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## DOCUDRAMA NARRATES THE STORY OF A MARTYR

# DO YOU KNOW THE CODE?

By Jamie Etheridge

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**A**lfa Romeo Foxtrot. Hear this and you may be reminded of the opening of a particularly bloody Oliver Stone film or else fear there is a new silly pop song out of Norway. Neither, however, would be correct. As odd as it seems, these words and their partners are part of a code to help reduce miscommunication across cultures.

Commonly known as the NATO Phonetic Alphabet, the 26-word code was created in the 1950s as the International Radiotelephony Spelling Alphabet. Each letter of the code represents a letter of the English alphabet. So if you were trying to spell the word Kuwait to someone over the telephone, you would say - Kilo, Uniform, Whiskey, Alfa, India, Tango - to represent the letters K-U-W-A-I-T.

After years of living abroad, I often use the code when trying to tell someone my name over the telephone. Though not exactly uncommon, my last name is not widely known

and in Kuwait can lead to lengthy episodes of confusion. So rather than repeating it three, four or 20 times, I go with the easier NATO code, 'Echo-Tango-Hotel...'

There's a rub, however. It only works if the person you are speaking with is also familiar with the code. Travel agents, hotel reservation clerks, airline agents almost always know the code. Most people who have served in the military will know it, as well diplomatic personnel, most international academics and many journalists, photojournalists and people who travel often.

But the guy taking your fast food order over the phone probably won't have heard of it. Luckily for me, there is Talabat, Carriage and the convenient fact that few people will ask your name. Typically they only need your address.

Still, it can come in handy when trying to give someone an email address or confirming an airline reservation over the phone. I've even used it when talking with other native English-speakers.

English is now a global language and there are various English accents and dialects. Differing pronunciations can still result in misunderstandings even among those with a similar linguistic background. So the next time you hear, 'can you repeat that?'

Letter	Code Word	Letter	Code Word
A	Alfa	N	November
B	Bravo	O	Oscar
C	Charlie	P	Papa
D	Delta	Q	Quebec
E	Echo	R	Romeo
F	Foxtrot	S	Sierra
G	Golf	T	Tango
H	Hotel	U	Uniform
I	India	V	Victor
J	Juliet	W	Whiskey
K	Kilo	X	X-ray
L	Lima	Y	Yankee
M	Mike	Z	Zulu

Just kiddin', seriously

# A THANK YOU LETTER TO THE TERRORIST

By Sahar Moussa

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**I** don't know why evil seems to be winning these days. That's what my friend told me, referring to the massacre that took place at Istanbul's Reina nightclub on New Year's Eve. At least 11 victims of the attack on the upscale nightclub were from Turkey, according to Anadolu news agency, while at least 27 victims were from 13 other countries including Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, Lebanon, Iraq, Syria, Jordan, Tunisia, Israel, Canada and India. Dozens of people were hospitalized and a handful of the injured are in critical condition, according to CNN.

I would like to send my condolences to all the parents and families that buried their children, husbands and wives. I also would like to send a message to the terrorists. Although it was announced that Islamic State claimed responsibility for the attack in a statement posted on Twitter, in my opinion, IS is not the only outfit responsible for the death of these victims and definitely not the only terrorist group.

Reina nightclub is considered to be one of the most prominent, expensive and luxurious nightclubs in Istanbul. It is known for attracting famous singers, actors and sports stars. So it is supposed to be highly secured, with bodyguards and security cameras. So letting the terrorist shoot for around 45 minutes without any intervention is really suspicious. Secondly, there is a police station right next to the club, so again the question pops up: Why didn't the police arrive straight away instead of waiting for 45 minutes to enter the club. So many questions, but no answers!

So dear terrorists - on this occasion, I would like to send a thank you note on your terror attacks that are masked behind your extreme religious beliefs in the name of God that only you claim to know about.

Thank you, because with every terror attack committed against civilians, you are actually uniting people.

Thank you, because with every blast you claim responsibility for, you are strengthening the bond between societies.

Thank you, because every time you kidnap and kill innocent children, women or men, you are deepening the understanding between human beings and making them stronger.

Thank you, because with every act of destruction you cause, new and bigger houses are built.

Thank you, because what politics and religion separated, with your frequent terrorist attacks, you are able to connect people with each other.

Thank you for every person who judged the martyrs that were killed just because they were having fun and celebrating inside the nightclub. You only gave them more good deeds in heaven.

I really hope that people understand that IS and other extremist parties do not represent Islam in any way. What they are doing is ferociousness, terrorism and barbarism. And Islam is a religion of peace, mercy and love.

If these people who are killing in the name of Islam know what Islam is really about, they wouldn't dare to kill anyone, because it is mentioned in the Quran: 'If anyone killed a person not in retaliation of murder, or (and) to spread mischief in the land - it would be as if he killed all mankind, and if anyone saved a life, it would be as if he saved the life of all mankind.' (Al-Maeda)

IS is nothing but a group of ignorant and brainwashed people, and is not related to Islam in any way.

For all the victims who lost their lives in the attack - RIP.  
Sahar@kuwaittimes.net



**KUWAIT:** The cooler temperatures means more people spending time outdoors, especially taking long walks along Kuwait's beautiful coastal walkway, the Corniche.

— Photo by Thomas Joseph

# Exploring Kuwait's countryside

## A visit to a local farm



By Athoob Al-Shuaibi

**D**uring the cooler winter months in Kuwait, many people prefer to spend time outdoors and a new activity now available is visiting local farms. Several farms in Wafra and Al-Abdaly are open to the public and accept visitors, either daily or on weekends. Though there is no official list, farms like Bab Dokalh, Bohayra and Sadeer in Abdaly and Yasmin in Wafra welcome visitors and offer a pleasant, refreshing break from the stress of urban life.

On a recent sunny but cool Saturday, we hit Road 40 with our kids and some friends to visit

the popular Yasmin Farm in Wafra. An hour's journey from Kuwait City, the drive to Wafra is far from boring thanks to hundreds of ideas for car games for the kids and the interesting things we saw along the way. The drive down provides a beautiful, scenic view of Kuwait's open desert, lots of camping grounds and if you're lucky, a chance to see a few small herds of camels strolling along the highway and eating shrubs.

Upon reaching the farm, we found a quaint open ground with places to park, a café and shop and a place to buy tickets. A golf cart took us on a tour with a guide to show us the agricultural fields and livestock comprising of sheep, goats, cows and chickens.



Several farms in Kuwait are open to the public or offer open days on weekends and welcome visitors. Photos show a recent visit to Yasmin Farms in Wafra. Other farms open for visitors include Bab Dokalh, Bohayra and Sadeer in Abdaly (information and directions for all can be found on their Instagram accounts.). — Photos by Jamie Etheridge



We then stopped at a small petting zone, which had a great influence on the kids, as they interacted closely with farm animals and camels. They bottle-fed kids (baby goats), played with the bunnies and turtles and petted the camels. They also watched baby ducklings and chicks, wandering around with amazement and laughter.

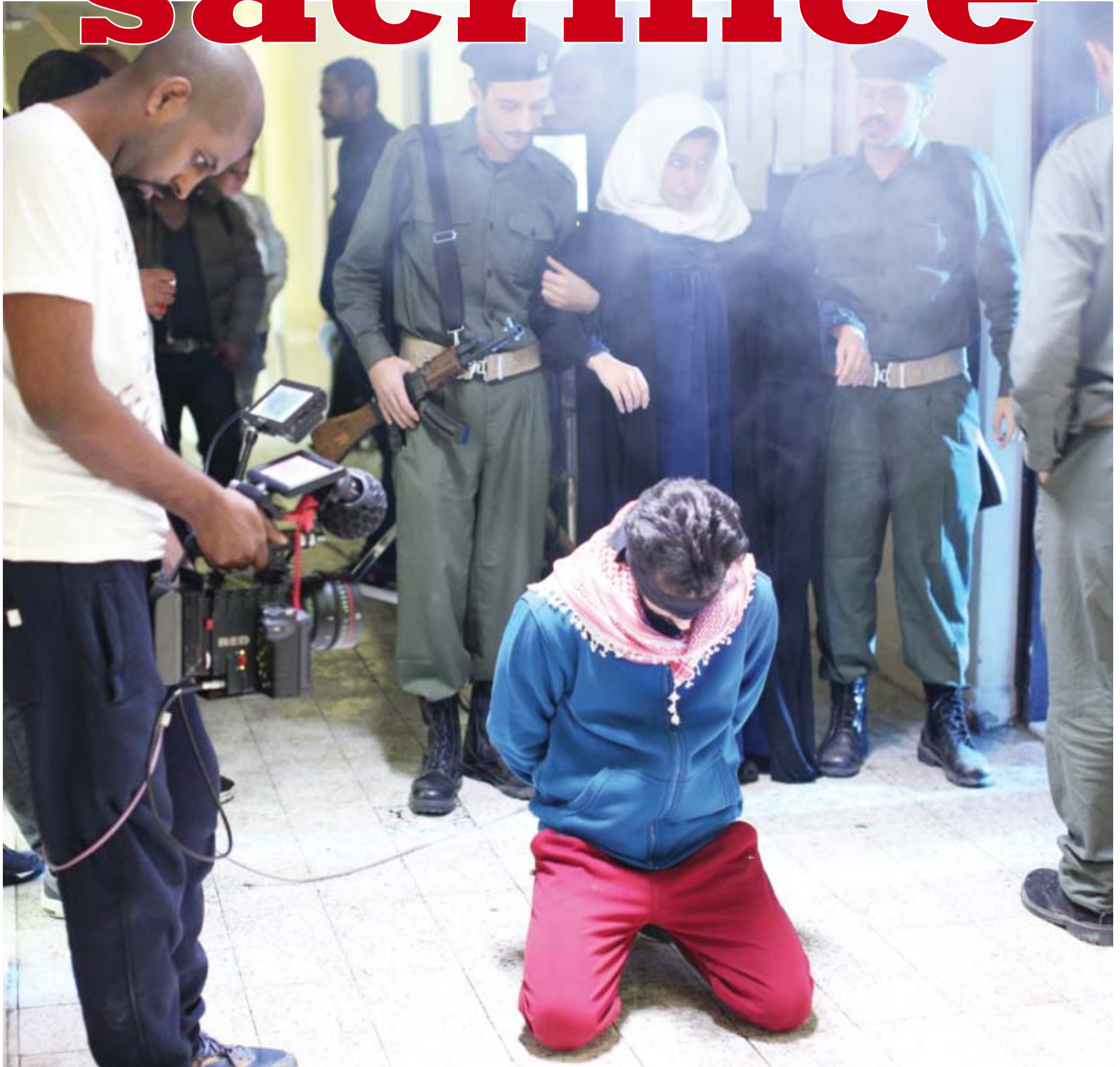
Without doubt, parents are encouraged to take their children for a similar experience due to its huge benefits. One of the main reasons is to detach them from electronics, as many of them are now glued to smartphones and

tablets. Another reason is to educate them about the origins of their food, along with getting some refreshing and clean air away from urban pollution.

At the end of our tour, another golf cart took us back to the playground area of the farm behind the cafe. There are long tables for large families to picnic, while the kids can play. The farm has some grills available for hire as well. You can wrap up your trip with a visit to the farm store, where you can buy fresh produce and preserves.



# Remembering the sacrifice



***She was only 23 when she was killed by Iraqi soldiers  
after they found she was a partisan***





By Nawara Fattahova

A human body is dumped just before sunset near a garbage bin on a street in Surra. The sight of the corpse, wrapped in black cloth, is horrifying.

But wait! This is not an actual crime - it's an outdoor shoot of a Kuwaiti docudrama that was being filmed in December about martyr Wafa Al-Amer. She was only 23 when she was killed by Iraqi soldiers after they found she was a partisan and member of a resistance group. For those who were in Kuwait in August 1990, these events evoke terrifying memories of the Iraqi invasion, which sought to totally obliterate the identity of Kuwait.

But for the younger generations who were born after the invasion and didn't witness this period, the incident is just an event in history they learn about at school. The new film 'Martyr Wafa Al-Amer' aims to familiarize them with the events of this dark period.

**Remembering Wafa**

Actress Manal Al-Jarallah is playing the role of Wafa, and was very happy to participate in this patriotic venture. "I didn't hesitate for a minute when the director approached me to play this role. I was very pleased and happy, as the martyr Wafa is an honor for our country. Shooting took place over seven days. It's a difficult role, and I hope I will present it in the best way," she told Kuwait Times.

"I was only two years old during the invasion, so I was not aware of the outfits, accessories and makeup to recreate that period. So the team prepared everything for me to look the same as Wafa. It's a new experience for me and I'm a bit worried, but the staff has made it easy for me.

When I read a novel about Wafa before shooting this documentary, I couldn't put it

down, as it was so exciting!" she noted.

The other main character is Kuwaiti actor Maytham Bader, who plays the role of Dr Abdalnaser Fakhroh, Wafa's cousin. "Fakhroh was the person closest to Wafa. He helped her move in various areas transporting weapons for the 'Kuwaiti defenders' group, although I don't know whether she was actually working with them," Maytham noted.

Like Manal, Maytham is also very pleased to play this role. "Participating in this film in an honor for me. I wish I could portray 10 percent of what the martyr Wafa did for Kuwait, who sacrificed her life for the sake of our country. This is my first time acting in a documentary, and I would like to thank the director for choosing me for this role," he added.

**Detailed and prepared**

Preparations for the film has been in the work for months. Salah Al-Hatem, general supervisor of the documentary, said work started three months back.

"We started by interviewing real-life personalities like Wafa's brother, her cousin and other partisans who worked with her. These people provided new information which wasn't published previously about Wafa, her life and her role during the invasion," he told Kuwait Times.

'Martyr Wafa Al-Amer' will run for 80 minutes. "We took care of all details - even the smallest ones - as we want to avoid the previous mistakes we made in the first docudrama we produced about martyr Asrar Al-Qabandi

last year. Some people complained about the errors in that documentary. We have rented used vehicles for this film from collectors of vintage cars, and these vehicles are exactly the same as those of the real people depicted. Also, the main actors Manal and Maytham look very much like the real personalities," explained Hatem.

This docudrama is produced by the Arab Information Center, and is sponsored by the Ministry of Information and the Martyr's Office, which supported this work by providing actual weaponry from that time. The premiere of the film will take place in February at the Jaber Cultural Center on the occasion of the National and Liberation Days. It will also be screened in cinemas and shown on TV.



KUWAIT: Photos show various scenes during the filming of the Kuwaiti docudrama, 'Martyr Wafa Al-Amer'. —Photos courtesy Saleh Al-Hatem.

# MOH FEES ON SERVICES FOR EXPATS TO RISE BY MID-FEB

FEES WILL REMAIN 20% LESS THAN PRIVATE SECTOR: DR HARBY

**KUWAIT:** Health Minister Dr Jamal Al-Harby said that the ministry of health has decided to increase fees on health services for expats which will become effective mid-February. However, he added that the fees of the services and medical examination provided by the MoH will be 20% less than that prevailed in the private sector.

Al-Harby said that there was a meeting of the council of the undersecretaries last week and a recommendation was made based on the ministry's study to review service fees for expats. He said

that the study recommended to increase fees for X-ray and medical laboratories services. However, they will be 20% less than that in the private sector. Other advanced medical examinations and nuclear tests that are not currently available in the private sector will be charged 50% of the cost, he added.

Al-Harby said fees for medical services were not reviewed for a long time and the costs are now a burden on the state's general budget due to high prices of medical equipment as well as the rising prices of medicines. This has

prompted the ministry to re-evaluate the existing fee structure in the MoH in providing services to non-Kuwaitis.

After issuing the decision to raise the fees, the impact of the decision on limited income expat labor will be studied. Subsequently, their status in regards to these increases will be decided by finding a suitable mechanism for them. Al-Harby said the bedoons will not be included in the purview of the increase and will only apply to expats who represent 2/3 of the total population of the country. —Al-Rai



## KUWAITI ARMY STRIVES TO EXCEL IN ALL FIELDS

**KUWAIT:** Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Defense Sheikh Mohammad Al-Khaled Al-Sabah underlined that the Kuwaiti army will always strive to excel in various fields. This remark was made yesterday following a tour by the Minister to one of the army's units, the Kuwaiti Army moral department

said in a press statement. Sheikh Mohammad Al-Khaled, during his tour, listened to details on the army's physical and technical capabilities. The goal of this tour is a show the Kuwaiti leadership's support to the Kuwaiti army - the first front to protect and secure the nation. —KUNA



**KUWAIT:** The Minister of Commerce and Industry Khalid Al-Rawdhan issued instructions to remove glass partitions between the employees and patrons at the Commercial Licenses Department at the Ministry. According to the Minister, this will help the department provide better services to the patrons and make the work smoother at the ministry.



## Crime

Report

### Citizens fall victims to 'fake Saudi plot sales'

**KUWAIT:** Several citizens found themselves victims of a fraud by committed by a 'leader' at Kuwait municipality and lecturer at the Public Authority for Applied Education and Training (PAAET) when he sold them plots of land in Saudi Arabia that could not be legally transferred to their names. The cheating came to light only after they paid large sums of money to the tunes of KD 17,000 for each plot in certain cases.

A security source said that a police station in Farwaniya governorate lodged a complaint against the suspect for selling non-transferrable plots of land to citizens in Saudi Arabia due to legal issues.

### Expat thrown off

An Ethiopian expat fell from the second floor of a Maidan Hawally building and was taken to hospital in a critical condition. She claimed her bedoon boyfriend pushed her out. He was detained and an investigation has commenced.

### Fisticuff over girl

Two citizens started a bloody fight in a cafe in Salmiya until police broke it up. It was found out that the fight was over a girl. Both were taken to police station for interrogation.

### Threatened

A citizen told the Bayan police that a Jordanian expat threatened her during a phone call between the two. She also said that a Jordanian woman insulted her verbally at her home. Police placed the Jordanians names on the wanted list for questioning.

### Expats arrested

Two Jordanians were detained in Maidan Hawally for exchanging blows. A security source said a Jordanian went to Median Hawally police station and told them that his nose was broken by another Jordanian. The latter was summoned but in turn claimed that he was beaten. So both were jailed at the orders of Hawally prosecutor for questioning by her.

### Driver robbed

Hawally detectives are working on identifying four persons, accused by a driver of robbing him of KD 48 at knife-point. The Bangladeshi driver went to Rumaithiya police station and told them that four persons stopped him near a hotel. As soon as they got in the car they pulled a knife and asked for money.

### Ammunition dealer held

Jahra police sent a citizen to criminal detectives for possessing ammunition for what seems to be for sale. He will also be sent later to Drugs Control dept for questioning in a drugs-related case. The suspect is also wanted on a KD 450 civil case. The man had 2,643 bullets in his possession when he was arrested. —Alrai, Al-Anbaa

## KUWAIT PARLIAMENT SEEKS EXPANDED SERVICES FOR SPECIAL NEEDS CITIZENS

**KUWAIT:** The parliamentary committee charged with special needs' affairs discussed during a meeting with Minister of Social Affairs Dr Hind Al-Subaih yesterday prospects of establishing branches for the Public Authority for Disabled in the governorates of Al-Ahmadi and Al-Jahraa.

The commission rapporteur, Hamdan Al-Azmi, said in a statement post the meeting that the request was intended to shorten transactions' time for this segment of the Kuwaiti society. Al-Azmi added that Minister Al-Subaih, also the Minister of State for Economic Affairs, expressed readiness to cooperate and establish new facilities for the citizens of special challenges to relieve them of long-time waiting to accomplish transactions. The committee, formed in the parliament's past session, includes MP Mubarak Al-Hajraf, Khalil Al-Saleh, Safaa Al-Hashem, Usama Al-Shahin, Dr Oda Al-Rwaiee, Hamdan Al-Azmi and Marzouq Al-Khlaifa. —KUNA

# International

FRIDAY, JANUARY 6, 2017

**Iraq launches offensive on IS near Syria border**



**Charlie Hebdo feels a target two years after attack**



**S Korea president's lawyers say no evidence for impeachment**



IZMIR, Turkey: Cars burn in the street at the site of an explosion in front of the courthouse in Izmir yesterday. —AFP

## TWO KILLED IN TURKEY CAR-BOMB ATTACK

‘THE MASSACRE WAS SOPHISTICATED AND WELL PLANNED’

**ANKARA:** A car bombing rocked the Turkish city of Izmir yesterday, killing at least two people and triggering a shootout that left two suspected militants dead, as authorities chased the fugitive killer behind the New Year attack in Istanbul. Turkey is on edge after the shooting rampage at the Reina nightclub unleashed shortly after revelers rang in 2017 which killed 39 people and was claimed by the Islamic State group. A top official said the gunman may be a Turkic Uighur and several people of Uighur origin were arrested yesterday.

Just four days after the nightclub carnage, a car bomb exploded outside a courthouse in the Aegean city of Izmir yesterday afternoon. State-run Anadolu news agency said a policeman and a court worker, reportedly a bailiff, were killed. Police battled “terrorists” in a clash which saw two militants killed while another escaped, according to Anadolu. Several ambulances rushed to the scene after the blast in the usually peaceful port city, Turkey’s third largest metropolis.

The mayor of the local Bayrakli municipality, Hassan Karabag, had told NTV television

that at least 10 people were wounded, while the Dogan news agency put the injury toll at 11. There has so far been no claim of responsibility or an indication of who may have carried out the attack, the latest bombing after a year of bloodshed in the Muslim-majority NATO member.

### ‘Uighur origin’

Turkish authorities meanwhile were seeking to close in on the Istanbul club attacker, who slipped into the night after spraying 120 bullets at terrified partygoers celebrating New Year. Of the 39 dead, 27 were foreigners including citizens from Lebanon, Saudi Arabia, Israel, Iraq and Morocco. A top official said the attacker was likely a Turkic Uighur and reports have indicated the authorities are looking into the possible existence of a cell, also including other jihadists from Central Asia. IS took responsibility for the massacre in a statement on Monday, the first time it has issued a clear and undisputed claim for a major attack inside Turkey.

The extremist group said it was a response to Ankara’s military operation against the

jihadists in northern Syria, where Turkish armed forces are supporting opposition fighters retaking territory from IS. Deputy Prime Minister Veysi Kaynak told A Haber broadcaster yesterday that the attacker was “probably” of Uighur origin as he sought to play down fears that the gunman would escape Turkey. Most Uighurs, an eastern Turkic group, live in the Xinjiang region of China, although there are also significant populations in ex-Soviet Central Asian states.

Previous reports had said the killer could be from Kyrgyzstan or Uzbekistan. Kaynak said airports had taken measures to ensure the killer did not flee Turkey and Dogan reported that the authorities also tightened land borders. The agency said checkpoints would be set up to search all vehicles and people leaving the country at border crossings in Edirne, western Turkey, which has a land border with Greece and Bulgaria. “The security forces are aware of who the terrorist is. We are also aware of the probable place where he might be,” Kaynak added, without giving further details. Kaynak described the massacre as “sophisticated and well planned”,

suggesting the gunman is part of a “well formed cell”.

### Families detained in Izmir

Special forces detained several people Uighur origin suspected of links with the Istanbul attack on the outskirts of the city yesterday, Anadolu said. Excluding the latest arrests, at least 36 had been detained in the probe by Wednesday. Authorities had on Tuesday detained 20 adults-along with 20 of their children—from three families in Izmir. There was no indication so far that the Izmir bombing could be linked to these detentions.

Those held had moved to Izmir on December 10 from the central city of Konya, where they are suspected of having been in touch with the killer during his stay there. Police are investigating possible links to IS of the suspects, who include Uighurs, Kyrgyz citizens and suspects from the Russian Caucasus region of Dagestan. The latest attack comes after Turkey suffered a bloody year in 2016 when multiple bombings blamed on Kurdish militants and IS jihadists killed hundreds of people. —AFP



## US SLAPS TERROR-RELATED SANCTIONS ON LADEN SON



In this image on Nov 7, 2001, a young boy (left) identified as Hamza bin Laden holds what the Taliban says is a piece of US helicopter wreckage in Ghazni, Afghanistan. —AP

**WASHINGTON:** The Obama administration imposed sanctions yesterday on a son of Sept 11 mastermind Osama bin Laden, saying the younger bin Laden poses a risk to US national security.

The State Department said Hamza bin Laden has been added to its Specially Designated Global Terrorist list after he was "determined to have committed, or pose a serious risk of committing, acts of terrorism that threaten the security of US nationals or the national security."

Hamza bin Laden was officially named an Al-Qaeda member in 2014 by his father's successor, Ayman Al-Zawahiri. The State Department says the younger Laden - in a 2015 audio

message - called for acts of terrorism in Western capitals. In an audio message last year, he threatened revenge against the US and warned Americans they would be targeted at home and abroad.

Hamza bin Laden also has called for lone wolf, or solo-operative, attacks against US, French, and Israeli interests in Washington, Paris and Tel Aviv. "Hamza bin Laden is actively engaged in terrorism," the State Department said, adding that terrorism designations deny individuals access to the US financial system and "can assist or complement the law enforcement actions of other US agencies and other governments." —AP

### TURKEY MAKES NEW ARRESTS OVER ATTACK, TIGHTENS BORDERS

**ANKARA:** Turkish police detained several new suspects yesterday in fresh raids over the nightclub attack that killed 39, as authorities tightened borders to prevent the fugitive killer from escaping. A top official said the attacker was likely a Turkic Uighur and reports have indicated the authorities are looking into the possible existence of a cell, also including other jihadists from Central Asia. But with the prospect of a dangerous trained killer on the run in the city adding to tensions in Istanbul after a spate of attacks, the authorities have still not caught the individual.

In the early hours of Sunday, a gunman stormed the swanky Reina nightclub on the shores of the Bosphorus in Istanbul and sprayed 120 bullets at terrified partygoers celebrating New Year. Of the 39 dead, 27 were foreigners including citizens from Lebanon, Saudi Arabia, Israel, Iraq and Morocco. The Islamic State group (IS) took responsibility for the massacre in a statement on Monday, marking the first time it has issued a clear and undisputed claim for a major attack inside Turkey.

The extremist group said it was a response to Ankara's ambitious military operation against it in northern Syria, where Turkish armed forces are supporting opposition fighters retaking territory from IS. Special forces detained several people suspected of links with the attack on the outskirts of Istanbul on Thursday, state-run news agency Anadolu said.

#### 'Probably of Uighur origin'

Authorities also tightened Turkish land borders, Dogan news agency reported, over fears the killer planned to flee the country. The agency said checkpoints would be set up to search all vehicles and people leaving the country at border crossings in Edirne, western Turkey, which has a land border with Greece and Bulgaria. Turkish Foreign Minister Mevlut Cavusoglu said on Wednesday that the attacker had been identified but did not give a name or further details.

Deputy Prime Minister Veysi Kaynak told A Haber broadcaster yesterday that the attacker was "probably" of Uighur origin as he sought to play down fears that the gunman would escape Turkey. Most Uighurs, an eastern Turkic group, live in the Xinjiang region of China, although there are also significant populations in ex-Soviet Central Asian states. Previous reports had said the killer could be from Kyrgyzstan or Uzbekistan. Kaynak said airports had also taken important measures to ensure the killer did not escape. Responding to some reports in local media that there was a second gunman, Kaynak said security forces were "assessing all probabilities" but that the shots were fired from one gun. He said investigations continued into whether the gunman had help inside the club and what kind of assistance he had to prepare the attack. Kaynak described the massacre as "sophisticated and well planned", suggesting the gunman is part of a "well formed cell". —AFP



MOSUL, Iraq: A boy poses as his family push a cart with their belongings on the western edge of Al-Intisar neighborhood in southeastern Mosul yesterday. —AFP

## IRAQ LAUNCHES OFFENSIVE ON IS NEAR SYRIA BORDER

'ZERO HOUR HAS COME TO LIBERATE THE WESTERN AREAS'

**BAGHDAD:** Iraqi forces launched an offensive against the Islamic State group near the Syrian border Thursday, piling further pressure on the jihadists' crumbling "caliphate." Baghdad and its allies also turned up the heat on IS in its last remaining Iraqi stronghold of Mosul, where the US-led coalition said it had doubled the number of its advisors. "A military operation has begun in the western areas of Anbar (province) to liberate them from Daesh," said Lieutenant General Qassem Mohammedi, head of Jazeera Operations Command, using an Arabic acronym for IS.

He said the operation was led by the army's 7th division, police, and fighters from local tribes that have opposed the jihadists, with aerial backing from the coalition. The main targets of the operation are Aanah, Rawa and Al-Qaim, the westernmost Iraqi towns along the Euphrates Valley. The jihadist hub of Al-Qaim, which lies 330 kilometers northwest of Baghdad, is still a long way

down the road and the most immediate target is the town of Aanah. "Our forces started advancing from Haditha towards Aanah from several directions," Mohammedi said.

Haditha was never seized by IS when the group swept across much of Iraq's Sunni Arab heartland in 2014 and is home to a tribe that has led the fight against the jihadists in the area. "Zero hour has come to liberate the western areas," Nadhom al-Jughafi, a commander with the Haditha tribal fighters, said. In 2016, Iraqi forces retook large parts of the vast province of Anbar, including its capital Ramadi and the city of Fallujah. Anbar is a desert area traversed by the Euphrates that borders Saudi Arabia, Jordan and Syria. Security in re-conquered areas remains precarious and jihadists continue to move across the province.

#### '200,000 buildings'

IS has lost more than half of the territo-

ry it once controlled in Iraq and the loss of Mosul would deal a major blow to the "caliphate" it proclaimed there in June 2014. Tens of thousands of Iraqi forces are currently involved in an offensive to retake the main northern city, which is also IS's last major stronghold in the country. The operation launched on October 17 is Iraq's largest in years and while significant territory was re-conquered around Mosul, the going has been tough inside the city itself. After a lull in operations, Iraqi forces launched a fresh push last week and appear to have found new momentum.

"Iraqi security forces have made significant progress since initiating phase two of their operation to liberate Mosul," Colonel John Dorrian, the coalition's spokesman, said on Wednesday. He said that was partly owed to increased coalition involvement in the battle, with a doubling of the deployment of advisors there to about 450. —AFP

# NO APOLOGY FROM CHARLESTON CHURCH SHOOTER AS SENTENCING PHASE BEGINS

**CHARLESTON, United States:** Dylann Roof, the self-described white supremacist who gunned down nine black churchgoers in a Charleston church, offered no apology or motive for his actions Wednesday as a jury began considering whether to sentence him to death. The same federal jury that found Roof guilty last month of all 33 federal hate crime charges in connection with the June 2015 killings is now tasked with deciding whether he will face execution or life in prison.

"There's nothing wrong with me psychologically," insisted Roof, who has chosen to represent himself in the proceedings, rebuffing advice from his lawyers and the presiding federal judge. His opening statement to the court, delivered in a barely audible voice, directly contradicted claims by his lawyers that he is not mentally fit. US District Judge Richard Gergel has found the 22-year-old competent to stand trial twice.

Federal prosecutors launched the day with their opening statement, reading from written notes confiscated from Roof in prison in August 2015. "I would like to make it crystal clear I do not regret what I did. I am not sorry," Assistant US Attorney Nathan Williams quoted the note as saying. "I have not shed a tear for the innocent people I killed." Roof went on: "I do feel sorry for the innocent white children forced to live in this sick country and I do feel sorry for the innocent white people that are killed daily at the hands of the lower races."

Williams said Roof's "horrific acts justify" capital punishment. "He killed nine people, and for that reason this case is worse," he said. "It is worse because of the reason he killed those people. He killed them because of the color of their skin, because he thought they were less than people. This case is worse because of the premeditation."

## Bloodbath

It took the jury just two hours to convict him of the June 17, 2015 killings at the Emanuel African Methodist Episcopal Church, a historic black church in downtown Charleston known as "Mother Emanuel." Parishioners attending a Bible study group had just begun their closing prayer when the self-avowed Nazi and Ku Klux Klan sympathiz-

er opened fire, firing 77 bullets in a horrific bloodbath that shocked the nation. The victims, who had welcomed Roof into the church, ranged in age from 26 to 87.

During the first phase of the trial, Roof made no attempt to explain his crimes and exhibited no signs of remorse as survivors recounted the rampage in heart-rending detail. A video of Roof's chilling confession to the killings was shown to the jury. "Somebody had to do something because black people are killing white people every day," Roof said without emotion to the FBI special agent questioning him. "They rape 100 white people a day." A verdict in the sentencing phase is expected in the coming days.

## 'This is it'

Federal prosecutors intend to bring more

than 30 witnesses, including survivors of the carnage and those close to the deceased victims, to the stand. The first was Jennifer Pinckney, the widow of slain pastor Clementa Pinckney, who explained how she and her young daughter hid in a nearby office as gunshots rang out, her hand clamped tight over the girl's mouth. When Roof tried the handle on the office's locked door, Pinckney said: "A chill completely went over me. I felt, 'This is it for us.'" But Roof left, and she called 911. Police played a game with her daughter, shielding her eyes so she would not see the carnage. "I'm just going to carry you out of here. Just keep your eyes closed," Pinckney recalled the police officer telling her daughter. Roof showed no emotion during her testimony, staring straight ahead. He did not ask her any questions on cross-examination.

