

Free fatwa  
hotline for  
religious  
queries

3



Mayweather,  
and McGregor  
agree to August  
super-fight

40



**Kuwait Times**  
Ramadan Timings 2017

Imsak	Fajr	Shorook	Duhr	Asr	Maghrib	Isha
03:03	03:13	04:48	11:49	15:22	18:49	20:21

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# Kuwait Times Friday Times



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# Celebrating the amazing date

See Pages 4 & 5

## Local Spotlight

## DNA TESTING IS BACK



By Muna Al-Fuzai

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The issue of DNA testing was the subject of controversy in Kuwait last year between supporters and opponents, when there was a proposal to impose it on all citizens and expats and store their genetic data with local authorities. The law was seen as a violation of international laws and the constitution of Kuwait. The proposed law was stopped by a decision by HH the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah for review in accordance with constitutional principles that safeguard the right of privacy.

The proposed law also imposed penalties of imprisonment and fines for violators. No country in the world imposes DNA tests on citizens and residents without a reason, and this is seen as going against international and humanitarian conventions, especially as European and US courts have banned its implementation over respect for freedom of individuals.

Recently, the parliamentary interior and defense committee returned to discuss a new bill to amend the DNA test law. The head of the committee explained that they are still discussing the establishment of a new law for the best application of DNA testing on four categories of people - criminals, families of missing persons, unidentified bodies and persons wishing to obtain citizenship. He noted that the panel has not made a final decision on the bill, and is still waiting for more clarification from the government.

The Cabinet and lawmakers have understood the importance of patience before approving laws that harm Kuwait constitutionally and internationally. The determination of the categories in the law can be adapted to reality. In the case of criminals, will the DNA test law include all suspects, or only those who have been arrested for specific crimes such as murder? Will it be applied only on those convicted by a final verdict? Will the DNA test be mandatory or voluntary? As for missing people and unidentified bodies, the need for DNA tests is normal to identify them and is universally applied.

The last category includes those who want to proceed with citizenship procedures. This category is the one targeted by this law to prevent forgery and false affiliation. There have been a lot of cases lately of people who falsified nationality data and gave their names to children who were not related by blood for money.

Therefore, the obligation of DNA testing for those who wish to complete the citizenship process is important. No request of such nature should be completed and accepted without a DNA test. Reports of nationality forgers have increased recently and it is necessary to search for ways to stop the recurrence of such crimes, which have done significant damage to the community.

With the new DNA law, the government will be able to punish those who violate the law and falsify data in order to obtain Kuwaiti citizenship. They must be stripped of the advantages that come with the Kuwaiti nationality. The old law will not come back and the new one if approved will not touch everyone.

## PHOTO OF THE DAY



Locals shop for olives and other edibles after breaking the fast in a downtown market in Kuwait City. — Photo by Yasser Al-Zayyat

## In my view

## PUNCH IN, PUNCH OUT!



By Dana Al-Rashid

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He wakes up early in the morning, and heads straight to work - no breakfast, not even coffee. Of course! For he doesn't like to be late to work - he actually prefers coming earlier than the official timings. He drives like a madman and somehow makes it to work in one piece. He looks at the empty offices around him, hearing the sound of nothingness. He then rushes to the "digital witness" - a device that proves how disciplined he is by registering his fingerprint every day at a certain time. He presses his thumb on this magical device, then disappears! He flashes a victorious smile, for he has tricked the system. He goes back to his warm bed, and dreams on.

A little later in the day, a fresh, new employee roams around the workplace - where the offices are still empty and uncomfortably quiet. As the days pass, his enthusiasm wears off. He begins to show apathetic behavior as well, because nothing ever happens here! It seems that the "punch in, punch out" culture is quite contagious!

Our good old employee finally wakes up from his sleep. Well, what do you know? There's still some time left! He takes off his pajamas and wears something more appropriate for an outing. He drives his fancy car aimlessly, and somehow ends up in a large shopping mall. He notices that there are many people of his kind

here! He jokingly tells his friends: "It seems that we all work in the mall!"

He ends the outing with a very filling lunch, then heavily heads back to work, making sure that nobody sees him, especially his supervisor and his more serious colleagues. He punches out, and as simple as that, his workday has ended. This was a brief description of an average day in the life of many, many employees working for the government sector in Kuwait.

At the end of the month, he enjoys his full salary, with no deductions whatsoever! His colleague, however, gets a deducted salary even though he is a hardworking, dedicated employee who never skips a day. Why? It is simply because he comes a little late in the morning for reasons out of his hands - such as family commitments and traffic. You see, in the end it's all about the fingerprint!

What is the cause of this rather bizarre phenomenon? Well, while the employee is most definitely held responsible for not attending and completing his tasks - it does seem like it's a symptom of a larger problem. A clear, defined system in which employees are expected and encouraged to be productive and efficient, with firm consequences if they are not, is the obvious solution. But, how to implement it and break the old cycle of comfortable complacency? That is the question!



KUWAIT: The cannon fired daily during Ramadan at Naif Palace to signal the end of the fast at Maghrib. — Photo by Yasser Al-Zayyat

# KUWAIT'S RAMADAN IFTAR CANNON

By Faten Omar

Ramadan is a time that unites Muslims around the world, with communities in every country adopting similar daily routines of fasting, followed by Iftar and then Suhoor - with charity, prayer and time with their family, all playing an important role. Ramadan has many rich traditions which support Muslims in their fasting, developed over many centuries. They evoke a very special spiritual time, and often trigger nostalgia and emotion.

One of the famous traditions in Kuwait during the Holy Month of Ramadan is the firing of the cannon at Maghrib to notify worshippers that it is time to break their fast. The firing of the cannon Midfa Al-Iftar, which takes place daily at Naif Palace in Kuwait City, attracts dozens of families and children daily, and is broadcast live on Kuwait TV and radio.

Fawzy Al-Shayeb, 52-years-old Egyptian, decided to come with his children to enjoy the Ramadan atmosphere. "Ramadan's Cannon reminds us of the Egypt atmosphere where we also waited for the firing to break our fast. It is more like nostalgia," Shayeb added that the children got to see some heritage and history of the place, where the open yard in the palace is filled with vintage cars and traditional garb for children "kids are allowed to play in and around the cannon. They were then asked to step back for safety as soldiers' fire it off."

Kawthar Abu-Nasr, a Palestinian housewife, 38-years-old, expressed her happiness to participate in such activities as it allows Kuwaitis and expats to share beautiful moments in Ramadan. Abu-Nasr came with her neighbors and some relatives to experience the tradition of Ramadan. "Large crowds flock to visit the Palace of Naif to take pictures, participate in competitions and live television events. To give them that ancient heritage moment and watch the breakfast cannon," she said.

She pointed out that she was amazed by the place where many companies participated to prepare Iftar and Girgian for the children. Adding, "We

did it to change our daily routine; and to wave to our families back home. It is not a bad thing to be on live broadcast on Kuwait television channel and radio."

"I've been meaning to witness this ceremony from a long time now and last week a couple of friends and I headed to Naif Palace to see it in person. The firing takes place inside the courtyard and its best to get there by 5:30 pm because it is crowded and the canon is fired exactly at the time of the Maghrib prayer," Emad El-Saman.

Saman decided to go with his friends who are into photography to take pictures during the firing of the cannon. He said that Kuwait has many unique places waiting to be discovered and his camera's job is to see the unseen beauty of Kuwait. "Kuwait not only has malls and cafes. The Iftar cannon maintains the inherent traditional colors. Kuwaiti tradition is quite old, the firing of the cannon attracts many children and families daily," he noted.

Naif Palace was built in 1919 under the reign of Sheikh Salem Al-Mubarak Al-Sabah. The first cannon in Kuwait came under the rule of Sheikh Mubarak Al-Sabah in 1907. The cannon was a gift from the Governor of Iran at that time, it was located near the sea at the Seef Palace and was later moved in the 1930s to the Palace of Naif. It is worth mentioning that the current cannon in Naif Palace came as a pledge from the Kingdom of Bahrain in 1992, a 25-pound English manufacture. The firing is conducted by three uniformed guards in red livery.

The first city to fire a Ramadan cannon was Cairo in the era of the Mamluks, during the reign of Sultan Khashukdume (865/872 Hijri). As the story goes, he wanted to try one of his new cannons and the experiment coincided with the time of Maghrib prayers during Ramadan. Residents' throughout the sultanate purposely fired the cannon to notify worshippers. Prominent figures and the elite of society went to the sultan and thanked him for his kind gesture, and the tradition continues until this day.

## FREE FATWA HOTLINE FOR RELIGIOUS QUERIES

By Nawara Fattahova

When people have any doubt about religious matters, they usually approach a religious cleric to give them guidance or a fatwa regarding the issue. The Ministry of Awqaf and Islamic Affairs has made this easy by operating a fatwa information hotline (#149). Sheikh Ahmad, a cleric who was on duty to answer questions by callers when Kuwait Times called, said queries change during different times of the year.

"In Ramadan, the majority of calls focus on three main issues - rules about fasting, zakat and finally umrah, as many people go for pilgrimage during Ramadan," he said. "Many people ask about mistakenly drinking or eating during the fast. They also ask what they can and cannot do during the daytime when they are fasting, especially when it comes to marital relations," he added.

Sheikh Ahmad said there are many popular myths about acts that break the fast, which are not true. "Many people believe injections break the fast, but this is not true. Taking any kind of medicine via injection is allowed while fasting. Also, blood

transfusions do not affect fasting. Some people say brushing with toothpaste spoils the fast, but this can only happen if the person swallows the paste. To avoid any doubt, I advise people to use a miswak (wooden twig)," he explained.

Fasting hours differ according to geographic location, and in some areas it's extremely long. "On the two poles, the fasting duration is 22 hours and the night is only two hours long. So people there are allowed to fast for the same duration as people do in Makkah, which is 15 hours. They start fasting at dawn and break their fast after 15 hours, even if the sun is up," Sheikh Ahmad said.

The fatwa information hotline accepts questions by callers daily from 9:00 am to 12:00 noon, and from 1:00 pm to 4:00 pm during the Holy Month of Ramadan.

During the rest of the year, calls are answered from 8:00 am to 12:00 noon, and from 4:00 pm to 8:00 pm. According to Sheikh Ahmad, about eight sheikhs rotate during the week on different days for periods set by the ministry. Sheikh Ahmad works on Saturdays, Mondays and Wednesdays.





Celebrating  
the amazing

# date

**Photo Essay by Yasser Al-Zayyat and Joseph Shagra**

**S**weet and rich, dates are essential for any gathering or event. Almost always served with coffee or tea, they date back to more than 6,000 years a staple aspect of the Middle Eastern diet. Typically used to break the fast, dates or date paste have also been integrated into the cuisine, especially in modern times.

Three Gulf countries and a total of eight Middle Eastern states are ranked among the top 10 date producers in the world. There are dozens of different varieties of dates, which are cultivated from the date palm tree.

Bursting with fiber, potassium, copper, manganese, magnesium as well as several vitamins and of course its natural sugar, a handful of dates can satisfy almost all the nutritional needs required for human survival.

In Kuwait, dates start to come into season in the late summer and early fall. Date palms planted all across the city, in private gardens and public spaces, will be bagged - where the fruit in bunches is wrapped to protect it from falling and birds - and eventually the dates once ripened will be collected and distributed or sold at market.



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# KUWAIT HISTORY



Mansour Al-Hajri, Kuwaiti maritime researcher and historian. Historic photo of Kuwait harbor, 1961. Source unknown.

## REMEMBERING OUR MARITIME PAST

By Nawara Fattahova

Once upon a time maritime trade served as the foundation of Kuwait's livelihood. The economy depended almost solely on trade from the Indian subcontinent and pearl diving. Kuwait was a gateway to the rest of the Peninsula and into Iraq, Syria and beyond.

The advent of cultured pearls and the opening of other routes effectively killed off Kuwait's competitive advantage as an importer and source of pearls. But with the discovery of oil, which became the main source of income, the majority of the people in Kuwait turned into employees of public institutions and the old professions were gradually forgotten.

Kuwait Times met a researcher in Kuwait history, Mansour Al-Hajri, who spoke about that period of Kuwait's history. Mansour Al-Hajri's father was a sailor, and later became a captain (nokhitha).

"In old Kuwait, people lived in two environments - the sea and desert. The latter were seasonal nomads, while the original Kuwaitis worked at sea and in the city. There were seven or eight maritime professions, and the Kuwaitis built the country from these," he told Kuwait Times. Some excerpts:

**Kuwait Times: What were the main maritime activities?**

**Mansour Al-Hajri:** There were two main maritime activities - pearl diving and sailing. In the beginning, Kuwaitis imported various types of big sailing dhows from India, such as Bghala, Kutiya and others. Later, Kuwaiti ship makers built Boom dhows. Pearl diving had different seasons that involved sailing to the Asian subcontinent or Africa, and dhows reached India, Zanzibar and other parts of these continents. Merchants imported wood, spices and other goods from India.

Every dhow had a name, and the owners were businessmen from Kuwaiti families such as Al-Ghanem, Al-Saqer, Al-



Mansour Al-Hajri

Kharafi, Al-Hamad, Al-Khalid, Al-Othman, Al-Nisef, Buqamaz, Bin Nikhi, Hilal Al-Mutairi, Marafie, Al-Sabah, Makki Jumaa and others.

Kuwait City's coast stretched from Dasman up to Watiya, and the Maqsab Gate was where the church currently stands. Kuwaitis of yore built a 'nigaa', which is a part of the sea surrounded by stones, which used to serve as a port for the dhows after they come back from their journeys, which used to be around nine or 10 months long.

**KT: Who worked on the dhows?**

**Al-Hajri:** Every dhow had a captain (nokhitha), two navigators (sikuniya) and two supervisors (mijadma), who controlled the unloading of goods, especially when travelling to Basra in Iraq, as they traded in dates. They used to transport the dates to India and Karachi. They sold the worst kinds of dates to businessmen there who used it in making

wine and colors for walls and houses. The other dates, the better ones, were sold to poor people.

**KT: How many dhows were there in Kuwait?**

**Al-Hajri:** Pearl diving was even more important than sailing. During the period of the late Amir Sheikh Mubarak Al-Sabah, there were 800 dhows in Kuwait of all kinds, including diving, sailing and Qataa dhows. The last type was only used for traveling between Gulf ports including Basra, Ibadan, Kuwait, Dubai, Abu Dhabi and Sharqiya in Saudi Arabia. These dhows sailed for only one month, trading in goods, and returned to pay the sailors.

Diving journeys were four months and 10 days long. Pearl diving was the toughest profession in the sea. Diving was an inspiration for families to write poems. Divers worked in diving areas (hiraat) to collect oysters that contained pearls. They used to open it with a curved knife to remove the flesh and get the pearl.

There were basically three main kinds of pearls - dana, lulu and hasba. The best pearl should be plain white - if there is any other color or sand on it, its price will drop. The pearl buyer (tawash) bought pearls from the dhow owner (nokhitha) by checking it under sunlight. In 1935, the late Amir Sheikh Ahmad Al-Jaber bought a dana pearl for 30,000 rupees and presented it to the queen of Britain when he visited her. This pearl is still preserved at the British Museum. The most expensive pearl was sold for 120,000 rupees at that time.

**KT: What difficulties did people face in the sea?**

**Al-Hajri:** Pearl diving witnessed many accidents. Many dhows sank - the most popular ones were Bin Nikhi, Bin Sadiq and Bilal Al-Saqer. In 1770, the dhow of Buti bu Taiban sank. On the Bilal dhow, there were 36 sailors, and 24 of them died in 1942. I had the chance to meet three of those who survived, and one of them is still alive now.

Photo

o f t h e d a y



**KUWAIT:** Photo captures the sunset in Kuwait. Kuwait residents are braving the blazing sun amid a heat wave that has raised temperatures to unprecedented levels. A recent international report identified Kuwait as one of the hottest spot on earth this year. — KUNA

# MIGRANTS SENDING BILLIONS HOME MORE THAN IN 2007

## KUWAIT AMONG THE TOP 10 COUNTRIES

**UNITED NATIONS:** Migrants are sending home billions of dollars more than they did a decade ago - and the rate of growth in remittances is almost double the increase in migration, according to a UN report released Wednesday. The report commissioned by the International Fund for Agricultural Development says that remittances increased by 51 percent during the decade from 2007 to 2016 while migration rose by 28 percent and population in the home countries of migrants grew by 13 percent.

The Rome-based UN agency which fights poverty in rural areas said the report is the first to examine a 10-year trend in migration and remittance flows. It said the findings are based on a series of studies and surveys commissioned by the fund, known as IFAD, and on its analyses of World Bank data. According to the report, remittances increased in

almost all regions of the world, but the sharp rise between 2007 and 2016 was mainly due to Asia which saw an 87 percent increase in money sent home from migrants.

IFAD President Gilbert Houngbo said what's most important is the impact on the lives of family members and others who receive the money. "The small amounts of \$200 or \$300 that each migrant sends home make up about 60 percent of the family's household income, and this makes an enormous difference in their lives and the communities in which they live," he said in a statement. According to the report, more than 200 million migrant workers are now supporting an estimated 800 million family members around the world.

And it projects that this year one billion people - one-in-seven people in the world - will be involved in either send-

ing or receiving more than \$450 million in remittances. "About 40 percent of remittances - \$200 billion - are sent to rural areas where the majority of poor people live," said Pedro de Vasconcelos, manager of IFAD's Financing Facility for Remittances and the report's lead author. "This money is spent on food, health care, better educational opportunities and improved housing and sanitation." The study estimates that between 2015 and 2030 an estimated \$6.5 trillion will be sent to low- and middle- income countries. Over 100 countries receive more than \$100 million in remittances every year, the report said, led by China, India, the Philippines, Mexico and Pakistan. It said the top 10 sending countries account for almost half the annual remittances: United States, Saudi Arabia, Russia, United Arab Emirates, Germany, Kuwait, France, Qatar, United Kingdom and Italy. — AP

# KUWAIT CENTRAL BANK KEEPS THE DISCOUNT RATE AT 2.75%

**KUWAIT:** The Central Bank of Kuwait (CBK) has decided to keep the discount rate at its current value 2.75 percent, a fixed rate since March 16. CBK's board of directors decided to continue employing the available measures and materials that aim at ensuring the competitiveness and attractiveness of the Kuwaiti Dinar as a store of domestic savings, CBK Governor and Board Chairman Dr Mohammad Al-Hashel said yesterday.



**CBK Governor and Board Chairman Dr Mohammad Al-Hashel**

These savings constitute a major source of funding provided by the local banking and financial units to the various sectors of the national economy and thus maintain a supporting environment for sustainable economic growth and development, Al-Hashel pointed out. The decision is also based on continuous monitoring by CBK of the domestic market, taking into consideration movements in interest rates on major international currencies, he added. He also said that CBK is keen on monitoring latest developments in domestic economic, monetary, and banking fields, in addition to latest updates regarding US Dollar's interest rate directions.

Kuwait refrained from following the US Federal Reserve's interest-rate increase for the first time since 2015, citing "modest" economic growth in the Gulf country hit by lower oil prices. Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates and Bahrain mirrored the US Fed's decision, raising their key rates by quarter of a percentage point. Kuwait pegs the dinar to a basket of currencies believed to be dominated by the dollar, while other members of the six-nation Gulf Cooperation Council are pegged to the greenback.

Kuwait Central Bank said the decision reflected the "limited economic growth and the continued increase of interest rates on the US dollar and all the challenges that entails." The Central Bank, he said, was also deploying other tools to "boost the attractiveness" of the dinar as a currency for local savings. Gulf Arab countries are struggling to bolster economic growth as oil prices fall and a strong dollar hurts industries such as tourism.

Countries that have a wide interest-rate gap with the Fed "will look to keep benchmark lending rates on hold," said Monica Malik, chief economist at Abu Dhabi Commercial Bank. Saudi Arabia's Central Bank raised its reverse repurchase rate by 25 basis points to 1.25 percent while keeping the repo rate unchanged at 2 percent. "With a lackluster growth environment, the region doesn't need higher interest rates," Malik said. Kuwait has raised its key rate by 75 basis points since the Fed started increasing its borrowing costs in December 2015.—Agencies

# FORGED 'MEDICAL' CERTIFICATES

By Hanan Al-Saadoun

**KUWAIT:** Residency detectives have arrested three Asians for forging 'medical' certificates and residency permits. The suspects sold the forged certificates to residency law violators. The three suspects confessed to their charges.

### Fake doctor arrested

Policemen have arrested an expat who claimed to be a doctor. The expat confessed to carrying out medical examinations and collecting money from 'patients'. The man was found to be a cleaner in a hospital. He has been sent to concerned authorities.

### Iftar for inmates

Directorate General of Reform Departments held a mass iftar for inmates of both genders. The event was held in the presence of Director General of Reform Department Brig Adel Al-Ibraim. The aim is to promote social interaction between inmates and to boost confidence among them. The event was held in cooperation with Kuwait Red Crescent Society.

### Fire warning

Director of Fire Department Public Relations and Information Colonel Khalil Al-Amir has warned against an increase in fire accidents which have been noticed recently amid increase in temperature. He urged peo-

ple to monitor their air conditioners and other electrical appliances. Air conditioner thermostat should be set at 25 degree Celsius or 75 degree Fahrenheit, which is most suitable for rationalizing power consumption.

### Inspection campaign

Kuwait Municipality Hawally branch has carried out an inspection campaign on shops, restaurants and other properties. This coincided with the media campaign by Municipality Public Relations under the slogan 'Your Health Is A Trust'. The campaign resulted in the closure of three cafes, restaurant and supermarket. 236 kilograms of food stuff were also destroyed.







**KUWAIT:** Turkish Foreign Minister Mevlut Cavusoglu (center) attends a press conference in Kuwait City yesterday as part of his tour of Gulf countries. Cavusoglu held talks with Qatar's Emir the day before as the search for a diplomatic solution to the Gulf crisis intensified and the UN voiced fears over growing humanitarian concerns in the region. —Photo by Yasser Al-Zayyat

# TURKISH FM HOLDS TALKS IN KUWAIT OVER GULF CRISIS

## UN SUPPORTS KUWAIT EFFORTS IN DEESCALATING CRISIS

**KUWAIT:** Turkish Foreign Minister Mevlut Cavusoglu yesterday held talks in Kuwait to push mediation efforts aimed at resolving a standoff between a Saudi-led alliance and Qatar. Cavusoglu discussed with his Kuwaiti counterpart Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Jaber Al-Sabah "regional and international developments," the official KUNA news agency said. Kuwait's Amir HH Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah has launched a mediation effort after Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, Bahrain and Egypt severed ties with Qatar, accusing it of sponsoring terrorism. The Turkish chief diplomat held talks with Qatar's Emir and Foreign Minister on Wednesday and plans to visit Saudi Arabia. Ahead of the talks in Kuwait, Cavusoglu told a press conference that he will travel to the holy city of Makkah today for talks with King Salman. "Although the kingdom is a party in this crisis, we know that King Salman is a party in resolving it," the Turkish minister said.

"We want to hear the views of Saudi Arabia regarding possible solutions and will share with them our views in a transparent way ... We pay a great attention to our relations with them," he said. Cavusoglu said Qatari officials believe they are not the cause of the current crisis and want to know the claims of the four countries. "We are trying hard to prevent any escalation and find a quick solution to the crisis ... Resolving the crisis is not through taking (boycott) decisions but through dialogue," Cavusoglu said.



**KUWAIT:** Kuwaiti First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah welcomes his Turkish counterpart Mevlut Cavusoglu yesterday. — KUNA

Saudi Arabia, the UAE and Bahrain broke off relations with Qatar on June 5, accusing it of supporting "terrorism". US President Donald Trump expressed support for the allegations against Doha, which categorically denied them. The crisis has put Turkey in a delicate position as Ankara regards Qatar as its chief ally in the Gulf but is also keen to maintain its improving relations with the key regional power Saudi Arabia. Turkey is also eager to maintain workable relations with Iran, Saudi Arabia's foe with whom Doha's critics say Qatar maintained excessively close ties. Meanwhile, the UN Secretary General Antonito Guterres has expressed his full sup-

port for Kuwait's efforts to deescalate tension and promote an effective dialogue, his spokesman said on Wednesday. UN Spokesman Stephane Dujarric said the Secretary General has been following the crisis in the Gulf region closely. Due to his conviction on the importance of a regional solution, Dujarric confirmed that Guterres spoke on Wednesday with First Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah, following a number of other contacts, to express his full support for Kuwait's efforts to deescalate tension and promote an effective dialogue.— Agencies

# KUWAIT REITERATES ITS UNWAVERING STANCE ON SYRIA

**DOHA:** Kuwait has reiterated its unwavering stance towards the Syrian crisis, calling for resolving it through peaceful and political channels based on Geneva I of 2012 and the relevant UN Security Council resolutions, mainly No 2254. In a press statement, the Kuwaiti delegation to 10th meeting of major donors of Syria that kick-started in Doha stressed the country's commitment to exert all efforts to alleviate the sufferings of all those afflicted by the continued humanitarian disaster.

Realizing the risks of the humanitarian

disaster and the necessity of rallying international efforts to mitigate its effects, the Kuwait hosted, upon a request by the UN, the First, Second and Third International Humanitarian Pledging Conference for Syria, where pledges worth more than \$7 billion were made, the delegation said. Kuwait's total pledges in five donors conferences for Syria reached \$1.6 billion, it said, renewing a call to other countries to honor their pledges made during the Brussels and London conferences so as to ease suffering of the Syrian people, the statement said.

Kuwait has honored its pledges in 2016 totaling \$100 million, as the Kuwait Fund for Arab Economic Development (KFAED) signed MoUs with the countries hosting Syrian refugees - Lebanon, Jordan, Iraq, Libya, Egypt and Turkey - to carrying out several projects covering health, services and education. The statement referred to the Kuwaiti charity societies' role in lessening the sufferings of the Syrian people, offering \$63 million in 2016, as well as pledging to present an additional sum of \$46 million.

Kuwait also offered \$29 million to the international agencies and bodies that have activities in Syria and its neighboring countries, the delegation said, adding that the country will also provide \$116.6 million from its pledges for 2017-2018 for infrastructure projects in Syria's neighboring countries. The statement finally extolled strenuous efforts made by Syria's neighboring countries, the UN and international organizations to relief vulnerable people of Syria inside and outside the country. — KUNA

## Crime Report

### VICTIMS OF 'CHEMICAL'

**KUWAIT:** A security source said that two young men died after using a substance called 'chemical'. A family member discovered their bodies in the diwaniya after the Ramadan fast. They perceived a strange odor coming from the diwaniya, so they went to check and found the two dead bodies. According to the source, the packaging of the 'chemical' is linked to the case of another youth who died two days ago. The deceased died after taking the illicit drugs.

#### Wife swindled

A Kuwaiti woman has urged the authorities to place her Egyptian husband on a wanted list for swindling. She said the suspect took her money and escaped. The woman filed a complaint in Jabraiya police claiming that she gave him \$75,000 and KD 10,000 for a business transaction, which later turn out to be a fraud. Police sources said that the suspect has left the country. In another development, an Egyptian man who claimed to be contractor has been arrested after he took KD 4000 from a citizen and disappeared.

#### Child Protection

Health Ministry Child Protection team has rescued a child who has been subjected to mental and physical torture by his father. The child has been handed over to the Juvenile police. A video clip documented the incident, which prompted the arrest of the father. A security source said that the Juveniles Protection Police had received a call about a 14-year-old boy who was being maltreated by his father.

#### Police shoot a dog

Jahra policemen had to shoot a dog dead in a Kabd farm after it attacked a guard there. The guard was taken to Jahra hospital for treatment.

#### Brothel raided

Three women; a Jordanian, Syrian and Lebanese are accused of using a flat as a brothel during this Ramadan. Detectives raided the apartment and arrested the suspects. Detectives learned about their activities and sent a team from the Vice Department to investigate the case. The women charge KD 20 per a round of sex and if the 'customer' wants home service, the fee doubles. An undercover agent was sent to make a bargain before the flat was raided. The three are being questioned.

#### 'Masked rapist'

A masked man attempted to rape a Filipina in an elevator. The suspect escaped after the Filipina screamed and fought him off. The woman was surprised after the man entered inside the elevator with an axe and threatened to kill her if she does meet his desires. Detectives went to the area and took the girl to the police station where she lodged a complaint.—Al Rai

Friday Times

# International

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**RIYADH:** This file photo taken on November 16, 2015 shows a Saudi F-15 fighter jet landing at the Khamis Mushayt military airbase, some 880 km from the capital Riyadh, as the Saudi army conducts operations over Yemen. — AFP

## US MOVES TO REASSURE QATAR

### ARMS SALE, JOINT EXERCISE ON THE CARDS

**DOHA:** The United States agreed a major warplane sale to Qatar and began manoeuvres with the emirate's navy yesterday, underscoring its commitment to their military alliance despite Doha's rift with other Gulf allies. Washington has sent conflicting signals to its longtime ally about its position on the diplomatic crisis which has seen Saudi Arabia and its allies impose sweeping sanctions on the emirate.

Last week, US President Donald Trump expressed support for the Saudi-led allegations against Qatar, charging that it had "historically been a funder of terrorism at a very high level". But Pentagon and State Department officials have since scrambled to reassure the emirate, which houses the largest US airbase in the Middle East and the command headquarters for US military operations in Iraq, Syria and Afghanistan.

US Defense Secretary Jim Mattis welcomed his Qatari counterpart Khalid Al-Attiyah to Washington on Wednesday for the signing of the agreement for the sale of F-15 fighters. "The \$12-billion sale will give Qatar a state-of-the-art capability and increase security cooperation and interoperability between the United States and Qatar," the Pentagon said.

It did not provide additional details on the sale but Bloomberg reported it could involve as many as 36 warplanes. Attiyah told the official Qatar News Agency the agreement would boost the emirate's defenses and create 60,000 jobs in the United States.

"We believe that this agreement will propel Qatar's ability to provide for its own security, while also reducing the burden placed upon the United States military in conducting operations against violent extremism," he said. The Pentagon meanwhile deployed two warships to carry out joint manoeuvres with the Qatari navy in the Gulf. The vessels docked in Hamad Port, south of the capital Doha, on Wednesday, the Qatari defense ministry said.

#### Concerns for war on IS

Mattis and Attiyah also discussed the US-led military campaign against the Islamic State jihadist group and "the importance of de-escalating tensions so all partners in the Gulf region can focus on next steps in meeting common goals". Washington has voiced growing concern about the impact of the diplomatic crisis on its military operations against IS, just as they come to a climax in the

jihadists' Iraq and Syria bastions, Mosul and Raqa. Secretary of State Rex Tillerson said last week that the rift was "hindering" the campaign and urged Saudi Arabia and its allies to ease their "blockade". At a Washington news conference with Tillerson on Wednesday, Saudi Foreign Minister Adel al-Jubeir denied the sanctions amounted to a blockade, insisting it was the kingdom's sovereign right to close its airspace to Qatari aircraft and seal the emirate's sole land border.

Saudi Arabia and its allies-led by the United Arab Emirates, Egypt and Bahrain have said there can be no mending of ties until Qatar ends its support for groups like the Muslim Brotherhood, which the four governments blacklist as a "terrorist" group. But Qatar and its allies-led by Turkey say the emirate has every right to conduct an independent foreign policy and have branded the sanctions imposed as "inhumane and un-Islamic".

