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# Kuwait Times Friday Times

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**Construction  
work: The most  
dangerous job  
in Kuwait**



**The injustice  
of divorce  
on women  
in Kuwait**



**Liverpool beat  
Man City 3-0,  
avenges cup  
final loss**



## ELECTRICITY HIKE TO HIT EXPATRIATES

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# Construction work: The most dangerous job in Kuwait

By Ben Garcia

**S**erious injury or accidental deaths among construction workers comprise nearly half of all worker injuries in Kuwait. These are likely to rise as the country's development plans kick into high gear in the coming few years. Lack of safety standards on site is the primary reason for Kuwait's high accident rates, according to research.

This is borne out by a visual survey of construction sites in the country. Anyone passing most in progress construction sites will note the archaic methods of construction still in use, including wooden scaffolding, unsafe use of equipment, lack of hardhats or safety precautions among other dangers.

Many construction companies insist they follow safety rules and guidelines set by the ministry, but it is apparent many companies don't. Some of them claim to embrace the idea of 'safety first', but the reality on the ground proves otherwise.

"We monitor workers every now and then, but sad to say very few of them are following orders," said a foreman supervising a small under-construction building in Salmiya. "Before we start work, we always remind our workers to wear all necessary protective clothing for their safety. They do wear it, but during the course of work, they remove it. These are the people you see without wearing anything here," said the supervisor, sounding disappointed.

## Accidents abound

Construction accidents are a frequent occurrence in various construction sites in Kuwait. Based on a case study by Dr. Hanouf M. Alhumaidi and F Hadipriono Tan, data collected from the Ministry of Social Affairs and Labor shows that accidents are due to several factors including low education, language barriers, a lack of training and negligence of safety rules and standards set by the government.

"The data provided by MSAL accident due to fall is at 33.2 percent, it is the most frequent occurrence in the construction sites. 25.2 percent is due to being crushed by heavy object and the accident due to misuse of tools and equipments are third with 18.1 percent," the report notes.

Most common injury in the construction accidents are bone fractures, 52.6 percent, wounds 17.5 percent and bruises 14.5 percent and only 0.8 percent are leading to deaths. Common accidents in the construction sites are due to a trench collapse, crane overturn and demolition accidents.

## Wear safety gear

Failure to abide by safety standards, both at the firm's level and the individual level, is a major factor in accidents at construction sites in Kuwait.

"We don't receive any protective equipment or clothing. I work in the clothes I come to the site with. We don't have any safety measures here," an Indian laborer at a construction site who asked that his name be withheld told the Kuwait Times recently. According to the worker, he is paid KD 10 per day, and gets his payment weekly. "Sometimes



we have to do overtime - that is also paid, so I make KD 350 to KD 400 a month. I pay KD 25 as rent and spend KD 30 on food and personal effects. Basically, most of my money is sent to my family," said the man who is from Andhra Pradesh. Some workers fail to use even the limited safety equipment provided.

"Yes, we have helmets and goggles, but I prefer to wrap a cloth around my head because it's comfortable," said another construction worker who spoke with this Kuwait Times reporter. "Yes, I have a helmet, but I don't wear it because it's heavy and gets hot. I develop a headache after wearing it, besides it slows down my movements," agreed his colleague. Asked if the company has any policy of punishing violators, the foreman replied in the negative. "No, we don't have such policies. I am tired of giving orders. What you see is not the company's fault," he asserted. On site safety standards are usually specified in the contracts of parties involved and ironically, according to Al-Humaidi's research, Kuwaiti safety standards, do not comply with international safety standards. "Lack of codes and standards that account for the current construction operations in Kuwait contribute to safety on Kuwaiti construction sites," the report noted.

## Failure to implement safety standards

A Filipino engineer who asked not to be identified said all construction companies in Kuwait have to follow certain rules required by the ministry prior to being granted build-

ing permits. "Standards are being followed, but it is true that in some instances, they can get building permits even without following safety rules. Wasta (influence) exists. I cannot prove it, but I have heard of many instances," he said. The engineer explained that every construction job site adopts safety regulations, involving stakeholders from owners to architects, contractors and insurance companies, and these have to be followed to safeguard Kuwait's environment and the workforce.

"The main reason why the rules and safety standards are not followed by all stakeholders is because of a lack of proper implementation. Inspection teams are sent to the sites, but we do not know whether they are monitoring all cases. The penalty for violators is small, besides we have a much disorganized labor system. Some of the workers are hired from the streets, and there is extensive use of subcontractors too," he added.

Kuwaiti municipality usually requires construction companies to contact the safety department when starting new projects for building permits and other issues. The department provides safety information regarding the proposed job or activity, and a safety representative conducts a site visit to ensure safe places for storage, temporary structures and services. Even safety posters are given to the contractor to be hung at the job site, but most of the time, those posters with regulations on them remain as decorative materials.



## Photo of the day



KUWAIT: Horse racing at the Subhan racing track. — Photo by Kuna/Ahmad Surour

### Local Spotlight

## CRIMINAL USE OF THE VEIL



By Muna Al-Fuzai

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The police are searching for a woman wearing a veil for "serving" a Filipina maid as a "feast" to some youths in a desert camp. The incident is sad and scary. The story began when the veiled woman went to a maids' office and asked to hire a servant. She went to the maids' waiting area and selected a beautiful one. She then paid some money and presented a copy of her civil ID. This is the normal procedure to hire a maid here, but this poor maid had no clue that she would become fodder for sex maniacs. She is lucky to be alive.

The veiled woman left the office with the maid,

and according to the maid's statement to the police, a car was waiting outside. The maid sat in the backseat with the veiled woman, while two young men were in the front. They headed to a desert campsite, where the woman in black disappeared, and the two men proceeded to rape the maid. This happened because of this evil veiled woman. I see the veil as a security threat and have said this over and over again. As long as I am dealing with someone whose face I cannot see, I'm in doubt. I know that some people here reject such talk, but I feel threatened being in the same place with a fully-covered person. This incident is clear evidence of how the veil is a threat.

According to a security source, the owner of the maids' office went to the police with the Filipina maid to file a complaint after she escaped from the criminals. The case is now with the police, but I am surprised how easy it is for anyone to show up and choose a woman and leave! It's not a piece of furniture or a car - it's a living creature! The veiled woman has disappeared, perhaps waiting to resume her crimes, and perhaps these abusers will return to attack a new victim.

I wonder for how long will the veil impose itself on our society and security, and when a dissenting voice is raised, it is silenced by calling the veil a virtue. I find that the beneficiaries of the veil are criminals, and it is difficult to deal with ghosts without features. Several crimes have occurred not only in Kuwait, but even in Egypt by veiled women who took advantage of the public's attitude of not asking a covered woman to show her identity.

Deception in the name of religion is not acceptable and because of this sad incident, no maids' office should allow letting any woman out of their custody without proper papers, and at least before knowing the real person behind the veil.

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# Dancing is life

Kuwait Times gets up close and personal with local hip-hop dancer, Doss.

By Faten Omar

**M**ohammed Al-Eidani is one of Kuwait's most influential and creative hip-hop dancers. He was a contestant on Arabs Got Talent and has participated in dozens of local dance performances, competitions and shows. Known by the moniker Doss, Al-Eidani speaks with Kuwait Times about the hard work and passion involved in what he does and shares his thoughts on today's hip-hop dance scene in Kuwait.

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

**Eidani:** I have a diploma in accounting, but working in companies was not my passion, so I'm now a fulltime dancer.

**KT: Why did you choose the nickname Doss?**

**Eidani:** It was a long time ago, when a little boy thought I'm Spanish. He said I'm uno (number one) and you are dos (number two). I did not know the spelling at that time, so I wrote it as 'Doss' with a double S.

**KT: Was dance always your dream?**

**Eidani:** Yes, it started when I was 13 years old. At that time, we had no one to teach us, but I learned on my own.

**KT: Are there any artists/dancers you want to work with?**

**Eidani:** I'm working now with every dancer in Kuwait. We have our community of dancers of all dancing styles.

**KT: What are some of the daily habits and disciplines required to become a professional dancer?**

**Eidani:** To be a professional dancer is not about technique; it is more about how you have fun while dancing.

**KT: How did Arabs Got Talent change your life?**

**Eidani:** We went on the last days of the audition - Ghanem Al-Dossari and me - and we got three buzzers. We had an amazing experience, where we met other dancers from the Middle East and exchanged information about dancing. When I met Qusai Kheder, a Saudi hip-hop artist, singer/songwriter, rapper and television personality, he made me feel I was a celebrity when he said my name and told me that he saw some of my dance videos on social media.





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All photos should be submitted at the Kuwait Times newspaper before 17th of March 2016.

## Rules & Conditions:

- The competition is open to individuals of all ages.
  - The submitted photos should be taken by the participant.
  - Every participant is allowed to submit maximum five entries.
  - The photos can be black and white or colour size 40X30 cm.
  - All entries should be provided a hard copy and Soft Copy on a CD (in high resolution) with photo of the participant needs to be included in the CD.
  - The original coupon should be attached to the back of each photo and should include a complete information about the participant.
- The coupons are advertised at Kuwait Times and Al Anba newspapers during the period of competition.
- All submitted photos will become property of Kuwait Times newspaper and can be used for different purposes.
  - The winners will be chosen by a panel of judges.
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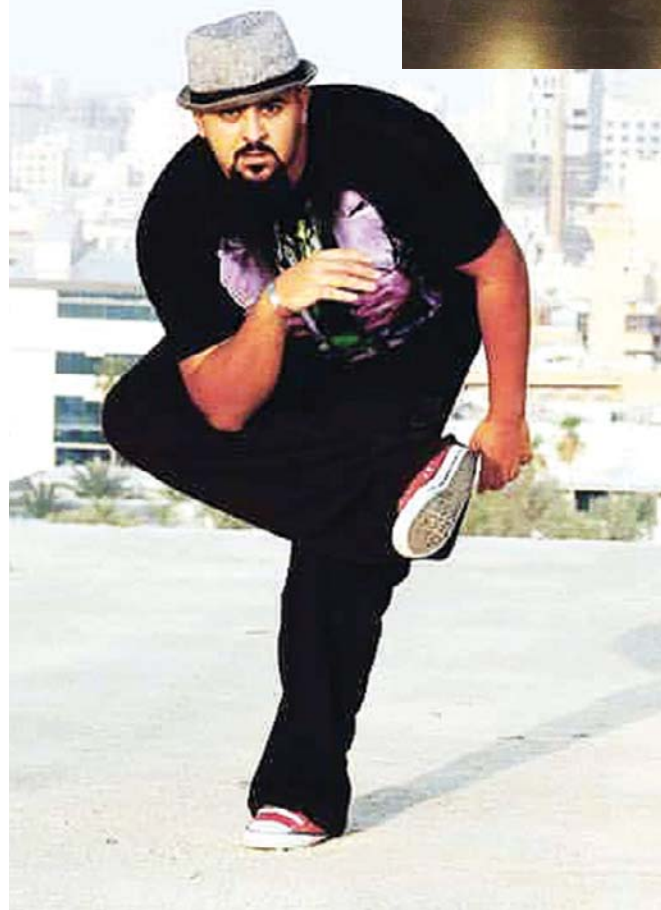


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Continued from Page 4

**KT: Do you like being famous?**

**Eidani:** No, being famous will get you in trouble because of envy and hate. I like living a normal life and having fun while dancing. Dance is my life.

**KT: In Arabs Got Talent, you and Ghanem wished to open a dance school. Have you managed to do so yet?**

**Eidani:** Yes, our dream came true, thanks to Rana's Fitness Studio, who gave us an opportunity to teach dancing in her studio for kids and adults. At first we did not know what or how to teach, but we managed.

**KT: You have the talent, but do you also have the support of your family?**

**Eidani:** Initially, my two brothers mocked me when they heard that I love to dance, but when I got my own dance show, they supported me. My father has passed away, but my brothers and mother support me every time I have a workshop or a dance show.

**KT: Why hip-hop and not any other form of dance?**

**Eidani:** I tried all forms of dance such as salsa, ballet, dabke and masala bhangra, an Indian dance, and it was hard.



**KT: Now that you are making waves, how are people in your industry reacting?**

**Eidani:** Some people think since I'm a dancer, I'm always in a party mood and drunk. They cannot understand that it is just a dance workshop and nobody is touching each other. But people support us. Once I met a big guy, and I was afraid to sit next to him. But he came to me and whispered, "my wife loves your dance - can I take a picture?!"

**KT: Do you think Kuwaitis are paying attention to hip-hop dancers?**

**Eidani:** Some people cannot understand hip-hop dancing yet. For instance, if you have a computer event, do not ask hip-hop dancers to perform - it is not the right place.

**KT: Have you tried to create other dancing styles?**

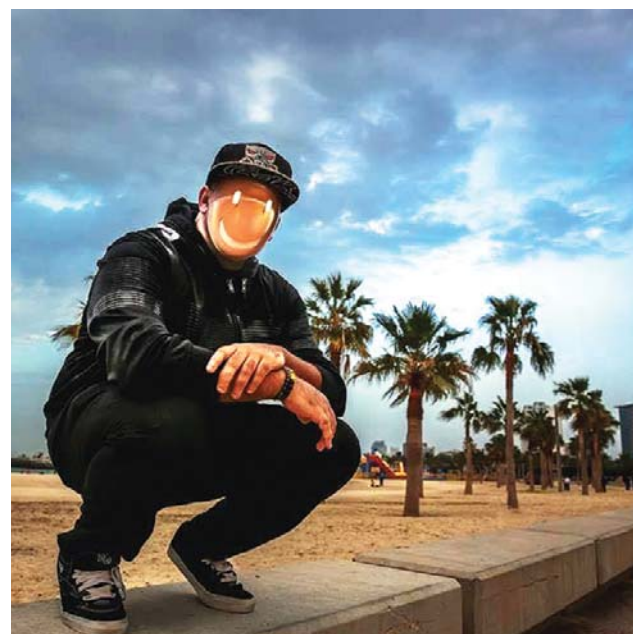
**Eidani:** I'm taking small steps towards some cultural dances like the Palestinian dabke folk dance and Kuwaiti dancing, and tryingz to change and mix them with other styles.

**KT: What advice would you give to up and coming dancers looking to break into the industry?**

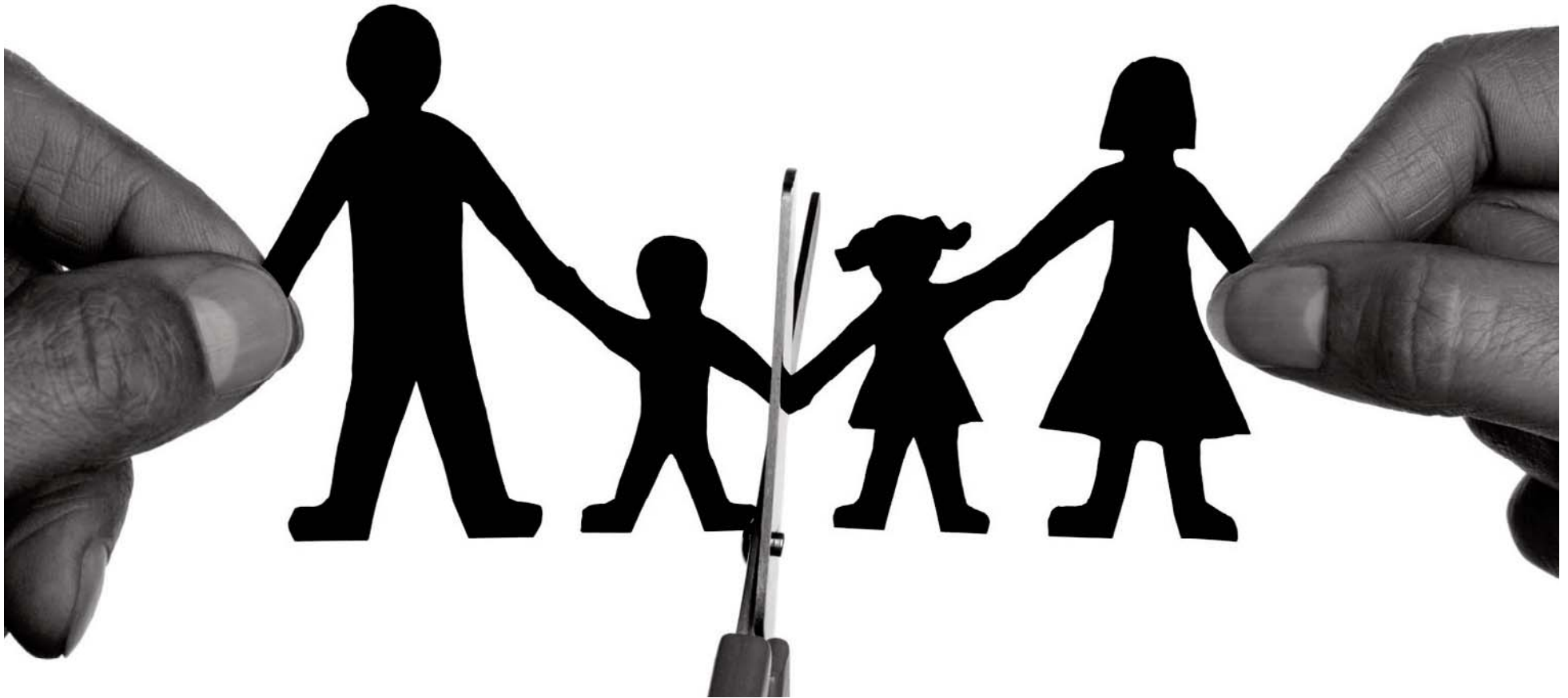
**Eidani:** Enjoy it and have fun. Never take it seriously.



— Photos by Mohammed Al-Eidani







## THE INJUSTICE OF DIVORCE ON WOMEN IN KUWAIT

By Faten Omar

**D**ivorce is a frightening prospect for women in the Arab world. Plenty of women keep silent and continue living with their husbands who beat and abuse them, because they fear the stigma of divorce.

Noor Al-Rashid, a divorced woman with two children, told Kuwait Times that she considers herself a strong woman for taking this decision. "It was not an easy decision to make, but my children faced a lot of problems with my ex-husband. I was married for seven years. My husband used to beat my one-year-old son to discipline him, and though he did not hurt him, every time he flew into a rage, he would break glasses or plates, which made my children very scared. I tried hard to make my husband see a therapist, but as a typical Arab man, he thought I was calling him crazy," she recalled. Rashid added that she did initially bear with the beatings and humiliation in order to keep the family together, but to no avail.

Although all citizens have equal rights under Kuwait's civil law, family law and divorce fall within the realm of

Sharia law. If a woman divorces through court proceedings, she rarely gets alimony and loses custody of her young children if she remarries. "When I remarried after my divorce, my ex-husband took my nine-month-old daughter," said a teary Rawan Basha. Basha's daughter is now two. "Her beautiful green eyes are like mine. That's all I can remember. Sometimes my mother visits her and sends me her pictures, because she is in Jordan with her father, and I can't leave Kuwait because of my work and new husband," said Basha.

Nevertheless, the shame of divorce is so strong that some women, like Alaa Al-Sharaa, would rather risk abuse. "There is no way I will seek a divorce even if I'm not happy. You know how much it took me to be a married woman before the age 30? In our society, my parents would rather see me unhappy than divorced to avoid tongues wagging that I have a bad character or that I cheated on my husband," she explained.

Sharaa told Kuwait Times that divorced women in Kuwait are considered fair game for married men over 50, and are preyed upon by unscrupulous men who want to

take advantage of them because they are not virgins.

Saud Mutairat, a legal researcher, told Kuwait Times that divorces are increasing in Kuwait because the government and other organizations make it easy for men to divorce. "The alimony can be paid by the Zakat House, and if the amount is large, the court can order him to pay monthly payments of not less than KD 50. On the other hand, the government must care more about the issue of custody, because we see many men cannot see their children at least once or twice a week," he said.

Recent statistics by the Ministry of Justice indicate that 28 percent of female divorcees hold masters' degrees, 25 percent are bachelor degree holders, while 21.8 percent have diplomas. The report added the highest divorce rate in males in 2013 was registered among holders of intermediate school certificates, at 27 percent, followed by holders of masters' degrees at 23 percent, followed by 22.4 percent with bachelor degrees. It indicated divorce cases shot up from 6,672 in 2012 to 6,904 in 2013, representing a 3.5 percent increase with 232 additional cases, while the majority of marriages ended in less than five years.



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## PALM-WEAVING - A SURVIVING LOCAL HANDICRAFT

## News

in brief

**Committee expedites bill to privatize sports clubs**

**KUWAIT:** The Youth and Sports parliamentary committee discussed yesterday the essentiality of privatizing all major sports clubs in the country, said committee chairman Abdullah Al-Ma'ayouf. He said in a press statement at the conclusion of the committee meeting that he urged committee members to expedite the drafting of a law allowing the privatization of sports clubs. Such a law, if officially adopted would throw a contemporary light on the concept of creating modern, self-supporting, and self-sustaining sports clubs, he said. Currently, the sports scene in the country is plodding on with sports clubs in constant need of adequate budgets to run them appropriately, depending in that on government subsidization and largesses, he said. "We cannot push forward Kuwaiti sports regionally and internationally without injecting the spirit of competitiveness in these sports by way of privatizing sports clubs and allowing private sector companies to run them as is currently happening in most world countries," he said.

**'Unstable conditions spark mounting responsibilities'**

**CAIRO:** Unstable conditions have sparked mounting responsibilities and challenges, Kuwait's Health Minister Dr Ali Saad Al-Obaidi said yesterday. Speaking at the 45th session of Arab health ministers, Al-Obaidi said that planned development in the Arab health sector will not be undermined, "in spite of these unstable conditions that threaten health security in the region." Moreover, Kuwait's health minister pointed to the ill effects of conflicts and humanitarian crises, saying they adversely affect the health of people of all ages. He also labeled "smoking, obesity and poor nutrition as epidemics that are of great concern." Al-Obaidi also said that the session aims to yield plans that "would turn hopes and aspirations into tangible results for the Arab people." Al-Obaidi also disclosed plans for an Arab strategy to combat AIDS (2014-2020), which in conjunction with a similar United Nations (UN) program, is designed to boost immunity to HIV.

**KUWAIT:** Palm-weaving is a handicraft Kuwaitis mastered for decades, just like ship-building, pearl-diving and trade across the sea. The country has had plenty of the materials of the industry, palm trees loofas and fronds that were woven together to produce various products, using a five-inch needle. The white fronds were separated from the stalks before they were completely dry. They were soaked in water to be dyed, then left to dry under the sun, to be soon woven.

A major item of palm-weaving in Kuwait was (Sufrah), a mat that comes in various shapes and sizes and used for eating on. It was strong enough to be washed by sea water with no harm done to it. They were also used for drying shrimps and some herbs. Another item was hand fans (Mahaffa), small ones for personal use in the hot summer, and big ones for grilling, at a barbecue for instance. A third essential product in Kuwaiti houses from palms was a basket (Rout), woven from palm fronds or grapes or pomegranates branches, used for keeping clothes.

The list also comprises straw whisks



Kuwaiti palm weaver Fayrouz Salmeen

and mats. To weave a mat, a meter by a meter and a half, one needed up to 50 meters of fronds. Skillful Kuwaitis used fronds for baby cradles and Malalas (hanging baskets to keep food for the next day), in addition to sieves, scuttles, picture frames, trays and a variety of other items. Fayrouz Salmeen, probably the only Kuwaiti currently practicing the

palm-weaving industry, told KUNA that his products have found their way to various foreign fairs. Salmeen is not after money, but rather seeking to preserve popular heritage, since palm-weaving is not a lucrative business these days. Many Kuwaitis use these items at home, for decoration as part of the good old days. — KUNA

## DEPUTY MINISTER OF AMIRI DIWAN AFFAIRS INAUGURATES HALL IN JAHRA

**KUWAIT:** Deputy Minister of Amiri Diwan Affairs Sheikh Ali Jarrah Al-Sabah and President of the Financial and Administrative Affairs in Amiri Diwan Abdulaziz Is-haq yesterday inaugurated the Sheikh Ahmad Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah Hall for social occasions in Al-Jahra area.

Marking the occasion, Sheikh Ali said the inauguration of such hall came as part of His Highness the Amir's guidelines to serve the families in Al-Jahra area.

"A court complex and a new hospital, hosting 1,200 beds, are among the projects developed for the people of Jahra," Sheikh Ali said. On his part, Is-haq said that the hall has been equipped for all sort of social occasions and services which are to be supervised by a professional team of experts.

Al-Jahra Governor Retired Lieutenant General Fahad Al-Amir praised the outcome of the project which will serve Al-Jahra families. — KUNA



**KUWAIT:** Deputy Minister of Amiri Diwan Affairs Sheikh Ali Jarrah Al-Sabah seen during the inauguration. — KUNA photos



**Kuwait's Ambassador to Australia Najeeb Abdulrahman Al-Bader pictured with Australia's Minister for Tourism and International Education Richard Colbeck.**

**Kuwaiti, Australian officials discuss bolstering relations**

**KUWAIT:** Australia's minister for tourism and International education Richard Colbeck stressed the importance of developing educational ties with Kuwait, said a statement by the Kuwaiti embassy yesterday. Colbeck's affirmation came during his meeting with Kuwait's Ambassador to Australia Najeeb Abdulrahman Al-Bader. Work is underway on the student visa issue, said Colbeck, noting that this was a step aimed to attract more Kuwaiti students to Australia. On his part, Ambassador Al-Bader said Australia was a preferred destination for Kuwaiti students for its universities' outstanding academic reputation and services. He said that his meeting with the Australian Minister also tackled issues of common interest as well as means to boost educational cooperation.







**KUWAIT:** Kuwait University President Dr Hussein Al-Ansari and Public Authority for Applied Education and Training Director-General Dr Ahmad Al-Athari during the signing ceremony. — KUNA

## KU AND PAAET POOL RESOURCES TO ADVANCE SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH

**KUWAIT:** Kuwait University (KU) and The Public Authority for Applied Education and Training (PAAET) yesterday signed a partnership agreement on furthering scientific research and giving support to scholars with competent track records. KU President Dr Hussein Al-Ansari noted in a press statement after the signing ceremony that time was ripe that two of the largest educational institutions in the country should pool their resources, both human and otherwise, into joint activities that allow teaching staff in KU and PAAET to use their talents and expertise in organizing research forums and scientific symposiums and publishing research papers, among other activities. He said he was heartened by the agreement "which will allow both institutions to work as a single unit in a partnership to enhance higher education in Kuwait."

This agreement was long overdue since cooperation between the two institutions had been ongoing on myriads of levels particularly in exchanging teaching staff and using each other's lab facilities; the agreement today simply caps this cooperation, said PAAET Director-General Dr Ahmad Al-Athari, in a similar press statement. He emphasized that both institutions would be working closely and jointly on vital government growth and development projects as prescribed by the clauses of the signed agreement. The two institutions will share the publishing of research papers and the training of researchers and technicians and lecturers, among other things. — KUNA

## MINISTRY OF PUBLIC WORKS ANNOUNCES A DETOUR AND CLOSURE ON AL-GHAZALI ROAD

**KUWAIT:** The Ministry of Public Works yesterday announced the permanent closure of the current ramp connecting Jahra Road to the Al-Ghazali bridge. An at-grade detour will be made available early morning this Saturday 5th March, and users of this road will be able to access Al-Ghazali through the ramp on the intersection with AbdulAziz Al-Musaeed Road (Canada Dry Street). This closure is of particular importance as it allows for the Jahra Road Development Project to continue works on Al-Ghazali.

The detour was opened in coordination with the General Directorate of Traffic. Following the site inspection and ensuring the necessary traffic safety conditions were met, permits for the opening of the detour were issued. The Ministry of Public Works requests all drivers to comply with traffic safety rules and follow the designated detour speed limits, to ensure minimum disruption, and maximum safety, during the construction work.

This mega project involves the construction of 17.7 km of viaducts (7.3 km of mainline Jahra Road, 2.4 km of bridges on linked roads and 8.0 km of ramps), including a trough at the 2nd Ring Road intersection, and 10 pedestrian bridges. The at-grade road works include 3.4 km of mainline Jahra Road, connecting roads and 15 km of service roads. The Jahra Road project also includes major utility relocation and works, such as 3.5 km of storm water box culverts, 33 km of water lines, 8.0 km of sanitary sewer, 51 km of electric cables, and 12 km of communication ducts.

# EXPATS LIKELY TO PAY FOR ELECTRICITY HIKE

By B Izzak

**KUWAIT:** A Ministry of Electricity and Water team yesterday briefed the National Assembly Financial and Economic Affairs Committee of plans to hike electricity charges which indicate that expatriate households are likely to pay most of the rises if approved. The Ministry divided its plans into four categories targeting private houses - a term meaning mostly Kuwaitis - investment houses, a term that refers to buildings - a majority of which are inhabited by foreigners, commercial and industrial.

### Expatriates

Current electricity charges are 2 fils per kilowatt for all purposes. The Ministry team proposed to raise the charges for investment houses (mostly expatriates) to be as follows: (First) - 1,000 kilowatt: 5 fils per kilowatt; (Second)-1,000 kilowatt: 8 fils per kilowatt; (Third)-1,000 kilowatts: 10 fils per kilowatts. This means that if a house in an investment building consumes 3,000 kilowatts in a particular month, the bill

will be KD 23 for that month up from the current charges of just KD 6. If the consumption is 1,000 or less, the bill will be just KD 5. The charges for a consumption of 2,000 will be KD 13 and so on.

### Kuwaitis

As for private houses or mostly Kuwaiti citizens, the proposed increases are as follows: (First)-3,000 kilowatts: 3 fils per kilowatt; (Second)-3,000 kilowatts: 8 fils per kilowatt; (Third)-3,000 kilowatts: 10 fils per kilowatts. This means that private houses which consume 9,000 kilowatts per month will pay KD 63 instead of KD 18 at current charges. The Ministry team also proposed to increase the charges for commercial use to 19 fils per kilowatts and leave it at 2 fils per kilowatt for industrial use.

Head of the Financial and Economic Affairs Committee MP Faisal Al-Shaye said the committee and the government have not reached an agreement on the proposals so far and another meeting will be held on Saturday. He, however, insisted that discussions in the meeting focused that the aim of the charges is to

cut consumption rather than boost revenues. Shaye said the committee made proposals to electricity consumption categories aimed at reducing consumption and told the government that it will not agree to any measures that could harm low and middle income sections.

The lawmaker said the meeting discussed several financial and technical alternatives for raising electricity charges, adding that the government has the right to make proposals but the final decision will be made by the National Assembly. Under a law passed by the Assembly more than two decades ago, the government has not right to increase charges on public services without the prior approval of the Assembly. This includes electricity, water and other services. But it does not include fuels. The government has been trying to convince MPs about the need to reduce subsidies to petrol and electricity as part of its efforts to rationalize consumption and boost non-oil revenues to finance the budget deficit after the sharp decline in oil prices.

# FIREMAN DAY FESTIVAL

By Nawara Fattahova

**KUWAIT:** Kuwait Fire Service Directorate (KFSD) is holding the 14th Fireman Day Festival from March 3-5, 2016 at the Souq Sharq Mall. This festival is held under the patronage of Sheikh Mohammed Al-Abdullah Al-Mubarak Al-Sabah State Minister for Cabinet Affairs. The 3-day program is aimed at informing people of the important role of the firefighters, and the hard job they do during the whole year. The festival includes an exhibition of firefighting vehicles and equipments, in addition to products and services of the participating institutions at the seaside front.

Photography gallery is on display in the middle of the Mall - showcasing some major fire accidents that the firefighters dealt with. There are many entertaining and awareness activities for children and adults including: live demonstration of extinguishing fire by housewife in the kitchen; documentaries;

Kidzania shows; and different competitions for kids and for adults as well. The activities are going on from 5:00 pm-9:30pm.

"These activities are part of the National celebrations of our beloved country. The firefighters are sacrificing their lives to protect the lives and properties of others. This is why we strongly respect all firemen in all sectors and departments, and we should support them," Director General of KFSD, Lt Gen Yousif Al-Ansari said during the launching ceremony yesterday.

"According to KFSD's statistics, the firefighters dealt with more than 12,400 accidents, where they saved many lives and properties. Also they ensured the safety of more than 23,300 building. Our firefighters also inspected over 21,000 locations for safety conditions and held various awareness and educational campaigns for different institutions," Al-Ansari said. These achievements were done with the support of different institutions.

"KFSD is cooperating with various public and private institutions including the Kuwaiti army, National Guards, and the oil sector, in addition to the partnership with the private sector. The main goal of this event is to increase awareness and rehabilitate the public to protect themselves and help others, as well as helping us decrease the daily fire accidents," he added.

Colonel Khalil Al-Ameer, Public Relations and Media Director noted that the firefighters do sacrifice their lives for others. "This festival and other achievement of KFSD wouldn't be done without the support of other institutions including the Ministry of Defense, National Guard, Ministry of Interior, Kuwait Oil Company, Medical Emergency Department, the sponsors and the media," he pointed out. Officials representing these institutions were awarded. This was followed by a tour at the exhibition, and then the Challenge Show presented at the sea.

