

Validity of dependents' iqamas linked to sponsor's



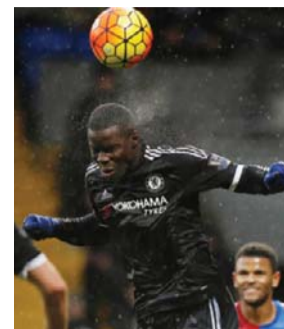
Operation continues to flush out India airbase attackers



Housing boom as Mogadishu emerges from ashes of war



Hiddink off the mark as Chelsea crush Palace



## EXPATS FACE DEPORTATION FOR VIOLATING ENVIRONMENT LAWS

MORNING OPDs ONLY FOR KUWAITIS FROM THIS MONTH



Min 04°  
Max 15°  
High Tide 05:38 & 19:07  
Low Tide 01:08 & 12:25

150 FILS  
NO: 16745  
40 PAGES



conspiracy theories

### AND THE CHAOS CONTINUES...



By Badrya Darwish

badrya\_d@kuwaittimes.net

Lately there have been a lot of crackdowns on illegal expats. Yesterday, while at the newspaper, I heard the guys talking about a raid on a publishing house near Kuwait Times in Shuwaikh. When I checked it out, it seemed that they were looking not only for illegals, but also anyone working part-time somewhere other than with their sponsor. It is not allowed for expatriates in Kuwait to work a second job or with anyone besides their sponsor.

The matter of part-time jobs and part-time work is actually a big issue on its own, which needs long debates and discussions. There are many businesses in Kuwait that rely on part-time help to survive and thrive and we have been suffering in Kuwait regarding this issue for many years. Sometimes the authorities are soft and lenient because they understand the needs of the business community, then all of a sudden for reasons unknown they consider it a crime.

The problem, and I'm not interfering in ministry affairs, is there should be a system in place for part-time work. For how many years we are hearing of different solutions to the supposed 'expat' problem, but the reality is that there should be a clear system and all should abide by it - each new minister comes and changes the law or changes the focus on which issues to deal with, according to, it looks like, political winds.

We are a country which needs foreign labor. No one can dispute this. And we need a lot of labor. There are tens of thousands of jobs that we are not ready to do, that our sons and daughters are not ready to do, that me myself am not ready to do. And we are blessed by God that we have the means to hire expats to do these jobs.

Can't we arrange a proper system, for God's sake? All our lives - from birth to death - will talk about expats? Have we no other pressing issues in this country? Is this the nuclear dilemma of our time? Why can't everyone meet - from the ministry of interior to social affairs to the municipality to the ministry of commerce, etc, etc - and hire expertise and sit and debate our labor needs and come up with a proper system?

Stop harassing people like this - as if they are rats and have no human rights. Kuwait helps a lot in the outside world. And our Amir was even recognized by the whole world as a humanitarian leader. Then the authorities come and spoil our reputation with these unjust and unfair practices and by not having a proper system and not punishing the real culprits who are selling visas to others and bringing them to Kuwait under false pretenses. Instead of punishing these guys, we are snatching workers off the streets and deporting them without even a trial.

And at the end of the day, after all this work and effort, the amount of people deported is so negligible that it won't even make the traffic less or affect anything. We are a modern country - we should be advanced in every issue. We do need marginal labor. Get rid of the criminals via the courts and get organ-



TEHRAN: Iranian protesters set fire to the Saudi Embassy during a demonstration against the execution of prominent Shiite cleric Nimr Al-Nimr by Saudi authorities on Saturday. — AFP

### SAUDI MISSIONS IN IRAN TORCHED BY PROTESTERS KUWAIT, GCC SLAM ATTACKS

TEHRAN: Iran's supreme leader warned yesterday that Saudi Arabia would face "divine revenge" for deciding to execute a Shiite cleric, calling the killing a mistake which would "haunt" the kingdom. Ayatollah Ali Khamenei was joined in his condemnation of Nimr Al-Nimr's death by neighboring Iraq's top Shiite authority, Grand Ayatollah Ali Al-Sistani, who described the death sentence as an unjust act of aggression.

Their comments came as protests in Iran yesterday spread to Bahrain, Pakistan, Indian Kashmir and Lebanon a day after a mob set fire to the Saudi embassy in Tehran and ransacked it before dozens were arrested. The Saudi consulate in Mashhad, Iran's second city, was also set on fire. The demonstrations highlighted fury over the killing of Nimr, a Saudi Shiite

Continued on Page 13

By Hanan Al-Saadoun

KUWAIT: The Interior Ministry yesterday warned that violators of environmental laws will face tough action, including deportation for expat offenders. Interior Ministry Undersecretary Maj Gen Suleiman Fahd Al-Fahd said environment police are determined to implement ministerial decision no. 1129 due to its integral role in implementing the environment protection law in cooperation and coordination with concerned authorities. He said Deputy Premier and Interior Minister Sheikh Mohammad Al-Khaled Al-Sabah is interested in activating all laws related to the natural environment and prevent encroachment.



Suleiman Al-Fahd

Fahd said strict measures will be taken against anyone who does not comply with the environment protection law, adding that an expat who does not comply with the environment law will face all procedures mentioned in the law and immediate deportation from the country, while a Kuwaiti offender will be taken to court. Fahd warned against damaging seasonal plants and flowers at public parks by plucking or uprooting them.

Fahd said no smoking will be allowed in places other than designated areas due to the environmental and health problems it causes for all. In a later statement, the interior ministry's PR and security media department clarified that expats would not be deported for violating smoking bans and they would only be fined in accordance to the law.

Fahd said environmental police will not hesitate in publishing names and photos of violators with evidence, to be example to others, and educate citizens and expats on all measures taken against them for violating the environment protection law.

Fahd said the implementation of the law comes from the interior ministry's keenness on preserving the environment in cooperation and coordination with all concerned authorities.

Continued on Page 13

### TRUMP DEFIANT AFTER JIHADISTS USE HIS REMARKS

WASHINGTON: After jihadists used his tough remarks about Muslims in a recruitment video, Donald Trump refused to back down, saying in remarks aired yesterday, "I have to say what I have to say." The Republican presidential hopeful made the comments on CBS's "Face the Nation" after a US monitoring group said that his call for a ban on Muslims entering the US had been used in a video by Somalia's extremist Shabab group.

Trump's call for a total, if temporary, ban had drawn criticism around the globe, including from Hillary Clinton, the front-running Democratic candidate, who said his remarks were used by radicals in recruitment videos - a suggestion Trump aides had sharply denied. In the new video, the Al

Qaeda-affiliated Shabab uses an excerpt from Trump's Dec 7 speech - made after an attack by a radicalized couple in California killed 14 people - to encourage Western Muslims to wage jihad, the SITE Intelligence Group reported. After describing Trump's call for a ban, the video goes on to say, "The West will eventually turn against its Muslim citizens."

Asked about it on CBS, the Republican frontrunner seemed to shrug his shoulders. "What am I going to do?" Trump asked. "I have to say what I have to say. And you know what I have to say? There's a problem. We have to find out what is the problem. And we have to solve that problem." He said his stance had drawn wide support, and he pointed to the recent terrorist attacks in Paris and said,

specifically citing the case of Brussels, that many nations were "shutting down cities that had never had a problem before." "Maybe it's not politically correct," Trump said, but "there's a big problem out there."

Trump's inflammatory remarks last month sparked global outrage. During a Democratic debate last month, Clinton accused Trump of being "ISIS' best recruiter", referring to the self-described Islamic State group, and said radical jihadists were "showing videos of Donald Trump insulting Islam and Muslims in order to recruit more radical jihadists". Trump accused her of lying, but Clinton's spokeswoman insisted that his remarks were "being used in social media by ISIS as propaganda". — AFP

### TWO JEWISH EXTREMISTS INDICTED OVER KILLINGS

JERUSALEM: Israel yesterday indicted two Jewish extremists suspected in a July arson attack on a Palestinian home that killed a toddler and his parents - a case that has been unsolved for months and helped fuel the current wave of Israeli-Palestinian violence. The long-awaited indictment follows months of investigations into a web of Jewish extremists

operating in the West Bank. The indictment named Amiram Ben-Ulief, a 21-year-old West Bank settler, as the main suspect in the attack. A minor was charged as an accessory. Yinon Reuveni, 20, and another minor were charged for other violence against Palestinians. All four were charged with belonging to a terrorist organization.

Continued on Page 13



DUMA: A relative reacts as he stands yesterday inside the burnt-out home of Saad Dawabsheh, who was killed alongside his toddler and wife when their house was firebombed by Jewish extremists on July 31, 2015 in this West Bank village. — AFP

### KUWAITI KILLED BY ROOMIE IN CAIRO

By A Saleh

KUWAIT: Egyptian security sources said a Kuwaiti student was killed by his Kuwaiti roommate in an apartment they shared in the Ajoza district of Cairo. According to security reports, a fight started between two brothers and their roommate over some financial issues and that both sides used knives to attack each other. The killer suffered a deep wound to his left thigh, while the deceased was killed by a stab to the neck. Kuwait's Ambassador to Cairo Salem Al-Zamanan expressed regrets on the incident and said embassy staff were deployed to follow up related developments.

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CAIRO: Kuwaiti National Assembly Speaker Marzouq Al-Ghanem meets with Egyptian President Abdel-Fattah El-Sisi. —KUNA

## EGYPT, KUWAIT MAINTAIN CLOSE TIES: SPEAKER GHANEM

CAIRO: The visiting Kuwaiti National Assembly Speaker Marzouq Ali Al-Ghanem has affirmed closeness of the Kuwaiti-Egyptian relations underscoring Cairo's leading role on the regional and international arenas. Ghanem, also Chairman of the Arab Inter-Parliamentary Union, said in a statement to KUNA as he emerged from a meeting with President Abdel-Fattah El-Sisi that he relayed greetings of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah and His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah to President Sisi. He affirmed, in concurrence with his eminent host,

His Highness the Amir's role for narrowing the gulf among the Arab states, also how highly the Arab leaders view His Highness.

Speaker Ghanem quoted President Sisi as expressing gratitude to him for his role in enabling the Egyptian parliament restore its membership in the AIPU. Turning to Egypt's local politics, Ghanem lauded the State adherence to implementation of the "road map," which genuinely features steps for overhauling the Egyptian economy and boosting state institutions' efficiency, noting that the map latest step forward was holding of elections in October. He

indicated that he also agreed with the president on necessity to gather Arab and international efforts against terrorism and reject any bid to link it to religions or civilizations. Furthermore, the two sides expressed concern at the prevailing violence in Syria, affirming necessity of resolving the crisis there according to resolutions of the Geneva-I conference, held in June 2012. Kuwait had hosted three international conventions for raising funds for the Syrians.

**Very instrumental**  
Meanwhile, a spokesman for the Egyptian

presidency quoted Sisi as saying that His Highness the Amir's efforts for promoting Arab unity are very instrumental. Presidential Spokesman Ambassador Alaa Yousef said that Al-Sisi's comments came in a meeting Ghanem before Ghanem's departure to Geneva where he will meet with Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) officials. His Highness the Amir's "humanitarian efforts have garnered him international adulation" the statement added.

Ghanem cherished "historic and long-standing" Kuwaiti and Egyptian bilateral relations, saying that both parties strive to further enhance

their relationship. Efforts of combating the spread of terrorism and religious extremism were also reviewed during the meeting, the statement said. "We are at a time when obstacles and challenges are rife and we should stand together as one Arab nation," the statement quoted the Egyptian President as saying. Both parties also stressed the importance of resolving regional conflicts that threaten peace and security. In his meeting with IPU officials in Geneva, Ghanem is expected to press for Egypt's inclusion into the international organization of parliaments. —KUNA

## KUWAIT TO BE CELEBRATED AS ISLAMIC CAPITAL JANUARY 18: INFO MINISTER

KUWAIT: Celebrations marking 'Kuwait the Islamic Capital 2016' will be launched on January 18th ahead of the annual Al-Qurain Cultural Festival due later in the month, Information Minister Sheikh Salman Sabah Salem Al-Humoud Al-Sabah has announced.

The Ministry of Information, in a statement yesterday, quoted Sheikh Salman as expressing deep gratitude to His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-Hamad Al-Sabah for chairing the celebration supreme committee, manifesting his keenness on developing the cultural sector due to its necessary role in bolstering patriotism, national values, customs and traditions of the people of Kuwait.

Sheikh Salman, also Minister of State for Youth Affairs and Chairman of the National Council for Culture, Arts and Letters, was speaking as he headed a meeting of the ceremonies' steering committee. He revealed that a consulting panel had been established to review the State cultural

plans, in general, and planned programs and projects, to be executed during the forthcoming celebratory days.

The minister, along with the officials who took part in the meeting, studied the planned activities, scenarios for launching the festivities namely holding a news conference to announce beginning of the event, in addition to other news conferences on themes such as women social role, media role in reacting to campaigns smearing Islam's image, Islamic banking beside holding a concert. Discussions also addressed prospects of promoting Kuwait's humanitarian activities, participation of the youth and citizens of special needs in this crucial cultural event, Minister Sheikh Salman said.

An agreement was reached, he said, to publicize the event locally and abroad to portray a true image about Islam and Kuwait's philanthropic efforts. It will be, he added, a historic opportunity to shed light on Kuwait's cultural heritage and



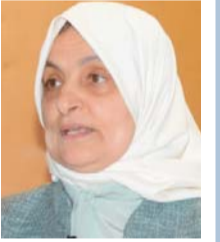
KUWAIT: Information Minister Sheikh Salman Al-Humoud Al-Sabah heads a meeting of the 'Kuwait the Islamic Capital 2016' steering committee. — KUNA

riches. The meeting was attended by the cultural council's General Secretary, Ali Al-Yoha, and other officials including

KUNA's Deputy General Director for the Editorial Department and Chief Editor Saad Al-Ali. — KUNA

## SENIOR OFFICIAL CALLS FOR HIGHER SPENDING ON RESEARCH

KUWAIT: A senior official yesterday highlighted Kuwait's plan to host a conference on knowledge economy with a call for increasing spending on scientific research and overhauling the sectors of sciences and knowledge.



Dr Hind Al-Subaih

Dr Hind Al-Subaih, the Minister of Social Affairs and Labor and Minister of State for Planning Affairs and Development, said administrative productivity and efficiency are attainable through hiking financial allotments for scientific research and creating an advanced "atmosphere for scientific applications and (theoretical) knowledge." Knowledge economy has become a main pillar for diversifying resources of income, said the minister, marking planned launch of the conference, themed "Contemporary State tasks from the perspective of knowledge economy," on February 1.

This type of economy enables the public and private sectors to nationalize competition, productivity, diversify income resources, overhaul business environment and lure foreign investors, she said. Moreover, it is based on transforming "knowledge into commodities and services and creating financial wealth through optimum implementation" of its concepts.

The upcoming conference, she said, implies a call on the government to improve its performance and upgrade its apparatuses for sake of bolstering efficiency and productivity; for such an approach leads to improving businesses.

Such objectives are achievable through increasing spending on scientific research and creating an atmosphere of applications and knowledge that may transfer Kuwait to creative education, minister Subaih added, renewing the call for establishment of "Kuwait center for knowledge economy," in partnership with international institutions. The minister spoke of a bill, implementation of which will signal start of diversifying the income, explaining that "it is a law based in separation of economic activities from administrative authority and subjecting it to an economic board with independent jurisdictions for direct investments in partnership with the private sector."

The proposal to hold this conference had been referred to the Supreme Council for Planning and Development, which blessed it. According to the World Bank, knowledge economies are defined by four pillars; institutional structures that provide incentives for entrepreneurship and the use of knowledge, skilled labor availability and good education systems, ICT infrastructure and access, and a vibrant innovation landscape that includes academia, the private sector and civil society. —KUNA



KUWAIT: Information Minister Sheikh Salman Al-Humoud Al-Sabah tours the Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Heritage Village yesterday. —KUNA photos



## MINISTER REITERATES AMIR'S KEENNESS ON GENUINENESS OF GULF SOCIETY

### SHEIKH SALMAN INSPECTS PREPARATIONS FOR VILLAGE'S OPENING

KUWAIT: His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah's patronage of the Gulf Popular Heritage Festival reflects the depth of his idea on the importance of maintaining genuineness and traditions of the Gulf society, said Minister of Information and Minister of State for Youth Affairs Sheikh Salman Sabah Salem Al-Humoud Al-Sabah.

They constitute the base of cohesion of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) states and peoples, Sheikh Salman added yesterday during a tour of Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Heritage Village, according to a statement by the Ministry of Information. Sheikh Salman inspected the preparations for the official opening of the Village on January 15. He said that the goal of the Village is to bring delight and pleasure for visitors. This shows Kuwait's vision on the momentousness of enhancing pan-GCC tourism, the minister said.

The opening of the Village and the Gulf Popular Heritage Festival coincide with the 25th Liberation Day and the 10th anniversary of His Highness the Amir's taking over the reins, and the naming of His Highness the Crown Prince. It is also the 55th National Day, Sheikh Salman noted.

The two events give a Gulf dimension to this year's celebrations, offering Kuwaitis and fellow GCC citizens a good opportunity to

enjoy the festival that has become a "bright spot" on Kuwait's tourism map, he said.

#### Visits

According to Sheikh Salman, the GCC culture ministers will visit Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Heritage Village's Gulf Popular Heritage Festival, as they attend celebrations of announcing Kuwait capital of Islamic Culture 2016.

Similar visits will be organized for Kuwait's guests from other Arab and Muslim countries, to convey the festival's media message, through efforts by the Ministry of Information, the State Ministry of Youth Affairs and the National Council for Culture, Art and Letters (NCCAL).

The Gulf Popular Heritage Festival bears a social and national message, namely to spread love and fraternity and enhance ties among the GCC peoples, besides being a forum where they meet to review their history and traditional professions, he said.

Sheikh Salman highly appreciated efforts by the Gulf Popular Heritage Festival organizers, topped with Deputy Minister for Amiri Diwan Affairs Sheikh Ali Jarrah Al-Sabah, who is head of the Higher Organizing Committee, and deputy head of the committee, Amiri Diwan Advisor Mohammad Dhaifallah Sharar,

who is the General Supervisor of the Village, as well as deputy General Supervisor Sheikh Sabah Fahad Al-Nasser Al-Sabah, who leads the juries of the competitions.

He also lauded efforts by Deputy Prime

Minister and Interior Minister Sheikh Mohammad Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah and all security personnel for spreading an atmosphere of safety for participants and visitors of the festival. — KUNA



## KUWAIT MARKS WORLD BRAILLE DAY

KUWAIT: Kuwait joins the world today in celebrating the World Braille Day to commemorate Braille system's role in spreading knowledge among visually-impaired people. Kuwait has been leading in introducing and distributing Braille system to help blind and visually-impaired people get easy access to language and literacy, and to better integrate into the society.

Kuwait has been active in republishing Braille books and for this end, it established a special printing house, the biggest in the Middle East. Since its inception, the printing house has rewritten and published a slew of books in different specialties, mainly to meet the education needs of the blind people. Kuwait has also been distributing copies of Braille books to educational institutions, worship places, government and non-government organizations and even to many countries around the world to help spread knowledge among this important segment of the society.

Kuwait introduced Braille system in a special section for the blind in the Islamic Studies Institute in 1947 and established Al-Noor school for the blind in 1955. Recently a Kuwaiti youth Shaikha Al-Majed invented a new pen to help blind people write, easily and without much effort. Her invention had won a patent in the US. The pen is of regular size and works by pushing it with the thumb, so the writer can write in the Braille way, smoothly.

World Braille Day is annually celebrated on January 4, the birthday of Braille inventor, Louis Braille. The day recognizes the contributions of Louis Braille in helping blind and visually impaired people to read and write. Non-governmental organizations (NGOs) around the world use this day to create awareness about the challenges faced by visually impaired individuals and to encourage businesses and governments to create economic and social opportunities for the blind. NGOs and disability organizations hold competitions and public outreach events. Teachers in schools teach the history of braille to their students. — KUNA



# MPs WARY OVER SUBSIDIES' RATIONALIZATION PLANS

'WRONG TO TARGET CITIZENS' POCKETS WHEN OIL PRICES DROP'

By A Saleh

**KUWAIT:** Chairman of the parliament's financial affairs committee MP Faisal Al-Shaye said that he supports stopping all 'wasteful official spending' including subsidies, provided it was done according to clear studies and setting binding prices. "The government must not consider making up for the budget deficit due to falling oil prices by increasing revenues collected from citizens," he underlined, pointing out that the government was about to refer a bill on increasing electricity prices to the committee soon. "We will ensure that consumers with normal consumption rates will get subsidized prices," he added.

## Paying the price

Meanwhile, MP Faisal Al-Kandari stressed the price increase policy currently promoted by the finance ministry was "very strange" in view of the affluence achieved over previous years, when oil prices were over \$100 per barrel. "Citizens must not pay the price when oil prices fall to \$30 when they had not even benefited from the previous affluence," he said, reminding of His Highness the Amir's speech on launching the parliamentary term when he called for austerity without affecting citizens. "The government is ought to lift subsidies given to some companies and merchants instead of going after simple citizens," he added, reminding that the government had once increased fuel prices when oil prices rose again. Kandari stressed that all prices would skyrocket with increasing fuel prices just like when the government increased diesel prices and prices of various goods went out of the commerce ministry's control. "The government must be up to its political responsibilities if subsidies are lifted," he concluded.

## Road maintenance

In the meantime, MP Saleh Ashour



MP Faisal Al-Shaye

argued that while the government is mulling options to reduce subsidies, it should instead hold accountable contractors responsible for road maintenance projects. The lawmaker heavily criticized what he described as lack of maintenance which created holes in the ground and gravel in streets after recent rainfalls. He urged Minister of Public Works, State Minister of National Assembly Affairs Dr Ali Al-Omair to probe the case and "refer responsible contractors to the prosecution while make them pay the maintenance funds."

## Not the time

On his part, former commerce minister Abdulwahab Al-Wazzan said that now is not the time to enforce taxes or increase prices in Kuwait "because it would not have any income for national funds at the present time."

"It is wrong to target citizens' pockets every time oil prices drop," said Wazzan, who is currently a member of the board of directors of the Kuwait Chamber of Commerce and Industry (KCCI). "Instead, (the state) should create a comprehensive strategy connected to developing nonoil



MP Faisal Al-Kandari

sources of income while reducing burdens on the state's budget." Wazzan argued that Kuwait can save up to KD 1.5 billion each year by reducing unnecessary expenses "such as ministries' expenses, delegations' travel, rewards and committees."

## Falling temperatures

Temperatures are expected to continue dropping in the next 48 hours as a result of north westerly winds that are affecting Kuwait, a veteran meteorologist said yesterday. The weather starting from today until the weekend is expected to be sunny and stable, said Essa Ramadan, a meteorologist at the Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA). He explained that the cold wave currently affecting Kuwait coincides with the appearance of the Lambda Scorpii, or 'Shaula' star in the sky, noting that it is expected to last for 12 more days. Meanwhile, Ramadan said that there is a chance of rain next Saturday, while temperatures are expected to fall again on Sunday.

## Educational building

The Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) made an objection to establishing



MP Saleh Ashour

a new building for the Farwaniya Educational District in Farwaniya. The DGCA said that the location of the 16-story building close to the Kuwait International Airport might pose risks to flights. As a result, the Education Ministry made a decision to allocate a piece of land in Riga'ie, which was previously allocated to build a new high school, for the new project.

## Lawyer demands compensation

A lawyer filed a case against the Ministry of Social Affairs and Labor (MSAL) and the Kuwait Lawyers Association (KLA), demanding KD 30,000 in damages over the confusion surrounding the KLA status. The MSAL had approved turning the KLA into a labor union, before the court approved a challenge to the decision. The Court of First Instance's ruling was upheld by both the appeals and cassation courts. Lawyer Mohammad Taleb, who had filed and won the challenge, filed a case yesterday demanding financial compensation for damages he sustained when he was unable to resume his work as KLA's treasurer following the MSAL's decision to turn it into a labor union, according to his statements.

Legalese

## ENTERING INTO A WORK RELATIONSHIP

By Attorney Fajer Ahmed

I have been writing for the past two years on multiple platforms and as I look back on last year's accomplishments, I am extremely grateful that I started writing for Kuwait Times. I received in total 4,862 emails in 2015. The most discussed issues are related to the labor law, and although I have discussed various parts of it on multiple occasions via my writings, my advice was mainly focused on ending a work contract. I spoke about the common issues for termination indemnity and also about transferring work permits. Therefore, in this article I decided that I will discuss the other side of labor law and that I would start right from the beginning and write about entering into a work relationship. I have answered the most frequently asked questions about the common issues that arise below:

1) I started working on Nov 5 and today is the 25th of December, and I don't want to continue with the company because I don't think the place is right for me. My contract says my probation period is 90 days - does that mean that I can leave within those 90 days? And if I do, what consequences shall I deal with?

I would like to start answering this question by first explaining what a "probation period" is. "Probation period" is a period of time where both the employee and the employer can test each other out to see if they are "fit" for each other. The probation period under the "new" labor law is 100 days and not 90 days, but some companies unfortunately have not updated their contracts.

If you have signed on a contract that states that your probation period is 90 days, then that specific line in the contract is not "legal" or "valid" unless it is to the benefit of the employee. Let me make it more clear with scenarios.

Scenario 1 - On the 91st day, if employee does not want to continue with the contract, then the employee can do so, because by law the probation period is for 100 days.

Scenario 2 - On the 91st day, the employer no longer wants the employee, and therefore ends the contract. The employer cannot do so because it does not benefit the employee.

According to the labor law, both the employer and employee can agree to terms that are different than the terms of Kuwait labor law, but only to the benefit of the employee. Now when it comes to consequences, one has to keep a few things in mind and be careful of visa regulations by making sure at all times that if you decide to leave, you cancel your visa.

2) When calculating the 100-day probation period, do we count only the business days or 100 days from the day employment starts including weekends?

Hundred days since the day you start including weekends.

3) I just started working for a company but they never gave me a contract to sign, just an offer letter. How do I know what my rights are? Is my work relationship still valid?

You can always prove that you have a valid working relationship with your employer regardless if you have a written contract or not. Any legal "work", physical or mental, in return for "payment" in any form is considered an employment relationship. Any rights written in the offer letter shall be as binding as a contract would be, in the case that no contract exists. In the case that no offer letter exists or for rights not mentioned in the contract, an employee can prove that he or she is entitled to them as long as there is solid proof that these rights are on a regular basis.

For example, employee X received on a monthly basis KD 300 every month as an allowance for an apartment as well as KD 50 for transport. If the employee can prove that these payments are constant, then the employee is entitled to them even if they are not mentioned in the contract.

4) I just started working at a new company and although my contract states that my salary is KD 800, my work permit says my salary is KD 600. Is this common?

From my experience, this is very common. Is it right though? NO. Absolutely not. Fortunately, in the case of a labor dispute between the employee and the employer, the employee has the right to prove that his/her salary was not as written in the work permit and the court shall take that into account. This makes a huge difference when termination indemnity, leave balances and so on are calculated. The court shall take into account the last six months' pay.



# MEDEVAC TRANSFERS 753 TO HOSPITALS DURING HOLIDAY

FIVE SAVED OFF UM AL-MARADEM ISLAND



A cable that fell on road 238 in Julaia, prompting response from Mina Abdullah Fire Center.

By Hanan Al-Saadoun

**KUWAIT:** Director of the Medical Emergencies Department Dr Tariq Al-Jasser said that air medevac units dealt with accidents and cases in northern and southern areas of the country and transferred them to hospitals, in addition to ambulance points on expressways during the new year holiday. The operations department registered 1,087 cases, 753 of which were taken to hospital, while 334 were treated on site, mostly over road accidents, fights, burns and simple wounds. During the holiday, 101 road accidents were registered. Jasser thanked all medical emergency departments for their efforts and thanked all paramedics for their notable role in serving the public.

## Five saved

Coastguard patrols rescued five people who had been stranded on Um Al-Maradem Island amid strong winds, and had to take refuge at the coastguard center on the island. On receiving a distress call, a boat was immediately dispatched to rescue the five people and evacuate to Khairan center.

## Fatal accidents

A 74-year-old Eritrean was instantly killed while his 19-year-old son and 3-year-old and

8-year-old grandsons were injured when the son lost control over their vehicle and it flipped over along Fahaheel Expressway. In another incident, a 15-year-old citizen was killed when he was run over by a vehicle driven by a retired citizen in Kabd desert area.

## Cable falls

Mina Abdullah Fire Center responded to a call about a cable that fell on road 238 in Julaia. It was moved to the shoulder, awaiting the electricity emergency team.

## Son charged

A citizen filed a complaint against her ungrateful son accusing him of assaulting her, said security sources, noting that the mother submitted a medical report stating her injuries. A case was filed and further investigations are in progress. Separately, a girl accused her brother of attacking her with a cleaver while he was drunk at their house in Sulaibiya. A case was filed for investigations.

## Suicide attempt

A citizen rushed his Filipina housemaid to Adan Hospital on finding that she had swallowed some pills to end her life, said security sources. An investigation was opened in the case.



Coastguard officers help people who were stranded on Um Al-Maradem Island.



BEIRUT: Kuwait Red Crescent Society (KRCS) continued delivering aid to Syrian refugee families in Lebanon yesterday. The society's aid included food, blankets, cleaning substances and presents for children, delivered to 600 families in Bekaa and Mount Lebanon, KRCS's envoy Dr MUSAED AL-ANEZI said. Kuwait is among the top countries in terms of providing humanitarian aid to Syrian refugees in Lebanon. According to recent statistics, there are over one million SYRIAN refugees living in different Lebanese cities. — KUNA





The Kuwait Dive Team removes an oil pipe in Khairan.



The Kuwait Dive Team removes a ship carrying sheep that sunk at the Doha Port.



KUWAIT: The Kuwait Dive Team raises the Kuwaiti flag at Umm Al-Gaz Island. — KUNA

# DIVE TEAM TO ORGANIZE BOAT RACING IN FEBRUARY

## ANNUAL REPORT FOR 2015 ACHIEVEMENTS RELEASED

**KUWAIT:** Kuwait Dive Team will organize a competition for environment-friendly boats racing during the country's celebrations of the National Day and the Liberation Day in February. The starting point of the race will be the Sharq beach, moving on to Umm Al-Gaz Island, team member Dhari Al-Huweila said yesterday.

The competition aims to encourage people to do sports, bring awareness towards protecting the environment and shed the light on the artificial island which is one of

the most prominent marine destinations in the country, he added.

The island, built 100 years ago, is situated in front of Souq Sharq, north western Kuwait Towers, Huweila told Kuwait News Agency (KUNA). The island has a five-meter high Kuwaiti flag post that people can see from the beach, he also added. Meanwhile, he noted that the team will organize campaigns to clean Kuwait's shores, while also organizing different activities aiming to protect marine life.

### Annual report

Earlier, the Kuwait Dive Team released their annual report covering their main achievements and activities in 2015. The accomplishments include lifting 24 ships and boats, fixing 76 buoys, securing navigation paths at Kuwait Bay, cleaning works at the Shamlan Dock and other locations, including the Shuwaikh beach where 250 tons of fishing nets and waste were removed, monitoring marine species in Kuwaiti waters, and raising environ-

mental awareness in society. Furthermore, the Kuwait Dive Team also launched a national environmental campaign in 2015 called 'Our Sea.'

The three-year campaign aims to protect the diverse components of Kuwait's marine environment. It includes organizing beach cleaning activities featuring participation of school students. The team also participated in an international environment protection forum that took place in Baltimore, Maryland, the United States of America.



A beach cleaning activity with participation from students.



A Kuwaiti diver monitors the status of coral reefs in territorial waters.



The Kuwait Dive Team lifts fishing nets off territorial waters.

# NBK HIGHLIGHTS 2015'S SOCIAL CONTRIBUTIONS

**KUWAIT:** The National Bank of Kuwait (NBK) released a statement highlighting their key activities to contribute in the development of the Kuwaiti society in 2015. This comes as part of NBK's commitment towards its social responsibility, supporting initiatives and charitable works, and supporting national manpower, said Manal Al-Mattar, Executive Director, Public Relations Department.

NBK's main contributions last year include providing more than 350 job opportunities for Kuwaitis as well as more than 2,000 training opportunities, launching a charity program in Ramadan and organizing its annual walkathon. The bank also continued efforts in building a special hospital for bone marrow transplant for children, Mattar added.

Manal Al-Mattar





In Brief

**POLICE'S EFFORTS APPRECIATED**

**KUWAIT:** Deputy Prime Minister and Interior Minister Sheikh Mohammad Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah conveyed to security personnel the appreciation of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah for protecting public order during the New Year holiday. Sheikh Mohammad Al-Khaled spoke highly of the sincere efforts made by the security personnel, males and females, to ensure the stability and security of the dear homeland, the Interior Ministry's Security Media Department said in a statement. — KUNA



**TANZANIA LAUDS TIES WITH KUWAIT**

**KUWAIT:** Tanzanian Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation Susan Kolimba described her country's ties with Kuwait as "strong and exceptional," the Kuwaiti Embassy in Tanzania said yesterday. During a meeting with Kuwaiti Ambassador to Tanzania Jassem Al-Najem, Kolimba emphasized the importance of deepening bilateral ties, especially in trade and commerce, said the embassy in a press release. She also noted that a new Tanzanian envoy to Kuwait will resume his tenure soon. — KUNA



**ARABSAT IMPROVING PERFORMANCE**

**AMMAN:** The Arab Satellite Communications Organization (ARABSAT) is keen on improving its performance and raising the level of its standards, Deputy Chairman Hamid Al-Qattan said yesterday. Arabsat seeks improvements through expanding its clients' base, its coverage and its acquisition of some satellite companies, as it obtained the acquisition of Greek 'HalaSat', Qattan, who is also Undersecretary of the Ministry of Communication, said after a workshop held before a series of meetings of Arabsat Board of Directors due tomorrow and Wednesday. — KUNA



Photo

of the day



**KUWAIT:** Workers brave the cold as they unload stacks of grass to be planted at the yard of the National Assembly building in Kuwait City yesterday morning. — Photo by Yasser Al-Zayyat

**GCC PRODUCTION ORGANIZATION CELEBRATES 40TH ANNIVERSARY**

**KUWAIT:** Over four decades the Gulf Cooperation Council's Joint TV/Radio Program Production Organization (JPPO) has had a legacy filled with successes as an influential media body that has made significant contributions in the history of the region.

The JPPO celebrates its Ruby anniversary on January 4, marking 40 years since the governments of the six Gulf states signed an agreement forming the body which outlines the crucial role media has played in linking the destinies of these nations' steps towards development on the cultural, economic and social scales.

Headquartered in Kuwait, the JPPO's goals have been to create radio and TV productions that aim to document Arab and Islamic history, Islamic morals and ideals, and Gulf customs, traditional arts and

scientific contributions in a modern-day world.

It has also aimed to shed light on the six countries - Kuwait, Bahrain, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, United Arab Emirates - showcasing to Arab audiences and listeners their geography, demographics and tourist attractions, the arts and accomplishments of local youth and private media establishments.

**Sesame Street**

Locally, several icons stand out such as the cuddly character Noman of the 1980s children's educational show Iftah Ya Simsim (the Arabic version of Sesame Street) who entertained families for years on end.

The theme music to these productions was also catchy and memorable like the one of the public awareness program

'Salamatak' (your safety), which was extremely successful in its goals of highlighting socially flawed behavior, health hazards and bad driving habits with a solution or upstanding method to tackle these mannerisms.

Along with these programs, JPPO has produced documentaries of which have aimed to have a positive impact on the social scale such as, 'The Contributions of Women of the Gulf in Development,' 'Innovations' and 'Gulf Successes' along with social drama productions like 'Our Life,' 'Gulf Stories' and 'To the Youth with Greetings.'

Pursuing these goals, it has done so while opting to stress on and preserve the Arabic language as a medium in reaching out to the millions of Arabic speakers across the Arab world and beyond. — KUNA

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**HALA FEBRUARY FESTIVAL TO KICK OFF JAN 28**

**KUWAIT:** Hala February Festival 2016 will kick off on January 28 and will continue until February 24, the festival's Higher Organizing Committee announced yesterday. The festival comes at the time where Kuwait celebrates 20 years since the assumption of power of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, 25th anniversary of the liberation of Kuwait from the Iraqi Invasion and the 55th National Day, said the committee in a statement.

The festival will introduce a first-ever type of activities in Kuwait and will allow people to enjoy a wide range of discounts in shopping malls, member of the higher committee and Chairman of Media committee for the festival Waleed Al-Saqabi said.

The event will also include entertainment shows for children, exhibition for youth projects, sports activities, religious and poetry seminars, concerts among other activities, Saqabi added. Meanwhile, he noted that the festival aims to boost Kuwait's economy, while also promoting tourism in the country and developing the retail market's field. — KUNA



Crime

Report

HOMICIDE INVESTIGATION IN DEAD BABY'S CASE

**KUWAIT:** The body of an infant was found by a citizen, who reported it to police in Wafra. He said that while he was on a picnic with his family, he noticed a strange object, and when he approached it, he found it was a dead baby, whose body seemed to have been torn apart by dogs. The Ahmadi prosecutor is dealing with the case as a homicide.

Security campaign

The security supervision of the traffic department operations launched a surprise campaign on the Second Ring Road and Arabian Gulf Road as well as South Surra, which resulted in impounding two cars for reckless driving, 10 motorcycles and three ATVs, in addition to detaining two persons at the traffic holding cell and another at the juveniles department. —Al-Anbaa

RETIREEES' DECISIONS 'NULL AND VOID'

**KUWAIT:** A source at the Civil Service Commission (CSC) warned against delaying action on the issue of renewing terms of retirement as well as appointments of some officials in government departments. He said that those who are still at work while their legal term had ended are considered in violation of the laws and rules, and threatened to consider their decisions "judicially null and void."

The source said the CSC sent many names earlier to the Cabinet, but it did not place them on the agenda, so government departments face the danger of going to court to defend decisions signed by those officials. He said legal authorities in the country such as the fatwa and legislation department and the CSC's legal department relieved themselves of responsibility if complaints against the decisions are filed in court, especially since many of them are related to financial and tenders issues. He said some administrative decisions such as promotions and loans can face contestation by effected employees and may result in compensations. —Al-Qabas

22,000 BEDOONS DO NOT MEET CITIZENSHIP CRITERIA

**KUWAIT:** The Central Apparatus for Illegal Residents' Affairs has concluded studying the files of 32,678 bedoons (stateless residents) within the second phase of the Cabinet's roadmap to consider granting bedoons citizenship, said high-ranking sources, noting that 22,037 of them did not match the conditions set to get Kuwaiti citizenship and thus their applications were rejected. The sources added that the concerned committee nominated 745 people to get citizenship and postponed looking into 1,089 other cases. The sources highlighted that some bedoons who had been registered in the 1965 census had been excluded because they did not match the conditions and had not done any great services to Kuwait. —Al-Anbaa



Al-Anbaa

WOMBS OF TIME

Al-Anbaa

By Saleh Al-Shayehi

Just like mothers, times have wombs as well. Years are born out of such wombs every new year. Such mothers do not die when giving birth to newborn babies. All bygone years, ever since the beginning of life, are still alive, because years do not die. It is we who perish and die. Life is always vivid and lively with the moon, sun, rain and thunder. Life only renews the people living it, while other components remain immortally the same.

People always rejoice and celebrate new years and open up to receive them. They are right in doing so. They get dressed up and decorate life in the process. They hang decorations inside and outside their cheerful chests. Happiness and joy are lawful rights of man in this life and life itself has a right to be lived joyfully. As humans, we may disagree, fight and blame life changes and time for our downfalls. Well,

*Happiness and joy are lawful rights of man in this life and life itself has a right to be lived joyfully*

time and life never change and it is we who change and keep taking different shapes and attitudes.

People have made the arrival of a new year a time for joy despite conflicts, disputes and fighting. It is high time for weapons to rest for at least one night. It is high time for shoulders to put down death tools they carry. It is high time for joy to shine in everybody's eyes and hearts.

Nobody knows how many years are there, and how old time and those years would get. Therefore, various people have tended to have their own calendars as if time had never existed or born before them; as if there had been no life before they came to this world and no sun had risen or moon had shown; as if no people had been born before them and lived and prepared earth to receive them!

—Translated by Kuwait Times

LINKING PASSPORT, RESIDENCY VALIDITIES BECOME EFFECTIVE

NO VISA TO DEPENDENTS WITHOUT SEPARATE PASSPORTS

**KUWAIT:** Director General of Residency Affairs Department at the Interior Ministry Major General Talal Maarafi spoke about many decisions, some to become effective today. He said this will lead to achieving more control and secure the country against violators. He said the department will be stricter in collecting fines and transfer them to the state treasury. He said the increase of fees for expat residencies is considered a correction of a situation that lasted 50 years and an income source as part of the state's procedures to deal with the general budget deficit.



Major General Talal Maarafi

Validity linkage

Maarafi said linking the passport's validity with residency for expats which will become effective today will coincide with three steps - the entry of the expat into the country with residency visa or family visa provided the passport is valid for two years, and entry with a visit visa with a passport that is valid for at least six months. No visa will be issued to dependents unless they have their own separate passports.

Maarafi spoke about steps that go along with linking an expat's residency with the validity of his passport, most important of which is that the wife's and children's residencies' validity should not exceed that of the sponsor, and creating a committee to confront obstacles that may surface during the implementation of this decision.

Grace period

Maarafi denied that there would be a grace period for departure, or a grace period for violators to stay or get a pardon. He said grace periods are ineffective and not feasible and involve squandering of funds, and help a violator not to act and increase the number of violators. He said a grace period is considered a reward for violators by not paying fines, allowing him to leave and return.

Maarafi said dependent residencies were linked with that of the sponsor because violations were found, as when an expat husband, who has a one-year residency, gets deported, but his wife and children remain because their residencies may extend to five years, apart from divorce cases, as when an expat divorces his wife, the woman and children remain under his sponsorship because they have a five-year residency though he has two.

Visit visa

Maarafi said there will be no residency permits for those who enter the country with a visit visa, and it is better for them to pay a fine and leave with an option to return, instead of being arrested, fingerprinted and deported for good. Also, there will be no residency permit for one whose residency expires until he pays the fines regardless of the period, provided that there are no security restrictions that prevent granting him residency.

Maarafi asked embassies and diplomatic missions in the country to renew passports of their citizens with the condition that passport validity should be 12 months and above, adding that there is coordination with the Manpower Public Authority (MPA) not to issue any work permit for less than a year, and said such steps will be in use during this week.

He said that a team was formed to go along with the implementation of the deci-

sion and study its negatives, and gave examples of delays the expat has nothing to do with, such as delays in medical tests or fingerprinting or a lengthy holiday. "We began a project of automated linkage with the health ministry to issue health insurance to prevent manipulation, which is an important step to protect public funds," he said.

Visas sold

Maarafi said cases were discovered over the sale of domestic help visas using citizens' civil IDs in cooperation with domestic help officers for amounts of KD 650 for those in Kuwait and KD 1,400 for those abroad, as some had 30 visas of domestic helpers on their files. Maarafi lauded security campaigns to arrest visa violators which were lately led by Interior Ministry Undersecretary Major General Suleiman Al-Fahd to arrest violators, adding that such campaigns complete our job and are very successful and proved fruitful, as large numbers of violators came forward to adjust their situation after paying fines.

Maarafi called upon members of parliament to support the efforts of the Interior Ministry, particularly laws concerning expat residencies, which we submitted to the interior minister who approved it and sent it to the National Assembly, most notably the increase of residency fees, as well as the direct citation of those who harbor violators and increasing the fines on residency fees. —Al-Rai

Al-Anbaa

Al-Anbaa

ENJOY THE REST!

By Samy El-Khorafi

In our travels, we have often seen groups of old foreigners visiting touristic sites in search of post-retirement joy and happiness so that they could enjoy what is left of their lives, bearing in mind the principle of 'better late than never'. They do so after they have already spent their lives saving money to spend it on such visits that they had always yearned for when they were still young.

A dear friend recently retired and already started complaining, claiming to be still too young to retire, though he had worked for over 30 years. "Where should I go? What will I do at home...just boss about the maids? I do not like staying at home," he keeps saying and grumbling and I keep asking him to be thankful that he has retired while still young and healthy. "Now you can do whatever you like without complaining of old age ailments and feebleness and before all kinds of diseases start invading your body. Work will go on with or without you, my friend," I always tell him.

"You should focus on enjoying what is left of your life," I told him, adding that the retirement age in many worldwide countries is 65 and that retirees then start touring the world. "Don't do like others who retire from the government and seek another job with the public sector, and thus turn their lives into endless work cycles, when can they enjoy what is left of their lives," I told him, noting that Kuwait has many beautiful attractions that we had been deprived of visiting because of work.

"You have to create a sort of balance between your post retirement life and your family. You can practice your hobbies like carpentry, you can join a club to lose weight and you can travel wherever you like without begging to extend your leave. You can take your wife on a new honeymoon and commemorate your happy moments without worrying about the kids, their nutrition or schooling," I told him.

"Life is too short, brother, and your children have grown up. Your wife deserves to be rewarded with what is left of your life. Do like the foreigners whom we see walking happily with their wives and only wish they had retired as young as you did so that they could go everywhere. Life is beautiful, so do not deprive yourself of its joys," I concluded.

—Translated by Kuwait Times

Al-Anbaa

Al-Anbaa

DETERIORATION OF CULTURAL MOVEMENT

By Dr Nermin Al-Houti

I was recently hosted by the "Diwan" program on Al-Shahid TV with its host Mohammad Al-Mulla. The program was distinguished by combining the past with the present through the guests, who are basically my teachers and founders of the theater movement in Kuwait - Dr Khalid Abdellatif Ramadan and Dr Mohammad Bilal. The episode began with discussing many issues which all focused on the deterioration of the theatric and cultural movement in Kuwait and how to solve them.

Among the most important issues that were discussed during the program was of playwrights, and the sufferings of some new youth who say they cannot find those who can adopt them intellectually and present their work on the arts arena, because their names are not known and do not have material value and weight. The next morning, as I was reading what was written about the program, I received a call from a strange number, and I answered it. After greeting me and identifying herself, the caller commended the program and the academic presentation, then asked me to focus in my column on her problem.

The issue in short is that the caller decided one day to write a play, and did it and presented

*The issue in short is that the caller decided one day to write a play, and did it and presented it to the concerned authorities to take its routine route for approval.*

it to the concerned authorities to take its routine route for approval. When the script was presented, she met a person in the concerned authority for approving the texts, and that personality gave promises of support after lauding her play - rather the personality gave our author promises that he will work hard to make a production company make the script materialize in a play in a theater.

Weeks later, while the woman was frequenting the concerned authorities to ask about her play, she was surprised by the personality that promised to help her who said: "Your script was lost!" Here is where the complaint ends, and our words to culture officials headed by the information minister begin: Who will restore the literature and intellectual rights to that girl and others who presented and are still presenting many ideas and creations that are being stolen under the word "lost" by the majority of officials? And how can we protect our innovators from such people, Your Excellency the Information Minister?

—Translated by Kuwait Times

FEAR OF FILIPINOS WITH DISEASES ENTERING KUWAIT

**KUWAIT:** Following a court decision in the Philippines that does not recognize the GAMCA system for testing expat labor, health ministry sources expressed fear that Filipino laborers infected with infectious diseases such as tuberculosis and AIDS may arrive in the country.

Sources said this ruling will lead to the Philippines government to consider the GAMCA entity illegal in the country, adding that the ruling will affect the accuracy of medical testing of workers before coming to Kuwait, especially since domestic help offices and all agencies that bring workers from Philippines deal with expat labor testing centers there.

The sources said this will increase the burden on local health centers in GCC countries, which will be solely responsible for discovering cases. —Al-Jarida



The Ministry of Health's building.





Hong Kong unsettled by case of missing booksellers

## HINDU NATIONALISTS GATHER FOR MASSIVE RALLY



PATHANKOT: Indian army soldiers conduct a search operation in a forest area outside the Pathankot air force base yesterday. — AP

## INDIAN TROOPS STILL FIGHTING AT AIR BASE

**PATHANKOT:** Indian troops were still battling at least two gunmen yesterday night at an air force base near the border with Pakistan, more than a day and a half after the compound came under attack, a top government official said. At least seven troops and four gunmen have been killed in the fighting so far. The two suspected militants were discovered shortly after noon yesterday and hours later appeared to have been cornered, Home Secretary Rajiv Mehrishi told reporters, adding that he expected the gunmen to be "neutralized" soon.

The attack on the Pathankot air force base started before dawn Saturday and is seen as an attempt to undo recent improvements in the relationship between archrivals India and Pakistan. It comes a week after Narendra Modi became the first Indian prime minister in 12 years to visit Pakistan. Mehrishi said Indian authorities were alerted Friday afternoon about a potential terror attack in Pathankot, and that aerial surveillance at the base spotted the suspected militants as they entered the compound. He said they were quickly engaged by Indian troops and "were unable to move toward their likely intended target" of the area where the base's aircraft and military equipment are kept.

Since Saturday morning, the base has been swarming with air force commandos, troops from India's elite National Security Guard and local police. The number of troops killed in the attack rose to seven yesterday, with four succumbing to their injuries overnight and an elite commando killed in a morning blast that occurred while he was handling explosives, officials said.

### 'Will be neutralized'

The attack at one of India's major air force bases started a few hours before dawn Saturday when a group of militants entered the area of the base where the living quarters are located, the Defense Ministry said. The first gun battle with the militants lasted about 14 hours, after which the air force said it had begun operations to secure the base.

Mehrishi said that troops were not certain of the presence of additional gunmen until they were discovered yesterday afternoon, and that the two men were cornered in a wooded area of the base by the evening. "They are limited to an area and we are very hopeful that by this evening these two terrorists will be neutralized," he said.

A senior air force officer, Air Marshal Anil Khosla, told reporters in New Delhi that the base will not be declared fully secured until the entire area is thoroughly checked by troops. The sprawling Pathankot air force base is spread over several kilometers (miles), including some forested sections. It houses a fleet of India's Russian-origin MiG-21 fighter jets and Mi-25 and Mi-35 attack helicopters, along with other military hardware.

### Unravel progress

The Defense Ministry said no aircraft or military equipment had been damaged in the fighting. The base is on the highway that connects India's insurgency-plagued Jammu and Kashmir state with the rest of the country. It's also very close to India's border with Pakistan. The Himalayan region of Kashmir is divided between India and Pakistan, but is claimed in its entirety by both. Rebels in India's portion of

Kashmir have been fighting since 1989 for independence or merger with Pakistan.