## Federal death penalty rare

Capital punishment rarely is meted out in federal cases, in part because violent crimes more typically are tried under state laws. The last person to be condemned to federal death row was Dzhokhar Tsarnaev, convicted for his role in orchestrating twin bombings at the finish line of the Boston Marathon in 2013. Federal authorities have executed only three criminals since 1976. Though Roof is representing himself, the judge has barred him from approaching the jury, the witness stand or the bench. He could escape the death penalty if just one member of the jury — 10 women and two men — opposes it. Roof is also facing state murder charges in South Carolina, in a trial slated to begin January 17. State prosecutors there also are seeking the death penalty.—AFP



**CHARLESTON, United States:** A man stops to observe the makeshift memorial in front of Mother Emanuel AME Church in downtown Charleston, South Carolina.—AFP

# NETANYAHU URGES PARDON FOR MANSLAUGHTER CONVICT

**TEL AVIV:** Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has called for a pardon for a soldier convicted of manslaughter for shooting dead a wounded Palestinian attacker as he lay on the ground. Elor Azaria, whose military trial since May has deeply divided Israel, was convicted on Wednesday, with right-wing politicians defending him despite top army brass condemning his actions. He now faces up to 20 years in prison. Reacting to the conviction, Netanyahu called for the 20-year-old French-Israeli sergeant to be pardoned.

"This has been a hard and painful day for us all—first and foremost for Elor and his family," Netanyahu wrote on Facebook. "I support giving a pardon to Elor Azaria." Netanyahu made waves before the trial even began by calling Azaria's father to express his sympathy. President Reuven Rivlin's office had earlier said any talk of a pardon was premature and that an application could only be made after the judicial process had run its course. No date has yet been announced for sentencing, and Azaria could then appeal.

Judge Colonel Maya Heller spent more than two and a half hours reading out the court decision, criticizing the arguments of Azaria's lawyers. On behalf of the three-judge panel, Heller said there was no reason for Azaria to open fire since the Palestinian was posing no threat. She called his testimony "evolving and evasive." "His motive for shooting was that he felt the terrorist deserved to die," she said. Azaria had entered

the courtroom smiling, applauded by family and supporters. But he looked shaken as the judge spoke, and after the verdict his mother yelled: "You should be ashamed of yourselves."

## Protests and scuffles

Outside Israel's military headquarters in Tel Aviv, where the court announced the verdict, dozens of Azaria supporters scuffled with police. Shabtay Oz, a retired policeman carrying a large Israeli flag, said he never imagined himself joining a demonstration. "But when I saw a soldier in cuffs after he shot a terrorist... that was the point of no return." Right-wing leaders have called for him to be pardoned in an extraordinary public rift between politicians and the military.

Before he became defence minister in May, Avigdor Lieberman was among Azaria's supporters. He has since backed away from his earlier stance, saying after the verdict that while he disagreed with the decision, it must be respected. The March 24 shooting in the occupied West Bank city of Hebron was caught on video and spread widely online. It showed Abdul Fatah al-Sharif, 21, lying on the ground, shot along with another Palestinian after stabbing and wounding a soldier, according to the army. Azaria then shoots him again in the head without any apparent provocation. His lawyers argued the soldier may have thought the Palestinian was wearing explosives, but others said he had already been

checked for a suicide belt and no one in the video appears to be acting cautiously. The Palestinian's father told reporters in Hebron after the verdict that Azaria should be sentenced to life. "For me, a just verdict will be one that is similar to the verdicts our sons (in Israeli prisons) get," Yusri al-Sharif said.

## Polarized public

The video was filmed by a Palestinian volunteer for Israeli rights group B'Tselem. "The fact that one soldier was convicted today does not exonerate the Israeli military law enforcement system from its routine whitewashing of cases in which security forces kill or injure Palestinians with no accountability," B'Tselem said after the verdict. The case had been portrayed by some as a test of whether Israel's military could prosecute one of its own, though many Palestinians argued Azaria was only put on trial because of the video.

The military has said it began investigating before the video's release. The last time an Israeli soldier was convicted of manslaughter was in 2005, Israeli media reported. The shooting came against the backdrop of a wave of Palestinian knife, gun and car-ramming attacks that erupted in October 2015. Most of the attacks were by lone-wolf assailants, many of them young people. Israel's military has said it believes a significant number of them were essentially on suicide missions. The violence has subsided in recent months.—AFP

### IN EXIT MEMO, US ENVOY WARNS UN RETREAT WOULD BE HARMFUL

**UNITED NATIONS:** United States interests, including national security, would be harmed if the country retreats from a leading role at the United Nations, US Ambassador Samantha Power warned on Thursday amid a backlash among Washington lawmakers against the world body. President-elect Donald Trump also disparaged the United Nations after the Security Council adopted a Dec 23 resolution demanding an end to settlement building by US ally Israel. Trump questioned the value of the organization, while some Republican lawmakers threatened to cut crucial US funding.

In an exit memo yesterday, Power - a member of President Barack Obama's cabinet - wrote: "Other nations will follow us if we continue to lead; without our leadership the vacuum on the global stage will prove very harmful to US interests." Among the reasons for continued strong US engagement at the 193-member United Nations, Power listed North Korea's nuclear ambitions, conflicts in Syria, Libya and South Sudan, climate change, the global refugee crisis and Russia.

"As Russia continues to menace our allies and attempt to interfere in political systems in Europe and beyond, we will need to show broad condemnation of these actions in UN fora," Power wrote in the 13-page memo. US intelligence agencies say Russia was behind cyber attacks before the US election in November that aimed to help Trump defeat Democrat Hillary Clinton. Moscow denies this. Power also promoted the importance of the United Nations in ensuring the success of the deal between Iran and key world powers to curb Tehran's nuclear ambitions in exchange for relief from economic sanctions. Trump has vowed to scrap the deal. "We must continue to fulfill our own commitments and use UN Security Council Resolution 2231 to ensure that Iran's nuclear program will remain exclusively peaceful," Power said. Trump plans to replace Power with South Carolina Governor Nikki Haley once she is confirmed by the US Senate. "Working with the UN to address these chal-

## CHARLIE HEBDO FEELS A TARGET TWO YEARS AFTER ATTACK

'2017, AT LAST, THE LIGHT AT THE END OF THE TUNNEL'

**PARIS:** The editor of Charlie Hebdo believes the world has become less tolerant of the French satirical newspaper's black humor but he staunchly defends the right to offend, two years after jihadist gunmen killed many of its staff. Charlie Hebdo marked the grim anniversary in typical style with a front-cover cartoon showing a laughing man staring down the barrel of a jihadist's AK47 rifle with the caption: "2017, at last, the light at the end of the tunnel."

On January 7, 2015, in an attack that tore the heart out of the paper, brothers Said and Cherif Kouachi forced their way into the low-key Paris office building where it was based and killed 11 people, including star cartoonists Cabu, Charb, Wolinski and Tignous. The slogan "Je Suis Charlie" was quickly picked up as an estimated one million people marched in a mass outpouring of solidarity in Paris, and it soon became a rallying cry for freedom of expression around the world. The newspaper had long been a target for Islamic extremists because it was one of a handful of European publications that printed cartoons of the Prophet Mohammed.

Riss, the man who took over from Stephane "Charb" Charbonnier as editor following the attack, now wonders how much support he would get if he repeated that controversial move now. "We get the impression that people have become



**PARIS:** A man stand in front of a memorial plaque for Ahmed Merabet, one of the victims of the deadly attack against the satirical weekly Charlie Hebdo during the ceremony marking the second anniversary of the attack, yesterday in Paris. —AFP

even more intolerant of Charlie," he told AFP. "If we did a front cover showing a cartoon of the Prophet Mohammed now, who would defend us?"

#### 'More threats'

Riss, whose real name is Laurent Sourisseau, said the number of threats received by the staff was increasing.

"Before they told us to be careful of Islamists. Now we must look out for Islamists, Russians and Turks," he said. That was partly a reference to a protest from Russian President Vladimir Putin over a cartoon Charlie Hebdo published in December after dozens of members of a Red Army choir were killed in a plane crash. —AFP



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**CALIFORNIA:** In this photo, farmer Kevin Herman stands next to an almond sweeper at his ranch near Madera, California. —AP

## TRUMP'S DEPORTATION VOW SPURS CALIFORNIA FARMERS INTO ACTION

'THEY FEAR BEING DEPORTED AND TORN FROM THEIR CHILDREN'

**FRESNO, California:** Days after Donald Trump won the White House vowing to deport millions of people in the country illegally and fortify the Mexican border, California farmer Kevin Herman ordered nearly \$600,000 in new equipment, cutting the number of workers he'll need starting with the next harvest. Herman, who grows figs, persimmons and almonds in the nation's most productive farming state, said Trump's comments pushed him to make the purchase, larger than he would have otherwise.

"No doubt about it," Herman said. "I probably wouldn't have spent as much or bought as much machinery as I did." Others in California's farming industry say Trump's tough campaign talk targeting immigrants in the country illegally - including a vast number of farm workers - spurred them into action, too. They're calling on congressional representatives to educate the incoming president on the workforce it takes to feed the country, and they're assuring workers they'll protect them. San Joaquin Valley farmer Joe Del Bosque recently gathered about 20 year-round employees at a Los Banos steakhouse for their annual holiday lunch.

The festivities began in a serious tone. The topic of immigration took a bigger part of the conversation this year because of Trump, he said. Del Bosque told his crew he'll make sure the new administration knows their vital role in the farming industry. It's a message Del Bosque wants his managers to spread to another 300 seasonal workers needed at the harvest's peak. Leticia Alfaro, a food-safety supervisor at the farm, said in an interview that many of her friends who work in the fields don't have proper documentation like her, and they take Trump's threats seriously.

### Ground zero

"They're terrified by his comments," Alfaro, 53, said in Spanish. They fear being

deported and torn from their children who were born here, she said. After Trump takes office, they wonder if it will be safe to make a simple trip to the grocery store, fearing checkpoints where they'll be pulled over and have to show their documentation. Trump's remarks were felt sharply in California, which produces nearly half the country's fruits, vegetables and nuts valued of \$47 billion annually. Experts say his words resonate nationwide.

Texas, Florida and Georgia are examples of states with large migrant communities dominating home construction, health care, food service industries, said David Zonderman, a labor historian at North Carolina State University. "California might be ground zero," he said of immigrant families living in the shadows. "But it's not a unique California issue." The fear stems from Trump's campaign rallies, where he received a rousing response each time he vowed to deport people who are in the country illegally - up to 11 million. That position softened after Trump won the election, when he said he'd start with 3 million with criminal records. Some farmers point to Trump's postelection shift as a sign his campaign bluster won't become reality. He is, after all, a businessman like them, they say. But others believe this shift underscores the president-elect's unpredictable nature. "Our workers are scared," said Joe Garcia, a farm labor contractor who hires up to 4,000 people each year to pick grapes from Napa to Bakersfield and along the Central Coast. "If they're concerned, we're concerned."

### Improving economy

Since Election Day, Garcia's crews throughout the state have been asking what will happen to them when Trump takes office. Farmers also are calling to see if they'll need to pay more to attract people to prune the vines, he said. Garcia tells farmers not to panic. They'll learn how

many return from Mexico after the holidays. "We'll plan around what we have," he tells them. "That's all we can do." Roughly 325,000 workers in California do the back-breaking jobs that farmers say nobody else will do, according to the US Bureau of Labor Statistics. Manuel Cunha Jr., president of the Nisei Farmers League farming association, estimates 85 percent of California farm workers live in the United States illegally.

Farmers for years have scrambled under a shrinking labor pool. Mexico's improving economy has slowed the flow of migrant workers. The dangerous border, controlled by drug cartels and human traffickers, keeps away others. Herman, the farmer who bought three new almond sweepers, said Trump influenced him on top of California's rising minimum wage and a new law giving farm laborers overtime rights that are equal to workers in other industries.

Plus, Herman said, he's heard too many workers question whether they'll return from their holiday trips to Mexico. "It's stories like that that have motivated me to become efficient and upgrade my equipment," Herman said. Tom Nassif, a Trump adviser and president of the powerful trade association Western Growers, said farmers shouldn't fear the president-elect. Trump isn't interested in deporting their workers, he said.

Nassif said he isn't privy to the details of Trump's immigration policy. He's recommended that Trump allow farm workers to stay by putting immigrants in the country illegally who are otherwise law-abiding residents on a period of probation under conditions that they pay taxes, learn English and obey all laws. "I think he's looking at people who have committed more serious crimes and start with them first - and rightly so," said Nassif, picked by Trump's campaign team to serve on an agriculture advisory committee. "I think there's less reason to worry than most people believe there is." —AP

## TOP US INTELLIGENCE OFFICIALS TO TESTIFY ON RUSSIAN HACKING

**WASHINGTON:** Senior US intelligence officials face questions at a Senate hearing that will be dominated by the intelligence community's assessment that Russia meddled in the presidential election to help Donald Trump win. The Armed Services Committee's cyber threats hearing on Thursday comes a day before the president-elect is to be briefed by the CIA and FBI directors - along with the director of national intelligence - on the investigation into Russia's alleged hacking efforts. Trump has been deeply critical of their findings, even appearing to back controversial WikiLeaks founder Julian Assange's contention that Russia did not provide him with hacked Democratic emails.

The committee's session is the first in a series aimed at investigating purported Russian cyber-attacks against US interests and developing defenses sturdy enough to blunt future intrusions. "We will obviously be talking about the hacking, but the main thing is the whole issue of cyber security," the committee's Republican chairman, Sen. John McCain of Arizona, said ahead of the hearing. "Right now we have no policy, no strategy to counter cyber attacks." Slated to appear before the Armed Services Committee are James Clapper, the national intelligence director; Marcel Lettre, the undersecretary of defense for intelligence; and Adm. Michael Rogers, National Security Agency chief and the top officer at the US Cyber Command.

Accusations Russia interfered in the 2016 election by hacking Democratic email accounts have roiled Washington for weeks. President Barack Obama struck back at Moscow in late December with a sweeping set of sanctions targeting Russia's leading spy agencies - the GRU and FSB - that the US said were involved. The GRU is Russia's military intelligence agency. The FSB is the main successor to the Soviet-era KGB. But the sanctions against both Russian intelligence agencies could easily be rescinded by Trump, who has so far publicly refused to accept the conclusion that Russia is responsible for the attacks.

### Proportional response

Trump earlier this week escalated his criticism of US intelligence professionals, such as Clapper, by tweeting, without evidence, that an upcoming briefing on the suspected Russian hacking had been delayed until Friday, and said, "perhaps more time needed to build a case. Very strange!" Intelligence officials said there had been no delay. Trump also suggested Wednesday in a tweet that one of Russia's primary targets, the Democratic National Committee, could be to blame for being "so careless." The sanctions imposed by Obama came after he pledged a "proportional" response to the hacking of the Democratic Party and Clinton's campaign chairman.

Emails stolen during the campaign were released in the final weeks by WikiLeaks. CIA Director John Brennan said in a Dec 16 message to employees that the FBI agreed with the agency's conclusion that Russia's goal was to support Trump in the election. Brennan wrote that he also had spoken with Clapper and said "there is strong consensus among us on the scope, nature, and intent of Russian interference in our presidential election." Moscow has denied the hacking allegations and dismissed Obama's sanctions as an attempt to "harm Russian-American ties." Although Russian President Vladimir Putin rebuked the Obama administration for trying to punish Russia, he said his country would not immediately retaliate and would instead wait for a new US approach after Trump takes office. Trump praised Putin's move and called him "very smart."

To buttress the case for sanctions imposed by Obama and expose Russia's cyber tactics, the Homeland Security Department released a report prepared with the FBI that for the first time officially tied cyber attacks into the email accounts of the Democratic National Committee to hackers affiliated with the GRU and FSB. —AP

## SCARS HAUNT COLOMBIAN REBELS AS THEY DISARM

**VEGAEZ:** Jair's missing right leg reminds him of many things: The heavy price he paid for fighting in the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia and the pain he inflicted on others. The 25-year-old guerrilla came of age in the FARC, which he believed was fighting to create a more just Colombia. Now, the Marxist rebels are gathering in disarmament camps after reaching a peace deal to end the half-century conflict. Preparing to disarm has given Jair a chance to think about how the violence has shaped his life. Six years ago, he was pursuing an enemy soldier in the country's northwest when he stepped on a land mine. Blown through the air, he landed 15 meters (yards) away, covered in blood and wearing nothing but his underwear, even though he had been dressed in

combat fatigues just seconds before.

"It's very hard when you've never been taught how to live after losing a leg," he said at a FARC camp in the jungle along the Arquia river, in the northwest. The camp sits near one of the demobilization zones where the rebels are now due to surrender their weapons, in a process overseen by the United Nations. Wearing shorts and a T-shirt, the handsome Jair seems like any other 20-something from the waist up. But he feels ashamed when civilians see his "ugly scar," he said. "We're at peace, but obviously this thing happened to you during the war. It's a reminder you're left with," he said.

A native of Colombia's Caribbean coast, Jair joined the FARC because he believed in their fight for social justice in a country with an ugly history of exploit-

ing its impoverished masses. But he struggles with the destruction his own actions wrought on other people's lives. "It weighs on me, because it's a war between poor people. We're killing each other," he said. The Colombian conflict, which grew out of a crushed peasant uprising in the 1960s, has drawn in not only the army and the FARC, but several other leftist rebel groups as well as drug gangs and right-wing paramilitary units funded by wealthy landowners. It has killed more than 260,000 people and left 60,000 missing.

### Moving on?

Mileidy, 19, also struggles with the scars left by the conflict. A year ago, army air strikes hit the camp where the teenage guerrilla and her comrades were hiding out. Shrapnel tore into her

legs and right arm. She still has metal fragments lodged in her body. "It feels like an electric current that just keeps growing. It really hurts," said the rebel. She said she had no regrets about her role in the conflict. "They (the army and paramilitaries) were shooting to kill. So how could we feel bad about capturing and killing them?" she said with a severe gaze.

But now, "we're in a peace process. You have to make friends with them," she said. "Nobody likes war," said Sebastian, a guerrilla who lost his right eye in a 1998 skirmish with paramilitary fighters who according to the FARC had been killing peasant farmers. He was 19 years old at the time. "Combat isn't good, but sometimes you have to do it," he said, still dressed in the camouflage uniform he has worn for more than 20 years. — AFP



**PHILADELPHIA:** This file photo shows former Attorney General Eric Holder speaks during the second day of the Democratic National Convention in Philadelphia. —AP

## CALIFORNIA HIRES EX-ATTORNEY GENERAL HOLDER TO FIGHT TRUMP

**SACRAMENTO:** Democratic leaders in the California Legislature said Wednesday they have hired former US Attorney General Eric Holder to advise them on a legal strategy as they gird for a fight against President-elect Donald Trump. The precise role of the high-profile lawyer remained unclear, but his politically connected firm will be paid \$25,000 a month plus expenses from the Legislature's budget to help lawmakers develop strategies "regarding potential actions of the federal government that may be of concern to the state of California," according to the contract with Holder.

The initial agreement runs for three months beginning Feb 1. After that, the parties will renegotiate the deal, said Kevin Liao, a spokesman for Assembly Speaker Anthony Rendon, D-Paramount. Republicans in the Legislature blasted the decision to sidestep lawyers already on California's payroll and hire Holder, who many conservatives view as a polarizing figure. California Gov. Jerry Brown and legislative leaders have talked tough since Trump's election in November, vowing to aggressively confront the Republican president who pledged during the campaign to repeal "Obamacare" and deport immigrants living in the US illegally.

### Fast and Furious

"We have an obligation to defend the people who elected us and the policies and diversity that make California an example of what truly makes a nation great," Rendon and Senate President Pro Tem Kevin de Leon, D-Los Angeles, said in a statement. The hiring of outside consultants is not unusual, but the decision to contract with such a high-profile figure made it a remarkable move with clear political overtones. As the nation's top lawyer from 2009 to 2015, Holder aggressively defended President Barack Obama's policies and took heat over "Fast and Furious," a gun-smuggling investigation in which federal agents allowed weapons to be delivered to drug cartels in Mexico. —AP

## BARACK OBAMA, PENCE HARDEN 'OBAMACARE' BATTLE LINES AT CAPITOL

**WASHINGTON:** Hardening battle lines for the brawl to come, President Barack Obama urged congressional Democrats to "look out for the American people" in defending his legacy health care overhaul, while Vice President-elect Mike Pence stood firm Wednesday in telling Republicans that dismantling "Obamacare" is Number 1 on Donald Trump's list. "We're going to be in the promise-keeping business," Pence declared at two separate Capitol news conferences. Just 16 days before Trump takes over the Oval Office, he said repealing and replacing Obama's law will be the president-elect's "first order of business."

"The American people voted decisively for a better future for health care in this country, and we are determined to give them that," Pence said. The Democrats, outnumbered in the new Congress, didn't sound confident in stopping the Republicans cold, but they signaled they wouldn't make the GOP's job any easier. New Senate Minority Leader Chuck Schumer, D-N Y, said that if the Republicans do scuttle the health care law, they will have to come up with a replacement plan before Democrats consider whether to help them revamp the system.

That adds pressure on Republicans, who for years have battled among themselves over what a new law would look like, including how to finance its programs and whether to keep Obama's expansion of Medicaid for more lower-income people. "They're repealing, we're not. It's their obligation to come up with a replacement," Schumer said, a sentiment he said he believed was unanimous among Democrats. Obama and Pence held dueling strategy sessions with lawmakers at the Capitol as the new Republican-led Congress commenced its drive to dissolve the health care statute.

The 2010 overhaul, which has extended coverage to 20 million people and reshaped the nation's \$3 trillion-a-year health care system, has long stood as one of Obama's proudest triumphs and the ascendant GOP's top target for extinction. The two sides traded insults through the day. "Don't let the Schumer



**WASHINGTON:** President Barack Obama, joined by, from second from left, Rep. Frederica Wilson, D-Florida, Rep. Joseph Crowley, D-New York, Senate Minority Leader Charles Schumer of New York, and House Minority Leader Nancy Pelosi of California arrives on Capitol Hill in Washington, to meet with members of Congress to discuss his signature healthcare law. —AP

clowns out of this web," Trump wrote on Twitter. Said Schumer: "The Republican plan to cut health care wouldn't make America great again, it would make America sick again. Previewing an attack line sure to be heard again in this year's debate, House Minority Leader Nancy Pelosi said the GOP is aiming to also scuttle Medicaid and Medicare, going after programs that are "very personal in the lives of the American people."

### Transition relief

Even with White House and congressional control, annulling "Obamacare" and replacing it looms as a daunting task for the GOP. Leaders hope to have legislation voiding much of the law on Trump's desk by next month, Republicans said. But after six years of failing to unite behind an alternative, GOP leaders are discussing postponing when repeal would take effect for 18 months or longer, allowing more time to craft replacement legislation. Trump has provided few details about how he would redesign the law, but has said he wants to retain popular provisions like ensuring coverage for people with pre-

existing medical problems.

Republicans will also need to figure out how to protect health coverage for millions of Americans during a transition period and how to avoid market-place bedlam as nervous insurance companies stop selling policies or boost rates. Seemingly acknowledging that danger, Trump tweeted warnings to GOP lawmakers. Seemingly acknowledging that danger, Trump tweeted warnings to GOP lawmakers. "Massive increases of ObamaCare will take place this year and Dems are to blame for the mess," he wrote. "It will fall of its own weight - be careful!" Republicans said Pence told them in their private meeting to argue that Democrats broke the health care system and Republicans will fix it.

Trump's team is already working with GOP congressional leaders on plans to undo Obama's law with both legislation and executive action that the president and federal agencies would be able to take, Pence said. Lawmakers said that according to Pence, Trump would sign some orders the day he takes office. Pence did not specify what those actions would be. —AP



**KARACHI:** Indian fishermen display their travel documents at the railway station in Karachi yesterday, after their release from prison. —AFP Photos

## PAKISTAN RELEASES DOZENS OF INDIAN FISHERMEN

‘POOR DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS BETWEEN BITTER NUCLEAR FOES’

**KARACHI:** Pakistan yesterday freed 219 Indian fishermen who had strayed into its waters, an official said, calling it a “goodwill gesture” ten days after a simi-

lar number were also released. The fishermen, some of whom had been in jail for more than a year, will be handed over to Indian authorities at the Wagah bor-

der, Sindh provincial official Mohammad Naseem Siddiqui said. A further 100 fishermen remain in prison, waiting for the Indian High Commission to confirm their nationality as they serve sentences of at least six months each, he said.

Dozens of Indian and Pakistani fishermen are captured in the Arabian Sea each year after straying across maritime borders. They often languish in prison even after serving their sentences, as poor diplomatic relations between the bitter nuclear foes hamper bureaucracy. Relations between India and Pakistan have plummeted since a deadly attack on an Indian army base in the disputed region of Kashmir in September, that New Delhi blamed on Pakistan-based Islamist group Jaish-e-Mohammed.

There have since been repeated outbreaks of cross-border firing, with both sides reporting deaths and injuries. Kashmir has been divided between India and Pakistan since the end of British colonial rule in 1947. Both claim the Himalayan territory in full and have fought two wars over the mountainous region. —AFP



**KARACHI:** A Pakistani policeman takes a selfie with Indian fishermen at the railway station in Karachi yesterday, after their release from prison.

## MYANMAR ACCUSED OF ‘WHITE WASH’ AS PANEL REJECTS CLAIMS

**YANGON:** Human rights groups said Myanmar’s government is trying to cover up abuses against civilians in a Muslim-majority part of Rakhine State after an investigation panel dismissed claims a government crackdown there amounts to “genocide.” A commission appointed by the government of Nobel laureate Aung San Suu Kyi issued interim findings refuting allegations of abuses by security forces on Wednesday, even as authorities were still investigating alleged police abuses after a video emerged appearing to show officers beating and kicking Rohingya villagers.

Troops have poured into northern Rakhine since insurgents believed to be from the mostly stateless Rohingya minority attacked border posts on Oct 9, killing nine police officers. At least 86 people have died and an estimated 34,000 have fled across the border to Bangladesh. Rohingya residents and refugees accuse security forces of summary executions, arbitrary arrest, rape and burning down homes as part of what the government has termed its “clearance operations” in search of attackers.

Myanmar’s government has flatly denied allegations that abuses have been committed, but has prevented independent journalists and aid workers from accessing parts of northern Rakhine. Under international pressure Suu Kyi ordered the commission to investigate the attacks and the abuse allegations. “The Bengali population residing in Maungtau region, the increasing population of Mawlawi (Islamic scholars), mosques and religious edifices are proof that there were no cases of genocide and religious persecution in the region,” said the report.

### ‘Astonishing’

Many in Myanmar refer to the Rohingya as “Bengalis” as they see them as interlopers from Bangladesh. The panel also said it had so far found “insufficient evidence” for legal action on allegations of rape by soldiers. “No cases of malnutrition were found in the area, due to the area’s favorable fishing and farming conditions,” it added, despite concerns from international aid organizations that tens of thousands of people who were receiving food aid before Oct. 9 are now cut off.

Phil Robertson, deputy Asia director at New York-based Human Rights Watch, said the panel was “looking more and more like the Myanmar government whitewash mechanism that we feared it would be,” highlighting that the panel chair Vice President Myint Swe, is a former army lieutenant general. Robertson said it was “astonishing” that the commission could conclude from the presence of mosques that the Rohingya are not being persecuted. “Judging by what is written in this interim report, the commission has so far acted to discount out of hand what it calls ‘external allegations’ rather than seriously investigate them and risk uncovering the litany of rights violations against the Rohingya,” he said by email.

Matthew Smith, founder of campaign group Fortify Rights, said the commission’s report was sharply at odds with accounts collected by researchers interviewing civilians in northern Rakhine and those who have fled to Bangladesh. “The army has committed atrocity crimes and this commission is attempting a whitewash. Ministries led by Suu Kyi have charted the path of denial, waging a shameful propaganda campaign,” Smith said by email.—Reuters

## ‘PATRICIDE’ SPICES UP INDIAN POLITICAL SOAP OPERA

**NEW DELHI:** After being tongue-lashed and expelled from his own party, the leader of India’s largest state had two options: Bow to the will of his father or commit political patricide weeks before an election. “Giving up power in old age is something that doesn’t happen in India, so we now have a patricidal war in

Uttar Pradesh,” said PR Ramesh, an editor at the Delhi-based Open magazine. Politics in India has long been a family affair, dominated by clans such as the Gandhis who have provided three prime ministers and now lead the main opposition party. But even in a country used to dynastic feuds, the battle between Uttar

Pradesh Chief Minister Akhilesh Yadav and his father Mulayam Singh Yadav has been gripping stuff.

After paving the way for his Australian-educated son to become chief minister following state polls five years ago, the 77-year-old Mulayam continued to lead the socialist Samajwadi Party (SP). During his

term in charge of the state—which has a population of around 215 million—Akhilesh has frequently bitten his tongue following criticism from his father, a former Indian defense minister. The older man has also been a source of embarrassment, especially after saying of a high-profile rape case that “boys will be boys.” —AFP



**KOLKATA, India: Google Inc CEO, Sundar Pichai poses as villagers take photographs in Gokulpur village, some 140 kms west of Kolkata yesterday. —AFP**

## INDIA ARRESTS FOUR OVER NEW YEAR ATTACK ON WOMAN IN TECH HUB

**NEW DELHI:** Police yesterday arrested four men in India's technology hub of Bengaluru over a video recording of a New Year attack on a woman that has sparked a national public debate about women's safety. News of the video came after a Reuters witness and media said several women revelers were groped

and assaulted by a mob in the southern city in a separate incident on New Year's Eve. Police made the arrests after examining a closed-circuit video clip of the attack by two men as the woman walked down a secluded lane in a residential area late on Dec 31.

The four men arrested were

"directly related to the case", including the two who perpetrated the attack, a senior city police official said. "There is clear evidence in the case," added the official, who declined to be named as he was not authorized to speak to the media. The police official did not elaborate on why the other two men were arrested.

All face charges of sexual harassment and assault. The video sparked outrage because it showed a man dismounting from a scooter to grab the woman and drag her towards the vehicle, despite her struggles.

The other man on the scooter briefly joined the scuffle as bystanders watched. But she was thrown to the ground before the men rode off. Bengaluru, in India's southern state of Karnataka, is home to many well-educated professionals, and had widely been viewed as safer for women than New Delhi, which is often labeled the country's rape capital, for the many sex crimes reported there. Sex crimes are common in India, with more than 34,000 rapes reported in 2015, figures from the National Crime Record Bureau show.

Authorities often face criticism for not doing enough to address a weak system of law enforcement and policing that leaves women vulnerable. G. Parameshwara, the state's home minister, said the government would soon bring the "culprits to book". The government plans to install nearly 550 more closed-circuit cameras within two months, increase police call-centre facilities and deploy more women police officers, he added.—Reuters

## PHILIPPINES KILLS LEADER OF ISLAMIC STATE-LINKED MILITANT GROUP IN CLASH

**MANILA:** Philippine security forces killed the leader of a militant group supporting Islamic State in a clash early yesterday, the country's police chief said, warning against possible retaliation. President Rodrigo Duterte recently cautioned against Islamic State taking root in the southeast Asian country, saying it needed to avoid "contamination." "I strongly believe that we have effectively broken the backbone of the militant Ansar Al-Khilafah Philippines (AKP)," Ronald Dela Rosa told a news conference to announce the death of the group's leader, Mohammad Jaafar Maguid.

Three AKP colleagues of Maguid were also arrested in a police operation shortly after midnight at a resort in the southern province of Sarangani, he added. "He is the recognized ISIS leader in that area," Dela Rosa said, adding that Maguid, who goes by the alias "Tokboy", was the "most wanted person" in the country's south, sought for his involvement in crimes ranging

from arson and murder to bombings. Police recovered two armlet rifles, a hand grenade, and M-16 magazines, from Maguid and the three men, identified as Matahata Dialawe Arboleda, Ismael Sahak, and Morhaban Veloso. The AKP and the Maute militant group, which has also pledged allegiance to Islamic State, are among a handful of small groups authorities blame for years of unrest in the Philippine south.