## TIFASEEL EXPO EXPLORES DESIGNS

By Athoob Al-Shuaibi

**KUWAIT:** American Institute of Architecture Students (AIAS) and the Kuwait University organized and hosted a design expo 'Tifaseel'. The exhibition is aimed at raising awareness on how architecture affects all fields of designs. "It's not just buildings; everything you see in this exhibition doesn't have to do with plans, sections and elevation of a building, or a specific architecture project. More so, it is a charity expo. Each year, we choose a specific charity that we want to give the proceeds to. The exhibition is between both students and companies. The companies here are renting positions and all

the money will go to that specific charity. Last year, it was the Society of the Guardians of the Disabled and this year, it's going to the Kuwait Society of handicapped," Nour Jaafar, a student explained.

Nour presented a jewelry design branching from the idea of religion. She said that religion is a very abstract idea in Islam. "There's nothing tangible about it, I decided to blend the personal side of the religion and the spirituality with the beauty of the words that God has given us." Tifaseel was opened on the 2nd of March at Al-Hamra Hall. The expo runs for two days - showcasing a variety of architectural designs done by both students and some companies.

## DOMESTIC HELP OFFICES RAIDED

By Hanan Al-Saadoun

**KUWAIT:** Inspection teams of the Domestic Help Department at the Interior Ministry carried out a campaign on domestic help offices in Hawally and Ahmadi governorates. The campaign resulted in the arrest of two persons, an Egyptian and an Ethiopian who bring in domestic helpers without official license. Five offices were raided for harboring absconding domestic help.



# Friday Times International

FRIDAY, MARCH 4, 2016

**France enters referendum debate with Calais warning**



**Istanbul police kill two leftist female militants**



**Romney calling Trump 'phony,' urges Republicans to shun him**



**SANAA:** A Yemeni boy shouts slogans as Houthi militiamen hold a poster depicting Lebanon's Hezbollah chief Hassan Nasrallah during a gathering to show their support to Hezbollah following the Gulf states' announcement declaring the group a "terrorist organization", in the capital Sanaa yesterday. — AFP

## HEZBOLLAH SLAMS GULF FOR 'TERRORIST' LABEL

### IRAN SAYS GCC MOVES AGAINST HEZBOLLAH HARM LEBANON

**BEIRUT:** Lebanon's armed Hezbollah movement yesterday said a decision by Gulf States to designate it a terrorist organization was "reckless and hostile". The six-member Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) took the step on Wednesday, opening up the possibility of further sanctions against Hezbollah, which wields broad political influence in Lebanon and is fighting in Syria for President Bashar Al-Assad.

The group's bloc in parliament said it held Saudi Arabia responsible for the GCC decision. "The decision by the GCC is reckless and hostile and is condemned. The Saudi regime bears responsibility for its issuing and for the consequences," the bloc said after its weekly meeting.

The region's main Shiite power, Iran, had already accused Gulf Arab states of jeopardizing Lebanon's stability by blacklisting Hezbollah, which Iran supports. Saudi Arabia is competing with Iran for influence across the region, and both sides back different factions in Lebanon and in wars in Syria and Yemen.

Relations between Lebanon and Saudi Arabia have plunged into crisis since Riyadh froze \$3 bil-

lion in aid to the Lebanese army in response to the Beirut government's failure to condemn attacks on Saudi diplomatic missions in Iran.

#### Iran warning

Iran warned yesterday that Gulf states were jeopardizing Lebanon's stability by blacklisting the leading force behind its government, Hezbollah, as a terror group. Deputy Foreign Minister Hossein Amir Abdollahian said that the Shiite militant group, which is one of Iran's closest allies, was a bulwark against terrorism in the region.

"We are proud of Lebanon's Hezbollah as the vanguard of resistance against the Zionist regime and the champion of the fight against terrorism in the region," Abdollahian told Iran's official IRNA news agency. "Those who call Hezbollah terrorists, have intentionally or unintentionally harmed the unity and security of Lebanon."

Wednesday's move against Hezbollah by the six-member Gulf Cooperation Council was the latest salvo in an intensifying battle for regional influence between Gulf heavyweight Saudi Arabia and Iran. Riyadh has been alarmed by the international

rehabilitation of Tehran since it reached a deal with major powers last year ending a 13-year standoff over its controversial nuclear program.

Saudi Arabia has also been angered by the mili-

tary intervention of Hezbollah in neighboring Syria since 2013 in support of Iran-backed President Bashar Al-Assad against rebels it has invested heavily in backing. — Agencies

## EMIRATES DEFERS LAUNCH OF WORLD'S LONGEST FLIGHT

**PANAMA CITY:** Emirates Airline, which was scheduled to launch what it called the world's longest non-stop flight this month between Dubai and Panama City, said on Wednesday it was postponing those plans for around a year. The launch, which had been slated for March 31, will now occur in late 2016 or early 2017 due to "operational factors," the Dubai airline said in a statement released in Panama.

Emirates announced in August that it would launch the world's longest flight, at 17 hours and 35 minutes between the two trading hubs, making Panama the airline's first destination in

Central America. The company had said it would offer a daily flight to Panama's capital aboard a Boeing 777-200LR aircraft, which can also carry up to 15 tons of cargo.

However, the company said that upon extensive review, it would now postpone the flight after "considering all operational factors, including fleet utilization and commercial demand."

Among the world's other longest flights are one connecting Dallas to Sydney (almost 17 hours), Johannesburg to Atlanta (16 hours, 40 minutes), and Dubai to Los Angeles (16 hours 35 minutes). — AFP



## AS SAUDI-IRAN TENSIONS GROW, LEBANON PAYS THE PRICE

**BEIRUT:** Caught in the middle of tensions between Saudi Arabia and Iran, Lebanon is paying the price for the growing rivalry between the Middle East's main Sunni and Shiite powers. Both Saudi Arabia and Iran are important players in Lebanon, where foreign powers have long backed a range of Sunni, Shiite and Christian groups on the country's complex political scene. Saudi Arabia has for years supported pro-Western Sunni politicians while Iran has nurtured the Shiite Hezbollah movement, with various Christian factions backing the two sides. And as rivalry between the two countries has intensified in recent weeks, Lebanon is suffering the fallout.

"Saudi Arabia is at an impasse and feels very lost. It sees the United States abandoned it in favour of Iran and of Russia in Syria, while Iran expands its influence in the region," said Hilal Khashan, head of the American University of Beirut's political science department. "The Saudis believe they have to react to the Iranians in one way or another. So they've chosen to respond in Lebanon by putting pressure on Hezbollah."

The two countries' rivalry plays out in a range of Middle East conflicts, from Syria where Iran and Hezbollah back President Bashar al-Assad while Saudi Arabia supports the opposition, to Yemen where Riyadh has launched a military intervention against Tehran-backed Shiite rebels. The implementation of Iran's nuclear deal with world powers earlier this year has raised deep concerns in Riyadh, a longtime US ally, and tensions boiled over in January.

### 'Brandishing a sword'

Riyadh and a number of its Gulf allies cut diplomatic ties with Tehran after an angry mob ransacked Saudi diplomatic missions in Iran following Saudi Arabia's execution of a prominent Shiite cleric. The hostility has now spread to Lebanon, with Riyadh last month halting a \$4-billion aid package to Lebanese security forces and calling on Saudi citizens to leave the country.

Saudi officials have said the moves are due to "hostile positions" taken by Hezbollah, which they have accused of exerting a "stranglehold" on the Lebanese state.

They have pointed specifically to Lebanon's refusal to join the Arab League and the Organization of Islamic Cooperation in condemning the attacks on Saudi diplomatic missions in Iran. The Saudi-dominated Gulf Cooperation Council upped the stakes on Tuesday, officially designating Hezbollah a "terrorist organization".

The GCC's decision was the equivalent of "brandishing a sword," said Lebanese researcher Waddah Sharara, author of the book "The Hezbollah State". "It's a weapon they reserve the right to use, but not one they have used directly yet," he said.

Iran hit back yesterday, with Deputy Foreign Minister Hossein Amir Abdollahian calling Hezbollah "the champion of the fight against terrorism in the region" and saying the blacklisting was jeopardising Lebanon's stability. Hezbollah has escalated its own vitriol against Saudi Arabia, calling it a "criminal, terrorist" state.

For now, Saudi Arabia's actions are having a limited effect. The withdrawal of aid to Lebanon's security forces is "more a formality" than a real economic sanction, Sharara said. But there are fears that Saudi Arabia, which has about \$2 billion deposited in the Lebanese central bank, could step up its efforts to squeeze Hezbollah. — AFP



**BAGHDAD:** Um Abdullah, who lost her husband in a car bomb explosion, collects recyclable items at a garbage dump to support her family in Baghdad yesterday. Most workers in the garbage dump are widows orphans who live below the poverty line. — AP



**CALAIS:** Migrants watch as a makeshift shelter burns in the so-called Jungle migrant camp in the French port city of Calais yesterday during the ongoing demolition of the camp's southern half. — AFP

## FRANCE ENTERS REFERENDUM DEBATE WITH CALAIS WARNING

### PARIS: MIGRANTS WILL FLOW TO BRITAIN AFTER EU EXIT

**LONDON:** France warned Britain yesterday it would end border controls and let thousands of migrants move on to Britain if voters backed leaving the European Union. It also said it would open its arms to British-based banks wanting to flee an non-EU Britain and stay in the bloc.

French Economy Minister Emmanuel Macron echoed comments by Prime Minister David Cameron that a migrant camp known as the "Jungle" in the northern French coastal town of Calais could move to southern England in the event of a British EU exit. Speaking ahead of a Anglo-French security summit in Amiens, Macron said a British exit would scupper a border deal that halts migrants in France but that Paris would be happy to accept bankers fleeing London.

"The day this relationship unravels, migrants will no longer be in Calais," Macron told the Financial Times newspaper, adding that rules allowing British-based banks to operate across the EU would be lost. "Collective energy would be spent on unwinding existing links, not recreating new ones," he said, a comment aimed at the view of British eurosceptics that a new deal could be made.

Macron's comments, which support Cameron's argument that an EU exit after the June 23 referendum could undermine security, led television news reports in Britain, where opinion polls indicate immigration is the biggest concern for voters.

Opponents of membership said the comment was part of a campaign to scare British voters into supporting membership. A British exit from the EU would rock the EU - already shaken by differences over migration and by fragility within the euro zone - by ripping away its second-largest economy, one of its top two military powers and by far its richest financial centre.

### BMW COURTS WORKERS

In a move that underscored big company concern over the impact of a possible British exit, Germany's BMW wrote to British employees who make its luxury Rolls-Royce car about the risks of a Brexit, as leaving is known. "As a wholly-owned

BMW Group company, it is important for all Rolls-Royce Motor Cars employees to understand the view of our parent company," BMW said in the letter.

"We believe it's much better to be sat at the table when regulations are set and have a hand in their creation, rather than simply having to accept them."

More than three-quarters of manufacturers and traders in Britain's car industry believe that staying in the European Union is best for their business because of the risk of trade barriers and skill shortages if the country leaves, a poll showed yesterday. The British car industry body SMMT said 77 percent of its members said remaining in the EU was the best option when the country votes in a referendum on June 23, according to a survey con-

ducted for the body by polling firm ComRes.

The prospect leave the EU also drove growth in Britain's dominant services sector to a near three-year low last month, according to an economic survey.

Opponents of EU membership, including Cameron's main Conservative party rival, London Mayor Boris Johnson, said the British people were being fed scare stories in an attempt to garner support for the EU. "Let's believe in ourselves again, rather than clutching the skirts of Brussels," Johnson wrote in The Sun newspaper. "Let us lift our eyes to the horizon and take a once in a lifetime opportunity. Ignore the scaremongers, we are bigger, better and greater than they pretend," he said. — Reuters

## TWO ITALIAN HOSTAGES PROBABLY KILLED IN LIBYA ATTACK: ITALY

**ROME:** Two Italian civilians held hostage in Libya were probably killed this week in fighting in the western Libyan city of Sabratha, the Italian Foreign Ministry said yesterday. Libyan security forces said they attacked Islamic State militants in Sabratha on Wednesday, and later released photographs of two Western men found dead after their raid. Italy's Foreign Ministry said the men might be two of the four employees of the Italian construction company Bonatti who were kidnapped last July near a compound owned by the oil and gas group Eni.

It named the possible victims as Fausto Piano and Salvatore Failla but said formal verification was difficult because it did not have access to the bodies. A spokesman for security forces in Sabratha said the two were probably shot before Wednesday's clashes. "According to our investigations the two Italians who were kidnapped in Libya last year were executed by Islamic State

militants before the confrontation took place," Sabri Kshada said. Local Libyan brigades have been fighting in Sabratha since last week, when militants briefly overran the city centre and beheaded more than 10 brigade members.

That followed a US air strike on the outskirts of Sabratha on Feb 19 in which more than 40 people were killed. The Serbian government said two Serbian nationals who had been held hostage since November were among the dead.

Sabratha is one of several Libyan cities where militants loyal to Islamic State have established a presence, taking advantage of the political chaos that has plagued the North African country since Muammar Gaddafi was toppled in 2011. Italy's Il Sole 24 Ore newspaper said yesterday that Italy had sent some 40 secret service agents to Libya "some weeks ago", and that an additional 50 special forces operatives were set to join them. A security source confirmed the story. — Reuters



## SOMALIA SENTENCES MILITANT TO DEATH FOR KILLING JOURNALISTS

**MOGADISHU:** A former media officer for the Somali Islamist group Al-Shabaab who arranged news conferences in the years when the militants controlled the capital Mogadishu was sentenced to death yesterday for the murder of six local journalists.

The Al-Qaeda-linked Al-Shabaab was pushed out of Mogadishu by African Union peacekeeping forces in 2011 but has remained a potent antagonist in Somalia, launching frequent attacks in its bid to overthrow

the Western-backed government.

Somalia was plunged into anarchy in the early 1990s following the toppling of military dictator Mohamed Siad Barre, and has been struggling to rebuild. Hasan Ali, chairman of the Somali military court, told reporters that Hassan Hanafi had admitted to killing one reporter and had been found guilty of killing five others.

"He will be put to death as soon as possible," Ali said. Hanafi, 30, has said he joined Al-Shabaab in 2008

when he was working as a journalist for a local Somali broadcaster. He was arrested in neighboring Kenya last year and then returned to Somalia for trial.

He had been promoted to commander in 2009. The following year, he was seriously injured in fighting. "Al-Shabaab killed many journalists but personally I killed only one," Hanafi said after the sentence was announced. "But I am indifferent if you kill me. You will see if killings

will stop even after my death."

Al-Shabaab, whose name means "The Youth," seeks to impose its strict version of sharia law in Somalia, where it frequently unleashes attacks targeting security and government targets, as well as hotels and restaurants in the capital. The group was also behind deadly attacks in Kenya and Uganda, which both contribute troops to an African Union peacekeeping force in Somalia. — Reuters



**GENEVA:** Italian-Swedish United Nations (UN) Syria envoy Staffan de Mistura (left) and his Norwegian Special Advisor Jan Egeland give a press conference about efforts to deliver aid to besieged Syrians following a meeting of the UN-backed humanitarian taskforce yesterday. —AFP

## EU LEADERS TO DISCUSS SYRIA WITH PUTIN TODAY

## NATIONWIDE POWER BLACKOUT HITS SYRIA

**LONDON:** British Prime Minister David Cameron, French President Francois Hollande and German Chancellor Angela Merkel will discuss the ceasefire in Syria with Russian President Vladimir Putin in a conference call today, Downing Street said.

"Tomorrow is an opportunity for the leaders of the UK, France and Germany to come together... and make very clear to president Putin that we need this ceasefire to hold, to be a lasting one and to open the way for a real political transition," Cameron's spokeswoman told reporters yesterday.

The truce that came into force at midnight on Friday and was negotiated by the US and Russia is the first major cessation of hostilities in the five-year war in Syria that has claimed more than 270,000 lives.

The call will be the first time the leaders have spoken since it came into effect.

Russia, a key ally of the regime of President Bashar al-Assad, has said it will carry on striking "terrorist groups" but non-jihadist Syrian rebels say Moscow has kept on bombarding other targets as well.

Cameron's spokeswoman described the truce as "fragile". She said the call was

about "wanting to make sure that the Russians fully support what they signed up to in the UN Security Council resolution at the end of last year to work towards peace in Syria".

Peace talks which aim to end the conflict are due to resume in Geneva on March 9. An earlier round was cut short amid intensifying Russian air strikes in Syria.

Speaking in parliament on Wednesday, Cameron said the ceasefire was "imperfect" but called it "an important step forward". "Not every group is included in the ceasefire, but basically we are not seeing the attacks that were taking place on the moderate opposition, which is welcome," Cameron said. "It has also enabled us, with others, to get aid to communities that desperately need it, including through air drops and convoys."

"I would not put too much optimism into the mix right now, but this is progress and we should work on it."

Meanwhile, war-torn Syria was hit yesterday by a nationwide power cut, state television reported, but the cause was not immediately known. "Electricity has been cut across all provinces and teams are try-

ing to determine the reason for this unexpected cut," the station reported, citing a source within the electricity ministry.

Damascus residents said power in the capital had been out since 1:00 pm (1100 GMT) and that mobile Internet connections from some private providers were also not working.

Syria's state mobile provider said its Internet service had been "partially cut due to part of the network unexpectedly malfunctioning". Since Syria's conflict erupted in March 2011, various areas across the country have experienced intermittent power outages as a result of clashes or air strikes and many regularly rely on generators for power.

Syria's parliament had on Monday called in electricity minister Imad Khamis for a special hearing on the power sector. Khamis told parliamentarians that the cost of "direct damage" to the country's power stations and the electricity network from 2011 until the end of 2015 was estimated \$3.75 billion. In statements carried by Syria's state news agency SANA, Khamis said five out of the 13 main power stations in Syria had been "directly damaged" in the war. — AFP

## ISTANBUL POLICE KILL TWO LEFTIST FEMALE MILITANTS IN STANDOFF

**ISTANBUL:** Turkish police killed two female leftist militants who hurled grenades and opened fire at an Istanbul police station yesterday, officials said.

The two women-members of the outlawed ultra-leftist Revolutionary People's Liberation Party-Front (DHKP-C) — had taken refuge in an apartment after their attack. Police then launched an assault on the apartment, and the two were "neutralized", Istanbul governor Vasip Sahin was quoted as saying by the official Anatolia news agency. Two police officers were lightly wounded.

The women were named as Cigdem Yaksi and Berna Yilmaz, both members of the DHKP-C, Anatolia said. According to the Dogan news agency, the two women had thrown several grenades then opened fire at the riot police headquarters. Officers returned fire, injuring one of the attackers before they fled to the nearby building. Security footage broadcast on television showed them brandishing weapons they pulled out of their handbags.

Turkey has been on a state of alert for months since a series of deadly attacks on its soil. Last month, 29 people were killed in a car bombing that targeted a military convoy in Ankara, which was claimed by the Kurdistan Freedom Falcons (TAK), who have been linked to the outlawed Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK).

In the last year, there were four deadly bomb attacks blamed on Islamic State (IS) jihadists, including the deadliest in Turkey's modern history that killed 103 people in Ankara in October. But there have also been sporadic attacks by radicals from the DHKP-C, which seeks a Marxist revolution in Turkey among the working classes but also espouses a fiercely anti-Western and anti-NATO agenda.

Known until the mid-1990s as Devrimci Sol (Revolutionary Left), the DHKP-C has claimed a string of attacks in Turkey in recent months, including a gun attack on the US embassy in Istanbul last year.

But many of its assaults have been small in scale and sometimes even amateurish in nature.

It claimed the hostage-taking on March 31 of prosecutor Mehmet Selim Kiraz at his Istanbul office that ended with the killing of the captive and both hostage-takers during a police raid.

One of its most high profile crimes was the killing of the billionaire head of one of Turkey's largest industrial empires Ozdemir Sabanci in January 1996. Last month, Turkey arrested alleged DHKP-C member Ismail Akkol over the Sabanci assassination and accused him of planning a suicide attack. — AFP



**ISTANBUL:** In this image taken from Security Camera footage obtained by Turkish TV company DHA, showing two women as they attack police in Istanbul yesterday. The two women attacked the police with gunfire and a grenade Thursday and then fled the scene to hide inside a building before being killed by police, an official said. — AP



# EU'S TUSK URGES MIGRANTS TO STOP COMING TO EUROPE

## IRANIAN MIGRANTS SEW MOUTHS SHUT IN PROTEST

**ATHENS:** EU Council President Donald Tusk told illegal economic migrants yesterday not to risk their lives or money to make a perilous trip to Europe "for nothing" but said unilateral actions by European Union states to deal with the crisis must stop.

Tusk was on a trip through Balkan states to try to drum up support for cohesion on how to deal with hundreds of thousands of migrants - a crisis that threatens to tear the bloc apart - before an EU summit on Monday. From Greece, which has been a primary gateway of migrants flooding into Europe for more than a year, Tusk said anyone who was not a refugee should stay away.

"I want to appeal to all potential illegal economic migrants wherever you are from: Do not come to Europe. Do not believe the smugglers. Do not risk your lives and your money. It is all for nothing," Tusk said. Up to 30,000 refugees and migrants have been stranded in Greece from progressive border closures further up the "Balkan corridor", the route taken to get into wealthier central and northern Europe.

"At Monday's summit, Greece will demand that burden sharing be equitable among all countries in the bloc, and sanctions for those that do not," Prime Minister Alexis Tsipras said after meeting Tusk.

"We ask that unilateral actions stop in Europe," said Tsipras in a view echoed by Tusk.

EU officials have told Reuters that European governments, and particularly Germany, are looking to Turkey to reduce the number of migrant arrivals in Greece to below 1,000 a day at most as an initial condition for discussing taking some Syrian refugees directly from Turkey. Tsipras said Greece would continue to do whatever it could to ensure no migrant or refugee was left helpless. But he added Greece could not bear the burden by itself.

"We will not allow Greece or any other country to be turned into a warehouse of souls," Tsipras said. "We are at a crucial moment for the future of Europe." Greece would make every effort to apply international treaties. Speaking of the masses of people reaching Greek shores on small inflatable dinghies from Turkey, Tsipras said: "We will not push back people in the sea, risking the lives of children."

Officials said Tusk would be stressing in Athens and Ankara yesterday that the goal was to eliminate entirely the transit of migrants from Turkey to Greece and that Europeans believed Turkey should be able to bring the numbers down to the "low triple digits" very soon.

"If there were to be a target figure, it would be zero,"

one EU official said, noting that 1,000 people a day would mean an unsustainable 350,000 people a year arriving in Greece.

### Migrants protest

A group of Iranian migrants sewed their mouths shut in a disturbing protest at the ongoing demolition of the "Jungle" migrant camp in the French port city of Calais yesterday. AFP journalists said at least nine Iranians had stitched their mouths shut in the southern half of the camp, which is being gradually demolished by French authorities. One carried a sign, saying "Will you listen now?" It follows a similar protest by Iranian refugees the night before. In a statement, Calais town hall said the unsettling protest had aroused "deep emotion". "But at the same time, nothing justifies such extremes when the state has done everything to take the migrants out of these undignified conditions," it said.

France has offered the evicted migrants places in heated containers next to the Jungle, or in one of 100 accommodation centres around the country. But many are reluctant to give up their dream of smuggling themselves across the Channel to England, where they have family or community ties, or see greater hope of finding work and education.

French authorities began demolishing the southern half of the camp on Monday, and by Thursday they were still razing makeshift shelters under heavy police protection, drawing ever closer to one of the main food distribution centres, which serves around 1,000 meals a day.

"I hope I can still come here," said Wadou, an Eritrean. "I don't have anything to cook with in my shelter." The camp, built on a former toxic waste dump, is a magnet for people hoping to reach Britain and many have refused to leave, although there has been no repeat of the violent clashes that erupted on Monday. The latest protests came as Britain said it would contribute 20 million euros (\$22 million) to boost security at the northern port, adding to the 60 million euros it has already provided.

The money will be used to boost "security of the access zone to the tunnel... and fighting trafficking networks," France's minister for European affairs Harlem Desir told RFI radio yesterday.

Meanwhile, a meeting between French President Francois Hollande and British Prime Minister David Cameron got under way in the northern city of Amiens, with the Calais crisis topping the agenda. — AFP



**BEIJING:** Policemen ride two-wheel electronic vehicles as they patrol at Tiananmen Square during the opening session of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference (CPPCC) in Beijing yesterday. The more than 2,000 members of China's top legislative advisory body convened their annual meeting yesterday, kicking off a political high season that will continue with the opening of the national congress tomorrow. — AP

## WHAT TO EXPECT FROM CHINA ANNUAL CONCLAVE

**BEIJING:** Around 3,000 delegates to the annual meeting of China's parliament, the National People's Congress, will meet in Beijing's Great Hall of the People on March 5 for a session that will last for around 12 days. Here is an overview of China's top legislature and this year's meeting:

### Issues

The top of the agenda this year is the new five-year plan, which will map out economic goals for the next five years. Exact details of what will be discussed or announced, including economic growth targets and the budget, are kept tightly under wraps ahead of the session. However, government sources, state media and Chinese academics say the following items are likely to be on the agenda for discussion, even if no firm decisions are reached: On the opening day, Premier Li Keqiang will announce key economic targets in his state-of-the-nation style address. The annual economic growth target is expected to be set in a range of 6.5 percent to 7 percent this year.

The slowing economy, efforts to shift to more consumption-led growth, and layoffs from supply-side structural reforms to tackle excess factory capacity and "zombie firms" will be high on the agenda too. The defense budget for the year also gets unveiled on the opening day. It is expected to log another impressive rise, despite the slowing economy. The Chinese territory of Hong Kong, which has seen continued demands from pro-democracy advocates for full suffrage, and self-ruled Taiwan, which elected an independence-leaning president in January, will probably be discussed too. The meeting will end with Li's annual news conference.

### Functions

The NPC meets annually in March to pass bills, approve the budget and

endorse personnel nominations. The NPC is generally considered a rubber stamp for the ruling Communist Party's policies and decisions, though debate on certain issues, such as pollution, can be lively.

### Membership

The chairman is Zhang Dejiang, a former vice-premier and the third-most senior person in the party after President Xi Jinping and Premier Li. The nearly 3,000 delegates attending the session represent China's 31 provinces, municipalities and autonomous regions, as well as Hong Kong, Macau and the military. There are also delegates for self-ruled Taiwan, made up of defectors and their descendants. They serve five-year terms.

### Votes

Votes almost always follow the Communist Party's wishes and pass by an overwhelming majority. But delegates have historically cast no votes to show frustration over issues such as corruption and crime. All citizens over the age of 18 are technically allowed to vote for delegates and be elected to the NPC, but most delegates are hand-picked by local-level officials.

### Meetings

Parliament meets in the Great Hall of the People to the west of Tiananmen Square in the heart of Beijing. Built in less than a year in 1959 to celebrate the 10th anniversary of the founding of the People's Republic, the main auditorium can seat 10,000 people. Parliament's largely ceremonial advisory body, the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference, meets in parallel with the NPC. It is made up of business magnates, artists, monks, non-communists and other representatives of broader society, but it has no legislative power. — Reuters



**CALAIS:** A hooded unidentified migrant from Iran has his lips sewn, prior to a demonstration in an attempt to prevent the dismantling of makeshift dwellings at a camp near Calais yesterday. — AP



## CLINTON NOW FACES STRUGGLE TO WIN BACK YOUNG VOTERS

**FORT COLLINS:** Standing in a line of thousands outside an arena at Colorado State University, Aleksandr Cronk contemplated the grim possibility that the man he was waiting to see, Bernie Sanders, may not make it to the November ballot and he'd have to decide whether to vote for Hillary Clinton.

Like millions of young voters nationwide, Cronk has been electrified by Sanders' longshot bid for the Democratic presidential nomination. Even as Clinton has racked up a commanding lead in the contest, she's overwhelmingly losing voters between ages 18 and 29 in early-voting states. Her lukewarm reception among people like Cronk points to a challenge for her in November, should she win the nomination. Overwhelming support from young voters twice helped secure the White House for Barack Obama.

### Wary change

"I don't think there's going to be a lot of change" if Clinton wins, said Cronk, 21. Like many younger voters he's especially alarmed by income inequality, the issue that Sanders has made a centerpiece of his campaign. "The Clintons don't really stand in that position very well," Clinton's weakness with younger voters has stood out consistently this year - she lost Democratic primary voters who are aged 18 to 29 by 70 points in Iowa, 68 points in New Hampshire and 25 points on Super Tuesday, when she won seven of the 11 states in play for Democrats.

"Hillary's weakness with millennials has to be very worrisome for the Democratic Party," said Simon Rosenberg, president of the New Democrat Network, a center-left advocacy group. "What you're seeing is the millennial generation has essentially seceded from the Democratic establishment."

Obama's presidential campaigns showed the power of voters under 30, who gave him 2-1 support in both 2008 and 2012. In 2016, even more millennials than Baby Boomers are eligible to vote, and they make up a large share of potential voters in battleground states such as Ohio, Pennsylvania and Iowa, demographers say.

For months Clinton tried to connect with younger voters through famous supporters such as singer Katy Perry and actor Lena Dunham. She embraced the anti-police-brutality movement Black Lives Matter, spearheaded by young African-Americans, and vowed to expand President Obama's deportation relief for young people in the country illegally and their families. She promised debt-free college for all, only to be one-upped by Sanders' pledge of free college for all.

Clinton has acknowledged she's fallen short, saying she has to work harder to convince young people she will help them. When an Iowa college student asked her in January why so many other youths found her dishonest, Clinton blamed decades of Republican attacks. "I have been around a long time and people have thrown all kinds of things at me and I can't keep up with it," replied Clinton. "If you are new to politics and it's the first time you've really paid attention, you go, 'Oh my gosh, look at all of this.'"

### 'Politically expedient'

Joelle Gamble of the Roosevelt Institute, a liberal New York think-tank, said young voters are increasingly distrustful of institutions like political parties. She noted that, on the Republican side, many have rallied around Texas Sen. Ted Cruz, who boasts of how hated he is by Washington Republicans. "I don't think there's any one candidate that can fix this," she said.

Sanders, a socialist senator who was an independent until launching his quixotic Democratic primary run last year, has come the closest. His call for a political revolution has reached people like Daniel Harty, a 21-year-old computer science student in Las Vegas who once saw himself as a libertarian but registered as a Democrat to support Sanders. Should Clinton be the nominee, Harty said, he'd never back her. "Hillary Clinton doesn't seem like a genuine person," Harty said. "She changes her opinions based on what's politically expedient." —AP



**PALM BEACH:** Republican presidential candidate Donald Trump, accompanied by New Jersey Gov Chris Christie, left, takes questions from members of the media during a news conference on Super Tuesday primary election night in the White and Gold Ballroom at The Mar-A-Lago Club. — AP

## ROMNEY CALLING TRUMP 'PHONY,' URGES REPUBLICANS TO SHUN HIM

### GOP LEADERS GROWING INCREASINGLY ANXIOUS

**WASHINGTON:** Former Republican presidential nominee Mitt Romney charged into the increasingly divisive 2016 GOP White House sweepstakes Thursday with a harsh takedown of front-runner Donald Trump, calling him a "phony" and exhorting fellow Republicans to shun him for the good of the country and party.

"His promises are as worthless as a degree from Trump University," Romney said in a speech readied for delivery to a University of Utah audience. In turning up the rhetoric, Romney cast his lot with a growing chorus of anxious Republican leaders - people many Trump supporters view as establishment figures - in trying to slow the New York real estate mogul's momentum.

"Here's what I know: Donald Trump is a phony, a fraud," Romney said in his talk, set for delivery later yesterday. Trump, in turn, disparaged Romney in a series of tweets: "I am not a Mitt Romney, who doesn't know how to win," "Romney, who ran one of the worst races in presidential history, is working with the establishment to bury a big 'R' win!" and Romney is "not a good messenger" to be telling Republicans how to get elected.

### Failed candidate

Romney has been chipping away at Trump in recent days, but the speech yesterday was certain to be his most forceful statement yet. Trump has responded to Romney by saying the former Massachusetts governor was a failed candidate in his own right. Panicked GOP leaders say they still have options for preventing the billionaire from winning the GOP nomination - just not many good ones.

Romney also declares that a Trump nomination at the party's convention in Cleveland in July would enable Democrat Hillary Clinton to win the presidency, according to excerpts of his speech obtained by The Associated Press. He charged that Trump "has neither the temperament nor

the judgment to be president."

Romney's involvement comes as party elites pore over complicated delegate math, outlining hazy scenarios for a contested convention and even flirting with the long-shot prospect of a third party option. The 2012 Republican nominee's speech marks his most aggressive step into the 2016 contest to date, but it was unclear what impact his words would have with voters deeply frustrated by their party's leaders.