India accuses Pakistan of arming and training the insurgents, a charge Islamabad denies, and the attack at the base is being viewed as a possible attempt to unravel recent progress in the relationship between the two nations. Police have said they're investigating whether the gunmen came from the Indian portion of Kashmir, where rebels routinely stage attacks, or from Pakistan.

The violence follows Indian Prime Minister Modi's surprise Dec 25 visit to Pakistan, where he met with his Pakistani counterpart, Nawaz Sharif - a trip that marked a significant thaw in the mostly tense relations between the nuclear-armed neighbors. The two leaders also held an unscheduled meeting at the Paris climate change talks last month.

Ahead of Modi's visit to Pakistan, the national security advisers of both countries met in Thailand. The foreign secretaries of both nations are scheduled to meet in Islamabad later this month. The responses to the weekend attack from both countries have been muted so far, with neither New Delhi nor Islamabad giving any indication that the planned talks are under any threat.

In Pakistan, Sharif's foreign affairs adviser, Sartaj Aziz, said in a radio interview Saturday, as the attack was unfolding, that Pakistan wants to consolidate its improved relations with India. Pakistan's foreign ministry condemned the attack. The reaction in India has also been quiet so far. While all political parties condemned the attack, there was no immediate demand that the government call off talks with Pakistan. In the past, when it was in opposition, Modi's own right-wing Bharatiya Janata Party has been the most vocal critic of engagement with Pakistan, saying that talks and terror should not go together. But with Modi's own diplomatic engagement with Islamabad at stake, the BJP has given no indication yet that the planned talks have been threatened by the attack. — AP

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  - Retired Customer(s): 30% of the net monthly salary (after deductions) - or continuous monthly income



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## ERDOGAN BACKS CRIMINAL PROBE INTO PRO-KURDISH OPPOSITION

**ISTANBUL:** Turkish President Tayyip Erdogan has said he backs a criminal investigation into leaders of the pro-Kurdish opposition over comments about Kurdish self-rule, saying those who committed constitutional crimes must pay the price.

A Turkish prosecutor opened an investigation into Selahattin Demirtas, co-head of the pro-Kurdish Peoples' Democratic Party (HDP), last week after a two-day congress of Kurdish groups called for greater self-governance. The

probe comes as predominantly Kurdish southeast Turkey experiences some of its worst violence since the 1990s after a two-year ceasefire between Kurdish militants and the state collapsed in July.

"The statements of the HDP leaders are constitutional crimes. There are investigations started by prosecutors against them. These should be followed up," Erdogan told reporters in comments published by the Hurriyet newspaper on Saturday. "I believe the

process that will start with the removal of immunities will have a positive impact on the mood of our country in fighting terrorism," he said.

As members of parliament, Demirtas and other HDP leaders would normally enjoy immunity from such cases, although they could be prosecuted and have the sentence suspended until a time when they no longer have immunity. Erdogan urged parliament last July to lift the immunity of politicians with suspected links to militants, after a

prosecutor launched an investigation into Demirtas over accusations he "provoked and armed" protesters.

The Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK) first took up arms in 1984 to push for greater autonomy in the southeast, and some 40,000 people have been killed in the violence. It is designated a terrorist group by the United States and European Union. Erdogan said on Thursday there would be no let-up in a military campaign that he said had killed more than 3,000 militants last

year. Demirtas has said the campaign is targeting local people who are presented as "terrorists", a charge the government denies. The HDP said on Saturday that around 1,000 people were trapped in the Zap district of Silopi province in the southeast, many sheltering in the basements of their houses, as the area came under tank fire. Television footage also showed smoke billowing from buildings under tank fire in the nearby district of Cizre. — Reuters



AMHERST: Democratic presidential candidate, Sen Bernie Sanders, I-Vt, speaks during a rally at UMass Amherst. — AP

## WHAT TO WATCH IN THE FINAL SPRINT TO IOWA'S CAUCUSES

### 2016 ELECTION HAS DEFIED ALL EXPECTATIONS

**WASHINGTON:** The 2016 presidential election has defied all expectations so far. An enormous field of GOP candidates, still a dozen strong with a month to go before the leadoff Iowa caucuses on Feb 1. The billionaire outsider who has tapped into the anger and fears of a nervous nation. A son and brother of presidents who is struggling to connect with voters despite his tremendous financial advantage. In less than a month, voters will begin having their say in what could turn out to be a bitter, months long fight for the Republican nomination.

On the Democratic side, front-runner Hillary Clinton is banking on neatly locking up the nomination as her GOP rivals tear each other apart. Some things to watch for in the four-week sprint to the Iowa caucuses:

#### Donald Trump's checkbook

To date, wealthy businessman Donald Trump has run a frugal campaign, skipping expensive television advertising as his Republican rivals and their affiliated super political action committees spend tens of millions of dollars on air time. Trump has promised that that's about to change, announcing plans last week to spend \$2 million a week on the air in three early voting states. Will Trump follow through on that promise? Television ad prices are only increasing as the voting draws closer, and Trump has yet to reserve any airtime.

#### Cruz's clergy

Texas Sen Ted Cruz is building a large organization of support in Iowa, amassing county leaders across the state and tapping a member of the clergy in each of the 99 counties. The son of a preacher, Cruz aims to take a well-worn path to victory in Iowa: Former Arkansas Gov Mike Huckabee in 2008 and former Pennsylvania Sen.

Rick Santorum in 2012 generated similar support among the state's evangelical voters, and each won the caucuses. The question is whether that network of religious conservatives will coalesce behind Cruz this time or splinter. Cruz has made strides, picking up the endorsements of Iowa evangelical leader Bob Vander Plaats and Focus on the Family founder James Dobson.

#### Establishment choices

Former Florida Gov Jeb Bush, who entered the race in June as the front-runner, jokes that his father, former President George H W Bush, has taken to throwing shoes at his television set in response to Trump. But as the caucuses near, the laugh lines have given to persistent frustration among party elders and its professional class that Trump remains a viable candidate. Several have said an effort must be mounted to take down Trump, but a coordinated campaign of negative ads has so far failed to materialize.

That's due in part to concerns that it could backfire and further motivate Trump's supporters, but also because several candidates vying to be the establishment choice are still in the race. Will there be an attempt to undermine Trump? Will Bush - or Florida Sen. Marco Rubio, Ohio Gov John Kasich or New Jersey Gov Chris Christie - emerge as the clear alternative to Trump before Trump or Cruz collects too many delegates to matter?

#### Departure lounge

Two low-polling Republicans quit in December: South Carolina Sen. Lindsey Graham and former New York Gov George Pataki. While all the remaining candidates insist they're not going anywhere, pressure could grow on other candidates to bow out and narrow the field. Among those feeling the heat: Santorum, who has failed

to produce the kind of excitement that propelled him to that Iowa victory four years ago. If he and others at the bottom dropped out and endorsed the same candidate, it could give rise to the Trump alternative for which some are desperate.

#### Clinton's test

A third-place finish in 2008 in Iowa completely disrupted Clinton's strategy to win the Democratic nomination and she never could catch then-Illinois Sen Barack Obama. This time, Clinton has poured significant resources and staff into the state. Polls show her with an edge over her chief rival, Sen Bernie Sanders, a Vermont independent. If Clinton wins Iowa, a loss in New Hampshire to Sanders would be easier to contain. Back-to-back losses in Iowa and New Hampshire would generate fresh worries among Democrats about their front-runner.

#### January surprises

The attacks in Paris and San Bernardino, California, shifted voters' focus to national security issues to the detriment of less experienced and less hawkish candidates, including retired neurosurgeon Ben Carson on the GOP side and Sanders. Another attack, especially on American soil, could further diminish candidates without experience in office or don't are uncomfortable focus their campaigns on foreign policy.

#### Final debates

The Republicans have two more debates - Jan 14 in South Carolina and Jan. 28 in Iowa - before the Feb 1 caucuses. Democrats will debate Jan 17, also in South Carolina. The GOP debates in 2015 broke viewership records, and the next two probably may provide make-or-break moments as undecided voters begin making up their minds. — AP

## FOUR SHOT DEAD IN LA DURING FIGHT OVER WASHING MACHINE

**ROWLAND HEIGHTS:** A man shot and killed his wife and two others in his home on New Year's Eve before his son wrestled the gun away and fatally shot him in a chain of events apparently set off by a dispute over a washing machine, authorities said.

Michael John Morey, 54, shot and killed his bedridden wife, Betty Jean Morey; his son's 48-year-old girlfriend, Linda Patricia Merrell, who also lives at the house in Rowland Heights; and a 27-year-old house guest, Ernesto Calzadilla, Los Angeles County coroner and sheriff's officials said. The father was a heavy drinker with a large gun collection, and authorities had made dozens of previous trips to the home, the sheriff's department said.

Investigators were talking to surviving witnesses to figure out what led to the father pulling out a semi-automatic pistol and opening fire Thursday night. "It looks like it was a dispute between the dad and the son's girlfriend, probably over using the washing machine," Sheriff's Lt John Corina told the San Gabriel Valley Tribune. "For some reason, this set the dad off."

The son, 33-year-old Christopher Morey, eventually recovered the gun from his

father and shot him, authorities said. Morey is being held on suspicion of murder on \$1 million bail, authorities said. Deputies reached by phone did not know if he has an attorney who could comment.

Prosecutors will review the evidence to determine whether to file charges against him. Corina said the potential case will consider whether the father still posed a threat when his son shot him. Christopher Morey and his girlfriend were living in the home with the 54-year-old mother, who had recently had a stroke.

"They had been taking care of her," Corina said. "She was in a hospital bed there in the middle of the living room." Authorities have not released the name of any victims, but the mother and brother of the 27-year-old were outside the home Friday and told the Tribune his name was Ernesto Calzadilla and he has an 8-month-old daughter. The mother, Maria Cruz, said the family was nice to his son and he liked being at the house. But the brother, Wilfred Calzadilla, said Ernesto had generally stopped going to the house because of worries about the father, making an exception on New Year's Eve. "Mixing alcohol and guns never ends good," Wilfred Calzadilla said. — AP

## US CONDEMNS KAGAME MOVE TO RUN FOR RWANDA PRESIDENT

**WASHINGTON:** The United States hit out Saturday at Rwandan President Paul Kagame's intention to run for a third term, saying it was "deeply disappointed" and concerned by the move. Washington and the European Union have consistently expressed strong opposition to Kagame, once a darling of the West, running again, and had called on him to step aside in 2017 to allow new faces to emerge and democracy to flourish.

"With this decision, President Kagame ignores a historic opportunity to reinforce and solidify the democratic institutions the Rwandan people have for more than 20 years labored so hard to establish," State Department spokesman John Kirby said in a statement.

Kagame said Friday he would run again in line with a constitutional amendment that won overwhelming backing in a referendum. The December 18 referendum saw voters massively approve constitutional amendments allowing Kagame, 58, to run for an exceptional third seven-year term in 2017. Thereafter, new rules will come into force enabling him to run for a further two five-year terms through to 2034, cementing his hold on a country he has effectively controlled since his rebel force ended the 1994 genocide, which left 800,000 dead.

Opponents and some international observers say Kagame has effectively stifled democracy in the nation of 10 million. "The United States believes constitutional transitions of power are essential for strong democracies and that efforts by incumbents to change rules to stay in power weaken democratic institutions," Kirby said in the strongly worded statement. "We are particularly concerned by changes that favor one individual over the principle of democratic transitions." Kirby called on Rwanda to respect the right to freedom of expression and to protest "the hallmarks of true democracies."

#### 'Unshakably strong'

Kagame was elected with some 90 percent



Rwandan President Paul Kagame

of ballots cast both in 2003 and 2010 and he had said that the outcome of the referendum would determine whether he continued in office. "You have asked me to lead the country after 2017. Given the importance you ascribe to this matter, I can only accept," he said in a televised New Year address. "You clearly expressed your choices for the future of our country. The process allowed us the time to make certain that the proposed changes had merit and wisdom," said Kagame, who described national unity as "unshakably strong."

The referendum followed more than 60 percent of voters signing a petition calling for the drafting of constitutional changes that would allow Kagame to stand again. Both houses of parliament are dominated by his Rwandan Patriotic Front (RPF). His supporters maintain that Kagame, an English speaker from the Tutsi ethnic group targeted in the genocide by Hutu majority extremists, is not an autocratic figure but a beacon of stability who has overseen economic growth. — AFP

## IS JIHADISTS KILL 12 IN RAID ON IRAQI POLICE TRAINEES

**TIKRIT:** Suicide attackers from the Islamic State group killed at least 12 Iraqi forces yesterday in a brazen attack on police training at a military base yesterday, officials said. A commando of fighters equipped with rifles and suicide vests snuck into Speicher base, near the city of Tikrit, in the middle of the night.

Their target was a large group of police forces from Nineveh, a northern province of which Mosul is the capital, who were undergoing training. "Under the cover of fog, they broke into Speicher," said Mahmud Al-Sorchi, spokesman for the paramilitary force being set up to take back IS-held Nineveh. "Nineveh police managed to kill seven attackers but three were able to detonate their suicide vests," he said, adding that three officers were among the 12 policemen killed. He also said 20 policemen were wounded in the attack.

Several other security sources in the region confirmed the attack, which was claimed by the Islamic State group. The jihadist organization said seven suicide attackers managed to enter the huge military base, which lies about 160 kilometers north of Baghdad.

In a statement posted online, IS said its commando reached a centre where 1,200 cadets were being trained, sparking clashes that lasted four hours. Speicher is located in Salaheddin province, which was one of the regions con-

quered by IS when it swept across much of Iraq's Sunni Arab heartland in June 2014.

The sprawling military base itself was never fully controlled by the jihadists but at the beginning of their offensive they committed one of the conflict's worst atrocities there. IS fighters assisted by local insurgents rounded up hundreds of cadets from Speicher, marched them to Tikrit and massacred them in several locations.

#### Ramadi clearing ongoing

Hundreds of bodies were discovered in shallow graves when the Iraqi forces retook Tikrit in April 2015 but other victims were shot and thrown into the Tigris and will likely never be found. The highest estimates put the number of executed cadets at 1,700. Security officials said Sunday raid was launched from the western side of the base, a desert area where IS remains able to operate despite the increased presence of Iraqi forces.

The group has launched a number of attacks since losing control of the city of Ramadi in the western province of Anbar a week ago. After taking the strategic government complex in the centre of the city, elite counter-terrorism forces have been expanding their grip and sweeping each neighborhood for holdout jihadists and trapped civilians. A number of IS fighters remain in

Ramadi but they are not in position to mount a fight back that would challenge the Iraqi forces' control of the city. "Over the last 24 hours, the Iraqi forces have cleared several more hundred square meters of the city," said Colonel Steve Warren, spokesman of the US-led coalition whose trainers and aircraft helped Iraqi forces retake Ramadi. "We don't think the enemy has enough combat power in downtown Ramadi to be able to recapture the city," he said. "We haven't seen anything more than small teams of ISIL (IS) fighters (four to eight individuals) trying to conduct harassing attacks," Warren said.

The group has continued to carry out suicide attacks in various locations, including on Friday north of Ramadi and over the weekend near the other main cities of Anbar, Fallujah and Haditha. Warren said at a recent briefing that months of daily strikes against the group, which the Iraqi government has lost half of the territory it took in 2014, are paying off. "The enemy is getting extraordinarily desperate when it comes to manpower," he said. The loss of Ramadi is the latest in a string of setbacks for IS, which analysts say is under increasing pressure. The group has since released a flurry of statements that either claim responsibility for attacks or show scenes of daily life attempting to convey that IS's so-called "caliphate" is still strong. — AFP



ANBAR PROVINCE: Iraqi security forces and allied Sunni tribal fighters defend their position against Islamic State group militants yesterday. — AP



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## OBAMA RETURNS FROM HAWAII, SAYS HE'S 'FIRED UP' FOR 2016

**HONOLULU:** US President Barack Obama is returning to the rancor of the nation's capital after two weeks of fun and sun in his native Hawaii, saying he's "fired up" for his final year in office and ready to tackle unfinished business.

At the top of Obama's priority list is executive action that is expected to expand when background checks are required for gun purchases. Obama is meeting with Attorney General Loretta Lynch on Monday to discuss a three-month review of what actions he could take to help reduce gun violence.

The actions, which are staunchly opposed by Republicans and are likely to spark a legal fight, continues to underscore Obama's desire to keep up an

aggressive agenda in 2016, even as the public's attention shifts to the presidential election.

Obama spent much of his vacation out of the public eye, playing golf with friends and dining out on the island of Oahu with his family. He also worked on his final State of the Union address, scheduled for Jan 12. The address to Congress is a high-profile opportunity for the president to try to reassure the public about his national security stewardship after the attacks in Paris and San Bernardino, California. Advisers say Obama will also look for other opportunities to keep security issues at the forefront as he tries to ease Americans' concerns. "Over the coming weeks and months, the American people should

expect the president to continue to communicate directly about his commitment to fighting terrorism and protecting the homeland," spokesman Eric Schultz said.

### Another crack

Congressional Republicans have outlined a competing agenda for January, saying they'll spend the first days of 2016 taking another crack at eliminating key parts of the president's health insurance law and ending federal funding for Planned Parenthood. The legislation is unlikely to become law, but it is popular with the GOP base in an election year.

The debate over Obama's gun actions will quickly spill over into the presidential campaign. Democratic front-runner

Hillary Clinton has already called for more aggressive executive actions on guns, while Republican candidates largely oppose efforts to expand background checks or take other steps that curb access to guns. In his weekly radio address, Obama said tens of thousands of people have died in the US from gun violence since background check legislation stalled three years ago.

"Each time, we're told that common-sense reforms like background checks might not have stopped the last massacre, or the one before that, so we shouldn't do anything," Obama said. "We know that we can't stop every act of violence. But what if we tried to stop even one?" Federally licensed gun sellers are required by law to

seek criminal background checks before completing a sale. But gun control advocacy groups say some of the people who sell firearms at gun shows are not federally licensed, increasing the chance of sales to customers prohibited by law from purchasing guns.

Despite his deep differences with Republicans, Obama has cited two agenda items for 2016 that have bipartisan support: a free trade agreement with 11 other nations called the Trans-Pacific Partnership and changes in the criminal justice system that would reduce incarceration rates for nonviolent offenders. He often points out that the US accounts for 5 percent of the world's population and 25 percent of its inmates. —AP

## ST LOUIS AREA FACING MASSIVE CLEANUP EFFORT AFTER FLOODING

'EVERYBODY AROUND US HAD CATASTROPHIC DAMAGE'

**ST LOUIS:** As the Mississippi River and its tributaries retreated from historic winter levels that flooded towns, forced evacuations and killed two dozen people, residents in the St. Louis area were facing a massive cleanup and recovery effort that will likely last weeks.

"The healing process, the restoration process has begun," Chris Greenhagen, pastor of the Central Baptist Church in Eureka, Missouri, one of the communities hit by flooding along the Meramec River earlier this week, said Saturday in a telephone interview.

Friday and some evacuees were also allowed then to return home. While residents took stock of the ruin, President Barack Obama on Saturday signed a federal emergency declaration for Missouri that allows federal aid to be used to help state and local response efforts. It also allows the Federal Emergency Management Agency to coordinate disaster relief efforts. Missouri Gov Jay Nixon had asked for the help.

Nixon and Illinois Gov Bruce Rauner also toured flood-ravaged areas as near-record crest predic-

first time Thursday.

### 'Catastrophic damage'

"Everybody around us had catastrophic damage," Pace said. She said she might not be able to move back for weeks while her landlord replaces soaked insulation. "It doesn't feel real yet," she said. Illinois Emergency Management Agency spokeswoman Patti Thompson said the state's flooding death toll increased to nine. Fifteen have died in Missouri. Rauner encouraged people to respect requests to

reaches of the St. Louis suburbs during the week. Two wastewater treatment plants were so damaged by the floodwaters that raw sewage spewed into the river. Hundreds of people were evacuated in the Missouri communities of Pacific, Eureka, Valley Park and Arnold, where many homes took in water.

William Reynolds said he moved at least \$50,000 worth of inventory from his Valley Park store to the second story of his nearby home when the area was evacuated. He was still unpacking Saturday after the evacuation was lifted. While the worst of the dangerous, deadly winter flood was over in the St. Louis area, the water was slowly make its way south.

In southeast Missouri, the Mississippi crested overnight Friday but not before damaging about two-dozen homes in Cape Girardeau, a community of nearly 40,000 residents that is mostly protected by a flood wall. "What we'd like people to know is that in Cape Girardeau there have been so many precautions in place that even given the magnitude of this event it's really gone remarkably well for us," Molly Hood, Cape Girardeau's deputy city manager, said Saturday.

Elsewhere, the Illinois River continued to rise Saturday and could near historic crests Tuesday or Wednesday, according to Thomas Spriggs, meteorologist with the National Weather Service in St. Louis. "It's still a very significant flood," Spriggs said. "It's going to be at major flood stage for the next three days."

Parts of the South were also in the flood's path. Moderate Mississippi River flooding is expected in Memphis. Dale Lane, director of the Shelby County Office of Preparedness, said high water from the river and its tributaries was approaching some homes on Mud Island, just south of downtown Memphis. The National Weather Service issued a flood advisory for the Cumberland River at Dover, Tennessee, through Monday evening. —AP



**KIMMSWICK:** Scott Fox, front, who decided it was time to leave his residence on Mississippi Boulevard, which was surrounded by water, paddles a boat with his friend Tony Watkins. —AP

The flood, fueled by more than 10 inches of rain over a three-day period that began last weekend, is blamed for 24 deaths in Illinois and Missouri.

Water from the Mississippi, Meramec and Missouri rivers largely began receding Friday in the St. Louis area. Two major highways - Interstate 44 and Interstate 55 - reopened south of St. Louis on

tions of the Mississippi River and levee breaks threatened more homes. In Missouri, Noelle Pace said she packed up electronics, some furniture and her 4-year-old son's clothing and toys and left Pacific on Dec 28, the day after she received a request to evacuate. She felt lucky to find the damage isolated to her crawl space when she returned for the

evacuate.

"This is life-threatening," he told reporters at Carlyle Lake in Clinton County in southern Illinois. "It's not just the water; it's the temperature. Hypothermia is a big risk to people's lives." The main culprit in the St. Louis region was the Meramec River, a relatively small Mississippi tributary that bombarded communities in the far southwestern

## REFUGEE CRISIS COULD SHAKE UP GERMAN POLITICAL LANDSCAPE

**BERLIN:** For the past decade, German politics has been a relatively dull affair, with Angela Merkel dominating at the national level and the major parties in agreement on all the big issues, from euro zone bailouts and refugees to the phase-out of nuclear energy. But that may change in 2016, when five of Germany's 16 states hold elections in the build-up to the next federal vote a year later.

Not only is Chancellor Merkel looking more vulnerable than ever before because of her welcoming stance towards the hundreds of thousands of refugees fleeing war in the Middle East, but the rise of the anti-immigrant Alternative for Germany (AfD) party has injected a new element of surprise into the political landscape.

Add to that an unprecedented splintering of the electorate, which means that six parties have a legitimate shot of entering most state parliaments, and Germany's normally cozy, consensual politics begins to look a bit less predictable, and potentially more divisive, than it has in a long time.

The wild card is the threat of an attack by Islamist extremists on German soil, a risk highlighted on New Year's Eve when authorities received a tip that Iraqi and Syrian nationals were planning suicide bombings at train stations in Munich. It could be fatal for Merkel, officials in Berlin acknowledge in private, if such an attack were carried out successfully by people who entered Europe with the flood of migrants, as was the case with two of the men involved in the Nov. 13 attacks in Paris.

Even if Germany is spared such a horror, the refugee crisis will continue to dominate the political debate this year, polarizing voters and emboldening Merkel's opponents on the right and left. So far the most damaging attacks have come from her conservative sister party, the Bavarian Christian Social Union (CSU).

"If we don't see success in limiting the tide of refugees, we could have a grassroots political tremor in Germany," said one senior government official, who

declined to be named because of the sensitivity of the issue. "If Merkel doesn't deliver you could see the AfD approaching 20 percent in the polls," the official predicted.

### AFD on the rise

Currently the AfD is polling between 8-10 percent, roughly double the 4.7 percent the party won in the last federal election in 2013, when it narrowly failed to clear the 5 percent mark needed to enter the Bundestag.



**KARLSRUHE:** This file photo taken on December 15, 2015 shows Bavarian State Premier and Christian Social Union (CSU) leader Horst Seehofer giving a speech during the congress of Germany's Christian Democratic Union (CDU). —AFP

That seems relatively harmless if you compare it to other like-minded parties across Europe, like the National Front in France, the Freedom Party in Austria or the Danish People's Party, which enjoy more than twice as much support. But the AfD's rise looks more significant when one considers that it has occurred against a backdrop of infighting and financial trouble within the party that might have crushed it.

In the past half year, the party has weathered the departure of its founder, embarrassing slurs about

African reproductive habits from one of its leading politicians, and a party financing law from the government that threatened to strip bare its coffers. In response to the new law, the AfD asked its supporters for donations and raised roughly 2 million Euros in just three weeks, a testament to its drawing power.

In three state elections that are due to be held in March, the AfD's newfound strength will be on stark display. It is on track to win 7 percent in the western states of Baden-Wuerttemberg and Rhineland-Palatinate and roughly twice that in Saxony-Anhalt in the east. "In every one of these elections, the performance of the AfD will be key in determining what constellations are possible," Torsten Krauel wrote in a front-page editorial in German daily Die Welt last week.

### More fragmented

The rise of the AfD and a nascent comeback by the Free Democrats (FDP), a business-friendly, socially liberal party that was the kingmaker of German politics for decades before imploding in the last federal vote, means that there are now three legitimate right-of-centre parties in Germany, including Merkel's conservative bloc.

Add to that the three leading parties of the left, the Social Democrats (SPD), Greens and hard-left "Linke," and German politics looks more fragmented than at any time since reunification in 1990. Merkel could yet emerge as the big loser from the new German political landscape if she is unable to stem the tide of refugees in the months ahead.

If she is successful, it may be her coalition partner in Berlin, the SPD, who suffer most. The rise of the AfD and return of the FDP would make it more difficult for the SPD to form left-leaning majorities at the state or federal level, condemning it to second-tier status for the foreseeable future. And that weakness could turn the SPD into a more confrontational and unpredictable partner for Merkel as the next federal vote in 2017 approaches. —Reuters



**MORELOS STATE:** In this Friday, Jan 1, 2016 photo, Gisela Mota waves during her swearing in ceremony as mayor of Temixco. —AP

## MEXICO MAYOR SLAIN ONE DAY AFTER TAKING OFFICE

**MEXICO CITY:** Officials say they have killed two people and arrested three others linked to the slaying of a Mexico mayor who had taken office only a day earlier. The state's governor said organized crime was behind the attack. Gunmen killed Mayor Gisela Mota Saturday at her house in Temixco, one of several cities around Cuernavaca that have been struggling with kidnappings and extortions by organized crime gangs.

Police quickly located a car of presumed assailants who opened fire on officers, the Morelos state government said in a statement. In a separate car, officials said they found two guns, one of them a semiautomatic, and ski masks.

Three people were detained - a 32-year-old woman, an 18-year-old and a minor. Morelos Attorney General Javier Perez Duron said the suspects have been tied to other crimes, but declined to provide more details. On his Twitter account, Morelos Gov Graco Ramirez attributed Mota's killing to organized crime, without citing a particular cartel or gang. He later announced state officials were establishing special security

measures for all off Morelos' mayors.

One organization representing mayors in the country, the Association of Local Authorities of Mexico, issued a statement saying nearly 100 mayors have been killed across Mexico over the past decade, "principally at the hands of organized crime." Mota, who had been a federal congresswoman, had been sworn into office on New Year's Day. Her center-left Democratic Revolution Party released a statement describing her as "a strong and brave woman who on taking office as mayor, declared that her fight against crime would be frontal and direct."

Temixco, with about 100,000 people, is a suburb of Cuernavaca, a city famed among tourists for its colonial center, gardens and jacaranda-decked streets. "The city of eternal spring" was long a favorite weekend getaway for people from nearby Mexico City. Drug and extortion gangs have plagued the state in recent years, driving away some tourists and residents. On its southwest border is the gang-plagued state of Guerrero, whose Pacific Coast resort of Acapulco has seen a sharp increase in murders. —AP

## SRI LANKA PRESIDENT PLEDGES LAND FOR 100K WAR VICTIMS

**COLOMBO:** Up to 100,000 people still living in camps six years after the end of Sri Lanka's brutal ethnic war will be given land to build homes within six months, President Maithripala Sirisena said yesterday. "It is an ambitious target, but I will see that all the internally displaced people are given land to build homes," the president said in an interview. "I am setting up a mechanism to complete this process within six months."

Sirisena, elected last January, has won praise for starting to hand back land after the end of one of South Asia's longest and bloodiest ethnic wars, pitting the government against Tamil separatists. But he is also under international pressure to do more to ensure reconciliation in the ethnically divided nation.

The president said he would give land to civilians displaced by war in the embattled northern and eastern provinces, and also the northwestern coastal region of Puttalam, by the middle of this year. During a visit to Jaffna in the north last month, where much of the fighting took place, Sirisena said he visited a refugee camp which has been home to about 1,300 families for the past 25 years.

"This is an unacceptable situation. I want to end this problem once and for all," he said. "For many people the main issue was lack of land and that is something we will resolve in the next six months." As part of a parallel

scheme, he was also planning to release additional private land occupied by the military, mainly in the former war zones in the northern and eastern provinces starting in the next two weeks.

He said he would travel to Jaffna this month to formally hand over about 700 acres of land as part of the plan and in line with an election promise he had made. Sirisena, 64, came to power with the backing of Sri Lanka's minority Tamils and Muslims in addition to the majority Sinhalese on the back of promises to ensure ethnic reconciliation and end the corruption and nepotism of his predecessor.

Soon after his election, Sirisena ordered security forces to return private land they occupied in the Jaffna peninsula, which had seen some of the bloodiest fighting during the war which claimed over 100,000 lives between 1972 and 2009. He said the government was also working on a mechanism to investigate allegations of war crimes in the final stages of the conflict. The president said he would also call for proposals for a new constitution to ensure the country did not slip back into war. "We can't rush the accountability process," Sirisena said. "Some people want it to be like instant noodles. We can't do that. We have to be responsible and respect rule of law." —AFP





# 150,000 HINDU NATIONALISTS GATHER FOR MASSIVE RALLY

## LARGEST EVER GATHERING OF RSS PARTY

**PUNE:** More than 150,000 Hindu hardliners, all dressed in khaki shorts, white shirts and black hats, put on a massive show of strength at an elaborate rally in western India yesterday. It was the largest ever gathering of the controversial Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS), a group seen as the ideological parent of Indian ruling Prime Minister Narendra Modi's Bharatiya Janata Party, officials said.

Devotees, all men, marched in unison with wooden staffs, chanted, sat in mass prayer and listened intently as RSS chief Mohan Bhagwat delivered a speech from a stage surrounded by walls designed to resemble a fort. A marching band composed of 2,000 RSS volunteers also played while a giant saffron flag, the color most associated with Hinduism, was hoisted on a post over 20 meters high at the 450-acre rally site at Pune in Maharashtra state.

The RSS styles itself as a cultural organization devoted to protecting India's Hindu culture. But critics accuse it of being an anti-Muslim pseudo-fascist organization with a history of fuelling religious tensions. Analysts say its influence has never been greater following the election in May 2014 of Modi, a former RSS foot-soldier. Attendees, who ranged in age from 15 to 102, were in bullish mood.

"People in the RSS look up to Modi as an example of what we can become. He gives our organization a great image," Vinayak Deshpande, 32, told AFP. Another volunteer, who asked not to be named, said the RSS had witnessed a 20 percent increase in activists since Modi became prime minister. "With Modi as prime minister the RSS is on the right track," he said.

The RSS, formed in 1925, is India's biggest grassroots religious organization and is believed to have around five million activists, known as "Swayamsevaks". It is notoriously secretive-volunteers do not formally register as members and communications are often done verbally. Yesterday's event was rare for its size and for its open invitation to the media.

Shreeang Godbole, an RSS official, told AFP it was the largest RSS camp ever held. Some 160,000 volunteers had registered to attend and practically all had turned up, organizers said. The organization has been banned three times in post-independence India, including after a for-

mer member assassinated Mahatma Gandhi in 1948 and following the 1992 demolition of a mosque in Ayodhya which led to deadly nationwide riots.

It favors a uniform civil code for India rather than personal laws for different religions, the protection of cows-which are sacred to Hindus-and the construction of a temple on the disputed Ayodhya site. Modi helped the group out as a boy and as a young adult became a full-time volunteer for more than 15 years, taking the requisite vow of celibacy, before joining the Bharatiya Janata Party.

### 'Dictating policies'

Thousands of RSS followers campaigned across India to help end ten years of Congress rule and propel Modi to the premiership. Almost two years into his term experts say the organization enjoys unprecedented political clout. Writing in The Indian Express, Shyamal Yadav, an expert on the RSS, said the organization "wields considerable power... sometimes dictating poli-

cies". Kumar Ketkar, a political analyst in Mumbai, agreed.

"Across the board RSS men are being appointed. For example they have significant influence in the human resources ministry, which includes education," he said. RSS advocates have welcomed a toughened beef ban in Maharashtra state since Modi came to power, but are likely to have been disappointed by his focus on economic growth and his failure to take a stance on Ayodhya.

The relationship has also been uneasy at times. BJP leaders feel that controversial comments made by Bhagwat last year contributed towards a humiliating defeat for their party in elections in Bihar state. And Ketkar said the RSS upper echelons are "extremely unhappy" that Modi has not consulted them on big decisions such as his surprise visit to Pakistan last month. But under a BJP-led government the RSS has never been stronger. Its foot-soldiers will be out in force to ensure a favorable result for Modi in Uttar Pradesh elections next year. —AFP



**PUNE:** Varkari's - Indian Hindu pilgrims who follow a religious movement within the spiritual tradition of Hinduism - sing songs as they arrive to take part in a right wing Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) rally. —AFP Photos

## TODDLER BECOMES FIRST 2016 MIGRANT CASUALTY

**ATHENS:** A drowned two-year-old boy became the first known migrant casualty of the year on Saturday after the crowded dinghy he was travelling in slammed into rocks off Greece's Agathonisi island, the coastguard said. The other 39 passengers, including a woman who had fallen overboard, were rescued after local fishermen raised the alarm.

Ten of the survivors were taken to hospital to be treated for hypothermia. The rubber vessel had set off from Turkey in the early morning in windy weather. The charity Migrant Offshore Aid Station (MOAS), which helps save migrants and refugees at sea, deployed its fast-rescue Responder boat to help bring the stranded passengers to safety in a joint operation with the Hellenic coastguard.

The toddler's body was pulled out of the water by fishermen, according to the coastguard. The migrants, including the child's mother, were taken to the port of Pythagorio on Samos, the nearest island, which is 50 kilometers away. There was no immediate information about their nationalities. "Nothing can prepare you

for the horrific reality of what is going on.

Today we came face to face with one of the youngest victims of this ongoing refugee crisis. It is a tragic reminder of the thousands of people who have died trying to reach safety in miserable conditions," said MOAS founder and US entrepreneur Christopher Catrambone in a statement. Despite the recent cold and choppy waters, large numbers of migrants and refugees are still setting sail from Turkey to make the hazardous journey across the Aegean in the hope of reaching Greece.

Overall, nearly one million migrants or asylum-seekers landed in Europe in 2015 in search of a better life after setting off in boats from either Turkey or North Africa. Most were refugees fleeing war and violence in Syria, Afghanistan and Iraq. More than 3,600 people have died attempting to make the crossing. Three-year-old Syrian toddler Aylan Kurdi, whose limp body was photographed washed up on a Turkish beach in September, became a heartbreaking symbol of the refugee crisis. —AFP

# 2016 NEW YEAR ADDRESS BY KIM JONG UN

Dear comrades,

Filled with the dignity and self-respect of being victors, who have set up a shining milestone in the history of the glorious Workers' Party of Korea and our country, we are greeting the New Year 2016.

In reflection of the fervent loyalty of all the people and service personnel, I extend the noblest respect and New Year greetings to the great Comrades Kim Il Sung and Kim Jong Il, the symbol of socialist Korea and the sun of Juche.

My New Year greetings also go to all the service personnel and people, who are working devotedly for the prosperity of their socialist country with a firm determination to follow the road of Juche to the end together with the Party, and I wish that all the families will be filled with harmonious feelings and the happy laughter of our dear children resound more loudly.

Seeing in the new year, I extend greetings to our compatriots in the south and abroad who are struggling to achieve national reunification, the cherished desire of the nation, and to the progressive peoples and our friends in the world who aspire after independence, justice and peace. The year 2015 was a year of gigantic struggle, which is adorned with meaningful events and eye-opening successes, a year of victory and glory, in which socialist Korea fully demonstrated its prestige and might.

Last year we celebrated the 70th anniversary of the founding of the Workers' Party of Korea as a proud and significant revolutionary event of the great Paektusan nation. Having turned out as one in hearty response to the Party's call, the service personnel and people waged a heroic struggle in the revolutionary spirit of Paektu and through bold army-people cooperation, thus bringing about proud labour results dedicated to the motherly Party.

The Paektusan Hero Youth Power Station, Chongchongang Power Station in Tiers, Sci-Tech Complex, Mirae Scientists Street, Jangchon Vegetable Cooperative Farm and many other structures of lasting significance and beautiful socialist villages that embody the Party's ideas and policies sprang up, showing the mettle of the country which is advancing by leaps and bounds reducing ten years to one.

Our working class, scientists and technicians, true to the instructions of the great leaders, made a big stride in making the metallurgical industry Juche-based, built model, standard factories of the era of the knowledge-driven economy in various parts of the country and put production lines on a modern and IT footing, thus opening a new road of advance for developing the overall economy and improving the people's standard of living. The flames of the campaign to implement the Party's ideas and defend its policies have unfolded a proud reality of our indigenous plane flying in the sky and our indigenous subway train running under the ground, and rich fish and fruit harvests were gathered, their socialist flavor bringing pleasure to the people. Our sportspeople including the trustworthy women's soccer players exalted the honor of their motherland and further encouraged the militant spirit of our service personnel and people by winning gold medals in international competitions.

Through the large-scale events held to celebrate the Party's 70th anniversary drawing the attention of the world, we demonstrated far and wide the might of the single-hearted unity of all the service personnel and people around the Party and the bright future of Juche Korea.

The moving scenes unfolded on the October celebration square shook the world with power greater

than that of explosion of an atomic bomb or that of the launching of an earth satellite, and clearly showed that nothing can check the dynamic advance of our Party, service personnel and people that are fighting with the single-hearted unity and arms as their ever-victorious weapons.

Last year our service personnel and people ward off the danger of war facing their country and nation and safeguarded the dignity of the Republic and world peace with honor.

That we neutralized the hair-trigger situation teetering on the brink of armed conflict owing to the grave political and military provocations by the hostile forces and defended the dignity and security of our motherland from possible calamities is a brilliant victory born of the Herculean might of the great army-people unity and of the powerful Paektusan revolutionary army.

What makes us look back upon last year with greater delight is that our young vanguard who are reliably carrying forward the lineage of the Juche revolution and faith demonstrated the might of the youth power without parallel in the world by means of their loyalty to the Party and heroic struggle.

Educated and trained in the embrace of the great leaders and the Party, our young people rushed ahead along the course of the Korean revolution set by the Party, creating the charging spirit and culture of young people of the Songun era and performing laudable deeds that touched people's heartstrings. The millions of young people, fully equipped with the revolutionary ideology of the great leaders and firmly rallied behind the Party, have grown strong in ideas and faith, to become successors to the cause of the Juche revolution. This is the greatest dignity, pride and success for us.

All the victories and successes achieved last year are a fruition born of the heroic struggle of our people, who turned out in the general offensive for their country's prosperity with the spirit and mettle of Paektu, and a crystallization of the invaluable blood and sweat the service personnel and people dedicated to the country and the revolution.

Spending last year seething with creation and filled with miraculous achievements together with the service personnel and people, who were burning their hearts with patriotism and loyalty, our Party witnessed with a warm feeling their beautiful spiritual world and strenuous struggle and gained greater strength and courage from their trust-filled look and sincere opinions.

As there are the Party's sagacious leadership, the invincible army and the great people that absolutely support the Party and defend it unto death, we have no difficulties to be afraid of and can accomplish any great cause without fail-this is the proud conclusion of last year's struggle.

I extend warm thanks to all the members of the Workers' Party of Korea, service personnel and people who glorified last year with heroic struggle and feats in devoted support of the cause of the Party cherishing ardent loyalty to it and faith in sure victory.

Our Party maintains the improvement of the people's living conditions as the most important of the numerous state affairs. The urban and rural areas, workplaces and villages should be kept spick and span, and positive measures should be taken to conserve the resources of the country and prevent air, river and sea pollution.

Our Party is steadfast in its determination and will to solidify the foundations of a thriving country by dint of science and technology and, with them as the engine, achieve national prosperity. The scientific research sector should give priority to resolving the scientific and technological problems that arise in

consolidating the might of the Juche-based industry, the socialist independent economy, and improving the people's standard of living, and strive to push back the frontiers of science and technology. Factories, enterprises and cooperative farms should build science and technology diffusion rooms in a splendid fashion and put their operation on a regular basis, so as to ensure that all the working people learn modern science and technology. It is also necessary to establish a social climate of resolving the problems arising in reality on the strength of science and technology.

The Cabinet and other state and economic organs should decisively improve their economic planning and guidance. Leading economic officials should fully equip themselves with Party policy, work out plans of the economic work in an innovative way and give a strong push to it on the principle of developing all the sectors at an exponential speed by relying on the inexhaustible creative strength of the working people and by dint of modern science and technology. They should accurately identify the main link in the whole chain of economic development and concentrate efforts on it while revitalizing the overall economy, especially when the conditions are not favorable and many difficulties arise. They should be proactive in organizing and launching the work of establishing on a full scale our style of economic management method which embodies the Juche idea, thus giving full play to its advantages and vitality.

The political and military might of our Republic should be strengthened in every way. It is necessary to cement the politico-ideological position of socialism rock-solid. We should regard ideology as the driving force of the revolution and focus on the five-point education so as to train all the service personnel and people to be strong in ideas, to etch in their hearts the revolutionary spirit of Paektu, the spirit of the blizzards of Paektu, and encourage them to give free rein to their indomitable mental strength in the struggle to carry out the instructions of the great leaders and safeguard the Party's policies. Political work and frontline-style information and motivational work should be vigorously conducted to ensure that the whole country seethes with an atmosphere of heightened political enthusiasm in the lead-up to the Seventh Party Congress.

Single-hearted unity is the great foundation and ever-victorious weapon for the Juche revolution. All the officials, Party members and other working people should connect their burning hearts with the garden of the offices of the Party Central Committee and share the Party's ideas, breathe the same breath as it and keep pace with it in order to travel one road forever following the Party. Party organizations and state organs should give absolute priority to the demands and interests of the people by thoroughly applying the politics of prioritizing, respecting and loving them, and take responsible care of their political integrity and material and cultural life to the end. Party organizations should take hold of public sentiments, rally the broad sections of the masses closely around the Party, and launch an intensive struggle among officials against all practices of abuse of power, bureaucratic and corruption that gnaw at and undermine our single-hearted unity.

In this year, which marks the 20th anniversary of the movement of winning the title of O Jung Hupled 7th Regiment initiated by General Kim Jong Il, the People's Army should further develop itself into a revolutionary army of the Party in which the Party's unified command system is thoroughly established, into a steadfast army of the Party that keeps the revolutionary faith to the death, and effect a turnaround in implementing the Party's four-point line of build-

ing up the army to be formidable. By keeping it as the seed to conduct training in a real-war atmosphere and put it on a scientific and modern footing, the army should raise the fierce flames of training so that all the service personnel are prepared to be elite soldiers of modern warfare and stout fighters who are equipped with the military strategies and tactics of Kim Il Sung and Kim Jong Il, the heroic fighting spirit and flawless abilities to fight an actual war. It should become a standard-bearer and shock force of the times to make breakthroughs as intended by the Party on the major fronts where a thriving country is being built, and look for more tasks that are for the good of the people.

Officers and men of the Korean People's Internal Security Forces should smash in embryo the maneuverings of the class enemy and hostile elements to harm the leadership of the revolution, our socialist system and our people's lives and property, and members of the Worker-Peasant Red Guards and the Young Red Guards should intensify combat and political training and fully prepare themselves to defend their villages.

The munitions industry sector should develop defence science and technology, put the defence industry on a highly Juche-oriented, modern and scientific footing, and give full play to the revolutionary spirit of Kunja-ri, so as to develop and produce a greater number of various means of military strike of our own style that are capable of overwhelming the enemy. We should ensure that our people enjoy the highest quality of civilization on the highest level.

By raising the flames of radical improvement in education in the new century, we should renovate the conditions and environment for education and improve its quality decisively, thereby bringing up talented personnel who are knowledgeable, morally sound and physically strong. We should improve medical treatment and preventive work as required by the socialist public health system in order to protect the people's life and promote their health.

We should make sports mass-based and part of daily concern to ensure that the whole country is astir with enthusiasm for sports, and radically develop the specialized sporting techniques to create new miracles of heroic Korea in international games. The sector of art and literature should brace itself to produce a larger number of contemporary masterpieces which make all the service personnel and people burn their hearts with enthusiasm for the revolution and for struggle.

We should launch a strong drive to establish discipline with regard to moral ethics so as to ensure that a sound and civilized way of life prevails throughout the country.

All the officials and working people should turn out as one in the struggle to usher in a golden age in building a thriving nation in this year when the Seventh Party Congress is to be held. It is the tradition of struggle and temperament of our people to turn out with a single mind and will and continuously work miracles like moving mountains and filling up seas if it is the Party's call.

In all fields of social life we should sustain the original features and great appearances of our society which is advancing on the strength of helping and leading one another forward and through a concerted effort. Our target is a Juche-oriented socialist power, and the might of socialism is none other than the might of collectivism. All sectors and all units should attach primary importance to the interests of the state, the Party and the revolution, introduce the successes and experiences gained by the leading units and make leaps and bounds in the flames of collectivist competition.

The principle of giving priority to self-develop-

ment should be maintained in building a thriving socialist country. Worship of big countries and dependence on foreign forces is the road to national ruin; self-development alone is the road to sustaining the dignity of our country and our nation and to paving a broad avenue for the revolution and construction. With affection, trust, dignity and pride in everything of our own, we should achieve the great cause of building a thriving nation and realize the people's beautiful dreams and ideals without fail by our own efforts, technology and resources. National reunification is the most pressing and vital task facing the nation.

Last year, greeting the 70th anniversary of national liberation, we appealed to all the compatriots to pool their efforts to open up a broad avenue to independent reunification, and strived for its realization. However, the anti-reunification forces that are not desirous of national reunification and improved inter-Korean relations ran amuck to realize their schemes for a war and even created a touch-and-go situation short of crossfire, causing grave apprehension at home and abroad. The south Korean authorities publicly sought to realize their goal of "regime change" in our country and unilateral "unification of systems" against the trend of inter-Korean dialogue and détente, and fanned distrust and confrontation between the north and the south.

This year we should hold up the slogan "Let us frustrate the challenges by the anti-reunification forces within and without and usher in a new era of independent reunification!" and press on with the national reunification movement more vigorously.

We should reject foreign intervention and resolve the issues of inter-Korean relations and national reunification independently in keeping with the aspirations and demands of the nation. It is none other than the outside forces that divided our nation, and it is also none other than the United States and its followers that obstruct the reunification of our country. Notwithstanding this, the south Korean authorities are clinging to a smear campaign against the fellow countrymen in collusion with the outside forces while touring foreign countries to ask for the solution of the internal issue of our nation, the issue of its reunification. This is a betrayal of the country and nation that leaves the destiny of the nation at the mercy of the outside forces and sells out its interests.

The issues of inter-Korean relations and national reunification should, to all intents and purposes, be resolved by the efforts of our nation in conformity with its independent will and demands, true to the principle of By Our Nation Itself. No one will or can bring our nation reunification.

The whole nation should struggle resolutely against the sycophantic and treacherous manoeuvres of the anti-reunification forces to cooperate with the outside forces. The south Korean authorities should discontinue such a humiliating act as going on a tour of foreign countries touting for cooperation in resolving the internal issues of the nation.

It is fundamental to realizing the country's reunification to prevent the danger of war and safeguard peace and security in the Korean peninsula. All the Korean people in the north, in the south and abroad will smash all challenges and obstructive moves by the anti-reunification forces in and out of the country and build a dignified and prosperous reunified Korea on this land without fail under the banner of By Our Nation Itself. Let us all strive for the final victory of the revolution full of confidence in victory and optimism. Greeting the hope-filled new year, I wish the people across the country good health and happiness.

From the Embassy of North Korea



## BEIJING REJECTS VIETNAM DISSENT OVER SOUTH CHINA SEA LANDING

**BEIJING:** Beijing has rejected a protest from Vietnam after a Chinese plane landed on a contested reef in the South China Sea, saying the operation took place within Chinese territory. A Chinese "test flight" landed on Fiery Cross reef, foreign ministry spokeswoman Hua Chunying said in an online statement late Saturday. Vietnam also claims the reef.

China has asserted its claim to almost all of the South China Sea by rapidly building artificial islands including airstrips said to be capable of hosting

military jets. It began work in 2014 on a 3,000-metre runway on Fiery Cross reef in the Spratlys island group, around 1,000 kilometers from China's island province of Hainan.

Hua said the test flight was civilian in nature, adding that the "relevant activity falls completely within China's sovereignty". Hanoi earlier strongly protested at the flight, labelling it a violation of sovereignty which "influences peace and stability in the South China Sea".

"Vietnam resolutely protests China's above-mentioned action, asking China

to immediately end while not repeating similar move," said foreign ministry spokesman He Hai Binh in Hanoi. Vietnamese officials also said they had asked Beijing to investigate the ramming and sinking of a Vietnamese fishing boat by a suspected Chinese boat.

The fishermen were around 60 nautical miles from Con Co Island in central Quang Tri province on Friday when a foreign boat crashed into their craft. The 11 crew members were rescued but the boat sank, the fishermen told the VNExpress news site. The captain was

quoted as saying that he saw Chinese characters on the foreign boat. Ha Le, deputy head of the Vietnam Fisheries Surveillance Department, told AFP Chinese officials had offered to check on the report if more details became available.