The killing and the arrests would "momentarily weaken" the group, Dela Rosa said, but a new leader could emerge eventually and launch fresh attacks. "We expect some retaliation from the ISIS-inspired groups," he added. "We should expect, and we should be very vigilant against, this possible retaliation." Philippine security forces are on full alert ahead of Monday's feast of the Black Nazarene in the capital Manila. It usually draws millions of devotees for a procession through the streets that runs for hours.—Reuters

## US TO RESUME AERIAL REFUELING DRILLS IN JAPAN

**TOKYO:** The US military will resume mid-air refueling training for Osprey aircraft in southern Japan today, despite a crash-landing there last month, according to the Japanese Defense Ministry. The US forces have taken a broad range of preventive steps, including education of pilots and confirmation of technical manual and flight simulation exercises, said the ministry in a statement yesterday. "The ministry has confirmed that the US took effective measures to prevent a recurrence of similar accidents," Defense Minister Tomomi Inada said in a statement. The refueling exercises have been suspended since a US Marines' Osprey transport aircraft made an emergency water landing off the island prefecture of Okinawa on December 13, which occurred during a mid-air refueling training.

In the accident, five crew members on board were rescued. It was Osprey's first major accident in Japan since America started its deployment in 2012 in Okinawa, some 1,500 km south of Tokyo. US Marines already restarted Osprey flights in Okinawa on December 19, saying the aircraft itself has no problem. But the crash has renewed concern among residents in Okinawa over the safety of the controversial Osprey aircraft. The tilt-rotor Osprey is a hybrid aircraft that can take off like a helicopter and fly like a plane. Washington has deployed 24 Ospreys at Okinawa's Marine Corps Futenma Air Station. Japan's Self-Defense Forces also plan to introduce 17 Ospreys and start to use some from fiscal 2019. —KUNA

## INDONESIA TO SET UP AGENCY TO COMBAT FAKE NEWS

**JAKARTA:** Indonesia is setting up an agency that will tackle fake news after a flood of untrue stories on social media, an official said yesterday, including claims China was waging biological warfare against the country using contaminated chilly seeds. The new cyber agency will also seek to protect state institutions from hackers, said presidential spokesman Johan Budi. Chief Security Minister Wiranto said that the move was necessary to combat a flood of news on social media that was "slandering, fake, misleading and spread hate." "Freedom (of speech) is a right in a democracy but there is also an obligation to obey the law," he said.

Officials said among the agency's tasks would be to monitor news circulating online to check for false stories. It will be overseen by the security ministry and will work alongside other government agencies, they said, without giving further details. It came after President Joko Widodo declared his intention at a cabinet meeting in December to combat fake news in a country where people are rapidly getting online for the first time, with over 130 million out of 255 million inhabitants now estimated to be internet users.

One of the most high-profile cases in recent times was a false claim circulating on social media in December that Beijing was seeking to wage biological warfare against Indonesia, after a true story that four Chinese citizens were arrested for using imported chilly seeds infected with bacteria on a farm south of Jakarta. The Chinese embassy in Jakarta was forced to issue a statement saying that the reports were "misleading and have caused great concerns." Another fake story that spread online said that millions of Chinese workers had entered Indonesia to replace local workers.

It comes as anti-Chinese sentiment is running high with Jakarta's ethnic Chinese governor standing trial for alleged blasphemy. Indonesian internet expert Nukman Luthfie said he hoped the new agency would not breach people's privacy, but added it was too early to tell. "It would be really unfortunate if it was going to be used to monitor public discussions because that's people's right," he said. There has been growing global concern about the spread of fake news, with some critics claiming a flood of false stories circulating online may have helped brash billionaire Donald Trump win the US election.—AFP



SEOUL: Nine judges of the Constitutional Court sit during a hearing on whether to confirm the impeachment of President Park Geun-Hye at the court yesterday, in Seoul, South Korea. —AP Photos

# S KOREA PRESIDENT'S LAWYERS SAY NO EVIDENCE FOR IMPEACHMENT

## 'PARK ACCUSED OF SERIOUS BREACH OF THE CONSTITUTION'

SEOUL: The impeachment trial of South Korea's President Park Geun-Hye got under way yesterday, with her lawyers arguing there is no evidence to back the corruption allegations that threaten to force her from office. Parliament voted to impeach Park last month over an influence-peddling scandal that has brought hundreds of thousands of protesters onto the streets every week demanding her removal. Park is accused of colluding with a longtime friend, Choi Soon-Il, to strong-arm donations worth tens of millions of dollars from top firms which were then funneled to dubious foundations.

The president is also accused of using her influence to ensure the merger of two Samsung units in 2015 to help facilitate a father-to-son power succession of Samsung's founding family, allegedly in return for bribes given to Choi. The

National Assembly, which must have its vote upheld by the Constitutional Court, accused Park of a "serious breach of the constitution" during the first full hearing in the impeachment case. "The court is requested to fire the president so that impaired constitutional order can be restored", said Kwon Seong-Dong, a lawmaker representing the parliament.

"The president has betrayed the trust and mandate from the people", he added. The Constitutional Court's initial hearing on Tuesday was curtailed after Park failed to attend. It decided to proceed yesterday regardless of whether she was present. Park's lawyers said there was no proof the president had issued any directive, oral or written, to tell her aides to ensure the National Pension Fund—the largest shareholder of one of the two Samsung units—voted for the merger.

### 'No solid evidence'

They urged the court to overturn the impeachment vote, saying the motion had been based on "likelihood at best" and insisted she be reinstated as president immediately. "There is no solid evidence to back the impeachment", Park's lawyer Lee Jung-Hwan told the court. Park is also accused of ordering aides to leak state documents to Choi, who has no official title or security clearance, and allowing her to meddle in state affairs including the appointment of top officials. Park also allegedly failed to carry out her official duties as the head of state during her response to the 2014 Sewol ferry disaster that claimed more than 300 lives, mostly schoolchildren.

The court has asked Park's lawyers to clarify the mystery surrounding her seven-hour absence at the time of the disastrous sinking. Unconfirmed media reports have suggested a wide range of theories about Park's whereabouts, including a romantic liaison, participation in a shamanistic ritual, cosmetic surgery or a 90-minute haircut. Park has repeatedly denied the corruption allegations in sometimes tearful televised addresses, while apologizing for lapses. At a separate criminal court trial yesterday, Choi also repeated her denial of all charges leveled against her.

"I think I was victimized" by groundless allegations, said Choi. Her lawyers have denied allegations Choi was involved in peddling influence or extortion. In a rare meeting with journalists, the president said Sunday that she had only sought to listen through Choi to ordinary citizens' opinions on her policies and speeches. She also insisted the donations to the foundations were made voluntarily by companies to help develop the country's culture and sports. The president also argued she reacted properly at the time of the ferry tragedy, ordering all possible efforts to rescue the victims. But massive demonstrations have been taking place in Seoul and other cities every Saturday for the past 10 weeks, with protesters calling for Park's immediate departure from office. —AFP



SEOUL: Choi Soon-Il, bottom left, the jailed confidante of impeached South Korean President Park Geun-hye, arrives for her trial at the Seoul Central District Court in Seoul, South Korea, yesterday.

## INDONESIA BACKS DOWN IN AUSTRALIA MILITARY ROW

JAKARTA: Indonesia appeared to back down yesterday from a decision to suspend all military cooperation with Australia in a row over teaching materials, with a senior minister saying only language training had been put on hold. The Indonesian military said Wednesday that military cooperation with Canberra, including joint exercises and exchange programs, had been put on ice last month after teaching materials deemed offensive to Jakarta were found at an Australian army base. The row erupted after a visiting Indonesian officer raised concerns about the materials at a language training facility in Perth.

Indonesia's military chief General Gatot Nurmantyo told reporters it involved "unethical stuff" which "discredited Indonesia and its military, even the nation's ideology". He said it concerned East Timor—which seceded from Indonesia after a bloody occupation—the Papuan region's independence movement and the nation's founding philosophy "Pancasila", all deeply sensitive topics for the Indonesian military. But following the military's announcement, leaders of both Australia and Indonesia publicly insisted ties were strong before Indonesian Security Minister Wiranto announced Thursday he was giving a "clarification" after receiving information from Nurmantyo.

The military "has temporarily suspended cooperation in language training," said the minister in a statement, adding it was due to "a small incident that has offended our dignity as a nation". But he said Indonesia was not "completely stopping all cooperation", contradicting the earlier military statement. Indonesian and Australian forces cooperate on a range of issues from border protection to counter-terrorism. "The suspension is temporary and will be resumed after Australia clearly takes measures to resolve the matter," he added.

### 'Relationship strong'

The Australian Broadcasting Corporation also broadcast footage yesterday of Nurmantyo giving a lecture in November, voicing fears Canberra was trying to recruit soldiers sent to Australia for training. "Every time there is a training program-like recently the best five or 10 students would be sent to Australia. That happened before I was chief so I let that happen," he said in translated remarks, according to the broadcaster. "Once I became chief commander of the national forces, it (the students being sent) did not happen again. They will certainly be recruited."

Australian Defense Minister Marise Payne denied Canberra had targeted Indonesian soldiers to be potential agents. She added that an investigation into the teaching materials that sparked the spat was almost complete and the government took the concerns seriously. Despite the row, Indonesian President Joko Widodo said relations with Canberra remained robust. "I think the relationship between Indonesia and Australia is in good condition, but perhaps on the operational level it still needs to be discussed so things will not heat up," he said. But he added the dispute about teaching materials was "a matter of principle" that needed to be cleared up.

Australian Prime Minister Malcolm Turnbull later said that Widodo "and I share a firm commitment to continue to build on the close relationship between our countries, based on common interests and mutual respect. —AFP



SYDNEY: Australia's Defense Minister Marise Payne speaks to the media in Sydney yesterday. —AFP



FRIDAY, JANUARY 6, 2017

# Lifestyle

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

Visitors tour a castle-like structure made from blocks of ice at the Harbin International Ice and Snow festival held in Harbin in north eastern's China's Heilongjiang province. The city of Harbin in China's frigid northeast is in its final stages of preparation for one of the world's largest ice and snow festivals, an annual event that last year drew more than a million visitors. —AP

哈尔滨冰雪大世界

**Glitzy Golden Globes launch  
Hollywood awards season**

## Album sales not up much despite Trump tweet

President-elect Donald Trump tweeted Wednesday that the album sales of Jackie Evancho, the teenage classical singer, have "skyrocketed" since the announcement that she would perform at his inauguration. Not exactly, according to sales figures. According to Nielsen Music, which tracks album sales, Evancho sold 7,206 albums the week ending on Dec 15 (she announced she would sing the national anthem at the Inauguration on Dec 14). The following week, which ended on Dec 22, Evancho sold 13,788 albums, and the week after, ending on Dec 29, the 16-year-old sold 11,096 albums.

While some of the credit may be due to the announcement about the performance at the inauguration, Evancho's sales could simply be a result of the holidays: She released a new album, "Someday at Christmas," on Oct 28, and she has other holiday albums in her catalog. And not surprisingly, holiday albums tend to sell particularly well during the holidays. The singer's album sales also could have seen a boost thanks to her performance on NBC's "America's Got Talent: Holiday Spectacular," which aired on Dec 19.

Her overall album sales, however, remain low. The top-selling album for the weeks ending on Dec. 22 and Dec 29 was a cappella group Pentatonix's "A Pentatonix Christmas," which sold 206,000 and 101,000 equivalent albums, respectively. Evancho became popular when she placed second on "America's Got Talent" in 2010, the same year she released her platinum-selling debut EP, "O Holy Night." Her 2011 album "Dream With Me," which featured songs with Barbra Streisand and Susan Boyle, achieved gold status.

Jackie Evancho



Director Emir Kusturica takes a rest next to Manuela, the 19 year old pet of Uruguayan former President and guerrillas Jose Mujica, at Mujica's home in Montevideo. — AFP photos



Film director Emir Kusturica speaks during an exclusive interview with AFP.



Director Emir Kusturica takes a rest next to Manuela, the 19 year old pet of Uruguayan former President and guerrillas Jose Mujica, at Mujica's home in Montevideo. — AFP photos

## Director Kusturica finds 'last hero' in Uruguay's ex-president

Acclaimed filmmaker Emir Kusturica doesn't hide his admiration for the subject of his latest film, Uruguayan ex-president Jose Mujica, a leftist rabble-rouser nicknamed "the world's poorest president." To the Serbian director, he is simply "The Last Hero"—the title of the documentary he has just finished shooting at Mujica's run-down farmhouse. He describes the project as the culmination of a long love affair with the Latin American left, which has few heroes these days. "I am a born idealist," said Kusturica, a two-time winner of the top prize at the Cannes Film Festival, the Palme d'Or.

"I developed a special vision of the world that is linked to the people I admired from my youth, from Che Guevara to (Fidel) Castro," he told AFP. "Since I couldn't make anything with these two—both deceased—when I heard about a man who was a president and still driving his tractor and fixing his house... I said, 'This is my man.' And I was not wrong." Mujica rose to fame during his presidency (2010-2015) by living in his rustic farmhouse, driving himself around in his beat-up Volkswagen Beetle and donating most of his salary to charity.

Now an 81-year-old senator, Mujica made waves as president by delivering tirades against unfettered capitalism and consumption at the United Nations and international summits. A colorful character known as much for his devotion to his three-legged dog as his landmark initiatives legalizing marijuana, abortion and gay marriage, Mujica is simply called "Pepe" in Uruguay—his nickname among both admirers and critics.

And there are plenty of the latter, even if Mujica remains popular. Disgruntled allies on the left say he failed to keep promises such as education reform. Across the aisle, enemies blame him for rising crime and revile his past as an urban guerrilla. "Some people in Uruguay do not like what he does, which is natural," said Kusturica. "However popular he is around the world, he is not as popular as I wish. He is not a mainstream popularity man."

### Unlikely film star

With his rumpled sweaters and bushy gray eyebrows, Mujica makes an unlikely film star. But to Kusturica—director of such films

as "Black Cat, White Cat," "Time of the Gypsies" and "Underground"—he is an icon. "The complicated history of this country and any other country is synthesized in the experience of Mujica," he said. As a young man, Mujica was caught up in the revolutionary movements then sweeping Latin America. In the 1960s and 70s, he was a leader in the Tupamaros, an urban guerrilla movement inspired by the Cuban Revolution.

Captured and jailed, he spent 14 years in prison—much of it in squalid conditions, held at the bottom of an old well by the military regime then in power. Freed under a 1985 amnesty law after the restoration of democracy, he became a lawmaker, minister and eventually president—all while keeping up work on his humble farm outside the capital, Montevideo. "I want to get into the deep connection between his personality... and his connection to the land," said Kusturica. "He's almost religiously... connected to the land." The documentary, which combines interviews with archival footage from Mujica's presidency, centers on his final day as president, handing power to his successor and ally, Tabare Vazquez.

Kusturica recently wrapped up filming at Mujica's "chacra," or farm, where the ex-president has hosted such dignitaries as Spain's former king Juan Carlos. With his sleeves rolled up, wearing a hat, baggy pants and plastic sandals, Mujica answered Kusturica's questions. He was luke-warm when asked how he felt about the project. "It will help people get to know Uruguay. It has a lot to offer the world," Mujica said of his country of 3.4 million people and three times as many cows. "I don't know what Kusturica will do with it, because he's half—he broke off, signaling "crazy" with one hand—and half genius. But I respect him a lot." He hopes the film will send a message of "humility and commitment," he said. Kusturica meanwhile said he hopes to have the film ready in time for the Venice Film Festival in September. — AFP



This image released by Sundance Selects shows, from left, Briana Shann, Hayley Squires, Dave Johns and Dylan McKiernan, foreground right, in a scene from, "I, Daniel Blake." — AP photos



This image released by Sundance Selects shows Hayley Squires, left, and Dave Johns in a scene from, 'I, Daniel Blake.'

Review

# LOACH FILM IS A SEARING CALL FOR HUMANITY, DECENCY

Just like a Michael Moore documentary, there's nothing subtle about a Ken Loach drama. The 80-year-old British director and social critic has long been an ardent, insistent, eloquent champion of the more vulnerable members of society - particularly working-class folks who are trying to do the right thing but just can't catch a break. Whether he's exploring homelessness, poverty or other social ills, Loach's arguments, and emotions, are always crystal clear.

Loach has been making movies for a half-century - some more effective than others - but he's in beautiful form with "I, Daniel Blake," a searing look at one man's seemingly futile fight against the British welfare system, against the encroachment of technology into our lives, and most of all, against the forces that can conspire to make people feel small and insignificant and, well, not human. There are moments when "I, Daniel Blake" - which won the Palme D'Or at Cannes - feels like a documentary, and that's largely due to the pitch-perfect cast Loach has assembled, from star Dave Johns - a comedian who is occasionally funny here but also proud, anguished and increasingly angry - down to those with the smallest parts: a security guard, a food bank employee, a kind-hearted worker at an employment office.

**Disheartening assessment interview**

Johns plays Daniel, a 59-year old, widowed carpenter in north-

eastern England, who's sidelined after a heart attack. Daniel aches to return to work, but doctors say his heart isn't ready. He's been receiving subsidies, but suddenly he's forced to undergo an assessment to determine whether he deserves them. Loach cleverly begins the film with merely the audio of this disheartening assessment interview, during which a clueless questioner asks absurd pre-ordained questions about, for example, the condition of his bowels. More disheartening is the result: Daniel gets 12 points, and needs 15 to keep getting assistance.

Thus begins an obstacle course that feels increasingly Monty Python-esque - though not funny. While Daniel waits for the mere chance to appeal, he must apply for unemployment benefits, or else he'll starve. To get them, he must prove he's spending 35 hours a week looking for work. Even though he can't work. And so Daniel pursues the farce. At a CV-writing workshop, Daniel's told he should make video CVs and send them from his smartphone - he doesn't have one, and can't even operate a computer mouse.

**Especially poignant**

"You give me a plot of land and I can build a house on it, but I can't get near a computer," he says ruefully. At the welfare office one day, Daniel meets a single mother, in more dire straits than he is. Katie (Hayley Squires, natural and moving) has been squeezed out of London and offered dismal lodging up

north instead. She's being "sanctioned" for being late, after getting on the wrong bus. Daniel befriends Katie, who's struggling so much, she needs to choose between heating her apartment and buying school clothes. She cooks for her children but doesn't have enough for herself. In one devastating scene at a food bank, she breaks open a can of beans and drinks the juice because she's so hungry.

Her shame is agonizing to watch. So is her embarrassment when she's caught shoplifting sanitary products. Daniel tries to keep her from despair, but his own situation is worsening, too. There's little comic relief here - how can there be? Loach and screenwriter Paul Laverty do give Daniel one quasi-humorous scene in which he makes a dramatic public call for recognition. The scene flirts with showiness, but does give us a break, however brief, from the bleakness. In the end, the title, seemingly unremarkable, reveals itself as especially poignant. Daniel is crying out for recognition as an "I" - even if he can't contribute, even if he needs help for a while. This prolific director will no doubt be making the same argument for years to come. "I, Daniel Blake," an IFC Films release, is rated R by the Motion Picture Association of America "for language." Running time: 100 minutes. Three stars out of four. — AP

## French maestro conductor Georges Pretre dies at 92

French maestro Georges Pretre, the preferred conductor of legendary opera singer Maria Callas, died Wednesday aged 92 after a career wielding the baton for many of the world's top orchestras. The Vienna Philharmonic, where he regularly conducted, said on its Facebook page that it was mourning "our charming and dear honorary member Georges Pretre with whom we have performed for 50 years". Pretre died in Naves in the southwest France where he owned a chateau, the town's deputy mayor Brigitte Baux, who regularly organized events with the conductor, told AFP.

Born in northern France in 1924, Pretre entered the Paris Conservatoire aged 15 but went on to pursue most of his career outside his homeland, from Chicago and the Metropolitan Opera of New York to La Scala in Milan and London's Royal Philharmonic. At the time of his death, he still had concerts at La Scala scheduled for 2017. A judo blackbelt and lover of horse-riding, Pretre spent his life in concert halls and opera houses but loved

all types of music, having mingled with the jazz scene in post-war Paris.

"A giant of music has been lost today," said Paris Opera director Stephane Lissner. Pretre was notably the first "invited leader" from 1986-1991 of the Vienna Symphony Orchestra, the Austrian capital's second classical ensemble after the celebrated Philharmonic. Pretre, who liked to say that he was himself Viennese, also twice conducted the prestigious New Year's concert by the Philharmonic, in 2008 and 2010.

He last conducted the Vienna Philharmonic in 2013 at the Theatre des Champs-Elysees in Paris, with a repertoire including Ravel, Beethoven and Strauss. In an interview in 2015, the bootmaker's son told AFP he caught the "bug" for music at the age of seven and a half, when he heard an opera's overture. "It gave me a shock," he said. "I knew I wanted to be a musician." — AFP



This file photo shows French born conductor Georges Pretre (right) conducting the Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra during the New Years' concert in Vienna's 'Goldener Musikvereinsaal.' — AFP



This combination of pictures shows, (From left) actor Denzel Washington, actor Andrew Garfield, Danish-US actor Viggo Mortensen posubg, actor Joel Edgerton and actor Casey Affleck. — AFP photos



This combination of pictures shows, (From left) director Barry Jenkins, US director Damien Chazelle designer Tom Ford, US director Kenneth Lonergan and Mel Gibson .



This combination of pictures shows, (From left) actress Kerry Washington actress Riley Keough, Charlotte Rampling, Felicity Huffman and actress Sarah Paulson.



This combination of pictures shows, (From left) French actress Isabelle Huppert, actress Jessica Chastain, actress Natalie Portman, actress Amy Adams and Irish-Ethiopian actress Ruth Negga .



Miss Golden Globe 2017 Sophia Stallone, Sistine Stallone, host Jimmy Fallon and Scarlett Stallone attend the 74th Annual Golden Globes Preview Day.

# Glitzy Golden Globes launch Hollywood awards season

**H**ollywood's elite hits the red carpet on Sunday for the Golden Globes, launching a fiercely-contested awards season that looks set to reward escapist fantasy and gritty drama in equal measure. The Globes has a reputation for delighting in its eccentric picks so its record in predicting Oscars glory has been patchy over the years, but it is a huge draw for the stars and remains for many a solid bellwether for Academy Awards success.

"The Globes is known as one of the most fun parties of the year. There are only about 1,200 seats, and they're hard to get. So that 'insider' status is tantalizing," Tim Gray, awards editor for trade magazine Variety, told AFP. "And Hollywood knows that the Globes reach a big audience, so it's important to get their films out there, to increase public awareness." Leading the pack of films vying for top honors is Damien Chazelle's "La La Land," a tribute to the Golden Age of Hollywood musicals set in modern-day Los Angeles.

It picked up seven nominations, and pundits see it as the overwhelming favorite for best comedy/musical film, ahead of "20th Century Women," "Deadpool," "Florence Foster Jenkins" and "Sing Street." "La La Land" is also in a strong position to pick up awards

for its stars Ryan Gosling and Emma Stone, best director for Chazelle and best score and song, according to a poll of experts by awards website Gold Derby.

### 'Very tight race'

"'La La Land' could win all of its categories. It's either the frontrunner or in second place, I believe, in all seven. The safest for them are comedy/musical best picture, Emma Stone and for score," Gold Derby managing director Chris Beachum told AFP. "They could win for Gosling, director and song but the Globes voters tend to want to spread things out more than that. You don't generally see a movie winning more than three or four."

Barry Jenkins's coming-of-age tale "Moonlight," with six nominations including for the director and cast members Naomie Harris and Mahershala Ali, has been monopolizing attention on the drama side of the contest. Another frontrunner is Kenneth Lonergan's unflinching "Manchester by the Sea," which earned the filmmaker nods for best directing and screenplay while Casey Affleck is a favorite for best actor and Michelle Williams vies for best supporting actress.



Actress/model Olivia Culpo



Actress Jillian Murray



Miss Golden Globe 2017 Sophia Stallone, Sistine Stallone, Scarlett Stallone, HFFPA President Lorenzo Soria, host Jimmy Fallon, Executive Producer Allen Shapiro and Executive Producer Barry Adelman attend the 74th Annual Golden Globes Preview Day at The Beverly Hilton Hotel.



This combination of pictures shows, (From left) US actor John Turturro, British actor Riz Ahmed, actor Tom Hiddleston, US actor Bryan Cranston and Courtney B Vance.

Gold Derby's experts have it just ahead of "Moonlight" as favorite for best dramatic motion picture, with Mel Gibson's war movie "Hacksaw Ridge," heist thriller "Hell or High Water" and family drama "Lion" rounding out the category. "On our website it's razor thin. Our experts go with 'Manchester' but if you combine all people voting and predicting, it's slightly in favor of 'Moonlight,'" said Beachum. "It's a very tight race. I think both will win a couple of awards."

**'A chintzier affair'**

For best actress in a drama, Natalie Portman is expected to pick up the award for her intense, critically-acclaimed turn as Jackie Kennedy in "Jackie," which chronicles the days immediately following John F. Kennedy's 1963 assassination. Maren Ade's "Toni Erdmann," a German comedy about a troubled father-daughter relationship, is leading the betting in the foreign language category after sweeping the board at the European film awards in December.

It will vie for the prize with three French films: "Divines," "Elle" and "The Salesman," a joint French-Iranian production as well as Chile's "Neruda." On the television side, FX true crime anthology "The People vs O.J. Simpson: American Crime Story" is expected to enjoy a winning night with five nominations. AMC crime drama "The Night Manager" will be close behind, with four nominations, while "Black-ish," "The Crown," "The Night Of," "This is Us" and "Westworld" have three each.

HBO comfortably leads the television nominations with 14. Hollywood A-listers Drew Barrymore, Sylvester Stallone, Nicole Kidman



Host Jimmy Fallon attends the 74th Annual Golden Globes Preview Day.

and Reese Witherspoon will add glitz to the annual party as awards presenters while host Jimmy Fallon is seen as a safe pair of hands compared with another Globes regular, caustic British comedian Ricky Gervais. "The Globes are always a slightly chintzier affair when compared to the Oscars or the Emmys," wrote Jack Mirkinson, an editor at US pop culture website Fusion, of the upcoming ceremony. "But they're often way more fun to watch, especially because all the stars involved get progressively drunker as the night goes on." — AFP



Actress Nicky Whelan



Actress Bryce Dallas



Actress Katherine

**Golden Globe nominees**

**Film**

- Best film, drama**
- "Hacksaw Ridge"
- "Hell or High Water"
- "Lion"
- "Manchester by the Sea"
- "Moonlight"

**Best film, musical or comedy**

- "20th Century Women"
- "Deadpool"
- "Florence Foster Jenkins"
- "La La Land"
- "Sing Street"

**Best actor, drama**

- Casey Affleck, "Manchester by the Sea"
- Joel Edgerton, "Loving"
- Andrew Garfield, "Hacksaw Ridge"
- Viggo Mortensen, "Captain Fantastic"
- Denzel Washington, "Fences"

**Best actress, drama**

- Amy Adams, "Arrival"
- Jessica Chastain, "Miss Sloane"
- Isabelle Huppert, "Elle"
- Ruth Negga, "Loving"
- Natalie Portman, "Jackie"

**Best actor, musical or comedy**

- Colin Farrell, "The Lobster"
- Ryan Gosling, "La La Land"
- Hugh Grant, "Florence Foster Jenkins"
- Jonah Hill, "War Dogs"
- Ryan Reynolds, "Deadpool"

**Best actress, musical or comedy**

- Annette Bening, "20th Century Women"
- Lily Collins, "Rules Don't Apply"
- Hailee Steinfeld, "The Edge of Seventeen"
- Emma Stone, "La La Land"
- Meryl Streep, "Florence Foster Jenkins"

**Best supporting actor**

- Mahershala Ali, "Moonlight"
- Jeff Bridges, "Hell or High Water"
- Simon Helberg, "Florence Foster Jenkins"
- Dev Patel, "Lion"
- Aaron Taylor-Johnson, "Nocturnal Animals"

**Best supporting actress**

- Viola Davis, "Fences"
- Naomie Harris, "Moonlight"
- Nicole Kidman, "Lion"
- Octavia Spencer, "Hidden Figures"
- Michelle Williams, "Manchester by the Sea"

**Best director**

- Damien Chazelle, "La La Land"
- Tom Ford, "Nocturnal Animals"
- Mel Gibson, "Hacksaw Ridge"
- Barry Jenkins, "Moonlight"
- Kenneth Lonergan, "Manchester by the Sea"

**Best foreign language film**

- "Divines" (France)
- "Elle" (France)
- "Neruda" (Chile)
- "The Salesman" (Iran/France)
- "Toni Erdmann" (Germany)

**Best animated feature**

- "Kubo and the Two Strings"
- "Moana"
- "My Life as a Zucchini"
- "Sing"
- "Zootopia"

**Television**

**Best drama series**

- "The Crown" (Netflix)
- "Game of Thrones" (HBO)
- "Stranger Things" (Netflix)
- "This Is Us" (NBC)
- "Westworld" (HBO)

**Best drama actor**

- Rami Malek, "Mr Robot"

- Bob Odenkirk, "Better Call Saul"
- Matthew Rhys, "The Americans"
- Liev Schreiber, "Ray Donovan"
- Billy Bob Thornton, "Goliath"

**Best drama actress**

- Caitriona Balfe, "Outlander"
- Claire Foy, "The Crown"
- Keri Russell, "The Americans"
- Winona Ryder, "Stranger Things"
- Evan Rachel Wood, "Westworld"
- Best musical or comedy series "Atlanta" (FX)
- "Black-ish" (ABC)
- "Mozart in the Jungle" (Amazon)
- "Transparent" (Amazon)
- "Veep" (HBO)

**Best musical or comedy actor**

- Anthony Anderson, "Black-ish"
- Gael Garcia Bernal, "Mozart in the Jungle"
- Donald Glover, "Atlanta"
- Nick Nolte, "Graves"
- Jeffrey Tambor, "Transparent"

**Best musical or comedy actress**

- Rachel Bloom, "Crazy Ex-Girlfriend"
- Julia Louis-Dreyfus, "Veep"
- Sarah Jessica Parker, "Divorce"
- Issa Rae, "Insecure"
- Gina Rodriguez, "Jane the Virgin"
- Tracee Ellis Ross, "Black-ish"

**Best limited series or TV movie**

- "American Crime" (ABC)
- "The Dresser" (Starz)
- "The Night Manager" (AMC)
- "The Night Of" (HBO)
- "The People vs O.J. Simpson: American Crime Story" (FX)

**Best limited series or TV movie actor**

- Riz Ahmed, "The Night Of"
- Bryan Cranston, "All The Way"
- Tom Hiddleston, "The Night Manager"
- John Turturro, "The Night Of"
- Courtney B. Vance, "The People vs O.J. Simpson: American Crime Story"

**Best limited series or TV movie actress**

- Felicity Huffman, "American Crime"
- Riley Keough, "The Girlfriend Experience"
- Sarah Paulson, "The People vs O.J. Simpson: American Crime Story"
- Charlotte Rampling, "London Spy"
- Kerry Washington, "Confirmation"

**Films with most nominations**

- "La La Land" - 7
- "Moonlight" - 6
- "Manchester by the Sea" - 5
- "Florence Foster Jenkins" - 4
- "Lion" - 4 — AFP



This file photo taken on December 11, 2014 shows the stage is seen prior to the star of the 2015 Golden Globe Awards nominations announcement, at the Beverly Hilton Hotel, in Beverly Hills, California.



This undated photo provided by HGTV, shows a portion of a kitchen in Ann Arbor, Mich.



In this undated photo provided by HGTV, a large center island used for cooking prep and dining is shown in a kitchen in Ann Arbor, Mich., and can actually make a small kitchen seem larger, says Brian Patrick Flynn, who designed this kitchen for the HGTV Urban Oasis 2016 house giveaway.



This undated photo provided by HGTV, shows a portion of a kitchen in Ann Arbor, Mich.

# KITCHEN TRENDS AND INNOVATIONS FOR 2017

Americans briefly scaled back the scope of home renovation projects after the recession began nearly a decade ago, says interior designer and "HGTV Design Star" judge Vern Yip. But even during the peak of that focus on smaller, more sustainable living, the size and complexity of kitchen designs continued to grow. "The kitchen is the heart of the home," Yip says, and people see it as good place to spend money and recoup the investment when they sell their home. What's trending in kitchen design as 2017 approaches? We've asked Yip and two other interior design experts - Caleb Anderson, co-founder of the New York-based design firm Drake/Anderson, and Brian Patrick Flynn, interior designer for HGTV's Urban Oasis 2016 home giveaway - to share their favorite innovations and thoughts on which trending design choices will stand the test of time.

### Think black and white

Black and white are the trendiest colors now for kitchen design, and Flynn points out that they're also timeless. A black and white palette works with virtually any accent color, he says, so "if you go black and white, you really only have to spend once." Right now, "black appliances with more of a matte finish" are among Flynn's favorites. Yip says cabinets in both black and white are popular, and look great mixed together. That's another trend all three designers are seeing: upper and lower cabinets done in different finishes and materials. Anderson recently designed a kitchen in London that has upper cabinets made of metal and glass, with lower cabinets made of cerused wood. "They need to complement each other," he says, "but everything doesn't have to match."

