

Housemaid jumps from the 6th floor



Planned electricity charges 'sharply' reduced, MP says



Barca take the lead; Enrique confirms exit



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## THE WOMEN OF Maha Al-Asaker

SEE PAGE 3



Local Spotlight

## 17 MILLION GALLONS OF WATER WASTED IN 2 DAYS



By Muna Al-Fuzai

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Last week I wrote about the national celebrations and predicted that water will be sprayed in the streets, which is a negative phenomenon. The national celebrations have turned into a water festival. What is the connection between the two? Nothing!

It is shameful that we celebrated in this fashion a national occasion in which many families remember their loved ones who sacrificed their lives for the nation to protect its land. But now the memory of those heroic martyrs no longer exists, except for reports about water guns, quarrels and the terrible congestion in the streets. The question remains - what is the wisdom of all this? And what have we learned and how much have we lost?

We have lost the opportunity to teach our kids why we are celebrating the national and liberation days. How should we think about this issue for the future? Isn't water a blessing? I don't think any of these ideas have been mentioned during the national days.

The ministry of electricity and water issued a statement in the press that water consumption during the celebrations reached 17 million imperial gallons, equivalent to the daily consumption of 17,000 houses, each consisting of 10 members. This is a loss of KD 170,000 to the state budget, at a time when the government is calling for reducing water and energy consumption.

The problem is not in the abundance or lack of water, but how to present the concept to the minds of our children, which stresses the importance of maintaining water as a blessing we need to preserve. Water wasted this year confirms that this negative phenomenon is expanding and getting worse. The interior ministry worked hard on this occasion against violators of traffic laws, with 1,800 ticketed for frivolity, recklessness and blocking traffic. Also, 45 brawls almost lead to loss of life or bloodshed.

The conditions were not good at the municipality as well. An official source said that its members seized 23 'machineguns' loaded with water from street vendors, in addition to lifting 34 tons of garbage from the main celebration sites in the capital alone. It is necessary to prevent the abuse of water just the way the law prohibited the use of foam sprays.

The ministry of electricity and water does not have a law that punishes consumers if water is wasted for any reason. Even when water is wasted by washing cars, it can only issue a warning and alert the owner, but nothing more.

Water is a great blessing, as people are dying of thirst in areas nearby. These young people will never understand the importance of respecting the grace in which they live as they're not going to learn the meaning of National Day except that it is a water festival. We in Kuwait do not have rivers or lakes - we get water from the Gulf after desalinating it, which costs a lot of money to the state, and we are responsible for this extravagance. The national holidays must be an occasion to think, thank and learn.

PHOTO OF THE DAY



The new Jaber Al Ahmad Cultural Center (JACC) seen at night. — Photo by Ghazi Qaffaf / KUNA

IMPRINT

## WHY I WON'T PROTEST TRUMP



By Nejouad Al-Yagout

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I did not come all the way to Earth to fight Trump, the devil or dictators. I came here to transcend the Trump inside of me, the devil within and the thoughts within me that are dictators at best! In fact, if thoughts were judged, I would be on death row, surely! And we all know that if each of us directed as much energy as we do toward Trump on ourselves, we would witness the most rapid of awakenings.

One of the strangest things I noticed is that Trump is a trigger for many. And citizens from countries with stringent laws against immigrants and refugees tend to voice their discontent the loudest. I wonder why people are not addressing the issues in their own countries. Is it because they fear being imprisoned, so they find it easier to express their angst at America, the land of the free? Furthermore, I wonder why most of us do not address the issues within our own selves. Are we terrified of breaking free from our self-made prisons?

Yes, expressing our angst can shed light on matters, but we have to make sure that we include ourselves. If our protest is directed only against an outer force, then we are in denial. Evidently, protests usually stem from noble intentions, but we seem to be getting nowhere. It almost seems as though we are forcing people to tolerate us instead of teaching one another how to find the love within us, a love that needs no coercion. This is why hate crimes keep increasing. When we suppress a person's inclination towards bigotry, it will explode in time. We can never force another person to accept us or give us rights.

Yes, many strides have been made because of protests. Women and minorities have now become active participants in the workforce, but those against any cause will find ways to attack eventually. This is why women are still not regarded as equal in many parts of the world and people of color and minorities are still attacked. What we need

is internal healing. A fight for equality will continue to backfire, and there will always be a form of resistance. Because it is the law of nature.

So perhaps, introspection can assist us in ascending the status quo. How about we stop protesting and ask ourselves: What is it inside each and every one of us that has created such divisiveness? What is it inside of us that judges another person based on skin color? What is it inside of us that has given birth to ideologies that separate human beings into categories?

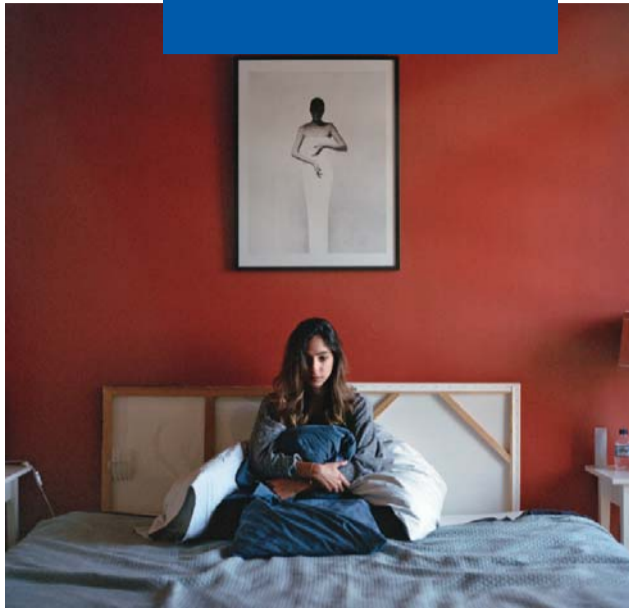
Instead of teaching people divisive scripture, we could resurrect the scripture within us all, the inclusive scripture that is divine. Our global shift of consciousness is already in fast gear because of all the people around the globe who are looking within for answers, but we are delaying the process by constantly blaming governments, leaders or the rich for issues lurking within the recesses of our own minds.

Evil exists because we are collectively misaligned with our divinity. And we have all heard of the tipping point. If enough of us are geared toward something - in this case ascension - it is bound to reach a critical mass and eventually become the new way of the world. And what took eons in the past will take the shortest time ever because of the Internet.

Most importantly, it will take a lot of courage to leave behind old ideological matrices, since our belief systems are so ingrained within us. But it is bound to happen, because we are all awakening. In the meantime, we can remind ourselves that we are not here to protest against an external force, but to protest the parts of us that see others as inferior. So perhaps a peaceful protest against ourselves is way overdue!

Nejouad Al Yagout - Photo by Djinane Alsuwayeh





Self Portrait of the Artist  
Photographer Maha Al-Asaker in her bedroom.

# The women of Maha Al-Asaker

By Athoob Al-Shuaibi

**W**hen you peek into the closet of a young woman, mostly you'd find posters, mementos and pictures of besties. It's a life stage that ends with maturity. But Kuwaiti artist and photographer Maha Al-Asaker was an exception. She would stick a list of goals with estimated dates for accomplishing them. She knew just what she wanted, planned constantly to discover the limits of her capabilities and ended up working in New York.

The photographer's journey of self-discovery and understanding is heartily reflected in her art. Lately, Maha checked off one of her goals - an art documentary project about Kuwaiti women in their bedrooms.

Maha suffered from the difficulty of letting go the memory of her father's tragic death in 2006 in a car accident. She struggled to find a way to express her feelings of grief, until one of her friends suggested her to carry a camera and take pictures. "I didn't have a professional camera then. But I felt that pictures can tell something about me...express what's within me. I didn't want others to tell me who I was - I chose to rely on myself in solving my problems," Maha told Kuwait Times.

Good photographers are not those who sell the most, but those who get appreciated by the public for what they like to do and not what they are asked to execute. When photographers rise to this level of professionalism to determine their path, they become artists. Maha's work is controversial, and sometimes bold. She defies the Kuwaiti social template in order to present her ideas. Her work needed plenty of creative thinking space away from limitations, so she headed to New York.

"Leave your artistic ego in Kuwait before going to NY if you're planning to live in that location. You must start from scratch - the competition is intense and the criteria they're looking for are high," Maha said. "For instance, if you desire to work as a fashion photographer, you must first work as an assistant to one. You also need to build many relations inside and outside your domain of work, because no matter how good your CV is, it's not going to guarantee a job!" she added.

Although she's financially independent, she wouldn't resign from her job in Kuwait to chase her dreams without parental consent. "I belong to the Al-Asaker family, and they are a conservative folk. However, my family respects my personal decisions. I'm blessed with a great mother who gave me wings to fly even though she would worry about me and miss me. I try to calmly resist the emotional blackmail emanating from their hearts to return home. I have to first make sure that my decision of coming back is mindful," Maha explained.

It's been a year since she began the implementation of her photographic art project "Women of Kuwait", which was recently published in Vogue Arabia. She was able to obtain the trust and approval of a few Kuwaiti women to model in front of her Hasselblad camera in their bedrooms. "Natural ambient light has been an indispensable pillar in this project. It's crucial for any vintage camera.

Notwithstanding, the most difficult challenge for me - after getting those Kuwaiti women to agree - was to portray them in a non-abrasive manner. House sanctity is highly exalted in Kuwait. Neither strangers nor relatives are welcome to enter the most intimate and private room of the house, despite the friendliness and generosity at the doorway," Maha told Kuwait Times.

"For this reason, this ongoing project aims to embrace the differences in the lives of women of Kuwait and weaken the social barrier between us and other women of the world. On a personal level, every time I photograph one of them and listen to her story, I invisibly continue my quest in the hunt for self-discovery secrets, wondering who I am and what I would've become if I was born somewhere else," she said.

Maha is planning to visit Kuwait this year to work on her project. Asked whether she desires to live in America for good, she replied: I don't know yet. I'm receptive to all possibilities. Either staying in NY or coming back for good should add to my photographic career, and not bring me back just for the sake of being back".

One wonders what goal on her list she's going to check off next!

To see more of Maha's work, visit [www.mahaalasaker.com](http://www.mahaalasaker.com)

## List of Publications

- F Stop Magazine group exhibition - issue 77 "Family" - June 2016.
- ArtSlant interview - April 2016.
- Tribe Photo Magazine, issue 2 - April 2016.
- Art Reveal Magazine, issue 14 - March 2016.
- "#Photography Magazine", issue 15 - December 2015.
- FEM Magazine - December 2015.
- F Stop Magazine group exhibition - issue 74 "Telling a story" - December 2015.
- Photo Art Mag - November 2015.
- CUSPHOTO - November 2015.
- Contributor magazine - November 2015.
- F Stop Magazine group exhibition - issue 73 "Where I live" - October 2015.
- Musee Magazine issue #12 Controversial - July 2015.
- Musee Magazine issue #11 Vanity - April 2015.
- SHIFT Vol. 9, International Center of Photography - July 2014.
- SELECT, the photography issue - 2013.



## List of Exhibitions

**May 16-19, 2016:** Abolish 153 art exhibition at FA Gallery, Kuwait.

**April 28-May 10, 2016:** Abolish 153 art exhibition at JAMM Art, Dubai.

**Sept 10-20, 2015:** ICP Alumni Group Exhibition at PhotoVille, Brooklyn.

**June 26-July 3, 2015:** "Les Lieux: at SoAm Studio, NYC.

**March 5-8, 2015:** "Art on Paper" with JHB Gallery, NYC.

**December 2-7, 2014:** "Miami Project" with JHB Gallery.

**October 30, 2014:** "ArtWalk Auction - The 20th anniversary" with JHB Gallery, Manhattan, NYC.

**July 10-13, 2014:** "Art Market - Hampton" with JHB Gallery.

**June 20-August 21, 2014:** "Elective Affinities" @ Rita K Hillman Education Gallery (International Center of Photography).

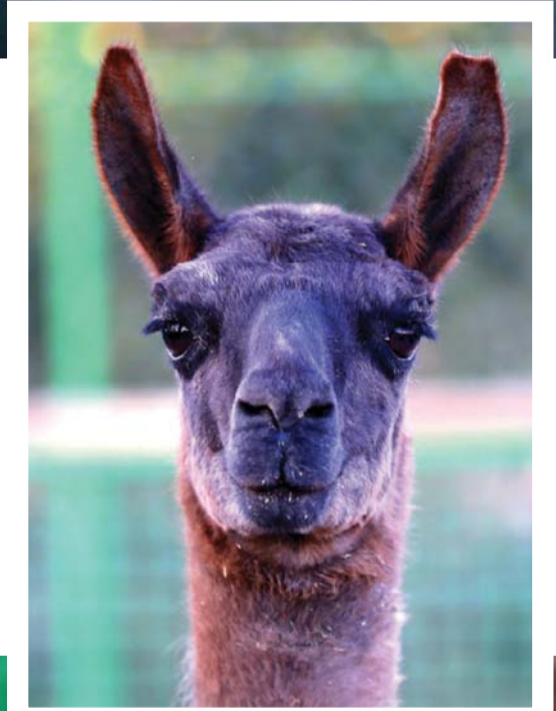


# DOORWAY TO NATURE

## PRIVATE ANIMAL PROTECTORATE IN AL-ABDALY

By Nawara Fattahova

**F**eeding llamas, deer, goats, sheep and other animals is a wonderful experience, and one people can enjoy at the Bab Dukkala nature protectorate in Abdaly, around 118 km from Kuwait City. There is no entrance fee to this reserve, encouraging families to visit. Although Bab Dukkala opened three years ago, it continues to fly under the radar. It's over an hour out of the city by car, and the secluded location provides over 15,000 sq m for guests and wildlife. "We chose this faraway place to have a large, open space to allow us to keep more animals and birds," Ahmad Al-Rashdan, owner of Bab Dukkala, told Kuwait Times.



Photos show the variety of animals that can be found at the Bab Al-Dukkala nature preserve in Al-Abdaly. — Photos by Joseph Shagra and Yasser Al-Zayyat



03 FRIDAY  
MARCH 2017

#### Private nature preserve

The protectorate is home to 60 types of animals and around 120 species of birds. "Besides the 100-plus types of birds in our cages, there is also a white parrot which is not caged. Visitors to Bab Dukkala can hold it on their arm and take photos," Rashdan noted. Visitors enjoy the chance to feed the various animals at the center. "We used to let people feed the animals with fruits or vegetables they brought with them, but we noticed that this can harm the animals, especially if the produce is sprayed with insecticides. We now provide leaves and plants that visitors can buy for a nominal price of 250 fils and feed the animals," explained Rashdan.

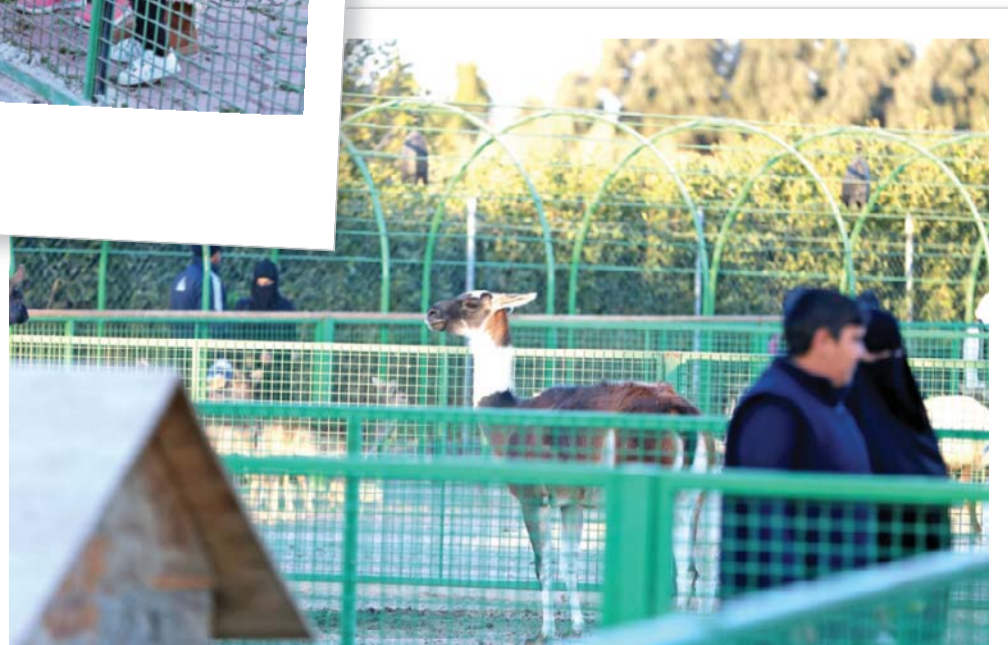
"We are glad that we don't face problems with visitors. We have guards walking around the protectorate who watch for any visitors attacking animals or throwing stuff on them. We have 25 people working here, including the cleaners," he said. The animals are sourced from all across the globe. "I travelled to various countries to bring these animals and birds. Some came from Europe, others from Saudi Arabia and the UAE, and the deer are local. I brought the birds from Sudan," he added.

Before creating the center, breeding animals was a hobby for Rashdan. "When I collected many animals, I thought of showing people my work, and that the animals can be used for people's enjoyment and eat from their hands. Even the wild animals are friendly to visitors. Also, one of our staff walks around the place with a monkey, which people can hold in their arms and take photos."

#### Ride a horse, pet a llama

Visitors can also ride a horse, pony and even a llama. The pony's small stature means rides are restricted to children. Guests are also offered the chance to try the Dee Poon 3D game, a virtual rollercoaster. The setup consists of two separate moving seats, with users wearing 3D eye-sets. They then experience a real-life rollercoaster ride.

Bab Dukkala is open only during winter, from Nov 1 to April 1. Opening hours are from 11:00 am to 8:00 pm. "Maybe many people don't know about this place, but we receive between 4,000 to 6,000 visitors every Friday, which is a huge number. We invite people to come and enjoy the great weather and atmosphere, especially during the weekend," concluded Rashdan.





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News

in brief

**Fugitives escaped from jail arrested**

**KUWAIT:** Ahmadi detectives arrested the two fugitives who escaped from Riqqa police station within 24 hours of their escape. The two were located in Meidan Hawally. Their accomplice who helped them escape was also arrested.

**Indecent photo**

A security source said a citizen in her 40s told Qadsiya police that a driver attempted to abuse her by asking her indecent mobile photo. According to her, she had a flat tire between Daeya and Qadisiya. She said that a car stopped by and the driver asked her to relax because he would change the tire. Later, he asked her to send him a picture on his mobile in 'short clothes' and he claimed that the picture would only remain in his phone. He gave her a phone number as well. The woman lodged a complaint accusing the man of encouraging her to commit vice crimes.

**Police-beating**

An Egyptian expat reported to Khaitan police that a policeman beat him while at work. However, the policeman refused to file counter charges.

**Verbal assault**

A policeman told Mubarak Al-Kabeer police that a citizen verbally insulted him when he stopped the latter to issue a ticket.

**Drug-dealers**

Ahmadi governorate security Director General Brig Abdullah Saffah ordered an Iranian woman and a citizen be sent to Drugs Control General Department after liquor and illicit drugs were found with them. The two were arrested in Mahboula area.

**Trespassing**

An Indian expat told Naem area police that an unknown person entered his house and asked for a cigar lighter. The Indian told him that he did not have one and asked him to leave. The unknown person abruptly picked his mobile phone and tried to run away. When the Indian resisted the attempt, the intruder pulled a knife, stabbed on his left hand and ran away. Investigations are ongoing.

**Vehicles impounded**

Around 1,000 cars and more than 500 motorcycles were impounded during the celebrations of National days for violating traffic rules and placing illegal stickers on the cars. — Al Anbaa

# MAID JUMPS FROM THE 6TH FLOOR

By Ben Garcia

**KUWAIT:** A Filipina domestic helper has been hospitalized after allegedly jumping from the 6th floor of her sponsor's building. The woman, who spoke with Kuwait Times, claimed that she jumped willingly after her sponsor threatened to call the police. She had been caught stealing KD 110 from her sponsor and she admitted the theft to this reporter. "Only small mistakes, but they'll shout at me and hit me in the face. I know how angry they could be. When they said they are calling a police, I was terribly scared. I don't know what to do because I don't want to be arrested; so I jumped out from the 6th floor," she told Kuwait Times.

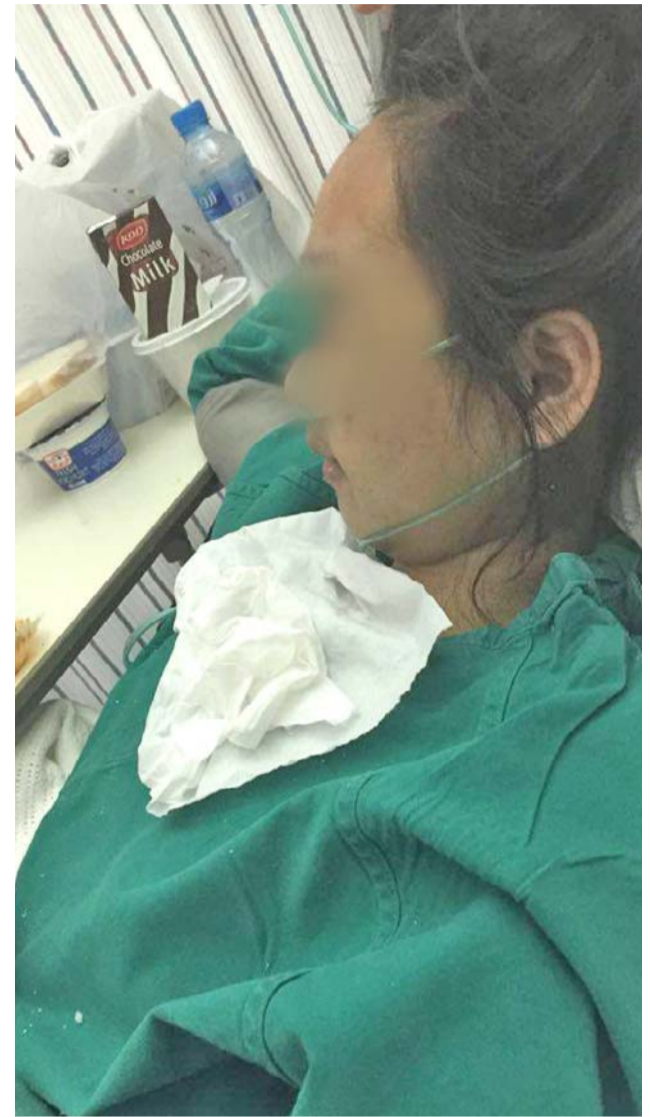
But there is more to the story. The woman, who gave her name as a 24-year-old Rahima, claims that she isn't really who her employer thinks she is. In fact, she isn't Rahima at all. Instead she said she is 17-year-old Malaiha Omar and that she used a fake name (Rahima) and a fake passport to get a job in Kuwait as a domestic helper.

Lying now in a bed in Mubarak Hospital with several injuries, Rahima (or Malaiha) narrated her story. She hails from Cotabato Philippines in a village of Datu Uddin Sinsuat. In 2016, she worked with a local recruiter in the Philippines to get a fake passport with a different name and age. She then came to Kuwait in August last year and started working. But since then, she claims that her employers mistreated her by whipping her with a belt. But she didn't have much problem until the day her employer discovered that she had stolen KD 110 from him.

"My male employer was asking about missing pants. Out of fear, I said I don't know, but I knew where the pants were. I was just too scared to tell him because I don't want to be whipped again. I accidentally burned the pants while ironing them. So he inspected my cabinet and found the damaged pants. There, he also found the money," she explained. The housekeeper admitted that during her employment, her sponsors did pay her monthly salary. However, after being caught stealing, she now claims that she was mistreated, did not receive a day off and was not allowed out of the house by herself.

AKO-OFW Chairman (International) Dr Celirino 'Chie' Umandap - an Kuwait-based international NGO, learned about the woman predicament, whose identity is yet to be verified through the Philippine Embassy. "Upon learning her case, I informed the office of the president through IACAT and our Department of Justice Secretary Vitaliano Aguirre. I am just waiting for their reply. Also, I have informed the Office of Susan Ople, of Ople Policy Center," he said.

Although Rahima's (or Malaiha) identity and age are yet to be verified, the question of her being under age has raised concerns. "How do you expect a young girl of her age to handle such a stressful situation? I blamed the local recruitment agency that hired such a teenage girl. It is illegal. The agency should be suspended or banned - or be subjected to investigation. How many more of such cases are here in Kuwait? Remember, even in Kuwait, the allowable age for domestic workers should be at least 24, he said.



Official from the Philippine Embassy who spoke with this reporter confirmed part of Rahima's claim. "She said she jumped from the sixth floor of her employer's window. She said she was only 17 years old. She has fracture on her leg; she cannot move her leg, there was a surgery on her left eye, but the whole details and the circumstances and information I got are yet to be verified. I just went to hospital to check her condition and see how we could be of help or whether the agency is helping or not. According to the recruitment agency personnel whom I spoke with, the young girl will not be filing any complaints against her sponsor because she said, it was her fault. But police have already filed an attempted suicide case," the embassy official said.

## KUWAIT AND ROMANIA OFFICIALS DISCUSS BILATERAL COOPERATION



Romanian Foreign Minister Teodor Viorel Melescanu pictured with Kuwaiti Ambassador Talal Mansour Al-Hajri. — KUNA

**VIENNA:** Romanian Foreign Minister Teodor Viorel Melescanu met with Kuwaiti Ambassador Talal Mansour Al-Hajri, discussing bilateral relations and ways to boost them in various fields. After the meeting, Ambassador Al-Hajri said via phone that the sides tackled political and economic cooperation between the two countries and touched on the preparation for a joint ministerial consultation committee. Al-Hajri noted that the two countries have signed, during Former Romanian Prime Minister Victor-Viorel Ponta visit to Kuwait, a memorandum of understanding regarding the joint committee. The ambassador added that the Romanian minister hailed the great level of diplomatic ties, which goes back to five decades, expressing hope that the economic and political fields would see similar levels in the future. The two sides also underlined the importance of bolstering investment opportunities in both nations. With regard to Kuwait's nomination to the Security Council, Al-Hajri said that the Romanian minister expressed mutual support to both countries, as non-permanent members of the Security Council. — KUNA



**KUWAIT:** Kuwaiti Ambassador to Australia Najib Al-Bader handed in a letter on bilateral ties from First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah to Australian Minister of Foreign Affairs Julie Bishop. During the meeting in the capital Canberra yesterday, Ambassador Al-Bader conveyed Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled's eagerness to boost cooperation with Australia on all levels. — KUNA





Kuwait Red Crescent Society (KRCS) inaugurating water wells in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania. —KUNA photos

## KUWAIT INAUGURATES 16 WELLS IN TANZANIA

**KUWAIT:** Kuwait Red Crescent Society (KRCS) has inaugurated 16 water wells in a number of schools in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania, in cooperation with the Kuwaiti-based Mabane Company. The inauguration ceremony was held yesterday in presence of Kuwaiti Ambassador Jasem Al-Najem, Anwar Al-Hasawi, KRCS's Deputy Chairman, and Shuaa Al-Qati, Executive Director of Communication in Mabane, KRCS said in a statement. This project is "one of a kind" that is being implemented by KRCS in Tanzania as part of a number of projects that the Kuwaiti society implements in Africa to improve the humanitari-

an condition in light of ongoing drought in the Horn of Africa, Al-Hasawi said in a press statement.

KRCS's humanitarian actions, in addition to its continued cooperation with the Kuwaiti embassy in Tanzania, boosts its presence to move on toward providing further humanitarian aid to African nations, said the Kuwaiti official. Kuwait will remain a supporter of every humanitarian effort as part of the firm approach of its foreign policy in providing humanitarian aid to all countries in need, Al-Hasawi said, expressing his gratitude to the Kuwaiti foreign ministry, embassy in Tanzania represent-

ed by Ambassador Al-Najem, and all Tanzanian officials for supporting philanthropic and humanitarian actions.

For his part, Ambassador Al-Najem told reporters the Kuwaiti embassy in Tanzania seeks to work closely with KRCS to solve water shortage and scarcity issues in the country due to the ongoing extreme drought in Dar es Salaam city. Meanwhile, Al-Qati explained that water wells projects in Dar es Salaam city is part of Mabane's community initiatives in supporting a number of social responsibility-themed issues and campaigns in cooperation with several bodies in the civil society. —KUNA

## KCCI UNDERLINES THE IMPORTANCE OF INTEGRATIVE ECONOMY IN GCC

**KUWAIT:** Kuwait Chamber of Commerce and Industry (KCCI) board-member Fahad Al-Joan has pointed out the importance of building a non-competitive integrative economy between GCC countries through finding more communication channels among member-states. Al-Joan made his remarks yesterday while meeting with the visiting Chairman of Oman Chamber of Commerce and Industry (OCCI), Dhofar governorate Abdullah Al-Rawas and his accompanying delegation at the KCCI's headquarters.

Kuwaiti investors aspire for further cooperation with their Omani partners, especially in light of the ongoing development in the Sultanate in fields of infrastructure, legislatives that encourages foreign investments, and the country's geographic location advantage, he said. The Kuwaiti-Omani commercial exchange volume has seen a significant development in the past period, estimating to around USD 700 million in 2014, including \$500 million in Omani exports to Kuwait, Al-

Joan noted. For his part, Al-Rawas called Kuwaiti investors to take advantage of the special facilitations provided to them by the Sultanate, particularly in the free-trade zone in Salalah, noting that Kuwaitis are completely exempted from taxes and treated as same as their Omani counterparts.

### Kuwait stock market

Meanwhile, Boursa Kuwait witnessed in the past week's sessions speculations on small chips and profit bagging particularly by leading and operating companies. New price levels were set for a large number of stocks, particularly those that turned bullish in recent sessions, amid intensive orders by financial portfolios on shares of companies that revealed their financial statements or information related to their operations.

Speculations dominated corporate shares (50-100 fils), amid traders' abstention from purchasing, in anticipation of financial disclosures by a number of companies that have

not done so for the past year financial status. The market also witnessed corrections on prices of many shares amid trades' decline by 35-45 percent as compared to January and February. As to today's session, hefty purchasing persisted on inactive and small chips, with Nabisco, Intiaz and Investor leading the operations, thus impacting positively on the benchmark.

Aayan board recommended distribution of 6.5 percent of the cash profits for the financial year ending on December 31, 2016. The traders followed up on a revelation by Zain regarding tax libel suits concerning the Iraqi Atheer Iraq and trade suspension of JFH stocks. Kuwait-15 index covered 12.11 million shares with a cash value estimated at KD 5.09 million, done in 594 cash deals thus the index closed at 970.4. The benchmark closed in a bullish manner, climbing by 27.31 and settling at 6,767.04, posting cash value amounting to KD 22.12 million, through 273.99 million shares, done in 6,339 deals. —Agencies



## ISSUANCE OF E-PASSPORTS

By Hanan Al-Saadoun

**KUWAIT:** Relations and Security Information Department said it has distributed many banners related to the issuance of e-Passports at the service centers, police stations, Kuwait International Airport, Interior Ministry building in Sabhan, Nationality and travel documents department, cooperatives and hospitals. This comes as part of an awareness campaign about the issuance of e-Passport and how to obtain it. The service centers are: Shamiya, Capital Governorate; West Mishrif, Hawally Governorate; Ishbiliya, Farwaniya Governorate; Adan Block 7, Mubarak Al-Kabeer; Saad Al-Abdallah, Jahra and Fahad Al-Ahmad, Ahmadi.

### Woman set ablaze

Farwaniya detectives have uncovered the mystery behind the fire incident that left a Sri Lankan expat dead. According to security sources, her boyfriend is the prime suspect. Police received a call about a fire incident in a flat and tried to rescue the woman who later succumbed to her injuries. Detectives learned that the suspect was living with her before he disappeared in a suspicious manner. The suspect initially claimed the woman committed suicide, but after interrogation, he then confessed to pouring a highly combustible liquid on her while she was asleep and set her ablaze before escaping.

## KUWAIT MINISTER CALLS FOR SUSTAINABLE USE OF WATER

**KUWAIT:** Minister of Oil and Minister of Electricity and Water Eng Esam Al-Marzouq has highlighted the need of raising the public awareness about sustainable uses of the water and energy resources. "It's totally impossible to achieve sustainable development and ensure the welfare of the future generations without enough water," he said at a function organized by the Ministry of Electricity Water to mark the Arab Water Day 2017. "Water is interrelated with food and energy," the minister said, noting that the problem of water

scarcity is exacerbating in many Arab countries. The educational, religious and media institutions should join forces in raising the public awareness about conserving the water resources, Al-Marzouq stressed. He noted that Kuwait has successful experiments in rationalizing the water consumption. The Ministry of Electricity and Water is keen on taking part in the scientific activities and ministerial meetings of the Arab Water Council (AWC), an affiliate of the Arab League, he went on. —KUNA



## ARAB LEAGUE CALLS FOR MINIMIZING ENVIRONMENTAL HAZARDS

### OFFICIALS ALARMED AT ISRAEL'S ENCROACHMENT ON PALESTINIAN ENVIRONMENT

**CAIRO:** Arab League Secretary General Ahmad Abul-Gheit yesterday called for greater Arab efforts to boost health and environmental development and minimize losses and damage caused by the environment. The Arab League chief, in the call made at opening session of the joint Arab ministers of health and environment, called for prudent preparation for mapping out the joint Arab strategy for health and environment (2017-2030). The Arab summit held in March 2015 urged Arab health ministers to intensify efforts in combating non-communicable diseases. He noted that the Arab citizens' health is of great priority for the League.

Qatari Minister of Environment Mohammad Al-Rumaihi underlined necessity of boosting development in the health and environmental sectors in the Arab world. The ministers also expressed deep alarm at ongoing and systematic Israel encroachments on the Palestinian environment that have also resulted in direct consequences on the Palestinians' health. The officials expressed the deep concern in a statement, released at conclusion of the Arab ministers of health and environment's meeting.

Conferees agreed on establishing the Arab forum for health and environment and urged Arab states to take part in this forum's meetings, due to be held once every two years at the ministerial level and once annually at the experts' level. In a final communique, the ministers expressed deep concern at environmental deteriora-



Arab ministers of health and environment meet during an open session in Cairo.

tion and pollution that have contributed to hiking death rates and illnesses in the Arab region. They blessed the Arab health and environment strategy (2017-2030) aimed at exerting intensive efforts to minimize consequences of illnesses, impotence and early deaths caused by the envi-

ronmental hazards.

