

Translator describes challenges, experience



Kuwait endorses new regulations for treatment abroad



Moderates make big gains in Iran polls



Wawrinka wins Dubai title after marathon tiebreak



## SYRIA CEASEFIRE TAKES HOLD DESPITE LIMITED VIOLATIONS

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### CROWN PRINCE TOURS NORTHERN BORDERS

**KUWAIT:** HH the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah yesterday paid a visit to the Department of Border Security Force on the northern border of the country. He was greeted upon his arrival by assistant interior ministry undersecretary for border security Maj Gen Sheikh Mohammed Yusef Al-Sabah, Director General of the General Department for land border security Maj Gen Fuad Al-Athari and senior border security officials.

During the visit, Sheikh Nawaf listened to a detailed explanation on the existing equipment and the monitoring system and extent of their readiness, as well as the sophisticated security system, which is the latest in the world used for border protection. He appreciated the tireless work carried out by servicemen day and night during the country's celebration of the glorious national holidays. HH Sheikh Nawaf praised the great efforts by the border security men, their competence, dedication and devotion in their work as they are the watchful eyes to preserve the nation's security and stability.

The Crown Prince stressed "the importance of exerting efforts in defending the soil of our dear homeland and preserving its security and stability and to always be vigilant against anyone trying to tamper with the security of the country".

He explained that he is fully confident in the ability of border guards in carrying out their duties and responsibilities fully, because they will spare no effort in maintaining and protecting the soil of Kuwait and its territorial integrity.

He conveyed the best greetings of HH the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, the Supreme Commander of the Armed Forces, who has always praised their noble efforts in preserving the stability and security of the homeland. — KUNA



**KUWAIT:** HH the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah is briefed by Director General of the General Department for Land Border Security Maj Gen Fuad Al-Athari yesterday during his visit to the northern borders of the country. — KUNA

**DAMASCUS:** Fighting subsided across much of Syria yesterday as the first major ceasefire of the devastating, five-year war appeared to broadly hold despite sporadic breaches in parts of the battle-scarred country. The truce, brokered by Washington and Moscow, is seen as a crucial step towards ending a conflict that has claimed 270,000 lives and displaced more than half the population. It faces formidable challenges including the exclusion of the Islamic State (IS) jihadist group and Al-Qaeda's Syria affiliate Al-Nusra Front, which control large parts of the country.

Meanwhile, HH the Amir of Kuwait Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah sent yesterday two cables to US President Barack Obama and Russian President Vladimir Putin, welcoming the UN Security Council Resolution 2268 endorsing the US-Russian joint statement on cessation of hostilities in Syria. The Amir appreciated both leaders' efforts to adopt this joint statement, hailing it as a genuine step and a glimpse of hope for ceasing several years of hostilities in Syria which have so far claimed the lives of hundreds of thousands of Syrian people.

HH the Amir wished that this could lead to a political solution to the Syrian crisis in order to put an end to the tragic situation and humanitarian sufferings of the brotherly Syrian people inside and outside Syria, to fulfill their legitimate demands and to bring security and stability back to Syria. The Amir also hoped that all involved parties would stick to the resolution so that the international community can focus on fighting and eradicating terrorism.

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### VIGIL HELD TO SAVE BAYT LOTHAN

By Athoob Al-Shuaibi

**KUWAIT:** A number of art and media figures, along with social media influencers, held a candlelight vigil yesterday calling on the owners of the building housing Bayt Lothan to protect this pre-oil structure that is slated for demolition. Bayt Lothan is considered the first nonprofit organization of its kind to nurture culture, music and the arts in all domains. The vigil was organized by artisan Lubna Saif Abbas and chef Mariam Al-Nisf through Facebook to peacefully protest against the closure of Bayt Lothan.

"We hope that this is the beginning. What we want is that people get reconnected to spaces that mean something. Bayt Lothan is a very special place. It's a place that has meaning that ties us to the past, and it's been vibrant and very active since the liberation. We thank the family for doing this because they created something that didn't exist before. However, we want it to continue and we're hoping that the government creates a trust and issues laws that would protect special places like Bayt Lothan. We don't want to see it go," said Abbas.

During the vigil, some attendees sang songs, while many spoke about their memories. Eman Jamal, a media researcher at Kuwait University, said Bayt Lothan is like her second home. "I will never forget the days when I used to practice photography and voluntarily worked for the Lothan Youth Achievement Centre (LOYAC), which emerged from the womb of this place. I wish it remains until my grandchildren see it," she said.

Joseph Shagra, a photographer at Kuwait Times, remembered his days at Bayt Lothan. "Bayt Lothan in the eighties was my high school and was called Al-Manhal. My classmates and I used to bring our swimsuits to school because the beach was right in front of the building. At that time, there weren't any roads here. It's sad that it's going to be demolished," he read.

Kuwait issued a law in 1961 to preserve heritage and distinctive buildings that symbolize the history and identity of Kuwait, but this law is not fully and clearly enforced. The building housing Bayt Lothan was first constructed in the late 1920s as a palace owned a member of the ruling family of Kuwait.



**KUWAIT:** Demonstrators hold a candlelight vigil at Bayt Lothan yesterday. — Photo by Joseph Shagra

### CHALLENGES FACE NEW FIFA BOSS

ARABS LAMENT MISSED OPPORTUNITY



GIANNI INFANTINO

**ZURICH:** Newly-elected FIFA president Gianni Infantino of Switzerland gestures during a press conference at the extraordinary FIFA congress on Friday. — AFP

**ZURICH/CAIRO:** FIFA's new president Gianni Infantino yesterday faced the mountainous task of reforming and uniting world football, with a pile of crises from the scandal-ridden Sepp Blatter era needing urgent action. Infantino, an executive at European football confederation UEFA, promised an end to the dark days at FIFA following his convincing election win. But the 45-year-old Swiss-Italian national was immediately met with multiple challenges, as football powerful players including key corporate partners must still be convinced that FIFA can mend its ways.

Infantino will also have to prioritize the interests of developing football nations in Asia and Africa, two continents that publicly backed election runner-up Sheikh Salman bin Ebrahim Al-Khalifa on hopes that a non-European would lead FIFA after Swiss national Blatter's 18-year presidency. "We will work tirelessly, starting with myself," the shaven-headed, multi-lingual new FIFA boss said. "You will be proud of FIFA. You will be proud of what FIFA will do for football."

Continued on Page 15

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## AMIR LAUDS CITIZENS, RESIDENTS FOR THE JUBILANT MANIFESTATIONS

**KUWAIT:** His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah on Friday congratulated the citizens and residents of Kuwait on the 55th anniversary of the National Day and the 25th anniversary of the Liberation Day, lauding their joyful expression on the two dear occasions through their participation in the various popular festivals.

His Highness the Amir praised personnel and officers of the Ministry of Interior, the Ministry of Defense and the National Guard for securing comfortable atmosphere for holding the celebrations. He also lauded the other official authorities and departments for their efforts in preparing for the celebrations; namely the higher committee for preparing for national celebrations, the Ministry of Information, the Ministry of Health, the Ministry of Education, the Fire General Directorate, Kuwait Municipality, also thanking the media for their wide-scale coverage of the activities.

His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad addressed greetings to Their Highnesses the leaders of the GCC states, Arab and friendly



His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah

states for their participation in the celebrations. He also recalled the national martyrs who had sacrificed their souls for defending the homeland. He prayed for the martyrs' souls, preserving the dear homeland, the bounties of security, safety and prosperity. — KUNA



RIYADH: Saudi ambassador participates in Kuwait's embassy celebration.

## KUWAITI FOREIGN MISSIONS CELEBRATE NATIONAL HOLIDAYS

**KUWAIT:** The State of Kuwait's foreign missions worldwide held several events and receptions in celebration of the nation's 55th National Day and the 25th Liberation Day. Kuwaiti ambassadors and diplomats at foreign missions and consulates in Saudi Arabia, Italy, and Tanzania released statements commemorating their country's national celebrations.

The Kuwaiti diplomats congratulated His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, and His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-Hamad Al-Sabah on the advent of the national festivities. They also took the chance to congratulate the people of Kuwait on the country's celebrations.

The foreign diplomats and officials attending the celebrations congratulated Kuwait on its national days, stressing that their countries were eager to develop ties with Kuwait. Other countries where Kuwaiti missions held receptions include Venezuela, Oman, Cyprus, Pakistan, Vietnam, Malaysia, Switzerland, Mongolia, Romania, Bhutan, Germany, Czech Republic, Hungary, Indonesia, the Philippines, South Korea, and Singapore. — KUNA



ROME: Kuwaiti ambassador to Italy Sheikh Ali Al-Jaber Al-Sabah is seen during the celebration.



WASHINGTON: US Secretary of State John Kerry with Ambassador Sheikh Salem Abdullah Al-Jaber Al-Sabah and his wife. — KUNA

## KUWAIT APPRECIATIVE OF US ROLE IN LIBERATION WAR: AMBASSADOR

**WASHINGTON:** Kuwait's Ambassador to the United States Sheikh Salem Abdullah Al-Jaber Al-Sabah has expressed Kuwait's appreciation of the effective US role in the international coalition to liberate Kuwait from the Iraqi occupation in 1991.

Speaking at a function held Thursday evening to mark the 25th anniversary of Kuwait's Liberation Day, Sheikh Salem acknowledged the role of the then US president George H W Bush in the US decision to join the international coalition, describing him as a unique man and a friend to the State of Kuwait.

The function was also attended by US Secretary of State John Kerry, former US secretary of state and commander of the joint chiefs of staff retired general Colin Powell and several US diplomats, journalists and several other dignitaries.

In his speech, Sheikh Salem recalled the great sacrifices of Kuwaiti martyrs, prisoners of war (POWs), missing as well as the US human casualties in the war. The Kuwaiti diplomat said he is proud of the high level of Kuwaiti-US relations.

He said that Kuwait's role as an effective member in the international community stems from depth conviction of the need for global cooperation to achieve security and prosperity for humanity. He cited the UN proclamation of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah as a 'Humanitarian Leader' and of Kuwait as a 'Humanitarian Center' as a proof of this

remarkable role. Sheikh Salem highlighted the great developments achieved in Kuwait in various domains since the liberation.

Meanwhile, Powell said that president Bush senior has opted for the military option to liberate Kuwait after the failure of all other options. He pointed out that 34 countries had contributed to the international coalition to liberate Kuwait, describing it as the biggest of its kind in post-World War II world. He stressed that the US would remain a friend to Kuwait forever, and vice versa.

A documentary, themed Kuwait Liberation, was screened during the function. The Kuwaiti embassy published on Thursday a letter in the US mass-circulation Washington Post to express Kuwait's acknowledgement of the contributions and sacrifices of all Americans who partook in Kuwait liberation war.

In the meantime, Kerry said that the US is "grateful for the special friendship with Kuwait" as he thanked Ambassador Sheikh Salem Al-Sabah and his wife for their efforts. The US is "so grateful for the special friendship with Kuwait," he told KTV and KUNA. "We cannot thank you enough for your great ambassador here. (Sheikh) Salem Al-Sabah and his wife, Rima, are fabulous. Kuwait and the United States now have such a linkage through history. We appreciate the strong partnership in trying to deal with the troubles of the region." — KUNA



CARACAS: Kuwait's Ambassador is pictured with Deputy Foreign Minister of Venezuela during the Kuwaiti embassy's celebration.



CARACAS: Staff members of the Kuwaiti embassy in Venezuela.



## ZAIN CELEBRATES NATIONAL HOLIDAYS WITH CARE CENTERS AND CHILDREN IN HOSPITALS

**KUWAIT:** Zain, the leading telecommunications company in Kuwait, celebrated the joys of National holidays with the Ministry of Social Affairs' care centers and with children in hospitals on the occasion of Kuwait's National holidays.

Zain showed its keenness to draw smiles on the faces of the less fortunate. The company's Corporate Communications and Relations team distributed national day-themed gifts to people with special needs, the elderly, orphans, and children in hospitals in a patriotic and family atmosphere.

The visits witnessed were enjoyed by care centers and children as well as the administrative and medical staff in care centers and hospitals. This participation came in line with Zain's Corporate Social Responsibility program where the company participated during this patriotic time of year to distribute gifts and celebrate this nationalistic occasion in a family atmosphere full of joy and happiness. The company went on to state that February is a special time of the year for the Kuwaiti society, and thus it committed itself to sharing the joys of such times with those who are less fortunate. Zain's continuous participation with different segments of society is a testament to the company's belief that improving the lives of communities in which it operates is central to its overall activities. Zain will continue to introduce initiatives that reflect the traditional humanitarian values and principles of the Kuwaiti society; aimed at enriching the art of giving and increasing bonding between individuals.



KUALA LUMPUR: Residents of the charitable village of Sabah Al-Ahmad in the city of Garut in Western Java Province celebrated the 55th National Day and the 25th Liberation Day. The celebration embodied appreciation and loyalty to the 'Humanitarian Leader' His Highness the Amir of Kuwait Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah. The celebration was attended by Kuwait's ambassador to Jakarta Abdulwahab Al-Saqr. — KUNA



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# Translation specialist describes challenges, experience in Kuwait

**'I wish to set up an association for translators in Kuwait'**

By Nawara Fattahova

**KUWAIT:** Obtaining information from all fields and systematically learning new terms is a major part of a translator's job. Dr Emad Abulnsr, a senior translation specialist and interpreter, spoke to Kuwait Times about his profession. Some excerpts:



Dr Emad Abulnsr

**Kuwait Times: When did you start your career?**

**Dr Emad Abulnsr:** I began translating in 1987 after graduating from university in Egypt. I came to Kuwait in 1994, and I have been working here since. I do both written translation and simultaneous interpretation from Arabic into English and vice versa in Kuwait and other countries too. I also speak some German, but not well enough for translation.

- I participated as a simultaneous interpreter at all three Syria donors' conferences at Bayan Palace
- The most exhausting thing is working under pressure

**Kuwait Times: Describe a typical day?**

**Abulnsr:** I start my duty at 8 am at one of the ministries as a senior translation specialist, where I do translation work myself and also supervise other written translations done in my department by my colleagues. I work at the office till 1:15 pm on the days when there are no conferences, otherwise I participate in official conferences taking place there. After work, I run a freelance translation business, where I do both written translation and simultaneous interpreting.

**Kuwait Times: What are some of your most significant works or participations?**

**Abulnsr:** I participated as a simultaneous interpreter at all three Syria donors' conferences at Bayan Palace. I was also the interpreter at the first Asian Cooperation Dialogue Conference, in addition to

- Usually one interpreter works alone for four to five hours, with a short break of 10 to 15 minutes
- Some specialized conferences include special terminology, so preparing in advance is important

many other conferences and meetings with prominent figures, the latest of whom was Bill Gates during his recent visit to Kuwait. I have also translated most if not all IMAX movies and also translated a book about marine environment in Kuwait for the Environment Public Authority.

In addition, I translated 'Eureka,' a science encyclopedia published by the Kuwait Foundation for the Advancement of Sciences, and many others. I am currently working on translating a book about Prophet Muhammad (PBUH), 'The Gifted Mercy,' from Arabic to English, which is expected to be published this June.

**Difficulties**

**Kuwait Times: What are the difficulties that you face in your profession?**

**Abulnsr:** The most exhausting thing is working under pressure. This especially happens when the client gives us a shorter time than what is actually needed to accomplish the task, so we have to work under pressure and overtime to finish on time and meet the deadline. Another difficult situation is when I am hired to interpret at a conference without being provided with the material that will be used, such as the speeches or presentation slides, so I have no clue what the event is about. This is important as preparing in advance makes our job easier and more accurate. For instance, we can prepare the correct titles of the speakers or names of organizations.

Also, some specialized conferences include special terminology, so preparing in advance is important.

But when we are not prepared, we feel pressure on the mind as you have to instantly dig up a word. Also, there may be new words and terms that we might not be familiar with.

**Kuwait Times: Any other problems?**

**Abulnsr:** In simultaneous interpretation, international rules state that there should be two interpreters in the booth at the same time, as each translator should translate up to 20 minutes only and then take a break, while the second translator takes over for another 20 minutes. But unfortunately in Kuwait, this rule is rarely followed, and only about 10 percent of events abide by the same. So usually one interpreter works alone for four to five hours, with a short break of 10 to 15 minutes after sessions that can extend up to 90 minutes. Funnily enough, we consume so much energy trying to concentrate for a long period of time, that we emerge from the interpretation booth not only exhausted, but even hungry!

**Improvement**

**Kuwait Times: How do you improve your skills?**

**Abulnsr:** Self-improvement is very important for a translator. If a translator does not keep reading and researching, he will not be aware of new terms. I am also in contact with translators from all over the world, and I now have 1,999 connections from various countries on LinkedIn, for example. Sometimes I also invite them to join us for interpretation at conferences, particularly if rare language pairs are not found

in Kuwait. This allows for exchanging views and experiences, which in itself is a credit for both sides. Many times, I also comment on some translation mistakes in public places, stickers, signboards, etc, some of which are very humorous.

In addition to reading and following social media, attending Internet webinars is also a very useful tool for a translator's training. There are a lot of free webinars as well as advanced ones that charge fees. Those who can afford it can also attend the annual international translation conference, where a lot of translation challenges and issues are discussed by specialists in the field.

**Kuwait Times: What do you aim to add to your work to improve it?**

**Abulnsr:** I wish to set up an association for translators - such as for other professions - in Kuwait. In other countries, there are associations for translators, but it is very difficult here due to the bureaucracy. When I went to inquire, I was told that signatures of at least 150 Kuwaiti translators are needed to set up a society, while during my 25 years of working in Kuwait, I only know two Kuwaiti translators. So we are now using social media instead to keep in contact, exchange information and discuss our problems. I can say that there are hardly around 20 quality translators here, but the number is gradually increasing.

- If a translator does not keep reading and researching, he will not be aware of new terms
- Self-improvement is very important for a translator



**KUWAIT:** Celebrators returned to their habit of using water guns during parades held at the Arabian Gulf Road and other streets in Kuwait on this year's National and Liberation Days celebrations. Water guns (and throwing water balloons) have become a customary public way of celebration ever since the government banned foam spray for health reasons in 2011. — Photos by Joseph Shagra and Fouad Al-Shaikh



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## Local spotlight

## EDUCATION REFORM



By Muna Al-Fuzai

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Most intellectuals and liberals in the Arab world agree on the importance of education reform, but no one says what is the goal or the means in order to reform society and change traditional concepts and counter extremism.

Talking about education reform is always focused on the introduction of computers in schools, rehabilitation of teachers and reviewing their situation to increase salaries, and achieve high results in science exams for example, but no one calls to expunge radical materials or ones that encourage conservative or extremist ideas and perhaps false opinions too. The goal of education should be to upgrade the regional and global standing and future of the state.

Reform of education must succeed in building new thinking skills and respect for others' beliefs and ideas in line with the constitution and its principles. Education must be a tool to eliminate the extended influence of the Muslim Brotherhood and encourage others seeking for the renewal and modernization of the curriculum. The teaching materials must have a direct impact on the students' daily lives and behaviors.

Education reform has become a need in all Arab countries and not only in Kuwait. In Kuwait, the cost of a student in the kindergarten stage in 2011/2012 was KD 4,031. Spending on the following three stages of education was KD 3,262 for primary, KD 3,299 for intermediate and KD 4,137 for high school. Public spending and the annual estimated budget for the education sector amounted to KD 1 billion for 2013, with salaries for the year 2011/2012 at KD 776.3 million and spending on buildings, training activities and tools not more than KD 250 million. This amount is not enough to have a serious reform process.

I know that drastic reform of education is not an easy process and can't be done in a day. It needs decades and will as much as decisions to recognize that education is still in the same place since the past 30 years. Education is not only the responsibility of the state, but is everyone's mission. The most important question is the philosophy of higher education and what do we want to have - researchers, administrators or intellectuals?

How do we fix education? Firstly, we must make education a priority in the agenda of any government. We have to reject the typical claim that the ministry is hijacked by an Islamist group or others, because this argument reflects impotence and failure and no one can dominate the culture of a society unless they are allowed to do so.

How do Islamist groups work in education? They rely on memorization and repetition as well as a refusal to debate, and of course the concept that democracy is a danger and any new calls for educational reform are a threat. It is common that such education results in people who act like they are programmed and execute any order without the slightest discussion, and so it is normal to see professors and teachers who have college degrees but hold extremist thoughts and are narrow-minded.

Let's take the vivid example of the number of terrorists in IS, especially those from the Gulf region such as Saudi Arabia and Kuwait. Others may have their reasons, such as ignorance and poverty, but there is no justification for those from our region to become terrorists. They have been brainwashed and poisoned with ideas of sick people, probably those who are professors and teachers. It is the education that allowed them to be an easy prey.

It is our right to demand for education reform. Real education reform must encourage the plurality of opinions and ideologies and should not be less important than mathematics, for instance. There is a need for adoption of quality indicators to measure learning standards of all students and educational staff to follow their performance and monitor the output of the educational system in Kuwait according to global performance systems.

## SCHOOLS IN KUWAIT WILL BE OPEN TODAY

**KUWAIT:** Schools will open as regular today, the Ministry of Education announced yesterday, denying rumors that they would remain closed post the national days' holiday. Dr Haitham Al-Athari, the undersecretary, denied in a statement to KUNA, tonight, allegations that have gone viral on the electronic social media that "Sunday is an official holiday for the students," affirming that the classes will be open as usual. — KUNA

## AUSTERITY POLICY EXCLUDES LOW INCOME CITIZENS, BASIC COMMODITIES: PREMIER

**LONDON:** The proposed austerity policy, to be worked out by the National Assembly and the Cabinet, will not affect citizens with low income and would not touch the price of basic commodities, said His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-Hamad Al-Sabah Friday.

Speaking to the London-based Al-Hayat newspaper, Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak affirmed that this was not the first time that Kuwait had to address its economic situation in light of the low oil price, stressing that the austerity policy was aiming at cutting unnecessary expenses, improving governance, and creating a responsible consumer culture within society. He hoped that the National Assembly and the Cabinet will come in terms with one another to reach agreement that will be beneficial in the long run.

## Unity

Meanwhile, His Highness Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak said that unity and solidarity between the leadership of Kuwait and its people will help the nation traverse through the alarming developments in the Middle East and Gulf region. Kuwait is keen on having good relations with all countries in the region, including Iran, he added.

However, he indicated that his country did not approve of the attacks that recently occurred against the Saudi embassy and consulate in Tehran and Mashhad, stressing that Iran should control extremist elements on its lands and also seek to normalize relations with its Arab neighbors. His Highness Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak affirmed that Kuwait and the member states in the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) will always seek measures to defuse tension in the region. — KUNA



**KUWAIT:** Deputy Prime Minister and Interior Minister Sheikh Mohammad Al-Khaled Al-Sabah participates in the funeral of martyr Turki Al-Enezi, who was run over by a motorist Thursday at Dasman roundabout in Kuwait City.

## AMIR INSTRUCTS MARTYR'S SONS TO BE TREATED AS KUWAITIS

**KUWAIT:** Deputy Prime Minister and Interior Minister Sheikh Mohammad Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah stressed the necessity of implementing directives of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah for treating sons of the martyr Turki Al-Enezi as Kuwaiti citizens.

Kuwait will never forget the martyr who sacrificed his soul for its sake, the Ministry's Public Relations and Media Security Department said in a press statement Friday. The move is

an honor to the martyr's efforts in serving the country, it added.

The statement referred to the parental feelings of His Highness the Amir towards the martyr, who is a Gulf son to a Kuwaiti mother. Enezi was run over by a motorist Thursday at Dasman roundabout in Kuwait City. Several other policemen were wounded in the accident.

Sheikh Mohammad Al-Khaled had stated during Enezi's funeral on Friday that Kuwait is proud of sacrifices offered by the martyr. The country's

soil embraces today a martyr who sacrificed his soul for its sake, the Ministry's Public Relations and Media Security Department quoted Sheikh Mohammad Al-Khaled as saying.

The minister prayed to Allah Almighty to bless the martyr's soul with mercy in Paradise and to bring solace to his family, wishing those injured speedy recovery, the statement said. Sheikh Mohammad Al-Khaled and some senior officials at the ministry took part in the funeral. — KUNA

## COUPLE ARRESTED FOR INJURING POLICEMEN

**KUWAIT:** The Ministry of Interior announced on Friday that it arrested a Syrian resident, who seemed to be in an abnormal state, and his Kuwaiti wife who tried to escape and consequently hit several policemen and injured them slightly. While policemen were on patrol at Sabah Al-Salem area, they suspected a Syrian resident named Khaled Hasan, the Ministry's Public Relations and Security Media Department said in a press statement.

Accompanied by his Kuwaiti wife, he appeared to be in an abnormal state, it said, adding that while she was trying to escape, she ran over several policemen and injured them slightly. The ministry found out that the Syrian had a criminal record involving fraud and possession of narcotics. He was arrested in possession of narcotic pills, it said, noting that he and his wife were referred to investigations, it concluded. — KUNA

## GOVT OPEN TO NATURALIZING 4,000 BEDOONS A YEAR

By A Saleh

**KUWAIT:** The government does not object to a request made by ten lawmakers to discuss the issue of bedoons (stateless) during the upcoming parliamentary session, informed sources said. The government is expected to approve a proposal made by the parliament's defense and interior committee to grant citizenship to 4,000 bedoons a year, the sources added. In another concern, the sources said that the parliament's legislations committee will hold a meeting to discuss a number of proposals concerning parliamentary elections, including adding new areas to the current electoral constituencies so that their residents could take part in the 2017 elections.

## Strange timing

MP Abdulhameed Dashti stressed

that video footage circulating online which allegedly shows him insulting an Arab country was recorded a long time ago, adding that it was strange why it is "being manipulated at this particular time." He added that he had been through similar attacks last year and urged people criticizing him to verify things before jumping to conclusions. "He who has proof that I have violated the constitution should take such proof to legal authorities," he underlined.

## Investments in Lebanon

The GCC Chambers of Commerce Union is currently closely watching GCC investments in Lebanon after four GCC states banned their subjects from travelling to Lebanon, which made the business and investment council in the Lebanese embassy in Riyadh to express con-

cerns of withdrawal of GCC funds from Lebanon. In this regard, Ali Al-Ghanem, Chairman of Kuwait Chamber of Commerce and Industry (KCCI), and chairman of the board of the GCC union stressed that the situation in Lebanon was being closely watched and that no such decisions were made yet.

## Live surgery

Head of the cardiology department at the chest diseases hospital Dr Mohammed Al-Mutairi said that the hospital would take part in an international conference on cardiac catheterization by performing a live surgery in the hospital and showing it through video conference at a conference hall in India. Mutairi added that the conference would also view live surgeries from India, US, France, UK and UAE.



Flames come out from a building which caught fire in Hawally on Thursday night.



Firefighters tackle a blaze which burned a vehicle in Saad Al-Abdullah on Friday.

## 1,533 'SECURITY MEASURES' TAKEN DURING CELEBRATIONS

By Hanan Al-Saadoun

**KUWAIT:** The Interior Ministry's Relations and Security Media Director Brigadier Adel Al-Hashash said that statistics collected from various field operations during the national celebrations included 1,533 security measures, filing 11,190 traffic citations, impounding 526 vehicles and 18 motorbikes and referring 41 juveniles to relevant authorities. Hashash added that security measures taken during the ceremonies aimed at protecting both citizens and expats from any malpractices while expressing joy.

## Smuggling foiled

Nuwiseeb custom inspectors foiled an attempt to smuggle 11 liquor bottles by three people arriving from a GCC country. Security sources noted that the bottles had been hidden in secret pockets in the clothes the suspects wore that were discovered during inspection.

## No injuries in fires

Hawally and Salmiya firefighters controlled a huge fire that started in a store in the yard of a Hawally building on Thursday night. The flames extended to a truck parked outside the building. No injuries were reported. Separately, a vehicle caught fire in Saad Al-Abdullah on Friday, said security sources, noting that firemen rushed to the scene and managed to control the fire without reporting any casualties.

## KUWAIT IMPORTANT REGIONAL PARTNER: NATO SECRETARY GENERAL

NATO ENTITY INCLUDES KUWAITI OFFICIAL IN ADVISORY COUNCIL

**BRUSSELS/ROME:** The NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg will visit Kuwait on Monday for talks with the Kuwaiti leadership. In an exclusive statement to the Kuwait News Agency (KUNA) Friday, Stoltenberg said he looks forward to visiting Kuwait for the first time as NATO Secretary General.

"Kuwait is an important regional partner for the Alliance, and has played a key role in promoting closer NATO-Gulf relations. In 2004, Kuwait was the first country to join the Istanbul Cooperation Initiative, or "ICI," NATO's partnership framework with Gulf nations," he noted.

"We face common security challenges, and share common aspirations for peace and stability. So over the past decade, our political and practical cooperation has grown, and we can do more together," said the NATO chief.

"For instance, the NATO-ICI Regional Centre in Kuwait, which will be a hub for practical cooperation with Kuwait and other regional partners, and allow us to deepen our close partnership even further," he added in his statement to KUNA. Meanwhile, a NATO press release here yesterday said during his visit, Stoltenberg will have meetings with His Highness the Amir of the State of Kuwait,

Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Jaber Mubarak Al-Hamad Al-Sabah, First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Sabah and the President of the Kuwait National Security Bureau, Sheikh Thamer Ali Al-Sabah.

The Secretary General will also sign the NATO-Kuwait Transit Agreement with the First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs and will pay a visit to site of the future NATO-Kuwait Istanbul Cooperation Initiative (ICI) Regional Centre.

## Tremendous efforts

Meanwhile, Sheikh Thamer Al-Sabah has been admitted into the NATO Defense College Foundation's advisory council due to his tremendous efforts in highlighting his country's strategic commitment to regional security, a NATO official said late Friday.

The decision was made on the sidelines of the foundation's international conference on the geopolitical situation in the Arab world, said Ambassador Alessandro Minuto-Rizzo, head of the foundation and former acting Secretary General of NATO.

Minuto-Rizzo said that choosing Sheikh

Thamer to become member of the advisory council was to acknowledge his decade-long efforts and cooperation with NATO which came within the Istanbul Cooperation Initiative (ICI), a document regulating cooperation between NATO and members from outside the organization. The official affirmed that he was looking forward to cooperate with the Kuwaiti figure to further enhance cooperation between NATO and its partners.

In regards to the foundation's role, Minuto-Rizzo said that this NATO-affiliated structure focused on bolstering relations on a more fluid and less formal approach, tackling major strategic challenges through direct dialogue with partners including the ones in the Arab region.

Touching on the conference, the official said that the event helped to paint a clear picture of what is occurring in the Middle East region, affirming that Sheikh Thamer, along with officials from 18 countries, had contributed to the success of the conference. Minuto-Rizzo also took the chance to commend the Kuwaiti official's final communiqué to the conference, indicating that Sheikh Thamer's speech reflected Kuwait's unique status in the region. — KUNA



Crime

Report

HYENA KILLED AFTER ATTACKING CAMP

**KUWAIT:** A hyena was killed after it attacked a Kuwaiti family's camp in Kabd, said security sources. Case papers indicate that a citizen spending the national holidays in a desert camp in Kabd called the police requesting protection from a hyena attacking their camp. The man informed the police that he had locked his family in a room inside the camp to protect them while the hyena was pacing outside. Arriving at the scene, policemen chased the hyena out of the camp and shot it to avoid endangering other campers' lives. The citizen said that the hyena was being chased by some vehicles when it entered his camp.

Forgery

A bedoon woman and her two female citizen friends were arrested on arrival at Kuwait international airport from Dubai, said security sources, noting that Dubai airport authorities found that the bedoon was using the passport of a friend she resembled and deported the three to Kuwait. Investigations are in progress to find whether the suspect received any assistance at Kuwait airport or the passport authorities did not do their job properly and were fooled by the resemblance.

Home robbery

A citizen reported that on returning from celebrating the national holidays, he found that unidentified robbers had stolen jewelry and cash from his house. The man said that he went out by 5 pm and returned by 11 pm to find that a dining room window was smashed and that the thieves stole the jewelry and cash. A case was filed.

Families fight

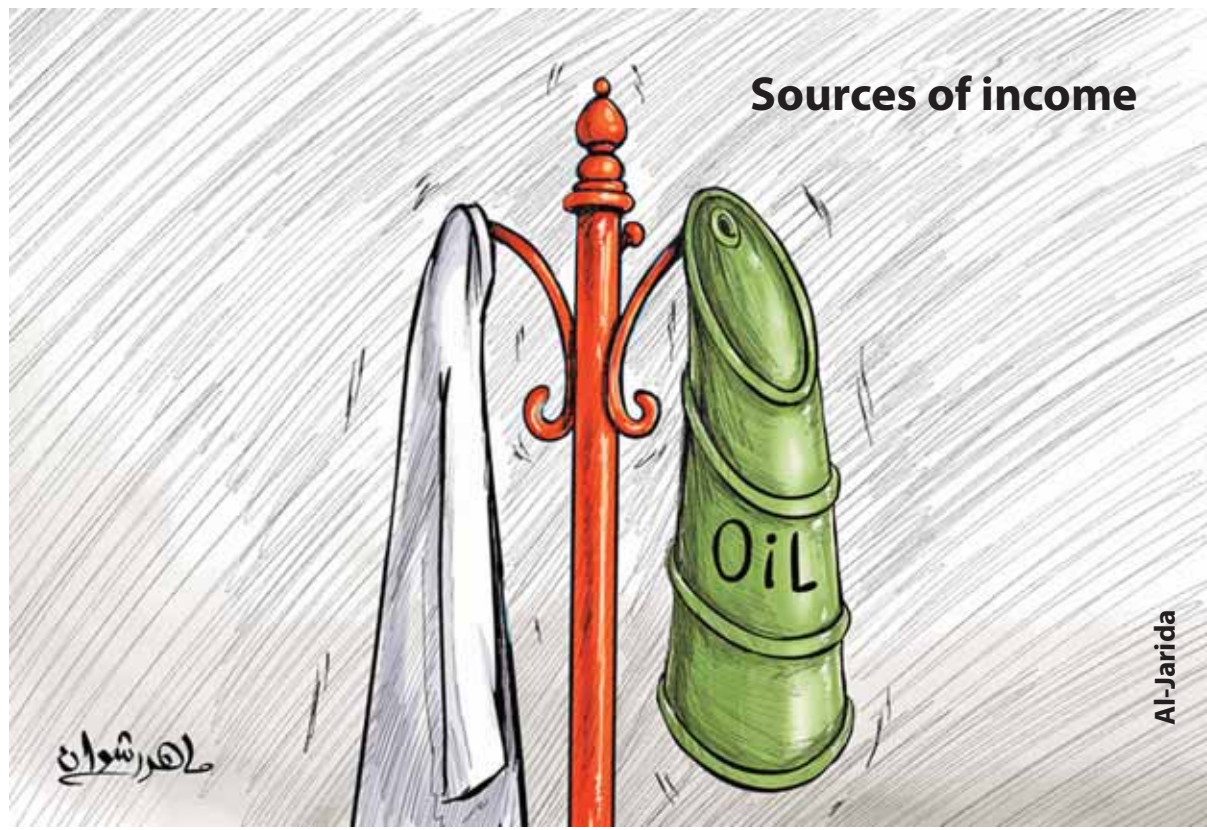
Two Arab families consisting of three men and two women fought in Hawally because of problems over their children, said security sources.

Drug possession

Narcotics detectives arrested a number of suspects of Sri Lankan, Egyptian, Indian, Gulf, and Kuwaiti nationalities as well as stateless people, all in possession of drugs in several separate cases. Security sources said that the total drugs seized included 1.15 kg of hashish, 100 gm of heroin, five grams of meth and over 4,000 illicit pills.

False alarm

Jahra security forces were alarmed after receiving a report from a girl crying and claiming that she had killed her mother, said security sources, noting that on rushing to the address the girl provided, policemen were received by the mother who said that her daughter was mentally disabled and had a file with the psychological diseases hospital. —Al-Rai, Al-Anbaa



Al-Anbaa

MOE AND ISRAELI LAWS

By Thaar Al-Rasheedi

A few months ago, I wrote about a Ministry of Education (MoE) application found on the App Store that belongs to an Israeli company. I expected MoE or any of its relevant sectors would remove, stop or even suspend the application after I published my article. Unfortunately, checking the App Store two days ago, I found the application still in use and even updated on Jan 26, 2016, which means that MoE stubbornly insists on using an Israeli platform in one of its sectors while nobody knows about it.

According to the application's conditions, it allows the Israeli company to watch any use of the application and review all the data in it even if it came from a third party, which means that within the privacy rules, the company has every right to review all the application's contents without permission from the owner and that any person downloading and using it would be subject to the surveillance of the Israeli company - Comco. The disaster is that the conditions for using this app

clearly state that any dispute resulting because of the application or its use would mandate all parties to fully subject to Israeli laws and courts. WOW! In other words, MoE has indirectly subjected itself to Israeli laws by using this application that includes all ministry information, officials' names, MoE news in the media, special directives and decisions as well as the names of employees who deserve incentives and excellent performance bonuses. I know that neither Israel nor Comco need this application to get the secrets of the 'Kuwaiti Nuclear Education Ministry', but the question is: Why has MoE chosen this particular Israeli application from dozens of international companies providing similar free applications. Its official could have selected any from hundreds of technology companies providing free smartphone application platforms. More than 43,000 users in Kuwait have downloaded the application on their smartphones since its launch two years ago until yesterday!

**More than 43,000 users in Kuwait have downloaded the application on their smartphones since its launch two years ago until yesterday!**

international companies providing similar free applications. Its official could have selected any from hundreds of technology companies providing free smartphone application platforms. More than 43,000 users in Kuwait have downloaded the application on their smartphones since its launch two years ago until yesterday!

—Translated by Kuwait Times



Al-Anbaa

TO AVOID THE SITUATION EXPLODING IN LEBANON

By Sami Al-Nisf

In 1990, Kuwait found out that six states and organizations that received most of its aid over years - Iraq, PLO, Yemen, Sudan, Tunisia and Jordan - were the most hostile to it and one of them invaded it, and ever since, GCC states, EU, US and Russia no longer accept that any of the countries receiving aid from them act against them. That is exactly what happened with Lebanon by Saudi Arabia and other GCC states.

To start with, there is a huge difference between Saudi Arabia's attitude towards Lebanon and that of other regional states like Syria. It's like the difference between good and evil. Saudi Arabia has been known to work for achieving stability, stopping wars, contributing in reconstructing Lebanon and employing its people. It even allowed its national carrier to operate from Jeddah throughout the civil war years; which is unlike the Syrian interference that only contributed to prolonging the war, shedding more blood and assassinating Lebanese leaders.

Nonetheless, Saudi Arabia was severely antagonized by the 'kidnapped' Lebanese decision-making to the extent that the Lebanese FM Gibran Bassil even outdid the Iranian authorities who condemned the assaults against the Saudi embassy while he did not, with a silly excuse of 'protecting Lebanese solidarity'. The Lebanese government also kept silent about militias infiltrating through its border to support the murder regime in Damascus that killed hundreds of thousands and displaced millions of its people, which would give any future Syrian regime the right to interfere back in Lebanon.

Lebanon seems to be at a crossroads nowadays because it can make use of the Saudi and GCC attitude to adjust its previous wrong choices and set new rules for political games in Lebanon, including a national project that subjects everybody to the authority of a united just Lebanese state including everyone and controlling its borders to avoid the terrible consequences already taking place in Iraq, Somalia, Syria, Libya and Yemen, where armed militias took over.

Lebanon of tourism, beauty, peace, investments and services that is compatible with itself and Arabs and that enjoys stable policies and is open to all parties, has potential to become one of the richest regional countries just like other service countries worldwide like Luxemburg, Switzerland, Singapore and Hong Kong. This is what Saudi Arabia and GCC states want for it and is being fought by other powers' agendas that only seek more political, economic and living blockages that would eventually blow things up and harm everybody. The choice is now for the Lebanese people to either choose those seeking reconstruction and those seeking its destruction.

Finally, PM Salam can take immediate measures to undo the problem by a quick reshuffle excluding Bassil from the foreign ministry because his statements and attitudes cannot mend the situation between Lebanon, Saudi Arabia and GCC states. Salam can also tightly close the borders with Syria to prevent insurgents going through them.

—Translated by Kuwait Times

BEDOON ISSUES RESOLVED AT EXPATRIATES' EXPENSE?

**KUWAIT:** Will the solutions due to be suggested by lawmakers in a two-hours session to be dedicated to discuss bedoon problems on March 1 be at the expense of expats, by replacing expats with bedoons and granting them more civil and social rights? MP

Ahmed Lari believes that bedoons would help solve demographic imbalances and could replace expats in government jobs, which means laying off 100,000 expats who are already overburdening public services. MP Abdulrahman Al-Jeeran stressed that

bedoons' issues were being studied by devoted people and that bedoons' files had been studied pending granting citizenship to those who deserve it. MP Fares Al-Otaibi said that bedoons' issues would be discussed in a public session. —Al-Rai

MOH INVESTIGATES CITIZEN'S DEATH, PROMISES LEGAL ACCOUNTABILITY

**KUWAIT:** The Ministry of Health (MoH) will investigate the death of citizen Abdul Rahman Al-Sultan in one of its hospitals, Assistant Undersecretary for Legal Affairs Dr Mahmoud Al-Abdul Hadi stressed. He added that upon instructions from Minister Dr Ali Al-Obaidi, a special committee had been formed to conduct the investigation and decide on the cause of death. "In case of medical error, doctors responsible will be subject to legal accountability," he stressed, reminding that the ministry had previously expelled several doctors for medical errors.

In another health concern, MoH undersecretary Dr Khaled Al-Sahlawi said that the recent Cabinet's decision on the allowances for medical treatment overseas would take effect by April 1. Sahlawi explained that the decision included paying a daily allowance of KD 75 for patients receiving treatment in the US and Europe and KD 50 for patients in other countries. He added that patients would also be entitled to flight tickets plus only one companion. Sahlawi stressed that MoH was currently conducting a study on possible alternatives for treatment overseas. —Al-Anbaa

POLICEMAN'S RUN OVER 'TERROR MOTIVATED'

**KUWAIT:** Investigations with a man who ran over a police officer during national celebrations last Thursday revealed that the suspect's actions were driven by 'terrorist motives,' a security source said. The suspect possesses the same ideology as a terrorist organization which calls for overturning the ruling system in the country, said the source who claims to have knowledge with the ongoing investigations with the suspect. He added that the man had planned to carry out a criminal act for a while before finally going ahead with his plans during the celebrations. The source also said that the suspect 'spoke normally' during investigations, which suggest that he might not be mentally unstable as initially believed.

Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Interior Sheikh Mohammad Al-Khaled Al-Sabah stated meanwhile that Kuwait was proud of sacrifices offered by mar-

tyr Turki Mohammad Al-Enezi, a policeman, who was run over by a motorist on Thursday, and described his killing as an 'act of terrorism.'

The minister made the statement during Enezi's funeral on Friday. The country's soil embraces today a martyr who sacrificed his soul for its sake, the ministry's public relations and media security department quoted Sheikh Mohammad as saying. The minister prayed to Allah Almighty to bless the martyr's soul with mercy in paradise and to bring solace to his family, wishing those injured speedy recovery, the statement said. Sheikh Mohammad and some senior officials at the ministry took part in the funeral. The ministry announced on Thursday that Enezi was run over by a motorist and several other policemen were injured in the incident when they were on duty at Dasman roundabout in Kuwait City. —Al-Qabas

KD 1.1 BILLION PROJECTS TO END THIS YEAR

**KUWAIT:** The total cost of ten strategic projects which are expected to finish this year reaches KD 1.1 billion, a Ministry of Public Works (MPW) official announced. These projects are highlighted by the Jaber Hospital, Jahra Road, Ministry of Education's building, the Misseelah project and the Central Prison, said Abdulmohsen Al-Enezi, Undersecretary Assistant for Planning and Development.

The KD 264 million Jahra Road project is expected to end next

October, he said, adding that the KD 76 Ministry of Education project is set to end by May while the KD 304 million project is set to finish by June. Meanwhile, Enezi said that the ministry plans to conclude the remaining projects included in the development plan by the beginning of 2018. These projects include the Jaber Al-Ahmad Bridge, the First Ring Road and the Nuwaiseeb Road, he said, adding that construction in each project is going on according to schedule. —Al-Anbaa

CANDY IN LOCAL MARKETS SAFE

**KUWAIT:** Kuwait Municipality Director Ahmed Al-Manfouhi hailed the cooperation shown by chocolate manufacturer Mars on examining and preventing an inedible shipment comprising of 2,700 cartons from entering the local market. Manfouhi said that a GCC-wide warning was made concerning a plastic substance in Mars and Snickers brands and that on examining samples from local markets, they were found safe as the company had already prevented the tainted shipment from reaching outlets. —Al-Qabas

**JOIN US!**

**KUWAIT AIRWAYS is currently looking for Female Flight Attendants (All Nationalities)**

**Candidates should meet the following requirements:**

1. Minimum Education: Completion of secondary education (12 years).
2. Priority will be given to candidates with a higher education level.
3. Age : between (20-32) years.
4. Fluent English (spoken & written ).
5. Minimum Height : ( 160 ) cm & Weight proportionate to the height.
6. Well groomed & physically fit to work as a Flight Attendant.

**Documents to be submitted:**

- Copy of civil I.D & passport
- Copy of nationality certificate (Kuwaitis only)
- Copy of high school certificate & Higher Certificate (if appropriate)
- Four passport sized photographs (colored)
- Copy of previous experience certificate (if appropriate)
- Transferable residence.

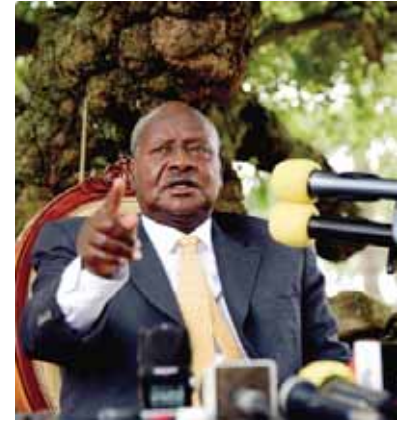
**Hiring Process:**

\* Interested qualified candidates should submit the above documents and copies of relevant qualifications to :The Coordination & Training Follow Up Section at: [crew-recruit@kuwaitairways.com](mailto:crew-recruit@kuwaitairways.com)

**Note:**

-All candidates will undergo written and oral English Tests followed by the interview. Priority will be given to qualified "Kuwaiti applicants"





**Uganda's 'dictator in a suit' holds power, but at what cost?**

**MUGABE'S LAVISH 92ND BIRTHDAY PARTY ANGERS CRITICS**



**CHARLESTON, South Carolina: Democratic presidential candidate former Secretary of State Hillary Clinton visits Hannibal's Kitchen, a 3rd generation family owned restaurant serving southern food, on Friday. — AFP**

**CLINTON EYEING DECISIVE WIN**

**SOUTH CAROLINA VOTES IN PRIMARY ELECTIONS**

**COLUMBIA:** Hillary Clinton is eyeing a decisive win in South Carolina's Democratic presidential nomination race, hoping to gain momentum against Bernie Sanders before the high-stakes "Super Tuesday" contest. One week after Donald Trump barreled to victory in the state's Republican vote, yesterday Democrats took center stage in South Carolina, where 55 percent of voters in the 2008 party primary were black.

Clinton is expected to win the southern state, and leads in the national delegate count at this early stage, having won two of the first three nomination contests - in Iowa, narrowly, and Nevada. Polling stations opened their doors at 7:00 am (1200 GMT) and were to close 12 hours later, at which point a winner could be announced if one candidate has a clear lead. "It would be a super send-off to do well here," Clinton told several hundred mostly African American voters, who gathered Friday for an oyster roast and fish fry at the county fairgrounds in Orangeburg.

By contrast, Sanders received a cool welcome

from the same crowd when he arrived unexpectedly at the event on the heels of the former secretary of state. "In 1963, I was there with Doctor (Martin Luther) King for the March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom," he said, earning some applause. Later in Columbia, Sanders delivered his final speech to an oversized, half-empty auditorium - while in Iowa, he had easily filled an arena with 5,000 supporters.

While Sanders has the support of some high-profile African Americans such as film director Spike Lee and the rapper Killer Mike, Clinton is backed by many local elected officials and black community figures. The 68-year-old also has the support of many of the same voters who supported her husband, Bill, whose popularity as a presidential candidate rivaled even that of Barack Obama.

Both presidents are men whom Clinton knows well, and she frequently jokes about being a part of their political lineage. "I'm not running to do either one of their third terms, but I do think they really did a good job for America, and it would be foolish not

to learn from them," Clinton said. In South Carolina, Clinton's campaign has worked hard to hammer home the message that she is the only candidate who can break down barriers still preventing minorities from getting ahead.

**'Super Tuesday'**

Some Clinton supporters say Senator Sanders, a transplanted New Yorker and self-declared democratic socialist who now represents Vermont, is little known in the south. Although Sanders, 74, was in South Carolina Friday, his prospects in the state are poor and he has invested few resources here. Instead, he is focusing on states like Ohio and Minnesota that vote in March, when a whopping 45 percent of the delegates who will attend the nominating convention are up for grabs.

He is to spend Saturday in Texas and Minnesota, while Clinton will be back in Columbia by night. Only three percent of delegates for July's nominating convention in Philadelphia will be awarded by the end of the day. But the 11 states that hold

Democratic nominating contests just days later on Super Tuesday will send a whopping 18 percent of the delegates to Philadelphia. Clinton is ahead in most of the 11 states, but Sanders has the edge in Massachusetts and his adopted home state of Vermont. Since he entered the campaign last year, Sanders has made up some lost ground with minorities in terms of face and name recognition.

**Clinton's Ups and Downs**

But Clinton's supporters, minority or otherwise, invariably say she is "qualified" and "experienced". Jay Smith, a retired African American, came to the polls in Columbia yesterday with her son Roy and young grandson. Both voted for Clinton. "She's the strongest of the candidates. She's been in it her whole life," Smith said. Bernie? "No, he's too old." Retired African American teacher Elvira Kennedy, 70, also voted for Clinton. "She's the best candidate," she said. "We never had a woman president, it's about time we give a woman a chance to mess everything. Men have been doing it for 300 years."

Tessa Blackwell, 29, a white restaurant manager, said she voted for Sanders. "I really love that he's doing such a grassroots campaign, and that he's not bought by any corporation," she said. "He's more for the people by the people." A win yesterday would mark Clinton's third since Feb 1, and could silence critics who say she has led a sluggish campaign. Since entering the race last April, Clinton's campaign has had its ups and downs. One of its lowest points was the FBI investigation into Clinton's use of a private email server during her tenure as secretary of state. The issue made headlines again on Friday, when the State Department released 1,500 pages of her emails to meet a deadline to disclose all releasable portions of her electronic correspondence in its possession by Monday night. But the candidate said she was not worried. "I am, you know, personally not concerned about it, I think that there will be a resolution on the security inquiry," she told MSNBC. Polls carried out last week gave Clinton a clear advantage in South Carolina: About 56 percent compared to 28 percent for Bernie Sanders. — AFP

**PALESTINIAN WANTED BY ISRAEL DIES IN BULGARIA**

**SOFIA:** A Palestinian who escaped from Israeli custody after being convicted of a 1986 murder has died at the Palestinian embassy in Sofia, Bulgarian prosecutors said yesterday. Police sealed off the mission building in the capital as an investigation began into the death of Omar Al-Nayef, who was jailed along with two other men for killing Jewish ultra-orthodox seminary student, Eliahu Amedi, in Jerusalem.

Prosecutors said in an initial statement they had been alerted by a representative of the Palestinian mission in Bulgaria "about a man who died as a result of violence" but a spokeswoman for the prosecutors later said no signs of violence were found on his body. She said Nayef was found in the mission's back yard and prosecutors were investigating whether he was pushed or fell from a high floor, as well all other possible causes. The mission, which is not guarded by Bulgarian security forces or its own guards and does not have camera surveillance, confirmed he was Omar Al-Nayef.

"Omar (Al-Nayef) Zayed is a martyr," the Palestinian ambassador to Bulgaria, Ahmed Al-Mathbouh, told



**SOFIA: In this frame made from AP video, police cars are parked outside the Palestinian Authority's embassy on Friday. — AP**

reporters. "We believe that those who persecuted him could have carried out something against him." Palestinian sources said he had been shot and a Palestinian prisoners' association and the militant Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine blamed Israel for his death, while President Mahmoud Abbas condemned what he called a "crime". The head of the Islamist Palestinian movement Hamas in the Gaza Strip, Ismail Haniya, also

denounced what he described as "a new Zionist crime". An Israeli Foreign Ministry spokesman said it had learned of his death in the media and was studying the information. Amedi's sister, Yaffa Pinhasi, told Israel's Channel 1 television that she believed Israeli agents were behind the killing. "Whoever did this deserves praise," she said. Nayef was sentenced to life in prison for the murder but escaped in 1990 while being moved

to hospital after he began a hunger strike. He first went to the Palestinian Territories before fleeing to an Arab country and then to Bulgaria, where he had lived since 1994.

Bulgarian authorities had sought to detain him following an extradition request by Israel in late December, prompting him to seek refuge at the Palestinian mission and leading to a country-wide search after Nayef could not be found at his Sofia address. Official Palestinian news agency Wafa said Abbas had ordered an investigation into the circumstances of Nayef's death. "The president has condemned the crime in the strongest terms possible and has ordered the members of the (investigation) committee to travel immediately to Bulgaria to discover what happened," Wafa said.

Abbas' spokesman Nabil Abu Rdainah said the presidency would pursue the issue with Bulgarian authorities. Bulgarian chief prosecutor Sotir Tsatsarov told reporters there was evidence Nayef had been living at the embassy. He also said Nayef had been alive when medics arrived at the embassy early on Friday but died shortly after. — Reuters

**IS ATTACKS KURDISH-HELD TOWN ON TURKISH BORDER**

**BEIRUT/DIYARBAKIR:** Islamic State militants launched an assault on a Kurdish-controlled town on Syria's border with Turkey yesterday, prompting air strikes by the US-led coalition to try to drive them back. The hardline fighters attacked Tel Abyad, which is controlled by the Syrian Kurdish YPG militia, and the nearby town of Suluk in the early hours of yesterday, YPG spokesman Redur Xelil and Turkish security sources told Reuters.

Coalition war planes carried out 10 air strikes to try to repel the assault, the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights reported. It said at least 45 Islamic State militants and 20 Kurdish militia fighters had been killed. The attack was launched hours after a "cessation of hostilities" came into effect under a US-Russian plan, although the temporary truce does not apply to Islamic State and Al-Qaeda affiliate the Nusra Front, meaning the Syrian government, Moscow and the coalition reserve the right to strike them. The truce appeared largely to be holding across much of Syria.

Xelil said the YPG and Syrian Kurdish internal security forces were able to "crush this attack and encircle the attackers", although he gave no casualty toll. The YPG captured Tel Abyad from Islamic State last year in an

offensive backed by US-led air strikes. The town lies north of Raqqa and had been a key supply line for the jihadi capital. The Turkish security sources said the attack was launched on two fronts and that the sound of gunfire and explosions, audible from the town of Akcakale on the Turkish side, had continued for several hours. Intermittent gunfire could still be heard. The security sources and a witness in Akcakale said war planes thought to be from the U.S.-led coalition against Islamic State struck the jihadist positions and that the Turkish army had increased patrols on its side of the border. While not directly addressing the Tel Abyad attack, 14 Turkish F-16s patrolled the Turkish-Syrian border on Friday, Turkish military said.

Xelil said some of the attackers infiltrated from the Turkish border to the north, reiterating accusations that Turkey was supporting the group. Turkey has consistently denied those accusations and the security sources said recent measures to stop illegal crossings meant it was impossible that the attackers had entered from Turkey. Other attackers infiltrated from the south, Xelil said. He said dozens of Islamic State fighters had been killed. — Reuters



## VISITING FRENCH CHEFS SCRAMBLE PALESTINIAN CUISINE

**RAMALLAH:** At a time of simmering Mideast tensions and rising malaise, a group of French chefs recently visited the West Bank to bring a little joie de vivre to Palestinian kitchens. The eight chefs visited restaurants in Ramallah, Hebron, Nablus and east Jerusalem in a weeklong event earlier this month sponsored by the French government, which prides itself on culinary diplomacy and has held similar events in Japan, Brazil, India, Morocco and elsewhere.

A parallel festival began four years ago and ran concurrently in Israel. Many Israeli chefs train in Europe, and in the last 20 years, a cosmopolitan Israeli cuisine has emerged, incorporating techniques and flavors from across the Jewish diaspora - everything from Moroccan couscous and Libyan fish stew to German potato pancakes and Austrian-inspired chicken schnitzel.

By contrast, Palestinian cooking has remained steeped in local and Middle Eastern recipes, thanks to a strong agrarian tradition and a shortage of clientele with disposable income. Dishes lean on chickpeas, lentils and rice, often spiced with cumin, drizzled in olive oil and accompanied by sides like hummus, tabbouleh and yogurt. Palestinian food also draws on Levantine flavors like zaatar - a thyme-like herb - as well as sumac and pomegranate molasses.

Ramallah, seat of the Palestinian Authority, has seen dozens of new restaurants and cafes open in recent years, serving Palestinian, Lebanese, Mexican, Japanese and Italian fare. But most cooks learn on the job. "Someone wanted to work for us after he came from a construction site. Another one dropped out of high school," said Jamal Nimer, owner of the Caesar Hotel in Ramallah, which opened five years ago. "You have to teach the people how to work."

### Lessons

That's where the French come in. One of the chefs gave lessons in baking bread, cakes and macaron cookies to the 32 students at the Caesar Hospitality College in Ramallah, which Nimer opened earlier this year to train staff. At the Orjuwan restaurant nearby, co-owner Saleem Sakakini said visiting chef Alex Dreyer helped his staff master basic techniques as they prepared a special menu featuring salmon in hollandaise sauce, a lamb rack served over herb-infused mashed potatoes and an apple tarte tatin.

"I liked the Palestinian food, because I think it's a very specific flavor that anyone can enjoy," said Dreyer, who works as a chef in Paris. "The flavor is so bold and beautiful." Sakakini said he was grateful

his dozen kitchen staff could get a master class in using the "sous vide" appliance, which cooks meat or vegetables uniformly via a hot water bath. He also relished the small touches Dreyer introduced. "He poached sliced garlic in milk for two hours, then dried it and then deep fried it," Sakakini said. "And then used it as a garnish. They looked phenomenal. I never tried this before."