Relations between the communist neighbors have grown tense in recent years over the disputed Spratly and Parcel island chains. Rioting broke out in Vietnam after Beijing sent an oil rig into contested waters in 2014, and at least three Chinese people were killed.

Since then the two sides have tried to mend relations. China's President Xi Jinping visited Hanoi in November but that visit also saw anti-Chinese protests. Hanoi has stepped up cooperation with the US, in what analysts say is a hedge against China's rising power. Several other claimants have also built facilities in the South China Sea but at a slower pace than China. The Philippines, Malaysia, Brunei and Taiwan also have claims to parts of the Sea, home to strategic shipping lanes as well as substantial oil and gas reserves. —AFP

## HONG KONG UNSETTLED BY CASE OF FIVE MISSING BOOKSELLERS

'STRONG REASON TO BELIEVE BO WAS KIDNAPPED'

**HONG KONG:** Hong Kong pro-democracy lawmakers said yesterday that they will press the government for answers after a fifth employee of a publisher specializing in books critical of mainland China's leadership went missing. Lawmaker Albert Ho said the city was "shocked and appalled" by the disappearance of Lee Bo. Like the four others who have disappeared in recent months, Lee is associated with publisher Mighty Current.

While there's been no official word on what happened to the

five missing people, Ho told reporters that it appears their disappearances are linked to the publisher's books. "From the available information surrounding the disappearance of Mr Lee Bo and his partners earlier, we have strong reason to believe that Mr Lee Bo was probably kidnapped and then smuggled back to the mainland for political investigation," Ho said.

It's not uncommon in mainland China for company executives and dissidents to be detained for lengthy periods by the authorities

or vanish without anyone claiming responsibility, but the disappearances are unprecedented in Hong Kong and have shocked the city's publishing industry. A few dozen protesters marched to Beijing's Liaison Office yesterday to demand information about Lee, Mighty Current's chief editor. Lee, 65, is also one of the company's major shareholders, the South China Morning Post reported.

### Political scandals

The company's co-owner, Gui

Minhai, is also among those missing, as are three staff members. Mighty Current and its Causeway Bay Bookstore are known for gossipy titles about Chinese political scandals and other sensitive issues popular with visiting tourists from the mainland. Books by Mighty Current are banned on the mainland but are available in Hong Kong, which enjoys freedom of the press and other civil liberties unseen on the mainland because of its status as a specially administered region of China. However, the disappearances highlight growing concern that Beijing is moving to tighten its grip on the former British colony as President Xi Jinping moves to clamp down on dissent.

Hong Kong Acting Secretary for Security John Lee told reporters that police were "actively" investigating the case and would widen the scope of their probe. The Hong Kong-Macau Affairs Office, which is under China's State Council, could not be reached yesterday for comment. Lee went missing Wednesday evening and was last seen leaving his company's warehouse, according to local media reports.

His wife told the Cable TV news channel in a report broadcast Saturday that she received a phone call from him the night he disappeared. She said he told her then that he was "assisting an investigation" and alluded to the earlier disappearances, but was not more specific. The number indicated the call came from Shenzhen, the mainland Chinese city next door to Hong Kong, the report said. —AP



**HONG KONG:** Protesters try to stick photos of missing booksellers during a protest outside the Liaison of the Central People's Government. —AP

## HK PROTEST 'PRO-BEIJING' UNIVERSITY APPOINTMENT

**HONG KONG:** Large crowds protested in Hong Kong yesterday after a pro-Beijing official was appointed to a senior role at the main university, as fears grow over what critics see as political interference in the city's education system. The downtown rally staged by teach-

demonstrators yesterday marched to the Government House, the residence of unpopular Hong Kong leader Leung Chun-ying, who appointed Li.

The protesters held banners that read "defend the university's autonomy" and

He is widely known to be close to Leung, who is also the chancellor of all the city's universities. "The appointment is not just about HKU, it's not just about universities. This is an issue of governance in all of Hong Kong," Benny Tai, a key figure in last year's pro-democracy movement, told the crowd. "The government just does not listen to public opinion," added Tai, who also teaches at the school.

### 98 percent disagree

Protester Timothy O'Leary, a humanities professor at HKU, told local broadcaster Cable TV: "I think this is a disappointing appointment. I think this is an indication that the government does not want to move forward in helping." Li's appointment comes after the university's council, criticized as being pro-Beijing, rejected liberal law scholar Johannes Chan as pro-vice chancellor at the university, sparking protests from staff and students.

At a non-binding vote in November by HKU alumni on whether Li should be appointed, 98 percent said no. The Hong Kong government defended the appointment yesterday. "The decisions are based on the merits of individuals, including their ability, expertise, experience, integrity and commitment to public service," a government spokesman said in a statement.

Former British colony Hong Kong was handed back to China in 1997 under a deal that guaranteed the retention of its civil liberties and capitalist system for 50 years. Teachers have previously accused officials of politically motivated censorship, including in 2012 when tens of thousands marched against "national education", a government proposal to introduce Beijing-centric patriotic teaching into schools. The plan was later dropped. —AFP



**HONG KONG:** Protesters shout slogans during a rally against Executive Council member Arthur Li's selection last month as chairman of Hong Kong University's (HKU) governing council. — AFP

ers, students and alumni comes in the wake of Arthur Li's selection last month as chairman of HKU's governing council.

The appointment taps in to wider concerns that academic freedoms in the city are under threat, particularly in the wake of last year's student-led mass pro-democracy rallies.

## TRAIN EVACUATED FOLLOWING BOMB SCARE IN NEW DELHI

**NEW DELHI:** Indian authorities have evacuated passengers from the Delhi-Lucknow Shatabdi Express at the Ghaziabad railway station near capital New Delhi early yesterday following reports of a bomb scare on the train.

India's leading television NDTV reported, quoting "railway sources" that the security authorities evacuated all the passengers from the Delhi-Lucknow Shatabdi

Express following a warning received from the Mumbai Anti-Terrorism Squad about the possibility of bomb attacks in trains ferrying between New Delhi and Kanpur, near the capital of Uttar Pradesh, Lucknow. This has led to the cancellation or diversion of a number of trains.

The NDTV quoted Delhi Divisional Railway Manager Arun Arora as saying: "We received an

input from Delhi Police about a possibility of bombs in major trains like Shatabdi, Durgam, Rajdhani, Vaishali Express and Nilanchal Express."

The official added that the security forces have launched search operations across all railway stations in the city soon after receiving the information and "so far nothing was found." Security was beefed up at major railway

stations including New Delhi, Nizamuddin, Old Delhi and Anand Vihar. Media sources reported that the security authorities have received a letter in which the messenger warned of attacks in train in the coming 72-hours-time. This has come one day after a terror attack on the Air Base in Punjab's Pathankot, near Pakistan border killing three security personnel and four militants. —KUNA



**MAKATI CITY:** Protesters display placards during a rally at the Chinese Consulate to protest moves by China in "fortifying" its claims at the disputed Spratlys Islands in the South China Sea. —AP

## ANTI-CHINA PROTESTERS RETURN FROM PHILIPPINE-HELD ISLAND

**MANILA:** Nearly 50 young Filipinos returned yesterday from a remote Philippine-held island in the South China Sea where they had staged a week-long protest against Beijing's claims in the disputed waterway. The group arrived at Pag-asa island on December 26 as part of an effort to stir up popular opposition to China's claim to most of the contested sea, including Pag-asa, also known as Thitu.

The 47 youths have now returned to Palawan island in the Philippines, Joy Ban-eg, a coordinator of the group, confirmed. Pag-asa island is part of the Spratlys chain in the South China Sea. China claims most of the sea but the Philippines, Brunei, Malaysia, Vietnam and Taiwan have conflicting claims. The end of the trip by the 47 Filipino youths coincided with a fresh flare-up between China and claimant Vietnam over the contested sea, as Hanoi accused the Asian giant of landing a plane on a disputed reef. Beijing insisted the operation took place within Chinese territory.

The Philippine Department of Foreign Affairs has said it will also file a protest over the incident. The youth group, organized by a former navy officer, is

called Kalayaan Atin Ito, which translates as "Kalayaan, This Is Ours." "Kalayaan" is the name of a township established by the Philippines in the Spratlys to assert its territorial claim and is also the Filipino word for freedom.

The Philippine government had previously praised the group's "patriotism" but had urged them not to proceed with the trip, while the youth group had accused the Philippine government of not doing enough to stand up to China. Photographs of the group, posted on their Facebook page, showed the youths camping on the island and posing with patriotic banners.

Reacting to the trip, the Chinese foreign ministry had previously said it was "strongly dissatisfied with the actions and words of the Philippine side." Despite having one of the weakest militaries in the region, the Philippines has been vocal in challenging China's claims to the South China Sea, a vital sealane and rich fishing ground which is also believed to hold vast mineral resources. The Philippines has an international arbitration case now pending in the Hague where it is challenging China's territorial claims, though China has refused to recognize the proceedings. —AFP



**TOKYO:** Japan's Emperor Akihito (center left) and Empress Michiko (center right) with the imperial family members appear during the New Year's greeting at the Imperial Palace. —AP

## EMPEROR WISHES FOR PEACE IN NEW YEAR'S APPEARANCE

**TOKYO:** Japan's Emperor Akihito expressed his hopes for world peace as he appeared Saturday with his wife, Empress Michiko, sons and grandchildren behind bullet-proof glass before thousands of well-wishers waving flags.

The 82-year-old Akihito, who was scheduled to make five such appearances at Tokyo's Imperial Palace Saturday, also released a New Year's statement in which he expressed his sympathy for people displaced from their homes and still living in temporary housing after the March 2011 tsunami and nuclear disaster in northeastern Japan.

Michiko, wearing a pinkish beige dress, waved to the crowd, estimated by public broadcaster NHK at 44,000 in the morning. That's likely to dou-

ble in the afternoon. Masako, wife of the crown prince who has made rare public appearances because of a stress-related illness, also joined this year's New Year's greeting, smiling in a deep blue dress. Akihito is the son of Hirohito under whose name Japan waged World War II and surrendered seven decades ago. But from the start, he has stood for peace.

His role is symbolic and he holds no political power, but he is relatively popular with the people. Michiko was the first commoner to marry into the Japanese royal family, and she also has at times suffered from stress, like the Harvard-educated Masako, a former diplomat. "From the start of this New Year, I pray for peace for our nation and for the world," Akihito told the crowd. —AP





A man walks on the frozen Songhua river beside the Harbin international ice and snow festival in northeast China's Heilongjiang province yesterday. Over one million visitors are expected to attend the spectacular Harbin Ice Festival, where buildings of ice are bathed in ethereal lights and international ice sculptors compete for honors. — AFP

## TWO JEWISH EXTREMISTS INDICTED OVER KILLINGS

Continued from Page 1

The arson attack in the West Bank village of Duma killed 18-month-old Ali Dawabsheh, while his mother, Riham, and father, Saad, later died of their wounds. Ali's 4-year-old brother Ahmad survived. The firebombing, carried out at night while the family slept, was condemned across the Israeli political spectrum and Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu pledged "zero tolerance" in the fight to bring the assailants to justice. Israel has authorized a series of steps, including holding several suspects without charge - a tactic typically used against Palestinian militants - to crack the case.

But critics have said that similar, albeit not deadly, attacks have festered for years with little action by the government. And for months, Palestinians watched angrily as the case remained unsolved, intensifying a feeling of skewed justice in the occupied territory, where suspected Palestinian militants are prosecuted under a separate system of military law that gives them few rights. The arson also touched on Palestinian fears of extremist Jewish settlers, who have attacked Palestinian property with impunity.

Palestinians cite the Duma incident as a factor in a three-month wave of attacks and clashes roiling the region, saying they are frustrated by years of unchecked settler violence. Palestinian attacks against Israeli civilians and soldiers over the past three and a half months have killed 21 Israelis, mostly in stabbings, shootings and car-jacking attacks. That figure does not include the two Israelis killed Friday by an Arab man in a shooting attack on a Tel Aviv restaurant, as the motive for the attack hasn't officially been determined yet. During that time, at least 131 Palestinians have been killed by Israeli fire, 90 of them identified by Israel as assailants. The rest died in clashes with security forces.

Israel says the violence is being fanned by a Palestinian campaign of incitement. The Palestinians say it is rooted in frustrations stemming from nearly five decades of Israeli occupation. The violence continued yesterday as a female Israeli soldier was shot in the West Bank city of Hebron, the

military said. She was moderately wounded and troops were searching for the shooter.

Israel's Shin Bet security service said yesterday that the suspects admitted to carrying out the Duma attack, saying it was in retaliation for the killing of an Israeli settler by Palestinians a month earlier. It said all the suspects were part of a group of extremists that had carried out a series of attacks over the years in a religiously inspired campaign to undermine the government and sow fear among non-Jews.

The indictment said Ben-Uliel admitted to spraying graffiti on the Dawabsheh family home and then tossing a firebomb through a bedroom window before fleeing the scene. Ben-Uliel's parents said they believe in his innocence and that he was tortured during interrogation. Nasser Dawabsheh, Saad's brother, said the indictments were not enough. "It's clear the Israeli institutions are not serious," he said. "It's clear there was an organization behind this crime, even the media knows that. And the government was not serious in preventing it and is not serious in pursuing the killers."

Jewish extremists have for years vandalized or set fire to Palestinian property, as well as mosques, churches, the offices of dovish Israeli groups and even Israeli military bases. The so-called "price tag" attacks seek to exact a cost for Israeli steps seen as favoring the Palestinians. The extremists are part of a movement known as the "hilltop youth", a leaderless group of young people who set up unauthorized outposts, usually clusters of trailers, on West Bank hilltops - land the Palestinians claim for their hoped-for state. A lawyer for one of the suspects says his client gave a forced confession after interrogators deprived him of sleep and tied him upside down by his feet.

The Yehsa council, an umbrella group of West Bank settlements, commended the indictment and said the suspects do not represent it. "It is now clear that these acts were perpetrated by a fringe group of anarchists bent on destroying the State of Israel and the freedom and justice that it represents," it said in a statement. — AP

## SAUDI MISSIONS IN IRAN TORCHED BY PROTESTERS

Continued from Page 1

who spent more than a decade studying theology at Iran's seminaries. On top of the ongoing wars in Syria and Yemen, Nimr's execution set the Middle East's main Shiite countries further apart from their Sunni counterpart in Riyadh.

While Shiite leaders hit out at Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, United Arab Emirates and Bahrain defended their ally, saying the executions were necessary to confront extremism. An official source at the Kuwaiti Foreign Ministry said yesterday Kuwait sharply condemned attacks by Iranian demonstrators on the Saudi embassy in Tehran and the Saudi consulate in Mashhad. Iranian authorities should shoulder responsibility for protecting the embassy and ensuring the safety of its staff, the source requested.

Such attacks are a flagrant violation of Vienna Convention that requires states to protect and safeguard diplomatic missions and to ensure the safety of their staff, the source reminded. The source called on Iranian authorities to abide by all international rules and norms which state the respect of states' sovereignty and non-interference in their internal affairs. In addition, the source reiterated Kuwait's support to all measures adopted by Saudi Arabia to maintain its security and stability.

The Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) also condemned the "barbaric" aggression on the Saudi missions, holding the Iranian authorities fully responsible for these "acts of terrorism". GCC Secretary-General Abdullah Al-Zayani also denounced Iran's "hostile and fomenting" statements against Saudi Arabia after the kingdom carried out "legitimate rulings against terrorists". He considered the statements "blatant interference in the kingdom's internal affairs." He reiterated the GCC's support to the resolutions the kingdom had made to "fight all forms of terrorism and track perpetrators of acts of terrorism and agitators and bring them to justice".

Nimr, 56, was a force behind anti-government protests in eastern Saudi Arabia in 2011. He was executed Saturday along with 46 Shiite activists and Sunnis who the Saudi interior ministry said were involved in Al-Qaeda killings. Some were beheaded, others were shot by firing squad. Nimr's brother, Mohammed, said he had been told the corpse would not be returned to the family and had been buried "in a cemetery of Muslims".

Khamenei, in a speech to clerics in Tehran, said the killing would not go unanswered. "The unjustly spilt blood of this martyr will have quick consequences," he said. "God will not forgive. This scholar neither encouraged people into armed action nor secretly conspired for

plots but the only thing he did was utter public criticism rising from his religious zeal." Sistani's remarks were not as strong as Khamenei's but in a statement he alluded to repercussions. "The spilling of their pure blood - including of the late cleric Sheikh Nimr Al-Nimr, may his soul rest in peace - is an injustice and an aggression," he said.

Nimr was arrested in 2012, three years after calling for the oil-rich Eastern Province's Shiite-populated Qatif and Al-Hsaa governorates to be separated from Saudi Arabia and united with Bahrain. Shiites there complain of marginalization. But the Saudi interior ministry described him at the time of his arrest as an "instigator of sedition". A video on YouTube in 2012 showed Nimr making a speech celebrating the death of then-interior minister Prince Nayef bin Abdulaziz.

Demonstrations outside the Saudi embassy and at Palestine Square in Tehran attracted around 1,500 people yesterday. Activists erected a street sign bearing Nimr's name outside the kingdom's embassy, but state media said the change had not been approved. Iran's President Hassan Rouhani had earlier intervened to distance the government from Saturday's violence at both the embassy and the consulate.

He called such demonstrators radicals and while deploring Nimr's killing said criminality at the diplomatic buildings was "totally unjustifiable". Forty-four people were arrested, prosecutors said. Several small protests took place in Baghdad and elsewhere in Iraq, including in the southern town of Nasiriyah yesterday.

The United States and European Union have expressed alarm at the executions, with Washington warning that Riyadh risked "exacerbating sectarian tensions at a time when they urgently need to be reduced". UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon said he was "deeply dismayed" by the state-sanctioned killings. France and Germany condemned the executions, voicing concerns about growing tensions in the Middle East.

Saudi Arabia's interior ministry said the executed men were convicted of adopting the radical "takfiri" ideology, joining "terrorist organizations" and implementing various "criminal plots". An official list included Sunnis convicted of involvement in Al-Qaeda attacks that killed dozens - Saudis and foreigners - in 2003 and 2004. Among them was Fares Al-Shuwail, described by Saudi media as Al-Qaeda's top religious leader in the kingdom.

Hassan Nasrallah, leader of Lebanon's Shiite movement Hezbollah, said Saudi Arabia had a "criminal and terrorist" government whose rulers wanted to spark "a conflict between Sunni and Shiite" Muslims. Executions have soared in Saudi Arabia since King Salman ascended the throne a year ago with 153 people put to death in 2015, nearly twice as many as in 2014. — Agencies

## EXPATS FACE DEPORTATION FOR VIOLATING...

Continued from Page 1

He added that the environment police will continue its campaigns with other bodies concerned with environment protection, and deal with all calls seriously and decisively.

Separately, Al-Anbaa reported that the health ministry prepares to implement a decision to allocate morning OPDs at various public hospitals for citizens only from this month. But it intends to exempt nuclear medi-

cine departments from this decision. Informed sources said the exception was due to the need to rationalize the use of isotopes and radioactive elements by using them only in the mornings instead of doubling the quantity used. Notably, the OPDs segregation was decided after a two-year experiment at Jahra Hospital, where OPDs only received citizens in the morning, when all specialists and consultants are in office, and received expat patients and citizens who wished to do so during afternoons.

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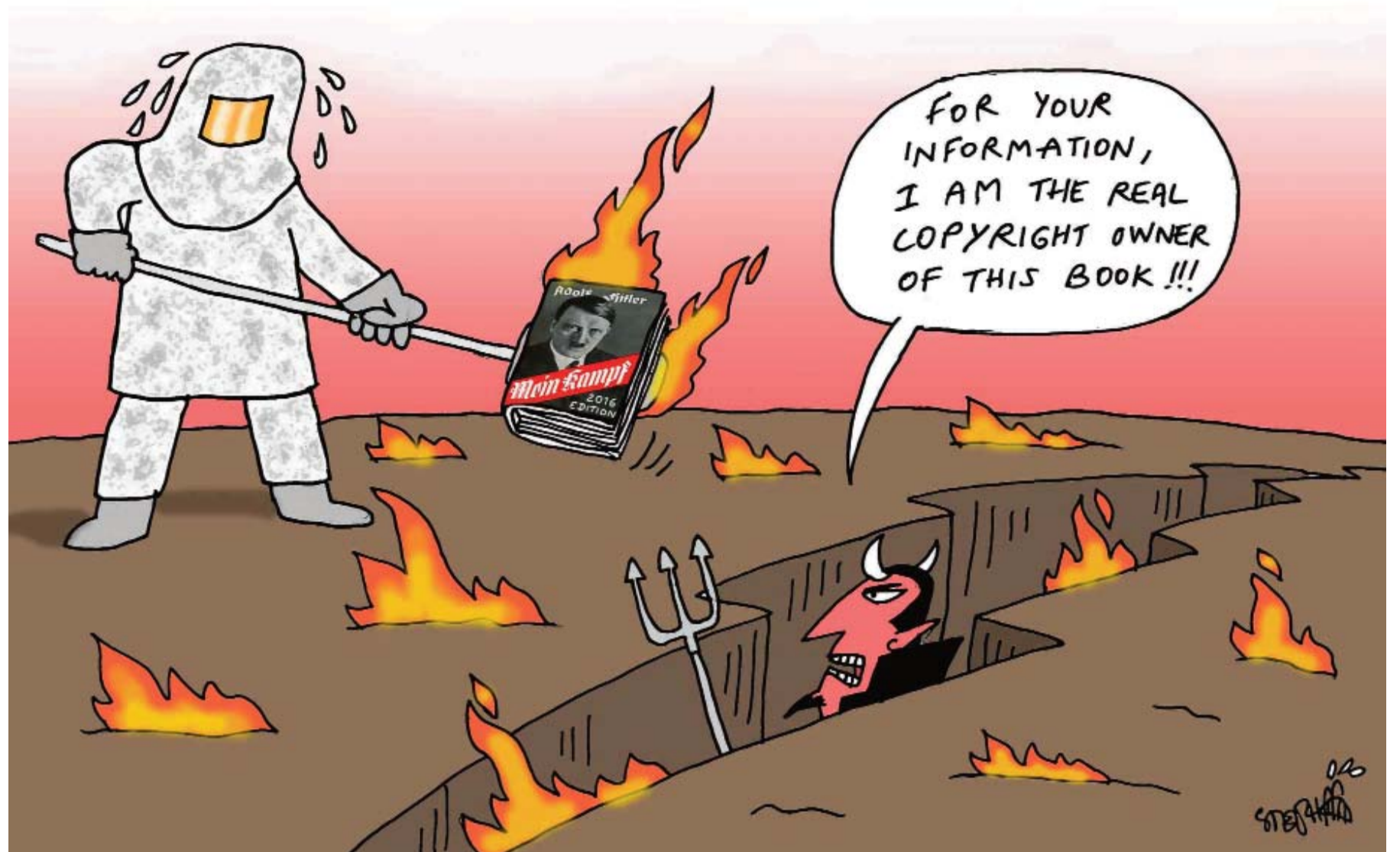
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## MEIN KAMPF TO BE PUBLISHED AGAIN IN GERMANY AS COPYRIGHT OF ADOLF HITLER EXPIRES ...



## RIYADH ASSERTS ITSELF BUT RISKS AN ESCALATION

By Ali Khalil

Saudi Arabia's execution of a leading Shiite cleric reflects an assertive but risky new approach that threatens to escalate its proxy wars with arch-rival Iran in Syria and Yemen, experts said yesterday. Hours after the Sunni-ruled kingdom announced Saturday's execution of Sheikh Nimr Al-Nimr, a driving force behind anti-government protests in 2011, angry demonstrators set fire to its embassy in Shiite-dominated Iran. The United States said Nimr's execution "risks exacerbating sectarian tension", while the European Union warned of "dangerous consequences" across the volatile region.

Nimr had been on death row since 2014, but his execution, rather than leaving him behind bars indefinitely, was still surprising given the likelihood it would further enflame Sunni-Shiite tensions. "Iran betted in the past on a hesitant foreign and domestic Saudi policy, but over the past year, things have completely changed and Riyadh has assumed a position that is rather provocative towards Tehran," said Mahjoub Al-Zweiri, professor of Middle Eastern studies at Qatar University. Nearly a year ago, King Salman succeeded his half-brother Abdullah as the monarch of the region's Sunni heavyweights. He brought along his nephew Mohammed bin Nayef as crown prince and interior minister and his own young and ambitious son Mohammed as a deputy crown prince and defence minister. In March, Saudi Arabia took the unforeseen step of leading an Arab military intervention in neighboring Yemen, launching an air campaign against Iran-backed Shiite Houthi rebels in support of President Abedrabbo Mansour Hadi.

### 'Element of Rationality'

Last month, Riyadh brought Syrian political and armed opposition factions together for unprecedented talks, reflecting its rising profile in efforts to end the war. Shortly after - and completely unexpectedly - Defense Minister Prince Mohammed announced the formation of a 34-nation coalition against Islamic "terrorism". "Riyadh presses ahead with its actions without giving much thought to reactions," said Zweiri. "It seems that there is a belief now that proactive and determined policies by Saudi Arabia could achieve results, including responding to Iran and its policies in the region," he said.

But for Francois Heisbourg, an adviser at the Paris-based Foundation for Strategic Research, Nimr's execution is part of Saudi Arabia's "headlong rush combined with an element of rationality". If the Saudis "think that the confrontation with Iran is inevitable, they might as well provoke it now when (their allies) the Americans are still around and that Iran is still in a relatively weak economic and military state," he said. Nimr, 56, was executed along with 46 other men, mostly Sunnis accused of involvement in Al-Qaeda killings, according to the interior ministry. Iran warned of a "high price" that Saudi Arabia will pay, but the Saudis shrugged off Tehran's reaction as "irresponsible". "We are completely confident with what we're doing and we believe in it and do not care how others view our procedures, whether on justice or implementation of sentences," said interior ministry spokesman Mansur Al-Turki.

### 'Polarization'

Jane Kinninmont, of the Chatham House think-tank in London, said the execution "reflects a hard line on internal criticism and is not simply a reflection of regional politics" as Nimr was a "vocal and passionate critic of the royal family". But she expected that his execution would "add to Saudi-Iranian polarization". "Iran is increasingly seeking to position itself as the defender of Shiite interests globally, and has a growing constituency as many Shiites feel beleaguered and victimized, especially with the rise of ISIS," she said, referring to the Islamic State group. "Saudi authorities will see the Iranian response as an apparent validation of their perception that Iran is meddling in their domestic affairs," Zweiri said he expected tensions over the execution to have far-reaching consequences. "This tension might push Tehran towards more coordination with Russia to complicate the situation further in Syria," he said, referring to Moscow's military intervention in support of President Bashar Al-Assad. Tehran "might also aim to prolong the conflict in Yemen where it would aim to exhaust Saudi Arabia, particularly with the sharp drop in oil prices," he said.

"The difference between Riyadh and Tehran concerning oil prices is that Tehran sees itself trained to face such tough conditions, like with the sanctions, while Riyadh is not," Zweiri added, however, that the kingdom's decision to lead major Gulf oil exporters in rejecting a production cut despite plummeting oil revenues is part of Riyadh's pressure on Tehran. "This is also linked to the kingdom's oil policy that Iran sees similar to a declaration of war targeting any attempt to revive the Iranian economy after the easing of sanctions" by the international community. —AFP

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## MASS EXECUTION DRIVEN BY FEAR OF MILITANCY

By Angus McDowall

Saudi Arabia's execution of a Shiite cleric provoked sectarian anger across the Middle East, but by putting to death dozens of Al-Qaeda convicts at the same time it also delivered a strong message that Sunni violence would not be tolerated at home. Riyadh knew its killing of Nimr Al-Nimr and three other Shiites for involvement in police deaths would prompt outrage and protests abroad, but seemed to calculate that, within the kingdom at least, the consequences would be controllable.

Amid rising regional turmoil and a series of bombings and shootings that have killed over 50 Saudis since late 2014, Riyadh's execution of 43 jihadists was a warning that internal support for militant Sunni groups would be crushed. Awadh Al-Qirni, a prominent Sunni cleric who backs the government against the jihadists, tweeted that the executions were "a message to the world and to criminals that there will be no snuffing out of our principles and no complacency in our security".

The Al Saud ruling family regard the expansion of Shiite Iran's influence in the Middle East as a threat to their security and to their ambition of playing the leading role among Arab states. Inside the kingdom, however, it is the threat of a rebellion by the majority Sunnis that most alarms a dynasty whose rule is based on conservative support at home and an alliance with the West. All past threats to the Al Saud, from a 1920s tribal rebellion to riots in the 1960s, a siege at Mecca's Grand Mosque in 1979 and protests in the 1990s, were caused

by conservative Sunni anger at modernization or ties with the West.

### Wanton Excommunication

That was why the Al-Qaeda uprising that began in 2003, and attacked the Al Saud by turning its own conservative Salafi brand of Sunni Islam against it, was such a danger. It is why the jihadist movement's latest iteration, Islamic State, is also a problem. While Islamic State seems to lack real support among Saudis, some may sympathize with its broader goals. By executing Al-Qaeda ideologues and attackers, Riyadh was showing its determination to crush support for the militant cause. By also killing four Shiites, angering Iran in the process, it was telling conservative Sunnis it was still on their side.

The notion that Saudi Arabia believes it is facing not only a physical threat, but an ideological battle with a rival interpretation of Salafi Islam, was strengthened by state media's focus on Faris Al-Shuwail Al-Zahrani among the executed. Zahrani, bearded, bespectacled, and in prison since 2004, is portrayed in Saudi media as Al-Qaeda's main ideologue during a series of attacks on expatriate housing compounds, police stations and oil facilities that killed hundreds.

Described at the time by the government as "one of the heads of strife, a preacher of takfir", Zahrani helped articulate jihadist views. Takfir, the process of excommunicating other Muslims by calling them infidels, is a central pillar of Salafi Islam. But unlike in Saudi Arabia's Wahhabi version of Salafism, in which only Riyadh's

state-appointed clergy are permitted to practice takfir, the jihadists say any Muslim can declare another to be infidel.

That and other differences have set up a fierce enmity between the kingdom's official clergy - which runs the Sharia Islamic courts that sentenced to death the 43 Al-Qaeda figures executed on Saturday - and the jihadist ideologues. "The official view is that these people are extremists involved in a wanton excommunication of other Muslims, in disobedience to the rightful ruler and in 'sowing dissension and disorder in the land'. So they are beyond the pale of Sunni Islam," said Bernard Haykel, professor of Near Eastern Studies at Princeton. The jihadists dispute Saudi Arabia's claim to lead Salafi Islam, the position of its state-appointed clergy as arbiters of religious orthodoxy.

### Sectarian Balance

Official Saudi media presented the jihadist Zahrani and the Shiite Nimr as equivalents - "inciters of violence and terrorism" as Sunday morning newspapers described them. It seemed to be an attempt by the government to reassure conservative Sunnis that Saturday's executions did not mean Riyadh would stop championing their sect against what it portrays as Shiite aggression across the Middle East. "My sense is the Shiite executions are a very convenient foil," said Haykel, adding that while the Al Saud did not regard its Shiite minority as posing as grave a threat as the jihadists, putting some of them to death helped rally the rulers' conservative base. —Reuters

## AFTER 1M MIGRANTS, EUROPE'S BORDERS ARE BACK

By Karl Ritter

Since it opened in 2000, the Oresund bridge between Sweden and Denmark has been a towering symbol of European integration and hassle-free travel across borders that people didn't even notice were there. Today, new travel restrictions imposed by Sweden to stem a record flow of migrants are transforming the bridge into a striking example of how national boundaries are re-emerging. A year of clampdowns on migration and terrorism has all but killed the idea of a borderless Europe where you could drive or train-hop from Spain in the south to Norway in the north without ever having to show your passport.

"We're turning back the clock," said Andreas Onnerfors, who lives in Lund, on the Swedish side of the bridge. An associate professor in intellectual history, he said he's benefited from the free flow of people and ideas across the bridge - he's studied on both sides and taught students from both Sweden and Denmark. "We're going back to a time when the bridge didn't exist," he said, referring to the ID checkpoints being set up today on the Danish side for train passengers wishing to cross over to Sweden.

The move is meant to stop undocumented migrants from reaching Sweden, which abruptly reversed its open-door policy after receiving more than 160,000 asylum-seekers last year, mainly from Syria, Iraq and Afghanistan. It follows the reintroduction of border checks in Germany, Austria, France, Belgium and other countries in what's supposed to be a passport-free travel zone spanning 26 nations. The moves are supposedly temporary, but are likely to be extended if Europe's migrant crisis continues in 2016. "It's basically every country for itself now," said Mark Rhinard, an expert on the European Union at the Swedish Institute of International Affairs.

Citing exceptional national circumstances related to security, terrorism and public order, several European countries have suspended EU rules that required

them to keep their borders open to each other. It's a significant development that strikes at the very heart of the EU project - the free movement of goods and people across borders.

The Bruegel think tank in Brussels says that in 2014 there were almost 1.7 million cross-border commuters in the passport-free zone known as the Schengen Area, after the Luxembourg town where it was created in 1985. Abolishing it would affect their daily lives, but the consequences for

million migrants that crossed the Mediterranean in 2015. Germany and Sweden, until recently, said refugees were welcome, while Hungary built a fence to keep them out. The Danish government took a series of measures to discourage migrants from going there, including a proposal to seize their jewelry to cover their expenses in Denmark.

Common rules requiring refugees to seek shelter in the first EU country they enter collapsed, as Greece and Italy were

great, said Karl Lallerstedt, co-founder of Black Market Watch, a Switzerland-based non-profit group focusing on cross-border smuggling. "It's not a strong federal state that can overrule its members," he said. "At the same time individual states have obligations to the EU. So you're in this sort of half-way house."

Any hope of a quick return to a borderless Europe was crushed by the deadly Paris attacks in November, after which France declared a state of emergency and beefed up border controls with neighboring countries. However, if bottlenecks build up at the borders, EU citizens and companies moving goods in trucks will eventually get fed up, said Rhinard, of the Swedish Institute of International Affairs. "As soon as it starts to bite economically, people are going to start to ask: 'Is this the right solution to the problem?'" Rhinard said.

That question is already being asked by companies and commuters opposed to new ID checks at the 8-km Oresund bridge-and-tunnel, known to European TV viewers as the focal point of the Swedish-Danish crime series "The Bridge". Train networks on either side have been integrated to allow thousands of commuters to cross the bridge daily, essentially incorporating the southern Swedish cities of Malmo and Lund into suburban Copenhagen.

But the new ID checks mean there will be no more direct railway service from Copenhagen's main station to Sweden. Travelers heading to Malmo will have to switch trains at Copenhagen Airport after going through the checkpoints there, adding an estimated half an hour to the 40-minute commute. To avoid the hassle, Sweden's national railway company SJ cancelled service to Denmark altogether, leaving only Danish and regional Swedish operators with service across the bridge. "This is what happens when national states put down their foot down and say security is most important," said Onnerfors. "It collides with the freedom (of movement) they've been talking about for 20 years, which was the reason we joined the EU to begin with." —AP



The sun sets over the Oresund Bridge between Sweden and Denmark in Malmo, Sweden yesterday. —AFP

Europe would go deeper, given the "visible and powerful symbol of European integration that Schengen represents," Bruegel researchers Nuria Boot and Guntram Wolff wrote in December.

Whether the temporary reintroduction of borders also means rebuilding mental boundaries between EU citizens remains to be seen. But the migrant crisis is becoming an even bigger challenge to European unity than the cracks emerging in recent years over the bloc's common currency, the euro. EU nations demonstrated starkly different views on how to deal with the 1

overwhelmed by sea arrivals and countries further north just waded the migrants through to their intended destination, often Germany or the Scandinavian countries. Meanwhile the EU's efforts to spread refugees more evenly across the bloc met stiff resistance from member states. By November only about 150 of 160,000 refugees had been relocated from Greece and Italy under an EU plan.

The crisis underlines structural flaws in the EU, showing how it has implemented common rules that it just can't enforce once the external pressures become too



## MATTHEW HOBDEN DIES AT AGE 22

**LONDON:** Matthew Hobden, an English cricketer regarded as one of the most talented up-and-coming players in the country, has died. He was 22. The England and Wales Cricket Board announced Hobden's death on Sunday. It didn't give a cause of death. Hobden was a bowler who had been selected for the Potential England Performance program for each of the last two years. He played county cricket for Sussex. Kevin Shine, the ECB's lead fast bowling coach, says Hobden "was the strongest, most powerful cricketer I've ever seen on that program - up there with elite athletes from different sports. His potential was huge, he was improving rapidly and I'm certain that he would have played for England." England players wore black armbands in Hobden's memory on the second day of the second test against South Africa in Cape Town yesterday. — AP

## LARRY GORDON, SURFING VISIONARY, DEAD AT 76

**SAN DIEGO:** Larry Gordon, who revolutionized surfing when he created foam boards at his California company, has died. He was 76. Gordon's wife, Gayle Gordon, told The Associated Press Saturday he died peacefully on New Year's Day at his San Diego home after a lengthy illness. An iconic figure in California's surfing and skateboarding scenes, Gordon was diagnosed with Parkinson's disease 10 years ago. Gordon studied chemistry at San Diego State University and it was then that he started experimenting with foam materials at his father's plastics factory. In the late 1950s, Gordon and fellow surfer and friend Floyd Smith used Polyurethane foam to build their own cutting edge boards. The demand for their foam surfboards forced the pair to move from Smith's garage and start their first legitimate surf shop, Gordon & Smith Surfboards & Skateboards. In 2007, Gordon was chosen as one of five surfboard shapers honored in the "International Surfboard Builders Hall of Fame." Gordon is survived by his wife, his three children, Debbie, Eric and Erin Gordon, five grandchildren and one great-grandchild. — AP

## CURRY'S RETURN CUT SHORT AFTER INJURY

**LOS ANGELES:** Stephen Curry's return from injury was cut short on Saturday with a knock to his bruised left shin and his early exit showed how vulnerable the Golden State Warriors could be without their MVP. Curry re-injured his left shin during the second quarter against the Denver Nuggets after missing the two previous games with the same injury. He finished with five points and four assists in 14 minutes. Champions Warriors eked out a 111-108 overtime win against the Nuggets but displayed how limited they are without Curry. With the return of their leader Golden State roared to a 37-13 advantage after the first quarter. But the game changed when Curry went to the bench, and ultimately left, and Golden State were outscored by 13 points in the fourth quarter where they lost their lead. — Reuters



BRISBANE: Tennis players Roger Federer (L) of Switzerland, Radek Stepanek (2nd R) of the Czech Republic, Garbine Muguruza of Spain (R) and Victoria Azarenka of Belarus join various characters during an event ahead of the start of the Brisbane International tennis tournament yesterday. — AFP



PERTH: Daria Gavrilova of the Australia Green team hits a return against Sabine Lisicki of Germany during their first session women's singles match on day one of the Hopman Cup tennis tournament in Perth yesterday. — AFP

## KYRGIOS TUNES UP FOR MURRAY AT HOPMAN CUP

**PERTH:** Precocious Australian Nick Kyrgios warmed up for an early season test against world number two Andy Murray with an impressive come-from-behind win on the opening day of the mixed teams Hopman Cup in Perth yesterday. Kyrgios, 20, who raised eyebrows with his on-court behaviour last year, was too good for fellow young gun Alexander Zverev in a match played that played out at a frenetic pace. Kyrgios dropped the first set but steamed through the second two to beat the teenage German in just over an hour, 4-6, 6-1, 6-4. Kyrgios will face Murray when Australia Green-one of two teams representing the host nation in the event plays Great Britain on Wednesday, at match he said

he was keenly anticipating. "I have been looking forward to that for a long time now so I'm going to go and do everything I can to physically prepare for that battle," he said. Murray has won all four of their encounters, most recently at last year's US Open, and Kyrgios has taken just one set off the Scot. Zverev, at just 18, is tipped, along with Kyrgios, to be one of the stars of the men's game for the next decade. He achieved the only break of the first set, but the volatile Australian kept a cool head to regain control of the match. "I felt as if it was a lucky break in the first set (for Zverev). I played a couple of loose points," the 30th-ranked Kyrgios said. "I knew I just had to stay calm,"

he added. Daria Gavrilova beat a rusty Sabine Lisicki in the women's singles 6-2, 6-2, and Australia Green went on to achieve a clean sweep, winning the mixed doubles on a tiebreak, 6-3, 4-6, 10-7. Gavrilova, ranked 36th in the world, celebrated her first appearance for Australia with a comfortable win over a clearly underdone Lisicki. The Russian-born Gavrilova only officially switched allegiances to Australia last month and said she was nervous before the match. For Lisicki, it was her first match since the US Open last September. The 2013 Wimbledon finalist was beaten in the fourth round by Simona Halep at the US Open and was sidelined by a knee injury for the rest of the year. — AFP

## DJOKOVIC ADMITS CONCERNS AFTER FRIEND BECOMES FEDERER COACH

**DOHA:** World number one Novak Djokovic admitted yesterday it will be bizarre to see his friend Ivan Ljubicic helping coach one of his greatest rivals, Roger Federer, this season. "Yes! Honestly, yes," said Djokovic, when asked if he would find it strange to see the Croat as part of the Swiss legend's coaching staff. "But you know, again, we are professionals." It was announced in December that Ljubicic, a former world number three, would be hired in a move widely interpreted as Federer trying to find a way to defeat a dominant Djokovic, who won three Grand Slams last year and was also a finalist in the French Open. "He (Ljubicic) knows my game, he knows the game of all Roger's opponents, and I think that's one of the reasons why Roger has hired him to be with him on the team," said Djokovic, speaking in Doha, ahead of his first tournament of the season, the Qatar Open, which begins on Monday. "Whether it's going to work or not, that's something to see for all of us, but I wish them all the best. He's a great guy, very calm, very composed, and I am sure Roger knows why he hired him." Federer has denied that the Croat has been hired just to help him overcome the Serb. Djokovic also said he was well-rested from his winter break and was "very excited" to start again on the tour. Given his performance last season there has been speculation that Djokovic could become the first player since Rod Laver in 1969 to win all four

Grand Slams in a single season. There is also the extra prize of a "fifth major" this season, with an Olympics gold medal up for grabs in Rio in August. The Serb said he would play to win every match. "Grand Slams and Olympic Games are the priority of the season, but it's a long season, so I can't really predict what's going to happen or guarantee if I am going to win any of the Grand Slams or all four. "Of course, I am going to try to win every

tournament and every Grand Slam that I play on, that's kind of the mindset that I have." Djokovic kicks off his season on Monday though it is still not yet known who will come through the qualifiers to face him in the first round. Doha last year represented one of his rare failures as Ivo Karlovic beat him in three sets in the quarter-finals. Also playing in Doha this year is Rafa Nadal and defending champion David Ferrer. — AFP

## PAVLYUCHENKOVA UPSETS SWISS SEED IN BRISBANE

**BRISBANE:** Russia's Anastasia Pavlyuchenkova caused the only upset on the first day of the season-opening Brisbane International when she swept aside fifth-seeded Swiss Timea Bacsinszky 6-2, 6-1 yesterday. The powerful Russian took just over an hour to defeat Bacsinszky and set up a clash against Frenchwoman Alize Cornet. Cornet booked her place in the second round when she beat fellow countrywoman Kristina Mladenovic 6-3, 6-4. Former Australian Open runner-up Dominika Cibulkova survived a scare from Belgian Yanina Wickmayer to win 3-6, 6-4, 6-4 in the tournament's first match at the Pat Rafter Arena. The Slovakian was down 4-3 in the third set before storming home to see off Wickmayer in two hours and 11 minutes. "Today I was really, really strong, especially mentally," she said. "For the first match it was tough because [in] these

first tournaments of the season...you never know what to expect. "The only thing I knew I could do better in the first set and second set was my serve," she added. Former Brisbane finalist Andrea Petkovic of Germany was untroubled in her 6-1, 6-2 win over Brazilian Teliana Pereira. Petkovic will take on either third seed Maria Sharapova or Ekaterina Makarova in the second round. In the only other main draw match Varvara Lepchenko of the US beat Slovakia's Anna Karolina Schmiedlova 6-2, 6-1 and will now face second-seeded Garbine Muguruza of Spain. Two-time Australian Open champion Victoria Azarenka begins her campaign today when she plays Russian qualifier Elena Vesnina, while the men's draw gets underway when fifth-seeded Frenchman Gilles Simon clashes with Bulgaria's Grigor Dimitrov. —AFP



PERTH: Karolina Pliskova of the Czech Republic hits a return against Jamila Wolfe of the Australia Gold team during their second session women's singles match on day one of the Hopman Cup tennis tournament in Perth yesterday. — AFP



## LIFE'S NOT A BEACH FOR CARTER AS RACING TRIUMPH

**PARIS:** Dan Carter admitted to shelving thoughts of a hot New Zealand beach as he battled driving rain and wind to lead Racing 92 to the top of the Top 14 table in a hard-fought 23-18 victory over Bordeaux-Begles.

Carter was instrumental in the win in his first Top 14 start at Stade Yves-du-Manoir in the Parisian suburb of Colombes. While the inclement weather might have been more winter in Dunedin than springtime in Paris, a smart show and give from the Kiwi playmaker set up the decisive try in the 53rd minute of a real slog of a match.

Carter burst inside Felix Le Bourhis'

right shoulder, a one-handed offload finding Brice Dulin to break clear, the international full-back's pass to Alexandre Dumoulin gifting the centre a clear run-in.

A conversion and three quick penalties from the World Rugby Player of the Year sealed the win, hooker Dimitri Szarzewski having scored Racing's opening try. Six penalties from Simon Hickey (4) and Lionel Beauxis (2) were all a combative Bordeaux side could muster.

"I'm not used to playing through Christmas and New Year, I'm usually on the beach in New Zealand! Bonne annee!" Carter told Canal Plus. "Last week against Clermont was a big game for us (a 26-10

victory), but it meant nothing if we didn't get the win this week. We're very happy with the win."

Clermont moved into second spot after running out 33-16 victors over Agen, a much-needed confidence boost after two consecutive home losses.

### PENALTY

Fast-rising flanker Camille Gerondeau scored a brace of tries to go along with a penalty try and 18 points from the boot of France fly-half Camille Lopez while his South African counterpart with Agen, Burton Francis, scored all of his side's points. "That was very complicated for us

in the first half playing against the wind," said Clermont coach Franck Azema.

"We knew it was important to keep hold of the ball, play the percentages and try to make them commit fouls. "We haven't done anything exceptional in winning at Agen, others have done it before us, but it was important for us to do it to stay on course. We would have liked the bonus point but we unfortunately conceded a try."

In other games Saturday, Montpellier, featuring 11 foreigners in the starting XV and a further five on the eight-strong bench, were edged 19-18 by Brive. Fijian No 8 Sisa Koyamaibole, a veteran of three

World Cups and a veritable journeyman of European clubs, was in outstanding form for Brive, the home side leapfrogging Montpellier into sixth place in a congested mid-table.

Grenoble put Oyonnax to the sword, running out bonus-point 42-17 winners, while La Rochelle broke Castres' four-match winning streak with a battling 25-21 victory.

On Sunday, star-studded Toulon host Pau keen to bounce back from a 31-8 thrashing at the hands of second-placed Toulouse, who take on struggling defending champions Stade Francais in Paris in the day's late game. —AFP

## LYON'S HOME TON AS AUSSIES SPIN WINDIES INTO TROUBLE

**SYDNEY:** Nathan Lyon claimed his 100th Test wicket in Australia with the dismissal of top-scoring opener Kraigg Brathwaite late on the opening day of the rain-hit third Test against the West Indies in Sydney yesterday.

Brathwaite had defied Australia's bowlers and two rain delays before he gave away his wicket late in the day to Lyon for 85. Brathwaite, one of the few shining lights in a dismal Windies tour with 94 in the first Hobart Test, was in sight of his fifth Test century before he fell to Lyon.

It gave the Australia off-spinner his 100th Test in Australia and 184th scalp overall. At the close, after 75 overs were squeezed in around two lengthy rain interruptions, the West Indies were 207 for six with Denesh Ramdin on 23 and Carlos Brathwaite belting two sixes and four fours in his unbeaten 35 after winning the toss.

"I'm pretty proud of that. It's a pretty big achievement for myself. I knew I was close, but I didn't know the exact number," Lyon said of his century of home Test wickets. "It's a big challenge for me, it's spinning pretty big and it's got decent bounce. It's a challenge for me to try and hit the stumps. I'm enjoying that challenge right now."

Australia have already retained the Frank Worrell Trophy after huge wins in the first two Tests and are chasing a 3-0 series clean sweep. Brathwaite, who along with Darren Bravo has been the best-performing batsman in the series for the struggling visitors, before he was deceived by Lyon's extra bounce and attempted to steer the ball past slip. But instead he duffed a catch off his glove to Steve Smith at slip. Brathwaite's dismissal was quickly followed by the wicket of skipper Jason Holder, who was instinctively caught by Joe Burns at short leg for one off left-arm spinner Steve O'Keefe.

Brathwaite watched four batting partners come and go as Australia used two

recognised spinners in Lyon and O'Keefe for the first time in a home Test for a decade.

Shai Hope, recalled for injured opener Rajendra Chandrika, began positively with some crisp drives but fell in the fifth over.

Josh Hazlewood got him to prod outside the off-stump and he was snapped up by Peter Nevill for nine.

Brathwaite put on 91 runs for the second wicket with Darren Bravo before Bravo was out in the third over after lunch for 33. James Pattinson dug one in and Bravo top-edged to Usman Khawaja at backward square leg.

### MIXUP IN THE MIDDLE

Marlon Samuels was run out in a dreadful mid-pitch mixup with Kraigg Brathwaite before the first rain interruption in the afternoon session. Samuels, who has scored a total of 35 runs in five innings in the series, hit towards point and darted off for a run only to stop in the middle of the pitch.

Brathwaite had dropped his bat before retreating to his end and Samuels was stranded by Hazlewood's throw to the striker's end. "I think those things happen in cricket. I'm not sure what to say about that," Brathwaite said. "It was just a misunderstanding." To compound Samuels' woes, rain immediately forced the players from the field and kept them off until tea was taken.

Upon resumption Jermaine Blackwood misjudged Lyon's turn and was bowled off-stump for 10 after not offering a shot.