Trump, meanwhile, was setting his sights on the general election. His campaign reached out to House Speaker Paul Ryan's office to arrange a conversation between the two men, and urged Republican leaders to view his candidacy as a chance to expand the party. "Why can't the leaders of the Republican Party see that I am bringing in new voters by the millions - we are creating a larger, stronger party!" Trump said on Twitter. Indeed, there was a surge in turnout in Super Tuesday's GOP primaries. While that could typically be a welcome sign for a party that has struggled to attract new voters in recent presidential elections, GOP leaders were privately grappling with the reality that some of those voters were in fact registering their opposition to the Republican establishment. Trump padded his lead with victories in seven Super Tuesday contests, with Texas Sen. Ted Cruz claiming three states and Florida Sen. Marco Rubio picking up his first victory of the 2016 race. Despite Trump's strong night, he was not yet on track to claim the nomination before the party's national gathering in July, according to an Associated Press delegate count. He has won 46 percent of the delegates awarded so far, and he would have to increase that to 51 percent in the remaining primaries.

### 'Time for choosing'

In his speech yesterday, Romney calls this moment a "time for choosing" that will "have profound consequences for the

Republican Party and more importantly, for the country." "Of the remaining candidates," he says, "the only serious policy proposals that deal with the broad range of national challenges we confront have come from Ted Cruz, Marco Rubio, and John Kasich."

GOP strategists cast March 15 as the last opportunity to stop Trump through the normal path of winning states and collecting delegates. A win for Rubio in his home state of Florida would raise questions about Trump's strength, as could a win for Kasich, Ohio's governor, on his home turf.

The candidates have a high-profile opportunity to make their case to voters in yesterday night's prime-time debate. Retired neurosurgeon Ben Carson all but ended his bid Wednesday, saying he would skip the debate and declaring he did "not see a political path forward." The GOP mayhem contrasted sharply with a clearer picture on the Democratic side, where Hillary Clinton was drawing broad support from voters and her party's leaders. Rival Sen. Bernie Sanders vowed to keep up the fight, though his path to the nomination has become exceedingly narrow. Romney argues that Trump's "domestic policies would lead to recession. His foreign policies would make America and the world less safe," Romney says. "And his personal qualities would mean that America would cease to be a shining city on a hill." Romney has moved aggressively to take on Trump in recent days, saying the billionaire's unreleased tax returns might contain "bombshells." He was not expected to endorse a candidate or announce a late entry into the race himself.

The Associated Press has asked Republican governors and senators if they would support Trump if he becomes the party's nominee. Of the 59 respondents, slightly fewer than half could not commit to backing him in November. A handful of officials, including Massachusetts Gov. Charlie Baker and Nebraska Sen. —AP



## INDIAN-AMERICAN COULD BE A SUPREME COURT JUDGE

**KANSAS CITY:** Sri Srinivasan, a federal appeals judge who was born in India and grew up in Kansas, would be the first foreign-born justice to serve on the Supreme Court in more than 50 years. The 49-year-old Srinivasan is one of several people being mentioned prominently as a potential replacement for Justice Antonin Scalia, who died last month.

A judge on the US Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia Circuit, Srinivasan would bring to the high court previous experience as an attorney in private practice, a law clerk to two Republican-appointed judges and a high-ranking official in the Obama Justice Department.

He has a "first-rate intellect, an open-minded approach to the law, a strong work ethic, and an unimpeachable character," high-ranking Justice Department veterans of Democratic and Republican administrations said in a letter endorsing him for the appeals court. The bipartisan warmth extended to his 97-0 confirmation vote by the Senate in 2013.

Srinivasan told the Senate Judiciary Committee then that he has "a deep respect for the need for strict objectivity and impartiality in the task of judging," citing both his work for Vice President Al Gore after the 2000 presidential election and his later work in the Justice Department under Solicitor General Theodore Olson, who was the lead lawyer for George W. Bush in the Supreme Court case that decided the 2000 race.

### 'Extremely talented'

"I think any objection to Sri would have to be based on notions that he's either not conservative enough or not liberal enough," said Stephen McAllister, a law professor at the University of Kansas. "It could not be intellectual ability, could not be writing ability, it could not be his general competence in the law," McAllister said. "He's just extremely talented in all respects."



**WASHINGTON;** This photo provided by the US Court of Appeals District of Columbia Circuit shows Judge Sri Srinivasan. — AP

His nomination to the appeals court did provoke some criticism from liberal interest groups who objected to his work in private practice representing former Enron Corp. CEO Jeff Skilling in his successful Supreme Court appeal, and represented Exxon Mobil Corp. and mining company Rio Tinto in lawsuits alleging their connection to human rights abuses abroad.

Srinivasan would be the court's first Indian-American and its first Hindu, on a bench with five Catholics and three Jews. The last justice who was born overseas was Austrian-born Felix Frankfurter, who retired from the court in 1962.

Srinivasan grew up in Lawrence, Kansas, where his parents taught at the University of Kansas and he played high-school basketball. He remains an avid Kansas basketball fan and tries to return for a game once a year, said McAllister. He received his bachelor's degree, law degree and MBA from Stanford University. He clerked for US Circuit Judge J. Harvie Wilkinson in Richmond, Virginia, and former Supreme Court Justice Sandra Day O'Connor, both appointed by President Ronald Reagan. He also worked in a junior Justice Department position during the Bush administration and as the top political deputy in the Solicitor General's office in the Obama administration. If nominated and confirmed, Srinivasan would have to step aside from high court consideration of two cases he has been involved with on the federal appeals court. He has been considering challenges to the Obama administration's plan to address climate change, and "net neutrality" rules that regulate how the Internet is delivered to consumers.

Deanell Tacha, a native Kansan who is now dean of the Pepperdine Law School, calls Srinivasan a "man of great integrity, high intellect and extraordinary qualifications." "He cares about other people," she said. "He's generous of spirit, and he's amazingly humble." And perhaps a tad superstitious. He regularly carried his twin children's baby socks to Supreme Court arguments and pulled them from his pocket at his investiture on the appeals court, longtime legal affairs writer Tony Mauro reported in 2013. — AP



**KENTUCKY:** A supporter of Republican presidential candidate Donald Trump cheers before a rally, Tuesday, March 1, 2016, in Louisville. — AP

# TRUMP'S RISE SPOOKS EUROPE AS SIDESHOW TURNS SERIOUS

WARNING TO TRADITIONAL PARTIES ABOUT IGNORING POPULIST

**LONDON:** Europe's bemusement at the rise of Donald Trump has switched to concern as his presidential campaign has gained ground in what observers said was a warning to traditional parties about ignoring populists.

German Foreign Minister Frank-Walter Steinmeier this week spoke about the "politics of fear" in the US campaign in a thinly-veiled reference to Trump and drew parallels to the rise of European demagogues.

"In Germany and in Europe, something is gaining momentum in our domestic politics. And to be honest, I am also seeing it here in the United States during the campaign: it's the politics of fear," he told university students during a visit to Washington.

European commentators have also issued increasingly stark warnings in recent days as the once-improbable prospect of the billionaire clinching the Republican presidential nomination is looking ever more likely.

### 'American Caesarism'

Financial Times columnist Martin Wolf said it would be a "global disaster" if Trump became president, calling him "grossly unqualified" and "a promoter of paranoid fantasies, a xenophobe and an ignoramus". Wolf drew possible historical comparisons with the end of the Roman Republic and even the rise of Adolf Hitler, warning: "American 'Caesarism' has now become flesh. It seems a worryingly real danger today."

Other commentators looked closer to

home. "In his own way, Trump is a whistleblower," French daily Le Figaro said in a front-page editorial. "He has reminded European political elites that it is dangerous to forget the language of those who vote for them," the newspaper said on Tuesday. "Populist leaders can rally those beyond their political base and it is dangerous to reduce them to their caricature," it said, adding: "We have entered a time when we must be wary of the 'impossible'."

The Parisian newspaper said: "In France we love to mock Donald Trump, his crazy hairdo, his plastic wives, his tirades out of a low-budget western. If it is good to laugh, it can also be useful to open our eyes, especially in a country that has given a third of its votes to the National Front," it said.

The French far-right party's co-founder Jean-Marie Le Pen last week gave his stamp of approval to Trump. "If I was American I would vote for Donald Trump... may God protect him," tweeted the fiery 87-year-old, who has now been replaced as National Front leader and expelled from the party by his daughter Marine.

### 'Revenge against arrogant elites'

Swedish economist Sandro Scocco, a member of the leftwing think tank Arena, also likened Trump's electorate to supporters of the far-right in Sweden who feel betrayed by the mainstream parties. "When the middle class begins to vote for Trump, we have problems," he said, blaming growing income

inequality and adding that far-right voters in Sweden "have every reason to be dissatisfied".

German daily Die Welt said both Trump and Europe's far-right and populist movements represented "a desire for revenge against arrogant elites". "The Nightmare Continues," ran a headline in the Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung on Wednesday, while the weekly Der Spiegel said Trump was "the leader of an authoritarian movement full of hatred". "His America would be frightening," Der Spiegel said.

Many commentators focussed their indignation on Trump's comments about barring Muslims from entering the United States made just days after a couple believed to have been inspired by the Islamic State group killed 14 people in California in December. In Britain, Prime Minister David Cameron has branded the comments "divisive, stupid and wrong" and a petition to bar Trump from visiting the country so far garnered more than 580,000 signatures.

Guardian columnist Deborah Orr said Trump and advocates of a British exit from the European Union or "Brexit" were "cut from the same cloth". She compared Trump's rhetoric to the concerns about the influx of workers in Britain from Eastern Europe ahead of an EU membership referendum on June 23. "The reason why Britain doesn't have a Trump is because the discontents that Trump voices in the US are voiced here in a more coded way-as opposition to the EU." — AFP



## IS-INSPIRED MILITANTS ON OFFENSIVE IN SOUTH PHILIPPINES

**MANILA:** Militants fighting in the name of the Islamic State group are escalating attacks in the southern Philippines, analysts said, deepening fears for the volatile region after its main Muslim rebel group failed to seal a peace pact. Gunmen who have pledged allegiance to the jihadists controlling vast swathes of Iraq and Syria have instigated a series of deadly battles with the army since the nation's parliament blocked the peace push last month.

An assassination attempt this week on a visiting Saudi Arabian preacher who was on an IS hit list has raised the alarm further, although police emphasized they were yet to determine the gunman's motives. "Their influence is growing stronger and it is expanding," Rodolfo Mendoza, a senior analyst at the Manila-based Philippine Institute for Peace, Violence and Terrorism Research told AFP, referring to IS. He said the various local groups that had pledged allegiance to IS were "planning big operations, like bombings, attacks or assassinations".

Such violence has plagued large areas of the southern Philippines for decades, as Muslim rebels have fought a separatist insurgency that has claimed 120,000 lives. The violence has left the region one of the poorest in the Philippines, while allowing warlords and extortion gangs to flourish. Many of the predominantly Catholic

Philippines' Muslim minority live in the south. The biggest rebel group, the 10,000-strong Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF), had been working hard with President Benigno Aquino's administration for nearly six years to broker an end to the rebellion.

But when congress failed to pass a bill last month that would have granted autonomy to the region, the peace process was frozen. The MILF has pledged to honor a ceasefire while it waits for Aquino's successor to be elected mid-year. But hardline groups opposed to compromise with the government have started to take advantage of the vacuum, as they sense an opportunity to raise their profile and prove their credentials to IS, according to analysts. "There is an incentive if they show that they are a fighting force," Zachary Abuza, a professor at the National War College in Washington, who specializes in Southeast Asian security issues, told AFP.

### Growing IS shadow

In the most spectacular attack, a previously obscure group discounted by the military as a small-time extortion gang launched an assault on a remote army outpost on Mindanao, the largest southern island. The attack triggered a week of fighting that the military said left six soldiers and at least 12 militants dead, and forced more than 30,000 people to flee their homes. The



**MANILA:** A family eats their lunch beside a railway line in Manila. The country has a population well over 100 million with about 25 percent living in poverty. — AFP

gunmen flew IS flags during the fighting, and bandanas with the group's insignia were found when soldiers overran their base, a two-storey concrete building, according to the military. At the same time about 100 kilometers (60 miles) away, soldiers were battling a bigger and much better known group that had previously declared allegiance to IS, the Bangsamoro Islamic Freedom Fighters (BIFF). That fighting, which began about a week after parliament missed its deadline to pass the auton-

omy legislation, has claimed the life of one soldier, according to the military. The clashes are continuing. AFP video footage on Tuesday showed rockets being fired from an army helicopter, as well as troops in a cornfield firing mortars and carrying a wounded soldier on an improvised stretcher. The BIFF split from the MILF in 2008 after the previous peace process collapsed, then carried out attacks on Christian communities that left more than 400 people dead and 600,000 displaced. — AFP

## MALAYSIA AND AUSTRALIA MOVE TO RETRIEVE SUSPECTED MH370 DEBRIS

### PIECE OF DEBRIS FOUND ON MOZAMBIQUE BEACH

**KUALA LUMPUR:** Australian and Malaysian officials were moving to retrieve and examine suspected aircraft wreckage found on the east African coast to quickly determine whether it came from missing flight MH370, Malaysia's transport minister said yesterday. The one-meter long piece of debris found on a Mozambique beach could provide fresh clues into the mystery of the Malaysia Airlines flight, which disappeared two years ago. "From the pictures shown, there is high probability the plane debris is from a Boeing 777 plane," Malaysian Transport Minister Liow Tiong Lai told reporters in Kuala Lumpur.

While cautioning that this needed to be verified, his comments appeared to be firmer than the "high possibility" he had mentioned on Wednesday. MH370, which carried 239 passengers and crew when it vanished March 8, 2014 on an overnight flight from Kuala Lumpur to Beijing, was a Boeing 777. Transport Minister Darren Chester of Australia, which is leading a vast oceanic search for wreckage, said the debris would eventually be transferred to Australia where it would be examined by officials and experts, including from Boeing.

The painstaking two-year search effort has scoured the seabed in the remote Indian Ocean, where the plane is believed to have gone down. But nothing has been found and the search could cease by mid-year. If confirmed to be from MH370, the debris would mark only the second shred of physical evidence in one of aviation's great mysteries. Last July, a wing fragment was found washed ashore on the Indian Ocean island of Reunion and later confirmed to be from MH370.



**MAPUTO:** Photo shows a piece of suspected aircraft wreckage found off the east African coast of Mozambique at Mozambique's Civil Aviation Institute (IACM) in Maputo. — AFP

That marked the first proof that the plane had met a violent end, but otherwise shed little light on what caused the disaster. Liow said officials from Australia's embassy in Mozambique had been dispatched to retrieve the new object from local authorities. Malaysian civil aviation experts and representatives of the airline also were en route to Mozambique. "We would like to get hold of the debris as soon as possible, so that's why we are working with Australia in the fastest manner," Liow said.

### Don't 'throw in the towel'

Neither Liow nor Australian officials could say exactly when the debris would be in the specialists' hands. The latest find comes just days before the disaster's two-year anniversary. Liow said a Malaysian-led

team of international investigators probing MH370's disappearance—a separate effort from the Australian-led search—will issue a statement Tuesday on the anniversary.

He did not say whether the statement would contain new revelations. International agreements require annual updates from investigators in accidents where aircraft cannot be found. US television network NBC first reported the new debris, saying it was found this week by an American man, Blaine Gibson, who blogs extensively on MH370, and citing experts saying it appeared to be part of an aircraft tail. Theories of what caused MH370 to vanish include a hijacking, rogue pilot action, or sudden mechanical problem that incapacitated the crew, but there is no evidence yet to support any particular theory. — AFP

## JAPAN NUKE REFUGEES FACE BLEAK RETURN 5 YEARS AFTER FUKUSHIMA

**NARAH:** Tokuo Hayakawa carries a dosimeter around with him at his 600-year-old temple in Naraha, the first town in the Fukushima "exclusion zone" to fully reopen since Japan's March 2011 catastrophe. Badges declaring "No to nuclear power" adorn his black Buddhist robe. Hayakawa is one of the few residents to return to this agricultural town since it began welcoming back nuclear refugees five months ago. The town, at the edge of a 20-km evacuation zone around the crippled Fukushima Daiichi plant, was supposed to be a model of reconstruction. Five years ago, one of the biggest earthquakes in history shook the country's northeast. The 10-metre tsunami it spawned smashed into the power plant on the Fukushima coastline triggering a meltdown and forcing nearby towns to evacuate. The disaster killed over 19,000 people across Japan and caused an estimated 16.9 trillion yen (\$150 billion) in damages.

Only 440 of Naraha's pre-disaster population 8,042 have returned - nearly 70 percent of them over 60. "This region will definitely go extinct," said the 76-year-old Hayakawa. He says he can't grow food because he fears the rice paddies are still contaminated. Large plastic bags filled with radioactive topsoil and detritus dot the abandoned fields. With few rituals to perform at the temple, Hayakawa devotes his energies campaigning against nuclear power in Japan. Its 54 reactors supplied over 30 percent of the nation's energy needs before the disaster. Today, only three units are back in operation after a long shutdown following the nuclear meltdown in Fukushima. Others are looking to restart. "I can't tell my grandson to be my heir," said Hayakawa, pointing at a photo of his now-teenaged grandson entering the temple in a full protective suit after the disaster. "Reviving this town is impossible," he said. "I came back to see it to its death." That is bound to disappoint Japan's Prime Minister Shinzo Abe. Rebuilding Naraha and other towns in the devastated northeast, he says, is crucial to reviving Japan. Tokyo pledged 26.3 trillion (\$232 billion) over five years to rebuild the disaster area and will allocate another 6 trillion for the next five years.

### Vanishing town

More than 160,000 people were evacuated from towns around the Daiichi nuclear plant. Around 10 percent still live in temporary housing across Fukushima prefecture. Most have settled outside their hometowns and have begun new lives. In Naraha, two restaurants, a supermarket and a post office, housed in prefabricated shacks, make up the town's main shopping centre. The restaurants close at 3 pm. No children were in sight at Naraha's main park overlooking the Pacific Ocean on a recent morning. Several elderly residents were at the boardwalk gazing at hundreds of bags stuffed with radioactive waste. In fact, the bags are a common sight around town: in the woods, by the ocean, on abandoned rice fields. — Reuters



## CYBER WARRIORS SPAR OVER CHINA-TAIWAN RELATIONS

**BEIJING:** Rappers in China and Taiwan are among the combatants squaring off in cyberspace after a landslide election win for the island's independence-leaning party fanned Beijing's fears that it could renew a push for sovereignty. Taiwan's Democratic Progressive Party (DPP) won presidential and parliamentary polls in January, reviving China's concern that the self-ruled island might be emboldened to seek formal independence.

DPP leader and president-elect Tsai Ing-wen says she wants to maintain the status quo and peace with China, but that has not deterred Chinese internet users from airing critical views on social media such as Facebook, provoking sharp responses in Taiwan. "There's only one China, HK, Taipei, they are my fellas," run the opening strains of a song by Tianfu Shibian, a rap group based in China's southwestern city of Chengdu. On its Twitter-like Weibo microblog, the group claims more than 7

million views for the music video of its song, "The Power of Red", which uses patriotic images laced with profanity to pour scorn on Tsai, her party and its independence notions. The song targets Taiwanese and foreigners unfamiliar with the complexities of Taiwan-China politics, aiming to dispel "misunderstandings," said Wang Zixin, the group's leader. "They just think us Chinese, or the mainland, are always bullying them," he added. "Through the song lyrics we want to say China is a peace-loving country, but we aren't chickens." The music video can be viewed on foreign websites such as Youtube, which is inaccessible in China, as is Facebook, but has yet to make a splash in Taiwan.

In Taipei, prominent rapper Dwagie, who backs the DPP, often raps in Taiwanese Hokkien to spotlight the island's individuality, rather than using Mandarin, the official language of both sides. Chinese performers of songs such as "The Force of Red" should

look to tackle the country's many social problems, from children's education to medical services for remote areas, before worrying about Taiwan, said Dwagie. "I want to know what the people who write these songs, and the netizens, are really thinking, deep down," he said. "Is there really nothing more important than whether this island belongs to you, or if Taiwan is independent or not?" China deems democratic Taiwan a breakaway province to be taken back by force, if necessary.

### Flood of posts

Thousands of posts flooded Tsai's Facebook page after the election win, demanding that the island be brought under China's control. China's internet users were just "exercising their freedom of speech," said DPP spokesman Yang Chia-liang. "We don't know if all more than one billion Chinese people can access the Internet and log on to Facebook, or if it is

just a specific group of netizens that can access Facebook and browse Taiwan's web," Yang said. "But naturally we hope the former is the case."

Tsai, hit by similar attacks in the past, put a message on Facebook last November welcoming mainland users to witness the "complete democracy, freedom and pluralism" that prevail in Taiwan. China's Taiwan Affairs Office did not respond to a request for comment, but a Foreign Ministry spokesman pointed to a lack of evidence that the government directed Facebook attacks. "If we put all of our energy into commenting on completely baseless or gossipy comments, there really is no time," Lu Kang told a daily briefing in Beijing, reiterating the stance that Taiwan forms part of China. Chiang Kai-shek's Nationalists fled to Taiwan in 1949, after being defeated by Chinese Communists in a civil war. The island has been self-ruled since. — Reuters

## CONQUERING PAKISTAN'S 'KILLER MOUNTAIN' AGAINST ALL ODDS

**ISLAMABAD:** Simone Moro stood atop Pakistan's "Killer Mountain" last week and observed the curve of the Earth—a view which had never been seen by anyone in winter until the climber and his team conquered Nanga Parbat. The expedition had taken three months and came more than six decades after the mountain was first summited, but 10 minutes was all Moro could allow himself to enjoy his achievement. "Now you have to come back... But you are so completely exhausted," the Italian mountaineer explained in an exclusive interview with AFP, saying he was afraid of losing concentration on the long, dangerous descent. From the peak, 8,125 meters (26,660 feet) above sea level, the mountains of northern Pakistan and India stretched out before him—including three more of the 14 eight-thousanders.

These are the only mountains on the planet with "death zones"—above 8,000 metres, where it is believed that the amount of oxygen in the atmosphere is too low to sustain human life. The pyramid of K2, the world's second-highest mountain and now the only eight-thousander unsummited in winter, was in the distance. "I saw the horizon—the line of the horizon—I saw that the line was curved," Moro said. "When you see these things... you understand how small and at the same time how big you could be." Nanga Parbat, with one of the highest death rates in the world, earned its grisly nickname after more than 30 climbers died trying to conquer it before the first successful summit in 1953.

Climbing it in winter's treacherous conditions would remain a feat unattained until Moro and his team—Alex Txikon of Spain and Pakistani climber Ali Sadpara—made their historic summit on February 26. One member of their team, Tamara Lunger from Italy, was forced to abandon her attempt just 170 meters from the peak. She could see Sadpara waving at her from the summit, she said, but she knew she had pushed her body to its limit. "My muscles felt very bad... I was vomiting the whole day and everything I ate or drank came out again." Hesitating, she asked herself if she was sad—but the choice was clear. "I said okay, if you go to the top now you will not go home... and I turned around and went down."

### Altitude of a jumbo jet

Nanga Parbat's fearsome Rupal face, rising more than 4,000 meters from base to top, presents one of the most difficult—and tantalizing—challenges in climbing. Moro said the team, which climbed without oxygen, had little time to acclimatize themselves, spending just one night at 6,200 meters before making the push toward the summit. "When you want to go to the altitude of jumbo flight without oxygen you need to acclimatized," he said, admitting that a "big question mark" hung over their expedition as they began the final climb. —AFP

## DEFIANT N KOREA FIRES MISSILES AMID TENSION UN IMPOSES TOUGH SANCTIONS

**SEOUL:** North Korea fired six short-range projectiles into the sea yesterday in a show of defiance just hours after the United Nations adopted the toughest sanctions to date on Pyongyang over its fourth nuclear test and rocket launch. Limited displays of military firepower have become a routine response by North Korea to international pressure over anything from its nuclear weapons program to its human rights record. South Korea's defense ministry said the six projectiles—either rockets or guided missiles—fell into the sea around 100-150 kilometers off the North's eastern coast. China's foreign ministry responded by urging all parties to refrain from any actions that might see tensions escalate still further.

The launches came after the UN Security Council unanimously passed a resolution late Wednesday imposing new sanctions after seven weeks of arduous negotiations between the United States and China, Pyongyang's sole major ally. All eyes are now on China and Russia to see if they fully enact the sweeping measures. North Korea offered no immediate statement on the sanctions, which break new ground, requiring all countries to inspect cargo destined for and coming from the North, in all airports and sea ports. They also ban or restrict exports of coal, iron and iron ore and other minerals from North Korea, and prohibit the supply of aviation fuel including rocket fuel.

### Potential loopholes

But analysts have pointed to several possible loopholes, including interpretations of what constitutes a proper cargo "inspection" and a provision that excludes mineral exports if their revenues are not deemed to be destined for military use. North Korea earns about \$1 billion per year in coal exports—a third of all export revenues—and about \$200 million annually from iron ore sales, US Ambassador Samantha Power told the Security Council. US President Barack Obama welcomed the measures as "a firm, united, and appropri-



**SEOUL:** A man watches a TV news program showing a file footage of the missile launch conducted by North Korea, at Seoul Railway Station yesterday. — AP

ate response" to the January 6 nuclear test and February 7 rocket launch.

"The international community, speaking with one voice, has sent Pyongyang a simple message: North Korea must abandon these dangerous programs and choose a better path for its people," Obama said. Banking restrictions will be tightened and governments will be required to ban flights of any plane suspected of carrying contraband destined for North Korea. "These are among the toughest measures we have agreed against any country in the world, certainly the toughest ever against the DPRK," said British Ambassador Matthew Rycroft, referring to North Korea by its official acronym.

A total of 16 individuals and 12 entities were added to a UN sanctions blacklist, including North Korea's NADA space agency and its spy agency. South Korean President Park Geun-Hye said she hoped the "unprecedentedly tough" sanctions would push Pyongyang into finally abandoning its nuclear weapons program. The resolution sends "a strong message from

the international community seeking peace on the Korean peninsula," Park said. Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe urged Pyongyang to refrain from any fresh provocations, while Tokyo's ambassador to the UN, Motohide Yoshikawa, stressed that "the heart of the matter now is implementation" of the sanctions by China, North Korea's largest trading partner, and other countries.

### Making sanctions bite

Power also called for a "robust and unyielding" follow-up to ensure the sanctions bite and singled out Russia and China as key players. Chinese Ambassador Liu Jieyi said the resolution should "be a new starting point and a stepping stone" for renewed talks on dismantling North Korea's nuclear program. Russia echoed that view, with Ambassador Vitaly Churkin saying the resolution is designed to "shut down as much as possible the financing" of North Korea's weapons program to push Pyongyang back to the negotiating table. —AFP



## AFGHAN TALEBAN LEADERSHIP IS IN PAKISTAN

**ISLAMABAD:** A top Pakistani official has said for the first time publicly that the Afghan Taliban's leadership enjoys a safe haven inside his country, which Islamabad uses as a "lever" to pressure the group into talks with Kabul. The admission by Pakistan's foreign affairs advisor Sartaj Aziz comes after years of official denials by Islamabad that it offers shelter or exerts any influence over the Taliban, and amid a fresh push for direct peace talks.

The Taliban's 14-year insurgency against Afghan and NATO forces has claimed tens of thousands of civilian and military lives. Speaking at the Council on Foreign Affairs in Washington on Tuesday, Aziz said: "We have some influence on them because their leadership is in Pakistan and they get some medical facilities, their families are here. 'So we can use those

levers to pressurize them to say: 'Come to the table,'" he added, according to a transcript on the think tank's website.

The remarks confirm what has become an open secret in diplomatic circles, particularly since Pakistan began brokering direct peace talks between Kabul and the Taliban last summer. The negotiations faltered after Afghan intelligence leaked the news the group's founder Mullah Omar had died in 2013. The Taliban later confirmed they lied about Omar's death for two years, sowing divisions among the militants and anger at his successor Mullah Akhtar Mansour for leading the cover-up. Most of the group's leaders are believed to be residing in the southwestern city of Quetta, with others in northwest Peshawar and southern Karachi.

Pakistan, Afghanistan, the United States and China held their fourth round of talks aimed at reviving direct peace talks between Kabul and the Taliban late last month. The four-country group invited Taliban representatives to return to negotiations by the first week of March, though a spokesman for the militants later said they had not yet received an invitation. Aziz said Islamabad had used the threat of expulsion to force the Taliban into the first round of talks. "We already-before the 7th July meeting last year-we had to use some of these levers and restricted their movements, restricted their access to hospital and other facilities, and threatened them that if you do not come forward and talk, then obviously we will at least expel you," he said. — AFP

## INDIAN PM SLAMS OPPOSITION OVER PARLIAMENT DISRUPTION

**NEW DELHI:** Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi urged opposition lawmakers yesterday to stop disrupting parliament, under growing pressure to pass the crucial reforms promised when he came to power nearly two years ago. Parliament has managed to pass just one bill since the current session began on February 23 due to rowdy protests in the house over the controversial arrest of a student leader last month. That has prevented the government from passing long-delayed bills, including a proposed bankruptcy law and a national goods and services tax (GST) that would replace a myriad of local levies seen as deterring investment.

"I seek support from parliamentarians to pass important bills," Modi said in parliament, accusing protesting MPs of "making the country suffer." "These bills are for people, for the country," Modi's government enjoys a majority in the lower house of parliament but needs opposition support to push through laws in the upper house, where it doesn't have the numbers. His right-wing nationalist Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) swept to power in 2014 promising to revive the economy and create much-needed jobs, but has been unable to enact many of its promised reforms.

Although India is the world's fastest-growing major economy, experts say gross domestic product is still not increasing at a fast enough pace to provide employment for a burgeoning young population. Last month saw violent protests in one of the country's most prosperous states by members of the Jat caste, traditional farmers who say they can no longer make a living from the land. They were demanding improved access to government jobs, still seen by many in India as the surest route to financial security despite efforts to create employment by attracting private investment.

Modi placed the blame for that squarely on the opposition Congress party, which he said had "sown the seeds of poverty" during its time in power. India's parliament is notoriously rowdy, and Modi's BJP employed similar tactics to disrupt the former Congress-led government. Last year more than 20,000 Indians, including prominent business leaders, signed an online petition urging lawmakers to end weeks of rowdy protests that had paralyzed parliament. Just 24 bills have been passed since Modi took over in May 2014, according to PRS Legislative Research, a New Delhi-based think-tank. Another 30 are stuck at the voting stage. — AFP



**NEW DELHI:** Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi (third right) talks with Indian Finance Minister Arun Jaitley during a meeting of ruling National Democratic Alliance lawmakers in New Delhi. — AP



**KASHMIR:** Kashmiri villagers carry the body of Asif Ahmad, a suspected rebel, during his funeral procession in the village of Dadsar some 40kms south of Srinagar yesterday. Three Kashmiri rebels were killed in a gunbattle with government forces as they tried to break through a security cordon in the disputed Himalayan region of Kashmir, army officials said. — AFP

## INDIA'S FEMALE SCAVENGERS ENSLAVED BY CASTE AND GENDER DISCRIMINATION

### DALIT GROUP - TRADITIONALLY THE LOWEST RANKED

**MUMBAI:** New legislation in India to crack down on the practice of forcing mainly the poorest women to clear other people's excreta will have little impact unless deeply entrenched sexism and caste bias are changed, activists said. Manual scavenging, a euphemism for disposing of faeces from dry toilets and open drains by hand, has long been an occupation thrust upon members of the Dalit group, traditionally the lowest ranked in India's caste system.

At least 90 percent of India's estimated 1.3 million manual scavengers are women, according to campaign group Jan Sahas. "It is not just a case of caste discrimination, but also gender discrimination, as women are forced to do this basest of jobs," said Ashif Shaikh, founder of Jan Sahas, which says it has liberated more than 21,000 Dalit women from the practice. "It is not even a job, it's slavery," he told the Thomson Reuters Foundation. "The women do not have a choice, they are paid a pittance, and are threatened with violence if they quit. There's a lot of pressure from the village,

the community, and their own families." India, which banned caste-based discrimination in 1955, has passed several laws to end manual scavenging with government pledges to modernize sanitation and criminalize those who employ manual scavengers. Legislation passed in December further tightened penalties. Yet Dalit communities continue to face threats of violence, eviction and withholding of wages if they try to give up the practice, human rights groups say. In 2014, Prime Minister Narendra Modi launched a "Clean India Mission" to improve sanitation in the fast-growing economy and increase funding for public toilets to end open defecation.

The campaign has helped draw attention to the plight of manual scavengers and forced state governments to act, Shaikh said. The government offers 40,000 rupees (\$590) to each rescued manual scavenger and training for alternate jobs. Yet crimes against lower-caste Indians are rising. There were more than 47,000 such crimes in 2014, an increase

of about a fifth from the previous year, according to official figures. The Copenhagen-based International Dalit Solidarity Network has called manual scavenging, a "caste-based and hereditary occupation form of slavery". Paid less than a minimum wage, manual scavengers are often forced to borrow money from their higher-caste employers, leading to debt bondage.

