

27 planes hit  
Kuwait sky with  
aerobatic shows



Resistance  
weakening as  
Iraq battles IS



Russia's Mutko  
'barred from  
FIFA post'



## S KOREAN COURT THROWS PRESIDENT OUT OF OFFICE

RULING TRIGGERS SNAP ELECTION TO ELECT NEW LEADER



150 Fils



Min 14°  
Max 30°



RIYADH: Saudis attend a music concert by Rashed Al-Majed (inset) in Riyadh on Thursday night. — AFP



## SLOWLY BUT SURELY, MUSIC COMING BACK TO SAUDI

RIYADH: Legendary Arab singer Rashed Al-Majed gave his fans three encores in the Saudi capital on Thursday night. Why not? They had waited about three decades for such a show. Majed opened for Mohammed Abdu as part of what one music lover called a "paradigm shift" in the conservative Islamic kingdom, which has cautiously begun introducing entertainment despite opposition from Muslim hardliners.

Both singers have Saudi roots and are popular throughout the Arab world but fans said Abdu had not sung in the Saudi capital since 1988. Local media reported there had been no other concerts in Riyadh since the early 1990s, after which they were effectively banned although private musical events did occur. "We missed them a lot," Jamal Al-Onzi, a 31-year-old bank worker, said of the singers. He was among the audience of 2,000 — all men—who paid between 500 and 2,500 riyals (\$133-\$667) for the performances at King Fahad Cultural Centre hall.

"We sold out in 30 minutes," Habib Rahal, of the organizers Rotana Music, said. Dressed almost exclusively in traditional white thobes and chequered headgear, the crowd was initially sedate despite the infectious drum beats and melodious strings that accompanied Majed.

In the shadows, one spectator mouthed the words and moved his arms in time to the music. Another tapped his left hand on his thobe. There was lots of enthusiastic shouting and calls of "Rashed"

before the energy peaked, pushing the singer to his three encores. They swayed in time to the music. Some even stood up to dance.

After more than 90 minutes, it was time to do it all again when Abdu took the stage at around midnight. Less pop-influenced than Majed, the elder man sings patriotic and traditionally romantic songs. "I have feelings of happiness and joy and pleasure," he told reporters before ending his long absence from a Riyadh stage. Abdu gained fame long before Abdulaziz al-Shudayyid was born, but the 21-year-old student said the veteran artist "sings for my generation."

"I know by heart all his songs," Shudayyid said. Although conservatism still runs deep, there is pressure for change in a country where more than half of the population is younger than 25 and people are connected to the wider world through the internet. They have a champion at the highest levels of power in Deputy Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman, 31, who is pushing economic diversification and social reform of the oil-dependent kingdom.

One of the most visible aspects has been entertainment, partly out of an economic motive to get Saudis spending at home rather than elsewhere in the Gulf. The kingdom still bans alcohol, public cinemas and theatres. It usually segregates unrelated men and women in restaurants and other public places. — AFP

SEOUL: South Korea's Constitutional Court removed President Park Geun-hye from office yesterday over a graft scandal involving the country's conglomerates at a time of rising tensions with North Korea and China. The ruling sparked protests from hundreds of her supporters, two of whom were killed in clashes with police outside the court, and a festive rally by those who had demanded her ouster who celebrated justice being served.

"We did it. We the citizens, the sovereign of this country, opened a new chapter in history," Lee Tae-ho, who leads a movement to oust Park that has held mostly peaceful rallies in downtown involving millions, told a large gathering in Seoul.

Park becomes South Korea's first democratically elected leader to be forced from office, capping months of paralysis and turmoil over the corruption scandal that also landed the head of the Samsung conglomerate in detention and on trial.

A snap presidential election will be held within 60 days. She did not appear in court and a spokesman said she would not be making any comment. Nor would she leave the presidential Blue House residence yesterday. "Park is not leaving the Blue House today," Blue House spokesman Kim Dong Jo told Reuters.

Park was stripped of her powers after parliament voted to impeach her but has remained in the president's official compound. The court's acting chief judge, Lee Jung-mi, said Park had violated the constitution and law "throughout her term", and despite the objections of parliament and the media, she had concealed the truth and cracked down on critics.

Park has steadfastly denied any wrongdoing. The ruling to uphold parliament's Dec. 9 vote to impeach her marks a dramatic fall from grace of South Korea's first woman president and daughter of Cold War military dictator Park Chung-hee. — Reuters (See Page 7)



The ousted South Korean President Park Geun-hye

## TERROR SUSPECT KILLED IN SAUDI POLICE SHOOTOUT

DUBAI: A wanted man has been killed in Saudi Arabia's oil-producing Eastern province after an exchange of gunfire while police were searching a neighborhood where he was hiding, state news agency SPA reported yesterday.

The man, Mustafa Ali Abdullah Al-Madad, was wanted by security forces for his involvement in "a number of terror crimes against the citizens and security personnel". He was killed in the governorate of Qatif. SPA said Madad refused to comply with security forces when asked to hand himself over, and opened fire at the police. Police fired back, resulting in the man's death. The official SPA news agency reported that one officer was wounded and hospitalized after the exchange of fire.

The Eastern Province city of Qatif has been the focal point of unrest among Saudi Arabia's protests in early 2011 calling for an end to discrimination against the minority sect and for democratic reforms in the kingdom. At least nine police have been shot dead since 2014 in and around Qatif, the scene of sporadic protests by residents who complain of marginalization. — Agencies

# SEA HERITAGE FESTIVAL PATRONIZED BY AMIR



Deputy Minister of Amiri Diwan Affairs Sheikh Ali Jarrah Al-Sabah is pictured with other top officials during the Final ceremony of the Sea Heritage Festival.



KUWAIT: Deputy Minister of Amiri Diwan Affairs Sheikh Ali Jarrah Al-Sabah attends the Final ceremony of the Sea Heritage Festival. — KUNA photos



**KUWAIT:** Final ceremony of the sea heritage festival, patronized by His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, was held at the seaside fishermen's diwaniah in the capital district, Al-Watiya, late on Thursday.

The ceremony was attended by Deputy Minister of Amiri Diwan Affairs Sheikh Ali Jarrah Al-Sabah, who was greeted upon arrival by the head of the sea heritage committee, Sheikh Salem Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah. Sheikh Salem Nawaf addressed a statement welcoming the attendees, including Hawally Governor Sheikh Ahmad Al-Nawaf Al-Sabah and Al-Assima Governor Thabet Al-Muhanna.



He expressed deep gratitude to His Highness the Amir for patronizing the event, reflecting his keenness on preserving the heritage of the sea, from where the ancestors had made their living. "We say from the bottom of our heart to Your Highness, thank you humanitarian leader," he said.

The activity included competitions among fishermen representing several diwaniahs. Sheikh Salem Nawaf also expressed gratitude to His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah "for his fatherly sponsorships of this ever-living heritage." The activity concluded with awards' distribution to winners of the competitions. — KUNA



## CBK HERITAGE BOOTH THE GRAND AVENUES

**KUWAIT:** Within its sixth 'Yazein Torathna' campaign, the Commercial Bank of Kuwait yesterday launched its two-day booth at the Grand Avenues mall to exhibit some aspects of Kuwait's heritage and traditions. Commenting on the activity, CBK's Deputy General Manager for publicity and PR Amani Al-Wer'a said that the campaign aims at educating current generations about the heritage of their ancestors and the lifestyles of Kuwaitis in the past.

Al-Wer'a added that CBK teams would be present at the Grand Avenues today also, where CBK's booth was built according to traditional construction designs similar to those included in CBK's calendar.



# 27 planes hit Kuwait sky with aerobatic displays

**KUWAIT:** Around 27 planes from all Gulf countries displayed remarkable aerobatic shows over Kuwait's sky yesterday as part of the Kuwait First Flying Gathering event, which kicked off earlier. The planes displayed beautiful rhythmic segments that were highlighted by each plane's distinctive color. The two-day event's shows were held at Sheikh Saad Al-Abdullah Airport. The event- considered as one of a kind in Kuwait's history, is under the auspices of the Minister of State for Youth Affairs. — KUNA



## FIVE ASIANS ARRESTED FOR RUNNING LIQUOR FACTORY

By Hanan Al-Saadoun

**KUWAIT:** The Ministry of Interior's security media and PR department yesterday announced yesterday that Mubarak Al-Kabeer detectives raided a home-made liquor factory in Al-Qurain. They found 183 barrels full of liquor from the spot along with brewing gear. Five Asians running the place were arrested who were found without any identification documents with them. A case was filed and further investigations are in progress.



## Photo

o f t h e d a y



**KUWAIT:** Photo shows seagulls at the sea. Kuwait was affected with a low pressure yesterday night, meteorologist Abdulaziz Al-Qarawi said. The high pressure will be coupled with light to moderate northwesterly winds. Today will be partially cloudy, with southeasterly winds (20-40 km/h) that will likely spew dusts, coupled with scattered rain. Highest heat is predicted at 31 degrees. — KUNA

## Crime

R e p o r t

**Wife beaten up**

**KUWAIT:** A female citizen recently called the police - reporting that her husband had beaten her up for coming late after going out with some female friends. She claimed that she locked herself up in a room to escape his assault. According to security sources, policemen rushed to the house and took her to the hospital for a medical report. However, the woman dropped all charges when her husband threatened to divorce her.

**Reckless drivers arrested**

Traffic police recently arrested three reckless drivers outside of some schools in Sabah Al-Ahmed area after several citizens filed complaints about youngsters driving dangerously outside girls' schools to attract girls' attention. Security sources added that 28 tickets were issued; three vehicles were seized.

**Asian briefly detained**

An Asian was briefly detained after traffic police inquired about his vehicle's license plate number and found out that it was reported stolen three years ago, said security sources. The owner said he bought the vehicle 18 months ago in Salmiya. However, policemen later discovered that their colleague made a mistake. The car was previously declared stolen and was found later - and handed over back to the owner who then sold it the present owner.

**Caught red-handed**

A citizen in his 50s was caught red-handed while attempting to break open a vehicle parked in a yard in Ahmadi. Security sources said that the man is a drug addict who had been imprisoned for a year. The suspect confessed to stealing items from lots of vehicles and spending the money he made on drugs.

**'Attempted suicide'**

An Indonesian housemaid was recently rushed to hospital with serious injuries after she attempted to commit suicide by slashing her wrist veins at her sponsors' house in Ashbilya. According to the sponsor, the maid received a message from home and started crying. She then ran to the kitchen to cut her veins. — Al-Rai Al-Anbaa

## KUWAIT DISTRIBUTES SHELTER AID TO IDPs IN YEMEN KRCS CONDUCTS EYE SURGERIES FOR DISPLACED IRAQIS

**KUWAIT:** The Kuwait Red Crescent Society (KRCS) conducted 40 eye surgeries for Iraqis displaced in the Kurdistan region, said a statement by the society yesterday. Chairman of the Board for KRCS Dr Hilal Al-Sayer said that it was important to carry out these procedures to help displaced Iraqis during their darkest hours. The operations, carried out in cooperation with medical and charitable organizations in Kurdistan, is part of the KRCS's humanitarian mission in Iraq, said Dr Al-Sayer who affirmed that the society was willing to increase cooperation with Iraq and Kurdistan within the relief aid domain. He took the chance to commend the Kuwaiti consulate in Irbil, saying that the diplomatic entity helped in facilitating KRCS work in the region. Al-Sayer revealed that a delegation from the society would depart to the region soon to carry out more medical procedures for displaced Iraqis.

**Shelter aid distributed**

In another development, Kuwait has distributed the first batch of shelter aid to the directorate of Tur Al-Bahah district

of Lahij Governorate for the internally displaced persons (IDP) from Taiz city as part of the ongoing Kuwaiti humanitarian campaign in Yemen. The "Kuwait is by your side" campaign's aid included cooking gas cylinders, cooking tools, blankets, and other necessary supplies for displaced families from districts of Haifan, Habshi Mountain, Mafalees, and Gabeeta in Taiz city, the Kuwaiti-Yemeni Relief Agency said in a press statement Thursday.

Alwan Al-Aateri, Director-General of Tur Al-Bahah district, expressed his gratitude to the Kuwaiti campaign for its care and interest in the displaced Yemeni families and persons, and its shelter aid that will alleviate their suffering in light of ongoing military confrontations by the district's borders. The campaign had distributed relief items to many Yemeni several provinces of the war-troubled country. It aims at securing necessities to more than 50,000 Yemenis at a cost of \$4.5 million. The Kuwaiti campaign seeks to help the Yemenis by securing food, water, education and housing. The agency comprises a number of Yemeni and Kuwaiti societies. — Agencies



**Doctors perform eye surgeries for displaced Iraqis in Kurdistan. — KUNA photos**



Paintings exhibited during the Adasa Festival 2. — KUNA photos

# ADASA FESTIVAL 2 KICKS OFF

**KUWAIT:** The Ministry of State for Youth Affairs late Thursday inaugurated the Adasa Festival 2 for audio and visual arts. The event, which coincides with the celebrations of the Kuwaiti Youth Day, aims to promote arts among youth through showcasing and celebrating the production of Kuwaiti young artists. Addressing the festival, Undersecretary of the Ministry of State for Youth Affairs Sheikh Al-Zain Al-Sabah stressed that the country's key role in supporting Kuwaiti youth who make up 72 percent of the total population.

The ministry seeks to build the capacity and harness the skills of national youths to increase their contributions to the state building and the society development, she added. For this purpose, the ministry is keen on working out strategies and launching initiatives and programs to help and empower youth, she noted. The opening ceremony was also attended by Minister of State for Cabinet Affairs and Acting Information Minister Sheikh Mohammad Al-Abdullah Al-Mubarak Al-Sabah. The three-day festival features a slew of activities such as concerts, art galleries, film screening, lectures and workshops. —KUNA



Minister Sheikh Mohammad Al-Abdullah Al-Mubarak Al-Sabah attends Adasa Festival 2



Undersecretary Sheikh Al-Zain Al-Sabah speaks during Adasa Festival 2.



## OOREDOO SPONSORS ADASA FESTIVAL

**KUWAIT:** Ooredoo, the fastest network in Kuwait in 2016, reiterated its commitment towards youth with sponsoring the second edition of Adasa Festival, a festival established by the Ministry of State for Youth Affairs, which kicked off its activities last week in Sheikh Jaber Cultural Center in Kuwait City. The festival aims at encouraging and supporting youth to display their artistic and creative work in different forms and fields, as part of the ministry's agenda to raise cultural awareness among youth.

The festival included a number of activities and workshops curated by Nuqat, a non-profit cultural entity, targeting a variety of subjects such as improvisation, acting, photography, filmography, and public speaking. The event will include musical performances by youth singers Ibrahim Dashti, Omar Afuni and

Yousef Yaseen on Saturday evening starting at 8:00 PM, in Sheikh Jaber Cultural Center's outdoor theater.

Commenting on the importance of this sponsorship, Ooredoo Kuwait's Senior Manager of Sponsorships, CSR and Social Media Yousef Al-Shallal said: "We're happy to be working with the Ministry of State for Youth Affairs for the second consecutive year in this cultural event, which sheds light on the importance of nurturing youth's passion for arts and culture. Our sponsorship to this event comes in alignment with our deep-rooted valued of caring, connecting, and challenging, and we believe in our investment in youth today as one of the most important segments in society."

Al-Shallal added: "This sponsorship activates our memorandum of understanding with the ministry,



Yousef Al-Shallal

which we signed last year, and fulfils our promise to be a supporter of youth in Kuwait. We strongly believe in the importance of partnership between the private and government sectors to reach our common goals in enabling and empowering our youth."

News

in brief

**Sheikha Hessa named AFNDP honorary chief**

**CAIRO:** The eminent Kuwaiti women personality, Sheikha Hessa Saad Al-Abdullah Al-Salem Al-Sabah, has been elected uncontested as the honorary head of the Arab Federation of NGO for Drug Prevention (AFNDP) during a meeting of the general assembly held in Cairo. Participants in the assembly elected members of the board, Dr Ahmad Abul-Azaem, a psychologist, as chairman of the federation, Dr Khaled Ahmad Al-Saleh of Kuwait as head of the Kuwait-based general secretariat and Majed Al-Shahin also of Kuwait as member. They discussed a plan for protection against addiction in the Arab world, a federation's statement said, also underlining noticeable hike of addiction cases in the Arab world due to the wars and troubles. The federation had been established in response to a recommendation issued by an international anti-doping convention, held in Bangkok in 1994.

**OPEC cut extension to be discussed March 26**

**KUWAIT:** The possibility of extending an OPEC oil output cut will be discussed after a monitoring meeting due later this month in Kuwait, the Kuwaiti Minister of Oil and Minister of Electricity and Water Essam Al-Marzouq said yesterday. He added that an OPEC ministerial committee for monitoring commitment of the output cut is due to meet here on March 26, the minister told KUNA. Last November, OPEC members concluded a deal in Vienna to cut production by around 1.2 million barrels per day (bpd), or over 3 percent, to 32.5 million bpd. Non-OPEC producers voluntarily decided to reduce output by 600,000 barrels per day. Russia alone will cut 300,000 barrels daily. Al-Marzouq said that commitment by the OPEC member of the output reduction decision initially hit 140 percent, but then fell to 102. Non-OPEC producers honored the decision by about 50 percent. The Kuwait meeting will review a report by a technical committee of the monitoring one that will meet March 24, in addition to developments of the world's oil scene as reported by the OPEC Secretariat.

**French FM holds talks with GCC Ambassadors**

**PARIS:** French Foreign Minister Jean-Marc Ayrault held a round of high-level talks on Thursday with Ambassadors from the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) nations as part of the process to further enhance dialogue between the two sides, official statements said. The French Foreign Ministry said in a statement that the meetings addressed several key topics, including ways to bolster and "broaden the partnership" between Paris and the GCC in such areas as university education, culture and the fight against terrorism and radicalization. Kuwait is an active participant in the French-GCC diplomatic dialogue and was represented at Thursday's meeting by Ambassador to France Sami Mohammad Al-Sulaiman. In a statement to KUNA, Kuwait's envoy "expressed the appreciation of the State of Kuwait for the good relationship with France" and he stressed that "Kuwait has a keen interest in consolidating these good relations in order to move bilateral ties to an even higher level" in the future. "Kuwait accords a large importance to the positive development of relations with France in various spheres," Al-Sulaiman emphasized.

**Kuwait eyes economic ties with South Korea**

**KUWAIT:** The private sector in Kuwait has a keen desire for greater direct investment opportunities in South Korea, Kuwaiti Ambassador Bader Al-Awadhi affirmed yesterday. There are also several facilitations for investment in Kuwait for Korean companies to take advantage of through the Kuwait Direct Investment Promotion Authority (KDIPA), Al-Awadhi stated to KUNA after meeting with Chairman of the Korea Chamber of Commerce and Industry (KCCI) Yongmaan Park. Kuwait encourages the flow of foreign direct investment into the country to make the utmost benefits, he added, noting that he has discussed with Park a number of subjects of joint interest such as the future of their economic and commercial cooperation plans and measures, particularly mutual investment. In return, the KCCI Chief welcomed the embassy's steps to boost Kuwaiti-South Korean economic cooperation, the Kuwaiti diplomat indicated.



**KFH-TAKAFUL HONOURS SUPERVISORS AT YUSUF A ALGHANIM AUTOMOTIVE**

**KUWAIT:** A delegation from KFH-Takaful, a subsidiary of Kuwait Finance House (KFH), visited Yusuf A Alghanim Automotive Service Center within the framework of promoting and consolidating the mutual relationship, and in efforts to emphasize the importance of reinforcing the collaboration and coordination efforts, while demonstrating the latest developments in the fields of cars and insurance.

During the visit, KFH-Takaful honored a group of supervisors and representatives at Yusuf A Alghanim Automotive in

recognition of the positive indicators achieved by the company during the last year, and in confirmation of the confidence of the company to continually open new horizons for further success. Ahmed Al-Nowaif - Marketing and Development Department Manager, and Rashed Al Rashed- Cars Unit Manager at KFH-Takaful honored Sahdi Shamas, Haroiton Malonian, Morad Naaem and Mohammad Adel.

This initiative reflects the collaboration between KFH-Takaful and Yusuf A Alghanim & Sons. it added value to the

customers and pushed KFH-Takaful for striving to develop its products and services to address the developments of the car markets, especially that insurance and cars are integral parts and increasingly witnessing changes at different levels.

Meanwhile, Yusuf A Alghanim & Sons expressed their thanks and gratitude to KFH for this impressive gesture that affirms the great interest in strengthening ties with customers and partners in an attempt to offer best services and highest performance levels.



**EQUATE SPONSORS 15TH FIREMEN'S DAY FESTIVAL**

**KUWAIT:** EQUATE Petrochemical Company, a global producer of petrochemicals, extended its sponsorship for to the 15th Firemen's Day Festival organized by the Kuwait Fire Service Directorate (KFSD) and under the patronage of His Excellency the Minister of State for Cabinet Affairs Sheikh Mohammad Al-Abdullah Al-Mubarak Al-Sabah. The sponsorship comes as part of the company's ongoing support to the everyday work and efforts placed by firefighters to save lives in Kuwait.

Speaking of the sponsorship, EQUATE's Petrochemical EH&S Leader Mohammad Al-Shamary, said, "We are proud at EQUATE to have the opportunity to sponsor this event in support of the tremendous work done by KFSD in maintaining the safety of individuals and public and private facilities similarly. Year after year, we continue to build on our strong partnership with KFSD through which we share knowledge and expertise in our field, conduct regular workshops and trainings, launch safety-related campaigns and coordinate together day-by-day out to ensure our

people stay safe as we implement best global practices together to serve everyone in Kuwait.

During the festival, EQUATE presented recognized HE the Minister of State for Cabinet Affairs and KFSD's Director-General Lieutenant-General Khaled Al-Mekrad. The company also had a booth presenting EQUATE's safety programs that were explained by the EH&S team and the EQUATE Emergency Response Team (ERT). EQUATE is a global producer of petrochemicals used in products that create a better world. The company is the world's second largest producer of Ethylene Glycol (EG) with industrial complexes in Kuwait, North America and Europe producing Ethylene, Ethylene Glycol (EG), Polyethylene (PE) and Polyethylene Terephthalate (PET).

The products are marketed throughout Asia, the Americas, Europe, the Middle East and Africa. As a leading global enterprise, EQUATE strongly pursues sustainability principles and best practices wherever it operates through partnerships with various stakeholders, including its employees and customers,

as well as societies as a whole in fields that include human development, environment, education, health and public awareness.

Established in 1995 as an international joint venture, EQUATE's shareholders include: Petrochemical Industries Company (PIC), The Dow Chemical Company (Dow), Boubyan Petrochemical Company (BPC) and Quraing Petrochemical Industries Company (QPIC). EQUATE provides reliable services and solutions that enable global customers and stakeholders to grow and attain the success they seek by being "Partners in Success".

With its initial founding taking place during 1947, Kuwait Fire Service Directorate (KFSD) is currently an independent government authority under the supervision of State Minister for Council of Ministers Affairs in the State of Kuwait. KFSD plays a number of critical national roles by providing required protection for lives and property from fires, crashes, incidents and natural disasters and preventing them throughout the country. www.kfsd.gov.kw

# International

SATURDAY, MARCH 11, 2017

**Resistance weakening as Iraq battles Islamic State**

8

**Axe attacker wounds 9 in German station rampage**

10

**Media the enemy? Trump is 'an insatiable consumer'**

14



SEOUL: The presidential Blue House is seen in Seoul, South Korea yesterday. In an historic, unanimous ruling yesterday, South Korea's Constitutional Court formally removed impeached President Park Geun-hye (inset) from office over a corruption scandal that has plunged the country into political turmoil and worsened an already-serious national divide. — AP

## S KOREA 'PRINCESS' DETHRONED IN DISGRACE

SEOUL: The corridors of power have been home to South Korea's Park Geun-Hye as a child, de facto first lady, and president. She leaves them in disgrace, crippled by a corruption scandal that made her the country's first head of state to be removed by impeachment. Now 65, Park grew up in the spotlight at the Blue House, the presidential complex just north of one of Seoul's royal palaces, enjoying a pampered life as the eldest child of military dictator Park Chung-Hee.

Despite rights abuses, her father oversaw the country's rapid economic development during his 1961-1979 rule, with the first family treated as royalty by some supporters and Park dubbed the young "princess"—a nickname that endured for decades. The assassinations of both her parents five years apart in the 1970s only further fanned sympathy for her. Park's mother—widely praised as a dutiful wife and caring mother in the still traditionalist society of the day—was murdered by a Korean-Japanese believed to have been acting on Pyongyang's orders.

A student in France at the time, Park returned home to assume the role of first lady until her father was killed by his own security chief in 1979. She subsequently kept a low profile for nearly two decades, until she made a successful 1998 bid to become a lawmaker as the South reeled from the fallout of the Asian financial crisis. She became an instant political star among older conservative Koreans who fondly remembered her mother and revered her father for helping pull a war-ravaged nation out of poverty. Adept at taking advantage of the nostalgia for them and the sympathy for her, she frequently peppered her campaign speeches with the phrase, "After I tragically lost my parents to assassins' bullets."

Park rose quickly up the political ladder, earning the nick-

name "the queen of elections" due to her voters' unwavering loyalty. The fact that Park never married and was estranged from her two siblings was part of her appeal, in a country where leaders had often been embroiled in major corruption scandals involving relatives. "I'm married to the Republic of Korea. I have no children. South Koreans are my family," Park once said, citing her role model as Elizabeth I of England known as the 'Virgin Queen'. Eventually Park was elected the South's first female president in 2012, winning the highest vote share of any candidate in the democratic era.

But it was the family of a shady religious figure she chose as a mentor who ultimately sowed the seeds of her downfall. Her relationship with Choi Tae-Min, the seven-times-married founder of a cult-like group 40 years her senior, began in the 1970s when he sent her letters claiming that he had seen her dead mother in his dreams. His influence grew until a US diplomatic cable published by Wikileaks noted widespread rumors that he had "complete control over Park's body and soul". He died in 1994, and his daughter Choi Soon-Sil—already a friend who handled Park's daily life including her wardrobe choices—inherited his role.

