

SUBSCRIPTION

# Kuwait Times



THE FIRST DAILY IN THE ARABIAN GULF

SATURDAY, MARCH 5, 2016

JAMADA ALAWWAL 26, 1437 AH

No: 16804

Anime, manga enthusiasts gather at Plamo Con

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Black belt Lina empowers fellow Jordanian women

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Messi hat-trick steers Barca to unbeaten record

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150 Fils

## GUNMEN KILL 16 AT YEMEN CARE HOME

### FOUR FOREIGN NUNS AMONG THE DEAD



Min 17°  
Max 30°



ADEN: Yemeni pro-government fighters inspect an elderly care home in this southern city after it was attacked by gunmen yesterday. — AFP

**ADEN:** Gunmen attacked a care home run by missionaries in Yemen's southern city of Aden yesterday, killing 16 workers including four foreign nuns, officials said. There was no immediate claim of responsibility, but Aden has seen a surge in attacks by the Islamic State group and rival Al-Qaeda. Four gunmen entered the refuge operated by Mother Teresa's Missionaries of Charity in Aden's Sheikh Othman district, killing a guard before tying up and shooting employees, security officials told AFP.

Screams of elderly residents echoed from the home during the shooting rampage, witnesses said. They recounted seeing the bodies of slain workers with their arms tied behind their backs scattered on the blood-stained floor as the aged residents cried out in fear. Apart from the four foreign nuns, the rest of those killed were Yemenis working at the facility, officials said.

Sunita Kumar, a spokeswoman for the Missionaries of Charity in the Indian city of Kolkata, said the members of the charity were "absolutely stunned" at the killing. "The sisters were to come back but they opted to stay on to serve people" in Yemen, she added. She also said that two of the killed nuns were from Rwanda and the other two were from India and Kenya.

The official sabaNews.net website cited another security source as saying that the victims were nurses, guards, cooks and other employees. They include

Yemenis, Indians and Ethiopians, the source said, adding that seven women were among those killed. The source said the assailants opened fire separately at every victim they tied up in different parts of the building. "We have never witnessed such a brutal crime," he said, adding that the killing spree lasted one hour. "I went out for Friday prayers. When I came back, I found all my friends dead," one of the residents said.

Yemeni Prime Minister Khalid Bahah said in a statement that security forces were hunting down the "terrorists" who carried out the attack. One official said the attackers were "extremists" and blamed the Islamic State group, which has been gaining ground in Aden in recent months.

It is not the first deadly attack on the Mother Teresa order in Yemen. In 1998, three of its nuns were shot dead in western Yemen by a psychiatric patient who had volunteered to fight alongside Bosnian Muslims in 1992 before returning to the Arabian Peninsula country. Once a cosmopolitan city home to thriving Hindu and Christian communities, Aden has gone from one of the world's busiest ports as a key hub of the British Empire to a largely lawless backwater. Aden's small Christian population left long ago. Unknown assailants have previously vandalized a Christian cemetery, torched a church and last year blew up an abandoned Catholic church. — Agencies

## KUWAIT REFINES OIL PRICING IN BATTLE FOR EUROPE CUSTOMERS

**DUBAI/LONDON:** OPEC member Kuwait has changed the way it prices oil for Europe, trading sources said, in a rare tactical move aimed at making its crude more competitive as the battle for customers between OPEC and non-OPEC rivals intensifies. The European market, long dominated by Russian oil supplies, has been neglected by major OPEC producers due to poor growth as they focused on expanding Asian markets.

But as Russia moved aggressively into Asian markets and with the growing global oil glut heating up the fight for customers, OPEC members such as Saudi Arabia and Iraq ramped up sales to Europe, taking on former Russian customers such as Poland and Sweden. Large sales from Iraq's Kurdistan into Europe have added to the competition over the past six months and now Kuwait - a usually little-noticed seller in Europe - is both increasing sales and making its crude more attractive.

"If we want to have a share in any market, we have to have competitive marketing. That's what we are doing ... we have a legitimate market share that we try to protect and develop," a senior trading source familiar with the

development said. Trading sources said that from late last year the state-run Kuwait Petroleum Corporation (KPC) began pricing its European exports against the dated Brent benchmark after years of following OPEC's heavyweight Saudi Arabia in pricing its oil against the Brent Weighted Average (BWAWE).

BWAWE is also used by Iran while Iraq is using dated Brent. Over the past year, because of the way they are calculated, barrels priced off dated Brent have on average been cheaper than those priced against BWAWE. "All you have to do is just to look at who the customers like from the point of view of pricing. It is pretty obvious that over the past year, they gravitated towards Iraqi and very cheap Kurdish oil," a second trading source said.

While changing its pricing policy, KPC also started trading more barrels on a spot basis in Europe, following the sale of its Rotterdam refinery to trading house Gunvor. Last month, a senior KPC official said Kuwait planned to boost output this year and sign new export deals with European customers despite "fierce competition". — Reuters

## MAN TORTURES WIFE TO DEATH

By Hanan Al-Saadoun

**KUWAIT:** A citizen was arrested yesterday in Jahra on charges of torturing his wife to death. The man had imprisoned her for three days, during which he beat and tortured her, which led to her death, according to preliminary investigations. A report from the Interior Ministry's Relations and Security Media Department referred to the suspect as A. N., a 43-year-old Kuwaiti, and the victim as D. T., also a Kuwaiti aged 33. It indicated that the man initially made an emergency call reporting that his wife died, then turned himself in to local police. The victim's body was taken to the Criminal Evidence General Department to determine the cause of death. Meanwhile, the suspect was jailed pending further legal procedures.

## SHEIKH MOHAMMAD LEAVES TO REPRESENT AMIR AT OIC SUMMIT

**KUWAIT:** Minister of State for Cabinet Affairs Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah Al-Mubarak Al-Sabah left yesterday to Indonesia to represent His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah in the extraordinary round of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation's (OIC) summit on Palestine and Holy Al-Aqsa Mosque. — KUNA



Minister of State for Cabinet Affairs Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah Al-Mubarak Al-Sabah

# JORDANIAN KING AFFIRMS COORDINATION WITH GCC

**AMMAN:** King Abdullah II of Jordan has asserted the continuous coordination and consultation with GCC leaders on how to best serve their joint interests. The King also underscored the strong ties binding the two sides. The King's remarks came in a meeting with a number of Jordanian newspaper Editor-in-Chiefs Thursday night.

King Abdullah II added that the priority of Jordan is maintaining security, adding that Jordanian Armed Forces are facing challenges on a daily basis, saying that such challenges are being dealt with efficiently, affirming his robust trust in the Jordanian army. The Jordanian leader said such challenges mirror what's taking place in the region, including the ongoing crises in the region. King Abdullah added that confronting radicalism is considered one of the top national issues that must be dealt with, particularly in raising awareness on how to protect the nation through the Jordanian media. — KUNA



King Abdullah II



## SCOUTING CONFERENCE EXTOLS KUWAITI EXPERIENCE IN HUMANITARIAN WORK

**KUWAIT:** Attendees of the eighth conference of the Arab Association for Boy Scouts and Girl Guides said yesterday that the Association makes use of the Kuwaiti experience in humanitarian work. Moreover, they called in a final statement to the conference, hosted by Kuwait, that school curricula in the Arab world should include contents on environmental awareness.

The final statement also recommended that governments and NGOs should work in unison to enhance the individual and the society. The statement further under-

scored the need to provide an environment for civil society organizations to thrive and grow.

It moreover brought attention to the need to take up the cause of "Scouts for Al-Quds or occupied Jerusalem," saying that all scouts should know about the socio-political situation in that city. The attendees agreed that all scouting outfits in Arab countries should remain true to the scouting movement by upholding its core values that seek to improve the individual and society together. — KUNA

## ARAB GROUP URGES HELP FOR HANDICAPPED CAUGHT UP IN WAR

**GENEVA:** The Arab Group at the UN Human Rights Council seeks solutions for the plight of people with special needs caught up in the maelstrom of wars and instances of terrorism, a Group official said yesterday. Representing the Group and addressing the Council's 32nd meeting in Geneva, Kuwait's delegate to the UN in this city, Ambassador Jamal Al-Ghunaim, said that the Arab countries were concerned about the fate facing many children, women, and the elderly in areas of armed struggle.

In these areas, often the pervasiveness of terrorism has absented any modicum of democracy, the rule of law, and human rights, he said, underlining the fact that in such areas, and due to prolonged fighting, the infrastructure has been severely compromised, affecting in the process the quality of the lives of inhabitants of these areas. In particular, aid in these areas could not be easily delivered to

such vulnerable groups as those with special needs, children, women, and the infirm, he noted in his speech.

He said the Arab Group of nations at the UN subscribed earnestly to the notion that people with special needs should be sincerely coopted and assimilated into society with the intent of treating them as equal partners to people with no handicaps. He added that people with special needs should be afforded easy access to information, transportation, communication, taking part in daily activities, and to exercising their human rights in full.

Arab countries, he said, had shown interest in issues related to people with special needs as far back as 1998 when the Arab Organization for People with Special Needs was established, noting that these countries have enlisted addressing the rights of people with special needs as a primary priority among issues for the Arab Development Plan for 2030. — KUNA



**KUWAIT:** Ambassador of Bulgaria to Kuwait Alexander Olshevski hosted a ceremony recently to celebrate his country's national day. Senior officials, diplomats and other dignitaries attended the event. — Photos by Joseph Shagra



Crime

Report



A wrecked vehicle is pictured following a fatal accident reported at the Sixth Ring Road.

MAN KILLED IN SIXTH RING ROAD ACCIDENT

By Hanan Al-Saadoun

**KUWAIT:** A motorist died after his car was involved in an accident and flipped over on Sixth Ring Road Thursday. Jahra occupational center dealt with accident and removed the body of the deceased from the car.



**KUWAIT:** Public Works Minister Ali Al-Omair is seen during a tour of the fifth constituency yesterday. — Photos by Fouad Al-Shaikh

PUBLIC WORKS MINISTER TOURS FIFTH CONSTITUENCY

By Meshaal Al-Enezi

**KUWAIT:** Public Works Minister Ali Al-Omair said there must be solutions for traffic congestions in the fifth constituency, adding that these solutions must come through the Ministry of Public Works (MPW) and the Interior Ministry's General Traffic Department. During a tour around the fifth constituency at and invitation from MP Ahmad Al-Azmi yesterday, Omair said that the goal behind the tour was to see firsthand and reduce the suffering of the area's residents. "We heard several proposals and we will do our best to put them into action," he said. Omair said that some of the projects are already underway and others are going through the usual procedures to obtain approvals from the State Audit Bureau, as well as allocation of budgets from the finance ministry.

Meanwhile, Azmi said they were briefed on the needs of the area including roads, landscaping and traffic congestions near Dhaher bridge. The citizens in the fifth constituency are suffering from many obstacles and are in need for the government to



Public Works Minister Ali Al-Omair speaks to reporters.



MP Ahmad Al-Azmi speaks.



Assistant Undersecretary for Traffic Affairs Major General Abdullah Al-Muhanna

meet their ambitions.

Meanwhile, Assistant Undersecretary for Traffic Affairs Major General Abdullah Al-Muhanna said the traffic department is performing its role in the roads issue through the five-party committee. He said that Dhaher and surrounding areas are suffering from traffic as King Fahd Road has changed from an expressway due to the many exits and detours.



Suspects arrested after police raided a liquor factory in Salwa.

Liquor factory closed

Hawally security closed down a liquor factory in Salwa run by seven expats, who were sent to concerned authorities. A security source said police learned about the Asians' activities and when it was confirmed, they found that it was the biggest factory in Hawally governorate. A warrant was obtained and the place was raided. 1,500 locally-made bottles were found, and 250 distilling drums were confiscated.

Medication crises

Sources said that a medication shortage crises in Kuwait might happen due to a procedural dispute between the State Audit Bureau and drugs companies over revealing their profit margins. Health ministry warehouses are witnessing a shortage of many medicines, and only the stocks of medicine in hospitals are preventing the crisis from exploding, and it may get severe in two weeks. Sources said the State Audit Bureau stopped awarding tenders because companies refused to declare their profit margins to avoid any harm to their during future tenders.

KUWAIT ORGANIZES FOOD SAFETY CONFERENCE IN MID-MARCH

**KUWAIT:** The Ministry of Health announced that it would organize the 2nd Kuwait Food Safety Conference (KFSC) on March 15-16, with the participation of several experts and specialists in this field across the globe. Dr Nawal Al-Qaoud, head of Administration of Food and Nutrition at Ministry of Health, said in a press statement that the conference aims to develop therapeutic nutrition in accordance with international standards for a speedy recovery of patients. She affirmed that therapeutic nutrition is a key factor of medical treatment, adding that the two-day event will bring together international and national experts on food safety. The event will be associated with a large fair of Kuwait's major companies specialized in nutrition, she said. It will discuss several axes on best methods to choose nutrition, food additives, their effects on food production, food preservation methods and some advices on buying healthier food, she noted. There is a ward for the best awareness design on food safety, she said, adding that everybody can participate in the competition through delivering the design at the headquarters of Al-Sabah Health Region and filling in an application form until March 10. — KUNA

KUWAITI CHARITY LOOKS AFTER ORPHANS IN JORDAN

**AMMAN:** Kuwait-based Al-Najat Charitable Society announced yesterday it would take under its wings 1,250 Syrian and Jordanian orphans. Al-Najat announced this at a ceremony in conjunction with a Jordanian charitable society in a bid to alleviate the plight of orphans of Syrian refugees and Jordanian orphans as well. The ceremony was attended by a number of Syrian and Jordanian families with orphaned children.

Director of Al-Najat, Thamer Al-Saheeb, said that a Kuwaiti group made up of twelve people representing the Kuwaiti charitable society came to the ceremony, adding that he was grateful to the embassy of Kuwait in Amman for its efforts to ease the work of Kuwaiti charitable organizations in Jordan, particularly in dealing with Syrian refugees on Jordanian soil. Spokesperson for the Jordanian charity attending the ceremony, Mahmoud Abu-Ramees, said that the charity he works for has about 2,000 orphans currently being looked after through funding by Al-Najat. He thanked all Kuwaiti charities for their benevolent care of refugees in Jordan. — KUNA

Crime

Report

Housemaid charged with employer's murder dies

**KUWAIT:** An Ethiopian maid charged with killing her employer in Andalus last month died while police were returning her to jail from the public prosecution Thursday evening. The woman's body was recovered by the coroner. The maid had allegedly killed a citizen in her twenties before attempting suicide. She was rushed to Sabah Hospital while being in a critical condition at the time, where she attempted suicide several times but failed. A security source said that while the maid was being returned to the central prison from the prosecution, a policeman found her unconscious, so he alerted prison security. They called in doctors, who pronounced her dead. An investigation went underway to determine the cause of death.

Medical staff assaulted

A dispute between a female patient and two citizens who work in Jahra polyclinic led to the beating of the two employees by the patient's husband. The two employees told police that were insulted and beaten by a person, who escaped. Detectives are looking for the suspect. — Al-Anbaa

# KUWAIT'S ANIME, MANGA COMMUNITY GATHER AT PLAMO CON

## KEY ANIMATOR, VOICE ACTOR ATTEND CONVENTION

By Ben Garcia

**KUWAIT:** Various Japanese arts including anime, manga, comics, and cosplay are on display at 'Plamo Con,' a convention and exhibition which kicked off at the Zain Tent near 360 Mall on Thursday evening. The three-day event is organized by Plamo Con, Kuwait's first official home of Japanese animation characters. Plamo Con is hosting the seventh event in cooperation with the Japanese Embassy.

"When we first organized the event in 2012, I was really surprised to know that a lot of people in Kuwait really like Japanese anime and cosplay," said Yousef Fawzi Mustafa Karam, President of

Plamo Con. "the excitement of our customers and participants has never demised ever since."

Japan's embassy officials lead by Ambassador Takashi Ashiki attended the event. "We consider this as a pop-culture event," Ashiki said. "A lot of Kuwaiti young men and women were in attendance; many of them dressed as (anime and video games) characters that they like. We planned this event for them to come together under one roof."

The event, which concludes today, also hosts a best cosplay contest and video game tournaments, held for the first time. Some of the winners selected will qualify to participate in competitions to be held in Japan in August 2016.



KUWAIT: Yousef Fawzi Mustafa Karam, President of Plamo Con (left).

— Photos by Joseph Shagra





**Celebrity guests**

This year's event also hosted a famous Japanese animator and Lebanese voice actor, who supervised a number of workshops and gave lectures at the venue. "The visit of Masami Suda, a celebrity guest from Japan, gives a lot of credence to the event," Karam said, crediting the Japanese Ambassador's help to facilitate the key animator's arrival to Kuwait. Suda is credited for his work on *Fist of the North Star*, *Pokémon the Movie 2000*, the *Dragon Ball* movies and *Gatchaman*, among others famous works.

In addition, the event's organizers invited Jihad Al-Attrash, a famous voice actor from Lebanon. "His most famous work is doing the Arabic voiceover for 'Duke Fleed,' the main character in the famous anime

*Grendizer*," Karam said. A famous super-robot animation that debuted on Japanese television in 1975, *Grendizer* has maintained relevance in the Middle East for over thirty years ever since the Arabic-dubbed version was broadcasted in Arab countries.

Plamo Con visitors have the chance to meet Suda and Attrash and receive signed copies of animation character sketches from them. They are also participating as judges in the cosplay contest, Karam said.

The event has attracted visitors not only from Kuwait, but also from Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries such as Bahrain, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates, Karam said. "We also have video terminals from various parts of the GCC," he added.



# First horses exhibition held at Mishref Fairground

Faten Omar

**KUWAIT:** For the first time in Kuwait, Al-Buraq Academy held an exhibition for horses at the Kuwait International Fairground in Mishref. The exhibition, held under the slogan 'live the equestrian experience,' was inaugurated last Wednesday at Hall number 7. It runs until 10:00 pm this evening.

Visitors can experience equestrianism by horseback riding. "The Kuwait Riders Academy invites participation in Al-Buraq's first equestrian exhibition to introduce the benefits and the power of equestrian for those young generations," said Mohammad Al-Kandari, founder of

the Kuwait Riders Academy. "(Visitors) can also enjoy a special show performed by our outstanding horse riders, in addition to an introductory lecture that will be talking about horses, their uses in the past and present as well as their living environments and their dietary system."

Kandari told Kuwait Times that he was happy to participate in the first exhibition for horses in Kuwait where visitors can find everything about horses in one place. "Kuwait Riders Academy provides affordable equestrian services for enthusiasts and professionals alike since 2007. We are giving courses and workshops for people all ages to learn more about horse riding," he said.

Kandari added that the Kuwait Riders Academy teaches according to the British Horse Society. When riders finish their courses, they can join the British Horse Society to become more professional, Kandari said, adding that his academy offers educational camping trips in the United Kingdom, Turkey, and Holland.

The exhibition held an auction for 70 Arabian horses. In addition, several public and private bodies participated in the event, including the Ministry of Interior, the Ministry of Defense, Ali Alghanim and Sons Automotive, The Kuwaiti Society for Arabian Horses, and Kuwait's equine art gallery.



**KUWAIT:** Mohammad Al-Kandari, founder of the Kuwait Riders Academy. — photos by Joseph Shagra



# International

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**DETROIT:** Republican presidential candidate, businessman Donald Trump (second left) gestures as Sen Marco Rubio, Sen Ted Cruz and Ohio Gov John Kasich watch him at a Republican presidential primary debate at Fox Theatre on Thursday. — AP

## RIVALS BLITZ TRUMP AT DEBATE

### MORE SCHOOLYARD TAUNTS, CHARGES OF LYING

**DETROIT:** Chief rivals to US Republican presidential front-runner Donald Trump assailed him for shifting positions on the issues at a debate, but said in the end they would reluctantly support him if he were their party's nominee. Under questioning by Fox News Channel moderators on Thursday, US Senators Marco Rubio of Florida and Ted Cruz of Texas and Ohio Governor John Kasich made the promise despite efforts by party elders to build an anti-Trump coalition of Republican voters to pick someone other than the incendiary New York billionaire.

Hours earlier 2012 Republican nominee Mitt Romney in a speech blasted Trump, a former reality TV show host, as an unelectable fraud whose nomination would ensure victory for Democratic front-runner Hillary Clinton in the Nov 8 election to succeed Democratic President Barack Obama. Tempers escalated quickly at the two-hour debate and, as in previous encounters, the battle descended into schoolyard taunts between Trump, Rubio and Cruz with accusations of lying and even a reference to male genitalia.

While Trump's three rivals followed party dogma, insisting they would set aside their concerns and rally around the ultimate nominee, they said they did so reluctantly if Trump were to emerge as the candidate for the general election. "Sometimes he makes it a little bit hard," said Kasich, 63. Trump, asked if he would support the Republican nominee if it was someone other than him, seemed startled by the question given the momentum behind him, but eventually said, "Yes I will." Trump, 69, defended himself from Romney's blistering rebuke and called Romney a failed candidate.

With the Florida and Ohio primary votes looming on March 15 as make-or-break for the anti-Trump forces, Trump provided some ammunition to his critics. Trump shrugged when presented with videotaped evidence from the moderators that he had shifted

positions on the Iraq war, immigration and whether to admit refugees from the Syrian civil war. "You have to show a degree of flexibility," he said.

Both Rubio and Cruz pounced. "I hope we don't see yoga on this stage," Cruz said. Replied Rubio: "Well, he's very flexible so you never know." It remained to be seen whether the debate would prove to be damaging to Trump. The runaway frontrunner to date has been immune from criticism that other politicians normally face, for instance, over flip-flopping on issues.

While Trump saw the greatest number of overall mentions on social media site Twitter, an analysis showed that 63 percent of the tweets expressing an opinion on him were negative, according to social media analytics firm Brandwatch which separated objective tweets from opinionated tweets in its analysis. The rating marks a decline in positive sentiment for Trump. In the last two Republican debates, Trump broke even in terms of positive and negative mentions, according to the firm's analysis, while he enjoyed a 62.5 percent positive sentiment rating during the Republican debate before that.

#### Immigration, Foreign Workers

Rubio, 44, and Cruz, 45, questioned Trump's immigration policy and his use of foreign workers at his exclusive Mar-a-Lago resort in Palm Beach, Florida. Cruz demanded Trump release an audiotape of an off-the-record session he had with New York Times editorial writers on Jan 5. Cruz and others have suggested that in the session Trump might have been more flexible on immigration than in public statements insisting he would build a wall between the United States and Mexico and deport 11 million illegal immigrants.

Trump refused to release the tape but said he would be flexible, for instance, on the height of the wall. He also abruptly changed his position on foreign workers, saying more of them

who are highly skilled should be allowed to remain in the United States. Rubio pressed Trump on the foreign workers he has imported to work at his Palm Beach resort, jobs he said could go to Americans. Trump said the workers were for a short November-to-March season. "People don't want a short-term job," Trump said. "So we bring people in and we send people out."

#### 'Give Me a Break'

Rubio asked Trump why he does not bring his clothing-making operations to the United States from China and Mexico if he is so interested in bringing jobs home, a central tenet of his unconventional campaign. "This little guy has lied so much about my record," Trump said in response to Rubio, adding that he had begun bringing some clothing operations home from overseas. But Rubio persisted: "The answer is he's not going to do it ... The reason he makes it in China and Mexico is because he can make more money on it."

Fox News moderator Megyn Kelly, who famously clashed with Trump at the first Republican debate last August, generated a fresh exchange in pressing Trump to explain his involvement with Trump University, a now-defunct online education company that has faced lawsuits from people who feel they paid out money for Trump U and got nothing in return. "Give me a break," said Trump. "Let's see what happens in court."

Rubio accused Trump of fleecing everyday Americans for personal gain. "He's trying to do to the American voter what he did to the people who signed up for this course," Rubio said. The debate went down a negative path early on when Trump responded to Rubio's contention last month that Trump had "small hands". "Look at these hands," Trump said, flashing his two hands to the crowd. He dismissed any suggestion he might be small elsewhere, Trump said: "I guarantee you there is no problem." — Reuters

# SHABAB 'CAN SURVIVE FOR 30 YEARS'

**NAIROBI:** On a Sunday afternoon in late February a car exploded outside a crowded restaurant in Baidoa, Somalia, and moments later a suicide bomber blew himself up among fleeing survivors. At least 30 people died in the attack, the latest by the Shabab, a Somali-led Al-Qaeda group in East Africa that continues to defy repeated predictions of its demise. Two days before the Baidoa bombings 14 people were killed when two bombs exploded outside a hotel and a public park in the capital Mogadishu.

One was a 200 kg homemade bomb, only the second time Shabab has used such a large device. The first was in July and the explosion tore the side off a six-storey hotel. Five weeks earlier, 19 were killed in a bomb and gun attack on a restaurant on Mogadishu's Lido Beach. It is not just civilians who are targeted. On Jan 15, Shabab fighters overran a military outpost in El-Adde, southern Somalia, manned by up to 200 Kenyan soldiers deployed as part of the African Union peace-enforcement mission, AMISOM. Kenya has refused to say how many of its soldiers were killed in the attack.

Matt Bryden, director of Sahan Research, a Nairobi-based think tank, described the first such attack, on a Burundian forward operating base in Lego last June, as "a threshold operation". Its success meant that assaults on isolated company-sized AMISOM units became their "standard operating procedure". AMISOM's effectiveness is hampered by suspicion and jealousy among the



**MOGADISHU:** A man looks at the dead body of a person killed during an attack in the center of the Somali capital on Feb 26, 2016. — AFP

main troop contributing countries and a lack of coordination, funds, focus and will. It is also struggling to adapt to a rural counter-insurgency after its eventual success in urban combat pushed Shabab out of Mogadishu five years ago.

"AMISOM is fighting the wrong war," said Stig Jarle Hansen, a Norwegian academic and author of a forthcoming book on jihad in Africa. "AMISOM watches their own back, they are in their garrisons, they go out patrolling once a week and the rest of the week the Shabab is on top of

things." By enforcing local support, "Shabab can survive for 30 years," said Hansen. The heavy losses inflicted on the Burundians in Lego, the Ugandans in Janale and Kenyans in El-Adde have cowed AMISOM, which has retreated from some areas and hunkered down in others. "Since AMISOM is not in an offensive posture, Shabab has plenty of space to think, plan and prepare," said Bryden.

Hitting AMISOM makes sense for Shabab because in the absence of a functioning national

army, the 22,000-strong force is the only protector of the internationally-backed government the jihadists are committed to overthrowing. Similarly, the killing of civilians serves to undermine confidence in the government. "They are attacking signs of normality," said Hansen by shooting up a beachside restaurant, turning a public garden into a slaughter ground or blowing up football fans. The message is clear, said Cedric Barnes, Horn of Africa director at the International Crisis Group research organization: "Shabab is saying, 'There is no normality, no security, it's not Somalia Rising, who are you trying to kid?'"

## Shabab Reborn

With a change of government due later this year, the tempo of Shabab attacks appears to be rising in an effort to undermine the already-shaky legitimacy of the process, said Barnes. The style of attack is also shifting, said Ken Menkhaus, a professor at Davidson College in the US. "Shabab is launching more spectacular attacks, looking for maximum bang for its buck," said Menkhaus. The city attacks also underscore Shabab's continued infiltration of government areas and the ease with which it can use corruption and sympathetic insiders to subvert security arrangements, moving truck bombs through roadblocks or - as in a botched plot in February - placing a laptop bomb on a plane inside an airport that is supposed to be the best-protected place in the country. — AFP

# 'SOCIAL CURSE' OF DEBT RAISES WORRIES IN QATAR

## SOME CITIZENS LIVING BEYOND THEIR MEANS

**DOHA:** Credit cards on the limit, huge bank borrowings and a struggle to repay loans: these are the personal debt problems of some Qataris despite the Gulf state's reputation for fabulous wealth. Generous government salaries and free healthcare, funded by vast natural gas reserves in a country with only about 300,000 citizens, do not always translate into healthy bank balances for ordinary Qataris.

Instead, they can come under intense social pressure to live way beyond their means, spending lavishly on everything from the latest smart phones and designer fashions to family weddings. Now their problems are deepening as diving global energy prices mean even the Qatari welfare state is becoming less generous.

Many are borrowing enormous sums from local banks to finance lifestyles they cannot afford, according to a study by Qatar University. "The idea of Qataris being a small, lucky, happy few - it's a myth," said Laurent Lambert, of the university's Social and Economic Survey Research Institute. "Many do not have the income to match the lifestyle and a small percentage are significantly poor by local standards and struggling to make ends meet."

Widespread personal debt, while familiar throughout the Gulf where loosely-regulated banks and extravagant living are commonplace, does not yet appear to threaten Qatar's overall financial system. Of the 75 per cent of Qatari families in debt - most owe more than 250,000 riyals (\$68,700), according to a 2014 Qatar National Development Strategy report - only a handful default on their loan payments, an offence punishable by prison. But recent layoffs of some state employees and petrol price increases - reforms hastened by the sinking energy market - have refocused attention on indebtedness and the problems it could present to social cohesion if citizens start to press their relatives and the government heavily for help. While Qatar has a total population of 2.5 million, most are foreign workers who have less access to the cheap loans available in a country where a conventional banking system operates alongside - but separately from - Islamic financial institutions. Likened to a "social curse" by Qatari commentators and a "fever spreading from house to house", over-indebtedness among the much smaller local population is a raising national concern.

Radio talk shows air interviews with distressed civil servants who complain of becoming mired in debt after borrowing from banks without understanding the costs of repayment. In Friday sermons, Muslim clerics rail against those who finance holidays to Europe and

lavish wedding parties with loans that can devour salaries and lead to depression and divorce.

Part of the problem, some Qataris say, is that the country's economic boom during the era of high energy prices that lasted until mid-2014 rapidly pushed up standards of living - and expectations of what it means to be both wealthy and successful. "You cannot have a bad watch on your wrist, a second-hand car, or an old telephone. You need to have the latest models so as not to appear 'poor,'" said Mohammed al-Mari, a former traffic policeman who works in the charity sector. "People end up pretending they have money just to keep up. There is this social pressure."

Al-Mari said that while he has managed to pay off debts and save money during his career years, he knew of a recent university graduate who was struggling. "He buys the latest iPhone because his peers have it but then, at the end of the month, he sells it back to pay his bills," he said. Al-Mari recalled how a Qatari woman had recently flown to neighboring Dubai to purchase a counterfeit designer handbag. "Her friend had bought a bag that she wanted but couldn't afford," he said. As well as a culture of extravagance and conspicuous consumption among some, others decry Qatar's "welfare syndrome" that has led a generation to believe it can live carelessly and be bailed out by relatives or a paternalistic government.

## Spreading Wealth

Part of a strategy by Gulf Arab governments to distribute some of their newly-discovered wealth, loans were extended to citizens in the 1960s and '70s and again in the early 2000s to help them buy shares in the state's multi-billion dollar energy enterprises. Liberal lending by local banks, flush with funds from a fast-growing economy, was later extended to households wanting for instance to build a holiday home or buy a new car. These were handed loans, often several times their annual salary, with virtually no collateral.

"It was a free for all. Anyone could borrow basically as much they wanted," said Mohamed Al-Kubaisa, a Qatari sociologist and newspaper columnist. After concerns grew about the proliferation of loans and of Qataris unable to pay them back, the central bank imposed in 2011 a cap of two million riyals on consumer credit secured only against borrowers' salaries, with a maximum repayment period of six years. Later that year, as Arab Spring protests spread across the region, the government raised state employees' salaries by 60 per cent and by 120 per cent for military personnel. — Reuters

## News

in brief

### Israel demolishes West Bank homes

**JERUSALEM:** Israeli forces demolished dozens of structures including a school in the northern West Bank this week, leaving 10 families homeless, the UN said yesterday. The demolitions took place on Wednesday in the village of Khirbet Tana, south of Nablus in the northern West Bank. In total, 41 structures were destroyed, displacing 36 Palestinians including 11 children, the UN's humanitarian body said in a statement. COGAT, the defence ministry body responsible for coordinating Israeli government activity in the Palestinian territories, put the number of structures at 20. It said demolition orders were issued in advance. Nickolay Mladenov, UN special coordinator for the Middle East peace process, said last month the number of such demolitions has tripled on average since the start of the year. "Since the beginning of 2016, Israel has demolished, on average, 29 Palestinian-owned structures per week, three times the weekly average for 2015," he said.

### Turkey car bomb attack kills 2 police

**DIYARBAKIR, Turkey:** A car bomb and rocket attack by Kurdish militants in Turkey killed two police officers and wounded 35 people in the southeastern province of Mardin yesterday, security sources said. The bomb blast, blamed on Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK) militants, caused significant damage to a traffic police station and neighboring housing in the town of Nusaybin, near the Syrian border, the sources told Reuters. A clash broke out between police and militants after the explosion, which occurred around 6 a.m. (0400 GMT). Security force reinforcements, along with ambulances and fire engines, were sent to the area, the sources said. There was no immediate claim of responsibility. Two soldiers were killed in a clash in the Idil district of the neighboring province of Sirnak, which borders both Syria and Iraq and has seen some of the heaviest violence, the Dogan news agency said. It also said Prime Minister Ahmet Davutoglu had arrived in the province for a brief visit.



## MAJOR BUSTS SHED LIGHT ON DRUG TRADE

**BEIRUT:** A string of major drug busts in Syria and Lebanon has drawn new attention to the trade in captagon, an illegal substance that has flourished in the chaos of Syria's war. Security forces in both countries have clamped down in recent months on exports of the psychostimulant, produced in swathes of Syrian and Lebanese territory where government oversight is lax or non-existent. "When the Syrian crisis started, Lebanon and Syria were transformed into a gateway to smuggle captagon," a Lebanese security source told AFP on condition of anonymity.

"The substance wasn't invented in the past five years - but that's when smuggling operations flourished, so Lebanon became an exporting country," he said. Captagon is classified by the UN Office on Drugs and Crime as an "amphetamine-type stimulant" and usually blends amphetamines, caffeine and other substances. On Dec 30, Lebanese authorities said they, in coordination with Saudi Arabia, had seized 12 million captagon capsules and arrested the "mastermind" of a cell exporting them to the Gulf. And in October, Lebanon arrested a Saudi prince and four other Saudi nationals for attempting to smuggle out nearly two tonnes of captagon via Beirut airport, in one of the country's largest busts.

General Maamun Ammuri, head of Syria's Drug Enforcement Agency, said authorities had seized shipments amounting to 24 million captagon capsules in 2015 alone. Some five million capsules were discovered en route from Syria's Mediterranean port of Tartus to Kuwait, and other "large amounts" were confiscated along the Lebanese and Turkish borders, Ammuri said. In war-torn Syria, authorities say captagon production occurs largely in areas outside government control, including northern Aleppo and on the outskirts of the capital.

"Our documents indicate that drug traffickers are terrorist groups with two goals: First, to spread this poison in areas under the control of the Islamic State group to fund themselves and buy weapons," said Ammuri. "And second, for its fighters to use so that they become numb to their own criminal activities, like beheadings and executions," he added. A former opposition fighter who is now in Lebanon as a refugee said he used to take captagon with his fellow fighters "to eliminate fatigue and fear so we could stay up longer". "It made us brave and gave us extraordinary energy," he told AFP. Another Syrian rebel said that "IS and (Al-Qaeda affiliate) Al-Nusra Front, as well as Islamist groups, forbid the use of these drugs because they're against Islamic law." A third admitted that opposition



**DAMASCUS:** Syrian police show seized drugs and captagon pills at the Drug Enforcement Administration in the capital on Jan 4, 2016. — AFP

factions produce captagon, but said it was strictly to generate funds for rebel groups and members were banned from partaking.