### Get creative

Anderson also notes that it's popular to design a kitchen island out of different materials than the cabinets and countertops. That puts a personal stamp on the room, especially if you make your island out of a distinctive piece of furniture, like a vintage cabinet.

By using popular materials in unique ways, you can design a kitchen that feels current but won't look dated as trends change. Flynn is fan of that approach: For HGTV's Urban Oasis giveaway house this year, he chose a reflective, black marble mosaic tile for the kitchen walls, from the counter all the way up to the ceiling. The look is on-trend, but has a classic beauty that won't need renovating in a few years.

He also used concrete for the countertops, a popular option now but one with a classic simplicity. Along with concrete, Anderson and Yip says quartz countertops are popular. Quartz is more durable than marble, which can easily stain, and more consistent in color throughout a large slab. Textured and colored glass is another way to jump on a trend in ways that reflect your own style, Anderson says. He's seeing glass used to surround the hoods above stoves, for backsplashes, and as cabinet fronts.

### Mix your metals

Gold, brass and other yellow-toned metal finishes have been popular for several years, says Yip, and now white metal finishes like chrome, pewter and stainless steel are catching on too. Anderson recently used a mix of black and steel finishes in one kitchen, along with brass. All three designers suggest going with your favorites and feeling free to mix and match.

"The hardware in your kitchen is sort of like the jewelry," and you can have fun adding that bit of bling, Yip says. Changing your hardware is a nice way to update the kitchen without having to change

### Tech isn't an afterthought

Flynn used a wifi-enabled oven (easily controlled from a smartphone) in the Urban Oasis house, as well as a refrigerator equipped with cameras accessible from a digital app, so you can see what you have inside it. "While you are out, you can decide on the fly what to buy and bring home to be stocked up for dinner," he says. Smaller appliances are a priority for many homeowners.

"People tend to clutter their countertops with small appliances or put them in the cabinet and have to pull them out," Anderson says. So designers now routinely figure in storage space where



This undated photo provided by Vern Yip shows a kitchen in Florida designed by Yip. — AP photos

the cabinets. You can also bring in a light fixture with a metal that's different from your cabinet hardware. Yip is seeing many clients opting to splurge on dramatic lighting in the kitchen, rather than in the dining room. "The old way of thinking is you spend thousands of dollars on the crystal chandelier over the dining table, but lighting over the kitchen was practical," he says. Now, there's more emphasis on kitchen lighting "that doesn't feel functional but has a really polished aesthetic quality."

small appliances can be concealed but easily accessed. Also, says Anderson, "Clients have so many devices, smart devices," that they need "an area in the kitchen that's devoted to USB ports and chargers." — AP



A handout picture taken by Jacob Berger in January 2016, and released in London on January 3, 2017, shows the late British art critic and prize-winning author John Berger sitting in the living room of his home in Paris. — AFP

## British art critic, revolutionary **John Berger** dies aged 90

Influential British art critic and prize-winning author John Berger, a self-declared revolutionary who controversially backed the far-left Black Panthers, has died aged 90, his son told AFP Tuesday. Berger was best known for his art criticism essay "Ways Of Seeing", written to accompany a BBC television series, which is credited with changing the way people viewed art. He also won the 1972 Booker Prize for Fiction for his experimental novel "G.", set in pre-World War I Europe. Berger died on Monday in the Paris suburb of Antony, his son Jacob said. "He died peacefully at home, surrounded by his family," he said. He had lived in France since the 1970s.

Berger was born in London in 1926. After serving in the British army, he enrolled in the Chelsea School of Art, becoming a painter. He then taught drawing from 1948 to 1955, becoming a noted art critic from 1952 onwards, according to his French publishers, Les Editions de l'Olivier. He wrote about artists including Pablo Picasso, Titian, Paul Cezanne and Gustave Courbet. "Ways of Seeing", a highly influential criticism of Western cultural aesthetics, originally aired in 1972 as a four-part BBC television series and was subsequently published as a book.

"Art and the wider world seemed to make more sense after watching Berger on the BBC, with his piercing blue eyes, steady delivery and groovy seventies shirt, eloquently explain perspective or the idealization of the nude," wrote The Guardian newspaper's arts correspondent Mark Brown.

### Black Panther donation

But besides art criticism, Berger also wrote novels, plays and poetry. "G." won the Booker Prize, one of the most prestigious awards in English language literature. A Marxist humanist who called himself a revolutionary, he donated half of his £5,000 prize money to the UK branch of the Black Panthers, the far-left black nationalist organization.

"There is not a single book of his that is not impregnated with politics," Jacob Berger said. "He was a friend of Subcomandante Marcos, a friend of the Palestinian people... who had an extremely strong political position without being a dogmatic communist." Berger moved to France to escape the "extremely anti-communist" Britain, his son said. In France, "there was a balance which tended much more towards support of, if not the Soviet Union, then of Marxist and communist ideals". Tributes came from the worlds of art, literature and politics.

"With John Berger's passing we have lost one of the great storytellers of our times," said publishers Penguin Books. Jeremy Corbyn, the veteran leftist leader of Britain's main opposition Labor Party, said: "John Berger changed the way we see the world and each other. "He was an advocate for socialism-and a more kind and generous life for all." — AFP

## From cakes to slippers, Slovenia stirs 'Melania' hype

Golden "Melania" cakes, "White House" slippers, guided tours tracing her rise to model stardom-tiny Slovenia has lost no time tapping into the marketing opportunities from its most famous daughter's rise to future US First Lady. The glamorous wife of President-elect Donald Trump has helped put her homeland-an Alpine nation a little smaller than New Jersey-on the map for US tourists coming to Europe. The number of American visitors jumped by 11 percent to 80,000 between January and October last year compared to the same period in 2015, according to the Slovenian Tourism Board (STB).

"The interest in Slovenia hasn't only increased since Trump's victory but already began when he announced his presidential candidacy," said STB spokeswoman Livija Kovac Kostantinovic. "Slovenia, as a boutique holiday destination, has become better known among the US public and media... Due to the increased interest, the STB plans its most intense digital campaign ever in the US market for 2017," she told AFP. Kostantinovic expects the trend to be further boosted once Trump takes office on January 20 -- especially in Melania Trump's hometown of Sevnica, 100 kilometers (60 miles) from the capital Ljubljana. Until recently, the small town of 5,000 on the banks of the Sava River was better known for its lingerie and furniture factories, as well as a 900-year-old castle.

Few in Sevnica even remembered a young girl called Melanija Knavs, who was born in 1970. Melania left in her late teens to embark on an international modeling career, which would eventually lead her to New York where she became Trump's third wife in 2005. A year later, she took US citizenship and has only rarely returned to Slovenia, where her parents still own a house in Sevnica but mostly live also in the US, according to local media.

### 'Melaniamania'

But this has not stopped savvy local entrepreneurs from tapping into what they call "Melaniamania". At Julija bakery on Sevnica's main street, you can have your very own slice of "Melania" for just three euros. The creamy white chocolate cake is stuffed with nuts and has a golden topping. The delicacy has been a hit with locals and foreigners, according to bakery employee Darja Jelenc. "It's a national pride... We've been selling many of these cakes over the last few weeks. People come all the way from Ljubljana to buy them," she told AFP.

Jelenc already dreams of even bigger success after Trump's inauguration. "The local tourist board has announced a whole bus of foreign journalists will come then," she said with a grin. On one of the forest-covered hills surrounding Sevnica, a rustic restaurant offers a "Melania" menu featuring locally-caught trout as its main course. Meanwhile, a specialty crepe shop sells "Melania" pancakes with wild blueberries, vanilla cream and, of course, gold dust.

Travel agency Muranica plans to launch a "Melania tour" in March that will include guided visits around landmark spots in Sevnica,



A road sign reading 'Sevnica' is seen at the entrance to Sevnica, Slovenia, the home town of future US First Lady Melania Trump. — AFP photos



A dessert named 'Melania' (in reference to future US First Lady Melania Trump) is pictured.

Ljubljana and Milan, Italy, where she started her modeling career. Even local footwear manufacturer Kopitarna Sevnica has joined the craze and launched a limited edition of luxurious felt slippers called "White House". "We sent the future First Lady a pair hoping they will keep her feet warm in the coming winter months," spokeswoman Mateja Reseta told AFP.



A cake named "Melania" (in reference to future US First Lady Melania Trump) is pictured in a bakery.

### Just hype?

The Trumps, however, have not been all that charmed by the many "Melania" gimmicks popping up. The couple recently hired a Slovenian lawyer to stop the use of their name and image for commercial purposes without their consent. Heeding the warning, Sevnica council promptly took down an advertising billboard with Melania's image while a honey producer had to remove jars claiming to be from "Melania's home garden". Others changed the name of their products, including pizzeria Rondo whose "Trump" burger became the more generic "Presidential" burger. The "Melania" mascarpone strawberry mousse, however, stays on the menu.

Still, not everyone buys into the hype. For Slovenian columnist Dejan Steinbuch, it is merely a marketing ploy. Most ordinary Slovenians don't care about Melania because she has long not been present, nor promoted her native land overseas, he says. "They feel she went to the US because she was fed up with Slovenia. Melania's attitude towards her homeland is determined by her departure," he wrote in a recent editorial for Croatian Vecernji List daily's website. — AFP



Slippers with the lettering "The White House", are pictured in Sevnica, Slovenia.



A hamburger called Presidential Hamburger (in reference to future US First Lady Melania Trump) is pictured.

# Leek, Sausage and Split-Pea Soup

By Katie Workman

**T**his makes a ton of soup, and you can freeze it at will. It's the kind of soup that sells itself, hits the spot, and has so much flavor and such a high level of comfort-foodness that you instantly feel better about life while eating it. If that's overstating it, I'm sorry, but my family never can get enough of these bean-grain-sausage concoctions. You'll see that two different starches are called for: rice and Israeli couscous. There is no reason for this other than that I had a bit of couscous left, but not enough for the whole batch of soup. Also, I love soups with a bounce-up of textures in them. You could use all rice, or all couscous, or any other grain you want to play with from spelt to farro. Just look at

the cooking times of the grain you want to use, and work backward to figure out when to add it.

There are lots of flavored chicken sausages on the market these days - I went with the basic Italian-seasoned versions, hot or sweet, but you could try any version that seems compatible with this simple soup. Also, know that soups thicken as they cool, so if you are planning to keep it for a day or two, you might find yourself needing to add some extra water or broth to loosen it up when you reheat it. This is also the kind of soup that is perfect when made ahead; the flavors deepen over a day or two in the fridge.



## LEEK, CHICKEN SAUSAGE AND SPLIT PEA SOUP

This November 2016 photo shows leek, sausage and split-pea soup in New York. — AP

Serves 12 to 14  
Start to finish: 1 hour 15 minutes

### Ingredients

2 tablespoons olive oil  
4 large leeks, white and light green parts, thinly sliced  
Kosher salt and freshly ground pepper to taste  
10 to 12 cups less-sodium chicken stock  
1 (28-ounce) can crushed tomatoes  
1-1/2 cups split peas  
1 cup long-grain rice  
1/2 cup Israeli couscous

12 to 16 ounces cooked chicken sausage, halved lengthwise and sliced  
Chopped fresh parsley  
Toasted pumpkin seeds

### Preparation

In a very large soup pot or Dutch oven, heat the oil over medium heat. Add the leeks, season with salt and pepper, and saute for about 8 minutes until they are wilted. Raise the heat to high, add 10 cups of the broth and the crushed tomatoes, and bring to a simmer. Add the split peas, return to a simmer, then lower the heat and simmer partially covered for 30 minutes.

Add the rice and simmer another 10 minutes, then add the couscous and sausage and simmer for another 20 minutes until the grains and the peas are tender. Add all or part of the remaining 2 cups of broth if the soup seems too thick when you finish cooking it. Serve hot in bowls, with some parsley and/or pumpkin seeds on top.

Nutritional information: Nutrition information per serving: 258 calories; 61 calories from fat; 7 g fat (2 g saturated; 0 g trans fats); 19 mg cholesterol; 412 mg sodium; 34 g carbohydrate; 10 g fiber; 5 g sugar; 15 g protein. — AP



# Let five-spice powder turn a 'blah' chicken into warm spice

By Melissa D'arabian

**E**ating healthy on a budget and tight schedule means the boneless skinless chicken breast makes frequent appearances on our dinner table. It's a smart choice as a lean protein - one cup of cubed chicken breast has a whopping 43 grams of protein yet only 5 grams of fat (fewer than 2 of those are saturated).

But the chicken breast story goes beyond protein gram counts. White meat chicken provides a sizeable chunk of our daily requirements for several vitamins and minerals, most notably B6, niacin, phosphorous and selenium, and smaller quantities of a slew of others. Impressive stats from the cut of meat that goes on mega-sale about every 4 weeks, and freezes so well that you can stock up when it does.

The problem with this wallet-friendly nutrient wonder is that it is so mild and low-fat (read: Low-flavor) that it can become "blah" and uninspired on the weekly family menu, elegantly referred to as being in a rut. The lower fat also

puts this protein at high risk for drying out. Today's recipe solves both those problems while also staying weeknight-speedy.

Five-Spice Chicken in Orange Broth is a skillet chicken that starts on the stovetop with a quick sear and then finishes in the oven, bathed in an aromatic orange juice broth, simmering to juicy perfection.

If you don't have five-spice blend on hand, I suggest it as a worthy purchase, because its warm spicy flavors (think ginger, anise and cinnamon) add a perfect depth to a ton of dishes, both savory and sweet. However, feel free to experiment with similar spices or blends (such a pumpkin pie spice). Another recommended purchase: an instant-read thermometer, which will improve your meat-cookery overall, so you can stop cooking the chicken as soon as it reaches 160 degrees. A final tip: most chicken breasts are larger than one serving. Consider serving the meat already sliced on a platter, and you'll find that two or three breasts will easily feed a family of four.



Photo shows five-spice chicken breast in orange broth in Coronado, Calif. — AP

## Five-spice chicken breast in orange broth

### Ingredients

Start to finish: 40 minutes

Servings: 4

1 1/2 pounds boneless skinless chicken breast, about 3 breasts  
2 tablespoons all-purpose flour  
1 tablespoon olive oil  
1 large onion, diced (about 1 1/2 cup diced)  
1 teaspoon Chinese five-spice (spice blend available at regular grocery stores)  
3/4 teaspoon ground cumin  
3-4 carrots, trimmed and halved both crossways and lengthwise  
4 garlic cloves, smashed  
1/4 cup white wine  
3/4 cup orange juice (fresh or carton)  
1 cup low-sodium chicken broth, plus extra if needed  
chopped cilantro for garnish (or parsley, if preferred)

### Preparations

Preheat the oven to 350 degrees F.

Pat the chicken breasts dry with a paper towel, trim visible fat, and season with salt and pepper. Sprinkle the flour over both sides of the chicken breasts and lightly press the flour into the meat. In a large oven-safe skillet, heat the olive oil over medium high flame. Brown the chicken breasts until golden, about 3-5 minutes per side. Remove the chicken and set aside on a plate (it will not be fully cooked). Add the onion to the same pan with a pinch of salt and stir with a wooden spoon. Once the onions are translucent, about 2-3 minutes, add the five-spice, cumin, carrots and garlic, and cook until very fragrant, about 3 minutes.

Increase temperature to high and deglaze the pan with the wine, scraping up any crusty bits on the bottom of the pan as it bubbles for a minute. Add the orange juice and 1 cup of broth and stir. Return the chicken breasts to the

pan, including any juices that have accumulated on the plate. Add extra broth (or just water) so that liquid level is about 1/4 the way up the chicken breasts. Spoon some of the sauce on top of each breast. Bring the mixture to a simmer and then place in the oven to continue cooking until the chicken breasts reach 160 degrees F, about 15-20 more minutes.

Remove the chicken from the oven and let rest a few minutes before slicing and serving with the carrots and the fragrant broth spooned on top. Garnish with fresh cilantro.

Nutrition information per serving: 271 calories; 61 calories from fat; 7 g fat (1 g saturated; 0 g trans fats); 86 mg cholesterol; 262 mg sodium; 19 g carbohydrate; 3 g fiber; 9 g sugar; 29 g protein. — AP



# Friday Times Travel

The Parthenon is shown, a temple dedicated to the goddess Athena. —AP photos

## A winter visit to Athens offers a pleasant alternative

**A**s a seaside metropolis with a lively outdoor vibe and dozens of picturesque islands beckoning nearby, Athens is more often considered a summer tourist destination than a winter escape. But if you've got more than beaches on your mind, there's plenty of upside to a brief cool visit that avoids the crowds and heat of summer.

Athens is one of the world's oldest cities, often called the cradle of Western civilization. Visitors will find monuments to ancient history on nearly every path they take. But with interesting neighborhoods, trendy shops and a variety of cafes and tavernas serving that famous Greek cuisine, Athens' attractions are not all rooted in the past.

The city is easy to get around by bus or metro and most major attractions are within walking distance. Temperatures in January average 50 F (10 C). Here's a suggested itinerary for a three-day visit.

### The Acropolis

The centerpiece of ancient Greece and modern-day Athens, the Acropolis literally stands above everything else and looms majestically over the city. It is particularly striking to view at night, when brilliantly illuminated. A 10-euro entrance fee to the compound takes you along a course of the central structures of Greek mythology as you climb past the Theatre of Dionysus, the Propylaea, the Erechtheion and the Herodeion - which still hosts the occasional live perform-



Members of the Evzoni presidential guard perform the changing of the guard ceremony in front of the tomb of the unknown soldier at Syntagma Square in Athens.



The view from the Temple of Poseidon, an ancient hilltop structure the southern peninsula of Sounion dedicated to the god of the sea.



The Temple of Poseidon, an ancient hilltop structure in the southern peninsula of Sounion dedicated to the god of the sea is shown.



The Temple of Poseidon, an ancient hilltop structure on the southern peninsula of Sounion dedicated to the god of the sea is shown.

ance. A 20-minute walk to the top unveils the most famous structure of all, the Parthenon - a former temple dedicated to the goddess Athena, the city's patron. However, the scaffolding of its prolonged restoration project takes a bit away from its grandeur.

Most of the Acropolis' treasures are housed in the nearby Acropolis Museum (entrance 5 euros), such as colossal stone statues depicting mythological scenes from ancient Greece. One of the museum's most impressive features is actually the architecture that includes glass floors through which you can see the ruins that lay below. A full view of the Acropolis spreads out from the second and third floor galleries.

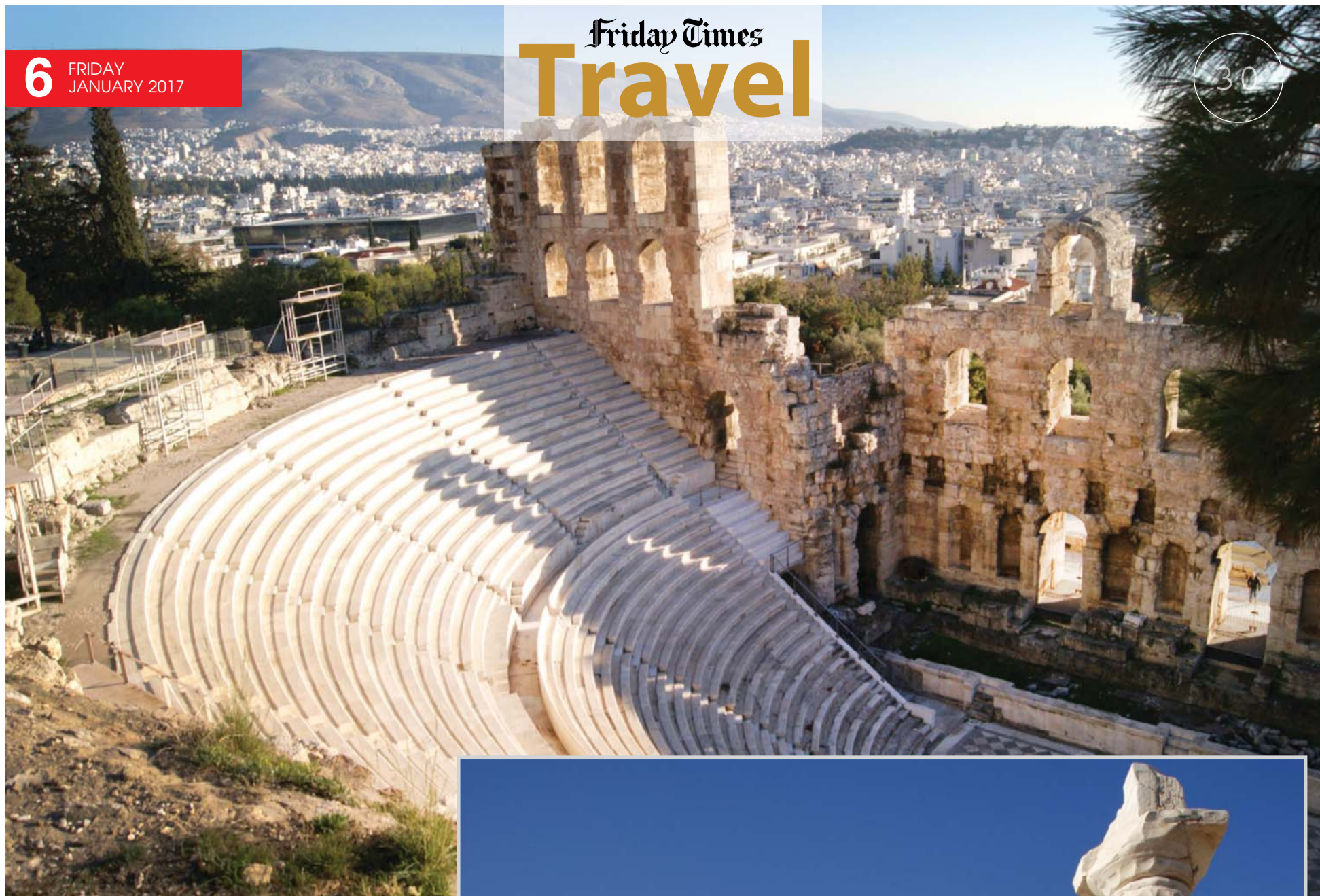
There are plenty of other ancient sites to visit across the city, but the most comprehensive is likely the nearby Ancient Agora on the Acropolis' northwest slope with its impressive Temple of Hephaistos nestled among ruins overgrown with green foliage from the winter rains. It houses a large assortment of ancient vases, figurines, coins and headless statues.

#### Lycabettus Hill

There are views of the Acropolis from everywhere, but the best one in town is from Lycabettus Hill. After a pleasant but steep hike up a winding trail, a panoramic view of the sprawling city is revealed. There's a little church at the top, Agii Isidori, and ample angles to photograph Athens. An early morning visit will put the sun behind you as you gaze across the city toward the Acropolis with the shores of the Aegean Sea lapping in the distance. Part of the fun is getting there via a stroll from the center of town through the upscale Kolonaki neighborhood, with its bustling cafes and designer merchandise.



The Erechtheionin, an ancient Greek temple on the north side of the Acropolis of Athens, is seen against a backdrop of Athens.



**The Odeon of Herodes Atticus, or Herodeion, a stone theatre structure located on the southwest slope of the Acropolis of Athens, is seen against a backdrop of Athens.**

### Syntagma Square

This is the heart of the city and site of mass protests in recent years over the Greek economic crisis. The square is right in front of parliament and the tomb of the unknown soldier, where soldiers in kilt-like garments and red leather clogs with black pompoms perform elaborate changing of the guard ceremonies several times a day.

To the west, busy Ermou street offers the city's primary shopping district and leads toward the neighborhoods of Monastiraki, which has a large, busy Sunday morning flea market, and Psyrri, with a wide selection of bars and live music tavernas. Eateries include O Kostas (5 Pentelis St.), a hole in the wall known for excellent souvlaki. At Lukumades (Eolou Street and Agias Irinis Square), get the deep-fried doughnut ball doused in honey.

### Plaka

Just south of Syntagma is Plaka, a historical neighborhood built upon the ancient town of Athens. Known as the "Neighborhood of the Gods" because of its proximity to the Acropolis, its maze-like narrow streets are a joy to explore. Amid remnants of archaeological sites, there's street art, small shops and restaurants. A real gem is Psaras, an old-style taverna off the main drag, popular with locals and tourists. The baked feta pastry appetizer dipped in honey and sprinkled with sesame seeds is a treat to warm up a winter day.

Besides the Acropolis Museum, the neighborhood is also home the Jewish Museum of Greece (6 euros) and the Museum of Greek Folk Art (2 euros).

### Sounion

A same-day excursion to one of the three nearby islands of Aegina, Poros or Hydra is possible, but with a limited winter ferry schedule the journey will likely take longer than the actual stay. A more rewarding outing is the 90-minute bus ride along the "Greek Riviera" down to the southern peninsula of Sounion, where the Temple of Poseidon reveals a breathtaking view of the sea. The deep blue waters ripple around the ancient hilltop structure dedicated to the god of the sea. The salty breeze offers an escape from the bustle of Athens, as mountains jut out of the sea and the rocky ancient landscape provides a tranquil parting from Greece. —AP



**The Temple of Poseidon, an ancient hilltop structure the southern peninsula of Sounion dedicated to the god of the sea, is seen against a backdrop of the Aegean Sea.**



### Aries (March 21-April 19)

Our vocational success depends a lot on how we feel about our life, and this is the area you look into this morning. You have a great deal of inner drive for the profession you have chosen. You look for ways to climb the corporate ladder and do not mind the hard work that comes along. Community affairs may surface this afternoon, but the time for your involvement is not quite yet. Your outward and social success is highlighted and you will find this a good time for networking. Political issues shine a light on your views and you may see several opportunities to grow in this area. Make plans for a short trip-starting this evening. When you wake up in a different atmosphere, your energies will become refreshed and renewed.



### Taurus (April 20-May 20)

Focus in on the things that really need accomplishing and the rest of the day will move along quickly. Someone has good ideas and without realizing it, may just leapfrog you forward in your career. Up-to-date information is most important to your business and you work and research to find the most recent theories and research that will help in your future projects and contacts with professional people. A strong urge for the social life finds you visiting with the neighbors this evening. Planning a future get-together is fun and a good way to bond and to keep in the know around the neighborhood. Consider suggesting a time to enjoy games and each other's food with perhaps a progressive dinner. A treat at each house: appetizers, salads, side dishes and desserts.



### Gemini (May 21-June 20)

Rules, rules, rules everywhere and they do not seem to be working. The world is going through a lot of changes and some of them just do not seem to make any sense to you. Changes in fuel, transportation issues, immigration and other subjects smack of exciting and careful conversations. You are concerned and you may be able to turn that concern into some positive changes. You are not necessarily a politician, but you do solve problems. Some problems in the school, workplace or community may have your attention. You can get on the political bandwagon and help to change, enlighten and give strength to certain issues that are important for most. There could be some ideas of yours that would encourage others to excel in positive ways. Keep in the know.



### Cancer (June 21-July 22)

This is a good time for completing unfinished business. Your work is much more effective than usual and you are able to get a lot done. Because of your tendency to be thorough, any problems with this recent project will not return. Your vitality and enthusiasm make good impressions with employers. Regarding your profession, consider where you would like to be in a year. You may find positive results when you approach a mate or partner with more than one solution to a quandary. This way they are still in control but you have presented some options that are acceptable or impressive. Today is a good day to express yourself. Your energies are high and your self-confidence is strong. This is also a very good time for physical competition and sports.



### Leo (July 23-August 22)

You need and will most likely seek powerful experiences in order to derive a deeper meaning from life. This is an excellent time for beginning a course of study or for getting work accomplished that must be done. In fact, your personal power enables you to accomplish things that might otherwise be very difficult. This evening is a time of inner peace and harmony for you—a time when you should evaluate your recent past and prepare for your near future. You easily use your experience as a learning tool. Make an effort to correct areas of your life that need shoring up and make compromises with others to smooth out any difficult relationships. Self-expression is accomplished through helping others at this time.



### Virgo (August 23-September 22)

Eat often and reduce the quantity of the meal so that your energies and your positive frame of mind can stay current all day—this is going to be a very busy day. Find a gym near your office or find an empty area at work where you can stretch and exercise when you begin to feel muscle tension. Balance is the word for the day. Your powers of persuasion are working with you, as is your enthusiastic and optimistic attitude. Much of your strength arises from the creative side of you that touches the spiritual, artistic, beautiful and imaginative elements in which the deeper aspects of the human psyche are shaped—really! One way to have a more fulfilling relationship is to stay aware of the differences between your needs and the needs of others.



### Libra (September 23-October 22)

You are full of wit and sharp insights. This could be a time for real breakthroughs in the inspirational department. You are in top form when it comes to mental activity. Making yourself understood in your place of business is an important element toward good relationships at work. Today and tomorrow are good times to begin a diet. Friends can present an interesting turn of events. Your life dreams may change now and why not; we certainly do not have the same dreams we had when we were very young. You will still become all that you can be and surprises with accomplishments and adjustments are found at every turn. At this time it would be good to take out those dreams and manipulate them. Appreciate the process of development.



### Scorpio (October 23-November 21)

This is a great time to buy a car, make travel arrangements or try and explain the workings of the universe. Today and tomorrow are the right times to seek a loan, sign contracts, complete projects, clean out closets, clean out desks and complete ongoing or unsettled private business affairs. You have no difficulty in getting through this day successfully, although you have worried about a few questionable situations. This afternoon is the time to dismiss them from your mind. You appear quite charming and your winning ways will see you through most difficulties. The evening brings with it opportunities to visit with family members that have been out of touch lately. Sharing ideas and making big plans for future activities keep your energies high.



### Sagittarius (November 22-December 21)

If you feel you need a loan, now and tomorrow are good times to obtain a loan. Perhaps someone will be repaying a debt or a family member is ready to support your plans. Some confusing circumstances, paperwork or issues have gone unresolved and can be resolved now. Take a little trip, or get outside today. You may want to break with your standard activities and try something new or different during the noon break today. You may discover some insights into day-to-day problems that will be of great value later. Coming to the aid of an older person or a handicapped individual will satisfy a deep emotional need. Communicating feelings becomes more important as you find yourself laughing and talking with friends this evening.



### Capricorn (December 22-January 19)

Accidents are not always bad; sometimes they are funny. Watch which door you open or where you sit and you will be fine. Before leaving home, make sure the cell phone is charged and be prepared so that you will feel comfortable if any delays or detours occur this day. You may be pleasantly surprised this afternoon when you receive a message, visit or a phone call from a childhood friend or sweetheart. You may be using public transportation for riding into and out of the work area, so a crossword puzzle, book or game will bring you much pleasure. Occasionally, you may be able to sit with the same person on these commuter rides and today could bring several good surprises from this trip.



### Aquarius (January 20- February 18)

You may be called upon to perform a very special job today—perhaps one that requires diplomacy. You could come up with new solutions or inventions—your creative mind is working well. A clear-minded insight into plans and methods is available. This is a very good time to communicate instructions or ideas to others and a good time for decisions. Everything comes around to value and brings out your dramatic, unique and unusual qualities. You may find that someone close to you understands and is supportive of your eccentricities. You may be looking for ways to enjoy your friends in a quiet environment this afternoon. You might consider going with a friend to a comedy club in your area. You enjoy your friends and feel good this evening.



### Pisces (February 19-March 20)

An important decision may have you looking for a little quiet time to think. You might feel that some avenue of support has been slowed or blocked. Arguments of an emotional kind will have to be reversed. You are learning to expand your vision into accepting the things you cannot change. Staying balanced in mind, body and soul means that if frustrations come up, your own outlook will remain positive. Through this balance you will be able to help many people. Independence, as well as anything unusual or different, is valued. Depending on your family's wishes, you may want to invite some friends over this evening. There is a chance to understand those around you and to have a special time with someone you love.