Chandrika injured his groin in the morning warm-up, after leg-spinner Devendra Bishoo hurt his shoulder on the morning of the second Melbourne Test. The West Indies, who are playing in their first Test at the Sydney Cricket Ground in 15 years, have not won a Test in Australia since 1997. — AFP



**CAPE TOWN:** England's wicket keeper Jonny Bairstow celebrates after having successfully caught off his grounds by South Africa batsman Stiaan van Zyl during day two of the second Test match between South Africa and England at Newlands Stadium in Cape Town yesterday. — AFP

## STOKES BATTERS S AFRICA IN BLISTERING DOUBLE TON

**CAPE TOWN:** Ben Stokes bludgeoned a career-best 204 not out, the second fastest double century ever, in a devastating display of attacking batting to power England to 513-5 in the second test against South Africa yesterday.

With Stokes rampant, England plundered 196 runs off just 25 overs in the first session on day two to take complete control and leave the top-ranked South Africans reeling. Stokes, on 74 overnight, needed just 12 balls on Sunday morning to get to his century, and continued to flay the South Africa bowling attack all over Newlands. Stokes and Jonny Bairstow, who was 95 not out, shared a destructive and unbroken 290-run partnership, a record sixth-wicket stand for England.

Among a series of significant statistics, Stokes' brilliant double hundred came off 163 balls, the second fastest behind Nathan Astle's 153-ball double ton against England in 2001-02. Also, Stokes battered 130 runs off just 74 balls on Sunday morning for a new test record for the most runs by a batsman in a session before lunch.

That put England, already 1-0 ahead in the series, in complete command at one of South Africa's favorite grounds, and where England hasn't won since 1957. South Africa has lost just four times in 28 matches at Newlands since being readmitted to test cricket, all against Australia.

### POWERFUL PULL

Newlands' reputation as a bastion for South Africa came crumbling down with Stokes' assault. The left-handed allrounder smashed two cover drives for four in the day's first over, and had hit 33 boundaries in all, 26 fours and seven sixes.

The last of those boundaries before lunch was a powerful pull off the back foot to the mid-wicket boundary to go past 200. Stokes leaped and punched his fist in the air to celebrate his first career double hundred. His previous career best was 120.

Although Sunday was all about Stokes, Bairstow continued his impressive series by approaching a century. He played the perfect foil to Stokes as England took a good position at 317-5 overnight to one where South Africa was just about out of the game already after less than two days of play.

Without injured fast bowlers Dale Steyn and Kyle Abbott, South Africa's patched up bowling attack was completely subdued: Morne Morkel, Kagiso Rabada, Chris Morris and spinner Dane Piedt all conceded more than 100 runs. Rabada had 3-123. England, searching for its first series win over South Africa in 11 years, has dominated the world's No. 1-ranked test team from the start of the four-match series and won the first test in Durban by

241 runs. A series defeat will knock South Africa off the top of the test rankings. — AP



**CAPE TOWN:** England's batsman Benjamin Stokes celebrates scoring a double century (200 runs) during the day two of the second Test match between England and South Africa at Newlands stadium yesterday in Cape Town, South Africa. — AFP

### SCOREBOARD

**SYDNEY:** Scoreboard at stumps on the first day in the third and final Test between Australia and West Indies yesterday in Sydney, Australia.

West Indies 1st innings		Extras (b-5 lb-1 nb-1)	7
K. Brathwaite c Smith b Lyon	85	Total (for 6 wickets, 75 overs)	207
S. Hope c Nevill b Hazlewood	9	Fall of wickets: 1-13 S. Hope, 2-104 Da. Bravo, 3-115 M. Samuels, 4-131 J. Blackwood, 5-158 K. Brathwaite, 6-159 J. Holder.	
Da. Bravo c Khawaja b Pattinson	33	To bat: K. Roach, J. Taylor, J. Warrican.	
M. Samuels run out (Hazlewood, Nevill)	4	Bowling: J. Hazlewood 12-2-35-1, J. Pattinson 13-2-41-1(nb-1), N. Lyon 32-11-68-2, M. Marsh 4-1-15-0, S. O'Keefe 14-4-42-1.	
J. Blackwood b Lyon	10		
D. Ramdin not out	23		
J. Holder c Burns b O'Keefe	1		
C. Brathwaite not out	35		



**SYDNEY:** Australian spinner Nathan Lyon (C) is congratulated by teammates after dismissing West Indies batsman Jermaine Blackwood (foreground R) on the first day of the third cricket Test match in Sydney yesterday. — AFP

## BOTHAM BLOWN AWAY BY 'MAGNIFICENT' STOKES

**LONDON:** England great Ian Botham hailed a "magnificent" display by Ben Stokes after the Durham all-rounder smashed his record for the fastest England double century against South Africa. Stokes, 24, reached the milestone from 163 balls on the second day of the second Test in Cape Town yesterday, obliterating Botham's mark of 220, set against India in 1982.

Analysing the match for Sky Sports, Botham said: "It was magnificent, one of the best examples of Test cricket I've seen in a long time. "Ben Stokes is box office. We knew he'd got it, and this is the tip of the iceberg. He'll get it wrong once in a while,

but he is a guy that wins matches, and they don't come along very often.

"You're just king of the castle. No boundary's big enough, no bowler's quick enough. It really is a moment to enjoy." Stokes's innings was also the second-fastest double ton in Test history, surpassed only by Nathan Astle's record of 153 balls for New Zealand against England in 2002.

Former England opener Geoffrey Boycott said: "All those thousands of England supporters who've come out here for a bit of a holiday, a bit of sunshine, see some cricket-you've seen something special." — AFP

### SCOREBOARD

**CAPE TOWN:** Scoreboard yesterday after England declared on 629-6 in its first innings on the second day of the second test against South Africa at Newlands:

England 1st Innings		Did not bat: Stuart Broad, James Anderson, Steven Finn.
Alastair Cook c Morris b Rabada	27	Fall of wickets: 1-55, 2-129, 3-167, 4-167, 5-223, 6-622.
Alex Hales c De Villiers b Morkel	60	Bowling: Morne Morkel 29-5-114-1 (1nb, 1w), Chris Morris 28-3-150-1, Kagiso Rabada 29-5-2-175-3 (7nb, 4w), Dane Piedt 25-5-112-0, Stiaan van Zyl 10-0-43-0, Dean Elgar 4-0-17-0.
Nick Compton c Bavuma b Rabada	45	South Africa: Hashim Amla, Stiaan van Zyl, Dean Elgar, A.B. de Villiers, Faf du Plessis, Quinton de Kock, Temba Bavuma, Dane Piedt, Chris Morris, Kagiso Rabada, Morne Morkel.
Joe Root c De Kock b Morris	50	Series: England leads four-match series 1-0.
James Taylor c De Kock b Rabada	0	
Ben Stokes run out De Villiers	258	
Jonny Bairstow not out	150	
Moeen Ali not out	0	
Extras: (12b, 6lb, 13w, 8nb)	39	
Total: (for 6 wickets declared)	629	
Overs: 125.5		





**BOSTON:** Brooklyn Nets' Jarrett Jack, center, falls in front of Boston Celtics' Isaiah Thomas (4) while driving for the basket during the third quarter of an NBA basketball game in Boston, Saturday. Jack was injured and left the game. The Nets won 100-97. —AP

**NBA Results/Standings**

Golden State 111, Denver 108 (OT); LA Clippers 130, Philadelphia 99; Dallas 98, New Orleans 105; San Antonio 121, Houston 103; Cleveland 104, Orlando 79; Utah 92, Memphis 87 (OT); Minnesota 85, Milwaukee 95; Charlotte 90, Oklahoma City 109; Indiana 94, Detroit 82; Boston 97, Brooklyn 100; Sacramento 142, Phoenix 119.

**Eastern Conference**

Atlantic Division				
	W	L	PCT	GB
Toronto	21	13	.618	—
Boston	18	15	.545	2.5
New York	15	19	.441	6
Brooklyn	10	23	.303	10.5
Philadelphia	3	33	.083	19

**Central Division**

Cleveland	22	9	.710	—
Chicago	19	12	.613	3
Indiana	19	14	.576	4
Detroit	18	16	.529	5.5
Milwaukee	14	21	.400	10

**Southeast Division**

Atlanta	21	13	.618	—
Miami	19	13	.594	1
Orlando	19	15	.559	2
Charlotte	17	16	.515	3.5
Washington	15	16	.484	4.5

**Western Conference**

**Northwest Division**

Oklahoma City	24	10	.706	—
Utah	15	17	.469	8
Portland	14	21	.400	10.5
Denver	12	22	.353	12
Minnesota	12	22	.353	12

**Pacific Division**

Golden State	31	2	.939	—
LA Clippers	22	13	.629	10
Sacramento	13	20	.394	18
Phoenix	12	24	.333	20.5
LA Lakers	7	27	.206	24.5

**Southwest Division**

San Antonio	29	6	.829	—
Dallas	19	15	.559	9.5
Memphis	18	17	.514	11
Houston	16	19	.457	13
New Orleans	11	22	.333	17

# LOPEZ HAS 30 POINTS AS NETS BEAT CELTICS 100-97

**BOSTON:** Center Brook Lopez scored nine of his season-high 30 points during a decisive fourth quarter and Joe Johnson added 20 points in the Brooklyn Nets' 100-97 road win over the Boston Celtics. The Nets (10-23) won for the second time in the past five games and overcame the loss of guard Jarrett Jack to a right knee sprain in the third quarter. The Celtics (18-15) have lost two in a row after winning the previous four.

**KINGS 142, SUNS 119**

Center DeMarcus Cousins scored 32 points and the Sacramento Kings blitzed the Phoenix Suns in the second half for a 142-119 victory. Guard Darren Collison added 21 points, and the Kings (13-20) posted their highest-scoring game of the season. It was eighth straight loss for the Suns (12-24), their longest losing streak since the 2010-11 season.

**CAVALIERS 104, MAGIC 79**

LeBron James scored 29 points and Kevin Love had 10 points and 13 rebounds in Cleveland's victory over Orlando, their 13th

consecutive win in the series. Tristan Thompson had 10 points and 12 rebounds and Kyrie Irving scored 13 points for the Cavs, who have won their last three games. The Magic have dropped consecutive games by double figures for the first time this season.

**THUNDER 109, HORNETS 90**

Kevin Durant had his ninth double-double of the season with 29 points and 11 rebounds, and Oklahoma beat Charlotte in a matchup of teams headed in opposite directions. The Thunder won their fourth straight, their seventh in the last eight games, and their 13th in the last 15. The Hornets suffered their third straight loss and have now lost six of their last eight.

**PACERS 94, PISTONS 82**

Paul George poured in a game-high 32 points and scored his team's last 21 points as Indiana pulled away for the win. The power forward, who struggled with his shot for 3 1/2 quarters and committed seven turnovers, also grabbed 14 rebounds. George Hill supplied 18 points and backcourt partner Monta Ellis

added 14 for the Pacers. George and Pistons small forward Marcus Morris got into a shoving match as the game ended and had to be separated.

**SPURS 121, ROCKETS 103**

LaMarcus Aldridge had 24 points and nine rebounds, and Danny Green broke out of a shooting slump with six three-pointers as San Antonio rolled past Houston to stay unbeaten at home. The Spurs avenged one of their rare losses with the dominating win over their Texas rival, turning a close game in the third quarter into a rout with a 26-5 run. Kawhi Leonard added 23 points and played lockdown defense on Houston guard James Harden, holding one of the NBA's top scorers to one point in the second half.

**BUCKS 95, TIMBERWOLVES 85**

Milwaukee overcame a 17-point first-quarter deficit to beat Minnesota. Milwaukee started the game 0-of-11 from the field and did not score its first field goal until a lay-in by John Henson with 3:21 left in the first quarter. It was

the longest field goal drought by an NBA team since New Orleans went without a basket until 2:42 remained in the first quarter against the Orlando Magic on Dec. 20, 2006.

**PELICANS 105, MAVERICKS 98**

Anthony Davis poured in a game-high 31 points and grabbed 14 rebounds to lead the struggling New Orleans Pelicans to a road victory, knocking off the Dallas Mavericks 105-98 at American Airlines Center. Most impressive for the Pelicans, who were just 3-15 on the road entering this game, was their poise at each end of the floor down the stretch after Dallas quickly rallied from a 12-point deficit to tie the game at 85-85 in the fourth quarter.

**JAZZ 92, GRIZZLIES 87 (OT)**

Rodney Hood scored a career-high 32 points including a pair of go-ahead free throws with 29.1 seconds left to lead Utah to the overtime victory. Gordon Hayward added 14 points and Jeff Withey earned his second career double-double with 12 points and 10 rebounds for Utah. The Jazz won their third straight game

despite giving up 23 points on 17 turnovers.

**CLIPPERS 130, 76ERS 99**

Center DeAndre Jordan had 22 points and 13 rebounds and the Los Angeles Clippers crushed the Philadelphia 76ers 130-99 at Staples Center. Austin Rivers came off the bench to score a season-high 26 points, J.J. Redick added 16 points and Chris Paul contributed 15 points and 14 assists for the Clippers (22-13), who coasted to their season-high sixth consecutive victory.

**WARRIORS 111, NUGGETS 108 (OT)**

Klay Thompson split the defense with a driving hoop with 15.6 seconds remaining in overtime to break a tie and propel Golden State over Denver. Draymond Green recorded a 29-point, 17-rebound, 14-assist triple-double for the Warriors, who improved to 16-0 at home this season while recording their third win over Denver this season. The win was Golden State's 34th in a row at home bridging this and last season, matching the fifth-best streak of all-time. — Reuters

# CROSBY STAYS HOT WITH 2 GOALS, PENGUINS BEAT ISLANDERS 5-2

**TAMPA:** Resurgent Sidney Crosby scored two power-play goals, Marc-Andre Fleury returned from a concussion and made 38 saves and the Pittsburgh Penguins beat the New York Islanders 5-2 on Saturday night. Crosby scored his 10th and 11th goals of the season and has 10 points in his last seven games. After scoring just six goals in his first 32 games, Crosby has five scores in his last five contests. Fleury made his first start since Dec. 14. The Penguins won just three of eight games without him. Pittsburgh has won four of six after dropping its first four games under new coach Mike Sullivan. Evgeni Malkin had three assists and has seven points over his last three games. Kris Letang also had three assists and has six points over his last two games. Phil Kessel scored his 12th of the season, Patric Hornqvist his eighth and Matt Cullen added a short-handed goal and an assist. John Tavares got his 15th goal and Nick Leddy also scored for New York after the Penguins built a 5-0 lead.

**BLUE JACKETS 5, CAPITALS 4, SO**

Jack Johnson and Brandon Saad each had two goals, Ryan Johansen scored in the third round of the shootout and last-place Columbus gave Eastern Conference-leading Washington its first losing streak this season. Columbus goalie Anton Forsberg relieved injured Curtis McElhinney 55 seconds into overtime and picked up his first career win after making six saves before the shootout. Columbus beat NHL-leading Dallas 6-3 on Tuesday night. Johansen slowed at the hash marks and flipped a shot over Braden Holtby's glove. Brandon Dubinsky also scored in the shootout and Forsberg made stops on Evgeny Kuznetsov and Nicklas Backstrom. Holtby allowed more than three goals for only the second time this season. T.J. Oshie and Jason Chimera had power-play goals for Washington, and Marcus Johansson and Kuznetsov also scored. Saad tied it with 1:08 left after Kuznetsov's go-ahead tally early in the third.

**DEVILS 3, STARS 2, OT**

John Moore scored a power-play goal 1:47 into overtime to give New Jersey a victory over NHL-leading Dallas. With Jamie Benn in the penalty box for hooking, Moore intercepted a Stars clearing attempt and fired the puck

past Antti Niemi. Kyle Palmieri and Bobby Farnham scored second-period goals and Cory Schneider made 29 saves for the Devils, who have their first three-game winning streak since October. Patrick Sharp and Colton Sceviour scored in the third period as Dallas overcame a 2-0 deficit to force overtime. Niemi made 27 saves for the Stars, who are 5-1-2 in their last eight games. The Devils prevailed despite the absence of Mike Cammalleri, their leading scorer. He was scratched before the game, and the team did not provide a medical update.

**PANTHERS 3, RANGERS 0**

Roberto Luongo stopped 39 shots for his third shutout of the season as the Florida Panthers beat the new York Rangers 3-0 Saturday night for their franchise-record eighth straight win. Brandon Pirri, Vincent Trocheck and Logan Shaw each scored to help Florida regain first place in the Atlantic Division. The Panthers also set a franchise record with their sixth consecutive home win and snapped a seven-game losing streak to the Rangers, beating them for the first time since April 23, 2013. Luongo got his seventh straight win, breaking his own Panthers franchise consecutive wins record, and 71st career shutout. Henrik Lundqvist made 15 saves for the Rangers, who have lost eight of their past nine on the road and 10 of their past 14 overall (4-8-2).

**KINGS 2, FLYERS 1**

Dwight King and Drew Doughty scored first-period goals, Jonathan Quick made 29 saves and Los Angeles beat Philadelphia for its fifth straight victory. Quick's bid for his 41st career shutout, snapping a tie with Frankie Brimsek and John Vanbiesbrouk for most shutouts by an American-born goalie ended with 12:10 to go in the third period when Brayden Schenn scored a power-play goal against his former team. Philadelphia's Michal Neuvirth, who sat out the previous five games because of an illness, made 30 saves in his first start since Dec. 15. But it wasn't enough to prevent a fifth straight road loss for the Flyers, three of them coming on this California trip.

**MAPLE LEAFS 4, BLUES 1**

Peter Holland scored the go-ahead goal early in the third period, Jonathan Bernier

stopped 39 shots and Toronto beat St. Louis. James van Riemsdyk, Nazem Kadri and Michael Grabner also scored to help Toronto beat St. Louis in regulation at home for the first time since 1998. Vladimir Tarasenko got his 23rd goal of the season and Jake Allen finished with 29 saves for the Blues. Holland's power-play goal at 3:15 of the third put the Blues ahead 2-1. Tarasenko got the Blues on the scoreboard first at 8:28 of the second on a one-timer of a cross-ice pass from David Backes That lead only lasted 5 seconds, with van Riemsdyk tying the score on a low shot that fooled Allen.

**OILERS 4, COYOTES 3, SO.**

Ryan Nugent-Hopkins scored in the third round of the shootout, Jordan Eberle had two goals in regulation and Edmonton beat Arizona to end a four-game losing streak. Taylor Hall also scored to help the Oilers win for the eighth time in their last 10 home games. Steve Downie, Brad Richardson and Anthony Duclair scored for the Coyotes, but Arizona has lost two of its past three. Duclair's goal put Arizona up 3-2 5:51 into the third period off a beautiful cross-ice saucer pass from Max Domi during a 2-on-1. Eberle tied it with his second goal with 5:52 left. It was his 300th NHL point. Cam Talbot made 31 saves and stopped two of three attempts in the shootout for Edmonton.

**RED WINGS 4, SABRES 3**

Tomas Tatar scored with 2:50 left in the third period to lift Detroit over Buffalo. Riley Sheahan, Henrik Zetterberg and Brad Richards also scored as the Red Wings snapped a three-game losing streak. Rookie Jack Eichel scored twice and Sam Reinhart also scored for Buffalo, which has lost four in a row. Detroit held 2-0 and 3-2 leads, and was outshot 35-23 by the Sabres. Petr Mrazek stopped 32 shots in the win.

**LIGHTNING 3, WILD 2, SO**

Ryan Callahan scored the lone shootout goal and Tampa Bay beat Minnesota. Callahan made several moves before beating Devan Dubnyk from in-close. Valtteri Filppula and Nikita Kucherov scored in reg-



**DENVER:** John Mitchell #7 of the Colorado Avalanche controls the puck against T.J. Brodie #7 of the Calgary Flames at Pepsi Center on Saturday in Denver, Colorado. —AFP

ulation for the Lightning, who went 3-2-1 on a six-game homestand. Left wing Ondrej Palat was reunited on a line with Kucherov and Tyler Johnson after missing eight games with an ankle injury and had an assist. Minnesota got goals from Charlie Coyle and Jared Spurgeon. Zach Parise played after sitting out a game with a knee injury. Rob Martell worked his 1,000th and final game as an NHL referee, and was honored in a pregame ceremony.

**PREDATORS 2, HURRICANES 1, OT**

Mattias Ekholm scored with 1:51 left in overtime to lift Nashville over Carolina. Paul Gaustad tied the game for Nashville with a short-handed goal in the second period. Ekholm assisted and Gaustad got his first goal of the season. Victor Rask put Carolina ahead 8:58 into the first with his 11th goal. Nashville's Pekka Rinne had 27 saves and Carolina's Eddie Lack stopped 19. In overtime, Ekholm corralled a deflected pass from Filip Forsberg, skated in on Lack and beat the goalie top shelf. Nashville captain and defenseman Shea Weber played in his 724th game for the franchise, passing Martin Erat for second on the club's career list. David Legwand played in 956 games.

**JETS 4, SHARKS 1**

Connor Hellebuyck made 27 saves, Drew Stafford scored a short-handed goal and Winnipeg beat San Jose to end a six-game

road losing streak. Joel Armia, a first-round pick by Buffalo in 2011, scored for Winnipeg to get his first NHL point. Mathieu Perrault and Nikolaj Ehlers also had goals and Winnipeg won its third in four games. San Jose's Brent Burns scored his 16th goal, most among NHL defensemen. The Sharks are still looking for their first winning streak in San Jose this season and fell to a league-worst 5-11 at home. Martin Jones had 17 saves on 20 shots before being replaced by Alex Stalock for the third period. Stalock had six saves.

**FLAMES 4, AVALANCHE 0**

Karri Ramo made 26 saves for his first shutout of the season, Josh Jooris had a goal and an assist and Calgary beat Colorado. Matt Stajan, Dougie Hamilton and Mikael Backlund also scored to help the Flames improve to 10-4-0 since the start of December. Ramo got his fifth career shutout and first since Nov. 29, 2014, at Arizona. Colorado's Jarome Iginla, vying to become the 19th player in NHL history to score 600 goals, was shut down by his former team. After getting No. 599 last Sunday against the Coyotes, he has not scored in three straight games since then. Iginla, who scored 525 goals in 15-plus seasons with the Flames, had a couple of chances in this one but one shot was blocked and Ramo made a save on another early in the third period. —AP



English Premier League results/table

Crystal Palace 0, Chelsea 3; Everton 1, Tottenham 1; West Ham 2, Liverpool 0; Arsenal 1, Newcastle 0; Leicester City 0, Bournemouth 0; Manchester United 2, Swansea 1; Norwich 1, Southampton 0; Sunderland 3, Aston Villa 1; West Brom 2, Stoke 1; Watford 1, Manchester City 2.

English Premier League table after yesterday's matches (played, won, drawn, lost, goals for, goals against, points):

Arsenal	20	13	3	4	34	18	42
Leicester	20	11	7	2	37	25	40
Man City	20	12	3	5	39	21	39
Tottenham	20	9	9	2	34	16	36
Man Utd	20	9	6	5	24	17	33
West Ham	20	8	8	4	30	23	32
Crystal Palace	20	9	4	7	23	19	31
Liverpool	20	8	6	6	22	24	30
Watford	20	8	5	7	25	22	29
Stoke	20	8	5	7	21	21	29
Everton	20	6	9	5	36	29	27
West Brom	20	7	5	8	20	25	26
Southampton	20	6	6	8	26	24	24
Chelsea	20	6	5	9	26	29	23
Norwich	20	6	5	9	23	32	23
Bournemouth	20	5	6	9	22	34	21
Swansea	20	4	7	9	17	26	19
Newcastle	20	4	5	11	19	35	17
Sunderland	20	4	3	13	22	39	15
Aston Villa	20	1	5	14	16	37	8

Scottish Premiership results/standings

Celtic 1, Partick Thistle 0; Dundee 2, Dundee United 1; Inverness Caledonian Thistle 2, Ross County 0; Kilmarnock 2, Hearts 2; Motherwell 3, Hamilton Academical 3.

Celtic	20	14	4	2	48	16	46
Aberdeen	21	13	4	4	34	20	43
Hearts	21	10	7	4	36	24	37
St. Johnstone	20	9	4	7	35	31	31
Ross County	22	9	3	10	36	33	30
Caledonian	21	7	7	7	29	30	28
Dundee	21	6	8	7	31	36	26
Motherwell	20	7	4	9	23	28	25
Partick Thistle	20	6	6	8	19	24	24
Hamilton	21	6	5	10	28	37	23
Kilmarnock	22	5	6	11	24	41	21
Dundee United	21	2	4	15	18	41	10

Spanish La Liga results/table

Granada 2, Sevilla 1; Rayo Vallecano 2, Real Sociedad 2; Cordoba 1, Mirandes 2.

Atletico Madrid	18	13	2	3	25	8	41
Barcelona	17	12	3	2	40	15	39
Real Madrid	17	11	3	3	45	16	36
Villarreal	17	10	3	4	22	15	33
Celta Vigo	18	9	4	5	28	25	31
La Coruna	17	6	9	2	25	16	27
Athletic Bilbao	17	8	3	6	25	18	27
Eibar	18	7	6	5	25	19	27
Sevilla	18	7	5	6	24	21	26
Malaga	18	6	5	7	13	14	23
Valencia	17	5	7	5	21	15	22
Espanyol	18	6	3	9	16	28	21
Real Betis	18	5	5	8	13	27	20
Real Sociedad	18	4	5	9	20	27	17
Getafe	17	4	5	8	18	26	17
Granada	18	4	5	9	20	32	17
Las Palmas	17	4	4	9	16	24	16
Sporting Gijon	16	4	3	9	15	25	15
Rayo Vallecano	18	4	3	11	20	41	15
Levante	18	2	5	11	12	31	11

Portuguese League results/standings

Maritimo Funchal 1, Estoril 1; Academica Coimbra 3, Uniao Madeira 1; Boavista 0, Moreirense 3; Nacional 2, Arouca 2; Vitoria Setubal 1, Sporting Braga 1; Pacos de Ferreira 2, Belenenses 2; Vitoria Guimaraes 0, Benfica 1; Sporting Lisbon 2, FC Porto 0.

Sporting Lisbon	15	12	2	1	26	7	38
FC Porto	15	11	3	1	30	9	36
Benfica	15	11	1	3	35	10	34
Sporting Braga	15	7	5	3	20	8	26
Vitoria Setubal	15	5	7	3	27	22	22
Pacos de Ferreira	15	6	4	5	21	17	22
Rio Ave	14	6	3	5	22	20	21
Arouca	15	4	8	3	19	17	20
Vitoria Guimaraes	15	5	4	6	16	21	19
Maritimo Funchal	15	5	3	7	21	28	18
Moreirense	15	4	5	6	15	18	17
Estoril	15	4	5	6	12	18	17
Belenenses	15	4	5	6	18	32	17
Nacional	15	4	4	7	14	17	16
Uniao Madeira	15	3	5	7	9	21	14
Academica	15	3	4	8	14	27	13
Boavista	15	2	4	9	9	21	10
Tondela	14	1	2	11	6	21	5



MADRID: Atletico's Thomas Parthey, right, celebrates after scoring a goal during a Spanish La Liga soccer match between Atletico de Madrid and Levante at the Vicente Calderon stadium in Madrid, Spain, Saturday. — AP

# SUB'S PARTEY PIECE SENDS ATLETICO TOP

**BARCELONA:** Substitute Thomas Parthey scored his first La Liga goal as Atletico Madrid beat bottom club Levante 1-0 to go top of the table on Saturday.

Hosts Atletico lacked a finishing touch in front of goal until Parthey struck nine minutes from the end with a shot that squirmed away from keeper Diego Marino. "The team is playing well and anyone could have got the goal," the 22-year-old Parthey told reporters. "I am still learning and by working hard I am having more chances to play."

Atletico have 41 points, two more than Barca who have a game in hand. Third-placed Real Madrid are on 36 points and visit Valencia. Elsewhere, Charles and Raul Alentosa gave mid-table Malaga a 2-0 victory over fifth-placed Celta Vigo.

Keeper Ruben Blanco could have done better with both goals and was then red-carded in the 64th minute after fouling Nordin Amrabat to concede a penalty. Amrabat took the spot kick but it was saved by substitute keeper Sergio Alvarez. In Madrid, Saul Niguez almost gave Atletico the lead inside two minutes with a near-post header from a corner that went just over the crossbar.

Jackson Martinez had an effort well saved by Marino before defender Stefan Savic nodded the

ball against the top of the bar from a corner.

**GOLDEN CHANCE**

At the other end Verza had a golden chance to put Levante in front on the half hour but fired wide. Atletico midfielder Koke then cracked a half-volley against the underside of the bar from 25 metres after 54 minutes and a cross from Luciano Vietto also thumped the woodwork.

The home side's attempts were becoming ever more desperate before Parthey, on the pitch for seven minutes, burst through the centre of the penalty area and Marino was unable to hold his shot as the ball crept over the line.

It was the first of three meetings in two weeks between the two Catalan teams who also clash in the King's Cup on Wednesday.

Atletico Madrid boss Diego Simeone has demanded more from his side in the second half of the season despite looking down on Spanish football's perennial powerhouses Barcelona and Real Madrid.

Thomas Parthey's late winner in a 1-0 victory over Levante on Saturday moved Los Rojiblancos two points clear of European champions Barcelona at the top of the table, albeit having played a game more.

Real meanwhile trail their city rivals by five points ahead of their trip to Valencia. Atletico's

success so far this season has been built on a rock solid defence that has conceded just eight goals in 18 league games.

An 11th clean sheet of the campaign was needed to see off bottom of the table Levante, though, as their struggle for goals continued as big summer signings Jackson Martinez and Luciano Vietto again failed to find the net.

And Simeone is well aware his side need more firepower to have any chance of repeating their incredible feat of beating Barca and Madrid to the title two years ago.

"We have one game to go until the end of the first half of the season, but leading the league will not distract us from the improvements we need," said Simeone. "I think we can play better, have more speed in our game, be more decisive, consistent, make better choices in the final third and score more goals. That is what concerns me."

Simeone certainly won't be lacking for options in the coming months despite Atletico's involvement on three fronts as they have also reached the last 16 of the Copa del Rey and the Champions League.

Argentine internationals Augusto Fernandez and Matias Kranevitter will be free to feature for the first time against Rayo Vallecano in the Cup in midweek after completing moves from Celta Vigo and River Plate respectively. — Agencies



SAINT-RAPHAEL: Frejus-Saint-Raphael's Gregory Gendrey (R) scores a goal during the French Cup round of 64 football match between Frejus-Saint-Raphael and Bordeaux yesterday, at the Louis-Hon stadium in Saint-Raphael. — AFP

## RONALDO WANTS TO 'LIVE LIKE A KING' IN RETIREMENT

**MADRID:** World Player of the Year Cristiano Ronaldo has claimed he will "live like a king" once his playing career comes to an end, but has ruled out a move into coaching when he hangs up his boots. Real Madrid's all-time leading scorer is in action as Los Blancos look to move level with eternal rivals Barcelona in the La Liga title race at Valencia.

However, in a wide-ranging interview with Spanish newspaper El Mundo, he admitted football doesn't always captivate his interest. "I have a top life, but I think I am going to enjoy it more when I finish my career, when I have time to do what I like," he said. "This Saturday there is a boxing bout in Las Vegas and I would like to take my friends and family to see it, and I can't because I don't have time. "I am not going to cry about it now because I am making a sacrifice in inverted commas, but after I want to live like a king." Ronaldo is the world's third highest paid athlete according to American business magazine Forbes with an annual income just shy of \$80 million dollars. And the 30-year-old believes he will continue to work on his brand once he retires from playing rather than a more

traditional move into coaching. "If you ask me now if I want to be a coach, I would say no. Nor a sporting director or president of a club," he added.

"Since I was 27 I have had my own line of clothes and I want my brand to keep growing because football will finish in five, six, seven or 10 years." The Portuguese captain's success has also attracted critics of his at times egotistical nature.

His decision to go ahead with a lavish 30th birthday hours after Madrid had lost 4-0 to Atletico Madrid in the capital derby in February dominated headlines in Spain for weeks afterwards.

Yet, despite admitting to making mistakes, Ronaldo believes it is his confidence that has moulded his talents into a three-time World Player of the Year. "Many people say they don't regret anything. That is a lie," he added. "I at least regret things a lot, but that also explains the kind of person you are."

"I am like this. If all I have achieved in football is by being like this then you can't ask me to change. If people ask me to improve, I accept it, but to change is very difficult." — AFP

## CITY WILL NEVER GIVE UP, VOWS PELLEGRINI

**WATFORD:** Manuel Pellegrini sent a warning out to the Premier League that Manchester City are ready to hit top gear in the title race after ending their away-day misery at Watford. Yaya Toure and Sergio Agüero earned a 2-1 comeback win on Saturday as Manchester City won on the road for the first time since September 12. Despite their travel sickness, Pellegrini's side remain just three points off leaders Arsenal.

And the Manchester City manager said: "We are returning to our form by recovering important players and once they are 100 per cent fit the team will improve every game."

"We are thinking of going game by game but when you win a game like we did here there is a lot of trust in the team. "We never gave up. It was important to win after six games with the way we had been playing before. I've always said this team has character and will never give up."

"It was a tough game against a good team that is in a good moment. We can move on from here." Agüero has been struggling with injuries all season but he

took his tally to double figures with his late winner. It could be our year says Hart.

He will be a key player with Manchester City vying on four fronts. Pellegrini is taking it game by game - starting with Wednesday's Capital One Cup first-leg tie at Everton.

Pellegrini said: "He is a big player for us. He has just come back so he will improve with games. "I'm so happy to be in all competitions despite all the injuries we've had."

"We must be thinking game by game." Goalkeeper Joe Hart says City can wrestle the title back from Chelsea and said: "We believe it could be our year and that's what we want to make it happen."

"We can't do much about other teams and their results. We have to look after ourselves. "This win is a big moment for us." Watford were on course for victory after Aleksandar Kolarov headed Ben Watson's corner into his own net.

But Manchester City had other ideas as Toure and Agüero struck in quick succession to clinch the smash-and-grab win.—AFP

## 'ANGRY' JURGEN KLOPP URGES LIVERPOOL TO RAISE GAME

**LONDON:** Liverpool manager Jurgen Klopp said that his side must improve their commitment levels if they are to make progress this season following a 2-0 defeat at West Ham United.

Klopp has identified this month's games as crucial to Liverpool's campaign, with a League cup semi-final against Stoke City and an FA Cup trip to Exeter City while there are also potentially tough league meetings with Arsenal and Manchester United.

And he has demanded immediate improvements after seeing his side undone by headed goals from Michail Antonio and former Liverpool striker Andy Carroll at Upton Park on Saturday.

"It's no day for being disappointed, it's a day for being angry," said the German, who has now overseen four Premier League defeats in his fledgling Liverpool tenure.

"We had the ball and possession and bad luck in a few situations, but that's not what I want to see, to be honest. You have to be there in the decisive moments."

"I know about the things in football and today (Saturday) it's our responsibility. My English is not good enough to process all the information that's going around me in this moment."

"It was bad, I told the players after the game. Summary: 'Not enough.'" Klopp was particularly unhappy with his side's defending after they conceded both goals to headers and struggled to deal with the aerial threat of Carroll throughout the afternoon.

"We could have done much better," he said. "If you fight in these moments, but at 100 percent — 95 percent is not enough. Who wants to see 95 percent? — that's what we have to do. "If you know in the other team there's Andy Carroll, then how can you allow crosses? There was bad defending from my side. It's about my responsibility. I am really angry about myself today."

**BILIC CHALLENGES CARROLL**

"When I talk about defending I don't want to use words like nasty and ugly. It's football, defending. I was a defender and I enjoyed it. "Nice part of the game, you get dirty afterwards, that's not a problem. You don't have to wash your clothes by yourself."

West Ham completed a first league double over Liverpool in over 50 years and manager Slaven Bilic singled out Carroll for praise afterwards. The one-time England striker has scored in successive games after returning to full fitness and Bilic says that it is up to Carroll himself to maintain those levels.

"Andy was brilliant, not just because of the goal, but for his performance, everything: defending, holding the ball up," said the Croatian.

"I think every ball that (goalkeeper) Adrian

kicked up, he went to head it or to flick it. And he was defending, tracking back, and when he had the chance to press the centre-backs, he took it."

"Now he looks fit to me. And basically we are talking a lot about him—'Andy England', 'Andy that'—but now he is fit and it is all about him now. "Is he going to look after himself, work hard, train, rest, to maintain his position or to even make it better? And then, and only then, he will become a great asset for us, and it is up to him. — AFP



MALAGA: Malaga's Cameroonian goalkeeper Carlos Kamani (L) vies with Celta Vigo's Danish midfielder Daniel Wass during the Spanish league football match Malaga CF vs RC Celta de Vigo at La Rosaleda stadium in Malaga on Saturday. — AFP





LISBON: Porto's Spanish coach Julen Lopetegui gestures from the sideline during the Portuguese League football match Sporting CP vs FC Porto at Alvalade stadium in Lisbon on Saturday. —AFP

## SPORTING TOP AFTER HANDING PORTO ITS FIRST DEFEAT

LISBON: Islam Slimani struck twice as Sporting Lisbon defeated Porto 2-0 on Saturday to end their 30-game unbeaten streak in the Primeira Liga and take over at the top of the table.

Slimani netted in each half to hand Porto their first league defeat since Jan. 25 and extend his team's undefeated home sequence to 24 matches.

Jorge Jesus' side have led the way for much of the season but suffered a wobble before Christmas, falling to consecutive defeats to Braga in the Portuguese Cup and Uniao da Madeira in the league, allowing Porto to snatch first place.

Victory for Sporting gave them 38 points from 15 matches, two ahead of their opponents.

"We are in the lead now and we must learn how to defend it," Jesus told Sport TV.

Slimani opened the scoring in the 27th minute with his ninth league goal of the season, meeting Jefferson Nascimento's free kick with a bullet header that flew past

keeper Iker Casillas.

Porto's Vincent Aboubakar was then denied an equaliser by an outstanding block from Rui Patricio but Sporting were comfortably the better side and Slimani's second ended the match as a contest.

The striker latched on to a sublime through ball from Bryan Ruiz in the 85th minute and fired a thumping effort in off Casillas' post.

"I'm convinced we can still win the title," said Porto coach Julen Lopetegui. "We have more points than last year and have to back ourselves to come back and win many games."

Benfica kept pace with the top two after a 1-0 win at Vitoria de Guimaraes stretched their unbeaten run to eight games.

Youngster Renato Sanches scored in the 75th minute with a powerful angled drive from the corner of the box. Benfica are third on 34 points, two behind Porto and eight ahead of fourth-placed Braga who drew 1-1 at Vitoria de Setubal. — Reuters

## WENGER IMPRESSED BY RESILIENT ARSENAL

LONDON: Arsene Wenger praised Arsenal's grit and determination as they moved two points clear at the top of the Premier League with a tense 1-0 win over Newcastle United.

After watching Laurent Koscielny's 72nd-minute strike secure three points at the Emirates Stadium on Saturday, Wenger said winning ugly will help his players believe they can do so again if they are unable to overwhelm an opponent with their attacking play.

"It was a difficult game against a good Newcastle side," the Gunners boss said. "Our legs were a bit heavy and we were tested against a team with a lot of good technical quality."

"Our fluency and our movement were not there. From then on it was: Let's stick together and try to win the game however we can. "The mental aspect of our team was tested and our defensive solidity more than our ability going forward."

"If you're in Newcastle's place you're sorry for them because they played very well. But I'm in the game long enough that when you're capable of winning and you don't play well, that shows the mental aspect of your team. "Not to drop points when you play like we did is very important. I think it helps the team as well because we go through moments in the season when we will not play well and the memory of having done that before and still having won the game helps you to hang on sometimes."

A valuable element of Arsenal's resilience was the reliability of goalkeeper Petr Cech, who made two excellent saves from Georginio Wijnaldum either side of half-time.

"He made two big saves, one in the first half and one at the beginning of the second and on top of that he stays calm, never

panics and today we needed that," Wenger said.

### SATISFIED

As he surveyed a haul of nine points from a Christmas programme of matches against Manchester City, Southampton, Bournemouth and now Newcastle, Wenger agreed that his team had not been consistent but pronounced himself satisfied. "We have given a lot over Christmas and we had games before like that," he said.

"At the end of the day, four games, how many points have you made? We knew nine would be acceptable or even good, 10 close to ideal because last year Man City made 10, the second-best made seven, we made six." Newcastle manager Steve McClaren was also pleased with his team's display, which was only lacking quality finishing.

"Goalkeepers win you matches and Cech certainly did that," he said. But as well as Cech's saves, there were times when Newcastle players failed to hit the target when well-placed, and the result was a third successive 1-0 defeat for his relegation-threatened club.

"I'm scratching my head as to how we got nothing from that game," he said. "Not many teams will come here and do what we did. But it's about putting the ball in the back of the net."

"I couldn't fault what we tried to do. Great spirit, fantastic energy, defended well—a complete performance without getting the result. "You've got to score first and we didn't. We always talk about performance and we delivered that. I'd be more worried if we weren't creating chances."

"In the last three games we've been dealt blows but we've come back and we have to do that again." —AFP



LA CORUNA: Deportivo La Coruna's Brazilian defender Sidnei (R) vies with Villarreal's forward Roberto Soldado during the Spanish league football match RC Deportivo de La Coruna vs Villarreal CF at the Municipal de Riazor stadium in La Coruna yesterday. —AFP

# VAN GAAL HOPES ROONEY SPARKS MAN UTD UPSURGE

MANCHESTER: Manchester United manager Louis van Gaal paid tribute to Wayne Rooney after his winner against Swansea City lifted him to second place in the club's all-time list of goal-scorers.

Rooney superbly flicked in Anthony Martial's cross with 13 minutes to go at Old Trafford on Saturday to give his side a 2-1 victory that ended their nine-game winless run and left them fifth in the Premier League.

The United captain's third league goal of the season took him past Denis Law to 238 goals—behind only Bobby Charlton's club record of 249 — and Van Gaal hopes a first home victory since 7 November will trigger an improved run for both Rooney and his side.

Van Gaal, who had overseen United's longest sequences of matches without victory since 1990, said: "It is amazing and that at the age of 30 years. "You have to say that of course now we are playing much more matches, but still it is an achievement. For me, it is more important he scores now and he scores today (Saturday)."

"He scores also a fantastic goal, with his left foot behind his right foot, and you cannot imagine what a goal that is. A great goal."

"All the players have done their utmost best

and that is very important for the manager. I hope it is a fantastic starting point for the team and for him." United, whose 0-0 draw against Chelsea last Monday meant that they had failed to score in five of their previous eight home games, produced an improved performance.

As well as creating the winning goal, Martial headed in the game's opening goal two minutes into the second half and Ashley Young, who set him up, also stood out.

Van Gaal described his starting formation, with a three-man defence and Young and Martial as wing-backs, as "risky". He was in danger of seeing more points dropped when Swansea, who had won their previous three games against United, equalised through a Gylfi Sigurdsson header with 20 minutes to play.

### 'LOWER THE PRESSURE'

But Rooney's goal was a reward for a more adventurous approach by the United manager. "Amazing is that you can perform the game plan like we have done in the first half and the second half in a risky style under this pressure. That is positive, I think," Van Gaal said.

"Also against Chelsea we played very risky because we want to press. The players want to

press. It is a risk to play that. "Still we are the dominating team, against Chelsea and today against Swansea. That is why I am proud they can do it under this pressure."

"They have showed it this season many times, but now the situation is different. Now I have a good hope this is a starting point for more."

"You cannot predict (what effect a win will have). Only it shall raise the confidence and lower the pressure because the players had a lot of pressure to do it in 90 minutes against an opponent that is not so easy."

"The opponent is also playing in a way that makes it difficult to score, with 10 players behind the middle line. That is why I am happy we scored the two beautiful goals."

Swansea, who remain just one place above the relegation zone, did not include England midfielder Jonjo Shelvey in their squad, but caretaker manager Alan Curtis said that the 23-year-old was still part of his plans.

"We had a good talk about it before we came away. He trained this morning with a group of players," Curtis said. "Jonjo has a terrific ability. We all know that. We need him and hopefully he will play a part to the end of the season for us." —AFP



DUNKERQUE: Paris Saint-Germain's Italian midfielder Marco Verratti (L) vies with Wasquehal's forward Adama Diakhite during the French Cup football match between Wasquehal and Paris Saint-Germain (PSG) yesterday at the Stadium Nord in Dunkerque, northern France. — AFP

# IBRAHIMOVIC SCORES WINNER AS PSG ADVANCES

PARIS: Zlatan Ibrahimovic headed home the winner as Paris Saint-Germain started the defense of its French Cup title with a scrappy 1-0 win over fourth-tier side Wasquehal yesterday.

Playing its first game of 2016 in the northern city of Lille, PSG was in control throughout and created multiple chances but lacked a cutting edge until the Sweden international connected with Marco Verratti's long ball on the hour mark.

Having opened up a 19-point lead at the top of the French league standings in just 19 games,

PSG is looking to reproduce the domestic treble Laurent Blanc's side achieved last season when it won the league title, the League Cup and the Cup. Among the top-tier teams also advancing to the round of 32 were Lorient, Saint-Etienne, Bordeaux, Lyon and Montpellier. Lyon's new coach Bruno Genesio, who replaced Hubert Fournier during the winter break, celebrated his first game in charge with a 7-0 thrashing of fifth-division Limoges after Maxwell Cornet and Rachid Ghezzal each scored a brace.

Montpellier, which also changed coach during the festive period and appointed former player Pascal Bailly following Rolland Courbis' resignation, defeated fifth-tier Epemay 1-0.

Bordeaux came close of suffering a shock exit at the hands of third-tier Frejus-Saint-Raphael, coming twice from behind before Diego Rolan sealed a 3-2 win in added time with a fine volley.

Two matches between top-tier teams see 10-time winner Marseille traveling to Caen later Sunday, and Nice hosting Rennes today. — AP

# DEFOE GIVES SUNDERLAND REASON TO BE CHEERFUL

LONDON: Relieved Sunderland manager Sam Allardyce gave thanks for two-goal Jermain Defoe after his side ended a five-match losing streak with a 3-1 win over fellow Premier League strugglers Aston Villa on Saturday.

"Thank God for Jermain Defoe and his finishing qualities. He turned the game back in our favour," Allardyce told Sky Sports after the 33-year-old former England striker's double at the Stadium of Light.

The clash of the basement clubs, a classic 'six pointer' in an increasingly desperate battle to avoid the drop from the world's most lucrative league, looked finely balanced before Defoe settled it. Allardyce had described the game as Sunderland's "biggest of the season" so far.

The Black Cats went ahead against the run of play in the 30th minute when Patrick van Aanholt's shot took a deflection off visiting defender Michah Richards. Villa equalised through Carles Gil's volley in the 63rd minute before Defoe, who could have had a hat-trick, netted twice, his second arriving in stoppage time.

"I was very pleased about everyone holding their nerve today, fans included. When they scored we could have gone under," said Allardyce. "We didn't, we kept plugging away and kept it nice and tight at the back and we finally got what we wanted. "Anxiety is what you need to play football, you need to have a little bit of tension, but if it goes too far into fear than that's when you can lose your nerve...the only way to dismiss that fear is to keep winning football matches," added Allardyce. The win left Sunderland in deep trouble still, second

from bottom with 15 points from 20 games, but their morale revived.

Villa, on a mere eight points, look doomed. Manager Remi Garde exchanged angry words with Allardyce at the final whistle and refused to shake the Sunderland manager's hand. Garde was unhappy his counterpart did not acknowledge him

before the start of the match.

"I would have preferred that Mr Allardyce came to me before the game to say 'hello,'" said the Frenchman.

"It's just a sign of (being) welcomed but I don't want to do too much (about it). I was upset probably by the result but that's it." — Reuters



AMIENS: Lille's Ivorian forward Junior Tallo (L) vies with Amiens' Senegalese midfielder Victor Samb and French defender Kevin Martinez (front) during a French Cup round of 64 football match between Lille and Amiens AC yesterday at the Licorne Stadium in Amiens. — AFP



# Sports

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Ibrahimovic  
scores winner  
as PSG advances

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LIVERPOOL: Everton's Argentinian defender Ramiro Funes Mori (C) heads the ball during the English Premier League football match between Everton and Tottenham Hotspur at Goodison Park in Liverpool, north west England yesterday. — AFP

## LENNON ON MARK AS IMPROVED EVERTON HOLD SPURS



LIVERPOOL: Aaron Lennon scored against his former club as Everton displayed rediscovered resolve in a 1-1 draw at home to Champions League-chasing Tottenham Hotspur yesterday.

Everton had lost their two previous home games, 3-2 against Leicester City and 4-3 against Stoke City, but they took a 22nd-

minute lead when Lennon converted Romelu Lukaku's knock-down with a neatly controlled half-volley. Dele Alli deftly volleyed home a brilliant equaliser in first-half stoppage time, but it was Everton who finished the game nursing the greater regrets, with substitute Muhamed Besic going close.

Everton remain 11th, nine points below Mauricio Pochettino's Tottenham, who squandered an opportunity to re-establish a five-point lead over fifth-place Manchester United.

Instead their cushion in the final Champions League berth has been trimmed to three points, while they now trail leaders- and arch rivals-Arsenal by six. Spurs looked every inch the team chasing a fourth

straight win as they established the tempo on a rain-slicked Goodison Park pitch, monopolising possession and forcing Everton deep into their own territory.

Seamus Coleman did brilliantly to prevent Alli turning in a low cross from Kyle Walker before Harry Kane saw a languid 25-yard shot hit the left-hand post and bounce across goal before going out for a goal-kick.

### UNDER PRESSURE

But mid-way through the half Everton landed a sucker-punch by going ahead with a delightfully constructed goal. From Leighton Baines's back-heel, Tom Cleverley lofted forward a pass that Lukaku nodded down for Lennon, who chested the ball down before steering a difficult half-volley

inside the left-hand post.

Lennon, who spent 10 years at Spurs, did not celebrate, but moments later he almost created a second goal by cutting the ball back for Arouna Kone, which obliged Toby Alderweireld to block.

It took Spurs a few minutes to clear their heads, but they came within a whisker of equalising on the half hour when Ben Davies collected a corner from Christian Eriksen and drove a shot against the bar from outside the box. Moments after the fourth official had indicated that two minutes of stoppage time were to be played, Spurs levelled with a goal every bit as pleasing as Everton's. Alderweireld's raking pass from halfway picked out the run of Alli, who leapt to control the ball on his chest before sliding a vol-

ley past Tim Howard's outstretched left hand and into the bottom corner.

Alli created a chance for Kane early in the second half with an alert chested lay-off, but under pressure from his England team-mate John Stones, the Spurs number 10 skewed wide. Everton manager Roberto Martinez added fresh legs for the last half an hour, Gerard Deulofeu and Besic replacing Lennon and Kone.