Park is accused of colluding with her for years to squeeze tens of millions of dollars from South Korean businesses, including many of the country's biggest companies, in exchange for governmental favors. Choi is on trial for coercion and abuse of power, while Lee Jae-Yong, the de facto leader of the world's biggest smartphone maker Samsung, has been indicted for bribery, corruption and other offences. Park apologized several times in tearful televised addresses, painting herself as a lonely, isolated leader whose main offence was to place too much trust in a friend.

"South Koreans, since I took office, I have lived a lonely life,"

she said. Choi "stayed with me during my most difficult times," she added. "It is a fact that I let my guard down." But the scandal was too much even for many of her supporters, prompting millions to take to the streets calling for her ouster and sending her once-bulletproof approval ratings to record lows. Many in her own party turned against her to vote for her impeachment in parliament, leaving it to the constitutional court to have the final say.

### 'Obsession with power'

The scandal has exposed allegedly corrupt ties between politics and business, as in Park's father's time, and his divisive legacy has always dogged her political career, with critics accusing her of inheriting his authoritarian streak. State probes have portrayed Park as a solitary, aloof figure who preferred staying at her residence to meeting advisors at the office, overly focused on her appearance and showing little tolerance for criticism. One official who was her chief of staff for two years told a parliamentary hearing he had often gone entire weeks without seeing her at all—an experience echoed by many other senior personnel.

Park was also accused of negligence over the sinking of the Sewol ferry in 2014 - when more than 300 people, mostly schoolchildren, drowned in the South's worst disaster for decades. Separately, Park is accused of ordering officials to crack down on and punish thousands of artists who voiced criticism of her. "Instead of the father's intelligence, insight and determination to build economy, she only inherited the worst part of him—obsession with power... and intolerance for critics," Chun Yu-Ok, a former ally and senior lawmaker in Park's party, wrote in a recent memoir. "Her downfall is a reminder for all South Koreans that now is time to finally say goodbye to our past." — AFP

## News

i n b r i e f

**Istanbul helicopter crash leaves 5 dead**

**ISTANBUL:** Five people were killed including a number of Russians when a privately-owned helicopter crashed in Istanbul yesterday, the provincial governor said. Turkish media speculated that foggy weather may have caused the crash. Two pilots and five passengers were on board the Sikorsky S-76 helicopter owned by Turkish conglomerate Eczacıbası, the private Dogan news agency said. "According to initial information, five died," Istanbul Governor Vasip Sahin told reporters. Bulent Eczacıbası, head of the conglomerate, confirmed in televised comments that "four Russian guests" were on board the aircraft as well as a company executive. State media and other reports said the helicopter hit a television tower but Sahin said he could not confirm that, adding investigations were taking place. Turkish media images showed the helicopter in pieces and thick black smoke as rescue teams continued their search in Buyukcekmece, a western district of Istanbul.

**2 security officers die, four injured in Sinai**

**EL-ARISH:** Islamic militants detonated a roadside bomb in Egypt's northern Sinai, killing two officers and wounding four in the latest attack in the restive peninsula, the Interior Ministry and security officials said yesterday. The explosion took place when a security patrol came upon a militant planting the device by a road in the town of el-Arish on Thursday evening. Security forces fired and killed the militant while his accomplices fled, setting off the device, according to the statement. The two slain officers were a lieutenant-colonel and a captain, the officials said. A discarded explosives-laden suicide vest was found at the site of the blast, they added, speaking on condition of anonymity because they were not authorized to talk to the media. The bombing came a day after suspected militants killed Col Yasser Mohammed El-Hadidi, a senior officer in El-Arish, also using a remote-controlled device.

**Catholic Church guard hacked in Bangladesh**

**DHAKA:** A Bangladeshi Christian was severely injured yesterday after being hacked with knives by a group of youths while he was guarding a Catholic church, police said. Gilbert Costa, 65, was guarding the Church at Mathurapur in the northwestern Pabna district, some 175 kilometers from Dhaka, when he was suddenly attacked by young men. "He was hacked randomly by sharp knives and was left severely injured. He was shifted to a hospital where his condition is now stable," local police chief Ahsan Habib said. Habib said police had arrested three young men from the same village where Costa lives in connection with the attack. He said they were investigating the attack but ruled out any Islamist extremist link, saying it appeared to be the result of "personal enmity".

**Anger and shock as Guatemala mourns**

**GUATEMALA CITY:** Guatemala recoiled in anger and shock yesterday at the deaths of 35 teenage girls in a fire at a government-run shelter where staff have been accused of sexual abuse and other mistreatment. The toll had climbed steadily from 19 killed in the Wednesday blaze itself, as 16 more girls succumbed in hospital overnight and Thursday to their horrific burns. Nineteen survivors remained hospitalized, most of them in critical condition, according to hospital officials. All the victims were aged between 14 and 17. They were all residents at the Virgin of the Assumption Safe Home for children just to the east of Guatemala City.



**MOSUL:** A general view shows the leaning minaret of the Great Mosque of Al-Nuri in Mosul yesterday, as Iraqi forces shell enemy positions during an offensive to retake the western parts of the city from the jihadists. — AFP

# RESISTANCE WEAKENING AS IRAQ BATTLES ISLAMIC STATE

## JIHADISTS FACING SIMULTANEOUS OFFENSIVES

**MOSUL:** Iraqi Special Forces battled the Islamic State group yesterday in west Mosul, where a commander said jihadist resistance is showing signs of weakening under repeated assaults. The jihadists are also facing simultaneous offensives in Syria by government forces, Turkish-backed rebels and a US-supported alliance of Kurdish and Arab fighters, piling more pressure on IS. But the battle for Mosul's Old City—which could see some of the toughest fighting of the operation—has not yet begun, nor has fighting inside the city of Raqa, IS's main bastion in Syria.

Iraq's Counter-Terrorism Service assaulted the Al-Amil Al-Oula neighborhood of west Mosul yesterday, and were battling the jihadists inside it, said Staff Major General Maan Al-Saadi, a CTS commander. Saadi said that following a string of losses since the launch of the government's assault on west Mosul on February 19, IS resistance had diminished. "After we broke the defensive line, they lost many fighters," he said.

"The enemy has begun to collapse. They have lost many of their combat capabilities. Today, the enemy sent (car bombs), but not in the numbers that they sent at the beginning of the battle." In another sign that the jihadists are feeling the squeeze, their chief Abu Bakr Al-Baghdadi was reported to have abandoned Mosul, leaving local commanders behind to oversee defense of the city. Iraqi forces launched their operation to retake Mosul in October, and recaptured the whole east bank of the Tigris River that runs through it in January.

**215,000 displaced**

They then set their sights on the smaller but more densely populated west side of the city. More than 215,000 people are currently displaced as a result of the battle for Mosul, according to the International Organization for Migration. Others fled their homes but later returned. Almost a quarter of the displaced—more than 50,000 people—have fled west Mosul since February 25, the IOM said.

But that is only a small fraction of the 750,000 civilians estimated to have stayed on in west Mosul under IS rule. In neighboring Syria, the jihadists lost more ground to a Russian-backed offensive by government forces east of second city Aleppo. Russian warplanes and regime aircraft and artillery

pounded IS positions around Jarrah airbase, held by the jihadists since January 2014. The Russian general staff said yesterday that it had carried out more than 450 air strikes in support of the offensive over the past week, killing more than 600 IS fighters, and destroying 16 infantry fighting vehicles and 41 machinegun-mounted pickups.

Washington too has turned up the heat on IS in Syria, more than doubling its troops numbers in the country with the deployment of 400 reinforcements to back the offensive on Raqa. Some 500 US military advisers were already deployed alongside the Syrian Democratic Forces, an alliance of Kurdish and Arab fighters that Washington regards as the force best equipped to drive IS from its stronghold.

**Feuding US allies**

But the operation is complicated by the implacable opposition to the SDF of US NATO ally Turkey, which is leading a rival offensive against IS in northern Syria. Ankara regards the dominant force within the SDF, the Kurdish People's Protection Units (YPG), as a terrorist organization, because of its links to a Kurdish rebel group that has waged a deadly 33-year insurgency in southeastern Turkey. Ankara has said its intervention is aimed as much against the YPG IS, and there have been repeated clashes between Turkish forces and the Kurdish militia. Asked about the standoff at a hearing of the Senate Armed Services Committee on Thursday, the top US commander for the region, General Joseph Votel, acknowledged that tensions between Ankara and the Kurds were near breaking point.

Efforts have been made to address the issue at a military level, "and there has to be an effort at the political level to address this," Votel said. Some of the US troop reinforcements being sent to Syria are to be deployed to SDF-held areas near the front line to deter further clashes between Turkish forces and Washington's Kurdish-Arab allies. Relations between Ankara and Moscow, however, are much improved even though they have supported opposite sides in the conflict between the rebels and the regime. Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan was in Moscow yesterday for a new round of consultations with President Vladimir Putin. — AFP



## EU LEADERS SEEK UNITY AFTER TUSK ROW

**BRUSSELS:** EU leaders sought yesterday to patch up deep divisions over the bloc's post-Brexit future, a day after an unseemly spat with Warsaw over President Donald Tusk's re-election underscored a lack of unity. The Brussels meeting—held without British Prime Minister Theresa May—aims to draft a declaration that leaders hope to unveil with great fanfare at a summit in Rome later this month to mark the EU's 60th birthday.

But unity is at a premium as the EU enters its seventh decade as big guns like France and Germany squabble with eastern countries over how the bloc should function when Britain pulls out. Paris and Berlin favor a "multi-speed Europe" in which some member states can deepen integration faster than others but Eastern nations, led by Poland, oppose it for fear of being locked out and left behind. European leaders have stressed the need to pull together as the European Union comes to terms with Britain's seismic decision to leave the bloc, as well as a more assertive

Russia and a less friendly United States.

According to a draft of the proposals seen by AFP, the EU 27 will "work together to promote the common good on the understanding that some of us can move closer, further and faster in some areas, keeping the door open to those who want to join later." The EU will be "an undivided and indivisible" union that "acts together whenever possible" the document said. The wording clearly prioritizes a "multi-speed" Europe and could spark further anger from countries like Poland who are loathe to see EU heavyweights go it alone.

The push to forge a more collective future for Europe was overshadowed by the clash with Poland over Tusk's re-election as head of the European Council, which groups the bloc's political leaders. Most of the 28 leaders—Britain still being a member—had hoped to push through Polish ex-premier Tusk's re-election on Thursday with a minimum of fuss so they could concentrate on a host of other chal-

lenges. Instead, they ran into outright opposition from the staunchly eurosceptic Polish government which cast the only no vote against 27 in favor. Polish Prime Minister Beata Szydlo accused her EU partners of setting a "dangerous precedent" by railroading their pick over the opinion of the candidate's home government.

Szydlo, whose right-wing eurosceptic Law and Justice party has nursed a long and bitter enmity with the centrist Tusk, blocked the summit's final statement in response. "It's not acceptable that one member says 'I don't want that', and then the other 27 are paralysed," said Luxembourg Prime Minister Xavier Bettel as he arrived for the talks yesterday. Britain's May, who left Brussels after the first day of the summit, said she wanted to "get on with" leaving the European Union—and her fellow EU leaders agreed. The EU summit was May's last before her self-imposed deadline to trigger the Article 50 withdrawal process by the end of March. — AFP

## SHOOTING AT A SWISS CAFE LEAVES 2 ALBANIANS DEAD

**GENEVA:** Swiss police said yesterday that a shooting by two gunmen at a cafe in the city of Basel was a targeted killing with no "terrorist" motive. The assailants dressed in dark clothes burst into Basel's Cafe 56 at around 8:15 pm late Thursday and fired several rounds, according to police in the picturesque city on the Rhine river. The three victims were all Albanian nationals, including two dead aged 28 and 39, while a 24-year-old was seriously injured, police said in a statement. A bullet hole pierced one of the cafe's windows. Terrorism is "excluded" as an element of the crime, which appeared to be a "targeted" attack on the victims, the statement said.

Locals said Cafe 56 has a checkered past. It "was previously an establishment known for its links to the drug world", one resident told local newspaper Basler Zeitung. "But since the ownership changed several years ago it became an ordinary cafe." After the shooting, the gunmen believed to be in their thirties fled towards the train station, police said, adding that initial evidence suggests they are also from eastern Europe. Public broadcaster RTS has previously reported that Albanian criminal organizations in Switzerland have ties to heroin trafficking, but police stressed that the motive for Thursday's shooting was not immediately clear. — AFP



**HELSINKI:** Men sit together at a temporary refugee protest camp at the Central railway station in Helsinki, Finland yesterday. Asylum seekers protest against the Finnish government's deportation policy. — AFP

## ROMAN CITIZENS HELP MIGRANTS, DEFY LAWS

### MIGRANT NUMBERS EXPECTED TO SURGE WITH SEA ARRIVALS

**ROME:** Volunteers served macaroni in marinara sauce to dozens of migrants outside one of Rome's biggest train stations this week, offering help to travelers largely ignored by institutions on the frontline of Europe's migrant crisis. While other European cities including Milan have set up information centers and shelters for migrants, Rome has repeatedly cleared out impromptu camps citing security concerns. "We've had 13 evictions," Andrea Costa, director of the Baobab Experience group of volunteers, said before the migrants settled in for a cold night.

To keep from being cleared out yet again, volunteers cook meals at home and bring them to a bare plaza outside Tiburtina station where tents are set up at 9 pm and taken down in the early morning. There are now 50 migrants staying here, mostly from Africa, as they attempt to reach other European countries. That number is expected to soar this summer with sea arrivals to Italy up 60 percent already this year after setting a record last year. "With boat arrivals at this pace, in a little while we'll have hundreds of people to take care of," Costa said.

Baobab saw between 500 and 1,000 migrants per day last summer, and volunteers have helped almost 63,000 migrants over the past two years with no state funding - only donations. Robel Tesfit, a 27-year-old Eritrean-Ethiopian who everybody calls "Bob", arrived in Italy by sea in 2015, hoping to reach Britain where he wanted "to play for Manchester United". He never made it to Britain, and returned to Rome where he was granted asylum. Now he uses his knowledge of Italian, Arabic, Tigrinya and Amharic to help Baobab volunteers, who gave him food, shelter and advice on his journey.

Pointing to the men and women lining up for pasta, he said: "When I arrived, I was the same as them." While Italy has shelters to house 175,000 asylum seekers, it does not fund structures for migrants in transit, in part because the European Union wants to stop migrants from moving on, not help them to do so. EU law says they must seek asylum in the country where they first set foot. At the end of last year, Rome set aside about 60 beds in a nearby Red Cross centre for travelers and officials say they want to renovate a hotel near the station to provide beds for about 100 more. — Reuters

## UN ACCUSES TURKEY OF 'SERIOUS' ABUSES

**GENEVA:** The UN yesterday accused Turkish security forces of committing serious abuses during operations against Kurdish militants in southeast Turkey after a regional ceasefire collapsed in July 2015. A report from the United Nations' rights office details evidence of "massive destruction, killings and numerous other serious human rights violations committed between July 2015 and December 2016 in southeast Turkey". "Government security operations" have targeted more than 30 towns and displaced 355,000 to half a million people, mostly Kurds, the report said. The outlawed Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK) has waged an insurgency against Turkey since 1984, though the violence was contained during the truce agreed in 2013.

But fighting resumed when the ceasefire fell apart in summer 2015. Satellite images of areas affected by the latest unrest "indicate an enormous scale of destruction of the housing stock by heavy weaponry", the report said, with some neighborhoods "razed to the ground". In Cizre, a mainly Kurdish town on the Syrian border, residents described the devastation of neighborhoods as "apocalyptic", the UN said. In early 2016, nearly 200 of the town's residents, including children, "were trapped for weeks in basements without water, food, medical attention and power before being killed by fire, induced by shelling," it said. — AFP

## BELGIUM 'SAFER'; RETURNING FIGHTERS A THREAT

**BRUSSELS:** A year after the Brussels bombings, Belgium is more secure but it faces the threat of battle-hardened jihadi fighters returning home as Islamic State makes its last stand, interior minister Jan Jambon said. "The question is whether IS will order them to fight to the last man or tell them to go home and cause as much damage as possible," Jambon said in an interview. "We have not seen any sign of a mass exodus so far but I can assure you that every intelligence service in every country is working on it," he said. Jambon said tighter security had made Belgium safer than it was when home-grown suicide bombers killed 32 people at the airport and a metro station on March 22 last year.

Belgium's federal prosecutor Frederic Van Leeuw told AFP in November that the cell that carried out the Brussels bombings, and was involved in the Paris attacks, had got its orders from high up in the IS command. The carnage in Brussels and in Paris in November 2015 involved "IS fighters carrying out attacks aimed at causing the most casualties possi-

ble," he said. However, with European jihadists finding it harder to get to and from Syria and Iraq, "the IS no longer orders but inspires people to carry out attacks," Jambon said.

That is the case for attacks perpetrated in the German capital Berlin in December, the French city of Nice in July and the southern Belgian city of Charleroi in August. A machete-wielding man shouting "Allahu akbar" (God is greatest) attacked two policewomen in Charleroi, badly injuring one in the face, before a third officer shot him dead. "I think we're in that (new) phase," said Jambon, a member of the Flemish nationalist N-VA party in a coalition government led by Prime Minister Charles Michel, a French-speaking Wallon.

### Intelligence sharing

He said the intelligence services in Belgium and other countries were exchanging information to check for the possible return of jihadists as IS loses territory to regional forces backed by the US and

other powers. Numbering around 500, Belgium is the European Union's largest per capita source of so-called foreign jihadist fighters, but Jambon said none had left the country for the Middle East since January 2016. In another development that he described as "dangerous," Jambon said the lines were blurring between peaceful and violent backers of Salafist ideas exported to Belgium from Saudi Arabia and other Gulf states. Some experts have linked the ideology embraced by IS, Al-Qaeda and other violent groups.

### 'Right to think'

Jambon said he believes the Saudi government when it denies it is funding the spread of Salafist ideas to Belgium. "But that does not mean there is no financing from (private) Saudis to certain groups." He said it was difficult to stop money transfers as well as curb the spread of extremist ideas in a democracy where "we have the right to think." — AFP



**KADUNA, Nigeria:** Nigerian President Muhammadu Buhari disembarks from an aircraft upon his arrival at the Nigerian Airforce base in Kaduna yesterday. — AFP

## AILING NIGERIAN PRESIDENT COMES HOME, NEEDS 'REST'

### VICE-PRESIDENT OSINBAJO ACTIVE AS INTERIM LEADER

**ABUJA:** Nigerian President Muhammadu Buhari said yesterday he would need more rest and health tests after coming home from nearly two months of medical leave in Britain during which his deputy, Yemi Osinbajo, stamped his authority on economic policy. Shortly after arriving back from London, the 74-year former general told officials he was feeling "much better" but wanted to rest over the weekend, raising questions about his ability to run Africa's biggest economy and most populous nation. Osinbajo, a lawyer who is seen as more business-friendly than Buhari, played an active role in driving policy changes in Africa's top oil producer during the president's seven-week absence.

The Nigerian stock market jumped to a one-month high when Buhari returned, but trimmed gains after his comments about his continued ill-

health raised fears of policy confusion and a power vacuum. Dressed in a dark kaftan and Muslim prayer cap, Buhari walked stiffly but unaided from his plane after it landed at an air force base in the northern city of Kaduna. After greeting a handful of provincial and military officials, he boarded a helicopter to Abuja to address Osinbajo and his top military and security commanders in a brief speech.

"I deliberately came back towards the weekend so that the Vice President will continue and I will continue to rest," Buhari said at the presidential villa. "All I need is to do further follow-ups within some weeks." He said he was "conscious" of the needs of the economy, mired in its first recession in 25 years due to a collapse in oil revenues, but failed to clarify Osinbajo's role or the extent of his powers now Buhari is back home. Buhari had

formally made him acting president when he left for treatment, but that appointment can only stand when the President is out of the country.

Buhari also did not reveal details of his sickness. "I couldn't recall when last I had a blood transfusion," he said. About his treatment in London he added: "Blood transfusions, going to the laboratories and so on and forth." Buhari has travelled to Britain several times to consult doctors since his election two years ago. Officials have refused to disclose details, saying only that he had undergone routine tests. This fuelled speculation that his health was worse than publicly admitted. In images released by his office on Thursday, Buhari looked painfully thin but was smiling as he greeted Archbishop of Canterbury Justin Welby in London. They were the first official pictures released in three weeks. — Reuters

## AXE ATTACKER WOUNDS 9 IN GERMAN STATION RAMPAGE

**DUESSELDORF:** German police said yesterday an axe-wielding attacker who wounded nine people in a bloody rampage at a railway station overnight was psychologically disturbed, ruling out a terrorist motive. They were waiting to question the 36-year-old from Kosovo who is in hospital with multiple bone fractures after jumping off a bridge while trying to flee police at the crime scene, the main railway station in the western city of Duesseldorf.

News site Spiegel Online identified him as Fatmir H and said he had told investigators that he had hoped to be shot dead by police following the random attack. The suspect sparked panic when he got off a commuter train late Thursday and began swinging an axe at passers-by. Police said he was in an "exceptional mental state" at the time. Police commandos with automatic weapons, wearing bullet-proof vests and balaclavas, rushed to the station backed by police helicopters amid fears it was a terrorist attack and initial false reports of multiple attackers.

With screams echoing around the station concourse and the wounded bleeding on the ground, police chased the man along railway tracks until he leapt off a four-meter (12-foot) bridge to evade arrest. Speaking to AFP, a police spokesman said officials had ruled out an Islamist motive for the attack by the man who comes from Wuppertal, about 30 kilometers west of Duesseldorf. Germany has been on edge after a string of attacks in recent months—several carried out by people with mental health problems—and a deadly truck attack on a Berlin Christmas market in December claimed by the Islamic State group.

### 'Blood everywhere'

"We were on the platform waiting for the train. The train arrived and suddenly someone with an axe came out and started attacking people," an unnamed witness told Bild daily. "There was blood everywhere." Writing on Twitter, Angela Merkel's chancellery chief-of-staff Peter Altmaier said: "Our compassion and our thoughts go out to the injured." And city mayor Thomas Geisel also reached out to victims. "It's a huge blow for Duesseldorf. Many people are in shock ... My thoughts go out to the victims and their families," he said. German authorities have been on high alert, particularly since the Berlin truck attack which claimed 12 lives.

The security services say there are about 10,000 radical Islamists in the country, of whom 1,600 are suspected of having links to militant groups. But there have also been several attacks where the assailants have turned out to be psychologically unstable. Last July, a mentally disturbed 17-year-old migrant wielding an axe and a knife went on a rampage on a train in southern Germany, seriously injuring four people. And last month, a 35-year-old German national, who was reportedly suffering from psychiatric problems, drove his car into a group of pedestrians in the southwestern city of Heidelberg, killing one and injuring two. —AFP

## KIDNAPPINGS BLIGHT WAR-SCARRED KABUL

**KABUL:** The bruises, scabs and chain markings have long faded but Haji Ghulam is still visibly traumatised by his month-long abduction, one of dozens of victims of a violent crime surge that has beset the Afghan capital. While the relatively rare kidnappings of foreigners instantly grab international headlines, this chilling wave of abductions of ordinary Afghans such as Ghulam remains a hidden scourge that has put the city on edge.

Afghan police, already stretched on multiple insurgent battlefronts, are struggling to rein in kidnapping rings that target not just the wealthy-but anyone that appears to have money. "On a cold spring day last year I was driving home from work with my son and cousin when we were waylaid by two cars with armed men in military uniforms," Ghulam, a 53-year-old professional money changer, said with a stammer, his lips and face twitching.

"I thought they were policemen, but they beat my son and cousin and dragged me to their vehicle. I was blindfolded, slapped, beaten. They drove for an hour and dropped me in a tiny hole in the ground," he told AFP at his home in Kabul. His kidnapers tortured him and sent his recorded screams to his family, demanding a ransom of \$2 million, a gargantuan sum in one of the world's poorest countries. He was fed little more than a piece of bread every day.

A month later, security officials discovered Ghulam in that hole in a small house on the outskirts of Kabul, maimed, emaciated and enchained. His kidnapers are still at large. Ghulam, who now walks with a limp and uses an armoured vehicle and private guards for his protection, is one of the lucky ones. In one case, a 14-year-old Afghan boy was abducted and then brutally murdered, his body dumped in downtown Kabul. In another incident, a city shopkeeper's ear was sliced off by his kidnapper and sent to his family to press them to pay up. Recently a Kabul businessman sold off his entire property to pay ransom for his kidnapped son, but he remains in captivity. Reliable official statistics are hard to obtain, but Afghanistan's Chamber of Commerce and Industries says around 80 businessmen were kidnapped around the country last year. Experts believe many other cases went unreported for fear of reprisals from the kidnapers.