## 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
Antigua	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	Niger	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



00:20 Wheeler Dealers  
01:10 Salvage Hunters  
02:00 Marooned With Ed Stafford  
02:50 Treasure Quest: Snake Island  
03:40 Fat N' Furious: Rolling Thunder  
04:30 The Liquidator  
05:00 How Do They Do It?  
05:30 How Do They Do It?  
06:00 Blue Collar Backers  
06:50 Mega Shippers  
07:40 Impossible Engineering  
08:30 Catching Monsters  
09:20 Deadliest Catch  
10:10 Kings Of The Wild  
11:00 Venom Hunters  
11:50 Mega Trains  
12:40 Curiosity: Volcano Time Bomb  
13:30 Fast N' Loud  
14:20 Biketacular  
15:10 Street Outlaws  
16:00 Edge Of Alaska  
16:50 Edge Of Alaska  
17:40 Edge Of Alaska  
18:30 Edge Of Alaska  
21:00 Fast N' Loud  
21:50 Misfit Garage  
22:40 Street Outlaws  
23:30 Curiosity: Volcano Time Bomb

00:10 Hank Zipzer  
00:35 Binny And The Ghost  
01:00 Violetta  
01:45 The Hive  
01:50 Sabrina Secrets Of A Teenage Witch  
02:15 Sabrina Secrets Of A Teenage Witch  
02:40 Hank Zipzer  
03:05 Binny And The Ghost  
03:30 Violetta  
04:15 The Hive  
04:20 Sabrina Secrets Of A Teenage Witch  
04:45 Sabrina Secrets Of A Teenage Witch  
05:10 Hank Zipzer  
05:35 Binny And The Ghost  
06:00 Violetta  
06:45 The Hive  
06:50 Mouk  
07:00 Dog With A Blog  
07:50 Tsum Tsum Shorts  
07:55 Miraculous Tales Of Ladybug And Cat Noir  
08:20 Elena Of Avalor  
08:45 Star Darlings  
08:50 Liv And Maddie  
09:15 Jessie  
10:30 Princess Protection Programme  
12:00 The 7D  
12:10 Austin & Ally  
13:00 Liv And Maddie  
13:50 Shake It Up  
14:40 Dog With A Blog  
115:30 Good Luck Charlie  
16:20 Girl Meets World  
17:10 Elena Of Avalor

17:35 Miraculous Tales Of Ladybug And Cat Noir  
18:00 The Next Step  
18:25 Descendants Wicked World  
18:30 Liv And Maddie  
18:55 Star Darlings  
19:00 Bunk'd  
19:25 Disney Mickey Mouse  
19:30 Austin & Ally  
19:55 Descendants Wicked World  
20:00 Backstage  
20:25 Tsum Tsum Shorts  
20:30 Elena Of Avalor  
20:55 Best Friends Whenever  
21:20 Jessie  
22:35 H2O: Just Add Water  
23:00 Binny And The Ghost  
23:25 Sabrina Secrets Of A Teenage Witch  
23:50 Sabrina Secrets Of A Teenage Witch



00:20 Henry Hugglemonster  
00:35 The Hive  
00:45 Loopdidoo  
01:00 Henry Hugglemonster  
01:15 Calimero  
01:30 Art Attack  
01:50 Zou  
02:05 Loopdidoo  
02:20 Henry Hugglemonster  
02:35 Calimero  
02:50 Zou  
03:05 Art Attack  
03:30 The Hive  
03:40 Loopdidoo  
03:55 Henry Hugglemonster  
04:10 Art Attack  
04:35 Loopdidoo  
04:50 Calimero  
05:05 Art Attack

05:30 Henry Hugglemonster  
05:45 Zou  
06:00 Art Attack  
06:30 Henry Hugglemonster  
06:45 Loopdidoo  
07:00 Zou  
07:15 Calimero  
07:30 Loopdidoo  
07:45 Henry Hugglemonster  
08:00 Minnie's Bow-Toons  
08:05 PJ Masks  
08:15 Goldie & Bear  
08:30 Jake And The Never Land Pirates  
08:45 Miles From Tomorrow  
08:55 Sofia The First  
09:20 Doc McStuffins  
09:35 Goldie & Bear  
09:50 Sheriff Callie's Wild West  
10:00 PJ Masks  
10:15 Jake And The Never Land Pirates  
10:30 Minnie's Bow-Toons  
10:35 Sofia The First  
11:30 Doc McStuffins  
12:20 Sheriff Callie's Wild West  
13:15 Gummi Bears  
13:40 Mickey Mouse Clubhouse  
14:35 Jake And The Never Land Pirates  
15:30 Little Mermaid  
15:55 Unbungalievable  
16:00 Miles From Tomorrow  
16:30 Jake And The Never Land Pirates  
16:55 The Lion Guard  
17:20 Goldie & Bear  
17:50 PJ Masks  
18:15 Sofia The First  
18:40 Doc McStuffins  
19:05 Jake And The Never Land Pirates  
19:30 Little Mermaid  
20:00 Jake And The Never Land Pirates  
21:00 Unbungalievable  
21:05 Goldie & Bear



06:00 Supa Strikas  
06:25 Supa Strikas  
06:50 Counterfeit Cat  
07:00 Star vs The Forces Of Evil  
07:15 K.C. Undercover  
07:40 Atomic Puppet  
08:10 Lab Rats  
08:35 Danger Mouse  
09:00 Lab Rats: On The Edge  
09:50 Kirby Buckets  
10:20 Kirby Buckets  
10:45 Gravity Falls  
11:10 Gamer's Guide To Pretty Much Everything  
11:35 Gamer's Guide To Pretty Much Everything  
12:00 Counterfeit Cat  
12:30 K.C. Undercover  
12:55 K.C. Undercover  
13:20 Star Wars Freemaker Adventures  
13:45 Lab Rats: Bionic Island  
14:10 Disney Mickey Mouse  
14:15 Lab Rats: Bionic Island  
14:40 Counterfeit Cat  
14:50 Star vs The Forces Of Evil  
15:05 K.C. Undercover  
15:30 Atomic Puppet  
15:55 Lab Rats  
16:25 Danger Mouse  
16:50 Future-Worm!  
17:15 Lab Rats: Space Colony  
18:05 Disney Mickey Mouse  
18:10 Supa Strikas  
18:35 Supa Strikas  
19:00 Star Wars Freemaker Adventures  
19:25 Gamer's Guide To Pretty Much Everything  
19:55 K.C. Undercover  
20:20 Counterfeit Cat  
20:45 Mighty Med  
21:10 Pickle And Peanut  
21:40 Disney Mickey Mouse  
21:45 Guardians Of The Galaxy  
22:10 Ultimate Spider-Man  
22:35 Boyster  
23:00 Programmes Start At 6:00am KSA

13:15 Emmerdale  
13:45 Coronation Street  
14:15 Masterpiece With Alan Titchmarsh  
15:10 Alphabetical  
16:00 Midsomer Murders  
17:50 Black Work  
18:45 Emmerdale  
19:45 Coronation Street  
20:10 Alphabetical  
21:00 Midsomer Murders  
22:50 Emmerdale



00:10 Food School  
00:35 What's For Sale?  
01:00 Testing The Menu With Nic Watt  
01:25 A Is For Apple  
01:50 Tripping Out With Alie & Georgia  
02:15 The Food Files  
03:05 The Game Chef  
03:30 Valentine Warner's Wild Table  
03:55 Miguel's Feasts  
04:20 Places We Go  
05:10 A Is For Apple  
06:25 My Sri Lanka With Peter Kuruvita  
06:50 Testing The Menu With Nic Watt  
07:15 A Is For Apple  
07:40 Tripping Out With Alie & Georgia  
08:05 The Food Files  
08:55 The Game Chef  
09:20 Valentine Warner's Wild Table  
09:45 Miguel's Feasts  
10:10 Places We Go  
11:00 A Is For Apple  
12:15 My Sri Lanka With Peter Kuruvita  
12:40 My Dubai  
13:05 A Is For Apple  
13:35 My Sri Lanka With Peter Kuruvita  
14:30 The Food Files  
15:25 Bondi Rescue Outback Adventure  
16:20 Places We Go  
17:15 Street Food Around The World  
18:10 The Wine Show  
19:05 The Food Files  
19:30 Bondi Rescue Outback Adventure  
20:25 Places We Go  
21:15 Street Food Around The World  
22:05 The Wine Show



00:00 The Killing Season  
01:00 Britain's Darkest Taboos  
02:00 Gangsters: America's Most Evil  
03:00 Homicide Hunter  
04:00 The Killing Season  
05:00 Britain's Darkest Taboos  
06:00 Gangsters: America's Most Evil  
07:00 Fred Dinenage: Murder Casebook  
08:00 Evil Up Close  
09:00 Fred Dinenage: Murder Casebook  
10:00 Homicide Hunter  
11:00 Robbie Coltrane's Critical Evidence  
12:00 Robbie Coltrane's Critical Evidence  
13:00 Robbie Coltrane's Critical Evidence  
14:00 Robbie Coltrane's Critical Evidence  
15:00 Evil Up Close  
16:00 The First 48  
17:00 Homicide Hunter  
18:00 Fred Dinenage: Murder Casebook  
19:00 Crimes That Shook Australia  
20:00 Nightmare In Suburbia  
21:00 The First 48  
22:00 Evil Up Close  
23:00 Monster In My Family



00:30 Storm Chasers  
01:20 Secret Space Escapes  
02:10 How The Universe Works  
03:00 Destroyed In Seconds  
03:25 Destroyed In Seconds  
03:50 Beyond Survival With Les Stroud  
04:40 How It's Made  
05:05 How It's Made  
05:30 Storm Chasers  
06:20 Mythbusters  
07:00 Kenny The Shark  
07:25 Awesome Adventures  
07:50 Bad Dog  
08:40 How It's Made  
09:05 How It's Made  
09:30 What Could Possibly Go Wrong?  
10:20 Mythbusters  
11:10 Destroyed In Seconds  
11:35 Destroyed In Seconds  
12:00 Destroyed In Seconds  
16:10 Kenny The Shark  
16:35 Awesome Adventures  
17:00 Dynamo: Magician Impossible  
17:50 Now That's Funny  
18:40 What Could Possibly Go Wrong?  
19:30 How It's Made  
19:55 How It's Made  
20:20 Mythbusters  
21:10 Dynamo: Magician Impossible  
22:00 Now That's Funny  
22:50 Destroyed In Seconds  
23:15 Destroyed In Seconds  
23:40 Beyond Survival With Les Stroud



MIRACLES FROM HEAVEN ON OSN MOVIES HD



00:05 Keeping Up With The Kardashians  
01:50 E! News  
02:50 Hollywood Medium With Tyler Henry  
03:45 Hollywood Medium With Tyler Henry  
04:40 Just Jillian  
05:30 Celebrity Style Story  
06:00 Keeping Up With The Kardashians  
06:55 E! News  
07:10 Keeping Up With The Kardashians  
08:10 E! News  
09:10 Keeping Up With The Kardashians  
10:05 Kourtney & Kim Take New York  
12:00 E! News  
12:15 Kourtney & Kim Take New York  
14:30 Celebrity Style Story  
15:00 E! News  
15:15 Botched  
15:45 Botched  
16:15 Hollywood & Football  
17:10 Keeping Up With The Kardashians  
18:05 Keeping Up With The Kardashians



00:10 Masterpiece With Alan Titchmarsh  
01:00 Emmerdale  
01:30 Coronation Street  
02:00 Coronation Street  
02:30 Alphabetical  
03:25 Big Star's Little Star  
04:20 Paul O'Grady's Favourite Fairy Tales  
05:15 Black Work  
06:10 Masterpiece With Alan Titchmarsh  
07:05 Alphabetical  
08:00 Big Star's Little Star  
09:00 Paul O'Grady's Favourite Fairy Tales  
10:00 Black Work  
10:55 Masterpiece With Alan Titchmarsh  
11:50 Alphabetical  
12:45 Emmerdale



22:55 My Dubai  
23:20 A Is For Apple  
23:45 My Sri Lanka With Peter Kuruvita  
Nat Geo HD  
00:10 Nazi Death Camp: The Great Escape  
01:00 WW2 Hell Under The Sea  
02:00 Locked Up Abroad  
02:55 Air Crash Investigation  
03:50 Nazi Death Camp: The Great Escape  
04:45 Desperate Hours  
05:10 Desperate Hours  
05:40 Car SOS  
06:35 Inside Cocaine Wars  
07:30 WW2 Hell Under The Sea  
08:25 Lords Of War  
08:50 Lords Of War  
09:20 The Numbers Game  
09:45 The Numbers Game  
10:15 Locked Up Abroad  
11:10 The Border  
12:05 Megastructures  
13:00 Lords Of War  
13:30 Lords Of War  
14:00 WW2 Hell Under The Sea  
15:00 Inside Cocaine Wars



00:10 Nazi Death Camp: The Great Escape  
01:00 WW2 Hell Under The Sea  
02:00 Locked Up Abroad  
02:55 Air Crash Investigation  
03:50 Nazi Death Camp: The Great Escape  
04:45 Desperate Hours  
05:10 Desperate Hours  
05:40 Car SOS  
06:35 Inside Cocaine Wars  
07:30 WW2 Hell Under The Sea  
08:25 Lords Of War

FRIDAY, JANUARY 6, 2017

- 08:50 Lords Of War
- 09:20 The Numbers Game
- 10:15 Locked Up Abroad
- 11:10 The Border
- 12:05 Megastuctures
- 13:00 Lords Of War
- 14:00 WW2 Hell Under The Sea
- 15:00 Inside Cocaine Wars
- 16:00 Locked Up Abroad
- 17:00 The Border
- 18:00 Taboo USA
- 19:00 Inside Cocaine Wars
- 20:00 Locked Up Abroad
- 20:50 The Border
- 21:40 Taboo USA
- 22:30 Inside Cocaine Wars
- 23:20 Car SOS



- 00:20 Croc Ganglands
- 01:10 Hunter Hunted
- 02:00 Man-Eater Of The Congo
- 02:50 World's Deadliest
- 03:45 Swamp Men
- 04:40 Shane Untamed
- 05:35 Man-Eater Of The Congo
- 06:30 World's Deadliest
- 07:25 Swamp Men
- 08:20 Shane Untamed
- 09:15 Animal Fight Club
- 10:10 Wild Indochina
- 11:05 Europe's Great Wilderness
- 12:00 Sharktraz
- 12:55 Croc Labyrinth
- 13:50 World's Deadliest
- 14:45 Swamp Men
- 15:40 Natural Born Monsters
- 16:35 Animal Fight Club
- 17:30 Wild Kalahari
- 18:25 Lion Ranger
- 19:20 Swamp Men
- 20:10 Natural Born Monsters
- 21:00 Animal Fight Club
- 21:50 Wild Kalahari
- 22:40 Lion Ranger
- 23:30 Sharktraz

- Nick Jr
- 00:15 Team Umizoomi
  - 00:38 Louie
  - 00:45 Louie
  - 00:53 Olive The Ostrich
  - 00:58 Olive The Ostrich
  - 01:03 Max & Ruby
  - 01:26 Wanda And The Alien
  - 01:37 Ben & Holly's Little Kingdom
  - 01:48 Ben & Holly's Little Kingdom
  - 02:00 Blaze And The Monster Machines
  - 02:22 Blaze And The Monster Machines
  - 02:45 Zack & Quack
  - 03:05 Team Umizoomi
  - 03:28 Louie
  - 03:35 Louie
  - 03:40 Olive The Ostrich
  - 03:44 Olive The Ostrich
  - 03:49 Paw Patrol
  - 04:01 Paw Patrol
  - 04:24 Ben & Holly's Little Kingdom
  - 04:35 Dora The Explorer
  - 04:59 Max & Ruby
  - 05:07 Bubble Guppies
  - 05:29 Little Charmers
  - 05:41 Shimmer And Shine
  - 06:05 Dora And Friends: Into The City!
  - 06:27 Zack & Quack
  - 06:38 Blaze And The Monster Machines
  - 07:00 Paw Patrol
  - 07:13 Paw Patrol
  - 07:36 Dora The Explorer
  - 08:00 Wanda And The Alien
  - 08:11 Zack & Quack
  - 08:22 Dora And Friends: Into The City!
  - 08:46 Blaze And The Monster Machines
  - 09:10 Paw Patrol
  - 09:35 Shimmer And Shine
  - 09:58 Dora The Explorer
  - 10:21 Paw Patrol
  - 10:45 Little Charmers
  - 10:57 Bubble Guppies
  - 11:20 Fresh Beat Band Of Spies
  - 11:40 Zack & Quack
  - 11:52 Team Umizoomi
  - 12:15 Team Umizoomi
  - 12:38 Louie
  - 12:45 Louie
  - 12:53 Olive The Ostrich
  - 12:58 Olive The Ostrich
  - 13:03 Max & Ruby
  - 13:26 Wanda And The Alien
  - 13:37 Ben & Holly's Little Kingdom
  - 13:48 Ben & Holly's Little Kingdom
  - 14:00 Blaze And The Monster Machines
  - 14:22 Blaze And The Monster Machines
  - 14:45 Zack & Quack
  - 15:05 Team Umizoomi
  - 15:28 Louie
  - 15:35 Louie



**FAST & FURIOUS 7 ON OSN MOVIES ACTION HD**

- 15:40 Olive The Ostrich
- 15:44 Olive The Ostrich
- 15:49 Paw Patrol
- 16:01 Paw Patrol
- 16:24 Ben & Holly's Little Kingdom
- 16:35 Dora The Explorer



**ACTION**

- 01:15 Machete
- 03:15 Blown Away
- 05:30 Fast & Furious 7
- 08:00 Seventh Son
- 09:45 Jurassic World
- 12:00 Justice League: Gods And Monsters
- 13:30 Fast & Furious 7
- 16:00 Nick Of Time
- 17:45 Jurassic World
- 20:00 Jupiter Ascending
- 22:15 Swordfish



**FAMILY**

- 01:00 My Girl 2
- 03:00 Little Man Tate
- 05:00 Gulliver's Travels
- 07:00 Santa's Little Helper
- 09:00 Charlotte's Web
- 11:00 Gulliver's Travels
- 13:00 The Boxtrolls
- 15:00 Bonta
- 17:00 The Lone Ranger
- 19:30 The Last Song
- 21:15 The Boxtrolls
- 23:00 The Lone Ranger



- 01:00 Return To Sender
- 02:45 The Hunger Games: Mockingjay Part II
- 05:00 Miracles From Heaven
- 07:00 Tommy Cooper: Not Like That, Like This
- 09:00 The SpongeBob Movie: Sponge Out Of Water
- 10:45 Far From The Madding Crowd
- 13:00 The Finest Hours
- 15:00 Spare Parts
- 17:00 The Lady In The Van
- 19:00 Brooklyn
- 21:00 Joy
- 23:15 How To Make Love Like An Englishman



**COMEDY**

- 00:00 Norbit
- 01:45 It's Complicated

- 04:00 A Madea Christmas
- 05:45 How Do You Know
- 08:00 All About Steve
- 10:00 Big Ass Spider!
- 12:00 Norbit
- 14:00 Superfast
- 16:00 All About Steve
- 18:00 Hit By Lightning
- 20:00 Ghostbusters
- 22:00 Army Of Darkness



**FESTIVAL**

- 01:45 Mad Dog And Glory
- 03:30 The Theory Of Everything
- 05:30 Manny
- 07:00 Gone With The Bullets
- 09:00 Bottle Rocket
- 11:00 Manny
- 12:30 The Theory Of Everything
- 14:45 Instinct
- 17:00 Bottle Rocket
- 18:30 The Blind Side
- 21:00 Changeling
- 23:30 Black Swan



**KIDS**

- 01:15 Cher Ami
- 03:00 Memory Loss
- 04:30 Mamma Moo And Crow
- 06:00 Gladiators Of Rome
- 07:45 The Heart Of The Oak
- 09:15 True Story Of Puss'n Boots
- 11:00 Evolution Man
- 12:45 Memory Loss
- 14:15 The Unbeatables
- 16:00 The Boxcar Children
- 18:00 True Story Of Puss'n Boots
- 20:00 Marco Macaco
- 22:00 The Unbeatables
- 23:45 The Boxcar Children



- 00:40 The Big Brain Theory
- 01:30 Mythbusters
- 02:20 The Quick And The Curious
- 02:45 Sci-Fi Science: Physics Of The Impossible
- 03:10 How Do They Do It?
- 03:35 Food Factory
- 04:00 Race To Escape
- 04:48 The Big Brain Theory
- 05:36 The Quick And The Curious
- 06:00 Sci-Fi Science: Physics Of The Impossible
- 06:24 Mythbusters
- 07:12 How Do They Do It?
- 07:36 Food Factory

- 08:00 How Do They Do It?
- 08:26 The Big Brain Theory
- 09:14 Mythbusters
- 10:02 Race To Escape
- 10:50 How Do They Do It?
- 11:14 Food Factory
- 11:38 The Quick And The Curious
- 12:02 Sci-Fi Science: Physics Of The Impossible
- 12:26 The Big Brain Theory
- 13:14 Mythbusters
- 14:02 How Do They Do It?
- 14:26 Food Factory
- 14:50 Race To Escape
- 15:38 The Quick And The Curious
- 16:02 Sci-Fi Science: Physics Of The Impossible
- 16:26 The Big Brain Theory
- 17:14 Mythbusters
- 18:02 Race To Escape
- 18:50 The Big Brain Theory
- 19:40 Mythbusters
- 20:30 Mythbusters
- 21:20 How Do They Do It?
- 21:45 Food Factory
- 22:10 Outrageous Acts Of Psych
- 22:35 Outrageous Acts Of Psych



- 00:20 Belief
- 01:10 What If We Get Married?
- 02:00 My Big Fat Fabulous Life
- 02:25 Say Yes To The Dress
- 02:50 Love, Lust Or Run
- 03:15 Cake Boss
- 03:35 Belief
- 04:20 Little People, Big World
- 04:45 Little People, Big World
- 05:10 Toddlers & Tiaras
- 06:00 Little People, Big World
- 08:30 Outdaughered: Busby Quints
- 09:20 Sister Wives
- 10:10 Obsessive Compulsive Cleaners
- 11:00 Obsessive Compulsive Cleaners
- 11:50 Love, Lust Or Run
- 12:15 Love, Lust Or Run
- 12:40 Love, Lust Or Run
- 13:05 Love, Lust Or Run
- 13:30 Love, Lust Or Run
- 13:55 Oprah's Master Class
- 14:45 Belief
- 15:35 Cake Boss
- 16:00 Cake Boss
- 16:25 Cake Boss
- 16:50 Cake Boss
- 17:15 Cake Boss
- 17:40 Buddy's Family Vacation
- 18:05 Buddy's Family Vacation
- 18:30 Suddenly Rich
- 19:20 Outdaughered: Busby Quints
- 20:10 Sister Wives
- 21:00 Kate Plus 8
- 21:50 Sister Wives
- 22:40 Coach Charming
- 23:05 Coach Charming
- 23:30 Breaking Amish

- 18:00 Hangar 1: The UFO Files
- 19:00 How The States Got Their Shape
- 20:00 Ancient Impossible
- 21:00 Brad Meltzer's Decoded
- 22:00 Ancient Aliens

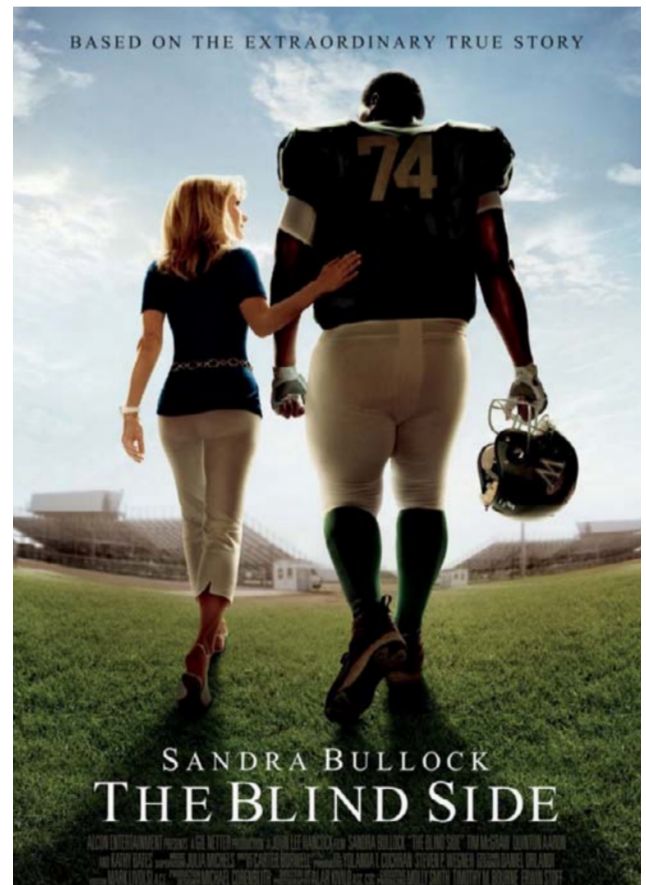


- 00:20 Time Team
- 01:10 DB Cooper: Case Closed?
- 02:50 Storage Wars
- 03:15 American Pickers
- 04:05 Pawn Stars
- 04:30 Pawn Stars
- 05:00 Mountain Men
- 06:00 Time Team
- 06:50 Time Team
- 07:40 Billion Dollar Wreck
- 08:30 Shark Wranglers
- 09:20 Mountain Men
- 10:10 Swamp People: Swamp Christmas
- 11:00 Aussie Pickers
- 11:50 Counting Cars
- 12:15 Car Hunters
- 12:40 Pawn Stars
- 13:05 Storage Wars: Best Of
- 13:30 Counting Cars: Best Of
- 18:30 Shipping Wars
- 19:20 Big Rig Bounty Hunters
- 20:10 Ice Road Truckers
- 21:00 American Pickers
- 21:50 Pirate Treasure Of The Knights Templar
- 22:40 Forged In Fire



- 00:00 Hangar 1: The UFO Files
- 01:00 How The States Got Their Shape
- 02:00 Ancient Impossible
- 03:00 America's Book Of Secrets
- 03:50 Ancient Aliens
- 04:40 How 2 Win
- 05:30 Hangar 1: The UFO Files
- 06:20 How The States Got Their Shape
- 07:10 The Universe
- 08:00 Ancient Impossible
- 09:00 America's Book Of Secrets
- 10:00 Ancient Aliens
- 11:00 How 2 Win
- 12:00 Hangar 1: The UFO Files
- 13:00 How The States Got Their Shape
- 14:00 Ancient Impossible
- 15:00 America's Book Of Secrets
- 16:00 Ancient Aliens
- 17:00 How 2 Win

- 00:00 Private Chef
- 01:00 Diners, Drive-Ins And Dives
- 02:00 Man Fire Food
- 03:00 Chopped
- 04:00 Guy's Grocery Games
- 05:00 Barefoot Contessa: Back To Basics
- 06:00 The Kitchen
- 07:00 The Pioneer Woman
- 08:00 Siba's Table
- 09:00 Anna Olson: Bake
- 10:00 The Kitchen
- 11:00 The Pioneer Woman
- 12:00 Siba's Table
- 12:30 Siba's Table
- 13:00 Diners, Drive-Ins And Dives
- 14:00 Chopped
- 15:00 The Kitchen
- 16:00 Anna Olson: Bake
- 17:00 Chopped
- 18:00 Iron Chef America
- 19:00 Man Finds Food
- 20:00 All Star Academy
- 21:00 Bite This With Nadia G
- 22:00 Iron Chef America
- 23:00 Man Finds Food



THE BLIND SIDE ON OSN MOVIES FESTIVAL HD

WORD SEARCH

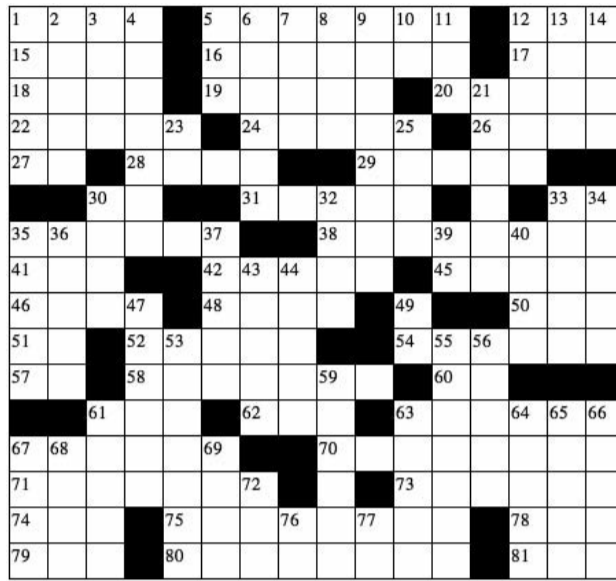
Chess

Find and circle all of the Chess words that are hidden in the grid. The remaining letters spell a secret message. Note: QUEEN and QUEENING are separately hidden and do not overlap.

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

- ATTACK BISHOP BLITZ CHESS BLOCKED BLUNDER CAPTURE CASTLING CENTER CHECKMATE CHESSBOARD
CHAMPIONSHIP DEEP BLUE DIAGONAL EN PASSANT ENDGAME EXCHANGE FILE FISCHER FORK GAMBIT
GRANDMASTER JUMP KASPAROV KIBITZING KING KNIGHT LOSE MATE IN TWO MIDDLEGAME OPENING
PAWN PIECE PROMOTION QUEEN QUEENING ROOK SACRIFICE STALEMATE TOURNAMENT WIN

CROSSWORD 1482



ACROSS

- 1. Ceremonial elegance and splendor.
5. European fishes.
12. Sexually transmitted urethritis (usually caused by chlamydia).
15. An elaborate song for solo voice.
16. Any of the salts of hydrobromic acid.
17. The month following July and preceding September.
18. Possessing material wealth.
19. (physics) Of or pertaining to a meson.
20. Strike with disgust or revulsion.
22. Sluggish tailless Australian arboreal marsupial with gray furry ears and coat.
24. Wheelwork consisting of a connected set of rotating gears by which force is transmitted or motion or torque is changed.
26. Characterized by lightness and insubstantiality.
27. An associate degree in nursing.
28. Electronic warfare undertaken to insure effective friendly use of the electromagnetic spectrum in spite of the enemy's use of electronic warfare.
29. A drama set to music.
31. Jordan's port.
35. Evil or harmful in nature or influence.
38. Warm-blooded vertebrates characterized by mammary glands in the female.
41. Electrical conduction through a gas in an applied electric field.
42. The superior of an abbey of monks.
45. A straight line connecting two points on a curve.
46. A collection of objects laid on top of each other.
48. A republic in the Middle East in western Asia.
50. Any of various dark heavy viscid substances obtained as a residue.
51. In operation or operational.
52. (Old Testament) The second patriarch.
54. The second largest continent.
57. (Akkadian) God of wisdom.
58. A tricycle (usually propelled by pedalling).
60. That is to say.
62. A light touch or stroke.
67. Nuts or fruit pieces in a sugar paste.
70. A member of a municipal legislative body (as a city council).
71. Enclose or enfold completely with or as if with a covering.
73. A metrical unit with unstressed-stressed syllables.
74. (informal) Of the highest quality.
75. A person who worships idols.
78. The compass point midway between east and southeast.
79. Preferred above all others and treated with partiality.
80. Cosmopolitan genus of ferns.
81. (Irish) The sea personified.

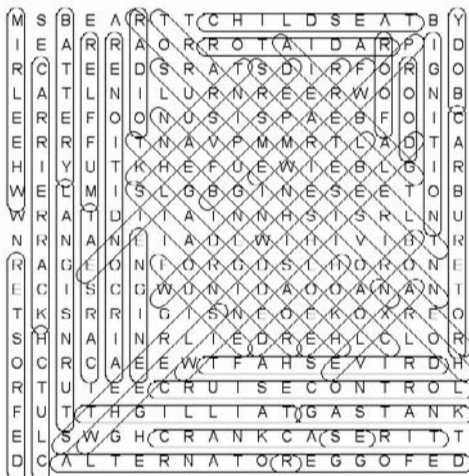
DOWN

- 1. A kind of heavy jacket ('windcheater' is a British term).
2. (Greek mythology) A giant Boeotian hunter who pursued the Pleiades and was eventually slain by Artemis.

- 3. Any of various minerals consisting of hydrous silicates of aluminum or potassium etc. that crystallize in forms that allow perfect cleavage into very thin leaves.
4. Shah of Iran who was deposed in 1979 by Islamic fundamentalists (1919-1980).
5. A defensive missile designed to shoot down incoming intercontinental ballistic missiles.
6. The craniometric point at the junction of the sagittal and coronal sutures at the top of the cranium.
7. Having a dusty purplish pink color.
8. Type genus of the Amiidae.
9. Typically having large ears and feeding primarily on insects.
10. A state in the Rocky Mountains.
11. Relating to or characteristic of or occurring on the sea or ships.
12. Greek mythology.
13. Drought-tolerant herb grown for forage and for its seed which yield a gum used as a thickening agent or sizing material.
14. Displeasing to the senses and morally revolting.
21. A person who is rejected (from society or home).
23. A radioactive element of the actinide series.
25. (trademark) A tinned luncheon meat made largely from pork.
30. Type genus of the Alcidae comprising solely the razorbill.
32. In a murderous frenzy as if possessed by a demon.
33. English theoretical physicist who applied relativity theory to quantum mechanics and predicted the existence of antimatter and the positron (1902-1984).
34. A genus of Pyralidae.
36. A particular environment or walk of life.
37. Submerged aquatic plant having narrow leaves and small flowers.
39. One million periods per second.
40. The basic unit of money in Lesotho.
43. A hairdo formed by braiding or twisting the hair.
44. An indehiscent fruit derived from a single ovary having one or many seeds within a fleshy wall or pericarp.
47. A fee charged for the use of pipes.
49. The syllable naming the fourth (subdominant) note of the diatonic scale in solmization.
53. A town in east central Missouri.
55. A portable gun.
56. Arm again.
59. A port city in southwestern Iran.
61. A soft quilt usually filled with the down of the eider.
63. A farewell remark.
64. Flat-topped or rounded inflorescence characteristic of the family Umbelliferae in which the individual flower stalks arise from about the same point.
65. Events that provide the generative force that is the origin of something.
66. Typical geese.
68. Belonging to some prior time.
69. Scottish chemist noted for his research into the structure of nucleic acids (born in 1907).
72. Hawaiian dish of taro root pounded to a paste and often allowed to ferment.
76. A white soft metallic element that tarnishes readily.
77. (astronomy) A measure of time defined by Earth's orbital motion.