Besic almost gave Everton victory with a glorious, dipping volley that Hugo Lloris palmed over and from Cleverley's resulting corner, Ramiro Funes Mori headed fractionally wide. The Goodison rafters echoing, Everton continued to push and Lloris was called upon again in stoppage time to repel a crisp effort from Ross Barkley. — AFP

## HIDDINK OFF THE MARK AS CHELSEA CRUSH PALACE



LONDON: Guus Hiddink enjoyed his first victory since taking over as Chelsea interim manager as the troubled Premier League champions crushed Crystal Palace 3-0 yesterday.

After draws against Watford and Manchester United following his arrival as short-term replacement for the sacked Jose Mourinho, Hiddink was at last able to celebrate three points at Selhurst Park. Oscar opened the scoring in the first half before Willian's cracker and a Diego Costa strike extended Chelsea's unbeaten run since Mourinho's departure to four matches.

In such turmoil for much of a season ruined by the breakdown of Mourinho's relationship with his squad, the Blues are slowly getting back in the groove under Hiddink and moved six points clear of the relegation zone after their first away league success in eight attempts.

"Everyone knows we have a lot of quality in our team, but sometimes champions have a tendency to be complacent and it can be difficult to get back (to form)," Hiddink said. "Do not go over

the top. It's the first win after a worrying period with two draws so the team desperately needed the win and it was convincing. "As long as we play like we did today I will be happy."

After climbing into contention for a European place, Palace's first defeat in seven matches left Alan Pardew's men without a win or a goal in their last three games. With torrential rain lashing Selhurst Park, Palace forward Wilfried Zaha went close early on with a low strike that skimmed off the slick pitch.

Eden Hazard saw a long-range effort deflected wide at the conclusion of Chelsea's first serious attack, but the Belgium playmaker began limping immediately after the shot.

Hazard, lambasted by Mourinho for not trying to play on when injured at Leicester last month, briefly carried on but in the 15th minute he decided he needed to come off.

While Hazard's commitment to the cause has been questioned in the past, on this occasion the 24-year-old seemed in genuine discomfort.

Palace defender Damien Delaney had a pair of headers saved by Thibaut Courtois as the hosts tried to take advantage of Chelsea's tepid start.

But crucially Palace striker Frazier Campbell scuffed wide from Jason Puncheon's cross midway through the half and Hiddink's team finally awoke from their slumber to snatch the lead in the 29th minute.



LONDON: Crystal Palace's Irish defender Damien Delaney (L) clears the ball from the path of Chelsea's Brazilian-born Spanish striker Diego Costa during the English Premier League football match yesterday. — AFP

Hiddink had made two changes from Monday's draw at United as Costa returned from suspension and Cesc Fabregas came in for Nemanja Matic.

Both repaid their Dutchman's faith with decisive contributions to the opener. Fabregas was the architect with a pass that sent Costa racing away from Delaney down the right edge of the Palace area. Looking up, Costa unselfishly ignored the chance to shoot himself and, with goalkeeper Wayne Hennessey out of position, the Spain striker pulled the ball back to Oscar, who had the simple task of slotting home from close-range.

Hiddink had called for players other

than Costa to take the responsibility of scoring and Oscar's fifth goal of the season was a well-timed response from the Brazilian. Cesar Azpilicueta almost made it two when he beat the Palace offside trap, surging clear to test Hennessey with a powerful strike that drew a fine stop from the Palace keeper. Kurt Zouma should have doubled Chelsea's lead when he rose highest to meet Willian's free-kick, but the defender couldn't keep his header on target. However, Zaha was unable to summon the power or accuracy to beat Courtois from a promising position and Willian made Palace pay in the 60th minute. — AFP

## FOXES CAN FINISH TOP FOUR: PEARSON

LONDON: Former Leicester City manager Nigel Pearson is backing the Foxes to finish in the top four of the Premier League but insists he can take some credit for their remarkable reverse in fortunes.

The Foxes have flourished under new boss Claudio Ranieri and were top at Christmas before settling back to second behind Arsenal after narrowly escaping relegation last season. "The first half of the season shows they are capable," the 52-year-old Pearson told BBC Radio 5 Live's Sportsweek. "I don't see any reason why they can't (stay in the top four). I think we've seen enough results this year to suggest the sides who have been promoted are doing well and the big guns are not having it their own way."

Pearson was sacked in June despite taking the Foxes from bottom of the Premier League to finish 14th in the table in their first season after winning promotion. However, his tenure was often dogged by controversy—he called a journalist an "ostrich" at a news conference and was involved in a touchline altercation with Crystal Palace midfielder James McArthur.

The former Southampton boss says he is "not angry" and "always had a good relationship with the club's owners". "Leicester continue to do exceptionally well and I can take quite a bit of pride in how well things have been set up," Pearson added.

"Some of the best work that was done doesn't necessarily coincide with when the results were going well." The 64-year-old Ranieri has added just three players to Pearson's squad in Gokhan Inler, N'Golo Kante and Yohan Benalouane.

However, the Italian has got the best out of striker Jamie Vardy, who is the joint top scorer in the league alongside Everton's Romelu Lukaku on 15 goals, and winger Riyad Mahrez, who has scored 13.

"He inherited a side which is more than very good but you have to give him some credit for recognising that and not doing too much with it," Pearson said. "Management comes in lots of different forms. One thing you have to credit Ranieri for is that it's rare to inherit a football club in a positive position. Normally there's a change because results aren't going well." — Reuters



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TEXAS CITY: Marathon Oil's refinery in Texas City, Texas. Seven of the 10 biggest losers in the S&P 500 in 2015 were energy companies. With crude prices at 11-year lows, the world's biggest oil and gas producers are facing their longest period of investment cuts in decades. —AP

## BIG OIL TO CUT INVESTMENT AGAIN IN 2016

### COMPANIES COULD SEEK MERGERS AND ACQUISITIONS FOR GROWTH

**LONDON:** With crude prices at 11-year lows, the world's biggest oil and gas producers are facing their longest period of investment cuts in decades, but are expected to borrow more to preserve the dividends demanded by investors. At around \$37 a barrel, crude prices are well below the \$60 firms such as Total, Statoil and BP need to balance their books, a level that has already been sharply reduced over the past 18 months. International oil companies are once again being forced to cut spending, sell assets, shed jobs and delay projects as the oil slump shows no sign of recovery.

US producers Chevron and ConocoPhillips have published plans to slash their 2016 budgets by a quarter. Royal Dutch Shell has also announced a further \$5 billion in spending cuts if its planned takeover of BG Group goes ahead. Global oil and gas investments are expected to fall to their lowest in six years in 2016 to \$522 billion, following a 22 percent fall to \$595 billion in 2015, according to the Oslo-based consultancy

Rystad Energy. "This will be the first time since the 1986 oil price downturn that we see two consecutive years of a decline in investments," Bjoernar Tonhaugen, vice president of oil and gas markets at Rystad Energy, told Reuters.

The activities that survive will be those that offer the best returns. But with the sector's debt to equity ratio at a relatively low level of around 20 percent or below, industry sources say companies will take on even more borrowing to cover the shortfall in revenue in order to protect the level of dividend payouts.

Shell has not cut its dividend since 1945, a tradition its present management is not keen to break. The rest of the sector is also averse to reducing payouts to shareholders, which include the world's biggest investment and pension funds, for fear investors might take flight.

Exxon Mobil and Chevron benefit from the lowest debt ratios among the oil majors while Statoil and Repsol have the highest debt burden, accord-

ing to Jefferies analyst Jason Gammel.

#### FEW LARGE DECISIONS

With only a handful of major projects approved in 2015, including Shell's Appomattox development in the Gulf of Mexico and Statoil's giant \$29 billion Johan Sverdrup field in the North Sea, 2016 is also likely to see few large investment decisions. Projects that could be green-lit include BP's Mad Dog Phase 2 in the Gulf of Mexico, which the company now expects to cost less than \$10 billion, around half the original estimate, and Chevron's expansion of the Tengiz project in Kazakhstan, according to Gammel.

Industry-wide, costs will be cut by reducing the size of projects, renegotiating supply contracts and using less complex technology. After rapidly expanding in the first half of the decade when oil prices were above \$100 a barrel, companies are now expected to focus on the most profitable activities, said Brendan Warn, oil and gas equity analyst at BMO Capital

Markets. "Companies want to reduce their range of activity and pick those with the highest returns on capital," Warn said. Shell, which plans to complete its \$54 billion acquisition of BG in February, intends to focus on the attractive liquefied natural gas (LNG) market and on deep water oil production, especially in Brazil, both areas in which BG is a leader.

With similar priorities in mind, BP is increasingly focused on the Gulf of Mexico and Egypt, where it approved a \$12 billion development in 2015.

While tens of thousands of jobs have already been cut in 2015, more redundancies are expected this year as companies narrow their focus, Warn added. On top of reducing spending by scrapping and delaying projects, oil majors will see costs come down as contractors agree to further price reductions. For example, the annual cost of hiring a drilling ship fell to an average of \$332,000 in 2015, compared with \$405,000 in 2014, according to Rigzone, which collects industry data.

The drop in investment bodes badly for services

and contractor companies, which are seeing their work dry up.

#### HOLD YOUR NERVE

But with fewer projects approved, fewer fields developed and less maintenance work undertaken, companies are putting their growth at risk. "You've got to hold your nerve. If you cut too deeply, it is very, very difficult to take advantage of the price rebound when it comes," a senior official at a European oil major told Reuters. Tumbling oil prices have cut billions of dollars from oil companies' revenue streams, although strong profits from refining have softened the blow for most. And while their in-house oil and gas production growth comes under pressure, companies might opt to acquire rivals with less resilient balance sheets, as with Shell's proposed acquisition of BG. "In the second half of 2016, if we see price stabilization, I expect companies will be looking to replace reserves inorganically, by making acquisitions," Warn said. —Reuters

## IRAN SAYS BOOSTING OIL EXPORTS DEPENDS ON FUTURE DEMAND

**DUBAI:** A rise in Iran's crude oil exports once sanctions against it are lifted depends on future global oil demand and should not further weaken oil prices, senior officials were quoted as saying. Oil Minister Bijan Zanganeh said Iran did not plan to exacerbate an already bearish oil market.

"We are not seeking to distort the market but will regain our market share," said Zanganeh, quoted by oil ministry news agency Shana. Oil prices are likely to come under further pressure this year, when international sanctions on Iran are due to be removed under a nuclear deal reached in July. Brent crude settled at \$37.28 a barrel on Thursday.

Iran has repeatedly said it plans to raise oil output by 500,000 barrels per day post sanctions, and another 500,000 bpd shortly after that, to reclaim its position as the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries' second-largest producer.

"The decision on the amount of exports highly depends on the future condition of the market. We will raise our market quota steadily," said Mohsen Qamsari, director general for international affairs of the National Iranian Oil Company (NIOC). "We will adjust our output to the global market's demand," he told Shana on Saturday. "We will exercise great caution to prevent a further decline in international prices and will adopt certain methods and strategies to this end," he added, without elaborating.

Oil prices fell as much as 35 percent for 2015 after a race to pump by Middle East crude producers and US shale oil drillers created an unprecedented global glut that may take through 2016 to clear. The sanctions have halved Iran's oil exports to around 1.1 million bpd from a pre-2012 level of 2.5 million bpd, and the loss of oil income has hampered investments. —Reuters

## STOCKS MIXED IN THIN TRADE; EMAAR WEIGHS ON DUBAI

### MIDEAST STOCK MARKETS

**DUBAI:** Middle East stock markets were mixed in quiet trade yesterday with Dubai falling as Emaar Properties was sold after a fire at one of its luxury hotels. The Saudi Arabian and Egyptian markets gained, supported by large-cap bank stocks. Emaar shares slid in heavy, early trade after its Address Downtown hotel in Dubai was engulfed by a fire on New Year's Eve. The stock hit an intra-day low of 5.44 dirhams but a rebound gained steam as buy orders were placed in the final 15 minutes of trade. It closed at 5.60 dirhams, down 1.6 percent, and Dubai's index finished down 0.5 percent.

Dubai's leading real estate developer said the blaze would have "no material impact" on it because the building and risk of fire were covered by its insurance.

Emaar will lose some business because of the closure of the hotel; a schedule has not been announced for its reopening. But the loss will be a very small part of its total business.

"The operational impact of the fire incident on Emaar's expected 2016 revenue and earnings per share estimates is not significant in our view," said a note by Arqaam Capital.

Hotel group revenues in 2016 are expected to be hurt by 13 percent, while at the parent level, the effect will be far less significant at 1 per-

cent, the note added.

"Any impact from lost room revenue because of damaged property, as well as tarnished reputation, should not be material for the parent company," said Ayisha Zia, equity analyst at Muscat-based OAB Invest. Abu Dhabi's index slipped 0.8 percent as heavyweights Etisalat and First Gulf Bank fell 0.9 and 1.2 percent respectively.

Saudi Arabia's index gained 0.6 percent in modest volumes. The government's 2016 austerity budget due to low oil prices has cast a shadow over the market, though there are hopes stock prices have now factored in macroeconomic headwinds, at least for now.

Saudi Arabian Mining Co (Ma'aden) jumped 2.7 percent after announcing it had started initial production of copper at its joint venture affiliate with Canada's Barrick Gold Corp.

Petrochemicals remained soft, however, as investors are still wary of the sector after rises in the price of natural gas feedstock in last week's budget. Saudi Basic Industries (SABIC), which makes up two-thirds of the sector's total market value, fell 0.7 percent.

"Industrial companies are expected to experience a relatively higher impact (from subsidy reforms) while the retail, telecom and

banking sectors will not be impacted directly," said a note by Saudi's NCB Capital. Major Islamic retail bank Al Rajhi led gains among lenders, rising 1.9 percent, and Riyad Bank added 1.6 percent after the fourth largest lender announced on Thursday it plans to pay a cash dividend of 0.35 riyal per share for the second half of 2015, the same payout as in the corresponding period of 2014. In Qatar, Doha's bourse retreated 1.1 percent as regional retail investors sold blue chips. Volumes were very low as many institutional investors were absent for year-end holidays.

Industries Qatar and Qatar National Bank, the two largest stocks in their respective sectors, fell 3.4 and 0.6 percent respectively. Qatar's economy expanded 3.8 percent year-on-year, after adjusting for inflation, according to Qatar's Ministry of Development Planning and Statistics. In Egypt, Cairo's main index advanced 1.2 percent, picking up momentum in the final 30 minutes of trade as blue-chip lender Commercial International Bank shares surged 7.4 percent. CI Capital, which Orascom Telecom bid to acquire from CIB in December, has acquired CIB's stake in affiliate Corplease for 133 million Egyptian pounds (\$17 million), CIB said in a bourse statement. —Reuters

## OMAN SETS PLAN TO HALVE OIL'S ROLE IN ECONOMY

**MUSCAT:** Oman's government has released a five-year plan to halve the economy's dependence on the oil industry as low crude prices pressure government finances. The 2016-2020 plan, set out in a statement by the Supreme Council for Planning late on Saturday, said over 500 programs and policies would seek to diversify the Omani economy into sectors such as manufacturing, mining, transport and tourism. The plan aims to cut the oil industry's contribution to gross domestic product to 22 percent from 44 percent; the contribution of natural gas would drop to 2.4 percent from 3.6 percent.

Average annual investments would total around 28 percent of gross domestic product; cumulative investment over the five years is expected to be 41 billion rials (\$106 billion), against 38 billion rials envisaged in the previous five-year plan. The new plan is to make heavy use of public-private partnerships, with 52 percent of total investment to come from the private sector against 42 percent in the last plan.

The plan assumes an average oil price of \$45 a barrel for 2016, \$55 for 2017 and 2018, and \$60 for 2019 and 2020, while Oman's average oil production is assumed to remain flat at 990,000 barrels per day. Brent crude oil is currently just above \$37. —Reuters





A fire engulfs The Address Hotel in downtown Dubai.

# EMAAR HIRES CONTRACTOR TO RESTORE FIRE-RAVAGED HOTEL

## COMPANY DENIES MATERIAL IMPACT FROM FIRE

**DUBAI:** Dubai's Emaar Properties has hired a local contractor to restore a fire-damaged hotel, stating yesterday the New Year Eve would have "no material impact" on the company because the building and risk of fire are covered by its insurance.

Fire engulfed Emaar's 63-storey Address Downtown luxury hotel and residential tower on New Year's Eve. The fire has been contained and the company and authorities are investigating its cause, Emaar added in a morning statement to Dubai's bourse.

Experts are asking if cladding layers fixed to the outside of buildings for decoration, insulation or protection may in some cases make them more vulnerable to fire. In a further emailed statement, Emaar said it had hired Dubai-based DUTCOC Group as contractor to clear and



**DUBAI:** Emaar shares, listed in the Dubai Financial Market, were down during the first trading day of the year.

restore the hotel. DUTCOC representatives are already on-site and working "round-the-clock", the statement said.

"As soon as clearing and assessment work is completed, construction will commence as per a tightly scheduled calendar," Emaar said. "The details of the work including the timelines and plans will be revealed in due course."

Emaar's hospitality division accounted for 12 percent of the firm's revenue in the nine months to Sept. 30, 2015, its financial statements show. The Address Downtown's nine-month room revenue was 87.6 million dirhams (\$23.85 million), or 18 percent of the hospitality unit's total room revenue of 490 million dirhams. Emaar's shares ended 1.6 percent lower, having fallen as much as 4.4

percent in early trade. "The building and risk of fire are covered by insurance so there should be no material impact on the company as a result of this incident."

Shares in Emaar, the Dubai Financial Market's heaviest stock at 18.8 percent, closed down 1.5 percent at Dh5.60 per share as UAE markets opened for the first time in 2016.

The company's chairman, Mohamed Alabbar, said yesterday that it intends to restore the building "to all its glory and even surpass the splendid architectural standards. Further timelines and plans will be shared as they are finalized."

"We develop our projects to the highest standards of quality and as per international best practices," he added. — Agencies

### News

in brief

#### Qatar Q3 real GDP growth slows to 3.8%

**DOHA:** Qatar's Ministry of Development Planning and Statistics released the following preliminary third-quarter gross domestic product data yesterday, adjusted for inflation. The mining and quarrying sector, which includes oil and gas, expanded 0.1 percent from a year earlier and 1.1 percent from the previous quarter. The rest of the economy grew 7.8 percent from a year earlier and 4.4 percent from the previous quarter.

#### Maaden says energy reforms to hit 2016 profit

**DUBAI:** Saudi Arabian Mining Co (Maaden) said yesterday that changes to energy and gas feedstock prices announced by the government last week would reduce its profit in 2016 by around 120 million riyals (\$32 million). The company, the Gulf's largest miner, said in the bourse filing that it would continue implementing its strategy to boost productivity and reduce costs to manage changes in commodity markets.

#### Al-Khodari says energy price hikes will raise its costs

**RIYADH:** Saudi Arabia's Abdullah Abdul Mohsin Al-Khodari and Sons yesterday forecast changes to the kingdom's electricity and energy prices would raise its costs by 44.3 million riyals (\$11.81 million) between 2016 and 2020. The builder is the latest Riyadh-listed company to reveal the likely impact of higher prices on its operations. Khodari forecast its operational costs would increase by 22.1 million riyals in 2016, 12.4 million riyals in 2017, 8.5 million riyals in 2018 and by less than 1 million riyals in both 2019 and 2020, according to a bourse statement. Last week, Saudi's government announced plans to shrink a record state budget deficit with spending cuts, reforms to energy subsidies and a drive to raise revenues from taxes and privatization.

#### Yields on Egypt's 91-day and 266-day T-bills rise

**CAIRO:** Yields on Egypt's three and nine-month treasury bills rose at yesterday's auction, data from the central bank showed. The average yield on Egypt's 91-day bill rose to 11.358 percent from 11.336 percent on Dec 27 and the yield on the 266-day bill jumped to 11.859 from 11.796 percent in a similar auction on Dec 27.

### TWO IOWA LAWMAKERS LEADING TRADE MISSION TO CUBA

**DES MOINES:** Two Democratic state legislators announced they will lead a delegation visiting Cuba next week looking to form relationships between Cuba and Iowa in order to open up options for potential future trade.

Sen. Steve Soddors, D-Marshalltown, and Rep. Kirsten Running-Marquardt, D-Cedar Rapids, said they will be meeting with representatives from the Cuban government and business leaders to focus on fostering new business opportunities between Iowa and Cuba.

The four-day trade mission beginning next Tuesday also will include representatives of economic development, tourism, and trade interests. The timing will allow the two state legislators to be back in Iowa in time for the Jan. 11 start of the Iowa General Assembly's 2016 session.

"These meetings in Cuba are part of ongoing efforts to improve relationships with this emerging new market located just off the coast of the United States," said Soddors, vice chairman of the Senate Economic Growth Committee. "Iowans create many products which could find a market in Cuba. Expanded trade can bring benefits to the people of both countries."

Soddors and Running-Marquardt will be joined by Carlos Portes, a former ambassador for Latin America. Portes - who came to the US at the age of 9 and was raised by a Marshalltown family - later was appointed Special Ambassador for Latin American affairs by President Jimmy Carter.

"These meetings will be an opportunity to showcase Iowa and develop future economic growth, as well as build key relationships," said Running-Marquardt, ranking member of the House economic development budget subcommittee. "The United States military has made this next step possible. Without their sacrifice we would not be able to move forward to build peaceful and beneficial relationships between Iowa and Cuba."

During last session, Soddors introduced a resolution approved by the Iowa Senate that promoted efforts to develop support for an enhanced trade relationship between Iowa and Cuba. — AP

## EGYPT ARREARS OWED TO OIL FIRMS UP TO \$3BN

**CAIRO:** Egypt's outstanding arrears to foreign oil companies rose to \$3 billion at the end of December 2015 from \$2.7 billion at the end of October, Petroleum Minister Tarek El Molla told Reuters yesterday.

The ministry had said in September that Egypt aimed to reduce the arrears owed to foreign oil companies to \$2.5 billion by the end of 2015 and to pay them off completely by the end of 2016.

Delays in paying back foreign petroleum companies had discouraged investment in the sector, but a drive to increase the price paid for domestic production and pay back arrears had encouraged new contracts signed in 2015. El Molla did not provide further detail on why total arrears have risen since November.

Egypt has run short of hard currency since a 2011 uprising drove tourists and investors away. Reserves almost halved to \$16.4 billion by the end of November.

Once an energy exporter, Egypt has turned into a net importer

because of declining oil and gas production and increasing consumption. It is trying to speed up production at recent discoveries to fill its energy gap as soon as possible.

#### Pound steady

Egypt's central bank kept the pound steady at 7.7301 pounds to the dollar at its official foreign currency auction yesterday, and the currency held steady on the black market as well.

Egypt, which depends on imported food and energy, is facing a dollar shortage and mounting pressure to devalue the pound. The central bank surprised markets when it strengthened the pound on Nov. 11 by 20 piasters against the dollar and has bucked expectations by holding it steady ever since.

The central bank sold \$39.1 million at a cut-off price of 7.7301 pounds to the dollar, unchanged from the previous auction last Thursday. The official rate is still far

stronger than the black market rate, which was around 8.58 pounds to the dollar on Sunday, virtually unchanged from last Thursday's 8.57 pounds, one trader said. The country has been starved of foreign currency since a popular uprising in 2011 ousted autocrat Hosni Mubarak and drove tourists and foreign investors away.

Egypt's reserves have tumbled from \$36 billion in 2011 to \$16.4 billion, and the country has been rationing dollars through weekly dollar auctions to banks, keeping the pound artificially strong.

The bank's Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) raised benchmark rates by 50 basis points last month, citing inflationary pressures. In February, the central bank imposed capital controls, limiting dollar-denominated deposits to \$50,000 a month in an attempt to fight the black market. The move caused problems for importers who could no longer source foreign currency to clear goods, which piled up at ports. — Reuters

## EXCHANGE RATES

### AL-MUZAINI EXCHANGE CO.

#### ASIAN COUNTRIES

Japanese Yen	2.531
Indian Rupees	4.602
Pakistani Rupees	2.903
Sri Lankan Rupees	2.120
Nepali Rupees	2.881
Singapore Dollar	216.643
Hongkong Dollar	39.299
Bangladesh Taka	3.880
Philippine Peso	6.509
Thai Baht	8.467

#### GCC COUNTRIES

Saudi Riyal	81.270
Qatari Riyal	83.386
Omani Riyal	788.462
Bahraini Dinar	809.353
UAE Dirham	82.974

#### ARAB COUNTRIES

Egyptian Pound - Cash	37.270
Egyptian Pound - Transfer	38.968
Yemen Riyal/for 1000	1.422
Tunisian Dinar	151.166
Jordanian Dinar	429.710
Lebanese Lira/for 1000	2.031
Syrian Lira	2.172
Morocco Dirham	31.081

#### EUROPEAN & AMERICAN COUNTRIES

US Dollar Transfer	304.600
Euro	334.603
Sterling Pound	454.768
Canadian dollar	220.965
Turkish lira	104.279
Swiss Franc	308.925
Australian Dollar 225.860	
US Dollar Buying	303.400

20 Gram	216.710
10 Gram	111.050
5 Gram	56.210

### UAE EXCHANGE CENTRE WLL

#### CURRENCIES

Australian Dollar	213.08
Canadian Dollar	223.37
Swiss Franc	311.14
Euro	335.85
US Dollar	304.55
Sterling Pound	454.36
Japanese Yen	2.56
Bangladesh Taka	3.882
Indian Rupee	4.586
Sri Lankan Rupee	2.122
Nepali Rupee	2.871
Pakistani Rupee	2.903
UAE Dirhams	0.08287
Bahraini Dinar	0.8094
Egyptian Pound	0.03880
Jordanian Dinar	0.4331
Omani Riyal	0.7908
Qatari Riyal	0.08397
Saudi Riyal	0.08118

#### TELEX TRANSFER PER 1000

### DOLLARCO EXCHANGE CO. LTD

#### Rate for Transfer

US Dollar	304.400
Canadian Dollar	222.240
Sterling Pound	455.735
Euro	334.985
Swiss Franc	301.790
Bahrain Dinar	805.305
UAE Dirhams	83.120
Qatari Riyals	84.335

#### Selling Rate

Saudi Riyals	81.850
Jordanian Dinar	428.810
Egyptian Pound	38.763
Sri Lankan Rupees	2.123
Indian Rupees	4.594
Pakistani Rupees	2.901
Bangladesh Taka	3.867
Philippines Peso	6.440
Cyprus pound	579.790
Kenyan Shilling	3.510
Syrian Pound	2.380
Nepalese Rupees	3.865
Malaysian Ringgit	71.725
Chinese Yuan Renminbi	47.470
Thai Bhat	9.415
Turkish Lira	104.405

### BAHRAIN EXCHANGE COMPANY

CURRENCY	BUY	SELL
Europe		
British Pound	0.441823	0.450823
Czech Korune	0.004160	0.016160
Danish Krone	0.040182	0.045182
Euro	0.324825	0.332825
Norwegian Krone	0.030240	0.035440
Romanian Leu	0.072947	0.072947
Slovakia	0.009097	0.019097
Swedish Krona	0.031943	0.036943
Swiss Franc	0.297195	0.307395
Turkish Lira	0.099817	0.110117

Australasia		
Australian Dollar	0.213695	0.225195
New Zealand Dollar	0.201970	0.211470

America		
Canadian Dollar	0.213989	0.222489
US Dollars	0.300250	0.304750

US Dollars Mint	0.300750	0.304750
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Asia		
Bangladesh Taka	0.003478	0.004078
Chinese Yuan	0.045432	0.048932
Hong Kong Dollar	0.037168	0.039918
Indian Rupee	0.004224	0.004614
Indonesian Rupiah	0.000018	0.000024
Japanese Yen	0.002443	0.002623
Kenyan Shilling	0.003163	0.003163
Korean Won	0.000248	0.000263
Malaysian Ringgit	0.067196	0.073196
Nepalese Rupee	0.002885	0.003055
Pakistan Rupee	0.002655	0.002935
Philippine Peso	0.006397	0.006677
Sierra Leone	0.000070	0.000076
Singapore Dollar	0.211140	0.217140
South African Rand	0.013627	0.022127
Sri Lankan Rupee	0.001749	0.002329
Taiwan	0.009142	0.009322
Thai Baht	0.008125	0.008675

Arab		
Bahraini Dinar	0.800404	0.808404
Egyptian Pound	0.034551	0.037677
Iranian Riyal	0.000084	0.000086
Iraqi Dinar	0.000201	0.000261
Jordanian Dinar	0.425272	0.432772
Kuwaiti Dinar	1.000000	1.000000
Lebanese Pound	0.000151	0.000251
Moroccan Dirhams	0.021552	0.045552
Nigerian Naira	0.001258	0.001893
Omani Riyal	0.784099	0.789779
Qatar Riyal	0.082886	0.084099
Saudi Riyal	0.080273	0.081223
Syrian Pound	0.001290	0.001510
Tunisian Dinar	0.147053	0.155053
Turkish Lira	0.098717	0.110117
UAE Dirhams	0.081882	0.083031
Yemeni Riyal	0.001376	0.001456



## HOW TO SPEND \$5TN: A RECORD-BREAKING YEAR IN DEALS

### BIGGEST ACQUISITIONS FROM 2015, WHEN COMPANIES AGREED TO \$5TN IN DEALS

**NEW YORK:** Companies around the world spent a record \$5.04 trillion on acquisitions in 2015, according to Dealogic, as slow worldwide economic growth and low interest rates pushed companies to combine forces.

Dealogic, a financial data provider, says the value of global deals soared 37 percent in 2015. The highest price tag came in November, when Pfizer and Allergan announced the biggest pharmaceutical deal in history.

Low interest rates since the Great Recession have made it cheaper for companies to borrow money to pay for acquisitions, and because the global economy only grew slowly this year, companies decided it made more sense to buy their competitors instead of trying to boost their sales on their own.

Here are the 10 largest acquisitions announced during the year:

#### Pfizer and Allergan

Pfizer, the maker of cholesterol fighter Lipitor, impotence treatment Viagra and fibromyalgia drug Lyrica, agreed to buy Allergan in November. The \$148.57 billion deal would be the second-largest corporate merger ever. It would give Pfizer control of Botox and move the company's headquarters to Ireland, cutting its taxes. Pfizer would also become the world's largest drugmaker in terms of sales.

#### AB InBev and SABMiller

The biggest beer maker in the world wants to get even larger. The company behind Budweiser, Corona and Stella Artois agreed to buy the maker of Miller Genuine Draft and Peroni for \$105.56 billion in October. The move would expand AB InBev's business in Africa, Asia and other key developing markets. As part of the deal, SABMiller agreed to sell the Miller brand to Molson Coors.



**TORRANCE:** The sign for the ExxonMobil Torrance Refinery in Torrance, California. Energy stocks fell far more than the rest of the market in 2015 as the price of crude oil plunged. — AP

#### Royal Dutch Shell and BG Group

When Royal Dutch Shell agreed to buy BG Group in April, oil prices had taken a steep fall from their 2014 highs. But they were going to get a lot worse. Oil and gas company Shell agreed to buy BG Group for \$69.83 billion to expand its liquid natural gas business. Natural gas prices have tumbled since then, and in December they reached their lowest levels in 16 years.

#### Dell and EMC

In October PC maker Dell agreed to pay \$65.97 billion for EMC, which makes data storage hardware and sells cloud storage and security products. Dell's personal computer sales have been weak for years, but the company has been expanding its software and service businesses. Dell was taken private in 2013 by founder and CEO Michael Dell.

#### Dow Chemical and DuPont

Dow Chemical agreed to buy com-

petitor DuPont in a deal that will combine two chemicals companies that were founded in the 19th century. Both Dow and DuPont were pushed by activist investors to break up or find other ways to revitalize their businesses. When the \$62.38 billion deal closes, Dow DuPont will make products including Styrofoam insulation, Teflon coatings and Nylon and Kevlar fibers. Dow DuPont will then break into three separate companies with more specific focuses.

#### Charter Communications and Time Warner Cable

Charter Communications agreed to buy Time Warner Cable for \$56.80 billion in May, and it will also spend about \$10 billion to buy Bright House Networks. That will make Charter one of the largest providers of TV and internet services in the U.S. Cable provider Comcast tried to buy Time Warner in 2014, but the US government opposed that deal.

#### Heinz and Kraft Foods

One of the largest food companies in the world was formed when H.J. Heinz bought Kraft Foods for \$53.83 billion. The purchase, which was announced in March and closed in July, brought together brands including Oscar Meyer, Capri Sun, Ore-Ida, Maxwell House, Kool-Aid and Heinz ketchup. The tie-up was engineered by Warren Buffett's conglomerate Berkshire Hathaway and Brazilian investment firm 3G Capital.

#### Anthem buys Cigna

A wave of health insurance combinations swept the market in July as Anthem announced it would buy Cigna for \$51.93 billion just after Aetna said it would buy Humana for \$35.04 billion. Anthem is the second-largest US insurance company in terms of enrollment, and Cigna is fourth. The combined company would cover almost 50 million people. Anthem sells health coverage to individuals and employees of small businesses and serves Medicare, Medicaid

and federal employees. Cigna sells group disability and life insurance in the US and has an international business.

#### EBay spins off PayPal

Online commerce giant EBay spun off its payments system unit PayPal for \$49.16 billion in July. That was almost a year after EBay announced PayPal would become a separate company. Investors value PayPal more highly than its former parent, as PayPal has a market capitalization of about \$45 billion compared to EBay's \$33 billion.

#### Teva buying Allergan Generics

Teva, an Israeli company that is already the world's largest manufacturer of generic drugs, will get even bigger by buying the generic drugs business of Botox maker Allergan. Teva had been looking to expand, as earlier in the year it pushed to buy generic drugmaker Mylan. It dropped that bid after agreeing to its \$40.5 billion deal with Allergan. — AP

## GREECE DEFIANT ON PENSION CUTS AHEAD OF KEY TALKS

### TSIPRAS WON'T GIVE IN TO UNREASONABLE DEMANDS

**ATHENS:** Greece's prime minister yesterday said his government will not give in to "unreasonable" demands as the debt-ridden country braces for critical negotiations with international creditors on the thorny issue of pension reform. The warning came just days after Athens got one billion euros under the terms of its third bailout program.

The creditors—the European Commission, the European Central Bank, the International Monetary Fund and the ESM-finalized a third Greek debt rescue program in August worth 86 billion euros (\$94 billion) after Greece looked to be on the brink of crashing out of the eurozone.

"The creditors have to know that we are going to respect the agreement to the letter, but that doesn't mean we are going to succumb to unreasonable and undeserved demands," Alexis Tsipras told Real News newspaper.

"We have no commitment to find the money exclusively from pension cuts. On the contrary, the agreement provides the option of equivalent measures, which we have already processed," he said.

He admitted though that the pension system which is "on the brink of collapse" needs to be overhauled. The labor ministry is working on a new social security system under which state-guaranteed pensions will be reportedly cut by half-to a minimum of 384 euros—and the rest will depend on a person's income and years of social security payments.

"If we don't face the problem of the social security system today, in a year we won't be able to pay pensions," the labor ministry's seniormost official, Andreas Nefeloudis, told Mega channel TV yesterday. Tsipras' leftist government was forced in July to back down from its anti-austerity electoral pledges and accept a three-year rescue package from its eurozone partners.

The government has since July pushed through parliament a number of unpopular bailout reforms, losing in the process part of its majority in the chamber due to defections.

In December, the government said it had



**BRUSSELS:** Greek Prime Minister Alexis Tsipras speaks with the media after a meeting of eurozone heads of state at the EU Council building in Brussels. — AP

established a privatization fund and planned to sell a major stake in electricity distributor Admie, the latest reforms sought by creditors.

#### 'Greece's comeback'

Tsipras appeared optimistic for 2016 saying it "will be the year of Greece's comeback after six years in crisis." "We will return to growth, we will put an end to the capital controls, we will reduce the debt and we will return to the markets," he said. Greeks however do not seem to share his optimism.

According to a poll by Kappa Research for Vima newspaper yesterday, 55.1 percent of respondents said they believed things would

get worse in 2016 while 61.1 percent said a Grexit scenario would resurface. Bank of Greece governor Yannis Stournaras meanwhile warned of the huge risks involved in case Greece fails to reach an agreement with its creditors.

"A potential failure in the conclusion of the assessment of the new bailout program will bring back memories of the negative experience of the first half of 2015," he said in an article published in Kathimerini newspaper yesterday. "For a number of reasons the European Union is now more vulnerable and less capable of facing a new Greek crisis," he added. Tsipras said the government aimed to conclude with the negotiations before the end of February. — AFP

## SEVEN OF 10 BIGGEST BANKS' UK UNITS PAID NO TAX IN 2014

**LONDON:** Two more investment banks have reported paying zero tax in Britain in 2014, prompting the opposition Labor party to urge the government to reverse a tax change it made for banks last year. Citigroup and Credit Suisse disclosed in the past fortnight that their main UK subsidiaries paid no corporate income tax in 2014, the most recent year for which figures are available. This means seven of the 10 biggest foreign investment and commercial banks operating in Europe's main investment banking centre have said their main British arms paid no tax in that year.

In total the 10 banking groups generated over \$40 billion in fees in Britain in 2014, reported \$6.5 billion in profit and employed almost 50,000 people. But they contributed just \$205 million in corporate income tax. "These are damning findings that make a real mockery of the government's approach to taxation of the financial sector," said John McDonnell MP, the opposition Labor party's shadow finance minister.

The other five banks, as reported by Reuters last month, are JP Morgan Chase & Co, Nomura Holdings Inc, Deutsche Bank AG, Bank of America Merrill Lynch and Morgan Stanley. All declined to comment. There is no evidence that they broke any tax rules.

Most companies engage in tax planning to manage their bills, and banking lobby groups say corporate income tax is just one of many taxes the investment banks pay - Britain benefits richly from income taxes on bankers' bonuses. "The government believes it is crucial that the banks make a fair contribution to restoring stability to the public finances and has taken important steps to ensure they do this," a spokesman for the finance ministry said. The tax authority said it ensures that all businesses pay tax due under British law, but declined to comment on the banks.

#### BANK LEVY

In July, following pressure from banks which threatened to move operations from London, Finance Minister George Osborne said he would halve a levy banks must pay as a percentage of their assets, and he would restrict the base on

which it is calculated. At the same time he increased the tax rate banks must pay on corporate income, to 8 percentage points above the standard rate. Tax experts say corporation tax is easier to avoid than the bank levy.

McDonnell said the figures showed Osborne was already pursuing a "soft touch" approach. "This report should be setting off alarm bells at the Treasury and he should be reversing his decision on the bank levy immediately," he said. Tax avoidance has become a hot political topic in Britain after revelations in recent years of profit shifting by big groups including Apple Inc. and Amazon.com. Last year, banks were required to disclose how much tax they have paid on profits generated country-by-country. On Dec. 31, Citigroup said that its two main UK subsidiaries had a combined profit of \$308 million, but losses from the past reduced the tax it actually had to pay to zero.

Credit Suisse did not have a tax bill because it reported a loss in Britain for 2014. The bank reports most of its European profits in Switzerland, where effective tax rates can be much lower than in Britain. Of the 10 biggest foreign investment banks measured by fee income, only three paid corporate income tax in 2014. Goldman Sachs Group Inc paid \$27 million in tax on \$2 billion of profit generated by its London arm, while Switzerland's UBS Group AG paid \$4 million on \$140 million in UK profits. Both declined to comment. The biggest taxpayer of the 10 was Paris-based BNP Paribas, which paid \$174 million on \$954 million profit generated by its UK unit, which focuses on investment and commercial banking.

"BNP Paribas is determined to do its civic duty in the field of taxation," the bank said in a statement. It is not possible to compare the contributions of British banks including Barclays and HSBC, because even though they have large investment banking businesses, their country-by-country reports also include taxes paid on retail operations. Barclays declined to comment and no-one from HSBC was available. — Reuters

## VENEZUELA CUTS GAS EXPORT TO NEIGHBORING COLOMBIA

**BOGOTA:** Venezuela's state oil company is temporarily halting gas exports across the border to Colombia, citing climate factors and the need to generate electricity, the Colombian Mining Ministry reported. The ministry said that PDVSA notified it that supplies would be suspended as of Friday because of "the behavior of electrical energy generation due to climatic variability."

A drought has been affecting the region, though it did not specifically mention that.

An agreement between the two countries calls for Venezuela to send 39 million cubic feet of gas per day to Colombia, about 3 percent of Colombia's supply.

The US Energy Information Administration says that while Venezuela has enormous natural gas reserves, second only to those of the United States in the Americas, it's been consuming more than it produces in recent years and has been trying to upgrade its infrastructure.

The EIA said part of the gas is used to generate power and 35 percent is used by the petroleum industry, much of it to help production from mature fields. Colombia in recent years has been a key supplier of gas to Venezuela. — AP

## GREECE, ARAB-TURKISH FUND SIGN 400M EURO DEAL ON LUXURY RESORT

**ATHENS:** Greece's privatization agency said yesterday it signed a 400 million euro (\$434.3 million) deal with Jermyn Street Real Estate Fund to sell Astir Palace, a luxury seaside resort outside Athens.

Greece's top administrative court had blocked the sale of the Astir Palace hotel complex in March, saying the town planning scheme that Greece submitted violated Greek law as the construction of a large number of residential buildings would harm the natural and urban environment.

"Jermyn Street Real Estate Fund has signed the new agreement to submit the amended special zoning and spatial plan for the development of Astir Palace," the Hellenic Republic Asset Development Fund (HRADF) said. The fund represents investors from Turkey, Abu Dhabi, Dubai, Kuwait and other

Emirates.

The agency said the agreement ensured that the fund's development plan for the resort was adjusted to the court's opinion. "The whole process is expected to be completed within the first half of 2016," HRADF said. The agency is expected to cash in about 100 million euros from the deal. The rest of the proceeds will go to National Bank, Greece's largest lender, which owns about 85 percent of the resort. Privatizations have been a key condition of Greece's international bailouts since 2010 but its state asset sales scheme has produced poor revenues due to bureaucratic delays and lack of political will.

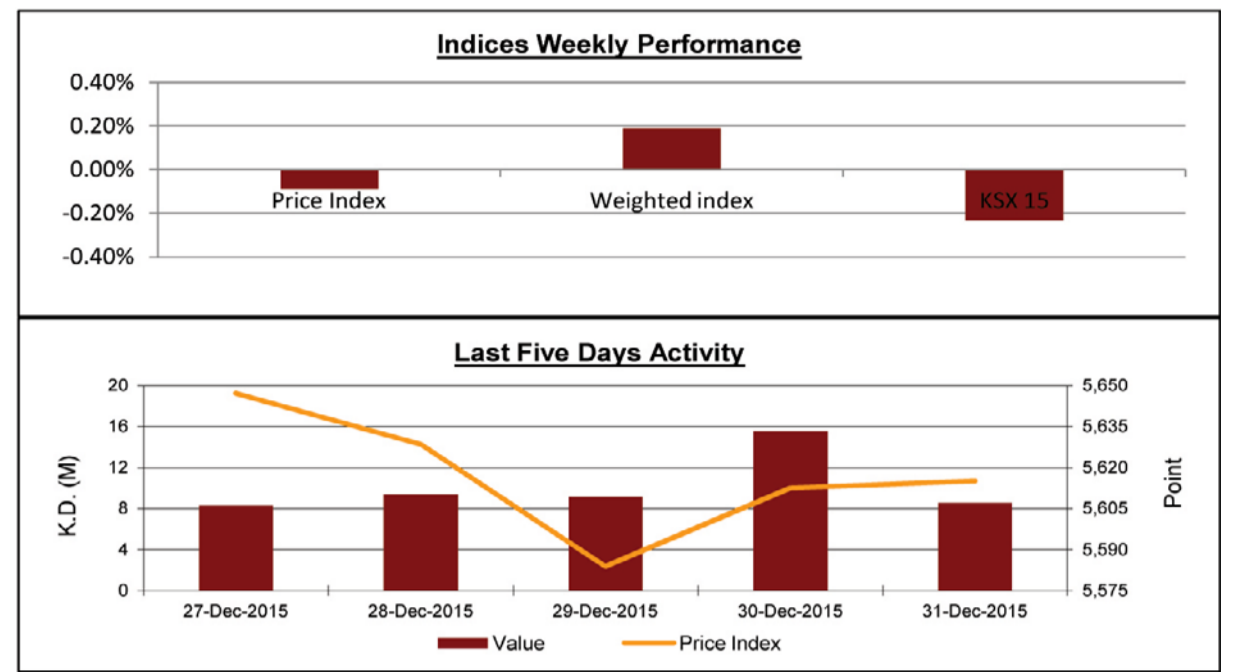
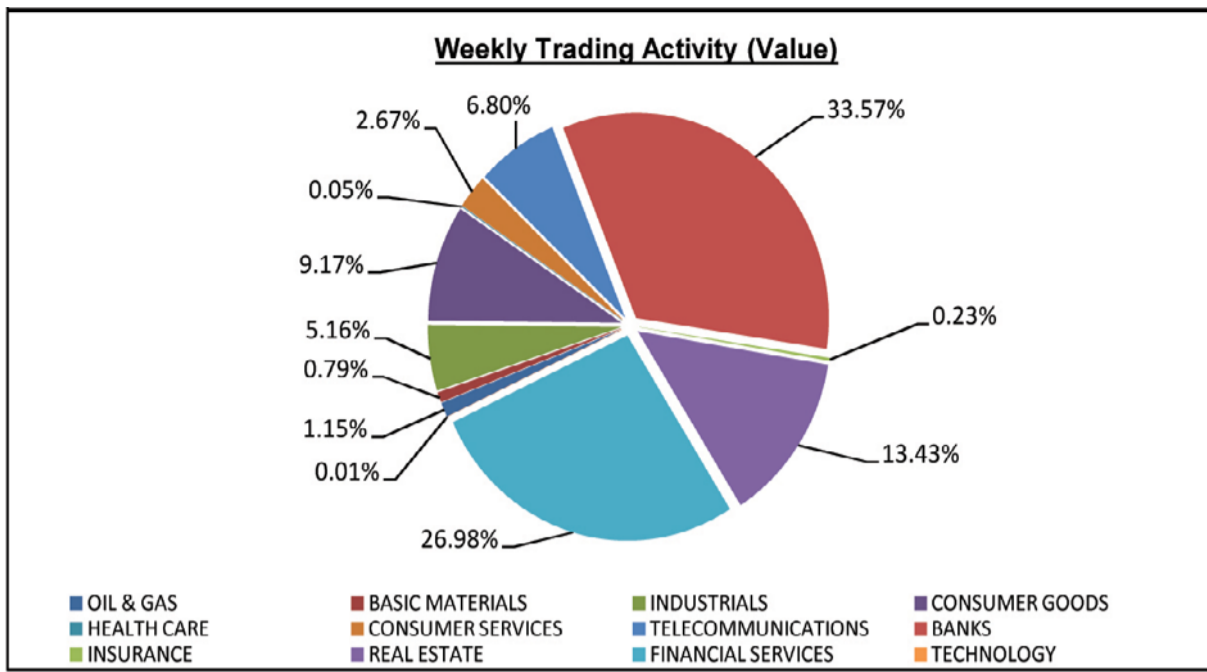
So far, Athens has raised only about 3.5 billion euros from state asset sales versus an original target of 50 billion euros. — Reuters

## Bank of America



**MIAMI:** A Bank of America branch in downtown Miami. Bank and other financial stocks ended 2015 modestly lower. — AP





# KUWAIT EQUITIES REMAIN UNDER PRESSURE

## BAYAN WEEKLY MARKET REPORT

**KUWAIT:** Kuwait Stock Exchange (KSE) ended last week with mixed performance. The Price Index closed at 5,615.12 points, down by 0.09 percent from the week before closing, the Weighted Index increased by 0.19 percent after closing at 381.70 points, whereas the KSX-15 Index closed at 900.43 points down by 0.23 percent. Furthermore, last week's average daily turnover increased by 15.24 percent, compared to the preceding week, reaching K.D. 10.20 million, whereas trading volume average was 121.51 million shares, recording a growth of 39.72 percent.

The three stock market indicators ended the week with mixed closings, whereas the Price and KSX-15 indices declined in light of the quick speculations and selling operations, whilst the Weighted Index went against the current and was able to realize a small weekly gain. Also, the overall market performance took a downward direction, despite the mixed performance witnessed by the end of the week, as many negative factors contributed into putting pressure on the market performance, such as the continued presence of the negative factors and the absence of new motivators, in addition to the investors' watch for the 2015 listed companies results, which will be announced in the coming weeks.

The opening session of the last week of the year witnessed mixed closings for the three market indicators, whereas the Price and Weighted indices were able to realize good gains by the end of the session supported by the purchasing powers that concentrated on the small-cap stocks and few leading stocks, while the KSX-15 Index recorded some losses by the end of the session affected by the selling operations that included some heavy stocks. Moreover, the market was subject to selling and profit collection operation in the next two sessions, included many stocks of different sectors, which pushed its three indices to close in the red zone, among a limited growth in the traded liquidity.

However on Wednesday's session, the market was able to realize good growth for the three indices, in light of the active purchasing power that included many stocks of large-cap and small-cap, especially after the noticeable declines witnessed by the stock prices in the previous sessions where it reached tempting purchasing levels. The end of week session witnessed the return to the mixed performance once again, as the Price Index continued its growth for the second consecutive session supported by the random purchasing operations that included few small-cap stocks, whilst the profit collection operations executed on a number

	Last Week	Previous Week	Ch. %
Volume	607,573,066	347,892,798	74.64%
Value (K.D.)	51,011,488	35,412,846	44.05%
Deals	13,255	9,923	33.58%

Last Week	Previous Week	Weekly Ch. %	Annual Ch. %
25,265,399,250	25,275,749,306	-0.04%	-9.70%

Company	Last Week Closing	Previous Week Closing	Ch. (fils)	Ch. %
IPG	315.00	250.00	65.0	26.00%
ALAQARIA	24.50	21.00	3.5	16.67%
AINS	530.00	460.00	70.0	15.22%
IFAHR	204.00	178.00	26.0	14.61%
POULT	196.00	176.00	20.0	11.36%

Company	Last Week Closing	Previous Week Closing	Ch. (fils)	Ch. %
TAHSSILAT	42.00	49.50	-7.5	-15.15%
KOUTFOOD	640.00	740.00	-100.0	-13.51%
YIACO	142.00	158.00	-16.0	-10.13%
MASSALEH	56.00	61.00	-5.0	-8.20%
ZIMAH	116.00	126.00	-10.0	-7.94%

of the leading stocks pushed the Weighted and KSX-15 indices to close in the red zone. The KSE market capitalization reached by the end of last week KD 25.27 billion,

	Price Index	Weighted index	KSX 15	
Weekly	Last week	5,615.12	381.70	900.43
	Previous week	5,619.98	380.98	902.52
	Change (Point)	-4.86	0.72	-2.09
	Change (%)	-0.09%	0.19%	-0.23%
Annual	Last year	6,535.72	438.88	1,059.95
	Change (Point)	-920.60	-57.18	-159.52
	Change (%)	-14.09%	-13.03%	-15.05%

decreasing by 0.04 percent when compared to its level in a week earlier where it was KD 25.28 billion. On an annual level, the market cap for the listed companies in KSE recorded a drop of 9.70 percent from its value at end of 2014, where it reached then KD 27.98 billion.