### \$5-10 a Pop

In Lebanon, factories churning out captagon are largely based along the restive border with

Syria, including the towns of Arsal, Flita, and Brital in the east and Wadi Khaled in the north, the security source said. "Captagon factories don't need a lot of space. You could produce millions of capsules in a minivan without making any noise," a second security source in Lebanon said. — AFP



**SABRATHA, Libya:** Italians Gino Pollicardo (left), 55, and Filippo Calcagno, 65, are seen following their release yesterday in this Libyan city. — AFP

## ITALIAN HOSTAGES FREED IN LIBYA

**TRIPOLI:** Two Italians kidnapped last July in Libya were freed yesterday in a raid on Islamic State group hideouts in a city near the capital, officials in Libya and Rome said. The announcement came a day after Italy said that two other nationals abducted at the same time had probably been killed in clashes between jihadists and local militiamen. "Two Italian hostages were released... in Sabratha after an operation targeting several houses after information reached security forces that Daesh elements were there," the city's mayor Hussein al-Dawadi said, using an Arabic acronym for IS. "They are now at a police station in Sabratha," 70 km east of Tripoli, he added.

Gino Pollicardo, 55, and Filippo Calcagno, 65, said in a statement released by the Sabratha municipality: "We are free and are relatively well physically but are psychologically exhausted. We urgently need to return to Italy." In a video posted on the municipality's Facebook page, the pair were seen wearing tracksuits, with long beards and dishevelled hair. Pollicardo's tearful wife told Italian media: "It's over. I spoke to him on the phone."

The foreign ministry in Rome confirmed the releases, saying that the two "are no longer in the hands of their captors". "They are now under the protection of the Sabratha military council and are in good health," a statement added. The men were among four employees of Italian construction company Bonatti who were kidnapped in July 2015 in the Mellitah region west of Tripoli. — AFP

## AKP FORMS PLANS FOR STRONGER PRESIDENCY

### PROPOSALS WOULD HAND ERDOGAN EXECUTIVE POWERS

**ANKARA:** Changes to Turkey's constitution envisaged by the ruling AK Party could hand President Tayyip Erdogan new powers to draft legislation directly and pick ministers, senior officials said, moves opponents fear could entrench authoritarian rule. A cross-party commission charged with drafting a new constitution collapsed last month after the main opposition pulled out over attempts by the AKP, founded by Erdogan more than a decade ago, to change Turkey from a parliamentary to a presidential system.

Erdogan won Turkey's first popular presidential election in August 2014 and has made no secret of his ambition to imbue the largely ceremonial post with more powers. Previous heads of state had been elected by parliament. The debate over the constitution has profound implications for Turkey, a NATO member state of 79 million people with aspirations to join the European Union. The outcome could change the way Turkey is ruled and redefine issues ranging from Turkish citizenship to the protection of religious freedoms. Erdogan's supporters say an executive presidency is vital if Turkey is to have the powerful leadership it needs to take a bigger role on the world stage. They reject suggestions it is about the personal ambition of one man. His opponents say it will consolidate too much power in the hands of a leader, whose grip over the media, the judiciary and police has tightened in recent years. They fear Erdogan's roots in conservative Islamist politics will take Turkey ever further from Western standards on free speech.

Erdogan has urged parliament to take the issue to a referendum, saying he believes Turks will accept a new charter and stronger powers for the head of state. Amid opposition dissent, the AKP is readying its own draft proposals. "If it emerges that the constitutional commission cannot work, the AKP will begin work on a constitution including the presidential system and will rapidly complete it," said Mustafa Sen, a chief adviser to Prime Minister Ahmet Davutoglu. "A decision (on the AKP draft) could be reached before the summer ... We are not writing a 10-volume novel. It must not be a text of more than 60-70 articles," he told Reuters.

Several other senior AKP officials said the party's proposals, which would need the support of 14 opposition members

of parliament to be put to a national vote, were already under discussion. The plans would allow the president to dissolve parliament, officials familiar with the discussions said. Such a move would also end the president's term and trigger parliamentary and presidential elections to ensure checks and balances, they added.

Two senior AKP officials involved in the deliberations said the president would be able to issue decrees to enact legislation without consulting parliament. "The president in our proposal would be more powerful than under the US system," one of the officials said, declining to be identified because the plans have not yet been finalized. The head of state would also appoint the cabinet as well as senior figures including ambassadors and some members of the judiciary.

### 'Secretaries, Not Ministers'

The AKP has broad cross-party support for overhauling the constitution, which dates back to an era of military coups and has been repeatedly revised. But there are wide divergences over what a new charter should look like. Opposition parties want it to focus primarily on protecting minority rights and democratic freedoms. "The current system is already pretty much like a semi-presidential system ... Even if there are shortcomings, a 200-year-old parliamentary system must not be sacrificed to the ambitions of one person," said Omer Suha Aldan, a deputy from the main opposition CHP. "The president would designate and unseat (cabinet members). They wouldn't be ministers, they'd be secretaries," he said.

Erdogan, who was prime minister for more than a decade, hoped after his election as head of state for swift constitutional reform to bolster his powers. But those plans have been impeded in part because of opposition fears of creeping authoritarianism. More than 1,800 court cases have been filed against people accused of insulting Erdogan since he became president, from students and a former Miss Turkey to journalists and academics, fuelling those fears. The looming trial of two prominent editors on terrorism charges, after their opposition newspaper Cumhuriyet published video of what it said were intelligence officials trucking arms to Syria, has also raised international concern. — Reuters

## MYTH OF NO BORDERS GROUP IN 'JUNGLE'

**CALAIS, France:** They have become an influential presence behind the scenes in France's "Jungle" migrant camp in Calais, but the myth surrounding the shadowy No Borders activist group serves many agendas. As the demolition continued in the southern half of the camp, where thousands of migrants have gathered in the hope of smuggling their way to Britain, the French government has accused the "violent and extremist" No Borders group of spearheading resistance.

But distinguishing its members from the many volunteers and aid workers in the camp was often difficult. Were these mysterious radicals among the dozens of Europeans standing alongside Kurdish and Iranian refugees as they tried to block the bulldozers from destroying the Hashram Kitchen, one of the main food distribution centres? It was hard to tell. "If they're here, none of them will talk to the press, that's one of their key rules," said Maya, who works with the charity Auberge des Migrants.

She said they certainly had a more "revolutionary" air than the charities working in the camp, and were more willing to confront the police, but the image of

violent hooligans presented in some parts of the French and British press was greatly exaggerated. Anarchists, anti-globalists, agitators: these are only some of the words used to describe the group by politicians. Several thousand migrants are living in makeshift shelters on the outskirts of the northern French port city, hoping to sneak across the Channel and claim asylum in Britain. The camp has also attracted an ever-changing cast of volunteers from Britain, all trying to help, but often arriving with different ideas about how to protest the grim conditions in the Jungle.

### 'Done Lots of Good Things'

The most notorious are No Borders. But aid workers who know the inner workings of the Jungle agreed there were barely a dozen No Borders activists - a far cry from the hundreds sometimes reported by the press or authorities. "They've done lots of good things in Calais, like opening a squat for women. They are useful, talk a lot to the migrants, especially on political questions," said Maya. Around the Hashram Kitchen, the atmosphere was more "peace and love" than vio-

lent thuggery - most had the air of earnest students or ageing hippies, all dreadlocks and beanie hats. "They can be a real pain, too - doing things their own way. But their influence on the camp is minimal," Maya said.

Tom Radcliffe, a British volunteer who helped establish Help Refugees and has been living in one of the shacks cleared away this week, dismissed the idea that No Borders is a dangerous source of disorder as "absolute nonsense". "They are not sinister - they're kids," he said. "They sometimes do some rather foolish things, giving people inaccurate information. They can be immature because many of them are very young and haven't seen what happens when things go bad."

No Borders began in 1999, according to its website, and claims to fight against borders and immigration controls saying "we believe in freedom of movement for all". Calais is only one of their causes. The group says the idea that the Jungle residents cannot organize themselves and need white activists from No Borders is "profoundly racist". "There is a very strong movement which is entirely led by the migrants," they wrote on their website. For many, the biggest problem was the myth surrounding No Borders. — AFP

## BELFAST BOMB INJURES OFFICER

**BELFAST:** A prison officer was injured by a bomb which exploded under his van in Belfast yesterday, police said, warning of a "severe" threat to security forces as the centenary approaches of the 1916 anti-British Easter Rising. Police said the bomb went off shortly after the man started driving away from his home. The 52-year-old was undergoing surgery in hospital but his injuries were not life-threatening. A 1998 peace deal largely ended three decades of violence in Northern Ireland between Protestants who want to remain under British rule and Catholics favouring unification with Ireland, but violence sporadically erupts.

More attacks were "highly likely" in the coming weeks, Assistant Chief Constable Stephen Martin told a news conference. "This could have been a fatality, the people who planned this wanted to kill a prison officer," Martin said, blaming the attack on nationalists opposed to British rule. "There are people within dissident republican groupings who want to mark this centenary by killing prison officers, police officers or soldiers," he added. "We believe the threat is extremely high, at the upper end of severe."

The rebellion 100 years ago, centred in Dublin, paved the way for the Irish republic to achieve independence, while the six counties of Northern Ireland remained in the United Kingdom. It will be marked by events on both sides of the Irish border this month. Martin said police had been stepping up patrols and would try to be "culturally sensitive" at events to mark the uprising, the most dramatic chapter of Ireland's independence struggle.

Politicians on both sides of the historical divide condemned yesterday's attack. Northern Ireland's First Minister Arlene Foster called it "disgraceful and despicable". Foster's father, a police officer, survived being shot by the Irish Republican Army (IRA) in the 1970s during the violent period known as the "troubles". Deputy First Minister Martin McGuinness, a former commander in the IRA during the troubles and a senior member of the nationalist Sinn Fein party, also condemned what he called a "despicable and futile act".

In 2012, a Northern Irish prison officer was killed in a motorway shooting blamed on militant nationalists - the first such killing of a prison officer since 1993. The victim of Friday's attack worked in a training school rather than in a prison, Finlay Spratt, head of the Northern Irish Prison Officers Association, told Reuters. "This is just terrible. What can you say? We have been down this road before. These people have no justification for what they do," Spratt said. — Reuters

## TREASON AT DINNER: TORY BREXIT RIFTS TURN NASTY

### OLD RIVALRIES, GRIEVANCES COME TO THE FORE

**LONDON:** The plot was hatched over a slow-roasted shoulder of lamb: two Conservative heavyweights decided to defy Prime Minister David Cameron over Europe, igniting a feud that is creating a bitter rift in the party. The setting was the north London home of the city's charismatic mayor Boris Johnson - one of the schemers and a longtime rival of Cameron's with ambitions to replace him in Downing Street one day.

The other man was justice minister Michael Gove, an intellectual leading light of the Conservative party and friend of the prime minister who has harbored resentment against him over a high-profile demotion. Gove's wife Sarah Vine, a columnist for the Daily Mail, described the evening as "all a bit surreal", with the two MPs sitting side by side on a sofa in Johnson's "stylishly dishevelled drawing room".

It was a couple of days before Cameron went to Brussels last month for a European Union summit that has paved the way for an in-out membership referendum on June 23 that has divided Cameron's Conservatives. In the tight-knit world of Westminster and especially in Cameron's inner circle - where many members attended the same university, Oxford - old rivalries and personal grievances are coming to the fore.

### 'Spin, Smears and Threats'

is a high-risk, high stakes game from which there will be no going back, either for the prime minister or for his Tory opponents," Daily Telegraph columnist Allister Heath wrote this week. After Cameron returned from the summit and announced a date for the referendum, Gove and five other cabinet ministers broke with the prime minister's pro-EU line and joined the ranks of Brexit backers. They were quickly joined by a third of the party's MPs including Johnson, who went to Eton College with Cameron and was a member of the same exclusive dinner club when the two were at Oxford University. For an older generation of Conservatives, opposition to Europe is more an article of faith than a matter of policy - an explanation for the lev-



**LONDON:** This file photo taken on Feb 22, 2016 shows Mayor of London Boris Johnson as he leaves his home. — AFP

el of rancor. The reasoned arguments laid out in Gove's letter explaining his position quickly turned into name-calling and barbed comments from others, with parliamentary sketch writers picking up on a poisonous mood between Conservative cliques in the House of Commons. Welfare minister Iain Duncan Smith, one of the six rebels, wrote in the Daily Mail yesterday condemning "spin, smears and threats" from the pro-EU camp. "The acrimonious manner in which all this has been conducted is troubling and will I fear have consequences long beyond June 23," he said.

Foreign minister Philip Hammond has reportedly called leading eurosceptic Bill Cash a "total shit", while Johnson dismissed as "baloney" Cameron's attempt to make a positive case for staying in Europe.

Tim Bale, politics professor at Queen Mary, University of London, warned there was a risk that "a cumulative drip drip of a thousand petty cuts could turn a difficult situation into a crisis". In a fiery speech last week, Cameron launched a thinly-veiled and scathing attack on his old rival Johnson, dismissing his ideas as "for the birds" and mocking his barely concealed political ambition. Johnson hit back with an article in The Sun,

Britain's most popular newspaper, in which he mocked Cameron for "clutching the skirts of Brussels".

### 'All Guns Blazing'

"Both sides are trying to find their range at the moment. They're not engaging in close combat yet," James Forsyth, political editor at the Spectator magazine, which Johnson used to edit, told AFP. But Forsyth said the internecine conflict so far "is not anywhere near as vicious" as the 1990s when Conservative ministers openly feuded over whether Britain should adopt the Maastricht Treaty. That conflict ultimately led to the downfall of then Conservative prime minister John Major, a staunch pro-European.

The sparring over the referendum is important for Cameron's future too as he has committed to leaving office by the time of the next election in 2020 without saying when or who will replace him. Forsyth said Cameron faced a choice between a measured campaign that would allow him to unite the party afterwards or going in "all guns blazing". "I think he's temperamentally more inclined to the latter," he said, adding that the prime minister "isn't pulling his punches at the moment". — AFP

## UKRAINE REJECTS PUSH FOR REBEL POLLS

**KIEV:** Ukraine and Russia said yesterday they had not signed up to any agreements at peace talks in Paris where France and Germany pushed for elections in pro-Russian separatist regions by the end of June. The two EU powers have been mediating negotiations between Ukraine and Russia over the 23-month war in the industrial east of the former Soviet republic.

"No agreements were reached," Ukrainian Foreign Minister Pavlo Klimkin tweeted early yesterday, while his Russian counterpart Sergei Lavrov also said "no consensus" had been reached over the holding of elections in the war-torn zone. The fighting has killed nearly 9,200 people since April 2014 and raised alarm in eastern Europe about what they see as Russian President Vladimir Putin's aggressive foreign policy stance.

Berlin and Paris argue that one of the continent's worst crises since the Balkans wars of the 1990s could be settled if the rebel-run regions hold Western-monitored polls that may be recognized as valid by Kiev. But

Ukraine insists that it cannot accept such elections until a lasting and fully-verifiable ceasefire is established first. "Our position - security first," Klimkin wrote on Twitter.

Kiev has also expressed fears that Russia - already having annexed Crimea in 2014 - may try to unsettle the country further by exerting influence over the separatist Donetsk and Lugansk provinces within a reunified Ukraine. A separatist vote also threatens to unleash a popular backlash against President Petro Poroshenko whose approval rating is already a fraction of what it was when he took office shortly after parliament ousted Ukraine's Moscow-backed leadership in Feb 2014. The resulting stalemate appears to be undermining EU efforts to return calm to the outer edge of the 28-nations' eastern frontier and focus on new concerns such as the ongoing migrant crisis and the possibility of Britain leaving the union.

"We underlined the importance of adopting an electoral law to hold local elections by the end of the first half of 2016," French Foreign Minister Jean-Marc

Ayrault said at the close of the Paris meeting on Thursday with his three counterparts. He also called for the release and exchange of all prisoners and people held in "illegal detention" by the end of April. His German counterpart Frank-Walter Steinmeier did little to hide his frustration over the meeting. "I am not satisfied by the way in which Kiev and Moscow have been leading these negotiations," he told reporters.

Steinmeier had first floated the idea of the insurgents conducting their own elections in the coming months at a UN Security Council meeting on Monday. Both Moscow and a top separatist negotiator blamed the seeming failure to achieve progress on Kiev. Lavrov said Ukraine was the only side at the meeting to reject the idea of setting a firm deadline for elections in rebel-run parts of the east. "We were ready to support it but the Ukrainian side requested that it not be insisted upon. As a result, no consensus was reached," Lavrov said in comments posted on Russian foreign ministry website yesterday. — AFP



**FESSENHEIM, France:** This file photo taken on April 09, 2013 shows a reactor of the Fessenheim nuclear power plant. — AFP

## GERMANY DEMANDS FRANCE SHUT NUKE PLANT NEAR BORDER

**BERLIN:** Germany demanded yesterday that France close down its oldest nuclear plant, Fessenheim, near the German and Swiss borders - just one of several ageing atomic plants that are unsettling France's neighbors. "This power plant is very old, too old to still be in operation," said a spokesman for Environment and Nuclear Safety Minister Barbara Hendricks. "That's why the environment minister demands its closure at the earliest possible date," he said, reiterating Berlin's earlier demands.

The spokesman was reacting to media reports that claimed a 2014 incident at Fessenheim was more serious than earlier reported. Flooding had disabled electrical control systems and forced operators to launch an emergency reactor shut-down, reported public broadcaster WDR and Sueddeutsche Zeitung daily. France and Germany are close political partners at the core of the EU but have taken vastly different energy paths.

France, which gets more than 75 percent of electricity from nuclear plants, has been a leading international proponent of atomic energy. Germany - where the public mood swung against nuclear power after the 1986 Chernobyl disaster - decided after Japan's Fukushima meltdown five years ago to phase out nuclear power.

The German media reports said that Fessenheim operators in the incident decided to insert boron into the reactor cooling system, a procedure the report likened to "pulling the emergency brake". The joint news report said that operators temporarily lost full control over the plant's reactor 1 in the April 9, 2014 incident after water had incapacitated one of two parallel reactor security systems. The official reports by French nuclear safety agency ASN had not mentioned the use of boron, the media report said.

"I am not aware of any other case where a power reactor here in Western Europe suffered an incident in which it had to be shut down with the use of boron," nuclear safety expert Manfred Mertins was quoted saying. The German environment ministry spokesman, however, suggested the reports were exaggerated, stressing that Germany believed the French operators had at no stage lost the ability to shut down the reactor in a controlled way. Fessenheim houses two 900-megawatt reactors and has been running since 1977, making its France's oldest operating plant. Due to its age activists have long called for it to be permanently closed. — AFP

## EU CHIEF MEETS ERDOGAN AS MIGRANTS DOUBLE IN EUROPE

### PLANS TO RESTORE SCHENGEN FREE TRAVEL

**BRUSSELS:** A record 1.2 million asylum seekers reached Europe in 2015, more than double the previous year, new figures showed yesterday as EU head Donald Tusk met Turkey's Tayyip Erdogan on the crisis. With Tusk wrapping up a whirlwind diplomatic tour before a crucial EU-Turkey summit in Brussels on Monday, the EU unveiled a plan for saving the passport-free Schengen zone that has been jeopardized by the huge influx of migrants and refugees.

Tusk has said numbers crossing the Aegean Sea from Turkey to reach the Greek islands were "far too high" and was to push the Turkish president for more intensive help. The sea crossing has been the scene of hundreds of deaths, and a Turkish court on Friday jailed two Syrian people smugglers over the death of Aylan Kurdi, the three-year-old boy who drowned and washed up on a beach in September.

Diplomatic efforts have also done little to relieve the human misery along the Greek-Macedonia border where conditions worsened after a night of driving rain and plummeting temperatures. The humanitarian crisis is particularly acute at the Idomeni crossing where around 12,000 people are stranded after Austria and the Balkan states imposed a cap on entries, triggering a rapidly growing build-up in Greece. "It was very difficult, nobody slept, and this morning the children were crying," said Teshrina Sharif, a Syrian woman travelling alone with a three-year-old and a five-year-old.

#### Turkey Flows Must Fall 'Drastically'

Greece is the main entry point for migrants who have reached Europe by sea from Turkey over the past 14 months, prompting increasingly frantic diplomatic efforts to curb Europe's worst migration crisis since World War II. The sheer scale of the crisis that is dividing EU nations and fostering nationalist sentiment was underscored by Eurostat figures showing the number of asylum applications in 2015 doubled that of the previous year. Of the 1.25 million first-time asylum seek-



**ISTANBUL:** Turkey's President Recep Tayyip Erdogan (right) shakes hands with European Council President Donald Tusk for the media before a meeting yesterday. — AP

ers arriving in the EU, Syrians fleeing the civil war were the largest group, numbering nearly 363,000, followed by 178,200 Afghans and 121,500 Iraqis.

Germany was the single largest recipient of asylum applications in 2015, at 441,800 or some 35 percent of the total, with Hungary taking 174,400 or 14 percent and Sweden 156,100 or 12 percent. Separate figures from the EU showed that an average of 1,943 people were still crossing to Greece every day in February, way above what Brussels is expecting from Ankara.

"We need to see the flows from Turkey drastically down soon," EU Migration Commissioner Dimitris Avramopoulos told a news conference as he unveiled the bloc's new "roadmap" for Schengen. The plan calls for the end of temporary border controls reintroduced by several member states and the restoration by the end of 2016 of full free travel across the 26-country Schengen zone. Brussels also called for the creation of an EU coastguard force by the summer, help for Greece to strengthen its external border, and to ensure the cooperation of Turkey in stemming the flow of migrants.

With the UN warning the border closures could leave Athens with 70,000 people stranded on its soil in the coming weeks, the EU has offered 700 million euros in emergency funding for Greece and other states. If Schengen collapses and border controls return it could cost the EU between five billion and €18 billion (\$5.5-\$20 billion) a year - equivalent to 0.05 percent to 0.13 percent of the bloc's economic output, Brussels said.

Tusk has bluntly warned economic migrants to stay away from Europe, in remarks on Thursday as he arrived in Ankara for talks with Prime Minister Ahmet Davutoglu, who will attend the Monday Brussels summit. "Do not come to Europe," he said. "Do not believe the smugglers. Do not risk your lives and your money. It is all for nothing." The crisis now poses an "existential" threat to the EU that challenges its ideals of peace and solidarity that were formed in the ashes of World War II, former European Commission chief Jose Manuel Barroso told AFP. "I really believe it's the most serious crisis in many years the European Union is facing, probably even the most serious since the beginning of the process of European integration," Barroso said. — AFP

## ENVIRONMENTALIST MURDERED IN HONDURAS



**TEGUCIGALPA:** A man holds up a cutout portrait of slain Honduran indigenous leader and environmentalist Berta Caceres outside the coroner's office on Thursday. — AP

**TEGUCIGALPA:** Honduran indigenous activist Berta Caceres, an award-winning environmentalist, was shot and killed in her home Thursday, her family said, labeling her death an assassination. Caceres won the 2015 Goldman Prize, considered the world's top award for grassroots environmental activism, for leading the indigenous Lenca people in a struggle against a hydroelectric dam project that would flood large areas of native lands and cut off water supplies to hundreds.

Caceres's mother, Berta Flores, said police had indicated her daughter was killed in a robbery, "but we all know it was because of her struggle." Caceres, a 43-year-old mother of four who had received death threats for her activism, was shot dead in the early hours of Thursday at her home in the western town of La Esperanza, Flores told TV network Globo.

In awarding her the prize, the Goldman organization commended her for carrying on her campaign despite the threats, writing: "Her murder would not surprise her colleagues, who keep a eulogy-but hope to never have to use it. Despite these risks, she maintains a public presence in order to continue her work."

President Juan Orlando Hernandez called the

killing "a crime against Honduras" and vowed to bring the perpetrators to justice, while the secretary general of the Organization of American States, Luis Almagro, condemned the crime as "horrific". As Caceres' body lay in a hall at a union headquarters in the Honduran capital late Thursday, supporters outside shouted, "Berta is alive, the fight goes on." Some 3,000 students blocked a road elsewhere in Tegucigalpa before police dispersed them with teargas.

Honduras, which has seen an explosion of gang violence in recent years, has one of the highest murder rates in the world. Security Minister Julian Pacheco said police arrested two people, a security guard at the complex where Caceres lived and another suspect who was wounded, but he did not give further details on the investigation. He said police had measures in place to protect Caceres, who recently won a ruling by the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights granting her special security measures. Police formerly provided her an around-the-clock guard, but switched to an occasional security detail at the activist's own request, he added. — AFP

## BRAZIL EX-PRESIDENT LULA HELD IN CORRUPTION PROBE

### INVESTIGATION HAS ENSNARED POWERFUL PEOPLE

**SAO PAULO:** Police searched the home of Brazil's powerful ex-president Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva and detained him for questioning yesterday in a probe into a huge corruption scheme. Agents searched his house in Sao Paulo, the offices of the Lula Institute, and houses of family members and associates, said Jose Chrispiniano, a spokesman for Lula and his institute.

Prosecutors said Lula was being targeted

seizure and 11 for detention for questioning," prosecutors said in a statement. The operations in Rio de Janeiro, Bahia and Sao Paulo states involved probes into "corruption and money laundering, among other crimes practiced by various people in the context of the Petrobras criminal scheme."

Lula, who was president from 2003-2010, remains one of Brazil's most influential figures and his fate is closely linked to that of

and a site in Atibaia (as well as) luxury furniture," prosecutors said in their statement. Lula denies ownership of the apartment and any involvement in the Petrobras scheme.

Prosecutors, however, said that beyond the immediate issue of the properties, they were examining Lula's wider role in the alleged Petrobras-related web of corruption enveloping the Workers' Party, the Lula Institute and also campaign finances. "Former president Lula, beyond being party leader, was ultimately responsible for who would be the directors at Petrobras and was one of the main beneficiaries of the crimes," the statement said.

Acknowledging the extraordinary nature of a once hugely popular president being detained, prosecutors said: "It is not a value judgment about who he is ... but an investigative judgment based on facts and certain acts which are under suspicion." "In a republic, even famous and powerful people must come under judicial scrutiny when there is a well-founded suspicion of criminal activity."

The news came a day after a bombshell claim by a Brazilian magazine that a former close ally of Lula and Rousseff - a senior Workers' Party senator who has already been charged in the Car Wash probe - was preparing to testify against them. Senator Delcicio do Amaral, who was arrested last November, was reportedly negotiating a plea bargain deal with prosecutors in which he would testify that Rousseff obstructed the Petrobras probe and that Lula had also been involved in the scheme.

The report, although unconfirmed, sparked a furious reaction from Rousseff's government and the president said in a speech that fighting corruption was her "first priority". Both Lula and Rousseff are also facing political heat after the arrest of their former campaign manager, Joao Santana, who allegedly took money originally embezzled from Petrobras. No allegations have been made officially against Rousseff in the Petrobras scandal. But she faces a growing number of other problems that could see her removed from office. — AFP



**SAO PAULO:** A supporter of former Brazilian president Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva who gathered with others outside his residence is restrained by militarized police officers in Sao Bernardo do Campo yesterday. Police searched the home of Lula (inset) and detained him for questioning yesterday. — AFP

as part of the Operation Car Wash probe into an embezzlement and bribery conspiracy centered on state oil company Petrobras. The corruption scandal, which has already seen a Who's Who of Brazilian politicians and businessmen face charges, is believed to be the biggest ever in Brazil.

Officials said that a major sweep including detentions and searches of properties had taken place in three states. "About 200 federal police and 30 auditors served 44 warrants, including 33 warrants for search and

his successor, President Dilma Rousseff, and the future of the ruling Workers' Party. Chrispiniano called the search, in which agents were backed by armed officers, "arbitrary, illegal and unjustified."

The allegations against Lula center on a luxury seaside apartment and country house that authorities say were given to the ex-president as bribes. "There is evidence that former President Lula received assets arising from the Petrobras scheme through the allocation and renovation of a triplex apartment



**SANTO DOMINGO:** Frenchman Christophe Naudin is escorted upon arriving in the Dominican Republic yesterday. — AFP

## 'AIR COCAINE' FRENCHMAN EXTRADITED

**SANTO DOMINGO:** Frenchman Christophe Naudin arrived early yesterday in the Dominican Republic after being extradited by Egypt over his alleged involvement in the escape of two pilots jailed in a drugs case dubbed "Air Cocaine". Naudin, a 53-year-old criminologist and aviation security expert who was arrested in Cairo on February 4, is wanted in the Caribbean nation on suspicion of helping pilots Pascal Fauret and Bruno Odos flee to France in October after they had been sentenced to 20 years in prison for drug trafficking.

The pair, who maintain their innocence, were arrested in March 2013 as they were about to depart from Punta Cana in a private jet found to be carrying 680 kg of cocaine. Convicted of drug trafficking in August, they were released pending appeal but barred from leaving the Caribbean nation. They somehow managed to flee and return to France - an escape that Dominican prosecutors allege Naudin facilitated. Prosecutor Francisco Dominguez said Naudin would be charged with conspiracy and the trafficking of migrants.

Naudin arrived in Santo Domingo shortly after midnight, said Tessa Sanchez, a spokeswoman for the attorney general's office. Naudin will make an initial court appearance within 48 hours of arrival, the prosecutor told journalists. Fauret and Odos fled back to France vowing to clear their names, but were rearrested in November near the French city of Lyon. On Feb 11, an appeals court in the Dominican Republic upheld the 20-year prison sentences for the two pilots. Paris has ruled out extraditing them. — AFP

## INDIA DENIES VISAS TO US RELIGIOUS FREEDOM BODY

**WASHINGTON:** India has denied visas for a delegation from the US government agency charged with monitoring international religious freedom, the agency said on Thursday. The delegation from the US Commission on International Religious Freedom had been scheduled to leave for India yesterday for a long-planned visit with the support of the US State Department and the US embassy in New Delhi, but India had failed to issue the necessary visas, the commission said.

"We are deeply disappointed by the Indian government's denial, in effect, of these visas," USCIRF chairman Robert George said in a statement. "As a pluralistic, non-sectarian, and democratic state, and a close partner of the United States, India should have the confidence to allow our visit," he said. George said USCIRF had been able to travel to many countries, including those among the worst offenders of religious freedom, including Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, Vietnam, China, and Myanmar. "One would expect that the Indian government would allow for more transparency than have these nations, and would welcome the opportunity to convey its views directly to USCIRF."

The Indian embassy in Washington did not immediately respond to a request for comment. Last year, despite a much-heralded fresh start in US-India ties under Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi, the United States ran into problems arranging visits by the head of its office to combat human trafficking and its special envoy for gay rights. A US State Department official referred queries on the visa issue to the Indian government, but highlighted remarks by President Barack Obama on a visit to Delhi last year, in which he made a plea for freedom of religion in a country with a history of strife between Hindus and minorities.

In its 2015 report, the bipartisan USCIRF said incidents of religiously motivated and communal violence had reportedly increased for three consecutive years. It said that despite its status as a pluralistic, secular democracy, India had long struggled to protect minority religious communities or provide justice when crimes occur, creating a climate of impunity. — Reuters

## FOREIGN PATIENTS TURN TO INDIA IN SEARCH OF CUT-PRICE CURES

**NEW DELHI:** When doctors told Australian Greg Jefferys he had Hepatitis C and the disease was destroying his liver, the devastating diagnosis was compounded by the cost of a cure. Unable to afford Sovaldi, hailed as a miracle drug, the 61-year-old flew to India, one of a growing army of patients seeking out low-cost, life-saving medicines on the subcontinent. Their illnesses vary - Hepatitis C, cancer and HIV are among the most common - but they are almost always desperate, seeing in India their only hope to save their life or that of a loved one.

Their contact underground "buyers' clubs", make the trip to India to buy from a legitimate distributor or seek out shady online pharmacies promising mail-order cures. "The doctors told me 'you've got Hepatitis C, you've probably got liver cancer'," recalled Jefferys, a PhD student. "The chatter was around the new generic versions of Sovaldi being released in India. I hopped on a plane to Chennai and in about two days I had an appointment with a specialist," he said.

India earned a nickname as "the pharmacy to the developing world" for its tough stance on patents. Successive governments have taken a view that patents should be granted only for major innovations, not updates to existing compounds - allowing domestic manufacturers to make generic versions of drugs at vastly lower cost. Sovaldi, chemically known as sofosbuvir, is made by US pharmaceutical giant Gilead and costs \$84,000 for a 12-week cycle of treatment in the United States.



**NEW DELHI:** This photo taken on Jan 28, 2016 shows Babu Bhai, an employee with a pharmacy, gathering generic drugs for a customer from a storeroom. — AFP

Rejected for a patent in India, generic drug makers, some licensed by Gilead, produce versions such as Mylan's MyHep, that cost less than \$900 a cycle. "This is something I observe more and more," said Leena Menghaney, who runs Medecins Sans Frontieres' Access Campaign in India, which works to broaden access to drugs. "All kinds of people and patients across the world are starting to access medicines from India. They travel themselves, or they contact a friend," she said.

More than 130 million people live with chronic Hepatitis C worldwide, according to the World Health Organization, and 500,000 die each year from related liver diseases. Since writing

a blog, Jefferys receives 150 emails a day from people in the US, Britain and elsewhere asking for help. "India's production of these generic Hep C drugs is saving thousands of lives a week."

When Loon Gangte, a Delhi-based HIV activist was diagnosed with the virus in 1997, the price of treatment was far beyond his reach. But the advent of generic Indian anti-retrovirals saved his life - and made the country a global centre for cheap, lifesaving HIV drugs. Gangte is open about carrying medicines overseas for others and says in a decade he has been stopped just once, at Thai customs, and fined. Most countries allow patients to import small amounts of medicines only for personal use. — AFP

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## KIM ORDERS NUCLEAR ARSENAL ON 'STANDBY'

**SEOUL:** Leader Kim Jong-Un has ordered North Korea's nuclear arsenal to be readied for pre-emptive use at any time, in an expected escalation of military rhetoric following the UN Security Council's adoption of tough new sanctions on Pyongyang. The North's nuclear warheads must be deployed "on standby so as to be fired at any moment," Kim was quoted as saying by the North's official KCNA news agency yesterday.

He also warned that the situation on the divided Korean peninsula had become so dangerous that the North needed to shift its military strategy to one of "pre-emptive attack". Such bellicose rhetoric is almost routine for North Korea at times of elevated tensions. While the North is known to have a small stockpile of nuclear warheads, experts are divided about its ability to mount them on a working missile delivery system. Washington downplayed Kim's threat as posturing. "We have not seen North Korea test or demonstrate the ability to miniaturize a nuclear weapon and put it on an ICBM (intercontinental ballistic missile)," a US defense official told AFP. Still, the official added, "our forces are ready to counter-eliminate strikes if necessary".

### 'Stern Punishment'

In Seoul, President Park Geun-Hye promised South Korea would mete out "stern punishment" in the event of any North Korea provocation as she warned of a "fiercer" backlash than usual from Pyongyang over the latest UN sanctions. According to KCNA, Kim made his comments while monitoring the test firing of a new, high-calibre multiple rocket launcher on Thursday, just hours after the UN Security Council unanimously adopted the US-drafted resolution penalizing the North for its fourth nuclear test in January and long-range rocket launch last month.

South Korea's defence ministry said the North had fired half a dozen rockets about 100-150 km into the sea off its eastern coast on Thursday. In a clear threat to the neighboring South, Kim said the new rocket launcher should be "promptly deployed" along with other "recently developed" weaponry. In the wake of the "gangster-like" UN resolution pushed by the United States and its South Korean ally, North Koreans are now "waiting for an order of combat to annihilate the enemy with their surging wrath", he added.