The strategy is also designed to coordinate with the World Health Organization and UN programs for combating epidemics and protecting vulnerable segments of the world population, namely children, women and the elderly, against environment-

related diseases and illnesses. Moreover, the plan aims at bolstering potentials of the health and environmental sectors in face of emergencies. The two-day meeting addresses means of coping with environmental hazards and minimizing their impact on man's wellbeing. —Agencies

## News

in brief

### KNPC to sign second loan tranche for mega project

**KUWAIT:** Kuwait National Petroleum Company (KNPC) will sign the second installment of a foreign loan to finance the company's Clean Fuel Project (CFP) by the end of the month, at a cost of \$6.2 billion, KNPC CEO Mohammad Al-Mutairi said yesterday. Speaking to KUNA on the sidelines of a ceremony to mark the completion of a maintenance phase in Mina Abdullah refinery, Al-Mutairi said that the company has already used up 95 percent of local funding for the project, which amounts to KD 1.2 billion. On the project, he noted that it has now been 81 percent completed, adding that the company regularly assesses the progress of the project, which is due to be completed next year. Moreover, Al-Mutairi said that KPC's renewable energy capacity stands at 800,000 barrels per day, as he underscored that the company's operations are meticulous and efficient. CFP is one of KNPC's landmark projects, which aims to expand and upgrade two of the company's refineries.

### 'Fair weather forecast' for weekend in Kuwait

**KUWAIT:** Fair weather will prevail in the country in the upcoming days, said an official at Kuwait Meteorological Center Abdulaziz Al-Qarawi yesterday. Al-Qarawi said that Kuwait had been under the influence of a northern air front recently, which resulted in the weather being cloudy and rainy. As for today, the official said the weather will be warm with light to moderate northwesterly wind during the day with speeds between 08-30 km/h. However, today evening will witness a drop in temperature with light variable wind and low and high temperatures between 14 to 28 Degrees Celsius. Tomorrow, Al-Qarawi expects the weather to be warm early during the day, but the presence of the northwesterly wind, at the speeds between 08-30 km/h, later on will drop the temperature from 28 to 6 Degrees Celsius.

## PLANNED INCREASES IN ELECTRICITY CHARGES 'SHARPLY REDUCED': MP

### PM GRILLING SHELVED AFTER HEALTH OFFICIAL STEPS DOWN

By B Izzak

**KUWAIT:** The Electricity and Water Ministry has decided to sharply reduce the planned high increases in electricity charges which were due to be implemented in May, opposition MP Riyadh Al-Adasani said yesterday. Adasani said that he has been officially informed by the Ministry of Electricity and Water in a response to a parliamentary question that the new charges for apartment buildings, affecting mainly expatriates, will now be a maximum of five fils per kilowatt instead of the original increase in the law to up to 15 fils a kilowatt.

Similarly, the kilowatt for commercial shops will now cost just five fils instead of the planned 25 fils and the cost for industrial and agricultural use will be three fils a kilowatt instead of the planned 10 fils. The Electricity Charges Increase Law, passed by the previous National Assembly last year, does not apply to Kuwaiti citizens. Adasani praised the measure but insisted that it was not enough and the government should reduce the increases on water and fuel charges. There has been no comment from the Electricity and Water Ministry on the issue.

The current electricity charges are just two fils a kilowatt for all purposes. The previous National Assembly passed a law last year raising the electricity and water charges several folds - the largest was for commercial shops which was raised from two fils to 25 fils, a whopping 1,250 percent increase. For apartment buildings, the law set the price at five fils a kilowatt for the first 1,000 kilowatts, 10 fils a kilowatt for the second 1,000 kilowatts and 15 fils a kilowatt for consumption above 2,000 kilowatts.

That plan would have raised electricity bills for some apartments to around KD 100 monthly in summer months. But cutting this increase to just five fils for all consumptions will increase the bills by over double the current bills. Adasani said that the lawmakers will continue to pressure the government to reduce all the price increases in order to reduce the burden on citizens.

In another important development, MP Yousef Al-Fadhalah said yesterday that he will not file the promised grilling against the Prime Minister after the Health Ministry Undersecretary Khaled Al-Sahlawi has resigned and his resignation has been accepted. Fadhalah has threatened that he will file to grill the

Prime Minister on March 5 over allegations of failing to check corruption and squandering of public funds. The lawmaker said he will file the grilling if the cabinet does not support Health Minister Jamal Al-Harbi who wanted to dismiss the undersecretary and several top officials over allegations of rampant corruption in the ministry. The Cabinet has reportedly rejected the moves by the minister who submitted his resignation in protest. Fadhalah and several MPs threatened to take action against the government.

Fadhalah told reporters yesterday that he has been informed by assembly speaker Marzouk Al-Ghanem that the health ministry undersecretary and another top official have resigned and their resignations were accepted by the government. He said that the two officials along with others will be sent to the public prosecution for investigation. The lawmaker vowed to continue monitoring corruption at the ministry. MP Jamaan Al-Harbash said he and several lawmakers plan to submit a request during the assembly session next week to launch an investigation into the health ministry corruption especially medical treatment abroad.



# International

FRIDAY, MARCH 3, 2017

**Hungry and afraid, Mosul civilians flee**



**Merkel in Egypt to reduce migrant flows**



**Sessions under fire over Russia envoy contacts**



**JAKARTA:** Indonesia's President Joko Widodo (right) looks on as Indonesia's Coordinating Minister Human Development and Culture Affairs, Puan Maharani (second left) and her mother, former president Megawati Sukarnoputri (left) and Saudi Arabia's King Salman bin Abdul Aziz take a selfie at the Presidential Palace in Jakarta. — AFP

## SAUDI KING URGES UNITED FIGHT AGAINST TERRORISM

KING SALMAN ADDRESSES INDONESIA PARLIAMENT DURING LANDMARK TRIP

**JAKARTA:** Saudi Arabia's King Salman called yesterday for a united fight against terrorism in a speech to Indonesia's parliament during a landmark state visit to the world's most populous Muslim-majority country.

The king is making the first visit by a Saudi monarch to Indonesia in almost 50 years as part of a tour of Asia, accompanied by a 1,000-strong delegation and hundreds of tons of luggage.

In a speech to hundreds of people at the legislature in the capital Jakarta, he called for an intensified fight against terrorism. "The challenge we, especially Muslims, face now is terrorism," he said. "We should close ranks in combating terrorism, radicalism and strive to bring world peace for the benefit of all of us." Saudi Arabia is part of a US-led coalition that has carried out air strikes against the Islamic State (IS) group and other jihadists in Syria. IS is under pressure in Iraq and Syria, as government forces make a drive to retake areas held by the jihadists. Saudi Arabia has witnessed a series of deadly attacks claimed by IS since late 2014, mostly targeting the

Shiite minority and security forces, killing dozens of people. However, some of the kingdom's partners in the Middle East have urged the Sunni-majority country to do more to defeat IS, and even accused the kingdom of supporting the jihadists.

Indonesia, which has long struggled with Islamic militancy, is also facing a renewed threat due to the appeal of IS, with hundreds of its citizens heading to the Middle East to fight with the jihadists. A gun and suicide attack in Jakarta in January last year that killed four civilians and four attackers was the first assault claimed by IS in Southeast Asia. On Thursday Salman also visited Jakarta's Istiqlal mosque, the biggest in Southeast Asia, accompanied by President Joko Widodo, and the leaders prayed together. The king and his entourage will be in Jakarta until today, after which they will head to the Hindu-majority resort island of Bali for a holiday. Salman's three-week Asian tour is seeking investment opportunities as the world's top oil exporter looks to diversify its economy. He began the trip in Malaysia earlier this week and is also set to visit Japan, China and the Maldives. —AFP

## SYRIA ARMY BATTLES IS INSIDE PALMYRA

**BEIRUT:** Syrian troops have pushed into Palmyra as they battle to retake the iconic city from the Islamic State group, but their advance was slowed yesterday by landmines laid by retreating jihadists.

Bolstered by Russian air strikes and ground troops, Syrian government forces have been battling through the desert for weeks to reach Palmyra. The oasis city has traded hands several times during the six-year civil war and become a symbol of IS's wanton destruction of cultural heritage in areas under its control. The jihadist group first seized Palmyra in May 2015

and began to systematically destroy and loot the UNESCO world heritage site's monuments and temples. IS fighters were driven out in March 2016 but recaptured the city last December.

The latest offensive to retake the city saw government forces break through its western limits late Wednesday, forcing IS fighters to retreat into eastern districts, according to the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights. "IS withdrew from most of Palmyra after laying mines across the city. There are still suicide bombers left in the eastern neighborhoods," Observatory head Rami Abdel Rahman told AFP. — AFP



## HUNGRY AND AFRAID, MOSUL CIVILIANS FLEE

**HAMAM AL-ALIL, Iraq:** The gunshot rang out as civilians tried to escape the west of Mosul, where Iraqi forces are battling jihadists, killing a father as he fled with his family.

"The sniper shot him in the head.

His family was all around him, the children and his wife, they were crying," said Maysun, who saw the shooting as she fled Mosul's Maamun neighborhood.

"They didn't want to leave his side,

but we made them continue because it was so dangerous," the 35-year-old told AFP at a camp for the displaced near Iraq's second city. More than 28,000 people have streamed out of west Mosul since February 19, when security forces began a push to wrest control from the Islamic State group, according to International Organization for Migration figures.

They are fleeing fighting and food shortages, but they face horrifying scenes as they leave.

"There were bodies in the street as we walked, children, pieces of bodies," said Safana, 23, as she waited in a food distribution queue in the Hamam Al-Alil camp. She said IS fighters had told people to leave her neighborhood of Maamun in west Mosul.

"They came in the morning and said if we hadn't left by evening they would kill us," she said, adjusting her yellow headscarf. Iraq's elite Counter-Terrorism Service has faced "fierce" resistance from IS in southwest Mosul,

and the jihadists have targeted fleeing civilians, according to senior commander Staff Lieutenant General Abdulghani Al-Assadi.

### Heartbroken

He told AFP around 15 fleeing civilians had been killed by jihadists in the past 10 days, with more wounded. Safana, who like many of those fleeing Mosul declined to give her family name, said civilians had been trapped in their homes during heavy clashes.

"Our neighbor's house was hit by a mortar round and the whole house collapsed on top of them."

"We managed to pull out two wounded people," her sister Shaimaa interjected. "But all the rest were dead, and their bodies are still under the rubble." Among those killed elsewhere in the area known as the Maamun Flats was 10-year-old Rusud Saddam, whose mother was inconsolable as she walked along a highway to reach transport to a camp for the displaced. — AFP



**MOSUL:** Families walk past an Islamic State sign while fleeing clashes between Iraqi forces and Islamic State group militants in western Mosul yesterday. — AP

## MEDICLINIC AND RIVALS PRESS ABU DHABI TO RETHINK HEALTHCARE REFORM

**ABU DHABI:** International healthcare operator Mediclinic is lobbying the Abu Dhabi government to rethink a change in medical insurance rules that has damaged its business after it bet big on acquiring Al Noor Hospitals, its regional CEO told Reuters.

At least two other healthcare companies operating in Abu Dhabi are also in talks with authorities, seeking a reversal or amendment to the reform that reduces state insurance coverage for citizens using private hospitals, according to two industry sources who declined to be named due to the sensitivity of the matter.

Abu Dhabi has cut insurance coverage under its Thiqa plan to 80 percent from 100 percent, meaning patients have to pay 20 percent of bills if they seek treatment at private hospitals.

The rule, which does not apply to government hospitals, was introduced last July - at the worst possible time for Mediclinic as it had just bought Abu Dhabi private hospital group Al Noor for about \$1.7 billion. The London and Johannesburg-listed company's experience illustrates the business risks in the Gulf's oil-exporting countries as low crude prices dampen economies and strain state finances.

The firm has begun lobbying the state Health Authority of Abu Dhabi over the Thiqa change, David Hadley, chief executive of Mediclinic Middle East, told Reuters in an interview.

"Other providers have done the same," said Hadley, adding that the reform had channelled patients to government hospitals.

"We don't have a problem with the policy on co-payments as long as it applies to the entire industry." One of the industry sources said that although authorities did not want to be seen as giving in to pressure in any way, the policy might be adjusted again around the end of this year - partly because reduced Thiqa coverage had led to higher costs at state hospitals, hitting the government's budget.

The Health Authority of Abu Dhabi did not respond to requests for comment about the private sector's discontent with the Thiqa change or whether it planned to scrap the reform or extend it to all hospitals.

It has previously said that the rule change would contribute to its efforts to increase efficiency, standardize operations and increase the sector's financial viability for the benefit of patients and the healthcare system as a whole. — Reuters

## IRAQI FORCES IN MOSUL FIGHT IS COUNTER-ATTACK

### MILITANT-RUN MOSQUE HIT IN WESTERN MOSUL; CIVILIANS KILLED

**MOSUL:** Islamic State fighters launched a counter-attack against advancing US-backed Iraqi forces in western Mosul during an overnight storm, as the battle for control of the militants' last major urban stronghold in Iraq intensified.

Explosions and gun fire rang out across the city's southwestern districts in the early hours of yesterday. The fighting eased in the late morning, although a Reuters correspondent saw an air strike and rebel mortar fire. A senior Iraqi officer said Islamic State staged its attack on units from the elite Counter Terrorism Service (CTS) when the storm hampered air surveillance and on-the-ground visibility. He said some militant fighters hid amongst displaced families to get close to the U.S.-trained troops. Iraqi forces captured the eastern side of Mosul in January after 100 days of fighting and launched their attack on the districts that lie west of the Tigris river on Feb. 19.

Defeating Islamic State in Mosul would crush the Iraqi wing of the caliphate declared by the group's leader, Abu Bakr Al-Baghdadi, in 2014, from Mosul's grand old Nuri mosque.

Residents reported that civilians were killed in air strike on an Islamic State-run mosque on Wednesday, highlighting the perilous situation facing hundreds of thousands of Mosul residents as the allied forces step up their campaign. The residents said the blast collapsed or damaged a number of neighboring houses, many of which are badly made and poorly maintained. A spokesman for the US-led coalition said he was not aware of an air strike on the Omar Al-Aswad mosque. The mosque was where Islamic State sent members of the Iraqi national police and armed forces to surrender their weapons and register in a militant database when the group



**MOSUL:** Iraqi special forces take cover on a roof overlooking Islamic State group positions, in the Mamun neighborhood of western Mosul yesterday. — AP

seized control of the city in 2014. In return they received a pass to prevent their arrest and possible execution at militant check points.

### Queues for food

The Iraqi military believes several thousand militants, including many who traveled from Western countries, are hunkered down in Mosul among the remaining civilian population, which aid agencies estimated to number 750,000 at the start of the latest offensive. The militants are using suicide car bombers, snipers and booby traps to counter the offensive waged by the 100,000-strong force of Iraqi troops, Kurdish peshmerga fighters and Iranian-trained Shi'ite Muslim paramilitary groups.

More than 28,000 civilians have been forced from their homes in western Mosul since the Feb. 19 offensive began,

while the total number displaced since the battle for Mosul started in October exceeds 176,000, according to the United Nations.

Yesterday, more than a thousand more streamed out southern Mosul, the majority on foot. Some said the militants fired at them as they crossed a defensive trench. One bearded man with a rod though his broken leg was carried by six men in a rug, while an old woman was pushed in a rickety fruit cart. Nearby, a Humvee brought a family wounded in a mortar attack to a CTS clinic. Medics cleaned their wounds and wrapped them in blankets. Many fleeing residents complained of hunger. One boy, Ali, held his baby sister as they queued for food handouts. He said they tried to flee on Wednesday but gave up when they came under Islamic State gunfire. Yesterday they managed to get out. — Reuters



# MERKEL LANDS IN EGYPT TO REDUCE MIGRANT FLOWS

## GERMAN LEADER MEETS SISI,

**CAIRO:** German Chancellor Angela Merkel landed in Cairo yesterday on a two-day trip to Egypt and Tunisia, in a push to limit migrant flows to Europe through North Africa, especially chaos-torn Libya. Turmoil exploited by people smugglers since the 2011 overthrow of Moamer Kadhafi has made Libya the main gateway for African migrants seeking to make dangerous Mediterranean crossings.

Merkel held talks with President Abdel-Fattah Al-Sisi shortly after her arrival yesterday.

Merkel's spokesman, Steffen Seibert,

She will depart to Tunisia today to meet Tunisian President Beji Caid Essebsi. She will "inform herself of the situation of Coptic Christians" and "speak to (Tayeb) about tolerance and the peaceful co-existence of religion," her spokesman Steffen Seibert said in a video uploaded on his Twitter account.

Merkel is joined by a business delegation that could sweeten the diplomacy with investments badly needed by both countries, which are grappling with sluggish economies, jihadist attacks and high unemployment, especially among youths. "The chancellor will

had also planned a trip to Algeria last week, but it was called off after President Abdelaziz Bouteflika fell ill.

Germany, which this year holds the G20 presidency, has also announced investment partnerships in Africa with the long-term goals of reducing poverty and deterring people from leaving in the first place.

Last year, Berlin spearheaded an EU agreement with Ankara that helped sharply reduce the influx of migrants through Turkey and western Balkan countries. But as with the Turkey deal, the negotiations with the North African countries have been clouded by human rights concerns. In particular, an idea floated by Merkel's interior minister-for North African countries to build holding centres for returned migrants-has been rejected by Merkel's centre-left coalition partners and by rights groups.

Foreign Minister Sigmar Gabriel-whose Social Democrats hope to topple Merkel this year-dismissed the idea, saying: "I doubt that all this has been really thought through".

### 'Dodgy deals'

Human Rights Watch noted that Egypt banned protests and jailed thousands of people, while outlawing the Muslim Brotherhood movement president Mohamed Morsi whom Sisi, a former army chief, overthrew in 2013. Repatriating Tunisians and Egyptians who do not need protection can be "legitimate" if they are treated fairly, the New York-based rights group said.

"It's another thing entirely to pursue dodgy deals that could trap asylum seekers and migrants from elsewhere in countries like Tunisia and Egypt that cannot guarantee decent treatment or meaningful access to asylum," said Judith Sunderland, a Europe and Central Asia director for the group.

But Merkel is under huge pressure at home to achieve results in an election year, as the anti-immigration Alternative for Germany party hopes to enter the national parliament for the first time.

Public fears in Germany have been heightened by several jihadist attacks last year-especially the truck rampage by Tunisian immigrant Anis Amri at a Berlin Christmas market that killed 12 people in December.

A year before, sexual assaults by large groups of mostly North African men on New Year's Eve against women in Cologne provoked outrage in Germany. — AFP



**CAIRO:** Egyptian President Abdel Fattah Al-Sisi (right) meets with German Chancellor Angela Merkel at the presidential palace in Cairo yesterday. — AFP

said Wednesday that Germany wants to help Egypt to strengthen its coast guard and crack down on illegal trafficking across the Mediterranean, where thousands of migrants die at sea each year.

Merkel, who faces elections in September, has been under intense pressure to reduce the number of asylum seekers coming to Germany, which has taken in over one million migrants since 2015.

Her government has urged the North African states to step up border controls and speed up repatriations of migrants whose asylum applications are rejected. Merkel was scheduled to meet with Coptic Orthodox Pope Tawadros II and Sheikh Ahmed Al-Tayeb, Egypt's top Muslim cleric.

speaking with Sisi about, among other things, economic cooperation and opportunities for German companies," Seibert said.

A major focus in Egypt and Tunisia will be on their troubled neighbour Libya, a largely lawless country that has porous desert borders with Algeria, Niger, Chad and Sudan.

### Holding centres

"Without a political stabilization of Libya, we won't be able to stop the human traffickers operating out of Libya who are responsible for by far the most arrivals in Italy," Merkel said in her latest weekly podcast. The trip is part of a larger diplomatic push by Merkel, who last year visited Mali, Niger and Ethiopia. She

regional security coordinator, said security forces cordoned off the area and sealed the route into neighboring Somalia, where the gunmen are suspected to have come from. No group has claimed responsibility for the latest kidnapping from the camp.

Kenyan authorities have expressed interest in closing Dadaab, claiming it has become a recruitment and training ground for Somalia's extremist group al-Shabab. But

authorities have not provided proof, and a court recently blocked a plan to close the camp at the end of May.

Al-Shabab has carried out several attacks in Kenya, including the April 2015 assault on Garissa University in which 148 people were killed. The extremist group has vowed retribution on Kenya for sending troops to Somalia to fight it. Kenyan government blamed al-Shabab for the kidnapping of two

Spanish aid workers from Dadaab camp in October 2011 and said that incident and other cross-border attacks led to its decision to send troops to Somalia. The workers were released after 21 months in captivity. In June 2012, four international aid workers were kidnapped from Dadaab in an attack that saw a Kenyan driver killed. They were rescued days later. The attack also was blamed on Al-Shabab. — AP



**ATHENS:** Cleaning workers hold placards reading "Why" during their protest in Athens along with health workers yesterday. Cleaners, security and catering staff, who work on contracts for public hospitals, staged a rally in central Athens, demanding to stop the lay-offs of the personnel and the signing of permanent contracts. — AFP

## SYRIA REBELS URGE TRUMP TO CORRECT OBAMA'S 'CATASTROPHIC MISTAKES'

**GENEVA:** The lead Syrian opposition negotiator at peace talks in Geneva said he hoped US President Donald Trump would correct the "catastrophic" errors of his predecessor Barack Obama to become a reliable partner against "devilish" Iran.

The UN-led negotiations edged forwards on Wednesday, for the first time in six days, as both sides saw hope of shaping the agenda to their liking, but with indirect talks wrapping up this weekend there is little prospect of any real breakthrough. "The people in Syria paid a high price because of the catastrophic mistakes made by the Obama administration," Nasr Al-Hariri told reporters in a briefing after meeting UN mediator Staffan de Mistura.

"Obama lied and he didn't keep any of the promises he made for the Syrian people. He drew red lines that he erased himself, he kept silent on crimes committed by Bashar Al-Assad." Obama long maintained that Assad, Syrian president for 17 years, must step down after presiding over a civil war that has killed hundreds of thousands of people and displaced millions. The United States has provided training, weapons and funding for rebel groups, but stopped short of attacking Assad's forces, which slowly turned the tide of the war with massive Russian and Iranian help.

"We reiterated the devilish role that Iran is playing through hundreds of thousands of fighters on the Syrian soil," Hariri said in response to a question on what he had told Russian officials during their landmark meeting yesterday.

The opposition and the Russians had not previously met at the Geneva talks. Diplomats said the meeting may be uncomfortable for Assad, Moscow's ally, who regards his opponents as terrorists. Trump has said his priority is to fight Islamic State, which has left Russia in the diplomatic driving seat and put Russia, Turkey and Iran in charge of overseeing a shaky ceasefire. He has also made it clear he wants to rein in Tehran's regional ambitions. Trump's administration has so far done little to suggest it is willing to engage in finding a political solution for Syria.

"Their policy is still unknown," said a Western diplomat at the talks. "They are almost not here." While Western envoys were coordinating with the Syrian opposition in Geneva, the US envoy kept his head down and left after a few days to deal with other issues. "The US is not a direct participant in the UN-led talks," a spokesperson for the US Mission in Geneva said. "The US remains committed to any process that can result in a political resolution to the Syrian crisis." — Reuters

## GUNMEN KIDNAP 3 TEACHERS AT KENYA REFUGEE CAMP

**NAIROBI:** Gunmen have kidnapped three Kenyan teachers from the world's largest refugee camp, police said yesterday. Three men with pistols abducted the teachers with the Udha Academy in the Hagadera section of Dadaab refugee camp, according to a police report seen by The Associated Press. The camp in eastern Kenya holds more than 200,000 Somali refugees.

Mohamud Saleh, the northeastern



## FRENCH COURT DELAYS EXTRADITION OF EX-KOSOVO PREMIER

**PARIS:** A French court yesterday delayed its decision on whether to extradite former Kosovo Prime Minister Ramush Haradinaj to Serbia, where he's wanted on war crimes charges. The appeals court in the northeastern town of Colmar said it agreed with the prosecutor's request for more information. The case will be examined again on April 6. Under a previous decision, Haradinaj must stay in France under judicial supervision while his case is being studied.



Ramush Haradinaj

Serbia's government requested his extradition after French police arrested Haradinaj in January on a Serbian arrest warrant. The arrest angered Kosovo, where lawmakers called on the European Union to intervene to secure his release. Haradinaj, a guerrilla fighter in Kosovo's

1998-1999 war for independence from Serbia, was cleared of war crimes charges by a U.N. tribunal.

"My legal situation has been set up by the international court for former Yugoslavia, my arrest here is illegal, accusations are political, so taking 30 more days for this decision is really political," Haradinaj said as he left the courtroom. The Kosovo government said such a delay was part of Serbia's "dirty games, for internal political profit." It called on the international community to press Serbia to "give an end, once and for all, to such intolerable acts."

Haradinaj's political party, the Alliance for the Future of Kosovo, has called for a protest on Saturday, the day when European Union foreign policy chief Federica Mogherini is in Kosovo's capital, Pristina, the last stop in her Balkan tour. Haradinaj's arrest in early January was one of a series of incidents that raised tensions between Kosovo and Serbia in the past three months. —AP

## NORTHERN IRELAND HOLDS SNAP ELECTION IN SHADOW OF BREXIT

POLL TESTS DELICATE PEACE IN BRITISH PROVINCE

**BELFAST:** Northern Ireland began voting yesterday in snap elections to resolve a political crisis fuelled by bad blood and Brexit, which is testing the delicate peace in the British province.

Long-simmering tensions boiled over in January when Sinn Féin deputy first minister Martin McGuinness quit, saying he could no longer work with First Minister Arlene Foster from the rival Democratic Unionist Party (DUP). His resignation triggered fresh elections to the Northern Ireland Assembly, a semi-autonomous legislature in Belfast in which representatives of once warring communities have shared power on and off since a 1998 peace deal.

Observers predict a similar outcome to the May 2016 assembly elections, in which the Protestant, conservative and pro-British DUP won slightly more seats than the Catholic, socialist and Irish Republican Sinn Féin. If Sinn Féin and the DUP cannot resolve their differences after the vote, the assembly's executive could be suspended and the province fully governed from London.

"I'd be more pessimistic than optimistic that the DUP and Sinn Féin can get back in a government together quickly," Jonathan Tonge, a Northern Ireland politics expert at Liverpool University, told AFP.

McGuinness resigned in protest over a botched green energy subsidy scheme



**BROOKEBOROUGH:** A man stands in the window of a Sinn Féin election campaign hut near Brookeborough Primary School in Brookeborough yesterday as people arrive to vote in the Northern Ireland Assembly elections. — AFP

instigated by Foster when she was economy minister, which has left the executive facing a possible £490 million (\$600 million, 570 million euro) overspend. It was the breaking point after months of tensions with the DUP. Deeply-engrained historical enmity was also exacerbated by the June vote to leave European Union, which the DUP supported but Sinn Féin opposed.

McGuinness is not standing again due to ill health. His successor as Sinn Féin's leader in Northern Ireland, Michelle O'Neill, has signalled a possible way out.

"We're up for going back into government but only on the basis of equality, respect and integrity," she told AFP in an interview on the last day of campaigning on Wednesday. — AFP

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# JEFF SESSIONS UNDER FIRE OVER RUSSIAN AMBASSADOR CONTACTS

## WHITE HOUSE LABELS REPORT AS ATTACK BY DEMOCRATS

**WASHINGTON:** US Attorney General Jeff Sessions was under fire yesterday after it was revealed he met twice last year with Russia's ambassador to Washington, seemingly contradicting statements he made in Senate confirmation hearings. The revelation cast a fresh cloud over President Donald Trump's administration, which has repeatedly denied any suspected ties between members of his election team and Russia—which US intelligence says interfered in the 2016 campaign against Hillary Clinton. The White House quickly labeled the report an attack by partisan Democrats, confirming the meetings but arguing Sessions did nothing wrong.

In a statement, the Trump administration's top law enforcement official, said: "I never met with any Russian officials to discuss issues of the campaign. I have no idea what this allegation is about. It is false." But with US intelligence agencies, the Justice Department—led by Sessions himself—and four Congressional committees examining the Russia scandal, Democrats demanded that Sessions recuse himself from the investigations and for Congress to name an independent special investigator to oversee a broad probe.

"Given AG Sessions's false statements about contacts with Russian officials, we need a special counsel to investigate Trump associates' ties to Russia," said Democratic Senator Ron Wyden, a member of the Senate Intelligence Committee. The Washington Post reported late Wednesday that Sessions—formerly a senator who advised Trump's campaign on foreign policy and other issues—met Ambassador Sergey Kislyak in July and September, just as accusations of Russian interference in the election were mounting.



**WASHINGTON:** This file photo shows Sen. Jeff Sessions, R-AL, as he is sworn in before the Senate Judiciary Committee during his confirmation hearing to be Attorney General of the United States, in Washington, DC. —AFP

Sessions, however, told his confirmation hearing at the Senate Judiciary Committee on January 10 that he did not know of contacts between Trump campaign members and Russia. "I did not have communications with the Russians," he said under oath.

### Calls to resign

Nancy Pelosi, the top Democrat in the House of Representatives, called for Sessions to step down. "After lying under oath to Congress about his own communications with the Russian, the attorney general must resign," she said. Democrat Elijah Cummings of the House Oversight Committee echoed that call. "When senator Sessions testified under oath that 'I did not have communications with the Russians,' his statement

was demonstrably false, yet he let it stand for weeks," Cummings said.

"Attorney General Sessions should resign immediately, and there is no longer any question that we need a truly independent commission to investigate this issue." A White House official dubbed the latest report an "attack." "This is the latest attack against the Trump administration by partisan Democrats," the official said. "Sessions met with the ambassador in an official capacity as a member of the Senate Armed Services Committee, which is entirely consistent with his testimony." Republican Senator Lindsey Graham called for answers on Russian ties but cautioned that contacts between the Trump campaign and Moscow "may be legitimate."

# WAS TRUMP'S TRIBUTE TO FALLEN NAVY SEAL FITTING OR CALCULATED?

**CHICAGO:** The televised moment moved a nation: A grief-stricken widow clasping her hands and looking skyward, tears streaming down her face as the nation's lawmakers and president delivered a deafening standing ovation in honor of her fallen husband. President Donald Trump's tribute to Navy SEAL William "Ryan" Owens during Tuesday's congressional address was seen by many as touching. But others regarded it as a calculated attempt to deflect criticism of his decision to approve a failed military operation and to turn around his administration's shaky start with a gesture that sought to unify a deeply divided country.

Social media was abuzz with both praise and criticism. Trump was praised on Twitter as giving "the greatest respect to Carryn Owens" and for moving "viewers to tears with his love for our fallen military." But others said Trump was responsible for Owens' death and criticized the "exploitation of his widow for last night's dog and pony show." Perceptions of the gesture likely depended on whether viewers trust Trump, said Matthew Dallek, a political management professor at The George Washington University and speechwriter for former Democratic US Rep. Richard Gephardt.

"Whether he seems to be exploiting (Owens') death or it seems to be heartfelt and genuine very much depends on one's political view and whether or not you trust Trump," Dallek said. "If you voted for him, you think he's honoring a patriot and this is powerful. If ... you don't trust him and don't approve of his presidency so far, I don't think this changes very much." Trump is following in the footsteps of many presi-



**WASHINGTON:** President Donald Trump, Vice President Mike Pence and House Speaker Paul Ryan of Wisconsin applaud Carryn Owens, widow of Chief Special Warfare Operator William Ryan Owens, on Capitol Hill in Washington, during the president's address to a joint session of Congress. —AP

dents who have introduced guests to help make a political point. But Tuesday's tribute was potentially more fraught because Owens' father has refused to meet with Trump and called for an investigation into the Yemen raid that took his son's life. — AP

# VICTIMS OF CALIFORNIA PLANE CRASH IDENTIFIED

**RIVERSIDE, California:** Family members have identified two women who survived the fiery Southern California crash of a small plane in a residential neighborhood and the three people who were killed. Christy Crown told Bay Area NBC affiliate KNTV late Tuesday that her sister-in-law Stacey Pierce is among the survivors while her sister-in-law's parents died in the crash. Brandon Farelas of San Jose told KGO-TV that his mother Sylvia survived and his 22-year-old sister Adine is among the dead.

The group was returning from a cheerleading competition on a rainy Monday afternoon when their plane plummeted into a residential neighborhood in the city of Riverside east of Los Angeles, killing three people and critically wounding two who were ejected. Authorities have not identified the victims, who traveled to attend a cheerleading event where the daughters of the two crash survivors competed. The Union School District students returned safely from the trip, superintendent Denise Clay wrote in a letter to families.

The twin-engine Cessna 310 crashed shortly after 4.40 pm Monday, igniting an inferno that destroyed two homes and slightly damaged two others. The tail number of the aircraft was N1246G, according to a government official with knowledge of the investigation who spoke on condition of anonymity because the official was not authorized to release the information until next-of-kin have been notified. Federal records show that number is assigned to a twin-engine Cessna 310 registered to Nouri Hijazi of San Jose.

Hijazi and his wife Dana were killed in the crash, while their daughter Stacey is in critical condition, Crown said. "He was an extremely experienced pilot, which was his hobby, his passion," Crown said in a statement to KNTV. "We want to say how incredibly devastated and heartbroken we are and still trying to process everything," the statement said. Farelas said his mother, Sylvia, called him before Monday's flight and said she was worried about the rainy weather, KGO-TV reported late Tuesday.

Riverside Fire Chief Michael Moore said the plane had just taken off from Riverside Municipal Airport, less than a mile away, bound for San Jose after a weekend cheerleading competition at Disney California Adventure Park. Moore did not provide the name of the cheerleading competition, but the Jr. USA Nationals for girls 15 and under was held at Disney California Adventure Park over the weekend. Officials with the competition did not immediately return calls Tuesday.

### Worst fear

One of the women survivors suffered burns on 90 percent of her body and was found moaning under debris in a smoke-filled bedroom of a burning home and was lifted out a window, fire Capt. Tyler Reynolds said. Weather in the area 60 miles east of Los Angeles had included rain, but there were no immediate indications of what caused the crash. NTSB investigators will examine environmental conditions, including the weather, along with the pilot's history, flight records and the physical components of the aircraft, said Stephen Stein, an air safety investigator with the National Transportation Safety Board.

Despite the massive fire, no one on the ground was hurt. Juan Cortes, 42, and his son, Jonathan, were installing fencing when they saw a low-flying plane make an awkward tilt and go straight down into a neighborhood. The pair raced to the scene in a truck to try to help. People were screaming in the street, and the elder Cortes said he saw a woman pulled from the flames. "She was alive because she was screaming, 'My daughter! My daughter!'" he recalled Tuesday. After hearing a loud sound that shook her house like an earthquake, 38-year-old Traci Zamora rushed outside.

