

SUBSCRIPTION

# Kuwait Times



ANNIVERSARY  
55  
Kuwait Times

THE FIRST DAILY IN THE ARABIAN GULF

SATURDAY, MARCH 4, 2017

JAMADA ALTHANI 6, 1438 AH

No: 17157

**E-passport helps  
Kuwait's Schengen  
visa waiver bid**



**Banksy opens  
Walled Off Hotel  
in Bethlehem**



**Torres counts  
days to return  
after head clash**



150 Fils

## KING SALMAN EMBRACES 'SELFIE' ON TOUR OF ASIA

LIGHTHEARTED PICS, CLIPS SHARED MILLIONS OF TIMES



Min 10°

Max 25°



JAKARTA: Indonesia's President Joko Widodo (left) presents a photo album with images from their meeting in Bogor the day before to Saudi Arabia's King Salman bin Abdul Aziz yesterday. — AFP

JAKARTA: Saudi Arabia's King Salman has embraced the "selfie", taking part in a number of lighthearted self-shot pictures and videos during his tour of Asia that contrast with the pomp and formality of most of the monarch's trips abroad. In the first days of a lengthy regional tour, the king has appeared with top-ranking officials in Indonesia and Malaysia in pictures and clips that have been shared online millions of times.

Indonesian President Joko Widodo shared on Facebook a video of himself dining with the king at the presidential palace in Bogor, near the capital Jakarta. In the video, both men comment on the visit, the first to Indonesia by a Saudi king in nearly five decades, and give viewers a rare peek into a state event. As Widodo holds what appears to be a phone camera, the king is seen dining before commenting in Arabic on his 12-day visit to Indonesia, the longest leg of his month-long tour of Asia.

"I'm very happy to be here in Indonesia and with the Indonesian people," King Salman says to the camera, as an interpreter sitting behind him translates into Bahasa Indonesia. The king was also photographed posing for a selfie with former president Megawati Sukarnoputri and her daughter Puan Maharani, who is a member of Widodo's cabinet. Indonesia has a high concentration of Facebook and Twitter users, and selfies are a mainstay of social media in the world's fourth most populous country.

Earlier this week, Salman was seen in a selfie posted on Twitter with Prime Minister Najib Razak of Malaysia, during the first stop on his sweep across Asia. Though rare, Salman has made occasional appearances on social media before, including when he posed last year for a selfie in Qatar with a teen who survived cancer. The king is travelling with an entourage of several hundred people and nearly 500 tonnes of luggage, including two escalators. After Jakarta, the delegation is set to take a break in the resort island of Bali, where up to four hotels and 300 luxury cars have been booked for more than a week, according to local police and a tour agency association. Salman is also set to visit Brunei, China, Japan, the Maldives and Jordan — Reuters

## PRESSURE MOUNTS AS SESSIONS BACKS OFF FROM RUSSIA PROBE

WASHINGTON: Attorney General Jeff Sessions may not have been clear about his contacts with Russian officials during the 2016 election, but this much is evident: The controversy over any Kremlin involvement in American politics is not going to fade away anytime soon. Sessions on Thursday became the second high-ranking member of the Trump administration to take a hit over conversations with Russia's envoy to the US, recusing himself from any probe that examines communications between Trump aides and Moscow. An early backer and key adviser for Trump's campaign, Sessions said his staff recommended that he step aside from a probe.

"I feel I should not be involved in investigating a campaign I had a role in," he said. Sessions' action followed revelations that he twice spoke with the Russian ambassador and didn't say so when pressed, under oath, by Congress. Though he rejected any suggestion that he tried to mislead anyone, he did allow that he should have been more careful

in his testimony. "I should have slowed down and said, 'But I did meet one Russian official a couple of times,'" he said.

The recusal, despite White House support for him, followed a chorus of demands that Sessions resolve the seeming contradiction between his two conversations with Moscow's US envoy, Sergey Kislyak, and his statements to Congress in January that he had not communicated with Russians during the campaign. It carried echoes of a similar controversy involving retired Gen Michael Flynn, who two weeks ago resigned as national security adviser after misleading White House officials about his own discussions with Kislyak.

Additional communication was revealed Thursday between Kislyak and Flynn and Trump's son-in-law, Jared Kushner, at New York's Trump Tower. In addition, Carter Page, a former foreign policy adviser to Trump's presidential campaign, spoke with the ambassador last summer, according to a person with knowledge of the meeting. — AP

## QATAR POPULATION BOOMS ON BACK OF 2022 WORLD CUP

DOHA: Qatar's population has swollen by more than two thirds since the emirate was chosen to host the 2022 World Cup, official government figures have revealed. The country's population stands at a record 2.67 million, figures just published from the Ministry of Development, Planning and Statistics (MDPS) reveal. In Dec 2010, when it was chosen as the venue for football's biggest tournament, Qatar had a population of 1.63 million, according to the MDPS. The latest figure represents a 64 per cent increase on the 2010 population total.

The number of people living in Qatar has mushroomed as the Gulf country recruits tens of thousands laborers to work on many huge and expensive major infrastructure projects linked to the 2022 tournament. There are 2.1 million migrant laborers in Qatar - many from countries including Nepal, Bangladesh and India - according to figures announced in December by Doha's Ministry of Administrative Development, Labor and Social Affairs. — AFP





**KUWAIT:** Walid Al-Khabizi, the Assistant Foreign Minister for Europe Affairs (right) and Bulgarian Ambassador to Kuwait Boris Borissov cut the ceremony's cake. —Photos by Joseph Shagra



Diplomats and other dignitaries attended the event.

# ELECTRONIC PASSPORT HELPS KUWAIT'S SCHENGEN VISA WAIVER BID: OFFICIAL



**KUWAIT:** Kuwait's adoption of the e-passport system will hopefully help prepare the ground for exempting Kuwaiti nationals from visa requirements in the Schengen Area, a Kuwaiti official said. The e-passport system is one of the EU technical requirements for a Schengen visa waiver, not all requirements, said Walid Al-Khabizi, the Assistant Foreign Minister for Europe Affairs. The Kuwaiti move could facilitate the negotiations in this regard, he added.

Khabizi made the comments during a reception, hosted Thursday by Bulgaria Embassy here to celebrate the country's national day. He said that the Kuwaiti-Bulgarian relations have been growing steadily since 1962. The signing of 26 agreements on cooperation between the two countries helped augment the relations in various fields and brought their views on various international issues close to each other, he said.

The number of Kuwaiti tourists, visiting Bulgaria rose to nearly 3,000 last year, he said, noting that the number of Kuwaiti students, studying at Bulgarian colleges also went up steadily over the last years. On investment cooperation, he said Kuwait Investment Authority (KIA) is mulling a plan for long-term investments in, and tapping into the potentials of trade exchanges with, Bulgaria which is an active member of the European Union and the NATO alliance. —KUNA

# WOMEN'S FINANCIAL EMPOWERMENT FORUM ORGANIZED IN BEIRUT

**BEIRUT:** A forum on women's empowerment in the financial sector kicked off in Beirut yesterday, focusing on women's role in Arab social development. In a keynote speech, Lebanese Minister of State for Women's Affairs Jean Ogasapian called for involving women in social improvement and prosperity. He said Arab official institutions and bodies should seek to invest women's capabilities to achieve social growth.

The forum was co-organized by the World Union of Arab Bankers (WUAB) and the Arab League's Arab Women Organization. WUAB President Joseph Torbey said that comprehensive and sustainable development is a core social goal that can be notched up with the help of women who make up one half of society.

He added that for a society to be developed, women should be involved, noting that human development should be based on women's empowerment. He regretted that although women make more than half of the world's population, they own only one per-

cent of the world's wealth, obtain just 10 percent of its income, and hold merely 14 percent of leading world posts in both public and private sectors.

On the forum, the WUAB president said it mainly aims at stressing women's involvement in economic sectors for stronger economies and more stable societies. Director-General of the Arab Women Organization Mervat Telawi said the companies where three women hold leading positions are more productive than others, citing relevant UN statistics.

She boasted Arab women have made recent reasonable successes in Saudi Arabia, Algeria, Morocco, Tunisia and even Iraq, but there are still major challenges women are facing due to existing wars and conflicts.

Telawi emphasized that Arab banks should provide necessary facilities for women's empowerment in the economic and financial domain. Regrettably, 1.33 billion women across the world have no bank accounts, she lamented. —KUNA



**BEIRUT:** A scene from the forum on women's empowerment in the financial sector. —KUNA





**WASHINGTON:** Kuwait's Ambassador US Sheikh Salem Abdullah Al-Jaber Al-Sabah (right) poses with US Secretary of the Homeland Security John F Kelly (center) and UN High Commissioner for Refugees Filippo Grandi. —KUNA

## GRANDI APPLAUDS KUWAIT'S GENEROUS CONTRIBUTIONS TO UN RELIEF EFFORTS

**WASHINGTON:** The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) Filippo Grandi said Thursday the State of Kuwait is one of the major donors for the UN humanitarian efforts. Grandi thanked His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah and the Kuwaiti government and people for their constant support to the UN aid agencies. He made the comments during a reception, hosted by Kuwait Ambassador to the United States Sheikh Salem Abdullah Al-Jaber Al-Sabah and his wife Sheikha Reema Al-Sabah, according to a statement by Kuwait Embassy here. He also commended Kuwait for hosting the three international humanitarian pledging conference on Syria and co-hosting, with Britain, Germany and Norway,

the fourth such conference in London. Kuwait is also lobbying with the European Union for a fifth donor conference for the displaced Syrians, due in Brussels later this year, he noted. The UN senior official appreciated the philanthropic efforts, being made by Sheikha Reema - the goodwill ambassador of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and her support to refugees across the Arab region and beyond.

The reception gathered a large number of US senior officials and congressmen, including Secretary of the Homeland Security John F Kelly and Head of the House Committee on Foreign Affairs Ed Royce and Deputy National Security Advisor to the President K T McFarland. —KUNA



## KUWAIT OIL PRICE DOWN 43 CENTS TO \$52.81 PB

**KUWAIT:** The price of Kuwaiti oil went down by 43 cents to \$52.81 per barrel Thursday after being at \$53.24 pb yesterday, Kuwait Petroleum Corporation (KPC) said yesterday. At the global level, the price of oil went down after data from the Russian energy agency displayed a decrease in Russia's

production by 100,000 barrels per day (bpd) from the 300,000 bpd pledged by Moscow in the production reduction agreement with OPEC. The Brent crude price was down by \$1.28 to \$55.08 pb, the same case with the West Texas Intermediate which went down by \$1.22 to settle at \$52.61 pb. —KUNA

## MINISTRY SANCTIONS NEW ELECTRICITY, WATER TARIFF

**KUWAIT:** Minister of Oil, Electricity, and Water Essam Al-Marzouq on Thursday sanctioned the new tariffs of electricity and water consumption provided for in law No 20/2016.

The price of a kilowatt for the investment and commercial sector will be five fils, and KD 2 for a thousand gallons of water, the ministry said in a statement. The investment sector refers to apartment buildings, while the commercial sector refers to shops.

As for the agricultural and the industrial sector, a kilowatt will be for three fils, and a thousand gallons KD 1.25.

Other sectors, including chalets and stables, will pay 12 fils for a kilowatt, and a KD 2 for a thousand gallons. The statement noted that the cabinet had ordered the maximum tariffs to be applied on the government sector (citizens' houses), 25 fils for each kilowatt and KD 4 for a thousand gallons of water.

The law has exempted private houses from the rise in tariffs that will be enforced on the commercial sector on May 22, the investment sector August 22, the agricultural and the industrial sector on November 22, then on the other ones on February 22, 2018. —KUNA



مؤسسة البترول الكويتية  
Kuwait Petroleum Corporation

### Human Resources Sector Petroleum Training Centre (PTC)

## KPC ANNOUNCES RECEIVING PRE-QUALIFICATION APPLICATIONS FROM TRAINING PROVIDERS

The Human Resources Sector in Kuwait Petroleum Corporation (KPC) will start receiving prequalification applications from potential training providers (local and foreign) specialized in the field of training that wish to provide their training services for the year 2017/2018 according to the following:

- Registration shall start on **Wednesday 1/3/2017** and end on **Thursday 28/12/2017** bearing in mind that prequalification applications submitted after the end date shall not be accepted.

- This prequalification is limited to:

- New training providers who are not currently approved by KPC.
- Training providers that wish to add a new training field which was not earlier prequalified by KPC.

- The prequalification application shall be reviewed based on the following criteria:

- The number of years of experience in the field of training.
- Total number of instructors and their qualifications / experience.
- Recognitions / Awards (Local and Foreign) received by the applicant.
- Number of programs certified by an international awarding body.
- Reference letters received from previous clients.
- Copy of previously executed training contracts.
- Audited financial statements for latest 3 years.
- Quality Management Certificate (ISO 9001) or equivalent.

- Potential training providers wishing to prequalify are requested to visit our website (<https://resourcing.knpc.com>) and obtain username and password, fill the information requested in prequalification application and ensure that they attach all required documents.

- The prequalification system shall not accept any (prequalification application) with missing mandatory documents.

- KPC shall review and evaluate training providers (who provided all required data in prequalification application) and will inform them in writing regarding their prequalification status whether accepted or rejected within (60) days from the end of registration date.

In case of any questions / queries, please contact us by phone on:

23887217 / 23887279 / 23887258 / 23887218 during working hours (from 10am to 2pm)

or by email on:

[mka299@knpc.com](mailto:mka299@knpc.com) or [mmk959@knpc.com](mailto:mmk959@knpc.com) or [amm399@knpc.com](mailto:amm399@knpc.com) or [aii019@knpc.com](mailto:aii019@knpc.com)





# PALESTINIANS REBUILD MOSQUE IN GAZA WITH KUWAITI DONATION

**GAZA:** The Palestinian Al-Falah Charity re-inaugurated, with contributions from an anonymous Kuwaiti donor, yesterday Omar Abdul Aziz Mosque in Al-Sudaniya in northern Gaza after it had undergone renovation. The mosque had been virtually demolished in Israeli attacks. Ramadan Tanboura, the head of the society, expressed in a statement deep gratitude to the Kuwaiti donor who helped rebuild the war-destroyed mosque, noting the close ties between the Kuwaiti and Palestinian peoples.

The Palestinian association, several months ago, opened another mosque, also with financial contributions by Kuwaiti donors, he revealed. He expressed deep gratitude to Kuwait, namely the leadership and the people, for the continuing support for the Palestinian people.

Hassan Al-Saifi, Undersecretary of the Palestinian Ministry of Religious Affairs, affirmed that the mosque was re-constructed with money granted by a Kuwaiti citizen. Palestinians who performed the Friday prayers at the mosque expressed gratitude to the Kuwaiti donor and the society. — KUNA



## KUWAIT DISTRIBUTES AID TO IRAQI DISPLACED

**IRBIL:** Kuwait provided around 3,000 blankets and 1,500 oil heaters to Iraqis displaced in Sulaimanya province, Kurdistan region yesterday. "The aid campaign was in cooperation with Kuwait General Consulate in Mosul and cities around it," Head of the charities organizations in Kurdistan region Mehdi Yosif said. "The aid is

meant to alleviate the suffering of the affected people and provide them with their urgent needs," Yosif said, praising Kuwait's role and aid to Iraq. Meanwhile, a representative of refugees in the region, Mohammad Idris expressed his thanks to Kuwait's support and aid to the displaced and refugees in the country. — KUNA







**KUWAIT:** The Environment Public Authority (EPA) hosted a workshop this past Thursday at the Liyah area, located 21 kilometers north of Jahra, about its project to rehabilitate the area from damage left by operations to excavate and collect sand used in construction materials. — KUNA

**Crime**

Report

**TWO ARRESTED WITH DRUGS IN JAHRA**

**KUWAIT:** Jahra police arrested two people with drugs in the area. One of the suspects was also found wanted to serve 15 years in jail for a previous crime. Patrol officers noticed that the two were in an abnormal condition when they pulled their car over in a street in the area. They obtained a warrant to search their car and arrested them after finding the drugs inside.

**Hit-and-run**

Police received a call about a person in a very bad shape lying on a Waha street. Police went to the area and discovered that the man was run over by a car. He was taken to hospital. An eyewitness told police that the driver fled, and gave them his car's license plate number. The driver, an Indian, was arrested by detectives. He claimed he helped the victim, but was afraid of legal action. He was detained. Separately, a citizen was injured when a truck swerved towards him on Sixth Ring Road. Police and paramedics went to the scene of the accident, and the injured man was taken to hospital.

**Game cards**

Six citizens playing cards got into an argument over the game's rules, and this escalated to exchanging blows that caused one of them to sustain a wound in the head. Meanwhile, one of the players was found wanted over a financial case. The incident took place in Mahboula.

**Reckless driver**

A reckless driver not only endangered others' lives, but also ran a red light and obstructed traffic on one of Mubarak Al-Kabeer's main roads. Traffic patrols chased the driver and stopped him, then arrested him and impounded his car.

**Work injury**

An Afghan man was taken to Adan Hospital after his finger was severed by a chainsaw. The man was cutting trees with the chainsaw. Paramedics gave him first aid, then took him to the hospital, where he was operated on. — Al-Rai



**MOROCCAN PREMIER HOPES TO CEMENT TIES WITH KUWAIT FURTHER**

**RABAT:** Moroccan Prime Minister Abdelilah Benkirane yesterday praised the deep-rooted ties between his country and the State of Kuwait hoping to cement these bonds further. The premier made the assertion during a meeting with the State of Kuwait Ambassador, Ali Al-Yahya, at the premiership headquarters.

Premier Benkirane indicated resolve of the two countries' leaders, His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah and King Mohammad VI, to develop these close ties into "an exemplary partnership." He also hinted that his discussions with the envoy dealt

with means of boosting the bilateral relations. Ambassador Yahya affirmed his readiness to do everything possible to bolster the bonds with Morocco.

Earlier, the ambassador met speaker of the Moroccan parliament, Habib el-Malki, after his election as chairman of the legislative assembly, which said in a statement that the two sides examined the distinctive bilateral relations at various levels. During the meeting, Malki called for reactivating the Kuwaiti-Moroccan friendship group. The Kuwaiti envoy said he conveyed an invitation to the chief lawmaker to visit Kuwait. — KUNA



Photo

of the day



KUWAIT: Birds on top of a mosque's dome in Kuwait. —KUNA

# KHARAFI COMES 1ST AT QATAR'S EQUESTRIAN COMPETITION

**DOHA:** Kuwaiti rider Ali Al-Kharafi has won the first place in the jumping 5th international equestrian jumping competition 'Chi Al-Shaqab' in Qatar, 2-4 March. Kharafi on Thursday won the jumping category 145cm with 56.88 seconds, followed by Qatar's Mubarak Al-Rumihi, 57.60

seconds. Qatari rider Nasser Al-Ghazli was third with 57.88 seconds, then Saudi Olympic athlete Ramzi Al-Duhami, 79.79 seconds. In the Jumping CSI 3 stars, 130 cm, Kharafi came third with 32.12 seconds, behind a Columbian rider who won first place with 31.02 seconds.

Duhami was second, 31.72 seconds, as Kuwaiti female rider A'asha Al-Qaoud came fifth 34.58, behind Saudi Arabia's Abudl-Karim Abar, 34.07. Up to 160 world top riders and 240 horses from 35 countries are taking part in the three-day equestrian competition. —KUNA



Kuwaiti rider Ali Al-Kharafi



Kuwaiti female rider A'asha Al-Qaoud



## MUSICAL PERFORMANCES BY CHELSEY GREEN, GREEN PROJECT

**KUWAIT:** The Public Affairs Section of the US Embassy in Kuwait is pleased to invite you to attend two musical performances by Chelsey Green and The Green Project.

Chelsey Green and The Green Project is an American ensemble that fuses traditional classical technique with a wide range of music genres including RandB, Pop, Funk, Jazz and Hip Hop. Admission is free.

First performance: Sunday, March 5th, from 7:00-8:00 pm. Location: Yarmouk Cultural Centre- Block 3, Street 3, Opposite Boubyan Bank. Second performance: Tuesday, March 7th from 7:00-8:00 pm. Location: The National Theatre, Drama Theatre, Theatre Building — Arabian Gulf Street.



# International

SATURDAY, MARCH 4, 2017

**Trapped Syrians tell of misery in no man's land**

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**Hindu ritual forces Nepali women into monthly exile**

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**Trump's new travel ban delayed**

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**TUNIS:** Tunisian President Beji Caid Essebsi, left, walks with German Chancellor Angela Merkel, while reviewing an honor guard during an official welcome ceremony at the presidential palace in Carthage, near Tunis, Tunisia, yesterday. —AP

## TUNISIA, GERMANY STRIKE NEW IMMIGRATION DEAL

### BOTH COUNTRIES TO TACKLE ILLEGAL MIGRATION

**TUNIS:** German Chancellor Angela Merkel announced a new agreement with Tunisia on tackling illegal migration during a visit yesterday, following tensions over the case of the Tunisian suspect in the Berlin market attack. Merkel, on a two-day trip to North Africa that also included a stop in Egypt, said Germany and Tunisia had agreed on faster repatriations for rejected asylum seekers and job training for Tunisians. The German leader, who faces elections in September, is under pressure to reduce the number of asylum seekers coming to her country, which has taken in more than one million migrants since 2015.

Merkel, who was also due to address Tunisia's parliament, has urged the North African states to step up border controls and speed up procedures to repatriate migrants whose asylum applications are turned down. Germany has said that Tunisian bureaucratic delays meant it could not expel Anis Amri, the suspect in the truck rampage at a Berlin Christmas market that killed 12 people, even

though his asylum application had been rejected six months earlier.

Merkel said that the two countries had agreed that questions from Germany on the identities of Tunisian asylum seekers will be answered within 30 days. "We will also help Tunisia to set up a registration system. Replacement passports are then meant to be issued within one week," she said at a joint news conference with Tunisian President Beji Caid Essebsi. This agreement "will satisfy Tunisia and will satisfy Germany," Essebsi said, adding that it concerned about 1,500 Tunisians whose residency requests have been refused by Germany.

"Measures will be taken in the Tunisian consulates in Germany to help in their identification," Essebsi said. Her talks also covered ways to respond to years of instability exploited by people smugglers in neighboring Libya. "We know the political situation in Libya is difficult," she said, welcoming Tunisia's efforts to help resolve the turmoil. "No-one is more interested

in political stability in Libya than its neighbors, but I'll say, because of the migration issue, it's also important for us Europeans."

#### Aid money pledge

The migrant issue had already been contentious in Germany where sexual assaults by large groups of mostly North African men on New Year's Eve 2015-16 against women in Cologne provoked outrage. Merkel's interior minister floated an idea for North African countries to build holding centers for returned migrants but it was rejected by Merkel's centre-left coalition partners and rights groups.

The visit is also a chance for Merkel to pledge support for a country often hailed as a rare success story of the Arab Spring uprisings that shook the region and toppled autocrats including longtime Tunisian dictator Zine El Abidine Ben Ali. Since its 2011 revolution, Tunisia has passed a new constitution and held free parliamentary and presidential elec-

tions. But the nation faces high unemployment, social tensions and the threat from jihadists who have killed dozens of soldiers and police as well as civilians including 59 foreign tourists.

Speaking in Tunis, Merkel announced 250 million euros (\$264 million) in development aid. "The funds are for rural development, small and medium enterprises, but mainly for youths... who especially need job training and employment opportunities," she said. Her trip is part of a larger diplomatic push by the German leader, who last year visited Mali, Niger and Ethiopia. She 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. Merkel was joined on her trip by a business delegation that could bring much-needed investments.—AFP





**RUKBAN, Jordan:** A member of the Jordanian armed forces carries a toddler from the informal Rukban camp, which lies in no-man's-land off the border between Syria and Jordan in the remote northeast, through the rain outside a UN-operated medical clinic on the Jordanian-side. — AFP

# TRAPPED SYRIANS TELL OF MISERY IN NO MAN'S LAND

## UN DELIVERS AID TO 15,000 TRAPPED SYRIAN FAMILIES

**RUKBAN, Jordan:** A Jordanian army ambulance pulled up at a makeshift clinic a few hundred meters from a desert border camp where tens of thousands of Syrian refugees are trapped in no man's land. A paramedic clambered out, carrying an emaciated boy around two years old. "Whose child is this?" he shouted as a border guard covered the crying child with his jacket to protect him from the cold. A woman in the ambulance said the boy's family had left him on a berm, an earth embankment running the length of Jordan's borders with Syria and Iraq, in the hope he would be taken for treatment.

The UN set up the clinic just inside Jordan in December to serve Rukban camp, a makeshift settlement in no man's land on the border with Syria where the United Nations says 60,000 Syrians are trapped. The temperature in the desert varies from a searing 50 degrees Celsius in the summer to below freezing in winter. "The conditions are very, very hard," said Maria, 30, wearing a hijab and a black gown covered in mud, waiting at the clinic in the cold and pouring rain.

She fled to Rukban from the Islamic State (IS) jihadist group's Syrian stronghold Raqa nine months ago in a terrifying 18-hour journey. Three of her children had died in the fighting. "I want to go back to Syria when things calm down. But now I can't go back to my

death," she said. "The hell of waiting here in the desert is easier than going back to die."

### Closed borders

At the time when Syria's war broke out in March 2011, Jordan operated 45 border crossings. By 2012, it had closed all but five over security concerns. Syrians continued to stream in-the kingdom now hosts around 650,000 UN-registered Syrian refugees, along with a further 700,000 who are not registered, the government says. In June 2016, a car bomb at the Rukban crossing, claimed by IS, killed seven Jordanian security personnel. The army responded by closing the border completely and declaring it a military zone.

Syrians in Rukban were blocked from entering Jordan and aid deliveries halted for much of the summer. In November, they resumed, with regular batches of essentials dropped over the border by crane. With residents in desperate need of health care, the UN in December opened the clinic in pre-fabricated huts a kilometre (less than a mile) from the camp, under Jordanian protection. Every day, the UN and Jordanian border guards shuttle people in for treatment then return them to the camp.

The clinic has treated 785 patients from Rukban and the smaller camp of Hadalat nearby, the UN said. "The UN is

delivering aid to around 15,000 Syrian families trapped in the Rukban and Hadalat areas," said Mohammed al-Hawari, spokesman of the UN's refugee agency, the UNHCR. "The clinic gives basic healthcare, but cases that need specialist treatment are referred to Jordanian hospitals." The clinic sits in a sensitive military zone. Army and border guard vehicles fan out along the border nearby, as Jordanian forces monitor movements on the Syrian side.

"Our borders are safe, we will not let anyone approach them," said Brigadier General Barakat al-Ajarmah, a border guard commander. "Our forces have set up cameras along the entire border to monitor it day and night," he said. "Even if IS has a presence in the camp, we are kept informed." Salah Khodeir, a member of a southern Syrian tribal militia set up to fight IS, to protect refugees and organise aid deliveries, said the camp was safe and that aid was arriving.

"The Jordanians are giving us every assistance," he said, standing near the berm, surrounded by women and children. Maha, who fled Homs in central Syria a year ago and has been in the camp ever since, waited with her four children, aged between two and 12. "Life is really, really hard here in the desert. It's so cold and there are lots of diseases," she said. "People need to be allowed in to get the treatment they need" inside Jordan. — AFP

## TURKEY ACCUSES BERLIN OF WORKING AGAINST ERDOGAN POWERS REFERENDUM

**ANKARA:** Tensions between Turkey and Germany soared yesterday as Ankara accused Berlin of working for a 'No' vote in a referendum on Recep Tayyip Erdogan's powers and a German town received a bomb threat after blocking a Turkish rally. The Turkish public will vote on April 16 on whether to create a presidential system which Ankara says will be like that in France or the United States and ensure political stability.

But critics say the system will further weaken parliament and herald one-man rule by Erdogan, Turkey's strongman president. Ahead of the referendum, Turkish politicians' trips to Germany have sparked controversy, notably a rally by Prime Minister Binali Yildirim in the western city of Oberhausen to garner support for a 'Yes' vote. And on Thursday, several local authorities blocked rallies by two more Turkish ministers, prompting a furious response from Ankara which promptly summoned the German envoy to protest.

"They don't want Turkey to campaign here, they are working for a 'No'," Foreign Minister Mevlut Cavusoglu told reporters in the Turkish capital yesterday. "They want to get in the way of a strong Turkey." Vienna has also said it would not allow any campaign-related events. Tensions with Berlin have also increased over Ankara's provisional detention of a German journalist on terror-related charges on Monday.

### Bomb threat

As the political fallout continued, the western German town of Gaggenau which cancelled a rally by Turkish Justice Minister Bekir Bozdogan said it received a bomb threat early yesterday. "The caller cited the cancellation of the event with the Turkish justice minister as a reason," local official Dieter Spannagel said. Bozdogan had been due to meet the Turkish community there on Thursday, but cancelled his address after the Gaggenau authorities withdrew their consent, citing capacity problems at the hall that was to have been used.

Cologne city authorities also withdrew permission for the Union of European Turkish Democrats to use a hall on Sunday for a speech by Economy Minister Nihat Zeybekci. Writing on Twitter, Turkey's EU Minister Omer Celik said Germany was damaging "the bridges between the democracies and building ideological Berlin walls that cut people off from each other." And Cavusoglu accused German officials of double standards and failing to "honor democracy, freedom of expression or freedom of assembly". Lashing out, he accused them of allowing "terrorists" from the outlawed Kurdistan Workers' Party to speak but denying the same right to Erdogan. — AFP

## CHEMICAL WEAPONS INJURE SEVEN IN MOSUL AREA

**BAGHDAD:** Seven people, among them five children, have been hospitalized over the past two days near Iraq's Mosul with injuries from chemical weapons, the Red Cross said yesterday. The Islamic State jihadist group, which holds the majority of west Mosul, has periodically used rudimentary chemical weapons in the course of its more than two-year war with Iraqi forces. "During the past two days, the hospital has admitted five children and two women showing clinical symptoms consistent with an exposure to a blistering chemical agent," Robert Mardini, the Red Cross Middle East director, said in a statement, referring to a facility near Mosul.

"The use of chemical weapons is absolutely prohibited under international humanitarian law. We are deeply alarmed by what our colleagues have seen, and we strongly condemn any use of chemical weapons, by any party, anywhere," Mardini said. The statement did not specify whether the seven were injured in one or more attacks, how the chemical weapons were delivered, or who was responsible. Several Iraqi military officers said they did not have information about recent chemical weapons attacks in the Mosul area.

IS overran large areas north and west of Baghdad in 2014, but Iraqi forces backed by US-led air strikes and other support have since regained much of the ground they lost to the jihadists. IS has periodically used chemical weapons in the course of the conflict, but while this has garnered widespread attention, the jihadists' bullets and bombs are far deadlier weapons. Iraqi forces launched an operation to retake west Mosul, the largest population centre still held by the jihadists, on February 19. — AFP



## CHRISTIAN FAMILIES IN EGYPT FLEE ISLAMIC STATE HIT LISTS

**ISMAILIA, Egypt:** When Islamic State militants began circulating names of Christians who must leave their Egyptian hometown of Arish or die, Munir Munir's father Adel, a civil servant, brought home a hit list that had his own name as number two. The first person on the list, shopkeeper Wael Youssef, was killed on Jan 30. The Munirs barricaded themselves inside their house "like rats in a hole," Munir Munir recalled last week.

Within a month, four more Christians in the town had been shot dead, one beheaded and another burned to death. After the seventh killing, the Munirs finally fled. Their father insisted on staying behind. A shift in Islamic State's tactics from attacking soldiers and police to targeting Christian civilians has become a potential turning point in a country trying to halt a provincial insurgency from spiraling into wider sectarian bloodshed.

Islamic State's branch in Egypt, which has waged a low-level conflict for years by attacking security forces mostly in the Munirs' native North Sinai province, has issued a new message inciting attacks on Christians across Egypt. The militants' aim, say analysts, is to weaken President Abdel Fattah al-Sisi by sowing the kind of sectarian chaos that has fuelled lengthy conflicts in Iraq and Syria. During the killing wave of the past month, about 145 families have fled North Sinai to Ismailia, a city on the edge of the Suez Canal that forms the western boundary of Sinai, and about 30 to Cairo.

Others have made their way to other provinces, church officials and human rights groups say. Several families, including the Munirs, told Reuters that Muslim neighbors unaffiliated to Islamic State have stepped up assaults against them, emboldened by the militants and the violence that has destabilized their province and seen hundreds of soldiers and police killed in recent years.

"Our neighbors took our land because we are Christian. They tried to attack me and my sister and when my father came to defend us they sprayed his face with acid," said Munir Munir's sister Dimiana as she huddled with four family members in a churchyard, waiting for volunteers to find them a new home. The families gathered forlornly at Ismailia's Evangelical Church around sacks over spilling with the clothes they managed to bring before they fled. Women wailed over lost homes and children ran around oblivious as volunteers brought in blankets and made calls seeking to secure shelter.

### Killed for being Christians

Copts comprise about 10 percent of Egypt's 90 million people, the biggest Christian minority in the Middle East. The violence is unlike previous waves of sectarian attacks in Egypt, because there is no longer any pretence of a reason, beyond killing Christians for their faith, said Ishak Ibrahim, researcher at the Egyptian Initiative for Personal Rights. "What we are seeing here is new. There has always been violence against Christians but it was usually for a 'reason' like land disputes. Now Christians are killed just for being Christians," he said.

"Militants are sending the government a message; saying they can change part of the country's demographics. This is a dangerous precedent," he said. "...And who knows if it will be replicated in Upper Egypt or elsewhere." Sameh Kamel had just made it out of the North Sinai with his wife and two children when his neighbour phoned. Islamic State militants had come knocking on their door just an hour after the family had packed their bags and fled. "They're knocking on doors and if they find a Christian they kill him," said Kamel.

The opening salvo came in December, when an Islamic State fighter bombed a church adjoining Cairo's St Mark's Cathedral, the seat of the Coptic papacy, killing 28 people. The militants threatened all Egyptian Christians in a video in February. The flight of the North Sinai Coptic families poses a challenge for Sisi, who promised to restore security in a US ally seen as a bulwark against extremism. Sisi, who's ouster of Islamist President Mohamed Mursi in 2013 sparked an escalation in the Sinai insurgency, has sought to assure Egyptians that security forces would preserve national unity. He ordered the government to help resettle displaced Christians and met with top officials to discuss how to respond. — Reuters



**PALMYRA:** In this file photo, Russian soldiers stand on a road as smoke rises from a controlled land mine detonation by Russian experts inside the ancient town of Palmyra, Syria in the central Homs province. —AP

## SYRIAN TROOPS CLEAR EXPLOSIVES AFTER TAKING PALMYRA FROM IS

**DAMASCUS:** Syrian army units were clearing land mines and explosives left behind by Islamic State militants in the historic town of Palmyra yesterday, a day after government troops and allied militiamen recaptured it from the extremists, a Syrian security official said. The military expects the process to be long and difficult due to the large number of mines planted by IS, he said, speaking on condition of anonymity in line with regulations. Syrian troops fully recaptured Palmyra on Thursday after a push that saw the militants' defenses crumble and IS fighters flee in the face of artillery fire and intense Russia-backed airstrikes.

It's the third time the town - famed for its priceless Roman ruins and archaeological treasures IS had sought to destroy - has changed hands in one year. The Syrian government seized the town from Islamic State militants last

March, only to lose it again 10 months later. Last spring, it took Russian demining experts weeks to clear the town from hundreds of mines planted by IS. Before the civil war gripped Syria in 2011, Palmyra was a top tourist attraction, drawing tens of thousands of visitors each year.

Syrian state television broadcast footage showing troops near the town's archaeological site, a UNESCO World Heritage Site, and the historic citadel yesterday. Archeologists have decried what they say is extensive damage to Palmyra's treasured ruins. Drone footage released by Russia's Defense Ministry last month showed new damage IS had inflicted to the facade of Palmyra's Roman-era theater and the adjoining Tetracylon - a set of four monuments with four columns each at the center of the colonnaded road leading to the theater.

The Islamic State group has destroyed scores of ancient sites across its self-styled Islamic caliphate in Syria and Iraq, viewing them as monuments to idolatry. Maamoun Abdu-Karim, the head of the Antiquities and Museums Department in Syria, told The Associated Press on Thursday night that this time around, the damage to the ruins seemed less in magnitude. "We had expected the worst. However, the damage, according to the available photos, appears limited," he said.

But the Islamic State group is not the only side in Syria's civil war, now in its sixth year that has damaged Palmyra.

A 2014 report by a UN research agency disclosed satellite evidence of looting while the ruins were under Syrian military control. Opposition fighters have also admitted to looting the antiquities for funds.—AP



**NABI SALEH:** Palestinian protesters block the door of an Israeli forces' armored car in the occupied West Bank village of Nabi Saleh, near the city of Ramallah yesterday. —AFP

## PALESTINIANS CLASH WITH SETTLERS IN WEST BANK

**NABI SALEH:** Palestinians clashed with Israeli settlers yesterday near the city of Ramallah in the occupied West Bank, an AFP photographer said. Fighting broke out near a water source for the Palestinian village of Nabi Saleh, and residents of the Halamish settlement fired gunshots into the air. An Israeli army spokeswoman said she was unable to provide comment.

Nabi Saleh has for years been a flashpoint in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Each Friday, Palestinians, foreigners and some Israelis protest in Nabi Saleh against the expansion of the nearby Halamish settlement.

In August 2015, pictures of an armed Israeli soldier in Nabi Saleh pinning down a crying Palestinian boy against a rock went viral on social media and made international headlines.—AFP



## STRESS UNDER SHELLING PRODUCES BABY BOOM IN UKRAINE

**AVDIIVKA, Ukraine:** Olena Gorbatova gave birth to her third child in war-torn eastern Ukraine to the sounds of gunfire and exploding shells in the Kiev-held flashpoint town of Avdiivka. The 40-year-old Gorbatova calmed herself by thinking the attacks were just a celebration of the baby girl she named Myroslava—which in Russian and Ukrainian means “glory to peace”. The wartime birth was not unusual.

The town in which dozens were killed in early February has seen a mini baby boom that doctors attribute to the fact that people want to couple in times of stress and a change in women’s hormonal behavior. “In recent years, we have managed to deliver babies from older families who are now in their 40s,” gynecologist Svitlana Khomchenko told AFP in the dilapidated and partially abandoned town of less than 20,000 people. “They had been trying without success for many years. And now families who were considered sterile have children,” said Khomchenko. “It turns out that stress is a factor.”

### Making love, not war?

Gorbatova’s 38-year-old husband Sergiy had to make it past a series of road blocks to reach the maternity ward where his wife was resting. A part of it has been turned into a military hospital. Women about to give birth lie side by side with the wounded from the 34-month revolt in the pro-Russian region that has killed more than 10,000 people and left nearly 25,000 others injured.