**North Korean leader Kim Jong-Un inspects the test-firing of a new-type large-caliber multiple launch rocket system at an undisclosed location. — AFP**

The Security Council resolution adopted late Wednesday laid out the toughest sanctions imposed on Pyongyang to date over its nuclear weapons program and will, if implemented effectively, apply significant econom-

ic pressure on Kim's regime. It breaks new ground by sanctioning specific sectors key to the North Korean economy and seeking to undermine the North's use of, and access to, international transport systems. — AFP

## 'MISSING' BOOKSELLER BACK IN HONG KONG

**HONG KONG:** One of five "missing" Hong Kong booksellers who was detained on the mainland returned to the city yesterday and met police, the government said, in a case that has provoked fears of increasing Chinese interference in the semi-autonomous region. Lui Por, who has been missing since October, was among three of the booksellers who Hong Kong police said earlier this week would be released on bail. "Police met with Lui Por, who returned to Hong Kong from the mainland, this morning," a brief government statement released late yesterday said.

"Lui requested to have his missing persons case closed and expressed that there was no need for assistance from the Hong Kong government or police," it said, adding he refused to provide any more information. Hong Kong police had said that Lui and his counterparts Cheung Chi Ping and Lam Wing Kee would all be released on bail. However, police yesterday were not able to immediately provide information about Lam and Cheung when contacted by AFP.

An unnamed source quoted by the South China Morning Post said Lui was not handed over to the city's police by mainland authorities. Instead, Hong Kong police were sent to meet Lui at his Hong Kong home, according to the newspaper. "He told officers that he was safe and he did not need any assistance from the police," the source said. Meanwhile, pro-democracy lawmaker Albert Ho said Lui "must be very scared" to say he wanted to drop his case. "It's just to show the mainland authorities that he will keep quiet," Ho told AFP.

### Tearful Confessions

The five booksellers from Hong Kong's Mighty Current publishing house, known for its salacious titles critical of Beijing, went missing last year, only to turn up in mainland China. One who apparently disappeared from Hong Kong, Lee Bo, appeared on television on Monday and insisted he had not been abducted by mainland authorities. In the Phoenix TV interview, Lee said he had "resorted to illegal immigration" to get to the mainland as he did not want to draw attention to his visit and that he made the trip so he could cooperate in an investigation.

The other four booksellers, who are under criminal investigation on the mainland, also appeared on Phoenix Sunday admitting to smuggling illicit books into China. In their first appearance since they were detained, Cheung, Lui and Lam blamed the company's illegal book trade on colleague Gui Minhai in their interviews. Gui, a Swedish citizen who was among the five missing, confessed he had "explored ways to circumvent official inspections in China", in the interview Sunday. — AFP

## MAHATHIR JOINS WITH OLD ENEMIES TO PUSH OUT PM

### MOVE BRINGS TOGETHER MAHATHIR AND ANWAR

**KUALA LUMPUR:** Former Malaysian leader Mahathir Mohamad yesterday joined hands with long-standing foes, including the party of the jailed Anwar Ibrahim, to crank up pressure on scandal-plagued Prime Minister Najib Razak to quit, marking a seismic political shift. In a dramatic flourish, Mahathir read a statement signed by 58 politicians and anti-corruption activists at a news conference where he was flanked by opposition leaders and some members of the ruling party he has now quit.

"We call upon all Malaysians, irrespective of race, political affiliation, creed or parties, young and old, to join us in saving Malaysia from the government headed by Najib Razak," the statement said. One of those beside Mahathir was a close aide of his former protege, opposition leader Anwar, with whom he fell out when he was prime minister in the late 1990s. Anwar issued a statement from prison a day earlier, saying he would "support the position" of those in civil society, political parties and individuals, including Mahathir, in the push to remove Najib.

Besides demanding the resignation of the prime minister, the so-called "core" group demanded the removal of those who had covered up misdeeds, the repeal of laws that violate fundamental rights and the restoration of institutions it said had been undermined, including the police and anti-graft agency. The rainbow alliance had come together under Mahathir because its members were not powerful individually to loosen Najib's grip on power, said Oh Ei Sun, a senior fellow of the S Rajaratnam School of International Studies in Singapore. "Dr Mahathir is pulling together everybody with the lowest common denominator - dislike of Najib, as he did not succeed in earlier attempts to topple Najib," he said.



**KUALA LUMPUR: Former Malaysian prime minister Mahathir Mohamad speaks during a press conference with members of the opposition yesterday. — AFP**

A government spokesman criticized the move by Mahathir and his former enemies, saying it "demonstrated the depth of their political opportunism and desperation". "There is an existing mechanism to change the government and prime minister. It's called a general election," the spokesman said. "And it is the only mechanism that is lawful, democratic and fulfils the people's will." Najib has faced sustained pressure to resign since the middle of last year over allegations of corruption linked to the debt-laden state fund 1Malaysia Development Berhad (1MDB), and deposits into his private accounts worth around \$680 million.

He has denied any wrongdoing, maintains that he did not use the funds for personal gain, and this year he was cleared of any criminal offence or corruption. The 1MDB scandal has fuelled a sense of crisis in a country under economic strain from slumping oil prices and a prolonged slide in its currency last year.

Mahathir, Malaysia's longest-serving

leader, was once Najib's patron but has become his fiercest critic and, because of his enduring popularity, a thorn in the side of the prime minister. Last week, he quit the United Malays National Organisation, which has led every ruling coalition since Malaysia's independence in 1957, saying it had become Najib's party and he did not want to be associated with corruption.

Also at yesterday's news conference was Muhyiddin Yassin, who was sacked as deputy prime minister last year after he openly questioned Najib on the 1MDB scandal. Another was Lim Kit Siang, an opposition leader and longtime nemesis of Mahathir. Most striking was the attendance of Mohamed Azmin Ali, a right-hand man of Anwar, whom Mahathir sacked as deputy prime minister in 1998 and had jailed on sodomy charges that many observers said were politically motivated. A year ago, Anwar was jailed again on sodomy charges he said were concocted by Najib's government to eliminate the threat he posed to its hold on power. — Reuters

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NEW YORK: A "Help Wanted" sign hangs in a store window in New York. US employers added a robust 242,000 workers in February 2016 as retailers, restaurants and health care providers drove another solid month for the resilient American job market. — AP

## US TRADE GAP WIDENS TO \$45.7 BILLION

### EMPLOYERS ADD 242,000 JOBS; RATE HOLDS AT LOW 4.9%

**WASHINGTON:** The US trade deficit rose in January as American exports fell for a fourth straight month, the Commerce Department said yesterday.

The gap between exports and imports climbed to \$45.7 billion in January from a revised \$44.7 billion in December. Exports of goods and services fell 2.1 percent in January to \$176.5 billion, lowest since June 2011. Exports of industrial equipment and supplies were down. American exporters have been hurt by weakness around the world and by a strong dollar that makes US products more expensive overseas.

The high dollar should be helping imports by making them cheaper in America. But imports slid 1.3 percent to \$222.1 billion in January, lowest since April 2011. Lower oil prices explain part of the drop. Petroleum imports of \$11.2 billion were the lowest since November 2003. But January imports of autos and auto parts hit a record \$30.6 billion. The deficit in the trade of goods with China rose to \$31.1 billion in January from \$29.7 billion. The goods gap with the European Union dropped to \$12.6 billion from \$13.3 billion in December. Increasing trade deficits drag down US gross domestic product - the broadest measure of economic output. Last year, the gap between exports and imports shaved more than 0.6 percentage points off annual GDP growth of 2.4 percent.

#### Jobs growth

US employers added a robust 242,000 workers in February as retailers, restaurants and health care providers drove another solid month for the resilient American job market. The unemployment rate held steady at a low 4.9 percent. The Labor Department yesterday also revised up its estimates of job growth in December and January by a combined 30,000. Over the past three months, employers have added a strong 228,000 jobs. The gains show that the US economy has weathered a global economic slowdown and falling financial markets without suffering much blowback. The improvement will help ease fears that arose in recent weeks that a new US recession might be looming.

Yesterday's jobs report is sure to be closely monitored by the Federal Reserve and presidential candidates as a gauge of how well the economy is extending its 61/2-year rebound from the Great Recession. "Neither global headwinds, financial turbulence nor political uncertainty has dimmed American business' enthusiasm for hiring," said Sal Guatieri, a senior economist at BMO Capital Markets. "The solid jobs report should allay recession fears."

Worker pay did slip last month after having picked up in January. But more Americans who had been sitting on the sidelines began searching for jobs last month and found them. Employers expect solid consumer demand in the months

ahead even though the stock market has turned turbulent, oil prices have hurt energy industry jobs and a stronger dollar has reduced export sales.

Retailers added 54,900 jobs last month. Restaurants and bars added 40,200, the health care sector 38,100. Hiring by construction companies, retailers and health care providers has offset layoffs at manufacturers and fossil fuel companies - two sectors squeezed by the pressures of uncertainty in China, sluggishness in Europe, declining oil prices and a stronger dollar. Job losses for the mining sector - an area that includes the battered energy industry - have totaled 140,400 in the past 12 months. And manufacturing has added just 12,000 jobs over that time.

Consumers have provided the foundation for much of the job market's improvement in what's become something of a self-sustaining cycle. More than 2.7 million workers hired over the past 12 months have bolstered spending on autos, housing and meals out. With unemployment remaining low, economists say more companies should begin to raise pay to attract workers, thereby fueling more hiring and increasing people's ability to spend, invest and save.

One of the lingering weaknesses of the recovery has been tepid pay growth. Over the past 12 months, average hourly earnings have risen 2.2 percent. Earnings actually fell slightly between January and February in a sign that an expected

lift-off in incomes has yet to be achieved.

But Ian Shepherdson, chief economist at Pantheon Macroeconomics, noted that wages may have fallen because the survey for the jobs report occurred before Feb. 15, which is payday for people who are paid semimonthly. Still, the hiring has translated into more consumer spending in several key sectors. Auto sales rose 7 percent over last February to 1.3 million vehicles, according to Autodata Corp.

Purchases of existing homes rose 0.4 percent last month to a seasonally adjusted annual rate of 5.47 million, according to the National Association of Realtors. That improvement followed a solid 2015, when sales achieved their highest level in nine years. And spending at restaurants has risen 6.1 percent over the past 12 months. Still, troubles abroad have tempered US economic growth. China, the world's second-

largest economy, is struggling with high corporate debts and slower growth. Oil prices have tumbled amid relatively low demand. The strong dollar has crushed exports, while the stock market has dropped in an extended bout of volatility this year. The Fed is looking for further wage growth. The central bank is considering whether to raise interest rates again in the face of global risks that could imperil broader economic growth. In December, the Fed raised rates from record lows - its first increase in nearly a decade. —AP

## IRAQ TO PAY \$2BN IN ARREARS TO FOREIGN FIRMS

**BAGHDAD:** Iraq will pay foreign oil companies about \$2 billion in remaining arrears for 2015 this April and expects to reach an agreement over contracts by half-way through the year, the deputy oil minister said. International firms such as BP, Royal Dutch Shell, ExxonMobil, Eni and Lukoil operate in the southern oilfields under service contracts, whereby they are paid a fixed dollar fee for additional volumes produced.

Those agreements have put Baghdad's coffers under immense strain as government revenues plunge due to slumping oil prices and Iraq is in talks with foreign companies to link the fees they receive for

developing its fields to crude prices.

"The new amended agreement will help to prevent inflating production costs and getting Iraq in debt," Fayadh Al-Nema who is in charge of upstream operations told Reuters in an interview in the southern oil city of Basra.

Nema said one way of reducing companies' costs was to hand drilling operations over to Iraq's state-run drilling firm, or to replace foreign workers with locals. Iraq's output rise in 2016 will be "very modest", Nema forecast, due to the shrinking investment budgets of foreign contractors, which are affected by the drop in oil prices.

Nema said a deal with PetroChina,

ExxonMobil and other energy companies could be reached by the end of the year over investing in a project to boost output from its smaller southern oilfields.

The multi-billion dollar "Integrated South Project" consists of building oil pipelines, storage facilities and a seawater supply project to inject water from the Gulf to maintain pressure and enhance oil recovery.

Investing companies will help raise production from the Artawi and Nahr Bin Umar oilfields and build energy infrastructure. Revenues from rising output from the two oilfields will be used to repay investors, Nema said.

Nema also said Iraq was working with BP to upgrade an old water injection facility in Garmat Ali, north of Basra, to provide oilfields of Rumaila and Zubair with water needed to boost output. The project is currently pumping more than 1 million barrels of water per day, with plans to increase output to 3 million. Iraq is in talks with foreign engineering companies to build a new onshore oil port to expand the country's export capacity. The new port will have an export capacity of 2.5 million barrels per day. "We have picked the ideal location for the new oil port that will ensure we have all the flexibility needed in shipping additional oil," Nema said. — Reuters

## ON WALL ST, FEARS OF A TRUMP PRESIDENCY

**NEW YORK:** At first glance, Donald Trump is everything Wall Street likes—a billionaire whose real estate empire has provided huge business for banks, and whose luxury towers house the rich and famous.

But his surprise success in the fight to win the Republican nomination for the US presidency has sent a chill over the heart of American capitalism.

The list of fears runs long: a president Trump could launch a trade war with China; he could increase taxes on the rich; he could interfere with the Federal Reserve over monetary policy; the White House's relations with Congress could break down completely. "He scares the markets. He is a big uncertainty," said Greg Valliere, chief strategist for Horizon Investments. "The market does not like uncertainty."

Businesses are disconcerted by the off-the-cuff comments Trump renders about crucial business and economic issues almost daily since hitting the campaign trail last year.

On one side, he has denounced huge salaries for chief executives, the greed of bankers and tax advantages that benefit wealthy Wall Street fund managers. He has denounced the huge population of undocumented immigrants that effectively keeps up the supply of low-wage workers for US businesses. He attacks China and Japan for manipulating their currencies for trade advantage and threatens to start a trade war with China. At the same time, he has declared his opposition to two huge free-trade accords spanning the Pacific and Atlantic oceans.

He has even leveled attacks at the titans of US businesses such as Ford and Apple because they manufacture outside the country as well as inside. But on the other hand, Trump courts US industry leaders with promises of business tax cuts. He also praises the skills of fellow billionaire Carl Icahn, one of Wall Street's most successful activist investors, who stands out as one of Trump's few vocal backers on Wall Street.

### 'Mixed bag' platform

"He doesn't fit into any particular economic mold, he's not a traditional conservative like Ronald Reagan," said Mark Perry of the American Enterprise Institute, a conservative think tank.

"His platform is really kind of a mixed bag of populist and isolationist types of policies that, he knows, will appeal to a



**NEW YORK: New York Stock Exchange. Donald Trump's surprise success in the fight to win the Republican nomination for the US presidency has sent a chill over the heart of American capitalism. — AP**

lot of uninformed people." Former White House nominee Mitt Romney, who ran the prominent investment house Bain Capital before entering politics, gave voice to the finance community's worries Thursday, warning that under Trump "the country would sink into a prolonged recession." "A business genius he is not," Perry pointed to one of Trump's more obvious "hypocrisies"—having his own Donald J. Trump brand menswear collection manufactured in China even while blasting that country for cheap labor.

Chris Low, chief economist at FTN Financial, said some of his clients appreciate Trump's position on cutting corporate taxes. But they also fear he could spark a trade war with China that could harm US businesses.

"We live in a globally connected economy," Low said. So far, however, markets have not reacted to Trump's strong lead in the Republican White House race. Fund managers remain uncertain about his chances against the likely Democratic nominee, former secretary of state Hillary Clinton, Low said.

"Trump's success moving forward is likely to bring increased volatility," David Lafferty of Natixis Global Asset Management predicted.

Among bankers, the sentiment is generally anti-Trump. Goldman Sachs chief Lloyd Blankfein last September pointed to the US president's power to unleash a nuclear weapon. "The image

of Mr Trump with his finger on the button blows my mind," he said.

But most bankers contacted by AFP would not speak openly about their disdain for Trump, worried about possible reprisals.

"He is crazy, he has crazy policies," one prominent banker said. "He does not know how to run a business," another said. "How can he run a country?"

Still, even as he weathered four corporate bankruptcies, Trump has amassed a fortune mainly in real estate estimated at \$4.5 billion. "We sometimes forget that underneath all the things that he does—the talking, the hair, the TV shows—he does know how to build, and he does know how to do that in an extremely efficient and economical way," said Gwenda Blair, author of "The Trumps," a book about the tycoon and his family.

Whatever it feels, Wall Street doesn't have a clear alternative, with polls showing Trump's top Republican rivals, Senators Ted Cruz and Marco Rubio, both too weak to overcome his lead in the primary race.

Some in the traditionally heavily Republican finance community are prepared to turn their support to Democrat Hillary Clinton in the November election, if the other choice is Trump.

"The market is nervous about him," Valliere said. Clinton is "the devil you know," he added. "The market will live with her." — AFP

## LSE GROUP LOGS SURGING PROFITS AMID MERGER

**LONDON:** London Stock Exchange Group yesterday posted surging 2015 net profits, and repeated its support for a merger with Deutsche Boerse amid interest from US giant Intercontinental Exchange.

Earnings after taxation soared almost 167 percent to £328 million (\$462 million, 425 million euros) last year compared with its performance in 2014, LSEG said in a results statement.

The company, which runs the London and Milan exchanges, added that revenues jumped almost 50 percent to £1.325 billion. Operating profit meanwhile rallied 73 percent to £404 million.

"The group has produced another strong financial performance and continues to make excellent progress executing our strategy to be a leader in global markets infrastructure," said chief executive Xavier Rolet. Last week, the LSEG had revealed it was in merger talks with Deutsche Boerse, which manages the Frankfurt stock exchange.

"We have recently confirmed that we are in detailed discussions with Deutsche Boerse regarding a potential merger of equals," added Frenchman Rolet. "This represents a compelling opportunity to strengthen each other in an industry-defining combination, by creating a global market infrastructure group with significant benefits for our customers and shareholders."

Deutsche Boerse now has until March 22 to launch a formal offer, pending shareholder approval and the green light from regulators. However on Tuesday, global markets operator Intercontinental Exchange revealed that it was mulling an offer, raising the prospect of a bidding war. If the merger goes ahead, Deutsche Boerse shareholders would have the upper hand with 54.4 percent of the new holding company's capital, with LSEG investors having 45.6 percent.

Both the London and Frankfurt financial markets would continue doing business under their respective current brand names. — Reuters



**LONDON: The central atrium is pictured inside the London Stock Exchange in central London yesterday. London Stock Exchange Group posted surging 2015 net profits, and repeated its support for a merger with Deutsche Boerse amid interest from US giant Intercontinental Exchange. — AFP**





**TIANJIN:** Airbus President and Chief Executive Officer Fabrice Bregier speaks during the ground breaking ceremony for the Airbus A330 Completion and Delivery Center in north China's Tianjin Municipality. — AP

## AIRBUS TOUTS 400-SEAT 'A350-8000' JETLINER

**PHOENIX:** Airbus is seeking airline support for a new 400-seat jetliner provisionally dubbed the A350-8000 as competition escalates with Boeing over the world's largest two-engined jets, airline and aviation industry sources said. After talking up the possibility of a new member of its A350 family, the European planemaker has swung into an active pre-marketing phase as it responds to a recent upgrade in the competing Boeing 777.

While Boeing has scored successes in the Gulf with its biggest ever twin-engined jet, the 406-seat 777-9, Airbus is expected to aim its design at airlines that do not always require the performance needed for extreme Gulf conditions.

"It would have similar capacity and range (as the 777-9) and substantially lower seat-mile costs," Airbus sales chief John Leahy said in an interview. "We are showing it to airlines right now."

The project is the latest move in a game of leapfrog played by Airbus and Boeing over the past decade in the market for big twinjets, valued at about \$1.9 trillion over 20 years.

It marks a shift in priorities after the oil price collapse eased pressure on Airbus to upgrade its larger four-engined A380, output of which is declining because of slow sales.

Two airlines whose feedback could be decisive in whether Airbus launches the new jet are Singapore Airlines and British Airways. Singapore took delivery of its first smaller A350-900 model this week and has long been weighing up the 777-9, while putting pressure on Airbus to offer it a choice.

Both airlines declined to comment.

Airbus planemaking president Fabrice Bregier was visiting Singapore on Thursday, where a spokesman declined to comment. The A350 XWB (Extra Wide Body) family was launched after a string of setbacks in

2006 to compete with Boeing's mid-sized 787 Dreamliner and the larger 777. Boeing responded to the all-new jet by upgrading its existing 777 series to include the 777-9, which has outsold the A350-1000 by about 40 percent but has entered a lean period.

Boeing has disclosed 306 sales of 777-9s and a similar variant, while Airbus has sold 181 of its A350-1000s.

"It is clearly an airplane that is on its own in the marketplace and the airplane is selling very well," Boeing marketing chief Randy Tinseth told the Istat Americas air finance conference, referring to the latest 777 model.

### KEY DECISIONS

The new, bigger A350 would use a derivative of the latest Rolls-Royce Trent XWB planned for the A350-1000. One person briefed on the plans said it would boost thrust from the current 97,000 pounds to just over 100,000 pounds.

Airbus believes this would compete well for the majority of airline needs and head off further 777-9 sales. But some analysts said a key to the project would be how easily Rolls-Royce could expand a full slate of projects as it strives to cut costs, even if leaving the Gulf business to Boeing.

"This sounds like they are making a virtue of its lack of hot-and-high performance compared to 777-9 when maybe it's the case that Rolls can't afford, or doesn't want to, do a much bigger and substantially new engine," said Nick Cunningham of UK-based Agency Partners.

One engine expert estimated the upgrade could cost half a billion dollars and require a bigger fan and new materials.

Rolls-Royce was not immediately available for comment. To give the new A350 more capacity and compete with the 777-9 on long trips, Airbus would boost the maximum take-off weight to just over 319 tons, compared with 308 tons on the Airbus

A350-1000, the person briefed on the plans said. However it would sacrifice some range compared with the 8,000-mile A350-1000. Airbus says it has not made a final decision on whether to launch a new A350 and will provide an update at the Farnborough Airshow in July.

Meanwhile, it has been weighing up what to call the new member off the A350 XWB family, reflecting deeper decisions on market positioning that can affect billions of dollars in sales.

It needs to strike a balance between protecting sales of the A350-1000, by emphasizing differences without weakening its long-held mantra of commonality between related aircraft.

Until now, the possible new model was widely known in the industry as the A350-1100, continuing a sequence from the 276-seat A350-800 to the 315-seat A350-900 and 366-seat A350-1000.

Now, sources say it is being pre-marketed with a surprise new identity, the A350-8000, though a final decision has yet to be taken. An earlier working title was A350-1000 XL.

Leahy confirmed that Airbus was reluctant to ratify the industry's nickname of A350-1100 but declined to give details.

"You don't want it so close to the 1000 that it is an either-or decision. You have the 1000 and another airplane, with equal gaps of 40 seats between the 900 and 1000 (models), and then whatever this becomes." Eight is a number widely used by planemakers and is seen as a symbol of success in a key battleground for sales: Asia.

"Eight is a very nice number out in Asia, but we are not going to comment until we launch the program," Leahy said. Airbus will however be hoping not to repeat the omen of the previous model to carry the -8000 model number: a VIP version of its A340, only one of which was ever built. — Reuters

## IMF ASKS EU TO BE 'REALISTIC' ABOUT GREECE BAILOUT PLAN

**WASHINGTON:** The IMF called on the European Union to be more "realistic" about what Greece must do to obtain further aid under an EU bailout program agreed in July.

For several months, EU officials and the IMF have held difficult discussions on the measures Athens should take to improve the finances of the debt-ridden eurozone country, reeling from nearly six years of recession. An informal meeting Wednesday in Brussels between representatives of the International Monetary Fund and the EU's European Commission, the European Central Bank and the European Stability Mechanism made "good progress," people on both sides said.

But the IMF, which has yet to decide whether to participate in the third bailout program for Greece since 2010, sounded its recurring theme Thursday on the question of the viability of the Greek economic program. "We try to provide the realistic analysis... that's our job to be realistic," said IMF spokesman Gerry Rice said, in the face of accusations by Greek authorities that the Fund is blocking progress on unlocking funds from the EU bailout.

"Although we are very close to the positions of the three European institutions, the IMF is maintaining a very hard position" that is "incomprehensible," Greek Finance Minister Euclid Tsakalotos said Thursday. "It's not right to characterize the IMF as tough or blocking," Rice said at a media briefing in Washington. At issue is how Greece can reach the budget targets set last July in exchange for 86 billion euros (\$94.2 billion) in EU financial aid.

The targets, aimed at reaching a primary budget surplus of 3.5 percent of gross domestic product in two years, are "very ambitious" and, above all, "had never been quantified nor specified," the IMF spokesman said. The 188-nation IMF, champion of orthodox fiscal policies, does not want to alter those targets but the program "needs to add up" and allow Greece to reduce debt to sustainable levels, Rice said. Currently the debt load is nearly 180 percent of GDP. — AFP

## STRONG US PAYROLLS REPORT BOOSTS DOLLAR, STOCKS

**LONDON:** The US dollar rose along with stocks yesterday after data showed the labor market in the United States was in good shape, fanning expectations the Federal Reserve will gradually raise interest rates this year.

European and US stock markets headed for their third week of gains, with the FTSEurofirst up 1 percent and futures prices predicting a 0.5 to 0.7 percent advance when trading starts in New York.

Data from the US Labor Department showed nonfarm payrolls grew by 242,000 jobs last month, beating forecasts for 190,000 new jobs. The unemployment rate held at an eight-year low of 4.9 percent, even though more people entered the job market.

The data also showed the US added 30,000 more jobs in December and January than previously reported. The only blemish in the report was a three-cent drop in average hourly earnings, but that was mostly because of a calendar quirk. "Labor market conditions are improving, but it's really a mixed bag and should easily keep the Fed on pause. They'll pause, but not stop, and the difference is important. I still think we could see a hike in June, but not before then," said Brian Jacobsen, chief portfolio strategist at Wells Fargo Funds Management.

The dollar rose 0.3 percent against a basket of major currencies as the euro fell back to \$1.0940. The dollar was also up against the yen at 114.02 yen. — Reuters



**TOKYO:** A passer-by is reflected on an electronic board of a securities firm in Tokyo yesterday. Asian shares were mixed in cautious trading yesterday as investors awaited the release of US non-farm payroll data. — AP

## ZIMBABWE GOVT TO TAKE OVER ALL DIAMOND MINES

**HARARE:** Zimbabwean President Robert Mugabe has announced that the government will take over all the country's diamond mines to stop foreign firms from syphoning off gems without declaring them.

"We have not received much (money) from the diamond industry at all," Mugabe said in a two-hour interview screened late Thursday by state broadcaster Zimbabwe Broadcasting Corporation.

"Our people... have not been able to

see or hear what was going on and lots of swindling, smuggling have taken place and the companies that have been mining virtually robbed us of our wealth. "We have decided that this area should be a monopoly area and only the state should be able to do mining."

Mines Minister Walter Chidhakwa last month announced the government had seized diamond mines in the eastern Chiadzwa district after their licences expired. Zimbabwe last year ordered diamond mines, including

joint ventures with Chinese companies mining in the Marange district, to join a government conglomerate.

The country's diamond industry has been tainted by allegations of rights abuses including the killing and torture of workers. Reports of abuse led to an international ban of gem exports from Marange between 2009 and 2011. Diamonds were discovered in Marange in 2006, drawing thousands of small-time miners hoping to make a quick fortune.

The army cleared the area in late 2008, when rights groups said more than 200 people were killed.

The government in Harare pinned its hopes on the diamond industry to shore up the moribund economy, but with little success. Zimbabwe, which earns most of its foreign exchange through mining, saw diamond production fall to 420,000 carats in the first five months of 2015 from 660,000 carats a year earlier, according to Bloomberg News. — AFP



**HONG KONG:** An employee (back left) arranges suitcases at a shop for luggage giant Samsonite in Hong Kong yesterday. Samsonite said it would buy US luxury bag maker Tumi in a deal worth \$1.8 billion. — AFP

## SAMSONITE TO BUY US LUXURY BAG MAKER TUMI FOR \$1.8BN

### FOOTHOLD IN HIGH-END CHINESE MARKET SEEN

**HONG KONG:** Luggage giant Samsonite said yesterday it would buy US luxury bag maker Tumi in a deal worth \$1.8 billion that analysts said would give the firm a foothold in the lucrative Chinese high-end market.

In a statement to the Hong Kong exchange, where it listed five years ago, Samsonite said it would pay \$26.75 a share for the firm—a third more than its value on Wednesday before the likely buyout was sounded.

Samsonite, which saw its shares bounce more than three percent to HK\$24.45 (\$3.15) in afternoon trade following the announcement, said Tumi was a "perfect strategic fit" for its business.

"This is a transformational acquisition for Samsonite. It will meaningfully expand our presence in the highly attractive premium segment of the global business bags," Samsonite chief executive officer Ramesh Tainwala said in a separate statement.

Financial analyst Jackson Wong at brokerage firm Simsen Financial group told AFP the purchase was a "good move". "Tumi is a premium brand name... higher end names would enhance their brand image," Wong, associate director of brokerage firm

Simsen, told AFP.

"Chinese people love to buy Samsonite. However in the last few years they have been buying extremely luxurious suitcases, and that's why they are trying to go upscale."

#### 'Shopping spree'

Numerous western brands in recent years have been setting up shop in China, which is widely considered the world's biggest luxury market, as a burgeoning middle class drives a shopping frenzy.

France's Hermes-known for its luxury handbags-opened a four-storey flagship store in China's commercial capital Shanghai in 2014. US-based Samsonite raised \$1.25 billion in an initial public offering in Hong Kong in June 2011, one of several Western brands-including Prada and Esprit-seeking to use the city to boost their presence in fast-growing Asian markets, particularly China.

But the world's second-largest economy expanded 6.9 percent in 2015, the worst performance in a quarter century and a far cry from the years of double-digit increases.

The country's luxury market also took a hit from a years-long corruption crackdown. "The luxury segment has been

affected because of austerity in China, but that doesn't take away from the whole story of Tumi, there's great opportunity there," Tainwala told Bloomberg News.

The luxury brand, which sells bags for as much as \$1,300, has more than 170 stores worldwide with plans to open up to 20 more this year, according to Bloomberg. Financial analyst Dickie Wong said Samsonite made the right decision, despite slowing growth in China.

"The Chinese economy is definitely slowing down and the (tourism) market is not growing as fast as it was couple of years ago, but on the other hand, the US market is doing very well," Wong, executive director of research for Kingston Securities, told AFP.

Samsonite is planning to double annual sales to \$4.7 billion by the end of 2020 and has announced nine acquisitions since 2012. In 2014, the firm bought backpack-maker Gregory Mountain Products for \$85 million and in 2012 it acquired high-end luggage brand Hartmann for \$35 million.

"They want spend money to increase their market share, that's why they are on a shopping spree," said analyst Francis Lun of Geo Securities. — AFP

## LATVIA CRACKS DOWN ON MONEY LAUNDERING AMID OECD CONCERNS

**RIGA:** Latvia's financial regulator yesterday said it had shut down a bank catering mainly to non-resident clients from the former Soviet Union due to its involvement in money laundering.

With the OECD expected to grant Latvia membership later this year, the organization has demanded the Baltic eurozone member crack down on graft in its banking sector.

The head of Latvia's FKTK financial regulator Peters Putnins said yesterday that his organization pulled the plug on the Trasta Komerbanka due to "breaches of anti-money-laundering regulations", among other failures. He also insisted that the bank was not "systemically important" and so would have no knock-on effect on the rest of the banking sector which sells itself as a gateway to both the European Union and the eurozone.

Latvia's Finance Minister Dana Reizniece-Ozola said yesterday in Riga that she hoped the case would "serve as an example to any other banks that may still be considering whether to work on the edge of the law." Half of Latvia's 26 registered commercial banks cater to foreigners, with the vast majority of those clients coming from Russia and other countries from the former Soviet Union. The Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development in an October report said that "non-resident deposits" (NRDs) are subject to weak financial regulation and paltry penalties.

Latvian 'boutique banks' have featured in a series of money-laundering scandals including the notorious Magnitsky case in Russia and the theft of one billion dollars from Moldova's state coffers. "Latvia is joining the OECD and we have to follow the rules-but this (Trasta Komerbanka closure) is not for the OECD's sake, it's for our own sake," Putnins told AFP. "Non-resident banks have their place if they are properly regulated. We are interested in doing business, but we are not interested in dirty money and the proceeds of crime." — AFP

## NIGERIA TO BREAK STATE OIL FIRM INTO 30 COMPANIES

**ABUJA:** Nigeria is to break up its state oil firm into 30 separate companies as it seeks to reform the corruption-ridden, under-performing giant, the junior oil minister said Thursday. The Nigerian National Petroleum Corporation (NNPC) is notoriously opaque and has been accused of withholding billions of dollars in government revenue, prompting calls for an overhaul.

Nigeria is Africa's largest oil producer, accounting for a daily output of two million barrels, but most of its inhabitants are poor. The country imports most of its petrol because of a lack of domestic refining capacity. "For the first time, we are unbundling the subset of the NNPC to 30 independent companies with their own managing directors," Ibe Kachikwu, who also heads the NNPC, said in a statement. "Titles like group executive directors are going to disappear and in their place you are going to have chief executive officers and they are going to take responsibilities for their titles," he said.

"At the end of the day, the CEO of an upstream company must deliver an upstream result." Thanks to reforms already under way at the NNPC, the company should start making a profit by the end of the year, he said. Oil accounts for 90 percent of Nigeria's foreign exchange earnings and 70 percent of government revenue. But the plunge in global oil prices since mid-2014 has significantly hurt government revenue and public spending. — AFP



**SUVA:** Sanjogeeta Kiran, right, with her sister Sulva Kiran, second left, and her children Shivendera, left, and Raajeen, sit amid the debris of their home in RakiRaki, Fiji, after cyclone Winston ripped through the island nation. — AP

## CYCLONE TEARS AT FIJI'S ECONOMY

FARM, TOURISM SECTORS WORST HIT, EXPERTS PREDICT REBOUND

**WELLINGTON:** The cyclone which tore through Fiji two weeks ago, killing 43 people, was so powerful that at the Namena Island Resort, it ripped out a commercial oven and tossed it half the length of a football field.

Manager Nigel Simpson said there's almost nothing left of the small diving resort. The six guest houses are gone, and heavy equipment like generators and compressors simply vanished in winds of up to 285 kilometers (177 miles) per hour. Worst of all, Simpson fears Cyclone Winston might have smashed up the coral reef which attracts tourists to the island, although he's yet to investigate underwater. The cyclone not only demolished thousands of homes, it also tore at the fabric of the South Pacific nation's economy. Apart from tourism, which accounts for one-third of GDP, it also wiped out a significant chunk of the sugar crop, another big source of foreign income.

Fiji's government has put the initial damage estimate at about 1 billion Fijian dollars (\$472 million), equivalent to about 10 percent of the economy. Yet experts and officials say that while many of Fiji's subsistence farmers and workers are facing tough times, they don't expect the cyclone's impact on

the larger economy will be major or long-lasting. That's because, unlike Namena Island, most tourist resorts were not directly in the cyclone's path and escaped major damage. Government infrastructure in the capital Suva was also spared, and aid money and rebuilding work will provide economic stimulus.

Home to 900,000 people, Fiji is one of the most developed Pacific island nations. Yet the annual GDP per person is only about \$9,000, and about 30 percent of people live in poverty. Before the cyclone, the economy was growing at a healthy 4 percent annual clip. Attracted by sunny beaches and a relaxed way of life, some 700,000 tourists visited last year. In the month before the cyclone hit, tourist numbers set a new record for a January. Just how many tourists will cancel trips or elect not to go because of the cyclone remains to be seen. The winds hit before the peak tourist season of June through October. Caroline Currie, the regional head of economics at the Asian Development Bank's Fiji office, expects the overall economic impact to be moderate and temporary.