Yesterday's Solution

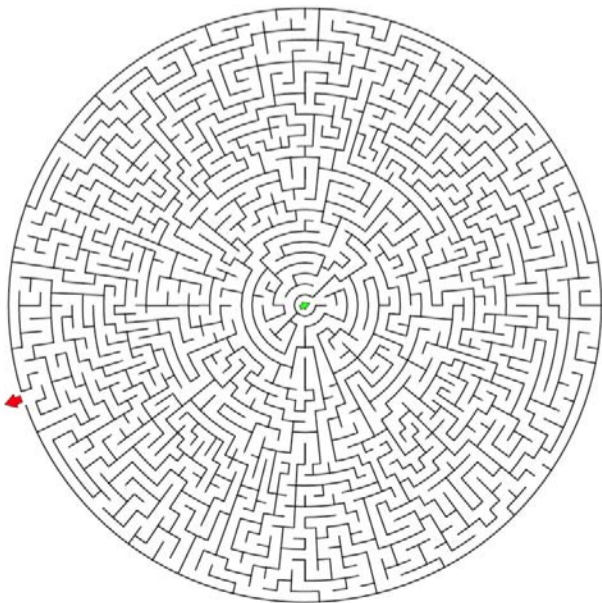
Car Parts



- AIR BAG AIR CONDITIONER ALTERNATOR AXLE BATTERY BODY BRAKE BUMPER CAR SEAT CARBURETOR CARRIER RACK CHILD SEAT
CLUTCH COOLING FAN CRANKCASE CRUISE CONTROL DEFOGGER DEFROSTER DOOR DRIVE LINE DRIVESHAFT ENGINE FRAME FUSE
GAS TANK HEADLIGHT HOOD HORN IGNITION MUFFLER POWER WINDOW RADIATOR RADIO REAR VIEW MIRROR ROOF SEAT BELT
STARTER STEERING WHEEL SUSPENSION TAIL LIGHT TIRES TRANSMISSION TRUNK TURN SIGNAL WHEEL RIM WHEELS WINDSHIELD

The hidden item is: SEAT BELT WARNING LIGHT

CHALLENGING MAZE



Daily SuDoku

4x4 grid for Daily SuDoku with numbers 1-9.

Yesterday's Solution

4x4 grid for Yesterday's Solution with numbers 1-9.



# HEALTH CARE BATTLE COULD DECIDE BALANCE OF POWER

**WASHINGTON:** The messaging battle is on over repealing and replacing President Barack Obama's health care law, and the balance of power in Washington may be at stake.

Democrats believe they already lost the public opinion fight over the law once, when they pushed through the Affordable Care Act in the first place, and Republicans grabbed hold of the issue to drive Democrats into the minority. Democrats are determined that this time, they'll come out on top.

For their part, Republicans are painfully aware that they're embarking upon the task of repealing and replacing the complex law at their peril. If Democrats get their way, the GOP will own every problem and complication that results from the rework, and there are certain to be many.

For both sides, the repeal-and-replace fight represents a risky and unexpected do-over nearly seven years after Democratic majorities in the House and Senate passed the law on a party-line vote. A voter backlash helped send Democrats into the minority in the House in the 2010 midterms, and Republicans have been using the issue to political benefit ever since. In November's elections, Donald Trump and GOP House and Senate candidates ran on promises to repeal the law and replace it with something better.

Now, Democrats have a chance to fight the messaging war anew, even as they continue to champion the health care law as good policy that's helped the country. And Republicans, who've had political success in attacking the law without offering a unified solution of their own, have a chance to present their ideas and make policy, but risk giving away their political advantage if they become the ones voters blame for problems in the health system.

The side that meets the challenge most effectively will help determine who prevails in the 2018 midterms, and in the next presidential election four years from now.

On Wednesday, as he unveiled Democrats' new attack line against the GOP - "Make America Sick Again" - Senate Minority Leader Chuck Schumer said that after the health law passed, voters blamed it for every problem related to health care, "and our Republicans colleagues and their message machine did it."

"Now, they're gonna own it," Schumer said of the GOP. "And all the problems in the health care system, and there have been many throughout the years, no one has solved all of them, are gonna be on their back."

### Responsibility

Schumer made his comments after Democratic lawmakers met with Obama to discuss combating GOP efforts to undo the law, a new legislative initiative which got under way Wednesday with a procedural vote in the Senate.

Obama's message: Not to cooperate with GOP replacement plans that don't offer a good solution for the 20 million Americans who gained health coverage under the law. He advised keeping the focus on those who benefited from the Affordable Care Act, such as people with pre-existing conditions who got coverage, and who might be hurt if their coverage were taken away.

And, he took on blame for Democrats' failure to sell the public on a law that by some measures has achieved its goals.

"I will take the responsibility for not having fully communicated with the American people for why this is an extraordinary victory for them," Obama said. Even as Obama huddled with Democrats, Vice President-elect Mike Pence was meeting with Republicans across the Capitol, emerging to offer assurances that Republicans would make good on their repeated promises to repeal the law.

"The American people know who owns Obamacare. It's the first half of the title. It is Obama and the party of Obama," Pence insisted. "What President-elect Trump and I

and the leaders in the Congress are determined to do is to keep faith with the American people."

Inside the meeting with House Republicans, Pence offered a more urgent message, advising Republicans to "go back to districts and lay the predicate that the Democrats own this thing," said GOP Rep. Dave Brat of Virginia. Trump himself castigated Democrats on the issue over Twitter, while offering notes of caution to his own party, writing Thursday, "The Democrats, lead (sic) by head clown Chuck Schumer, know how

bad ObamaCare is and what a mess they are in. ... time for Republicans & Democrats to get together and come up with a healthcare plan that really works."

Some Republicans are painfully aware that their own political fortunes could be at risk if they fumble the issue. "I'm here because of Obamacare," said GOP Rep. Kevin Cramer of North Dakota, crediting the issue with his victory in 2012. And now, Cramer says, he risks losing his seat over Obamacare, "if we let our voters down in places like North Dakota by not acting decisively and swiftly." — AP



**AHMEDABAD:** In this photograph taken on January 4, 2017, Indian police officials wearing face masks sit in a vehicle after a suspected outbreak of avian flu in the village of Hathijan, some 20kms from Ahmedabad. Late January 4, some 16 emus (*Dromaius novaehollandiae*) were culled by Indian health department officials at The Asha Foundation - an animal and bird rescue centre, in the western Indian state of Gujarat state after they tested positive for suspected avian flu (H5N1 virus), state authorities have culled some 2,000 birds. — AFP

CLINIC  
PAGE



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248 33 199

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**KNCC PROGRAMME FROM THURSDAY TO WEDNESDAY  
(05/01/2017 TO 11/01/2017)**

**SHARQIA-1**  
MOANA 1:00 PM  
MOANA 3:15 PM  
MOANA 5:30 PM  
MOANA 7:45 PM  
ASSASSIN'S CREED 10:00 PM  
ASSASSIN'S CREED 12:30 AM

**SHARQIA-2**  
THE GREAT WALL 11:30 AM  
THE GREAT WALL 1:30 PM  
THE GREAT WALL 3:45 PM  
THE GREAT WALL 6:00 PM  
THE GREAT WALL 8:15 PM  
THE GREAT WALL 10:30 PM  
THE GREAT WALL 12:45 AM

**SHARQIA-3**  
ASSASSIN'S CREED 12:45 PM  
ASSASSIN'S CREED 3:30 PM  
DANGAL -Hindi 6:15 PM  
THE GREAT WALL 9:30 PM  
THE GREAT WALL 11:45 PM

**MUHALAB-1**  
DANGAL -Hindi 1:00 PM  
SNOW WHITE'S NEW ADVENTURE 2:30 PM  
FRI  
SNOW WHITE'S NEW ADVENTURE 4:30 PM  
ASSASSIN'S CREED 6:30 PM  
DANGAL -Hindi 9:00 PM  
ASSASSIN'S CREED 12:15 AM

**MUHALAB-2**  
SNOW WHITE'S NEW ADVENTURE 11:45 AM  
MOANA 1:45 PM  
MOANA 4:00 PM  
MOANA 6:15 PM  
THE GREAT WALL 8:30 PM  
THE GREAT WALL 10:45 PM  
THE GREAT WALL 1:00 AM

**MUHALAB-3**  
THE GREAT WALL 12:30 PM  
THE GREAT WALL 2:45 PM  
THE GREAT WALL 5:00 PM  
THE GREAT WALL 7:15 PM  
THE GREAT WALL 9:30 PM  
THE GREAT WALL 11:45 PM

**FANAR-1**  
SNOW WHITE'S NEW ADVENTURE 11:30 AM  
ASSASSIN'S CREED 1:45 PM  
SNOW WHITE'S NEW ADVENTURE 4:30 PM  
SNOW WHITE'S NEW ADVENTURE 6:30 PM  
ASSASSIN'S CREED 9:00 PM  
ASSASSIN'S CREED 11:30 PM

**FANAR-2**  
MOANA 12:00 PM  
MOANA 2:30 PM  
MOANA 5:00 PM  
MOANA 7:30 PM  
THE FOUNDER 10:00 PM  
THE FOUNDER 12:30 AM

**FANAR-3**  
SING 11:45 AM  
DANGAL -Hindi 2:00 PM  
DANGAL -Hindi 5:15 PM  
DANGAL -Hindi 8:30 PM  
THE GREAT WALL 11:45 PM

**FANAR-4**  
THE GREAT WALL 11:30 AM  
THE GREAT WALL 1:45 PM  
THE GREAT WALL 4:00 PM  
THE GREAT WALL 6:15 PM  
THE GREAT WALL 8:30 PM  
THE GREAT WALL 10:45 PM  
THE GREAT WALL 1:00 AM

**MARINA-1**  
THE GREAT WALL 11:45 AM  
MOANA 2:00 PM  
MOANA 4:15 PM  
MOANA 6:45 PM  
THE GREAT WALL 9:00 PM  
THE GREAT WALL 11:15 PM

**MARINA-2**

THE GREAT WALL 1:00 PM  
THE GREAT WALL 3:15 PM  
THE GREAT WALL 5:30 PM  
THE GREAT WALL 7:45 PM  
THE GREAT WALL 10:00 PM  
THE GREAT WALL 12:15 AM

**MARINA-3**  
FLORENCE FOSTER JENKINS 12:30 PM  
ASSASSIN'S CREED 2:45 PM  
FLORENCE FOSTER JENKINS 5:15 PM  
FLORENCE FOSTER JENKINS 8:00 PM  
ASSASSIN'S CREED 10:15 PM  
ASSASSIN'S CREED 12:45 AM

**AVENUES-1**  
THE FOUNDER 11:45 AM  
PASSENGERS 2:15 PM  
THE FOUNDER 4:45 PM  
PASSENGERS 7:15 PM  
THE FOUNDER 9:45 PM  
THE FOUNDER 12:15 AM

**AVENUES-2**  
THE GREAT WALL -3D- 4DX 1:00 PM  
THE GREAT WALL -3D- 4DX 3:15 PM  
MOANA -3D- 4DX 5:45 PM  
THE GREAT WALL -3D- 4DX 8:15 PM  
ASSASSIN'S CREED -3D- 4DX 10:30 PM  
THE GREAT WALL -3D- 4DX 1:00 AM

**AVENUES-3**  
SING 1:30 PM  
SING 3:45 PM  
DANGAL -Hindi 6:00 PM  
DANGAL -Hindi 9:15 PM  
THE GREAT WALL 12:30 AM

**AVENUES-4**  
DANGAL -Hindi 12:30 PM  
MOANA 1:30 PM  
FRI  
ASSASSIN'S CREED 3:45 PM  
DANGAL -Hindi 6:15 PM  
NO THU  
Special Show "ROGUE ONE:A STAR WARS STORY" 6:30 PM  
THU  
ASSASSIN'S CREED 9:30 PM  
ASSASSIN'S CREED 12:05 AM

**AVENUES-5**  
THE GREAT WALL 1:15 PM  
THE GREAT WALL 3:30 PM  
THE GREAT WALL -3D 5:45 PM  
NO SUN  
Special Show "LA LA LAND" 5:30 PM  
SUN  
THE GREAT WALL 8:00 PM  
THE GREAT WALL 10:15 PM  
THE GREAT WALL 12:30 AM

**AVENUES-6**  
ASSASSIN'S CREED 12:00 PM  
ASSASSIN'S CREED 2:30 PM  
ASSASSIN'S CREED 5:00 PM  
ASSASSIN'S CREED 7:30 PM  
ASSASSIN'S CREED 10:00 PM  
ASSASSIN'S CREED 12:45 AM

**AVENUES-7**  
THE GREAT WALL 11:30 AM  
THE GREAT WALL 1:45 PM  
THE GREAT WALL 4:00 PM  
TAHT AL TARABEZA 6:15 PM  
ESHTEBAK 8:30 PM  
THE GREAT WALL 10:45 PM  
THE GREAT WALL 1:00 AM

**AVENUES-8**  
SNOW WHITE'S NEW ADVENTURE 12:00 PM  
THE SNOW QUEEN 3 1:45 PM  
SNOW WHITE'S NEW ADVENTURE 4:00 PM  
SNOW WHITE'S NEW ADVENTURE 6:00 PM  
LA LA LAND 7:45 PM  
LEVEL UP 10:15 PM  
LEVEL UP 12:05 AM

**AVENUES-9**  
MOANA 11:30 AM  
MOANA 2:00 PM  
MOANA 4:30 PM

MOANA 7:00 PM  
THE MONSTER 9:30 PM  
THE MONSTER 11:30 PM

**AVENUES-10**  
FLORENCE FOSTER JENKINS 1:15 PM  
FLORENCE FOSTER JENKINS 1:30 PM  
FRI  
FLORENCE FOSTER JENKINS 3:45 PM  
MOANA 6:15 PM  
FLORENCE FOSTER JENKINS 8:45 PM  
FLORENCE FOSTER JENKINS 11:15 PM

**AVENUES-11**  
THE GREAT WALL-CINESCAPE 11- 2D 12:30 PM  
THE GREAT WALL-CINESCAPE 11- 3D 2:45 PM  
THE GREAT WALL-CINESCAPE 11- 2D 5:00 PM  
THE GREAT WALL-CINESCAPE 11- 3D 7:15 PM  
THE GREAT WALL-CINESCAPE 11- 2D 9:30 PM  
THE GREAT WALL-CINESCAPE 11- 2D 11:45 PM

**360 ∞- 1**  
ASSASSIN'S CREED 11:30 AM  
ASSASSIN'S CREED 1:45 PM  
ASSASSIN'S CREED 4:15 PM  
ASSASSIN'S CREED 6:45 PM  
ASSASSIN'S CREED 9:15 PM  
ASSASSIN'S CREED 11:45 PM

**360 ∞- 2**  
FLORENCE FOSTER JENKINS 11:45 AM  
FLORENCE FOSTER JENKINS 2:15 PM  
FLORENCE FOSTER JENKINS 4:45 PM  
FLORENCE FOSTER JENKINS 7:15 PM  
FLORENCE FOSTER JENKINS 9:45 PM  
ROGUE ONE:A STAR WARS STORY 12:15 AM

**360 ∞- 3**  
PASSENGERS 1:00 PM  
PASSENGERS 3:30 PM  
LAF WA DAWARAN 6:00 PM  
PASSENGERS 8:15 PM  
PASSENGERS 10:45 PM  
PASSENGERS 1:00 AM

**AL-KOUT.1**  
THE GREAT WALL 1:15 PM  
THE GREAT WALL 3:30 PM  
THE GREAT WALL 5:45 PM  
THE GREAT WALL 8:00 PM  
THE GREAT WALL 10:15 PM  
THE GREAT WALL 12:30 AM

**AL-KOUT.2**  
THE GREAT WALL 12:00 PM  
MOANA 2:15 PM  
MOANA 4:30 PM  
MOANA 6:45 PM  
THE GREAT WALL 9:15 PM  
THE GREAT WALL 11:45 PM

**AL-KOUT.3**  
THE FOUNDER 12:30 PM  
FLORENCE FOSTER JENKINS 2:45 PM  
SING 5:00 PM  
THE FOUNDER 7:15 PM  
FLORENCE FOSTER JENKINS 9:45 PM  
THE FOUNDER 12:05 AM

**AL-KOUT.4**  
ASSASSIN'S CREED 1:00 PM  
ASSASSIN'S CREED 3:30 PM  
ASSASSIN'S CREED 6:00 PM  
ASSASSIN'S CREED 8:30 PM  
ASSASSIN'S CREED 11:00 PM

**BAIRAQ-1**  
THE GREAT WALL 12:15 PM  
THE GREAT WALL -3D 2:30 PM  
THE GREAT WALL 4:45 PM  
THE GREAT WALL -3D 7:00 PM  
THE GREAT WALL 9:15 PM  
THE GREAT WALL 11:30 PM

**BAIRAQ-2**  
FLORENCE FOSTER JENKINS 1:00 PM  
MOANA 3:15 PM  
MOANA 5:30 PM  
MOANA 7:45 PM  
FLORENCE FOSTER JENKINS 10:00 PM  
THE GREAT WALL 12:30 AM

# Friday Times BUSINESS

FRIDAY, JANUARY 6, 2017

## OIL RISES AS SAUDI ARABIA DISCUSSES SUPPLY CUTS



Qatar Airways confirms change to Airbus order

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MIAMI LAKES: People fill out job applications at a job fair in Miami Lakes, yesterday. The Labor Department reported that fewer Americans applied for unemployment benefits the week before. —AP

## WORLD STOCKS JUMP AFTER STRONG CHINA DATA UNCERTAINTY PERSISTS OVER US MONETARY POLICY

**LONDON:** World stocks hit their highest level since mid-2015 yesterday after strong Chinese data added to the optimism about global growth and inflation that has been driving markets since the start of the new year. Growth in China's services sector accelerated to a 17-month high in December, a private sector survey showed, adding to upbeat factory and service sector surveys out of the United States, Europe and Asia released this week.

In addition, minutes from the US Federal Reserve's December meeting showed that many of the central bank's policy makers are expecting a pick-up in economic growth and inflation in the world's biggest economy as a result of fiscal, regulatory or other policies. The MSCI world equity index, which tracks shares in 46 countries, was up 0.4 percent at one stage to hit its highest level since July 2015. At that level it was up over 1.5 percent for the year so far.

The index was pushed up by Asian shares, which rose for the eighth consecutive day yesterday.

European shares held steady near recent highs. "While I am always cautious about December data because of seasonal factors, we certainly have seen across the board positive PMI data in Japan, China and the UK as well this morning," said Investec economist Victoria

Clarke. Britain's economy finished 2016 strongly, growing at the fastest rate since mid-2015, an industry survey showed yesterday.

### "Trump momentum"

Stocks and bond yields have been rising ever since the election of Republican Donald Trump as US president on expectations that fiscal stimulus will boost growth and inflation. Trump's inauguration takes place on Jan 20. "There seems to be a continuation of the Trump momentum we saw in December, and this promises to be the prevailing mood until we get into the detail of what Trump will actually do and the battles he may have with Congress," said Investec's Clarke.

The minutes of the US Federal Reserve's December meeting showed that policymakers were keen to emphasize the uncertainty of the outlook even while anticipating better growth and inflation for the US economy. "The FOMC's minutes to its Dec meeting released post yesterday's European close could best be characterized as perhaps tilted toward the hawkish side but tempered by a heavy dose of uncertainty," said Rabobank strategist Richard McGuire.

"All the policymakers emphasized the uncertainty of the outlook, reminding investors that

the outlook is more nuanced than the market seems to think," he said. With just two weeks to go before Trump takes over, investors and policymakers are waiting to see if his actions match his rhetoric and if his policies will be approved by Republican lawmakers.

The dollar extended its losses yesterday, falling 0.42 percent against a basket of six major

currencies - though still near the 14-year high hit on Tuesday - following losses against the Chinese yuan. China stepped into both its onshore and offshore yuan markets to shore up the faltering yuan for a second day on Wednesday, sparking speculation that it wants a firm grip on the currency ahead of Trump's inauguration. — Reuters

## MOST GULF MARKETS RISE ON FIRMER OIL

### MIDEAST STOCK MARKETS

**DUBAI:** Saudi Arabian and United Arab Emirates stock markets made small gains in trade yesterday after oil prices rebounded overnight and global equity markets firmed. The Saudi equities index rose 0.3 percent, partially recovering from Wednesday's 0.7 percent decline, as the petrochemical sector was bid up. Yanbu National Petrochemical jumped 4.6 percent after an hour of trade.

Some other large-caps which had been hit by profit-taking over the last two sessions also rose, with Al Rajhi Bank adding 0.8 percent. But peer Riyad Bank fell 0.9 percent after its board recommended a slightly lower cash dividend distribution for the second half of

2016 compared to the corresponding period in 2015. Construction firm Khodari gained 1.2 percent after saying it had renewed 124.5 million riyals (\$33.2 million) of Islamic credit facilities with Al-Bilad Bank. In Dubai, the main index added 0.8 percent with Dubai Investments rising 4.1 percent after announcing on Wednesday the launch of a new 3 billion dirham (\$817 million) real estate project in Dubai. Dubai Islamic Insurance and Reinsurance jumped 14.0 percent to 1.09 dirhams in its heaviest trade since early 2014. The stock soared its 15 percent limit on each of the past three days, and it has doubled in price since Dec. 27. —Reuters



**KUALA LUMPUR:** Malaysians walk near a giant poster of US dollar at a foreign currency money-changer in Kuala Lumpur yesterday. The Malaysian ringgit was trading near 18-year lows yesterday dropping to its weakest level against the US dollar since June 1999. —AP

## OIL RISES AS SAUDI ARABIA DISCUSSES SUPPLY CUTS

DOUBTS REMAIN IF OPEC WILL CUT OUTPUT AS PROMISED

**LONDON:** Oil prices rose slightly yesterday after reports Saudi Arabia had started talks with customers about a reduction of up to 7 percent in crude sales in February to support an attempt by OPEC to reduce global supply. The Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries promised in November to cut output to help prop up prices. Under the deal, Saudi Arabia agreed to cut output by 486,000 barrels per day (bpd), or 4.61 percent of its October output of 10.544 million bpd.

"Aramco is approaching all its customers for possible cuts from February and discussing likely (supply) scenarios," one source told Reuters. "Nothing is confirmed yet," the source said, adding the scenarios were for cuts of 3-7 percent.

Investors have been suspicious that OPEC may not cut as much as promised,

but several sources told Reuters yesterday that the world's biggest oil exporter would comply with the OPEC cuts.

Benchmark Brent crude oil was up 20 cents a barrel at \$56.66 by 1110 GMT. US light crude oil was up 20 cents a barrel at \$53.46. Both contracts rose by around 2 percent on Wednesday. "There remains a question mark over whether OPEC, with a long history of non-compliance, will actually follow through (with the cuts). Very few respondents expect full compliance," Singapore Exchange (SGX) said yesterday, citing results from a survey of its participants.

"Three-quarters of those surveyed went for (crude) prices averaging within the current \$50-\$60 a barrel range (for 2017)," SGX added. Analysts at US bank Goldman Sachs said even if OPEC reduced production as promised, there

was "only moderate oil spot price upside given the expected supply response to higher oil prices and new production".

The US bank said it expected Brent prices to peak at \$59 a barrel by mid-2017. In another sign of compliance with the cuts, Abu Dhabi National Oil Company (ADNOC) has scheduled maintenance at oilfields for March and April, although it was not immediately clear how much exports might fall.

Oil prices also found support from an American Petroleum Institute (API) report showing US crude inventories fell 7.4 million barrels last week. US government figures on inventories were due to be published at 11 am EST (1600 GMT) yesterday. A Reuters survey forecast the EIA report would show US crude stocks declined by about 2.2 million barrels in the week to Dec 30. —Reuters

### News

in brief

#### Kuwait oil price down 43 cents to \$51.29 pb

**KUWAIT:** The price of Kuwaiti oil went down by 43 cents to \$51.29 per barrel on Wednesday as oppose to \$51.72 pb the day before, said Kuwait Petroleum Corporation (KPC) yesterday. At the global level, the price of oil went up as a result of a decrease in US crude reserves in addition to the near implementation of the OPEC and major producers' decision to decrease oil production this week. The price of the Brent Crude went up by 99 cents to reach \$56.46 per barrel, the same case with the West Texas Intermediate which went up by 93 cents to \$53.26 pb. The OPEC daily basket price stood at \$ 52.71 a barrel Wednesday, compared with \$53.13 per barrel the previous day, OPEC said yesterday.

#### NBAD confirms departure of four senior managers

**DUBAI:** Four top managers at National Bank of Abu Dhabi (NBAD) have resigned from the lender, effective from Jan 1, 2017, it said yesterday. Abdulla Mohammed Saleh AbdulRaheem, deputy group chief executive, and Qamber Al-Mulla, senior managing director and chief executive of Gulf and international, had both left the bank, it said. Saif Al-Shehhi, senior managing director, UAE government and key Abu Dhabi-based clients, and Abdulla Al-Otaiba, senior managing director and group head of global retail & commercial had also left, the bank said.

#### Yields rise as Qatar CB sells 1.4bn riyals of T-bills

**DUBAI:** Qatar's central bank said yesterday it had sold 1.4 billion riyals (\$385 million) of Treasury bills at a monthly auction this week, with yields rising from December's auction. It sold 750 million riyals of three-month bills at a yield of 1.84 percent, 500 million riyals of six-month at 2.06 percent and 150 million riyals of nine-month at 2.19 percent. In early December the central bank sold 670 million riyals of bills: 180 million riyals of three-month at 1.67 percent, 190 million riyals of six-month at 1.88 percent, and 300 million riyals of nine-month at 2.10 percent. In mid-December, the central bank raised policy rates by 25 basis points after a similar hike by the US Federal Reserve.

#### QIIB wins nod to open Bank in Morocco

**DUBAI:** Qatar International Islamic Bank (QIIB), the Gulf state's third-largest listed Islamic bank by assets, said yesterday it had received approval to open a bank in Morocco with local lender Credit Immobilier et Hotelier (CIH). QIIB said in a bourse statement that it was working with CIH Bank to meet requirements and obtain necessary regulatory approvals in Qatar and Morocco. Morocco's central bank approved five requests to open Islamic banks in the country, including a CIH Bank proposal, on Jan 3.

## EGYPT'S FOREIGN RESERVES RISE TO \$24.265BN IN DEC

**CAIRO:** Egypt's net foreign reserves rose to \$24.265 billion at the end of December from \$23.058 billion at the end of November, the central bank said yesterday, cash that economists said would cover imports for more than five months. Egypt has been struggling with a foreign currency shortage since an uprising in 2011 drove away tourists and foreign investors, and had roughly \$36 billion in reserves before then. Domestic debt rose by 5.3 percent in the first quarter of 2016/2017 to reach 2.758 trillion Egyptian pounds (\$154.42 billion) at the end of September versus 2.619 trillion at the end of June, the central bank said in a statement.

And Egypt's external debt rose to \$60.153 billion at the end of September from \$55.764 billion at the end of July, the statement said. Egypt floated its currency in November as part of a series of economic reforms aimed at reducing the budget deficit and balancing the currency market. The move helped it clinch a \$12 billion three-year loan from the International Monetary Fund.

The reserves were further supported, economists say, by a \$2 billion repurchase transaction that the central bank secured with global banks last month. The transaction with a consortium of international banks has a maturity of one year.

"The central bank succeeded in achieving its target of \$25 billion ... The rise is strong and noticeable and would cover imports for more than five months," Cairo-based CI Capital economist Hany Farahat said.

"The rise in reserves will restore confidence in the central bank's ability to restore stability in the foreign exchange market," said Farahat. The country of over 90 million has been seeking a variety of funding sources, from development loans to foreign grants and aid, to plug its financing needs as it struggles with an acute dollar shortage caused by years of post-uprising turmoil. —Reuters

## LEBANON TO RESTART OIL, GAS LICENSING ROUND

**BEIRUT:** Lebanon intends to restart its first oil and gas licensing round after a three-year delay, the energy minister said yesterday, hoping to kick-start the development of a hydrocarbon industry.

In its first sitting since being formed in December, Lebanon's new cabinet passed two decrees on Wednesday defining the blocks and specifying conditions for production and exploration tenders and contracts.

Lebanon will offer five offshore

blocks for exploration and production and is to hold another pre-qualification round for companies interested in bidding, Minister of Energy and Water Cesar Abou Khalil told a news conference. Beirut estimates it has 96 trillion cubic feet of natural gas reserves and 865 million barrels of oil offshore, but squabbling between parties has prevented the passage of vital laws needed to develop the sector.

In 2013, 46 companies qualified to

take part in bidding for oil and gas tenders, 12 of them as operators, including Chevron, Total and Exxon Mobil. Abou Khalil said he expects these 46 companies to be interested still and that Lebanon will hold another pre-qualification process to increase competition and secure the best deal. The next stage is for the government to agree a tax regime for the nascent hydrocarbon industry. On Wednesday, the cabinet also agreed to form a min-

isterial committee to discuss the draft tax law. Abou Khalil said the committee would meet later yesterday.

"The committee is committed to finalise comments on the tax law (with) the shortest delay," he said. "It might take a couple of weeks, and then we will go back to the council of ministers and we will transfer the (draft) law to the parliament, where it is expected to be passed in the first legislative session." — Reuters



**ROME:** People walk past a screen announcing sales in a shop yesterday in Rome on the first day of winter sales in Italy. —AFP

## SAUDI CB LIFTS HOME BUYERS' BANK LOAN RATIO

**DUBAI:** Saudi Arabia's central bank said yesterday it would allow banks to supply a bigger share of funding for purchases of homes, as part of authorities' drive to stimulate the real estate market and ease a shortage of affordable housing. Banks will now be permitted to lend buyers 85 percent of the value of a home, up from 70 percent previously. That will apply to purchases of first homes by Saudi citizens.

The change will let banks offer a wider variety of products in the market without compromising the financial stability of the banks, the central bank said. Last March, it raised the loan-to-value ratio to 85 percent from 70 percent for specialized mortgage companies but did not do so for banks. At the time, it said mortgage firms were more able to bear increased risk associated with the change because unlike commercial banks, depositors' money was not at risk. — Reuters

## OPEC OIL OUTPUT FALLS FROM RECORD HIGH AHEAD OF CUTS

### NIGERIA POSTS BIGGEST DECLINE, FOLLOWED BY SAUDI

**LONDON:** OPEC's oil output in December fell from a record high ahead of a deal to cut production, a Reuters survey found yesterday, helped by attacks on Nigeria's oil industry and top exporter Saudi Arabia trimming exports. The decline, the first since May according to Reuters surveys, occurred despite higher exports from second-largest OPEC producer Iraq and a further upward trend in Libyan output.

Supply from OPEC in December fell to 34.18 million barrels per day (bpd) from a revised 34.38 million bpd in November, according to the survey based on shipping data and information from industry sources.

Oil hit an 18-month high of \$58.37 a barrel on Tuesday, boosted by an OPEC agreement to lower supply from Jan 1. The supportive impact of the agreement on prices may not occur straight away, an analyst at SEB said.

"We are not necessarily set for an immediate price take-off. One problem is the very high OPEC production in fourth-quarter 2016," said Bjarne Schieldrop, chief commodities analyst at SEB. "The still-rising crude oil production in Libya is also creating concerns

that OPEC's cuts might be less effective."

Based on the December survey, OPEC is pumping 1.68 million bpd above the 32.50 million bpd production target that it agreed on Nov. 30 to adopt from Jan. 1 in its first supply cut decision in eight years. OPEC output started to climb following its decision in late 2014 to retain market share rather than cut supply to prop up prices. Saudi Arabia, Iraq and Iran all pumped more and production also increased due to the return of Indonesia in 2015 and Gabon in July 2016 as OPEC members.

In December, the biggest reduction came from Nigeria, although not as a result of deliberate cuts to boost prices. No Forcados crude was exported following an attack on a pipeline, and shipments of the Agbami stream fell most likely due to planned maintenance work, sources in the survey said.

Nigeria and Libya are both exempt from the OPEC supply cut agreement because of output losses caused by conflict. Nigerian militant group Niger Delta Avengers said in November it had attacked the Forcados pipeline.

