v Nantes</b>        | <b>22:00</b> |
| beIN SPORTS                        |              |
| <b>Caen v Stade de Reims</b>       | <b>22:00</b> |
| beIN SPORTS                        |              |
| <b>GFC Ajaccio v Guingamp</b>      | <b>22:00</b> |
| beIN SPORTS                        |              |

# PSG SEEK TO EXTEND THEIR UNBEATEN RUN

## FRENCH LEAGUE PREVIEW

### French Ligue 1 table

**PARIS:** French Ligue 1 table ahead of the weekend's matches (played, won, drawn, lost, goals for, goals against, points):

|               |    |    |    |    |    |    |   |    |                 |    |   |    |    |    |    |   |    |
|---------------|----|----|----|----|----|----|---|----|-----------------|----|---|----|----|----|----|---|----|
| Paris SG      | 24 | 21 | 3  | 0  | 61 | 11 | 0 | 66 | Bordeaux        | 24 | 8 | 9  | 7  | 31 | 33 | 0 | 33 |
| Monaco        | 24 | 11 | 9  | 4  | 35 | 28 | 0 | 42 | Lorient         | 24 | 7 | 9  | 8  | 33 | 35 | 0 | 30 |
| Nice          | 24 | 11 | 6  | 7  | 38 | 28 | 0 | 39 | Guingamp        | 24 | 8 | 6  | 10 | 26 | 30 | 0 | 30 |
| Angers        | 24 | 10 | 7  | 7  | 25 | 20 | 0 | 37 | Lille           | 24 | 6 | 11 | 7  | 19 | 19 | 0 | 29 |
| Saint-Etienne | 24 | 11 | 3  | 10 | 26 | 27 | 0 | 36 | Bastia          | 24 | 8 | 4  | 12 | 22 | 29 | 0 | 28 |
| Caen          | 24 | 11 | 3  | 10 | 26 | 29 | 0 | 36 | Reims           | 24 | 6 | 8  | 10 | 25 | 33 | 0 | 26 |
| Nantes        | 24 | 9  | 8  | 7  | 24 | 23 | 0 | 35 | Gazélec-Ajaccio | 24 | 6 | 8  | 10 | 25 | 34 | 0 | 26 |
| Marseille     | 24 | 8  | 10 | 6  | 34 | 24 | 0 | 34 | Montpellier     | 24 | 7 | 4  | 13 | 27 | 30 | 0 | 25 |
| Rennes        | 24 | 8  | 10 | 6  | 32 | 30 | 0 | 34 | Toulouse        | 24 | 4 | 8  | 12 | 25 | 42 | 0 | 20 |
| Lyon          | 24 | 9  | 6  | 9  | 31 | 27 | 0 | 33 | Troyes          | 24 | 1 | 8  | 15 | 16 | 49 | 0 | 11 |

**PARIS:** Paris Saint-Germain will be looking to extend their Ligue 1 unbeaten streak at bitter rivals Marseille tomorrow as the hosts bid to end their own record winless run at home. Laurent Blanc's champions stretched their unbeaten run to a record 33 matches with a 3-1 win over Lorient midweek and next tackle Marseille who have not won at their Velodrome Stadium since September. PSG-with 66 points from 24 games-have an impressive 24-point lead with their fourth consecutive and sixth overall league title beckoning. Marseille, who claimed the last of their ten Ligue 1 titles back in 2010, are eighth in the league - 32 points behind PSG.

A 1-0 victory at Montpellier Tuesday pushed Marseille's unbeaten league run to 11 matches, with their last away loss a 2-1 defeat to PSG at the Parc de Princes on October 4. But that impressive statistic conceals misery at their Velodrome stronghold where they have not won since September 13. Blanc's side will be looking to further flex their muscles with a Champions League last 16 tie against Chelsea on February 16. The Parisians have won their past eight 'Classique' clashes with Marseille, and another would give them a new record of consecutive wins against their rivals. But counterpart Michel can count on the support of their loyal fans with PSG's supporters banned from travelling to Marseille because of security concerns.

### 'Must win match'

Marseille will be without newly-signed winger Florian Thauvin after he received a red card against Montpellier, but Scotland striker Steven Fletcher, also a transfer window signing, should give the southern giants fresh legs. "It's a match we have to win, for the club, for the fans and above all for us," said Marseille striker Remy Cabella. "If we got a result against Paris it would give us a boost."