Around the corner, she saw a house engulfed in flames, and one of the victims emerged. "She just came crawling right out of it onto the front lawn," she said. "Her lower body was on fire." Hector Jimenez, 19, was playing video games at home when he heard a loud boom and saw black smoke. "It's just sad that it happened here," he said. "It makes me nervous living around an airport. That's one of my worst fears, having this happen." —AP



## ORLANDO SHOOTER'S WIDOW TO BE RELEASED ON BAIL

**LOS ANGELES:** A US federal judge in California on Wednesday agreed to release on bail the widow of the gunman who killed dozens of people at an Orlando nightclub last year. US magistrate Donna Ryu set bail at \$500,000 for Noor Salman pending her trial on two charges related to the assault by her husband Omar Mateen on the Pulse gay nightclub in Florida that killed 49 people. Prosecutors had argued that Salman, who was arrested in January in connection with the massacre, should

be kept behind bars because she posed a threat to society. They have until today to appeal the judge's decision.

In handing down her ruling, Ryu said there was no proof Salman had any connection to the Islamic State jihadist group or had exhibited extremist views. She also said there was no evidence Salman posed a risk of flight or a danger to the community.

"I agree with the pretrial service recommendation and find that Ms Salman has rebutted the presumptions

of both risk of flight and danger to the community and that she can and should be released pursuant to strict conditions that will reasonably mitigate those risks," Ryu said. She ordered the 30-year-old, who had a four-year-old son with Mateen, to wear an electronic monitor while living with her maternal uncle in northern California, where she grew up.

The ruling essentially puts Salman under house arrest, allowed to leave only for court appearances, to meet

her attorneys or for medical appointments for her and her son, Ryu said. Salman, whose case is being prosecuted in Florida, faces up to life in prison if convicted of the charge of assisting her husband in his bid to help a terrorist organization. She also faces up to 20 years in prison on the second charge of lying to investigators. Police killed Mateen in a shootout. During the attack, he had called dispatchers to pledge allegiance to the Islamic State group.—AFP

## US GOVERNMENT OFFERS SUPPORT TO JEWISH COMMUNITIES AFTER THREATS

**WASHINGTON:** The US authorities on Wednesday offered support to Jewish communities in the wake of a series of threats and attacks since President Donald Trump's election in November. The Department of Homeland Security (DHS) is advising Jewish communities and offering protective measures, DHS Secretary John Kelly said in a statement issued late in the day. "DHS has Protective Security Advisors in all 50 states who serve as liaisons to government, industry and community leaders, and who provide expertise on protective measures, threat reporting and security awareness," he said.

The advisors will offer support "in terms of training, protective measures, exercises and information sharing." Counterterrorism experts have also provided Jewish communities information about available federal help, Kelly added. It includes "facility vulnerability assessments, as well as assistance to connect organizations with active shooter preparedness and bombing prevention training and guidance, tabletop exercises, protective measures, guides and other tools to strengthen security," he said. At least 100 Jewish community centers and schools in 33 states have reported bomb and other threats since the start of the year.

Last weekend, vandals broke and overturned more than 500 gravestones at a Jewish cemetery in Philadelphia. The attack came a week after more than 100 headstones were damaged at a Jewish cemetery in St Louis, Missouri. The incident prompted a visit by Vice President Mike Pence. After remaining silent on the Missouri attack for several days, Trump decried the anti-Semitic threats as "horrible" and "painful" last week. However, concern is rising about his embrace by white supremacist groups and an "alt-right" movement given a platform on Breitbart, the online news outlet once headed by Trump's chief White House strategist Steve Bannon.

The White House also raised eyebrows on International Holocaust Remembrance Day late last month by issuing a statement that made no mention of the six million Jews killed in the Nazi genocide. During a speech to Congress on Tuesday, Trump criticized the recent threats against Jewish community centers and condemned the apparently racially motivated killing of an Indian immigrant in Kansas City. He said those attacks "remind us that while we may be a Nation divided on policies, we are a country that stands united in condemning hate and evil in all its forms."—AFP



**MEXICO:** In this file photo, Jose Luis Gonzalez Meza, lawyer who has worked on behalf of Joaquin El Chapo Guzman, holds a press conference in front of the gates of the Altiplano maximum security prison in Mexico. —AP

## MEXICAN LAWYER ASKS TRUMP TO DEPORT DRUG LORD EL CHAPO

**MEXICO CITY:** A lawyer who has worked on behalf of Joaquin "El Chapo" Guzman is trying a novel legal tactic: He is calling on US President Donald Trump to deport the Mexican drug lord back home from his jail cell in the United States.

Lawyer Jose Luis Gonzalez Meza held up a

banner outside the Mexican Attorney General's Office in the capital Wednesday that read: "Mr Trump, Deport the illegal and criminal Chapo Guzman." Trump has pledged to deport migrants who have committed illegal acts.

Gonzalez Meza said Mexican prosecutors

violated due process when they extradited Guzman in January. "That means he is in the United States illegally," the lawyer said. "We are going to ask he be returned, because he is illegal and criminal!" Guzman faces US drug trafficking, money laundering and other charges. He has pleaded not guilty.—AP

## MISSOURI SENATE VOTES DOWN LGBT DISCRIMINATION PROTECTIONS

**JEFFERSON CITY:** Missouri state senators early Wednesday gave initial approval to a measure that opponents have criticized as making it more difficult to sue for discrimination in the state and voted down protections for LGBT people. Democrats railed against the bill on discrimination lawsuits for hours Tuesday before hammering out a compromise after midnight. It received initial approval in a voice vote. Republicans and pro-business backers say it's now too easy to sue for discrimination in the state, but opponents argue the proposed change would allow discrimination to go unpunished.

"It's unfortunate that the Missouri Senate has taken the very first step in moving forward with Jim Crow legislation," Missouri NAACP President Rod Chapel told reporters

Wednesday. He added that the measure would allow people who "perpetrate or have violated the civil rights of others to remain free of any penalty for their conduct." Senators also in a 20-10 vote killed a proposed amendment by Creve Coeur Democratic Sen. Jill Schupp to ban discrimination against lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people in employment, housing and public accommodations.

Republican Sens. Caleb Rowden of Columbia and Ryan Silvey of Kansas City joined Democrats to support what's sometimes referred to as the Missouri Nondiscrimination Act. The underlying legislation from Farmington Republican Sen. Gary Romine would require plaintiffs bringing discrimination lawsuits to prove that race, reli-

gion, sex or other protected status was the motivating factor for discrimination or being fired, not just a contributing factor.

While that would ramp up the burden of proof in discrimination cases compared to what's currently in place, that's not as strict as Romine's earlier proposal to require plaintiffs to prove their status as a protected class was the sole reason they were fired or harassed. The change was part of the bipartisan compromise. "Our entire intent has never been to promote or support or allow discrimination in any place in this great state of Missouri," Romine told colleagues on the Senate floor before the vote. "Our intent in this bill is to make sure that we have a standard in the statutes that is fair to the employee and employer alike." — AP





MUMBAI: In this file photo, a man walks past a truck that distributes Coca Cola in Mumbai, India. —AP

## ANGRY AT PETA, TRADERS IN SOUTH INDIAN STATES PULL US DRINKS

COURT LIFTS RESTRICTIONS ON WATER SUPPLY TO COCA-COLA

**NEW DELHI:** Traders angry at a US-based animal rights group have turned their ire on two iconic American brands, pulling Coke and Pepsi from shelves in the south Indian state of Tamil Nadu. The Tamil Nadu Traders Association said the soft-drink makers were draining too much water in the state but that they targeted the American brands because PETA had pushed the 2014 ban on the popular local tradition of bull-taming.

The trading association said its ban that went into effect late Wednesday was supported by more than 1.5 million local shop owners and beverage sellers in Tamil Nadu. In a separate case, a court yesterday lifted restrictions on water supplies to Coke and Pepsi factories in the drought-prone state. In January, Tamil Nadu was rocked by protests by tens of thousands of people demanding that the ban on bull-taming, or jallikattu, be lifted. The government rushed new legislation exempting the tradition from animal cruelty laws.

During the protests, thousands of young people turned their anger against the People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals

to other American multinational companies and vowed to shun sodas made by them. Traders pledged that they would not sell colas and would instead stock locally made soft drinks or coconut water. "On March 1, following a campaign among traders and the public against foreign brands, we implemented the decision of our association members to sell only domestic brands of beverages," said A. M. Vikrama Raja, president of the trade group.

In the court case, the Madras High Court announced that it was removing restrictions on the supply of water to Coca-Cola and PepsiCo's factories in Tamil Nadu. In November, the court had barred the two companies from using local water supplies after farmers complained about water shortages in the state's Thamirabarani River. In Chennai, the state capital, traders said the ban on Coke and Pepsi was rooted in people's anger against PETA. "How can we forget that it's because of PETA that jallikattu was banned by the Supreme Court?" Arumugham Desigan, district secretary of the traders association, said yesterday.

### Deeply disappointed

He said the association has appealed to local restaurants and hotels to stop serving Coke and Pepsi and offer locally made fruit drinks instead. The weeks-long protests to resume the bull-taming ritual became a fight for Tamil identity, with many people viewing its ban as an assault on Tamil Nadu's customs and traditions. Meanwhile, the Indian Beverage Association that represents almost all leading soft-drink manufacturers in India, said it was "deeply disappointed" with the call for the ban, terming it "anti-consumer and anti-competition." Coca-Cola referred to the IBA statement and declined to comment further on the ban. The IBA said the ban was "was against the proven fundamentals of robust economic growth." "Coca-Cola and PepsiCo India together provide direct employment to 2,000 families in Tamil Nadu and more than 5,000 families indirectly, through their extensive supply chain," the IBA said in a statement. The association said it hoped "good sense will prevail and that consumers will continue to have the right to exercise their choice in Tamil Nadu." —AP

## DEATH TOLL CLIMBS TO 22 IN AFGHANISTAN ATTACKS

**KABUL:** The Afghan Health Ministry says the death toll from simultaneous suicide bombings in the capital has climbed to 22, with another 120 people, most of them civilians, wounded in the attacks. Spokesman Ismail Kawasi said yesterday that hospitals near the site of the twin explosions the day before have been overwhelmed with wounded people, many in serious condition.

The Taliban claimed the noon-time assault on Kabul, which included an hour-long gunbattle with police. The attack appeared to take aim at the country's embattled security forces. Pakistan condemned the "horrific" attacks. The two countries have long accused each other of turning a blind eye to insurgents who operate in the porous border region.—AP



KABUL: Afghan security forces investigate the aftermath of Wednesday's suicide attack and shooting in district police headquarters in Kabul, Afghanistan, yesterday. —AP

## US DRONE STRIKE KILLS TWO IN PAKISTANI TRIBAL REGION

**PESHAWAR:** A suspected US drone strike in Pakistan's northwestern tribal region yesterday killed two militants, three intelligence officials said. The latest strike took place in the Kurram tribal region bordering Afghanistan and the identity and nationality of the slain men were not immediately known, said the officials. They spoke on condition of anonymity as they were not authorized to speak to media on the record. Pakistan's military and the CIA's drone strikes have killed thousands of Pakistani and foreign militants in the tribal regions since Sept 11, 2001 attacks in the United States.

The drone strike came on the same day that Pakistan's cabinet approved a set of reforms that will bring the tribal regions under government control, an aide to Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif said. The reforms will be implemented over a five-year period after a merger of the tribal regions with Pakistan's northwestern Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province, he said. The official spoke on condition of anonymity because he wasn't authorized to disclose the information before it was released officially.

Also yesterday, Pakistani police shot and killed a vendor they suspected of being a suicide bomber in the northwestern city of Mardan, a police officer Mumtaz Khan said. The vendor was riding a bicycle and didn't stop at a checkpoint outside a courthouse, he said. Khan said the police first rammed a vehicle into the bicycle when the vendor didn't listen to warning shouts and shot him when he tried to run away. The man died later and no explosives or weapons were found, he said. "I don't understand why the vendor would keep going (even though) we were giving him loud warnings," said another officer, Zeb Bakhtiar, who was at the checkpoint.

Pakistani police have been on high alert after a recent string of suicide bombings that have killed more than 125 people, the latest of them inside a court building in another northwestern city. Pakistani Taliban-linked militants and the Islamic State group have claimed the brazen attacks. The Pakistani Taliban, their allied local militant groups and al-Qaida-linked foreign militants have been operating from the country's lawless tribal regions along the Afghan border. The rough terrain consists of long swathes of land that has historically been ruled by a set of local tribal laws, effectively denying access to the Pakistani police and judicial system there.



PESHAWAR: In this file photo, a Pakistan army soldier stands guard in Pakistani tribal area of Khyber, near Torkham border post between Pakistan and Afghanistan. —AP

## BANGLADESHI ISLAMIST KILLED IN SHOOT-OUT

**DHAKA:** An Islamist extremist in custody for allegedly stabbing two police officers was killed in a shoot-out yesterday when gunmen attacked the van he was travelling in, police said. Amijul Islam, 25, was arrested on Tuesday on suspicion of stabbing and wounding two police officers. Police said the attack occurred when they took Amijul to the northern town of Sherpur, an extremist hub, to conduct a series of raids. "Extremists attacked our van and he was shot. He died in a hospital," local police chief Khan Mohammad Erfan said.

Rights groups have raised doubts about police accounts of such incidents in the past, saying many were staged. Bangladeshi security forces have launched a nationwide crackdown on Islamist extremist groups since a deadly attack on a Dhaka cafe last year, killing around 50 suspected militants. —AFP



## UN VOICES CONCERN OVER CHILD MARRIAGE LAW IN BANGLADESH

**DHAKA:** The United Nations voiced its criticism yesterday over a controversial new law in Bangladesh that allows underage children to be married off by their parents. The new rule keeps the minimum marriageable age for males at 21 and for females at 18 but relaxes the restriction for "special circumstances"—including for girls who elope, are raped or bear children out of wedlock. Rights groups fear without an age limit in these cases, underage children could be married off, undermining Bangladesh's efforts to curb such unions and improve women's health.

The UN's child protection agency in Bangladesh said it "remains concerned" about the special provision, and its potential impact on children's wellbeing. "Marrying as a child has a lifelong impact on a person's wellbeing. It limits opportunities and the chance to be a child," UNICEF's representative in Bangladesh Edouard Beigbeder said in an email. The Child Marriage Restraint Act, passed by parliament this week, replaced a law dating back to the British colonial period.

This dated legislation was largely ignored in poor-

er districts, where girls are married off in their early teenage years. Beigbeder described the broader legislation, with its objective of preventing child marriage and providing sanction and remedies when cases did occur, as "a positive step forward." Child marriages have dropped from two-thirds of the total to around half between 2006 and 2013, UNICEF figures show. Rights organizations warned this latest legal provision could unwind those gains, forcing new brides to drop out of school and work in conditions activists compare to child labor. — AFP

## JAPAN EMPEROR MEETS VIETNAM KIN OF TOKYO'S WWII SOLDIERS

**HANOI:** Japan's royal couple yesterday listened to the tearful stories of Vietnamese children who were abandoned by their Japanese soldier fathers after WWII, a symbolic meeting in Hanoi aimed at healing wounds between the former war foes. The 83-year-old Japanese emperor Akihito and his wife, Michiko, are on their first visit to Vietnam, the latest in a series of trips to former battlegrounds. The elderly couple shook hands and comforted more than a dozen children of the some 700 Japanese military men who decided to stay in Vietnam for a decade after their country's defeat in the second world war.

It was under Akihito's father Hirohito that Japan first sent troops into Vietnam in 1940 when the country was a colony of France. After the war many of the soldiers stayed on, married Vietnamese women and began raising families as they helped revolutionary leader Ho Chi Minh secure independence from Paris, a little-known chapter of the two countries shared histories. But they were ordered to leave the country in 1954 and "encouraged" by the Vietnamese government to leave their families behind, said Hatsuhsa Takashima, the emperor's press secretary.

"It might be possible that Vietnamese authorities thought that it was not good for Vietnamese people to jump to a quite new environment," he said. The half-Japanese children left behind often endured painful ostracism at home, while their mothers struggled to raise families on their own and were criticized for cozying up to the former occupying forces. "I understood that families of ex-Japanese soldiers here encountered many difficulties," Emperor Akihito said after listening to tearful stories of separation.

### Closing doors to the past

"We are thankful for the attention by the Japanese emperor and empress," said 94-year-old Nguyen Thi Xuan, a former war bride who raised three half-Japanese children on her own and never remarried. "War brought nothing to us. I only want peace for both countries of Vietnam and Japan," Xuan said. Tran Duc Dung, whose Japanese father trained Vietnamese military men during the war, said he was eager to forget the hardships and discrimination his family faced. "It's time to close all that happened in the past. My only wish now is to be recognized by the Japanese government as a Japanese citizen," Dung said. — AFP



**HANOI:** Japanese Emperor Akihito, second left, and Empress Michiko, third right, raise a toast with Vietnamese Prime Minister Nguyen Xuan Phuc, left, and Phuc's wife Tran Nguyet Thu, right, at a reception hosted by the Japanese Ambassador to Vietnam at a hotel in Hanoi, Vietnam, yesterday. —AP



**MANILA:** In this file photo, residents watch as workers load one of the five people killed in an alleged police anti-drug operation in Manila, Philippines. — AP

## PHILIPPINES TAKES BIG STEP BACK TOWARDS DEATH PENALTY

**MANILA:** Philippine President Rodrigo Duterte's campaign to bring back the death penalty for drug-related crimes has cleared a major hurdle, with supporters backing it in congress but critics denouncing the planned killings as "inhumane". The death penalty bill, along with a proposed measure to punish children as young as nine as adult criminals, are key planks of Duterte's controversial drug war that has already claimed more than 6,500 lives.

A majority of politicians in the lower house of congress passed a second reading of the bill on Wednesday night, clearing one of the biggest obstacles in proponents' plans to make the death penalty legal by May. A third and final reading still needs to be held next week, although with no more debates both sides agree passage is a formality. Then the Senate, which is similarly dominated by Duterte's allies, would pass a counterpart bill. "We have hurdled the most difficult part," congressman Reynaldo Umali, a sponsor of the bill, said.

Opponents voiced anger the Philippines would bring back the death penalty, 11 years after it was revoked, highlighting among many concerns a corrupt justice system that would lead

to innocent people being executed. "The decision is inhumane, shameful and blatantly disrespectful," Father Jerome Secillano, executive secretary for public affairs at the Catholic Bishops' Conference of the Philippines, said in a statement sent to AFP. "Let me reiterate this, criminals should be punished and victims should be aided, but the punishment should not be death. Due to our flawed and dysfunctional criminal justice system, there is a great chance that innocent people may become victims of wrongful convictions."

The Catholic Church, which counts 80 percent of Filipinos as followers, had led the opposition to abolish the death penalty in 2006. Secillano and opposition lawmakers also criticized the tactics used to ensure the bill was passed, such as curtailing of debates and only allowing a vote by voice so lawmakers would not be specifically identified as having supported it. The speaker of the house also threatened to strip lawmakers of committee leadership positions if they voted against the bill. "This is a chamber of puppets and bullies," congressman Edcel Lagman, a longtime opponent of capital punishment, said after his efforts to block the bill were voted down.

### Just drug crimes

The bill limits the death penalty to drug-related crimes. Possessing 500 grams of marijuana, or 10 grams of cocaine, heroin or ecstasy, would be crimes punishable by execution, as would manufacturing and selling drugs. People who commit serious crimes such as murder and rape while under the influence of drugs could also be executed. However committing those crimes without being under the influence of drugs would only be punishable with jail terms. The bill allows for execution by hanging, firing squad or injection.

Duterte won presidential elections last year after pledging an unprecedented campaign to eradicate illegal drugs in society by killing tens of thousands of people. Since he took office in May, police have reported killing more than 2,550 people in the drug crackdown, claiming all the deaths were in self defense, while more than 4,000 others have died in unexplained circumstances. Rights groups and other critics have said Duterte is presiding over widespread human rights violations, with Amnesty International warning the killings could amount to a crime against humanity. —AFP



## BALI PROSECUTORS SEEK ONE-YEAR JAIL FOR UK EX-WAR REPORTER

**DENPASAR:** Indonesian prosecutors yesterday demanded a one-year jail term for a British former war correspondent on trial for allegedly using hashish on the resort island of Bali. If former Reuters journalist David Fox, 55, is handed a one-year sentence, it would include time already served, meaning he could be released from jail in a matter of months. Prosecutors will recommend a jail sentence for Australian businessman Giuseppe Serafino, 48, who was detained before

Fox and led police to the journalist, at a later hearing.

The pair is charged with using, possessing and transporting hashish after allegedly being caught in possession of small amounts of the drug in October. After being arrested, Fox admitted to police that he had been using hashish for years due to the stress of covering conflicts. The former Reuters journalist covered wars and disasters in countries including Bosnia, Rwanda and Iraq. At yesterday's hearing in the Balinese capi-

tal Denpasar, prosecutor Erawati Susina said that Fox's actions were "against the government's programs which are aimed at eradicating illicit drugs".

Under Indonesia's tough anti-drugs laws, they could face several years in jail but Susina said prosecutors were seeking a lenient sentence as Fox was a first-time offender and had admitted his wrongdoing. Judges do not have to follow prosecutors' sentence recommendations but they often do. Authorities raided Serafino's house

after a tip-off that a foreigner living there had been using drugs. Police found about seven grams of hashish, after which Serafino said Fox had helped him buy the drugs. Fox was later arrested and police found 10 grams of hashish in his pocket and at his house, along with smoking equipment. Indonesia has some of the toughest anti-narcotics laws in the world but the pair will escape the death penalty as they have not been charged with trafficking. —AFP



**KUALA LUMPUR:** Former North Korean deputy ambassador to the United Nations, Ri Tong II, centre, addresses journalists outside the North Korean embassy in Kuala Lumpur yesterday. —AFP

## MALAYSIA: A MAGNET FOR UNSOLVED MYSTERIES

## MALAYSIANS BEMOAN OVER THEIR COUNTRY'S LUCK

**KUALA LUMPUR:** Following the Cold War-style assassination of Kim Jong-Nam with a lethal nerve agent, Malaysians have once again found their country the unlikely focus of a dramatic global story, embellished by speculative reports and outlandish theories. The Southeast Asian nation was used to flying under the international news radar before the disappearance of flight MH370 three years ago triggered what looks set to become one of aviation's most enduring mysteries.

Now Kim's murder has thrust it back into the spotlight, at the centre of an equally sensational drama-cooked up beyond its borders and featuring a complex plot and cast that has left many Malaysians bewildered and bemoaning their country's luck. The revelation last Friday that the estranged half-brother of North Korean leader Kim Jong-Un was killed with lethal nerve agent VX-developed for chemical warfare-after he was ambushed at Kuala Lumpur international airport on Feb 13 fuelled intense speculation Pyongyang was behind the operation.

But with four of the key suspects having fled to North Korea and a fifth enjoying diplomatic immunity, Malaysian police may again struggle to close the case, as they did with MH370. Many Malaysians are now start-

ing to tire of the apparently interminable news focus on their country and fear Malaysia will again see its reputation tarnished. "There was once a time you would never hear Malaysia in high level foreign or diplomatic news. Now, it's like there's no control-we keep on coming up," said taxi driver S. Jaganathan, 68. "So much major news has happened here that... I wasn't surprised when I heard the news (of the murder). It's so often that to me it's normal now".

## Success story

Two women have been charged with Kim's murder but theories about who was really behind the assassination abound. Some have suggested that Kim Jong-Un may not have ordered the killing, which instead could have been organized by other actors in Pyongyang seeking to impress him, as a tribute to coincide with the birthday of the strongman's father Kim Jong-Il, who died in 2011. There has also been speculation that Kim, who lived in the Chinese gambling enclave of Macau, may have been targeted because of gaming debts.

Self-employed Amir Zaini, 27, said he could not believe Malaysia was again engulfed in such a bizarre tale. "It's crazy that this is happening in Malaysia again of all

places," he said. Malaysia had already become accustomed to the international spotlight-and the wilder fringes of people's imagination-when flight MH370 from Kuala Lumpur to Beijing disappeared in 2014. The lack of a final resting place of the plane or any clear explanation for its fate spawned a string of conspiracy theories including a Taliban hijacking, a meteor strike and even a diversion by the CIA.

Malaysia has undergone rapid development since independence to become Southeast Asia's third-largest economy. The showcase capital Kuala Lumpur mixes striking modern architecture and infrastructure with restored colonial buildings while the country's national parks and pristine beaches are a popular tourist draw. Despite entrenched rural poverty many Malaysians jealously guard Malaysia's status as a regional success story and are concerned the country's hard-won image may now be at risk.

Nazmi Najib, 31, software engineer, said he learned the news of Kim's assassination with a sinking sense of déjà vu. "This might affect our image because other people might think our security is not so good," he said. "Hopefully this case can be solved soon, because there is a lot of negative speculation around it." —AFP

## UNHOLY ROW: THAI MONKS AND COPS IN BIZARRE TEMPLE TURF WAR

**PATHUM THANI:** One side of the temple gate is blocked by cops in blue, the other by rows of bald men in orange-the frontline of a bizarre stand-off between the Thai state and Buddhist monks that is raising questions of impunity, religion and power. The Dhammakaya temple's compound in northern Bangkok has been under siege for two weeks as thousands of officers try to arrest the sect's 72-year-old spiritual leader. Phra Dhammachayo, who is accused of colluding in a \$33 million embezzlement, is believed to be hiding somewhere on the temple's sprawling 1,000 acre grounds, an area twice the size of Monaco.

The Thai junta, which has run the country since 2014, has invoked special powers to get him but so far failed spectacularly. Police were initially led on a merry dance through secret tunnels, empty rooms and even to the fugitive abbot's quarters-where they found a bed with pillows arranged under a sheet in a poor imitation of a sleeping person. But defiant monks and temple followers have now blocked officers from entering the temple and resuming the search.

With the stand-off lurching into farce, the Thai junta that ordered the raid is fast 'losing face' and transfixing a public banned from criticizing the 'generals who seized power in a 2014 coup. "At first this area was controlled by police... but the temple devotees took it back," Phra Pasura Dantamano, a senior monk, explained after his staff helped sneak reporters inside the compound. Around him sat rows of monks and disciples chanting mantras in the direction of officers who have ordered them to leave but fear sparking a violent confrontation.

Temple staffs-who deny knowledge of the former abbot's whereabouts-say he is innocent and accuse the junta of launching a politicized witch-hunt. Inside the compound, where phone service has been cut by authorities, defiant devotees fear authorities are trying to dismantle their temple and seize its assets. "We will stay until we win," said 67-year-old Narin Mingkwan, one of thousands of mostly middle-aged women leading the unlikely holdout.

## How much to nirvana?

Founded in 1970 the temple has harnessed modern technology and aggressive PR methods to build a cult-like following-and a handsome bank account. Critics accuse the abbot of distorting traditional Buddhist morality by encouraging materialism and promising spots in the afterlife in exchange for donations. Beyond the temple's gates, manicured lawns and tree-lined canals sweep around towering geometric shrines, including one that famously resembles a glittering UFO. —AFP



**BANGKOK:** In this photo, Buddhist monks pray inside the Wat Dhammakaya temple grounds, just north of Bangkok. —AFP



A close-up photograph of a child dressed as a clown. The child is wearing a large, multi-tiered hat with a pink top layer decorated with yellow and blue star-shaped confetti, a gold glitter middle layer, and a teal bottom layer with pink and yellow heart and flower-shaped confetti. The child's face is painted with vibrant colors: pink on the cheeks, purple on the forehead, and a large red nose. The child is wearing large, pink-rimmed glasses with white daisy flowers attached to the top. The child's hair is dark and pulled back. The background is a soft, out-of-focus grey.

# Friday Times Lifestyle

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A child dressed as clown takes part on the Carnival Clown's Parade at Sesimbra village on February 27, 2017. — AFP

## Accountants behind Oscars snafu will no longer attend show





**PriceWaterhouseCooper representatives Martha L Ruiz (left) and Brian Cullinan (right), the only two people who know the results carry two briefcase with the winning envelopes before the 89th Annual Academy Awards at Hollywood & Highland Center, on February 26, 2017, in Hollywood, California. — AFP**

## Accountants behind Oscars snafu will no longer attend show

The two accountants involved in the embarrassing mix-up at Sunday's Oscars will not be invited back to the show, a spokesperson for the Academy told AFP on Wednesday. Brian Cullinan and Martha Ruiz from PricewaterhouseCoopers—the firm responsible for tallying and safeguarding Oscar votes and results—were in charge of handing out the winning envelopes to presenters at the ceremony. However a mix-up resulted in Cullinan handing Warren Beatty and Faye Dunaway a duplicate of the best actress envelope—instead of the one that showed “Moonlight” winning best picture. The fiasco marked the most embarrassing mistake in Oscars history, with the musical “La La Land” briefly declared the winner for best picture before organizers realized the error.

Cullinan has come under scrutiny for reportedly tweeting during the ceremony, sending out a picture of Emma Stone, who won the best actress award for “La La Land,” minutes before handing Beatty the wrong envelope. PricewaterhouseCoopers took the blame after the gala evening ended in chaos and said Cullinan was mortified by his mistake. “He is very upset about this mistake. And it is also my mistake, our mistake and we all feel very bad,” Tim Ryan, PwC’s US chairman, told trade magazine Variety. The company had no immediate comment on Wednesday on the Academy’s decision to drop Cullinan and Ruiz from future shows.

Cheryl Boone Isaacs, the Academy president, told The New Yorker magazine that she was horrified as the disastrous ending to one of the most watched shows on television unfolded. “I just thought, What? What? I looked out and I saw a member of Pricewaterhouse coming on the stage, and I was, like, Oh, no, what-what’s happening? What. What. WHAT? What could possibly...?” she said. “And then I just thought ‘Oh my God, how does this happen? How. Does. This. Happen.’” The Academy also apologized Wednesday to producer Jan Chapman, whose photo was mistakenly flashed in the event’s “In Memoriam” segment honoring film industry figures who died over the past year. — AFP

# Iranian film hails demise of US Navy in imagined Gulf battle



**A production assistant for the animated film, ‘Battle of the Persian Gulf II,’ holds a poster for the movie, at the office of Farhad Azima, the Iranian director and screenwriter, in Tehran, Iran. — AP photos**



**Farhad Azima, Iranian director and screenwriter of the animated film ‘Battle of the Persian Gulf II’ center, gives an interview to The Associated Press, while a man watches a trailer for the movie, at his office, in Tehran.**

In a climactic battle at sea, an Iranian commander orders his forces to open fire on a much larger US fleet, obliterating it with a barrage of rockets, some of which tear American flags from their masts. The scenario unfolds in “Battle of the Persian Gulf II,” a new Iranian animated film more than four years in the making that imagines a devastating response to an American attack on the country’s nuclear program. It might have seemed out of date this time last year, when a nuclear accord reached with world powers had lifted sanctions and raised hopes for a broader rapprochement between Iran and the West.

But now tensions are rising again. President Donald Trump has repeatedly criticized the nuclear deal, and his administration put Iran “on notice” last month after it tested a ballistic missile. Iranians were meanwhile angered over Trump’s travel ban, which temporarily barred their entry to the United States before it was blocked by the courts. Director Farhad Azima says the timing of the film’s release is purely coincidental. The movie has begun showing in the city of Mashhad, where it was produced, and will open in other cities in the coming weeks.

The nearly 90-minute film, a sequel to a

production about the 1980s Iran-Iraq war, begins with a US attack on an Iranian nuclear reactor. Washington has long warned it would take military action to prevent Iran from developing an atomic

weapon, while Iran insists its nuclear program is entirely peaceful. That sets up a showdown in the Persian Gulf, where the real-life US Navy has accused Iranian forces of harassing its vessels in recent months.

In the film, a character who closely resembles Gen. Qassem Soleimani, head of Iran’s elite Quds Force, leads a single vessel against more than a dozen American warships. When a US commander orders him to surrender or die, he replies: “General, I am not a diplomat, I am a revolutionary!” He warns that any American soldiers taking part in an attack on Iran “should order their coffins,” before his forces destroy the whole U.S. fleet.

The US Navy’s 5th Fleet, which is based in Bahrain and is responsible for naval operations in the Persian Gulf, declined to comment on the film when contacted by AP. The real-life Soleimani has directed Iranian-backed forces in Syria, where they are aiding President Bashar Assad, and Iraq, where they are helping the government battle the Islamic State group. In recent years he has gained near-mythic status in Iran, where he is seen as resisting US hegemony in the region. Azima says his film cost \$250,000 to make, and that producers raised the funds from ordinary people. — AP



**This image provided courtesy of the Fatemeh Al-Zahra Animation Group, shows a scene from the Iranian animated film, ‘Battle of the Persian Gulf II.’**

## Disney to feature first gay scene in Beauty and the Beast

Disney will feature its first gay scene when a character is seen struggling with his sexuality in the live-action remake of ‘Beauty and the Beast’, according to the film’s director. The film’s stars will be heterosexual - British actors Emma Watson and Dan Stevens play the title roles - and manservant LeFou, sidekick to the film’s macho main man Gaston, will grapple with his own sexuality.

“LeFou is somebody who on one day wants to be Gaston and on another day wants to kiss Gaston,” director Bill Condon told gay magazine Attitude in an interview published on Wednesday. “He’s confused about what he wants. It’s somebody who’s just realizing that he has these feel-

ings. It is a nice, exclusively gay moment in a Disney movie,” he told the British magazine. Attitude editor-in-chief Matt Cain said it was an important step towards fair representation of LGBT people in the media.

“By representing same-sex attraction in this short but explicitly gay scene, the studio is sending out a message that this is normal and natural - and this is a message that will be heard in every country of the world, even countries where it’s still socially unacceptable or even illegal to be gay,” he said. ‘Beauty and the Beast’ tells the story of a prince who is transformed into a beast, and a young woman who is imprisoned in his castle, as he tries to win her love. — Reuters



## Anti-colonial film gets rave reception at Africa fest



People walk past headquarters of the Africa's top film festival Panafrican Film and Television Festival (Fespaco) in Ouagadougou. — AFP

A film raging against colonialism and the exploitation of Africa wowed viewers at the continent's top cinema festival Wednesday, winning shouts of approval at a screening packed to bursting point. "The African Storm" tells the story of an African president who nationalizes businesses run by racist, cynical Western executives. Directed and produced by its Beninese star Sylvestre Amoussou, it tackles several hot-button issues including an exit from the CFA franc currency, closer ties with Russia and China as opposed to the West, criticism of the International Monetary Fund and World Bank, and pride in being African.

One of 20 feature-length movies on show at the Panafrican Film and Television Festival (Fespaco) in Burkina Faso's capital Ouagadougou, the movie was punctuated by applause and cries of approval when it screened on Wednesday. "It's not an anti-European film, but a film against the governments of states that exploit us," Amoussou said, adding that the project had been "fully-funded by Africans". Commenting on the reaction of the crowd, he told AFP: "People are frustrated. Lots of people are thinking the same as what I put on the screen, but no one dares to say it and no one has the opportunity to say it. "Young people say to me, 'But when are Africans going to make a real film about the problems facing us?' I said, 'One day I'll make it.' I've been working on this film for 10 years."