In the southern West Bank town of Hebron, Mahmoud Halaika worked with Vincent Lucas - who cooks in a Michelin-starred restaurant in southwestern France. The two prepared steak in a creamy mushroom sauce alongside lamb neck stuffed with aromatic rice and served with yogurt - a Palestinian specialty.

Halaika said he loved preparing food as a child and spent six years cooking in an Israeli restaurant outside Tel Aviv, where he earned a good salary but feared that authorities would discover he was sleeping in Israel illegally during the week. He eventually moved back to Hebron and took a job cooking for half the pay at the Pasha Palace restaurant, where a local clientele enjoys Palestinian fare in a leafy courtyard.

### Techniques

Hebron, which has long been a flashpoint for Israeli-Palestinian violence, sees



**RAMALLAH:** In this photo taken on Feb 20, 2016, Palestinian chef Jihad Al-Maharmeh prepares a mixed Palestinian French dish, Freekeh lamb rack, at Orjuwan restaurant in this West Bank city. — AP

few tourists, making the chef's visit all the more special. "We learned their techniques. Their slow cooking," Halaika said. Back in Ramallah, Sakakini said the festival was a bright spot in a challenging time, when business has fallen by 30 percent due to renewed Israeli-Palestinian violence.

The last five months have seen nearly daily Palestinian attacks, mainly stabbings in the West Bank and east Jerusalem, which have killed 28 Israelis. Israelis have killed more than 160

Palestinians in the same period, most of whom Israel identified as assailants. Israel has blamed the violence on Palestinian incitement, while the Palestinians say it is rooted in frustration at decades of occupation and dwindling hopes for independence. "The political situation in the Middle East is very dull and depressing," Sakakini said. "There's an intifada, we have checkpoints ... To work with people who are otherwise unattainable gives us the chance to believe in what we are doing." — AP

## IN JUNGLE CAMPS, COLOMBIA REBELS TAKE PEACE LESSONS

**MAGDALENA MEDIO VALLEY, Colombia:** In their secret jungle camps, Colombia's Marxist rebels used to learn how to fight. Now their leaders are trying to teach them how not to. They still carry the rifles and machetes they have used for half a century in their war against the Colombian government. But now troops of the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC) are sitting down for classes on how life will be once they lay down their weapons. Thousands of miles away at talks hosted by Cuba, their commanders are negotiating a peace accord they hope to sign with Bogota in March.

Meanwhile, here in the jungle, FARC soldier Tomas, 37, is acting as an instructor, explaining to his fellow recruits what is at stake. AFP was granted exceptional access by FARC commanders to this mountain camp in northwestern Colombia. After his 14 years spent marching and fighting in this jungle, Tomas must now convince his comrades to work to achieve the FARC's aims by political means. "Some of them are looking forward to it. They are pleased about it, optimistic," he said. "But others are keeping quiet about it. They are a bit reserved. 'How do we sever ourselves from the weapon we have carried for so many years?'"

### Makeshift Classrooms

Classes like these are going on in various camps around the country that are home to the FARC's 7,000 members. At this camp in the Magdalena Medio region, a mustachioed commander in a green beret orders ranks of troops to sit down side by side. They have built the makeshift class-

room themselves, cutting down trees to make tables. Among the fighters are young women and boys scarcely out of puberty, with rifles by their sides and pistols on their hips.

With the sun beating down on him, Tomas sits by his laptop computer and explains the issues covered by the peace talks. "The problem, companions, is about the land. Access to the land must be democratized," he said. Some of the young recruits yawn and shake their heads as they struggle to follow the presentation. Older troops listen more closely and take notes, occasionally raising their voices to say "excuse me, comrade" and ask a question.

Among the elder members is Cornelio, who has spent 33 of his 55 years fighting in the FARC. He fears anarchy could break in the regions it controls, if its fighters disarm. "They talk to us about laying down our weapons. They talk to us about turning into a political party," he said after the class. "So the question we ask ourselves is: what will happen when we put the weapons away and delinquency breaks out?"

### No More Killing

The FARC started in the mid-1960s as a peasant uprising against perceived state oppression and took over areas where state control was absent. They are classed as a terrorist organization by powers including the United States and the European Union. The conflict has ground on for decades as a territorial dispute between various armed groups. Now, as negotiators close in on a March 23 deadline to sign an accord, Latin America's last armed conflict could soon be over. — AFP



**LA MACARENA, Colombia:** Forensic workers unearth unidentified bodies at the cemetery in this town on Feb 24, 2016. — AP

## COLOMBIA DIGS UP PAST IN FORMER REBEL STRONGHOLD

### LA MACARENA CEMETERY A SYMBOL FOR LEFTIST CRITICS

**LA MACARENA, Colombia:** The stench of death envelops the makeshift morgue as Diego Casallas uses a box cutter to slash open a mud-caked body bag. The unidentified remains are all but decomposed after more than a decade in the ground, but there are valuable clues: A pair of brown work boots and a camouflaged backpack. "These are objects that can lead to an eventual identification," says Casallas, a forensic anthropologist, as he calmly inspects a femur bone with the cold detachment required of his profession.

As a deal to end Colombia's half-century conflict nears, this lonely cemetery in a former rebel stronghold has become a hive of activity. The past two weeks, criminal investigators have been digging up the dead in hopes of identifying 464 people buried in unmarked paupers' graves. So far, they've disinterred 66. It's slow work. Every exhumation is documented by forensic anthropologists, topographers and crime scene photographers under the supervision of a prosecutor before samples can be sent to Bogota for DNA analysis, and hopefully, a match with an expanding genetic database of thousands of Colombians whose loved ones disappeared during decades of fighting.

If the detective work succeeds on a large enough scale, it could go a long way in helping Colombians heal from the bloodshed and regain confidence in the rule of law. In October, as part of a breakthrough in three-year-old peace talks, government negotiators and the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia agreed to establish a high-level agency to search for the bodies of the estimated 45,000 people who were believed to have been slain by one side or the other and whose bodies were discarded without record during the conflict. An additional 220,000 people are confirmed to have been killed.

Authorities for now are concentrating the search in the Sierra de la Macarena, a wild, Taiwan-sized region long disputed by government troops and the FARC. Human rights groups applaud the effort but say the scope of Colombia's bloodletting requires more resources. Casallas is one of just two dozen forensic anthropologists employed by the chief prosecutor's office, whose job it is to sift through more than 21,000 unmarked tombs and graves nationwide containing so-called NNS, or no names, the term used to describe the anonymous dead.

### Symbol

"If we keep going at the current pace, Colombia is going to be looking for our disappeared for at least the next three generations," said Pablo Cala, an activist who has helped authorities hand over to their families the remains of 108 victims of the 2,292 people buried anonymously in the Macarena

region. The cemetery in La Macarena has long been a symbol for leftist critics of the government. Its location, a few feet downslope from a military base belonging to the elite Omega Task Force, one of the largest recipients of US counterinsurgency aid, fueled tales that it held untold numbers of civilians killed by the military and dressed up as guerrillas to hide human rights abuses. Colombian media took to calling it the world's largest mass grave.

It is unknown how many of the dead were civilians. In a fatal omission that speaks to longstand-

ing institutionalized neglect and corruption in Colombia, authorities at the time made almost no effort to identify the dead or investigate how they were killed. Such distinctions matter little to Jesus Antonio Hernandez, who for three decades was the village's gravedigger. During the worst of the bloodbath starting in 2002, after earlier peace efforts broke down and the government launched a major offensive, helicopters would unload as many as 10 corpses a day on the base's airstrip, which is the dusty jungle crossroads' only paved surface. — AP



**Cornelio (right), a member of the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC), takes notes during a "class" on the peace process between the Colombian government and their force, at a camp in the Colombian mountains on Feb 18, 2016. — AFP**

## 'I'M GOING TO DIE': SWEDISH GIRL TELLS OF LIFE UNDER IS

**STOCKHOLM:** Marilyn Nevalainen was just 15 years old, and pregnant, when she left Sweden to be a jihadist recruit, though she did not realize what a mistake she had made until she was in Iraq. Desperate, she called home from the Islamic State stronghold of Mosul in northern Iraq begging for help, and was ultimately rescued by Kurdish forces. On Friday, foreign ministry spokeswoman Veronica Nordlund told AFP that Nevalainen, who is originally from the southwestern Swedish town of Boras, has "returned to Sweden with her family."

She landed Thursday in Stockholm with her parents, who had travelled to Iraq several times over the past eight months to try to bring her home, according to regional newspaper Boras Tidning. Police said her boyfriend, a Moroccan who reached Sweden as an unaccompanied minor three years ago, was dead. Kurdish forces rescued the girl near Mosul on Feb 17, according to a statement from the Kurdistan Regional Security Council.

Nordlund would not reveal many details of the rescue, though she confirmed it was the result of "collaboration between the Swedish authorities and foreign governments". In an interview broad-

cast this week by TV channel Kurdistan 24, the Swede said in broken English that she met her boyfriend in 2014 and that he became radicalised after watching IS videos. "Then he said he wanted to go to ISIS (another acronym for IS) and I said, 'Okay, no problem,' because I did not know what ISIS meant or what Islam was," she said. She was pregnant when they left Sweden in May 2015, taking trains and buses across Europe until they finally crossed the border from Turkey to Syria. They were then driven by IS jihadists to Mosul.

### 'Very Hard Life'

"In my house we had nothing, no electricity, no water, nothing. It was totally different from how I lived in Sweden, because in Sweden we have everything, and when I was there I did not have anything, did not have any money either. It was a very hard life," she said. "When I got a phone, I started to contact my mum and I said I wanted to go home. She contacted the Swedish authorities," she told Kurdistan 24. Swedish media has published desperate text messages she sent her mother while she was stuck in Iraq. — AFP

## STRIKE ON YEMEN MARKET KILLS 30

**SANAA:** A Saudi-led air coalition air strike on a market northeast of the rebel-held Yemeni capital Sanaa killed at least 30 rebels and civilians, witnesses said. The air strike targeted three rebel vehicles as they entered a market in the town of Naqil bin Ghaylan, killing at least 30 Houthi insurgents and civilians, one tribal source in the area said. The rebel-controlled Saba news agency gave a higher death toll, saying that 60 civilians were killed and wounded in the attack but it did not mention any casualties among fighters.

The attack hit Khulaqa market, which is known for selling qat, a mild narcotic that is chewed throughout Yemen, witnesses said. The area is part of the Nehm region, where coalition-backed loyalists have been advancing against the rebels as they try to close in on Sanaa. Rights groups have repeatedly urged the coalition to avoid causing civilian casualties. Earlier this month, Human Rights Watch accused the coalition of using US-supplied cluster bombs. The coalition last month announced that an independent inquiry would examine charges of possible abuses against civilians in the conflict.

A panel of UN experts says the coalition has carried out 119 sorties that violated humanitarian law, and called for an international probe. The coalition launched late March 2015 an air campaign against Iran-backed rebels in support of the UN-recognized President Abedrabbo Mansour Hadi. The Iran-backed Shiite rebels have controlled Sanaa since September 2014 and had placed Hadi under house arrest.

But he escaped, initially seeking refuge in second city Aden last year before fleeing to the Saudi capital, Riyadh, as the rebels advanced on the southern port. Hadi returned to Aden after loyalists backed by the coalition drove the rebels out of there and four other southern provinces in the summer. But Hadi

and senior officials continue to spend most of their time in Riyadh against a backdrop of worsening security in Aden, the temporary base of the government.

The United Nations warned this month of a "human catastrophe unfolding in Yemen", where it says more than 6,100 people had been killed in the fighting since last March. The UN said another 3,000 people had been wounded and 2.5 million people forced to flee their homes. Donors at a conference in Qatar pledged Wednesday \$220 million of aid to Yemen. Hadi's government accused this week Lebanon's Hezbollah of sending fighters to support the Houthis, saying it had evidence of the Shiite militia's involvement. Also yesterday, the United Arab Emirates, a key member of the Saudi-led coalition, said that one of its soldiers has died in Yemen when his military vehicle overturned. The UAE has lost more than 70 soldiers in Yemen since the launch of the campaign. — AFP



**SANAA:** A Yemeni man inspects a damaged vehicle after an airstrike by Saudi-led coalition yesterday. — AP



## RUBIO FINALLY MAKES MOVE ON TRUMP - BUT TOO LATE

**HOUSTON:** Marco Rubio unleashed a campaign's worth of harsh criticism on Donald Trump in the final Republican debate before Tuesday's crucial primaries. The problem may be that it took 10 debates and three Trump victories to get Rubio fired up. Rubio, along with most of the other Republican presidential candidates, has treated Trump with kid gloves for months, tiptoeing around glaring questions about the real estate mogul's business record, political ideology, brash temperament and ambiguous policy proposals.

Only now, with Trump threatening to pull away from the field, did Rubio aggressively try to dismantle the billionaire businessman's grip on the Republican race, with occasional help from Ted Cruz, the conservative Texas senator. Rubio accused Trump of shifting his position on deportation and staffing his hotels and other businesses with foreign workers instead of Americans. He also punched holes in the real estate mogul's vague proposal for replacing President Barack Obama's healthcare law.

"What is your plan, Mr Trump? What is your plan on healthcare?" Rubio pressed. The

senator also gleefully pointed out Trump's propensity for repeating talking points over and over again, the same criticism that tripped up Rubio in a debate earlier this month. "Now he's repeating himself!" Rubio exclaimed. Rubio's assertive posture was sure to be cheered by the crush of Republican officials who have rallied around his campaign in recent days, desperate for the senator to become a viable alternative to Trump. But privately, many were likely wondering why it took so long for Rubio to make his move - and whether his strong showing came too late.

Next week's Super Tuesday contests mark the biggest single-day delegate haul of the nomination contests. A strong showing by Trump could put the nomination within his grasp, raising the stakes for his rivals to stop him. Rubio was sometimes joined by Cruz in tag-team attacks on Trump. It was a tactical shift for two senators who had trained their fire on each other in recent weeks, both betting that the best strategy was to clear the field of other rivals before moving on to Trump. But Tuesday's Nevada caucuses clearly changed their calculus. Trump dominated

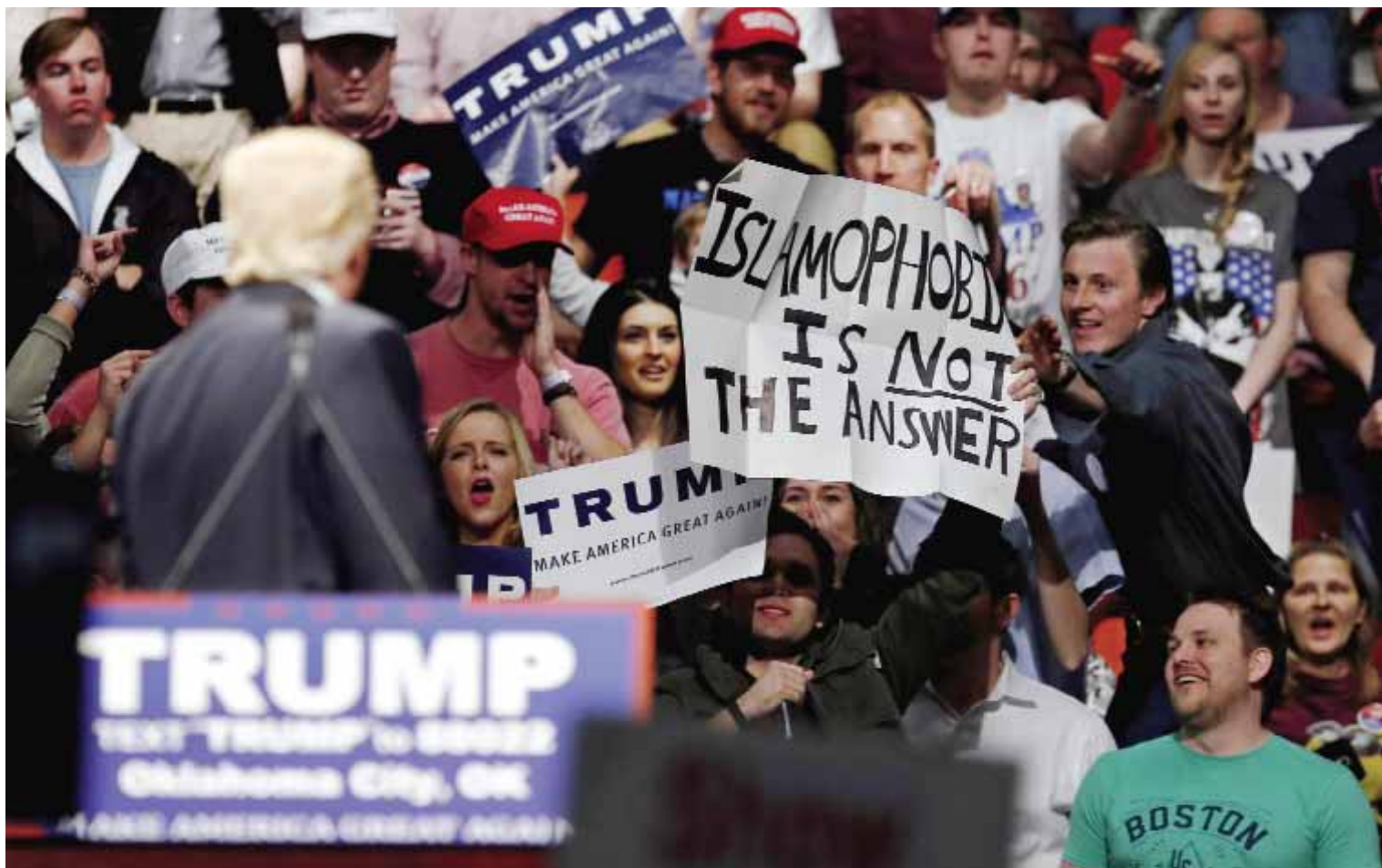
that contest, beating second-place Rubio by more than 20 points, and pulling ahead significantly in the early delegate count after victories in South Carolina and New Hampshire as well. Trump appeared rattled at times as he faced the most sustained, face-to-face attacks of the campaign. Before Thursday, only Jeb Bush had made a real effort to tangle with Trump on the debate stage, though it did little to help the former Florida governor. Bush ended his campaign last week after disappointing showings in early primaries and a fundraising drought.

### Lessons

Rubio appeared to have taken lessons from Bush's exchanges with Trump. The senator was prepared for Trump's frequent habit of interrupting and almost willfully refused to back down when the businessman tried to talk over him. He also took a page out of Trump's own playbook, lacing his more substantive critiques with some sharply personal attacks. During a particularly biting exchange, Rubio said that if Trump hadn't inherited family money, he would be "selling watches in Manhattan." — AP



**HOUSTON:** Republican presidential candidate businessman Donald Trump (left) and Republican presidential candidate Sen Marco Rubio (center) and Republican presidential candidate Sen Ted Cruz (right) at a break during a Republican presidential primary debate at The University of Houston on Thursday. — AP



**OKLAHOMA CITY:** Republican presidential candidate Donald Trump looks on as a Trump supporter reaches for a sign that reads "Islamophobia is not the answer" at a rally on Friday. — AP

## TRUMP'S MARCH STIRS GROWING SENSE OF DREAD AMONG REPS

**WASHINGTON:** US Republicans in Washington are coming to grips with what many of them not long ago considered an unimaginable reality: Donald Trump is likely to be their presidential nominee and standard-bearer. The prospect of Trump winning the Republican primary had been the stuff of Washington jokes, whispered hallway conversations and eye-rolls, even as he led in public opinion polls for months and dominated debate after debate.

But with the brash billionaire now winning three straight contests in New Hampshire, South Carolina, and Nevada, denial is giving way to a mostly gloomy acceptance that he may have too much momentum to be stopped, especially if wins big in key Southern primaries next week that look favorable to him. "It fills all of us with concern and dread," said Senator Jeff Flake of Arizona, who has endorsed fellow Senator Marco Rubio of Florida, considered the main hope of the Republican establishment to derail Trump's march to the nomination.

That march was given a boost on Friday when New Jersey Governor Chris Christie, a Republican presidential candidate who dropped out of the race after a dismal finish in New Hampshire, became the first major establishment Republican to endorse Trump. "There is no better fighter than Donald Trump," Christie said at a news conference with Trump in Texas.

Trump has vowed to scrap US trade deals, slap a tariff on imported goods and raise taxes on hedge-fund managers, as well as retain some sort of mandate to purchase health insurance - clashing with the free-market principles that have long underpinned Republican economic policy. Some Republicans in Congress, such as Flake and Senator Lindsey Graham of South Carolina, said a Trump nomination would do

enormous damage to the party and predicted a heavy election defeat in November to the eventual Democratic nominee. "I am like on the team that bought a ticket on the Titanic after we saw the movie," said Graham, contending that Trump would be "slaughtered" in the general election.

In a Republican presidential debate in Houston on Thursday night, another Trump rival, Senator Ted Cruz of Texas, challenged him on his electability, citing ties to Democratic frontrunner Hillary Clinton such as a donation to the Clinton Foundation. Trump responded by ridiculing Cruz for his inability to win more than the early voting state of Iowa and taunted him for being behind the billionaire in opinion polls in Cruz's home state of Texas. Said Trump, "If I can't beat her, you're really gonna get killed, aren't you?"

Another Rubio supporter, Representative Carlos Curbelo of Florida, told Reuters he would not back Trump if he were the nominee. "If the nominee is a fraud, and someone who's offensive, and incapable of being an effective president like Donald Trump, I won't support him," Curbelo said. Other Republicans tried to be more optimistic. "I don't think his nomination would be catastrophic," said Senator Susan Collins of Maine. She said she did not believe, as some strategists fear, that having Trump on the ballot in November would hurt Republican chances for holding onto control of the Senate, where the party currently has a 54-46 edge.

Conservative economist Arthur Laffer, an adviser to former President Ronald Reagan who has been counseling Trump on tax policy, said he was convinced the real estate mogul was open to sound advice. Laffer recalled Trump telling him: "Look, if you've got a better idea than I've got, tell me, and I'll

change." Senator John Thune of South Dakota suggested Trump's presence could help by bringing more voters to the polls. "There's a lot of energy, a lot of intensity on our side," Thune said.

### 'Really Freaked Out'

Privately, lobbyists, economists, and analysts expressed deep concern about having Trump, who has proposed building a wall along the southern US border and imposing a temporary ban on Muslims entering the country, as the face of the party. "There are a lot of people who are really freaked out," said Douglas Holtz-Eakin, who was the chief economic policy advisor to 2008 Republican presidential candidate John McCain. "He seems to be winging it."

Conservative policy-makers worry that Trump's pitch to voters is based on his management skills rather than conservative principles. Juleanna Glover, a prominent Republican communications consultant, told Reuters that Trump's ascent "spells the death of the party's sentient and cohesive governing framework." Two Republican business lobbyists, who also asked to remain unidentified, told Reuters that they are very concerned about Trump, chiefly because they do not know what he stands for.

They said they have no sense of certainty because Trump's positions on issues such as tax, trade, and regulation range from being only vaguely understood to completely unknown. By vowing to make America "win" again abroad while going into little detail on his foreign policy plans, Trump is also stirring concern in Washington national security circles. A high-ranking official at a conservative think-tank, who spoke on condition of anonymity because his job requires him to steer clear of partisan politics, said: — Reuters

## ABORTION RETURNS TO SUPREME COURT ALTERED BY SCALIA DEATH

**WASHINGTON:** The Supreme Court challenge to a Texas law that has dramatically reduced the number of abortion clinics in the state is the justices' most significant case on the hot-button issue in nearly a quarter-century. One of this election-year term's biggest cases is being argued Wednesday before a court altered by the death of Justice Antonin Scalia. He was perhaps the most vociferous abortion opponent among the nine justices. The Texas law has been replicated across the South and elsewhere, part of a wave of state abortion restrictions in the past five years.

States mainly led by Republicans have tried to limit when in a pregnancy abortions may be performed, restricted abortion-inducing drugs that take the place of surgery and increased standards for clinics and the doctors who work in them. The Supreme Court case involves that last category. A Texas law enacted in 2013 requires doctors who perform abortions to have admitting privileges at nearby hospitals. It also prohibits clinics from providing abortions unless they meet the standards of outpatient or ambulatory surgical centers. The high court has partially blocked those measures. If allowed to take full effect, all but 10 clinics in Texas would have to close. There would be no abortion providers in the state's rural areas or west of San Antonio. The only clinic in the Rio Grande Valley would be allowed to remain open on a limited basis. Before the law was passed, there were roughly 40 clinics in the state. About half have closed.

The case offers competing views of how to protect women's health. The clinics contend abortions are safer than many other medical procedures that are less stringently regulated and that the clinic regulations have only one purpose: to reduce the availability of abortions. "These laws are tantamount to an outright ban for too many," said Amy Hagstrom Miller, chief executive of Whole Woman's Health, which operates clinics in Texas and other states.

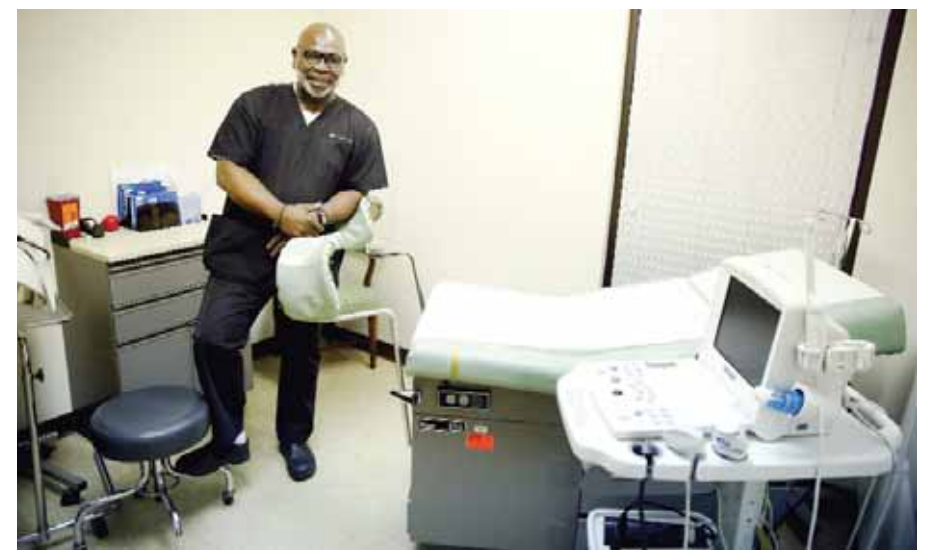
Defenders of the laws in Texas and elsewhere argue that states have discretion to take steps to make abortions safer. Alabama and other states backing Texas told the Supreme Court that states were within their rights to apply health regulations to clinics for the sake of patients. "Obviously I'm pro-life and I would like to limit the number of abortions, but here we were looking at women's health and safety," said Republican Gov. Robert Bentley of Alabama, a

doctor who signed his state's admitting privileges law. Texas Solicitor General Scott Keller, who will defend the law at the Supreme Court, said Texas acted in response to the high-profile case of Philadelphia abortion doctor Kermit Gosnell. He is serving a life sentence after his conviction for killing three babies born alive and for the overdose death of a woman who was a clinic patient. A federal judge in Texas struck down parts of the law as not intended to promote women's health and clearly aimed at reducing access to abortion. But the 5th US Circuit Court of Appeals in New Orleans largely accepted the state's argument.

The justices' June 2015 order putting the appellate ruling on hold at least suggests that there is a majority to cut back on the regulations. The clinics and abortion-rights groups are hoping for a ruling that might bolster challenges to other restrictions on abortion. To prevail, they still need Justice Anthony Kennedy's vote, along with the reasonably certain votes of four more liberal justices, just as they did before Scalia's death. Kennedy was part of the 5-4 majority to reaffirm abortion rights in 1992, then wrote the court's decision in 2007 that upheld a federal law banning a certain procedure that opponents call partial-birth abortion. That was also a 5-4 split.

### Teeth

A broad high court ruling striking down the Texas provisions would show that the court's 1992 decision still "has some teeth in it," said Stephanie Toti, the lawyer who will argue the clinics' case. Without Scalia, the best that supporters of these laws can hope for is a 4-4 tie, which would uphold the appeals court's endorsement of the Texas law and perhaps affect similar laws in Louisiana and Mississippi because they are part of the same judicial circuit as Texas. A trial judge also struck down Louisiana's admitting privileges law, but the 5th Circuit has allowed Louisiana to enforce the law as the case makes its way through the courts. Two of the state's four clinics have closed in response and a third will have to close soon, said Nancy Northup, president of the Center for Reproductive Rights. On Friday, the clinics said in an emergency appeal to the high court that only a New Orleans clinic would remain open if the state is allowed to enforce the law. They want the justices to block the ruling and let them stay open. — AP



**TUSCALOOSA, Alabama:** In this photo taken Feb 22, 2016, Dr Willie Parker stands in a procedure room for a portrait at the West Alabama Women's Center. — AP

## OREGON CITY FIRES GOATS WITH 'BARNYARD AROMA'

**SALEM:** A crew of goats brought in to devour invasive plants at a popular park in Oregon's state capital, Salem, have been fired because they ate indiscriminately, cost nearly five times as much as human landscapers and smelled far worse, a city official said on Friday. The 75 billy and nanny goats were supposed to eat Armenian blackberry and English ivy and other invasive plants choking native vegetation across the 9.1-acre Minto-Brown Island Park, the city's largest, in a pilot program last fall.

But the program ended in November after six weeks, and Salem has no plans to renew it, Keith Keever, the city's parks superintendent, said Friday. The goats "had a barnyard aroma" and cost \$20,719, including \$4,203 for drinking water and a workers' toilet, and \$2,560 for monitoring, city staff said in a report to the city council this week. The cost was nearly five times the \$4,245 for a normal parks maintenance

man backed by a prison inmate work crew to do the job, the report said.

Rachel McCollum, owner of Yoder Goat Rentals, the company that supplied the goats, praised the work of the animals, adding: "The public response was very favorable." While the goats were "almost universally welcomed by park users as a pleasant, pastoral addition to the scenery," they also greedily devoured native flora right along with invasive targets, choosing tasty maple and hazelnut trees. In one area, they ate all the leaves from blackberry stems but left the prickly bramble.

It is not the first time goats have been used as gasoline-free lawn-mowers. They have been used at Alphabet Inc's headquarters in Mountain View, California, and at the Historic Congressional Cemetery in Washington, DC. Keever did say that Salem is not ruling out using goats in the future for certain landscaping projects, such as maintaining steep hills. — Reuters

## UGANDA'S 'DICTATOR IN A SUIT' HOLDS POWER AT WHAT COST?

**KAMPALA:** "In the past you could get away with imprisoning and killing everyone," said Ugandan lawyer and poet Kabumba Busingye. "Now it has become much more difficult to be a dictator." Under Idi Amin, 1970s Uganda was a rough dictatorship ruled with brutal buffoonery, but Yoweri Museveni, a former rebel who helped overthrow Amin and his successor to seize power in 1986, is a "sophisticated dictator in a suit," said Busingye.

Museveni swept to his fifth election victory this month with 61 percent of the vote. Observers said the cards were heavily stacked against his opponents, as the 71-year-old's grip on his party and country - and his access to state resources - meant the result was never in any doubt. "In the past there was rule by decree, abolishing courts and parliament. Now you keep them, you have elections once in five years but you arrange the system to make sure that



Yoweri Museveni

you always get your way," said Busingye.

The cost of getting his way may prove higher this time than in similarly disputed elections against the same main opponent, Kizza Besigye, in the past. Foreign donors are dismayed and, more

importantly, a large chunk of the electorate feels disenfranchised and angry. In the days since the vote, armed police and soldiers have maintained an aggressive, highly visible presence on the capital's streets to keep a lid on things, while Besigye has been prevented from leaving his home by a succession of mob-handed arrests. "The issue of legitimacy is going to be a big one for the next government," said Livingstone Sewanyana, chairman of the Citizens Election Observers Network Uganda (CEON-U) which monitored the vote. "There is a general belief that the whole process was not transparent and the mood is that the results do not reflect the will of the people."

### 'Goodwill Exhausted'

While campaigning, Besigye addressed large rallies in his urban strongholds and in rural areas where Museveni finds his strongest support.

The president resorted to "rented crowds" attracted by freebies and hand-outs, said Sewanyana, and could rely on the support of an Electoral Commission that is widely regarded as partisan. During three decades in charge, Museveni has melded state and party, bending institutions to his will, from the security forces to the judiciary. "Museveni controls all aspects of our life," said Sewanyana. Doing others' dirty work abroad has won him gratitude and a free pass. Uganda's army is the core of the US and European-backed fight against Islamist militants in Somalia and its soldiers are deployed in various UN peacekeeping missions. "Uganda is punching above its weight in the region in terms of security matters, and a number of players both in the region and outside would be keen to have continuity," said Busingye. "Museveni has very shrewdly worked this into his calculations." — AFP



## BARCELONA WAITS FOR REFUGEES - WHO AREN'T COMING

**BARCELONA:** Half a year after Barcelona launched a municipal plan to welcome refugees fleeing wars in places like Syria and Iraq, Spain's second largest city is still waiting for them to arrive. "This fills us with rage," Barcelona Mayor Ada Colau, a former activist born out of the anti-austerity Indignados protest movement said. "The city is ready at the technical level, all our services are ready and residents are waiting with open arms. But they don't arrive." While EU interior ministers gathered in Brussels this week to try to hammer out a unified response to the biggest migration crisis in the bloc's history, the city detailed its own "Barcelona Refugee City" plan.

When Colau announced the initiative in August, hundreds of residents of the Mediterranean, seaside city flooded the city hall with e-mails volunteering to help. The plan was quickly followed by other cities across the country including Madrid, the Mediterranean port of Valencia and Cadiz in the southwest. Faced with this outpouring of solidarity, Spain's conservative government agreed to increase to 17,680 the number of refugees which the country would accept as part of a broader EU response to the migrant crisis.

It had initially agreed to accept just 2,749. "But since then, just 18 have arrived (in the whole of Spain), a ridiculous figure," said Pascale Coissard, spokeswoman in the northeastern region of Catalonia for the country's Commission for Refugee Aid. The agency has for months prepared to receive a chunk of the over one million people who have arrived in Europe fleeing from Syria, Iraq, Afghanistan or Eritrea. It boosted the number of places able to welcome refugees in Catalonia—the capital of which is Barcelona—to 41 from ten and will shortly open 50 more. The agency has also reinforced its medical and psychological services and it is training municipalities in the region how best to deal with newly arrived refugees.

### 'Working blindly'

The Catalan branch of the Red Cross, meanwhile, is recruiting social workers, interpreters and employment consultants and has set up three reception centres with up to 200 places for emergency situations. "We are ready," said Oscar Barbero, head of social services for the local branch of the Red Cross. "But we are working blindly, without knowing when they will arrive, how they will

arrive or how many will arrive." The main problem is that Spain's central government "is not providing any information," said Ignasi Calbo, coordinator of the "Barcelona Refugee City" plan, for which 10.5 million euros (\$11.6 million) has been set aside.

And Brussels and European nations are also dragging their feet. In late September, European leaders agreed on a plan to relocate 160,000 migrants from the countries they're flooding into—mainly Greece and Italy. But it has so far relocated just 600 — an unacceptable situation for Colau. "In the summer we will go to the beach for a swim, in the same sea where each week people die because Europe is not providing safe passage," she said. "And while it does not, it will be an accomplice to these human trafficking mafias and boat sinkings."

### 'Get tired of waiting'

As a result, Barcelona wants European cities to grab hold of the issue. For the past few months, it has been working with associations representing European cities, such as Eurocities or Metropolis, to pressure European institutions to act. Now they will move to direct action, said Colau. Barcelona city hall is finalizing



**BARCELONA:** Members of 'Proactiva Open Arms' NGO carry a lifeboat as they take part in the European March for Refugee Rights to demand the European authorities to take action to secure safe passage routes for refugees. — AFP

cooperation agreements with municipalities which have been overwhelmed by the arrivals of migrants, such as Athens and Lesbos in Greece or Lampedusa in Italy. "But there will come a time when cities get tired of waiting," said Calbo, hinting local authorities may

assume some responsibilities in areas of asylum that belong to the central government in Madrid. "It is a state duty but there is a humanitarian level which we cannot forget. And human rights are above European legislation," he added, without giving further details. — AFP



**DUBLIN:** Counting gets under way in Dublin, Ireland yesterday. A detailed exit poll for Ireland's election has found that most voters spurned the coalition government of Prime Minister Enda Kenny and the country faces either a hung parliament with no workable majority - or an alliance between the traditional polar opposites of political life. —AP

## IRELAND'S EXIT POLL SHOWS NO CLEAR WINNERS; GOVERNMENT HAMMERED

**DUBLIN:** Ireland's two main political foes were left considering an unlikely alliance yesterday after exit polls suggested voters had rejected established parties — including the ruling coalition — in favor of protest groups and independents. Enda Kenny's government looked to be the latest victim of European voters' growing antipathy to mainstream politics even though his premiership has seen Ireland bounce back from a bailout to become the continent's fastest growing economy.

Kenny's centre-right Fine Gael captured 25 to 26 percent of the vote, the exit polls said. That is far below the 36 percent it won five years ago and the 30 percent opinion poll rating it enjoyed at the start of campaigning. With partners Labor in line to win just 7 to 8 percent of the ballot, the only viable option for government appeared to be a problematic alliance between historic rivals Fine Gael and Fianna Fail, whose vote the poll showed rose to 23 percent.

"Either we could have another election now and do away with the count, or we'll let them muddle around for a month or so and maybe they can think the unthinkable," said Michael Marsh, a professor of politics at Trinity College Dublin. "It's hard to see any kind of government without Fine Gael and Fianna Fail getting together." No previous Irish election has seen Fine Gael and Fianna Fail — heirs to opposing sides in a civil war almost a century ago — fall below a combined 50 percent of the vote. Framed as a debate over how to distribute the profits of accelerating economic growth, Kenny's campaign to "keep the recovery going" rang hollow with many voters yet to feel any impact after years of austerity.

### Weeks to form government

One Fine Gael junior minister said he would "of course" be open to a prospective

deal with Fianna Fail after another exit poll late on Friday showed a similar result. He was the first senior member of either party to say so after weeks of rejecting the notion. While Fine Gael and Fianna Fail have few policy differences, they showed no appetite to team up during the campaign with one minister describing the prospect as a "nightmare". Others fear it would allow left-wing Sinn Fein, the former political arm of the Irish Republican Army, which polled at 15-16 percent, to establish itself as the main opposition party.

Fianna Fail party members would have to back any coalition. The party's general secretary told radio station Newstalk it was "not beyond the bounds of possibility" that final results could see it come out on top. Under Ireland's proportional representation system, candidates capture preferences from eliminated rivals and surplus votes of those elected, making seats difficult to call. Working on the assumption that his would be the largest party, Fine Gael strategist Mark Mortell said Kenny would "hold off making phone calls" until early next week. There was a risk of a second election this year if a sensible solution could not be found, he said. Analysts said it could take weeks for a government to be proposed.

### Anti-establishment vote

The exit polls suggested a major transformation had occurred in the party system in Ireland just weeks before the centenary of the 1916 Easter Rising, the most dramatic chapter of Ireland's struggle for independence from Britain. Fine Gael and Fianna Fail, which have swapped power since the state's foundation, and Labor, the junior partner in many governments, were shunned by voters in favor of independent candidates, smaller parties and the rising Sinn Fein. — Reuters

## SPAIN FACES LONG ROAD TO FORM NEW GOVERNMENT

**MADRID:** After a brief glimmer of hope, Spain's Socialists look set to fail in their bid to form a government next week, plunging the country into more political uncertainty. As the country emerges from an economic crisis and faces an independence threat in the northeastern Catalonia region, it still does not have a government, nearly 10 weeks after elections produced a hung parliament. Socialist chief Pedro Sanchez has been racing to garner backing for a coalition government.

But as a March 1 deadline approaches for a crunch parliamentary session in which lawmakers will vote for or against his government program, Sanchez only has the support of centrist upstart Ciudadanos and the regional Canaries' Coalition — not enough to see him through. "The most probable result is that Pedro Sanchez will be defeated," says Pablo Simon, politics professor at Madrid's Carlos III University.

### What next?

If Sanchez fails, a two-month countdown will start from the beginning of next week

when the vote takes place, during which the wildly diverging parties will try once again to come to an agreement to govern Spain. Failing that, new elections will be called in June — an issue of concern at what right-wing daily El Mundo calls "the worst political time for Spain in three decades". "We spent so many months hearing that the good thing about these elections was that it would finally put an end to the two-party system, that this was the moment for dialogue," says Manuel Cruz, philosophy professor at the University of Barcelona.

"And it may turn out that political forces aren't capable of seizing this opportunity... That would be a failure on the part of all parties, including the emerging ones," he added in a video interview on the El Confidencial news site. The December 20 elections saw the ruling, conservative Popular Party (PP) lose its absolute majority. The party's leader, acting prime minister Mariano Rajoy, gave up attempts to form a government after he failed to get support from other parties fed up with austerity and corruption scandals plaguing his grouping. — AFP

## BOSNIA TO SHUT DOWN RADICAL ISLAMIC CENTERS OVER LINKS TO SYRIA MILITANTS

### BREAKAWAY COMMUNITIES 'BREEDING ISLAMIC STATE RECRUITS'

**GRACANICA:** Dozens of breakaway Muslim community groups in Bosnia face shutdown by police for rejecting the authority of the moderate national Islamic organization and radicalizing young men who have left to join Islamist insurgents in Syria, officials said. Most of Bosnia's Muslims, known also as Bosniaks, are moderates well integrated in its widely secular society, which also comprises Orthodox Serbs and Catholic Croats. But during and after Bosnia's 1990s ethnic war, some came under the sway of foreign Islamist "mujahideen" who slipped in to fight in support of Bosnian Muslims against nationalist Serbs and Croats, fostering more radical forms of Islam.

Echoing the experience of other European countries with Muslim communities, more than 150 Bosnians have gone to fight alongside Islamist militants such as Islamic State in Syria and Iraq over the past few years, police say. More than 50 have returned to Bosnia and about 30 were killed in combat. Bosnian Security Minister Dragan Mekic said this week that police would soon shut down Muslim community groups that refuse affiliation with the state-recognized Islamic Community organization based in the

capital Sarajevo. "It is correct and true that criminals who have made fascist and violent threats against us from the Middle East have been members of these illegal community groups," an editorial on the Islamic Community's website said on Friday. It was referring to death threats sent via the Internet this week to Bosnia's top Islamic cleric, Grand Mufti Husein Kavazovic, by a Bosnian believed to be fighting in Syria. The man who made the threats came from a village adjacent to a breakaway Muslim community, one of 64 in Bosnia, in the northeastern village of Gracanica, according to Bosnian media.

### 'No support for caliphate'

Fikret Duric, the Gracanica community leader, acknowledged that it had adopted a fundamentalist form of Islam but denied any connection with radicalized men going to join Islamic State or other Islamist insurgents in Syria and Iraq. "They accuse us of organizing departures to foreign wars, which I absolutely deny," said Duric, 39, sporting a long beard and traditional Islamic robe. "We don't support the so-called (Islamic State) caliphate and will not help it in any way." The official Islamic Community organization

has agreed to negotiations with dissident local groups that face having their centers of worship and study sealed by police in coming days. But it defended the crackdown as vital to restoring order and unity among its faithful — who make up almost half of Bosnia's population — and allow it to vouch for all its members. "We live in a world where radical Muslims take actions with undesirable consequences, and the Islamic Community has decided to take stock of what we have in Bosnia, start a dialogue with them and call on them to come under our roof," senior Islamic Community official Razim Colic told Reuters.

But Duric said tensions had been raised by repeated police harassment of his community. He said some members had been forcibly removed by police from their mosque after they stayed on for Koranic studies following prayers. Dissident Muslims want mosques to be open 24 hours, one of their disputes with the mainstream Islamic Community. "Going back under the Islamic Community roof would mean returning to where we started, but I fear that this time the problem may be bigger because our believers have got used to the freedom they have here," Duric said. — Reuters



**POLYKASTRO, Greece:** Migrants and refugees go on with their daily life in a camp staged next to the national road near the town of Polykastro 20km away from the Greek-Macedonian borders. —AFP

## THOUSANDS STRANDED AS GREECE BECOMES MIGRANT 'WAREHOUSE'

**ATHENS:** Greece is fast becoming the "warehouse of human beings" that its government has vowed not to allow. Hastily setup camps for refugees and other migrants are full. Thousands of people wait through the night, shivering in the cold at the Greek-Macedonian border, in the country's main port of Piraeus, in squares dotted around Athens, or on dozens of buses parked up and down Greece's main north-south highway. On Thursday, hundreds of frustrated men, women and children abandoned their stranded buses or left refugee camps, setting off on a desperate trek dozens of kilometers (miles) long to reach a border they know is quickly shutting down to them.

About 20,000 migrants were in Greece on Thursday, Defense Minister Panos Kammenos said. Of those, Macedonia allowed just 100 people to cross over from Greece's Idomeni border area. Another 2,700 people, mostly Syrians and Iraqis, were waiting in a camp at Idomeni at nightfall, while another 1,000 people were stuck at a gas station in Polykastro, 17 kilometers away. Thousands more were heading north — about 40 busloads of people were waiting along Greece's main highway, while refugee camps in northern Greece and near Athens were full.

Greece is mired in a full-blown diplomatic dispute with some EU countries over their border

slowdowns and closures. But to those on the road — and to Greece, a financially struggling nation with a lengthy seacoast that is impossible to seal — who is responsible for the border restrictions almost doesn't matter. What matters is the result. And that result finds both Greece and the migrants caught in the middle between an increasingly fractious Europe, where several countries are reluctant to accept more asylum-seekers, and Turkey, which has appeared unwilling or unable to staunch the torrent of people leaving its shores in barely seaworthy smuggling boats bound for Greek islands.

### Syrians, Afghans, Iraqis flee

Adding to the pressure is Greece's financial predicament. The country has been wracked by a financial crisis since 2010 and still depends on an international bailout for which it must pass yet more painful reforms. Those have led to widespread protests, including blockades on the country's highways by farmers who are furious at pension changes they say will decimate their incomes. The vast majority of those reaching Greece, Europe's main gateway for migrants, have been Syrians, Afghans and Iraqis fleeing war at home. "My only hope is to live in a safe place. That's enough for me actually," said 17-year-old

Minhaj Ud Din Wahaj from Afghanistan's Wardak province. "We have been in war since 40 years, so I have been raised in war. I was born in war." In Athens, hundreds of migrants mill around central Victoria Square, uncertain of where to go next. On Thursday, two men hanged themselves from a tree in the square but were rescued by bystanders. Police said the men, who were rushed to a hospital, were trying to draw attention to their predicament.

In the north, nearly 400 people scrambled out of a former military base set up as a refugee camp in Diavata, near the city of Thessaloniki, and began walking the 70 kilometers to Idomeni on the Macedonian border. Dozens more set off on foot from buses stuck on the highway, where farmers' blockades were hindering traffic. Still more people flowed into the country, with dinghies full of migrants arriving on Greece's islands and hundreds more people piling on ferries heading from the islands to Piraeus. "We are escaping from war," said Rana, an English teacher from Syria arriving in Piraeus. She would not give her last name to protect those she left behind. "Our house is destroyed, and salaries in some places stopped. ... I think all the people, most of the people, seek the shelter and education for their kids." — AP



## MUGABE'S LAVISH 92ND BIRTHDAY PARTY ANGERS CRITICS

**MASVINGO:** Zimbabwean President Robert Mugabe, the world's oldest leader, hosted lavish celebrations to mark his 92nd birthday yesterday at a time of severe drought and increasing friction over his succession. Tens of thousands of party loyalists, officials and members of the public are expected to attend a day of concerts, street parades and parties in Masvingo in the south-east of the country.

"Organizers have been working flat-out to ensure the celebrations are a success," Simon Khaya-Moyo, spokesman for the ruling ZANU-PF party said. "Everything is in place and we are looking forward to tremendous events." Mugabe, who turned 92 last Sunday, has ruled for 36 years during an era marked by vote-rigging, mass emigration, accusations of human rights abuses and economic decline. On his actual birthday, state media poured praise on his leadership since independence from Britain.

In its 16-page special supplement, the Sunday Mail said on its front cover: "Thank You Bob, We now have a voice, since 1980". The main party was held in a large tent at

the Great Zimbabwe ruins, a UNESCO world heritage site that was built in the 13th Century as the headquarters of the Munhumutapa empire. Cattle and wild game will be slaughtered for the feast, with organizers claiming that as many as 50,000 guests are expected. The scale of the celebrations, costing a reported \$800,000 this year, attract annual controversy in Zimbabwe, which recently declared a "state of disaster" due to the drought and widespread food shortages.

### 'Very little to celebrate'

"There is very little to celebrate for a 92-year-old who has presided over the collapse of the economy, reducing the country to a nation of vendors and beggars," Takavafira Zhou, a political analyst at Masvingo State University said. "There will be wining and dining at the venue while all around people are starving." Zimbabwe has suffered a series of food crises and hyper-inflation since Mugabe's land reforms when farms were seized from white farmers for redistribution. Despite his advanced age and recent speculation

over his health, Mugabe has avoided naming a successor, fuelling infighting within ZANU-PF. Vice President Emmerson Mnangagwa is viewed as the likely next president, but in recent weeks he has been publicly criticized by Mugabe's wife Grace in a sign of growing rivalry. The president continues to give lengthy speeches, often launching tirades against his Western foes, but he has become increasingly frail.

He courted ridicule in September by reading the wrong speech to parliament, unaware that he had delivered the same address a month earlier. On Tuesday, scores of young supporters from the main opposition Movement for Democratic Change (MDC) party staged a protest in Masvingo. Protest placards read: "No birthday when children are starving" and "We want jobs, not bashes." Last year, Mugabe's 91st birthday celebrations included a cake that weighed 91 kilograms (200 pounds). Local media reported that party activists ordered teachers and villagers in the rural districts of Masvingo to make cash donations to help pay for this year's celebrations. — AFP



**HARARE:** Zimbabwe President Robert Mugabe (center), flanked by his wife Grace Mugabe (left) and daughter Bona, blows candles on his cake during a surprise party hosted by the office of the President and Cabinet at State House in Harare to celebrate his 92nd birthday. — AFP

# PHILIPPINE TROOPS KILL 42 ISLAMIST MILITANTS

## JAPAN TO SUPPLY PHILIPPINES WITH MILITARY EQUIPMENT

**MANILA:** Philippine security forces killed as many as 42 Muslim rebels claiming links with Islamic State and captured their stronghold during five days of fighting in the mountains of a southern island, an army spokesman said yesterday. Three soldiers were killed and 11 wounded when the forces seized the bastion of an affiliate of Jemaah Islamiah, a Southeast Asian network of Islamist militants, in the province of Lanao del Sur.

"Our troops were able to seize a stronghold of the terrorists on Thursday night," the spokesman, Major Filemon Tan, told reporters by telephone from the southern island of Mindanao, estimating that about 42 militants had been killed. "We are still

pursuing the rebels, using armored assets." Tan said the army was shelling rebel positions with 105-mm howitzers on Friday, while air force planes dropped bombs and helicopters fired rockets near the town of Butig, a base of the country's largest Muslim rebel group, the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF). But the MILF stayed away from the skirmishes and helped about 8,000 people displaced from their homes when the fighting began on Feb 20, the military said.

The Philippines signed a peace deal with the MILF in March 2014, ending 45 years of conflict that killed more than 120,000 people, displaced 2 million and stunted growth in the poor but resource-

rich south. Army and police officials believe some Muslim rebel factions, including the small but violent Abu Sayyaf group, have pledged allegiance to Islamic State militants in Iraq and Syria, but say they have found no evidence to support this. Elsewhere in Mindanao, soldiers were also chasing the Abu Sayyaf group, which is holding captive several foreigners, including a Japanese, a Dutch national, two Canadians and a Norwegian.

In another development, The Philippine defense chief says his government will sign an accord with Japan to allow Tokyo to supply military equipment to Manila in the first such Japanese defense pact in Southeast Asia. Defense

Secretary Voltaire Gazmin says the agreement he will sign Monday with the Japanese ambassador in Manila is not directed against any country but aims to address gaps in the underfunded Philippine military's capabilities. Gazmin said yesterday that there has been no discussion on what defense equipment Japan can provide, but added that the Philippine military currently needs to upgrade its intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance capabilities. The Asian neighbors have increased defense cooperation amid separate territorial conflicts with China. They held joint naval rescue drills near the disputed South China Sea last year. — Agencies

## News

in brief



### Plane crashes in Hong Kong; one person dies

**HONG KONG:** A man died after a small aircraft he was flying plunged into the sea in Hong Kong on yesterday, a rare occurrence in the southern Chinese city. The crash was reported shortly after 2 pm local time (0600 GMT) and emergency responders were seen lifting a body out of the water. "Fire services found an unconscious man in the vicinity, and he died at 3:55 pm," a government spokesman said. A spokesman for the Civil Aviation Department said in a statement that the man who died was the pilot, and the plane was a single engine Zlin Z42. He said the plane fell into the sea near Hong Kong's rural Tai Po region, located in the city's outlying New Territories. "There was a pilot and no passengers when this incident occurred," the spokesman said, citing information provided by the Hong Kong Aviation Club.

### Denmark minister resigns, ending government crisis

**COPENHAGEN:** Denmark's environment minister resigned yesterday, ending a crisis of confidence that had threatened to topple Prime Minister Lars Lokke Rasmussen's minority centre-right government. "Today I have announced to the prime minister that I resign from the post as environment and food minister," Eva Kjer Hansen said in a statement, saying she did not want to "stand in the way" of the government. The Conservative People's Party, which has just six seats in parliament but whose support is crucial to Rasmussen's minority government, on Wednesday threatened to withdraw its backing if the premier did not sack Kjer Hansen.

### Three die as small ferry sinks in the Philippines

**MANILA:** Three people have been killed after a small ferry sank in the Philippines, police said yesterday, the latest in a series of maritime accidents in the archipelago. The Lady Aimee ferry was travelling to Alabat Island from the coastal town of Gumaca, 117 kilometers from Manila, when it sank just 200 meters from shore at 4.40pm on Friday, said Chief Inspector Juan Byron Leogo. Fishermen on the seashore were able to rescue 60 passengers and four of the crew, but three passengers were killed, said Leogo, the town police chief. He attributed the sinking to "sudden high and strong waves" and possible "overloading", saying the boat's maximum number of passengers is less than 50. A police report said part of the boat was destroyed by the waves. Authorities are considering criminal charges against the ferry owners.

### N Korea rocket turns enemy tanks into 'boiled pumpkin'

**SEOUL:** North Korea yesterday boasted of a newly developed anti-tank weapon that its leader said was so powerful it could turn the most heavily armored enemy tanks into "boiled pumpkin". Pyongyang's state media said leader Kim Jong-Un had watched tests of the portable, laser-guided rocket and declared it had the "longest firing range in the world", and was "as accurate as a sniper's rifle". "He noted with great satisfaction that even the special armored tanks and cars of the enemies which boast their high maneuverability and striking power are no more than a boiled pumpkin before the anti-tank guided weapon", the KCNA news agency. Kim called for the weapon to go into mass production as soon as possible and for it to be deployed to frontline units and coastal defense units. With a siege mentality bordering on paranoia, North Korea maintains a huge military. It has some 1.2 million active troops out of a population of around 25 million-double the size of the armed forces in South Korea, which has twice as many people.

### Car bomb injures seven in Thai rebellious south

**BANGKOK:** A car bomb detonated outside an urban police station in Thailand's restive south yesterday, injuring at least seven people and offering a reminder of the region's simmering violence as the ruling junta eyes full peace talks with the insurgents. The explosive, hidden inside a passenger car, was set off in the middle of the day in the capital of Pattani province, one of three Muslim-majority states wracked by rebellion in the kingdom's southern tail. "The bomb was put in a Honda Jazz, which was stolen from a nearby village this morning," provincial police commander Major General Thanongsak Wangsupa said. More than 6,000 people have died in 10 years of near-daily violence between state security forces and the loose network of Muslim insurgents, who are seeking greater autonomy from Buddhist-majority Thailand, which annexed the region a century ago. Yesterday's bomb injured at least six police officers and one civilian and sent plumes of black smoke streaming into the sky.

## MONGOLIA LIVESTOCK IN DANGER AFTER DROUGHT, HARSH WINTER

**ULZIIT:** The Mongolian herder gazed out of his felt tent at the half-eaten carcass of what was his riding horse, now lying in blood-stained snow and being devoured by hungry dogs. "I had 700 head of cattle," Huyag Tserennyam said while staring out into the white wilderness in the remote mountainous area of Ulziit. "I've lost 150 so far." It has been a harsh winter in Mongolia following an especially dry summer - a weather pattern unique to the country and known here as a "dzud" (pronounced "dzuhd") - decimating tens of thousands of livestock and prompting the Mongolian government this week to formally launch a dzud appeal, seeking foreign aid, for the first time in six years.

There were indications in the summer that it would be a difficult year, and Tserennyam said he prepared extra grass in anticipation of a rough winter. He has used up all of the animal feed he received as aid from his local government, and has nearly used up his grass reserve. "I really tried, but I still lost - and I keep on losing - my herd," the 60-year-old said, feeding his one remaining horse. That horse is now his only mode of transport; it carried his wife to a recent doctor's visit. Supplies are running low, and the couple's milk tea is watery. More than 10,000 head of livestock have perished across Tserennyam's province of Bayankhongor this winter, said Col Munkhbaatar Togoo, head of the province's Emergency Management Division. Temperatures have dipped as low as minus 46 C (minus 51 F), about 16 degrees C (29 degrees F) lower than normal. Snowfall in some mountainous areas reached 70 centimeters (28 inches), he said. "Compared to recent years, this is unusually cold. It's had big effects on herding lifestyles," Togoo said.

The summer drought meant that cattle had less to graze on, failing to fatten up sufficiently before winter. In addition to those that have died, many of the survivors are so thin that their meat is not of high enough quality to sell if they perish, Togoo said. Mongolia's government announced its dzud appeal on Tuesday. This winter is worse than the last dzud in 2009-2010, and a greater part of the country is affected. Only 45,000 livestock have died so far this year compared to the 9.7 million attributed to the 2009-2010 winter, but the vast majority of losses typically take place in the spring before the grass grows back in May. The Asian Development Bank is contributing US \$3 million in assistance toward local infrastructure and risk management plans, including helping districts prepare shelters for herders, as well as emergency training. Further assistance is coming from Red Cross societies of Britain, Japan and Finland, said Purejav Jambalragchaa, a coordinator with the Mongolian Red Cross Society. Many herders are struggling to supply themselves with food because the snow is often too thick for horses or motorbikes to pass through. — AP



**TOKYO:** People cross a street in Tokyo. The results of the 2015 census released Friday show the population dropped by 947,000 people in the last five years, the first decline since the count started in 1920. — AP

## JAPAN POPULATION SHRINKING

**TOKYO:** Japan's latest census confirmed the hard reality long ago signaled by shuttered shops and abandoned villages across the country: the population is shrinking. Japan's population stood at 127.1 million last fall, down 0.7 percent from 128.1 million in 2010, according to results of the 2015 census, released Friday. The 947,000 decline in the population in the last five years was the first since the once-every-five-years count started in 1920. Unable to count on a growing market and labor force to power economic expansion, the government has drawn up urgent measures to counter the falling birth rate.