As far as KSE annual performance, the Price Index ended last week recording 14.09 percent annual loss compared to its closing in 2014, while the Weighted Index decreased by 13.03 percent, and the KSX-15 contracted by 15.05 percent.

### 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 Insurance sector, achieving 2.73 percent growth rate as its index closed at 1,126.99 points. Whereas, in the second place, the Consumer Goods sector's index closed at 1,094.91 points recording 1.54 percent increase. The Oil & Gas sector came in third as its index achieved 1.25 percent growth, ending the week at 818.74 points.

On the other hand, the Technology sector headed the losers list as its index declined by 3.68 percent to end the week's

activity at 820.16 points. The Health Care sector was second on the losers' list, which index declined by 3.21 percent, closing at 925.34 points, followed by the Consumer Services sector, as its index closed at 1,008.68 points at a loss of 1.38 percent.

### Sectors' Activity

The Financial Services sector dominated a total trade volume of around 333.45 million shares changing hands during last week, representing 54.88 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 20.80 percent of last week's total trading volume, with a total of around 126.38 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 17.12 million or 33.57 percent of last week's total market trading value. The Financial Services sector took the second place as the sector's last week turnover was approx. KD 13.76 million representing 26.98 percent of the total market trading value. —Prepared by the Studies & Research Department, Bayan Investment Co.

Sector	Volume	To Market %	Value	To Market %
OIL & GAS	20,741,665	3.41%	584,656	1.15%
BASIC MATERIALS	1,078,468	0.18%	401,657	0.79%
INDUSTRIALS	23,916,999	3.94%	2,631,308	5.16%
CONSUMER GOODS	3,752,026	0.62%	4,677,023	9.17%
HEALTH CARE	151,777	0.02%	24,084	0.05%
CONSUMER SERVICES	8,880,240	1.46%	1,362,818	2.67%
TELECOMMUNICATIONS	15,108,554	2.49%	3,468,528	6.80%
BANKS	73,739,453	12.14%	17,123,187	33.57%
INSURANCE	315,280	0.05%	117,236	0.23%
REAL ESTATE	126,378,404	20.80%	6,852,212	13.43%
FINANCIAL SERVICES	333,448,896	54.88%	13,764,534	26.98%
TECHNOLOGY	61,304	0.01%	4,245	0.01%

Sector	Last Week Closing	Previous Week Closing	Weekly Ch. %	Annual Ch. %
OIL & GAS	818.74	808.60	1.25%	-22.98%
BASIC MATERIALS	986.38	982.78	0.37%	-12.81%
INDUSTRIALS	1,043.03	1,048.02	-0.48%	-2.55%
CONSUMER GOODS	1,094.91	1,078.31	1.54%	-10.68%
HEALTH CARE	925.34	955.98	-3.21%	-1.59%
CONSUMER SERVICES	1,008.68	1,022.78	-1.38%	-6.74%
TELECOMMUNICATIONS	598.63	598.02	0.10%	4.94%
BANKS	907.08	900.91	0.68%	-9.75%
INSURANCE	1,126.99	1,097.05	2.73%	-4.28%
REAL ESTATE	940.76	942.63	-0.20%	-16.74%
FINANCIAL SERVICES	595.38	595.23	0.03%	-28.45%
TECHNOLOGY	820.16	851.47	-3.68%	-10.49%

# INVESTORS LOOK TO JANUARY EFFECT AT START OF 2016

**NEW YORK:** As Wall Street wraps up its flattest year since 2011, investors will have to deal with many of the same issues next year as they attempt to gauge market direction.

While many market participants have a host of worries heading into 2016 that could hurt stocks and keep volatility high, they remain optimistic for gains in 2016 and a strong start to the year could boost that case. According to the Stock Trader's Almanac, the direction of January's trading predicts the course for the year 75 percent of the time.

Stocks could get a boost next week from the so-called "January effect," when stocks that were sold off in December for year-end tax harvesting rally back in the next month as investors scoop them back up at lower prices. Of the S&P 500 components, 301 were down 10 percent or more from their 52-week highs and 175 were off by at least 20 percent through Dec. 30, according to Ryan Detrick, market strategist at Kimble Charting Solutions in Cincinnati.

That broad decline was offset by the narrow leadership of the "FANG" stocks - Facebook, Amazon, Netflix and Alphabet. Combined, they comprise more than 5 percent of the weighting in the S&P 500 and have all risen at least 35 percent for the year.

While the overall breadth of the S&P is not promising, that may leave a broader swath of stocks that could see a rebound next month, according to Jeff Saut, chief investment strategist at Raymond James Financial in St Petersburg, Florida.

### Hibernation

"The individual investor is in hibernation. There are six distinct stages to a secular bull

market and we are nowhere near euphoria, nowhere close, unless you own the FANGs," said Saut.

Despite the flat performance to finish out the year, stocks grappled with volatility throughout 2015. The S&P has moved at least 1 percent on a daily basis in either direction 72 times, the most since 2011, according to Standard & Poor's data.

The S&P 500 notched a record high of 2,130.82 on May 21 as middling economic data eased expectations for a rate hike from the US Federal Reserve. But three months later, the benchmark had fallen into correction territory, a drop of 10 percent from its high, when signs China's economy may be slowing faster than expected unnerved investors and a Fed rate hike drew closer.

"It turned into a big nothing. We are essentially where we started the year. We had a lot of volatility in between," said Ken Polcari, Director of the NYSE floor division at O'Neil Securities in New York. "In retrospect, actually, it could have been a disaster and it really ended up kind of flat, so I count that as a win, once you add in dividends."

Along with the return of many investors next week after the holidays, the economic calendar is more active, culminating with Friday's payrolls report.

But while recent jobs reports have been closely monitored for signs the Fed will begin to raise rates, the influence of the report may be muted due to the recent hike by the Fed and its intention to continue raising at a gradual pace. "The Fed knows it needs to be careful and they are going to be careful," said Scott Wren, senior global equity strategist at Wells Fargo Investment Institute in St. Louis. — Reuters



CHARLOTTE: Duke Energy employees work on power lines in Charlotte, NC. Utility stocks ended 2015 modestly lower. —AP



# WHAT'S IN STORE FOR THE BEGINNING OF 2016

**KUWAIT:** With its December first tightening in 9 years, the Fed so-called "lift-off" is finally behind us. The federal funds rate is up 25 bps to a target of 25-50 bps. In the beginning of 2016 markets can now move on to the next set of questions. How much and how fast for the Fed? What of the impact on the US economy, the global economy, commodities, currencies etc...

Analysts and markets are for the most part expecting a 2016 slightly above the 2014 and 2015 growth. Indeed, the IMF is looking for world GDP growth of 3.6 percent, despite the worries emerging from China. For the large economies, the US is expected to grow 2.8 percent, the Euro area 1.6 percent, Japan 1.0 percent, China 6.3 percent and emerging markets at 4.5 percent.

Under this scenario, markets expect the Fed to raise policy interest rates 75-100 bps into December 2016, while the Fed is "signaling" closer to 150 bps. On the other side of the Atlantic, during its last meeting, the ECB disappointed markets by "only" cutting its deposit rates and extending its current QE program, from September 2016 to March 2017. It also failed to meet market expectations of an increase in its monthly purchases of securities currently at euros 60 billion. That ECB announcement, in December, prompted a large and swift correction in the euro rate by almost five percent.

Market participants in the beginning of 2016 will be reassessing the call that had the policy divergence, between the ECB and the Fed, caused the recent one-way dollar rally. This reassessment will be affected by lower oil prices that will continue to weigh on inflation. In light of the less dramatic central bank "divergence", analysts have revised their views on the dollar expecting the appreciation to become less pronounced than in 2014 and 15.

Another market disappointment came from the December OPEC meeting. Indeed, oil prices in December continue to slide as OPEC kept its guidance quota unchanged at 30 million barrel per day, with Iran still poised to hike production ahead. Dashed hopes of a production cut send oil prices tumbling toward 9-

year lows. Equities in the advanced economies have seen pressure from oil equities but also from deflation fears and concerns that lower oil prices may be signaling weaker growth again especially with China million Dollar question of soft or hard landing.

The new lows in commodities point not only to a weak industrial demand, imbalances between supply and demand, but also the continued strength of the USD.



## Strong US economy in 2016

US employment gained 211K in November, with unemployment steady at 5.0 percent and wages advancing close to 2.0 percent on a yearly basis. Retail sales, car sales, and home sales are also good enough to support the Fed's view of US growth topping 2.0 percent in 2016, and that the time has finally come to raise short-term rates above the zero bound set back in 2009.

The negative effect of the less accommodative monetary policy on bond yields should be limited in the beginning of 2016. In contrast to the

## NBK MONEY MARKETS REPORT

Fed, the ECB and BOJ are set to continue expanding their balance sheets significantly over the coming year. While global economic growth for 2016 is expected to improve only slightly, the US, signs of higher wage pressures are appearing. The year or year change of average hourly earnings broke out of a six-year range, rising to its highest level since July

2016. This policy divergence is expected to keep the Euro currency under pressure, and in turns help the economy to close its output gap. The ECB's economic models suggest that a 5 percent decline in the Euro's trade-weighted exchange rate might lift GDP by 0.3 percent and inflation by as much as 0.5 percent. As a result, there is a strong correlation between

a political reshuffling that could potentially create more volatility in markets.

A potential concern for investors in 2016 is the upcoming UK EU referendum. The polls are close, and this could keep volatility elevated. The Bank of England is expected to hike its interest rates in the first half of 2016, with the economy near full employment, rising real wages and growth running above trend. The problem remains that in the last quarter of 2015, UK economic data disappointed on multiple fronts. Bank of England policymakers also expressed their concerns over falling commodity prices, stating that low oil prices and subdued wage growth are keeping a lid on inflation.

In the beginning of 2016, external and political drivers will be the major catalysts for the Sterling Pound. With inflation prospects looking subdued and with Europe continually stealing growth from its major partners, the benefits from UK positive employment and cheaper commodity prices have run out leaving the BoE worried about deflation and postponing any interest rates hike further into 2016, possibly beginning of 2017.

## BoJ change of plans

The Bank of Japan's quantitative easing program is still expanding by at least 10 percent of GDP per year. With underlying inflationary pressures still muted, the pressure on the central bank to remain accommodative is significant. More policy innovation could be implemented in 2016. Japan continues to have the best earnings revisions of any major region. In addition, Japan's exposure to China remains relatively high. Export exposure is three times higher than in Europe. Should the economic slowdown in China worsen, the country would continue to be negatively affected.

In December, the Bank of Japan surprised markets by keeping policy unchanged at its current level of ¥80 trillion expansion. The BoJ has started to realize the little extra benefit of increasing purchases from the current level at least in terms of political risks associated. Moreover, a weaker yen from these levels is not likely to significantly improve exports volumes at

the expenses of being called a currency manipulator.

## Emerging markets

Emerging markets remain under pressure in the beginning of 2016 from the same global macro headwinds already in place in 2015. The negative effects of weak oil prices and commodities, of a sharp strengthening in the US dollar, of a tighter Fed monetary policy and of a weakening in Chinese growth momentum will unfortunately continue to drag economic growth prospects in these regions. Moreover, the dollar strength will put into light the large exposure of Emerging markets with debt denominated in dollar.

The third quarter growth of 2015 was reported at 6.9 percent down from 7.0 percent the previous quarter, but many suspect the actual growth rate to be under that pace. In parallel, the Chinese Renminbi was added to the IMF's SDR basket of currencies with a weight of 10.9 percent, effective October 2016, adding respectability and credibility to the Chinese currency.

In December, the PBoC published a new trade weighted exchange rate index for the Renminbi. The statement released said that the intention of this was to 'shift how the public and the market observe the RMB exchange rate movements. The statement goes on to say that it would be more appropriate to measure the performance of the RMB against both the US dollar and also the basket of trade weighted currencies.

The PBoC expects the new basket of currencies to be a more explicit reference in setting the value of the RMB in the future. Most importantly, they see this as a signal that China does not intend to engage in competitive devaluation.

Given the strength of the US dollar, markets have started to assume that the PBoC is trying to use the basket as a justification to further weaken the Renminbi and prop up the Chinese economy

*Kuwait  
Kuwaiti dinar at 0.30350  
The USD/KD opened at 0.30350 yesterday morning.*

## US REPEALS MEAT LABELING LAW AFTER TRADE RULINGS AGAINST IT

**WASHINGTON:** It's now harder to find out where your beef was born, raised and slaughtered. After more than a decade of wrangling, Congress repealed a labeling law last month that required retailers to include the animal's country of origin on packages of red meat. It's a major victory for the meat industry, which had fought the law in Congress and the courts since the early 2000s.

Lawmakers said they had no choice but to get rid of the labels after the World Trade Organization repeatedly ruled against them. The WTO recently authorized Canada and Mexico, which had challenged the law, to begin more than \$1 billion in economic retaliation against the United States.

"US exporters can now breathe a sigh of relief," said Republican Sen Pat Roberts of Kansas, chairman of the Senate Agriculture, Nutrition and Forestry Committee. The longtime opponent of the labels helped add the repeal to a massive year-end spending bill. After the law was passed, Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack said the government immediately would stop requiring the labels.

Consumer groups say the repeal is a disappointment just as consumers are asking for more information on their food packages. Advocates say the labels help people make more informed buying decisions and encourage purchases of American meat.

Before repeal, the labels told shoppers that a particular cut of meat was "born in Canada, raised and slaughtered in the United States" or "born, raised and slaughtered in the United States." Congress first required the labels in 2002 amid fears of mad cow disease from imported cattle. The labels weren't on most packages until 2009, though, due to delays pushed by the meat industry.

Repeal became inevitable once the United States lost all its WTO appeals and the retaliation became a possibility. But the consumer groups criticized Congress for repealing the law for ground meat and pork in addition to the fresh cuts of meat that were the subject of WTO concerns.

### Holiday gift?

The bill was "a holiday gift to the meatpacking industry from Congress," complained the advocacy group Food and Water Watch. Meatpackers who buy Mexican cattle were some of the law's most aggressive opponents. The repeal also was a big defeat for lawmakers from northern border states where US ranchers directly compete with Canadian ranchers. Those lawmakers insisted on including the labeling in the 2002 and 2008 farm bills and this year fought to replace it with a voluntary program once the WTO rulings came down. But after years of success, this time they were not able to find enough support.

Roger Johnson of the National Farmers Union, which has heavy membership in those states, said the group was "furious" about the repeal. "Packers will be able to once again deliberately deceive consumers," Johnson said. Still, there was some good news for food labeling advocates in the spending bill. Despite an aggressive push by the food industry, lawmakers decided not to add language that would have blocked mandatory labeling of genetically modified ingredients. Also, a provision by Sen. Lisa Murkowski, R-Alaska, would require labeling of genetically modified salmon recently approved by the Food and Drug Administration.

The issue is expected to come up again in 2016, with Vermont set to require labeling on genetically modified food this summer. The day the spending bill passed, Vilsack said he would try to help Congress come up with a middle ground on labeling of engineered foods "in a way that doesn't create significant market disruption, while at the same time recognizing consumers' need to know and right to know basic information." — AP

# ECONOMIC BOOM AS SOMALIA EMERGES FROM ASHES OF WAR

## HOUSING ESTATES BEING BUILT AS DIASPORA SOMALIS RETURN

**MOGADISHU:** Somalia's elegant colonial villas were left in ruins by two decades of street fighting among warlords, and the seaside capital Mogadishu was dubbed the most dangerous city in the world.

But now new housing estates are being built amid an economic boom as diaspora Somalis return and newly wealthy businessmen capitalize on the relative peace in the city. Some seven kilometres (four miles) outside Mogadishu in a formerly largely rural area, new homes are springing up, with almost 50 houses now ready on an estate, builders say.

Mohamed Abdullahi Ali, from Salaam Somali Bank, said it was a "great honour" to back the estimated \$20 million (18 million euro) project. Construction began in early 2015 and the project was touted as offering commercial returns and helping rebuild the nation. "It is a new neighborhood for all Somalis to buy affordable homes, by leaving the densely populated neighborhoods of Mogadishu, and to come and stay with families here," Ali said. "According to our plan, we are going to build 500 homes that can cover the residential needs for 500 families in the first stage, and then will construct more houses."

### Different vision of Mogadishu

Tens of thousands forced to flee their homes still live in plastic and rag shelters in the capital, sometimes in the ruins of war-shattered buildings, and more than a million people are still in need of emergency aid in a country ravaged by famine in 2011, the United Nations says. Car bombs and assassinations are still common, and a 22,000-strong African Union force fights alongside the army to protect the internationally-backed government from attacks by the Islamist Shebab insurgents.

The streets in the new estate offer a very different vision of Mogadishu.

Those returning to Somalia—including investors wanting to start new business in their homeland—say the Daru Salaam estate offers them a more secure place to live. "I came back to this city to buy a new home in Daru Salaam neighborhood... the houses are well built," said Abdiqadir Jimale Roble, 34, who grew up in Sweden from the age of 12 after Somalia spiralled into civil war in the early 1990s. "I have been out of Somalia for long time but I came back because everybody needs his country—and the country is making much progress," Roble added.

"I had to take part in that progress, and everybody should have a house in his country." For those returning with dollars earned abroad, the estate reflects the possible profits to be made even in a still dangerous country.

### 'Humanitarian needs remain vast'

Sadia Sheikh Ahmed, who also grew up in



**MOGADISHU:** A man walks through Daru Salaam city, a new housing estate built amid an economic boom, north Mogadishu on December 11, 2015. — AFP

Sweden after fleeing Somalia, said she had helped her relatives abroad snap up property. "Initially we wanted to buy two houses, but now we and our relatives have bought eight homes, scheduled to be completed soon," she said.

A two-storey house can cost some \$130,000, while a more simple bungalow comes in at around \$70,000. Those are hefty sums in one of the poorest countries in the world, with a gross domestic product per capita of just \$284, according to the World

Bank, against a sub-Saharan Africa average of \$1,300. Development indicators are "among the lowest in the world", the World Bank says, noting the Horn of Africa nation is "heavily dependent" on aid and remittances.

Over 308,000 children are acutely malnourished, according to the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA).

"After more than two decades of violence and political instability, Somalia is on a positive trajectory," OCHA said, while warning the "promising trend" takes place amid a "precarious" humanitarian and security situation.

"Humanitarian needs remain vast and Somalia's humanitarian crisis remains among the largest and most complex in the world," OCHA added.

But the estate is symbolic of the possible changes in Mogadishu. "The security here is very good and there have been no problems," said Fuad Ahmed Warsame, marketing director of Daru Salaam Real Estate, which is building the new neighborhood—meaning "house of peace."

The company is headquartered in central Mogadishu's famous Bakara Market, the city's commercial heart, once infamous as the 1993 battle when fighters shot down two American Black Hawk helicopters. The bullet scars there have long been covered up with business booming.

"Our plan is to build a new neighborhood with a good environment, new designs," added Warsame. — AFP



**MOGADISHU:** People ride a bicycle through Daru Salaam city, a new housing estate in north Mogadishu. New housing estates are being built in Mogadishu amid an economic boom as diaspora Somalis return and newly wealthy businessmen capitalize on the relative peace in the city. — AFP



## OOREDOO SURPRISES CUSTOMERS WITH NEW REVOLUTIONARY INTERNET PACKAGES

INTERNET OF THE FUTURE IS NOW AVAILABLE WITH TAILORED OFFERS



**KUWAIT:** Ooredoo Kuwait, a member of the international Ooredoo Group, has recently announced launching new packages for its postpaid internet which are tailored to match the taste and desires of gaming, technology and movies lovers at a competitive price.

The new promotional postpaid offer allows customers to use 1TB of high-speed internet with various devices for KD12 per month. The devices cover the interests of all customers no matter what they are, whether they are into gaming, productivity, or entertainment and movies. Customers have the option of choosing between the gaming devices Xbox or PlayStation 4, the latest tablet releases from Huawei or iPad, or the latest Apple TV.

Mijbil Alayoub, Director of Corporate Communications at Ooredoo Kuwait said: "Our internet packages have always been a major attraction to current and new cus-

tomers, therefore we work hard on reintroducing them every now and then adding bonus benefits at a competitive price to match their increasing requirements"

Ooredoo's data packages enable customers to have a very fast and constant internet access as they wish. In addition to having the ability to carry on the unused internet data to the following month with no extra charges.

Ooredoo's operations in Kuwait date back to December 1999 when it launched wireless services as the second operator. The company today provides mobile, broadband internet and corporate managed services tailored to the needs of customers and businesses. Ooredoo is guided by its vision of enriching people's lives and its belief that it can stimulate human growth by leveraging communications to help people achieve their full potential.

## 3 DAYS REMAINING FOR GULF BANK'S AL-DANAH MILLIONAIRE DRAW

**KUWAIT:** Gulf Bank's highly anticipated Al-Danah millionaire draw is only three days away. The Al-Danah KD 1 million draw will take place at the Grand Avenues at the Avenues Mall on 7 January at 7 pm. Gulf Bank invites you to attend this exciting event.

In addition to the lucky KD 1 million Al-Danah winner, the winners of the KD 250,000 and KD 50,000 cash prizes will be announced. As always, a representative from the Ministry of Commerce and Industry will be at Gulf Bank's Al-Danah draw. Over the course of the event,

the Bank will also unveil the Al-Danah draw line-up for 2016.

Every Al-Danah account holder with a minimum of KD 200 maintained in their account before the closing date is eligible to win and is automatically entered into the Al-Danah draws. Opening an Al-Danah account and being part of the draw is simple, as no salary transfer is required. Minors require their parents or their legal guardian to open the account on their behalf.

Gulf Bank's Al-Danah account offers a number

of unique services including the Al-Danah Deposit Only ATM card, which helps account holders deposit their money at their convenience; as well as the Al-Danah online calculator to help customers calculate their chances of becoming an Al Danah winner. The Al-Danah account additionally provides loyalty chances, in which all chances customers accrued in the previous year are added to that of the following year; therefore, the total chances an existing customer had at the end of 2015 will be added to his/her 2016 chances.

## WHAT 2016 WILL DO TO YOUR CHECKBOOK

### RENT, FOOD, GAS AND RAISES

**NEW YORK:** Wondering how you will fare financially in 2016? Below are what experts think next year will hold for financial matters close to home: Raises, rent, gas, food and health.

#### WILL YOU GET A RAISE NEXT YEAR?

Maybe. Wage growth has been perhaps the job market's biggest weakness since the recession ended. Pay increases have been both slow and uneven, highly dependent on your field of employment. And for many, it has not been enough to keep pace with the cost of living.

In November, average hourly earnings climbed 2.3 percent from a year earlier, according to the government's most recent report.

seems. "I'm not convinced things are going to grow as much as I would like them to," he said.

#### WILL MY RENT GO UP?

Yes, most likely. It's been a tough few years for US renters because demand has outpaced supply, causing prices to rise.

Rents increased 4.5 percent in October, 5.3 percent in September and 6.2 percent in August, according to real estate data firm Zillow. The median rental payment nationwide was \$1,382 in October, roughly 30 percent of the median US family income and high enough for the government to consider it financially burdensome. Over the past decade, that number

housing competition, Nadji says.

#### WILL GAS PRICES STAY LOW?

Yes, most likely. Oil prices have plummeted over the last year, a result of high global supplies and weaker demand than expected. US drivers are paying less than \$2 a gallon on average for the first time since the Great Recession. Seasonal factors and volatile oil prices will push prices up and down throughout the year, but overall prices are expected to remain low compared with recent years.

The Energy Department forecasts an average of \$2.37 a gallon next year, which would be the lowest annual average since 2009.

Tom Kloza, head of energy

of Agriculture's Economic Research Service anticipates the price for food will be up 2 to 3 percent for 2016, same as 2015 and in line with the 20-year historical average of 2.6 percent. That includes food people consume at home and out at restaurants.

Annemarie Kuhns, an economist at the ERS, said that certain food prices were off this year due to unusual events, such as the avian influenza that led to the death of millions of birds and sent egg prices up roughly 15 percent. Looking ahead, she and fellow economists anticipate these prices may level off in 2016 - assuming cooperation from Mother Nature.

#### WILL MY HEALTH INSURANCE COST MORE?

Probably. People buying their own coverage through the exchanges created by the Affordable Care Act should see premiums go up faster in 2016 than in previous years, said Cynthia Cox, associate director of health reform and private insurance at the Kaiser Family Foundation.

According to Kaiser research, if you do not shop around and let your plan passively renew, the premiums for the lowest silver level plan - the most popular on the exchange - will increase 15 percent on average next year. If you are willing to switch, premium increases are expected to be zero to 1 percent. This is because the exchange is set up to encourage shopping around.

These increases apply only to people who are receiving subsidies to help pay for the insurance. For those who do not, the increase is expected to be 6 percent.

Cox added that shoppers should also update any personal information - such as changes to your family size or income - which can impact what they pay.

"It's very important to go back online and shop every year," Cox said. "This is still an evolving market - there are new insurers coming in and other insurers leaving. The only way to find (the best price) is to go online or navigate through a broker."

Employer-sponsored plans premiums increased about 4 percent this year. And while Kaiser does not forecast employer-sponsored plan price changes, it does not anticipate any unusual hikes in health care costs that tend to push up insurance prices. However, employees may end up paying more out of pocket for deductibles, copayments and other expenses they are responsible for, depending on their employer's plan. —AP



**SAN FRANCISCO:** Gas prices are nearing or exceeding four dollars a gallon at some High Desert gas stations. No one paid as much as Californians for gas this year, which is the bad news. The good news is that it's the first time that's ever happened, and also, the average price was \$3.16 per gallon, still pretty cheap. —AP

But that is only about two-thirds the roughly 3.5 percent typically seen in a strong economy.

Many economists are optimistic Americans' pay will start growing faster soon because hiring has been good and layoffs have been low. But that's been the case for a while, and wages haven't taken off yet.

Joseph LaVorgna, chief US economist at Deutsche Bank, is not expecting major gains ahead. He notes that measures that include a broader mix of compensation beyond hourly wages show there's even less growth in pay than it

of renters spending over this threshold on rent has jumped from 14.8 million to 21.3 million, or 49 percent of all renters.

There are more rent increases anticipated ahead.

"Rents are expected to rise in virtually all major cities in 2016," said Hessaam Nadji, senior executive vice president with commercial real estate services firm Marcus & Millichap.

Some small consolation: While rents will still rise, the pace of rent growth will slow modestly from the exceptional levels set in 2015 as new construction creates more

analysis at the Oil Price Information Service, said drivers should expect lower lows and higher highs at the pump in the year ahead, but he doesn't expect the price of a gallon of gasoline to go over \$3 at any time in 2016.

"Nationally we are looking at a year that is very similar to the year we are ending," Kloza said.

#### WHAT ABOUT FOOD?

New year, same dish. Food prices should rise at a rate near the historical average, according to the USDA's forecasts.

The United States Department



## BURGAN BANK INVITES PREMIER CUSTOMERS TO WATCH 'STAR WARS, THE FORCE AWAKENS' FOR FREE

**KUWAIT:** Stemming from its wide range of valuable privileges specially designated to its Premier Banking customers, Burgan Bank, in collaboration with Grand Cinemas, recently invited its Premier Banking customers to watch the first screening of the new "Star Wars - The Force Awakens" movie for free, at the most luxurious VIP movie theatre - Grand Class VIP at Al-Hamra Tower.

Premier customers had the choice of reserving their seats to any of the three shows that were exclusively available for them that day. They enjoyed watching the movie in 3D, which added a new dimension of entertainment filled with excitement and anticipation while watching the movie, as well as enjoying the mini buffet at the Grand Class VIP lounge.

Burgan Bank is committed to rewarding its premier customers with exclusive offers that are tailor-made for their own lifestyle and aspirations, and will continue accommodating optimal customer convenience with the provision of added value benefits inside and outside Kuwait.

Established in 1977, Burgan Bank is the youngest commercial bank and second largest by assets in Kuwait, with a significant focus on the corporate and financial

institutions sectors, as well as having a growing retail, and private bank customer base. Burgan Bank has majority owned subsidiaries in the MENA region supported by one of the largest regional branch networks.

The Bank has continuously improved its performance over the years through an expanded revenue structure, diversified funding sources, and a strong capital base. The adoption of state-of-the-art services and technology has positioned it as a trendsetter in the domestic market and within the MENA region. Burgan Bank's brand has been created on a foundation of real values - of trust, commitment, excellence and progression, to remind us of the high standards to which we aspire. "People come first" is the foundation on which its products and services are developed.

The bank was re-certified with the prestigious ISO 9001:2008, making it the first bank in the GCC, and the only bank in Kuwait to receive such accreditation for the third consecutive year. The Bank also has to its credit the distinction of being the only Bank in Kuwait to have won the JP Morgan Chase Quality Recognition Award for twelve consecutive years.

## AL-MULLA EXCHANGE SHOWERS GOLD PRIZES ON CUSTOMERS

**KUWAIT:** Kuwait's leading exchange company, Al Mulla Exchange, aims to provide its customers a way to start the New Year on a golden note with the 'Transfer and Win Gold Festival'. On track with the company's continuous efforts to bring the best offers and rewards, this latest promotion gives customers a chance to win 1 g gold daily for every transaction they make.

Beginning with January 1, 2016, the promotion is set to last till March 31, 2016, and will see 10 winners every day, giving away a total of 910 g of gold. The festival will culminate with a grand prize of 1 kg gold to one lucky winner.

Speaking at the launch of the festival on Friday, Al Mulla Exchange's General Manager, Rakesh Joshi, said the promotion is an extension of the company's tradition of fulfilling the customers' needs and aspirations, "and a way of expressing our gratitude to them for supporting us in our growth and success."

Al Mulla Exchange has a reputation for running innovative promotions with great benefits for the maximum number of people. In 2015, the company organized

more than 5 promotions including free round trip air tickets to various destinations, which turned out to be a very successful campaign.

The general manager noted that the gold festival would mark an auspicious beginning to 2016, and expressed hope that this would help in strengthening the relationship with customers, and cementing their trust. "Additionally, we are confident that promotions of this nature would increase the footfall in our branches, allowing more people to experience our services and our exceptional facilities."

Rakesh Joshi underlined the efforts put in by Al Mulla Exchange since its inception in 2001 to redefine the standards of Kuwait's exchange sector through technological upgrades and innovative remittance solutions aimed at bringing greater security, speed and convenience to customers.

Al Mulla International Exchange offers insurance and loyalty points on every transaction free of charge, in addition to SMS confirmation for transfer operations. The company also provides secure online money transfer services at [www.amxremit.com](http://www.amxremit.com).



## N KOREA LEADER OPENS 'SCI-TECH COMPLEX' IN PYONGYANG

**SEOUL:** North Korean leader Kim Jong-Un has opened a science and technology complex in Pyongyang, the North's state media said Saturday, adding another ostentatious building to the impoverished country's showcase capital.

His attendance at the ceremony on Friday marked his first public appearance since his New Year address, when he vowed to raise living standards in

the struggling one-party Stalinist state. Inspecting the complex, he said it was "a great centre" open to everybody for study and "for disseminating [the] latest science and technology in which the party's plan has been materialised", Pyongyang's KCNA news agency reported.

He said the completion of the complex was testimony to the great importance the Worker's Party of Korea

attaches to the development of science and technology.

"It is the party's firm determination to ... advance the establishment of a rich and powerful fatherland through the locomotive of science and technology", Kim said in his New Year speech.

The complex is located on a "propitious site" near the Taedong River in the capital, Prime Minister Pak Pong-Ju said during a speech at its opening ceremony.

Pyongyang's Korean Central TV broadcast footage of Kim cutting the ribbon to the gleaming structure amid rapturous applause from thousands of participants gathered in front of the building, as balloons floated into the air and a band struck up a tune, "Happy Tomorrow".

He was filmed touring the building, which a TV commentator said was modelled on the structure of a nucle-

us. A mock-up model of the North's Unha rocket that put a satellite into orbit in 2012 was on display in the complex.

Pyongyang has a myriad of monuments and pompous edifices of dubious purpose spawned by the personality cult of the ruling Kim dynasty, for which money and resources have been syphoned from its threadbare economy. — AFP



**LAS VEGAS:** In this January 4, 2015, file photo, the DJI Inspire 1 quadcopter is displayed during a press event at the Mandalay Bay Convention Center for the 2015 International CES in Las Vegas, Nevada. The annual tech extravaganza with more than 3,600 exhibitors set to formally start on January 6 in Las Vegas. — AFP

## NEW GADGETS PROMISE TO BE FRIENDLIER AT CES SHOW

**SAN FRANCISCO:** From drones, cars and robots to jewelry, appliances and TVs, the new technology on display at the 2016 Consumer Electronics Show promises to be smarter and friendlier than ever.

The annual tech extravaganza with more than 3,600 exhibitors set to formally start on Wednesday in Las Vegas is likely to see innovation across a range of sectors, from health care to autos, connected homes, virtual reality and gaming.

"There are always a couple of winners at CES, and sometimes there are the sleepers that turn out to be the cool thing," Gartner analyst Brian Blau told AFP.

But Blau said the innovations are "often evolutionary, not revolutionary." Televisions will play starring roles at the show as usual, with giants such as Samsung, Sony, LG and Vizio among contenders in a market rapidly shifting to ultra-high definition.

"We are in the sweetest of the sweet spot in the TV market," NPD analyst Stephen Baker told AFP while discussing CES.

"Sales of 4K TVs are exploding right now," he said, referring to the popular new high-definition format.

Drones are also expected to make a splash at CES, where an Unmanned Systems Marketplace has doubled in size from a year earlier to cover 25,000 square feet (2,300 square meters).

Blau expects the drones on display at the show to be more sophisticated, with easy controls and even applications that let them be operated using smartphones.

"If you want to make it popular with consumers you have to make it relatively easy to use and foolproof," he said. "And that is what a lot of drone manufacturers have been doing."



**LAS VEGAS:** Attendees arrive for the first official day of the 2015 Consumer Electronics Show, in this January 6, 2015 file photo in Las Vegas, Nevada. — AFP

"A lot more of your devices are going to run with less direction from you but a greater sense of how to help you out," Blau said.

The trend of once-dumb devices getting smarter will continue to include light bulbs, remote controls, thermostats and other devices in the home as well as "wearables" such as jewelry or clothing.

"We are going to see a lot of wearables, and more smart clothes than last year," Blau said.

Apple does not officially attend CES, but smart household products tuned to the technol-

### SPOTLIGHT ON CARS

Cars rolled out at CES may also showcase the potential for digital technologies enhancing consumer goods, according to NPD analyst Baker.

Mark Boyadjis of IHS Automotive referred to cars as a "core pillar" of the show.

Innovation in cars is changing the way people interact with vehicles, as technology handles more and more aspects of driving.

"In the long run, it means maybe delivering cars without steering wheels, or steering wheels that can be moved or put away," Boyadjis said.

"It means physical buttons may all but be gone, being replaced by display, gesture recognition, speech recognition."

A record 10 automakers will be showing at CES along with at least 115 automotive tech companies, according to the Consumer Technology Association, which organizes the show.

### VIRTUAL REALITY SPREADS

CES will also boast a big section devoted to virtual reality, as product makers jump into the trend ahead of the expected releases in 2016 of headsets from Oculus, Sony, and Valve.

It remained to be seen whether new contenders would step up to challenge "the big three" in VR, but CES goers would likely see uses of the technology extended beyond gaming, according to Blau.

CES will, of course, have its share of colorful creations including a Haier moving refrigerator designed to resemble the beloved R2-D2 of blockbuster "Star Wars" film fame.

"As for what sells, we won't know that until later this year," Baker said of the sea of offerings set to go on display.

The premier consumer electronics show set a record last year with more than 176,000 people attending.

At this year's CES, officially open from January 6-9, organizers aim to cap attendance at that level with security ramped up in the wake of last month's attacks in California.

"While we know of no credible threat against CES, we remain vigilant," said Gary Shapiro, president of CTA, formerly the Consumer Electronics Association. — AFP

## HOW AN END TO PHONE DISCOUNTS WILL HELP CUSTOMERS

**NEW YORK:** AT&T will no longer offer discounted phones with two-year contracts starting Jan 8. Before you rush out to beat the deadline, consider that you might be better off paying full price for the phone.

That's because phone companies also reduce the monthly bill for voice, text and data services when you buy your own phone or bring a used one. Some may pay a bit more, some a bit less, but the overall bill is roughly the same. What you get in return is more flexibility in which phone you buy and how long you stay with the carrier.

AT&T's decision comes as no surprise. In the third quarter, only 1 in 5 customers chose a contract plan when they signed up with AT&T or upgraded their phones. T-Mobile broke away from contracts completely nearly three years ago, and Verizon stopped offering contracts to new customers in August. Sprint also has been weighing dropping contracts completely.

Sprint CEO Marcelo Claure told The Associated Press in September that discounted, contract phones - including his company's - amount to "a gimmick, a trick. You tell people I'm going to give you a free phone, but really the customer pays in a more expensive service plan."

Indeed, phone discounts mask the true costs of phones and phone services. Here's an explanation of the changes:

### WHAT ARE MY OPTIONS NOW?

Most people now buy and pay for phones in monthly installments, though you can also pay the full price upfront. You can also bring a used device, such as one from a friend or family member who has upgraded to a newer model. Sprint and T-Mobile also have leasing options - you pay less each month, but you don't get to keep or resell the device in the end.

### WILL I PAY MORE?

Not necessarily so, even though you now have to pay the full price for a phone. When you got a discounted phone under contract, you were already paying the balance in the form of fees. For instance, the full cost of an iPhone 6s is \$650. Although you pay just \$200 at the contract rate, the phone company passes along the remaining \$450 in higher monthly fees for voice, text and data. Over two years, the \$450 comes to \$18.75 a month. Put another way, your phone company is subsidizing your phone by \$18.75 a month and tacking that on to the phone bill for voice, text and data.

If you forgo the contract, your monthly bill for voice, text and data is typically reduced by \$15 or \$25 a month. The \$25 discount applies for higher data plans - usually ones you share

with family members. In such cases, you're actually better off buying the phone yourself, as you're getting a \$25 bill reduction but giving up only \$18.75 in subsidies.

If your discount is only \$15, and you're giving up \$18.75 in subsidies, then technically your bill is going up slightly. What you get instead is flexibility.

### WHAT DO YOU MEAN BY FLEXIBILITY?

Because phone companies were subsidizing phones, there was an incentive to get the most expensive model, even if you didn't need that. These days, there are many mid-range Android phones that do what high-end phones did just a few years ago. If you choose one of those models, you keep the savings. That's also the case if you get a friend or relative's old phone. You no longer feel that you're losing out by not claiming the most expensive phone in a contract renewal.

And if your phone lasts longer than two years, there's no longer the pressure to upgrade just to claim the phone subsidies. You simply pocket the savings. More important, you're no longer tied to two-year contracts.

### DOES THIS MEAN I CAN SWITCH WHENEVER I LIKE?

Yes and no.

If you buy a phone under an installment plan, you're still stuck with the phone company until you pay off the phone. That said, rival companies often have promotions to pay off the balance for you. And if you pay the full cost of the phone upfront, you own the phone and can switch whenever you like. Just be aware that certain phones work on limited number of networks, so it's still not total freedom.

### WHAT IF RATES INCREASE ONCE I PAY FULL PRICE FOR A PHONE?

Phone rates can go up at any time, but that historically hasn't happened because of stiff competition. In fact, phone companies have been offering more data for the same prices, an effective price cut.

And if your phone company does increase the rates, just go to another. Again, rivals typically offer promotions to switch. You can always take your phone number with you as long as you sign up with the new company before cancelling.

### CAN I STILL GET A SUBSIDIZED PHONE?

Sprint still offers contract plans, though they aren't emphasized and they may disappear any day. Verizon offers contracts only to existing customers who renew. At AT&T, contracts will be offered only under certain business plans. — AP

## GAMERS ARE JUST WIRED DIFFERENTLY, SAYS STUDY

**UTAH:** Nerve circuits have been uncovered that mark out compulsive players from the rest - and they are both good and bad.

Scientists carried out MRI (magnetic resonance imaging) scans on almost 200 ten to 19 year olds and found some of the abnormalities improve their ability to absorb new information.

But other changes are associated with distractibility and poor impulse control, according to the findings published in *Addiction Biology*.

Professor Jeffrey Anderson, of the University of Utah, said: "Most of the differences we see could be considered beneficial. However the good changes could be inseparable from problems that come with them."

The growing problem of 'internet gaming disorder' is a phenomenon many experts regard as a serious mental illness with sufferers so obsessed they often even give up eating and sleeping to play.

The study found teenage boys with it have vision or hearing brain cells that are more likely to have enhanced coordination to the 'salience

network' of neurons that focus attention on important events, priming a person to take action.

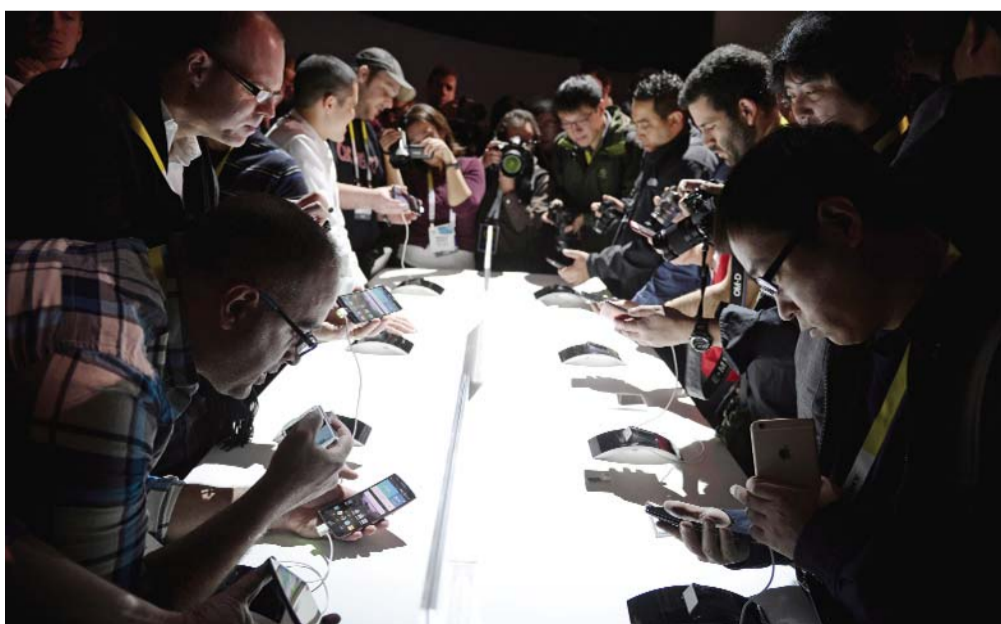
In a video game, this may help a gamer react more quickly to the rush of an oncoming fighter. And in life, to a ball darting in front of a car, or an unfamiliar voice in a crowded room.

Prof Anderson said: "Hyperconnectivity between these brain networks could lead to a more robust ability to direct attention toward targets, and to recognise novel information in the environment. The changes could essentially help someone to think more efficiently."

Follow up studies will be needed to directly determine whether the boys with these brain differences do better on performance tests.

A more troublesome finding is a coordination between two brain regions, the dorsolateral prefrontal cortex and temporoparietal junction, that is more strong than in individuals who are not compulsive video game players.

Prof Anderson said: "Having these networks be too connected may increase distractibility."



**LAS VEGAS:** Attendees get their first hands-on look at the new LG G Flex2 smart phone, at the LG press conference at 2015 Consumer Electronics Show in Las Vegas, Nevada. From drones, cars and robots to jewelry, televisions and appliances, the new technology on display innovations at the 2016 Consumer Electronics Show will be smarter and friendlier. — AFP

### APPLE PRESENCE FELT

Electronics makers are also using building smart technology into all manner of devices, allowing them to adapt to how people use them, responding to voice or gesture, for example.

ogy giant's HomeKit and controlled by iPhones were expected to be plentiful.

Samsung and Google-owned Nest were also expected to make moves to be at the center of smart homes, where the market is vexed by the lack of a single standard or system for devices to speak with each other.



A boy is hooked on video game



## MORE PATIENTS MAY BE ABLE TO SAFELY SHOWER AFTER SURGERY

**NEW YORK:** Many patients may be able to shower just two days after their operations without increasing their risk of infections around the incision site, a recent study suggests. Even though showering can lift patients' spirits, potentially speeding recovery, concerns about contamination often prompt doctors to advise against getting wounds wet until stitches are removed, which can take many days, or even weeks. But when researchers randomly permitted some patients with relatively low-risk surgical wounds to shower 48 hours after their operations, the people who got to bathe were happier with their care - and their odds of infection were no different from those of their unwashed peers.

The findings, along with results from other recent research, should help convince more doctors to let patients shower after surgery, said Dr Paul Dayton, a researcher at Des Moines University and UnityPoint Health in Iowa who wasn't involved in the study. "Traditions are sometimes long to fade away due to lack of good evidence to support change - this paper will certainly help to drive change," Dayton said by email. "Early water exposure may in fact be a universally safe recommendation."

For the current study, Dr Jin-Shing Chen of National Taiwan University Hospital and colleagues focused on patients with relatively low-risk wounds, excluding people with infections, inflam-

mation or injuries caused by outside objects like bullet or knives entering the body. The experiment included patients with "clean" wounds, the lowest-risk category, with no signs of infection after less invasive operations, and individuals with so-called "clean-contaminated" wounds, which are uninfected but involve more complex operations such as chest, ear or gynecologic procedures.

### Superficial surgical

The researchers enrolled 444 patients having surgeries on the thyroid, lung, face, extremities and certain abdominal hernias. Half the participants could shower 48 hours after the operations, while the rest of them had to wait. Within two weeks of

surgery, four patients in the shower group and six in the unwashed group developed superficial surgical site infections with redness and swelling, a difference that was too small to rule out the possibility that it was due to chance. All of the patients reported similar levels of pain after surgery, but the ones who got to shower were more satisfied with their care.

One shortcoming of the study is that doctors knew which patients got to shower and which didn't, which has the potential to influence outcomes, the authors note in the *Annals of Surgery*. Researchers also lacked data on the longer-term infection risk since they only followed patients for two weeks. It's also important to note that patients who showered didn't use

soap or cleanser at the surgical site or submerge the wound, noted Dr Heather Evans, an infectious disease and surgery researcher at the University of Washington and Harborview Medical Center in Seattle.

All wounds in the study were also relatively small and probably weren't under tension that might lead to conditions that can trigger infections, Evans, who wasn't involved in the study, added by email. "I think the take-home message for patients from this particular study is that showering with water within 48 hours after elective surgery is safe if the surgical wound is small, had minimal contamination, and was primarily closed with (stitches)," Evans said. — Reuters



**JOHANNESBURG:** A staff member of the South African Breastmilk Reserve (SABR) in Johannesburg gets ready to go into the sterilized "Milk Kitchen". — AFP photos



**JOHANNESBURG:** A staff member of the South African Breastmilk Reserve (SABR) in Johannesburg cleans equipment.

## BREAST MILK BANKS TACKLE HIGH INFANT MORTALITY IN S AFRICA

### 'EVERY DROP COUNTS'

**JOHANNESBURG:** Patrick, a premature baby weighing a minuscule 1.2 kilos (2.65 pounds), was "saved" by a breast milk bank in South Africa, where child mortality is high despite being the continent's most developed economy. "It was a question of life and death because of the fact he could not go on formula," said his 39-year-old mother Annerleigh Bartlett. "There was no way. He was too little." Bartlett, from Cape Town, wasn't producing her own milk yet, and the for-

mula can damage premature babies' intestines. So, for the first two weeks of his life, Patrick relied for his survival on breast milk donated by anonymous women. The principle of milk banks is simple: mothers donate milk, which is tested, pasteurized, then delivered to babies in

milk banks should be promoted and supported as an effective approach to reduce... mortality for babies who cannot be breastfed," said South Africa's ministry of health in a recent report. "South Africa has a much higher nutrition problem than countries at comparable income levels." South Africa's infant mortality rate was 32.8 deaths per 1,000 births in 2013 — far higher than countries such as Egypt, Algeria or Indonesia.



**JOHANNESBURG:** A staff member packs unpasteurized donated breast milk into a freezer.

mula can damage premature babies' intestines. So, for the first two weeks of his life, Patrick relied for his survival on breast milk donated by anonymous women. The principle of milk banks is simple: mothers donate milk, which is tested, pasteurized, then delivered to babies in

**Low breastfeeding rates**  
Children who are exclusively breastfed are 14 times more likely to survive in the first six months of life than formula-fed children, according to the United Nations Children's Fund, UNICEF. But South Africa has very low breastfeeding rates at just



**JOHANNESBURG:** A staff member holds a bottle of pasteurized breast milk.

need. "Every drop counts," said a poster at the headquarters of the South African Breastmilk Reserve (SABR), a network of milk banks which supply 87 hospitals and feed over 2,800 children this year. "Human

7.4 percent, partly as a result of prevalent poverty and effective marketing by baby formula companies. Soon after having their babies, many poor mothers need to get working again. "Many of these



**JOHANNESBURG:** A staff member holds up a sachet of frozen donated breast milk.

moms are not employed in the formal sector. They don't get maternity benefits," said Chantell Witten, researcher at the North West University Center of Excellence for Nutrition in South Africa.

"It means that moms are not with their baby, so they start formula feed. "These babies don't get the right formula because moms can't afford to feed adequately and appropriately." There is also a perva-

banned in magazines and billboards since 2012 and South Africa now encourages HIV-positive mothers to breastfeed as long as they are taking antiretrovirals. Still, there is some way to go. "First we were very uncomfortable, knowing that it is a fluid from someone else," said Pradesh Mewalala, whose twins Anya and Ariana were born prematurely. Mewalala eventually agreed to



**JOHANNESBURG:** A staff member irons a foil cap onto a bottle of pasteurized breast milk to seal it from bacteria entering the bottle.

sive belief in South Africa that formula milk is better for the baby. "A lot of poor people think that rich people formula-feed. They aspire for the best for their children," said Stasha Jordan, SABR's director, describing some of the marketing for formula as "aggressive". Until 2011, formula was distributed for free to prevent transmission of HIV from mother to child, another factor leading towards a bias to using formula over milk.