The government estimated in 2011 that more than 180,000 rural households are engaged in manual scavenging. Western Maharashtra state, which topped the list, had set a deadline of the end of March to end the practice. "We have provided incentives in rural areas to build toilets, and we have offered alternative employment to these people in some districts," said US Lonare, a senior official in the state's social justice department. He did not say if the deadline will be met. Jan Sahas' Shaikh said the new legislation must be implemented in full. "Even one woman forced to do this work is a shame," he said. "It's a crime." — Reuters



# Lifestyle

FRIDAY, MARCH 4, 2016

A model trips and falls during the presentation of the H&M Fall-Winter 2016-2017 ready-to-wear fashion collection, presented Wednesday, March 2, 2016 in Paris. — AFP

## Miracle seeking on Pakistan's Quran mountain





Catherine Zeta Jones in her academy award winning role in Chicago. The film was distributed by Miramax.



John Travolta and Samuel L Jackson in 'Pulp Fiction', one of Miramax's most successful movies.

## Miramax sold to Qatar-based beIN

**M**iramax, the film studio behind hundreds of hit movies including "Pulp Fiction" and "Chicago," has been sold to the Doha-based beIN Media Group, both companies announced on Wednesday. beIN, which runs sports networks and movie channels in 24 countries in the Middle East, North Africa, Europe and the US, said Miramax would continue to operate as an independent film and television studio under its new owners. "We are extremely excited to have achieved this key milestone within our strategy," said Nasser Al-Khelaifi, chairman and CEO of beIN Media Group.

Miramax's back catalogue of more than 700 movies have won a total of 68 Oscars, including for "The English Patient,"

"Shakespeare in Love," and "No Country for Old Men."



The company was founded in 1979 by Harvey and Bob Weinstein, who sold it on to the Walt Disney Company for \$60 million in 1993. It was bought for more than 10 times that amount in 2010, by an investor group led by real estate magnate Ron Tutor, private equity firm Colony Capital and the Qatar Investment Authority, although Tutor later sold his stake to the Qataris. Colony and Qatar had reportedly been looking to offload the company with its library for at least a year, although no investor came in for the \$1 billion asking price. The financial terms of the deal announced on Wednesday were not disclosed.

In 2016, Miramax has invested or will be investing and co-distributing a number of

titles including "Bad Santa 2," "Bridget Jones's Baby," "Southside with You," "The 9th Life of Louis Drax" and the TV show "From Dusk Till Dawn: The Series," based on the film of the same name. Last year, the company's slate included "Mr. Holmes" and the comedy hit "The Wedding Ringer."

"Miramax is a successful film and television company, providing a strong and recognizable brand, a unique library and industry expertise that complement beIN Media Group's plans to grow across the entertainment industry and develop new content production," said Al-Khelaifi.— AFP

## Jack Fisk rediscovers Los Angeles through Malick's eyes

**Y**ou might not know the name Jack Fisk, but you definitely know his work. Whether it's the private bowling alley where Daniel Plainview torments Eli Sunday in Paul Thomas Anderson's "There Will Be Blood," the disarmingly simple Silencio theater in David Lynch's "Mulholland Dr.," or a single Victorian home perched on a hill of wheat in Terrence Malick's "Days of Heaven," Fisk has created some of the most iconic spaces seen on screen in the past 40 years.

Fisk, 69, is a production designer. Who deserves to get the glow of celebrity recognition, like the greats of cinematography did a few years ago. He has been twice-nominated for an Academy Award, most recently for recreating the world of 1820s fur trappers in "The Revenant." And like cinematographer Emmanuel "Chivo" Lubezki, who he's worked with on six films, Fisk is one of the most respected in the field. Fisk describes his job as being a second set of eyes for the director. He's that rare kind of low-key artist who is a Jack of all trades. "I got a lot of work because I was a one-man band. I could design it, build it, dress it and prop it," he said.

His latest, "Knight of Cups" (out today in a limited release) starring Cate Blanchett, Christian Bale and Natalie Portman, reunites him with Malick once more. Fisk has worked on every one of Malick's films. They first collaborated on the 1973 masterpiece "Badlands" and they haven't let up, despite both taking nearly two-decade breaks. "Badlands" is also where Fisk met his wife, actress Sissy Spacek, with whom he produced two daughters.

The film "Knight of Cups" is an expressionistic Los Angeles odyssey, following a screenwriter (Bale) who has lost his words through a series of relationships with the likes of Blanchett, Natalie Portman, and Freida Pinto. It takes the audience from the fake streets of the Warner Bros. lot to the very real skid row area of Downtown and beyond - to the Santa Monica canyons, the Malibu beaches, the uninviting steps of the powerful Century City talent agency CAA, the grotesquely opulent mansions of Coldwater Canyon, the modernist

houses of the Hollywood Hills, and even out to the desert, whether it be the serene periphery of Palm Springs or the bacchanalia of Las Vegas. "It's difficult making a Los Angeles movie. So many different things have shot here," Fisk said. He's responsible for some of them, including Lynch's "Mulholland Dr." "I was trying to do things completely different," said Fisk. "David (Lynch) loves Los Angeles but his entry is more 'Sunset Boulevard' and it's a moodier, darker city. ('Knight of Cups') was not. This was more advertising."

Fisk knows the city but he doesn't live there permanently. He lived in Los Angeles for 12 years, having moved to the coast in a U-Haul with his friend David Lynch in 1970. They shared an apartment for a time near the Sunset Strip, and then they moved to a small home in Santa Monica with goats, chickens, and a goose. The goose would join him for his morning walks to the pier for coffee.

The Los Angeles that Bale's character inhabits isn't quite that quaint. It's full of excess - money and beautiful people and distractions. "It's not a real world. You're driving down the street and it's a Bentley and a Mercedes, a Ferrari. You go to stores and a pair of shoes is like \$1000. I was down on Rodeo Drive today and it's crazy, but it's wonderful. For me, coming here is almost like an amusement park," said Fisk, who's called a Virginia farm home for the past three decades.

Fisk didn't win the Academy Award on Sunday. He laughed that he just wanted one to match his wife's. "The books are falling down!" he said with a smile. He's talking to Malick about future projects and still has one more Malick film in post-production, but for now, he's mostly thinking about basements, having just bought a house in Austin, Texas, in between his daughters' homes. "Knight of Cups," he said was reaffirming to his life and his family. "It just makes me want to hug them more," Fisk said. "I appreciate everything that was real in my life."— AP

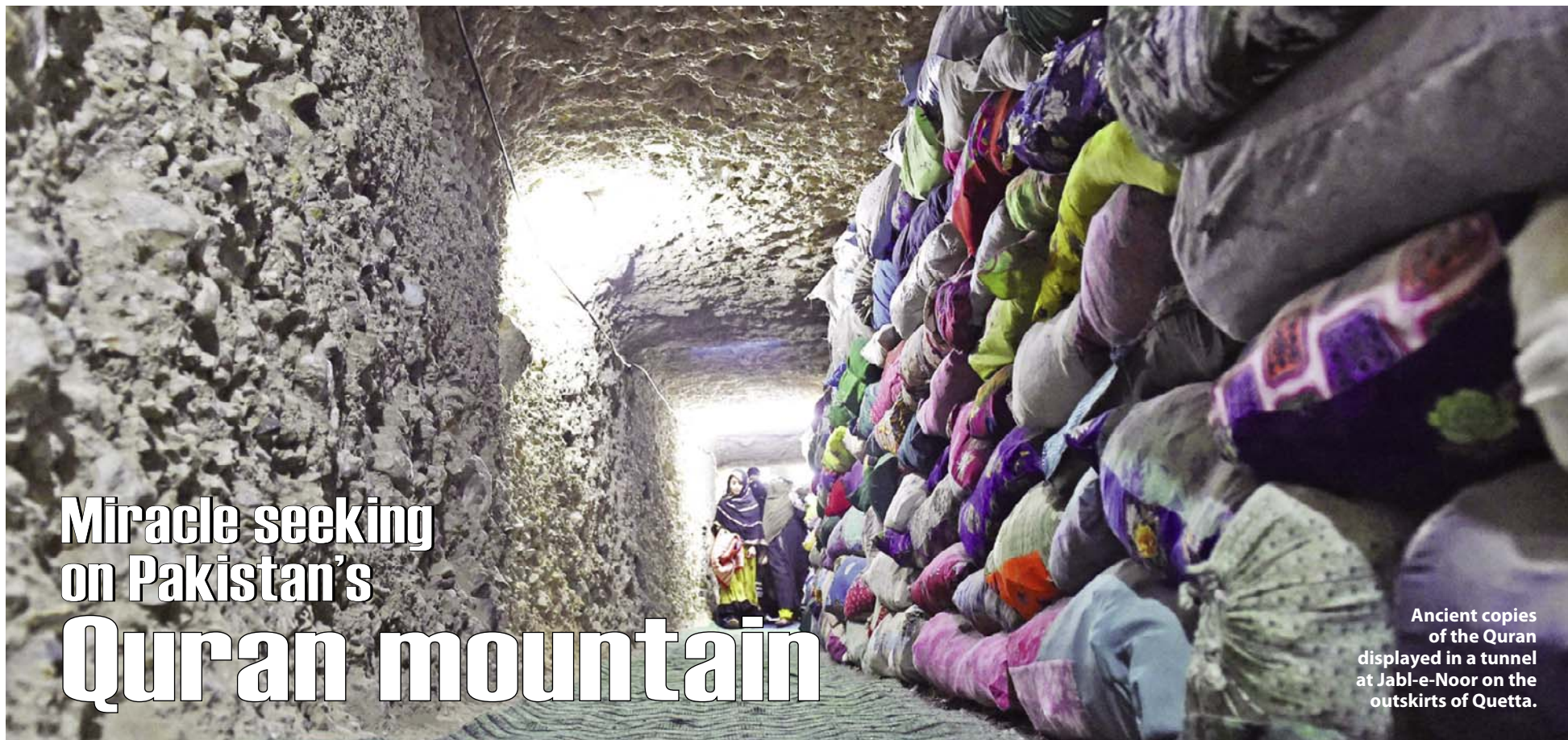


Jack Fisk poses for a portrait to promote the film, "Knight of Cups," in Santa Monica, California — AP photos



This image released by Broad Green Pictures shows Christian Bale and Natalie Portman in "Knight of Cups."





# Miracle seeking on Pakistan's Quran mountain

Ancient copies  
of the Quran  
displayed in a tunnel  
at Jabl-e-Noor on the  
outskirts of Quetta.

**D**eep inside the dry, biscuit-colored mountains surrounding Pakistan's southwestern city of Quetta lies an unexpected treasure: a honeycomb of tunnels bursting with cases of Qurans, hidden safe from desecration.

The hill known as Jabal-e-Noor, or "Mountain of Light", has been visited by hundreds of thousands of people since two brothers turned it into a shrine for Islam's holy book, some copies of which are up to 600 years old, officials who run it say.

"We have buried at least five million sacks of old Qurans," says Jabal-e-Noor administrator Haji Muzaffar Ali. But the mountain's labyrinth of tunnels is steadily nearing capacity. Hundreds of sacks

packed with copies of the holy book now lie exposed on the hillside as administrators struggle to create space for them. The problem is especially thorny in Pakistan, where any disrespect to the Quran can inflame accusations of blasphemy, punishable by death—whether by the state or at the hands of a vigilante mob. Islam's holy text is believed by Muslims to be the word of God spoken through the

Prophet Mohammad directly to mankind. For that reason the words themselves are held sacred, meaning Muslims must dispose of their old Qurans with great respect.

Religious scholars approve of two ways: by wrapping the book carefully in a cloth and burying it in the ground, as at Jabal-e-Noor, or placing it in flowing water so the ink is washed away from the pages. But the man behind the mountain, affluent 77-year-old businessman Abdul Sammad Lehri, has an idea that, if realized, would prove both risky and revolutionary: building one of Pakistan's first-ever Quran-recycling plants. The move could turn Lehri's shrine into a target.

In neighboring Afghanistan in 2011, around 1,000 angry demonstrators partially destroyed a paper mill that had been accused of recycling the Quran into toilet paper.



**Haji Abdul Sammad Lehri gesturing as he speaks to AFP during an interview in Quetta.**



**A Pakistani Muslim devotee visiting a tunnel where ancient copies of the Quran are preserved in Jabl-e-Noor on the outskirts of Quetta. — AFP**

While in Pakistan an angry mob torched a factory in Punjab province in November 2015 after one of its employees was accused of burning pages from the Quran in the boiler.

## God's word, recycled

But, perhaps surprisingly, scholars in Pakistan

say it could work. "The scholars... approve recycling of Qurans and if a recycling plant is reusing the pages of Qurans, there is no harm," says Tahir Mehmood Ashrafi, chairman of the Pakistan Ulama (religious scholars) Council. So long as the words are removed, and the solution used to remove it disposed off in accordance with Islamic teachings,

leading scholar Mufti Muneeb-ur-Rehman says, "then you can use those pages to reproduce or manufacture cardboards or anything".

Existing plants in Pakistan do not recycle Qurans because of the restrictions involved, Irfan Qadir, secretary of the Punjab Quran Board, which monitors the collection and disposal of pages of Quranic verse, tells AFP—such as only Muslims being allowed to take part in the work. "However," he adds, "we have authorized a private foundation to recycle torn out pages of the Quran on very limited scale." The foundation, he says, puts water and the pages of the Quran in a barrel together, where the words are washed away.

After, "the water goes in a well dug in the ground and they use the pulp to make a very soft cardboard." The board has proposed a recycling plant for Qurans, he says, but no action has yet been taken by the government.

At Jabal-e-Noor, named after the mountain in Saudi Arabia where the Prophet is said to have received the first verses of the Quran, the idea exists only in the minds of Lehri and his team for now.

Visitors to the mountain can leave donations but pay no fee to enter, and Lehri says they need the funds. "We want to install the plant and dig out more tunnels, but have no resources," he explains.

## Place of wishes

Lehri's passion for protecting the words of the Quran began in 1956, he tells AFP during an interview at his home in Quetta, surrounded by medicines and newspapers.

He spotted a newspaper with a large picture of the Kabba lying on the floor of a friend's car, he says. Picking it up, he vowed to make it his mission to forever safeguard holy images and words.

In 1992, he says, he and his brother Abdul Rashid were running a stone-crushing business on a property leased in the hills outside Quetta. But they were only using a small portion of the space leased. So, he says, "I decided to bury them (the pages) inside this mountain". As the flow of pilgrims to Jabal-e-Noor increased, many began leaving messages scribbled on the walls of the tunnels—graffiti prayers, most seeking love, for God to grant.

"Oh God, may I get a marriage of my choice," pleads one, while others are more specific: "God, please break Amina's engagement and rid her of Hamza". Those who run the mountain are now also praying for a miracle. "I've asked some (rupee) billionaire friends to help" fund the recycling plant, Lehri tells AFP. "They initially agreed—but now they are not responding," he says. — AFP



**A Pakistani volunteer unloading a sack containing old copies of the Quran from a van at Jabl-e-Noor after collecting them from different places on the outskirts of Quetta. — AFP**





Models present the creations of Chloe during the 2016-2017 fall/winter ready-to-wear collection fashion show yesterday in Paris.



# PARIS

FASHION WEEK



Models present the creations of Lemaire during the 2016-2017 fall/winter ready-to-wear collection fashion show yesterday in Paris.







Vionnet



Models present the creations of Vionnet during the 2016-2017 fall/winter ready-to-wear collection fashion show yesterday in Paris.



Rocha



Models present the creations of Rocha during the 2016-2017 fall/winter ready-to-wear collection fashion show on yester in Paris.  
— AFP photos







# A rice-free stir-fry for a healthy take on the **Asian classic**

Melissa D'arabian

Somewhere in the repertoire of every healthy-minded cook is a stir-fry. You chop up a bunch of veggies, cook them quickly at high heat, add meat or tofu, maybe a flavorful sauce or a sprinkle of chopped cashews or peanuts. Easy, healthy and versatile. And usually Asian in flavor profile.

But one day, I got to wondering: Why not try an unexpected flavor slant, such as Italian, southern French, Greek or Mexican? The plug-and-play skeleton of a typical stir-fry is just begging to be mixed up a bit. I love a cooking blueprint that grants me not just one dinner, but plenty of possibilities. With stir-fries being so

healthy - due to their reliance on oodles of veggies - it's a perfect model to expand beyond the tasty Asian box we have it in.

So let's start with a few stir-fry tips. First, always prep all your ingredients in advance and have everything right there at the stovetop before you begin. Nowhere is mise en place more important than with a stir-fry (also true for grilled pizza, but that's a column for another day). Second, use high heat. You want to sear the ingredients, and that requires lots of heat. If you are using firmer vegetables such as broccoli and cauliflower, and you prefer them softer than a quick roll in the wok will make them, either blanch them briefly as part of your prep, or use a quick saute-steam method (as used in the recipe here).

Third, don't crowd your wok (or frying pan), which will lower the temperature and result in a steamed stir-fry (not a good thing). If you don't have a sufficiently large wok, cook the protein in a separate frying pan (I explain how below) to get a nice sear, then add to the vegetable skillet at the last minute, along with the sauce. Finally, top the entire thing with something crunchy, such as a few chopped almonds. You won't even need rice.



## ITALIAN STIR-FRY

### ITALIAN STIR-FRY

Start to finish: 15 minutes

Servings: 4

Ingredients

1 pound boneless, skinless chicken breasts, cut into thin strips

Salt and ground black pepper

1/2 pound small broccoli florets

2 1/2-pound head cauliflower, trimmed, cored and cut into small florets (about 1 1/2 pounds florets)

1 tablespoon grapeseed or other neutral oil, divided

1/2 medium yellow onion, chopped

1/4 cup low-sodium chicken broth or stock (or water)

2 cloves garlic, minced

1/8 teaspoon red pepper flakes

1/4 cup grated Parmesan cheese

1 cup marinara sauce, warmed

2 tablespoons toasted pine nuts (optional)

### Preparation

Season the chicken strips with salt and pepper, then set aside. In a food processor, pulse the broccoli until finely chopped. Transfer to a large bowl. Working in batches, repeat this step with the cauliflower, adding the chopped bits to the broccoli. Have all remaining ingredients prepped. In a medium nonstick skillet over medium, heat 1 teaspoon of the oil. At the same time, in a large wok over high, heat the remaining oil. In the skillet, brown the chicken on all sides until golden, 6 to 8 minutes, depending on how thick the strips are.

Meanwhile, add the broccoli, cauliflower and onion to the wok. Cook, stirring constantly and spreading the vegetables up the sides of the wok, until the vegetables start to brown, about 5 minutes. Add the broth, then cover and let steam for 2 to 3 minutes. Remove the cover and let the remaining broth evaporate. Add the garlic, red pepper flakes and a pinch of salt. Continue to cook another minute, stirring. Add the cooked chicken and Parmesan cheese, stir, then remove from heat. Serve with pine nuts sprinkled on top, if desired, and the marinara either drizzled over the top or served on the side. — AP



# THIS CAKE IS A DELICIOUS LOVE CHILD OF BROWNIES AND PUDDING

By Alison Ladman

**T**his chocolate cake is more delicious and more indulgent than any dessert has a right to be. And you will thank us for that. The goal was a chocolate cake that combined the best attributes of brownies and pudding. Which is to say, we wanted it both tender and cakey, but also richly moist, even gooey. And the best environment for cooking such a cake turned out to be the slow cooker. It heats the cake slowly and gently while retaining all the moisture.

For extra decadence, we built our cake over a layer of frozen cherries, giving it a Black Forest effect. The resulting dessert has a cakey exterior, but a pudding-like centre. Served warm with a dollop of vanilla ice cream or whipped cream, you'll never believe this treat came from your slow cooker.

Feel free to mix up the fruit. If cherries don't do it for you, substitute frozen blueberries, peaches or mango chunks. And feel free to assemble and refrigerate it the night before in the slow cooker crock, then just pop it in the cooker the next day.



## CHOCOLATE CHERRY SLOW COOKER PUDDING CAKE

### Ingredients

Start to finish: 4 hours 20 minutes (20 minutes active)

Servings: 12

20 ounces frozen pitted cherries

2 cups powdered sugar

1 cup cocoa powder

2 cups all-purpose flour

1/2 teaspoon salt

1 1/4 cups (2 1/2 sticks) unsalted butter, room temperature

1 cup granulated sugar

1 cup packed brown sugar

6 eggs

8 ounces chopped bittersweet chocolate

### Preparation

Mist the interior of a 6- to 8-quart slow cooker with cooking spray. Arrange the cherries in an even layer on the bottom of the slow cooker. Sift together the powdered sugar, cocoa powder, flour and salt. In a large bowl, use an electric mixer to beat together the butter, granulated sugar and brown sugar until light and fluffy. Add the eggs, 2 at a time, beating well between additions. Stir in the flour-powdered sugar mixture in 2 additions, then stir in the bittersweet chocolate. Spoon the mixture over the cherries and smooth the top. Cover and cook on low for 3 1/2 to 4 hours, or until set up at the edges and very fudgy and pudding-like in the middle. Let sit for 15 minutes. Serve warm.





Friday Times

FRIDAY, MARCH 4, 2016

# Travel

Visiting the

# Aran Islands

in Ireland's Wild Atlantic Way

Give up Paris, the Irish poet WB Yeats told fellow writer JM Synge, and go to the Aran Islands in order to “express a life that has never found expression.” The budding playwright took the advice and traveled to the Aran Islands off Ireland's West Coast. He returned full of ideas, incorporating island ways and dialect into works such as his lyrical play, “Riders to the Sea.”





The dramatic coastal scenery near the Black Fort on Inishmore. Hiking and biking are two popular attractions of Inishmore, one of the three Aran Islands off Ireland's west coast. — AP photos



Things have changed a bit since Synge made his pilgrimage in 1898, but even today this rocky outpost in Ireland's Wild Atlantic Way remains a place to find respite from modern life and move to a simpler rhythm.

Many visitors treat the islands as a day trip, taking the ferry or flight from Galway. But to really experience the islands' charms, consider spending a few nights. Multiple B&Bs offer reasonable rates. There are three islands. Most visitors go to the largest, Inishmore. The other two, Inisheer and Inishmaan (the latter is the setting for "Riders to the Sea"), are smaller and less-visited, and can be reached by ferry for day trips from Inishmore. Here are some basics on planning your trip.

#### SET THE MOOD

Synge's "The Aran Islands," a book of essays, is fun to dip into. Another classic is the 1934 fictional documentary, "Man of Aran," which took some liberties with historical accuracy. More recently, island scenery was featured in the opening to the '90s sitcom "Father Ted," which is commemorated by the annual Tedfest, held each February.

#### GETTING THERE

Aran Island Ferries run from Rossaveal, a one-hour drive from Galway, and take about 45 minutes for the crossing. There's also ferry service from Doolin near the Cliffs of Moher on the west coast of County Clare. Aer Arann offers short flights from Connemara with shuttle service from downtown Galway to the airport and a shuttle on the other end to the village of



Waves pound the naturally formed pool known as the Serpent's Lair on the island of Inishmore in Ireland. This pool has twice been the site of the Red Bull Cliff Diving tour.

Kilronan. However you go, book in advance.

#### GETTING AROUND

You can rent a bike at the harbor in Kilronan and go your own way. Or you can take a minivan tour; vans meet the ferries. For a more leisurely approach, try a pony trap tour. If you have enough time, there's a lot to be said for simply walking and stopping to smell the wildflowers - and say hello to the occasional sheep. The islands are strewn with ruins and miles of stone walls. Be prepared for all types of weather: Bring layers and water-

proof outerwear. It may pour in the morning, then turn sunny and warm by afternoon.

#### SIGHTSEEING

The big attraction on Inishmore is Dun Aonghasa, (aka Dun Angus), a prehistoric clifftop stronghold with four sets of dry stone walls and a "chevaux-de-frise," a band of jagged upright stones meant to deter attackers (open daily 9:30 a.m.-4 p.m. in winter and until 6 p.m. in summer, admission, about \$5).

Also worth a look is Dun Duchathair, the Black Fort. Not much is left of the fort but it

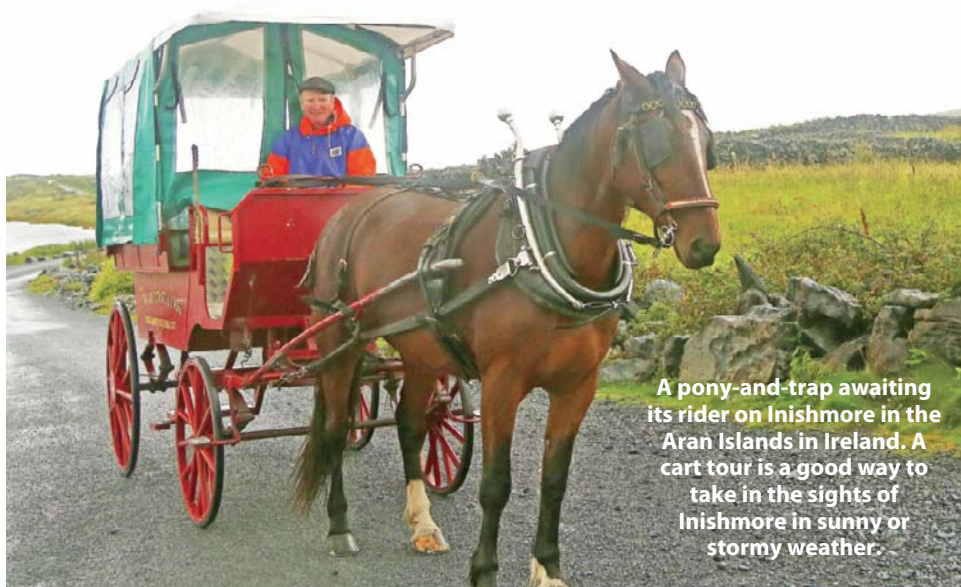
has a breathtaking coastal setting. The Serpent's Lair, of Red Bull fame, is a naturally formed pool connected to the ocean by an underwater channel. The rocks can be slippery; wear shoes with good soles. The Aran Sweater Market in Kilronan sells garments knit in the famous Aran pattern as well as yarn and patterns for the crafty.

#### FOOD

The quality of the food may come as a pleasant surprise. You'll find delicious fresh fish and hearty specialties like Irish stew and Guinness chocolate cake. Popular spots on Inishmore include Teach Nan Phaidi and Ti Joe Watty's, which has live music weekends and throughout the summer. The economically named The Bar pub serves a stew that will restore you if you've spent the day hiking. The Pier House Restaurant has an elegant dining room with a view.

#### ACCOMMODATIONS

The Aran Islands Hotel has rooms with balconies and views, starting at around \$85. The Seacrest B&B has rooms with baths for about \$60 a night including a full Irish breakfast. Seacrest co-owner Thomas Faherty gives excellent pony-and-trap tours of the island. Will your stay in the islands awake your inner genius? Hard to say. But you may find yourself feeling the way Synge did one evening as he strolled along Galway Bay and looked westward. "The sort of yearning I feel towards those lonely rocks," he wrote, "is indescribably acute."



A pony-and-trap awaiting its rider on Inishmore in the Aran Islands in Ireland. A cart tour is a good way to take in the sights of Inishmore in sunny or stormy weather.





# Movies

## The most critically acclaimed movies of **Kate Winslet's career**

One of the most commercially successful and critically acclaimed actors of her generation, Kate Winslet has been in movies that have collectively grossed more than a billion dollars - and although this weekend's *Triple 9* won't get her any closer to that hallowed achievement, it offers you the perfect occasion to take a fond look back at some of the brightest critical highlights in a filmography full of them.



### HEAVENLY CREATURES (1994)



Director Peter Jackson's impressively violent early work might have made him a natural fit for a movie about the grisly true-life tale of two teenage girls (played by Winslet and Melanie Lynskey) whose obsessive relationship leads to a shocking act of brutality - but few of his fans could have been prepared for *Heavenly Creatures*, an absorbing, assured film that blended elements of drama, science fiction, and romance while drawing beautifully compelling performances from its leads.

Ultimately nominated for a Best Original Screenplay Oscar at the Academy Awards, *Creatures* vaulted Jackson and his partner Fran Walsh to international acclaim, jump-started Winslet's film career, and wowed critics like David Rooney of *Variety*, who wrote that it "Combines original vision, a drop-dead command of the medium and a successful marriage between a dazzling, kinetic techno-show and a complex, credible portrait of the out-of-control relationship between the crime's two schoolgirl perpetrators."

### SENSE AND SENSIBILITY (1995)

Jane Austen's books have inspired countless films, but with 1995's *Sense and Sensibility*, director Ang Lee proved there was still cinematic gold yet to be spun from her stories. Working from an Oscar-winning screenplay by Emma Thompson (who also starred as the noble Elinor Dashwood), this adaptation offered a faithful representation of Austen's 1811 novel about the financial and romantic aftershocks that reverberate through a landed British family after their patriarch passes away. Bolstered by an excellent ensemble cast that also included Winslet, Hugh Grant, and Alan Rickman, *Sensibility* resonated with Jeanne Aufmuth of the *Palo Alto Weekly*, who echoed the sentiments of the vast majority of her peers when she asked, "Enduring love, heartbreak, undying passion and bitter betrayal. What more could you ask from Jane Austen, and for that matter, from a film?"





## JUDE (1996)



**T**homas Hardy's novel *Jude the Obscure* got the big-screen treatment with this 1996 adaptation courtesy of director Michael Winterbottom, who cast Winslet and Christopher Eccleston as the tormented couple at the heart of the story. The tale of 19th-century cousins who attempt to build a life for themselves in spite of many cruel obstacles imposed by class, culture, and

religion, Jude is decidedly dark stuff, with a final act that packs a gut-punch even by the standards of Victorian-era arthouse pictures. If watching it isn't exactly easy, it was well worth the effort according to most critics - including James Berardinelli of ReelViews, who wrote, "This is a film of tremendous scope and emotional depth that uncovers the soul of a novel and brings it to life on the screen."

## TITANIC (1997)



**T**ake one of the most infamous seafaring disasters in history and overlay it with a tragic love story between two beautiful people, and what do you have? *Titanic*, otherwise known as the blockbuster that sent millions of moviegoers fumbling for their Kleenex

while Kate Winslet and Leonardo DiCaprio fought for their lives aboard the titular capsizing ocean liner. It wasn't the first *Titanic* film - or even the first one named *Titanic* - but James Cameron's iceberg-bound romance certainly struck a chord with audiences, setting

sail to the tune of more than \$1.8 billion in worldwide grosses. And it's a good thing, too: at \$200 million, it set a new record for the most expensive film ever made, causing many an ulcer on the Fox executive board (and ultimately earning Cameron a hefty chunk of

money through his percentage of the profits). And oh by the way, while audiences were filing into the 194-minute *Titanic* in droves, critics were lining up to give it praise - including *Newsweek's* David Ansen, who called it "big, bold, touchingly uncynical filmmaking."



## HAMLET (1996)

**T**ry adapting *Hamlet* for the screen after all these years, and you'd better bring something special to the table - and to his credit, that's exactly what writer/director/star Kenneth Branagh did with his 1996 take on the classic Shakespeare play, leaving no dramatic stone unturned in a sprawling four-hour epic boasting the acting talents of an equally hefty cast that included Winslet, Jack

Lemmon, Robin Williams, Billy Crystal, Richard Attenborough, Judi Dench, Charlton Heston...you get the idea. Although they'd seen it adapted countless times before, critics couldn't help but be impressed by Branagh's *Hamlet*; as James Berardinelli wrote for ReelViews, "I have seen dozens of versions of this play (either on screen or on stage), and none has ever held me in such a grip of awe."





**ETERNAL SUNSHINE  
OF THE SPOTLESS  
MIND (2004)**

It would take a special kind of heart-break to make a person want to completely purge their memories of a former love - and it's very much to Winslet's credit that she managed to convincingly embody just that sort of tempestuous, bewitchingly unobtainable affection in *Eternal Sunshine of the Spotless Mind*. Starring opposite Jim Carrey, Winslet played one-half of a star-crossed couple

whose agonizing ups and downs lead them to seek out a groundbreaking therapy that will rid them of their pain...and that's when things get really weird. A mindbending, critically beloved love story as well as one of the most eye-catching films of the early aughts, *Sunshine* finds director Michel Gondry (working from a script by Charlie Kaufman) riddling the drama with stunning visual effects that,

depending on what you want out of the movie, either deepen its metaphorical layers of meaning or are simply really cool to look at. It's admittedly too strange and/or chilly to appeal to everyone, but at its heart, the movie lives up to Mariko McDonald of *Film Threat*'s assessment of it as "fresh, heartfelt and ultimately heart-breaking in its honest portrayal of a modern relationship."

## FINDING NEVERLAND (2004)



Sticklers for accuracy bristled at the liberties it took with J.M. Barrie's life story, but *Finding Neverland* was still good enough for audiences - who made it a \$100 million-plus hit - and the Academy, which bestowed Johnny Depp with a Best Actor nomination for his work as the play-

wright and Peter Pan author. *Neverland* finds Barrie nursing his wounds after the failure of his most recent play, befriending a widow (Kate Winslet) and her young boys, and taking inspiration from their unorthodox friendship - even as helps cost him his own marriage and puts him at

odds with the boys' grandmother (Julie Christie). "Plenty of narrative liberties have been taken," admitted Jason Blake of the *Sydney Morning Herald*, but argued that "It doesn't matter a jot. At heart, this isn't a biography anyway, it's an ode to the power of the imagination."