Sergiy laughed off local jokes that the rising birth rate is down to the large number of Ukrainian soldiers defending the town. He admitted that many people tried to convince him not to bring more children into the Ukraine’s unsafe world. “But we still decided to do it,” he said. The fog of war means that no real scientific study can explain why couples have more sex and women appear to be more fertile when disaster strikes. Gynecologist Khomchenko simply cites the statistics she has.

The year the war broke out in 2014 there were 45

births in Avdiivka compared with 110 babies born in 2016 more than double the figure despite people fleeing the region for more peaceful parts of the ex-Soviet state. Khomchenko recalls scenes of horror as women were hidden in basements to shield them from exploding shells that blasted out windows and mortar rounds that landed in the hospital’s garden. The city’s heating system is periodically not working and the doctor says she has had to take many deliveries by candlelight. A power generator has been recently installed and the windows replaced.

### Glory to peace

The maternity ward stayed open even during the frightening days in early February when constant clashes between rebels and government troops claimed 35 lives in Ukraine’s east. “We worked while people were dying,” said Khomchenko. “But we were forced to move some of the women in labour to neighboring towns because there was no heat or water.” — AFP



**PARIS:** This file photo shows Winner of the right-wing primaries ahead of France’s 2017 presidential elections, Francois Fillon, right, defeated candidate Alain Juppe, center, and president of the primary’s organizing committee Thierry Solere, left, posing for a photo at the primary’s high authority headquarters in Paris. — AFP

## JUPPE WAITS IN WINGS IF FILLON QUILTS FRENCH RACE

**BORDEAUX:** Veteran French conservative Alain Juppe is ready to step in as presidential candidate if the beleaguered Francois Fillon pulls out, his entourage said yesterday as the list of deserters from Fillon’s camp grew. Fillon’s spokesman Thierry Solere quit the campaign yesterday in the latest sign that support is crumbling over an expenses scandal. Pressure has been building on 62-year-old former prime minister Fillon since he revealed this week that he will be charged over allegations he paid his wife Penelope hundreds of thousands of euros for fake parliamentary jobs.

The 71-year-old Juppe, also a former prime minister, was beaten by Fillon in the conservative primary in November despite being the clear pre-contest favorite. He has kept out of the campaign since then as far-right candidate Marine Le Pen has taken the lead in opinion polls and centrist Emmanuel Macron has also benefited from Fillon’s woes.

### Juppe ready

With supporters deserting Fillon by the day and the first round of voting fast approaching on April 23, Juppe is now prepared to take over, a member of his entourage said. Juppe “will not refuse if all the conditions are met-Francois Fillon has to take the decision to pull out himself and the rightwing and centre camps have to be united behind him”, the unnamed source said. Since his defeat in the primary,

Juppe has kept a low profile in the southwest city of Bordeaux where he is mayor. Police raided the Fillons’ Paris residence on Thursday, adding to the pressure on him to step aside.

Solere, a key member of his team, said on Twitter yesterday he was quitting. Already gone from Fillon’s campaign are two deputy directors, the treasurer and his foreign affairs point man Bruno Le Maire. Le Pen, campaigning on an anti-immigration and anti-EU platform, has a clear lead in polling ahead of the first round in an election influenced by the same populist themes that swept Donald Trump to power in the United States and led British voters to opt to leave the European Union. Surveys currently show however that Le Pen will be beaten in the decisive runoff on May 7 by either the fast-rising Macron or the conservative candidate.

The danger for the right is that Fillon has slipped to third place in polling and risks being eliminated in the first round. Fillon hit out at the justice system this week, claiming he was the victim of a “political assassination” over the fake jobs allegations that were first made by the Canard Enchaîné newspaper. Investigators are probing what work Fillon’s wife Penelope actually performed for her pay. A source close to Juppe told Le Parisien newspaper yesterday that the veteran politician “felt ill” when he heard Fillon questioning the impartiality of judges. —AFP

## BREXIT TRIGGER STILL FIXED FOR END-MARCH

**BRATISLAVA:** Britain will still formally trigger its departure from the European Union by the end of March, the minister responsible for managing “Brexit” said yesterday. David Davis’s comments, during a visit to Bratislava, came just two days after a vote by the House of Lords called that date into question. When asked by journalists about the date Davis said “Yes”, the conservative government would be able to trigger Article 50 of the EU’s Lisbon treaty by the end of this month. A two-year period of negotiations will follow.

The House of Lords, Britain’s unelected upper chamber of parliament, voted Wednesday to amend and thereby delay the bill that would allow Prime Minister Theresa May to begin Brexit negotiations. The Lords, where May’s Conservative Party does not hold a majority, have demanded guarantees for EU nationals living in Britain, a matter that the premier had wanted to tackle later. The defeat means the bill must return to the lower House of Commons for deliberation, delaying final approval just weeks before the self-imposed deadline for starting Brexit negotiations.

At a joint press conference, Davis told Slovakia’s Prime Minister Robert Fico that the government wanted to preserve the rights of EU citizens now living in Britain. “For existing citizens in the UK, we want something that is very close to or identical to that of the rights of British citizens in terms of rights of residence, access to welfare,” Davis said. “But that is something that will have to be agreed between us, in the whole 28,” he added, referring to all EU member states.

Hundreds of thousands of EU citizens living and working in Britain, a majority from eastern states such as Slovakia and Poland, are demanding that their rights be protected. It is estimated that at least 1.2 million British citizens currently live and work in other EU member states. They, too, are lobbying to preserve their rights post-Brexit. —AFP



**BRATISLAVA:** Britain’s Secretary of State for Exiting the European Union, David Davis, left, and Slovakian Prime Minister Robert Fico, right, attend a press conference after their meeting in Bratislava yesterday. —AFP



## UN CONCERNED AT SERIOUS ABUSES, TORTURE IN SRI LANKA

**GENEVA:** The UN yesterday warned that a range of serious abuses, including torture, appear to remain widespread in Sri Lanka and criticized the country's slow progress in addressing wartime crimes. "A number of serious human rights violations... are reportedly continuing to occur in Sri Lanka, including the harassment or surveillance of human rights defenders and victims of violations, police abuse and excessive use of force," the UN human rights office said in a statement.

It expressed alarm while launching a report on Sri Lanka's progress in deal-

ing with crimes committed during its 37-year Tamil separatist conflict that ended in 2009.

In particular, "the use of torture remains a serious concern," the report said, pointing to the nation's own Human Rights Commission's acknowledgement of complaints illustrating the "routine use of torture by the police throughout the country as a means of interrogation and investigation." "The prevailing culture of impunity for perpetrating torture has undoubtedly contributed to this situation," the report said.

### Sense of urgency

Such abuses are continuing even as Sri Lanka's "worryingly slow" progress addressing its wartime past risks derailing the move toward lasting peace, the rights office warned. President Maithripala Sirisena's government has agreed to a United Nations resolution which, among other things, called for special war crimes tribunals and reparations for victims of the conflict, which claimed at least 100,000 lives. In the report launched yesterday, the UN human rights office acknowledged that the government had made posi-

tive advances on constitutional and legal reforms, land restitution and symbolic gestures towards reconciliation.

But it cautioned that the measures taken so far had been "inadequate, lacked coordination and a sense of urgency." UN rights chief Zeid Ra'ad Al Hussein was concerned that "hard-won gains could prove illusory if they are not tethered to a comprehensive, robust strategy," the statement said. "I urge the government and people of Sri Lanka to prioritize justice alongside reconciliation to ensure that the horrors of the past are firmly dealt with, never to recur," he said. —AFP

## FRESH FEAR OF HONOR VIOLENCE STALKS PAKISTANI VICTIM

**GUJRANWALA, Pakistan:** In early three years after Saba Qaiser's father and uncle shot her in the face, rolled her in a rug and threw her in a river for marrying without their consent, the 21-year-old from Pakistan's Punjab province is again afraid for her life. After surviving the attack in the city of Gujranwala, 225 kilometers from Islamabad, Qaiser was determined to ensure the men were brought to justice. It was a rare move in a nation where hundreds of women and men are killed each year by their families over perceived damage to "honor" for slights such as eloping or mingling with the opposite sex.

Even though Qaiser's father and uncle were arrested and jailed, Qaiser was pressured by relatives to forgive them under a law that until last October allowed killers who had been pardoned by family members to walk free. Since the case did not go to trial, the men were released after two months in jail. "Although I had to tell the court that I had forgiven them, I never did from my heart," said Qaiser, whose story was told in the 2016 Oscar-winning documentary, "A Girl in the River: The Price of Forgiveness" by filmmaker Sharmeen Obaid-Chinoy.

Her uncle never forgot the "dishonor" she had brought on the family, and when he came across a trailer for Obaid-Chinoy's film last year, he was furious, Qaiser said. "He came to my house at night and asked for me and started shooting from his pistol. I was lucky to survive his attack," said Qaiser, whose left cheek bears a scar running from mouth to temple from the previous attack. Qaiser's father and uncle were once again taken into custody, in April 2016, and are expected to be freed later this month after Qaiser decided not to press charges against them.

Women's rights campaigners say the case illustrates the difficulties of prosecuting such crimes despite new legislation against "honor killings", which removed the loophole that once enabled pardoned killers to go free. The new law was passed in October, three months after the murder of an outspoken social media star, Qandeel Baloch, whose brother was arrested in connection with her death by strangulation. The new law still gives victims' relatives the option of forgiving attackers, but only in cases where the culprits have been sentenced to death. Even if a pardon is given, attackers face a mandatory life sentence. Yet the nature of honor violence means many crimes are never reported in Pakistan since most attackers are close kin often living under the same roof as their victims, activists say.

### Family bonds

After the attack, Qaiser's mother was forbidden by her husband from seeing Qaiser and forced to move to the northwestern city of Sargodha in Punjab province, 175 kilometers away from her daughter. She visits her husband in prison every week. But as soon as the visit is over, she secretly sees her daughter. "My husband is not angry at her. It's his brother who provokes him and after they are out of the jail, we will break ties with him," she said. But Qaiser fears the matter will not end there.

"He'll be madder at me and will want to harm me for sending him to jail for the second time," she said in the dimly-lit room where she lives with her husband and two children. —Reuters



**Surkhet, Nepal:** In this photograph, Nepalese women Pabitra Giri, left, and Yum Kumari Giri, right, sit by a fire as they live in a Chhaupadi hut in Surkhet District, some 520km west of Kathmandu. —AFP

## HINDU RITUAL FORCES NEPALI WOMEN INTO MONTHLY EXILE

PRACTICE CONSIDERS MENSTRUATING WOMEN UNTOUCHABLE

**SURKHET:** The small thatched hut in western Nepal has no walls to keep out the cold. Inside is a raised platform where Pabitra Giri sleeps during her period, banished from her home by a centuries-old Hindu ritual. Below the hut, known as a chhaupadi, Giri lights a small fire to keep her warm. The smoke rises up to the small cramped area where she sleeps, making her eyes water. "We think that if we don't follow chhaupadi bad things will happen and if we do, it (the gods) will favor us. I feel it does good, so I follow it during my periods," Giri, 23, explained.

"Now I am used to it. I used to be afraid in the beginning because I was away from my family during dark nights and the place is like this," Giri said gesturing around her. The practice is linked to Hinduism and considers women untouchable when they menstruate. They are banished from the home-barred from touching food, religious icons, cattle and men-and forced into a monthly exile sleeping in basic huts. In some areas, women are also made to spend up to a month in the chhaupadi after they have given birth.

Two women recently died while following chhaupadi-one of smoke inhalation after she lit a fire for warmth, while the other death is unexplained. These incidents have spurred fresh impetus to

end the practice. Chhaupadi was banned a decade ago, but new legislation currently before parliament will criminalize the practice, making it an imprisonable offence to force women to follow the ritual. "Women were accepting chhaupadi as tradition. After defining chhaupadi an offence by law the tradition will be discouraged saving rights and lives of many women," Krishna Bhakta Pokhrel, a lawmaker pushing the bill, said.

### For the gods

But previous attempts to stop chhaupadi have failed to address the deep superstitious beliefs that underpin it. Even in the capital Kathmandu, three in four homes practice some form of restriction on women during their periods, usually banning them from the kitchen and prayer room, said Pema Lhaki, a women's right activist who has campaigned for years to end chhaupadi. Most attempts to end the ritual have focused on destroying the chhaupadi but that hasn't stopped women being banned from their homes-instead, in some areas, it has seen women forced to sleep in even more rudimentary huts or even outside, Lhaki said.

"Until we make the woman herself make the decision, the destruction of menstrual huts is more for external pur-

poses. The menstrual huts should remain. Success is when they remain but they don't go into them," she said, accusing the government of encouraging the chhaupadi to be destroyed to meet quotas set by international donors. In a village a few miles from where Giri lives, Khagisara Regmi is considering building a chhaupadi. After her husband died eight years ago, the 40-year-old found it too difficult to follow chhaupadi-which would bar her from cooking or touching her son when she was menstruating-while bringing up her four young children.

But a few years ago, her only son started having fits. When a nearby hospital failed to cure them, Regmi turned to the local shaman who told her that her son's seizures were because she hadn't followed the ancient ritual. "Because I didn't observe purity the gods were displeased. It wasn't favorable for my son," she said. It is often the village shamans-who fill a void left by woefully poor medical services in rural Nepal-and the elderly who are the guardians of the ritual.

Sabitra Giri, 70, defiantly told AFP that the Maoists during Nepal's brutal civil war tried to end chhaupadi as part of an anti-religion drive-but failed. "You can cut me but while I'm alive this practice will continue," she said. — AFP





**SEPANG:** North Korean national Ri Jong Chol, centre, is escorted with a heavy police presence as he leaves the Sepang police headquarters in Sepang yesterday. —AFP

## FRUSTRATED MALAYSIAN POLICE RELEASE NORTH KOREAN SUSPECT

### SUSPECT WAS INVOLVED IN ILLICIT ACTIVITIES

**KUALA LUMPUR:** Malaysia issued an arrest warrant for a North Korean airline employee yesterday over the assassination of the half-brother of Pyongyang's leader, after frustrated police had to release their only other suspect from the isolated nation. Ri Jong-Chol is among eight North Koreans suspected of involvement in the dramatic killing of Kim Jong-Nam, the half-brother of the reclusive nation's leader, who was poisoned with a banned nerve agent at Kuala Lumpur International Airport. Malaysia's attorney general has announced there was insufficient evidence to charge 47-year-old Ri.

"The deportation will take place tonight. He will be escorted by two North Korean officials to Beijing and from Beijing to Pyongyang," deputy prime minister Ahmad Zahid Hamidi told reporters. "The police probe showed he was not working as stated in his documents but was involved in illicit activities detrimental to our security." As he was led out of a police station outside the capital under tight security and handed over to immigration authorities, police chief Khalid Abu Bakar said he regretted the release.

"We believe that Ri Jong Chol played a part in Kim Chol's murder but unfortunately we lack evidence to charge him," he said, using the name given in the passport carried by Kim Jong-Nam. "We are frustrated because of a lack of evidence," he said via text message from Saudi Arabia where he is on a religious pilgrimage. However, he denied political or diplomatic pressure

had been a factor in the release, saying it was purely an investigative issue.

A senior police official who asked not to be named told AFP that Ri had been handed over to immigration authorities in the administrative capital of Putrajaya. "I do not know when he will be deported as they will need to sort out the travel documents," he said. Ri's release came two days after two women—one Vietnamese and one Indonesian—were charged with murdering Kim. Seven other North Koreans are wanted in connection with the killing.

#### Arrest warrants

Yesterday police issued an arrest warrant for a North Korean airline employee, Kim Uk Il, 37, in connection with the murder. They also requested that Hyon Kwang Song, second secretary at the North Korean embassy, assist the probe. Both are believed to be in Malaysia. Four others are thought to have fled to Pyongyang on the day of the murder. Ri was arrested days after Kim suffered an agonizing death when he was attacked as he waited to board a flight to Macau.

CCTV footage shows two women approaching the heavyset 45-year-old and apparently smearing his face with a cloth. Police say he suffered a seizure and died less than 20 minutes later. Swabs of the dead man's face revealed traces of VX, a synthetic chemical so deadly that it is classed as a weapon of mass destruction. Indonesian Siti Aisyah, 25, and Doan Thi Huong, 28, from Vietnam, face the death penalty if found guilty. Both women say they

thought they were merely taking part in a prank video.

South Korea has pointed the finger of blame at North Korea, citing what they say was a standing order from leader Kim Jong-Un to kill his exiled half-brother who may have been seen as a potential rival. North Korea, which has not acknowledged the dead man's identity, has vehemently protested the investigation, saying Malaysia is in cahoots with its enemies. In response, Malaysia has cancelled a visa-free travel deal with North Korea—a key conduit to the outside world—and recalled its envoy to Pyongyang.

#### The facts remain

On Thursday a senior North Korean diplomat leading a delegation to Kuala Lumpur reiterated Pyongyang's assertion that Kim had died of a heart attack, dismissing the use of a nerve agent, and urged Malaysia to release his body. Police chief Khalid quashed the claims. "Our investigations supported by expert reports confirmed that Kim was murdered. North Korea can say what they like but the facts remain," he told national news agency Bernama.

Malaysia yesterday also stepped up its criticism of the use of the banned nerve agent, condemning "the use of such a chemical weapon by anyone, anywhere and under any circumstances". "Its use at a public place could have endangered the general public," the foreign ministry said, adding that the Hague-based Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons was helping it investigate. —AFP

## HUNDREDS MARCH AS SHOOTING OF BOY SHOCKS THAI SOUTH

**BANGKOK:** More than 1,000 people marched in Thailand's insurgency-torn south yesterday to condemn the killing of a Buddhist family, including an eight-year-old boy, as a sudden spike in violence undercuts progress in peace talks. The under-reported rebellion waged by Malay Muslim insurgents against the Buddhist-majority Thai state has killed more than 6,800 people, mostly civilians, since it erupted 13 years ago. That toll rose Thursday after suspected militants ambushed the car of a deputy village headman, shooting him dead along with his eight-year-old son, wife and sister-in-law.

The family was driving to school on a remote road in the Ruso district of Narathiwat province when the gunmen attacked. The ambush provoked outrage from religious leaders and civil society groups from both the Muslim and Buddhist communities, who came together for yesterday's march through Ruso. Dozens of local school children also joined the demonstration, carrying a banner that said "stop the shooting, stop the killing". "The aim of the rally is to denounce the killing of innocent people," Colonel Ruangsak Buadaeng, a local police commander, said.

Thursday also saw a 44-year-old Muslim leader killed in a drive-by shooting and three plainclothes soldiers gunned down in front of stunned shoppers at a night market in Pattani province. The insurgents, who operate in tight and secretive cells, rarely claim their attacks. Shootings are frequent but it is often hard to work out whether they are related to the rebellion, criminal activity or personal disputes in the region.

#### Safety zone

But Thursday's wave of violence appeared timed to undermine recent gains made in peace talks between the army and the Mara Patani—an umbrella group claiming to represent the insurgents. The Thai army and the Mara Patani this week agreed to create a limited "safety zone" in the region, as a trust building measure. The deal, tantamount to a highly localized ceasefire, was a small but rare step forward in years of stuttering talks. But analysts say the Mara do not represent the most active armed militant faction and have played down the significance of the "safety zone" announcement. —AFP



**NARATHIWAT:** Children hold a banner that reads, stop the killing, stop the shooting during a march for peace in Thailand's restive southern province of Narathiwat yesterday. —AFP

## PHILIPPINES' DUTERTE WILL PAY PRICE FOR DRUGS KILLINGS

**MANILA:** A senator and detained critic of Philippine President Rodrigo Duterte's war on drugs has warned he and his "blind followers" will pay for ignoring alleged extrajudicial killings, and should stop trying to fool the world their crackdown was above board. Leila de Lima, who last year led a Senate probe into alleged summary killings during Duterte's anti-drugs campaign, was arrested last week and has been remanded in police detention on drug charges.

"In due time, your president and those who blindly enforce his illegal orders to kill, fabricate evidence and concoct lies will be held accountable," De Lima said in a handwritten note posted on her official Facebook page yesterday. The senator was responding to rebuttals by the president's office and the police of a report by Human Rights Watch, which on Thursday challenged official accounts that thousands of killings during police operations were in self-defense, and that due process had been followed. —Reuters



# ZIMBABWE SEEKS AID AFTER FLOODS KILL OVER 240 IN THREE MONTHS

**HARARE:** At least 246 people have been killed by floods in Zimbabwe since December, state media reported yesterday, as the government launched an appeal for foreign aid. The Herald newspaper said at least 128 people had been injured, 2,000 left homeless, 74 schools damaged and 70 dams had burst in floods across the country that followed a prolonged drought. "There is an inadequate supply of tents, foodstuffs and drugs for the affected people," Local Government Minister Saviour Kasukuwere told the paper.

"There is a need for blankets and clothing for the affected families and they are at risk of contracting pneumonia and acute respiratory infections." He appealed for emergency funding from international donors, private companies and the public. "After working hard responding to the effects of drought, the same people are now suffering because of excessive floods," Bishow Parajuli, of the United Nations Development Program (UNDP), told The Herald.

Kasukuwere said rainfall levels had been above normal in most parts of Zimbabwe in recent months. Government officials were not immediately able to comment to AFP. Among the worst affected areas were

south-western districts including Tsholotsho, where at least 859 people were living in a makeshift camp after their homes were destroyed by heavy rains. State television on Thursday showed images of marooned villagers in Tsholotsho being rescued by airforce helicopters.

The meteorological department has warned of further heavy rains, cautioning people against crossing flooded rivers and bridges. The floods came as Zimbabwe was hoping to recover from a severe drought which ravaged most of the southern African country and destroyed many food crops. The country now faces more food shortages following the floods and an outbreak of the fall armyworm caterpillar that devours crops, according to the agriculture ministry.

A former regional bread basket, Zimbabwe has relied on imports in recent years to top up local harvests. Critics blame the perennial shortages on President Robert Mugabe's controversial land reforms which saw the seizure of white-owned farms for redistribution to landless blacks, most of whom lacked the means to farm. Mugabe, 93, has blamed the poor yields on erratic rains due to climate change.—AFP

## DEPORTED GRANDMOTHER FROM SINGAPORE FIGHTS FOR UK RETURN

**SINGAPORE:** Twenty-seven years of marriage, two British sons and a granddaughter could not protect Singaporean Irene Clennell from deportation, but now the feisty grandma is fighting to get back to her family. Clennell, 52, was deported to Singapore Sunday, despite being the primary caregiver for her sickly British husband John, who she said has sunk into a mire of depression since she left. "He was crying," she told AFP in an interview at her sister's cramped suburban home in the Southeast Asian city state, where she is sleeping on the sofa as she tries to find a legal way back to her family in Britain.

John had femoral artery bypass in his leg last year and suffered a subsequent hernia. Since then, she said, he has struggled to walk far and needed help dressing himself. "Before, it was different because he was fit and well—he was able to look after himself. But now he can't because of his condition," she said, adding that she had been his sole caregiver at their County Durham home. Clennell has been holed-up at her sister's Singapore flat, talking to the media and trying to coordinate her legal fight to be

allowed back into Britain since she was deported Feb 26.

Her British sister-in-law has hired an immigration lawyer and set up a crowd funding campaign to cover her legal fees, which had raised more than £53,000 (\$65,000) yesterday. Her husband is so desperate for them to be reunited he has written to a French minister asking whether they could live in France as a family, said Clennell, who arrived in Singapore with hardly any money or possessions after a period in UK immigration detention.

### My mistake

Clennell first arrived in Britain in 1988 and worked as a receptionist at a London hotel where she met her husband, a construction worker. She was subsequently granted indefinite leave to remain in the country. But she lost this right after spending long periods of time in Singapore, initially to have help from her family raising her young children, and then to care for her elderly parents before their deaths. Clennell said she now regrets leaving for so long as she didn't realize it would create so many problems.—AFP



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## TRUMP'S BROMANCE WITH RUSSIA'S PUTIN APPEARS TO BE COOLING

**WASHINGTON:** With his administration on the defensive over investigations into alleged Russian meddling in last year's election, US President Donald Trump is no longer tweeting praise for his Kremlin counterpart. Less than five weeks after he took office, the chances of a spring thaw in relations between Washington and Moscow - once buoyed by an apparent "bromance" between Trump and President Vladimir Putin during the US political campaign - are looking much dimmer, US officials say.

His top foreign policy advisers have started talking tougher on Russia, and the apparent cooling of Trump's approach follows the resignation last month of his first national security adviser, Michael Flynn, a vocal advocate of warmer ties with Moscow. He was replaced by Army Lieutenant General HR McMaster, who is more hawkish on Russia and allied with Defense Secretary Jim Mattis, a retired Marine Corps general.

In one other sign of a stiffening attitude, two officials said the administration had offered the job of top Russia adviser at the National Security Council to Russia scholar Fiona Hill, a leading Putin critic. Her books include "Mr Putin, Operative in the Kremlin", an allusion to the Russian leader's past as a KGB officer. It was not immediately known whether she had accepted the post.

Pressure also has come to bear from Trump's fellow Republicans in Congress, long wary of his campaign overtures to Putin, and from European allies anxious over any sign that the president might prematurely ease sanctions imposed on Russia after its annexation of Crimea and support for pro-Russian rebels in Ukraine. Posing fresh obstacles to rapprochement with Russia, analysts say, is mounting evidence that Attorney General Jeff Sessions, the president's son-in-law Jared Kushner, and other members of Trump's team communicated with Russian officials during and after the presidential campaign.

The mushrooming inquiry - which is now focused on Sessions and his contacts with Moscow's ambassador to Washington - has fueled calls for expanded investigations into allegations that Moscow sought to sway the election's outcome. "There is so much panic in the US political establishment over Russia right now that Trump will be boxed in on what he can do," said Matthew Rojansky, a Russia expert at the Wilson Center think tank in Washington. White House officials say there were no improper contacts, and Russia denies any meddling. —Reuters

## RAILROAD THEFTS AND GUNS: A DEADLY MIX IN CHICAGO

**CHICAGO:** When street-gang thieves slipped with ease into a Norfolk Southern rail yard on Chicago's South Side and ripped locks off one train, they likely expected to see merchandise like toys or tennis shoes. What they beheld instead was a gangster's jackpot: box after box of brand new guns. The guns had been en route from New Hampshire weapon maker Sturm, Ruger and Co. to Spokane, Washington. Instead, the .45-caliber Ruger revolvers and other firearms spread quickly into surrounding high-crime neighborhoods.

Along with two other major gun thefts within three years, the robbery helped fuel a wave of violence on Chicago's streets. The 2015 heist of the 111 guns, as well as one in 2014 and another last September from the same 63rd Street Rail Yard highlight a tragic confluence. Chicago's biggest rail yards are on the gang- and homicide-plagued South and West sides where most of the city's 762 killings happened last year. Chicago's leaders regularly blame lax gun laws in Illinois and nearby states that enable a flow of illegal weapons to the city's gangs and criminals.

But community leaders and security experts say no one seems to be taking responsibility for train-yard gun thefts. Only 16 of the stolen Rugers have been recovered since the 2015 break-in, according to hundreds of recent court records. One was used in a Jan 22, 2016, shooting. Police woke an attempted-murder suspect and found one by his bed. Another was in a dealer's home alongside 429 bags of heroin. Police recovered another during a traffic stop; the driver said his friend had just been shot 10 times and he had to protect himself. —AP



**NEW YORK:** In this file photo, people carry posters during a rally against President Donald Trump's executive order banning travel from seven Muslim-majority nations, in New York's Times Square. —AP

## TRUMP'S NEW TRAVEL BAN DELAYED URGENCY OF NEW TRAVEL BAN FADES

**NEW YORK:** President Donald Trump was barely in office when he signed an executive order restricting immigration from seven Muslim-majority nations. There was not a moment to waste, he said, because any delay would allow the "bad dudes" to rush into the US. Then federal courts struck down his ban. The White House said a new version would be coming. That was a month ago. The urgency seems to have faded. There has been no further legal appeal.

And announcement of a replacement order has been repeatedly postponed, a reflection of legal difficulties, shifting administration priorities and politics. It now won't be unveiled until next week at the earliest, says a White House official. "The holdup flies in the face of the mythology as to why they needed to rush the bill in the first place," said Doris Meissner, who was head of the Immigration and Naturalization Service for President Bill Clinton.

"It was a contrived argument and a reflection of inexperience and a rush to fulfill a campaign promise." The delay stands in stark contrast to the ban's rollout, a swift action designed as the centerpiece of a barrage of executive orders to set a bold tone for the Trump administration's first days. Trump signed it late on a Friday afternoon, prompting widespread protests at the nation's airports while hardening battle lines between the president's supporters and opponents.

But the rushed order, composed with little outside consultation, drew fierce bipartisan criticism as federal agencies, foreign governments and travelers were left confused to its con-

tents, creating chaos at airports and leaving the White House to defend the rollout by saying that its speed was necessary. "If we waited five days, 10 days, six months to begin establishing the first series of controls, we would be leaving the homeland unnecessarily vulnerable," said senior policy adviser Stephen Miller who, along with chief strategist Steve Bannon, was the architect of the ban.

But the unveiling of a new order has been postponed at least three times since then, and the White House has shifted its tone on the ban - in part by not talking about it. Shifting priorities, Trump has spent more time at events meant to boost his economic agenda and on Thursday appeared on an aircraft carrier to tout his plans for a military buildup. During his first speech to Congress on Tuesday, he did not specifically mention the ban, merely saying that the administration "will shortly take new steps to keep our nation safe."

After Trump received high marks for that speech, aides scuttled plans to sign the new travel ban the next day, not wanting the controversial measure to overtake some of the best headlines of the young administration. Moreover, public opinion has shifted against the ban. A Quinnipiac poll conducted in early January, before details were known, found that Americans supported "suspending immigration from 'terror prone' regions" by 48 percent to 42 percent.

But a follow-up poll after the ban was implemented found a 12 point net swing against the idea of a travel ban. "This didn't go right the first time: The optics at the airports were bad and

constituents flooded their lawmakers with calls," said Linda Fowler, professor of government at Dartmouth College. "The White House must know it has to get it exactly right this time. When this ban is released, more lawsuits are coming. To lose a second time would be devastating."

Government lawyers who defended the ban in court the first time made its speed a crucial part of their argument. August Flentje, special counsel to the US attorney general, told judges on the Ninth US Circuit Court of Appeals that the need to quickly enforce the ban prevented the administration from gathering evidence that citizens from the seven countries, including refugees, pose a serious threat of terrorism, a claim the judges did not buy.

When the court rejected the ban, the White House vowed to immediately and simultaneously appeal the decision and craft a new order, though Trump later acknowledged that delaying the first order might have helped it surmount legal challenges. "Now if I would've done it in a month, everything would have been perfect," the president said in mid-February. "The problem is we would have wasted a lot of time, and maybe a lot of lives because a lot of bad people would have come into our country."

But the government didn't pursue its appeal. And the Pentagon and State Department have fought the White House about which countries should be included in the plan. And weeks have passed without the release of the new order, even though White House press secretary Sean Spicer said last week it was "finalized." The next rollout, he said, would be "flawless." —AP



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NEW YORK: Snapchat co-founders Bobby Murphy (left) and CEO Evan Spiegel (center) ring the opening bell at the New York Stock Exchange as the company celebrates its IPO on Thursday. — AP

## BIG LEAP FOR SNAPCHAT

### MESSAGING APP DEBUTS ON WALL STREET

**WASHINGTON:** Snapchat owner Snap Inc rode a wave of euphoria in its Wall Street debut Thursday as investors sent shares of the popular messaging app soaring. Snap jumped 44 percent to close at \$24.48 in its inaugural trading day, after raising \$3.4 billion in the richest US tech company listing since Facebook in 2012. The California startup known for its disappearing photo messages priced its offering Wednesday at \$17 to give it a market value of \$24 billion.

The strong debut lifted its value to \$28 billion, or more than double that of social media rival Twitter, which went public in 2013. Analysts have offered mixed views on the future of Snap, debating whether it can mimic the success of Facebook or end up in the tech junkyard. Debra Williamson of the research firm eMarketer said Snapchat inspires the same kind of excitement as Facebook in its early stages. "This is a company that is fundamentally changing communication," she said.

"This makes Snapchat as exciting a property as Facebook when it launched. And it has a lock on the youth market which is critically important for new technologies."

Snapchat has more than 158 million daily active users creating 2.5 billion "snaps" a day in 20 different languages. It expects \$936 million in revenues in 2017, and has partnerships with major brands and publishers. While most of its users are under 30, it has been gaining traction with older smartphone users as it expands its offerings of content from its media partners.

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. It remains unclear if Snap can expand beyond its core base of young users or how it will fare in many international markets in a competitive social media landscape.

#### Value questions

Brian Wieser at Pivotal Research Group said Snap is massively overvalued, and set a target price of \$10 for the shares - 40 percent below the offering price. "Snap is a promising early stage company with significant opportunity ahead of itself," Wieser said in a research note. "Unfortunately, it is significantly overvalued given the likely scale of its long-term opportunity and the risks associated with executing against that opportunity."

Wieser said Snap has "an innovative, large-scale, and distinctively young-skewing platform which is establishing itself as a magnet for business unit talent and content partners alike" but its prospects are still unproven. And it is not clear if Snapchat's founders have what it takes to grow into a major force, he cautioned. "Investors will also be exposed to what appears to be a sub-optimal corporate structure operated by a senior management team lacking experience transforming a successful

new product into a successful company." One issue raised by analysts is that the IPO will give new investors non-voting stock, allowing co-founders Evan Spiegel and Bobby Murphy unusual control over the company. Anil Dash, a tech industry entrepreneur who blogs about the industry, said the share structure is worrisome. "It is absolutely not fine that \$SNAP has floated non-voting shares. That will end in pure folly," Dash tweeted. Snap also has departed from tech sector tradition by operating without a campus, with its employees scattered in various locations around its Southern California base.

Global Research Equities analyst Trip Chowdhry warned that Snap's valuation was far too optimistic. "Snap is a great company at the valuation of \$500 million," Chowdhry said. "It is a total disaster at anything beyond that." But, "in 1.5 years, you will get a better entry point - let all the hot air go out, let the private investors cash out, let's see how the industry evolves." — AFP



## WORLD MARKETS DIVERGE AHEAD OF FED SPEECH

**LONDON:** World equity markets trod water yesterday as investors awaited signals from Federal Reserve chief Janet Yellen about the possible timing of the next interest rate hike. "Global equities are lacklustre into the weekend as profit taking grips investors on both sides of the pond following recent record highs," said Accendo analyst Henry Croft. "Investors are also looking ahead to a choir of Fed speakers - including chair Yellen - this afternoon ahead of the central bank's self-imposed blackout period before the March 15 meeting," he said.

Oanda analyst Craig Erlam said the week "has already been dominated by the US cen-

tral bank, with a large number of Fed officials making public appearances ahead of the blackout period-which starts tomorrow - and voicing their support for a rate hike very soon." The odds were now more than 75 percent that a rate hike was forthcoming, the expert said, with some seeing an even higher probability.

Yellen and four more officials, including vice chairman Stanley Fischer, were scheduled to speak later yesterday and "it is now down to them to fine tune the message and ensure markets are properly positioned ahead" of the next rate-setting meeting, he said. Even Fed governor Lael Brainard, a so-called "dove" on monetary policy, suggested rates could rise soon.

### 'Fait accompli'

The "hawks" at the Federal Reserve are more concerned about the threat of rising inflation, especially if tax cuts and spending fuel the economy, but the "doves" warn of the risk of raising interest rates based on policies that have not been announced, and whose implications cannot yet be measured. Brainard "has tipped the scales in overwhelming favour of a rate hike as the market now views March as fait accompli," one trader said.

The dollar had rallied strongly since the start of February, but "whether the dollar is able to build on these gains in today's session will depend on just how hawkish policy mak-

ers are," said Oanda's Erlam. The greenback broke above 114 yen for the first time in two weeks on Thursday and remained above the level heading into the weekend break.

Elsewhere, oil prices climbed after tumbling more than two percent Thursday in reaction to the stronger dollar - which makes the commodity more expensive for holders of other currencies - and news that Russia was well short of its promised output cuts.

Despite agreeing to slash production as part of a deal with global producers to address a global glut, Moscow's reductions were only a third of what it pledged in January and February. — AFP



**CHENNAI:** An Indian boy looks at artificial floral bouquets at a market yesterday. — AFP

## DOLLAR RETREATS

**NEW YORK:** The dollar weakened against a basket of major currencies yesterday ahead of a speech by Federal Reserve chief Janet Yellen that could affirm expectations for an interest rate hike on March 15. The dollar is up about 0.74 percent this week, its fourth straight weekly gain, boosted by hawkish comments from a slew of Fed speakers that have led to a dramatic revising of rate hike expectations. Speeches from Yellen and Fed Vice Chair Stanley Fischer are now widely expected to be the final clues to the timing of the next rate hike.

Futures traders now are pricing in an 80 percent chance of a Fed hike in March, up from 35 percent on Tuesday, according to the CME Group's FedWatch Tool. "The markets are looking for validation for the increase in Fed rate hike expectations from comments from Fed Chair Yellen. That's the key issue for the market right now," said Shaun Osborne, chief FX strategist, at Scotiabank in Toronto.

The dollar was down 0.32 percent at 101.87 against a basket of six major currencies. On Thursday, the index hit a seven-week high of 102.26. Against the Japanese yen the greenback was little changed. The euro rose 0.48 percent against the dollar after a poll showed French far-right candidate Marine Le Pen's chances in the country's presidential election dimming.

While the French election news may be supportive for the euro at the margin, the political race has not necessarily been the main driver for the euro's recent weakness, Scotiabank's Osborne said. "That's more about the shift in relative yields and monetary stance given the move in short-term rates in the US," he said. US two-year Treasury yields hit their highest in more than 7-1/2 years on Thursday.

Rate hike expectations also weighed on the Australian and New Zealand dollars, both of which fell against the greenback. The kiwi dollar was down 0.69 percent, while the Aussie was down 0.09 percent. "People were not expecting the Fed to move in March so last month they were putting on more (interest rate) carry trades in these currencies," said Bank of Montreal head of European FX strategist Stephen Gallo. "That is clearly coming off." Mexico's peso strengthened to its strongest level since the U.S. presidential election in November, after US Secretary of Commerce Wilbur Ross said a sensible trade deal with Mexico will help the battered currency. — Reuters

## US FED AND ECB GOING THEIR SEPARATE WAYS

### GLOBAL ECONOMY WEEK AHEAD

**FRANKFURT:** Two of the world's biggest central banks are likely to find themselves with a bigger policy gap by the end of the coming fortnight the European Central Bank on Thursday will resist calls to start tightening policy against surging inflation but robust US jobs data on Friday could seal the case for another Federal Reserve hike the week after. So, let's say minus 0.4 percent rates in Europe and more than 0.75 percent in Washington.