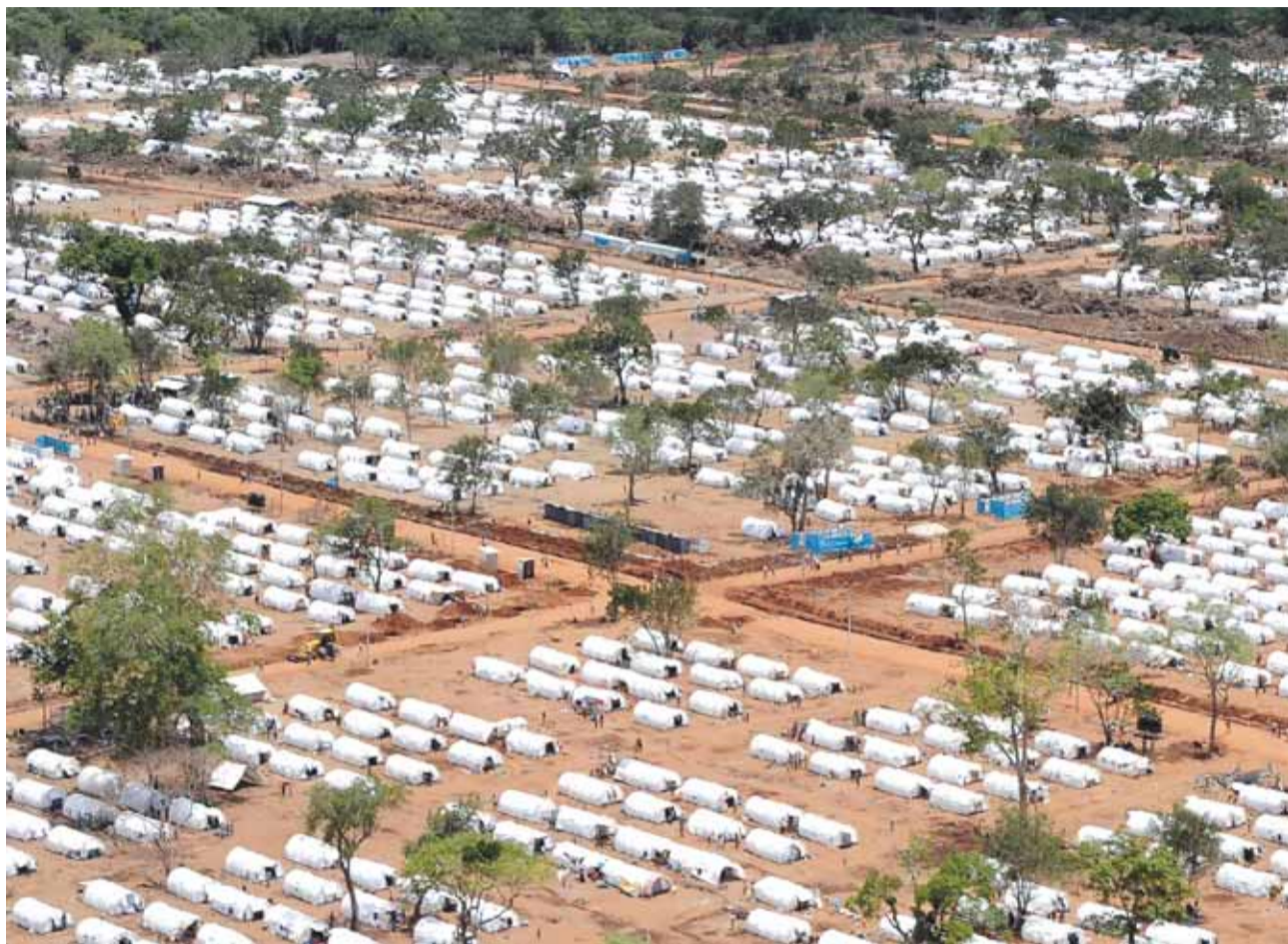
### Crime city

Kidnappings and extortion have become a cottage industry, while car thefts are common. In fact Kabul, is a city so riddled with crime that displaying wealth can be tantamount to a death sentence. The situation is exacerbated by rampant poverty and rising unemployment. The kidnapping rings appear to be feeding off growing insecurity as Afghan law enforcement remain stretched by the Taliban, Islamic State jihadists and other militant groups.

The fledgling and under resourced police force is struggling to effectively combat crime, which has contributed to an unprecedented exodus of Afghans towards Europe. "In addition to the threat of bombings, the city is plagued by kidnapers and extortionists," Haji Zeerak, a spokesman for money changers in Kabul's Shahzada market, told AFP. "Because of this business is down and more people are fleeing the country," he said, adding that nearly 100 money changers were kidnapped last year. In another shocking incident, armed men recently stole \$1.2 million from a money changer in Kabul after stopping his car. When the money changers took the issue to President Ashraf Ghani, police arrested a criminal gang said to be behind it but the money is yet to be recovered, Zeerak said.— AFP



**KABUL:** In this photograph taken on February 28, 2017, Afghan money changers count banknotes in the courtyard of the currency exchange Sarayee Shahzada market. — AFP



**MANIK FARM:** This file photograph taken on May 23, 2009 shows a general view of thousands of UNHCR tents, occupied by Internally Displaced People (IDP). — AFP

## SRI LANKA RISKING CENSURE AS PREZ FALTERS ON WAR LEGACY

### ISLAND WITH ITS FIRST REAL SHOT AT A LASTING PEACE

**COLOMBO:** President Maithripala Sirisena came to power in Sri Lanka promising justice for war crimes, breaking from his hawkish predecessor and presenting the island with its first real shot at a lasting peace. But that optimism has been sorely tested as Sirisena, having missed a two-year deadline to investigate war-era abuses, declared he would never prosecute his soldiers, rejecting outright fresh UN calls for an international trial.

"I am not going to allow non-governmental organizations to dictate how to run my government," he said a day after the UN criticized Sri Lanka's "worrying slow" progress in facing its wartime past. "I will not listen to their calls to prosecute my troops."

His defiant tone marked a sharp shift from the conciliatory approach that had earned praise from the international community, and drew unfavorable comparisons to Sri Lanka's wartime leader Mahinda Rajapakse.

The strongman resisted international pressure to probe allegations government forces under his control killed up to 40,000 Tamil civilians in the final months of the war, which ended in May 2009. "Sirisena's remarks are worrisome and alarmingly reminiscent of speeches by his rival and predecessor Mahinda Rajapakse," the International Crisis Group's Alan Keenan told AFP.

Sirisena has made inroads towards shedding Sri Lanka's status as global pariah since defeating Rajapakse in January 2015. A member of the majority Sinhalese community, he received the support of the Tamil minority

after promising accountability for excesses carried out by the largely Sinhalese military.

In October 2015 he went one step further, agreeing to a UN Human Rights Council resolution which called for special tribunals and gave Sri Lanka 18 months to establish credible investigations. But the deadline lapsed without those commitments being met. "We put too much trust in him, and he's badly disappointed us," said Eswarapatham Saravanapavan, a politician from the war-ravaged Tamil heartland of Jaffna. "We didn't ask for handouts. All we wanted was justice."

### Politically constrained

Tamils abroad, fed up with inaction, have been pressuring the Geneva-based rights council to censure Sirisena at meetings later this month, Saravanapavan said. In a new report last week the council acknowledged Sri Lanka had taken some steps towards reconciliation but cautioned the measures had been "inadequate, lacked coordination and a sense of urgency".

Sirisena's blunt rejection of fresh demands for tribunals with foreign judges has raised concerns that no military personnel may ever be held accountable. But experts say the president is juggling pressures from a muscular army, which opposes any trials, and an unwieldy political coalition that helped bring him to power. "The political constraints facing Sirisena from a popular military are considerable, and the participation of foreign judges has always been a hard sell for many

Sinhalese," Keenan said. There have been symbolic gestures towards reconciliation. The national anthem was sung in Tamil during national day celebrations last year for the first time in 67 years—an unthinkable act under Rajapakse. Swathes of military-occupied land have been returned to Tamils in Jaffna, where Sirisena hit the streets last week promising reconciliation just moments after railing against the UN. But there have been false steps, too.

Draconian anti-terror laws have not been repealed as promised, and rights groups expressed outrage when Sirisena sent a police officer implicated in abuse to defend his administration at a UN inquiry into torture. The president also raised eyebrows in November when he asked US-president elect Donald Trump to use America's clout at the UN to clear Sri Lanka's war crimes record.

Diplomatic sources say a UN rights council session later this month poses a key test for Sri Lanka, which narrowly avoided a censure motion soon after Sirisena came to power. The island nation bought time on that occasion by promising to address past abuses—an approach it has taken again with Sri Lanka's foreign minister appealing for a second chance.

It's a worrying case of *deja vu* for those who backed Sirisena in his shock victory over Rajapakse, often despite threats to their own lives. "The president's mandate was for reform. We are very disappointed he has not kept his pledges," said civil society leader Sarath Wijesuriya. — AFP

# FOR JAPAN'S NUCLEAR REFUGEES, INSULTS AND REJECTION PERSIST

'SHE'S A FUKUSHIMA KID. SHE CARRIES CONTAGIOUS RADIATION'

**HIRONO:** Satsuki Sekine's home was destroyed in Japan's 2011 tsunami disaster and her family fled in the nuclear panic that followed. But crueler still were the insults and stigmatization she faced in the community where she sought refuge. Rather than offer sympathy, Sekine's new classmates bullied her with nasty jibes-part of an epidemic of discrimination in a nation where the vulnerable and the different can be marginalized.

"She's a Fukushima kid. She carries contagious radiation" were among the taunts the evacuee, now 15 years old, endured in her new home far from the ravaged northeast and the crippled Fukushima nuclear plant. "My house was destroyed in the earthquake and swept away in the tsunami," Sekine told AFP. "One of my relatives died in the disaster. We had to flee from the nuclear accident." "After all that, I was bullied at school," the 15-year-old said. "I was so depressed that I wanted to die."

Sekine is now living back near her original home, in a region which is slowly recovering from the disaster that drove more than 160,000 people from their homes when the tsunami-lashed plant went into meltdown. But she is just one of many children and adults who have faced insults, ostracism and even violence in towns and cities where they sought sanctuary.

## 'Just go away'

Japan is famed for social order and exquisite manners. But behind the facade is a suffocating group identity that can result in bullying of those who stand out, a dynamic blamed for a high rate of child and adult suicides. In the immediate aftermath of the quake-tsunami disaster which left 18,500 people dead or missing, a sense of solidarity swept Japan as it faced its greatest

postwar crisis and municipalities welcomed the displaced.

"Ganbarou Nippon" (Don't give up, Japan) was a common refrain as the nation pulled together. But reaction to the refugees at street level was often cold. Urara Aoyama, now 16, tried hard not to let her new classmates know her family came from a town beside the stricken plant. "But word spread when I entered middle school," said Aoyama, who, with Sekine, now attends high school in the town of Hirono near their original homes, which remain off limits. Aoyama too was questioned about the contagiousness of radiation, taunted and told she should just go away. "They said such things behind my back, sometimes intentionally in loud voices so I could hear," she said.

## 'Totalitarian environment'

Asao Naito, a bullying expert at Tokyo's Meiji University, said Japan's education system suppresses individuality and makes children prone to pick on the different. "So evacuees from Fukushima are preyed upon in the totalitarian environment of Japanese schools," he said. A recent case in Yokohama, south of Tokyo, stirred outrage after it emerged that a boy had been extorted of 1.5 million yen (\$13,000) by classmates. He was also slapped and pushed around and accused of living on government "compensation". He swallowed the pain for years while secretly siphoning cash from home to pay his tormenters.

Kei Hida, the family's lawyer, said she believed the boy could not bear to open up to his family knowing his mother had also suffered abuse from neighbours. "Garbage was thrown at her and she received an anonymous letter telling the family to leave the neighbourhood," Hida said. Lawyer Tomohiro

Kurosawa said that part of the problem is that for many Japanese the Fukushima evacuees are not seen as "victims" as nobody in authority has yet been held accountable.

Not a single arrest has ever been made, plant operator Tokyo Electric Power Co was rescued with public money, and the government of Prime Minister Shinzo Abe is committed to restarting nuclear plants. "When victims speak out under these circumstances, they appear to criticise the nation and are penalised socially," Kurosawa said. "Government policies cloud the status of the victims, creating room for others to reject and attack them."

## Wartime echoes

Kurosawa, who has represented radiation victims from Hiroshima and Nagasaki, said the stigma imposed on Fukushima has historical echoes of the harsh treatment that survivors of the WWII atomic bombs endured.

Despite their suffering and their status as the first victims of the atomic age, many were shunned-in particular for marriage-due to prejudice over radiation exposure.

On returning to Fukushima, Sekine and Aoyama began attending a school which was set up primarily for students from contaminated areas. There, they perform with other students in a play describing the region's ordeal. "Through contact with each other, their scars are gradually healing and they themselves are recovering," their teacher Shunichi Kobayashi said of the cast members. "Each of them has experienced all sorts of painful events, so that makes them unite with each other." Acting out their trauma is helping overcome the pain, he said. And Sekine says she now no longer wants to die. "I will not run away from hardship," she said. — AFP



**KUALA LUMPUR:** Malaysians protest outside the North Korean Embassy in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. — AP

## US MOVE ON N KOREA TESTS RISKS CHINA CLASH

**WASHINGTON:** The United States is scrambling to develop a new strategy to counter North Korea's aggressive nuclear weapon and missile programs, but tougher sanctions could provoke a diplomatic clash with China. Secretary of State Rex Tillerson will visit Washington's frontline allies South Korea and Japan next week before heading on to great power rival China to discuss the mounting crisis.

Kim Jong-Un's regime is testing a new ballistic missile that could threaten US bases and cities in the Pacific rim, and rocket salvo tactics that could overwhelm missile defense systems. Most observers see China as the only power with the leverage to get its isolated neighbor to stand down, and existing United Nations-backed sanctions have had little effect so far. The crisis is the first major security challenge of Donald Trump's presidency, and the Pentagon has already provoked China's ire by deploying the THAAD anti-missile system in South Korea.

Now, other options are being considered, and the hawkish wing of the Washington foreign policy community is pushing for measures that would hurt Chinese banks that work with Pyongyang. State Department spokesman Mark Toner would not be drawn on the details of any plan Tillerson might take to Asia, but officials confirmed that an urgent policy review is underway.

Toner said the North Korean threat would be "front and center" in the planned talks next week between Tillerson and his Chinese, South Korean and Japanese counterparts. The senior diplomats would, he said, "talk through what our options are and new ways to look at resolving the situation." But the signals coming out of China are not encouraging for those in Washington who cling to the hope that Beijing may be ready to rein in its small but belligerent neighbor.

On Wednesday, Foreign Minister Wang Yi implied that the United States and North Korea were equally at fault for provoking the latest crisis and headed towards a "head-on collision." Wang urged the US military to halt planned exercises with South Korea, in exchange for Pyongyang halting its nuclear and missile programs-an idea Washington promptly dismissed. "The onus is on North Korea to take meaningful actions toward denuclearization and refrain from provocations," Toner said. China has in the past supported measures against North Korea's nuclear program, but six sets of UN sanctions since Pyongyang's first test in 2006 have failed to slow it.

## Nuclear strike

North Korea is now building and testing an intercontinental ballistic missile (ICBM) with a solid fuel motor that could be carried by a small, easily-hidden road convoy. This would be harder for existing US and South Korean forces to detect and counter, and could put American mainland cities as well as US bases in Japan in range of a nuclear strike.

But, North Korea watchers in Washington argue, this is not such a worry to China, which opposed the North Korean nuclear program itself but does not see the new missile as such an issue. "The Chinese are not serious about this threat," said former US official Anthony Ruggiero, a veteran of the State Department and US Treasury's sanctions and counter-proliferation teams. For Ruggiero, a fellow at the hawkish Foundation for Defense of Democracies, the key to getting Beijing to take notice is to fine the banks that give North Korea access to international finance. — AFP



**HIRONO:** This picture taken on February 22, 2017 shows Futaba Future School teacher Shunichi Kobayashi (C) and members of a theatre club at the school posing for a photo. — AFP

# INDONESIAN BUDDHISTS CANED UNDER SHARIA

**JANTHOL:** Indonesia's only province to impose sharia law caned Buddhists for the first time Friday, after two men accused of cockfighting opted for punishment under the strict Islamic regulations. Alem bin Suhadi, 57, and Amel bin Akim, 60, both ethnic Chinese and members of the Buddhist minority, were whipped in front of dozens of local officials and residents in the city of Jantho, Aceh province.

The two men grimaced as they received nine

and seven lashes respectively on their backs, a sentence that was mitigated because they had spent over a month in detention since police nabbed them for cockfighting in Aceh Besar in January. "When they were arrested, two chickens and 400 thousand rupiah of betting money were confiscated by the police," said prosecutor Rivandi Aziz.

Caning is common in Aceh for breaking the province's strict Islamic laws, for offences rang-

ing from drinking alcohol, to gambling to gay sex. In the past only Muslim residents could be caned but that changed in 2015, when Aceh's regulations were overhauled. Non-Muslims who violate Islamic law can either choose to be tried under the national legal system or sharia.

The two Buddhists would likely have faced jail under Indonesian nation law. "We live in Aceh, so we have to obey the regulation in our region," Alem told AFP shortly after being

caned. A Muslim was also lashed seven times for betting on cockfights Friday, while another man accused of abusing three teenagers was lashed 112 times. Aceh, on Sumatra island, began implementing sharia law after being granted special autonomy in 2001, an attempt by the central government in Jakarta to quell a long-running separatist insurgency. Islamic laws have been strengthened since the province struck a peace deal with Jakarta in 2005. — AFP



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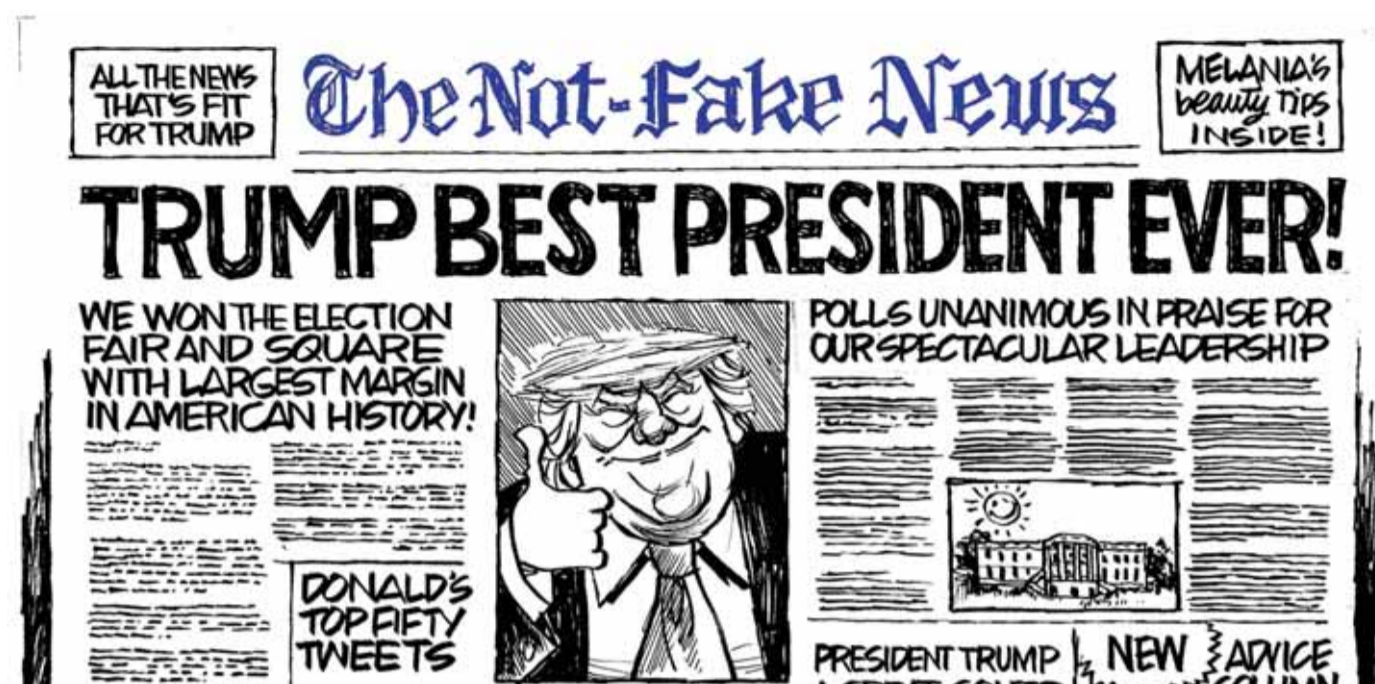
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This image provided by Jim Morin of the Miami Herald in February 2017 shows his editorial cartoon made for 2017's Sunshine Week. — AP

## MEDIA THE ENEMY? TRUMP IS AN INSATIABLE CONSUMER

WATCHING CABLE IS OFTEN AN INTERACTIVE EXPERIENCE

**NEW YORK:** Before most people are out of bed, Donald Trump is watching cable news. With Twitter app at the ready, the man who condemns the media as "the enemy of the people" may be the most voracious consumer of news in modern presidential history. Trump usually rises before 6 am and first watches TV in the residence before later moving to a small dining room in the West Wing. A short time later, he's given a stack of newspapers - including The New York Times, The Wall Street Journal, The Financial Times, The Washington Post and, long his favorite, The New York Post - as well as pile of printed articles from other sources including conservative online outlets like Breitbart News.

The TVs stay on all day. The president often checks in at lunch and again in the evening, when he retires to the residence, cellphone in hand. It is a central paradox of the Trump presidency. Despite his fervent media criticism, Trump is a faithful newspaper reader who enjoys jousting with reporters, an avid cable TV news viewer who frequently live-tweets what he's watching, and a reader of websites that have been illuminated by his presidential spotlight, showcasing the at-times conspiratorial corners of the internet.

### Trump's media diet

No recent president has been so public about his interest in his media coverage, nor seemed so willing to mobilize the powers of the federal government based on a media report that he has just read, heard or watched. In fact, the power of Trump's media diet is so potent that White House staffers have, to varying degrees of success, tried to limit his television watching and control some of what he reads.

The president's cable TV menu fluctuates. Fox News is a constant, and he also frequently watches CNN despite deriding it as "fake news." Though he used to watch "Morning Joe," a Trump aide said the president has grown frustrated with his coverage on the MSNBC program and has largely stopped. For Trump, watching cable is

often an interactive experience. More than dozen of times since his election, he has tweeted about what he saw on TV just minutes before.

On Nov 29, he posted about instituting potentially unconstitutional penalties for burning the American flag 30 minutes after Fox ran a segment on the subject. On Jan 24, he threatened to "send in the Feds!" to Chicago a short time after watching a CNN segment on violence in the city. On Feb 6, after CNN reported about a "Saturday Night Live" skit on the increasing power of the president's advisers, Trump just 11 minutes later tweeted, "I call my own shots, largely based on an accumulation of data, and everyone knows it!"

On Tuesday, Trump tweeted five different times about the news of the day being discussed on his preferred morning show, "Fox & Friends." MSNBC's Rachel Maddow, a frequent Trump critic, told The Associated Press that she finds it "unsettling" that Trump "may be getting most of his understanding of the world based on whatever he stumbles upon on cable."

While pleased that Trump is following the media, Maddow noted that "the White House is designed as an instrument to feed the president of the United States expertly curated and highly selective, well-vetted information from every corner of the world." Others note there may be some smart politics behind Trump's media diet. He "advertised getting his news the same way his supporters do, which helps make a connection," said Tobe Berkovitz, a communications professor at Boston University.

The president's advisers try to curb his cable consumption during the workday. But there are no limits when he returns to the residence. He also avidly watches his own staff's TV performances, including White House Press Secretary Sean Spicer's daily briefing. Aides have been known to shape their public comments to please the president or try to influence him.

Trump's consumption of cable news differs considerably from previous commanders in chief, who have at least claimed to be

disconnected from the cable chatter. Jay Carney, White House press secretary under Barack Obama, has claimed that Obama "doesn't watch cable news," though that did not keep the former president from criticizing the medium.

### Getting news online

Where Trump differs most from his presidential predecessors is his reliance on getting news online - even though he rarely uses a computer and prefers aides to print out articles for him to read. What he was seeing on Twitter and conservative websites like the Drudge Report and the conspiracy-laden Infowars helped forge his political persona - and his public misinformation campaign questioning whether Obama was born in the United States.

And social media has become a way for some news sources to gain an audience with the president. Last Thursday, as questions swirled around contacts between Attorney General Jeff Sessions and the Russian ambassador, a Reddit user posted a picture of Russian President Vladimir Putin and New York Sen. Charles Schumer from a 2003 photo op. Two hours later, the blog The Gateway Pundit reprinted the photo with the headline "Where's the Outrage?"

The image careened across the internet from an Infowars editor's post to the Drudge Report to Trump's own Twitter account as he delivered that outrage, demanding an investigation into Schumer's alleged ties to Putin.

That wasn't the only time last week when Trump put the White House stamp on a theory that originated on the edges of the conservative movement. Radio host Mark Levin voiced without evidence the idea that Obama had wiretapped Trump Tower. That accusation was picked up the next day by Breitbart News, the site formerly run by Trump's current chief strategist Steve Bannon. An aide placed that piece in Trump's daily reading pile, said a White House official, who like other aides would not be named discussing the president's private routine. — AP

## TRUMP TO PAY HOMAGE TO ANDREW JACKSON

**WASHINGTON:** Donald Trump plans to visit Nashville next week to rally supporters and perhaps pay homage to predecessor and unlikely political idol Andrew Jackson, America's first populist president. Trump plans to hold a campaign-style rally in the city on Jackson's 250th birthday Wednesday and, according to the Tennessean newspaper, could visit the nearby Hermitage-the final resting place of America's seventh president. Since coming to office in January, Trump aides have sought to draw comparisons between the bareknuckle Democratic president and Trump.

A portrait of Jackson has been introduced to the Oval Office and Trump's top strategist Steve Bannon described his boss's populist inaugural address "Jacksonian." Not so fast, says Jackson historian Daniel Feller, of the University of Tennessee. "I can understand fully why Trump wants to portray himself as the second coming of Andrew Jackson. I don't see much similarity myself," he said. "The narrative of Andrew Jackson is that a great popular hero came in and overthrew the existing establishment in Washington, that he was an outsider, that he was not taken seriously."

That is exactly the image Trump has tried to cultivate-despite losing the popular vote to Hillary Clinton by three million votes. Where Jackson pledged to speak for the common man and spoke of "cleansing the Augean stable," Trump talks of "draining the swamp" in Washington. But historians say Jackson's story is more subtle.

Born in the backwoods in 1767, he was orphaned in his early teens. He gained a reputation as a fighter: As a young man he was cut with a sabre for refusing to polish a British soldier's boots and once killed a man in a duel. He gained fame as a military hero for defeating the British in New Orleans.

### 'Trail of tears'

Jackson's reputation has been somewhat tarnished in recent years, with criticism focused on his temperament and the forced removal of Native Americans from their land. The Treasury Department recently decided to replace Jackson's image on the \$20 bill, with civil rights hero Harriet Tubman. But for the White House, comparisons with Jackson help place Trump inside the pantheon of US presidents and within the mainstream of American political history.

Trump's critics have painted the polarizing mogul as an aberration and his views as antithetical to the American democratic tradition. "Part of the mystique of Andrew Jackson is that he came from nowhere and he came to bust up Washington," said Feller. "But Jackson had been a very different outsider, Jackson had been a public servant, he had been in the employment of government in military or civilian capacity almost his entire adult life." By contrast Trump was never drafted into the military and the presidency was his first elected office.