## IRIS (2001)

Acting opportunities don't come much meatier than *Iris*, a dramatization of literary critic and writer Jim Bayley's memoirs about his life with novelist Iris Murdoch - and director Richard Eyre lined up a cast more than willing to make the most of it. Both Winslet, who stars as Murdoch as a younger woman, and Judi Dench, who portrays the author in her later years, earned Academy Award nominations for their work - as did Jim Broadbent, who played the elder Bayley. "It's not only that Murdoch and Bayley had just that kind of kinship over the span of a 40-plus year marriage," marveled Kenneth Turan for the *Los Angeles Times*. "It's that the actors manage an identically close and intimate relationship both to each other and to the characters they play."

## STEVE JOBS (2015)

By the time *Steve Jobs* premiered in 2015, audiences had already seen a number of films about the Apple co-founder, both documentary (Alex Gibney's *Steve Jobs: The Man in the Machine*, released earlier in the year) and narrative (2013's *Jobs*, starring Ashton Kutcher). This *Steve Jobs* needed something special, in other words, to overcome the familiarity of its subject; fortunately, it boasted several unique ingredients, including direction from Danny Boyle, a script from Aaron Sorkin, and a cast that included Michael Fassbender as Jobs and Winslet as Apple marketing exec Joanna Hoffman. All that talent still didn't do much to move the needle with a moviegoing public that might have been pretty Jobsed out at that point, but it had the desired effect with critics who applauded *Steve Jobs* as the definitive *Steve Jobs* biopic. As Bob Mondello argued for NPR, "The film feels so electric while you're watching, it's hard to believe that after two hours, it doesn't even get to the iPod, let alone the iPhone." — (www.rottentomatoes.com)



## LITTLE CHILDREN (2006)

Winslet earned a Best Actress Oscar nomination for her work in *Little Children*, a harrowing ensemble drama that explores how outside events can nudge even the most well-worn domestic orbits wobbling off their axis. With writer/director Todd Field at the helm, this adaptation of the Tom Perrotta novel looks at a suburban community whose beautiful facade masks untold conflicts - and whose carefully calibrated order is disrupted by the arrival of a registered sex offender (Jackie Earle Haley). It's the kind of yarn that's been spun countless times over the last few decades, but many critics still took fresh pleasure from this particular telling - including J.R. Jones, whose *Chicago Reader* review argued, "the characters are drawn with such compassion their follies become our own and their desires seem as vast as the night sky."





Aries (March 21-April 19)

As your mind begins to focus on your work today, you will be able to tackle the toughest work problems. Keep track of your money this afternoon while shopping-it will be easy to see things that are tempting to have. Communication with friends is enhanced later this afternoon. You should think about getting in touch with a long-distance relative or friend soon. You have a deep desire for personal freedom and may seek friends who are a little unconventional. This helps you to break out of a boring job or routine. Music is likely to play a more important role for you than usual. You could end up with some really good seats to a concert, a play or an opera. You should take the time to share your dreams and hopes with loved ones this evening.



Taurus (April 20-May 20)

You feel a love of order and law-an appreciation for responsibilities and duty. Do not become overly confident in a work situation however. Slow down and proof the work you and your team produce. Problems are valued for the lessons they represent, rather than perceived as obstacles; because of this attitude, you will find fewer problems than most. You could be tagged by many to help regarding very personal and emotional issues. A very full day can lead to silly laughter this afternoon. You help others to lighten up and you make it a day in which all will want to participate. A feeling of being at peace on the emotional level is present. Stability and permanence satisfy a deep emotional need. Music is likely to play a fun role this evening.



Gemini (May 21-June 20)

Well-thought-out business transactions will be successful. The potential for profit is great. You are propelled forward because you planned and thought through the process. Do not be afraid to ask for guidance when and if you need it. Travel beckons, but waiting until after the twenty-fourth means a more satisfying trip-your enthusiasm is contagious. It is easy for you to encourage and influence others in positive ways. You might consider the possibilities of working with an emergency team. Matters pertaining to the family, home or property will need your undivided attention later this afternoon; you can be most helpful. Someone is willing to help you balance your budget or work out a budget-say yes to the offer.



Cancer (June 21-July 22)

There are many opportunities available now, to grow and advance in your professional world. You may be sitting in on a meeting today and decide you can take charge of this meeting in the future-it won't be as hard as you thought. You may even create a regular duty for yourself. There is a lot of passion behind what you say and think. You are able to guide and direct people into the best choices for problem-solving difficulties. You communicate with feeling and strength. Money lessons are still available to you and will be for some time. Learn to live within your capabilities and create ways to happiness without the small things that can quickly add up to clutter and future bills. Communication with a loved one is positive tonight.



Leo (July 23-August 22)

Money matters have the green light today. Someone wants to do something nice for you and you may feel like queen or king for the day. A feeling of being at peace and stable on the emotional level comes into prominence. Group issues have your attention. You have a natural sense of what the public wants. Be prepared, however, your ideas may be tossed out the window-they will bounce back later. It is just one of those days. Your humanitarian urges should be satisfied-consider some volunteer work now. An instinctive urge to get serious about taking care of yourself is emphasized. Diet, exercise and work somehow mean more now; you want to feel good about yourself and the way you do things. Purchase a kite for this windy month.



Virgo (August 23-September 22)

An increase in the payroll, allowance or some other source of money is in the future for you today. At least you can create a positive end result by opening the door to the possibilities. This may mean accepting a new job, or agreeing to your part of some condition surrounding the family. Financial gain and material wellbeing are among the brighter aspects now. There is another pleasing development today-watch for it. It may be that someone distrusting in the past will offer you the hand of trust and put you in a position of power! Your friendly eyes will comfort a stranger later this afternoon, whether you know it or not. If flowers are not blooming in your area of town yet, make a few big paper flowers to enjoy around the house.



Libra (September 23-October 22)

This is another day when nothing seems impossible. You could have many challenges, but you do not view them as difficult. If you feel disorganized, try guiding yourself with a list-it will help to ground you throughout the day. Now is a good time to deal with those emotional situations that occurred yesterday or the day before. You are able to deal with others with logic, as well as deep empathy. You are clear-minded and have good insight into your own plans and methods. This is a very good time to share the idea of your plans and goals. This is also a good time for decisions. You may decide to work on your car this afternoon, or sign-up for an auto-mechanics class some evening soon. A sunny relationship is filled with compassion.



Scorpio (October 23-November 21)

You may pretend to know less than you really know at work today. Could it be you are trying to get out of being involved in a new project more than likely you are trying to stay focused-there could be lots of distractions this morning. In a group meeting this afternoon you may finally be able to lend others your ideas about a particular ongoing problem. There are good practical job-related thoughts running around in your head today. The ability to communicate with superiors or describe what you see is in your favor-others listen. Don't be afraid to project your talent and your ability to solve problems-make your dreams come true! Unexpected company this evening causes a large amount of good, healthy laughter! Start a dream diary for tonight.



Sagittarius (November 22-December 21)

You are somewhat susceptible to misunderstandings at work today but it could be because of not getting enough rest. Asking for confirmation and requesting a memo or e-mail to outline what has been planned is a good idea. One could also grab a pen and pad of paper to take notes. This would certainly show that a busy person like you will have ways to follow through on important tasks. With your efficient manner, you set examples for others to follow. After the noon hour, you should be back with your regular high enthusiasm. You gain fresh perspectives and valuable insights in a community or group gathering this afternoon. You could become quite helpful in a gentle sort of way as you help a friend to get past some old problems.



Capricorn (December 22-January 19)

This is a time when you must be prudent in personal decisions about finances. You should expend great zest in moneymaking efforts. Mostly, though, you should avoid the desire to obtain all the wonderful things you see in the merchandise window! Working steadily day after day is stressful and while it is good you are conscientious, you would be happier as you pace yourself, lighten up, take your breaks, enjoy your successes before moving forward. Some interest in sports teams and groups may create an opportunity to join an after-work golf, tennis, swim, bicycling, etc., group. People from your work may want to join you. If you put your planning mind in gear, you might be able to plan some interaction between departments or between cities.



Aquarius (January 20- February 18)

Keep your impatience from alienating others today. Your decisions are on target but they may not always be carried out as you expected. The process of completing some particular task may call for your creative mind. There may be some business work that you can do at home today-you will be the wiser to put it aside and spend time with your loved ones. You are learning-now, enjoy the quiet moments when you can get them. Plan on more evenings at home and relax once in a while with a friend or family member. You can give without loving but you cannot love without giving. Fortunately, you have your path fairly well defined. This is a good time to communicate your goals and encourage others to do the same to gain a focus.



Pisces (February 19-March 20)

You may find yourself guiding others today. You may be introducing visiting dignitaries or new co-workers. This activity takes a lot of passion and you seem to enjoy welcoming others and showing them around. It takes a great deal of patience to give tours or be a tutor when so much of your own work needs to be completed-you can do it and you enjoy it. The visitors that you take charge of today may feel more welcomed with you than anyone else in the whole company, so . . . You may be invited to perform this service again. Financial gain and material wellbeing are important to you and you will be pleased when you receive a promise or actual in-the-hand money this afternoon. There is time for some fun tonight!

COUNTRY CODES

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



01:15 The Chocolate War  
03:00 Blown Away  
05:00 Death Rides A Horse  
06:55 Peggy Sue Got Married  
08:40 Punks  
10:15 Beauty Shop  
12:00 Mirromask  
13:40 The Garbage Pail Kids Movie  
15:15 Agent Cody Banks  
16:55 Agent Cody Banks 2:  
Destination London  
18:35 The Man In The Iron Mask  
20:45 Big Screen  
21:00 Mirromask  
22:40 A Fish Called Wanda

00:50 River Monsters  
01:45 I'm Alive  
02:40 Dr. Dee: Alaska Vet  
03:35 Tanked  
04:25 Animal Cops South Africa  
05:15 Gator Boys  
06:02 Treehouse Masters  
06:49 Dr. Dee: Alaska Vet  
07:36 Monkey Life  
08:00 Monkey Life  
08:25 Bad Dog  
09:15 Dr. Dee: Alaska Vet  
10:10 Treehouse Masters  
11:05 Tanked  
12:00 Bad Dog  
12:55 Bondi Vet  
13:50 Dr. Dee: Alaska Vet  
14:45 Gator Boys  
15:40 Treehouse Masters  
16:35 Tanked  
17:30 Animal Cops South Africa  
18:25 River Monsters  
19:20 Big Fish Man  
20:15 Tanked  
21:10 Echo And The Elephants Of  
Amboseli  
21:40 Echo And The Elephants Of  
Amboseli  
22:05 Treehouse Masters

00:10 Eastenders  
00:45 Holby City  
01:40 Stella  
02:30 Ripper Street  
03:25 Doctors  
03:55 Eastenders  
04:25 Starlings  
05:05 Death In Paradise  
06:00 Starlings  
06:45 Holby City  
07:45 Doctors  
08:15 Eastenders  
08:45 Stella  
09:40 Death In Paradise  
10:35 The Musketeers  
11:35 The Musketeers  
12:30 The Musketeers  
13:30 Holby City  
14:25 Doctors  
14:55 Eastenders  
15:25 Death In Paradise  
16:25 Death In Paradise  
17:20 Death In Paradise  
18:20 Doctors  
18:50 Doctors  
19:25 Father Brown  
20:15 War And Peace  
21:00 War And Peace  
21:50 Doctor Foster  
22:50 Stella  
23:35 Doctors

00:00 What'd You Miss?  
01:00 Charlie Rose  
02:00 First Up With Angie Lau  
03:00 First Up With Angie Lau  
04:00 Trending Business  
05:00 Trending Business  
06:00 Asia Edge  
07:00 Bloomberg West  
08:00 Charlie Rose  
09:00 Countdown  
10:00 Countdown

10:30 On The Move  
11:00 On The Move  
12:00 The Pulse  
13:00 Bloomberg Surveillance  
14:00 Bloomberg Surveillance  
15:00 Bloomberg Go  
16:00 Bloomberg Go  
17:00 Bloomberg Go  
18:00 Bloomberg Markets  
19:00 Bloomberg Markets: European  
Close  
20:00 Bloomberg Markets  
21:00 Bloomberg Markets  
22:00 Bloomberg Markets  
22:30 Brilliant Ideas  
23:00 Bloomberg Markets

00:00 News Update  
00:30 Dialogue  
01:00 News Update  
01:15 China 24  
02:00 The Heat  
02:30 News Update  
03:00 Global Business  
04:00 News Update  
05:00 News Update  
06:30 Dialogue  
07:00 News Hour  
08:00 Global Business  
09:00 News Update  
10:30 Sports Scene  
11:00 Global Business  
12:00 News Update  
12:30 Culture Express  
13:00 Africa Live  
14:00 News Update  
14:30 Dialogue  
15:00 News Update  
15:15 China 24  
16:00 News Update

01:30 Climate Business  
02:00 U.S. Squawk Alley  
03:00 Asia Squawk Box  
05:00 Asia Street Signs  
07:00 Fast Money: Half Time Report  
08:00 Capital Connection  
09:00 Squawk Box Europe  
12:00 Europe Street Signs  
13:00 Worldwide Exchange  
14:00 U.S. Squawk Box  
17:00 Squawk On The Street  
19:00 U.S. Squawk Alley  
20:00 Fast Money: Half Time Report  
21:00 U.S. Power Lunch  
23:00 U.S. Closing Bell

00:40 Who On Earth Did I Marry?  
01:05 Who On Earth Did I Marry?  
01:30 The Haunted  
02:20 Ghost Lab  
03:10 Deadly Affairs  
04:00 True CSI  
04:45 Who On Earth Did I Marry?  
05:10 Who On Earth Did I Marry?  
05:30 The Haunted  
06:20 Fatal Encounters  
07:10 True Crime With Aphrodite  
Jones  
08:00 Dr G: Medical Examiner  
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  
California Investigator

01:00 Tech Transformers: Kevin  
Spacey

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?  
22:35 Who On Earth Did I Marry?  
23:00 Serial Killers  
23:50 Deadly Devotion

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01:05 Who On Earth Did I Marry?  
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02:20 Ghost Lab  
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23:50 Deadly Devotion

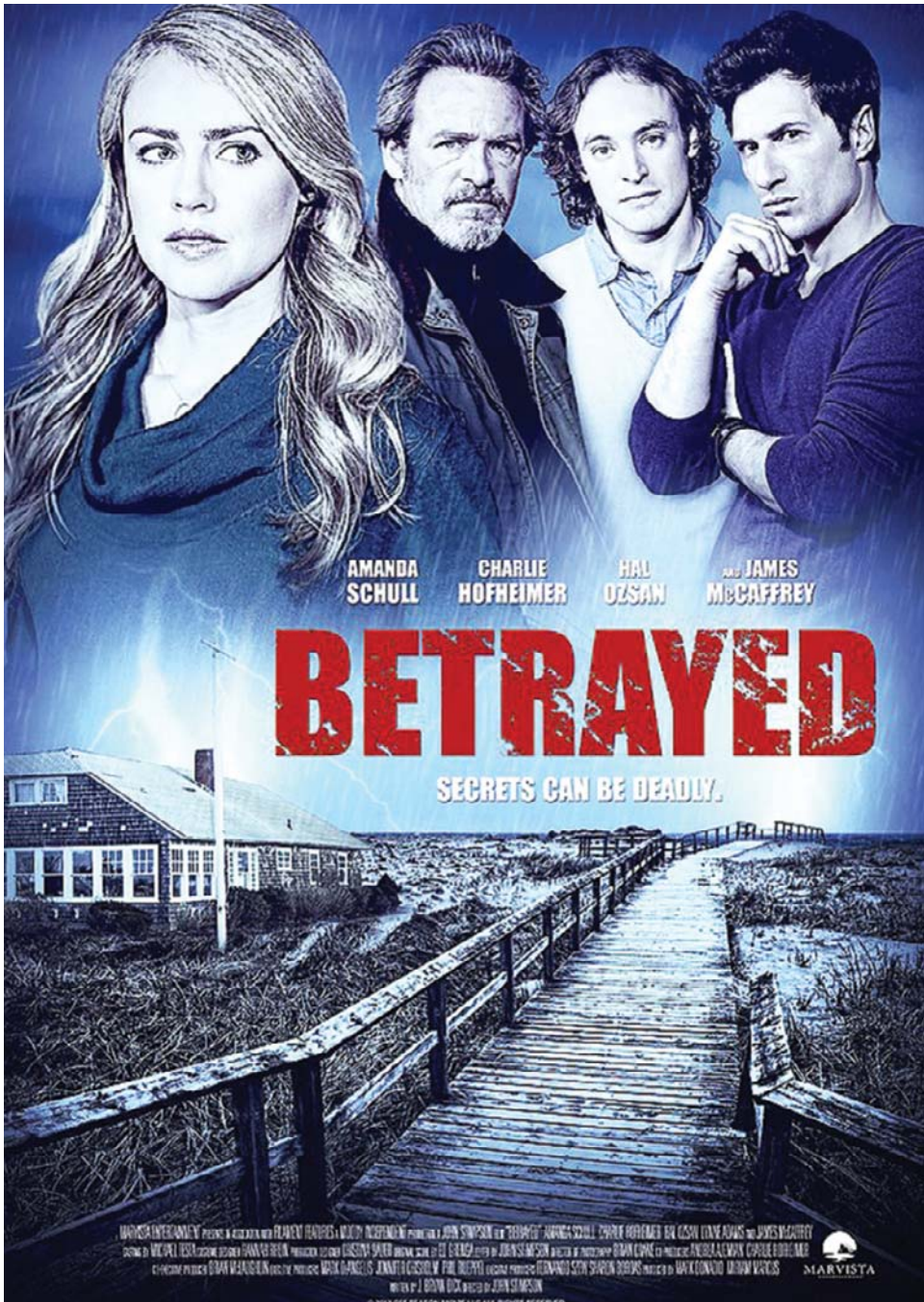
00:35 Weird Or What?  
01:20 How It's Made  
01:44 How It's Made  
02:08 Mega Builders  
02:55 How The Universe Works  
03:42 Sci-Fi Saved My Life  
04:29 Weird Or What?  
05:16 Mega Builders  
06:03 How The Universe Works  
06:50 Mighty Ships  
07:37 How Do They Do It?  
08:00 How Do They Do It?  
08:23 Weird Or What?  
09:08 Sci-Fi Saved My Life  
09:53 Mighty Ships  
10:38 How It's Made  
11:00 How It's Made  
11:23 Invent It Rich  
12:08 How The Universe Works  
12:53 Mighty Ships  
13:38 Weird Or What?  
14:23 How It's Made  
14:46 How It's Made  
15:10 Sci-Fi Saved My Life  
15:57 Invent It Rich  
16:44 How The Universe Works  
17:31 Mighty Ships  
18:18 Sci-Fi Saved My Life  
19:05 Weird Or What?  
19:50 Alien Mysteries  
20:40 How The Universe Works  
21:25 How It's Made  
21:50 How It's Made  
22:15 Sci-Fi Saved My Life  
23:00 Alien Mysteries  
23:45 How The Universe Works

00:40 Modern Sniper  
01:30 Zero Hour  
02:20 Origins  
02:40 Chasing Classic Cars  
03:05 Anthony Bourdain: No  
Reservations

03:50 100 Miles From Nowhere  
04:35 American Guns  
05:20 Extreme Engineering  
06:05 Codes And Conspiracies  
06:50 Modern Sniper  
07:35 Origins  
08:00 Bizarre Foods  
08:50 Tattoo Hunter  
09:40 Extreme Engineering  
10:30 Gunslingers  
11:20 Origins  
11:45 Chasing Classic Cars  
12:10 Bizarre Foods  
13:00 Tattoo Hunter  
13:50 Extreme Engineering  
14:40 Gunslingers  
15:30 Origins  
15:55 Chasing Classic Cars  
16:20 Bizarre Foods  
17:10 Tattoo Hunter  
18:00 Extreme Engineering  
18:50 Gunslingers  
19:40 Origins  
20:05 Chasing Classic Cars  
20:30 Megaquake: Hour That Shook  
Japan  
21:20 Anthony Bourdain: No  
Reservations

00:00 Violetta  
00:45 The Hive  
00:50 Sabrina Secrets Of A Teenage  
Witch  
01:15 Sabrina Secrets Of A Teenage  
Witch  
01:40 Hank Zipzer  
02:05 Binny And The Ghost  
02:30 Violetta  
03:15 The Hive  
03:20 Sabrina Secrets Of A Teenage  
Witch  
03:45 Sabrina Secrets Of A Teenage  
Witch  
04:10 Hank Zipzer  
04:35 Binny And The Ghost  
05:00 Violetta  
05:45 The Hive  
05:50 Mouk  
06:00 Lolirock  
06:25 Sofia The First  
06:50 Gravity Falls  
07:15 Miraculous Tales Of Ladybug  
& Cat Noir  
07:40 Jessie  
08:05 Shake It Up  
08:30 Shake It Up  
08:55 That's So Raven  
09:20 That's So Raven  
09:45 Austin & Ally  
10:10 Austin & Ally  
10:35 A.N.T. Farm  
11:00 A.N.T. Farm  
11:25 Jessie  
11:50 Jessie  
12:15 Cars Toons  
12:20 Miraculous Tales Of Ladybug  
& Cat Noir  
12:45 Fish Hooks  
13:00 Fish Hooks  
13:10 Austin & Ally  
13:35 Austin & Ally  
14:00 Liv And Maddie  
14:25 Descendants Wicked World  
14:30 Liv And Maddie  
14:55 Dog With A Blog  
15:20 Dog With A Blog  
15:45 Miraculous Tales Of Ladybug  
& Cat Noir  
16:10 Violetta  
17:00 I Love Violetta  
17:10 Lemonade Mouth  
18:40 Descendants Wicked World  
18:43 Best Friends Whenever  
19:05 Miraculous Tales Of Ladybug  
& Cat Noir  
19:30 Violetta  
20:20 I Love Violetta  
20:30 Oliver & Company  
21:50 Violetta Recipes  
22:00 Binny And The Ghost  
22:25 Sabrina Secrets Of A Teenage  
Witch  
22:50 Sabrina Secrets Of A Teenage  
Witch  
23:10 Hank Zipzer  
23:35 Binny And The Ghost

00:05 Henry Hugglemonster  
00:20 Calimero  
00:35 Zou  
00:50 Loopdidoo



BETRAYED ON OSN MOVIES HD ACTION



- 01:05 Art Attack

01:30 Henry Hugglemonster

01:45 Calimero

02:00 Zou

02:15 Loopdidoo

02:30 Art Attack

02:55 Henry Hugglemonster

03:05 Calimero

03:20 Zou

03:30 Loopdidoo

03:45 Art Attack

04:10 Henry Hugglemonster

04:20 Calimero

04:35 Zou

04:45 Loopdidoo

05:00 Art Attack

05:25 Henry Hugglemonster

05:35 Calimero

05:50 Zou

06:00 Loopdidoo

06:15 Art Attack

06:35 Henry Hugglemonster

06:50 Calimero

07:00 Zou

07:20 Loopdidoo

07:35 Art Attack

08:00 Calimero

08:10 Zou

08:25 Loopdidoo

08:40 Miles From Tomorrow

09:05 Sofia The First

09:30 Goldie & Bear

09:45 Jake And The Never Land Pirates

10:10 Mickey Mouse Clubhouse

10:35 Doc McStuffins

11:00 Sofia The First

11:30 Goldie & Bear

12:00 Miles From Tomorrow

12:25 Special Agent Oso

12:40 The Hive

12:50 Handy Manny

13:15 Jungle Junction

13:30 Mickey Mouse Clubhouse

14:00 Sofia The First

14:25 Goldie & Bear

14:50 Doc McStuffins

15:15 Zou

15:30 Mickey Mouse Clubhouse

15:55 Loopdidoo

16:10 Miles From Tomorrow

16:35 Jake And The Never Land Pirates

17:00 Sofia The First

17:25 Jungle Cubs

17:50 Aladdin

18:15 Gummi Bears

18:40 Goldie & Bear

19:05 Miles From Tomorrow

19:30 Sofia The First

19:55 Doc McStuffins

20:10 Jake And The Never Land Pirates

20:35 Miles From Tomorrow

21:00 Goldie & Bear

21:30 Sofia The First

22:00 Jungle Cubs

22:25 Aladdin

22:50 Gummi Bears

23:20 Lilo And Stitch

23:50 Zou
- 
- 00:00 Programmes Start At 7:00am

KSA

07:00 Star vs The Forces Of Evil

07:25 K. C. Undercover

07:50 Supa Strikas

08:15 Annedroids

08:40 Lab Rats

09:10 Kirby Buckets

09:35 Wander Over Yonder

10:00 Rocket Monkeys

10:25 Ultimate Spider-Man

10:50 Boyster

11:20 Boyster

11:45 Pair Of Kings

12:10 Pair Of Kings

12:35 Lab Rats

13:00 Lab Rats

13:30 Phineas And Ferb

13:55 Phineas And Ferb

14:20 Kickin' It

14:45 Kickin' It

15:10 Disney Mickey Mouse

15:15 Rocket Monkeys

15:40 Wander Over Yonder

16:05 Star vs The Forces Of Evil

16:30 Kirby Buckets

16:55 Gamers Guide To Pretty Much Everything

17:25 K. C. Undercover

17:50 Supa Strikas

18:15 Lab Rats

18:40 Mighty Med

19:10 Annedroids

19:35 Star vs The Forces Of Evil

20:00 Kirby Buckets

20:25 Gamers Guide To Pretty Much



A PROMISE ON OSN MOVIES HD

- Everything

20:55 K. C. Undercover

21:20 Pickle And Peanut

21:45 Lab Rats

22:10 Mighty Med

22:40 Super Matrak

23:05 Super Matrak

23:30 Boyster
- 
- 00:00 Fashion Police

00:55 The Grace Helbig Show

01:25 Keeping Up With The Kardashians

02:20 E! News

03:15 Giuliana & Bill

04:10 The E! True Hollywood Story

05:05 The E! True Hollywood Story

06:00 Keeping Up With The Kardashians

06:55 Keeping Up With The Kardashians

07:50 Style Star

08:20 E! News

09:15 Giuliana & Bill

10:15 Giuliana & Bill

11:10 The Grace Helbig Show

11:35 The Grace Helbig Show

12:05 E! News

13:05 Live From The Red Carpet: The 2016 Academy...

15:00 Fashion Police

16:00 Dash Dolls

17:00 Dash Dolls

18:00 E! News

19:00 Christina Milian Turned Up

20:00 WAGs

21:00 WAGs

22:00 E! News

23:00 Botched
- 
- 00:00 Diners, Drive-Ins And Dives

00:30 Diners, Drive-Ins And Dives

01:00 Rev Run's Sunday Suppers

01:30 Rev Run's Sunday Suppers

02:00 Tia Mowry At Home

02:30 Tia Mowry At Home

03:00 Man Fire Food

03:30 Man Fire Food

04:00 Diners, Drive-Ins And Dives

04:30 Diners, Drive-Ins And Dives

05:00 Iron Chef America

06:00 Chopped

07:00 Man Fire Food

07:30 Man Fire Food

08:00 Chopped

09:00 Barefoot Contessa

09:30 Barefoot Contessa

10:00 The Kitchen

11:00 The Pioneer Woman

11:30 The Pioneer Woman

- 12:00 Chopped

13:00 Guy's Big Bite

13:30 Guy's Big Bite

14:00 Diners, Drive-Ins And Dives

14:30 Diners, Drive-Ins And Dives

15:00 Man Fire Food

15:30 Man Fire Food

16:00 Chopped

17:00 The Kitchen

18:00 The Pioneer Woman

18:30 The Pioneer Woman

19:00 Chopped

20:00 Iron Chef America

21:00 Follow Donal... To Europe

21:30 Follow Donal... To Europe

22:00 Australian Food Adventures With Matt Moran

23:00 Man Finds Food

23:30 Man Finds Food
- 
- 00:20 Pawn Stars

00:45 Pawn Stars Australia

01:10 Aussie Pickers

02:00 Alaska Off-Road Warriors

02:50 American Pickers

03:40 Shipping Wars

04:05 Shipping Wars

04:30 Pawn Stars

05:00 Hoard Hunters

06:00 The Curse Of Oak Island

06:50 Search For The Lost Giants

07:40 Hunting Hitler

08:30 American Restoration

08:55 Mountain Men

09:45 Ax Men

10:35 Swamp People

11:25 Leepu And Pitbull

12:15 Counting Cars

12:40 Counting Cars

13:05 Big Rig Bounty Hunters

13:30 Big Rig Bounty Hunters

13:55 Hoard Hunters

14:45 Search For The Lost Giants

15:35 Hunting Hitler

16:25 Counting Cars

16:50 Alone

17:40 Down East Dickering

18:30 Duck Dynasty

18:55 Duck Dynasty

19:20 Ax Men

20:10 Swamp People

21:00 Storage Wars: New York

21:25 Storage Wars: New York

21:50 Pawn Stars

22:15 Pawn Stars Australia

22:40 Hunting Hitler

23:30 The Curse Of Oak Island
- 
- 00:10 The Chase

01:05 Emmerdale

- 01:30 More Tales From Northumberland...

02:00 Coronation Street

02:30 Big Star's Little Star

03:25 The Chase: Celebrity Specials

04:20 Seven Days With,Ä¶

05:15 Come Dine With Me Couples

06:10 Who's Doing The Dishes?

07:05 More Tales From Northumberland...

07:30 Grantchester

08:25 Seven Days With,Ä¶

09:20 Big Star's Little Star

10:15 The Chase

11:10 More Tales From Northumberland...

11:35 Come Dine With Me Couples

12:30 Who's Doing The Dishes?