#### Turkey courts 'wise' Saudi

Turkey has launched a diplomatic push to try to resolve the crisis on behalf of its ally, throwing its support behind a UN-backed mediation effort by Kuwait, one of the Gulf states which did not join the Saudi-led sanc-

tions. Foreign Minister Mevlut Cavusoglu was in Kuwait yesterday after talks in Qatar on Wednesday. He is due to fly on to Saudi Arabia today.

Turkey has been caught in a delicate balancing act. While standing squarely behind its ally, it has been anxious not to antagonize key regional power Saudi Arabia. "Saudi Arabia has the potential and capability to solve this crisis as a wise state and big brother of the region and also as a major actor," Turkey's presidential spokesman Ibrahim Kalin said on Wednesday. The United Nations has expressed mounting concern about the humanitarian impact of the crisis.

As well as severing economic and political ties, the four governments ordered Qataris out within 14 days and called home their own citizens. Bahrain and the UAE have also banned expressions of sympathy for Qatar. Bahrain announced on Wednesday that it had detained a citizen for sympathizing with Qatar on social media. "I am alarmed about the possible impact on many people's human rights," UN human rights chief Zeid Ra'ad Al Hussein said. "It is becoming clear that the measures being adopted are overly broad in scope and implementation," he added. — AFP

## TURKEY OPPN MARCHES AFTER MP'S ARREST

**ANKARA:** Thousands of supporters from Turkey's main opposition party yesterday began marching on foot to Istanbul from Ankara to protest the jailing of one of its MPs in an unusual show of public anger against the authorities. Former journalist turned Republican People's Party (CHP) lawmaker Enis Berberoglu was sentenced to 25 years' jail on Wednesday for leaking classified information to a newspaper. This is the first time a deputy from the CHP—the main secular opposition founded by Turkey's first president Mustafa Kemal Atatürk—has been held amid the crackdown that followed last year's failed coup. A dozen lawmakers from the pro-Kurdish Peoples' Democratic Party (HDP) — the third largest party in parliament—have been arrested under the state of emergency put in place after the aborted putsch.

The CHP is the second largest party in parliament after the ruling Justice and Development Party (AKP). CHP leader Kemal Kilicdaroglu, who has been accused by critics in the past of not taking a sufficiently tough line against President Recep Tayyip Erdogan, led the protest brandishing a sign saying "justice" in Turkish. He vowed that he and his supporters would march all the way to Maltepe, on the outskirts of Istanbul, where Berberoglu is being held in jail. "If there is a price to pay then I will be the first to pay it," said Kilicdaroglu as protesters gathered close to the main Kizilay Square on Ankara. "I am going to walk and I am going to walk all the way to Istanbul. And we will continue this march until there is justice in Turkey."

### 'Shoulder to shoulder'

Istanbul is by road some 450 kilometers west of the capital. Reports said that Kilicdaroglu planned to cover up to 20 kilometres a day, stopping on the way, in what promises to be an epic trek. Protesters chanted "shoulder to shoulder against fascism" while others held placards urging "justice for arrested MPs". Security forces, who often clamp down on protests in Ankara and Istanbul, allowed the march to go ahead unhindered. Kilicdaroglu marched at the head the column surrounded by his own security detail, still clutching the "justice" sign and waving at the crowds. There were reports of scuffles with opponents of the CHP with water thrown but no major incidents. Hundreds also held a protest at Istanbul's Macka Park on the European side of the city, chanting "we will win through resistance". "Why is an individual arrested just because of a news story? That means some are hesitant about the exposure of the reality inside that story," said an Istanbul protester who gave his name as Cem.

Kilicdaroglu and the CHP expressed solidarity with Erdogan in the wake of the July 15, 2016 failed coup against his rule, even meeting the president at his palace. But tensions have risen since the April referendum on expanding Erdogan's powers which the president narrowly won but the opposition says was marred by violations.

Tens of thousands have been arrested in the crackdown that followed the coup bid, which the authorities blamed on the US-based Islamic preacher Fethullah Gulen. He denies the allegations. Lawyers for Berberoglu yesterday lodged an appeal against his conviction with the Istanbul district court. The case relates to the controversial publication by the Cumhuriyet daily in 2015 of images purportedly showing the Turkish intelligence service seeking to transport arms over the border to Syria. —AFP

## BAHRAINI COURT JAILS 26 OVER ATTACKS ON POLICE

**DUBAI:** A Bahraini court yesterday issued sentences of up to life in prison for 26 Shiites over the attempted murder of policemen in the Sunni-ruled kingdom, a judicial source said. Twenty of the defendants were jailed for life while the rest were each handed 15-year prison terms, the source said. They were found guilty of forming a "terrorist group" between 2011 and 2013 and attempting to kill policemen in the Shiite village of Diraz, west of Manama. Villages of the Shiite majority have been scene to frequent protests and clashes since in March 2011, when security forces crushed nationwide protests demanding political reforms. Police last month opened fire to disperse a months-long sit-in in Diraz, killing five people in the crackdown. The tiny Gulf state is a key regional ally of the United States and is home to its Fifth Fleet, but the administration of former president Barack Obama often scolded Manama over rights concerns. In another case, a court in Manama jailed a Bahraini for 10 years and revoked his citizenship for joining the Islamic State Sunni extremist group, a public prosecution statement said. —AFP



**LONDON:** An automated hose sprays water onto Grenfell Tower, a residential tower block in west London that was caught in a huge blaze. —AFP

## PM ORDERS INQUIRY AS FIREFIGHTERS SEARCH FOR BODIES IN LONDON TOWER

### 'THIS TERRIBLE TRAGEDY IS BEING PROPERLY INVESTIGATED'

**LONDON:** British Prime Minister Theresa May yesterday ordered a public inquiry into the devastating London tower block fire which left at least 17 people dead as firefighters searched for bodies with dozens still reported missing. "We owe that to the families, to the people who have lost loved ones and the homes in which they lived," said May, as firefighters said parts of the council-owned building in west London had become structurally unsafe.

The prime minister said the inquiry, an official review of action by public institutions, was needed to ensure "this terrible tragedy is properly investigated". Seventeen people have been confirmed dead and the number is expected to rise, with Fire Commissioner Dany Cotton telling Sky News there were still "unknown numbers" of people inside. "Tragically now we are not expecting to find anyone else alive," she said.

The 24-storey Grenfell Tower was home to around 600 people when the fire ripped through the building before dawn on Wednesday. Whole families remain missing after the fire which forced residents to flee through black smoke down the single stairwell, jump out of windows or even drop their children to safety. Around 35 appeals to find missing loved ones have been made in the press and on social media so far.

### 'Very hard questions'

Questions are growing about how the flames spread so quickly, engulfing the tower's 120 apartments in what fire chiefs said was an unprecedented blaze. Opposition leader Jeremy Corbyn, who visited the tower on Thursday after the prime minister, said "some very hard questions must be answered" about how the fire took hold. "We have to get to the bottom of this—the truth has got to come out and it will," he told volunteers at a local church.

The focus of criticism centres on the cladding fitted to external walls on the

1970s concrete block as part of a £8.7 million refit (\$11 million, 9.9 million euros) completed last year. According to the BBC, the cladding had a plastic core and was similar to that used by high-rise buildings in France, the United Arab Emirates and Australia, which had also suffered fires that spread. Rydon, the firm responsible for the refit, said the project "met all required building regulations". Harley Facades, which fitted the panels, told the BBC: "At this time, we are not aware of any link between the fire and the exterior cladding to the tower."

### 'We saw them dying'

Grenfell Tower is part of a social housing estate in north Kensington, just streets away from some of the most expensive homes in the world in Notting Hill. The area has a large immigrant population, but many families have lived in the area for years, passing on their low-rent homes to their children. Witnesses told how residents in the upper floors used their mobile phone torches to attract attention, before they disappeared from view, their screams of help falling silent.

"We saw them dying," said Adi Estu, 32, who was evacuated from her home nearby. Some people reportedly jumped from the windows, and one witness, Samira Lamrani, said she saw a woman drop a baby from the ninth or 10th floor, for the child to be caught by a man below. The fire triggered a fresh wave of mourning in a country already battered by a string of terror attacks.

More than £480,000 had been raised online for the victims by early Thursday, while local community centres were inundated by donations of clothes and food. Volunteers in Glasgow — 550 kilometres (350 miles) away—sent a truck laden with nappies and other supplies. Queen Elizabeth II sent her condolences, paying tribute to the bravery of the emergency services. "It is also heartening to see the incredible generosity of

community volunteers rallying to help those affected by this terrible event," she in a statement.

### Questions over safety measures

Cladding has been added to a number of buildings across London in recent years, intended to provide insulation as well as improve the appearance of older buildings. But Kostas Tsavdaridis, associate professor of structural engineering at the University of Leeds, warned: "Some materials used in facades act as significant fire loads." "Although theoretically they are fire resistant, in most cases they are high-temperature resistant instead of fire resistant. But even if they are, smoke and fire will spread through the joints and connections," he said.

There were questions about why there was no sprinkler system in the Grenfell Tower which could have helped stop the fire spreading, or any central smoke alarm system that would have woken sleeping residents. Official fire service advice for residents to stay in their homes and use towels to block out smoke, while awaiting help, has also come under scrutiny.

Firefighters were able to reach only the 12th floor of the block during the height of the blaze. Abdelaziz El-Wahabi, his wife Faouzia and their three children were among those who followed protocol by staying in their flat on the 21st floor. "Last time I spoke to his wife, he was on the phone to the fire brigade. I've not heard from them since," his sister Hanan Wahabi told AFP on Wednesday morning.

David Collins, former chairman of the Grenfell Tower Residents' Association, said the building's management had failed to listen to residents' calls for improvements on fire safety. "If the same concerns were had in a wealthy part of Kensington and Chelsea they would have got resolved, but here they didn't get resolved," Collins said. —AFP



**MOGADISHU:** People walk at the site of a terror attack outside the Pizza House restaurant. —AFP

## SOMALI SURVIVORS SPEAK OF RESTAURANT SIEGE BY REBELS

### 31 DEAD, NEARLY 40 WOUNDED

**MOGADISHU:** Islamic extremists attacked a popular Somalia restaurant in an overnight siege and killed 31 people - many at point-blank range - before they were slain by security forces, police said yesterday. Survivors described harrowing scenes of hiding under tables and behind curtains as the five gunmen hunted for victims in the darkened Pizza House restaurant. Nearly 40 people were wounded.

Al-Shabab claimed responsibility for the attack, which began Wednesday evening with a car bomb exploding at the gate to the restaurant and ended when troops secured the site after dawn, said senior police Capt. Mohamed Hussein. "I never thought I would have the chance to see the sun again. They were killing people on sight," university student Saida Hussein told The Associated Press. She said she survived by hiding behind a large table.

Soldiers in gun-mounted vehicles surrounded the building, and troops later entered the ground floor as Al-Shabab snipers defended their positions upstairs. The battle to end the siege was hampered by darkness, Hussein said. Aden Karie said he was wounded by an attacker who spotted him moving behind a curtain. "He shot at me twice, and one bullet struck me on the leg," Karie said as he was taken to an ambulance.

The bodies of five girls believed to have been killed by the extremists were found in the restaurant, police said. The body of a Syrian man who worked as a chef lay near a blood-spattered and bullet-marked wall. The car bomb that began the attack blew the roofs off the restaurant and other nearby buildings. Many of the first victims were young men who had been entering the Pizza House when the bomb went off, Hussein said.

#### 'Martyrs'

The extremists, appearing to pose as security forces, then rushed inside the restaurant. The gunmen "were dressed in military uniforms. They forced those fleeing the site to go inside," witness Nur Yasin told the AP. A neighboring restaurant, Posh Treats, which is frequented by the city's elite, was damaged in the blast, security officials said. Security forces rescued Asian, Ethiopian, Kenyan and other workers at Posh Treats as the attack continued, Hussein said.

President Mohamed Abdullahi Mohamed called the victims "martyrs" and noted that the attack came during the Muslim holy month of Ramadan. The United States mission to Somalia said many of the victims had been breaking their daily Ramadan fast when the attack began. Ramadan "is a time of spiritual reflection and

increased piety, which makes the timing of this attack all the more atrocious," the US statement said.

Somalia-based Al-Shabab often targets high-profile areas of Mogadishu, including hotels, military checkpoints and areas near the presidential palace. It has vowed to step up attacks after the recently elected government launched a new military offensive against it. Al-Shabab was the deadliest Islamic extremist group in Africa last year, killing more than 4,200 people, according to the Washington-based Africa Center for Strategic Studies.

The extremist group also faces a new military push from the United States after President Donald Trump approved expanded operations, including airstrikes. On Sunday, the US military in Africa said it conducted an airstrike in southern Somalia that killed eight extremists at a rebel command and logistics camp. Somalia's president confirmed the airstrike and said such attacks would disrupt the group's ability to conduct new operations. Pressure is growing on Somalia's military to assume full security responsibilities for the country. The 22,000-member African Union multinational force, AMISOM, which has been supporting the fragile central government, plans to start withdrawing in 2018 and leave by the end of 2020. —AFP

## PALESTINIAN MAYOR IN W BANK BRUSHES OFF HIS VIOLENT PAST

**HEBRON:** For Palestinians, the new mayor of Hebron is a hero who they hope will improve their city. But to Israelis, the new leader of the divided West Bank city is an unrepentant murderer. Weeks after the former PLO fighter took office, Tayseer Abu Sneineh is a contentious figure in the West Bank's most volatile city, showing no remorse for his role in an attack 37 years ago but saying he is now committed to pursuing a peace agreement with Israel.

He sports a short gray beard today, but as a 26-year-old math teacher he took part in an attack in Hebron on Israeli settlers returning home from Friday night Sabbath prayers on May 2, 1980. Six people were killed and 16 wounded. Abu Sneineh was convicted as one of the gunmen and sentenced to life in prison. But he was released three years later in a prisoner swap between Israel and the Palestine Liberation Organization and deported to Algeria. He returned to the West Bank, along with other exiled PLO figures, after the Oslo interim peace agreement was signed in 1993.

#### Fortified compounds

Abu Sneineh says the attack, one of the deadliest on West Bank settlers, was justified. "They all were armed settlers and soldiers, no women or children," he recalled. "We attacked them with guns and hand grenades." "We wanted to send a message to the settlers that this is our city and they have to leave," Abu Sneineh added. Hebron is the West Bank's most populous city, holy to Muslims and Jews, where several hundred nationalist Israeli settlers live in fortified compounds in the midst of 170,000 Palestinian inhabitants.

Palestinians must frequently cross through military checkpoints to get around the area, and the close proximity of the two populations has turned the city into a flashpoint of violence. Hebron has been the epicenter of many of the Palestinian attacks targeting Israelis in the past year and a half. The Palestinians seek the West Bank, captured by Israel in 1967, as the heartland of a future independent state and say the Jewish settlements there are illegal - a position that has wide international backing. Israel says the presence of its settlers is justified by an ancient Jewish connection to Hebron going back to the days of the biblical patriarch Abraham.

Noam Arnon, a spokesman for the Jewish community of Hebron, called Abu Sneineh "a despicable and cowardly murderer" who killed civilians in their white Sabbath shirts. "It was a terror attack of the type that took place recently in Paris and London," Arnon charged. "The fact that he boasts about it proves what a despicable murderer he is."

Abu Sneineh shrugged off criticism, saying that many Israeli officials served in the military and were involved in the deaths of numerous Palestinians in decades of fighting. "They killed children, women, the elderly; they bombed schools, residential buildings and killed thousands of Palestinians since the establishment of the state of Israel," he said. Now 63, Abu Sneineh said he has put his life as a militant behind him and is focused on the tough reality of governing in a divided city.

#### Tight military control

Abu Sneineh lives in Hebron's Old City, an area under tight Israeli military control. Passing recently through an Israeli checkpoint on his way to the Ibrahim Mosque, a site revered by Jews as the Tomb of the Patriarchs, he was cheered as a native son capable of solving the city's problems. His priority these days, Abu Sneineh said, is to improve municipal services for Palestinian residents, including water, electricity and roads. Most of these services are controlled by Israeli authorities. "We need to double the amount of water, and increase the electricity and expand the boundaries of the city and this needs Israel approval," he said.

The new mayor's first challenge in office involved a burst sewage pipe in the Old City. He said it took a week of negotiating with Israeli authorities to obtain a permit for municipal workers to enter the area and fix the pipe. On his way to the mosque, Abu Sneineh stood in line at a checkpoint with a dozen others waiting for an Israeli soldier behind bulletproof glass to open a revolving gate before they passed through a metal detector. Soldiers prevented an AP team from filming the checkpoint and threatened to arrest a photographer. —AP

# PUTIN LIFTS SECRECY ON GRANDCHILDREN

**MOSCOW:** Russian President Vladimir Putin offered a glimpse at his family life yesterday, confirming for the first time that he has grandchildren and saying he wants to keep them out of the spotlight so they can grow up "normally". "I have grandchildren. They live normal lives," Putin said during his annual marathon TV

call-in with Russians, confirming a revelation from a series of interviews by US filmmaker Oliver Stone that have been airing in the US this week.

Putin said that one grandchild was "already in preschool" and that "my second grandson was born recently", which garnered

applause in the studio. But he said he did not want to identify them by name them in order to let them live ordinary lives. "The thing is, I don't want them to grow up like hereditary princes, I want them to grow up to be normal people." "If I mention ages and names, they would be identified and never left alone," he said. —AFP



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**ALEXANDRIA:** A Virginia State Trooper pets a dog being walked by Tricia Hatridge of Alexandria, Va, as he was keeping traffic from entering near Eugene Simpson Stadium Park the day after House Majority Whip Steve Scalise of La was shot during a congressional baseball practice at the park. —AFP

## CONGRESS SEEKING NORMALCY, BACK TO WORK AFTER SHOOTING

### EVERYONE ON THAT FIELD IS A PUBLIC SERVANT: TRUMP

**ALEXANDRIA:** The business of the House was resuming a day after a rifle-wielding attacker opened fire on Republican lawmakers practicing for a charity baseball game, critically wounding House GOP Whip Steve Scalise of Louisiana and hitting aides and Capitol police. The assailant, who had nursed grievances against US President Donald Trump and the GOP, fought a gun battle with police before he, too, was shot and later died.

Colleagues said Scalise, who had been fielding balls at second base, dragged himself away from the infield, leaving a trail of blood before they rushed to his assistance. He was listed in critical condition Wednesday night at a Washington hospital, which said he will require several more operations. The shooter was identified as James T Hodgkinson, a 66-year-old home inspector from Illinois who had several minor run-ins with the law in recent years and belonged to a Facebook group called "Terminate the Republican Party."

Capitol Police officers who were in Scalise's security detail wounded the shooter, who was taken into custody. He later died of his injuries, Trump told the nation from the White House. "Everyone on that field is a public servant," Trump said, his tone somber, America's acrimonious politics set aside for the moment. "Their sacrifice makes democracy possible." After visiting Scalise Wednesday evening at MedStar Washington Hospital Center, Trump tweeted: "Rep Steve Scalise, one of the truly great people, is in very tough shape - but he is a real fighter. Pray for Steve!" Lawmakers noted their good fortune in having armed protectors on hand - "Thank God," they exclaimed over and over - and said otherwise the shooter would have been able to take a huge deadly toll.

Across the Potomac River in Washington, the shocking events left the Capitol horrified and stunned, and prompted immediate reflection on the current hostility and vitriol in American politics. Lawmakers called for a new dialogue on lowering the partisan temperature, and Trump urged Americans to come together as he assumed the role of national unifier for one of the first times in his presidency.

Proceedings were canceled for the day in the House, and instead Speaker Paul Ryan of Wisconsin and Democratic leader Nancy Pelosi of California issued their own calls for unity. "An attack on one of us is an attack on all of us," Ryan said, to prolonged applause. On Thursday House proceedings were to resume as usual, and lawmakers were returning to the Capitol in search of some semblance of normalcy.

#### Sanders denounces violence

Shortly after the shooting, Bernie Sanders, the former candidate for the Democratic presidential nomination, said on the Senate floor that the shooter apparently was a volunteer for his campaign last year. Sanders said he denounced the violence "in the strongest possible terms." Scalise, 51, the No. 3 House Republican leader, was first elected in 2008. The popular and gregarious lawmaker is known for his love of baseball and handed out commemorative bats when he secured the job of House whip several years ago.

Texas Rep Roger Williams said that one of his aides, Zack Barth, was shot but was doing well and expected to fully recover. Two Capitol Police officers sustained relatively minor injuries. A former congressional aide was hospitalized. The shooting occurred at a popular park and baseball complex in Alexandria, Virginia, across the Potomac River from Washington, where Republican lawmakers and others were gathered for a morning practice about 7 a.m. They were in good spirits despite the heat and humidity as they prepared for the congressional baseball match that pits Republicans against Democrats. The popular annual face-off, which raises money for charity, is scheduled to go forward as planned Thursday evening at Nationals Park in Washington.

Hodgkinson has been in the area since March, living out of his van, said local FBI Special Agent In Charge Tim Slater. Democratic former Alexandria Mayor Bill Euille said he had spoken often with the man on recent mornings at the nearby YMCA. Hodgkinson's apparent Facebook page included strong criticism of Republicans and the Trump administration. But Slater said authorities were still working to determine a motive and had "no indica-

tion" Hodgkinson knew about the ball practice ahead of time.

The GOP lawmakers' team was taking batting practice when gunshots rang out and chaos erupted. Scalise was fielding balls at second base when he was shot, according to lawmakers present. Rep Mo Brooks, an Alabama Republican, said his colleague "crawled into the outfield, leaving a trail of blood." "We started giving him the liquids, I put pressure on his wound in his hip," Brooks said. The gunman had a rifle and "a lot of ammo," said Sen. Jeff Flake of Arizona, who was at the practice.

#### 'Security saved a lot of lives'

Texas Rep Joe Barton, still in his baseball uniform, told reporters that Scalise's security detail, Capitol Hill police and then Alexandria police returned fire in a battle that lasted as long as 10 minutes and included dozens of shots. "The security detail saved a lot of lives," he said. "It was scary." Lawmakers took cover in the dugout. Barton said his son, Jack, got under an SUV. Texas Rep Mike Conaway described what sounded like an explosion, then lawmakers scattering off the field as police roamed in search of the gunman and engaged him.

"The guy's down to a handgun, he dropped his rifle, they shoot him, I go over there, they put him in handcuffs," Conaway said, adding that if the shooter had "gotten inside the fence, where a bunch of guys were holed up in the dugout, it would have been like shooting fish in a barrel."

Rep Jeff Duncan of South Carolina said he had just left the practice and encountered the apparent gunman in the parking lot before the shooting. The man calmly asked which party's lawmakers were practicing and Duncan told him they were the Republicans. The man thanked him. The wounded Capitol Police officers were identified as David Bailey, who was treated for a minor injury, and Crystal Griner, who was shot in the ankle. Also wounded was former congressional aide Matt Mika, who now works for Tyson Foods in its Washington office. Mika's family said the lobbyist was shot multiple times and was in critical condition following surgery. —AP

## AUSTRALIAN PM POKES FUN AT TRUMP IN LEAKED AUDIO

**SYDNEY:** Australia's prime minister has taken a comical swipe at Donald Trump, mimicking his mannerisms and making reference to the Russia scandal, in comments he said were intended as "affectionately light-hearted". In a leaked audio recording that comes just months after a tetchy phone call between the two leaders, Malcolm Turnbull is heard making fun of the US president's idiosyncratic speaking style.

"The Donald and I, we are winning and winning in the polls," Turnbull said in a closed event for journalists in Canberra on Wednesday. "We are winning so much. We are winning like we have never won before. We are. We are. Not the fake polls. Not the fake polls. They're the ones we are not winning in," he said to laughs from the audience at the Mid-Winter Ball, where politicians and Canberra journalists let their hair down. "We are winning in the real polls. You know, the online polls. They are so easy to win."

Typically, the event is off-the-record, meaning journalists would not report on what was said, but a recording was leaked to the political editor at commercial broadcaster Channel Nine, who did not attend the soiree and decided to report it. Turnbull played down the speech late Thursday, saying that he was the butt of the jokes rather than Trump.

"My speech was light-hearted, affectionately light-hearted," he told Melbourne's 3AW radio. "It's a breach of protocol, it's a breach of faith," he added of the leaked recording. "But it's light-hearted, it's affectionate and the butt of my jokes, was myself." In a statement cited by Channel 9, the US Embassy in Canberra said they saw the lighter-side of the address. "We understand that last night's event is equivalent to our own White House Correspondents' Dinner," it read. "We take this with the good humor that was intended." Last month, Turnbull met the US president in New York to mend fences, after the bad-tempered call early in Trump's White House tenure.

Trump reportedly exploded and cut short the conversation when he was told about a Barack Obama-era deal to move refugees from Australia to America. The Australian leader appeared to make light of that icy conversation in the leaked recording. "It was beautiful. It was the most beautiful putting-me-at-ease ever," he said. In another leaked clip, Turnbull poked fun at the ongoing controversy surrounding the Trump administration's ties to Russia. "I have this Russian guy. Believe me, it is true. It is true," Turnbull said. —AFP

## LIVING IN THE TERROR OF MS-13 IN NY SUBURBIA

**BRENTWOOD:** The town of Brentwood on New York's Long Island may look like an oasis of calm away from the hustle and bustle of Manhattan. But behind its timber homes and neat front yards, terror lurks. In this middle-class town 44 miles from New York and about the same distance from the glitzy Hamptons summer retreat for Manhattan's millionaires, the Latino street gang MS-13 exerts a brutal grip.

Nearly 70 percent of the 60,000 residents here are Hispanic, mostly from Central America, and fear of the street gang-born on the streets of Los Angeles in the 1980s and exported back to El Salvador-runs deep. "I don't know the gang members, I don't get along with them," says a 15-year-old girl outside the public high school, speaking hurriedly in Spanish and refusing to give her name. But everyone knows the names Nisa Mickens and Kayla Cuevas-teenage classmates hacked and beaten to death by machetes and baseball bats last September.

Their names and faces remain tacked to a tree just outside the school nearly a year later, staring out of police wanted posters looking for their killers. Accused of committing 17 savage murders in the last two years, MS-13 is believed to have 400 members in the surrounding Suffolk County on Long Island, with Brentwood and the neighboring suburb of Central Islip the worst-hit.

Open mention of the gang prompts nervous looks, especially among immigrants, many of whom are undocumented. Like school students, the school administration and Suffolk County police decline to talk to AFP. One of the few brave enough to speak out is Nisa's father, Robert Mickens.

### 'My biggest fear'

"I am not afraid," the 40-year-old nursing-home carer says. "I've been through my biggest fear-that was losing my daughter." His living room, its curtains drawn tight in the afternoon, has been transformed into an altar to his youngest daughter, murdered the day before she turned 16. She was in the wrong place at the wrong time, targeted simply because she was friends with Kayla, who had fallen afoul of the gang.

He points to a trophy she won in a basketball championship, a poster from her funeral signed by her friends and a picture of Nisa at six years old. "She was a good girl, a sweet girl... she was hated by no one." President Donald Trump has declared MS-13 a national security threat, seizing on the fear-some brand to justify his stepped-up deportations of undocumented immigrants, plans to build a border wall and pressure on cities to stop protecting vulnerable migrants.

But police say his administration's anti-immigrant rhetoric has only silenced MS-13's biggest victim, the Hispanic community, which does not dare report crimes. Gang violence is on the rise, at least partly because of the arrival of unaccompanied migrants fleeing MS-13 in El Salvador, Guatemala and Honduras, Suffolk County police chief Timothy Sini recently told lawmakers in Washington.

More than 4,600 unaccompanied Central American children have arrived in Suffolk County since 2014, police say. But Brentwood offers little salvation. Joseph Kolb, a research fellow at the Center for Immigration Studies, says the government's decision to place thousands of young people in communities such as this one has caused "a public safety crisis."

### 'No escape'

"The large majority, if not all of them, come here traumatized and immigration services essentially dumps them," he says. "These are children who grew up in a culture of violence." Many come to live in Brentwood with a relative they have never met or haven't seen for years, who is often out all day or may even be involved in the gang.

Ruthless recruitment through threats and extortion does not spare children. "Unfortunately for many of these Central American kids, there is no escape," Kolb says. "Brentwood school has become overwhelmed," he adds. "I spoke with a school official who says 'We have no idea where to put these kids.'" Law enforcers are stepping up arrests, announcing on Wednesday that 33 alleged gang members had been rounded up in Suffolk County alone. —AFP



**PERRY, Florida:** This undated portrait made available by Rebecca Vann Photography shows Rudy Blanco, his wife Shelly, daughter Hannah and son Noah. —AP

## CUBANS FACE DEPORTATION RISK AS OTHER IMMIGRANTS

### IMPERILED BY OLD DEPORTATION ORDERS

**MIAMI:** Tens of thousands of Cubans living in the US are adapting to a harsh new reality: After enjoying decades of favored status dating back to the Cold War, many of them now face the same deportation risks as any other immigrants. They feel betrayed by former President Barack Obama's administration, which in its waning days stripped away a nearly automatic path to citizenship that had been offered since the 1960s to Cubans who arrived on US soil, even those who showed up without a visa. The change was part of a thaw in relations with Cuba, which also agreed to start accepting the return of more of its people who get deported.

Now some Cubans have been detained at routine appointments with immigration officials, and many more fear they could be imperiled by old deportation orders or caught up in the increased arrests of non-citizens pursued by President Donald Trump's administration. "I wasn't prepared for any of this. How could I have seen this coming?" said Maykel Vargas, a Cuban who spent three months in detention after immigration officials took him into custody when he was trying to renew a temporary document. "I don't know what is going to happen."

### Immigration privileges

Anticipation is mounting about a White House announcement on Cuba planned for today and how it may affect business deals and leisure travel. But experts agree that Trump's new policy is not expected to restore previous immigration privileges. Any changes open the possibility that the

Cuban government could scale back commitments on migration agreements, including promises to take back deportees.

Vargas, 37, worked as an Uber and Lyft driver to provide for his sister, who is single and pregnant. He said he couldn't afford the \$700 required to apply for permanent residency, a much more complex process. He continues fighting deportation after being released Monday with an ankle monitor. Hermes Vigoa, 46, wasn't even nervous when he showed up at an immigration office in Miami earlier this year to renew a temporary document he needed for his driver's license and car insurance while he completed the permanent-residency process.

He arrived in the US two years before Obama canceled the fast-track citizenship system. Cubans still have a path to residency if they find a way to arrive in the US with a visa, but Obama ended the open-arms treatment to curb a recent immigration surge mostly through the Mexico border. "I thought everything was fine until an officer told me, 'You are in limbo' and told my girlfriend to take all my stuff because I was being detained," Vigoa said. He was detained for a month before he was released, without explanation, to continue seeking a green card.

