

FREE

# Kuwait Times Friday Times

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Min 29°  
Max 43°

**Kuwait urged  
to abolish the  
'sponsorship  
system'**

8



**India seeks  
repatriation  
of all illegal  
residents**

9



**Mourinho,  
Pep resume  
hostilities  
in derby duel**

46



## MUSLIMS CROWD MAKKAH FOR HAJJ

**MAKKAH:** Close to 1.5 million Muslims from around the world had descended yesterday on Saudi Arabia for the annual hajj pilgrimage, undeterred by last year's stampede disaster but with Iranians absent. As temperatures exceeded 40C (105F), pilgrims crowded into Makkah's sprawling, air-conditioned Grand Mosque complex to walk around the Kaaba-the black cube that Muslims across the globe face while they pray.

In one of the first rites of hajj, which formally starts on Saturday, white-clad pilgrims take their turn circling the Kaaba in a procession that continues 24 hours a day. Pilgrims who cannot walk are pushed around the mosque in wheelchairs by workers. Regularly-spaced taps provide thirsty pilgrims with spring water, and visitors can eat under large fast food signs at a commercial centre inside the complex, where they are also able to shop.

But as soon as loudspeakers sound the call to prayer, the shops are shuttered and the faithful line up to worship. Outside at all the Grand Mosque's entrances, Saudi police control the movement of pilgrims between green plastic barriers. Step out of line, and a policeman calls through a megaphone to order them back into place.

Continued on Page 12

True Taste of **Lebanese** Cuisine



  
**Al Sanawbar**  
Good Times

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Local Spotlight

CELLPHONE ADDICTION

By Muna Al-Fuzai

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Dr Hisao Ishii of Japan conducted a very interesting study about cellphone addiction among teenagers. "Teenagers can be seen taking advantage of every spare minute to touch base with their friends," he said, adding that the addiction of children to their mobile phones can threaten the very fabric of society. Although his study was based on children in Japan, the same trends apply in Kuwait and many countries around the world. Teenagers' habits are nearly similar everywhere.

Go to any cafe or mall here and you will not find a single boy or a girl without a mobile. It also takes me by surprise that most of them hold their mobile in their hands as if it is their only link to stay connected and be accepted in the social circle of their friends! Dr Ishii's research warned: "Genuine conversation will be driven out by superficial communication, leading to deterioration in the quality of relationships. Indeed, the very fabric of society may be threatened."

Even with all reports warning about the negative impacts of mobiles on teenagers' behaviors and ties with family and friends, many kids take their mobiles with them to school.

Teenagers today are shaping relations with the power of the mobile and its apps like WhatsApp, Snapchat, etc. So, when they meet someone for the first time, they start checking how active he/she is on social media, and of course the number of their followers, and want to stay in touch several times a day. Teenagers are spending too much time on their mobiles, exchanging text messages rather than direct and physical contacts.

Although the study focused on teenagers, many people are now addicted to their mobiles for different reasons. Some are using social media to make a living, like selling food and clothes. Some are young people who are also addicted to their mobiles because they want to stay connected with their friends, chat, read the latest news, play games and pass the time gossiping.

Texting and driving is another matter of concern, and it is common to see young people do this in the middle of the road. Social media has turned stupid and uneducated people into rich and popular figures around the world. There is a threat of presenting wrong models to young people - like a Ms X who never made it through school, but has made more money than what an educated person can make in his/her lifetime!

Sociologists have warned that the popularity of emailing and playing games on mobile phones is affecting other important activities such as recreational reading and studying. I fully agree. Even with all reports warning about the negative impacts of mobiles on teenagers' behaviors and ties with family and friends, many kids take their mobiles with them to school. Some schools manage to take the mobiles from their students, but not all schools do so. This issue needs to be taken into consideration by specialists. If this addiction cannot be controlled, at least let's be ready for what to do next.

PHOTO OF THE DAY



A Kuwaiti wooden ship used in pearl diving. — Photo by KUNA/Ghazy Gaffaf

In my view

A LOVE LETTER TO MAN FROM WOMAN

By Nejoud Al-Yagout

local@kuwaittimes.net

*•Note to Reader: This letter is the beginning. What is to come in due time is an article I wrote about the unconditional love of the Divine, prompted by a male friend of mine who believes strongly in gender equality. This letter, too, is inspired by his appreciation for women and his humanitarianism. His faith in women has propelled me to write this letter to all men, in the hope that those with me will speak out more and those against me will learn how to love me as I love them. To be continued....*

Dear Man,

Why is your love conditional on what we wear or do;

what we love or who we love, for that matter? How would it be any different if you were born a female in this region? Did you ever try to put yourself in our shoes or abayas? I am not writing this letter out of spite, but because of a profound love I have for you, we have for you. And many of you are on our side, but the few of you who view us as property seem to be guarding the status quo fiercely. I invite you to let go. I promise you that we can make heaven here on Earth. Together. As one. There is something so beautiful about masculine and feminine energies coming together. This is the way it should be. It is no longer about patriarchal rules or segregated schools. These are antiquated systems that no longer work. They stunt our collective awakening and potential for universality.

Tell me, what is it about us that you fear? Why do you erroneously believe that you cannot control your desires around us? We are not objects of lust, dearest brother. If that is how you view us, then perhaps it is a call from your soul to ignore the thoughts within you that tell you this is the case, rather than get us out of your way to avoid temptation. Our consciousness on this planet is finally evolving, so let us collaborate to transcend this antagonism toward one another. Since you hold the power, we await your cue to ascend. We do not want to fight you. We want to become enlightened. With you.

Do you know that when we walk alone in the streets, we are not afraid of being attacked by stray dogs, but are terrified of being assaulted by you? And the most painful thing to hear is that we deserved it because we were unveiled or not accompanied by a male. This stems from conditioning, from a deep-rooted belief

that women are on Earth to sate a man's desire. We know that many of you have discarded such beliefs, but for those who haven't, I invite you to transform age-old matrices so that we can raise our frequencies; so that we can embrace each other and cross the threshold from fear into love.

I am writing this letter, because I know many brothers and sisters agree with me that it is time to shed the skin of outdated gender biases that divide us and come together for the sake of our children and generations to come. Oh dear man, please tell me that you are way grander than the way we perceive you. Hold my hand. I am not dirty. I am you.

Love,  
Woman

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The holy mosque in Makkah in the past

## Kuwaitis of bygone era brave arduous journeys to reach Islam's zenith 'Haj'

**KUWAIT:** Devout Kuwaitis of bygone eras used to undergo rigorous preparations for the 'Haj', an annual Islamic pilgrimage to the holy city of Makkah and a compulsory obligation for all adult Muslims physically capable of embarking on the journey. Given the enormity of the "Hajj" pilgrimage, one of the five pillars of Islam that constitute the foundation of Muslim life, our forefathers hopped on camels and braved an arduous journey that lasted three months (1,527 kilometers, 948 miles).

Moreover, in an interview with KUNA yesterday, Kuwaiti civil researcher Saleh Al-Methen noted that the "inaugural Kuwaiti Haj campaign actually dates back to 1800", when the country was a fledgling emirate. Speaking on intense preparations for the "Hajj" pilgrimage, Al-Methen said that "leaders of the Hajj campaigns made arrangements months in advance where they would purchase all necessities and contact sage tour guides", veterans these leaders often relied on to facilitate the journey to reach the zenith of Islam.

Furthermore, 'Haj' campaign leaders also made sure to stock up on copious amounts of food that included dates, rice, flour and tea in efforts to ensure that the journey to Makkah would go off without a hitch. Meanwhile, Al-Methen revealed that Kuwaitis then would often offer pecuniary assistance to those unable to afford the cost of the journey, an act of sheer benevolence that is seemingly embedded in this diminutive Gulf nation's culture.

The Kuwaiti researcher also talked about various hurdles that often encumbered the journey to 'Haj', as pervasive war, political instability and the spread of contagious diseases accentuated the hardships travelers had to endure. Describing jubilant scenes of the return of pilgrims to the country, Al-Methen noted that children pranced around villages serenading the pilgrims, who would often dole out commemorative gifts such as 'Zamzam' water, prayer rugs and other ornaments in return. He also added that it was customary then for pilgrims' domiciles to be adorned with green flags that heralded joyous gatherings that marked the culmination of a debilitating yet rewarding odyssey. — KUNA



Kuwaitis on a pilgrimage for haj

# تخفيضات نهاية الموسم

## CLEARANCE OFFER

OFFER STARTING FROM 10/2016 TO 30/9/2016





— Photos by Yaser Al-Zayyat

# Flow House Waterpark opens doors to visitors in Abu Halifa



Nawara Fattahova

**A** new waterpark with completely innovative concepts was launched yesterday at Abu Halifa next to Kuwait Magic Mall. Sprawling over an area of 10 000 square meters, the Flow House Waterpark is now welcoming visitors daily from 10am-10pm. Besides the regular attraction such as the slides, kids area and the pool, Flow House provides the first of its kind surfing attraction (Flow Rider), where trainers and instructors will teach the visitors how to ride the waves.

The other first of its kind concept in Kuwait is the Clear Lounge Oxygen Bar, which is a diving activity with scenting aroma while enjoying an underwater activity. For those who would like to spend the whole day at the Flow House, they can rent one of the beach cabins, which will provide them with all hotel services. The visitor can choose

between a single or double cabin with prices range between KD 15 and KD 45.

There is an outlet of Ruby Tuesday Restaurant, a small supermarket and a few retail shops within the park providing the visitors all amenities under one roof. Visitors also will have beach access. Another attraction is the multi-purpose hall which is available for daily rent for parties or celebrating different occasions.

General Manager of the Flow House Hamad Al-Khonaini told the Kuwait Times that safety measures and clean water are the top priorities for the management. He said visitors are not allowed to bring in food from outside. The entrance fee is KD 18 inclusive of the Oxygen Bar or KD 12 without it. For the disabled the fee is curtailed to KD 8 while kids under three years enter for free. The Flow House Waterpark can be contacted over telephone No. 90013322 or visit it at website: [www.flowhousekw.com](http://www.flowhousekw.com)







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Abu Halifa, next to Kuwait Magic Mall

flowhousekw





By Nawara Fattahova

Shows of illusion are rare in the Gulf. Some think they involve magic, which is haram. But a group of young Kuwaitis are trying to change local perceptions, offering a fun and entertaining performance through the group, Imagine.

Formed by Abdullatif Al-Saleh, Ayed Abdullah, Khalid Al-Muharib and others, Imagine presents sleight of hand tricks and illusions in a comedic way. "We are the only illusionist comedians in the Middle East. We also interact with the audience. Our shows are for adults, but children from the age of 10 will also enjoy them, as the shows include animals, in addition to visual tricks," Saleh told Kuwait Times.

Saleh, the founder of Imagine, got the idea to form the team in 2014, and in March 2015, he brought this idea to fruition. "In January 2016, the last member joined our team. Although our team is complete now, I don't mind if a new member seeks to join us. We are the best in what we do, but

we don't mind having another member if he has new skills or a special talent that is different," he pointed out.

Presenting tricks and illusions is the sole source of livelihood for some members, while others do it as part-time job or hobby, along with studying or working in other jobs. "I was an employee before starting this activity. I then resigned to be fully dedicated to my hobby and passion. It was hard in the beginning, but it's getting better now, and I can live off it. I also did standup comedy in 2015, and it was one of the biggest shows," said Saleh.

Imagine have presented shows in various places. "Besides this theatre, we have held joint shows in Arraya, Hilton, Hamra Mall and Discovery Mall. These shows were organized by companies and charity organizations. We also held a show in Qatar during a national festival held there. Now we are planning to hold shows in London, Dublin and the US," he noted.

The show presents popular tricks Kuwaiti style. "We use some of the common props used in magic shows such as

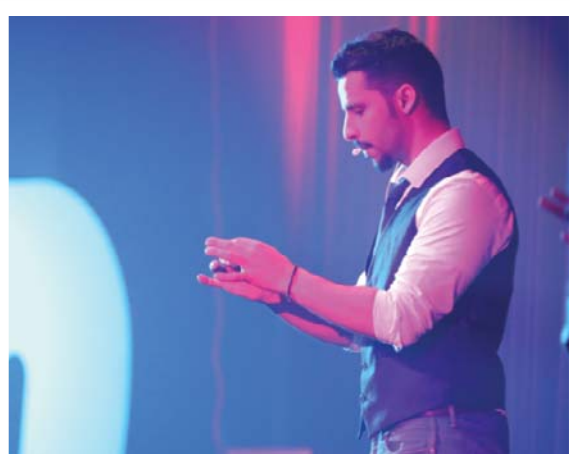
Sleight  
of hand

Imagine will present a show Sept 29, 2016 at the Hmeli Theatre (previously the Medical Professions Theatre) in Jabriya.



Abdullatif Al-Saleh, Ayed Abdullah, Khalid Al-Muharib talk with Kuwait Times about their upcoming show, overcoming challenges to creating an illusion show in Kuwait and the growing popularity of live performances in Kuwait. File photos show some of the Imagine team's previous performances. — Photos by Joseph Shagra and courtesy Imagine team.





## LOCAL ILLUSIONISTS OFFER A BEHIND-THE-SCENES TAKE ON PERFORMANCE

the big box for cutting a person, flying instruments and other popular tricks. But we present them in a local style, as the presenter wears the national outfit and headdress, and we use Kuwaiti music and songs during the show, in addition to special lights," explained Saleh.

He also revealed some tricks. "I don't mind telling the secret of my tricks, as I'm not a magician - I'm just an illusionist. So when I do the disappearing trick, we manipulate the audience with light effects, and when one person disappears, another replaces him from the backstage, but they don't notice. Many people think a genie is helping us make people disappear, but they have to understand it's just an illusion," he stated.

Muharib is still a student and performs with Imagine in the evenings. He learned his tricks from the Internet, books and other shows. During this interview, he showed this reporter some quick yet very interesting tricks - one with a playing card and another with a ring he was wearing.

He wants to continue working with the team even after graduation, but he is not sure if it would be his main job or a part-time one.

Abdullah is a director and also participates in some segments of the show. He has also acted in a local soap opera. His and Khalid's family were against such shows as they thought they involved magic, which is unacceptable by religion and society. But they eventually came around, and now attend all shows.

Imagine will present a show Sept 29, 2016 at the Hmeli Theatre (previously the Medical Professions Theatre) in Jabriya. "This will be our third big show and the 17th in total. It will be the first to have live animals participating, in addition to the animal mascots that we usually use. This show will be completely different from the previous big one, as we have been preparing for it for the whole year, and have presented some parts of it at small joint shows," he added.

The upcoming show that will take place on Sept 29 will include 40 minutes of performances presented for the first time in the world - and it's a Kuwaiti idea. "The show will include Ghost Protocol, Blue Light, Khifa Show and others. The entire team that is working on this show, including those in backstage, decor, lights and other areas all are Kuwaitis," concluded Saleh.

Imagine can be found on Instagram, Twitter and Facebook @ImagineKUW. They also have a website: [www.imaginekuw.com](http://www.imaginekuw.com)





# KUWAIT MARKS 2ND ANNIVERSARY OF AMIR AS A 'HUMANITARIAN LEADER'

**KUWAIT:** Kuwait today marks the 2nd anniversary of the UN honoring of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah as a "Humanitarian Leader" and Kuwait as a "Humanitarian Center." The honoring came in recognition of the major role of Kuwait and His Highness the Amir for reinforcing a "humanitarian diplomacy" and supporting charity work that was extended around the globe. His Highness the Amir was honored in a ceremony held at the UN headquarters in New York on Sept 9.

During the ceremony, UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon lauded the great humanitarian efforts His Highness the Amir had exerted, enabling the international organization to face the repercussions of war and catastrophes. "We thank the Amir and the people of Kuwait for their outstanding generosity towards people in need," said the Secretary-General then. Ban added that Kuwait had increased its support to multilateral humanitarian action exponentially since the start of the crisis in Syria.

In addition, the country donated hundreds of millions of dollars for humanitarian operations - "not only in the Middle East, but in Chad, Ethiopia, Kenya, Nigeria, Somalia and Sudan. Kuwait's leadership and funding has saved lives, and has galvanized others to participate in coordinated humanitarian action." He noted that Kuwait's initiatives had prompted the international community to offer more aid, which helped the UN fulfill its humanitarian missions worldwide.

## Providing assistance

For his part, His Highness the Amir stressed that Kuwait, since independence and gaining the UN membership, had followed a steady approach in its foreign policy, essentially based on humanitarian assistance to countries in need "regardless of their geographic location, religious beliefs or ethnic origins". This assistance is in "pursuance of its belief and conviction of the importance of international partnership, as well as the unification and activation of international efforts, aimed at the maintenance and preservation of the founda-

tions of life - that is the human spirit," said the Amir. His Highness Sheikh Sabah noted that Kuwait has always been developing and modernizing the methods of providing assistance.

"Kuwaiti charitable associations and peoples' fundraising committees have set an example in their continued support of many humanitarian projects in Asia and Africa, by individual initiatives that have become - by the blessing of Allah - a shining example of benevolence characterizing the Kuwaiti people," said His Highness the Amir. In 2008 Kuwait earmarked 10 percent of its total humanitarian assistance to countries affected by natural or man-made disasters to be channeled to UN organizations and specialized agencies active in the humanitarian field, His Highness the Amir told the ceremony.

Then, His Highness the Amir announced that Kuwait would double its annual contribution to the Central Emergency Response Fund (CEFR) to USD1 million. "I am pleased to announce before you of doubling our fixed annual voluntary contribution to the Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF) to USD one million," His Highness Sheikh Sabah said. His Highness the Amir has always been keen on Kuwait's participation in the international humanitarian events, leading the Kuwaiti delegation to the first ever World Humanitarian Summit in Istanbul in May, 2016.

## Humanitarian values

Addressing the summit, His Highness the Amir said: "Kuwait has long been acclaimed for its deep belief in humanitarian values and helping hand for the needy people." The total value of Kuwait's contributions to the relief effort in the last five years exceeded USD two billion, which made the country the world's biggest aid donor in terms of the ratio of aid to the country's GDP, His Highness the Amir added.

In the meantime, the annual Kuwait International Forum for Humanitarian Work was launched in 2014. The third forum was held last April. The event involves several government bodies and private organizations, besides Kuwaiti and foreign experts, working together to



**His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah and UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon pose for a photo after UN honors His Highness the Amir as a 'Humanitarian Leader' and Kuwait as a 'Humanitarian Center'. — KUNA**

promote humanitarian initiatives and activities. Part of Kuwait's major humanitarian role was hosting the First, Second and Third International Humanitarian Pledging Conference for Syria Donors, January 2013, January 2014 and March 2015. During the three events, the country's total pledges in support of the Syrian people hit USD 1.3 billion. Leading the Kuwaiti delegation to the fourth conference held in London in February 2016, His Highness the Amir announced providing USD 300 million more over three years to support the Syrian refugees over.

## Charitable organizations

In addition to the official backing to the Syrian people, the Kuwaiti charity

organizations and societies launched many campaigns to collect aid for the Syrian people. The Kuwait Red Crescent Society (KRCS) and the International Islamic Charitable Organization (IICO) have played a leading role in these efforts. As for Iraq, Kuwait has always been keen on supporting the people there, especially the displaced, to alleviate the sufferings. In 2015, Kuwait announced a donation of USD 200 million to help displaced Iraqis. It also pledged USD 176 million during an Iraqi aid conference held in Washington last July. Ahead of the last fasting month of Ramadan, the Kuwaiti charity organizations distributed 12,000 food packages on displaced Iraqis in Iraq Kurdistan. On relief aid during times of natural disasters

and disease, Kuwait offered thousands and millions of dollars to several countries affected by the devastating forces of nature. The Palestinian cause has always been at the core of Kuwait's humanitarian work. The country has always been supporting the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people. In 2009, Kuwait donated USD 34 million to contribute to the expenses of operations carried out by the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA).

In 2013, USD 15 million were offered to UNRWA. Then in 2014, a relief aid campaign for the Gaza was launched in Kuwait, in the aftermath of the Israeli aggression on the Strip in July of that year. On Yemen, Kuwait announced in 2015 a generous donation of USD 100 million for the Yemeni people suffering from the ills of civil war.

## Natural disasters

The Kuwaiti humanitarian hand was also extended to those who suffered from natural disasters in Japan, the Philippines, Turkey, and Somalia in recent years. As for natural disasters aid, Kuwait offered a USD 10 million donation to Bangladesh which was struck by a tornado in November 2007. It also aided Japan with five million oil barrel (worth about USD 500 million) after the destructive earthquake and tsunami that struck the country in March 2011. In July 2012, Kuwait delivered humanitarian aid worth USD 10 million to Somalia to help people suffering from famine and drought in the Horn of Africa country.

In 2012, Kuwait donated USD 250,000 for victims of Turkey's earthquake. Kuwait provided USD 10 million for the Philippines, which was then suffering the aftermath of a devastating tornado in 2014, while also contributing USD 5 million to the World Health Organization (WHO) to fight the Ebola virus the same year. Kuwait's engagement in various philanthropic activities around the globe and the UN honoring of His Highness the Amir has brought wide praise from the world leading organizations and leaders who highly appreciated the unprecedented humanitarian role of the country. — KUNA

# KUWAIT URGED TO ABOLISH 'SPONSORSHIP SYSTEM'

By B Izzak

**KUWAIT:** UN Special Rapporteur on Trafficking in Persons, especially women and children, Maria Grazia Giammarinaro yesterday called on Kuwait to abolish the Kafala system (sponsorship system) but praised a number of measures taken by Kuwait to improve the situation of foreign workers especially domestic helpers. Giammarinaro said that some domestic workers have been forced into prostitution and that hundreds of them flee their employers every year for being forced to work for long hours, are mistreated and beaten.

"In order to be successful in the struggle against trafficking, the government of Kuwait should also consider to deal with the general context of migration and labor regulations that produce social vulnerabilities," she told a press conference at the conclusion of a five-

day visit at the invitation of the Kuwaiti government. "This is the reason why the Kafala system should be abolished and replaced by a different regulation, allowing migrant workers to enjoy substantial freedom in the labor market," Giammarinaro said. The UN official praised Kuwait for setting up two shelters for female domestic helpers who flee their employers and called for setting up a shelter for men. "This accomplishment is even more significant given that exploitation is of domestic workers is prevalent in the region," she said.

"I encourage the government and institutions of Kuwait to continue in this direction and redouble efforts to better prevent trafficking and protect its victims," the UN official said. "It is necessary to address existing gaps especially regarding real alternatives to deportation when people are not willing to



**Minister of Justice, Awqaf and Islamic Affairs Yaqoub Al-Sanea hold talks with UN Special Rapporteur on trafficking in persons, Maria Grazia. — KUNA**

return," she said. Giammarinaro urged Kuwaiti authorities to drop the absconding charges against foreign workers and ensure paying their unpaid wages as well as the possibility of changing the employer without restriction.

She said that trafficking for sexual exploitation, particularly forced prostitution exists in Kuwait and the Gulf states and called for implementing the anti-trafficking in persons law in Kuwait to eradicate this phenomenon.

The UN official called on authorities to fast-track the establishment of a government owned recruitment agency to prevent trafficking in domestic workers. Giammarinaro called for the establishment of a "victim fund" that will provide a comprehensive compensation scheme for victims of trafficking. She also urged allowing migrant workers to enjoy the freedom to set up associations to protect their rights.



# INDIA SEEKS REPATRIATION OF ALL ILLEGAL RESIDENTS: SINGH

NEW DELHI BEEFS UP MEASURES AT AIRPORTS TO CURB HUMAN TRAFFICKING

## Crime

Report

### Eid prayers solely at assigned mosques

**KUWAIT:** Eid Al-Adha prayers will be held only inside assigned mosques, the Ministry of Awqaf and Islamic Affairs said yesterday. The prayers will be held in coordination with the Ministry of Interior and at the mosques where comfort accommodations are available.

### Army frees military prisoners during Eid

**KUWAIT:** Kuwait Army is releasing military personnel imprisoned for breaching disciplinary regulations on the occasion of Eid Al-Adha. Kuwait Army Chief of Staff Lieutenant General Mohammad Khaled Al-Kheder gave the orders in this respect, upon guidelines from the Deputy Prime Minister and Defense Minister Sheikh Khaled Al-Jarrah Al-Sabah.

### Amir congratulates poet Al-Wugayyan

**KUWAIT:** His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah yesterday sent a cable to Kuwaiti poet Dr Khalifa Al-Wugayyan, who won the prestigious Al-Quds Literary Award from the Arab Writers' Union. His Highness the Amir wished Al-Wugayyan more success, to honor his dear country on the regional and international cultural scenes. His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah and His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-Hamad Al-Sabah sent similar congratulatory cables to Al-Wugayyan.

### Emergency and blood bank to operate during holiday

**KUWAIT:** The medical emergency department and the central blood bank will continue working as regular during Eid Al-Adha holiday (effectively starting tomorrow till September 18th). Dr Jamal Al-Harbi, the assistant under-secretary for back-up medical services, said in a statement, on Thursday, the emergency department would provide services at 69 centers and emergency points in the governorates, including the islands. The medical air service will be also operating as regular and will be ready to evacuate people in need in remote regions to hospitals or clinics.

### Only serious cases will be treated abroad: Minister

**KUWAIT:** Dr Ali Al-Obaidi announced that only citizens suffering from serious illnesses and diseases would be allowed to get medical treatment in foreign countries. Cases such as cancer, children's serious illness and critical surgeries would be given the approval for the treatment outside Kuwait, the minister added in a statement. The resolution stipulates revising regulations for dispatch of patients to the foreign countries. Modifications will be done objectively and in a manner that "safeguards providing the service only to the eligible," Minister Al-Obaidi continued.

### US hails Kuwait Naval command of CTF 152

**MANAMA:** Commander of the US Fifth Fleet based in Bahrain, Admiral John Miller has hailed Kuwait's Naval Force's command of the CTF 152 Combined Maritime Forces. Miller made a statement yesterday during a ceremony to hand over the command of CTF 152 from Kuwait to Jordan. Kuwait has led the force over the past year.

By Sajeev K Peter

**KUWAIT:** The India government has requested the Kuwaiti authorities to find a way to repatriate around 29,000 Indians currently staying in Kuwait without valid residency documents, stated Gen V K Singh, India's Minister of State for External Affairs here on Wednesday. Addressing a press conference at the Indian Embassy along with Indian Ambassador Sunil Jain, the minister said, "Since these 29,000 people are having problems with their residency, we have requested the government of Kuwait to find out ways and means of sending these people back to India at the shortest possible time. We have also assured the Kuwait government that the India government is ready to assist them in all possible ways so that these illegal residents can go back to India as fast as possible," he said.

During his two-day stay in Kuwait, the minister held discussions with First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah, Minister of Social Affairs and Labour Hind Al-Subaih and other high-level officials. The Minister of Social Affairs and Labor assured him that the ministry would look into all labor-related problems of Indians. On his part, Singh has suggested to the minister that both sides shall convene the joint working group at an earliest date.

"I am also happy to meet and interact with a large number of Indians during my visit. My visit was also to take stock of the issues being faced by the community. It gives me confidence that all problems are solvable but it requires time to find ways and means and to increase our interaction both at the political and the official level in Kuwait," he said. The minister visited Qatar and the UAE before arriving in Kuwait.

Praising the Indian ambassador, Singh



**KUWAIT:** Gen V K Singh, India's Minister of State for External Affairs, addresses the Indian community at the Indian embassy auditorium on Wednesday. Deputy Chief of Mission Shubashis Goldar (second left), Indian Ambassador Sunil Jain, and First Secretary (consular, community) K K Pahel (right) look on.

said, Jain is a proactive ambassador who is seriously engaged in solving the problems of the community. Answering a question regarding the Indian Community School, he said the India government has no direct role in the functioning of the school as it is not owned by the government. "I have learned that the school was setup by the community and I earnestly hope that the community will be able to solve the problems," the minister pointed out.

### Immigration

The India government has taken several steps to protect its citizens, the minister said in response to a query regarding the continuing human trafficking from India and the enduring malpractices and large-scale corruption in recruitments. The government has already stopped single woman, who is below 30 years of age, from going abroad in search of job. Similarly, recruitments are channeled

through authorized government agencies in order to ensure guarantee for the contracts. "We are taking stringent action against illegal recruiting agents. But in India, the law and order is under the jurisdiction of each state. We have already instructed states to take appropriate action. The Protector-General of Emigrants will be visiting Kuwait soon to discuss and find solution to various immigration issues and plug loopholes in the recruitment system," the minister added.

The government is establishing suitable checks at the country's various airports in order to stop human trafficking, the minister said. "Today, all Indian missions abroad are sharing immigration data so that they know how many people are travelling out of the country," he said. Later, the minister addressed a gathering of Indian community representatives at the embassy auditorium and discussed a range of issues pertaining to the community.

## OWNERS MOVE FROM PILLAR TO POST AS POLICE IMPOUND TAXIS

METER COMPANIES HAVE NO OFFICIAL INTIMATION

**KUWAIT:** As police continued to impound hundreds of taxis for not complying with the new metering system and tariffs, several taxi owners moved from pillar to post amid total confusion about the new metering system. Several taxi owners and drivers gathered in front Assistant Secretary for Traffic Affairs Major Gen Fahad Al-Shuwaie complaining that they did not receive any official letter from the traffic department to revise the tariff. Though owners of roaming taxi companies, who found themselves lost between the Interior Ministry and meter programming companies, went to the assistant under-secretary's office to explain the matter to him, they were not allowed to meet him.

Citizen Abdelaziz Al-Enezi said that the traffic department impounded more than 2,000 taxis because they did not program meters to the new tariff. Though there are more than 4,000 taxis go to companies approved by the traffic department to program their meters every day, the companies refuse to do so claiming that they have not received any official letter from the authorities to do so.

### Indecent action

A citizen who was acquainted with a man through social media, accused him of indecent action. She said that following several dates in cafes during the past few months, she went with him to a parking lot overlooking the sea. But she was surprised when he started touching her body until he reached her private parts and began attacking her. She pushed him away and moved away from him. Police are investigation.

### Man stabbed

A fight in Jahra ended in one person stabbing the other. It was found out later that mockery was the reason. A citizen in Jahra called police and told them her son was stabbed by a neighbor following a fight between the two. Police and paramedics went to the area and found out the stabbed man with a shoulder injury. He was taken to Jahra hospital. Detectives were able to find and arrest the suspect who told them that the victim used to mock him whenever he saw him. He will be referred to public prosecution for further action. — Al Rai



# Friday Times International

FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 9, 2016

**S.Africa's ANC  
faces deep  
crisis after  
vote defeat**



**With a new  
plane, Clinton  
courts media on  
the campaign  
trail**



**Heavy fighting  
as Taliban  
push into  
southern  
Afghan city**



**VIENTIANE:** US President Barack Obama waves as he boards Air Force One following the closing ceremony of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), at the Wattay International Airport. — AFP

## OBAMA FOCUSES ON ASIA SECURITY THREATS GATHERED WITH EAST ASIAN LEADERS IN LAOS

**VIENTIANE:** North Korea's defiant missile testing and the South China Sea territorial row were among a barrage of security threats in focus yesterday as US President Barack Obama gathered with East Asian leaders in Laos.

The annual event this year comes at a time of heightened tensions on a wide range of fronts across the region, with terrorism also a concern after deadly bomb blasts in Thailand and the Philippines in recent weeks.

Obama was due to meet yesterday morning with the leaders of the 10-member Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) bloc, pitting him against firebrand Filipino leader Rodrigo Duterte who this week branded him a "son of a whore".

The expanded East Asia summit will then take place, which involves members of the long-running and increasingly fraught six-nation talks aimed at convincing North Korea to give up its nuclear ambitions. Defying the international community and UN sanctions, North Korea on Monday conducted the latest in a series of ballistic missile tests that have rattled nerves across the region.