Prime Minister Shinzo Abe has made preventing a decline below 100 million a top priority. But population experts say it would be virtually impossible to prevent that even if the birth rate rose to Abe's target of 1.8 children per woman from the current birthrate of 1.4. Tokyo's rush hour trains are just as crowded as ever: Japan's biggest cities have continued to grow as

younger workers leave small towns in search of work. The census showed Tokyo's population grew to 13.5 million, up 2.7 percent since the 2010 census.

But a visit to any regional city will find entire blocks of small shops shuttered, the owners usually either retired or deceased. In rural areas, even just outside Tokyo, villages are mostly empty, fields overgrown and bus and train services intermittent thanks to scant demand. The rate of population growth peaked in 1950 and has fallen continuously since 1975. By 2011 it had hit zero, the census figures show. Though Japan is leading this demographic shift, the rest of Asia is following. In South Korea, China and elsewhere in Asia, improved life spans and falling birthrates are raising worries over how to provide for the rapidly expanding ranks of seniors with shrinking labor forces.

A World Bank report issued late last year forecast that health and pension spending will rise sharply at a time when elders can count on less support from

their families. "The rapid pace and sheer scale of aging in East Asia raises policy challenges, economic and fiscal pressures and social risks," the report said. It recommended that governments facilitate more participation in the labor force by women and seniors, provide better childcare and elder-care, and revamp their pension and health systems to cope.

For Japan, the demographic crunch is one of the biggest challenges to a postwar economic model based on rising incomes and consumption. Nearly a third of all Japanese were over 65 years old in 2015. By 2050, almost 40 percent will be older than 65, according to projections by the National Institute of Population and Social Securities Research. Richard Katz of The Oriental Economist forecasts that by 2045 there will be 13 percent fewer workers per person in Japan. That means each worker would need to produce 13 percent more in terms of economic value to offset the decline and maintain current living standards. — AP

## HIGHLIGHTS OF DRAFT UN NORTH KOREA SANCTIONS RESOLUTION

The United States on Thursday proposed a draft United Nations Security Council resolution that would dramatically tighten sanctions on North Korea following Pyongyang's recent nuclear test and missile launch. Here is an overview of the draft resolution circulated to the 15-member council:

### Conventional arms

The draft resolution targets North Korea's conventional arms capabilities by closing a gap in the arms embargo that had allowed small arms and light weapons to be sent to North Korea. North Korea would instead be subjected to a full arms embargo on all weapons. It has an unprecedented ban on the transfer to North Korea of any item that could directly contribute to the operational capabilities

of the North Korean armed forces, such as trucks that could be modified for military purposes. It bans states from hosting North Korean military and policy trainers and advisors.

### N Korean proliferation networks

The draft resolution has a new requirement that states expel North Korean diplomats who are involved in illicit activities.

### Cargo and interdiction procedures

The draft resolution has a new requirement that states must inspect on their territory all cargo going to or coming from North Korea via land, sea or air. Previously states were only required to do this if they had reasonable grounds to believe there was illicit cargo. It calls upon states to carry out inspections in a way that minimizes impact on the transfer of humanitarian relief cargo. It would ban all flights suspected of carrying prohibited items and ban all port calls by any vessel suspected of engaging in illicit activities. All vessels belonging to Ocean Maritime Management Company Limited would be banned from entering any port. It would require states to ban the chartering of their vessels or air-

craft by North Korea, unless the state determines those services are for "livelihood purposes" and will not be used by North Korea to generate revenue. It also requires states to ban their nationals from operating North Korean vessels or using North Korean flags of convenience.

### Resources

The draft resolution would ban the supply or transfer to North Korea of aviation fuel, including rocket fuel. It would ban the export of gold, titanium ore, vanadium ore and rare earth minerals. It would also ban the export of coal, iron and iron ore unless such transactions are for "livelihood purposes" and would not be generating revenue for North Korea's nuclear and missile programs. — Reuters



**North Korean leader Kim Jong-Un smiles during the inspection of the test-fire of a newly developed anti-tank guided weapon at an undisclosed location. — AFP**





**ATHENS:** Afghan children pose in the dormitory at the reception centre for migrants and refugees in Schisto, near Athens where 1300 migrants, mainly Afghans, are stranded in Greece. —AFP

## TRAPPED IN GREEK CAMP, AFGHANS DECRY DISCRIMINATION AT MACEDONIAN BORDER

**SCHISTO:** After risking his life to get out of Afghanistan, Jamshid is out of luck—he arrived in Greece just as Balkan states further north shut their doors to Afghan nationals. Now he and hundreds of fellow Afghans face an uncertain future at the Greek camp of Schisto, waiting for a path to Europe that may never reopen. “When we arrived at Macedonia border we got the news that Afghans cannot pass the border, only Syrian can pass the border. This is really a big discrimination,” says the 24-year-old Kabul resident, who says he previously worked as an American army translator.

“In Syria there is five years of war, in Afghanistan there is more than three decades of war. (The Islamic State jihadi group) exists in Syria, (it) exists in Afghanistan. What’s the difference between Afghans and Syria?” he wondered. Thousands of refugees and migrants have been stranded in Greece after Macedonia abruptly closed its border to Afghans last week and imposed stricter document controls on Syrians and Iraqis, slowing their passage to a trickle and rejecting those without valid passports.

Skopje’s move follows decisions by countries further up the migrant route to turn back groups of Afghans, after reports that many were actually Iranians or Pakistanis. Jamshid claims he was mistreated after being intercepted by Macedonian police. “Around 30 of us tried to cross the border. The Macedonian police caught us, beat us and put us on a truck.” “They said they would leave us on the border with Serbia. But when we got there, we realized we were back at the border with Greece,” he said. Mohammad, a 22-year-old engineering student says Macedonia police were not even interested in looking at his papers.

“They said ‘where are you from’, we said ‘from Afghanistan’ (and they said) ‘go out of here,’” he said. Another man said seven of his group disappeared near the Albanian

border where they heard shots being fired. Austria has also clamped down with a daily cap on asylum-seekers and said it would only let 3,200 migrants pass through each day, sparking fears of a domino effect along the Balkan migrant trail. “It’s not our vision to become the subsidized border guards of Europe, to become Europe’s Lebanon or Jordan,” Greece’s deputy Prime Minister Yiannis Dragasakis said Friday.

### Old army camp

An old army camp at the heart of an industrial storage area near the port of Piraeus, Schisto was recently refurbished by the Greek army to accommodate some 1,500 people. Army colonel Michalis Klouvas, who supervises operations, says the camp could eventually hold 4,000. “Out of 1,300 people here, a third are children,” Klouvas said, adding that he would prefer “for the problem to be resolved soon so that people don’t have to stay here long.” The hastily-renovated camp houses hundreds of families in tents, with separate buildings acting as a first aid area, a mess hall, a place of prayer and shelter for unaccompanied minors.

Children sit on the ground, playing with pebbles, and teenagers play volleyball and older men mill about aimlessly. Many are desperate to continue their journey northwards and do not wish to wait, even when told that Macedonia may not let them through. Further north, hundreds of migrants and refugees have walked out of similar camps in an effort to get to the border on foot. But others are too weak to even try. Outside one dormitory, a woman helps a man in his fifties who is sitting in a wheelchair, his feet wrapped in bandages, his head bowed low. Karim Mandi, has brought to the doctor his five-year-old son, whose ankles are in pain from walking. “My son cannot walk (but) the doctor has told us to wait because there is no more medicine,” he says. —AFP

# INDIAN SINGLE WOMEN BANNED FROM OWNING MOBILE PHONES

MOBILE DEVICES ‘DISTRACT GIRLS FROM THEIR STUDIES’

**MUMBAI:** Several villages in the western Indian state of Gujarat have banned girls and single women from owning mobile phones, saying the devices distract them from their studies. A couple of villages in Mehsana and Banaskantha districts in Gujarat have imposed the ban in recent weeks, with more villages joining the campaign, said Ranjit Singh Thakor, president of the Mehsana district council. The ban applies to girls under the age of 18 and unmarried women, he said. “The girls don’t study properly if they have mobile phones, and they can get into all sorts of bad situations,” he told the Thomson Reuters Foundation by telephone.

“Let them study, get married, then they can get their own phones. Until then, they can use their fathers’ phones at home, if necessary.” This is not the first time Indian villages have taken

this step. Villages in eastern Bihar state had imposed a similar ban a few years ago, saying mobile phones were “debasement of the social atmosphere” by leading young women to elope. Activists protested, calling it an assault on freedom that could potentially harm women by denying them access to protection.

India is the world’s second-biggest market for mobile phones, with more than 1 billion users. The ban in villages in Gujarat comes as Prime Minister Narendra Modi, who hails from the state, pushes the Digital India initiative that aims to connect rural areas with high-speed Internet networks. In Mehsana district, offenders will be fined about 2,100 rupees (\$31) and informants will be rewarded, Thakor said. Female students in university are exempt from the ban, as they may need the phones

for their studies, he said. The ban is being adopted by people from the Thakor caste in the entire state, he said. While more villages appear to be embracing the ban, villages in Banaskantha district have an informal rule, said Gaurav Dahiya, the district development officer. “It was imposed by village elders in the villages, saying it’s for the girls’ safety,” he said. “But not many people are following it.” Mobile phone ownership has been found to improve the lives of people in rural areas, who often have poor connectivity. In Tanzania, for instance, mobile phones were found to have a significant impact on women’s businesses and lives, a study found. Yet there and in India, men often control phones, especially in rural areas where members of a family may share a single device. — Reuters

# FEARS OF HOME-GROWN JIHADIST VIOLENCE MOUNT IN NIGER

**NIAMEY:** Increasingly targeted by jihadist fighters roaming its remote northern desert, and Nigeria’s feared Boko Haram insurgents on its southern flank, Niger fears the emergence of its own brand of home-grown Islamist trouble. In recent years foreign-funded aid groups and social media have brought ideas peddled by Wahhabism—an ultra-conservative form of Islam—to more and more of Niger’s 19 million people, one of the planet’s poorest nations. The past decade has seen thousands of mosques built and the number of madrassas, or Quranic schools, soar.

Almost every street in poor parts of the capital Niamey has a mosque, with the faithful gathering by the hundreds for prayers. Most women in the west African nation now wear a headscarf. Niger is 98 percent Muslim, but the vast majority adhere to the Maliki school of Sunni Islam popular across the region that is viewed as more tolerant than Wahhabism—a fundamentalist school of Islam supported by Saudi Arabia and accused of inspiring the Islamic State group.

Even this month’s presidential and parliamentary elections were marked by religion, with campaign rallies invariably opening with the Fatiha, a recital of the opening passage of the Koran widely used before public events. Boubakar Seydou Traore, imam of the Tchanganai district in northern Niamey and general secretary of the Islamic Association of Niger, welcomed the growing place of religion. “With the new media, television, Internet, radios, we now have access to more information. This has promoted better practices. Women wearing veils, interrupting university courses at times of prayer, this is the emergence of Islam,” Traore said.

### ‘Not like this 5 years ago’

“It wasn’t like this five years ago,” countered Moulaye Hassane an Islamic studies expert at Niamey’s Institute of Research into Human Sciences. But Hassane said Wahhabism is taking hold mainly in the towns, while Maliki Islam prevails in rural areas. “The (armed radical) Salafist groups in the desert don’t have a direct influence. But the danger for Mali, Mauritania and Niger is that a new form of Islam will surface. It’s an internal process.

“The day will come when (some) will want an Islamic republic.” The Christian minority once lived peacefully alongside Muslims, but in January 2015 anti-Christian riots in Niamey and southeastern Zinder left 10 dead and 50 churches razed in an unprecedented flare-up of reli-



**MARADI:** Niger’s children attending a lesson in an Islamic school in Maradi, southern city of Niger. — AFP

gious violence. The riots were sparked by the publication of a cartoon of the Prophet Mohammed by French satirical weekly Charlie Hebdo, a week after gunmen killed 12 people in a Paris attack against the paper.

Hassane says religious hardliners got a boost in the 1990s. “Due to bad governance, the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund imposed regulations that forced the state to slash social spending. NGOs (non-governmental organizations) with Wahhabite ideas arrived with funds from Saudi Arabia, Qatar and elsewhere ... They work in the social sector,” he said. “Students with grants to study in Arab countries too learn Wahhabism. After the elections they’ll go into parliament,” he added.

### Imams arrested

Hassane said politicians were ignoring the problem and said “the state needs to come back, the administration needs to be present everywhere.” With a fast-growing population and a world record fertility rate, Niger lacks education

facilities, with few girls in class and boys frequently sent to Quranic schools. Interior Minister Hassoumi Massaoudou meanwhile played down the influence of Wahhabism, saying it “only concerns a small part of the population” and that most hardliners come from Mali, Libya and Nigeria.

He did acknowledge however that “there is a fringe that could become radical” and said the administration was closely monitoring the Islamist issue. Authorities “watch the mosques and the prayers”, Massaoudou said, adding that some preachers have been arrested. But prominent civil society figure Moussa Tchanganai said bad governance and human rights violations were responsible for the growing Islamist influence. “Wayward politics lay the groundwork for all that. If we fail to establish a democracy, it provides a justification for Islamists who say that democracy is a model imported from the West,” he says. Policies based on tight security are no solution, he said. The regime “wants to eradicate the evil without addressing its causes.” — AFP

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## Washington Watch

TRUMP: FEEDING  
THE 'MONSTER'

By Dr James J Zogby

Donald Trump's candidacy is American politics reduced to the absurd. It is theater in its most stripped down form - a show where the content is not as important as the event and the raw emotion it evokes. From the earliest days of his candidacy, pundits have failed to understand Trump. His appeal is not issue-based, since, as his critics have correctly observed, he has taken wildly contradictory positions on most core Republican concerns - abortion, immigration, and Obamacare, to name a few. Trying, as some attempted, to find the hidden logic in his bizarre mish-mash of words is, at best, a fool's errand.

And pundits who have compared Trump's appeal among Republicans with Bernie Sander's appeal with Democrats have missed the point. Young voters find Sanders authentic and believable. Trump's devotees, on the other hand, are more attracted to their candidate's defiant bluster and his cavalier "bull in the china shop" demeanor. He lies about his personal life, his business dealings, positions he has taken and things he's done. His supporters know it, but they don't care. They are angry, and he feeds their anger. What they care about is the performance - and this is what the pundits have missed, causing them to underestimate Trump's appeal and to repeatedly and mistakenly predict his demise.

During the course of this campaign, Trump has attacked a series of "icons", many considered "taboo" for Conservatives - Fox News, Megyn Kelly, Senator John McCain, the Pope, the Iraq war. After taking on each of them, his candidacy was declared fatally wounded, until the next polls came out showing Trump's strength undiminished. Trump's appeal is not in his adherence to orthodoxy, his consistency, his clarity, or his genuineness. Rather it is in his performance. Seeing Trump at one of his "huge" rallies or observing him at a debate is much like watching a contemporary wrestling WWE "Smackdown".

Trump events remind me of this quote that opens a 2014 Forbes Magazine article on Vince McMahon, the billionaire wrestling promoter: "Subtlety has no place in professional wrestling. Nuance is for losers. Either you play big - to the smallest fan in the last row of the arena, to the millions tuning in each week on television - or you go home...[It is] a spectacle of excess".

The performance is false - the "bad guys" are as phony as the "good guys". Even the blows they deliver are fake. But the crowds love it, shaking their fists, whooping and yelling as the "drama" unfolds. It is pure "id", unrestrained. Like McMahon, Trump knows how to appeal to his crowd. He knows what they want and he delivers. Listen, in the same article, as Vince McMahon describes his approach to his audience: "I look at it like it's a really nice monster. When you feed the monster, the monster is happy. The problem with that is, the monster grows. And as the monster grows, then the monster wants more to eat. And as long as you do that, everything is great. And if you don't provide the food, then bad things start to happen".

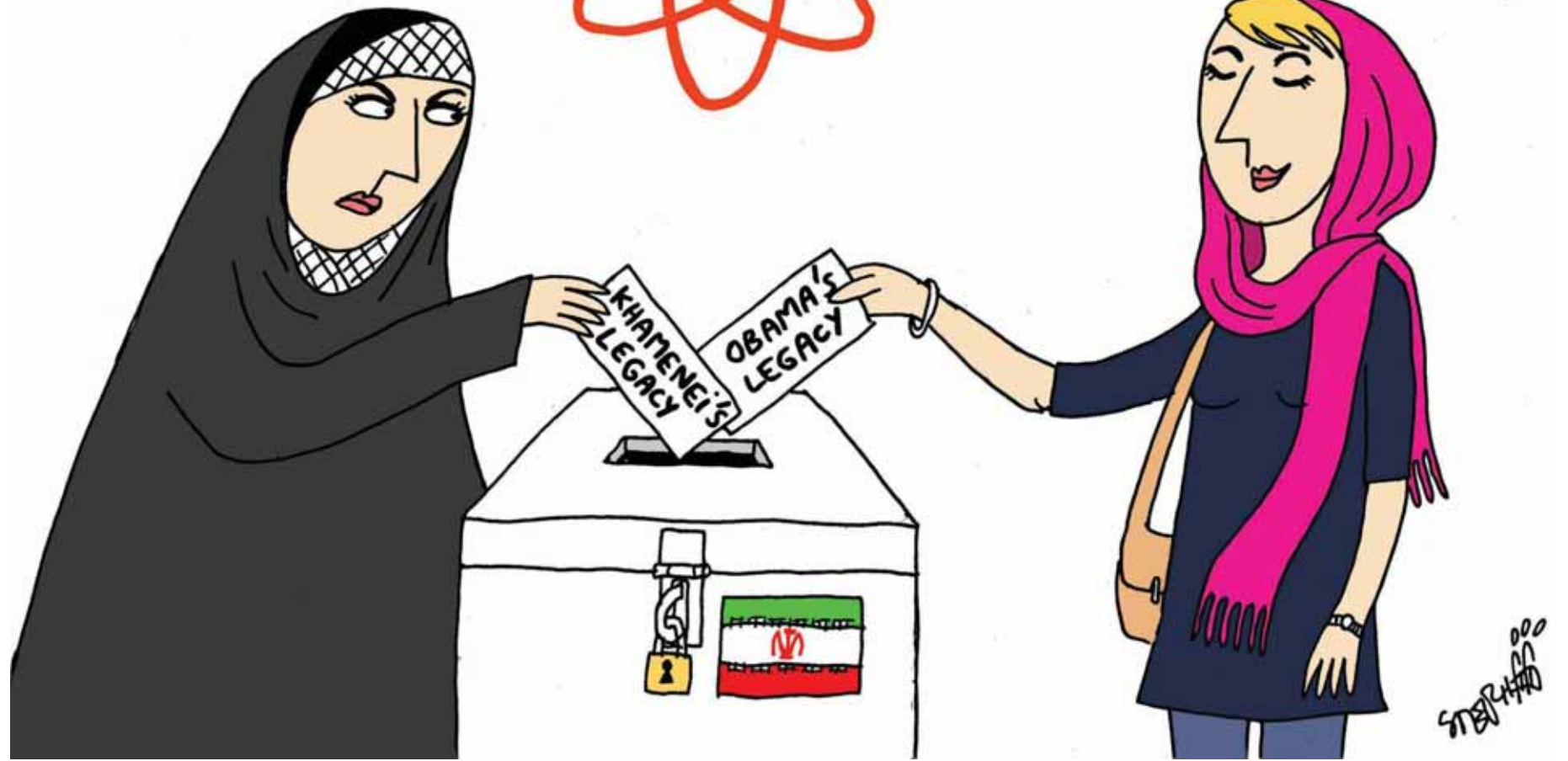
## Parable

McMahon's little parable is an apt description of the Republican establishment's relationship with their Tea Party "masses". They created the monster, fed and nurtured it, but, in the end, they were unable to tame it. They fed its anger. They entertained it with the crude rants of Sarah Palin, Michele Bachmann, and company - using that anger against President Barack Obama. For a while the establishment was able to control this "monster", for example, redirecting it to support Mitt Romney in 2012. But by 2016, this same leadership could no longer satisfy the hunger of their creation. And when the "monster" would no longer "play ball" with the establishment, it turned on them and looked elsewhere to have its anger entertained and fed.

Enter performance artist Donald Trump. His appeal is as raw as the WWE. Like McMahon, he plays with his audience, with an intuitive sense of what they want to see and hear. He is successful - a billionaire, many times over. He has a beautiful wife - or better, a series of beautiful wives. Despite his success, he feigns anger at America's demise, promising his supporters that he will deliver greatness. And he appeals to their basest instincts. He cruelly demeans his opponents. He paints the world in terms as starkly black and white as the WWE. He is a xenophobe and a bigot who targets the Mexicans and the Muslims. He is a bully who threatens to "punch in the face" hecklers who disrupt his events. And he is crude, using obscenities and vulgarities designed to incite - to whoops and yells and shaking fists. In this way, the "monster" is fed and appears, at least for now, to be happy. The danger that Trump poses is not that he is inconsistent or untruthful or that he lacks a coherent philosophy. It is that he is the reductio ad absurdum of our politics. He is the crude reality TV entertainer, turned leader - without politics, just anger. He is not a Republican or a Conservative - not that it matters to him or his followers. He is a budding fascist using his performance art to mobilize "a monster" that may devour us all.

NOTE: Dr James J Zogby is the President of the Arab American Institute

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IRAN'S  
ELECTIONS

## PUTIN CAN CASH IN ON SYRIA GAINS WITH TRUCE

By Vladimir Isachenkov

Russian President Vladimir Putin has a chance to cash in on his gains in Syria by scaling down his bombing blitz when a ceasefire takes effect so he can emerge as a peace broker with international stature. The Syrian army's significant advances around Aleppo will allow Damascus to negotiate with its foes from a position of strength, while the cease-fire that is scheduled to go into effect at midnight Friday offers Putin an opportunity to emerge from the five-month bombing campaign stronger than when it started.

A halt in fighting could also help avoid a looming confrontation with Turkey, which has vowed to stop at nothing to halt a Kurdish offensive north of Aleppo. A Turkish incursion would dramatically raise the stakes and could drive Putin into a corner, an escalation he wants to avoid. By engaging the United States in a direct military-to-military dialogue in Syria, the Russian president also fulfills his key goal of making Moscow a global player on par with Washington.

Ever since Russia launched its air campaign in Syria on Sept 30, the Kremlin has urged the US to coordinate military efforts. But Washington has accused Moscow of hitting

civilians and targeting moderate rebels instead of its declared goal, the Islamic State group, and only has agreed to exchange information on military flights to avoid incidents in the skies over Syria. Russia has responded by challenging the US to name the groups and areas its warplanes shouldn't target.

## Information

The ceasefire agreement now effectively meets that demand, requiring Russian and US military experts to exchange information on opposition units abiding by the ceasefire and extremist groups, such as the Islamic State group, considered fair game. Such an information exchange will allow Moscow to deflect criticism over its airstrikes by making the rebel groups that fail to commit to the cease-fire a legitimate target. While Assad must be eager to reclaim full control over Aleppo, Syria's largest city and its commercial capital before the war, Putin may not see capturing the city as essential for the success of his Syria strategy.

The Syrian army already has seized key positions around Aleppo, effectively cutting rebel supply routes, and in Putin's view it could be enough to shore up Assad's positions ahead of peace talks and make the US and its allies interested in negotiating a com-

promise in prospective Syria peace talks. The negotiations in Geneva broke up in January before starting in earnest, and the opposition demanded an end to Russian airstrikes as a condition to resume them.

The truce agreement envisions, however, that both Russia and the US-led coalition will continue their action against the Islamic State group and Al-Qaeda's branch in Syria, Jabhat Al-Nusra, or the Nusra Front. Al-Nusra is a key fighting force around Aleppo and in many other areas, and numerous smaller jihadi groups are allied with it, so doubts remain if the declared truce would lead to any significant reduction in hostilities.

## Motley Collection

With a motley collection of rebel units mixed closely on the battlefield, it also remains unclear how Russia and the US could distinguish between moderate rebels and Al-Nusra. Turkey, Saudi Arabia and other Gulf monarchies that have backed Assad's foes throughout the war in Syria, which has displaced half of its population and killed more than a quarter-million since March 2011, have watched the US-Russian deal with unease, fearing that it will play into Assad's hands.

They have mulled ground action in Syria,

a prospect that would become even more likely if the ceasefire collapses. Turkey has cast the Kurdish offensive north of Aleppo as an existential challenge, and vowed to halt it. If Turkey sends its troops into Syria, it would dramatically raise the risks of a clash with Russia. Relations between Moscow and Ankara have been badly strained since a Turkish jet shot down a Russian warplane at the Syrian border in November. Putin has ordered the military to destroy any target that would threaten Russian warplanes, but while he could be eager to punish Turkey for downing the Russian jet, he would try to avoid a dangerous escalation that could potentially pit Russia against NATO.

The ceasefire appears to be Russia's best bet now, and Putin can be expected to make every effort to make sure it holds, including mostly grounding war planes. He has spoken to Assad to secure his commitment to the ceasefire, and also called the Saudi, Iranian and Israeli leaders this week to discuss it. While Russia has vowed to continue air raids against the Islamic State group and Al-Nusra, Putin can be expected to reduce or even call off airstrikes in areas where Al-Nusra fighters are closely mixed with US-backed groups to prevent the truce from immediate collapse. —AP

## WHICH IS SAFER - UBER OR TAXI? NO CLEAR ANSWER

By Justin Pritchard

The deadly shooting rampage in Kalamazoo, Michigan, raises anew a question that has dogged Uber and other taxi competitors: Their rides may be cheaper and more convenient than a cab, but are they as safe? It's not just whether Uber's part-time drivers are better (or worse) behind the wheel. It's whether passengers are more likely to be assaulted, kidnapped or raped by an Uber driver than a cabbie. The answer is that there seems to be no reliable answer. Police and transportation authorities around the US say they know of no rigorous comparison of cabbies and Uber drivers.

The taxi industry, facing an existential threat from Uber, has highlighted a series of incidents as evidence that an Uber trip is a gamble passengers should not take. Then again, taxi drivers have assaulted customers, too. If any place might have analyzed which is safer, how about San Francisco, where Uber was launched more than five years ago and keeps its headquarters? Police there can't say because they don't keep crime data in a way that would answer the safety question. Local transportation regulators don't know, either. Nor does San Francisco's district attorney, though his office is spearheading a lawsuit that alleges Uber misled passengers into believing its driver background checks are the most comprehensive available.

"We haven't done a comparison because that is not what the case is about," said Max Szabo, a spokesman for San Francisco prosecutors. The debate over safety has come amid rapid growth by Uber and other app-based ride-sharing services such as Lyft, and it flared after the arrest of Uber driver Jason Dalton last weekend in the killings of six people in the Kalamazoo area. Asked which is safer, Uber's own head of safety public policy did not answer directly.

Instead, Dorothy Chou said Uber is enlisting technology "to predict and prevent incidents from happening." She pointed out that the app lets passengers share their location and requires feedback on drivers after every trip. Uber is starting to use its drivers' phones to track hard braking and other dangerous driving, she said, as well as whether a driver is holding a phone. "As long as we keep innovating ... eventually it will definitely be safer to take a ride-sharing vehicle," Chou said. While there is no definitive answer to the safety question, there are some clues.

## Driver Background Checks

This is where taxi advocates hit Uber hardest, saying that Uber's checks fail because they do not include fingerprinting of would-be drivers. Many law enforcement experts say a fingerprint search is the most comprehensive way to check someone's background, and taxi regulators typically require one. Uber counters that fingerprint checks are imperfect and that its background check process -

which it says includes searches of motor vehicle department files and several criminal databases going back seven years - is excellent. But Uber can no longer claim its methods are "industry-leading." Uber agreed to pay \$28.5 million to settle a lawsuit (not the one filed by San Francisco) that alleged such safety claims were false. As part of the settlement, Uber's "safe ride fee" will become a "booking fee."

Each side can point to troubling findings about the other. In their lawsuit, San Francisco prosecutors detailed how police there and in Los Angeles found 25 Uber drivers who had serious criminal histories that were not flagged during the background check or may have been disregarded by Uber. Uber says that in 2014, at least 600 active taxi drivers who also applied to Uber in San Diego, Los Angeles and San Francisco failed its background check for problems such as violent crimes.

## Reported Incidents

The national Taxicab, Limousine & Paratransit Association has a website listing news reports of assaults,

rapes and other violence against passengers or pedestrians by Uber or Lyft drivers as part of a campaign it calls "Who's Driving You?" Though Uber has not replied with a website in kind, there are plenty of stories of taxi drivers committing violent crimes. Anecdotes can be evidence; they are not proof. Data that could be used to break down on-the-job crime rates of taxi and Uber drivers may exist, but no one has done that analysis, at least not publicly.

Doing it rigorously would be hard. Amid a fight over whether Uber drivers should be required to submit to fingerprint checks, Austin, Texas, has released some information. According to a document compiled by the city, in 2015 Uber drivers allegedly were involved in 13 sexual assaults and one rape; taxi drivers, five; and Lyft drivers, six. One sexual assault was listed as Uber or Lyft. But those numbers lack essential context, such as how many miles, trips or hours on the job cabbies log versus Uber drivers. Without that information, it's impossible to tell whether a passenger is more at risk with one or the other. —AP



In this Feb 22, 2016 photo, Uber driver Jason Dalton is arraigned via video before Judge Christopher T Haenicke in Kalamazoo, Michigan. —AP





**QOM:** Iranian women show their identification cards as they queue in a polling station to vote for the parliamentary and Experts Assembly elections on Friday. — AP

## ROUHANI, MODERATES MAKE BIG GAINS IN IRAN ELECTIONS

AT LEAST 33 MILLION VOTE IN TWINNED ELECTIONS

**TEHRAN:** President Hassan Rouhani won a resounding vote of confidence and his reformist allies won 29 out of the 30 seats reserved for the capital Tehran in parliamentary elections that could speed Iran's post-sanctions opening to the world, early results released yesterday showed. Tens of millions thronged polling stations on Friday for a twin vote to the 290-seat parliament and the 88-member Assembly of Experts, which selects the country's highest authority, the supreme leader.

President Rouhani, whose reformist allies made gains in the twin contests for parliament and a leadership body, said Iran's election had given the government more credibility and clout. "The competition is over. It's time to open a new chapter in Iran's economic development based on domestic abilities and international opportunities," the official IRNA news agency quoted him as saying. He added that the government would cooperate with anyone elected to build Iran's future. "The people showed their power once again and gave more credibility and strength to their elected government."

An initial tally of 1.5 million votes counted in Tehran - fewer than one-fifth of the capital's eligible voters - showed Rouhani and his pragmatic ally, ex-president Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani, leading the race for the Assembly of Experts, according to interior ministry figures. A ministry statement said senior reformist Mohammed Reza Aref led the race for parliamentary seats among candidates in Tehran. Aref "so far based on the counted votes is at the top of the list followed by five (other) reformists," it said. Seventh on the list was a senior conservative, it said.

Aref, a Stanford-educated former presidential candidate and minister, who served as vice-president to the former reformist President Mohammad Khatami, leads the reformist list in Friday's contest in Tehran, where more than 1,000 candidates are competing for just 30 seats in parliament. The twin poll was seen by analysts as a potential turning point for Iran, where nearly 60 percent of the 80 million population is under 30. The elections were the first since a landmark nuclear deal last year that led to the removal of most of the sanctions that have damaged the economy over the past decade. Supporters of Rouhani, who championed the nuclear deal, were pitted against hardliners close to Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, who are deeply wary of detente with Western countries. The conservative Guardian Council had restricted both races by disqualifying most reformist and many moderate candidates.

However, of the top contenders for Tehran's 16 Assembly of Experts seats, the partial count showed 13 were members of a list led by Rouhani and Rafsanjani, though some were consensus candidates also backed by hardliners. The three most prominent hardliners received lesser scores: Ahmad Jannati was 10th, the assembly's current chairman Mohammad Yazdi came 12th, and arch-conservative Mohammad-Taghi Mesbah-Yazdi was teetering on the edge in 16th place.

Even if reformists do not emerge with a majority nationally in the legislature, dominated since 2004 by conservatives, analysts say they will secure a bigger presence than before. Conservatives usually perform well in the countryside while

young town-dwellers tend to prefer moderate candidates.

### High Reformist Hopes

Reformists seeking more social and economic freedoms and diplomatic engagement voiced high hopes of expanding their sway in parliament and easing conservative clerics' grip on the experts' assembly. Saeed Leylaz, a political analyst and economist who served as an adviser to former President Mohammad Khatami, said initial indications were beyond reformist expectations.

"It seems the number of candidates who belong to the reformist and independent groups will be the majority in parliament and I am hopeful that the new parliament will be perfect for us," he told Reuters. "In the Assembly of Experts our initial expectation was 15 to 20 percent but it seems it will be beyond that."

Rafsanjani, 81, a prominent leader ever since Iran's 1979 Islamic revolution, called for national unity now the divisive campaign was over. "The competition is over and the phase of unity and cooperation has arrived," state news agency IRNA quoted him as saying. "The time after elections is the time for hard work to build the country." Asked by Reuters on Friday what would happen if reformists did not win, he said: "It will be a major loss for the Iranian nation."

Newspapers hailed what they saw as a huge turnout, including many young voters. Polling was extended five times for a total of almost six extra hours because so many people wanted to vote. Iran's Financial Tribune newspaper said three million first-time voters were among the nearly 55 million people aged 18 and over who are eligible to cast ballots. Interior Ministry spokesman Hosseinali Amiri said more than 33 million votes had been cast but that tally was not final. It would probably take three days to count all the votes, he said.

### Mousavi Votes

Authorities had promised that all Iranians would be able to vote and on Friday opposition leader Mir Hossein Mousavi and his wife voted for the first time since being put under house arrest in 2011, an ally of Mousavi's told Reuters. Iran, which has the world's second-largest gas reserves, a diversified manufacturing base and an educated workforce, is seen by global investors as a huge emerging market opportunity, in everything from cars to airplanes and railways to retail.

For ordinary Iranians, the prospect of this kind of investment holds out the promise of a return to economic growth, better living standards and more jobs in the long run. An opening to the world of this scale - and Rouhani's popularity - have alarmed hardline allies of Khamenei, who fear losing control of the pace of change, as well as erosion of the lucrative economic interests they built up under sanctions.

Whatever the outcome, Iran's political system places considerable power in the hands of the conservative Islamic establishment including the 12-member Guardian Council, which vets all electoral candidates. It had already tried to shape Friday's vote by excluding thousands of candidates, including many moderates and almost all reformists. — Reuters

## SYRIA CEASEFIRE TAKES HOLD DESPITE LIMITED...

Continued from Page 1

"Honestly, I was surprised that the calm lasted through the night," said Ammar Al-Rai, a 22-year-old medical student in Damascus. "I think this is the first time we've woken up without the sound of shelling." UN envoy Staffan de Mistura said peace talks would resume on March 7 if the ceasefire prevails and more aid is delivered - a key sticking point in negotiations. A special international task force, co-chaired by Moscow and Washington, was due to meet behind closed doors in Geneva yesterday to monitor the truce. De Mistura said it was important that any incidents are "quickly brought under control" and a military response should be the "last resort."

Russia, which has waged nearly five months of intense air strikes against rebels in support of Syrian President Bashar Al-Assad, said it had halted bombing in all areas covered by the truce. Moscow has vowed to keep striking IS, Al-Nusra and other "terrorist groups," but said it would ground all its warplanes in the Syria campaign on the first day of the truce to avoid potential "mistakes."

EU foreign policy chief Federica Mogherini said the lull in fighting was "the first chance to put an end to violence on the ground and should not be missed." "If it holds, it will create the conditions for full, sustained and unimpeded humanitarian access throughout Syria," she added. Among the limited ceasefire breaches, state media said "terrorist groups" fired a number of shells on Damascus but caused no casualties. Rebels also accused the government of intermittent "truce violations" in parts of the country.

In Aleppo, Syria's second city, two people were killed and four wounded when shells hit the majority-Kurdish neighborhood of Sheikh Maqoud, according to the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights, a Britain-based monitor. Syrian state media said one person was killed by sniper fire in the same district. Aleppo city is now almost com-

pletely encircled by pro-regime troops after a massive Russian-backed offensive that has caused tens of thousands to flee in recent weeks. But yesterday, children played in parks. "I hope the truce continues even for a limited time so we can get back part of our old lives from before the war," said Abu Nadim, a father of four.

Jihadists attacked the border town of Tal Abyad in Raqa province, sparking clashes that killed at least 45 IS members, 20 Kurdish militia fighters and two civilians, the Observatory said. US-led coalition warplanes launched at least 10 air strikes to try to drive back the jihadists, the monitor reported. Twin suicide bombings meanwhile killed six people outside the town of Salamiyeh in Hama province, where IS is present, state news agency SANA said.

The complexities of a conflict which escalated from anti-government protests into a full-blown war drawing in rival world powers make brokering a lasting halt to the fighting a huge challenge. Assad has been bolstered by the support of Russia and Iran while the West, Turkey and Gulf states back rebel groups. "The pressure being placed by Russia and the US on regional actors is such that many of these regional actors can't reject the political process entirely," said Firas Abi Ali, an analyst for IHS Country Risk in London. "This is putting them in a bind where they're compelled to behave as if they're part of the process regardless of what they actually want from it."

Syria's top opposition grouping, the High Negotiations Committee (HNC), said Friday that 97 opposition factions had agreed to respect the truce, for two weeks initially. In a particularly encouraging sign, a commander in the hardline Islamist faction Ahrar al-Sham said his group - allied with Al-Nusra - had not conducted any military operations since the truce started. "But the ceasefire is stillborn, because it began with violations from the regime. It will be very difficult for the ceasefire to hold," Hussam Salameh warned. — Agencies

## CHRISTIE, IN ABOUT-FACE, ENDORSES RIVAL TRUMP

**FORT WORTH, Texas:** New Jersey Gov Chris Christie has a reputation for vengeance. And he delivered it with gusto on Friday as he shocked many in the political world by endorsing GOP frontrunner Donald Trump for the Republican presidential nomination. The surprise endorsement, the first for Trump from a sitting governor and by far his most prominent, comes as Trump rival Marco Rubio appeared on the cusp of a breakthrough following a break-out debate performance. And it marks the second time that Christie has knee-capped the Florida senator, just as he appeared to be on the rise.

At the news conference in Fort Worth, Texas, Christie described Trump - a man he had previously panned as ill-suited for the White House - as the best Republican candidate to lead the country and beat Democrat Hillary Clinton. "I've gotten to know all the people on that stage and there is none who is better prepared to provide America with the strong leadership that it needs both at home and around the world than Donald Trump," Christie said. Reporters covering the event were visibly stunned when the governor, who dropped his own bid for the presidency earlier this month following a disappointing finish in New Hampshire, walked into the room.

The endorsement comes at a particularly opportune time for the real estate mogul, who on Thursday night faced a barrage of new attacks from Rubio during the final debate ahead of next week's Super Tuesday contests, where large numbers of delegates are at stake. During the debate, Rubio hit at Trump's business record, history of hiring foreign workers and his vague policy positions. The broadsides clearly irritated Trump and threatened to provide Rubio with a jolt of new momentum as he seeks to turn the contest into a two-man race.

Rubio appeared to be flying high on Friday morning, delivering new Trump attack lines, including mocking his spelling on Twitter, with newfound glee. But then, in charged Christie to steal the news cycle and momentum. "I think this changes the narrative in a dramatic way," said Fred Malek, a major Republican fundraiser, of Christie's decision.

The timing immediately following the debate appeared to be a coincidence. A former Christie campaign official said the governor made his decision to

endorse Trump on Thursday following a meeting in Manhattan attended by the two men and their wives. Christie was already on a plane heading to Texas as the debate was airing, according to the former official, who was not authorized to speak publicly on Christie's behalf and spoke on the condition of anonymity.

But it was nonetheless the second time Christie has managed to tear down Rubio just as he was on the rise. During the last GOP debate before the New Hampshire primary, as Rubio appeared on the cusp of a breakthrough, Christie set a verbal trap that left Rubio repeating the same practiced line over and over again. It was a high moment for Christie's campaign - and especially personal.

Christie has grown deeply resentful of Rubio. Some of that anger stemmed from a super PAC supporting the Florida senator that was responsible for much of the negative advertising that Christie's campaign and his allies have blamed for his loss in the race. Throughout his campaign, Christie bashed the baby-faced senator as inexperienced, drawing parallels with another first-term-senator-turned-president, Barack Obama, and blasted Rubio for his frequent missed votes and Washington insider status.

Ironically, Christie's tactic was the same one used so effectively by Rubio against Trump on Thursday night, as he forced the billionaire to repeat the same talking points to describe a healthcare plan thin on detail. "I just watched you repeat yourself five times five seconds ago," Rubio said.

With his endorsement, Christie is now back in the game, and his role now appears to be that of attack dog. Christie appeared to embrace the role within minutes of announcing his endorsement, painting Rubio as a desperate man on the cusp of losing the race. And Trump appeared to relish the attacks, repeatedly mentioning Christie's take-down of Rubio during that pre-New Hampshire debate. "I gotta tell you, Chris was so - wow, what he did. That was one of the great prosecutions I've ever seen," Trump raved at a post-endorsement rally. "I watched Chris take a man apart," he added. "And honestly, I thought he was going to die, Rubio. He was so scared like a little frightened puppy." — AP



**FORT WORTH, Texas:** Republican presidential candidate Donald Trump stands with New Jersey Gov Chris Christie before a rally on Friday. — AP

## CHALLENGES FACE NEW FIFA BOSS

Continued from Page 1

Infantino said governance reforms passed just hours before his election win were "groundbreaking" and that implementing them would be a priority. They include changes to FIFA's management, limiting Infantino's powers compared to the authority held by Blatter. There will be a 12-year term limit for top officials and salaries will be disclosed. The all-powerful executive committee will be renamed a FIFA council and football's multi-billion dollar business activities will be run separately from football politics.

But there was no decision to create an outside watchdog that has been widely demanded as the only way to solve FIFA's corruption crisis. Top World Cup sponsors like credit-card giant Visa said after the vote that "independent oversight of the reforms" was still the best strategy to ensure real change. Infantino has promised to bring in "independent and respected voices" to FIFA but has not given details. Experts said that corporate partners - who demanded an end to the sleaze that came to characterize the Blatter era - will be watching to see if Infantino's desire to make changes goes beyond rhetoric.

Jeff Thinnis, a US consultant to global corporations on ethics and governance, told AFP that the FIFA vote is "only a start." "Given the culture of FIFA, a very corrupt culture down through the national associations, it is going to be a long slog before what is on paper becomes what is in practice," he said. Infantino downplayed divisions in world football, saying he had won "an election but not a war."

Sheikh Salman, a royal from Bahrain, had been the pre-poll favorite, and his defeat was a blow to the ambitions of Asia and especially the Arab world, where there had been anticipation of a powerful new voice in sport. "The new FIFA needs to become more inclusive and reflect the diversity of world football," the sheikh said after the vote, pledging to work with Infantino. India, a supporter of Sheikh Salman, said it hoped to receive "due importance" under FIFA's new boss. The new FIFA boss has insisted that he was not a European candidate, but "a football candidate" and touted his relationships across the globe.

Arab football chiefs and pundits said the Arab region squandered the chance to help elect their first FIFA president because their two candidates failed to cooperate, leaving the door open for Infantino to triumph. UEFA's Infantino got 88 votes in the first round, three more than Asian Football Confederation (AFC) chief Sheikh Salman of Bahrain, while Prince Ali Bin Al-Hussein of Jordan managed 27 and Frenchman Jerome Champagne won seven.

Sheikh Salman would have had a better chance if his efforts were united with Prince Ali as Infantino won in the

second round with 115 of the 207 votes, which was more than the required majority of 104, while Sheikh Salman got 88 and Prince Ali four. "Some countries gave promises but didn't fulfil them. We are all Arabs but unfortunately some support the other party (candidate) and we hope these changes in the future," Bahrain FA President Ali Al-Khalifa said in a television interview. "We as Arabs should unite our efforts and be clear with each other. It appears from the first round that some countries have joined the other party (candidate). We have now to look forward and help FIFA's new president get (the world governing body) out of the current crisis," he added.

The Confederation of African Football (CAF) pledged its backing to Sheikh Salman while his AFC said it supported him but it seems some of those countries did not give him their vote. "Africa has fulfilled its promises but it is clear that something happened with Asian countries and this was behind the final result," Sudan FA president Mutasif Jaffar said. "Sheikh Salman was depending heavily on Africa and Asia and the plan was to get 100 votes in the first round. He has to find out what happened to his home (vote)."

This was the second chance for the Arab region to get a FIFA president after Prince Ali lost to Blatter by 133-73 votes in the election last May when Sheikh Salman announced his support for the Swiss incumbent. "Arabs split as usual so a historic chance has been wasted and I think it will not come again," Arab journalist Mustafa Agha tweeted. "Infantino won because the Arabs split. If there was cooperation we could have had an Arab president."

Whilst cooperation between Sheikh Salman and Prince Ali could have helped the Arab cause in the election, they would have had to put aside past differences to achieve it. When Sheikh Salman became AFC president in 2013, he made changes which in effect meant Prince Ali lost his seat as one of Asia's representatives on the FIFA executive committee. This lack of support continued when Sheikh Salman said the AFC would support Blatter against any other candidate in previous elections, including the vote last May.

Despite the failure of the region's candidates to triumph in Friday's vote their efforts were appreciated in the region. "Thank you Sheikh Salman, you were a big competitor... and thank you Prince Ali for your courage. You both have opened the door for all to compete with the west," Qatari sports magazine Estad Al-Doha's editor-in-chief Mahed Al-Khelaifi tweeted. Queen Rania of Jordan also offered her support to Prince Ali, tweeting: "It's not winning that makes a leader, but how committed he is to the game. @AliBinAlHussein you will always be a leading light on the field." — Agencies



## FOWLER GRABS HONDA CLASSIC LEAD, BOHN SUFFERS HEART ATTACK

**MIAMI:** World number five Rickie Fowler fired another bogey-free 66 on Friday to take a one-shot lead after two rounds of the US PGA Tour's Honda Classic. Fowler's second straight four-under effort on the Champion course at PGA National in Palm Beach Gardens, Florida, gave him an eight-under total of 132. American golfer Jason Bohn suffered a mild heart attack during Friday's round after complaining of chest pains on the course. The 42-year-old was transported by ambulance to a Palm Beach Gardens hospital for tests and was to remain overnight in stable condition.

Fowler was one stroke in front of fellow American Jimmy Walker, who capped his 66 with a birdie at 17 and an eagle at the par-five 18th. "I've been swinging well," said Fowler, whose strong early-season form included a victory in Abu Dhabi and a playoff loss to Hideki Matsuyama in Phoenix. "It's nice to hit fairways, hit greens, especially at a place like this where it's very demanding tee to green," added Fowler. "I felt like I didn't hit it as

good as yesterday, but I hit some really good drives through the middle, through the end of the round, and made a few more putts, which was nice," he said.

First-round co-leader Sergio Garcia, playing alongside Fowler, signed for a 69 for 134, and Australian Adam Scott powered up the leaderboard with a bogey-free 65 that included an eagle and three birdies and put him in fourth on 135. "I felt like I played quite well. Obviously the course is not getting any easier as the week goes on. The wind was not as much as yesterday but it was still challenging," said Garcia. The Jack Nicklaus-designed course got the better of Rory McIlroy, whose second straight two-over 72 included a triple-bogey six at the par-three fifth and saw him miss the cut with a four-over total of 144.

### Another disappointment

It was another disappointing finish in a tournament where Northern Ireland's McIlroy has experienced wildly fluctuating fortunes. McIlroy's 2012 victory at

PGA National propelled him to number one in the world for the first time. Defending his title the following year, he was struggling when he withdrew complaining of a painful wisdom tooth. After missing out in a playoff in 2014, he missed the cut last year. In fact, Fowler was the only one of four top-10 players to make the cut. Along with world number three McIlroy, ninth-ranked Patrick Reed and 10th-ranked Branden Grace will also miss the weekend.

Playing alongside McIlroy, defending champion Padraig Harrington of Ireland rebounded from his opening 73 with a gritty two-under-par 68 that had him heading into the weekend on one-over 141. Harrington nabbed seven birdies to offset three bogeys and a double bogey. Fowler became the first player to go bogey-free over the first two rounds of the tournament since it moved to the Champion course in 2007. He rolled in a 22-foot birdie putt at his final hole and Walker, playing behind him, heard the roar but stayed in touch with his strong



**FLORIDA:** Rickie Fowler of the United States hits his tee shot on the 13th hole during the second round of the Honda Classic at PGA National Resort & Spa - Champions Course in Palm Beach Gardens. — AFP

finish. "I think it's important to be close to the lead in a tournament like this, because it's such a hard golf course," Walker said. — AFP

## CAPITALS OVERCOME WILD

**WASHINGTON:** Dmitry Orlov scored with 5:04 remaining after Alex Ovechkin got a tying goal earlier in the period to help the Washington Capitals rally for a 3-2 win over the Minnesota Wild on Friday night. Ovechkin got his league-leading 40th goal 4:35 into the third on a power play, and Brooks Orpik also scored while the NHL-best Capitals completed a four-game homestand with three wins. Braden Holtby made 30 stops for Washington after he was pulled early in the second period of a loss Wednesday night to Montreal. All four games on the Caps' homestand were decided by one goal. Mikko Koivu and Nino Niederreiter scored for Minnesota. Koivu tied a club record by playing in his 743rd NHL game, all with the Wild.

### LIGHTNING 4, DEVILS 0

Steven Stamkos extended his goal-scoring streak to a season-high five games and the Tampa Bay Lightning beat the fading New Jersey Devils for their fifth straight win. Ben Bishop made 21 saves for his third shutout of the season. Alex Killorn, Ondrej Palat and Matt Carle also scored as the Lightning sent the Devils to their second loss in as many nights and fifth in six games. Cory Schneider, who was lifted after giving up three goals in the first period of a 6-1 loss to Columbus on Thursday, had 32 saves for New Jersey.

### BRUINS 4, HURRICANES 1

Matt Beleskey scored goals in the first and third periods, leading the Boston Bruins over the Carolina Hurricanes. It was the 388th regular-season victory for Boston

coach Claude Julien, who needs two wins to tie Art Ross as the Bruins' career leader. It was only the third regulation loss for the Hurricanes in their last 16 home games (10-3-3). Carolina has lost in regulation on back-to-back nights. Patrice Bergeron scored for Boston in the first period, and Brad Marchand added an empty-net goal in the closing seconds. Tuukka Rask stopped 39 shots. Noah Hanifin had Carolina's lone goal.

### DUCKS 2, OILERS 1, OT

Rickard Rakell scored 1:24 into overtime to give the Anaheim Ducks a win over the Edmonton Oilers. Rakell put a backhander past Cam Talbot seconds after a change on the fly, using some gorgeous puck handling to keep Oilers center Leon Draisaitl flatfooted and leave the goaltender baffled. Ryan Getzlaf scored in regulation and Frederik Andersen stopped 17 shots to give Anaheim its seventh straight win. Jordan Eberle had the lone goal for Edmonton, which dropped its sixth in a row.

### SABRES 3, SHARKS 1

Zach Bogosian scored on a ricochet with 7:24 remaining in regulation and the Buffalo Sabres beat the San Jose Sharks for the ninth time in 10 meetings. Johan Larsson also scored and Evander Kane added an empty-netter to help the Sabres extend their domination over the Sharks by winning for the fifth straight time in San Jose. Chad Johnson made 24 saves. Marc-Edouard Vlasic scored the lone goal for the Sharks, who lost for just the third time in regulation this season in the 30 games that they scored first. — AP



**LOS ANGELES:** Los Angeles Lakers forward Nick Young, right, shoots as Memphis Grizzlies forward PJ Hairston defends during the first half of an NBA basketball game on Friday, Feb 26, 2016. — AP

## LOWRY LIFTS RAPTORS TO 10TH STRAIGHT WIN

**TORONTO:** Kyle Lowry scored a career-high 43 points to help the Toronto Raptors beat the Eastern Conference-leading Cleveland Cavaliers 99-97 Friday night. Terrence Ross added 15 points for Toronto, which won its 10th straight at home to tie a franchise record previously set between March 24 and Nov. 4, 2002. Raptors leading scorer DeMar DeRozan had a season-low six points while battling flu-like symptoms. LeBron James had 25 points and Kevin Love added 20 for the Cavaliers, who had their lead over Atlantic Division-leading Toronto in the East cut to two games. Lowry tied the score at 97 with a hook shot with 51.9 seconds remaining. After J.R. Smith's miss gave the Raptors the ball with 28.9 seconds left, Lowry made a pull-up jumper with 3.8 seconds left to put Toronto back in front. Following a Cleveland timeout, James unleashed what would have been a game-winning 3-pointer, but it missed the rim completely as time expired. With the win, the Raptors clinched the season series 2-1.

### HAWKS 103, BULLS 88

Jeff Teague scored 19 points, Al Horford added 18 and Atlanta snapped a three-game losing streak with a victory over short-handed Chicago. Paul Millsap had 12 points and 13 rebounds for the Hawks, who ended a four-game home skid - their longest since April 2007. Atlanta moved into fifth place in the East. Chicago, which had won three straight, played without its top three scorers because Jimmy Butler, Derrick Rose and Nikola Mirotic were nursing injuries. A sore right hamstring sidelined Rose for the second straight game. Doug McDermott finished with 20 points and Paul Gasol had 16 points and 17 rebounds for the Bulls.

### HORNETS 96, PACERS 95

Kemba Walker scored 22 points and hit the game-winning shot with 2.4 seconds left to lift Charlotte over Indiana. Monta Ellis gave Indiana the lead with a layup over Walker with 16.2 seconds to go. Walker then split two defenders above the 3-point line to get to the rim and sank a left-handed scoop shot over Paul George. The Pacers had a chance at the buzzer, but George's shot from the top of the key missed. George finished with 32 points. Marvin Williams had 26 points and 13 rebounds for the Hornets, tied with Chicago for seventh place in the Eastern Conference, 1 1/2 games ahead of Detroit. Charlotte won for the second time this month at Indiana after dropping 12 straight on the Pacers' home court. Walker, who also had 10 assists, scored nine points in the final 5:08 to help fend off a late Pacers charge.

### CLIPPERS 117, KINGS 107

Chris Paul scored a season-high 40 points and added 13 assists with eight rebounds to propel Los Angeles past Sacramento. Sparked by the scoring and playmaking of Paul, the Clippers ran off 20 consecutive points in the third quarter to break the game open. The lead remained in double dig-

its the rest of the way. DeMarcus Cousins had 26 points, 15 rebounds and nine assists for the Kings. Rudy Gay scored 23. Jeff Green scored 22 points and Jamal Crawford had 21 for Los Angeles. The Clippers, who had dropped three of five, have beaten the Kings seven straight games in Sacramento and 19 of 23 overall. Paul missed the team's morning shootaround while nursing a sore right forearm, but the injury never seemed to bother his shooting. He made 13 of 20 shots and all 10 free throws in falling three points shy of his career high.

### WIZARDS 103, 76ERS 94

John Wall had 23 points and 11 assists to lead Washington past Philadelphia. Jared Dudley scored 14 points and Ramon Sessions added 12 for the Wizards. Wall finished two rebounds short of a triple-double. Washington snapped a three-game road losing streak while winning for the eighth time in nine games against Philadelphia. The Wizards began play three games behind Charlotte for the final playoff spot in the Eastern Conference. Jahlil Okafor scored 21 points for the 76ers (8-50), who lost their seventh straight and 11th in 12 games.

### KNICKS 108, MAGIC 95

Carmelo Anthony had 19 points, 11 rebounds and six assists, and New York quickly jumped on an Orlando team that appeared to still be staggered by Stephen Curry. A night after yielding 51 points and 10 3-pointers to Curry in a 130-114 loss to Golden State, the Magic were barely in the game after the first 10 minutes. Kristaps Porzingis added 18 points for the Knicks, who won for only the third time in 16 games. Nikola Vucevic scored 18 for the Magic, and Aaron Gordon had 17 points and eight rebounds.

### MAVERICKS 122, NUGGETS 116, OT

Raymond Felton hit a tying jumper with 10.2 seconds left in regulation and then scored eight of his 16 points in overtime as Dallas rallied from 23 down to beat Denver. Chandler Parsons led the Mavericks with 27 points, including 15 in the third quarter when Dallas took a 67-66 lead with 5:15 to play after coming all the way back from a 55-32 deficit late in the second quarter. Dirk Nowitzki had 20 points and 13 rebounds for the Mavericks, who closed the fourth period on an 8-0 run over the final 1:50. David Lee, playing his second game with Dallas, had 14 points and 14 rebounds in 26 minutes. Will Barton led the Nuggets with 22 points. Kenneth Faried had 20 points and 12 rebounds. Danilo Gallinari injured his right ankle in the closing minutes of the third quarter and didn't return. On Denver's final possession of regulation, Barton's jumper at the buzzer bounced off the front rim. Wes Matthews' 3-pointer gave Dallas the lead for good at 115-114 with 3:03 left in overtime.

### GRIZZLIES 112, LAKERS 95

Vince Carter scored a season-high 19 points and five of his teammates also reached double figures to help Memphis cruise past Los Angeles. Carter made his first five shots - all 3-pointers during a 7:48 span - and the 18-year veteran finished 7 for 10 from the field in 20 minutes to help the Grizzlies win for the 13th time in 17 games. P.J. Hairston scored 21 points, Mike Conley had 17 points and seven assists, and Zach Randolph added 15 points and 10 rebounds for Memphis. Kobe Bryant sat out because of a sore right shoulder as the Lakers lost their eighth straight and 22nd in 25 games. They got 22 points from rookie D'Angelo Russell. —AP

### NHL results/standings

Tampa Bay 4, New Jersey 0; Washington 3, Minnesota 2; Boston 4, Carolina 1; Anaheim 2, Edmonton 1 (OT); Buffalo 3, San Jose 1.