Immigration officials did not respond to requests for information on these cases. Officials say more than 36,000 Cubans currently face deportation orders. About 29,000 are convicted criminals and 7,000 non-criminal immigration violators, according to Immigration and Customs Enforcement. Two other Cubans who were taken into custody last month after being

here for decades are getting the attention of elected officials. They arrived as children in the famous Mariel boatlift in 1980, when Cuba's then-President Fidel Castro allowed the departure of anyone who wanted to leave the Communist nation. About 125,000 "marielitos" crossed the Florida Straits that year.

### 'Wet foot, dry foot'

Both men have criminal convictions but insist they have turned their lives around. In 1984, the nations agreed on a list of 2,746 Cubans who were alleged criminals and could be returned to the island. When the US abandoned the "wet foot, dry foot" policy in January, the two nations agreed that the list could be revised to add other Cuban "marielitos" who were subject to active deportation orders. Rudy Blanco was 8 when he was brought from the port of Mariel by his parents in 1980. He now has a family and owns a home-remodeling business in Perry, Florida. But because he was convicted of attempting to sell cocaine in 1998, he wasn't allowed to become a US citizen and instead received an order of deportation by mail in 2005.

Blanco was allowed to stay as long as he made routine visits to ICE. However, he was arrested on May 9 and is now awaiting deportation. An ICE spokeswoman said only that the agency intends to deport him based on the 2005 order. Blanco's wife, Shelly, said that both Florida Sen. Marco Rubio and the family's congressman, Rep. Neal Dunn, have told her they are trying to gather information on the case. Both men are Republicans. —AP

## IS CLAIMS IT'S TAKEN BIN LADEN'S HIDEOUT

**KABUL:** The Islamic State group said its fighters have captured Osama bin Laden's infamous Tora Bora mountain hideout in eastern Afghanistan but the Taliban on Thursday dismissed the claim, saying they were still in control of the cave complex that once housed the former Al-Qaeda leader. Earlier, IS released an audio recording, saying its signature black flag was flying over the hulking mountain range. The message was broadcast on the militants' Radio Khilafat station in the Pashto language late on Wednesday.

It also said IS has taken over several

districts and urged villagers who fled the fighting to return to their homes and stay indoors. A Taliban spokesman denied IS was in control, claiming instead that the Taliban had pushed IS back from some territory the rival militants had taken in the area. The Tora Bora mountains hide a warren of caves in which al-Qaeda militants led by bin Laden hid from US coalition forces in 2001, after the Taliban fled Kabul and before he fled to neighboring Pakistan.

According to testimony from al-Qaeda captives in the US prison at

Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, bin Laden fled from Tora Bora first to Afghanistan's northeastern Kunar province, before crossing the border into Pakistan. He was killed in a 2011 raid by US Navy SEALs on his hideout in the Pakistani garrison town of Abbottabad.

Pakistan complained the raid violated its sovereignty while bin Laden's presence - barely a few miles from the Pakistani equivalent of Washington's West Point military academy - reinforced allegations by those who accused Pakistan of harboring the Taliban and al-Qaeda militants.

Pakistan denies such charges, pointing to senior al-Qaeda operatives it has turned over to the United States.

Meanwhile, Taliban spokesman Zabiullah Mujahid told The Associated Press in a telephone interview that Taliban fighters pushed back the Islamic State group from areas of Tora Bora that IS had earlier captured. Mujahid claimed that more than 30 IS fighters were killed in battle. He also added that a US airstrike on Taliban positions on Wednesday that killed 11 of its fighters had benefited the Islamic State group. —AP



**ISLAMABAD:** Pakistan's Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif speaks to media after appearing before an anti-corruption commission at the Federal Judicial Academy. —AFP

## PAKISTANI PM APPEARS BEFORE COURT PANEL

### ALLEGATIONS OF CORRUPTION AND MONEY LAUNDERING

**ISLAMABAD:** Pakistan's prime minister yesterday denied allegations of corruption and money laundering during a nearly three-hour appearance before a Supreme Court-appointed team investigating his family's offshore companies. Nawaz Sharif's appearance before the panel at the Judicial Academy took place amid tight security after Sharif, his daughter, one of his sons and a younger brother arrived at the complex of judicial buildings in the capital.

Sharif's daughter Maryam Sharif shared a photo on social media of her and her father smiling and appearing relaxed before entering. "My government, my family and I presented ourselves for accountability. There was neither any stain of corruption on us in the past and nor will there be any such charge against us in future," Sharif told reporters after the hearing, which was closed to the public.

He said the allegations concern only his family's personal and private business and not government corruption or fraud.

It was unclear whether Sharif would again be summoned to appear before the panel. His younger brother Shahbaz Sharif is to appear before the panel next week. Sharif said he and his family would prove their innocence before the five-member panel, which will submit its report to the Supreme Court sometime this month. He said he looked forward to the Supreme Court's final verdict but that he was ready to face a bigger court of 200 million people next year when parliamentary elections will be held.

#### Denied allegations

Sharif, who has previously denied allegations of abusing his authority to enrich himself, has been under pressure from political opponents to resign in the wake of reports based on documents leaked from a Panama-based law firm indicated his sons owned offshore companies. The panel probing the Sharif family holdings is comprised of senior investigators and representatives from the country's two

powerful spy agencies the Inter-Services Intelligence and Military Intelligence. Sharif's two sons have already testified before the same panel, denying allegations regarding their family's financial affairs. Sharif's family and his party have alleged that some of the panel members are biased, accusing them of pressuring witnesses to testify against Sharif.

The panel has denied the allegation, countering with accusations that some Sharif party officials were threatening the panel and that some government officials were refusing to cooperate. Sharif's spokesman Musadik Malik told Pakistan's DUNYA news channel that Sharif had refrained from taking up his constitutional immunity to avoid appearing before the panel "because his hands are clean." Thursday's developments came nearly two months after the Supreme Court ruled there was not enough evidence to remove Sharif from office but ordered a further investigation into the allegations. —AP

## BRITISH GAY WOMAN LAUNCHES RIGHTS APPEAL IN HONG KONG

**HONG KONG:** A high-profile gay rights case in Hong Kong went to appeal yesterday, closely watched by campaigners who say the socially conservative city is lagging in equal rights. The British woman fighting the case is known to the court only as QT and was refused a spousal visa because she is in a same-sex partnership.

Major international companies including Morgan Stanley, Goldman Sachs and Credit Suisse last week made an application to submit evidence to the Court of Appeal, saying they wanted to give a "more rounded picture of the issues", emphasizing their commitment to diversity and desire to hire top talent from around the world. But the court refused their request, saying evidence they put forward was likely to repeat grounds already being presented by QT's legal team.

Human rights barrister Dinah Rose argued yesterday that even though gay marriage is not recognized under Hong Kong law, that did not mean same-sex couples in a civil partnership or married in a foreign jurisdiction should be denied the rights of heterosexual married couples. Heterosexual spouses are eligible for "dependant" visas which allow them to enter Hong Kong and to work.

Rose characterized such treatment as "a form of discrimination" that goes against the city's core values and the principle of equality. "We are dealing with real people, who have a real relationship and who have suffered a significant disadvantage because of their sexuality," she said. QT came to Hong Kong in 2011 after she entered into a civil partnership with a woman known as "SS" in Britain. SS was moving to Hong Kong for a new job.

But QT was denied a dependant visa and was given instead a visitor visa, which does not allow her to work. She was later granted a 12-month visa under exceptional circumstances which did allow her to work, Rose said, but added that was still "less favorable" treatment. QT lost a legal challenge at the High Court last year after a judge ruled that equating same-sex unions to married status was "not permissible" under Hong Kong law.

Rose said that people in polygamous marriages are allowed to bring in one of their spouses as a dependant, even though such relationships are not recognized in Hong Kong. Immigration law does not explicitly mention gay couples, but states that only the "spouse" of a person permitted to work in the territory may apply for a dependant visa. Judge Andrew Cheung said Thursday gay people were treated "differently" in Hong Kong because of current marriage law. "I'm of course not saying gay people are not protected in Hong Kong," he told the court. "All I'm focusing on is in terms of the right to marriage." Rights campaigners in the region were galvanized last month when a court in Taiwan ruled in favor of gay marriage. The hearing continues and is due to last for two days. —AFP



## SRI LANKA SEEKS MONK'S ARREST OVER HATE CRIME

**COLOMBO:** A Sri Lankan court issued a warrant yesterday for the arrest of a radical Buddhist monk accused of instigating arson attacks against the island's minority Muslim community. Police said the warrant for the arrest of Galagodaatte Gnanasara relates to an accusation of insulting the Quran that dates back to April 2014, months before the outbreak of deadly religious riots. The magistrate ordered his arrest after he failed to appear for a court hearing into the matter yesterday.

Police are also investigating more than a dozen recent complaints of incitement against Gnanasara, who went into hiding in May, after a series of arson attacks targeting Muslims. Yesterday they said they had arrested two of his associates in connection with a petrol bomb attack on a mosque last month. Gnanasara's Buddhist Force or BBS is accused of instigating the hate crimes. On Sunday, police said they had made the first arrest of a BBS member in connection with four arson attacks in a Colombo suburb.

Prime Minister Ranil Wickremesinghe vowed on Wednesday that he would not allow a repeat of 2014 anti-Muslim riots in which four people died and hundreds of homes were destroyed, promising tougher legislation. With stoning and desecration of Muslim-owned places now an almost daily occurrence, the government faces international criticism over its failure to tackle the violence and rein in the BBS. In a video message released Sunday, the group denied any involvement, but accused the government of allowing Islamic extremism to flourish in the Buddhist-majority nation. Earlier this month, Western diplomats urged Sri Lanka to take action to stop the renewed outbreak of religious violence.—AFP



**COLOMBO:** This file photo shows controversial Sri Lankan Buddhist monk Galagodaatte Gnanasara during a press conference in Colombo.—AFP

## AUSTRALIAN JOURNALIST SHOT IN WAR-TORN PHILIPPINE CITY

**MARAWI:** An Australian television journalist was shot in the neck yesterday as he reported from a southern Philippine city where Islamist militants are battling government troops, but he did not suffer major injuries. Adam Harvey, a reporter for the Australian Broadcasting Corporation, wrote on Twitter: "Lucky", alongside an image of an X-ray showing the bullet lodged in his neck, close to his spine. "Thanks everyone I'm okay. Bullet is still in my neck, but it missed everything important," he said in another Twitter post.

Harvey was shot in Marawi, the most important Muslim city in the mainly Catholic Philippines where government forces are struggling to defeat hundreds of militants fighting under the black flags of the Islamic State (IS) group. He was inside the provincial capital compound where local and foreign journalists have congregated during the more than three weeks of fighting, the government's crisis management committee spokesman, Zia Alonto Adiong, told. Although the compound is secured by the military, it is only about two kilometers from the pockets of the city that the gunmen control.

"I want to appeal to everyone you should be very careful because in our assessment the vicinity of the 103rd (military camp), the vicinity of the capitol is within the line of sight of the enemy," local military spokesman Lieutenant-Colonel Jor Herrera told reporters in the compound after the shooting incident. Harvey was taken to the nearby city of Iligan for medical treatment, Adiong said.—AFP

# THOUSANDS RETURNING TO SHATTERED HOMES

## REBUILDING THEIR THATCHED-ROOFS

**DHAKA:** Thousands of people began returning yesterday to villages destroyed by massive landslides that killed at least 141 people in southeastern Bangladesh to begin rebuilding their thatched-roof homes. The government offered the victims cash and materials to help start their lives anew after the landslides early Tuesday. About 2,000 people left 13 shelters in hard-hit Bandarban district after its road network was largely restored, said Dilip Kumar Banik, the top government administrator of the area.

Azizul Haque, who was preparing to leave a shelter in Bandarban, said he had hoped to return to his home district of Cox's Bazar to celebrate the upcoming Eid holiday with his family, but the landslide had destroyed those plans. "I have lost my wife and my 10-year-old daughter. I have lost everything," Haque said, sobbing. "My life was very difficult, now it has become even more difficult. I do not know why Allah is punishing me this way." Banik said poor day laborers and migrants had built homes in vulnerable areas despite warnings from officials.

After torrential rains began Monday, officials used loudspeakers to ask people to leave their homes for safety, and some were evacuated. "But that fateful night, the hills started collapsing. They are poor and they do not want to leave their homes, their belongings so easily. They have few options," he said. Shah Kamal, secretary of the Ministry of Disaster Management, said yesterday that officials from various agencies were assessing what can be done to



**RANGAMATI:** Bangladeshi firefighters recovered a dead body at the site of a landslide.—AFP

prevent such disasters in the future. Rescuers on Yesterday recovered the body of a woman from a mass of mud that collapsed onto a village in southeastern Bangladesh and were searching for several others who were still missing, officials said.

Officials reported 104 dead and at least 5,000 homes destroyed or damaged in Rangamati, where mostly tribal villagers live in small communities near a lake surrounded by hills. Another 28

were killed in the coastal Chittagong district, six died in Bandarban, two in Cox's Bazar and one in Khagrachhari. The delta nation is frequently hit by strong storms, flooding and landslides. Experts said this week's tragedy was also the result of uncontrolled denuding and soil harvesting on hills above unplanned settlements.

Many people in hilly regions ignore authorities' calls to avoid constructing homes on slopes.—AP

## JAPAN PASSES DIVISIVE ANTI-TERROR LAW

**TOKYO:** Japan passed a controversial anti-terror law yesterday that critics warned would stomp on privacy rights and lead to over-the-top police surveillance. Thousands protested outside the legislature after a full night of debate by sleepy parliamentarians and unsuccessful efforts by Japan's weak opposition to block the law's passage.

The government said the law, which criminalizes the planning of serious offenses, is necessary to prevent terrorism ahead of the Tokyo 2020 Olympics. It doesn't give police new powers, but critics say the legislation could be abused to allow wiretapping of innocent citizens and threaten privacy and freedom of expression guarantees in the constitution. Terrorism "won't disappear because of this law," said 29-year-old demonstrator Yohei Sakano outside parliament.

"It's mostly designed to crack down on citizens' movements, not terrorism." Retired government worker Toshiaki Noguchi added: "We're turning into a society of censorship." US surveillance whistleblower Edward Snowden and Joseph Cannataci, UN special reporter on the right to privacy, have both criticized the law, and polls show the public is divided on its merits. The bill's passage overcame a no-confidence motion against Prime Minister Shinzo Abe's cabinet and a censure bid aimed at Justice Minister Katsutoshi Kaneda.

Tokyo insists the law—which calls for a prison term of up to five years for planning serious crimes—is a prerequisite for implementing a UN treaty against transnational organized crime which Japan signed in 2000. "We will uphold the law in an appropriate and effective way to protect people's lives," Abe told reporters after the legislation passed. "Three years ahead of the Tokyo Olympic and Paralympic Games, we hope to cooperate with the international community to prevent terror," he added.

### 'Forced vote'

The bill was revised several times over the years as earlier versions met with fierce resistance and never made it through parliament. The latest version reduced the number of targeted crimes to around 270 offences and narrowed the definition of terrorist and criminal organisations. Earlier versions encompassed more than 600 crimes, many unrelated to terrorism or crime syndicates.

The opposition has warned that petty crimes could fall under the scope of the law, and mocked Japan's justice minister when he earlier conceded that, hypothetically, mushroom hunting could be targeted if the fungi were stolen to raise money to fund terrorism. But even the slimmed-down legislation gives police and investigators too much leeway, some said. "What comes next will probably be legislation allowing police to wiretap and eavesdrop on telephone and every day conversations," said Setsu Kobayashi, a constitutional expert and professor emeritus at Keio University. Japanese police have relatively limited access to wiretapping.

"The law makes it possible for authorities to investigate even before a crime has been committed," said Hisako Tsuruta, 63, at a protest outside parliament Thursday afternoon. "The activities of civil society and labour groups could come under surveillance." The opposition chastised Abe for trying to push the law through quickly, as he faces mounting criticism over allegations that he gave friends special consideration in a couple of unrelated business deals.

"This is an ultimate form of forced vote-it shut down sensible debate," Renho, head of the leading opposition Democratic Party who goes by one name, told reporters. Some Japanese media have likened the bill to the World War II-era "public order maintenance law" under which ordinary people were arrested for political offences, exercising labor rights and anti-war activities.—AFP

# RODMAN GIVES KIM THE GIFT OF TRUMP: 'THE ART OF THE DEAL'

## LOW-KEY TRIP FOR THE FLAMBOYANT EX-NBA STAR

**PYONGYANG:** Dennis Rodman has delivered a message from President Donald Trump to North Korea - sort of. Yesterday, the former NBA player gave the country's sports minister a copy of Trump's book "The Art of the Deal," a present intended for North Korean leader Kim Jong Un. It wasn't signed by Trump, who was Rodman's boss for two seasons of the "Celebrity Apprentice" reality TV show. Rodman has said his visit has nothing to do with the White House. Some other highlights of what has so far been a low-key Pyongyang trip for the often flamboyant celebrity, who has visited the North four times before:

### Hanging with athletes

While his previous visits in 2013 and 2014 often drew controversy, Rodman has said this week he's just here to meet old friends and have a good time. He and his small entourage have been spending time hanging out with young North Korean basketball players and visiting local sights. He watched a North Korean men's basketball team and met Sports Minister Kim Il Guk. Along with the Trump book, other gifts he presented for Kim Jong Un include a copy of "Where's Waldo? The Totally Essential Travel Collection," a mermaid puzzle, two sets of soap and two autographed jerseys. Rodman also met North Korean Olympic athletes, including judo gold

medalist An Kum Ae. "All of you guys should be proud of yourselves, because, you know, a lot of people don't give you guys credit, because this is such a small country, and not many people from North Korea can compete around the world," Rodman said. He continued: "But for you guys to come back here in your country, with a medal, that says a lot about North Korea, because people don't really take North Korea so seriously about sports or anything like that."

### An old friend

Rodman, one of the only Westerners to have personally met Kim Jong Un, has been criticized for a prior trip where he sang "Happy Birthday" to Kim and suggested an American missionary was at fault for his own imprisonment in North Korea, remarks for which he later apologized. But the sports minister made clear Rodman is viewed fondly in Pyongyang. "In the past, our respected supreme leader met you several times and he used his precious time to watch the basketball match with the players you brought here. In the past he met you, so our people all know you well," Kim Il Guk told Rodman. "And also we feel that you are an old friend."

### No role in student's release

Rodman's arrival on Tuesday came just hours after the North decided to

release Otto Warmbier, an American university student who had been imprisoned for 15 years with hard labor for trying to steal a propaganda banner. Warmbier, who had been confined for 17 months, has apparently fallen into a coma not long after his confinement began and Pyongyang issued a statement yesterday saying it decided to let him go for "humanitarian reasons." Officials in Washington and Pyongyang said Rodman played no role in the release. Behind-the-scenes discussions regarding Warmbier had been underway well before his visit.

The 22-year-old Warmbier, a University of Virginia undergraduate, was convicted and sentenced in a one-hour trial in North Korea's Supreme Court in March 2016. He got 15 years in prison with hard labor for subversion after he tearfully confessed that he had tried to steal the propaganda banner. His father, Fred Warmbier, told Fox News that his son was "terrorized and brutalized" and has been in a coma for more than a year.

The report of Warmbier's release on the North's official Korean Central News Agency made no mention of Warmbier's health. Although US citizens are not banned from visiting North Korea, the US State Department strongly advises against it. With Warmbier's release, three other Americans remain imprisoned in North Korea.—AP



**PYONGYANG:** Former NBA basketball star Dennis Rodman presents a book titled "Trump The Art of the Deal" to North Korea's Sports Minister Kim Il Guk. — AP

## BLAST IN KINDERGARTEN

**BEIJING:** An explosion rocked a kindergarten in eastern China yesterday, injuring an unknown number of people including children, local police said. A photo posted by Chinese media online shows several women and children sitting or lying on the ground, some bleeding. One woman is clutching her child, who is in tears. The blast occurred at the gate of the kindergarten as children were leaving the school in the afternoon,

according to the Xinhua news agency, citing the emergency office of Xuzhou city. An official at the police station in Fengxian county in Jiangsu province told that the cause of the explosion was under investigation.

"There were some children injured," the official said. The images circulating online showed more than a dozen people outside a building, many lying on the concrete and some appearing to be uncon-

scious, including a small child. The force of the blast tore the clothes off some people. It is the latest tragedy to strike a kindergarten in China in recent weeks. A school bus packed with kindergarten pupils erupted in flames inside a tunnel in eastern Shandong province on May 9, killing 11 children, a teacher and the driver. Officials later said the fire was intentionally set by the driver, who was angry at losing overtime wages.—AFP



**MANILA:** This file photo taken on June 01, 2017 shows Philippine President Rodrigo Duterte gesturing as he gives a speech during the mass oath taking of officials of various national leagues at the Malacanang Palace in Manila.—AFP

## DUTERTE TAKING A REST AS CITY BURNS

**MANILA:** Philippine President Rodrigo Duterte has withdrawn from public duties this week because he is tired and needs to "rejuvenate", his spokesman said yesterday as government forces battled Islamist militants in the biggest crisis of his rule. Duterte, 72, has not been seen in public since Sunday and missed a scheduled appearance the following day at annual Independence Day celebrations in Manila, sparking speculation about the state of his health.

"He's just taking some time off to rejuvenate," presidential spokesman Ernesto Abella told reporters. Abella said there was no date for when Duterte would resume his official duties, although he insisted the president was healthy. "I'm saying that there's nothing to worry about in terms of sickness," he said. "The president is well." Pressed by journalists to state whether Duterte had visited a doctor this week, Abella said: "I'm not privy to those matters but I'm sure he's checked with his own experts." Duterte was last seen in the southern city of Cagayan de Oro, visiting soldiers wounded in nearby fighting with Islamic State group-styled gunmen that is now on its fourth week.

Fifty-eight soldiers and police officers have died in the clashes in Marawi city, while at least 26 civilians have also been confirmed killed. The militants remain holed up in pockets of Marawi alongside hundreds of trapped civilians being used as hostages or human shields. Duterte imposed martial law over Marawi and the rest of the southern region of Mindanao, home to 20 million people, on the day the fighting erupted to head off what he said was an attempt by IS to carve out its own territory there. Abella said Duterte was taking time off because of a punishing schedule since then, which included regular visits to military camps and hospitals to support troops.

"It has been really brutal, so it is important to allow him this kind of rest," Abella said. Duterte had repeatedly denied during last year's presidential election campaign that he suffered from cancer. However he said last December that he used to take fentanyl, a highly addictive synthetic opioid, to ease the pain of a spinal injury that he suffered in motorcycle accidents many years earlier. Duterte said then his doctor made him stop using it on learning he was "abusing the drug" by using more than the prescribed amount. Duterte's fentanyl comments attracted controversy as he has led a war on drugs in which thousands of addicts and users have been killed. Under the constitution, the separately elected vice president shall act as president if the incumbent dies, is permanently disabled or removed from office.—AFP

# Friday Times Lifestyle

FRIDAY, JUNE 16, 2017

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

This photo shows Yoga instructor Meridith Lana teaching her students during a 'Goat Yoga' class organized by Lavenderwood Farm in Thousand Oaks, California. — AFP

## Yoga with goats craze takes off in US

# Anita Pallenberg, actress and Stones muse, dead at 73

**A**nita Pallenberg, the globe-trotting actress and model who was best known as part of a love triangle within The Rolling Stones, has died, friends said Wednesday. She was 73. Pallenberg, who long struggled with drugs and alcohol, died Wednesday of unspecified causes, actress and friend Stella Schnabel announced on Instagram. Born in Rome to ethnically German parents, Pallenberg had an itinerant youth as she moved to New York to mingle in Andy Warhol's avant-garde art circles before heading to Paris to work as a model. She eventually landed cinema roles, most notably "Barbarella," the 1968 science-fiction film about a future world government starring Jane Fonda.

She would become called an unofficial member of The Rolling Stones, a rare woman in the studio who offered her input on the direction of the 1968 album "Beggars Banquet." She met the Stones in 1965 when she offered them hashish backstage before a concert in Munich, where she was on a modeling assignment. She soon began a two-year relationship with Brian Jones, the Stones guitarist who was the initial leader of the band. "Then he turned into a kind of schizo. He got aggressive and abusive," Pallenberg said of Jones in an interview with the now defunct magazine Cheap Date.

On a vacation in Morocco in 1967, fellow Stones guitarist Keith Richards spotted Jones beating Pallenberg, she later recounted. She left Jones—who would die in 1969 — and became the girlfriend of Richards with whom she had three children, one of whom died in infancy. "A most remarkable woman. Always in my heart," Richards, who remained friendly with Pallenberg after their relationship ended in the late 1970s, wrote on Twitter. Pallenberg, who would go on long drug and alcohol binges, sobered up in the late 1980s. She divided time between London and Jamaica and embarked on various projects, including importing textiles from India, but largely kept a low profile.

She told The Guardian in 2008 that she decided not to write an autobiography, saying she spoke to several publishers and "they all wanted salacious." Singer Marianne Faithfull, who was involved in the late 1960s with Stones frontman Mick Jagger, described Pallenberg as a lifelong friend in a tribute on Facebook. "She taught me so much, especially after we got clean; it was very good, and so much fun! Farewell my love, go well." — AFP



This file photo taken on May 12, 1971 shows Rolling Stone guitarist Keith Richard (right), his actress wife Anita Pallenberg, and their children arrive at for the 25th International Cannes film festival to show their support for the screening of the documentary film 'Gimme Shelter' chronicling the last weeks of The Rolling Stones' 1969 US tour. — AFP

## FROM BLEEPS OF 'PONG' AND 'MARIO,' GAME MUSIC COMES OF AGE

**T**he electronic bleeps and squawks of "Tetris," "Donkey Kong" and other generation-shaping games that you may never have thought of as musical are increasingly likely to be playing at a philharmonic concert hall near you.

From the "ping ... ping" of Atari's 1972 groundbreaking paddle game "Pong," the sounds, infectious ditties and, with time, fully-formed orchestral scores that are an essential part of the sensory thrill for gamers have formed a musical universe. With its own culture, sub-cultures and fans, game music now thrives alone, free from the consoles from which it came.



In this June 1990 file photo, Tetris, an addictive brain-teasing video game, is shown as played on the Nintendo Entertainment System in New York.

When audiences pack the Philharmonie de Paris' concert halls this weekend to soak in the sounds of a chamber orchestra and the London Symphony Orchestra performing game music and an homage to one of the industry's stars, "Final Fantasy" Japanese composer Nobuo Uematsu, they will have no buttons to play with, no characters to control. They're coming for the music and the nostalgia it triggers: of fun-filled hours spent on sofas with a Game Boy, Sonic the Hedgehog and the evergreen Mario. "When you're playing a game

you are living that music every day and it just gets into your DNA," says Eimear Noone, the conductor of Friday's opening two-hour show of 17 titles, including "Zelda," "Tomb Raider," "Medal of Honor" and other favorites from the 1980s onward.

### Remixing game music

"When people hear those themes they are right back there. And people get really emotional about it. I mean REALLY emotional. It's incredible." Dating the birth of game music depends on how one defines music. Game music scholars - yes, they exist - point to key milestones on the path to the surround-sound extravaganzas of games today. The heartbeat-like bass thump of Taito's "Space Invaders" in 1978, which got ever faster as the aliens descended, caused sweaty palms and was habit-forming. Namco's "Pac-Man," two years later, whetted appetites with an opening musical chirp. For fun, check out the 2013 remix by Dweezil Zappa, son of Frank, and game music composer Tommy Tallarico. Their take on the tune speaks to the sub-culture of remixing game music, with thousands of redos uploaded by fans to sites like ocremix.org - dedicated, it says, "to the appreciation and promotion of video game music as an art form."

Based on the Russian folk song "Korobeiniki," the music of the 1984 game "Tetris" has similarly undergone umpteen remixes - including "Tetris Meets Metal," with more than 2.2 million views on YouTube. By 1985, the can't-not-tap-along-to-this theme of "Super Mario Bros.," the classic adventure of plumber Mario and his brother Luigi, was bringing fame for composer Koji Kondo, also known for his work on "Legend of Zelda." Both are on the bill for the "Retrogaming" concert in Paris. Kondo was the first person Nintendo hired specifically to compose music for its games, according to the 2013 book, "Music and Game." —AP

## Pakistani-American makes Hollywood rom-com debut

**G**rowing up in Pakistan's chaotic megacity of Karachi, Kumail Nanjiani never imagined he would one day star in a Hollywood rom-com, let alone be a leading man in Donald Trump's America. "The Big Sick," opening in selected cinemas on June 23, brings to the big screen the real-life story of how the 39-year-old comedian met and fell in love with his American wife, Emily Gordon. It narrates their courtship, Nanjiani's strict Muslim parents trying to set him up with an arranged marriage and Emily falling gravely ill, forcing him to take charge and build a relationship with her parents.



Kumail Nanjiani

Nanjiani and Gordon co-wrote the script and filmed the movie long before Trump's election, but the president's attempts to ban visa-holders from certain Muslim countries, has given the film renewed potency. Its challenge of stereotypes in US popular culture, portraying Muslims as regular people rather than terror suspects or fighters, has taken on even greater significance than initially intended. "Obviously it would be great if our movie came out and people didn't see it as a political statement because it really isn't. It is just a love story and a comedy," Nanjiani was quoted as saying by Variety at the Los Angeles premiere.

The movie premiered at the Sundance Film Festival, ironically on the day of Trump's inaugu-

ration, and Amazon acquired the distribution rights for a reported \$12 million, allegedly one of the biggest deals in Sundance history. Nanjiani, who plays a tweaked version of himself, stars opposite Zoe Kazan as Emily, and Ray Romano and Holly Hunter as her parents. The son of strict Muslim parents from Pakistan's teeming business capital on the Arabian Sea, Nanjiani moved to the United States to study at Grinnell, a liberal arts college in Iowa in 1997. He got into comedy at university, and after graduation moved to Chicago, where he worked in computer science by day and performed stand-up gigs at night. He likes to say that he was inspired to get into comedy by British actor Hugh Grant's best-man speech in 1994 film "Four Weddings and a Funeral."

### 'Great for morale'

But if Grant personifies a certain type of stammering Englishman, Nanjiani has joined a stable of US comedians treading ground more commonly associated with public intellectuals than gags for laughs. At a stand-up performance in New York to promote the movie, he joked about the difficulty of getting US citizenship, getting racist abuse on Twitter and being able to vote in last year's election—"It really made a huge difference!" "People are like 'go back to India!' I've never been to India," he deadpanned, claiming he fantasized about being able to rescue a racist from danger to "see the awkward look on their face."

The venue, just off Times Square, was nearly full. Pre-release publicity has sent Nanjiani's profile soaring from his previously most prominent role as Dinesh, an information technology geek on HBO series Silicon Valley. When he returned to Grinnell to deliver the commencement address last month, he spoke of being heckled with racist abuse at gigs and rejected at auditions for not being "American" or "good looking" enough.—AFP



Attendees listen as conductor Alan Gilbert leads the New York Philharmonic in a free concert.



Conductor Alan Gilbert leads the New York Philharmonic in a free concert in New York's Central Park.

## IN TENSE TIMES, TOP CONDUCTOR CREATES UN OF ORCHESTRAS

In his eight years leading the New York Philharmonic, Alan Gilbert has witnessed the power of music to connect cultures—and watched as political strife consumes much of the world. Closing his tenure in one of classical music's most prestigious positions, Gilbert is planning a next chapter by creating a sort of United Nations of orchestras. Dubbed Musicians for Unity, Gilbert envisions a group of artists from around the world who can come together at short notice.