Amoussou summed up his message as this: "Africans, you have a beautiful continent. Let's roll up our sleeves and get to work. We have to think about the future and our children." He said it was painful to see Africans dying while trying to reach Europe, a "hypothetical paradise", when "they have a rich continent" themselves. Survivor testimonies point to at least 350 deaths among migrants crossing the Mediterranean from North Africa this year, many of them sub-Saharan Africans. Fespaco runs until March 4, with organizers expecting more than 100,000 visitors. Ouagadougou has hosted the jamboree since 1969. — AFP

This image released by Twentieth Century Fox shows Dafne Keen, left, and Hugh Jackman in a scene from 'Logan.'



Review

## 'Logan' a satisfying end for Jackman's Wolverine

*'Logan is gritty, dark, and a deeply satisfying conclusion for fans'*

Logan - is not for the faint of heart - not just because of its brutal violence, but because it packs an emotional wallop you don't typically expect from a comic-book movie. Featuring Hugh Jackman's final turn as Wolverine, "Logan" isn't a shiny, colorful, superhero-style film, either. It's gritty, dark, and a deeply satisfying conclusion for fans who've followed the clawed character through Jackman's past eight movie outings with the X-Men and alone as Wolverine. Writer-director James Mangold, who also directed 2013's "The Wolverine," clearly loves the character as much as Jackman does, and both seem liberated by this film's R rating. "Logan" is not a kids' movie. It's viscerally violent - lots of claws-through-the-face shots - and emotionally profound as it explores the relationship between Logan and Professor X (Patrick Stewart).

Viewers would need some basic familiarity with these characters to fully appreciate the story told in "Logan." If you don't know anything about the relationship between the title mutant and Charles Xavier (Stewart), the arc they experience in this film would be far less impactful. (The quick version: Professor X is the de-facto leader of mutants, who most appreciates them and their powers. Logan has resented the immortality that comes

with his mutant-ness, and has a lot softer heart than his claws would indicate.) It's the near future, and Logan is a hard-drinking limo-driver for hire. As one of the few remaining mutants, he keeps a low profile while caring for an aging and ill Professor X, who's hidden in a secret silo just south of the Mexican border. Half the time he babbles nonsense, but the professor tells him there's a young mutant coming their way, and soon they're charged with Laura, a little girl who doesn't speak but has deadly claws like Wolverine.

### Dramatic scenes

A slick-looking villain with a "Terminator" hand (a perfectly smarmy Boyd Holbrook) is interested in this young mutant as well. She was part of a pseudo-military genetic research project led by the evil Dr Rice (Richard E Grant, even smarmier).

Laura (entrancing newcomer Dafne Keen) is planning to meet the other kids Dr Rice experimented on in Eden, a place they read about in an X-Men comic book. So meta. Thus the story becomes a road movie, with Logan, Laura and Xavier comprising an endearing and offbeat family on their way to Eden as they try to outrun Dr Rice and his goons. Logan is reluctant and disinterested,

Xavier is kind and a little kooky, and Laura is mute. Laura is also a killer badass, and Keen makes her so fun to watch. Imagine Wolverine's powers in a pint-sized, pony-tailed package. Between the 11-year-old's performance and flawless special effects, Keen's fight scenes are as thrilling and blood-letting as any of Wolverine's.

And Jackman doubly delivers as Wolverine. You'll see what I mean when you watch the film. He is in top form as both an action star and an actor, bringing heart to his dramatic scenes and wielding unmatched adamantium power in the action sequences. Beyond the claws, there's also some cutting-edge car play, including a throw-down between a limo, two motorcycles and a barbed-wire fence. Mangold also manages to work in an anti-GMO message about a Monsanto-like company and pay tribute to classic cinema with a nod to the 1953 Western, "Shane." "Logan" is a family drama, an action thriller and an epic superhero story. If this is indeed Jackman's last Wolverine film, he's going out in heartfelt, high-class style. "Logan," a 20th Century Fox release, is rated R for "strong brutal violence and language throughout, and for brief nudity." Running time: 141 minutes.

*Three and a half stars out of four. — AP*

## Prosecutors urge judge to reject latest Polanski motion

Prosecutors on Wednesday urged a judge to reject Roman Polanski's effort to unseal testimony in his long-running sex with a minor case unless the fugitive director returns to a Los Angeles courtroom. The filing argues that Polanski remains a fugitive and other judges have already ruled to keep the testimony sealed based on requests by former lawyers for the Oscar winner. Polanski's attorney filed the motion last month seeking to unseal the testimony of the first prosecutor who handled his 1977 unlawful sex with a minor case.

Polanski's lawyer Harland Braun has said the testimony could be crucial in resolving the case and getting Polanski to return for sentencing if

he has assurances he won't have to do additional time behind bars. A hearing in the case is set for March 20. The director fled to France in 1978 on the eve of sentencing when the now-deceased judge in the case suggested in private remarks that he would renege on a plea bargain and sentencing agreement. Polanski's travel has since been restricted to France, Poland and Switzerland. Authorities in Poland and Switzerland have rejected efforts to return Polanski to the United States in recent years. Prosecutors contend nothing has changed and that previous rulings by California judges that Polanski must return to Los Angeles for sentencing remain valid.

"The defendant has many options before him if he returns" to Los Angeles, Deputy District Attorney Michele Hanisee wrote in the Wednesday filing. She stated Polanski could argue for time served, appeal previous rulings or withdraw his guilty plea and go to trial. "What he cannot do is dictate outcomes from afar while insulating himself from any potential adverse consequence," she wrote. Braun has argued that the recent extradition efforts have led to Polanski serving more than 300 days in jail or home confinement, and that he has served his sentence. Polanski wants to unseal testimony from retired Deputy District Attorney Roger Gunson, who originally handled Polanski's case. — AP



File photo shows filmmaker Roman Polanski during a break in a hearing concerning a US request for his extradition over 1977 charges of sex with a minor, in Krakow, Poland. — AP





## GIRLS LEARN BALLET STEPS IN CONSERVATIVE UPPER EGYPT

An Egyptian girl practices ballet moves during her training at Alwanat Cutlural Centre.



Egyptian girls perform a ballet dance during training at Alwanat Cutlural Centre.



An Egyptian girl practices ballet moves as other classmates watch during her training at Alwanat Cutlural Centre.



Egyptian girls practice ballet moves during their training at Alwanat Cutlural Centre in the Upper Egyptian city of Minya. — AFP photos

In Egypt's conservative southern province of Minya, young girls in black leotards and white tights wobble on their tip toes to classical music in a room painted with colorful motifs. "Look forward, stretch your arms," a male instructor calls out to the girls aged four and above. They try to mimic their teacher, a professional ballet dancer from the capital, as he gracefully raises his arms over his head. It's a surprising scene in the traditional province, which more often makes headlines for family feuds or sectarian violence against its large Coptic Christian minority. But the founders of the Alwanat Centre in Minya city are determined to make it the first ballet school in the wider Upper Egyptian province of the same name.

"Society is a bit insular in Minya. They say there's some extremism here," says Marco Adel, one of the center's founders. "We want children to be more open to life, to like art," says the 33-year-old law graduate, who is an avid drawer. In the almost two years since ballet lessons started at the center, they have become a great success, with parents driving up to one hour from nearby towns to bring their children to lessons.

### Male instructor

Christine Essam, whose daughter Eleina is learning ballet steps at the center, says she and her husband thought carefully about signing their four-year-old up for classes. "Most people around us—whether family or friends—were against it. They'd say: 'Couldn't you find anything other than ballet?'" "Girls in Upper Egypt are expected to wear modest clothes," the 26-year-old pharmacist says, adding it is a "bit hard" to make dance socially acceptable. Around 160 students aged four to 26 — including boys—now flock to lessons at the center, Adel says, up from 15 after classes were launched in May 2015.

Most Muslim girls and women who come to learn ballet wear a headscarf, he says, and they can choose to learn with one of the center's three female instructors, including two who also don the Islamic hijab. But for more than a month, the center has also had a male instructor. Mamdouh Hassan, a professional dancer with the Cairo Opera Ballet Company, travels the 240 kilometers (150 miles) from Cairo every weekend to teach the next generation. Adel says a few parents have complained about a man teaching their daughters, but eventually the instructor was accepted. "At first, we were a little surprised. But we were told he was very experienced and we trust the center," Essam says.

### 'Thrilled' father

Vivianne Sobhi, the mother of seven-year-old Farah, says social barriers have started to break down in Minya. "These days girls go swimming in swimsuits," the 27-year-old teacher says. Running a ballet school hundreds of kilometers from the capital is not without its challenges. Male instructor Hassan was once two hours late because the motorway from Cairo was closed due to fog, and the center had to order ballet shoes from the capital as none were available in the southern city. Adel says the Alwanat Centre—which also offers zumba and music classes, as well as theatre and cinema workshops—was born of "personal efforts".

"But the culture ministry or sponsors are welcome to help," Adel says, pointing to the center's small rooms. But parents seem happy. As he helps his five-year-old daughter Heaven arch her back for a gymnastics move called a bridge, Adel Gerges says he is thrilled with her experience at the centre. "We were deprived of all of this during our childhood," says the 35-year-old pharmacist. "We won't make the same mistake with our daughter." — AFP



Egyptian girls practice ballet moves during their training at Alwanat Cutlural Centre.



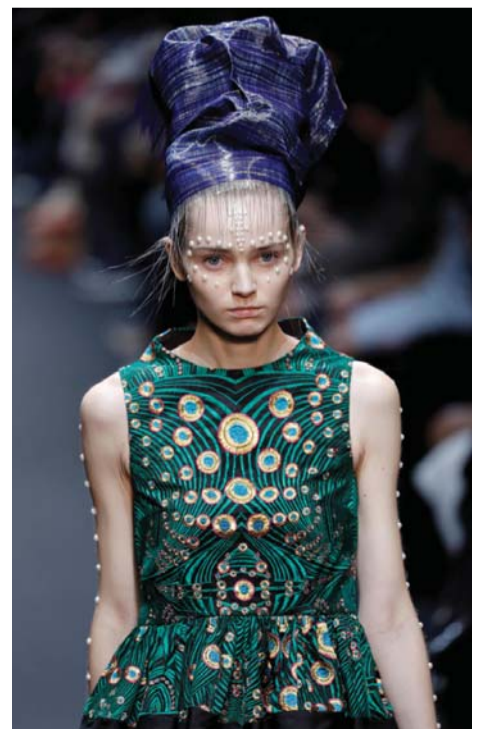
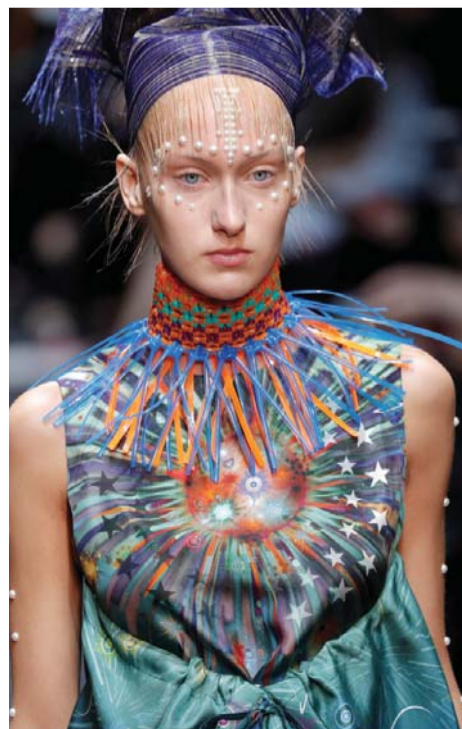
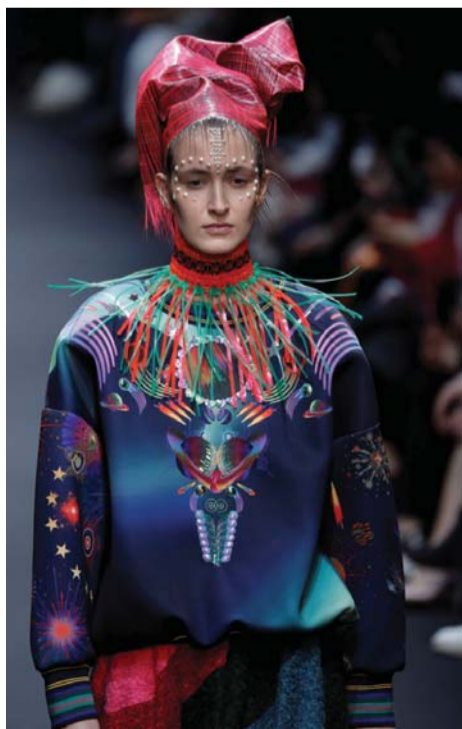
# Turkish fashion designer freed from jail pending trial

**A** Turkish fashion designer and government critic has been released from jail pending trial on charges of inciting hatred through social media postings. Barbaros Sansal was released late on Wednesday. The state-run Anadolu Agency says he is barred from leaving Turkey. The designer posted a video tweet on New Year's Eve criticizing celebrations "while there is so much filth, vileness and poverty" that many considered to be vulgar and offensive.

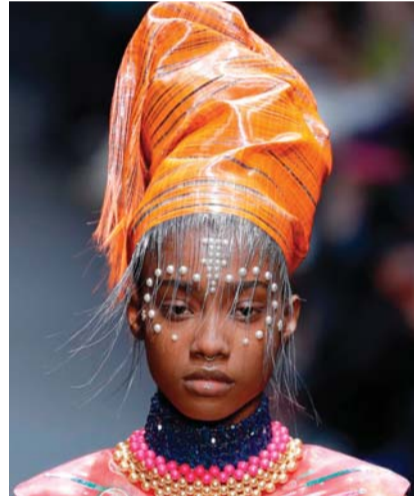
He was expelled from Turkish-controlled Northern Cyprus on Jan 2 where he was vacationing and was attacked by unknown assailants on the tarmac on his arrival at Istanbul's main airport, before being detained. Sansal faces up to three years in prison if convicted of the charges. His trial begins in Istanbul on March 16. — AP



## PARIS FASHION WEEK







Models present creations by Manish Arora during the women's Fall-Winter 2017-2018 ready-to-wear collection fashion show in Paris. — AFP photos







Manish Arora acknowledges the audience following the women's Fall-Winter 2017-2018 ready-to-wear collection fashion show in Paris yesterday. — AFP photos



Models present creations by Paco Rabanne during the women's Fall-Winter 2017-2018 ready-to-wear collection fashion show in Paris yesterday.





# Enchiladas don't sound healthy, unless you do these tricks

By Melissa D'Arabian

**T**he weather we've been having this winter has me craving some stick-to-your-ribs comfort food. Since I grew up in Tucson, Arizona, comfort food was always something Mexican or southwestern, involving tortillas, rice, beans, cheese and a tasty sauce to drown it all in. Which is a long way of saying: enchiladas are pretty much my dream food. So it became my goal to create a version of enchiladas that mimicked the flavors and comfort of my childhood but didn't make me feel weighed down and searching for my elastic waist-band sweatpants.

I swapped out white rice for brown rice to boost the nutrient profile, and used black beans without added fat (I almost don't miss the lard). While cheese enchiladas are honestly my flavor of choice, I added chicken to give heft and protein, which enabled me to reduce drastically the amount of cheese. Without the extra

fat, I needed some moisture to keep the filling luscious and tasty. Surprisingly, finely chopped baby spinach worked great, adding nary a calorie but a little boost of vitamins (A, C, folate) and iron. Win-win.

I whipped up a simple enchilada sauce using canned whole tomatoes. And my final victory? I used large chard leaves instead of tortillas. Chard is an incredible source of vitamin K (one cup has 4 times your daily requirement), while also providing vitamin C and A. And, one cup of chard has, get ready: seven calories.

Using chard as a casserole-wrapper is way easier than it sounds. Trim away the thick stem and then boil the leaves for two minutes, which softens them just enough to fill and roll without falling apart. Try today's recipe for enchiladas, and once you master the roll-up technique, try swapping chard leaves for pasta in Italian dishes like manicotti.



## CHARD-WRAPPED ENCHILADAS

### Ingredients:

Start to finish: 1 hour

Servings: 8

For the sauce:

1 28-ounce can of whole peeled tomatoes  
1/2 large yellow onion, roughly chopped  
3 cloves garlic, smashed  
2 teaspoons chili powder  
1 teaspoon olive oil

For the filling:

1/2 cup cooked brown rice  
3/4 cup cooked black beans, rinsed and drained if canned  
3/4 cup cubed or shredded cooked chicken breast  
3/4 cup baby spinach leaves, chopped  
3/4 cup shredded cheddar cheese  
1 teaspoon ground cumin  
1 teaspoon dried oregano  
1 teaspoon granulated garlic  
1/2 teaspoon kosher salt  
pinch cayenne (optional)

8 large chard leaves  
1/4 cup shredded cheddar cheese  
1/4 cup cilantro leaves  
1/4 cup plain low fat Greek yogurt

### Preparation

Heat the oven to 375 degrees F. Make the sauce: place all the sauce ingredients in a medium saucepan and simmer over medium-low heat, partially covered with a lid, for 20 minutes, gently smashing open the tomatoes with a wooden spoon as it cooks. Turn off heat, allow to cool a little.

Carefully blend sauce with an immersion blender or in a regular blender (be very careful of steam if using a regular blender). Prepare the chard leaves: cut away the stems below the leaves (you can chop and saute stems for another side dish). Then, if the stems are tough, gently cut out the first inch or so of stem within the leaf, cutting it out in a "V" shape with a knife.

Parboil the leaves in a large pan of simmering water over medium-low heat until tender, but not falling apart, about 2 minutes. (Err on undercooking; not overcooking.) Make the filling: combine all the filling ingredients (through cayenne) in a large

bowl and stir. Roll the enchiladas: Place the softened chard leaf on a cutting board with the stem end closest to you. Place about 1/4-1/3 cup of filling on the leaf, about 1 inch from the bottom of the leaf. Gently fold the sides of the leaf inward and then roll up the leaf from the bottom. (Note: if the stem is still a little tough, go ahead and let it "break" as you roll; it will be in the center of the rollup, so it won't be visible.)

You should have a nicely-shaped enchilada-like packet. Repeat with remaining leaves. Spray a 9-by-9 or 2-quart baking dish with nonstick spray. Spread about 1/4 cup of the sauce on the bottom of the pan and then lay the 8 enchiladas in pan. Pour the sauce on top, tightly cover with foil and bake until hot throughout, about 20 minutes. Remove the foil, top with remaining 1/4 cup of cheese and bake uncovered for 10 more minutes. Top with yogurt and cilantro and serve.

Nutrition information per serving: 169 calories; 58 calories from fat; 6 g fat (3 g saturated; 0 g trans fats); 30 mg cholesterol; 597 mg sodium; 15 g carbohydrate; 4 g fiber; 4 g sugar; 13 g protein.-AP





# 1 scoop or 2? Raw cookie dough is latest NYC food fad

Cookie dough is having its Cronut moment. People have been standing in line for up to three hours at a month-old New York City shop that sells scoops of raw dough in a cup or a cone like ice cream. The sweet treat has become the latest food fad to generate buzz and long lines on the sidewalk, following the Magnolia Bakery cupcake popularized by "Sex and the City" and the Cronut, the croissant-doughnut mashup that made pastry chef Dominique Ansel's Manhattan bakery a phenomenon among foodies and tourists and ultimately inspired mass produced knockoffs.

Kristen Tomlan, the 28-year-old founder of DO Cookie Dough Confections, said she's selling 1,500 pounds of cookie dough a day at her Greenwich Village storefront and hopes to expand both in New York and online. "It's really cookie dough gone wild," said Tomlan, who grew up in St. Louis and has a background in design and branding. The name of the business, DO, is pronounced "dough" and rendered with a line over the O indicating a long vowel sound. About 30 people were lined up across the street when the shop opened at 10 a.m. Tuesday. Nancy Lerman, who works nearby, said she's been twice before and tried most of the flavors, which include chocolate chip, red velvet and peanut butter snickerdoodle.

## Why eat raw dough instead of a cookie?

"I just think it's yummiier," Lerman said. "I don't eat a lot of cookies but I would eat cookie dough." New York University student Alex Day joined the line in hopes of sampling the dough for the first time. Day said she's always loved raw dough and figured the people lining up outside DO must be on to something. "I'm sure it'll be really good if people are waiting this long for it," she said.

Inside the shop, some of Tomlan's 50 employees were busy measuring baking soda and mixing butter, sugar and flour to keep up with the demand. Tomlan said her products are made with heat-treated flour and pasteurized eggs so they can be eaten raw. The store sells baked cookies as well as raw dough, which keeps for three weeks in the refrigerator and three months in the freezer. Food trend watchers said raw dough may be a flash in the cookie pan.

New York-based restaurant consultant Michael Whiteman said startups like DO where customers spend just a few dollars each visit require "enormous foot traffic"

to support the rent. "This has been the downfall of numerous juice chains and yogurt chains before them and other single-item wizards before that," Whiteman said. Darren Tristano, president of Chicago-based food consulting firm Technomic, said that if DO succeeds, competitors will likely rush to copy it, diluting the appeal of the original.

But Tristano is not surprised that people are waiting in line for raw dough. "Waiting in line when it's not a necessity is a lot easier than it was 10 or 20 years ago," he said. "Today you have a device in your hand. You can be incredibly productive waiting in line. Whereas 20 years ago nobody waited in line unless they had to." — AP





Friday Times

FRIDAY, MARCH 3, 2017

# Travel



An elephant, in Botswana's Okavango Delta, allowed viewers a close approach via a boat drifting quietly through tall grass. —AP photos



**What to look for when  
you're booking a photo  
safari**





Photo taken in Botswana's Okavango Delta, shows a photographer collecting an image of an elephant foraging for food.

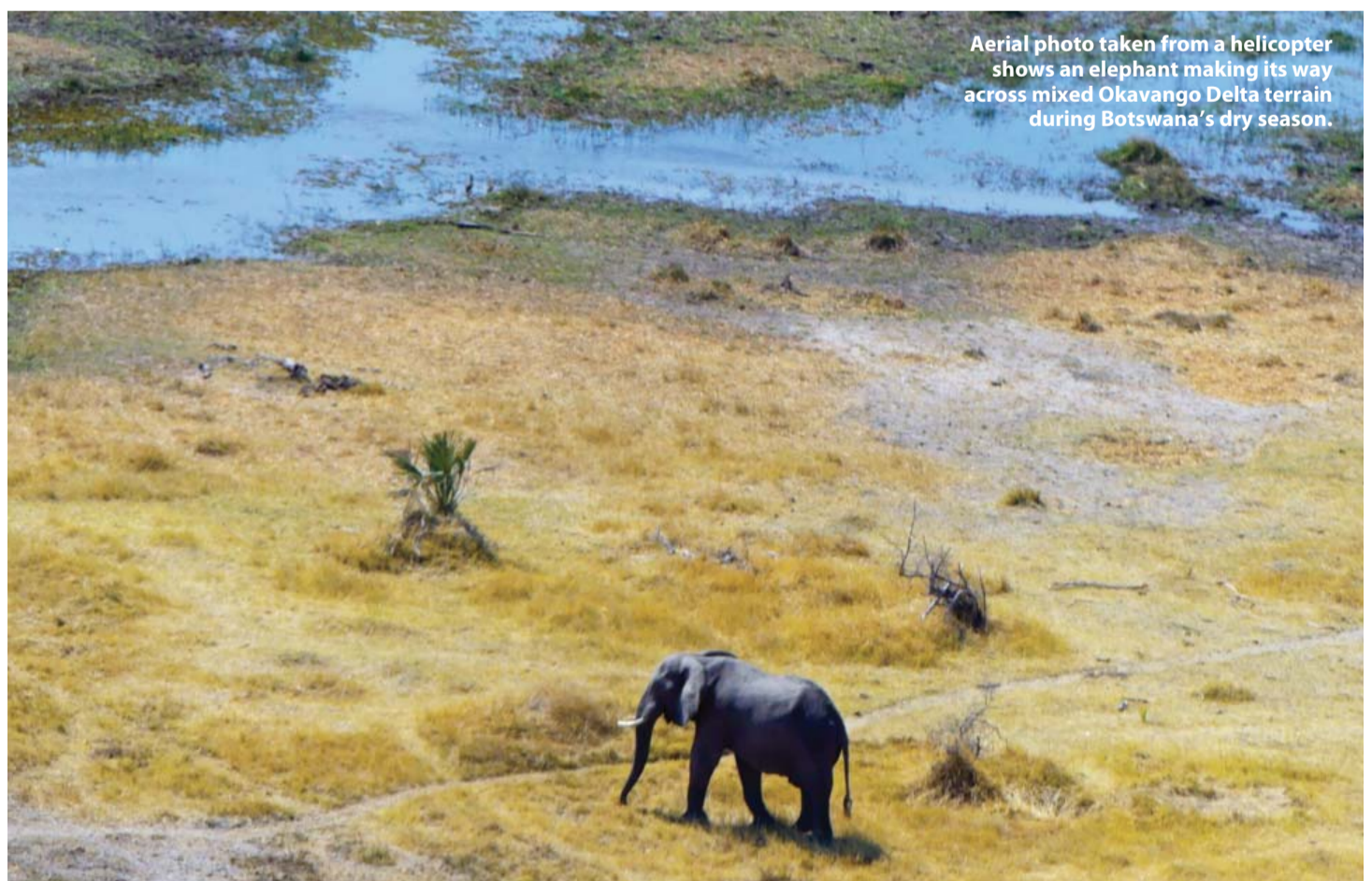
*Shopping for a wildlife safari is like taking a multiple-choice exam. You know the right answer is there on the page somewhere but they all seem so appealing. Most safari operators guarantee face time with animals and birdlife but those assurances come with varying degrees of viewer comfort, species diversity and proximity.*

Options range from the traditional group tours - people of all ages and interests sharing vehicles, lodging and meals - to customized luxury trips built around singles, couples, family groups or other self-selected combinations pursuing their own interests.

But when you add it all up, the best safaris for the money generally are those tailored primarily for photographers. Photo tours may be priced slightly higher than the traditional treks but then they provide more value. Some aspects to consider: Fewer travelers per group means you can go more places. When participation is limited to as few as a half-dozen people, everyone has a window seat and an opportunity to find the right camera angle. More hands-on instruction is available from the expedition leaders, many of whom are professional photographers.

Photo tours move at a slower pace. Every person has a chance to get that cover photo for his or her album. Operators of photo tours use different modes of transportation ranging from safari vehicles and dugout canoes to helicopters and small planes. That provides dramatic wildlife viewing no matter what the terrain.

Many photo tour outfitters provide camps in leased areas known for their unique wildlife abundance rather than simply supplying hotel rooms near nature preserves. Game drives originating from these private leaseholds mean less viewing congestion from other safari vehicles when animals are spotted.



Aerial photo taken from a helicopter shows an elephant making its way across mixed Okavango Delta terrain during Botswana's dry season.





Photo taken on Hunda Island in Botswana's Moremi Game Reserve, shows a Greater Kudu with a Red-Billed Oxpecker gleaning ticks from its back.

Photo tours don't operate on an 8 a.m.-to-5 p.m. schedule. They depart when lighting is at its best, the so-called "golden hours" of early morning and late afternoon. That also happens to be when temperatures are more comfortable - a major consideration if traveling in Africa, India or the Galapagos Islands.

Another difference between traditional safaris and photo tours is group composition, said Court Whelan, director of Conservation Travel Programs for Natural Habitat Adventures, an ecotourism company in Boulder, Colorado. "On a normal trip, it's not as easy to initiate conversations about technical details but most people on photo trips are interested in elevating their photography," he said. "They have different styles. Different eyes. It makes for good sharing."

More people are choosing photo trips these days because equipment quality has improved and they can gather their own images rather than buy them, Whelan said.

"On a photo tour, if somebody wants that perfect lighting on a landscape, they'll get



Photo taken in Botswana's Linyanti Private Reserve shows a young leopard laying in the shade of some thorny acacia branches.



Photo taken from a safari vehicle parked along the edge of Botswana's Moremi Game Reserve shows a pair of male lions stretched out for a nap in the shade. — AP Photos

it," he said. "They're not only chasing things down but they're also waiting for things to come to them." Working with smaller groups is more rewarding for everyone because they can sit down together and analyze their work, said Ona Basimane, a photojournalist who also serves as a Natural Habitat expedition leader in his native Botswana. "In a photo trip, interpretation is more toward helping people anticipate the animal's next move so they can always be ready to take a picture," Basimane said. "So one gets the benefit of learning about behavior but also getting to take good images."

The National Geographic Society, which has shaped its reputation in large part around world-class photography, also offers world-class photo tours. "The signature of National Geographic photo tours is that we're more exploratory in nature, we emphasize cultural groups and we're led by staff photographers," said Molly Danner, a program director for the company's Expeditions group.

"We provide organized photo shoots and

the kinds of access that people might not be able to get on their own," Danner said. "Berbers in Morocco. Masai villages in Africa. Traditional festivals and camel fairs in India. Our trips are designed to maximize photo opportunities for people along the way." Photo tours usually aren't a good fit for young children but they do accommodate people from all skill levels, Danner said. "We try to cater to people who have different kinds of goals and who want special access to traveling with National Geographic photographers."

Having a professional photographer along can yield great results from the unexpected. A colleague of Danner's, for example, recently returned from a photo trek raving about how she had been able to get a great shot because the National Geographic photographer "stopped the bus for a scene he wanted to capture," Danner said. "He was able to offer a spontaneous opportunity along with some insights. It became her favorite moment and the favorite picture from the trip." — AP





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

The morning hours are your best time for making important phone calls and for impressing others. Your powers of concentration are excellent. You will make major progress with a research or study project. You may find yourself standing in a long line to purchase concert tickets during your noon break. In business, particularly this afternoon, refrain from pushing your ideas too hard. The more low-key you play your position the more others desire to know your viewpoint. You may find yourself helping a young person with that person's schoolwork this afternoon-careful, you could end up doing most of the work. The people dear to your heart are emphasized this evening. Time spent at home tonight may prove most rewarding.



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

Career growth comes from building your knowledge and expressing your enthusiasm. Writing, speaking or other communicative talents will open up opportunities for you to network. You may need to be available for someone's transportation or some caretaking. This is temporary, but you will be able to lend a helping hand. You may enjoy a career in which you are able to guide others and instruct others in art expression or in some protocol. Perhaps a business in the arts is preferable. Consider one or two instead of five or six different goals-aim for a balance. The young people around you and under your care are influenced by your expression of compassion and patience. You also enjoy teaching others through demonstrating the work you do.



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

There is an inevitable change coming with regard to your career. Your business status and social status will improve soon. Luck is in your corner today, increasing your earning power. Opportunities are available now for your consideration. You may not want to throw all your energy into any particular direction so comparing your choices is a good plan. This is a period where good feelings among friends prevail and should be enjoyed. Leisure activity among friends or family will happen often this month. Your spiritual life and your psychic abilities are growing by leaps and bounds. Keep track of your dreams; the dreams are sometimes teaching dreams and notes can be revealing. There is positive information regarding a past investment.



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

Business gets the green light today, in all sorts of ways. This is a great time to be with others and to work together. Whether you are in sales or not, you may come up with an idea that will push your company into better business; everyone will listen. You are needed in some technical job today and nobody can do your job as well as you. This is a time for getting ahead, and a time you will enjoy your career and savor its rewards. Perhaps this is also a good time to think and study-you have a real appreciation for ideas and thoughts. Improved and revised contracts have the positive go-ahead. There is a sense of testing the limits in some areas of your life. Showcase your talents and abilities by taking a few creative risks from now until the end of this month.



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

Your work can be a source of enjoyment, or may provide a chance to experience something rewarding. Luck and optimism prevail all day long. Life just seems to go your way. This is a period emphasizing an enhanced sense of personal possibilities. During this time, additional responsibilities may be placed on you in the context of the home setting. Also, you should open up to relatives since it is a good time for emotional support. You have an opportunity to attract new friends and people of the opposite sex. You may feel the need to secure your own feelings about yourself through another person by improving your looks or by flirting. Self-esteem, however, begins from within you. Relax, meditate and seek answers from within.



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

Vibrations encourage you to be expressive in your work. You don't feel pressured today and it is easy to take advantage of all the opportunities for advancement that are available now. Your energy is high and your creative juices are flowing, ready to be applied to the work at hand. If you give your best effort now, considerable success may follow. Your desire for self-expression and originality is accented. Be wise in the balance of your time. There is a strong wish to make your surroundings as pleasant as possible. You could keep notes on some changes you would like to make so when the time is right your ideas will be more in focus. Concentrate on one thing at a time. Good conversations and interactions with your loved ones are possible this evening.



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

You may appear very at ease and loose today. However, you should avoid excessive risks. Everything seems to be working together and you may find yourself expressive and able to communicate well. This is a great time to be with others and to work together. You may be sought after as just the person for a particular job. You may personally feel your work is not up to par, even though your management and objective abilities are in high focus. Money trends for you will be best realized after the twentieth of this month. Perseverance should be exercised as much as possible-slow and steady win the race. You could feel moved to give a friend an encouraging word this afternoon. This evening is a great time to enjoy your friends.



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

There is an urge today to be recognized by your co-workers for your hard work. This may mean you had a recent job upgrade or some other change you had been working to achieve. There is a possibility that during this time, work as a whole will come under scrutiny and you will need to feel secure in the professional realm. You have a natural sense of what the public wants and can step in to provide it or to point in the right direction. This clearly is what puts you in demand when it comes to sales and service. Include your friends and family in the joy of expressing happiness through singing, whistling, etc. There is a romantic tie that will give you a boost now. At home this evening, you give as well as receive support. Someone gives you flowers.



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

Shake hands with a firm but appropriate handshake, particularly today. Be courteous and attentive to those that come into your work arena. First impressions at work are very important. You will be called on to tackle tasks that require real discipline all during this day. It is time to speak up for yourself in the areas of investments, collection of debts from others, as well as the payment of debts-make a show of responsibility. Others may find you in a very practical mood. Your mind is quite clear. Ideas are flowing and could come with ease; you can talk, talk, talk. You express strength in the workplace and can solve problems successfully. A clear understanding of where your limitations and expectations are is important at home as well.