Western Conference						Tampa Bay														
Central Division						W	L	OTL	GF	GA	PTS	Boston								
Dallas	38	18	6	202	178	82	35	22	4	169	149	74	Detroit	30	20	11	153	158	71	
Chicago	38	20	5	177	151	81	Ottawa	29	27	6	179	192	Montreal	29	27	5	167	168	63	
St. Louis	35	19	9	157	152	79	Buffalo	25	30	7	147	168	57	Toronto	21	28	10	145	176	52
Nashville	30	21	11	162	158	71	<b>Metropolitan Division</b>													
Colorado	32	27	4	169	176	68	Washington	45	11	4	200	139	94							
Minnesota	27	25	10	161	158	64	NY Rangers	35	20	6	175	156	76							
Winnipeg	26	30	4	158	179	56	NY Islanders	33	19	7	170	146	73							
<b>Pacific Division</b>						Los Angeles	36	20	4	161	139	76	Pittsburgh	30	21	8	155	156	68	
Anaheim	33	19	8	149	142	74	New Jersey	30	26	7	139	153	67							
San Jose	32	22	6	178	164	70	Carolina	28	25	10	153	168	66							
Vancouver	24	24	12	147	171	60	Philadelphia	27	22	11	148	163	65							
Arizona	27	28	6	166	188	60	Columbus	25	29	8	162	191	58							
Calgary	26	30	4	162	184	56	Note: Overtime losses (OTL) are worth one point in the standings and are not included in the loss column (L).													
Edmonton	22	34	7	153	192	51														
<b>Eastern Conference</b>						Florida	35	18	7	167	139	77								
<b>Atlantic Division</b>																				



**WASHINGTON:** Evgeny Kuznetsov #92 of the Washington Capitals celebrates teammate Dmitry Orlov #9 of the Washington Capitals (not pictured) goal as goalie Darcy Kuemper #35 of the Minnesota Wild reacts during the third period at Verizon Center on February 26, 2016. —AFP

### NBA Results/Standings

Charlotte 96, Indiana 95; Washington 103, Philadelphia 94; NY Knicks 108, Orlando 95; Toronto 99, Cleveland 97; Atlanta 103, Chicago 88; Dallas 122, Denver 116 (OT); LA Clippers 117, Sacramento 107; Memphis 112, LA Lakers 95.

Eastern Conference					Western Conference				
Atlantic Division					Northwest Division				
W	L	PCT	GB	Oklahoma City	41	17	.707	-	
Toronto	39	18	.684	Portland	30	28	.517	11	
Boston	34	25	.576	Utah	28	29	.491	12.5	
NY Knicks	25	35	.417	Denver	23	36	.390	18.5	
Brooklyn	16	42	.276	Minnesota	18	40	.310	23	
Philadelphia	8	50	.138	31.5	<b>Pacific Division</b>				
<b>Central Division</b>					Golden State	52	5	.912	-
Cleveland	41	16	.719	-	LA Clippers	38	20	.655	14.5
Indiana	31	27	.534	10.5	Sacramento	24	33	.421	28
Chicago	30	27	.526	11	Phoenix	14	44	.241	38.5
Detroit	29	29	.500	12.5	LA Lakers	11	49	.183	42.5
Milwaukee	24	34	.414	17.5	<b>Southwest Division</b>				
<b>Southeast Division</b>					San Antonio	49	9	.845	-
Miami	32	25	.561	-	Memphis	34	23	.596	14.5
Atlanta	32	27	.542	1	Dallas	31	28	.525	18.5
Charlotte	30	27	.526	2	Houston	29	29	.500	20
Washington	27	30	.474	5	New Orleans	23	34	.404	25.5
Orlando	25	32	.439	7					





**TURIN:** Juventus' Italian defender Leonardo Bonucci controls the ball during the UEFA Champions League round of 16 first leg football match between Juventus and Bayern Munich at the Juventus Stadium in Turin.—AFP

#### ITALIAN LEAGUE PREVIEW

## HERNANES COMMITTED AS JUVENTUS FACE INTER

**MILAN:** Brazilian midfielder Hernanes has surrendered hope of a free-scoring role but said he is committed to the cause as Juventus look to stretch their Serie A lead against his former club Inter Milan today. Hernanes hit five goals in 26 appearances for Inter in his final full season before moving to Turin for 11m euros (\$12.14m) in August 2015. Yet with only 13 games remaining this season, the 30-year-old from Recife has been forced to reassess his personal expectations as part of a squad for whom winning trophies is widely expected.

From the relative freedom enjoyed at Inter and, before that, Lazio, Hernanes has been used in several midfield positions by coach Massimiliano Allegri as the champions continue their bid for a treble of trophies this season. "I came to Juventus full of bounce, with the idea that I would be playing up front and scoring lots of goals," said Hernanes. "But the coach changed my position and I've had to adapt. I'm starting to feel at ease, but I can still improve." Despite failing to cement a regular starting spot, Hernanes's versatility is quickly becoming an advantage for Juventus and he was ready when it mattered in midweek.

It was half-time at Juventus Stadium, holding midfielder Claudio Marchisio had gone off injured and Juve were trailing 2-0 to Bayern Munich in the Champions League. Moved into the centre of midfield alongside Sami Khedira, Hernanes inspired a lacklustre Juve with an energetic yet solid performance that helped launch a stirring comeback thanks to goals from Paulo Dybala and Stefano Sturaro. Although Bayern are expected to seal a quarter-final place following the return leg on March 16, before then Juventus face Inter twice in the league and Cup as they bid to at least keep their double aims on track.

A win today would see Juventus stretch their lead over title-chasing Napoli to four

points ahead of the Azzurri's much-anticipated trip to Fiorentina on Monday, when fellow Europa League opponents Lazio travel to Sassuolo. Inter's title hopes have faded since the resumption of hostilities in early January, since when Roberto Mancini's men have won only three times in nine outings. Inter boosted flagging morale with a 3-1 win over Sampdoria last week but Mancini's men are 10 points off the pace and four points behind third-placed Fiorentina in the first Champions League qualifying spot.

Mancini was given a boost on Thursday when league officials accepted an appeal against Geoffrey Kondogbia's two-match ban, meaning the French midfielder is available. But defeat today would complicate the 2010 champions' bid to return to Europe's premier club competition after a four-year absence. "It's a very important game for us and we'll give everything to try and win," Croatian midfielder Ivan Perisic told Inter Channel. But the odds are all against the visitors. A struggling Juventus held Inter to a scoreless draw earlier this season and, once they had found their rhythm, stunned Mancini's men 3-0 in the opening leg of their Italian Cup semi-final.

Inter host Juventus in the second leg on Wednesday, and Perisic added: "It won't be easy to overturn the score from the first game but we'll keep fighting until the last minute." Elsewhere, Roma will move provisionally up to third place with a win at Empoli where Luciano Spalletti's visitors will target a sixth consecutive win for the first time this season a week after a 5-0 rout of Palermo. AC Milan, who held Napoli 1-1 last week, will look to stretch their unbeaten run to nine games when they host Torino looking to close the gap on the European places. Sinisa Mihajlovic's men sit in sixth, 14 points behind Juventus and eight behind Fiorentina.—AFP

## AURIER BANISHED TO PSG RESERVES AFTER INSULTS

**PARIS:** Paris Saint-Germain defender Serge Aurier has been banished to the club's reserve team as punishment for insulting coach Laurent Blanc in a video on social media. Aurier, 23, will spend three weeks training with PSG's reserves, who play in France's amateur fourth tier, with the Ivorian then set to return to the first-team squad on March 21. PSG said the decision was made to "protect the group from any potential problems" after Aurier drew the ire of the French champions following his appearance in a video on the social media site Periscope in which he directed homophobic insults at Blanc and also appeared to insult several team-mates. Aurier, who joined Paris on an initial loan deal from Toulouse in 2014 before the move was made permanent last summer, will miss PSG's Champions League last-16 second

leg at Chelsea on March 9.

#### Bastia climb up

Bastia continued their climb up the Ligue 1 table on Friday with a 2-0 victory away to Champions League hopefuls Nice. Hosts Nice, who have now won just once in six outings, were reduced to 10 men before the hour when Paul Bayesse was dismissed, and Bastia took full advantage with goals from Sadio Diallo and Floyd Ayite shortly after. Nice remain in third spot above Saint-Etienne on goal difference in the race for France's third Champions League berth, while Bastia moved up to 10th after registering a third straight win. Paris Saint-Germain, unbeaten in 36 league matches, will aim to continue their march towards a fourth successive Ligue 1 title on Sunday when they visit fifth-place Lyon.—Agencies



Paris Saint-Germain defender Serge Aurier

# MANAGERLESS NIGERIA APPOINT CARETAKERS

## OLISEH RESIGNS AS COACH

**ABUJA:** Nigeria's Olympic team coach Samson Siasia will take charge for the Super Eagles' upcoming Africa Cup of Nations qualifiers after Sunday Oliseh resigned, the country's football federation said yesterday. Nigeria Football Federation (NFF) technical committee chairman Chris Green announced the appointments in the capital Abuja in the wake of Oliseh's departure. The 41-year-old coach quit overnight, citing unpaid wages and contractual breaches, throwing Nigeria's qualification into doubt for next year's AFCON tournament in Gabon.

Siasia will be joined on the bench by national team assistant coach Salisa Yusuf and Under-20 manager Emmanuel Amunike to prepare for the double-header with Egypt next month. Shaibu Amodu, who has previously managed the national team on four occasions, declined to return on health grounds but will have a supervisory role, the NFF said. "These are temporary appointments and they will be reviewed after the matches against Egypt with the coaches expected to revert to their primary assignments," said one official who was at the meeting. It is understood Nigeria are looking to appoint a full-time foreign coach. Siasia's appointment is a return to the job he lost in 2011 when he was sacked in the wake of Nigeria's failure to qualify for the 2012 AFCON.

#### 'Lack of support'

Oliseh was just eight months into a three-year contract and said he quit because he did not enjoy the support of the NFF. "Due to Contract violations, lack of Support, unpaid wages, benefits to my players, assistant coaches and myself, I resign as Super Eagles Chief Coach," he wrote on Twitter in the early hours of

Friday. The man he replaced in July 2015, Stephen Keshi, had previously complained of unpaid wages and was later paid the arrears by Nigeria's presidency in 2013.

Players have also protested in the past about unpaid bonuses from the state-funded NFF. Nigeria's game against Egypt is a must-win qualifier in the northern city of Kaduna with the return leg two days later in Cairo. Egypt are seven-times winners of the tournament and currently head Group G with six points after two matches. Nigeria are second on four points. Only the overall group winners are guaranteed automatic qualification to the 2017 finals. Oliseh has complained he has been unable to travel to Europe to assess Nigerian players to pick his squad.

#### 'Abandoning ship'

Nigeria already faced an uphill battle to defend the title they won in 2013 in South Africa and after failing to qualify for last year's finals. Former national team official Ben Alaiya said Oliseh's resignation has further compromised the country's chances of getting through. "It's a shock. He should not have quit, it was like abandoning the ship in the middle of the sea. It was a big slap to 180 million Nigerians," he said. "But we must move ahead and look at the options because we have very important games against Egypt next month."

Former Nigeria international Dosu Joseph said the NFF must move quickly to appoint a successor to stay on track for Gabon 2017. "Many of us saw this coming but we now need to move forward because we have to beat Egypt at least at home or else kiss goodbye to the Nations Cup," he warned. "The NFF



Sunday Oliseh

must now sit up for the matches against Egypt because it will be a disaster if we failed again to qualify for the Nations Cup." Oliseh's relations with the NFF soured when Nigeria failed to go past the group stage of the recent African Nations Championships in Rwanda. He vented his frustration in a YouTube video earlier this month, attacking critics who wanted him sacked, but later apologized, while sports minister Solomon Dalung backed him to stay on.—AFP

## BOSA LEADS PASS-RUSH PACK AS TEAMS SEEK NEXT MILLER

**INDIANAPOLIS:** The most coveted players in the NFL draft are, of course, the franchise-caliber quarterbacks. The most important prospects might be the pass rushers. Just ask the Super Bowl champion Denver Broncos how they snagged that shiny trophy. "That's pretty much the whole example I have to give. Defense won that game, 100 percent. Von Miller, he really showed what a pass rush can do for a team," said Joey Bosa, the Ohio State defensive end who's first in line to be the next Miller.

Widely pegged for the first pick, held this year by the Tennessee Titans, Bosa's 6-foot-5, 269 pound frame ought to fit well in the lineup for some team at the top of the draft seeking an instant impact for the defense. He was an end in a 4-3 scheme in college, but he said Friday at the league's scouting combine that he has incorporated pass-coverage drops into his offseason training to prepare for possibly playing outside linebacker in a 3-4 system. "I never could have dreamed to be in this situation, being considered the No. 1 pick," Bosa said. "It's kind of mind blowing."

Taking an outside pass rusher with the top slot in the draft would hardly be startling. Miller, voted the Super Bowl MVP less than three weeks ago, was the No. 2 pick in 2011 by the Broncos. Defensive end Jadeveon Clowney was the first selection by the Houston Texans in 2014. These days, the role is even more in demand. "Von Millers aren't just falling out of the sky, all over the place," said Indianapolis Colts coach Chuck Pagano, whose team could use one.

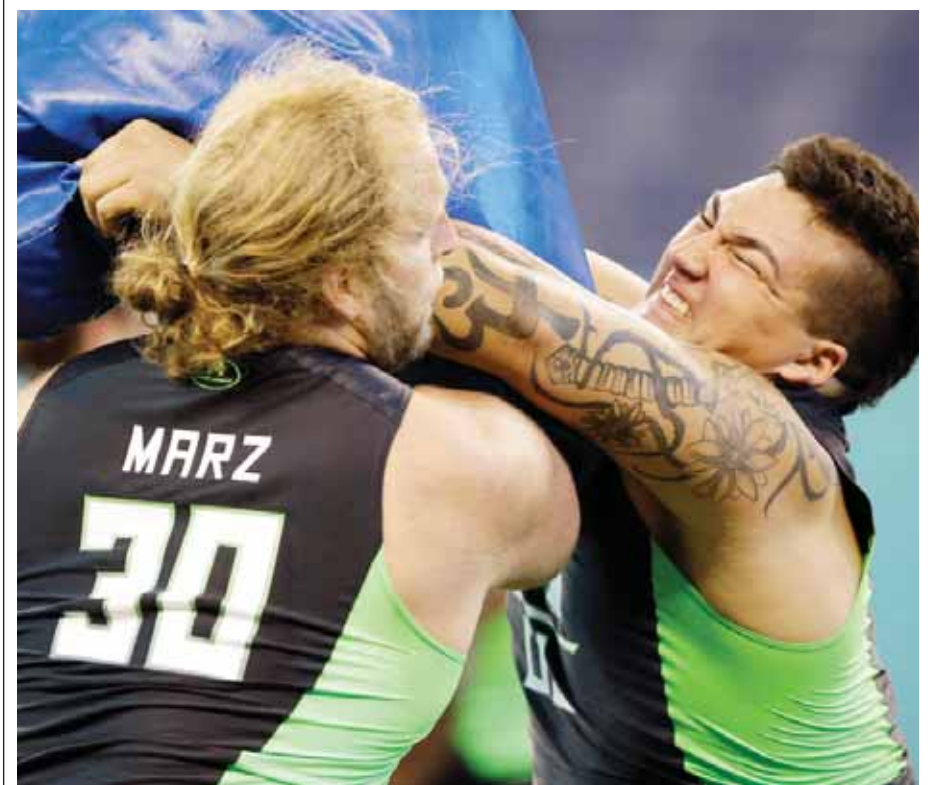
Once elite quarterbacks are established, they rarely go anywhere until retirement. Plus, only one can play at a time. With pass rushers, teams can't have enough. Miller wouldn't have been nearly as dominant had the Broncos not had DeMarcus Ware pressuring the pocket from the other side. "Only so many people are walking the earth with the skill set to be big enough, athletic enough and have the traits to be able to rush the passer," Arizona Cardinals general manager Steve Keim said. "That's generally why they are either drafted high or get overpaid in free agency."

The players realize this, too. "Watching the Super Bowl, it was evident that the pass rushers took over that game," Northwestern DE Dean Lowry said. "Even with Cam Newton and Peyton Manning, the guys on the defensive lines decided to take over. Von Miller and DeMarcus Ware won that game. That just shows how important pass rushers are and how important defensive line pressure on the quarterback is. That focus is not just in the Super Bowl. It's all the way back into the college game."

In a deep draft for defensive linemen, tackles included, Bosa is the consensus leader of the pass-rushing pack on a list highlighted by UCLA outside linebacker Myles Jack, Oregon end DeForest Buckner, Clemson end Shaq Lawson, Ohio State outside linebacker Darron Lee, Notre Dame outside linebacker Jaylon Smith, and Eastern Kentucky end Noah Spence. Spence started at Ohio State before being kicked off the team due to a drug problem.

Bosa, whose father and uncle were each drafted in the first round by the Miami Dolphins in the late 1980s, came from the football factory St. Thomas Aquinas in Fort Lauderdale, Florida, which had the most alumni of any high school on NFL rosters last season. His younger brother, Nick, signed with Ohio State for 2016. Bosa's sack total dropped from 13 1-2 as a sophomore to just five as a junior last year, but he pointed to the excess of double-teams he faced. "If I was double-teamed and not getting there, I knew somebody else was going to," Bosa said. "As long as we're succeeding as a defense, I was happy."

He was suspended for the season opener, too, for an unspecified violation of athletic department policy. "I really took that opportunity and didn't let it affect me negatively and let it help me grow as a person, as a leader, and as a player," Bosa said. "But I'll discuss that with the teams. I'm sure it'll be a little uncomfortable, but I've got to do what I've got to do." After spring becomes summer and summer turns to fall, Bosa will be back on the edge of the formation, making tackles - and quarterbacks uncomfortable.—AP



**INDIANAPOLIS:** Wisconsin offensive lineman Tyler Marz (left) and UCLA offensive lineman Alex Redmond run a drill at the NFL football scouting combine on Friday, Feb 26, 2016.—AP

## LIGHTLY RECRUITED PLAYERS NOW TURNING HEADS AT NFL COMBINE

**INDIANAPOLIS:** Jack Conklin walked to the podium in Indianapolis, glanced down at the surrounding crowd and shook his head in disbelief. Four years ago, Conklin had only one scholarship offer and was ready to attend prep school. Now the left tackle from Michigan State, who started his college career as an invited walk-on, is one of the most coveted offensive linemen in the nation. "It's crazy just to see how far I've come," Conklin said at the NFL scouting combine. "It's hard to think about to go from being four years ago to have no idea if I was going to be on a Division I team going into the fall. It's hard to take in how far I've come as a person and a player."

The odds were certainly stacked against Conklin making it this far. He played for his father, Darren, at a small Michigan high school, where the staff was not well schooled in the art of selling recruits to college coaches. The book on Conklin was he was too light and not strong enough to be a college lineman, and his resume supported the notion. He played mostly defensive end and tight end in high school and could lift only 225 pounds on the bench press about 10 times in succession.

His skill set appeared to be translated better to basketball, where he averaged 17.1 points and 10.4 rebounds as a senior, and if he had taken up Wayne State on its scholarship offer, Conklin might have fallen through the cracks in Division II football. Instead, Conklin bet on himself - just like a surprisingly high number of other big-name players in this year's draft class. "It was always a dream," North Dakota State quarterback Carson Wentz said. "I didn't think that today, this is where I was going to be. I didn't think like that. It was a goal."

Wentz was lightly recruited after moving from receiver to quarterback as a high school senior. His only FBS offer came from Central Michigan, so he wound up staying in his home state and playing for a school that has won five straight FCS national championships. Wentz could be the first quarterback taken in April, but he won't be the only one with this kind of story. The only scholarship offers fielded by Connor Cook, Conklin's college teammate, came from Michigan State, Miami (Ohio) and Akron. He wound starting three years and

played on two Big Ten championship teams. Paxton Lynch initially drew interest from schools such as Bethune-Cookman, Florida Tech and Florida A&M until he was chosen MVP of the 2011 Central Florida All-Star game. Then Indiana and Florida jumped on board, but his home state Gators only wanted him as a walk-on. So when Lynch got a late scholarship offer from Memphis, he took it.

Both could be first-round picks in April. It's not just a quarterback thing. Some thought Derrick Henry would move to defense in college. Alabama coach Nick Saban kept him at running back and after two seasons as T.J. Yeldon's backup, Henry became the school's second Heisman Trophy winner and led the Crimson Tide to the national championship. Receiver Josh Doctson wanted to play college football in his native Texas, but spent his freshman season at Wyoming. He transferred to TCU, going from walk-on to All-American and now to one of the top receivers in this year's draft.

To Doctson, the chance of a combine invite seemed so remote he didn't even consider it until he played his final college game. "I'm not supposed to be standing here in this stadium ... not really being recruited out of high school," Doctson said Friday. "I'm fortunate to be standing here in these shoes." Sure, there are stories like this at every combine. This year, they are more commonplace, more compelling and more eye-popping to those evaluating the prospects, who put a premium on the steady progression in college.

"It's a positive evaluation," Hall of Fame executive Bill Polian said. "What it tells you is that the guy has tremendous drive, and in some cases, you see that on tape. What's the difference between Jack Conklin and (former Colts center) Jeff Saturday? Jack's going to get drafted a little higher because he's a little taller." Four years ago, such a comparison seemed improbable. Today, Conklin just smiles, nods his head and appreciates how much has changed. "Four years ago, I was thinking, I had no idea where I was going to be," he said. "To be here now four years later, training for the combine and possibly being a first-round pick, it's crazy."—AP



# ASIA PUTS BRAVE FACE ON SALMAN DEFEAT

**HONG KONG:** Asian football leaders put a brave face on AFC boss Sheikh Salman bin Ebrahim Al Khalifa's FIFA presidential defeat yesterday and pledged to work with the world body's new head Gianni Infantino. Asian Football Confederation (AFC) head Sheikh Salman, gunning to become FIFA's first Asian leader, had been the pre-poll favorite but he lost out in the second round of voting. The Bahraini royal had repeatedly denied claims of complicity in human rights violations during a crackdown on pro-democracy protesters in his home country, calling them "nasty lies". He warmly embraced Swiss-Italian Infantino after the election result and later said in a statement that the AFC "looks forward to working with the new-look FIFA".

He added: "The new FIFA needs to become more inclusive and reflect the diversity of world football. I trust Gianni Infantino will provide the leadership to achieve this, as well as the rest of the reforms that are now urgently needed." Sheikh Salman's defeat is a blow to the ambitions of Asia and especially the Arab world, where there had been anticipation of a powerful new voice in sport.

The AFC has been a staunch supporter of the Qatar 2022 World Cup, whose controversial bidding process was at the heart of the crisis which engulfed FIFA and prompted Friday's poll.

Sheikh Salman enjoyed strong backing among the Asian voters, including the 10-member East Asian Football Federation which confirmed its support just before the election. The East Asian bloc includes powerhouse China, which aspires to host and even win a World Cup and has been splashing out on top players for the Chinese Super League. China's Xinhua news agency said Infantino had pledged that FIFA's new secretary-general wouldn't be from Europe, in a possible sign of hope for Asia. And sports.163.com called Infantino a "lucky star" for China after he promised to expand the World Cup from 32 to 40 teams, which would give the national team a better chance of qualifying.

### 'Mood for change'

Meanwhile India, another supporter of Sheikh Salman which hosted the annual AFC awards in November, said it

hoped to receive "due importance" under Infantino. "I am sure FIFA under the able leadership of Infantino would continue to give India its due importance and co-operation for the development and promotion of football," All India Football Federation vice-president Subrata Dutta said.

Infantino's election was warmly welcomed by Australia, an AFC member since 2006, despite its earlier announcement that it would vote for Jordan's Prince Ali bin Al Hussein. "Today was the best day FIFA has had in many years," Football Federation Australia chairman Steven Lowy said in a statement. "The mood for change was in the air and the congress voted overwhelmingly to move forward with a new structure and new leadership to implement it."

New Zealand, from the 11-member Oceania Football Confederation, confirmed that it voted for Infantino after meeting the candidates in Zurich before the vote. "The New Zealand Football delegation is delighted Gianni Infantino was elected and we firmly believe he is the right person to lead the next period for FIFA including the reform agenda,"



**MANAMA:** Bahraini supporters of FIFA presidential candidate Sheikh Salman bin Ebrahim Al-Khalifa (portrait), react following the news of Salman's defeat in the elections, at the Rotana hotel, in the capital Manama. —AFP

said New Zealand Football president Deryck Shaw. The election result made headlines around the region, with Hong

Kong's Apple Daily splashing "End of the Blatter dynasty", referring to suspended former leader Sepp Blatter.—AFP

## CELTIC BOSS BLASTS WASTEFUL CHAMPS

**GLASGOW:** Celtic manager Ronny Deila said his side need to start taking their chances after the Hoops were held to a 1-1 draw by Hamilton at New Douglas Park on Friday. Leigh Griffiths had given his side a 35th-minute lead from the penalty spot before teammate Dedryck Boyata saw red seven minutes later for a lunge on Carlton Morris. Gary Mackay-Steven and Griffiths both spurned chances to double Celtic's advantage before the Scotland striker saw his second penalty of the match saved by Hamilton stopper Michael McGovern.

Hamilton then grabbed a superb 73rd-minute equalizer through substitute Eamonn Brophy as they gained some redemption for their 8-1 humbling by the Hoops back in January. It ends a run of three successive wins for Celtic and the Parkhead club's manager was angry at his side's lack of composure in front of goal. "It's disappointing that we went down to 10 men and we didn't win this game," Deila said. "We started well but in the second half things were more open. You have to take your chances especially when you are down to 10 men. We had three very big chances and didn't score and they got theirs from a set play and that was disappointing."

"I think we defended in the second half better than we have with 10 men before and they didn't have a lot of chances and we had a lot of control. But we needed to want the ball more and create more chances and maybe have been braver on the ball. Leigh missed the penalty and he was two times alone with the goalkeeper

as well so that's hard to swallow. We had three very big chances and should have won the game." Boyata's red card for bringing down Morris had a big influence on the game and television replays appeared to suggest the Belgian defender got something on the ball first.

However, Deila said he had no argument with referee Craig Thompson's decision. "The sending off is an okay decision. He doesn't take the ball and we have to start learning that you have to stay on your feet and run with the player in those situations," the Norwegian manager said. "I've seen it one more time and he doesn't take the ball so it's a red card." The point means Celtic open a seven-point gap at the top of the table over Aberdeen, who could cut the deficit if they can defeat St Johnstone yesterday. "There are 11 matches left and a lot to play for. Nothing is finished here and I say that all the time," said Deila, whose side host Dundee on Wednesday.

"But we are going to fight to the last game and already on Wednesday we have a game where we want three points." Hamilton manager Martin Canning was proud of the progress his side had made since their 8-1 humiliation at Celtic Park. "The team worked ever so hard and deserved something from the game," Canning said. "Michael McGovern kept us in it with the penalty save and then we got our goal but with a bit of luck we might have got all three points. "I'm proud of the boys as it's such a big effort to take something off Celtic, albeit with ten men, but you have to put in the work."—AFP



**ZURICH:** New FIFA president Gianni Infantino, of Switzerland, waves to delegates after his election, during the Extraordinary FIFA Congress 2016 in Zurich, Switzerland on Friday, Feb 26, 2016. —AP

## INFANTINO GOES FROM STOP-GAP TO SOCCER MOST POWERFUL MAN

### FIFA ELECTS GIANNI INFANTINO AS PRESIDENT

**ZURICH:** Six months ago Gianni Infantino was a low-profile right-hand man to European soccer boss Michel Platini. He was the striking, shaven-headed character who pulled balls out of glass pots during televised UEFA competition draws. Barely-known by the general public, he was also the man behind a complex attempt to force Europe's clubs to rein in their spending, but which ended up leaving fans and even club directors confused.

On Friday, Infantino was chosen as the new president of FIFA, a position which made his predecessor Sepp Blatter as instantly recognizable as some of the world's leading statesmen. It was a remarkable leap for the affable Swiss-Italian. The polyglot lawyer only entered the FIFA race in late October, one day before the deadline, as a stop-gap candidate after Platini had been placed under investigation for ethics violations. When Platini failed to clear his name and was banned from football for six years, Infantino was left carrying the hopes of European football.

In the intervening time, he has visited several dozen countries, clocking up by his own calculations enough air miles to have flown around the world three times. "On October 27, I started my journey in Cairo, and last Monday I finished in Cape Town, so it was a kind of Cape to Cairo in reverse," he said during his presentation to the FIFA congress on Friday. "It was destiny which brought me to start the journey, an exciting journey, a fantastic journey," he said. "Five months ago I was not thinking of being a candidate but many things have happened."

### Changing fortunes

At the same time as he was delivering his speech in Zurich, almost three hours' drive away in Nyon the draw was being held for the Europa League, Europe's second-tier club competition. Had the dice fallen differently, Infantino would have been conducting that draw. Having joined UEFA in 2000, Infantino rose to become its general secretary in 2009, just as Platini announced his break-even rule known as Financial Fair Play. Designed to stop rich owners buying success by ploughing unlimited amounts of cash into their clubs, the rule banned them from spending more than their generated revenue.

Infantino has said it saved European clubs from spending themselves into oblivion but critics argued it prevented smaller clubs from growing and cemented a status quo in which the same teams dominate. There was also confusion over the way it was implemented. UEFA initially said that clubs who did not comply would be kicked out of European competition, no matter how big. In the event, clubs were allowed to negotiate settlements and, while some were subjected to financial penalties and squad reductions, no big clubs were expelled from European competition. "Financial Fair Play is a very important tool and the only thing (prob-

lem) is that it's not all that easy sometimes to understand how the system works, and maybe UEFA has to do it more transparently," said Bayern Munich chief executive Karl-Heinz Rummenigge. Infantino's watch has also seen the European Championship expanded from 16 to 24 teams and the innovative move of staging the 2020 tournament in 13 cities around Europe rather than a single host nation. Although it is hoped Infantino's election will mark a clean break with FIFA's past, his rise to the top bears some similarities to that of his disgraced predecessor Blatter,

who has been banned for six years for ethics violations. Both were raised in the same Swiss valley, only 10 km (six miles) from each other, both were modest amateur footballers and both speak the same five languages. Each went to university and then began their careers in the French-speaking part of Switzerland. During the campaign, Infantino often had to fend off suggestions that he is too Eurocentric. "I'm not the European candidate, I'm not the UEFA candidate," he responded at one point. "I'm a football person, so I feel that I am the candidate for football."—Reuters



**Manchester City's Chilean manager Manuel Pellegrini**



**Liverpool manager Jurgen Klopp**

## KLOPP, PELLEGRINI CROSS PATHS IN A LEAGUE CUP SHOWDOWN

**LONDON:** Liverpool manager Jurgen Klopp will be bidding to secure his first trophy for the club and Manchester City counterpart Manuel Pellegrini potentially his last in today's League Cup final. Klopp, 48, is less than five months into his mission to restore Liverpool to former glories, whereas Pellegrini, 62, has only three months left in the City saddle before handing the reins to Pep Guardiola. City are the favorites, but former Liverpool captain Steven Gerrard has claimed that the nous Klopp demonstrated by leading Borussia Dortmund to five trophies will give the underdogs the edge at Wembley.

Responding to Gerrard's prediction, made in the Daily Telegraph, Klopp said: "I am not sure I am the difference, but I know the way. There is absolutely no reason at this moment to have a doubt. I have to show it as clear as possible so there is no misunderstanding between my mouth and the ears of the players. "We do this job in professional football. We only want to win things: titles, cups, whatever. "A lot of managers work their whole lives and can be really successful, but have never the chance to win something. Now, everything is possible."

Having fallen nine points below fourth-place City in the Premier League, Liverpool's hopes of Champions League qualification are fading and they were recently eliminated from the FA Cup by West Ham United. They will face Manchester United in a tantalizing last-16 Europa League tie, but it is today's game that offers Klopp the best chance to make a mark in his maiden campaign. With eight

trophies, Liverpool are the League Cup's most successful club, but they have not procured any silverware since they last won the tournament in 2012. Klopp's tenure to date has been a tale of feast and famine, with dreary displays interspersed by stunning results such as slick away wins at City and Chelsea, a breathless 5-4 victory at Norwich City and six-goal thrashings of both Southampton and Aston Villa.

### Big guns return

Liverpool won 4-1 at the Etihad Stadium in November when they last faced City, but Klopp and Pellegrini have attempted to play down the significance of that result. Perhaps significantly, both men have since recovered key personnel—notably captain Vincent Kompany and playmaker David Silva for City and skipper Jordan Henderson and striker Daniel Sturridge for Liverpool.

Liverpool's starting XI has been largely unchanged since the 6-0 Valentine's Day demolition of Villa, with Klopp making just one change across that game and the two-legged Europa League win over German side Augsburg. His key decision regards his centre-back pairing, with fit-again duo Martin Skrtel and Dejan Lovren back in contention along with Mamadou Sakho, Kolo Toure and converted midfielder Lucas Leiva. Pellegrini is hopeful that Kompany, Liverpool old boy Raheem Sterling and right-back Bacary Sagna will be fit despite training away from the main group on Friday. Eliaquim Mangala, Jesus Navas and Wilfried Bony are all available for selection again, while cup goalkeeper Willy Caballero is expected to take over from Joe Hart.—AFP

## STERLING'S ROAD TO WEMBLEY BRINGS CITY STAR BACK HOME

**LONDON:** When Raheem Sterling gazes out the window of Manchester City's coach on the road to Wembley today, it will be no surprise if the winger's dreams of League Cup glory are interrupted by a flashback to his childhood. Sterling's presence amid the pomp and circumstance of City's League Cup final showdown with Liverpool represents a remarkable triumph in the face of adversity for the 21-year-old. Only 11 years ago, Sterling was facing an uncertain future as a new arrival at Vernon House, a school for children with behavioral difficulties which is situated less than a mile from Wembley.

Transplanted from Jamaica when his mother was forced to move to London to improve her financial situation by working as a nurse, Sterling was struggling to adapt to the bleak surroundings of the west London estate that became his home from age five. Sterling, who had no contact with his father before he was killed in a gang-related incident in Kingston when he was nine, was in danger of earning a potentially ruinous label as a disruptive pupil.

"He was a tiny little ball of energy, and sometimes that would tip over into anger and he would get aggressive with other kids," his Vernon House teacher Chris Beschi told BBC Sport. But, crucially, Sterling found an outlet for his growing pains whenever he had a ball at his feet and by the time he was 11 he had caught the eye of youth coaches at nearby QPR. Unlike so many of his pampered contemporaries in the Premier League, who are whisked away to plush academies to learn their trade, Sterling's football education had initially come on the streets, where he would play with a juice carton or a can if no ball was affordable.

### Mean streets

"He was a street footballer," former QPR

academy chief Steve Gallen told Bleacher Report. "And he lived in Stonebridge, so these were mean streets. They didn't mess about there. "It helped develop his mentality. He was so small the bullies thought they could intimidate him. "They couldn't get close. He'd ride tackles and when they did hit him, it never bothered him for an instant. He had no fear."

It wasn't long before that tenacious attitude blended with Sterling's innate talent to produce a player so promising that Liverpool signed him when he had yet to make a single professional appearance. He quickly became the third youngest player in Liverpool's history, making his debut aged 17 in 2012, and was just 17 years and 341 days old when he became the fifth youngest player to represent England later the same year. Sterling's off-the-cuff excellence in the maelstrom of Liverpool's unsuccessful bid to win the Premier League in 2013-14 secured his reputation as the most gifted youngster of his generation.

But, with the Reds slumping a year later and City keen to sign him, Sterling infuriated Liverpool by rejecting a new contract, provoking an ugly dispute before he finally forced a move to Eastlands in July 2015 in a £49 million (\$67 million, 62 million euros) deal that made him the most expensive player in the world aged 21 or younger. Sterling's naked ambition drew plenty of criticism, but, strutting it off in the same way he hurdles challenges on the pitch, the winger has gradually established himself as one of City's key figures. And if he delivers an influential display to win the first major silverware of his career against his old club, Sterling will have graduated with honors in the most fitting venue.—AFP



## ARNAUTOVIC'S DOUBLE SINKS STRUGGLING VILLA



**STOKE-ON-TRENT:** Aston Villa's desperate hopes of a lifeline at the bottom of the Premier League foundered on yet another miserable away-day yesterday as Marko Arnautovic struck twice for Stoke City. After a dismal first half low on quality, Arnautovic

buried his fierce penalty straight down the middle and into the net early in the second half after Phil Bardsley had been brought down in the box by Ashley Westwood. Within five minutes the Austrian international bundled in his second, winning a header and then chesting the ball over the line himself, before Villa gave themselves half a chance with a 79th-minute Leandro Bacuna reply. The result left Remi Garde's men still seven points adrift after a game which epitomised why they are the league's lowest scorers. They have been unable to win an away league game all season since their opening-day victory at Bournemouth.—Reuters

## WATFORD AND BOURNEMOUTH IN STALEMATE



**LONDON:** Watford and Bournemouth played out a turgid 0-0 draw in the Premier League yesterday that left the visitors embroiled in the battle to avoid relegation. Watford striker Odion Ighalo forced Bournemouth keeper Artur Boruc into an early save as the hosts started well. Heurlho Gomes made a fine stop to deny Harry Arter's sweet strike for Bournemouth

in the second half before striker Ighalo wasted an excellent chance for the hosts when he headed over the bar from an unmarked position.

**Daniels extends contract**  
Bournemouth left back Charlie Daniels has committed his future to the south coast side by signing a new three-and-a-half year contract, the Premier League club said on Friday. The 29-year-old, who has claimed five league assists this campaign, more than any other defender apart from Tottenham Hotspur's Danny Rose, has made more than 150 appearances for club. Daniels, who joined from fourth tier Leyton Orient in 2011, has started 25 of Bournemouth's 26 league matches this season, scoring two goals.— Agencies



**LONDON:** West Ham United's Cheikhou Kouyate (right) and Sunderland's Lee Cattermole (left) battle for the ball, during the English Premier League soccer match between West Ham United and Sunderland FC yesterday. — AP

## WEST HAM'S ANTONIO KEEPS SUNDERLAND IN TROUBLE



**LONDON:** Michail Antonio struck as West Ham United enhanced their European qualifying hopes and snuffed out Sunderland's recent revival with a 1-0 victory yesterday. The former Nottingham Forest midfielder scored in the 30th minute, clinically punishing a loose clearance by Patrick van Aanholt to take his tally for the east London club to five goals. Slaven Bilic's side climbed to fifth place in the Premier League, supplanting Manchester United in the Europa League berth, and closed to within four points of the Champions League places. Sunderland manager Sam Allardyce met with defeat on his return to Upton Park and has now seen his team go 14 matches without a clean sheet in all competitions.

Sunderland, who had drawn 2-2 at Liverpool and beaten Manchester United 2-1 on their two previous outings, remain a point from safety. A sleepy game leapt to life in the 19th minute when Manuel Lanzini teed up Mark Noble for a first-time drive that Sunderland goalkeeper Vito Mannone brilliantly tipped onto the visitors' bar. Mannone's opposite number, Adrian, gave the home fans a scare when he elected to perform some kick-ups after receiving a back-pass, allowing Wahbi Khazri to charge down his attempted clearance.

Moments later, Khazri almost embarrassed the Spaniard with an opportunistic free-kick from deep on the right that hit the top of the crossbar. But it was West Ham who made the breakthrough after Van Aanholt failed to get enough purchase on the ball as he attempted to

clear Sam Byram's hopeful pass down the hosts' right flank. Antonio picked up the pieces, leaving Van Aanholt trailing by languidly dragging the ball onto his left foot and then curling a low shot into the bottom-left corner. Like Allardyce, Jermain Defoe was up against his former club and he spurned a chance to equalize early in the second half when he lashed wide after James Collins had misjudged Lee Cattermole's lobbed pass.

Van Aanholt and Yann M'Vila also shot off-target as Sunderland began to make inroads, while Adrian saved sharply with his feet from Jack Rodwell. West Ham substitute Andy Carroll almost made the game safe when he met Byram's knock-down with a full-blooded volley, but the ball cannoned back into play off the bar. Back at the other end, Byram thwarted Rodwell and Adrian saved one-handed from Dame N'Doye, before Dimitri Payet went close to swelling the hosts' lead by flashing a left-foot volley narrowly wide.— AFP



### Matches on TV (Local Timings)

ENGLISH PREMIER LEAGUE		beIN SPORTS 4 HD	
Liverpool v Everton	15:00	Sampdoria v Frosinone	17:00
Newcastle v Man City	15:00	Carpi v Atalanta	17:00
Man United v Arsenal	17:05	Juventus v Inter Milan	22:45
Tottenham v Swansea	17:05		
SPANISH LEAGUE		GERMAN LEAGUE	
Real Sociedad v Malaga	0:05	Augsburg v Monchengladbach	17:30
Villarreal v Levante	14:00	Dortmund v Hoffenheim	19:30
Valencia v de Bilbao	18:00	Mainz 05 v Bayer 04	19:30
Deportivo v Granada	20:15	Eintracht Frankfurt v Schalke	21:30
Barcelona v Sevilla	22:30	FRENCH LEAGUE	
		Nantes v AS Monaco	16:00
ITALIAN LEAGUE		Ajaccio v de Marseille	19:00
Citta di Palermo v Bologna	14:30	Saint Etienne v Caen	19:00
Udinese v Hellas Verona	17:00	Lyon v Paris Saint-Germain	23:00
Chievo Verona v Genoa	17:00		

## KOHLI PROPS UP INDIA AFTER BOWLERS SKITTLE PAKISTAN

**DHAKA:** Virat Kohli scored a confident 49 to prop up India in a tricky chase as they defeated neighbors Pakistan by five wickets in a low-scoring Asia Cup match yesterday. India, who will host the World Twenty20 next month, will be boosted by the performance of their bowlers ahead of the March 8-April 3 tournament after they skittled Pakistan for 83 inside 18 overs.

India captain Mahendra Singh Dhoni opted to bowl first on a green-tinged pitch at the Shere Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur and his bowlers responded brilliantly, extracting good movement out of the wicket. Medium pacer Hardik Pandya was the most successful among the Indian bowlers, picking up three wickets for eight runs, while Pakistan did not help their own cause with Khuram Manzoor and captain Shahid Afridi running themselves out.

Wicketkeeper Sarfraz Ahmed's 25 was Pakistan's highest individual score while Manzoor, making his T20 debut, was the only other batsman to reach double figures

with 10. India's chase also began on a sorry note with left-arm pacer Mohammad Amir dismissing both openers Rohit Sharma and Ajinkya Rahane leg before in the first over before they had opened their scoring. Suresh Raina fell in Amir's next over as India were reduced to 8-3 with Kohli and Yuvraj Singh at the crease.

Yuvraj struggled against the Pakistan pace attack initially but managed to stay at the crease with Kohli as the duo added 68 for the fourth wicket to take India in sight of their target. Kohli looked assured and on course for his 13th T20 fifty but was given lbw against pacer Mohammad Sami though he seemed to have got an edge on the ball. Pandya fell two balls later for a duck, edging Sami to Mohammad Hafeez at first slip where the fielder managed to hold on after juggling the ball a few times. India were still eight runs away from their target but southpaw Yuvraj (14 not out) and Dhoni took them home with 27 balls to spare.— Reuters

## BAYERN WINS IN WOLFSBURG AS STUTTGART LOSES TO HANNOVER

**FRANKFURT:** Kingsley Coman and Robert Lewandowski scored in the second half to give Bundesliga front-runner Bayern Munich a 2-0 win in Wolfsburg yesterday. The defending champion stayed on course for an unprecedented fourth straight title and provisionally increased its lead over Borussia Dortmund to 11 points. Dortmund hosts Hoffenheim today. In other matches, Claudio Pizarro scored a late goal to salvage a 2-2 draw for Werder Bremen against Darmstadt, bottom-place Hannover ended a five-match losing streak under new coach Thomas Schaaf with a 2-1 win in Stuttgart and Hamburger SV settled for a 1-1 draw at home against Ingolstadt.

Lewandowski raised his league-high tally to 23 goals to secure Bayern's win in Wolfsburg. Pep Guardiola's team did just enough to win against last season's runner-up. There were no other matches yesterday, with four matches scheduled unusually for Sunday due to Europa League matches two days ago. In Wolfsburg, the host team wasted the better chances in the first half despite Bayern's dominance.

Franck Ribery came on 11 minutes into the second half for Arjen Robben and the French winger played a role in both Bayern goals. He dribbled past three Wolfsburg players before getting the ball to Lewandowski, whose shot was deflected. The ball fell kindly to Coman, who slotted it home from close range in the 66th. The same three players also created Bayern's second in the 74th. Coman broke through on the right and crossed into the area. Ribery chested the ball down and Lewandowski drove it inside the post with the outside of his right foot. Lewandowski scored a Bundesliga-record five goals inside nine minutes when Bayern won 5-1 at home in the fall.

"These are a very important three points for us," Lewandowski said. "We were patient. Wolfsburg was defending and waiting for the counter." Guardiola said it was difficult to play four days after the intense 2-2 draw with Juventus in the Champions League. "We started very well but we are not resolute enough in our attacks," the outgoing Bayern coach said. "Once we scored, it became easier for us. Ribery was important with his one-on-one skill." In Stuttgart, Hannover earned its first win after eight straight losses with Japan midfielder Hiroshi Kiyotake setting up both goals with free kicks for captain Christian Schulz.

Timo Werner scored the opening goal for Stuttgart, which had several chances foiled by Hannover goalkeeper Ron-Robert Zieler and lost for the first time after an undefeated run of eight matches. The win restored some hope for Hannover in the battle against relegation. Werder didn't help its cause by failing to win at home against promoted Darmstadt, which led 2-1 on goals from Sandro Wagner's penalty and Aytac Sulu before Pizarro struck in the 89th. Werder, which led on a goal by Anthony Ujah, has only one win in 11 home matches. Newly signed Josip Drmic gave Hamburg an early lead before Lukas Hinterseer struck in the 61st for Ingolstadt's first goal away from home in five matches.— AP



**MADRID:** Atletico's Antoine Griezmann (bottom) celebrates with teammates after scoring during a Spanish La Liga soccer match between Real Madrid and Atletico Madrid at the Santiago Bernabeu stadium in Madrid yesterday. — AP

## GRIEZMANN KEEPS ATLETICO'S TITLE HOPES ALIVE; BEAT REAL

**MADRID:** Antoine Griezmann scored a goal early in the second half to give Atletico Madrid a 1-0 win over Real Madrid at Santiago Bernabeu Stadium yesterday, keeping Atletico's title hopes alive and virtually ending its rival's chances in the Spanish league. The French forward scored with a left-footer in the 53rd minute after a cross by Brazilian left back Filipe Luis, helping visiting Atletico pull within five points of leader Barcelona, which hosts Sevilla today to close out the 26th round. Real Madrid could drop 12 points behind Barcelona if the Catalan club wins today.

It was Real Madrid's first defeat at home since a humiliating 4-0 loss to Barcelona in November. The team had won seven straight at Bernabeu. Fans loudly jeered Real Madrid president Florentino Perez, calling for his resignation. After the final whistle, many fans waved white "goodbye" handkerchiefs to show their displeasure with the president. Some protested outside the stadium, prompting police to intervene to disperse the crowd. "The league is over for us," Real Madrid coach Zinedine Zidane said. "To lose to Atletico at home is very difficult to overcome."

It's the third season in a row that Atletico beat Real Madrid at Bernabeu in the Spanish league. "This win gives Atletico Madrid fans reason to feel very proud of their players," Atletico coach Diego Simeone said. "Atletico keeps improving. We are going through a good moment." Simeone said it remains difficult to catch up to Barcelona, which against Sevilla has a chance to tie Real Madrid's record of 34 unbeaten games in all competitions set in 1988 and 1989. "The truth is that Barcelona is very good, it will be difficult for them to lose three games," Simeone said. "Of course you always want more, but we have to keep focused on our goal, which is to finish in the top three."

Griezmann got the winner in a breakthrough that started near midfield. He carried the ball to the top of the area, fed Luis on the left flank and the Brazilian passed it right back for Griezmann's shot from near the penalty spot. "It was crucial victory for us," Griezmann said. "We will keep fighting." Atletico had not scored a goal in its last two games. It hasn't conceded in four straight matches. Real Madrid started pressuring and controlled the early parts of the game but Atletico improved and didn't allow the hosts to create many chances. Cristiano Ronaldo, who had scored seven goals in his last three games at the Bernabeu, came close to equalizing with a header in the 68th but the ball went straight into the hands of Atletico goalkeeper Jan Oblak.

"It was a game we had to win and we didn't," Ronaldo said. "It was already complicated to win the league before this loss, now it's even harder. We have to keep our focus on the Champions League." Ronaldo's best opportunity with the game tied came just three minutes into the second half when he entered the area free from markers but sent his low show just wide of the far post. He had another chance from a free kick in the 32nd but his swerving shot was saved by Oblak. One of Atletico's best chances in the first half had been a long-range shot by Griezmann, forcing goalkeeper Keylor Navas to make a difficult save in the 40th.

Madrid wanted a red card for Atletico defender Diego Godin pulling Karim Benzema's jersey when the French striker headed toward the goal in the 31st but the referee only showed Godin a yellow card. Madrid also sought a penalty on Danilo in the 75th. The game match marked the encounter of the league's best offense and the top defense.— AP

### SCOREBOARD

**DHAKA:** Scoreboard yesterday in the Asia Cup match between India and Pakistan at Sher-e-Bangla National Cricket Stadium:

Pakistan	0-11-2 (4w), Ravichandran Ashwin 3-0-21-0 (5w).
Mohammad Hafeez c Dhoni b Nehra	4
Sharjeel Khan c Rahane b Bumrah	7
Khuram Manzoor run out	10
Shoaib Malik c Dhoni b Pandya	4
Umar Akmal lbw b Singh	3
Sarfraz Ahmed b Jadeja	25
Shahid Afridi run out	2
Wahab Riaz lbw b Jadeja	4
Mohammad Sami c Raina b Pandya	8
Mohammad Amir b Pandya	1
Mohammad Irfan not out	0
Extras: (4lb, 11w)	15
TOTAL: (all out)	83
Overs: 17.3	
Fall of wickets: 1-4, 2-22, 3-32, 4-35, 5-35, 6-42, 7-52, 8-70, 9-83, 10-83.	
Bowling: Ashish Nehra 3-0-20-1 (2w), Jasprit Bumrah 3-2-8	
1, Hardik Pandya 3.3-0-8-3, Yuvraj Singh 2-0-11-1, Ravindra Jadeja 3	
India	
Rohit Sharma lbw b Amir 0 Ajinkya Rahane lbw b Amir 0 Virat Kohli lbw b Sami 49 Suresh Raina c Riaz b Amir 1 Yuvraj Singh not out 14 Hardik Pandya c Hafeez b Sami 0 MS Dhoni not out 7 Extras: (1b, 3lb, 8w, 2nb) 14 TOTAL: (for 5 wickets) 85 Overs: 15.3.	
Fall of wickets: 1-0, 2-2, 3-8, 4-76, 5-76.	
Did not bat: Ravindra Jadeja, Ravichandran Ashwin, Jasprit Bumrah, Ashish Nehra.	
Bowling: Mohammad Amir 4-0-18-3 (6w), Mohammad Sami 4-0-16-2, Mohammad Irfan 4-0-16-0 (1w, 1nb), Wahab Riaz 3.3-0-31-0 (1w, 1nb). Result: India won by 5 wickets.	
Toss: India.	
Umpires: Ruchira Palliyaguruge, Sri Lanka, and, Sharfuddoula, Bangladesh.	
TV umpire: Enamul Haque, Bangladesh. Match referee: Richie Richardson, West Indies.—AFP	



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LEICESTER: Leicester's Riyad Mahrez (center) is tackled by Norwich's Alexander Tettey (left) during the English Premier League soccer match between Leicester City and Norwich City at the King Power Stadium in Leicester yesterday. — AP

## LEICESTER SURGE CLEAR AS ULLOA SHINES



**LEICESTER:** Leicester City eked out a critical win against struggling Norwich City with a very late winner from substitute Leonardo Ulloa that opened up a five-point lead at the top of the Premier League yesterday. Following their crushing stoppage time defeat at Arsenal last time out, the Foxes had, according to manager Claudio Ranieri, been "ready for the fight" but for most of the match seemed curiously becalmed as Norwich enjoyed the best openings.

Yet Ulloa's 89th-minute winner, following one of Leicester's flattest performances of their surreal season, demonstrated to him that his side has the patient, determined make-up of champions. "The conclusion I have drawn from this is that my players believe until the end," a delighted Ranieri told the BBC. "That, for me, is very important. If the other teams start to win, they can win all the matches. But for us, the next match is always the final match. That is our mentality."

Ranieri reckoned he had been particularly worried about this match with his players having had two weeks since the deflation of their Arsenal loss to reflect on what might have been. "I was so worried about this match, because after two weeks, your players can lose their tempo, but now I am very relaxed, and now I start

to think about the West Brom match (on Tuesday). It is a derby and a very, very tough match."

Cameron Jerome had squandered the outstanding chance of the game for the Canaries just before halftime, glancing a header wide, but though they labored unimaginatively through much of the second half, Leicester sent the King Power Stadium wild in the dying seconds. For once, it was not Jamie Vardy or Riyad Mahrez who delivered the goods but unsung Argentine striker Ulloa, who was brought on in the 77th minute as Ranieri's final gamble to take the points. It proved an inspired change, with the 29-year-old sliding in at the back post to latch on to Marc Albrighton's cross and earn the result which leaves Norwich, who were worth at least a point, still in peril just above the relegation zone. — Reuters



SOUTHAMPTON: Chelsea's Brazilian-born Spanish striker Diego Costa (left) shoots but doesn't score as Southampton's Dutch defender Virgil van Dijk (right) defends during the English Premier League football match between Southampton and Chelsea at St Mary's Stadium in Southampton yesterday. — AFP

## WAWRINKA WINS DUBAI TITLE AFTER MARATHON TIEBREAK

**DUBAI:** Stan Wawrinka edged out Cypriot Marcos Baghdatis in a nerve-jangling, near-30 minute tiebreak to secure the Dubai Duty Free Championship with a 6-4 7-6(13) triumph yesterday. Wawrinka's path to victory had been eased by the retirements of world number one Novak Djokovic and Australian prospect Nick Kyrgios in the earlier rounds but the Swiss often toiled against surprise finalist Baghdatis, whom he beat for a sixth successive time.

World number four Wawrinka was gifted the first set by a Baghdatis double fault-his third of that game alone-and a tepid second set was notable for not featuring a single break point. But then followed a 28-point tiebreak in which twice grand slam champion Wawrinka saved five set points before a Baghdatis backhand drifted long to give the Swiss a second title of the year following his victory in Chennai in January. "It's been an amazing year. I'm playing my best tennis since a few years now so hopefully I can keep this level," Wawrinka said.

Baghdatis initially played serve and volley with aplomb, while Wawrinka's stinging backhand was lethal from the baseline, but that early assurance proved fleeting as both players made a catalogue of errors. Wawrinka afforded Baghdatis two break points after whipping a forehand wide and the Cypriot converted following another wayward Swiss forehand for a 3-2 first-set lead. Wawrinka, who was within two points of suffering opening-round elimination at the Aviation Club, immediately broke back with a crosscourt winner past the advancing Baghdatis, who was seeking a first title since 2010.

The pair were content to trade half-paced shots from



**DUBAI:** Stan Wawrinka from Switzerland holds the trophy after he beats Marcos Baghdatis from Cyprus during the final match of the Dubai Tennis Championships in Dubai yesterday. — AFP

the back of the court and when either did up the tempo it usually failed. World number 57 Baghdatis, serving at 4-5, saved four set points but his serve deserted him again as he conceded the set. The second set went with serve before an attritional tiebreak in which Baghdatis fluffed chances to square the match and Wawrinka threw his racket in frustration after missing an easy forehand. "It was a crazy tiebreak," added Wawrinka. "Until 6-6 I was always up with a mini break ... I did two or three quick mistakes. Then it starts to be all about nerves. You try to play simple, aggressive and it was good to finish in two sets." — Reuters

## CHELSEA SINK SOUTHAMPTON



**SOUTHAMPTON:** Late goals from Cesc Fabregas and Branislav Ivanovic saw an impressive Chelsea come from behind to beat Southampton 2-1 at St Mary's Stadium in the Premier League yesterday. Southampton took the lead on 41 minutes through Shane Long, but Fabregas drew the champions level in the 75th, as Chelsea became the first team to score against Southampton in seven games.

Ivanovic headed the winner in the 89th minute following a corner taken by Willian. Chelsea extended its unbeaten league run since interim manager Guus Hiddink replaced Jose Mourinho in December to 11 games. That level of form could yet salvage Chelsea's season, with the team moving up to 11th in the standings, 11 points behind fourth-place Manchester City. Southampton, which had not conceded in six games before Saturday,

dropped to seventh place in the table - dealing a blow to its own hopes of European football next season.

In a surprise move, given Southampton's recent fine form, made Ronald Koeman made two changes, giving striker Charlie Austin his first league start in place of Graziano Pelle, as well as recalling right-back Cedric for James Ward-Prowse. Chelsea, which was still without injured captain John Terry, remained unchanged after last weekend's 5-1 victory against Manchester City. The visitors were however forced into an early change after Pedro pulled up with what looked like a hamstring injury, with Oscar taking his place.

But just as Chelsea was beginning to grow into the game, Southampton took the lead following a mistake by Baba Rahman. The young defender headed the ball straight into the path of Long, and Southampton's top scorer was able to race into the penalty area before beating Thibaut Courtois with a highly composed close-range chip. However, Chelsea produced a vastly-improved performance in the second half and got its reward with a fortuitous equalizer, when Fabregas sent over a 75th minute cross that crept past goalkeeper Fraser Forster. The goal gave Hiddink's side renewed hope, with Willian going close from the edge of the area. Willian then followed up by providing the corner kick for Ivanovic's match-winning header. — AP



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SHANGHAI: Officials led by host country officials Chinese Finance Minister Lou Jiwei (center left in front) and People's Bank of China Governor Zhou Xiaochuan, center right in front, pose for a family photo of G20 Finance Ministers and Central Bank Governors Meeting at the Pudong Shangri-la Hotel in Shanghai yesterday. —AP

## G20 NATIONS PLEDGE ALL TOOLS TO LIFT GROWTH GERMANY RAISES FUROR OVER FISCAL AND MONETARY STIMULUS

SHANGHAI: The world's 20 top economies will use all policy tools available to lift sluggish global growth, they said yesterday, despite German disquiet over fiscal and monetary stimulus.