Obama warned on Monday shortly after arriving in Laos that Kim Jong-Un's regime was dooming itself to further isolation, and the UN Security Council condemned the tests. But North Korea responded in typically bellicose fashion, threatening on Wednesday to take "further significant measures".

### 'Serious concern'

The 18 East Asia summit nations will voice "serious concern" over the latest North Korean tests, according to a draft of their end-of-meeting statement obtained by AFP. "We reaffirmed the importance of peace and security in this region and reiterated support for the denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula in a peaceful manner," the statement said.

The statement will also emphasise the importance of maintaining peace in the South China Sea, the other major regional flashpoint. China came under pressure at ASEAN's stand-alone summit on Tuesday and Wednesday over its land reclamation efforts in the sea, which are aimed at cementing control over the strategically vital waters.

An international tribunal ruled in July that Beijing's claims to nearly all of the sea had no legal basis, and its artificial island-building activities were illegal.

### Muted statement expected

China insists it has sovereign rights to most of the sea-through which \$5 trillion in global shipping trade passes annually-even waters close to Southeast Asian nations. But it has vowed to ignore the ruling and the Philippines released photos on Wednesday claiming to show that Beijing was continuing with its island-building campaign.

Chinese Premier Li Keqiang has been in Laos this week and faced questioning over the issue, with ASEAN leaders voicing alarm. "We remain seriously concerned over recent and ongoing developments and took note of the concerns expressed by some leaders on the land reclamations," said a joint statement at the end of their summit on Wednesday.

Nevertheless, intensive Chinese lobbying helped to ensure there was no mention of the July ruling in the ASEAN statement.

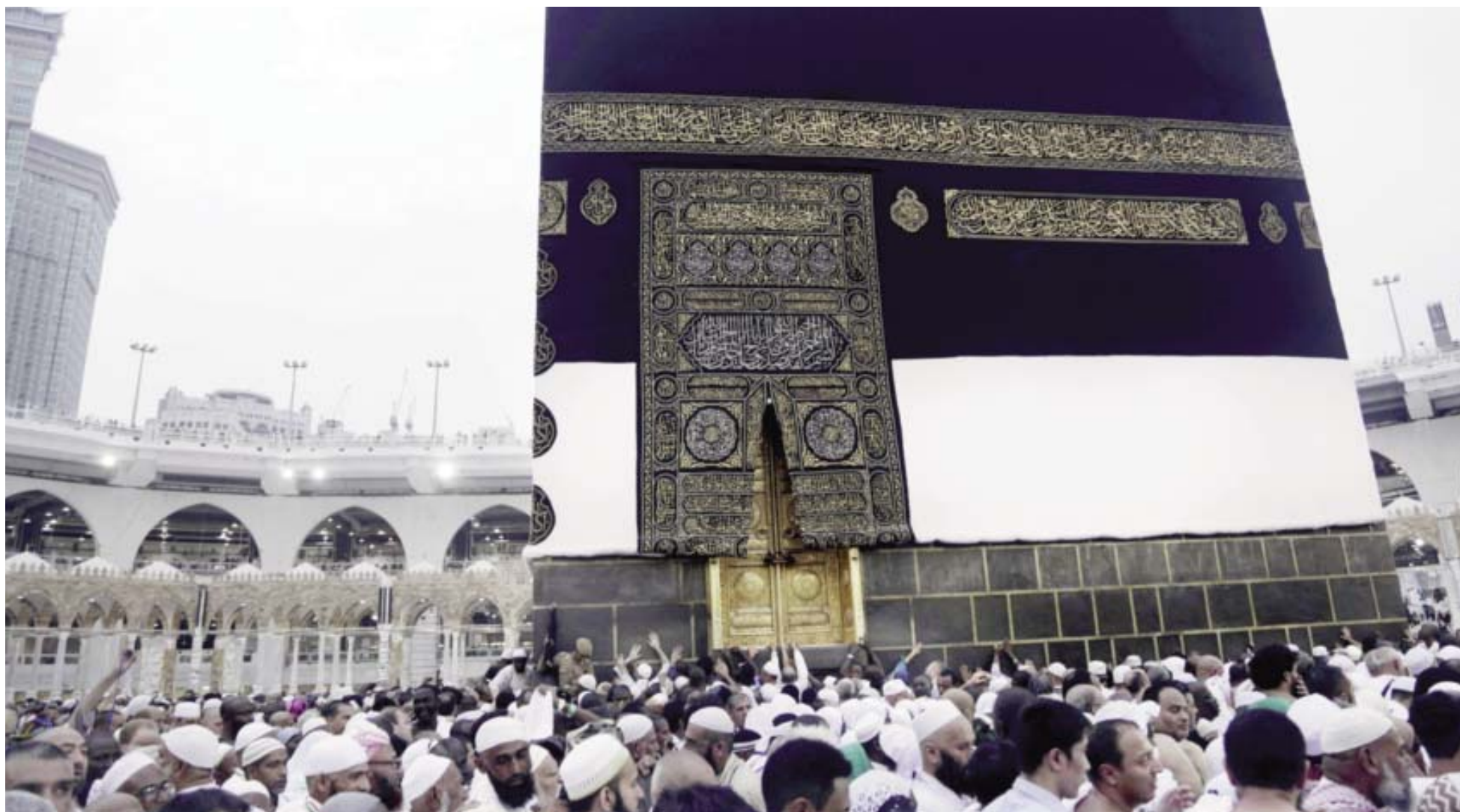
The East Asia bloc was expected to urge all parties to follow international law, but otherwise release a muted statement on the South China Sea. "We reaffirmed the importance of maintaining peace, stability, security and freedom of navigation in and over-flight in the South China Sea," the draft of its post-summit statement said.

A spectacular sideshow to this week's diplomacy in Laos has been the spat between the acid-tongued Duterte and Obama, leaders of nations that have been longtime allies.

Duterte launched a barrage of insults against Obama after being told the US president planned to raise concerns about a war on crime in the Philippines that has claimed 3,000 lives in just over two months.

"You must be respectful. Do not just throw away questions and statements. Son of a whore, I will curse you in that forum," Duterte told reporters. Obama cancelled a meeting with Duterte scheduled for Tuesday because of the outburst. They met briefly on Wednesday night before a leaders' dinner, but only exchanged "pleasantries", according to the White House. — AFP





MAKKAH: Muslim pilgrims circle the Kaaba, Islam's holiest shrine, at the Grand Mosque yesterday. — AP

# FROM PRAYER BEADS TO CLOCKS, THE RETAIL RITES OF HAJJ

## SEASON FOR GIFT GIVING?

**MAKKAH:** After spending thousands of dollars to reach Makkah for the hajj, Muslim pilgrims face another unavoidable cost-for the armfuls of gifts they are expected to take home. Even before this year's pilgrimage rites begin on Saturday, Sidi Mokhtar Dembele from Mali said he has already spent the equivalent of more than \$850 on prayer beads, prayer rugs and other souvenirs for family and friends.

The annual pilgrimage is first and foremost a spiritual journey, with close to two million faithful visiting the sites where their Prophet Mohammad (PBUH) performed the same rites 1,400 years ago. But religious tourism is also an industry which Saudi Arabia, home to Islam's two holiest sites, plans to develop under its wide-ranging "Vision 2030" project to diversify its oil-dependent economy.

While the number of annual hajj pilgrims is relatively constant, the kingdom wants to foster a year-round religious tourism sector relying on those who perform the umrah, or lesser pilgrimage, at any time of the year. By 2020, Saudi Arabia wants 15 million umrah visitors annually, up from six million.

Dembele, 54, a customs inspector who wears a traditional blue robe and a white skull-cap, said shopping was part of the religious obligation. "It's what the Prophet Mohammad (PBUH) asked us to do. Bring back gifts for family and friends," he said in a cluttered street of Makkah lined with stalls.

Another pilgrim, Mohammed Hassan from



MAKKAH: Muslim pilgrims walk away after the last prayer of the day, leaving the Grand Mosque on Wednesday. — AFP



Egypt was making purchases just a few dozen metres (yards) from the Grand Mosque, the holiest site in Islam. There, on Ibrahim al-Khalil Avenue, shops compete with flashing lights and signs in a myriad of languages. "I already bought some abayas, prayer beads, perfume, prayer rugs and incense," the 61-year-old Egyptian engineer said.

Abayas are head-to-toe black robes worn according to tradition by Saudi women. Grimacing, Hassan said his total budget is 3,000 riyals (\$800), a substantial sum on top of around \$6,700 for airfare and hotels in Mecca and Medina, the second holy city.

The cost is unavoidable, he said, because "family and friends will be proud of these souvenirs. They have real value. They are priceless." Dressed in a jalabiya robe and smiling as he tried to force his way through the crowded street, he said his children will be able to tell everyone: "Papa brought me this from the Kaaba."

Muslims across the world pray in the direction of Kaaba, the black cube which stands in the middle of the Haram or sacred site at the Grand Mosque. Many pilgrims from poor countries in Africa or Asia cannot, like Hassan, pay for hajj themselves. They make the journey courtesy of their governments and may live in cheap hostels, or even in the street.

#### Business good

Foreign pilgrims last year spent almost 20 billion riyals (\$5.3 billion) during the hajj, according to the Makkah Chamber of Commerce and Industry. More than 1.4 million overseas pilgrims are expected to perform this year's hajj, alongside hundreds of thousands of Saudi-based faithful.

Gamal Hamada, an Egyptian who will perform the hajj with his wife, said "we saved our



MAKKAH: Muslim pilgrims walk out after the last prayer of the day, leaving the Grand Mosque on Wednesday. — AFP

entire life" to realise the dream of hajj, and it is an obligation to return home loaded with gifts. The hajj formally lasts six days but pilgrims arrive earlier.

One vendor, Maged Abdullah, said daily revenue at his small shop selling prayer rugs and Islamic clothes is already running at between 20,000 and 25,000 riyals. His neighbor Ali Abu Saadi agreed that things are going well.

Saadi's shop overflows with trinkets made in China as customers jostle—"those who are rich as well as those who are poor", said the Yemeni, 66. Yet in Makkah there is more on offer than just the plastic prayer beads or windup clocks, mass-produced in Asia, which alert Muslims to their five-daily prayers.

Outside the Grand Mosque, on mats on the ground, other vendors propose a return to the simpler time of the Prophet, selling traditional

incense, or sticks of miswak, wooden "natural tooth brushes" often seen protruding from the lips of pilgrims. Sold for a few riyals, even miswak forms part of the religious rite. "Most gifts have a religious significance, helping those close to us who remain in our country feel the passion of the hajj," said Omar Sar, a 58-year-old from Senegal. "With these gifts, we inspire them to reinforce their faith that they too will come to Makkah." — AFP

## MUSLIMS CROWD MAKKAH AHEAD OF HAJJ CLOSE TO 1.5 MILLION ATTEND

Continued from page 1

At prayer time, access to the Kaaba is suspended and the walk around it is stopped to avoid overcrowding. It is one of several safety measures authorities say they have implemented after, according to data from foreign officials, close to 2,300 pilgrims died during the hajj stoning ritual last year. The stampede and security had been on the mind of a pilgrim from Ivory Coast, who gave her name only as Mrs Coulibaly, 49. "But since arriving at the airport we have been taken charge of and well supervised. So I feel at ease and totally dedicated to my

prayers," she said.

For the first time in almost three decades Iranians will not join the pilgrimage after talks between Tehran and Riyadh on logistics and security fell apart in May. Iran sent 60,000 pilgrims last year, and claimed the largest number of stampede fatalities, at 464. Sunni-dominated Saudi Arabia and Shiite Iran are regional rivals who have had no diplomatic relations since early this year.

They are at odds over a number of regional issues including Syria and Yemen.

Verbal sparring between the two Islamic powers has intensified ahead of this year's pilgrimage. — AFP



MAKKAH: A child holds on to his father as he circles the Kaaba, Islam's holiest shrine, at the Grand Mosque yesterday. — AFP



MAKKAH: Muslim pilgrims pray the Fajr prayer before sunrise, outside the Grand Mosque yesterday. — AFP



MAKKAH: Muslim pilgrims perform Wudu, a ritual washing before prayers, just outside the Grand Mosque yesterday. — AFP



## PARIS ATTACK SUSPECT INVOKES SILENCE FOR 3RD TIME WITH JUDGE

**PARIS:** The only surviving suspect in last November's attack on Paris refused to speak to a judge Thursday for a third time, in frustration at 24-hour video surveillance of his prison cell.

Salah Abdeslam's lawyer, Frank Berton, said the judge repeatedly asked questions to no avail on Thursday. Berton said Abdeslam was not obligated to explain his silence but "obviously" it's linked to the constant surveillance. Authorities hope Abdeslam can provide information about the Islamic State group's strategies and networks, and identify others who might have had a connection to the Nov. 13 attacks, which killed 130 people. The same network that attacked Paris struck again in Abdeslam's hometown of Brussels in March, days after he was tracked down in his hideout and arrested.

His Brussels lawyer was present at Thursday's hearing in Paris. Abdeslam kept silent at a hearing in May, and refused to attend a hearing in July. Berton argued that two round-the-clock video cameras in Abdeslam's cell in Fleury-Merogis prison could cause psychological damage, but France's top administrative authority struck down the lawyer's request to remove them. Judicial authorities argue the surveillance is needed to ensure he doesn't commit suicide.

Abdeslam, 26, initially said he wanted to explain his path to radicalization and his role in the Nov. 13 attacks on the Bataclan concert hall, cafes and the national stadium. The other attackers died in suicide bombings or under police fire. Abdeslam's precise role in the attacks has never been clear. —AP



Salah Abdeslam

## S.AFRICA'S ANC FACES DEEP CRISIS AFTER VOTE DEFEAT

POLITICAL FUTURE THREATENED

**JOHANNESBURG:** Record electoral losses and deep internal divisions are threatening both the long hold on power enjoyed by South Africa's ruling ANC party and the political future of President Jacob Zuma.

Since 1994, the African National Congress—once led by Nelson Mandela—has comfortably swept to victory in elections, and remains the largest party in the country. But in last month's municipal elections, the loss of control of the capital city Pretoria, economic hub Johannesburg and port city Port Elizabeth point to the party's new fragility. "The ANC is being consumed by three demons—corruption, factionalism and a leadership without credibility," Prince Mashele, analyst and co-author of "The Fall of the ANC: What Next?", told AFP. The party has always bred factions and divisions, but its dismal showing during the August 3 local elections has brought tensions to the surface. On Monday, activists from rival party factions scuffled in downtown Johannesburg as anti-Zuma members threatened to occupy the party's headquarters. "This is certainly the first time it has come to the fore in such a widely expressed way," said Mari Harris, an analyst and director of Ipsos pollsters in South Africa. Despite the increasingly vocal calls for Zuma to step down, many



**JOHANNESBURG:** A woman holds a cloth bearing the portrait of late South African president Nelson Mandela as South African ruling party African National Congress disgruntled members demonstrate near by the ANC head-quarter demanding the resignation of South African president Jacob Zuma and the National Executive Committee on September 5, 2016. —AFP

experts caution that he retains a strong grip on the party's power structure and draws loyalty from his extensive patronage network. "There are two extremes within the party—pro and anti Zuma—but in between there are other people who tolerate the president for now," said Harris. The party is due to choose a new leader at the end of next year, with the selected name then running as president in national elections in 2019 when

Zuma cannot stand for a third term in office. "What we are witnessing now is not the end, it's part of a downward spiral to the bottom," said Mashele. "The bottom eventually will be when the ANC is totally removed from power and we are not yet there." Several analysts forecast support for the ANC—the celebrated party that freed the country from apartheid—dipping below 50 percent in the 2019 election. —AFP

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## DESPITE KATRINA LESSONS, FLOOD PLAN IN LOUISIANA SHOWS GAPS

**BATON ROUGE:** Eleven years ago, Sam Barbera hooked up his boat and headed to New Orleans to ferry people from Hurricane Katrina's floodwaters. Four weeks ago, he found himself in another boat for rescues - this time at home in Baton Rouge, when a massive rainstorm ravaged the area.

It was "night and day," he said. "Katrina was kind of baptism by fire. It was just people showing up, everybody doing their own thing." But during the catastrophic flooding in mid-August, police directed volunteer boats and their owners - nicknamed the "Cajun Navy" - to neighborhoods where water was rising, and social media postings offered guidance on where victims needed help. "You didn't have that in Katrina. Katrina was kind of like you just put your boat in. Katrina was mayhem," Barbera said.

In 2005, the monster storm exposed huge gaps in disaster response plans on local, state and federal levels. More than 1,500 people were killed in Louisiana alone. After the levees failed and inundated New Orleans and surrounding communities, thousands were plucked from rooftops and attics. Response was a fly-by-the-seat-of-your pants effort, with no coordinated strategy for rescues - or what to do with the people saved. First responders were overwhelmed, and many were left to fend for themselves. Lessons learned from Katrina formed the backbone of state and federal reaction as historic flooding ravaged 20 parishes last month. The response in the immediate aftermath was widely praised by officials and storm victims, Republican and Democrat alike. But the slog of the longer-term recovery is starting to show that cracks remain in the disaster safety net - and that wariness lingers about federal help after the troubled response to Katrina.

### Criticisms

Criticisms are emerging about the pace of housing aid, the size of grants from the Federal Emergency Management Agency, and the question marks that surround rebuilding and recovery. "I don't feel like y'all are pushing the issue quick enough or fast enough to be able to get people back in their homes," state Rep. Clay Schexnayder, a Republican who represents hard-hit areas, told FEMA at a recent hearing on flood response. Stephan Perkins, 46, was waiting for a FEMA inspector to show up 10 days after he registered with the agency. Perkins had a flood insurance policy that covered the structural damage to his home but not its contents. A neighbor with the same type of flood coverage told Perkins that FEMA offered him less than \$200. "I'm just hearing the horror stories," said Perkins, a father of two.

FEMA defends its response, saying it has approved more than \$575 million in recovery grants for households so far, set up 26 disaster assistance centers and brought more than 2,500 staff to Louisiana. "FEMA has been on the ground in Louisiana since before the first drop of rain hit the ground. We've already provided shelter and support to thousands of families," agency spokesman Rafael Lemaitre said in a statement. Perhaps complaints are inevitable when a disaster displaces so many who desperately want to get back to their homes. Officials estimate more than 110,000 homes are damaged from flooding described as the worst disaster since Superstorm Sandy. But discontent took longer to surface this time, and there's little disagreement about improvements in the federal and state response in the years since Katrina. People weren't left stranded for days without supplies, like at the New Orleans convention center and on interstate overpasses after Katrina. Hospitals and nursing homes weren't left to fend for themselves when threatened with floodwaters, like in 2005. — AP



**HAMMOND, LOUISIANA:** In this Saturday, Aug. 13, 2016 file aerial photo, a boat motors between flooded homes after heavy rains inundating the region. —AP



**WHITE PLAINS, NEW YORK:** Democratic presidential nominee Hillary Clinton arrives to speak to the press at Westchester County Airport September 8, 2016. —AFP

## WITH A NEW PLANE, CLINTON COURTS MEDIA ON THE CAMPAIGN TRAIL 'WELCOME TO OUR BIG PLANE! IT'S SO EXCITING'

**NEW YORK:** When Hillary Clinton arrived at her brand-new campaign plane, she greeted crew members, climbed aboard and then made a surprise move: A beeline to the dozens of journalists seated in the back.

"Hey guys!" Clinton told members of the media as they awaited takeoff. "Welcome to our big plane! It's so exciting." The Democratic presidential nominee promised she'd be back later to take questions, adding she was "so happy to have all of you with me. I've been just waiting for this moment."

For months, Clinton broke with campaign tradition and flew separately from the reporters who follow her around the country, drawing criticism along the way for a roughly nine-month streak of avoiding any kind of formal news conference. Since the Monday arrival of her new blue-and-white Boeing 737 plane - dubbed "Hill Force One" - Clinton has ventured from her seat up front to the back four times, twice taking questions from reporters during trips to Ohio, Illinois and Florida. Then, yesterday morning, she gave a full-fledged press conference on the tarmac, her new plane serving as a backdrop as she fielded seven questions on topics ranging from foreign policy and the positions of her GOP rival, Republican Donald Trump.

### Campaign disputes

Clinton's campaign disputes the suggestion she had been dodging the media, arguing the former secretary of state has conducted more than 300 interviews this year. But her past reluctance to take questions from a free-wheeling pack of traveling journalists - commonplace in presidential politics - has fueled criticism about her reliability and provided ammunition to

Republicans and Trump, who have accused her of hiding to avoid scrutiny.

For most of the campaign, Clinton has largely kept her traveling press corps at a distance, choosing instead to sit for one-on-one interviews with local and national broadcasters, to call into cable TV shows, appear on podcasts and talk with new media websites. Clinton, for example, plans to make a repeat appearance on the popular daytime TV talk show "Ellen" next week during a fundraising trip to California.

"The public should expect to see and hear from her very often, but the national press corps may be disappointed in how much they're involved in that communication," said Jamal Simmons, a Democratic strategist and veteran of the presidential campaigns of Bill Clinton and Al Gore. "One could argue that Barack Obama talks to more voters when he's on the Jimmy Fallon show than he does when he talks to CNN."

Clinton's campaign had signaled that she would make herself more available to reporters as the November election approaches, and her decision to "gaggle" - as the onboard Q&As are known on the trail - allows her to quickly respond to Trump from 30,000 feet.

"It's her opportunity to continue to frame the message, to own the conversation," said Maria Cardona, a Democratic strategist and former Clinton campaign aide. "As opposed to letting it all happen on his timeframe and his playing field." It comes after a late summer period in which Clinton largely stayed out of public view, raising money to bankroll her fall campaign. It also follows a more disciplined stretch from Trump, who has commanded extensive cable TV coverage of his campaign. Trump also travels apart from

reporters, although he invited some onboard Monday for a gaggle and short flight, and said he may do so again. On Wednesday, he also lifted the ban on reporters from some outlets covering his events.

Kicking off the Labor Day holiday, Clinton greeted the journalists covering her on Monday and Tuesday before departure and then returned for gaggles that covered about 20 to 25 minutes apiece. The questions from reporters have ranged from the FBI's inquiry into her use of a private email server, the Clinton Foundation, Russia's role in the election, Clinton's health, the future of Syria and Obama's recent trip to Asia.

Asked about a coughing fit in Cleveland, Clinton said she suffered from seasonal allergies and had increased her dosage of antihistamines. When a reporter asked what she thought of Trump campaign manager Kellyanne Conway's comment that Clinton was "allergic to the media," Clinton said of Trump, "I'm allergic to him." Yet some of the exchanges got complicated. On Tuesday night, as Clinton traveled from Florida to suburban New York, reporters tried to invite her into another pastime of the campaign plane: rolling an orange down the aisle with a question written on it.

In black ink, the question asked Clinton if she would rather have dinner with Trump or Putin. After the orange reached the front cabin, Clinton's traveling press secretary, Nick Merrill, rolled it back to the press with the word "Putin" circled. But the answer wasn't so simple. Merrill later clarified that Clinton had not put the circle on the orange, he had. And he said it only meant that Clinton had dined with Putin in the past, not that she preferred a meal with Putin over Trump. —AP





**NEW YORK:** Republican presidential candidate Donald Trump arrives to speak to the Conservative Party of New York Presidential Convention, Wednesday, Sept. 7, 2016. — AP

## CLINTON CALLS TRUMP COMMENT ON SECURITY BRIEFING ‘UNDISCIPLINED’ ‘NOT JUST UNPATRIOTIC BUT ALSO SCARY’

**WHITE PLAINS, NEW YORK:** US Democratic presidential candidate Hillary Clinton chastised Republican rival Donald Trump yesterday for hinting about things he learned in classified intelligence briefings, calling it “totally inappropriate and undisciplined.”

Speaking to reporters the morning after a New York security forum featuring separate appearances by the two candidates, Clinton also slammed the businessman for praising Russian President Vladimir Putin and saying US generals had been “reduced to rubble” by the

policies of US President Barack Obama.

At the televised forum on Wednesday night, Trump said he was “shocked” by information he got during the briefing. “What I did learn is that our leadership, Barack Obama, did not follow what our experts ... said to do,” Trump said. “I would never comment on any aspect of an intelligence briefing I received,” said Clinton, a former secretary of state, before boarding her campaign plane. Clinton said Trump’s praise of Putin as a better leader than Obama was “not just unpatriotic” but also “scary.” “It suggests

he will let Putin do whatever Putin wants to do and then make excuses for him,” Clinton said.

### Trump’s response

Trump’s campaign fired back at Clinton after her session with reporters, saying she was resorting to “unhinged and dishonest” attacks. “These are the desperate attacks of a flailing campaign sinking in the polls, and characteristics of someone woefully unfit for the presidency of the United States,” Jason Miller, senior communications adviser for Trump, said in a statement.

Clinton’s lead over Trump in national opinion polls has weakened in recent days. The current average of polls by website RealClearPolitics puts her at 45.6 percent support, compared to Trump’s 42.8 percent.

Obama hit back at Trump yesterday for criticizing his foreign policy record, saying the Republican nominee for the Nov. 8 election was unfit to follow him into the Oval Office and the public should press him on his “outright wacky ideas.”

Clinton said she would convene a meeting of bipartisan security experts on Friday to discuss the fight against Islamic State militants. “What you didn’t hear from Donald Trump last night was any plan to take on ISIS,” Clinton told reporters, using an acronym for the group. “That’s not only dangerous, it should be disqualifying.”

The televised “Commander-in-Chief” forum on Wednesday, attended by military veterans, was the first time Trump and Clinton had squared off on the same stage since accepting their parties’ White House nominations in July, although they did not appear at the same time.

It offered a prelude to how Clinton and Trump will deal with questions of national security in their three upcoming presidential debates later in September and in October. — Reuters

## HUNTING DOWN IS LEADER SHOULD BE ‘TOP PRIORITY’

**WHITE PLAINS:** Hillary Clinton yesterday called for the United States to track down and kill Islamic State group leader Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi, as it did Osama bin Laden, insisting her Republican rival Donald Trump has no plan to defeat the jihadists. “We should make it a top priority to hunt down the leader of ISIS,” the democratic White House hopeful told reporters on a tarmac in White Plains, New York. “Getting al-Baghdadi will require efforts at the top levels, but it will send a resounding message that nobody directs or inspires attacks against the United States and gets away with it.”

Clinton and Trump have clashed repeatedly over foreign policy, but their battle rose to a new level Wednesday night when the two were separately grilled over their national security credentials. Clinton, holding an impromptu press conference on a New York tarmac before flying to a campaign event, castigated the brash billionaire for failing to formulate a strategy to defeat IS extremists. “One thing you didn’t hear from Donald Trump last night is any plan to take on ISIS, one of the biggest threats

facing our country,” Clinton said, using an acronym for the group.

When asked at the forum about how he would stop the spread of global terrorism, “Trump’s answer was simply, ‘take the oil,’” Clinton added. “He says his plan is still a secret, but the truth is he simply doesn’t have one. And that’s not only dangerous, it should be disqualifying.”

Instead of laying out a Middle East strategy, Trump “bizarrely” praised Russian President Vladimir Putin and suggested the strongman is a stronger leader than US President Barack Obama, she said. “Now, that is not just unpatriotic and insulting to the people of our country as well as to our commander in chief, it is scary,” Clinton said.

The New York real estate mogul’s campaign swiftly shot back, with Trump spokesman Jason Miller calling Clinton’s attacks “unhinged and dishonest.” “These are the desperate attacks of a flailing campaign sinking in the polls, and characteristics of someone woefully unfit for the presidency of the United States,” Miller added in a statement. — AFP

## LIKE HAWAIIAN SEAFOOD? HERE’S WHO’S CATCHING IT

**HONOLULU:** Around 700 undocumented foreign workers, mostly from impoverished Southeast Asian and Pacific Island nations, work on Hawaii’s commercial fishing fleet, the country’s fifth-highest grossing fishery. They catch prized ahi tuna, mahimahi and other seafood at some of the country’s finest restaurants, markets and hotels. They do not have visas and cannot enter the country, staying confined to their boats for sometimes years at a time - all with the blessing of high-ranking federal lawmakers and officials. An Associated Press investigation found instances of human trafficking, active tuberculosis and low food supplies.

### How did they get to hawaii?

The workers are mostly experienced fishermen from Indonesia, the Philippines, Vietnam and the tiny Pacific island nation of Kiribati. They are not permitted to fly into Hawaii because they do not have visas. Instead, they are hopscotched thousands of miles by plane through several countries until reaching Pacific island nations, Panama or even Mexico. From there, they are put on boats for the long trip to Honolulu.

### How much are they paid?

The fishermen earn anywhere from \$350 a month up to around \$1,500 a month, depending on their boat and the bonuses they may be given. Most take home \$500 to \$600 a month. They work shifts as long as 22 hours with few breaks, and are typically at sea three weeks each month. Some salaries break down to as little as 70 cents an hour; for many boat owners, bait and ice cost more than crew salaries. The fishermen catch about \$110 million worth of seafood annually.

### Why can’t they leave their boats?

The men are not allowed to set foot on shore because they are undocumented, nonimmigrants without visas. They have not technically entered the country and have no paperwork granting them access even onto the docks. They are, by law, detained by their boat captains who hold onto their passports. In rare cases, boat owners can request passes from federal authorities to take the fishermen ashore for things such as medical care. Though the men are not technically allowed to leave their vessels, security guards turn a blind eye when they go onto the docks, but no farther, to see friends.

### Who oversees this system and how it is legal?

Officials from US Customs and Border Protection and the Coast Guard monitor the use of foreign labor in Hawaii’s commercial fishing fleet, made up of about 140 boats. The federal agencies have no authority to set wages, but they do intervene when fishermen say their salaries are late or complain about other problems. The US Attorney’s office says the system is legal.

A loophole in federal regulations pushed by lawmakers including late Hawaii Sen. Daniel Inouye allows foreign men to work on the fleet. Fishermen were initially allowed to fly to Hawaii, but that ended after the Sept. 11 attacks.

### What kind of seafood do the fishermen catch?

The men catch seafood including marlin, swordfish and ahi tuna used to make poke, a Hawaiian salad made with raw fish that’s a staple in the islands. One fish can bring as much as \$1,000 at Hawaii’s fish auction, the only one of its kind still operating in the US. The bulk of the catch goes to restaurants, hotels and markets in Hawaii, but about 20 percent is shipped to the mainland where it’s served in some of the country’s finest restaurants. The fish can be found everywhere from Whole Foods and Costco to Sam’s Club and military bases along with hotels, including the Hyatt, and Roy’s restaurants. Supermarkets, restaurants and chefs selling the seafood condemned labor abuse. — AP



**HONOLULU:** In this March 22, 2016 photo, fish caught by foreign crews aboard American ships are stacked at the Honolulu Fish Auction. — AP





**KATHMANDU, NEPAL:** Heather Bar, center, a researcher at the New York-based Human Rights Watch speaks during the release of a report on child marriage in Nepal yesterday. — AP

## NEPAL CRITICIZED FOR NOT STOPPING CHILD MARRIAGES

### PROGRESS TO COMBAT THE PROBLEM?

**KATHMANDU, NEPAL:** Traditional practices, poverty, last year's massive earthquake and Nepal's ongoing political instability mean child marriages remain a serious problem in the country, where 10 percent of the girls marry before they are 15, even though the government says it is making progress to combat the problem, rights groups say.

New York-based Human Rights Watch said government indifference means it has not taken the concrete steps needed to achieve the goal of completely stopping the practice in Nepal, which has the third-highest rate of such marriages in Asia after Bangladesh and India.

Nepalese government officials, however, said the Himalayan nation has made significant progress in stopping child marriage and has new policies and laws to address the issue, including a new law that says both men and women have to be 20 before they can legally marry. But child-rights groups say the earthquake that killed thousands and made millions homeless, plus the country's ongoing political instability, is making the situation worse in one of the poorest nations in the world.

#### Not done enough

A report released by Human Rights Watch on yesterday said the government has not done enough to end the practice of child marriage, adding there was little evidence of the government working effectively to try to prevent child marriage or mitigate the harm that married children experience.