With just weeks to go before contentious French and Dutch elections, the ECB will be keen not to rock the boat, so it is likely to give just a token nod to robust growth figures, steering clear of any policy hint that may give emerging populist movements ammunition. A Reuters poll showed unanimity for no change. But the balancing act may be more difficult than it looks. With growth on its best run since before the financial crisis and inflation peeking just above the ECB's target, calls are mounting, particularly in Germany, for the bank to scale back its 2.3 trillion euro (\$2.42 trillion) bond buying scheme and raise its negative interest rates.

Doves hold a comfortable majority among the policymakers, however, so any shift will come at the margins. In practice that could mean increased inflation forecasts, letting an ultra-cheap lending scheme to banks expire as scheduled, and dropping a reference to the risk that growth may disappoint. Still, ECB President Mario Draghi will probably avoid any discussion about winding down asset

buys, even pushing back on calls by some rate setters to tweak the ECB's guidance, giving up its reference to further rate cuts, a possibility markets have already priced out.

"If the French presidential election also passes without turbulence, and growth and inflation data remain solid, the ECB might turn more hawkish in its meeting on June 8," Reinhard Cluse, economist at investment bank UBS, said. "This would then leave the meeting on July 20 for preparing the markets for the tapering (off asset-buying) on September 7." For now though, Draghi will stick to his line that the inflation surge is temporary, growth is fragile and political risks clouds the outlook, requiring stimulus, a Reuters poll of analysts showed.

Having tightened policy in 2011 just months before the euro zone debt crisis started spiralling out of control, the ECB will be desperate not to move too early, even if it risks being called out by some for moving too late.

### US jobs

The Fed, meanwhile, must deal with what Draghi dubbed a high-class problem: solid growth, full employment and returning inflation. Non-farm payrolls yesterday showed an increase of 186,000 jobs, probably enough to push the Fed to move. Unemployment benefits already fell to near a 44-year low late last month, indicating further tightening of the labor market.

Indeed, markets have now almost fully

priced in a hike in March, the third since rates bottomed out at the height of the crisis, and two more increases could still come before the end of the year. Robust jobs growth threatens to overheat the labour market, just as inflation is heading higher, with the Fed's preferred measure now in the upper end of the range central bank officials in December estimated would be reached this year.

Manufacturing growth is also firming, offsetting relatively weak consumer demand, good enough for even the most dovish Fed officials to argue for a hike sooner rather than later. Soothing global growth fears, meanwhile, China is expected to report another set of strong figures for both exports and imports, indicating that even if overall growth is slowing and debt is rising fast, the slowdown remains under control, mitigating the risk for emerging market economies.

Indeed, China's factory activity expanded faster than expected in February, firming arguments for the central bank to raise short-term interest rates by another 10 basis points as soon as March. Data due on Wednesday are expected to show Chinese exports up by 10 percent in February while imports could have risen by 20 percent, a boon for countries like Australia, which supply China with raw materials. Indeed, the Reserve Bank of Australia may signal on Tuesday that policy easing is done, given the economy's convincing rebound last quarter, rising commodity exports and a robust increase in household debt levels. — Reuters



## JAPAN INFLATION TICKS UP AFTER YEARLONG SLIDE



**TOKYO:** Passengers exit the Naka-Meguro subway station yesterday. — AFP

**TOKYO:** Japanese consumer prices picked up in January for the first time in almost a year, government data showed yesterday, halting a long string of declines as Tokyo struggles to put deflation in the rear view mirror. A key inflation index, which excludes the volatile cost of fresh food, rose 0.1 percent from a year earlier, the internal affairs ministry said. The increase, largely due to rebound in oil and energy prices, marked the first uptick in 11 months and ended the longest string of price declines in more than five years. It was also the first positive monthly inflation figure since Dec 2015.

"Consumer prices will continue to pick up, thanks to oil and a weak yen," said Maiko Noguchi, a senior economist at Daiwa Securities. "The question is: will underlying strength in inflation pick up with stronger wage growth, household spending and business confidence? I don't

think it will at this point," she told Bloomberg News before the data release. Spending by Japan's households remains weak, separate data showed yesterday, with a 1.2 percent on-year fall in January. That was the 11th consecutive month of decline.

Slow wage growth is weighing on consumer spending - which accounts for more than a half of Japan's GDP - despite a tight jobs market. Unemployment has been at its lowest level in around 20 years. Fresh data Friday showed the jobless rate edged down from 3.1 percent in December to 3.0 percent in January. This week, Japan posted an unexpected drop in factory output for January, the first fall in six months and the latest red flag for the world's number three economy. Japan has been struggling to reverse a years-long deflationary spiral of falling prices and lackluster growth. — AFP

## SHARED BIKES GRIND SHANGHAI'S GEARS

**SHANGHAI:** Shanghai has impounded thousands of brightly colored bikes placed on city streets by cycle-sharing companies, in the latest sign of impatience with an explosion of the haphazardly-parked two-wheelers. The bike-sharing sector has become one of the fastest-growing industries in the country, with users typically renting the bicycles for short periods by first unlocking them through the use of mobile phone apps.

Costs can be as low as 1 yuan (15 US cents) per hour and the bikes can be left anywhere for the next user to come along. While hailed as a way to fight road traffic and pollution, the phenomenon has become viewed as a nuisance in some communities, with bikes often parked outside of designated parking areas, left in the middle of sidewalks or even on freeways.

Row upon row of mostly orange and silver bikes from the company Mobike sat collecting dust in a massive parking lot in Shanghai's Huangpu district near the city's famed riverfront Bund area. They had been rounded up by a private firm hired by the government to oversee bicycle parking. The bikes began to accumulate over the past month, said a woman whose balcony overlooks the crowded storage lot, declining to give her name.

A Huangpu district government spokeswoman said shared bikes are not exempt from parking rules. "Any vehicles that violate parking regulations will be impounded. It's the same for everyone," she said. Mobike said in a statement that it was in touch with authorities and seeking to clarify what it called a "misunderstanding" by the company hired to round up the bikes.

The bike-share concept has attracted huge amounts of venture capital investment for key players Mobike and Ofo, who have funnelled that money into placing hundreds of thousands of bikes in dozens of Chinese cities. China's state-run Xinhua news agency said Thursday that over the past two years more than 29 different providers have sprung up, placing more than three million bikes on streets around the country.

A community in Beijing called Mentougou impounded hundreds of share bikes for similar reasons last month. It later returned them to their providers. More than 500 bicycles were dumped in huge piles on the streets of the southern city of Shenzhen in January, with images of the nearly three-meter-high jumbled stacks going viral. — AFP



**SHANGHAI:** This picture taken on March 1, 2017 shows impounded bicycles from the bike-sharing schemes Mobike and Ofo. — AFP



**SHENYANG, China:** This photo taken on March 1, 2017 shows a woman walking past a Lotte Department Store in north-east China's Liaoning province. — AFP

## LOTTE, SOUTH KOREA FACE CHINA BACKLASH

### MISSILE ROW ESCALATES

**BEIJING:** South Korea's Lotte Group faces an escalating backlash in China after providing land for a US missile-defense system, amid growing concern that the row will mushroom into wider Chinese retaliation against Seoul. South Korea's fifth-largest company, Lotte signed a deal Tuesday to provide land for the US system, which was prompted by threats from North Korea. But the plan has also angered Beijing, which fears it will undermine its own military capabilities.

Lotte has already suffered business setbacks and faces mounting boycott threats over the Terminal High-Altitude Area Defense (THAAD) system. The Chinese producer of one of the country's most popular snacks has withdrawn its goods from Lotte Marts across China, saying Wednesday it would "never cooperate" with the company. A range of other actions have been taken, including a consumer boycott in northeastern Jilin province, where protesters last weekend unfurled a banner at a Lotte Mart store saying "Lotte supports THAAD, get out of China immediately."

Last month Lotte was forced to halt construction of a \$2.6 billion theme-park

project in northeastern China after authorities suddenly found safety problems, and Lotte websites have this week been downed by apparent cyberattacks. Underlining the possibility of even wider Chinese retaliation, Beijing travel agencies said yesterday they could no longer arrange trips to South Korea after Yonhap news agency reported the order was handed down by Chinese authorities. "Please consider going to other countries. Trips to South Korea are suspended due to policy and safety factors," said a woman staffer at CYTS online service, one of China's biggest travel companies. Staff at two other travel firms said the same.

#### Lighting a fuse

China's frequently nationalistic Global Times newspaper wrote in an editorial Thursday that "Chinese society has formed a collective determination to impose sanctions on South Korea". The stakes are high for Lotte, which has invested more than ten trillion won (\$8.76 billion) in its Chinese operations since 1994. It now has 22 Chinese subsidiaries, 120 outlets, 26,000 employees, and annu-

al sales in China of around \$2.6 billion. It has no duty-free stores in China, but its vast duty-free empire in South Korea makes 70 percent of its sales from visiting Chinese tourists. "Lotte's decision has lit a fuse. When foreign firms touch Chinese consumers' nationalistic feelings, it can spark a boycott," said Fu Guoqun, a Peking University business professor. "This will have quite a huge impact on the company." Lotte Group declined comment when contacted by AFP.

Beijing has not directly threatened Lotte Group, but a Chinese foreign ministry spokesman said the company's success in the country is "dependent on the Chinese market and the Chinese consumers". China has repeatedly denounced THAAD as a threat to its security, with a foreign ministry spokesman saying "the consequences entailed will be borne by the US and the Republic of Korea". Calls are growing in China for Beijing to use the carrot and stick of its huge market to raise pressure on South Korea to abandon the THAAD plan. The Global Times warned in a Thursday editorial that South Korea could lose "the huge Chinese market" over the row. — AFP



# MAYO, WINGS, BUTTER: 'FAKE MILK' THE LATEST FOOD FIGHT

**NEW YORK:** Is "fake milk" spoiling the dairy industry's image? Dairy producers are calling for a crackdown on the almond, soy and rice "milks" they say are masquerading as the real thing and cloud the meaning of milk. A group that advocates for plant-based products, the Good Food Institute, countered this week by asking the Food and Drug Administration to say terms such as "milk" and "sausage" can be used as long as they're modified to make clear what's in them.

It's the latest dispute about what makes a food authentic, many of them stemming from developments in manufacturing practices and specialized diets. DiGiorno's frozen chicken "wyngz" were fodder for comedian Stephen Colbert. An eggless spread provoked the ire of egg producers by calling itself "mayo". And as far back as the 1880s, margarine was dismissed as "counterfeit butter" by a Wisconsin lawmaker. The US actually spells out the required characteristics for a range of products such as French dressing, canned peas and raisin bread. It's these federal standards of identity that often trigger the food fights.

## Cow, nut, bean

Though soy milk and almond milk have become commonplace terms, milk's standard of identity says it is obtained by the "complete milking of one or more healthy cows". That's a point the dairy industry is now emphasizing, with the support of lawmakers who last month introduced legislation calling for the FDA to enforce the guidelines. "Mammals produce milk, plants don't," said Jim Mulhern, president of the National Milk Producers Federation. The federation says it has been trying to get the FDA to enforce the standard since at least 2000, and that the lack of enforcement has led to a proliferation of imitators playing "fast and loose" with dairy terms.

Those products often refer to themselves as "soymilk" or "almondmilk," single words that the dairy industry says is a way to get around the guidelines for "milk". The Plant Based Foods Association, which represents companies like Tofurky and milk alternatives, says standards of identity were created to prevent companies from passing off cheaper ingredients on customers. But the group says that's not what soy, almond and rice milk makers are trying to do. Those companies are charging more money, and consumers are gravitating toward them, said Michele Simon, the group's executive director. The FDA says it takes action "in accordance with public health priorities and agency resources."

## Edible, but eggless

The little-known Association for Dressing



(Left) This photo provided by Nestle USA shows a package containing DiGiorno pizza and boneless "wyngz". (Right) This photo shows Yoplait Greek yogurt on display at a supermarket in Port Chester, New York. — AP

and Sauces showed its might in a 2014 mayonnaise melee. The group repeatedly complained to the FDA that an eggless spread was calling itself Just Mayo, noting that under the federal rules mayonnaise is defined as having eggs. Hellmann's mayonnaise maker Unilever, one of the association's members, had sued Just Mayo's maker citing the same issue. That lawsuit was dropped after the company faced blowback from the vegan spread's supporters.

The dressings and sauces group wasn't the only one upset by Just Mayo's name. The CEO of the American Egg Board, which represents the egg industry, also tried unsuccessfully to get a consultant to stop the sale of Just Mayo at Whole Foods. The revelations led to an investigation by the US Department of Agriculture. Soon after, the egg industry group's CEO retired earlier than expected. As for Just Mayo, the company worked out an agreement with the FDA to keep its name - with some strategic tweaks to its label to make clear it does not contain eggs.

## Straining for yogurt

It was a milk protein concentrate at issue in a lawsuit over Yoplait Greek. That ingredient isn't listed in the FDA's standard of identity for yogurt. What's more, the suit said General Mills relied on the ingredient to thicken its yogurt, rather than straining it the way other Greek yogurts are made. "Not only was it not Greek yogurt, it wasn't yogurt at all," said Brian Gudmundson, the Minnesota lawyer who filed the suit.

The case was ultimately dismissed by the judge, who said the matter would be better handled by the FDA. Gudmundson said he reached out to the agency afterward, but



nothing came of it. Yoplait Greek's maker, General Mills, says it has since made recipe changes to its yogurts and it no longer uses milk protein concentrate in Yoplait Greek. The company had also noted in legal filings that the FDA said during a seminar that milk protein concentrate could be used in yogurt.

In 2002, the presence of milk protein concentrate in Kraft Singles was also called out in a warning letter from the FDA, which noted it was not listed as an ingredient in the definition for "pasteurized process cheese food." Kraft now labels the Singles as a "pasteurized prepared cheese product."

## Wyngz, not wings

"Wyngz" scored a high-profile TV appearance not long after DiGiorno launched frozen meals with pizza and the boneless chicken pieces in 2011. "The Colbert Show" called the spelling out as a "government-mandated" way to get around the fact that they're not made of wing meat. Colbert cited a page on the USDA's website that said the odd spelling could be used for a product that is "in the shape of a wing or a bite-size appetizer type product," but not made entirely from wing meat.

"No other misspellings are permitted," the website says. The story behind the USDA declaration remains a bit of a mystery. DiGiorno owner Nestle said it wanted to call the boneless chicken pieces "wings", since it believes people understand that "boneless wings" are not whole wings. The company says the USDA instead proposed "wyngz". Nestle proudly noted that it believes it was the first, and perhaps only, company to approach the USDA with an issue that led to the "wyngz" determination. — AP

## BRITISH ECONOMY'S STRONG GROWTH SINCE BREXIT VOTE SLOWS

**LONDON:** Britain's unexpectedly strong economic growth since last June's Brexit vote may be starting to fade as inflation picks up, according to a major business survey that chimed with notes of caution from several top companies. Slowing consumer spending started to hurt services companies in February, an unpromising signal for the economy ahead of Britain's divorce with the European Union, Friday's Markit/CIPS UK Services Purchasing Managers' Index (PMI) showed.

As finance minister Philip Hammond puts the final touches on his first annual budget on March 8, the survey is likely to reinforce his sense that Britain's strong growth since last year's vote to leave the EU will fade this year. The services PMI fell to a five-month low of 53.3 from 54.5 in January and suggested the economy is now expanding at a quarterly pace of around 0.4 percent - much slower than the 0.7 percent expansion during the fourth quarter of 2016.

Sterling slid to a seven-week low against the dollar after the PMI was published, prompting investors to discount further the chance of the Bank of England raising record low interest rates any time soon. Lacklustre reports from major British companies added to the sense of a tougher 2017 for the economy than last year. Advertising giant WPP, the kind of company regarded by analysts as a bellwether for the economy, warned of a tough economic background and its forecast for growth this year came in below analyst forecasts.

Earlier this week, British broadcaster ITV reported the first decline in advertising revenue since 2009. Britain's economy expanded faster than most of its developed world peers in 2016 but economists think rising inflation is starting to weigh on consumers and business profit margins, something corroborated by the PMI survey. "Notwithstanding the disappointment, that is what everyone has been expecting to happen - we just hoped we were wrong," said Alan Clarke, head of European fixed income strategy at Scotiabank, on the PMI.

Data company Markit said some firms in its survey reported cautious spending by British consumers. It highlighted strong inflation pressure with input costs and selling prices in services companies increasing at the fastest rates since mid-2008 when consumer price inflation hit more than 5 percent. "Weaker consumer spending was a key cause of slower service sector growth, suggesting that household budgets are starting to crack under the strain of higher prices and weak wage growth," Chris Williamson, chief business economist at IHS Markit, said.

Despite the inflation pressure, Williamson said the PMI's fall left it around levels more consistent with a further rate cut by the Bank of England than an increase. Last month BoE Governor Mark Carney said he remained convinced that inflation would go above the bank's 2 percent target only temporarily and due entirely to the fall in the value of the pound since the Brexit vote, rather than more deep-seated price pressures.

The pound may have further to fall, a Reuters poll of foreign exchange strategists and economists showed on Thursday. Prime Minister Theresa May intends to trigger the formal process for separating from the EU by the end of this month. Although growth slowed in February, services firms remained confident about their prospects in the next 12 months, with optimism running just below January's eight-month high. — Reuters

## US SERVICES SECTOR SPEEDS UP IN FEB

**WASHINGTON:** The US services sector, the main driver of the economy, saw growth hit its fastest pace 15 months in February, according to industry data released yesterday. The Institute for Supply Management's Non-Manufacturing Index rose a full point from January to 57.6 percent, seasonally adjusted, the highest reading since October of 2015. The index, which surveys activity among all segments of the services industry, has recorded continuous growth for more than seven years. A reading above 50 percent indicates expansion.

Companies in 16 of the 18 sectors surveyed reported growth, with only the real estate and information industries reporting contraction, ISM said. Ian Shepherdson of Pantheon Macroeconomics

said the results were "very strong" and likely to keep monthly job creation above 200,000 new positions into early spring at least. "The message here is that underlying spending growth is robust, despite the sharp drop in real consumption in January," he wrote in a client note.

The ISM report's components showed some notable high points: the Business Activity Index hit its highest level since February 2011 at 63.6 percent, and employment rose a half point to 55.2 percent. Comments from respondents were mixed but most had a positive outlook. A construction sector executive reported a tight labor market, financial services noted a pickup in lending and mining saw a strong start to the first quarter. — AFP



## LSE LOGS SOLID EARNINGS AS MERGER TEETERS

**LONDON:** The London Stock Exchange logged solid results and ramped up its shareholder dividend yesterday amid worries over the likely collapse of its merger with Deutsche Boerse. The results were published just days after it emerged that LSE's blockbuster tie-up with the German giant was on the brink of failure. Operating profit grew five percent to £427 million (\$524 million) in 2016 from the previous year, the group said in a results statement. Revenues jumped 14.4 percent to £1.515 billion.

Net profit or earnings after taxation more than halved to £152 million due to a sizeable loss on the disposal of its Russell Investment Management division. However, the LSE hiked its annual shareholder dividend by a fifth to 43.2 pence per share in a move it said reflected the "strong outlook" for the business. The LSE stunned markets last Sunday

when it revealed that it would not meet a key EU antitrust demand to gain clearance for the Deutsche Boerse merger. In a shock announcement, the LSE had said it was "highly unlikely" it would meet the European Commission's recent request to divest its majority stake in MTS, which is a trading platform for government bonds in Italy.

### 'Very difficult situation'

"The Commission's very recent request for the group to divest MTS, a systemically important regulated business that sits at the heart of our Italian operations, put us indeed in a very difficult situation," said Chief Executive Xavier Rolet yesterday. He added: "In the event that this transaction did not successfully conclude, then we are back to square one."

Nevertheless, the LSE insisted yes-

terday that it "continues to work hard" on its proposed merger with Deutsche Boerse, which manages the Frankfurt stock exchange. The blockbuster deal was unveiled to much fanfare last year and backed by both sides even in the face of Brexit. The EC's competition probe meanwhile remains ongoing and a decision is expected by April 3.

The company - which runs the London and Milan exchanges - had offered last month to sell clearing house LCH Clearnet SA to European competitor Euronext if the EC approves the merger. "We will await ... the decision of the competition authorities," added Rolet yesterday. "It is up to them to consider the remedies that we have offered and make the decision in due course." Questioned about the group's alternative plans, should the merger collapse, he told

reporters: "There isn't a sort of plan B, C, D or E; it's just a continuation of our strategy. Whilst we are doing this ... we are assembling a portfolio which is increasingly valuable."

### Third time unlucky

It is the third time that the Frankfurt and London stock exchanges have tried to tie the knot, following two unsuccessful attempts in 2000 and 2005. In early afternoon deals yesterday, LSE shares slid 1.53 percent to 3,095 pence on London's falling FTSE 100 index, as dealers digested the earnings. "Sometimes engagements should not end in marriage," noted ETX Capital analyst Neil Wilson. "In the case of LSE, its continental forays have not ended well and perhaps with Brexit looming the chance for a cross-channel merger has come and gone." — AFP

## UKRAINE TAX CHIEF FALLS ILL AS POLICE MOVE OVER GRAFT

**KIEV:** Ukrainian state agencies sought to detain the head of the tax and customs service yesterday over the alleged embezzlement of around \$75 million - a potentially landmark case after patchy anti-graft efforts from the Western-backed authorities. Television footage showed an apparently unconscious Roman Nasirov being stretchered into an ambulance and taken to Kiev's Feofania hospital late on Thursday. Reporters said he had suffered a heart attack. This could not be independently verified.

Anti-corruption prosecutor Nazar Kholodnytsky said investigators believe 38-year-old Nasirov helped exiled lawmaker Oleksandr Onishchenko deprive the state of 2 billion hryvnias (\$75 million) in tax revenue linked to a gas deal. "Detectives and a prosecutor went to Feofania," Kholodnytsky said on television channel 112. "Nasirov was notified of the allegation by a detective. I will find out if he was conscious or not." Nasirov has previously denied all allegations of graft against him. His office would not immediately comment on the matter.

Prime Minister Volodymyr Groysman said Nasirov had been relieved of his duties while the case is pending. "It is in our interest that the investigation be impartial and effective. This issue is very important for Ukrainian society today," he said in a government meeting. Prosecutor Kholodnytsky was openly sceptical about Nasirov's sudden hospitalization. "I, like many Ukrainian citizens, have doubts about the unexpected transfer to hospital, as this has become a historic tradition for the Ukrainian political elite and top management." He cited the example of a former transport minister who in 2008 was found by investigators in a hospital after they sought to detain him on corruption charges. If Nasirov is found guilty, it would be the first successful prosecution of a senior official for graft since the 2014 uprising that ushered in a Western-backed leadership promising to tackle endemic corruption.

### Fur coats, jewels and cash

"This is the destruction of the unwritten corrupt status quo in the country," said pro-European lawmaker Serhiy Leshchenko in a post on Facebook. "Nasirov will be a valuable witness to the misuse of state money by those in the highest ranks." Stop-start reforms over the past three years have raised concerns that Ukraine's political elite lacked the will to eradicate a deep-rooted system of cronyism and bribe-taking.

Nasirov's lawyer, Andriy Kuzmenko, confirmed that he was being investigated for embezzlement and said he could face up to six years in prison. Opposition lawmakers and the finance ministry have previously called for Nasirov to be investigated for abuse of office. In 2016, Nasirov clashed with an activist appointed to reform the graft-plagued customs of Odessa over her accusation that he had blocked her attempts to fire corrupt officials. In an online wealth declaration tool aimed at boosting transparency, he disclosed last October that he and his wife held cash in euros and dollars worth \$2.2 million and owned Swiss watches, diamond jewelry, fur coats and fine porcelain among other items. — Reuters



**LONDON:** In this photo taken on Feb 27, 2017, Spacehop users Lavinia Osbourne (right) and Whitney Fangawa pose for a picture in one of the homes available for hire as office space on the Spacehop website. — AP

## WELCOME TO YOUR OFFICE: A STRANGER'S LIVING ROOM

### SPACEHOP WHERE AIRBNB MEETS THE ENTREPRENEUR

**LONDON:** Claire Brynteson had a house, a job and a dining table that was empty once she got her three children out the door every morning. When she received a flyer telling her she could make money by renting seats at the table to people looking for short-term office space, she jumped at the chance to list its virtues on the Spacehop website - where Airbnb meets the laptop entrepreneur. "I wondered why perhaps it had taken so long since Airbnb has been running for so long," Brynteson said at her home in south London. "People have for a long time been making money out of their home with guests staying over the night and paying to be there. This is a little less intrusive."

The rise of self-employment and soaring office costs are fueling demand for shared office space in metropolitan areas, with a handful of firms renting workspace by the hour, similar to the way Airbnb offers overnight stays. Vrumi, founded in 2015, says it has 5,000 registered users and 120,000 square feet

of rentable workspace across the UK. London-based Spacehop joined the market last year, as did Breathe, a four-year-old company that also operates in the US and Canada.

It's the latest development of the so-called sharing economy, where those looking for extra cash are generating income any way they can with the help of the Internet and smartphone apps. Space itself has become a commodity, with people renting their driveways to commuters searching for parking, attics to apartment dwellers in need of storage and garden plots to those who want to grow their own tomatoes.

Boxful in Hong Kong promises to declutter your life by collecting and storing unneeded belongings. In Spain, LetMeSpace provides a marketplace to rent out anything from parking spaces to unused storage. Pubs are renting out space in the morning to people looking for peace to work, said Catherine Cottney, manager of trends at business research firm Mintel. "It's the final fron-

tier," Cottney said. "People are recognizing the worth of space and they're looking to maximize that." With an abundance of investors and a computer-literate entrepreneurial population, the UK is driving the trend in Europe. In Britain, platform revenues more than tripled to £850 million (\$1.1 billion) in the three years through 2015, according to a study by PwC. Peer-to-peer accommodation, which includes shared office space as well as overnight stays like Airbnb, accounted for 27 percent of that total. Globally, PwC estimates that revenues in the sharing economy were about \$15 billion in 2015.

### Changes

The move toward new workspaces dovetails with changes in the workplace itself. Cary Cooper, an expert on workplace issues at Alliance Manchester Business School, said he's surprised the Airbnb model didn't come to office space sooner, and he believes it will grow as millennials seek flexibility and others seek to make a living. — AP



## LESS THAN 10% OF CLIMATE AID REACHING POOREST

**LONDON:** Less than 10 percent of funds spent to help poorer communities adapt to climate change impacts and adopt clean energy are reaching the people most in need of the money, finance researchers say. In part, that is because international climate funds, under pressure to get donated funds into action, are opting to work with development banks and other big international agencies that can quickly spend millions - rather than with smaller-scale local governments and projects, said researchers at the London-based International Institute for Environmental and Development (IIED).

Weak local ability to design and evaluate projects, and to fill out complicated forms to access money are another problem, the report said, as is the smaller scale of local projects, as vetting each one takes more time. Another obstacle is the lack of a specific target in the Paris Agreement on climate change to spend more finance at the local level, the researchers said in a report released this week. "Understanding how to get money where it matters is the challenge of the moment," said Clare Shakya, climate change director at IIED and one of the report's authors.

Today, donors have given only 11 percent of the climate funds they promised, in part because of the obstacles, she said. Richer nations have promised to donate or otherwise mobilize \$100 billion a year by 2020 to help poorer countries switch to clean energy and adapt to problems such as worsening droughts,

flooding and sea level rise. But getting that money raised and flowing has proved challenging.

The United States, for instance, has promised \$3 billion to the Green Climate Fund and so far delivered \$1 billion. But President Donald Trump has suggested he would not make any additional contributions, and may pull the United States out of its international climate agreements. The lack of international finance is a problem for countries such as Ethiopia, which has estimated it needs \$7.5 billion a year to switch to clean energy and adapt to climate change, but is so far receiving between \$100 million and \$200 million a year in international support, said Saleemul Huq, a senior fellow at IIED.

### Ethiopia pushes ahead

Ethiopia is nonetheless moving ahead with a large-scale national push toward hydropower and wind, solar and geothermal energy, and on projects to adapt to climate change, including worsening drought, said Gebru Jember Endalew, the program coordinator for Climate Change Forum-Ethiopia and the new chair of the Least Developed Countries group in international climate change negotiations. The east African nation is saving money by incorporating its clean energy projects into its national plans, rather than carrying out each piece of the effort as a separate internationally funded project, he said. Such work "needs to be part of the development plan of the country," he said. "It needs to be managed there. It's much less costly than using consultants."

Endalew said poor countries have little option but to push ahead on climate change adaptation efforts as much as possible on their own because the impacts of climate change "are already more severe" than anticipated, with the world just 1 degree Celsius above pre-industrial temperature levels. "Imagine when they're 3 to 4 degrees" higher, he said. He said the Least Developed Countries group would continue to push for swift action on climate change because "our main goal is for the world to remain safe".

### Local level finance

Some examples of how international climate finance could reach local level - and the most vulnerable people - are emerging, however. In Mali and Senegal, a three-year effort by IIED and the Near East Foundation has led to the creation of six \$700,000 funds to help local communities build resilience to climate variability and extreme events. The funds, administered by local governments, allow communities to choose the actions they think will most help them. In Senegal, for instance, a salt harvesting community has used money to plant salt-resistant trees to help protect the estuary where they work. The effort, part of the UK-funded Building Resilience to Climate Extremes and Disasters (BRACED) project, aims to help local governments and communities develop better skills to manage climate funds and to use money in a transparent and cost-effective way. — AFP

# LOSING JOBS, WORKERS IN FRANCE SEE FUTILE VOTE

## WHIRLPOOL MOVING JOBS TO POLAND

**AMIENS, France:** Two months before France's presidential elections, workers for Whirlpool in the northern French city of Amiens are torn between anger and resignation as the US appliances giant prepares to move their jobs to Poland. The move to Lodz, set for June 2018, will affect some 290 workers and is the latest in a string of manufacturing closures to hit the city famous for its Gothic cathedral.

Caroline Bizet and many of her colleagues at Whirlpool, a domestic appliances brand, could not hide their contempt for politicians in a campaign season marred by corruption scandals. "All the jobs are being outsourced. People are being laid off, there are suicides, there are divorces, everything," said Bizet, 49, who has worked for Whirlpool for 17 years. Her contempt for politicians was clear. "They're in their gilded armchairs and they couldn't care less about us," she said at the end of her shift at the factory some three kilometres from the city center where clothes dryers are made.

She was referring to the expenses scandals that have embroiled both far-right leader Marine Le Pen and one of her main rivals in the presidential race, conservative Francois Fillon. Picketers distributed leaflets outside the factory, which was bedecked with protest banners. "When you talk about deindustrialization of our country it has special resonance here," said Brigitte Foure, the city's centrist mayor, voicing her "bitterness" over the exodus to eastern EU states with cheaper labor such as Poland, Romania and Slovakia.

Unemployment in Amiens, a cathedral city of around 200,000, stands at 11.9 percent, two points higher than the national average. In 2014, the Goodyear tyre company outsourced more than 1,100 jobs, and Whirlpool moved its washing machine production to Slovakia in 2003. Another 60 jobs of a Whirlpool sub-contractor, Prima, are also at risk next year, as well as those of some temporary workers. Guillaume Bonnard, a 33-year-old foreman with Prima, told AFP: "The problem is that as long as everyone is not at the same level in Europe it can never work."

### Frexit?

Mohamed El Mokretar, a union leader at Prima, thinks a "Frexit" is the only solution, saying simply: "We have to leave the European Union." Francois Ruffin, a leftist who was behind last year's youth protests against labor reforms across France known as Nuits Debout (Up All Night), is among a handful of politicians who have ventured to Amiens to confront the gloom. Ruffin, who is running for parlia-



**AMIENS, France:** This file photo taken on Jan 24, 2017 shows Whirlpool employees leaving the Amiens production factory on Jan 24, 2017. — AFP

ment in June, campaigned in the city aboard a multi-colored truck with loudspeakers blaring revolutionary songs.

The director of a hit documentary "Merci Patron" (Thanks, Boss) in which the little guys take on France's richest man, Ruffin says protectionism is the only solution. "I don't want the (far-right) National Front (FN) to have a monopoly on this political weapon, or for them to be the only ones to dare to talk about tariffs and import quotas," he told AFP as he handed out his manifesto.

Recently the FN's local representative Eric Richermoz paid one of his frequent visits to the Whirlpool factory, showing workers a video on his cellphone of Le Pen promising a 35-percent surtax on the products of companies that outsource jobs. Le Pen, who says she will hold a referendum on France leaving the EU if elected, is tipped to win the first round of France's presidential election on April 23 but lose in a run-off vote on May 7. — AFP

## 'MCLIZARD' SERVED TO PREGNANT INDIAN WOMAN

**NEW DELHI:** Would you like some fries with that lizard? A pregnant woman in Kolkata in eastern India has complained of finding a lizard in the french-fries she bought at her local McDonald's restaurant. McDonald's said yesterday it was investigating the incident. A picture circulating widely on social media and local news channels showed a tiny lizard amidst golden-brown fries in the chain's iconic red carton it uses to serve french-fries. AFP could not immediately verify the authenticity of the photograph.

The incident happened on Tuesday when Priyanka Moitra went to grab breakfast at her local McDonald's restaurant in Kolkata city. "I was like, yuck! Oh my God, this is a lizard in my fries," Moitra told the NDTV news network in an interview aired yesterday. "I spoke to the area's sales manager, spoke to the in-charge but they dismissed it with a neglectful attitude," said Moitra, who filed a police case Tuesday evening. The police later temporarily shut down the restaurant.

"We are taking the situation seriously," McDonald's said in a statement. "Immediately upon being made of aware of the complaint, we launched a thorough investigation in an effort to gather the facts of the matter... it is still ongoing." The restaurant has since reopened after receiving a green light from food safety authorities, a company spokesperson said.

Food safety standards are often lax in India where it is difficult to build a watertight supply chain due to a shortage of infrastructure and resources. Tainted water, unreliable cold storage facilities and a lack of education on hygiene pose serious risks for international food chains, whose reputation can suffer a big blow from one local slip. — AFP



SATURDAY, MARCH 4, 2017

Mexican artist Juandres Vera works on a 3D canvas during the Dubai Canvas Festival in downtown Dubai. The Dubai Canvas Festival features 25 international artists and four Emirati female artists shortlisted for a 2.3 million AED (around 620,000 dollars) award. — AFP

**Street artist  
Banksy opens  
Walled Off Hotel  
in Bethlehem**

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This file photo taken on February 24, 2017 shows French-Lebanese musician and composer Ibrahim Maalouf speaking while holding the trophy he received for the Best Original Music award for 'Dans les forêts de Sibirie' (In the Forests of Siberia) during the 42nd edition of the Cesar Ceremony at the Salle Pleyel in Paris. — AFP

## TRUMPETER MAALOUF ACCUSED OF KISSING 14-YEAR-OLD GIRL

Star trumpeter Ibrahim Maalouf is being investigated by French police for kissing a 14-year-old girl while she was his intern, a justice official said yesterday. The incident dates from 2013 when the Franco-Lebanese musician, who has played with Sting and Elvis Costello, is alleged to have kissed the girl at the end of her internship. Prosecutor Laure Beccau said the inquiry centers on "sexual interference, which is different from sexual assault because it involves the consent of the minor". Maalouf, now 36, is alleged to have sent the secondary school student a text message asking her to send him a picture of herself naked, French daily the Parisien reported.—AFP



In this Sunday file photo, Lou Reed performs at the Lollapalooza music festival, in Chicago. — AP

## Colombian stars Shakira, Vives accused of plagiarism

A Madrid court will look into allegations that Colombian superstars Shakira and Carlos Vives plagiarized part of their hugely popular Grammy Latino-winner "La Bicicleta", a court spokesman said Thursday. Music publisher MDRB filed a complaint in a commercial court in Madrid on behalf of Livan Rafael Castellanos, a Cuban singer known as Livam who alleges that the catchy tune copies parts of his own 1997 song called "Yo te quiero tanto" (I love you so). The complaint centres around an intellectual property problem, said the court spokesman.

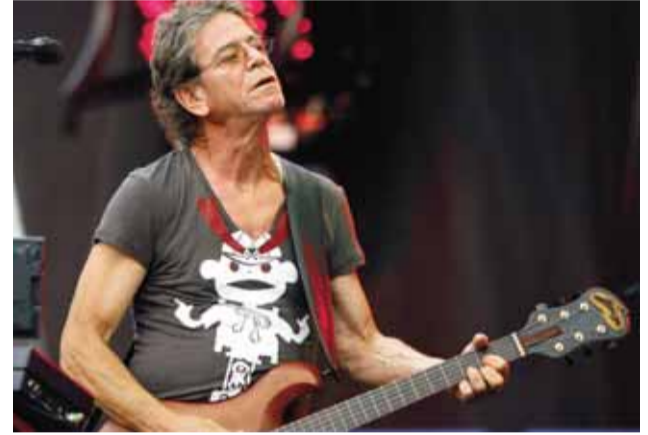
More specifically, it focuses on the songs' choruses, he added—both the melody and the lyrics. Shakira and Vives sing "que te sueno y que te quiero tanto" (I dream of you and love you so much), while Livam says "yo te quiero, yo te quiero tanto" (I love you, I love you so much). The court spokesman said the complaint was against Vives and Shakira—who lives in Spain—as well as producer Andres Castro and Sony Music. This is not the first time that Shakira has come up against allegations of plagiarism. —AFP

## Lou Reed archive to go public at New York library

The New York Public Library has obtained the archives of Lou Reed, with plans to make the legendary underground rocker's legacy as open as possible. The city's free-to-the-public library system, best known for its imposing main building on Fifth Avenue, announced the acquisition Thursday on what would have been Reed's 75th birthday. "What better place to have this than in the heart of the city he loved the best?" Reed's widow Laurie Anderson, herself a prominent experimental musician, said in a statement.

"My dream has always been to make Lou's work completely accessible to the public. You don't have to have any special credentials," she said. The Lou Reed Archive includes some 3,600 audio and 1,300 video recordings as well as 300 feet (90 meters) worth of papers and photographs, according to the library. The New York Public Library immediately showcased the new collection with a selection of his notebooks and correspondence going on display to the public for the first time through March 20. Anderson had put together the Lou Reed Archive—which reflects his music but also features his other interests, including tai chi—after the rocker died in 2013 from liver disease.

"It takes a while to see a life as a whole and now that the first step of the archive is complete we can step back and begin to see some dazzling new patterns in the work Lou made in his long and intense life as an artist," she said. Reed revolutionized the music world with The Velvet Underground and later as a solo artist, infusing into rock an aesthetic sensibility from the modern art world. Starting with the 1967 debut album "The Velvet Underground and Nico," which was produced by pop art master Andy Warhol, Reed took up lyricism on subjects such as drug use and sexual fetishism that then were rarely touched by musicians.