The G20 finance ministers and central bank chiefs meeting in Shanghai said in a communique that while the global recovery was continuing, "it remains uneven and falls short of our ambition for strong, sustainable and balanced growth."

The gathering came amid fears driven by slowing growth in host nation China, steep falls in world financial markets, and US interest rates having risen for the first time in nine years while Japan has adopted negative rates. The OECD last week cut its 2016 global growth forecast from 3.3 percent to 3.0 percent.

The G20 communique cited a list of specific risks the world faces, including volatile capital flows, falling commodity prices and rising geopolitical tensions, along with "the shock of a potential UK exit from the European Union and a large and increasing number of refugees in some regions."

But disagreements about the right remedy emerged on Friday, the first day of the meeting, after Germany's Finance Minister Wolfgang Schäuble said attempts to boost economies with monetary loosening could be counterproductive and fiscal stimulus-governments spending more or cutting taxes-had run its course.

"Fiscal as well as monetary policies have reached their limits," he said. "If you want the real economy to grow there are no shortcuts without reforms." As the European Union's

largest and richest member, Germany sometimes has different economic priorities to other countries and Schäuble was at odds with the United States, Britain and China, which all backed the use of monetary and fiscal tools to fight a downturn, as well as structural reforms.

Berlin does "not agree on a G20 fiscal stimulus package," the German minister said.

In the event the communique acknowledged: "Monetary policy alone cannot lead to balanced growth," and said fiscal policy would be used "flexibly," while giving a nod to the importance of structural reforms. But France's Finance Minister Michel Sapin told AFP earlier that while "no-one" was suggesting a co-ordinated global stimulus package, those in a "better situation" should use it in an "intelligent" way to "support global demand."

Asked about the German stance, he said

some countries might be "reluctant for historic, cultural reasons, which can be understandable... but today we are in an economic situation which requires all the policy tools that exist to be used."

US Treasury Secretary Jacob Lew told reporters Friday that "it's increasingly important to use all the levers of policy that are available, and that means using fiscal levels as well as monetary policy and structural reforms."

### 'Market volatility'

While the US Federal Reserve raised interest rates in December, many analysts believe it will delay any more tightening given renewed risks for the US recovery. This year the Bank of Japan and the European Central Bank (ECB) adopted negative interest rates

and huge quantitative easing programs.

But the document did not express any explicit concerns over China, where growth has slowed to its weakest in 25 years. In the communique the group reaffirmed their previous commitments to "refrain from competitive devaluations" or "target our exchange rates for competitive purposes."

There are widespread concerns Beijing could lower the value of its yuan in order to lift its struggling export sector-at its competitors' expense-though Chinese officials deny any such plans.

"There is no basis for persistent renminbi depreciation from the perspective of fundamentals," People's Bank of China chief Zhou Xiaochuan said Friday. "We will not resort to competitive devaluations to boost our advantage in exports." —AFP

### OSBORNE PUSHES BREXIT ONTO G20 LIST OF RISKS

SHANGHAI: British finance minister George Osborne pushed to include the risk of Britain leaving the European Union onto the list of risks to the global economy agreed by financial leaders of the top 20 economies yesterday, G20 officials said.

Britain will vote in a referendum in June whether it wants to remain part of the 28-nation EU.

British Prime Minister David Cameron negotiated a special status for Britain in the bloc last week to help convince Eurosceptics that continued membership would benefit the United Kingdom more than leaving. The risk of Britain exiting the EU, dubbed "Brexit", was not in the original draft of the communique of finance ministers and central bankers of the top 20 economies, but was added on the insistence of Britain, G20 officials said.

The final G20 communique, seen by Reuters, lists "a shock of a potential UK exit from the European Union" as one of the risks to the global economy, alongside with volatile markets, cheap commodities and the migration crisis.

"It was the British who called for it, but it did not meet with opposition," one G20 official said. "Everyone around the table would rather avoid a shock of that sort at such a fragile time for the global economy," the official said.

Some G20 officials also saw the inclusion of the line on Britain in the communique as a way to draw attention to the negative consequences of exiting the EU to support Cameron's campaign to stay in.

Italian Finance Minister Pier Carlo Padoa-Schioppa said that a decision by Britain to leave the EU would have negative global consequences.

"We would classify a UK exit from the EU as a powerful geopolitical shock, a negative shock," Padoa-Schioppa told reporters in Shanghai.

The City of London is a major financial centre for world finance, accounting for roughly 10 percent of Britain's GDP and some bankers believe that leaving the EU could disrupt business and force many financial institutions to move out. —Reuters

## ANGRY PROTESTS AS FRANCE'S FARM EXPO OPENS

PARIS: France's annual farm fair kicked off yesterday with dramatic displays of anger by farmers facing ruin, with protesters heckling President Francois Hollande and tearing down the agriculture ministry's pavilion. Five members of the main farmers' union FNSEA were arrested after the protesters destroyed the stand's walls and furniture, the union said. They wanted to "say loud and clear at the stand... that this country's agricultural producers don't feel like citizens," FNSEA secretary-general Dominique Barreau told AFP. "That's the exasperation, that's where we are!"

Earlier, livestock farmers booed and whistled as Hollande and Agriculture Minister Stephane Le Foll arrived to start the fair, when the countryside comes to Paris to show off the cream of French produce.

As the pair made their way through the vast exhibition centre in southern Paris, they walked past a large banner reading: "I am the best in my profession but my mission is no longer enough."

Livestock farmers, some wearing black T-shirts reading "I'm a livestock farmer, I'm dying", heckled Hollande, calling him "good for nothing" and "manure" who should resign.

One shouted: "He couldn't care less about us." "I hear the cries of distress," said Hollande, who plans to seek re-election in 15 months despite dismal approval ratings. "If I am here today it's to show that there is national solidarity."

France has seen months of protests across the country, with farmers blocking roads with their tractors and dumping manure outside government offices. Hollande acknowledged that the crisis facing farmers is "exceptionally hard, exceptionally long, exceptionally generalised."

He added: "To come and exhibit in the context of so much difficulty and pain is a lovely act of patriotism. It is not compliments that farmers want but lasting policies."

Laurent Pinatel, spokesman of the national small farmers group Confederation Paysanne, told AFP earlier that the French farm sector "is experiencing its worst crisis ever."

"There is a lot of worry on the farms, a lot of people are quitting (because) they feel there is no future," Pinatel said, noting that 5,000 farmers are leaving the sector each year.

The government says more than 40,000 farms are in extreme distress. The beef, pork and milk sectors have seen prices collapse because of declining sales to China and especially a Russian embargo on most Western food imports in retaliation for sanctions over the Ukraine crisis.

Grain and vegetable farmers are also feeling the pinch, especially wheat producers hit hard as world prices nosedive. In addition wholesalers, who have been engaged in a price war for several years, are demanding ever deeper cuts from suppliers, who are in turn squeezing farmers.

Hollande pledged yesterday to review the law governing relations between wholesalers and suppliers.

Meanwhile, a mild winter has upset the apple cart for many growers, who are bringing produce to the market before they can find buyers. Disease has heaped further woe on livestock farmers, with bluetongue ravaging cows and an outbreak of bird flu leading to several countries banning imports of foie gras.

### 'Extremely fragile'

The Salon de l'Agriculture is a must on the calendar of any ambitious politician, and ahead of next year's election, the glad-handing and the "stroking of cows' behinds" made virtually compulsory by the earthy president Jacques Chirac-is the order of the day.

But the FNSEA warned: "It's out of the question for the

fair to become a political beauty contest once again." Nevertheless, Hollande did not fail to make a stop to admire the fair's mascot, a Bazadais cow from southwestern France named Cerise (Cherry).

Nearly 700,000 visitors-a third of them children under 12 encouraged to pet the animals and enjoy the rural atmosphere, with cocks crowing and hay strewn in the alleyways-are expected to descend on the vast Porte de Versailles exhibition centre for the nine-day fair.

Despite the widespread despair, exhibitors were loath to boycott the event. "We are here even if our heart isn't in it," said Florent Dornier of the Jeunes Agriculteurs union. "It's often the only week off for farmers, but they are extremely fragile." —AFP



PARIS: A general view shows cows and a placard with the inscription "I am a breeder and I am dying" on the opening day of the "Salon de l'Agriculture" (Agriculture Fair) in Paris yesterday. —AFP



# ROLLERCOASTER IRISH ECONOMY KEY TO ELECTION

**DUBLIN:** From Celtic Tiger to collapse and back to growth again, Ireland's recent economic history has shaped its election as voters looked to have punished Enda Kenny's coalition for years of austerity despite a recovery. Here is a breakdown of the main events over the past decade:

### Celtic Tiger

The boom years which led to the economy being nicknamed the Celtic Tiger began in the mid-1990s and reached their peak a decade later. This period transformed an island that had been one of Europe's poorest

countries and caused a property bubble that saw house prices quadruple between 1996 and 2006. Ireland saw average annual growth of six percent between 1995 and 2007, slashed unemployment and doubled its GDP in a decade. But as an international financial crisis took hold in 2008, the property bubble burst, taking much of the economy down with it, while banks which had given large loans on property began to totter.

The economy slumped 3.5 percent in 2008 and almost eight percent in 2009, while the failure of Anglo Irish Bank summed up many of the problems which led to the bust.

Fianna Fail, long Ireland's dominant political force, suffered a historic defeat in the election of 2011 due to anger over the property crash and economic crisis on their watch.

### Austerity

As turmoil roiled international markets in September 2008, the Irish government guaranteed the debts and deposits of six Irish banks. Ireland was forced to accept a European Union and International Monetary Fund bailout deal in 2010 under which the government received loans in return for imposing cuts and reforms.

A series of austerity budgets stripped billions from spending, cutting sectors including public sector pay and pensions, social welfare, the health service, and education.

At the same time, taxes were raised, including a new property tax and a water tax that crystallised anger over austerity, sparking mass protests and refusals to pay. Unemployment hit 15 percent in 2012, and over twice that level for young people.

Emigration, long a feature of Ireland's past that was banished by the Celtic Tiger, returned with about 240,000 people moving abroad.

### Recovery

Ireland became the first eurozone country to exit its bailout in 2013. Economic growth returned with a rate of 4.8 percent in 2014, the highest in the European Union. This showed signs of speeding up further in 2015 as seven percent growth was registered in the first nine months. Average wages, which fell or were stagnant since 2008, began to tick upwards. At the election, Prime Minister Enda Kenny campaigned for a second term on his economic record, promising to "keep the recovery going" and attract 70,000 Irish people to return home this year. — AFP



**RANCHI:** Indian construction laborers work on a building site on the outskirts of Ranchi yesterday ahead of the country's annual Budget. India's Finance Minister Arun Jaitley is scheduled to present annual Budget for the financial year 2016-2017 in the Parliament tomorrow. — AFP

# INDIA SEES GROWTH ABOVE 7% DESPITE 'GRIM' GLOBAL OUTLOOK

## GOVT GEARS TO PRESENT REFORM-ORIENTED BUDGET

**NEW DELHI:** India on Friday offered a cautious forecast for economic growth to exceed 7 percent in the next financial year, as the government prepares to present its budget with clamor for promised reforms growing. The Economic Survey, a yearly report released by the finance ministry ahead of the national budget on Monday, said gross domestic product (GDP) would expand between seven percent and 7.75 percent in 2016-17.

The relatively upbeat prediction comes despite a weak global economy, with a slowdown in China that has worried investors, other major emerging markets in recession and sinking global stocks.

India's GDP likely grew 7.6 percent over the 2015-16 financial year, the government said, making it the world's fastest-growing major economy. However,

Friday's forecast represents a paring back of expectations from last year's survey which predicted growth would top eight percent this year.

"We've learnt from the experience of last year. The forecast for last year went wrong, maybe it was over-optimistic," said Arvind Subramanian, the government's chief economic adviser.

Last year's survey did not anticipate how much weak global demand would hurt India's exports, nor the impact of a second bad monsoon on its vast agricultural sector, he said. "This year's assessment is really based on looking out at the external environment which seems to be very grim," Subramanian told reporters. Prime Minister Narendra Modi has made it a priority to boost India's economic growth, vital for lifting millions out of poverty, since sweeping to power in a general election in May 2014.

But investors have raised concerns about the pace of promised reforms needed to create jobs for India's tens of millions of young people. Economists said the wide range of the growth forecast for 2016-17 indicated the government may be hedging its bets.

"What jumped out at me is that the government's estimate has become more cautious," Hanna Luchnikava, senior economist, Asia Pacific at IHS Economics in Munich, told AFP. "We do not expect any acceleration (in growth) next year, in fact the risks are to the downside," she said.

### Challenges ahead

While its growth has outpaced that of powerhouse China in recent quarters, Asia's third-largest economy still faces challenges.

After cooling from previously high levels, India's once exorbitant inflation has ticked up again over the past few months, with prices rising 5.7 percent in January. India's main stocks index has lost a fifth of its value over the past year, private investment is weak and the rupee is trading at near-record lows against the dollar. The Economic Survey forecast consumer price inflation would ease to 4.5 to 5 percent in 2016-17.

It also said India's services sector remains one of the main engines of growth, expanding more than nine percent in the current fiscal year.

Services make up more than half of India's economy although the government is pushing to increase manufacturing through its Make in India campaign. Investors will be looking to Monday's budget for concrete reforms from the business-friendly government.

There are hopes it will move to overhaul a complex corporate tax regime seen as off-putting to investors. The Economic Survey also said the government probably succeeded in reducing its fiscal deficit to 3.9 percent of GDP in 2015-16 as economists expect.

It remains to be seen whether Finance Minister Arun Jaitley will look to relax the stringent fiscal deficit reduction target for next year when he presents the budget. — AFP

# GLOBAL REGULATORS MAY PROPOSE RULES FOR FINTECH: CARNEY

**LONDON:** Global regulators may propose rules to prevent "fintech" innovations from destabilising the broader financial system, the G20's Financial Stability Board said yesterday.

FSB Chairman Mark Carney said in a letter to central bankers and finance ministers from the Group of 20 economies meeting in Shanghai that assessing the systemic implications of fintech innovations would form part of the task force's core policy work this year.

It marks the first time that regulators at the global level have begun scrutinising fintech, a sector that includes blockchain, the distributed ledger technology underpinning bitcoin that proponents say could radically change payments systems. So far regulators have been treading carefully as countries such as Britain are wary of crimping a sector that is still tiny compared with banking, but could create many new jobs in future. "The regulatory framework must ensure that it is able to manage any systemic risks that may arise from technological change without stifling innovation," Carney said.

The FSB will discuss its findings in March and consider its next steps, he added.

Carney, who is also Governor of the Bank of England, said the more difficult economic and financial conditions since the start of this year partly reflect weaker growth prospects.

Banking shares have come under pressure, reflecting concerns that lenders have to do more to adjust their long-term business models to a lower growth, lower nominal interest rate environment, Carney said.

Carney said the FSB will report in September on whether there has been a reduction in market liquidity and, if so, its extent, drivers and likely persistence.

Banks and central bankers have locked horns over why liquidity in secondary bond markets has thinned, with bankers blaming tougher regulation introduced by the FSB and others since the 2007-09 financial crisis.

Central bankers say much of the heavier liquidity in markets before the crisis was "illusory" with insufficient evidence so far to show that some of the new rules need rolling back.

### ASSET MANAGERS IN SIGHT

Linked to the liquidity issue is a worry that asset managers could not cope with heavy redemptions, or investors pulling money out of bond funds en masse.

"We have prioritised work to analyse structural vulnerabilities in asset management activities and to identify risks that may merit policy responses in four areas," Carney said.

The FSB, which sets global standards implemented by G20 member countries, will issue policy recommendations in September after looking at leverage in funds, and their operational risks and securities lending activities.

"An over-optimistic 'liquidity illusion' may have been reinforced by the growth of investment products offering redemptions at very short notice," Carney said.

Policies to reduce "fire-sale" risks in open-ended investment funds may also help, he said.

Carney said IOSCO, which groups global securities markets regulators, will publish by December a "toolkit" of measures to promote proper conduct by individuals and firms in markets. Global regulators will also consult on more detailed rules to prevent clearing houses, which stand between two sides of a derivatives trade, from becoming "too big to fail" due to their size and reach, Carney said. — Reuters



**SHANGHAI:** Spain's Economy Minister Luis de Guindos (left) shakes hands with Bank of England Governor Mark Carney (right) as they pose for a photo after sessions of the G20 Finance Ministers and Central Bank Governors Meeting at the Pudong Shangri-la Hotel in Shanghai yesterday. — AFP

## EXCHANGE RATES

### AL-MUZAINI EXCHANGE CO.

ASIAN COUNTRIES	
Japanese Yen	25.562
Indian Rupees	4.394
Pakistani Rupees	2.865
Sri Lankan Rupees	2.087
Nepali Rupees	2.741
Singapore Dollar	214.230
Hongkong Dollar	38.655
Bangladesh Taka	3.826
Philippine Peso	6.303
Thai Baht	8.430
GCC COUNTRIES	
Saudi Riyal	80.136
Qatari Riyal	82.548
Omani Riyal	780.535
Bahraini Dinar	798.060
UAE Dirham	81.817
ARAB COUNTRIES	
Egyptian Pound - Cash	35.250
Egyptian Pound - Transfer	38.423
Yemen Riyal/for 1000	1.402
Tunisian Dinar	148.320
Jordanian Dinar	423.540
Lebanese Lira/for 1000	2.002
Syrian Lira	2.142
Morocco Dirham	31.124
EUROPEAN & AMERICAN COUNTRIES	
US Dollar Transfer	300.350
Euro	332.190
Sterling Pound	421.240
Canadian dollar	218.360
Turkish lira	102.510
Swiss Franc	304.000
Australian Dollar	217.450
US Dollar Buying	299.150

GOLD	
20 Gram	244.530
10 Gram	125.190
5 Gram	63.440

### UAE EXCHANGE CENTRE WLL

CURRENCIES	TELEX TRANSFER PER 1000
Australian Dollar	201.91
Canadian Dollar	219.82
Swiss Franc	306.95
Euro	336.85
US Dollar	299.90
Sterling Pound	431.04
Japanese Yen	2.67
Bangladesh Taka	3.817
Indian Rupee	4.375
Sri Lankan Rupee	2.083
Nepali Rupee	2.732
Pakistani Rupee	2.860
UAE Dirhams	0.08161
Bahraini Dinar	0.7970
Egyptian Pound	0.03819
Jordanian Dinar	0.4265
Omani Riyal	0.7788
Qatari Riyal	0.08269
Saudi Riyal	0.07994

### DOLLARCO EXCHANGE CO. LTD

Rate for Transfer	Selling Rate
US Dollar	300.600
Canadian Dollar	224.390
Sterling Pound	417.695
Euro	329.915
Swiss Franc	300.685
Bahrain Dinar	795.235
UAE Dirhams	82.085
Qatari Riyals	83.290

Saudi Riyals	80.840
Jordanian Dinar	423.450
Egyptian Pound	38.278
Sri Lankan Rupees	2.081
Indian Rupees	4.374
Pakistani Rupees	2.867
Bangladesh Taka	3.823
Philippines Peso	6.310
Cyprus pound	572.540
Japanese Yen	3.630
Syrian Pound	2.365
Nepalese Rupees	3.725
Malaysian Ringgit	72.335
Chinese Yuan Renminbi	46.310
Thai Bhat	9.380
Turkish Lira	100.703

### BAHRAIN EXCHANGE COMPANY

CURRENCY	BUY	SELL
Europe		
British Pound	0.411552	0.420552
Czech Korune	0.004276	0.016276
Danish Krone	0.040473	0.045473
Euro	0.324126	0.332126
Norwegian Krone	0.030910	0.036110
Romanian Leu	0.086185	0.086185
Slovakia	0.008916	0.018916
Swedish Krona	0.031429	0.036429
Swiss Franc	0.295256	0.305456
Turkish Lira	0.096854	0.107154
Australasia		
Australian Dollar	0.206471	0.217971
New Zealand Dollar	0.193484	0.202984
America		
Canadian Dollar	0.217202	0.225702
US Dollars	0.296530	0.300850

US Dollars Mint	0.296850	0.300850
Asia		
Bangladesh Taka	0.003442	0.004042
Chinese Yuan	0.044474	0.047974
Hong Kong Dollar	0.036665	0.039415
Indian Rupee	0.004181	0.004571
Indonesian Rupiah	0.000018	0.000024
Japanese Yen	0.002584	0.002764
Kenyan Shilling	0.003006	0.003006
Korean Won	0.000234	0.000249
Malaysian Ringgit	0.067711	0.073711
Nepalese Rupee	0.002848	0.003018
Pakistan Rupee	0.002715	0.002995
Philippine Peso	0.006230	0.006510
Sierra Leone	0.000067	0.000073
Singapore Dollar	0.211367	0.217367
South African Rand	0.013326	0.021826
Sri Lankan Rupee	0.001737	0.002317
Taiwan	0.008929	0.009109
Thai Baht	0.008105	0.008565

Arab		
Bahraini Dinar	0.780066	0.798066
Egyptian Pound	0.033474	0.037810
Iranian Riyal	0.000083	0.000084
Iraqi Dinar	0.000196	0.000256
Jordanian Dinar	0.419746	0.427246
Kuwaiti Dinar	1.000000	1.000000
Lebanese Pound	0.000150	0.000250
Moroccan Dirhams	0.020405	0.044405
Nigerian Naira	0.001234	0.001869
Omani Riyal	0.773970	0.779650
Qatar Riyal	0.081815	0.083028
Saudi Riyal	0.079233	0.080183
Syrian Pound	0.001273	0.001493
Tunisian Dinar	0.145251	0.153251
Turkish Lira	0.096854	0.107154
UAE Dirhams	0.080820	0.081969
Yemeni Riyal	0.001357	0.001437



## EUROZONE ECONOMY HITS WALL OF WORRY, DEFLATION CONCERN

### CONFIDENCE INDEXES FALL, PRICES DROP IN GERMANY, FRANCE, SPAIN

**LONDON:** A wall of consumer and business angst is standing in the way of eurozone economic recovery and there are renewed signs of deflation in the bloc's biggest countries to worry the European Central Bank.

Data from across the 19-member currency bloc on Friday will put pressure on the ECB to take strong additional policy actions at its meeting in March on top of the unprecedented stimulus it is already giving. Reports of falling prices in Germany, France and Spain along with an array of weak sentiment surveys for the bloc as a whole will also provide ammunition to those arguing that governments must now loosen their budgets to stimulate growth.

The data contrasted with some recent, tentative signs of revival and boosts from cheap energy and a competitive euro. "The eurozone currently resembles a 50-year-old overweight smoker: there are a lot of downside risks, but the base case for the short term remains fairly decent," said Bert Colijn, economist at ING.

Even this modest confidence does not appear to be shared by businesses and consumers.

The European Commission reported that overall eurozone economic sentiment deteriorated by far more than expected in February, falling to 103.8 in February, just above the long-term average, from a slightly upwardly revised

105.1 in January. Business sentiment - not numerically comparable - came in at 0.07 from 0.29 in January, below even the most bearish projection in a Reuters poll and barely in positive territory.

The consumer confidence index, meanwhile, dropped to -8.8 from -6.3 in January, down from -5.7 in December - a poor harbinger for future spending, last year's bright spot.

Sarah Hewin, chief economist at Standard Chartered, said some of the decline may have come from a belief that improvements to growth and employment may be waning.

But she also cited falling stock markets and broader concerns about how the European Union manages the hun-

dreds of thousands of migrants and refugees entering its borders.

#### PRICE GUIDANCE

The biggest blow from Friday's euro zone data may have been to the ECB, which is already buying assets to the tune of 60 billion euros (\$66 billion) a month and effectively charging banks to deposit money. Both are attempts to push money out into the economy to boost inflation, which it wants at just below 2 percent. But inflation, dragged down in part by falling oil and commodity prices, is not playing ball.

"We now expect euro area headline ... inflation to decline to -0.1 percent in February," Barclays said, referring to a

blocc-wide release on Monday.

Germany data set the tone on Friday, showing prices falling 0.2 percent year-on-year, having been up by 0.4 percent in January. Spain was deep in deflation with prices down 0.9 percent year-on-year.

In France they were down 0.1 percent and Italy reported flat month-on-month wage inflation. It all points to more action from the ECB on March 10, particularly as markets appear to have given up any hope of near-term inflation.

Eurozone long-term inflation expectations - as measured by the five-year, five-year eurozone breakeven forward - are at record lows below 1.4 percent. — Reuters



**SHANGHAI:** (From left): Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) Secretary General Jose Angel Gurría, US Federal Reserve Board Chair Janet Yellen and British Chancellor of the Exchequer George Osborne talk during a family photo of the G20 Finance Ministers and Central Bank Governors Meeting at the Pudong Shangri-la Hotel in Shanghai. — AP

## UK'S OSBORNE WARNS OF DEEPER SPENDING CUTS

### ECONOMIC GROWTH FALLS SHORT OF EXPECTATIONS

**LONDON:** British finance minister George Osborne warned that he might cut public spending more deeply than he previously planned after the country's economic growth fell short of the pace foreseen in his plans to wipe out the country's budget deficit.

Osborne, due to make an annual budget statement on March 16, said official growth figures announced on Thursday showed Britain's economy was smaller than he had hoped for.

He also said in an interview with BBC television, which was broadcast on Friday, that "storm clouds" had gathered over the global economy and could hurt Britain further. Osborne's comments stood at odds with an appeal by the International Monetary Fund to finance ministers attending a Group of 20 nations meeting in Shanghai this week. The IMF urged countries to boost global demand through fiscal means.

Osborne, who is considered a front-runner to replace Prime Minister David Cameron as the leader of Britain's Conservative Party, has staked

his reputation on turning the country's still large budget deficit into a surplus by the end of the decade. "We may need to undertake further reductions in spending because this country can only afford what it can afford and we will address that in the budget," Osborne told the BBC during a visit to Shanghai for the G20 meeting.

"I think everyone accepts that things have got more difficult since the start of the year as more information comes in, we make sure that... Britain lives within its means."

Finance spokesman for Britain's main opposition Labour party John McDonnell said Osborne's comments represented "total humiliation". "Far from paying our way, Osborne's short-term economics means Britain is deeper and deeper in hock to the rest of the world," he said.

Britain's economy expanded by 2.2 percent in 2015, according to official data, weaker than growth of 2.4 percent which was pencilled into

the forecasts of the Office for Budget Responsibility which underpin Osborne's budget plans. The latest figures for nominal gross domestic product - a key metric for government debt when expressed as a percentage of economic output - also fell short of the OBR's forecast and left Osborne with more work to do as he works towards his goal of a budget surplus by the end of the decade.

"We'll set it out, if we need to, how we'll reduce spending, but the first place I look to is further efficiencies in government," Osborne said. Britain has withstood the recent ructions in the global economy so far. But a sharp fall in consumer confidence this month could be a bad omen given the country's reliance on household spending to drive growth. Some economists argue that Osborne should use record low levels of government borrowing costs to fund investment and stimulate the economy as the global outlook darkens, rather than cut public spending further. — Reuters

## JC PENNEY'S SHARES RISE AFTER UPBEAT REVENUE OUTLOOK

**NEW YORK:** Beware the underdog. JC Penney Co delivered strong fourth-quarter results, wrapping up a year when it stole market share from rivals. The company, based in Plano, Texas, offered an upbeat sales outlook, as efforts to spruce up its merchandise are winning over shoppers. It also pledged that it would return to a profit this year, on an adjusted basis. Investors cheered, pushing shares up nearly 15 percent Friday.

The results were a bright spot in an otherwise dismal holiday quarter, where department store rivals like Macy's and Kohl's offered disappointing outlooks after struggling with weak sales.

It was a reversal of fortunes this critical holiday season for Penney, which is clawing its way back from a failed reinvention plan that caused catastrophic losses and plunging sales.

And the latest performance offers encouraging news that a transformation by CEO Marvin Ellison is in the works. Ellison officially took the helm in August 2015, after a nine-month transition period working closely with Myron Ullman, who returned to the top CEO spot in April 2013 when the board fired Ron Johnson. Johnson got rid of most promotions and replaced them with everyday low prices and swapped basics for trendy assortments in a bid to grab higher-income, younger shoppers.

Ullman stabilized the business by bringing back discounts and restoring store-label merchandise. Ellison's goal is to expand sales and remake the retailer to be more nimble.

The company is playing catch up in e-commerce, including rolling out services that allow online shoppers to pick up orders in stores. It's using its store-label offerings as a key weapon to fight against pricing pressures from online rivals. It's also testing appliances and just rolled out a new campaign called "Get Your Penney's Worth," which will offer certain store-label items for pennies. Ellison noted that the Penney campaign should help to broaden its demographic, which centers on middle-income shoppers with an annual average household income of \$60,000.

JC Penney still has a long way to go before it can claim a full recovery. The company posted annual sales of \$12.6 billion for the year ended Jan. 30, up 3 percent from the prior year. Still, that's far below the nearly \$18 billion in annual

revenue once booked right before Johnson came to the helm in November 2011.

But Penney is making some good progress given a tough environment, particularly in department store arena, where shoppers are being selective. Ellison told investors during a conference call Friday that it's evident that Penney gained market share in 2015.

"Our ability to gain share in a relatively flat to negative retail market is not accidental," he said. He also assured analysts that the company is testing different initiatives before rolling them out. Penney had learned painful lessons from Johnson who rolled out the bold pricing strategy without testing in the stores. Ellison said the re-establishment of key private brands like St. John's Bay and Royal Velvet have helped win shoppers back. The company is also accelerating the rollout of shops within its stores devoted to the Sephora beauty brand. It added 28 last year for a total of more than 500 shops, a big chunk of the 800-store fleet. This year, it plans to add 60.

Sephora was a top-selling area for the holiday shopping season as well as handbags, home and furnishings and shoes. Ellison noted all of its clothing businesses enjoyed positive results despite unseasonably warm weather that plagued many retailers including Macy's.

Penney posted a 4.1 percent increase in revenue at stores opened at least a year. In comparison, the metric rose just 0.4 percent at Kohl's, dropped 4.3 percent at Macy's and declined 3.2 percent at upscale Nordstrom.

Penney said it lost \$131 million, or 43 cents per share, in the fourth quarter. That compares with a loss of \$35 million, or 11 cents per share, a year earlier. Results were weighed down by pension and restructuring costs. Excluding those adjusted results amounted to a profit of 39 cents per share, which matched estimates from FactSet. Revenue rose nearly 3 percent to \$3.99 billion, and topped the \$3.97 billion FactSet estimate.

Penney said that it expects revenue at stores opened at least a year to rise anywhere from 3 percent to 4 percent this year, and that adjusted profits should be positive. Penney's shares rose \$1.23 to close at \$9.59. Still, the stock is well below the \$43 it hit in February 2012 when enthusiasm for Johnson's makeover was high. — AP

## BUFFETT: US ECONOMY BETTER THAN PRESIDENTIAL HOPEFULS SAY

**OMAHA:** The United States' economy is in better shape than the presidential candidates make it seem, investor Warren Buffett said Saturday, even though businesses like his still face challenges.

In his annual letter to Berkshire Hathaway shareholders, Buffett didn't name specific candidates or issues, but noted that the negative drumbeat about the economy, health care reform and income inequality may get voters down about the future.

"It's an election year, and candidates can't



**OMAHA:** Berkshire Hathaway Chairman and CEO Warren Buffett speaks during an interview with Liz Claman on the Fox Business Network in Omaha, Neb. Buffett says the United States' economy is in better shape than the presidential candidates make it seem. Buffett said yesterday in his annual letter to Berkshire Hathaway shareholders that any baby born in the country today will live better than their parents, even with the current slow economic growth. — AP

stop speaking about our country's problems (which, of course, only they can solve)," he said, adding later, "that view is dead wrong: The babies being born in America today are the luckiest crop in history." Buffett noted that there will still be economic troubles as business evolves, but that the country needs to make sure it has a solid safety net to help people who lose jobs.

"The answer in such disruptions is not the restraining or outlawing of actions that increase productivity. Americans would not be living nearly as well as we do if we had mandated that 11 million people should forever be employed in farming," he wrote.

Buffett pointed out that change also creates challenges for Berkshire's businesses. For instance, its BNSF railroad is certain to haul less coal in the future and Geico insurance could be hurt by driverless cars.

He assured shareholders that Berkshire's businesses will adapt just as the company did when its original Berkshire Hathaway textile operation failed.

Buffett's letter is one of the most well-read documents the business world each year because of his successful track record and his knack for explaining complicated subjects in simple terms.

Buffett said the book value of Berkshire's businesses improved 6.4 percent last year even as its stock price fell 12.5 percent. When dividends are factored in, the S&P 500 gained 1.4 percent by comparison. Buffett has warned that it will be increasingly hard for Berkshire to continue beating the market because the company is so large.

Berkshire Hathaway employs more than 360,000 people at its eclectic mix of companies, including insurance, utilities, railroad, manufacturing and retail firms. Berkshire also holds significant stakes in Coca-Cola, Wells Fargo, American Express, IBM and other companies. — AP

## CHINA CB TRIES TO REASSURE WORLD OVER SLOWING GROWTH

**SHANGHAI:** China's normally reclusive central bank chief Zhou Xiaochuan is an unusually prominent presence at the G20 finance ministers meeting in Shanghai, racing from seminar to news conference to spread positive messages about the world's second-largest economy.

After months of silence, the governor of the People's Bank of China (PBoC) wants investors to know that the yuan currency - also known as the renminbi (RMB) — will be stable despite the slowest growth in a quarter of a century.

"The fundamentals of China's economy remain strong. There is no basis for persistent renminbi depreciation," Zhou told a conference on Friday, before delivering a similar message half an hour later at a rare media briefing by the central bank, all after he gave respected business magazine Caixin a lengthy interview earlier this month. Chinese officials are mounting an unprecedented charm offensive in an attempt to convince global investors that its economy and currency are healthy, but doubts over their message remain despite the public statements. The drive comes after senior officials from around the world - among them IMF chief Christine Lagarde and US Treasury Secretary Jacob Lew - urged Chinese authorities to communicate better.

"China is ramping up public relations in what will be a difficult 2016," China economist at IHS Global Insight, Brian Jackson, said in a research note.

"During the second half of 2015, a vacuum of public statements raised market uncertainty, which officials are now trying to fill, itself a positive development regardless of their exact messaging." A stock market slump and shock currency devaluation in mid-2015 raised worries about Beijing's ability to avoid a hard landing. Policymaking is secretive in the Communist-ruled country and state-backed media toe the party line, restricting the free flow of information that modern capital markets need, analysts say.

"It is important that they (Chinese officials) stick to the reform agenda that they have set out and that they communicate their policies clearly in a world

that is very much anxious to know the reasons for actions that are taken," US treasury chief Lew told reporters in Shanghai.

#### Water and oil

For an official who was appointed in 2002 but still speaks in public only a few times a year, Zhou seems to be everywhere at the G20 gathering, where 19 countries and the European Union are meeting to confront slowing global growth. But at the opening ceremony, he waved off an invitation from Finance Minister Lou Jiwei to speak in public for what would have been the third time that day-causing watching journalists to burst into laughter.

The economic situation is more serious. China's economy expanded an annual 6.9 percent in 2015,

the slowest in 25 years. Its foreign exchange reserves have fallen to \$3.2 trillion as nearly \$200 billion flowed out of the country in December and January alone.

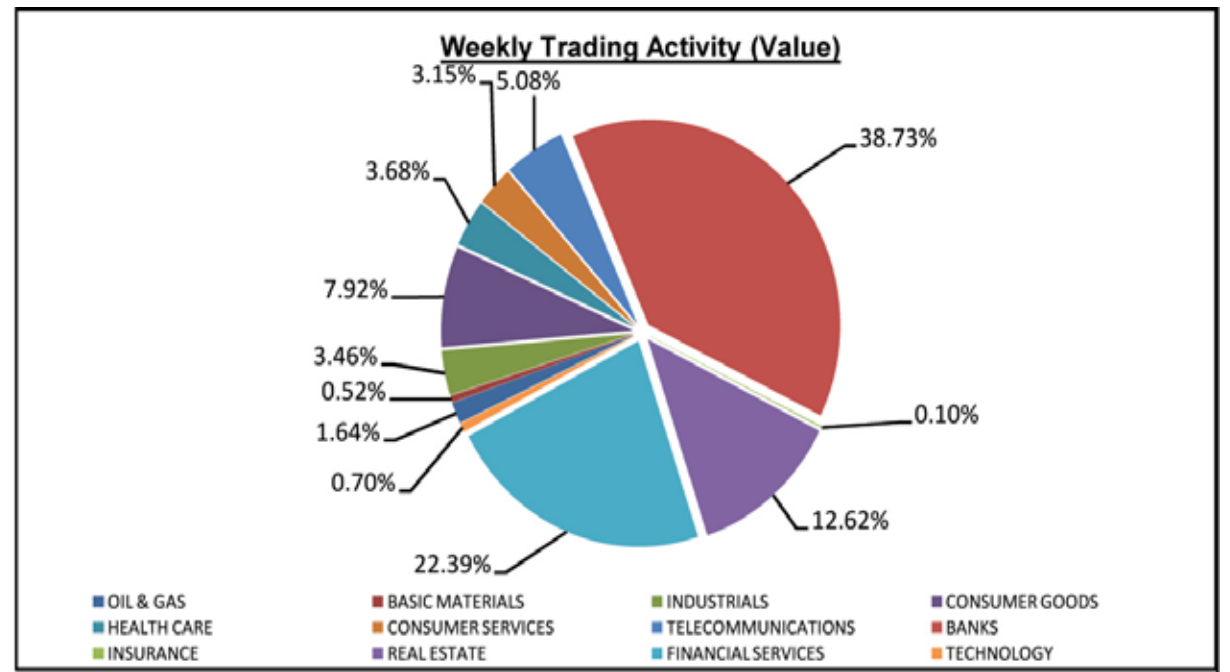
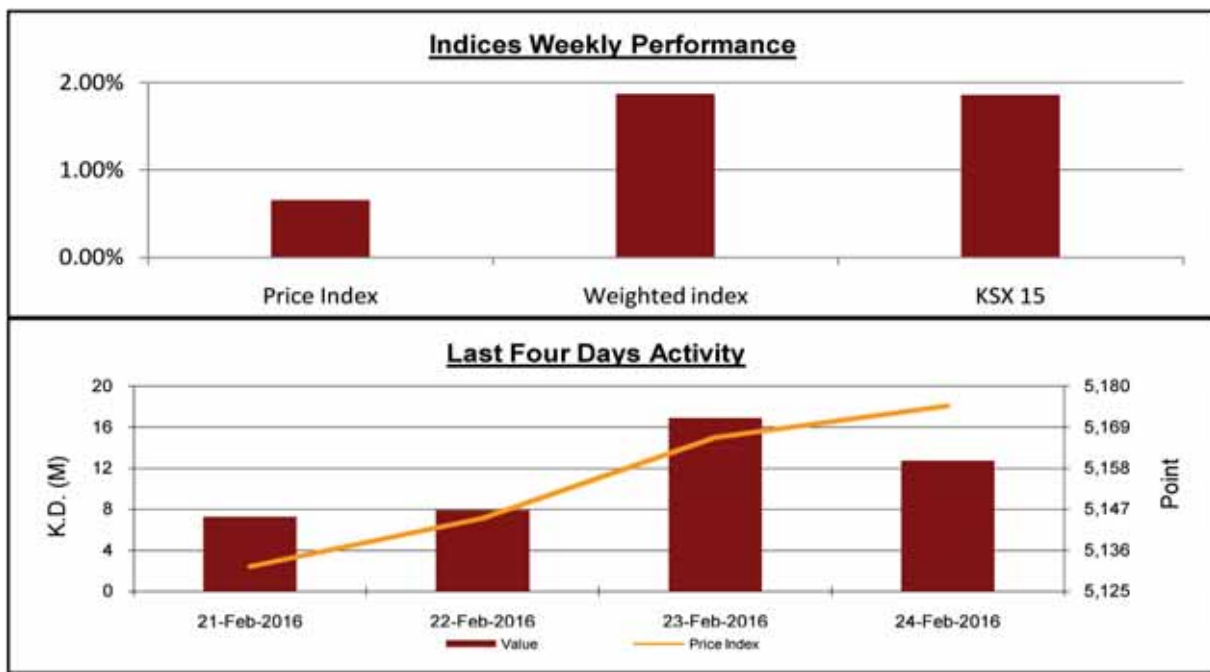
Zhou sought to explain: "It isn't like an oil field with fixed reserves that won't remain after you drain it. It's like a reservoir with water coming in from upstream and flowing out downstream."

But investors have been confused by seemingly contradictory statements that pledge to move towards greater exchange rate flexibility while at the same time promising the currency will remain "basically" stable. "From the standpoint of currency market players, this is not a credible position," Arthur Kroeber, head of research for Gavekal Dragonomics, told the same seminar that Zhou addressed. — AFP



**BEIJING:** Shoppers walk past a patriotic mural on the streets in Beijing on Thursday. China faced pressure to reassure nerve-wrecked world markets over how it is steering its slowing economy and managing its currency at Friday's gathering of finance ministers and central bankers from the United States, Europe and other major economies in Shanghai. — AP





# NEW OPTIMISM PERKS UP KSE STOCKS

## BAYAN WEEKLY MARKET REPORT

**KUWAIT:** Kuwait Stock Exchange (KSE) ended last week in the green zone. The Price Index closed at 5,174.69 points, up by 0.66 percent from the week before closing, the Weighted Index increased by 1.87 percent after closing at 356.37 points, whereas the KSX-15 Index closed at 838.19 points up by 1.86 percent. Furthermore, last week's average daily turnover increased by 25.09 percent, compared to the preceding week, reaching KD 11.19 million, whereas trading volume average was 134.89 million shares, recording an increase of 9.16 percent.

KSE INDICES		Price Index	Weighted index	KSX 15
Weekly	Last week	5,174.69	356.37	838.19
	Previous week	5,140.96	349.83	822.89
	Change (Point)	33.73	6.54	15.30
	Change (%)	0.66%	1.87%	1.86%
Annual	Last year	5,615.12	381.70	900.43
	Change (Point)	-440.43	-25.33	-62.24
	Change (%)	-7.84%	-6.64%	-6.91%

fluctuated performance, and contracted trading activity.

By the end of the last week, the number of listed companies that disclosed its 2015 financial results reached 74 company, representing 38.95 percent of the total 190 listed company in KSE. The disclosed companies realized around KD 1.34 billion, increasing by 5.11 percent from the same companies' results for 2014 financial year. On the other hand, the market capitalization for KSE reached KD 23.62 billion by the end of last week, increasing by 1.47 percent from its level in a week earlier where it was KD 23.28 billion; however on an annual level, the market cap for the listed companies in KSE declined by 6.51 percent from its value at end of 2015, as it reached then KD 25.27 billion.

As far as KSE annual performance, the price index ended last week recording 7.84 percent annual loss compared to its closing in 2015, while the weighted index decreased by 6.64 percent, and the KSX-15 recorded 6.91 percent loss.

### Sectors' Indices

Seven of KSE's sectors ended last week in the green zone, while the other five recorded declines. Last week's highest gainer was the Telecommunications sector, achieving 4.97 percent growth rate as its index closed at

592.94 points. Whereas, in the second place, the Technology sector's index closed at 857.91 points recording 4.36 percent increase. The Health Care sector came in third as its index achieved 2.91 percent growth, ending the week at 1,016.55 points.

On the other hand, the Consumer Services sector headed the losers list as its index declined by 0.87 percent to end the week's activity at 959.10 points. The Industrial sector was second on the losers' list, which index declined by 0.48 percent, closing at 962.92 points, the least declining sector was the Real Estate sector, as its index closed at 824.17 points at a loss of 0.30 percent.

### Sectors' Activity

The Financial Services sector dominated a total trade volume of around 229.69 million shares changing hands during last week, representing 42.57 percent of the total market trading volume. The Real Estate sector was second in terms of trading volume as the sector's traded shares were 24.69 percent of last week's total trading volume, with a total of around 133.21 million shares.

On the other hand, the Banks sector's stocks were the highest traded in terms of value; with a turnover of around KD 17.33 million or 38.73 percent of last week's total market trading value. The Financial Services

MARKET ACTIVITY			
	Last Week	Previous Week	Ch. %
Volume	539,573,096	617,889,330	-12.67%
Value (K.D)	44,754,933	44,723,533	0.07%
Deals	11,719	15,403	-23.92%

MARKET CAPITALISATION (K.D.)			
Last Week	Previous Week	Weekly Ch. %	Annual Ch. %
23,619,948,724	23,277,955,494	1.47%	-6.51%

TOP GAINERS OF THE WEEK				
Company	Last Week Closing	Previous Week Closing	Ch. (fils)	Ch. %
YIACO	228.00	188.00	40.0	21.28%
ALDEERA	29.00	25.00	4.0	16.00%
COAST	37.00	33.00	4.0	12.12%
GFH	54.00	48.50	5.5	11.34%
OOREDOO	1,180.00	1,060.00	120.0	11.32%

TOP LOSERS OF THE WEEK				
Company	Last Week Closing	Previous Week Closing	Ch. (fils)	Ch. %
IFAHR	162.00	192.00	-30.0	-15.63%
ARKAN	85.00	94.00	-9.0	-9.57%
CABLETV	24.50	26.50	-2.0	-7.55%
MARAKEZ	31.50	34.00	-2.5	-7.35%
QCEM	65.00	70.00	-5.0	-7.14%

sector took the second place as the sector's last week turnover was approx. KD 10.02 million representing 22.39 percent of the total market trading value. — Prepared by the Studies & Research Department, Bayan Investment Co.

SECTORS' WEEKLY TRADING ACTIVITY				
Sector	Volume	To Market %	Value	To Market %
OIL & GAS	28,087,331	5.21%	734,293	1.64%
BASIC MATERIALS	852,607	0.16%	234,948	0.52%
INDUSTRIALS	16,503,341	3.06%	1,546,970	3.46%
CONSUMER GOODS	2,198,693	0.41%	3,545,994	7.92%
HEALTH CARE	7,516,695	1.39%	1,645,584	3.68%
CONSUMER SERVICES	10,688,803	1.98%	1,409,998	3.15%
TELECOMMUNICATIONS	12,017,630	2.23%	2,275,611	5.08%
BANKS	94,537,465	17.52%	17,333,926	38.73%
INSURANCE	353,187	0.07%	43,885	0.10%
REAL ESTATE	133,209,730	24.69%	5,649,177	12.62%
FINANCIAL SERVICES	229,690,907	42.57%	10,019,916	22.39%
TECHNOLOGY	3,916,707	0.73%	314,631	0.70%

SECTORS INDICES PERFORMANCE				
Sector	Last Week Closing	Previous Week Closing	Weekly Ch. %	Annual Ch. %
OIL & GAS	753.29	740.36	1.75%	-7.99%
BASIC MATERIALS	891.25	894.62	-0.38%	-9.64%
INDUSTRIALS	962.92	967.52	-0.48%	-7.68%
CONSUMER GOODS	1,058.45	1,048.07	0.99%	-3.33%
HEALTH CARE	1,016.55	987.80	2.91%	9.86%
CONSUMER SERVICES	959.10	967.54	-0.87%	-4.92%
TELECOMMUNICATIONS	592.94	564.87	4.97%	-0.95%
BANKS	813.22	795.77	2.19%	-10.35%
INSURANCE	1,051.21	1,055.67	-0.42%	-6.72%
REAL ESTATE	824.17	826.67	-0.30%	-12.39%
FINANCIAL SERVICES	544.62	531.69	2.43%	-8.53%
TECHNOLOGY	857.91	822.10	4.36%	4.60%

# US STOCKS END STRONG WEEK ON FLAT NOTE

**NEW YORK:** US stocks ended a strong week on a flat note as lower oil prices and utility stocks offset encouraging economic news. Still, the market ended Friday with a second straight weekly gain.

The Dow Jones industrial average closed down 57.32 points, or 0.3 percent, to 16,639.97. The Standard & Poor's 500 index lost 3.65 points, or 0.2 percent, to 1,948.05 and the Nasdaq composite added 8.27 points, or 0.2 percent, to 4,590.47. All three indexes finished the week up by 1.5 percent or more. Oil, despite Friday's decline, was up 3.6 percent for the week.

On Friday the market was buoyed early by a strong rally in overseas stocks triggered by word from China that it would not devalue its currency to make its imports more competitive.

Also, the Commerce Department said US gross domestic product, the broadest measure of economic health, grew at an annual rate of 1 percent in the fourth quarter, an improvement from the first estimate of 0.7 percent. Economists were expecting a reading of 0.4 percent growth.

"We are finally seeing some stabilization in the economic data - durable goods numbers, retail sales, and this second reading on GDP - that will hopefully end this debate on whether the US economy is heading toward recession," said Quincy Krosby, a market strategist with Prudential Financial.

Voya Market Strategists Douglas Cote and Karyn Cavanaugh, in a note to investors, said the GDP data could

increase the likelihood of an interest rate increase at the Federal Reserve's meeting in March.

But the stronger economic news kicked interest rates up sharply. That in turn hit relatively safe investments like government bonds and stocks that are attractive for their dividends, like utilities and consumer staples, hard. Coca-Cola was the biggest decliner in the Dow, slipping 2.3 percent, followed by Wal-Mart and IBM. All three stocks have a dividend yield of 3 percent or more.

The Dow Jones utility index, a basket of 15 utility companies, fell nearly 3 percent, and the sector was the biggest loser in the S&P 500. Utility stocks tend to do better at times of low interest rates or economic uncertainty because their business is relatively stable and they pay a high dividend. Government bond prices fell, pushing the yield on the 10-year Treasury note up to 1.76 percent from 1.72 percent the day before. Gold prices also fell, closing down \$18.40 to \$1,220.40 an ounce.

Oil was unable to hold gains it had early in the day, and closed down 29 cents, or 1 percent, to \$32.78 a barrel. Brent crude, the global benchmark, fell 19 cents to close at \$35.10. In other energy commodities, heating oil fell 1.9 cents to \$1.051 a gallon. Wholesale gasoline futures fell 3.9 cents to \$1.017 a gallon and natural gas rose 0.6 cents to \$1.791 per 1,000 cubic feet.

In other metals, silver fell 49 cents to \$14.71 an ounce and high-grade copper rose 5 cents to \$2.125 a pound. — AP



NEW YORK: Traders Edward Curran (left) and John Santiago (right) work on the floor of the New York Stock Exchange on Friday. — AP



# OECD CALLS FOR REFORMS TO WAKE UP GROWTH

**SHANGHAI:** With little hope for the world economy picking up pace soon, governments must tackle reforms at home to kickstart growth, the OECD said on Friday. Promoting entrepreneurship, labor mobility and higher productivity were all on the menu of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development's (OECD) recommendations to policymakers.

"Global growth prospects remain clouded in the near term," it said in its "Going for Growth" interim report,

released ahead of a G20 finance ministers meeting in Shanghai. "The case for structural reforms, combined with supporting demand policies, remains strong," it said.

The OECD chided governments for not doing more, pointing out that cutting red tape could help stoke growth and create jobs at a time when the world economy is stuttering. Removing barriers that stifle entrepreneurship and limit the capacity of firms to make good use of knowledge and technology is a "reform priority," it said.

It also recommended making it easier for new entrants in services where there is pent-up demand, such as taxis, reforming health and pension benefits and helping workers to become more mobile.

"It's up to (G20 finance) ministers to look at the situation and give the signal to governments that there's no way out," Alain de Serres, author of the report, told journalists in Shanghai.

Southern European countries have been more pro-active than their northern neighbors in tackling reform, the OECD

said, also praising Japan, China, India and Mexico. But others had not done enough, the report said, adding: "Governments around the world need to address deep structural weaknesses that the crisis laid bare, but which in many cases originated well before."

Acknowledging that many government budgets are tight, the OECD said particularly cash-strapped countries may need "to prioritize on high short-term returns or on low-cost measures".

Some measures could actually save

governments money quickly, it said, including making unemployment benefits conditional on training schemes or attracting private investment into public infrastructure. China, which holds the presidency of the G20, also stressed the importance of structural reforms.

"We might be standing at the edge of a cliff with two options: whether to fall or whether to... push forward the painful reform process," Chinese Finance Minister Lou Jiwei told a news conference to launch the report. —AFP



**SHANGHAI:** (L to R) Jin Liqun, president of the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB), Bank of Korea Governor Lee Juyeol, South Korean Finance Minister Yoo Il-ho and Japanese Finance Minister Taro Aso greet each other as they take part in a 'family photo' for the G20 Finance Ministers and Central Bank Governors Meeting at the Pudong Shangri-la Hotel in Shanghai yesterday. —AFP

## NEW BANK ANOTHER BRICS IN BEIJING'S DIPLOMATIC WALL

**SHANGHAI:** A new \$100 billion bank for major emerging nations will sign agreements to establish its headquarters in China yesterday, the latest step in Beijing's efforts to re-engineer the world's financial institutions.

The New Development Bank (NDB), set up by the so-called BRICS nations of Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa, has been viewed as a challenge to Washington-based institutions.

Its website explicitly describes it as an "alternative to the existing US-dominated World Bank and International Monetary Fund" which will address needs for infrastructure and sustainable development. It comes after the formal establishment in December of the Chinese-led, Beijing-headquartered Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank, a \$100 billion institution that counts several major European countries among its members after they signed up despite Washington's objections.

Earlier, following a long campaign by Beijing, the IMF announced China's yuan will be included in its elite Special Drawing Rights reserve currency basket.

The NDB represents an attempt to put financial meat on the bones of the BRICS grouping, whose members represent more than 40 percent of the world's population but who only became an acronym courtesy of a Goldman Sachs economist in 2001.

Establishing the bank at the financial heart of the world's second-largest economy is another landmark in China's efforts to have a greater say in global institutions, and to exert greater financial and diplomatic influence despite a slowdown in growth.

Societe Generale China economist Claire Huang in Hong Kong, speaking to AFP, said that the new bank will offer loans with fewer strings attached than existing multilateral lenders. "Borrowing from NDB won't have as many obligations as borrowing from the

IMF," she said, saying the institution would act as "a small IMF" and discussions will be more streamlined because of the limited membership. But NDB president KV Kamath, a former private banker from India, insisted on Friday that the institution "will function like a prudent bank should" and offer loans on the basis of the cost of funds and an appropriate margin.

The first approvals are expected in April and he expects 10 to 15 projects to be given the go-ahead this year, he added, more than half of them in green energy. Each country has a 20

percent share in the bank, with none holding veto power, and it will confine its loans to them.

### One Belt, One Road

As well as the development banks, President Xi Jinping's One Belt One Road plan calls for boosting the country's loans and investment in infrastructure projects from Central Asia and the Middle East to Europe. Railway links now connect Chinese cities such as Suzhou to Warsaw, and Zhengzhou to Hamburg. Xi paid his first official to the Middle East this year as Beijing seeks to deepen its ties in the oil-rich region, which it depends on for energy imports, and which it hopes to develop into new markets for its oversupply of steel, aluminium, and industrial goods.

But sceptics say the plan's ambitions to export China's excess may outstrip reality. "The magnitude of the overcapacities and the size of One Belt One Road is a complete mismatch, it will not put even a minor dent in the overcapacities in China," said Joerg Wuttke of the EU Chamber of Commerce in China. The belt-and-road vision "remains a grandiose and abstract wish list rather than a coherent blueprint of interconnected international investments", wrote analysts Michal Meidan and Luke Patey in a report for the Danish Institute of International Studies.

"Once it is set into motion many of the infrastructure projects will encounter financial uncertainties as well as political and security risks."

The NDB faces challenges of its own. It formally opened last year, but has yet to begin disbursing funds or move into its permanent offices. Bank representatives will sign formal agreements with the Shanghai government and the People's Republic of China on Saturday to establish its headquarters in the city. But it comes with several of its member nations slammed by rock-bottom oil and commodity prices and global shortfall in demand. Like the AIIB, the bank will have authorized capital of \$100 billion, with initial subscriptions set at \$50 billion. But it said Friday members have only paid in \$1 billion so far. Asked whether the turmoil facing its members would hinder the bank, its chairman Anton Siluanov, Russia's finance minister, told reporters in Shanghai:

"On the contrary, in a period of some difficulties... the bank has become particularly important in terms of raising investment resources". —AFP

conductive to healthy economic growth and in recent years has launched a raft of measures to kickstart prices and push away inflation back up nearer that level. A controversial program of sovereign bond purchases, known as QE or quantitative easing, was rolled out last year and initially appeared to work.

### Stimulus measures in March?

But the economic slowdown in China and depressed oil prices have pushed inflation expectations back down again. At the ECB's first policy meeting this year, president Mario Draghi suggested additional monetary easing could be on the cards as early as March if inflation expectations do not pick up soon.

Analysts said the German inflation data would fuel speculation that the ECB will launch new stimulus measures when its governing council meets on March 10. "Pressure for appreciable ECB stimulus in March has been ramped up by early euro-zone consumer price data for February which suggests that a return to deflation is highly probable as a consequence of lower oil, commodity and food prices," said IHS Global Insight analyst Howard Archer. —AFP

# US CONSUMER SPENDING, PRICES DATA KEEP RATE HIKES ON TABLE

## FOURTH-QUARTER GDP GROWTH RAISED TO 1% RATE

**WASHINGTON:** US consumer spending rose solidly in January and underlying inflation picked up by the most in four years, keeping Federal Reserve interest rate increases on the table this year.

The upbeat data on Friday added to reports on manufacturing and the labor market in suggesting economic growth regained momentum early this year after slowing in the fourth quarter.

The growth outlook was further bolstered by steady consumer sentiment in February despite a recent stock market sell-off. That should help ease fears of a looming recession and probably allow the Fed to hike rates this year. The US central bank raised rates in December for the first time in nearly a decade. "Growth is rebounding, inflation is picking up and stocks have recovered about half the loss posted this year. Conditions are moving back toward supporting a rate hike," said Joel Naroff, chief economist at Naroff Economic Advisors in Holland, Pennsylvania.

The Commerce Department said consumer spending increased 0.5 percent, the largest gain in 10 months, as households ramped up purchases of a range of goods and a return to normal winter temperatures boosted demand for heating.

Consumer spending, which accounts for more than two-thirds of US economic activity, rose by an upwardly revised 0.1 percent in December. Economists polled by Reuters had forecast consumer spending advancing 0.3 percent last month after a previously unchanged reading in December.

The dollar rose against a basket of currencies on the data, while prices for US Treasury debt fell. US stocks were trading higher. The pick-up in consumer spending stimulated price pressures last month, which will most likely increase Fed officials' confidence that inflation will move toward the US central bank's 2 percent target despite low inflation expectations.