13:25 Emmerdale

13:50 Emmerdale

14:20 Coronation Street

14:45 Big Star's Little Star

15:35 The Chase: Celebrity Specials

16:30 The Doctor Blake Mysteries

17:25 Shetland

18:20 Emmerdale

18:45 Emmerdale

19:10 Coronation Street

19:35 The Chase: Celebrity Specials

20:30 The Doctor Blake Mysteries

21:25 Shetland

22:20 Coronation Street

22:50 Emmerdale

23:15 Emmerdale

23:40 Seven Days With,Ä¶
- 
- 00:10 Eat Street

00:35 Eat Street

01:00 Confucius Was A Foodie

01:50 The Best Job In The World

02:15 Street Food Around The World

02:40 Eat Street

03:05 Cruise Ship Diaries

03:30 Taste Of The Tropic: Taiwan

04:20 Tripping Out With Alie & Georgia

04:45 Tripping Out With Alie & Georgia

05:10 Eat Street

05:35 My Sri Lanka With Peter Kuruvita

06:00 City Chase Marrakech

06:50 Confucius Was A Foodie

07:40 The Best Job In The World

08:05 Street Food Around The World

08:30 Eat Street

08:55 Cruise Ship Diaries

09:20 Taste Of The Tropic: Taiwan

10:10 Tripping Out With Alie & Georgia

10:35 Tripping Out With Alie & Georgia

11:00 Eat Street

11:25 My Sri Lanka With Peter

- Kuruvita

11:50 City Chase Marrakech

12:40 Confucius Was A Foodie

13:35 The Best Job In The World

14:00 Eat Street

14:30 Eat Street

14:55 Cruise Ship Diaries

15:25 Tales From The Bush Larder

15:50 Tales From The Bush Larder

16:20 Lyndey Milan - Taste Of Australia

16:45 Lyndey Milan - Taste Of Australia

17:15 Eat Street

17:40 Eat Street

18:10 Tripping Out With Alie & Georgia

18:35 Tripping Out With Alie & Georgia

19:05 Cruise Ship Diaries

19:30 Tales From The Bush Larder

20:00 Tales From The Bush Larder

20:25 Lyndey Milan - Taste Of Australia

20:50 Lyndey Milan - Taste Of Australia

21:15 Eat Street

21:40 Eat Street

22:05 Tripping Out With Alie & Georgia

22:30 Tripping Out With Alie & Georgia

22:55 Confucius Was A Foodie

23:45 The Best Job In The World
- 
- 00:30 Suburgatory

01:00 The Nightly Show With Larry Wilmore

01:30 Web Therapy

02:00 Curb Your Enthusiasm

02:30 It's Always Sunny In Philadelphia

03:00 Modern Family

03:30 Playing House

04:00 Weird Loners

04:30 The Tonight Show Starring Jimmy Fallon

05:30 Modern Family

06:00 Mad Love

06:30 Community

07:00 Late Night With Seth Meyers

08:00 Weird Loners

08:30 Breaking In

09:00 New Girl

09:30 Kevin From Work

10:00 Hot In Cleveland

10:30 Community

11:00 The Tonight Show Starring Jimmy Fallon

12:00 Mad Love

12:30 Weird Loners

13:00 Breaking In

13:30 Community

14:00 Playing House

14:30 Kevin From Work

- 15:00 Hot In Cleveland

15:30 Suburgatory

16:00 The Nightly Show With Larry Wilmore

16:30 Mad Love

17:00 Late Night With Seth Meyers

18:00 Fresh Off The Boat

18:30 Black-ish

19:00 Parks And Recreation

19:30 The Simpsons

20:00 The Tonight Show Starring Jimmy Fallon

21:00 Suburgatory

21:30 The Nightly Show With Larry Wilmore

22:00 Louie

22:30 Curb Your Enthusiasm

23:00 It's Always Sunny In Philadelphia

23:30 Late Night With Seth Meyers
- 
- 00:00 Wolves

01:45 Dragon Blade

04:00 Jurassic Attack

06:00 The Outsider

07:45 The Scorpion King 4: Quest For Power

09:45 Forget And Forgive

11:30 Betrayed

13:15 X-Men: Days Of Future Past

15:30 The Scorpion King 4: Quest For Power

17:30 The Hulk

20:00 Oblivion

22:15 300: Rise Of An Empire
- 
- 00:00 About Last Night

02:00 Pitch Perfect

04:00 Garfield's Fun Fest

05:30 The Other Sister

08:00 Happy Gilmore

10:00 The Other Sister

12:15 Pitch Perfect

14:15 Bottle Rocket

16:00 Happy Gilmore

18:00 500 Days Of Summer

20:00 Without A Paddle

22:00 The Five Year Engagement
- 
- 01:15 InSight

03:00 A Walk Among The Tombstones

05:00 Breathe In

07:00 The Dependables

09:00 Testament Of Youth

11:15 Breathe In

13:00 The Invisible Woman

15:00 Middle Of Nowhere

16:45 Testament Of Youth

19:00 Nightcrawler

21:00 Inside Llewyn Davis

23:00 Jamesy Boy
- 
- 01:30 The Apostle

03:45 White Bird In A Blizzard

05:30 Dr. Strangelove

07:15 Secret Window

09:00 Little Man Tate

11:00 Dr. Strangelove

13:00 Tea With Mussolini

15:00 Julie And Julia

17:15 Little Man Tate

19:00 Short Term 12

21:00 Begin Again

23:00 Jayne Mansfield's Car
- 
- 01:00 The Longest Ride

03:15 Left Behind

05:15 A Turtle's Tale 2: Sammy's Escape From Paradise

07:00 Dragonheart 3: The Sorcerer's Curse

09:00 Accidental Love

11:00 Jack And The Cuckoo Clock Heart

13:00 A Promise

15:00 Boychoir

17:00 Paul Blart: Mall Cop 2

19:00 Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles

21:00 Avengers: Age Of Ultron

23:30 The Purge: Anarchy



Word Search Puzzles

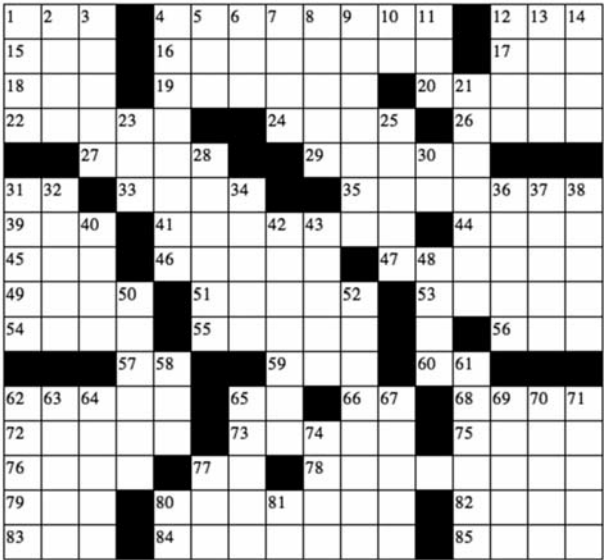
Livewire Puzzles

Find these words. They are some of the puzzles made by Livewire Puzzles since 1979. The remaining letters spell a Dutch Proverb.

ESQUARINGOFFTONKORTSAA  
VNHTSABNNNDHMFWDKINTUPS  
AUUUWORRAIEAOETNLOTFIA  
WTMTTRPMAILARVOQFERTLIR  
KHOGANEEDCVHEIUIDECCB  
COTNETEDTEGSRRAPANAIEA  
OUHIDIALLHGEELHTLGEID  
HSBKEUEPCNICTEHP EOIHDA  
SEASPCILILRNPHATLA AZTC  
STLLIRWLGLAALGRELANRREA  
ORLETISACNATTFEGDEITRR  
TOSINCBKSYANSZICAPWHWB  
GUVGETEEMUETTYUSWPHEOA  
RBEHCEDRRROENFRIMHORO  
ALRTEOBUIRRUFERC EYTADI  
NECOGHUEVPHSSEPANABCEN  
DCSFDSGNOISIVELBUODKNE  
PLKHEZEPARTSETTHGILFOT  
RERAWUTOUCHWOODRSHELPR  
IFONGNIRDNALLABOAFBREE  
XACDCHINESERINGSIPNSNE

- ABRACADABRA  
ARROW  
ASTROKNOT  
BALL AND RING  
BEDBUG  
BRIDGE THE GAP  
CENTIPEDE  
CHINESE RINGS  
CORKSCREW  
CRYSTAL CLEAR  
DEAD END  
DOUBLE VISION
- EQUALIZER  
EUREKA  
FIRECRACKER  
FLIGHT TEST  
GRAND PRIX  
HANDCUFFS  
HAVE A HEART  
KING TUT  
MELEDA  
MOTHBALLS  
MOUSETRAP  
NUT HOUSE
- PENTANGLE  
PINETREE  
PRETZEL LOGIC  
SHOCKWAVE  
SHORT CIRCUIT  
SILENT PARTNER  
SLEIGHT OF HAND  
SLINGSHOT  
SOMETHING FISHY  
SPUTNIK  
SQUARING OFF
- THE RACK  
TOUCH WOOD  
TRAPEZE  
TRIPLE CROWN  
TRIPLE PLAY  
TRIPWIRE  
TROUBLE CLEF  
VIRUS  
WEATHERVAIN  
WEDGE  
WOODEN OPEN

CROSSWORD 1185



ACROSS

1. A defensive missile designed to shoot down incoming intercontinental ballistic missiles.  
4. A large region between the Black and Caspian seas.  
12. Someone who engages in arbitrage (who purchases securities in one market for immediate resale in another in the hope of profiting from the price differential).  
15. The United Nations agency concerned with the interests of labor.  
16. The condition of having no arms.  
17. A unit of length equal to one thousandth of an inch.  
18. A unit of absorbed ionizing radiation equal to 100 ergs per gram of irradiated material.  
19. A bicycle with two sets of pedals and two seats.  
20. An Indian side dish of yogurt and chopped cucumbers and spices.  
22. A case or sheath especially a pollen sac or moss capsule.  
24. (Greek mythology) God of love.  
26. The feeling of distress and disbelief that you have when something bad happens accidentally.  
27. Made from residue of grapes or apples after pressing.  
29. Italian lawn bowling (played on a long narrow dirt court).  
31. A state in the eastern United States.  
33. The basic unit of money in Thailand.  
35. Emotions experienced when not in a state of well-being.  
39. Any of various coarse shrubby plants of the genus Iva with small greenish flowers.  
41. Someone who tricks or coerces men into service as sailors or soldiers.  
44. Prevent from being included or considered or accepted.  
45. A coenzyme derived from the B vitamin nicotinic acid.  
46. The inner and thicker of the two bones of the human leg between the knee and ankle.  
47. Everything you own.  
49. A wad of something chewable as tobacco.  
51. The first light of day.  
53. A republic in the West Indies on the western part of the island of Hispaniola.  
54. An officer who acts as military assistant to a more senior officer.  
55. A note that alternates rapidly with another note a semitone above it.  
56. A local computer network for communication between computers.  
57. Being nine more than ninety.  
59. An independent agency of the United States government responsible for collecting and coordinating intelligence and counterintelligence activ-

- ities abroad in the national interest.  
60. A very poisonous metallic element that has three allotropic forms.  
62. Small terrestrial lizard of warm regions of the Old World.  
66. A radioactive transuranic metallic element.  
68. A block of solid substance (such as soap or wax).  
72. A member of the North American Indian people of Oregon.  
73. Make less active or intense.  
75. Advanced in years.  
76. (botany) Of or relating to the axil.  
78. A tall piece of furniture that provides storage space for clothes.  
79. A decree that prohibits something.  
82. The biblical name for ancient Syria.  
83. Title for a civil or military leader (especially in Turkey).  
84. Mottled curly-grained wood of Pterocarpus indicus.  
85. A small cake leavened with yeast.

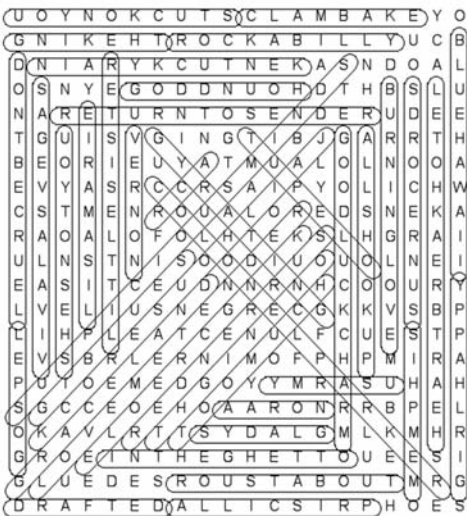
DOWN

1. Channel into a new direction.  
2. Pompous or pretentious talk or writing.  
3. (from a combination of MODulate and DEModulate) Electronic equipment consisting of a device used to connect computers by a telephone line.  
4. Clouding of the natural lens of the eye.  
5. A loose sleeveless outer garment made from aba cloth.  
6. A large vase that usually has a pedestal or feet.  
7. (of a young animal) Abandoned by its mother and raised by hand.  
8. Sour or bitter in taste.  
9. Talk idly or casually, in a friendly way.  
10. Being one more than one.  
11. A river in north central Switzerland that runs northeast into the Rhine.  
12. Type genus of the Amiidae.  
13. Swiss hotelier who created a chain of elegant hotels (1850-1918).  
14. (Scottish) Bluish-black or gray-blue.  
21. African antelopes.  
23. A compartment in front of a motor vehicle where driver sits.  
25. Sudden mass fear and anxiety over anticipated events.  
28. A prophet of the first century.  
30. Being one hundred more than three hundred.  
32. A genus of Indridae.  
34. A town twenty miles east of Rome (Tibur is the ancient name).  
36. (computer science) A system of world-wide electronic communication in which a computer user can compose a message at one terminal that is generated at the recipient's terminal when he logs in.  
37. Type genus of the Sittidae.  
38. A mug intended for serving beer.  
40. (Babylonian) God of storms and wind.  
42. (British) A minicar used as a taxicab.  
43. United States physicist (born in Austria) who proposed the exclusion principle (thus providing a theoretical basis for the periodic table) (1900-1958).  
48. One of the two main branches of orthodox Islam.  
50. A German city near Leipzig.  
52. Any of numerous plants of the genus Plantago.  
58. Airtight sealed metal container for food or drink or paint etc..  
61. Scarabaeid beetle considered divine by ancient Egyptians.  
63. A Russian prison camp for political prisoners.  
64. (Hindu) A manner of sitting (as in the practice of Yoga).  
65. Cubes of meat marinated and cooked on a skewer usually with vegetables.  
67. Type genus of the Percidae.  
69. 100 agorot equal 1 shekel.  
70. Cubes of meat marinated and cooked on a skewer usually with vegetables.  
71. Swelling from excessive accumulation of serous fluid in tissue.  
74. Distant in either space or time.  
77. A human limb.  
80. An informal term for a father.  
81. Conforming to truth.

Yesterday's Solution

Elvis

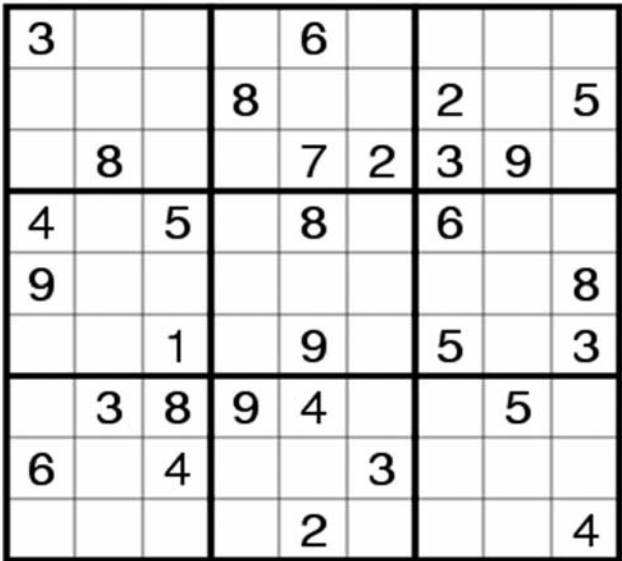
This is the solution to the puzzle located [here](#).



- AARON  
ALL SHOOK UP  
BLUE HAWAII  
BURNING LOVE  
CLAMBAKE  
COLONEL PARKER  
DON'T BE CRUEL  
DRAFTED  
G.I. BLUES  
GIRL HAPPY  
GLADYS
- GOOD LUCK CHARM  
GOSPEL  
GRACELAND  
GYRATING  
HEARTBREAK HOTEL  
HOUND DOG  
IN THE GHETTO  
JAILHOUSE ROCK  
KENTUCKY RAIN  
KING CREOLE  
LISA MARIE
- LITTLE SISTER  
LOVE ME TENDER  
MEMPHIS  
ONE NIGHT  
PRISCILLA  
RCA  
RETURN TO SENDER  
ROCKABILLY  
ROUSTABOUT  
SHE'S NOT YOU
- STUCK ON YOU  
SUN RECORDS  
SURRENDER  
SUSPICIOUS MINDS  
THE KING  
TOO MUCH  
TUPELO  
U.S. ARMY  
VERNON  
VIVA LAS VEGAS

The hidden sentence is: YOU CAN DO ANYTHING BUT LAY OFF OF MY BLUE SUEDE SHOES

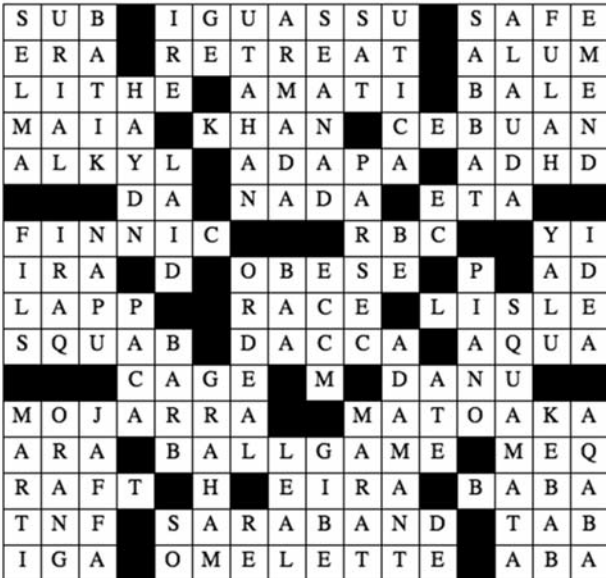
Daily SuDoku



Yesterday's Solution



Yesterday's Solution





# YEARLONG SPACEMEN EMBRACE FRESH AIR BACK ON EARTH

**CAPE CANAVERAL:** Ah, there's nothing like a blast of fresh, frigid air to welcome you back to the planet after nearly a year cooped up in space. That's the word from astronaut Scott Kelly, NASA's space-endurance champ who returned to bitterly cold Kazakhstan on Wednesday, along with his roommate for the past year, Russian cosmonaut Mikhail Kornienko.

In a NASA interview before heading home to Houston, where he arrived early Thursday, Kelly said it was "amazing" to feel the cold air when the hatch of his Soyuz capsule popped open after touchdown. "I don't mean to say it's not fresh on the space station," he said, "but there's nothing like new cold air coming into the capsule." Both Kelly, 52, and Kornienko, 55, yearned for nature throughout their 340-day mission at the International Space Station, a dry run by NASA for eventual trips to Mars. "Just like Scott, I wanted to see Earth and I wanted to smell that fresh air. This is an unforgettable feeling," Kornienko said.

It was the longest an American ever lived in space, although nothing new for the Russians. The world record is 438 days, set back in the mid-1990s at the former Mir space station. Even before that, a pair of Soviet cosmonauts had racked up a full one-year spaceflight.

"Congratulations on your record," former cosmonaut and Kazak space agency chief Taldat Musabayev said at a welcoming ceremony. He couldn't resist: "Of course, it was already done 28 years ago." President Barack Obama joined the chorus of praise pouring in. "Welcome back to Earth, @StationCDRKelly! Your year in space is vital to the future of American space travel. Hope gravity isn't a drag!" Obama said via Twitter.

The White House said Obama spoke with Kelly on Wednesday, thanking him for his service and for sharing his journey through social media. Kelly posted hundreds of photos of Earth. After landing, the latest one-year space subjects quickly parted company, Kelly flying back to Houston and Kornienko to Star City, Russia, near Moscow. While en route, Kelly tweeted a picture of his first salad back on Earth, noting it will be important to grow fresh food during Mars expeditions, like his space station lettuce crop.

## Bittersweet farewell

Kelly acknowledged it was bittersweet leaving the space station - his home since last March, currently staffed by three men until the arrival of three more in two weeks. "I'd been there a long time, so I looked forward to leaving. But at the same time, it's a magnificent place and I'm going to miss it," he said. Neither will be saying goodbye - in Russian, do svidaniya - to medical tests anytime soon.

Minutes after emerging from their capsule, they were whisked in chairs to a medical tent where they did their best to stand, walk, jump, navigate obstacles - everything an astronaut might need to do immediately upon arriving at Mars. NASA aims to put astronauts on the red planet in the 2030s, but first wants to know how the body - and mind - will fare during the 21/2-year expedition. Kelly ranked physical isolation aboard the 250-mile-high platform, from those he loved, as his biggest challenge.

Kelly looked fit as he emerged from the Soyuz capsule on the remote steppes of central Asia, pumping his fist and giving a thumbs-up. He showed no signs of slowing down a few hours later



**HOUSTON:** Expedition 46 Commander Scott Kelly of NASA, left, is greeted by Jill Biden, wife of US Vice President Joe Biden, after arriving at Ellington Field after his return to Earth. — AP

as he waited to board the plane for the long flight back to Houston. He needed little if any assistance in walking and said there seemed to be little difference from his five-month station stint five years ago. The exams - along with blood, saliva and urine collections - will continue for weeks if not months. In the case of Kelly and his identical twin, retired astronaut Mark Kelly, the testing could last a year if not longer. The brothers served as guinea pigs - one in weightlessness, the other on the ground. Kelly's last tweet from orbit Tuesday provided a cliffhanger: "The journey isn't over. Follow me as I rediscover #Earth!"

The brothers were reunited at Ellington Airport near Johnson Space Center in Houston early Thursday. The

welcoming committee included Scott's two daughters, ages 21 and 12; his girlfriend who's been chronicling his mission as a NASA public affairs officer at Johnson; and his sister-in-law, former Arizona congresswoman Gabrielle Giffords, Mark's wife. "It's great to be back in Texas on US soil," Scott Kelly told the crowd. "I missed everyone very much."

## 'Not about us'

Also joining in the celebration: Vice President Joe Biden's wife, Jill, and NASA Administrator Charles Bolden. "I brought you some beer and apple pie - nothing's more American than that," Jill Biden said. As for his space legacy, Kelly said he and Kornienko "were a small

part" in setting the stage for Mars. "Expanding our envelope and our ability to operate in space is something that's going to take us farther from this planet," he said. He stressed that it took thousands working behind the scenes to pull off this mission, noting: "It's really not about us." Maybe so, but their sacrifice was duly noted by grateful well-wishers at NASA and elsewhere. On this flight alone, the pair traveled 144 million miles through space - the average distance between Earth and neighbor Mars - and were exposed to cosmic radiation. They tackled 400 experiments, some of them unpleasant. And like other station residents, Kelly downed recycled urine and sweat - nearly 200 gallons over the year. — AP

# CLINIC PAGE



Kuwait Times  
NEWSPAPER PUBLISHED DAILY (EXCEPT ON THE MONDAY AND WEDNESDAY)






Dr. Fahad Al-Mukhaizeem  
استشاري أطفال  
M.B. Bch. FRCPC. FAAP. PEM



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





**Kuwait**  
**CINEMA**

**SHARQIA-1**  
ZOOTOPIA  
HELP, I SHRUNK MY TEACHER  
HELP, I SHRUNK MY TEACHER  
ZOOTOPIA  
RACE  
RACE

12:45 PM  
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**SHARQIA-2**  
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**SHARQIA-3**  
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JAI GANGAAJAL - Hindi  
KHALTET OMRY  
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**MUHALAB-1**  
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**MUHALAB-2**  
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**MUHALAB-3**  
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**FANAR-3**  
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**FANAR-5**  
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EL AMERICANO: THE MOVIE  
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**RACE**  
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**MARINA-1**  
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**MARINA-2**  
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**AVENUES-1**  
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**AVENUES-2**  
THE HOUSE ON PINE STREET  
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**AVENUES-4**  
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JAI GANGAAJAL - Hindi  
JAI GANGAAJAL - Hindi

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JAI GANGAAJAL - Hindi

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**AL-KOUT.4**  
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JAI GANGAAJAL - Hindi  
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**PLAZA**  
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ZOOTOPIA  
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LONDON HAS FALLEN

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**AJIAL.2**  
BACHAANA -Pakistani  
BACHAANA -Pakistani  
BACHAANA -Pakistani  
KALYANA VAIBHOGAME-Telugu  
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FOR SALE

**Mercedes** Benz E-350, model 2010, single owner, no accident, well maintained by agency, km 180,000. Mob: 5576200. **(C 5141)**  
**3-3-2016**

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**2-3-2016**

Prayer timings

Fajr:

04:52

Shorook

06:11

Duhr:

12:00

Asr:


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Maghrib:


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Isha:

19:06



EMERGENCY

**112**

THE PUBLIC AUTHORITY  
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Automated enquiry  
about the Civil ID card is  
**1889988**

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
Khaldiya	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



# Friday Times BUSINESS

FRIDAY, MARCH 4, 2016

BRITAIN'S AUTO INDUSTRY SEES RISK FROM BREXIT

PAGE 40



Impoverished interior poses economic risk for Tunisia

Page 39



**BASRA:** A general view shows excess gas being burnt off at a pipeline in the newly opened section of the oil refinery of Zubair, southwest of Basra in southern Iraq yesterday. — AFP

## DIVIDEND PAYMENTS MAY SAG IN GULF SLOWING GROWTH, AUSTERITY PRESSURING MIDEAST COMPANIES

**DUBAI:** Corporate dividends in Saudi Arabia and other Gulf countries may be starting to shrink as companies find it harder to raise funds, forcing them to cut payouts.

For many years, high dividend yields have lured investors to Gulf bourses, partly offsetting factors such as limited trading liquidity, erratic regulation and poor corporate disclosure of information. In 2015 dividend yields in the six-nation Gulf Cooperation Council averaged about 4.5 percent; the average for emerging markets was 3 percent, Deutsche Bank estimated.

Cheap oil is now threatening that pattern. Economic growth is slowing as reduced oil revenues force governments to cut spending; Moody's predicts Saudi gross domestic product will expand 2.8 percent this year, against an average 5.7 percent between 2010 and 2015. This will crimp corporate profits. Austerity in the Saudi 2016 budget - higher fuel, electricity and natural gas feedstock prices - will raise costs of many listed companies by several percentage points this year, the firms said. Future budgets may contain more austerity.

Meanwhile it has become more expensive to raise funds from capital markets with fewer new petrodollars flowing through economies. Market interest rates have risen sharply. So if oil stays low for years, some companies may sacrifice parts of their dividend payments to raise cash needed for operations and expansion. In Saudi Arabia, there are initial signs of this. Total dividend payments by listed companies fell about 5 percent to 62 billion riyals (\$16.5 billion) last year, Riyadh Capital calculated.

Companies limited the drop by eating into their profits; payouts totalled 64 percent of profits last year, up from 57 percent in 2014. But this ratio cannot increase indefinitely without hurting firms' ability to reinvest in their businesses. "Raising capital has become a key obstacle, and companies with deteriorating cash profiles need to figure out whether they want to distribute some back to investors or retain some for capital expenditure," said Mohammed Al-Shammasi, director at Riyadh-based Derayah Financial. Retailer United Electronics said it would not distribute divi-

dends for the fourth quarter of 2015 to finance expansion plans. Home appliance importer Shaker said it would not distribute dividends for 2015 to support future growth and its balance sheet.

### Sectors

Dividends in Saudi Arabia's petrochemical sector, its profit margins linked to prices of oil and natural gas feedstock, appear among the most vulnerable. Loss-making petrochemical producers such as National Industrialisation are not expected to pay dividends for 2015 or 2016, analysts at AlJazira Capital said; other firms may cut back.

Outside Saudi Arabia, Industries Qatar, a petrochemicals, metals and fertiliser producer, proposed a 2015 dividend of 5 riyals, down from 7 riyals. The Saudi cement sector may be vulnerable because it is exposed to construction activity in the kingdom, which has been falling with lower state spending. The sector currently offers a high dividend yield of 10 percent.

Santhosh Balakrishnan at Riyadh Capital said

the industry was less burdened by debt than others so it should be able to maintain dividends. But Arabian Cement said it is proposing a dividend for the second half of 2015 of 2.5 riyals, down from 3.25 riyals a year ago.

For the Gulf as a whole, the most important sector is likely to be banks, because they are heavily weighted in markets. For 2015, most banks maintained payouts with only a few exceptions such as Doha Bank in Qatar and Abu Dhabi's Union National.

NBAD Securities predicts Qatari banks will offer dividend yields of 5 to 9 percent in 2016, slightly above their historical range of 4 to 8 percent. "Banks with lower capital adequacy ratios may cut dividends, as Doha Bank did, but overall it is not a main concern for the banking sector," said Chiradeep Ghosh at Bahrain-based SICO.

That may change if there is a protracted period of low oil prices. In a letter to banks at end-2015, for example, Oman's central bank warned it might intervene in bank dividend payments to ensure lenders kept enough capital to meet requirements. — Reuters



## CHINA 2016 OIL IMPORT GROWTH MAY EXCEED 800,000 BPD

**SINGAPORE:** China's crude oil imports may rise by more than 800,000 barrels per day this year, boosted by storage needs, robust gasoline demand and fuel exports, an executive from a Beijing-based consultancy said yesterday.

The jump in imports, if realised, could see China overtaking the United States as the world's largest crude importer after China's average crude imports hit a record 6.71 million bpd in 2015, up 8.8 percent from a year ago. China is expected to import 860,000 bpd more crude this year, Yao Li, chief executive of SIA Energy said at a Platts conference. Independent refiners who recently received import quotas, have become a driver of Chinese crude

demand and their preference for low-sulphur oil could cause producers from Venezuela and the Middle East to lose market share, Li said.

"China's crude oil slate will become sweeter and lighter because of production yield requirement and as independent refiners prefer low-sulphur crude due to cost advantage," she said.

"Middle East producers will probably lose more market share. Russian ESPO is the biggest winner."

China's domestic oil consumption is expected to grow by 410,000 bpd as strong car sales boost gasoline use in the world's second largest economy, Li said. The estimate

is higher than that of the International Energy Agency which sees China's oil demand growing by 330,000 bpd to 11.51 million bpd in 2016.

SIA Energy's Li expects Chinese fuel exports to rise by 330,000 bpd this year as local refiners, driven by strong margins, have increased output, although this will be offset by incremental imports of 120,000 bpd, including mixed aromatics for gasoline blending.

Most of the exports will be from state refiners rather than private companies as they have weak trading capabilities, Li said. Private refiners are "more likely to compete in the domestic market", she added. —Reuters



**BEIJING:** Residents pass by an advertisement board depicting a busy urban scene in Beijing. As China's top leaders gather in Beijing for its annual legislature this week, delegates will focus on the ruling party's new development plan. —AP

## OPEC, NON-OPEC PLAN MEET IN MOSCOW ON MARCH 20: NIGERIA OIL PRICES EASE AS GLUT GLOOM OVERCOMES BUDDING BULLS

**ABUJA:** Some members of the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries plan to meet with other producers in Russia around March 20 for new talks on an oil output freeze, Nigeria's petroleum minister said yesterday.

"We're beginning to see the price of crude inch up very slowly. But if the meeting that we're scheduling, it should happen in Russia, between the OPEC and non-OPEC producers happen about March 20, we should see some dramatic price movement," he told a conference in Abuja. "Both the Saudis and the Russians, everybody is coming back to the table," he said. "I think we're very humbled today to accept that if we get to a price of \$50, it will be celebrated. That's a target that we have." Benchmark Brent futures were around \$37 per barrel at 1215 GMT yesterday.

## Oil prices ease

Brent oil prices eased yesterday after ballooning US crude inventories and a lack of any fresh action from the world's largest producer to temper supply snuffed out some of the bullish sentiment that has built this week. International benchmark Brent futures lost 6 cents to \$36.87 a barrel by 1200 GMT, while US crude futures edged up 6 cents to \$34.72.

"Prices must fall once again to reach bottom in a way that really shuts down production. I don't think a freeze is the solution," Natixis commodities strategist Abhishek Deshpande said.

"That is the only true way of really turning around prices sustainably and for good ... once that happens, there will be a true turning

point and, for me, that kind of bottom is still below \$25."

US crude inventories rose 10.4 million barrels to a fresh record of 517.98 million barrels last week. Around 1 million to 2 million barrels of crude are being produced globally every day in excess of demand, contributing to a 70 percent fall in oil prices since mid-2014.

An agreement struck in February by some big producers, led by Russia and Saudi Arabia, to freeze output at January levels is expected to do little to reduce the oversupply, not least because output in the first month of the year was at, or near, record highs.

"We continue to remain wary of possible rallies," said Daniel Ang of brokerage Phillip Futures. Prices have risen since February thanks to slowing US output and signs of financial distress among the higher-cost producers that might signal further supply cuts.

US crude output fell for a third month in December, as struggling oil companies succumbed to the price rout. Seasonally, the second quarter of the year tends to be one of the weakest, as spring refinery maintenance cuts crude demand.

Reuters data shows on average over the last 15 years, Brent has gained 4.9 percent in the second quarter, compared with an average gain of nearly 7.5 percent in the third quarter, usually the strongest in terms of price performance. Market watchers have said there has been more bullishness spreading through the market. "The market has suddenly started to focus on bullish headlines. This has created huge inflows, buying from hedge funds," said Oystein Berentsen, managing director of crude at Strong Petroleum in Singapore. — Reuters

## News

in brief

## Algeria plans to issue debt

**ALGIERS:** Algeria plans to issue local debt as a source of financing to offset the collapse in world oil prices, which halved government energy revenues last year, Prime Minister Abdelmalek Sellal said. The North African OPEC member, which relies on oil and gas for 60 percent of its budget, has already started to trim back some state-subsidised energy services, reduced 2015 and 2016 public spending and frozen some infrastructure projects. Prime Minister Abdelmalek Sellal told reporters the government had no plans to issue foreign-currency bonds, but would issue local-currency debt in April with an interest rate of 5 percent, according to a report on Thursday from the state news agency APS. He did not give details of the size of the issue or its maturity. It was not clear whether it would be open only to local Algerian businesses and banks.

## Oman CB: Rising bond yields driven by market

**ABU DHABI:** A rise in yields of domestic Oman government bonds is driven by the market, and the central bank does not plan steps to try to restrain yields, central bank executive president Hamood Sangour al-Zadjali said yesterday. "It is driven by the market, we are leaving it to the market," Zadjali told Reuters on the sidelines of a financial conference. Last month, the government sold 100 million rials (\$260 million) of five-year development bonds at an average yield of 4.32 percent, sharply up from 2.54 percent at the last issue of five-year development bonds, a 300 million rial sale last August. Low oil prices are pressuring state finances and banking system liquidity in Oman. But Zadjali said banking system liquidity was normal and banks' overnight lending rates were reasonably low. "I don't see any challenges." Bond yields "have gone up because of the higher dollar, which has risen. And also after the Fed hiked rates," he said, adding that last month's bond sale had seen a very good response among investors.

## IDB to raise \$1.5bn in 5-year sukuk issue

**DUBAI:** Jeddah-based Islamic Development Bank will raise \$1.5 billion from a five-year sukuk issue that it is due to price later yesterday, a document from arrangers showed. The deal will carry pricing of 50 basis points over midswaps, according to the document, in line with final guidance issued earlier in the day and inside the initial range of mid-to-high 50s bps over the same benchmark given on Wednesday. The offering has received orders worth more than \$1.5 billion from investors, of which \$243.8 million came from the joint lead arrangers and related parties, the document added. The sukuk offering is being arranged by Boubyan Bank, CIMB, Emirates NBD Capital, Gulf International Bank, JP Morgan, Natixis and Standard Chartered.



## ARGENTINA-IMF RELATIONS THAWING AFTER 10-YR BREAK

**WASHINGTON:** Argentina's reformist government has opened the way to resuming relations with the International Monetary Fund, after a decade of icy relations that saw the country censured by the crisis lender. President Mauricio Macri's tentative deal Monday to repay bondholders long branded as vultures by Buenos Aires has signalled a new approach to economic management to global capital markets. Resuming friendly relations with the IMF would confirm the country's return from the cold and help restore its former image as a South American economic leader.