The musicians will "play concerts that express hope for peace and cooperation and shared humanity," he told AFP. Gilbert experimented with the idea last week as he led his last series at the Philharmonic's home in Lincoln Center. At his invitation, the orchestra was joined by musicians from 24 countries that often have sour political relations with the United States or one another including China, Cuba, Iran, Iraq, Israel, Russia and Venezuela.

If the project sounds utopian, Gilbert is clear-eyed about the limits. He recalled that the New York Philharmonic in 2008 played a landmark concert in North Korea that brought some audience members to tears. Yet Gilbert acknowledged that tensions surrounding the nuclear-armed communist state have grown since. Still, Gilbert believes that music can only be a positive force in a world where conventional diplomacy can come up short. "I do think that in this day, the talking is not exactly working," Gilbert said. "Even though it's an age-old cliché, music's capacity to communicate without words is really unparalleled," he said.

### Concerts for major events

Plans for Musicians for Unity—including how it will secure funding—are still in their infancy, but Gilbert envisions starting modestly with two to three concerts a year. Occasions could include a concert in 2018 to mark the centennial of the birth of anti-



Conductor Alan Gilbert leads the New York Philharmonic in a free concert in New York's Central Park. — AFP photos

apartheid icon Nelson Mandela. While joking that Musicians for Unity will not be "ambulance chasers," he said the artists could have convened for major events such as the launch of the Paris accord on climate change—which has since taken a blow with US President Donald Trump's plans to withdraw from it.

Gilbert has closely coordinated his idea with the United Nations, and UN Secretary General Antonio Guterres has sent a message of support. The New York Philharmonic performed inside the General Assembly Hall as Guterres took over from Ban Ki-moon in December, playing selections including Beethoven's

Symphony No. 5, one of music's defining works of hope. Gilbert has also taken inspiration from Karim Wasfi, conductor of the Iraqi National Symphony Orchestra, who was among the guests for his Philharmonic finale. Wasfi has turned up with his cello to play in the aftermath of bombings in Baghdad, assuaging pain through the soothing power of music.

### Reaching outside Western canon

Gilbert—the first New York-born music director of the Philharmonic, in which both of his parents were violinists—has championed new work as well as international travels since he took up the baton in 2009. He will be succeeded by Dutch conductor Jaap van Zweden, seen as more in the traditional mold of conductor who demands exacting performances of classics. Gilbert on Tuesday began to guide the Philharmonic in a series of free concerts across all five New York boroughs, presenting well-known works including Dvorak's "New World Symphony."

Yet for his final series at Lincoln Center, Gilbert made eclectic selections including a piece by Kinan Azmeh, the Syrian-born clarinetist who marries Arabic and Western classical music. Guests included Yo-Yo Ma, the celebrated cellist who has tried to find musical commonalities across cultures with his Silk Road Ensemble. Gilbert hoped Musicians for Unity would both present the Western canon and explore music from other traditions. "I think Bach is definitely universal and to play a Beethoven symphony can be a powerful experience for anybody anywhere," he said. "I certainly don't see it as any cultural imperialism," he said. "But I'm personally also very interested in learning about other classical music, as Yo-Yo refers to it." — AFP

## Beatty, Freeman, Woody Allen fete Diane Keaton at AFI gala



Filmmaker Woody Allen, left, greets actress Diane Keaton onstage to give her the 45th AFI Life Achievement Award during a gala tribute to Keaton at the Dolby Theatre. — AP photos

Diane Keaton is such a special entertainer that even normally reclusive Woody Allen is appearing in a televised tribute to her. Allen is among those honoring the actress in the American Film Institute's presentation of its 45th Life Achievement Award. The AFI's "Tribute to Diane Keaton" will premiere Thursday night on TNT.

Warren Beatty, Morgan Freeman, Reese Witherspoon, Jane Fonda and Emma Stone also paid homage to Keaton during a gala ceremony last week in Hollywood. Steve Martin and Martin Short performed a musical roast of the actress. Allen, who directed Keaton to her Oscar-winning performance in "Annie Hall," said he owes much of what he's accomplished in his life to her. — AP



Actress Rachel McAdams walks onstage.



Actor/filmmaker Warren Beatty gestures to actress Diane Keaton in the audience during the event.



Actress Meryl Streep walks onstage.



An employee of Japan's cooked rice processing machine maker SUZUMO demonstrates their automatic sushi wrapping machine at the International Food Machinery and Technology Exhibition in Tokyo. — AFP photos

## SUSHI CHEF IN A DAY: JAPAN FOOD FIRMS SHOWCASE TASTY TECHNOLOGY

From edible ink printers to chicken stick conveyor belts, Japan's food firms put it all on the menu at an industry show this week with one bold exhibitor claiming it could turn anyone into a top sushi chef. Newmind's color printers can graft almost any image—a country flag, Hello Kitty face or message to a loved one—onto cookies and other food just like a conventional printer. Best of all, you can eat the ink. Over at Kojima Giken's booth, a machine plunged wooden skewers into diced chicken and leek bits as they passed along a conveyor belt.

The result is a wildly popular grilled snack called yakitori, usually accompanied by copious amounts of beer. The company says its machines can churn out anywhere from 300 to 20,000 yakitori sticks an hour depending on the size of the machine. "And we can skewer pretty much anything," said founder Minoru Kojima. "Just last year, we designed a big machine to make fruit and vegetables on sticks—the kind of things you eat at parties. We sold them in France." There were nearly 800 exhibitors at the International Food Machinery and Technology Exhibition in Tokyo, which wraps up Friday.

Suzumo Machinery has a device that combines rice, spicy green wasabi paste and fresh fish before wrapping the sushi in a clear plastic wrap stamped with an expiration date — at a rate as quick as 2,000 pieces an hour. "Making sushi is a difficult thing and require skills that take about from three to five years to acquire," said Suzumo's Ryosuke Murai. "With this machine, you can become a sushi chef in a day." — AFP

## Kyrgyz animations tackle bride kidnapping stigma

Sports journalist Gulzhan Turdubayeva still cries when she thinks about the day she was kidnapped, taken to the home of an unknown man and told she would marry him. "He was quite short. Apart from that I cannot remember much about him," Turdubayeva, who lives in the Central Asian country of Kyrgyzstan, said of the ordeal three years ago. "I had never even met him before." The practice of bride kidnapping, known locally as Ala-Kachuu, is widespread in the conservative Muslim-majority nation. An estimated 12,000 women and girls are abducted every year in Kyrgyzstan often with the connivance of their relatives—and offered to a potential husband, according to the UN.

Turdubayeva resisted and, in the end, she managed to get away unmarried. Many others aren't so lucky. Now her story and those of four other women have been turned into short animations as part of a project aimed at lifting the veil on bride kidnapping. "People see the drama of bride kidnapping in a girl getting bundled into a car by several men, but often it doesn't happen like that," said Tatyana Zelenskaya, one of the artists behind the "One Day They Stole Me" series. "The real drama (comes) later when the would-be in-laws were persuading her to stay," Zelenskaya said. "How did they impose their will on her in that moment and why did she accept the marriage? This is what I wanted to understand."

### 'I will never forgive'

Turdubayeva appears as "Nargiza" in one of the short cartoons. Sketched in thick dark lines, it tells of her scheming aunt and how she was tricked into being driven to an unknown man's home under the pretence of getting a lift home from work. "My mother is still in contact with her, but I will never forgive her," Turdubayeva said of her aunt through tears. Other cartoons in the series are even darker. In one of them, a heroine named Begaim is raped by the man she is supposed to marry, a common danger for women subjected to bride kidnapping. In another, the marriage ends in divorce.

So far, the animations have only been shown as clips on YouTube which have been embedded by local media, but Zelenskaya is hopeful they might one day be shown on national television. In a sign of how sensitive the issue remains in Kyrgyz society, Turdubayeva is the only one of the five heroines to publicly reveal her identity. While Turdubayeva has been widely applauded for coming forward, she has

also received hate mail on social networks, where the clips have been widely shared. The abusive messages came mostly from men. "Some of them told me, 'You're a fool, you should have stayed with him. You are both Kyrgyz, which is the main thing,'" she told AFP.

### Slow to change

The problem of bride kidnapping has deep roots in Kyrgyzstan. As in other parts of the former Soviet Union, including the Caucasus, bride kidnapping pre-dates Communism, which failed to completely eradicate the practice. Kidnappings surged after the impoverished country's independence from Moscow in 1991, as the country went into economic freefall. Some experts have linked the practice to the economy, and specifically rural families' inability to pay high bridal prices, which are often reduced in cases where the bride is kidnapped.

Traditional arranged marriages, such as those seen in neighboring Tajikistan and Uzbekistan, are less common in Kyrgyzstan. Zulfiya Kochorbayeva, an expert at the Agency of Social Technologies, a non-profit group, adds that young rural men and women "lack places where they can socialize and build relationships." "I remember at my school, one of my schoolmates was stolen straight from the graduation ball," Kochorbayeva recalled. "Around half of my schoolmates got married in this way," she said.

### Criminal offence

Kyrgyz officials say incidents of bride kidnapping are declining thanks to tougher legislation, including a 2012 law that specifically targets such kidnappings with prison terms of up to 10 years. Kochorbayeva told AFP there had been recent instances of kidnappers receiving criminal sentences, alongside a push from civil society to curb the phenomenon. But a UN report published in 2016 found that almost a third of people in the country were still unaware that bride kidnapping is a criminal offence.

And Kochorbayeva said instances of girls or women reporting the crime remain the exception. "The rate of discovery is still very weak," she said. "It is difficult for girls to file complaints, considering their own families may not support them." She says that reflects Kyrgyzstan's patriarchy. "Here, the older generation decides the fate of the younger generation. That's the essence of a patriarchal society." — FP



A Kyrgyz man rides to catch a woman wearing a traditional bridal gown during a folk festival. — AFP photos



Sports journalist Gulzhan Turdubayeva.



This photo shows employees of an information technology company exercising together in their office after lunchtime in Tokyo. — AFP photos



An employee of the Tokyo-based electrical equipment manufacturing company Fujikura stretching with playground equipment at the company's health activity room.



This photo shows employees of an information technology company exercising together in their office after lunchtime in Tokyo. — AFP photos



Employees of an information technology company exercising together in their office after lunchtime in Tokyo.



An employee of the Tokyo-based electrical equipment manufacturing company Fujikura checking his blood pressure.



An employee of the Tokyo-based electrical equipment manufacturing company Fujikura checking his health at the company's health care room.

## Japan limbers up with monkey bars, radio drills

**A**t the stroke of 1:00 pm, a group of Tokyo IT workers spring from their desks for a few minutes of rigorous bending, stretching and thrusting as a voice on the radio instructs them—"ichi, ni, san (one, two, three)". The suited staff are taking part in a regular calisthenics drill implemented by Adoc International, while over at electrical equipment firm Fujikura, the staff can be seen dangling from multi-coloured monkey bars.

A growing number of Japanese companies are encouraging exercise breaks, in the hope of keeping employees limber and productive for longer, as the nation contends with a shrinking labor pool and one of the world's fastest ageing populations. "Japan's population is quickly getting older and there are fewer and fewer kids—this is very big risk for companies," said Kenichiro Asano, who works in Fujikura's healthcare strategy group. With almost zero formal immigration, companies need to keep staff fit in the hope they'll work past the usual retirement age.

"Keeping workers in shape is an important corporate strategy," said Asano, adding: "Good health means a sound society and a sound company." The government wants to keep citizens healthy as the growing number of retirees with medical problems strains the public purse.

### Stay active

Adoc International's staff practice "rajio taiso", a stretching routine that is often learned in schools and dates back to the 1920s. "We chose rajio taiso because it was the simplest exercise to put in place," said Clifton Lay, who works in Adoc International's human resources department. "Most Japanese and people who grew up here already know it and have no trouble with the movements," he added. Instructions for the three-minute exercise are also played daily on public broadcaster NHK, with different sets tailored for building strength or for the elderly and disabled.

Automaker Toyota has its own in-house version, while Sony employees—ranging from blue collar assemblers to top executives—are supposed to join in a group stretch at 3:00 pm daily, although it's not mandatory. At e-commerce giant Rakuten, some 12,000 movable desks were installed when it moved its head office. Workers can switch between standing and sitting throughout the day. "I get tired easily when I'm sitting too long so it's nice to be able to stand up from time to time," said 35-year-old Rakuten engineer Liu Xiaolu.

More companies need to adopt a health-focused mindset, said Koichiro Oka, a professor of health behaviour science at Waseda University in Tokyo. "If you think it is all right not to move much on weekdays because you're exercising on weekends, you'd be wrong," he said. "A lack of exercise during the week can lead to heart disease, diabetes and other health problems," he explained.

The rajio taiso routine is considered by many as a Japanese tradition, although the idea was actually borrowed from a similar program sponsored by an insurance company in the United States. It spread quickly throughout Japan, as workplaces, schools and local communities got into the routine. The daily radio broadcast was temporarily banned by the Allied occupiers following Japan's defeat in World War II because it was seen as being too militaristic. But it was reintroduced in 1951. Today, as many as 28 million Japanese are believed to take part daily. "Doing these exercises in the morning when you arrive at work or just after lunch—when your head is not completely into working—let's you get ready and say 'OK let's do the job,'" said Adoc's Lay. — AFP



Employees of an information technology company exercising together in their office after lunchtime in Tokyo.



This photo shows Stephanie Allis struggling to maintain her concentration as a baby goat gets close during a 'Goat Yoga' class organized by Lavenderwood Farm in Thousand Oaks, California. — AFP photos



Students struggling to maintain their concentration as goats get close during a 'Goat Yoga' class organized by Lavenderwood Farm in Thousand Oaks, California.



Adonna Ebrahimi struggling to maintain her concentration as a baby goat balances on her back during a 'Goat Yoga' class organized by Lavenderwood Farm in Thousand Oaks, California.



Bonita Williams struggling to maintain her concentration as goats get close during a 'Goat Yoga' class organized by Lavenderwood Farm in Thousand Oaks, California.

## Yoga with goats craze takes off in US

Adonna Ebrahimi is stretched out on her yoga mat, struggling to maintain a cobra pose—and her composure—as a couple of baby goats do a balancing act on her back. Welcome to "Goat Yoga," the latest fitness craze sweeping the United States, where young and old are lining up for the popular classes that leave participants not only saying "namaste" but also in stitches. The new workouts taking place on farms across the country involve Nigerian Dwarf goats—miniature goats of West African origin—roaming about as yogis practice their exercise routines.

"At first, it was a bit scary because I didn't know the goats were going to jump on my back," Ebrahimi, 53, said on a recent afternoon after completing her first "Goat Yoga" class outside Los Angeles. "But then they were there and you felt the warmth of the animal and you're on the straw, in the sun, with the trees and the blue

skies around you, and it just felt so calming and peaceful."

Some 20 people and 15 goats -- 11 kids and four moms—took part in the class that was organized outdoors in a pen covered with straw. As yoga instructor Meridith Lana encouraged participants to "exhale," "pull your navel to your spine" or "watch your posture," the sound of bleating reverberated in the background, the nimble animals skipping about, jumping on people's backs, munching on their hair or a beard and licking their faces. A few also answered the call of nature.

### Priceless therapy

"They're adorable and they're friendly," said Lana after the class. "They do eat your hair, they do leave you presents on your mat but it's all in fun. "The therapy you get here is priceless." Danette McReynolds, whose family owns the



Yoga instructor Meridith Lana (right) teaching her students during a "Goat Yoga" class.





Baby goats resting during a "Goat Yoga" class.



Students during a "Goat Yoga" class.

goats, said she decided to host the classes to raise money for her 16-year-old daughter and a friend who are planning to showcase the animals at a farm show in Wisconsin this summer. "We didn't know how it was going to go but it's taken off, we're booked solid," she said. "People love it. They decompress, they cuddle the goats and relax."

Lana said interacting with the goats is an experience similar to playing with a pet, which has clinically been proven to relieve stress and improve well-being. "The happiness the goats bring is great," she said. "All animals are therapeutic but there is something about these goats that is just incredible. "You can be in a child's pose position and the next thing you know, you don't want to get up because there is a goat on your back. "If there's anything these goats allow you to be it's conscious."

Several of her students said while the goats did admittedly get in the way of the yoga stretches and poses, they were a welcome distraction that had everyone giggling and vowing to come back for more. "It was a pure release of tension, a pure release of frustration," said Judy Waters, who attended a class with her husband and several other friends, one of whom was celebrating her birthday.

"You can't really be upset when you're around a bunch of baby goats climbing around and being silly." There was also one added bonus, she said. "I didn't think about the administration in Washington once during this entire hour," Waters chuckled. "I would love to do this every week if I could."— AFP



Students struggling to maintain their concentration as goats get close during a "Goat Yoga".



Bonita Williams getting distracted during a 'Goat Yoga' class organized by Lavenderwood Farm in Thousand Oaks, California.



Yoga instructor Meridith Lana teaching her students during a 'Goat Yoga' class.



Baby goats resting during a "Goat Yoga" class .



# Meat and potatoes can be made healthier as dinner salad

By Melissa D'Arabian

**G**enerations of Americans have grown up heralding meat and potatoes as the classic dinner of choice. Who doesn't love the taste of that time-honored combination, filling our bellies with the comfort of a juicy, fatty steak and fluffy, carby spuds? Just thinking about it is enough to make us pine for the 1950s when this was considered a healthy meal. I have good news, however. I have discovered that with a little creativity, any main dish can be turned into a salad, scratching the itch without ditching nutrition. So yes, meat and potatoes can be made healthier, and lighter, which is a bonus for summertime eating.

Try my Meat and Potatoes Steakhouse Salad recipe. It stretches just one 8-ounce steak into feeding four people, which means alongside that tasty steak, each person will also be filled up with a slew of veggies. I used filet mignon because it's a lean cut of beef, and since only a couple of ounces of meat needed per person, the whole dish remains reasonably priced.

Cute baby potatoes on the salad mean you'll also feel satisfied in a way that frankly only comes from a starchy side. In fact, the entire salad celebrates steakhouse flavors, including garlicky meaty mushrooms, flash-cooked asparagus, tomatoes, blue cheese, chives and a creamy dressing

made from Dijon mustard and aromatic tarragon. It's like the steakhouse menu itself morphed into a complete meal on a plate. At 322 calories per serving, you might have steak and potatoes a little more often.

## MEAT AND POTATOES STEAKHOUSE SALAD

### Ingredients

Servings: 4  
Start to finish: 25 minutes  
6 cups of baby spinach or mixed greens  
1 8-ounce filet mignon, trimmed of visible fat  
1/2 teaspoon granulated garlic  
1 tablespoon olive oil  
8 ounces sliced white mushrooms  
2 cloves garlic, minced  
1/2 pound asparagus, steamed until just barely tender  
1/2 pound baby potatoes, boiled until tender  
4 small tomatoes, quartered  
1 ounce blue cheese, in crumbles or chunks  
3 tablespoons chopped fresh chives

### Tarragon-Dijon Dressing

2 tablespoons Dijon mustard  
2 tablespoons red wine vinegar  
2 tablespoons water

1 tablespoon olive oil  
1 teaspoon dried tarragon (or 2 teaspoons fresh)  
Salt and pepper  
Place the greens on a large platter and set aside.

### Preparation

Heat a heavy saute pan over medium high heat. Sprinkle the steak with salt, pepper, granulated garlic and half of the olive oil and then cook in the pan until cooked to desired doneness, about 3-5 minutes per side. Remove the steak from the pan and set aside to rest. In the same saute pan, add the remaining olive oil, mushrooms and garlic and cook just until mushrooms begin to soften, about 3 minutes. Sprinkle with salt and set aside.

Make the dressing: Whisk together the Dijon mustard, vinegar, olive oil and tarragon until creamy. Add salt and pepper to taste. Layer all the salad ingredients on top of the spinach and drizzle with the dressing and serve. (May be chilled if preferred, but I like the slight warmth of the steak, mushrooms and potatoes on the salad.) — AP



# COOKING ON DEADLINE:

## Greek Tabbouleh Salad

By Katie Workman

**T**his is a Mediterranean twist on a classic Middle Eastern bulgur wheat salad, with very approachable flavors. It can be served as a side dish or a main course, and even as part of a creative appetizer or meze spread. It's also a great portable dish, perfect for bringing to a potluck or serving outside for a Fourth of July get-together.

In this recipe, the bulgur "cooks" by soaking in liquid, absorbing fresh lemon juice along with the water. That really brightens up the earthy flavor (know going in that you need two hours to get the bulgur soft). It's a great dish to keep in the front of your mind during the summer months when ripe tomatoes, cucumbers and fat bunches of herbs are readily available. This recipe is adapted from my second cookbook, "Dinner Solved!"

### GREEK TABBOULEH SALAD

#### Ingredients

Serves 6 to 8 as a side dish

Start to finish: 2 1/2 hours (2 hours unattended)

1 1/2 cups bulgur wheat  
1 3/4 cups hot water  
Grated juice and zest of 2 lemons  
1/3 cup extra-virgin olive oil  
1/2 cup finely chopped onion  
1 clove garlic, finely minced  
3 tablespoons minced fresh parsley leaves  
3 tablespoons minced fresh mint leaves  
1 teaspoon kosher or coarse salt  
1/2 teaspoon freshly ground black pepper, to taste  
1 seedless cucumber, diced (peeled or not, your choice)  
1 pint cherry or grape tomatoes, halved  
3/4 cup crumbled feta  
1/3 cup slivered Kalamata olives  
2 tablespoons minced fresh oregano

#### Preparation

Pour the bulgur into a large bowl and add the hot water and lemon juice. Stir and cover. Let sit at room temperature for 2 hours, until the bulgur has

absorbed all of the liquid, or place it in the fridge for at least 4 hours. Add the lemon zest, olive oil, onion, garlic, parsley, mint, and salt and pepper to the bulgur and combine well. Stir in the cucumber and tomatoes. Add the feta, olives and oregano, and toss gently to combine.

#### Nutritional information

336 calories; 179 calories from fat; 20 g fat (5 g saturated; 0 g trans fats); 17 mg cholesterol; 358 mg sodium; 34 g carbohydrate; 6 g fiber; 4 g sugar; 8 g protein.

# From glorious highs to disappointing lows

## Recapping E3 2017

By Aakash Bakaya

Another year, another E3 'extravaganza'. It's the season where gamers from around the world revel in the blinding hype, the screaming fans and of course the most cringe-worthy of presentations. It is true that in the past few years, E3 hasn't brought the best finished products to the industry. With all the brilliant trailers and dazzling lights, the show succeeded more in achieving fan-fare than actual critical acclaim.

E3 2017 in comparison had more than its share of closet-skeletons coming on the back of the colossal upsets that were 'No Man's Sky' and 'Star Wars: Battlefront'. We won't know if this year's show will succeed in the 'acclaim' department until the games are actually released but for now we can at least enjoy the speculation, hope and wariness the latest E3 as to offer. So without any further ranting - let's get into this year's show's major highs and stinging lows.



Game enthusiasts and industry personnel walk past the Nintendo Switch exhibit during the Electronic Entertainment Expo E3 at the Los Angeles Convention Center on June 13, 2017 in Los Angeles. — AFP

### The Highs



## 1. A Way Out (EA Originals)

Let's start with my personal favourite showing of the conference. EA (of all publishers) floored me with 'A Way Out', a unique co-op, story driven puzzle-action game. Opening your trailer with the words - 'from the makers of 'Brothers: A tale of two sons' would make anyone sit up and notice but for me, someone who considers 'Brothers' to be one of the best gaming experiences they've ever had, it was an instant jaw drop. The game looks insanely fun and the co-op story of escaping a prison together with a friend online opens the door to another stellar experience from developers Hazelight. If you're into two-player campaigns or simply looking for something different - be sure to keep the release date for 'A Way Out' circled on your calendar.

## 2. Shadow of the Colossus (Sony)

This was the true highlight of Sony's conference. One of the most pristine titles of the Playstation 2 era, Bluepoint studio's 'Shadow of the Colossus' escaped my grasp when I was a wee lad growing up with my PS2. To see this gem not only return to stores but also be completely remade from the ground up is a treat almost too tempting to pass up even from an avid PC gamer like myself. Updated controls and the option to play the game as it was originally intended is the icing on this delicious cake. The release date is set for some time in 2018 as we know from Bluepoint's 'The Last Guardian' - the wait could be much much longer.





### 3. Spider-Man (Sony)

This spot was a toss-up between 'Spider-Man' and 'God of War'. Both were extended previews of what we've seen before but I think Insomniac took our collective breaths away with their latest showing of their new AAA super-hero game. I have fond memories of wasting countless hours playing their earlier Spider-Man games on the PS1 and this latest entry thankfully looks to be more of the same. The mechanics look tight, the wit and energy is every-

where and the light-hearted, colourful tone is abundant - it's everything the originals were but better. The trailer did look a bit sketchy with the numerous 'quick time events' that made the game look more like an interactive movie than a fluid video-game but hopefully they show more free flowing game-play moments in the future. Fingers-crossed for this one.



### 4. Far-Cry 5/ Beyond Good & Evil 2 (Ubisoft)

E3 2017 had its share of surprises and Ubisoft knocking it out of the park was one of them. The new 'Assassin's Creed' looks interesting, 'South Park: The Fractured but Whole' looks great but the big show stoppers were their showing of 'Far-Cry 5' and the long awaited Beyond Good & Evil 2'.

The latest entry in the 'Far-Cry' series has brought a massive amount of discussions to gaming circles but I would be lying if I claimed that the setting this time around doesn't appeal to me. The rural, rustic setting of out-back Montana simply oozes personality and the ability to go wild in a small town gone wacko opens up a ton of possibilities - a feature this franchise is most famous for. On the other-hand, a follow-up to the cult classic 'Beyond Good & Evil' is up there with 'Half-Life 3' in terms of anticipation and excitement and the sole cinematic trailer was extremely well done. How it will truly stand next to its beloved predecessor is still very much up in the air but hopefully Ubisoft can deliver.

### 5. Metroid mania (Nintendo)

The unveiling of not one but TWO new Metroid games was easily the pinnacle of this year' showcase and quite possibly the most anticipated releases of the decade. If any studio was chosen to 'win' E3, then Nintendo pretty much trampled over the competition. 'Metroid: Prime 4' and 'Metroid: Samsus Returns' couldn't be more different in terms of release but boy did they just choose the most perfect time for it.

To be fair - 'Prime 4' was only a poster and a confirmation that they are indeed working it but that was enough for this much ignored fan-base to go up in raptures. 'Samsus Returns' had a significant amount of game-play footage at the show and the re-imagining of this 1991 Gameboy release looks to be slightly different. 'Samsus Returns' is going back to its plat former roots is extremely welcome but I am not fully sold on the 2.5D ascetics which foregoes the beautiful pixelated vistas of 'Fusion' and 'Zero Mission' for a more...let's say PS1 look. Whatever happens with these releases - let's hope that Nintendo once again see's the enormous potential of their classic 'Metroid' series.



## The Lows

### 1. Creation Club (Bethesda)

Let's get this out of the way first, Bethesda's entire conference was an absolute s\*\*t-show. I don't mean to exaggerate but there's no other way to put it. A time-waste of magnificent proportions, nothing of actual value was shown apart from the 'Wolfenstein' sequel. The new VR capabilities for 'Doom' and 'Fallout 4' look decent for what it is but why would anyone play it when they already have the more comfortable and affordable option of playing it as they already are IE sitting on their ass. But at the very peak of this mountain of disappointment was the announcement of 'Creation Club' for 'Fallout' and 'Skyrim'.

Don't be fooled - this is Bethesda's second attempt at shoving paid mods into single player games and charging for a service that has been free for decades is another slap to both modding communities and gamers alike. Adding a micro-transaction system into 'Skyrim' (which is now 7 years old) while simultaneously saying they aren't working on any new 'Elder Scrolls' content at the moment is enough to cause an internet riot. Stop shoving 'Skyrim' in our faces at every single conference Bethesda and just please show us something new.



### 2. Marvel vs Capcom Infinite (Sony)

How in the world did Capcom mess this up? Releasing a Marvel game, any Marvel game in this day and age is sure to be a quick-fire success. But it looks like Capcom took 'quick-fire' much too literally in this case. Set to release in a few months, everything from the horrendous graphics to the laughable 'story' reveal looks rushed out the door with little to no evaluation. 'Injustice: 2' and 'Tekken 7' threw down the gauntlet at what fighting games can offer in this day and age but Capcom seems to have looked at the competition and run behind Chun-Li's horribly rendered face and meekly offered their surrender.



### 4. Detroit: Become Human (Sony)

'Detroit: Become Human' was one of the biggest talking points of last year's E3. From designer David Cage, most popularly known for his 'cinematic', story-driven titles - the industry was eager for another look at his latest offering. What we ended up getting was a bland and totally uninspired look at another sci-fi dystopia. The premise that looked so interesting only a year ago was squandered with by-the-numbers characters and drawn out tropes. Here, robots are beginning to rise up to 'fight the power' and suddenly want to 'destroy the system' - how very exciting!

The previous trailer showed us a detective character handling an intense hostage negotiation with another android. Now, we are fighting our oppressors (humans in this case) and taking back our freedom (what freedom did servitude androids even have and why did we program them to want such a thing?!). As you can tell, the premise has not only been done a countless times before - it looks like it's been done several times better as well. Even though the branching story choices you make actually look like they will matter but with such a cliched narrative - I'll rather watch those choices play out online.

### 3. Anthem (EA)

I might be in the minority on this but 'Anthem' was a let-down. Graphically, it might be the best looking game of the show but the moment the actual game started - I lost interest. The game has potential no doubt but the tired showing of running, gunning and looting with your friends online isn't exactly a fresh genre. MMO's have been doing it for years on PC and recently 'Destiny' has taken up that mantle on consoles. BioWare's capabilities of delivering a good story and universe have also waned drastically in the last few years and nothing from the trailer showed otherwise. It might turn out to be a ton of fun when it comes out but does it have the staying power its competitors are offering? I say it won't.



### 5. Xbox fumbles again

For the final entry, I would like to point to Microsoft. For they have done what no other gaming publisher has ever been able to do for at least 20 years. They made the reveal of a brand new console boring. The specs for the new Xbox One X are amazing and capabilities are the strongest they've ever been on a home console - so what is the problem?

Games.

Once again, Microsoft showcased a line-up of games you can either play on your PC or just ignore all too together. I am the last person to vouch for console 'exclusives' but in this case, the Xbox desperately needs it. You can play all the latest sports games on your PS4 and the same goes for its console exclusives which to no one's surprise - garnered more attention and praise than whatever Xbox was offering. They needed to blow our minds with this reveal especially when it is getting hammered in the market by the competition. Sadly, for that to happen we'll have to wait for the next E3.