A price index for consumer spending edged up 0.1 percent after dipping 0.1 percent in December. In the 12 months through January, the personal consumption expenditures (PCE) price index rose 1.3 percent, the largest increase since October 2014, after advancing 0.7 percent

in December.

Excluding food and energy, prices rose 0.3 percent. That was the largest increase since January 2012 and followed a 0.1 percent gain in December. The so-called core PCE price index increased 1.7 percent in the 12 months through January, the largest rise since July 2014.

The core PCE, the Fed's preferred inflation measure, rose 1.5 percent in December. Last month's increase in the core PCE pushed it past the level that central bank policymakers expected it to be by

### SENTIMENT STEADY

Separately, the University of Michigan said its consumer sentiment index rose to 91.7 in February after slipping to 90.7 early in the month. It was slightly down from January's 92.0 reading.

Consumer spending last month was supported by a 0.5 percent rise in income as the labor market continued to tighten. That was the largest increase since June and added to a 0.3 percent rise in December. Wages and salaries shot up 0.6 percent in January, as minimum wage increases came into

economy expanded at a 2.0 percent pace in the third quarter and grew 2.4 percent in 2015.

Businesses accumulated \$81.7 billion worth of inventory in the fourth quarter rather than the \$68.6 billion reported last month. As a result, inventories subtracted only 0.14 percentage point from GDP growth instead of the previously reported 0.45 percentage point.

The bigger inventory build is bad news for first-quarter GDP growth because it means businesses will have little incentive to place new orders, which will continue to



**MIAMI:** Shoppers stop to look in the window of a lighting store in the Design District of Miami Beach, Florida. The Commerce Department issued the second of three estimates of how the US economy performed in the October-December quarter. —AP

year-end. "It has to make the Fed more confident in their course of action going forward," said Omair Sharif, rate sales strategist at SG Americas Securities in New York. "The bar for rate hikes is relatively low. Unless there are significant further shocks in financial markets, I think we will probably get two or three rate hikes this year."

Financial markets see almost no chance of a rate hike in March and low probabilities of further monetary policy tightening for the rest of the year.

effect in some states, and were up 0.2 percent in the prior month.

Earlier, the Commerce Department said gross domestic product increased at a 1.0 percent annual rate in the fourth quarter as businesses were less aggressive in their efforts to reduce unwanted inventory.

The economy was previously reported to have grown at a 0.7 percent pace in the fourth quarter and economists had expected that GDP growth would be revised down to a 0.4 percent rate. The

hold down production.

"The weaker drag from inventories in the fourth quarter means that any rebound in the first quarter could be slightly more modest than we previously expected," said Paul Ashworth, chief US economist at Capital Economics in Toronto. First-quarter GDP growth estimates are above a 2.0 percent rate, but the risks are tilted to the downside amid slowing world economies, a strong dollar and the recent global stock market sell-off that tightened financial market conditions. —Reuters

# GERMANY AGAINST G20 STIMULUS AS MINISTERS MEET

**SHANGHAI:** Germany objected Friday to launching a G20 fiscal and monetary stimulus package to boost global growth, as the major economic powers split over how to battle a menacing downturn.

Government attempts to boost their economies with monetary loosening could be "counterproductive", Wolfgang Schaeuble said at a Group of 20 finance chiefs meeting in Shanghai.

And he said that fiscal stimulus-essentially governments spending more or cutting taxes-had run its course, and the main recourse to battling a global slump was reform. Schaeuble had backing from France, but was at odds with the United States, Britain and China, which all backed the use of monetary and fiscal tools to fight a downturn, as well as structural reforms. US Treasury Secretary Jacob Lew told reporters: "It's increasingly important to use all the levers of policy that are available, and that means using fiscal levels as well as monetary policy and structural reforms."

### World economy under assault

The G20 gathering comes with the global economy assailed on multiple fronts, from slowing growth in host nation China to weak commodity prices. The OECD last week cut its 2016 global growth forecast from 3.3 percent to 3.0 percent.

Chinese Premier Li Keqiang told the opening ceremony that the meeting came amid "sluggish world economic recovery and growth."

"Destabilising factors and uncertainties are on the rise," he said in a video message. China came under

pressure ahead of the meeting to push forward with structural reforms to sustain its growth. Lew told his Chinese counterpart Lou

Jiwei that it was crucial for China to support household income and rebalance the economy toward consumption-led growth, according to a report on their meeting from the US

also known as the renminbi, under pressure from speculation of a looming devaluation, the governor of the People's Bank of China sought to reassure markets, saying in Shanghai that China's economic fundamentals "remain strong".

"There is no basis for persistent renminbi depreciation from the per-

### 'No crisis' says France

The meeting of finance ministers and central bank governors of the advanced and emerging-market economies comes after the Bank of Japan and the European Central Bank (ECB) have adopted negative interest rates and huge quantitative easing programs.

While the US Federal Reserve has recently moved in the opposite direction, raising interest rates in December, many analysts believe it will delay any more tightening given the frailty of the global economy. But Schaeuble's stance challenged the representatives of the world's top 20 economies, who were also urged by the International Monetary Fund this week to take "bold" action to boost growth and contain risk in a "highly vulnerable" global economy. Berlin does "not agree on a G20 fiscal stimulus package", the German minister said. "Monetary policy is extremely accommodating to the point that it may even be counterproductive in terms of negative side effects. Fiscal as well as monetary policies have reached their limits-if you want the real economy to grow there are no shortcuts without reforms."

He insisted that reforms were more important and "thinking about further stimulus just distracts from the real task at hand". Bank of England governor Mark Carney criticised negative interest rates as a "zero-sum game" that exported problems to other countries. But he argued that monetary stimulus "can buy time for structural adjustments" and the challenges "demand that our firepower is well-aimed". "Several commentators are peddling the myth that monetary policy is out of ammunition," he said. —AFP



**SHANGHAI:** Chief of Germany's Federal Bundesbank Jens Weidmann (left) and German Finance Minister Wolfgang Schaeuble (right) hold a press conference after sessions of the G20 Finance Ministers and Central Bank Governors Meeting at the Pudong Shangri-la Hotel in Shanghai yesterday. —AFP

Treasury Department.

Lew and Lou "also discussed the importance of China making its transition to a market-determined exchange rate in an orderly and transparent way, while clearly communicating its policies and actions to the market," the Treasury statement said. With the yuan currency,

spective of fundamentals," Zhou Xiaochuan said. "We will not resort to competitive devaluations to boost our advantage in exports."

Zhou said China still has some monetary policy space and tools to confront challenges, and that fiscal and structural steps should also be used.

## ZERO-PERCENT INFLATION IN GERMANY TURNS HEAT ON ECB

**FRANKFURT:** Falling energy prices brought inflation in Germany back down to zero percent this month, data showed on Friday, turning up the heat on the ECB to avert possible deflation in the wider euro area. Germany's national inflation yardstick, the consumer price index, stood at zero percent in February, compared with 0.5 percent in January, the federal statistics office Destatis said.

And using the Harmonised Index of Consumer Prices (HICP) — the barometer used by the European Central Bank—the inflation rate stood at minus 0.2 percent in February, compared with plus 0.4 percent in January.

The last time the German HICP index was in negative territory was in September 2015, when it reached minus 0.1 percent. And the last time it was lower than minus 0.2 percent was in January 2015, when it stood at minus 0.4 percent. The data were still only preliminary, calculated from consumer price data for six of Germany's 16 regional states. But final data based on all 16 states were scheduled to be published on March 11.

The ECB regards annual inflation rates of close to but just under 2.0 percent as





## TOYOTA RESHAPES THE FUTURE OF SUSTAINABLE MOTORING

The fourth generation Prius is here, unveiling the latest version of this global green icon, which takes the hybrid concept further than ever, with striking design, higher expected fuel economy ratings and greater ride comfort. The arrival of the Prius, Toyota's first hybrid vehicle in the region, reflects Toyota's mission in engaging with local communities and continuous efforts to contribute to society by making automobiles that lead to a cleaner environment.

Toyota's hybrid technology marks a breakthrough in automobile fuel consumption and reflects the company's commitment to utilizing the technology in driving sustainability forward. The Prius will raise awareness around the premium performance of hybrid technology and will assist in cementing the leading position of alternative energy vehicles.

Commenting on the arrival of the Prius to the region, Takayuki Yoshitsugu, Chief Representative of Middle East & North Africa Representative Office, Toyota Motor Corporation, stated, "At Toyota, we firmly believe that technology is a vital enabler for sustainable develop-

ment. Driven by this belief, Toyota has been working on the future of sustainable motoring by heavily investing in introducing vehicles that are environment friendly and fun to drive. Toyota's hybrid experience will be extremely rewarding for our customers. Great looks, comfort and space combined with advanced technology, finely tuned aerodynamics and lightweight materials ensure an exhilarating driving performance, world-class efficiencies and ultra-low CO2 emissions. We see great potential in the Middle East for the Prius. We also sincerely appreciate the unwavering support from our customer base for our initiatives to make more environmentally friendly vehicles."

In 1993, automotive brands were launching standard cars with basic features. The same year, Toyota invested heavily in developing vehicles with the future in mind. The three environmental challenges that Toyota had addressed included introducing alternative energy sources as opposed to oil, reducing CO2 emissions and preventing pollution. In December 1997, Toyota launched the first generation Prius, the world's first

mass-produced hybrid vehicle. In 18 years after rolling out the first Prius, Toyota has sold more than 8 million hybrid vehicles worldwide. Today with the launch of the 2016 Prius, Toyota celebrates 56 years of fruitful research and development efforts.

### The two power sources of Toyota's hybrid technology

Toyota's hybrid vehicles provide high performance without wasting gasoline, propelled by the synergy between two power sources, which are the gasoline engine and the electric motor. When accelerating, the vehicle uses an electric motor that does not require gasoline to accelerate efficiently and powerfully. In response to driving conditions, the system efficiently combines power from the electric motor and gasoline engine automatically. When the vehicle has stopped, the system also automatically shuts down the engine to avoid wasting fuel during idling. The cumulative effect of preventing gasoline wastage in this manner means Toyota's hybrid technology can provide dramatically

better fuel efficiency than any other vehicle in its class. There is no need to charge the hybrid system battery using external equipment. The hybrid system automatically charges the battery by using electricity generated each time you apply the brakes. Please click on the following link which explains the two power sources <https://youtu.be/j6ffwQaftac>

Toyota hybrid not only fits the region's sustainability agenda, but is also in line with the global direction towards more sustainable and greener communities. The Prius, as a symbol of Toyota's hybrid technology, will contribute to achieving the new Millennium Sustainable Development Goals, which strive for a healthy lifestyle, taking urgent actions to combat climate change, and ensuring access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all. The alignment between what is delivered with Toyota's hybrid technology and the efforts exerted globally to sustain the planet's resources makes the Prius the perfect car for responsible drivers who are aiming to adopt a more eco-friendly approach towards our planet.

## ORYX INDUSTRIES, FIRST EQUITY PARTNERS AND STATE HOLDING ATTEND IFIRME

**FUJAIRAH:** Co-partners and main sponsors, Fujairah based Oryx Industries, Bahrain's First Equity Partners and Qatar's State Holding, participated at the 4th International Forum for Industrial Rocks and Mining Expo (IFIRME), and held at the Fujairah Exhibition Centre on 23 - 25 February.

Held under the patronage of Sheikh Hamad bin Mohammed Al-Sharqi, Member of the Supreme Council and Ruler of Fujairah, IFIRME's fourth edition held under the title "Innovation for Economic Development and Sustainability in the Mining Sector".

Organized by the Fujairah Natural Resources Corporation, in cooperation with the UAE's Ministry of Energy and the Arab Industrial Development and Mining Organization, IFIRME has proven to be a highly effective platform for professionals to meet and discuss industry issues. These can range from investment opportunities and expansion into new markets to how the region's burgeoning real estate sector is driving a need for high quality rock products.

Industrial materials and rocks are used as a base material in a variety of industries across the world and are essential to the success of many others. Industrial rocks are often used for their physical or chemical properties for various manufacturing or commercial usages.

For IFIRME 2016 Oryx Industries, the lead-

ing construction material producer in the GCC region, joined its stakeholders First Equity Partners (FEP) and Qatar's State Holding on a shared stand where they showcased a full range of their products and services.

The IFIRME has attracted hundreds of regional and international delegates and visitors.

Speaking of their joint participation at the expo, the three partners expressed their satisfaction of this event. Nasser Barakat, CEO of Oryx Industries said: "IFIRME 2016 is a great platform for Oryx Industries to exhibit and share our products and services with potential industry partners and customers, including our transportation and logistics services. Our participation came on the back of a very successful year for Oryx Industries, during which we have achieved double-digit growth across all our business lines. The strategic partnership that was formed last year with FEP and State Holding has allowed us to look at expanding on our dominance in the region's industry sector and we have conducted talks with other key industry players at the expo to help further grow our business into new markets and new industries."

FEP's Director of Investments, Hasan Al-Mansoor, added: "As a private equity player, FEP along with a consortium of investors, acquired a stake in Oryx Industries in 2015

and we have been extremely happy with the company's continuing success as an industry leader. We are also excited with the fact that Oryx Industries has expanded its geographical presence in the GCC which includes the top three main markets of quarry products: Qatar, Kuwait, and Bahrain, and has established itself as a key player in the Fujairah quarry export market. Having realized the benefit of taking part in the expo before, we were eager to participate in the IFIRME 2016 to identify yet more opportunities and deals, and we have achieved these goals."

State Holding's Deputy CEO, Badr Al-Kashti, concluded: "With development and sustainability at the core of our investments, we view the construction materials sector as one of many industries in our diverse portfolio that we hold long-term confidence in. We have been particularly impressed with Oryx Industries growing its production capacity of quarry products to more than 8 million tons annually through the installation of state of the art production lines in Oryx Crushers, as well as expanding its production facilities in Al-A'ali Crushers. As a key shareholder in Oryx Industries we are aware of its experience and dominance within its industry and IFIRME 2016 was another opportunity for us to support the company, as well as to explore additional investment opportunities in Fujairah, the UAE and internationally."



## DUNIA ABDULAZIZ SALBOUKH WINS KD 125,000 IN NBK'S AL-JAWHARA MONTHLY DRAW FOR FEBRUARY

**KUWAIT:** National Bank of Kuwait (NBK) announces the winner for February's KD 125,000 Al Jawhara monthly prize, Dunia Abdulaziz Salboukh. The draw was held under the supervision of the Ministry of Commerce and Industry. The winner's name was announced live on Marina FM.

NBK has doubled customers' chances to win in the weekly, monthly and quarterly draws when they do not withdraw or transfer from their accounts.

NBK customers have chances to win KD 5,000 weekly, KD 125,000 monthly and a grand prize of KD 250,000 quarterly. Each KD 50 in a customer's account entitles them one entry into the draw, thus more money in an account means more chances into each draw. This new added feature enables Al Jawhara Account holders to double their chances when maintaining their balance without withdrawing.

Al-Jawhara is the most popular prize-giving account in Kuwait. Al-Jawhara account entitles account holders to enter the weekly, monthly and quarterly Al-Jawhara draws. All prizes are automatically credited to the winners' accounts the day after the draw.

Al-Jawhara account is available for both Kuwaitis and expats and can be opened at any of NBK's numerous branches around Kuwait, or safely and easily through NBK's website for existing customers.



## GULF BANK ANNOUNCES WINNERS OF 'SPEND MORE, WIN MORE' GULF REWARDS CAMPAIGN

**KUWAIT:** Gulf Bank announced yesterday the third draw winners of its "Spend More, Win More" with Gulf Rewards promotional campaign for its credit card holders. The campaign runs until 29 February 2016. All Gulf Bank credit cards holders are automatically enrolled in this campaign.

The daily winners are:  
Russell Martin Loughland — 100,000, Gulf Points 15-02-2016

Mohammed Ahmed Mohammed Abdulsalam — 100,000 Gulf Points  
Abdulla Dhawi Obaid Abdullah — 100,000 Gulf Points

Abdulaziz Sadeq Mohammed Sadeq 100,000 Gulf Points

Yousef Abdulla Yousef Al-Ghunaim 100,000 Gulf Points

Mohammed Nasser Abdulredai Marfi 100,000 Gulf Points  
Ali Jamil Hijazi 100,000 Gulf Points

This new campaign is part of Gulf Rewards, the fastest and most rewarding points program in Kuwait. Gulf Rewards

includes Gulf Points for free flights and hotels redemptions, as well as Gulf Bank "Entertainer", Kuwait's first geo-locator mobile application offering exclusive deals in Kuwait, UAE, and London.

There will be 30 lucky winners, 29 daily winners each receiving 100,000 Gulf Points, and one grand prize winner of 1,000,000 Gulf Points. For each 10 KD spent locally, one chance will be earned, and for each 10 KD spent internationally, three chances will be earned.

100,000 Gulf Points can be redeemed in a multitude of ways. For example, they can be redeemed for 5 roundtrip tickets to Dubai, or 3 roundtrip tickets to Beirut, or 2 roundtrip tickets to Europe, or even 1 roundtrip ticket to the USA, depending on how you to choose to use them. Or you can use your Gulf Points for free hotel stays in one of 300,000 hotels worldwide. With all these ways to use your points, imagine what you could do with 1 Million Gulf Points.

To ensure the redemption procedure is as straight forward as possible, Gulf Bank has

created a dedicated webpage on its website at [www.gulfbank.com/gulfpoints-en](http://www.gulfbank.com/gulfpoints-en) where customers can view their points, check their balance, redeem points instantly online for flights and hotel stays, or benefit from frequently advertised special offers.

Customers can earn additional chances to win the Gulf Points draw by using the Gulf Bank "Entertainer" app. This exclusive app offer instants deals on your mobile phone which can be used at restaurants, hotels, spas, as well as on children's activities and interests at participating merchants in Kuwait, UAE, and London. If you use your Gulf Bank credit card to pay for any Entertainer, Buy One, Get One Free offer, you will earn Gulf Points on each of those transactions and have more chances to win in the "Spend More, Win More" campaign.

The Gulf Bank "Entertainer" app is available free for existing Gulf Bank credit card holders to download from App Store for iOS/iPhone and the Google Play Store for Android. You can also visit [www.gulfbank.com/entertainer-en](http://www.gulfbank.com/entertainer-en) to receive an activation code.

## VENEZUELA IN ADVANCED TALKS FOR \$5BN LOAN: CB

**CARACAS:** Venezuela is in advanced talks for a \$5 billion loan from international banks and investment funds, the head of the central bank said on Friday, potentially providing an influx of cash for the OPEC member country, which faces heavy debt payments this year. The operation would provide \$3 billion in liquidity for the government and \$2 billion to finance a gold mining joint venture with Canada's Gold Reserve Inc, Nelson Merentes, the central bank president, said in an interview.

On Wednesday, Venezuela and Gold Reserve signed a memorandum of understanding to jointly develop the Las Brisas and Las Cristinas gold mines, ending an arbitration dispute. "We hope within a month to constitute the company, and in parallel we are seeking the loan," Merentes said. "I can't say for sure if it will be in a month, in two months. But it will definitely be this year. We are moving quickly." Gold Reserve was not immediately available for comment. Merentes said the loan would be repaid with gold produced from the mines, which would serve as the guarantee for the loan. A spokeswoman for Gold Reserve declined to comment, saying that the company planned to issue a statement in the "near future."

Merentes said banks from Germany, Canada and China had come to Caracas to participate in a government-sponsored mining sector event. It was not immediately clear whether these banks would be

involved in providing the loan.

### DEBT PAYMENTS

Investors have grown more concerned that Venezuela or state oil company PDVSA could default this year, pushing the country's bond yields to the highest level of any emerging market nation.

Venezuela's international reserves fell to a 17-year low of \$13.5 billion on Friday after the government paid in full its \$1.5 billion Global 2016 bond, according to central bank data. Merentes vowed Venezuela would meet all debt commitments, adding that authorities were willing to use instruments such as oil or gold warrants in efforts to refinance. "These are commodities that can be sold in the future or in the present," he said. "We are going to continue doing modern financial architecture to seek liquidity."

Obtaining the financing may be difficult given that Gold Reserve is a tiny exploration company with no assets in production. It had \$2.2 million in cash on hand as of the end of September. In its third-quarter results it warned of "substantial doubt about the company's ability to continue as a going concern."

Banks have been leery of funding the advanced projects of major players in the sector, and precious metal exploration companies have largely fallen out of favor with investors, stung by the extended slide in bullion prices.—Reuters





Keynote speaker James Philips, Corporate Vice President



James Philips, Corporate Vice President (left), Samer Abu Ltaif, Regional General Manager of Microsoft Gulf (second left)

# MICROSOFT CLOUD ROADSHOW 2016 LEADS TOWARDS CLOUD INNOVATION

## CORPORATE VP HIGHLIGHTS ESSENCE OF CLOUD COMPUTING

By Islam Al-Sharaa

**DUBAI:** In line with Microsoft's efforts to impart the latest cloud knowledge and empower IT professionals to achieve more, the Cloud Roadshow 2016 was held on Feb 22 and 23 at the Hyatt Regency Dubai Creek Heights. The event aimed at reiterating the cloud presence in the market by hosting two-day trainings held by Microsoft experts who shared valuable techniques and sound practices that allow organizations and individuals to leverage the most suitable technology solutions for their needs. It also provided a unique opportunity for IT leaders and professionals to meet and collaborate in an engaging platform.

The first day opened with keynote speaker James Philips, Corporate Vice President, Business Intelligence Group, highlighting the essence of cloud computing and imparting basic tips on how leveraging modern cloud technology can lead to organizations reinventing themselves. During the sessions, further stress was placed upon building and deploying of applications with the Microsoft App Platform, with emphasis on the fundamentals of Office 365, Windows 10 infrastructure and bringing power of data to organizations.

Kuwait Times spoke to Philips about Microsoft's cloud offerings and other services. Some excerpts:

**Kuwait Times: How secure is our information on the cloud. Who should have access to it, and more importantly, who can have access to it?**

**James Philips:** We have invested heavily in security and privacy. It's a core success. Ensuring our customers are able to trust our cloud is an important part of our success and our interests are completely in line. If you look at the investment that we have made and all the certificates that Microsoft has, clearly it's important to us. Plus we are at a global scale the best in global security.

**KT: In this age of Internet of Things, sharing economy and driverless cars, what is Microsoft's share and vision in these emerging concepts?**

**Philips:** The IoT is the most interesting thing that is happening in our industry. It is sort of a major next wave of innovation. We've seen personal computers give way to mobile computers, giving way

now to intelligent devices. Everything has software in it and that is what IoT is about - supporting the ability to execute the software in whatever device one wants to interact with backed by a cloud capability that can provide the ability to collect data, process that data and then provide a better experience to these clients. This is where most of the growth is going to come for us and for any other cloud provider in the next couple of decades.

**KT: Tell us something more about Microsoft Azure and new projects.**

**Philips:** We recently introduced Azure, which marries our business intelligence capabilities and data visualization with learning in advance analytics with the ability to create applications. It's a move away from simply providing a bunch of disaggregated infrastructure parts to providing complete business applications and complete infrastructure or service offerings that get customers closer to the solution they're trying to build with other clouds. With Azure cloud, you start closer to something that looks like a complete solution.

We are moving into a world where software is everything, that provides compelling opportunities to make our lives easier and our businesses more efficient. The cloud really comes into its own in that world, when you have trillions of devices around the world that are all admitting data and all capable of delivering back experiences based on the processing of that data which is fundamentally transformative and impossible without a global cloud infrastructure behind it. That's when the cloud starts to change the world we're living in and change the lives of the people that live in this world.

**KT: How secure is our information on the cloud. Who should have access to it, and more importantly, who can have access to it?**

**Philips:** The ability to permit the end users of devices to control their own policy with regards which information they are comfortable storing or sharing is an important part of Microsoft's strategies. If you compare what we do to what some of our competitors do, it is pretty clear that we land very strongly on the side of giving users control over their data and their information. We are in a business that provides great technology to allow our customers to build solutions.

One of the things that Microsoft does which is unique in this industry is to provide you an option. We give you a choice between using your own data centers or our cloud. How you decide what is right for you is going to vary depending on the industry that you're in and the problem that you're trying to solve. In general, the cloud gives you a higher degree of cost efficiency in order to start using infrastructure. If you have a global application and you need to have a footprint across the earth, the cloud will certainly be a better solution for you.

The evidence is that the worst breaches that occur are not in the public cloud, but for the people that are trying to do it for themselves. The other reality is that if you're trying to compete in today's world and you're trying to transfer your business, the cloud provides you with the opportunity to do that. It's impossible to alter any one company to lay down a global footprint of data center capacity to go facilitate building kinds of applications that are driving these changes. The cloud is a safer bet than trying to do it yourself and the cloud provides you a unique opportunity to go do things that you could never do yourself.

**KT: What about cost-effectiveness?**

**Philips:** If you look at the evolution of our pricing structure, it's pretty clear that we refuse to be beat on price. The most important thing to think about is the value someone is getting - the price is one component of the value. Microsoft has what really sets us apart from other competitors is full stack offering. You might find infrastructures that provide raw source and raw networking, like from Amazon, but what you don't find starting at the top is a complete business application integrated with a comprehensive data stack and analytic capabilities integrated with rich center developer tools and services riding the top infrastructure and servers with a global footprint which enables our customers to build solutions that are differentiated.

Price is obviously one component but ultimately what matters is can you go and serve your customers and deliver unique solutions that allows you to drive revenue into growth revenue that remains relevant in a world in which the economy is fundamentally changing across industries, and I think this is where the differentiation lies.



James Philips, Corporate Vice President, Business Intelligence Group (right) with Islam Al-Sharaa, IT Director Kuwait Times.



Second day presentations elaborated on cloud solutions that can lead to more collaborative and cohesive workspaces. Microsoft solutions like Office 365, SharePoint, Azure and Internet of Things (IoT) were expounded

upon, with prominent speakers emphasizing their role in creating more competitive advantage for businesses, and how best to leverage these solutions for managing workplace processes.

## FROM WESTERN UNION TO APPLE: WHEN TECH BATTLED GOVERNMENT

**NEW YORK:** The fight between Apple and the FBI over access to a San Bernardino killer's iPhone isn't the first time industry and government have tangled over privacy and security. Every revolution in communications technology has sparked new battles over its use that changed the course of law enforcement, surveillance and civil liberties. Here are a few famous cases that helped establish the rules that govern the government's access to our conversations and other personal details:

### THE TELEGRAPH

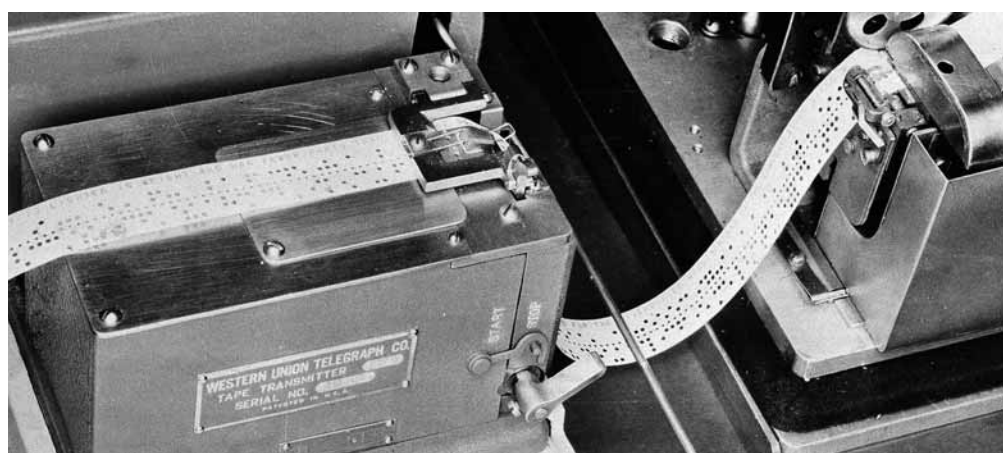
The telegraph upended nineteenth-century notions of time and distance, making possible same-day - and sometimes faster - communication where previously it had taken days or weeks for a mailed letter to arrive by train or steamer. Its users, though, had little expectation of privacy. All messages passed through the hands of telegraph operators, and the telegrams themselves were easily accessible to government agents.

Many states had privacy laws forbidding the telegraph company to let others read a telegram meant for you, according to a Mississippi Law Journal article by Wesley MacNeil Oliver, a Duquesne University law professor. But it was far less clear what evidence the government needed to present a court to justify a wiretap.

Western Union, eager to let customers know it was looking out for their privacy, jumped at the opportunity to object to government subpoenas in the mid-to-late 1800s. The company would argue that the government's requests for information were too broad and that they were unreasonable searches not permitted by the Constitution. The company's efforts helped set a standard for telegraph subpoenas, Oliver wrote. For instance, the government had to provide a "reasonably accurate description of the paper wanted, either by its date, title, substance, or the subject it relates to" instead of just requesting an "indiscriminate search" for information contained in a broad swath of telegrams, he said.

### THE TELEPHONE

Law enforcement efforts soared with Prohibition,



This May 16, 1944 file photo shows a device used by Western Union which translates a telegram into holes on a tape, and then passes it along to the box-like apparatus at left. — AP

leading to a confrontation with phone technology. A particularly famous case revolved around Roy Olmstead, a former Seattle police officer who became known as "King of the Northwest Bootleggers" for running a ring of liquor importers and distributors in the 1920s. Federal agents tapped the phone company's wires outside Olmstead's company offices and by his home in an era when there was no warrant requirement for doing so, said Richard Hamm, a history professor at the State University of New York at Albany. Evidence gathered from the taps was crucial to Olmstead's conviction.

The case went to the Supreme Court, where four of the then-major phone companies filed briefs in support of the convicted bootlegger, arguing that the warrantless wiretaps violated constitutional prohibitions on unreasonable searches and self-incrimination. The Supreme Court upheld Olmstead's conviction in 1928, ruling the wiretap evidence allowable since Olmstead's physical house wasn't searched nor his papers seized. But the decision galvanized legislative efforts to ban wiretapping by federal agents, Hamm said. The 1934 Communications Act, which regulated telecommunications and set up the FCC, also criminalized wiretap-

ping and barred the use of wiretap evidence in court.

Almost 30 years later, another Supreme Court case involving the FBI bugging of a public telephone booth largely overturned the Olmstead decision. The high court used the case to lay out the broad principle that the Fourth Amendment protects individual privacy, said Washington University Law professor Neil Richards, and not just the "physical sanctity of the home."

### THE TELEPHONE RINGS TWICE

A 1977 Supreme Court case, United States v New York Telephone Co, features prominently in the Justice Department's case against Apple, largely because it revived and reinterpreted a law as old as the Constitution for the modern age. In that case, a regional AT&T subsidiary gave FBI agents information but refused to lease them phone lines to install a "pen register" - a device that records the numbers dialed on a phone - to investigate a gambling ring. The company argued that it couldn't do so with a warrant under then-current wiretap law. A federal judge, backed by an appeals court, forced the company to provide technical assistance to the government. — AP

## WONDER MATERIAL SPARKS RUSH TO DEVELOP NEW ELECTRONICS

**BARCELONA:** Bendable mobile phones, quick-charge batteries and unbreakable touch screens - technology firms are racing to harness the potential of graphene, a wonder material which scientists say could transform consumer electronics. A fine sheet of pure carbon, graphene is as thin as an atom, making it the skinniest material known. At the same time though, it is 100 times stronger than steel, hugely pliable and can conduct electricity and heat better than anything else. "There are other materials which do have one of those properties each," physicist Kostya Novoselov - who first isolated graphene in 2004 - said at the Mobile World Congress, the sector's biggest trade fair, in Barcelona. "What is amazing here is that all those qualities are combined in one simple crystal." Of course that immediately leaves us with a number of possible applications.

### Graphene Patents Soar

Novoselov, a Russian-born British citizen, and his colleague at Manchester University Andre Geim won the Nobel Prize for their work with graphene, sparking a flurry of interest in the new material. The number of patents involving graphene soared from under 50 in 2004 to around 9,000 in 2014, according to Andrew Garland of research firm Future Markets, who puts out a twice-yearly report on the material. "Most are in electronics," he said.

Samsung, the world's number one smartphone maker, has taken out the most graphene patents - over 490 - followed by China's Ocean's King Lighting and IBM. While its real-world uses so far remain modest, research into possible applications for the material picked up steam in Europe after the European Union set aside one billion euros (\$1.1 billion) in 2013 to be spent over ten years to investigate. "We believe we require another ten years to get to the point where a

lot of devices will start being on the market," said Andrea Ferrari, director of the Cambridge Graphene Centre at the University of Cambridge. The trade fair in Barcelona for the first time had a pavilion dedicated to graphene research centres and start-ups, a sign of the growing importance of the material to the mobile industry.

### 'Can Support an Elephant'

Graphene is so pliable scientists predict it will one day make flexible phones possible. British firm FlexEnable showcased a smart-watch prototype made using graphene that wraps around a user's wrist and features a full colour LCD display that is capable of running video content. "This sort of display technology is basically ushering in a completely new generation of mobile devices because we can start folding electronics," said the company's technical director, Mike Banach. British tech firm Zap&Go, meanwhile, displayed a graphene charger for mobile phones and tablets that takes just five minutes to fully load with power.

The company is making 2,000 versions to give to journalists and to people who pre-order them, said the company's marketing director, Simon Harris. "What we have here ultimately could replace the lithium-ion battery in billions of devices. It needs to come down in size and up in power," he added. Graphene is so strong and thin that researchers believe they will one day be able to use it to make unbreakable screens for mobile devices.

"With just a few kilos you can replace all the touchscreens in the world. With just a few layers on top of each other you can support an elephant," said Vittorio Pellegrini, director of the Italian Institute of Technology's Graphene Labs. "Graphene is really a material that allows our imagination to fly. There is no limit to what you can do," he added. — AFP



## MONARCH BUTTERFLY POPULATION SURGES IN MEXICO

**MEXICO CITY:** The monarch butterfly population has soared in its Mexican winter sanctuary this season, marking a recovery for the threatened species that migrates across North America, officials said Friday.

The orange and black butterfly covered 4.01 hectares (9.9 acres) of pine and fir forest in the 2015-2016 season, more than tripling last year's figure of 1.13 hectares, Mexican, US and Canadian officials said. While researchers measure the population by the area it covers, it estimates that there were 140 million butterflies this year in the mountains of central Mexico.

But officials and conservationists warned that they must sustain their efforts or risk reversing this progress. "The area occupied by the monarchs in the Mexican sanctuaries has increased in the last two seasons, which suggests the start of a recovery of this butterfly," said Omar Vidal, Mexico office director for the World Wide Fund for Nature.

"It's very good news. At the same time, we can't lower our guard in any of the three countries and we must redouble our efforts to ensure this migratory phenomenon transcends this and the next generation."

The rebound comes after the population

hit an all-time low of 0.67 hectares in 2013-2014.

The decline has been blamed on illegal logging in their Mexican wintering grounds and the drop in milkweed on which they feed due to the use of pesticides in the United States and Canada. The butterflies travel more than 4,000 kilometers (2,500 miles) from Canada to spend the winter in a mountain reserve straddling the states of Mexico and Michoacan.

They usually arrive at their nesting ground between late October and early November and head back north in March. Alejandro del Mazo, the head of Mexico's office for protected areas, credited the recovery to the "great results" of the joint actions taken by the Mexican, US and Canadian governments to reverse the decline.

The goal, which follows a mandate given at a 2014 North American summit, is to increase the area to six hectares by 2020. This compares to a high of 18.19 hectares in 1996-1997.

### Plant milkweed

Dan Ashe, director of the US Fish and Wildlife Service, said his country has restored

more than 100,000 hectares of fields without pesticides in the past year, with an investment of \$20 million.

"I am encouraged by the good news coming out of Mexico, an indication that we have the ability to save the North American monarch butterfly and with it one of the most remarkable wildlife migrations on the planet," Ashe said. "But there is much more we need to do and it will take a coordinated citizen effort on a scale never before seen." Ashe urged people across the region to help the butterfly thrive by planting milkweed, and reach the goal of having 250 million monarchs by 2020. "A simple stand of native milkweed can make every backyard, school, community center, city park and place of worship a haven for breeding or migrating monarchs, and together we can bring about the greatest citizen conservation victory of our generation," he said.

But Vidal of WWF warned that herbicides are still a major problem in the United States, along with illegal logging in Mexican sanctuaries. "The threats to the monarch remain and if they are not dealt with, if actions are not followed through, the migratory phenomenon won't recover," he said. — AFP



A kaleidoscope of monarch butterflies cling to tree branches, in the Piedra Herrada sanctuary, near Valle de Bravo, Mexico. Monarch butterflies have made a big comeback in their wintering grounds in Mexico, after suffering serious declines, investigators said Friday. — AP



Australia's flagship icebreaker Aurora Australis sailing from Australia's Mawson research station in Antarctica. The icebreaker that ran aground in Antarctica during a blizzard has been successfully refloated, officials said. — AFP

## AUSTRALIAN ICEBREAKER REFLOATED IN ANTARCTICA AFTER GROUNDING

### RESCUERS WORKING TO BRING VESSEL'S EXPEDITIONERS HOME

**SYDNEY:** An Australian icebreaker that ran aground in Antarctica during a blizzard has been refloated, officials said yesterday as they work to bring the vessel's expeditioners home.

The Aurora Australis ran aground with 68 people on board after breaking its moorings on Wednesday and was stuck on rocks at Horseshoe Harbour, close to Australia's Mawson station.

"The Aurora Australis was successfully refloated and is now out of Mawson harbour," director of the Australian Antarctic Division Nick Gales told reporters in Hobart. "It is going to remain in the vicinity of Mawson harbour for a few days while the P&O crew conduct a very thorough assessment of any damage that has occurred during the event."

"Importantly there is no evidence that any oil has been spilled or any pollution event has occurred," he added. The 37 expeditioners onboard were rescued by barge Friday and taken to Mawson station, while the crew remained to refloat the ship, which is owned by P&O Maritime Services, using its ballast system and work boats.

Shaun Deshommes, P&O Maritime's opera-

tions manager, said it would take up to three days to fully assess the damage to the boat's hull, including using underwater cameras.

"The breach is relatively small," he told reporters at a press conference with Gales, adding that only a small tank had been damaged. "It is not affecting in any manner the stability or the safety of the vessel." It is expected that the boat, which is capable of breaking ice up to 1.23 metres thick, will journey back to Australia for repairs.

### 'International jigsaw puzzle'

Gales said the Australian Antarctic Division was engaging with other Antarctic programmes on how to bring the expeditioners back to Australia. The United States Antarctic programme has already agreed to take more than 30 expeditioners from another of Australia's stations, Davis, to Casey station, some 1,500 kilometres (950 miles) away, by plane later yesterday.

That group had been scheduled to return to Australia on the Aurora Australis after a southern hemisphere summer in Antarctica. They are now expected to be flown home on an AAD plane in

the coming days. Gales said Australia would consider the assets of other countries active in the region-including France, the United States, South Africa, China and Japan-before deciding on the best option to bring the expeditioners at Mawson home.

Saying it was like an "international jigsaw puzzle", Gales said Australia would seek to minimise disruption to other nation's programmes.

"We really try and look for the most efficient and effective and safe way to respond to the situation that minimises impact on other programs as well as is able to give us the assistance we need," he said.

Australia's Environment Minister Greg Hunt thanked the "broader Antarctic community" for its help given the dangerous and hostile environment.

In a statement, Hunt also thanked "the many nations which have been quick to offer logistical support to the Australian Antarctic program". Several countries have territorial claims on Antarctica, viewed as a potential future source of huge mineral resources, although under a 1949 agreement the frozen continent is designated a scientific preserve. — AFP

## GLOBAL WARMING DOUBTS SPUR PUSH TO BLOCK SCIENCE NORMS

**CHARLESTON, W.Va.:** Doubt over man's contribution to global warming, particularly through burning coal for power, is fueling a push by West Virginia lawmakers to block new science standards in schools.

In a state defined by a coal industry that is now on life support, the Republican-led House of Delegates voted 73-20 on Friday to delay the new science standards related to Common Core.

Discussion on the measure Thursday focused on concerns, largely by coal proponents, that teaching the standards about global warming would follow a "political agenda" and an "ideology."

The vast majority of peer-reviewed studies, science organizations and climate scientists say global warming stems largely from manmade sources. A major source of carbon emissions is burning coal.

"In an energy-producing state, it's a concern to me that we are teaching our kids, potentially, that we are doing immoral things here in order to make a living in our state," said Del. Jim Butler, R-Mason.

The science standards, set to take effect July 1, would be blocked for at least a year and existing standards would remain in their place. The measure next heads to the GOP-controlled Senate, where the education chairman says he has no issue with the bill. "As it stands right now, I have no problems with it at all," said Sen. Dave Sypolt, R-Preston.

"I'm going to work it and send it right through." It's unclear how the full Senate would act on the proposal. In April 2015, the state Board of Education made some changes to the standards that global warming doubters favored; for example, adding

"natural forces" to the list of climate-change debate topics, which already included greenhouse gases; human changes in atmospheric concentrations of greenhouse gases; and relevant laws and treaties.

Climate change only appears in a handful of places in the standards. In one example, ninth-graders are tasked with analyzing "geoscience data and the results from the global climate models to make an evidence-based forecast of the current rate of global or regional climate change and associated future impacts to Earth systems."

The full bill passed Friday also would change standards for other subject areas. Experts appointed by the House speaker and Senate president would suggest new math and English standards to be put in place by the 2017-18 school year.

Last year, the Board of Education stripped its Common Core-related standards for math and English and replaced them. But some lawmakers say the new standards still resemble Common Core too closely.

Democratic Gov. Earl Ray Tomblin said the state shouldn't keep changing its educational standards year after year. He also criticized lawmakers for the change on the science standards. "Those are things that our educators should be making those decisions on, as opposed to somebody because of a belief they have," Tomblin said.

Some delegates said it would be dangerous to start limiting the information presented to students by blocking the science standards. "It's a bigger world than just West Virginia that many of these students are going to live in," said Del. Dave Perry, D-Fayette. — AP

## US PERFORMS ITS FIRST UTERUS TRANSPLANT

**WASHINGTON:** The United States has completed its first uterus transplant surgery, following on a technique already proven in Sweden that could help women suffering from infertility, the Cleveland Clinic said Thursday. The nine-hour surgery took place on February 24, and the 26-year-old patient-whose identity was not revealed-was in stable condition, the hospital said in a statement.

The transplanted uterus came from a deceased donor. More details about the surgery are expected during a press conference with the medical team to be scheduled next week in Cleveland, Ohio.

Late last year, Cleveland Clinic began enlisting candidates for uterine transplants as part of a clinical trial that aimed to offer the procedure to 10 women.

Women potentially eligible to receive a uterine transplant include those who suffer from an irreversible condition known as Uterine Factor Infertility (UFI), which affects between three and five percent of women worldwide, the hospital said.

Sweden's University of Gothenburg achieved its first birth via a transplanted uterus in September 2014. — AFP

## RULING MAY LEAVE LOUISIANA WITH ONE ABORTION CLINIC

**NEW ORLEANS:** Abortion services in Louisiana will be restricted to one clinic in New Orleans unless the US Supreme Court reverses an appellate court ruling, an abortion rights group said. On Wednesday, a ruling by the 5th US Circuit Court of Appeals allowed a Louisiana law to take effect that requires doctors providing abortions to have admitting privileges at a hospital within 30 miles.

Supporters say the law's provision requiring admitting privileges at area hospitals is meant to protect women's health. Opponents say it's meant to make it essentially impossible for women to get abortions and would do just that. The Center for Reproductive Rights, which is representing abortion clinics and doctors, said only one clinic in Louisiana would be able to provide abortions unless the Supreme Court reverses the ruling.

The center said the Women's Health Care Center in New Orleans will remain open because it has doctors with admitting privileges. But the group said two other two clinics - one in Baton Rouge and one in Bossier City - were forced to stop providing abortions Thursday. Meanwhile, a fourth clinic in Shreveport would have to stop providing abortions unless the Supreme Court stops Louisiana's law from going into effect, the group said. "The fourth clinic is hanging on by a thread, with one physician who will have to cease providing services unless we can get immediate relief from the Supreme Court," said David Brown, a staff lawyer with the

Center for Reproductive Rights.

A fifth clinic in Metairie, a suburb of New Orleans, closed recently. Abortion clinics and their doctors sued Louisiana to block the law. In late January, US District Judge John deGravelles in Baton Rouge barred the state from enforcing that requirement, but his decision was overturned by the appellate court. The same appellate court in New Orleans allowed a similar law to go into effect in Texas last June. The Supreme Court is slated to hear arguments in the Texas case on March 2.

The clinics did not respond to messages seeking comment and confirmation of the status of abortion services at their facilities. "The effect (of the ruling) is proving devastating on women's ability to access safe and legal abortion services in Louisiana," Brown said.

Louisiana Department of Health and Hospitals Secretary Rebekah E. Gee said in a statement that the law now in effect ensures "facilities and physicians that perform abortions are operating in the safest manner possible and have ready access to emergency care." A violation carries a fine of up to \$4,000 and the loss of a clinic's license, she said. Doctors who perform an abortion without admitting privileges could also face licensing sanctions, she said.

Ruth Wisher, press secretary for Louisiana Attorney General Jeff Landry, said that "if abortion clinics are in compliance with the law, they may remain open." — AP

## SEAWORLD ACKNOWLEDGES PLANTING WORKER IN ANIMAL RIGHTS GROUP

**ORLANDO, Florida:** SeaWorld acknowledged that it sent its own workers to infiltrate an animal rights group which opposed the practices of the theme park. The development comes months after People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals accused a SeaWorld employee of trying to incite violence while posing as a fellow animal rights activist.

SeaWorld Entertainment CEO Joel Manby vowed Thursday to end the practice, but said that it had sent its employees to protect the safety of its employees and customers.

"We recognize the need to ensure that all of our security and other activities align with our core values and ethical standards," Manby said.

However, the company refused to say who had authorized the infiltration, how long it had been going on, or how many workers were used to infiltrate animal rights groups or other opponents. SeaWorld spokeswoman Aimee Jeansson Becka cited the confidential nature of its security practices.

The employee at the center of the accusations by PETA, Paul McComb, is still employed by SeaWorld but working in another department, the company said Thursday. PETA said last summer that its own investigation

revealed that McComb, a human resource worker, attempted to incite protesters and had posted incendiary comments on social media while mas-

querading as an animal-rights activist since 2012.

PETA officials said Thursday that SeaWorld's refusal to fire McComb



This photo made in summer 2015 and provided by Jessica Waller shows a three-week-old baby lobster at Bigelow Laboratory for Ocean Sciences in East Boothbay, Maine. Her photograph won a National Science Foundation visual media award and also appears in the March/April 2016 edition of Popular Science. — AP

shows that it condones corporate spying. The group has been especially vocal in its criticism of SeaWorld since the 2013 documentary, "Blackfish," suggested the treatment of captive orcas provokes violent behavior. Park attendance dropped after the release of the documentary, which chronicled events at the park leading up to the death of a SeaWorld trainer in 2010.

"The tawdry orca sideshows and despicable spying tactics are sinking SeaWorld's ship," said Tracy Reiman, PETA's executive vice president.

SeaWorld could face civil, and even criminal, legal exposure depending on the information it obtained from McComb about PETA and what the company did with the information, said Sharon Sandeen, a law professor at Mitchell Hamline School of Law in St Paul, Minnesota.

If any information SeaWorld got from McComb met the definition of a trade secret - it was secret, had value because it was secret and there was an effort by PETA to keep it secret - then PETA could have a claim of trade secret misappropriation, she said. "PETA would have to identify information that they said was misappropriated," Sandeen said. "They would have to show they had policies in place to keep the information secret." — AP



## AIRLINES WORRY ZIKA MAY BE HURTING AMERICAS TRAVEL

**NEW YORK:** A number of airlines have raised concerns that the rapidly spreading Zika virus may be discouraging travel in the Americas, the International Air Transport Association's Director General and CEO Tony Tyler told reporters in New York.

His comment on the sidelines of an event hosted by the global airline trade group marks one of the industry's first acknowledgments that the mosquito-borne virus could hit revenue.

"A number of members have expressed concern that they may already be seeing some effect on travel, particularly in the Americas," he said. "When we publish (traffic) numbers, particularly I think the regional numbers for January, perhaps there will be the first indication of that." Tyler could not comment on what kind of impact the airlines were seeing, whether destination switches by travelers or lower bookings overall.

Bookings to Zika-hit parts of the Americas fell 3.4 percent from a year ago between Jan. 15, when the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention issued a travel advisory for pregnant women, and Feb. 10, according to a report last week by travel data analysis company ForwardKeys.

Scientists are investigating a potential link between Zika infections of pregnant women and more than 4,300 suspected cases in Brazil of microcephaly, a condition marked by abnormally small head size that can result in developmental problems.

Other travel companies, such as cruise ship operators Carnival Corp and Norwegian Cruise Line Holdings Ltd, have yet to report a hit from the virus.

Top airlines have said identifying any bookings shift from Zika would be difficult because unit revenue already is down to places such as Brazil because of

the country's economic crisis. Some air ticket prices are falling nonetheless. The lowest fares to debt-strapped San Juan, Puerto Rico have fallen 22 percent on average from a year ago, according to an early February analysis of six of the busiest US domestic routes to the island's capital by Harrell Associates.

Puerto Rico is one of 28 countries and territories in the Americas battling Zika. At least three conferences at major Puerto Rican hotels were recently canceled and one postponed because of concerns over the virus.

Much remains unknown about Zika, including whether the virus actually causes microcephaly in babies. Brazil said it has confirmed more than 580 cases of microcephaly, and considers most of them to be related to Zika infections in the mothers. Brazil is investigating an additional 4,100 suspected cases of microcephaly. — Reuters



**GENEVA:** Tarun Dua, Expert on Mental and Brain Disorders of the World Health Organization, WHO, speaks during a press conference about the Guillain-Barre syndrome in the context of Zika virus, at the European headquarters of the United Nations, in Geneva on Friday. — AFP



**SAN JUAN:** Workers from the Puerto Rico Health Department and CDC review Zika related data collected by the island's health dept and the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) in San Juan, Puerto Rico. Officials have barred local blood donations, ramped up efforts to eradicate the Aedes aegypti mosquito and are trying to monitor every pregnant woman on the island due to fears Zika might cause birth defects. — AP

## STUDY OF 9 PREGNANT TRAVELERS RAISES NEW WORRIES ABOUT ZIKA

### NUMBER OF FETAL INFECTIONS AND BRAIN ABNORMALITIES

**CHICAGO:** A study of nine pregnant women from the United States who traveled to countries where the Zika virus was circulating shows a greater-than-expected number of fetal infections and brain abnormalities, US health officials said on Friday.

Two of the women had miscarriages, two had abortions, two had apparently healthy children, and one child was born with severe microcephaly, the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention said.

Doctors are still following the two remaining pregnancies, which so far appear to be progressing without complications, the CDC said. "We did not expect to see these brain abnormalities in this small case series of US pregnant travelers," said Dr. Denise Jamieson, a birth defects expert serving on CDC's Zika Virus Response Team.

She said it was "greater than we would have expected." Brazil is investigating thousands of cases of babies born with abnormally

small heads thought to be linked with Zika, a mosquito-borne virus circulating in Latin America and the Caribbean.

In the nine US cases, Zika virus infection during pregnancy was associated with a range of outcomes, including early pregnancy losses, congenital microcephaly, and apparently healthy infants, the CDC said. Microcephaly is a birth defect associated with undersized heads and developmental problems. More information will be available in the future from a new CDC registry for US pregnant women with confirmed Zika virus infection and their infants. An analysis of some cases showed the virus had crossed the placenta and affected the fetuses.

In one, a woman traveled to a Zika-affected area when she was five weeks pregnant. Antibody testing confirmed a recent Zika infection. The mother miscarried at eight weeks, and an analysis of the fetus detected Zika virus. "Our lab identified Zika in the pla-

cental tissues. That is suggestive that Zika may have caused the miscarriage," CDC Director Dr. Thomas Frieden told reporters on a conference call. But he cautioned that 10 percent to 20 percent of all pregnancies end up in miscarriage, so it was not certain that Zika was to blame. In another case, a woman in her 30s had traveled to a Zika-affected area when she was about 12 weeks pregnant. Shortly after her return, she developed a fever, eye pain, body aches and a rash. Testing confirmed a recent Zika infection.

The woman got a routine ultrasound at about 20 weeks gestation, and doctors noted that the fetus was missing its corpus callosum, tissue that connects both halves of the brain. It also had fluid in the brain and there was evidence the brain had shrunk in size. The Zika virus was detected in the amniotic fluid. The woman chose to abort the fetus.

In another case, a woman who had lived in Brazil gave birth to an infant with severe

microcephaly. The CDC did not release details on where the baby was born. In January, a CDC spokesman confirmed that a U.S. woman who had lived in Brazil gave birth to a microcephalic baby in Hawaii.

"It's more evidence to me that this association is continuing to look stronger and stronger," said Dr. Richard Beigi, president of The Infectious Diseases Society for Obstetrics and Gynecology, who had seen the reports.

"We want to be cautious because it's a small group of women, but from what I saw, it is suggestive that the effects look to be more severe in the early part of pregnancy," said Beigi, an obstetrician at the University of Pittsburgh Medical Center.

The CDC is also investigating another 10 cases of Zika infection in pregnant travelers. On Jan. 15, the CDC issued an advisory telling pregnant women to consider postponing travel to areas with active transmission of Zika virus. — Reuters

## YELLOW FEVER DEATH TOLL RISES TO 125 IN ANGOLA

**LUANDA:** An ongoing yellow fever epidemic in Angola has killed 125 people out of 664 suspected cases since December 30, government statistics show, despite attempts to quell the outbreak.

The centre of the health crisis remains the capital Luanda, where 92 people have died, the health ministry said on Friday. There is no specific treatment for yellow fever, a viral hemorrhagic disease which is transmitted by infected mosquitoes and found in tropical regions of Africa and Latin America's Amazon region.

Authorities launched a mass vaccination campaign earlier this month. The government has also urged residents to sterilise stagnant water before drinking it.

Yellow fever vaccinations are routinely recommended for travellers to Angola, though the country had not previously seen a significant outbreak since 1986. World Health Organization figures show there are an estimated 130,000 cases of yellow fever reported yearly, causing 44,000 deaths worldwide each year, with 90 percent occurring in Africa. — AFP

## CANADA LAWMAKERS TO PRESENT NEW ASSISTED DYING RULES

**OTTAWA:** Canada's parliament will present new rules for doctor-assisted dying by June 6, in compliance with a high court ruling issued a year ago, the attorney general said. The government will "take an empathetic approach" toward the legislation, balancing the rights of individuals and medical professionals while protecting the vulnerable, Jody Wilson-Raybould told reporters.

The Supreme Court a year ago quashed a section of the Criminal Code, clearing the way for consenting adults with serious health problems to seek help from a medical practitioner to end their life. The court gave the government until June to bring the law into compliance with its ruling, allowing lawmakers time to come up with new rules for doctor-assisted dying.

A parliamentary special committee tasked with putting forward recommendations for the law said in a new report that assisted dying should be an option available to people with debilitating and irreversible illness, including competent minors and people with mental illness.

A person diagnosed with a serious health problem could also make arrangements in advance to die, in situations where dementia or other illness could prevent them from making the decision later. Conservatives on the committee challenged the recommendations, saying they go far beyond what the court had ordered.

In December, Quebec became the first Canadian province to roll out its own set of rules for doctor-assisted dying, in response to strong public demand.

Some form of physician-assisted dying is legal in Belgium, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Switzerland and in a handful of US states. — AFP

# CLINIC PAGE



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248 33 199



Dr. Fahad Al-Mukhaizeem  
فهد علي المخيزيم



Consultant Pediatrician استشاري أطفال  
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### VIVA LANUCHES SNAPCHAT GEO-FILTER FOR KUWAITI STUDENTS IN USA, UK

**KUWAIT:** VIVA, Kuwait's fastest-growing and most developed telecom operator, launched an exclusive and special Geo-filter on Snapchat on National and Liberation Days' occasion, for Kuwaiti students in United States of America and United Kingdom.

Commenting on this significant achievement, Abdulrazzaq Bader Al-Essa, said: "VIVA is considered as the first Leader Telecom Company in Kuwait that created a department specialized in Social Media, which endeavors to reach accomplishments, therefore our professional team worked hard throughout months to read such achievement and launch this filter on Snapchat." He added: "We aim to share the Kuwaiti students in USA and UK these annual national celebrations, and offer this gift for them to use it in their photos and videos on Snapchat and share it with their families and friends." In Addition, Kuwaiti tourists who are planning to visit USA and UK during the holiday can use this Geo-filter on Snapchat.



### AHLI UNITED CELEBRATIONS FOR THE NATIONAL DAYS

**KUWAIT:** Within its Kuwait national holidays' celebration program, Ahli United Bank (AUB) organized a special celebration in the Joint Banks Complex area in Kuwait City. The event featured the traditional Kuwaiti Arda Group that performed amongst a large crowd of attendees in a nationalistic, festive atmosphere.

The celebration came as a very pleasant surprise to the Bank's customers, employees and passers-by who gathered to take photos and be part of AUB's celebration, which was launched to encourage everyone to join in the joy of celebrating the national holidays of

our beloved Kuwait.

In addition, a team of the Bank employees distributed Kuwait's flag and Kuwaiti sweets to everyone sharing with them the happiness of this very special occasion.

Ahli United Bank has always been a leader in communicating with its customers and the public. The Bank is keen to engage with the people of Kuwait, through its diversified activities and banking services. and this is amply demonstrated through its competitive range of products of services available at Head Office in the Joint Banks Complex and through its branch network throughout the country.



**KUWAIT:** Commercial Bank of Kuwait's management and staff celebrated Kuwait's National and Liberation Days by releasing balloons colored with the Kuwaiti flag's colors.



### ABK CONCLUDES SPONSORSHIP OF SPECIAL NEEDS OPERETTA

**KUWAIT:** Al Ahli Bank of Kuwait (ABK) successfully concluded its Golden sponsorship of the Special Needs Operetta, which was organized by the Ministry of Social Affairs on the occasion of the National and Liberation days. The event was held under the patronage of the Undersecretary of Ministry of Social Affairs

and Labor Dr Mutar Al-Mutairi, on 23 February, 2016 at the Ministry's theatre located in Sulaibikhat.

The Bank's sponsorship of the Operetta is in line with its Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) strategy, which focuses on supporting the special needs segment in Kuwait.