The report "Our Time to Sing and Play" said that although child marriage has been illegal in Nepal since 1963, researchers found that "police rarely act to prevent child marriage or bring charges, and almost never do so unless a complaint is filed. Government officials

often officially register child marriages, even though child marriage is a crime."

The report said a majority of the children who marry young were from Nepal's Dalit or indigenous communities, reflecting the greater prevalence of child marriage in marginalized and lower-caste communities. It said poverty, lack of access to education, child labor, social pressures, and dowry practices were among the factors driving child marriage.

The last survey by the government in 2011 found that 41 percent of girls married before the age of 18. According to UNICEF, the UN's child protection agency, 37 percent of girls married before the age of 18 and 10 percent were married before the age of 15.

Sunmaya Tamang, now 23, married when she was 14 and gave birth to a boy the next year. "I was not aware there are laws that say we cannot marry young. Nobody told us or tried to stop us," said Tamang, adding that marrying at that age meant she was not able to finish her schooling and was forced to work in a carpet factory to support her family. She now works cleaning houses in Kathmandu to help her family.

"If I was able to complete school, I would have a better job, better life," she said.

She would not say if her parents forced her into the early marriage. Many such marriages are arranged by parents who try to find suitable grooms when their daughters are still very young.

It is rare for a girl to complain to the authorities even if they know their marriage is illegal, fearing that would get their parents in trouble. And even if they do, police are reluctant to act, said Rashmila Shakya of Child Workers In Nepal, a children's rights organization. "Police and authorities give least priority to child marriage cases because it is just

accepted reality for them," Shakya said.

The earthquake that struck in April last year not only killed about 9,000 people, but also made nearly 4 million people homeless, which according to Shakya has made the situation worse. "Families in the earthquake-hit areas are desperate. They want to marry off their daughters so they have one less mouth to feed," Shakya said, adding no surveys have been carried out to find out how prevalent that is, but the number is believed to be significant.

#### Instability

Political instability - the ninth government in 10 years took power last month - and ethnic troubles, which mean a constitution that was adopted last year is still not fully enforced because minority groups oppose it, also deflect attention from the problem.

Shakya said as the country, politicians and bureaucrats struggle with one crisis after another, protection of children's rights does not get the priority it deserves. Government officials deny the charges and say the country is making good progress.

Dr. Kiran Rupakhetee at the Ministry of Women, Children and Social Welfare, said that includes changing the legal age of marriage to 20 for both men and women as part of a government policy to end child marriage. Earlier, exceptions were allowed for marriages after the age of 18 if there was parental consent but now there are no exceptions.

Violators can be jailed for three years and fined 10,000 rupees (\$95), which is more than the monthly salary for many people. "For the first time child marriage is protected by the constitution, which says it is illegal," said Rupakhetee, adding the government this year also adopted a national strategy plan to end child marriages. — AP

## ATTACKS HAVE KILLED 44 PAKISTANIS WORKING ON CHINA CORRIDOR SINCE 2014

**KARACHI, PAKISTAN:** Militants trying to disrupt construction of an "economic corridor" linking China with Pakistan's coast have killed 44 workers since 2014, an official said on yesterday, a rising toll likely to reinforce Chinese worry about the project's security. The China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) is a \$46 billion network of roads, railways and energy pipelines linking western China to a deep-water port on Pakistan's Arabian Sea coast, which passes through Pakistan's troubled Baluchistan province.

Pakistani officials say they have taken tough measures and that security has greatly improved in Baluchistan, a resource-rich region where ethnic Baluch separatists have battled the government for years. They oppose the CPEC.

Colonel Zafar Iqbal, a spokesman for construction company Frontier Works Organization (FWO), said all of the workers killed were Pakistani and most fell victim to roadside bombs and attacks on construction sites. "The latest figure has climbed up to 44 deaths and over 100 wounded men on CPEC projects mainly road construction in Baluchistan, which began in 2014," Iqbal told Reuters.

#### Toll accelerated this year

In November 2015, the official figure was 25 killed, indicating that the toll has accelerated this year. The Pakistani projects are part of a Chinese plan to build land, sea and air routes across Asia and beyond boosting trade and winning new markets overseas for Chinese companies as domestic growth slows. Chinese officials have appealed for improved security in Baluchistan and other regions where projects are planned or under way. In a bid to address their fears, Pakistan last year created an army division, believed to number more than 10,000 troops, to focus specifically on protecting CPEC projects and Chinese workers.

FWO, which is owned by the Pakistani army, has been awarded the bulk of road-building contracts in Baluchistan and other volatile areas in Pakistan. Pakistani officials concede security problems remain in Baluchistan, but say the work is progressing ahead of schedule. — Reuters

## NEPAL'S NEW LEADER PLEDGES TO SPEED UP QUAKE REBUILDING

**KATHMANDU:** Nepal's new prime minister promised yesterday to speed up reconstruction after a devastating earthquake and said he would increase aid for homeless victims as he laid out his government's priorities.

The previous administration had been heavily criticized for the slow pace of rebuilding, with a \$4.1 billion reconstruction fund largely untouched over a year after the April 2015 disaster. Pushpa Kamal Dahal, a former Maoist guerrilla who took over as prime minister last month, said his government would increase the compensation for those who lost their homes in the quake from 200,000 rupees (\$1,882) to 300,000. "Speeding up the reconstruction and building after the earthquake... falls in the priority of this government," he told parliament.

"The government will not tolerate any carelessness or delay in this work." Nearly 9,000 people died in the 7.8-magnitude earthquake and millions more were left homeless. Many now face a second winter without proper shelter because they have still not received the compensation money they need to start rebuilding their homes. — AFP



**KATHMANDU, NEPAL:** Nepalese Prime Minister Pushpa Kamal Dahal, also known as Prachanda addressing the nation at parliament in Kathmandu on September 8, 2016. — AP





**JHELUM, PAKISTAN:** In this Monday, Sept. 5, 2016 photo, Pakistani police officers escort the detained father, second left face covered, and husband, right face covered, of slain British woman Samia Shahid, to appear in court. — AP

## PAKISTAN COURT POSTPONES HEARING IN UK WOMAN'S MURDER CASE

**JHELUM, PAKISTAN:** A defense lawyer says a Pakistani court has postponed the hearing of the ex-husband and the father of a British woman who was murdered while on a family visit to Pakistan.

Mohammad Arif says the two were to appear on yesterday before the court in the city of Jhelum but the judge postponed the hearing until Saturday. The case is suspected to be the latest reported incident of so-called "honor killings."

The police have said the killing of 28-year-old Samia Shahid was a "premeditated, cold-blooded murder" and a government-ordered police inquiry has recommended that her ex-husband and her father be tried on charges of rape and murder.

Shahid was buried in July in eastern Pakistan after her family declared she had died of a heart attack. — AP

## INDIAN COURT SENTENCES MAN TO DEATH FOR ACID ATTACK MURDER

**MUMBAI:** An Indian court sentenced a man to death yesterday for murdering a woman by throwing acid on her face after she rejected his marriage proposal, a decision applauded by the victim's family. Ankur Panwar was found guilty on Tuesday of hurling sulphuric acid on 24-year-old Preeti Rath in a fit of jealousy outside a railway station in the financial capital Mumbai in May 2013. Rath, who was a neighbour of Panwar's in New Delhi and had just arrived in Mumbai to start a new job as a nurse, died in hospital of multiple organ failure the following month. "The court has awarded the death penalty to Ankur Panwar. I convinced the court that the acid attack belonged to the rarest of rare cases," public prosecutor Ujjwal Nikam told AFP.

### 'The rarest of rare'

The Supreme Court says capital punishment should only be carried out in "the rarest of rare" cases in India, among a dwindling group of nations that still have the death penalty on their statute books. Panwar's lawyer said they would appeal the verdict-delivered at a special court dealing with crimes against women-to the Bombay High Court, Mumbai's highest. "We are moving the case to the high court. There is no second thought about it," Apeksha Vora told AFP.

Police alleged Panwar, reportedly 26, and a hotel management graduate, had committed the crime out of jealousy after she rejected his marriage proposal and had wanted to disfigure her face to destroy her career. Nikam successfully argued that Panwar's attack had been pre-meditated. Vora had pleaded leniency for her client, saying that he was his family's sole breadwinner. —AFP

## MALDIVES POLICE RAID NEWSROOM AFTER DOCUMENTARY BROADCAST

**COLOMBO, SRI LANKA:** Police in the Maldives have raided the office of one of the country's leading news websites shortly after a television documentary was broadcast that accused the country's president of corruption, money laundering and misrule.

Zaheena Rasheed, editor of Maldives Independent, said yesterday her offices were raided by the police who produced a court warrant over an alleged "conspiracy to topple the government." Police took away the security camera recordings and the computer hard drives in the raid on Wednesday. Rasheed was among those interviewed for the documentary aired by the Qatar-based Al Jazeera network. She left the country ahead of the broadcast. Maldives became a multiparty democracy in 2008 after decades of autocratic rule but President Yameen Abdul Gayoom has taken a stranglehold on power since his election in 2013. — AP

## HEAVY FIGHTING AS TALEBAN PUSH INTO SOUTHERN AFGHAN CITY LATEST CITY TO BE TARGETED BY INSURGENTS

**KANDAHAR, AFGHANISTAN:** The Taliban stormed into Tarin Kot yesterday, triggering heavy fighting around government buildings as panicked residents scrambled to flee the capital of southern Uruzgan province, the latest city to be targeted by insurgents. Pitched battles prompted urgent calls from officials for reinforcements and air support, after the militants toppled security posts on the outskirts to breach the city gates. Residents said senior officials were abandoning government buildings and fleeing to the airport on the outer edges of the city, which has practically been besieged by the Taliban for months. "If reinforcements do not arrive the city will collapse into the hands of the Taliban," Karim Khademzai, head of the provincial capital, told AFP.

The Taliban are fighting to take over police and intelligence agency headquarters, residents said, voicing fears they will storm the local prison to free captured insurgents. Tarin Kot's normally bustling streets were deserted and shops closed as civilians sought to escape from the city. Sabir Menawal, a Tarin Kot resident, said Taliban fighters entered his house near the police headquarters and took up positions inside to fire at government buildings. "The Taliban instructed us to leave the area immediately," Menawal told AFP. "I fled with my family to a safer area of Tarin Kot, but we fear fighting could spread to this area too."

In a sobering admission, Uruzgan's police chief Wais Samim said many of the city's outer defenses had fallen to the Taliban without a fight. "Some policemen retreated from their outposts. Some people here deliberately want the enemy to succeed," he told AFP. "We will address this issue once we repel the enemy."

The fighting in Uruzgan comes as the Taliban are threatening to capture Lashkar Gah in neighbouring Helmand province, and northern Kunduz, which the insurgents briefly seized last year in a stinging blow to Afghan forces.

### Deteriorating security

President Ashraf Ghani's office, meanwhile, said the government will not allow "Uruzgan to become a sanctuary for terrorists". "Reinforcements have reached the province, and the local police chief and provincial officials are on the frontline fighting the enemy," presidential spokesman Shahhussain Murtazawi said on Facebook.

That claim was refuted by multiple Tarin Kot residents, who said senior officials had been seen fleeing to the airport. "Many provincial officials including the governor and other heads of government departments are at the airport," Khademzai told AFP.

General Abdul Raziq, the powerful police chief of Kandahar, said he was personally leading a contingent of military reinforcements to Uruzgan. "We are going to Tarin Kot with hundreds of forces to repel the enemy attack," Raziq told AFP.

NATO has not yet responded to AFP's request for comment on whether foreign forces will intervene in Uruzgan. Since being toppled by a US invasion in 2001, the Taliban have been seen as a rural militant movement capable only of hit-and-run attacks on cities. But they have demonstrated an alarming new push into urban centers over the last year.

The deteriorating security highlights the struggle of Afghan forces, stretched on multiple fronts, to secure remote provinces such as Uruzgan, where Australian, Dutch and American troops fought for years. As the Taliban edged closer to Tarin Kot on Wednesday, they promised a general amnesty to government forces who surrender unconditionally. Defense ministry spokesman Mohammad Radmanish however rejected what the Taliban's "propaganda campaign", saying the Taliban would be beaten back. — AFP



**ZABUL, AFGHANISTAN:** In this Aug. 15, 2016 photo, Taliban suicide bombers stand guard during a gathering of a breakaway Taliban faction.—AP



# AIR CHINA MAGAZINE APOLOGIZES OVER 'RACIST' ARTICLE

**BEIJING:** The publisher of Chinese national carrier Air China's in-flight magazine apologized yesterday for allegedly "racist" travel advice offered to passengers visiting London, as mainland social media users rushed to defend the controversial tips.

The latest issue of "Wings of China" ran an article detailing safety tips to travelers based on the race and nationality of local residents. "London is generally a safe place to travel, however precautions are needed when entering areas mainly populated by Indians, Pakistanis and black people," the article said in English translation below a Chinese text, according to a photograph published by CNBC. "We advise tourists not to go out alone at night, and females always to be accompanied by another person when travelling," it added. The Chinese version was worded slightly differently, stating that such neigh-

borhoods were "comparatively more chaotic"—an adjective often used to describe dangerous areas.

## 'Blatantly untrue and racist statements'

The English translation prompted London MP Virendra Sharma, who emigrated from India to Britain in the 1960s, to complain to the Chinese government. "I am shocked and appalled that even today some people would see it as acceptable to write such blatantly untrue and racist statements," he said in an online statement. "I have raised this issue with the Chinese ambassador, and requested that he ensures an apology is swiftly forthcoming from Air China, and the magazine is removed from circulation immediately," Sharma said.

In a Chinese-language statement yesterday, the publisher attributed the "inappropriate descriptions" to editorial errors, stating

that they were at odds with the "original intention to actively promote the beautiful scenery of London". It described itself as a third-party organization, although Air China's own website describes the magazine as "an authoritative information resource of Air China Group and Air China".

The publisher apologized that the text had "misled" a number of media outlets and readers and damaged Air China's brand image. But on Chinese social media, most commentators expressed bafflement at the backlash.

In a common refrain, one user of China's Twitter-like Weibo platform asked: "This is just stating the truth—what is there to apologize about?" Another queried: "There are more rapists and robbers there anyway—why is saying this discriminatory?"

Many said they felt the advice was valuable. "We can't satisfy everyone, but we certainly

must put Chinese people's safety first," one user stated. Discussion and public awareness of racism in China is notoriously low—often resulting in viral scandals that spark global outrage beyond the Great Firewall but cause nary a whimper of concern within the mainland. In May, an ad by a Chinese detergent maker depicting a black man stuffed into a washing machine and transformed into a fair-skinned Asian stoked outcry abroad, initially dismissed by the company as overly sensitive. China often portrays itself as the victim of discrimination at the hands of foreign media, and many on Weibo expressed indignation at what they saw as hypocritical finger-pointing from those in the West. "We don't owe black people, Indians or Pakistanis anything; we never trafficked slaves or colonised India and Pakistan," wrote one user, adding: "So go die, all you politically correct people." —AFP

# JAPAN'S PROPOSED ANTI-CONSPIRACY LAW STIRS CIVIL RIGHTS CONCERNS

## COULD GIVE POLICE POWER TO TRAMPLE CIVIL LIBERTIES

**TOKYO:** More than a decade after an initial attempt failed, Japan wants to enact legislation to penalize conspiracies to commit crimes such as terrorism but critics say such changes would give police power to trample civil liberties.

Proponents say the steps are vital to fight terrorism in a climate where the risks have grown as Tokyo prepares to host the 2020 Olympics, and to ratify a UN Treaty aimed at battling international organized crime. "It's very important ... to fight organized crime by cooperating with international society," Chief Cabinet Secretary Yoshihide Suga told reporters when asked about the proposals. Opponents see the proposals as part of Prime Minister Shinzo Abe's broader agenda to tighten the government's grip at the expense of individual rights. Critics including the Japan Federation of Bar Associations also warn the changes—when combined with a recent expansion of the scope of legal wiretapping and the reluctance of courts to rein in police surveillance powers—could have a chilling effect on grassroots opposition to government policies.

## 'Limits the protection of individual right'

The federation also says Japanese law already prohibits preparing to commit certain serious crimes such as murder, arson and counterfeiting or plotting an insurgency or the use of explosives. "The ruling coalition is emboldened and, led by the prime minister, wants to push these kinds of laws," said Meiji University law professor Lawrence Repeta. "He's

pushing an agenda that grants the police and the government broader authority and limits the protection of individual rights."

Proposed changes floated in a document leaked to Japanese media and seen by Reuters would make it a crime for "organized crime groups" to conspire and prepare to commit serious crimes punishable by four or more years imprisonment. Examples included gangsters readying a plot to shoot a rival gang leader and terrorists preparing a chemical attack. Workers chatting over drinks and saying they want to kill their boss wouldn't qualify, the document says.

## 'Chilling effect'

Legal experts, however, say the vague phrasing suggests that civic groups opposed to government policies could be considered "organized crime groups" if they are found to be preparing for illegal actions, such as plans by activists opposed to US military bases blocking roads to construction sites. "There is no clause limiting this to a group like the Mafia," said lawyer Yuichi Kaido. "It could target a group that is opposed to the government in some way." If the revisions are enacted, "people will become afraid and it will have a chilling effect," he said.

Liberal Democratic Party-led governments have tried three times to enact such legislation since the United Nations adopted a Convention Against Transnational Organized Crime in 2000. But outcries from lawyers, activists and media scuppered the bills.

This time, though, Abe's ruling coalition has a two-thirds majority in both houses of parliament, and public worries about terrorism ahead of the Olympics have grown after deadly attacks overseas. "We are facing the Tokyo Olympics and once something happens, it will already be too late," LDP Secretary General Toshihiro Nikai was quoted by media saying on a radio program.

The justice ministry is taking pains to allay concerns ordinary people would be ensnared by the changes, stressing that's not true in a Q&A on its website. Critics see the push for legal changes as integral to Abe's efforts, reflected in LDP proposals to revise Japan's post-war constitution, to strengthen the authority of the state.

Other moves include the 2013 enactment of a states secrets law toughening penalties on leaks, and changes this year that widened the scope for wiretapping to include fraud and theft.

Some legal experts find the trend especially troubling given the judiciary's reluctance to restrict police powers. In a recent example, the Supreme Court this year declined to review a case concerning police surveillance of 17 Muslims who were monitored purely because of their religion, upholding a lower court ruling that the surveillance had been "necessary and unavoidable" to protect against terrorism.

"This would be added to an existing criminal justice system in which the courts do not serve as an effective check on police and prosecutors," Meiji University's Repeta said. —Reuters



**BEIJING:** Commemorative plates with images of late communist leader Mao Zedong sit behind transformer toys in a stall in Beijing's Tiananmen Square on the eve of the 40th anniversary of his death, on September 8, 2016. —AFP

## THAILAND, MALAYSIA PLAN BORDER WALL TO HALT ILLEGAL FLOW OF GOODS, PEOPLE

**VIENTIANE:** Thailand and Malaysia will discuss plans to build a wall along their shared border, Thai officials said on Thursday, a day before Malaysian Prime Minister Najib Razak is set to meet his counterpart in Bangkok.

People-trafficking and the smuggling of drugs and weapons are among the transnational crimes that have flourished along the 640-km (398-mile) Thai-Malay border, until a crackdown by Thailand last year disrupted regional trafficking routes.

Najib is to meet Thai Prime Minister Prayuth Chan-ocha on an official visit that will focus on security cooperation and investment. The wall is on the agenda for the meeting, said a Thai foreign ministry official. "It will be on the agenda during Najib's visit, but it will not be the biggest item on the agenda," foreign ministry spokesman Chinawut Setawat told Reuters at a regional meeting in the Laotian capital of Vientiane. "It is still at the memorandum of understanding phase," said Colonel Yutthanam Petchmuang, a spokesman for Thailand's Internal Security Operations Command.

## No response

Malaysia's foreign ministry did not respond to a request from Reuters for comment. Najib's visit follows three deadly bomb attacks in southern Thailand over the past month, including a wave of bombs in tourist towns in August that Thai police have linked to Muslim separatists operating in the country's south.

The porous Thai-Malay border has also been a site for the smuggling of weapons, drugs and illegal oil. After taking power in a May 2014 coup, Thailand's junta promised what it called a "zero tolerance" policy of human trafficking and launched a nationwide crackdown on vice and crime.

In January 2004, a shadowy separatist insurgency by ethnic Malays resurfaced in Thailand, after simmering for decades. Since then, 6,500 people have been killed, says Deep South Watch, a body that monitors the violence. — Reuters

# CHINA SHUNS SEOUL SECURITY DIALOGUE AMID MISSILE DEFENSE ROW

**BEIJING:** China is shunning a security dialogue in Seoul amid an ongoing row over South Korea's decision to deploy a powerful US missile defense system.

The official newspaper Global Times on yesterday quoted an unidentified Defense Ministry spokesman as saying China was not sending a delegation to this week's Seoul Defense Dialogue because of "reasons of work arrangement." It offered no other details. China has angrily denounced plans for the deployment of the US Terminal High Altitude Area Defense, or THAAD system, whose radars it says will allow the US mili-

tary to peer deep into northeastern China. Seoul and Washington say the system is intended solely to defend against North Korea's missile threat. China elevated the issue on Monday, with President Xi Jinping expressing China's opposition directly in a meeting with his South Korean counterpart Park Geun-hye. Xi said that "mishandling the issue is not conducive to strategic stability in the region, and could intensify disputes." Beijing's reaction has also stoked public outrage, threatening everything from tourism exchanges to appearances by K-pop stars in China. —AP



FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 9, 2016

# Lifestyle

[www.kuwaittimes.net](http://www.kuwaittimes.net)

A model walks the runway at the VFILES fashion show during New York Fashion Week 2016 at Spring Studios in New York City. —AFP

## Tom Ford, Kanye West usher in NY Fashion Week



## Review

## Eastwood's 'Sully' stubbornly refuses to soar

In "Sully," Clint Eastwood's haunted and sterile docudrama of Capt Chesley Sullenberger's 2009 landing of Flight 1549 on the Hudson, Eastwood has drained away all the superficial, rah-rah heroism of Sullenberger's great feat, but he has also sucked the life out of it. "Sully" is every bit an Eastwood picture. Instead of the rush of euphoria that the "Miracle on the Hudson" swept through a New York accustomed to only tragedy from the air, we get a weary parable that, as Eastwood has often done, pulls the curtain away from a celebrated public figure and reveals the inner trauma and sense of responsibility that lies inside a regular man thrust into an unwanted spotlight.

Sullenberger, played with typical dignity and sensitivity by Tom Hanks, is not celebrated here with a parade of a movie. He is beset by demons and anxieties, and the almost comically harsh scrutiny of an aviation safety panel, which, relying on automated flight simulations, believes Sullenberger could have safely returned to LaGuardia or made it over the New Jersey shoreline to Teterboro. Their snide, judgmental presence is there throughout "Sully," as they try to second guess his decision-making. It's an exaggeration. The film's climactic grilling of Sullenberger at a public hearing was referred to in news reports as "gentle, respectful and at times downright congenial."

### Preternatural calm

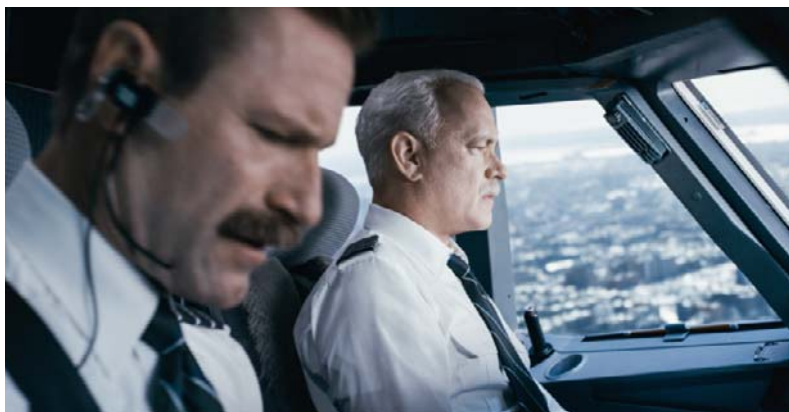
But Eastwood and screenwriter Todd Komarnicki working off of Sullenberger's book "Highest Duty: My Search for What Really Matters," had to find drama somewhere. The entire flight lasted less than six minutes. It was just 208 seconds from bird strike to the frigid Hudson. How do you make a film out of mere moments, handled with preternatural calm? Eastwood lingers in its aftermath, as Sully remains holed in a Manhattan he has little love for. The narrative is fractured, flashing backward and forward, into the pilot's past and occasionally into his nightmares. Hanks, white haired and sub-

dued, finds Sullenberger's essence not in the miraculous but in the mundane: A man just doing his job, not so unlike his "Captain Phillips."

And though the film bears his name, "Sully" is really a two-hander. With Sullenberger throughout is his co-pilot Jeff Skiles (a top-notch Aaron Eckhart), his partner in flight and on the ground. They huddle together in midnight runs and in testimony, leaning on each other through the surreal media storm. Eastwood moves slowly to the landing but gives it its full due. Filmed on IMAX, his big, clear images nevertheless remain somber - as does Eastwood's own quiet score - in the big, awaited moment. Nowhere is much of a sense of New York or the cathartic relief that lifted the city.

### Disappointing emptiness

Instead, "Sully" remains, stubbornly, a refraction of Sullenberger's interior, as filtered through Eastwood's elegiac lens. "I eyeballed it," is how the pilot explains his intuitive response, built up over 42 years of flying. It's not hard to feel Eastwood's own identification with the man. He, too, is an old hand who works quickly: workmanlike and instinctually, "eyeballing" it. You can imagine Eastwood, too, up there on the stand responding to what computers say he should have done differently. "Life's easier in the air," Skiles and Sullenberger agree. Eastwood, of course, does too. Only being aloft for him is to be in the director's chair, far from other concerns. His focus in "Sully" is both its greatest attribute (this is, after all, a serious and thoughtful film that sees a universally known event through a fresh perspective) and the reason for its disappointing emptiness. In testimony, Sullenberger criticizes the simulators for "taking all the humanity of the cockpit." Eastwood has put it back in. But the story of Flight 1549 was bigger than that. "Sully," a Warner Bros release, is rated PG-13 by the Motion Picture Association of America for "some peril and brief strong language." Running time: 96 minutes. Two and a half stars out of four. —AP



This image released by Warner Bros. Pictures shows Tom Hanks, right, and Aaron Eckhart in a scene from 'Sully.' — AP



Singer Usher sits on his newly unveiled star after becoming the 2,588 entertainer to receive a Hollywood Walk of Fame star in Hollywood, California. — AFP

## Usher calls on fans to keep his Walk of Fame star shiny

R&B singer Usher accepted the 2,588th star on the Hollywood Walk of Fame Wednesday, imploring fans during a tongue-in-cheek speech to keep vigil over it and ensure it stays clean. The star was unveiled in front of a number of musical and film luminaries, including pop and soul icon Stevie Wonder, Black Eyed Peas front man will.i.am. and movie mogul Harvey Weinstein. "It is because of you guys that I have this moment. It is because of you that this shining star will be here and I leave it up to you-it's your responsibility-to come down here every chance you get to shine my

star," he joked to fans.

"Hey listen, that's the smallest thing that I could ask of you right now, especially given the fact that I'm going to be walked on." Usher, 37, has won eight Grammy Awards and sold more than 65 million albums, with nine Hot 100 No. 1 hits and 18 Hot 100 Top 10 singles. His 2004 record "Confessions" was the best-selling solo album in the first decade of the 21st century in the US and brought him one of his three Grammys in 2005.

Born Usher Raymond IV in Dallas, Texas, he was raised in Chattanooga, Tennessee, and later moved to Atlanta. His mother

entered him in singing competitions when he was 12 and he caught the attention of an executive from LaFace Records. His hits include "Can U Get Wit It," "U Remind Me," which brought him his first Grammy in 2002 for best male R&B vocal performance, and "U Don't Have To Call," which brought him his second in 2003, in the same category.

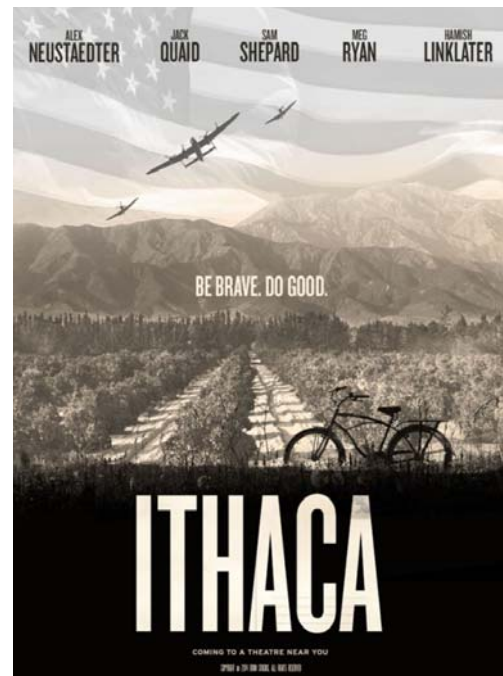
Usher's acting career has taken in Broadway, television and a number of feature films, culminating in an acclaimed turn as boxing champion Sugar Ray Leonard in the recently released Roberto Duran biopic "Hands of Stone." — AFP

## Meg Ryan uses 'fierce' maternal instincts in her directorial debut

Hollywood actress Meg Ryan goes behind the camera for her directorial debut "Ithaca," a World War II drama for which she said she used her maternal instincts in telling the story.

The movie, based on William Saroyan's novel "The Human Comedy", follows a teenager who wants to help his widowed mother financially by getting a job as a messenger. He soon gets some tough lessons in life as he delivers messages to families who have lost loved ones in the war.

"I felt like it really is, in its deepest part of DNA, a story that I felt should be told from a maternal point of view," Ryan said in an interview. "And I felt like it was simple ... it's a simple narrative about complicated things." The "When Harry Met Sally" actress, who also stars in the film, said she was surprised how much she liked directing. "The intimacy you end up having with every single thing in a movie when you're directing it ... makes you love it," she said. "The most fierce I ever am is as a mum and, it turns out, as a director, trying to protect the artists who've come to help me out." Tom Hanks, with whom Ryan starred in "Sleepless in Seattle" and "You've Got Mail", has a small role in the movie. "He doesn't need much directing," she said. "Ithaca" is released in the United States today. — Reuters







Marilyn Smolenski uses a mock gun to demonstrate how to pull a handgun out of the concealed carry clothing she designs.



Anna Taylor, founder and CEO of Dene Adams LLC, displays a corset that allows for the concealed carrying of a firearm in Atlanta, Ga.

# Women buying FIREARMS creates concealed carry fashion market

Does this gun make me look fat? For decades, women have had few choices when it comes to the clothing they can wear to hide that they're carrying a firearm. They could wear baggy T-shirts or coats, or put it in a purse and hope it didn't get swiped or that they didn't have trouble getting it out in an emergency. Enter holsters, corsets, camisoles and other clothing designed to be flattering, feminine - and functional - for the pistol-packing' mama crowd." I don't want to dress in tactical gear and camo all the time. I love tactical clothing for the range. It's comfortable. I don't want to ruin my everyday clothing," said Marilyn Smolenski, who in 2012 created Nickel and Lace, a company that caters to women who want to carry a firearm concealed but don't want to trade in their femininity. "But I don't want to wear it to the grocery store."

Smolenski started her company right around the time when Chicago city laws changed and she could again legally carry a firearm. When that happened, she struggled to find something that didn't make her look frumpy and didn't broadcast that she was packing heat. Most of the clothing was geared to men - coats with hidden pockets, or holsters that tuck neatly inside a waistband. But until the last few years, those weren't always great options for women who don't wear belts as frequently and are more likely than men to wear form-fitting clothing, making it difficult to hide the fact they're carrying a firearm.