**Aries (March 21-April 19)**

How you manage difficulties, find that diplomatic solution or come up with the right approach is entirely built around your talents. Your outward charm and ability to be all things to all people are what is most central to your personality. This ability to solve problems, to counsel and always to put others at ease is the key to meeting and coming to know you. Your mind cuts right through all the window dressing and gets right down to the quick. Before anyone knows it, you have the heart of most matters out front for all to see. You would make a great investigator, either in scientific research or undercover work. Your ability to get to the point is phenomenal. All partnership transactions are favored today. Follow your hunches regarding monetary affairs.



**Taurus (April 20-May 20)**

Emotional security is on your mind, and bringing home the bacon, or soy, has never been as important as it is now. You make wise decisions. You could find that a business of your own or a side business may benefit you-ask lots of questions. Flexibility is more than a virtue at this time; it is a necessity. Financial interests, including shared accounts, could be manipulated to create a more beneficial outcome. Look at this and talk it over with the other party. The beach, or some other place of enjoyment, calls out for your presence this afternoon. If you call ahead, others could meet you at the beach and perhaps, a little volleyball could ensue. Relations with family and friends are positive and they will encourage your endeavors.



**Gemini (May 21-June 20)**

As a natural peacemaker, sometimes superficial, you try to avoid all harsh and crude actions, people or things. With direct drive, you always head straight to the heart of a matter. Your perceptions are in tune with your practical issues. You will tend to get much accomplished for others today. Perhaps you are working in a service-oriented type of business. Continued hard work with no time for play may make for a bit of stress, so take the breaks you need in order to keep your great smile in place. Invite a friend or family member to enjoy the out-of-doors with you this afternoon-perhaps some outdoor sports: fishing, soccer, etc. Emotional security and a sense of belonging and nurturing are felt instinctively now.



**Cancer (June 21-July 22)**

Your burning zeal for the ideal world and your need to be part of a group of like-minded souls are major factors in your makeup. You learn and grow through your efforts to help others and to make your own inner vision a reality. Harmonizing the needs and demands of business and partnership with your personal agenda might become one of your greater balancing acts at this time. Recognition is headed your way. Look sharp! You will be thrust into the spotlight where you can positively shine. You have a high degree of motivation when it comes to giving and to personal sacrifice. You feel understanding and accepting and are easily moved by the problems of others. Psychology in all of its forms is a driving force in your life at this time.



**Leo (July 23-August 22)**

You may find that both your personal growth and your career could depend on how you can shuffle and balance an overabundance of work. Rely on your own efforts; you have what it takes to succeed. If you need help, co-workers can be unusually helpful. You will benefit from investigative mind, getting to the heart of things. This may be a tense time. This could be a very lucky day for making plans or decisions and for finding your way through just about any problem you might discover. Good advice from a guide or older person is available. Put your artistic talents to work improving your home. Colorful accents could brighten your surroundings as well as your spirit. This is a good day-much can be accomplished at work and at home.



**Virgo (August 23-September 22)**

There could be challenges today, but you are able to handle them as long as you do not expect others to agree with your advanced thinking right away. You may not find much support for your particular ideas but record them for future reference-do not push. You have a lot of energy for improving your situation. You are motivated to improve. Careful, if you become too aggressive there could be some hard feelings, especially from young people. Your ability to respond to life-to possess and nurture your own ideas and impulses may suffer some setbacks, or at least some major reorganization. You may take your work more seriously at this time. Relax as much as possible this afternoon and try not to add to the stress level.



**Libra (September 23-October 22)**

Your insight and vision into what unites people and into the dreams and mystical regions of our minds are most profound. Fun discussions with co-workers may have you considering your next weekend. You have an enchanting way of working and communicating with others and with music and the arts. New paths to work, world or personal unity are a major interest-you have a very practical sense of how to make your dreams real. A desire to purchase something that could become a prized possession is strong this afternoon. Perhaps this evening would be a good time to think and study-you have a real appreciation for ideas and thoughts. You may find yourself enjoying a long conversation, writing a letter or making a special phone call this evening.



**Scorpio (October 23-November 21)**

You will have opportunities to improve your earning potential and family security. Do not spend money frivolously today, however, as tomorrow there could be some unexpected expenses. You are very career-oriented and your personal reputation and honor is of the utmost importance. You possess a natural sense of organization and practical insight and might consider managing or supervising others. When it comes to business and career, you have a mind that is motivated to take care of business. Your thoughts and ideas are practical and your clear-sightedness makes some form of management or supervision almost unavoidable. You may enjoy some form of physical or creative expression this afternoon-sports, theatrics, arts and crafts, etc.



**Sagittarius (November 22-December 21)**

You have an incredible drive to accomplish and achieve these days. Your ambitions are backed up by the will to get things done. Be aware of your tendency for pushiness-you can be very passionate when involved in your work. You try hard and you always press on toward any goals that you have on your mind. You have an ability to work with the imagination, reaching beyond the commonplace. Consider the field of teaching-even part-time. Your enthusiasm for mystical and religious experiences would make you an excellent teacher in the areas of art and creative matters. Your sense of the unity behind things spiritual and psychological is felt by those around you. You will continue to enjoy creative experiences.



**Capricorn (December 22-January 19)**

Always going beyond convention into whatever is new, exciting and spicy, you are happy when caught up in the variety and complexity of life. Connections with people on a grand scale play an important part in your life now. Education, advertising and travel could play a part in this. Law and philosophy or religion has much potential to impact your lifestyle. You enjoy deliberation and have a very methodical mind. Able to develop sound logic and good arguments, you are practical, rather than abstract, and seldom confused. You manage to be the most popular among your co-workers today and will see much support for what you need to accomplish. A financial opportunity you once thought was lost forever may come around again.



**Aquarius (January 20- February 18)**

This is a time to take risks and dare to be a little unconventional. You will prosper through new insights, inventions and an independent point of view. Your career could open up by taking the road less traveled, by daring to be the oddball, with new approaches. Your list for keeping a good balance in your life works. Keep with your pattern of success, your example is contagious. There is a cycle of longing for home comforts, family, and real estate. Your emotions and feelings are very clear. You may find yourself serving to guide someone younger than you in matters of importance this evening. Someone you help today may not accept your ideas but be patient; you have done your job. A relationship will be getting particularly cozy.



**Pisces (February 19-March 20)**

Pace yourself and take your breaks-this day could develop into a more successful day than you think. A lot can be accomplished by the end of this day. Your thoughts are well organized and before you know it, you are on your way home. Thoughts of advancing in the workplace may bring up those old thoughts of continued education. Plans for resuming or continuing your education could be mapped out, or even begun. If you did not take your schooling seriously enough in the past, you may reconsider your options at this time. A wish could come true if you pursue it diligently. Ask the right question and you might get the right answer. Your timing is very good! This evening may be a time when you can share some quiet time with a loved one.

**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	Nigar	00227
Congo	00242	Nigeria	00234
Cook Islands	00682	Niue	00683
Costa Rica	00506	Norfolk Island	00672
Croatia	00385	Northern Ireland (UK)	0044
Cuba	0053	North Korea	00850
Cyprus	00357	Norway	0047
Cyprus (Northern)	0090392	Oman	00968
Czech Republic	00420	Pakistan	0092
Denmark	0045	Palau	00680
Diego Garcia	00246	Panama	00507
Djibouti	00253	Papua New Guinea	00675
Dominica	001767	Paraguay	00595
Dominican Republic	001809	Peru	0051
Ecuador	00593	Philippines	0063
Egypt	0020	Poland	0048
El Salvador	00503	Portugal	00351
England (UK)	0044	Puerto Rico	001787
Equatorial Guinea	00240	Qatar	00974
Eritrea	00291	Romania	0040
Estonia	00372	Russian Federation	007
Ethiopia	00251	Rwanda	00250
Falkland Islands	00500	Saint Helena	00290
Faroe Islands	00298	Saint Kitts	001869
Fiji	00679	Saint Lucia	001758
Finland	00358	Saint Pierre	00508
France	0033	Saint Vincent	001784
French Guiana	00594	Samoa US	00684
French Polynesia	00689	Samoa West	00685
Gabon	00241	San Marino	00378
Gambia	00220	Sao Tome	00239
Georgia	00995	Saudi Arabia	00966
Germany	0049	Scotland (UK)	0044
Ghana	00233	Senegal	00221
Gibraltar	00350	Seychelles	00284
Greece	0030	Sierra Leone	00232
Greenland	00299	Singapore	0065
Grenada	001473	Slovakia	00421
Guadeloupe	00590	Slovenia	00386
Guam	001671	Solomon Islands	00677
Guatemala	00502	Somalia	00252
Guinea	00224	South Africa	0027
Guyana	00592	South Korea	0082
Haiti	00509	Spain	0034
Holland (Netherlands)	0031	Sri Lanka	0094
Honduras	00504	Sudan	00249
Hong Kong	00852	Suriname	00597
Hungary	0036	Swaziland	00268
Ibiza (Spain)	0034	Sweden	0046
Iceland	00354	Switzerland	0041
India	0091	Syria	00963
Indian Ocean	00873	Taiwan	00886
Indonesia	0062	Tanzania	00255
Iran	0098	Thailand	0066
Iraq	00964	Toga	00228
Ireland	00353	Tonga	00676
Italy	0039	Tokelau	00690
Ivory Coast	00225	Trinidad	001868
Jamaica	001876	Tunisia	00216
Japan	0081	Turkey	0090
Jordan	00962	Tuvalu	00688
Kazakhstan	007	Uganda	00256
Kenya	00254	Ukraine	00380
Kiribati	00686	United Arab Emirates	00976

## OSN MOVIES HD ACTION

02:15 Metro  
04:00 Bad Company  
06:00 Fast & Furious 7  
08:15 Jurassic Hunters  
09:45 Metro  
11:30 Bad Company  
13:30 Fast & Furious 7  
15:45 Big Game  
17:30 Hitting The Apex  
20:00 Hudson Hawk  
21:45 The Man From U.N.C.L.E.  
23:45 The Blood Lands

05:25 The Muppets  
07:10 Lilo & Stitch  
08:40 Lilo & Stitch 2  
09:55 Herbie Fully Loaded  
11:40 The Muppets  
13:30 Chicken Little  
15:00 Hotel Transylvania 2  
16:30 Beverly Hills Chihuahua  
18:05 The Princess Diaries 2: Royal Engagement  
20:00 Mary Poppins  
22:20 Hotel Transylvania 2  
23:50 Chicken Little

## OSN MOVIES HD FIRST

02:00 Criminal  
04:00 Ice Age: Collision Course  
06:00 The Huntsman: Winter's War  
08:00 Finding Dory  
09:45 Batman Unlimited: Monster Mayhem  
11:15 Ice Age: Collision Course  
13:00 The Huntsman: Winter's War  
15:00 Jason Bourne  
17:00 Joy  
19:15 Pete's Dragon  
21:00 Miss Peregrine's Home For Peculiar Children  
23:15 The Martian

## OSN MOVIES HD THRILLER

01:30 Comedown  
03:15 The Purge: Anarchy  
05:15 Mission To Mars  
07:15 San Andreas Quake  
09:00 Comedown  
10:45 The House Sitter  
12:30 Mission To Mars  
14:30 Nick Of Time  
16:15 Project Almanac  
18:15 The Harvest  
20:00 The Two Faces Of January  
21:45 Deja Vu

## OSN MOVIES HD FAMILY

00:50 Lilo & Stitch 2  
02:05 Monsterville: The Cabinet Of Souls  
03:35 A Sunday Horse

00:15 The Mexican  
02:30 Gentlemen Broncos  
04:00 Camp Nowhere  
05:45 Hanging Up  
07:30 The Grand Seduction  
09:30 Camp Nowhere

11:15 Hanging Up  
13:00 Crazy On The Outside  
14:45 Lovesick  
16:45 Pixels  
18:30 Valentine's Day  
20:30 Break Point  
22:00 Undercover Brother  
23:30 Two-Bit Waltz

## OSN MOVIES FESTIVAL

00:00 WarGames  
02:00 The Man Who Wasn't There  
04:00 The Express  
06:15 The Girl  
08:00 WarGames  
10:00 The Express  
12:15 Ronaldo  
13:45 The Man Who Wasn't There  
15:45 The Yellow Handkerchief  
17:30 Ed Wood  
19:45 Boyhood  
22:30 Experimenter

## OSN MOVIES KIDS

01:15 Bamse And The City Of Thieves  
02:45 Cher Ami  
04:30 Doctor Proctor's Fart Powder  
06:00 Ratchet And Clank  
07:45 Memory Loss  
09:15 Curious George  
11:00 Garfield  
12:30 Bamse And The City Of Thieves

14:00 Ploddy Police Car On The Case  
15:30 Curious George  
17:15 Paws  
19:00 The Nutcracker Sweet  
20:30 Ploddy Police Car On The Case  
22:00 Memory Loss  
23:30 Paws

## OSN MOVIES HD

01:30 Last Action Hero  
03:45 Gridiron Gang  
06:00 S.W.A.T.  
08:00 Quantum Of Solace  
10:00 Last Action Hero  
12:15 Rise Of The Planet Of The Apes  
14:00 S.W.A.T.  
16:00 Eight Men Out  
18:00 The Horse Whisperer  
21:00 Ghostbusters  
22:45 The Legend Of Zorro

## OSN MOVIES HD

01:15 Teaching Mrs. Tingle  
03:00 The Moment  
04:30 Guilty At 17  
06:00 The Illusionist  
08:00 Into The Woods  
10:00 The Bling Ring  
11:30 Dirty Pretty Things  
13:00 The Moment  
14:30 Marie Antoinette  
16:45 Teaching Mrs. Tingle  
18:30 Planes: Fire & Rescue  
20:00 Zero Dark Thirty  
22:45 Deadline

## BBC FIRST

00:15 Doctors  
00:45 EastEnders  
01:15 Holby City  
02:15 Agatha Raisin  
03:10 Agatha Raisin  
04:00 Him & Her  
04:35 EastEnders  
05:05 The Musketeers  
06:00 Holby City  
06:55 Doctors  
07:25 Doctors  
07:55 EastEnders  
08:30 EastEnders  
09:00 Casualty  
09:50 New Tricks  
10:45 New Tricks  
11:40 New Tricks  
12:35 Casualty  
13:30 Holby City  
14:25 EastEnders  
14:55 New Tricks  
15:55 Doctors  
16:25 Doctors  
16:55 Doctors  
17:25 Doctors  
17:55 Doctors  
18:30 Doctors  
19:00 Kat & Alfie: Redwater  
20:00 Rillington Place  
21:00 Orphan Black  
21:50 Doctor Who  
22:40 Agatha Raisin  
23:30 Agatha Raisin

## COMEDY CENTRAL

00:05 The Jim Gaffigan Show  
00:30 The Jim Gaffigan Show  
00:55 Disaster Date  
01:20 Disaster Date  
01:45 Lip Sync Battle  
02:10 Disorderly Conduct: Video On Patrol  
03:00 The Daily Show With Trevor Noah  
03:25 Life Or Debt  
04:15 Disaster Date  
04:40 Disaster Date  
05:05 Disorderly Conduct:

Video On Patrol  
05:55 Bondi Ink.  
06:50 Catch A Contractor  
07:40 Lip Sync Battle  
08:05 Lip Sync Battle  
08:30 Disorderly Conduct: Video On Patrol  
09:20 Sweat Inc.  
10:10 Hungry Investors  
11:00 Life Or Debt  
11:50 Bondi Ink.  
12:40 Disaster Date  
13:05 Disaster Date  
13:30 Lip Sync Battle  
13:55 Lip Sync Battle  
14:20 Hungry Investors  
15:10 Catch A Contractor  
16:00 Gym Rescue  
16:55 Frankenfood  
17:25 Frankenfood  
17:50 Lip Sync Battle  
18:15 Lip Sync Battle  
18:39 Disaster Date  
19:03 Disaster Date  
19:27 Catch A Contractor  
20:13 Frankenfood  
20:37 Frankenfood  
21:00 The Daily Show With Trevor Noah  
21:30 The President Show  
22:00 Comedy Central Presents Comedy 3alwagef  
22:25 Impractical Jokers  
22:50 Impractical Jokers  
23:15 Lip Sync Battle  
23:40 The Daily Show With Trevor Noah

## FOOD

00:00 Rev Run's Sunday Suppers  
00:30 Rev Run's Sunday Suppers  
01:00 Private Chef  
02:00 Diners, Drive-Ins And Dives  
03:00 Man Fire Food  
03:30 Man Fire Food  
04:00 Chopped  
05:00 Guy's Grocery Games  
06:00 Barefoot Contessa: Back To Basics  
06:30 Barefoot Contessa: Back To Basics  
07:00 The Kitchen  
08:00 The Pioneer Woman  
08:30 The Pioneer Woman  
09:00 Siba's Table  
09:30 Siba's Table  
10:00 Bake With Anna Olson  
11:00 The Kitchen  
12:00 The Pioneer Woman  
13:00 Siba's Table  
13:30 Siba's Table  
14:00 Diners, Drive-Ins And Dives  
15:00 Chopped  
16:00 The Kitchen  
17:00 Bake With Anna Olson  
18:00 Chopped  
19:00 Guy's Grocery Games  
20:00 Paul Hollywood - City Bakes  
21:00 Reza Spice Prince Of Vietnam  
21:30 Reza Spice Prince Of Vietnam  
22:00 The Big Eat - Middle East  
22:30 Diners, Drive-Ins And Dives  
23:00 Chopped

Show  
04:50 Til Death  
05:15 Bette!  
05:40 American Housewife  
06:05 The Mick  
06:30 The Bernie Mac Show  
06:55 2 Broke Girls  
07:20 Late Night With Seth Meyers  
08:10 The Ellen DeGeneres Show  
09:00 The Tonight Show Starring Jimmy Fallon  
09:50 Til Death  
10:15 Bette!  
10:40 The Bernie Mac Show  
11:05 10 Items Or Less  
11:30 The Ellen DeGeneres Show  
12:20 Seinfeld  
12:45 Seinfeld  
13:10 The Middle  
13:35 The Middle  
14:00 Til Death  
14:25 Bette!  
14:50 The Bernie Mac Show  
15:15 American Housewife  
15:40 The Mick  
16:05 The Ellen DeGeneres Show  
17:00 Seinfeld  
17:30 Seinfeld  
18:00 The Middle  
18:30 The Middle  
19:00 Last Man Standing  
19:30 Baby Daddy  
20:00 The Tonight Show Starring Jimmy Fallon  
21:00 Seinfeld  
21:30 Seinfeld  
22:00 Kevin Can Wait  
22:30 Kevin Can Wait  
23:00 2 Broke Girls  
23:25 Late Night With Seth Meyers

## OSN SERIES HD FIRST

00:40 Riverdale  
01:30 Beyond  
02:20 DC's Legends Of Tomorrow  
03:20 C.S.I. Cyber  
04:10 Drop Dead Diva  
05:00 Good Morning America  
07:00 The View  
07:45 The Chew  
08:30 Riverdale  
09:20 C.S.I. Cyber  
10:10 Drop Dead Diva  
11:00 The Blacklist  
11:45 Suits  
12:30 The View  
13:15 The Chew  
14:00 Live Good Morning America  
16:00 C.S.I. Cyber  
17:00 The Amazing Race  
18:00 The Blacklist  
19:00 Once Upon A Time  
20:00 Suits  
21:00 Emerald City  
22:00 The Amazing Race  
23:00 DC's Legends Of Tomorrow  
23:50 The Blacklist

## OSN FIRST HD Home of HBO

00:00 In Treatment  
00:30 Queen Sugar  
01:15 The Leftovers  
02:15 No Contract, No Cookies: The Stella D'oro Strike  
03:00 Veep  
03:35 Silicon Valley  
04:10 LifeStories: Families In Crisis  
04:45 Sugartime  
06:40 Cinema Verite  
08:10 Jockey  
09:40 First Time Felon  
11:25 The Immortal Life Of Henrietta Lacks  
13:00 Conspiracy  
14:35 Ethel



FAST & FURIOUS 7 ON OSN MOVIES ACTION HD



FRIDAY, JUNE 16, 2017

16:10 Taking Chance  
 17:30 The Immortal Life Of Henrietta Lacks  
 19:05 Five Days  
 20:10 Chance  
 21:00 The Leftovers  
 22:00 Mildred Pierce  
 23:00 LifeStories: Families In Crisis  
 23:30 Five Days



00:00 Beyond  
 01:00 DC's Legends Of Tomorrow  
 01:50 The Blacklist  
 02:40 Riverdale  
 03:30 Beyond  
 04:20 DC's Legends Of Tomorrow  
 05:20 C.S.I. Cyber  
 06:10 Drop Dead Diva  
 07:00 Good Morning America  
 09:00 The View  
 09:45 The Chew  
 10:30 Riverdale  
 11:20 C.S.I. Cyber  
 12:10 Drop Dead Diva  
 13:00 The Blacklist  
 13:45 Suits  
 14:30 The View  
 15:15 The Chew  
 16:00 Live Good Morning America  
 18:00 C.S.I. Cyber  
 19:00 The Amazing Race  
 20:00 The Blacklist  
 21:00 Once Upon A Time  
 22:00 Suits  
 23:00 Emerald City



00:15 Face Off  
 06:05 Rewind  
 07:30 Sanctuary  
 13:55 Halo: The Fall Of Reach  
 15:10 Face Off  
 21:00 Looper  
 23:00 Rewind



00:00 Married At First Sight  
 01:00 Castle  
 02:00 Cougar Town  
 05:00 Project Accessory  
 06:00 Desperate Housewives  
 07:00 Desperate Housewives  
 08:00 Married At First Sight  
 09:00 Castle  
 10:00 Cougar Town  
 13:00 Project Accessory  
 14:00 Desperate Housewives  
 18:00 American Idol  
 21:00 Desperate Housewives



00:20 Oprah's Lifeclass  
 01:10 Promzillas  
 02:00 Cake Boss  
 02:50 Say Yes To The Dress  
 03:35 Oprah's Lifeclass  
 04:20 Little People, Big World  
 04:45 Little People, Big World  
 05:10 Toddlers & Tiaras  
 06:00 Cake Boss  
 21:00 Outdaughters: Busby Quints  
 21:50 Separated At Birth  
 22:40 Cake Boss



00:45 America's Cutest Pets  
 01:40 Wild Ones  
 02:05 Wild Ones  
 02:35 Tanked  
 03:25 Blood Lions - Bred For The Bullet



### RISE OF THE PLANET OF THE APES ON OSN MOVIES HD

04:15 Dr. Jeff: Rocky Mountain Vet  
 05:02 Untamed China With Nigel Marven  
 05:49 Wild Ones  
 06:14 Wild Ones  
 06:36 Gorilla School  
 07:00 Gorilla School  
 07:25 Dr. Jeff: Rocky Mountain Vet  
 08:15 Wild Ones  
 08:40 Wild Ones  
 09:10 Predators Up Close With Joel Lambert  
 10:05 Tanked  
 11:00 Dr. Jeff: Rocky Mountain Vet  
 11:55 America's Cutest Pets  
 12:50 Wild Ones  
 13:15 Wild Ones  
 13:45 Untamed China With Nigel Marven  
 14:40 Predators Up Close With Joel Lambert  
 15:35 Tanked  
 16:30 Untamed China With Nigel Marven  
 17:25 Deadly Islands  
 18:20 Wildest Africa  
 19:15 Tanked  
 20:10 Dr. Jeff: Rocky Mountain Vet  
 21:05 Deadly Islands  
 22:00 Wildest Africa  
 22:55 The Lion Queen  
 23:50 Untamed China With Nigel Marven



Crime & Investigation Network  
 00:00 The First 48  
 01:00 Robbie Coltrane's Critical Evidence  
 02:00 Homicide Hunter  
 03:00 Cold Case Files  
 04:00 The First 48  
 05:00 Robbie Coltrane's Critical Evidence  
 06:00 My Crazy Ex  
 07:00 My Crazy Ex  
 08:00 Evil Up Close  
 09:00 Crimes That Shook Britain  
 10:00 Homicide Hunter  
 11:00 Nightmare In Suburbia  
 12:00 Nightmare In Suburbia

13:00 My Crazy Ex  
 14:00 Evil Up Close  
 15:00 Homicide Hunter  
 16:00 Robbie Coltrane's Critical Evidence  
 17:00 Nightmare In Suburbia  
 18:00 Nightmare In Suburbia  
 19:00 Evil Up Close  
 20:00 Crimes That Shook Britain  
 21:00 Homicide Hunter  
 22:00 They Took Our Child, We Got Her Back  
 23:00 Deadly Wives



00:30 Six Degrees Of Murder  
 01:20 Murder Chose Me  
 02:10 Murder Book  
 03:00 Betrayed  
 03:48 I Almost Got Away With It  
 04:36 California Investigator  
 05:01 California Investigator  
 05:24 Deadly Affairs  
 06:12 Southern Fried Homicide  
 07:00 The Locator  
 07:25 The Locator  
 07:50 I Almost Got Away With It  
 08:40 California Investigator  
 09:05 California Investigator  
 09:30 Deadly Affairs  
 10:20 Southern Fried Homicide  
 11:10 Vanity Fair Confidential  
 12:00 The Locator  
 12:25 The Locator  
 12:50 I Almost Got Away With It  
 13:40 California Investigator  
 14:05 California Investigator  
 14:30 Deadly Affairs  
 15:20 Southern Fried Homicide  
 16:10 I Am Homicide  
 17:00 The Locator  
 17:25 The Locator  
 17:50 I Almost Got Away With It  
 18:40 California Investigator  
 19:05 California Investigator  
 19:30 Deadly Affairs  
 20:20 Southern Fried Homicide  
 21:10 Deadline: Crime With Tamron Hall  
 22:00 Who Killed Jane Doe?  
 22:50 The Vanishing Women  
 23:40 Casey Anthony: An American Murder Mystery



00:20 Street Outlaws  
 01:10 What On Earth?  
 02:00 Salvage Hunters  
 02:50 Storage Hunters UK  
 03:15 Storage Hunters UK  
 03:40 Misfit Garage  
 04:30 Container Wars  
 05:00 How Do They Do It?  
 05:30 How Do They Do It?  
 06:00 Abandoned Engineering  
 06:50 You Have Been Warned  
 07:40 Gold Divers  
 08:30 What On Earth?  
 09:20 Shipwreck Men  
 10:10 The Island With Bear Grylls  
 11:00 The Wheel: Survival Games  
 11:50 Life After: Chernobyl  
 12:40 Heavy Rescue  
 13:30 Fast N' Loud  
 14:20 Diesel Brothers  
 15:10 Fast N' Loud: Demolition Theatre  
 16:00 Abandoned Engineering  
 21:00 Fast N' Loud  
 21:50 How It's Made: Dream Cars  
 22:15 How It's Made: Dream Cars  
 22:40 Fast N' Loud: Demolition Theatre  
 23:30 Heavy Rescue



00:00 Ultimate Guide To The Presidents  
 01:00 Weapons At War  
 02:00 America's Book Of Secrets  
 02:50 Ancient Aliens  
 03:40 Your Bleeped Up Brain  
 04:30 The Universe  
 05:20 Ultimate Guide To The Presidents  
 06:10 The Universe  
 07:00 Weapons At War  
 08:00 America's Book Of Secrets  
 09:00 Ancient Aliens  
 10:00 Your Bleeped Up Brain

11:00 The Universe  
 12:00 Ultimate Guide To The Presidents  
 13:00 Weapons At War  
 14:00 America's Book Of Secrets  
 15:00 Ancient Aliens  
 16:00 Your Bleeped Up Brain  
 17:00 The Universe  
 18:00 Ultimate Guide To The Presidents  
 19:00 Weapons At War  
 20:00 America's Book Of Secrets  
 21:00 Ancient Aliens  
 22:00 D-Day: The Lost Films



00:20 Queen Of The Chase  
 01:10 Unlikely Animal Friends  
 02:00 Lion Gangland  
 02:50 Survive The Wild  
 03:45 Safari Brothers  
 04:40 My Life Is A Zoo  
 05:35 Lion Gangland  
 06:30 Survive The Wild  
 07:25 Safari Brothers  
 08:20 My Life Is A Zoo  
 09:15 Python Hunters  
 10:10 Wild Argentina  
 11:05 1000 Days For The Planet  
 12:00 Great White Code Red  
 12:55 Secrets Of The King  
 13:50 Wild 24  
 14:45 Dr. K's Exotic Animal ER  
 15:40 Predator Fails  
 16:35 Python Hunters  
 17:30 Wild Argentina  
 18:25 1000 Days For The Planet  
 19:20 Dr. K's Exotic Animal ER  
 20:10 Predator Fails  
 21:00 Python Hunters  
 21:50 Wild Argentina  
 22:40 1000 Days For The Planet  
 23:30 Great White Code Red



00:04 Boj  
 00:16 Barney And Friends  
 00:44 What's The Big Idea?  
 00:50 My Little Pony  
 01:13 Qumi Qumi  
 01:26 Transformers: Rescue Bots

01:48 Pound Puppies  
 02:11 Chuck And Friends  
 02:33 Bali  
 02:47 Kit 'n' Kate  
 03:00 Littlest Pet Shop  
 03:22 Heroes Of The City  
 03:38 Heroes Of The City  
 03:53 My Little Pony  
 04:16 What's The Big Idea?  
 04:22 Qumi Qumi  
 04:35 Barney And Friends  
 05:03 Transformers: Rescue Bots  
 05:25 Boj  
 05:38 Pound Puppies  
 06:00 Chuck And Friends  
 06:23 Bali  
 06:37 Kit 'n' Kate  
 06:43 Kit 'n' Kate  
 06:50 Thomas And Friends  
 07:01 Littlest Pet Shop  
 07:24 Heroes Of The City  
 07:40 Heroes Of The City  
 07:55 Barney And Friends  
 08:23 My Little Pony  
 08:46 Qumi Qumi  
 08:58 Transformers: Rescue Bots  
 09:21 Boj  
 09:33 Pound Puppies  
 09:56 Chuck And Friends  
 10:18 Barney And Friends  
 10:46 What's The Big Idea?  
 10:53 Kit 'n' Kate  
 10:59 Bali  
 11:13 Thomas And Friends  
 11:25 Littlest Pet Shop  
 11:47 Heroes Of The City  
 12:03 Heroes Of The City  
 12:18 My Little Pony  
 12:41 What's The Big Idea?  
 12:48 Qumi Qumi  
 13:00 Transformers: Rescue Bots  
 13:23 Barney And Friends  
 13:51 Boj  
 14:03 Pound Puppies  
 14:26 Chuck And Friends  
 14:48 Kit 'n' Kate  
 14:55 Kit 'n' Kate  
 15:01 Thomas And Friends  
 15:13 Littlest Pet Shop  
 15:35 Heroes Of The City  
 15:51 Heroes Of The City  
 16:06 My Little Pony  
 16:29 What's The Big Idea?  
 16:36 Qumi Qumi  
 16:48 Transformers: Rescue Bots  
 17:11 Boj

Word Search Puzzles

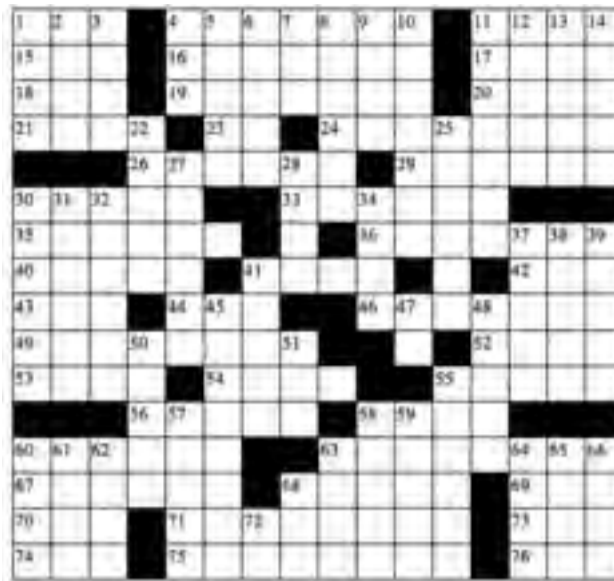
Farm

Find and circle all of the words that are hidden in the grid. The remaining letters spell a common farm animal.