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

Today, customers seem to be eating out of your hands, so to speak. There is a magnetic sort of attraction the minute a customer walks in the building where you work. It doesn't matter whether you are selling cars or greeting cards for next christmas; your methods win over any other. You are certainly noticed, regardless of what you do. Mental patterns and communication skills play major roles in your success. Everyone enjoys your sense of humor. This afternoon you enjoy a gathering of neighborhood friends. A park near your neighborhood is a great place to let the kids play. You can use the grill to create some fun and easy meals. You may want to bring a few fishing poles so some of the lovers of fishing can teach others.



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

Right now, you are prone to unwise spending habits-take care to plan a budget and stick to it. You could look at money as though it were energy. Whatever you buy will take a certain percent of your energy to pay for it. Delay large purchases for a few more days. You are a dedicated professional and enjoy being successful. At this time, however, you must take care to not use other people as steppingstones to your success, for that may be your inclination at this time-although not a conscious act. Try to establish and maintain a team attitude. Winning the hearts of others can be a challenge you are eager to accept-and the thrill of the chase might be most of the fun. Is it the pursuit of happiness-or the happiness of pursuit?



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

Too much time has been spent worrying over insignificant situations. The possibility that you could spend life in some sort of steady and happy state of being seems surprising to you. There is the art of escape and then there is the art of surrender; somewhere in the middle we find a comfortable balance. First you find your niche and then your professional life will be more satisfying-you can set and achieve your goals. You are appreciative of all that comes to you. Only you can create that positive frame of mind; energy follows thought. As you clear away the mental tasks, you will find a most enchanting way to make a difference for the positive. Your spirit soars as you think about the new goals for your birth year.

**COUNTRY CODES**

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





- 00:20 Misfit Garage
- 01:10 So You Think You'd Survive?
- 02:00 Legend Of Croc Gold
- 02:50 Manhunt With Joel Lambert
- 03:40 Fast N' Loud
- 04:30 Storage Wars Canada
- 05:00 How It's Made: Dream Cars
- 05:30 How It's Made: Dream Cars
- 06:00 Made By Destruction
- 06:25 Made By Destruction
- 06:50 How Do They Do It?
- 07:15 How Do They Do It?
- 07:40 Impossible Engineering
- 08:30 Legend Of Croc Gold
- 09:20 Everest Rescue
- 10:10 The Island With Bear Grylls
- 11:00 Ed Stafford: Into The Unknown
- 11:50 Storage Hunters UK
- 12:15 Storage Hunters UK
- 12:40 Aftershock: Disaster In Nepal
- 13:30 Fast N' Loud (Season 4 Specials)
- 14:20 Diesel Brothers
- 15:10 Street Outlaws
- 16:00 Wheeler Dealers
- 16:50 Wheeler Dealers
- 17:40 Wheeler Dealers
- 21:00 Wheeler Dealers
- 21:50 Diesel Brothers
- 22:40 Street Outlaws
- 23:30 Aftershock: Disaster In Nepal



- 00:00 It Takes A Killer
- 00:30 It Takes A Killer
- 01:00 The First 48
- 02:00 The Jail: 60 Days In
- 03:00 Homicide Hunter
- 04:00 It Takes A Killer
- 04:30 It Takes A Killer
- 05:00 The First 48
- 06:00 The Jail: 60 Days In
- 07:00 Deadly Wives
- 08:00 Deadly Wives
- 09:00 Crimes That Shook Britain
- 10:00 Homicide Hunter
- 11:00 My Crazy Ex
- 15:00 Deadly Wives
- 16:00 Crimes That Shook Britain
- 17:00 Homicide Hunter
- 18:00 Nightmare In Suburbia
- 19:00 It Takes A Killer
- 19:30 It Takes A Killer
- 20:00 The First 48
- 21:00 Crimes That Shook Britain
- 22:00 Deadly Wives
- 23:00 The First 48



- 00:30 Unchained Reaction
- 01:20 NASA's Greatest Missions
- 02:10 NASA's Unexplained Files
- 03:00 Destroyed In Seconds
- 03:25 Destroyed In Seconds
- 03:50 Ultimate Survival
- 04:40 How It's Made
- 05:05 How It's Made
- 05:30 Dirty Jobs
- 06:20 Mythbusters
- 07:00 Kids vs Film
- 07:25 Awesome Adventures
- 07:50 Bondi Vet
- 08:40 How It's Made
- 09:05 How It's Made
- 09:30 Unchained Reaction
- 10:20 Mythbusters
- 11:10 Bondi Vet
- 12:00 Bear Grylls: Born Survivor
- 12:50 How It's Made
- 13:15 How It's Made
- 13:40 Dirty Jobs
- 14:30 Mythbusters
- 15:20 Unchained Reaction
- 16:10 Kids vs Film
- 16:35 Awesome Adventures
- 17:00 Man v Expert
- 17:50 Breaking Magic
- 18:15 Breaking Magic
- 18:40 Destroyed In Seconds
- 19:05 Destroyed In Seconds
- 19:30 How It's Made
- 19:55 How It's Made
- 20:20 Mythbusters
- 21:10 Man v Expert
- 22:00 Breaking Magic
- 22:25 Breaking Magic
- 22:50 Destroyed In Seconds
- 23:15 Destroyed In Seconds
- 23:40 Bear Grylls: Born Survivor



- 00:10 Hank Zipzer
- 00:35 Binny And The Ghost
- 01:00 Violetta
- 01:45 The Hive
- 01:50 Sabrina Secrets Of A Teenage Witch
- 02:40 Hank Zipzer
- 03:05 Binny And The Ghost
- 03:30 Violetta
- 04:15 The Hive
- 04:20 Sabrina Secrets Of A Teenage Witch
- 05:10 Hank Zipzer
- 05:35 Binny And The Ghost
- 06:00 Violetta
- 06:45 The Hive
- 06:50 The 7D
- 07:00 Jessie
- 07:50 Tsum Tsum Shorts
- 07:55 Rolling To The Ronks
- 08:20 Elena Of Avalor
- 08:45 Bunk'd
- 09:10 Stuck In The Middle
- 09:35 Wizards Of Waverly Place
- 10:25 A.N.T. Farm
- 11:15 Good Luck Charlie
- 11:40 Good Luck Charlie
- 12:05 Shake It Up
- 12:30 Shake It Up
- 12:55 Disney Mickey Mouse
- 13:00 Welcome To The Ronks
- 13:15 Gravity Falls
- 13:40 Hank Zipzer
- 14:05 Star Darlings
- 14:10 Austin & Ally
- 14:35 Jessie
- 15:00 Bunk'd
- 15:25 Kirby Buckets
- 15:50 Rolling To The Ronks

- 16:20 Miraculous Tales Of Ladybug And Cat Noir
- 16:45 Elena Of Avalor
- 17:10 Stuck In The Middle
- 17:35 How To Build A Better Boy
- 19:25 The Next Step
- 19:50 Austin & Ally
- 20:15 Star Darlings
- 20:20 Shake It Up
- 20:45 Backstage
- 21:10 Liv And Maddie
- 21:35 Cracked
- 21:40 Dog With A Blog
- 22:05 Best Friends Whenever
- 22:30 Jessie
- 22:55 Tsum Tsum Shorts
- 23:00 Kirby Buckets



- 00:20 Henry Hugglemonster
- 00:35 The Hive
- 00:45 Loopdidoo
- 01:00 Henry Hugglemonster
- 01:15 Calimero
- 01:30 Art Attack
- 01:55 Zou
- 02:05 Loopdidoo
- 02:20 Henry Hugglemonster
- 02:35 Calimero
- 02:50 Zou
- 03:05 Art Attack
- 03:30 The Hive
- 03:40 Loopdidoo
- 03:55 Henry Hugglemonster
- 04:10 Art Attack
- 04:35 Loopdidoo
- 04:50 Calimero
- 05:05 Art Attack
- 05:30 Henry Hugglemonster
- 05:45 Zou
- 06:00 Art Attack
- 06:30 Henry Hugglemonster
- 06:45 Loopdidoo

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



- 06:00 Danger Mouse
- 06:25 Gravity Falls
- 06:50 Atomic Puppet
- 07:15 Star vs The Forces Of Evil
- 07:25 Counterfeit Cat
- 07:40 Supa Strikas
- 08:10 K.C. Undercover
- 08:35 Star Wars Freemaker Adventures
- 09:00 Lab Rats
- 09:25 Lab Rats
- 09:50 Danger Mouse
- 10:20 Supa Strikas
- 10:45 Supa Strikas
- 11:10 Counterfeit Cat
- 11:35 Pair Of Kings
- 12:30 Future-Worm!
- 12:55 Lab Rats
- 13:20 Lab Rats
- 13:45 Atomic Puppet
- 14:10 Disney Mickey Mouse
- 14:15 Star vs The Forces Of Evil
- 14:40 Supa Strikas
- 15:05 Lab Rats
- 15:30 Gamer's Guide To Pretty Much Everything
- 15:55 Right Now Kapow
- 16:25 K.C. Undercover
- 16:50 Future-Worm!
- 17:15 Gravity Falls
- 17:40 Lab Rats Elite Force
- 18:05 Disney Mickey Mouse
- 18:10 Supa Strikas
- 18:35 Right Now Kapow
- 19:00 Atomic Puppet
- 19:25 Gamer's Guide To Pretty Much Everything
- 19:55 K.C. Undercover
- 20:20 Kickin' It
- 20:45 Mighty Med
- 21:10 Danger Mouse
- 21:40 Disney Mickey Mouse
- 21:45 Marvel's Avengers Assemble
- 22:10 Marvel Ultimate Spider-Man vs The Sinister 6
- 22:35 Boyster
- 23:00 Programmes Start At 6:00am KSA



- 00:05 So Cosmo
- 00:55 So Cosmo
- 01:50 E! News
- 02:50 Just Jillian
- 03:45 Hollywood Medium With Tyler Henry
- 05:30 Fashion Bloggers
- 06:00 EJ NYC
- 06:55 E! News
- 07:10 EJ NYC
- 08:10 E! News
- 09:10 Keeping Up With The Kardashians
- 12:00 E! News
- 12:15 Live From The Red Carpet
- 14:10 Red Carpet Rundown: Oscars 2017
- 15:00 E! News
- 15:15 Fashion Police
- 16:10 So Cosmo
- 17:05 Botched
- 19:00 E! News
- 20:00 Revenge Body With Khloe Kardashian
- 21:00 Revenge Body With Khloe Kardashian
- 22:00 Revenge Body With Khloe Kardashian



- 00:10 The Chase
- 01:00 Emmerdale
- 01:30 Coronation Street
- 02:00 Coronation Street
- 02:30 The Jonathan Ross Show
- 03:25 Don't Tell The Bride
- 04:25 5 Star Family Reunion
- 05:15 The Syndicate
- 06:15 The Chase
- 07:05 The Jonathan Ross Show
- 08:00 Don't Tell The Bride
- 09:00 5 Star Family Reunion
- 10:00 The Syndicate
- 11:00 The Chase
- 11:50 The Jonathan Ross Show
- 12:45 Emmerdale
- 13:15 Emmerdale
- 13:45 Coronation Street
- 14:15 The Chase
- 15:10 The Jonathan Ross Show

- 16:00 Don't Tell The Bride
- 17:00 Tonight At The London Palladium
- 17:50 The Syndicate
- 18:50 Emmerdale
- 19:15 Emmerdale
- 19:45 Coronation Street
- 20:10 The Jonathan Ross Show
- 21:00 Don't Tell The Bride
- 22:00 Tonight At The London Palladium



- 00:15 This Is Brazil
- 01:05 Tom's Istanbul Delight
- 01:30 A Is For Apple
- 02:20 The Food Files
- 02:45 David Rocco's Dolce Vita
- 03:35 Sara's Australia Unveiled
- 04:25 David Rocco's Dolce Vita
- 04:50 Valentine Warner's Wild Table
- 05:20 The Wine Show
- 06:15 The Food Files
- 06:40 One Man & His Campervan
- 07:10 Tom's Istanbul Delight
- 07:35 A Is For Apple
- 08:05 A Is For Apple
- 08:30 The Food Files
- 09:00 David Rocco's Dolce Vita
- 09:25 David Rocco's Dolce Vita
- 09:55 Sara's Australia Unveiled
- 10:20 Sara's Australia Unveiled
- 10:50 David Rocco's Dolce Vita
- 11:15 Valentine Warner's Wild Table
- 11:45 The Food Files
- 12:10 One Man & His Campervan
- 12:40 Miguel's Feasts
- 13:05 Dog Whisperer
- 14:00 Top Chef Top Table: Seoul
- 14:30 David Rocco's Dolce Vita
- 14:55 David Rocco's Dolce Vita
- 15:25 Sara's Australia Unveiled
- 15:50 Sara's Australia Unveiled
- 16:20 Valentine Warner's Wild Table
- 16:45 Valentine Warner's Wild Table
- 17:15 The Wine Show
- 18:10 One Man & His Campervan
- 18:35 One Man & His Campervan
- 19:05 David Rocco's Dolce Vita
- 19:30 Sara's Australia Unveiled
- 20:00 Sara's Australia Unveiled
- 20:25 Valentine Warner's Wild Table
- 20:55 Valentine Warner's Wild Table
- 21:20 The Wine Show
- 22:10 One Man & His Campervan
- 22:35 One Man & His Campervan
- 23:00 Miguel's Feasts
- 23:25 Dog Whisperer



- 00:20 Intimate Enemies
- 01:10 Polar Bear Invasion
- 02:00 Top Cats
- 02:50 Secrets Of The Wild
- 03:45 Wild 24
- 04:40 Dangerous Encounters
- 05:35 Top Cats
- 06:30 Secrets Of The Wild
- 07:25 Wild 24
- 08:20 Dangerous Encounters
- 09:15 World's Deadliest
- 10:10 Wild Colombia (2017)
- 11:05 World's Deadliest Animals
- 12:00 Hunting The Hammerhead
- 12:55 Lion Battle Zone
- 13:50 Secrets Of The Wild
- 14:45 Wild 24
- 15:40 World's Deadliest Animals
- 16:35 Snakes In The City
- 17:30 Europe's Wild Islands
- 18:25 World's Deadliest Animals
- 19:20 Wild 24
- 20:10 World's Deadliest Animals
- 21:00 Snakes In The City
- 21:50 Europe's Wild Islands
- 22:40 World's Deadliest Animals



- 00:10 Hitler The Junkie
- 00:35 Hitler And The Occult
- 01:00 Human Lampshade: A Holocaust Mystery
- 02:00 Locked Up Abroad
- 02:55 Ultimate Airport Dubai
- 03:50 Hitler The Junkie
- 04:15 Hitler And The Occult
- 04:45 The Numbers Game
- 05:40 Car SOS
- 06:35 Crimes Against Nature
- 07:30 Mine Kings
- 08:25 Battleground Brothers
- 09:20 The Numbers Game



THE LONE RANGER ON OSN MOVIES FAMILY HD



FRIDAY, MARCH 3, 2017

- 10:15 Locked Up Abroad
- 11:10 The Border
- 12:05 China To The World
- 13:00 Battleground Brothers
- 14:00 Facing...
- 16:00 Locked Up Abroad
- 17:00 The Border
- 18:00 Taboo USA
- 19:00 Miracle Hospital
- 20:00 Locked Up Abroad
- 20:50 The Border
- 21:40 Taboo USA
- 22:30 Miracle Hospital
- 22:55 Miracle Hospital



- 00:15 Team Umizoomi
- 00:38 Louie
- 00:45 Louie
- 00:53 Olive The Ostrich
- 00:58 Olive The Ostrich
- 01:03 Max & Ruby
- 01:26 Wanda And The Alien
- 01:35 Ben & Holly's Little Kingdom
- 01:46 The Day Henry Met
- 01:51 The Day Henry Met
- 01:57 Blaze And The Monster Machines
- 02:19 Blaze And The Monster Machines
- 02:41 Zack & Quack
- 03:03 Team Umizoomi
- 03:25 Olive The Ostrich
- 03:30 Olive The Ostrich
- 03:35 Paw Patrol
- 03:58 Little Charmers
- 04:10 Ben & Holly's Little Kingdom
- 04:22 Dora The Explorer
- 04:44 Max & Ruby
- 05:07 Bubble Guppies
- 05:31 Shimmer And Shine
- 05:54 Dora And Friends: Into The City!
- 06:17 Zack & Quack
- 06:29 The Day Henry Met
- 06:34 The Day Henry Met
- 06:38 Blaze And The Monster Machines
- 07:00 Paw Patrol
- 07:13 Paw Patrol
- 07:37 Dora The Explorer
- 08:00 Zack & Quack
- 08:22 Dora And Friends
- 08:46 Blaze And The Monster Machines
- 09:10 Paw Patrol
- 09:35 Shimmer And Shine
- 09:58 Dora The Explorer
- 10:21 Paw Patrol
- 10:45 Little Charmers
- 10:57 Bubble Guppies
- 11:20 Fresh Beat Band Of Spies
- 11:40 Zack & Quack
- 11:52 Team Umizoomi
- 12:15 Team Umizoomi
- 12:38 Louie
- 12:45 Louie
- 12:53 Olive The Ostrich
- 12:58 Olive The Ostrich
- 13:03 Max & Ruby
- 13:26 Wanda And The Alien
- 13:35 Ben & Holly's Little Kingdom
- 13:46 The Day Henry Met
- 13:51 The Day Henry Met
- 13:57 Blaze And The Monster Machines
- 14:19 Blaze And The Monster Machines
- 14:41 Zack & Quack
- 15:03 Team Umizoomi
- 15:25 Olive The Ostrich
- 15:30 Olive The Ostrich
- 15:35 Paw Patrol
- 15:58 Little Charmers
- 16:10 Ben & Holly's Little Kingdom
- 16:22 Dora The Explorer
- 16:44 Max & Ruby
- 17:07 Bubble Guppies
- 17:31 Shimmer And Shine
- 17:54 Dora And Friends: Into The City!
- 18:17 Zack & Quack
- 18:29 The Day Henry Met
- 18:34 The Day Henry Met
- 18:38 Blaze And The Monster Machines
- 19:00 Paw Patrol
- 19:13 Paw Patrol
- 19:37 Dora The Explorer
- 20:00 Zack & Quack
- 20:22 Dora And Friends: Into The City!
- 20:46 Blaze And The Monster Machines
- 21:10 Paw Patrol
- 21:35 Shimmer And Shine
- 21:58 Dora The Explorer
- 22:21 Paw Patrol
- 22:45 Little Charmers
- 22:57 Bubble Guppies
- 23:20 Fresh Beat Band Of Spies



TOMORROW NEVER DIES ON OSN MOVIES ACTION HD

OSN MOVIES HD ACTION

- 00:00 No Tell Motel
- 01:30 Outcast
- 03:15 The Hunger Games: Mockingjay Part I
- 05:30 Harlock: Space Pirate
- 07:30 Seventh Son
- 09:15 King Arthur
- 11:30 The Hunger Games: Mockingjay Part I
- 13:45 Bad Company
- 15:45 Golden Eye
- 18:00 Tomorrow Never Dies
- 20:10 Die Hard
- 22:30 Wanted

OSN MOVIES HD FAMILY

- 01:15 Hannah Montana Movie
- 03:15 The Santa Clause 3
- 05:15 Underdog
- 07:00 Hercules (1997)
- 09:00 Chicken Little
- 10:45 Stitch! The Movie
- 12:00 Underdog
- 13:45 Chicken Little
- 15:30 Lilo & Stitch 2
- 17:00 Ghost Squad
- 19:00 The Lone Ranger
- 21:30 White Fang
- 23:30 Lilo & Stitch 2

OSN MOVIES HD

- 00:15 Poltergeist
- 02:00 Cradle 2 The Grave
- 03:45 The Lovely Bones
- 06:00 A Beautiful Mind
- 08:15 Goosebumps
- 10:00 Big
- 12:00 Man Of The House
- 13:45 Cas & Dylan
- 15:30 The Guardian
- 18:00 Pitch Perfect 2
- 20:00 The Walk
- 22:15 Role Models

OSN MOVIES HD COMEDY

- 00:00 Kill Your Friends
- 02:00 Coneheads
- 04:00 Father Of The Bride Part II
- 06:00 The Rewrite
- 08:00 Coneheads
- 10:00 Father Of The Bride Part II
- 12:00 The Rewrite
- 14:00 Honeymooners
- 16:00 Lovesick

OSN MOVIES HD ACTION

- 18:00 Ride
- 20:00 Dickie Roberts: Former Child Star
- 22:00 This Is Where I Leave You

OSN MOVIES HD FESTIVAL

- 00:15 Rio, I Love You
- 02:00 Bulworth
- 04:00 Trash
- 06:00 Ironweed
- 08:30 Middle Of Nowhere
- 10:15 Escobar: Paradise Lost
- 12:15 Pele: Birth Of A Legend
- 14:00 Searching For Bobby Fischer
- 16:00 Wuthering Heights
- 18:00 Serena
- 20:00 Mystic River
- 22:15 In America

OSN MOVIES HD KIDS

- 00:45 Miffy The Movie
- 02:15 Blue Elephant 2
- 04:15 Mamma Moo And Crow
- 06:00 Sava
- 07:30 Pim And Pom: The Big Adventure
- 09:00 Alpha Dogz: Pups United
- 10:45 Miffy The Movie
- 12:15 Blue Elephant 2
- 14:00 The Wild Thornberrys Movie
- 16:00 Alpha Dogz: Pups United
- 18:00 Curious George
- 20:00 Worms
- 21:30 The Wild Thornberrys Movie
- 23:15 Pim And Pom: The Big Adventure



- 00:40 Mythbusters
- 01:30 How Do They Do It?
- 01:55 Food Factory
- 02:20 Food Factory USA
- 02:45 Food Factory USA
- 03:10 Close Encounters
- 03:35 Close Encounters
- 04:00 Kings Of Construction
- 04:48 Mythbusters
- 05:36 How Do They Do It?
- 06:00 Food Factory
- 06:24 Food Factory USA
- 06:49 Food Factory USA
- 07:12 Close Encounters
- 07:37 Close Encounters
- 08:00 How Do They Do It?
- 08:26 Kings Of Construction
- 09:14 Mythbusters
- 10:02 Close Encounters

OSN MOVIES HD ACTION HD

- 10:27 Close Encounters
- 10:50 How Do They Do It?
- 11:14 Food Factory
- 11:38 Food Factory USA
- 12:03 Food Factory USA
- 12:26 Kings Of Construction
- 13:14 Mythbusters
- 14:02 How Do They Do It?
- 14:26 Food Factory
- 14:50 Close Encounters
- 15:15 Close Encounters
- 15:38 Food Factory USA
- 16:03 Food Factory USA
- 16:26 Kings Of Construction
- 17:14 Mythbusters
- 18:02 Close Encounters
- 18:27 Close Encounters
- 18:50 Kings Of Construction
- 19:40 Mythbusters
- 20:30 Mythbusters
- 21:20 How Do They Do It?
- 21:45 Food Factory
- 22:10 Close Encounters



- 00:20 Oprah's Master Class
- 01:10 Single Dad Seeking...
- 02:50 Love, Lust Or Run
- 03:15 Cake Boss
- 03:35 Oprah's Master Class
- 04:20 Little People, Big World: Wedding Farm
- 05:10 Toddlers & Tiaras
- 06:00 Little People, Big World: Wedding Farm
- 06:50 Little People, Big World: Wedding Farm
- 07:40 Little People, Big World: Wedding Farm
- 08:30 Little People, Big World
- 09:20 Designer Darlings
- 10:10 Ultimate Shopper
- 11:00 Ultimate Shopper
- 11:50 Love, Lust Or Run
- 12:15 Love, Lust Or Run
- 12:40 Love, Lust Or Run
- 13:05 Love, Lust Or Run
- 13:30 Love, Lust Or Run
- 13:55 Oprah: Where Are They Now?
- 14:45 Oprah's Master Class
- 15:35 Cake Boss
- 16:00 Cake Boss
- 16:25 Cake Boss
- 16:50 Cake Boss
- 17:15 Cake Boss
- 17:40 Cake Boss
- 18:05 Cake Boss
- 18:30 Cake Boss
- 18:55 Outrageous Kid Parties
- 19:20 Little People, Big World
- 20:10 Designer Darlings
- 21:00 Little People, Big World
- 21:50 Sister Wives
- 22:40 Too Ugly For Love?
- 23:30 Return To Amish



- 00:00 The Universe: Ancient Mysteries Solved
- 01:00 Blood And Glory: The Civil War In Color
- 02:00 Ancient Discoveries
- 03:00 Missing In Alaska
- 03:50 Ancient Aliens: The Ultimate Evidence
- 04:40 The Human Calculator
- 05:30 The Universe: Ancient Mysteries Solved
- 06:20 Blood And Glory: The Civil War In Color
- 07:10 The Universe
- 08:00 Ancient Discoveries
- 09:00 Missing In Alaska
- 10:00 Ancient Aliens: The Ultimate Evidence
- 11:00 The Human Calculator
- 12:00 The Universe: Ancient Mysteries Solved

- 13:00 The Universe
- 14:00 Ancient Discoveries
- 15:00 Missing In Alaska
- 16:00 Ancient Aliens: The Ultimate Evidence
- 17:00 The Human Calculator
- 18:00 The Universe: Ancient Mysteries Solved



- 00:20 Time Team
- 01:10 Outlaw Chronicles: Hells Angels
- 02:00 Search For The Lost Giants
- 02:50 Storage Wars
- 03:15 American Pickers
- 04:05 Pawn Stars
- 05:00 Mountain Men
- 06:00 Mankind The Story Of All Of Us
- 06:50 Hunting Hitler: Inside The Investigation
- 07:40 Billion Dollar Wreck
- 08:30 Shark Wranglers
- 09:20 Ice Road Truckers
- 10:10 Swamp People
- 11:00 American Pickers
- 11:50 Counting Cars
- 12:15 Car Hunters
- 12:40 Pawn Stars
- 13:05 Pawn Stars Best Of
- 13:30 Storage Wars: Best Of
- 16:50 Pawn Stars Best Of
- 18:30 Shipping Wars
- 19:20 Alaska Off-Road Warriors
- 20:10 Ice Road Truckers



- 00:00 Patricia Heaton Parties
- 01:00 Diners, Drive-Ins And Dives
- 02:00 Man Fire Food
- 03:00 Chopped
- 04:00 Guy's Grocery Games
- 05:00 Barefoot Contessa: Back To Basics
- 06:00 The Kitchen
- 07:00 The Pioneer Woman
- 08:00 Siba's Table
- 09:00 Anna Olson: Bake
- 10:00 The Kitchen
- 11:00 The Pioneer Woman
- 12:00 Siba's Table
- 13:00 Diners, Drive-Ins And Dives
- 14:00 Chopped
- 15:00 The Kitchen
- 16:00 Anna Olson: Bake
- 17:00 Chopped
- 18:00 Guy's Grocery Games
- 19:00 Luke Nguyen's United Kingdom
- 20:00 Follow Donal... To Europe
- 21:00 Girl Eat World
- 22:00 Iron Chef America



MAN OF THE HOUSE ON OSN MOVIES HD



## Word Search Puzzles

### Old TV Shows 1

Find and circle all of the old TV shows that are hidden in the grid. The remaining letters spell the name of an additional old TV show.

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

- |                     |              |                |                 |
|---------------------|--------------|----------------|-----------------|
| ALICE               | FLYING NUN   | L.A. LAW       | ODD COUPLE      |
| BEN CASEY           | FUGITIVE     | LASSIE         | PEYTON PLACE    |
| BEVERLY HILLBILLIES | GOMER PYLE   | LOVE BOAT      | RAWHIDE         |
| CHIPS               | GOOD TIMES   | MAD ABOUT YOU  | RIFLEMAN        |
| CANNON              | GREEN ACRES  | MAUDE          | RIN TIN TIN     |
| CAPTAIN KANGAROO    | GREEN HORNET | MEDICAL CENTER | SOAP            |
| DOBIE GILLIS        | HOWDY DOODY  | MIAMI VICE     | ST. ELSEWHERE   |
| DONNA REED          | I SPY        | MOD SQUAD      | TAXI            |
| DR. KILDARE         | IRONSIDE     | MOONLIGHTING   | THREE'S COMPANY |
| EMERGENCY           | JETSONS      | MURPHY BROWN   | WALTONS         |
| FLIPPER             | KOJAK        |                |                 |

## Yesterday's Solution

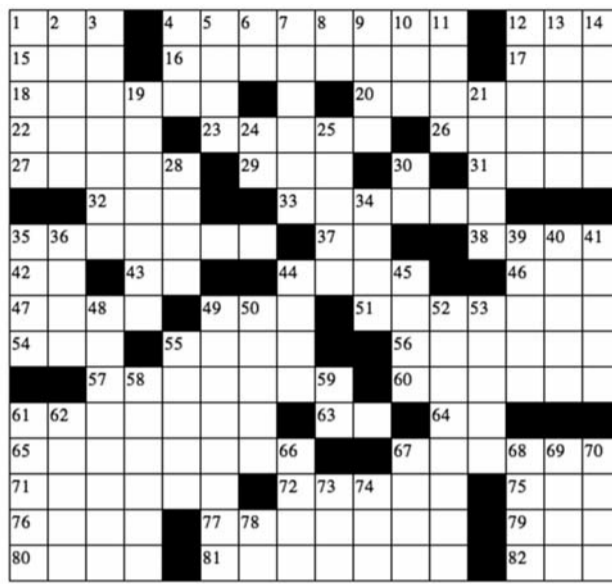
### Nursing Home 2

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

- |            |                |                 |                  |              |
|------------|----------------|-----------------|------------------|--------------|
| ADMISSION  | DISABILITY     | LOTION          | PHYSICAL THERAPY | SOAP         |
| ASSIST     | DOCTOR         | LOUNGE          | PILLS            | SOCIALIZE    |
| BEDPAN     | ELEVATOR       | MEALS           | PODIATRIST       | STAFF        |
| BEDTIME    | ENTERTAINMENT  | MECHANICAL LIFT | RECLINER         | SUPPOSITORY  |
| BOOKS      | EYEGASSES      | MEDICINE        | RECREATION ROOM  | SYRINGE      |
| CALL BELL  | FOOD TRAY      | MEMORY          | RELATIVES        | THERMOMETER  |
| CARD GAMES | GERIATRIC      | MORNING CARE    | ROOMMATE         | TUBE FEED    |
| CHARTING   | HEALTH         | NURSE           | SEDAIVES         | VIRUS        |
| CRAFTS     | HOLIDAY EVENTS | OSTEOPOROSIS    | SHAVER           | VISITOR      |
| DEMENTIA   | INSULIN SHOT   | OXYGEN          | SINGING          | WANDER ALARM |
| DIABETES   | LAXATIVES      | PATIENTS        | SLEEP            | WASH HANDS   |
| DINNER     | LOCKDOWN       | PHARMACIST      | SNACK CART       |              |

The hidden message is:  
LIFE'S TRAGEDY IS THAT WE GET OLD TOO SOON AND WISE TOO LATE

## CROSSWORD 1536



### ACROSS

- A pilgrimage to Mecca.
- Taken before a meal as an appetizer.
- A humorous play on words.
- A period marked by distinctive character or reckoned from a fixed point or event.
- A skirt consisting of a rectangle of calico or printed cotton.
- The 7th letter of the Greek alphabet.
- At or near the north pole.
- An island in the Persian Gulf.
- An island in the Persian Gulf.
- The basic unit of money in Bangladesh.
- A genus of Indriidae.
- The capital and largest city of Bangladesh.
- (Greek mythology) Monster with nine heads.
- Title for a civil or military leader (especially in Turkey).
- An accidental hole that allows something (fluid or light etc.) to enter or escape.
- Belonging to or on behalf of a specified person (especially yourself).
- French engineer who constructed the Eiffel Tower (1832-1923).
- United States astronomer (1835-1909).
- An official prosecutor for a judicial district.
- Noisy talk.
- A public promotion of some product or service.
- (astronomy) The angular distance of a celestial point measured westward along the celestial equator from the zenith crossing.
- Relating to or characteristic of or occurring on the sea or ships.
- (Greek mythology) Goddess of the earth and mother of Cronus and the Titans in ancient mythology.
- An artificial language proposed as an auxiliary European language.
- The basic unit of electric current adopted under the System International d'Unites.
- A state of abeyance or suspended business.
- Given to avoiding association with others.
- Type genus of the family Ostreidae.
- Herbs, shrubs and trees.
- A soft white precious univalent metallic element having the highest electrical and thermal conductivity of any metal.
- A white metallic element that burns with a brilliant light.
- A person who worships idols.

### DOWN

- A nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drug (trade name Lodine).
- Physicist honored for advances in solid state electronics (born in Japan in 1925).
- One of the most common of the five major classes of immunoglobulins.
- Very dark black.
- A difficult entangling situation.
- An advanced law degree.
- A measured portion of medicine taken at any one time.
- Temporarily inactive.
- Bark in a high-pitched tone.
- A low evergreen shrub of the family Ericaceae.
- An orderly arrangement.
- Common black-and-gray Eurasian bird noted for thievery.
- American prizefighter who won the world heavyweight championship three times (born in 1942).
- Large burrowing rodent of South and Central America.
- A unit of energy equal to the work done by an electron accelerated through a potential difference of 1 volt.
- (usually plural) A destructive action.
- Being nine more than forty.
- A sock with a separation for the big toe.
- Any of various coarse shrubby plants of the genus Iva with small greenish flowers.
- King of Saudi Arabia since 1982 (born in 1922).
- The state prevailing during the absence of war.
- A city in central New York.
- Indian religious leader who founded Sikhism (1469-1538).
- Pacific newts.
- A large gathering of people intended to arouse enthusiasm.
- A state in the eastern United States.
- A member of a seafaring group of North American Indians who lived on the Pacific coast of British Columbia and southwestern Alaska.
- Small buffalo of the Celebes having small straight horns.
- A radioactive transuranic element.
- The front of the head from the forehead to the chin and ear to ear.
- Mild yellow Dutch cheese made in balls.
- 20 aspers equal 1 kuru.
- ('cease' is a noun only in the phrase 'without cease') End v 1.
- A member of the Siouan people of the Kansas river valley in Kansas.
- A Chadic language spoken south of Lake Chad.
- The basic monetary unit of most members of the European Union (introduced in 1999).
- Repetition or recapitulation in reverse order.
- More of the same adv.
- A cgs unit of dynamic viscosity equal to one dyne-second per square centimeter.
- A reply by a Pope to an inquiry concerning a point of law or morality.
- The cardinal number that is the sum of seven and one.
- Very large white gannet with black wing tips.
- Containing salt.
- A white soft metallic element that tarnishes readily.
- (Philippine) A dish of marinated vegetables and meat or fish.
- A network of intersecting blood vessels or intersecting nerves or intersecting lymph vessels.
- A Kwa language spoken in Ghana and the Ivory Coast.
- Containing an unusual amount of grease or oil.
- Large sweet juicy hybrid between tangerine and grapefruit having a thick wrinkled skin.
- An inclined surface or roadway that moves traffic from one level to another.
- An infection of the sebaceous gland of the eyelid.
- A constellation in the southern hemisphere near Telescopium and Norma.
- The blood group whose red cells carry both the A and B antigens.