Still, taking up Jackson's mantle could be good politics for Trump. A key factor in his electoral victory was the ability to pick up votes from disgruntled Democrats. Where Democratic presidents Franklin Roosevelt, Harry Truman and John F Kennedy invoked Jackson, his anti-elite views are reflected today by only the Bernie Sanders and Elizabeth Warren wing of the Democratic party. Trump is more than happy to steal the Democrat's thunder. — AFP

# Kuwait Times 55th Anniversary

# BUSINESS

German imports soar in Jan, CA surplus shrinks 17

Oil industry revives quest for deepwater reserves 18

EU plans measures to block foreign takeovers of firms 20

SATURDAY, MARCH 11, 2017



US adds a robust 235K jobs 19



LONDON: Shoppers walking down Oxford Street are seen through a railing in London yesterday. — AFP

## G20 PLAN TO STAVE OFF DEBT CRISES STALLS

### IMF STUDY ON GROWTH-LINKED DEBT HIGHLIGHTS STIGMA

**LONDON:** Global efforts to create a market for growth-linked bonds that could help avert debt crises have stalled because none of the wealthy economies backing the drive are willing to take the lead and be the first to issue, sources told Reuters. Growth-linked, or GDP-linked, sovereign bonds allow a country's repayments to fluctuate depending on its level of economic growth or contraction - meaning, for example, a government would pay less if its revenues were hit by recession.

Policymakers for the Group of 20 major world economies last year agreed on an initiative to create a market for the bonds. They commissioned an International Monetary Fund report into such debt, which could offer poorer economies some respite if they fell on hard times and stave off the kind of defaults seen recently in the likes of Puerto Rico and Ukraine.

The G20's technical staff were briefed earlier this year on the IMF findings, which they will feed back to finance ministers and central bank governors before their G20 meeting in Germany on March 17-18. They were told that the main obstacles to the project was a lack of investor demand and the stigma attached to such instruments, according to two sources close to the discussions. These kind of bonds

have so far only emerged from debt restructurings as a way to coax creditors to accept writedowns. One plan mooted by the G20 last year was to have advanced economies issue first to make investors more comfortable with the bonds. But this has hit the buffers for the moment because no country wants to take the risk of being the first to issue the bonds, according to the sources.

#### 'NO BIG BANG'

"The technical discussions have suggested no big bang issuance is expected as of now or coordinated issuance that was initially thought may be possible," said one of the sources who declined to be named as the discussions were private. "It was more a recognition of the work that was done, a sharper understanding of the key impediments and a possible way forward. There is a little more work to be done before these things take off."

The IMF's report on state-contingent debt, which includes GDP-linked bonds, is due to be published in late April. The second source familiar with the discussions added that deep scepticism about growth-linked debt within Germany, the hosts of this year's G20, was also an impediment.

Many in Germany fear Berlin would need to pay too much of a premium to coax traditional investors in bonds, seen as a safer store of cash than stocks, to expose themselves to the potential downsides of growth-linked debt, the source said.

Rafael Molina of Newstate Partners, an advisory firm that collaborated with the IMF on its report by canvassing a broad range of market participants including investors and possible issuers, said: "The feedback has shown that people are intrigued but they want to see the benefits and how it will come out. "There are many concerns and many questions that have to be addressed before growth-linked bonds develop in a way that a market can be created for it."

#### FIRST MOVER

Argentina, which takes over the G20 presidency next year, offered investors growth-linked warrants during debt restructurings in 2005 and 2010 but they cost the treasury billions of dollars as the economy recovered. And while the Bank of England has steered a market group to develop a legal framework for growth-linked bonds, uncertainty over Britain's economic trajectory as it leaves the

European Union makes it an unlikely proving ground for these bonds. In a paper last month, think tank CIGI said the United States would be the best place to kickstart this project. However, if promoting a market more beneficial to others comes at a cost to the US economy, it may jar with President Donald Trump's "America First" mantra, the sources said.

France, which on Friday hosts a workshop on GDP-linked securities, was the first eurozone country to sell bonds linked to inflation, and one of the first to launch "green" debt earmarked for environmental projects. But a French government official, who declined to be named as they are not authorized to speak publicly, cautioned that upcoming presidential and parliamentary elections in France and the transition to a new leadership meant that any potential issue of growth-linked debt would not be around the corner.

History has shown that the development of a sizeable market for this type of instrument may take decades. Britain was the first industrialized country to sell inflation-linked bonds in the early 1980s, but it was not until the United States and France joined the market in the late 1990s that it began to gain scale. Germany only joined in 2006. — Reuters

# BT AGREES TO HIVE OFF ITS NETWORK ARM IN UK

**LONDON:** BT, Britain's former telephone monopoly, agreed Friday to hive off a unit that oversees the network used by all of the country's phone and broadband providers in response to competition concerns. Communications regulator Ofcom said the company will turn its Openreach unit into an independent entity that will have its own board and chief executive while remaining part of BT Group.

Ofcom ordered the separation in

November because of concerns BT wasn't consulting with other telecommunications firms about projects that affect them. The agreement allows the split to take place without the delays that would have been caused by the sale of Openreach, Ofcom said.

"This is a significant day for phone and broadband users," Sharon White, Ofcom chief executive, said in a statement. "The new Openreach will be built to serve all its customers equally, working truly independently

and taking investment decisions on behalf of the whole industry - not just BT."

Sky Plc, which provides phone, internet and cable TV throughout the UK, described the move as "a welcome step that we have long called for on behalf of our customers." "It's important that today's agreement is now implemented by BT in good faith and without delay," Sky said.

George Salmon, an analyst at Hargreaves Lansdown, said the outcome, while not unex-

pected, is still good news for shareholders.

"With competitors such as Sky and TalkTalk crying foul, there was always an element of doubt as to whether BT and Openreach would be required to do the splits," Salmon said.

"The news that it will remain part of the wider group, although with its own distinct board and brand, should put to bed any lingering concerns investors may have had over this potentially disruptive issue." —AP



**JAKARTA:** Workers install building glass-wall covers in Jakarta yesterday to prevent the over-heating from the sunlight. Indonesia's Central Bank announced that the nation's foreign exchange reserves had grown to \$119.9 billion by the end of February 2017, up from \$116.9 billion in the preceding month, the Central Bank Governor, Agus Martowardojo, said this week. —AFP

## OIL TRADING GIANT VITOL BETS ON FUEL RETAIL FOR GROWTH

### VITOL INVESTS IN GAS STATIONS FROM TURKEY TO PAKISTAN

**LONDON:** From Pakistan to Turkey, the world's largest independent oil trader Vitol is betting on a spike in gasoline and diesel demand in young and growing nations by snapping up filling stations that disappointed oil companies are prepared to sell.

With the sharp drop in global oil prices, major integrated oil companies have been shedding assets, including the marginally profitable retail outlets, to cut costs. But privately-held Vitol, which trades 6 million barrels per day of crude oil and refined products, says these assets present an opportunity to strengthen its presence in end-markets and in up-and-coming hubs.

This month, Vitol secured more than 23 percent of Turkey's retail market after it agreed to buy Petrol Ofisi from Austrian oil firm OMV for \$1.45 billion. "The volume we trade means integration into the distribution chain makes sense. Retail also allows you to participate in markets on an on-going basis, so it's not always ad hoc or spot," Chris Bake, a top Vitol executive, told Reuters.

"It allows us to have different kinds of discussions with our suppliers," said Bake, who sits on Vitol's executive com-

mittee and is the chairman of retail unit Vivo Energy. The purchase will add another 1,700 outlets to Vitol's portfolio of 3,000 stations acquired through investments in the last few years in Viva Energy in Australia, Vivo Energy in Africa, Varo in central Europe and OVH in Nigeria.

It has also consolidated its initial investments such as by buying Royal Dutch/Shell's stake in Vivo and Viva and its aviation business in Australia last year. The eastern Mediterranean is a major import market and Vitol sees Turkey as a good destination because of its proximity to transport routes from the Mediterranean, Black Sea and Red Sea. "With fuel and non-fuel retailing, we can optimize the system. We are able to look closely at how to streamline the assets and we are willing to invest capital. With Vivo, we have added around 100 new service stations per year," Bake said.

Of its main trading competitors, only Trafigura is also vying for a piece of the retail pie. It has a large presence in Africa through its subsidiary Puma Energy and is set to acquire a large stake in India's Essar Oil. Glencore, Gunvor and Mercuria have favoured upstream or midstream

assets. Last year, Gunvor bought a refinery in Rotterdam, Mercuria bought oil and gas marketing and distribution assets in the United States and Glencore invested in oil deposits in Chad.

Vitol's retail investments fit in with its view that transport will be the major driver of fuel demand growth, with aviation demand to outstrip that for cars, which is slated to peak in about 10 years time. "Global demand for gasoline and diesel will peak but you can't apply the macro picture to individual countries that have high growth prospects like Pakistan where the Chinese are investing tens of billions of dollars in the CPEC (China Pakistan Economic Corridor), so demand will grow compared with developed economies," Bake said.

Last year, Vitol increased its stake in Pakistan's Hascol Petroleum Ltd that runs around 450 service stations from 15 to 25 percent. Like Turkey, apart from its own growth prospects, Pakistan will become even more a gateway to the rest of Asia as CPEC will see the Chinese government invest \$57 billion, mainly in a network of rail, road and pipeline projects, to connect Western China to Pakistan's sea port of Gwadar. — Reuters

## US ALUMINUM GROUP FILES COMPLAINT AGAINST CHINA

**BEIJING:** China appealed to Washington yesterday to refrain from imposing sanctions on Chinese aluminum suppliers after US producers filed a complaint against them in the Trump administration's first trade case. An industry group, the Aluminum Association, accused Chinese producers of selling at unfairly low prices that hurt foreign competitors in the case filed Thursday. It asked the US Commerce Department to impose anti-dumping duties of 38 percent to 134 percent on aluminum foil for consumer and industrial uses.

"China hopes that the US side will not resort to trade remedies," a Commerce Ministry official, Wang Hejun, said in a statement. "We hope the two countries can resolve the concerns of both industries through dialogue and hope the US Department of Commerce will exercise caution and avoid harming mutual benefit."

A flood of low-cost Chinese aluminum exports has pushed global prices so low that US and European smelters are closing. Producers say thousands of jobs are at risk. Trump promised during his campaign to raise duties on Chinese imports to offset what he was unfair action by Beijing but has yet to take action. Aluminum is one of an array of Chinese industries including steel, coal and glass whose production mushroomed over the past decade until supply vastly exceeded demand. The ruling Communist Party is shrinking steel and coal production but has yet to announce plans for aluminum. Chinese smelters that make more than half the world's aluminum are adding millions of tons of capacity, supported by what Western competitors say are improper subsidies. — Reuters

## TUNISIA'S POWERFUL UNION, INDUSTRY AGREE WAGE HIKE IN PRIVATE SECTOR

**TUNIS:** Tunisia's main labor union and largest industry association agreed yesterday to raise wages for about 1.5 million private sector workers, a step aimed at reducing social tension, restoring investor confidence and reviving the economy.

The announcement of the 6 percent increase came at a ceremony at the Prime Minister's office, after weeks of talks between the private business industry group and the UGTT, a powerful labor union that since the 2011 revolution has on occasion intervened in political matters. Wided Bouchamoui, the head of the Chamber of Commerce and Industry known by its French acronym UTICA, said the wage hike came at a delicate time for many local companies looking to increase growth after Islamist militant attacks in 2015 that have hit the economy hard.

"Our role has been to keep an atmosphere of social peace. Today, we need to raise production rates," she said. The government has imposed an extra corporate tax on all companies of 7.5 percent as part of plans to raise revenue and reduce its budget deficit, which will reach 4.9 percent this year. Nouredine Tabboubi, the head of the UGTT union, said that this agreement will help to drive production at a time when the government is looking to revive the economy, which is forecast to grow by 2.5 percent in 2017 from 1 percent in 2015.

Tunisia has been praised as an example of compromise politics and democratic transition since overthrowing former president Zine El Abidine Ben Ali in the first of the Arab Spring revolts, and has held free elections and drafted a new constitution. But many Tunisians still worry about the rising cost of living, unemployment and the continued marginalization of rural towns, some of the factors that helped fuel the 2011 protests that forced Ben Ali out. — Reuters



## NEARLY ALL BERLIN FLIGHTS CANCELLED DUE TO STRIKE

**FRANKFURT/BERLIN:** Tens of thousands of passengers were stranded in Berlin yesterday as a strike by ground staff led to the cancellation of nearly 700 flights operated by airlines including Air Berlin, Ryanair and Lufthansa.

Berlin Airport, which operates Tegel and Schoenefeld airports, said almost all flights from the German capital had been grounded, with 466 flights cancelled at Tegel and 204 at Schoenefeld as of 0900 GMT. The strike by ground staff, who want an increase in their hourly pay to 12 euros (\$12.71) from 11 euros, is due to run for 25 hours from 0400 local time (0300 GMT) yesterday. Enrico Ruemker, strike leader at trade

union Verdi, told Reuters TV that workers were ready to take further strike action if they did not receive a "reasonable" offer, although the union remained open to talks at any time. The industrial action comes as many trade visitors try to make their way home from the world's biggest tourism trade fair, the ITB, which ends in Berlin on March 12.

Some delegates left the trade fair early to avoid the strike while others told Reuters they faced long train journeys or detours to other German airports such as Hamburg or Dresden. Air Berlin said it had cancelled 202 flights, with only long-haul routes and flights to and from Duesseldorf still

operating. It offered passengers vouchers for train tickets to their German destinations or flights from Hanover. Irish budget carrier Ryanair cancelled 77 flights to or from Berlin and said it was offering customers a full refund, free transfer onto the next available flight or a free transfer onto an alternative flight route.

German flagship Lufthansa said it had had to cancel 68 flights between Berlin, Frankfurt and Munich, affecting about 10,000 passengers, who could rebook or cancel for free. "Everything should return to normal on Saturday," a Lufthansa spokesman said. — Reuters

## DOLLAR HITS 7-WEEK HIGH, FOCUS ON US JOBS DATA

**LONDON:** The dollar firmed to seven-week highs against the yen yesterday, as investors awaited US jobs data ahead of next week's Federal Reserve meeting, while weak inflation figures pushed the Norwegian crown to four-month lows against a stronger euro. The single currency rose a third of a percent to a four-day high of \$1.0619, having been boosted by comments from European Central Bank head Mario Draghi on Thursday that investors saw as somewhat hawkish.

The ECB removed from its statement a reference to using all available measures to induce growth and inflation, driving markets to price in an interest rate hike in early 2018, on expectations the ECB will wind down its stimulus program as the European economy improves.

"It (the euro) is not going to run away to the top side because we're waiting to see what wage growth does today in the States, and what the Fed statement tells us next Wednesday," said ING currency strategist Chris Turner in London. A surprisingly robust private US jobs report from ADP on Thursday heightened bets for a strong monthly non-farm payrolls release due at 1330 GMT, further strengthening the case for a US interest rate hike at the Fed's policy meeting next week.

The dollar climbed almost half a percent to 115.495 yen, its highest since Jan. 20, leaving it up nearly 1-1/2 percent for the week. The dollar index, which tracks the greenback against a basket of six major rivals, was flat at 101.85. It was on track for its fifth straight week of gains - its best run in eight months - after a quarter-of-a-percent rise this week.

Markets are now pricing in an almost 90 percent chance of a Fed hike next week, according to Reuters data. "In the near term it's going to be quite tough for there to be further dollar strength, given how well-priced the Fed meeting is next week, and also just how much the market has priced for the year now as a whole," said currency strategist Hamish Pepper at Barclays in London. The Norwegian crown fell to four-month lows against the euro after data showed consumer prices in Norway fell to four-year lows in February, putting pressure on the central bank to keep monetary policy loose. — Reuters



**PARIS:** Wilhelm Hubner (C), president of the board of Auchan Holding, flanked by Auchan Holding secretary general Xavier de Mezerac (L) and Immochan affiliate head Benoit Lheureux (R) pose during a presentation of the group's 2016 results in Paris yesterday. —AFP

## GERMAN IMPORTS SOAR IN JAN, CA SURPLUS SHRINKS

IMPORTS UP 3% ON THE MONTH, EXPORTS UP 2.7%

**BERLIN:** German imports soared more than expected in January, outperforming a surprisingly strong rise in exports in a further sign that Europe's biggest economy fired on all cylinders at the start of 2017. Data released by the Federal Statistics Office yesterday, also showed the current account surplus fell sharply on the month suggesting vibrant domestic demand is helping to slowly re-balance Germany's traditionally export-driven economy. "Germany's domestic demand will remain strong this year and we expect imports to rise faster than exports in 2017," said Sal. Oppenheim economist Ulrike Kastens. "This should help to contain the trade surplus, although it is likely to remain high," Kastens said, adding that German companies would have to invest more to further fuel imports and significantly reduce the trade surplus.

"But many firms are still holding off investments due to a series of political risks and uncertainties," she added, pointing to the threat of a protectionist US trade policy and the unclear outcome of several major elections in Europe. Seasonally adjusted imports rose by 3.0 percent on the month, while

exports increased by 2.7 percent, the data showed. Both figures came in much stronger than expected.

A breakdown of unadjusted trade figures showed that exports to countries outside the European Union rose the sharpest while imports were particularly strong from EU countries outside the euro zone. "After their lacklustre performance in the past year, exports are rebounding in 2017," DIHK economist Volker Treier said, adding demand from emerging markets such as China, Brazil, Russia and India was rising.

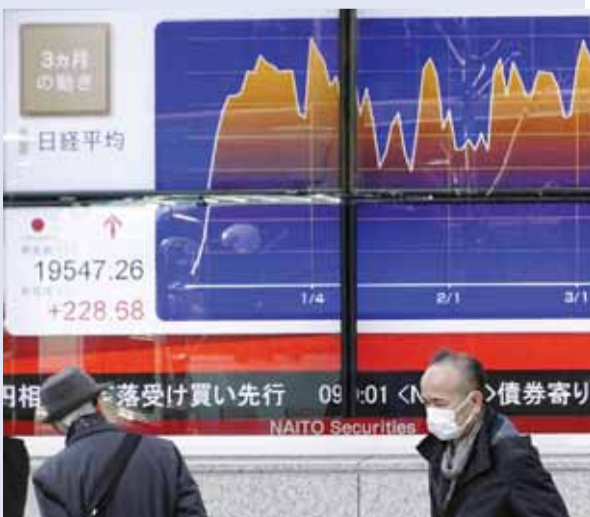
Despite the jump in imports, the seasonally adjusted trade surplus stood at 18.5 billion euros (\$19.6 billion), up slightly from 18.3 billion euros in December. Analysts put the discrepancy mainly down to one-off factors at the turn of the year. The wider current account surplus nearly halved, however, to 12.8 billion euros after a revised 24.8 billion euros in December, the data showed. On the year, it shrank by 1.8 billion euros.

### War of words

In 2016, German exports rose 1.2 percent on the year to hit a record 1.2 trillion euros while imports edged up 0.6

percent to reach an all-time high at 955 billion euros. This propelled the trade surplus to 252.9 billion euros, also a record high. The European Commission and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) have repeatedly urged Germany to take advantage of record-low borrowing costs and increase investment as a measure to reduce the country's large trade and current account surpluses.

US President Donald Trump's trade adviser on Monday described the US trade deficit with Germany as "one of the most difficult" issues, calling for bilateral discussions to reduce it outside of European Union restrictions. Peter Navarro's comments followed his complaints that Germany was exploiting a weak euro to gain a trade advantage. The criticism was firmly rejected by Finance Minister Wolfgang Schaeuble on Tuesday who said Germany's trade surplus was the result of high demand for its products and this had nothing to do with any form of currency manipulation. The war of words has set the stage for a heated debate on trade and tax policies when G20 decision-makers meet in the German town of Baden-Baden next week. — Reuters



**TOKYO:** A man looks at an electronic stock board of a securities firm showing the chart of Tokyo's Nikkei 225 stock index movement in the past three months in Tokyo yesterday. —AP

# OIL INDUSTRY REVIVES QUEST FOR DEEPWATER RESERVES

## OIL PRICE, LOW SERVICE COST BOOST OFFSHORE EXPLORATION

**HOUSTON:** Deepwater oil drilling can be expensive, time-consuming and a hard sell to investors. But the world's top energy firms are restarting their search for giant oilfields under the ocean after a two-year lull. A recovery in oil prices to about \$50 a barrel from a 12-year low in 2016 is reviving oil majors' appetite for risk.

Reductions in offshore production costs mean that some projects may be able to compete with North American shale fields, executives said at an energy conference in Houston this week.

The recovery in the industry has so far been focused on onshore shale output from the largest US oilfield, the Permian Basin. "Our competition over the past years has evolved from 'we want to be the best in deepwater' to 'we want to compete with shale' to 'we want to beat the Permian'," Wael Sawan, Royal Dutch Shell's executive vice president for deepwater, said in an interview.

Shell is the largest deepwater producer among the world's top publicly traded oil companies and is set to pump 900,000 barrels per day (bpd) from such projects by the end of the decade.

Firms such as Shell and Exxon Mobil, who specialize in complex offshore exploration, slashed budgets after oil prices collapsed in 2014. Spending cuts were so drastic that the Paris-based International Energy Agency warned this week of a looming supply crunch beyond 2020.

Shell has cut well costs by at least 50 percent, reduced logistics cost by three quarters and cut staff by nearly a third to make developments in areas such as the Gulf of

Mexico and Nigeria profitable at oil prices below \$40 a barrel, on par with the most profitable shale wells, Sawan said. Other companies such as France's Total have seen similar cost cuts.

### Sniper focus

After cutting the cost of deepwater development, companies are also reviving the search for new resources. They are focusing exploration efforts on areas close to existing fields to maximize the chances of discovery and minimize costs. Many such areas are in Brazil, the Gulf of Mexico and Southeast Asia. "It is a very selective, sniper focus," Sawan said.

Some firms are poised to benefit from decreased competition, lower costs of marine seismic studies and drilling rigs, and cheaper opportunities to acquire exploration licences from governments eager to attract investment. "Right now, we've entered the best time in the last decade to be in the exploration business," Gregory Hebertson, who heads Murphy's western hemisphere exploration, said at the CERAWEEK conference in Houston.

"There is probably a two- or three-year window that we can capture the cost efficiency in the market."

Discovering new resources is essential for oil firms to grow and to offset natural decline of fields. But deepwater exploration requires money, time, expertise - and luck. Some shareholders would prefer that oil firms stick to other, less risky growth options, said Federico Arisi Rota, executive vice president Americas for Italy's Eni, which operates major offshore drilling projects.

"We must compete with alternative

growth options that might be considered more attractive," such as growth through mergers and acquisitions or investing in shale oil production, Rota said.

Pressure to limit company spending amid a slow recovery in oil prices is also putting a break on big exploration campaigns. "We know exploration spending is not always appreciated by investors," Kevin McLachlan, head of exploration for Total said.

### Riskier plans

Eni is considered one of the most successful explorers after the discovery of giant gas fields in Egypt in recent years. It aims at discovering 2 to 3 billion barrels of oil and gas this year through drilling 115 offshore wells near Africa, Mexico, Norway and Asia, Rota said. A "more aggressive" exploration program is planned to start in 2018 in riskier and more expensive regions such as the Arctic, which offer the potential big discoveries, he said.

Deepwater resources will be required to keep up with the growing demand, regardless of output growth in shale oil fields, Total's McLachlan said. Such projects are "key to our long-term plan, and we believe it is the same for the industry no matter the near-term focus on the Permian," McLachlan said, referring to the largest US oilfield in west Texas.

Hess Corp Chief Executive John Hess said the company's Liza development, off the coast of Guyana, was crucial to his company's growth potential and estimated to have as much as 2 billion barrels of oil. "This is one of the largest oil discoveries in the last 10 years," Hess said in an interview. — Reuters

## SPANISH GDP TAKING A HIT FROM BREXIT

**MADRID:** Britain's exit from the European Union will trim 0.2-0.4 percentage points off Spain's gross domestic product growth, according to a government report published yesterday by daily newspaper El Pais.

Spain's top priority in Brexit talks will be to keep workers moving freely between both countries, the report, prepared by Madrid's representation to the EU, added. Britain and Spain have strong trade and investment links and the report said the Spanish economy would "suffer negative consequences" from Brexit.

It said Spanish exports to Britain would fall by 464 million euros (\$490 million) per year under the best-case scenario which the report defined as Madrid reaching a bilateral trade agreement with London after Brexit. But the report said the fall in exports could reach as much as one billion euros per year, with the food and auto sectors especially hard-hit.

Brexit could cause Spain's economic output to fall by two and four billion euros per year, the equivalent of a fall of between 0.2 and 0.4 percentage points in its gross domestic product, it added.

Britain is the biggest destination for Spanish investment abroad and is Spain's main source of foreign visitors. Spanish banks such as Santander play leading roles in British finance while Spanish service providers like Telefonica and construction firm FCC have significant holdings in the country.

Santander generates 12 percent of its revenues in Britain and the country accounts for 30 percent of Telefonica's earnings, according to the report. It said there are 102,498 Spanish nationals living in Britain and 391,000 Britons living in Spain, including 105,000 pensioners who cost Spain's public health system around 250 million euros per year. — AFP

# CHINA'S DEBT 'TOO HIGH,' MUST BE CONTROLLED: CB

**BEIJING:** China's central bank governor said yesterday the country needs to get soaring corporate debt under control but its economy and currency are stable and the decline in its foreign exchange reserves is no cause for concern.

Zhou Xiaochuan's comments at a news conference held during China's national legislature follows warnings a rapid rise in debt could lead to financial trouble. Beijing is trying to reduce reliance on credit and to clear away debts of state companies but private sector analysts say it needs to move faster.

"The leverage of non-financial enterprises in the whole society is too high," said Zhou. "First of all, (debt levels of) every business, especially those with leverage that already is too high, have to be controlled." Zhou gave no indication he foresaw a financial crisis. But his chief deputy, sitting beside Zhou, echoed warnings by private sector analysts that debt could drag on economic growth or threaten financial stability.

"The continued increase of leverage is not conducive to the sustainable development of the economy and accumulates certain risks," said Yi Gang. China has relied on repeated infusions of credit to support growth in the world's second-largest economy since the 2008 financial crisis. That has boosted its total debt from the equivalent of about 150 percent of annual economic output pre-crisis to more than 260 percent today. The country's top economic official,



This photo taken on Thursday shows a Chinese vendor selling sweet potatoes at a street market in Shenyang, northeast China's Liaoning province. —AFP

Premier Li Keqiang, called for attention to debt in a speech to the legislature Sunday but said the financial system is healthy.