"What's really devastating, though, is the loss of homes and subsistence lifestyles," she

said. Particularly hard-hit are the estimated 200,000 people who rely on the sugar industry: farmers, cane-cutters, mill workers, people in related industries, and their family members. Abdul Khan, the executive chairman of the Fiji Sugar Corporation, which processes all of Fiji's sugar, said about half of this year's crop of 1.2 million metric tons of sugar cane on the main island of Viti Levu was destroyed, costing farmers about \$23 million.

Most of the 650,000 metric tons on the island of Vanua Levu survived. The storm damaged three sugar mills on Viti Levu, but they should be able to cope with the reduced harvest, which takes place from May through early July, Khan said. He said officials will distribute emergency aid for the many farmers who will be left without an income this year.

To attract tourists back, industry leaders will launch some new packages next week that will include accommodation and flights on the national airline, Fiji Airways, said Attorney-General Aiyaz Sayed-Khaiyum. "There'll be some good deals for tourists," he said. "The reality is that Fiji is quite resilient, and those resorts that were affected will be up and running soon." — AP

## SLOVAKIA'S ECONOMY STANDS OUT, BUT PUBLIC SERVICES LAG BEHIND

**BRATISLAVA:** Slovakia stands out in central Europe, as a euro zone member that has reformed its economy, kept its national debt low and attracted international investors. But when pensioner Kornel Klatt went into a hospital in Bratislava for surgery, he took his own toilet paper.

Slovakia's growth has not trickled down to health and education, tarnishing Prime Minister Robert Fico's credentials as he heads into an election today. Although his Smer party is expected to win, it is likely to lose its absolute majority. Fico has bolstered his ratings with a vocal stance against

immigration, but his popularity has fallen in the final weeks of the campaign. Teachers and nurses have staged rare protests for higher wages and more spending on schooling and health. "I received good medical care, but the building was old, the beds uncomfortable and patients had to bring cutlery and toilet paper," said Klatt, 72, who had hip surgery in December. When Slovakia broke off from the Czech Republic in 1993, it was much the poorer of the two, with defunct arms factories and an autocratic prime minister who preferred ties with Russia to convergence with the European Union and scared away investors.

That began to change in 1998, when a centre-right government took power. Slovakia joined the EU in 2004 and adopted the euro in 2009. Gross domestic product grew to 77 percent of the EU average in 2014 from 47 percent in 1995, and Fico is promising to reach 85 percent in his next term. Fico won his first four-year term in 2006 and second in 2012. He reversed some privatisations, slightly raised corporate taxes and expanded worker protection, but Slovakia remained an investor favourite. Strong growth and healthy banks have kept the budget under control and debt at half the euro zone average.

### NOT ROSY ALL AROUND

However, the average Slovak gross wage remains low by European standards at 861 euros (\$941.59) per month, less than its regional peers. That appeals to investors, but not to voters.

Slovak teachers, some of whom went on strike last month, are paid less than those in any other country in the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development, according to OECD data. And at 10.4 percent the unemployment rate is far above the Czech Republic's 6.4 percent. A third of the labour force is out of work is some outlying regions. Fico's government has tried to address living standards - the minimum wage has been raised to 405 euros a month, for example. But critics say he has resorted to handouts like free train rides for students and pensioners rather than real reform.

Fico's first government cancelled fees for doctor visits, for example, which was popular with patients. The fees were meant to limit needless consultations, though, and save money for more serious treatment. Healthcare in Slovakia ranked 24th among 35 European states last year, according to Swedish-based Health Consumer Powerhouse.

In February, the government had to call in army personnel to secure care at one hospital after hundreds of nurses quit in protest over pay. Fico's health minister and the head of parliament resigned in 2014 after thousands of Slovaks protested in the streets over allegations of overpriced purchases of hospital equipment, the cabinet's biggest scandal.

"I have always leaned left, admired Scandinavian countries, voted for Smer in last election - but I won't support them this time," said Bohuslav Ilavsky, the headmaster of an elementary school in Detva, a town in central Slovakia. — Reuters

## SERBIA OPENS NEW TENDER FOR STEEL PLANT

**BELGRADE:** The Serbian government launched a new tender yesterday for its sole steel mill which it tried to privatise without success in 2012 as it seeks to sell off a raft of public companies.

The starting price of the Zelezara Smederevo plant, which lies 40 kilometres (25 miles) east of Belgrade, is 45.6 million euros (\$50 million), according to a ministry advertisement in the Politika daily.

Talks with US steel group Esmark over buying a majority stake failed in

February last year after US Steel, which bought the bankrupt plant for 23 million dollars in 2003, pulled out in 2012 because of the global economic downturn. The government then bought the plant back for the symbolic price of one dollar, saying the move was aimed at preventing the loss of about 5,500 jobs and keeping operations going while a new long-term strategic partner was sought.

Serbia's government has expressed commitment to privatising a raft of pub-

lic companies, a condition of a 1.2 billion euro (\$1.3 billion) loan agreement with the International Monetary Fund, although it has called off the sale of one of its biggest assets, Telekom Srbija.

The president is expected to call an early election Friday after the government said it required a clear mandate to carry out reforms needed to join the European Union.

According to state broadcaster RTS, the government is negotiating with China's HBIS over acquisition of Zelezara

Smederevo, whose losses in 2014 amounted to 96 million euros (\$109 million). After last year's failed sale, management of the plant was entrusted to Holland-based HPK Engineering BV with the purpose of preparing it for privatization. Zelezara Smederevo has annual capacity of about two million tons and at its peak accounted for 14 percent of Serbia's exports.

The deadline for the submission of offers was fixed at March 30, the government advertisement said. — AFP



# EXCLUSIVE INDIAN PROPERTY EXHIBITION OPENS AT HOLIDAY INN SALMIYA

**KUWAIT:** The two-day Indian realty exhibition, which brings together some of the top builders and developers from South India, opened to large crowds at the Holiday Inn Hotel in Salmiya yesterday.

The premier show, which will remain open from 10am to 8pm on May 4th and 5th, was inaugurated by Sunil Jain, Ambassador of India to Kuwait, in the presence of Vigneshkumar VP Marketing, The New Indian Express, Mousa A Al-Najadah, Asst CEO of Warba Insurance, Vikram Shekhawat, Expat Group Head, National Bank of Kuwait, Mohandas NC of Indian Frontliners, Natarajan, Hotel Saravana Bhavan, Chelladurai, President Kuwait Tamil Sangam, Hirak Mukherjee, Country Head Air India, Anural, Regional Director TCIL, Devesh Kumar, Resident Manager LIC International and Rajeev Sakhuj, Resident Manager LIC HFL.

Following the lighting of the ceremonial lamp, Jain toured the various booths and discussed salient features of the properties being showcased with the exhibitors.

Organized by the New Indian Express newspaper in association with LIC Housing Finance Limited (LIC HFL), the Indian Realty Exhibition 2016 highlighted prime properties from over two-dozen top Indian builders and developers. Among the properties being displayed are luxury villas, apartments, row houses, budget homes and developed plots, from cities such as Bengaluru, Chennai, Kochi and Hyderabad. During the two day show period, realty developers are offering exclusive, one-time bargain prices and special discounts on select properties.

Another aspect of the exhibition was the highly informative realty consultancy services being offered on the sidelines of the show. V.

Nagarajan, editor and publisher Priya Publications provided advisory services for NRIs and a seminar was held on FDI/NRI investment in real estate.

The Government of India has considerably eased investment norms for real estate sector and considering several policy measures to boost the realty sector, such as the Real Estate (Regulation and Development) Bill, guidelines for the launch of REIT units and is encouraging development of infrastructure, which will give a much-needed fillip to real estate sector.

The NDA government has also recently approved a proposal allowing investment made by NRIs to be deemed as domestic investment on par with resident investments. The repatriation benefits up to two residential units and annual repatriation limit up to \$1 million out of NRO account arising out of income from sale of properties, rentals and others have made investment in real estate a lucrative option for NRIs.

In a further move to ease the norms, residents are now permitted to remit home loan EMI on behalf of NRIs. The RBI has also clarified that income and sale proceeds of assets held abroad by the returning NRIs need not be repatriated to India and can be retained and invested outside India.

Also, with the commercial property absorption increasing across metros, there will be a corresponding demand for housing both for rental and investment purposes. Experts believe that for every square meter of commercial property absorption in a city, it generates demand for three square meters of residential property.

These positive moves by the government are likely to give a much-needed boost to the realty sector in the country. For people looking to

invest or buy homes in India, this is an especially opportune moment as property prices are currently stagnant, home loan lending rates are

very competitive and special concession in interest rates are being offered to women homebuyers.



SATURDAY, MARCH 5, 2016

# Kuwait Times Weekender

www.kuwaittimes.net

**Black belt Lina  
empowers fellow  
Jordanian women**

SEE PAGE 26

Kendall Jenner opens the Balmain Fall-Winter show and also reveals her new blond locks. — AFP (See Pages 28 & 29)



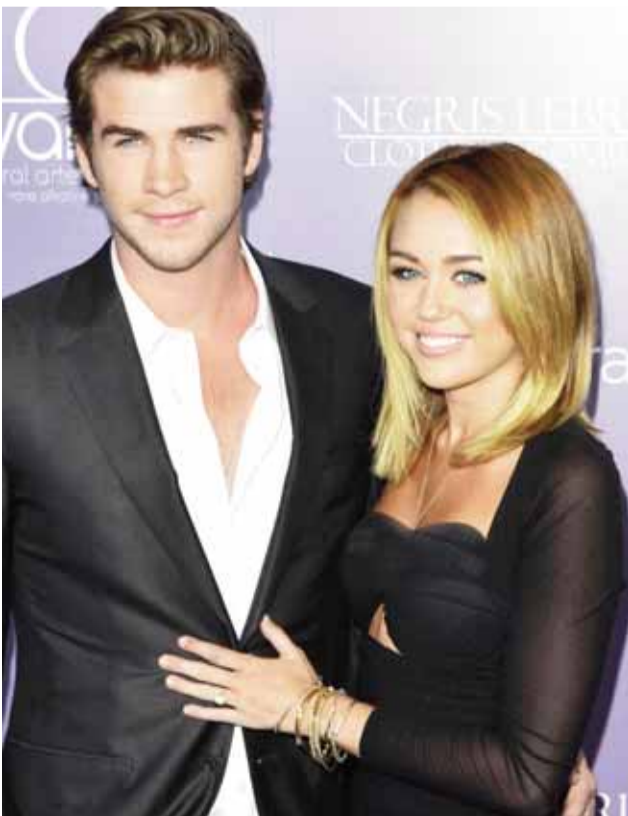
# Oscar Isaac set to take on the role of Hamlet

The 36-year-old actor has taken on the iconic role as the Danish prince in a Sam Gold-directed off-Broadway version of Shakespeare's play, according to the Daily Mail newspaper. He will take to the stage at the Theatre For A New Audience venue in Brooklyn, New York, next year with the production set to start in the Spring of 2017. However, Bruce Cohen, a spokesperson for the theatre says there is "no information" regarding the show at present. The hunky star is well versed when it comes to doing theatre work having performed in a number of shows including 'Romeo and

Juliet, 'We Live Here', 'Grace', 'Two Gentlemen of Verona' and 'Beauty of The Father', and he also previously studied at the Juilliard School for performing arts in New York. Isaac is currently in London shooting 'Star Wars' Episode VIII', in which he plays X-wing fighter pilot Poe Dameron. The sequel to 'The Force Awakens' is scheduled for release on December 15, 2017. He will next be seen playing villainous mutant Apocalypse in superhero movie 'X-Men: Apocalypse', which hits cinemas in May.

## Miley Cyrus has changed her party-loving ways

The 'Wrecking Ball' singer reunited with former fiance Liam Hemsworth earlier this year - over three years after they split - and is keen to prove she has changed and put her wild ways behind her. A source said: "She either doesn't answer their calls or says she's not going out. Liam never liked that she got crazy, so Miley is making big changes. She doesn't want to screw it up." Instead, the 23-year-old beauty is spending most of her time at the 'Hunger Games' actor's Malibu home, doing everything she can for him to be comfortable. The source told Us Weekly magazine: "She has been cooking and cleaning for Liam, waiting on him hand and foot. She wants to make sure she keeps him." Despite their problems in the past, Miley and Liam, 26, are confident their relationship will last this time around. The source added: "They know what they have is real. Miley needed some time to grow up, but she feels ready for this now." It was recently claimed that after getting back together, the couple, who split in September 2013, are also planning to marry again, but there was no big proposal from Liam. A source said: "It's true, the engagement is back on. It's been a whirlwind but they're both totally in love with each other and decided to pick up where they left off. There was no big proposal this time, they just talked about it and Miley decided to put the ring back on. She's told friends that she feels as if she's come full circle."



## Zoe Saldana rebuffs criticism about her appearance in 'Nina'

The 'Avator' star was criticized by Nina Simone's family, who are against the biopic about the jazz singer and civil rights activist, following the release of the movie's trailer, while many Twitter users complained about Zoe's appearance as the teaser showed her sporting a prosthetic nose and a darker skin tone for the role. A friend of the actress has now spoken out, insisting Zoe - whose father was from the Dominican Republic, while her mother is from Puerto Rico - is not bothered by the backlash and was expecting it because she is not African American. The source told the New York Post newspaper: "This started three years ago. They actually thought the project was shelved, but it's coming out and she's proud of it. There's always controversy [over] 'is she Latin or isn't she Latin,' so she's used to that, but this is different for her." Zoe was chosen for the role in 2012 and she has admitted she expected her casting to cause controversy. The 37-year-old actress previously said: "I didn't think I was right for the part, and I know a lot of people will agree, but then again, I don't think Elizabeth Taylor was right for Cleopatra either. "An artist is colorless, genderless ... It's more complex than just, 'Oh, you chose the Halle Berry look-alike to play a dark, strikingly beautiful, iconic black woman.' The truth is, they chose an artist who was willing to sacrifice herself. We needed to tell her story because she deserves it." After the trailer was released the official Nina Simone Twitter account, which is now run by her estate, posted: "Please take Nina's name out your mouth. For the rest of your life ... Hopefully people begin to understand this is painful. Gut-wrenching, heartbreaking, nauseating, soul-crushing. It shall pass, but for now... (sic)" Zoe has not spoken out about the criticism, but her pal insists she "loves the film" 'Nina' is set to be released in April.

## Jennifer Lopez says she gets 'better with age'

The 'On The Floor' hitmaker believes she has "more to give" as she gets older. She said: "When you first start in this business, you think, 'This is going to run out' or 'It's going to finish at a certain time' or 'If I reach a certain age I won't be relevant.' 'I have found that I just get better and better with more experience and more life. I have more to give to what I do and that's what I look forward to when creating this record." The 45-year-old singer and actress has just recently resigned with record label Epic and is looking forward to the change as she believes it will be a "great starting point again". She added to PEOPLE magazine: "I've had so much success over the years but this is going to be a great starting point again. It's all about finding the right sound for me and the right songs and the right lyrics for me right now. Hopefully we'll have new music very soon." Meanwhile, Jennifer is reportedly incredibly excited about collaborating with LA Reid again. A source said: "Jennifer and LA are longtime friends, and they love working together. She has a bunch of hits. But she's always making music. And she's really excited to work with LA to put new stuff out."



## Meghan Trainor used to pile on clothes due to her being insecure

The 22-year-old singer would even cover up in thick sweatshirts in sweltering heat because she hated the thought of people seeing her body, in particular her arms. She said: "I - every day - wore sweatshirts and sweatpants to cover up my body because I was so insecure. And it would be summer. And I would go on vacation and I'd be in Trinidad and Tobago, 90-degree weather, and I'd be wearing sweatshirts. I didn't want to show my arms. I didn't want to show anything, and I was just so insecure and uncomfortable. I thought, like, 'All right, if I'm fully covered - I'm good.' And that's not what I should have been feeling." These days, Meghan is proud of the letters she receives from her fans who tell her how her track 'All About That Bass' helped with their own confidence and body image issues, and they inspire her to be a role model. She told the 'CBS Sunday Morning': "I get messages all the time, 'I hated myself, I didn't want to go to school. I was so uncomfortable, and now I love myself. And I was in a really dark place until your song came out.' And I was like, 'Whoa, man, we've got to do more of these. We've got to do more of these songs.'"



## Gal Gadot's mother has been a 'major influence' in her life



The 'Wonder Woman' star who hails from Israel credits her family for her making her dream big, but especially her mum, who taught her and her sister to be "ambitious". She said: "My mother has been a major influence in my life and that of my sister. Both my father and mother raised us to be very capable and independent women with a strong sense of ourselves and a positive outlook on life. That kind of spirit is very important. I grew up in believing in myself and thing that I would be able to accomplish the goals I set out for myself. My mother was the one who taught me to have big dreams and go out into the world with a sense of adventure." The actress who rose to fame as Gisele in

'The Fast and the Furious' franchise - thinks the values her mother instilled in her have helped her. Speaking about her Wonder Woman character, she said: "She's the ultimate symbol of a strong, smart, and serious woman. She represents the kind of woman who is independent and highly capable, someone who can handle herself in very difficult conditions and doesn't need to rely on a man to rescue her." Gal will debut as the super heroine this month in 'Batman v. Superman: Dawn of Justice' followed by her standalone 'Wonder Woman' movie next year, and says when she feels overwhelmed with the work she has on, she thinks back to the lessons her mother has instilled her.

## Charlize Theron won't compromise herself for a guy

The 40-year-old actress who has been single since splitting from Sean Penn last year admits some men are intimidated by her but she thinks their reactions are to do with their own "insecurities" and she'd never give up on her own big dreams to make them happier. Charlize stated: "Some [men find me intimidating]. I've met all types of men in my life. What I've found is that most men's reactions to me are a reflection of their own insecurities and have nothing to do with me and really speak to their character and not mine. I've never tried to appear less forceful or be less assertive in order to make a man feel more secure. I have always dreams big and wanted to make the best of my life. I never wanted to compromise; I would not be happy. I've always wanted a man who recognizes my dreams and goals, appreciates all those aspects of my character and is confident enough in his own self not to feel threatened." Charlize is embracing being in her 40s and the 'Huntsman: Winter's War' star who has adopted children Jackson, four, and baby August, who was born last year thinks Hollywood is finally "beginning to recognize" good roles for older women. She added to HELLO! magazine: "I'm much happier in my 40s than I was in my 20s. As an actress, I have more opportunities than ever and I think Hollywood is beginning to realize that actresses don't die at 40. We've got to continue making progress and find more great roles for women that reflect our strength and importance in society."



The 29-year-old singer, who was raped at 19-years-old, was joined onstage at the Academy Awards by other victims of sexual abuse during her performance of 'Till It Happens To You'. Some of the group members permanently inked their body to mark the occasion and celebrate their strength. Meanwhile, the 'Pokerface' songstress previously revealed some of her family only found out that she had been raped after her performance at the Oscars. She said: "My grandmother and my Aunt Sheri both called me the day after

the Oscars because I never told them I was a survivor. I was too ashamed. Too afraid. And it took me a long time to even admit it to myself because I'm Catholic and I knew it was evil but I thought it was my fault. I thought it was my fault for ten years. The morning after the Oscars when I talked to my grandmother Ronnie, with tears in her eyes I could hear them welling through the phone she said to me "My darling granddaughter, I've never been more proud of you than I am today." (sic)

## Film Review



## 'London Has Fallen,' a ludicrous sequel on steroids

**L**ondon Has Fallen" never pretends to be anything it's not. The sequel to Antoine Fuqua's big, dumb and kind of fun "Olympus Has Fallen," is bigger, dumber, jaw-droppingly shameless and also kind of a riot. It is just so spectacularly cliched and over-the-top that all you can do is laugh.

The craziest thing is how they convinced everyone to reprise their roles. A dare? Fond memories? Or perhaps the \$161 million worldwide box office receipts didn't hurt either. In any event, Aaron Eckhart is back as U.S. President Benjamin Asher, Angela Bassett as Lynne the Secret Service Director, Morgan Freeman as the Vice President and, of course, Gerard Butler as Secret Service Agent Mike Banning - the guy who saved the country from an improbably big assault on the White House just three years ago.

The only one missing is director Antoine Fuqua and you feel it. He's been replaced with Swedish director Babak Najafi in his English-language debut. Fuqua might not have been at his best with "Olympus Has Fallen" but he's still a skilled director. "London Has Fallen" is a lot more cartoon.

This time, the president, Mike and Lynn head off to London for the funeral of the British Prime Minister where 40 other heads of state are expected. And, as is want for the unluckiest administration in history, there's a large-scale, hyper-coordinated attack in the moments before

the funeral as the terrorists pick off world leaders in various comical locations around the city. The French PM is on a luxury motor boat with champagne, the Japanese PM is stuck in traffic on a bridge, and the older Italian PM is up on the rooftop of Westminster Abbey with his young girlfriend because "you only turn 30 once."

### Action movie based on action movies

One of the only ones to get out alive is the US president, and he and Mike begin an unbelievable run around the city to try to find safety. All that's missing was a montage of them trying on some civilian clothes so that they aren't running around the desolate streets in their "hey, I'm the president and his protector three-piece navy suits." That, sadly, does not happen.

Anyone who saw the first one knows that this is not an action movie that's based in any sort of reality. It's an action movie based on other action movies. The lines are big, the jokes are dumb, the through-the-temple shots and ensuing blood splatter gratuitous, the logic infuriating, and the gunfire relentless. At one point, when Mike and the President are in relative safety, Mike confirms to a terrorist via intercom that, yes, he is the one with the president.

Mike also might be a murderous sociopath. When President Ben asks what he's made of, he says "bourbon and bad decisions." He also

prefers the close contact knife kill to simple gun shots and makes jokes like "I knew you'd come out of the closet sometime" when the president emerges to save him from a terrorist.

The terrorists, by the way, are led by a powerful international arms dealer (Alon Moni Aboutboul) who is out for vengeance after a drone strike targeting him ended up killing his daughter at her wedding. For such an epic and comprehensive operation, his goals are fuzzy at best. It's a wonder how he was able to turn all those British police and royal guards into his own personal army with a vague "change the world" message.

But that's too much thinking for a movie that is ultimately just mindless bluster. It remains so-bad-its-good fun, too, until the final third which devolves into some troubling Middle Eastern stereotypes and rah-rah American patriotic posturing as contrast. This sort of movie was made for television viewing. You could tune in or out at any moment and really not miss anything. Or just have a drink beforehand and bring your rowdiest friends to the theater. "London Has Fallen," a Gramercy Pictures release, is rated R by the Motion Picture Association of America for "strong violence and language throughout." Running time: 99 minutes. One and a half stars out of four. - AP

## Casting Saldana as Simone inflames ideas of race, beauty

**I**f there was any doubt about how Nina Simone's family and fans feel about the upcoming biopic starring Zoe Saldana, recent social media posts make it clear they are not pleased. A fresh round of criticism for the film erupted after the trailer and poster for "Nina" were unveiled Wednesday. Saldana posted a quote from the singer and civil rights activist on Twitter, and Simone's estate responded with: "Cool story but please take Nina's name out your mouth. For the rest of your life." Simone's daughter and others have decried the choice to cast a light-skinned actress as the African-American activist since Saldana took the part in 2012. Her skin was apparently darkened for the role, and she wears a prosthetic nose.

At the time, Simone's daughter, Simone Kelly, said: "Appearance-wise this is not the best choice." "My mother was raised at a time when she was told her nose was too wide, her skin was too dark," Kelly told the New York Times in a 2012 interview.

Simone's dark complexion and traditionally African features were central to her identity and concept of black beauty, so casting someone with Saldana's more ethnically ambiguous appearance is galling, said Miriam J Petty, assistant professor in the African-American Studies department at Northwestern University.

### Depth of ignorance

"It's disrespectful and demonstrates the depth of the ignorance of the person making the film of the very subject of the film," she said. The Simone estate tweeted Wednesday: "Hopefully people begin to understand this is painful. Gut-wrenching, heartbreaking, nauseating, soul-crushing." The estate is urging fans to hold listening parties on the film's release date rather than watching "Nina."

Petty, also a devoted Simone fan, also encourages fans to stay away. "I think it's important not to support this film financially, because the problem with biopics is they become the last word," she said. "Whatever can be done to discredit this film as not the definitive one, by virtue of the philosophical problem, the very blatant philo-

sophical problem of this casting." The singer's estate cooperated with producers of the Netflix documentary "What Happened, Miss Simone?" which was nominated for an Oscar this year.

Robert L Johnson, founder and chairman of the studio releasing "Nina," describes Saldana's performance as "an exceptional and mesmerizing tribute." "She gave her heart and soul to the role and displayed her extraordinary talent," he said in a statement Thursday. "The most important thing is that creativity or quality of performance should never be judged on the basis of color, or ethnicity, or physical likeness." Asks Petty: "Then why put Zoe Saldana in brown-face makeup?"

Representatives for Saldana and the Simone estate did not respond to requests for comment Thursday from The Associated Press. RLJ Entertainment will release "Nina" in theaters, digital HD and video on demand on April 22. - AP



Zoe Saldana attends the Los Angeles Premiere of "Infinitely Polar Bear" held at Regal Cinemas L.A. LIVE in Los Angeles. — AP photos



In this June 27, 1985 file photo, singer Nina Simone performs at Avery Fisher Hall.





This file photo taken on February 15, 2016 shows recording artist Kendrick Lamar as he receives the award for the Best Rap Album, *To Pimp A Butterfly* during the 58th Annual Grammy music Awards in Los Angeles. — AFP

## In surprise return, Kendrick Lamar warns of spiritual crisis

Fresh from his triumph at the Grammys, Kendrick Lamar has returned with a surprise new album that shows a more spontaneous side to a rapper still thinking big about the world's ills. The album released on Friday-tellingly entitled "untitled unmastered." brings together songs that Lamar has performed in recent months along with studio outtakes in which the rising star both reflects on the discomforts of fame and warns of a society in spiritual crisis.

"untitled unmastered." starts where Lamar left off musically with a jazzy pizzicato on a string bass but quickly goes into heavy lyrical territory. Lamar conjures up imagery from the September 11 terrorist attacks and the Book of Revelation as he cautions against hypocrisy among the religious as well as atheism. "Another trumpet has sounded off and everyone heard it / It's happening-no more running from world wars / It's happening-no more discriminating the poor," he raps.

The 28-year-old artist hails from the gangsta rap capital of Compton in Los Angeles County but, while maintaining street cred, considers himself a Christian. He brings the themes together later in the album as he tries to get inside the mind of a murderer, speaking of how the American business of mass incarceration can crush faith. "Genocism and capitalism just made me hate," he raps, in a neologism that turns genocide into an ideology.

### A rougher feel

The rollout of "untitled unmastered." could scarcely be more different than that for his last album, *To Pimp a Butterfly*, which came out almost exactly a year ago after a lengthy buildup and immediately achieved iconic status in the hip-hop world.

"To Pimp a Butterfly" experimented widely with conventional form, bringing in spoken word interludes and jazz segues, to create an intricate portrait of the state of black America, with the song "Alright" emerging as an unofficial anthem of the protest movement against police brutality.

Lamar led the Grammys by winning five awards at the music industry's big night on February 15. He received a near-record 11 nominations and won praise for his spirited, politically tinged performance that teased on the unreleased material.

"untitled unmastered." features a series of cameo appearances, most notably by CeeLo Green who adds his mellifluous yet soulful tenor voice. The latest album digresses toward the end with a more than eight-minute track—which hip-hop artist Swizz Beatz revealed to have been produced by his five-year-old son—that culminates in a lackadaisical sing-along to acoustic guitar. Yet the eight-track album—which, true to the title, assigns numbers and dates rather than names to each song—ends with a polished dose of funk.

### Still a 'crash dummy'

On that final single Lamar, as was his wont on *To Pimp a Butterfly*, turns his self-questioning about his role into a larger examination of social forces. "Why so sad? Walking around with them blue faces," he sings to the beat, a play on words as he conflates an expression for sadness with the color of the stripes that appear next to Benjamin Franklin's portrait on new \$100 bills.

Lamar reflects on a young woman conned into credit card debt and brings back an enduring image from *To Pimp a Butterfly*, that of a South African beggar who makes the rapper wonder about his fortunes. "Ain't no money like fast money / Even today I'm considered a crash dummy / A rapper chasing stardom / How can I fast forward?" he sings.

Lamar delves into the racial dynamics behind the music business on the album's third track, a parable in which the rapper seeks advice from people of four races about his success. The Asian, according to Lamar, urges him to meditate and the Native American tells him to hold onto land. The black man encourages him to seek sexual satisfaction. And the white man? He told Lamar "that he selling me for just \$10.99." — AFP

## Sam Smith on new album: 'I'm going even deeper'

If you thought Sam Smith was deeply honest on his first album, expect him to take it a step further on his sophomore release. "It's (expletive) great. It's really deep (stuff) that's coming out - that's all I'll say," a smiling Smith said in a recent interview. He wouldn't say when his follow-up to 2014's *In the Lonely Hour* will be released, but said he's pushing himself to explore new territory.

"Every day I'm having little epiphanies and changes and loving it. But all I can say is that I'm putting my heart even more out on the (expletive) line," Smith said. "I'm going even deeper. I can't believe I'm even doing it, but I'm going even deeper." *In the Lonely Hour* featured emotional pop songs about love lapses and unrequited love, including song titles like "Leave Your Lover" and "I'm Not the Only One." It reached multiplatinum status in the United States and won four Grammy Awards, including song and record of the year for "Stay With Me."

As he reflects on that album, Smith says he has mixed feelings about his breakthrough project. "There's a few songs I really (expletive) hate, but then the core of the album, songs like 'Stay With Me,' 'I'm Not the Only One' - actually all the songs except 'Money on My Mind' - I really love and I'm really proud of the classic-ness of the way they sound, because I still listen to them now and I still love them," he said. "The music I'm making at the moment, it's very much a beautiful little transition from there and it fits."

Smith co-wrote his debut album and also won an Academy Award for co-writing "Writing's on the Wall" from the James Bond film *Spectre*. He says



there's a "few moments" on his first album "where I think to myself, 'I would have changed that. I would have done that differently.'" Smith added that when he began to rise in the United Kingdom as a featured act on Disclosure's dance song "Latch" - originally released in late 2012 - there was some confusion about which musical direction he should take.

"As soon as 'Latch' had a lot of success in (the) U.K., my label and me had a little bit of a panic. We were like, 'Maybe we should be doing dance?' And that's what I can hear on (my first) album - there's two or three songs where I can hear the little wobble, but the rest of the album is what I set out to make from the beginning," he said. "But I still love my album, but I'm loving my new one (expletive) more." — AP



## Foo Fighters dispel breakup rumors in viral online spoof

After a growing online buzz and chatter about the band's future, Foo Fighters have some news—they are staying together. Foo Fighters, one of the defining acts of the 1990s alternative rock boom, had become a trending topic on social media Wednesday after stating sternly that they would soon make an "official band announcement."

Late in the day, Foo Fighters released a seven-minute video on YouTube with repeated-but, on closer look, over-the-top-suggestions that the band is over. The video ends with a caption that reads: "For the millionth time, we're not breaking up."

The video opens with a parody interview of frontman Dave Grohl—earlier the drummer of grunge legends Nirvana—as the 47-year-old is told that the younger generation is all about electronic music. "One button? One finger?" Grohl asks incredulously on what he needs to do to play electronics, as he blows on his hand to warm it up and heads to a keyboard.

Meanwhile, the other band members convene to find a new singer and jot down an audition list to include Justin Bieber and the Canadian pop celebrity's new electronic producer, Diplo. Finally Nick Lachey, best known for the late 1990s boy band 98 Degrees, enters the studio and offers a rousing rendition of Foo Fighters hit "Everlong."

The band apparently decided to raise expectations of a breakup and put on the spoof after drummer Taylor Hawkins, speaking at an event around the Grammy Awards, said that Foo Fighters needed a break. Despite the denial of a breakup, it remains unclear when Foo Fighters will perform again.

The band ended an extensive tour in November and released a free EP dedicated to victims of the November 13 terror attacks in Paris as it hinted at a hiatus. "I can't help but wonder when we will see each other again. Who knows? But, with everything Foo Fighter related, it will only be when it feels right," Grohl said at the time. — AFP



Women attend a self-defense class in the Jordanian capital Amman.



Jordanian Lina Khalifeh (Left) teaches a self-defence class.

## Black belt **Lina** empowers fellow Jordanian women

**T**aekwondo black belt Lina Khalifeh started teaching self-defense to Jordanian friends in her parents' basement in 2010 after one of them confided that her father and brother hit her—never expecting it would lead to an invitation to the White House. Word about her classes quickly spread and two years later, overwhelmed by the demand, Khalifeh opened the country's first women-only martial arts center.

At the facility in north Amman, her young students throw fast punches, closely following instructions from their short-haired, 31-year-old coach. "My aim is to empower women and to make them confident and able to defend themselves," said the taekwondo athlete who won a gold medal at the 2003 Junior Asian Championships. "Sexual harassment happens worldwide. It's not as bad in Jordan as in Egypt for example, but it does exist—especially on public transport and in some neighborhoods of Amman."

Since starting SheFighter, Khalifeh says she has trained some 14,000 women and girls aged between four and 75 — including thousands of Syrian refugees and foreign domestic workers through NGOs. In May last year, she was invited to the White House in Washington as one of several inspiring young entrepreneurs from around the world. "We want to empower leaders of social change like Lina Khalifeh of Jordan," US President Barack Obama said in his speech, singling her out.

### More protection needed

"Women have to be able to defend themselves" since Jordanian law does not provide women with enough protection from harassment, rape or domestic violence, she said. Over the past few years, rights groups have increasingly denounced violence against women in Jordan and demanded legal amendments to better protect its victims. The country's penal code allows a rapist to avoid prison if he marries his victim.

And while murder is punishable by the death penalty, in so-called "honor killings"—the murder of a female relative believed to have "dishonored" the family—courts usually commute or reduce sentences. Khalifeh said that some people in the conservative kingdom had opposed her project, but that overall she had received "quite a lot of support". "Some women who have signed up for classes at the centre have been the victims of violence, harassment—even rape," she said.

One of her students, 18-year-old Farah Murad, said she joined the classes after a young man harassed her in the street. "It happened in broad daylight," she said. "I was walking down the street when this guy caught me by the shoulder. I pushed him back but then I didn't know what to do, so I ran all the way home." But classes at SheFighter have helped.

### 'Head held high'

"I'm no longer scared," Murad said. "Now I walk in the street with my head held high during the day and after dark. I know how to defend myself." In two- to three-month courses for four levels, Khalifeh teaches a mixture of taekwondo and boxing, as well as self-defense tricks like how to escape a strangling hold or hair grab.

Taekwondo, originally developed in Korea more than 2,000 years ago as a form of self-defense, involves using bare hands and feet to repel an opponent, often with trademark spectacular kicks. Lujein Darwish, 16, said she fended off a harasser using skills she learnt over six months at the martial arts centre.

"Women need to be strong to defend themselves in these situations, especially when they're alone in the street," she said. And then there are those who attend SheFighter's two- to three-month classes for sport. "I've been doing taekwondo since I was a child because I love it," Rouba Massaada, 17, said. "But, of course, if someone harasses me or says something hurtful, they should watch out," she added, smiling. — AFP



Women attend the self-defense class.



A new portrait of actor Kevin Spacey in his role as "House of Cards" President Francis J. Underwood on display at the National Portrait Gallery in Washington. — AFP photos



Jon Hamm plays a narcissistic advertising executive in US show *Mad Men*, which was the subject of the museum exhibition.