## Daily SuDoku

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

## Yesterday's Solution

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

## Yesterday's Solution

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



# SPRING POPS UP SUPER EARLY IN MUCH OF US



**NEW YORK:** A Canada Goose paddles past a painted turtle out of hibernation, in New York's Central Park. —AP

**WASHINGTON:** Spring has sprung early - potentially record early - in much of the United States, bringing celebrations of shorts weather mixed with unease about a climate gone askew. Crocuses, tulips and other plants are popping up earlier than usual from Arizona to New Jersey and down to Florida. Washington is dotted with premature pink blossoming trees. Grackles, red-winged blackbirds and woodpeckers are just plain early birds this year. The unseasonably warm weather has the natural world getting ahead of - even defying - the calendar, scientists said Tuesday.

In cities like Indianapolis, Pittsburgh and Columbus, Ohio, spring has arrived about a month earlier than the 30-year average and about 20 days earlier than in 2012, which was the earliest spring on record. Scientists at the US Geological Survey's National Phenology Network, which studies seasonal signs, have calculated local and a national spring index based on observations of lilacs, honeysuckles and temperature records that are fed into a computer model. The spring leaf index goes back to 1900 and 2012 has been the earliest on record. But preliminary records show this year ahead of 2012 in a good chunk of the nation.

It's still too early to draw a conclusion for the country, said University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee scientist Mark D. Schwartz and phenology network director Jake Weltzin. As the world warms, spring is arriving earlier, but not everywhere. For a broad swath of the US,

2017 sticks out like a crocus in early February. Nashville, St. Louis, Washington, Atlanta, Pittsburgh, Columbus and Indianapolis are at least three weeks early on the spring index, but Phoenix and Los Angeles are running a bit late. "It's weird," Weltzin said Tuesday.

The latest early spring isn't supposed to show up for decades based on computer simulations that model springs of the future, said Jeff Masters, meteorology director of the private Weather Underground. "This is basically a year 2100 sort of spring that we're seeing this year," Masters said. "Way surprising." Fox butterflies are already out in Massachusetts and New York. Beetles are scurrying around Martha's Vineyard. Crocuses and snowdrops are in full flower in suburban Boston - all exceptionally early because of warm temperatures and little snow cover, said Boston University biology professor Richard Primack.

### Chill hours

"I am already hearing woodpeckers knocking on tree trunks" when these sounds usually occur in March or April, said Primack, editor of the journal Biological Conservation. The northern shoveler duck is usually the next to last duck to make it to upstate New York, arriving sometime in April, but it's already here, said Kevin McGowan, an ornithologist at the Cornell Lab of Ornithology. These wildlife sightings stem from warm weather in February that Masters

called "off-the-charts weird" that included upper 90s in Oklahoma and a first-of-its-kind February tornado in Massachusetts.

Masters and Penn State University climate scientist Michael Mann, who photographed flowers sprouting outside his central Pennsylvania house in mid-February, said this is a combination of natural weather variation and man-made warming of the climate. Warm weather can lead to crop damage if there is a freeze in March or April after plants have already bloomed. It can also worsen droughts, which happened in 2012, Schwartz said. Georgia Tech climate scientist Kim Cobb said what's happening is disconcerting, no matter how nice it is for people.

"Sure we can't wait to shed our wool coats and hats each spring, but such warm temperatures are wreaking havoc, sight unseen on key crops," Cobb said in an email. "Here in Georgia peach buds have been robbed of necessary 'chill hours' this winter." The early spring is even changing language with some calling recent weeks "alt-spring" and "March-uary." Penn State meteorology professor David Titley, said it feels like being on one of the recently discovered Earth-size planets around a nearby star. "Everything is kind of familiar (weather-wise) but different. I was walking around ... in my shirt sleeves and I was almost hot. In February. That's not supposed to happen," said the retired admiral.—AP

CLINIC  
PAGE



Kuwait Times  
THE ORIGINAL INSPIRATION BASED ON THE ARABIAN BELLS

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 WEDNESDAY (02/03/2017 TO 08/03/2017)

|  |          |         |          |         |
|--|----------|---------|----------|---------|
| <b>SHARQIA-1</b>                         | LOGAN    | 6:00 PM | LOGAN    | 9:45 PM |
| LOGAN                                    | 11:30 AM | LOGAN   | 12:30 AM |         |
| HAMAH - Kuwaiti Film                     | 2:15 PM  | LOGAN   |          |         |
| HAMAH - Kuwaiti Film                     | 3:45 PM  |         |          |         |
| HAMAH - Kuwaiti Film                     | 5:15 PM  |         |          |         |
| HAMAH - Kuwaiti Film                     | 6:45 PM  |         |          |         |
| HAMAH - Kuwaiti Film                     | 8:30 PM  |         |          |         |
| HAMAH - Kuwaiti Film                     | 10:00 PM |         |          |         |
| LOGAN                                    | 11:30 PM |         |          |         |
| <b>SHARQIA-2</b>                         |          |         |          |         |
| HAMAH - Kuwaiti Film                     | 12:00 PM |         |          |         |
| LOGAN                                    | 1:30 PM  |         |          |         |
| LOGAN                                    | 4:15 PM  |         |          |         |
| LOGAN                                    | 7:00 PM  |         |          |         |
| LOGAN                                    | 9:45 PM  |         |          |         |
| LOGAN                                    | 12:30 AM |         |          |         |
| <b>SHARQIA-3</b>                         |          |         |          |         |
| ELOISE                                   | 1:15 PM  |         |          |         |
| ELOISE                                   | 3:15 PM  |         |          |         |
| LOGAN                                    | 5:15 PM  |         |          |         |
| LOGAN                                    | 8:00 PM  |         |          |         |
| ELOISE                                   | 10:45 PM |         |          |         |
| ELOISE                                   | 12:45 AM |         |          |         |
| <b>MUHALAB-1</b>                         |          |         |          |         |
| ELOISE                                   | 12:30 PM |         |          |         |
| ELOISE                                   | 2:30 PM  |         |          |         |
| ELOISE                                   | 4:30 PM  |         |          |         |
| ELOISE                                   | 6:30 PM  |         |          |         |
| MERCURY PLAINS                           | 8:30 PM  |         |          |         |
| ELOISE                                   | 10:30 PM |         |          |         |
| ELOISE                                   | 12:30 AM |         |          |         |
| <b>MUHALAB-2</b>                         |          |         |          |         |
| LOGAN                                    | 12:15 PM |         |          |         |
| LOGAN                                    | 3:00 PM  |         |          |         |
| HAMAH - Kuwaiti Film                     | 5:45 PM  |         |          |         |
| LOGAN                                    | 7:15 PM  |         |          |         |
| HAMAH - Kuwaiti Film                     | 10:00 PM |         |          |         |
| LOGAN                                    | 11:30 PM |         |          |         |
| <b>MUHALAB-3</b>                         |          |         |          |         |
| LOGAN                                    | 1:15 PM  |         |          |         |
| HAMAH - Kuwaiti Film                     | 2:30 PM  |         |          |         |
| LOGAN                                    | 4:00 PM  |         |          |         |
| LOGAN                                    | 6:45 PM  |         |          |         |
| LOGAN                                    | 9:30 PM  |         |          |         |
| LOGAN                                    | 12:15 AM |         |          |         |
| <b>FANAR-1</b>                           |          |         |          |         |
| HAMAH - Kuwaiti Film                     | 12:00 PM |         |          |         |
| HAMAH - Kuwaiti Film                     | 1:30 PM  |         |          |         |
| HIDDEN FIGURES                           | 3:00 PM  |         |          |         |
| HAMAH - Kuwaiti Film                     | 5:30 PM  |         |          |         |
| HAMAH - Kuwaiti Film                     | 7:00 PM  |         |          |         |
| HAMAH - Kuwaiti Film                     | 8:30 PM  |         |          |         |
| HIDDEN FIGURES                           | 10:00 PM |         |          |         |
| HAMAH - Kuwaiti Film                     | 12:45 AM |         |          |         |
| <b>FANAR-2</b>                           |          |         |          |         |
| KIKORIKI. Legend of the Golden Dragon    | 1:00 PM  |         |          |         |
| KIKORIKI. Legend of the Golden Dragon    | 2:45 PM  |         |          |         |
| KIKORIKI. Legend of the Golden Dragon    | 4:30 PM  |         |          |         |
| ELOISE                                   | 6:15 PM  |         |          |         |
| MERCURY PLAINS                           | 8:15 PM  |         |          |         |
| ELOISE                                   | 10:15 PM |         |          |         |
| ELOISE                                   | 12:15 AM |         |          |         |
| <b>FANAR-3</b>                           |          |         |          |         |
| MERCURY PLAINS                           | 12:00 PM |         |          |         |
| COMMANDO 2-Hindi                         | 2:00 PM  |         |          |         |
| ELOISE                                   | 5:00 PM  |         |          |         |
| COMMANDO 2-Hindi                         | 7:00 PM  |         |          |         |
| MERCURY PLAINS                           | 10:00 PM |         |          |         |
| MERCURY PLAINS                           | 12:05 AM |         |          |         |
| <b>FANAR-4</b>                           |          |         |          |         |
| LOGAN                                    | 1:30 PM  |         |          |         |
| LOGAN                                    | 4:15 PM  |         |          |         |
| LOGAN                                    | 7:00 PM  |         |          |         |
| LOGAN                                    | 9:45 PM  |         |          |         |
| LOGAN                                    | 12:30 AM |         |          |         |
| <b>FANAR-5</b>                           |          |         |          |         |
| LOGAN                                    | 12:30 PM |         |          |         |
| LOGAN                                    | 3:15 PM  |         |          |         |
| LOGAN                                    | 6:00 PM  |         |          |         |
| LOGAN                                    | 8:45 PM  |         |          |         |
| LOGAN                                    | 11:30 PM |         |          |         |
| <b>MARINA-1</b>                          |          |         |          |         |
| ELOISE                                   | 12:00 PM |         |          |         |
| ELOISE                                   | 2:00 PM  |         |          |         |
| ELOISE                                   | 4:00 PM  |         |          |         |
| ELOISE                                   | 6:00 PM  |         |          |         |
| HIDDEN FIGURES                           | 8:00 PM  |         |          |         |
| ELOISE                                   | 10:45 PM |         |          |         |
| ELOISE                                   | 12:45 AM |         |          |         |
| <b>MARINA-2</b>                          |          |         |          |         |
| LOGAN                                    | 1:00 PM  |         |          |         |
| THE DEVIL'S CANDY                        | 1:45 PM  |         |          |         |
| LOGAN                                    | 3:45 PM  |         |          |         |
| LOGAN                                    | 6:30 PM  |         |          |         |
| LOGAN                                    | 9:15 PM  |         |          |         |
| LOGAN                                    | 12:05 AM |         |          |         |
| <b>MARINA-3</b>                          |          |         |          |         |
| LOGAN                                    | 11:30 AM |         |          |         |
| LOGAN                                    | 2:15 PM  |         |          |         |
| HAMAH - Kuwaiti Film                     | 5:00 PM  |         |          |         |
| HAMAH - Kuwaiti Film                     | 6:45 PM  |         |          |         |
| LOGAN                                    | 8:15 PM  |         |          |         |
| LOGAN                                    | 11:00 PM |         |          |         |
| <b>AVENUES-1</b>                         |          |         |          |         |
| THE DEVIL'S CANDY                        | 11:30 AM |         |          |         |
| A DOG'S PURPOSE                          | 1:30 PM  |         |          |         |
| THE LEGO BATMAN MOVIE                    | 3:45 PM  |         |          |         |
| A DOG'S PURPOSE                          | 6:00 PM  |         |          |         |
| THE DEVIL'S CANDY                        | 8:15 PM  |         |          |         |
| THE DEVIL'S CANDY                        | 10:15 PM |         |          |         |
| THE DEVIL'S CANDY                        | 12:15 AM |         |          |         |
| <b>AVENUES-2</b>                         |          |         |          |         |
| LOGAN -2D -4DX                           | 1:30 PM  |         |          |         |
| LOGAN -2D -4DX                           | 4:15 PM  |         |          |         |
| LOGAN -2D -4DX                           | 7:00 PM  |         |          |         |
| LOGAN -2D -4DX                           | 9:45 PM  |         |          |         |
| LOGAN -2D -4DX                           | 12:30 AM |         |          |         |
| <b>AVENUES-3</b>                         |          |         |          |         |
| ELOISE                                   | 1:00 PM  |         |          |         |
| ELOISE                                   | 3:00 PM  |         |          |         |
| ELOISE                                   | 5:00 PM  |         |          |         |
| ELOISE                                   | 7:00 PM  |         |          |         |
| ELOISE                                   | 9:00 PM  |         |          |         |
| ELOISE                                   | 11:00 PM |         |          |         |
| ELOISE                                   | 1:00 AM  |         |          |         |
| <b>AVENUES-4</b>                         |          |         |          |         |
| LOGAN                                    | 1:00 PM  |         |          |         |
| LOGAN                                    | 3:45 PM  |         |          |         |
| LOGAN                                    | 6:30 PM  |         |          |         |
| LOGAN                                    | 9:15 PM  |         |          |         |
| LOGAN                                    | 12:05 AM |         |          |         |
| <b>360°-1</b>                            |          |         |          |         |
| ELOISE                                   | 12:00 PM |         |          |         |
| ELOISE                                   | 2:00 PM  |         |          |         |
| ELOISE                                   | 4:00 PM  |         |          |         |
| ELOISE                                   | 6:00 PM  |         |          |         |
| ELOISE                                   | 8:00 PM  |         |          |         |
| ELOISE                                   | 10:00 PM |         |          |         |
| ELOISE                                   | 12:05 AM |         |          |         |
| <b>360°-2</b>                            |          |         |          |         |
| HIDDEN FIGURES                           | 1:00 PM  |         |          |         |
| HIDDEN FIGURES                           | 1:30 PM  |         |          |         |
| FRI                                      |          |         |          |         |
| HIDDEN FIGURES                           | 4:00 PM  |         |          |         |
| HIDDEN FIGURES                           | 6:45 PM  |         |          |         |
| HIDDEN FIGURES                           | 9:30 PM  |         |          |         |
| HIDDEN FIGURES                           | 12:15 AM |         |          |         |
| <b>360°-3</b>                            |          |         |          |         |
| JOHN WICK: CHAPTER 2                     | 1:45 PM  |         |          |         |
| JOHN WICK: CHAPTER 2                     | 4:30 PM  |         |          |         |
| ABY- Malayalam                           | 7:00 PM  |         |          |         |
| JOHN WICK: CHAPTER 2                     | 10:00 PM |         |          |         |
| JOHN WICK: CHAPTER 2                     | 12:30 AM |         |          |         |
| <b>AL-KOUT.1</b>                         |          |         |          |         |
| HAMAH - Kuwaiti Film                     | 12:00 PM |         |          |         |
| LOGAN                                    | 1:30 PM  |         |          |         |
| LOGAN                                    | 4:15 PM  |         |          |         |
| LOGAN                                    | 7:00 PM  |         |          |         |
| <b>AL-KOUT.2</b>                         |          |         |          |         |
| LOGAN                                    | 12:45 PM |         |          |         |
| ELIMINATORS                              | 1:45 PM  |         |          |         |
| LOGAN                                    | 3:45 PM  |         |          |         |
| ELIMINATORS                              | 6:45 PM  |         |          |         |
| LOGAN                                    | 8:45 PM  |         |          |         |
| LOGAN                                    | 11:30 PM |         |          |         |
| <b>AL-KOUT.3</b>                         |          |         |          |         |
| ELOISE                                   | 11:45 AM |         |          |         |
| ELOISE                                   | 1:45 PM  |         |          |         |
| ELOISE                                   | 3:45 PM  |         |          |         |
| ELOISE                                   | 6:00 PM  |         |          |         |
| MERCURY PLAINS                           | 8:00 PM  |         |          |         |
| ELOISE                                   | 10:00 PM |         |          |         |
| ELOISE                                   | 12:05 AM |         |          |         |
| <b>AL-KOUT.4</b>                         |          |         |          |         |
| MERCURY PLAINS                           | 12:00 PM |         |          |         |
| MERCURY PLAINS                           | 2:00 PM  |         |          |         |
| HAMAH - Kuwaiti Film                     | 4:00 PM  |         |          |         |
| HAMAH - Kuwaiti Film                     | 5:30 PM  |         |          |         |
| HAMAH - Kuwaiti Film                     | 7:00 PM  |         |          |         |
| HAMAH - Kuwaiti Film                     | 8:30 PM  |         |          |         |
| HAMAH - Kuwaiti Film                     | 10:15 PM |         |          |         |
| MERCURY PLAINS                           | 11:45 PM |         |          |         |
| <b>BAIRAQ-1</b>                          |          |         |          |         |
| LOGAN                                    | 12:00 PM |         |          |         |
| LOGAN                                    | 2:45 PM  |         |          |         |
| HIDDEN FIGURES                           | 5:30 PM  |         |          |         |
| LOGAN                                    | 8:15 PM  |         |          |         |
| LOGAN                                    | 11:00 PM |         |          |         |
| <b>BAIRAQ-2</b>                          |          |         |          |         |
| ELOISE                                   | 11:30 AM |         |          |         |
| HAMAH - Kuwaiti Film                     | 1:30 PM  |         |          |         |
| HAMAH - Kuwaiti Film                     | 3:00 PM  |         |          |         |
| HAMAH - Kuwaiti Film                     | 4:30 PM  |         |          |         |
| HAMAH - Kuwaiti Film                     | 6:00 PM  |         |          |         |
| HAMAH - Kuwaiti Film                     | 7:30 PM  |         |          |         |
| HAMAH - Kuwaiti Film                     | 9:00 PM  |         |          |         |
| ELOISE                                   | 10:30 PM |         |          |         |
| ELOISE                                   | 12:30 AM |         |          |         |
| <b>BAIRAQ-3</b>                          |          |         |          |         |
| KIKORIKI. Legend of the Golden Dragon    | 1:15 PM  |         |          |         |
| KIKORIKI. Legend of the Golden Dragon    | 3:00 PM  |         |          |         |
| KIKORIKI. Legend of the Golden Dragon    | 4:45 PM  |         |          |         |
| LOGAN                                    | 6:30 PM  |         |          |         |
| LOGAN                                    | 9:15 PM  |         |          |         |
| LOGAN                                    | 12:05 AM |         |          |         |
| <b>PLAZA</b>                             |          |         |          |         |
| MUNTHIRIVALLIKAL THALIRKUMBOL -Malayalam | 3:30 PM  |         |          |         |
| ABY- Malayalam                           | 6:30 PM  |         |          |         |
| ABY- Malayalam                           | 9:15 PM  |         |          |         |
| MUNTHIRIVALLIKAL THALIRKUMBOL -Malayalam | 9:15 PM  |         |          |         |
| <b>LAILA</b>                             |          |         |          |         |
| LOGAN                                    | 3:45 PM  |         |          |         |
| HAMAH - Kuwaiti Film                     | 6:30 PM  |         |          |         |
| LOGAN                                    | 8:00 PM  |         |          |         |
| LOGAN                                    | 10:45 PM |         |          |         |
| <b>AJIAL.1</b>                           |          |         |          |         |
| COMMANDO 2-Hindi                         | 3:30 PM  |         |          |         |
| COMMANDO 2-Hindi                         | 6:30 PM  |         |          |         |
| COMMANDO 2-Hindi                         | 9:30 PM  |         |          |         |
| <b>AJIAL.2</b>                           |          |         |          |         |
| BIR BIKRAM - Nepali                      | 4:00 PM  |         |          |         |
| MUNTHIRIVALLIKAL THALIRKUMBOL -Malayalam | 3:45 PM  |         |          |         |
| MUNTHIRIVALLIKAL THALIRKUMBOL -Malayalam | 6:45 PM  |         |          |         |
| MUNTHIRIVALLIKAL THALIRKUMBOL -Malayalam | 9:45 PM  |         |          |         |
| <b>AJIAL.3</b>                           |          |         |          |         |
| RAEES- HINDI                             | 3:15 PM  |         |          |         |
| DANGAL -Hindi                            | 6:00 PM  |         |          |         |
| RAEES- HINDI                             | 9:15 PM  |         |          |         |

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from 8:00am - 4:00pm)

### PRAYER TIMINGS

Fajr: 04:54

Shorook 06:13

Duhr: 12:00

Asr: 15:19

Maghrib: 17:48

Isha: 19:07



## Hospitals

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

## Clinics

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



# Friday Times BUSINESS

FRIDAY, MARCH 3, 2017

BITCOIN 'CREATOR' RACES TO PATENT TECHNOLOGY WITH GAMBLING TYCOON

Page 40



Yahoo punishes CEO in latest fallout from security breach

Page 41



NEW YORK: The New York Stock Exchange is prepared for the IPO of Snap Inc, yesterday. The company behind the popular messaging app Snapchat to started trading yesterday after a better-than-expected stock offering. — AP (See Page 41)

## EUROZONE INFLATION HITS ECB TARGET RISING INFLATION TO RAISE GRUMBLING ABOUT STIMULUS

**BRUSSELS:** Eurozone inflation in February hit the European Central Bank's 2.0 percent target for the first time since 2013 as its massive economic stimulus appeared to be finally paying off, figures showed yesterday. Unemployment in the 19-country single currency area in January meanwhile was 9.6 percent, unchanged from December but holding at its lowest rate since May 2009, the Eurostat statistics service said.

Analysts said the figures showed consumers have largely put aside immediate concerns over Brexit and the new US administration but while last year's economic pick-up continues, further gains might be limited. Higher oil and food prices have stoked inflation in the last year but they seem to have peaked out for the moment, they noted.

Analysts surveyed by Factset expected 2.0 percent inflation after prices jumped 1.8 percent in January following 1.1 percent in December. The Eurostat statistics service said the last time inflation was at 2.0 percent was in January 2013. Jennifer McKeown at Capital Economics said she expected the increase to 2.0 percent to "prove temporary ... (as) underlying price pressures remain subdued."

There was no sign either of increased wage pressures, meaning the ECB "is likely to reiterate its view that the latest pick-up in inflation will be transitory," she said.

ECB chief Mario Draghi said last month he saw no need to change course and the economy still required the central bank's support.

"We should not react to individual data points and short-lived increases in inflation," Draghi said.

### ECB on hold

Howard Archer at IHS Markit said he did not expect inflation to rise much further and it could even fall back to around 1.6 percent by the end of the year. Archer said that while some at the ECB might argue the latest figures show it is time for change, he believed Draghi would not budge.

"The ECB has made it very clear that it wants to see sustained, decisive evidence that underlying eurozone inflationary pressures are picking up," he said. The ECB was also "very aware that there are appreciable uncertainties ahead, especially political ones," he said, citing elections in the Netherlands, France and Germany, the Brexit

talks and the Trump administration.

Inflation is a key indicator of underlying consumer demand and the ECB adopted its just under 2.0 percent target with the aim of ensuring a modest but sustained increase in prices, the sign of a healthy economy. The 2008 global financial crisis however brought the eurozone to its knees as governments slashed spending and hiked taxes, crushing demand in the process and putting the economy into deep recession. In response, the ECB has poured trillions of euros into the banking system to provide cheap credit for businesses to expand and invest, in turn creating much-needed jobs. Up to now, however, progress has been slow and there is still ground to make up—the jobless rate ran at 7.5 percent before the 2008 financial crash.

### Grumbling

Rising inflation combined with low interest rates engineered by the central bank increase the pain felt by savers who are still getting near-zero returns on savings kept in conservative holdings such as bank deposits. And it has encouraged stimulus skeptics who think the ECB is close enough to its goal of bringing

inflation sustainably to just below 2 percent that it can start thinking about when to signal a gradual exit from stimulus efforts slated to run through the end of this year.

Economist Carsten Brzeski at ING-DiBa said that "with inflation about the magical 2 percent level, new complaints against the ECB's loose monetary policy and new media headlines are likely to emerge."

The figures may increase the public relations headache for ECB President Mario Draghi but are not likely to make the bank change course. Draghi has argued that the recent increase in inflation comes from global oil prices, an external factor that is not due to a fundamental improvement in the economy. He has also said that the economy still needs support through a year of heightened political uncertainties that will include elections in the Netherlands, France, and Germany.

Analyst Michael Schubert at Commerzbank said that while some ECB council members want the bank to start thinking about ending its extraordinary stimulus efforts, "our analysis indicates that opponents of an early exit have a solid majority" on the bank's 25-member governing council. — Agencies





**TOKYO:** Businessmen go past an electric quotation board flashing the Nikkei key index of the Tokyo Stock Exchange (TSE) in front of a securities company in Tokyo yesterday. —AFP

## DOLLAR BULLS STILL NERVOUS AS MARCH RATE HIKE BAKES IN

RISE AGAINST AUSSIE, KIWI SHOWS CONCERN ABOUT HIGHER RATES

**LONDON:** Further signs that the US Federal Reserve is swinging toward a March rise in interest rates kept the dollar rising against the yen and a handful of other major currencies on Thursday, although the pace against a resilient euro was slower.

Governor Lael Brainard, a dove on the US central bank's open market committee, was the latest to say on Wednesday that an improving global economy and a solid US recovery mean it will be "appropriate soon" to raise rates. That fuelled a rise of more than half a percent to a two-week high of 114.40 yen and gains of up to 1 percent against the Australian and New Zealand dollars, typically sold when investors are reining in their appetite for risk.

The latter moves, and the relatively minimal scale of the gains against the euro and sterling, pointed to a more mixed picture, however, even as expectations of a rise in rates this month double.

The euro has proven strong around \$1.05 and the losses for both European stock markets and the commodities currencies point to worries about the impact of higher US rates and a higher dollar on global growth. "The fact that the dollar hasn't managed to rally to any order of magnitude is of concern to dollar bulls," said Richard Benson, co-head of portfolio management with currency fund Millennium Global in London.

"The problem from here is that if you haven't been involved for a period of time, are you going to bet against the euro when it's almost fully-priced for the Fed? The next two percent (move higher for the dollar) may be very sticky." The dollar index, which measures the greenback against a basket of six major currencies, was just 0.25 percent higher on the day on Thursday at 102.03.

Against the euro it gained just 0.3 percent to \$1.0518, with

traders citing a steady drip of corporate demand for the single currency, which also fuelled a rise against sterling on Wednesday.

A widening of US-Japan interest rate differentials helped the dollar, but the US two-year yield fell back a basis point from Asian session highs of 1.308 percent as traders arrived at their desks in New York. Some analysts warned that the dollar could weaken, despite the widening interest rate differentials, should stocks retreat.

"If the Fed goes ahead with a faster pace of rate hikes and shrinks its balance sheet, it will weigh on stock prices," said Minoru Uchida, chief FX analyst at Bank of Tokyo Mitsubishi UFJ. "Lower share prices and wider yield differentials would result in a weaker dollar, just like in May 2013 when Fed's Bernanke signalled tapering."

Speeches from Fed Chair Janet Yellen and Vice Chair Stanley Fischer on Friday are now widely expected to be the final piece of the puzzle, along with next week's non-farm payrolls.

But Millennium's Benson and a number of others point to the need for a bigger move in yields of longer-dated US Treasuries if the greenback is to rise further. "Whether the Fed's next hike is in March, May or June is less important than whether they go twice or three times this year, and that in turn is less important than what the market prices as a terminal Fed Funds rate," said Societe Generale strategist Kit Juckes.

"At the moment, the market isn't convinced that Fed Funds will peak much above 2 percent. A move higher from there would be more supportive for the dollar than any rethink about how fast we get to 2 percent." —Reuters

## TAIWAN SITS OUT FOREX INTERVENTION TO DUCK TRUMP BLAST

**TAIPEI:** Taiwan's central bank, fearful of being labelled a currency manipulator by US President Donald Trump, has pulled back on intervention to weaken the Taiwan dollar, making it Asia's second best-performing currency in 2017.

The currency has risen 5 percent so far this year, giving the island's stock market a boost, but knocking its fourth-quarter balance of payments to a five-year low and hammering its insurers, which are heavily invested overseas. A central bank official told Reuters the

currency movement was directly related to the bank not intervening so much in the foreign exchange markets.

"The central bank wants to signal to the United States that it does not manipulate Taiwan's currency," the official said. The bank's governor, Perng Fai-nan, declined to comment when asked on Thursday if the currency's strength was linked to the bank's nervousness that Trump might label it a manipulator. Trump has criticized especially China, Japan and Europe for

policies he claims artificially weaken their currencies and make their exports more competitive.

His administration has said it will analyse the currency practices of major trading partners, and the US Treasury is required to publish a report on these practices in mid-April. After any declaration that a country manipulates its currency, the Treasury will try to negotiate a resolution, but the process could result in punitive tariffs on that country's goods. —Reuters

## BREXIT VOTE HITS DEUTSCHE TELEKOM PROFITS IN 2016

**FRANKFURT, AM MAIN:** German telecommunications giant Deutsche Telekom said yesterday net profits fell in 2016, as its stake in Britain's BT lost value in the wake of last year's Brexit vote. Net profits were down 18 percent to 2.67 billion euros (\$2.8 billion), the company said. Analysts had been expecting it to post a profit of 4.54 billion euros.

The main factor hitting profits was a 2.2-billion-euro loss from its 12-percent stake in BT "mainly as a result of declines in the BT share price and in the pound sterling following the Brexit referendum," the German group said. Britain's June vote to leave the European Union took the global markets completely by surprise, sparking lingering uncertainty and unease over London's future relationship with Brussels.

Deutsche Telekom stressed that the dip in profits would not affect its payout of shareholder dividends, which it plans to increase by 5 euro cents to 0.60 euros per share. Operating, or underlying profit at the group slightly outpaced the group's own forecasts, adding almost 8.0 percent to reach 21.4 billion euros. Revenues at Telekom grew 5.6 percent in 2016 to more than 73 billion euros, more than analysts had forecast, as its American unit T-Mobile USA continued to enjoy strong performance.

That division alone added 8.2 million customers last year in the teeth of a highly competitive and saturated US mobile phone market. T-Mobile USA's revenues grew 16 percent to \$37.3 billion, while profits doubled to \$1.5 billion. Across the Atlantic, Telekom's revenues in Germany and the rest of Europe fell as its fixed-line phone business continues to decline. Looking ahead to 2017, Deutsche Telekom aims to increase revenues to achieve an operating profit of around 22.2 billion euros — 4.0 percent higher than 2016's figure. —AFP



**BONN:** Timotheus Hoettges, the CEO of Deutsche Telekom attends the company's annual financial press conference in Bonn yesterday. —AP

## UK BUSINESS LEADER WARNS OVER BREXIT'S 'WORST-CASE SCENARIO'

**LONDON:** The president of one of Britain's biggest business lobby groups is to warn of the economic damage the country would suffer if it leaves the European Union without securing a wide-ranging trade deal with the bloc. In prepared remarks for a speech due later yesterday, Confederation of British Industry President Paul Drechsler will say that a "no deal" scenario would open a Pandora's Box of economic consequences. "If Britain leaves the EU without a deal, it would have to rely on so-called World Trade Organization rules - a set of tariffs that would immediately raise the cost of trade for both sides but impact Britain more as its relative dependence on EU trade is higher than the EU's on Britain."

"Here in the UK and across the continent firms are worried about this 'worst-case scenario'," Drechsler is due to say. "Some are getting ready for it to reduce economic damage. Some won't prepare because they're hoping for a deal. But in reality many firms can't prepare because the cost of change is simply too high to even consider it."

Under WTO rules, Britain would not be able to trade with its former EU partners on terms that would be any more advantageous than other countries that do not have trade agreements with the EU, such as the United States. As a result, the EU would impose tariffs on an estimated 15,000 goods, in no uniform way: some British exports, like pharmaceuticals, would face no extra charge but the large majority would. —AP



## CONSUMERS, EXPORTS FUEL SPANISH ECONOMY IN Q4

**MADRID:** Spending by Spanish households kept the economy on a solid footing in the fourth quarter of last year with exports also fuelling growth ahead of what may be a trickier 2017, data showed yesterday.

The Spanish economy expanded by 0.7 percent between October and December from the previous three months, the National Statistics Institute (INE) confirmed in a final reading, unchanged from the growth rate recorded a quarter earlier. A recovery in the job market in Spain's third year out of recession helped sustain spending by families, and weak inflation also boosted household budgets after many Spaniards faced steep wage cuts during a prolonged downturn.

For the year, the Spanish economy grew 3.2 per-

cent, the same as in 2015. The European Commission forecasts it will dip to 2.3 percent growth this year while Madrid reckons 2.5 percent.

Indeed, the coming months may be more challenging as some of the tailwinds boosting the latest expansion fade. Consumer prices, for example, already spiked year-on-year in January and February as energy costs rose. Economists also expect the pace of job creation to eventually start slowing, though employment data released on Thursday showed hiring continued apace in February.

The number of people signing on to pay social security - a measure of job creation - rose by 74,080 month-on-month, the Labour Ministry said, more than in February 2016, helped by hiring in construc-

tion, education and hotels and restaurants.

The growth momentum recorded at the end of 2016 may have carried into the first three months of the year, Economy Minister Luis de Guindos said. "Quarterly growth at the very least will be similar to what we had in the second half of last year," de Guindos told Radio Nacional yesterday. He expects lower inflation in the second quarter. Spain's economy largely shrugged off a prolonged period of political turmoil at home in 2016 as parties struggled to form a government for 10 months following two inconclusive elections.

Investment, as measured by growth in capital goods, rose 3.1 percent in 2016, down from a 6 percent increase in 2015, INE data showed. —Reuters

## ALLIED IRISH READY TO IPO AS RESUMES DIVIDEND PAYMENTS

**DUBLIN:** Allied Irish Bank (AIB) became the first domestic-owned Irish lender to restart dividends since the financial crash almost a decade ago, proposing a 250 million euro (\$263 million) payment and saying it was ready to IPO this year.

Finance minister Michael Noonan said the bank's performance supported the view that 2017 is an appropriate time to consider selling Ireland's 25 percent stake. Last month, he raised the possibility of doing so as early as May as markets improve. The 99.9 percent state-owned bank was valued at 11.3 billion euros at the end of last year, meaning a share sale yielding almost 3 billion euros would be one of the largest bank listings in Europe since the 2008 financial crisis.

"Market conditions at the moment are pretty receptive but that can move in a week, move in a day," AIB chief financial officer Mark Bourke told Reuters in a telephone interview.

"There is huge interest in the Irish story, which has continued to deliver and we are a pure play on that. When that is added to the performance and recovery the bank has made, the interest levels are always pretty high among investors." AIB pointed to strong financial results and robust capital as supporting its "modest" dividend. The bank intends to maintain a conservative stance but sees scope for a progressive payment, Bourke said following AIB's results yesterday.