In this Sunday file photo, Lou Reed performs at the Lollapalooza music festival, in Chicago. — AP

The establishment of the Lou Reed Archive, whose financial details were not disclosed, comes amid a push to preserve the legacies of major musicians. Bob Dylan last year reached an agreement to keep his archive at the University of Tulsa in Oklahoma, already a hub for the works of pioneering folk singer Woody Guthrie. Bruce Springsteen more recently agreed to set up his archive at Monmouth University near his working-class hometown in New Jersey. — AFP

## Ed Sheeran still thinking out loud, mostly about love

Ed Sheeran has spoken of not wanting to be defined by "Thinking Out Loud," his 2014 love song whose viral success made him one of the world's elite pop stars overnight. His strategy to beat "Thinking Out Loud," it turns out, works two ways—writing even more ballads in hopes of outdoing his mega-hit, and also branching out musically in startling new directions. The British songwriter yesterday put out his third album that is forecast to be one of the 2017's top-selling releases "Divide," which, like Sheeran's other works, is named after a mathematical symbol. Through the 16 songs, Sheeran alternates between his now signature sound—acoustic pop with roots in classic soul—and tracks that, by chance or design, may make some of his fans scratch their heads.

The now 26-year-old surprises from the get-go on "Divide" by becoming a rapper. In a narrative style reminiscent of top rappers such as Kendrick Lamar, Sheeran turns his song into a mission statement as he muses on his newfound fame. Rapping of a lifestyle of drinking, smoking and drugs, Sheeran says: "I guess it's a stereotypical day for someone like me / Without a 9-to-5 job or a uni degree / To be caught in the trappings of the industry."

### Tapping into Ireland and Ghana

On "Galway Girl" and "Nancy Mulligan," Sheeran veers into Irish traditional music, with the second song an endearing and consciously retro telling of his grandparents' love story. In the album's most unexpected turn, Sheeran sets his guitar pop to Afrobeat rhythms in a collaboration with the Ghanaian-British artist Fuse ODG on "Bibia Be Ye Ye." Fuse ODG wrote on Facebook that Sheeran worked on the song with him in Ghana and that the chorus means "all will be well" in the Twi language. But on much of "Divide," Sheeran focuses on what he has become known for—earnest love songs, now seemingly dedicated to his girlfriend Cherry Seaborn, a friend from his childhood in Suffolk. "Perfect" and "Hearts Don't Break Around Here" are like "Thinking Out Loud" guided by little-adorned guitar and seem equally destined to become favorite wedding first-dance songs. Sheeran closes the album in darker territory with the ballad "Save Myself" as he swaps guitar for piano and wonders, with an angst that turns suicidal, whether his love is required.

### Success, but doubts

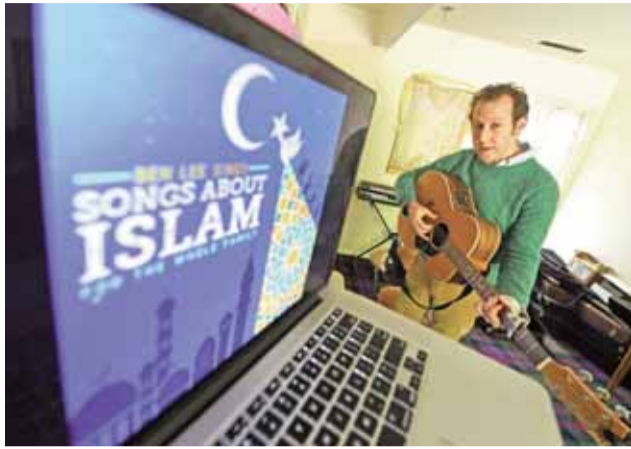
When it comes to business, at least, Sheeran has every reason to expect success. He has already topped the monthly listener chart on leading streaming service Spotify after releasing the first two singles off "Divide" including "Shape of You," a minimalist dance track about picking up a woman at a bar. The ginger-haired singer, who has admitted that he does not have a typical pop star physique, struggled in his early years. He busked in London and moved to Los Angeles with little plan other than to play open-mic nights.

His career enjoyed a jolt when he was taken under the wing of pop superstar Taylor Swift. "Thinking Out Loud" became the first song played half a billion times on Spotify, although the record has been repeatedly broken. Yet Sheeran acknowledges his doubts. On "What Do I Know?" he recalls his father's warnings not to discuss politics. But Sheeran—who delayed "Divide" so it would not be overshadowed by the US election—notices the tumult around him. "I'm just a boy with a one-man show / No university, no degree," he sings. "Love can change the world in a moment. But what do I know?" — AFP



This cover image released by Atlantic Records shows, 'Divide,' the latest release by Ed Sheeran. — AP





Australian musician Ben Lee rehearses inside his home studio in Los Angeles, California. — AFP photos

## In age of Trump, an indie rocker explains Islam

**D**istraught by the treatment of Muslims in Donald Trump's America, indie rocker Ben Lee felt he could seize on his own skills to encourage understanding. The former frontman of the group Noise Addict has recorded an album of songs about Islam and, hoping for the greatest impact, geared them toward children. With chipper arrangements that would be at home in kindergarten classrooms, "Ben Lee Sings Songs About Islam for the Whole Family" explains the religion's core beliefs with references to the Quran.

Lee, an Australian who lives in Los Angeles, said he knew the power of songs through his career and also by observing his seven-year-old daughter. "That's the beauty of the pop song—you can say anything, and if you say it in two and a half minutes with a catchy chorus, it becomes digestible," said the affable 38-year-old. "I think I'm at the point in my life where you start realizing that any lasting effect that you're going to have on the human race is going to be through the influence you can make on the next generation," he told AFP with a chuckle. Lee will donate all proceeds from the album to the American Civil Liberties Union which has aggressively challenged Trump on rights issues including his sweeping ban—since suspended by the courts—on travelers from seven Muslim-majority nations.

### Non-literal take on faith

But Lee does not see his album, which came out yesterday, as political. Instead, he is hoping to bring a nuanced understanding of religion. Lee, who grew up Jewish, said he had reached a spiritual "fork in the road" where he could no longer take religions literally but wanted to appreciate them. The album's goal "is to focus on the commonalities and on beginning to think mythologically about these cultural narratives—and introducing children to thinking in that way as opposed to thinking literally," Lee said. "All of these religions are like Greek myths or Shakespeare. They provide great insights into humanity."

The music on "Ben Lee Sings Songs About Islam for the Whole Family" is upbeat and direct. On "Ramadan," Lee strums a folk-rock guitar to maracas and a bit of jazzy piano as he explains the holy month of fasting. "Ramadan, oh Ramadan / We're so happy when you come / And sad to leave you when you're gone / We'll miss you, Ramadan," he sings. On "La Ilaha Il Allah," Lee turns the core Arabic-language creed of Islam "There is no God but God"—into a campfire-like sing-along alongside religious stories. Lee then goes into a rocking chorus to tell the religion's meaning on "Islam Means Surrender."

### Full respect intended

Lee said he has read much of the Koran and studied Sufism, Islam's mystical movement that embraces music as a spiritual path. More conservative Islamic schools, notably the Wahhabis who dominate Saudi Arabia, frown on music in religion. Lee said he fully intended his album to be respectful. "I'm not depicting pictures of Mohammed (PBUH)," he said, in reference to Islam's general prohibition on images of its prophet, "I'm singing songs." "I would never want to do something that's perceived as an insult." Lee has been working on five separate albums on major religions—Buddhism, Christianity, Hinduism, Islam and Judaism—but said he hurried out his latest work in light of current events.

Lee, who has collaborated with leading alternative rockers including Liz Phair and Dinosaur Jr's Lou Barlow, in 2013 put out an album on his experiences with ayahuasca, the psychedelic brew from Amazonian shamans. "I've always been interested in taking fairly fringe concepts and making them palatable," he said. In a political climate that some have described as "post-truth," Lee said his look into religion was all the more timely. "All religions—no matter how much they've been misinterpreted by fundamentalists and by orthodoxy and literalists—at their core are about a search for truth," he said. — AFP

## RIHANNA DELIGHTS AT HARVARD RECOGNITION

**R**ihanna never went to college but the R&B superstar voiced delight as she was presented an award by Harvard University for her humanitarian work. "So I made it to Harvard! Never thought I would be able to say that in my life, but it feels good," a beaming Rihanna said to students' cheers at the prestigious US university Tuesday evening. Harvard named the 29-year-old singer its Humanitarian of the Year, pointing to her projects that include an advanced center to treat breast cancer in her native Barbados and support for girls' education around the developing world.

Rihanna said she had set up her first charity at age 18 and remarked: "People make it seem way too hard, man." "You don't need to be rich to help someone, you don't need to be famous, you don't even need to be college-educated," she said, while joking that she wished she were. "I want to challenge each of you to make a commitment to help one person, one organization, one situation that touches your heart," she said. "My grandmother always used to say, 'If you got a dollar, there's plenty to share.'" Rihanna, who was discovered by a music executive while still a teenager, has also set up a scholarship program named after her grandparents for Caribbean students in the United States. — AFP



This file photo shows Conductor Alan Gilbert on stage during the Carnegie Hall 125th season opening night gala at Carnegie Hall in New York. — AFP



This file photo shows British musician Chris Martin and members of the band Coldplay on February 24, 2016. — AFP

## Coldplay releases piano ballad in surprise new music

**C**oldplay on Thursday released a piano ballad in surprise new music by the English rockers to mark frontman Chris Martin's 40th birthday. "Hypnotised," described by the band as a "new non-single song," is the first track off an EP entitled "Kaleidoscope" announced for June 2. "Hypnotised" starts off with dream-like chimes and piano with hints of Sigur Ros before turning into a more traditional rock ballad. The song—in which Martin confesses he's "never gonna be a saint" but finds renewal through love—is accompanied by a soothing video with images of the sea.

A Coldplay statement described the EP as a "sister release" to the band's last album "A Head Full of Dreams," which featured a song called "Kaleidoscope." Besides "Hypnotized," "Kaleidoscope" features "Something Just Like This"—

Coldplay's recent collaboration with chart-topping New York electronic duo The Chainsmokers—and three yet-to-be released songs. Coldplay, which has enjoyed worldwide success since its debut album "Parachutes" in 2000, had hinted that "A Head Full of Dreams" may be its swan song when it came out in late 2015.

Coldplay has gone on a marathon global tour for "A Head Full of Dreams." An Asian leg opens on March 31 in Singapore before second rounds through Europe and North America. The group will also headline a new Global Citizen festival in Hamburg on July 6 to press leaders of the Group of 20 major economies to work to end extreme poverty in the developing world. — AFP



# 'Before I Fall': 'Groundhog Day' gets teen makeover

In the quarter century since the release of the cult classic film "Groundhog Day," filmmakers of all genres have used the "time loop" as a narrative device. The concept is simple: characters experience the same day again and again, often having to figure out some universal truth to reform their characters and break the cycle. Now indie director Ry Russo-Young has revisited the premise in "Before I Fall," which hits theatres yesterday, with the original movie's thirtysomething protagonists replaced with a cast of sassy millennials to appeal to the lucrative young adult market. In "Groundhog Day," it is the selfish, arrogant weatherman Phil Connors, played by an acclaimed Bill Murray, who is forced to relive the same events until he decides to be a better man.

Harold Ramis's comedy has spawned more than 30 copycats to varying degrees of success—from Disney's "Mickey's Once Upon a Christmas" in 1999 to the 2015 sci-fi flop "Project Almanac." Although "Groundhog Day" was only moderately successful on its release, it came to be considered one of the greatest-ever comedies over time, listed as a "culturally, historically, or aesthetically significant" milestone in the US National Film Registry. Ry-Russo prepared for his updated version by watching time-loop movies such as "Primer" and "Edge of Tomorrow." "For me, part of the research process is really covering a lot of ground and really understanding the different intersecting genres," she said.

### Brooding

Shot over just 24 days, "Before I Fall" follows Samantha Kingston, a student in the "in crowd" who is about to lose her virginity to another of the popular kids. Played by 22-year-old rising star Zoey Deutch, Sam finds herself trapped in a



This file photo shows (From left) Ry Russo-Young, Zoey Deutch, Lauren Oliver and Jennifer Beals attending the 'Before I Fall' New York Special Screening at Landmark Sunshine Cinema. — AFP

time loop, destined to repeat the day of her death in an auto accident over and over. Maria Magenti's screenplay moves the action from the New England of Lauren Oliver's young adult novel of the same name to the brooding majesty of the rainy Pacific Northwest. "The landscape offered a lot for Sam's psychology," the 35-year-old Russo-Young said. "There's sort of a moodiness, and a sense of mortality, drama and angst to those visuals that felt like a charac-

ter who is between life and death, who's trying to figure it out."

Sam's journey takes her through the various stages of confusion, grief, terror and acceptance as she tries to figure out what the cosmos has in mind for her. "The challenge with any repeat-day construct is that you have to make it feel fresh every day and not like you're watching the same scene," Russo-Young said. "And the good news is it's not the same scene because Sam is in

a completely different psychological and emotional place." The cast teams Deutch ("Vampire Academy," "Dirty Grandpa") and the up-and-coming 23-year-old Halston Sage ("Paper Towns," "Scouts Guide to the Zombie Apocalypse") with veterans like Jennifer Beals 34 years after she made her name in "Flashdance."

### Good life

Like all time-loop movies, Russo-Young's fourth feature—her third in a row to premiere at the Sundance Film Festival—plays out as a parable about redemption and what it means to live a good life. It also offers lessons on sexual pressure, the stresses of social media and the fragility of teenage friendships. "When I watched it for the first time, it culminated in this weird feeling of a celebration of life, which I felt was so powerful and moving," Deutch said. "I recognized in people that were watching that they wanted to do good... Literally, I felt a sense of warmth and wanting to do good." Deutch, who was bullied at middle school, says she immediately connected with a character whose flaws didn't define her.

"She's a follower in the beginning and becomes her own leader in her life," she said. "Before I Fall" was a hit with the Sundance crowd and has been earning generally favorable reviews. "These are two talented women who deserve to be elevated with the next projects they're offered," Brian Formo of the online movie magazine "Collider" wrote of Deutch and Russo-Young. "Before I Fall" could've been boilerplate. It often boils over with perfectly observed truths." — AFP



This image released by the Tribeca Film Festival shows filmmaker Antonino D'Ambrosio with retired New York City Police detective Frank Serpico, who is the subject of a documentary, 'Frank Serpico,' which will premiere at the Tribeca Film Festival. — AP

## Docs about Whitney Houston, Frank Serpico headed to Tribeca

Documentaries about Whitney Houston, Gilbert Gottfried, Elian Gonzalez and Frank Serpico will premiere at the Tribeca Film Festival. The New York festival announced 82 of the 98 features that will play in this year's slightly slimmed-down slate. Among the entries are "Gilbert," Neil Berkeley's documentary about the comedian; "Elian," the Alex Gibney-produced documentary about the famous Cuban boy; "Frank Serpico," Antonino D'Ambrosio's film about the 1970s New York police officer; and the Houston documentary "Whitney: Can I Be Me."

Other films include "LA 92," about the Rodney King riots, and an investigation into the handling of rape kits in "I Am Evidence." Among the narrative films announced is Michael Winterbottom's latest road trip with Steve Coogan and Rob Brydon, "The Trip to Spain." Also premiering is Adam Rifkin's "Dog Years," about an aged former Hollywood star played by Bert Reynolds. And writer-director Azazel Jacobs will debut her latest, "The Lovers," in which Tracy Letts and Debra Winger play a long-married couple whose romance is sparked again when they separate. The 16th annual Tribeca Film Festival runs April 19-30. — AP

## RSVP 'no' to 'Table 19'

Review

**S**tilted conversations. Empty niceties. Forced joy. That overwhelming sense that it might have been better to just stay at home in sweats. It's that horrifying feeling you get being at a bad wedding with people you barely know. And, as it turns out, it's also the experience of watching "Table 19," a movie about being at a bad wedding at a table with people you barely know. While that unpleasant sensation might be tolerable (and even kind of clever) for a first act set up, in the awfully generic "Table 19," it never fades and even gets worse as the labored wackiness gives way to trite sentimentality. The premise is to spend the course of a wedding reception with the people at the random table, or as they later explain, the pity invite people who should have RSVP'd "no." There's the unhappy married couple who sort of know the bride's father (Lisa Kudrow and Craig Robinson), the old undervalued nanny (June Squibb), the estranged family member who's had some trouble with the law (Stephen Merchant), the awkward teenager who's hoping to meet a girl (Tony Revolori), and, Eloise (Anna Kendrick), who gave up her maid of honor duties when the bride's brother, Teddy (Wyatt Russell), dumped her by text a few months prior to the wedding.

How fun it might have been if these misfits had a modicum of comedic chemistry with one another, or actually seemed like real humans. Instead, they're all half-baked "types" as though they'd all just been tasked with executing a lame audience-suggested improv exercise right before the cameras started rolling. You know you're in trouble when there are basically two running gags, one about Kudrow's character being in the same outfit as the waiters at the wedding, and the other being that Merchant's character, in an attempt to hide his convict status, can only manage to say "I'm a successful businessman." Both sour with repetition.

### Life advice

It's all incredibly strained. The script infuriatingly withholds key character information. Threads are left pointlessly dangling (like the mysterious, handsome man who shows up to give Kendrick's character cryptic life advice, dance with her and then disappears). There's an elaborate "Mean Girls"-esque ecosystem of wedding guests charted out at the beginning ("eligible singles," "iffy singles," etc) that goes nowhere. And then things really take a turn for the worse when the movie starts throwing everyone's terribly oversimplified Big Life Problems at the plot expecting the audience to care.



This image released by Fox Searchlight Pictures shows, from left, Lisa Kudrow, Craig Robinson, June Squibb, Stephen Merchant, Anna Kendrick and Tony Revolori in a scene from the film, 'Table 19.' — AP

Kendrick manages to skirt by somewhat on charisma and her ability to make even the most unnatural scripts work for her, but there's only so much she can do, especially when she barely has anyone to play against in Teddy. Robinson is essentially sleepwalking and Kudrow somehow barely even registers. The only real comedic highlight is compliments of Andy Daly, a guest at another table, who has about three minutes of screen time. That a low concept rom-com didn't quite work is no great offense, but more of a headscratcher when so many talented people are involved. The story itself came from Mark and Jay Duplass, who I can only hope merely sold the idea and weren't in fact involved in its execution.

Perhaps it rests with the director, Jeffrey Blitz, Oscar-nominated for the documentary "Spellbound," who has successfully directed television comedies, including "The Office." The crucial problem with "Table 19" is that you never fall for the misfits, or fall for them falling for each other. They remain, even after a brisk 87 minutes, those annoying strangers who you can't wait to never see again. "Table 19," a Fox Searchlight Pictures release, is rated PG-13 by the Motion Picture Association of America for "thematic elements, sexual content, drug use, language and some brief nudity." Running time: 87 minutes. One half star out of four. — AP





People are sing and praise during the 'singles summit' held at Prayer City.



People praise the lord during the 'singles summit' held at Prayer City. — AFP photos

## Nigerians head to church to find earthly love



People sing and dance during the praise session at the 'singles summit' held at Prayer City.



A man jumps during a praise session at the 'singles summit' held at Prayer City.



People praise the lord during the 'singles summit' held at Prayer City.

Thousands of people began to arrive at the Nigerian megachurch just after dawn on a cool morning, looking for love and hot tips on how to avoid "dating devils". The "singles summit" is one of several offered by hugely popular Pentecostal churches in the west African nation, where marriage is a cornerstone of society to which most people aspire. With the relentless hustle and bustle of city life, and challenging economic conditions in a period of recession, there's often little time to seek out love. But the Mountain of Fire and Miracles Ministries aims to change all that at its vast Prayer City complex, opposite an amusement park off the Lagos to Ibadan expressway.

Its Gen218 program-named after the Bible verse in Genesis where God says "It is not good that the man should be alone" before making Eve-promises to teach participants tricks for picking the right partner and avoiding pitfalls. The lucky ones may actually find a boyfriend or girlfriend. Michelle Michaels, a 37-year-old public servant in a brown striped dress, was among the crowds at the summit one Saturday in February. "Obviously I'm a single, not married, searching and all that," she told AFP. "But it's more about getting it right," she added, turning serious. "Marriage can be a disaster. The rate of divorce is very high nowadays and I don't want to be part of it."

### 'Aggressive prayer'

With an astonishing maximum capacity of more than 200,000 people, Prayer City bills itself as a "24 hours a day, 7 days a week, non-stop" venue facilitating "aggressive prayer". By 8:30 am the singles summit was well under way, with a dapper singer in a suit and red tie belting out majestic soft rock ballads that were more Coldplay than Kumbaya. Half an hour later, there was dancing in the aisles. By 10:00 am, many were crying. Some were sprawled motionless and face down on the floor in apparent rapture. The summit appeared to be reaching a climax but in fact hadn't even started: superstar pastor Daniel Kolawole Olukoya's appearance was still four hours away.

A range of churches offer singles summits but the substance is more or less the same. It includes frank advice about the realities of



A singer leads the praise session during the 'singles summit' held at Prayer City.

married life, while divine guidelines are prescribed such as abstaining from sex until marriage, and there's a lot of praise. Pastor Matthew Ashimolowo of the Kingsway International Christian Centre held his own event earlier last month, teaching from his bestselling book "Don't Date Devils". On a different note, husband and wife team Bisi and Yomi Adewale, from the Family Booster Ministry, host singles events on the theme "12 Relationships You Must Avoid At All Cost".

"The singles are not only going there to hook future sanctified partners but also to acquire the spiritual endowments and secular skills on how to become future rich husbands and wives," said Nimi Wariboko, a professor at Boston University's theology school who studies Pentecostalism. "The summits are also places of pleasure, spaces where one can intensely party in the name of worship and experience huge emotional release without guilt. "It's a bundled service package directed at a segment of Nigerians eager to cross over from one stage of life into another."

### Traditional to modern

While the church may appear conservative in some ways, specifying that women must cover their hair on religious premises, for example, it's liberal in others. The Mountain of Fire and Miracles Ministries condemns forced marriage, child marriage, polygamy and inherited marriages, which see a widow passed on to another family member and are still common in Nigeria. In this way, the church helps guide young professionals as they adapt their traditional customs to modern life. "There has been an evolution from arranged marriage to marrying for love, and of course a shared love of Jesus Christ is a way of legitimizing a choice of who to marry," said Daniel J. Smith, an anthropology professor at Brown University in the United States.

That said, Olukoya still emphasizes patience, since hasty vows can result in an unhappy marriage to what he calls a "baby husband"-someone who "loves his mother more than the wife"-or an "acidic wife"-a woman whom, "when she talks, you feel like committing suicide". "Being a single isn't a bad thing," said Oluboyede Oluwatosin, a thoughtful 31-year-old technician attending his first singles summit. "It's good to be married but you don't just jump into marriage, there is some training you need. If you jump into marriage, you will surely jump out." — AFP





A bellboy stands outside street artist Banksy's newly opened Walled Off hotel in the Israeli occupied West Bank town of Bethlehem. — AFP photos



Banksy's work is displayed in the "The Walled Off Hotel".



The presidential suite of the "The Walled Off Hotel" in the West Bank city of Bethlehem.



A visitor looks at a bed inside street artist Banksy's newly opened Walled Off hotel in the Israeli occupied West Bank town of Bethlehem.

## STREET ARTIST BANKSY OPENS WALLED OFF HOTEL IN BETHLEHEM

Secretive British street artist Banksy opened a hotel next to Israel's controversial separation wall in Bethlehem yesterday, his latest artwork in the Palestinian territories. The 10-room Walled Off Hotel fits in with the artist's dystopian work, with rooms facing out onto the grim view of the wall, which cuts through the occupied West Bank. Banksy's spokespeople insisted the building was not merely an artistic statement but also an active hotel, with rooms to be rented out later. While most Palestinian cities in the West Bank are forbidden for Israelis to visit, the part of Bethlehem where the hotel is located is under Israeli control, meaning Israeli tourists seeking to understand the reality of the occupation can also visit.

Bethlehem tourism firms have long complained that the wall and Israel's continued occupation of the West Bank have crippled business. The artist has a long history in the Palestinian territories. In February 2015, he allegedly sneaked into the Gaza Strip through a smuggling tunnel and painted three works on the walls of Gaza homes destroyed in Israeli air strikes during the devastating conflict of the previous year. In 2007, he painted a number of artworks in Bethlehem, including a young girl frisking an Israeli soldier pinned up against a wall.

In 2005, he sprayed nine stencilled images on the vast barrier erected by Israel to separate itself from most of the occupied West Bank. The wall is one of the most striking symbols of Israel's 50-year occupation, and has become a major focus for demonstrations and art work. Israel refers to it as the security barrier and insists it is crucial for keeping out would-be attackers. Banksy said in 2005 that he considered the wall illegal and that his work sought to highlight the impact of the barrier on the lives of Palestinians.

His stencils hastily were sprayed at different locations along the 8-metre (27 foot) wall for fear of Israeli soldiers. They included a ladder reaching over the wall, a young girl being carried over it by balloons and a window on the grey concrete showing beautiful mountains in the background. He admitted the wall made "the ultimate activity holiday destination for graffiti writers." — AFP



An employee stands in the restaurant area of the "The Walled Off Hotel".



A wall decorated with security cameras and slingshots is seen in the bar area of the "The Walled Off Hotel".



An Israeli security watch tower is seen from one of the rooms of the "The Walled Off Hotel".





A picture shows a bed and graffiti inside street artist Banksy's newly opened Walled Off hotel.



The presidential suite of "The Walled Off Hotel".



An employee stands in the bar area of the "The Walled Off Hotel".



Gavin Grindon of the University of Essex, who co-curated with Banksy the museum inside "The Walled Off Hotel", stands by the reenactment of the signing of the year 1919 Balfour declaration in the in the West Bank city of Bethlehem.

## Art as a refuge from France's terror attacks

**T**errorist attacks in France over the past two years have provided grim inspiration for the country's artists-and for some directly affected by the carnage, creating is helping to heal. Cartoonist Catherine Meurisse narrowly avoided death because she was late for a meeting when jihadists attacked the Paris offices of Charlie Hebdo, the satirical magazine where she worked, on January 7, 2015. Twelve people were gunned down that day. Meurisse, now 37, battled depression after what turned out to be the first of three major jihadist attacks in France in little over a year and a half.

She has since published a work entitled "Lightness" about her recovery, seeking to help others deal with their experience of terror. She worked through her own experiences at the Villa Medicis in Rome, a prestigious art institution where she was struck by statues in the garden of Niobe, a Greek heroine whose children were slaughtered by the gods. "The art helped me meditate on the violence and myself," she told cultural magazine *Telerama*. "I had a sense of approaching death, the bodies of my friends, gently and without fear."

### Tossed but not sunk

After the Islamic State attacks in Paris that left 130 people dead in November 2015, prize-winning Franco-Moroccan author Leila Slimani was among writers who poured her grief and anger out

onto the page as she railed against extremism. "It is in Paris that I had access to art, to music, to beauty," she wrote. "Your fountains of milk and honey are worth less than the Seine." On the streets, graffiti artists daubed the defiant motto of Paris, "Fluctuat nec mergitur" (She is tossed by the waves, but does not sink) on walls around the city. The same message was projected as far away as the Flatiron building in New York.

Graphic artist Jean Jullien, meanwhile, laid a sketch of the Eiffel Tower over the 60s-era circular peace symbol that quickly showed up at pro-France demonstrations in the capital and other cities. Across France, people turned to books after the attacks, and while 2015 saw a drop in numbers at cinemas and festivals, the figures bounced back last year. Sales of works by Victor Hugo and other classic authors surged, as did Hemingway's tribute to Paris, "A Moveable Feast"-the French title of which translates as "Paris is a Party".

### Predictions and reflections

Even before the spate of attacks 2015 attacks and the Nice truck massacre that followed in July last year, French film-makers were beginning to explore the motives and repercussions of jihadist attacks. The release of "Made in France", a thriller about a wave of jihadist attacks on Paris, was delayed twice

after the bloodshed in the city and finally only came out via video on demand.

Franco-British production "Bastille Day", meanwhile-about a planned attack-chillingly came out just a day before the Nice assault on France's national holiday that left 86 people dead. It was immediately pulled from theatres. Thomas Bidegain's film "The Cowboys", released 10 days after the Paris attacks, also looked to homegrown extremism for its inspiration, following the story of an apparently normal French girl who suddenly disappears, leaving Arabic lesson books and jihadist propaganda behind.

"Events shone a cruel, monstrous light on some of our films," Bidegain said after the attack, but noting that in France, "cinema has its eyes open." The foretelling of terror has been accompanied by reflection. Marie-Castille Mention-Schaar began filming "Le Ciel attendra" (The sky will wait), about young women caught up in jihadist movements, just two days after the November 2015 Paris attacks, after debating whether she should put the project on hold. The director said she decided to push on because it was "even more important for me to try and understand" her characters' motivation. — AFP





Tunisian children arrive at Mount Sammama.



Tunisian musicians perform on Mount Sammama, during a gathering as part of a project by the Jabal Theatre, to use traditional culture and drama to combat the appeal of jihadist ideology. — AFP photos



Tunisian children perform on Mount Sammama.



A Tunisian theatre actor performs on Mount Sammama.



Tunisian children arrive at Mount Sammama.



Tunisian children perform on Mount Sammama.

## Upstaging jihad in Tunisia's impoverished mountains

**A** rustic theatre where performers wear masks carved from cactus aims to win over young Tunisians in a long neglected mountain district that has become a cradle of jihadism. Welcome to the "Jabal (mountain) Theatre" of music and dance on an open-air stage flattened from bare earth on Mount Sammama, in a range of hills that is a favored hideout of loyalists of Al-Qaeda and the Islamic State group. Since its 2011 revolution, Tunisia, birthplace of the Arab Spring, has faced jihadist attacks that have killed more than 100 security force personnel as well as 59 foreign tourists and 20 Tunisian civilians.

The Kasserine region in which Mount Sammama lies is one of Tunisia's remotest and most neglected, and its poverty has fanned extremism. Adnen Felali, a 42-year-old teacher, is determined to use traditional culture and drama to combat the appeal of jihadist ideology. "Our project, the Jabal Theatre, targets primarily children, the future of our country," he said. "We want to teach them that the mountains are a place of creativity, of poetry, of beauty, and in no way a place to breed the culture of death." The concept of his rural theatre was born two years ago and has had to overcome skepticism from all sides, especially in the absence of any support from the state. But despite its humble setting and facilities, Felali is aiming high, with the ambition of "eradicating extremism through culture and human understanding". The extremists may be lurking just "200 meters (yards) away with their bombs and guns, but we reject their catastrophic presence alongside us because for us the mountain is where we live", he said. With a winter chill setting in, hundreds of schoolchildren attended a four-hour festival of Bedouin music and dance, a break with the harshness of everyday reality.

### 'Best weapon'

Music teacher Ellafi Khachnaoui, 70, was among the crowd along with his oud, the pear-shaped stringed instrument beloved of the Arab world. "We want this generation to learn of the culture of life. We want them to be protected from the risk of being recruited by terrorists," said Khachnaoui. In January 2016, Kasserine was the scene of the



Tunisian musicians perform on Mount Sammama, during a gathering as part of a project by the Jabal Theatre.

worst social unrest in Tunisia since the revolution after a young man was killed during a demonstration against unemployment. In the absence of economic prospects, Kasserine remains vulnerable. "We have mines, we have fear... we have death," sighed Felali. There have been several deaths over the past year from land mines planted by the jihadists. Maalia, 32, her face masked by large black glasses, was seriously wounded in a land mine explosion last May as she and two friends were out collecting wild rosemary. Her cousin and a friend were killed on the spot. As for Maalia, she woke up in hospital with her eyes bandaged. Following several operations, one of her eyes was saved, but not the other. "Culture is the best weapon against backwardness, darkness and terrorism," said Maalia, who was among the audience at the Jabal Theatre.

Her voice choking with emotion, Maalia vowed never to leave her native mountain. "This is where I was born and I am not scared despite everything that's happened to me... I will carry on the war with words, not with guns," she said. — AFP



# Mistreatment of models casts new shadow over fashion

The "sadistic" mistreatment of scores of models who were forced to wait in a dark, cramped staircase for hours at a Paris fashion week casting has sparked fresh criticism of how the industry functions. With fashion already under intense scrutiny over under-age and overly thin models, the case made headlines around the world after US casting director James Scully broke ranks to denounce two rivals who he claimed were "serial abusers".

The furore has also highlighted how vulnerable even relatively top level models can be at "cattle call" castings for the elite catwalk shows in Paris, New York and Milan. At least 150 models were forced to wait for three hours or more in a hot and airless staircase for the Balenciaga show casting on Sunday, with the agents shutting the door and turning off the lights when they went off to eat. The label, one of the most influential on the Paris catwalk, sacked the casting agency on Tuesday hours after Scully took to Instagram to protest about the "sadistic and cruel" treatment of the women. Despite repeated attempts, AFP has been unable to contact the casting director, who is a major backstage figure on the Paris scene. Two models who were left in the dark told AFP that up to 300 girls had been forced to wait in the stairway over the course of the day, with the only toilet locked.

### 'Thing have to change'

"It was the worst ever casting I had," said former Gucci model Anna Vivchar, 19, who lost her place when she had to go to the

toilet. "Everyone was nervous and hot. "I am very grateful Balenciaga did what they did. They also apologized and sent us flowers." Fellow Ukrainian Elizabeth Pentsarska, 17, who has walked for Chanel, said with models rushing between up to 13 castings a day "normally you wait only maybe half an hour". In a world where a code of silence often rules, and where models can be too afraid of losing work to speak up, insiders say the swift sacking of such a high-profile figure has sent tremors through the industry.

Isabelle Saint-Felix of Synam, the French model agency union, said the dismissal was a deterrent to those who would "abuse their power" over models. "It is a warning to others and it could be an opportunity to rectify the situation. We have been warning for four or five years about the deteriorating situation. "Things have to change. Sometimes we let things go too far before we open our eyes to what is going on," she said. Synam had warned the French Couture Federation for years about "models being disrespected, worsening conditions and more and more demands," she said. "Models are very sweet adorable girls who have very short careers. They want to work and think that this is the price they have to pay. But we say that is a price they should not have to pay."

### 'Concerns trivialized'

Sara Ziff, a former top model who heads the New York-based Model Alliance, said the problem runs deep. "The industry is com-

pletely incapable of regulating itself. It is a little bit sad that we are reduced to naming and shaming. Really we should have some standards in our industry." Scully, who raised the alarm over the Balenciaga casting, sits on the board of the Alliance, which campaigned for child labor laws to be applied to underage models in New York. Ziff, who directed the acclaimed behind-the-scenes fashion documentary "Picture Me", said: "You have to ask where were these girls' agencies? Aren't they supposed to be looking out for their interests? I think that's the real story."

She said models' concerns were often "trivialized and dismissed". "It can't be that bad, people think. It is often not seen as work but more a privilege, but when you see what goes on behind the scenes there is nothing glamorous about it. "You are going between New York, London, Milan and Paris in the span of a month, working around the clock going to castings and fittings and often you don't know your schedule sometimes more than a couple of hours in advance." Working conditions in France tend to be better than in the US, Ziff said. "In Paris, at least models are considered employees of their agents and their clients. In the US, we have almost no labor protection." — AFP



## PARIS FASHION WEEK



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



## DELL EMC ENHANCES CLOUD SERVICE PROVIDER PARTNER PROGRAM TRACK

**DUBAI:** Dell EMC announced an enhanced focus and investment in the varied service provider industry that includes communications service providers, cable multiple system operators, hosting/co-location providers, public cloud providers, vertical market cloud specialists, and consumer webtech providers. The effort includes an expanded service provider track in the Dell EMC Partner Program and a new solutions engineering practice. As traditional enterprises shift investments to enable their Digital Transformation and cloud delivery models, they increasingly rely on modernized, flexible and agile service providers.

Adapting to this shift, service providers increasingly turn to common infrastructure building blocks of compute, storage and networking for multi-cloud services to increase their operational agility, speed time-to-service delivery, raise customer satisfaction and build differentiation into how they manage and operate cloud services. These building blocks - whether from Systems Integrators, Network Equipment Providers or infrastructure providers - must meet the industry's rigorous requirements and specifications.

**Enhanced Cloud Service Provider Program Track**  
The Cloud Service Provider track in the 2017 Dell

EMC Partner Program features an expanded go-to-market engine, anticipating significant scaling of the Dell EMC partner ecosystem. Participating partners can leverage the program to create differentiated cloud services, shorten time-to-market and accelerate time-to-revenue. Key investments demonstrating the renewed Dell EMC commitment include:

Strengthened partner compensation benefits including predictable revenue-based rebates and access to both earned-and proposal-based business development funds. Enhanced rewards for cloud resale partnering between participants in the Dell EMC Partner Program Cloud Service Provider and Solution Provider tracks. Increased Dell EMC sales and marketing investments that expand the available sell-with and sell-out resources on behalf of service provider partners globally and regionally.

To complement the partner program, Dell EMC is also investing in a global solutions engineering practice to produce a wide range of tested and validated systems for various service provider use cases. The practice leverages Dell EMC's industry-leading compute, storage and open networking solutions, providing industry-standard building blocks for deployment at any scale from the customer edge to hyper scale data centers. Customers

can take advantage of Dell EMC Extreme Scale Infrastructure for tailored offerings, cloud-native architectural expertise and modular data centre designs.

The solutions integrate state-of-the-art, software-defined storage (SDS) and software-defined networking (SDN) from Dell EMC including ScaleIO and OS10 respectively, as well as SDS and SDN capabilities with partners. Dell EMC OEM customization capabilities and extensive partner ecosystem provide additional sourcing options to speed time to market. This flexible infrastructure base is combined with virtualization, automation and orchestration software from various ecosystem partners and the Dell EMC Service Assurance Suite, yielding highly scalable and extensible cloud infrastructure.

Service providers and their partners can leverage this infrastructure to host a wide range of workloads to modernize service delivery or support new service creation. The service provider solutions engineering practice will focus initially on network functions virtualization (NFV) solutions principally for communications service providers. For mobile operators, Dell EMC plans to introduce validated systems for virtual evolved packet core (vEPC) with Affirmed Networks and virtual IP multimedia subsystem (vIMS) with MetaSwitch Networks.