But experts say attitudes towards breast milk are changing. Baby formula advertisements have been

use the milk, a decision that saved his daughters. The milk undergoes strict microbiological screening and donors must take AIDS and Hepatitis B tests. Patrick is now a vibrant six-month-old baby. Eventually, his mother was able to breastfeed. It's now her turn to be a donor at the Milk Matters bank in Cape Town. "I needed to pay back the institution that helped me and our child kind of survive," said Bartlett.

"I managed to provide three liters of milk... to assist with feeding 20 babies for a period of 24 hours." — AFP



**JOHANNESBURG:** A staff member records all the bottled pasteurized breast milk on a record sheet.



**JOHANNESBURG:** Breast milk is seen being pasteurised in a pasteurization machine at the South African Breastmilk Reserve (SABR).

## BETTER RESULTS OFFSET COSTS OF PROSTATE SURGERY

**NEW YORK:** Men who get prostate cancer surgery at hospitals that do a lot of these procedures may have better results, and those better outcomes might help offset the added cost of care at specialized facilities, a US study suggests. Plenty of evidence for prostate cancer and a host of other medical conditions links the best outcomes to the most experienced surgeons. The current study adds a fresh analysis of the economic benefits of sending patients to facilities that perform the procedure often, even if they might be far from home or have higher fees than community hospitals.

"The data reinforces the dictum that getting it right the first time is always the most cost effective approach," senior study author Dr Sarmad Sadeghi of the Norris Comprehensive Cancer Center at the University of Southern California in Los Angeles said by email.

"Our analysis shows that societal costs of long-term care for prostate cancer will be reduced as a result of fewer treatment failures," Sadeghi added. Researchers focused on radical prostatectomies, procedures that excise tumors by removing the prostate gland as well as surrounding tissue. Most US surgeons who do these operations handle less than 10 cases a year, but they account for an estimated 40 percent of prostatectomies, Sadeghi and colleagues report in the journal *Prostate Cancer and Prostatic Diseases*. The research team used data on typical outcomes to estimate how costs might change if more prostatectomies were performed by what they call "high-volume" surgeons, who did at least 250 of the procedures each year.

When patients saw the high-volume surgeons, they were less likely to have cancer recur, to require salvage radiation therapy after initial treatment or to develop tumors that spread beyond the prostate, the analysis found. To calculate the potential cost savings associated with more experience, researchers estimated what would happen in four different scenarios based on the proportion of operations done by high-volume surgeons,

ranging from 50 to 80 percent of procedures.

### Radiation therapist

Compared with when high-volume surgeons did only half the surgeries, when they did 80 percent of the cases the estimated costs savings per operation were \$177, \$357 and \$559 at 5, 10 and 20 years, respectively. These savings would offset the estimated referral costs of up to \$1,833 per prostatectomy for sending patients to the high-volume centers, the researchers calculated. Limitations of the study include the fact that these cost savings are based on a mathematical model built on several different previous studies done at different times. The results are also based on the current typical progression of prostate cancer, which might change with advances in treatment.

It's also possible that the calculations underestimated the potential cost savings because the researchers focused on cancer recurrence but didn't look at other expensive outlays related to managing complications such as impotence and incontinence that can be more common with less experienced surgeons, Dr Quoc-Dien Trinh, a urologist at Brigham and Women's Hospital in Boston who wasn't involved in the study, said by email.

Patients should also be careful not to focus on the surgeon's experience level until after they determine whether they actually need surgery, because many men with slow-growing tumors don't necessarily need prostatectomies, said Dr Daniel Barocas, a researcher in surgical quality and outcomes at Vanderbilt University Medical Center in Nashville, Tennessee, who wasn't involved in the study.

"If you skip ahead and go straight to a high-volume surgeon or a high-volume radiation therapist, you may not get the full benefit of counseling regarding whether to treat or what treatment is best," Barocas said by email. "For a patient who has decided on a prostatectomy, however, both the center and the surgeon are important." — Reuters

## ITALY IN SHOCK OVER SPATE OF CHILDBIRTH DEATHS

**ROME:** Italy's health minister has ordered a series of investigations after five women died in childbirth in seven days, shocking a nation with one of the lowest maternal mortality rates in the world. The deaths occurred across the country between December 25 and 31. While all appear to have explainable causes, their concentration over the holiday period has raised questions over whether hospital staffing may have been a factor and also over whether older mothers-to-be are being sufficiently monitored for warning signs of potentially fatal conditions.

In the latest case, Giovanna Lazzari, 29, already a mother of two who was eight months pregnant, died on New Year's Eve in Brescia, northern Italy, a day after coming to the clinic's emergency unit with a high fever and symptoms of gastroenteritis, according to her partner Roberto Coppini. As her condition deteriorated, doctors attempted an emergency Cesarean but were unable to save either the mother or the foetus. "In a few hours, I lost a baby and a unique mamma. Someone has to tell me what happened," Coppini told reporters.

"Giovanna sent me a text message during the night in which she told me she had very strong pains but that the doctors were not paying any attention to her. "She would have been 30 on January 1. She was young and healthy." Health minister Beatrice Lorenzin has dispatched a team of experts to try and establish what happened in the Brescia clinic and three of the other four fatal cases. "We have to understand if the recommended procedures were followed or if there were organizational deficiencies," Lorenzin said. "The priority is identifying any errors and preventing other tragedies." According to media reports, the tragedy in Brescia was triggered by a detachment of the placenta from the wall of the patient's uterus. In two of the other cases, both of which resulted in still births, the mothers, aged 35 and 39, suffered cardiac arrest during

labor, according to reports. Anna Massignan, a 34-year-old doctor from Lonigo, near Vicenza who died on Christmas Day, succumbed after an emergency Cesarean eight months into her pregnancy, reportedly following a fall at home. Her son was delivered alive but died several hours later. The one case not being investigated concerned a 23-year-old from Foggia in southern Italy who was approaching her due date and died suddenly at home. Doctors were able to perform a post-mortem Cesarean and save her daughter.

### 'Obsolete procedures'

Although the tragedies being investigated all appear to be explicable, a leading gynecologist said some of the victims may have paid the price for inadequate screening for the risk of thrombosis or heart problems emerging during the latter stages of pregnancy.

"With preventative checks we could save so many women in the delivery room," said Rosalba Paesano, Professor of Gynaecological Science at Rome's La Sapienza university. "But the health ministry does not say they are required, in reality because they cost too much. The procedures we have in place are obsolete," Paesano told La Repubblica.

Antonio Starita, medical director at Rome's San Camillo hospital, told La Stampa: "The one figure that stands out is that 35 percent of pregnancies in Italy involve women over 35 and, at this age, the maternal mortality risk doubles." Starita said blocks on new hires in parts of the health system could be creating staff shortages, particularly amongst midwives assigned to home visits who could pick up early warning signs of problems in a pregnancy. According to World Bank figures, Italy has had an average of four childbirth related maternal deaths per 100,000 live births since 2004, making it one of the top ten safest countries for women having a baby. — AFP



## EXTRA CARE REQUIRED WHEN DYING PARENTS HAVE YOUNG KIDS

**NEW YORK:** End-of-life care for parents of young children may need to include additional support services that help the entire family cope with terminal illness, a recent study suggests. While all families may struggle when a loved one is dying, parenting duties can create an added layer of emotional stress and complicate efforts to comfort patients at the end of life, researchers note in the journal *BMJ Supportive and Palliative Care*. "What is unique about patients with young children is the extraordinary psychological suffering related to parenting," said lead study author Dr Eliza Park, a psychiatry researcher at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

These parents may worry about how their illness negatively impacts

their children's lives, how their death will impact their kids, and how to explain their prognosis to their children in an age-appropriate way. They may also experience anticipatory grief about their inability to raise their children into adulthood, Park added by email. "The patient in these situations truly is the entire family unit," Park said. To understand the unique issues faced by terminally ill parents, Park and colleagues surveyed 344 widowed fathers who had lost a spouse to cancer and were raising young children. Their late wives had been about 44 years old on average. The families typically had two kids under 18 years old, with the youngest child around 8 years old. About 43 percent of the women had cancer that had spread to

other parts of the body at the time tumors were diagnosed. Roughly two thirds of the women received hospice services, and 41 percent of them died at home.

Almost half of them died at the location of their choice. According to the fathers, 38 percent of mothers had not said goodbye to their children before death, and 26 percent were not at peace with the prospect of dying. Nine in 10 widowed fathers reported that their spouse was worried about the strain on their children at the end of life, the survey found. Fathers who reported clearer communication between doctors and their spouse about the prognosis also reported fewer indications of depression or grief in their survey responses.

### Broader population

One shortcoming of the study, the authors note, is that it was done online and men were recruited through an open-access educational website, so researchers couldn't verify that the men were indeed widowed fathers who lost spouses to cancer. The participants also tended to be white and married, with more income and education than a typical widow might have, which could limit how much the results apply to a broader population of parents and families.

Still, the findings suggest a need to better understand how parenting influences choices in treatment at the end of life, and what support families and children may need to cope with terminal illness, the authors conclude.

This may be particularly true for mothers who haven't experienced the death of a loved one before, said Denise Sheehan, a researcher at Kent State University College of Nursing and director of clinical research at Hospice of the Western Reserve in Cleveland, Ohio.

These women may be uncertain about what to do for themselves, their children and their spouse, Sheehan, who wasn't involved in the study, said by email. "Having more time with their children without being a burden to their family is often their primary goal," Sheehan added. "Mothers tend to worry about how their children will live without them, who will take care of them and nurture them throughout their lives." — Reuters

## EATING DISORDERS IN CHILDREN CAN CAUSE IRREVERSIBLE DAMAGE, SAYS GOSH EXPERT

44.7% OF ADOLESCENTS IN KUWAIT SUFFER FROM EATING DISORDERS

**KUWAIT:** Dr Lee Hudson, consultant and expert in eating disorders at Great Ormond Street Hospital, discusses why it is important for children to eat correctly and why eating disorders can be damaging to growing children. "Childhood is a time of development," Dr Hudson explains "and children need food to help them develop correctly. Anything that affects their food intake can have irreversible effects to their bodies in the long run." Understanding and being aware of potentially damaging food disorders is important for parents to keep their children healthy.

Eating disorders affect 70 million individuals worldwide and 90% who have eating disorders are women between the age of 12 and 25. "Eating disorders" Dr Hudson explains, "are where difficulties with eating are due to a primary mental health illness." Eating disorders cover a range of different disorders which are characterised by abnormal eating habits. "Disordered eating" where someone may not be eating as regularly or properly as they should be is something shared by a lot of people through their lifetimes but is not the same, or as dangerous, as an eating disorder, which is linked to mental health problems. There are many different types of eating disorders, but perhaps the most common are Anorexia Nervosa and Bulimia Nervosa.

### Subclinical Anorexia Nervosa

A case study that was conducted across 7 Arab countries shows that those who are overweight are more likely to have an eating disorder, and that 44.7% of adolescents in Kuwait suffer from disordered eating. The



Dr Lee Hudson

results of a study of 495 girls from UAE concludes that 66% of these girls were self-conscious about their weight and 33.5% of them suffer from disordered eating, with 2 girls in the study being diagnosed with Anorexia Nervosa or Bulimia Nervosa as a result of the study. Additionally 24 of the 495 girls that were observed were shown to experience subclinical Anorexia Nervosa. Meanwhile a case study that was conducted on high school girls in Saudi Arabia shows that 24.6% of them had a high risk of having or getting an eating disorder as they scored highly on Eating Attitudes Test (EAT) when interviewed. A case study in Oman showed that 33% of the adolescent girls are inclined to Anorexic behaviour. These studies show that children across the GCC are at high risk of eating problems which can be dangerous for their health and future development.

Anorexia Nervosa is a condition "where a person believes they are fat when they

are actually thin and have a drive to continually lose weight." Dr Hudson summarises. People suffering from anorexia may in fact be very thin but will believe that they are fat. There are medical complications linked to Anorexia Nervosa because "people can become so underweight that they can literally starve to death," Dr Hudson describes. When a child becomes underweight they become malnourished and it can cause permanent damage to their bodies. "This is especially the case in children and young adults with the disease as it can affect their growth, development and affect long term health such the health of their bones," Dr Hudson continues. Young women with



anorexia are 12 times more likely to die than other women the same age without the condition and 20% of people suffering from anorexia will die prematurely from complications arising from their disorder, including suicide and heart problems.

### Vomiting and malnutrition

Bulimia Nervosa is another common eating disorder where the sufferer has a distorted body image. With Bulimia Nervosa there is guilt associated with eating, and people will often 'binge eat' (over-eat) and then 'purge' (throw up) afterwards. "Most people with bulimia are either at a normal weight or overweight. They will be very unhappy about their eating and body," Dr Hudson clarifies. People with bulimia can have medical problems linked to their vomiting such as dental issues related to the erosion of enamel from vomiting and mal-

nutrition which can cause lasting effects as a child. "Healthy growth in males and females requires enough food and the right types of food to work properly. Growth is not just about height and weight - it includes the development of the brain and the formation of bones," Dr Hudson explains. Growth can be affected when children are underweight or starving and this can be irreversible.

Keeping children healthy is important for their health now and in the future. Most parents will be aware when children are losing weight at a significant rate and not eating enough. "What is harder to notice," Dr Hudson comments "is when children become underweight or overweight because this can be gradual. This is why health checks for children can be helpful. Weight loss can happen for a range of reasons, and is not just linked to eating disorders, so if you are worried about your child's weight you should seek the advice of a medical professional." The earlier weight loss is noticed the sooner the reasons behind the weight loss can be understood and interventions put into place before the effects become irreversible and the condition harder to treat.

### Medical expertise

Dr Lee Hudson is a consultant in general paediatrics at Great Ormond Street Hospital. Dr Hudson specialises in medical complications involved with eating and feeding disorders, obesity, chronic fatigue syndrome and general paediatric conditions in infants, children and young people. Dr Hudson qualified from Sheffield



University and undertook specialist training as a general paediatrician in Australia and the UK. He is also an executive member of

the International Association of Paediatrics and Child Health and the Royal College of Paediatrics and Child Health's Young People's Health Special Interest Group.

Great Ormond Street Hospital in London is recognised as one of the few truly world-class hospitals for children. As a global leader, GOSH has top clinical and research experts working every day to find new and better ways to treat children. While breakthroughs and medical expertise are essential to the treatment of patients, GOSH also places great emphasis on the support and care provided for children by nurturing an open and supportive atmosphere, ensuring that parents and patients are well informed and closely involved in the treatment process. Children receive the highest standards of care and attention from the expert team of medical and support staff during their stay at GOSH, and are always treated with respect, trust, concern and openness.



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## Recipe for SKILLET-GLAZED SPICY SWEET POTATOES

By Sara Moulton

One of the biggest challenges of producing a holiday meal is figuring out how to cook all of the various dishes and land them all on the table at the same thrilling moment.

It's not easy, especially when there's a big roast of some kind hogging the oven for hours. The part that annoys me most? It forces my glazed sweet potatoes, which require 45 minutes in the oven, to sit on the sidelines. Well, not anymore. You can cook these delicious glazed sweet potatoes on top of the stove in about 10 minutes flat. But let's talk about the sweet potato before tackling the method.

These days, there's usually quite a selection of sweet potatoes at the supermarket, many of which are mistakenly called yams. True yams are indigenous to Africa, Asia, Latin America and the Caribbean. Here, they're mostly sold at Latin or Caribbean markets. They are mild in flavor and starchy. How they became confused with sweet potatoes is a long story, but suffice to say that if you're at the supermarket in search of a sweet potato that is indeed sweet, you'll probably be all right whether it's labeled sweet potato or yam.

As noted, one of the great things about this recipe is that the potatoes don't need to spend 45 minutes in an oven. Instead, they're cooked in water in a large skillet. The recipe's most time-consuming step is peeling and slicing the potatoes, though you certainly can do that ahead of time, then park them on the counter until you're 10 minutes from dinnertime.

Cooking the potatoes takes so little time because they've been sliced fairly thin. Another perk of this recipe: Adding the spices to the water in which the spuds

are boiled ensures deep flavor. And the glaze? All you have to do is boil down the cooking liquid and add some butter and brown sugar. Simple! Happily, this method works equally well with carrots and butternut squash. It's a sure-fire way to conjure up a stress-free - and mouth-watering - side dish for your roast turkey or ham.

### Ingredients

Start to finish: 35 minutes  
Servings: 4  
1 teaspoon ground cumin  
1 teaspoon smoked paprika  
1/2 teaspoon cayenne  
Salt

1 1/2 pounds sweet potatoes, peeled, halved or quartered lengthwise, and sliced crosswise 1/3 inch thick  
2 tablespoons butter, cut into pieces  
1 tablespoon brown sugar  
2 teaspoons lemon juice

### Preparation

In a 12-inch skillet over medium-high, whisk together 1 1/2 cups water, the cumin, paprika, cayenne and about 1 teaspoon of salt. Add the potatoes, then cover the skillet and bring the liquid to a boil. When it boils, reduce the heat to a simmer and cook the potatoes, covered, for 3 to 5 minutes. Remove the lid and prick the potatoes with a paring knife. If they are almost tender, remove the lid and increase the temperature so that the liquid boils. If they are not almost tender, cover the potatoes and cook, covered, for another minute or so, then remove the lid. Boil the liquid until it only comes up the side of the skillet about 1/4 inch. Add the butter, brown sugar and lemon juice, then simmer, stirring gently, until the liquid is reduced to a glaze. Season with salt and serve immediately.

## Tomatillo salsa offers a fresh approach to poaching salmon

By Sara Moulton

The French love to cook fish by poaching it in a flavored liquid, usually a combination of white wine and water, leeks or onions, and some herbs. It's a notably lean way to roll because there's no fat involved. And the finished product is reliably tender because it has been cooked at a low temperature. So, it's lean, tender and... quite boring. I crave more flavor and texture. So here's a recipe for poached salmon that adds the missing elements.

Typically, poaching calls for a lot of liquid. The fish is supposed to be submerged as it cooks, after which the liquid usually is tossed. I wanted a way to poach the fish in a small amount of liquid, which then could do double duty as a sauce. Given that fish generally requires a spritz of acid to brighten it up, the ideal liquid needed to be acidic and intensely flavored. Green salsa - that is, tomatillo salsa with chilies and lime juice - struck me as a likely candidate.

The salmon wouldn't have to swim in a vat of the salsa. I made a modest batch and cooked the salmon in a smallish skillet with the salsa rising halfway up the sides of the fillets. I covered the pan tightly to trap the heat and flipped over the salmon half way through its cooking time to make sure it cooked evenly.

How do you know when the salmon is finished cooking? If you slide a knife into it and the blade sails through the fillet with no resistance, it's done. And be sure to pull it off the heat when there's still a tiny bit of resistance left, which will allow for carry-over cooking time. For crunch, I sprinkled tortilla chips on top; they are salsa's classic partner. But these were my own healthy baked tortilla chips, which take only 15 minutes to prepare. On the whole, this recipe is pretty quick and easy to make, but you can streamline it even further by picking up green salsa and baked tortilla chips at the supermarket. By the way, there were leftovers the second time we tested this winner. When we polished them off the next day, we discovered that this dish is just as delicious cold as hot.

### SALMON POACHED IN GREEN SALSA AND TOPPED WITH BAKED CHIPS

#### Ingredients

Start to finish: 40 minutes  
Servings: 4  
For the tortilla strips:

2 tablespoons vegetable oil

1 teaspoon chili powder  
1/2 teaspoon ground cumin

Four 6-inch corn tortillas  
Salt

For the salmon:

8 ounces fresh tomatillos, husked, rinsed and quartered  
1/2 cup coarsely chopped scallions (white and light green parts)

1/3 cup coarsely chopped fresh cilantro

1 tablespoon lime juice  
1/2 jalapeno or serrano chili, seeds removed if desired

2 cloves garlic, finely chopped  
2 tablespoons vegetable oil  
1/2 cup finely chopped red onion  
Salt and ground black pepper

1 1/2 pounds center-cut salmon fillet, cut into 4 equal portions

### Preparation

To make the tortilla strips, heat the oven to 400 F. In a small bowl, stir together the oil, chili powder and cumin. Brush the oil mixture over both sides of each tortilla. Using a knife or pizza wheel, cut the tortillas into thin strips. Arrange the strips in a single layer on a rimmed baking sheet. Bake the strips on the oven's middle shelf for 6 to 8 minutes, or until crispy. Sprinkle with salt, let cool completely, then break them up slightly. Set aside.

To prepare the salsa, in a food processor, combine the tomatillos, scallions, cilantro, lime juice, chili and garlic. Pulse until the ingredients are almost smooth with a few small chunks.

In a medium skillet over medium, heat the oil. Add the onion and cook, stirring, until softened, about 5 minutes. Add the tomatillo mixture and simmer

gently, stirring occasionally, for 10 minutes. If the mixture gets too dry, add 1/2 cup of water. Season with salt and pepper. Add the salmon to the skillet, skin sides down, then cover the skillet tightly and simmer gently for 5 minutes.

Turn the salmon over, cover tightly and simmer gently until the salmon is almost cooked through, about another 5 minutes. Remove the pan from the heat and let the salmon stand for 3 minutes, covered, before serving. To serve, transfer a portion of salmon to each of 4 plates, then top each with sauce and tortilla strips.



## No need to buy your Swedish meatballs from a furniture store



By Katie Workman

Full confession: I've never known what Swedish meatballs were. I knew of them, of course. But I never knew what really made them Swedish, or at least "Swedish." So I did a little research. In Sweden, meatballs are called kottbullar (which is now the first and only Swedish word I know), and they usually are made with ground beef or a mix of ground beef and sometimes veal, and they are finished in a sauce of broth and cream. That sounded like something my family could get down with. And apparently they should also be served with lingonberries. Admittedly, they were pretty good that way, channeling a sort of Thanksgiving vibe (think turkey and cranberry sauce).

While there are other Northern European meatball recipes that combine a gravy of sorts with meatballs, I think it's safe to say that most people (hand raised!) will associate these meatballs with Sweden (and Ikea) above all. I made these once using the combination of ground beef listed in the ingredients, and once using 1 1/2 pounds of the "meatloaf mix" you can find in the meat section of many supermarkets. The latter is a combination of beef and veal. Both worked perfectly.

Panko breadcrumbs are packaged dried Japanese breadcrumbs that are a little larger and

flakier than their Italian cousins. These days they are sold alongside the other breadcrumbs, but if you have trouble finding them check the international aisle, too. I love their texture, which is a little lighter than the more finely ground version.

This recipe makes very saucy meatballs, which I served over orzo for friends and family, and then over couscous for a twist, also to high acclaim. You could cut the amount of broth and cream in half if you wanted more of a glaze than a sauce. I'm planning to do that when I make them for a holiday cocktail potluck party and serve them with cute little skewers.

### SWEDISH MEATBALLS

#### Ingredients

Start to finish: 1 hour  
Makes about 90 meatballs  
4 teaspoons olive oil, divided  
3 tablespoons minced shallots  
1 large egg, lightly beaten  
3/4 cup milk, preferably whole  
3/4 cup Panko breadcrumbs  
1/4 teaspoon ground allspice  
Salt and ground black pepper  
1 pound ground beef  
3 tablespoons all-purpose flour  
1 bay leaf  
3/4 cup cream

1 1/2 cups low-sodium beef broth  
Handful minced fresh parsley or chives (optional, but adds nice color and freshness)

### Preparation

In a large, deep saucepan over medium, heat 2 teaspoons of the olive oil. Add the shallots and saute for 5 minutes, or until they are softened, but not browned. Set aside. In a large bowl, combine the egg, milk, breadcrumbs, allspice, 1 teaspoon salt and 1/2 teaspoon pepper. Add the beef and shallots, then use your hands to combine until well mixed. Form the mixture into small meatballs, less than 1-inch in diameter.

Heat the same saucepan over medium-high, add the remaining 2 teaspoons olive oil. Working in batches, brown the meatballs on all sides, turning them carefully, about 6 minutes. Use a slotted spoon to transfer them to a paper towel-lined baking sheet. Pour off all but 1 tablespoon of the fat in the pan, then return it to medium high heat. Add the flour and stir until the flour turns golden brown, about 2 minutes. Add the bay leaf, cream and broth, then bring to a simmer.

Return the meatballs to the pan, heat until the sauce thickens and coats the meatballs well and the meatballs are cooked through. Season with salt and pepper. Serve hot, over pasta or rice, if desired. Top with minced parsley or chives, if desired.





—Photos by Yasser Al-Zayyat

## LO'LO'A ART PRODUCTION COMPANY HONORS GRADUATING TRAINEES

The first professional cinema course 101, organized by Lo'lo'a Art Production Company in collaboration with Cinescape and Cinemagic companies, was recently concluded. A special ceremony was held at Ibis Hotel, Salmiya to honor the graduating trainees. Speaking on the occasion, Lolo's CEO, Sheikh Intisar Salem Al-Ali thanked all participants and trainers' efforts noting that they would eventually facilitate making Kuwait the capital of film industry in the Gulf. Al-Ali added that 50 participants had taken part in the training course and that only 26 of them passed the course successfully after receiving proper training in various cinematic arts and professions.



## ICSK JUNIOR CONDUCTS GRAND VALEDICTORY FUNCTION

The Indian Community School Kuwait Junior conducted the Valedictory function 'PEARLS 2015' for the PAC ICSK Junior Arts Fest on Saturday 28th November 2015. The event was graced by the esteemed Chief Guest, Honorary Secretary to ICSK Board of Trustees Vijay Karayil. Galaxy of luminaries that graced the occasion were Honorary Joint Secretary Santosh Mathew,

PAC Representative to the Board Suresh KP, Honorary Member George Mathew, Honorary Member Roy, Art fest 'Pearls' convener Joel Jose, 40 PAC convener Mathew George, other PAC Members and honorable judges. PAC Arts Fest convener Joyal Jose delivered the welcome address. Principal in-charge Mrs. Sherly Dennis addressed the gathering through her Presidential address.

In his address, the Chief Guest Vijay Karayil extended his wholehearted gratitude to the elected members of the Parents Advisory Council and all parents for the support rendered in making ICSK the number one school in Kuwait. The vote of thanks delivered by Vice-Principal Gomathy Murthy brought a closure to the first segment of the official function.

The fabulous performance of meritorious students and the PAC Arts Fest convener Joyal Jose, in the cultural fiesta was much appreciated leaving the audience spell bound. All the winners along with their parents were felicitated for their achievements in co-curricular activities. Over-all champions in each of the four categories were recognized with a trophy. The winners were extended

good wishes to compete for the Inter branch competitions to be held shortly.

The unflagging cooperation and encouragement offered by PAC members, dedication of staff, grit and determination of students along with the support of parents is much appreciated and placed on record. The function came to a close with the vote of thanks by PAC member Manoj Mathew.



## ICSK AMMAN STUDENTS ACHIEVE SUCCESS IN BADMINTON TOURNAMENT

The students of the Indian Community School Kuwait Amman branch have brought glory to the school with their spectacular achievement in the IBAK Inter-School Badminton Tournament 2015 held in Kuwait. Adhnan Jeff of Class VI C was the winner in the under-12 Singles Boys Category. Aidan Anesh Mathew Class V-B and Adhnan Jeff Class VI-C were the 2nd Runnersup in the doubles under-14 Boys category. Mr Rajesh Nair C, Principal expressed his delight and happiness at the excellent performance put up by the students of ICSK Amman and extended his congratulations.



**Discovery Channel HD**

00:20 Fast N' Loud  
01:10 Impossible Engineering  
02:50 Wheeler Dealers: Trading Up  
03:40 Auction Hunters  
04:05 Property Wars  
04:30 Storage Wars Canada  
05:00 What Happened Next?  
05:30 How It's Made  
06:00 Ice Cold Gold  
06:50 Wheeler Dealers  
07:40 Fast N' Loud  
08:30 Auction Hunters  
08:55 Property Wars  
09:20 Storage Wars Canada  
09:45 What Happened Next?  
10:10 How It's Made  
10:35 Misfit Garage  
11:25 Street Outlaws  
12:15 Engine Addict With Jimmy De Ville  
13:05 Auction Hunters  
13:30 Property Wars  
13:55 Storage Wars Canada  
14:20 Ice Cold Gold  
15:10 Wheeler Dealers  
16:00 Fast N' Loud  
16:50 What Happened Next?  
17:15 How It's Made  
17:40 Deadliest Catch  
20:10 The Liquidator  
20:35 Storage Wars Canada  
21:00 Deadliest Catch: Legend Of The Cornelia Marie  
21:50 Gold Rush: Catch Up  
22:40 Catching Monsters  
23:30 Wheeler Dealers

Teenage Witch  
01:15 Sabrina Secrets Of A Teenage Witch  
01:40 Wolfblood  
02:30 Violetta  
03:15 The Hive  
03:20 Sabrina Secrets Of A Teenage Witch  
03:45 Sabrina Secrets Of A Teenage Witch  
04:10 Wolfblood  
05:00 Violetta  
05:45 The Hive  
05:50 Mouk  
06:00 Lolirock  
06:25 Hank Zipzer  
06:50 Girl Meets World  
07:15 H2O  
07:40 H2O  
08:05 Austin & Ally  
08:55 Sabrina Secrets Of A Teenage Witch  
09:45 Jessie  
10:35 Teen Beach Movie  
12:20 Hank Zipzer  
12:45 I Didn't Do It  
13:35 Liv And Maddie  
14:30 H2O  
15:20 Jessie  
16:10 Violetta  
17:00 The Next Step  
17:25 Liv And Maddie  
17:50 Jessie  
18:15 Austin & Ally  
18:40 I Didn't Do It  
19:05 H2O  
19:30 Violetta  
20:20 The Next Step  
20:45 Good Luck Charlie  
21:35 Wizards Of Waverly Place  
22:00 Binny And The Ghost  
22:25 Sabrina Secrets Of A Teenage Witch  
22:50 Sabrina Secrets Of A Teenage Witch  
23:10 Wolfblood

**OSN FIRST HD COMEDY**

00:00 Weird Loners  
00:30 Cristela  
01:00 The Nightly Show With Larry Wilmore  
01:30 Married  
02:00 Togetherness  
02:30 The Big C  
03:00 Your Family Or Mine  
03:30 The Goldbergs  
04:00 Two And A Half Men  
04:30 The Tonight Show Starring Jimmy Fallon  
05:30 Suburgatory  
06:00 Tilt Death  
06:30 New Girl  
07:00 Late Night With Seth Meyers  
08:00 Two And A Half Men  
08:30 Suburgatory  
09:00 Your Family Or Mine  
09:30 Grandfathered  
10:00 Melissa & Joey  
10:30 New Girl  
11:00 The Tonight Show Starring Jimmy Fallon  
12:00 Tilt Death  
12:30 Two And A Half Men  
13:00 Suburgatory  
13:30 New Girl  
14:00 The Goldbergs  
14:30 Grandfathered  
15:00 Melissa & Joey  
15:30 Cristela  
16:00 The Nightly Show With Larry Wilmore  
16:30 Tilt Death  
17:00 Late Night With Seth Meyers  
18:00 Your Family Or Mine  
18:30 The Goldbergs  
19:00 Breaking In  
19:30 Melissa & Joey  
20:00 Bad Judge  
20:30 Weird Loners  
21:00 Cristela  
21:30 The Nightly Show With Larry Wilmore  
22:00 Getting On  
22:30 Togetherness  
23:00 The Big C  
23:30 Bad Judge

**OSN MOVIES ACTION**

00:00 Bad Ass 3: Bad Asses On The Bayou  
02:00 Wer  
04:00 Assassin's Bullet  
06:00 Dying Of The Light  
08:00 The Assault  
10:00 Abandoned Mine  
12:00 Assassin's Bullet  
14:00 Forget And Forgive  
16:00 Special ID  
18:00 Abandoned Mine  
20:00 Bloodsport  
22:00 Max Payne

**OSN MOVIES HD ACTION**

00:00 Wer-18  
02:00 Assassin's Bullet-PG15  
04:00 Dying Of The Light-PG15  
06:00 The Assault-PG15  
08:00 Abandoned Mine-PG15  
10:00 Assassin's Bullet-PG15  
12:00 Forget And Forgive-PG15  
14:00 Special ID-PG15  
16:00 Abandoned Mine-PG15  
18:00 Bloodsport-PG15  
20:00 Max Payne-PG15  
22:00 Battle Of The Damned-PG15

**OSN MOVIES HD COMEDY**

00:00 Date And Switch  
02:00 Until She Came Along  
04:00 Streetdance: All Stars  
06:00 Shanghai Calling  
08:00 Big Fat Liar  
10:00 Streetdance: All Stars  
12:00 Until She Came Along  
14:00 The Love Guide  
16:00 Big Fat Liar  
18:00 The Waterboy  
20:00 Dumb And Dumber To  
22:00 Idiocracy

**OSN MOVIES DRAMA**

01:00 Stash House-PG15  
03:00 As Cool As I Am-PG15  
05:00 Stone Markers-PG15  
07:00 Return To Nim's Island-PG  
09:00 Second Coming-PG15  
11:00 Stone Markers-PG15  
13:00 Stash House-PG15  
15:00 InSight-PG15  
17:00 Second Coming-PG15  
19:00 Zulu-PG15  
21:00 Decoding Annie Parker  
23:00 The Grief Tourist-PG15

**OSN MOVIES HD FESTIVAL**

01:00 Jodorowsky's Dune  
03:00 The Trouble With Bliss  
05:00 Upside Down  
07:00 Serial (Bad) Weddings  
09:00 See Girl Run  
11:00 Upside Down  
13:00 The Trouble With Bliss  
15:00 What Dreams May Come  
17:00 See Girl Run  
19:00 Gattaca  
21:00 Disconnect  
23:00 Carrington

**Discovery Science**

00:35 The World's Strangest UFO Stories  
02:55 What Could Possibly Go Wrong?  
03:42 Mighty Ships  
04:29 Food Factory  
05:16 How Do They Do It?  
06:03 How The Universe Works  
06:50 Strip The Cosmos  
07:37 Deadliest Space Weather  
08:00 How Do They Do It?  
08:23 Mythbusters  
09:08 NASA's Unexplained Files  
09:53 Mega Builders  
10:38 X-Machines  
11:23 Mighty Ships  
12:08 Through The Wormhole With Morgan Freeman  
12:53 Mega Builders  
13:38 Mythbusters  
14:23 X-Machines  
15:10 NASA's Unexplained Files  
15:57 Mighty Ships  
16:44 Through The Wormhole With Morgan Freeman  
17:31 Mega Builders  
18:18 NASA's Unexplained Files  
19:05 Futurescape With James Woods  
19:50 How Do They Do It?  
20:40 Stephen Hawking's Grand Design  
22:15 NASA's Unexplained Files  
23:00 How Do They Do It?  
23:45 Through The Wormhole With Morgan Freeman

**Food Network**

00:00 The Soup  
00:30 WAGs  
01:25 Sex With Brody  
01:50 The Grace Helbig Show  
02:20 E! Entertainment Special  
03:15 Extreme Close-Up  
04:10 The E! True Hollywood Story  
06:00 Keeping Up With The Kardashians  
07:50 Style Star  
08:20 E! Entertainment Special  
09:15 Giuliana & Bill  
11:10 #RichKids Of Beverly Hills  
12:05 E! Entertainment Special  
13:05 The Grace Helbig Show  
14:05 Hollywood Cycle  
15:00 Keeping Up With The Kardashians  
16:00 Kourtney And Khloe Take The Hamptons  
17:00 Stewarts And Hamiltons  
18:00 Keeping Up With The Kardashians  
20:00 House Of DVF  
21:00 Christina Milian Turned Up  
22:00 WAGs  
23:00 Sex With Brody  
23:30 Fashion Bloggers

**OSN FIRST HD**

00:00 Justified  
01:00 Scandal  
02:00 How To Get Away With Murder  
03:00 Show Me A Hero  
04:00 Switched At Birth  
05:00 The Ellen DeGeneres Show  
06:00 Covert Affairs  
07:00 Switched At Birth  
08:00 Odyssey  
09:00 The Ellen DeGeneres Show  
10:00 Covert Affairs  
11:00 Switched At Birth  
12:00 Coronation Street  
13:00 The Ellen DeGeneres Show  
14:00 Odyssey  
15:00 Live Good Morning America  
17:00 The Ellen DeGeneres Show  
18:00 Odyssey  
19:00 Scandal  
20:00 How To Get Away With Murder  
21:00 Quantico  
22:00 Rosewood  
23:00 Allegiance

**ID. Investigation Discovery**

00:40 Scorned: Crimes Of Passion  
01:30 California Investigator  
02:20 Diabolical  
03:10 True Crime With Aphrodite Jones  
04:00 The Injustice Files: Sundown Towns  
04:45 Scorned: Crimes Of Passion  
05:30 California Investigator  
06:20 The Will  
08:00 Dr G: Medical Examiner  
08:50 On The Case With Paula Zahn  
09:40 Fatal Encounters  
10:30 Murder Shift  
11:20 Deadly Affairs  
12:10 True Crime With Aphrodite Jones  
13:00 The Will  
13:50 I Almost Got Away With It  
14:40 California Investigator  
15:05 Dr G: Medical Examiner  
15:55 Fatal Encounters  
16:45 On The Case With Paula Zahn  
17:35 Murder Shift  
18:25 I Almost Got Away With It  
19:15 The Will  
20:05 Deadly Affairs  
20:55 True Crime With Aphrodite Jones  
21:45 California Investigator  
22:10 Who On Earth Did I Marry?  
23:00 True Crime With Aphrodite Jones

**ITV Choice**

00:10 Paddock To Plate  
01:05 Emmerdale  
02:00 Coronation Street  
02:30 The Chase: Celebrity Specials  
03:25 The Jonathan Ross Show  
04:20 The Syndicate  
05:15 Paddock To Plate  
07:05 Coach Trip  
07:30 Grantchester  
08:25 The Syndicate  
09:20 The Jonathan Ross Show  
10:15 The Chase

**OSN FIRST MORE**

00:00 The Ellen DeGeneres Show  
01:00 Chicago Fire  
02:00 Good Morning America  
03:00 Mistresses  
04:00 Grimm  
05:00 Chicago Fire  
06:00 Good Morning America  
07:00 Coronation Street  
07:30 Coronation Street  
08:00 The Ellen DeGeneres Show  
09:00 Parenthood  
10:00 Coronation Street  
10:30 Coronation Street  
11:00 The Ellen DeGeneres Show  
12:00 C.S.I.  
13:00 Marvel's Agent Carter  
14:00 Parenthood  
15:00 Chicago Fire  
16:00 White Collar  
17:00 C.S.I.  
18:00 Marvel's Agent Carter  
19:00 Parenthood  
20:00 C.S.I.  
21:00 Marvel's Agent Carter  
22:00 Mistresses  
23:00 Grimm

**OSN MOVIES HD**

01:45 Isa-PG15  
03:15 A Madea Christmas-PG15  
05:00 Le Week-end-PG15  
07:00 Bad Parents-PG15  
09:00 A Common Man-PG15  
11:00 Louder Than Words-PG15  
13:00 About Alex-PG15  
15:00 Stonehearst Asylum-PG15  
17:00 A Common Man-PG15  
18:45 Blackhat-PG15  
21:00 Cold In July-18  
23:00 Dom Hemingway-18

**OSN MOVIES HD KIDS**

01:15 Marvel's Planet Hulk  
02:45 Worms  
04:30 Mamma Moo And Crow  
06:00 Columbus In The Last Journey  
08:00 The Elf Who Stole Christmas  
09:45 Krazy Planet  
11:15 The Unbeatables  
13:00 Worms  
14:30 Miffy The Movie  
16:00 The Three Dogateers  
18:00 Krazy Planet  
20:00 Hatching  
22:00 Miffy The Movie  
23:30 The Three Dogateers

**OSN MOVIES HD PREMIERE**

00:00 The Intruders-PG15  
02:00 Romeo & Juliet-PG15  
04:00 Bully-PG15  
06:00 Knight Rusty-PG  
08:00 Hellboy: Sword Of Storms



**WER ON OSN MOVIES ACTION HD**

10:00 Isa-PG15  
12:00 Romeo & Juliet-PG15  
14:15 The Mark-PG15  
16:15 Hellboy: Sword Of Storms-PG  
18:00 Curve-PG15  
20:00 Nightingale-PG15  
22:00 Neighbors-18

**AMC**

04:00 I, Madman  
05:30 Brannigan  
07:20 The Sharkfighters  
08:35 Cannon For Cordoba  
10:20 Earthbound  
11:55 George Washington  
13:25 Duplex  
14:55 Futureworld  
16:40 The Great Escape  
19:30 Still Life: A Three Pines Mystery  
21:00 Fear The Walking Dead  
22:05 Suspect Zero  
23:45 Fear The Walking Dead  
00:50 Fargo  
02:25 Still Life: A Three Pines Mystery

**Disney Junior**

03:05 Calmero  
03:20 Zou  
03:45 Art Attack  
04:10 Henry Hugglemonster  
04:20 Calmero  
04:35 Zou  
04:45 Loopedidoo  
05:00 Art Attack  
05:25 Henry Hugglemonster  
05:35 Calmero  
05:50 Zou  
06:00 Loopedidoo  
06:15 Art Attack  
06:35 Henry Hugglemonster  
06:50 Calmero  
07:00 Zou  
07:20 Loopedidoo  
07:35 Art Attack  
08:00 Calmero  
08:10 Zou  
08:25 Loopedidoo  
08:40 Jake And The Never Land Pirates  
09:05 Sofia The First  
09:30 Miles From Tomorrow  
09:55 The Hive  
10:05 Mickey Mouse Clubhouse  
10:35 Doc McStuffins  
11:00 Sofia The First  
11:30 Jake And The Never Land Pirates  
12:00 Miles From Tomorrow  
12:25 Special Agent Oso  
12:50 Handy Manny  
13:15 Jungle Junction  
13:30 Mickey Mouse Clubhouse  
14:00 Sofia The First  
14:25 Sofia The First  
14:50 Miles From Tomorrow  
15:15 Jake And The Never Land Pirates  
15:40 Jake And The Never Land Pirates  
16:05 The Adventures Of The Disney...  
16:35 Miles From Tomorrow  
17:00 Sofia The First  
17:25 Aladdin  
17:50 Gummi Bears  
18:15 Chip 'n' Dale's Rescue Rangers  
18:40 Jake And The Never Land Pirates  
19:05 Miles From Tomorrow  
19:30 Sofia The First  
19:55 Doc McStuffins  
20:15 Jake And The Never Land Pirates  
20:45 Sheriff Callie's Wild West  
21:05 Mickey Mouse Clubhouse  
21:35 Sofia The First  
22:00 The Adventures Of The Disney...  
22:25 The Adventures Of The Disney...  
22:55 The Adventures Of The Disney...  
23:20 Lilo And Stitch  
23:45 Cars Toons  
23:50 Zou  
00:05 Henry Hugglemonster  
00:20 Calmero  
00:35 Zou

13:00 Homicide Hunter  
14:00 I Survived  
15:00 Frenemies  
15:30 Frenemies  
16:00 Crimes That Shook Britain  
17:00 Crime Stories  
18:00 The First 48  
19:00 I Survived  
20:00 Homicide Hunter  
21:00 Crime Stories  
22:00 Crimes That Shook Britain  
23:00 Killer Kids  
00:00 Jack The Ripper  
01:00 Born To Kill  
02:00 The Haunting Of...

**HISTORY HD**

03:00 Ax Men  
04:00 Shipping Wars  
04:30 Shipping Wars  
05:00 Duck Dynasty  
05:55 American Pickers  
06:45 American Restoration  
08:00 Shipping Wars  
08:25 Big Rig Bounty Hunters  
09:15 Ice Road Truckers  
10:05 Duck Dynasty  
11:00 Alaska Off-Road Warriors  
13:00 American Pickers  
14:00 Storage Wars  
15:00 Pawn Stars  
16:00 Shipping Wars  
17:00 American Restoration  
18:00 Storage Wars  
18:30 Pawn Stars  
19:00 American Pickers  
20:00 Storage Wars  
22:00 Pawn Stars  
00:00 American Pickers  
01:00 American Restoration  
02:00 Pawn Stars

**TLC HD**

03:40 Your Style In His Hands  
04:30 Jon & Kate Plus 8  
05:00 Little People, Big World  
05:30 Cake Boss  
06:00 Say Yes To The Dress  
06:25 Obsessive Compulsive Cleaners  
07:15 Hoarding: Buried Alive  
08:05 Say Yes To The Dress: The Big Day  
08:55 Oprah: Where Are They Now?  
09:45 Jon & Kate Plus 8  
10:10 Little People, Big World  
10:35 My Five Wives  
11:25 Cake Boss  
11:50 Love, Lust Or Run  
12:15 Love, Lust Or Run  
12:40 Obsessive Compulsive Cleaners  
13:30 My Big Fat Fabulous Life  
13:55 My Big Fat Fabulous Life  
14:20 Food Hospital  
15:10 Jon & Kate Plus 8  
15:35 Little People, Big World  
16:50 My Five Wives  
17:40 Cake Boss  
18:05 Say Yes To The Dress  
18:30 Your Style In His Hands  
19:20 Catwalk 30+  
20:10 Obsessive Compulsive Cleaners  
21:00 My Giant Life  
21:50 Curvy Brides  
22:15 Curvy Brides  
22:40 Long Island Medium  
23:05 Last Chance Salon  
23:55 My Giant Life  
00:45 Curvy Brides  
01:10 Curvy Brides  
01:35 Long Island Medium  
02:00 Last Chance Salon  
02:50 My Five Wives

**nickelodeon HD**

03:24 Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles  
03:48 Henry Danger  
04:12 Nicky, Ricky, Dicky & Dawn  
04:36 The Haunted Hathaways  
05:00 Winx Club  
05:24 Sanjay And Craig  
06:12 SpongeBob SquarePants  
07:00 Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles  
07:48 Sanjay And Craig  
08:12 Harvey Beaks  
08:36 Breadwinners  
09:00 Get Blake  
09:24 Rabbids Invasion  
09:48 Henry Danger  
10:12 Nicky, Ricky, Dicky & Dawn  
10:36 The Haunted Hathaways  
11:00 Winx Club  
11:24 Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles  
12:12 Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles  
13:00 Breadwinners  
13:48 Get Blake  
14:12 Rabbids Invasion  
14:36 Henry Danger  
15:00 Nicky, Ricky, Dicky & Dawn  
15:24 SpongeBob SquarePants  
16:12 Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles  
16:36 Sanjay And Craig  
17:24 Harvey Beaks  
17:48 Breadwinners  
18:12 Henry Danger  
18:36 Nicky, Ricky, Dicky & Dawn  
19:00 The Haunted Hathaways  
19:24 Max & Shred  
19:48 SpongeBob SquarePants  
20:36 Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles  
21:24 Breadwinners  
22:12 Sanjay And Craig  
23:00 SpongeBob SquarePants  
23:48 Henry Danger  
00:12 Nicky, Ricky, Dicky & Dawn  
00:36 Max & Shred  
01:00 The Haunted Hathaways  
01:24 Sanjay And Craig  
02:12 SpongeBob SquarePants  
Sundance Channel HD  
04:05 Above Freezing  
05:35 In The Bath Tub Of The World  
07:00 Miss Fisher's Murder Mysteries  
08:00 Theatreland  
08:30 The Odds  
10:00 Charge!

11:35 Welcome To Pine Hill  
13:00 Hopscotch  
14:45 Choking Man  
16:05 Discovering: Lennon  
16:55 In Conversation With Charge!  
19:00 Theatreland  
19:30 Hollywood's Best Film Directors  
20:00 Welcome To Pine Hill  
21:30 Hopscotch  
23:15 Don't Let Me Drown  
01:00 The Sunshine Boy  
02:50 Choking Man

07:00 Penn Zero: Part Time Hero  
07:25 Boyster  
07:50 Supa Strikas  
08:15 Lab Rats  
08:40 K. C. Undercover  
09:10 Star vs The Forces Of Evil  
09:35 Kirby Buckets  
10:00 Lab Rats  
10:25 Kickin' It  
10:50 Mighty Med  
11:20 Supa Strikas  
11:45 K. C. Undercover  
12:10 Penn Zero: Part Time Hero  
12:35 Annedroids  
13:00 Eddie's Million Dollar Cook-Off  
14:30 Phineas And Ferb  
15:10 Disney Mickey Mouse  
15:15 Rocket Monkeys  
15:40 Penn Zero: Part Time Hero  
16:05 Star vs The Forces Of Evil  
16:30 Kirby Buckets  
16:55 Gamers Guide To Pretty Much Everything  
17:25 K. C. Undercover  
17:50 Supa Strikas  
18:15 Lab Rats



ASSASSIN'S BULLET ON OSN MOVIES ACTION HD







CROSSWORD 1127



ACROSS

1. Shift from one side of the ship to the other.
5. European annual grown for forage.
12. The local time at the 0 meridian passing through Greenwich, England.
15. The actions and activities assigned to or required or expected of a person or group.
16. Dilatation or distension of a hollow organ.
17. (used especially of commodities) In the natural unprocessed condition.
18. A loose sleeveless outer garment made from aba cloth.
20. Lower in esteem.
22. Large high frilly cap with a full crown.
24. Term used in some classifications as nearly equivalent to the order Coraciiformes.
26. (of pain or sorrow) Made easier to bear.
28. A toxic protein extracted from castor beans.
29. The supreme commander of a fleet.
32. (Akkadian) God of wisdom.
35. Decapod having eyes on short stalks and a broad flattened carapace with a small abdomen folded under the thorax and pincers.
36. Tree bearing large brown nuts containing e.g. caffeine.
41. Goddess of the dead and queen of the underworld.
42. Any place of complete bliss and delight and peace.
43. The sixth month of the Hindu calendar.
44. Any of various long-tailed rodents similar to but larger than a mouse.
46. A fencing sword similar to a foil but with a heavier blade.
47. Having winglike extensions.
48. One of four subclasses or superorder of Monocotyledones.
53. The largest Australian city located in south-eastern Australia.
56. The chief solid component of mammalian urine.
58. A Tibetan or Mongolian priest of Lamaism.
59. Singing jazz.
62. Cubes of meat marinated and cooked on a skewer usually with vegetables.
65. A port city on the Caspian Sea that is the capital of Azerbaijan and an important center for oil production.
69. An implement used to propel or steer a boat.
72. Type genus of family Ulmaceae.
73. The law enforcement agency in the Justice Department.
74. Genus of North American and east Asian perennial herbs.
76. An officer who acts as military assistant to a more senior officer.
77. Title for a civil or military leader (especially in Turkey).
78. Of or relating to or characteristic of Thailand of its people.
79. (computer science) A data transmission rate (bits/second) for modems.