The event was held to shed light on the importance of involving those with special needs, and to encourage the integration of these individuals with the members of society, especially at a time where the nation comes together to enjoy the blessing of liberty. Children with special needs and children from

care homes participated in the operetta, further strengthening the sense of nationalism and joy on this special occasion.

ABK Representative, Ali Al-Baghli - Corporate Communications Manager was honored by the Undersecretary of Ministry of Social Affairs and Labor Dr Mutar Al-Mutairi,

for the Banks support and commitment to making a difference in the community.

For more information on Al Ahli Bank of Kuwait please visit [www.eahli.com](http://www.eahli.com) or contact an ABK representative via 'Ahli Chat' or by contacting a customer service agent via 'Ahlan Ahli' at 1899899.



Members of the Kuwaiti Positivity Voluntary Group visited Nepal recently, where they presented aid to children at a local orphanage.





## HEALTH AWARENESS CAMPAIGNS HELD IN HAWALLY

As part of Hawally Governorate Health Zone's efforts to spread awareness on different medical issues and diseases, Dr Hala Abdullouze from south Hawally polyclinic along with her colleagues organized an open day recently to bring such awareness to the public. Al-Sanabel Al-Thahabiya was among the companies contributing, as it promoted skin care products through its German principle Sebamed. Meanwhile, Bayan Health Center held its women's awareness day, concentrating on breast cancer diagnoses and other health issues such as diabetes, blood pressure, and obesity. The awareness campaigns also includes activities in which doctors provide medical advice on disease prevention and treatment, particularly chronic diseases such as diabetes and blood pressure.







- 00:55 Night Manager
- 01:55 Breaking Bad
- 02:55 Equis
- 05:10 The Hills Run Red
- 06:40 The Great Escape
- 09:30 Mannequin
- 11:00 One Summer Love
- 12:40 It Runs In The Family
- 14:05 Waking Up In Reno
- 15:40 Les Miserables (1998)
- 17:50 Miracles
- 19:15 Groundhog Day
- 21:00 Doubt
- 22:45 Annie Hall

- 13:00 Africa Live
- 14:00 News Update
- 14:30 Dialogue
- 15:00 News Update
- 15:15 China 24
- 16:00 News Update
- 16:15 Global Business
- 17:00 News Update
- 17:15 World InSight
- 18:00 Asia Today
- 18:30 Culture Express
- 19:00 News Update
- 19:30 The Heat
- 20:00 Africa Live
- 21:00 Global Business
- 21:30 Dialogue
- 22:00 News Update
- 22:15 China 24
- 23:00 News Update
- 23:15 World InSight

- Jones The Will
- 12:10 The Will
- 13:00 The Will
- 13:50 California Investigator
- 14:15 California Investigator
- 14:40 Dr. G: Medical Examiner
- 15:30 True Crime With Aphrodite
- Jones
- 16:20 True Crime With Aphrodite
- 17:10 Disappeared
- 18:00 Disappeared
- 18:50 California Investigator
- 19:15 California Investigator
- 19:40 I Almost Got Away With It
- 20:30 I Almost Got Away With It
- 21:20 I Almost Got Away With It
- 22:10 I Almost Got Away With It
- 23:00 House Of Horrors: Kidnapped
- 23:25 House Of Horrors: Kidnapped
- 23:50 Deadline: Crime With



- 00:50 Gator Boys
- 01:45 Gator Boys
- 02:40 Africa's Super Seven
- 03:35 Cute To Kill
- 04:25 Gorilla Doctors
- 05:15 Tigerfish: Africa's Piranha
- 06:02 Elephants In The Room
- 06:49 Wildest Islands
- 07:36 Swamp Brothers
- 08:00 Swamp Brothers
- 08:25 Treetop Cat Rescue
- 08:50 Treetop Cat Rescue
- 09:15 Wild Capture School
- 09:45 Wild Capture School
- 10:10 Rugged Justice
- 11:05 Dr. Dee: Alaska Vet
- 12:00 Big Fish Man
- 12:55 Austin Stevens: Snakemaster
- 13:50 Wild Capture School
- 14:20 Wild Capture School
- 14:45 Wildest Latin America
- 15:40 Wild Hawaii
- 16:35 Wildest Middle East
- 17:30 Wildest Islands
- 18:25 How Sharks Hunt
- 19:20 Wild Capture School
- 19:50 Wild Capture School
- 20:15 Rugged Justice
- 21:10 Dr. Dee: Alaska Vet
- 22:05 Treetop Cat Rescue
- 22:35 Treetop Cat Rescue
- 23:00 Wild Capture School



- 00:00 Managing Asia
- 00:30 First Class
- 01:00 Inside China
- 01:30 CNBC Conversation: v Santiprabhob
- 02:00 Inside China
- 02:30 CNBC Conversation: v Santiprabhob
- 03:00 Managing Asia
- 03:30 First Class
- 04:00 Inside China
- 04:30 CNBC Conversation: v Santiprabhob
- 05:00 Managing Asia
- 05:30 First Class
- 06:00 Inside China
- 06:30 CNBC Conversation: v Santiprabhob



- 00:35 Mythbusters
- 01:20 Mythbusters
- 02:08 Mythbusters
- 02:55 Mythbusters
- 03:42 Weird Or What?
- 04:29 Weird Or What?
- 05:16 Weird Or What?
- 06:03 Weird Or What?
- 06:50 Weird Or What?
- 07:37 How Do They Do It?
- 08:00 How Do They Do It?
- 08:23 Food Factory
- 08:45 Food Factory
- 09:08 Food Factory
- 09:30 Food Factory
- 09:53 Food Factory
- 10:15 Food Factory
- 10:38 Food Factory
- 11:00 Food Factory
- 11:23 Food Factory
- 11:45 Food Factory
- 12:08 How Do They Do It?
- 12:31 How Do They Do It?
- 12:53 How It's Made
- 13:15 How It's Made
- 13:38 How It's Made
- 14:00 How It's Made
- 14:23 How It's Made
- 14:46 How It's Made
- 15:10 How It's Made
- 15:33 How It's Made
- 15:57 Strangest Weather On Earth
- 16:44 Strangest Weather On Earth
- 17:06 Strangest Weather On Earth
- 17:31 Strangest Weather On Earth
- 17:56 Strangest Weather On Earth
- 18:18 Strangest Weather On Earth
- 18:40 Strangest Weather On Earth
- 19:05 Strangest Weather On Earth
- 19:27 Strangest Weather On Earth
- 19:50 Mythbusters



- 00:00 Eastenders
- 00:30 Father Brown
- 01:20 Dickensian
- 02:05 Unforgotten
- 03:35 Eastenders
- 04:05 Eastenders
- 04:35 Doctors
- 05:05 Father Brown
- 05:55 The Cafe
- 06:20 Eastenders
- 06:50 Eastenders
- 07:20 Death In Paradise
- 08:20 Dickensian
- 09:05 Doctor Who
- 10:00 Eastenders
- 10:30 Eastenders
- 11:00 Death In Paradise
- 11:55 Dickensian
- 12:45 Dickensian
- 13:35 Doctor Who
- 14:25 Eastenders
- 14:55 Eastenders
- 15:30 Starlings
- 16:20 Call The Midwife
- 17:15 Doctor Who
- 18:00 Doctors
- 18:30 Doctors
- 19:05 Death In Paradise
- 20:00 Silent Witness
- 21:00 Silent Witness
- 22:00 Ripper Street
- 22:55 Death In Paradise



- 00:00 They Took Our Child, We Got Her Back
- 01:00 My Haunted House
- 02:00 Curious & Unusual Deaths
- 02:30 Curious & Unusual Deaths
- 03:00 Crimes That Shook Britain
- 04:00 Frenemies
- 04:30 Frenemies
- 05:00 They Took Our Child, We Got Her Back
- 06:00 My Haunted House
- 07:00 Fred Dinenage: Murder Casebook
- 08:00 Fred Dinenage: Murder Casebook
- 09:00 Fred Dinenage: Murder Casebook
- 10:00 Frenemies
- 13:00 Campus Nightmares
- 16:00 Crimes That Shook Britain
- 17:00 Nightmare In Suburbia
- 20:00 Private Crimes
- 21:00 Private Crimes
- 21:30 Private Crimes
- 22:00 Private Crimes
- 22:30 Private Crimes
- 23:00 Killer Kids



- 01:30 Solved
- 02:20 Solved
- 03:05 Dive To The Bottom Of The World
- 03:50 Codes And Conspiracies
- 04:35 Codes And Conspiracies
- 05:20 Codes And Conspiracies
- 06:05 Codes And Conspiracies
- 06:50 Codes And Conspiracies
- 07:35 Origins
- 08:00 JFK: Inside The Target Car
- 08:50 Dive To The Bottom Of The World
- 09:40 Mega Predators
- 10:30 Lost Temple To The Gods
- 11:20 Flight 370: The Missing Links
- 12:10 Extreme Engineering
- 13:00 Extreme Engineering
- 13:50 Extreme Engineering
- 14:40 Extreme Engineering
- 15:30 Deadliest Catch
- 16:20 Deadliest Catch
- 17:10 Deadliest Catch
- 18:00 Deadliest Catch
- 18:50 Deadliest Catch
- 20:05 America: Facts vs. Fiction
- 20:30 The Kennedy Detail
- 22:10 American Guns
- 23:00 The Kennedy Detail



- 00:20 Deadly Dilemmas
- 00:45 Fast N' Loud
- 01:35 Fast N' Loud
- 02:25 Fast N' Loud
- 03:15 Fast N' Loud
- 04:05 Fast N' Loud
- 05:00 Fast N' Loud
- 06:00 Flying Wild Alaska
- 06:50 Kings Of Crash
- 07:40 Fast N' Loud
- 08:30 Storage Hunters
- 08:55 The Liquidator
- 09:20 Auction Hunters: Pawn Shop Edition
- 09:45 How It's Made: Dream Cars
- 10:10 How Do They Do It?
- 10:35 Edge Of Alaska
- 11:25 Alaska: The Last Frontier (Season 5 Specials)
- 12:15 Railroad Alaska
- 13:05 Storage Hunters
- 13:30 The Liquidator



- 00:00 Brilliant Ideas
- 00:30 Charlie Rose
- 01:30 Bloomberg Businessweek
- 02:00 Encore
- 02:30 High Flyers
- 03:00 Charlie Rose
- 04:00 Charlie Rose



DEATH RACE ON OSN MOVIES HD ACTION

- 05:00 The Great Disrupters
- 06:00 Leaders With Lacqua
- 06:30 Leaders With Lacqua
- 07:00 High Flyers
- 07:30 Studio 1.0
- 08:00 Studio 1.0
- 08:30 Mark Carney: An Exclusive Conversation
- 09:00 Encore
- 09:30 Encore
- 10:00 Worldwide Business With Kathy Ireland
- 10:30 Worldwide Business With Kathy Ireland
- 11:00 High Flyers
- 11:30 High Flyers
- 12:00 Charlie Rose
- 13:00 Bloomberg Best
- 14:00 Mobil 1: The Grid

- 13:55 Auction Hunters: Pawn Shop Edition
- 14:20 Flying Wild Alaska
- 15:10 Kings Of Crash
- 16:00 Fast N' Loud
- 16:50 How It's Made: Dream Cars
- 17:15 How Do They Do It?
- 17:40 Street Outlaws
- 18:30 Extreme Car Hoarders
- 19:20 Close-Up Kings
- 20:10 The Liquidator
- 20:35 Auction Hunters: Pawn Shop Edition
- 21:00 Incredible Engineering
- 21:30 Blunders: Fixed
- 21:50 Incredible Engineering
- 22:00 Blunders: Fixed
- 22:40 Wheeler Dealers: Top 5
- 23:30 Kings Of Crash



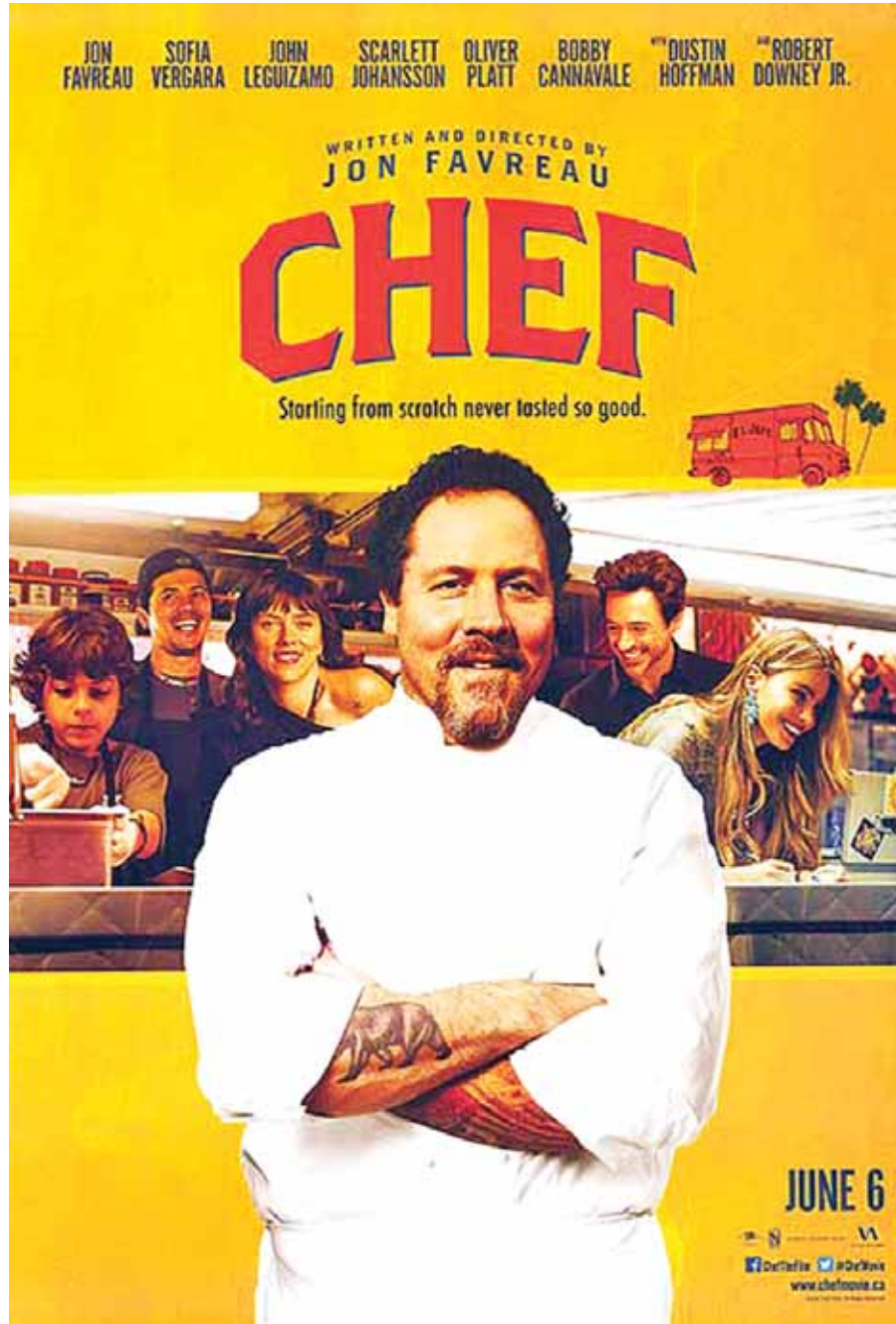
- 00:00 Violetta
- 00:45 The Hive
- 01:30 Sabrina Secrets Of A Teenage Witch
- 01:15 Sabrina Secrets Of A Teenage Witch
- 02:05 Hank Zipzer
- 02:05 Binnie And The Ghost
- 02:30 Violetta
- 03:15 The Hive
- 03:20 Sabrina Secrets Of A Teenage Witch
- 03:45 Sabrina Secrets Of A Teenage Witch
- 04:10 Hank Zipzer
- 04:35 Binnie And The Ghost
- 05:00 Violetta
- 05:45 The Hive
- 06:00 Lolo
- 06:25 Sofia The First
- 06:50 Gravity Falls
- 07:15 Miraculous Tales Of Ladybug & Cat Noir
- 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 Violetta Recipes
- 10:25 Home On The Range
- 12:00 I Love Violetta
- 12:15 Whisker Haven Tales With The Palace Pets
- 12:20 Jessie



- 00:00 News Update
- 00:30 Dialogue
- 01:00 News Update
- 01:15 China 24
- 02:00 The Heat
- 02:30 News Update
- 03:00 Global Business
- 04:00 News Update
- 05:00 News Update
- 06:00 Dialogue
- 07:30 News Hour
- 08:00 Global Business
- 08:00 News Update
- 10:30 Sports Scene
- 11:00 Global Business
- 12:00 News Update
- 12:30 Culture Express



- 00:40 Deadly Women
- 01:30 Scomed: Crimes Of Passion
- 02:20 California Investigator
- 02:45 California Investigator
- 03:10 True CSI
- 04:00 Surviving Evil
- 04:45 Deadly Women
- 05:30 Scomed: Crimes Of Passion
- 06:20 The Will
- 07:10 The Will
- 08:00 Fatal Encounters
- 08:50 News Update
- 09:40 Disappeared
- 10:30 True Crime With Aphrodite
- 11:20 True Crime With Aphrodite



CHEF ON OSN MOVIES HD COMEDY

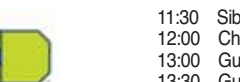
- 12:45 Jessie
- 13:10 Liv And Maddie
- 13:35 Liv And Maddie
- 14:00 Austin & Ally
- 14:30 Austin & Ally
- 14:55 I Didn't Do It
- 15:20 I Didn't Do It
- 15:45 Miraculous Tales Of Ladybug & Cat Noir
- 16:10 Miraculous Tales Of Ladybug & Cat Noir
- 16:35 Best Friends Whenever
- 17:00 Girl Meets World
- 17:25 Girl Meets World
- 17:50 I Love Violetta
- 18:00 Zapped
- 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 Binnie 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 Binnie And The Ghost

- 00:00 Programmes Start At 7:00am KSA
- 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 Star vs The Forces Of Evil
- 10:25 K. C. Undercover
- 10:50 Supa Strikas
- 11:20 Lab Rats
- 11:45 Mighty Med
- 12:10 Mighty Med
- 12:35 Mighty Med
- 13:00 Mighty Med
- 13:30 Mighty Med: The Mother Of All Villains
- 14:20 Kickin' It
- 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
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- 19:35 Star vs The Forces Of Evil
- 20:00 Kirby Buckets
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- 20:55 K. C. Undercover
- 21:20 Supa Strikas
- 21:45 Lab Rats
- 22:10 Mighty Med: The Mother Of All Villains
- 23:05 Super Matrak



- 00:05 Henry Hugglemonster
- 00:20 Calimero
- 00:35 Zou
- 00:50 Loopydoo
- 01:05 Art Attack
- 01:30 Henry Hugglemonster
- 01:45 Calimero
- 02:00 Zou
- 02:15 Loopydoo
- 02:30 Art Attack
- 02:55 Henry Hugglemonster
- 03:05 Calimero
- 03:20 Zou
- 03:30 Loopydoo
- 03:45 Art Attack
- 04:10 Henry Hugglemonster
- 04:20 Calimero
- 04:35 Zou
- 04:45 Loopydoo
- 05:00 Art Attack
- 05:25 Henry Hugglemonster
- 05:35 Calimero
- 05:50 Zou
- 06:00 Loopydoo
- 06:15 Art Attack
- 06:35 Henry Hugglemonster
- 06:50 Calimero
- 07:00 Zou
- 07:20 Loopydoo
- 07:35 Art Attack
- 08:00 Calimero
- 08:10 Zou
- 08:25 Loopydoo
- 08:40 Miles From Tomorrow
- 09:05 Sofia The First
- 09:30 Goldie & Bear
- 09:45 Jake And The Never Land Pirates

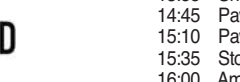
- 11:30 Siba's Table
- 12:00 Chopped
- 13:00 Guy's Big Bite
- 13:30 Guy's Big Bite
- 14:00 Diners, Drive-Ins And Dives
- 14:30 Diners, Drive-Ins And Dives
- 15:00 Diners, Drive-Ins And Dives
- 15:30 Diners, Drive-Ins And Dives
- 16:00 Diners, Drive-Ins And Dives
- 16:30 Diners, Drive-Ins And Dives
- 17:00 Chopped
- 18:00 Siba's Table
- 18:30 Siba's Table
- 19:00 Dinner At Tiffani's
- 19:30 Dinner At Tiffani's
- 20:00 Rev Run's Sunday Suppers
- 20:30 Rev Run's Sunday Suppers
- 21:00 All Star Academy
- 22:00 Follow Donal... To Europe
- 22:30 Follow Donal... To Europe
- 23:00 Australian Food Adventures With Matt Moran



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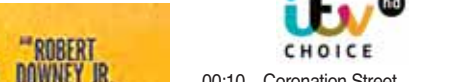
- 00:20 Ax Men
- 01:10 Alaska Off-Road Warriors
- 02:00 Ice Road Truckers
- 02:50 Aussie Pickers
- 03:40 Outlaw Chronicles: Hells Angels
- 04:30 Duck Dynasty
- 05:00 The Curse Of Oak Island
- 06:00 Ice Road Truckers
- 06:50 Duck Dynasty
- 07:40 Shark Wranglers
- 08:30 Storage Wars
- 08:55 Big Rig Bounty Hunters
- 09:45 Ice Road Truckers
- 10:35 American Pickers
- 11:25 Hoard Hunters
- 12:15 Pawn Stars
- 12:40 Pawn Stars
- 13:05 Shipping Wars
- 13:30 Shipping Wars
- 13:55 Shark Wranglers
- 14:45 Pawn Stars
- 15:10 Pawn Stars
- 15:35 Storage Wars
- 16:00 American Pickers
- 16:50 Ice Road Truckers
- 17:40 Duck Dynasty
- 18:30 Hoard Hunters
- 19:20 Shipping Wars
- 19:45 Shipping Wars
- 20:10 Pawn Stars
- 20:35 Pawn Stars
- 21:00 Pawn Stars
- 21:25 Pawn Stars
- 21:50 Pawn Stars Australia
- 22:15 Pawn Stars Australia
- 22:40 Hunting Hitler
- 23:30 Pawn Stars
- 23:55 Pawn Stars



- 00:00 New Money
- 00:30 Fashion Bloggers
- 00:55 Fashion Bloggers
- 01:25 Stewarts And Hamiltons
- 02:20 El News
- 03:15 Sex With Brody
- 03:40 The Grace Helbig Show
- 04:10 El Entertainment Special
- 05:05 El Entertainment Special
- 06:00 Keeping Up With The Kardashians
- 06:55 Keeping Up With The Kardashians
- 07:35 Art Attack
- 08:00 Calimero
- 08:10 Zou
- 08:20 El News
- 09:15 House Of DVF
- 10:15 House Of DVF
- 11:10 Fashion Bloggers
- 11:35 Fashion Bloggers
- 12:05 El News
- 13:05 Keeping Up With The Kardashians
- 14:05 Keeping Up With The Kardashians
- 15:00 Dash Dolls
- 16:00 Dash Dolls
- 17:00 Botched
- 18:00 El News
- 19:00 Fashion Bloggers
- 19:30 Fashion Bloggers
- 20:00 Keeping Up With The Kardashians
- 21:00 Keeping Up With The Kardashians
- 22:00 Hollywood Medium With Tyler Henry



- 00:00 Diners, Drive-Ins And Dives
- 00:30 Diners, Drive-Ins And Dives
- 01:00 Chopped
- 02:00 Diners, Drive-Ins And Dives
- 02:30 Diners, Drive-Ins And Dives
- 03:00 Man v Food
- 03:30 Save My Bakery
- 04:00 Chopped
- 05:00 Chopped
- 06:00 Diners, Drive-Ins And Dives
- 06:30 Diners, Drive-Ins And Dives
- 07:00 Man Fire Food
- 07:30 Man Fire Food
- 08:00 Chopped
- 09:00 Amazing Wedding Cakes
- 10:00 The Pioneer Woman
- 10:30 The Pioneer Woman
- 11:00 Siba's Table

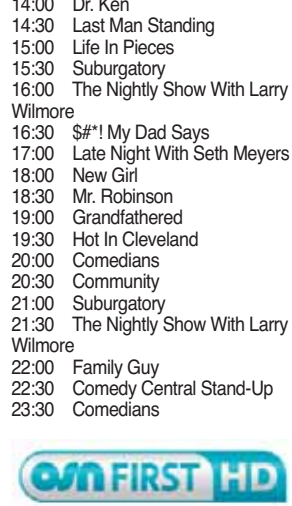


- 00:10 Coronation Street
- 00:35 Coronation Street
- 01:10 Blue Go Mad In Ibiza
- 02:00 More Tales From Northumberland...
- 02:30 Coronation Street
- 02:55 Coronation Street
- 03:20 Coronation Street
- 03:40 Coronation Street
- 04:05 Coronation Street
- 04:40 The Jonathan Ross Show
- 05:30 Vera
- 07:10 Murdoch Mysteries
- 08:05 Murdoch Mysteries
- 08:55 Murdoch Mysteries
- 09:50 Murdoch Mysteries
- 10:40 Murdoch Mysteries
- 11:30 Shetland
- 12:25 Olla
- 13:15 More Tales From Northumberland...
- 13:45 Ant & Dec's Saturday Night Takeaway
- 15:00 Seven Days With A Friend
- 15:55 Royalty Close Up
- 16:45 Royalty Close Up
- 17:40 Cilla
- 18:35 More Tales From Northumberland...
- 19:00 Seven Days With A Friend
- 19:55 Ant & Dec's Saturday Night Takeaway
- 21:10 More Tales From Northumberland...
- 21:35 Blue Go Mad In Ibiza
- 22:25 Seven Days With A Friend
- 23:15 Who's Doing The Dishes?



- 00:10 David Rocco's Dolce Vita
- 00:35 Sara's New Nordic Kitchen
- 01:00 Hook, Line And Sisters
- 01:25 Miguel's Feasts
- 01:50 Valentine Warner's Wild Table
- 02:15 Valentine Warner's Wild Table
- 02:40 David Rocco's Dolce Vita
- 03:05 Food School
- 03:30 American Food Battle
- 03:55 Chefs Run Wild
- 04:20 World's Biggest Festival: Kumbh Mela
- 05:10 Charlie Luxton's Homes By The Sea
- 06:00 Miguel's Tropical Kitchen
- 06:25 Get Stuffed
- 06:50 Fearless Chef
- 07:40 Eat Street
- 08:05 Eat Street
- 08:30 Cesar To The Rescue
- 09:20 Food School
- 09:45 The Best Job In The World
- 10:10 World's Best Chefs
- 10:35 World's Best Chefs
- 11:00 World's Best Chefs
- 11:25 World's Best Chefs
- 11:50 Maverick Chef
- 12:15 Maverick Chef
- 12:40 Maximum Foodie
- 13:05 Miguel's Feasts
- 13:35 Valentine Warner's Wild Table
- 14:00 Valentine Warner's Wild Table
- 14:30 Fearless Chef
- 15:25 American Food Battle
- 15:50 World's Best Chefs
- 16:20 World's Best Chefs
- 16:45 World's Best Chefs
- 17:15 George Clarke's Amazing Spaces
- 18:10 Miguel's Tropical Kitchen
- 18:35 Get Stuffed
- 19:05 Food School
- 19:30 American Food Battle
- 20:00 World's Best Chefs
- 20:25 World's Best Chefs
- 20:50 World's Best Chefs
- 21:15 George Clarke's Amazing Spaces
- 22:05 Miguel's Tropical Kitchen
- 22:30 Get Stuffed
- 22:55 Maximum Foodie
- 23:20 Miguel's Feasts
- 23:45 Valentine Warner's Wild Table

- Jimmy Fallon
- 12:00 \$#! My Dad Says
- 12:30 I Hate My Teenage Daughter
- 13:00 Breaking In
- 13:30 Community
- 14:00 Dr. Ken
- 14:30 Last Man Standing
- 15:00 Life In Pieces
- 15:30 Suburgatory
- 16:00 The Nightly Show With Larry Wilmore
- 16:30 \$#! My Dad Says
- 17:00 Late Night With Seth Meyers
- 18:00 New Girl
- 18:30 Mr. Robinson
- 19:00 Grandfathered
- 19:30 Hot In Cleveland
- 20:00 Comedians
- 20:30 Community
- 21:00 Suburgatory
- 21:30 The Nightly Show With Larry Wilmore
- 22:00 Family Guy
- 22:30 Comedy Central Stand-Up Comedians
- 23:30 Comedy Central Stand-Up Comedians

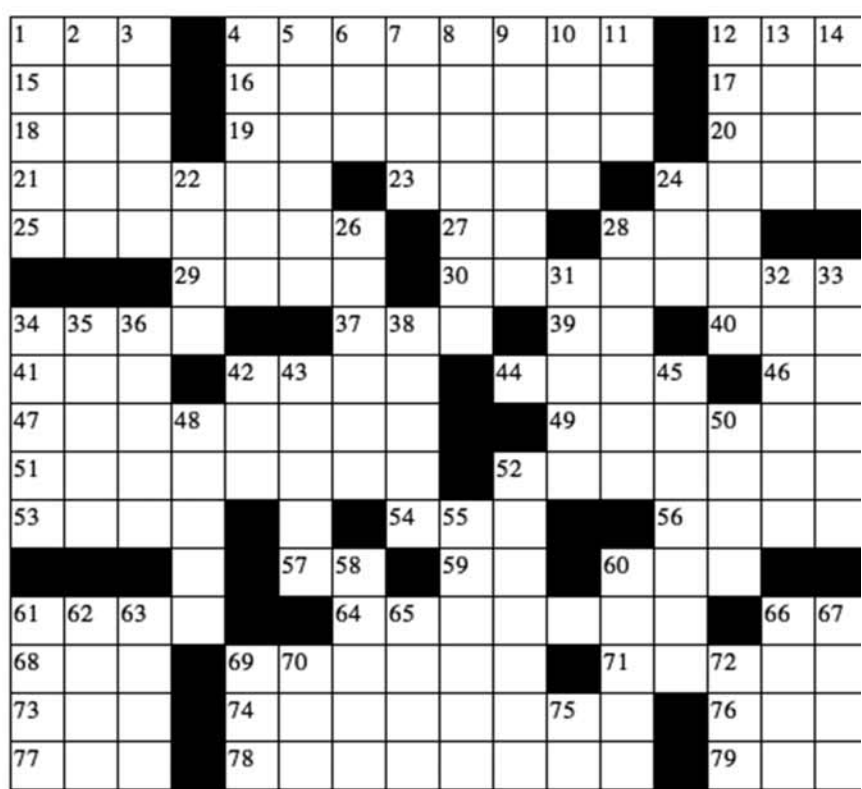








CROSSWORD 1180



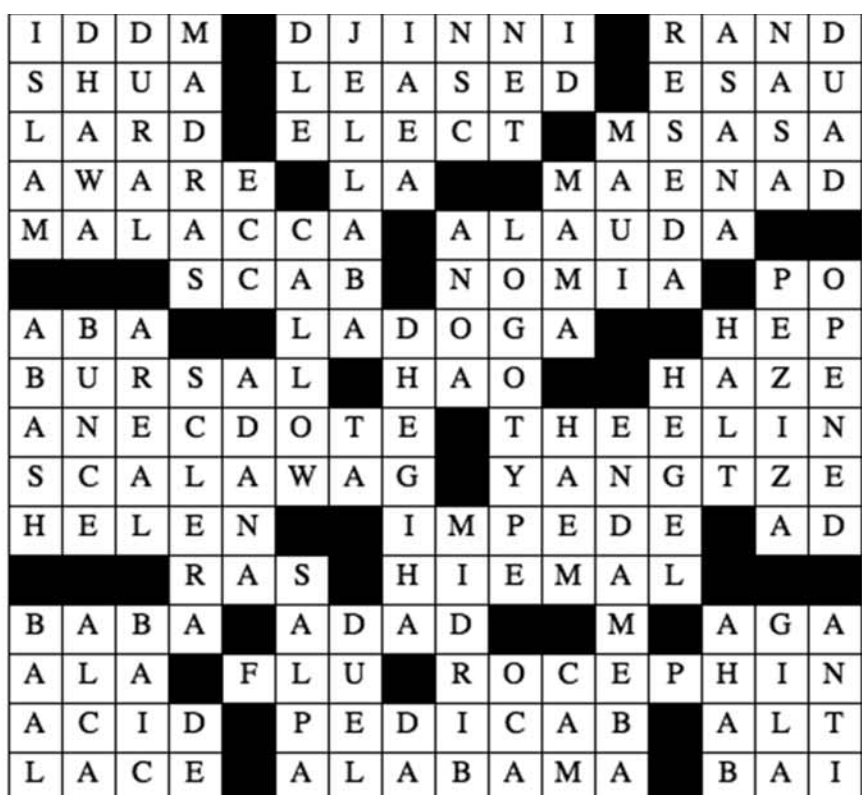
ACROSS

1. A constellation in the southern hemisphere near Telescopium and Norma.
4. Any of various long-legged carrion-eating hawks of South and Central America.
12. The universal time coordinated time when a transmission is sent from Earth to a spacecraft or other celestial body.
15. (Irish) The sea personified.
16. Lacking gonads.
17. The cry made by sheep.
18. Either extremity of something that has length.
19. Hairy perennial Eurasian herb with yellow daisylike flowers reputed to destroy or drive away fleas.
20. Being one more than two.
21. A genus of Bothidae.
23. Disposed of to a purchaser.
25. Of or relating to the language of the Hebrews.
27. Destruction of heart tissue resulting from obstruction of the blood supply to the heart muscle.
29. Relatively small fast-moving sloth.
30. (formal) Ordinary and not refined.
34. A Chinese breed of small short-legged dogs with a long silky coat and broad flat muzzle.
37. A health resort near a spring or at the sea-side.
39. A period of time containing 365 (or 366) days.
40. Antibacterial drug (trade name Nydradiz) used to treat tuberculosis.
41. The capital and largest city of Japan.
44. A short labored intake of breath with the mouth open.
46. An official prosecutor for a judicial district.
47. Grown for its thickened edible aromatic root.
49. (South African) A camp defended by a circular formation of wagons.
51. Seed of amaranth plants used as a native cereal in Central and South America.
53. A language unit by which a person or thing is known.
54. Title for a civil or military leader (especially in Turkey).
56. Great merriment.
57. A silvery ductile metallic element found primarily in bauxite.
59. The blood group whose red cells carry both the A and B antigens.
61. Singing jazz.
64. Only the bowfins.
68. An accidental happening.
71. Greek mythology.
73. The compass point that is one point south of due west.
74. A large estate in Spanish-speaking countries.
76. A defensive missile designed to shoot down incoming intercontinental ballistic missiles.
77. How long something has existed.
78. A great raja.
79. A compartment in front of a motor vehicle where driver sits.

DOWN

1. The 1st letter of the Hebrew alphabet.
2. A liquid preparation used on wet hair to it a tint.
3. A unit of dry measure used in Egypt.
4. A woman's dress style that imitates the caftan cloaks worn by men in the Near East.
5. (Greek mythology) One of the three Graces.
6. Fish eggs or egg-filled ovary.
7. Type genus of the Anatidae.
8. Alternatively, a member of the family Nymphaeaceae.
9. A port city in southwestern Turkey on the Gulf of Antalya.
10. The basic unit of money in South Africa.
11. Fermented alcoholic beverage similar to but heavier than beer.
12. The capital and largest city of Georgia on the Kura river.
13. Radioactive iodine test that measures the amount of radioactive iodine taken up by the thyroid gland.
14. A female domestic.
22. Consistent with fact or reality.
24. The basic unit of money in Romania.
26. Eurasian pigeon with white patches on wings and neck.
28. The capital and largest city of Poland.
31. City in Sudan.
32. A colorless liquid hydrocarbon extracted from petroleum or coal tar and used in making synthetic resins.
33. (criminal law) A pleading describing some wrong or offense.
35. Swelling from excessive accumulation of serous fluid in tissue.
36. A member of a formerly tribal people now living in south central India.
38. A civil or military authority in Turkey or Egypt.
42. A period marked by distinctive character or reckoned from a fixed point or event.
43. Division of a usually pinnately divided leaf.
45. (plate tectonic theory) A hypothetical continent including all the landmass of the earth prior to the Triassic period when it split into Laurasia and Gondwanaland.
48. Upright in position or posture.
50. A formal association of people with similar interests.
52. Genus of South and Central American heathlike evergreen shrubs.
55. A person who gains weight.
58. Wood of a larch tree.
60. The capital and largest city of Yemen.
62. Open-heart surgery in which the rib cage is opened and a section of a blood vessel is grafted from the aorta to the coronary artery to bypass the blocked section of the coronary artery and improve the blood supply to the heart.
63. A domed or vaulted recess or projection on a building especially the east end of a church.
65. Type genus of the Majidae.
66. Having nine hinged bands of bony plates.
67. A metrical unit with unstressed-stressed syllables.
69. A master's degree in theology.
70. A plant hormone promoting elongation of stems and roots.
72. Committee formed by a special-interest group to raise money for their favorite political candidates.
75. A person who announces and plays popular recorded music.

Yesterday's Solution



STAR TRACK



Aries (March 21-April 19)

A do-it-yourself project has your attention this morning. It could be a friend has begun to put this project together. You pitch in and are helpful and your expertise, along with your friend's enthusiasm and expertise, creates a most positive result. This could be a chair, a clock, a baby bed or any sort of needed project. This is a time of year when much of the world is under a blanket of drizzle in one form or another-snow, sleet, rain, etc. Family and security are things that get your attention. If you are not repairing something or tending to chores this afternoon, you may find yourself just naturally tinging around the house. Let yourself dream. These days do not come too often-let your imagination loose. Music can be enjoyed this evening.



Taurus (April 20-May 20)

Restlessness today may have you exercising out-of-doors. You have too much zeal to stay indoors. Neighbors and friends that visit early are included in early afternoon activities. You may enjoy some form of group competition. Speak less and listen more, all the way through this day-you will learn things about your friends that you did not know before. Connections with people on a grand scale play a big part in your life now: chatting over the internet, writing articles, etc. Education, advertising and travel could also play a part in this. Law and philosophy or religion has much potential to affect your lifestyle. You may feel that you are in touch and in harmony with others-the lines of communication are open.



Gemini (May 21-June 20)

A community program may call for your ability to negotiate. Others enjoy being around you and you know just what to say and how to help. If you want to have some time for yourself today, you may have to go for a walk. You and a friend may find some time to enjoy a nearby gym. Of course, exercise of this sort can help your stamina. An instinctive urge to get serious about taking care of yourself at many levels is emphasized. You have a good routine of diet, exercise and work. You want to feel good about yourself and the way you do things. This evening is a good time to write letters and make phone calls. It may get warmer before it gets cold again but for now... Heat up that fire-place, heat up a cup of cider and enjoy your loved ones.



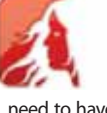
Cancer (June 21-July 22)

You may find yourself working by choice today, but it is likely to be inside your home. If you are good at negotiating, you could just be spending a bit of time on the phone. If you create proposals or make sales, you will probably be using some high-tech equipment. Ambitious schemes and the pursuit of success take on high priority. This brings a focus on the practical, the successful, the pragmatic-whatever it takes to get you ahead. The meek may inherit the earth, but the shrewd will collect the rent. Any financial gain now would be best set aside for a rainy day at the end of this year. Rain, cold, snow and all sorts of reasons to stay inside could create friction if too many people share the same space. Take an opportunity to socialize and play.



Leo (July 23-August 22)

You may be alone most of this day-people just seem to drain your energies at this time. You may find yourself shopping, but not necessarily to purchase items-perhaps to investigate the new technical items on the market. Later this afternoon, you will feel more like being with others and perhaps, talking about all those new high-tech products you saw this morning. Ideas and technologies that change the way people live are a major new focus in your life. Uphold any obligations now-promises, errands, chores, etc. Someone is really depending on you to come through with your promises. Although your finances will look better later this year, it would be a good idea to tread lightly when it comes to any financial questions.



Virgo (August 23-September 22)

You find ways to show others just how much you appreciate them. If you need to have an up-close-and-personal conversation with a loved one-anytime today is the right time. You may be pleasantly surprised at the results of your efforts to revise an old friendship. You also seem prepared for just about any unexpected event that might happen. This is a time when your path of expression becomes more positive and firm. The new, the futuristic, the high-tech are the hallmarks of your lifestyle as this cycle gets underway. You may become fascinated with the weather system trends and could be encouraged to learn or follow future storm systems. Controlling the weather is something of a curiosity. It may become a happening in the future.



Libra (September 23-October 22)

Seeking employment, taking a vacation and obtaining a loan are the activities most favorable to this weekend. You can make anything happen that you set your mind to accomplish. You may decide to clean up or finish things left undone from yesterday. Friends are best friends when they encourage you to stay focused. Later, they will want you to go with them to a play or see a movie. You and your friends often enjoy some form of exercise for a fun get-together: a game of hockey, racket ball, line skating, wall climbing, etc. Proper gear for these sports activities is very important and will guarantee you the enjoyment of many safe and fun times. Family members may vote for your attention this evening. Keep the young people around you busy.



Scorpio (October 23-November 21)

A change of residence is possible soon-perhaps a long-distance relocation. Educational plans may need changing; you now realize that they do not suit you as well as you would like. Anything connected with publishing, advertising or broadcasting requires reexamination just now. A change of plans or perspectives gives you the upper hand. This February will be full of opportunities for you to fulfill your wishes and to gain that focus you have wanted to achieve. A successful adventure today may include a camping trip, a special date, being included in a party, travel, etc. Today is the first day of some exciting changes. The only warning just now is to know that it would be easy to overindulge. Good feelings come from friends and family.



Sagittarius (November 22-December 21)

An urge to be independent could find you moving off in a different direction from the crowd. Your behavior could provoke others; easy does it. Look at the way you view others. It could just be difficult to stretch your imagination when the elements outside keep you captive inside-relax. This may be a good time to trade reading material, organize a closet in a new style or play board games. Helping others may become very important to you this afternoon. You could help provide shoes to a home for children or make a friendly visit to a home for the elderly. The quality of your energies is upbeat this afternoon-an attitude of gratitude takes hold. You may teach about predicting the future. This would be a good time to order a personal forecast.



Capricorn (December 22-January 19)

Learning what makes people tick is fun for you. Your instinctive orientation at this time is toward getting down to the basics and starting over from scratch. However, trying to figure things out when it comes to romance just now may be a bit premature. You may want answers, but the universe and perhaps the gal or guy in question, may not be ready to give up the answers. Keep your mind busy on those hobbies you wanted to organize. Of course, until the weather clears... This is certainly a good time to do the tax report. It is best to stay within your own little world today-tomorrow will be a better day to understand the people around you-including that special love relationship. Some kind of healing process is at work in your life now.



Aquarius (January 20- February 18)

Climbing up to fix something that needs repair, you may discover that it is time to repair your own body. You may have discovered that you are out of shape, are out of breath or have some other function that needs care taking. Many people find that an exercise routine helps them become more energetic and improves their outlook on life in general. Check with your doctor before making any drastic changes. Obtaining and exchanging information takes on importance. You may become more involved with neighbors or siblings at this time. Communicating feelings becomes important. A lover or child who is bright and articulate plays a big role in your life. If you are not babysitting tonight, you could be tutoring a young person.



Pisces (February 19-March 20)

You may spend some time this morning making changes in your living surroundings. Nothing will block you from whatever you set out to do today. You will make a great deal of progress when you take that first step. Depending on the weather, you may be planning or working on a spring garden today. You have a desire to rise above the everyday expectations and move into regions of the unusual. This may mean expressing yourself in some artistic way: decorating, dance, music, acting, photography, etc. Today you will make large strides toward your dreams. You may be counseling or teaching this afternoon in some volunteer group. A social affair this evening will put you in the limelight-everybody wants your attention.

WORD SEARCH

The Beach

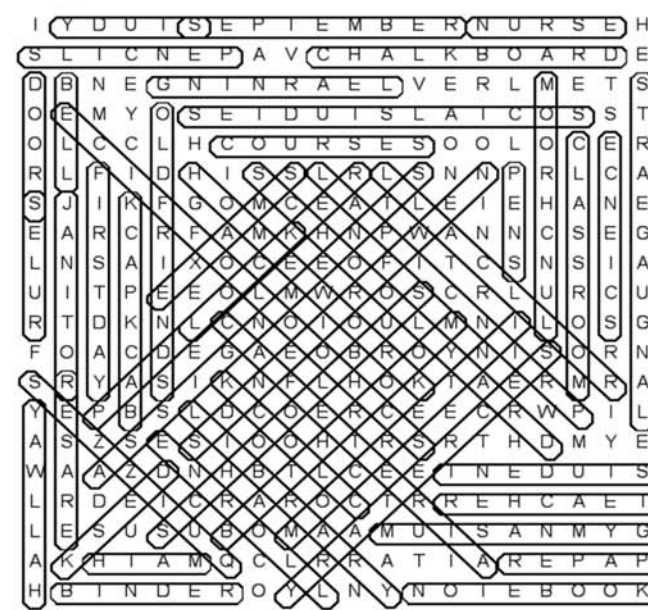
Find and circle all of the beach words that are hidden in the grid. The remaining letters spell an additional beach word.



- |            |            |            |
|------------|------------|------------|
| BARE FEET  | SAILING    | SURFBOARD  |
| BEACH BALL | SAND       | SURFING    |
| BOAT       | SEAGULL    | SWIMMING   |
| CLOUDS     | SEASHELL   | SWIMSUIT   |
| DRIFTWOOD  | SEASHORE   | T SHIRT    |
| HAT        | SKY        | TOWEL      |
| KITE       | STARFISH   | VOLLEYBALL |
| LIFEGUARD  | SUNGLASSES | WADING     |
| OCEAN      | SUNSCREEN  | WATER      |
| PAIL       | SUNSHINE   | WAVES      |
| PIER       |            |            |

Yesterday Solution

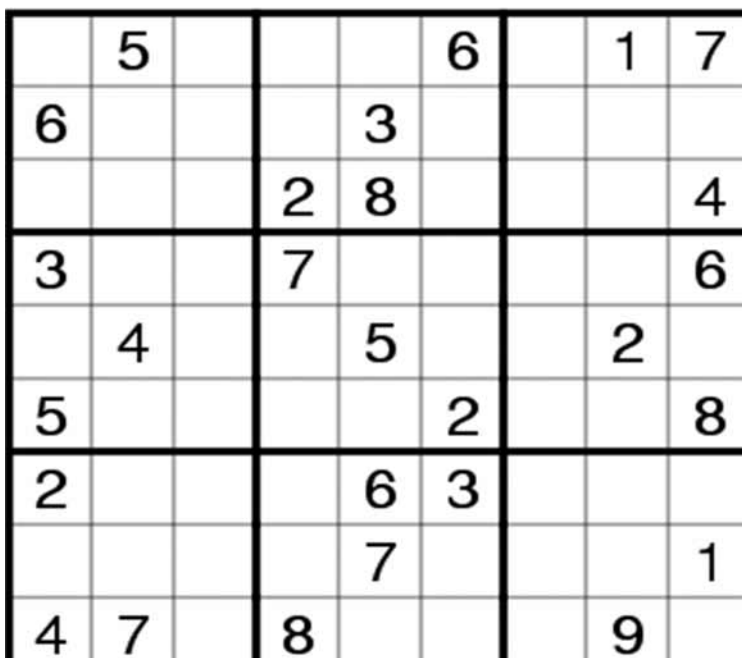
Back to School



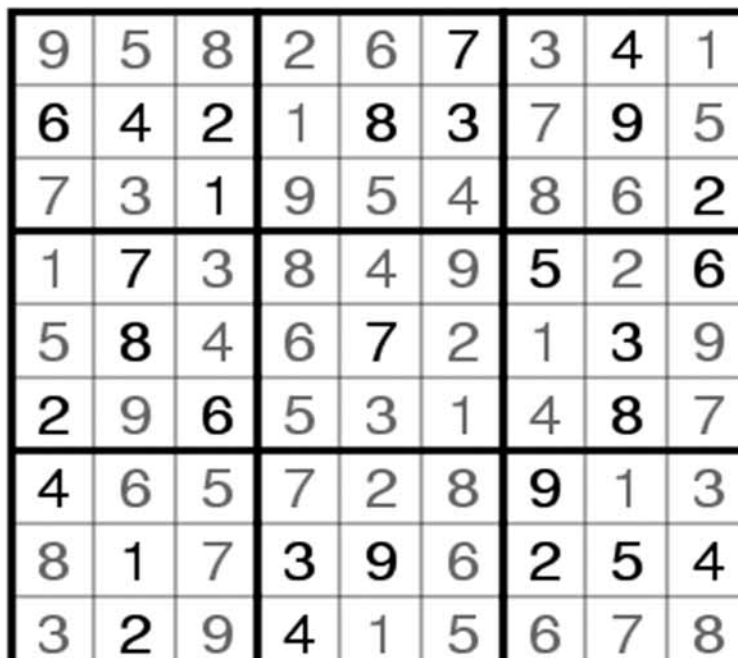
- |             |               |             |                |
|-------------|---------------|-------------|----------------|
| ASSIGNMENTS | ERASER        | LUNCHROOM   | ROLL CALL      |
| BACKPACK    | EXAMS         | MATH        | RULES          |
| BATHROOM    | FIRST DAY     | NEW FRIENDS | SCHOOL BUS     |
| BELL        | GYMNASIUM     | NOTEBOOK    | SCHOOL OFFICE  |
| BINDER      | HALLWAY       | NURSE       | SCHOOLYARD     |
| CAFETERIA   | HOMEWORK      | OLD FRIENDS | SCIENCE        |
| CHALKBOARD  | INTERCOM      | PADLOCK     | SECRETARY      |
| CLASSROOM   | JANITOR       | PAPER       | SEPTEMBER      |
| CLOCK       | LANGUAGE ARTS | PENCILS     | SOCIAL STUDIES |
| COURSES     | LEARNING      | PENS        | STUDENT        |
| DESK        | LIBRARY       | PRINCIPAL   | STUDY          |
| DOORS       | LOCKER        | QUIZZES     | TEACHER        |
| ENROLL      |               |             |                |

The hidden message is: I HAVE NEVER LET MY SCHOOLING INTERFERE WITH MY EDUCATION.

Daily SuDoku



Yesterday's Solution





For labor-related inquiries and complaints:  
Call MSAL hotline 128

### Hospitals

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

### Clinics

Kaizen center	25716707
Rawda	22517733
Adaliya	22517144
Khalidiya	24848075
Kaifan	24849807
Shamiya	24848913
Shuwaikh	24814507
Abdullah Salem	22549134
Nuzha	22526804
Industrial Shuwaikh	24814764
Qadisiya	22515088
Dasmah	22532265
Bneid Al-Gar	22531908
Shaab	22518752
Qibla	22459381
Ayoun Al-Qibla	22451082
Mirqab	22456536
Sharq	22465401
Salmiya	25746401
Jabriya	25316254
Maidan Hawally	25623444
Bayan	25388462
Mishref	25381200
W Hawally	22630786
Sabah	24810221
Jahra	24770319
New Jahra	24575755
West Jahra	24772608
South Jahra	24775066
North Jahra	24775992
North Jleeb	24311795
Ardhiya	24884079
Firdous	24892674
Omariya	24719048
N Khaitan	24710044
Fintas	23900322



### PHARMACIES ON 24 HRS DUTY

GOVERNORATE	PHARMACY	ADDRESS	PHONE
Ahmadi	Sama Safwan Abu Halaifa Danat Al-Sultan	Fahaee Makka St Abu Halaifa-Coastal Rd Mahboula Block 1, Coastal Rd	23915883 23715414 23726558
Jahra	Modern Jahra Madina Munawara	Jahra-Block 3 Lot 1 Jahra-Block 92	24575518 24566622
Capital	Ahlam Khaldiya Coop	Fahad Al-Salem St Khaldiya Coop	22436184 24833967
Farwaniya	New Shifa Ferdous Coop Modern Safwan	Farwaniya Block 40 Ferdous Coop Old Kheitan Block 11	24734000 24881201 24726638
Hawally	Tariq Hana Ikhlas Hawally & Rawdha Ghadeer Kindy Ibn Al-Nafis Mishrif Coop Salwa Coop	Salmiya-Hamad Mubarak St Salmiya-Amman St Hawally-Beirut St Hawally & Rawdha Coop Jabriya-Block 1A Jabriya-Block 3B Salmiya-Hamad Mubarak St Mishrif Coop Salwa Coop	25726265 25647075 22625999 22564549 25340559 25326554 25721264 25380581 25628241

### INTERNATIONAL CALLS



Afghanistan	0093	Luxembourg	00352
Albania	00355	Macau	00853
Algeria	00213	Macedonia	00389
Andorra	00376	Madagascar	00261
Angola	00244	Majorca	0034
Anguilla	001264	Malawi	00265
Antigua	001268	Malaysia	0060
Argentina	0054	Maldives	00960
Armenia	00374	Mali	00223
Australia	0061	Malta	00356
Austria	0043	Marshall Islands	00692
Bahamas	001242	Martinique	00596
Bahrain	00973	Mauritania	00222
Bangladesh	00880	Mauritius	00230
Barbados	001246	Mayotte	00269
Belarus	00375	Mexico	0052
Belgium	0032	Micronesia	00691
Belize	00501	Moldova	00373
Benin	00229	Monaco	00377
Bermuda	001441	Mongolia	00976
Bhutan	00975	Montserrat	001664
Bolivia	00591	Morocco	00212
Bosnia	00387	Mozambique	00258
Botswana	00267	Myanmar (Burma)	0095
Brazil	0055	Namibia	00264
Brunei	00673	Nepal	00977
Bulgaria	00359	Netherlands	0031
Burkina	00226	Netherlands Antilles	00599
Burundi	00257	New Caledonia	00687
Cambodia	00855	New Zealand	0064
Cameroon	00237	Nicaragua	00505
Canada	001	Niger	00227
Cape Verde	00238	Nigeria	00234
Cayman Islands	001345	Niue	00683
Central African	00236	Norfolk Island	00672
Chad	00235	N. Ireland (UK)	0044
Chile	0056	North Korea	00850
China	0086	Norway	0047
Colombia	0057	Oman	00968
Comoros	00269	Pakistan	0092
Congo	00242	Palau	00680
Cook Islands	00682	Panama	00507
Costa Rica	00506	Papua New Guinea	00675
Croatia	00385	Paraguay	00595
Cuba	0053	Peru	0051
Cyprus	00357	Philippines	0063
Cyprus (Northern)	0090392	Poland	0048
Czech Republic	00420	Portugal	00351
Denmark	0045	Puerto Rico	001787
Diego Garcia	00246	Qatar	00974
Djibouti	00253	Romania	0040
Dominica	001767	Russian Federation	007
Dominican Republic	001809	Rwanda	00250
Ecuador	00593	Saint Helena	00290
Egypt	0020	Saint Kitts	001869
El Salvador	00503	Saint Lucia	001758
England (UK)	0044	Saint Pierre	00508
Equatorial Guinea	00240	Saint Vincent	001784
Eritrea	00291	Samoa US	00684
Estonia	00372	Samoa West	00685
Ethiopia	00251	San Marino	00378
Falkland Islands	00500	Sao Tome	00239
Faroe Islands	00298	Saudi Arabia	00966
Fiji	00679	Scotland (UK)	0044
Finland	00358	Senegal	00221
France	0033	Seychelles	00284
French Guiana	00594	Sierra Leone	00232
French Polynesia	00689	Singapore	0065
Gabon	00241	Slovakia	00421
Gambia	00220	Slovenia	00386
Georgia	00995	Solomon Islands	00677
Germany	0049	Somalia	00252
Ghana	00233	South Africa	0027
Gibraltar	00350	South Korea	0082
Greece	0030	Spain	0034
Greenland	00299	Sri Lanka	0094
Grenada	001473	Sudan	00249
Guadeloupe	00590	Suriname	00597
Guam	001671	Swaziland	00268
Guatemala	00502	Sweden	0046
Guinea	00224	Switzerland	0041
Guyana	00592	Syria	00963
Haiti	00509	Serbia	00381
Holland (Netherlands)	0031	Taiwan	00886
Honduras	00504	Tanzania	00255
Hong Kong	00852	Thailand	0066
Hungary	0036	Toga	00228
Ibiza (Spain)	0034	Tonga	00676
Iceland	00354	Tokelau	00690
India	0091	Trinidad	001868
Indian Ocean	00873	Tunisia	00216
Indonesia	0062	Turkey	0090
Iran	0098	Tuvalu	00688
Iraq	00964	Uganda	00256
Ireland	00353	Ukraine	00380
Italy	0039	United Arab Emirates	00976
Ivory Coast	00225	United Kingdom	0044
Jamaica	001876	Uruguay	00598
Japan	0081	USA	001
Jordan	00962	Uzbekistan	00998
Kazakhstan	007	Vanuatu	00678
Kenya	00254	Venezuela	00582
Kiribati	00686	Vietnam	0084
Kuwait	00965	Virgin Islands UK	001284
Kyrgyzstan	00996	Virgin Islands US	001340
Laos	00856	Wales (UK)	0044
Latvia	00371	Yemen	00967
Lebanon	00961	Yugoslavia	00381
Liberia	00231	Zambia	00260
Libya	00218	Zimbabwe	00263
Lithuania	00370		

### STATE OF KUWAIT DIRECTORATE GENERAL OF CIVIL AVIATION METEOROLOGICAL DEPARTMENT



Tel: (+965) 161 Ext: 2627 - 2630  
Fax: (+965) 24348714  
www.met.gov.kw

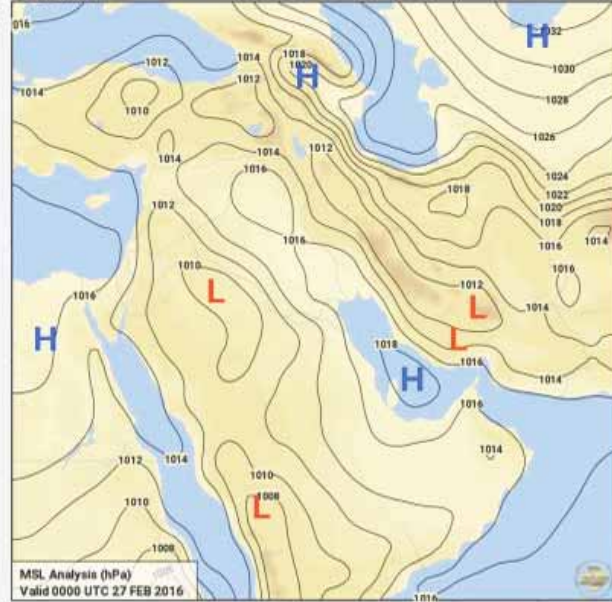
### Expected Weather for the Next 24 Hours

Issued 27/02/2016-07:00 LT UTC +3hr

Max Temperature 27 °C

By Day : Partly cloudy to cloudy with variable wind changing to light to moderate south easterly wind, with speed of 10 - 30 km/h with a chance for scattered rain that might be thundery later on  
By Night : Cloudy with light to moderate freshening gradually at times south easterly wind, with speed of 15 - 40 km/h with a chance for scattered thunder rain

#### SFC. CHART



#### Four-Day Forecast

	Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday
Expected Weather	partly cloudy + scattered rain	sunny	sunny	sunny
Min Temp °C	16	12	11	12
Max Temp °C	28	26	26	27
Wind Direction	south easterly	north westerly	north westerly	north westerly to light variable
Wind Speed km/h	10 - 32	15 - 40	12 - 35	08 - 28

All times are local time (GMT+3) unless otherwise stated

#### Weather Watches

Thunder Rain

#### Kuwait Forecast

Station	MIN °C	REC	Max °C	EXP
KUWAIT CITY	18		27	
KUWAIT AIRPORT	13		27	
ABDALY	13		27	
BUBYAN	14		25	
JAHRA	15		28	
FAILAKA ISLAND	15		25	
SALMIYAH	18		25	
AHMADI	18		21	
JAL ALIYAH	14		26	
QAROH ISLAND	18		24	
UMM AL-MARADEM	18		22	
NUWASISIB	14		24	
WAFRA	14		28	
MANAGISH	15		26	
SALMY	15		26	
MUTRIBA	14		28	

#### Recorded Yesterday at Kuwait Airport

Max Temp (°C)	27
Min Temp (°C)	10
Max Rel Hum (%)	71
Min Rel Hum (%)	24
Max Wind Speed (km/h) and Direction	25 NW
TOTAL RAINFALL IN 24 HR	0 mm

Sunrise	06:15
Sunset	17:46

#### Prayer Times

Fajr	04:56
Sunrise	06:15
Zuhr	12:01
Asr	15:18
Sunset	17:46
Isha	19:03



## PRIVATE CLINICS

Ophthalmologists	
Dr. Abdallah Al-Mansoor	25622444
Dr. Samy Al-Rabeea	25752222
Dr. Masoma Habeeb	25321171
Dr. Mubarak Al-Ajmy	25739999
Dr. Mohsen Abel	25757700
Dr. Adnan Hasan Alwayl	25732223
Dr. Abdallah Al-Baghly	25732223
Ear, Nose & Throat (ENT)	
Dr. Ahmed Fouad Mouner	24555050 Ext 510
Dr. Abdallah Al-Ali	25644660
Dr. Abd Al-Hameed Al-Taweel	25646478
Dr. Sanad Al-Fathalah	25311996
Dr. Mohammad Al-Daory	25731988
Dr. Ismail Al-Fodary	22620166
Dr. Mahmoud Al-Booz	25651426
General Practitioners	
Dr. Mohammed Y Majidi	24555050 Ext 123
Dr. Yousef Al-Omar	24719312
Dr. Tarek Al-Mikhaizeem	25736920
Dr. Kathem Maarafi	25730465
Dr. Abdallah Ahmad Eyadah	25655528
Dr. Nabeel Al-Ayoobi	24577781
Dr. Dina Abdallah Al-Rafea	25333501
Urologists	
Dr. Ali Naser Al-Serfy	22641534
Dr. Fawzi Taher Abul	22639955
Dr. Khaleel Abidallah Al-Awadi	22616660
Dr. Adel Al-Hunayan FRCS (C)	25313120
Dr. Leons Joseph	66703427

Plastic Surgeons	
Dr. Mohammad Al-Khalaf	22547272
Dr. Abdal-Redha Lari	22617700
Dr. Abdel Quttainah	25625030/60
Family Doctor	
Dr Divya Damodar	23729596/23729581
Psychiatrists	
Dr. Esam Al-Ansari	22635047
Dr. Eisa M. Al-Balhan	22613623/0
Gynaecologists & Obstetricians	
Dr Adrian arbe	23729596/23729581
Dr. Verginia s.Marin	2572-6666 ext 8321
Dr. Fozeya Ali Al-Qatan	22655539
Dr. Majeda Khalefa Aliyami	25343406
Dr. Ahmad Al-Khooly	25739272
Dr. Salem soso	22618787
General Surgeons	
Dr. Amer Zawaz Al-Amer	22610044
Dr. Mohammad Yousef Basher	25327148
Internists, Chest & Heart	
Dr. Adnan Ebil	22639939
Dr. Mousa Khadada	22666300
Dr. Latefa Al-Duweisan	25728004
Dr. Nadem Al-Ghabra	25355515
Dr. Mobarak Aldoub	24726446
Dr Nasser Behbehani	25654300/3

Paediatricians	
Dr. Khaled Hamadi	25665898
Dr. Abd Al-Aziz Al-Rashed	25340300
Dr. Zahra Qabazard	25710444
Dr. Sohail Qamar	22621099
Dr. Snaa Maarouf	25713514
Dr. Pradip Gupje	23713100
Dr. Zacharias Mathew	24334282
Dermatology	
Dr. Mohammed Salam Bern University	23845955
Dentists	
Dr Anil Thomas	3729596/3729581
Dr. Shamah Al-Matar	22641071/2
Dr. Anesah Al-Rasheed	22562226
Dr. Abdallah Al-Amer	22561444
Dr. Faysal Al-Fozan	22619557
Dr. Abdalateef Al-Katrash	22525888
Dr. Abdallah Al-Duweisan	25653755
Dr. Bader Al-Ansari	25620111
Neurologists	
Dr. Sohal Najem Al-Shemeri	25633324
Dr. Jasem Mola Hassan	25345875
Gastrologists	
Dr. Sami Aman	22636464
Dr. Mohammad Al-Shamaly	25322030
Dr. Foad Abdallah Al-Ali	22633135

Endocrinologist	
Dr. Abd Al-Naser Al-Othman	25339330
Dr. Ahmad Al-Ansari	25658888
Dr. Kamal Al-Shomr	25329924
Physiotherapists & VD	
Dr. Deyaa Shehab	25722291
Dr. Mused Faraj Khamees	22666288
Rheumatologists:	
Dr. Adel Al-Awadi	25330060
Dr. Khaled Al-Jarallah	25722290
Internist, Chest & Heart	
DR.Mohammes Akkad	24555050 Ext 210
Consultant Cardiologist	
Dr. Mohammad Zubaid MB, ChB, FRCP, PACC Assistant Professor Of Medicine Head, Division of Cardiology Mubarak Al-Kabeer Hospital	25339667
Dr. Farida Al-Habib MD, PH.D, FACC	2611555-2622555
Inaya German Medical Center	Te: 2575077 Fax: 25723123



Gossip



# YOKO ONO HAS BEEN ADMITTED TO HOSPITAL

The 83-year-old singer-and-artist was taken to Mount Sinai West Hospital in New York - the same hospital where her widow John Lennon was pronounced dead in 1980 - on Friday on the advice of doctors. Her son Sean Ono Lennon has since confirmed that she was taken in due to "tiredness and dehydration" and did not suffer a stroke. Sean - who is the son of the late Beatles legend - said his mother is doing "fine" and even joked that the only stroke she had was a "stroke of genius". Taking to his Twitter account yesterday, he

wrote: "Hey guys it was only rumors from the press: was NOT a stroke, just dehydration/tired. She is FINE. Thank you everyone for your concern. @yokoono ... Only Stroke @yokoono had was a Stroke of Genius! She's really fine. Thanks for all the well wishes! Big Love, Sean (sic)." A spokesperson confirmed that an ambulance was called to Yoko's apartment on 72nd Street in Manhattan yesterday at around 9pm.