**EEMNES:** Prime Minister and VVD-leader Mark Rutte, 3rd right, attends the tv show *Koffietijd* with Loretta Schrijver, 2nd right, and Pernille La Lau, 1st right, in Eemnes, yesterday. —AFP

## DITCH COMPUTERS TO SAVE DEMOCRACY DUTCH ELECTION'S RETURN TO PAPER AND PEN

**UTRECHT, Netherlands:** In an age of superfast computers and interconnected everything, the only sure way to protect the integrity of election results is to return to paper and pen. That is the view of Sijmen Ruwhof, an ethical or "white hat" hacker, who last month revealed that the Dutch election's commission computer software was riddled with vulnerabilities. In a shock announcement just weeks before the March 15 elections - seen as a bellwether of the rise of far-right and populist parties across Europe - Dutch officials announced they were abandoning the computer system in use since 2009 to return to counting ballots by hand.

It was Ruwhof who discovered the problem. At the request of Dutch broadcaster RTL he spent just one evening examining the OSV software, developed for the Dutch government by a German company, via an online YouTube explanatory video, finding 25 weak points. "It seemed to be completely insecure. I was quite shocked that we run our democracy, our election process based on very vulnerable software," he

said. Within days of the RTL report, the interior ministry announced ballots cast by the 12.9 million eligible voters would now be hand counted.

Then the head of the Dutch secret services (AIVD) made another stunning revelation - in the past six months there had been hundreds of attempted cyber attacks on Dutch companies and government agencies. Most were believed to have been carried out by Russian, Chinese and Iranian hackers. "It's a real challenge to stay ahead of the game," AIVD head Rob Bertholee said.

### Weak spots

But these revelations, like the stunning news that Russian hackers appear to have meddled in the US presidential elections, were of little surprise to Ruwhof. As a 12-year-old he became fascinated by computers. Self-taught, he managed to hack into the school computers and informed grateful teachers the system was insecure. That was 19 years and an information technology degree ago. Now 31, Ruwhof makes his living working for banks, government

departments, and major companies hacking at their request into their systems to expose their weaknesses.

"It's very easy," he insisted, without any smugness. But he remains frustrated that for many companies and organizations security is almost an afterthought. "Software systems are so complex nowadays that it's hard for a single IT person to comprehend the whole system. So nobody has the total picture of the system. As a hacker you just go by and you scan for weak spots and you always find something." The world has been lucky so far, because few terror groups like the so-called Islamic State have the capacity yet to unleash "cyber terrorism."

But imagine if from a computer far, far away malfasants could snap the power grid, change the formula for purifying drinking water, or empty millions at once from bank accounts, undermining the financial system? And that it is not the worst scenario. "If you manage to manipulate election software, you can decide who runs a country, and that's a whole different impact," Ruwhof warned. —AFP

## WHEN AMAZON'S CLOUD STORAGE FAILS, LOTS OF PEOPLE GET WET

**NEW YORK:** Usually people don't notice the "cloud" - unless, that is, it turns into a massive storm. Which was the case Tuesday when Amazon's huge cloud-computing service suffered a major outage. Amazon Web Services, by far the world's largest provider of internet-based computing services, suffered an unspecified breakdown in its eastern US region starting about midday Tuesday. The result: unprecedented and widespread performance problems for thousands of websites and apps.

While few services went down completely, thousands, if not tens of thousands, of companies had trouble with features ranging from file sharing to webfeeds to loading any type of data from Amazon's "simple storage service," known as S3. Amazon services began returning around 4 pm EST, and an hour later the company noted on its service site that S3 was fully recovered and "operating normally."

### The concentrated cloud

The breakdown shows the risks of depending heavily on a few big companies for cloud computing. Amazon's service is significantly larger by revenue than any of its nearest rivals - Microsoft's Azure, Google's Cloud Platform and IBM, according to Forrester Research. With so few large providers, any outage can have a disproportionate effect. But some analysts argue that the Amazon outage doesn't prove there's a problem with cloud computing - it just highlights how reliable the cloud normally is.

The outage, said Forrester analyst Dave Bartoletti, shouldn't cause companies to assume "the cloud is dangerous." Amazon's problems began when one S3 region based in Virginia began to experience what the company called "increased error rates." In a statement, Amazon said as of 4 p.m. EST it was still experiencing errors that were "impacting various AWS services." "We are working hard at repairing S3, believe we understand root cause, and are working on implementing what we believe will remediate the issue," the company said.

### Why S3 matters

Amazon S3 stores files and data for companies on remote servers. Amazon started offering it in 2006, and it's used for everything from building websites and apps to storing images, customer data and commercial transactions. "Anything you can think about storing in the most cost-effective way possible," is how Rich Mogull, CEO of data security firm Securosis, puts it. Since Amazon hasn't said exactly what is happening yet, it's hard to know just how serious the outage is. "We do know it's bad," Mogull said. "We just don't know how bad."

At S3 customers, the problem affected both "front-end" operations - meaning the websites and apps that users see - and back-end data processing that takes place out of sight. Some smaller online services, such as Trello, Scribd and IFTTT, appeared to be down for a while, although all have since recovered. The corporate message service Slack, by contrast, stayed up, although it reported "degraded service" for some features. —AP



## CENTRIFY EXPANDS MOBILE SECURITY OFFERINGS IN THE MIDDLE EAST

**DUBAI:** Centrify, the leader in securing hybrid enterprises through the power of identity services, announced yesterday that it has expanded support for Windows endpoints - including laptops, desktops and mobile devices and joined AppConfig.org to streamline app and device provisioning, extend IT security policy and provide end-users with more device choices. These enhancements to Centrify's mobile-centric identity management solutions will let organizations in the Middle East further realize seamless, context-aware policy across all the applications, endpoints and devices their users prefer - all from a single integrated solution.

**Age of Access**

In today's age of access, enabling user choice, while maintaining a highly secure environment is critical. The new Windows management features let IT organizations manage Windows endpoints from the cloud - including blocking app access from unmanaged devices - and further extends Centrify's Zero Sign-On capabilities to Windows, so once users are securely authenticated the first time,

they never have to type in their ID again when launching an app.

**More Mobile Endpoints**

This new feature builds on and extends Centrify's existing industry-leading identity support for Mac, iOS, Linux and Android endpoints, as well as its Multi-Factor authentication (MFA) support for Linux and Windows login and privilege elevation. Combined with Centrify's released Analytics Service that uses machine learning to assess risk based on user behavior patterns, organizations get needed help in stopping anomalous access requests across apps, sites, and resources.

Furthering its commitment to securing access to the boundary less hybrid enterprise, Centrify has also joined App Config, a collection of industry leading enterprise mobility management solution providers and app developers that have come together to make it easier for developers and customers to drive mobility in business. The community's mission is to streamline the adoption and deployment of mobile enterprise applications by

providing a standard approach to app configuration and management, building upon the extensive app security and configuration frameworks available in the OS.

"The world of security needs to move away from a legacy static perimeter-based approach to addressing the need to protect millions of scattered connections in an increasingly boundary less hybrid enterprise. Centrify's goal is to stop breaches through the power of identity services, and by tightly integrating mobile and identity policy into a single solution, we are creating a more robust way to ensure that only the right people have access to the right apps and data from managed devices," said Kamel Heus, regional manager - MEA, Centrify.



**Kamel Heus, Regional Manager, Centrify**



**TOKYO:** Nao Imoto, 31-years-old, shows off Nintendo's newest computer game console Switch at a retail store Bic Camera in central Tokyo, yesterday. —AP

## THE NINTENDO SWITCH'S BIG CHALLENGE: LURING GAMERS

**NEW YORK:** With three kids and constant travel for work, John Hussey jumped at the chance to play an open-world adventure game like "The Legend of Zelda: Breath of the Wild" anywhere, anytime. After he heard about the Nintendo Switch, a hybrid game machine that works as both a console at home and a tablet on the go, Hussey ordered one in January even though it wouldn't arrive until yesterday, when Nintendo's latest game machine debuts.

Nintendo will need lots of traditional gamers like Hussey to redeem itself as a console maker, after being eclipsed by Microsoft and Sony in the game-console wars. But Nintendo will also need lots of casual gamers who are satisfied with playing on a smartphone and would never have dreamed of buying a \$300 game machine. And in trying to appeal to many audiences, Nintendo risks not being the best at serving any one.

**Three lives**

The Switch is like three machines in one. Wireless controllers attach to a game tablet for hand held gaming. Take the tablet to a gathering with friends, and you can rest it on a table with a kickstand and detach the controllers for use as stand-alone devices. Back home, slide the tablet into a docking station and snap the controllers into a grip accessory and you have a traditional game console attached to a TV. With each switch - get it? - you can pick up where you left off.

"Knowing I could get the 'Zelda' game both at home and on the road, at this stage in my life that's essential," said Hussey, a sales rep from Bloomington, Indiana. "I can't sit around at home and play a 70-hour game, but if I'm on airplanes or hotels, it's perfect for me." The new "Zelda" game is the biggest available at launch, though Nintendo is also pushing a collection of casual party games called "1-2-Switch." Nintendo says more than 80 titles are in development, including "Super Mario Odyssey" and the action-puzzle game "Snipperclips: Cut it Out, Together." —AP

## PHONEMAKERS FOCUS ON FLICKS ON THE FLY

**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 phone-makers 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 on Thursday.

French media group Vivendi, which owns YouTube competitor Daily motion and France's No.1 pay TV service Canal+, set up Studio+ last year to make high quality miniseries 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 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

watching film. The LG device is the first smartphone that can support Netflix's higher quality HDR video streaming which makes colors 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-



**BARCELONA:** New mobile phones feature better screens to ensure a satisfying video experience. — AFP

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 ratios, a step up from the conventional 16:9 found on most phones, for

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



**OSN MOVIES HD**  
ACTION

- 01:30 As Above, So Below
- 03:15 The Gauntlet
- 04:45 Die Hard
- 07:00 Bad Company
- 09:00 Golden Eye
- 11:15 Tomorrow Never Dies
- 13:15 Die Hard
- 15:30 Six Days Seven Nights
- 17:15 Tracers
- 19:00 Ladder 49
- 21:00 Fury
- 23:15 Wild Card

**ANIMAL PLANET HD**

- 00:00 Wild Costa Rica
- 00:55 Gator Boys
- 01:50 River Monsters: Lair Of Giants
- 02:45 Bondi Vet
- 03:40 Biggest And Baddest
- 04:35 Tanked
- 05:25 In Too Deep
- 05:50 In Too Deep
- 06:15 Gator Boys
- 07:02 River Monsters: Lair Of Giants
- 07:49 Biggest And Baddest
- 08:36 Going Ape
- 09:00 Going Ape
- 09:25 Biggest And Baddest
- 10:15 Catching Monsters
- 11:10 Yankee Jungle
- 12:05 The Vet Life
- 13:00 Treehouse Masters
- 13:55 Bondi Vet
- 14:50 Earthquake: Panda Rescue
- 15:45 Pandamonium
- 16:40 Pandamonium
- 17:35 Pandamonium
- 18:30 Pandamonium
- 19:25 Pandamonium
- 20:20 Catching Monsters
- 21:15 Biggest And Baddest
- 22:10 Yankee Jungle
- 23:05 Treehouse Masters

**BBC FIRST**

- 00:25 Uncle
- 00:55 Doctors
- 01:30 Doctors
- 02:05 Line Of Duty
- 03:10 Line Of Duty
- 04:10 Mum
- 04:40 Uncle
- 05:10 Doctors
- 05:40 Doctors
- 06:10 Father Brown
- 07:00 Doctors
- 07:30 Doctors
- 08:00 Doctors
- 08:30 Doctors
- 09:00 Doctors
- 09:30 Eastenders
- 10:00 Eastenders
- 10:30 Eastenders
- 11:05 37 Days
- 12:00 37 Days
- 13:00 37 Days
- 14:00 Casualty
- 14:55 Doctors
- 15:30 Doctors
- 16:00 37 Days
- 17:00 37 Days
- 18:00 37 Days
- 19:00 Doctors
- 19:30 Eastenders
- 20:00 Father Brown
- 21:00 Last Tango In Halifax
- 22:00 Poldark
- 22:55 Silk
- 23:50 Silk

**ci crime & investigation network**

- 00:00 The First 48
- 01:00 Private Crimes
- 01:30 Private Crimes
- 02:00 50 Ways To Kill Your Lover
- 03:00 My Haunted House
- 04:00 The First 48
- 05:00 Private Crimes
- 05:30 Private Crimes
- 06:00 50 Ways To Kill Your Lover

- 07:00 My Haunted House
- 08:00 Deadly Wives
- 09:00 The First 48
- 10:00 Killers
- 11:00 Crimes That Shook Britain
- 12:00 Crimes That Shook Britain
- 13:00 Crimes That Shook Britain
- 14:00 Crimes That Shook Britain
- 15:00 Crimes That Shook Britain
- 16:00 Crimes That Shook Britain
- 17:00 Crimes That Shook Britain
- 18:00 Crimes That Shook Britain
- 19:00 Crimes That Shook Britain
- 20:00 It Takes A Killer
- 20:30 It Takes A Killer
- 21:00 I Didn't Do It
- 22:00 The First 48
- 23:00 Killers

**COMEDY CENTRAL**

- 00:05 Ugly Americans
- 00:30 The Daily Show With Trevor Noah
- 01:00 Another Period
- 01:25 Another Period
- 01:50 Kumail Nanjiani: Beta Male
- 02:40 Inside Amy Schumer
- 03:05 South Park
- 03:30 South Park
- 04:00 The Daily Show With Trevor Noah
- 04:25 Coaching Bad
- 05:15 Bondi Ink.
- 06:05 Ridiculousness
- 06:30 Ridiculousness
- 06:55 Ridiculousness
- 07:20 Sweat Inc.
- 08:10 Lip Sync Battle
- 08:35 Lip Sync Battle
- 09:25 Workaholics
- 09:50 Workaholics
- 10:15 Ridiculousness
- 10:40 Ridiculousness
- 11:05 Ridiculousness
- 11:30 Ridiculousness
- 11:55 Life Or Debt
- 12:45 The It Crowd
- 13:10 The It Crowd
- 13:35 The It Crowd
- 14:00 Sweat Inc.
- 14:50 Urban Tarzan
- 15:15 Urban Tarzan

- 15:40 Hungry Investors
- 16:30 Disaster Date
- 16:55 Disaster Date
- 17:20 Disaster Date
- 17:45 Key And Peele
- 18:10 Key And Peele
- 18:35 Key And Peele
- 19:00 Comedy Central Presents Comedy 3alwagef
- 19:30 Workaholics
- 19:55 The Jim Gaffigan Show
- 20:20 I Live With Models
- 20:44 Idiotsitter
- 21:07 Brotherhood
- 21:30 Comedy Central Presents Comedy 3alwagef
- 22:00 The Daily Show - Global Edition
- 22:30 Inside Amy Schumer
- 22:54 Important Things With Demetri Martin
- 23:18 Another Period
- 23:42 Another Period

**Discovery Family**

- 00:15 Destroyed In Seconds
- 00:40 Bear Grylls: Born Survivor
- 01:30 Unchained Reaction
- 02:20 Man v Expert
- 03:10 Breaking Magic
- 03:35 Breaking Magic
- 04:00 Destroyed In Seconds
- 04:25 Destroyed In Seconds
- 04:50 Bear Grylls: Born Survivor
- 05:40 How It's Made
- 06:05 How It's Made
- 06:30 Dirty Jobs
- 07:20 Mythbusters
- 08:00 Kids vs Film
- 08:25 Kids vs Film
- 08:50 Bear Grylls Survival School
- 09:15 Bear Grylls Survival School
- 09:40 Bondi Vet
- 10:30 Bondi Vet
- 11:20 Bondi Vet
- 12:10 Bondi Vet
- 13:00 Bondi Vet
- 13:50 Mythbusters
- 14:40 Mythbusters
- 15:30 Mythbusters
- 16:20 Mythbusters
- 17:10 Mythbusters

- 18:00 Unchained Reaction
- 18:50 Unchained Reaction
- 19:40 Man v Expert
- 20:30 Kids Do The Craziest Things
- 20:55 Kids Do The Craziest Things
- 21:20 Breaking Magic
- 21:45 Breaking Magic
- 22:10 Troy
- 23:00 Destroyed In Seconds
- 23:25 Destroyed In Seconds
- 23:50 Destroyed In Seconds

**Disney Channel HD**

- 00:00 Kirby Buckets
- 00:25 Sabrina Secrets Of A Teenage Witch
- 00:50 Sabrina Secrets Of A Teenage Witch
- 01:10 Hank Zipzer
- 01:35 Binny And The Ghost
- 02:00 Violetta
- 02:45 The Hive
- 02:50 Sabrina Secrets Of A Teenage Witch
- 03:15 Sabrina Secrets Of A Teenage Witch
- 03:40 Hank Zipzer
- 04:05 Binny And The Ghost
- 04:30 Violetta
- 05:15 The Hive
- 05:20 Sabrina Secrets Of A Teenage Witch
- 05:45 Sabrina Secrets Of A Teenage Witch
- 06:10 Hank Zipzer
- 06:35 Binny And The Ghost
- 07:00 Violetta
- 07:45 The Hive
- 07:50 The 7D
- 08:00 Jessie
- 08:25 Jessie
- 08:50 Tsum Tsum Shorts
- 08:55 Austin & Ally
- 09:20 Rolling To The Ronks
- 09:45 Gravity Falls
- 10:10 Miraculous Tales Of Ladybug And Cat Noir

- 10:35 Elena Of Avalor
- 11:00 Stuck In The Middle
- 11:25 Bizaardvark
- 11:50 Bunk'd
- 12:15 Disney Cookabout
- 12:40 Invisible Sister
- 14:10 The 7D
- 14:20 Stuck In The Middle
- 14:45 Stuck In The Middle
- 15:10 Stuck In The Middle
- 15:35 Stuck In The Middle
- 16:00 Stuck In The Middle
- 16:25 Jessie
- 16:50 Jessie
- 17:15 Austin & Ally
- 17:40 Austin & Ally
- 18:05 Descendants Wicked World
- 18:10 Elena Of Avalor
- 18:35 Stuck In The Middle
- 19:00 Gravity Falls
- 19:25 The Swap
- 20:55 The 7D
- 21:05 Disney Cookabout
- 21:30 Bizaardvark
- 21:55 Bunk'd
- 22:20 Shake It Up
- 22:45 Dog With A Blog
- 23:10 Best Friends Whenever
- 23:35 Kirby Buckets

**Disney Junior**

- 00:00 Goldie & Bear
- 00:30 Goldie & Bear
- 00:55 PJ Masks
- 01:20 Henry Hugglemonster
- 01:35 The Hive
- 01:45 Loopdidoo
- 02:00 Henry Hugglemonster
- 02:15 Calimero
- 02:30 Art Attack
- 02:55 Zou
- 03:05 Loopdidoo
- 03:20 Henry Hugglemonster
- 03:35 Calimero
- 03:50 Zou
- 04:05 Art Attack
- 04:30 The Hive
- 04:40 Loopdidoo
- 04:55 Henry Hugglemonster
- 05:10 Art Attack
- 05:35 Loopdidoo
- 05:50 Calimero
- 06:05 Art Attack
- 06:30 Henry Hugglemonster
- 06:45 Zou
- 07:00 Art Attack
- 07:30 Henry Hugglemonster

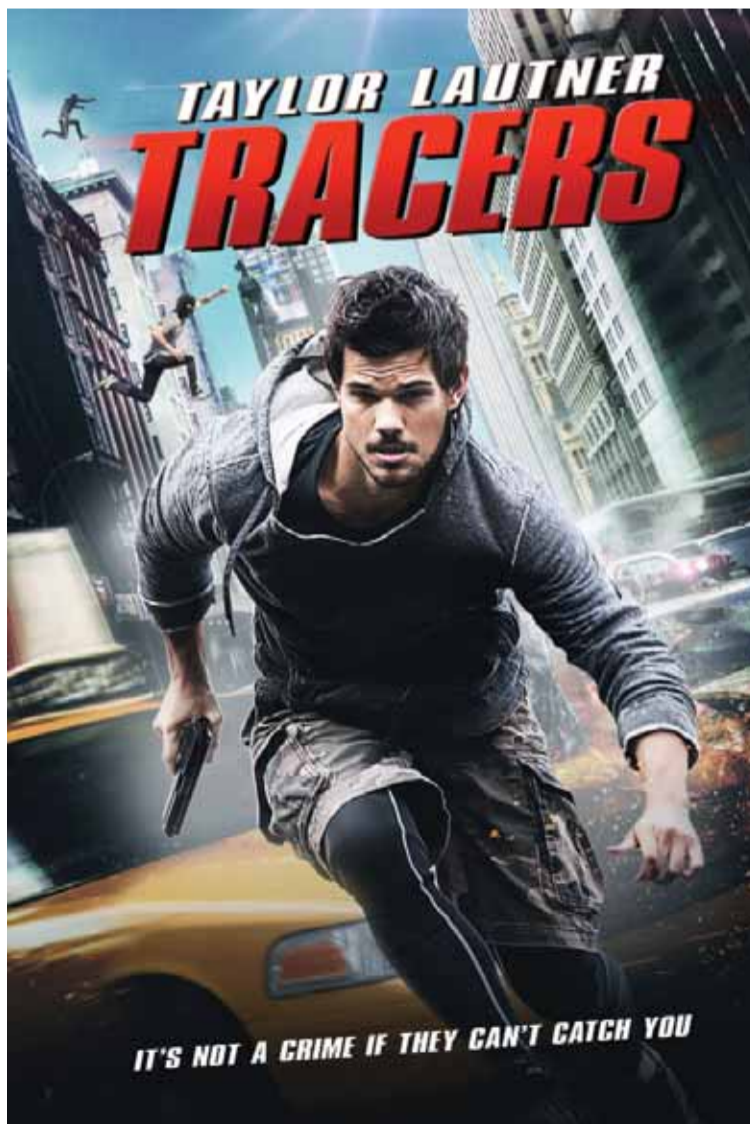
- 07:45 Loopdidoo
- 08:00 Zou
- 08:15 Calimero
- 08:30 Loopdidoo
- 08:45 Henry Hugglemonster
- 09:00 My Friends Tigger & Pooh
- 09:25 Mickey Mouse Clubhouse
- 09:50 Goldie & Bear
- 10:15 Miles From Tomorrow
- 10:30 Jake And The Never Land Pirates
- 11:00 Sofia The First
- 11:30 Doc McStuffins
- 12:00 The Lion Guard
- 12:30 Goldie & Bear
- 13:00 Mickey Mouse Clubhouse
- 13:30 Miles From Tomorrow
- 14:00 PJ Masks
- 14:25 PJ Masks
- 14:50 PJ Masks
- 15:20 PJ Masks
- 15:45 PJ Masks
- 16:10 PJ Masks
- 16:40 PJ Masks
- 17:05 PJ Masks
- 17:30 PJ Masks
- 18:00 PJ Masks
- 18:25 PJ Masks
- 18:55 PJ Masks
- 19:20 PJ Masks
- 19:45 PJ Masks
- 20:15 PJ Masks
- 20:45 PJ Masks
- 21:00 Goldie & Bear
- 21:30 Goldie & Bear
- 22:00 Unbungalievable
- 22:05 Goldie & Bear
- 22:35 Miles From Tomorrow
- 23:00 My Friends Tigger & Pooh
- 23:25 Mickey Mouse Clubhouse
- 23:55 Minnie's Bow-Toons

**Discovery Channel HD**

- 00:30 Aftershock: Disaster In Nepal
- 01:20 Gold Rush
- 02:10 Wheeler Dealers
- 03:00 Diesel Brothers
- 03:50 Street Outlaws
- 04:40 How Do They Do It?
- 05:05 How Do They Do It?
- 05:30 How It's Made: Dream Cars
- 06:00 How It's Made: Dream Cars
- 06:30 How Do They Do It?
- 07:00 Storage Wars Canada
- 07:25 Storage Wars Canada
- 07:50 Storage Wars Canada
- 08:15 Storage Wars Canada
- 08:40 Storage Wars Canada
- 09:05 How Do They Do It?
- 09:30 How Do They Do It?
- 09:55 How It's Made: Dream Cars
- 10:20 How It's Made: Dream Cars
- 10:45 How Do They Do It?
- 11:10 Gold Rush
- 12:00 Everest Rescue
- 12:50 Made By Destruction
- 13:15 Made By Destruction
- 13:40 Fast N' Loud
- 14:30 Fast N' Loud
- 15:20 Fast N' Loud
- 16:10 Fast N' Loud
- 17:00 Fast N' Loud
- 17:50 The Island With Bear Grylls
- 18:40 Bear's Wild Weekend With Stephen Fry
- 19:30 Impossible Engineering
- 20:20 Legend Of Croc Gold
- 21:10 Manhunt With Joel Lambert
- 22:00 Aftershock: Disaster In Nepal
- 22:50 Dark Woods Justice
- 23:40 Alaskan Bush People

**XD**

- 00:00 Programmes Start At 6:00am KSA
- 07:00 Supa Strikas
- 07:25 Supa Strikas
- 07:50 Marvel Ultimate Spider-Man vs The Sinister 6
- 08:15 Right Now Kapow
- 08:40 Star vs The Forces Of Evil
- 09:10 Mighty Med
- 09:35 Lab Rats
- 10:00 Supa Strikas
- 10:25 Supa Strikas
- 10:50 Supa Strikas
- 11:20 Supa Strikas
- 11:45 Supa Strikas
- 12:10 Supa Strikas
- 12:35 Supa Strikas
- 13:00 Peter Pan
- 14:20 Star vs The Forces Of Evil
- 14:45 Atomic Puppet
- 15:10 Disney Mickey Mouse



TRACERS ON OSN MOVIES ACTION HD



SATURDAY, MARCH 4, 2017

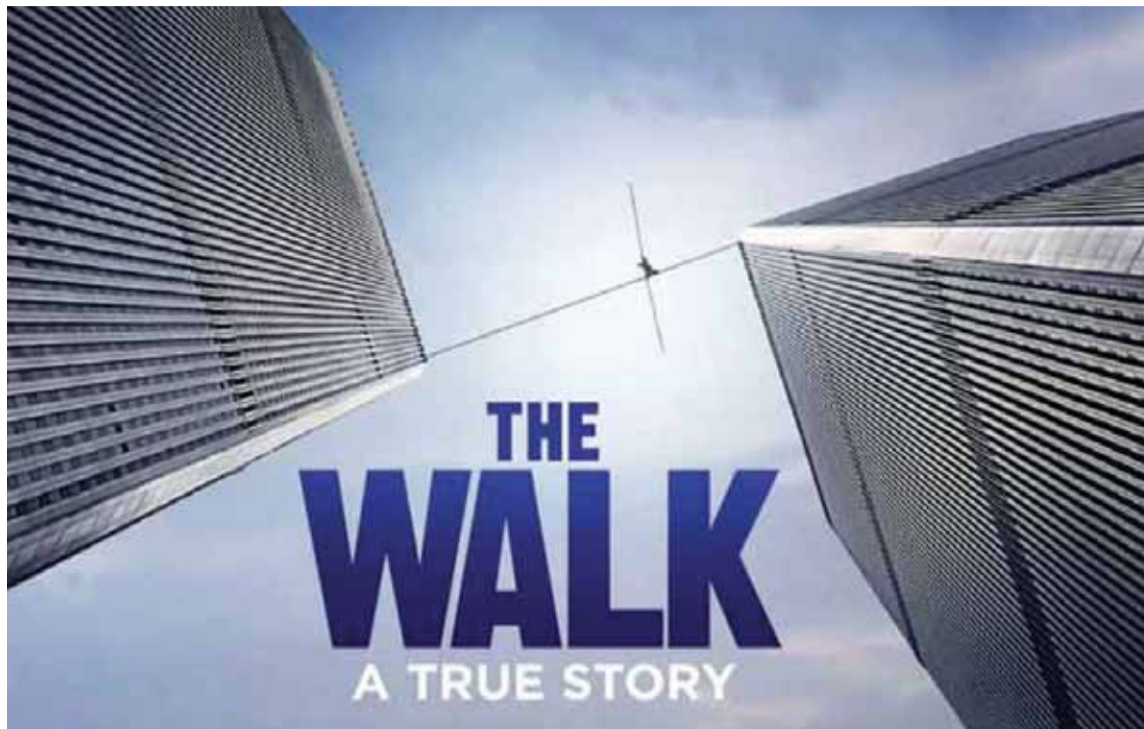
- 15:15 Supa Strikas
- 15:40 K.C. Undercover
- 16:05 Right Now Kapow
- 16:30 Right Now Kapow
- 16:55 Right Now Kapow
- 17:25 Right Now Kapow
- 17:50 Right Now Kapow
- 18:15 Kickin' It
- 18:40 Lab Rats Elite Force
- 19:05 Disney Mickey Mouse
- 19:10 Right Now Kapow
- 19:35 Peter Pan
- 20:55 Danger Mouse
- 21:20 Star vs The Forces Of Evil
- 21:45 Mighty Med
- 22:10 Pickle And Peanut
- 22:40 Disney Mickey Mouse
- 22:45 Marvel's Avengers: Ultron Revolution
- 23:10 Marvel Ultimate Spider-Man vs The Sinister 6
- 23:35 Boyster



- 00:00 E! News
- 00:15 Hollywood & Football
- 01:05 Hollywood & Football
- 01:55 Hollywood & Football
- 02:50 E! News
- 03:50 Catching Kelce
- 04:45 Catching Kelce
- 05:40 Catching Kelce
- 06:30 Fashion Bloggers
- 07:00 E! News
- 07:55 E! News
- 08:10 E! News
- 09:10 E! News
- 10:05 Fashion Police
- 10:55 Botched
- 11:45 Mariah's World
- 12:35 Mariah's World
- 13:25 Mariah's World
- 14:15 E! News
- 14:45 Celebrity Style Story
- 15:15 Celebrity Style Story
- 15:45 Celebrity Style Story
- 16:15 Live From The Red Carpet
- 18:10 Red Carpet Rundown: Oscars 2017
- 19:00 Fashion Police
- 20:00 E! News
- 21:00 Celebrity Style Story
- 21:30 Celebrity Style Story
- 22:00 So Cosmo
- 23:00 So Cosmo



- 00:00 Luke Nguyen's United Kingdom
- 00:30 Luke Nguyen's United Kingdom
- 01:00 Follow Donal... To Europe
- 01:30 Follow Donal... To Europe
- 02:00 Diners, Drive-Ins And Dives
- 02:30 Diners, Drive-Ins And Dives
- 03:00 Man Fire Food
- 03:30 Man Fire Food
- 04:00 Chopped
- 05:00 Guy's Grocery Games
- 06:00 Barefoot Contessa: Back To Basics
- 06:30 Barefoot Contessa: Back To Basics
- 07:00 Chopped
- 08:00 Barefoot Contessa: Back To Basics
- 08:30 Barefoot Contessa: Back To Basics
- 09:00 The Pioneer Woman
- 09:30 The Pioneer Woman
- 10:00 Siba's Table
- 10:30 Siba's Table
- 11:00 Anna Olson: Bake
- 11:30 Anna Olson: Bake
- 12:00 Man Fire Food
- 12:30 Man Fire Food
- 13:00 Diners, Drive-Ins And Dives
- 13:30 Diners, Drive-Ins And Dives
- 14:00 Chopped
- 15:00 Barefoot Contessa: Back To Basics
- 15:30 Barefoot Contessa: Back To Basics
- 16:00 The Pioneer Woman
- 16:30 The Pioneer Woman
- 17:00 Siba's Table: Fast Feasts
- 17:30 Siba's Table: Fast Feasts
- 18:00 Anna Olson: Bake
- 18:30 Anna Olson: Bake
- 19:00 Man Fire Food
- 19:30 Man Fire Food
- 20:00 Diners, Drive-Ins And Dives
- 20:30 Diners, Drive-Ins And Dives
- 21:00 Restaurant Stakeout
- 22:00 Mystery Diners
- 22:30 Mystery Diners
- 23:00 Diners, Drive-Ins And Dives
- 23:30 Diners, Drive-Ins And Dives



THE WALK ON OSN MOVIES HD

- 
- 00:15 Emmerdale
  - 00:40 Coronation Street
  - 01:10 The Chase
  - 02:00 Callie-Anne Cooks Into The Wild
  - 02:30 Emmerdale
  - 04:55 Coronation Street
  - 07:00 Vera
  - 08:35 Murdoch Mysteries
  - 09:25 Tonight At The London Palladium
  - 10:20 Grantchester
  - 11:15 Grantchester
  - 12:10 Tina & Bobby
  - 13:00 Don't Tell The Bride
  - 14:00 Don't Tell The Bride
  - 15:05 The Jonathan Ross Show
  - 16:00 Ant & Dec's Saturday Night Takeaway
  - 17:15 Tina & Bobby
  - 18:10 Murdoch Mysteries
  - 19:05 Tonight At The London Palladium
  - 20:00 Don't Tell The Bride
  - 21:00 Ant & Dec's Saturday Night Takeaway
  - 22:10 Tina & Bobby
  - 23:00 The Jonathan Ross Show
  - 23:50 Coronation Street



- 00:00 Engineering Disasters
- 01:00 The Universe
- 02:00 Patton 360
- 03:00 Ancient Discoveries
- 04:00 Missing In Alaska
- 04:50 Ancient Aliens: The Ultimate Evidence
- 05:40 Engineering Disasters
- 06:30 The Universe
- 07:20 Patton 360
- 08:10 The Universe
- 09:00 Ancient Discoveries
- 10:00 Missing In Alaska
- 11:00 Ancient Aliens: The Ultimate Evidence
- 12:00 Engineering Disasters
- 13:00 The Universe
- 14:00 Ancient Aliens: The Ultimate Evidence
- 15:00 Ancient Aliens
- 16:00 Ancient Aliens
- 17:00 Ancient Aliens: The Ultimate Evidence
- 18:00 Ancient Aliens: The Ultimate Evidence
- 19:00 Ancient Aliens: The Ultimate Evidence
- 20:00 Hangar 1: The UFO Files
- 21:00 Hangar 1: The UFO Files
- 22:00 Hangar 1: The UFO Files
- 23:00 Hangar 1: The UFO Files



- 00:30 The Curse Of Oak Island
- 01:20 Ronnie O'Sullivan's American Hustle
- 02:10 Ultimate Wheels
- 03:00 Lost In Transmission
- 03:50 Pawn Stars
- 04:15 Pawn Stars South Africa

- 04:40 Pawn Stars South Africa
- 05:05 Pawn Stars UK
- 05:30 Pawn Stars UK
- 06:00 Mankind The Story Of All Of Us
- 07:00 Storage Wars Miami
- 07:50 Pawn Stars Australia
- 08:15 Pawn Stars Australia
- 08:40 American Pickers
- 09:30 American Restoration
- 10:20 Ultimate Wheels
- 11:10 Lost In Transmission
- 12:00 Shipping Wars
- 12:25 Shipping Wars
- 12:50 Ice Road Truckers
- 13:40 Ax Men
- 14:30 Battle 360
- 15:20 Hunting Hitler
- 16:10 The Curse Of Oak Island
- 17:00 Storage Wars Miami
- 17:50 Counting Cars
- 18:15 Car Hunters
- 18:40 Pawn Stars
- 19:05 Pawn Stars Best Of
- 19:30 Ice Road Truckers
- 20:20 American Pickers
- 21:10 Forged In Fire
- 22:00 The Curse Of Oak Island
- 22:50 Hunting Hitler
- 23:40 Outlaw Chronicles: Hells Angels



- 00:00 Miguel's Feasts
- 00:25 Dog Whisperer
- 01:15 Top Chef Top Table: Seoul
- 01:40 David Rocco's Dolce Vita
- 02:05 Sara's Australia Unveiled
- 02:30 David Rocco's Dolce India
- 02:55 David Rocco's Dolce India
- 03:20 Glamour Puds
- 03:45 Rustic Adventure Argentina
- 04:10 Maximum Foodie
- 04:35 Delinquent Gourmet
- 05:00 Charlie Luxton's Homes By The Sea
- 05:50 Poh & Co
- 06:20 Testing The Menu With Nic Watt
- 06:45 Chocolate Covered
- 07:15 Grandma's Boy
- 07:40 George Clarke's Amazing Spaces
- 08:35 Seoul: Capital Of K-Pop
- 09:30 The Wine Show
- 10:25 David Rocco's Dolce Vita
- 10:55 David Rocco's Dolce Vita
- 11:20 The Food Files
- 11:50 The Food Files
- 12:15 Andy And Ben Eat The World
- 12:45 Dog Whisperer
- 13:40 Sara's Australia Unveiled
- 14:05 David Rocco's Dolce India
- 14:35 David Rocco's Dolce India
- 15:00 Confucius Was A Foodie
- 15:55 Maximum Foodie
- 16:25 Delinquent Gourmet
- 16:50 The Food Files
- 17:20 The Food Files
- 17:45 Poh & Co
- 18:15 Testing The Menu With Nic Watt
- 18:40 Grandma's Boy

- 19:10 Tripping Out With Alie & Georgia
- 19:35 Rustic Adventure Argentina
- 20:05 Maximum Foodie
- 20:30 Delinquent Gourmet
- 21:00 The Food Files
- 21:25 The Food Files
- 21:55 Poh & Co
- 22:20 Testing The Menu With Nic Watt
- 22:45 Grandma's Boy
- 23:10 Tripping Out With Alie & Georgia
- 23:35 Rustic Adventure Argentina



- 00:20 Car SOS
- 01:10 Locked Up Abroad
- 02:00 The Border
- 03:00 Hitler The Junkie
- 03:25 Hitler And The Occult
- 03:55 Facing...
- 04:50 Facing...
- 05:45 Locked Up Abroad
- 06:40 Air Crash Investigation
- 07:35 Mega Factories: Supercars
- 08:30 Megastructures
- 09:25 Dog Whisperer
- 10:20 Dog Whisperer
- 11:15 Miracle Hospital
- 11:40 Miracle Hospital
- 12:10 Nat Geo Amazing!
- 13:05 Cradle To Grave
- 15:00 Route Awakening
- 15:30 Route Awakening
- 16:00 Air Crash Investigation
- 17:00 Bugatti Chiron: Super Car Build
- 18:00 Megastructures
- 19:00 Ultimate Airport Dubai
- 20:00 The Border
- 21:00 Bugatti Chiron: Super Car Build
- 21:50 Megastructures
- 22:40 Ultimate Airport Dubai
- 23:30 The Border



- 00:30 Hunting The Hammerhead
- 01:20 Lion Battle Zone
- 02:10 Secrets Of The Wild
- 03:00 Rescue Ink
- 03:50 The Invaders
- 04:45 Wild Colombia (2017)
- 05:40 South Africa
- 06:35 Safari Brothers
- 07:30 Monster Fish
- 08:25 Monster Fish
- 09:20 Unlikely Animal Friends
- 10:15 Snakes In The City
- 11:10 World's Weirdest: Animal Taboo
- 12:05 Dr. K's Exotic Animal ER
- 13:00 Birthplace Of The Giants
- 13:55 World's Deadliest Animals
- 14:50 The Invaders
- 15:45 Europe's Wild Islands
- 16:40 Survive The Wild

- 17:35 Savage Kingdom
- 18:30 Africa's Hunters
- 19:25 Dangerous Encounters
- 20:20 Europe's Wild Islands
- 21:10 Survive The Wild
- 22:00 Savage Kingdom
- 22:50 Africa's Hunters
- 23:40 Dangerous Encounters



- 00:00 Inside Out
- 02:00 The Secret Of The Magic Gourd
- 04:00 Clockstoppers
- 06:00 Robots
- 08:00 Tinker Bell And The Lost Treasure
- 10:00 Inside Out
- 12:00 Robots
- 14:00 The Wild
- 16:00 The Boxtrolls
- 18:00 The Lizzie McGuire Movie
- 20:00 Race To Witch Mountain
- 22:00 Secretariat



- 01:00 Someone Marry Barry
- 03:00 Honeymooners
- 05:00 Lovesick
- 07:00 Ride
- 09:00 Honeymooners
- 11:00 Lovesick
- 12:45 Ride
- 14:45 Baby Mama
- 16:45 The Grand Seduction
- 18:45 Valentine's Day
- 21:00 Hector And The Search For Happiness
- 23:00 A Million Ways To Die In The West



- 01:00 Summer In February
- 03:00 Serena
- 05:00 Pele: Birth Of A Legend
- 07:00 Searching For Bobby Fischer
- 09:00 Neil Young: Heart Of Gold
- 11:00 Wuthering Heights
- 13:00 The Wave
- 15:00 Of Mice And Men
- 17:00 Every Thing Will Be Fine
- 19:00 Frankie And Johnny
- 21:00 The Life Aquatic With Steve Zissou
- 23:00 The Royal Tenenbaums



- 01:00 Duplicity
- 03:15 The Guardian
- 05:45 Pitch Perfect 2
- 07:45 The Guardian
- 10:15 Little Man Tate
- 12:00 The Walk
- 14:15 The Fugitive
- 16:30 Sherlock Holmes
- 18:45 Invictus
- 21:00 American Sniper
- 23:15 Death Race



- 00:00 Mythbusters
- 00:50 Kings Of Construction
- 01:40 Mythbusters
- 02:30 How Do They Do It?
- 02:55 Food Factory
- 03:20 Mythbusters
- 04:10 Close Encounters
- 05:00 Kings Of Construction
- 05:48 Mythbusters
- 06:36 How Do They Do It?
- 07:00 Food Factory
- 07:24 Mythbusters
- 08:12 Close Encounters
- 08:37 Close Encounters
- 09:00 How Do They Do It?
- 09:26 Food Factory
- 11:26 How Do They Do It?
- 13:26 Close Encounters
- 17:26 Mythbusters
- 18:14 Mythbusters
- 20:40 Mythbusters
- 21:30 NASA's Unexplained Files
- 22:20 Future Weapons





## ASSE-KUWAIT HOLDS ITS 219TH TECHNICAL MEET

**A**merican Society of Safety Engineers (ASSE), Kuwait Chapter is a premier voluntary, Non-profit Health, Safety and Environmental organization, which strives to provide professional guidance, training, consultancy and resources to the industrial and social sectors in the region. As a part of continuous efforts in its professional journey, ASSE-Kuwait Chapter organized its 219th Technical Meet (9th in the term 2016-17) on two technical topics (1). The Leader's Challenge - Seeing and Understanding Risk in the Oil and Gas Industry" (2). Integrated Crisis and Business Continuity Plan".