And with its finances still strained, it could also reopen Argentina's access to IMF valuable technical and funding support. Relations were frozen in 2006 when the country, still recovering from its default on nearly \$100 billion in debt five years earlier, stopped cooperating with the Washington institution. It also halted the annual "Article IV" economic reviews the IMF conducts with all members.

Over time relations worsened as the country supplied data on economic growth and inflation that was far from meeting IMF standards and allegedly masked real problems.

Fast-forward to Macri, who took office in December vowing to break with the policies of his predecessors which isolated the country internationally and, Macri says, left the economy very weak.

Macri has begun to reform economic statistics, admitting growth is slow and inflation high. And he has told the IMF he wants to resume Article IV assessments later this year.

"Reengagement with the IMF is crucial because it removes the longstanding view of Argentina being a completely opaque country that doesn't publish any kind of credible economic information whatsoever," said Monica de Bolle, a former IMF economist now at the Peterson Institute for International Economics in Washington.

A return to the good graces of the IMF would also encourage the return of foreign investors, said Ernesto Calvi, director of the Brookings Institution's Global-CERES Economic and Social Policy in Latin America Initiative.

"Knowing that the Fund will be there if needed is a strong reassurance for investors, especially at a time when they're already pretty scared about emerging markets," he told AFP.

### Red card

The rapprochement is hardly a given. Some people in Argentina still hold the IMF responsible for its 2001 crisis. The former IMF managing director Dominique Strauss-Kahn conceded in 2007 that there are reasons Argentinians labelled the Fund a "devil". That resentment smoldered throughout the eight years of the populist presidency of Cristina Kirchner, Macri's predecessor. The relationship hit bottom at the beginning of 2013 when the IMF dealt the country what it called a "red card," taking the unprecedented step of censuring it for failing to supply accurate economic data. Since taking office, Macri has moved to shake things up. He replaced the head of statistics. On January 13 the new government admitted inflation was about 30 percent last year, more than double what Kirchner's government reported.—AFP



**TUNIS:** Tunisian demonstrators shouting slogans in the town of Siliana, northwest of Tunis, during a protest in solidarity with Kasserine, following the death of an unemployed man who climbed atop a power pole near the governor's office and was electrocuted in the town earlier in the week. — AFP

## IMPOVERISHED INTERIOR POSES ECONOMIC RISK FOR TUNISIA POVERTY, UNEMPLOYMENT RATES SOARING

**TUNIS:** Government neglect in central Tunisia, where poverty and unemployment rates are several times the national average, risks undermining the gains of its revolution and creating a breeding ground for extremism, experts say. Five years after Tunisia's popular uprising, which set the tone for the momentous Arab Spring wave of protests, the wealth gap between its impoverished interior and coastal cities is sparking fresh unrest.

"We thought that the social issues that killed off (former president Zine El Abidine) Ben Ali would be the priority for the political class," said Abderrahmane Hedhili, president of the Tunisian Forum for Economic and Political Rights (FTDES).

"But that hasn't happened: the interior regions are still suffering from poverty and unemployment and remain the victims of discrimination." Central Tunisia was the crucible of the 2011 uprising, when protests demanding jobs and reform started in the town of Sidi Bouzid and spread across the country, eventually forcing Ben Ali into exile. Fresh demonstrations and clashes erupted in January in nearby Kasserine after an unemployed man died while protesting the removal of his name from a list of hires for public sector jobs.

Unrest spread across the country and prompted authorities to implement a nationwide nighttime curfew that lasted into February. President Beji Caid Essebsi expressed sympathy at the time with demonstrators. "There is no dignity without work... we cannot tell those who have nothing to eat to keep being patient," he said. Statistics from Tunisia's heartland-neglected for decades by successive governments in Tunis-make for grim reading for Essebsi's administration. Unemployment in the region last year was far higher than the national 15 percent average, with 26.1 percent of people out of work in the southwest alone, according to the National Statistics Institute. A 2014 World Bank report said poverty rates in central areas were four times higher than in other parts of Tunisia-as much as 30 percent in some regions. "Tunisia needs to create a level playing field

by opening up the economy and removing... the dichotomy between the coast and the interior," the report said.

### 'Social explosion'

A lack of infrastructure and jobs has also raised fears that Tunisia's interior could become a breeding ground for extremism. The country is facing a growing jihadist menace, with security forces coming under periodic attack and a young shepherd beheaded in November near Sidi Bouzid by extremists allied to the Islamic State group.

Residents of Kasserine have warned that the town's youth, short of work or education prospects, could become a target for extremist recruiters. "We are in such a state of despair that one might even follow the devil out of misery," one protester said during January's demonstrations. A new constitution adopted in 2014 made it legally incumbent on the state to work to "achieve parity between regions" of Tunisia. But the government has its work cut out; anaemic economic growth coupled with an increase in jihadist attacks-including against foreign tourists-have left little room to manoeuvre.

Residents of Tunisia's interior scoff at talk of reform, describing government promises to ease inequality as "empty words". The region "has enormous potential but is failing to attract private investment due to a lack of infrastructure and poor quality social services," according to economist Karim Trabelsi.

He said the main problem was Tunisia's development model, which has not changed for decades. Local government official Adel Ageurbaoui said sorely needed economic stimulus was being held up by cumbersome Tunisian bureaucracy. Investment packages exist, he said, but they "surpass the capacity of regional services" to act. With tourism expected to be down this year and an official growth rate of just 0.8 percent in 2015, time is running out for authorities to narrow the wealth gap, according to Hedhili. "If the authorities continue with these policies, we are going to see a social explosion," he said. — AFP



**AMRITSAR:** Indian jewelers shout slogans during a protest against excise duties on gold in Amritsar yesterday during a three-day nationwide strike by gold vendors. Jewelers across gold-loving India are on a three-day strike in a bid to force the government to shelve plans for a controversial excise tax announced in this week's budget.—AFP

## DOLLAR STILL IN FAVOR, BUT RECENT LOSSES UNLIKELY TO BE RECOUPED

**LONDON:** The dollar will appreciate against major currencies in the coming months, a Reuters poll found, but not enough to make up for the losses incurred just before and since the Federal Reserve raised interest rates in December.

Since December, investors have rushed into the euro and the Japanese yen, considered safe havens, amid concern about slowing inflation, low oil prices and lagging economic growth in China. That and evidence the US economy is slowing has turned the Fed, which meets next on March 15-16, more dovish and helped narrow the policy divergence between itself and global peers.

While the Fed is not likely to raise rates this month, economists expect it will do so twice more this year. Markets are more skeptical.

"2016 is not going to be another year of the dollar," said Sonja Martens, senior FX strategist at DZ Bank. "There's a

lot of potential stumbling blocks. There's geo-political risks, there's political, economic risks and many of these have the potential to upset the market equilibrium at any time."

Data suggest some improvement in the world's largest economy, with further evidence of a strong labour market likely to arrive today. But expectations for four increases this year are dwindling, restraining the dollar's rise.

Even so, the dollar will strengthen from here, according to median forecasts from a poll of 61 strategists taken this week, who have trimmed their euro and yen forecasts considerably from last month after both the currencies rallied in early February.

Those expectations come despite expectations the European Central Bank will expand its quantitative easing program next week and cut its already negative deposit rate. The Bank of Japan is also expected to ease policy further sometime after June this year.—Reuters



## GOOGLE'S SELF-DRIVING CAR TEAM BEEFS UP EXPERIENCE

**SAN FRANCISCO/DETROIT:** Google's self-driving car team is expanding and hiring more people with automotive industry expertise, underscoring the company's determination to move the division past the experimental stage. The operation now employs at least 170 workers, according to a Reuters review of their profiles on LinkedIn, the business-oriented social network. Many are software and systems engineers, and some come from other departments at Google.

More than 40 of the employees listed on LinkedIn have previous automotive industry experience, with skills ranging from exterior design to manufacturing. They hail from a wide range of companies, including Tesla Motors Inc, Ford Motor Co and General Motors Co. Google has not disclosed details about the size or composition of its self-driving car team, and Johnny Luu, spokesman for Google's car team, declined to comment. The team could have additional members who do not publish profiles on LinkedIn. Google has said previously that it intends to ready the technology for a marketable self-driving car by 2020, but it may never manufacture vehicles itself. The tech giant is more likely to contract out manufacturing much like Apple does with iPhone - or to license technology to existing car manufacturers, automotive industry experts said. Licensing would follow the model Google has used with its Android operating system for mobile devices.

In the past four weeks, Google has advertised nearly 40 new positions on the team, and many are related to manufacturing. The team currently has six people with such experience, including purchasing, supplier development and supply chain management.

Hires with manufacturing skills could help Google find and coordinate with a partner to build a vehicle, said Paul Mascarenas, a former Ford executive who is president of FISITA, the International Federation of Engineering Societies.

Google is also engaged in discussions with federal and state regulators about how to revise motor vehicle safety standards to accommodate autonomous cars. The competition for technical talent is intensifying as tech and automotive companies race to build driverless vehicles. Beyond Google, the players include Tesla, established car makers such as Daimler AG and GM and, and technology companies such as Apple Inc and Uber Technologies Inc.

Google's team is being assembled by John Krafcik, an industry veteran who previously headed Hyundai Motor Co's US operations and is an expert

in product development and manufacturing. Krafcik joined Google in September 2015.

Another senior executive with previous automotive experience, Paul Luskin, was hired last month as operations manager, according to his LinkedIn profile. An engineer with stints at Jaguar Cars, Ford and Japanese supplier Denso Corp, Luskin most recently was president of Ricardo Defense Systems, a unit of Britain's Ricardo PLC, according to the LinkedIn profile.

Google hired industry veteran Andy Warburton in July to head the vehicle engineering team, according to his LinkedIn profile. Warburton spent two years as a senior engineering manager at Tesla and 16 years as an engineering manager at Jaguar. A third auto veteran, Sameer Kshisagar, joined Google in November as head of global supply management on the self-driving car team. Kshisagar is a manufacturing expert who previously worked for GM, according to his LinkedIn profile.

Luskin, Warburton and Kshisagar did not respond to requests for comment. Google's self-driving car group also has tapped people with experience beyond the auto industry, including aerospace (Boeing, SpaceX, Jet Propulsion Lab) and electronics (Intel, Samsung, Motorola), according to LinkedIn profiles.

Krafcik and Chris Urmson, director of the car team, have said they want to forge partnerships with established automakers and others to build vehicles. Krafcik made a public pitch for alliances at an auto industry conference in Detroit in January.

However, Google may have to look farther than the auto industry to find a manufacturing partner, said Raj Rajkumar, a Carnegie-Mellon University professor who advises companies on self-driving car development. The tug-of-war over who controls - and profits from - the stream of user data in self-driving cars is "an inherent and fundamental conflict" between Google and traditional automakers, Rajkumar said. Instead, Google may choose to build its own engineering and design prototypes, then partner with a Chinese automaker or an Asian contractor such as Hon Hai Precision Industry's Foxconn Technology Co that wants to enter the automotive field, several experts said. Michael Tracy, a Michigan-based auto manufacturing consultant, said Google sees the potential of several different revenue streams from its self-driving technology, including licensing its mapping database and vehicle control software, as well as an integrated package of software, sensors and actuators that would form the backbone of a self-driving vehicle.—Reuters



**LONDON:** BMW motorcycles on display in a showroom in London yesterday. — AP

## BRITAIN'S AUTO INDUSTRY SEES RISK FROM BREXIT

EU'S OPEN BORDERS GOOD FOR BUSINESS: ROLLS-ROYCE CEO

**LONDON:** The economic argument over the cost of Britain leaving the EU heated up yesterday, with the chief executive of Rolls-Royce Motor Cars telling staff that the bloc's open borders are good for business.

Torsten Muller-Otvos said the EU's free trade arrangements help the firm, which is owned by Germany's BMW Group. In a letter to staff at Rolls-Royce and Mini - which is also BMW-owned - he said "tariff barriers would mean higher costs and higher prices, and we cannot assume that the UK would be granted free trade with Europe from outside the EU."

Britain will hold a referendum on EU membership June 23, and economic arguments are likely to be crucial to deciding how many people vote. Foreign-owned firms are wary of accusations of meddling in Britain's decision. BMW head of sales and marketing Ian Robertson denied BMW was saying car prices or labor costs would definitely go up if UK leaves the EU. He said the company was pointing out the advantages of the EU's open market covering 28 nations and some 500 million people.

"We've built our business on a 500-million

market called the EU, and I think that is a very successful business that we wish to continue to move forward," Robertson told the BBC.

Britain's Society of Motor Manufacturers and Traders said support for continued EU membership is widespread across the auto industry. The group, which represents dozens of carmakers and parts suppliers, said Thursday that 77 percent of its members backed remaining in the bloc in a survey.

"We are part of a fully integrated European company where we benefit from the free movement of goods and people, and we believe not to be part of the EU would be undesirable for our business and the sector as a whole," said Rory Harvey, managing director and chairman of GM-owned Vauxhall.

While many large British businesses support staying in, some 200 small-business leaders have signed a letter backing an EU exit. The letter, coordinated by the group Leave.EU, said leaving would give firms more "flexibility and adaptability." Signatories included bosses of taxi companies, couriers, construction and removal firms, mortgage advisers, florists and more. — AP

## BANK OF AMERICA REVS UP AUTO LOANS BUSINESS

**NEW YORK:** Bank of America is making a big push into auto lending just as regulators are sending warning signals, losses from auto loans are rising, and rivals are growing more cautious after years of strong returns. The bank tapped mortgage executives Matt Vernon and John Schleck to lead the auto lending business last May, saying they would be able to sell auto loans alongside other products such as checking accounts and home equity loans.

In interviews, the executives and their boss, D. Steve Boland, who oversees a broad swath of consumer lending, said they still see room for growth from borrowers who have good credit. They have hired extensively in recent months, adding dozens of loan officers and salespeople.

But some competitors and bank analysts said hiring doesn't make sense at this stage, because auto sales may be close to peaking, and consumer credit is showing signs of weakness.

Industry-wide, banks classified \$1.1 billion worth of auto loans as uncollectible in the fourth quarter, according to the Federal Deposit Insurance Corp. That is up 15 percent from the year-ago period, and up 39 percent since the fourth quarter of

2011. Ultimately, much of that bad debt turns into losses for the banks.

"I'm not actively hiring or growing our operations across the platform. That's for sure," said Andrew Stuart, head of TD Auto Finance, which is slightly smaller than Bank of America's auto business.

At a Feb. 10 conference, Capital One Financial Corp CEO Richard Fairbank said that while auto loans provided "once in a lifetime type returns" after the financial crisis, the business has begun to lose strength. In a January interview on CNBC, JPMorgan CEO Jamie Dimon called the market "stretched."

Portales Partners analyst Charles Peabody said Bank of America is late to the auto loans party. But in its defense, he noted that the bank's Chief Executive Brian Moynihan and his management team were too busy trying to resolve mortgage-related issues when the auto lending business seemed like a smarter bet.

"They should have been beefing this thing up two years ago, but two years ago Moynihan was still trying to stabilize the ship," Peabody said.

### SLOWING MOMENTUM

All banks are struggling to boost revenue during a period of stubbornly low interest rates and tough post-crisis regulation, but Bank of America has felt the pain more acutely than most of its peers.

The second-largest US bank by assets, Bank of America trades at just 50 percent of book value, compared to 90 percent for JP Morgan Chase & Co and 130 percent for Wells Fargo & Co. Bank of America took bigger losses than those rivals during the crisis, and still lags them by other key metrics, including return on equity and costs in relation to revenue.

While Bank of America showed some progress in 2015, it still has to prove it can generate consistent performance under Moynihan, who took the helm in 2010. During his tenure, the bank has paid tens of billions of dollars in fines and settlements related to mortgages that were issued before he became CEO. Bank of America ranks 11th among US auto lenders, with just 1.72 percent of the market in the third quarter of last year, according to the latest available data from

Experian Automotive. Ally Financial Inc, the largest US auto lender, accounts for 6 percent, followed by Wells Fargo, which ranked second with 5.57 percent. JPMorgan was fifth with 4.15 percent.

Bank of America may rank higher yesterday, when Experian says it will release fourth-quarter data, because Vernon said much of its growth came at the end of the year.

Auto sales remain very robust. Figures carmakers released on Tuesday showed that sales climbed to a 15-year high for the month of February, driven by low gasoline prices, wage growth, and because loans are both available and cheap. But most forecasters expect sales to peak in 2016 and trend down over the next few years.

"We remain in the 'plateau' camp," RBC Capital Markets analyst Joseph Spak wrote on Tuesday, sticking to his flat sales forecast. Stocks have broadly declined in recent months over concerns about the global economy, and some companies that make money selling or financing vehicles have gotten hit even harder. They recovered some of those losses after the latest sales figures.—Reuters



## EUROZONE ECONOMY STUTTERING ALONG

**LONDON:** The eurozone economy is stuttering along. That's the conclusion from economic reports Thursday that are likely to cement expectations that the European Central Bank will bolster its stimulus efforts in a week's time. Financial information company Markit said its main gauge of business activity across the 19 country single currency bloc showed growth faltering for the second straight month. The so-called purchasing managers' index slipped to 53.0 points in February from 53.6 the month before.

Though the February rate was higher than the 52.7 initial estimate and remains above the 50 level that marks the threshold between expansion and contraction, it points to muted growth, particularly

in France, the eurozone's second-largest economy. Markit estimates growth in the first quarter of this year could ease from the already "meagre" quarterly rate of 0.3 percent at the end of 2015.

"The slowdown in growth of business activity, accompanied by a similar easing in the pace of job creation and the steepest fall in prices charged for a year, suggest that the region's recovery is losing momentum," Williamson said. "The broad-based disappointment ups the odds of the ECB acting aggressively to avoid another downturn," he added. Separate figures from the European Union's statistics agency, Eurostat, showed retail sales in the region grew by a monthly rate of 0.4 percent in January. It's a modest uptick and provides

further evidence that the region's consumers won't be driving economic activity enough to quickly reduce the region's unemployment rate, which is still high at 10.3 percent despite consistent falls over the past two years.

Neither the survey from Markit nor the Eurostat data are likely to ease concerns much about too-low inflation, which is ostensibly the ECB's main concern. Figures this week showed the eurozone's annual inflation rate fell below zero in February, to negative 0.2 percent, way short of the ECB's target of just below 2 percent.

ECB President Mario Draghi has consistently hinted at further measures over the past few weeks and the markets now expect some bold action at the central

bank's meeting on March 10. Measures being touted include a further cut into negative territory of the rate the ECB pays banks on their deposits at the central bank. It currently stands at minus 0.3 percent, meaning banks have to pay to keep money at the ECB.

By keeping interest rates low and pumping money into the economy via its bond-buying program worth over a trillion euros, the ECB is hoping to generate enough economic activity to get prices rising. The great concern is that the clouds over the eurozone, as well as over the global economy as a whole, have darkened over the past couple of months, largely because of unease over the economic slowdown in China. — AP

## UK SERVICES GROWTH AT 3-YEAR LOW AS BREXIT DOUBTS GROW

### FIRMS CUT RATES OF HIRING AS FACTORY ORDERS DROP

**LONDON:** The prospect of Britain voting to leave the European Union sent shivers through the boardrooms of the country's dominant services sector last month, driving growth to a near three-year low. New orders in the sector rose in February at the weakest pace since early 2013, prompting companies to cut the rate of hiring to levels last seen 2-1/2 years ago, a survey showed yesterday.

"Survey responses reveal that firms are worried about signs of faltering demand, but boardrooms have also become unsettled by concerns regarding the increased risk of 'Brexit', financial market volatility and weak economic growth at home and abroad," said Markit's chief economists, Chris Williamson. It was the first time Markit, which compiles the influential index, cited the outcome of the June 23 referendum on Britain's EU membership as a factor denting business expectations.

The Markit/CIPS UK services purchasing managers' index - a survey of industry sentiment and plans - slumped to 52.7 from 55.6 in January, the weakest reading since March 2013. It was lower than all the predictions in a Reuters poll of economists that had produced a median forecast of 55.1.

A reading above 50 still denotes growth, but Thursday's survey was the starkest sign to date that Britain's recovery from the financial crisis is losing momentum and shows why Bank of England policymakers have said they stand ready to boost the economy if needed.

British gross domestic product now looks on track to expand by just 0.3 percent in the first quarter of 2016, according to Markit, a slowdown from 0.5 percent in the final three months of 2015 and its poorest performance since late 2012.

Last month, the government announced the date of the referendum and influential London mayor Boris Johnson backed the 'Out' campaign events which "exacerbated an undercurrent of unease about Europe that was already there", added Williamson.

Bank of England policymakers have said they have not yet observed businesses holding off on investment plans due to uncertainty around the referendum, but the latest PMI is likely to catch their eye. "The extent of the slowdown will be a shock to policymakers and surely puts to bed any talk of the Bank of England raising interest rates," said Williamson.

The UK all-sector PMI, which includes weaker-than-expected manufacturing and construction surveys published by Markit earlier this week, fell to 52.9 in February from 56.1 in January, hitting its lowest level since April 2013. — Reuters

## BRAZIL, AMID PRESSURES, KEEPS 14.25% RATE

**BRASOLIA:** Brazil's Central Bank on Wednesday maintained its benchmark Selic interest rate at 14.25 percent, as the world's seventh-biggest economy struggles with rising inflation and severe recession. In January, the bank also left the rate unchanged, surprising the market. A weekly survey of 100 market analysts by the central bank's Focus magazine has found expectations that the high rate will be held steady through this year, with a cut to 12.5 percent in 2017.

Officials are under pressure to ease the hardship of ordinary Brazilians squeezed by rising prices with double-digit inflation. But the bank, caught between rising inflation and a deepening recession, has been in a bind over how to respond. The rate has now been steady since July 2015, when the bank made the last of seven consecutive hikes to try to put a lid on inflation. "The country is not seeing growth and is in recession and that's why we think the central bank will maintain the rate," economy analyst Angelo Larozi told AFP. "It can't lower it, because of the pressure from inflation. The situation is complicated." "We see the central bank as having trouble in acting independently. There are government pressures," he added. Brazil registered 10.67 percent inflation in 2015, the highest since 2002 far off the government target of 4.5 percent, or even the previous year's annual rate of 6.41 percent. Latin America's biggest economy has been in recession since the second quarter of 2015. The three main credit rating agencies have lowered their Brazil rating to junk status. — AFP

## WORLD FOOD PRICES STABLE IN FEBRUARY

**ROME:** World food prices stabilised in February near a seven-year low as rising vegetable oil and meat prices offset declines in cereals, sugar and dairy, the United Nations food agency said yesterday. Food prices have fallen for four straight years and remain under pressure from ample agricultural supply, a slowing global economy and a strengthening US dollar. The Food and Agriculture Organization's (FAO) food price index, which measures monthly changes for a basket of cereals, oilseeds, dairy products, meat and sugar, averaged 150.2 points in February against a revised 150.0 points the month before.

The flat result follows an almost 19 percent slide in 2015 and a further slump in January. Food on international markets in February was 14.5 percent cheaper than a year ago, the FAO said.

The FAO forecast world cereal output in 2015 would be 2.525 billion tons, down 6.3 million tons from its previous prediction, mainly due to lower wheat production estimates in India and Iran.

Making its first global production forecast for wheat in 2016, the FAO calculated the year's harvest would reach 723 million tons, 10 million tons lower than the record hit in 2015.

World wheat output is expected to have reached 733 million tons in 2015-16 and world cereals ending stocks are forecast at 636.2 million tons, the FAO said. Any slowdown in trade, combined with already low prices, could weigh on the 2016 wheat output forecast, FAO senior economist Abdolreza Abbassian said.

"It's a matter of wait and see," Abbassian said. "Right now there is no great concern on the horizon." The vegetable oil index was pushed up by palm oil prices, which leapt 13 percent on reports of falling inventories and a poor near-term production outlook. Soy oil prices also firmed. — Reuters



**SACRAMENTO:** Employee Brittney Bounds bags groceries for customer Esther Franklin, left, at Compton's Market in Sacramento, California. The Institute for Supply Management, a trade group of purchasing managers, issued its index of non-manufacturing activity for February. — AP



## SVITOLINA HEADS TO Q-FINALS AT MALAYSIAN OPEN

**KUALA LUMPUR:** Second seed Elina Svitolina advanced to the quarter-finals of the Malaysian Open yesterday with a 6-1, 3-6, 6-0 win over Japan's Risa Ozaki.

The 21-year-old Ukrainian who took almost two hours to defeat her Japanese opponent, will square off against Slovakian

Kristina Kucova on Friday.

Kai-Chen Chang was sent home packing after being dispatched by Turkey's Cagla Buyukakcay in straight sets, 7-5, 6-3.

The 25-year-old Taiwanese player had a dream start to the competition when she knocked out top seed Roberta Vinci from

Italy in the first round on Tuesday.

Buyukakcay will meet sixth seed Eugenie Bouchard from Canada at the quarter-finals on Friday.

The 22-year-old Bouchard has been trying to put a difficult 2015 behind and has been showing signs of returning to form recently.

She cruised to the next round after trashing Kurumi Nara from Japan 6-1, 6-2 on Wednesday.

In other second round matches Thursday, Naomi Broady from Britain beat China's Zhaoxuan Yang 6-4, 6-3, while Lin Zhu from China defeated Zarina Diyas from Kazakhstan 7-5, 6-2. — AFP



Lleyton Hewitt

## RETIRED HEWITT ON STANDBY AS KYRGIOS OUT OF US CLASH

**MELBOURNE:** Veteran Lleyton Hewitt is on standby to break his short-lived retirement if Australia need their new captain against the United States in this weekend's Davis Cup World Group tie in Melbourne.

World number 27 Nick Kyrgios withdrew before yesterday's draw with a virus and back trouble, with Hewitt, in charge as Australia captain for the first time, nominated as his replacement.

But Hewitt, 35, who was thought to have played his last competitive match at the Australian Open in January, did not name himself in Friday's singles or Saturday's pivotal doubles rubbers, instead preferring to use 77th-ranked Sam Groth. Groth will open the tie on grass at Kooyong in Melbourne against big-serving American John Isner, ranked 11, while Australia's top-ranked Bernard Tomic faces world number 24 Jack Sock in today's singles.

Groth was nominated to partner doubles specialist John Peers in Saturday's showdown against multiple Grand Slam winners Bob and Mike Bryan.

But that decision can be changed up until an hour before the pivotal rubber, leaving open the possibility that Hewitt could take his place in the doubles.

"We'll just see how it pans out," Hewitt said at the draw. "We've got to put our best options forward every single day and we will have a look at it after each day's play and see how Sam plays and pulls up after his singles."

USA team captain Jim Courier said he was not surprised by the Australian team

change. "We've seen how much Lleyton was practising this week and with Nick's pretty conspicuous absence but it's certainly not something coming down here that we were anticipating," Courier said.

## FITNESS TEST

If Hewitt does take part he will be the first playing captain for Australia since Norman Brookes in 1919.

Kyrgios practised briefly this week but he was ruled out by team medical staff, having not recovered from a virus he contracted in Dubai last week.

"We took Nick through his paces a little bit this morning, just gave him a bit of a

fitness test," Hewitt said.

"We had to see how he pulled up from yesterday. It wasn't the toughest hit yesterday but he just wasn't fit enough to play this weekend, which is just unlucky. It was bad timing for us, but it was really out of our hands in the end."

Hewitt announced his retirement amid great fanfare at this year's Australian Open in Melbourne when he bowed out to Spain's David Ferrer in the second round.

Since his debut against USA as an 18-year-old in 1999, Hewitt has played in a record 41 Davis Cup ties for his country, with a 58/20 win-loss record in singles and doubles. — AFP



**LIEGE:** (From L to R) Croatia's davis cup team captain Zeljko Krajan and Croatian tennis players Marin Cilic, Borna Coric, Ivan Dodig and Franko Skugor attend the playing schedule draw of their Davis Cup first round World Group meeting against Croatia, yesterday, in Liege. The first round will be played from today to 6th in Liege. — AFP

## DJOKOVIC AND MURRAY TARGET DAVIS CUP Q-FINAL SHOWDOWN

**PARIS:** Novak Djokovic and Andy Murray can set up a Davis Cup quarter-final blockbuster if they successfully pilot Serbia and defending champions Great Britain through the first round. However, the world's top two players will go into their home clashes against Kazakhstan and Japan respectively this weekend with question marks over their fitness and match sharpness.

World number one Djokovic saw his streak of 17 successive finals come to an end in Dubai last week when an eye infection forced a quarter-final retirement. Murray, meanwhile, hasn't hit a ball in anger since losing to old rival Djokovic in the Australian Open final almost five weeks ago. The 28-year-old took February off after his wife Kim gave birth to their first child, Sophia.

Djokovic led Serbia to the 2010 Davis Cup title. "I am optimistic and I hope that I am going to play," said the 11-time major winner. "I was a little sceptical but now all is going well." Djokovic and world number 23 Viktor Troicki will play singles for the Serbs in Belgrade while Kazakhstan's top player is Mikhail Kukushkin, the world 79. Murray, who led Great Britain to their first Davis Cup title in 79 years last November, said being a new father has not affected his sleep patterns. "It was very different to what I expected," he said. "I still practise hard and do all the same things I was doing before. I will find out if it is different on Friday or not."

The key clash in Birmingham could come on Sunday when Murray takes on Japan's top player, Kei Nishikori, the world number six. Murray holds a 5-1 career advantage over Nishikori ahead of the first Davis Cup clash between the two nations since 1931.

"Britain have one of the best teams with Andy and his brother (doubles star, Jamie). It's a great challenge," said Nishikori.

## HEWITT PLAYS IT AGAIN

Should Serbia and Britain emerge victorious, they will clash in the UK from July 15-17 for a place in the semi-finals with Murray already revealing that he intends to play.

In Melbourne, former world number one and two-time major winner Lleyton Hewitt could be drafted into action as a playing captain in the clash with the United States after Nick Kyrgios was ruled out through injury. It's a match-up between the tournament's two most successful nations but the US won the last of their 32 titles in 2007. Australia captured their 28th and most recent crown in 2003.

In a shock move late Wednesday, Hewitt replaced Kyrgios in the squad despite having retired as a player after the Australian Open. The 35-year-old is now ranked 301 in the world but boasts a formidable Davis Cup record of 42-14 in singles.

Bernard Tomic, the world 20, will play singles as will Sam Groth with Hewitt likely to only feature in Sunday's doubles on the grass courts of Kooyong. Top 30 players John Isner and Jack Sock will lead the United States' hopes. The winner of the tie will take on either last year's runners-up Belgium or 2005 champions Croatia who meet in Liege.

Switzerland, the champions in 2014, go to Pesaro to face Italy without Roger Federer, who is recovering from knee surgery, and the resting Stan Wawrinka. Instead their hopes will be spearheaded by 34-year-old Marco Chiudinelli whose ranking is a lowly 146. The winner of that tie will face either Poland or Argentina who are playing in Gdansk. The Poles are in the World Group for the first time while Argentina, runners-up three times since 2006, are in the elite section for a 15th consecutive year. The South Americans will be favourites to progress with two players- — AFP





— Photos by Sherif Ismail

# AMIR'S SHOOTING CHAMPIONSHIP KICKS OFF IN FABULOUS STYLE

By Abdellatif Sharaa

**KUWAIT:** His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah Fifth Annual International Shooting Grand Prix continues at Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Olympic Shooting Complex with men trap competition on 75 targets, while the final round will be at 1 pm. Meanwhile the pre-event training for men and women skeet will start at nine today morning.

The official opening ceremony took place on Wednesday night in a fabulous celebration, during which Information Minister, State Minister for Youth Affairs Sheikh Salman Sabah Al-Salem Al-Humoud Al-Sabah said the support and care from HH the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad to the International Grand Prix, contributed to boosting its status at the International level.

Sheikh Salman who represented HH in the opening ceremony which was named "Humanity has an Amir" said Kuwait's organization of this dear Grand Prix for the fifth time in Kuwait reflects the unlimited support Kuwait shooting enjoys from HH the Amir and this contributed to

having shooters get Olympic and International medals.

He said the tournament enjoys the presence of an elite group of world shooters from 31 countries, which reflects its International importance and wished all participants success.

Sheikh Salman Al-Hmoud said he was honored to represent HH the Amir, adding that the ceremony carried expression of loyalty and love of Kuwait as well as its global peace and humanity mission.

He thanked the sports personalities that attended the ceremony, including the President of Asian Shooting Confederation Sheikh Ali bin Abdallah Al-Khalifa, Chairman of the Gulf Shooting Organization Committee Maj Gen Ahmad Al-Risi, and heads of delegations.

On his part Director General of Public Sports Authority Sheikh Ahmad Al-Mansour thanked HH the Amir for his patronage of the Grand Prix, and the continued support of the athletes in various sports.

He said the opening ceremony was great as fans interacted with it, adding that the International participation this Grand Prix enjoys

reflects its importance and the shooter's keenness to come out winners.