Zhou also tried to quiet financial market concerns about the outlook for China's currency, the yuan. Expectations the yuan

would be allowed to weaken against the dollar prompted an outflow of money starting in late 2015, which led Beijing to tighten controls on capital movement. That has prompted concern Chinese acquisitions abroad might be hampered if buyers cannot move money out of the country.

"We believe this year the Chinese economy will be relatively stable," Zhou said. "Under such circumstances, this year's exchange rate should be relatively stable." The central bank plans no major policy changes but regulation will be "more meticulous," said Zhou. Zhou also tried to dispel concern about the decline in China's multitrillion-dollar foreign reserves to just over \$3 trillion in February from a peak of nearly \$4 trillion in 2014. The central bank spent reserves to prop up the yuan's exchange rate.

"The decline in the foreign exchange reserves is also a normal phenomenon, because we did not originally want so much," said Zhou. "So an appropriate decline is not something bad." Zhou defended the investment controls as a curb on purchases of assets that are "unsuited to the industrial policy needs of the country." He cited sports, entertainment and other areas where Chinese investors have been spending heavily. "These have not much benefit to China," he said. "So we consider a certain degree of policy guidance necessary and effective." — AP

## RUSSIAN OIL MAJOR TURNS TO FORMER JUICE KING

ROSNEFT GROWS TRADING WITH PARTNERS UNDER SANCTIONS

**MOSCOW/LONDON:** A former Russian juice magnate who has crude terminals and other assets in the Caspian and Black Sea region says he is expanding cooperation with Kremlin-controlled Rosneft to help the oil major boost trading from Turkey to southern Europe.

Rosneft's partnership with David Yakobashvili and his Petrocas oil products trading and logistics firm is part of efforts to build new markets as the Russian oil major grapples with US and EU sanctions imposed in 2014 over Moscow's activities in Ukraine. Sanctions have stopped Rosneft, the world's biggest listed oil company by output, working with Western banks and scuppered its bid to buy a trading

unit from Morgan Stanley. In response, Rosneft has built ties with global trading houses Trafigura and Glencore, as well as companies such as Petrocas that are based closer to home.

"We are pursuing joint strategic interests with Rosneft and are discussing joint involvement in infrastructure projects in the south Caucasus and beyond," Yakobashvili told Reuters.

"Petrocas helps (Rosneft) increase margins when selling refined products and delivering them to end users in Europe and Turkey," he said in an interview. Born in the former Soviet Union's republic of Georgia, Yakobashvili, 60, set up Petrocas in 2008 to supply Georgia and its neighbors with refined products. The initiative was part of an

effort to diversify away from Russia. In 2010, Yakobashvili divested from what had been his main asset, juice and dairy firm Wimm-Bill-Dann. PepsiCo bought a controlling stake in the company in 2010 in a deal valuing Wimm-Bill-Dann at more than \$5 billion.

Petrocas, which controls oil terminals and gas stations in the Caucasus and Black Sea area, operated mostly as a logistics company until Rosneft acquired 49 percent in the firm in 2014 for \$144 million. "Petrocas has become a reliable partner to help solve logistical tasks in the Caspian Sea and the Caucasus," Yakobashvili said, adding it was now seeking to expand trading operations in more southern European nations. In 2014, Petrocas sold about

1 million tons of oil products per year. That had grown to 3.5 million tons in 2016. Yakobashvili said this would expand this year as he targets markets in Greece, Italy, Bulgaria, Romania, Turkey and Germany. Petrocas was looking at starting crude oil trading and was talking to firms in Kazakhstan and Turkmenistan, he said.

Petrocas, which buys volumes from Rosneft at tenders, already has contracts with oil firms such as Kazakhstan's Kazmunaigaz, Austria's OMV, Greek Motor Oil Hellas, Italy's Saras and France's Total. Turkey is a key growth market for Petrocas, which plans to ship 900,000 tons of diesel in 2017 to Turkey's Demiroren Group under a long-term deal. — Reuters

## SPAIN STRUGGLES TO REPOPULATE ITS DESERTED INTERIOR

**SARNAGO, Spain:** Sarnago lost its last resident 37 years ago but Jose Maria Carrascosa and his association are trying hard to revive the village, an uphill battle in one of Spain's most depopulated regions. A rural exodus, which began in the 1950s as people moved to find work in factories, has left some parts of Spain with just two people per square kilometre—the same density as in Siberia.

This is the case in parts of Castile, a vast region in central Spain where Sarnago is located, in the northern Aragon region and the southern provinces of Extremadura. It makes Spain a "strange country within Europe" since no other similarly sized nation on the continent has such demographic deserts, Spanish writer Sergio del Molino wrote in his travel book "La Espana Vacía" ("Empty Spain"), published last year.

"The depopulation here was brutal," said Jesus Hernandez, the mayor of San Pedro Manrique, a larger town of around 600 residents near Sarnago. The emigration from the region was especially fuelled by a decision in 1965 while Spain was in the grips of the dictatorship of Francisco Franco to plant 22,000 hectares (54,000 acres) of pine trees to feed the paper industry, which pushed out cereal farming.

Two years later, Carrascosa's father moved his family to Tudela, a town further east in the fertile Ebro Valley.

### Not forgotten

But wind-swept Sarnago, which at one point was home to about 400 people including 30 children, has not been forgotten by its former residents, who have restored 25 of its 40 houses and now have running water and access to electricity. Carrascosa, who heads an association that seeks to reverse the village's fortunes, is proud of his three-bedroom home in Sarnago, which he visits regularly for short stays.

Through meetings, a magazine and social media, he encourages other former residents to maintain a link with the village too. The restoration of homes, though, has still not led to any permanent residents, mainly due to lack of public services in the village, located some 200 kilometres (135 miles) northeast of Madrid.

The nearest public health centre is four km away in San Pedro Manrique but offers only basic medical care. There is a primary school there as well, with 66 children, but no high school. Jesus Catalan, a 71-year-old pensioner, and his wife live in Sarnago from March to October but leave in winter when temperatures can drop to minus 15 degrees C (5 degrees F). "January and February are very hard and if there is a heavy snowfall you are trapped," he said. Rural tourism has grown in recent years in the region, which boasts picturesque tree-covered valleys, mountains and even dinosaur footprints.

Father of two Gonzalo Esteban, 42, moved to the nearby town of Yanguas, with just 40 residents, in 2001 with his wife from Valladolid, a city of 300,000 residents, 250 km away, to open a rural inn with a restaurant specialising in mushroom dishes. But Esteban said he was aware that the town, which has just seven young families including his own, could easily die out. — AFP



**PITTSBURGH:** In this photo made on March 30, 2016, display signs designed to attract employment seekers line the booths of job recruiters at a Job Fair in Pittsburgh. — AP

## US ADDS A ROBUST 235K JOBS; UNEMPLOYMENT DIPS TO 4.7%

ECONOMY REMAINS ON A SOLID FOOTING

**WASHINGTON:** US employers added a robust 235,000 jobs in February and raised pay at a healthy pace, evidence that the economy remains on solid footing nearly eight years after the Great Recession ended. The unemployment rate dipped to a low 4.7 percent from 4.8 percent, the Labor Department reported Friday. More people began looking for jobs, increasing the proportion of Americans working or looking for work to the highest level in nearly a year.

The strong job growth, decent pay gains and low unemployment rate make it all but certain that the Federal Reserve will raise short-term interest rates when it meets next week.

February's job gains were boosted by 58,000 additional construction positions, the most in nearly a decade. That figure was likely enhanced by unseasonably warm weather in much of the nation. Yesterday's report was the first to cover a full month under President Donald Trump. Trump has already tweeted cheerfully about a survey of pri-

vate-sector hiring released earlier this week that suggested a robust job gain in February. That survey, by payroll provider ADP, concluded that private employers added 298,000 jobs in February, the biggest monthly gain in three years. An array of evidence suggests that the US job market is fundamentally healthy or nearly so. The number of people seeking first-time unemployment benefits - a rough proxy for the pace of layoffs - reached a 44-year low two weeks ago. And in January, employers added a vigorous 227,000 jobs, according to the government's figures, higher than last year's monthly average of 187,000.

Business and consumer confidence has soared since the presidential election, with many business executives saying they expect faster economic growth to result from Trump's promised tax cuts, deregulation and infrastructure spending. The US economy is also benefiting from steadier economies overseas. Growth is picking up or stabilizing in

most European countries as well as in China and Japan. The 19-nation alliance that uses the euro currency expanded 1.7 percent in 2016, an improvement from years of recession and anemic growth. Germany's unemployment rate has fallen to 3.9 percent, although in crisis-stricken Greece, unemployment remains a painful 23 percent.

In the United States, employers have been hiring solidly for so long that in some industries, they're being compelled to raise pay. Hourly wages for the typical worker rose 3.1 percent in 2016, according to a report this week by the Economic Policy Institute. That's much higher than the 0.3 percent average annual pay gain, adjusted for inflation, since 2007, the EPI said. Minimum wage increases last year in 17 states and Washington, DC, helped raise pay among the lowest-paid workers, the EPI found. Pay increases for the poorest 10 percent of workers were more than twice as high in states where the minimum wage rose as in states where it did not. — AP

# EU PLANS MEASURES TO BLOCK FOREIGN TAKEOVERS OF FIRMS

## DRAFT PLAN REFERS TO NEED TO REDUCE CHINESE INFILTRATION

**BRUSSELS:** The European Union plans measures to block "politically-motivated" foreign investment, after Germany, France and Italy asked it to act against takeovers in sectors that could harm Europe's strategic interests. The proposal could give the EU - which can already block takeovers on antitrust grounds - power to scrutinize "investments in the EU of strategic importance both from an economic and security perspective".

That would include defense, transport infrastructure and critical and cutting-edge technologies and could be extended to deals that put at risk a vaguely defined "economic prosperity", according to the proposal from the European Commission's industry department seen by Reuters. The paper makes several references to China, citing, as one hypothetical example of an undesirable deal, a company receiving funds from the Chinese government to enable it to buy a European company to make a

"strategic penetration of the EU market".

Germany has been making protectionist noises after a spate of Chinese takeovers of its technology companies. Home appliance maker Midea's acquisition of robot-maker Kuka was just one of the Chinese deals last year with a total worth of more than \$10 billion, about 40 times as much as in 2015, according to Thomson Reuters data. Some EU countries have their own rules to protect strategic firms, but this would be the first at the EU level and would go beyond the usual scope of such measures which are usually related to national security.

Under the proposal, the EU could block takeovers by a company whose motivation is "just for the purpose of disposing its overcapacity" - which could include sectors such as steel where Europe accuses China of dumping under-priced goods. The blocking mechanism could also apply to takeovers of EU companies by an EU-

based subsidiary of a foreign firm, or even in cases of "infiltration of the management with individuals from non-EU countries" who could access data and technology, the paper said.

The plan would need the approval of all Commission departments, including trade officials, who are usually less favorable to protectionist measures. EU states and the European Parliament would then have to adopt the proposals. To avoid an excessive concentration of power in Brussels at a time of rising euroscepticism, the proposal suggests EU states would maintain the right to allow or deny a takeover even after EU vetting.

Under a bolder option of the plan, a new EU agency would be set up to examine foreign investments, although this could attract EU bashing if an investment is rejected to the detriment of EU companies' growth prospects, the paper said. — Reuters

# CARMAKERS EYE MORE UK SUPPLIERS TO HANDLE BREXIT

**GENEVA:** As Britain prepares to leave the European Union, some carmakers are considering softening the blow of any tariffs by sourcing more parts locally and producing more models they can sell domestically rather than export. Eighty percent of UK-assembled vehicles are exported and they could face tariffs of up to 10 percent if Britain has to fall back on World Trade Organization rules, with some components subject to multiple varying tariffs each time they cross a border.

"If we do find there are tariffs on sending cars out, or there are tariffs on bringing components in, then that would be a motivator to repatriate some component production to the UK," McLaren Automotive Chief Executive Mike Flewitt told Reuters at the Geneva motor show.

The country's largely foreign-owned car industry is due to hit a record high production of around 2 million units by the turn of the decade, making it one of Europe's largest, and some firms have warned tariffs could push production abroad. The sector is a major employer which British Prime Minister Theresa May has pledged to champion in the Brexit negotiations with the EU she plans to trigger this month; executives are concerned uncertainty could persist beyond the two-year process.

A local sourcing push would help mitigate some of the risks of leaving the EU's single market and be a bonanza for smaller UK parts makers but a headache for international suppliers, whose manufacturing footprints are reliant on free trade.

Only 41 percent of the parts in British-built cars are made within the country on average, less than the typical 50 to 55 percent local content require-

ment which Britain would have to agree to in some bilateral trade deals. The proportion of parts sourced locally varies among automakers, making it easier for some to meet the "Made in Britain" threshold than others.

McLaren expects to reach a 58 percent "localization rate" by the end of the decade from around 50 percent now, under a plan that pre-dates the June Brexit vote. Jaguar Land Rover (JLR), Britain's biggest carmaker, also sources around half its content locally.

The level falls to less than 40 percent at German luxury carmaker BMW's Mini plant in southern England, while Opel/Vauxhall Astras built in the UK contain only 25 percent British parts.

French carmaker PSA Group, which this week announced a deal to buy Opel and Vauxhall from General Motors, said trade barriers in the event Britain loses access to the single market would push it to increase the percentage of local components. "If it's a hard Brexit then of course the supplier base needs to be developed, and I think this is something that the UK government completely understands," Chief Executive Carlos Tavares told reporters in Geneva.

### Not so easy

The jury is out on how feasible this might be. Ralf Speth, the CEO of JLR, doubts Britain produces enough mass-market vehicles to attract the major supplier investments it would need to cross the 50 percent localization threshold. It and other carmakers have been slowly boosting UK parts content for years. Britain's Society of Motor Manufacturers and Traders, however, believes UK-built cars could source up to 80 percent of parts domestically. The fall in the pound since the Brexit referendum has raised

import costs, adding a further incentive.

Matt Boyle, the chief executive of electrified powertrain specialist Sevcon, based in England's northeast, said it had seen rising demand since the referendum and is able to respond quickly through the use of flexible third-party sites. "We've got off-the-shelf hybrid systems and electric systems today," he said. The industry is lobbying for British government support, which could be required to kick-start investment in parts production that would be new for Britain, such as alloy wheels.

Over 4 billion pounds (\$4.9 billion) worth of components such as engine castings, steering systems and seat parts could be sourced in Britain, according to a joint industry-government report published in 2015, adding to roughly 10 billion pounds currently spent by car firms on UK suppliers.

### Model mix

Carmakers are used to picking parts makers to supply their plants across borders, benefiting from unfettered trade among members of the European single market or the North American Free Trade Agreement - and between the EU and Mexico.

But Donald Trump's election in the United States and protectionist candidates in upcoming elections in the Netherlands and France mean the Brexit referendum is not the only risk to free trade.

That has prompted some executives to ponder how plants and supply chains could be refocused on domestic demand. "Our interest and our competitive advantage will be to have UK plants with a pound cost structure to supply a market where revenue is in pounds," PSA's Tavares said. — Reuters



**LONDON:** Pedestrians walk past retail outlets and shops on Oxford Street in central London yesterday. —AFP

## UK INDUSTRIAL OUTPUT DROPS AT START OF YEAR

**LONDON:** Britain's industrial output recoiled in January as the nation prepared to exit the European Union, official data showed yesterday. Industrial output slid 0.4 percent compared with activity in December, with a particularly weak contribution from manufacturing, the Office for National Statistics (ONS) said in a statement. Although moderately better than expectations for a 0.5-percent decline, the latest industrial output data followed a 0.9-percent rise in December.

Manufacturing output, which excludes mining and quarrying, electricity, gas and water supply, slid 0.9 percent in January from December. Construction activity also shrank by 0.4 percent, which contrasted with a 1.8-percent expansion in the previous month. The ONS also said that Britain's deficit in goods and services, the gap between exports and imports, stood unchanged at £2.0 billion (\$2.4 billion, 2.3 billion euros) in January.

"The latest economic data for the UK has come in on the soft side, with manufacturing production and industrial production both contracting in January," noted analyst David Cheetham at XTB brokerage. "The manufacturing number in particular could be seen as a cause for concern with a 0.9-percent month on month decline matching the worst reading since the Brexit vote" in June.

Conservative Prime Minister Theresa May will activate Article 50 of the EU's Lisbon Treaty in the next three weeks, sparking a two-year divorce process and tense talks over the terms of Britain's departure from the bloc. —AFP

## PERU COPPER MINERS' STRIKE, ADDING TO CHILE STOPPAGE

**LIMA:** Workers at a US-owned copper mine in Peru launched a wage strike yesterday, heightening pressure on the market for the key commodity already hit by a similar stoppage in Chile.

Some 1,200 workers downed tools at the southern Cerro Verde mine, majority-owned by Arizona-based Freeport-McMoran, said union spokesman Rommel Arias. The miners are demanding special benefit payments to protect their incomes against a downturn in copper prices, and better working conditions. "We have ended discussions with the company and no agreement has been reached," Arias told AFP.

"The strike started at 7.30 am on Friday morning (1230 GMT)."

Mining sector consultant Jorge Manco calculates that production at Cerro Verde reached half a million tonnes last year, making it Peru's biggest copper mine. Strikes at copper mines have raised concerns on international markets for the metal, a key component in electrical wiring.

Some 2,500 workers at the world's biggest copper mine, the Escondida site in Chile, have been on strike for a month for higher pay. Analysts at British bank Barclays said Thursday that prices were stable despite the Chilean strike, since the world's biggest copper consumer, China, is well stocked.

Italian bank Unicredit meanwhile calculated that prices were falling slightly "with no end in sight" to the Escondida dispute. — AFP

ANNIVERSARY  
**55**  
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# Weekender

SATURDAY, MARCH 11, 2017

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## The battle to save loved British dogs

SEE PAGE 29

This file photo taken on April 05, 2005 shows a camera man filming Leonardo da Vinci's masterpiece the "Mona Lisa" in the "musee du Louvre" in Paris. The subject of centuries of scrutiny and debate, Mona Lisa's famous smile is routinely described as enigmatic. But is it really that hard to read? Apparently not. In an unusual trial, close to 100 percent of people described her expression as unequivocally "happy", researchers revealed on March 10, 2017. — AFP



## Sir Elton John given personalized Nike

The 'Rocket Man' singer now owns a unique pair of shoes called Air Forces 1 Jet made by the iconic sports brand after they decided to honour the 69-year-old star for his "commitment to diversity and inclusion, and his long-standing relationship with Nike". The trainers are said to be inspired by the 'I'm Still Standing' hitmaker's knighthood with a silver upper part and as well as a disco ball and it also has the words Sir on the back end. Elton received them as a gift last weekend when he visited the company's head quarters in Eugene, Oregon in the US. The 'Tiny Dancer' singer has been associated with Nike since the mid 70s when they started making custom shoes for him. Meanwhile, late last year, Elton, who is known for his quirky style and trademark glasses collection, revealed he is launching a limited edition fashion range with Lady Gaga. He joined forces with the 'Born This Way' hitmaker's sister Natali Germanotta and fashion designer Brandon Maxwell on a limited edition clothing and accessories line called Love Bravery for the American department store Macy's. Speaking previously about their collaboration, the 'Blue Wonderful' previously said: "I love the idea of fusing who you are on the inside - your passions and dreams - with what you wear on the outside."

## Underwood grateful for eyebrow pencils

The 33-year-old singer has claimed she damaged her facial features when she was younger, and is "very happy" there is a variety of products in a range of colors she can use to cover up the irreversible beauty blunders she made by over-plucking. The 'All-American Girl' hitmaker told PEOPLE: "Growing up in the '90s I feel like the thin eyebrow was definitely a thing and I, like so many others, overdid it. "They never really grew back the way they were supposed to so now I am very happy that they do have eyebrow pencils, so I can fix what I did to myself when I was young." But the songwriter's facial hair was not the only issue she had as a youngster, as she also opted for a perm, which she strongly regrets. She explained: "[My] worst hair moment ever would probably be me in the sixth grade when I decided that my bangs should

have crazy amounts of gel ... [and] I had a perm at some point, when I was like 14. That was a bad idea." The 'American Idol' champion - who was crowned the winner on the fourth season of the talent show in 2005 - was never happy with her freckles, or her teeth, and went to extreme lengths to change her appearance. She said: "I had freckles on my face and they were in the exact same spot on both of my cheeks, so I felt like I got teased at school. I remember asking my mom if we could get rid of them. Well, I did get rid of them. "I had bad teeth, too." Carrie has revealed she had to wear dental braces for a number of times to align her pearly whites. She explained: "I had to get braces [more than once]. I actually had them on the bottom for like three months while I was doing red carpets, but no one knew - so I felt like I had a secret."



## Kit Harington describes himself as a 'big cynic'

The 'Game of Thrones' star - who is known for playing the role of Jon Snow in the popular series - has revealed he is a highly pessimistic person because he always believes he has filmed a "terrible scene" after he shoots an episode of the American fantasy drama. The dark-haired hunk told ABC



News: "I'm such a big cynic, I film a scene and [think] it's going to be a terrible scene." However, the British star is left surprised when other people congratulate him on his performance and are happy with the outcome he continued: "Then when everyone loves it, I'm happy." The 30-year-old actor has teased the upcoming instalment, which is set to air on July 16 this year, is much "grander" and more ambitious than any of the previous six series because the creative team have had a bigger budget to spend on the production, although there will be three less episodes. Speaking about the forthcoming seven-part programme, Kit - whose full name is Christopher Catesby Harington - explained: "[Season seven has] so much more ambition. More grander. "There are less episodes this year, so they spent more money on those episodes. So, the whole scale of it is up." Kit believes 'Game of Thrones' - which is based on George RR Martin's novels - has to end with an unforgettable finale, which no other television show has uncovered before. He said: "That has to happen at the end of 'Thrones', this season and next season. It has to go into places TV hasn't been." Meanwhile, Kit's co-star Sophie Turner - who plays Sansa Stark in the television show - is gutted the series will end and is worried about her future career plans when filming ends because it has been her "life" for the past few years. Speaking previously, she said: "I'm probably sadder than you guys are. It's been my life since I was 13, so I'm pretty sad about it. "It's crazy when the show finishes I'll pretty much be the same age Kit [Harington] was when he started ... which is crazy. I don't know what I'm going to do with my life."

## Pamela Anderson sees Playboy as her 'university'

The model and activist has graced a number of covers for the American magazine and whilst she knows it was a huge part of her life, she feels she has "graduated with honors". She said: "Playboy was my university, I always say - and I graduated with honors." The 49-year-old star has struck up a close friendship with Wikileaks founder Julian Assange, who she thinks is "one of the most important people in the world". Speaking to John Bishop on The Nightly Show on Thursday evening (09.03.17), she added: "I met him through Vivienne Westwood, who wanted us to meet. We started seeing each other every month, and now we see each other a lot more regularly. "I do really think he's one of the most important people in the world, and I think what he does is historic; it's very important. He's very brave and he sacrificed a lot for all of us, every civilian. He's doing this for everybody; he's exposed corruption and everyone has a right to know ... He's passionate about what he does and he's brilliant, so stay tuned." Meanwhile, Pamela previously admitted she is "flattered" by rumours she is dating Julian. She said: "I ended up at the embassy on the wrong day but was able to meet with Julian privately. I asked him how he thought I could be more effective as an activist. We came up with tenure to support relentless activism - giving activists tenure and cover basic needs so that they continue their great work while being able to provide for themselves and their families wherever they may be in the world."





## James Blunt regularly asked if he's a taxi driver

The 43-year-old musician bought a Tuk-Tuk in Thailand, which he has since shipped to Ibiza, and when he drives around in the three-wheeled motorized vehicle he is often stopped by people and is requested to take them to certain destinations. Speaking about his purchase and the reaction to it to ES Magazine, the 'Goodbye My Lover' hitmaker said: "I bought a Tuk-Tuk in Thailand. It cost a bit to get it back to Ibiza, but it's amazing. People stop me, thinking I'm a taxi driver, and then when they recognize me say things, like, 'Oh, my God! You're that guy who sang that song! What happened to you?'" And the dark-haired vocalist's unusual possessions doesn't stop there, as he has admitted he has a burgeoning collection of hotel room key cards, which he has collected over the years in the hope his artistic friend

will have a use for them. Speaking about the additional pieces of memorabilia he has amassed, he said: "Hotel room key cards. I amassed a pile of them thinking that an artist friend of mine could use them — but actually, no matter how many you pull out, they still don't look nearly as colourful or as fun as credit cards" Although James' pal has no use for the collectibles, he has still kept hold of the plastic pieces. He continued: "I really should just throw them away". And the next item on the British star's must-have list is the army barracks in London's Hyde Park, which he used to live in, because he wants to refurbish them. He explained: "I used to live in Hyde Park Barracks. I'd love to buy it and knock it down. It's hideous. There used to be a beautiful old building there until Basil Spence built his monstrosity."