## Men and women

"When you put a man's holster on a woman's body it sticks out. It doesn't hug the body," said Carrie Lightfoot, founder and owner of The Well Armed Woman in Scottsdale, Arizona, which does everything from providing firearms instruction to women to selling a variety of concealed carry clothing. One of her company's first missions was to design and produce a holster that recognized the differences in body types and clothing styles between men and women. Women's waists tend to be shorter, providing less room to withdraw a gun from a holster. Hips and chests can get in the way too, she said.

Lightfoot and Smolenski said that some manufacturers tended to "shrink it and pink it" - thinking that taking gear produced for men and making it smaller and brightly colored would



Anna Taylor, founder and CEO of Dene Adams LLC, displays a corset that allows for the concealed carrying of a firearm in Atlanta, Ga.

satisfy female customers. They and their counterparts emphasize they are driven first by function and safety before aesthetics come into the equation. "Women need to know they can carry effectively," Lightfoot said. "I think the key is finding a way to carry it so you can be comfortable and move through your day without being poked and having a big hunk of metal in your pants and not be able to sit at work."

## Personal safety

Both also are advocates for providing women with information and guidance on ways to feel secure and be safe. For Smolenski, that goal has led to the creation of the annual Firearms and Fashion Show which includes seminars on personal safety. Her company actually got its start

with a line of jewelry - from necklaces that can be pulled away easily and then used as a weapon to "chopsticks" that can both be used to hold up hair and then be wielded against an attacker. For Anna Taylor, the founder and CEO of Dene Adams LLC - named after her grandfather, who first taught her to respect firearms and handle them safely - the road to creating a line of concealed carry clothing began at around the time she became a single mom and the safety of the family rested on her shoulders. When she got her first concealed carry permit in 2013, she went through seven different holsters.

## Solid black

"Some were hard and uncomfortable. Some of them I'd have to take off and set down when I

went to the bathroom and I was afraid I would go off and leave it just like I've left my phone behind before. Others, belly band types with a print so bad you could see the grip or outline of the gun through my clothes," Adams said. "So when I went out in public, I felt like I had these awkward arms always trying to hide this thing." Her first design involved a mousepad and a post-partum corset to create a soft holster.

She was able to carry the kids around, nurse, give the kids baths - even jump on the trampoline - "and I could forget that it was there." With her last \$200, she found a manufacturer willing



Marilyn Smolenski uses a mock gun to demonstrate how to pull a handgun out of the concealed carry clothing she designs.

to do a small run. Flash forward three years and she now has products on shelves at nearly 100 dealers around the country. She has expanded into safety and training and is now an NRA pistol and rifle instructor. She even has a few men who buy her products - including, she said, air marshals, who gravitate to the snug, comfortable designs. "We have options that don't have lace. We have solid black," she said. — AP





New York Fashion Week begins (main events start Thursday) Randy Gerber and Cindy Crawford arrive for the Tom Ford Autumn/Winter 2016 Menswear and Womenswear Collection presentation in New York. — AFP photos



Julianne Moore arrives for the Tom Ford Collection presentation.



Uma Thurman arrives for the Tom Ford Collection presentation.



Zayn Malik arrives for the Tom Ford Collection presentation.

## TOM FORD, KANYE WEST USHER IN NY FASHION WEEK



Swiss Beatz and Alicia Keys arrive for the Tom Ford Collection presentation.

**F**ilmmaker-designer Tom Ford and rap superstar Kanye West fired the start gun on New York Fashion Week Wednesday, unveiling intimate A-list shows that proffered starkly different visions of women's attire. For Ford, who premiered his second movie "Nocturnal Animals" at the Venice film festival only last week, it was a triumphant return to New York after showing more recently in London and Los Angeles.

He laid on a sophisticated candle-lit dinner at Manhattan's swanky Four Seasons Restaurant for the likes of Tom Hanks, Julianne Moore, Alicia Keys, Cindy Crawford and Naomi Campbell. Under a new streamlined schedule that allows customers to buy the clothes almost instantly, he ditched the official spring/summer 2017 season to unveil a fall/winter 2016 collection for both men and women. "In a world that has become increasingly immediate, the current way of showing a collection four months before it is available to customers, is an antiquated idea and one that no longer makes sense," Ford said ahead of the show.

"Showing the collection as it arrives in stores will remedy this, and allow the excitement... to drive sales and satisfy our customers' increasing desire to have their clothes as they are ready to wear them." Guests were treated to a sit-down, champagne dinner that included smoked salmon and caviar on orchid-decorated tables. The masses could only gawp at the spectacle live streamed on his website.

Strutting to a sultry soundtrack that included Keys' hit "Fallin," Ford sent down a short box runway in the middle of the tables a collection of pencil skirts with deep slits up the back, buckle belts and statement jewelry. A retro classic tweed look of impeccable tailoring was jazzed up with color-blocked fur jackets, fur-trimmed patchwork coats, animal print and camouflage. It was wearable, albeit very expensive sexy chic. For men there were suede, corduroy and silk jackets and evening jackets with retro disco detail.

with buckle belts, feathers, and flame-detail and column beaded dresses with cut-out backs that hugged the figure and flashed thigh through slits to the top of the leg. It was less timeless elegance and more sports basics and sky-high stilettos at West's show finally conducted under the blazing afternoon heat more than an hour and half behind schedule. It was another live streamed show watched in person by only the hand-picked few, who included West's reality star wife Kim Kardashian, Vogue editor-in-chief Anna Wintour and British racing car driver Lewis Hamilton.

Never one to hide his light under a bushel, he commanded the presidential park Hillary Clinton used to kickstart her White House run last year and created in honor of one of World War II president, Franklin D Roosevelt. His Yeezy Season Four-dominated by body suits and stilettos-was his latest collaboration for Adidas and a meditation on ethnic diversity. At a time when America is gripped by debate about race the overwhelming majority of models were black-a rarity on Western catwalks-after West demanded that "multiracial women only" apply to his casting call.

Models stood or sat barefoot on a lawn dressed in imitation speedos, skin-tight crop tops, bandeau strips, athletics knickers and cycling shorts.

Others descended an outdoor triangular catwalk dressed in ribbed vest tops worn with oversized, over-the-knee stiletto boots-the transparent plastic version of which Kardashian was recently photographed wearing. It was a body-hugging look of sports basics worn with oversized hooded parkas and puffers. But stilettos were so tall and seemingly fragile that at least two models slipped or stumbled. "I want to make pieces that can be timeless," he told Vogue in an interview. "Pieces that you can pick up out of a vintage store in 20 years and say, 'Wow, I'm happy I have this.'" — AFP

**These boots weren't made for walking**

For evening wear there were sequin cocktail dresses paired





Anna Wintour arrives for the Tom Ford Collection presentation.



David Burtka (left) and Neil Patrick Harris arrive for the Tom Ford Collection presentation.



Tom Hanks and Rita Wilson arrive for the Tom Ford Collection presentation.



Singer Rita Ora arrives for the Tom Ford Collection presentation.



Iman arrives for the Tom Ford Collection presentation.



Models wear the Yeezy Season 4 collection by Kanye West during a fashion show.

## Kendall and Kylie Jenner display their own creations

It was quite the family fashion day for Kendall and Kylie Jenner, who came straight from brother-in-law Kanye West's Yeezy show on Roosevelt Island off Manhattan on Wednesday to their own party celebrating their fashion label, KENDALL + KYLIE. The fashionista sisters (and reality TV stars) said they were gradually becoming more confident designers with each new collection. "I think that every season we get more and more comfortable," said Kendall, 20, who as a model is a frequent presence on top-designer runways at Fashion Week. "It's super-awesome. The line grows with us."

Added Kylie, 19, also expected to be hitting the runway this

week: "We've learned how to work with each other better. I mean, everything down to certain fabrics and patterns. We definitely learned a lot." The sisters said they've benefited from appearing as models for designers they admire. "I think it's cool to be able to see both sides," Kendall said. "I get to see the designers that I work with who are obviously on a much higher level than our brand at the moment. It's cool to see their process and what they have to go through behind the scenes, because it's kind of a goal to set and somewhere that I would like to be one day."

At the party, in the multi-tiered, technology-heavy Samsung 837 venue in downtown Manhattan, guests sipped cocktails and

munched on hors d'oeuvres as they examined the new collection - heavy on leather, both black and white. Spray-paint artist Malcom Stuart was on hand to decorate T-shirts with his own custom emojis; One could also get a leather backpack monogrammed on the spot. Many in the crowd had just spent the afternoon in the hot sun at West's marathon, al fresco Yeezy show for Adidas. The Jenner sisters were full of praise. "It was so awesome," said Kylie. "I love watching his stuff. He's a genius and just seeing his work come to life, it's really cool." — AP



Sisters Kendall Jenner, left, and Kylie Jenner speak to the media at a party for their KENDALL + KYLIE collection.



Fashion from the KENDALL + KYLIE collection is displayed for the media. — AP photos



# Mini-muffins

## are great snacks or breakfast

By Melissa D'Arabian

**T**he reason cupcakes took the baking world by storm a few years ago is because, in short, they are awesome. A sweet little package of moist, crumbly goodness topped with a dollop of creamy, fatty frosting - I understand my four daughter's (and America's) obsession.

For the healthy eater, cupcakes might seem like a non-starter; completely off the table. Except, my 10-year-old daughter, Charlotte, did something very wise that changed everything for me last year. At someone else's party, she chose a mini-cupcake over a regular-sized cupcake, which frankly

puzzled me, given the "more-is-more" tendency normally driving my children's sugary-treat decisions. Her reason? Because it was "cuter." To her, tiny was darling, and that made it better. I could use that to my advantage, I decided. And so can you.

I have always loved the automatic portion control that comes with using a regular muffin tin - I bake up everything from scalloped potatoes to huevos rancheros muffin-sized. And mini-muffins are perfect for healthier muffin batters - the smaller size is more forgiving on the texture front, so you can load up batters with protein and fiber (think whole grain flours, nuts, seeds, shredded veggies) and they will still be tasty, where full-sized muffins can feel denser more easily.

I make all sorts of flavors of mini-muffins, and keep them in my freezer in resealable plastic bags for last minute snacks and even breakfast on the go - they thaw in minutes on the counter. Using my carrot and (leftover, repurposed) quinoa mini-muffin as a base, I added a reduced sugar frosting out of cream cheese and orange juice, and voila: the mini-muffin became a "cupcake." Suddenly, I had very reasonable dessert! And, if you want to skip the frosting altogether, then keep this little guy as a mini-muffin, no problem - they are a treat either way.



## MINI QUINOA CARROT CAKES

### Ingredients

Start to finish: 30 minutes, plus cooling time

Servings: 20 mini cupcakes

1 1/4 cups finely-milled almond flour

1/2 cup cooked quinoa

1/2 teaspoon baking powder

1/2 teaspoon baking soda

1 teaspoon ground pumpkin pie spice (or ground cinnamon)

1/4 teaspoon salt

2 tablespoons coconut oil, melted

2 eggs

1/4 cup sugar (agave or maple syrup could also be used)

1 teaspoon vanilla extract

1/4 teaspoon almond extract

1 tablespoon fresh orange juice (or other citrus)

1 large banana, mashed well until creamy (about 1/2 cup)

1/3 cup finely-grated carrot (about one carrot), gently squeezed dry in a paper towel

Cream Cheese Frosting (optional):

4 ounces (1/2 cup) light cream cheese

1/4 cup powdered sugar

1-2 tablespoons fresh orange juice (or other citrus)

Orange zest, for garnish, optional

### Preparation

Preheat oven to 350 F. In a large bowl, whisk together the almond flour, quinoa, baking powder, baking soda, pumpkin pie spice, and salt and set aside. In a small bowl, vigorously whisk the oil, sugar, eggs, vanilla extract, almond extract and orange juice until pale and creamy (about 2 minutes). Mix wet ingredients into dry ingredients and stir with a wooden spoon until blended. Add the banana and carrot and mix well.

Spoon into mini-muffin tin lined with paper liners (or sprayed well with nonstick spray). Fill about 2/3 full. Bake until cooked through, about 15 minutes. Meanwhile make the frosting by whisking together the cream cheese, powdered sugar and lemon juice until completely smooth. Cool cupcakes completely, and frost if desired.



# Italian squash bake brings Mediterranean flair to dinner

By Melissa D'Arabian

**T**his week's Italian squash bake is a true work horse. Want an easy, make-ahead weeknight side dish? This will do the trick. Hosting both vegetarians and meat eaters for dinner? Serve Italian squash bake along with grilled chicken or fish on the side for the carnivores, and you'll be all set. Since the recipe is quite flexible, you can easily make as much or as little as you need. The colors of the vegetable slices are pretty, juxtaposed against one another, making this a company-worthy recipe with zero last-minute prep. A quick note to parents:

Once you've sliced up the veggies, let your little ones do the layering - it's a great way to include them in the vegetable cookery of dinnertime. And you almost can't mess this up, aside from the aesthetics.

My daughter, who loves to help me make this, even considers it a (lightened-up) version of lasagna. She's actually not too far off. This Mediterranean-style squash bake is inspired by a tian, which is a Provençal dish named after the earthenware baking vessel traditionally used to make it.

My squash version gets its flavor from calorie-free herbs, lemon juice and garlic cloves instead, plus just enough satisfy-

ing fat from a light dusting of cheese added in the final stages of baking. Since squash only packs in about 10 calories in a half-cup serving (and surprisingly only about a gram of sugar), a little cheese is the perfect touch of comfort. Bringing Mediterranean flair to your weeknight cooking routine might be just the thing your autumn needs.



## ITALIAN SQUASH BAKE

### Ingredients

Start to finish: 1 hour  
Servings: 4  
1 medium-large zucchini, sliced  
1 medium-large yellow crookneck squash, sliced  
2 large shallots, sliced  
2 tomatoes, sliced  
5-10 garlic cloves  
2 teaspoons dried Italian herb seasoning  
1 tablespoon olive oil  
Juice of 1/2 lemon  
1/2 cup shredded mozzarella or parmesan cheese, or mixed  
Salt and pepper

### Preparation

Preheat oven to 375 F. Spray an 8-inch earthenware or regular baking dish with nonstick cooking spray. Season the vegetables with a little salt and pepper. Layer the squash, tomato and shallot slices "shingle style" in the dish, alternating vegetables. Don't hesitate to pack the vegetables in fairly tightly; the slices should not lay completely flat. Once the vegetables are all snugly in the baking dish, sprinkle on the garlic cloves, and dried herbs. Drizzle on the olive oil and squeeze on the lemon juice. Cover with foil and bake for a half hour. Remove the foil and continue baking for an additional half hour, sprinkling the cheese on top the last 15 minutes (for a total bake time of about an hour.) Serve warm or room temperature.





26

Friday Times

FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 9, 2016

Kids

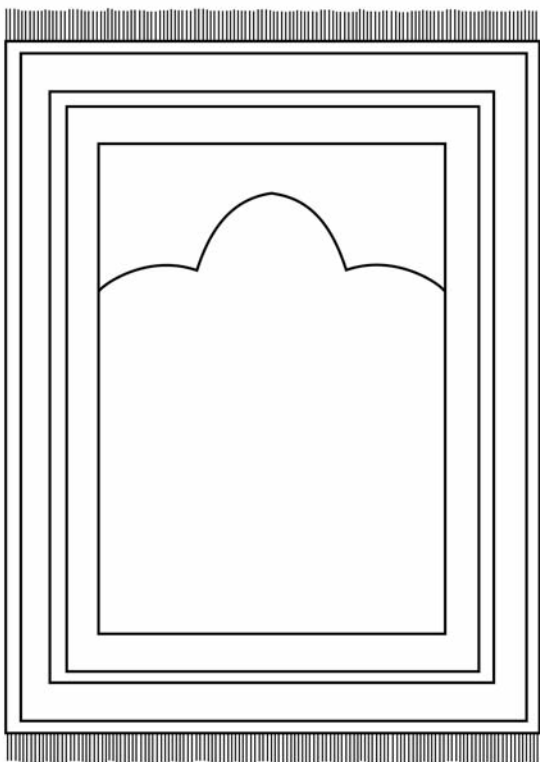


Color  
the classroom

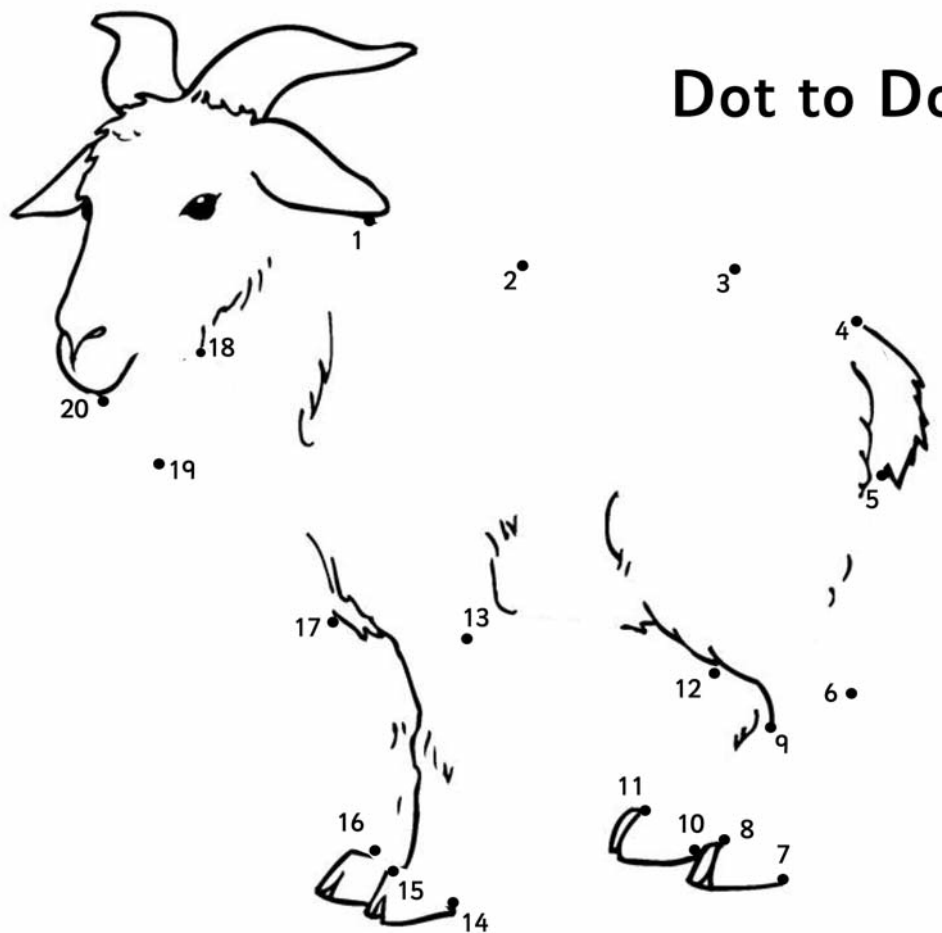


### Design an Islamic Prayer Mat

Look at examples of Islamic prayer mats. You will see that they often include geometrical patterns and they never include pictures of animals or people. Have a go at drawing your own design below.



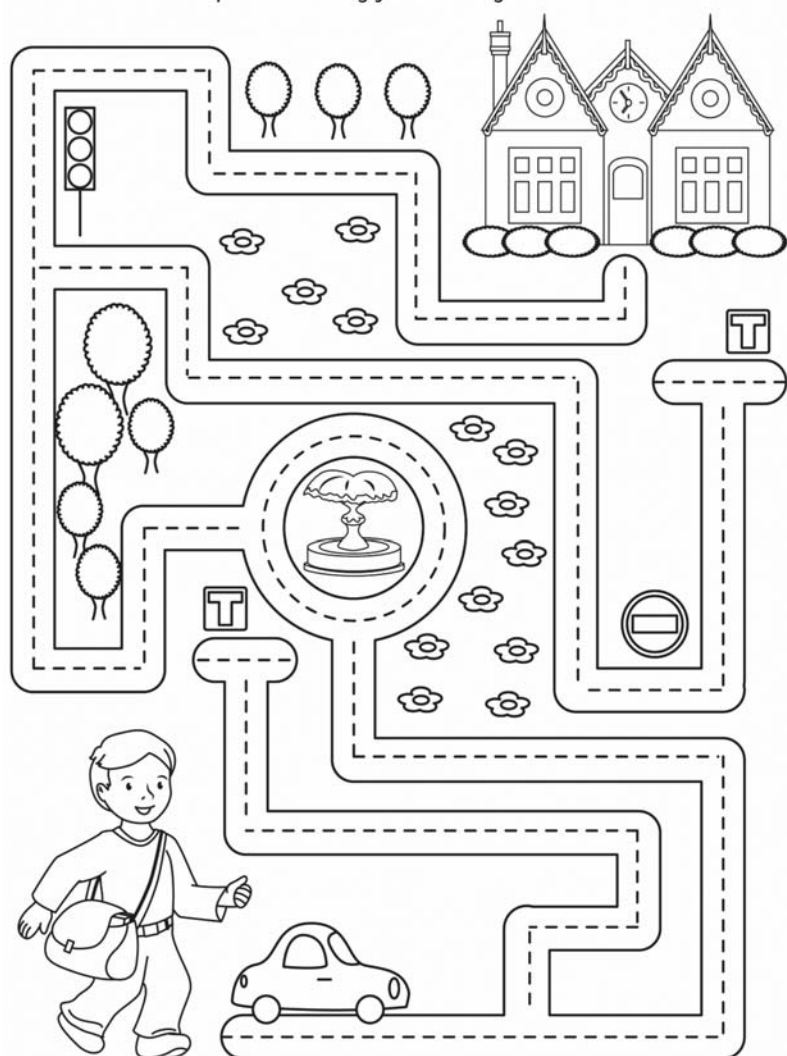
### Dot to Dot



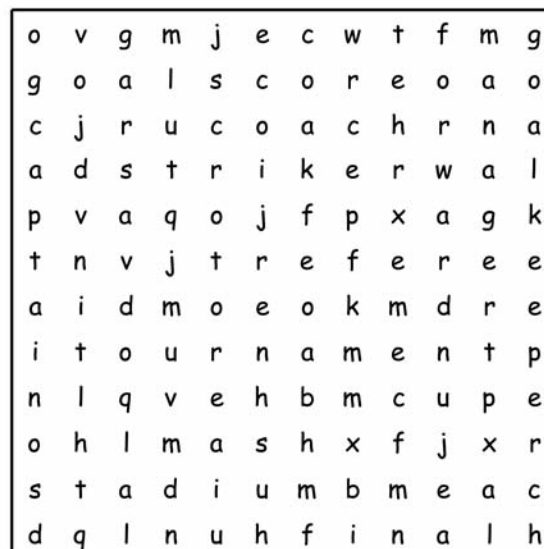




Help the little boy find his way to school!



## Soccer Word Search



goal	score	striker
tournament	final	cup
goalkeeper	forward	coach
manager	team	stadium
referee	captain	



## Autumn Scramble

Can you unscramble the Autumn words below?

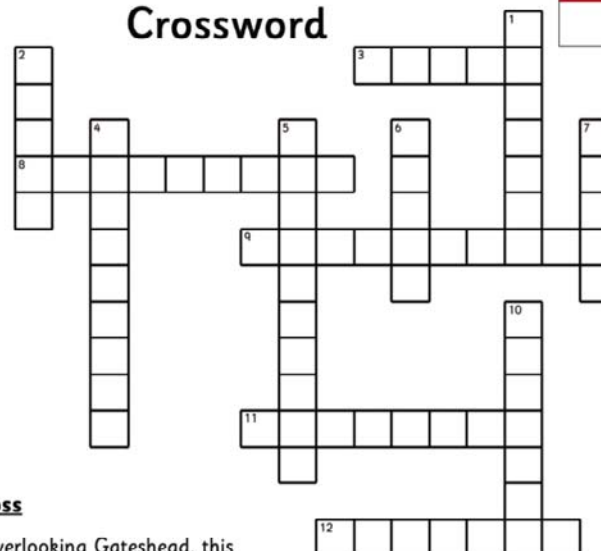


1. vhtsear \_\_\_\_\_
2. aveesl \_\_\_\_\_
3. cesowrrac \_\_\_\_\_
4. lowlye \_\_\_\_\_
5. binrefo \_\_\_\_\_
6. prae \_\_\_\_\_
7. aker \_\_\_\_\_
8. racon \_\_\_\_\_
9. isrqeulr \_\_\_\_\_
10. alppe \_\_\_\_\_
11. nagreo \_\_\_\_\_
12. lfal \_\_\_\_\_
13. rde \_\_\_\_\_
14. owbrn \_\_\_\_\_



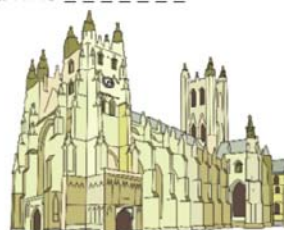
## English Landmarks

### Crossword



#### Across

3. Overlooking Gateshead, this statue is known as the \_\_\_\_\_ of the North.
8. This northwest seaside resort is famous for its tower.
9. Prehistoric stone circle in Wiltshire.
11. The most westerly point of England.
12. The flagship of Admiral Nelson, now in dry dock at Portsmouth, is called HMS \_\_\_\_\_.



#### Down

1. Opened in 1864, this suspension bridge was based on a design by Isambard Kingdom Brunel and crosses the Avon from Bristol.
2. The theatre in London associated with William Shakespeare.
4. Canterbury has a famous one, a site of pilgrimage.
5. This Midlands town has a castle associated with the legendary outlaw Robin Hood.
6. The White Cliffs of \_\_\_\_\_.
7. The Crown Jewels are kept in the \_\_\_\_\_ of London.
10. This castle in Berkshire shares its name with the British Royal Family.







# Friday Times Travel

48 hours in peaceful

# Vientiane



**C**rouched low over the Mekong within almost a stone's throw of Thailand, Vientiane has finally shaken off its cobwebs and earnestly joined the 21st century. The city is still one of the most relaxed small capitals on the planet, and while it can't rival sibling city Luang Prabang for good looks, it has a raffish charm all of its own. As you wander the cracked streets and riverfront in Vientiane, you're walking past the ghosts of Siamese invasions, wartime spies and madcap Ravens (American pilots) who were all here at one time or another. Vientiane urbanites are friendly, and in no time you'll be chatting with a monk, stall-holder or expat, all happy to help you on your way. With just two days in Laos' languid capital, make the most of your time through a couple of Vientiane's excellent local tours, enjoying croissant breakfasts, night markets, temples and foot rubs in between.



**DAY 1****Morning**

Vientiane is all about coffee and bakeries; coffee from the lush region of the Bolaven Plateau in the far south, and bakeries harking back to the colonial times of the French, when baguettes and pastries were absorbed into Lao food culture. Start your day early at Le Banneton, a simple little patisserie that turns out the best croissants and tarts. Then at 8.30am meet Tuk Tuk Safari for one of their memorable tours of the city in a comfy tuk-tuk. The 'Lao for One Day' tour takes you far beyond the obvious as you explore a fresh food market, try a sweet snack known as kao iarm (sticky rice and coconut roasted in bamboo), then visit a silversmith's workshop. After this you'll get behind the scenes in the kitchen of a restaurant that helps train street youth, before taking lunch there. After visiting the COPE Visitor Centre, which gives victims of UXO (unexploded ordnance) all over Laos the chance to walk again with prosthetic limbs and physio, the final stop will be a temple to learn to make a wax flower offering.

**Afternoon**

After your tour, grab your own tuk-tuk and make for Laos' most important national monument, Pha That Luang, passing Patuxai, the country's version of the Arc de Triomphe. Later, consider a visit to Wat Si Saket, before taking an early dinner at the excellent, contemporary Lao Kitchen to feast on delicious laap (chicken or pork mince with mint leaves, lime juice, spring onion and coriander).

**Evening**

As the light turns golden over the Mekong, head to the riverfront and soak up the atmosphere of the night market, wandering past stalls grilling meat and fresh fish. Bor Pennyang has a balcony where you can drink to the sunset. For Indochine-style lodgings for the night, go down a quiet lane beside a temple to Lani's House by the Ponds. This tranquil art deco house has French chandeliers, roomy bedrooms at affordable prices, and koi carp turning silent arabesques in its ornamental pools.







## DAY 2 Morning

Grab an early breakfast at JoMa Bakery & Café, where you can feast on fresh fruit, bagels and fresh juices, before meeting Green Discovery ([greendiscoverylaos.com](http://greendiscoverylaos.com)), the country's premiere adventure and ecotourism operators. On their one-day kayaking and cycling trip you'll cycle alongside the Mekong and through rice fields to a fertile chilli-growing island (with a delicious picnic to follow), then float leisurely downstream back to Vientiane by kayak. Alternatively, stay closer to the city with a visit to one or two of Vientiane's museums, such as the Kaysone Phomvane Memorial and Haw Pha Kaeo; or take a bus or tuk-tuk out to Xieng Khuan, aka Buddha Park, to see the myriad religious and mythological statues.



## Afternoon

By now it's well into the afternoon and you've earned the right to shop a little. Make for T'Shop Lai Gallery, arguably the city's most refined shopping experience. Here you can purchase handmade soaps and perfumes and see the gallery's latest exhibition. All products are made by the cooperative Les Artisans Lao, which helps disadvantaged women. Fragrances in hand, it's time to enjoy something Vientiane does very well: massage! The trick is to go where Lao people treat themselves, and, yes, it may look like a hole in the wall but Oasis, near the riverside, is something of a Tardis. Expect sensuous treatments from foot rubs to deep-tissue Swedish massage, in relaxed, cool and very clean surroundings.

## Evening

Walking on air, and doubtless a beatific grin on your face post-pamper, settle in at one of Vientiane's famous restaurants. PimentUn boasts the best steak in the city - from rib-eye to chateaubriand - with Argentine beef cooked on their open-range grill; while stylish Le Silapa is known for its authentic French cuisine. If its Lao cuisine you're after then join the hungry locals at the sizzling aromatic fog that is earthy Ban Anou Night Market. Before turning in, enjoy a glass of something refined and cool at iBeam or The Jazzy Brick Bar. If you want a little more life, make for the city's oldest falang (foreigner) hangout, Khop Chai Deu, and its South Beach-style rooftop. ([www.lonelyplanet.com](http://www.lonelyplanet.com))





WORD SEARCH

Old West 2

Find and circle all of the words that are hidden in the grid. The remaining 30 letters spell a Will Rogers quotation.