The Technical Meet began with the Opening address by Rama Krushna Chary, President ASSE Kuwait Chapter and Sanjay Jaiswal in his opening remarks briefed about upcoming ASSE GCC HSE Excellence Award 2017. Adnan Yousef, Head of Technical Events Committee introduced the speakers for the Tech event Daryl Wake & Ram Kumar who are skilled leaders and safety experts.

Daryl Wake, Senior Consultant - EMEA, Former non-commissioned officer in the Royal Australian Navy and longtime health and safety expert has improved safety for companies around the world in some of the most high-risk industries and challenging locations. He holds an International Certificate in Occupational Safety and Health from the British Safety Council and Six Sigma yellow- and green-belt certifications. A native of Australia, he now lives in Dubai, United Arab Emirates. He has presented the topic "The Leader's Challenge - Seeing and Understanding Risk in the Oil and Gas Industry"

Later Nachuppally Ram Kumar highlights the importance of Integrated Crisis and Business Continuity Plan, Core values, business aspects and elements involved for Crisis and Business Continuity Management, Crisis Communication strategy, principles and framework, ERP, Risk Management process. He emphasized on the importance of organizational core business values, safeguarding the interests of stake-

holder, emphasizing increase the likelihood of achieving business objectives meeting assertively and focusing on the essential features of emergency, risk management, crisis and business continuity management to resilience with the following suggestions and recommendations as per the international standards and code practices strategic proactive management approach.

As an Honor of Appreciation, ASSE Kuwait chapters Core

Committee honored the speakers with a memento for his excellent and skillful presentation. Technical Meet concluded with close out speech of Sunil Sadanad, Treasurer of ASSE Kuwait Chapter who thanked the Speakers for giving an insight on the topics. He thanked the Technical Events committee for the arrangements and all the participants, who attended the technical meet.

### DELEGATION FROM COUNCIL OF SAUDI CHAMBERS VISITS AOU TRAINING CENTER

**A** delegation from the National Committee for Training at the Council of Saudi Chambers, paid a visit to the Training Center of the Arab Open University (AOU). Dr Sami Khalifa, Manager of the Training Center, welcomed the delegation headed by Dr Ahmad Sultan Nasser and expressed his pleasure for the visit, cherishing the efforts of the committee in the areas of training and human resource development. The delegation was briefed on the AOU's mission and vision as well as its programs across its branches that operate in eight Arab countries.

They were also introduced to the Center's training and counseling services, and the agreements and protocols that the AOU has signed with various Arab and international bodies. On his part, Dr Khalifa Hassan expressed his gratitude for the warm welcome and valued the AOU's role in training and research. He pointed out that the visit is one of the visits paid to a number of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries in order to consider the best practices of

training and development in the GCC countries, and to reach an agreement and a strategic partnership on training for serving labor markets and developmental tracks in the GCC countries.

During the meeting, both parties were ready to cooperate for the common good and the programs of sustainable developmental plans in Arab countries. In addition, numerous ideas about the important issues of training and development were addressed, such as the possibility of cooperation, coordination and exchange of experiences to achieve the goals of both the Center and the committee and to promote the environment of business management and the programs of training and development at the Gulf and Arab levels. The meeting was also attended by Naif Al-Fadli from the Department of Training, Development and Community Service, the AOU Headquarters, and Eng. Misherf Al-Royali and Hanan Al-Atas from the visiting delegation.



# SHEIKH ADEL AUJAN'S LIFE AND LEGACY CELEBRATED

**H**undreds gathered in Dubai to celebrate the life and legacy of one of the Gulf's most prominent businessmen, Sheikh Adel Aujan. Sheikh Adel, who passed away in January, was the Chairman of one of the largest Middle Eastern beverages conglomerates, Aujan Coca-Cola Beverages Company (ACCBC), formerly known as Aujan Industries, which is widely regarded as one of the region's top home-grown success stories.

In commemoration of Sheikh Adel's contribution to both business and society, the company organized a prestigious gala dinner at the Oberoi hotel on March 1, inviting 250 members of the ACCBC family, including members of the Aujan family, past and present employees as well as suppliers and partners. The centerpiece of the event was the Adel Aujan Awards (AAA), which will be held annually, and which will honour a select group of ACCBC's best-performing suppliers for outstanding performance in five categories - innovation; quality; service; value addition and partnership.

In addition, Abdulla Adel Aujan, Chairman of ACCBC, welcomed the guests and gave a speech in memory of the late Sheikh Adel. He said: "I have every confidence that ACCBC will deliver on the vision of my father and its shareholders through our portfolio of strong brands, robust investment plans in both capacity and capability and the high calibre, experienced management team" A panel discussion involving friends and former colleagues of Sheikh Adel also looked back on the career of one of Saudi Arabia's most remarkable industrialists.

Tolga Sezer, Chief Executive Officer of ACCBC, said: "In order to recognize our valued relationships with business partners, distributors, suppliers and to maintain our commitment to improvement and innovation, we decided to inaugurate the very first Adel Aujan Awards in honor of the loving memory of our late Chairman, Sheikh Adel Aujan. The annual awards will in future allow us to recognize business partners that contribute the most to ACCBC's success, by sharing our values and our commitment to excellence, delivering sustainable performance and surpassing expectations."

Over a 48-year career with ACCBC, Sheikh Adel grew the Damman-based business into a multi-billion-dollar drinks giant, thanks to the innovative marketing of existing brands such as Vimto and homegrown brands like Rani and Barbican.



The Saudi businessman was also the visionary behind the largest ever consumer goods partnership in the Middle East with The Coca-Cola Company creating a joint venture between the two companies entitled Aujan Coca-Cola Beverages Company (ACCBC).

The inaugural Adel Aujan Awards saw five companies honored by ACCBC. The Innovation AAA was won by Constantia, a manufacturer of packing and labels. Louis Dreyfus Company, a leading merchant and processor of agricultural goods, picked up the Quality AAA, while industrial products supplier MAST-FOODS won the Service AAA. Beverage can manufacturer Can-Pack Middle East won the Value Addition AAA, while John Bean Technologies (JBT), a food industry machinery giant, was awarded the Partnership AAA. The company that would eventually become Aujan Industries was founded in 1905, and was

expanded into beverages when it acquired the exclusive rights to distribute Vimto in the region in 1928.

Sheikh Adel joined the company in 1968 after studying in the US, and quickly expanded Aujan Industries' sales and distribution networks. Over the years, he developed Vimto Cordial as the drink of choice for families in the Gulf region during the Holy Month of Ramadan. The company's first homegrown brand, Rani, was introduced in 1982. The fruit-juice brand has gone on to become one of the most preferred beverages in the Middle East. Aujan Industries also sells and distributes Barbican, a non-alcoholic malt-based drink, having bought the brand outright in 2011. As well as beverages, Aujan Group Holding also has interests in real estate and packaging materials, with investments in hotels and game reserves in the Middle East and Africa.

## ZERO MOTORCYCLES - WINNER AT THE KUWAIT BIKE SHOW

**N**ew Generation Motorcycles (NGM), the exclusive dealer for Zero Motorcycles in Kuwait, had double cause for celebration at the Kuwait Bike Show 2017. The brand celebrated the successful outing as main sponsor of the show and winning the Slow Race competition with its Zero S bike. The electric-powered Zero Motorcycle, which is gaining popularity as rival to petrol-powered bikes, showed its durability and versatility by claiming victory in the race that puts the focus on balance and control as the last bike to cross the finish line declared the winner.

Victory capped off a successful program of events for NGM as the firm took center stage as the major sponsor, interacting with thousands of bike enthusiasts and demonstrating the benefits

of the Zero bikes before unveiling the custom-made Zero DS street bike. Ali Faisal Al-Mutawa, General Manager of New Generation Motorcycles, said: "The Kuwait Bike Show was a huge success, particularly for us as the sponsor. The interaction with bike fans and potential customers was extremely pleasing and we had the ideal platform to showcase Zero Motorcycles."



## MILLENNIUM HOTELS & CONVENTIONS CENTER CELEBRATES NATIONAL DAY & LIBERATION DAY

**I**n celebration of Kuwait's National Day and Day of Liberation, Millennium Hotels and Conventions Center Kuwait is utterly delighted to extend its warmest congratulations for this very special occasion. With Millennium's exceptional offers and special promotions during the month of February; guests and visitors are sure to enjoy an excellent stay with their friends and family members, where they can also guarantee a relaxed break time at the hotel's spacious rooms, with its modern designs and unique facilities.

The extraordinary 5-Star Hotel is introducing exclusive offers during the 'Hala February' festivities, where guests can benefit from the amazing rates on suites that include complimentary breakfast, as well as using the hotel distinctive facilities for free, such as the gym, swimming pool and free internet. In addition to the transportation service to and from Kuwait's international Airport, children of 6- 12 years will be getting an exclusive 50% discount on their delicious meals at Lamar International Restaurant, while children under 6 years old are offered an entirely free meal.

In word from Area General Manager of Millennium & Copthorne Kuwait, Dani Saleh, says: "It gives us great pleasure to celebrate the joys of Kuwait's National and Liberation Day with all residents and visitors. We are keen on providing our competitive offers on rooms and amenities every year, along with adhering to the highest standards of quality on our hospitality services. Our annual participation in this national event contributes mainly in promoting inbound tourism in Kuwait. We believe that the month of February makes Kuwait an attractive hub for many guests visiting the country for business or for leisure."



## VENEZUELA EPILEPTICS STRUGGLE WITH SEIZURES AMID SHORTAGES

**MAIQUETIA, Venezuela:** Venezuelan plumber Marcos Heredia scoured 20 pharmacies in one day but could not find crucial medicines to stop his epileptic 8-year-old from convulsions that caused irreparable brain damage late last year. The once giggly and alert boy, also called Marcos, could no longer sit on his own and began to shut off from the outside world. "I called people in the cities of San Cristobal, Valencia, Puerto La Cruz, Barquisimeto, and no one could find the medicine," Heredia, 43, said in the family's bare living room in a windy slum overlooking an international airport in the coastal state of Vargas. "You can't find the medicines, and the government doesn't want to accept that."

Heredia ended up traveling 860 km by bus to the Colombian border to pick up medicine a cousin had bought him in the neighboring country. He was back at work

the next day. Venezuela's brutal recession is worsening shortages of medicines from painkillers to chemotherapy drugs. With 85 of every 100 medicines now missing in Venezuela, anti-convulsants are among the toughest drugs to find, Venezuela's main pharmaceutical association said.

An estimated 2 million to 3 million Venezuelans suffer from epilepsy at some point in their lives, according to Caracas-based support organization LIVECE. Patients have been struggling to find specific anti-convulsive medicines as far back as 2012. Due to untreated convulsions, progress has evaporated for otherwise functional people and those with severe disabilities who had managed to improve their mobility or speech.

Like Heredia, patients and families try anything they can to get hold of drugs: barter diapers, frantically engage in WhatsApp groups created specifically for pharmaceuti-

cal exchanges, use expired medicines or, if they can afford it, ask friends to bring them in from abroad. But the shortages are so extreme that patients sometimes take medicines ill-suited for their conditions, doctors warn. Neurologist Beatriz Gonzalez of LIVECE said she was worried about epileptic mothers giving birth to deformed children because they take the wrong medicine, or losing the child because they cannot find the drugs.

### 'Heart in my mouth'

The problem goes much further than just those with epilepsy. Unexpected convulsions can also afflict feverish children, accident victims or people with other neurological conditions. Two-year-old Carlos Baute unexpectedly started to shake and choke when he had a fever in January. Holding his tongue down with two fingers to keep him from swallowing it, his mother visited multi-

ple underequipped hospitals before one finally treated him. Baute's mother said she could not find medication and was worried that her son, an active boy who has recovered and likes to dash around the clinic where he is being treated, may yet suffer another fit.

Leftist President Nicolas Maduro blames the shortages on a right-wing plot to overthrow him, but in a recent speech, he said he had approved "major dollar investments" to boost drug availability, without providing details. Venezuela is set to open three medical labs with Palestine, he added last week. "(We must) solve this very delicate issue that has been affected by the economic war," said Maduro. Venezuela's Information and Health Ministries, as well as the Social Security Institute, which oversees some hospitals and drug distribution, did not respond to requests for comment. —Reuters



**EICHENAU, Germany:** This file photo taken on April 25, 2016 shows an employee of a car workshop checking the emission levels of a vehicle. — AFP

## POLLUTION FROM RIGGED GERMAN VWs TO KILL 1,200

**PARIS:** Pollution from 2.6 million Volkswagen cars sold in Germany between 2008 and 2015, rigged to appear eco-friendly, will cause 1,200 premature deaths in Europe, a study of the fraud's health impacts said yesterday. "The researchers estimate that 1,200 people in Europe will die early, each losing as much as a decade of their life, as a result of excess emissions generated," said the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, which took part in the study. This corresponded to about \$1.9 billion (\$2 billion) in health costs and lost labor productivity, the paper said.

Germany will account for about 500 lives lost, only 40 percent of the projected European toll, according to findings published in the journal *Environmental Research Letters*. Poland is in second place with 160 deaths, followed by France with 84, the Czech Republic with 72, Italy 55, Austria 47, Switzerland 40, Hungary 32, Britain 30 and Romania 27. The same researchers had previously estimated that excess emissions from 482,000 Volkswagens sold in the United States in the same period would cause 60 premature American deaths.

Volkswagen admitted in 2015 to having installed software in 11 million diesel engines worldwide to circumvent emis-

sions tests. This was to make the cars seem compliant with pollution limits while in fact they were emitting health-harming pollutants. In Germany, 2.6 million rigged Volkswagens were sold under the brands VW, Audi, Skoda and Seat, said the researchers - a fifth of the country's total diesel fleet.

### No borders

Diesel cars emit nitrogen oxides, or NOx - poisonous gases that contribute to acid rain and combine with ammonia to create particles that can penetrate deep into the lungs and cause cancer, chronic breathing problems and premature death. Air pollution "doesn't care about political boundaries; it just goes straight past," said study co-author Steven Barrett of MIT. "Thus a car in Germany can easily have significant impacts in neighboring countries, especially in densely populated areas such as the European continent," he said in a statement.

If Volkswagen were to recall and retrofit all affected German-sold vehicles by the end of 2017, "this would avert 2,600 additional premature deaths and 4.1 billion euros in corresponding health costs," the study authors said. In 2012, the World Health Organization's cancer research agency classified diesel engine exhaust

as cancer-causing. The European Environment Agency estimates that more than 400,000 people die prematurely every year due to outdoor air pollution in urban Europe - about half of it from traffic emissions.

Volkswagen's rigged cars emitted NOx at levels that were on average four times the European limit, said the MIT statement. The researchers combined data on Volkswagen emissions, how far and often Germans drive their cars, and pollution-impacting weather phenomena such as wind and rainfall. They produced a map of pollution which they overlaid on population density charts of Europe. With these, they calculated Europeans' exposure to German-derived excess emissions from the Volkswagen deceit, and their increased risk of premature death.

"It ends up being about a one percent extra risk of dying early in a given year, per microgram per metre cubed of fine particles you're exposed to," Barrett explained. "Typically, that means that someone who dies early from air pollution ends up dying about a decade early." Excess emissions are calculated as the difference between the limits set by European authorities, and actual pollution that took place under the fraud. — AFP

## CITY NOISE TIED TO HEARING LOSS

**PARIS:** Urban noise pollution and hearing loss are closely linked, according to rankings of 50 large cities in both categories released yesterday. High-decibel urban areas - such as Guangzhou, New Delhi, Cairo and Istanbul - topped the list of cities where hearing was most degraded, researchers reported. Likewise, cities least afflicted by noise pollution - including Zurich, Vienna, Oslo and Munich - registered the lowest levels of decline in hearing.

This statistical link does not necessarily mean the constant din of city life is the main driver of hearing loss, which can also be caused by infections, genetic disorders, premature birth, and even some medicines. The findings are also preliminary, and have yet to be submitted for peer-reviewed publication. "But this is a robust result," said Henrik Matthies, managing director of Mimi Hearing Technologies, a German company that has amassed data on 200,000 people drawn from a hearing test administered via cell phones. "The fact that noise pollution and hearing loss have such a tight correlation points to an intricate relationship," he told AFP.

Researchers at Mimi and Charite University Hospital in Berlin explored the link by constructing two separate databases. The first combined information from the World Health Organization (WHO) and Norwegian-based technology research group SINTEF to create a noise pollution ranking for cities around the world. Stockholm, Seoul, Amsterdam and Stuttgart were also among the least likely to assault one's ears, while Shanghai, Hong Kong and Barcelona came out as big noise makers.

Paris - one of the most densely populated major cities in Europe - scored as the third most cacophonous. The ranking for hearing loss drew from Mimi's phone-based test, in which respondents indicated age and sex. Geo-location technology pinpointed the cities.

### 'Silent epidemic'

The results were measured against a standard for age-adjusted hearing. On average, people in the loudest cities were ten years "older" - in terms of hearing loss - than those in the quietest cities, the study found. Stacked side-by-side, the two city rankings are remarkably similar, suggesting more than an incidental link. The findings highlight the need for better monitoring, the researchers said. "While eye and sight checks are routine, ear and hearing exams are not," said Manfred Gross, head of the department of Audiology and Phoniatrics at Charite University Hospital. "The earlier hearing loss is detected, the better the chances are for preventing further damage."

Collaborations between scientists and private companies that collect health-related information from consumers are becoming more common in the era of Big Data. California-based DNA genetic testing company 23andMe, for example, has worked extensively with university researchers to ferret out rare genetic disorders by combing through mountains of anonymous data from its clients. Also yesterday, World Hearing Day, the WHO released figures showing annual costs of unaddressed hearing loss of between \$750 billion and \$790 billion globally. —AFP



## BIRTH DEFECTS JUMP 20-FOLD IN ZIKA-HIT MOMS

**WASHINGTON:** Pregnant women infected with the Zika virus last year were 20 times more likely to bear children with birth defects than those who gave birth prior to the epidemic, US health officials said Thursday. Researchers for the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention compared birth outcomes prior to the Zika epidemic's outbreak in 2015 - using data from three US state registries - to those of mothers infected by the virus in 2016. The defects included microcephaly - a crippling deformation that leads to babies having very small brains and heads - as well as poor cranial development, neural tube defects and other brain or eye abnormalities. The study found that those defects were seen in about three live births per 1,000 in 2013 and 2014.

But in 2016 abnormalities were found in some 60 infants and fetuses per 1,000 when their pregnant mothers were infected by Zika. Among infected women, the virus was also responsible for 48 percent of miscarriages and 66 percent of premature births, with fetuses frequently suffering from neural tube defects or other brain abnormalities in early stages of development. —AFP

## SATELLITE SHIFTS COURSE TO AVOID MARS MOON

**CAPE CANAVERAL, Florida:** A NASA science satellite orbiting Mars was forced to make a rare evasive maneuver to avoid a collision next week with one of the planet's two small moons, the U.S. space agency said on Thursday. Flight controllers at NASA's Jet Propulsion Laboratory in Pasadena, California, commanded the MAVEN spacecraft, which is studying Mars' vanishing atmosphere, to fire up its engine on Tuesday to boost its speed by about 1.3 feet per second (0.4 meters per second).

The acceleration was necessary to slightly shift MAVEN's orbit and steer the satellite clear of the Martian moon Phobos, the National Aeronautics and Space Administration said in a statement. —AFP

# IN KENYA, FAIRER SHARING OF RIVERS HELPS KEEP PEACE

**NAROK, Kenya:** Kelena Ole Nchoe hopes efforts to share river water in the Ewaso Nyiro South basin in Kenya's Rift Valley will help avoid the violence that has erupted elsewhere between herders and farmers as a drought crisis shrinks pasture. But he is sure there will be competition for water in the near future. Ole Nchoe is the chair of 12 associations for water users along the Enkare Narok tributary, south of Nairobi, which strive to use the scarce resource wisely, complementing the work of nine groups on the main Ewaso Nyiro River. Together they cover a 188-km stretch that flows into Lake Natron near the Kenya-Tanzania border.

On each river, there is a center that trains and supports the associations' members, hosting private and community farms and carrying out water conservation activities. Ole Nchoe said the centers advise farmers not to cultivate crops near the river but to plant trees along its banks instead. This helps prevent soil erosion that will eventually block the river with sediment and alter its course, inconveniencing people downstream.

Fair sharing of natural resources is key to keeping the peace among communities that depend on the river, he added. "When using the river, you must be mindful of other people who are also using it - including wild animals - or else there will be trouble," he said. With the backing of the associations, funded by the Dutch government, farmers have adopted techniques to keep the land near the river well-watered and healthy, ranging from bee-keeping and irrigation

to tree planting. Communities have also constructed small dams to collect and retain rainwater, and carried out work to preserve springs along the Ewaso Nyiro River, such as erecting fences.

### Chemical Contamination

Daniel Naikuni, a farmer who belongs to one of the Enkare Narok associations, is worried about declining water volumes, as well as rampant pollution of the river near Narok town. "People are doing horticulture cultivation along the river and are spraying the crops with chemicals that get into the river," said the testicular cancer survivor. "This poses a health threat to the people downstream." Other people are releasing raw sewage into the river at night since the town does not have a sophisticated sanitation system, he said. Chemicals contained in both farm waste and sewage expose residents to diseases, he added.

The centres educate farmers about the importance of leaving a 15-m gap between their cultivated land and the river on which to plant trees, Naikuni said. They are also discouraged from using generators to pump water from the river and from building furrows on their land. Instead, the recommendation is to start using drip irrigation. Tago James, a member of the Naroosura association, said he uses this kind of precision irrigation, together with greenhouses, to cut water use and help protect the Ewaso Nyiro River.

Any drop in water levels could lead to conflicts between people and wildlife as animals move onto homesteads in

search of water, he warned. Peter Tajeu, vice chairman of the Olkiramatian conservancy in Narok County, some 130 km south of Nairobi, said the Ewaso Nyiro River is a lifeline for both wild animals and livestock. Animal watering points have been constructed along the river as it flows towards Lake Natron a few kilometres away, he said. These watering points prevent vegetation on the banks being destroyed by animals, helping protect wetlands and swamps in the semi-arid area of Magadi, he explained. Other efforts include tree-planting and keeping charcoal burners at bay.

### Confiscated Pumps

Julius Muriuki, who manages the Ewaso Nyiro South centers for the non-profit African Conservation Centre, said farmers along the rivers need to be offered new sources of income to deter them from intensive cropping and animal rearing, which drain water from the river. Alternative activities include bee-keeping, feeding animals in one place - known as zero-grazing - and greenhouses, he said. However, if farmers are prevented from cultivating their land, they could resort to poaching and other vices, he warned. Those who want to continue growing crops should start water harvesting projects for irrigation and drill wells away from rivers, he added. "Any time the Ewaso Nyiro River dries up in Magadi, residents say people in Naroosura have taken our share, water is becoming a scarce resource and soon the Ewaso will be depleted," said Muriuki. — Reuters

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## 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	LOGAN	8:45 PM	LOGAN	12:30 AM
HAMAH - Kuwaiti Film	LOGAN	11:30 PM		
HAMAH - Kuwaiti Film			<b>AL-KOUT.2</b>	
HAMAH - Kuwaiti Film			LOGAN	12:45 PM
HAMAH - Kuwaiti Film			ELIMINATORS	1:45 PM
HAMAH - Kuwaiti Film			LOGAN	3:45 PM
HAMAH - Kuwaiti Film			ELIMINATORS	6:45 PM
HAMAH - Kuwaiti Film			LOGAN	8:45 PM
LOGAN			LOGAN	11:30 PM
<b>SHARQIA-2</b>			<b>AL-KOUT.3</b>	
HAMAH - Kuwaiti Film			ELOISE	11:45 AM
LOGAN			ELOISE	1:45 PM
LOGAN			ELOISE	3:45 PM
LOGAN			ELOISE	6:00 PM
LOGAN			MERCURY PLAINS	8:00 PM
LOGAN			ELOISE	10:00 PM
			ELOISE	12:05 AM
<b>SHARQIA-3</b>			<b>AL-KOUT.4</b>	
ELOISE			MERCURY PLAINS	12:00 PM
ELOISE			MERCURY PLAINS	2:00 PM
LOGAN			HAMAH - Kuwaiti Film	4:00 PM
LOGAN			HAMAH - Kuwaiti Film	5:30 PM
ELOISE			HAMAH - Kuwaiti Film	7:00 PM
ELOISE			HAMAH - Kuwaiti Film	8:30 PM
			HAMAH - Kuwaiti Film	10:15 PM
			MERCURY PLAINS	11:45 PM
<b>MUHALAB-1</b>			<b>BAIRAQ-1</b>	
ELOISE			LOGAN	12:00 PM
ELOISE			LOGAN	2:45 PM
ELOISE			HIDDEN FIGURES	5:30 PM
ELOISE			LOGAN	8:15 PM
MERCURY PLAINS			LOGAN	11:00 PM
ELOISE				
ELOISE			<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>MUHALAB-2</b>			<b>BAIRAQ-3</b>	
LOGAN			KIKORIKI. Legend of the Golden Dragon	1:15 PM
LOGAN			KIKORIKI. Legend of the Golden Dragon	3:00 PM
HAMAH - Kuwaiti Film			KIKORIKI. Legend of the Golden Dragon	4:45 PM
LOGAN			LOGAN	6:30 PM
HAMAH - Kuwaiti Film			LOGAN	9:15 PM
LOGAN			LOGAN	12:05 AM
<b>MUHALAB-3</b>			<b>PLAZA</b>	
LOGAN			MUNTHIRIVALLIKAL THALIRKKUMBOL -Malayalam	3:30 PM
HAMAH - Kuwaiti Film			ABY - Malayalam	6:30 PM
LOGAN			ABY - Malayalam	9:15 PM
LOGAN			MUNTHIRIVALLIKAL THALIRKKUMBOL -Malayalam	9:15 PM
LOGAN				
			<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 THALIRKKUMBOL -Malayalam	3:45 PM
			MUNTHIRIVALLIKAL THALIRKKUMBOL -Malayalam	6:45 PM
			MUNTHIRIVALLIKAL THALIRKKUMBOL -Malayalam	9:45 PM
			<b>AJIAL.3</b>	
			RAEES- HINDI	3:15 PM
			DANGAL -Hindi	6:00 PM
			RAEES- HINDI	9:15 PM
<b>FANAR-1</b>				
HAMAH - Kuwaiti Film				
HAMAH - Kuwaiti Film				
HIDDEN FIGURES				
HAMAH - Kuwaiti Film				
HAMAH - Kuwaiti Film				
HAMAH - Kuwaiti Film				
HIDDEN FIGURES				
HAMAH - Kuwaiti Film				
<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				
MERCURY PLAINS				
ELOISE				
ELOISE				
<b>FANAR-3</b>				
MERCURY PLAINS				
COMMANDO 2-Hindi				
ELOISE				
COMMANDO 2-Hindi				
MERCURY PLAINS				
MERCURY PLAINS				
<b>FANAR-4</b>				
LOGAN				
LOGAN				
LOGAN				
LOGAN				
LOGAN				
<b>FANAR-5</b>				
LOGAN				
LOGAN				

## VACANCY

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### PRAYER TIMINGS

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

## 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



SATURDAY, MARCH 4, 2017



Flight Schedule

DIAL 161 FOR AIRPORT INFORMATION

Arrival Flights on Saturday 4/3/2017

Airlines	Flt	Route	Time
CLX	758	Luxembourg	00:05
KLM	413	Amsterdam/Dammam	00:25
JZR	267	Beirut	00:30
JZR	539	Cairo	00:40
THY	772	Istanbul	00:55
RJA	642	Amman	01:05
QTR	1086	Doha	01:15
MSR	1618	Alexandria	01:20
SAI	441	Lahore	01:30
THY	764	Istanbul	01:50
DLH	635	Doha	01:55
PGT	858	Istanbul	02:00
ETH	620	Addis Ababa	02:05
GFA	211	Bahrain	02:30
UAE	853	Dubai	02:30
KAC	412	Bangkok	02:50
OMA	643	Muscat	02:55
KKK	6506	Istanbul	02:55
FDB	069	Dubai	03:05
ETD	305	Abu Dhabi	03:10
MSR	612	Cairo	03:10
KAC	358	Kochi	03:30
QTR	1076	Doha	03:30
KAC	546	Cairo	03:55
KAC	418	Manila	04:25
JZR	503	Luxor	05:10
JZR	529	Asyut	05:15
DHX	170	Bahrain	05:20
KAC	344	Chennai	05:35
KAC	332	Trivandrum	05:45
THY	770	Istanbul	05:55
KAC	364	Colombo	06:05
KAC	384	Delhi	06:05
KAC	206	Islamabad	06:20
KAC	346	Ahmedabad	06:25
BAW	157	London	06:40
PAL	668	Manila/Dubai	07:00
KAC	204	Lahore	07:15
FDB	5061	Dubai	07:15
KAC	284	Dhaka	07:35
FDB	053	Dubai	07:50
KAC	302	Mumbai	08:20
UAE	855	Dubai	08:40
KAC	382	Delhi	08:45
ABY	125	Sharjah	09:05
ETD	301	Abu Dhabi	09:05
KAC	352	Kochi	09:10
QTR	1070	Doha	09:30
FDB	055	Dubai	09:40
SVA	512	Riyadh	10:00
AVV	653	Sohag	10:10
GFA	213	Bahrain	10:40
KAC	774	Riyadh	11:05
IRM	1188	Mashhad	11:15
RBG	553	Alexandria	11:15
JZR	165	Dubai	11:30
FDK	801	Damascus	11:45
SYR	343	Latakia	12:05
KAC	286	Dhaka	12:25
MSC	401	Alexandria	12:30
JZR	239	Amman	12:45
FDB	075	Dubai	12:50
UAE	871	Dubai	12:50
MSR	610	Cairo	13:00
IAW	157	Al Najaf	13:25
JZR	779	Jeddah	13:35
KAC	564	Amman	13:40
KAC	788	Jeddah	13:45
KNE	231	Riyadh	13:55
KAC	672	Dubai	14:00
QTR	1078	Doha	14:10
FDB	059	Dubai	14:20
KAC	692	Muscat	14:30
GFA	221	Bahrain	14:40
KAC	542	Cairo	14:45
KNE	529	Jeddah	14:55
KNE	683	Madinah	15:05
KAC	618	Doha	15:15
ETD	303	Abu Dhabi	15:15
OMA	645	Muscat	15:35
UAE	857	Dubai	15:45
ABY	127	Sharjah	15:50
MSR	575	Sharm el-Sheikh	15:50
KAC	154	Istanbul	15:55
SAW	705	Damascus	16:00
SVA	504	Madinah	16:00
KNE	531	Jeddah	16:05
JZR	535	Cairo	16:10
QTR	1072	Doha	16:10
JZR	787	Riyadh	16:25
JZR	357	Mashhad	16:25
JZR	787	Riyadh	16:25
KAC	662	Abu Dhabi	16:35
RJA	640	Amman	16:55
KAC	118	New York	17:00
SVA	510	Riyadh	17:15
GFA	215	Bahrain	17:30

JZR	777	Jeddah	17:45
JZR	325	Al Najaf	17:50
NIA	251	Alexandria	17:55
SVA	500	Jeddah	18:00
UAE	875	Dubai	18:00
FDB	063	Dubai	18:10
JZR	177	Dubai	18:20
MSR	620	Cairo	18:30
QTR	1080	Doha	18:50
IRA	669	Mashhad	18:55
SYR	341	Damascus	19:00
KAC	512	Mashhad	19:20
ABY	123	Sharjah	19:25
KAC	502	Beirut	19:30
GFA	217	Bahrain	19:30
KAC	674	Dubai	19:45
FDB	057	Dubai	19:50
KAC	104	London	19:50
KAC	166	Rome	19:55
KNE	381	Taif	19:55
MSR	618	Alexandria	20:05
OMA	647	Muscat	20:10
JZR	189	Dubai	20:15
QTR	1088	Doha	20:35
KAC	562	Amman	20:40
DLH	634	Frankfurt	20:45
FDB	5053	Dubai	20:50
KAC	616	Bahrain	20:50
FDB	8053	Dubai	20:55
KAC	786	Jeddah	21:15
ETD	307	Abu Dhabi	21:20
MEA	402	Beirut	21:20
ALK	229	Colombo	21:25
UAE	859	Dubai	21:40
KAC	676	Dubai	21:45
GFA	219	Bahrain	21:45
KAC	174	Munich	22:00
QTR	1082	Doha	22:00
JZR	125	Bahrain	22:05
KLM	415	Amsterdam	22:10
NIA	151	Cairo	22:10
ETD	309	Abu Dhabi	22:15
AIC	987	Chennai/Hyderabad	22:25
JZR	241	Amman	22:45
KNE	533	Jeddah	22:45
KAC	1544	Cairo	22:55
KAC	164	Paris	22:55
JAI	574	Mumbai	23:00
JZR	185	Dubai	23:15
FDB	071	Dubai	23:45

Departure Flights on Saturday 4/3/2017

Airlines	Flt	Route	Time
AIC	976	Goa/Chennai	00:05
JAI	573	Mumbai	00:30
PIA	240	Sialkot	00:40
FDB	072	Dubai	00:40
BBC	044	Dhaka	01:30
CLX	853	Luxembourg	01:30
KLM	413	Amsterdam	01:50
KAC	417	Manila	02:00
MSR	619	Alexandria	02:20
THY	773	Istanbul	02:25
SAI	442	Lahore	02:30
DLH	635	Frankfurt	02:55
ETH	621	Addis Ababa	03:05
PGT	859	Istanbul	03:35
KAC	103	London	03:40
UAE	854	Dubai	03:45
KKK	6505	Istanbul	03:55
OMA	644	Muscat	03:55
THY	765	Istanbul	04:00
MSR	613	Cairo	04:10
ETD	306	Abu Dhabi	04:10
QTR	1077	Doha	04:40
FDB	1087	Doha	05:50
QTR	070	Dubai	06:30
THY	771	Istanbul	06:50
KAC	153	Istanbul	06:50
KAC	165	Rome	06:55
JZR	164	Dubai	06:55
RJA	643	Amman	07:05
JZR	238	Amman	07:10
GFA	212	Bahrain	07:15
KAC	541	Cairo	07:15
KAC	163	Paris	07:25
KAC	773	Riyadh	07:30
KAC	787	Jeddah	07:45
FDB	5062	Dubai	07:55
JZR	778	Jeddah	07:55
KAC	563	Amman	08:00
BAW	156	London	08:40
KAC	173	Munich	08:50
FDB	054	Dubai	08:55
KAC	691	Muscat	09:00
KAC	117	SNN/New York	09:00
KAC	671	Dubai	09:15
JZR	534	Cairo	09:15
KAC	101	London	09:35

ABY	126	Sharjah	09:45
UAE	856	Dubai	09:55
ETD	302	Abu Dhabi	10:10
JZR	356	Mashhad	10:25
VIZ	205	QA	10:30
KAC	411	Bangkok	10:30
FDB	056	Dubai	10:35
QTR	1071	Doha	10:40
SVA	513	Riyadh	11:00
AVV	654	Asyut	11:10
KAC	617	Doha	11:10
GFA	214	Bahrain	11:25
RBG	554	Alexandria	11:55
KAC	501	Beirut	11:55
KAC	661	Abu Dhabi	12:05
JZR	776	Jeddah	12:05
IRM	1189	Mashhad	12:30
FDK	802	Damascus	12:45
SYR	344	Latakia	13:05
JZR	786	Riyadh	13:10
KAC	511	Mashhad	13:15
MSC	402	Alexandria	13:30
JZR	176	Dubai	13:45
MSR	611	Cairo	14:00
FDB	076	Dubai	14:05
UAE	872	Dubai	14:15
IAW	158	Al Najaf	14:25
JZR	324	Al Najaf	14:25
KNE	382	Taif	14:50
KAC	673	Dubai	15:00
KAC	561	Amman	15:00
FDB	060	Dubai	15:10
KAC	785	Jeddah	15:15
PAL	669	Dubai/Manila	15:20
GFA	222	Bahrain	15:25
QTR	1079	Doha	15:40
JZR	188	Dubai	15:40
KNE	530	Jeddah	15:55
KAC	1543	Cairo	15:55
KNE	684	Madinah	16:00
ETD	304	Abu Dhabi	16:20
KAC	357	Kochi	16:20
ABY	128	Sharjah	16:30
OMA	646	Muscat	16:35
MSR	576	Sharm el-Sheikh	16:50
SAW	706	Damascus	16:55
KNE	532	Jeddah	16:55
SVA	505	Madinah	17:00
KAC	675	Dubai	17:00
JZR	266	Beirut	17:05
JZR	240	Amman	17:15
FDB	052	Dubai	17:25
KAC	615	Bahrain	17:35
QTR	1073	Doha	17:40
UAE	858	Dubai	17:45
JZR	538	Cairo	17:45
RJA	641	Amman	17:55
SVA	511	Riyadh	18:15
KAC	353	BLR	18:15
GFA	216	Bahrain	18:20
KAC	283	Dhaka	18:30
JZR	184	Dubai	18:40
NIA	252	Alexandria	18:55
JZR	554	Alexandria	18:55
FDB	064	Dubai	19:05
JZR	124	Bahrain	19:15
UAE	876	Dubai	19:30
SVA	501	Jeddah	19:30
MSR	621	Cairo	19:30
QTR	1081	Doha	19:50
IRA	666	Esfahan	19:55
SYR	342	Damascus	20:00
ABY	124	Sharjah	20:05
GFA	218	Bahrain	20:15
KAC	383	Delhi	20:30
FDB	058	Dubai	20:35
KAC	361	Colombo	20:35
KAC	775	Riyadh	20:45
KNE	232	Riyadh	20:55
MSR	607	Luxor	21:05
OMA	648	Muscat	21:10
KAC	205	Islamabad	21:25
KAC	345	Ahmedabad	21:30
QTR	1089	Doha	21:35
DLH	634	Doha	21:35
KAC	741	Dammam	21:45
DHX	171	Bahrain	21:50
FDB	5054	Dubai	21:50
FDB	8054	Dubai	21:55
KAC	351	Kochi	22:00
ETD	308	Abu Dhabi	22:15
MEA	403	Beirut	22:20
ALK	230	Colombo	22:25
GFA	220	Bahrain	22:30
KAC	301	Mumbai	22:45
KAC	381	Delhi	22:45
UAE	860	Dubai	22:55
ETD	310	Abu Dhabi	23:05
NIA	152	Cairo	23:10
QTR	1083	Doha	23:20
KLM	415	Dammam/Amsterdam	23:20
KNE	534	Jeddah	23:35



WORDSEARCH PUZZLE

Old TV Shows 2

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.