Saudi Arabia, which said it pumped a record amount in November, supplied

less in December, sources in the survey estimated. Exports were lower because customers asked for less crude, not because of cutbacks implemented under the OPEC deal.

"Exports are down markedly from a massive November number," said one source who tracks Saudi output. "The bottom line is December is down from November with regard to supply to market." Among countries with higher output, the largest increase of 70,000 bpd was in Libya, where a two-year blockade was lifted in December on pipelines leading from two western fields. The recovery remains at risk from political conflict. Output also climbed in Iraq, the survey found, with exports from the country's south most likely exceeding November's record rate of 3.407 million bpd, according to shipping data and industry sources. Iran, which was allowed to raise output under the OPEC deal as sanctions had crimped its supply, pumped 30,000 bpd more. The Reuters survey is based on shipping data provided by external sources, Thomson Reuters flows data, and information provided by sources at oil companies, OPEC and consulting firms. —Reuters

## QATAR AIRWAYS CONFIRMS CHANGE TO AIRBUS ORDER

**DOHA:** Qatar Airways has renegotiated an order with Airbus to take delivery only of larger A321 planes, not A320s as originally planned, the Gulf carrier's chief executive said yesterday. The switch to the different aircraft comes after the airline refused to accept four A320neos last year over issues with their engines. "We are going to take all A321s, there will be no more A320s," Baker told reporters at a press event in Doha.

The original order with Airbus was for up to 80 planes. Last month Baker said Qatar Airways was looking at an order combining both types of planes, but this has now been ruled out.

He added that negotiations were continuing over which type of engine to use in the new planes. Qatar is considering using engines produced by CFM International, a venture between GE of the United States and France's Safran. The engines on the cancelled planes were made by Pratt and Whitney.

Baker was speaking at an awards ceremony which crowned Doha's Hamad International as a "five-star" airport, one of only six in the world. Baker added that the aim was to expand the airport's capacity from the current 50 million annual passengers to 65 million by 2021, a year before the gas-rich emirate hosts the football World Cup. The expansion is being designed by Foster and Partners, said Baker, renowned British architects who are also designing the World Cup final stadium. The Qatar Airways boss also ruled out job cuts for 40,000 Qatar Airways staff. —AFP



**DOHA:** Hamad International Airport's chief operating officer, Badr Al-Meer (left), and Qatar Airways chief executive, Akbar Al-Baker, pose for a picture during a ceremony which crowned Doha's Hamad International as a "five-star" airport, one of only six in the world, yesterday. —AFP

## ABU DHABI LEVIES FEE ON EXPAT TENANTS TO BOOST REVENUES

**ABU DHABI:** The emirate of Abu Dhabi has imposed a fee on expatriates renting homes there as it seeks to increase state revenues that have fallen due to low crude prices. The municipal fee, equivalent to 3 percent of a tenant's annual rent, will take effect retroactively from February 2016, the Abu Dhabi Department of Municipal Affairs & Transport said yesterday.

Last January the largest member of the United Arab Emirates hiked water and electricity charges, and in July the International Monetary Fund estimated the government would run a fiscal deficit of 6.9 percent of gross domestic product in 2016.

Authorities decided on the fee last year but delayed its introduction because procedures to implement it were not yet in place. The department did not say how much the measure, from which UAE nationals are exempt, would raise.

Neighboring Dubai, the financial hub of the UAE, charges tenants a 5 percent municipality fee. The emirates do not levy income tax. — Reuters



**MINNEAPOLIS:** This photo taken Feb. 6, 2008 shows Macy's pedestrians walking in and out of Macy's in the skyway connecting it to the IDS Building in downtown Minneapolis. —AP

## MACY'S TO CLOSE STORES, CUT JOBS AS SALES DROP

ICONIC DOWNTOWN MINNEAPOLIS STORE TO DOWN SHUTTERS

**NEW YORK:** Macy's says it is eliminating more than 10,000 jobs and plans to move forward with 68 store closures after a disappointing holiday shopping season. The department store chain also lowered its full-year earnings forecast.

The retailer said Wednesday that sales at its established stores fell 2.1 percent in November and December compared to the same period last year. Macy's Inc. pointed to changing consumer behavior and said its performance reflects the challenges that are facing much of the retail industry.

The company said the 68 store closures, which span the nation, are part of the 100 closings it announced in August. Of the 68, three were closed by the middle of 2016, 63 will close in the spring and two will be closed by the middle of 2017.

Macy's is selling or has sold three other locations, but is leasing the properties back and will keep operating those stores. Some employees may be offered positions at nearby stores, but Macy's estimates that 3,900 employees will be affected by the closures.

Macy's also said it plans to restructure parts of its business and sell some properties. This will lead to the reduction of 6,200 jobs. The moves are estimated to save \$550 million annually.

Overall, Macy's said, the job reductions represent about 7 percent of its workforce. The company, which owns the Macy's and Bloomingdale's brands, has been struggling with

declining traffic in its stores, where the bulk of its business is still conducted. It said it is closing stores that are "unproductive or are no longer robust shopping destinations" as well as selling those with highly valued real estate.

It plans to invest some of its savings in growing its digital business. Macy's said it now expects to earn between \$2.95 and \$3.10 per share on an adjusted basis for its 2016 fiscal year, versus its prior forecast of \$3.15 to \$3.40 per share. The company is scheduled to report full results in February. Shares in Macy's fell more than 10 percent to \$32.20 in after-hours trading.

A shopping landmark in downtown Minneapolis is closing. Macy's Inc. said Wednesday it is selling the store, ending more than a century of department store retailing in the heart of Minnesota's largest city. The closing, planned for March, affects 280 employees.

The Star Tribune (<http://strib.mn/2ibtOaZ>) reports the property is being sold to a New York investment firm for more than \$40 million. The property consists of three buildings totaling nearly 1 million square feet along Nicollet Mall. Minneapolis City Council President Barb Johnson says Macy's representatives cited changing shopping habits and slumping sales for the store's closure. For decades the property was the headquarters and flagship store of the Dayton Co., forerunner of Target Corp, founded by the father and uncles of Minnesota Gov. Mark Dayton. —AP

## BRANSTAD WON'T RECOMMEND TAX CUT

**DES MOINES:** Gov Terry Branstad said Wednesday he doesn't believe the state can afford to cut income taxes right now and won't be making a tax-policy recommendation to the GOP-led Legislature that convenes next week. However, the governor said he would be open to considering tax policy changes lawmakers may send him that are fiscally responsible and sustainable.

"I think it can be done in future years with a better economy as we did in '97, but at this point I don't think we're in a position to do it right now," Branstad told reporters at a forum sponsored by the Associated Press. "Considering the difficult budget decisions we're faced with this year, at this time at least I'm not making a recommendation for a major tax reform this year."

The state already faces a projected \$100 million shortfall in the fiscal year that ends June 30. "It's certainly something I support and would like to see done," the GOP governor said, "but at this point I don't have anything in my program."

Branstad said he has looked at various options to change Iowa's tax structure to make it simpler and more competitive, but has been challenged to find a "meaningful" tax relief approach he thought "was both sustainable in terms of generating the revenue we need for education and other programs, as well as reducing taxes at this point." Top legislative Republicans were undaunted by his decision not to call for a tax cut. "We appreciate the governor's perspective, certainly, and that's probably not going to dissuade us from looking," said House Speaker Linda Upmeyer, R-Clear Lake.

"No matter what, we have opportunities to approach simplification, doing a lot of other things so we're going to continue doing our job and we appreciate him doing his," the House speaker said, adding she's not excluding tax cuts. "I'm acknowledging that the governor doesn't think that's possible. We'll keep looking." Incoming Senate Majority Leader Bill Dix, R-Shell Rock, said a fair and competitive income tax system is a key factor in luring new businesses, investors, risk-takers and keeping or attracting new residents seeking career opportunities. "The income tax is a penalty on hard work, investment, taking risks," said Dix, who will guide the Iowa Senate agenda when lawmakers Monday convene the 87th Iowa General Assembly. "Our tax policy should be simpler, should be more easily understood and should reflect the values of hard work and investment - and punishing them less."

### Strongest growth

Dix said his 29-member caucus would consider "everything is on the table" following a 2016 election in which voters indicated they wanted to see changes in the way state government conducts business. The Shell Rock Republican said he was a freshman House member in 1997 when the GOP-led Legislature and Branstad passed a 10 percent across-the-board cut that marked the last time Iowans saw their income taxes reduced. "People claimed at the time that the sky would fall and revenue would tank and the truth of the matter is we saw on the heels of that decision some of the strongest growth that Iowa has seen in the past because it changes people's behavior and that's what we really want to do," Dix told the AP forum. —AP



**In this Nov 4, 2014, file photo, Iowa Gov Terry Branstad and Lt Gov Kim Reynolds (left) watch early election returns in West Des Moines, Iowa. —AP**

## MEXICO GAS PRICE HIKE SPURS LOOTING

**MEXICO CITY:** Mexicans angry over a double-digit hike in gasoline prices looted stores and blockaded roads on Wednesday, prompting over 250 arrests amid escalating unrest over the rising cost of living in Latin America's second biggest economy.

Twenty-three stores were sacked and 27 blockades put up in Mexico City, Mayor Miguel Angel Mancera said, days after the government raised gasoline costs by 14 to 20 percent, outraging Mexicans already battling rising inflation and a weak currency. Mexican retailers' association ANTAD

urged federal and state authorities to intervene quickly, saying 79 stores had been sacked and 170 forcibly closed due to blockades. Deputy interior Minister Rene Juarez said over 250 people had been arrested for vandalism and that federal authorities were working with security officials in Mexico City and the nearby states of Mexico and Hidalgo to address the unrest.

"These acts are outside the law and have nothing to do with peaceful protest nor freedom of expression," Juarez said in a press conference late on

Wednesday. Mexican President Enrique Pena Nieto said earlier on Wednesday that the price spike that took effect on Jan. 1 was a "responsible" measure that the government took in line with international oil prices. The hike is part of a gradual, year-long price liberalization the Pena Nieto administration has promised to implement this year.

State oil company Pemex said on Tuesday that blockades of fuel storage terminals by protesters had led to a "critical situation" in at least three Mexican states. —Reuters

## SCUTTLED FORD PLANT HAS MEXICO FEARING MORE UNDER TRUMP

**MEXICO CITY:** Ford Motor Co.'s cancellation of plans to build a \$1.6 billion auto manufacturing plant in San Luis Potosi has sounded alarms across Mexico. Even as the country is being rocked by rowdy nationwide protests against a Jan. 1 gasoline price hike, the Ford news led the front pages of Mexico's most influential newspapers Wednesday, and they tied the development directly to President-elect Donald Trump.

"Trump leaves Mexico without 3,600 jobs," read the headline on *El Universal*. "Ford's braking jolts the peso," said *Reforma*, referring to the Mexican currency's nearly 1 percent slump following the news.

"The jobs created in Mexico have contributed to maintaining manufacturing jobs in the United States which otherwise would have disappeared in the face of Asian competition," the Mexico Economy Department said. The Mexican peso slid again Wednesday, with the Bank of Mexico's 48-hour interbank exchange rate for the currency weakening from 21.05 to the U.S. dollar to 21.52 at the close.

Mexicans have been nervous about Trump's tough rhetoric toward their country, including disparaging remarks about immigrants who enter the US illegally and vows to wall off the border and renegotiate the North American Free Trade Agreement, upsetting ties with what is by far Mexico's largest trading partner.

Two weeks before inauguration, the scuttling of the planned Ford factory and Trump's pressure on General Motors should be a "much-needed wake-up call," said Mexico analyst Alejandro Hope.

It shows "how much actual leverage Trump has within specific companies, which is far greater than what Mexican elites thought until recently," Hope said. "They claimed that at the end of the day economic interests would prevail over political messaging. That's clearly not the case."

In an editorial, *El Universal* also recalled the deal Trump struck in December with Carrier to keep 800 of 1,300 jobs at an Indiana furnace factory from being sent to Mexico, in return for millions of dollars in tax incentives. It also implicitly criticized the Mexican government's response to the incoming administration. "Mexico loses thousands of jobs with no word on a clear strategy for confronting the next US government which has presented itself as protectionist and, especially, anti-Mexican," the paper wrote. "Trump will try to recover as many US companies that have set up in Mexico as possible. He will try to make them return at whatever cost, through threats or using public resources." —AP

## US OIL INDUSTRY CHIEF CALLS FOR MORE OFFSHORE ACCESS

**WASHINGTON:** The US oil industry's main lobbyist called on Wednesday for expanded offshore oil and gas production, delivering a plea for deregulation two weeks before the inauguration of President-elect Donald Trump. American Petroleum Institute President Jack Gerard said the United States should relax the "regulatory onslaught" the energy industry has seen in recent years—a comment that closely echoes Trump's position. "Today, 94 percent of federal offshore acreage is off limits to energy production," Gerard said in prepared remarks at an annual event to outline the state of the industry. "Restricted offshore areas could hold 50 billion barrels, or more, of oil and more than 195 trillion cubic feet of natural gas." The remarks came two weeks after President Barack Obama banned new offshore oil and gas drilling on more than 100 million acres (40.5 million hectares) of the Arctic and parts of the Atlantic Ocean, a move that coincided with a similar freeze by Canadian authorities.

### Trump sympathetic

In decisions welcomed by industry, Trump has picked prominent figures and allies of the oil and gas industries to fill his new administration, including former Exxon Mobil CEO Rex Tillerson to head the State Department, and former Texas Governor Rick Perry for the Energy Department. Trump also has tapped Oklahoma Attorney General and climate change-denier Scott Pruitt to lead the Environmental Protection Agency and made the oil investor Carl Icahn a special advisor to overhaul US regulations. —AFP



In this Jan 9, 2013 file photo, Chevy trucks line the lot of a dealer in Murrysville, Pa. Demand may be slowing, but US consumers still bought a whole lot of cars and trucks in 2016. US sales of new vehicles hit a new high in 2016. —AP

# US AUTO SALES HIT A RECORD 17.55M IN '16 LED BY SUVs

REPEAT PERFORMANCE IN 2017 COULD BE A TALL ORDER

**DETROIT:** US consumers bought a record number of new cars and trucks in 2016. A repeat performance in 2017 could be a tall order. Low gas prices, rising employment and low interest rates kept buyers coming to car dealerships last year. There was also the lure of new technology - such as back-up cameras, automatic emergency braking and Apple CarPlay - and new vehicles like the Chrysler Pacifica minivan, the Honda Civic and the all-electric Chevrolet Bolt.

US vehicle sales totaled 17.55 million, beating the previous year's record of 17.47 million, according to Autodata Corp. It was the seventh consecutive year of year-over-year sales gains, an unprecedented string, said Tom Libby, an analyst with the consulting firm IHS Markit.

That string could be in jeopardy, however. The National Automobile Dealers Association expects US sales to drop to 17.1 million vehicles in 2017 as interest rates and vehicle prices rise. Large numbers of cars coming off leases will hit the used-car market next year, putting pressure on new car sales. And more buyers are opting for longer loans, so they won't be returning to dealerships anytime soon.

Political issues could also impact sales. President-elect Donald Trump has threatened to impose a 35-percent tariff on vehicles made in Mexico and exported to the US, which would impact every major automaker. But he also has promised more spending on infrastructure, which could boost pickup truck sales. "It is the year of unknowns," said Michelle Krebs, a senior analyst with the car buying site Autotrader.com.

For now, though, the market has plateaued at a high level. Nissan Motor

Co.'s US sales rose 5 percent in 2016 to more than 1.5 million, a company record. The Subaru brand also set an annual record, with sales up 6 percent to 615,132. Honda Motor Co.'s sales jumped 3 percent to more than 1.6 million. Hyundai Motor Co.'s sales rose 2 percent to 775,005. Ford Motor Co.'s sales were up less than 1 percent to more than 2.6 million. Fiat Chrysler's sales were flat at 2.2 million.

General Motors Co. said its year-over-year sales were down 1.3 percent to just over 3 million cars and trucks. That was partly because the company cut back on low-profit sales to rental-car firms. Toyota Motor Corp.'s full-year sales fell 2 percent to 2.4 million. Volkswagen brands sales dropped 8 percent to 322,948, hurt by the company's diesel mileage cheating scandal.

### Here are some details of 2016 sales:

**WINNERS AND LOSERS:** Ford's F-Series pickup remained the best-selling vehicle in America in 2016, with 820,799 trucks sold. That's the equivalent of 93 trucks sold every hour. The Toyota Camry was the best-selling car, despite a 9.5-percent dip in sales to 388,618. Jaguar saw the biggest sales increase of any brand, with sales more than doubling over 2015 thanks to its new XE sedan. Fiat Chrysler's Italian brands, Fiat and Alfa Romeo, declined more than 20 percent each as customers scratched small cars off their shopping lists in favor of SUVs.

**LUXURY CROWN:** Mercedes-Benz held onto its title as the top-selling luxury brand. Mercedes sales were up less than 1 percent to 374,541, edging BMW and Lexus.

**SUV TAKEOVER:** Toyota's US sales chief, Bill Fay, said consumers' shift from cars to SUVs is one of the most dramatic the

industry has ever seen. Three years ago, trucks and SUVs represented 50 percent of the US market. They closed 2016 at 63 percent of total sales, and analysts don't see that changing anytime soon. Boomers and Millennials both like the space SUVs offer and their higher ride, and improvements in fuel economy make them competitive with cars. The Honda CR-V was the best-selling SUV in the US last year, with sales up 3 percent to 357,335.

**PILING ON THE DEALS:** Incentive spending reached a record of \$4,000 per vehicle in November before falling a bit in December. Buyers were walking away with thousands of dollars in bonus cash or financing deals. Autotrader said Ford was offering as much as \$13,000 off its C-Max plug-in hybrid in certain markets in December. But the deals can hurt the industry in the long term, since they damage vehicles' resale values and automakers' profits. Automakers, wary of relying too heavily on incentives to move vehicles, started cutting production in the fall. Even with incentives, the average sale price of a vehicle rose to \$32,000, a record for December, LMC said.

**DECEMBER TO REMEMBER:** Holiday promotions and elevated incentives boosted sales 3 percent to 1.7 million, Autodata said. But even if sales had been flat compared to last December, 2016 would have broken a record. Volkswagen's sales jumped 20 percent over last December, while Subaru sales rose 12 percent. GM and Nissan both gained 10 percent. Honda's sales rose 6 percent and Toyota's rose 2 percent. The Nissan Rogue SUV was one of the month's stars, with sales up 53 percent as an updated version hit the market. —AP

## KUWAIT ADDRESSES FIFA FOR TEMPORARY SUSPENSION LIFT

**KUWAIT:** Kuwait's parliamentary committee for sports and youth affairs decided yesterday to address a message to the International Federation of Association Football (FIFA) requesting temporary lift of the suspension enforced on Kuwait Football Association to enable the national team take part in forthcoming Asian Cup finals.

Chairman of the commission MP Saadoun

Hammad Al-Otaibi said in a statement that the committee is asking FIFA to lift the suspension on temporary basis; pending government and parliamentary endorsement of proposed amendments to the national sports laws and regulations. The commission has received copy of a new government sports bill of 74 articles, in addition to a number of draft laws presented by members of the National Assembly (the

Parliament of the State of Kuwait).

Al-Otaibi added that the commission has set January 9th as the date for its next meeting and addressed an invitation to the Minister of Information, Minister of State for Youth Affairs Sheikh Salman Sabah Salem Al-Humoud Al-Sabah to attend the planned session to discuss the government and parliamentary proposals in this respect. — KUNA



**SAN SALVADOR DE JUJUY: TOPSHOT - Peugeot's pilot Stephane Peterhansel and co-pilot Jean Paul Cottret, both from France, compete during the Stage 3 of the 2017 Dakar Rally between San Miguel de Tucuman and San Salvador de Jujuy, in Argentina, on Wednesday. — AFP**

## PETERHANSEL LEADS PEUGEOT SWEEP AS TOYOTA HIT DAKAR TROUBLE

### AL ATTIYAH OUT OF DAKAR RALLY

**SAN SALVADOR DE JUJUY:** Defending champion Stephane Peterhansel led a Peugeot sweep of the top-three finishing spots on the third stage of the Dakar Rally on Wednesday with teammate Sebastien Loeb narrowly retaining the overall lead.

Peterhansel, 51, seeking a 13th career triumph in the gruelling 9,000km endurance event, finished the San Miguel de Tucuman to San Salvador de Jujuy stage in Argentina in 4 hours 18 min 17 sec.

Carlos Sainz, the 2010 champion, was second, coming home 1 min 54 sec behind the Frenchman Peterhansel. Third was nine-time world rally champion Loeb at 3 min 8 sec off the lead.

Loeb stays in the overall lead with a paper-thin 0.42sec advantage over Sainz and a 4.18sec gap on Peterhansel. "It's a really good day for Peugeot."

Qatari two-time winner Nasser Al Attiyah has been forced to pull out of the Dakar Rally yesterday, his Toyota team confirmed. The 46-year-old, the 2011 and 2015 champion, would not start fourth stage after losing the wheel of his car during the previous day's special. Al Attiyah came to a halt for over an

hour when he damaged a wheel on his vehicle. "The damage to his Toyota Hilux is too extensive to be repaired by his team," organisers added. Al Attiyah had been among the pre-race favourites and was sitting second in the overall standings ahead of Wednesday's stage. The fourth day of the Dakar Rally is 521km from San Salvador de Jujuy in Argentina to Tupiza in Bolivia with French driver Sebastien Loeb leading the race.

"We've lost, not completely but probably, two rivals in Nasser Al Attiyah and Giniel de Villiers, so it's a little bit clearer at the front of the race," said Peterhansel, who had struggled in the first two stages, finishing seventh and 12th.

Wednesday's stage was split into two sections with the second part over a 124km timed run seeing the competitors race at altitude hitting 5,000m for the first time in the 2017 event.

However, it was a test too far for Toyota, who are seen as Peugeot's major rivals for the title. Longtime stage leader Nasser Al Attiyah of Qatar, the 2011 and 2015 champion who was just 28 seconds behind Loeb overnight,

came to a halt for over an hour when he damaged a wheel on his vehicle.

Toyota teammates Giniel de Villiers, the 2005 winner, and 2004 champion Nani Roma also hit technical trouble on the exhausting climb.

Spain's Joan Barreda won the third stage of the motorcycle event by more than 10 minutes to take the overall lead.

The Honda rider dominated the 780km (364km timed) stage in 4 hours 22 min 41 sec. Overnight leader and defending champion Toby Price of Australia was close to 23 minutes off the pace on his KTM.

"I was lucky and I did a good job. It was a really tough stage but I kept my focus during all the stage, so I am really happy with the work," said Barreda. "It's still too early to talk about winning. There are still seven thousand kilometres to go."

Britain's Sam Sunderland is second overall at 11 min 20sec behind Barreda while Paulo Goncalves of Portugal holds third spot at 14min 42sec.

Today's fourth stage, over 521km from San Salvador de Jujuy to Tupiza in Bolivia will be raced to altitudes of around 3,500m. — Agencies

## MATSUYAMA EMBRACES EXPECTATIONS FOR 2017

**LOS ANGELES:** A sizzling finish to 2016 has Hideki Matsuyama focused more than ever on his golfing goals this year, among them a major title and perhaps the world number one ranking. "Becoming number one in the world is the goal I think of all of us out here," Matsuyama told reporters this week as he prepared to tee it up yesterday in the USPGA Tour Tournament of Champions at Kapalua, Hawaii. "I still have some weak links in my game that I have to work on, but hopefully little by little, I'll be able to improve and to fix what I need to, and hopefully some day compete for number one." Not many weaknesses have been apparent in Matsuyama's game of late. Since late October he has won four of five starts with one runner-up finish as well.

The world number six player's bid to rise will be one of the chief storylines of a 2017 in which the return from injury of Tiger Woods and Australian Jason Day's bid to stay atop the world rankings will also be in the spotlight.

After a fifth-placed finish at the US PGA Tour Championship, Matsuyama won the Japan Open and the World Golf Championships HSBC Champions in October, the Taiheiyo Masters in November and the Tiger Woods-hosted Hero World Challenge in the first week of December.

He also squeezed in a second place finish at the CIMB Classic. It was a sensational end to a 2016 that started with a victory in the USPGA Tour Phoenix Open and included a tie for seventh at the Masters and a fourth-placed finish at the PGA Championship.

"The expectations of people around me are high," he said. "I don't really worry too much about that. Hopefully not put too much pressure on myself. But I know that other people expect a lot of me, and so all I can do is just try my best."

He says there are still things in his game he wants to improve. "Well, as you know, Jason (Day), he hits it long and he just has a wonderful short game," Matsuyama said. "I don't even come as close to hitting as long as he does. So that's one of the areas that I really need to work on, and hopefully I can do that."

But mostly, Matsuyama said, he's got to stay true to the skills that have brought him this far, the skills that have prompted Jordan Spieth and Woods to predict that Matsuyama will be among the game's elite for years to come.

"I've got to just be my own guy," Matsuyama said. "I just have to play my own game and not try to live up to anybody else's expectations except myself." — AFP



**LAHAINA:** Hideki Matsuyama of Japan looks on from the 18th hole during the pro-am prior to the SBS Tournament of Champions at the Plantation Course at Kapalua Golf Club on Wednesday in Lahaina, Hawaii. — AFP



## US TOPS RUSSIA IN WORLD JUNIOR HOCKEY SEMIFINAL SHOOTOUT

**MONTREAL:** Troy Terry scored on all three of his shootout attempts, the last in the seventh round to give the United States a 4-3 victory over Russia on Wednesday in the world junior hockey semifinals.

The Americans will face Canada in the final Thursday night. Canada beat Sweden 5-2 on Wednesday night. Terry scored the winner right after Russia's Alexander Polunin hit the crossbar. The University of Denver forward beat Ilya Samsonov through the legs for the third time.

"I'm just trying to gather my words here," said the 19-year-old Terry, an Anaheim draft pick. "I'm still shaking a little bit. He's such a big goalie, I felt the best way to score on him was going five-hole. The second and third time, I was just trying to figure it out as I went down."

The shootout hat trick matched Jonathan Toews' feat for Canada in a 2-1 semifinal victory over the United States in 2007. "He has great skill, great hands," said US defenseman Charlie McAvoy of Boston University. "He's got ice in his veins, and he proved that tonight."

Terry and Jeremy Bracco of Kitchener of the Ontario Hockey League scored in the initial five round shootout, with Terry making it 2-1 and Bracco tying it at 2 to keep the tiebreaker going. The teams were allowed to repeat shooters after the fifth round, with Denis Guryanov connecting for the second time for

Russia and Terry countering to keep the Americans alive. Boston College's Colin White scored twice and Wisconsin's Luke Kunin added a goal in regulation for the Americans. Tyler Parsons stopped 33 shots. Parsons plays for London in the OHL.

"I'm so happy for our guys and the fight that they showed," said coach Bob Motzko of St. Cloud State. "That was a tremendous game to be a part of. We'll enjoy this for a little, but our guys know the mission isn't over. It's exciting to know we have a chance at the gold medal tomorrow."

Guryanov had two goals for Russia, Kirill Kaprizov also scored, and Samsonov made 40 saves. "Obviously it's super tough," Russian defenseman Mikhail Sergiyachov said. "We wanted to win that game. We did everything we could to win. We lost in the shootout."

Seeking its fourth title and first since 2013, the US beat Russia in the knockout round for the first time in eight games. The Americans also beat Russia 3-2 in the preliminary round. "It was more than just a game," White said. "Knowing we lost seven times in a row, we had to do this for more than ourselves, for our country, and we pulled it off."

Kunin tied it at 2 on a power play at 10:23. The Minnesota Wild first-round draft pick completed a beautiful tic-tac-toe play from Bracco and Boston University's Jordan Greenway. White put the

Americans in front six minutes later when his wrist shot from the left faceoff dot

took a deflection off Russian defenseman Yegor Rykov and eluded Samsonov's glove. Clayton Keller could have put the game away for the Americans when he was awarded a penalty shot at 5:14 of the third. The Boston University forward went high with a backhander, and Samsonov made a nice glove save.

Guryanov tied it at 3 less than a minute later, beating Parsons through the legs. Kaprizov continued his electrifying tournament, scoring on a wraparound at 11:54 of the first period to get the Russians on the board. It was the first time the Americans trailed in this tournament.

White tied it on a deflection with 55 seconds remaining in the first period, and Guryanov put the Russians back in front at 1:17 of the second.

"A lot of parts of it were just a terrific hockey game," Motzko said. "Back and forth, great talent. The players left it on the line. It was tremendous hockey. This is a special win for us."

Julien Gauthier scored twice, Anthony Cirelli, Mitchell Stephens and Dylan Strome added goals and Carter Hart stopped all 28 shots he faces in relief for Canada Joel Eriksson Ek and Carl Grundstrom scored for Sweden scored on two of three shots on Canadian starting goalie Connor Ingram. He was replaced by Hart 8:05 into the game. — AP

## HAYES, GRABNER SCORE 2 EACH AS RANGERS BEAT FLYERS

**PHILADELPHIA:** One night after saying his team got out-worked badly in a loss to the Buffalo Sabres, New York Rangers coach Alain Vigneault turned to goaltender Henrik Lundqvist and was rewarded with a 5-2 win over the Philadelphia Flyers. Lundqvist, who allowed four goals on 19 shots in Tuesday loss in Madison Square Garden, turned aside 30-of-32 shots for his 17th win of the season. Kevin Hayes scored two goals, Michael



**PHILADELPHIA:** Chris Kreider #20 of the New York Rangers scores at 5:01 of the third period against Steve Mason #35 of the Philadelphia Flyers at the Wells Fargo Center on Wednesday in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. The Rangers defeated the Flyers 5-2. —AFP

Grabner added two goals and an assist and Chris Kreider picked up another goal to give the Rangers their first win of 2017.

### CANADIENS 4, STARS 3 (OT)

Max Pacioretty scored the game-winner on a breakaway 19 seconds into overtime, his second goal of the game, giving Montreal a win against Dallas at American Airlines Center. Nathan Beaulieu had a goal and two assists for the Canadiens, who also got a goal from Alexander Radulov. Shea Weber added two assists and Al Montoya made 39 saves.

### JETS 4, PANTHERS 1

Patrik Laine took over as the NHL's leading rookie goal-scorer, powering Winnipeg over Florida at the BB&T Center. Laine, the second overall pick in the 2016 draft, scored his 21st goal. The Jets also got goals from Shawn Matthias, Nikolaj Ehlers and Mark Scheifele.

### CANUCKS 3, COYOTES 0

Ryan Miller stopped 22 shots for his first shutout in more than a year and Sven Baertschi scored the winning goal in the

first period as Vancouver extended its winning streak to five games with a victory over Arizona. Brandon Sutter (penalty shot) and Bo Horvat (breakaway) scored third-period goals for the Canucks, who are 7-2-1 in their last 10 games.

### FLAMES 4, AVALANCHE 1

Mikael Backlund ran his goal-scoring streak to five straight games as Calgary beat Colorado at the Scotiabank Saddledome. Alex Chiasson had a goal and an assist for the Flames, who converted three-of-seven power-play opportunities. Kris Versteeg and Johnny Gaudreau also scored, while Mark Giordano, Sean Monahan and TJ Brodie chipped in with two assists each.

### DUCKS 2, RED WINGS 0

John Gibson continued his stellar play in and Nick Ritchie and Ondrej Kase scored goals as Anaheim snuffed out Detroit at Honda Center. Gibson, who tied a franchise record with 51 saves in Sunday's shootout victory against the Philadelphia Flyers, needed to stop only 23 this time in recording his eighth career shutout and second of the season. — Reuters

### NHL results/standings

Anaheim 2, Detroit 0; Vancouver 3, Arizona 0; Calgary 4, Colorado 1; Montreal 4, Dallas 3 (OT); NY Rangers 5, Philadelphia 2; Winnipeg 4, Florida 1.

#### Western Conference

##### Central Division

	W	L	OTL	GF	GA	PTS
Chicago	23	12	5	109	98	51
Minnesota	23	9	4	113	76	50
St. Louis	20	13	5	108	111	45
Winnipeg	19	19	3	113	122	41
Dallas	16	15	8	100	117	40
Nashville	16	14	7	103	102	39
Colorado	12	25	1	77	129	25

##### Pacific Division

San Jose	23	13	2	95	82	48
Anaheim	20	12	8	109	109	48
Edmonton	19	13	7	111	104	45
Calgary	21	17	2	109	112	44
Los Angeles	19	15	4	94	92	42
Vancouver	19	18	3	100	116	41
Arizona	11	22	5	82	124	27

#### Eastern Conference

##### Atlantic Division

Montreal	24	9	6	119	90	54
Ottawa	20	13	4	94	98	44
Boston	20	16	4	95	97	44
Toronto	17	12	8	113	109	42
Tampa Bay	19	16	4	113	111	42
Florida	16	15	8	93	108	40
Detroit	16	17	5	93	109	37
Buffalo	14	15	8	82	102	36

##### Metropolitan Division

Columbus	27	5	4	126	74	58
Pittsburgh	25	8	5	133	107	55
NY Rangers	27	13	1	141	103	55
Washington	23	9	5	105	83	51
Philadelphia	20	15	5	118	125	45
Carolina	16	14	7	95	101	39
New Jersey	16	16	7	92	115	39
NY Islanders	15	15	6	104	113	36

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

## SOUTH AFRICA ROCKED BY KYLE ABBOTT DEPARTURE

**CAPE TOWN:** South African cricket was rocked yesterday when it was announced that Test fast bowler Kyle Abbott had quit the national team in order to play county cricket in England.