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

- ASSAY OFFICE  
BANK ROBBER  
BARN  
BLACKSMITH  
BOOTS  
BUCKBOARD  
BUNKHOUSE  
CALAMITY JANE  
CHAPS  
COAL OIL  
COWPOKE  
DAVY CROCKETT
- DOCTOR  
DRESSMAKER  
FENCE  
GENERAL STORE  
GOLD NUGGET  
GUNSLINGER  
HATS  
HIRED HAND  
HORSES  
ICE HOUSE  
LASSO  
MARSHALL
- MINE SHAFT  
OUTLAWS  
PELTS  
PIGS  
PIONEERS  
POST OFFICE  
RANCH HAND  
REVOLVER  
RUSTLER  
SADDLER  
SALOON GIRL  
SCHOOLHOUSE
- SCOUTS  
SHOOTOUT  
SHOTGUN  
SPURS  
STIRRUP  
TOWN HALL  
TRADING POST  
TUMBLEWEED  
WAGON  
WANTED POSTER  
WHISKEY  
WILD BILL HICKOK

Yesterday's Solution

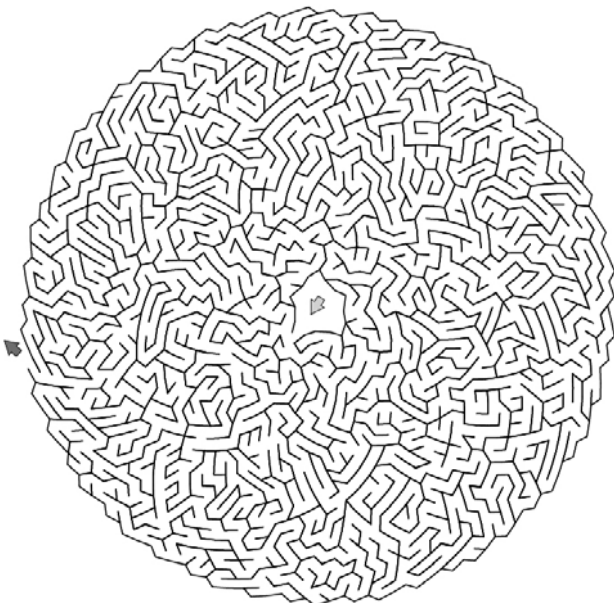
Nursing Home 2

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

- ADMISSION  
ASSIST  
BEDPAN  
BEDTIME  
BOOKS  
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WASH HANDS

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CHALLENGING MAZE



CROSSWORD 1368

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		

ACROSS

- A characteristic state or mode of living.
  5. Educator who founded the first kindergarten in the United States (1804-1894).
  12. A cgs unit of work or energy.
  15. (Norse mythology) Ruler of the Aesir.
  16. A university town in southeast Wyoming.
  17. The basic unit of money in Romania.
  18. Coffee trees.
  19. Small shrubby African tree having compound leaves and racemes of small fragrant green flowers.
  20. An inflammatory complication of leprosy that results in painful skin lesions on the arms and legs and face.
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  24. Of southern Asia.
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  37. Water frozen in the solid state.
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  41. A broken piece of a brittle artifact.
  44. Harsh or corrosive in tone.
  46. Port city on southeastern Honshu in central Japan.
  49. An associate degree in nursing.
  50. The seventh and last day of the week.
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  54. (meaning literally 'born') Used to indicate the maiden or family name of a married woman.
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- Informal or slang terms for mentally irregular.
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  - Ensure observance of laws and rules.
  - A deciduous tree of the family Ulmaceae that grows in the southeastern United States.

Daily SuDoku

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

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- A constellation in the southern hemisphere near Telescopium and Norma.
- A metallic element having four allotropic forms.
- An intensely radioactive metallic element that occurs in minute amounts in uranium ores.

Yesterday's Solution

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

Yesterday's Solution

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



WORD SEARCH

Old West 2

Find and circle all of the words that are hidden in the grid. The remaining 30 letters spell a Will Rogers quotation.

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

- ASSAY OFFICE  
BANK ROBBER  
BARN  
BLACKSMITH  
BOOTS  
BUCKBOARD  
BUNKHOUSE  
CALAMITY JANE  
CHAPS  
COAL OIL  
COWPOKE  
DAVY CROCKETT
- DOCTOR  
DRESSMAKER  
FENCE  
GENERAL STORE  
GOLD NUGGET  
GUNSLINGER  
HATS  
HIRED HAND  
HORSES  
ICE HOUSE  
LASSO  
MARSHALL
- MINE SHAFT  
OUTLAWS  
PELTS  
PIGS  
PIONEERS  
POST OFFICE  
RANCH HAND  
REVOLVER  
RUSTLER  
SADDLER  
SALOON GIRL  
SCHOOLHOUSE
- SCOUTS  
SHOOTOUT  
SHOTGUN  
SPURS  
STIRRUP  
TOWN HALL  
TRADING POST  
TUMBLEWEED  
WAGON  
WANTED POSTER  
WHISKEY  
WILD BILL HICKOK

Yesterday's Solution

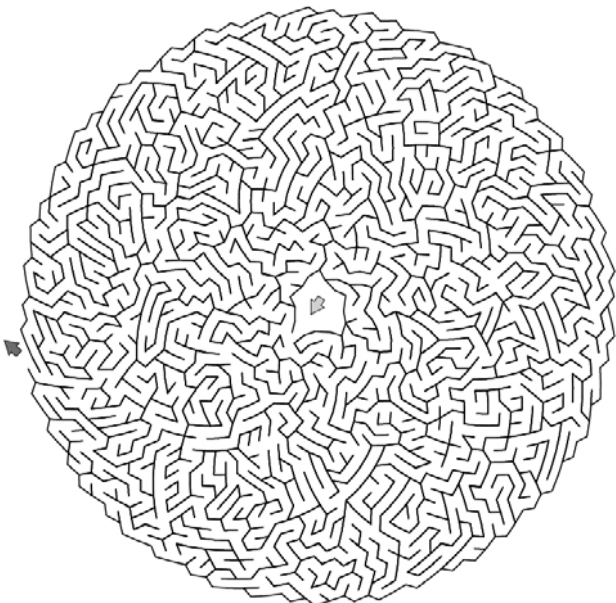
Nursing Home 2

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

- ADMISSION  
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INSULIN SHOT  
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LOUNGE  
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MECHANICAL LIFT  
MEDICINE  
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NURSE  
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PILLS  
PODIATRIST  
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1	2	3	4		5	6	7	8	9	10	11		12	13	14
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A	N	A		W	A	K	E	F	U	L		J	I	V	E
H	E	L		H	I	R	C	I	N	E		E	D	I	T
A	B	A	S	E		A	C	R	I	D		L	E	A	N
B	E	S	P	E	A	K				O	G	A	L	A	L
				U	Z	B	A	K			N	E	P	A	L
P	E	R	M	E	A	T	E				R	O	B		C
A	G	E	E				A	B	E	D		G	A	B	O
C	G	S					K	O	A	L	A		O		E
H	A	E	M	A	L		B				L	I	N	K	A
A	R	T	I	S	A	N				E			A	N	O
				A	B	N	A	K	I			A	R	B	O
S	H	A	M	E				A	C	U	L	E	A		
C	A	N	I	S	T	E	L				A	G	L	A	I
A	Z	O			T	I	M	U	C	U		G	A	B	O
L	A	V			O	L	I	G	U	R	I	A		E	T
D	N	A			S	T	R	A	D	D	L	E		L	A

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

Yesterday's Solution

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



BBC FIRST

09:15 Pramface  
09:45 Doctors  
10:15 Doctors  
10:45 Eastenders  
11:15 Dickensian  
12:00 Holby City  
13:00 Doctors  
13:30 Doctors  
14:00 Eastenders  
14:30 Eastenders  
15:05 Casualty  
16:00 New Tricks  
16:55 Call The Midwife  
17:50 Call The Midwife  
18:45 Casualty  
19:35 Holby City  
20:30 Doctors  
21:00 Eastenders  
21:30 The Musketeers  
00:15 Doctors  
00:45 Doctors  
01:15 Father Brown  
02:00 DCI Banks  
03:00 Thirteen  
03:55 Happy Valley  
04:50 Friday Night Dinner

COMEDY CENTRAL

09:00 Catch A Contractor  
10:15 Workaholics  
10:40 Workaholics  
11:05 Lip Sync Battle  
11:30 Workaholics  
11:55 Workaholics  
12:20 Tosh.0  
12:50 Tosh.0  
13:15 Key And Peele  
13:40 Key And Peele  
14:05 Workaholics  
14:30 Workaholics  
14:55 Tosh.0  
15:20 Tosh.0  
15:45 Key And Peele  
16:10 Key And Peele  
16:35 Catch A Contractor  
17:00 Frankenfood  
17:25 Frankenfood  
17:50 Tosh.0  
18:15 Workaholics  
18:40 Workaholics  
19:05 Workaholics  
19:30 Tosh.0  
19:55 Tosh.0  
20:20 Workaholics  
21:35 Tosh.0  
22:00 Tosh.0  
22:30 Key And Peele  
22:55 Key And Peele  
23:25 Workaholics  
23:50 Ridiculousness  
01:27 Urban Tarzan  
01:50 Urban Tarzan  
02:13 Lip Sync Battle  
02:37 Brotherhood  
03:00 The Daily Show With Trevor Noah  
03:30 Inside Amy Schumer  
03:54 Broad City  
04:18 South Park  
04:42 TUT

Discovery Family

09:00 Destroyed In Seconds  
09:25 Destroyed In Seconds  
09:50 Ultimate Survival  
10:40 How It's Made  
11:05 How It's Made  
11:30 World's Toughest Jobs  
12:20 Mythbusters  
13:00 Kids vs Film  
13:25 Dick 'n' Dom Go Wild  
13:50 My Cat From Hell  
14:40 How It's Made  
15:05 How It's Made  
15:30 Invent It Rich  
16:20 Mythbusters  
17:10 Animal Airport  
17:35 Animal Airport  
18:00 My Cat From Hell  
18:50 Ultimate Survival  
19:40 How It's Made  
20:05 How It's Made  
20:30 World's Toughest Jobs  
21:20 Mythbusters  
22:10 Kids vs Film  
22:35 Dick 'n' Dom Go Wild  
23:00 World's Funniest  
23:50 Outrageous Acts Of Psych  
00:15 Outrageous Acts Of Psych  
00:40 Invent It Rich



09:15 The Hive  
09:20 Sabrina Secrets Of A Teenage Witch  
10:10 Hank Zipzer  
10:35 Binny And The Ghost  
11:00 Violetta  
11:45 The Hive  
11:50 Mouk  
12:00 Jessie  
12:25 Jessie  
12:50 Miraculous Tales Of Ladybug And Cat Noir  
13:15 Tsum Tsum Shorts  
13:20 Disney Cookabout  
13:45 Bunk'd  
14:10 Austin & Ally  
14:35 Shake It Up  
15:00 A.N.T. Farm  
15:25 A.N.T. Farm  
15:50 That's So Raven  
16:40 Good Luck Charlie  
17:30 Jessie  
17:55 Disney Mickey Mouse  
18:00 The 7D  
18:15 Miraculous Tales Of Ladybug And Cat Noir  
18:40 Hank Zipzer  
19:05 Star Darlings  
19:10 Austin & Ally  
19:35 Austin & Ally  
20:00 Liv And Maddie  
20:50 Dog With A Blog  
21:15 Jessie  
21:40 Bunk'd  
22:05 Star Darlings  
22:10 Gravity Falls  
22:35 Miraculous Tales Of Ladybug And Cat Noir

23:00 Backstage  
23:25 Full Out  
00:55 The 7D  
01:05 Liv And Maddie  
01:30 Jessie  
01:55 Violetta  
02:45 Backstage  
03:10 H2O: Just Add Water  
03:35 H2O: Just Add Water  
04:00 Binny And The Ghost  
04:25 Sabrina Secrets Of A Teenage Witch  
04:50 Sabrina Secrets Of A Teenage Witch  
05:10 Hank Zipzer  
05:35 Binny And The Ghost



09:10 Henry Hugglemonster  
09:20 Calimero  
09:35 Zou  
09:45 Loopdidoo  
10:00 Art Attack  
10:25 Henry Hugglemonster  
10:35 Calimero  
10:50 Zou  
11:00 Loopdidoo  
11:15 Art Attack  
11:35 Henry Hugglemonster  
11:50 Calimero  
12:00 Zou  
12:20 Loopdidoo  
12:35 Art Attack  
13:00 The Hive  
13:10 Zou  
13:25 Loopdidoo  
13:40 Gummi Bears  
14:05 Sofia The First  
14:30 Goldie & Bear  
14:40 PJ Masks  
14:55 Jake And The Never Land

Pirates  
15:10 Doc McStuffins  
15:20 Miles From Tomorrow  
15:35 Jake And The Never Land  
Pirates  
15:45 Goldie & Bear  
16:00 Sofia The First  
16:25 The Lion Guard  
16:55 Jake And The Never Land  
Pirates  
17:20 Minnie's Bow-Toons  
17:25 Sheriff Callie's Wild West  
17:50 The Hive  
18:00 Doc McStuffins  
18:30 Mickey Mouse Clubhouse  
19:00 The Lion Guard  
19:30 Jake And The Neverland  
Pirates  
19:45 Aladdin  
20:15 Sheriff Callie's Wild West  
20:45 Doc McStuffins  
21:15 Minnie's Bow-Toons  
21:20 The Adventures Of The



09:40 Fast N' Loud  
10:30 Garage Gold  
11:00 How Stuff's Made  
11:30 How Do They Do It?  
12:00 Mythbusters  
12:50 World's Top 5  
13:40 Trailblazers  
14:30 Boy To Man  
15:20 The Island With Bear Grylls: USA  
16:10 So You Think You'd Survive?  
17:00 Dark Woods Justice  
17:50 Diesel Brothers  
18:40 Alcatraz: Escaping The Rock  
19:30 Fast N' Loud  
20:20 Misfit Garage

21:10 Street Outlaws  
22:00 Dark Woods Justice  
03:00 Wheeler Dealers  
03:50 Misfit Garage  
04:40 Street Outlaws  
05:30 Alcatraz: Escaping The Rock



12:00 Booster  
12:10 Super Matrak  
12:35 Super Matrak  
13:00 Star vs The Forces Of Evil  
13:25 K.C. Undercover  
13:50 Supa Strikas  
14:15 Danger Mouse  
14:40 Phineas And Ferb  
15:05 Counterfeit Cat  
15:10 Gravity Falls  
15:35 Lab Rats: Bionic Island  
16:00 Rocket Monkeys  
16:25 Ultimate Spider-Man  
16:50 Booster  
17:20 Booster  
17:45 Pair Of Kings  
18:10 Pair Of Kings  
18:35 Lab Rats: Bionic Island  
19:00 Lab Rats: Bionic Island  
19:30 Phineas And Ferb  
19:55 Phineas And Ferb  
20:20 Kickin' It  
20:45 Kickin' It  
21:10 Disney Mickey Mouse  
21:15 Supa Strikas  
21:40 Supa Strikas  
22:05 Lab Rats: Bionic Island  
22:30 Danger Mouse  
22:55 Kirby Buckets  
23:25 K.C. Undercover  
23:50 Annedroids  
00:15 Gamer's Guide To Pretty Much Everything  
00:40 K.C. Undercover  
01:05 Counterfeit Cat  
01:10 Gravity Falls  
01:35 Pickle And Peanut  
02:00 Lab Rats: Bionic Island  
02:25 Supa Strikas  
02:55 K.C. Undercover  
03:20 Gamer's Guide To Pretty Much Everything  
03:45 Guardians Of The Galaxy  
04:10 Marvel Avengers Assemble  
04:40 Disney Mickey Mouse  
05:00 Programmes Start At 6:00am KSA



09:40 #RichKids Of Beverly Hills  
10:35 #RichKids Of Beverly Hills  
11:30 Botched  
12:00 Hollywood Medium With Tyler Henry  
12:55 E! News  
13:10 Hollywood Medium With Tyler Henry  
14:10 E! News  
15:10 Hollywood Medium With Tyler Henry  
18:00 E! News  
18:15 Hollywood Medium With Tyler Henry  
19:10 LA Clippers Dance Squad  
20:05 LA Clippers Dance Squad  
21:00 E! News  
21:15 LA Clippers Dance Squad  
01:00 E! News  
02:00 WAGs  
03:00 Keeping Up With The Kardashians  
04:00 Keeping Up With The Kardashians  
05:00 E! News  
05:15 WAGs



09:25 When Ant & Dec Met The Prince  
10:45 Callie-Anne Cooks Into The Wild  
11:15 Murdoch Mysteries  
12:10 Who's Doing The Dishes?  
13:05 The Chase  
14:00 When Ant & Dec Met The Prince  
15:30 Callie-Anne Cooks Into The Wild  
16:00 Murdoch Mysteries  
16:55 Who's Doing The Dishes?  
17:50 The Chase  
18:45 Emmerdale

19:15 Emmerdale  
19:45 Coronation Street  
20:15 Who's Doing The Dishes?  
21:10 The Chase  
22:00 Royal Stories  
22:30 Victoria  
23:50 Murdoch Mysteries  
00:45 Emmerdale  
01:15 Emmerdale  
01:45 Coronation Street  
02:10 The Chase  
03:00 Royal Stories  
03:30 Victoria  
04:50 Emmerdale  
05:15 Emmerdale  
05:40 Coronation Street



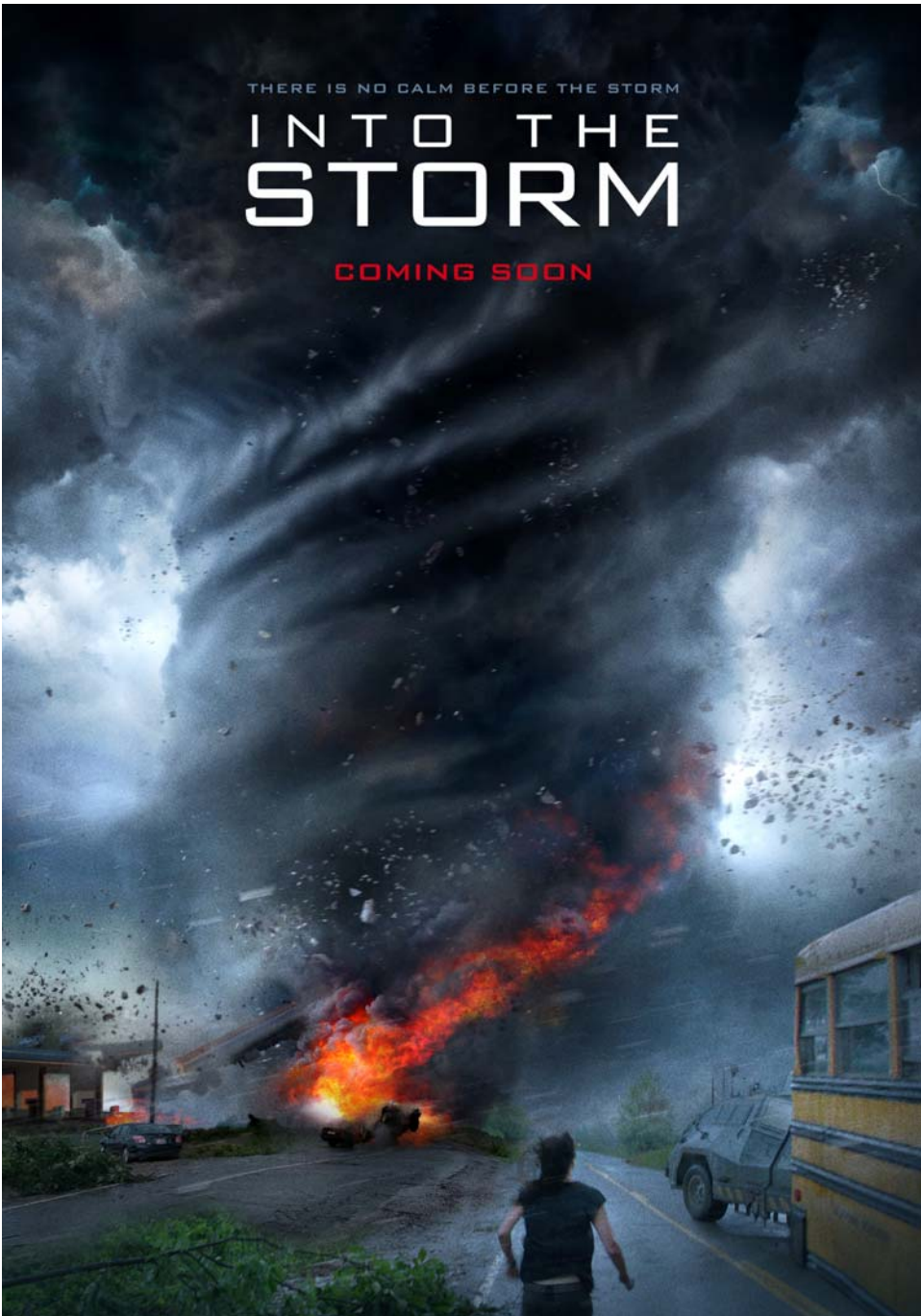
09:05 Sara's New Nordic Kitchen  
09:30 Eat: The Story Of Food  
10:20 Gok's Chinese Takeaway  
11:10 Seoul: Capital Of K-Pop  
12:00 East Bites West  
12:25 East Bites West  
12:50 Access 360 World Heritage  
13:40 Grandma's Boy  
14:05 Eat Street  
14:30 Sara's New Nordic Kitchen  
15:20 Eat: The Story Of Food  
16:10 Gok's Chinese Takeaway  
17:00 Seoul: Capital Of K-Pop  
17:50 East Bites West  
18:15 East Bites West  
18:40 Access 360 World Heritage  
19:35 Delinquent Gourmet  
20:00 Eat Street  
20:30 Sara's New Nordic Kitchen  
20:55 Sara's New Nordic Kitchen  
21:25 Eat: The Story Of Food  
22:20 Gok's Chinese Takeaway  
23:15 Valentine Warner Eats Scandinavia  
23:40 Valentine Warner Eats Scandinavia  
00:10 East Bites West  
00:35 East Bites West  
01:05 Sara's New Nordic Kitchen  
01:30 Eat: The Story Of Food  
02:25 Gok's Chinese Takeaway  
03:15 Valentine Warner Eats Scandinavia  
03:40 Valentine Warner Eats Scandinavia  
04:05 East Bites West  
04:30 East Bites West  
04:55 Access 360 World Heritage  
05:45 Delinquent Gourmet



09:20 Science Of Stupid  
09:50 Machine Impossible  
10:45 Science Of Stupid  
11:10 Science Of Stupid  
11:40 Ape Man  
12:35 Locked Up Abroad  
13:30 Breakout  
14:25 Wicked Tuna  
15:20 Science Of Stupid  
15:45 Science Of Stupid  
16:15 4 Babies A Second  
17:10 Myigrations  
18:05 Brain Games  
19:00 I Wouldn't Go In There: WW2 Special  
20:00 No Man Left Behind  
21:00 Locked Up Abroad  
22:00 4 Babies A Second  
23:00 Myigrations  
00:00 Man Hunt  
01:00 World's Weirdest  
02:00 4 Babies A Second  
02:50 Myigrations  
03:40 Man Hunt  
04:30 World's Weirdest  
05:20 Ape Man



09:45 My Dog Ate What?  
10:40 Soul Of The Elephant  
11:35 Amazonia's Giant Jaws  
12:30 Dr. K's Exotic Animal ER  
13:25 My Dog Ate What?  
14:20 Soul Of The Elephant  
15:15 Crimes Against Nature  
16:10 Wild Scotland: Highlands  
17:05 Making Panda  
18:00 Shark Junction  
18:55 Tiger's Revenge  
19:50 World's Deadliest Animals  
20:45 Snakes In The City  
21:40 Little Giant



INTO THE STORM ON OSN MOVIES HD ACTION



22:35 The Living Edens  
23:30 Wild Scotland: Highlands  
00:25 Secrets Of The Wild  
01:20 Snakes In The City  
02:10 Little Giant  
03:00 The Living Edens  
03:50 Wild Scotland: Highlands  
04:40 Secrets Of The Wild  
05:30 Shark Junction

nickelodeon HD

09:00 Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles  
09:24 Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles  
09:48 Henry Danger  
10:12 Nicky, Ricky, Dicky & Dawn  
10:36 The Haunted Hathaways  
11:00 Max & Shred  
11:24 Henry Danger  
11:48 Nicky, Ricky, Dicky & Dawn  
12:12 SpongeBob SquarePants  
13:00 Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles  
13:48 Winx Club  
14:12 Harvey Beaks  
16:12 Nicky, Ricky, Dicky & Dawn  
16:36 The Haunted Hathaways  
17:00 Winx Club  
17:24 SpongeBob SquarePants  
17:48 SpongeBob SquarePants  
18:12 Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles  
18:36 Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles  
19:00 Breadwinners  
19:24 The Loud House  
19:48 Harvey Beaks  
20:12 Rabbids Invasion  
20:36 Henry Danger  
21:00 Game Shakers  
21:24 SpongeBob SquarePants  
21:48 SpongeBob SquarePants  
22:12 Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles  
22:36 The Loud House  
23:00 Sanjay And Craig  
23:24 Harvey Beaks  
23:48 Breadwinners  
00:12 Lost In The West I  
01:00 100 Things To Do Before High School  
01:24 Game Shakers  
01:48 SpongeBob SquarePants  
02:36 Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles  
03:00 Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles  
03:24 Breadwinners  
03:48 Breadwinners  
04:12 Sanjay And Craig  
04:36 Sanjay And Craig  
05:00 SpongeBob SquarePants  
05:24 SpongeBob SquarePants  
05:48 Henry Danger

nick Jr.

09:01 Paw Patrol  
09:24 Ben & Holly's Little Kingdom  
09:35 Dora The Explorer  
09:59 Max & Ruby  
10:07 Bubble Guppies  
10:29 Little Charmers  
10:41 Shimmer And Shine  
11:05 Dora And Friends  
11:27 Zack & Quack  
11:38 Blaze And The Monster Machines  
12:00 Paw Patrol  
12:13 Paw Patrol  
12:36 Dora The Explorer  
13:00 Wanda And The Alien  
13:11 Zack & Quack  
13:22 Dora And Friends: Into The City!  
13:46 Blaze And The Monster Machines  
14:10 Paw Patrol  
14:35 Shimmer And Shine  
14:58 Dora The Explorer  
15:21 Paw Patrol  
15:45 Little Charmers  
15:57 Bubble Guppies  
16:20 Fresh Beat Band Of Spies  
16:40 Zack & Quack  
16:52 Team Umizoomi  
17:15 Louie  
17:22 Louie  
17:30 Fresh Beat Band Of Spies  
17:53 Olive The Ostrich  
18:03 Max & Ruby  
18:26 Wanda And The Alien  
18:37 Ben & Holly's Little Kingdom  
18:48 Ben & Holly's Little Kingdom  
19:00 Blaze And The Monster Machines  
19:22 Blaze And The Monster Machines  
19:45 Zack & Quack  
19:55 Zack & Quack  
20:05 Team Umizoomi  
20:28 Louie  
20:35 Louie  
20:40 Olive The Ostrich  
20:44 Olive The Ostrich



HIGH SCHOOL MUSICAL 3: SENIOR YEAR ON OSN MOVIES HD FAMILY

osn MOVIES HD  
ACTION

10:00 Swelter  
12:00 Batman Unlimited: Monster Mayhem  
13:30 Non-Stop  
15:30 The Hobbit: The Battle Of The Five Armies  
18:00 Legendary: Tomb Of The Dragon  
20:00 Swelter  
22:00 Non-Stop  
00:00 Into The Storm  
02:00 Faster  
04:00 Dragon Blade

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FAMILY

09:00 Captain Sabertooth And The Treasure Of Lama Rama  
11:00 Atlantis: The Lost Empire  
13:00 Treasure Planet  
15:00 High School Musical 3: Senior Year  
17:00 Toy Story  
19:00 Open Season: Scared Silly  
21:00 Race To Witch Mountain  
23:00 Oz The Great And Powerful  
01:15 Hook  
03:45 Ghost Squad  
05:15 Race To Witch Mountain

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09:15 Transcendence  
11:15 Accidental Love  
13:00 The Imitation Game  
15:00 Transcendence  
17:00 Avengers: Age Of Ultron  
19:30 Peter Pan Live!  
21:45 The Second Best Exotic Marigold Hotel  
23:45 The Theory Of Everything  
01:45 Pixies  
03:00 Minions  
05:00 Ant-Man

osn MOVIES HD  
COMEDY

10:00 Indian Summer  
12:00 Under The Tuscan Sun  
14:00 Father Hood  
16:00 Indian Summer  
18:00 Under The Tuscan Sun  
20:00 Green Card  
22:00 Father Hood  
00:00 Spy Hard  
02:00 The Bad News Bears (2005)  
04:00 Hot Pursuit

osn MOVIES HD  
FESTIVAL

09:15 Begin Again  
11:00 Tracks  
13:00 Testament Of Youth  
15:15 Prefontaine  
17:00 Tracks  
19:00 Philomena  
21:00 Ed Wood  
23:15 Prefontaine  
01:00 The Railway Man  
03:00 Walk The Line  
05:30 Nixon

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KIDS

10:30 Memory Loss  
12:00 Jack And The Cuckoo Clock Heart  
14:00 Pim And Pom: The Big Adventure  
15:45 Rugrats Go Wild  
17:15 Pixies  
18:45 Blue Elephant 2  
20:30 Miffy The Movie  
22:00 Scooby-Doo! Moon Monster Madness  
00:00 Rugrats Go Wild  
02:00 The Tale Of The Princess Kaguya  
04:15 Miffy The Movie  
05:45 Scooby-Doo! Moon Monster Madness

osn MOVIES HD  
DRAMA

09:00 Big Eyes  
11:00 Streetdance: All Stars  
13:00 The Melancholy Fantastic  
15:00 Shanghai Calling  
17:00 Experimenter  
19:00 Big Eyes  
21:00 Odd Thomas  
23:00 Shanghai Calling  
01:00 The Kings Of Summer  
03:00 The Disappearance Of Eleanor Rigby: Her  
05:00 Fury

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PREMIERE

10:00 A Promise  
12:00 Far From The Madding Crowd  
14:00 Paul Blart: Mall Cop 2  
16:00 R.I.P.D.  
17:45 The Judge  
20:15 Breathless  
22:00 Paul Blart: Mall Cop 2

00:00 The Two Faces Of January  
02:00 Interstellar  
04:45 Out Of The Dark



09:00 Alaska Mega Machines  
09:48 Mythbusters  
10:36 Battle Factory  
11:00 Battle Factory  
11:24 Through The Wormhole With Morgan Freeman  
12:12 How Do They Do It?  
12:36 Food Factory  
13:00 How Do They Do It?  
13:26 Mythbusters  
14:14 Through The Wormhole With Morgan Freeman  
15:02 Alaska Mega Machines  
15:50 How Do They Do It?  
16:14 Food Factory  
16:38 Battle Factory  
17:02 Battle Factory  
17:26 Mythbusters  
18:14 Through The Wormhole With Morgan Freeman  
19:02 How Do They Do It?  
19:26 Food Factory  
19:50 Alaska Mega Machines  
20:38 Battle Factory  
21:02 Battle Factory  
21:26 Through The Wormhole With Morgan Freeman  
22:14 Mythbusters  
23:02 Alaska Mega Machines  
23:50 Mythbusters  
00:40 Through The Wormhole With Morgan Freeman  
01:30 Race To Escape  
02:20 How Do They Do It?  
02:45 Food Factory  
03:10 Mega Builders  
04:00 Race To Escape  
04:50 Through The Wormhole With Morgan Freeman  
05:40 Mythbusters



09:15 Cake Boss  
09:35 Oprah: Where Are They Now?  
10:20 Little People, Big World  
10:45 Little People, Big World  
11:10 Toddlers & Tiaras  
12:00 Little People, Big World  
12:25 Little People, Big World  
12:50 Little People, Big World  
13:15 Little People, Big World  
13:40 Little People, Big World  
14:05 Little People, Big World  
14:30 Jill & Jessa: Counting On  
15:20 Kate Plus 8  
16:10 Bakery Boss  
17:00 Bakery Boss  
17:50 Love, Lust Or Run

18:15 Love, Lust Or Run  
19:55 Oprah: Where Are They Now?  
20:45 Oprah: Where Are They Now?  
21:35 Cake Boss  
23:40 The Undateables  
00:30 Buddy's Family Vacation  
00:55 Buddy's Family Vacation  
01:20 Jill & Jessa: Counting On  
02:10 Kate Plus 8  
03:00 My Big Fat Fabulous Life  
03:50 Kate Plus 8  
04:40 Little People, Big World: Welcome To The Jungle

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COMEDY

09:00 Two And A Half Men  
09:30 Two And A Half Men  
10:00 Hank  
10:30 The Tonight Show Starring Jimmy Fallon  
11:30 Better With You  
12:00 Mad Love  
12:30 \$#! My Dad Says  
13:00 Late Night With Seth Meyers  
14:00 Hank

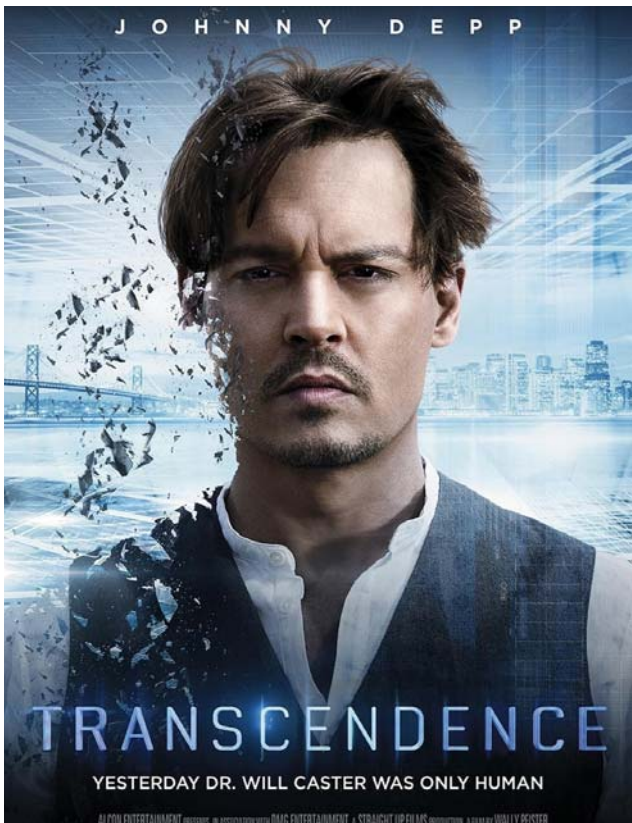
14:30 Better With You  
15:00 Two And A Half Men  
15:30 Uncle Buck  
16:00 Uncle Buck  
16:30 \$#! My Dad Says  
17:00 The Tonight Show Starring Jimmy Fallon  
18:00 Mad Love  
18:30 Hank  
19:00 Better With You  
19:30 \$#! My Dad Says  
20:00 Two And A Half Men  
20:30 Uncle Buck  
21:00 Uncle Buck  
21:30 Modern Family  
22:00 Modern Family  
22:30 Mad Love  
23:00 Late Night With Seth Meyers  
00:00 Superstore  
00:30 The Goldbergs  
01:00 The Goldbergs  
01:30 New Girl  
02:00 The Tonight Show Starring Jimmy Fallon  
03:00 Modern Family  
03:30 Modern Family  
04:00 It's Always Sunny In Philadelphia  
04:30 Togetherness  
05:00 The Last Man On Earth  
05:30 Late Night With Seth Meyers

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09:00 Empire  
10:00 Good Morning America  
12:00 The Art Of More  
13:00 Bones  
14:00 Once Upon A Time  
15:00 The Amazing Race  
16:00 The Ellen DeGeneres Show  
17:00 Bones  
18:00 Once Upon A Time  
19:00 The Ellen DeGeneres Show  
20:00 Live Good Morning America  
22:00 The Art Of More  
23:00 The Ellen DeGeneres Show  
00:00 Once Upon A Time  
01:00 The Amazing Race  
02:00 Grey's Anatomy  
03:00 Chicago Med  
04:00 The Night Shift  
05:00 Outlander

ci crime & investigation network

09:00 Homicide Hunter  
10:00 Killer Kids  
11:00 Britain's Darkest Taboos  
12:00 Crimes That Shook Britain  
13:00 Beyond Scared Straight  
14:00 Crime Stories  
15:00 Nightmare In Suburbia  
16:00 Killers  
17:00 The First 48  
18:00 Crimes That Shook Britain  
19:00 Beyond Scared Straight



TRANSCENDENCE ON OSN MOVIES HD





Aries (March 21-April 19)

Gut feelings don't originate in the tummy, but in the right side of the brain. You operate with your gut feelings today and probably fare better than others who make decisions without much information. Sales, communication and the arts are areas where you excel. This has been a month of rapid growth and recognition for your hard work, mentally and physically. On the other hand, this day affords you the opportunity to decide on a new moneymaking opportunity. On this occasion you will need to not only use your intuitive talent, but also ask about time of involvement and background questions. This could mean an investment opportunity as well as the possibility of working with a charity organization. You have optimism, now add wisdom.