Clothes worn by US actor Bryan Cranston, who plays Walter White in the cult TV series "Breaking Bad", are on display at a Las Vegas museum.

## Top TV series getting museum treatment

Some say television is experiencing a new golden era, and America's museums are putting those highly acclaimed shows on display, showcasing popular culture in their prestigious spaces in hopes of attracting younger and more diverse visitors.

In the US capital Washington, the National Portrait Gallery houses the likenesses of all of the country's great leaders—George Washington, Thomas Jefferson, Abraham Lincoln and... Francis Underwood? Underwood, Oscar-winning actor Kevin Spacey's cunning fictional president on the powerhouse Netflix series "House of Cards," sits cross-legged at a desk — his Oval Office, of course.

The work made its debut last week and will be on display until October. The display coincides with Friday's release of the fourth season of the political drama. "I'm one step closer to convincing the rest of the country that I am the president," Spacey joked the day the portrait was unveiled. But why would a museum feature a fictional TV character?

"Not only does it reflect the impact of popular contemporary culture on America's story, but it also exemplifies the fine art tradition of actors portrayed in their roles," explained Kim Sajet, director of the National Portrait Gallery. The National Museum of American History, also in Washington, gave a similar explanation when it added iconic objects from the cult TV series "Breaking Bad" to its collection last November. The yellow hazmat suit and the black porkpie hat worn by Walter White, a meek chemistry teacher who becomes a drug kingpin, won't be on public display until a planned 2018 exhibit on American culture. But fans who can't wait that long can visit a new exhibit at the Mob Museum in Las Vegas that features the protective suit and mask that White, played by Emmy winner Bryan Cranston, wore while cooking meth.

Other small screen sensations featured by American museums include early 20th century

clothing worn by the aristocratic characters and their household staff on "Downton Abbey" at Chicago's Driehaus Museum, on display until May 8. There was also last year's "Mad Men" exhibit at New York's Museum of the Moving Image, which coincided with the final episodes of the acclaimed show about a narcissistic advertising executive's professional and family life in the 1960s.

### 'New, younger, more diverse'

"There is nothing surprising about seeing the influence of television" in American museums, said Dustin Kidd, a sociologist at Temple University in Pennsylvania. The author of "Pop Culture Freaks" told AFP the country has numerous museums dedicated to film and television, and that "the influence of television on American art is as old as television itself."

But Vera Zolberg, a sociologist at the New School, a university in New York, said featuring TV series "may very well be" a new trend. She compared it to museums hosting visitors for sleepovers. Now routinely offered as an option, she said she "would not have imagined such a practice" a few years ago. Peggy Levitt, a sociologist at Wellesley College in Massachusetts, said pop culture exhibits are becoming more prevalent as museums realize they need to change their practices to bring in "new, younger, more diverse audiences." "There is a growing recognition in this country that the people inside museums do not look like the people outside them," she said. A 2010 study by the American Association of Museums showed that white Americans make up 69 percent of the population but account for 79 percent of museum visitors.—AFP

## Scientists use math to hunt identity of elusive Banksy

Elusive street artist Banksy may have been unmasked - by mathematics. Scientists have applied a type of modeling used to track down criminals and map disease outbreaks to identify the graffiti artist, whose real name has never been confirmed. The technique, known as geographic profiling, is used by police forces to narrow down lists of suspects by calculating from multiple crime sites where the offender most likely lives.

The researchers used the location of 140 Banksy artworks in London and Bristol, western England. Writing in the *Journal of Spatial Science*, they said the artworks "are associated with sites linked to one prominent candidate" - Robin Gunningham, previously named in media reports as Banksy.

They said the study is not conclusive but "does provide some support for the theory that he is Banksy." Banksy's spokeswoman did not immediately respond to a request for comment yesterday. The artist's satirical stencils - rats, kissing policemen, riot police with yellow smiley faces - first appeared on walls in Bristol before spreading to London and then around the world. His works have fetched as much as \$1.8 million at auction.

The researchers say their art-sleuthing "demonstrates the flexibility of geographic profiling." Lead writer Steven Le Comber, a mathematical biologist at Queen Mary University of London, said the technique had uses beyond criminology, such as working out where epidemics start. He said that during a malaria outbreak in

Cairo, "we found that if we used the addresses of people with malaria we could find the mosquitoes that were spreading the disease very easily."

Le Comber said the Banksy hunt suggested geographic profiling could even be used to track down terrorists before they commit an attack. "Some terrorists will engage in graffiti, banner-posting and leafletting to establish their credibility," Le Comber said. "You could potentially use the spatial pattern of leafletting to identify the location of terror cells." — AP



Workmen watch the media photograph a new artwork by British artist Banksy opposite the French Embassy, in London.



Bonhams employees adjust a spray paint work by urban artist Banksy at Bonhams auction house in London.— AP photos



### Balmain

The Fall-Winter show (as expected) was filled with great looks by Olivier Rousteing. The show also had a couple of surprises with supermodels Gigi Hadid and Kendall Jenner revealing new hair colors. — AFP photos

# PARIS FASHION WEEK



### Lanvin

### Rick Owens

Models walking runway in the Fashion house's first collection after the departure of former head designer Alber Elbaz. Lanvin have yet to appoint a new head designer. The Fall/Winter show was created by the design team.

Models showcasing the 2016- 2017 Fall/Winter show. Named Mastodon by Rick Owens himself.



# Vetements

Demna Gvasalia puts on another show for the French label yesterday.

# Julien David

Models showcasing the Fall/Winter 2016-2017 collection yesterday.



# Loewe

Jonathan Anderson delivered yet another show for the brand's Fall/Winter Collection.

# Chalayan

Hussein Chalayan puts on his Fall/Winter 2016-2017 show yesterday in Paris.



These images provided by Sony Computer Entertainment, LLC shows scenes with creatures and locations from the video game, "No Man's Sky." — AP photos

# 'NO MAN'S SKY' REACHING TO INFINITY AND BEYOND

GAME INDUSTRY'S BEST KEPT SECRET RELEASES ON 21ST JUNE

**LOS ANGELES:** "No Man's Sky" creator Sean Murray wants everyone in the world to know that his galaxy simulator isn't merely a ridiculously ambitious idea that's wowed crowds at the Electronic Entertainment Expo. It's actually a video game. "I think people really like the concept, but it's very important for me to deliver on that," said the Hello Games co-founder during a recent trip to Los Angeles to show off "No Man's Sky."

While the virtual environments in most games are meticulously crafted by artists and designers, "No Man's Sky" transports players to a fictional sci-fi galaxy populated by an almost infinite number of planets - each with their own ecology - that are generated by a PlayStation 4 or PC using mathematical

rules devised by Murray and his Guildford, England-based indie studio. It's "Minecraft" meets "The Martian."

With its breathtaking vastness, colorful art style recalling classic sci-fi novel covers and moody score provided by electronic-rock band 65daysofstatic, "No Man's Sky" captured the gaming industry's attention in 2014 when it was first teased at the Spike Video Game Awards and E3.

## 18 quintillion planets to explore

The game, which is scheduled for release June 21, doesn't feature a traditional narrative. Instead, there's lore players can uncover when interacting and learning languages from alien races scattered across an estimated 18 quintillion - that's 18 billion billion - planets. "It's not like a typical video game," said Murray. "You don't start off in prison, then someone throws you a gun and you have to rescue your dad or something. It's about

down players who cause too much mayhem, such as breaking into alien factories to steal blueprints or killing too many dinosaur-like creatures.

"They're these self-replicating drones that were put there by this ancient forerunner race that did it with good intentions to protect planets," said Murray. "They're gotten a little bit out of control. It's questionable in the game whether they're good guys or bad guys." The way in which time passes in the "No Man's Sky" is also determined by developers' algorithms because planets uniquely rotate, resulting in different day and night cycles.

"We display a 24-hour clock right now, which shouldn't be there," said a visibly conflicted Murray. "Every time I've tried to change that, it just breaks people's brains." The game's randomness means that even Murray, who helped build a new engine to create "No Man's Sky," is still surprised by what he discovers when landing his spaceship on new planets.

"I was showing someone the game, and we came across this stilted creature that looked like a zombie T-rex," said Murray. "I screamed to the person, 'Go move closer to it! It's quite fun that I cannot know my own game.'" Despite the seemingly endless structure of "No Man's Sky," Murray suggested it does have a natural conclusion: reaching the center of the universe.

"It seems really daunting, but you will be able to upgrade your ship to fly further and further in each jump that you make," said Murray. The landmark is illustrated on the game's galactic map by a bright light that can be glimpsed past an array of tiny dots, which each represent different solar systems. "When you reach the center, there's a reason why you would want to keep playing, but for most people, that's probably the point they'll put down the pad," said Murray. "It will probably take hundreds and hundreds of hours." — AP



finding these places and becoming more engrossed in them."

For instance, players can record a planet's lifeforms and upload them to earn the game's currency. Or they can shoot 'em with a laser gun. "You can be a good citizen of the universe or you can be a jerk, a space jerk," said Murray. "It's up to you." However, it's not consequence-free gameplay. There's an intergalactic force called Sentinels who will sometimes hunt

## FACEBOOK SET TO PAY MORE BRITISH TAX AFTER CRITICISM

**LONDON:** Social media giant Facebook, which has been under fire in Britain for its tax arrangements, said yesterday it will stop routing its British sales through Ireland - a practice that had kept its UK tax bill extremely low.

Facebook, Amazon and other multinationals have been criticized for using complex tax arrangements in Europe to drastically reduce their bills. Facebook said in a statement that from April, "UK sales made directly by our UK team will be booked in the UK, not Ireland. Facebook UK will then record the revenue from these sales." It said the change would "provide transparency to Facebook's operations in the UK"

Facebook paid just 4,327 pounds (\$6,116) in corporation tax in 2014 in Britain, where it recorded 105 million pounds in revenue. The UK is one of its biggest markets outside the United States. The company did not say how much more tax it would pay under the new arrangements in Britain, where the corporation tax rate is 20 percent of taxable income. Facebook's announcement follows Britain's introduction of a "diverted profits tax" of 25 percent to deter companies from using complex international arrangements to cut their tax bills. — AP

## AMAZON UNVEILS DEVICES FOR SMART HOME MARKET

**WASHINGTON:** Amazon unveiled two devices Thursday in the family of its "Alexa" voice-activated personal assistant, aiming for a bigger foothold in the smart-home market. The US online giant announced it would sell the Amazon Tap, a \$130 voice-activated portable speaker, which connects to Wi-Fi or a mobile hotspot "to play music, read the news, provide weather reports, and even order a pizza."

The second device is called the Echo Dot, a basic \$90 sibling of the original Echo which can control light switches, thermostats and other connected devices by voice command. The Dot will only be made available to customers with existing Amazon devices, and may only be ordered with the voice command, "Alexa, order an Echo Dot."

Amazon launched its effort in 2014 with its Echo speaker, using the same kind of artificial intelligence employed by Apple's Siri, Google Now and Microsoft's Cortana, among others. Internet titans such as Apple and Google are eager to make their platforms into hubs that exploit the powers of smartphones, tablets or other devices to control entertainment, information, temperature, lighting and more in smart homes. The platform could let Amazon jump ahead in that race with the first device in homes that will be listening and ready to act whenever people might think of something they want or need to buy. Amazon has been adding partners to its Alexa platform, including the Spotify streaming music service, which it made a feature of its Fire TV, enabling voice searches for viewers. — AFP



**SAN FRANCISCO:** In this Wednesday, March 2, 2016 photo, David Limp, Amazon Senior Vice President of Devices, gestures toward an Amazon Echo in San Francisco. Amazon.com is introducing two devices, the Amazon Tap and Echo Dot, that are designed to amplify the role that its voice-controlled assistant Alexa plays in people's homes and lives. — AP

## COLLEGE HACKERS SHINE LIGHT ON CYBERSECURITY

**BOSTON:** Students from MIT and Britain's University of Cambridge will spend the weekend hacking one another's computers, with the blessing of their national leaders. The two schools are competing in a hacking contest that U.S. President Barack Obama and British Prime Minister David Cameron announced last year among other joint cybersecurity projects between the two nations. The White House billed it as a showdown between the two prestigious schools, both known as heavyweights in the world of computer science.

But the colleges opted to make it a friendlier match. Instead of facing off against each other, the schools assigned their top hackers to six teams made up of students from both institutions. Teams will gather at MIT on Friday and then, for a frenzied 24 hours, try to hack into their opponents' computers and steal a trove of files.

"This isn't us versus them," said Howard Shrobe, a principal researcher at MIT's Computer Science and Artificial Intelligence Laboratory, which is hosting the event. "It's the best of both schools working together." Along with bragging rights, winners will receive cash prizes of more than \$20,000. It's intended to be the first in a series of global cybersecurity competitions.

After a summit in Washington last year, Obama and Cameron jointly called for wider collaboration on cybersecurity. It was only weeks after the US government accused North Korea of hacking computers at Sony Pictures Entertainment Inc. The leaders also agreed to form a joint "cyber cell" among their national security agencies, among other measures.

### Shortage of professionals

Major breaches like the Sony hack have underscored what experts say is a shortage of cybersecurity professionals. An industry group reported last year that 86 percent of its members believe there is a shortage of skilled workers. The contest at MIT aims to spark interest in the field and to promote cooperation among academics.

"It is essential for us to work together and compare notes," said Frank Stajano, leader of the Academic Centre of Excellence in Cyber Security Research at the University of Cambridge, which is sending 10 students to the competition. "If you're not at least as good as the bad guys, then you have no chance against them." Hacking competitions have been gaining popularity in recent years, both as sport and to train students for jobs in cybersecurity. By carrying out attacks, students learn to uncover weak spots in security systems and, in turn, build better defenses. On Friday, students will use computers that have hidden vulnerabilities already built-in.— AP

## TECH AND SECURITY EXPERTS BACK APPLE

**SAN FRANCISCO:** The nation's leading tech companies joined security experts, independent programmers and civil liberties advocates who filed court papers backing Apple in its fight with the FBI over an encrypted iPhone used by an extremist killer.

Several law enforcement groups, meanwhile, filed briefs in support of federal authorities who are seeking Apple's help in hacking an encrypted iPhone used by Syed Farook, one of the San Bernardino mass shooters.

These "friend of the court" briefs come in advance of a March 22 hearing in which Apple is asking U.S. Magistrate Sheri Pym to reverse an order requiring Apple to create a software program that overrides iPhone security features. That program would let authorities try to unlock Farook's phone by guessing its passcode; Apple says it would make all other iPhones more vulnerable to future attacks.

Relatives of five people who were killed, along with one survivor of the Dec 2 attack, also filed a brief saying the FBI's request is lawful and calling Apple's concerns "speculative." The relatives argued the phone might contain useful leads or even "explain the motive for this senseless tragedy." But the husband of another survivor submitted a letter on Apple's behalf, saying he believes the order would set a bad precedent and adding that he doesn't believe the phone has any useful information.

### Rewrite the rules

The case has pitted top officials of the Obama administration against one of the world's most admired and profitable companies. US Attorney General Loretta Lynch this week suggested Apple was trying to rewrite the rules for what she characterized as routine steps taken by law enforcement investigators. But some of Apple's biggest competitors rose to its defense in a joint legal brief submitted Thursday.

"The government's position, if it prevails, will undermine the security of America's most sensitive data," states a filing from Google, Facebook, Microsoft, Amazon, Yahoo and ten other companies. "The law does not allow federal agents to conscript companies into defeating their own security safeguards and product designs." — AFP



GENEVA: The Mercedes Concept Car is shown during the press day at the 86th International Motor Show. — AP

# DIFFERENT PATHS MAY LEAD TO AUTONOMOUS VEHICLES

## EVERYDAY CARS ARE GETTING GRADUALLY SMARTER

**GENEVA:** Cars that drive themselves would mean a revolution in how people get around. But they might arrive just as much by evolution, with everyday cars getting gradually smarter, as by sudden shifts to fully self-driving vehicles.

Autonomous driving - and its potential for sweeping change - was much on the minds of top auto executives at the Geneva International Motor Show. The exhibit space in Geneva was mostly used for the show's primary purpose: showing off product to the news media and the public in order to boost sales. The display stands were dominated by expensive sports and luxury cars for the rich and new SUVs for more middle-class buyers.

But the future beyond the upcoming model year was very much a topic of discussion, if less visible on the display stands. Executives think that cars that drive themselves at least part of the time may be upon us by the end of this decade. Technology such as autonomous driving by cars equipped with cameras and radar sensors could blend with Internet connections and apps. For instance, a car could be ordered for a few hours through an app and drive itself to the customer.

Google, meanwhile, is testing completely autonomous cars on streets in Mountain View, California, Austin, Texas, and Kirkland, Washington. Daimler CEO Dieter Zetsche said his company sees "two roads to full autonomy, one being the more evolutionary one where basically more and more assistance systems kind of automatically lead to a fully

autonomous car."

"The other one is more revolutionary ... where first in restricted areas you have fully autonomous cars and over time you expand the area where you can do that," he said. "And I would say in restricted areas you can see fully autonomous cars in the latter path around the turn of the decade."

### Avoid collisions

Some vehicles at the Geneva show made the case for evolution. The Mercedes-Benz E-Class luxury sedan from Daimler AG already offers wide-ranging, optional driver assistance technology. The latest version of the car can avoid collisions at intersections by recognizing crossing traffic and braking. It can help drivers fight crosswinds, automatically brake for pedestrians, warn drivers if they're getting drowsy, and park itself. It can assist avoidance maneuvering, first by helping the driver steer and then by bringing the car back onto a straight path in a controlled way afterward.

Nissan says its Qashqai crossover SUV - that is, a sport-utility with some car-like features - will be equipped with what the company calls "stage one" autonomous driving technology that lets it drive itself in single-lane heavy traffic conditions on freeways. Nissan says it will have a full range of vehicles with autonomous technology by 2020 "on mainstream, mass-market cars at affordable prices."

Nissan also showed off its IDS, for intelligent driving system, concept car, with a steering wheel that retracts when not needed. Car companies are

determined that they - not tech companies such as Google or Apple or a new entry such as ride-sharing service Uber - will provide the technology and reap the profits. They don't want to play the role of Taiwan manufacturer Foxconn Technology Group, which makes smartphones for Apple: as contractors for a technology firm.

One token of that is the appearance of auto executives on turf usually associated with the tech industry such as the CES electronics show in Las Vegas. Ford CEO Mark Fields spoke at the Mobile World Congress in Barcelona about the company's plans for semi-autonomous functions such as cars that deal with traffic jams and parking, and its fully autonomous vehicle development program.

Some analysts talk about cars as a service, something you order for a few hours or day when needed, instead of something you own. General Motors, for instance, has started an app-based car-sharing program, Maven, with 21 vehicles parked around the University of Michigan campus in Ann Arbor, Michigan. That idea could eventually merge with vehicle autonomy. Analyst Colin Bird from IHS Automotive said that ride-sharing services such as Uber and car-sharing such as GM's Maven or Daimler's Car2Go would "in the long term merge into one thing, a highly autonomous on demand network of cars. That's the long-term vision." Carmakers, he said, "see that coming down the pike and they want to be involved in that, they don't want Uber, or somebody else, to take that from them." — AP

**AMC**

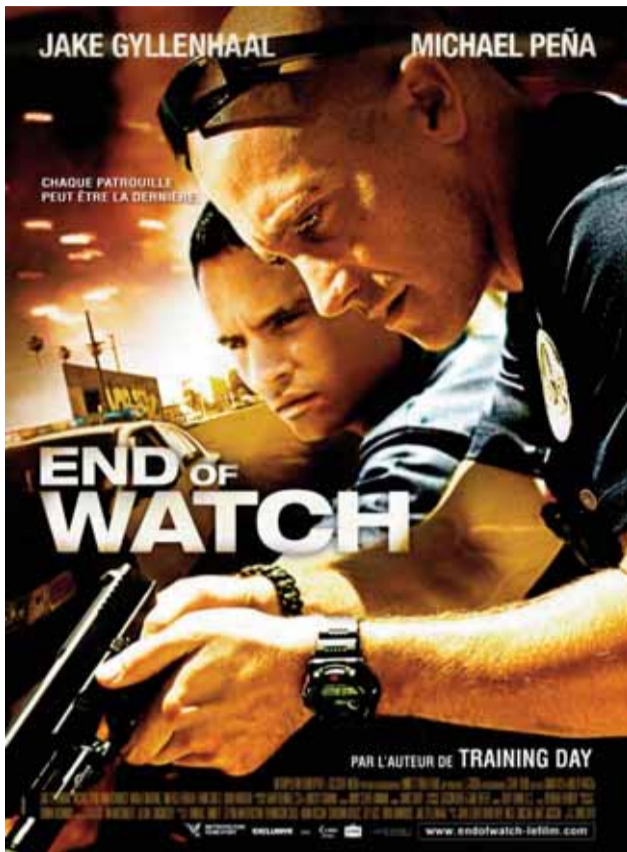
00:25 The Chocolate War  
 02:10 They Call Me Mister Tibbs!  
 04:00 Fuzz  
 05:30 Guns Of The Magnificent Seven  
 07:15 The Garbage Pail Kids Movie  
 08:50 Agent Cody Banks  
 10:30 Agent Cody Banks 2: Destination London  
 12:10 Guns Of The Magnificent Seven  
 13:55 One More Time  
 15:30 Everybody's Fine  
 17:10 The Man In The Iron Mask  
 19:20 Lords Of Dogtown  
 21:00 Night Manager  
 22:00 Breaking Bad  
 23:00 The Joshua Tree

**BBC FIRST**

- 00:05 Doctors  
 00:35 Father Brown  
 01:20 War And Peace  
 02:10 War And Peace  
 02:55 Stella  
 03:45 Doctors  
 04:15 Father Brown  
 05:00 Doctors  
 08:30 Eastenders  
 10:30 Death In Paradise  
 13:15 Casualty  
 14:10 Doctors  
 14:40 Doctors  
 15:10 The Musketeers  
 18:30 Eastenders  
 19:00 Moone Boy  
 19:25 Father Brown  
 20:15 Dickensian  
 21:00 Dickensian  
 21:50 War And Peace  
 22:40 Unforgotten  
 23:30 Doctors



- 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 Jessie  
 10:10 I Love Violetta  
 10:25 Oliver & Company  
 12:00 Violetta Recipes  
 12:15 Whisker Haven Tales With The Palace Pets  
 12:20 Jessie  
 12:45 Jessie  
 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 Miraculous Tales Of Ladybug & Cat Noir  
 16:35 Gravity Falls  
 17:00 Alex And Co  
 17:25 Mako Mermaids  
 17:50 I Love Violetta  
 18:00 Cars



END OF WATCH ON OSN MOVIES HD

- |  |                                       |
|--|---------------------------------------|
| 19:30 Mako Mermaids                      | 16:35 Jake And The Never Land Pirates |
| 19:55 Girl Meets World                   | 17:00 Sofia The First                 |
| 20:20 Girl Meets World                   | 17:25 Jungle Cubs                     |
| 20:45 Good Luck Charlie                  | 17:50 Aladdin                         |
| 21:10 Good Luck Charlie                  | 18:15 The Lion King                   |
| 21:35 H2O                                | 19:45 Sofia The First                 |
| 22:00 Binny And The Ghost                | 20:10 Jake And The Never Land Pirates |
| 22:25 Sabrina Secrets Of A Teenage Witch | 20:35 Miles From Tomorrow             |
| 22:50 Sabrina Secrets Of A Teenage Witch | 21:00 Goldie & Bear                   |
| 23:10 Hank Zipzer                        | 21:30 Sofia The First                 |
| 23:35 Binny And The Ghost                | 22:00 Jungle Cubs                     |
|  | 22:25 Aladdin                         |
|  | 22:50 Gummi Bears                     |
|  | 23:20 Lilo And Stitch                 |
|  | 23:50 Zou                             |



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|---------------------------------------|--|
| 00:05 Henry Hugglemonster             | 07:00 Star vs The Forces Of Evil             |
| 00:20 Calimero                        | 07:25 K. C. Undercover                       |
| 00:35 Zou                             | 07:50 Supa Strikas                           |
| 00:50 Loopdidoo                       | 08:15 Annedroids                             |
| 01:05 Art Attack                      | 08:40 Lab Rats                               |
| 01:30 Henry Hugglemonster             | 09:10 Kirby Buckets                          |
| 01:45 Calimero                        | 09:35 Gamers Guide To Pretty Much Everything |
| 02:00 Zou                             | 10:00 Supa Strikas                           |
| 02:15 Loopdidoo                       | 13:00 Wendy Wu: Homecoming Warrior           |
| 02:30 Art Attack                      | 14:30 Phineas And Ferb                       |
| 02:55 Henry Hugglemonster             | 14:45 Kickin' It                             |
| 03:05 Calimero                        | 15:10 Disney Mickey Mouse                    |
| 03:20 Zou                             | 15:15 Rocket Monkeys                         |
| 03:30 Loopdidoo                       | 15:40 Wander Over Yonder                     |
| 03:45 Art Attack                      | 16:05 Star vs The Forces Of Evil             |
| 04:10 Henry Hugglemonster             | 16:30 Kirby Buckets                          |
| 04:20 Calimero                        | 16:55 Gamers Guide To Pretty Much Everything |
| 04:35 Zou                             | 17:25 K. C. Undercover                       |
| 04:45 Loopdidoo                       | 17:50 Supa Strikas                           |
| 05:00 Art Attack                      | 18:15 Lab Rats                               |
| 05:25 Henry Hugglemonster             | 18:40 Mighty Med                             |
| 05:35 Calimero                        | 19:10 Annedroids                             |
| 05:50 Zou                             | 19:35 Star vs The Forces Of Evil             |
| 06:00 Loopdidoo                       | 20:00 Kirby Buckets                          |
| 06:15 Art Attack                      | 20:25 Gamers Guide To Pretty Much Everything |
| 06:35 Henry Hugglemonster             | 20:55 K. C. Undercover                       |
| 06:50 Calimero                        | 21:20 Supa Strikas                           |
| 07:00 Zou                             | 21:45 Lab Rats                               |
| 07:20 Loopdidoo                       | 22:10 Mighty Med                             |
| 07:35 Art Attack                      | 22:40 Super Matrak                           |
| 08:00 Calimero                        | 23:05 Super Matrak                           |
| 08:10 Zou                             | 23:30 Boyster                                |
| 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 The Lion King                   |  |
| 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             |  |

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



- 00:00 Diners, Drive-Ins And Dives  
 00:30 Diners, Drive-Ins And Dives  
 01:00 Follow Donal... To Europe  
 01:30 Follow Donal... To Europe  
 02:00 Australian Food Adventures With Matt Moran  
 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 Amazing Wedding Cakes  
 10:00 The Pioneer Woman  
 10:30 The Pioneer Woman  
 11:00 Siba's Table  
 11:30 Siba's Table  
 12:00 Barefoot Contessa  
 12:30 Barefoot Contessa  
 13:00 Chopped  
 14:00 Diners, Drive-Ins And Dives  
 17:00 Chopped  
 18:00 Siba's Table  
 19:00 Staten Island Cakes  
 20:00 Chopped  
 21:00 Diners, Drive-Ins And Dives  
 21:30 Diners, Drive-Ins And Dives  
 22:00 Man v Food  
 22:30 Man v Food  
 23:00 Save My Bakery



- 00:35 The Chase: Celebrity Specials  
 01:30 More Tales From Northumberland...  
 02:00 More Tales From Northumberland...  
 02:30 Emmerdale  
 05:00 Coronation Street  
 07:10 Shetland  
 08:05 More Tales From Northumberland...  
 10:15 Grantchester  
 11:05 The Doctor Blake Mysteries  
 12:00 Murdoch Mysteries  
 12:50 Murdoch Mysteries  
 13:45 The Jonathan Ross Show  
 14:35 Shetland  
 15:30 Ant & Dec's Saturday Night Takeaway  
 16:45 The Jonathan Ross Show  
 17:40 Murdoch Mysteries  
 18:35 More Tales From Northumberland...  
 19:00 More Tales From Northumberland...  
 19:30 Ant & Dec's Saturday Night Takeaway  
 20:45 The Jonathan Ross Show  
 21:40 Grantchester  
 22:30 The Doctor Blake Mysteries  
 23:25 Coronation Street  
 23:50 Coronation Street



- 00:30 Suburgatory  
 01:00 The Nightly Show With Larry Wilmore  
 01:30 Louie

- 02:00 Curb Your Enthusiasm  
 02:30 It's Always Sunny In Philadelphia  
 03:00 Fresh Off The Boat  
 03:30 Black-Ish  
 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 Fresh Off The Boat  
 09:30 Parks And Recreation  
 10:00 The Simpsons  
 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 Black-Ish  
 14:30 Parks And Recreation  
 15:00 The Simpsons  
 15:30 Suburgatory  
 16:00 The Nightly Show With Larry Wilmore  
 16:30 Mad Love  
 17:00 Late Night With Seth Meyers  
 18:00 The Muppets  
 18:30 Dr. Ken  
 19:00 Last Man Standing  
 19:30 Life In Pieces  
 20:00 The Tonight Show Starring Jimmy Fallon  
 21:00 Suburgatory  
 21:30 The Nightly Show With Larry Wilmore  
 22:00 Saturday Night Live  
 23:00 It's Always Sunny In Philadelphia  
 23:30 Late Night With Seth Meyers

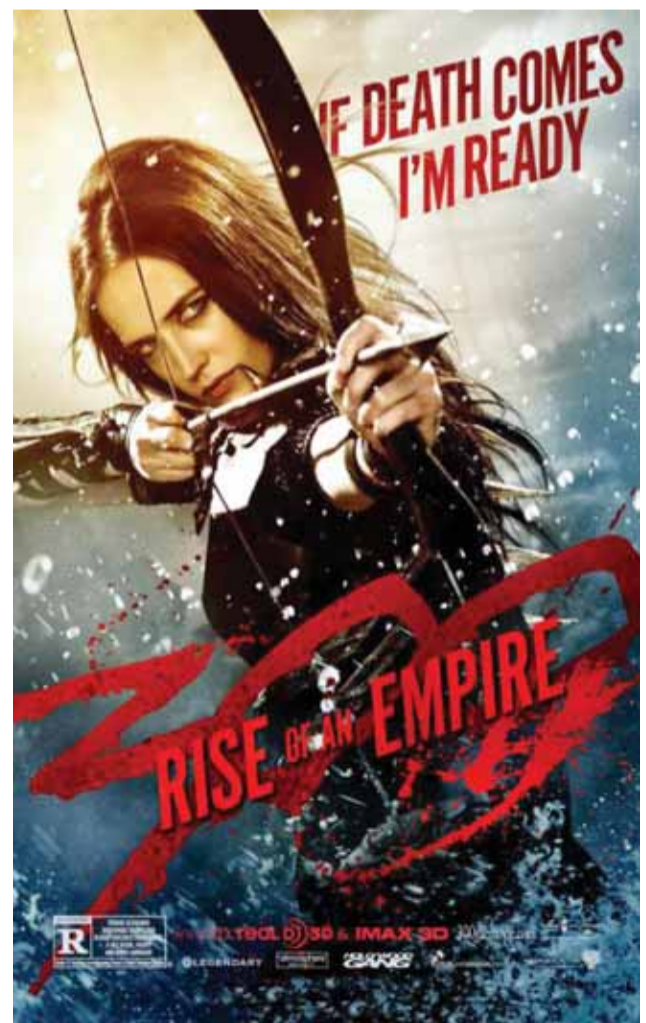
- 05:00 Cinema Verite  
 06:30 Love Crimes Of Kabul  
 06:30 Love Crimes Of Kabul  
 08:00 The Mind Of The Married Man  
 08:00 The Mind Of The Married Man  
 08:30 The Comeback  
 08:30 The Comeback  
 09:00 Veep  
 09:00 Veep  
 09:30 Getting On  
 09:30 Getting On  
 10:00 From The Earth To The Moon  
 10:00 From The Earth To The Moon  
 11:00 Bette Midler: The Showgirl  
 11:00 Bette Midler: The Showgirl  
 11:00 Bette Midler: The Showgirl  
 11:00 Bette Midler: The Showgirl  
 12:15 Herblock: The Black & The White  
 12:15 Herblock: The Black & The White  
 14:00 The Mind Of The Married Man  
 14:00 The Mind Of The Married Man  
 14:30 The Comeback  
 14:30 The Comeback  
 15:00 Veep  
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 15:30 Getting On  
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 16:00 From The Earth To The Moon  
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 17:00 Bette Midler: The Showgirl  
 17:00 Bette Midler: The Showgirl  
 17:00 Bette Midler: The Showgirl  
 17:00 Bette Midler: The Showgirl  
 19:00 The Newsroom  
 19:00 The Newsroom  
 20:00 The Sopranos  
 20:00 The Sopranos  
 21:00 Luck  
 21:00 Luck  
 22:00 Animals  
 22:00 Animals  
 22:30 Funny Or Die Presents  
 22:30 Funny Or Die Presents



- 00:00 The Newsroom  
 00:00 The Newsroom  
 01:00 The Sopranos  
 01:00 The Sopranos  
 02:00 Game Of Thrones  
 02:00 Game Of Thrones  
 03:00 The Bastard Executioner  
 03:00 The Bastard Executioner  
 04:00 The Wire  
 04:00 The Wire  
 05:00 Cinema Verite



- 00:00 Supernatural  
 01:00 Grey's Anatomy  
 02:00 Survivor: Kaoh Rong  
 03:00 Sleepy Hollow  
 04:00 Good Morning America  
 06:00 The Astronaut Wives Club  
 07:00 White Collar  
 08:00 Blood & Oil  
 09:00 American Idol  
 11:00 White Collar  
 12:00 The Astronaut Wives Club



300- RISE OF AN EMPIRE ON OSN MOVIES ACTION



- 13:00 The Ellen DeGeneres Show
- 14:00 American Idol
- 16:00 Live Good Morning America
- 17:00 The Ellen DeGeneres Show
- 18:00 Blood & Oil
- 19:00 Grey's Anatomy
- 20:00 Stitches
- 21:00 Criminal Minds
- 22:00 The Blacklist
- 23:00 Mad Dogs

**OSN MOVIES ACTION**

- 00:15 300: Rise Of An Empire
- 02:00 Devil's Pass
- 03:45 Betrayed
- 05:15 Oblivion
- 07:30 The Hulk
- 10:00 Age Of Dinosaurs
- 11:45 The A-Team
- 14:00 Wrath
- 15:45 Oblivion
- 18:00 Justice League: Throne Of Atlantis
- 19:30 The A-Team
- 21:45 Guardians Of The Galaxy

**OSN MOVIES HD ACTION**

- 00:00 Devil's Pass-18
- 01:45 Betrayed-PG15
- 03:15 Oblivion-PG15
- 05:30 The Hulk-PG15
- 08:00 Age Of Dinosaurs-PG15
- 09:45 The A-Team-PG15
- 12:00 Wrath-PG15
- 13:45 Oblivion-PG15
- 16:00 Justice League: Throne Of Atlantis-PG15
- 17:30 The A-Team-PG15
- 19:45 Guardians Of The Galaxy-PG15
- 22:00 Predator-18

**OSN MOVIES HD COMEDY**

- 00:15 The Hoolligan Factory
- 02:00 Bad Parents
- 04:00 Bottle Rocket
- 06:00 Happy Gilmore
- 08:00 Tooth Fairy
- 10:00 Bottle Rocket
- 12:00 500 Days Of Summer
- 14:00 Encino Man
- 16:00 Tooth Fairy
- 18:00 The Bounty Hunter
- 20:00 22 Jump Street
- 22:00 A Million Ways To Die In The West