AIB's main rival, 14 percent state-owned Bank of Ireland, last week delayed restarting its dividend payments until next year. Royal Bank of Scotland's Irish unit Ulster Bank announced the resumption of payments to its parent company late last year. AIB, whose 21 billion euro taxpayer bailout was the biggest for any Irish bank still trading and more than four-times that of Bank of Ireland, reported a full year pre-tax profit of 1.7 billion euros, down from 1.9 billion a year ago.

But that was primarily as a result of writing back far fewer of its remaining and shrinking 9.1 billion euros in provisions racked up during Ireland's financial crisis. Its writebacks totalled 294 million last year versus almost 1 billion in 2015. The bank's core tier one capital ratio - a measure of financial strength - increased sharply to 15.3 percent at the end of 2016 from 13.7 percent three months earlier. Bourke said the bank's UK business, which accounted for 14 percent of pre-provision operating profit last year, had held up after Britain's vote to leave the European Union and was "broadly, far better than anyone would have forecast." — Reuters



**LONDON:** Britain's opposition Labor Party Shadow Chancellor of the Exchequer John McDonnell delivers a pre-budget speech on the economy, in London yesterday ahead of the government's Spring Budget announcement on March 8. — AFP



**TANGSHAN:** A woman checks a Chinese cabbage at a local market set up near steel factories in Tangshan yesterday. China said it will cut 500,000 jobs in the steel and coal industries this year as it continues to trim excess capacity in the smokestack sectors amid a slowing economy. —AFP

## CHINESE FACTORIES GROW AS GLOBAL DEMAND IMPROVES GROWTH IN SERVICES SECTOR SLOWS BUT STILL ROBUST

**BEIJING:** China's factory activity expanded faster than expected in February as domestic and export demand picked up, adding to signs that the global economy is regaining momentum even as fears grow of a surge in trade protectionism. Growth in both output and orders accelerated last month, according to official and private factory surveys on Wednesday, giving the government more room to focus on tackling financial risks to the economy as debt continues to rise.

"This is the 7th consecutive month that China's official manufacturing PMI stayed within expansionary territory, suggesting that industrial activity remains buoyant," said Zhou Hao, emerging markets economist at Commerzbank AG in Singapore. Zhou said it was "very likely" that China's central bank would raise short-term interest rates by another 10 basis points in March-which would mark the third such move in as many months-as authorities grow more confident that the economy is on steadier footing.

Facing growing risks from explosive growth in debt, China's central bank has cautiously shifted its stance in recent months to a tightening bias after years of super-loose policy to stave off the risk of a hard landing for the world's second-largest economy.

Policy sources have told Reuters that China's leaders will accept a lower economic growth target of around 6.5 percent in 2017, and target a less aggressive expansion of money supply, as the focus slowly shifts from growth to pushing reforms to contain debt and housing risks. China's industrial sector has benefited from a construction boom since the middle of last year that has spurred demand and prices for building materials from cement to steel, boosting sales and profits.

The official Purchasing Managers' Index (PMI) released on Wednesday rose to a three-month high of 51.6 in February, compared with the previous month's 51.3, and above the 50-point mark that separates growth from contraction on a monthly basis.

Analysts had expected a reading of 51.1. Output rose at a faster pace of 53.7, compared to 53.1 in January, while overall new order growth also picked up.

A private survey which focuses more on small and mid-sized firms offered similarly encouraging findings. The Caixin/Markit Manufacturing Purchasing Managers' index (PMI) rose to 51.7, up from 51.0 in January and beating analysts' forecasts of 50.8.

New export orders grew at the fastest pace since September 2014. While the industrial sector continued to shed jobs in February, the pace eased to its slowest since March 2013. Inflationary pressures also continued to rise sharply thanks largely to higher prices for building materials such as steel reinforcing bars and copper pipes, but producers were able to pass some of the increased input costs on to consumers. For now, China's consumer inflation remains well within the central bank's comfort zone, but expectations of upward pressure could keep the central bank on a gradual tightening path. — Reuters



# BITCOIN 'CREATOR' RACES TO PATENT TECHNOLOGY WITH GAMBLING TYCOON

## SPECIAL REPORT

**SYDNEY/SINGAPORE:** The man who last year made global headlines by claiming to be Satoshi Nakamoto, the creator of bitcoin, is working with a fugitive online gambling entrepreneur to file scores of patents relating to the digital currency and its underlying technology, blockchain.

Craig Wright, the Australian computer scientist who made the Satoshi claim, has the backing of Calvin Ayre, a wealthy Canadian entrepreneur, according to people close to Wright and documents reviewed by Reuters. Ayre has been indicted in the United States on charges of running online gambling operations that are illegal in many US states - an accusation he rejects. Wright's expertise combined with Ayre's support make a potentially formidable force in shaping the future of bitcoin and blockchain, the ledger technology that underlies digital currencies.

Wright and his associates have lodged more than 70 patent applications in Britain and have plans to file many more, according to documents and emails reviewed by Reuters and sources with knowledge of Wright's business. The patents range from the storage of medical documents to WiFi security, and reflect Wright's deep knowledge of how bitcoin and blockchain work.

Their total compares with 63 blockchain-related patents filed globally last year and 27 so far this year by multinationals from credit card companies to chipmakers, according to Thomson Innovation. Neither Wright nor Ayre would comment for this story on their business relationship, details of which are revealed here for the first time, or their goals. But their interest in bitcoin and blockchain highlights two key trends. First, an increasing number of entrepreneurs believe blockchain, which can circumvent the need for big financial intermediaries, will challenge traditional payment systems. Various banks are investing large sums to explore how blockchain could revolutionize payment systems and cut costs.

Bitcoin involves sending payments directly, securely and potentially anonymously between two people's digital wallets, whereas all mainstream transactions, including those using intermediaries like Paypal and credit card lenders, run through banks and usually require named accounts and verification.

Second, blockchain has the potential to defy authorities trying to enforce borders and national regulations - and it already does so in areas such as online gambling. In internet chatrooms some online gamblers say that using bitcoin enables them to disguise their identity and transactions.

The confidentiality conveyed by the currency is one source of its popularity. Bitcoin hit a record high this week, partly because of speculation that the first bitcoin exchange-traded fund is set to receive US regulatory approval. After a sharp rise this year, the cryptocurrency reached more than \$1,200 per bitcoin. Ayre said last year that he saw a "growing convergence" of bitcoin and online gambling, according to the website CalvinAyre.com. Documents reviewed by Reuters show Wright's links to online gambling go back decades and that bitcoin grew out of code originally developed with gambling in mind. Early bitcoin code, seen by Reuters and analysed by a computer coding consultant with no ties to Wright or any blockchain-related project, contains unimplemented functions related to poker.

Wright's vision for bitcoin, though, goes much further than gambling, according to his research papers and interview transcripts. It remains unclear whether he is Satoshi Nakamoto or not, and even whether Satoshi is one person or a group of people. But some of the documents, including two folders of computer code for early versions of bitcoin, support Wright's claims that he was closely involved in the development of the cryptocurrency before it became public in 2009. Whatever Wright's original role, he has suggested bitcoin could have widespread applications. In a paper from November 2015, also reviewed by Reuters, he wrote: "The bitcoin blockchain can be scaled up to replace all existing payment system networks to become the world's single global economic infrastructure."

The paper is unpublished, but it gives an insight into the global scope of his plans for the technology. While it's far from clear the two will be successful in their patent applications, bitcoin and patent experts say Wright's project represents the single largest filing of bitcoin-related intellectual property they've seen. "It's certainly bullish," said Justin Hill, a patents expert with law firm Olswang. "With the ambition comes the risk."

### Antigua connection

Reuters has previously reported that Wright was filing patents through a company called EITC Holdings, which is based in Antigua. Ayre lives in Antigua, and EITC Holdings is headed by associates of Ayre, according to one source close to Wright and one with direct knowledge of his business, as well as corporate documents reviewed by Reuters.

Australian Stefan Matthews, who began working for Ayre in 2011, was a director of EITC Holdings until at least late 2016. It isn't clear if he's still associated with the company. Canadian Robert MacGregor, another long-term Ayre associate, was a director of EITC Holdings until mid-April 2016. The documents do not disclose the shareholders of the company.

Matthews and MacGregor appear with Wright in a June

ed data. Other applications by Wright and his associates relate to sports betting and a blockchain-based operating system for simple electronic devices. Emails from Wright to Ayre's associate Matthews, reviewed by Reuters, set out plans to file 150 patents. A person with direct knowledge of Wright's business said he and associates ultimately aim to file closer to 400. None has been approved so far and it's not clear whether the patents would be enforceable if granted, but Wright's associates have been quoted as saying the patents could be sold "for upwards of a billion dollars."

They face stiff competition from other players who are spending significant sums to explore blockchain's potential. About 70 banks (and Thomson Reuters) have joined a company called R3, which is examining whether blockchain could cut costs in the way financial markets execute transactions. A spokesperson for R3 did not respond to requests for comment. PwC, a consultancy, said more than \$1.5 billion was invested in blockchain companies in 2016. Whoever wins this intellectual property race, the rush to patent applications poses a threat to the original conception of bitcoin as a technology available to all. "What was started by Satoshi as an open source project is going to be far from an open project by the time all the commercial projects weigh in," said Nigel Swycher, CEO of London-based Aistemos, an IP analytics company. "People will try to use patents as one of many ways to protect their interests."

### The coder

Details about Wright's links to the online gambling industry have emerged from previously unpublished information from the Australian Tax Office (ATO), which is investigating Wright over his claims for tax credits relating to bitcoin ventures. In 2014 Wright told the ATO that he had been producing software for online casinos and other gambling businesses when he was writing computer code that later helped to develop bitcoin.

A 2015 video, reviewed by Reuters, shows Wright being interviewed by three ATO officials. Wright is clad in a waistcoat and tie, fielding questions about his complex businesses and claims for tax breaks. At one point he is quizzed about his work for Bodog, the online gambling network set up by Ayre. Wright clams up and says he cannot disclose any details because of "contractual obligations." The ATO declined to comment on Wright, saying that its investigation into him was continuing. A person close to Wright told Reuters that Wright began working for Bodog in 2010. Ayre had set up Bodog in the 1990s. It expanded into entertainment and proved so lucrative that Ayre featured in the 2006 "billionaires" issue of Forbes magazine.

Ayre chose to base his gambling business in Costa Rica. But much of its revenue came from players in the United States, where online gambling was and is illegal in many states. In February 2012, the US Attorney's Office in Maryland indicted Bodog, Ayre and four other people (Wright not among them) for allegedly conducting an illegal gambling business between 2005 and 2012. They were also indicted for moving funds from overseas to pay winnings to gamblers in the United States. The Maryland attorney's office said the case was "still pending."

### Move to Britain

Wright's involvement with bitcoin was initially lucrative. He worked on computer code with an American cybersecurity consultant named David Kleiman, and by 2011 the pair had amassed 1.1 million bitcoins, worth more than \$1 billion at today's prices. Their activities were described by Wright in his interviews with the ATO, of which Reuters has reviewed the transcripts. Kleiman died in 2013.

Wright lost money when an online currency exchange ran into difficulties, according to documents reviewed by Reuters. Wright left Australia and relocated his business ventures to Britain. In 2015, associates of Ayre began setting up companies which are now involved with Wright and bitcoin and blockchain. In September 2015, EITC Holdings, the Antiguan company that has filed scores of patents, was incorporated, originally under the name NCrypt Holdings. That month, two companies - The Workshop Technologies and The Workshop Ventures - were incorporated in Britain with Ayre's associate MacGregor as their sole director. According to the person with direct knowledge of the patent filings, Wright now works for The Workshop Technologies and MacGregor is his boss. — Reuters



Satoshi Nakamoto



Craig Wright

***Bitcoin involves sending payments directly, securely and potentially anonymously between two people's digital wallets, whereas all mainstream transactions, including those using intermediaries like Paypal and credit card lenders, run through banks and usually require named accounts and verification***

2015 photograph seen by Reuters. Neither man responded to requests for comment. Sources familiar with the company said they had gone to some lengths to avoid their roles in EITC being discovered.

In September, Ayre posted on his Facebook page that Wright was his "crazy/smart friend." Photos on Ayre's Facebook page show him and Wright boating and swimming together in what Ayre identifies as Indian Arm, a fjord near Vancouver, the previous month. A spokesman for Ayre, Ed Pownall, said Ayre was living in Antigua while trying to clear his name and was not doing "any interviews at the moment, on legal advice." Pownall added that Ayre "wanted you to know the information about him is incorrect." He declined to specify what information he was referring to.

The range of patent applications lodged by Wright and colleagues is wide. Five, registered on Dec. 14, were made by EITC Holdings with the bland description "computer-implemented method and system," public filings show. One, registered on Dec. 28, was described as "Determining a common secret for two blockchain nodes for the secure exchange of information" - apparently a way to use the blockchain to exchange encrypt-



# PHONEMAKERS FOCUS ON FLICKS ON THE FLY

## MOBILE VIDEO TRAFFIC FORECAST TO GROW 50 % ANNUALLY

**BARCELONA:** The mobile phone industry is racing to improve its ability to deliver content as the popularity of watching TV series and films on small screens surges, forcing a shift in focus for the sector. Mobile video traffic is forecast to grow by around 50 percent annually to account for over two-thirds of all mobile data traffic by 2021, according to a forecast by Sweden-based telecommunications operator Ericsson.

The growing popularity of video is pushing phonemakers to come up with devices with better screens and sound quality. For telephone operators it is pushing them to work closely with media giants like Vivendi and Turner, who are ramping up production of video content made specifically for mobile devices. "Video is not an option, it is a must for telecom operators today," Eric Xu, the CEO of China's Huawei, the world's third-largest phone maker after Apple and Samsung, said at the Mobile World Congress in Barcelona, the phone industry's largest annual trade fair, which wraps up yesterday. French media group Vivendi, which owns YouTube competitor Dailymotion and France's No.1 pay TV service Canal+, set up Studio+ last year to make high quality mini series made to be watched on smartphones. The company has so far produced 25 original series in five languages.

Each series consists of ten episodes lasting ten minutes which are distributed to paying subscribers via an app for people on the go.

### 'Enormous opportunity'

Vivendi has reached an agreement with



**BARCELONA:** Visitor check devices in the Vive HTC booth during the Mobile World Congress in Barcelona yesterday. The Mobile World Congress ended yesterday. —AP

telecom providers in Brazil, Argentina, France and Italy to provide the service and it will debut in Russia in June. "Our aim is to be the preferred partner of major carriers," said Vivendi chief executive Arnaud de Puyfontaine at a conference at the trade fair called "the content gold rush". The service allows telecom firms to "differentiate themselves" and encourages customers to sign up to plans with bigger data bundles so they can watch more video, he said.

US media giant Turner Communications, a division of Time Warner whose HBO channel is the home to popular shows such as "Game of Thrones", has also started production groups that make short form content "that is really, really specific for mobiles," said Turner chief executive John Martin.

"Mobile is an enormous opportunity," he added. Several phonemakers meanwhile unveiled new devices at the trade fair geared for watching video.

South Korea's LG presented a new flagship phone, the G6, which comes with a massive screen to target Netflix-loving, stream savvy commuters who want to watch films and series on the go.

Italian cinematographer Vittorio Storaro, who has won Oscars for "Apocalypse Now" and "The Last Emperor", was on hand to praise the advantages of the phone's 18:9 screen aspect ratio, a step up from the conventional 16:9 found on most phones, for watching film. The LG device is the first smartphone that can support Netflix's higher quality HDR video streaming which makes colours more vivid.

### 'Doubling down on mobile'

Netflix announced at the fair that it is set to introduce new technology that will deliver decent video quality to mobile devices while using less data. "We are doubling down on mobile," said the company's vice president of product innovation, Todd Yellin.

Streaming Netflix shows on mobile phones is rising around the world and in three major markets-India, Japan and South Korea-people stream more Netflix video on their phones than on TV, he said. Netflix CEO Reed Hastings claims he is among the converts to watching series on mobile phones. "I watched 'The Crown' on mobile, and it was incredible, you see these great panoramas.. but when I told the writer Peter Morgan about that, he was aghast," he said, referring to the popular Netflix drama about the early years of Queen Elizabeth's reign. —AFP

## SNAP FUTURE DEBATED AS POPULAR APP MAKES DEBUT

**SAN FRANCISCO:** As Snapchat's owner makes its Wall Street debut, the key question for investors is whether the vanishing-message app is on its way to glory or despair. Wildly popular with young smartphone users keen to share messages that don't linger, Snapchat is alternately viewed in the social media world as a winning bet such as Facebook or a lackluster performer like Twitter.

Snap Inc. priced its initial public offering (IPO) Wednesday at \$17 a share to raise \$3.4 billion and give the California startup a hefty valuation of \$24 billion. It's the largest US tech firm to make a market debut since Facebook in 2012. Analysts at the venture equity firm Goodwater Capital said in a report that the company has positioned itself "as the most significant competitor to Facebook in social networking."

Snap has some strong credentials, Goodwater noted: more than 158 million daily active users creating 2.5 billion "snaps" per day in 20 different languages, \$936 million in revenues expected in 2017, and partnerships with major brands and publishers.

"Snapchat is well-positioned to scale rapidly and take market share in the \$652 billion global advertising market," the report said. Analyst Debbie Williamson of eMarketer said Snap has "revolutionized" the way young people communicate and been creative with features for users and advertisers. "It has a pretty long runway ahead," she said. "I think of it in the context of where Facebook was early on." Both companies got early locks on a young generation, with the potential to add older users with time.

"It always makes sense to stay in tune with what young people are doing, and Snapchat has really struck a chord with young people," Williamson said. Snap's prospects outside the US market are less clear, she added, saying it faces tougher competition as Facebook and others mimic Snapchat's features.

Some analysts are skeptical about Snap, however, pointing to the example of Twitter, which has seen only modest increases in its user base since its 2013 IPO, and now trades well below its offering price. — AFP

# YAHOO PUNISHES CEO IN LATEST FALLOUT FROM SECURITY BREACH

## MAYER 'FAILED TO ACT SUFFICIENTLY'

**SAN FRANCISCO:** Yahoo is punishing CEO Marissa Mayer and parting ways with its top lawyer for the mishandling of two security breaches that exposed the personal information of more than 1 billion users and already have cost the company \$350 million. Mayer won't be paid her annual bonus nor receive a potentially lucrative stock award because a Yahoo investigation concluded her management team reacted too slowly to one breach discovered in 2014.

Yahoo's general counsel, Ronald Bell, resigned without severance pay for his department's lackadaisical response to the security lapses. Alex Stamos, Yahoo's top security officer at the time of the 2014 breach, left the company in 2015.

Although Yahoo's security team uncovered evidence that a hacker backed by an unnamed foreign government had pried into user accounts in 2014, executives "failed to act sufficiently" on that knowledge, according to the results of an internal investigation disclosed Wednesday. At that time, Yahoo only notified 26 people that their accounts had been breached.

The report didn't identify the negligent executives, but it chastised the company's legal department for not looking more deeply into the 2014 breach. Because of that, the incident "was not properly investigated and analyzed at the time," the report concluded. Bell declined to comment through



**In this Feb 19, 2015 file photo, Yahoo President and CEO Marissa Mayer delivers the keynote address at the first-ever Yahoo Mobile Developer Conference, in San Francisco. — AP**

his spokeswoman, Marcy Simon.

Yahoo didn't disclose the 2014 breach until last September when it began notifying at least 500 million users that their email addresses, birth dates, answers to security questions, and other personal information may have been stolen. Three months later, Yahoo revealed it had uncovered a separate hack in 2013 affecting about 1 billion accounts, including some that were also hit in 2014.

The breaches, the two biggest in internet history, have already exacted a

major toll. Yahoo already lowered the sales price of its email and other digital services to Verizon Communications from \$4.83 billion to \$4.48 billion to account for the potential backlash from the breaches. That deal was reached last July, two months before Verizon and the rest of the world learned about Yahoo's lax security.

More than 40 lawsuits also have been filed seeking damages for the breaches. If Yahoo's sale to Verizon is completed as expected later this year, a successor company called Altaba Inc. — AP



## PAIN-FREE WIE SETS EARLY CHAMPIONS PACE

**SINGAPORE:** Michelle Wie revelled in being injury-free for the first time in years as she carded a superb 66 to lead after the first-round of the HSBC Women's Champions yesterday. The 27-year-old American shot a brilliant six-under-par round at Singapore's brand new Tanjong course after needing a sponsor's invite to play in the elite event featuring 19 of the world's top 20.

Her round, played in wind and rain, featured eight birdies and a series of long putts, reminiscent of when she won the US Open in 2014 before injuries and a loss of form saw her tumble to 179th in the world. "It feels good to play without much pain," she said. "To go out there and just play some golf and focus on my game rather than trying to finish out rounds. I'm very proud of myself today." Wie finished the day one shot clear of a group of five players, including the Rio Olympic champion Park In-Bee.

The South Korean signed for a 67 to join Canada's

Brooke Henderson, Sweden's Anna Nordqvist, American Mo Martin and Ariya Jutanugarn of Thailand in a tie for second on a heavily congested leaderboard. Park, playing just her second tournament since a six-month layoff, made five birdies in a bogey-free round but said she was still a long way off her best. "I still feel like I'm a little bit rusty. Hopefully that rust goes away as quick as possible," she said. "One round doesn't really matter. I have to do this for the rest of the three days, and that's what it really takes to win a golf championship."

Another five players, including former champions Stacy Lewis and Paula Creamer, were a further shot back at four-under as 20 players broke 70 on the opening day of the \$1.5 million event, dubbed Asia's major. Ranked 11th in the world but joining the LPGA Tour for the first time after playing mostly in her home tour in South Korea, Park Sung-Hyun made seven

birdies in her 68. One of the longest hitters in the game, Park finished runner-up at last year's Evian Championship, one of the five women's golf majors, but only decided this year to join the LPGA Tour full-time. Wie's career has been in free fall since she captured her first major in 2014.

The Hawaiian of Korean heritage has had only one top-10 finish since the end of 2014 and made just 12 cuts from 25 events she entered in 2015. Last month at the Australian Open, she suffered back spasms, triggering fears of another layoff, but showed no signs of discomfort as she strolled around the Sentosa Golf Club without a care in the world. "It's always exciting to be on the top of the leaderboard or near the top of the leaderboard," she said. "Even though it's just the first day I want to just keep building and hopefully the next three days I can take it day-by-day, hole-by-hole, shot-by-shot and play as hard as I can." —AFP

# WORLD NO 2 DJOKOVIC BATTLES INTO ACAPULCO QUARTER-FINALS

**ACAPULCO:** World number two Novak Djokovic battled into the quarter-finals of the ATP Acapulco event on Wednesday, rallying for a 4-6, 6-4, 6-4 triumph over Juan Martin del Potro. The Serbian star led a parade of the top four seeds into the last eight, with second-seeded Rafael Nadal, number three Marin Cilic and fourth-seeded defending champion Dominic Thiem all advancing.

Top-seeded Djokovic, back in action this week for the first time since his shock second-round exit at the Australian Open in January, had to dig deep against former US Open champion del Potro after falling a break down in the third set. He broke back immediately to level the set at 4-4 then held at love to pile the pressure on del Potro—who fended off one match point with a service winner but couldn't hold off Djokovic on the next.

"Every match that I've played against delPo in the past couple of years has been very close, really enjoyable to play and great for the crowd to watch," said Djokovic. "I am very happy and proud to win this match, even though I was close to losing when he was serving at 4-3 up in the third set. "I just tried to get as many returns back in play as possible." The Serbian advanced to a quarter-final clash with Australia's Nick Kyrgios, a 6-2, 6-4 winner over American Donald Young. Djokovic's travails in a match lasting two hours and 38 minutes were a far cry from Nadal's comprehensive 6-1, 6-1 victory over Paolo Lorenzi.

"I played a complete match today and I'm feeling great after a month without playing," said Nadal, a two-time winner in Acapulco who is playing his first tournament since falling to Roger Federer in the Australian Open final. "I think I played a very solid match ... some great shots, some good winners," added the Spaniard, who dropped just seven points on his serve and never faced a break point against the 38th-ranked Italian. Nadal broke Lorenzi for the fifth time in the final game of the match, delivering a stinging forehand winner to wrap up the win in just 66 minutes. Nadal next faces Japanese qualifier Yoshihito Nishioka, a 6-4, 3-6, 6-0 winner over Australian lucky loser Jordan Thompson.

Cilic booked his quarter-final berth with a 6-3, 2-6, 6-3 victory over fellow Croatian Borna Coric. Cilic, the 2014 US Open champion, remained unbeaten against his 20-year-old compatriot. He fired a dozen aces, and broke Coric three times in the match—including twice in the final set to set up a clash with American Steve Johnson, a 7-6 (7/5), 6-3 winner over American wildcard Ernesto Escobedo. Austria's Thiem advanced with a 7-5, 6-3 victory over Adrian Mannarino. Thiem, winner at Rio de Janeiro last week, booked a meeting with American Sam Querrey, who toppled fifth-seeded Belgian David Goffin 6-2, 6-3. — AFP



**ACAPULCO:** Serbia's Novak Djokovic returns the ball to Argentina's Juan Martin del Potro during their second round match on the third day of the Mexican Tennis Open in Acapulco on March 1, 2017. — AFP

## ROGER FEDERER STUNNED BY RUSSIAN DONSKOY IN DUBAI

**DUBAI:** Roger Federer blamed a lack of commitment for his shock 3-6 7-6(7) 7-6(5) loss to world number 116 Evgeny Donskoy of Russia in the Dubai Open second round on Wednesday. Swiss Federer, playing his first tournament since winning his 18th grand slam title at the Australian Open in January, wasted three match points in the second set and led 5-2 in the third before the 26-year-old Donskoy fought back. Third seed Federer, seven-times champion in Dubai, surged 5-1 ahead in the deciding tiebreaker but qualifier Donskoy reeled off six points in a row to secure a remarkable victory.

"Maybe I wasn't really committed enough, I think," the 35-year-old Federer said. "Commitment in tennis is a big thing. Today I wasn't, really. That sort of is a feeling you get and it trickles in an entire game. "Legs also felt slower out here tonight. I felt tired all day. I tried to get myself in shape, and, you know... It's just a tough

loss tonight. So many chances. It was crazy. There's no excuses there." Federer, who skipped last year's tournament because of a knee surgery which sidelined him for the back end of the season, refused to be downbeat over his first loss of the year.

"I just think it's still the beginning of the comeback," said Federer, who is scheduled to play at Indian Wells next week. "I got to take the positives out of playing again in a tournament where I feel I'm quite healthy. I'm happy I got over the (groin) injury I sustained at the Australian Open." Donskoy will next face French seventh seed Lucas Pouille, who beat qualifier Marius Copil 6-1 6-4, in the quarter-finals. Top seed Andy Murray, who is playing in his first tournament since a fourth round defeat at the Australian Open, beat Guillermo Garcia-Lopez 6-2 6-0 to reach the quarter-finals, where he will face Germany's Philipp Kohlschreiber. — Reuters



## AS NBA SEASON WINDS DOWN, HAWKS REMAIN HUGE ENIGMA

**ATLANTA:** Some nights, they soar. Other nights, they crash and burn. Say this about the Atlanta Hawks: They are maddeningly consistent at being inconsistent. With a little over a month to go in the regular season, the Hawks are comfortably positioned to reach the playoffs but know they can't go on like this if they want to make a deep run. Up to now, they've been one of the NBA's biggest enigmas, a group that has shown glimpses of being really, really good - when they're not looking really, really bad. They've got 22 games to figure it out. "We're kind of waiting for it all to happen," Kent Bazemore said. "We know what kind of team we can be. Obviously, we've shown glimpses of that. But it's showing up every night and wearing a hard hat and leaving it all out there."

This is a team that posted impressive road wins at defending NBA champion Cleveland, as well as Toronto and Boston - all ahead of Atlanta in the Eastern Conference standings. This is also a team that was swept in two games by one of the league's worst teams, the Los Angeles Lakers, and has dropped five games at home by at least 18 points, including a 36-point blowout at the hands of the sub-.500 Detroit Pistons. Oh, and in addition to that win at Toronto, there was also a 44-point loss to the Raptors. "Of course, you want to be clicking a little bit earlier, a little bit sooner," Paul Millsap said after the Hawks survived an up-and-down performance Wednesday night to beat the Dallas Mavericks, a game that pretty well epitomized the entire season.

"Sometimes, it takes a little longer. Hopefully the end result is worth it. I think if we continue to play like we're playing, we'll get there." Just two years ago, the Hawks were seemingly poised for greatness. They set a franchise record with 60 wins, claimed the top seed in the East and reached the conference finals before getting swept by LeBron James and the Cavaliers. It turned out to be an aberration.

Last season, the Hawks slipped to 48-34 and were eliminated in the second round of the playoffs. Now, they seem to have taken another step backward after coach Mike Budenholzer gambled on a drastic makeover - signing Dwight Howard, letting longtime center Al Horford leave in free agency, installing Dennis Schroder as the point guard and trading Jeff Teague. Since a promising 9-2 start, Atlanta (34-26) is essentially a .500 team in search of an identity. Something. Anything. "If there's one area where we probably need the most improvement - and if we improve that it's going to lead to more consistency - it's us being better offensively," Budenholzer said. "Reducing our turnovers, just being more efficient."

But look what happened against the Mavericks, a rebuilding team that managed to make a game of it even after the Hawks shot 72 percent in the first half. Thrown off by a 2-3 zone defense, Atlanta turned it over 23 times and somehow found itself trailing 93-89 with 2 1/2 minutes to go. To their credit, the Hawks closed on an 11-2 run, getting a huge basket from Millsap to reclaim the lead with 30.5 seconds remaining, and held on for a 100-95 victory. Still, it looked more like the season in review than a promising step forward.

Budenholzer remains hopeful that the Hawks can pull it all together. To him, the glass still looks half-full. "We've played well in stretches and shown an ability to compete at a high level," Budenholzer said. "We're kind of focused on that and how can we find that? That gives us optimism." Time is running out. "We're a very dangerous team," Bazemore insisted. "Obviously, with the players we have, some nights we think we can roll into the gym and get wins. That's not the case in this league. All the great teams play really hard every night. That's what we have to do." —AP



**SAN ANTONIO:** San Antonio Spurs forward Kawhi Leonard (2) shoots and scores over Indiana Pacers forward Paul George (13) in the final seconds of an NBA basketball game on Wednesday, March 1, 2017. — AP

## THOMAS SHAKES OFF SLUMP TO HELP SINK THE CAVALIERS

### LEONARD LEADS SPURS, PELICANS STOP PISTONS

**LOS ANGELES:** Kawhi Leonard nailed a clutch jump shot with two seconds remaining to lift the San Antonio Spurs to a 100-99 victory over the Indiana Pacers on Wednesday. Leonard's game winning shot capped a 31-point performance for the American in front of a crowd of 18,400 at the AT&T Center arena. Leonard drained the shot despite being guarded by Pacers star Paul George. It was then George's turn at glory but his shot from beyond the arc bounced harmlessly off the rim, ending the contest. "Coach drew up a good play and LaMarcus (Aldridge) set a good screen for me," Leonard said about his final shot. "We had about nine seconds. I wanted to take my time and try to get off a good shot and it ended up going in for me." The Spurs led 98-97 before Danny Green missed a layup with 1:46 to play. Myles Turner took advantage on the other end with a jumper 11 seconds later to give Indiana a 99-98 lead. After a pair of empty possessions by both teams, Monta Ellis missed two free throws for the Pacers with nine seconds to play, giving San Antonio a final shot at the victory.

#### PELICANS 109, PISTONS 86

Anthony Davis had 33 points and 14 rebounds, and New Orleans snapped a three-game skid with a victory over Detroit. Pistons 6-foot-11 center Andre Drummond was ejected for swatting at the back of 6-1 Pelicans guard Tim Frazier's head after Frazier had ripped away a rebound late in the third quarter. Drummond had 13 points and 17 rebounds to that point, but also missed nine of 10 free throws. Jrue Holiday had 22 points for the Pelicans, who were without newly acquired All-Star DeMarcus Cousins because of Cousins' one-game suspension that was triggered when he received his 18th technical foul of this season on Sunday night. Jon Leuer scored 22 points and Tobias Harris added 15 points for Detroit.

#### CELTICS 103 CAVALIERS 99

Isaiah Thomas scored 31 points, including the go-ahead free throws, as the Boston Celtics outlasted LeBron James and the Cleveland Cavaliers 103-99 on Wednesday night. Boston's win overshadowed the seventh triple-double of the season for James, who finished with 28 points, 13 rebounds and 10 assists. Kyrie Irving added 28 points for the Cavaliers, who lost for the first time when leading at any point in the fourth quarter on the road. The game marked the third meeting this season between the top two teams in the Eastern Conference, and the first win by the Celtics. Jae Crowder had 17 points and 10 rebounds for Boston, which led by three entering the fourth before there were six ties and 10 lead changes in the final 12 minutes. Deron Williams, signed by Cleveland earlier this week, scored four points in 24 minutes in his Cavaliers debut.

#### WIZARDS 105, RAPTORS 96

Bojan Bogdanovic had 27 points off the bench and Bradley Beal added 23 as Washington ended an eight-game losing streak against Toronto. John Wall had 12 points and 13 assists for his 39th double-double of the season as the third place

Wizards took the first of a home-and-home series against Toronto, moving a game up on fourth place Toronto in the standings. DeMar DeRozan had 24 points and Serge Ibaka added 22 more for the Raptors, who were again without All-Star Kyle Lowry following the guard's wrist surgery that will keep him out the remainder of the regular season.

#### HAWKS 100, MAVERICKS 95

Paul Millsap scored with 30.5 seconds remaining and Atlanta held off Dallas. After Millsap's basket put the Hawks ahead 96-95, Harrison Barnes missed a chance to put the Mavericks back in front. His jumper was off the mark with Kent Bazemore in his face. Ersan Ilyasova was fouled going for the rebound and made both free throws with 11.1 seconds left. Dallas still had a chance to force overtime, but Seth Curry slipped on the inbounds pass and Bazemore scooped up the loose ball, taking off the other way for a dunk that clinched the victory. Millsap had 18 points and just missed a triple-double, dishing out 10 assists to go with eight rebounds. Ilyasova also finished with 18 points. Barnes led the Mavericks with 25 points.

#### HEAT 125, 76ERS 98

Tyler Johnson scored 24 points off the bench, and Miami never trailed in a win over Philadelphia. Wayne Ellington made six 3-pointers for 18 points for Miami, which has won 10 of its past 11 at home. Hassan Whiteside, Dion Waiters and Goran Dragic all scored 15 for the Heat, and Whiteside also grabbed a game-high 11 rebounds. Robert Covington scored 19 for the 76ers, who learned earlier Wednesday that center Joel Embiid will miss the remainder of the season with a left knee injury.