Taurus (April 20-May 20)

This is another high-energy day in which much can be accomplished. As a result you can expect a little boost with regard to a job well done. This is a great time to be with others, working as a team. The support you need is available and you, in turn, are able to lend support to others. There is a feeling that you can do anything if you set your sights high enough. You may decide to take a course in speed learning or some other way to absorb facts quickly. You get the time-consuming chores out of the way. There is optimism and a tendency to take on new challenges. Friends and group sports may be enjoyed tonight. It is easy to see what you care about. Your sense of appreciation is sharpened and you do special favors for your family this evening.



Gemini (May 21-June 20)

You are ready to socialize before the day even begins. Although you may be tempted to stay home or get ready for some party and goof off from your responsibilities, you are actually in a good position to make much progress at work. You may shine in your particular job and find that practical insights come with ease. You could represent or speak for your company or communicate about your skills. It is interesting what a change in attitude will do for the day's work. Juggling your time between career and domestic activities is a necessity. Money does not buy what it used to and you may want to confer with a friend before you go on a shopping expedition later today. A different place to shop may give you better budgeting options.



Cancer (June 21-July 22)

It is easy for you to make correct decisions, find the right path and move forward in your career. You have a lot of energy to pour into practical decisions. You may need to put a careful watch on your inclination to appear commanding. Right now, the key to career moves involves attending to nagging details-whatever you have put off or neglected. Attention to matters of health and finding positive stress relief techniques are important. This is a great time, when good fortune and plain old luck surround you. There is a feeling that everything is doable if you set your sights high enough. There is optimism, faith and a tendency to take chances at the deepest emotional levels. New and deeper powers are being awakened in you.



Leo (July 23-August 22)

Support and recognition should be forthcoming from the public and from family and friends. You feel at home in the world and it more than takes care of you. You could have deep insights into your own feelings and inner, spiritual nature. You may be a bit moody, even dreamy and creative during this period. Your emotions and feelings could reach heights that are close to ecstatic. It is easy for you to find the proper motivation to fulfill your ideals or make your dreams into reality. Communicating is at a high just now. Your timing is perfect and those around you should find you most enthusiastic. Your own growth and success may be linked to questions of security-home and family, in particular. It is time to establish a home base.



Virgo (August 23-September 22)

It is as though you have turned yourself into a more confident and focused person these days. Stop and think how you have grown and be proud of yourself. Keep your momentum steady, as you will have doors of opportunity that open up for you soon. This is a good time to expand your world, physically or mentally. A four-month healing trend is also yours for the taking. You can right old wrongs and recover from regrets at this time. Benefits learned from past experiences help with present decisions. Everything points to your making some good personal decisions. You could feel great support from those around you. Romance and other things that tug at the heartstrings come your way this evening as you will want to celebrate.



Libra (September 23-October 22)

An important bond, perhaps with an older person or someone in authority, may come into focus today. There could be some tension or sense of opposition requiring compromise or negotiation on your part. There is an opportunity for understanding and even growth. Competition seems to spur you into achieving things you never thought you could accomplish. This afternoon you will be involved in some competitive activities at work-expect the highest achievements out of yourself. Teamwork is fun and you inspire others to achieve. You may be able to bring a group together with words or ideas that transport others. This evening you enjoy a favorite hobby, book review or perhaps an art show. Movies, books and all forms of escape could prove enjoyable.



Scorpio (October 23-November 21)

Information that you have been questioning will begin to take shape and prove useful. This next period is one of action and embarking on new projects. You may have a tendency to take refuge in duties and responsibilities rather than face issues that might put you through some changes-today is different. Puzzling questions are present now and there could be a feeling of being tested. If you are never questioned or puzzled, you might never discover the things you need to learn. Perhaps you yearn for a big problem to solve. You may become interested in continued education this fall-perhaps to learn a new skill. You will soon have an opportunity to learn new things. Consider teaching citizenship or driver's education this winter-you will be educated.



Sagittarius (November 22-December 21)

The coordination of a business conference may be on your shoulders today and tomorrow. This is easy stuff, but if you feel you need extra help, all you have to do is ask. Requests are good but it is best not to make any demands. This particular time promises to be competitive. Cooperate with others but back away from those who are too aggressive. You find it easy to work with sensitive material, touching upon the more vulnerable areas of the mind or self. You are able to handle these delicate matters without ever breaking stride-for you view the emotional and tender areas of the human psyche as natural. The most important thing that guides you is the truth. This evening your friendships play a most important part in your day.



Capricorn (December 22-January 19)

There is a relentless getting down to essentials that make your sense of practical vision very deep. You have a sense of how to manipulate sensitive areas of the public. Perhaps you work for a group that is involved in the study of statistical matters. You may have come upon some answers regarding the cause of some demented character flaw or a plant that may promote healing. Research and statistics and writing your findings could be very important. You have new information about a financial situation that can leave you smiling. There is an emphasis on close relationships and ideas of fairness and harmony concerning young people this evening-you may be the go-between. Tonight you encourage family members to volunteer to help a charity.



Aquarius (January 20- February 18)

This is a time when job and family become important in the way you manage your time. They need you and you may need them as you make further plans for your own future. You may find that friends and many personal interests are set aside for a short while-travel and time are gaining your foremost attention. Your life path may be redefined and you may see your foreman heading in a new direction. If you see that you would do better in public relations, or in some other department, you could start a project that would help you move into that change. When higher-ups recognize your potential, the results could be a move toward a different environment. Your talents could be in demand in more than one place-an increase in salary is due.



Pisces (February 19-March 20)

You have a lot of passion to pour into career decisions. There is a positive self-attitude that comes across quite strong. This attitude is not necessarily as selfish as it is forthright. Eliminating the trivial is all-important; focus is the goal. Discipline is no problem, but you may be too authoritarian, assertive and somber some of the time. Listen to yourself so that you can change any tendency to be abrupt in your response to others. You are involved in a day that requires an intense mental effort. You work hard and your hard work pays off. Exercise or take in a massage this afternoon-perhaps with a friend or loved one. A massage will release the tensions. Neighbors are friendly; accept invitations they might extend to you at this time.

COUNTRY CODES

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



## FLORIDA POLITICIANS URGE USE OF INTREXON GM MOSQUITOES FOR ZIKA

**MIAMI:** Intrexon Corp said on Wednesday a bipartisan coalition of Florida politicians had urged the US government to step up efforts to fight Zika, including sanctioning the emergency use of the company's genetically engineered mosquitoes. The Florida House members, led by Speaker-designate Richard Corcoran and Democratic leader-designate Janet Cruz, have written to the US Department of Health and Human Services, and the US Food and Drug Administration (FDA), seeking permission for the state and local governments to use the GM mosquito, the company said.

FDA said in an email to Reuters that it had received the letter and will respond directly to the Florida coalition, without specifying a timeframe for it.

No vaccine or treatment has been approved for Zika. The virus, first detected in Brazil last year, has rapidly spread across the Americas and parts of Asia. In recent weeks, US authorities determined that local mosquitoes were transmitting Zika in an area of south Florida. The US territory of Puerto Rico has also experienced a widespread outbreak.

US health regulators cleared the way last month for a trial in Key Haven, Florida to assess the effectiveness of Intrexon's GM mosquitoes to reduce levels of the aedes aegypti mosquito population, which is known to carry Zika, dengue and chikungunya. There is vote scheduled in November seeking community approval for the trial, as the use of Intrexon's mosquitoes have raised concerns among the locals about its safety. In the letter, the politicians said that delaying Florida's access to Intrexon's technology posed "an unnecessary health risk" to the people of Florida, the company said. The mosquitoes are genetically altered so their offspring die before they can reproduce. Trials in Brazil, Panama and the Cayman Islands have shown that the GM mosquitoes can reduce localized Aedes aegypti populations by more than 90 percent. The GM mosquito strain is made by Oxitec, an Oxford University spin-off company that is now a UK subsidiary of US-based Intrexon. — Reuters

## SINGAPORE UNCLEAR IF ZIKA STRAIN CAUSES BIRTH DEFECTS

### LOCAL ZIKA STRAIN IN SINGAPORE DIFFERENT THAN BRAZIL'S

**SINGAPORE:** Singapore said yesterday it did not know if the Zika virus detected in the country could cause the same birth defects and other disorders linked to an outbreak in Latin America.

A DNA analysis of the mosquito-borne virus, which has infected almost 300 people in Singapore, including two pregnant women, revealed slight differences between the strains but it was not clear what that meant in terms of the severity of

the disease, the health ministry said. The World Health Organisation (WHO), which has declared Zika an international health emergency, says more research is needed to determine the effects of the different Zika strains.

"There is no evidence from existing studies and from this sequence to indicate whether the differences between these strains and the South American virus correlate with differences in severity or type of disease," the health ministry said. "Correlation

of virus strains with specific clinical manifestations will take long-term careful epidemiological studies as well as experimental studies," it added.

The WHO has said that infection with the virus in pregnant women can cause the birth defect microcephaly, in which the brain and head of the baby are undersized, and other severe brain abnormalities. The WHO also said it was likely that the Zika virus could trigger the Guillain-Barre syndrome, a rare neurological disorder that can result in paralysis, though conclusive proof may take years. The connection between the virus and microcephaly first came to light in Brazil, which has been the hardest hit by the outbreak affecting Latin America. Scientists say the Zika strain in Brazil most likely evolved from an Asian strain. The virus, first detected in Uganda in 1947, spread to equatorial Asia in the 1960s and 1980s.

Singapore said the strain causing the current outbreak also evolved from an Asian strain. Raymond Lin, head of the National Public Health Laboratory said the strain in Singapore and Brazil were slightly different, but it was not clear what this meant. "There might be fine differences, there might be more mutations but currently there is no evidence at all to suggest that it's less severe or more severe; whether there is less or more likelihood of getting microcephaly," he told media. —Reuters



**SEPANG:** An oil palm plantation worker carrying an oil palm bunch to be loaded onto the back of a truck at a plantation near Sepang. A Malaysian delegation is in Paris during this week to defend the virtues of the controversial palm oil, and try to get the abandonment of the French tax proposal on palm oil, the Malaysian Minister of Plantation presents as "sustainable" and "good for health". —AFP

# CLINIC PAGE



Kuwait Times

248 33 199






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استشاري أطفال  
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Kuwait

CINEMA

SHARQIA-1

BOGET FAKARA (Kuwaiti Film)

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AVENUES-4

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# Friday Times BUSINESS

FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 9, 2016

## SAUDI OGER FACES HUGE DEBT RESTRUCTURING

PAGE 38



China Aug imports  
rise for first time  
in nearly 2 years

Page 40



FRANKFURT: Mario Draghi (center), President of the European Central Bank (ECB), arrives for a press conference following a meeting of the ECB's Governing Council in Frankfurt am Main, western Germany, yesterday. — AFP

# ECB KEEPS INTEREST RATES UNCHANGED

## BREXIT SHOCK FADES AMID GROWTH PICKUP

**FRANKFURT:** The European Central Bank held its record-low interest rates unchanged yesterday, a spokesman said, as analysts expected the bank to wait for a clearer picture to emerge of the Brexit impact before making any drastic policy changes.

The bank's governing council voted to keep the benchmark refinancing rate at zero percent, while the rate on the marginal lending facility remains at 0.25 percent and the bank deposit rate at -0.4 percent, the spokesman said after the policy meeting.

The council expects rates to remain at current, or lower, levels "for an extended period of time", the ECB said in a statement. The decision was widely expected after early data suggested the eurozone held up well to the initial shock of Britain's June vote to quit the EU, with employment and surveys of purchasing managers stable and ECB figures showing loans to businesses growing by 1.3 percent in July. But since Britain has yet to trigger the process to extricate itself from the bloc, analysts warn that it could take time for the economic fallout to make itself felt.

The ECB also refrained from making any tweaks to its massive asset-buying program to encourage lending and reinvigorate growth, which has seen it purchase over a trillion euros in government and corporate bonds over the past 18 months.

"The governing council confirms that the monthly asset purchases of 80 billion euros are intended to run until the end of March 2017, or beyond, if necessary, and in any case until it sees a sustained adjustment in the path of inflation consistent with its inflation aim," the bank said in a statement. Eurozone inflation—which the ECB aims to maintain at just below 2.0 percent—remains well shy of target, stuck at 0.2 percent in August.

With stubbornly low inflation and sluggish growth weigh-

ing heavily on the minds of policymakers, analysts were expecting ECB chief Mario Draghi to hint at further stimulus measures at a press conference later yesterday. The bank is also set to announce its latest growth and inflation forecasts for the 19-nation eurozone.

### More stimulus soon

The ECB "will need to announce further policy stimulus before long," said analyst Jennifer McKeown at Capital Economics, noting that sluggish business surveys suggest ongoing slow growth in the eurozone-making an extension of QE past its present cutoff date of March 2017 more likely. "The central bank will extend the horizon before the end of this year," agreed Nick Kounis of ABN Amro, noting that "if the ECB waits too long, markets could get nervous."

Analysts told AFP in advance of Thursday's meeting that the ECB council will likely prefer to wait until after a crucial referendum in major eurozone economy Italy and the US presidential election in November to make that decision. The central bank "needs to save some ammunition" for December, Natixis analyst Johannes Gareis said.

In advance of their September meeting, ECB board members emphasized that much of the large stimulus agreed on in March is only just coming into effect. That meeting saw the launch of a new tranche of cheap loans for banks, the expansion of QE from 60 to 80 billion euros (\$90 billion) per month and its extension to corporate as well as government bonds, and an interest rate drop. "Our priority is to implement this comprehensive package in the best possible way," Bank of France governor Francois Villeroy de Galhau told a Frankfurt banking conference on Wednesday. — AFP

## SAUDI, ALGERIA OIL MINISTERS TO MEET

**ALGIERS:** Algeria's energy minister will meet his Saudi counterpart and OPEC's secretary-general in Paris today as part of moves towards clinching a global deal on stabilising crude output to support oil prices, an Algerian official and OPEC sources said. Algeria will host the informal meeting with Saudi Energy Minister Khalid Al-Falih and OPEC's Mohammed Barkindo, said the Algerian official, who asked not to be identified. A source at the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries confirmed the meeting as part of a push for an output deal, with producers battered by a glut-induced halving of oil prices over the past two years. "There is a strong move towards a deal between OPEC and non-OPEC to at least freeze production," the source told Reuters. "It seems we are going in this direction. But if we are going to freeze, we have to use secondary sources to gauge production levels. We can't allow each country to use a different method," the source said.

"Iran must agree to be in line with other producers and use secondary sources," Tehran says it supports any measures to stabilise the market. However, it has stopped short of indicating whether it would join a global deal before its production reaches 4 million barrels per day, the level at which it says it was pumping before the imposition of Western sanctions in 2012. The sanctions ended in January this year. — Reuters



# SAUDI OGER FACES HUGE DEBT RESTRUCTURING

## GOVT ENDS RESCUE TALKS FOR CONSTRUCTION GIANT

**DUBAI/RIYADH:** The Saudi Arabian government has ended talks aimed at saving construction giant Saudi Oger, which is now facing the prospect of a multi-billion-dollar debt restructuring to stave off collapse, according to sources aware of the matter.

Oger, owned by the family of former Lebanese Prime Minister Saad Hariri, was one of two mega-contractors charged with implementing the grand infrastructure and development plans of the kingdom, building everything from defence installations to schools and hospitals. The fall in oil prices since mid-2014, and the consequent sharp state spending cuts, have weighed heavily on the kingdom's construction industry but in particular Oger, given its size and reliance on government contracts.

The numbers are stark: the government owes Oger about 30 billion riyals (\$8 billion) for work it has completed, according to a Saudi-based source with knowledge of the matter, in a sign of the strain on state finances. This huge backlog of payments has left Oger struggling to meet its obligations, including 15 billion riyals of loans, billions of riyals owed to contractors and suppliers, and 2.5 billion riyals to workers in back and severance pay, according to the source and a second Saudi-based source.

Oger and the Saudi finance ministry both did not respond to requests for comment for this story.

The sources declined to be named due to the sensitivity of the matter. It is unclear why Riyadh might have ended the talks aimed at saving a company whose collapse would send shockwaves through the Saudi banking system and wider economy. The 15 billion riyals of loans equate to around two-thirds of the combined profits of all Saudi banks in the first half of 2016 - though the lenders' strong capital positions and low levels of non-performing loans would mean writing off this debt would not threaten the system.

A collapse of Oger could also trigger a wave of defaults among its huge network of sub-contractors and suppliers, which are also Oger creditors. The humanitarian aspect of the company's woes is perhaps most pressing: Oger's pay backlog is affecting thousands of workers from South Asia contracted by the firm, many of whom have been left in desert camps. Several camps had stopped receiving food, electricity, maintenance and medical services from the firm, workers told Reuters last month.

### OPTIONS DISCARDED

Oger has had close links with Saudi authorities since it was established in 1978 by Hariri's father Rafik, a former Lebanese premier whose strong ties to the Saudi royal family helped make it the go-to construction firm for key projects, along with Saudi Binladin Group. The decline in oil prices has changed this arrangement, with Saudi Arabia delaying infrastructure projects and payments for existing work: a development which has also caused Binladin severe financial difficulty.

One mid-level Oger manager said the ministry of finance had not made payments on his multi-billion-riyal government project for nearly a year. In total,

according to the first Saudi-based source, Oger is owed 10 billion riyals which the government has already approved payment of, but for which the money has not been transferred, and more than 20 billion riyals for work completed and subsequently billed to the state.

The situation facing Oger - one of the kingdom's largest private-sector firms - reflects the complex and entrenched role the government plays in the economy, with problems partly caused by one part of the state apparatus being addressed by another.

Talks between the company and Saudi authorities to find a solution to Oger's financial problems have been taking place this year, though the exact start date is unclear.

The discussions had explored and then discarded a number of options, including the government buying into the company and the sale of real estate assets or a stake in Oger to Nesma, another Saudi construction firm, according to the sources plus two other banking and industry sources.

It was not clear why the options were rejected and whether the decision was driven by Oger or Riyadh. The first Saudi-based source said the last plan on the table had been for Oger to sell investments such as Oger Telecom - which owns majority stakes in Turk Telecom and South African operator Cell C - and a 20 percent holding in Jordan's Arab Bank, with Saudi state-linked entities likely buyers. However, around the time of the holy month of Ramadan, Oger was informed by the government it was ending all negotiations, according to the first two Saudi-based sources. Ramadan lasted a month up to July 6.

No reason was given for why the government walked away, and some sources said there was still belief among creditors the state was open to further negotiations.

However, the government had been "aggressive" in its negotiations with Oger, according to one banking source, which would make striking a deal much harder if they returned with the same approach. The relationship between Riyadh and the Hariris, and also the kingdom and Lebanon, is not as close as it was. The political dead-

lock in Beirut has allowed the Hezbollah political and militia movement - which is backed by Saudi Arabia's arch-rival Iran - to wield increasing influence in the country.

### ANXIOUS CREDITORS

While a deal may still be possible, the attention of company executives and creditors is increasingly switching to how the company can save itself, with sources indicating a debt restructuring seems the only viable option. Should it go down this route, it is likely to appoint advisers and ask banks for a standstill agreement - which would protect it from new legal action to allow for debt talks to take place - later this year, according to the two Saudi-based sources.

Creditors are becoming increasingly anxious though. Samba Financial Group in July became the first lender to seek a court judgment against Oger to reclaim its dues, according to the second Saudi source. It has the second-largest exposure to Oger among lenders behind National Commercial Bank, according to the source and a separate banking source.

Samba did not respond to requests for comment. Much of Oger's bank debt is held by Saudi banks, although Lebanese, Gulf and international banks are also exposed - mostly through a \$1.03 billion loan that is due to mature in February. The move by Samba could precipitate further legal claims against Oger from banks, according to industry and banking sources, although laws governing companies in distress in the kingdom are opaque and largely untested, making enforcing such court actions tricky.

The only real precedents for Oger would be the debt woes of conglomerates Saad Group and Ahmad Hamad Algosaibi and Brothers (AHAB). In that case, bank creditors secured court judgements recognizing their claims but a negotiated solution is still to be secured, more than seven years after the initial default. Any Oger debt restructuring though would dwarf those of Saad and AHAB in magnitude, said the second Saudi-based source. Despite its complexities, bank creditors would likely accept a formal restructuring process instead of forcing Oger's liquidation, said banking and industry sources. — Reuters



**BANGKOK:** A Thai woman prepares a floral arrangement in a shop in a whole sale market in Bangkok yesterday. — AFP

## News

in brief

### Dinar exchange rate against dollar stable

**KUWAIT:** The exchange rate of the US dollar against the Kuwaiti dinar was stable at KD 0.301, and the euro at KD 0.338 yesterday, compared to Wednesday's rates. The Central Bank of Kuwait (CBK) said in its daily bulletin that the pound sterling dropped to KD 0.402, as the Swiss franc stayed at KD 0.310, and the Japanese yen was unchanged at KD 0.002. Meanwhile, the Sterling recorded its lowest rate against the US dollar and the euro in the UK on Wednesday. The currency was affected by reports on weak performance in the industrial sector in July, in the wake of the Brexit vote. According to the UK's Office for National Statistics, the performance of the industrial sector dropped by 0.9 percent on monthly basis, while economic experts had expected a further drop of 0.4 percent.

### Moroccan govt expects economy to grow by 4.5%

**RABAT:** The Moroccan government expects the country's gross domestic product to grow 4.5 percent in 2017, up from less than 2 percent in 2016 after the worst drought in decades, a government source said yesterday. A budget deficit of 3 percent of GDP is expected, down from 3.5 percent in 2016, as the country continues to repair its public finances after huge deficits in 2012. Morocco's drought slashed its cereal harvest to 3.35 million tons, down 70 percent from 2015's record 11 million tons. The source said the government has forecast the 4.5 percent growth in the 2017 national budget, which will be based on a medium cereal crop of 7 million tons.

### Aluminium Bahrain ups line 6 loan to \$1.5 bn

**DUBAI:** Aluminium Bahrain (Alba) said yesterday it had received financial commitments worth \$1.5 billion from banks to finance its line 6 expansion project. Alba plans to become the world's largest single aluminium smelter complex, boosting its annual output by 540,000 tons to 1.5 million tons, by adding a sixth "potline" used to produce the metal from raw materials such as bauxite. The company was initially aiming to borrow between \$500 million and \$750 million from banks, but has decided to raise the amount after strong interest, Alba said in a bourse statement. The two-part loan will consist of an unsecured conventional tranche of \$882 million and an Islamic tranche of \$618 million, and is expected to have a tenor of seven years, Alba said. It did not specify when the loan would be signed, but said it expected the interest rate to be 325 basis points over the London interbank offered rate.

## TURKEY NEEDS MORE REFORMS TO BOOST GROWTH: DEPUTY PM

**ANKARA:** Turkey needs to implement further economic reforms to set it on a path of higher growth and aims to drive up household and corporate savings, Deputy Prime Minister Mehmet Simsek said yesterday. Simsek, who has oversight for the economy, has previously said Turkey would not achieve its goal of 4.5 percent growth this year, although like others ministers he has been playing down the impact on output from a failed coup in July.

Economists say the government needs to speed up reforms to boost productivity in education, labour, governance and taxation. They also say savings need to rise to shift the reliance for growth on consumption. "We need to show an effort for more reforms to place Turkey on a high growth path," Simsek told a business conference. "With very strong incentives, household savings will increase, and the reforms will encourage corporate savings as well."

He did not detail specific policy measures, but said research and innovation would lift output. He also said the government would "keep it tight" and avoid any unnecessary budget spending. Weighing on the outlook, Turkish industrial production fell a calendar-adjusted 4.9 percent year-on-year in July, the Turkish Statistics Institute. Turkey's Finansbank said this was bigger than the 3 percent fall it had predicted, while BGC partners said it was broadly in line with its forecast. — Reuters



# COULD WORLD COPE WITH ANOTHER MAJOR DISRUPTION TO OIL SUPPLY?

## ONLY SAUDIS HAVE SPARE OIL CAPACITY AND IT IS VERY THIN

**LONDON:** A battle for market share between oil producers has left the world awash with stocks of unwanted crude and driven a collapse in prices over the past two years. But a study of one often overlooked oil market parameter—spare capacity or the ability of producers to quickly ramp up output to cushion against unexpected supply cuts elsewhere—shows that a major bullish trend for prices could be building.

With Iran, Iraq, and Gulf nations Kuwait and the United Arab Emirates all producing at or almost at capacity, there is only a handful of states that have a significant gap between current production levels and what they can produce in theory. The word “theory” is key here, though, as those countries include Libya, Nigeria, Venezuela and Saudi Arabia.

The chances of an end to unrest in Libya and Nigeria or of Venezuela overcoming its social and economic problems and ramping up production are so low that most analysts are writing off theoretically higher capacity levels in those countries. That leaves Saudi Arabia, the only major traditional swing supplier, as the sole global central bank of spare capacity. But the assumption also comes with a caveat.

Having told the market for many years

that they can produce 12.5 million barrels per day if needed, Saudis, including Deputy Crown Prince Mohammed Bin Salman, have said this year they can ramp up supply immediately only to 11.5 million bpd.

Deduct from that figure Riyadh’s current record output of 10.7 million bpd, and that leaves Saudi and effectively global spare capacity at only 0.8 million bpd—the lowest on record and not enough to cover even one major supply outage. “Supply constraints seem a distant prospect in the current oil market, but a return to balance in 2017 will leave the world with severely limited spare capacity,” HSBC’s oil industry analysts said in a note.

Others broadly share that view. “In a market full of disruptions and uncertainties, if there was a blow up of the scale of Canada once again, we would see oil prices rise like we did pre-summer,” said Abhishek Deshpande, an analyst at Natixis. Wildfires in the Canadian region of Alberta in May cut the country’s daily output by 1 million barrels and were one of the factors that pushed oil prices to a six-month high.

### RECORD STOCKS

So is it inevitable that when global oil demand finally rises close to or above sup-

ply in the next few months, prices will jump on fears of a lack of spare capacity? Not necessarily.

For analyst Deshpande, countries like Nigeria still pose downside risks as their contribution to the market is unpredictable. “Assuming all countries were producing at their optimal levels, including Libya and Nigeria, and markets were balanced, it is then I would be really worried about thin spare capacity,” he said.

Meanwhile Iraq, Kuwait, the UAE and Saudi Arabia are all set to add new capacity in 2017 as they are drilling on new fields. Separately, the world has accumulated so many stocks over the past two years—standing at a record 3 billion barrels according to the International Energy Agency—that they have become a substitute of sorts for spare capacity.

Before the supply glut started building in mid-2014, stocks stood at just 2.6 billion barrels. It would take many months to bring them back to that level if demand were finally to exceed supply next year.

However, some observers believe that the constraints on spare capacity mean a bigger cushion needs to be maintained. “There is no reason stocks should return to pre-collapse levels. The lack of swing suppliers calls for more,” said veteran OPEC watcher Jamie Webster. — Reuters

## ADIOS ALGIERS, OIL OPTIONS HINT OUTPUT DEAL MAY LIE FURTHER AHEAD

**LONDON:** The oil options market indicates traders are not betting big on OPEC and rival Russia clinching a meaningful deal this month to control output, although investors have turned more optimistic. The oil price is heading for its first weekly rise in nearly a month after Saudi Arabia and Russia said on Monday they would work closely to monitor fundamentals and to recommend measures to ensure market stability, including a potential production freeze.

OPEC member countries and Russia will meet on the sidelines of the International Energy Forum in Algiers later this month and have signalled a freeze could be on the agenda. The initial \$2.50 gain in oil to a high of \$49.40 a barrel after the Saudi-Russia news was short-lived, not least because of the failure of the two sides to reach any deal on output at a special meeting in Doha back in April.

But the derivatives market shows that investors could well be holding out for a deal further down the line and are displaying a lot more optimism, as demand and supply come closer to falling into balance. The options market has seen a near-across-the-board rise in the implied volatility, a measure of the price, in buy options relative to sell options this week.