**OSN MOVIES DRAMA**

- 01:00 Testament Of Youth-PG15
- 03:15 Nightcrawler-PG15
- 05:15 Middle Of Nowhere-PG15
- 07:00 The Invisible Woman-PG15
- 09:00 Breathless-PG15
- 11:00 Middle Of Nowhere-PG15
- 13:00 Two Men In Town-PG15
- 15:00 My Piece Of The Pie-PG15
- 17:00 Breathless-PG15
- 19:00 Blue Ruin-PG15
- 21:00 Hummingbird-PG15
- 23:00 The Rover-18

**OSN MOVIES HD FAMILY**

- 01:00 Toy Story 2
- 03:00 The Pacifier
- 05:00 D2: The Mighty Ducks
- 07:00 Planes: Fire And Rescue
- 09:00 Inspector Gadget (1999)
- 11:00 Ratatouille
- 13:00 Dolphin Tale 2
- 15:00 Coraline
- 17:00 Night At The Museum: Battle Of The Smithsonian
- 19:00 The Game Plan
- 21:00 Three Men And A Little Lady
- 23:00 Coraline

**OSN MOVIES HD FESTIVAL**

- 01:15 Little Man Tate
- 03:00 Short Term 12



GUARDIANS OF THE GALAXY ON OSN MOVIES ACTION HD

- 04:45 Julie And Julia
- 07:00 Tea With Mussolini
- 09:00 The Mirror Has Two Faces
- 11:00 Julie And Julia
- 13:00 Mandela: Long Walk To Freedom
- 15:30 Paradise
- 17:30 The Mirror Has Two Faces
- 19:30 The Double
- 21:30 The Savages
- 23:30 Legends Of The Fall

**OSN MOVIES HD PREMIERE**

- 01:15 Shiver-PG15
- 03:00 A Promise-PG15
- 05:00 Jack And The Cuckoo Clock Heart-PG
- 07:00 Boychoir-PG15
- 09:00 Paul Blart: Mall Cop 2-PG15
- 11:00 Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles-13:00 Avengers: Age Of Ultron-PG15
- 15:30 Son Of Batman-PG
- 17:00 Big Eyes-PG15
- 19:00 St. Vincent-PG15
- 21:00 Are You Here-PG15
- 23:00 The Necessary Death Of Charlie Countryman-18

**OSN MOVIES HD KIDS**

- 01:00 Memory Loss
- 02:45 Yellowbird
- 04:30 Miffy The Movie
- 06:00 Pororo: The Racing Adventure
- 08:00 Dixie And The Zombie Rebellion
- 10:00 Zarafa
- 11:30 Jungle Shuffle
- 13:00 Yellowbird
- 14:30 Bamse And The City Of Thieves

- 16:00 Kikoriki: Team Invincible
- 18:00 Zarafa
- 20:00 The Tale Of The Princess Kaguya
- 22:00 Bamse And The City Of Thieves
- 23:30 Kikoriki: Team Invincible

**OSN MOVIES HD PREMIERE**

- 00:30 End Of Watch-18
- 02:30 Step Up Revolution-PG15
- 04:15 I Am Ali-PG15
- 06:15 HairBrained-PG15
- 08:00 In My Dreams-PG15
- 10:00 A Stranger In Paradise-PG15
- 11:30 Need For Speed-PG15
- 14:00 Streetdance: All Stars-PG15
- 16:00 In My Dreams-PG15
- 18:00 The Judge-PG15
- 20:30 The Last Of Robin Hood-PG15
- 22:00 The Two Faces Of January



- 00:45 The Day I Almost Died
- 01:35 My 600lb Life: Where Are They Now?
- 02:25 My Naked Secret
- 02:50 My Naked Secret
- 03:15 Children's Emergency Rescue
- 03:40 Children's Emergency Rescue
- 04:05 Craft Wars
- 05:00 Craft Wars
- 06:00 Say Yes To The Dress
- 06:25 Designer Darlings
- 07:15 Outrageous Kid Parties
- 07:40 Outrageous Kid Parties

- 08:05 Bakery Boss
- 08:55 Bakery Boss
- 09:45 Designer Darlings
- 10:35 Little People, Big World: Wedding Farm
- 11:25 Jon & Kate Plus 8
- 11:50 Jon & Kate Plus 8
- 12:15 Jon & Kate Plus 8
- 12:40 Jon & Kate Plus 8
- 13:05 Jon & Kate Plus 8
- 13:30 My Big Fat Fabulous Life
- 14:20 Belief
- 15:10 Cake Boss
- 15:35 Cake Boss
- 16:00 Cake Boss
- 16:25 Cake Boss
- 16:50 Cake Boss
- 17:15 Little People, Big World: Wedding Farm
- 18:05 Oprah's Lifeclass
- 18:55 Cake Boss
- 19:20 Oprah Winfrey Leadership Academy...
- 21:00 Iyanla: Fix My Life
- 21:50 Oprah's Master Class
- 22:40 Long Island Medium
- 23:05 90 Days To Wed
- 23:55 The Day I Almost Died



- 00:50 River Monsters
- 01:45 Man-Eating Super Croc
- 02:40 Big Fish Man
- 03:35 Tanked
- 04:25 Echo And The Elephants Of Amboseli
- 04:50 Echo And The Elephants Of Amboseli
- 05:15 Gator Boys
- 06:02 Treehouse Masters

- 06:49 Big Fish Man
- 07:36 Monkey Life
- 08:00 Monkey Life
- 08:25 Treehouse Masters
- 09:15 Treehouse Masters
- 10:10 Treehouse Masters
- 11:05 Treehouse Masters
- 12:00 Treehouse Masters
- 12:55 Austin Stevens: Snakemaster
- 13:50 Crocodile Feeding Frenzy
- 14:45 Charles & Jessica: A Chimp Tale
- 15:40 Animal Cops South Africa
- 16:35 Echo And The Elephants Of Amboseli
- 17:05 Echo And The Elephants Of Amboseli
- 17:30 Into The Pride
- 18:25 Wildest Africa
- 19:20 Rugged Justice
- 20:15 Wild Capture School
- 20:45 Wild Capture School
- 21:10 Treetop Cat Rescue
- 21:40 Treetop Cat Rescue
- 22:05 Dr. Dee: Alaska Vet
- 23:00 Rugged Justice
- 23:55 Austin Stevens: Snakemaster



- 00:00 Britain's Darkest Taboos
- 01:00 The Haunting Of...
- 02:00 The Last Goodbye
- 02:30 The Last Goodbye
- 03:00 Ms. Homicide
- 04:00 The First 48
- 05:00 Crimes That Shook Britain
- 06:00 The Haunting Of...
- 07:00 The FBI Files
- 08:00 Fred Dinenage: Murder Casebook
- 09:00 Fred Dinenage: Murder Casebook
- 10:00 Britain's Biggest Heists
- 11:00 Britain's Biggest Heists
- 12:00 Crimes That Shook Australia
- 13:00 Crimes That Shook Australia
- 14:00 When Life Means Life
- 15:00 When Life Means Life
- 16:00 The FBI Files
- 17:00 Crime Stories
- 18:00 Crime Stories
- 19:00 Britain's Biggest Heists
- 20:00 Britain's Biggest Heists
- 21:00 Monster In My Family
- 22:00 Monster In My Family
- 23:00 The Last Goodbye
- 23:30 The Last Goodbye



- 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 Serial Killers
- 04:00 Deadly Devotion
- 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 Fatal Encounters
- 08:50 Disappeared
- 09:40 Disappeared
- 10:30 On The Case With Paula Zahn
- 11:20 On The Case With Paula Zahn
- 12:10 The Will
- 13:00 The Will
- 13:50 California Investigator
- 14:15 California Investigator
- 14:40 Dr G: Medical Examiner
- 15:30 On The Case With Paula Zahn
- 16:20 On The Case With Paula Zahn
- 17:10 Disappeared
- 18:00 Disappeared
- 18:50 California Investigator
- 19:15 California Investigator
- 19:40 Deadly Affairs
- 20:30 Deadly Affairs
- 21:20 Deadly Affairs
- 22:10 Deadly Affairs
- 23:00 True CSI
- 23:50 Surviving Evil



- 01:10 Hawaii Life
- 01:35 World's Most Extreme Homes
- 02:00 House Hunters
- 02:30 House Hunters
- 02:55 Rehab Addict
- 03:20 Rehab Addict
- 03:45 Rehab Addict
- 04:10 Fixer Upper
- 05:05 Caribbean Life
- 05:30 Hawaii Life
- 05:55 Extreme Homes
- 06:45 Million Dollar Rooms
- 07:10 Million Dollar Rooms
- 07:35 Rehab Addict
- 08:00 Extreme Homes
- 08:50 Restoration SOS Buffalo
- 09:15 Hawaii Life
- 09:40 Healthy Gourmet
- 10:05 Healthy Gourmet
- 10:30 Beachfront Bargain Hunt
- 11:00 Beachfront Bargain Hunt
- 11:25 Caribbean Life
- 11:50 Hawaii Life
- 12:15 Rehab Addict
- 12:40 Rehab Addict
- 13:10 Curb Appeal
- 13:35 Curb Appeal
- 14:00 Junk Gypsies
- 14:25 Junk Gypsies
- 14:50 Cousins On Call
- 15:15 Kitchen Cousins
- 15:45 Giada's Weekend Getaways
- 16:10 Giada's Weekend Getaways
- 16:35 Rachel Hunter's Tour Of Beauty
- 17:00 Rachel Hunter's Tour Of Beauty
- 17:25 America's Most Desperate Kitchens
- 17:50 America's Most Desperate Kitchens
- 18:15 Giada In Italy
- 18:40 Giada In Italy
- 19:05 Flip Or Flop
- 19:30 Flip Or Flop
- 20:00 Extreme Homes
- 20:55 House Hunters
- 21:20 House Hunters
- 21:45 Hawaii Life
- 22:10 Restoration SOS Buffalo
- 22:35 Rehab Addict
- 23:00 Million Dollar Rooms
- 23:55 Million Dollar Closets



- 00:00 Redbull Skate Arcade World Final 2015
- 00:30 American Misfits
- 01:00 Master Debaters With Jay Mohr
- 01:30 Strangers In Danger
- 02:00 Redbull Skate Arcade World Final 2015
- 02:30 ASP Champions Crowning 2008
- 03:00 Afrmxa Freestyle Awards 2010
- 03:30 Feast Of The East
- 04:00 Fuel TV's Skate Arabia
- 05:00 Insane Cinema: Machotaildrop
- 06:45 DC Initials Tour
- 07:00 Riding The Long White Cloud
- 08:00 Brasil Surf
- 09:00 Fuel TV's Skate Arabia
- 10:00 The 808
- 10:30 The South
- 11:00 Master Debaters With Jay Mohr
- 11:30 ASP Champions Crowning 2008
- 12:00 Afrmxa Freestyle Awards 2010
- 12:30 Feast Of The East
- 13:00 Master Debaters With Jay Mohr
- 13:30 World Of X Games 2014
- 14:00 Fuel TV's Skate Arabia
- 15:00 Slam!
- 15:30 El Sueno
- 16:10 The Afends Hemp Revolution
- 16:30 American Misfits
- 17:00 Crankworx Rotorua 2015
- 19:00 Crankworx Rotorua 2015
- 21:00 Insane Cinema: Machotaildrop
- 22:45 DC Initials Tour
- 23:00 King Of Wake 2013
- 23:30 King Of Wake 2013

## AOU AND ATU ORGANIZE COMPETENCY BASED TRAINING WORKSHOP

**A**rab Open University (AOU) in coordination with the Arab Trainers Union (ATU) will organize a workshop, entitled "Competency-based Training" at the AOU Kuwait Branch Campus

on 6th March, 2016. The workshop will be delivered by Dr Younis Khataybah, Chairman of the Union and also an expert in human resources management, planning and training. It will address two

essential themes, determination of training needs by competencies, and development of performance. The workshop will be concluded with granting certificates to participants.



Dr Younis Khataybah



## SAFETY SPECIALISTS SPEAK AT ASSE SEMINAR

**T**he American Society of Safety Engineers (ASSE), Kuwait Chapter conducted a training seminar on 'How to Build Effective Contract Specific HSE Plan' on 19th February 2016 from 9:00 am to 2:00 pm at Kohinoor Banquet Hall, Fahaheel.

The trainer for the session was Sanjay Jaiswal. He is a Certified Safety Professional (CSP) by the Board of Certified Safety Professionals, USA and holds a B.E. in Fire Engineering from Nagpur University India. He is presently Core Committee member of the ASSE Kuwait Chapter. Jaiswal is currently working in Kuwait Oil Company as Safety Specialist and carries more than 26 years' experience in downstream and midstream Oil and Gas industry. His specific skill areas include but not limited to the

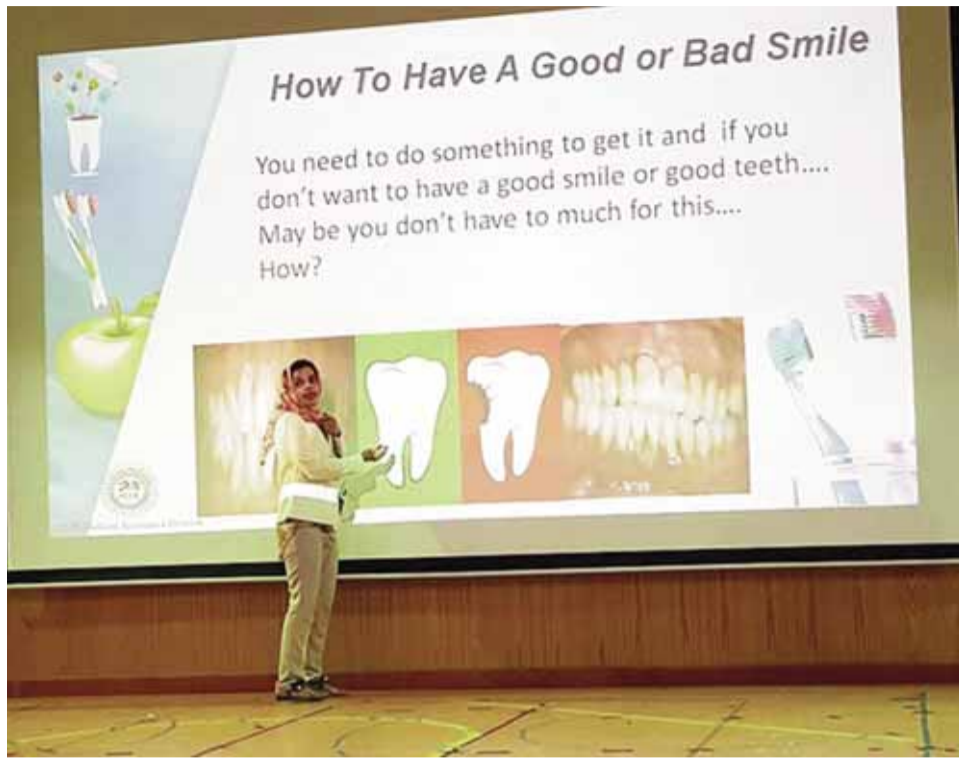
Development and implementation of HSE Management System, HSE Training, Auditing and Inspections, Risk Assessment and Loss Prevention, Accident investigations, Process Safety Management and Contractor HSE Management.

The training seminar was excellently conducted by the trainer and effectively communicated. Participants have appreciated the learning of the subject. Overall understanding on the Project Specific HSE Plan requirements, ability to carry out Risk Assessment / Hazard Identification, Identification of required Safety Procedures / Programs, Identifying the training requirements / skill requirements, Defining the roles and responsibilities etc, Ability to identify the requirements for implementing the key safe work

practices with the Audio and video Presentations. The program was very much beneficial to all the members particularly to the junior Safety Officers and Engineers especially from Petroleum and Petrochemical industries. Around 15 members attended and got benefited from this program. The participants were very much happy and given feedback to conduct more such useful training from ASSE Kuwait chapter for the benefit of its members.

Babu VSVRA, Head of training committee, thanked Sanjay Jaiswal for his efforts, time, and initiative to make the training program successful. The session concluded with the distribution of Participation Certificates. Delicious dinner Sponsored by ASSE - Kuwait Chapter served at the end of the session.





# PAKISTAN EMPLOYMENT FORUM ORGANIZES ORAL HEALTH CARE SEMINAR FOR STUDENTS



**P**akistan Employment Forum Kuwait (PEFK), Medical Assistance Division, organized Oral Health Care Seminar on 17th February, 2016 for Young Students in Pakistan English School Mangaf with coordination of Ihsan Ullah, the Principal of Pakistan English School Mangaf. PEFK Medical Assistance Division prepared and conducted the event led by Dr Huda Shams, Dr Yasir Jameel. PEFK Medical Assistance Division is dealing with career assistance, guidance and counseling in Medical field for Job seekers and Students in Kuwait. Ihsan Ullah, The Principal, Muhammad Rizwan Abid, vice Principal of Pakistan English School Mangaf, Muhammad Irfan Adil, Founder President of PEFK, along with school staff including Qari Sohaib Anjum and Nighat graced the event.

Seminar was started by Recitation of Holy Quran by Abdul Wahab whereas the event was conducted nicely by Khadija Abbas. She introduced PEFK and Medical Assistance Division to Young Student. PEFK Founder President, Muhammad Irfan Adil welcomed all and Invited Dr Huda Shams, Dr Yasir Jameel for the presentation. Dr Huda Shams and Dr Yasir Jameel Delivered Comprehensive and informative Presentation on Oral Health Topic, which showed different ways to tackle Dental issues. Young Students Participated with full enthusiasm and showed their high interest towards presentation and asked several questions in Q/A session and Students were shown different Techniques of brushing through Presentation and demonstration.

### Premier forum

At the end, PEFK President, Muhammad Irfan Adil thanked

the Audience, Students and Principal of school for giving opportunity to conduct seminar. He briefly explained about Pakistan Employment Forum Kuwait and stated that PEFK is a premier and first ever Pakistani Forum of its kind in State of Kuwait which is purely designated to provide assistance for job seekers and career counseling for students residing in Kuwait especially among Pakistanis. PEFK is a non-Political and non-Governmental organization. It is a social welfare group established with a vision to provide career guidance to job-seekers and students, mainly Pakistani citizens residing in Kuwait, and help those in need of assistance in their career development, with no limitations of religion, nationality, race or ethnicity. We are here to serve humanity and the career of all humans is precious to us. We aim to provide the Best Career Development Counseling and Job Hunting guidance to our community in Kuwait.

A famous National Song of Pakistan was presented beautifully by Abdul Aziz the student of Pakistan English School Mangaf and firmly appreciated by all participants. Muhammad Rizwan Abid, vice Principal of Pakistan English School Mangaf Kuwait highly appreciated PEFK initiative for students. He marked this effort as an amazing contribution. He stated that the Oral Health seminar is very useful, informative and productive. He thanked PEFK Medical Assistance Division and all PEFK Team for their ongoing efforts in serving the community. At the end, Certificate of Appreciation was presented to the participating students and Teacher in PEFK 3rd Annual Event and Interscholar Pakistan National Song Competition.





An *Aedes aegypti* mosquito is photographed through a microscope at the Fiocruz institute in Recife, Pernambuco state, Brazil. Volunteer Google engineers in San Francisco and New York are working with UNICEF counterparts to create a system that combines several types of data to help predict where the *Aedes aegypti* mosquito, which spreads the Zika virus, might next be particularly active, helping in eradication efforts. — AP

## QUESTIONS GROW ABOUT ZIKA'S RISK TO FUTURE PREGNANCY CONCERNS IF VIRUS CAN BE TRANSMITTED SEXUALLY

**LOS ANGELES:** Few women have competed in the Olympics while pregnant, but the suspicion that the Zika virus in mothers is causing birth defects is central to calculations by athletes and others planning travel to Brazil in August for the summer games.

Chief among their concerns is whether Zika, unlike similar mosquito-borne viruses, can be transmitted sexually, or remain latent in the body - possibly presenting a risk for women who become pregnant after the Olympics have ended. More than a dozen disease experts, in interviews with Reuters, said there is no evidence at this point of long-term risk for future pregnancies. But, given the surprises seen with the virus so far, they said people should remain cautious until studies give scientists a better picture of how the virus works. They said it would take months or even years of study for definitive answers to questions about Zika's risks.

Public health agencies have urged pregnant women to avoid travel to Zika outbreak areas but have given little guidance for couples planning to start a family.

Dr. Claire Panosian, of the University of California, Los Angeles, division of infectious diseases, said that for years she has advised couples to wait several months after traveling to exotic locales before trying to conceive because of the risk of birth defects from diseases like toxoplasmosis.

Zika should be no different, she said: "Women of child-bearing age should be very scrupulous - wait several months." The virus, which is spreading rapidly through the Americas, has been linked to a spike in microcephaly, a rare birth defect, in Brazil. The condition is defined by unusually small heads in newborns and can cause brain damage.

Zika has not been proven to cause microcephaly, but evidence of an association led the World Health Organization to declare the outbreak a global health emergency.

The US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention says pregnant women should

consider skipping the 2016 Olympics because of the risk of Zika infection. For women who are considering becoming pregnant - and their male partners - the agency recommends consulting their physicians in deciding whether to go to the Games.

The US Food and Drug Administration, however, has suggested a more detailed time frame. It called this week for a six-month delay in all human cell or tissue donations, including of semen and eggs, from people who have had Zika infections or traveled to an outbreak area.

Canada's national health agency on Wednesday advised women who want to get pregnant to wait at least two months after traveling to countries affected by the Zika outbreak. Eighteen women have competed in modern Olympics while pregnant according to a group of Olympic historians who publish their statistics at Sports-Reference.com. The number includes US beach volleyball gold medalist Kerri Walsh, who was not yet aware she was pregnant when competing in London in 2012.

Some current Olympic hopefuls say they might think twice about the Rio Games if Zika could threaten future pregnancies, and they are hoping for some better answers before the competition begins.

"If things stood as they are right now, I probably would not go," renowned US soccer goalkeeper Hope Solo told CBS last week. "At some point I do want to start a family, and I don't want to be worried."

Solo has spoken out about feeling conflicted over her two great ambitions - winning Olympic gold and becoming a mother in the future. "It's scary, and I have a lot of reservations about going to the Olympics," she said. DeeDee Trotter, a 33-year-old Olympic sprinter and medalist who aims to make the US team again this year, said in an interview she wasn't worried "if the only danger is to women who are pregnant."

That sentiment could change if a prior Zika infection is shown to pose a risk later "when I do decide to have children," she said.

The US Olympic Committee has told athletes that babies may be at risk if the mother is infected with Zika while pregnant, or if she becomes pregnant within an unknown time frame after being infected.

"We have worked to ensure that all potential Olympic and Paralympic athletes are aware of the CDC's recommendations, and we will continue to do so," USOC spokesman Mark Jones said in an emailed statement. "They are the experts."

### THE IMMUNITY QUESTION

The CDC says experiencing a Zika infection once likely protects a person from future infection, although that immunity - like so many aspects of Zika - is not yet proven. "It is likely that, following infection, people are immune, but what percentage of convalesced patients and for how long will not be clear for some time," said Dr. Leslie Lobel, chair of the department of virology and developmental genetics at Israel's Ben-Gurion University of the Negev who has been working with Ugandan and Brazilian scientists to investigate Zika.

Whether the virus can remain in the body and cause a recurrence also is not known. In one case, Zika virus was detected in semen 62 days after the man was infected, but it was not clear whether it was capable of infecting someone else.

Separately, the CDC is investigating at least 14 cases of possible sexual transmission. Zika was first identified in 1947 in Uganda and previously linked to smaller outbreaks. Many people who are infected show no symptoms, while those who become ill report relatively mild effects of rash or fever. There is no vaccine or treatment for the virus, which is in the same family as dengue, West Nile virus and yellow fever. — Reuters

## HAPPINESS CAN BREAK YOUR HEART: DOCTORS

**PARIS:** Joyful events-the birth of a child, a big win by your team-can trigger a dangerous condition called the "broken heart syndrome", doctors and researchers reported Thursday.

Takotsubo syndrome, as it is also known, involves the sudden weakening of heart muscles, causing the left ventricle-the chamber which pushes oxygen-rich blood through the body-to balloon out abnormally at the bottom. Besides acute chest pain and shortness of breath, the condition can lead to heart attacks and death.

It has long been known that an unexpected emotional shock-typically something unpleasant, such as the death of a spouse, or a violent argument-can provoke an attack. But statistics were lacking, and no one had ever investigated whether an intensely happy event could give the same result. In 2011, a pair of researchers in Switzerland-Christian Templin and Jelena Ghadri, both of University Hospital Zurich-set up a global registry to track cases of the syndrome, which is fairly rare. Five years later, the network of 25 hospitals spread across nine countries had collected data on statistically significant 1,750 cases of the Takotsubo syndrome (TTS).

For the study, Templin and Ghadri, leading a team of 16 researchers, determined that emotional jolts were responsible for 485 of those cases. And within that group, four percent-a total of 20 individuals-could be said to have suffered from "happy heart syndrome."

### Birth of a grandchild

"We have shown that the triggers for TTS can be more varied than previously thought," said Ghadri. "The disease can be preceded by positive emotions too."

The 20 cases set off by joyful events included a birthday party, a wedding, a surprise farewell celebration, a favorite rugby team winning a game, and the birth of a grandchild.

None of them proved fatal. Emergency room doctors should be aware of the fact that patients with signs of heart attack could be suffering from TTS, sparked by either positive or negative experiences. For reasons the researchers do not understand, 95 percent of the patients in both the "broken heart" and "happy heart" groups were women, mostly in their mid-to-late 60s.

"We still do not know why women are predominately affected by the Takotsubo syndrome," Ghadri told AFP. "We can only speculate that the hormonal state-namely, oestrogen-might play a role in the disease mechanism." Women have much higher levels of oestrogen than men, in whom testosterone — AFP

## EXPELLED PREGNANT GIRLS BACK AT SCHOOL IN SIERRA LEONE

**FREETOWN:** A group of 5,000 girls who were expelled from schools in Sierra Leone for getting pregnant during the Ebola crisis have returned to the classroom, the education ministry said on Thursday.

All schools were closed from June 2014 to April 2015 in Sierra Leone as part of government efforts to curb the spread of the Ebola virus, which killed almost 4,000 people in the country.

But when they reopened in April 2015, girls were assessed using invasive methods to check if they were pregnant or had recently given birth. Kadie, in her third year of secondary school in the south of the country, told AFP: "My breasts were lumped together to find out whether they contained milky substances before I was allowed to continue my tuition."

It pupils were found to be expecting or had become mothers, they were given the choice of attending temporary alternative classes funded by the British and Irish governments.

As a result many girls missed exams to gain entrance to higher secondary school, university or college.

Education Minister Brima Turay said the girls, some of whom were still in the primary system when they became pregnant, were readmitted in January after being banned from mainstream schooling for being a "negative influence" on others.

"They started during the school year in January but we were watching their performance before this disclosure and I am pleased to report that it has been outstanding and over our expectation," he told AFP. The authorities said last year the girls were expelled "to avoid other girls from following the example of becoming pregnant while attending school", as it "would set a bad precedent which runs alien to the country's cultural values".

An outcry ensued, with the Human Rights Commission of Sierra Leone calling the exclusion of pregnant girls from mainstream educational institutions "discriminatory and stigmatization". Sallimatu, 13, who spoke to AFP by phone from Bo, Sierra Leone's second largest city, said she was happy to have returned to school, adding that the stigma attached to teenage pregnancy made her determined to work hard at her studies. — AFP

# OBAMA TRUMPETS GAINS IN HEALTHCARE COVERAGE

20 MILLION GAINED INSURANCE DUE TO HEALTHCARE LAW

**MILWAUKEE:** President Barack Obama trumpeted the nation's declining uninsured rate Thursday and said 20 million people have gained insurance as a result of his signature healthcare law as he commemorated the approaching sixth anniversary of the Affordable Care Act.

Obama criticized Republicans for trying to "repeal or undermine" the act about 60 times and said they've explained what they would replace it with "about zero times."

"If they got their way, 20 million people will have their insurance taken away from them," Obama said.

Congratulating local leaders in Wisconsin for winning a national health insurance enrollment contest, Obama acknowledged that millions more are eligible to enroll but have yet to do so. He attributed some of that to acrimony over the law, saying people haven't always known what's true and what's not.

Obama was introduced at the event by Brent Brown of Mosinee, Wisconsin, who said he's a Republican who never voted to elect Obama and worked to ensure he would not be president. But he said the health care law saved his life after he was diagnosed with an autoimmune disease and ran out of money for treatment. Brown called on Republicans to quit trying to repeal the law. "Swallow your pride as I am doing right now," he said.

More than 38,000 Milwaukee-area residents have newly signed up for health coverage, out of about 51,000 uninsured people who were eligible to enroll. The city's sign-up ratio was the highest among the 20 cities competing in the president's "Healthy Communities Challenge." The



**MILWAUKEE:** President Barack Obama speaks from the United Community Center on Thursday in Milwaukee, Wis. The President traveled to Milwaukee to celebrate the city's victory in the Healthy Communities Challenge, a competition between 20 cities to increase the number of Americans with health insurance during the latest Health Insurance Marketplace open enrollment period. —AP

winning city was promised a visit by the president.

### Renewing coverage

"All told, counting new folks and people renewing their coverage, you got nearly 90,000 people to sign up," Obama said. "That's enough to fill Lambeau Field and still have a big tailgating party with folks outside. And those tailgaters wouldn't have to worry because Obamacare covers indigestion from too many brats." Lambeau Field is the home of the NFL's Green Bay Packers. Obama also faulted Wisconsin Gov. Scott Walker for refusing federal funding to expand Medicaid, an

option given to states under the law, to help cover more people. Obama said 21,000 additional state residents would be covered "with the stroke of his pen."

"He's denying Wisconsinites their ticket to health insurance and it's political," Obama said of Walker, who dropped out of the race for the Republican presidential nomination last year. Walker has argued that the federal government can't be trusted to keep its funding commitment to the states. Walker spokeswoman Laurel Patrick said Thursday that due to Walker's entitlement reforms, everyone in poverty is covered through Medicaid, without exposing taxpayers to potential liability. — AP

## MORE EVIDENCE THAT ASPIRIN LOWERS RISK OF CANCER: STUDY

**MIAMI:** People who take aspirin regularly have a significantly lower risk of cancer, particularly involving the colon and gastrointestinal tract, according to US research published on Thursday.

The findings in the Journal of the American Medical Association (JAMA) Oncology suggest that aspirin use should complement-not replace-already established preventive screening measures such as colonoscopies. "We now can recommend that many individuals consider taking aspirin to reduce their risk of colorectal cancer-particularly those with other reasons for regular use, such as heart disease prevention," said senior author Andrew Chan of the Massachusetts General Hospital.

"Our findings imply that aspirin use would be expected to prevent a significant number of colorectal cancers above and beyond those that would be prevented by screening and may have even greater benefit in settings in which the resources to devote to cancer screening are lacking."

Previous research has shown that regular aspirin use can help prevent colorectal cancer.

However, the wider effect of aspirin on all cancers was less clear. So the researchers looked at 32 years worth of data from nearly 136,000 nurses and health professionals who answered health surveys.

People who took either a regular aspirin or a low-dose aspirin at least twice per week showed a three percent lower risk of any type of cancer than those who did not report regular aspirin use.

The protective benefit of aspirin "appeared after five years of continuous use at dosages ranging from 0.5 to 1.5 standard tablets a week or one low-dose tablet a day," said the study.

Aspirin use reduced the risk of colorectal cancer by 19 percent and the risk of any gastrointestinal cancer by 15 percent.

Regular aspirin use "could prevent close to 30,000 gastrointestinal tract tumors in the US each year," said the study. The team also calculated that aspirin use could "prevent an additional 7,500 colorectal tumors among US adults over 50 who have endoscopic screening and 9,800 among the almost 30 million who are not screened."

However, when researchers looked specifically at common cancers such as breast, lung and prostate cancer, they found no risk reduction from aspirin use.

The research was based on observational studies, so it is not as strong as a randomized controlled trial.