## January Jones wants to find love on 'The Bachelorette'

The former 'Mad Men' actress - who has a five-year-old son, Xander - has been "grooming" herself for the reality show as she liked the idea of dating former Bachelor Ben Higgins, but her publicist insisted she would "ruin" her career if she ever took her reality TV dream seriously. Speaking on 'The Late, Late Show', she said: "I've been grooming myself for it. 'I watch the show, have a couple of glasses of wine, Ben gets kicked off and I'm like — 'Oh, I'm going to be the next Bachelorette and get that guy. 'And then [my publicist] says that's going to ruin my career and I get shot down. But that's my dream!' January, 39, admitted she would like Ben to call her if he was watching, but suggested she's actually more interested in current 'Bachelor' hunk Nick Viall. She said: "[Ben] is not even my favourite. Nick's pretty cute..." January previously admitted she is attracted to "dirty" younger men. She said: "The moment I see someone I think is cute, I Google him and oh, he's 25, and I'm thinking, 'What's my problem?' 'My sister too. She lives in LA and we both like tattoos, guitar, kinda dirty..." And as well as worrying about the emotional connection, January is unsure of



the physical benefits of dating a younger guy. She continued: "Is the sex great though? Do they know what they are doing? I guess you can teach them. "But I want a manly man in flannel with a beard and an axe. But there's always something wrong. Like, he's a Republican." — Bangshowbiz

## Ashley Roberts' beauty essential a coral eyeliner

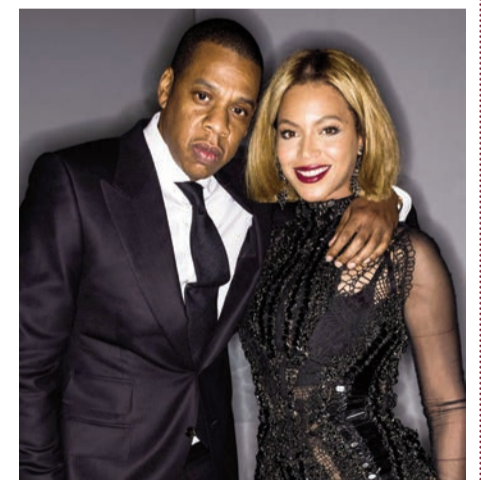
The 35-year-old singer - who is known for being a member of the girl band The Pussycat Dolls for seven years - has admitted if she was to be stranded on a desert island and was only allowed to take a select few cosmetic products with her it would be a "little bit" of bronzer, a red lipstick and a peach-colored eyeliner. Speaking exclusively to BANG Showbiz about her must-have beauty items, the blonde beauty said: "My three beauty products would be a little bit of bronzer, a red lip, or eyeliner like a coral because that's quite nice with a tan and a mascara. Really that's all you need." And the 'Buttons' hitmaker has revealed she prefers a simplistic and minimalist aesthetic for the day time, as well as for a glamorous red carpet event, because she likes to "see [her] face". She explained: "Everyday natural I like some mascara, some bronzer, and throw on a little lip and that's probably it. But if I do red carpet I boost it up a little bit, but I usually like to see my face." Meanwhile Ashley, who launched her debut footwear line Allyn in February, has revealed her middle name, her rebellious upbringing, and being surrounded by "a lot of Western cowboys" largely influenced her Spring/Summer 2017 collection. Speaking about her latest venture, she said: "My father was a musician and he was in the Mamas and the Papas for a little bit, and I grew up around creativity, rock and roll. So a lot of my inspiration is from what I saw growing up. "A lot of the buckles on my shoe are inspired by Phoenix, Arizona, because we have a lot of Western cow-

boys, so I really tried to tie in my inspiration from growing up with my father, and also what inspired me as a teenager - rebelling."



## Beyonce attending spinning classes with husband

The 35-year-old R&B superstar is expecting twins with the 'Encore' rapper, but that isn't stopping the brunette beauty from getting exercise as the couple are regulars at SoulCycle, where they do the intense cycling workout. And on Wednesday, she even took her former Destiny's Child band mate Kelly Rowland along for a class in West Hollywood. A source told Us Weekly magazine: "She's been taking a class almost every day." Hollywood's power couple will reportedly learn the genders of their expected twins this month. The 'Lemonade' hitmaker - who revealed her pregnancy via Instagram - was apparently overheard telling guests at a pre-Oscars bash last month that she and her rap star spouse will know what they are having in the next couple of weeks. A source previously revealed: "She was telling people they'll know the genders of the babies in two weeks." Despite the excitement and speculation surrounding Beyonce's pregnancy, the chart-topping star has so far declined to reveal when she is due to give birth. However, the celebrity duo are planning to buy a 123-room mansion to accommodate their growing family. The couple - who have five-year-old daughter Blue Ivy together - secretly viewed an 85 million Hollywood abode belonging to heiress Petra Stunt and her businessman husband James Stunt earlier in February. A source said: "Beyonce and Jay Z are actively hunting for a house, something they can settle in for the next decade or so, and



Petra's place seems to be very appealing to them. They were shown around two weeks ago and are thinking about whether it works for them. "They know with their expanding brood it's time to get serious about laying some roots, and having a statement pad in Hollywood is at the top of their list." They loved the space and the size, they just need to work out if it's the right fit for the future." But Beyonce and her 47-year-old husband are said to be reluctant to pay the asking price for the house, despite their vast wealth. The source explained: "They said they want to get a good deal though, so they were keen on getting the price down."

## FILM REVIEW

## Kristen Stewart, otherworldly in 'Personal Shopper'

Director Olivier Assayas's bizarre but transfixed "Personal Shopper" is not something that lends itself to a simple description. Loosely, it's about a young artist, Maureen (Kristen Stewart), who is coping (poorly) with the recent death of her twin brother Lewis while working as a personal shopper for a demanding Somebody in Paris. But it's also a ghost story. And a mourning drama. And an erotic psychological thriller. And a whodunit. And a critique of celebrity vapidness (sort of). It is, in short, all over the place. And whatever the pieces add up to is rudely ambiguous.

That's not to say the pieces aren't thought-provoking. Stewart is a beguiling lead, once again playing an ordinary person in close proximity to unfathomable fame and wealth. In Assayas's "Clouds of Sils

Maria" she was the personal assistant and close confidant of a too often ungrateful actress. Here, she's even more disconnected from her employer, who is some kind of wealthy model/humanitarian/person about town. Instead of intellectualizing acting and Hollywood as in "Sils Maria," here she's unenthusiastically expressing her creativity by picking out designer wares for her boss, Kyra, and resisting the temptation to try them on (she's been told not to do that).

Maureen's real obsession, however, is trying to contact her dead brother. They were both mediums and made an oath that if one died, the deceased would contact the other. It's why she's staying in Paris at this terrible job and not moving on to be with her boyfriend.

So Maureen spends nights regu-

larly at Lewis's home, which is bordering on Miss Havisham-level decay despite only being vacant for three months. She stalks around corners and runs toward the scary creaks in the empty home and tells her brother's old girlfriend that she definitely felt a presence. While sparse for a modern ghost story, it is rather effective in its ability to terrify. When Maureen suspects contact, she only wants more, and more and more. Her desperate grasp for definitive meaning presents an intriguing and compellingly stylish portrait of grief and mourning.

But, as you already know, this isn't just a ghost story, and "Personal Shopper" whiplashes back from the spiritual realm to the "real world" of loaned couture and jewelry and Maureen's unfulfilled ambition. It's there that Maureen starts making



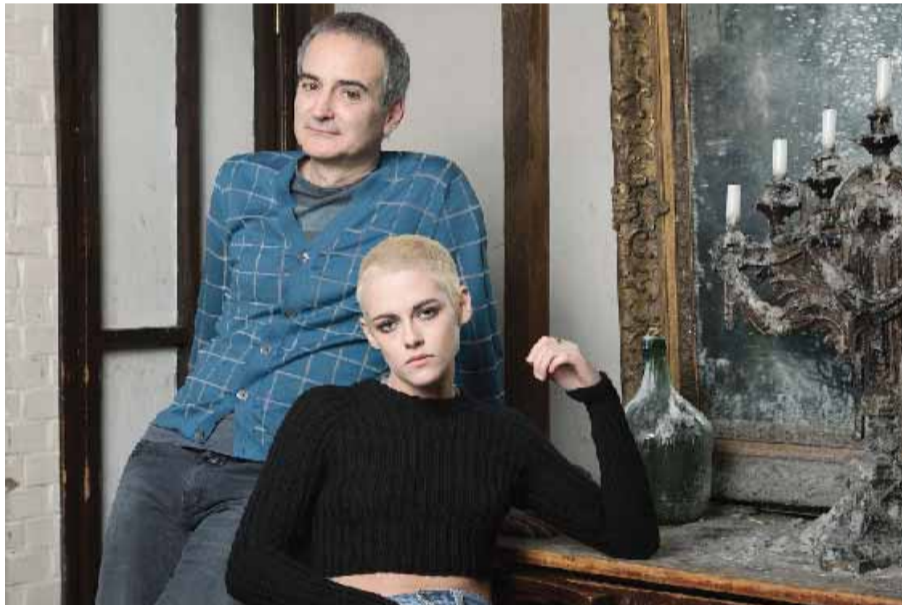
A screenshot from the film 'Personal Shopper'.

contact with another kind of spirit — the elusive being behind the "unknown" number that begins to light up her phone with an obsessive consistency. This mysterious text messenger gets under Maureen's skin pretty quickly. What was initially bemused annoyance turns quickly into an exciting lifeblood for her as the texter asks provocative questions and encourages her to rebel a little (i.e. down some vodka and try on Kyra's forbidden clothes).

Never has a modern film so astutely captured the mundane but all-consuming experience of emotionally charged texting. Instead of silly text clouds popping up in the frame, Assayas takes the viewer right to the phone screen and the tense fingers typing, sending, and waiting as the little bubbles tease that another is coming. And then things take quite an unexpected turn for a film that thus far (besides the apparitions) has been pretty

expectedly subdued. Thank goodness for Stewart, who deftly guides the audience along on this jumbled journey. The always evolving actress is singular in excelling at occupying this ordinary space despite her extraordinary fame off screen. That she's already played an assistant-type for Assayas takes away a bit of the fun of seeing her as a normal bumping up against the equally unreal world of celebrity, but in "Personal Shopper" she gets to go a little more wild. In the end, it might be too much to ask that a story about vague unfulfilled desire adds up to something concrete, but this film that came out swinging crescendos to a deeply unsatisfying shrug.

"Personal Shopper," an IFC Films release, is rated R by the Motion Picture Association of America for "for some language, sexuality, nudity and a bloody violent image." Running time: 105 minutes. Two and a half stars out of four. — AP



Kristen Stewart, right, and writer-director Olivier Assayas pose for a portrait to promote their film, "Personal Shopper" in New York. — AP

## Vietnam King Kong premiere ruined by monster fire

Film buffs with the hottest ticket in town were left running for safety after a giant model of King Kong went up in flames at the sizzling Vietnam premiere of the rebooted horror classic. The blaze began as a glamorous announcer welcomed communist party officials, diplomats and celebrities to the screening of 'Kong: Skull Island' in Ho Chi Minh City on Thursday night. But the razz-matazz soon gave away to farce as a blaze—apparently started by a torch discarded by a fire dancer—consumed the over-sized primate in minutes.

The fire tore through the five-meter high model, sending filmgoers scurrying for cover as flames burned demon-like through King Kong's eyes. The only injuries caused by the fire were to the model of the giant ape—and the pride of event organisers, as video of the fiasco went viral. "Due to a mistake from one

of the (fire) dancers, part of the stage caught fire and spread to all of the decorations," according to a statement by Vietsin Commercial Complex Development, the company in charge of the shopping mall where the premiere was held.

The fire was extinguished after five minutes. But Vietnamese social media lit up with amusement at the bungled launch. "It was better than watching a 3D movie," a facebook user called Hoang Quoc Hiep quipped, while others speculated the fire was part of a PR stunt. Directed by Jordan Vogt-Roberts, the latest outing for Kong features an A-list cast led by Samuel L Jackson, Tom Hiddleston, Brie Larson and John Goodman. The \$185 million blockbuster is the first Hollywood movie to be shot in the communist country and includes many landmark locations, including the limestone cliffs of Ha Long bay. — AFP



This picture taken on March 9, 2017 shows a giant model of King Kong going up in flames during the premiere of the "Kong: Skull Island" in Ho Chi Minh City. — AFP



DOHA FILM INSTITUTE

First Qumra Talk explores the power of online film distribution



Qumra Talks, a new initiative at the third edition of Qumra, the industry event by the Doha Film Institute, kicked off with the first session focusing on International Digital Distribution and Marketing. Pierre Alexandre Labelle, CEO of Under the Milky Way; Gianluca Chakra, Managing Director, Front Row Filmed Entertainment and Nader Sobhan, Iflix head of Middle East and North Africa, came together to give their take on the direction of digital film distribution and whether the potential power of online distribution for independent filmmakers had been hyped or is a much-needed reality.

Pierre Alexandre Labelle took attendees through the basics of Video on Demand (VOD), the role of the digital distributor and different models of digital distribution. Speaking of the value that digital distribution offers filmmakers, Labelle said: "Video on Demand is the present and future of entertainment. This is the way the industry is evolving. Packaged media, DVDs etc., are fast disappearing. Traditional distribution channels, such as movie theatres, give filmmakers a limited audience with the constraints of time and space while VOD allows for tens of thousands of films to be available all the time."

Discussing the way in which people watch entertainment now, Nader Sobhan added: "I can't remember the last time I ran home to watch TV. No one does this anymore. There's been a seismic shift to how we watch entertainment. We no longer have to wait, we can watch films and TV shows through a multitude of platforms and devices. Iflix gives people an all-you-can-eat entertainment platform where they can binge on the films and TV shows they want."

Adding to the argument for filmmakers to harness the power of digital distribution channels, Gianluca Chakra said: "Now that you have many different ways of distributing your film, you have more ways for people to see your film. Filmmakers can find new audiences, or indeed 'their' audience." The discussion also covered the marketing of film on digital distribution platforms, whose natural ally is social media. The panel highlighted platforms such as Facebook and Instagram, which allow distributors and producers to reach a highly targeted audience.

Organized in partnership with the Northwestern University in Qatar, Qumra Talks is a series of three specially curate discussions, open to the public. It brings together leaders from the film, TV, technology and online worlds to offer new perspectives into areas that are redefining the film and media ecosystem.



DOCUMENT HERITAGE OR RISK LOSING YOUR HISTORY, REMINDS QUMRA MASTER RITHY PANH

Cambodian-French filmmaker and Qumra Master Rithy Panh had a word of advice for emerging filmmakers. "If you do not document your story (your past and heritage), you will have no history," he told audiences, taking them on a sublime journey into his own tryst with filmmaking. Panh, the director of *The Missing Picture* (Cambodia, France/2013), nominated for the Academy Award for Best Foreign Film, is acclaimed for his compelling documentaries that probe into the dark annals of Cambodia's history under the Khmer Rouge.

Panh was talking in his masterclass during Qumra, a Doha Film Institute initiative that seeks to provide mentorship, nurturing, and hands-on development for filmmakers from around the world. Qumra is taking place in Qatar from 3 through 8 March. At once personal and yet detached, his works including *The Rice People* (1994), *S21: The Khmer Rouge Death Machine* (2004) and *Duch, Master of the Forges of Hell* (2012), set the framework for the Qumra Masterclass led by Richard Pe a, former programme director of the Film Society of Lincoln Center and the director of the New York Film Festival.

For Panh, each film has been intense excursions into his own life and soul. But for a filmmaker who sought catharsis in documenting the evil that men did, he believes that 'cinema cannot heal anything. Cinema cannot change life or the world but it gives you the possibility that you can change something. That is why cinema is relevant.'

He has opened the Bophana Centre in Phnom Penh to help rebuild the Cambodian film industry. It had a number of young Cambodians working in *First They Killed My Father*, Angelina Jolie's recent film adaptation of Loung Ung's memoir, with Bophana Productions as co-producer. "I don't ask my students to make films of the genocide," says Panh. "We train them and give possibility to making images and sounds." This is part of his mission to document his nation, which he says



is relevant to the region too "because documenting memory is important. So use the digital tools to express your feelings and sensitivity."

Powerful tool

His approach is to filming is not to pan the camera on the subjects "but to be with them." That is why in making *S21*, which has one of the powerful single-shot sequences of a 'perpetuator' describing his deeds inside the prison, Panh refuses to take his camera into the cell.

"My camera stops at the door; if I enter it would be to step on the bodies of the prisoners who were there." Five falcons appeared out of nowhere during the shoot, an enigma, he says is often part of honest documentary making. Documentary is difficult than feature; there are a lot of forbidden things, and moral and ethical considerations, he adds. "But for me, documentary is important because it is a way to show people that you cannot destroy me. I am here, and I am capable of making poetry, and creating more than fiction."

Making film is not easy, he told the young filmmakers. "You do not have to sacrifice life for films; life is more precious.

But if you ask too many questions (on how and what to film) you will be paralyzed. Just go do it, and do it well." Panh took audiences through his early days in France, when he received a camera as a gift and shot his first 'film,' - "it made people laugh and I realized it was a powerful tool." He learnt the art of cinema, as much by attending film school, as by watching countless films. He went to Mali, worked with Souleymane Ciss, was arrested for filming, and the experience gave him "hope that cinema is not just entertainment but also memory, dignity, love, poetry and point of view."

His first film *The Rice People* was a tribute to his grandparents, which is underlined by his intense spirituality that "everybody has a soul; the house, the kitchen."

He also learnt during its making that in directing children it is best left to 'express feelings by themselves,' and which formed the foundation of his cinematic philosophy - 'you do not make film of people but with people.' And from his own experiences - through life and cinema - he has learnt that there is nothing called the 'banality of evil. There is only the choice you make - in anything.'

## 'GAME OF THRONES' ANNOUNCES WINTER IS COMING - IN SUMMER



In this image released by HBO, Kit Harington appears in a scene from "Game of Thrones." HBO said Thursday that the series will return for its seventh season on Sunday, July 16. — AP

**G**ame of Thrones returns for its season seven premiere on July 16, HBO announced Thursday in an elaborate marketing stunt which elated and bemused fans of the hit fantasy show. In a gimmick described by the New York Times as "memorably misguided," the US cable network revealed all in a Facebook Live video showing a block of ice which viewers had to melt by commenting "Fire" to reveal the date.

The process was supposed to take a touch under 15 minutes—already a long time to be concentrating on a block of slowly melting ice—but the video malfunctioned several times, drawing out the process to more than an hour. The debacle sparked snarky posts on Twitter, where #GoTS7 remained one of the top trending hashtags worldwide for hours after the announcement.

"Whoever is in charge of the @GameofThrones S7 premiere date reveal is getting a visit from Septa Unella," tweeted one frustrated fan, invoking the brutal nun of the show's fifth and sixth seasons. "Next year, @HBO, a press release will do," said fan account @BeautyBrienne. "Game of Thrones" tells the story of noble families vying for control of the Iron Throne, all the while keeping one eye on the "White Walkers" leading hordes of the undead toward an invasion from the North.

Since its debut in 2010, the fantasy epic—which has 38 Emmys, more than any other narrative show in history—has been the target of criticism for senseless violence and, more controversially, its pervasive use of rape as a dramatic device. The adult themes have not deterred viewers of the show, which has grown its audience in the US to more than 25 million, and is breaking records across the world.

Season six of "Game of Thrones" was the first to move beyond George RR Martin's "A Song of Ice and Fire" novels. Showrunners David Benioff and DB Weiss last year announced a shortened run of episodes for the final two seasons after HBO had already confirmed season seven would return in summer, a departure from the usual April premieres. The show has been teasing winter's arrival since its pilot episode, and with the season six finale entitled "The Winds of Winter," the camera crew has been forced to wait for colder weather. Benioff told fans at San Diego Comic-Con in July last year shooting would not finish until February and that "there's no way to get the show out there until summer." — AFP



This image released by NBC shows Mandy Moore, left, and Milo Ventimiglia in a scene from "This Is Us." The season finale for the popular time-twisting family drama will air Tuesday at 9 pm EST on NBC. — AP

## 'This is Us' season finale focus is ill-fated Jack, Rebecca

**"T**his is Us" creator Dan Fogelman helpfully explains his time-twisting family drama's ambitious theme: A vision of shared humanity, without end. "There's no dying. There's no you, or me, or them. It's just us," character Kevin says in a fifth-episode scene singled out by Fogelman as key.

"It has always been part of our conceit that people die but stay a very active part of the lives of both the people who knew and loved them" and the generations that follow, the writer-producer said. But do not, even for a moment, expect his courtesy to extend to revelations about Tuesday's season finale (9 pm EST) of the hit NBC drama already renewed through 2019.

Or - spoiler alert for laggard viewers! - that he'll confess when we'll find out how Milo Ventimiglia's Jack dies, or how long it takes Mandy Moore's widowed Rebecca to end up with Miguel (Jon Huertas), Jack's friend and colleague, or any of the other unknowns driving fans to distraction. But Fogelman will say the season-ender is a showcase for Ventimiglia and Moore. While they're part of a gifted ensemble cast, their characters' unexpected journey and the actors' chemistry made them standouts.

"It's a very intense hour of television and I'm incredibly proud of Mandy and Milo's performance in it," Fogelman said. "I'm excited to see people react - hate it, love it, and hopefully come back to try to find out some things." Following Jack and Rebecca, their three children and others connected to them isn't a linear experience. "This is Us" hopscoches between decades past and present as we meet people at different stages in their lives. There are scenes whose place on the timeline is uncertain, and the characters' connections emerge gradually.

### 'Lost' meets 'thirtysomething'

Think of it as "thirtysomething" meets "Lost," everyday pathos sliced into a jigsaw puzzle. In season one, Jack and Rebecca Pearson make a snap decision to adopt an abandoned African-American baby after losing one of their triplets at birth, and the family's multiethnic nature is part but only part - of the layered and emotionally intimate series. Because of its zigzag nature, we get glimpses of events yet to be explained.

Moore, for one, recommends taking the stories as they come, especially the circumstances of Jack's death. "I encourage people to almost forget that Jack is not here present day," she said. "I would hate for people to be sitting on pins and needles and saying, 'Is this the episode?' 'Is that the episode?'"

But that intrigue likely is part of the drama's success. "This is Us" has broken into the top 10 shows among total viewers, unusual for a freshman series, and is a big winner with advertiser-coveted young adult viewers ages 18 to 49 and with

women. Its numbers are only getting better. Last Tuesday, it drew its biggest audience yet, 11.2 million, and attracted 20 percent more young adults than its prior telecast. Among young adult women, "This Is Us" is the No 1 broadcast program for the season.

Ask Fogelman what's behind the show's appeal and he gamely offers up several possibilities. The time-shifting approach adds an element of mystery to the family and "twists up their narrative in a way that maybe makes people pay attention to a family drama in a way they don't always." The casting, including the actors who play the three grown Pearson children, Sterling K Brown, Chrissy Metz and Justin Hartley as, respectively Randall, Kate and Kevin. Count in Susan Kelechi Watson as Randall's wife, Beth; Chris Sullivan as Kate's boyfriend, Toby, and Ron Cephas Jones as Randall's birth father, William.

The characters all are "well-meaning and good but incredibly flawed," providing a mirror in which viewers may see versions of themselves and their own relationships. But maybe he's overthinking it, Fogelman says: "It honestly may work because people enjoy looking at Mandy and Milo and there's not too much more to it than that." (For the record, he also lauded them as "actors' actors. They just happen to have the faces of stars.")

Told of Fogelman's suggestion that she and Ventimiglia might be irresistible eye candy and the show's draw, Moore laughingly brushes it off. "Dan, of course, totally deflecting his genius writing and brilliant concept," she said of Fogelman, a University of Pennsylvania graduate (in English) who took a year's side trip to Oxford University. His film credits include "Bolt" and "Crazy Stupid Love."

Critics largely agree with Moore's assessment, showering "This Is Us" with the kind of praise that these days goes to programs on cable and streaming platforms, not network TV. Emmy Awards should follow. Fogelman and the cast appreciate it all, but viewer devotion can have its downside. "I've been lucky enough to work on some very successful things, movies, but never quite had something like this before," Fogelman said. "You think, 'Oh wow, we did it!' but it comes with a whole load of new stressors and problems," including audience reaction to the foretold shattering of Jack and Rebecca's life together. He tries to avoid reading online comments but insists they wouldn't sway the show's course if he did. "We're going to stick with what our original plan is," he said, and have faith it won't alienate viewers. "But if we do, so be it. But I don't think we will." — AP

# Meet Cuba's top detective writer, incognito at home

**D**etective fiction fans and literature buffs worldwide love Leonardo Padura; some watch his sleuth Mario Conde on Netflix. But back home in Communist Cuba, the author is virtually unknown. "I am semi-visible," the grey-haired writer, 61, tells AFP with a smile. He has spent the morning smoking and drinking coffee while working on the latest Conde novel in the Havana house where he continues to live and work. "I very rarely appear on television in Cuba. I rarely appear in the media. But I have lots of readers."

### Cuban 'Tolstoy'

Padura won international acclaim for his 2009 book "The Man Who Loved Dogs," a historical thriller about the agent who assassinated Soviet exile Leon Trotsky. A politically loaded tale for an author living in Communist Cuba, The New York Times likened it to the work of the Russian greats Tolstoy and Dostoyevsky.

But Padura is perhaps best known for

the series of novels starring his hard-drinking, heavy-smoking Havana detective. Lieutenant Conde was immortalized last year in a Netflix original mini-series. But with little internet access on the island, few Cubans are likely to see it.

With thousands of books sold and prizes under his belt, Padura could live comfortably abroad if he wanted to. His novels have been translated into 20 languages. He spends four months a year abroad for publishing commitments. But Padura says there is only one place where he can write: his home neighborhood of Mantilla. Dressed in shorts and sandals, he tends the banana and lemon trees in the grounds of the house, Villa Alicia, that he shares with his wife Lucia. He even repairs the brickwork, with the help of a builder friend.

### 'Ideological problems'

Cuba's regime repressed writers and intellectuals in the 1970s for criticizing the Communist revolution. "They were silenced

and sidelined," Padura says. He was not writing during that period. Like many Cubans-including revolutionary leader Fidel Castro himself-he had dreamed of becoming a baseball player.

He worked for the Communist state media in the 1980s and 1990s. But later he became what he calls one of the government's "usual suspects." Officials once judged from his work in a culture magazine that he had "ideological problems," and sent him to be "re-educated" at another publication. Even there he defied pressure and carried on "writing what I wanted," he says.

### Searching for answers

Artistic life became freer in the 1990s, even as the economy plunged, after the fall of Cuba's Communist protector, the Soviet Union. Now Cuba is gradually opening up its economy and foreign relations.

But uncertainty hangs over its warming ties with the United States under President

Donald Trump. With one eye on history, Padura notes that sales of George Orwell's dystopian allegory "1984" reportedly rose in the United States after Trump took office. "People are not finding answers in politics," Padura says.

"Some people go to church to pray and find answers there. Others read and find answers in literature." With his reflections on nationalism and totalitarianism and his allegorical echoes of Soviet themes, Orwell in his time touched on some of the same subjects that Padura is covering.

A small, devoted local readership snapped up Padura's books at the recent Havana Literary Festival. But another planned event-the presentation of a new edition of "The Man Who Loved Dogs"-was canceled by authorities without explanation. Padura is used to being largely overlooked by the country's media. But he insists that he will not leave his country. "Without Cuba, Leonardo Padura the writer would not exist," he said. — AFP



This file photo taken on March 18, 1997, shows a man displaying a T-shirt tribute to rapper Biggie Smalls aka The Notorious B.I.G., as friends and fans lined the funeral procession route through his old neighborhood in Brooklyn. — AFP

## Tributes 20 years after death of The Notorious B.I.G.

**T**he rap world paid tribute Thursday to one of its defining figures, The Notorious B.I.G., 20 years after he died in a still murky shooting. Diddy, a fellow New York rapper who was one of the slain rapper's proteges, marked the anniversary with an Instagram call for fans to recite their favorite Notorious B.I.G. verses and post the cover versions online.