“The overall situation in oil, in my view, is stabilising. The stock draw should be with us as we head into the fourth quarter,” said asset manager RCMA’s chairman Doug King, whose Merchant fund runs some \$220 million in commodities.

“One would say that there is a distinct chance in the next six months that we do get into some of the inventory, which would act as a catalyst for investors to increase exposure to the oil market”.

When supply is expected to outstrip demand in the longer term, buy, or “call” options tend to be cheaper than sell, or “put” options as investors generally bet on the greater likelihood of oil prices falling rather than rising.

Puts are still pricier than calls, but by far less than they were just a couple of weeks ago, particularly those that are said to be close-to-the-money, or likely to be profitable. The premium of a put maturing in one month, around the time of the Algiers meeting, is around 422 basis points more expensive than a call expiring at the same time, compared with 550 basis points a week ago.

### DOHA REDUX?

A major sticking point at Doha was getting Iran to join any group initiative on production. Iran has said that while it supports joint efforts to stabilise the market, it will not freeze production until its own output reaches pre-sanctions levels of around 4 million barrels per day, from an estimated 3.6-3.8 million bpd now.

“The timeframe to reach any agreement to freeze is not necessarily in September. It will need to include Iran and that will be more likely to be at the end of the first quarter of next year,” Petromatrix strategist Olivier Jakob said. For puts maturing in May next year, when a supply agreement might theoretically materialize, their premium over calls has fallen to 570 basis points from 600 basis points last week. Money managers, who in early August had built the largest short position in crude futures since the start of the year, have now cut those bets in half.

“Rebalancing is definitely taking place, to some degree or another. It’s most definitely seen in the European market ... where inventories really have been coming down a great deal since the beginning of the year,” said Christian Gerlach, who helps run around \$350 million in commodity-related funds for Swiss & Global Asset Management, part of Julius Baer.

OPEC and Russia are pumping at, or close to, record rates, while US production has started to pick up after months of decline, making investors wary about the effectiveness of a freeze, especially given uncertainty over the global economy. Regardless of whether the market believes there could be any freeze, regular verbal intervention is paying off. From the first whispers of possible coordination in February, the price has risen by 51 percent and the premium of oil for delivery by December 2017 over that for December 2016 has slimmed down to \$3.60, from closer to \$5 a month ago.

The International Energy Agency believes the market will show no oversupply over the second half of 2016. “We have no real spare capacity in OPEC at all. It’s ‘full blast,’” RCMA’s King said. — Reuters

# OIL EXTENDS GAINS AFTER BIG US CRUDE STOCK DRAW

**LONDON:** Oil prices rose more than 1.5 percent yesterday after US industry data showed a large drawdown in crude stocks, reflecting the temporary impact of an Atlantic storm. US crude stocks fell

by 12.1 million barrels last week, data from the American Petroleum Institute showed after the market settled on Wednesday, compared with expectations for an increase of about 200,000

barrels. Benchmark Brent crude oil was up 75 cents a barrel at \$48.73 by 1025 GMT, after settling up 72 cents on Wednesday. US light crude was up 85 cents at \$46.35, having ended the previous session up 67 cents.

Stocks of US crude have been at record highs in the past two years, thanks partly to an output-boosting shale oil boom. But Tropical Storm Hermine, which threatened the Gulf Coast refining region last week before moving to the East Coast of the United States, led to the loss of some US oil production. The US government said on Aug. 29 that 11.5 percent of Gulf of Mexico output was shut in as a precautionary measure.

“The big crude draw was a temporary move,” said Tamas Varga, analyst at London brokerage PVM Oil Associates. “The big picture is bearish. The API stats are only a road bump on the way down.” Oil was also buoyed by robust trade data from China, which showed its crude imports in August surged by nearly a quarter from a year ago to the second-highest amount ever, driven by independent refiners rushing to cash in on low oil prices before import quotas expire in December.

Oil hit a one-week high on Monday after Russia and Saudi Arabia agreed to cooperate on stabilising the oil market. Prices have since fallen because of uncertainty over the chances of an output freeze being agreed by producer nations, particularly after an April meeting in Doha failed to reach an agreement. — Reuters



**MUMBAI:** Chairman and Managing Director of the Mahindra and Mahindra Group, Anand Mahindra (left) shakes hands with CEO of Ola cabs, Bhavish Aggarwal during a joint press conference in Mumbai yesterday. Ride-hailing service Ola has formed an agreement with Mahindra and Mahindra to offer cars cheaply to drivers. The Indian automaker has agreed to sell and finance vehicles for 40,000 Ola drivers by 2018 and the deal is worth \$400 million, both companies said at a press conference in Mumbai. — AFP



# CHINA AUG IMPORTS RISE FOR FIRST TIME IN NEARLY 2 YEARS

## GLOBAL DEMAND STILL EXPECTED TO REMAIN SLUGGISH

**BEIJING:** China's imports unexpectedly rose in August for the first time in nearly two years, boosted by coal and other commodities, suggesting domestic demand may be picking up and putting the world's second-largest economy on a more balanced footing. Exports also showed signs of improvement, falling by a less-than-expected 2.8 percent from a year earlier, as demand in the United States, Europe and even Japan showed some signs of improvement, data showed yesterday.

If it proves sustainable, a trade recovery or even signs of trade stabilization would help ease fears that China's economy is becoming increasingly lopsided, and give feeble global growth a much-needed shot in the arm. In recent months, China's economy has shown signs of stabilizing, but growth has become more dependent on a government infrastructure spending spree and a housing boom as private investment fizzles and exports remain sluggish. "The improvement in imports is mostly a reflection of stronger domestic demand. Chinese companies are restocking (raw materials), and also are now expecting prices to start rising," said Wang Jianhui, an economist with Capital Securities in Beijing. "There is also some expectation that the economy is improving. As we are entering the high season in the fourth quarter, we expect exports to stay stable and imports to improve as higher prices spread to more products." China's 1.5 percent import rise was the first expansion in value terms since October 2014. Economists polled by Reuters had expected a fall of 4.9 percent, moderating from a sharp 12.5 percent tumble in July. While a surge in commodity prices is widely acknowledged as a major factor for the rebound in imports, analysts believe the surpris-

ing uptick also reflected stronger domestic demand, which is fueling a brighter profit outlook for Chinese manufacturers. "The size of the pick-up suggests that there may also have been some improvement in import volumes last month," Capital Economics said in a note. Non-commodity imports also rebounded, HSBC said in a note, noting gains in machinery imports. The launch of new consumer electronic gadgets ahead of the year-end shopping season may also have given a boost to China's supply chain, as firms imported more components to make products such as Apple's iPhone 7, which officially launched this week.

A similar bounce in hi-tech was seen in Taiwan's export data on Wednesday, though analysts are skeptical it will last much beyond the seasonal Christmas peak. "We think the rebound in domestic demand is a reflection of robust infrastructure investment over the past few months. This is the result of an expansionary fiscal policy, which we believe will continue into the second half of 2016, and possibly well into 2017," HSBC economists said.

### COMMODITIES AND CARS

Among commodity imports, coal jumped over 50 percent by volume as China cut back on mining its own coal in favour of buying higher quality supplies from countries such as Australia. While iron ore imports slipped from July they remained near record highs as Chinese steelmakers rebuild inventories in expectation of higher returns. Stockpiles at small- and medium-sized mills rose 7.5 percent from Aug. 11 to 25, Morgan Stanley said in a note.

The steel price surge is due in part to Beijing's efforts to reduce excess capacity. Some Chinese steel plants are turn-

ing in the best margins in at least three years as prices rise and demand for building materials increases. Chinese steel exports also look set to hit a fresh record this year, raising friction with some of its major trading partners.

Passenger vehicle sales in China to retail customers rose 12.7 percent in January-August from a year earlier, the China Passenger Car Association said yesterday. Imports of automobiles and auto parts also increased significantly in August, Nomura noted. Global demand for Chinese goods also seems to be picking up slowly, though weak US factory activity readings and German output data this week suggest export orders may remain sluggish.

Exports fell 2.8 percent from a year earlier, beating forecasts for a 4.0 percent decline. Shipments to the US dipped marginally while those to the European Union rose 2.4 percent. Exports to Japan also improved, albeit modestly. China's customs department said pressure on shipments was expected to ease further in the fourth quarter, though analysts doubt there will be any strong recovery soon.

China recorded a narrower trade surplus of \$52.05 billion in August, versus a \$58 billion forecast and July's \$52.31 billion. However, global demand still remains depressed. International Monetary Fund (IMF) Managing Director Christine Lagarde said earlier this month that it will likely downgrade its 2016 global growth forecast again. China's cabinet said this week that it will step up proactive fiscal policy efforts now that commodity prices are relatively low, hinting that the infrastructure boom will continue. But some analysts said a housing rebound may be peaking as sharp price rises force more cities to tighten restrictions on home buyers. — Reuters



**LIANYUNGANG:** Chinese workers load steel pipes at a port in Lianyungang in east China's Jiangsu province yesterday. China's imports rose 1.5 percent year-on-year in August, figures showed yesterday, the first increase in nearly two years, in a positive sign for the world's second-largest economy. — AFP

## UK TECH SECTOR IN SHAKEUP UNDER HEWLETT PACKARD DEAL

**LONDON:** British group Micro Focus will merge with some of Hewlett Packard Enterprise's software assets, the pair said, in a further consolidation of the global tech sector after SoftBank's blockbuster purchase of ARM Holdings.

The deal creates an entity worth \$8.8 billion (7.8 billion euros) that will be "one of the world's largest pure-play enterprise software companies," the two said in a statement.

Shares in Micro Focus soared more than 16 percent in early London trade yesterday. It marks the latest in a string of tech sector mergers and acquisitions, topped by Japanese mobile firm SoftBank's vast \$32 billion takeover of British iPhone chip designer ARM Holdings in July. "With today's announcement, we are taking another important step in achieving the vision of creating a faster-growing, higher-margin, stronger cash-flow company well-positioned for our customers and for the future," HPE chief executive Meg Whitman said in a statement, unveiling the deal late Wednesday.

The move comes after the breakup of computer giant Hewlett Packard last year into two companies: software and services HPE and computer and printer maker HP Inc.

HPE shareholders will get 50.1 percent ownership of the new combined company to be entitled HPE Software and a \$2.5 billion cash payment. HPE Software and Micro Focus will have combined annual revenues of \$4.5 billion and operating profit-as measured by EBITDA, or earnings before interest, tax, depreciation and amortisation-of \$1.35 billion.

The deal is the biggest announced purchase of a foreign target by a British firm since voters opted to quit the European Union in June. "The merger will create one of the world's largest infrastructure software companies with leading positions across a number of key products," Micro Focus chairman Kevin Loosemore said. Other headline-grabbing takeovers recently have included Microsoft's \$26-billion acquisition of social media company LinkedIn, and US cyber security leader Symantec's \$4.65-billion purchase of Blue Coat Inc.

Separately Wednesday, Intel announced plans to spin off its cyber security operations as an independent company under the name McAfee, as the US giant also sought to offload non-core operations. "The tech sector is going through a rapid phase of consolidation. Tech is leading (the) deal market this year-as it did in 2015," ETX Capital analyst Neil Wilson told AFP. "The pace of tech deals is the second fastest ever after 2000, while the number of deals across the rest of the market is down."

### 'Confident move'

After ARM Holdings was snapped up in July, the latest merger also illustrates that British companies are able to do the buying, Wilson said. "After Arm Holdings was sold to SoftBank, it's also a sign that the UK tech sector is still capable of making deals in the other direction," he added. "It's a confident move-it would be the biggest acquisition by a British company of a foreign tech firm and comes in the face of a massive drop in the value of the pound that has made UK firms the target of overseas bidders." Analyst Markus Huber, of City of London Markets, said the developments were partly down to the fact that British tech companies were "simply very good in what they are doing". — AFP

## GERMAN GROWTH EXPECTED TO HALVE IN 2017 AS BREXIT BITES

**BERLIN:** German economic growth will nearly halve in 2017 as Brexit and other risks hit exporters, the DIW institute said yesterday, although it predicted a pick up to 1.9 percent this year due to strong domestic demand. The subdued outlook followed a string of economic data which painted a bleak picture for German manufacturing, with industrial orders barely rising in July and output posting its steepest drop in nearly two years. "The German economic engine is likely to start stuttering for a while," DIW said in a statement, adding that Britain's decision to leave the European Union would limit Germany's growth prospects in the coming months.

"The Brexit decision is likely to put the brakes on German foreign trade until the middle of 2017," the institute said. Britain is Germany's third-most important export market and uncertainty about London's future relationship with the remaining 27 EU members is hampering investment decisions. DIW raised its 2016 growth forecast for the German economy to 1.9 percent from 1.7 percent, mainly due to a surprisingly strong performance in the first six months of the year. But it lowered its 2017 growth forecast for Germany to 1.0 percent from 1.4 percent, also citing special factors such as more holidays falling in working weeks next year.

Brexit is expected to cost the German economy 0.3 percentage points of overall growth next year, DIW head Marcel Fratzscher said. The lower number of working days in 2017

will reduce the overall growth rate by another 0.4 percentage points, he added. Other leading institutes are a bit more optimistic. The RWI think tank said on Thursday it expected the German economy to grow by 1.9 percent this year and by 1.4 percent next. The Kiel-based IfW institute forecasts only a mild economic slowdown to 1.7 percent in 2017 from 1.9 percent this year.

### TAX CUTS VS INVESTMENTS

Speaking in the Bundestag lower house of parliament, Economy Minister Sigmar Gabriel confirmed the government's growth forecast of 1.7 percent this year. This would be on a par with last year when the German economy grew by the strongest rate in four years, mainly driven by soaring private consumption and higher state spending.

Gabriel, also head of the Social Democrats, called for more investment in childcare, education and digital infrastructure instead of using the federal budget surplus for tax cuts after next year's election - as suggested by conservative Finance Minister Wolfgang Schäuble. "We must not fall into the trap and weaken the state further," Gabriel said. "The most important point of reference is a strong and more capable state." But he suggested the government should agree on lowering the social welfare contributions for low- and middle-income earners ahead of next year's federal election. — Reuters





**TOKYO:** A construction site in Tokyo yesterday. Japan's economy barely grew in the April-June quarter, revised data showed yesterday, supplying the latest failing report card for the prime minister's policy blitz. —AFP

## ECB INACTION WEIGHS ON STOCKS BUT BOOSTS EURO

**LONDON:** European stock markets dipped yesterday while the euro struck two-week highs against the dollar after the European Central Bank left its key interest rates unchanged and decided against extending the duration of its bond-buying stimulus program.

**KEEPING SCORE:** In Europe, France's CAC-40 was down 0.4 percent at 4,541 while Germany's DAX fell 0.6 percent to 10,690. The FTSE 100 index of leading British shares was 0.2 percent higher at 5,859. US stocks were poised to open flat, with Dow futures and the broader S&P 500 futures down 0.1 percent.

**ECB WATCH:** The decision by the ECB to keep policy unchanged wasn't a huge surprise but some in the markets had been hoping there would have been an extension to the stimulus program. Investors are waiting to hear what ECB President Mario Draghi says about the outlook at his upcoming news conference. The central bank faces stubbornly low annual inflation of only 0.2 percent despite pumping 1 trillion euros (\$1.1 trillion) in newly printed money into the banking system through bond purchases since March, 2015. The purchases, made at a rate of 80 billion euros a month, are set to continue at least through March, 2017 or until inflation convincingly picks up. Draghi could indicate Thursday that the bank is ready to extend the bond-buying program.

**EURO SOLID:** Europe's single currency maintained its firm tone after the decision, trading 0.5 percent higher at a two-week high of \$1.13. More stimulus could have weighed on the currency as traders price in the possibility of more euros in circulation for longer.

**ANALYST TAKE:** "The ECB's decision today to leave policy on hold as had been broadly expected reflects the reasonably positive tone of recent economic data, but we think that it will need to announce further policy stimulus before long," said Jennifer McKeown, senior European economist at Capital Economics.

**CHINA TRADE:** Imports rose in August for the first time since late 2014, while a contraction in exports narrowed in a positive sign for global economic growth. Imports expanded by an unexpectedly strong 1.5 percent, up from July's 12.5 percent plunge. Exports fell 2.8 percent but that also was better than forecast and an improvement over the previous month's 4.4 percent contraction. The improvement was a positive sign for Chinese leaders who are trying to protect millions of trade-supported jobs. The import gain suggested lackluster Chinese domestic demand might be firming up.

**ASIA'S DAY:** Japan's Nikkei 225 index fell 0.3 percent to 16,958.77 and Sydney's S&P-ASX 200 fell 0.7 percent to 5,385.80. The Hang Seng index in Hong Kong gained 0.8 percent to 23,919.34 points and the Shanghai Composite Index rose 0.1 percent to 3,095.95. Seoul's Kospi added 0.1 percent to 2,063.73, while India's Sensex rose 0.3 percent to 29,006.18.

**ENERGY:** Benchmark US crude rose 68 cents to \$46.18 per barrel in electronic trading on the New York Mercantile Exchange. Brent crude, used to price international oils, rose 59 cents to \$48.56 in London. —AP

# US JOBLESS CLAIMS FALL IN STRONG LABOR MARKET

FOUR-WEEK MOVING AVERAGE OF CLAIMS FALLS 1,750

**WASHINGTON:** The number of Americans filing for unemployment benefits unexpectedly fell last week, pointing to sustained labor market strength even as the pace of job growth is slowing.

Initial claims for state unemployment benefits decreased 4,000 to a seasonally adjusted 259,000 for the week ended Sept. 3, the lowest level since mid-July, the Labor Department said yesterday. Claims for the prior week were unrevised. Economists had forecast first-time applications for jobless benefits rising to 265,000 in the latest week.

It was the 79th straight week that claims remained below the 300,000 threshold, which is associated with robust labor market conditions. That is the longest stretch since 1970, when the labor market was much smaller. Despite very low layoffs, the Federal Reserve is widely expected to keep interest rates unchanged at its upcoming Sept. 20-21 policy meeting in the wake of a slowdown in job growth last month and a contraction in manufacturing activity. Services sector activity in August was

the slowest in 6-1/2 years. The US central bank raised its benchmark overnight interest rate at the end of last year for the first time in nearly a decade, but has held it steady since amid concerns over persistently low inflation.

The dollar was trading lower against a basket of currencies, while prices for US government debt fell. A Labor Department analyst said there were no special factors influencing last week's claims data. However, claims for Virginia, New Mexico, Alabama and Minnesota, as well as those for Hawaii and Puerto Rico were estimated because Monday's Labor Day holiday had caused delays in the processing of the data.

The estimates are based on historical trends and normally do not deviate much from the actual data, the analyst said. The four-week moving average of claims, considered a better measure of labor market trends as it irons out week-to-week volatility, fell 1,750 to 261,250 last week.

As the labor market nears full employment, there is probably not

much room for further declines in claims. A report on Wednesday showed job openings hit a record high in July, though hiring continued to lag, suggesting a possible skills mismatch. The very low level of claims together with all-time high job openings suggests the labor market remains healthy, even though employment growth moderated in August after payroll gains averaged 273,000 jobs per month in June and July. The economy created 151,000 jobs in August, still well above the roughly 100,000 jobs that Fed Chair Janet Yellen says is needed to keep up with growth in the working age population.

With the labor market near full employment and the economy's recovery from the 2007-09 recession showing signs of aging, the slowdown in job growth is normal. Thursday's claims report also showed the number of people still receiving benefits after an initial week of aid fell 7,000 to 2.14 million in the week ended Aug 27. The four-week average of the so-called continuing claims slipped 4,000 to 2.15 million. — Reuters

## GOLD CLAWS HIGHER ON SOFTER DOLLAR, AS ECB MEETS

**LONDON:** Gold moved higher yesterday, bolstered by a softer dollar on views that the U.S. central bank is in no hurry to raise interest rates and as the European Central Bank kept up its economic stimulus program. Platinum also climbed after an industry report said the market will tighten more than previously forecast. Gold held strong gains from Friday when weak US jobs data led investors to bet that a September rate rise was no longer on the cards, sending

the dollar spiralling down.

"We had another couple of data points this week in the US that pointed perhaps to the economy not yet being strong enough to sustain another interest rate rise in the short term," said Mitsubishi analyst Jonathan Butler.

"With a week or so to go before the FOMC meeting, I think generally we'll see a supportive environment for gold, but also quite a bit of choppy trading as sentiment changes."

Spot gold rose 0.2 percent to \$1,347.17 an ounce by 1205 GMT, with US gold futures up 0.2 percent to \$1,352.10. Rising US interest rates increase the opportunity cost of holding non-yielding bullion and boost the dollar, in which gold is priced.

The European Central Bank, as expected, kept its already loose policy stance unchanged on Thursday, holding rates at record lows and promising to keep its 80 billion euro (\$90.4 billion) monthly asset buying program going at least until next March. "There are just not enough (assets) for the ECB to buy. If we see more buying, it will give a fillip to gold," said Jeffrey Halley, business development and market strategist at OANDA Asia Pacific. The dollar index, which measures the greenback against a basket of currencies, was down 0.3 percent at 94.651.

A weaker dollar makes gold less expensive for holders of other currencies. "As long as the dollar remains weak, we can see gold test \$1,350 and make its way up to \$1,375-\$1,380 levels," he said.

Spot gold faces resistance at \$1,352 an ounce and could either hover below this level or retrace to support at \$1,327, said Reuters technical analyst Wang Tao. Platinum rose 0.8 percent to \$1,093.40 an ounce, having hit a two-week peak on Wednesday. In its latest Platinum Quarterly report, the World Platinum Investment Council forecast a 520,000 ounce deficit in the platinum market this year, up from a 455,000 ounce shortfall predicted three months previously.

Palladium was up 1.1 percent at \$694.80. On Wednesday the metal scaled its highest in more than two weeks. Spot silver climbed 0.5 percent to \$19.85, having touched its highest in more than three weeks in the previous session. — Reuters



**Former French Economy Minister and founder of the political movement "En Marche" (On the Move), Emmanuel Macron looks on during a visit of a factory manufacturing plastic packaging for cosmetic products, Auriplast, in Aurillac, central France, yesterday. — AFP**



## INJURY-STRAINED WASHINGTON BEATS ATLANTA 5-4



**WASHINGTON:** Washington Nationals catcher Wilson Ramos (40) can't reach Atlanta Braves' Nick Markakis, who scored on a single by Jace Peterson during the 10th inning of a baseball game at Nationals Park. — AP

**WASHINGTON:** Nationals ace Stephen Strasburg winced after throwing a pitch and was forced to leave in the third inning of his first start back from the disabled list, and NL East-leading Washington went on to beat Atlanta 5-4 in 11 innings early yesterday. There was no announcement on the severity of his injury by the time the game ended well past midnight. Strasburg, making his first start since Aug. 17 after being sidelined by soreness in his right elbow, exited after 2 1/3 innings, allowing a run on two hits. With Braves pitcher Mike Foltynewicz attempting to bunt after Dansby Swanson's leadoff double, Strasburg's 0-2 pitch sailed high. Strasburg grimaced, walked around the mound and then threw another pitch, retiring Foltynewicz. Washington's trainer came out and Strasburg departed, covering his mouth with his glove as he reached the dugout. Strasburg was replaced by Sean Burnett, who gave up an RBI double to Adonis Garcia. Jayson Werth walked leading off the 11th and Daniel Murphy followed with a double off Jed Bradley (1-1). After Bryce Harper was intentionally walked to load the bases, Wilson Ramos singled off Brandon Cuniff to win it. Mat Latos (1-0), the 10th Nationals pitcher, got one out for the win.

#### DODGERS 3, DIAMONDBACKS 1

Yasiel Puig homered and drove in another run, and Brock Stewart became the fourth consecutive rookie pitcher to win his start, helping the Dodgers beat Arizona to win their fifth straight and complete a three-game sweep. The NL West leaders increased their lead to a season-high five games over San Francisco. Stewart (1-2) allowed one run and five hits in five innings. Kenley Jansen pitched the ninth for his 43rd save in 49 chances. Robbie Ray (7-13) struck out 12 in six innings.

#### INDIANS 6, ASTROS 5

Carlos Carrasco overcame a home run and an apparent bug in his eye to pitch into the eighth inning, helping Cleveland beat Houston. The game-time temperature was warm, causing swarms of midges to journey

from Lake Erie to the muggy ballpark. Carrasco (11-7) allowed Colby Rasmus' two-run homer in the fourth, one batter after the game was stopped briefly when one of the bugs appeared to get in his eye. The right-hander regrouped after the home run, allowing four runs in 7 1/3 innings. Mike Napoli's two-run homer off Doug Fister (12-11) gave Cleveland a 4-3 lead in the fifth. Pinch-hitter Brandon Guyer added a two-run double in the inning and the Indians extended their lead over Detroit to 5 1/2 games in the AL Central.

#### BREWERS 2, CUBS 1

Jonathan Villar hit two home runs and Keon Broxton robbed Anthony Rizzo of a homer in the ninth inning to help Milwaukee beat Chicago. Milwaukee got its first hit when Villar homered leading off the fourth. Villar homered again off Joe Smith (1-1), the sixth Chicago pitcher, leading off the eighth. Corey Knebel (1-2) pitched a scoreless inning, and Tyler Thornburg finished for his ninth save. With one out in the ninth, Rizzo hit a drive to deep center. Broxton jumped above the wall to make the catch. Chicago starter Mike Montgomery faced the minimum number of batters through three innings. He lasted five innings, allowing one run and two hits with two walks and six strikeouts Milwaukee starter Matt Garza gave up one run and three hits in six innings.

#### RED SOX 7, PADRES 2

Travis Shaw, Hanley Ramirez and Brock Holt homered and David Price threw seven solid innings to lead Boston past San Diego, moving the Red Sox into first place in the AL East. Shaw, inserted into the lineup for a slumping Yoan Moncada, hit his 16th homer in the second inning, a two-run shot, and added an RBI single in the fourth. Ramirez's homer came in the eighth off Jake Smith's first major league pitch. Holt added a pinch-hit homer in the ninth Price (15-8) won his season-high sixth straight start, allowing two runs and six hits. Jarrod Cosart (0-3) left after 3 1/3 innings after hurting his right leg while covering first base on Jackie Bradley Jr's grounder.

#### YANKEES 2, BLUE JAYS 0

Bryan Mitchell earned his first major league win, combining with Luis Severino and Tyler Clippard to shut down Toronto in New York's victory. Starlin Castro homered and Brian McCann had an RBI single for the Yankees, who have won four straight and closed within 2 1/2 games of Baltimore for the second AL wild card. Marcus Stroman (9-7) struck out eight in five innings but the Blue Jays lost for the fifth time in six games. They were swept for the third time this season, first since May 16-18 by Tampa Bay.

#### RAYS 7, ORIOLES 6

Corey Dickerson had a go-ahead RBI double in the seventh inning and Tampa Bay beat Baltimore to avoid a three-game sweep. Dickerson, in a 2-for-28 slide, tied the score 6-all with an RBI single in the fifth and got the decisive hit during the seventh off Mychal Givens (8-2). JJ Hardy drove in two on a second-inning double and Michael Bourn hit a solo homer during a three-run third that put Baltimore ahead 5-3. Baltimore's Dylan Bundy and Tampa Bay's Drew Smyly each allowed five runs and seven hits in 3 2/3 innings. Kevin Kiermaier and Nick Franklin homered for the Rays. Brad Boxberger (3-0) pitched a scoreless seventh for the win and Alex Colome got three outs for his 31st save in 33 chances.

#### METS 6, REDS 3

Jose Reyes homered on the first pitch of the game, Noah Syndergaard lasted five shaky shutout innings and New York won its fifth in a row, beating Cincinnati. Reyes and Curtis Granderson each homered for the second straight day and the Mets beat Cincinnati for the 14th straight time. Wilmer Flores added a pinch-hit, two-run drive. The Mets finished off a three-game sweep and have won eight of 10. They pulled within a percentage point of St Louis for the second NL wild card, both a half-game behind San Francisco. Syndergaard (13-8) gave up six hits and four walks. But the Reds went 0 for 3 in trying to steal against him - opposing runners had been previously been 45 for 51 this season. Jeurys Familia closed for

his 47th save, extending his franchise record. Anthony DeSclafani (8-3) was the loser.

#### ROCKIES 6, GIANTS 5

Cristian Adames hit a two-run double in the ninth inning off Joe Nathan in Colorado's comeback victory over San Francisco. Nolan Arenado homered to start the three-run rally, and Tom Murphy and David Dahl also went deep for the Rockies. With Colorado down 5-3, Arenado led off the ninth with his NL-leading 37th home run off Santiago Casilla. After Murphy's one-out single, Jake Osich (1-1) came on and hit pinch-hitter Charlie Blackmon. Nick Hundley's bloop single off Nathan loaded the bases, and Adames lined a double off the wall. Jordan Lyles (4-4) pitched the top of the ninth to get the win. The Giants are 17-32 since the All-Star break.

#### PIRATES 4, CARDINALS 3

Jung Ho Kang led off the eighth inning with a home run, and Pittsburgh beat St. Louis to snap an eight-game losing streak. Kang hit a drive deep into the bullpens in left-center off rookie Alex Reyes (1-1) for his 17th homer and third in two games. It helped snap the Pirates' longest skid since dropping 10 straight in 2011. The Cardinals are percentage points ahead of the New York Mets for the second NL wild card, and the Pirates drew within 4 1/2 games of St Louis. Trevor Williams (1-0) allowed one unearned run in three innings in his major league debut. Tony Watson worked a perfect ninth inning for his 11th save.

#### WHITE SOX 7, TIGERS 4

Avisail Garcia hit a go-ahead single against his former team in a four-run eighth inning and Chicago beat Detroit to keep the Tigers a game out of the final AL wild-card spot. The Tigers wasted a chance to move into a tie with Baltimore for the second wild card. The teams begin a three-game series Friday in Detroit. Jose Abreu led off the eighth with a single for his third hit and scored on Justin Morneau's double off Shane Greene (3-4). After Todd Frazier grounded out, Garcia singled to right-center. — AP



## T ROMO HEADS LIST OF DECLINING NFL PLAYERS

**DALLAS:** Tony Romo followed the best season of his career in 2014 with one injury after another. The question no longer is whether Romo can duplicate the success he had just two years ago when he led the Dallas Cowboys to 12 wins and the NFC East title. Rather, people wonder if he can stay healthy to play at all. Romo missed 12 games in 2015 after he broke his left collarbone twice. He begins this year on the sideline after suffering a back injury in the preseason. The four-time Pro Bowl quarterback is clearly on the decline. Here are other players who could trend downward in 2016:

Jason Peters, LT, Eagles: He's an eight-time Pro Bowl pick and two-time All-Pro who has missed only two games in the past three seasons. But the 34-year-old Peters isn't the dominant blocker he used to be. He has 18 penalties and 12 sacks allowed over the last two seasons.

Chris Johnson, RB, Cardinals: Johnson was on his way to his seventh 1,000-yard season in eight years before getting hurt last season. He ran for 814 yards in 11 games. His injury gave David Johnson an opportunity to play more and he was dynamic. The Cardinals are in good hands with either Johnson, but expect David to get the ball more than Chris.

Demaryius Thomas, WR, Broncos: Thomas had 105 catches for 1,304 yards and six TDs in 2015 despite Peyton Manning's rapid decline. But the Broncos are a far more run-oriented offense under Gary Kubiak, who can emphasize his system in Year 2 now that Manning is gone and Trevor Siemian is the quarterback. Thomas will get the ball, but he's not going to catch triple-digit passes in this offense.

Mario Williams, DE, Dolphins: After racking up 38 sacks between 2012-14, Williams had just five sacks in 909 snaps last season. He was released by the Bills following a disappointing year playing linebacker in Rex Ryan's 3-4 system. Miami is banking on Williams being more comfortable in the 4-3, but Williams' best days could be in the past. Arian Foster, RB, Dolphins: Foster missed 23 games for the Texans over the past three seasons due to back, groin and Achilles tendon injuries. He's a 30-year-old running back who took a lot of hits and has suffered a lot of injuries. That adds up to less production. — AP

## COWBOYS' ELLIOTT SET FOR DEBUT, QUESTIONS LINGER

**FRISCO:** Days from his Dallas debut and cleared by prosecutors in Ohio in a domestic violence case, Ezekiel Elliott still had to answer questions Wednesday about conduct away from the field. The same report citing insufficient evidence to support a woman's claims against him included documents that had a text exchange between the two indicating concern over Elliott passing a drug test.