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

- |        |            |           |             |
|--------|------------|-----------|-------------|
| BALER  | FARMER     | HOUSE     | SOWING SEED |
| BARN   | FENCE      | LIVESTOCK | STABLES     |
| BUTTER | FERTILIZER | MILK      | TRACTOR     |
| CAT    | GOATS      | PASTURE   | TROUGH      |
| CHEESE | GRAIN      | PIG       | TURKEYS     |
| CORN   | HARROW     | FLOW      | WEATHERVANE |
| COW    | HARVEST    | PRODUCE   | WEEDS       |
| CREAM  | HAY        | ROOSTER   | WELL        |
| DAIRY  | HEN        | SEEDS     | WHEAT       |
| DOG    | HORSE      | SOIL      |             |

CROSSWORD 1638



ACROSS

1. A caustic detergent useful for removing grease.
4. Any customary and rightful perquisite appropriate to your station in life.
11. A metrical unit with unstressed-stressed syllables.
15. Airtight sealed metal container for food or drink or paint etc..
16. Russian anarchist.
17. A feeling of strong eagerness (usually in favor of a person or cause).
18. 100 avos equal 1 pataca.
19. Large Old World butterflies.
20. God of fire.
21. A Chadic language spoken south of Lake Chad.
23. The blood group whose red cells carry both the A and B antigens.
24. Of or relating to or supporting Romanism.
26. West Indian tree having racemes of fragrant white flowers and yielding a durable timber and resinous juice.
29. A hostel for pilgrims in Turkey.
30. A support or foundation.
33. A fictitious name used when the person performs a particular social role.
35. Characterized by intense emotion.
36. A genus of Old World mints of the family Labiatae.
40. A genus of Ploceidae.
42. The 22nd letter of the Greek alphabet.
43. A lyric poem with complex stanza forms.
44. Of or relating to or characteristic of Thailand of its people.
46. Of or relating to or denoting numbers.
49. (Brit) UK decimal coin worth ten pennies.
52. Informal terms for money.
53. Tropical starchy tuberous root.
54. A strip of land projecting into a body of water.
56. English monk and scholar (672-735).
60. Twin brothers.
67. A republic in the Asian subcontinent in southern Asia.
69. An accountant certified by the state.
70. A decree that prohibits something.
71. Tending to make sober or more serious.

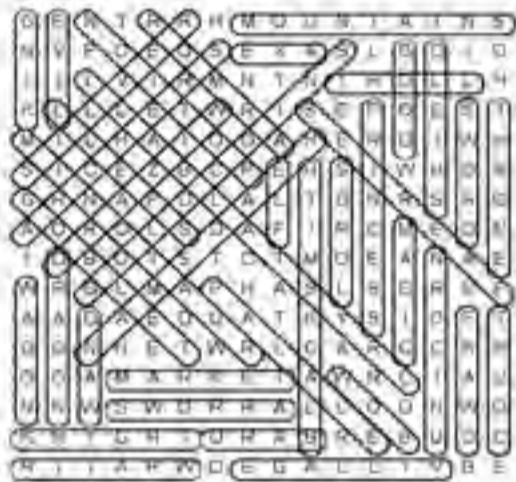
73. Psychoactive substance present in marijuana.
74. The compass point midway between northeast and east.
75. A river in central Brazil that flows generally northward (with many falls) to join the Tocantins River.
76. Consisting of or made of wood of the oak tree.

DOWN

1. Someone who works (or provides workers) during a strike.
2. Rock that in its molten form (as magma) issues from volcanos.
3. A person regarded as arrogant and annoying.
4. A loose sleeveless outer garment made from aba cloth.
5. Proceeding from or ordered by or subject to a pope or the papacy regarded as the successor of the Apostles.
6. Jordan's port.
7. Usually large hard-shelled seed.
8. (zoology) Relating to frogs and toads.
9. (British) A check given by the British government to someone who is unemployed.
10. An amine containing the double bond linkage -C=C-N-.
11. Sister and consort of Izanami.
12. A high wave (often dangerous) caused by tidal flow (as by colliding tidal currents or in a narrow estuary).
13. A large and imposing house.
14. A bachelor's degree in literature.
22. (of complexion) Blemished by imperfections of the skin.
25. A complex carbohydrate found chiefly in seeds, fruits, tubers, roots and stem pith of plants, notably in corn, potatoes, wheat, and rice.
27. (biology) Of unlike parts or organs.
28. A small cake leavened with yeast.
31. (of securities) Bought and sold on a stock exchange.
32. A number that is added to another number (the augend).
34. A strategically located monarchy on the southern and eastern coasts of the Arabian Peninsula.
37. Disposed of as useless.
38. Be going to.
39. United States choreographer noted for his use of African elements (born in 1931).
41. A rechargeable battery with a nickel cathode and a cadmium anode.
45. Someone from whom you are descended (but usually more remote than a grandparent).
47. A monarchy in northwestern Europe occupying most of the British Isles.
48. Swedish oceanographer who recognized the role of the Coriolis effect on ocean currents (1874-1954).
50. A Chadic language spoken south of Lake Chad.
51. A federal agency established to coordinate programs aimed at reducing pollution and protecting the environment.
55. A genus of tropical Asian and Malaysian palm trees.
57. Squash bugs.
58. An ancient region on the coast of southwest Asia Minor.
59. A native or inhabitant of Iran.
61. A branch of the Tai languages.
62. Flat surface that rotates and pushes against air or water.
63. A republic in western South America.
64. (prefix) Outside or outer.
65. An ancient Hebrew unit of dry measure equal to about a bushel.
66. A bag made of paper or plastic for holding customer's purchases.
68. A wooden pin pushed or driven into a surface.
72. A soft silvery metallic element of the alkali earth group.

Yesterday's Solution

Fantasy World 2



- |              |           |           |         |
|--------------|-----------|-----------|---------|
| ARCHERS      | DWARF     | LODGE     | SPELL   |
| ARROW        | SLIP      | MAGIC     | SWORN   |
| ARROWS       | EYE       | MARKET    | THROAT  |
| ARC          | FARMS     | MONUMENT  | TRAIL   |
| SARD         | GOBLET    | MOUNTAINS | WINDY   |
| BLACKSMITH   | GOLD COIN | PALACE    | VILLAGE |
| BOY          | GOOD      | POTION    | WAGON   |
| BOUNT        | HEADSMAN  | PRODIGY   | WARD    |
| CRYSTAL BALL | KING      | SHIELD    | WIZARD  |
| DRAGON       | KNIGHT    | SILVER    | WRATH   |

THE HIDDEN MESSAGE IS: THE LION, THE WITCH AND THE WARDROBE

Daily SuDoku

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

Yesterday's Solution

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

Yesterday's Solution



# CHINA LAUNCHES ITS FIRST X-RAY SPACE TELESCOPE

X-RAY SPACE TELESCOPE TO STUDY BLACK HOLES, PULSARS

**BEIJING:** China successfully launched yesterday its first X-ray space telescope to study black holes, pulsars and gamma-ray bursts, state media reported. A Long March-4B rocket carried the 2.5-tonne telescope into orbit from the Jiuquan Satellite Launch Center in northwest China's Gobi Desert at 11:00 am, according to the official Xinhua news agency. The Hard X-ray Modulation Telescope (HXMT), named Insight, will allow Chinese scientists to observe magnetic fields and the interiors of pulsars and better understand the evolution of black holes.

It will also help scientists search for gamma-ray bursts corresponding to gravitational waves and study how to pulsars can be used for spacecraft navigation, Xinhua said. "We are looking forward to discovering new activities of black holes and studying the state of neutron stars under extreme gravity and density conditions, and physical laws under extreme magnetic fields," Xinhua quoted HXMT lead scientist Zhang Shuangnan as saying. "These studies are expected to bring new breakthroughs in physics," Zhang added.

The telescope will seek out new black hole activity by repeatedly scanning the Milky Way for active celestial bodies that emit X-rays. Black holes are usually undetectable, but when matter falls into a black hole, it is accelerated and heated, emitting X-rays in the process, Zhang explained. Compared with other countries' space telescopes, HXMT has a large



**CHINA:** This recent undated photo shows the Hard X-ray Modulation Telescope (HXMT), named Insight, being lifted onto a Long March-4B rocket at the Jiuquan Satellite Launch Center in northwest China's Gobi Desert.—AFP

er detection area and broader energy range providing advantages in finding black holes and neutron stars that emit bright X-rays and making scanning the galaxy more efficient, according to Zhang. Very bright objects have a large number of photon particles, which can result in image over-exposure, but HXMT designers solved the problem by diffusing photons instead of focusing them.

"No matter how bright the sources are, our telescope won't be blinded," chief designer Chen Yong said. Beijing sees its multi-billion-dollar space pro-

gram as a symbol of its rise and of the Communist Party's success in turning around the fortunes of the once poverty-stricken nation. In April, China's first cargo spacecraft successfully docked with an orbiting space lab a key development toward China's goal of having its own crewed space station by 2022. Last month, China opened a "Lunar Palace" laboratory on Earth to simulate a moon-like environment and house students for up to 200 days as the country prepares for its long-term goal of sending humans to the natural satellite.—AFP



**TURKEY:** Children jump into Istanbul's Bosphorus Strait.—AP

## MICROSCOPIC ORGANISMS TURN ISTANBUL SHORES TURQUOISE

**ISTANBUL:** The waters around Istanbul have turned a striking shade of turquoise. A natural phenomenon called a "phytoplankton bloom" has turned the normally dark waters of the Bosphorus and Golden Horn into an opaque tone of light blue. It's caused by microscopic organisms that have inundated the Black Sea, just north of Turkey's largest city.

Berat Haznedaroglu, an environmental engineer, says it's a normal annual event. He said: "This year we got a lot of rain events that carried nutrients from the Saharan desert to the Black Sea, which created an optimal environment for this phytoplankton to bloom." Haznedaroglu works at the Institute of Environmental Sciences at Istanbul's private Bogazici University. The Bosphorus, a strait that separates Europe from Asia, also connects the Black Sea to the Sea of Marmara.—AP

CLINIC  
PAGE



Kuwait Times



Dr. Fahad Al-Mukhaizeem  
د. فهد علي المخيزيم



Consultant Pediatrician استشاري أطفال  
M.B. Bch. FRCPC. FAAP. PEM



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



## KNCC PROGRAMME FROM THURSDAY TO THURSDAY

<b>SHARQIA-1</b> Taht Al Tarabeza (Re-Release) Laf Wa Dawaran (Re-Release)	10:00 PM 12:15 AM
<b>SHARQIA-2 Seats-428</b> Min 30 Sana (Re-Release) AL FERAN (KUWAITI)	9:30 PM 12:30 AM
<b>SHARQIA-3</b> MINIONS (Re Release) KING ARTHUR: LEGEND OF THE SWORD	9:45 PM 11:45 PM
<b>MUHALAB-1</b> Laf Wa Dawaran (Re-Release) KING ARTHUR: LEGEND OF THE SWORD	9:30 PM 11:45 PM
<b>MUHALAB-2</b> RAABTA (Hindi) AL FERAN (KUWAITI)	9:45 PM 12:45 AM
<b>MUHALAB-3</b> Ashan Khargen (Re-Release) Min 30 Sana (Re-Release)	10:00 PM 12:15 AM
<b>FANAR-1</b> RAABTA (Hindi) RAABTA (Hindi)	9:30 PM 12:30 AM
<b>FANAR-2</b> DIARY OF A WIMPY KID: THE LONG HAUL Taht Al Tarabeza (Re-Release)	10:30 PM 12:30 AM
<b>FANAR-3</b> KING ARTHUR: LEGEND OF THE SWORD Laf Wa Dawaran (Re-Release)	9:45 PM 12:15 AM
<b>FANAR-4</b> Min 30 Sana (Re-Release) ALIEN: COVENANT	9:30 PM 12:30 AM
<b>FANAR-5</b> AL FERAN (KUWAITI) AL FERAN (KUWAITI) AL FERAN (KUWAITI)	10:00 PM 11:30 PM 1:00 AM
<b>MARINA-1</b> Laf Wa Dawaran (Re-Release) KING ARTHUR: LEGEND OF THE SWORD	9:30 PM 12:15 AM
<b>MARINA-2</b> Taht Al Tarabeza (Re-Release) Ashan Khargen (Re-Release)	9:45 PM 12:30 AM
<b>MARINA-3</b> DIARY OF A WIMPY KID: THE LONG HAUL Min 30 Sana (Re-Release)	10:00 PM 12:05 AM
<b>AVENUES-1</b> YO-KAI WATCH: The Movie ALIEN: COVENANT	9:30 PM 11:30 PM
<b>AVENUES-2</b> MINIONS(Re Release)-3D-4DX KING ARTHUR: LEGEND OF THE SWORD (3D-4DX)	10:00 PM 12:05 AM
<b>AVENUES-3</b> THE BOSS BABY HERE ALONE	10:30 PM 12:30 AM
<b>AVENUES-4</b> ALIEN: COVENANT Laf Wa Dawaran (Re-Release)	10:15 PM 12:45 AM
<b>AVENUES-5</b> KING ARTHUR: LEGEND OF THE SWORD DIARY OF A WIMPY KID: THE LONG HAUL	9:45 PM 12:15 AM

<b>AVENUES-6</b> AL FERAN (KUWAITI) Min 30 Sana (Re-Release)	10:00 PM 11:30 PM
<b>AVENUES-7</b> Ashan Khargen (Re-Release) Laf Wa Dawaran (Re-Release)	9:30 PM 11:45 PM
<b>AVENUES-8</b> DIARY OF A WIMPY KID: THE LONG HAUL Taht Al Tarabeza (Re-Release)	10:15 PM 12:30 AM
<b>AVENUES-9</b> RAABTA (Hindi) THE EXCEPTION <b>360°- 1</b> KING ARTHUR: LEGEND OF THE SWORD KING ARTHUR: LEGEND OF THE SWORD	9:45 PM 12:45 AM 9:45 PM 12:30 AM
<b>360°- 2</b> Taht Al Tarabeza (Re-Release) ALIEN: COVENANT	10:15 PM 12:45 AM
<b>360°- 3</b> AL FERAN (KUWAITI) AL FERAN (KUWAITI) Ashan Khargen (Re-Release)	9:45 PM 11:15 PM 12:45 AM
<b>AL-KOUT.1</b> Ashan Khargen (Re-Release) Min 30 Sana (Re-Release)	9:30 PM 11:45 PM
<b>AL-KOUT.2</b> AL FERAN (KUWAITI) AL FERAN (KUWAITI) AL FERAN (KUWAITI)	9:45 PM 11:15 PM 12:45 AM
<b>AL-KOUT.3</b> Laf Wa Dawaran (Re-Release) KING ARTHUR: LEGEND OF THE SWORD	10:15 PM 12:30 AM
<b>AL-KOUT.4</b> Safra 5 Njoom (Kuwaiti Film) (Re-Release) Taht Al Tarabeza (Re-Release)	10:00 PM 12:05 AM
<b>BAIRAQ-1</b> MINIONS (Re Release) THE BOSS BABY	9:45 PM 11:45 PM
<b>BAIRAQ-2</b> DIARY OF A WIMPY KID: THE LONG HAUL DIARY OF A WIMPY KID: THE LONG HAUL	10:00 PM 12:05 AM
<b>BAIRAQ-3</b> RAABTA (Hindi) AL FERAN (KUWAITI)	9:30 PM 12:30 AM
<b>PLAZA</b> CIA: Comrade in America (Malayalam) RAABTA (Hindi)	9:30 PM 12:15 AM
<b>LAILA</b> Taht Al Tarabeza (Re-Release) KING ARTHUR: LEGEND OF THE SWORD	9:30 PM 11:45 PM
<b>AJIAL.1</b> CIA: Comrade in America (Malayalam) CIA: Comrade in America (Malayalam)	9:30 PM 12:15 AM
<b>AJIAL.2</b> CIA: Comrade in America (Malayalam)	10:15 PM
<b>AJIAL.3</b> BAAHUBALI 2: The Conclusion -Hindi	10:00 PM

### LOST

I, Ayesha Jaffar, Eshbelia Block 4 street 429 building no. 48, hereby inviting to the notice of the public that my certificate of BCOM examination 2014 with registration no. FFALBS0003 of Calicut University have been irrecoverably lost during transit from India to Kuwait as such I intend to apply for the duplicate certificate. If anybody happens to get the originals may kindly send the same or intimate the undersigned or the university. Ayesha Jaffar S/d.  
(C 5321)  
14-6-2017

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## EMERGENCY



# 112

## Hospitals

<b>Sabah Hospital</b>	<b>24812000</b>
<b>Amiri Hospital</b>	<b>22450005</b>
<b>Maternity Hospital</b>	<b>24843100</b>
<b>Mubarak Al-Kabir Hospital</b>	<b>25312700</b>
<b>Chest Hospital</b>	<b>24849400</b>
<b>Farwaniya Hospital</b>	<b>24892010</b>
<b>Adan Hospital</b>	<b>23940620</b>
<b>Ibn Sina Hospital</b>	<b>24840300</b>
<b>Al-Razi Hospital</b>	<b>24846000</b>
<b>Physiotherapy Hospital</b>	<b>24874330/9</b>

## Clinics

<b>Kaizen center</b>	<b>25716707</b>
<b>Rawda</b>	<b>22517733</b>
<b>Adaliya</b>	<b>22517144</b>
<b>Khaldiya</b>	<b>24848075</b>
<b>Kaifan</b>	<b>24849807</b>
<b>Shamiya</b>	<b>24848913</b>
<b>Shuwaikh</b>	<b>24814507</b>
<b>Abdullah Salem</b>	<b>22549134</b>
<b>Nuzha</b>	<b>22526804</b>
<b>Industrial Shuwaikh</b>	<b>24814764</b>
<b>Qadsiya</b>	<b>22515088</b>
<b>Dasmah</b>	<b>22532265</b>
<b>Bneid Al-Gar</b>	<b>22531908</b>
<b>Shaab</b>	<b>22518752</b>
<b>Qibla</b>	<b>22459381</b>

# Friday Times BUSINESS

FRIDAY, JUNE 16, 2017

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Fall of the roaming empire: EU scraps mobile travel fees

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DOHA: This file photo shows migrant laborers working on a construction site in Doha in Qatar.—AFP

## QATAR'S MIGRANT WORKERS ON GULF CRISIS FRONTLINE LABORERS CUT DOWN TO ONE MEAL TO FIGHT CRISIS

**DOHA:** Ajit, an Indian electrician, is just seven months into his new job but right now he is a worried man, like many other members of the huge migrant workforce in Qatar. He frets not only about his job, his future in the country but also the price of food. "If this continues, there will be problems for people like us, the workers. The price of food will go up and there will be no jobs," he said. He was referring to the diplomatic crisis in the Gulf that has seen Qatar isolated after regional giant Saudi Arabia and several allied countries cut all ties to Doha.

Ajit earns 1,000 riyals a month, of which he sends 600 home to his family. He worries he won't be able to do that for much longer. "In some supermarkets, the price of rice, tomatoes and onions has increased," he said. "Where I was spending one riyal on each item, now it is double that." Ajit has come up with a solution to cope with the

rising food prices in Doha-cut down to just one meal a day.

### 'Maybe send us home'

The 31-year-old is typical of the nervous migrant workforce. As the crisis imploded, discussion has largely focused on the political and security aspects of the row between some of the globe's richest countries in one of the world's most volatile regions. But outside the corridors of power, it is Qatar's foreign workforce - totaling more than two million, mostly from south Asia—who are on the frontline when it comes to the immediate impact of the crisis.

While Qatar's Western expats are likely to ride out the economic impact, there is no such luxury for Ajit and his colleagues. The rising price of staple foods is just one of their fears. Concerns are also growing about job security and the lack of much-needed overtime as economic uncertainty

grows, due to what Doha has labeled the "blockade" imposed by neighboring countries. "I have heard people saying there will be no more jobs in Qatar," added Ajit.

A short distance away stood Anil, a 32-year-old scaffolder from Bangladesh, in blue overalls and a purple face-cover to shield from the fierce summer sun. He was resting after a morning of labor in heat of 48 degrees Celsius the rundown Doha suburb of Mshereib that is being transformed into a gleaming cafe, hotel and business area ready for the 2022 football World Cup. "Everybody is talking about this problem (the crisis)," said Anil, 32. "Some people are saying they may send us home." In just one week since Qatar was cut off, Anil said the price of the apples he buys has more than doubled, from seven to 18 riyals per kilo.

### Bad timing

"I've heard Qatar is supporting terrorists

and that's why they've been blockaded," said Abdulbariq, 38, an electrician. The Bangladeshi uses the money he earns — 820 riyals a month—to send his two daughters to school in India. "This will affect them," he fears. The Gulf crisis could not have hit the workforce at a worse time. Because of the Muslim fasting month of Ramadan, working hours have already been reduced and there is no chance to make up any shortfall through overtime.

That though is only a temporary measure. Although Qatari officials have, so far, confidently shrugged off the economic impact of isolation, that view is not shared on the country's many construction sites. "I have a father, brother, mother and sisters to look after, I send home 1,500 riyals a month," said Noor-ul-Islam, a 26-year-old mason from Bangladesh. "Definitely there will be problems for my family if this crisis continues."—AFP

## US FED RAISES KEY RATE, SIGNALS THIRD HIKE IN 2017

**WASHINGTON:** The US Federal Reserve raised its benchmark interest rate by a quarter point to 1.0-1.25 percent on Wednesday and signaled another increase remains likely this year, despite the recent spate of weak economic data. In explaining this second rate hike of 2017 and plans for more increases in the coming months, Federal Reserve Chair Janet Yellen said the move reflected the progress in the world's largest economy, which continues to add jobs at a solid pace.

"The economy is doing well, is showing resilience," Yellen said in her quarterly press conference. "We have a very strong labor market, an unemployment rate that's declined to levels we have not seen since 2001. And even with some moderation in the pace of job growth, we have a labor market that continues to strengthen." And despite recent tepid price pressures, the Fed expects inflation to pick up eventually, citing "one-off reductions" in certain categories such as cell phone services and prescription drugs as the reason for the recent lower readings.

Those factors mean the Fed's preferred inflation measure will remain below the two percent target for some time, but will gradually rise to the target level over "the medium term." But coming on a day when the consumer price index and retail sales fell, in large part due to falling food and gasoline prices, but with widespread declines in other categories, some economists are saying the Fed is no longer basing its decision on the data, as it has repeatedly said. "The third rate hike in seven months, coming not long after a relatively poor Q1 GDP print, suggests the Fed has become less data-dependent in its monetary policy decisions," Fitch Ratings Chief Economist Brian Coulton said. One FOMC member, Minneapolis Federal Reserve Bank President Neel Kashkari, dissented from the decision, preferring to keep policy on hold for now.

### Third hike coming?

Analysts in recent weeks have become increasingly doubtful there would be a third rate increase later this year, as inflation, consumption and other economic data have indicated the weakness seen in the first quarter has continued. Fed futures markets now put the chances for another rate increase this year to below 50 percent. Chris Low of FTN Financial said the Fed "compromised" by continuing the rate increases despite falling inflation, but "the market expects the Fed to take a break."

However, Yellen said business and household confidence remain quite strong, and echoed the statement from the Fed's policy-setting Federal Open Market Committee, which repeated its confidence that the economy will continue to expand "at a moderate pace" even with further gradual rate increases. Asked about the criticism, Yellen said, "I don't think ...the Fed's credibility has been impaired."—AFP



**NEW YORK:** In this file photo, specialist Anthony Rinaldi is silhouetted on a screen at his post on the floor of the New York Stock Exchange.—AP



**TOKYO:** A man looks at an electronic stock board showing Japan's Nikkei 225 index at a securities firm in Tokyo.—AP

## ASIA MARKETS SLIDE, DRAGGED BY OIL PLUNGE AND TRUMP FEARS

**HONG KONG:** Asian markets mostly sank yesterday with energy firms swiped by a dive in oil prices, while traders were also spooked by a report that President Donald Trump was being investigated for possible obstruction of justice. Crude tanked three percent on data Wednesday showing a smaller-than-forecast drop in US stockpiles and an International Energy Agency warning that global output will increase faster than demand next year as US production ramps up. The news followed the OPEC cartel's warning that higher US output was hurting its drive to address a long-running supply glut, which has hammered the oil market. Both main contracts extended losses in Asian trade. "Energy stocks will have a tough day at the office, with oil getting smashed 3.5 percent on higher gasoline inventory and we see US crude trading into the May lows now," Chris Weston, Australia-based chief market strategist at IG Markets, said. Hong Kong-listed CNOOC sank 1.5 percent and PetroChina was 1.2 percent off while in Sydney Woodside Petroleum shed 1.7 percent and Rio Tinto was down 3.7 percent.

Index lost 0.8 percent in Tokyo. The losses hurt broader stock markets, with Tokyo down 0.3 percent, Sydney losing 1.2 percent, Seoul off 0.5 percent and Singapore slipping 0.5 percent. But Shanghai closed 0.1 percent up. Hong Kong retreated 1.2 percent, with property firms also suffering hefty selling after the Federal Reserve lifted interest rates and signaled further tightening measures in the future. The city's de facto central bank followed the Fed's rate hike on Thursday, owing to a monetary policy link to the US.

### Unequivocally hawkish

Markets were given a jolt by a Washington Post story saying top intelligence officials would be questioned over allegations Trump tried to get the FBI to back away from a probe into former national security adviser Michael Flynn. The news comes as special prose-

cutor Robert Mueller looks into allegations of collusion between Trump's campaign and Russia to sway the outcome of last year's presidential election. The report added to concerns the tycoon's planned big-spending, tax-cutting, deregulating agenda—which helped fuel a months-long global rally from November-could founder.

Traders were sent scurrying last month when sacked FBI chief James Comey also said Trump had urged him to lay off Flynn. The White House has denied all the claims. The crisis engulfing the president, and the uncertainty that has brought, has kept investors on edge for months. The dollar struggled even after the Fed rate hike and its more hawkish outlook for monetary policy,

while also unveiling plans to suck cash out of the financial system by scaling back the bonds on its balance sheet.

The US central bank said it expected to lift borrowing costs for a third time this year, brushing aside weaker inflation and consumption data in recent weeks. Greg McKenna, chief market strategist at AxiTrader, said: "The Fed was unequivocally hawkish. As a result, the Fed signaled that it is not to be swayed from the path of raising rates and reducing the size of its balance sheet. "Another hike is expected in 2017 and possibly four more in 2018 — as well as the balance sheet shift." In early European trade London shed 0.2 percent, Paris slipped 0.3 percent and Frankfurt gave up 0.1 percent.—AFP

## TOKYO SHARES END DOWN AS YEN HITS ELECTRONICS FIRMS

**TOKYO:** Tokyo stocks drifted lower yesterday with investors looking past another record close on Wall Street as a pick-up in the yen hit electronics firms. The market was also spooked by a report that Donald Trump was being investigated for possible obstruction of justice linked to a probe into alleged Russia meddling in the US elections. The Washington Post report added to concerns that the tycoon's planned big-spending, tax-cutting, deregulating agenda—which helped fuel a months-long global rally-could founder.

The dollar struggled against the yen despite the Federal Reserve's decision to lift interest rates, as expected, and signal further hikes, brushing aside weaker inflation and consumption data in recent weeks. The greenback bought 109.63 yen against 109.54 yen in New York but is still well down from the levels above 110 yen in Tokyo earlier Wednesday. "The view on the FOMC (Federal

Open Market Committee) was divided so sell orders picked up and pulled down the market," Okasan Online Securities said in a commentary.

The benchmark Nikkei 225 index fell 0.26 percent, or 51.70 points, to 19,831.82 while the Topix index of all first-section issues lost 0.23 percent, or 3.68 points, to end at 1,588.09. Shares in Hello Kitty owner Sanrio fell 2.88 percent to 2,058 yen after the European Commission said it has launched probes into whether the firm, along with other major brands including Nike and Universal Studios, illegally blocked retailers from selling merchandise across the bloc's borders. Technology shares lost ground after selling hit the sector in the US again on Wednesday.

Apple supplier Sharp fell 1.53 percent to 385 yen and Panasonic sank 1.63 percent to 1,452 yen. But Toshiba shed earlier losses and ended up 1.02 percent to 316.5 yen.—AFP

## FULL STALLS, EMPTY MARKETS AS SUDAN'S ECONOMY CRUMBLES

**AWEIL, South Sudan:** "I sell the small bottle of cooking oil for 140 SSP. Six months ago, it was 70. The customers complain," said James Deng, an 18-year-old stallholder in Aweil, South Sudan. In this regional market in the country's north-west-just as at the main Konyokonyo market in the capital Juba, 800 kilometers to the south, and other towns across the country—prices of essential items have rocketed as a direct consequence of almost uninterrupted civil war since December 2013.

The South Sudanese Pound (SSP) has collapsed from 18.5 to the dollar in December 2015 to around 140 now in black market transactions in Juba. Inflation has reached record levels increasing by 730 percent in the 12 months up to August 2016, according to World Bank figures. Adam Oumar, a shopkeeper in Aweil, sells red onions for 500 SSP per 'malua', an iron container used as a measuring unit and containing about four kilograms. Only six months ago, it cost 70 pounds.

"It's now very expensive and people can't afford it anymore, so they take little," he said, standing in front of his shop, well-stocked like those of his neighbors, but lacking customers. In Konyokonyo, Saturdays used to be the busiest in the hectic market, but in early June the dense maze of uneven paths contained just a few customers, shuffling between stalls dedicated to mattresses, plastic buckets and secondhand clothing in the section run by Sudanese traders.

Vegetables are sold in an area dominated by Ugandan merchants. Kamala, a 46-year-old schoolteacher, a basket of shopping in her hand, had a frustrating morning. "I came with 6,000 pounds but just see, this basket is not filled up." She said she received her last wages in January and it was getting harder and harder to buy the basics.

### Spending savings

Kamala should receive 2,000 pounds a month, a salary that has not increased for years. In early 2016 it was worth about \$65. Now it's worth just \$15. This is a particular problem in South Sudan where almost everything is imported. "This money we are pulling out now, its money we saved for the future, to cater for issues of children, medicine or education for children. But this money, now we are finishing it for food," she said. "The first solution to this problem is for the conflict to stop. This will give us opportunity to cultivate and grow our own food," Kamala said.