#### NUGGETS 110, BUCKS 98

Nikola Jokic had his second triple-double in two nights to lead Denver over Milwaukee. Jokic finished with 13 points, 14 rebounds and 10 assists for his fourth career triple-double - all in his last 13 games. Danilo Gallinari scored 22 points for Denver, which built a 31-point lead despite playing without point guard Jameer Nelson (illness) for the first time this season. The Nuggets, coming off a victory Tuesday at Chicago, have won back-to-back road games for the first time this season. They've also won consecutive games for the first time since taking three straight Jan 24-28. Khris Middleton had a season-high 21 points to go with five rebounds and five assists for the Bucks.

#### KNICKS 101, MAGIC 90

Kristaps Porzingis had 20 points and nine rebounds, and Derrick Rose scored 19 to help New York cruise past Orlando. Facing a Magic team adjusting to playing with a smaller lineup, the Knicks used their superior size to their advantage. Porzingis, who missed the previous two games with a sprained right ankle, presented matchup problems for Orlando all night. Carmelo Anthony had 17 points and Justin Holiday added 14 off the bench for the Knicks. Evan Fournier led Orlando with 22 points. — AP



## MLS Preview

ATLANTA, MINNESOTA  
READY FOR MLS BOW

**LOS ANGELES:** The 2017 Major League Soccer season kicks off today with expansion team Minnesota United FC ushering in a new era with a daunting trip to Portland. Minnesota are one of two new sides lining up in the 22-team MLS this year, with Atlanta United FC also making their debut on Sunday at home to the New York Red Bulls. The two teams are the latest additions to the ranks of MLS, which is enjoying increasing popularity after a 2016 season that saw record average crowds of 21,692.

The odds are against either side making a splash in their debut season. Since 2005, 11 clubs have joined MLS and only one—the Seattle Sounders—advanced to the playoffs in the first year. Minnesota face a baptism of fire today in their trip to 2015 champions Portland in Oregon, one of the hotbeds of US soccer. Minnesota's maiden season will be overseen by Englishman Adrian Heath, best known for his six years with Everton during the club's golden era in the 1980s. Minnesota's MLS incarnation emerged from the club's previous existence in the struggling North American Soccer League. Atlanta, however, have had to build a team and a fan base from scratch.

## 50,000 sell-out expected

So far, the project has been a roaring success without a ball being kicked. More than 30,000 season tickets have been sold while Sunday's opener at Bobby Dodd Stadium on the campus of Georgia Tech is expected to be a 50,000-seat sell-out. "It's crazy. When I took the job one of the things I was told was, 'Be careful. Atlanta is not really a sporting city,'" Atlanta president Darren Eales said. "But the interest we've had has been extraordinary. For a team that has never played a game, the interest is pretty high."

Eales acknowledges the challenges Atlanta are likely to face in their debut season. The team's roster is a carefully crafted mix of experienced MLS players and young recruits from South America who will be trained by former Argentina coach Gerardo "Tata" Martino. "We know its going to be difficult. The last 10 expansion teams to enter the league, only one of them made the playoffs," Eales said. "We've built the roster with the aim of being competitive from the start. It will be tough but if we get some luck, who knows? The beauty of the MLS playoffs is that it is a cup competition. If we sneak into the playoffs anything can happen."

## Impressive evolution

Eales, 44, who grew up in Cambridge, England before playing soccer in the US at college and professional level, has been impressed by the evolution of the sport over in the two decades since the start of the MLS. "When I played at university they were still going through the phase of trying to 'Americanize' soccer," Eales said. "The prevailing wisdom was that you had to make soccer higher scoring, more palatable for a US audience. When I played, the biggest cheer would be for when a goalkeeper punted the ball high into the air. "But the smartest move Major League Soccer made was to keep the sport exactly the same as the rest of the world. The legacy of that decision is that you now have a culture of supporters here who are increasingly knowledgeable about the game." —AFP



**MINNEAPOLIS:** In this file photo, Cassie Benson (left) and her boyfriend Manny Chavez (center) cheer during a news conference in Minneapolis, where it was announced that Minnesota was awarded an MLS soccer franchise. The theme for Major League Soccer this season is 22 for 22, as the league embarks on its 22nd year with 22 teams, including two new teams in Atlanta and Minnesota. —AP

LEICESTER HIT £16.4 MILLION  
PROFIT FROM TITLE SEASON

**LONDON:** Leicester City made a pre-tax profit of £16.4 million (\$20.1 million, 19.1 million euros) in the season of their fairytale Premier League title win, the club announced yesterday. Prize money from winning the 2015-16 title saw the Thai-owned club's turnover swell by over £24 million from the previous financial year, when Leicester had finished 14th. A rise in domestic television revenue and higher attendances at the King Power Stadium—both linked to the title triumph—also contributed to the increase in turnover.

"Our long-term commitment to financial sustainability includes regular reinvestment back into the club, keeping it competitive as we bid to bring continued success to its growing supporter-base and the community that has supported it for over a century," chief executive Susan Whelan said in a statement. "We will continue to work diligently and purposefully to build a legacy they can all be proud of." Ten months on from their 5,000-1 title success, Leicester are toiling near the bottom of the table and recently sacked manager Claudio Ranieri. Despite the increase in turnover during the title-winning campaign, Leicester's profits fell by around £10 million, mainly due to player purchases.

Whelan said Leicester's title win was the fruit of "years of sustainable planning" and praised owners King Power, the Bangkok-based travel retail group owned by Vichai Srivaddhanaprabha. "The incredible support of the Srivaddhanaprabha family and the King Power Group of companies continues to safeguard the club's future and it remains an enormously rewarding experience for everyone associated with the club to be part of the family's long-term vision," she said. "Their passion for the club and commitment to its progress sets the tone from which we all take inspiration."

Leicester also confirmed they are legally contesting a charge that they breached the Football League's financial fair play rules while playing in the English second tier in 2014. The club's losses exceeded the permitted limit of £8 million during their Championship-winning 2013-14 season. "The club has entered into an arbitration process with the Football League in relation to the legality of the 2012 Championship FFP rules," Leicester said in a statement quoted by BBC Sport. "Provision has been made for legal costs in relation to this process, however the directors are confident that no further liability will be incurred by the company." —AFP

## CELTIC'S 'LISBON LION' GEMMELL DIES AT 73

**LONDON:** Celtic great Tommy Gemmell, who inspired the club to glory in the 1967 European Cup, has died aged 73 after a long illness, the Scottish giants announced yesterday. Gemmell scored Celtic's equaliser and played a part in Stevie Chalmers's 84th-minute winner as Celtic came from behind to beat Inter Milan 2-1 in Lisbon in the 1967 final. It made them Britain's first European champions and saw the team dubbed 'the Lisbon Lions'. "The whole Celtic Family is mourning his passing and everyone associated with the club sends their thoughts and prayers to his family, his fellow Lions and his many friends at this desperately sad time," Celtic said in a statement. Gemmell also scored in the 1970 final, when Celtic lost 2-1 to Dutch side Feyenoord in Milan.

He spent 10 years at Celtic Park between 1961 and 1971, making 418 appearances and scoring 63 goals. In addition

to the breakthrough European Cup win, he also amassed six league titles, three Scottish Cups and four Scottish League Cups. Celtic added: "Tommy Gemmell is a true Celtic legend, part of the greatest side in the club's history and a man who played a pivotal role in our greatest ever triumph when, in Lisbon's Estadio Nacional, 11 men all born within a 30-mile (48.3-kilometre) radius of Celtic Park beat Inter Milan to win the European Cup.

"The legend of the Lisbon Lions was created that night and Tommy and his team-mates were assured their place in the pantheon of Celtic greats. "And, like the rest of the Lions, Tommy remained humble about his incredible football achievements." Gemmell joined Nottingham Forest in 1971 and spent two years there. Following a short spell in the United States with the Miami Toros, he returned to Scotland,

joining Dundee and leading them to victory over Celtic in the 1973 League Cup final.

He retired in 1977 and went on to manage Dundee and, over two spells, Albion Rovers. Former Celtic midfielder and assistant manager Murdo MacLeod told BBC Sport Gemmell was "one of the greats". The club's former striker John Hartson wrote on Twitter: "Sad news hearing Tommy Gemmell has passed away. Celtic great thoughts are with his family and close friends, RIP Tommy." Celtic's arch rivals Rangers said in a statement: "The club would like to send our sincere condolences to the family of Celtic legend Tommy Gemmell. "He was one of the great Celtic and Scotland players and will be sadly missed. Our thoughts are with Tommy's family and friends at this very difficult time." —AFP



## Scottish Premier League

## CELTIC GO 27 POINTS CLEAR IN SCOTLAND

**GLASGOW:** Celtic extended their lead at the top of the Scottish Premiership to 27 points as they eased to a 4-0 victory at bottom of the table Inverness Caledonian Thistle. A superb strike from Scott Sinclair fired Celtic in front just before the break before a horrendous mistake from Inverness goalkeeper Owain Fon Williams allowed in-form French striker Moussa Dembele to make it 2-0 just 11 seconds into the second half.

Stuart Armstrong then curled in a free-kick before Dembele grabbed his 31st goal of a prolific season to seal Celtic's 22nd consecutive victory since Inverness became the only team to take points off the Glasgow giants this season following a 2-2 draw back in September. Celtic manager Brendan Rodgers hailed an outstanding team performance from his side, who are now just seven points away from a sixth successive title. "That's how I want the team to play. We defended in pacts and hunted the ball, giving very little space to opponents to create any chances," Rodgers said.

"Then when we had the ball we played with charisma and fluidity and were a threat on goal." Rivals Rangers reduced the gap on

second-placed Aberdeen, who lost 1-0 to Hamilton on Tuesday, to six points following their 3-2 win over St Johnstone which ended a run of four games without victory. Just as they did against Hamilton on Saturday, Celtic had to bide their time against an organized defense and it took another moment of magic to give them the lead in the 43rd minute.

Sinclair collected the ball 25 yards out and superbly stayed on his feet following a challenge from Ross Draper before sending a curling dipping shot into the bottom right-hand corner of the net leaving Fon Williams with no chance. The Inverness keeper made a horrific start to the second half as he handed Celtic their second goal on a plate 11 seconds after the restart. Inverness gave the ball away with their second touch after the kick-off but Dembele's touch was heavy and Gary Warren played the ball back to Fon Williams.

However, the 'keeper made a complete hash of his attempted clearance and Dembele juggled the loose ball over his head before calmly volleying in from a couple of yards out to score for the fifth successive game. The striker then showed great skill to power his way past three Inverness

## Scottish Premiership table

Scottish Premiership table after Wednesday's matches (played, won, drawn, lost, goals for, goals against, points):

|           |    |    |   |    |    |    |    |             |    |   |    |    |    |    |    |
|-----------|----|----|---|----|----|----|----|-------------|----|---|----|----|----|----|----|
| Celtic    | 27 | 26 | 1 | 0  | 73 | 16 | 79 | Dundee      | 27 | 8 | 6  | 13 | 31 | 37 | 30 |
| Aberdeen  | 27 | 16 | 4 | 7  | 50 | 24 | 52 | Kilmarnock  | 26 | 6 | 10 | 10 | 24 | 41 | 28 |
| Rangers   | 27 | 13 | 7 | 7  | 37 | 32 | 46 | Ross County | 27 | 6 | 9  | 12 | 29 | 45 | 27 |
| Hearts    | 27 | 10 | 8 | 9  | 46 | 35 | 38 | Hamilton    | 27 | 4 | 12 | 11 | 26 | 39 | 24 |
| Johnstone | 27 | 10 | 7 | 10 | 35 | 36 | 37 | Motherwell  | 26 | 6 | 6  | 14 | 30 | 53 | 24 |
| Partick   | 27 | 8  | 8 | 11 | 29 | 32 | 32 | Inverness   | 27 | 4 | 10 | 13 | 31 | 51 | 22 |

defenders before releasing Sinclair, who fired a shot just over. Celtic weren't to be denied for long and had a third in the 66th minute from a stunning free-kick from Armstrong. Fon Williams was caught napping as the Scottish midfielder curled in a powerful effort from the left-edge of the box that beat the 'keeper at his near post.

Dembele, who grabbed a hat-trick in the 6-0 Scottish Cup win over Inverness just 18 days ago, helped himself to his second of the match in the 73rd minute. The French under-21 international beat the off-side trap to race

on to Kieran Tierney's lofted pass and lift the ball over the out-rushing Fon Williams for his 11th goal in his past five matches. Inverness manager Richie Foran gave a damning indictment of his side's performance. "We lacked courage and belief. We just didn't turn up tonight and we probably lost the game before we even started for some players," Foran said. "I'm not even sure Celtic got out of second gear." Elsewhere, Ross County defeated Hearts 1-0 at Tynecastle that leaves Jambos' boss Ian Cathro with just four wins in 15 matches. —AFP

## SUBLIME LEWANDOWSKI FIRES BAYERN INTO CUP SEMI-FINALS

**BERLIN:** Robert Lewandowski took his season tally to 30 goals to inspire Bayern Munich's 3-0 win over ten-man Schalke in the German Cup quarter-finals on Wednesday. Having hit a hat-trick in last weekend's 8-0 mauling of Hamburg at home, Lewandowski's rich form continued at the Allianz Arena as he was involved in all three Bayern goals, scoring twice. He is the Bundesliga's joint top-scorer with 19 goals, alongside Borussia Dortmund's Pierre-Emerick Aubameyang, having also scored six times in the Champions League and five in the cup.

"We managed to do everything we want to in the first-half and attacked well," said man-of-the-match Lewandowski. "Schalke couldn't do much about it. We know one goal isn't enough in the cup, which is why we wanted more." The Poland hot-shot gave holders Bayern the lead with just three minutes gone by deftly chipping Franck Ribery's pass over Schalke goalkeeper Ralf Faehrmann. He turned provider by supplying the cross for attacking midfielder Thiago Alcantara to head home on 16 minutes. Lewandowski then drilled Ribery's pass into the Schalke net on 29 minutes for a seventh goal in his last four games.

Schalke defended well in the second half, but it was a miserable return to Munich for defender Holger Badstuber, on loan in Gelsenkirchen from Bayern until June. The Germany centre-back was sent off late on for a second booking when he fouled Javi Martinez after pulling Arjen Robben's shirt moments before. Schalke shot-stopper Faehrmann said Bayern's early goals were like a "punch in the face" for the Royal Blues. "The first-half was nothing for us," he fumed. "We didn't put in the challenges and were behind in all areas. That is simply the class from Bayern that you can't allow any mistakes."

The win keeps Bayern on course for the treble of Champions League, Bundesliga and German Cup this season and was their third-straight dominant display in Munich. Their Champions League Round of 16, first-leg 5-1 hammering of Arsenal, who they face away in Tuesday's return, was followed by the goal-bonanza against Hamburg. Earlier, Borussia Moechengladbach booked their semi-final berth with a 2-1 win at Hamburg thanks to penalties by captain Lars Stindl and Brazilian striker Raffael. Both Borussia Dortmund and third-division giant-killers Sportfreunde Lotte will go into the pot for the semi-finals after their clash on Tuesday was postponed by a heavy snowfall.

The referee deemed the playing surface in Lotte unsafe and the replay will take place on March 14. The German Football Association (DFB) have reportedly advised Lotte to find an alternative ground given the poor condition of the pitch at their 10,000-capacity stadium. Eintracht Frankfurt also reached the last four thanks to their 1-0 win at home to Arminia Bielefeld. Midfielder Danny Blum scored Frankfurt's first-half winner. However, the night belonged to ex-captain Marco Russ, who came off the bench in added time to make his first appearance since battling cancer last year. —AFP



**MUNICH:** Bayern Munich's Polish striker Robert Lewandowski in action during the German Cup DFB Pokal quarter-final football match FC Bayern Munich v FC Schalke 04 on March 1, 2017. —AFP

## USA DOWN GERMANY TO KICK OFF SHEBELIEVES CUP

**LOS ANGELES:** The United States launched their 2017 season with a 1-0 victory over Germany Wednesday in a duel of FIFA's top-ranked women's teams in the SheBelieves Cup women's tournament. Lynn Williams scored in the 56th minute to give the United States the victory in the second match of a double-header in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. France seized an injury-time winner to defeat England 2-1 in the curtain-raiser. In addition to being ranked one and two by FIFA, the United States and Germany have won the last two major women's trophies.

The USA are the defending World Cup champions while Germany earned gold at the 2016 Rio Olympics. A conservative first half saw the teams reach the interval scoreless, but things opened up in the second half. Christen Press set up the US goal, stealing the ball from German defender Isabel Kerschowski. Her shot came off the crossbar, but teammate Tobin Heath corralled the rebound. Heath's shot was blocked by Kerschowski, but the ball landed in front of Williams who notched the second international goal of her career. "I happened to be there at the right time," said Williams, a 23-year-old who is one of the rising players expected to be key for US coach Jill Ellis as the Americans build toward the 2019 Women's World Cup.

In the opening match, Marie-Laure Delie's 80th-minute header pulled France level and five minutes into injury time substitute Wendie Renard produced the winner, her header bouncing over England goalkeeper Karen Bardsley. England had taken a 1-0 lead in the 32nd minute with a low blast from Jordan Nobbs. Action in the tournament featuring four of the top-five teams in the FIFA world rankings resumes tomorrow at Red Bull Arena in Harrison, New Jersey, when France face Germany and the United States take on England. For the European teams, the tournament is a tune-up for the UEFA Women's Euro in the Netherlands in July. —AFP



## GUARDIOLA SALUTES BRAVO

**MANCHESTER:** Manchester City manager Pep Guardiola insisted he has no concerns about his goalkeeper Claudio Bravo despite the club's supporters appearing to show their displeasure at the experienced Chilean international during a 5-1 FA Cup win over Huddersfield Town. Bravo, who has been displaced by Willy Caballero as first choice at the Etihad, let an opening goal from Harry Bunn through his legs early in the fifth round replay against the Championship side.

City supporters cheered sarcastically when Bravo made an unconvincing save in the first half and, again, later in the match when he caught a routine cross. But Guardiola, who paid £15.4 million for his services from Barcelona last summer, insisted the performance from Bravo was up to standard. "You

would have to ask the fans (about jeering). The performance from Claudio was amazing, to make the build-up, nobody else can do that," said Guardiola.

"He reads when the men are free. It's not easy to read that. He gave us the opportunity to play. What the fans express, I'm not here to judge them. "I am not worried about him, he's strong enough. He's one of the best. This year, he was named as one of the best five goalkeepers in the world. "The people cannot imagine a goalkeeper is. But I know how the media works. I'm delighted and so happy that he's with us. "I know I can count on him. I can count on his behaviour when he's playing and when he's not playing. He's always involved in the team. I just congratulate him on how he played at Huddersfield and how he played today." Bravo's poor start was unimportant

in the end as City coasted into the FA Cup quarter-finals where they will meet Middlesbrough.

### 'Best of Aguero'

Sergio Aguero scored twice, taking his season tally to 22 goals, and Leroy Sane, Pablo Zabaleta and Kelechi Iheanacho were also on the mark for a City team that scored five for a second consecutive game, after their thrilling 5-3 Champions League win over Monaco. For Aguero, who had lost his place after the brilliant start made by the now-injured Gabriel Jesus, the performance was particularly impressive, according to his manager. "It was the best performance I have ever seen from Sergio in many, many things," said Guardiola. "He was good with the ball, one against one, two against one. He didn't lose the ball in the box. — AFP



**ROME:** Roma's Stephan El Shaarawi goes for an acrobatic shot during an Italian Cup, first-leg, semifinal soccer match between Lazio and Roma, at the Rome Olympic stadium on Wednesday, March 1, 2017. — AP

### ITALIAN CUP

## LAZIO EDGE ROMA; CUP CLASH MARRED BY RACIST CHANTING

**ROME:** Lazio beat neighbors AS Roma for the first time in eight meetings on Wednesday, although racist chanting and a boycott by their opponents' fans marred their 2-0 win in the Italian Cup semi-final first leg. Sergej Milinkovic-Savic and Ciro Immobile scored in each half for Lazio, who last beat their neighbors in the Italian Cup final in May 2013, at a disappointingly half-empty Stadio Olimpico. Roma defender Anthony Rudiger was repeatedly subjected to racist chanting from Lazio fans during the first half, prompting the stadium announcer to warn that the match would be interrupted if it continued. The chanting died down after that.

The Roma end of the stadium remained deserted as the supporters continued their boycott in protest at partitions which have been installed on the Curva Sud (South Curve). Authorities had lowered the partitions as a compromise measure but Roma fans want them removed altogether,

saying the barriers limit their view of the pitch and divide groups of supporters who used to sit together. They also say they have been banned from waving flags and banners and get fined for sitting in the wrong seats.

Roma midfielder Radja Nainggolan, the team's driving force this season, had a relatively subdued match while Lazio looked lively. Officially the home side at the stadium shared by the two teams, Lazio went ahead when Felipe Anderson burst down the right and pulled the ball back for Milinkovic-Savic to fire into the roof of the net on the half hour. The second goal came from a similar move as Keita Balde Diao got away from his marker on the right and slipped the ball to Immobile to score from close range in the 77th minute. Roma had won five of the last seven meetings, all in Serie A, while the other two matches were drawn. —Reuters

## KANE V LUKAKU: THE DUEL OF THE IN-FORM STRIKERS

**LONDON:** They are 23-year-old strikers in the form of their lives, leading the race to be the Premier League's top scorer, and blossoming after circuitous routes to the top of the game. One is lean, hard-working and can score all types of goals. The other has a boxer's build, has been criticized for his work rate and relies on physique over technique. Both are model professionals off the field and highly sought-after for being so consistent at doing one of the hardest jobs in soccer.

And they are going head to head on Sunday. Born within 77 days of each other, Harry Kane and Romelu Lukaku are the priceless assets that Tottenham and Everton - ambitious clubs which have been just outside English soccer's established elite - want to build their futures around. Kane and Lukaku have each scored a Premier League-high total of 17 goals, along with Arsenal's Alexis Sanchez, and have more than 20 goals for club and country this season. Kane has struck three hat tricks in his last nine appearances, while Lukaku recently scored four goals in a game. Unsurprisingly, the match at White Hart Lane is being billed as a duel of the in-form strikers.

Kane might just have the edge in their rivalry, perhaps because he plays for a superior team with Tottenham second in the league and Everton in seventh. He made a surprising breakthrough at Spurs in the 2014-15 season, after loans spells in the lower leagues with Leyton Orient, Millwall, Norwich and Leicester, where his scoring was hardly prolific. Now he is first choice at his local club - he has scored 20 goals in all competitions for the third straight season - and for England.

Kane is striving to retain the Premier League's Golden Boot after scoring 25 goals last season, and believes he is "up there" with the best in the world on current form. "When people have said I'm a one-season wonder, that's motivated me," Kane said. "I want to prove them wrong and I know, in myself, that I will always score." Lukaku - a powerfully built, 6-foot-3 (1.90 meters) striker - has just tied Duncan Ferguson as Everton's highest-ever scorer in the Premier League with 60 career goals, with his tally coming in 129 games as opposed to Ferguson's 239 across two spells.

The Belgium international has also had to fight to get to where he is after failing to establish himself at Chelsea, which he joined from Anderlecht in 2011 as a seemingly natural heir for Didier Drogba. He had spells on loan at West Bromwich Albion in 2012-13 (scoring 17 league goals) and then at Everton the following season (scoring 15 league goals), before completing a permanent club-record move to Goodison Park in 2014.

Under Ronald Koeman, who was hired as Everton manager in the last offseason, Lukaku is working harder off the ball than previously, putting himself about outside the area as well as inside it. He watches DVDs of his own performances and says he spends hours watching clips of other strikers down the years such as Drogba, Thierry Henry and Samuel Eto'o. "If you want to become one of the best world players - if you look at the like of Messi, Ronaldo, Thierry Henry - they were players who were constantly improving, constantly getting better," Lukaku said. "That's what I want to do. I don't want to peak too early." Lukaku said he is trying not to think about his private battle with Kane going into Sunday's game. "That's what cost me the Golden Boot last year," Lukaku said, "so for me it's just a game I want to win." —AP



## WENGER 'NOT INTERESTED' IN BARCELONA JOB

**LONDON:** Arsene Wenger said he had no interest in succeeding Luis Enrique as Barcelona coach yesterday, but admitted his future as Arsenal manager remains up in the air. Luis Enrique announced after Barcelona's 6-1 win over Sporting Gijon on Wednesday that he will step down from his role at the end of the season in order to take a break.

Wenger, 67, is due to make a decision on whether to extend his 20-year association with Arsenal either this month or next and he reiterated that his preference would be to remain at the Emirates Stadium. Asked if he would be interested in moving to Camp Nou, he said: "No, my preference has always been the same and will remain the

same. "Of course I am not looking for jobs in other clubs or jobs off other people. "I am focused on me, getting to the next level and trying to improve and always trying to see what you can do better and reinvent yourself and that's what I try to do. That's basically it."

Wenger's position is once again under scrutiny after Arsenal fell off the pace in the Premier League title race and lost 5-1 at Bayern Munich in the first leg of their Champions League last 16 tie. Despite his long attachment to the club, he said he was not allowing sentiment to cloud his thinking about his future. "I have been here for 20 years and I had many times the opportunity to leave so I don't

think I have to convince you that my preference has always been Arsenal," he told a press conference at Arsenal's training base.

"But of course I am objective and lucid enough to make the right decision for myself and the club as well. The club is free to make the decision it wants and I will respect that." Wenger also said he would not be worried about the potential impact of making a statement about his future similar to Luis Enrique's. "I believe that the players have their targets, the team targets, and I don't think that can be detrimental. It can be positive as well," said the Frenchman, whose side visit Liverpool tomorrow. —AFP

## ENRIQUE CALLS CURTAIN ON BARCELONA'S REIGN

**BARCELONA:** Barcelona coach Luis Enrique is leaving the Spanish La Liga champions at the end of the season when his contract expires after three trophy-laden seasons at the club. Luis Enrique made the announcement at a news conference after Barca thrashed Sporting Gijon 6-1 at the Nou Camp on Wednesday to keep up their bid for a third league title under the management of their former midfielder. "I would like to thank the club for the confidence they have shown in me, it's been three unforgettable years," said Luis Enrique, who has won two Liga titles, two King's Cups and the 2015 Champions League since succeeding Gerardo Martino in 2014.

Luis Enrique said he had met with Barca directors Albert Soler and Robert Fernandez before this season to discuss the possibility of not renewing his contract. "They told me there was no hurry to make a decision, but now that moment has arrived," he added. "This is a very difficult decision for me which I have thought about for a very long time but I think I have to be loyal and do what I think is right." Barca top the standings on 57 points, one ahead of arch-rivals Real Madrid who have played one game fewer.

Luis Enrique has also led his team to the King's Cup final but suffered heavy criticism after Barcelona were crushed 4-0 by Paris St Germain in their Champions League last 16 first-leg game two weeks ago. Luis Enrique followed in the footsteps of former team mate Pep Guardiola in leading Barca to the treble in his first season in charge, although his reign has also witnessed turbulent moments. The coach was reported to be on the brink of dismissal in January 2015 due to his rocky relationship with Lionel Messi after leaving the Argentine talisman out of the starting line-up.

### Spectacular football

While he has overseen spectacular football, fired by the prolific attacking partnership of Messi, Neymar and Luis Suarez, Luis Enrique has been criticized for abandoning the team's style of play perfected by Guardiola which was geared around controlled possession in midfield. He bore the brunt of criticism for the harrowing defeat by PSG which has left Barca on the brink of their earliest elimination from the Champions League in a decade. Luis Enrique said he had become exhausted from the constant pressure that comes with the Barca job and needed time out to recover, echoing Guardiola's words when he stepped down in 2012.

"In my work I am constantly looking for solutions and that means I get no time to rest, I need to rest and that's my main motive for leaving," he said. Guardiola paid tribute to his former team mate. "With Luis Enrique's farewell, fans lose someone who was the perfect coach for Barcelona. The football in the last three years has been incredible," the Manchester City manager said on Twitter.

Midfielder Ivan Rakitic said he and the rest of the Barca squad were taken aback when Luis Enrique revealed the news to them in the dressing-room. "We knew nothing about it," Rakitic told Croatian media. "First he told the team about his decision. We were left stunned and at a loss for words. We want to end the season successfully and enjoy what is left." Barca president Josep Bartomeu also praised the departing coach. "We're very happy with the work he has done up to now and we have to accept his decision and support him. — Reuters

### SPANISH LEAGUE ROUNDUP

# BARCA TAKE THE LEAD

**MADRID:** On a night marked by the surprise announcement that coach Luis Enrique will leave Barcelona at the end of the season, his team routed relegation-threatened Sporting Gijon 6-1 to return to the top of the Spanish league on Wednesday. Lionel Messi scored his league-leading 21st goal less than 10 minutes into the match at the Camp Nou to help Barcelona earn a comfortable victory. Barcelona leads the standings for the first time since the opening round, one point ahead of Real Madrid, which was held by Las Palmas to a 3-3 draw at the Santiago Bernabeu Stadium.

Madrid, which still has a game in hand, scored twice with Cristiano Ronaldo in the final minutes to erase a two-goal deficit and salvage a point despite playing most of the second half without 10 men after a red card for Gareth Bale. Luis Enrique announced that he will not coach Barcelona next season in the post-match news conference, saying that he needed to rest. "The reason clearly had to do with the way of life I need to have in this profession, constantly having to find solutions, constantly trying to improve my team," he said.

After scoring important late winners in the last two games, Messi put Barcelona on the board with a header off a long cross into the area in the ninth minute. It was his 36th goal in 36 matches this season, and his 12th in the last 11 league games. The Argentina playmaker also hit the crossbar with a free kick in the 59th minutes, a couple of minutes before being substituted. Two minutes after Messi opened the scoring, Barcelona added to the lead with an own goal by Juan Rodriguez, who deflected a shot by Luis Suarez.

The Uruguay striker scored with a volley from inside the area in the 27th, and his second-half substitute, Paco Alcacer, added the fourth from close range after a pass by Messi. Neymar found the net with a well-placed free kick in the 65th, and Ivan Rakitic rounded off the scoring with an angled shot in the 87th as Barcelona made it five league wins in a row. Sporting, which could have left the relegation zone with a victory, got its lone goal from Carlos Castro in the 21st. Third-place Sevilla, five points off the lead, hosted Athletic Bilbao yesterday. Fourth-place Atletico played at struggling Deportivo La Coruna on the same day.

### REAL MADRID 3, LAS PALMAS 3

Real Madrid looked set to return to the top when Francisco "Isco" Alarcon scored in the eighth minute. But Pedro "Tana" Dominguez equalized two minutes later and Las Palmas took advantage of Gareth Bale's sending off with a second yellow card for an altercation with an opponent at the beginning of the second half. The visitors, sitting 12th in the standings, went ahead with a penalty kick converted by Jonathan Viera in the 56th and a counterattack goal scored by Kevin-Prince Boateng in the 59th. Ronaldo helped Madrid rally by converting a penalty in the 86th and netting the equalizer with a header in the 89th. "We have to improve a lot of things," Madrid left back Marcelo said. Madrid, seeking its first league title since 2012, had been leading the league since the eighth round. Zinedine Zidane's team has scored at least one goal in 45 straight games, breaking Barcelona's record from 1942-44.

### CELTA VIGO 2, ESPANYOL 2

All four goals were scored in an 11-minute span in the first half of a game between two mid-table clubs. Iago Aspas put



**BARCELONA:** FC Barcelona's coach Luis Enrique waves to the crowd during a training session at the Miniestadi stadium in Barcelona. — AP

Celta ahead in the 21st and Gerard Moreno equalized in the 28th before Daniel Wass restored the hosts' lead in the 30th. Pablo Piatti leveled in the 32nd. Celta played a man down from the 43rd after defender Andreu Fontas was sent off.

### OSASUNA 1, VILLARREAL 4

Colombian striker Santos Borré scored twice in the first half as Villarreal easily defeated last place Osasuna to remain in sixth place. Bruno Soriano and Roberto Soldado also scored for the visitors. The result extended Osasuna's winless run in the league to 17 games.

### GRANADA 2, ALAVES 1

Granada won its third game in a row at home to move closer to leaving the relegation zone. Alaves had two players sent off in second-half injury time. —AP

### Spanish La Liga table

Spanish La Liga table after Wednesday's matches (played, won, drawn, lost, goals for, goals against, points):

|                     |    |    |   |    |    |    |    |
|---------------------|----|----|---|----|----|----|----|
| Barcelona           | 25 | 17 | 6 | 2  | 71 | 21 | 57 |
| Real Madrid         | 24 | 17 | 5 | 2  | 63 | 25 | 56 |
| Sevilla             | 24 | 16 | 4 | 4  | 48 | 29 | 52 |
| Atletico Madrid     | 24 | 13 | 6 | 5  | 44 | 21 | 45 |
| Real Sociedad       | 25 | 14 | 3 | 8  | 39 | 34 | 45 |
| Villarreal          | 25 | 11 | 9 | 5  | 36 | 19 | 42 |
| Eibar               | 25 | 11 | 6 | 8  | 41 | 33 | 39 |
| Athletic Bilbao     | 24 | 11 | 5 | 8  | 31 | 29 | 38 |
| Espanyol            | 25 | 9  | 9 | 7  | 35 | 33 | 36 |
| Celta Vigo          | 24 | 10 | 5 | 9  | 39 | 39 | 35 |
| Alaves              | 25 | 8  | 9 | 8  | 25 | 31 | 33 |
| Las Palmas          | 25 | 7  | 8 | 10 | 35 | 39 | 29 |
| Valencia            | 25 | 8  | 5 | 12 | 35 | 43 | 29 |
| Real Betis          | 24 | 7  | 6 | 11 | 25 | 38 | 27 |
| Malaga              | 25 | 6  | 8 | 11 | 32 | 42 | 26 |
| Leganes             | 25 | 5  | 6 | 14 | 20 | 40 | 21 |
| Deportivo La Coruna | 23 | 4  | 7 | 12 | 26 | 39 | 19 |
| Granada             | 25 | 4  | 7 | 14 | 24 | 53 | 19 |
| Sporting Gijon      | 25 | 4  | 5 | 16 | 27 | 54 | 17 |
| Osasuna             | 25 | 1  | 7 | 17 | 25 | 59 | 10 |



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BARCELONA: Barcelona's Argentinean forward Lionel Messi controls the ball during the Spanish league football match FC Barcelona vs Real Sporting de Gijon at the Camp Nou stadium on March 1, 2017. — AFP



## Barca take the lead; coach confirms exit