The report was released less than two weeks after video surfaced of Elliott in a legal marijuana shop in Seattle, which led to admonishments from owner and general manager Jerry Jones and coach Jason Garrett. "I feel like there have been some damages done, but the past is the past," said Elliott, the fourth overall pick of the draft out of Ohio State. "I'm focused on the now." Here's the now: Elliott is set to do something Hall of Famers Tony Dorsett and Emmitt Smith didn't by starting the opener as a rookie running back for the Cowboys on Sunday against the New York Giants. The last Dallas running back with that distinction is more trivia fodder than anything. It was Derrick Lassic in 1993, when Smith was holding out after helping the Cowboys win the Super Bowl following the 1992 season. The other two rookie starters for Dallas in their openers were Calvin Hill (1969) and Ron Springs (1979).

### Outrunning distractions

At the moment, though, Elliott is having a hard time outrunning distractions. His first training camp was clouded by the domestic violence investigation, although his father strongly denied the allegations in a statement the day they surfaced. While the outcome of the investigation matched the claims from Elliott's representatives, the text exchange raised more doubts. "Honestly I have no idea what you're talking about," Elliott said when asked about the texts. "I haven't seen those." Elliott also said he was confident he had done nothing wrong. "I'm a target, that's what I've realized from all of this," said Elliott, who rose to stardom in college with four rushing touchdowns when the Buckeyes won a national championship on the Cowboys' home field two years ago. "I've got to conduct myself that way so I cannot have any distractions and I can just focus on ball." — AP



**SAN DIEGO:** San Francisco 49ers quarterback Colin Kaepernick, middle, kneels during the national anthem before the team's NFL preseason football game against the San Diego Chargers, Thursday, Sept 1, 2016. — AP

## NFL'S GOODELL DOESN'T AGREE WITH KAEPERNICK'S ACTIONS

**NEW YORK:** NFL Commissioner Roger Goodell disagrees with Colin Kaepernick's choice to kneel during the national anthem, but recognizes the quarterback's right to protest. Asked by The Associated Press about Kaepernick's decision not to stand before games when the national anthem is played, Goodell said in an email Wednesday: "I don't necessarily agree with what he is doing."

"I support our players when they want to see change in society, and we don't live in a perfect society," Goodell added. "On the other hand, we believe very strongly in patriotism in the NFL. I personally believe very strongly in that." Goodell added that NFL players have a visible platform for their viewpoints. With that comes responsibility to use those platforms properly. "We have to choose respectful ways of doing that so that we can achieve the outcomes we ultimately want and do it with the values and ideals that make our country great," said Goodell, whose late father, Charles, was a US senator. "I think it's important to have respect for our country, for our flag, for the people who make our country better; for law enforcement; and for our military who are out fighting for our freedoms and our ideals."

Kaepernick wouldn't stand for the anthem at his team's preseason games, with San Francisco 49ers teammate Eric Reid and Seattle's Jeremy Lane doing the same. Kaepernick has cited racial injustice and police brutality among the many reasons for his actions and said he plans to continue to not stand for the anthem during the regular season. Kaepernick said Wednesday on his

Instagram account that he will donate all the money he receives from his jersey sales to charity to thank fans for their support. He said he's pleased his 49ers jersey has become the top seller in the NFL since his protest became public. The 49ers open their season at home against the Los Angeles Rams on Monday night.

### Will bench players who sit

Also in reaction to Kaepernick's actions: US hockey coach John Tortorella said he'd bench any player who stays seated during the national anthem. Tortorella, who will coach the United States at the upcoming World Cup of Hockey, told ESPN: "If any of my players sit on the bench for the national anthem, they will sit there the rest of the game." Tortorella, who also coaches the Columbus Blue Jackets, talked a bit more about his view Wednesday. "I feel very strongly of being able to say what you want to say in your way, about you're upset about things," he said. "You have your right to do that, but to bring that flag and anthem into it and drag that down, no way. So I feel strongly both ways."

Tortorella's son Nick is an Army Ranger and is deployed in the Middle East. "When there are men and women that give their lives for their flag, for their anthem, have given their lives, continue to put themselves on the line with our services for our flag, for our anthem, families that have been disrupted, traumatic physical injuries, traumatic mental injuries for these people that give us the opportunity to do the things we want to do," Tortorella said. "There's no chance an anthem and a

flag should come into any type of situation where you're trying to make a point."

New York Jets receiver Brandon Marshall spoke out on WFAN Radio, saying he disagreed with host Boomer Esiason, who had criticized Kaepernick. Marshall also discussed the issue a bit at practice Wednesday. "Like it or not, this is a civil rights movement. It's a civil rights issue," Marshall said. "Martin Luther King did an amazing job of making sure everyone was at the table. What I mean by that is, he never once went against America. He always said America was an amazing nation. Whether he believed that or not, I don't know, but I say that because if you want to get things done, you have to do it in a way where everyone's at the table."

Seahawks receiver Doug Baldwin said he has considered joining Seattle teammate Lane in not standing for the anthem. "I want to make sure I get all my ducks in a row before I do so," Baldwin said. "My grandfather being in the military it hit home for me as well. It's the veterans that have reached out and said that's what they fought for, that's what they sacrificed their lives for was to give people back home under the flag, under this country, the opportunity to stand up or sit for what they believe in. So that was very heartening for me to hear that." Teammate Bobby Wagner believes the Seahawks should act together because "that's that the world needs to see." "Anything we want to do, it's not going to be individual," he added. "It's going to be a team thing. The world needs to see people coming together versus being individuals." — AP



## TOP SIERRA LEONE OFFICIALS ARRESTED OVER CORRUPTION

**FREETOWN:** Three of Sierra Leone's top football officials were arrested and detained overnight over alleged corruption offences, the head of the country's anti-graft agency told AFP yesterday. Police picked up the Sierra Leone Football Association (SLFA) president, Isha Johansen, her vice-president Brima Kamara and secretary-general Chris Kamara on Wednesday night, and drove them to the headquarters of the Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC) in Freetown before they were taken into custody.

ACC chief Ady Macauley told AFP their arrests related to "discrepancies in the financial statement of the SLFA relating to donor and public funds to the amount of \$3.5 million," since Johansen assumed office in 2013. Macauley said Johansen, Kamara and Kamara had been invited to speak to the ACC on several occasions but had failed to respond. The ACC had announced the start of "Operation Thunderbolt" on Wednesday, which it said would "bring to justice" individuals known to the commission who may have been involved in graft.

According to SLFA officials in Freetown the association is not accountable to the government of Sierra Leone but to FIFA's account committee, which usually audit national associations. Neither the arrested officials nor their lawyers could not be reached for a comment but have in the past denied any wrongdoing, referring to the ACC drive as "political interference".

The head of the Criminal Investigations Department, Chief Superintendent Mohamed Kamara, confirmed the three spent the night in their custody, though none have been charged. They remained in custody and were undergoing questioning by Thursday lunchtime, and Johansen was refused a request to be transferred to hospital, the police chief said, until a doctor had seen her. Johansen was elected president of the Sierra Leone Football Association on August 3, 2013 after her main opponent, former Sierra Leone International footballer Mohamed Kallon, was disqualified.

Since then she has faced heavy criticism from football executives, with several local clubs boycotting the national leagues. A presidential committee was set up to address the conflict but failed to make headway. Johansen founded her own club, FC Johansen, in 2004 with the objective of giving hope to a group of young footballers. She is Sierra Leone's first female FA president, and also serves on FIFA's security and integrity committee.

Many Sierra Leoneans have long blamed corruption for the poor performance of the Leone Stars national team. The news comes less than a week after FIFA named a new chief finance officer following the massive financial scandal that rocked the world football body last year. The former postholder Markus Kattner was fired for his involvement in a staggering multi-million dollar self-enrichment plot through illicit bonus payments and pay rises that also helped bring down former president Sepp Blatter and secretary general Jerome Valcke. — AFP



**NEW YORK:** Novak Djokovic of Serbia hits a return against Jo-Wilfried Tsonga of France during their 2016 US Open Men's Singles match at the USTA Billie Jean King National Tennis Center. — AFP

## DJOKOVIC FAVORITE AS PRETENDERS LINE-UP AT US OPEN SEMI-FINALS

**NEW YORK:** Novak Djokovic heads into the US Open semi-finals as the overwhelming favorite to go on and lift a third title in New York, but Kei Nishikori, Stan Wawrinka and Gael Monfils are potential road blocks. World number one Djokovic takes a 12-0 career lead over Monfils into their semi-final today while Nishikori looks to build on his shock five-set win over Andy Murray against Wawrinka.

Swiss third seed Wawrinka, playing in his third semi-final in four years, ended Juan Martin del Potro's magical run in the early hours of Thursday morning with a four-set win. World number one Djokovic, chasing a third major of the season and 13th overall, remains wary of the dangers posed by 30-year-old Monfils who is in only his second semi-final at the Slams.

"Gael's one of the few players that I will definitely pay a ticket to watch," said Djokovic. "He seems more focused at this time of his career and I am definitely expecting a tough battle." Tenth-seeded Monfils has lost twice to Djokovic in New York in five sets in the first round in 2005 and a straight sets defeat in the 2010 quarter-finals. But he is enjoying one of the best spells of his career, winning the title in Washington and making the semi-finals at the Toronto Masters where he lost to Djokovic again. Monfils is on an impressive 19-2 run since Wimbledon but admits he's the underdog against Djokovic, the 2011 and 2015

champion playing in a 10th successive semi-final in New York. "He's better player than me, definitely," said Monfils who has yet to drop a set but hasn't faced a seeded player. Djokovic should be the fresher having completed just two full matches in five rounds. He was handed a walkover into round three and was then the beneficiary of two injury-hit retirements. All of which means the Serb has spent just 4 hours and 34 minutes on court; Monfils has been out there four minutes short of 12 hours.

### Nishikori returns to semis

Nishikori reached the semi-final his first at any Slam since he finished runner-up in New York in 2014 — with an impressive 1-6, 6-4, 4-6, 6-1, 7-5 triumph over world number two and 2012 champion Murray. It was just his second win in nine matches with the Briton but he is happy chasing down deficits. Against Wawrinka, he trails 3-2 but won their last meeting in the Toronto semi-finals this summer. He also beat the 31-year-old in five sets in the quarter-finals of the US Open in 2014. "We just played in Toronto. He's been playing good tennis," said Nishikori who has a double target this weekend. He can become Asia's first Grand Slam men's singles champion while the title would net him a windfall of \$3.5 million. — AFP

## JAPAN COACH GIVEN NEW 'TRANSLATOR' AFTER BAN



**BANGKOK:** This file photo taken on September 3, 2016 shows Japan's coach Vahid Halilhodzic (R) attending a team training session — AFP

**TOKYO:** Japan's under-fire football coach Vahid Halilhodzic has been handed an assistant to help him communicate with players after claims of a rift during their rocky World Cup qualifying campaign, reports said yesterday. There were calls for the Franco-Bosnian's head after last week's embarrassing 2-1 home defeat by the United Arab Emirates and Halilhodzic did little to help his cause after the game by banning his players from smiling, according to Japanese media.

Tuesday's 2-0 win in Thailand soothed fears Japan could fail to qualify for the 2018 World Cup, and may have saved Halilhodzic's job. But the Japan Football Association (JFA) have now turned to

Olympic coach Makoto Teguramori to offer back-up to the 63-year-old firebrand, the Nikkan Sports daily said. "We hope to be able to have him act as a go-between for the coach and players," JFA technical committee chief Akira Nishino was quoted as saying. "Vahid would also like that kind of support," he added. "They will meet and discuss the situation and we'll take it from there."

Halilhodzic will still be on thin ice when the Blue Samurai face Iraq at home on October 6, ahead of a daunting clash against Asian champions Australia in Melbourne five days later. He took charge of Japan in March last year after the JFA fired Mexican Javier Aguirre following their Asian Cup flop in Australia

and amid allegations of match-fixing dating back to a previous tenure in Spain. Halilhodzic, who previously worked in France where a satirical puppet show teased him with a character named "Coach Vahid", led Algeria to the knockout stages of the 2014 World Cup but has failed to inspire Japan, despite billing himself as "Mr Fix-it" on his appointment. The defeat to UAE in Saitama was particularly galling for Japan after the same opposition sent them crashing out of last year's Asian Cup in the quarter-finals. According to local media, Halilhodzic later issued a bizarre instruction to his players "not to be caught smiling", apparently wanting them to show contrition. — AFP





**RIO DE JANEIRO:** Participants react under fireworks during the opening ceremony of the Rio 2016 Paralympic Games at the Maracana stadium.



**RIO DE JANEIRO:** A member of Bahrain's delegation enters with flag during the opening ceremony.

# PARALYMPICS OPEN TO THEME: 'THE HEART KNOWS NO LIMITS'

**RIO DE JANEIRO:** The Paralympic Games opened Wednesday with 4,350 athletes demonstrating first-hand their creed: "The heart knows no limits; everybody has a heart." Wheelchair daredevil Aaron Wheelz showed the spirit in the opening act. As a countdown from 10 reached its end, Wheelz raced down a giant ramp and somersaulted in the air through a giant 0 on the stadium floor. That finished the countdown and shattered more stereotypes about what athletes with disabilities can do. The president of the International Paralympic Committee, Philip Craven, made a similar point with his speech. Craven, who lost the use of his legs in a rock-climbing fall at the age of 16, reminded Brazilians they have their own problems to overcome. Craven suggested Brazilians follow the lead of Paralympians.

"In a country which has faced major challenges of late, Paralympians will switch your focus from perceived limitations - to a world full of possibility and endless opportunity," Craven said. "They will surprise you, inspire and excite you, but most of all they will change you." Brazil is mired in its worst recession in generations. The country just removed its elected president, and these games needed a government bailout of almost \$80 million to make it to the starting line. Craven also used the theme of "inclusion," topical in a country often separated by the rich and poor, and black and white; a country with few provisions for wheelchairs or anyone with an impairment.

"Show the world that there is no them, there is only us," Craven told the capacity crowd at the opener. "A world where people of all abilities, races, nationalities and sexualities can come together as one. We are all part of one world." The symbolic cauldron was lit by Brazilian swimmer and wheelchair user Clodoaldo Silva as rain fell. The six-time gold medalist faced a flight of stairs and looked perplexed about what to do next. The staircase then opened, exposing a ramp leading to the cauldron. Problem solved.

## Swirling samba rhythms

Silva received the torch after a number of ath-

letes carried it in the stadium. Among them was former Brazilian Paralympic medalist Marcia Malsar, who wobbled and fell over backward as she carried the torch across floor with aid of a cane. Malsar got back up, with some assistance, and finished her roughly 30-meter section of the relay in an effort warmly acknowledged by the crowd.

The show featured a tribute to the wheel, to Brazil's swirling samba rhythms, and to the beach - a ritual gathering spot in Rio. And there was the cast applauding an imaginary sunset, another ritual in this beach town. The show also saluted Brazilian swimmer Daniel Dias, the country's most decorated Paralympian with 10 gold medals - and surely more to come in Rio. Organizers say tickets sales have been booming. Only 200,000 were sold a few weeks ago, but they've now sold 1.6 million. The goal is 2.4 million. This is partly a result of the reasonable prices for many tickets, only 10 Brazilian reals (\$3). A notable absentee was International Olympic Committee President Thomas Bach.

The IOC chief said he had to miss the ceremony to attend a state mourning ceremony in Germany for Walter Scheel, the former West Germany president. Craven told reporters it's the first time since Salt Lake City in 2002 that an IOC president had missed a Paralympic opening. Patrick Hickey, a high-ranking IOC member from Ireland, was among 10 people charged by Brazilian prosecutors on Tuesday with ticket scalping, conspiracy and ambush marketing related to last month's Olympics.

Police investigators said they wanted to speak with Bach about email exchanges he had with Hickey related to ticket allocations for Ireland. Police had planned to "summon" Bach if he came for the opening ceremony, though there is no evidence he knew about the ticket scam. Also missing were 267 Russian athletes who were banned because of alleged state-sponsored doping. Officials say 159 nations were entered on Wednesday, and in addition a refugee team. Rio 2016 organizing committee chairman Carlos



**RIO DE JANEIRO:** Participants react under fireworks during the opening ceremony of the Rio 2016 Paralympic Games at the Maracana stadium.



**RIO DE JANEIRO:** Members of Iran's delegation enter during the opening ceremony.

Arthur Nuzman, Craven and - loudest of all Brazil President Michel Temer - were jeered. Nuzman and Craven when they thanked the Brazil government. Temer opened the games officially and, as he was in the Olympics when he was only the act-

ing president, was jeered by fans chanting "Fora Temer" - Out Temer. Temer took over as president after Dilma Rousseff was removed from office on impeachment charges a week ago by the federal senate. — AP





**LONDON:** A combination of pictures created in London on September 8, 2016 shows Manchester United's Portuguese manager Jose Mourinho (L) shouting on the touchline during the pre-season friendly football match between Wigan Athletic and Manchester United at the DW stadium in Wigan, northwest England, on July 16, 2016 and Manchester City's Spanish manager Pep Guardiola (R) gesturing from the touchline during the English Premier League football match between Manchester City and Sunderland at the Etihad Stadium in Manchester, north west England, on August 13, 2016. — AFP

# PEP AND JOSE RESUME HOSTILITIES IN DERBY

**MANCHESTER:** Manchester United manager Jose Mourinho and his Manchester City adversary Pep Guardiola rekindle a rivalry 20 years in the making in this weekend's hotly anticipated Manchester derby. Friends who became foes, Mourinho and Guardiola represent opposite ends of football's ideological spectrum and their ongoing grudge match has shaped the game's recent history. It is three years since they last shared a touchline and tomorrow's clash at Old Trafford marks the resumption of a duel that could determine the outcome of the Premier League title race.

"He (Guardiola) left Barcelona for a number of reasons," former Liverpool defender Jamie Carragher wrote in the Daily Mail when Mourinho was appointed by United in May. "But one of them, I'm sure, is the continual baiting to which he was subjected by Mourinho in the media. 'It is inevitable, at some point, that theme will return. Guardiola must be thinking: 'Oh no, not him again.'"

Though renowned for their different demeanors, the pragmatic Mourinho, 53, and the idealistic Guardiola, 45, have both shown a capacity for ruthlessness in their early days in Manchester. Mourinho has sidelined experienced German midfielder Bastian Schweinsteiger, while Guardiola's benching of Joe Hart forced the popular goalkeeper to leave City for Torino.

Both men have also delivered impressive initial results, leaving their

clubs neck-and-neck on nine points-along with Chelsea-after the first three games of the season. It is two decades since their paths first crossed at Barcelona in the mid-1990s, when Guardiola was captain and Mourinho worked as an assistant to Bobby Robson and Louis van Gaal. The pair became close, but they found themselves in opposition at Camp Nou in 2008 when Barcelona went in search of a successor to Frank Rijkaard as manager.

Despite Mourinho's stellar achievements with Porto and Chelsea, he was overlooked in favour of the inexperienced Guardiola. The Portuguese exacted sweet revenge two years later when Inter Milan knocked defending champions Barca out of the Champions League. In an iconic image, Mourinho raced across the Camp Nou pitch in celebration, his right hand provocatively raised in the air.

## 'Spineless coward'

Mourinho's appointment by Real Madrid that year brought him into regular confrontation with Guardiola. Mourinho's first Clasico ended in a humiliating 5-0 defeat and during a sequence of four encounters in two weeks later that season, the rivalry between the men turned ugly. In the build-up to their Champions League semi-final, Mourinho's acerbic comments prompted an angry, foul-mouthed response from the usually placid Guardiola.

That year's Spanish Super Cup wit-

nessed a new low in the relationship between the clubs as Mourinho poked Guardiola's assistant Tito Vilanova in the eye during a touchline shoving match. They last met in 2013 when Guardiola's Bayern Munich edged Mourinho's Chelsea on penalties in the UEFA Super Cup. Ahead of the current campaign, both managers were at pains to play down the significance of their rivalry. "In the Premier League, if I focus on him and Manchester City, and he on me and Manchester United, someone else is going to win the league," Mourinho said.

Guardiola said managers like Mourinho pushed him to "reach another level". But the gloves will come off when the referee's whistle sounds at Old Trafford tomorrow, if not in the pair's pre-match press conferences the day before. The presence of the swaggering Zlatan Ibrahimovic in United's forward line only adds spice to the blend. Ibrahimovic, who has scored four goals in four games for United since joining from Paris Saint-Germain, has played for both men and has very different opinions about each of them. Ibrahimovic played under Mourinho for only one season at Inter, winning the 2008-09 Italian title, but described him as someone "I was basically willing to die for". He branded Guardiola, who sidelined him at Barcelona the following season, a "spineless coward". Manchester is about to find out whether the city is big enough for both of them. — AFP

## 5 CLASSIC SHOWCASES OF THE MANCHESTER DERBY

**MANCHESTER:** Manchester United welcome Manchester City to Old Trafford on Saturday in a derby match that sees opposing managers Jose Mourinho and Pep Guardiola renew their sulphurous rivalry. AFP Sport highlights five matches that explain the story of the 135-year-old relationship between the cross-town rivals.

### United 1-3 City, Division One, March 1968

With 10 games of the season remaining, United were second in the table and City third, while both teams had games in hand on leaders Leeds United. George Best found the net for United, but City claimed victory courtesy of goals from Colin Bell, George Heslop and Francis Lee. Both teams were in contention on the final day. City took the title thanks to a 4-3 win at Newcastle United, condemning United to a runners-up spot. But United's season ended in glory as a 4-1 win over Benfica saw Matt Busby's men become England's first European Cup winners, 10 years on from the Munich air disaster in which eight of the team died.

### United 0-1 City, Division One, April 1974

Scottish striker Denis Law left United in 1973 having scored 237 goals, which makes him the club's third-highest all-time scorer. But few goals were as resonant as the one he scored against United for City in 1974. United were desperate for victory in their battle to avoid relegation, but with nine minutes remaining and the score 0-0, Law's instinctive back-heel gave City victory. Results elsewhere meant United would have gone down regardless of the result at Old Trafford. But Law was distraught. He was immediately substituted and did not kick a ball again in league football.

### City 5-1 United, Division One, September 1989

Alex Ferguson was entering his third full season as United manager and having seen his side finish the previous campaign in 11th place, he looked no closer to ending their 22-year wait for the title. The 1989-90 season's first derby at Maine Road was to prove a personal horror show for the Scot as David Oldfield inspired promoted City to their biggest derby win since 1955. But United ended the season as FA Cup winners, buying Ferguson valuable time, and it would be 13 years before they next tasted defeat in the derby.

### United 5-0 City, Premier League, November 1994

Having ended their long wait for the English title in 1993, United followed it up with a league and FA Cup double in 1994. The derby at Old Trafford later that year reflected the gulf that had opened up between the two Manchester teams. Russia winger Andrei Kanchelskis scored a hat-trick and there were also goals for Eric Cantona and future City manager Mark Hughes as United returned to winning ways after a humiliating 4-0 defeat by Barcelona in the Champions League.

### United 1-6 City, Premier League, December 2011

Ferguson dismissed City as the "noisy neighbors" following their acquisition by the mega-rich Abu Dhabi United Group in August 2008. But he could no longer dismiss the racket being made across town following this galling reverse at Old Trafford. Mario Balotelli's brace put City in control, the controversy-prone Italian famously revealing a T-shirt that read "WHY ALWAYS ME?" after opening the scoring in the 22nd minute. But it was Jonny Evans's dismissal early in the second half that proved decisive. Sergio Aguero, David Silva and Edin Dzeko, who scored twice, hammered home the visitors' numerical advantage. It was United's heaviest home defeat in 66 years and Ferguson called it his "worst ever day". Five months later, City pipped United to the title-their first since 1968 — on goal difference after Aguero's injury-time strike secured a heart-stopping 3-2 home win over Queens Park Rangers on the season's final day. — AFP



## TWO-TIER TEST PLAN AXED AFTER INDIA-LED BACKLASH

**NEW DELHI:** Controversial plans to create a two-tier Test system have been scrapped by cricket's world governing body after the powerful Indian board led a backlash, senior officials said yesterday. The proposal for a de facto premier league featuring the top seven sides had been welcomed by players and was one of the main agenda items at an International Cricket Council meeting in Dubai which ended Wednesday.

While the ICC said "significant progress" was made in discussions on "the future shape of all international cricket", both the Indian and Bangladeshi boards confirmed the two-division proposal had been ditched. "The officials at the meeting shot down the two-tier proposal," Anurag Thakur, president of the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI), told AFP. "The BCCI could have benefited financially from the two-tier system but morally we wanted to stand with the countries which would have been badly affected." His Bangladeshi counterpart Nazmul Hassan confirmed the plan had been taken off the table. "It's good news for us," said Hassan, whose board had been fiercely critical of the plan which would have effectively deprived Bangladesh of the opportunity to play major Test teams.

"India and Sri Lanka were also with us, so we were more or less confident that it would not be approved. We are delighted to know that ICC has now informed us of this officially," he told AFP. Under the proposed revamp, designed to boost waning interest in Tests, the seven highest-ranked teams would have formed a top division. The other three lowest-ranked sides—currently the West Indies, Bangladesh and Zimbabwe—would have joined a second division also including the likes of Afghanistan and Ireland.

Although England, Australia and New Zealand were in favour, Thakur made his organisation's opposition public last month, effectively rendering it dead in the water. India, the game's financial powerhouse, has a history of ensuring its stance prevails on key debates within the global body.



**MUMBAI:** In this photograph taken on May 22, 2016, Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) President Anurag Thakur gestures as he speaks during a press conference at BCCI headquarters. — AFP

India's Thakur, whose predecessor Shashank Manohar is head of the ICC, said the plan should never have got off the ground. "How could the ICC have proposed such a system in the first place? This should have been shot down at the outset," he said. Thakur said India would have stood to gain from playing more matches against teams such as England and Australia which attract big TV audiences and decent crowds.

"But countries such as Zimbabwe, West Indies and Bangladesh would have suffered huge losses and we didn't want that," he added.

### Appetite for change

In a statement issued on Wednesday, ICC chief executive David Richardson gave few details of the discussions in Dubai but did refer to long-standing plans for a Test championship play-off by the end of the decade. "Encouragingly there is an appetite from the 10 full members for more context around all three formats of the game and we have consensus on a range of areas," said Richardson. "This includes the details of ODI and T20 structures and principles around Test cricket schedules, which include the concept of a Test Champion play-off every two years, and the opportunity for more nations to be involved." The Federation of International Cricketers' Associations (FICA), which represents players around the world, said it would be "disappointing" if the two-tier proposal had been "shelved so early in this process". A recent FICA survey found 72 percent of players supported the idea of a divisional system, which would include the possibility of promotion and relegation, as a way of adding more meaning to each match. — AFP



**MANCHESTER:** Pakistan's cricket players celebrate after winning the T20 international cricket match between England and Pakistan at The Emirates Old Trafford. — AFP

## AHMED DELIGHTED AS PAKISTAN END ENGLAND TOUR ON A HIGH

**MANCHESTER:** New Twenty20 captain Sarfraz Ahmed was delighted to end the England tour on a "high note" Wednesday erasing memories of the damaging spot-fixing controversy of their last visit six years ago. Pakistan inflicted a crushing nine-wicket win over England at Old Trafford on Wednesday in Ahmed's first match in charge of the Twenty20 side and the final match of their tour.

Fresh from Sunday's four-wicket victory in Cardiff, where Ahmed made 90 as Pakistan avoided a one-day series white-wash, the tourists held England to 135 for seven in their 20 overs. Left-arm spinner Imad Wasim removed both England openers before fast bowler Wahab Riaz took a Twenty20-best three for 18. Openers Sharjeel Khan (59) and Khalid Latif (59 not out) then shared a blistering century stand as Pakistan won with 31 balls to spare.

"Credit to our bowlers ... and then Khalid and Sharjeel played really well," Ahmed told reporters. "After we won the match in Cardiff, the morale was very high when we arrived here." But I told the players that when we are playing T20 cricket we want some energy and we want some good fielding on the ground. The players did that," he added. "This is how to play modern-day cricket." Riaz had been plagued by no-ball problems as Pakistan came from behind to draw a four-Test series with England 2-2 — a result that took them top of the Test standings—before losing the one-dayers 4-1. But there was no over-stepping in Manchester.

"The credit goes to the bowling coach (Azhar Mahmood), he really helped me, he was very strict with me about the no-balls," said Riaz. "Because I was resting the last two games, he really worked hard with me," the 31-year-old man-of-the-match added. Pakistan confounded a succession of England batsmen with their changes of pace, none more so than Riaz, who broke the 90mph barrier in Manchester. "When I was running in, I had a plan within myself that if I have to bowl fast, it has to be very fast and if I have to bowl slow, it has to be

very slow," said Riaz. "You have to have a lot of varieties in this T20 game. I think I was successful in that and getting wickets."

### 'High note'

Pakistan's conduct, as well as their cricket, helped restore their reputation in English cricket circles following the spot-fixing controversy that blighted their last visit six years ago. "The whole tour was very good, our Test cricket was very good. We wanted to finish on a high note and we did," said Ahmed. Beaten England captain Eoin Morgan blamed a rapid change in conditions for a crushing loss. England managed just one boundary in their last 10 overs, whereas Sharjeel and Latif struck 14 fours and a six in the first five overs of Pakistan's reply.

But Morgan said evening dew had made the new ball come on to the bat nicely at the start of Pakistan's chase, even

though there was a gap of just 10 minutes between innings. "I think conditions changed quite dramatically throughout the game," he said. "With the benefit of hindsight, I probably would have bowled first and chased in the evening—given how much dew there was about."

### 'Pretty boys'

But England coach Trevor Bayliss was scathing after a disappointing end to his team's season. "The way we were going allowed Pakistan to get on top. We didn't show urgency with our running," he said. "We played like pretty boys at one stage," the Australian added. "We want to win every game. You can coach all you want but it's got to come from within. "The ceiling is still very high. We're still looking at how well we can play. We're looking at how we can become a bit more consistent." — AFP

## FORMER ARSENAL STAR FLAMINI JOINS PALACE

**LONDON:** Crystal Palace signed former Arsenal midfielder Mathieu Flamini on a free transfer yesterday. Flamini was released by Arsenal when his contract expired at the end of last term and the French star was unable to find a new club in time for the start of the season. But the 32-year-old has now accepted an offer to join Premier League side Palace until the end of the current campaign.

"Crystal Palace is a very ambitious club with great players and I am looking forward to being part of that squad," Flamini told Palace's website. "It is a very interesting challenge for me and I am very excited to be here. "I have had chance to discuss the move here with Palace manager Alan Pardew

and he really helped me make my decision."

Flamini, who has also had spells at Marseille and AC Milan, made 246 appearances over two spells at Arsenal. He won the FA Cup three times with the Gunners and also played in their 2006 Champions League final defeat against Barcelona. Having been beaten by Bournemouth in the race to sign Arsenal midfielder Jack Wilshere on a season-long loan, Pardew turned his attention to free agent Flamini once the transfer window closed. "His playing ability will help us but also his leadership qualities and his ability of how to win games in a passing style," Pardew said. "I am delighted we have secured a player of his stature." — AFP



# Sports

MADRID: In this file photo taken on August 14, 2011 shows Barcelona's coach Josep Guardiola (L) and Real Madrid's Portuguese coach Jose Mourinho shaking hands before the Spanish Supercup first leg football match between Real Madrid and Barcelona at the Santiago Bernabeu stadium. — AFP

## Pep and Jose resume hostilities in derby