In South Sudan, 85 percent of the working population is self-employed, the overwhelming majority engaged in small scale farming. But the conflict has severely disrupted agricultural production, triggering a major food crisis nationwide and even famine in some areas. The government of President Salva Kiir understands the sensitivity of the matter and ordered food trucks from neighboring Uganda to Juba at the beginning of May. The influx of subsidized food was supposed to help relieve pressure on prices, but the effect was limited.

The conflict has also hit South Sudan's oil production, its only source of foreign exchange, at the same time as global oil prices have tumbled. "Before the crisis of 2013 we were producing 240,000 barrels per day. In 2014 up to the first half of 2015 we were producing 160,000 barrels per day. To my knowledge today we are below 130,000," said finance minister Stephen Dhieu in an interview.

He added that the government is trying to rehabilitate some of the oil facilities damaged by fighting and increase production to around 160,000-180,000 barrels a day this year. The country is the world's most dependent on oil revenues, which account for almost all of its exports and for 60 percent of gross domestic product, according to the World Bank. Truckers, taxis and private individuals struggle to fill their tanks, waiting for hours in long queues outside the few petrol stations that have fuel.

The alternative is the black market where, in Aweil for example, 26 year old Sadik sells a 16 liter container of petrol for 2,800 pounds, up from 1,700 six months ago. Rather than a black market, this is in fact a parallel market, operating in plain sight, on a busy city road. The only time Sadik has any problems with officials, he says, is when they come to complain that traders are stockpiling fuel to push prices higher still, as he too tries to earn enough to live.—AFP



**BOESCHEPE:** This file photo shows a man using his mobile phone in Boeschepe at the Franco-Belgian border.—AFP

## FALL OF THE ROAMING EMPIRE: EU SCRAPS MOBILE TRAVEL FEES

### END OF ROAMING CHARGES, A TRUE EUROPEAN SUCCESS STORY

**BRUSSELS:** The EU rang in the end of roaming charges for Europeans using mobile phones within the 28-nation bloc yesterday in what under-pressure Brussels hailed as one of its greatest successes. A decade in the making, the move comes in time for the summer holidays when millions of Europeans will be on the move, and is a public relations coup at a time when the bloc is under fire over Brexit and other problems. It means Europeans calling, texting or using the internet when travelling in other EU nations will be charged the same as they are at home, instead of grossly inflated prices.

"The European Union is about bringing people together and making their lives easier. The end of roaming charges is a true European success story," European Commission chief Jean-Claude Juncker and European Parliament head Antonio Tajani said in a statement. "From now on, citizens who travel within the EU will be able to call, text and connect on their mobile devices at the same price as they pay at home. Eliminating roaming charges is one of the greatest and most tangible successes of the EU."

It remains to be seen whether Britons will continue to enjoy same-cost mobile calls and data downloads in Europe after Britain's departure from the EU, negotiations for which are due to start next week. That question has seen the EU's roaming success win support from some unusual quarters across the Channel. "Well played EU," tweeted Gary Lineker, the former England football captain and now a host on BBC television. Another ex-footballer-turned media pundit, Stan Collymore, said on Twitter: "Roaming charges abolished today in the EU, so you won't pay a penny extra over your UK phone tariff when in the EU! Until Brexit. Enjoy!" The existence of roaming charges—an important source of revenue for telecoms companies—was long seen as a "market failure" by Brussels.

The European Commission estimates the end of roaming fees will cost European telecom operators 1.2 billion euros. But the share of revenues from roaming charges already significantly declined in recent years as charges for calls and text messages dropped 90 percent since 2007 and data charges declined 96 percent since 2012 under EU regulations.

Data traffic, meanwhile, has grown 100-fold, according to the EU. "Each time a European citizen crossed an EU border, be it for holidays, work, studies or just for a day, they had to worry about using their mobile phones and a high phone bill from the roaming charges when they came home," Juncker and Tajani said. "Roaming charges will now be a thing of the past." They noted the abolition of the practice had "been a long time coming, with many actors involved". Nevertheless, "by working closely together, the European Union

has delivered a concrete, positive result for European citizens".

Worried by the rise of euroskeptic parties in recent years, the EU has seized upon the end of roaming to promote itself as a solution to Europe's problems, rather than a cause of them.

The European Commission has hung a huge colored banner down the side of its Brussels headquarters saying "Goodbye roaming fees" in English, French and German, along with a smiley face emoji.

Scrapping roaming charges was "a good day for all European citizens!" said Manfred Weber, a key ally of German Chancellor Angela Merkel who heads the largest group in the European Parliament, the centre-right European People's Party. Social Democrat leader Gianni Pittella of Italy meanwhile tweeted that because of the end of roaming: "We all are a bit more European!"—AFP

## NEW ZEALAND'S ECONOMIC GROWTH MISSES EXPECTATIONS

**WELLINGTON:** New Zealand's economy grew a "moderate" 0.5 percent in the January-March quarter, official data showed Thursday, falling short of market expectations as the construction sector slowed. The gross domestic product (GDP) figure just missed analyst predictions of a 0.7 percent rise and was well off the central bank's 0.9 percent forecast. "Much lower building activity combined with mixed results for the service sector took the shine off higher dairy production and saw a second quarter of moderate overall GDP growth," Statistics New Zealand said.

It said the result put growth for

the 12 months to March 31 at 3.0 percent. Construction was down 2.1 percent for the quarter, partially offset by a 4.3 percent rise in agriculture as milk production ramped up after a long slump. Capital Economics analyst Kate Hickie said the slowdown in construction was likely to be short-term and the economy was set to continue to grow at 3.0-3.5 percent a year.

"Evidence from building consents issued suggests there is still a decent pipeline of construction work," she said. "What's more, there are signs of strength in other areas of the economy."—AFP



**RIYADH:** Saudi men attend a technical education evening class at an electrical workshop as part of a pioneering program in Riyadh.—AFP

## CARS, COMPUTING: SAUDI ADULT COURSES SEEK SELF-RELIANCE

### SAUDI TO BROADEN SMALL BUSINESS BASE

**RIYADH:** The smell of automotive grease fills a college hallway and clanging noises emerge from the workshop where Saudi Arabian men gather around an engine. These are not high school graduates, but older students in a pioneering program for extending skills throughout society. The kingdom for the first time is giving short technical courses—among them household electronics and computing—to men and women who say it's a further step towards easing their country's reliance on foreign labor.

The move complements efforts to build a more self-reliant economy after the collapse of global oil prices. It also helps dispel misconceptions that Saudis don't like to get their hands dirty in manual work, much of which is done by millions of expatriates. "In my home I can fix it," said Mohammed Al-Harbi, 29, who works in his family's small business and joined the household electronics course at Riyadh Technical College. "I don't want to hire someone."

The world's biggest oil exporter last year embarked on a wide-ranging social and economic reform plan to wean the economy off oil by broadening its industrial, investment and small business base to employ more Saudis. It calls for improved education and expanded vocational training. The new adult courses are not designed to qualify people for the job market, said Ahmad Fahad Al-Fahaid, who heads the Technical and Vocational Training Corporation (TVTC), the government agency in charge of skills development. They should, however, help them develop just enough knowledge to avoid having to call in expatriate laborers who "offer some maintenance or skills that can be done by Saudis," Fahaid said during a visit to the automotive workshop.

#### Added value

"Nobody told them, nobody taught them, nobody trained them, so that's why we stepped in" to offer skills that will help Saudis do the repairs themselves or, at least, to better oversee those doing the work, Fahaid said. Classes are free except for a small registration charge. Official figures show close to nine million foreigners are employed in the kingdom, which has a local population of more than 21 million. That was before an intensified effort to reduce the kingdom's reliance on foreigners as oil prices settled at around half the level they were three years ago.

A weaker economy forced Saudi Arabia to delay major infrastructure projects, temporarily halt public service benefits, and prepare to implement taxes for the first time. Coinciding with the pilot training program, Saudi Arabia gave illegal foreigners three months to leave without penalty. More than 345,000 have already stepped forward for the amnesty which ends later this month, the Arab News reported in early June.

Fahaid said that if Saudis can do basic repairs themselves then expatriates who remain should have "the skills needed to give an added value" to the economy, rather than performing menial tasks. Students welcomed the chance to pick up new skills, and said they want more. "We have learned about vehicles and how to maintain them. We learned a lot already," said Ali Al-Qasim, 26.

#### I 'can do it'

He was one of several men dressed in brown smocks watching the oil drain from the engine of an old sedan hoisted above them. Across campus, a student reassembled the power unit of a dismantled air conditioner as about 15

classmates followed his progress. Sultan Abdullah, in his late 20s, said the four evening classes weren't enough, especially for someone like him. Educated in Japan, he lost his job with a government ministry earlier this year.

"Young people, they have no work," Abdullah said, pointing out two other unemployed men in his class that focused on cooling systems. Saudi youths face "strong competition" from South Asians and other expatriates, and "it is better for our country" if more locals could find jobs, he said. But the night school is designed to fill a gap, not for job training which is covered in many other TVTC programs, Fahaid said. A foreign education expert in Saudi Arabia earlier said that education and training reforms will take years.

The kingdom's well-equipped colleges may "talk the talk" but standards still lag, the expert said. While training in certain trades already meets global standards, Fahaid conceded that "in some other areas we need a lot... to develop our capability, and that's what we are doing in TVTC." The pilot project for more than 4,600 trainees ended before Ramadan. It is due to continue, with expanded course offerings, after the Muslim fasting month finishes in late June.

For women, the program offered basic computer technology, hairdressing and beauty instruction. It reflects public "requests for different kinds of courses" for all ages, Fahaid said, adding: "A lot of Saudis are keen to learn new skills." Among them is Suliman al-Kuoboor, 52, a Royal Saudi Air Force flight engineer. "I came here to make more knowledge for myself," he said. Instead of calling a foreign technician, "you can do it by yourself," he said, expressing confidence in his new skills for connecting household wires, switches and lights.—AFP

## MONEY FROM EUROPE: A LIFELINE FOR NIGERIANS

**BENIN CITY, Nigeria:** Grace and Sunday Otoide's house is the last one standing on Bata Road in Benin City, southern Nigeria. All the neighbors have left and the retired couple hopes to do the same. With the money their two children send from Italy, they want to build a new house. Dozens of lorries used to pass along the road to get to the local shoe factory, once one of Benin City's industrial jewels. But it's now no more than a track swallowed by swamps.



**Edoja Okyokunu**

At the turn of the century, the leading shoe manufacturer that gave the road its name relocated its factory to Ghana, frustrated by constant power cuts. About 3,000 employees, most of them young people, lost their jobs. Since then, the flood barriers surrounding the area have fallen into disrepair and the water has reclaimed the earth, flooding every dwelling and the factory. "We have no nothing. No chop (food), not in," says Grace in pidgin English from a large sofa that has seen better days.

Her husband's pension has also been hurt by the devaluation of Nigeria's naira currency. Two of the couple's six children were smuggled into Italy several years ago. They send back what they can, when they can, to help their parents build a new home. The current one threatens to fall down at any moment. "I don't know what kind of job she does. But she does work abroad, she's the one who must worry for me. If I were young again, I would travel overseas," says Grace.

#### Money transfers

More than 37,500 Nigerians arrived on the Italian coast by boat in 2016, according to the International Organization for Migration. Most of them came from Benin City. The city is riddled with human trafficking networks. Often the Nigerian women who end up in Italy become sex workers, while men are pushed into Italian mafia networks around the trade. The phenomenon can be traced back to the time of the region's industrial collapse in the late 1980s, military rule and the structural adjustment programs that killed the economy.

For nearly 30 years, Edo state, of which Benin City is the capital, has survived on the money sent back from across the Mediterranean. Even small sums represent a real monthly salary for families—as long as the money is sent in foreign currency. On the outskirts of the city, there are no roads, electricity or drainage, yet brick houses are mushrooming in the largely abandoned fields. Emmanuel Otoide is building a large house for a client who left for Italy 10 years ago and has not come back.

On the walls, the owner's mother has stuck a notice from her Pentecostal church: "2017 My Year of Greater Light". "The mother of the owner is (a) pure water seller, she is a street vendor," the construction engineer says, adding that without the money from overseas, building the house would be impossible. Behind him, workers dig the foundations of another house by hand, sweating in the suffocating heat, 10 hours a day, for 3,000 naira. —AFP



**BENIN CITY:** A man walks past a house built with proceeds from money repatriated by immigrant from Europe in Benin City, capital of Edo State, southern Nigeria. —AFP photos



## VERIZON TAKES OVER YAHOO TO COMPLETE \$4.5 BILLION DEAL

**SAN FRANCISCO:** Verizon has taken over Yahoo, completing a \$4.5 billion deal that will usher in a new management team to attempt to wring more advertising revenue from one of the internet's best-known brands. Tuesday's closure of the sale ends Yahoo's 21-year history as a publicly traded company. It also ends the nearly five-year reign of Yahoo CEO Marissa Mayer, who isn't joining Verizon. She will walk away from Yahoo with a compensation package currently worth about \$125 million, including her severance pay and stock awards that will be fully vested with the deal's completion.

Yahoo's email and other digital services such as sports, finance and news will be run by Tim Armstrong, who has been running AOL since Verizon bought that company for \$4.4 billion two years ago. Armstrong will now be CEO of a new Verizon subsidiary called Oath, which will consist of Yahoo and various AOL services. About 2,000 Yahoo and AOL workers are expected to lose their jobs as Verizon trims expenses and eliminates overlapping positions.

"Now that the deal is closed, we are excited to set our focus on being the best company for consumer media, and the best partner to our advertising, content and publisher partners," Armstrong said. Verizon won't be getting Yahoo's prized stakes in two Asian internet companies, Alibaba Group and Yahoo Japan. Those will belong to a newly formed company called Altaba, which also will inherit Yahoo's \$8 billion in cash and any money that might have to be paid in various shareholder lawsuits filed against Yahoo leading up to the sale.

The suits include complaints tied to computer hacking attacks that stole personal information from more than 1 billion Yahoo user accounts in 2013 and 2014 but weren't disclosed until last year. The fallout from the digital intrusions forced Yahoo to give Verizon a \$350 million discount on the initial sale terms reached last July, causing the deal to be delayed by several months. Altaba's stock will begin trading next week under the ticker symbol "AABA." Yahoo's stock will trade through today.

### Yahoo's stock triples

Verizon is counting on the combination of Yahoo and AOL to build a strong third alternative in a rapidly growing digital advertising market that is currently dominated by Google and Facebook. But Yahoo's ad revenue has been



**LAS VEGAS:** In this file photo, Yahoo president and CEO Marissa Mayer speaks during the International Consumer Electronics Show in Las Vegas. —AP

falling for most of the last decade. The company lured Mayer away from Google in 2012 in hopes of reversing the decline, but she couldn't pull it off despite investing billions in acquisitions aimed at making Yahoo a bigger player in the mobile advertising market.

By the end of last year, Yahoo's annual revenue after subtracting ad commissions had shrunk to \$3.5 billion, a 35 percent drop from its 2008 peak. By comparison, Google's revenue last year totaled \$73 billion, after subtracting ad commissions. Despite the company's struggles, Yahoo's

stock more than tripled while Mayer was CEO, creating more than \$30 billion in shareholder wealth.

But most of those gains stemmed from Yahoo's stake in Alibaba, a Chinese e-commerce company whose fortunes have soared while Yahoo faded. The Alibaba investment was engineered 12 years ago by Yahoo co-founder Jerry Yang in what is now widely regarded as one of the savviest deals in internet history. Yahoo's stock performance is the main reason most shareholders haven't complained too loudly about Mayer's lavish compensation package.—AP

## CHINA FINES EMIRATES FOR FLYING AT WRONG ALTITUDE

**BEIJING:** China's civil aviation authority has fined Dubai-based Emirates airline for violating safety rules and banned it from adding new routes in the country for six months. On April 17, an Emirates plane flew at the wrong height over the city of Urumqi in far-western Xinjiang, causing "serious flight conflict," the Civil Aviation Administration of China (CAAC) said in a statement. In another "unsafe event" also over Urumqi on May 18, an Emirates plane lost radio communications during its flight, the regulator said. The leading Middle Eastern airline was fined 29,000 yuan.

Emirates was previously barred from adding new planes and routes in China for six months after a January 2016 incident where a plane landed with low fuel. The CAAC said its officials recently met with Emirates representatives to assess operations of the airline in the country in recent years. At the meeting, Emirates executives briefed the CAAC on its own internal investigation and proposed corrective measures. Earlier this week, the authority said it had "zero tolerance" for "security risks" and would introduce new methods to prevent accidents. Emirates offers 38 weekly flights to and from China, providing connections to over 150 cities in the world. —AFP

## GREECE 'OPTIMISTIC' OF BAILOUT BREAKTHROUGH AT EUROZONE TALKS

**LUXEMBOURG:** Greece said it was hopeful of securing a deal yesterday that could end months of eurozone feuding with the IMF and unlocks sorely needed bailout cash for Greece to avert a fresh crisis. Athens will likely have to wait for a long-desired agreement on wider debt relief, but officials said it would at least receive more "clarity" on the way ahead. IMF chief Christine Lagarde and the eurozone's 19 finance ministers meet in Luxembourg with hopes riding high that the talks will secure the release of the latest tranche of Greece's 86-billion euro bailout agreed in 2015.

"Optimistic," Greek Finance Minister Euclid Tsakalotos said in a terse comment to reporters as he entered the talks, marking a clear change to the negative mood earlier in the week. The upbeat feeling was shared by Greece's biggest eurozone partners, with German Chancellor Angela Merkel in Berlin also expressing confidence that Greece "will be rewarded for its efforts." "I hope that today we will take a very positive step forward. Building on the huge step that Greece put in," Eurogroup head Jeroen Dijsselbloem, who is also Dutch Finance Minister, said in Luxembourg.

Athens all week insisted it would veto the deal, furious that the latest disbursement from its third bailout since 2010 could come without firm debt relief commitments after delivering on tough reforms. But Dijsselbloem said the ministers would agree to more "clarity" on debt relief, to be delivered at the end of Greece's bailout in 2018, even if the exact figures would only be provided later.

### Future of Europe

Bitter disagreement between Germany and the International Monetary Fund has held up the payout of a fresh tranche for Athens to meet seven billion euros of debt repayments due in July. The IMF, which took part in Greece's two previous bailouts, has long insisted that more debt relief be part of a deal. But Berlin, Greece's sternest critic has resisted any fresh commitment to debt relief, saying Athens did not need it and must continue reforms.

In a major breakthrough, the IMF agreed this month to join Greece's massive bailout while putting off the debt question until a later date. The IMF compromise was a shock for the Greek government, who lost a major backer of deeper debt relief. But the Fund's move is a controversial one, with critics accusing the Washington-based organization of bending its rules to satisfy Berlin. The IMF had insisted repeatedly that Greece's debt is not sustainable, and that the country would require significant debt relief from Europe before the fund could approve a new loan program.

Greece nearly crashed out of the euro in 2015 after a furious fight over the bailout deal, and says its fragile recovery has suffered from the most recent delay. In an emotional editorial published on Wednesday in France, Greek Prime Minister Alexis Tsipras said the meeting was "essential" for the "future of Europe". Without a deal, Tsipras said he would take up the issue with EU leaders at a summit in Brussels next week, a situation that the eurozone ministers intended to avoid. —AFP

## MOTOR RACING

## 'INSULTED' VARNISH MULLING LEGAL ACTION AGAINST CYCLING CHIEFS

**LONDON:** British track cyclist Jess Varnish could take legal action against the sport's domestic body British Cycling after an independent review labelled the elite programme as engendering a 'culture of fear'.

The 26-year-old—a European Team Sprint world champion in 2011 — told 'The Times' she felt insulted at being labelled a 'troublemaker' and a 'ring-leader' in the review which was published on Wednesday. Varnish's complaints in April 2016 about the sexist remarks and bullying by the programme's Australian technical director

Shane Sutton led to the Cycling Independent Review (CIR) being set up under the leadership of British Rowing chair Annamarie Phelps.

Phelps, though, had to defend the final version being seven pages shorter and with some damning criticisms removed compared to the draft report leaked to the 'Daily Mail' in March this year. Varnish, whom Sutton told to 'get on with having a baby' after she was cut from the team last year, said the characterisations of her in the report would not ring true with those who knew her. "I am insulted," she told The

Times. "In a way I'm glad they have used this language because it shows what the people are like in there (British Cycling).

"Anyone who knows me knows I am not a troublemaker or ringleader. No one has ever been removed from the programme the way I was." Phelps and the five member panel criticised British Cycling for lacking 'good governance' and regretted findings in a 2012 report had not been acted upon because of them prioritising winning medals at the London Olympics. However, observations in the draft report that the

board had been 'inept' and 'sanitised' an in-house enquiry into Varnish's allegations were not present in the final account. Their finding in the draft report that Varnish had been removed from the team as 'an act of retribution' for her criticisms of the coaching regime had also been removed.

Phelps, though, denied the report was a whitewash and explained they had utilised a process known as 'Maxwellisation' which allows those named and shamed in the draft report the right to reply and to defend themselves. —AFP

## ICE HOCKEY

## SWISS PHENOMENON SIGN OF COUNTRY'S BELATED RISE

**GENEVA:** Switzerland's passion for ice hockey appears to have been born around 1898, when a Canadian who had brought used equipment to Europe organised the first games in Davos and St Moritz. About 120 years later, the country may have finally produced its first international star.

On June 23 in Chicago the National Hockey League will hold its annual entry draft, where the world's top amateurs are selected by the NHL's 30 teams. The first or second player chosen will be Switzerland's Nico Hischier, according to consensus projections from hockey experts, who have unanimously described the 18-year-old from Valais canton as his country's finest-ever prospect.

With Hischier virtually certain to become the top Swiss selection in NHL draft history, the wealthy Alpine nation is now seen as a rising hockey power. The question is: what took it so long?

## A FAILING RECORD?

Switzerland has been hooked on hockey from the start. When the sport's initial envoy to Europe, Canadian George Alfred Meagher, crossed the Atlantic in the 1890s, his stops other than Switzerland included Paris, London, Glasgow and Brussels, according to "On the Origins of Hockey", an authoritative book about the sport's early years compiled by three hockey historians.

But unlike Britain, France and Belgium, hockey in Switzerland fast became a national obsession.

Roughly 15,000 matches are played here each year, while the top professional league, known as National League A, has one of the highest attendance rates in Europe, according to sports ministry figures. "Ice hockey is very big in Swiss culture... about the same as a football," said Franco Baffa of the Society for International Hockey Research, who called it the country's true "national sport", noting the passion for even tiny local clubs.

But, when it comes to international achievement, Switzerland may best be described as a hockey failure.

Sweden and Finland—equally hockey-mad nations with similar populations to Switzerland—have collectively won multiple Olympic medals, world championships and produced dozens of first-rate global talents who have led championship NHL teams.

Swiss hockey can claim no such honours.

## 'SLEEP IN YOUR OWN BED'

The reasons for Switzerland's meagre international record are varied, players and experts said, although one factor stood out.



**CALGARY:** This file photo taken on February 17, 2016 shows Switzerland's Nino Niederreiter (L) of the Minnesota Wild shooting on the net of Jonas Hiller (R) of the Calgary Flames during an NHL game at Scotiabank Saddledome in Calgary, Alberta, Canada. Niederreiter, widely considered to be Switzerland's greatest player, began his professional career in the Swiss league, but his skills ultimately propelled him to the NHL. He was the fifth player chosen in the 2010 entry draft, the highest selection ever for a Swiss player. —AFP

Elite talents from other European countries have flocked to the NHL, craving the hefty salaries, training and top-level exposure that North America offers, while Swiss players often preferred to stay home. "My dream was always playing in Switzerland," said one of the country's few successful exports, Nino Niederreiter, a forward with the Minnesota Wild. Niederreiter, widely considered to be Switzerland's greatest player, told AFP that while growing up he never thought of playing for iconic franchises like the New York Rangers or Montreal Canadiens. His horizon stopped at ECH Chur, his local club that plays in a quiet Alpine city of 33,000 people.

Swiss players figured they could "make great money and sleep in their own bed", Niederreiter said. He began his professional

career in the Swiss league, but his skills ultimately propelled him to the NHL.

He was the fifth player chosen in the 2010 entry draft, the highest selection ever for a Swiss player. Asked how he felt about being displaced from that honour by Hischier next week, Niederreiter said he was resigned.

"At the end of the day, number five is not number one or two."

## GREAT STRIDES

Baffa agreed that "the NHL is not necessarily the goal of a young (Swiss) player", with many preferring the comfortable life offered by the domestic league.

But things are changing partly due to players like Niederreiter and Roman Josi, a defenceman with the 2017 Stanley Cup final-

ist Nashville Predators, the historian said. Hischier made the rare decision to leave home as a teenager to play for the Halifax Mooseheads of the Canadian Hockey League, the world's top amateur development league, boosting his draft prospects. Baffa and Niederreiter also noted that improved coaching and a pivot away from the cautious defensive hockey towards a more aggressive offensive style of play has also raised the Switzerland's international profile and helped it generate more dynamic prospects.

And the NHL has noticed. "Over the last 10 years, the country that has made the greatest strides, no question in my mind, is Switzerland," Brian Burke, a leading hockey executive and former NHL vice president told Canada's The Fan radio station last month. —AFP

## PENAUD DEBUTS AS FRANCE MAKE EIGHT CHANGES

**DURBAN:** France coach Guy Noves made eight changes yesterday to the starting team for the second Test against South Africa Saturday in Durban, with young centre Damian Penaud debuting.

Penaud, 20, is rewarded for excellent performances during the closing stages of the domestic season with Top 14 champions Clermont. He replaces Henry Chavancy.

There is a new half-back partnership, Francois Trinh-Duc (fly) and Baptiste Serin (scrum) from that which started in a 37-14 first Test loss last Saturday in Pretoria.

Tighthead prop Rabah Slimani, hooker and captain Guilhem Guirado, second row Romain Taofifenua, flanker KÉvin Gourdon and full-back Scott Spedding return. "We are expecting him to live this adventure and become aware of the international level," commented Noves about Penaud, the son of former international Alain.

"He's a young player. We have the feeling, as with others, that he has talent. Now he must express it.

"Obviously, our severity with him will be a little less than with players who have been in the national set-up for some time," added the coach.

A couple of experienced forwards, No 8 Louis Picamoles and lock Yoann Maestri, keep their place after starting at Loftus Versfeld stadium last weekend.

Trinh-Duc returns in place of Jules Plisson for the first time since breaking a forearm against Samoa last November in a 52-8 French triumph.

Like Trinh-Duc, Spedding, rested last Saturday after playing in the French Top 14 final the previous weekend, gets a start, ahead of Brice Dulin.

Slimani is restored after a back injury sustained during preparations for the three-Test tour, which finishes on June 24 in Johannesburg.

Team (15-1)

Scott Spedding; Yoann Huget, Damian Penaud, Gael Fickou, Virimi Vakatawa; Francois Trinh-Duc, Baptiste Serin; Louis Picamoles, Kevin Gourdon, Yacouba Camara; Romain Taofifenua, Yoann Maestri; Rabah Slimani, Guilhem Guirado (capt), Jefferson Poirot Replacements: Clement Maynadier, Eddy Ben Arous, Uini Atonio, Julien le Devedec, Bernard le Roux, Antoine Dupont, Jean-Marc Doussain, Nans Ducuing Coach: Guy Noves (FRA). —AFP

## WALLABIES OVERLOOK STEPHEN MOORE FOR SCOTLAND TEST

**SYDNEY:** Wallabies captain Stephen Moore was overlooked for the second Test in a row yesterday, as Eto Nabuli was handed his debut against a Scottish team making eight changes after last week's thumping win against Italy. Veteran Moore only made the bench in Australia's 37-14 win against Fiji last weekend and may not get that far in Sydney on Saturday, with coach Michael Cheika saying he was in a fight with Tolu Latu to be among the reserves. Nabuli, the Queensland Reds' Fijian-born winger, is the only change to the run-on side, after Henry Speight suffered a minor hamstring strain in his two-try performance against Fiji.

Rugby league convert Karmichael Hunt retains his place at inside centre after an encouraging debut last Saturday, with Michael Hooper again skipping the side. Hooker Moore, who has played 118 Tests, told the Sydney Daily Telegraph Thursday that he isn't retiring and wants to be playing for the Wallabies at the 2019 World Cup.

The 34-year-old said the leadership shuffle was all part of Cheika's long-term strategy. "We have had a number of discussions about that going way back so it hasn't come out of nowhere. Those roles, they're fluid and they evolve over time," Moore said. "I am really comfortable with how all that is panning out." Cheika will be mindful that the Wallabies beat fifth-ranked Scotland by just one point in their previous two meetings and lost to them 9-6 in their last home encounter in 2012. The Scots have been in scintillating form of late, beating Wales and Ireland during the Six Nations before defeating Italy 34-13 in Singapore last weekend. —AFP



**ROTORUA:** British and Irish Lions tour captain Sam Warburton kicks a ball during a team training session in Rotorua, New Zealand, yesterday. The Lions play the Maori All Blacks here tomorrow. —AP

### RUGBY

## LIONS BENCH CAPTAIN WARBURTON, FARRELL OUT WITH THIGH STRAIN

**WELLINGTON:** Tour captain Sam Warburton has been relegated to the bench for the British and Irish Lions clash against the Maori All Blacks tomorrow, just a week before the first Test.

Munster and Ireland's Peter O'Mahony will take over as captain for a match the tourists regard as an "unofficial fourth Test". Fly-half Owen Farrell, who was also named on the bench, was later withdrawn with a minor thigh strain and replaced by Dan Biggar.

There was no comment on Farrell's chances of being fit for the first Test. Warburton led the Lions to a disappointing 23-22 loss to the Highlanders midweek and coach Warren Gatland opted instead to hand flanker O'Mahony the skipper's armband.

"Peter is a proven captain with Munster," Gatland said ahead of the match in Rotorua. "He never takes a backward step and we believe that those leadership qualities will serve us well on Saturday against a quality and determined Maori All Blacks team."

The Irishman is the fourth player to captain the Lions on tour after Warburton, Ken Owens and Alun Wyn Jones.

The tourists are looking to bounce back after their second defeat of the tour and Gatland's selection against the Maori team is expected to be close to his first-choice side.

If it is, then losing the Test captaincy would be a huge blow to Warburton, who led the Lions to a series win in Australia in 2013 but has struggled for form recently after a run of injuries.

Gatland has shown previously that he will not shy away from big selection calls, famously dropping Irish legend Brian O'Driscoll for the 2013 series decider against Australia, which the Lions won.

### 'BUILDING WELL'

He has opted for an all-Irish combination at nine and 10 against the Maori, with Johnny Sexton starting at fly-half and Conor Murray at scrum-half.

This Saturday's starting side includes 11 players who started in the Lions' gutsy 12-3 win over the Canterbury Crusaders, their most impressive display on tour so far.

"We need to play like we did last Saturday against the Crusaders," assistant coach Neil Jenkins said.

"We're a week out from the first Test so Saturday's game against the Maori is huge for us, it's like an unofficial fourth Test match." Leigh Halfpenny replaces the injured Stuart Hogg at fullback, while Liam Williams makes way for Anthony Watson on the wing.

However lock Wyn Jones, who captained against the Crusaders, did not even make the matchday 23, with Gatland preferring England's Maro Itoje in the second row backed by Iain Henderson on the bench.