Striker Georges-Kévin Nkoudou added: "I know that there is always pressure between Paris and Marseille, but it remains a classic, and it's up to us to rise to the occasion." Second-placed Monaco, 24 points behind PSG, host Nice, three points behind in third, in a classic Riviera derby today. The clash is crucial for qualification for elite European football next season, with Monaco's billionaire Russian owner Dmitry Rybolovlev making a rare appearance at training to motivate the troops. "He said some words

this morning to motivate us, to wake us up and to take this match seriously," said Morocco midfielder Nabil Dirar.

Lyon, back into the top half, above 11th-place Bordeaux on goal difference, are six points adrift of the Champions League spots. Coach Bruno Genesio is hopeful their 3-0 win at Bordeaux with boost his side. "It's good for morale," said Genesio.

"I hope it will be the spark that will open the way to some good results." Lyon travel to

Angers, sitting fourth with 37 points, and looking to get back to winning ways after losing 2-1 at Reims, while Bordeaux host fifth-placed Saint-Etienne. Nantes will be looking to extend their unbeaten streak to 11 matches at Toulouse as Lille host Rennes, Guingamp travel to Corsica side Gazélec-Ajaccio and Reims visit Caen. Tailenders Troyes, who sacked coach Claude Robin after a heavy 4-0 defeat at Guingamp left them 15 points from safety, travel to Bastia today. — AFP

# PELLEGRINI IN SPOTLIGHT AS CITY BRACE FOR LEICESTER SHOWDOWN

**MANCHESTER:** Manchester City's home supporters will have their first opportunity to begin a drawn out farewell to Manuel Pellegrini when their team face Leicester in a contest that will play a major role in deciding the Premier League title race. Until Monday's announcement that City boss Pellegrini will be replaced by Bayern Munich's Pep Guardiola at the end of the season, it appeared this game would be all about first place in the table and the displays of City's Sergio Aguero and Leicester's Jamie Vardy, two of the division's most in-form stars.

But Pellegrini, who received a rapturous response from City supporters during Tuesday's victory at Sunderland, looks sure to dominate proceedings today when he appears before his home crowd for the first time since his departure was confirmed.

There had been speculation that City's decision not to renew Pellegrini's contract when it expires later this year might unsettle a team still pushing for honors on four fronts.

But City's assured performance at Sunderland suggested otherwise and that ability to concentrate on the game ahead, rather than focusing too far into the future, is what will see them through the campaign according to French defender Gael Clichy. "We need to make ourselves hard to beat and that's what we did," Clichy said. "Three points are three points - what we're trying to do is take every game as it comes and see how it goes. "When you come to somewhere like Sunderland and keep a clean sheet and win it's really satisfying. We have Leicester today so let's make it count and get those three points." — AFP



# LEARN TO SWIM; SWIM TO COMPETE

*Local academy trains future swim athletes and offers classes for adults and kids*

By Nawara Fattahova

Despite its long coastline and history as a seafaring nation, swimming as a sport is not very popular in Kuwait. Many people are also unaware that there is an academy here for training children and adults to become international swimming champions. Proformance Aquatic provides this service for enthusiasts aged 3 years and up. Some of its students have been victorious at various international championships and are even preparing to participate in the Olympics.

## Origins of the Program

Proformance Aquatic was founded in 2013 as a company. "The company is a franchisee of two brands; Swim America, which is a franchise of the American Coaching Association, and the Elite Swim Team, which is a local team founded in 2005. At that time, we were the first and only swimming academy in Kuwait. Unlike other programs, we started by focusing on developing a competitive team. Over the years, we worked to develop a pre-competitive school followed by a development school and finally a learn-to-swim school," Mishari Razouki, CEO and Cofounder of Proformance Aquatic, told Kuwait Times. "We are amongst the strongest Arab private teams, neck-and-neck with the top team in the GCC region," he added.

The academy has about 600 -700



students presently, grouped according to their time skills. "We are considered the largest swimming program in Kuwait and the strongest team in the state based on overall results. Our students represent the academy at international championships. Our top achievement was sending the first Kuwaiti girl to the Olympic Games and our next achievement is making other kids follow in her footsteps. We have numerous kids who have won scholarships from very popular uni-

versities, and we have obtained very promising results in international competitions," stressed Razouki.