Cricket South Africa immediately cancelled Abbott's contract and said it was in the process of doing the same with one-day star Rilee Rossouw. Both have Kolpak contracts with Hampshire which preclude them from playing for South Africa. Abbott has signed for four years and Rossouw for three.

The announcements came immediately after South Africa clinched a Test series against Sri Lanka, winning the second Test by 282 runs. Abbott will not play in

the third and final Test in Johannesburg next week.

"It's a massive loss," said South African captain Faf du Plessis, who was unaware of Abbott's decision until the player told his teammates during the Cape Town Test following a report from England about his impending move.

Du Plessis said Cricket South Africa needed to take action to prevent a further player drain. Three other players - Stiaan van Zyl, Simon Harmer and Hardus Viljoen, who have all played Test cricket in the past 15 months - have also signed Kolpak deals recently.

"We must make sure something like this doesn't happen again," said Du Plessis. "These players are

too valuable and too important for us to sit back and say, these things happen and other players will take their place."

Du Plessis acknowledged that Cricket South Africa's transformation targets, which effectively mean that a maximum of five white players can appear in a team, might have contributed to the exodus. "It's one of the factors," he said. "Opportunity, money - there are a lot of things that guys will look at as their excuse or their reason for going overseas."

"What Kyle's reason is I'm not sure, but every single reason that is causing players to leave is a concern. We need to look at every one of them." —AFP

### SCOREBOARD

**MELBOURNE:** Scoreboard after the third day of the third Test between Australia and Pakistan at the Sydney Cricket Ground yesterday:

<b>Australia first innings</b> 538 for 8 declared (M. Renshaw 184, D. Warner 113, P. Handscomb 110; W. Riaz 3-89)	W. Riaz b Lyon	8
<b>Pakistan first innings</b> (126 for 2 overnight)	Y. Shah not out	5
A. Ali run out (Starc) 71	Extras (b3)	3
S. Khan c Renshaw b Hazlewood 4	Total (8 wickets, 95 overs)	271
B. Azam lbw b Hazlewood 0	Fall of wickets: 1-6 (Sharjeel), 2-6 (Babar), 3-152 (Azhar), 4-178 (Misbah), 5-197 (Shafiq), 6-239 (Sarfraz), 7-244 (Amir), 8-264 (Riaz)	
Y. Khan not out 136	To bat: I. Khan.	
M. ul-Haq c sub (Bird) b Lyon 18	Bowling: Starc 21-5-65-1, Hazlewood 25-7-53-2, O'Keefe 18-3-37-1, Lyon 27-2-98-3, Cartwright 4-0-15-0.	
A. Shafiq c Smith b O'Keefe 4		
S. Ahmed c sub (Bird) b Starc 18		
M. Amir c Warner b Lyon 4		

## YOUNUS SHINES BUT AUSTRALIA IN CHARGE

**SYDNEY:** Pakistan's Younus Khan notched his 34th Test century but Australia had reduced the tourists to 271 for eight, still 68 runs short of avoiding the follow-on, at close of play on the rain-disrupted third day of the third Test yesterday.

The 39-year-old reached the milestone for the first time in Australia in the hour after tea to complete his career set of centuries in each of the Test-playing nation. He was unbeaten on 136 at stumps alongside tailender Yasir Shah (five not out) but Australia will be confident of securing a 3-0 series sweep with a lead of 267 on the back of their first innings 538-8 declared.

"Hopefully, (the wicket) will start playing some tricks," Australia bowling coach David Saker told reporters. "I would assume that we will go out and have another bat and put some more wear in the wicket and have a bowl in the last day and a bit."

Persistent rain sweeping in from the Pacific Ocean had prevented Pakistan from resuming on 126-2 until four hours after the scheduled start at the Sydney Cricket Ground.

Younus had forged a 120-run third-wicket stand with Azhar Ali to stall Australia on Wednesday and the home side were desperate to make a breakthrough once play eventually got underway. The pace attack failed to do the job and ultimately it was a breakdown in communication between the batsmen that ended the key partnership on 146 runs.

Nathan Lyon had just come on to huge applause from a crowd largely bedecked in pink for Glenn McGrath's breast cancer charity and Younus slapped the spinner's second delivery past a close fielder and called for a run.

Azhar hesitated and was left stranded as Mitchell Starc swooped and hurled the ball to Peter Handscomb, who was standing in

behind the stumps for the sick Matt Wade.

### AZHAR'S MILESTONE

The 31-year-old Azhar was clearly disappointed to depart for 71 but can take pride from the fact he had surpassed Mohsin Khan's 33-year-old record for a Pakistan batsman in a Test series in Australia.

Azhar's 395 runs in five innings over three Tests, which one more to come, bettered the 390 Mohsin managed in five matches in 1983-84.

Pakistan skipper Misbah-ul-Haq departed shortly after tea, holing out in the deep for 18, and Asad Shafiq followed for four when Steve Smith, at slip, brilliantly caught a Steve O'Keefe ball that went off bat, pad and wicketkeeper's thigh.

Younus had hammered a huge six over long-on to move to 98 and completed his century by sweeping the ball to deep square leg for his 12th four. "It's probably his last tour to Australia so it's a really happy, happy moment for each and everyone of us," Azhar said.

"He's been part of the team for so long and he's so done so well for so many years for Pakistan. He's mentally very tough and keeps working hard on his game."

Younus's partnership with Sarfraz Ahmed (18) lasted only until the new ball was taken when the wicketkeeper almost immediately got a thick edge on a Starc delivery which flew to Jackson Bird at gully.

As the evening shadows crept across the field, Lyon removed Mohammad Amir for four and Wahab Riaz for eight to finish with figures of 3-98.

Bird took two catches while on as a substitute fielder for Wade, who retired to the team hotel after two overs suffering from diarrhea. —Reuters

## RABADA RUNS RIOT AS SOUTH AFRICA WIN TEST

**CAPE TOWN:** Kagiso Rabada claimed a six-wicket haul yesterday as South Africa bowled Sri Lanka out for 224 in their second innings to win the second test by 282 runs with a day and a half to spare and take an unassailable 2-0 lead in the three-match series. Sri Lanka failed to last the first session of the fourth day at Newlands, having resumed on 130-4 and being dismissed after just over 100 minutes of play. They added 94 runs for their final six wickets to fold easily after being set a huge 507-run target on Wednesday. "We have been relentless, never letting Sri Lanka into the game. We really stood up at key moments of the game," said South Africa captain Faf du Plessis.

The 21-year-old Rabada, who finished with figures of 6-55 and a second 10-wicket haul in a test, ran through the visiting batsmen in a fiery seven-over spell, first having Dinesh Chandimal (30) caught as he flicked the ball up to Stephen Cook at short leg. Upul Tharanga was next to go as he swung the bat through a brief knock of 12 runs off seven balls, perishing when he got a bottom edge through to wicketkeeper Quinton de Kock.

Rabada, having taken two overnight, then claimed his fifth wicket of the innings, surprising captain Angelo Mathews with some extra bounce and finding the edge of the bat for De Kock to take another catch. Mathews went for 49, the top Sri Lankan score of the test.

Suranga Lakmal (10) was next as a rising delivery from Rabada brushed his glove on the way through to De Kock. Rangana Herath and Lahiru Kumara showed some resistance for the ninth wicket before quick glove work had Kumara stumped off Keshav Maharaj for nine. Nuwan Pradeep was bowled by Vernon Philander to end the match, leaving Herath not out on 35. "I felt my rhythm was a little off in the first innings but then it all clicked in the second innings and it all just got a lot better," Rabada told reporters.

South Africa dominated the test, save for the first session on the opening day, scoring 392 in their first



**CAPE TOWN:** South African bowler Kagiso Rabada bowls on Rangana Herath (not in picture) during the second Test between South Africa and Sri Lanka yesterday at Newlands Cricket Stadium in Cape Town. —AFP

innings with Dean Elgar and De Kock both getting centuries. Philander and Rabada then took four wickets each as Sri Lanka were bowled out for 110 in reply but South Africa did not enforce the follow on, batting again instead and declaring midway through the third day on 224-7. South Africa won the first test in Port Elizabeth by 206 runs and will be seeking a whitewash of the series in the third test at the Wanderers in Johannesburg from Jan. 12-16. "It's obviously disappointing to make the same mistakes in a second successive test match. The batsmen let the bowlers down," said Sri Lanka captain Mathews. —Reuters

### SCOREBOARD

**CAPE TOWN:** Final full scores on the fourth day of the second Test between South Africa and Sri Lanka at Newlands yesterday.

<b>South Africa, first innings, 392</b>	L. Kumara st De Kock b Maharaj	9
<b>Sri Lanka, first innings, 110</b>	N. Pradeep b Philander	5
<b>South Africa, second innings, 224-7 declared</b>	Extras (b6, lb5, nb2)	13
<b>Sri Lanka, second innings (overnight 130-4)</b>	Total (62 overs)	224
D. Karunaratne b Philander	Fall of wickets: 1-11 (Karunaratne), 2-25 (Mendis), 3-66 (Silva), 4-69 (De Silva), 5-144 (Chandimal), 6-165 (Tharanga), 7-166 (Mathews), 8-171 (Lakmal), 9-211 (Kumara)	
K. Silva c Cook b Rabada	Bowling: Abbott 15-3-46-0, Philander 14-1-48-3 (1nb), Rabada 17-3-55-6 (1nb), Maharaj 16-3-64-1	
K. Mendis c Elgar b Philander	Result: South Africa won by 282 runs.	
D. de Silva lbw b Rabada		
A. Mathews c De Kock b Rabada		
D. Chandimal c Cook b Rabada		
U. Tharanga c De Kock b Rabada		
R. Herath not out		
S. Lakmal c De Kock b Rabada		

## AMERICAN RISKE PROVES DANGEROUS FOR RADWANSKA

**SHENZHEN:** American world number 39 Alison Riske stunned Polish top seed Agnieszka Radwanska in the Shenzhen Open yesterday, sending her careering out of the WTA tournament 6-2, 3-6, 6-0.

Riske raced to a 5-0 lead in the quarter-final first set in the southern Chinese city before Radwanska, the world number three, offered brief resistance, breaking her opponent back once.

The defending champion secured the second set 6-3, but the decider was a demolition that belied the difference in their rankings, with Radwanska only winning six points and Riske taking it to love.

China is a happy hunting ground for 26-year-old Riske, whose only WTA tour victory came at the Tianjin Open in 2014 and who reached the final there again last year.

The highest-ranked player left in the \$750,000 Shenzhen Open is Britain's world number 10 Johanna Konta, who ground out a 6-4, 6-7 (11/13), 6-3 victory over Kristyna Pliskova of the Czech Republic.

The two women hit a combined 22 aces during their two hour, 12 minute match, with Pliskova saving two match points in the marathon second set tie-break, and Konta four set points, before

the Czech finally prevailed. "I knew going into the match that I would have a tough challenge on her service games," said Konta. "I tried to neutralise her first and second serves as much as possible to try and get myself into those games, and work very hard to create some chances."

In today's semi-finals Riske will face Italy's Camila Giorgi, who eliminated home player Wang Qiang 6-0, 6-2. Konta will take on Katerina Siniakova, who followed up her defeat of world number four Simona Halep by disposing of Serb qualifier Nina Stojanovic, 6-3, 6-4. —AFP

## RAONIC SETS UP CLASH WITH NADAL

**BRISBANE:** Defending champion and top seed Milos Raonic cruised into the quarter-finals of the Brisbane International with a regulation 6-3, 6-2 win over Argentine Diego Schwartzman yesterday.

Raonic, who beat Roger Federer to win the 2016 Brisbane title, will now take on Rafael Nadal for a place in the semi-finals after the Spaniard crushed Germany's Mischa Zverev 6-1, 6-1. Raonic broke Schwartzman once in the first set and three times in the second to wrap up the match in 69 minutes, but said he wasn't happy with his start.

"At the beginning I really struggled that first service game, and had another close service game before I started to get in on his games," Raonic said.

"Then I could feel I started imposing myself on him. He started making some mistakes and I was able to create some things as well. "I have to be glad with how I finished." Nadal wasted no time in his 55 minute demolition of Zverev to the delight of the packed crowd in Pat Rafter Arena.

The 14-time Grand Slam singles winner gave Zverev no chance, blasting 30 winners across the two sets and making only seven unforced errors.

Nadal was troubled by illness and injury in 2016 and said he was thrilled to be back on court fully fit. "After injuries and hard times it's so special to be back on court," he said. "Tomorrow (against Raonic) it's going to be a very hard match. "He likes this court and he's had some good results here. I hope to play at my best and if I do I'll have a good chance."

Fourth seeded Austrian Dominic Thiem saw off huge serving Australian Sam Groth 7-6 (7/5), 6-3. The Australian was granted a wildcard into the tournament and won his first round match against Pierre-Hugues Herbert. —AFP

## MUSTAFA KARAM SHOOTING TOURNEY

By Abdellatif Sharaa

**KUWAIT:** The annual Mustafa Karam and Sons Company Shooting Tournament began yesterday at Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Olympic Shooting Complex with the participation of club shooters along with National Guard and UAE shooters. The tournament will conclude on Saturday.

The tournament will be in skeet, trap and double trap events for men, women and juniors.

Kuwait and Arab Shooting Federations Secretary General Obaid Al-Osaimi said the tournament is considered one of the events that witness strong competition between all participants, who registered early to participate.

Al-Osaimi thanked the company for its continued support and lauded its material and moral support of the Kuwaiti shooters, as he urged them to exert their best efforts in this tournament so they can represent Kuwait and make achievements in the upcoming events.

The closing ceremony will be held at at 5 pm on Saturday (January 7) at Kuwait Shooting Sport Club.



**BRISBANE:** Alize Cornet of France celebrates her victory over Dominika Cibulkova of Slovakia in their women's single quarter-final match at the Brisbane International tennis tournament in Brisbane yesterday. —AFP

## KERBER, CIBULKOVA BEATEN IN BRISBANE BOILOVERS

**BRISBANE:** The Brisbane International lost its top two women's seeds yesterday when Angelique Kerber and Dominika Cibulkova were both bundled out in the quarter-finals of the season-opening tournament.

World number one Kerber made 48 unforced errors, including five double faults, as she went down to Ukraine's Elina Svitolina 6-4, 3-6, 6-3, while Frenchwoman Alize Cornet eliminated Cibulkova 6-3, 7-5.

Kerber started slowly against Svitolina, who broke the German early and held the advantage to take the opening set. Kerber struck back in the second and appeared to take command of the match when she broke Svitolina at the start of the third.

However, the sixth seeded Ukrainian broke back to level the set, then broke again to move to 5-3, holding comfortably to claim her fourth win against Kerber in nine meetings.

Kerber said she wasn't worried about how the early loss would affect the

defence of her Australian Open crown.

"I think Grand Slams are always completely different," she said. "It doesn't matter how you play before. Of course, it's always good to have matches, especially at the beginning of the year."

"I have had two good matches here. I will try to have a few more matches before Melbourne (at the Sydney International next week)."

Svitolina will now take on third seeded Czech Karolina Pliskova, who came back from losing the first set to Italian Roberta Vinci to win her quarter-final 3-6, 6-2, 6-2. In the first match on Pat Rafter Arena, Cornet was in irresistible form as she blunted everything Cibulkova threw at her to win a tight struggle in 123 minutes.

A more settled and mature Cornet said there was no reason why she couldn't get back into the world top 20 for the first time since 2014.

"I've always had a lack of consistency during my career and maybe the fact that I'm 26, I'm a little bit older now, I

have more experience and I feel like maybe I'm touching something during this week of Brisbane," she said.

"I handle my emotions much better and I think that's how I got some really great victories here."

"I don't want to say that it's done, but definitely when I see myself playing like this, I believe that I can go higher in the rankings."

She now faces reigning French Open champion Garbine Muguruza, who edged Russia's Svetlana Kuznetsova 7-5, 6-4. Fourth seed Muguruza started slowly against Kuznetsova before closing out the match in one hour, 50 minutes.

The Spaniard has now been on court for almost seven and a half hours in her opening three rounds but although she admitted to being tired, she said it was good preparation for the Australian Open.

"I'm not worried-I know with Cornet it is going to be a battle, she's a fighter, so I expect another tough match," Muguruza said. —AFP

# CHINA TO CURB SPLASHY SPENDING ON PLAYERS

**BEIJING:** China will put limits on the wild sums its clubs are spending on international football players, authorities said yesterday, days after the transfer window opened and the Asian record was promptly smashed.

In an interview posted on the General Administration of Sport, an unnamed spokesman said the government would “regulate and restrain high-priced signings, and make reasonable restrictions on players’ high incomes”.

The statement came days after Shanghai SIPG recruited Brazilian star Oscar from Chelsea in a 60-million-euro (\$63 million) deal that broke the Asian transfer record.

Carlos Tevez, Argentina’s former Manchester United and Manchester City striker, was lured to rival Chinese Super League club Shanghai Shenhua in

another big-money deal. Tevez’s transfer fee was 10.5 million euros, according to the website transfermarkt.com, which tracks football transfers, and the 32-year-old is reportedly set to become the highest-paid player in the world with a two-year contract of 38 million euros per season.

Oscar’s deal with Shanghai SIPG is thought to be 24 million euros a season which would still put him above Real Madrid’s Cristiano Ronaldo and Lionel Messi of Barcelona. Last year Chinese teams broke the Asian transfer record four times in an acquisition spree that outstripped even the mega-rich English Premier League.

The world-beating deals are part of a Chinese rush into football that seems to be driven more by political calculations than fiscal ones.

China’s national team is ranked a lowly 82nd in

the world-just below the Caribbean island nation of St Kitts and Nevis, population less than 60,000 — but Chinese President Xi Jinping has declared his hopes of the country one day hosting and winning a World Cup, prompting a flood of money into its top professional teams.

The wild spending has drawn criticism in China, with many fans asking whether the huge sums would be better spent on building up the country’s lagging infrastructure and talent in the sport.

Without citing specific numbers or names, the sports administration official said the government would “set the upper limit” for players’ transfer fees and income and control “irrational investment”.

It would consider measures such as taking fees from clubs that spend excessively to support youth development programs. — AFP

# ANTETOKOUNMPO BUZZER-BEATER LIFTS BUCKS OVER NY KNICKS

**NEW YORK:** Giannis Antetokounmpo hit a step-back jumper near the free throw line as time expired to lift the Milwaukee Bucks to a 105-104 win over the New York Knicks at Madison Square Garden. Antetokounmpo posted his 16th double-double of the season with 27 points and 13 rebounds for Milwaukee (18-16). Lance Thomas was draped all over Antetokounmpo on the shot, but the Bucks forward found a little space with a back step to nail the winner as Milwaukee fought back from a 16-point third-quarter deficit. Carmelo Anthony led the Knicks (16-19), losers of six straight, with 30 points and 11 rebounds for his third double-double this season.

### Bulls 106, Cavaliers 94

Jimmy Butler scored 14 points in the fourth quarter after a slow start and Chicago held on against depleted Cleveland. LeBron James had 31 points, eight rebounds and seven assists while playing 37 minutes despite battling an illness. The Cavs (26-8) were also without Kevin Love (food poisoning) and Kyrie Irving (right hamstring).

### Hornets 123, Thunder 112

Nicolas Batum scored 28 points and Charlotte beat Oklahoma City at the Spectrum Center, snapping an 11-game losing streak against the Thunder. Batum scored on a drive and a three-pointer as part of a 9-0 run that pushed a 105-104 Charlotte lead to



**NEW YORK:** Milwaukee Bucks’ forward Giannis Antetokounmpo (34) breaks around New York Knicks’ forward Lance Thomas (42) in the waning seconds of an NBA basketball game at Madison Square Garden in New York. — AP

114-104 with 1:19 left. Oklahoma City never got closer than six the rest of the way. The Hornets (20-16) snapped a two-game losing streak and remained atop the Southeast Division.

### Hawks 111, Magic 92

Dennis Schroder had 18 points, seven assists and six rebounds in leading Atlanta over Orlando at the Amway Center. The Hawks (19-16) won their fourth consecutive game. The Magic (16-21) lost for the third time in their last four games.

### Heat 107, Kings 102

Tyler Johnson capped a 23-point night with a driving layup that he made despite the foul, breaking a tie and helping Miami hold off a furious Sacramento rally in a victory at the Golden 1 Center. Goran Dragic added 19 points for Miami (11-26), which ended a six-game losing streak despite blowing a 19-point third-quarter lead and playing without usual starters Hassan Whiteside and Justise Winslow.

### Clippers 115, Grizzlies 106

Austin Rivers scored a game-high 28 points and Los Angeles earned a victory over Memphis at Staples Center. Jamal Crawford contributed 22 points, while DeAndre Jordan collected 18 points and 20 rebounds for the Clippers. J.J. Redick added 19 points and Raymond Felton chipped in 11 points.

### Warriors 125, Trail Blazers 117

Shaun Livingston had a dunk, Draymond Green a block and Stephen Curry a three-pointer in a key 34-second sequence of the fourth quarter, helping Golden State hold off Portland. Curry totaled 35 points and Kevin Durant 30 as Golden State made it three straight wins this season over the Trail Blazers. — Reuters

# GABON GLOOMY, TENSE AHEAD OF CUP OF NATIONS

**LIBREVILLE:** With just days to go before Pierre-Emerick Aubameyang’s Gabon begin their quest to win the Africa Cup of Nations on home soil, the mood in the host nation remains gloomy. While the final touches are being put on the four stadiums due to host matches in the January 14-February 5 tournament, the small central African state remains in the midst of a social and political crisis. On the streets of the capital Libreville, decorated with banners advertising the upcoming continental tournament, workmen have been busy applying a final lick of white paint to the edges of pavements. In the other host cities of Oyem in the north, Franceville in the south-east and Port-Gentil, the country’s oil capital, final adjustments are still being made around the stadiums.

But the atmosphere on the streets is yet to pick up and the mood around the end-of-year celebrations in Gabon was somewhat moribund at a time when the country is struggling with a severe economic crisis caused by the collapse of the price of oil.

Oil is the main source of revenue in the country of 1.8 million people and with a large number of economic migrants from the likes of Senegal, Burkina Faso and Cameroon. “Libreville, Port-Gentil, Franceville and Oyem have lost their reputations as energetic, teeming cities of party animals,” stated an opinion piece in the national daily L’Union on Wednesday.

President Ali Bongo Ondimba’s re-election in August, which was validated by the constitutional court, is contested by the opposition and the European Union and led to deadly unrest in the country.

In his New Year message to the nation, Bongo accepted the difficulties currently faced by many in the country. “Many of our compatriots have been badly affected by the fall-out from the world economic crisis. Many jobs have been lost in the oil industry in particular,” he said.

### BOYCOTT CALLS

In recent months there have been continual calls for strike action, notably in public sector jobs, amid demands for social as well as political change. Close to six months have passed since the presidential election, but opposition leader Jean Ping continues to declare himself the rightful winner and has called on the people of Gabon to resist against “the dictatorship”. Opposition newspapers have made regular calls to boycott the Cup of Nations, which gets underway when Gabon face debutants Guinea-Bissau on January 14, or to use the tournament as a sandbox for their ideas. Still traumatised by the post-election violence, some in Gabon are dreading the prospect of incidents around matches, notably in the traditionally rebellious city of Port-Gentil and in Oyem.

The head of state has tried to calm the tensions by reiterating his promise to open political dialogue “the day after the 2017 Africa Cup of Nations ends,” but Ping has so far rejected this. Bongo described 2016 as “a difficult year due to an election campaign marred by hatred and by a post-election situation that saw tension rise to unacceptable levels for our people.” — AFP

## NBA results/standings

LA Clippers 115, Memphis 106; Golden State 125, Portland 117; Miami 107, Sacramento 102; Chicago 106, Cleveland 94; Milwaukee 105, NY Knicks 104; Charlotte 123, Oklahoma City 112; Atlanta 111, Orlando 92.

### Eastern Conference Atlantic Division

	W	L	PCT	GB
Toronto	23	11	.676	-
Boston	21	14	.600	2.5
NY Knicks	16	19	.457	7.5
Philadelphia	9	24	.273	13.5
Brooklyn	8	25	.242	14.5

### Central Division

Cleveland	26	8	.765	-
Milwaukee	18	16	.529	8
Indiana	18	18	.500	9
Chicago	18	18	.500	9
Detroit	16	21	.432	11.5

### Southeast Division

Charlotte	20	16	.556	-
Atlanta	19	16	.543	0.5
Washington	16	18	.471	3
Orlando	16	21	.432	4.5
Miami	11	26	.297	9.5

### Western Conference Northwest Division

Utah	22	14	.611	-
Oklahoma City	21	15	.583	1
Portland	15	22	.405	7.5
Denver	14	21	.400	7.5
Minnesota	11	24	.314	10.5

## RED-HOT REAL EYE UNBEATEN RECORD AGAINST GRANADA

**BARCELONA:** Leaders Real Madrid get their pursuit of a first La Liga title in five years back underway against Granada tomorrow with their confidence sky high and seeking to match Barcelona's Spanish record of 39 games unbeaten in all competitions.

Zinedine Zidane's side crushed fellow title aspirants Sevilla 3-0 in a King's Cup last 16 first leg on Wednesday despite resting forwards Karim Benzema and Cristiano Ronaldo and having five other key players missing due to injury.

Defenders Pepe and Sergio Ramos plus midfielders Lucas Vazquez and

Mateo Kovacic will still be missing on Saturday along with long-term injury victim Gareth Bale but it is difficult to envisage any outcome other than a win against 19th placed Granada.

Real's top scorer Ronaldo, crowned Ballon d'Or winner for the fourth time before Spain's winter break, is set to return along with Benzema, although Zidane said his team are playing so well they barely notice the absentees.

"Of course some players are more important than others but what we want is to make every player feel important and everyone is playing phenomenally well," Zidane said on

Wednesday. "The good thing is that everyone is committed to the cause, there's no difference when players are out and that says a lot about the group." Real will match the Spanish record tally of 39 games set by Barcelona if they avoid defeat to Granada, who have won only one game all campaign.

Champions Barca, trailing Real by three points and having played one game more, face a tougher test in their first league game of 2017 as they visit fourth-placed Villarreal.

Coach Luis Enrique has an almost full strength squad available and his

attacking trident of Lionel Messi, Luis Suarez and Neymar should be fully rested after enjoying a longer break than their team mates.

"I've been pleasingly surprised with the shape they've been in since they returned, they have come back far sharper than when they left," said the coach. "Just because they were on holiday doesn't mean they haven't been working hard, and I'm very happy with how fit they are." Sevilla, a point behind Barca in third, face a difficult trip to in-form Real Sociedad (fifth) while Atletico Madrid (sixth) travel to mid-table Eibar. — Reuters

## TOURE DEMANDS MAN CITY SHOW MORE FIGHT

**LONDON:** Yaya Toure has challenged Manchester City to put a smile back on Pep Guardiola's face with a dominant display in today's FA Cup third-round clash at West Ham.

Guardiola was in a tetchy mood following City's 2-1 win over Burnley on Monday as he grumbled about the way officials treat his team and embarked on a series of fractious post-match interviews.

Adding to the growing sense that the City boss is struggling to find his feet in English football, in a recent interview with NBC he said he may not stay in management for much longer than his current contract. Although Guardiola won trophies and plaudits by the bucketload during his spells at Barcelona and Bayern Munich, managing those clubs comes with a guarantee of success to a certain degree. In contrast, the more cut-throat Premier League, where Leicester's title triumph last season showcased a strength in depth missing in Spain and Germany, can sap a manager's vim. While it is far too soon to say Guardiola's philosophy won't succeed in England, he certainly looks frazzled and could do with City-lagging well behind Chelsea in the title race-recapturing the swashbuckling spirit that saw them mark his arrival with a long winning streak. City midfielder Toure, back in favour after clashing with Guardiola earlier this season, believes the solution is to play with more passion at critical moments.

"At the moment we are in not in our best form but we have to be able to deliver," Toure said. "City have always been a team who fight to the end to win a trophy and at the moment we are not happy with the position in the league. We have to fight."

"We are starting the second half of the season now and I think we will have to be almost perfect. We'll have to win all the games when we play the top four. The lads, the fans, the manager, we are all understanding that and we will try to do our best to get there."

### CONFIDENCE

Guardiola's first taste of the FA Cup comes at the London Stadium, where inconsistent West Ham will hope to bounce back from successive league defeats against Leicester and Manchester United. Hammers goalkeeper Darren Randolph is confident his team's gritty effort against United following Sofiane Feghouli's controversial red card, which has since been rescinded, offers hope. "We battled on for most of the game with 10 men, still creating chances, so we take confidence from that," Randolph said.

Chelsea manager Antonio Conte will also be competing in the FA Cup for the first time when the Premier League leaders take on third-tier Peterborough at Stamford Bridge, while title rivals Liverpool face fourth-tier Plymouth at Anfield. Holders Manchester United will be aiming for their eighth successive victory in all competitions when they host Championship promotion chasers Reading.

Arsenal, who lifted the FA Cup in 2014 and 2015, travel to second-tier Preston looking for a more complete performance after they were forced to fight back from 3-0 down in a dramatic 3-3 draw at Bournemouth on Tuesday.

Among the non-league minnows aiming to cause a surprise are Eastleigh, who face second-tier Brentford, Barrow, at home to third-tier Rochdale, and Sutton, who entertain third-tier AFC Wimbledon. — Reuters



**LONDON:** Tottenham's Dele Alli, second right, scores a goal past Chelsea's goalkeeper Thibaut Courtois during the English Premier League soccer match between Tottenham Hotspur and Chelsea at White Hart Lane stadium in London, yesterday. — AP

## SPURS AND ALLI DENY CHELSEA RECORD WIN

**LONDON:** In-form midfielder Dele Alli scored two near-identical headers as Tottenham Hotspur beat Chelsea 2-0 on Wednesday to torpedo the Premier League leaders' hopes of a record 14th consecutive victory. Chelsea were bidding to become the first team to win 14 successive games within the same English top-flight season, but Alli's goals, both set up by Christian Eriksen, brought them down to earth.

"We were competitive against a team in very good form, one of the best in Europe, and we feel very proud and pleased because the performance was very solid," said Spurs manager Mauricio Pochettino.

Antonio Conte's Chelsea must content themselves with having equalled Arsenal's season record of 13 wins in a row from 2001-02 and they remain five points clear of second-place Liverpool.

But the end of their winning streak

will give hope to their pursuers, not least Tottenham, who rose above Manchester City and Arsenal to third place in the table, seven points below the leaders. "It is a pity to stop this run, but Tottenham is a good team, a really strong team and I think is for sure one of the teams that can fight for the title until the end," Conte told Sky Sports.

"My team are top of the table because we are working a lot. This league is very tough and it is important to continue to work." Alli, 20, has now scored braces in three successive games and his latest double allowed Pochettino's men to register a fifth win in a row—their best such run in nearly a year. It also enabled Spurs to claim a measure of revenge, both for their 2-1 defeat at Chelsea in November and the fiery 2-2 draw at Stamford Bridge last May that ended their title challenge.

Pochettino, meanwhile, could cele-

brate his 150th Premier League game as a manager with a deeply satisfying victory. "We are in a good position, third in the table," he said. "But it is a long way to finish the season."

### CARBON COPY

Whereas Spurs had gone with four at the back in November's 2-1 loss at the Bridge, here they effectively matched Chelsea's 3-4-3 shape, which made for an attritional first half at White Hart Lane.

Spurs saw most of the ball, their wing-backs Kyle Walker and Danny Rose carrying the fight, but they struggled to pick holes in Chelsea's rearguard and the visitors posed a threat on the break. In the fifth minute, Nemanja Matic's lofted pass over Spurs' right-sided centre-back Eric Dier found Eden Hazard in ample space, only for the Belgian to shoot narrowly wide with his left foot.— AFP

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Friday Times

# Sports

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BRISBANE: Alize Cornet of France celebrates her victory over Dominika Cibulkova of Slovakia in their women's single quarter-final match at the Brisbane International tennis tournament in Brisbane yesterday. —AFP

**KERBER, CIBULKOVA BEATEN  
IN BRISBANE BOILOVERS**

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