Diddy wrote that the artist-also known as Biggie Smalls or, after the title of one of his songs, Big Poppa-was "the greatest rapper of all time." He described his first meeting with Biggie at a soul food restaurant in Harlem, saying, "The first thing I remember was how big and black he was," in contrast to many of the rappers who had gone mainstream by the 1990s.

Among the artists who posted tributes was the rising Canadian rapper Belly who gave his rendition of the opening verses of Biggie's "It Was All a Dream." Biggie, whose real name was Christopher Wallace, was shot in an SUV as he visited Los Angeles on March 9, 1997, with his murder remaining officially unsolved. Speculation immediately rose that his death was linked to a feud between East Coast and West Coast rappers that had been simmering for years, although some music historians say the coastal rift was exaggerated for commercial reasons. His death came less than a year after Tupac Shakur, the legendary rapper from the Los Angeles scene, was himself gunned down in Las Vegas.

In a grim anniversary tie-in, a memorabilia dealer has put on sale the cars in which Tupac and Biggie were shot. In a sign that they rival each other even in death, each car is for sale for the same price — \$1.5 million. The dealer, Moments in Time, said that a family had bought the SUV in which Biggie was killed and did not know of its history until a detective informed them in 2005 that it may be needed for the investigation. — AFP

# Broadway musical celebrates unsung Canadian 9/11 heroes

**O**n September 11, 2001 they quietly provided refuge to nearly 7,000 anguished airline passengers. Nearly 16 years later, ordinary Canadians from Newfoundland are the heroes of a musical making its Broadway debut. On that terrible day, 38 jets landed at Gander airport just minutes apart when US airspace closed after the Al-Qaeda plane strikes on New York, Washington and Pennsylvania, which killed nearly 3,000 people.

Gander may once have been a busy refueling base for trans-Atlantic flights, but those years were long gone by and the airport had never known such a frenzied pace of arrivals. Thousands of residents mobilized to help the trapped passengers, some forced to spend more than 20 hours on planes before being allowed to disembark. The ensuing days of cohabitation left an indelible impression on everyone.

"The first day, these 7,000 people that landed were strangers. And after five days, it was like 7,000 people added to your family," recalls Gander mayor Claude Elliott, who is stepping down this fall after 21 years in the job. But if it might be easy to imagine such fraught days being turned into a book, a film or even a play, a musical was less easy to imagine.

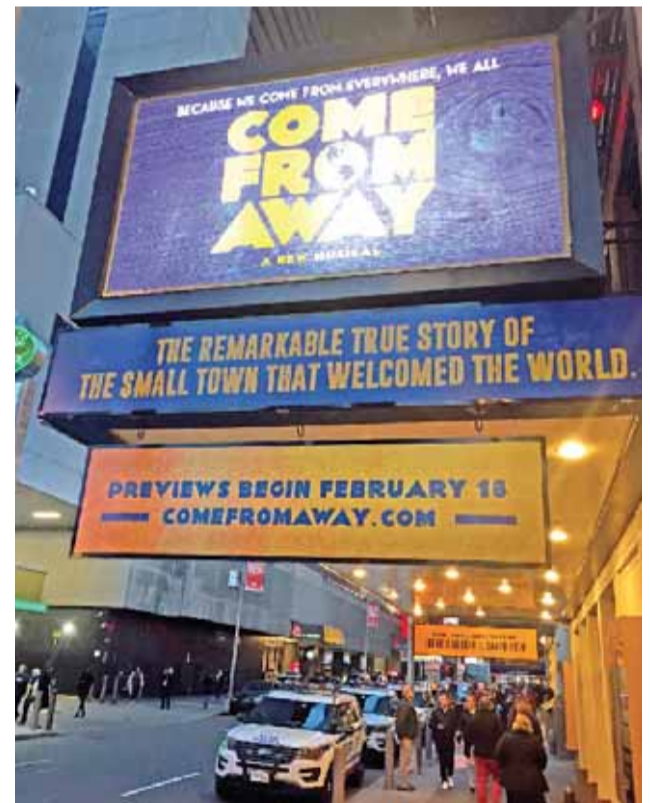
When Elliott first heard that two Canadian writers were working to turn those frantic days into the plot of a musical, he had his doubts. "It was a little bit scary at first," he admits, not least because the mayor's character is so central to the cast. But writers Irene Sankoff and David Hein have turned dozens of interviews into "Come From Away," a work faithful to the atmosphere of those five extraordinary days. Each actor plays at least two roles, often that of a Gander resident and an airline passenger.

### 'Something nice'

The musical, which makes its official Broadway debut Sunday-after successful trial runs in San Diego, Seattle, Toronto and Washington-has deftly avoided pathos and is peppered with a light comedic touch. The songs are less flamboyant than some of Broadway's big hitters, the music is subdued, the orchestra sits on stage rather than in the pit, and there is a Celtic influence and a disheveled tone that do much to capture the mood. Elliott says he loves the end result.

"It's first class," he says. "It's certainly telling the story that happened in Gander. It's right on." He saw it three times in Canada, and is planning to attend the show twice in New York, where Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau is also to take in a performance on March 15. The underlying message of kinship between citizens from all over the world is a prescient theme in the context of the global refugee crisis and Donald Trump's protectionist anti-migration policies.

The passengers, especially Americans returning from overseas,



The Musical "Come from Aways" plays at the Gerald Schoenfeld Theatre on March 9, 2017, in New York. — AFP

"needed a lot of help, food, clothing, but most important, they needed love and compassion," recalls Elliott. "A lot of American passengers were wondering what kind of country they were going back to. We gave them that reassurance that goodness and kindness will prevail every time over hatred," he tells AFP.

The writers avoid the trap of cliches by showcasing the tensions, frustrations and impatience, but also prejudice with a Muslim passenger who arouses suspicion. They also include the story of one of the airline pilots, Beverley Bass, who tells the audience about being a woman in a man's world and the pitfalls she needs to navigate to become their equal. "A lot of people learned a lot of things about life," remembers Natasha Gagarin, 41, a distant cousin of the Soviet astronaut and who was a United stewardess on one of the last planes to land on Gander that day. "It was a horrible day, but something nice came out of it," she says. — AFP



An Indian widow dances during celebrations for Holi or "festival of colors" in Vrindavan.



A Hindu priest throws colored powder on to devotees inside Banke Bihari temple during Holi festival celebrations in Vrindavan.

# India's shunned widows spray color to celebrate Holi



Indian widows celebrate Holi or the "festival of colors" in Vrindavan.



Indian students celebrate the Holi festival with colored powder at Guru Nanak Dev University in Amritsar.

**W**idows in India's northern town of Vrindavan smashed social taboos by spraying each other with brilliant powdered colors to celebrate Holi, a Hindu festival that ushers in spring. Tradition bars Indian widows from celebrations as their presence is considered ominous. Although fast dying out, the custom still persists in some places. Such women are ostracized and, irrespective of age, obliged to wear drab clothes, often white to signify mourning, and avoid jewelry or adornment. But a hermitage in India's most populous state of Uttar Pradesh is working to change public attitudes toward widows during Holi, which falls on Monday this year. Widows smeared each other with color, danced and sang during Thursday's celebration at the hermitage run by a non-profit group, Sulabh International.

"I have not played Holi like this in the last 30 years," said one participant, Gaurbani Sheel. "This has changed my mood, despite being a widow." Holi, one of the most popular festivals in the Hindu calendar, can last nearly 10 days in some parts of the state, although it is more often limited to a day elsewhere. Besides throwing color, people eat quantities of a traditional sweet dumpling called 'gujiya'. In the nearby ancient holy city of Varanasi, devotees and "sadhus", or holy men, daubed each other with ashes from funeral pyres at the Manikarnika Ghat, where Hindus cremate their dead on the Ganges river. Devotees sounded pellet drums and danced amid the pyres during

the customary sprinkling with ashes, days before the main festival that is meant to appease a principal Hindu deity, Lord Shiva, widely seen as the god of creation and destruction. "It is the ancient traditional belief of Varanasi that Lord Shiva comes to the crematorium to celebrate Holi with his devotees and ghosts," said worshipper Gulshan Kapoor. — Reuters



A Hindu priest, left, leaves after pouring colored water onto devotees inside Banke Bihari temple during Holi festival celebrations in Vrindavan.



Indian students take a selfie as they celebrate the Holi festival. — AP/AFP photos

**Hounded out**

# Battle to save beloved British dogs

**E**clipsed in the rush for so-called designer dogs, some famous British breeds are now threatened with extinction, the world's biggest dog show Crufts warned as it kicked off its annual showpiece event. Globally-famous native breeds are being squeezed out by handbag-sized pooches better suited to modern busy lifestyles and smaller homes, said the famous dog show. But Crufts is trying to raise their profiles before the 160,000 visitors expected at the National Exhibition Centre in Birmingham, central England, for the four-day extravaganza, which closes Sunday.

"We could see these breeds effectively become extinct," said Bill Lambert, health and breeder services manager at The Kennel Club, which runs Crufts and is the governing body



**A Pug dog waits to be shown on the second day of the Crufts dog show at the National Exhibition Centre in Birmingham, central England, on March 10, 2017. — AFP photos**

for all matters canine in Britain. "We have seen a trend in Britain away from larger dogs to smaller dogs due to lifestyles and people living in cities more. It's a vicious circle: they become less popular, then people see them less and forget about them," he told AFP.

The Kennel Club registers newborn puppies, with Labrador Retrievers (33,856), Cocker Spaniels (21,854) and the increasingly popular French Bulldogs (21,470) topping the charts last year. But some native former favorites are now down at the bottom and classed as vulnerable British breeds, including Bloodhounds (53), King Charles Spaniels (84) and Mastiffs (102).

**World famous to extinct?**

Greyfriars Bobby, who held a 14-year daily vigil at his master's grave in Edinburgh until his own death in 1872, remains a world-famous dog. But Skye Terriers like him now top the vulnerable British breeds list, with just 28 puppies registered last year.

There are an estimated 600 to 800 left in Britain and only 3,000 worldwide, meaning extreme care must be taken with bloodlines to avoid inbreeding.

"They've become unfashionable. It's horrendous and awful. I wish people would get to know them," said Margaret Samuel, a Skye



**A woman feeds an Afghan hound an ice cream**

owner and enthusiast who brought along her pet Donald. "He'll lick you to death!" she said. "They look funny and I think they have a sense of humour. They certainly have their own opinion." Dandie Dinmont Terriers were all the rage in the 1800s, with queen Victoria jumping on the craze.

"Dandies were the first celebrity breed," said owner Kevin Noble. But only 91 puppies were registered last year. They typically cost around £1,000 (\$1,200, 1,150 euros). Dandies were bred to hunt badgers and like Otterhounds, their working purpose has been outlawed, harming numbers.

**'Chilled out' hounds**

However, Otterhounds have adapted to become docile family dogs. "I don't think Heather would know what to do with an otter," Daryl Brotchie, an Otterhound Club committee member, said of her beloved pet. "They're very chilled out. Look into their eyes



**A Bulldog rests in its pen**



**A woman grooms a Poodle dog**

and they look into your soul."

Some 400 Otterhounds are left in their native Britain and 800 worldwide. "You fall in love with the breed. But the gene pool is now really small," said a worried Brotchie. Just 40 newborn puppies were registered last year. Some hope a celebrity owner could revive the fortunes of vulnerable breeds. But even Pembroke Welsh Corgis-famously beloved of Queen Elizabeth II-are on the vulnerability watch list, with just 393 puppies registered in 2016.

**Top dogs**

Now in its 126th year, Crufts sees dog owners from Britain and around the world bring their pets to compete at the 25 acre (10 hectare) site. Dogs are judged for best of breed, with winners competing for Best in Show the ultimate Crufts prize. "At heart it is a very serious dog show, but Crufts is an extravaganza," said The Kennel Club's Lambert. "It is an institution in British culture and winning Crufts is like winning Wimbledon-it's the pinnacle." — AFP

## TREND MICRO '2016 SECURITY ROUNDUP' REVEALS 752% INCREASE IN RANSOMWARE 81 BILLION CYBER THREATS BLOCKED, AN INCREASE OF 56%

**DUBAI:** Trend Micro Incorporated (TYO: 4704; TSE: 4704), a global leader in cybersecurity solutions, yesterday released its annual security roundup report, "2016 Security Roundup: A Record Year for Enterprise Threats," which proves 2016 was truly the year of online extortion. Cyber threats reached an all-time high in 2016, with ransomware and Business Email Compromise (BEC) scams gaining increased popularity among cybercriminals looking to extort enterprises. A 752 percent increase in new ransomware families ultimately resulted in \$1 billion in losses for enterprises worldwide.

Trend Micro and the Zero Day Initiative (ZDI) discovered 765 vulnerabilities in 2016. Of these, 678 were brought to ZDI through their bug bounty program, then ZDI verifies and discloses the issue to the affected vendor. Compared to vulnerabilities discovered by Trend Micro and ZDI in 2015, Apple saw a 145 percent increase in vulnerabilities, while Microsoft bugs decreased by 47 percent. Additionally, the use of new vulnerabilities in exploit kits dropped by 71 percent, which is partially due to the arrest of the threat actors behind Angler that took place in June 2016.

"As threats, have diversified and grown in sophistication, cybercriminals have moved on from primarily targeting individuals to focusing on where the money is: enterprises," said Ed Cabrera, chief cybersecurity officer for Trend Micro. "Throughout 2016 we witnessed threat actors extort companies and organizations for the sake of profitability and we don't anticipate this trend slowing down. This research aims to educate enterprises on the threat tactics actively

being used to compromise their data, and help companies adopt strategies to stay one step ahead and protect against potential attacks."

In 2016, the Trend Micro Smart Protection Network(tm) blocked more than 81 billion threats for the entire year, which is a 56 percent increase from 2015. In the second half of 2016, more than 3,000 attacks per second were blocked for customers. During this time, 75 billion of blocked attempts were email based, illustrating that email remains the top entry point for threats. Report highlights include:

### Growth of Ransomware

Throughout the course of 12 months, the number of ransomware families grew from 29 to 247. One leading factor to explain this increase is the profitability of ransomware. Although individuals and organizations are encouraged not to pay the ransom, cybercriminals still managed to rake in roughly \$1 billion last year. BEC Scams on the Rise - Much like ransomware, BEC scams proved to be incredibly lucrative for cybercriminals, resulting in an average of \$140,000 in losses for companies around the globe. These scams also highlighted the effectiveness of social engineering techniques for threat actors targeting enterprises.

### Variety of Vulnerabilities

Trend Micro and the Zero Day Initiative (ZDI) discovered a record high number of vulnerabilities in 2016, most of which were found in Adobe Acrobat Reader DC and Advantech's WebAccess. Both applications are widely used throughout enterprise and Supervisory

Control and Data Acquisition (SCADA) systems. Angler Exploit's Exit - Following the arrest of 50 cybercriminals, the once dominant Angler exploit kit slowly faded out of the spotlight until it ceased to exist. While it didn't take long for new exploit kits to burst onto the scene in Angler's absence, by the end of 2016, the amount of vulnerabilities included in exploit kits had decreased by 71 percent.

### Trojans and ATM Malware

Cybercriminals have been using ATM malware, skimming cards and banking Trojans for a while now. However, the attacks have diversified in recent years, giving threat actors access to personally identifiable information (PII) and credentials, which can also be used to gain a foothold inside enterprise networks. Mirai's Massive Attack - In October 2016, attackers took advantage of poorly secured IoT devices to issue a distributed denial-of-service (DDoS) attack that hijacked approximately 100,000 IoT devices and forced websites such as Twitter, Reddit and Spotify to go offline for several hours.

### Yahoo's History Making

Yahoo experienced the largest data breach in history in August 2013, compromising 1 billion account users' information. However, the incident was not disclosed until three months after reports of a separate data breach in September 2016, which involved 500 million more accounts. These events stirred up the responsible disclosure conversation and the accountability companies have to their customers regarding the security of user data.

## FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS UNDER PRESSURE TO RAMP UP SECURITY

**DUBAI:** Financial institutions are under pressure to ramp up security, with trends such as the increased take-up of mobile banking putting banks' IT infrastructure defenses at growing risk of cyber-attack. Increasingly, customers are playing an important role in highlighting security incidents, with a quarter (24%) of financial institutions saying that some of the threats they faced in 2016 were identified and reported to them by a customer.

According to the Financial Institutions Security Risks research from Kaspersky Lab and B2B International, security investment is a high priority for banks and financial institutions. Suffering from attacks both on their own infrastructure and on their customers, retail banks spend three times as much on IT security as comparably sized non-financial institutions. Moreover, 64% of banks admit that they will invest in improving their IT security regardless of the return-on-investment, in order to meet the growing demands of government regulators, top management and even their customers.

Despite banks putting serious efforts and budgets into safeguarding their perimeters against known and unknown cyber-threats, protecting the breadth of IT infrastructure that now exists - from traditional to specialized, ATMs and Point-of-Sale terminals - has proved difficult. The vast and ever-changing threat landscape, coupled with the challenge of improving the security habits of customers, has provided fraudsters with ever more points of vulnerability to exploit.

### Emerging Risks

Emerging risks related to mobile banking are highlighted in the report as a trend that can expose banks to new cyberthreats. 42% of banks predict that an overwhelming majority of their customers will use mobile banking within three years, but admit that users are too careless in their online behavior. The majority of the banks surveyed admitted (46%) that their customers are frequently under attack from phishing attempts, with 70% of banks also reporting financial fraud incidents as a result, leading to monetary loss.

Rising phishing and social engineering attacks on customers have seen banks reassess their security efforts in this area. 61% of respondents see improving the security of apps and websites that their customers use as one of their main security priorities, closely followed by the implementation of more complex authentication and verification of log-in details (a key priority for 52%). Although they are vulnerable to the phishing tricks and tools that target their customers, banks are still more concerned about another 'old enemy' - targeted attacks. And they've got good reasons to be worried - targeted attack methods are becoming more common-place, with malware-as-a-service platforms even being used to harm financial organizations.

### Persistent Threats

Experience of real incidents shows us that investments into security in the financial industry are well worth it in most cases - financial institutions report significantly fewer security events than companies of the same size in other industries - with the only exception of targeted attacks and malware. The detection of abnormal, potentially malicious activity, combining legitimate tools with fileless malware, requires a combination of advanced anti-targeted solutions and extended security intelligence. Still, 59% of financial firms are yet to embrace third-party threat intelligence.

Types of general security event experienced: Malware and targeted attacks are the only incidents that banking organizations experience more than their peers in other industries. Sharing threat intelligence would help banks to identify new and emerging threats quickly, an important point for them to note, considering the low levels of concern banks have about some of their most vulnerable devices, such as ATMs. Sharing more third party intelligence, in this respect, could help banks prepare for threats that they may not otherwise expect.

### ATM Protection

Banks show comparatively low levels of concern about the threat of financial loss due to attacks on ATMs, despite being highly vulnerable to attacks of this nature. Only 19% of banks are concerned with attacks on ATM and cash withdrawal machines, despite the growing rate of malware targeting this part of a banks' infrastructure (in the 2016 threats review we've reported a 20% growth in ATM malware compared to 2015).



**LONDON:** Photo shows London landmarks, including the BT Tower and the London Eye on the skyline in London. British telecoms giant BT Group has agreed to legally separate its broadband unit Openreach to remedy concerns over competition in the sector, the company announced yesterday. — AFP

## DISASTER RESPONSE GOES DIGITAL - BUT NOT FOR ALL

**NEW ORLEANS:** What do you do if you are a disaster manager in a coastal city when a powerful earthquake hits off-shore? You start tweeting life-saving updates and safety information to the public, alert your volunteers via SMS and set up a helpline. You host a conference call for rescue workers using open-source tools and provide them with access to key documents via an online file-sharing service before reaching out to emergency accommodation providers through lodgings websites. At a conference on resilience in New Orleans this week, technology companies outlined the increasingly sophisticated tools they are offering - on an altruistic basis - to help people cope better when disasters strike.

They are also collaborating to advance the speed and efficacy with which those tools can be deployed, said Kellie Bentz, head of global disaster response and relief for online accommodation marketplace Airbnb. "In this space, we don't believe there is any room for competition - we should all be working together; there is just too much to do," she said. Tech firms, including Google and Facebook, have "a very informal charter" to talk to each other so they can work better with governments and aid groups, she added. And it's not just in natural disasters like earthquakes and floods that tech companies are offering help.

### Helping people in need

Later this year Airbnb plans to launch a new community of socially minded hosts that want to put up - for free - people in need, from refugees to aid workers and the homeless, said Bentz. The company already enables its 3 million hosts to offer shelter to people hit by emergencies and those who assist them - a service that has been activated in some 55 disasters globally since 2013, with more than 2,000 nights' accommodation donated. Cloud communications platform Twilio.org, meanwhile, is partnering with the International Rescue Committee charity so that refugees in Greece can find out the date of their asylum appointment in their own language via a phone-based voice response system.

Tom Tarantino, Twitter's public policy manager, said the company aims to "weaponise Twitter in a disaster" by helping users make the most of different features - from dedicated hashtags to Twitter handle lists, adverts and live video - to get vital information to those affected as quickly as possible. If communications go down or are overloaded in a disaster, an SMS version of Twitter can be activated, or Twilio can use its connections to find out which data networks are still on and figure out when others will be up and running, the experts said.

Yet while these companies are seeking innovative ways to assist in disasters, they acknowledged technology cannot always substitute for human support, and some of those affected may be reluctant to try out new things in tough circumstances. To overcome this issue, Airbnb sends employees and volunteers to disaster zones to help people use the online platform, Bentz said. "Not all digital solutions are right to solve human problems," said Erika Murdock Balbuena, head of strategic initiatives with Twilio.org. In a crisis, people may not want to have to sign up for something on a web page but just be reassured they will have a safe place to sleep, she added.

### Digital illiteracy

In a separate discussion at the conference, government officials highlighted the difficulties of using vast amounts of information pouring in via social media to make good decisions. "From an emergency management perspective, it's a huge mess," said Sara Estes White, deputy chief information officer for New Orleans. "How do you take it and make it useful?" Mark Dix of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration said agencies must become "clever in how we manipulate, use, sort and filter that data" to answer the right questions. Software has been developed that can mine tweets and other crowd-sourced reports from crisis zones to find out what is happening where - from mapping floods in Jakarta to identifying relief needs after Hurricane Sandy hit New York in 2012. But some vulnerable groups - often the elderly or the poorest families - cannot use the internet, experts cautioned. In New Orleans, which was battered by Hurricane Katrina in 2005, around two-thirds of the lowest-income groups do not have access to the internet, said Estes White. — Reuters



**FRANKFURT:** Photo shows the US Consulate General in Frankfurt, Germany. WikiLeaks has published thousands of documents purportedly taken from the Central Intelligence Agency's Center for Cyber Intelligence, a dramatic release that appears to expose intimate details of America's cyberespionage toolkit. — AP

## WIKILEAKS' AID ON CIA SOFTWARE HOLES COULD BE MIXED BLESSING

### ANTI-SECRECACY SITE OFFERS TO HELP FIX VULNERABILITIES

**NEW YORK:** WikiLeaks has offered to help the likes of Google and Apple identify the software holes used by purported CIA hacking tools - and that puts the tech industry in something of a bind. While companies have both a responsibility and financial incentive to fix problems in their software, accepting help from WikiLeaks raises legal and ethical questions. And it's not even clear at this point exactly what kind of assistance WikiLeaks can offer.

### The promise

WikiLeaks founder Julian Assange said Thursday that the anti-secrecy site will help technology companies find and fix software vulnerabilities in everyday gadgets such as phones and TVs. In an online news conference, Assange said some companies had asked for more details about the purported CIA cyberespionage toolkit that he revealed in a massive disclosure on Tuesday. "We have decided to work with them, to give them some exclusive access to the additional technical details we have, so that fixes can be developed and pushed out," Assange said. The digital blueprints for what he described as "cyberweapons" would be published to the world "once this material is effectively disarmed by us."

Any conditions WikiLeaks might set for its cooperation weren't immediately known. Nor was it clear if WikiLeaks holds additional details on specific vulnerabilities, or merely the tools designed to exploit them. Apple declined comment on the WikiLeaks offer, and Google didn't respond to requests for comment. Microsoft said it hopes that anyone with knowledge of software vulnerabilities would report them through the company's usual channels.

### Legal questions

Tech companies could run into legal difficulties in accepting the offer, especially if they have government contracts or employees with security clearances. "The unauthorized release of classified documents does not mean it's unclassified," said Stewart Baker, a former official at the Department of Homeland Security and former legal counsel for the National Security Agency. "Doing business with WikiLeaks and reviewing classified documents poses a real risk for at least their government contracting arms and their cleared employees."

Other lawyers, however, are convinced that much of the information in the documents is so widely known that they are now part of the public domain. That means tech companies

would be unlikely to face any legal liability for digging deeper with WikiLeaks. Alternatively, suppose tech companies don't accept WikiLeaks' offer to help fix any security flaws - and are subsequently hacked. At that point, they could face charges of negligence, particularly in Europe where privacy laws are much stricter than in the US, said Michael Zweiback, a former assistant US attorney and cybercrime adviser now in private practice.

### Getting too close to Wikileaks

Public perception might be a bigger problem. "They don't want to be seen as endorsing or supporting an organization with a tainted reputation and an unclear agenda," said Robert Cattanach, a former US Department of Justice attorney. During the 2016 election, WikiLeaks published thousands of emails, some embarrassing, from breached Democratic Party computers and the account of a top aide to Hillary Clinton. US intelligence agencies concluded those emails were stolen by hackers connected to the Russian government in an attempt to help Donald Trump win the presidency.

The CIA did not respond directly to Assange's offer, but it appeared to take a dim view of it. "Julian Assange is not exactly a bastion of truth and integrity," CIA spokeswoman Heather Fritz Horniak said. But most tech companies already have digital hotlines to receive tips about security weaknesses, even if they come from unsavory characters. So it wouldn't break new ground for them to consult with a shadowy organization such as WikiLeaks.