President of Kuwait and Arab Shooting Federations Eng Duaij Al-Otaibi said during his speech said "It is with great pleasure, as Kuwait shooting celebrate the opening of HH the Amir Fifth International Shooting Grand Prix, that I take this opportunity to thank HH the Amir who designated an annual International shooting tournament that brings brothers and friends together in a fair sports competition.

Al-Otaibi who chairs the Higher Organizing Committee said the feats of HH the Amir for the sport of shooting are many, including the construction of the Olympic ranges, which is unique of its type around the world, and became an attraction to others, enabled Kuwait to organize many tournaments at the International, regional, Arab and Gulf levels.

Al-Otaibi thanked Information Ministry, State Minister for Youth Affairs Sheikh Salman Sabah Al-Salem Al-Humoud Al-Sabah for his continued support of the sport of shooting.





FORMER NEW ZEALAND CAPTAIN CROWE DEAD

**WELLINGTON:** Tributes flowed yesterday for former New Zealand cricket captain Martin Crowe, who died after a long battle with cancer. He was 53.

Widely considered New Zealand's finest batsman, Crowe was initially diagnosed with follicular lymphoma in 2012 before the disease went into remission.

In September 2014, however, Crowe said a more aggressive form, double-hit lymphoma, had developed and he had been told only five percent survive more than 12 months.

New Zealand Cricket Chief Executive David White paid tribute to Crowe's contribution to the game.

"It's incredibly sad and hard to believe he has been taken from us so early," White told Radio New Zealand. "Our hearts go out to his family and close friends.

"Over the next few days and weeks we will celebrate his life and outstanding con-



Martin Crowe

tribution to New Zealand and world cricket." Crowe's funeral will be held in Auckland on March 11.

The Dean of Auckland's Holy Trinity Cathedral, Jo Kelly-Moore, said: "Martin's life is being remembered today across the nation and the world as a husband, father, brother and cousin, batsman, hero, friend and sporting champion.

"The funeral will be a time for those private and public memories to join together."

After making his first class debut as a teenager, Crowe played the first of his 77 tests against Australia in 1982. He went on to score 5,444 runs at an average of 45.36 with 17 centuries, still a record for the country.

He had a top-score of 299, falling a single short of becoming the first New Zealander to score a test triple century, against Sri Lanka in 1991. That mark stood until Brendon McCullum scored 302 against India in 2014.

The elegant right-hander also scored 4,704 runs at an average of 38.55 in one-day internationals. His death was keenly felt in cricketing circles, with an outpouring of tributes flowing on social media.

"Very sad to hear of the passing of Martin Crowe this morning. An inspiration

to me and so many others. One of our true greats," former New Zealand captain Stephen Fleming wrote on Twitter.

Cricket Wellington, one of the three first class teams Crowe played for in New Zealand, described him as "a genius, true legend of the game", while former Indian legspinner Anil Kumble called him a cricketing icon.

New Zealand Cricket issued a short statement acknowledging Crowe's death on their website yesterday and a spokesman said they were honouring his family's wishes for privacy.

Crowe had been scathing of NZC's administration in the latter stages of his life, particularly in the way Ross Taylor, who Crowe mentored, was sacked from the captaincy in late 2012.

Local media reported at the time Crowe had even burned his New Zealand blazer because of the decision. — Reuters

NHL results/standings

Washington 3, Toronto 2; Chicago 5, Detroit 2; Anaheim 3, Montreal 2 (SO).

Western Conference

Central Division

	W	LOTL	GF	GA	PTS	
Chicago	40	20	5	185	155	85
Dallas	38	20	7	209	189	83
St. Louis	37	20	9	166	162	83
Nashville	32	21	11	172	161	75
Minnesota	29	25	10	170	162	68
Colorado	32	29	4	175	187	68
Winnipeg	26	32	4	161	186	56

Pacific Division

Los Angeles	37	21	4	165	143	78
Anaheim	35	19	8	156	146	78
San Jose	34	22	6	188	167	74
Vancouver	24	26	12	150	178	60
Arizona	27	30	6	168	198	60
Calgary	26	33	4	170	197	56
Edmonton	24	34	7	158	194	55

Eastern Conference

Atlantic Division

Florida	36	19	8	174	148	80
Tampa Bay	37	22	4	175	151	78
Boston	35	23	6	197	176	76
Detroit	32	21	11	163	168	75
Ottawa	30	27	7	188	200	67
Montreal	30	28	6	175	178	66
Buffalo	25	31	8	148	172	58
Toronto	21	31	10	149	185	52

Metropolitan Division

Washington	47	12	4	208	146	98
NY Rangers	37	20	6	180	159	80
NY Islanders	34	20	7	174	151	75
Pittsburgh	32	22	8	167	160	72
Philadelphia	29	22	11	157	168	69
Carolina	29	26	10	158	174	68
New Jersey	30	27	7	140	156	67
Columbus	26	30	8	167	196	60

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

MCGINN SCORES IN DEBUT AS DUCKS BEAT CANADIENS IN SO

**ANAHEIM:** Jamie McGinn scored in his Ducks debut and Jakob Silfverberg got the only goal in the shootout as Anaheim beat the Montreal Canadiens 3-2 on Wednesday night for its ninth consecutive victory. Corey Perry scored the tying power-play goal with 9:09 to play for the Ducks, who have won 18 of 21 to streak into a first-place tie with Los Angeles atop the Pacific Division. John Gibson stopped 25 shots and all three Montreal shootout attempts with relative ease. Alex Galchenyuk scored two goals and Mike Condon made 32 saves for the Canadiens, who lost their second straight to open a West Coast road trip.

CAPITALS 3, MAPLE LEAFS 2

Matt Niskanen and the NHL's top power play unit cashed in as the Washington Capitals outlasted the youthful and out-classed Toronto Maple Leafs. The Capitals reached 98 points for the season and matched the 1995-96 Detroit Red Wings for the most victories through 63 games with 47. The Maple Leafs remained in last place in the league with 52 points. Niskanen's winner came after Washington relinquished a 2-0 lead built on goals by Taylor Chorney and Alex Ovechkin. Nikita Soshnikov scored his first NHL goal, and Colin Greening scored his second of the season for the Maple Leafs.

BLACKHAWKS 5, RED WINGS 2

Patrick Kane had a goal and an assist 1:24 apart on power plays in the second period, and Artemi Panarin scored twice to help the Chicago Blackhawks rout the Detroit Red Wings. Kane finished with three points, extending his NHL-leading total to 88 to match his career high set during the 2009-10 season. Corey Crawford didn't give up a goal until mid-way through the third period when Brad Richards scored. Gustav Nyquist had Detroit's other goal. Andrew Ladd restored the three-goal lead in the third period in his second game back with the Blackhawks. Panarin scored his second goal 35 seconds later. Brent Seabrook also scored for Chicago. — AP



ANAHEIM: Phillip Danault #24 of the Montreal Canadiens skates with the puck during warm ups prior to a game against the Anaheim Ducks at Honda Center on Wednesday in Anaheim, California. — AFP

S AFRICA, AUSTRALIA TUNE UP FOR WORLD TWENTY20

**DURBAN:** South Africa and Australia will be seeking to find their best combinations when they meet in three Twenty20 internationals, shortly before both sides travel to India for the World Twenty20 tournament.

Australia appear to have the most uncertainties. They were beaten 3-0 at home by India in their most recent T20 series and the selectors made several significant changes in picking a squad for South Africa and the global event.

Steve Smith was handed the captaincy, making him the leader in all three formats, while the squad includes three players who have yet to play in a T20 international - wicketkeeper Peter Nevill, left-arm spinner Ashton Agar and leg-spinner Adam Zampa.

While Nevill has established himself as

Australia's Test wicketkeeper, Agar, Zampa and fast bowler Andrew Tye are virtual novices at international level.

Agar has played in two Tests and two one-day internationals, famously hitting 98 at number 11 on Test debut in the 2013 Ashes.

Zampa made his debut and played in two one-day internationals in New Zealand last month. Tye played in only two T20 internationals against India.

Australia have a strong batting line-up, however, although this too could be problematical in terms of deciding on the best combination.

South Africa won two T20 internationals against England last month and will be strengthened by the returns of fast bowler Dale Steyn and wicketkeeper-batsman Quinton de Kock.—AFP



# JORDAAN BLAMES CAF FOR SEXWALE FIFA FAILURE

**CAPE TOWN:** Tokyo Sexwale's bid to become FIFA president was doomed as soon as his own confederation refused to back him, South African Football Association head Danny Jordaan said of his compatriot's failed attempt to lead soccer's governing body.

Businessman Sexwale pulled out of the race, won by UEFA general secretary Gianni Infantino, just before voting started on Feb. 26 and Jordaan believes his chances were dashed when the Confederation of African Football (CAF) opted to back rival Sheikh Salman bin Ebrahim Al Khalifa.

CAF handed their endorsement to the

Asian Football Confederation (AFC) president at an executive meeting in Rwanda last month, shortly after the Bahraini royal had signed a lucrative co-operation agreement between CAF and the AFC.

"I was at the CAF meeting in Rwanda where Tokyo was present," Jordaan told South Africa's Eye Witness News.

"He had a meeting with the CAF executive and I think that there are things that they put to him there as to why they found it difficult to support him.

"When we left Kigali, it was clear that CAF was not going to support him.

"Jerome Champagne had no endorse-

ment from any continent and neither did Prince Ali and Tokyo, so it was always going to be tough for those candidates who must compete against candidates who actually have two continents endorsing them."

Jordaan, however, believes FIFA has been strengthened by the election of Infantino. "The reporting lines are clear, the governance of FIFA is strengthened, transparency has been strengthened," he added.

"So on the plus side, he comes into a new environment for organising, managing and controlling world football but he's a person that has, I think, significant experience to steer FIFA into calmer waters."

Jordaan did not attend the presidential election in Zurich, citing a busy schedule in his duties as mayor of the South African coastal city of Port Elizabeth.

Germany's Kicker magazine, however, alleged he stayed away for fear of possible arrest in the investigation into a \$10 million bribe allegedly paid to former CONCACAF president Jack Warner to secure hosting rights for the 2010 World Cup. Jordaan headed South Africa's bid committee, which has also been implicated in the US court case against several football officials over alleged bribery in the bidding campaign for the 2010 tournament. — Reuters

# SPURS BEAT PISTONS TO CLINCH PLAYOFF BERTH

**SAN ANTONIO:** Kawhi Leonard scored 27 points and LaMarcus Aldridge added 23 as the San Antonio Spurs beat the Detroit Pistons 97-81 on Wednesday night to clinch their 19th straight playoff berth. San Antonio (51-9) won its 29th straight home game to open the season in its first game following a month-long road trip brought on by the San Antonio Stock Show and Rodeo. San Antonio joins Golden State as the only teams to clinch spots in the postseason. Leonard and Aldridge excelled against a Detroit team thinned by injuries to forwards Anthony Tolliver and Stanley Johnson. Aldridge added 10 rebounds and Leonard had six rebounds and five assists for San Antonio, which has won six straight. Detroit center Andre Drummond had nine points and 14 rebounds, ending his career-high and the league's season-high of consecutive double-doubles at 13 straight.

## CLIPPERS 103, THUNDER 98

The Oklahoma City Thunder took the court hours after the death of part-owner Aubrey McClendon and squandered a 22-point lead to lose to the Los Angeles Clippers on Wednesday night. Chris Paul had 21 points and 13 assists for Los Angeles and DeAndre Jordan had 20 points and 18 rebounds. The Clippers ended the game with a stunning 26-5 run after trailing by 16 points with 7:30 left. The Thunder had only one field goal during that stretch, a 17-foot jumper by Durant. It was the largest comeback win of the season for the Clippers. Kevin Durant scored 30 points and Russell Westbrook had 24 points and 12 assists for Oklahoma City. McClendon, 56, was killed slamming his sport utility vehicle into a concrete bridge embankment in Oklahoma City shortly after 9 a.m. local time. This came one day after he was indicted by a federal grand jury for allegedly conspiring to rig bids to buy oil and natural gas leases in north-west Oklahoma while he was still CEO of Chesapeake Energy Corp.

## NUGGETS 117, LAKERS 107

D.J. Augustin scored 22 of his 26 points in the fourth quarter to lead six Denver players in double figures as the Nuggets beat Los Angeles in Kobe Bryant's final game at the Pepsi Center. Emmanuel Mudiay added 22 points and the Nuggets used a 10-0 run midway through the final quarter to gain some separation. Bryant finished with five points and didn't play in the second half because of a sore right shoulder. Fans kept chanting "We want Kobe" as he sat on the bench with a wrap on his shoulder. The Nuggets honored Bryant with a video tribute during a timeout in the first quarter.

## ROCKETS 100, PELICANS 95

James Harden had 39 points, 11 rebounds and seven assists to help Houston overcome miserable shooting in a victory over New Orleans. The Rockets went 3 of 34 on 3-point attempts and committed 21 turnovers but were able to rally past New Orleans thanks to an off night from Pelicans star

Anthony Davis. With their horrendous shooting performance, Houston became the first team in NBA history to make fewer than four 3s on 30 or more attempts. But on the 34th attempt, Houston point guard Patrick Beverley delivered the most important shot of the game, a 3-pointer from the corner that gave the Rockets a lead with less than a minute remaining.

## RAPTORS 104, JAZZ 94

Kyle Lowry scored 32 points and DeMar DeRozan added 31 to help Toronto beat Utah for a club-record 11th straight home win. Lowry, who had a career-high 43 points in a victory over Cleveland on Friday night before being rested Sunday in a loss at Detroit, added five assists and four rebounds. Toronto (40-19) led the entire second half on the way to its fifth win in six games. The Jazz (28-32) were led by Gordon Hayward, who had 26 points, six assists and three rebounds. Derrick Favors added 15 points and seven rebounds for Utah, which has lost four straight and seven of 11. There were 11 lead changes and nine ties in the first half before the Raptors took control.

## MAGIC 102, BULLS 89

Nikola Vucevic scored 24 points and rookie Mario Hezonja added a career-high 21 as Orlando beat Chicago. Victor Oladipo scored 17 points and Aaron Gordon had 13 points and 15 rebounds as Orlando coasted to an easy win. Elfrid Payton had nine points and 12 assists. Derrick Rose led Chicago with 16 points, all in the first half. Pau Gasol had 12 points and Doug McDermott was the only other Bulls player in double figures with 11. Both teams were on the second game of back-to-backs and it looked it. Orlando hit only 40.2 percent, while Chicago shot just 38.4 percent from the field.

## WIZARDS 104, TIMBERWOLVES 98

Bradley Beal scored 26 points and Alan Anderson added 18 to lead Washington to a fourth straight victory. John Wall had 14 points and 12 assists, and Beal and Anderson led a Wizards bench that outscored Minnesota's second unit 64-18. Washington shot 50 percent, hit 11 of 29 3-pointers and scored 50 points in the paint to overcome 17 turnovers. Ricky Rubio had 22 points and six rebounds, Zach LaVine scored 21 and Karl-Anthony Towns had 14 points, 15 rebounds and five assists for the Timberwolves. Minnesota made 29 free throws to just nine for Washington, but 19 turnovers did in the young Wolves.

## CELTICS 116, TRAIL BLAZERS 93

Isaiah Thomas had 30 points to lead Boston to a fourth straight win. Avery Bradley added 17 points as the Celtics won their 12th straight at home. The streak ties Boston's longest since it won 13 straight at the Garden during the 2008-09 season. Six Boston players reached double figures and the Celtics also outscored Portland 60-34 in the paint, while committing just five turnovers. Damian



**SAN ANTONIO:** San Antonio Spurs guard Jonathon Simmons (17) drives to the basket against Detroit Pistons center Aron Baynes (12) during the second half of an NBA basketball game, Wednesday, in San Antonio. San Antonio won 97-81. — AP

Lillard led Portland with 20 points. C.J. McCollum added 17.

## GRIZZLIES 104, KINGS 98

Mike Conley scored 24 points, including 10 in the fourth quarter, to lead Memphis to a victory over Sacramento. Conley, who also had five assists, shot 9 of 12, including all three attempts from 3-point range as the Grizzlies won their second

straight and sixth in the last eight. Zach Randolph finished with 19 points and eight rebounds for Memphis, while JaMychal Green and Mario Chalmers scored 15 apiece. Chris Andersen added 10 points, including the final two free throws with 17 seconds left to seal the victory. DeMarcus Cousins led the Kings with 18 points and 16 rebounds, but was 7 of 18 from the field. Darren Collison finished with 17 points. — AP

## NBA results/standings

Orlando 102, Chicago 89; Charlotte 119, Philadelphia 99; Boston 116, Portland 93; Toronto 104, Utah 94; Houston 100, New Orleans 95; Memphis 104, Sacramento 98; Indiana 104, Milwaukee 99; Washington 104, Minnesota 98; San Antonio 97, Detroit 81; Denver 117, LA Lakers 107; LA Clippers 103, Oklahoma City 98.

Eastern Conference					Western Conference				
Atlantic Division					Northwest Division				
	W	L	PCT	GB	Oklahoma City	42	19	.689	-
Toronto	40	19	.678	-	Portland	33	29	.532	9.5
Boston	37	25	.597	4.5	Utah	28	32	.467	13.5
NY Knicks	25	37	.403	16.5	Denver	24	37	.393	18
Brooklyn	17	44	.279	24	Minnesota	19	42	.311	23
Philadelphia	8	53	.131	33	Pacific Division				
Central Division					Golden State	54	5	.915	-
Cleveland	42	17	.712	-	LA Clippers	40	20	.667	14.5
Indiana	32	29	.525	11	Sacramento	24	35	.407	30
Detroit	31	30	.508	12	Phoenix	15	45	.250	39.5
Chicago	30	30	.500	12.5	LA Lakers	12	50	.194	43.5
Milwaukee	25	36	.410	18	Southwest Division				
Southeast Division					San Antonio	51	9	.850	-
Miami	34	26	.567	-	Memphis	36	24	.600	15
Atlanta	33	28	.541	1.5	Dallas	33	28	.541	18.5
Charlotte	32	28	.533	2	Houston	30	31	.492	21.5
Washington	30	30	.500	4	New Orleans	23	36	.390	27.5
Orlando	27	33	.450	7					



BAYERN LOSE PERFECT HOME RECORD TO GIVE DORTMUND HOPE

**BERLIN:** Bayern Munich suffered a shock 2-1 defeat to Mainz on Wednesday, losing their 100 percent home record this season, as their lead in the Bundesliga was trimmed to five points.

The result shakes up the title race ahead of tomorrow's crunch clash when Pep Guardiola's Bayern play at second-placed Borussia Dortmund.

Colombia striker Jhon Cordoba came off the bench to seal only Mainz's second victory

in Munich with the winner on 86 minutes to finish off a counter-attack. "We had our chances and then let them counter-attack. We shouldn't have allowed that to happen," fumed Bayern's goal-scorer Arjen Robben.

Mainz took a shock lead at the Allianz Arena when Spanish winger Jairo fired home in the first-half with the Bayern defence well beaten. Robben pulled a goal back for the Bavarians on 64 minutes.

Despite Mainz managing only 22 per-

cent of possession, Cordoba grabbed the late winner and was mobbed by his teammates. "We knew how we could win here with a strong defensive display and a good counter-attack," said Mainz coach Martin Schmidt, who praised his side's 'outstanding display'. "It feels really good."

Dortmund's 2-0 win at Darmstadt on Wednesday cut Bayern's lead from eight points to five as another Colombia striker, Adrian Ramos, and defender Erik Durm net-

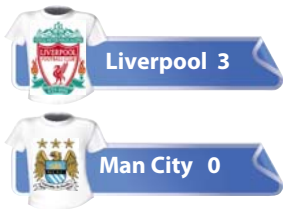
ted. "We and Bayern both know that things can now be a bit tight. We want to win the thing," said Dortmund's Germany defender Durm.

Hertha Berlin cemented third place, but remain 15 points adrift of Dortmund, with a 2-0 win over Eintracht Frankfurt in the capital. Ivory Coast striker Salomon Kalou and Mitchell Weiser scored to keep Hertha on course for a first return to the Champions League since 2000. — AFP



**LIVERPOOL:** Liverpool's Emre Can, centre, fights for the ball against Manchester City's Sergio Aguero during the English Premier League soccer match between Liverpool and Manchester City at Anfield Stadium, Liverpool, England, Wednesday. — AP

LIVERPOOL ROUT MAN CITY TO AVENGE LEAGUE CUP HEARTACHE



indebted to goalkeeper Willy Caballero's three penalty saves. But both were absent for this rematch, with Caballero resuming his place on the bench as Joe Hart returned for this critical match while Toure was absent with a foot problem.

Liverpool's best player on Sunday had been Lucas Leiva, deputising in central defence, but he was missing on this occasion due to a thigh problem as Reds boss Jurgen Klopp made five changes.

Daniel Sturridge was also sidelined, but any Liverpool fears about their attacking intent without the England forward were soon forgotten. As a result of Liverpool's switches, the home side looked much fresher than City. The Reds enjoyed far more possession as the first half progressed but City's defence, led by the ever-impressive Vincent Kompany, refused to be cowed.

City produced few clear-cut chances as one Sterling effort flew into the Kop end but Liverpool then found another gear and set themselves on the path to victory.

After 33 minutes, Lallana had few options available from 30 yards out so decided to test Hart and his surprising effort snuck into the bottom corner. The goal caught Hart, and Anfield, unawares and was initially barely cel-

ebrated as few in the stadium knew it had settled in the back of the net.

SLICE OF LUCK

However, four minutes before the break there was absolutely no doubt that Milner had doubled the lead as he finished off a wonderful passing move to poke past Hart.

Seconds before the interval, Liverpool also got a slice of luck where Milner clearly handballed a Sergio Aguero header from a corner but it was missed by the officials.

The incident was an indicator that it would be Liverpool's night and they confirmed that after the restart.

A vocal and excited Anfield urged Liverpool forwards and Firmino was again at the heart of the action in the second half, pulling the strings against a City side that began to look increasingly ragged.

Liverpool's freshness paid off again as Firmino capped off a superb passing move.

Gael Clichy's poor tackle allowed Lallana to pick the ball up outside the penalty area and his inch perfect pass found Firmino, who slotted into the far corner.

Liverpool continued to hunt for goals and Hart had to be at his very best shortly after the third goal. — AFP

JUVE SECURE MILAN CUP FINAL AFTER INTER SCARE

**MILAN:** Holders Juventus suffered an almighty scare on their way to a second successive Italian Cup final, dominating Inter Milan at a penalty shoot-out after Roberto Mancini's men won 3-0 on the night to level their semi-final tie.

Juventus, who claimed their first league and Cup double in 20 years last May, will now meet AC Milan in the May 21 at Rome's Olympic Stadium.

But in a rain-hit San Siro encounter that saw Inter dominate throughout, Juve coach Massimiliano Allegri was soon regretting his decision to deploy a second string side.

With a 3-0 cushion from the first leg, Allegri rested goalkeeper Gianluigi Buffon and striker Mario Mandzukic, while Giorgio Chiellini, Claudio Marchisio and Martin Caceres were all injured.

But, under the cosh following a string of poor results, Mancini cracked the whip and the Nerazzurri responded in style to take a 2-0 lead by the 49th minute thanks to Marcelo Brozovic and Ivan Perisic.

When Brozovic hit his second from the spot eight minutes from time after a dubious penalty decision, the tie was forced to extra time.

After two thrilling but goalless periods, Rodrigo Palacio's miss from the spot made the difference as Juve stayed on track for a second consecutive double.

Defender Leonardo Bonucci scored Juve's fifth and final spot-kick to start the celebrations, although he will miss the final due to suspension after earning a caution on the night. He admitted to Rai Sport: "We made life difficult for ourselves, I think tonight we played the worst ever game since I've been at Juventus.

"We were lucky to take it to penalties... we didn't have the right approach to the game. Inter didn't have anything to lose, and we made it easy for them."

Inter coach Roberto Mancini could only lament: "We deserved to win this. We were very unlucky.

"But it was a great performance. I can only compliment the lads. I hope this gives us the extra spur to try and finish in third place."

Inter threatened from the outset, Perisic drilling just wide of Norberto Neto's upright but the hosts were rewarded for their efforts on 17 minutes when Slovenian midfielder Brozovic fired past Neto after Gary Medel had bundled Hernanes off the ball.

Juve looked out of sorts and another error, this time from Daniele Rugani, allowed Adem Ljajic to unleash a curling shot that bounced off the top of the bar.

Ljajic, meanwhile, fired inches wide of the near post to give Juve plenty of reason for reflection at the interval.

Inter resumed in similar fashion and after just four minutes Eder burst down the right to fire a perfect delivery for Perisic, who tapped the ball past Neto at the back post. — AFP



**MILAN:** Inter Milan's Marcelo Brozovic scores on a penalty during the Italian Cup second leg semifinal soccer match between Inter Milan and Juventus at the San Siro stadium in Milan, Italy, Wednesday. — AP



## CECH, KOSCIELNY BLOWS ADD TO ARSENAL WOE



**LONDON:** Arsenal will be without goalkeeper Petr Cech and centre-back Laurent Koscielny for tomorrow's trip to Tottenham Hotspur, manager Arsene Wenger revealed after Wednesday's 2-1 loss to Swansea City.

"Cech got a muscular problem at the end of the game," Wenger said. "He will not play on Saturday. I have full faith in (David) Ospina." On Koscielny, he added: "He has a calf problem as well. He will not play on

Saturday." The double injury blow will have blackened Wenger's mood yet further after a result that left Arsenal six points below Premier League leaders Leicester City in third place. It was Arsenal's third defeat in a row, after previous losses at the hands of Barcelona and Manchester United, and saw them booed off by their own fans at the Emirates Stadium.

Wayne Routledge cancelled out Joel Campbell's early opener for Arsenal before Ashley Williams bundled in a 74th-minute winner. "It is a very unlucky defeat because we created many chances and we were unlucky in our finishing," said Wenger, whose side hit the woodwork three times. "The two shots on target they had in the whole game were the two goals. It's a very disappointing result and the players are very down. We have to respond to that.

"It looks a bit like a confidence issue. We have to focus on our job and come back, reminding ourselves that we have some quality as well. Analyse it well and bounce back. We have a big game in three days. "At the moment I am more worried about our results (than the title race). We just lost three games and that is always a very difficult moment for the team.

"At the moment we don't dream, we are realistic. We must come back to what we do well and do the basics."

### 'NOT IN THE MOOD'

Wenger defended his decision to send Danny Welbeck on for Campbell in the second half, a move that drew derision from Arsenal fans and cries of "You don't know what you're doing!"

"Campbell has not played for a while

and he started to tire," the Frenchman said. "He played against a very young left-back and I thought Welbeck could give him some problems with his runs behind.

"These kind of decisions don't mean that Campbell did badly. I think he did quite well tonight (Wednesday), but there was room on that flank to be very dangerous with pace. "We have to take the fans on our side. They were ready to support us tonight. "They were quite good, but we faded in the game and you could see in the last part we had a lack of movement to create dangerous situations. "We will not talk about titles tonight. I'm not in the mood. It's a big disappointment." Swansea's win was all the more remarkable given they were without head coach Francesco Guidolin, who had been admitted to hospital with a lung infection. — AFP



**MANCHESTER:** Manchester United's Juan Mata, second from right, scores his side's first goal of the game, during the English Premier League soccer match between Manchester United and Watford, at Old Trafford, in Manchester, England, Wednesday. — AP

## MATA GIVES MAN UNITED'S TOP-FOUR CHASE FLIGHT



**MANCHESTER:** Juan Mata's late free-kick earned Manchester United a 1-0 home win over Watford on Wednesday, a fourth successive victory that lifted their hopes of Champions League qualification.

Mata struck seven minutes from the end against a Watford side who deserved at least a point and who missed a host of chances, with Odion Ighalo the biggest culprit.

United's teenage striker Marcus Rashford was unable to keep up the remarkable form that had brought him four goals in his first two games at senior level.

But Louis van Gaal's side still managed to grind out a victory that allowed them to close the gap on the Premier League's top four, all of whom dropped points in the mid-week matches.

Van Gaal stuck with Rashford in attack, with the fit-again Anthony Martial returning wide on the right.

He gave another teenager a full debut at centre-back, as Tim Fosu-Mensah came in for Michael Carrick, with Chris

Smalling still unavailable following a shoulder injury.

United's vigour caused Watford early concern, with a panicked Jose Holebas slicing Daley Blind's left-wing cross towards his own goalkeeper, and Martial misdirecting a free header wide after Ander Herrera's cross found him at the far post.

Ighalo's alertness provided a test for the home defence. Blind did well to deflect one effort past the post, and then was relieved to see the striker blast straight at goalkeeper David de Gea after giving the ball away 30 yards from goal.

Morgan Schneiderlin volleyed inches wide for United from just outside the penalty area, having connected sweetly with Troy Deeney's headed clearance from a Mata free-kick.

In defence, Fosu-Mensah was having a testing time. One superb challenge on Ighalo was followed by a poor one on Etienne Capoue just outside the penalty area, for which the Dutch teenager was rightly booked.

Moments later, Deeney beat Fosu-Mensah to flick on Capoue's cross and Ighalo's shot on the turn rolled inches wide with De Gea beaten.

By now, Watford should have been in front. Blind's under-hit back-pass allowed Ighalo to run clear of Fosu-Mensah, and it was as well for the home side that De Gea stood up to make the block. United's back line was fraying at the edges. De Gea saved them again when Blind allowed Guillermo Varela's pass to run through to Ighalo, who still could not find a way to score.—AFP

## ANTONIO RUINS BIRTHDAY BOY POCHETTINO'S BID FOR TOP



**LONDON:** Michail Antonio ruined Mauricio Pochettino's birthday as the West Ham winger sealed a 1-0 win that stopped Tottenham taking over at the top of the Premier League on Wednesday. Pochettino hoped to celebrate his 44th birthday by masterminding the victory that would put his club in pole position in the English top-flight for the first time since August 2009.

But Antonio struck early in the first half at Upton Park and Tottenham were unable to respond as they suffered an untimely first defeat in seven league games.

Leicester's draw against West Bromwich Albion on Tuesday had paved the way for second placed Tottenham to seize the initiative as they chase a first league title since 1961.

However, the last time Tottenham were top in March was way back in 1964 and they couldn't end that sequence following a tame display that left them three points behind Leicester ahead of Saturday's north London derby against third placed Arsenal, whose loss against Swansea on Wednesday was the only bright spot for Pochettino.

West Ham's victory kept them in the hunt for a top four finish as they try to mark their final season at Upton Park by securing an unexpected Champions League place.

Pochettino made four changes from the team that came from behind to defeat Swansea on Sunday, with Kieran Trippier, Ben Davies, Ryan Mason and Nacer Chadli selected in a bid to keep his side fresh.

But the changes did little to aid Spurs, who may also have underestimated the level of motivation in a West Ham side fired up by their vociferous fans to upstage their hated London rivals.

Whatever the cause, Slaven Bilic's side made a blistering start and stunned the lacklustre visitors with a goal in the seventh minute. From Pochettino's point of view it was a disappointing one to concede as a corner reached Antonio, who had easily escaped Chadli's attempt to mark him, and the winger had time and space to bury his header past a weak attempted save from Hugo Lloris.

### TOOTHLESS

Lloris partially redeemed himself when he sprang across goal to keep out Mark Noble's powerful long-range effort.

Pochettino's men had thrashed the Hammers 4-1 in November, but the hosts were unbeaten at home since August and it was easy to see why as their relentless pressing rendered Tottenham toothless in attack. Standing arm crossed with a furrowed brow on the touchline as rain lashed down, Pochettino was hardly having the best of birthdays and there was little sign of his players, who failed to muster a shot on target in the opening 30 minutes, lifting his mood.


As he has so often this season, Dimitri Payet was at the heart of all West Ham's best moves and he brought Lloris into action at the end of another incisive raid.

Pochettino's team finally showed signs of recapturing their recent swaggering form in the second half and Erik Lamela threatened when he headed wide from Trippier's cross.

The key moment came when Toby Alderweireld's long-range strike was parried by West Ham goalkeeper Adrian into the path of Harry Kane, but the England forward, usually so lethal in front of goal, made a complete hash of his effort. Tottenham defender Kevin Wimmer, already on a booking, might have feared a red card after tripping Emmanuel Emenike, but referee Andre Marriner instead gave a foul against the Hammers striker.

Pochettino sent on Dele Alli and Son Heung-min in the closing stages, yet the birthday boy's party was destined to end up a damp squib as Spurs ran out of steam. — AFP



A dynamic action shot from an NBA game. In the center, James Harden of the Houston Rockets (white jersey with number 13) is jumping towards the basket. He is being defended by Anthony Davis of the New Orleans Pelicans (red jersey with number 23), who is also jumping. Another Pelicans player (red jersey with number 16) is visible in the lower left. The basketball hoop and backboard are at the top of the frame. The background shows a large arena filled with spectators.

# Friday Times Sports

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HOUSTON: Houston Rockets' James Harden (13) charges into New Orleans Pelicans' Anthony Davis (23) as Alonzo Gee, right, helps defend during the second half of an NBA basketball game Wednesday in Houston. — AP

## Spurs beat Pistons to clinch playoff berth