DOWN

1. A metric unit of weight equal to one thousandth of a kilogram.
2. A cruel and brutal fellow.
3. Divulge information or secrets.
4. The branch of engineering science that studies the uses of electricity and the equipment for power generation and distribution and the control of machines and communication.
5. Something of sentimental value.
6. Hormone produced early in pregnancy by the placenta.
7. The 7th letter of the Greek alphabet.
8. Minute floating marine tunicate having a transparent body with an opening at each end.
9. Have an ambitious plan or a lofty goal.
10. A state in New England.
11. (Old Testament) The second patriarch.
12. A small hard particle.
13. An independent group of closely related Chadic languages spoken in the area between the Biu-Mandara and East Chadic languages.
14. Affectedly dainty or refined.
19. A flat-bottomed volcanic crater that was formed by an explosion.
21. Hairy upright herb native to southeastern Asia but widely cultivated for its large glossy edible fruit commonly used as a vegetable.
23. Tropical American trees with palmately compound leaves and showy bell-shaped flowers.
25. An independent agency of the United States government responsible for collecting and coordinating intelligence and counterintelligence activities abroad in the national interest.
27. Submerged freshwater perennials.
30. Depressing in character or appearance.
31. A milkshake made with malt powder.
33. Of or relating to living organisms.
34. With good sense or in a reasonable or intelligent manner.
37. A person afflicted with leprosy.
38. Used of a single unit or thing.
39. According to the Old Testament he was a pagan king of Israel and husband of Jezebel (9th century BC).
40. A city in southern Turkey on the Seyhan River.
45. A platform built out from the shore into the water and supported by piles.
49. King of Denmark and Norway who forced Edmund II to divide England with him.
50. A usually soluble substance for staining or coloring e.g. fabrics or hair.
51. Someone who works (or provides workers) during a strike.
54. A genus of small kites of both Old and New Worlds.
55. 1 species.
57. Jordan's port.
60. 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.
61. An elaborate song for solo voice.
63. Mild yellow Dutch cheese made in balls.
64. A large bundle bound for storage or transport.
66. Type genus of the Amidiidae.
67. Either of two spiral-horned antelopes of the African bush.
68. Employed in accomplishing something.
70. The part of the nervous system of vertebrates that controls involuntary actions of the smooth muscles and heart and glands.
71. The Tibeto-Burman language spoken in the Dali region of Yunnan.
75. A toxic nonmetallic element related to sulfur and tellurium.

Yesterday's Solution



STAR TRACK



Aries (March 21-April 19)

Withholding your thoughts today may be a sensible strategy, even if it's not easy to remain silent. Your key planet Mars is anxiously squaring contentious Mercury, making it exceptionally tough to speak your mind without blowing your cool. Even if you can keep your feelings under wraps for a while, you're likely to let loose later in the day. There's no question about it; the less you say now, the more peaceful your life is. Discretion is the better part of valor.



Taurus (April 20-May 20)

An unexpected social commitment could get in the way of your production at work today. You might be invited to participate in a group activity that distracts you from something that's less fun yet more important. Unfortunately, you may rush to say yes as a means of escape, even if it turns out to be a bad idea. Nevertheless, don't blame yourself later if you wish you had chosen differently. All you need to do is make the best choices you can in the moment and take responsibility for the consequences. You reap what you sow.



Gemini (May 21-June 20)

You're not exactly certain what others expect from you today. However, you're ready to swing into action even if you don't know which direction you're going. Part of the problem is that interactive Mercury has you hyper-focused on the future while its square to impetuous Mars heightens your impatience. Nevertheless, flying by the seat of your pants now is asking for trouble you don't need. Spending extra time studying your maps increases your chances of arriving at the right destination.



Cancer (June 21-July 22)

You might get up on the wrong side of the bed today. Fortunately, early morning dissatisfaction can transform into afternoon hope, even if you don't have a clue as to how it might happen. It all starts with having faith in your dreams. If you believe in yourself, others will pick up on your optimism. It's like starting a fire from a spark; nurturing a tiny flame can turn it into the fuel of inspiration. Your positivity is contagious; it's your attitude that determines your failure or success.



Leo (July 23-August 22)

Normally, you perform well under pressure, but formidable obstacles are not easily dismissed today. You're less certain about a recent decision, but might not want to expose your vulnerability by sharing your fears. Don't waffle now, even if you're unsure of your next move. It's simpler in the long run to take a strong position, even if it leads to conflict. At least others will know exactly where they stand and can make their plans accordingly.



Virgo (August 23-September 22)

You're eager to show everyone how adaptable you are today, but your patience may be running thin as clever Mercury squares impulsive Mars in your 3rd House of Communication. You wish that people would state their needs more clearly because you don't understand what they want. But rather than wasting energy criticizing others for being indecisive, just move forward by following through with your plans. Putting your own life in order is more constructive now than trying to manage anyone else's.



Libra (September 23-October 22)

You're highly sensitive to people's unexpressed feelings today and may try to settle the tense dynamics by boldly walking into the middle of a conflict. You have your own point of view, but still believe in the process of open dialogue. Unfortunately, the more you hear, the more you realize the current stress might not have an immediate resolution. Instead of pretending you know what to do, share your uncertainty. Ironically, your honesty catalyzes a solution that seemed impossible only moments before.



Scorpio (October 23-November 21)

Your unwavering commitment to the truth as you see it may generate some unexpected backlash today. You may struggle to open your mind as you're asked to entertain a variety of possibilities. You truly want to be more flexible, but too many choices can be quite overwhelming now. Nevertheless, it's wise to listen to the needs of everyone involved. The good news is that you can win what you want if you're acting like a team player. Everyone is more willing to compromise once competition turns into cooperation.



Sagittarius (November 22-December 21)

Although romance might be in the air, it's difficult to bring it down to earth today. You're so eager to engage your heart in an interaction with someone special that you can't separate your wishes from the true dynamics. Talking about your feelings helps to ground your expectations, but don't expect miracles now since there may be insurmountable differences of opinion between you and another person. Just remember that you can respect an opposing point of view without having to support it. A healthy relationship is built on mutual respect not blind agreement.



Capricorn (December 22-January 19)

No matter how disciplined or determined you are today, you won't likely accomplish everything on your agenda. You're all too easily distracted because your curiosity is aroused by every new idea that floats your way. Unfortunately, you may grow anxious when you realize these mental diversions aren't leading you to your desired destination. But the information you learn now can be worthwhile later, even if you're not making tangible progress. Be patient, you'll be able to see the big picture soon enough.



Aquarius (January 20-February 18)

You may grow worried if you can't pin down a sensible course of action at work now. Even if you have a viable strategy for getting ahead, you're not sure that your timing is right. It's unsettling if you don't receive the support you expect now that assertive Mars squares interactive Mercury in your 1st House of Personality. But don't jeopardize your long-term plans with feelings of impatience or doubt. Sometimes you just have to wait for the right opportunity to knock at your door.



Pisces (February 19-March 20)

Visualizing the final outcome of your decisions is nearly impossible today; however, you can have a fine time by spinning a few fantasies within your imagination. Nevertheless, it's still a struggle to keep your behavior consistent with your thoughts while self-directed Mars crosses paths with rational Mercury in your 12th House of Spirituality. Forget about trying to explain your actions to anyone else, since the more you say now, the less sense you make. Eleanor Roosevelt wrote, "The future belongs to those who believe in the beauty of their dreams."

WORD SEARCH PUZZLE

Soccer

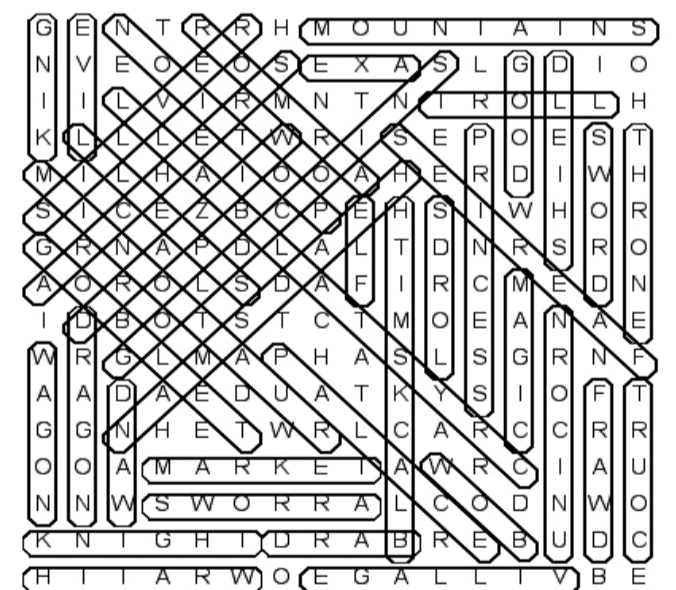
Find and circle all of the words that are hidden in the grid. The remaining 37 letters spell a secret message.



- |             |           |              |               |
|-------------|-----------|--------------|---------------|
| ASSIST      | FORMATION | MATCH        | SLIDE TACKLE  |
| BALL        | FORWARD   | OFFENSE      | SOCKS         |
| CAPTAIN     | FOUL      | OFFSIDE      | SPORT         |
| CHEERING    | GAME      | PENALTY KICK | STOPPAGE TIME |
| CLEATS      | GOALIE    | POSITION     | STRIKERS      |
| CLUB        | GOALS     | PRACTICE     | SUBSTITUTE    |
| COACH       | GRASS     | RED CARD     | SWEEPER       |
| COIN TOSS   | HALVES    | REFEREE      | THROW-IN      |
| CORNER KICK | HAT TRICK | SCORE        | TOUCHLINE     |
| DEFENSE     | HEADING   | SHIN GUARD   | WALL          |
| FANS        | JERSEY    | SHOOT-OUT    | WORLD CUP     |
| FIELD       | JUGGLING  | SHORTS       | YELLOW CARD   |
| FIFA        | KICK-OFF  | SHOT         |               |

Yesterday's Solution

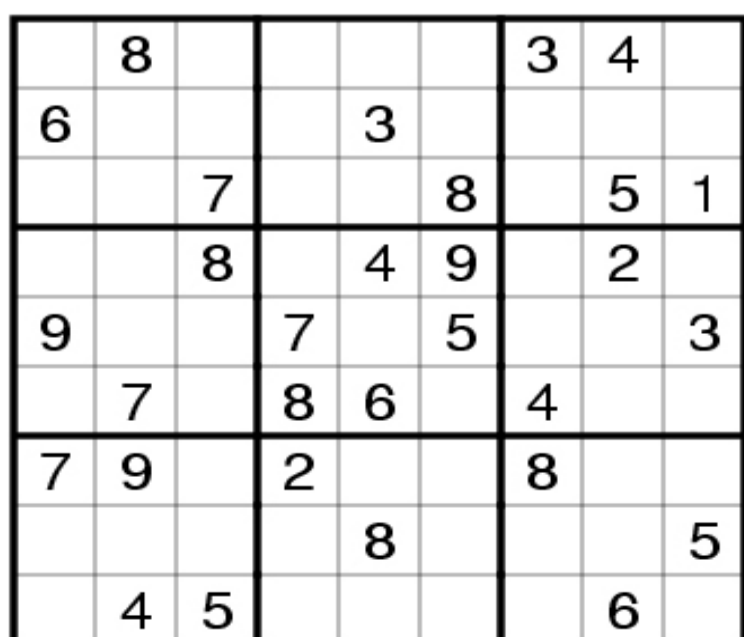
Fantasy World 2



- |              |            |           |         |
|--------------|------------|-----------|---------|
| ARCHERS      | DWARF      | LORDS     | SPELL   |
| ARMOR        | ELF        | MAGIC     | SWORD   |
| ARROWS       | EVIL       | MARKET    | THRONE  |
| AXE          | FAERIES    | MINOTAUR  | TROLL   |
| BARD         | GOBLET     | MOUNTAINS | UNICORN |
| BLACKSMITH   | GOLD COINS | PALACE    | VILLAGE |
| BOW          | GOOD       | POTTON    | WAGON   |
| COURT        | HEADSMAN   | PRINCESS  | WAND    |
| CRYSTAL BALL | KING       | SHIELD    | WIZARD  |
| DRAGON       | KNIGHT     | SILVER    | WRAITH  |

The hidden message is: THE LION, THE WITCH AND THE WARDROBE

Daily SuDoku



very hard

Yesterday's Solution



very hard



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
Qadsiya	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	Lesotho	00266
Algeria	00213	Macau	00853
Andorra	00376	Macedonia	00389
Angola	00244	Madagascar	00261
Anguilla	001264	Majorca	0034
Antigua	001268	Malawi	00265
Argentina	0054	Malaysia	0060
Armenia	00374	Maldives	00960
Australia	0061	Mali	00223
Austria	0043	Malta	00356
Bahamas	001242	Marshall Islands	00692
Bahrain	00973	Martinique	00596
Bangladesh	00880	Mauritania	00222
Barbados	001246	Mauritius	00230
Belarus	00375	Mayotte	00269
Belgium	0032	Mexico	0052
Belize	00501	Micronesia	00691
Benin	00229	Moldova	00373
Bermuda	001441	Monaco	00377
Bhutan	00975	Mongolia	00976
Bolivia	00591	Montserrat	001664
Bosnia	00387	Morocco	00212
Botswana	00267	Mozambique	00258
Brazil	0055	Myanmar (Burma)	0095
Brunei	00673	Namibia	00264
Bulgaria	00359	Nepal	00977
Burkina	00226	Netherlands	0031
Burundi	00257	Netherlands Antilles	00599
Cambodia	00855	New Caledonia	00687
Cameroon	00237	New Zealand	0064
Canada	001	Nicaragua	00505
Cape Verde	00238	Niger	00227
Cayman Islands	001345	Nigeria	00234
Central African	00236	Niue	00683
Chad	00235	Norfolk Island	00672
Chile	0056	N. Ireland (UK)	0044
China	0086	North Korea	00850
Colombia	0057	Norway	0047
Comoros	00269	Oman	00968
Congo	00242	Pakistan	0092
Cook Islands	00682	Palau	00680
Costa Rica	00506	Panama	00507
Croatia	00385	Papua New Guinea	00675
Cuba	0053	Paraguay	00595
Cyprus	00357	Peru	0051
Cyprus (Northern)	0090392	Philippines	0063
Czech Republic	00420	Poland	0048
Denmark	0045	Portugal	00351
Diego Garcia	00246	Puerto Rico	001787
Djibouti	00253	Qatar	00974
Dominica	001767	Romania	0040
Dominican Republic	001809	Russian Federation	007
Ecuador	00593	Rwanda	00250
Egypt	0020	Saint Helena	00290
El Salvador	00503	Saint Kitts	001869
England (UK)	0044	Saint Lucia	001758
Equatorial Guinea	00240	Saint Pierre	00508
Eritrea	00291	Saint Vincent	001784
Estonia	00372	Samoa US	00684
Ethiopia	00251	Samoa West	00685
Falkland Islands	00500	San Marino	00378
Faroe Islands	00298	Sao Tome	00239
Fiji	00679	Saudi Arabia	00966
Finland	00358	Scotland (UK)	0044
France	0033	Senegal	00221
French Guiana	00594	Seychelles	00284
French Polynesia	00689	Sierra Leone	00232
Gabon	00241	Singapore	0065
Gambia	00220	Slovakia	00421
Georgia	00995	Slovenia	00386
Germany	0049	Solomon Islands	00677
Ghana	00233	Somalia	00252
Gibraltar	00350	South Africa	0027
Greece	0030	South Korea	0082
Greenland	00299	Spain	0034
Grenada	001473	Sri Lanka	0094
Guadeloupe	00590	Sudan	00249
Guam	001671	Suriname	00597
Guatemala	00502	Swaziland	00268
Guinea	00224	Sweden	0046
Guyana	00592	Switzerland	0041
Haiti	00509	Syria	00963
Holland (Netherlands)	0031	Serbia	00381
Honduras	00504	Taiwan	00886
Hong Kong	00852	Tanzania	00255
Hungary	0036	Thailand	0066
Ibiza (Spain)	0034	Toga	00228
Iceland	00354	Tonga	00676
India	0091	Tokelau	00690
Indian Ocean	00873	Trinidad	001868
Indonesia	0062	Tunisia	00216
Iran	0098	Turkey	0090
Iraq	00964	Tuvalu	00688
Ireland	00353	Uganda	00256
Italy	0039	Ukraine	00380
Ivory Coast	00225	United Arab Emirates	00976
Jamaica	001876	United Kingdom	0044
Japan	0081	Uruguay	00598
Jordan	00962	USA	001
Kazakhstan	007	Uzbekistan	00998
Kenya	00254	Vanuatu	00678
Kiribati	00686	Venezuela	00582
Kuwait	00965	Vietnam	0084
Kyrgyzstan	00996	Virgin Islands UK	001284
Laos	00856	Virgin Islands US	001340
Latvia	00371	Wales (UK)	0044
Lebanon	00961	Yemen	00967
Liberia	00231	Yugoslavia	00381
Libya	00218	Zambia	00260
Lithuania	00370	Zimbabwe	00263

**STATE OF KUWAIT**  
DIRECTORATE GENERAL OF CIVIL AVIATION  
METEOROLOGICAL DEPARTMENT



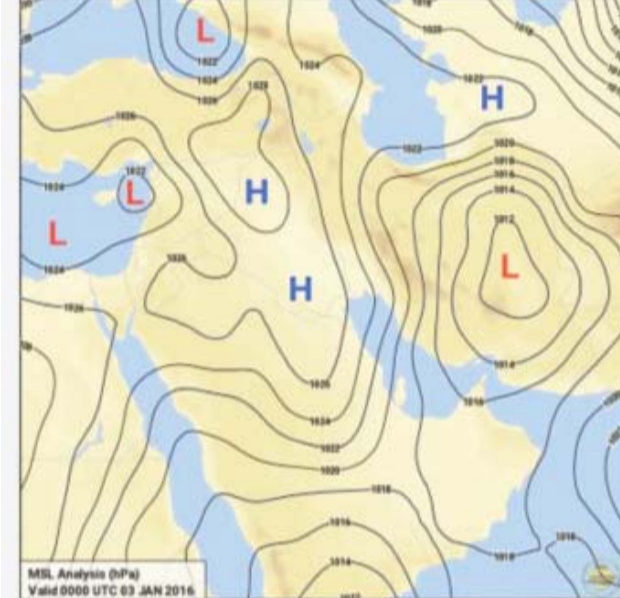
Tel: (+965) 161 Ext: 2627 - 2630  
Fax: (+965) 24348714  
www.met.gov.kw

**Expected Weather for the Next 24 Hours**  
Issued 03/01/2016-07:00 LT UTC +3hr

**Max Temperature 12 °C**

**By Day** : Cold with light to moderate freshening gradually at times north westerly wind, with speed of 15 - 40 km/h and some high clouds will appear  
**By Night** : Very cold with light to moderate north westerly wind, with speed of 15 - 38 km/h

SFC. CHART



Four-Day Forecast

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday
Expected Weather	cold + high clouds	partly cloudy + chance for fog	sunny	sunny + scattered clouds
Min Temp °C	06	06	07	08
Max Temp °C	15	16	16	18
Wind Direction	north westerly	south easterly to light variable	variable wind changing to light to moderate north westerly	north westerly to light variable
Wind Speed km/h	08 - 30	06 - 22	06 - 22	06 - 26

All times are local time (GMT+3) unless otherwise stated

**Warnings & Weather Watches**

no warnings or weather watches

**Kuwait Forecast**

Station	MIN °C	REC	Max °C
KUWAIT CITY	10		16
KUWAIT AIRPORT	05		12
ABDALY	05		14
BUBYAN	06		15
JAHRA	07		13
FAILAKA ISLAND	09		16
SALMIYAH	11		17
AHMADI	10		18
JAL ALIYAH	05		15
QAROH ISLAND	13		19
UMH AL-MARADEM	12		19
NUWAISIB	09		19
WAFRA	07		18
HANAGISH	05		15
SALMY	03		14
MUTRIBA	05		15

**Recorded Yesterday at Kuwait Airport**

Max Temp (°C)	16
Min Temp (°C)	09
Max Rel Hum (%)	100
Min Rel Hum (%)	48
Max Wind Speed (km/h) and Direction	46 N
TOTAL RAINFALL IN 24 HR	0 mm

**Sunrise**

06:43

**Sunset**

17:02

**Prayer Times**

Fajr	05:18
Sunrise	06:43
Zuhr	11:52
Asr	14:43
Sunset	17:02
Isha	18:24



**PRIVATE CLINICS**

Ophthalmologists	Plastic Surgeons
Dr. Abdallah Al-Mansoor	25622444
Dr. Samy Al-Rabea	25752222
Dr. Masoma Habeeb	25321171
Dr. Mubarak Al-Ajmy	25739999
Dr. Mohsen Abel	25757700
Dr. Adnan Hasan Alwayl	25732223
Dr. Abdallah Al-Baghly	25732223
<b>Ear, Nose &amp; Throat (ENT)</b>	
Dr. Ahmed Fouad Mouner	2455050 Ext 510
Dr. Abdallah Al-Ali	25644660
Dr. Abd Al-Hameed Al-Taweel	25646478
Dr. Sanad Al-Fathalah	25311996
Dr. Mohammad Al-Daary	25731988
Dr. Ismail Al-Fodary	22620166
Dr. Mahmoud Al-Booz	25651426
<b>General Practitioners</b>	
Dr. Mohammed Y Majidi	2455050 Ext 123
Dr. Yousef Al-Omar	24719312
Dr. Tarek Al-Mikhazeem	22636920
Dr. Kathem Maarafi	25730465
Dr. Abdallah Ahmad Eyadah	25655528
Dr. Nabeel Al-Ayoobi	24577781
Dr. Dina Abdallah Al-Rafea	25333501
<b>Urologists</b>	
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

Paediatricians	Endocrinologist
Dr. Khaled Hamadi	25665898
Dr. Abd Al-Aziz Al-Rashed	25340300
Dr. Zahra Qabazard	25710444
Dr. Sohail Qamar	22621099
Dr. Snaa Maarroof	25713514
Dr. Pradip Gupare	23713100
Dr. Zacharias Mathew	24334282
<b>Dermatology</b>	
Dr. Mohammed Salam	23845955
<b>Dentists</b>	
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
<b>Neurologists</b>	
Dr. Sohal Najem Al-Shemeri	25633324
Dr. Jasem Mola Hassan	25345875
<b>Gastrologists</b>	
Dr. Sami Aman	22636464
Dr. Mohammad Al-Shamaly	25322030
Dr. Foad Abdallah Al-Ali	22633135

Family Doctor	Psychiatrists	Gynaecologists & Obstetricians
Dr Divya Damodar	23729596/23729581	
<b>Psychiatrists</b>		
Dr. Esam Al-Ansari	22635047	
Dr. Eisa M. Al-Balhan	22613623/0	
<b>Gynaecologists &amp; Obstetricians</b>		
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	
<b>General Surgeons</b>		
Dr. Amer Zawaz Al-Amer	22610044	
Dr. Mohammad Yousef Basher	25327148	
<b>Internists, Chest &amp; Heart</b>		
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	

Physiotherapists & VD	Rheumatologists:	Internist, Chest & Heart	Consultant Cardiologist
Dr. Abd Al-Naser Al-Othman	25339330		
Dr. Ahmad Al-Ansari	25658888		
Dr. Kamal Al-Shomr	25329924		
<b>Physiotherapists &amp; VD</b>			
Dr. Deyaa Shehab	25722291		
Dr. Mused Faraj Khamees	22666288		
<b>Rheumatologists:</b>			
Dr. Adel Al-Awadi	25330060		
Dr. Khaled Al-Jarallah	25722290		
<b>Internist, Chest &amp; Heart</b>			
DR. Mohammed Akkad	2455050 Ext 210		
<b>Consultant Cardiologist</b>			
Dr. Mohammad Zubaid	MB, ChB, FRCP, PACC		
Assistant Professor Of Medicine	Head, Division of Cardiology		
Mubarak Al-Kabeer Hospital	25339667		
<b>Consultant Cardiologist</b>			
Dr. Farida Al-Habib	MD, PH.D, FACC		
MD, PH.D, FACC	2611555-2622555		
Inaya German Medical Center			
Te: 2575077			
F			





## Anna Camp and Skylar Astin engaged

The 'Pitch Perfect' stars have revealed they are set to tie the knot after Skylar got down on one knee over the new year. Captioning a picture of the pair where Anna is showing off her sparkling ring, he wrote: "I asked. She said yes!!! (sic)" To which, she added in her own post: "He asked. I said YES!!! (sic)" Meanwhile, the 33-year-old actress previously revealed the pair are the best of friends. She gushed: "The funny thing is, is that we never ever have any scenes together. So, yeah, it was great. We had a great time when we saw each other on set. It was awesome. We're really best friends, so it's awesome. He's definitely sweet like his character is." Skylar was also a support for Anna when she split from her now ex-husband Michael Mosley, with an insider revealing the pair have always had "amazing chemistry". A source said at the time: "They had a great connection and became friends, but nothing romantic happened until after she separated from her husband. They have amazing chemistry." The couple - who are best known for their roles of Aubrey Posen and Jesse Swanson in the musical movies - have been dating since 2013.



## Jay Z: I can make Harry Styles a solo success

Jay Z thinks he can help Harry Styles become a solo success. The 'Empire State of Mind' rapper believes he can hook the One Director star up with the top artists and producers and ensure his solo career goes really well. He told the Daily Star on Sunday newspaper: "Harry doesn't need any help with exposure, everybody in the world knows who he is. But he does need to make the transition from being part of a group to becoming an individual artist. I can get him working with the bigger artists, the biggest producers - and have



him as the biggest artist in the world within a year." Meanwhile, the 21-year-old singer - whose group will be taking a hiatus next year - has already written a number of songs including four with Snow Patrol's Johnny McDaid. A source said at the time: "Harry has been writing constantly both when on the road and when doing his own thing. He's managed to work on and record 20 songs already. Some of what he's written in the past has been given to the band. But he's been working hard on creating his own sound."

## Depp thanks Heard for 'putting up' with him

Johnny Depp has thanked Amber Heard for "putting up" with him. The 'Black Mass' star had some sweet words for his wife as he accepted the Desert Palm Achievement Award at the Palm Springs International Film Festival. He said: "I also have to thank my wife Amber for putting up with me, for living with all these characters, which can't be easy. It's hard for me - it's got to be hard for her." Meanwhile, the 52-year-old actor previously admitted he feels so "lucky" to connect with Amber on "a lot of levels". He explained: "We connect on a lot of levels but the first thing that really got me was she's an aficionado of the

blues. I would play a song, some old obscure blues song and she knew what it was. "She's very, very literate. She's a voracious reader, as I have been, so we connected on that as well. And she's kind of brilliant. I'm a lucky man." And Amber is equally happy with the Hollywood hunk, admitting having stepchildren - Johnny's daughter Lily-Rose and son Jack - is the "greatest, most surprising gift" ever. She shared: "It's an honor and the greatest, most surprising gift I have ever received in my life ... "I feel new flavors that I didn't know existed. New colors that I didn't know existed have been added to my life. I'm so happy."

## Cheryl's brother moves in with her



Cheryl Fernandez-Versini's brother has reportedly moved into her home to offer his support. The 'Crazy Stupid Love' hitmaker's marriage to Jean-Bernard Fernandez-Versini is said to be on the rocks and brother Garry Tweedy has been staying with her so he can help her get through the difficult times. A source told The Sun on Sunday newspaper: "He and Cheryl are extremely close. He's part of her entourage and is by her side for practically all her work commitments. "He needs to be in London for a base, and Cheryl has a big house that needs to be filled. It goes without saying that at a time like this she'll need his support." Meanwhile, Cheryl's cousin Tony Tweedy previously claimed the 32-year-old singer and her husband of 18 months have been struggling with the language barrier as she speaks little French and he knows only a small amount of English. He said: "The family think the marriage is over. When I asked if Cheryl was happy with him, they replied, "Put it this way, I'll give it six months. That was three months ago, and look what's happening. "Cheryl can't speak French. I'm told he speaks little English. What sort of relationship is it if she cannot speak French and he can't speak English? They may as well have a threesome with the interpreter."

## Khloe dislikes New Year's Resolutions



Khloe Kardashian doesn't like making New Year's Resolutions. The 'Keeping Up With The Kardashians' star has admitted she prefers to make goals for her life, as she took time to reflect on the past year, which has seen her estranged husband Lamar Odom come close to death. Writing on her official website, she shared: "Lots of people use a new year to make resolutions to achieve their body goals. Everyone wants to work out more, but me, personally, I don't really make any resolutions, exercise or otherwise. "I like to make goals in life, but I make sure that the goals aren't too crazy because if you ever fall off the horse, you beat yourself up. It's good to set small goals, and I never set a crazy time limit for myself. "The new year is a good time to reflect on the baby steps I've taken, and how I've evolved. I think it's so important to acknowledge the evolution." Meanwhile, the 31-year-old star previously revealed she is hoping to learn how to "appreciate every moment" more over the next 12 months. She said: "This year has made me realize how quickly things can change. In a moment everything can change. "So one of my resolutions is to be more present and appreciate every moment (sic)".

## Kim Kardashian West debuts first picture of son Saint



Kim Kardashian West has debuted the first picture of her three-week-old son Saint. The 'Keeping Up With The Kardashians' star gave birth to her and Kanye West's little bundle of joy last month and has posted a sweet picture of him and his two-year-old sister North's hands intertwined. Captioning the photo on her Instagram page, she wrote simply: "She said, 'He's my best friend.'" The 35-year-old television personality and the 'Only One' rapper have reportedly been offered \$2.5 million for the first picture of baby Saint. The couple have been inundated with requests and offers, with figures starting at \$2 million but they are "almost certain" they will reject all offers for the pictures. Meanwhile, after Kim's tough birth, the 38-year-old rapper is reportedly treating her like a "queen". A source said: "Kanye was really supportive at the hospital. And at home, as always, he treats her like a queen. She's his queen. Having Saint hasn't changed that. "Kim has a baby nurse for an extra set of hands, but she's obviously very involved. She's up and about but of course feeling exhausted at the same time." Kim gave birth to Saint on December 5, nearly three weeks before her due date of December 25. — Bang Showbiz

## 'Protective' Carrie Fisher!

Carrie Fisher feels "protective" over Daisy Ridley and John Boyega. The 59-year-old actress - who found international fame for her portrayal of Princess Leia in the 'Star Wars' movies - admits she worries about her 'Star Wars: The Force Awakens' co-stars because of the "hysteria" that will soon surround them. She told the Daily Star on Sunday newspaper: "You do think of the kids like John and Daisy and of course you feel protective of them. "You know the hysteria that is coming for them and, as much as you try to explain it, they won't get it until they are in the middle of it. All you can do is pre-



pare them for it as best as possible." Meanwhile, that is not the only advice Carrie has given to 23-year-old Daisy. She said previously: "I told her not to go through the crew like wildfire, but I also told her not to take any advice from me. When I was first in it I never wanted anyone to have the anecdote, 'I slept with Princess Leia.'" Daisy has also been offered a "warning" by Harrison Ford about the perils of fame. She shared: "It wasn't really advice. It was more of a warning. He said that the anonymity thing is difficult, because as creative people you look to other people for inspiration and suddenly people are looking at you."

## Anastacia's cancer research



Anastacia researched mastectomies after a breast cancer scare in 2005. The 47-year-old singer, who was first diagnosed with the disease in 2003 but made a full recovery, looked into having her breasts removed eight years before her second diagnosis in 2013 after a mammogram flagged something suspicious. Speaking exclusively to BANG Showbiz, she said: "I had a scare two years after my first my cancer and I immediately researched mastectomies at that point. I almost got a prophylactic mastectomy prior to getting cancer again." The 'I'm Outta Love' hitmaker made the brave decision to undergo a double mastectomy in October 2013 after she contracted breast cancer for the second time, but she's adamant the operation was a no-brainer out of fear it could spread to her organs. She explained: "The problem with a lumpectomy [a procedure to remove the affected area] is you still have tissue that cancer can come back." She added: "And that's why my decision was, 'I don't want another lumpectomy in the other breast so that maybe next time it's not just the lumpectomy, it's in the liver or somewhere else.'" Since the mastectomy two years ago, Anastacia, who also battles with the chronic inflammatory condition Crohn's Disease - has undergone breast reconstruction and has admitted she's in the "best health" she's been for a long time.



## Damon on being a 'Raging Narcissist' and 'The Martian' scene that made him cry



Though some might find it challenging to act in a film without a scene partner, Matt Damon joked that he enjoyed the experience on "The Martian" because "I'm a raging narcissist, so it was very natural." Damon was appearing with director Ridley Scott following a screening of the film at the Palm Springs International Film Festival as part of the fest's "Talking Pictures" program on Saturday afternoon. The pair had to arrive straight from a delayed flight at the airport, but the packed audience didn't seem to mind waiting a few extra minutes for the pair, who were greeted enthusiastically. The event was moderated by Variety's Jenelle Riley.

"The Martian" marks the first collaboration between Damon and Scott—in fact, the pair had never met before Scott expressed an interest in the script, which the actor was already attached to. But the collaborators had nothing but high praise for one another, with Damon noting that Scott tends to employ the same crew over and over again because "they don't want to miss an opportunity to work with him." Scott is a meticulous planner when directing, but also said that there are times

when "things don't go quite the way you planned and the emotion takes over, which I happen to think is beautiful."

The pair discussed the climactic scene where Damon's astronaut Mark Watney is sent back into space with the hope his crew will be able to intercept and receive him. Damon revealed that Scott "did a really tricky thing" when they shot the scene. "The rest of the cast had already wrapped and it was just Ridley and I," said Damon. "He got the sound from their side of the scene and he piped it into my helmet, but didn't tell me he was going to do it."

So suddenly I heard the voices of my friends and it struck me I hadn't heard another voice for years. I'd been communicating by email, these people were coming to save me, these people who had sacrificed a year of their lives for me. And I just wept. It wasn't planned or forced, it was about him creating an environment. And it was the dream of an actor because you just have to show up and be relaxed." Scott said they used the first take, and only did two total. Which prompted Damon to quip, "We're really lazy." — Reuters



This file photo taken on February 7, 2005 shows French singer Michel Delpech (center) performing at the Bataclan music hall in Paris. — AFP photos

## 1970s French singer Delpech dies aged 69

French singer Michel Delpech, whose songs "Chez Laurette" and "Quand j'étais chanteur" helped capture the mood of the 1960s and 1970s, died on Saturday. He was 69. Delpech had been in hospital in Puteaux, in Paris's western suburbs, battling throat cancer, his wife told AFP, sparking a wave of tributes. "Michel Delpech died without ever having aged," French President Francois Hollande said in a statement. "His songs touched us because they spoke to us. To our emotions as well as our difficulties. He reflected the 70s better than anyone."

Pascal Negre, the head of Universal Music France, chimed in, tweeting that Delpech was "a poet speaking about the lives of people, an unparalleled melodist and an endearing man". Born on January 26, 1946 in the town of Courbevoie, Delpech was raised in a modest



This file photo taken on March 22, 2014 shows French singer Michel Delpech looking on during the 34th "Salon du Livre de Paris" book fair in Paris.

family with two sisters. His father had a small metal plating workshop and his mother was a housewife. He released his first song aged just 18, and quickly broke out with his first hit, "Chez Laurette" in 1965, achieving fame for chronicling France in the 1970s.

Delpech soon also lived the lifestyle of a music star, once telling the newspaper France-Soir of his image as "Prince Charming, a singer for women wearing polka dot shirts". "I had in me a combination of pride and arrogance," he told the daily. But his meteoric rise was accompanied by a sharp fall, with divorce in the late-1970s plunging him into a years-long depression that sent him looking for answers in Hinduism, clairvoyance and psychoanalysis. Though he recovered, in 2013 he was diagnosed with the cancer that eventually claimed his life. — AFP

## 'Taiwan's Louvre' opens new museum after 15-year wait



Taiwan President Ma Ying-jeou (center) gestures with other officials as they attend the opening ceremony for the new National Palace Museum branch in the southern Taiwan city of Chiayi on Monday. — AFP photos



Local art groups (in foreground) perform in front of Taiwan President Ma Ying-jeou (center with sunglasses) during the opening ceremony of the National Palace Museum branch.



Performers drum on opening day in front of the new National Palace Museum branch.

Some of China's most valuable historic artefacts went on display in Taiwan at a new branch of one of the world's top museums, as the island pushes its credentials as a cultural destination. The 9,000 square metre venue in the southern city of

Chiayi is an extension of Taipei's famous National Palace Museum—one of the most popular museums in the world, drawing more than five million visitors each year. The new attraction opens as Taiwan attempts to diversify its stagnating economy, with

tourism a key area for growth, and officials hope the museum will lure more visitors to the rural south. The opening comes after a catalogue of delays due to flooding, and disagreements with the venue's original architect—it has taken 15 years to complete. "We

hope to attract up to 1.5 million visitors in the first year," said Feng Ming-chu, director of both the Taipei and Chiayi museums.

The new venue will target domestic visitors from the south as well as foreign tourists, with the museum to be included in travel packages, said Feng. The flagship Taipei museum boasts more than 655,000 Chinese artefacts spanning 7,000 years from the prehistoric Neolithic period to the end of the Qing Dynasty in 1911.

They were removed from the Beijing Palace Museum in the 1930s by China's Nationalist government to prevent them falling into the hands of invading Japanese troops. The collection was then transported to Taiwan by the Nationalists after they were defeated by Chinese communist forces and fled the mainland in 1949. Feng was optimistic the new branch would attract visitors, despite the less well-known location. She compared it France's Louvre museum opening an outpost in the former coal-mining town of Lens. "We believe the target could be met if taking the French experience as an example," she told AFP. Stellar exhibits from the Taipei museum will be moved to Chiayi for the inaugural months—including the "jadeite cabbage" sculpture, created in the 19th century by an unknown artist. The cabbage head with a locust and cricket camouflaged in its leaves has become a favorite with visitors and is seen as an auspicious symbol of fertility. —AFP



Taiwan President Ma Ying-jeou (center with sunglasses) and Hong Kong film star Jackie Chan (right) take part in the opening ceremonies for the National Palace Museum branch.



Rihanna arrives at the 2015 Metropolitan Museum of Art's Costume Institute Gala benefit in honor of the museum's latest exhibit "China: Through the Looking Glass" May 4, 2015 in New York. — AFP



Local art groups pose for photos on opening day in front of the new National Palace Museum branch.



# Palm Springs toasts Oscar hopefuls on night full of stars

Honorees at the Palm Springs Film Festival gala were campaigning and practicing their awards speeches Saturday night. Chairman of the Board recipient Matt Damon suggested his "The Martian" director Ridley Scott, for instance, was overdue even though he had helmed an Oscar best picture winner in "Gladiator." "There are only a handful of master directors on the planet and Ridley is one of them." As the last honoree of the night Damon may have felt pressure to wrap up, especially with some empty tables before him.



Matt Damon poses backstage with the Chairman's award for "The Martian".

"There's a bunch of people I want to thank, but I won't do it here, I'll do it privately," he said. Earlier Cate Blanchett, who accepted the actress Desert Palm Achievement Award from Saoirse Ronan, said Todd Haynes and the "Carol" team had "set the bar so high I don't know where to go as an actress." She took time to praise Ronan, recipient of the Intl Star Award, for her career choices. "You have made a film for the ages," she said of the "Brooklyn" team.

Ronan said she prepped for her speech by Googling Meryl Streep and looking up Sandra Bullock's speeches. "I am not Meryl Streep, FYI,



Ridley Scott, right, presents the Chairman's award to Matt Damon at the 27th annual Palm Springs International Film Festival Awards Gala on Saturday in Palm Springs, Calif. — AP/AF photos



Cate Blanchett walks on stage to accept the Desert Palm achievement award - actress for "Carol".



Saoirse Ronan, left, presents the Desert Palm achievement award to actress Cate Blanchett.

so I am not winging it," Ronan said. The other Intl. Star Award honoree, Michael Fassbender, and his presenter Kate Winslet had the aud in stitches. Fassbender said Winslet told him "not to f-k this up" as he got up to the mic. While praising his fellow cast members Fassbender said, "The box office for 'Steve Jobs' may not be great, but thank god for 'Jurassic Park.'" Kate Winslet and Michael Fassbender Matt Baron/BEI/Shutterstock

Cast members from "The Big Short" accepted the ensemble prize from their director,

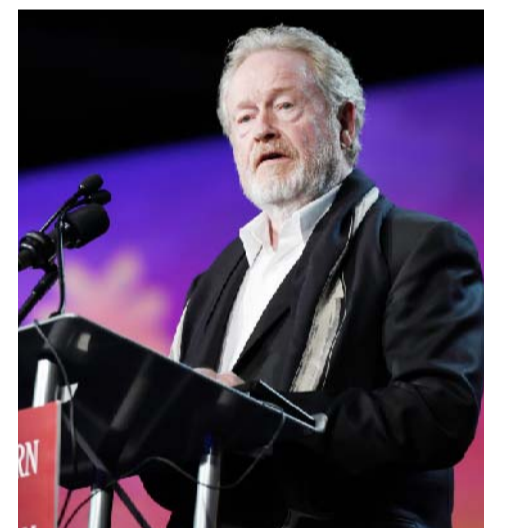
Adam McKay. Christian Bale said, "Nobody thought Adam McKay could direct 'The Big Short.' In a small way I hope 'The Big Short' helps the people who were s..t on by the banks." His co-star Steve Carell pointed out that Ryan Gosling was absent. "We all hate him and are glad he's not here," Carell joked. Amber Heard and Johnny Depp arrive at Saturday's gala Rob Latour/REX/Shutterstock

Johnny Depp, who accepted the actor Desert Palm Achievement Award, brought out a sheet of paper and told the attendees to be prepared. "I'm going to thank all these people, my speech is going to take 45 minutes." Also bringing levity to the proceedings was Bryan Cranston, winner of the Spotlight Award, who said he was afraid it was a lifetime achievement award, meaning he was getting old. Getting serious, he said, "We embrace differences of opinion and that's what makes us a great nation." Other honorees included Alicia Vikander, Brie Larson, Rooney Mara and Tom McCarthy.

The gala also paid tribute to the late producer Jerry Weintraub, who was a benefactor of the film festival. The gala attendees went through unprecedented security and fest head Harold Matzner said there SWAT team members around the Convention Center where the gala was held. Meanwhile artistic director Helen du Toit is taking over for exec director Darryl Macdonald, who has been on medical leave since Dec 28. — Reuters



Brie Larson poses backstage with the breakthrough performance award for "Room".



Ridley Scott presents the Chairman's award.



Ridley Scott, from left, Cate Blanchett, winner of the Desert Palm achievement award - actress for "Carol," and Matt Damon, winner of the Chairman's award, pose backstage.



Christian Bale, left, and Sibi Blazic.



Johnny Depp walks on stage to accept the Desert Palm achievement award - actor for "Black Mass".



Saoirse Ronan poses backstage with the international star award, actress for "Brooklyn".



Kate Winslet, right, presents the international star award - actor to Michael Fassbender.





Lucie Arnaz



Alicia Vikander poses backstage with the rising star award for "The Danish Girl".



Finn Wittrock, left, and Sarah Roberts.



Steve Carell, from left, Finn Wittrock, Jeremy Strong and Christian Bale walk on stage to accept the ensemble performance award for "The Big Short".



Deniz Gamze Erguven



Bryan Cranston poses backstage with the spotlight award - actor for "Trumbo".



Michael Keaton, left, and Tom McCarthy, winner of the Sonny Bono visionary award for "Spotlight," pose backstage.



Ben Mendelsohn presents the spotlight award - actress.



Jacob Tremblay, left, and Lenny Abrahamson, right, pose backstage with Brie Larson, winner of the breakthrough performance award for "Room".



Paul Dano presents the international star award - actress.



Adam McKay presents the ensemble performance award.



Helen Mirren presents the spotlight award - actor.



Scott Cooper presents the Desert Palm achievement award - actor.



Jacob Tremblay, left, and Lenny Abrahamson present the breakthrough performance award.



# Lifestyle

MONDAY, JANUARY 4, 2016

Palm Springs  
toasts Oscar  
hopefuls on  
night full of stars

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This overhead view shows visitors looking at a 24m x 25m (wide) image of two monkeys displayed to celebrate the "Year of the Monkey" from the Chinese zodiac at the Hitachi Seaside Park in the Japanese city of Hitachinaka in Ibaraki prefecture, some 100 kilometers north of Tokyo yesterday. The display was made up from around 15,000 pine cones and plants collected in the park. — AFP

## Chris Brown under investigation for battery in Las Vegas

Singer Chris Brown was under investigation by Las Vegas police on Saturday for possible battery on a woman, authorities said, in a case that comes nearly seven years after his notorious arrest for beating then-girlfriend Rihanna. A spokeswoman for the singer strongly denied the accusation. Las Vegas police in a statement said a woman was at a party inside a hotel room at the Palms Casino Resort on Saturday morning when she tried to take a photo of the "Run It!" singer.

"The victim was alleged to have been battered by Brown, who at the same time took her cell phone," the statement said. The incident followed the popular R&B singer's performance on Friday night at a club in the city. The website TMZ posted a photo it said

showed the woman's eye, which appeared to have some darkness around it.

Officers who went to the hotel to investigate the reported attack found the woman appeared to have minor injuries, but Brown had already left the hotel and they could not speak to him, the police statement said. Police did not say how exactly the woman might have been injured. Police said investigators have still not heard from Brown. They listed him as a suspect in misdemeanor crimes of battery and theft, which are less serious in the US judicial system than a felony.

Las Vegas police had not arrested Brown, 26, by early Saturday evening. Nicole Perna, a spokeswoman for the singer, said in a statement the woman's accusations are "unequiv-



In this Friday, Dec 18, 2015 file photo, Chris Brown performs at the Hollywood Palladium in Los Angeles. — AP

ocally untrue." "Her claim that she had her phone in her possession inside the after party and was able to take a photo causing an altercation with Chris Brown is a complete fabrication," Perna said in a statement.

Brown was arrested in Los Angeles in February 2009, on the eve of the Grammy Awards, for assaulting then-girlfriend Rihanna. A photo of Rihanna's injuries posted on TMZ soon after the attack made Brown the object of intense criticism, and he pleaded guilty later that year to assault. He was sentenced to five years' probation, and after some brushes with the law his probation was lifted nearly a year ago. A month ago, he canceled a tour to Australia and New Zealand after being refused a visa due to his 2009 domestic violence conviction. — Reuters

## Ready, set, roll: Boston Marathon gets its 1st documentary

America's marquee marathon is ready for its close-up. "Boston," the first feature-length documentary film about the Boston Marathon, is in the works. Its creators say the movie will go well beyond the 2013 bombings to retrace the iconic footrace's first steps in 1897. "Over the years, the Boston Marathon has had so many extraordinary stories of people achieving and accomplishing things," said producer Megan Williams, an Oscar-nominated filmmaker. "It's like looking at cultural and social change over the last century through the lens of this major sporting event."



In this April 9, 1975, file photo, distance runner Kathrine Switzer poses near her home in White Plains, NY.

Two feature films (one starring Mark Wahlberg), a stage play and an HBO special also are in production, though they're all about the 2013 finish line attacks that killed three spectators and wounded more than 260 others. No Boston documentary would be complete without the dark events of 2013. "Boston," however, will focus less

on the chaos than the comeback. The producers had 56 cameras along the course in 2014 for the marathon's first running since the bombings. Director Jon Dunham said the city's determination to take back its namesake race will be a recurring theme in the movie, which was conceived before the attacks.

But the film will be a sort of highlights reel

from the 120-year-old marathon, the nation's oldest. The Boston Athletic Association, which organizes the race, gave Dunham exclusive rights to its archive of photos, video and marathon memorabilia. "Boston" will tell the stories of some of the greatest marathoners ever to



In this April 21, 2014, file photo, Meb Keflezighi celebrates his victory in the 118th Boston Marathon.

conquer the hilly 26.2-mile course stretching from Hopkinton, Massachusetts, to Boston. They include four-time winner Bill Rodgers; Johnny Kelley, who ran 61 Bostons and won two; and Kathrine Switzer, who in 1967 became the first woman to run with an official bib number.

"It's a huge undertaking. We've got 300 hours of stuff we shot, not counting the archival

material," said Dunham, who hopes it will psych up runners like his popular "Spirit of the Marathon" films - cult classics that followed select amateur and elite runners at the 2005 Chicago and 2012 Rome marathons. Nothing rivals the Boston Marathon in terms of sheer lore, said Tom Derderian, a running coach and author who's serving as an executive producer, along with 2004 Olympic marathon bronze medalist Deena Kastor.

### Wild speculation

"The marathon is a mirror in which you can see the reflections of the times in every year," he said. "For instance, the world of the 1910 Boston was not this world - it featured young men who were considered at great risk of ruining their health by running. That was the essential myth of those times." Derderian ticks off other examples: wild speculation in the 1920s that fueled rampant betting on the winner, and unemployed men who ran during World War II in hopes the media attention would help them compete for scarce jobs. "Boston" also will follow more modern heroes, such as 2014 victor Meb Keflezighi, the first American man to win in 31 years.

But the real star is the race itself. The movie tentatively is set to premiere in April 2017 in conjunction with the 121st edition of the race. John Hancock Financial, the marathon's principal backer, has signed on as the film's title sponsor, though Williams said she's still working to raise half of the project's \$2 million budget. In the meantime, the Boston Symphony Orchestra is recording Emmy-winning composer Jeff Beal's score. "I'm not a runner and I'm not from Boston," Williams said. "But I hope our film really captures the uniqueness and importance of the Boston Marathon." — AP



In this April 19, 1983, file photo, Joan Benoit receives her laurel wreath and reacts to cheering crowds after winning the Boston Marathon in record time for the women's division, in Boston. — AP photos



In this April 20, 1992, file photo, Johnny Kelley, 84, crosses the finish line in Boston, during his final running of the Boston Marathon.



In this April 16, 1979, file photo, Bill Rodgers wins the Boston Marathon.