Aspirin also carries certain risks, such as bleeding and stroke, and cannot be tolerated by everyone. — AFP

CLINIC  
PAGE



Kuwait Times  
THE LEADING INDEPENDENT DAILY IN THE ARABIAN GULF

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

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



# Flight Schedule

**DIAL 161 FOR AIRPORT INFORMATION**

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

**Arrival Flights on Saturday 5/3/2016**

Airlines	Flt	Route	Time
MSC	415	Sohag	00:05
KLM	413	Amsterdam/Dammam	00:20
JZR	267	Beirut	00:30
JZR	539	Cairo	00:40
FDB	069	Dubai	00:55
RJA	642	Amman	01:05
THY	772	Istanbul	01:05
SAI	441	Lahore	01:30
DLH	635	Doha	01:35
ETH	620	Addis Ababa	01:45
PGT	858	Istanbul	02:00
UAE	853	Dubai	02:30
GFA	211	Bahrain	02:30
OMA	643	Muscat	02:55
FDB	067	Dubai	03:05
MSR	612	Cairo	03:10
QTR	1076	Doha	03:15
KKK	6507	Istanbul	03:20
ETD	305	Abu Dhabi	03:25
JZR	503	Luxor	04:25
DHX	170	Bahrain	05:40
THY	770	Istanbul	05:55
FDB	5061	Dubai	06:30
BAW	157	London	06:40
JZR	529	Asyut	06:50
PAL	668	Manila/Dubai	06:55
KAC	416	Jakarta/Kuala Lumpur	07:15
KAC	412	Manila/Bangkok	07:20
KAC	204	Lahore	07:40
QTR	1086	Doha	07:40
FDB	053	Dubai	07:45
KAC	302	Mumbai	07:50
KAC	382	Delhi	08:00
KAC	206	Islamabad	08:25
KAC	352	Kochi	08:30
KAC	344	Chennai	08:30
UAE	855	Dubai	08:40
ABY	125	Sharjah	09:00
KAC	284	Dhaka	09:10
ETD	301	Abu Dhabi	09:20
QTR	1070	Doha	09:25
FDB	055	Dubai	09:40
OMA	641	Muscat	10:05
GFA	213	Bahrain	10:40
UAE	873	Dubai	11:05
RBG	553	Alexandria	11:15
IAW	157	Al Najaf	11:50
NIA	151	Cairo	11:55
FDB	075	Dubai	12:25
MSC	401	Alexandria	12:30
JZR	241	Amman	12:50
UAE	871	Dubai	12:50
MSR	610	Cairo	13:00
FBA	831	Al Najaf	13:30
JZR	779	Jeddah	13:35
KNE	460	Riyadh	13:50
MSR	575	Sharm el-Sheikh	13:55
KAC	672	Dubai	14:00
QTR	1078	Doha	14:10
FDB	057	Dubai	14:10
GFA	221	Bahrain	14:40
JZR	175	Dubai	14:45
KAC	512	Mashhad	14:50
KAC	788	Jeddah	14:50
KNE	462	Madinah	14:55
KNE	472	Jeddah	15:05
NIA	251	Alexandria	15:30
OMA	645	Muscat	15:30
KAC	562	Amman	15:40
UAE	857	Dubai	15:45
ABY	127	Sharjah	15:45
JAD	301	Amman	15:55
JZR	535	Cairo	16:10
QTR	1072	Doha	16:10
FDB	051	Dubai	16:30
JZR	357	Mashhad	16:30
JZR	257	Beirut	16:30
KNE	474	Jeddah	16:35
ETD	303	Abu Dhabi	16:40
RJA	640	Amman	16:55
KAC	542	Cairo	16:55
SVA	510	Riyadh	17:15
GFA	215	Bahrain	17:30
KNE	470	Jeddah	17:45
KAC	540	Sharm el-Sheikh	17:45
JZR	325	Al Najaf	17:50
MSR	614	Cairo	17:50
KAC	118	New York	17:55
JZR	777	Jeddah	17:55
SVA	500	Jeddah	18:00
UAE	875	Dubai	18:00

KAC	502	Beirut	18:00
FDB	063	Dubai	18:05
JZR	177	Dubai	18:20
ABY	123	Sharjah	18:45
QTR	1080	Doha	18:55
IRA	669	Mashhad	18:55
KAC	742	Dammam	19:05
KAC	614	Bahrain	19:10
IRM	1188	Mashhad	19:15
KAC	774	Riyadh	19:25
GFA	217	Bahrain	19:30
KAC	176	Geneva/Frankfurt	19:35
KAC	618	Doha	19:35
CLX	856	Luxembourg	19:35
KAC	104	London	19:40
KAC	674	Dubai	19:45
MSR	618	Alexandria	20:05
KNE	480	Taif	20:10
JZR	189	Dubai	20:15
FDB	061	Dubai	20:20
OMA	647	Muscat	20:20
KAC	786	Jeddah	20:30
ABY	121	Sharjah	20:35
FDB	5053	Dubai	20:50
DLH	634	Frankfurt	20:55
JAI	572	Mumbai	20:55
QTR	1088	Doha	21:00
MEA	402	Beirut	21:20
ETD	307	Abu Dhabi	21:20
ALK	229	Colombo	21:25
UAE	859	Dubai	21:40
GFA	219	Bahrain	21:45
KAC	676	Dubai	21:45
QTR	1082	Doha	22:00
KLM	415	Amsterdam	22:05
AIC	987	Chennai/Hyderabad	22:25
ETD	309	Abu Dhabi	22:25
KAC	564	Amman	22:25
FDB	059	Dubai	22:30
JZR	185	Dubai	23:15
FDB	071	Dubai	23:45
THY	764	Istanbul	23:50
JZR	125	Bahrain	23:55
JAI	574	Mumbai	23:55
MSC	403	Asyut	23:55

**Departure Flights on Saturday 5/3/2016**

Airlines	Flt	Route	Time
AIC	976	Goa/Chennai	00:05
JZR	528	Asyut	00:05
BBC	044	Dhaka	00:10
PIA	240	Sialkot	00:40
FDB	072	Dubai	00:40
MSC	502	Alexandria	00:55
JAI	573	Mumbai	00:55
MSC	416	Sohag	01:00
KLM	413	Amsterdam	01:35
THY	773	Istanbul	02:30
SAI	442	Lahore	02:30
DLH	635	Frankfurt	02:35
ETH	621	Addis Ababa	02:45
UAE	854	Dubai	03:45
PGT	859	Istanbul	03:55
OMA	644	Muscat	03:55
FDB	068	Dubai	04:00
MSR	613	Cairo	04:10
ETD	306	Abu Dhabi	04:15
KKK	6508	Istanbul	04:20
QTR	1077	Doha	05:00
THY	765	Istanbul	05:15
FDB	070	Dubai	06:30
RJA	643	Amman	07:05
THY	771	Istanbul	07:05
FDB	5062	Dubai	07:10
GFA	212	Bahrain	07:15
JZR	240	Amman	07:15
JZR	778	Jeddah	07:55
FDB	054	Dubai	08:30
KAC	511	Mashhad	08:30
QTR	1087	Doha	08:40
BAW	156	London	08:45
JZR	256	Beirut	09:05
KAC	671	Dubai	09:15
JZR	534	Cairo	09:15
KAC	787	Jeddah	09:25
ABY	126	Sharjah	09:40
UAE	856	Dubai	09:55
KAC	101	London/New York	09:55
KAC	541	Cairo	09:55
KAC	561	Amman	10:00
JZR	174	Dubai	10:10
ETD	302	Abu Dhabi	10:25
KAC	501	Beirut	10:30
JZR	356	Mashhad	10:30

FDB	056	Dubai	10:35
QTR	1071	Doha	11:00
KAC	165	Rome/Paris	11:00
OMA	642	Muscat	11:05
GFA	214	Bahrain	11:25
KAC	539	Sharm el-Sheikh	11:25
RBG	554	Alexandria	12:00
JZR	776	Jeddah	12:20
UAE	874	Dubai	12:30
NIA	152	Cairo	12:55
IAW	158	Al Najaf	13:05
FDB	076	Dubai	13:10
MSC	402	Alexandria	13:30
JZR	176	Dubai	13:45
MSR	611	Cairo	14:00
UAE	872	Dubai	14:15
JZR	324	Al Najaf	14:25
FBA	832	Al Najaf	14:40
KNE	481	Taif	14:50
PAL	669	Dubai/Manila	14:55
MSR	576	Sharm el-Sheikh	14:55
KAC	785	Jeddah	15:00
KAC	673	Dubai	15:00
FDB	058	Dubai	15:10
QTR	1079	Doha	15:10
GFA	222	Bahrain	15:25
JZR	188	Dubai	15:40
KAC	617	Doha	15:45
KAC	613	Bahrain	15:50
KAC	773	Riyadh	15:50
KAC	741	Dammam	15:55
KNE	463	Madinah	16:00
KNE	473	Jeddah	16:05
ABY	128	Sharjah	16:25
OMA	646	Muscat	16:30
NIA	252	Alexandria	16:30
JAD	302	Amman	16:40
KAC	563	Amman	16:45
KAC	675	Dubai	17:00
JZR	266	Beirut	17:05
KNE	475	Jeddah	17:25
ETD	304	Abu Dhabi	17:30
FDB	052	Dubai	17:35
QTR	1073	Doha	17:40
UAE	858	Dubai	17:45
JZR	538	Cairo	17:45
RJA	641	Amman	17:55
SVA	511	Riyadh	18:15
GFA	216	Bahrain	18:20
JZR	184	Dubai	18:40
KNE	471	Jeddah	18:45
MSR	615	Cairo	18:50
JZR	238	Amman	18:50
JZR	554	Alexandria	19:10
FDB	064	Dubai	19:20
ABY	124	Sharjah	19:25
UAE	876	Dubai	19:30
SVA	505	Jeddah	19:30
IRA	666	Esfahan	19:55
GFA	218	Bahrain	20:15
IRM	1189	Mashhad	20:30
KAC	283	Dhaka	20:35
KAC	353	BLR	20:40
KAC	361	Colombo	20:45
QTR	1081	Doha	20:50
KAC	351	Kochi	20:50
KAC	543	Cairo	20:55
CLX	856	Hong Kong	21:05
MSR	607	Luxor	21:05
JZR	124	Bahrain	21:05
KNE	461	Riyadh	21:10
KAC	331	Trivandrum	21:10
ABY	122	Sharjah	21:15
OMA	648	Muscat	21:20
FDB	062	Dubai	21:20
DLH	634	Doha	21:45
DHX	171	Bahrain	21:50
FDB	5054	Dubai	21:50
JAI	571	Mumbai	21:55
QTR	1089	Doha	22:00
KAC	381	Delhi	22:00
ETD	308	Abu Dhabi	22:10
KAC	301	Mumbai	22:10
ME	A403	Beirut	22:20
ALK	230	Colombo	22:25
GFA	220	Bahrain	22:30
UAE	860	Dubai	22:55
KAC	345	Ahmedabad	23:00
QTR	1083	Doha	23:05
KLM	415	Dammam/Amsterdam	23:05
KAC	205	Islamabad	23:10
ETD	310	Abu Dhabi	23:15
FDB	060	Dubai	23:35



## KNCC PROGRAMME FROM THURSDAY TO WEDNESDAY (03/03/2016 TO 09/03/2016)

Category	Program	Time	Category	Program	Time
SHARQIA-1	ZOOTOPIA	12:45 PM	EL AMERICANO: THE MOVIE	RACE	5:00 PM
	HELP, I SHRUNK MY TEACHER	3:00 PM		RACE	7:00 PM
	HELP, I SHRUNK MY TEACHER	5:15 PM		RACE	9:45 PM
	ZOOTOPIA	7:15 PM		RACE	12:30 AM
SHARQIA-2	RACE	9:30 PM	MARINA-1	HELP, I SHRUNK MY TEACHER	12:15 PM
	RACE	12:15 AM		HELP, I SHRUNK MY TEACHER	2:30 PM
	LONDON HAS FALLEN	12:00 PM		HELP, I SHRUNK MY TEACHER	4:45 PM
	ZOOTOPIA	2:00 PM		HELP, I SHRUNK MY TEACHER	7:00 PM
SHARQIA-3	ZOOTOPIA	4:15 PM	MARINA-2	RACE	9:15 PM
	ZOOTOPIA	6:30 PM		RACE	12:05 AM
	LONDON HAS FALLEN	8:30 PM		LONDON HAS FALLEN	11:30 AM
	LONDON HAS FALLEN	10:30 PM		LONDON HAS FALLEN	1:30 PM
MUHALAB-1	LONDON HAS FALLEN	12:30 AM	AL-KOUT.1	LONDON HAS FALLEN	2:30 PM
	RACE	11:30 AM		LONDON HAS FALLEN	4:45 PM
	RACE	2:15 PM		LONDON HAS FALLEN	7:00 PM
	JAI GANGAAJAL - Hindi	5:00 PM		LONDON HAS FALLEN	9:15 PM
MUHALAB-2	KHALTET OMRY	8:00 PM	AL-KOUT.2	LONDON HAS FALLEN	12:45 PM
	KHALTET OMRY	10:00 PM		LONDON HAS FALLEN	2:45 PM
	KHALTET OMRY	12:05 AM		LONDON HAS FALLEN	4:45 PM
	BACKTRACK	11:30 AM		LONDON HAS FALLEN	6:45 PM
MUHALAB-3	BACKTRACK	10:30 PM	AL-KOUT.3	LONDON HAS FALLEN	8:45 PM
	BACKTRACK	12:30 AM		LONDON HAS FALLEN	10:45 PM
	BACKTRACK	12:30 AM		LONDON HAS FALLEN	12:45 AM
	BACKTRACK	12:30 AM		LONDON HAS FALLEN	1:00 PM
FANAR-1	BACKTRACK	12:30 AM	AL-KOUT.4	ZOOTOPIA	3:30 PM
	BACKTRACK	12:30 AM		BACKTRACK	5:45 PM
	BACKTRACK	12:30 AM		BACKTRACK	7:45 PM
	BACKTRACK	12:30 AM		BACKTRACK	9:45 PM
FANAR-2	BACKTRACK	12:30 AM	AL-KOUT.5	BACKTRACK	11:45 PM
	BACKTRACK	12:30 AM		RACE	12:15 PM
	BACKTRACK	12:30 AM		EL AMERICANO: THE MOVIE	3:00 PM
	BACKTRACK	12:30 AM		EL AMERICANO: THE MOVIE	5:00 PM
FANAR-3	BACKTRACK	12:30 AM	AL-KOUT.6	RACE	7:00 PM
	BACKTRACK	12:30 AM		RACE	9:45 PM
	BACKTRACK	12:30 AM		RACE	12:30 AM
	BACKTRACK	12:30 AM		RACE	12:30 AM
FANAR-4	BACKTRACK	12:30 AM	AL-KOUT.7	RACE	12:30 AM
	BACKTRACK	12:30 AM		RACE	12:30 AM
	BACKTRACK	12:30 AM		RACE	12:30 AM
	BACKTRACK	12:30 AM		RACE	12:30 AM
FANAR-5	BACKTRACK	12:30 AM	AL-KOUT.8	RACE	12:30 AM
	BACKTRACK	12:30 AM		RACE	12:30 AM
	BACKTRACK	12:30 AM		RACE	12:30 AM
	BACKTRACK	12:30 AM		RACE	12:30 AM

## REQUIRED HVAC Tech Drivers

Send your CV to  
Email : [elshereef1@gmail.com](mailto:elshereef1@gmail.com)

### ACCOMMODATION


Room for rent immediately available in Sharhabeel street, Hawally for a single/couple Filipino only. Contact: 65589910. (C 5140) 2-3-2016

### 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

### Prayer timings

<b>Fajr:</b>	<b>04:52</b>
<b>Shorook</b>	<b>06:11</b>
<b>Duhr:</b>	<b>12:00</b>
<b>Asr:</b>	<b>15:20</b>
<b>Maghrib:</b>	<b>17:49</b>
<b>Isha:</b>	<b>19:06</b>



## 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

Word Search Puzzles

Autumn

Find and circle all of the Autumn words that are hidden in the grid. The remaining letters spell a secret message - an Albert Camus quotation.

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

- ACORN
- APPLE
- BIRD MIGRATION
- BLOWING LEAVES
- BLUSTERY DAY
- CANNING
- CHESTNUTS
- CHILLY
- COLD
- CROPS
- EQUINOX
- FALL
- FARMING
- FEAST
- FROST
- HALLOWEEN
- HARVEST
- HAYSTACK
- HICKORY NUTS
- LONGER NIGHTS
- NOVEMBER
- OCTOBER
- ORANGE LEAVES
- PIE
- PUMPKIN
- RAKE
- RED LEAVES
- SCARECROW
- SCHOOL
- SEASON
- SEPTEMBER
- SHORTER DAYS
- SQUASH
- SWEET POTATOES
- THANKSGIVING
- TURKEY
- WINDY
- YELLOW LEAVES

Yesterday's Solution

Livewire Puzzles

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

- 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

The hidden phrase is: A HANDFUL OF PATIENCE IS WORTH MORE THAN A BUSHFUL OF BRAINS

CROSSWORD 1186

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15				16								17	
18			19							20			
21			22		23				24		25		
		26		27		28					29		
30	31	32							33	34			
35				36	37		38	39		40	41	42	43
44			45		46	47			48		49		
50			51	52				53			54		
55			56				57	58			59		
60		61			62						63		
		64			65					66			
67	68			69			70	71	72		73	74	75
76				77	78		79				80		
81				82							83		
84				85							86		

ACROSS

- 1. (computer science) A computer that is running software that allows users to leave messages and access information of general interest.
- 4. Distribute according to a plan or set apart for a special purpose.
- 12. A syndrome that occurs in many women from 2 to 14 days before the onset of menstruation.
- 15. Resinlike substance secreted by certain lac insects.
- 16. A city in Taiwan.
- 17. A broad flat muscle on either side of the back.
- 18. A loose sleeveless outer garment made from aba cloth.
- 19. A new embodiment of a familiar idea.
- 20. A republic in West Africa on the Gulf of Guinea.
- 21. An imaginary elephant that appears in a series of French books for children.
- 23. The seventh month of the Moslem calendar.
- 25. Being one more than two.
- 26. A unit of absorbed ionizing radiation equal to 100 ergs per gram of irradiated material.
- 28. A Spanish unit of length (about a yard) having different values in different localities.
- 30. Rich and superior in quality.
- 33. A metric unit of volume or capacity equal to 10 liters.
- 35. An Arabic speaking person who lives in Arabia or North Africa.
- 36. A soft silvery metallic element of the alkali earth group.
- 40. Czech novelist who wrote in German about a nightmarish world of isolated and troubled individuals (1883-1924).
- 44. The most northwestern Hawaiian island (beyond Kauai).
- 46. A crude uncouth ill-bred person lacking culture or refinement.
- 49. (often followed by 'of') A large number or amount or extent.
- 50. Any of various coarse shrubby plants of the genus Iva with small greenish flowers.
- 51. A white soft metallic element that tarnishes readily.
- 53. A river in north central Switzerland that runs northeast into the Rhine.
- 54. A religious belief of African origin involving witchcraft and sorcery.
- 55. A loose skirt consisting of brightly colored fabric wrapped around the body.
- 57. A bachelor's degree in music.
- 60. A colorless explosive liquid that is volatile and poisonous and foul-smelling.
- 61. A white metallic element that burns with a brilliant light.
- 63. Open-heart surgery in which the rib cage is opened and a section of a blood vessel is grafted from the aorta to the coronary artery to bypass the blocked section of the coronary artery and improve the blood supply to

the heart.

- 65. The virus that causes acquired immune deficiency syndrome (AIDS).
- 67. People having the same social or economic status.
- 70. A palace and fortress built in Granada by the Moslems in the Middle Ages.
- 76. The sense organ for hearing and equilibrium.
- 77. Of or relating to a caduceus.
- 80. An associate degree in applied science.
- 81. Mythical bird of prey having enormous size and strength.
- 82. Large arboreal boa of tropical South America.
- 83. A local and habitual twitching especially in the face.
- 84. Anterior pituitary hormone that stimulates the function of the thyroid gland.
- 85. A great raja.
- 86. Hormone secreted by the posterior pituitary gland (trade name Pitressin) and also by nerve endings in the hypothalamus.

DOWN

- 1. Divulge information or secrets.
- 2. A small cake leavened with yeast.
- 3. Someone who works (or provides workers) during a strike.
- 4. A drug (trade names Atarax and Vistaril) used as a tranquilizer to treat anxiety and motion sickness.
- 5. A room equipped with toilet facilities.
- 6. A person who has lied or who lies repeatedly.
- 7. The size of a book whose pages are made by folding a sheet of paper three times to form eight leaves.
- 8. Largest crested screamer.
- 9. 100 aurar equal 1 krona.
- 10. A state in east central United States.
- 11. Animal reproductive body consisting of an ovum or embryo together with nutritive and protective envelopes.
- 12. A cloth having a crisscross design.
- 13. An irrational but irresistible motive for a belief or action.
- 14. Characterized by dignity and propriety.
- 22. A popular island resort in the Netherlands Antilles.
- 24. Having undesirable or negative qualities.
- 27. A young woman making her debut into society.
- 29. By bad luck.
- 31. Capital of Armenia.
- 32. An avalanche volcanic water and mud down the slopes of a volcano.
- 34. A state in northwestern North America.
- 37. A radioactive element of the actinide series.
- 38. A ductile malleable reddish-brown corrosion-resistant diamagnetic metallic element.
- 39. Intentional deception resulting in injury to another person.
- 41. All the plant life in a particular region.
- 42. Cubes of meat marinated and cooked on a skewer usually with vegetables.
- 43. Inspiring awe or admiration or wonder.
- 45. The inner and longer of the two bones of the human forearm.
- 47. A populous province in northeastern China.
- 48. A girl or young woman who is unmarried.
- 52. A soft white precious univalent metallic element having the highest electrical and thermal conductivity of any metal.
- 56. United States newspaper publisher (1858-1935).
- 58. An oral drug (trade name Mevacor) to reduce blood cholesterol levels.
- 59. A ballistic missile that is capable of traveling from one continent to another.
- 62. Mostly black African weaverbird.
- 64. Wood of a larch tree.
- 66. The capital and largest city of Yemen.
- 68. A mountainous landlocked communist state in southeastern Asia.
- 69. A fraudulent business scheme.
- 71. A Russian river.
- 72. A pilgrimage to Mecca.
- 73. A Chadik language spoken south of Lake Chad.
- 74. A sudden short attack.
- 75. United States writer (born in Poland) who wrote in Yiddish (1880-1957).
- 78. (Irish) Mother of the ancient Irish gods.
- 79. Fiddler crabs.

Daily SuDoku

9		7		8				
3			6					
	6					2		7
	3			5		7		
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medium

Yesterday's Solution

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

hard

Yesterday's Solution

A	B	M		C	A	U	C	A	S	I	A		A	R	B	
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A	G	A			A	M	B	O	Y	N	A		B	A	B	A



# DUCKS SET NEW STRAIGHT GAMES MARK

**GLENDALE:** Corey Perry had a goal and two assists and Jamie McGinn and Rickard Rakell scored on Anaheim's first two shots as the Ducks tied a franchise record with their 10th straight victory, routing Arizona 5-1 on Thursday night. Cam Fowler and Josh Manson also scored, and Frederik Andersen stopped 27 shots as Anaheim stayed atop the Pacific Division. The Ducks matched the 2013-14 team's winning streak despite injured captain Ryan Getzlaf's absence. Anthony Duclair scored, and Niklas Treutle allowed five goals on 16 shots in his first NHL start for the Coyotes in their seventh straight loss.

## LIGHTNING 4, SENATORS 1

Ben Bishop made 33 saves as the Tampa Bay Lightning tied a franchise record with their eighth straight victory. Cedric Paquette, Ondrej Palat, Nikita Kucherov and Steven Stamkos - into an empty net - scored for the Lightning, who wrapped up a four-game road trip. Marc Methot scored the lone goal for the Ottawa Senators. Andrew Hammond, making his first start since February 11, made 25 saves.

## PENGUINS 4, RANGERS 1

Sidney Crosby, Evgeni Malkin and Patric Hornqvist each scored in the final 2:13 of the second period, leading the Pittsburgh Penguins past the New York Rangers. Malkin added two assists and Phil Kessel scored into an empty net for the Penguins, who frustrated Rangers goaltender Henrik Lundqvist midway through the second and chased him with a three-goal flurry at the end of the period. Marc-Andre Fleury stopped 27 shots for the Penguins and is one away from becoming the 20th goalie in NHL history to reach 350 wins. Chris Kreider scored his 14th for the Rangers, whose three-game win streak ended.

## BRUINS 4, BLACKHAWKS 2

Patrice Bergeron and Brad Marchand each had a goal and an assist to help lead the Boston Bruins over the Chicago Blackhawks. Ryan Spooner and Loui Eriksson also had goals for Boston, which won for the fifth time in seven games. The Bruins now prepare to face the Washington Capitals, the NHL's points leader, on Saturday, before heading out on the road for six of the next eight games. Jonathan Toews and Thomas Fleischmann scored for Chicago, which has dropped three of its last five and 6 of 10, but the Western Conference leaders remained two points ahead of Dallas and St Louis, who were idle.

## OILERS 4, FLYERS 0

Taylor Hall, Nail Yakupov, Patrick Maroon and Lauri Korpikoski all scored, and Cam Talbot made 35 saves to lead Edmonton to its third straight victory. Talbot, in his ninth straight start, earned his second shutout of the season and 10th of his career. Top rookie Connor McDavid had an assist in his first game versus the Flyers since being injured against them in Philadelphia's 4-2 win at Edmonton on Nov. 3. The 2015 No. 1 overall pick missed 37 games after breaking his clavicle when he was ridden hard into the boards by Philadelphia's Brandon Manning, who watched from the press box as a healthy scratch.



**PITTSBURGH:** New York Rangers' Viktor Stalberg (25) collides with Pittsburgh Penguins' Kevin Porter (11) during the first period of an NHL hockey game in Pittsburgh on Thursday, March 3, 2016. Porter was injured on the play and left the game. — AP

## SABRES 6, FLAMES 3

Johan Larsson scored the go-ahead goal with 9:31 left and Marcus Foligno had a goal and two assists in the Buffalo Sabres' win over the Calgary Flames. The loss extended Calgary's skid to 0-6-1 and dropped it into last place in the Western Conference. Jack Eichel, Nicolas Deslauriers, Rasmus Ristolainen and Evander Kane, with an empty-netter, also scored in helping Buffalo extend its home dominance over Calgary. The Sabres improved to 10-0-2 in their past 12 home games against the Flames, with their last regulation loss a 3-1 defeat on March 15, 1996. Sean Monahan and Dougie Hamilton each had a goal and an assist, and Mikael Backlund also scored for the Flames. Calgary dropped its sixth consecutive road game. The Flames' winless streak is their longest since going 0-7-1 in December 2014.

## WILD 2, MAPLE LEAFS 1

Mikko Koivu and Mikael Granlund scored power-play goals to lead the Minnesota Wild past the Toronto Maple Leafs. Devan Dubnyk had 21 saves for the Wild, who hold the second wild-card playoff spot in the Western Conference. Jake Gardiner gave the Leafs the lead early in the second period and Garret Spars - making his second start since being recalled from Toronto of the AHL last weekend, finished with 20 saves.

## ISLANDERS 4, JETS 3, OT

Kyle Okposo scored off a quirky rebound 2:20 into overtime to lift the New York Islanders over the Winnipeg Jets. New York's Frans Nielsen blasted the puck toward the net, but it hit Jets forward Nikolaj Ehlers in the face. Okposo got the

rebound and shot it in past Michael Hutchinson. Calvin de Haan, Shane Prince and Anders Lee also scored, and Thomas Greiss stopped 26 shots as the Islanders improved to 5-1 on their season-high seven-game road trip that concludes Sunday against the crosstown-rival New York Rangers. Mark Scheifele had two goals and Tyler Myers also scored for the Jets, who have lost six straight at home.

## DEVILS 5, PREDATORS 4, OT

Adam Henrique forced overtime with a goal, then scored 1:54 into the extra period on the power play as the New Jersey Devils snapped the Nashville Predators' five-game winning streak. Henrique's wristier tied it with 39.7 seconds left, and his 22nd goal this season - 12 seconds after Nashville took a delay of game penalty - led the Devils to their first win in four games. Travis Zajac also scored in the third, Kyle Palmieri had a power-play goal and two assists, and Devante Smith-Pelly also had a goal and an assist in his New Jersey debut. Filip Forsberg had a goal and two assists, and Craig Smith and Mike Ribeiro each scored power-play goals and added an assist. The Predators set a franchise record with a point in their 11th straight game (7-0-4).

## AVALANCHE 3, PANTHERS 2

Gabriel Landeskog had a goal and an assist and Calvin Pickard made 24 of his 38 saves in the third period to lift the Colorado Avalanche over the Florida Panthers. Jaromir Jagr had an assist on Florida's first goal to tie Gordie Howe for third in career points with 1,850. He is 37 points behind Mark Messier for second. Jagr, in his 22nd season, also ranks third in goals with 743

and his 1,107 assists are sixth. Matt Duchene and Mikkel Boedker also scored and Tyson Barrie had two assists for Colorado. Brian Campbell and Erik Gudbranson had the goals for Florida, and Roberto Luongo had 23 saves.

## SHARKS 3, CANUCKS 2

Patrick Marleau scored the go-ahead goal in the third period as the San Jose Sharks won their third straight, beating the Vancouver Canucks. Brent Burns and Tomas Hertl had a goal and an assist each for the Sharks, who rebounded from a 2-0 deficit to remain third in the Pacific Division. Martin Jones made 28 saves for San Jose. Jake Virtanen and Sven Baertschi scored for the Canucks, who have lost three straight and fell 10 points behind Minnesota and Colorado for the second wild-card berth in the Western Conference.

## KINGS 3, CANADIENS 2

Anze Kopitar and Tanner Pearson scored less than 3 minutes apart early in the first period and Dwight King scored on a breakaway in the third, leading the Los Angeles Kings over the Montreal Canadiens. The victory kept the Kings tied for the Pacific Division lead with the Anaheim Ducks, who come to Staples Center for a Saturday matinee. Jonathan Quick finished with 13 saves in the opener of a five-game homestand. He handed the Canadiens their only shutout loss of the season on Dec. 17, making a season-high 45 saves in a 3-0 victory. PK Subban and Lars Eller scored and Andrei Markov had two assists for the Canadiens, who are 11-25-3 following a 19-4-3 start that included a season-opening nine-game winning streak.— AP

## PIERCY, FRASER SET PACE WITH 66S AT DORAL MICKELSON ONE OFF PACE AFTER SHOOTING 67

**MIAMI:** American Scott Piercy and Marcus Fraser of Australia upstaged the biggest names in the game as they charged into a tie for the lead after the opening round of the WGC-Cadillac Championship in Miami on Thursday. Piercy and Fraser fired matching six-under-par 66s on the daunting Blue Monster course at the Trump National Doral Resort, ending the day a stroke in front of five-times major winner Phil Mickelson, who birdied four of his last nine holes. Englishman Danny Willett, Australian Adam Scott and Americans Jason Dufner and Charley Hoffman opened with 68s in

the first of the year's four elite World Golf Championships events while world number one Jordan Spieth carded a 69.

"It's very demanding off the tee, there's trouble on every single hole, so you have to stand up and really commit to a shot," Spieth told Golf Channel after carding five birdies and two bogeys. "And it's not done from there. A lot of times we play courses where there is a miss (for the green) where you can still make par but on quite a few holes out here you just can't miss it. "I'm very pleased to get in under par on this golf course. This course normally gets my num-

ber but I beat it today." American Spieth attracted the biggest galleries of the day in a high-profile grouping with second-ranked Australian Jason Day and third-ranked Northern Irishman Rory McIlroy.

Day offset four birdies with four bogeys to return a 72 while McIlroy spoilt an encouraging start week when he double-bogeyed his final hole, the par-three ninth, to shoot a 71. "I was leaving a lot of putts short. But I guess to be expected," said four-times major winner McIlroy, who this week switched to an unconventional cross-handed putting

grip. "It's the first day competitively with a bit of a new grip with the putting. Disappointed with the finish, just get out there tomorrow, try to pick up those shots quickly again and start from there." Piercy, a three-times winner on the PGA Tour, twice got to seven under but twice slipped back as he recorded two bogeys in five holes over the tough closing stretch. "The last five holes, I was a little off," said the 37-year-old American. "I had the wind off my left which sometimes isn't my favorite and just hit a couple of weird shots." — Reuters



**NEW ORLEANS:** New Orleans Pelicans guard Norris Cole (30) takes the ball away from San Antonio Spurs guard Patty Mills during the first half of an NBA basketball game on Thursday, March 3, 2016. — AP

## CURRY LEADS WARRIORS TO 44TH STRAIGHT HOME WIN

**OAKLAND:** Stephen Curry and the Golden State Warriors matched one record set by Michael Jordan's Chicago Bulls as they closed in on the bigger mark. Curry scored 33 points in his return from an ankle injury and the Warriors tied Chicago's NBA record by winning their 44th straight regular-season home game, 121-106 over the Oklahoma City Thunder on Thursday night. "That's an amazing accomplishment," Curry said. "It's a compliment to us as a team, our coaching staff and obviously our fans who bring that atmosphere every night to give us the ultimate home-court advantage." Five days after tying the NBA record with 12 3-pointers in an overtime win at Oklahoma City, Curry went 5 of 15 from long range in the rematch.

But he got more than enough help from his bench to help the Warriors (55-5) move 50 games above .500 in their quest to break the Bulls' single-season mark for victories. The Bulls won 44 consecutive home games from March 30, 1995, until April 4, 1996. That helped them set the record with 72 wins in 1995-96, a mark the Warriors remain on pace to surpass after beating the Thunder for the third time in as many tries this season. Kevin Durant scored 32 points, Russell

Westbrook had 22 and Serge Ibaka added 20 for the Thunder, who have lost six of eight since the All-Star break.

### SPURS 94, PELICANS 86

Kawhi Leonard capped a 30-point, 11-rebound performance with a huge 3-pointer in the final minute as the San Antonio Spurs extended their winning streak to seven games with a 94-86 victory over the New Orleans Pelicans on Thursday night. LaMarcus Aldridge had 26 points and Danny Green scored 11 for the Spurs, who trailed 86-82 before closing the game on a 12-0 run during the final 3:10. Leonard was 12-of-22 shooting, including 6 for 10 from 3-point range. The Pelicans missed their last six shots and allowed the Spurs to grab a pair of critical offensive rebounds that led to five second-chance points during San Antonio's game-ending run.

### HEAT 108, SUNS 92

Dwyane Wade scored 27 points, Goran Dragic added 25 against his former team and Miami never trailed on the way to beating Phoenix for its third straight victory. Luol Deng scored 12 and Hassan Whiteside grabbed 11 rebounds for Miami,

which led by as many as 21 in the first half. Rookie guard Devin Booker kept the Suns in the game, scoring 15 of his 34 points in the fourth quarter. Alex Len had 12 points and 13 rebounds for Phoenix, which tied a club record by losing its 17th consecutive road game. The Suns have dropped 30 of 33 overall.

### KINGS 104, MAVERICKS 101

Rajon Rondo had 18 points and 12 assists in his first game in Dallas since an ugly split with the Mavericks last season as Sacramento ended a 22-game regular-season losing streak on his old home floor. Booed almost every time he touched the ball, Rondo was the steady hand the Kings needed late. He missed a January loss at Dallas when Sacramento blew a lead in double overtime to keep alive the Mavericks' longest home winning streak against one opponent. DeMarcus Cousins had 22 points and 13 rebounds as the Kings snapped a four-game losing streak with just their fifth win in the past 17 games. Chandler Parsons scored 28 to lead the Mavericks, who had a three-game winning streak snapped in the finale of a six-game homestand, their longest of the season. — AP

## JANG AND LEE LEAD AS KO SLIPS BACK IN SINGAPORE

**SINGAPORE:** Top-ranked Lydia Ko carded an ugly 74 as she slipped nine shots off the pace set by South Koreans Jang Ha-Na and Lee Mi-Rim at the HSBC Women's Champions yesterday. The 18-year-old, seeking her first win at the tournament in Singapore, has much ground to make up at the par-72 Sentosa course after an unsatisfying first two rounds.

Defending champion Park In-Bee was also five shots back from Jang and Lee, who fired 66 and 67 respectively for matching aggregate scores of 136. Park, who didn't card a single bogey as she romped to the title last year, struggled to a 73 on another windy day at the resort island course. Jang shot to the top of the leaderboard after shooting four birdies and an eagle on the par-five seventh, before Lee joined her at the top.

"First round and second round, two eagles, so I feel very comfortable," said Jang. "Today I'm very comfortable on the front nine and I told myself, 'Don't do too much thinking, just be patient. There are two more days, so I have to concentrate more.'" Like Jang, Lee had a flawless day and carded five birdies to move six places to the top. But the windy conditions affected her drives and she said she had to be sharper on the greens.

Lee said: "I feel that my swing right now is not good, but my short game is better and I am scoring well." Norway's Suzann Pettersen and Pornanong Phatlum of Thailand are trailing the leading pair by a stroke. Pettersen, who fired 69 to go with her opening round of 68, said she was in a good position heading into the weekend. "I've been playing some solid golf, hitting good golf shots and maneuvering myself around this golf course in a pretty easy way," said Pettersen. "I'm hitting the ball better and better each day, which is for me my bread and butter usually. It's nice that I feel comfortable and being able to hit the shots you see and execute. "For me, it's a good starting point, but still got a job to do on the weekend." — AFP

## TENNIS

## USA CONFIDENT WITH BRYANS ON THEIR SIDE

**MELBOURNE:** Captain Jim Courier said the heavyweight Bryan brothers doubles pairing gave the United States the edge over Australia in their Davis Cup tie with the scores locked at 1-1 after the opening singles matches yesterday. Australia's Bernard Tomic beat Jack Sock to level the World Group round one tie between the great, traditional Davis Cup rivals after John Isner breezed past Sam Groth in the first match. Tomic rolled through the opening two sets against Sock before being forced to battle hard to win 7-6 (7/2), 6-3, 3-6, 6-4 in sweltering conditions at the famous Kooyong centre court in Melbourne. The victory, in sweltering temperatures, was crucial for Lleyton Hewitt's Australians, after world number 11 Isner trounced the 77th-ranked Groth 7-6 (7/2), 6-2, 6-2.

The retired Hewitt is on standby for a possible playing appearance following the match-eve withdrawal of star youngster Nick Krygios with a virus and back trouble. Courier, who works as a television commentator alongside Hewitt at the Australian Open, said he was confident America held the whip hand with doubles specialists Bob and Mike Bryan, who are multiple Grand Slam champions. "Bob and Mike seem to be at an advantage in the historical count of doubles in Davis Cup, but every day is a different day," Courier said. "They've played awfully well. We feel confident in them, but we don't take anything for granted. We'll be ready to go-but I love having them on our side."