## Peter Andre is growing his hair to look like Thor

The 43-year-old singer - who celebrated his birthday yesterday is keen to have long flowing locks like the superhero, who is played by Chris Hemsworth in the Marvel film franchise, but his tresses are currently at an "awkward stage" of growth. He wrote:

"I've decided to grow my hair to epic proportions. I'm thinking Thor. It's at that really awkward stage at the moment, so I apologize now if you see me wearing a lot more hats." Peter admitted his wife Emily MacDonagh - the mother of his two-year-old daughter Amelia - has already given her seal of approval to his plans, and he is even considering going for a man bun hairstyle when his locks grow long enough. He added: "I really fancied a change and wifey is a fan of the rugged look, so it's a double whammy. Will I do the man bun? Me? Never. Well, maybe..." As well as his own new look, Peter admitted he loves it when his eight-year-old daughter Princess - who, along with son Junior, 10, he has with ex-wife Katie Price - puts her hair in braids. He wrote in his column for new! magazine: "I love it when she puts her hair in braids. She looks awesome!"



## Drake and Rihanna are back together

The 'Hotline Bling' hitmaker and 27-year-old beauty's romance looked to be back on track after they were spotted dancing and kissing at London's Libertine nightclub last Monday besotted with the R&B superstar. A source told The Sun newspaper: "They're back together and Drake is totally besotted. His team has been teasing him about it but nothing can wipe the smile off his face." And of their behavior at the club on Monday, an onlooker added: "They were like a couple of teenagers - snogging and following each other around the club. It was like watching scenes from their new

video when they danced together." The lovers are believed to have been inseparable even since they arrived in London for the BRIT Awards, where they did a show-stopping performance of their song 'Work' and showed millions of viewers their sexy dance routine as Rihanna twerked on Drake. Rihanna, 27, has had several relationships over the years including a serious romance with rapper Chris Brown, which ended abruptly after he was found guilty of assaulting her in 2009.

## Liam Payne dating Cheryl Fernandez-Versini

The One Direction hunk has been in a secret relationship with the 'X Factor' judge, who is 10 years his senior, for the past three months, according to The Sun. A source told the newspaper: "Cheryl and Liam are in a relationship. It was unexpected but they've both made each other incredibly happy." Liam was really struggling with the idea of life after the band to begin with - being in the spotlight and that level of fame had started to get to him. "But he's been so happy with Cheryl. He's been telling people close to him that he's madly in love." Sources close to the heartthrob even claim that the new rose tattoo on his hand is a tribute to Cheryl's floral inking which covers her lower back and bum. Liam and Cheryl first met five years ago when he auditioned for 'The X Factor' as a solo artist before Simon Cowell formed One Direction with Liam, Niall Horan, Zayn Malik, Harry Styles and Louis Tomlinson. Cheryl, 32, recently filed for divorce from her second husband, Jean-Bernard Fernandez-Versini, although the couple split in August. And last year, 22-year-old Liam and his girlfriend of two years, Sophia Smith, broke up.



## Kieran Hayler training to become a magician

The former stripper - who is married to Katie Price - is working on a new side project after being wowed by one of conjurer Dynamo's live shows in Brighton, South East England, and the 28-year-old personal trainer has already mastered several illusions. He said: "We went to see Dynamo perform in Brighton last week and I was so impressed that I just wanted to become a magician. So I went online and bought some stuff and now I've got five tricks under my belt." Katie - who married the hunky star in 2013 - joked she is planning to make some commission from Kieran's magic acts at various events. She quipped: "He's so good. I'm going to tout him out to do magic at weddings and I'll take a 10 per cent cut." The couple - who celebrated the first anniversary of their wedding vow renewal on February 21 - are planning to host a talent show party this year where Kieran will perform some of his latest tricks. Katie, 37, explained to Britain's OK! magazine: "Kieran's going to be able to do his magic tricks. We'll get a stage and do it all properly with people judging."



## Kendall Jenner says Caitlyn Jenner is lucky

After Caitlyn - who was previously known as Bruce Jenner - admitted that her gender transition had been hard on all of her children, especially Kendall and her younger sister Kylie, 18, the supermodel told her how lucky she is. Caitlyn said: "All my kids, but especially Kendall and Kylie - having to deal with a father transitioning, it's very, very difficult process with all this history you have in your life." Telling Caitlyn "you got pretty lucky", Kendall, 20, added: "We're all pretty open, accepting, non-judgmental people. Our whole family." In an upcoming clip for Caitlyn's reality TV show 'I Am Cait', her close friend Chandi Moore said: "I know this has not been the easiest thing for you guys to wrap your heads around, but you guys are being real troopers about it. We appreciate the love you give Cait and our full community. Because we need it." Caitlyn revealed last year that she was transgender and while her children and former wives have been supportive, she recently admitted that she will always be "haunted" by not telling her late father about her gender identity.



## Katie Holmes' sisters told her not to order spaghetti on first date

The 37-year-old actress - who was married to Tom Cruise for six years - has recalled her three older sisters advised her against any messy food during her first ever romantic meal with a guy, when she was around 14 or 15, to avoid an awkward encounter. She said: "My older and wiser sisters told me not to order spaghetti. They said that would be embarrassing because noodles could fly all over the place." The 'Giver' star also remembers her siblings giving her a makeover and filming the moment she got ready for her dinner date. She added to Britain's HELLO! magazine: "I was a freshman in high school and I went to homecoming. My sisters videotaped me getting ready - the transformation

from the real me to the glammed-up whatever they did to me. We went out to dinner." The raven-haired beauty - who has nine-year-old daughter Suri with Tom - keeps in contact regularly with her sisters but admits she texts her family a lot more than calls nowadays. She said: "I used to call all the time. Now I may text them more to keep in touch."







Mark Healey of Hawaii takes a spill down the face of a large wave in the second heat of The Quiksilver in Memory of Eddie Aikau surf contest at Waimea Bay located on the north shore of the island of Oahu in Hawaii. — AP

# Surfers get once-in-a-lifetime 60 foot swells off Hawaii

There are two sayings that come along with the Eddie Aikau big-wave surfing invitational: "The bay calls the day" and "Eddie would go." For the first time in six years, the bay - and event organizers - gave the nod Thursday as a powerful and sustained swell produced huge surf on Oahu's North Shore. Eddie, a famed lifeguard and big-wave surfer who once protected these shores, most certainly would have gone. Before the sun came up over the horseshoe-shaped Waimea Bay, organizers huddled together to make the final call on the event, which has only run nine times in its 31-year history.

Eddie Aikau's brother, Clyde, announced to a large crowd early Thursday morning that his brother's namesake surfing contest was on. "I've been riding Waimea Bay for over 40 years, and today has to be one of the best days I've ever seen," Aikau said. "It is a go!" he added as the crowd came alive with whistles, cheers and applause. They got what they hoped for as huge sets of monster waves crashed onto the outer reef of the

bay, producing some waves that organizers estimate were 60 feet tall.

Clyde Aikau is the only competitor to surf in all eight previous competitions and is the oldest at 66 to compete in this year's event. Thursday will be his last time surfing in the contest, he said. Clyde said the event isn't really about competition, fame or money. It's about honoring his brother's legacy of helping others and his passion for the ocean. "We are humbled and privileged," he said. One competitor, Ramon Navarro, the son of a fisherman from south Chile, embodies Eddie's spirit, said event spokeswoman and longtime Aikau family friend Jodi Wilmott.

Navarro is a "very unassuming, a very humble character," Wilmott said. "He has a higher vision." In 2009, when Navarro was invited to his first Eddie competition, he awoke the crowd when he rode the biggest wave of the day, scoring a perfect 100 on the monster breaker that towered over him. "Eddie was a higher-vision guy, too," Wilmott said. "He had loftier goals for

humanity, and he understood the power of relationships. That is just the spirit Ramon has tapped into."

Navarro came to the North Shore and worked his way into the surfing community by building mud brick ovens and selling empanadas to beachgoers, Wilmott said. Navarro surfed in the first heat of the morning on Thursday, and despite only catching one wave out of a possible four, earning him a mere 5 points out of 100, Navarro said he was just happy to be involved in the event. "This is my dream," Navarro said after drying off from his hour-long session. "I can die happy now."

Looking forward to his second heat of the day, Navarro said he hoped that Eddie would "look at (him) and send (him) some good waves." "I'm going to try my best and enjoy it, I'm just happy to be here," he added. Local Hawaii surfer John John Florence won Thursday's event, catching four massive waves for a total score of over 300 points. Australia's Ross Clarke-Jones took second, and Hawaii's Shane Dorian finished third. The competition began in 1984, six years after Eddie

Aikau died.

As a lifeguard, Eddie Aikau is said to have never had a fatality while on duty. When the surf was too big for most in Waimea Bay and the crowds cleared out, Aikau would grab his surfboard and take on the biggest waves around. Ultimately, however, Aikau gave his life to the ocean in a final attempt to save others. The 31-year-old Aikau was part of a team that was attempting to trace the route of their Polynesian ancestors from Hawaii to Tahiti aboard the traditional Hokulea canoe in 1978. The vessel encountered rough seas and capsized. Aikau took his surfboard and paddled away for help. He was never seen again, though the rest of the crew was eventually rescued. — AP



Professional surfer Ramon Navarro (left) makes the drop on a wave while professional surfer Jamie Mitchell loses control and wipes out at Waimea Bay in Waimea, Hawaii. —AFP



Professional surfer Jeremy Flores flashes a 'shaka' sign after exiting the water at Waimea Bay in Waimea, Hawaii.

## Home Centre receives Service Hero Award for superior customer service

Home Centre, the largest home retailer in the Middle East, was awarded the Service Hero CSI award in the Home Furniture category. The brand was recognized for its commitment to providing outstanding service and value to its customers at the Customer Service Assessment Awards held on 15th February 2016 at JW Marriott, Kuwait.

Service Hero is the Arab world's only 100% consumer powered customer satisfaction index which rates 16 industry categories such as cafes, retail banks, mobile operators, home furniture, electronics, airlines among others for customer service. After nominating leading brands in every category, Service Hero begins the voting process which lasts for a year. Launched in 2010, this index has measured over 100,000 consumer voices covering more than 300 private sector companies in Kuwait and has also recently expanded to UAE.

Competing against 15 large multinational brands in the home furniture category, Home Centre, which has 5 stores in Kuwait, was honored by Service Hero based on votes which were placed by customers in Kuwait from 2015 to 2016. Mederic Payne, CEO of Home Centre said: "We are honored to have received this prestigious award by securing the maximum

number of votes. Customers have always been our prime focus and this recognition reflects our long-standing dedication to providing exceptional customer service. This win motivates us to sustain our customer satisfaction index as we strive to remain the preferred home shopping destination in the region."

Votes are placed based on the service dimensions of reliability, speed, product quality, value, location, staff quality, call center and website quality. Customers were also asked to make a comparison between the expected and actual experience of the service and rate factors including overall satisfaction and loyalty. Service Hero has partnered with American Customer Satisfaction Index and members of European Society of Opinion & Market Research, ensuring results are impartial, objective and accurately reflect the voice of the consumer. Recently, Home Centre won the Most Admired Retailer of the Year award in the Home and Housewares category at the 5th Annual Images RetailME Awards 2015, where it was also conferred with the 2015 - 2016 Global Innovation Middle East Award.



## 'GODS OF EGYPT'

Film Review

At a certain point in "Gods of Egypt," an extravagantly silly foray into Afroasiatic mythology from the director Alex Proyas, one wounded deity begs another to show him mercy—a futile request as far as his enemy is concerned, but one that may strike a more receptive chord with the compassionate viewer (which is to say, any viewer who would buy a ticket to "Gods of Egypt"). Since the film enters theaters already in its death throes—undone by toxic word of mouth, much criticism of its predominantly white cast, and an opening-weekend box office projection of about 10% of its \$140 million production budget—perhaps a little kindness would not be misplaced.

So here goes: Yet damned if Proyas doesn't put it all out there with a lunatic conviction you can't help but admire, immediately earning this Lionsgate release a place in the 2016 pantheon of gloriously watchable follies. With its burnt-yellow cinematography, its excessively gilded production design and its blinding flashes of sunlight, "Gods of Egypt" at times doesn't suggest a movie so much as a giant cinematic tanning salon—all the better, perhaps, to darken the pearly skin tones of most of the actors on display (an effect that can be further enhanced with your purchase of murk-maximizing 3D glasses).

The opening scene sweeps us over the streets, roofs and pyramids of a prosperous ancient Egypt, a kingdom ruled over by the wise and compassionate Osiris (Bryan Brown). For centuries Osiris has allowed his lowly mortal subjects to dwell in harmony with the gods, who tower over everyone thanks to the latest advances in digital height-modification technology. Everything changes, however, at the coronation of Osiris' son, Horus (Nikolaj Coster-Waldau), also known as the lord of the air.

Shortly before the crown can pass, in storms Osiris' jealous brother, the desert god Set (Gerard Butler), who promptly murders the king in full view of the horrified public, then defeats his nephew Horus in a duel and gouges out his eyes. It all happens so quickly, and with such dynamic "Virtua Fighter"-style whooshings of the camera, that you barely have time to register such head-scratching details as, say, the fact that Set is way too young to be Osiris' brother, or the hilariously unexplained provenance of Butler's Scottish accent. But don't think too hard about it. It's magic!

Related Box Office: 'Gods of Egypt' Falling Flat, 'Deadpool' Still King Some time later, Set has established a new reign of terror in which mortals, once free to enter the afterlife, must now buy their way in with treasure. Meanwhile, said mortals have now been sentenced to a lifetime of hard labor, including Bek (Brenton Thwaites), a wily, handsome and quite boring

young thief who dreams of freeing Horus from his self-imposed exile. And so, with the help of his fetching lover, Zaya (Courtney Eaton), and under the nose of Set's right-hand man, Urshu (Rufus Sewell), Bek breaks into the palace's booby-trapped vault and steals back one of Horus' eyes.

Now sporting a sexy eyepatch, the lord of the air determines to seize his revenge against Set and take back the crown. First, however, Horus must address a few complications, such as the fact that his former squeeze, Hathor (Elodie Yung), is now bedding down with his nemesis, their love nest strategically positioned next to a towering obelisk that underscores Set's lust for conquest and his nagging infertility issues.

the living, or the enormous proto Starship Enterprise that Ra navigates through the heavens, every night doing battle with what appears to be a thunder cloud with teeth. At times the camera stays still long enough for you to take in the ornately bejeweled details of Liz Palmer's costumes, though unfortunately, this also gives you time to study the almost surreal disconnect between foreground and background in every artificial-looking frame.

As ever, Proyas doesn't skimp on spectacle, though it's a disappointment when the Sphinx inevitably shows up and disgorges her riddle; you want to tell her to either slow down and enunciate or get the hell back to Vegas. The movie's action highlight finds two evil goddesses, Astarte (Abbey Lee) and Anat (Yaya



Hathor, incidentally, is described in the production notes as "the goddess of love, music and alcohol," which means that she presumably would be in a position to do something about Marco Beltrami's epically tumescent score, or at least to ensure that no one walks into "Gods of Egypt" without a beer in hand. In a movie where the deities transform at will into winged, animal-headed Hasbro figurines, or where Geoffrey Rush's white-robed sun god Ra reliably bursts into craptacular CG flames, the drinking games pretty much write themselves.

Coming off "I, Robot" and "Knowing," Proyas hasn't exactly been in his element for a while, but every so often the elaborate kitsch and clutter of his visual design clears away for the sort of striking effect that reminds you of the impassioned fantasist who gave us "The Crow" and "Dark City"—a small sandstorm that becomes a portal between the lands of the dead and

Deng), chasing after Horus and Bek on enormous fire-breathing cobras, forcing our mismatched heroes to put their heads together. Coster-Waldau and Thwaites manage a passable, bickersome on screen chemistry that drives the movie toward its big moral epiphany, which is the importance of treating even one's so-called inferiors with compassion and decency, as Horus slowly learns to see the worth of his mortal subjects and the entwined nature of their destinies.

But really, who is "Gods of Egypt" kidding? Like so many of Hollywood's sword-and-sandal offerings, this interminable ersatz epic consigns most of the human race to a sea of digital extras while subjecting its immortal characters to more than two hours' worth of big-screen deification. —Reuters





Models present creations for fashion house Bottega Veneta as part of the Women Autumn/Winter 2016 Milan Fashion Week yesterday.



Models present creations for fashion house Blumarine as part of the Women Autumn/Winter 2016 Milan Fashion Week yesterday. — AP/AFP photos

# Emporio Armani, Versace, Diesel headline Milan fashion

The Italian fashion industry is deeply tied to its manufacturing base, with the textile mills that populate northern Italy key to helping designers realize their particular visions. This could explain the fashion world's fascination with reclaiming disused industrial spaces to show off the finished product. The third day of Milan Fashion Week for next spring and summer started with the fashion herd thronging past bemused Italian postal workers preparing the day's deliveries as the well-heeled and freshly caffeinated crowd filled an old depot that became the backdrop for Diesel Black Gold's Milan womenswear debut.

The space even came with its own, complementary, industrial-sized "No Smoking" sign, which once safeguarded the daily mail but now protects high fashion. Gucci has adopted a former rail depot nearby, while Giamba and No 21 showed off their wares in an abandoned factory set in a middle-class neighborhood in a juxtaposition that demonstrates how integrated work and life in Italy are, despite stereotypes to the contrary. Some highlights from Friday's womenswear previews for fall/winter 2016/17:

#### Female power

Donatella Versace's woman is an urban powerhouse. The collection turns on daywear, from power suits to athletic-trimmed ribbed knits. Versace said that "every single piece is wearable, desirable, real." Men's jackets are feminized, deconstructed into a dress with a plunging back, or finished with a jagged hemline cov-



Fashion designer Donatella Versace (right) salutes model Gigi Hadid at the end of the Versace women's Fall-Winter 2016-2017 fashion show.

ered with sequins. Pants are slim fitting, flaring to a cropped ankle or finishing in stirrups, while dresses have hidden zippers that with a simple pull can reveal or conceal thighs and more.

Gigi Hadid didn't need a zipper to flash the crowd, inadvertently or not, from the low-cut knit evening dress she was modeling. She got a high-five from the designer as she left the runway. The collection also marked the return of Baroque elements to Versace, with black and white swirls set against psychedelic acid prints. Outerwear ranged from serious dark trenches with leather trip to ladylike pastel tinged white furs.

#### Synthetic pleasures

Marco de Vincenzo indulged in synthetic pleasures for his next collection. The designer, who has the backing of LVMH, plays the serious business of fashion at the highest levels of technology, creating lustrous fake furs out of hand-woven Lurex jersey and shiny textiles with a watery finish from organza mixed with silk and nylon. "It is important with the fabrics that I define as a little borderline, like fake furs in Lurex, are done very well. And here Made in Italy makes the difference," de Vincenzo said backstage.

The result was a lush, shimmery, peluche coats with graphic patterns in bold color combinations, like a light blue jacket with red amoeba-like spots that suggest an exaggerated animal print, and snug, gathered and knotted sheath dresses in shiny prints full of asymmetry. Put together, the collection conveyed a nostalgia that comes with long-loved pieces retrieved from the attic, but with a colorful modern edge that created a world all unto itself. Take for example, a sheer smocked purple dress fitted with an accordion pleum at the waist, combing elements both modern and bygone.

Shoes featured neat rows of ruffles up the front of booties or covering open-toe sandals. And de Vincenzo created his first bag, a ladylike piece with a twist, a bear paw flap. Binding the collection was the persistent, unflinching use of bright, clashing colors: bright green, yellow and purple blurring together, electric blue, and red. "It takes courage, it takes a lot of things, to do fashion today," de Vincenzo said. "I am following my route, without rushing."

#### Back in black diesel gold

Renzo Rosso has repatriated his Diesel Black Gold fashion label to Milan from New York, in a victory for the Italian Fashion Chamber, which under new management is working to energize the national fashion system. Rosso brought menswear to Milan several years ago. "Together we want to make Milan the most important fashion week in the world," Rosso said backstage. Texture defined the clean, youthful looks, with a velvet top with puffy short sleeves tucked into a quilted mini, or a soft turtleneck sweater paired with a stud-laden leather mini.

The latest Diesel Black Gold collection combined power with utility: Jackets were inventive combinations of a standard leather biker front finished with a billowing quilted hoodie in the back. Trousers were high-waisted, including Diesel's trademark jeans in a version with stripes of contrasting stripes of velvet, leather and sparkling brocade. Footwear included lace-up military-style boots. The color palette was rigorously blue, black and gray with a few white contrast pieces.

#### Pop goes Emporio

At 81, Giorgio Armani shot a youthful wink at the fashion crowd from his Emporio Armani line. The designer embraced the digital language of today's youth, creating his own off-skew emojis out of circles, triangles and squares in yellow, pink and green - the season's motifs. One of the winking pieces, a cropped striped sweater, best belied an understanding of the digital generation's desire to transform this global communication form into wearable mascots - that is the desire to make the virtual concrete.

Armani dubbed the collection "New Pop." And his Emporio fall/winter 2016/17 geometrical motifs graced handbags, were

elbow-length gloves.

Nearly all looks were teamed with wide corset-like belts, tie-up boots, buckled sandals or peep-toe shoes and handbags, some with charms, others so small they were worn around the neck. The brand, known for its luxury leather goods with handbags costing as much as 6,000 euros (\$6,600), presented its latest addition to the its accessories range at the show: the new Pionnière and Cahier bags. The small, shoulder-strap bags retail for about 1,750 euros and 2,400 euros respectively, with the round-shaped Pionnière inspired by hunting, uniforms and travel and the more expensive Cahier reminiscent of old book bindings and notebooks.

The bags will be on sale from Friday in selected Prada stores in Milan, London, Paris and New York. With customers living in different climates, several fashion houses

A model presents a creation for the show for fashion house Versace.



printed on blouses and became colorful broaches. Armani's indulgence in whimsy never comes at the expense of the brand's youthful elegance. Short trousers were loosely pleated, resembling skirts, and skirts were mini but not micro. Jackets were cropped and disciplined, with a double-breasted pea coat gaining sophistication from a green high-neck sweater that peeked from the hem and pixelated print trousers. Evening looks sparkled, including sheer cropped tops with a collage of shapes protecting the wearer's modesty worn with Bermuda shorts that were as soft as a skirt.

#### Kinky girls

She's a very kinky girl, the Giamba girl's a super freak. The looks for Giambattista Valli's signature Giamba line are made of lace and leather, sheers and furs, graffiti prints and zebra patterns for an urban jungle feel inspired by Nan Goldin's photographs of 1980s Greenwich Village subculture. Italian-Brazilian socialite and



A model presents a creation for the show for fashion house Versace as part of the Women Autumn/Winter 2016 Milan Fashion Week.

#### Four eyes for fashion

Fendi's finishing touch for its latest collection was shades with wavy blue-striped accents, echoing the looks. For Prada, eyewear came with ornate twirling stems. While eyewear, particularly sunglasses, have long been a fashion trend, and more and more a mainstay on fashion runways, the promotional pairing has been at the whim of the fashion designer. Now the government is backing plans to create more of a unified fashion system, bringing together federations promoting shoes, handbags, jewelry and furs with Italy's ready-to-wear apparel sector for commercial events. The project could launch as soon as next year, officials said.

In a taste of things to come, this year, the annual Mido eyewear fair, the world's largest, was held during Milan Fashion Week, a rare coincidence. "We need to work more to demonstrate that we are a great country in terms of style," Mido president Cirillo Marcolin said in an interview. "We have to work a little bit more together to compete with the big power of French conglomerates." Italy is the No 1 producer of premium eyewear in the world, and fashion house licenses are one of the segment's main components alongside more architecturally oriented frame design. Revenues for Italian eyewear producers grew 12 percent last year to 3.5 billion euros, according to figures released Thursday. That compares with revenues of 62 billion euros for Italian ready-to-wear last year. — AP

## Prada offers 'see now, buy now' bags straight off Milan catwalk

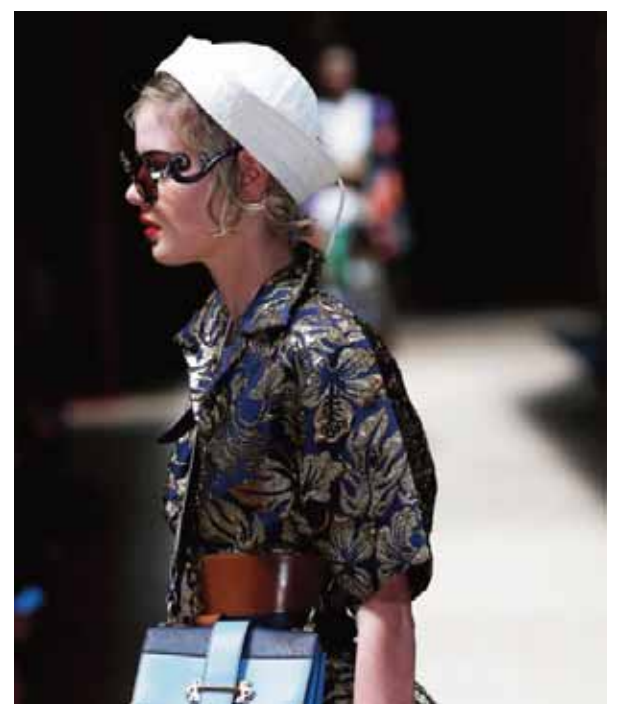
Italy's Prada blended military, nautical and 1940s looks for women next fall at Milan Fashion Week and joined in on the "see now, buy now" retail model by offering two new styles of bag at selected outlets from Friday. Miuccia Prada, regarded as a trailblazer by fashionistas, mixed prints with luxurious fabrics to create glamorous, colorful, layered outfits, for her collection.

The designer, 66, put fur on sleeves and linings of check or leather jackets and cloaks, embroidery on slinky velvet dresses and played with an array of prints - cactus plants, flowers and fruit - on tops, skirts and dresses. Brocade also featured heavily in the collection - namely in gold on jackets and skirts. Dark coats reminiscent of an elegant military style were teamed with white nautical hats and thick tights. Dresses and slinky jackets had big shoulders, a nod to 1940s silhouettes, and some were worn with chunky,

have announced they want to bridge the usual six-month gap between catwalk presentation and retail availability, by offering runway items in shops or online sooner. Prada reported nearly flat net revenue of 3.55 billion euros in the year to Jan. 31 last week, with earnings hit in recent quarters by costly shop investments and slower demand for luxury goods, notably from major market China.

— Reuters

A model wears a creation for Prada women's Fall-Winter 2016-2017 collection as part of the Milan Fashion Week. — AP





## Oscar hopeful features Jewish settlers and Palestinian nuns

In director Basil Khalil's Oscar entry for best short film, Palestinian nuns in a convent in the Israeli-occupied West Bank face a dilemma when stranded Jewish settlers seek their help. The Palestinian-French-German production "Ave Maria" tells how Orthodox Jewish settlers crash into a statue of the Virgin Mary near a small remote convent with their car as the sabbath-and the Jewish religious ban on using the phone to seek help-begins. They seek assistance from five nuns who belong to a silent order and who are therefore forbidden to contact anyone to fix the settlers' car.

The two groups find themselves in "their own worst nightmares as their rules and regulations for life are tested," says Khalil, who was born to a Palestinian father and a British mother in the northern Israeli Arab city of Nazareth. In the film, which runs for less than 15 minutes, the Jewish

settler family discuss among themselves whether they can accept a glass of water from the nuns' kitchen-where forbidden pork is being prepared. The events appear to the viewer as "both amusing and absurd", Khalil said from his home in London, but they do not mock the settlers or the nuns.

The subject of the film, shot in Hebrew, Arabic and English, is not religion but something broader, Khalil said. "When a child is born in Israel/Palestine it is assigned its friends and enemies and is told to fight for one side or the other." The film has so far won 16 awards and has been screened in over 30 countries, including at 75 festivals. "An Oscar would be a wonderful acknowledgement of my work as a director, the icing on the cake," Khalil said.

Although Palestinian cinema is still trailing behind in the Arab world, it has made its mark at the Oscars. In 2014,

Hany Abu Assad's "Omar" scored a nomination in the best foreign-language film category. Omar, a tale of love, betrayal and struggle in the Israeli-occupied territories also won a jury prize in the "Un Certain Regard" category at the Cannes festival and two top awards at the Dubai International Film Festival. In 2013 "Five Broken Cameras" - a Palestinian-Israeli co-production - was an Academy Award nominee in the documentary section. Directed by Palestinian Emad Burnat and Israeli Guy Davidi, the film documents the story of Bilin village and the struggle of its residents to protect their land from Jewish settlers and Israel's giant West Bank separation barrier. — AFP

**Basil Khalil nominated, for Short Film (Live Action) 'Ave Maria', attends the Oscar Week: Shorts evening in Beverly Hills. — AFP**



**Adi Rukun (left), Joshua Oppenheimer and Signe Byrge Sorensen who made the Oscar nominated documentary 'The Look of Silence' attend a reception for documentary filmmakers at the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences in Beverly Hills. — AFP**

## In Indonesia, an Oscar-nominated film reopens old wounds

Indonesia's first film production to be nominated for an Oscar is at once a source of national pride and of shame for the world's third-largest democracy. "The Look of Silence" centers on one of the worst massacres since World War Two, when at least 500,000 people died in violence that raged after then-general Suharto and the military took power following an abortive coup in 1965. A million or more people were jailed, suspected of being communists.

Up for best documentary at Sunday's Academy Awards ceremony, the film has forced many to confront one of the darkest periods in Indonesia's history and remains banned from commercial cinemas. "Successive governments have failed to address the events of 1965 as a lesson that needs to be learned by the nation," said Muhammad Nurkhoron of the national commission on human rights. "There needs to be at least be official recognition but that hasn't happened. But we feel happy this film has been nominated so the world can see those events are finally being questioned."

Government officials did not respond to repeated requests for comment on the film. Despite the ban, "The Look of Silence", which has an Indonesian co-producer, is available online and had hundreds of private screenings across Indonesia. This year's nomination will be the second for director Joshua Oppenheimer, whose similarly-themed "The Act of Killing" lost out in

the best documentary category in 2013. While the first film unveiled some of 1965's unrepentant killers who still remain free, "The Look of Silence" tells the same tale through the eyes of a victim's family.

In the film Adi Rukun comes face to face with the alleged torturers and killers of his three siblings. "It was the hardest thing I've done in my life," Rukun said in a telephone interview. "What I wanted was to hear a confession, but I saw them feel no remorse." The films go beyond tracking the cathartic journeys of those involved to show how many continue to turn a blind eye to past crimes. "I hope the films will energize the movement in Indonesia against impunity and against a system based on fear and intimidation," Oppenheimer told Reuters by telephone.

Indonesia began a transition to democracy in 1998 after more than three decades of authoritarian rule. The 2014 election of Joko Widodo as president, the first leader to come from outside the country's political and military establishment, offered hope to human rights activists that past violations would finally be addressed. That has not happened, and last year Indonesia censored several events to mark the 50th anniversary of the 1965 killings. "The hope is small," said Nurkhoron. "But these films are a step to reconciliation with the past." — Reuters

## Pakistan Oscar hope eyes bigger prize - law reform

Sharmeen Obaid-Chinoy made history by winning Pakistan's first Oscar four years ago. Now she's back in Hollywood, hoping to scoop a second Academy Award for her harrowing film about a teenage girl shot in the face by her own family. But while other Oscar nominees obsess about hair and make-up, the 37-year-old filmmaker has a much bigger fight on her hands: how to stop honor killings in Pakistan, where she says more than 1,000 women are murdered each year by male relatives for allegedly bringing shame on the family.

"A Girl in the River: The Price of Forgiveness" tells the story of 19-year-old Saba who was beaten, shot and thrown into the river after she ran off to marry her fiancé, whom her family initially accepted-and then decided was too poor. The 40-minute film goes head to head with four other nominees in the documentary short subject category at Sunday's Oscars in Hollywood. Survivors of honor killings are rare and the film offers a stark look at the pain-physical and emotional-inflicted on Saba, her extraordinary resilience and ultimate failure to see her father and uncle convicted.

They beat her, shot her in the face and dumped her in a burlap sack in the river. At the last moment, she tilted her head, meaning the bullet grazed her cheek instead of shattering her skull. Somehow she managed to cling to the bushes and pull herself out of the water. She went to police and to hospital. Obaid-Chinoy, who read about her ordeal one morning in the newspaper, tracked her down and filmed Saba's story over eight to nine months in 2014. In Pakistan, a loophole in the law allows the perpetrators of so-called honor killings to get off scot-

free if they are pardoned by their family.

### Change law

Saba initially seeks a conviction, but eventually relents under the weight of pressure from her brother-in-law and community elders who say it is better to resolve enmity than let it fester. Obaid-Chinoy wants to change that. Pakistani Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif hosted a screening of the film in Islamabad last week and has promised to rid Pakistan of the crime by tightening up the legislation. The filmmaker said she had hoped for a positive response but admitted such an unprecedented reaction had taken her by surprise.

"If we get this law passed, it will be all worth it," she said by telephone from Los Angeles after flying in from Pakistan, battling jet lag and an avalanche of pre-Oscar publicity. "The biggest victory would be to get the legislation passed-to take forgiveness off the table, to have a law that deters killing women in the name of honor and for people to realize that this is a serious crime." Obaid-Chinoy has been here before. In 2012, she became an instant celebrity in Pakistan for winning an Oscar for "Saving Face," a documentary that exposed the horrors endured by women who survive acid attacks.

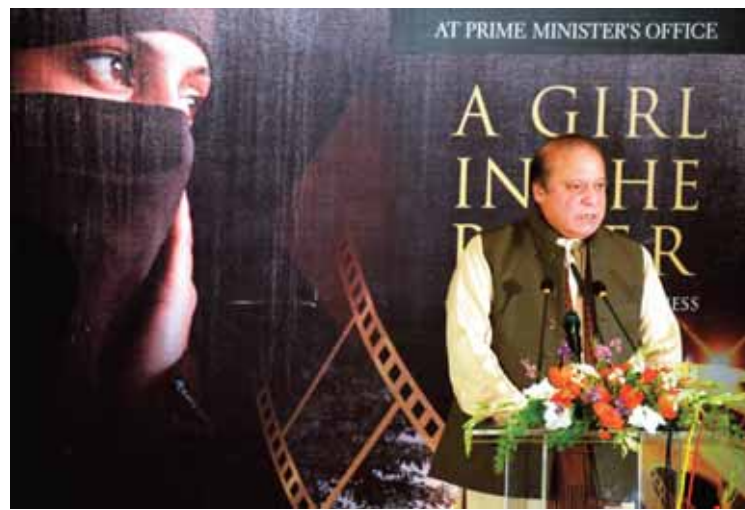
Her success helped boost awareness about the particularly horrific crime, and the government in Punjab province started processing acid cases through anti-terrorism courts to offer women speedy justice, she said. Obaid-Chinoy grew up in Karachi and studied in America, but is proud to live in Pakistan, believing the onus is on people like her to help the country improve. Last year she started Pakistan's first animated

feature film studio and she says she will wear an outfit by Pakistani label Sana Safinaz to the Oscars.

### Abuse from cleric

Her Academy Award stands next to the television at home-with an Emmy on the other side. So has she dusted off a spot for a second Oscar? "It's a very tough year, I have to say, and there are some fantastic films in contention," she said. Nor is it always smooth sailing at home. Just this week she said a video went viral of a prominent cleric accusing her of being immoral and calling her a prostitute. "I think if the film were to win an Academy Award, then the issue of honor killing, which doesn't just affect women in Pakistan but affects women around the world, would really gain traction," she said. Obaid-Chinoy expects officials to start work on revising the honor killing legislation within weeks.

Punjab-Pakistan's most populous province has just passed laws protecting women's rights and taking violence against women seriously. "I think society is in a flux," she said. "While there are very promising indicators... you also find pockets in Pakistan where violence against women is rising," she said, listing southern Punjab, Baluchistan and the tribal belt. In the film, Saba's father Maqsood is unrepentant. Saba says she has not truly forgiven him. She now has a baby boy and has not travelled to Hollywood. "She thought we were going to the World Cup," Obaid-Chinoy said. Her office is helping Saba and when they last spoke, Saba asked if she had won. Not yet. — AFP



**Pakistan's Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif speaks during a screening of 'A Girl in the River: the Price of Forgiveness' by Pakistani filmmaker Sharmeen Obaid Chinoy at Prime Minister Office in Islamabad. — AFP photos**



**Oscar-winning Pakistani director Sharmeen Obaid-Chinoy poses for a photograph with the award during a press conference in Karachi. Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif vowed Pakistan would eradicate 'evil' honor killings as he congratulated director Sharmeen Obaid-Chinoy on her second Oscar nomination for a harrowing documentary on the practice.**

## Fantasy, imagination and craft inform Oscar worthy costumes

Costume design is one of those arts that's often taken for granted during awards season. There's an old saying in the below-the-line crafts that if you're noticing their work, it's only because there's a problem. But for the designers behind the scene and the directors and actors they support, they couldn't be more essential. This year, the Oscar nominees for best costume design span a wide variety of genres, from action and fantasy to romance. The Associated Press spoke to each of the nominated designers about their process and their work.

### PACO DELGADO, 'THE DANISH GIRL'

Spanish costume designer Paco Delgado actually had a wealth of information about transgender artist Lili Elbe for "The Danish Girl," thanks to photographs and the portraits done by her partner Gerda Wegener. "In those times, society and etiquette for dressing was much more rigid. To wear a skirt wasn't a fashion statement, it was a gender statement," Delgado said. "You wore skirts if you were a woman and you wore trousers if you were a man."

The most powerful costume for Delgado was thus the gender-bending suit Lili wears in Paris on the day she goes to research female organs and then gets beat up in the park by some toughs. Ambiguity is particularly powerful concept for Delgado, and nothing captured that quite like that suit that Redmayne wears in this crucial moment of transition, with the soft fabrics, silk shirt, high-waisted trousers, and unmistakably feminine jacket. "Sometimes ambiguity is more offensive to certain people than assurance of a sort of assigned gender."

### JACQUELINE WEST, 'THE REVENANT'

Jacqueline West had an unlikely mix of inspirations in costuming fur trapper and frontiersman Hugh Glass (Leonardo DiCaprio) in "The Revenant": a picture of a Russian monk and a Karl Bodmer painting of a hunter-trapper for the Arikara Nation. "All the stages of mankind had to be in that costume - the ego and the disintegration, and how nature strips the ego from everyone," West said.

"I wanted all of that to be part of this costume. When you're clothing philosophical ideas it's quite a challenge.

There are few fabrics more controversial than a fur, but West did have control over how she obtained the real skins and furs. With the help of a fur trading company that buys everything from natives and even the Parks department - which provided her with the bear skin - she was able to do so in the most responsible way possible. Unsurprisingly, the infamously brutal conditions of the

shoot took its toll on costuming too, but sometimes in unexpected ways. When Glass has to hide away in a body of water, West had to design a replica of the fur he wears throughout that was two sizes bigger, so that it would fit a dry suit underneath. "If Leo went in that water he would have frozen to death," West said.

### 'MAD MAX: FURY ROAD'

To create the post-apocalyptic world of "Mad Max: Fury Road,"

costume designer Jenny Beavan went straight to the trash. George Miller had been developing "Mad Max: Fury Road" for over a decade by the time Jenny Beavan was called on to start working on the costumes, so she had his vision and Brendan McCarthy's graphic novel to get her started. In this world of scarcity and war, Beavan imagined that the characters' clothes would be decorated by the everyday items that were no longer useful in that world, whether it was car parts, kitchen utensils or just junk, making each its own visual feast of everyday detritus.

### 'CAROL' AND 'CINDERELLA'

Sandy Powell got to create two memorable entrances for Cate Blanchett this year - one behind a dark, wide-rimmed black hat as the wicked stepmother in the live-action reimagining of the classic fairy tale "Cinderella" and the other as a lonely housewife in a 1950s department store, catching the eye of a pretty young thing for the first time in "Carol." "Someone's first appearance in a film or in a story is really important," Powell said. "There's a restraint to ('Carol') which is completely opposite of 'Cinderella' ... In 'Carol,' she had to stand out, but not in a really obvious way. She had to look like one of the shoppers." Powell decided on a pale fur coat for Blanchett's character Carol, accented by coral accessories. "It's a very flattering color for fair skin and blonde hair and it's a fresh color for winter," Powell said. "There's something a bit optimistic about those colors." — AP



**Painted in gold Oscar statues bound for the stage stand in Hollywood, California amid continuing preparations for this weekend's 88th Academy Awards. — AFP**





In this photograph, students from East London Youth Dance Company pose holding mobile phones displaying slang words that they use in daily life at the University of East London. A group of teenage dancers laughed about how quickly their language changes, rattling off 'old' words still unfamiliar to many older English speakers. — AFP

## Sick, bad, wicked: London's colorful slang on the rise

Sitting on the floor of a rehearsal room in east London in leggings, T-shirts and headbands, a group of teenage dancers laughed about how quickly their language changes, rattling off "old" words still unfamiliar to many older English speakers. "Safe" meaning good, "boomting" or "chungting" meaning good-looking, and "a lie!" as an exclamation of agreement were all deemed to have "died down". "That was before. What else was there? Moist?" asked 19-year-old Tafote Akerejola.

"No I never used that one! That one annoyed me!" said Adanna Lawrence, 16, explaining that "Moist meant you're dry. Like you're dead up, you're nothing." "Then that moved on to wet," added Akerejola. "But I wouldn't say someone who is boring is moist or wet cos I have my own slang. You personalise it as well." The language used by the members of the East London Youth Dance Company, whose ages range from 14 to 19, is an example of what has been termed "Multicultural London English" (MLE) by academics—a way of speaking born from the melting pot of immigrant communities in the capital and spreading rapidly throughout Britain.

Though it emerged only in the last three decades, among young people the dialect has largely replaced the traditional London Cockney famed for its rhyming slang. It includes elements from sources as varied as the Caribbean, West Africa, Britain's grime hip-hop movement and the ex-colonial English of Pakistan. Words are often used to mean the opposite of their traditional meaning, with "sick", "bad" and "wicked" all meaning good, according to the teenagers.

To address friends they say "fam", a short version of "family", and pepper their sentences with "like", drawing out the vowel to sound like an "a". MLE is distinct to other urban dialects around the world because it is impossible to know the ethnic background of speakers by their accents alone, according to academics. "The speakers of MLE are governed not by class or by race or by color, but by age," said slang expert Jonathon Green. "People between about 15 and 30. They could be white, they could be black, they could be brown."

**'Everyone mixing together'**  
Experts say that the London lingo could indicate the way

that other languages will evolve in the future. Linguists use the term "multiethnolects" to describe such tongues, which have also begun to emerge in other European countries like France and the Netherlands. MLE's dominance among all kinds of young Londoners may be due to mixed communities, an emphasis on multiculturalism over integration, and an attitude that English is elastic, according to Birkbeck, University of London professor Penelope Gardner-Chloros, who led a study comparing MLE to its counterpart "Multicultural Paris French".

"In France there is a much bigger divide between second and third generation migrants and what you might call the 'long-term indigenous', and this is reflected in the language," Gardner-Chloros said. In contrast to France, where the French Academy decides the language's official vocabulary and rules, Britain's attitude to English is much more flexible. "English is a notoriously malleable, open, changeable, variable, even welcoming language. It always has been," said Green. MLE has attracted some negative reporting in the British press, where it was dubbed "Jafaican" or fake-

Jamaican when it was first noticed. It has also been seized on by right-wing groups as an example of the dangers of immigration. It didn't help when young Londoner Mohammed Emwazi or "Jihadi John" appeared in Islamic State group beheading videos, delivering threats to Britain and the United States in a distinct MLE accent.

But some have turned the language to their advantage, even building careers from it like rapper Dizze Rascal, who began his release "Pagans" with the line: "I don't speak queen's English but I'm still distinguished". Akerejola, the dancer, said she was proud of the language she said made her feel "we have our own thing, we're a family". "There are some slang words that come from Jamaica, some from Nigeria. It's everyone mixing together," Akerejola said. "We adapt. It's flavorful," she added. "It's a good thing." — AFP

## London bids farewell to young street rebels

Once the crucible of youthful rebellion, London's streets have been emptied of punks, skinheads and rude boys by the rise of the Internet, a lack of public spaces and protective parents. Punk was born in fashion designer Vivienne Westwood's clothes shop "Sex" 40 years ago, bringing anarchy to the posh Chelsea neighborhood. "The police used to have to wait at Sloane Square and round up all the punks as they got off the Tube," recalled Westwood in her memoirs. "Once they had about 200 of them, they would escort them in a procession down the King's Road to the shop."

This was 1976, when Britain only had three television channels, families were large and parents wanted teenagers out of their hair and out the house. "But urban tribes are today a rare breed on the capital's streets, a trend echoed across Britain. "People still go out and want to be seen, they have that urge to be looked at. The only change is that people have access to a lot more media," photographer Derek Ridgers, author of "78-87: London's Youth" told The Daily Telegraph.

According to an Ipsos Mori survey published in December, 68 percent of British 15-year-olds spend 10 hours a day on weekends engaged in non-physical pastimes such as watching television, playing video games, surfing the Internet or reading. At the same time, crime and alcohol consumption have decreased significantly, although a link has not been proven. In 2013/2014, nearly 22,400 young English people were convicted or reprimanded for the first time, a 75 percent decrease over 10 years.

### 'Constant pings'

"Young people still can be found on the streets and other public outdoor spaces at certain times and places, but it is probably true to say their overall presence has been reduced," said Paul Hodgkinson, a sociology professor at the University of Surrey. "Societies and authorities have become increasingly intolerant of young people hanging out in public spaces," while parents are more preoccupied with the safety of their children, he said. "If the Internet disappeared, I would see my friends much more," said Spencer, 16, from Chesham, a town northwest of London.

"It's easier," countered 15-year-old Nathan, from Chiswick in southwest London. "It's more fun to play videogames, and we can talk and have a coffee while doing it." "I would choose to be with my friends and have fun. However, this is not a possibility because we have too much work," added Phoebe, 16. "On Facebook our year group have a chat so that we can ask each other about homework which is extremely helpful," she said.

Ivy, 15, from London neighbourhood Queen's Park, said she would "prefer to hang out with my friends on the street" than spend time on the web, but admitted she would "panic" without the Internet. However, her mother Liz Corcoran bemoaned the incessant interruption of the virtual world, complaining "there are constant messages and pings." But for Hodgkinson, the popularity of social networks is "more a symptom of the lack of possibilities to congregate in physical space" rather than a cause of the exodus off Britain's streets. — AFP



A file photo shows British designer Vivienne Westwood during the finale of her catwalk show at the Autumn/Winter 2016 London Fashion Week in London. Once the crucible of youthful rebellion, London's streets have been emptied of punks, skinheads and rude boys by the rise of the Internet, a lack of public spaces and protective parents. — AFP

## To post or - not to post: Defiant Pakistan teens' growing dilemma

A pretty 15-year-old girl strikes a pose and pouts at the camera on her phone, so far so Generation Z, but unlike her teenage counterparts in the West, she stops short of posting the photo on social media, restricted in part by Pakistan's social mores. It is a confusing time for the nation's youth—the arrival of 3G and 4G in Pakistan in 2014 and a massive surge in the sale of smartphones has seen social media use surge, making information about largely taboo subjects such as love, dating, even sex more accessible than ever.

Young people can communicate online in relative freedom, and the country even has a Kim Kardashian type figure—Qandeel Baloch, who has become famous through her tireless self-promotion and suggestive "selfies" posted on social media, amassing tens of thousands of followers. But for the many in the deeply conservative Muslim nation, strict religious and familial controls still dictate behavior—the "duck-face" selfie shot, which is almost ubiquitous on the social media pages of teens in the West, can present a hazard in Pakistan.

"In my pictures, I cannot pout anymore, I've stopped doing that, because otherwise people judge," the young girl told AFP on condition of anonymity. "You cannot post a picture outside with your friends, because your relatives, or friends, or teachers will criticize you. They will say: 'You look like a slut. Why are you smiling?'" she explained. "So now, I barely change my profile picture anymore. When I started using social media, I thought I'd be a pretty girl with a lot of friends online. But I'm just an awkward girl with five friends."

The story is echoed by some of her classmates at a middle-income private school in Islamabad, where teenage boys and girls spoke candidly to AFP about their online experiences, but declined to be named. "It all comes back to religion. We are in an Islamic state. People here will judge you because Islam doesn't encourage girls to show their legs, or arms, and it doesn't encourage boys and girls to interact," said one 14-year-old boy who described being scolded by relatives after posting a picture of himself with a girl.

### Growing defiance

Globally the perils women face online are well-documented but Pakistan's teenage girls face multiple issues—not only can their behavior be judged as tarnishing the families' reputation or honor, there are rising incidents of cyber-misogyny and harassment. "When I post pictures I get these creepy stalkers who send me creepy pictures. It really messes you up," said the 15-year-old girl, adding she no longer talks to boys online because of this.

A male classmate agreed: "I don't like selfies. And it's not safe for girls, because it can attract some boy stalkers." But there is also a sense of growing defiance in the country, where around two-thirds of the population—roughly 180 million people—is believed to be under the age of 30. On Valentine's Day, social media starlet Baloch donned a plunging scarlet dress and posted a message defying the country's president, who had issued a stern warning against the "Western" holiday.

"They can stop people from going out, but they can't stop

people from loving," she declared in a Facebook video, going on to branding politicians "idiotic and disgusting". Baloch is derided and feted in equal measure in Pakistan, but the message appeared to tap into the frustrations of many young people tired of being told how to behave—the footage has been viewed more than 830,000 times, and garnered 7,000 likes and counting. She shot to fame in Pakistan in 2014 after a video of her pouting for the camera and asking "How em looking?" went viral. "People are going crazy—especially girls. I get so many calls where they tell me I'm their inspiration and they want to be like me," she said.

### 'Don't just blame society'

Cyberspace can turn society's rules upside down, said one 13-year-old boy. "Online, guys write to girls 'hey baby, let's hook up,'" he said to a roar of laughter from his classmates. Once, he admitted to more scandalized giggles, it was the other way around. "A girl asked me to be friends in an online message. I was scared to death." Another 15-year-old girl added social media provided them a unique platform for expression. "It's useful to us, it's our own identity. In school you can't always speak your mind. On social media, you can be more open about what you like. You get to be yourself."

Some of AFP's interviewees said they knew of teenagers using fictitious profiles in order to protect their identities and behave more freely. One young girl commented: "In a Muslim country, it's bad to talk to guys face to face so girls do it online. But it's very risky, some people have fake accounts." Despite halting the pouting photographs, the 15-year-old girl called on her peers to be more confident online, instead of hiding behind Pakistani cultural restrictions. She said: "You can't blame society for everything... You can't be a wimp all your teenage life and do nothing. And you can do (something) on social media." — AFP



Pakistani internet consumers look at images of Qandeel Baloch, who has become famous through her tireless self-promotion and suggestive 'selfies' posted on social media, in Islamabad. — AFP