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

- |               |                |                 |               |
|---------------|----------------|-----------------|---------------|
| A-TEAM        | DOCTOR WHO     | HEE HAW         | NEWHART       |
| ALF           | DYNASTY        | HUNTER          | NIGHT COURT   |
| AIRWOLF       | EQUALIZER      | JEFFERSONS      | OUTER LIMITS  |
| BARETTA       | FALCON CREST   | KNIGHT RIDER    | PRISONER      |
| BARNABY JONES | FAME           | MACGYVER        | S.W.A.T.      |
| BENSON        | FANTASY ISLAND | MAVERICK        | SILVER SPOONS |
| BIG VALLEY    | FISH           | MAYBERRY R.F.D. | T.J. HOOKER   |
| BONANZA       | FLINTSTONES    | MISTER ED       | TWILIGHT ZONE |
| CHEERS        | FULL HOUSE     | MUNSTERS        | VIRGINIAN     |
| COACH         | GROWING PAINS  | NANNY           | WEBSTER       |
| DALLAS        | HAWAII FIVE-O  |                 |               |

Yesterday's Solution

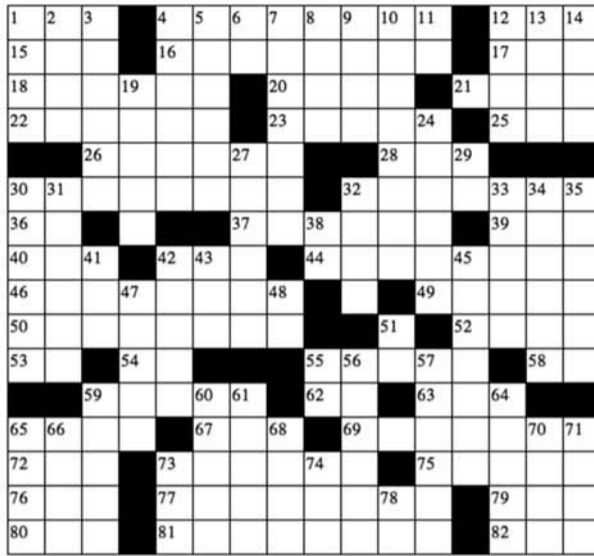
Old TV Shows 1

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 T S N O R Y 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 O R A G N A K N T 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        |                |                 |

The hidden TV show is: THE MARY TYLER MOORE SHOW

CROSSWORD 1537



ACROSS

- The sound made by a gentle blow.
- (chemistry) Relating to or containing an alkali.
- How long something has existed.
- Aromatic bulb used as seasoning.
- A viral disease of cattle causing a mild skin disease affecting the udder.
- An informal term for a father.
- An industrial city in southern Poland on the Vistula.
- A piece of metal covered by leather with a flexible handle.
- A Chadic language spoken south of Lake Chad.
- Stern foremost or backward.
- Undo the ties of.
- A barrier constructed to contain the flow of water or to keep out the sea.
- A tablet placed horizontally on top of the capital of a column as an aid in supporting the architrave.
- A three-year law degree.
- A native or inhabitant of Vietnam.
- An official prosecutor for a judicial district.
- Give advice to.
- A relatively large open container that you fill with water and use to wash the body.
- Title for a civil or military leader (especially in Turkey).
- Having unlimited power.
- Low stinging nettle of Central and South America having velvety brownish-green toothed leaves and clusters of small green flowers.
- Wearing footwear.
- Not based on fact.
- The capital and largest city of Norway.
- A hard malleable ductile silvery metallic element that is resistant to corrosion.
- A silvery ductile metallic element found primarily in bauxite.
- A mouth or mouthlike opening.
- Date used in reckoning dates before the supposed year Christ was born.
- The 7th letter of the Greek alphabet.
- A small cake leavened with yeast.
- A flat wing-shaped process or winglike part of an organism.
- Moving in curves or spirals.
- A loose sleeveless outer garment made from aba cloth.
- An Australian boomerang.
- The compass point that is one point south of due west.
- Bubble shells.
- The compass point midway between northeast and east.
- Towards the side away from the wind.
- Normal or sound powers of mind.
- Noisy talk.

DOWN

- The basic unit of money in Bangladesh.
- Affected manners intended to impress others.

- Any of several trees of the genus Platanus having thin pale bark that scales off in small plates and lobed leaves and ball-shaped heads of fruits.
- Evergreen Indian shrub with vivid yellow flowers whose bark is used in tanning.
- Very small silvery eel-like schooling fishes that burrow into sandy beaches.
- One thousand periods per second.
- A defendant in a criminal proceeding.
- Large gregarious predatory feline of Africa and India having a tawny coat with a shaggy mane in the male.
- In or of the present month.
- A revolutionary doctrine that advocates destruction of the social system for its own sake.
- (Akkadian) God of wisdom.
- (Babylonian) God of storms and wind.
- An amino acid that is found in the central nervous system.
- Mild yellow Dutch cheese made in balls.
- Cubes of meat marinated and cooked on a skewer usually with vegetables.
- Oil palms.
- (commerce) The period of time permitted by commercial usage for the payment of a bill of exchange (especially a foreign bill of exchange).
- A small pellet fired from an air rifle or BB gun.
- Shrub bearing oval-fruited kumquats.
- Aromatic Old World herb having aromatic threadlike foliage and seeds used as seasoning.
- The distinctive spirit of a people or an era.
- A member of the Siouan people of Virginia and North Carolina.
- An ancient Greek colony on the Asiatic side of the Dardanelles.
- A state in the eastern United States.
- (Irish) Mother of the ancient Irish gods.
- The boy whose upbringing was described by Jean-Jacques Rousseau.
- A container.
- Like or being a phantom.
- Small terrestrial lizard of warm regions of the Old World.
- A public promotion of some product or service.
- Being five more than one hundred.
- A logarithmic unit of sound intensity.
- Submit or yield to another's wish or opinion.
- United States psychologist who studied the intelligence of primates (1876-1956).
- Lower in esteem.
- A coffee cake flavored with orange rind and raisins and almonds.
- American filmmaker and comic actor (1935-).
- United States choreographer noted for his use of African elements (born in 1931).
- A French abbot.
- A river in north central Switzerland that runs northeast into the Rhine.
- (Babylonian) A goddess of the watery deep and daughter of Ea.
- A person with an unusual or odd personality.
- An associate degree in applied science.
- A silvery malleable metallic element that resists corrosion.
- A very poisonous metallic element that has three allotropic forms.

Yesterday's Solution

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

Daily SuDoku

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

Yesterday's Solution

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



## OLYMPIC CHAMP PARK IN-BEE SEIZES SINGAPORE LEAD

**SINGAPORE:** Olympic champion Park In-Bee recovered from a rare double bogey to grab the outright lead after the second round of the HSBC Women's Champions tournament in Singapore yesterday. Playing just her second tournament after a six-month break to recover from a thumb injury, the South Korean shot a second straight five-under-par 67 at Sentosa Golf Club to lead by a single stroke at 10-under 134. Three players-American Michelle Wie (69), South Korean Hur Mi-Jung (67) and Thailand's Ariya Jutanugarn (68) - were locked in a three-way tie for second at nine-under.

Norway's Suzann Pettersen (67) and South Korean Park Sung-Hyun (68) were a further shot back on a packed leaderboard. Park had gone 29 holes without dropping a shot at the par-72 New Tanjong course when she missed the green with her approach on the 12th hole and then fluffed her chip, taking a double bogey six. But she recovered from her mistake with a birdie at the 14th, and then calmly drained a five-foot putt at the final hole for her seventh birdie of the day to seize the halfway lead. "It was just really unlucky. I had a really good drive down the middle and I had mud on the ball," Park said. "I was on the right side and I knew it was going to go left, and I aimed right but it went 30 yards left. I hit a good shot but it's that unlucky bounce. Making double-bogey was a mistake. I didn't want to ruin the day with one bad hole with an unlucky shot. I think it's just trying to keep

the calm emotions going. Obviously there was a few birdie holes coming in, so I was trying to get a couple from there."

### Ko's 'shot of the day'

Wie, who led overnight after firing a course record 66 in her opening round, did

not make a single bogey in her second round and briefly regained the lead when she made her fourth birdie of the day at the 13th, a sweeping par-five dogleg. But the American, who has struggled with injuries and a loss of form since winning the US Open in 2014, was unable to pick up any more shots on the run back to the clubhouse with the ball narrowly trickling past the cup several times. "I definitely just kept very patient out there," Wie said. "It got really frustrating at times just seeing those putts just slip out. I just kept it steady, and made a good up-and-down on the last hole which I'm really proud of."

Pettersen also briefly found herself in front after making seven birdies, including three in a row from the 10th, only to drop two shots in her last four holes. "I played really good golf today but I had two lousy bogeys coming in," she said. New Zealand's world number one Lydia Ko ominously charged up the leaderboard with a 68 to finish tied for seventh with five others, including the defending champion Jang Ha-Na, at seven-under. Ko, who has gone 11 events without winning, her longest drought in four years, capped her round with three successive birdies after making a spectacular eagle on the par-five fifth when she smashed a five-wood to within a foot of making an albatross. "I will definitely take that shot," she said. "That was the shot of the day I think." — AFP



**SINGAPORE:** Park In-Bee of South Korea tees off on the 3rd hole during the HSBC Women's Champions golf tournament held at Sentosa Golf Club's Tanjong course yesterday. — AP

## IOC GETS TOUGH WITH 2020 TOKYO GAMES GOLF VENUE

**TOKYO:** The International Olympic Committee (IOC) has issued a sharp warning to the private club set to host golf at the 2020 Tokyo Games: admit women or you're out. On a visit to Tokyo to check on the city's Olympic preparations, IOC vice president John Coates said the Kasumigaseki Country Club in Saitama prefecture was running out of time to change its policy of refusing to grant full membership to women. "Our principles are based on non-discrimination, that's the position we've made quite clear," Coates, chairman of the coordination commission which oversees preparations for the Olympics, told reporters.

"There has been progress-as recently as this week there have been more discussions with the club (to suggest) it's heading in the right direction for them to have a non-discriminatory membership procedure," he added, flagging the end of June as a possible time frame to resolve the awkward standoff. Earlier this month, the club's chairman told local media he was "flummoxed" by the row, prompting further criticism of its policies.

Coates insisted, however, that if the current impasse dragged on beyond June, the IOC would be forced to look for alternative venues. "At some point there has to be a cut-off," said the Australian, adding that there was still plenty of time to find another golf club. "We've got to be very careful because we are going there by their grace. I respect that it's a private club but our position is clear. We will only go to a club that has non-discrimination."

### 'Considerable savings'

Coates also sought to allay fears over the Games budget, which experts warn could reach an eye-watering \$25 billion, by pointing to "considerable savings" made by moving some of the venues outside of Tokyo. In its bid, Tokyo estimated the bill for the Games at a little over \$7 billion and promised 85 percent of venues would be within eight kilometers of the Olympic village, plans long since torn up due to soaring costs. "As a result of looking at existing venues outside of Tokyo, we have saved \$2.2 billion," said Coates, referring to sports such as cycling, basketball and sailing, which be hosted by cities outside of the capital. — AFP

## HONG KONG'S TRAILBLAZER CHAN HOPES TO INSPIRE OTHER WOMEN

**HONG KONG:** Chan Yuen-ting, the first female coach to lead a men's professional soccer club to a top-flight title, hopes her success with Hong Kong's Eastern will inspire other women to follow their dreams. The 28-year-old turned a childhood crush on former England captain David Beckham into a groundbreaking career that has earned her plaudits from around the world and a place in the Guinness Book of Records. Chan is nicknamed "Beef Ball" in a play on her name and for the similarities of her personality to Chinese perceptions of the characteristics of the cow.

Among those characteristics are an appetite for hard work and determination, both of which Chan showed in spades as she shattered the glass ceiling for women coaches in football. Remaining persistent is Chan's advice to other women looking to break into environments, in sport and elsewhere, where men still dominate. "There might be many women who work in a male-dominated environment and are waiting for opportunities to rise or to break through," she said ahead of the club's Asian Champions League group match against Kawasaki Frontale this week.

"They might think, 'oh there are so few opportunities or it's super difficult'. But I keep telling them believe in it and it'll become reality. "Even though you might be ready sometimes the opportunities aren't there, but at least when the time comes you'll be ready." After gaining a masters degree in sports science, Chan got her start in soccer as a

data analyst before moving into a coaching role and then joining Eastern, where she assumed the top job after her predecessor left for a club in mainland China.

### Equal status

Chan believes she was fortunate that she grew up in Hong Kong as she may not have had the same opportunities elsewhere in Asia. "I'm really lucky to be born, to live and work in Hong Kong," she said. "While I was growing up, and even now, I believe there has hardly been any discrimination against women. It's because of this, Hong Kong Football Association was able to give me a platform to develop my career. "If I was in another Asian country, where women are not of the same social status as men, I would never be able to do what I can."

Leading Eastern to the Hong Kong Premier league title last year was an achievement in itself for a relatively modest club and meant a maiden campaign in the continent's top competition, the Asian Champions League. The club's first very first group game enabled Chan to pit her coaching wits against Luiz Felipe Scolari, the Guangzhou Evergrande boss who led Brazil to their World Cup triumph of 2002.

While a 7-0 defeat starkly illustrated the huge step up in class Eastern were making, Scolari making time to come over after the match and give Chan some words of encouragement was an

experience which still brought a big smile to her face. "For me that moment was exciting. I mean aside from just competing against him, he's a former World Cup winner, I've watched him from a young age on TV," she recalled.

"So when I saw him in person, it was quite inspiring. And the things he said to me really sank in and I was very happy to be able to meet a coach of that standard." Eastern's second Champions League match in front of a packed house at Hong Kong's Mongkok Stadium on Wednesday had a better outcome with an early penalty earning Chan's side a 1-1 draw and their first point in the competition. "The (Champions League) is a competition of really high standard and we're quite lucky to be able to compete and for us, as a Hong Kong team, to be apart of it is quite groundbreaking," she said on the eve of the match.

"We all understand that the quality of football is a whole new level. For us, it's definitely a challenge." While she has no solid plans to leave Hong Kong in the near future, Chan has expressed interest in taking her career overseas in the long-term and to then bring her knowledge back to Hong Kong would be ideal. But for now, she is focusing on improving herself as a coach and continuing to build her relationship with her team. "It's nerve-racking," she said. "There's definitely more nerves than excitement, because there's never been a female coach leading an all-male team." — Reuters



## BLOODY BATTLES CLOUD BELGRADE'S 'ETERNAL DERBY'

**BELGRADE:** An "Eternal Derby" tainted by ultranationalism: the recurring duel between Belgrade's Partizan and Red Star, which next takes place today, has become more about hooligans and police than sport. Nowadays a pretext for clashes between supporters of the rival teams, the event was for a long time a celebration of Yugoslav football, which had a certain romantic aura despite a lack of trophies. But that golden era of football collapsed with the breakup of Yugoslavia in the bloody conflicts of the 1990s.

In the stadiums filled with Red Star's "Gypsy" supporters and the "Gravediggers" cheering Partizan, paramilitaries were recruited who went on to commit atrocities. Warlord Zeljko Raznatovic, known as Arkan, found men for his "Tigers" paramilitary unit in Red Star's Marakana stadium. "Good football has been replaced by bad play and hooligans," said bitter teacher and Red Star fan Nikola Jankovic, 58, who like many others stopped going to matches in the early 1990s.

On Saturday, like every derby day, Belgrade will resemble a battlefield. Helicopters will fly over the city and thousands of riot police will be deployed. But away from the stadiums and matches, leading supporters from both sides regularly make news. At the end of 2016, top Partizan fan Aleksandar Stankovic was assassinated in his car, in what appeared to be a mafia settlement. "The rivalry does not have much to do with sport, it is linked to criminality," said Mihajlo Todoc, football journalist for the Sportski Zurnal newspaper. In the streets of Belgrade are



**BELGRADE:** A file picture shows supporters of Red Star Belgrade clashing with police on the tribunes during the Serbian first league match between Red Star and Partizan, in Belgrade. — AFP

murals of deceased young men who "are not martyrs of sport, but victims of a quite different type of settling of accounts," he said.

### Nostalgia for better times

Former player and Red Star legend Vladimir Petrovic, known as Pizon (Pigeon), nostalgically

remembers the time when he went by foot to the stadium for the derby battle. "After a victory, you walked the streets like a hero," he said. Nothing could be better than winning the derby, not even winning the championship, added former Partizan coach Ljubisa Tumbakovic. The clubs' intense rivalry

emerged from the creation of two clubs in the aftermath of World War II, replacing pre-war clubs that had disappeared in the conflict.

Red Star inherited many players and the stadium of the Yugoslavia club, while Partizan, created and directed by the army, played their first season in the compound of BSK, another former club of the capital. Whether you become a Gypsy or a Gravedigger is not a personal choice. "Children support the club supported by their fathers," said Sandra Radenovic, a sociologist at the physical culture faculty in Belgrade. Certain regions formed bonds with clubs based on legendary players they produced. Thus Zrenjanin in northern Serbia, where Partizan hero Nenad Bjekovic was born, is "black and white", while western Ub is decked in red and white for giving Red Star Dragan Dzajic.

Red Star has more fans across the country — 48.2 percent of Serbians over the 30.5 percent who support Partizan, according to a poll conducted in 2008. Red Star also won the first derby 4-3 in January 1947, and has since won 107 out of 241 contests, over Partizan's 76 victories. Partizan are consoled by the fact they won by the biggest margin, 7-1, in 1953, but have failed to match their eternal rival winning the European Cup Final in 1991. Today, Red Star could widen the gap to nine points in Serbia's football league and advance to a 28th title. But in a very weak championship, nobody will really care. In Serbia, football lovers are now more interested in Chelsea or Real Madrid than the derbies of the capital. —AFP

## SNOW VOLLEYBALL HOPES TO STAKE CLAIM IN OLYMPICS

**LAUSANNE:** Beach volleyball is moving to the mountains and swapping its sand for snow. A spinoff of the sun-splashed sport familiar to Summer Olympic fans and seaside frolickers, snow volleyball is spreading from the Alps to the Andes and making a run at the Winter Games. If all goes well, volleyball officials say, their sport would be the first to appear in both the Summer and Winter Olympics. "Our key message is to be the No 1 family sport in the world," Fabio Azevedo, the general director of the International Volleyball Federation, said in an interview with The Associated Press. "I think it fits perfectly to our plan."

Itself an offshoot of the more traditional indoor game, beach volleyball has grown into one of biggest attractions of the Summer Games, thanks no doubt to the bikini and boardshorts uniforms and the party atmosphere. Now the FIVB wants a piece of the Winter Olympics, and it sees snow volleyball as the way in. With a European tour already established, volleyball officials have set out an agenda that would bring the new snow sport to Asia, Argentina and the United States with an eye toward approval as a demonstration sport at the 2022 Beijing Games.

"They want to push it ultimately to the Winter Olympics," said Martin Kaswurm, whose company manages the Snow Volleyball European Tour. "It's not something we put into the mouths of the FIVB. It's something they had as a goal themselves." The continental circuit, which kicks off this weekend in the Czech ski resort of Spindleruv Mlyn, was officially sanctioned by volleyball's European governing body for the first time last winter. Azevedo said the goal is to have a world tour next year and a fully-fledged world championship in 2019. A spot in the 2020 Youth Olympic Games in Lausanne - where the FIVB has its headquarters - is also on the federation's radar.

### Winter Olympics

From there, snow volleyball could apply for status as a demonstration sport at the 2022 Winter Olympics. Azevedo hopes to have at least an informal display at the Winter Games next year in Pyeongchang, South Korea, even if it's just stringing up a net in a plaza somewhere. "We definitely want to be there and show people what snow volleyball is like," he said. "Being really conservative, in order to climb this mountain step

by step, I think the Olympics in 2026."

While Olympic ice hockey and field hockey have different rules, different equipment and different governing bodies, snow volleyball is almost identical to the beach game. The tactics and rules are also similar to the two-a-side beach sport, and many of the competitors come from beach volleyball. "Basically, we've just changed the surface," Kaswurm said. "The only thing different is that they wear soccer shoes." The atmosphere also resembles beach volleyball, with disc jockeys cranking out music and cheerleaders - in lederhosen instead of bikinis - pumping up the crowd. "Music, it's inside our DNA, man," Azevedo said.

### Pure happiness

Usually there is a hot tub courtside, and traditionally the winners will jump in after their matches to celebrate (and warm up). "If you're brave enough and have your swimsuit - or not - you can just jump in. And with the drinks and other friends you can enjoy the view on the center court and all the mountains around," said Bobb Kufa, the 2016 Czech beach champion. "Pure happiness." Austrian national champion Flo Schnetzer said the crowd especially loves the post-match hot tub celebration. "The people laugh when they see people in their underwear jumping into the whirlpool," he said. "It's so much fun to play in such an amazing atmosphere and to play in such an amazing place. The crowd is really crazy; they love it. They like to party and they like to celebrate in the mountains."

### Smart and flexible

But playing on a mountain has its own challenges. Mostly, because the snow is slicker than sand there is more of a premium on players who can read and react quickly than on tall ones who can block. It's also easier to jump on the compacted snow, so shorter players can be more effective blockers and height is less of an advantage. "Snow volleyball is for smart and flexible players," Kufa said. "All the moves are much slower. That means you have to be smarter - especially in defense. You have to decide the direction you want to go, and that's all. You can't take it back - otherwise you find yourself on your back with the shoes up to the air." — AP

## WORLD BASEBALL CLASSIC GROWS SLOWLY, BUT FAR FROM MATURE

**NEW YORK:** The World Baseball Classic returns Monday for its fourth edition, growing slowly yet still far from rising to the prominence of soccer's World Cup or the Olympics. South Korea hosts Israel at the opener of the 16-nation tournament in Seoul, and the Dominican Republic starts its title defense March 9 against Canada in Miami. "The tournament remains very much in the early innings of its development," Chris Park, Major League Baseball's senior vice president of growth, strategy and international, said Thursday at a Yankee Stadium news conference. "Our ultimate ambition is to watch and supervise this tournament as it matures into a truly global platform for our game and a real competitor with the top international tournaments around the world."

First-round games also are being played at Tokyo and Guadalajara, Mexico; and second-round games at San Diego and Tokyo. The championship round is at Dodger Stadium in Los Angeles from March 20-22. The United States, which failed to finish better than fourth under managers Buck Martinez, Davey Johnson and Joe Torre, is led this year by Jim Leyland and starts play March 10 versus Colombia in Miami.

The 2013 championship on the MLB Network averaged 843,000 viewers; it was the most-watched sporting event in the Dominican Republic in at least a decade, averaging an 11.2 rating on CDN. And in Puerto Rico, there was a combined 39.0 rating for telecasts on Telemundo, MLB Network and ESPN Deportes. "Let's see if their success will translate to more people watching," said broadcaster Al Leiter, a pitcher on the 2006 US team. The tournament is run by MLB and the players' association and games will be televised in the US on MLB Network and ESPN Deportes. In total, 171 countries will receive WBC broadcasts, and more than 50 sponsors have reached agreements.

Revenue is forecast to top \$100 million for the first time. Still, that is less than 2 percent of the \$5.5 billion projected by FIFA for next year's World Cup in Russia. While the World Cup is soccer's ultimate event, many players decline to participate in the WBC, which is played while their clubs are at spring training ahead of season openers that start April 2. Japan won the initial tournament in 2006 and repeated as champion in 2009, but Houston Astros outfielder Norichika Aoki will be the only Japanese player in MLB who will be at the WBC this time. —AP



RUGBY

# CHIEFS RUN RIOT AFTER BLUES SEE RED

**WELLINGTON:** The Waikato Chiefs downed a 14-man Auckland Blues 41-26 in Hamilton yesterday to extend six years of Super Rugby dominance over their New Zealand rivals. A relatively even contest turned into a Chiefs romp after Blues flanker Steven Luatua was sent off for a high tackle on the stroke of half-time. The Chiefs scored six tries and always looked comfortable winners, despite conceding three tries themselves as concentration lapsed late in the match. The result was their 11th straight win on the North Island derby against the Blues, a winning streak stretching back to March 2011.

The game opened at a frantic pace, with the

Chiefs looking more threatening on attack but hampered by poor discipline and handling errors. They scored two early tries, the first to Liam Messam from a driving maul and the second when Tim Nanai-Williams' blistering run set up Damian McKenzie. But Ihaia West kicked three penalties to keep the Blues in touch and they looked like they could rally and challenge the Chiefs' formidable defense. That changed when Luatua was shown a red card just before the break for a high tackle on Nanai-Williams. The Chiefs immediately punished the infringement as Hika Elliot scored their third try from a maul.

They had a fourth within two minutes of the restart through Lachlan Boshier and there could have been two more as the shellshocked Blues fell apart on defense. Winger James Lowe brushed aside two half-hearted tackles for the Chiefs' fifth and Anton Lienert-Brown added another at the end of a slick passing move. To their credit, the Blues fought back and scored two tries, one to lock Patrick Tuipulotu and the other coming when prop Charlie Faumuina sidestepped a tackler. It narrowed the gap from 41-9 to 41-26, adding some respectability to the scoreline but the result had been beyond doubt soon after Luatua's departure. — AFP

## NFL FINDING BETTER VALUE IN RUNNING BACK REVIVAL

**INDIANAPOLIS:** As Todd Gurley and Ezekiel Elliott spent the past two years crashing through conventional wisdom, Dalvin Cook saw the NFL's two emerging stars as something bigger. He viewed them as change agents, as role models, as trendsetters, paving the way for college football's next great runners. Now, with a whole group of backs ready to cash in on the success of Gurley and Elliott, Cook is looking to do more than join the cause. He wants to create his own story in the league's running back revival.

"After that draft class with Todd and Melvin (Gordon), and then Ezekiel came after those guys, I've definitely seen it (the value of running backs) go up," Cook said Thursday at the league's annual scouting combine. "If you put us in the right system, we can help teams win ball games." It sounds strange coming from a league that once treated workhorse feature backs with the reverence of today's franchise quarterbacks. But as the rules changed, the passing game opened up and the salary cap became more prohibitive, team officials searched for younger, cheaper answers.

Former Denver Broncos coach Mike Shanahan was so masterful at using late-round draft picks or even undrafted rookies behind his seemingly invincible zone-blocking scheme, everyone thought they could do it. Others tried, with mixed results. Then came the dual-backfield craze. The concept was two solid backs were better than one great one because they could stay healthier and productive. That was followed by the over-30 idea - don't waste money on an over-the-hill back. The stats mostly backed it up.

The result: Each philosophical adaptation made running backs less valuable on draft weekend. From 2012-2016, only four running backs were taken in the first round and none was selected in 2013 or 2014. Things are changing again. After Seattle rode Marshawn Lynch to a Super Bowl title and almost a second, Gurley broke the first-round drought and became the 2015 Offensive Rookie of the Year. Elliott won the 2016 NFL rushing title and led Dallas to the top seed in the NFC, and Atlanta won the NFC championship by using essentially two productive feature backs to give quarterback Matt Ryan more balance on offense.

"Running backs went through this period of - we blame that on Denver and Mike Shanahan, where you can always get your running back in the seventh round," said Rams general manager Les Snead, who drafted Gurley. "The year we drafted Todd, and even Melvin Gordon, kind of opposite years, right? He had a freshman slump, Todd had a sophomore slump. They get drafted in the first round, they ended up producing. Ezekiel Elliott, put that guy behind that line and guess what? Defenses have problems. "This year, you have another group of running backs who are pretty good. They're going to go first round and they're going to help teams." With LSU's Leonard Fournette, Cook from Florida State and Stanford's Christian McCaffrey all projected to go in the first round, it could be the deepest running back class in years. Tennessee's Alvin Kamara could move into the first round as well and the class includes two 2,000-yard rushers - Texas' D'Onta Foreman and San Diego State's Donnell "DJ" Pumphrey. The timing couldn't be better. Green Bay, Detroit and Indianapolis went into the offseason looking for backfield help and after releasing longtime stalwarts Adrian Peterson and Jamaal Charles, Minnesota and Kansas City could be in the market, too. — AP

# BULLS HAND WARRIORS 2ND STRAIGHT DEFEAT

## LILLARD SCORES 33 AS TRAIL BLAZERS BEAT THUNDER

**LOS ANGELES:** Golden State, adjusting to life without injured Kevin Durant, fell to the Chicago Bulls on Thursday, just the second time in nearly two years the Warriors have suffered back-to-back NBA regular-season defeats. Jimmy Butler scored 22 points to lead four Bulls players in double-figures in the 94-87 triumph. The Warriors' points total was their season low, and they lost a second straight regular-season contest for the first time since April of 2015.

The Warriors had fallen 112-108 to the Washington Wizards on Tuesday, when Durant limped out of the game in the first quarter with what was later diagnosed as a left knee ligament sprain and bone bruise. The former NBA Most Valuable Player will be sidelined indefinitely, although the Warriors, who have already secured a playoff berth, have not ruled out a return before the end of the regular season. "Obviously, you feel for him and want him to get healthy as fast as possible but not



**PORTLAND:** Portland Trail Blazers guard Damian Lillard (right) shoots over Oklahoma City Thunder forward Andre Roberson during the first half of an NBA basketball game on Thursday, March 2, 2017. — AP

rush it because we have a long journey ahead of us going into the playoffs," two-time NBA MVP Stephen Curry said. "Next man up mentality, but obviously it will be tough to replace a guy like KD."

Curry led the Warriors with 23 points, but he and "Splash Brother" teammate Klay Thompson combined to make just three of 22 three-point attempts. Overall, the Warriors were six-for-30 from three-point range in the defeat. Thompson added 13 points and Draymond Green contributed a dozen in the defeat. The Warriors had led 51-47 at halftime, and erased a five-point deficit with 9:09 to play thanks to three baskets from Curry and a driving layup from David West that gave Golden State an 85-84 lead with 5:43 to go.

### 'Part of the game'

But Golden State couldn't maintain the momentum. "A couple of shots we normally make did not fall," said Curry, who was 10 of 27 from the field. "That's not the reason we lost." Warriors coach Steve Kerr said his team didn't play with enough urgency to make up for their cold shooting. "You are not always going to shoot well," Kerr said. "When that happens, the ball is gold. You have to value each possession. Our intensity and focus was not there." Veteran Dwyane Wade scored 12 points for Chicago, putting the Bulls up 88-85 with 2:16 remaining. Bulls reserve Paul Zipser closed out a 7-0 scoring run with three-pointer that stretched Chicago's lead to six points with 1:41 to play. — AFP

## NBA results/standings

Portland 114, Oklahoma City 109; Phoenix 120, Charlotte 103; Chicago 94, Golden State 87.

	W	L	PCT	GB
<b>Eastern Conference</b>				
<b>Atlantic Division</b>				
Boston	39	22	.639	-
Toronto	36	25	.590	3
NY Knicks	25	36	.410	14
Philadelphia	22	38	.367	16.5
Brooklyn	10	49	.169	28
<b>Central Division</b>				
Cleveland	41	18	.695	-
Chicago	31	30	.508	11
Indiana	31	30	.508	11
Detroit	29	32	.475	13
Milwaukee	26	33	.441	15
<b>Southeast Division</b>				
Washington	36	23	.610	-
Atlanta	34	26	.567	2.5
Miami	28	33	.459	9
Charlotte	26	35	.426	11
Orlando	22	39	.361	15
<b>Western Conference</b>				
<b>Northwest Division</b>				
Utah	37	24	.607	-
Oklahoma City	35	26	.574	2
Denver	28	33	.459	9
Portland	25	35	.417	11.5
Minnesota	25	36	.410	12
<b>Pacific Division</b>				
Golden State	50	11	.820	-
LA Clippers	36	24	.600	13.5
Sacramento	25	36	.410	25
Phoenix	19	42	.311	31
LA Lakers	19	42	.311	31
<b>Southwest Division</b>				
San Antonio	46	13	.780	-
Houston	43	19	.694	4.5
Memphis	36	25	.590	11
Dallas	24	36	.400	22.5
New Orleans	24	37	.393	23



# KYRGIOS STUNS DJOKOVIC IN ACAPULCO

**ACAPULCO:** Australian bad boy Nick Kyrgios shocked Novak Djokovic in straight sets at the Mexico Open, dealing a major blow to the world number two's hopes of regaining his mantle of invincibility. The 21-year-old Kyrgios overpowered Djokovic with 25 aces in the 7-6 (11/9), 7-5 triumph as the Serb sought to rebuild confidence after his shattering second round defeat at the Australian Open in January. The Australian, letting his tennis skills take centre stage instead of his tantrums, won 81 percent of his first-serve points as he dominated his first ever match with Djokovic.

"It's what I dreamed of as a little kid, playing on these great venues against some of the greatest players in the world," said Kyrgios. "I never have a problem getting up for these matches. I wasn't thinking about winning at any stage," he added. "I knew I had to stay in the moment because I've been in situations where matches have gotten away from me, so I had to stay switched on the whole time. I knew that if I just waited and waited, eventually I'd get my chance." Djokovic fell in the Australian Open to Uzbekistan's Denis Istomin, then did not play again until this week.

After beating Slovakia's Martin Klizan he rallied to defeat Juan Martin del Potro, before losing his quarter-final to Kyrgios. The world No 17 Kyrgios delivered another giant killer performance as he also beat Rafael Nadal and Roger Federer in their first ATP tour level meetings. He is the youngest player to record victories over the tennis Big Five—Djokovic, Federer, Nadal, Andy Murray and Stan Wawrinka—and is now 11-17 against top



**ACAPULCO:** Serbia's Novak Djokovic fails to return a serve from Australia's Nick Kyrgios during a quarterfinal match of the Mexican Tennis Open in Acapulco, Mexico on Thursday March 2, 2017. Kyrgios unleashed a 25-aces barrage to defeat Djokovic 7-6 (9), 7-5 to reach the semifinals of the Mexican Open. —AP

ten players. Kyrgios will be seeking to reach his first final of the season when he faces big-serving American Sam Querrey in the semis.

Nadal bounced back from a break down in both sets to defeat Japan's Yoshihito Nishioka 7-6 (7/2), 6-3 and book his semi-final

spot. The second-seeded Spaniard, a two-time winner in Acapulco, hammered five aces in the battle between the two lefthanders. "He is so quick," Nadal said. "I felt I needed to choose the right shots to do the damage. I was trying to hit the winner too early some-

times and too late other times, so it was tough to get my rhythm." World No 6 Nadal also kept his Acapulco unbeaten streak alive, having won 13 straight matches, and moved to 26-0 in sets in the ATP Tour event.

## Nadal moves on

Nadal advanced to a semi-final meeting with Marin Cilic. Nadal has won three of four career meetings with the Croatian. "I am excited about playing this match," Nadal said. "He is one of the best players in the world." The 30-year-old Nadal clinched Thursday's victory in the ninth game of the second set with an overhead smash at the net after Nishioka's return landed well short. Nadal easily won the opening set tiebreaker by taking the first five points and then two out of the next four. He closed out the first set with a blistering cross-court forehand that froze Nishioka in his tracks. Nishioka was his own worst enemy at times as the 21-year-old qualifier had no aces, committed four double faults and won just 50 percent of his second-serve points.