## Swim Lessons for adults, children

Proformance Aquatic accepts children and adults from all nationalities starting from age three. "We have kids from 26 different nationalities and we have programs set for them. We track our swimmers all the way from the second they step into our program, we have a Long Term Development Plan for each which

enables us to determine where that child will reach if he follows our path of training," he added. Some of the students participated in the international Euro Meet competition last month. "This is a competition where a lot of world champions go to prepare themselves for the Olympics. So they will be mingling with these high-level swimmers and this pleases us. We are not focusing on the local level but more on international exposure," Razouki said.

Maria Filopoulou, a swimmer and

trainer, has been coaching various age categories for the past two years. "I train kids aged between six to 12 years old, both boys and girls. But I don't have enough time to train myself for the upcoming competition!" she noted. Edith Lingmann is 18 and has been practicing this sport since she was 12. She came to Kuwait four years ago and joined the Torpedoes team. "I have participated in various championships including the Dubai Open and the Qatar championship, and I also participated in the Euro Meet championship held in Luxemburg recently. I will now go to the United States as I have received a scholarship," she pointed out.

Abdulrahman Alhajer, 14, also participated in the Euro Meet championship. "I joined this team about six months ago. Last year, I participated in the Arab Championships held in Dubai and I was nominated as the Best Swimmer in my age group," he beamed. The Euro Meet 2016 Championship was a successful event, with a remarkable history of attracting top notch Olympians. Filopoulo and Lingmann both managed to secure Final B positions - Filopoulo in the 50m, 100m and 200m breaststroke and Lingmann in 50m and 100m freestyle. This places both of them in Top 15 seeds in the meet, which out of 800 female participants, is very impressive. If you are interested to be part of this wonderful program, you can visit their website

[www.proformanceaquatic.com](http://www.proformanceaquatic.com) or call 22913233.

# Sports



Resurgent Bryant lifts Lakers over Pelicans

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SEVILLA: Sevilla's French forward Kevin Gameiro (left) vies with Celta Vigo's defender Hugo Mallo during the Spanish Copa del Rey (King's Cup) semifinal first leg football match Sevilla FC vs RC Celta de Vigo on February 4, 2016. — AFP

## SEVILLA CRUSH CELTA 4-0 IN COPA SEMIS

**MADRID:** French striker Kevin Gameiro scored twice after missing a first-half penalty to help Sevilla beat Celta Vigo 4-0 in the first leg of their Copa del Rey semifinal on Thursday. Gameiro had his penalty saved by Celta goalkeeper Ruben Blanco in the 28th minute, but made amends with goals from counterattacks in the 59th and 62nd minutes. Fellow Frenchman Adil Rami had put Sevilla on the board with a header just before halftime, and Danish midfielder Michael Krohn-Dehli rounded off the scoring in the 87th.

The second leg is next week in Vigo. Defending champion Barcelona routed Valencia 7-0 in the first leg of the other semifinal on Wednesday. "I'm very satisfied because I think we played a very complete match in many aspects. We made things difficult for Celta," Sevilla coach Unai Emery said. "But we have to remain cautious. We can't forget that Celta already defeated Barcelona 4-1 in its stadium (this season)." Sevilla and Celta created good scoring chances from the start at the Ramon Sanchez-Pizjuan Stadium in Seville, but the hosts were in control for most of the match.

Blanco had made two difficult saves just



SEVILLA: Sevilla's French forward Kevin Gameiro (right) celebrates with Sevilla's Danish midfielder Michael Krohn-Dehli (left) after scoring during the Spanish Copa del Rey (King's Cup) semifinal first leg football match Sevilla FC vs RC Celta de Vigo on February 4, 2016. — AFP

before Celta defender Sergi Gomez fouled Machin Vitolo inside the area to concede the penalty. But the goalkeeper stopped Gameiro's spot-kick by diving to his left to make the save. Rami finally opened the scoring with a header off a corner in the 45th, and Gameiro added his goals by taking advantage of the open space left by the Celta defense in the second half. Both times he started his run from Sevilla's own half before getting in front of Blanco in one-on-one situations.

Celta's best chance was a header from Sergi Gomez that hit the crossbar in the first half. It was the first of three games between Sevilla and Celta in a week. The teams will also meet in a Spanish league game on Sunday in Vigo. Seeking its first Copa del Rey title, Celta made it to the semifinals by upsetting Atletico Madrid in the quarters. The last time it reached the final was in 2001, when it lost to Real Zaragoza after eliminating Barcelona in the semis. Sevilla, which last won the competition in 2010, is the only team to have won all of its seven Copa del Rey matches this season. It has outscored opponents 20-0 during the streak. — AP