Gatland has made clear that the three-Test series against the All Blacks is the main priority and other tour matches are a means to improve before facing the world champions.

"We were obviously disappointed with the loss against the Highlanders and realise that we need to improve in several areas, including our discipline," Gatland said.

"But we feel that overall we are building well towards the Test matches." The three-Test series begins on June 24. Lions (15-1): Leigh Halfpenny (Toulon/WAL); Anthony Watson (Bath/ENG), Jonathan Davies (Scarlets/WAL), Ben Te'o (Worcester/ENG), George North (Northampton/ENG); Johnny Sexton (Leinster/IRL), Conor Murray (Munster/IRL);

Talupe Faletau (Bath/WAL), Sean O'Brien (Leinster/IRL), Peter O'Mahony (capt - Munster/IRL); George Kruis, Saracens/ENG, Maro Itoje (Saracens/ENG); Tadhg Furlong (Leinster/IRL), Jamie George (Saracens/ENG), Mako Vunipola (Saracens/ENG)

Replacements: Ken Owens (Scarlets/WAL), Jack McGrath (Leinster/IRL), Kyle Sinckler (Harlequins/ENG), Iain Henderson (Ulster/IRL), Sam Warburton (Cardiff/WAL), Greig Laidlaw (Gloucester/SCO), Dan Biggar (Ospreys/WAL), Elliot Daly (Wasps/ENG).



## KOC HOLDS HONORING CEREMONY FOR PARTICIPANTS IN KUWAIT SPORTS DAY

By Abdellatif Sharaa

**KUWAIT:** Kuwait Olympic Committee (KOC) held an honoring ceremony for those who participated in the first Kuwait Sports Day that was organized late last year with the participation of Kuwait Sports Federations and Clubs.

The ceremony was attended by President of Kuwait Olympic Committee

Sheikh Fahad Jaber Al-Ali, President of Arab and Kuwait Shooting Federations Eng Duaij Khalaf Al-Otaibi and a large number of sports federations members.

President of Kuwaiti Olympic Committee told journalists the committee seeks to develop sports in Kuwait, and one of the best means to do so is to cooperate with the education ministry to prepare athletes according to a sci-

entific plan so that they can represent Kuwait through discovering outstanding athletes.

He said this will be an annual event to support and motivate youth.

He said we saw today many federations participated including the equestrian club as an example and were outstanding and we are looking forward to keeping things going for the better.

Meanwhile, President of Kuwait and Arab Shooting Federations Eng Duaij Al-Otaibi, who chaired the organizing committee of Kuwait Sports Day, in which many youth and juniors participated said we are happy to organize such a day and hope other days will be followed, with the support of HH the Amir, HH the Crown Prince and HH the Prime Minister, along with the continued support by the Public Authority for Sport. He said Kuwait Sports Day was a true sports event in which most sports federations participated.

He said domestic sports activities help enhance competition among youth, and hope it continues for the coming years.

Al-Otaibi added that Kuwait day was true sports club where many participated, as we were honored by their participation, and hoped that it continues year after year. He thanked all those who contributed to the organization of the day, and thanked Sheikh Fahad Jaber Al-Ali and Olympic Committee members. He also thanked Director General of Public Authority for Sports and his deputies.

Eng Duaij Al-Otaibi thanked Sheikh Salman Sabah Al-Salem Al-Humoud Al-Sabah who patronized the Kuwait Sports Day and gave major support for the day. Eng Al-Otaibi said sports are not for foreign participation only, but also domestic events are very important in maintaining the continuity of sports activities through preparing the youth, and we must provide them with facilities and competent trainers, as I am sure sports in Kuwait will improve vastly, and hope that all work sincerely to achieve success.



Golf

## NEW FATHER JOHNSON READY FOR OPEN DOUBLE

**ERIN:** World number one Dustin Johnson says fatherhood has made him a better player as he prepares to defend his US Open title just days after the birth of his second son.

The 32-year-old arrived at Erin Hills on Tuesday after a hectic 24 hours that saw him and wife Paulina Gretzky celebrate the arrival of baby River on Monday.

Johnson, who has been installed as the favourite for this week's title in Wisconsin, described his unusual major championship build up as an "awesome couple of days." "Everybody's healthy. Mom is healthy. The baby is healthy. So that's good," Johnson said. The big-hitting American star has begun to deliver on his talent in recent seasons after a series of major near-misses. A second-place finish at the 2015 US Open at Chambers Bay was followed by last year's victory at Oakmont, his first major, while in February he claimed the world number one ranking. Johnson believes being a parent has helped him ascend to the top of the golfing heap.

"It just gives you a whole new perspective on things," he said Wednesday. "Where before kind of golf was the most important and now my family is the most important. "At the end of the day whether I'm having a good day or bad day, when I either see my family or talk to them, whatever, if I was upset or even if I was happy with the way I played, none of that matters. "Just I'm always happy and excited to be with them." Johnson is still smarting from the freak accident that deprived him of the chance to challenge for the Masters in April, when he slipped on stairs and hurt his back on the eve of the tournament.

"Obviously it was very disappointing not to be able to play, kind of with a freak accident," he said. "I'm excited to come back and defend this week." Johnson ended up watching the Masters on television as a frustrated viewer. "I couldn't really do much else, I was laying on the couch," he said. "Leading into the Masters I was playing the best golf that I've ever played. I've still got some work to do to get back to when I was playing that good." —AFP



**HARTFORD:** Dustin Johnson of the United States plays his shot from the tenth tee during the first round of the 2017 US Open at Erin Hills yesterday in Hartford, Wisconsin. — AFP

## LOCAL ROOKIE LEADS QUEEN'S CUP AS SCOTT HEND STRUGGLES

**BANGKOK:** Local rookie Chanut Sakulpolphaisan shared the lead with three others after the first day at the Queen's Cup in Thailand yesterday as title defender Scott Hend stumbled with a series of costly bogeys.

The 26-year-old Chanut, who only finished the qualifying school in January, slotted eight birdies during his opening round to end with a six-under-par 65 at the Santiburi Samui Country Club on the southern Thai resort island of Koh Samui. Three others—India's Rashid Khan, Angelo Que from the Philippines and fellow Thai Prayad Marksaeng—shot a similarly strong 65, leaving everything to play for in the \$500,000 competition. Khan and Que both boasted eight birdies during their first rounds while Prayad, who has two previous Queen's Cup victories under his belt, complemented his five birdies with a magnificent eagle on the twelfth. "I'm surprised myself," Chanut, who missed the halfway cut at the same cup in 2015, said according to a report put out by tour organisers. — AFP

## BASEBALL

# ROYALS BEAT SAN FRANCISCO TO COMPLETE TWO-GAME SWEEP

**SAN FRANCISCO:** Mike Moustakas hit his 18th home run leading off the second inning, Jorge Bonifacio and Lorenzo Cain followed with back-to-back shots in the third and the Kansas City Royals beat the San Francisco Giants 7-2 on Wednesday to complete a two-game sweep. Bonifacio finished with two hits and three RBIs, Whit Merrifield added three hits and three runs while Alcides Escobar singled three times to help Jason Hammel end an eight-game winless stretch on the road that dated to 2016. Hammel (3-6) allowed one run over 6 2/3 innings to beat the Giants for the first time in 12 starts. The right-hander gave up eight hits, struck out four and walked one. Moustakas, one of Kansas City's top hitters over the past two weeks, stayed hot with his home run off former Royals pitcher Johnny Cueto (5-6) that landed in the waters of McCovey Cove. It was the fifth homer in 12 games for Moustakas, who is already just four shy of his career-high.

## ANGELS 7, YANKEES 5

Shortstop Andrelton Simmons hit a two-run homer in the seventh inning to break a tie and lead the Angels to a victory over the Yankees. Simmons fell to one knee to hit his seventh home run and ruined the major league debut of New York right-hander Ronald Herrera (0-1). Danny Espinosa hit a two-run homer for the Angels, and Gary Sanchez a three-run shot for the Yankees. Blake Parker (2-2) earned the victory in relief. Angels starter Matt Shoemaker left the game in the fourth inning with what the team called tightness of his right forearm extensor muscle. David Hernandez pitched a scoreless ninth to earn his first save of the year.

## MARLINS 11, ATHLETICS 6

Marcell Ozuna homered to start the Miami Marlins' comeback from an early four run deficit, and they beat the Oakland Athletics 11-6 Wednesday to complete a two-game sweep. Ozuna hit his 17th home run to start the second inning, added a double and had three RBIs. Tyler Moore hit his fifth homer and scored three times to help the Marlins overcome a wobbly outing by Edinson Volquez, who had a no-hitter in his most recent home start. Ichiro Suzuki had a pinch-hit single in the fifth for his 365th interleague hit, breaking Derek Jeter's major league record. Ryon Healy hit a three-run homer for the Athletics (27-38), who fell to 11 games below .500 for the first time. They went 1-5 on their trip and lost their ninth consecutive road series, their longest such streak since 1986. Oakland lost after leading by three or more runs three times on the trip. Daniel Gossett (0-1) couldn't hold a 4-0 lead in his major league debut after being called up from Triple-A Nashville, and allowed seven runs, six earned, in 3 1-3 innings. Kyle Barraclough (2-1), the first of six Miami relievers, pitched a scoreless fifth.

## RED SOX 7, PHILLIES 3

Mookie Betts homered twice and Xander Bogaerts had three RBIs to help the Red Sox beat the Phillies. Betts had four hits and drove in three to lead an offensive barrage off Phillies starter Jeremy Hellickson (5-5). Boston tagged him for six runs on nine hits in just five innings. Betts led off the game with a single, had an RBI double in the second, but his biggest hit was a solo home

run, his 10th of the season, in the fourth inning after the Phillies had scored three runs to close within 5-3. He had a chance to get the cycle in the ninth inning, but instead of a triple connected for home run No. 11 to put the game out of reach. It was his eighth career multi-homer game. Betts was dazzling defensively as well, and made a stellar diving catch in right field to rob Howie Kendrick of a hit in the fifth inning.

## BLUE JAYS 7, RAYS 6

Russell Martin hit a tiebreaking home run in the bottom of the eighth inning to lift the Blue Jays to a 7-6 victory over the Rays. Kendrys Morales homered among his two hits and drove in four runs for the Blue Jays, who won after giving up a three-run lead in the top of the eighth. Trailing 6-3, the Rays tied it on Logan Morrison's 19th homer, a two-run shot off reliever Joe Smith (3-0) and Derek Norris' sacrifice fly. Martin then connected for his sixth home run of the season off reliever Jose Alvarado (0-1) over the center-right-field fence in the bottom half. Roberto Osuna ensured it stood up in the ninth, finally forcing Evan Longoria to pop out to sec-

## PADRES 4, REDS 2

Franchy Cordero's go-ahead single in the seventh inning capped a comeback that included Hunter Renfroe's two-run homer, sending the Padres to a sweep-completing victory over the Reds. Jhoulys Chacin (6-5) pitched seven innings, allowing five hits and two runs. With the score 2-2 after Renfroe's tying shot an inning earlier, Padres pinch-hitter Matt Szczur and Jose Pirela scored after drawing walks against reliever Michael Lorenzen (3-2) to open the seventh. The Reds, who have lost their past eight road games, were swept at both Dodger Stadium and Petco Park to go 0-6 on the West Coast trip. Cordero, a rookie center fielder who made his major league debut May 27, hit three home runs in the series and knocked home Szczur with a single to right field.

## BRAVES 13, NATIONALS 2

Kurt Suzuki homered, Julio Teheran earned his third consecutive victory and the Braves defeated the Nationals to earn a rare series victory on the road against their NL East rival. Brandon Phillips had four hits and three RBIs

effectively into the sixth inning as the Rockies beat the Pirates to snap a three-game losing streak. Marquez (5-3) gave up one run and four hits in five-plus innings as the Rockies avoided being swept for the first time this season. Raimel Tapia went 4 for 4 and scored three times for Colorado. Jake McGee bailed the Rockies out of a bases-loaded, one-out jam in the seventh. Colorado picked up its major-league best 25th road win. The Pirates managed just one extra-base hit and left eight men on as their season-high four game winning streak came to an end. Chad Kuhl (1-6) remained winless since the first week of the season. He gave up three runs in five innings and his ERA sits at 5.61 through 12 starts.

## METS 9, CUBS 4

Curtis Granderson opened a five-run eighth inning with his 300th homer, a tiebreaking shot that helped the Mets rally past the Cubs. Injury replacement Lucas Duda added a three-run homer off Hector Rondon, and T.J. Rivera capped the outburst with an RBI single for his third hit. With sluggers Yoenis Cespedes and Michael Conforto on the bench to begin the game, the resurgent Mets came back from a 4-1 deficit and took two of three from the defending World Series champions despite losing second baseman Neil Walker to a left leg injury. Granderson received a standing ovation and came out for a curtain call after connecting in the eighth off Carl Edwards Jr. (2-1). Jerry Blevins (4-0) struck out three of his four batters to earn the win.

## DODGERS 6, INDIANS 4

Cleveland relief ace Andrew Miller gave up a tiebreaking home run for the second straight night - a solo shot to pinch-hitter Kike Hernandez in the eighth inning - and the Dodgers defeated the Indians. Hernandez, batting for Chase Utley, hit a 1-2 pitch that barely cleared the wall in right field. Hernandez pumped his fist as he rounded first base after his homer gave Los Angeles a 3-2 lead. Miller (3-2) wore a shocked expression as he walked to the left of the mound after the home run. The left-hander, who has been virtually unhittable, allowed a leadoff homer to Cody Bellinger in the eighth - the first he gave up this season - that broke a tie in the Dodgers' 7-5 win Tuesday. Miller was charged with four runs in 2/3 of an inning after throwing 25 pitches Tuesday and the Indians (31-31) dropped to .500 for the first time since April 19.

## ASTROS 13, RANGERS 2

Derek Fisher homered and had an RBI single for his first major league hits in a nine-run sixth inning to help the Houston Astros to a victory over the Rangers to avoid a three-game sweep. The Astros led by three with no outs in the sixth when Fisher, who made his debut on Wednesday, connected off Jeremy Jeffress for a solo home run to the seats in left field. Two pitches later, Jake Marisnick hit a pitch into nearly the same spot to extend the lead to 6-1. Houston had pushed the lead to 10-1 when Fisher came up again with two outs in the inning. This time he laced a single to right field to send another run home. But the Astros weren't done scoring in that inning yet. Dillon Gee plunked Marisnick before George Springer added a two-run double to make it 13-1. — AFP

## ROCKIES 5, PIRATES 1

Ian Desmond hit his fourth home run of the season and rookie German Marquez pitched



**ANAHEIM:** Aaron Judge #99 of the New York Yankees flies out as Juan Graterol #59 of the Los Angeles Angels of Anaheim lookson during the seventh inning of a game at Angel Stadium of Anaheim on Wednesday in Anaheim, California. —AFP

ond base to earn his 17th save of the season. Tampa Bay lost for just the second time in eight games.

## DIAMONDBACKS 2, TIGERS 1

Taijuan Walker pitched five sharp innings in his return from the disabled list, and the Diamondbacks won their fourth straight game, beating the Tigers. Walker (5-3) allowed a run and six hits in his first appearance since May 19. He had been out because of a blister on his right index finger. The Diamondbacks scored two runs in the first inning, and that turned out to be all they needed. Walker was lifted after 82 pitches, but Randall Delgado pitched three scoreless innings of relief. Fernando Rodney struck out the side in the ninth for his 18th save in 21 chances. Jordan Zimmermann (5-5) allowed two runs and six hits in eight innings. Arizona is 9-1 in interleague play this season. The lone defeat was at home May 10 against Detroit.

for the Braves, who had dropped seven consecutive road series against the Nationals and had lost 23 of their last 25 games in Washington before taking two of three this week. Braves outfielder Matt Kemp left the game in the third inning after suffering an apparent leg injury while sliding into third base. Atlanta was in control from the start against Washington starter Tanner Roark (6-4), who gave up two runs before he recorded an out and three total in the first inning. The Braves would add three more in the third, with Nick Markakis scoring from third after Nationals catcher Jose Lobaton's pickoff attempt of Kemp caught first baseman Ryan Zimmerman off guard and sailed into right field. Kemp was thrown out and injured at third on the play.

# INDIA PICK PANT, YADAV FOR WEST INDIES TOUR

**NEW DELHI:** Wicketkeeper-batsman Rishabh Pant and left-arm wrist spinner Kuldeep Yadav were picked yesterday for India's limited-overs tour of the West Indies comprising five one-day internationals and one Twenty20 starting June 23.

The two youngsters replace opening batsman Rohit Sharma and allrounder Hardik Pandya from the 15-man Champions Trophy squad, which is defending its title in England and Wales.

Pant, who has played just one T20 international for India, and Yadav were already on the radar after being named among five

players kept on standby for the 50-over tournament. The duo have been rewarded for their excellent showing on the domestic circuit, including impressive displays in the Indian Premier League Twenty20 tournament. Pant, 19, hit two fifties for Delhi Daredevils in the recent IPL edition, following on from a 326-ball 308 in the domestic Ranji Trophy last season. His aggressive left-handed batting and ability to handle the pressure of a high-stakes match impressed chief selector MSK Prasad, who described him as a "player for the future". Yadav piqued interest in his Test debut, clinching

four wickets in India's series victory over Australia in March. The 22-year-old from Kanpur in northern India also put in a strong showing for his IPL side Kolkata Knight Riders. The Virat Kohli-led India will leave directly for the Caribbean Islands after wrapping up their ongoing Champions Trophy campaign.

India though do not officially have a coach for the West Indies tour, with Anil Kumble only contracted until the end of the Champions Trophy.

"The administrative staff of the Indian Cricket Team will continue for the tour of

West Indies," said the Board of Control for Cricket in India, without clarifying the coach's position.

The BCCI has hinted Kumble could stay on for the West Indies tour. The position for head coach was advertised last month, with Kumble among the names in the mix.

**Squad:** Virat Kohli (capt), Shikhar Dhawan, Rishabh Pant, Ajinkya Rahane, Mahendra Singh Dhoni, Yuvraj Singh, Kedar Jadhav, Hardik Pandya, Ravichandran Ashwin, Ravindra Jadeja, Mohammed Shami, Umesh Yadav, Bhuvneshwar Kumar, Kuldeep Yadav and Dinesh Karthik. —AFP

## PILLORIED, RANKED LAST, PAKISTAN FIRST INTO ICC FINAL

**ISLAMABAD:** Sarfraz Ahmed's Pakistan team had the lowest ranking entering the Champions Trophy, and was pilloried after a disappointing opening loss that had critics suggesting it couldn't advance beyond the group stage.

A sequence of three straight wins, including a semifinal victory over a confident host, means Pakistan is the first team to qualify for Sunday's final. And now that they're in it, Pakistan fans want a rematch against India.

Imran Khan, the legendary allrounder who guided Pakistan to victory in the 1992 World Cup final, forecast an Indo-Pak final even before India's semifinal match against Bangladesh.

"Now the whole nation awaits our team making amends in the final against India - if they defeat Bangladesh," Khan posted on Twitter as he congratulated Pakistan on its semifinal win over England.

Pakistan was thrashed by 124 runs by defending champion India in the first group match in the eight-team tournament but rebounded quickly to beat South Africa and Sri Lanka to qualify for its third Champions Trophy semifinals.

Sarfraz Ahmed, seemingly lost for words after the heavy loss to India, maintained faith in the younger players in the squad and it paid off in one of the most lopsided semifinals in the tournament's history.

The eight-wicket victory at Sophia Gardens in Cardiff was made possible with the likes of fast bowler Hasan Ali, opening batsman Fakhar Zaman and young spinner Shadab Khan.

Ali, who conceded 70 runs against India, is now a leading bowler in the tournament with 10 wickets. Zaman has provided Pakistan some electrifying starts. And Shadab's ability to control big hitters in the middle overs has helped Pakistan restrict the scoring of opponents.

"The turnaround is built on the inclusion of youngsters and it could only be done by a Pakistan team," said Ramiz Raja, an ex-Pakistan captain who now works at a cricket commentator. "The tournament is no more about the rankings, because already No. 8 team is in the final."

Pakistan, which can be shaky when batting second, has successfully chased down in three successive matches that included Ahmed's gritty half century against Sri Lanka after Pakistan had collapsed to 162-7 while chasing 237-run target.

Pakistan's more seasoned players like Shoaib Malik and Mohammad Hafeez are yet to fire in the tournament and have so far been overshadowed by the young performers.

Imran Khan is hopeful that the squad of 2017 can achieve a victory during the holy month of Ramadan, much like his squad did 25 years ago. — AP



**LAS VEGAS:** In this Sept. 12, 2014, file photo, Floyd Mayweather Jr. poses on the scale during a weigh in for a fight against Marcos Maidana in Las Vegas. Mayweather Jr. said Wednesday, he will come out of retirement to face UFC star Conor McGregor in a boxing match on Aug. 26. — AP

### BOXING

## MAYWEATHER AND MCGREGOR AGREE TO AUGUST SUPER-FIGHT

**LOS ANGELES:** Boxing legend Floyd Mayweather and mixed martial arts icon Conor McGregor confirmed plans for a long-awaited showdown on Wednesday, triggering both criticism and anticipation for what is set to be one of the richest fights in history.

Mayweather and McGregor-kingpins of their sports-will climb into a boxing ring to face each other at Las Vegas's T-Mobile Arena on August 26.

The 40-year-old Mayweather will be aiming to reach the 50-0 milestone while McGregor is a heavy underdog in the 12-round boxing match. A victory for the Irishman would be a monumental upset. "Floyd is the greatest of all time and Conor is the master of our sport," MMA promoter Dana White said. "I thought it would be an impossible deal to do, but it was the right fight at the right time and we got it done."

Leonard Ellerbe, chief executive of Mayweather Promotions, said the box-

er's team decided to end his 23-month retirement because the clamor for the 154-pound showdown had been impossible to ignore.

"There is not one place I go to with Floyd where he doesn't get asked the question, 'Floyd are you going to fight Conor McGregor?' All Floyd thinks about is fighting Conor McGregor and whipping his ass," Ellerbe said.

Mayweather announced the fight on his Instagram account with a graphic saying "IT'S OFFICIAL!!!" showing pictures of both fighters and listing Las Vegas as the location while McGregor sent out an earlier tweet stating "THE FIGHT IS ON."

"Floyd said '154 is no problem, I don't want a catchweight,'" Ellerbe said. McGregor is the top pay-per-view draw in UFC while Mayweather had been the money-spinner in some of boxing's biggest bouts, including matchups with Filipino legend Manny Pacquiao and US

star Oscar De La Hoya. Mayweather earned \$250 million for his fight against Pacquiao.

"There is a different feel from the Pacquiao fight, Ellerbe said. "It is the unknown factor (of fighting a MMA star)." Neither Mayweather nor McGregor have competed this year. Mayweather retired from pro boxing in 2015 after defeating Andre Berto, while McGregor (21-3) defeated Eddie Alvarez in November 2016.

White said the key to finalizing the fight was luring Mayweather out of retirement. "Everybody is happy with this deal," he said. "Nobody is bummed out." The boxing format heavily favors the undefeated Mayweather (49-0, 26 KOs), whom many consider to be the best pound-for-pound fighter in the world. McGregor, 28, will be entering unknown territory as he has not stepped into a boxing ring since he was a teenager.—AFP

## RUSSIA MAKING PROGRESS ON RACISM BEFORE WCUP

**MOSCOW:** Russia has made progress fighting soccer racism ahead of next year's World Cup, but players, coaches and fans still risk abuse, a new report says. There were 89 racist and far-right incidents at Russian games in the 2016-17 season, slightly below the two previous seasons, according to Thursday's report by European anti-discrimination group FARE and Russia-based SOVA.

In one case, an African player complained of racist abuse by an opponent during a Russian Premier League game. In another case, a hardline fan group segregated part of a stadium for people of "Slavic appearance," the report alleges. Fans of Russian champion Spartak Moscow flew anti-Semitic banners. The Russian Football Union's disciplinary committee, however, has said it didn't detect a single racist incident in any of the top three divisions this season.

The report comes ahead of the Confederations Cup, starting Saturday, and a year ahead of the World Cup. "The Russian football authorities and the government authorities have realized ... the way both of these competitions will be tarnished by the fear of racism occurring and they've taken some quite strong measures," FARE's executive director Piara Powar told The Associated Press in a telephone interview. "There still remains the danger of some isolated incidents taking place."

Russian authorities have taken measures to blacklist at least 191 fans from attending sports events, while the RFU ejected an influential fan leader, Alexander Shprygin, from its organization. He was deported twice from France last year following violence around Russia's match with England at the European Championship, and has been accused of posting far-right symbols on social media, a charge he denied.

Shprygin was dragged out of a bathroom at an RFU conference in September by police and detained, reportedly in connection with an investigation into fan violence.

FARE says Russia has made some progress, and that it didn't observe monkey chants or openly Nazi flags in any top-flight games this season. However, it warns far-right fans instead fly banners with concealed messages such as runes and number codes used by Nazi and ultranationalist groups.

The RFU punished two clubs in the 2015-16 season for such banners, but didn't pursue any such cases this season - something which Powar says indicates it may be "turning a blind eye." That was despite cases of anti-Semitic banners being flown by Spartak fans, including taunts aimed at rival CSKA Moscow, whose club president and then-coach are both Jewish. Another Spartak banner showed a Russian rock singer caricatured as an Orthodox Jew, accompanied by personal abuse. CSKA fans also targeted their own coach, Leonid Slutsky - now at England's Hull City - with a banner linking his Jewish faith to poor results. FARE says the number of violent racist incidents fell from five to two last season compared to

the year before. There was also no repeat of large-scale violent attacks on foreign fans, such as those which took place between Russian and English fans in Marseille a year ago during the European Championship. However, there are indications that football-related violence between different ethnic groups in Russia is becoming more entrenched, with fans from Russia's largely Muslim regions in the North Caucasus forming "fan groups which adopt football hooligans' rules and initiate fights with Moscow teams." In another case last month at a playoff game for a place in the Russian Premier League, one fan group from the Yenisei Krasnoyarsk team issued a statement on social media saying that its sector of the stadium was only available to fans of "Slavic appearance." A member of the group, Artyom Kirillov, suggested the group had been misunderstood. "A lot was made up" in local media reports of the incident, he told the AP. "We are loyal to all Russian citizens." — AP



**INCHEON:** In this Wednesday photo, Uli Stielike, head coach of the South Korean men's soccer team, stands to meet the media after arriving from Qatar at Incheon International Airport in Incheon, South Korea. Stielike yesterday, fired as South Korea's head coach after poor results in World Cup qualifying. — AP

### SOCCER

# S KOREA AXE STIELIKE AFTER QATAR SHOCK

**SEOUL:** South Korea axed coach Uli Stielike yesterday after a shock defeat to Qatar left their World Cup qualification hanging in the balance.

Stielike, who has been in charge since 2014, paid the price for a run of poor results including qualifying defeats to China and Iran. The 62-year-old German was South Korea's longest serving coach and he led the team to 27 victories, also a national record.

But Tuesday's 3-2 reverse in Doha, South Korea's first loss to Qatar in 32 years, left them in danger of missing direct qualification for Russia 2018.

Lee Yong-Soo, chairman of the Korean Football Association, also resigned in a shake-up ahead of South Korea's final two qualifying games.

"As the results of the final World Cup qualification round did not meet our expectation, the KFA and coach Stielike decided to end Stielike's contract under mutual agreement," said Lee after a meeting in Seoul.

"We spoke with Stielike and notified him before the press conference. Stielike said that he respects any deci-

sion reached by the technical committee," he added. Lee said Stielike would probably be replaced by a South Korean coach, explaining time was too short for a foreigner to get to know the team.

"The reason that we will likely select a South Korean coach is because there is too little time for a new foreign coach to understand the characteristics of each player," Lee told reporters after the meeting. "The most important task for the next coach will be to boost the players' morale and building up a new team. We only have a year until the Russia World Cup but... that is enough time to build up a new team," he said.

### TOFFEE TURNAROUND

Stielike's sacking completed a fall from grace for a man once dubbed "God-tielike" by South Korean fans for his successes after taking the helm in September 2014. During his 33-month reign, the former Real Madrid midfielder chalked up a record 27 wins as well as five draws and seven defeats.

Stielike was appointed in September 2014, after South Korea had been pelted

with toffees, a Korean insult, upon returning winless from that year's World Cup in Brazil.

Just months later he led them to the Asian Cup final-without conceding a single goal en route-before they went down 2-1 to hosts Australia in Sydney.

Stielike also led South Korea to victory at the East Asia Cup seven months later. But trouble set in during Asia's final round of World Cup qualifiers, especially when they went down 1-0 to China in March-only their second loss to the Chinese in 32 games.

He had been widely expected to go after Tuesday's loss to Qatar, which left South Korea clinging to the second automatic qualifying spot in Group A.

South Korea are seeking to qualify for their ninth consecutive World Cup, a run which includes reaching the semi-finals on home soil in 2002.

They remain second in Group A, seven points behind already-qualified Iran but just one ahead of Uzbekistan. South Korea play Iran and then Uzbekistan in their final two games in August and September.—AFP

## SOUTHAMPTON SACK PUEL AFTER JUST ONE SEASON

**LONDON:** Claude Puel was sacked as Southampton manager on Wednesday after just one season in charge, the English Premier Club announced. Puel, 55, took Southampton to a respectable eighth-place finish in the table and to the League Cup final where they were defeated by Manchester United. "Southampton Football Club can today confirm that it has terminated the contract of Claude Puel with immediate effect," said a club statement. Puel, a former Monaco, Lille, Lyon and Nice coach, was booed by his own

fans when visitors Stoke City won 1-0 at St Mary's on the final day of the Premier League season in May.

Officials at Southampton had already revealed plans to review the Frenchman's future and Puel's cause was not helped by his side's failure to score for a fifth straight home match. "Everyone at Southampton would like to express our thanks to Claude for his hard work and commitment this year. The highlight of the season was a memorable day at Wembley in the League Cup Final, a day our

fans will always treasure," added the club.

"We wish Claude well for the future. The search for a new management team is underway. We are confident that we will find the right fit in line with the long term vision of the club." Puel replaced Ronald Koeman as manager last year when the Dutchman took over at Everton and signed a two-year contract. Despite Southampton's eighth-place finish, they lost 16 league games and suffered early exits from both the FA Cup and the Europa League. During the defeat against Stoke, his

team's own fans chanted "You don't know what you're doing".

Puel had told reporters before the season ended that he had expected to still be in charge for the 2017/2018 season.

"I came here for a project, to continue this work to improve all these young players," he said. "Many players have become starting players this year, like Maya Yoshida, Oriol Romeu, Jack Stephens so it's important to continue this role and keep building the future of Southampton.— AFP

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# Sports

FRIDAY, JUNE 16, 2017

LAS VEGAS: In this May 2, 2015, file photo, Floyd Mayweather Jr. celebrates during his welterweight title fight against Manny Pacquiao in Las Vegas. Mayweather Jr. said Wednesday, he will come out of retirement to face UFC star Conor McGregor in a boxing match on Aug 26. — AP

## Mayweather and McGregor agree to August super-fight

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