In the eighth game of the first set, Nishioka was up 40-15 and, despite having three challenges on the board, he failed to review a Nadal forehand that was ruled in but appeared to have sailed wide. Third-seeded Cilic reached the semi-finals without hitting a ball as American Steve Johnson withdrew. Johnson pulled out of his scheduled quarter-final on the hard courts with a right ankle injury he said he sustained in his victory over Ernesto Escobedo on Wednesday. Unseeded Querrey eliminated fourth-seeded Dominic Thiem of Austria 6-1, 7-5 in their quarter-final match. —AFP

## KUWAIT 8TH OPEN TENNIS TOURNAMENT KICKS OFF

By Abdellatif Sharaa

**KUWAIT:** Kuwait 8th Open Tennis Tournament 2017 kicked off yesterday under the patronage of President of Kuwait and Arab Shooting Federations Sheikh Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Abdallah Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, and will continue until March 14, at the Tennis Center and Yarmouk Sports Club Courts. The first match in the tournament (the U11) was won by Mohammad Al-Failakami. He defeated Shamlan Ali with the score of 9-4. Fahad Al-Daihani beat Mohammad Mutlaq 9-0, while Antonios Al-Samrani defeated Abdelaziz Al-Mahmeed 9-1. Also, Abdelaziz Khalid defeated Jawad Al-Mahmeed 9-7 as, Mohammad Qalli beat Musaed Shaker 9/2.

Kuwait Tennis Federation Secretary General and Director of the Tournament Abdelredha Al-Ghareeb was happy with the successful kick off and the heavy participation. He thanked all Kuwait's sports clubs who registered their players in the tournament. He said this is a good opportunity for all club players to get in touch with high caliber players. Al-Ghareeb thanked Behbehani Group for its major support of the tournament since its launch in 2002. He also thanked other sponsors including Kuwait Finance Center, Kuwait Airways and Kuwait International Bank.

# PSL FINAL IS MORE THAN A MERE GAME OF CRICKET FOR PAKISTAN

**ISLAMABAD:** The Pakistan Super League final is more than a mere game of cricket. For the Pakistan Cricket Board it's a challenge to showcase that it can once again safely host international teams. With just three days to go before tomorrow's Twenty20 final in Lahore, nobody is entirely sure which eight foreign players will shrug off safety concerns and participate in the tournament's deciding match at the Gaddafi Stadium.

PSL chairman Najam Sethi says that at least four players from each team will be picked from a pool of around 60 foreign cricketers. The two finalists will be determined once the last knockout match - featuring the Karachi Kings and Peshawar Zalmi - is played Friday in the United Arab Emirates, Pakistan cricket's home away from home. Quetta Gladiators, which has already qualified for the final, will be without its contracted foreign players after England's Kevin Pietersen, Luke Wright and Tymal Mills along with South African Rilee Rossouw flew home from Sharjah and declined to play in the Lahore final because of security concerns.

"It matters a lot when you lose all your key players," Sarfraz Ahmed, who is captain of the Quetta team and the Pakistan National T20 team, said after arriving in Karachi on Thursday. Sarfraz didn't reveal which foreign cricketers will now represent Quetta in the final, but said he was confident or recruiting talent from the list of available players. Pakistan has not hosted any of cricket's leading teams since a terrorist attack on Sri Lanka's team bus at Lahore in 2009.

And so the PCB views the PSL final as an opportunity to regain the confidence of foreign teams and bring back international cricket. Officials from other national cricket boards and the International Cricket Council have been invited for tomorrow's final to witness the security first hand. Doubts were raised over Lahore hosting the final when a wave of new terrorist attacks hit Pakistan last month. At least 13 people were killed in Lahore when a bomber targeted police escorting a rally by pharmacists. But the provincial government, federal government and the army extended full support in terms of security for the cricket.

The provincial government has promised at least 7,000 police officers to guard the surroundings of Gaddafi Stadium, and encouraged spectators to travel to the venue well ahead of the final to avoid long delays at security checkpoints. "This final is for all the Pakistanis and I hope after we organize it peacefully international cricket will also return to Pakistan," said Quetta coach



**LAHORE:** Pakistan's paramilitary troops stand guards at an entry gate of Gaddafi stadium ahead of the final cricket match of Pakistan Super League, in Lahore, Pakistan yesterday. —AP

Moin Khan, who was part of Pakistan's 1992 World Cup winning squad. Local cricket fans have ensured high demand for the \$5 tickets for tomorrow's final. Long queues were witnessed in front of local banks in Lahore on Thursday, but fans were told there were no tickets left in that category.

PSL organizers said they put 10,000 tickets on sale for \$5 each, while tickets in other categories were selling for \$38, \$76 and \$114. Cricketer-turned politician Imran Khan is among a few former cricketers who have criticized the decision to hold the PSL final in Lahore. In a Twitter post, he said nobody wanted international cricket to return to Pakistan more than him, "but staging the PSL final in Lahore carries huge risks with no benefit at all." "A match played under a tight security ring around the stadium will exaggerate Pak's security issue." Any security lapses would be a massive setback, he added, saying "we can say goodbye to cricket in Pak for the next decade." —AP



Italian League Preview

# ROMA MENTALITY CRUCIAL TO SERIE A RACE, SZCZESNY SAYS

**MILAN:** On-loan Arsenal goalkeeper Wojciech Szczesny has yet to decide his future but has no doubts about Roma's approach when they face Napoli looking to stay in Serie A title contention today. "They will fight for the win and openly challenge us," Szczesny said. "But these are games when mentality makes the difference. I like to think that we don't have to envy our rivals." In what is Francesco Totti's 25th and final season with the capital club, Roma are enjoying yet another tilt at the title Juventus, away to midtable Udinese tomorrow, have won the past five seasons.

But days after Belgium midfielder Radja Nainggolan hit a spectacular brace to embellish a 3-1 masterclass at outclassed Inter Milan, Roma suffered a 2-0 loss to city rivals Lazio in their Cup semi-final first leg. Szczesny does not expect coach Luciano Spalletti to panic for a potent Napoli side still reeling from a shock 2-0 home defeat to 10-man Atalanta which virtually ended their hopes of challenging Juventus for the title. Speaking to Sky Sport Italia, he added: "It's easy to say after a defeat that we have to change things, but our results and performances have been positive for the past few months. There's no point rushing to conclusions," said the Polish keeper.

"My future is the game against Napoli. That's the way it should be, focusing on what we do on the pitch. When the moment comes, you will all know my future." Doubts over the future of Napoli coach Maurizio Sarri have also emerged following a recent spat with owner and president Aurelio De Laurentiis. That has been compounded by negative results in yet another bleak month of February which saw defeats to Real Madrid in the Champions League, Atalanta in the league and Juventus in the Cup on Tuesday.

Napoli endured a similar dip in February 2016 with Europa League elimination to Villarreal, a league loss to Juventus and two draws with AC Milan and Fiorentina. Defeat to Atalanta last week left Napoli 12 points adrift of Juve, virtually ending their chances of challenging for a title they last won in 1990. Sarri is expected to assemble his strongest possible side and that means Dries Mertens, who has hit three hat-tricks while deputizing for Arkadiusz Milik during a four-month injury absence, could get the nod over the now-fit Pole.

Juventus will be without injured midfielder Stefano Sturaro for the trip to Udinese due to an ongoing stomach muscle problem. But with Gonzalo Higuain, Paulo Dybala and Mario Mandzukic all fit, Massimiliano Allegri's men should have little trouble prevailing against a Udinese side who suffered a 4-0 loss in the corresponding fixture last year. High-flying Atalanta, only three points behind Napoli in fourth and sitting ahead of Lazio, Inter and AC Milan, welcome Fiorentina looking to keep fans dreaming of Champions League football for yet another week.

Lazio, one point behind Atalanta, will look to build on their impressive display against Roma away to Bologna, who have suffered two defeats and a draw since their 7-1 home rout by Napoli last month. Inter, now 18 points off the lead, are also six behind Napoli in the third Champions League qualifying spot. But Argentinean striker Mauro Icardi told Gazzetta dello Sport they still believe in a third-place finish. "We're not out of contention and we won't be until it's mathematically impossible for us to qualify," he said. "I firmly believe we can finish third, we all believe that, that's always been our objective." —AFP

## Italian Serie A table

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

Juventus	26	22	0	4	55	17	66
Roma	26	19	2	5	57	23	59
Napoli	26	16	6	4	60	29	54
Atalanta	26	16	3	7	42	26	51
Lazio	26	15	5	6	45	29	50
Inter Milan	26	15	3	8	41	27	48
AC Milan	26	14	5	7	37	29	47
Fiorentina	26	11	8	7	44	37	41
Torino	26	9	9	8	48	42	36
Sampdoria	26	9	8	9	31	32	35
Chievo	26	10	5	11	28	34	35
Cagliari	26	9	4	13	35	52	31
Sassuolo	26	9	3	14	35	42	30
Udinese	26	8	6	12	28	35	29
Bologna	26	7	7	12	24	39	28
Genoa	26	6	8	12	28	41	26
Empoli	26	5	7	14	15	37	22
Palermo	26	3	6	17	22	50	15
Crotone	26	3	4	19	21	45	13
Pescara	26	2	6	18	27	57	12

## WEST HAM UNITED VS CHELSEA — FANS' VIEW

**LONDON:** Chelsea can edge even closer to clinching the Premier League title if they take all three points from their game against West Ham on Monday. Antonio Conte leads his side across London with hopes of securing 29 points from the club's remaining 12 fixtures. Violent clashes between supporters marred Chelsea's last visit to the London Stadium and tensions are likely to be running high on and off the field. Here is what the fans have to say about their respective clubs:

### Geo Mackie, Hammers Chat

"One defeat in 20 games shows Chelsea are in fantastic form but they have picked up just one win from their last four on the road - which was at Leicester. That tells me that there could be points up for grabs here. I'm expecting a score-draw. "I would like to see Slaven Bilic have a go and aim for a win. We are in the middle third of the table where relegation is not a worry and European football is probably out of reach, so we've got nothing to lose. "As long as the players give 100 percent then the fans will be happy, we can accept a defeat, just as long as both the players and manager have given it their all.

"It would be a huge boost if Andy Carroll is fit and available to play. I think if he had been involved in the last two games then we may have an extra four points on the board. "Carroll's injury record is something we just have to put up with. On his day I think he is a top Premier League striker and he must be an absolute nightmare for defenders. "When you play teams like Chelsea you rely on the big characters in your dressing room." "I think the crowd trouble the last time our clubs met at the London Stadium was all blown out of proportion. There were a small number of arrests from both sets of supporters and I have seen a lot worse at other football grounds around the country. "The stewarding, which was a massive issue earlier in the season, has improved, so I have no concerns heading into the game on Monday night."

### Andy Saunders, The Chels podcast

"This is East London v West London. It's a proper London rivalry stretching back for as long as anyone can remember. We see West Ham as the wretched underclass in the East End and they associate us with the Kings Road. "The footballing gap between the two clubs has widened significantly but the undercurrent of bitterness and outright contempt is alive and well. "As we approach the final stretch of fixtures, every game is a big game for us. West Ham haven't had a particularly great season and have dropped a lot of points. "That said, this is a London derby so the atmosphere will be heated and I'm sure they'll raise their game for the occasion. —Reuters

## THINGS TO LOOK FOR IN THE BUNDESLIGA

**BERLIN:** Two of the league's best strikers go head-to-head when Cologne host leaders Bayern Munich and Freddie Ljungberg makes his debut as Wolfsburg's assistant coach. Here are five things to look out for in the Bundesliga this weekend:

### Hot-shots collide in Cologne

Hot-shot strikers Anthony Modeste and Robert Lewandowski will shoot it out when Cologne host Bayern today. Chinese side Tianjin Quanjian have reportedly offered 50 million euros (\$52.82m) for Modeste, but the Frenchman wrote "I'm staying in Cologne" on Twitter on Monday. Modeste has 17 goals, while Lewandowski has hit 19 in the league, including a hat-trick in last weekend's 8-0 league hammering of Hamburg. The Poland hot-shot is on fire with seven goals in his last four games and has 30 goals in all competitions. Bayern, who start the weekend five points clear in the table, drew 1-1 with Cologne last October in Munich. It has been six years since Bayern lost to Cologne who will have Germany defender Jonas Hector suspended after a fifth booking while Munich are at full strength.

### Ljungberg on Wolfsburg bench

Ex-Arsenal star Freddie Ljungberg starts his senior coaching career as Andries Jonker's assistant for Wolfsburg at Mainz today. Head coach Jonker replaced Valerien Ismael who was sacked on Sunday after five defeats in six league games left Wolfsburg two points from relegation. Jonker, previously the head of Arsenal's youth academy, has brought over Ljungberg who was coaching the Gunners' junior teams. "He is interested in the individual development of players. At Arsenal I got to see how good Freddie is at that," explained Jonker. Ljungberg scored 71 times in 318 games for the Gunners, but has his work cut out coaxing goals from Wolfsburg's attack which has netted four goals in their last six games.

### Toprak faces future club

Bayer Leverkusen's Turkey defender Omer Toprak faces future employers Borussia Dortmund today. Dortmund announced last month they met the release clause in the 27-year-old's contract and he will sign a four-year deal at the end of the season. Leverkusen lost their last two games, a 4-2 home defeat to Atletico Madrid in the Champions League followed by a lacklustre 2-0 at home to Mainz. Dortmund posted 3-0 wins against both at home to Wolfsburg and at Freiburg, where Pierre-Emerick Aubameyang scored twice. The striker is back in form after a dip following Gabon's early Africa Cup of Nations exit. "It's best for us all when 'Auba' doesn't worry too much, looks forward to his next task and has that ease back in his game," said coach Thomas Tuchel.

### Frings' Bremen return

Ex-Germany star Torsten Frings, coach of bottom side Darmstadt, returns to Werder Bremen today for the first time since they sacked him. Frings, 40, was shown the door as Bremen's assistant coach when Viktor Skrypnyk was also dismissed in September Frings made 447 appearances for Werder, but three points is his priority in Bremen to close the 10-point gap to safety. Darmstadt are unbeaten in their last six games against Bremen. "This is something special. I played for the club for 20 years and enjoyed a lot of success, also as a member of the coaching staff," said Frings. "I'm happy to come back, but it is important for us to take something."

### '100 percent' Kalou

Hertha Berlin coach Pal Dardai says he is '100 percent' sure Salomon Kalou will face strugglers Hamburg on Sunday as his team look to climb into the top three. The 31-year-old Ivory Coast striker missed training on Wednesday with a foot knock, but is set to partner Vedad Ibisevic. The pair have scored 15 goals between them, while Hamburg are back in the bottom three after last weekend's 8-0 pounding by Bayern. Kalou has scored five goals this season produced his fourth assist in last weekend's 2-0 win at home to Eintracht Frankfurt. —AFP

## German Bundesliga table

**BERLIN:** Bundesliga table ahead of the weekend matches (played, won, drawn, lost, goals for, goals against, points):

Bayern Munich	22	16	5	1	54	13	53
RB Leipzig	22	15	3	4	41	22	48
Borussia Dortmund	22	11	7	4	46	23	40
Hoffenheim	22	9	11	2	39	22	38
Hertha Berlin	22	11	4	7	30	24	37
Eintracht Frankfurt	22	10	5	7	25	22	35
FC Cologne	22	8	9	5	31	22	33
Bayer Leverkusen	22	9	3	10	34	32	30
SC Freiburg	22	9	3	10	28	39	30
Moenchengladbach	22	8	5	9	25	29	29
Mainz 05	22	8	4	10	31	37	28
Schalke 04	22	7	6	9	26	23	27
FC Augsburg	22	7	6	9	21	28	27
VfL Wolfsburg	22	6	4	12	20	33	22
Werder Bremen	22	6	4	12	28	43	22
Hamburg	22	5	5	12	21	45	20
FC Ingolstadt 04	22	5	3	14	19	34	18
SV Darmstadt 98	22	3	3	16	15	43	12



# FIVE THINGS TO LOOK FOR IN THE PREMIER LEAGUE

**LONDON:** With the Premier League in the thrilling final third of the season, AFP Sport looks at five storylines to watch out for in this weekend's action:

## Can anyone catch Chelsea?

With a remarkable 17 wins from their last 20 league games, rarely has the phrase "runaway leaders" been more apt than when describing Chelsea's seemingly unstoppable march to the championship. Antonio Conte's side, who make the short trip to London rivals West Ham on Monday, sit 10 points clear of second-placed Tottenham with just 12 games remaining, raising the possibility that the title race will reach its conclusion well before the final round of matches. For the chasing pack, and fans of a thrilling finale, there have been dispiritingly few signs that Chelsea might stumble in the final furlong, although West Ham's 2-1 win over Conte's men in the League Cup earlier this season provides a glimmer of hope of another upset when the Blues return to the London Stadium.

## Klopp must silence critics

Nothing encapsulates the rollercoaster existence of a Premier League manager better than the waves of opprobrium crashing

down on Jurgen Klopp since Liverpool's 3-1 loss at Leicester on Monday. Heading into 2017, Liverpool were in such rich form that a period of sustained success appeared on the cards. But just two months later Klopp is under pressure for the first time at Anfield after two wins in 12 games—a dismal sequence that saw the Reds crash out of the FA and League Cups and fall 14 points behind Chelsea. The only remaining goal for fifth-placed Liverpool is to qualify for the Champions League, which makes Saturday's Anfield showdown with fourth-placed Arsenal a crucial moment for Klopp, whose overall points total from his first 55 games is less than the amount collected by his predecessor Brendan Rodgers.

## Leicester back on track?

When Jamie Vardy raced onto Marc Albrighton's precise long pass and drilled a clinical finish beyond Liverpool goalkeeper Simon Mignolet it was as though the previous eight months of pratfalls and personal agendas had never happened to champions Leicester. In the first match after Claudio Ranieri's shock sacking, Vardy was back to his best as Leicester, at last displaying the controlled aggression that carried them to that fairytale title triumph, ended a five-game losing streak with a 3-1 win over Liverpool. Vardy and several of his team-mates have angrily denied claims they told Leicester's owners to sack Ranieri, but with a point to prove, the Foxes, under the caretaker leadership of Craig Shakespeare going into a crucial clash with lowly Hull, finally have a cause that could carry them out of the relegation zone in the nick of time.

## Cup won't suffice for Mourinho

Fresh from Manchester United's thrilling League Cup final success, Jose Mourinho needs the feel-good factor from that 3-2 win against Southampton to spark a push to qualify for the Champions League. Despite becoming the first United manager to win a major trophy in his maiden season, missing out on Europe's elite club competition would be a huge blow for Mourinho, who knows the same failing triggered the sacking of his predecessor Louis van Gaal. United are two points adrift of the top four, in sixth place, but Mourinho's men should be able to inch closer to their target if Wembley hero Zlatan Ibrahimovic inspires an expected victory over struggling Bournemouth at Old Trafford.

## Spurs need more than Kane

If title hopefuls Tottenham are to make Chelsea sweat in the closing weeks of the season, Mauricio Pochettino's side will have to find some support for Harry Kane, starting against Everton tomorrow. Kane underlined his credentials as the Premier League's most predatory finisher last weekend, netting his third hat-trick in his last nine appearances in a 4-0 demolition of Stoke. But expecting the England forward to keep up that astonishing level for the rest of the season would be foolhardy, so Pochettino needs to tease more consistency from Dele Alli, who has only one goal in his last seven appearances, and Christian Eriksen, who hasn't scored in the league since December, to ease the burden on Kane. —AFP

## TEAMS TO WATCH IN CHINESE SUPER LEAGUE

**SHANGHAI:** As the big-spending Chinese Super League kicks off a new season this week, here are five new faces to look out for:

### Oscar (Shanghai SIPG)

The biggest transfer in Asian football history saw new SIPG manager Andre Villas-Boas sign another Chelsea alumnus, attacking midfielder Oscar, for a whopping 60 million euros. Arriving to a hero's welcome in January, Oscar has already started repaying his hefty price tag with his goals in the AFC Champions League, including in this week's 5-1 rout of Western Sydney Wanderers. Oscar's goal was laid on by last year's 55 million euro man Hulk, who is already showing signs of forming a potent partnership with his countryman and has bagged two goals in two Champions League outings. Carlos Tevez (Shanghai Shenhua)

Shenhua also made waves in Shanghai in January by signing Tevez, the former Manchester City and Juventus striker, from Argentina's Boca Juniors on a reported annual salary of 38 million euros, making him the world's highest-paid footballer. Shenhua on Sunday go up against the equally cash-rich Jiangsu Suning, who themselves splurged 78 million euros a year ago to land Brazilian pair Ramires and Alex Teixeira. But new Shenhua manager Gus Poyet will want better from his Argentine striker than last month's lacklustre display at home to Brisbane Roar, when Shenhua were dumped out of the AFC Champions League play-offs 2-0.

### Alexandre Pato (Tianjin Quanjian)

Pato was touted as Brazil's next superstar when, as a twinkle-toed 17-year-old, he shone as part of the Internacional side that beat Barcelona in the 2006 Club World Cup, breaking Pele's record as the youngest scorer in a FIFA competition. A move to European giants AC Milan followed where 18 goals in 42 matches saw the striker win the Serie A 2009 young player of the year award. But after Milan won Serie A in 2010-2011, injuries took their toll and his form hit the rocks. He moved back to Brazil in 2013 for an unsuccessful spell at Corinthians. La Liga side Villarreal picked him up for three million euros last summer and he scored six goals in 24 appearances before they cashed in for 18 million when Tianjin came calling.

### Odion Ighalo (Changchun Yatai)

The Nigerian striker seemingly had the world at his feet when he scored 17 goals for Watford last season. But his form dipped alarmingly and he lost his place at the English Premier League club having scored just once before Christmas. Watford sold Ighalo to newly promoted Changchun Yatai on January's Premier League deadline day for a club-record 23.3m euros after two-and-a-half years at Vicarage Road, in which he played 100 times and scored 39 goals.

### Fabio Cannavaro (Tianjin Quanjian)

This season the Chinese Super League can boast two World Cup winners as Italy's 2006 captain Fabio Cannavaro takes the reins at promoted Tianjin Quanjian, joining 2002 winning coach Luiz Felipe Scolari of Guangzhou Evergrande. Last year's China League One champions are making their debut in the top flight and armed with a considerable war chest, Tianjin tried to land superstars Diego Costa, Pierre-Emerick Aubameyang and Wayne Rooney. Instead Cannavaro ended up with Belgium midfielder Axel Witsel for 20 million euros, out-of-favor former Brazil wonderkid Pato for 18 million and Junior Moraes on loan from Dynamo Kiev. Whether Cannavaro will be still around in June, when the transfer window reopens, remains to be seen. Super League clubs are notoriously impatient, as Cannavaro knows from his brief stint at Guangzhou Evergrande in 2015. —AFP



## Matches on TV (Local Timings)

### ENGLISH PREMIER LEAGUE

<b>Man United v Bournemouth</b> beIN SPORTS	<b>15:30</b>
<b>Leicester City v Hull City</b> beIN SPORTS	<b>18:00</b>
<b>Watford v Southampton</b> beIN SPORTS	<b>18:00</b>
<b>West Bromwich v Crystal Palace</b> beIN SPORTS	<b>18:00</b>
<b>Stoke City v Middlesbrough</b> beIN SPORTS	<b>18:00</b>
<b>Swansea City v Burnley FC</b> beIN SPORTS	<b>18:00</b>
<b>Liverpool v Arsenal FC</b> beIN SPORTS	<b>20:30</b>

### SPANISH LEAGUE

<b>CD Leganes v Granada CF</b> beIN SPORTS	<b>15:00</b>
<b>SD Eibar v Real Madrid</b> beIN SPORTS	<b>18:15</b>
<b>Villarreal v RCD Espanyol</b> beIN SPORTS	<b>20:30</b>
<b>Barcelona v Celta de Vigo</b> beIN SPORTS	<b>22:45</b>

### ITALIAN LEAGUE

<b>AS Roma v SSC Napoli</b> beIN SPORTS	<b>17:00</b>
<b>UC Sampdoria v Pescara</b> beIN SPORTS	<b>20:00</b>
<b>AC Milan v AC Chievo Verona</b> beIN SPORTS	<b>22:45</b>

### GERMAN BUNDESLIGA

<b>SV Werder Bremen v SV Darmstadt</b> beIN SPORTS	<b>17:30</b>
<b>Dortmund v Bayer 04 Leverkusen</b> beIN SPORTS	<b>17:30</b>
<b>FC Koln v Bayern Munich</b> beIN SPORTS	<b>17:30</b>
<b>FSV Mainz 05 v VfL Wolfsburg</b> beIN SPORTS	<b>17:30</b>
<b>TSG 1899 Hoffenheim v Ingolstadt</b> beIN SPORTS	<b>17:30</b>
<b>Monchengladbach v Schalke 04</b> beIN SPORTS	<b>20:30</b>

### FRENCH LEAGUE

<b>Paris Saint-Germain v Lorraine</b> beIN SPORTS	<b>19:00</b>
<b>FC Metz v Stade Rennes</b> beIN SPORTS	<b>22:00</b>
<b>Montpellier v Guingamp</b> beIN SPORTS	<b>22:00</b>
<b>Bastia v Saint Etienne</b> beIN SPORTS	<b>22:00</b>
<b>Caen v Angers</b> beIN SPORTS	<b>22:00</b>
<b>Dijon v OGC Nice</b> beIN SPORTS	<b>22:00</b>

## English Premier League table

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

Chelsea	26	20	3	3	55	19	63
Tottenham	26	15	8	3	50	18	53
Man City	25	16	4	5	51	29	52
Arsenal	25	15	5	5	54	28	50
Liverpool	26	14	7	5	55	33	49
Man Utd	25	13	9	3	38	21	48
Everton	26	12	8	6	42	27	44
West Brom	26	11	7	8	36	32	40
West Ham	26	9	6	11	35	44	33
Stoke	26	8	8	10	30	40	32
Burnley	26	9	4	13	28	37	31
Watford	26	8	7	11	30	43	31
Southampton	25	8	6	11	28	31	30
Bournemouth	26	7	5	14	36	51	26
Leicester	26	6	6	14	27	44	24
Swansea	26	7	3	16	32	57	24
Middlesbrough	26	4	10	12	19	28	22
Crystal Palace	26	6	4	16	33	46	22
Hull	26	5	6	15	23	50	21
Sunderland	26	5	4	17	24	48	19



# MOCKED BY MOURINHO, LEON NOW PRIMED TO TOPPLE REAL

**MADRID:** Pedro Leon was mocked by Jose Mourinho for not being Zinedine Zidane when at Real Madrid. Now the in-form Eibar winger could deal a huge blow to Zidane's hopes of landing the La Liga title. After Gareth Bale lost his head and Madrid their La Liga lead in a 3-3 draw with Las Palmas on Wednesday, an uncomfortable trip to Eibar's 6,200-capacity Ipurua stadium today was probably the last thing on their wish list.

"Whenever I came here as a visiting player I knew that Ipurua was a difficult place to come given how the fans and the team get on top of you," Leon told reporters on Thursday. "Let's hope that's how things go today and that they don't feel comfortable here." Zidane's men will be confronted by an Eibar side launching the most unlikely challenge for a place in Europe next season.

Leon's ninth goal of the season deep into stoppage time salvaged a 2-2 draw for Eibar at Real Sociedad on Tuesday to keep the tiny Basque club with the second lowest budget in La Liga in seventh, just three points off a Europa League place. "We have been very consistent all year," added 30-year-old Leon. "We are having a great season and hopefully we don't drop off between now and the end of the campaign." Madrid have already suffered at the hands of Eibar this season in a 1-1 draw at Real's Santiago Bernabeu in October. It was the first point and first goal Eibar had scored against Real since being promoted to the Spanish top flight for the first time in 2014.

## Belittled by Mourinho

Despite Madrid's colossal 631.3 million euro (\$665 million) budget dwarfing Eibar's 43 million euros, Leon believes his side can prove David to Real's Goliath and beat the 11-time European champions for the first time. "They have weapons at their disposal which are beyond us with our budget, but in these games you forget all about that. It's really special when you beat such an outstanding side."

Eibar may also be catching Madrid at the right time. Bale will be suspended after the first red card of his Real career in mid-week as Madrid fell a point behind Barcelona at the top of the table. Madrid battled back from 3-1 down with 10 men thanks to Cristiano Ronaldo's double. However, they have now conceded seven times in their last three outings and Zidane recognized his side must improve on their first-half displays to avoid always needing to bail themselves out late on.

Leon knows all about the demands of being a Madrid player after he was ostracized by Mourinho during his one season at the Bernabeu in 2010/11. "You talk of Pedro Leon as if he was Zidane or Maradona or di Stefano. He was playing for Getafe two days ago," then-Real boss Mourinho angrily responded when pressed on Leon's lack of first-team opportunities. Leon expects a reaction from Madrid's Galacticos. "We must recognize that they're the favorites because they're one of the best sides in the world," he said. "We know that for Madrid only winning is acceptable, and even more so at home. "Yesterday (Wednesday) wasn't a good day for them, but we know that Madrid on a bad day can still easily beat you. They will come here to take the three points." —AFP

## Spanish La Liga table

**MADRID:** Spanish La Liga table after Thursday'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	25	17	4	4	49	29	55
Atletico Madrid	25	13	7	5	45	22	46
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	24	4	8	12	27	40	20
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

# FRENCH FOOTBALL LEGEND RAYMOND KOPA DIES AT 85

**PARIS:** French football legend Raymond Kopa, who won the European Cup three times with Real Madrid in the 1950s, died yesterday aged 85 after a long illness, his family said. The French Football League announced that a minute's silence would be observed before all weekend games in honor of the man who rose from a poor mining family in northern France to become one of Europe's greatest players. At the pinnacle of his career in the 1950s he played in a Real Madrid team alongside Alfredo di Stefano and Ferenc Puskas and was honored with three European Cup titles and the Ballon d'Or player of the year award.

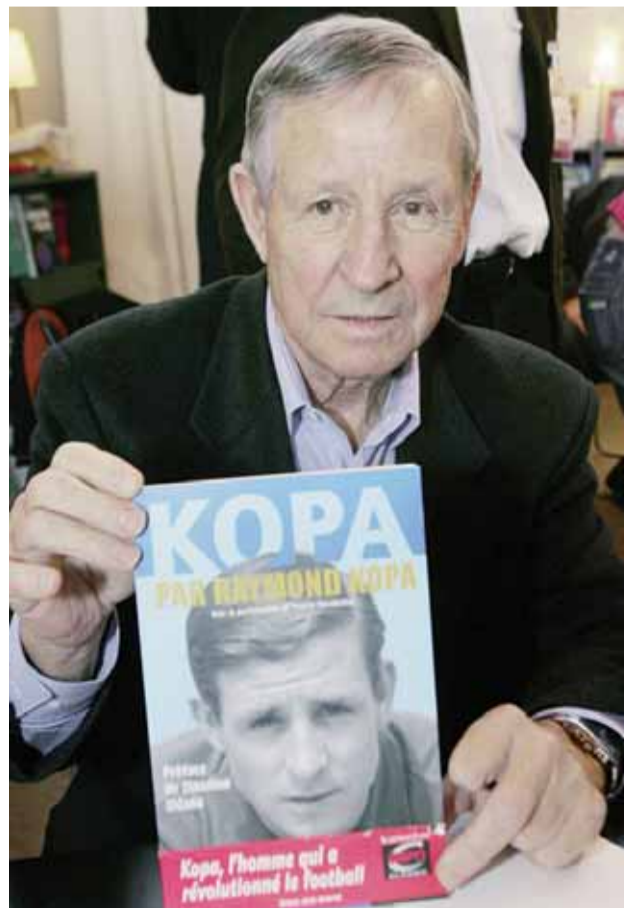
Real Madrid issued a statement lamenting the loss of a "great star" and offered commiserations to his family. "He was a player of exquisite technical gifts," the statement said. "The Frenchman remains one of the great stars of his epoch." Kopa was also central part of the French side beaten by Pele's Brazil in a classic World Cup semi-final in 1958. "He died at 8.15 am after his illness worsened. Raymond had been in hospital since Sunday," his son-in-law William Boucher said. In a statement French President Francois Hollande said Kopa was "one of France's most admired sportsmen." Winner of the Ballon d'Or in 1958, the attacking midfielder, whose real name was Kopaszewski played football after he failed to qualify for a job down the pit.

## Traitor

The youth could not become a miner because of an accident which led to the amputation of part of two of his fingers. He made a football name for himself as a teenager playing for French side Angers. He moved to Reims in 1951 aged 19 and from there joined Real Madrid in 1956, and linking up with another legend, di Stefano, in one of the greatest Real teams of all time. "I was the first French player to leave the country. A lot of people called me a traitor," he said later. "My only fault was to be the precursor."

With Real he won the European Cup in 1957, a year after being losing finalist in 1956 for Reims against Real. He went on to win two more European Cups in 1958 and 1959 with the Spanish giants. Kopa guided the French national side as they reached the 1958 World Cup semi-final, losing 5-2 to a Brazilian side featuring Pele in his debut tournament. The same year Kopa became the first French player to win the Ballon d'Or as Europe's player of the year, after placing

third in 1956 and 1957 and second in 1959. He remains today one of only three players, along with Lionel Messi and Cristiano Ronaldo, to have figured four times in the Ballon d'Or's top three. In 1959 he returned to Reims and continued to play until 1967 when he retired. —AFP



**This file photo shows French football legend Raymond Kopa presenting his book 'Kopa by Kopa' as he attends the 27th edition of the Paris annual book fair. —AFP**

## Scottish Cup Preview

# MURTY WANTS WINNING FAREWELL AT RANGERS

**GLASGOW:** Rangers caretaker manager Graeme Murty has challenged his players to aspire for greatness in their Scottish Cup quarter-final against Hamilton today in what will likely be his last match in charge. The Glasgow giants ended a run of four games without a win on Wednesday when Emerson Hyndman fired in a last-minute winner to seal a 3-2 victory over St Johnstone. It gave Murty his first league win since the former under-20s coach was thrust into the Ibrox hotseat following the departure of Mark Warburton and his managerial team.

Rangers have struggled to adapt to life back in the Scottish Premiership and the Scottish Cup remains their only hope of a trophy this season. Murty was delighted to have finally got a win following two back-to-back defeat but insists he wants more from his players as they attempt to book their place in the last four of the competition. "I feel great, and I feel really good for the players. I've just done the debrief and I wish you had seen it as I highlighted some of the great stuff we did. I told them, I thought we were good, and if we want to be great, we need to do these things better," the caretaker manager said.

"That is the kind of mentality I would prefer. Good is OK, but I prefer to be great and I'd like the fellas to dare to be great as well. So can we enhance our processes? Can we enhance the things that we maybe didn't do quite so well? Then, take that step from being good to being great. "The way they played [in the win against St Johnstone] and the brightness with the ball was really, really encouraging, and I think it is indicative of the way they have trained and their intensity, and I think the players are in a better place right now."

Rangers are expected to name a new manager next week with Portuguese coach Pedro Caixinha the favorite to take over. Despite admitting it wasn't always a pleasurable experience, Murty says his time in charge will boost his career options in future. "In my calmer moments when I make my decision about where I want to go, this experience-as difficult as it's been at times-will make me a better practitioner wherever I am," Murty said. "It will make me a better coach, a better man-manager and better able to appreciate the athletes I work with, whatever age they are."

Celtic will continue their quest for a first domestic treble since 2001 when they take on St Mirren tomorrow. The match at Parkhead against the Championship strugglers will mark Celtic's first game since the death of former player Tommy Gemmill, who inspired the club to glory in the 1967 European Cup. Gemmill scored Celtic's equalizer 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'. —AFP



# Sports



Djokovic upset as Nadal books semis

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LA CORUNA: Atletico Madrid's forward Fernando Torres lies on the field after loosing a chance to score during the Spanish league football match RC Deportivo de la Coruna vs Club Atletico de Madrid on March 2, 2017. —AFP

## TORRES SUFFERS HEAD TRAUMA IN COLLISION

### SEVILLA MAINTAIN CHASE OF BARCA, REAL MADRID

**BARCELONA:** Sevilla moved within two points of La Liga leaders Barcelona with a 1-0 home win over Athletic Bilbao on Thursday, while Atletico Madrid's Fernando Torres was knocked out in an aerial clash at Deportivo La Coruna and taken to hospital. Sevilla's Vicente Iborra scored the winner for the second game in a row, his strike having decided the derby against Real Betis last week, as he netted on the rebound in the 14th minute after Steven Jovetic's penalty was saved by Gorka Iraizoz. Earlier, Atletico's Antoine Griezmann struck a brilliant dipping shot to earn a 1-1 draw at Deportivo but the goal was overshadowed by a head injury to team mate Torres who had to be carried off on a stretcher with his neck in a brace.

The late game was billed as a contest between the two leading candidates to take over at Barcelona next season, after Luis Enrique said on Wednesday he would not renew his contract at the champions, and Sevilla's Jorge Sampaoli came out on top. Ernesto Valverde's Athletic side dominated the game, however, and were unlucky not to draw level before the break when Raul Garcia's diving header struck the post. Sevilla's victory - their fifth in a row in all competitions leaves them third on 55 points, two behind leaders Barcelona and

one adrift of Real Madrid in second with a game in hand. "We've played a lot of games recently and are feeling the pressure at being near the top, we had won our last four games (before facing Athletic) and we're still fighting at the top. We'll have ups and downs but we're intact," said Sampaoli. The Argentine coach gave an angry response when asked about the soon to be vacant role at Barcelona. "I have no idea what you're talking about. I find it incredible people can talk about candidates at this stage in the season, there is no response to that question," he said.

#### Urgent treatment

Atletico's ex-Spain striker Torres fell face down on the pitch in the 85th minute after challenging for the ball with Depor's Alex Bergantinos and required urgent treatment. Players from both teams looked concerned as an eerie silence fell over the Riazor stadium while the home fans applauded Torres, who had regained consciousness, as he left the field. A statement from Atletico said 32-year-old Atletico favourite Torres had suffered head trauma and would spend the night under medical observation in a hospital in Coruna.

"We felt nervous and worried after the awful blow he received," Atletico coach Diego Simeone told a news conference. "I heard a noise from the bench, I don't know if it was his neck but he felt something. These are awful things that happen in football. "We are hoping for the best for Fernando, it was a complicated situation for the Deportivo and Atletico players." Deportivo's former West Bromwich Albion and Real Betis manager Pepe Mel had seen his side take a surprise lead in his first game in charge when Florin Andone pounced on a terrible goal kick from Jan Oblak to score in the 13th minute.

Oblak mis-hit the ball and it was headed towards a surprised Jose Gimenez but Romanian forward Andone was more alert and intercepted before slipping the ball past the keeper. Atletico's France international Griezmann leveled in the 68th after playing a one-two with Yannick Carrasco and calmly sending the ball spinning at speed over keeper German Lux. The draw takes Atletico on to 46 points, one point clear of Real Sociedad in the fight for fourth spot after the Basques were held to a 2-2 draw at home to Eibar on Tuesday. Deportivo are a point above the relegation zone after ending a four-game losing streak which saw Gaizka Garitano sacked. —Reuters