## 'Anything can happen'

Hewitt, in his first Davis Cup as captain after retiring at the Australian Open in January, was giving little away about his selection options for the doubles, even about his own chances of playing a role. "We haven't spoken about it yet," he said. "The Bryans obviously are the favourites tomorrow in the doubles. But I still think our guys have got a good shot at it, and then on the last day anything can happen." Hewitt has until an hour before the doubles tie to finalise his combination and choose between the team's doubles specialist John Peers, Groth and himself. Earlier Tomic, ranked 20, sent tremors through the Australian camp when he hit a flat spot during the third set of his tie, inviting world number 24 Sock back into the match and a fourth set.

But Tomic rallied and broke the American in the ninth game and served out for a four-set win on the grass of Kooyong, former venue for the Australian Open. "It was very tough out there. I haven't beaten Sock before so I knew that it was going to be tough," Tomic said. "But playing him on a (grass) surface where I could beat him on I was very happy because the conditions were very tough."



**MELBOURNE:** John Isner of the United States hits an overhead volley return to Australia's Samuel Groth during their Davis Cup singles match in Melbourne yesterday. — AP

Earlier Isner's serve was too strong for Groth and he wrapped up the contest in one hour 49 minutes. Isner served his way out of three break points down in the first set to confidently

take the opening set in a tiebreaker 7-2. The beanpole American smashed 20 aces as Groth's game deteriorated and posed an early selection dilemma for new Australian captain Hewitt. — AFP

## RUTHLESS RUSSIANS SINK RIVALS IN UROLEAGUE

**BELGRADE:** Russian clubs enjoyed a perfect week in Euroleague as Moscow rivals Khimki and CSKA as well as Lokomotiv Krasnodar all won to move closer to the competition's knockout stages. Khimki beat Barcelona 75-61 at home and Lokomotiv defeated Anadolu Efes Istanbul 76-61 away on Thursday, after six-time winners CSKA celebrated an impressive 96-87 victory at holders Real Madrid on Wednesday.

Khimki were tied with Barcelona in Group F before the game with both sides having won four and lost four of their eight matches. The Russians, however, blew away the twice former winners after taking a 19-point halftime lead and gained the upper hand in a tight race to reach the last eight. Barcelona fought hard to get back into the match after the break but Khimki's ironclad defense restricted the Catalan side to only 20 field goals from 61 attempts. "It was one of our best defensive performances of the season, we played tough from the first to the last minute," Khimki coach Rimas Kurtinaitis told [www.euroleague.net](http://www.euroleague.net).

Barcelona, winners in 2003 and 2010, now face an uphill battle to avoid an early exit in a fiercely competitive group after another lackluster performance. Six-times winners CSKA stayed top of Group F, improving to 7-2 after five of their players scored in double figures, led by power forward Kyle Hines, who amassed 16 points. "We got another victory in such a tough Top 16 group," said CSKA's Greek coach Dimitris Itoudis. "As I told my players, this was another day at work for us. We did good things during the game and proved that this CSKA team can score regardless what we play offensively."

The Top 16 features two pools of eight, with the top four from each section advancing to the best-of-five quarter-final playoff series. The winners will then qualify for the May 13-15 Final Four in Berlin. In Group E, Lokomotiv took a big step towards the playoffs after guard Malcolm Delaney sank 19 points and fellow American centre Anthony Randolph added 17 against Anadolu Efes Istanbul. They are second in the pool with a 7-2 record, behind Fenerbahce Istanbul, who have seven wins and one defeat ahead of their home game against Red Star Belgrade yesterday. Panathinaikos Athens, who have six titles, boosted their hopes of progressing with a 76-58 win at Unicaja Malaga. — Reuters

## SWIMMING

## PHELPS KICKS OFF ORLANDO MEET WITH 100M FLY WIN

**MIAMI:** Olympic superstar Michael Phelps kicked off the Orlando Pro Swim meet Thursday with a victory in the 100m butterfly in 52.28sec. Phelps, hoping to add to his stunning tally of 18 Olympic gold medals at the Rio Games in August, swam the first 50m in 24.62sec and held off fellow American Tom Shields for the victory. Shields clocked 52.35, with Brazilian Henrique Martins third in 52.59. Germany's Aliena Schmidtke won the women's 100m fly in 59.94. Yuliya Efimova of Russia produced a season's best of 1:05.70 in winning the women's 100m breaststroke.

In the men's 100m breaststroke, Brazil's Joao Gomes edged American Josh Prenot at the wall, winning in 1:00.64 to Prenot's 1:00.66. Brazil's Felipe Lima was third in 1:00.73. Katie Ledecky won the 200m freestyle in a time of 1:55.73 — second-fastest in the world this year behind the 1:54.43 she posted in Austin in January. "It felt pretty good," Ledecky said. "I guess it was about where I thought I would be time-wise. I worked this morning and this afternoon on some of the details I've been working on around my turns. I was pleased with how I put it all together."

Missy Franklin, winner of four gold medals at the 2012 London Olympics, was second in 1:57.67 and Allison Schmitt was third in 1:58.18. The women's 400m individual medley went to world championships silver medallist Maya DiRado, whose time of 4:36.82 made her the fourth-fastest this season. Vietnam's Vien Nguyen was second in 4:39.64 ahead of American Becca Mann (4:40.44). Freestyle queen Ledecky was fourth in 4:40.95. American Chase Kalisz won the men's 400m medley in 4:15.36, with South Africa's Sebastien Rousseau second in 4:20.06. — AFP



Heads of KSF on their way to General Assembly meeting.



Al-Otaibi and Al-Osaimi pictured during the ASF General Assembly.

# KUWAIT SHOOTERS SHINE AT AMIR GRAND PRIX

By Abdellatif Sharaa

**KUWAIT:** Kuwait's Women Trap shooter Shahad Al-Hawal won the first gold medal for Kuwait yesterday - followed by Sara Al-Hawal who won silver, while Egypt's Suzan Gaber took the bronze. In the Men's Trap, Kuwait's Abdelrahman Al-Faihan was up to the task - winning the gold medal in a hard fought competition. Lebanon's Walid Alnajjar won silver while Kuwait's Talal Al-Rashidi won bronze. Today, there will be a gold medal up for grab in the Women's Skeet event, while men's official PET will also take place today.

Meanwhile, Presidents of the Arab Shooting Federations thanked HH the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah for his unlimited support in shooting sport, which helped raise its status at the world level. He said this during the Ordinary General Assembly meeting that was chaired by President of Arab and Kuwait Shooting Federations Eng Duaij Khalaf Al-Otaibi. The Arab Shooting Sport leaders appreciated the major role Kuwait is playing to boost the sport in the Arab world.

Eng Al-Otaibi lauded the warm and brotherly atmosphere during the General



Shahad Al-Hawal celebrates her gold medal

Assembly, which helped issue several important decisions. Al-Otaibi said that the ASF General Assembly discussed the latest preparations by the Egyptian federation to host the Arab Shooting Championship (to be held at the end of March). The General



Assembly meeting was attended by Jordan, UAE, Bahrain, Tunis, Algeria, Saudi Arabia, Sudan, Syria, Iraq, Oman, Palestine, Qatar, Lebanon, Egypt, Morocco and Mauritania. Libya and Yemen could not attend. Kuwait's outstanding shooter

Shahad Al-Hawal said she did not expect to win gold in the Trap Event, adding that when she participates in events she only thinks about practicing her hobby - shooting. She said the competition was hard and of international standard.



Kuwait's Al-Faihan celebrates after winning a gold medal.



Kuwait's Al-Mudhaf seen with Egypt's Franco.

## LEICESTER HOPE TO CAPITALIZE ON EPL TITLE RIVALS' MISTAKES

**WATFORD:** Following a week of contrasting emotions, surprise leaders Leicester City head for Watford today back in the driving seat in an extraordinary Premier League title race. The disappointment of a 2-2 draw at home to West Bromwich Albion on Tuesday was followed by the welcome bonus of seeing title rivals Tottenham Hotspur, Arsenal and Manchester City all lose 24 hours later. The upshot was that the Foxes, despite failing to take a host of chances to beat West Brom, will travel to Vicarage Road with their lead at the top of the table extended to three points.

"That's football," said Leicester winger Marc Albrighton, whose side edged Norwich City 1-0 last weekend with a late winner. "I think in the last two games at home, we have had a massive amount of chances to win both games. "It was late on against Norwich to get the win but on Tuesday we kept pushing to the end and that was important. "We had chances with the last kick of the game but it just wasn't to be." Albrighton's team-mate Danny Drinkwater, who netted against Albion, added: "Tuesday was a point in the right direction. "We're slightly disappointed not to get the three points but I feel we have played well and we can take a lot of positives into today.

"We broke a resilient side down twice. They scored two goals as well but we can take positives. "There was a difference between that game and Norwich." With eight wins and just two defeats on the road, Leicester will take the best away record in the Premier League to Watford. The Hornets, meanwhile, have won five and lost five of their 14 home games so Leicester will feel confident of boosting their hopes of a fairytale title triumph. Leicester beat Watford 2-1 at the King Power Stadium in November but the most memorable meeting between the clubs in recent years came in May 2013, when Watford triumphed 3-2 over two legs in a Championship play-off semi-final.

### Firepower

The Foxes recovered from that setback to win promotion to the Premier League a year later and now have their sights set on lifting the trophy in just their second season back in the top flight. "It is going to be a really tough place to go," Albrighton said. "Watford have showed what a good side they are this season. "They have got some great players, some firepower up top, but we will be confident as ever. "The season we have had is fantastic. We are

not going to let a point at home dampen any confidence in the camp."

However, Sebastian Proedl believes Watford are capable of beating the league leaders this weekend and influencing the title race. Quique Sanchez Flores' side were unfortunate to leave Old Trafford empty-handed this week after Juan Mata's late goal secured a narrow 1-0 victory for Manchester United.

And Watford defender Proedl said: "Every game at Vicarage Road so far this season has been tough for the opponent. So they should be warned. We want to get a result. "They are big contenders for the title and it is a good opportunity for us to show how we have improved this season. "Leicester could win the league. At the beginning everyone was surprised when they were top but no one is surprised any more." The manner of defeat to United may have been frustrating but Proedl is convinced his side's performance demonstrated how far they have come this season. "Maybe we can collect some points against Leicester that we missed against United," added the Austrian. "The best games are when you challenge the best. It is why we are here in the Premier League, to compete against the best."— AFP

## UEFA SET TO INTRODUCE GOAL-LINE TECHNOLOGY

**PARIS:** UEFA will introduce goal-line technology to its competitions in time for this season's Champions League and Europa League finals, European football's governing body announced yesterday. A decision to bring in the technology (GLT) in time for Euro 2016 and for next season's Champions League had already been announced in January, but will now also be in place for the Champions League final in Milan on May 28 and the Europa League showpiece in Basel, Switzerland, on May 18.

The technology, which determines whether the ball has completely crossed the line, is already used in the English Premier League, Italy's Serie A, the German Bundesliga and Ligue 1 in France. World governing body FIFA also brought it in for the 2014 World Cup in Brazil after a series of successful trials. UEFA confirmed in January that GLT would be used in the European Championship in France in June and July and in the Champions League from next season, and added that it would likely ultimately be extended to all UEFA competitions.

However, former general secretary Gianni Infantino, now the FIFA president, has admitted that fitting all grounds with the necessary technology would be a logistical headache, particularly in a competition as extensive as the Europa League. Even in countries where the technology is already in place, a different system is used in France to that used in England, Germany and Italy. UEFA have said that, in conjunction with GLT, they will continue to use additional assistant referees to monitor activity in each penalty area.— AFP



**FLORIDA:** United States' Crystal Dunn (16) fights off the defense of England's Demi Stokes during the second half of a SheBelieves Cup women's soccer match on Thursday, March 3, 2016. — AP

## DUNN POWERS USA

**LOS ANGELES:** Crystal Dunn and the reigning World Cup champion USA got off to a flying start with a win in their opening game of the inaugural SheBelieves Cup tournament on Thursday. Dunn's goal in the 72nd minute was all the US national women's team would need in a 1-0 victory over world number five England at Raymond James Stadium in Tampa, Florida.

Dunn took a short pass from teammate Meghan Klingenberg and spun away from a defender before hammering a right footed shot into the upper corner of the net. Her goal came less than 10 minutes after she entered the game as a substitute. The new women's international soccer event kicked off Thursday as four of the top five ranked teams in the world - USA, England, France and Germany - compete for the

tournament title on US soil.

The six-match competition features many of the world's top players and includes three teams that made the final four of last year's Women's World Cup. In the other game Thursday, Germany scored a late second half goal to defeat France 1-0. Right back Leonie Maier pounced on a loose ball and scored in the 83rd minute after France failed to clear a corner kick from the right side. It was the sixth goal of Maier's international career. Thursday's matches were the first of three doubleheaders. The Americans square off against France and Germany faces England in round two tomorrow. The tournament concludes Wednesday with the USA meeting Germany and England battling France.— AFP

German League Preview

# DORTMUND OUT TO TRIM BAYERN'S LEAD

**BERLIN:** Germany's top two clubs go head to head today with hosts Borussia Dortmund out to ignite the Bundesliga title race by further trimming the lead of Pep Guardiola's Bayern Munich. Bayern seemed to be running away with a fourth straight league title, and enjoyed an eight-point lead over second-placed Dortmund, until Mainz slammed on the brakes with a shock 2-1 win at the Allianz Arena on Wednesday.

It was only Bayern's second league defeat of the season. Dortmund's 2-0 win at Darmstadt the same night meant Bayern's lead was cut to five points and adds spice to an already mouth-watering clash at Borussia's Signal Iduna Park, but the Bavarians remain favorites. When the sides met last October, Bayern dealt Dortmund a 5-1 thrashing in Munich. Bayern have won four of the last five league meetings including victories in both of their last two visits to Dortmund. Dortmund's single Bundesliga victory over Bayern in the last four years was a 3-0 thumping in Munich in April 2014 when Guardiola's side had already won the league title with a record seven games to spare.

**Guardiola under pressure**

But for the first time in his three seasons at

Bayern, Guardiola has a league rival breathing down his neck. "This Borussia Dortmund team is completely different to the last three years," said the Spaniard after losing to Mainz. "We will have to fight until the last game and the last second." The Dortmund camp has sniffed weakness in their rivals. "Let's not beat about the bush—we want to cut the gap to two points," said Dortmund captain Mats Hummels.

"Today is going to be a brilliant game, we'll be really up for it." Guardiola has a longer injury list than Dortmund coach Thomas Tuchel, who is only missing centre-back Sokratis from his first-choice line-up. Injuries to Jerome Boateng, Javi Martinez and Holger Badstuber have forced Guardiola to convert left-back David Alaba into a centre-back alongside Mehdi Benatia. But Guardiola has an embarrassment of riches in midfield with Franck Ribery back from injury and Germany's World Cup winner Mario Goetze unable to get a game. Whether he plays or not, Goetze, like fellow ex-Borussia star Robert Lewandowski, can expect another hostile reception from home fans on his return to Dortmund.

**Shoot-out**

A sub-plot to the showdown sees the league's top three scorers shooting it out in Dortmund. Bayern's Lewandowski tops the list with 23 goals in his 23 games while Dortmund's Pierre-Emerick Aubameyang is just one behind with 22. Munich's Thomas Mueller has also scored a highly respectable 17 league goals. Between them, Mueller and Lewandowski have 40 league goals. They are just 14 short of the league record partnership of 54 set by Wolfsburg pair Edin Dzeko and Grafite in 2009. "You sometimes get games (like the Mainz defeat), but it will be different in Dortmund," promised Lewandowski ominously.

There will be a relegation battle royale when Werder Bremen, who stunned Bayer Leverkusen 4-1 on Wednesday thanks to veteran Claudio Pizarro's hat-trick, host bottom side Hanover 96. Bremen remain just one place above the bottom three while Hanover, who have playmaker Hiroshi Kiyotake back from injury, are seven points from safety and desperately need to win. Second-bottom Hoffenheim will be looking to build on their 2-1 win over Augsburg when they travel to Stuttgart, who are winless in their last three games after a surge which carried them up to mid-table. — AFP

German Bundesliga table

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

Bayern Munich	24	20	2	2	59	13	62
Dortmund	24	18	3	3	59	25	57
Hertha Berlin	24	12	6	6	33	24	42
M'gladbach	24	12	3	9	49	40	39
Mainz 05	24	12	3	9	34	30	39
Schalke 04	24	11	5	8	34	31	38
Bayer	24	10	5	9	33	30	35
VfL Wolfsburg	24	9	7	8	36	31	34
Ingolstadt 04	24	8	7	9	18	25	31
Cologne	24	7	9	8	25	30	30
Hamburg	24	7	7	10	28	34	28
VfB Stuttgart	24	8	4	12	35	48	28
Augsburg	24	6	7	11	27	35	25
Darmstadt	24	6	7	11	25	38	25
Werder Bremen	24	6	6	12	31	47	24
E' Frankfurt	24	5	8	11	27	39	23
Hoffenheim	24	4	9	11	25	37	21
Hanover 96	24	5	2	17	21	42	17

Italian League Preview

# PRESSURE CRANKED UP ON TITLE-CHASING JUVE

**MILAN:** Just as Juventus have overhauled pace-setters Napoli in the race for the Serie A title, the Italian leaders are under increasing pressure as they head to Atalanta tomorrow. The defending champions qualified for the Italian Cup final beating Inter Milan after extra-time and penalties on Wednesday in what was described as a dreadful performance-by their own players. "Tonight we played the worst ever game since I've been at Juventus," said defender Leonardo Bonucci. "We were lucky to take it to penalties." While his side lead second-placed Napoli by three points, Gazzetta dello Sport reported Thursday that Real Madrid were preparing to pounce for their coach Massimiliano Allegri.

Meanwhile, Giorgio Chiellini, Claudio Marchisio and Martin Caceres are all out injured for the Atalanta game, but goalkeeper Gianluigi Buffon, striker Mario Mandzukic and defender Patrice Evra should all be back in action. Goal-shy Atalanta managed a draw with Carpi last weekend to avoid getting sucked into a relegation battle, and immediately turned their sights to a win over Juventus. "We must look forward and try to break this streak of games without a win as soon as possible," said their Slovenian midfielder Jasmin Kurtic, after scoring his first goal for the club in the 1-1 draw at Carpi. "We conceded little or nothing in that match and created some opportunities we can build on."

Napoli, out of Europe and only three points behind Juventus, received a boost ahead of their home tie with mid-table Chievo when former Italy coach Cesare Prandelli tipped them to bounce back. "Napoli are in good shape, they're only

three points behind Juventus who will have important commitments, and if I were at Napoli I'd be thinking about maintaining concentration," he said. "They've been strong, in four games we'll see how the table looks." Napoli midfielder Marek Hamsik feels the same way about his side's title chances. "February was a difficult month, but we played well against Juve and Milan the Bianconeri have a three-point advantage now, but there are 11 rounds left and anything is possible," he said.—AFP

Italian Serie A table

MILAN: Italian Serie A table ahead of the weekend's games (played, won, drawn, lost, goals for, goals against, points):

Juventus	27	19	4	4	48	15	61
Napoli	27	17	7	3	55	22	58
Roma	27	15	8	4	55	28	53
Fiorentina	27	16	5	6	48	27	53
Inter Milan	27	14	6	7	34	25	48
AC Milan	27	13	8	6	39	28	47
Sassuolo	27	10	11	6	34	31	41
Lazio	27	10	7	10	34	36	37
Bologna	27	10	5	12	29	31	35
Chievo	27	9	7	11	32	36	34
Empoli	27	9	7	11	33	40	34
Torino	27	8	8	11	33	34	32
Atalanta	27	7	9	11	26	31	30
Udinese	27	8	6	13	24	40	30
Genoa	27	7	7	13	27	32	28
Sampdoria	27	7	7	13	39	46	28
Palermo	27	7	6	14	27	47	27
Frosinone	27	6	5	16	26	53	23
Carpi	27	4	9	14	24	44	21
Verona	27	2	12	13	24	45	18

Spanish League Preview

# MINNOWS EIBAR NEXT ON RAMPANT BARCA'S RADAR

**MADRID:** European champions Barcelona can take another step closer to a sixth La Liga title in eight years when they travel to the humble surroundings of Eibar's 6,000 capacity Ipurua tomorrow. Barca are on a record 35-game unbeaten streak stretching back to October to put them well on course to repeat the treble of league, Cup and Champions League they won last season. The Catalans hold an eight-point lead over Atletico Madrid with eternal rivals Real Madrid a further four points back in third with just 11 games of the league season to go.

Despite Barca's incredible run, they had been far from their best in recent weeks until Lionel Messi scored his 35th hat-trick for the club in a 5-1 rout of nine-man Rayo Vallecano on Thursday. "The league isn't finished, there are still plenty of points to play for," warned captain Andres Iniesta. However, coach Luis Enrique admitted he was relishing the business end of the season. "We are approaching the final third of the season and the most beautiful part is still to come."

Barca will be shorn of one of their star attacking triumvirate in the Basque country as Neymar is suspended. But with a first free mid-week since December to come, Enrique is unlikely to waver too much from his strongest side with full-backs Jordi Alba and Dani Alves set to return. Eibar have punched well above their weight in just their second ever season in the top-flight to sit eighth in the table. However, they have lost six of their last seven games. "We are having a significantly poorer second-half of the season than the first, but I am sure we will turn it around," coach Jose Luis Mendilibar said after a 1-0 defeat at Sevilla on Wednesday.

Real Madrid's realistic title hopes are all but over, but Zinedine Zidane's men will be keen to make amends for defeat to Atletico in the

Madrid derby last weekend when they host Celta Vigo at the Santiago Bernabeu. Cristiano Ronaldo eased the backlash against his comments after the derby pinning the blame on his teammates for Madrid's poor season to date with a goal and an assist in Real's 3-1 win at Levante in midweek. And Zidane should have a far stronger squad to choose from for the visit of high-flying Celta as captain Sergio Ramos and Dani Carvajal return from suspension, whilst Gareth Bale, Luka Modric and Marcelo are in contention after varying spells on the sidelines due to injury.

The game of the weekend sees second-placed Atletico travel to Gary Neville's Valencia tomorrow. Valencia moved into the top half of the table with their fifth win in their last six games in all competitions against Malaga in midweek. However, Neville's men face a much stiffer task against an Atletico side that hasn't conceded in five games. "Obviously it is a difficult game and we won't get carried away," Atletico boss Diego Simeone said of his side's title chances. "Above all what matters in football is winning. We know it is very difficult to see Barcelona losing matches. We are only thinking about ourselves."

Atletico could be boosted by the return of Belgian winger Yannick Carrasco after three weeks out with ankle ligament damage, but inspirational defender Diego Godin is a doubt with a hamstring injury. Villarreal hold a commanding nine-point advantage over Sevilla in the race for the fourth Champions League place and will be expected to stretch their unbeaten league run to 15 games when Las Palmas visit El Madrigal on Saturday. Sevilla go in search of their first away win of the season at struggling Getafe, who have lost their last seven in the league. — AFP



ENGLISH PREMIER LEAGUE

- Tottenham v Arsenal** 15:45  
beIN SPORTS 2 HD
- Newcastle v Bournemouth** 18:00  
beIN SPORTS
- Chelsea v Stoke** 18:00  
beIN SPORTS 9 HD
- Swansea v Norwich** 18:00  
beIN SPORTS
- Southampton v Sunderland** 18:00  
beIN SPORTS
- Everton v West Ham** 18:00  
beIN SPORTS
- Man City v Aston Villa** 18:00  
beIN SPORTS 2 HD
- Watford v Leicester** 20:30  
beIN SPORTS 2 HD

SPANISH LEAGUE

- Real Madrid v Celta de Vigo** 18:00  
beIN SPORTS 3 HD
- Villarreal v Las Palmas** 20:15  
beIN SPORTS
- Getafe CF v Sevilla FC** 22:30  
beIN SPORTS

TOMORROW

- Deportivo v Malaga** 0:05  
beIN SPORTS

ITALIAN LEAGUE

- Hellas Verona v Sampdoria** 20:00  
beIN SPORTS
- Napoli v Chievo Verona** 22:45  
beIN SPORTS 4 HD

GERMAN LEAGUE

- Werder Bremen v Hannover** 17:30  
beIN SPORTS
- Wolfsburg v Monchengladbach** 17:30  
beIN SPORTS 5 HD
- Augsburg v Bayer 04** 17:30  
beIN SPORTS 4 HD
- E Frankfurt v Ingolstadt 04** 17:30  
beIN SPORTS
- Stuttgart v Hoffenheim** 17:30  
beIN SPORTS
- Koln v Schalke 04** 17:30  
beIN SPORTS
- Dortmund v Bayern Munich** 20:30  
beIN SPORTS 5 HD

FRENCH LEAGUE

- PSG v Montpellier** 19:00  
beIN SPORTS 6 HD
- Angers v Saint Etienne** 22:00  
beIN SPORTS
- Girondins v Ajaccio** 22:00  
beIN SPORTS
- Lille OSC v Stade de Reims** 22:00  
beIN SPORTS
- OGC Nice v ES Troyes** 22:00  
beIN SPORTS
- Bastia v Lorient** 22:00  
beIN SPORTS

# CHELSEA CAN SECURE TOP 4 FINISH: MATIC

**LONDON:** Nemanja Matic claims Chelsea can still secure a top four finish if they can secure a fourth successive Premier League win when Stoke visit Stamford Bridge today. The Blues' win at Norwich this week moved last season's champions into the top half of the table for the first time since August and within eight points of fourth placed Manchester City. While their progress may look modest when measured in league places, Guus Hiddink's team are undeniably on the rise and remain unbeaten in domestic competition since December.

The manner of recent performances has drawn comparisons to some of last season's better displays and with the second leg of the Champions League last 16 tie with Paris Saint Germain to come next week, they have hit form at exactly the right time. Chelsea interim manager Hiddink is remaining guarded about his side's Premier League ambitions. Blues midfielder Matic, though, believes that with the side now lying 10th, they can close the gap to the Champions League places if they can win all of their remaining 10 league games.

"It is very important to win games. We are a big team and have to keep doing this if we are to get closer to the first four," Matic said. "I know it's very difficult to catch them but we will give our best to win every game from now on. "I know that is very hard, maybe impossible, but in football anything can happen." Chelsea will undoubtedly have one eye on the meeting with PSG when they will attempt to overturn a one-goal first leg deficit.

**Big games**

But centre-back Gary Cahill insists the impressive form of striker Diego Costa since Hiddink took charge means the club is more than capable of competing on all fronts. "It is perfect timing to have Costa back to his very best with the big games we have coming up. He's scoring goals and long may that continue," Cahill said. "I'm sure for a striker if you start scoring goals, you think you will score every time you get on the pitch. He is in that mind-set now.

"People aren't talking about him not scoring for three-four games or whatever any more like earlier in the season. His record is great at the minute, so he feels confident. "Ultimately for us if we have Diego in form and scoring goals, it's great for the team." Stoke arrive at Stamford Bridge in confident mood, having moved above Chelsea and up to seventh by beating Newcastle 1-0 on Wednesday. That was a third successive victory for Mark Hughes' side, who are only five points outside the Champions League positions. Hughes spent three years at Chelsea as a player, and actually featured the last time they lost at home to Stoke, in a 1995 League Cup tie.

The Potters have not won a league match at Stamford Bridge since 1974, and their manager is keen to put that right. "I had a great time as a player there when they were a mid-table team. You could see things were starting to roll in the right direction as I left," Hughes said. "Going back there, we haven't had the best of times. We're looking to change that. It will be a good match up. "We've gone there in recent seasons and really haven't tested them enough." Stoke

are stretched defensively as Phil Bardsley faces several weeks out with a calf injury, Geoff Cameron has an ankle problem and Ryan Shawcross is in Germany seeing a specialist about his back injury.— AFP

**English Premier League table**

**LONDON:** English Premier League table ahead of this weekend's matches (played, won, drawn, lost, goals for, goals against, points):

Leicester	28	16	9	3	51	31	57
Tottenham	28	15	9	4	49	22	54
Arsenal	28	15	6	7	44	28	51
Man City	27	14	5	8	48	31	47
Man Utd	28	13	8	7	37	26	47
West Ham	28	12	10	6	42	31	46
Stoke	28	12	6	10	30	33	42
Liverpool	27	11	8	8	41	36	41
Southampton	28	11	7	10	35	28	40
Chelsea	28	10	9	9	42	38	39
Everton	27	9	11	7	49	36	38
Watford	28	10	7	11	29	29	37
West Brom	28	9	9	10	29	36	36
Crystal Palace	28	9	6	13	31	37	33
Bournemouth	28	8	8	12	32	44	32
Swansea	28	7	9	12	27	37	30
Sunderland	28	6	6	16	34	53	24
Norwich	28	6	6	16	31	53	24
Newcastle	27	6	6	15	27	50	24
Aston Villa	28	3	7	18	22	51	16

# POCHETTINO TAUNTS ARSENAL AHEAD OF DERBY SHOWDOWN

**LONDON:** Tottenham Hotspur manager Mauricio Pochettino has warned Arsene Wenger that Arsenal's wealth of experience will count for nothing in the pressure-packed Premier League title race. Pochettino's side host the Gunners today in one of the most eagerly anticipated showdowns between these bitter north London rivals for decades. With second-placed Tottenham currently three points behind shock leaders Leicester City and three ahead of third-placed Arsenal, the latest battle for north London supremacy will have a significant influence on the outcome of both teams' title bids.

After finishing below Arsenal for the last 20 years, Tottenham are finally in position to turn the tables as they look to win the English title for the first time since 1961 and such is the clamour to see the fixture that tickets are changing hands for up to £800 (\$1,135; 1,035 euros) - nearly 10 times the most expensive face-value price. Arsenal, who last lifted the Premier League trophy in 2004, are the only side in the top three to have gone through the highs and lows of a title race in recent seasons.

But Pochettino, whose side saw their six-match winning run ended in a 1-0 loss at West Ham United on Wednesday, dismissed the theory that experience could be decisive as he pointed to Arsenal's successive defeats against Manchester United and Swansea City this week. "It's difficult to know. If they have players that have the advantage to win the title, what happened against Manchester United or Swansea?," Pochettino said. "Different clubs sometimes sign a player or a manager with a big background or big trophies behind them. Sometimes they have success and sometimes not. "You never know. Football is not an ordinary business. Anything can happen."

Arsenal appear more vulnerable than ever and the absence of injured duo Petr Cech and Laurent Koscielny will strengthen Tottenham's

belief that the balance of power in north London is about to change. Alexis Sanchez hardly helped Arsenal's predicament when the Gunners winger publicly questioned his team-mates' hunger for success following the dismal Swansea defeat. "I think we can win the Premier League with the players we have. That said, we lack a certain hunger," Sanchez said. "We need to step out onto the pitch as if we're already 1-0 up. We lack self-belief, that we can actually be champions."

**Contrasting emotions**

Following a week of contrasting emotions, Leicester head for Watford today back in the driving seat in the title race. The disappointment of a 2-2 draw at home to West Bromwich Albion on Tuesday was followed by the welcome bonus of seeing title rivals Tottenham, Arsenal and Manchester City all lose 24 hours later. The upshot was that the Foxes travel to Vicarage Road with only 10 games standing between them and the completion of arguably the most unlikely title triumph in English football history.

"It is a going to be a really tough place to go," Leicester winger Marc Albrighton said of facing Watford. "They have got some great players, some firepower up top, but we will be confident as ever. "The season we have had is fantastic. We are not going to let a point at home dampen our confidence." Manuel Pellegrini has warned his City stars there can be no repeat of their woeful defeat at Liverpool if they are to revive their slender title hopes against Aston Villa.

City's 3-0 loss was their third league defeat in a row and even though the League Cup winners have a game in a hand, bridging a 10-point gap between themselves and Leicester will be a monumental task "Of course, we cannot play in the way we did. Not only did we concede three goals but we didn't shoot once," Pellegrini said.—AFP

# PELLEGRINI WARNS HIS MISFIRING CITY STARS

**MANCHESTER:** Manuel Pellegrini has warned his Manchester City stars there can be no repeat of their woeful defeat at Liverpool if they are to revive their slender Premier League title hopes against Aston Villa. City's 3-0 loss at Anfield was their third league defeat in a row and even though they have a game in a hand, bridging a 10-point gap between themselves and leaders Leicester City over the final two months of the season will be a monumental task.

The worrying statistic for City is that, despite looking good in cup competitions, they have won just one of four league matches since boss Pellegrini announced on February 1 that he would be leaving at the end of the season to make way for Pep Guardiola. A home game against bottom club Villa today ought to provide the opportunity to begin collecting league points again and Pellegrini has made clear that a repeat of Wednesday's performance will not be accepted. "Of course, we cannot play in the way we did.

Not only did we concede three goals but we didn't shoot once at the Liverpool goal," Pellegrini said. "I think it was because we were not fresh. I am not thinking about the title and not thinking about trying to qualify for the next stage of the Champions League. "The most important thing is to recover our level of performance in the Premier League because we have lost the last three. "I am surprised by this. We didn't expect to lose 3-0 at Liverpool." The match against Villa will be City's fifth in 14 days, a sequence that has brought mixed results. The highlights were undoubtedly a 3-1 away win over Dynamo Kiev that leaves Pellegrini's side well placed to reach the Champions League quarter-finals for the first time in their history, and the penalty shoot-out victory over Liverpool at Wembley in the League Cup final.—AFP

# Sports



Kuwait shooters shine at Amir 5th Grand Prix

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MADRID: Barcelona's Lionel Messi (right) scores past Rayo Vallecano's Antonio Amaya (left) - his side's fourth goal during a Spanish La Liga soccer match between Barcelona and Rayo Vallecano at the Vallecas stadium on Thursday, March 3, 2016. — AP

## BARCELONA CRUSH NINE-MAN RAYO 5-1

### MESSI LIFTS BARCA TO RECORD 35-MATCH UNBEATEN RUN

**BARCELONA:** Barcelona set a Spanish record of 35 matches unbeaten in all competitions with a thumping 5-1 win at nine-man Rayo Vallecano in La Liga on Thursday after goal-machine Lionel Messi scored his 35th hat-trick. Ivan Rakitic opened the scoring, Messi caught up with Real Madrid's Cristiano Ronaldo on 35 trebles in all competitions and Arda Turan completed the rout, with Turkey's captain scoring his first goal for the club since joining from Atletico Madrid.

Barca's victory, which saw them beat the undefeated record Real Madrid had held since the 1988/89 season, restored an eight-point lead at the top over Atletico with 11 matches to go. Atletico beat visiting Real Sociedad 3-0 on Tuesday, while third-placed Real Madrid are again 12 points off the pace after a 3-1 win at Levante on Wednesday. Barca

were helped by the fact that Rayo lost defender Diego Llorente to a red card three minutes before halftime for a foul on Rakitic before Manuel Iturra was also sent off in the 67th for bringing down Sergio Busquets in the area.

Busquets was felled from behind going for the rebound after a Messi free kick came back off the bar but Luis Suarez's penalty was saved by Juan Carlos, Barcelona's ninth miss from 18 penalties in all competitions this season. "It's a strange situation (missing penalties)," the Catalan side's midfield general Andres Iniesta said. "We mustn't let it bother us while everything is working as well as it is. "The reasons are many (to explain) why the team continues in this positive dynamic (but) the league isn't over, there are lots of points still to

take," he was quoted as saying on the As website ([www.as.com](http://www.as.com)).

Rakitic scored in the 22nd minute by tapping the ball home when it fell to him after Juan Carlos spilt a high cross. Messi finished off a fine one-two with Neymar a minute later for his first goal and Llorente was shown the red card three minutes before halftime for a foul on Rakitic. Messi scored his second in the 53rd after a shot by Suarez came back off the post and completed his hat-trick in the 72nd after darting through the defense from midfield. Rayo got a consolation in the 57th through Manucho's header after Bebe, at the far post, nodded a cross from the right into the middle as the two ex-Manchester United players combined. — Reuters