### A better path

Ideally, the CIA would have shared such vulnerabilities directly with companies, as other government agencies have long done. In that case, companies would not only be dealing with a known entity in an aboveboard fashion, they might also obtain a more nuanced understanding of the problems than their engineers could glean from documents or lines of computer code. And if companies could learn details about how the CIA found these vulnerabilities, they might also find additional holes using the same technique, said Johannes Ullrich, director of the Internet Storm Center at the SANS Institute.

And there are risks obtaining actual hacking tools from WikiLeaks. Some might have unadvertised features that could, for instance, start extracting data as soon as they launch. Ullrich said the CIA also might have left some traps to attack people running its exploits. — AP

**BBC FIRST**

- 00:25 Doctors
- 00:55 Line Of Duty
- 03:05 Mum
- 03:35 Uncle
- 04:05 Doctors
- 05:05 Father Brown
- 06:00 Doctors
- 09:00 Eastenders
- 10:30 The Durrells
- 13:00 Casualty
- 13:55 Doctors
- 15:00 The Durrells
- 17:30 Doctors
- 18:00 Eastenders
- 19:00 Father Brown
- 20:00 Last Tango In Halifax
- 21:00 Poldark
- 21:55 Silk
- 23:50 Line Of Duty

- 10:55 Life Or Debt
- 11:45 The It Crowd
- 13:00 Sweat Inc.
- 13:50 Urban Tarzan
- 14:40 Lip Sync Battle
- 15:30 Disaster Date
- 16:45 Key And Peele
- 18:00 Comedy Central Presents
- Comedy 3alwagef
- 18:30 Workaholics
- 18:55 The Jim Gaffigan Show
- 19:20 I Live With Models
- 19:44 Idiotsitter
- 20:07 Brotherhood
- 20:30 Comedy Central Presents
- Comedy 3alwagef
- 21:00 The Daily Show - Global Edition
- 21:30 Inside Amy Schumer
- 21:54 Important Things With Demetri Martin
- 22:18 Broad City
- 22:42 Broad City
- 23:05 The Half Hour
- 23:30 The Daily Show - Global Edition

- 07:00 Barefoot Contessa: Back To Basics
- 08:00 The Pioneer Woman
- 09:00 Siba's Table
- 10:00 Anna Olson: Bake
- 11:00 Man Fire Food
- 12:00 Diners, Drive-Ins And Dives
- 13:00 Chopped
- 14:00 Barefoot Contessa: Back To Basics
- 14:30 Barefoot Contessa: Back To Basics
- 15:00 The Pioneer Woman
- 16:00 Siba's Table
- 16:30 Siba's Table
- 17:00 Anna Olson: Bake
- 18:00 Man Fire Food
- 19:00 Diners, Drive-Ins And Dives
- 20:00 Restaurant Stakeout
- 21:00 Mystery Diners
- 22:00 Diners, Drive-Ins And Dives
- 23:00 Man Fire Food

- 08:30 Cougar Town
- 09:00 The Ellen DeGeneres Show
- 10:00 Fresh Off The Boat
- 10:30 Galavant
- 11:00 The Tonight Show Starring Jimmy Fallon
- 12:00 George Lopez
- 12:30 According To Jim
- 13:00 Cougar Town
- 13:30 Galavant
- 14:00 Kevin Can Wait
- 14:30 Last Man Standing
- 15:00 Fresh Off The Boat
- 15:30 Community
- 16:00 Community
- 16:30 George Lopez
- 17:00 The Ellen DeGeneres Show
- 18:00 2 Broke Girls
- 18:30 Life In Pieces
- 19:00 Modern Family
- 19:30 Modern Family
- 20:00 The Tonight Show Starring Jimmy Fallon
- 21:00 Community
- 21:30 Community
- 22:00 Man Seeking Woman
- 22:30 Man Seeking Woman
- 23:00 Veep
- 23:30 Late Night With Seth Meyers

**COMEDY CENTRAL**

- 00:00 Another Period
- 00:50 Neal Brennan: Women And Black Dudes
- 01:40 Inside Amy Schumer
- 02:05 South Park
- 03:00 The Daily Show With Trevor Noah
- 03:25 Coaching Bad
- 04:15 Bondi Ink.
- 05:05 Ridiculousness
- 06:20 Sweat Inc.
- 07:10 Lip Sync Battle
- 08:25 Workaholics
- 09:15 Ridiculousness

- 00:00 Follow Donal... To Europe
- 00:30 Follow Donal... To Europe
- 01:00 Diners, Drive-Ins And Dives
- 01:30 Diners, Drive-Ins And Dives
- 02:00 Man Fire Food
- 02:30 Man Fire Food
- 03:00 Chopped
- 04:00 Guy's Grocery Games
- 05:00 Barefoot Contessa: Back To Basics
- 05:30 Barefoot Contessa: Back To Basics
- 06:00 Chopped

- 00:30 Community
- 01:00 Community
- 01:30 The Detour
- 02:00 The Detour
- 02:30 Veep
- 03:00 Black-ish
- 03:30 Kevin Can Wait
- 04:00 According To Jim
- 04:30 The Tonight Show Starring Jimmy Fallon
- 05:30 Cougar Town
- 06:00 George Lopez
- 06:30 Galavant
- 07:00 Late Night With Seth Meyers
- 08:00 According To Jim

- 01:00 Frequency
- 02:00 Timeless
- 03:00 Survivor: Game Changers
- 05:00 Good Morning America
- 07:00 Agent X
- 08:00 The Family
- 09:00 The Night Shift
- 10:00 Prison Break
- 11:00 Once Upon A Time
- 12:00 Agent X
- 13:00 The Family
- 14:00 The Night Shift
- 15:00 Timeless
- 16:00 Live Good Morning America - Weekend
- 17:00 Prison Break
- 18:00 Grey's Anatomy
- 19:00 The Blacklist: Redemption
- 20:00 The Art Of More
- 21:00 DC's Legends Of Tomorrow
- 22:00 Supernatural
- 23:00 Bates Motel

- 00:00 From The Earth To The Moon
- 01:00 Queen Of The South
- 02:00 Vinyl
- 03:00 Big Little Lies
- 04:00 Rome
- 05:00 Warm Springs
- 07:15 Hello Ladies: The Movie
- 09:00 The Jack Bull
- 11:00 Weapons Of Mass Distraction
- 13:00 Longford
- 15:00 The Fever
- 17:00 Weapons Of Mass Distraction
- 19:00 From The Earth To The Moon
- 20:00 Queen Of The South
- 21:00 Quincy Jones: Burning The Light
- 22:00 The Fence
- 23:00 Rome

- 00:00 Timeless
- 01:00 Survivor: Game Changers
- 03:00 Frequency
- 04:00 Timeless
- 05:00 Survivor: Game Changers
- 07:00 Good Morning America
- 09:00 Agent X
- 10:00 The Family
- 11:00 The Night Shift
- 12:00 Prison Break
- 13:00 Once Upon A Time
- 14:00 Agent X
- 15:00 The Family
- 16:00 The Night Shift
- 17:00 Timeless
- 18:00 Live Good Morning America - Weekend
- 19:00 Prison Break
- 20:00 Grey's Anatomy
- 21:00 The Blacklist: Redemption
- 22:00 The Art Of More
- 23:00 DC's Legends Of Tomorrow

**Syfy HD**

- 00:25 12 Monkeys
- 01:15 Eureka
- 05:15 Face Off
- 06:00 Stargate SG-1
- 10:10 Smallville
- 14:25 Seeds Of Destruction
- 16:00 The Shannara Chronicles
- 16:50 The Magicians
- 17:40 Sanctuary
- 18:30 Sanctuary
- 19:20 Earthbound
- 21:00 Black Sheep
- 22:30 Street Fighter: Assassin's Fist



- 00:00 Yeh Rishta Kya Kehlata Hai
- 00:30 Meri Durga
- 01:00 Mere Angne Mein
- 01:30 Chandra Nandni
- 02:00 Jana Na Dil Se Door
- 02:30 Suhaani Si Ek Ladki
- 03:00 Saath Nibhaana Saathiya
- 03:30 Yeh Rishta Kya Kehlata Hai
- 04:00 Ishqbaaz
- 04:30 Naamkarann
- 05:00 Pardes Mein Hai Mera Dil
- 05:30 Ye Hai Mohabbatein
- 06:00 Chandra Nandni
- 06:30 Yeh Rishta Kya Kehlata Hai
- 07:00 Saath Nibhaana Saathiya
- 07:30 Jana Na Dil Se Door
- 08:00 Mere Angne Mein
- 08:30 Pardes Mein Hai Mera Dil
- 09:00 Suhaani Si Ek Ladki
- 09:30 Ishqbaaz
- 10:00 Dil Hai Hindustani
- 11:00 Koffee With Karan
- 12:00 Yeh Rishta Kya Kehlata Hai
- 12:30 Veer
- 16:00 Suhaani Si Ek Ladki
- 16:30 Jana Na Dil Se Door
- 17:00 Mere Angne Mein
- 17:30 Meri Durga
- 18:00 Saath Nibhaana Saathiya
- 18:30 Ye Hai Mohabbatein
- 19:00 Dil Hai Hindustani
- 20:00 Koi Laut Ke Aaya Hai
- 21:00 Ishqbaaz
- 21:30 Dil Bole Oberoi
- 22:00 Ye Hai Mohabbatein
- 22:30 Dil Hai Hindustani
- 23:30 Koi Laut Ke Aaya Hai

**STAR WORLD HD**

- 00:00 Bones
- 01:00 Cedar Cove
- 02:00 Married At First Sight
- 05:00 Mom vs. Matchmaker
- 06:00 The Fashion Fund
- 07:00 Wedding Band
- 08:00 Desperate Housewives
- 10:00 Married At First Sight
- 13:00 Mom vs. Matchmaker
- 14:00 The Bridge
- 15:00 The Listener
- 16:00 MAFS: The First Year
- 17:00 House Of DVF
- 18:00 Grey's Anatomy
- 20:00 Fashion Star
- 21:00 Cedar Cove
- 22:00 Bones

**TLC HD**

- 00:20 The Day I Almost Died
- 01:10 Alaskan Women Looking For Love
- 02:00 Married By Mum And Dad
- 02:50 Monsters Inside Me
- 03:35 Little People, Big World
- 04:20 Toddlers & Tiaras
- 05:10 Toddlers & Tiaras
- 06:00 Kate Plus 8
- 08:30 Toddlers & Tiaras: Coach Wars
- 09:20 Too Ugly For Love?
- 10:10 Ultimate Shopper

- 11:00 Ultimate Shopper
- 11:50 Say Yes To The Dress: Bridesmaids
- 12:15 Say Yes To The Dress: Bridesmaids
- 13:30 Say Yes To The Dress: Bridesmaids
- 13:55 Say Yes To The Dress UK
- 14:20 Say Yes To The Dress UK
- 14:45 Designer Darlings
- 15:35 My Big Fat Fabulous Life
- 17:15 Say Yes To The Dress: Bridesmaids
- 17:40 Oprah: Where Are They Now?
- 18:30 Iyanla: Fix My Life
- 19:20 Toddlers & Tiaras: Coach Wars
- 20:10 Cake Boss
- 20:35 Cake Boss
- 21:00 Oprah: Where Are They Now?
- 21:50 Iyanla: Fix My Life
- 22:40 An Hour To Save Your Life
- 23:30 Botched Up Bodies

**OSN MOVIES HD ACTION**

- 00:45 The Tower
- 03:00 Die Another Day
- 05:30 San Andreas
- 07:45 Metro
- 09:45 The World Is Not Enough
- 12:15 Die Another Day
- 14:30 San Andreas
- 16:30 Batman: Bad Blood
- 17:45 Jupiter Ascending
- 20:00 Taken 3
- 22:00 Get Lucky
- 23:30 Payback

**OSN MOVIES HD THRILLER**

- 01:00 Standoff
- 03:00 Along Came A Spider
- 05:00 The Two Faces Of January
- 07:00 Stonehearst Asylum
- 09:00 Panic Room
- 11:00 The Dorm
- 13:00 Persecuted
- 15:00 Nick Of Time
- 17:00 The Darkness
- 19:00 Perfect Sisters
- 21:00 Landmine Goes Click
- 23:00 Se7en

**OSN MOVIES HD FAMILY**

- 01:00 The Haunted Mansion
- 03:00 Frankenweenie
- 05:00 The Sorcerer's Apprentice
- 07:00 The Emperor's New Groove
- 09:00 Mars Needs Moms
- 11:00 The Sorcerer's Apprentice
- 13:00 Kronk's New Groove
- 15:00 Rio
- 17:00 Inspector Gadget
- 19:00 The Game Plan
- 21:00 Sky High
- 23:00 Rio

**OSN MOVIES HD FIRST**

- 01:15 No Escape
- 03:15 In The Heart Of The Sea
- 05:15 Dad's Army
- 07:00 The Age Of Adaline
- 09:00 In The Heart Of The Sea
- 11:00 Spectre
- 13:30 Madoff Part 1
- 15:00 Madoff Part 2
- 16:30 Captain America: Civil War
- 19:00 Hail, Caesar!
- 21:00 Mr. Right
- 23:00 The Last Witch Hunter

**OSN MOVIES COMEDY HD**

- 00:00 The Starving Games
- 02:00 Paul Blart: Mall Cop 2
- 04:00 Confessions Of A Shopaholic
- 06:00 Hot Rod
- 08:00 Paul Blart: Mall Cop 2
- 10:00 Confessions Of A Shopaholic
- 12:00 Hot Rod
- 13:45 Turbo Kid
- 15:45 Hanging Up
- 17:45 How Do You Know
- 20:00 She's Funny That Way
- 22:00 How To Make Love Like An Englishman



STANDOFF ON OSN MOVIES THRILLER HD



SATURDAY, MARCH 11, 2017

**OSN MOVIES FESTIVAL**

- 00:15 Moonwalkers
- 02:15 Whiplash
- 04:15 We Are Many
- 06:15 WarGames
- 08:30 Grand Central
- 10:15 The Yellow Handkerchief
- 12:00 The Rainmaker
- 14:15 Manny
- 15:45 Get On Up
- 18:00 The Silent Storm
- 20:00 Almost Famous
- 22:45 Inherent Vice

**OSN MOVIES KIDS**

- 00:45 Big Baby
- 02:15 The Tale Of The Princess Kaguya
- 04:30 The Unbeatables
- 06:15 The Adventures Of Rocky And Bullwinkle
- 08:00 Marco Macaco
- 09:30 Pet Pals In Windland
- 11:00 Big Baby
- 12:30 The Tale Of The Princess Kaguya
- 14:45 Barnyard
- 16:30 Pet Pals In Windland
- 18:00 Evolution Man
- 20:00 Doctor Proctor's Fart Powder
- 21:45 Barnyard
- 23:30 Marco Macaco



**DIE ANOTHER DAY ON OSN MOVIES ACTION HD**

**OSN MOVIES HD**

- 00:45 Drunk Wedding
- 02:15 S.W.A.T.
- 04:15 Up Close And Personal
- 06:30 McFarland, USA
- 08:45 Step Up All In
- 10:45 S.W.A.T.
- 12:45 Miracle
- 15:00 The Horse Whisperer
- 18:00 Jurassic World
- 20:15 Unstoppable
- 22:00 Fifty Shades Of Grey

**MOVIES HD**

- 01:00 Love And Other Impossible Pursuits
- 03:00 Laws Of Attraction
- 04:30 The Gift
- 06:30 Hostage
- 08:30 Boys And Girls
- 10:00 Edmond
- 11:15 Starsky & Hutch
- 13:00 Love And Other Impossible Pursuits
- 14:45 Gosford Park
- 17:00 Queen Of Earth
- 18:30 Committed
- 20:00 Kate And Leopold
- 22:00 The Longshots
- 23:30 Heartlands

**SUNDANCE TV**

- 01:30 Copenhagen
- 03:10 The Thin Blue Line
- 04:55 White Lies
- 06:30 Writers' Room
- 07:00 Bloody Beans
- 08:30 This May Be The Last Time
- 10:05 Five Star
- 11:30 Death Of A Salesman
- 13:50 The Jam: About The Young Idea
- 15:25 Daft Punk Unchained
- 16:30 Theater Of War
- 18:15 Five Star
- 19:40 Death Of A Salesman
- 22:00 Krishna
- 23:20 Lamb

**ANIMAL PLANET HD**

- 00:50 The Beauty Of Snakes
- 01:45 Bondi Vet
- 02:40 Biggest And Baddest
- 03:35 Tanked
- 04:25 Escape To Chimp Eden
- 04:50 Escape To Chimp Eden
- 05:15 Gator Boys
- 06:02 The Beauty Of Snakes
- 06:49 Biggest And Baddest

- 07:36 Call Of The Wildman
- 08:00 Call Of The Wildman
- 08:25 Biggest And Baddest
- 09:15 Catching Monsters
- 10:10 Restoration Wild
- 11:05 The Vet Life
- 12:00 Treehouse Masters
- 12:55 Bondi Vet
- 13:50 Ten Deadliest Snakes With Nigel Marven
- 14:45 Ten Deadliest Snakes With Nigel Marven
- 15:40 Ten Deadliest Snakes With Nigel Marven
- 16:35 Ten Deadliest Snakes With Nigel Marven
- 17:30 The Beauty Of Snakes
- 18:25 Ten Deadliest Snakes With Nigel Marven
- 19:20 Catching Monsters
- 20:15 Biggest And Baddest
- 21:10 Restoration Wild
- 22:05 Treehouse Masters
- 23:00 Catching Monsters
- 23:55 Gator Boys



- 00:00 Private Crimes
- 00:30 Private Crimes
- 01:00 50 Ways To Kill Your Lover
- 02:00 My Haunted House
- 03:00 The First 48
- 04:00 Private Crimes
- 04:30 Private Crimes
- 05:00 50 Ways To Kill Your Lover
- 06:00 My Haunted House
- 07:00 Deadly Wives
- 08:00 The First 48
- 09:00 Killers
- 10:00 Homicide Hunter
- 19:00 It Takes A Killer
- 19:30 It Takes A Killer
- 20:00 I Didn't Do It
- 21:00 The First 48
- 22:00 Killers
- 23:00 Crimes That Shook Britain



- 01:10 Wheeler Dealers
- 02:00 Diesel Brothers
- 02:50 Street Outlaws
- 03:40 How It's Made: Dream Cars
- 04:05 How It's Made: Dream Cars
- 04:30 How Do They Do It?
- 05:30 How It's Made: Dream Cars
- 06:00 Storage Wars Canada
- 08:05 How It's Made: Dream Cars
- 09:20 How Do They Do It?
- 09:45 How It's Made: Dream Cars
- 10:10 Gold Rush
- 11:00 Everest Rescue
- 11:50 Made By Destruction

- 12:40 Fast N' Loud
- 16:50 The Wheel: Survival Games
- 17:40 Legend Of Croc Gold
- 18:30 Impossible Engineering
- 19:20 Legend Of Croc Gold
- 20:10 Manhunt With Joel Lambert
- 21:00 Fukushima: On The Frontline With Joel Lambert
- 21:50 Ten Deadliest Snakes With Nigel Marven
- 22:40 Alaskan Bush People
- 23:30 Gold Rush



- 00:20 Ronnie O'Sullivan's American Hustle
- 01:10 Ultimate Wheels
- 02:00 Lost In Transmission
- 02:50 Pawn Stars
- 05:00 Mankind The Story Of All Of Us
- 06:00 Storage Wars Miami
- 06:50 Pawn Stars Australia
- 07:40 American Pickers
- 08:30 American Restoration
- 09:20 Ultimate Wheels
- 10:10 Lost In Transmission
- 11:00 Shipping Wars
- 11:25 Shipping Wars
- 11:50 Ice Road Truckers
- 12:40 Ax Men
- 13:30 Battle 360
- 14:20 Hunting Hitler
- 15:10 The Curse Of Oak Island
- 16:00 Storage Wars Miami
- 16:25 Storage Wars Miami
- 16:50 Counting Cars
- 17:15 Car Hunters
- 17:40 Pawn Stars
- 18:05 Pawn Stars Best Of
- 18:30 Ice Road Truckers
- 19:20 American Pickers
- 20:10 Forged In Fire
- 21:00 The Curse Of Oak Island
- 21:50 Hunting Hitler
- 22:40 Outlaw Chronicles: Hells Angels
- 23:30 Gold Hunters: Legend Of The Superstition...



- 00:15 Lyndey Milan - Taste Of Australia
- 00:40 David Rocco's Dolce Vita
- 01:05 Sara's Australia Unveiled
- 01:30 David Rocco's Dolce India
- 02:20 Confucius Was A Foodie
- 03:10 Maximum Foodie
- 03:35 Delinquent Gourmet
- 04:00 The Food Files
- 04:50 Poh & Co
- 05:20 Testing The Menu With Nic Watt

- 05:45 Grandma's Boy
- 06:40 Carnival Eats
- 07:35 Valentine Warner Eats Scandinavia
- 08:05 Eat Street
- 09:00 The Wine Show
- 09:55 Croatia's Finest
- 10:20 The Food Files
- 11:15 Andy And Ben Eat The World
- 11:45 Dog Whisperer
- 12:40 Sara's Australia Unveiled
- 13:05 David Rocco's Dolce India
- 13:35 Confucius Was A Foodie
- 14:30 Testing The Menu With Nic Watt
- 15:50 The Food Files
- 16:45 Poh & Co
- 17:15 Grandma's Boy
- 18:10 Tripping Out With Alie & Georgia
- 18:35 Delinquent Gourmet
- 19:05 Testing The Menu With Nic Watt
- 19:30 Testing The Menu With Nic Watt
- 20:00 The Food Files
- 20:55 Poh & Co
- 21:20 Grandma's Boy
- 22:10 Tripping Out With Alie & Georgia
- 22:35 Delinquent Gourmet
- 23:00 Sara's Australia Unveiled
- 23:25 David Rocco's Dolce India
- 23:50 Confucius Was A Foodie



- 00:10 Locked Up Abroad
- 01:00 The Border
- 02:00 Inside: 21st Century Warship
- 03:50 Crimes Against Nature
- 04:45 Locked Up Abroad
- 05:40 Air Crash Investigation
- 06:35 Bugatti Chiron: Super Car Build
- 07:30 Megastructures
- 08:25 Dog Whisperer
- 10:15 Miracle Hospital
- 11:10 A Brave Heart: The Lizzie Velasquez Story
- 12:05 Atlantis Rising
- 14:00 Route Awakening
- 15:00 Air Crash Investigation
- 16:00 Mega Factories: Supercars
- 17:00 Megastructures
- 18:00 Ultimate Airport Dubai
- 19:00 The Border
- 20:00 Mega Factories: Supercars
- 20:50 Megastructures
- 21:40 Ultimate Airport Dubai
- 22:30 The Border
- 23:20 Nazi Underworld



- 00:20 Blood Rivals: Lion vs. Buffalo
- 01:10 Ultimate Animal Countdown
- 02:00 World's Deadliest Animals
- 02:50 The Invaders

- 03:45 Europe's Wild Islands
- 04:40 Survive The Wild
- 05:35 Safari Brothers
- 06:30 Monster Fish
- 07:25 Monster Fish
- 08:20 Unlikely Animal Friends
- 09:15 Snakes In The City
- 10:10 Freaks & Creeps
- 11:05 Dr. K's Exotic Animal ER
- 12:00 Cuba's Secret Reef
- 12:55 World's Deadliest Animals
- 13:50 The Invaders
- 14:45 Urban Jungle: Wilderness Rising
- 15:40 Survive The Wild
- 16:35 Savage Kingdom
- 17:30 Africa's Hunters
- 18:25 Dangerous Encounters
- 19:20 Urban Jungle: Wilderness Rising
- 20:10 Survive The Wild
- 21:00 Savage Kingdom
- 21:50 Africa's Hunters
- 22:40 Dangerous Encounters
- 23:30 Cuba's Secret Reef



- 00:15 Barney And Friends
- 00:42 Qumi Qumi
- 00:53 Chuck And Friends
- 01:15 Kit 'n' Kate
- 01:25 My Little Pony
- 01:47 Transformers: Rescue Bots
- 02:08 Heroes Of The City
- 02:22 Pound Puppies
- 02:44 Kit 'n' Kate
- 02:49 Qumi Qumi
- 03:00 Transformers: Rescue Bots
- 03:21 Heroes Of The City
- 03:49 Pound Puppies
- 04:11 Qumi Qumi
- 04:33 Barney And Friends
- 05:00 Littlest Pet Shop
- 05:21 Chuck And Friends
- 05:43 Kit 'n' Kate
- 05:53 My Little Pony
- 06:15 Transformers: Rescue Bots
- 06:36 Heroes Of The City
- 07:05 Pound Puppies
- 07:26 Qumi Qumi
- 07:49 Kit 'n' Kate
- 07:54 Kit 'n' Kate
- 07:59 Barney And Friends
- 08:26 Littlest Pet Shop
- 08:47 Chuck And Friends
- 09:09 My Little Pony
- 09:30 Transformers: Rescue Bots
- 09:51 Heroes Of The City
- 10:20 Barney And Friends
- 10:47 Pound Puppies
- 11:08 Qumi Qumi
- 11:31 Littlest Pet Shop
- 11:52 Chuck And Friends
- 12:13 Kit 'n' Kate
- 12:24 My Little Pony

- 12:45 Transformers: Rescue Bots
- 13:07 Heroes Of The City
- 13:21 Barney And Friends
- 13:48 Heroes Of The City
- 14:02 Pound Puppies
- 14:23 Qumi Qumi
- 14:46 Littlest Pet Shop
- 15:07 Chuck And Friends
- 15:29 Kit 'n' Kate
- 15:39 My Little Pony
- 16:01 Transformers: Rescue Bots
- 16:22 Chuck And Friends
- 16:44 Heroes Of The City
- 17:12 Qumi Qumi
- 17:23 Barney And Friends
- 17:50 Qumi Qumi
- 18:01 Littlest Pet Shop
- 18:23 Pound Puppies
- 18:44 Kit 'n' Kate
- 18:55 My Little Pony
- 19:16 Transformers: Rescue Bots
- 19:37 Heroes Of The City
- 20:06 Barney And Friends
- 20:33 Pound Puppies
- 20:54 Qumi Qumi
- 21:17 Littlest Pet Shop
- 21:38 Chuck And Friends
- 21:59 Kit 'n' Kate
- 22:10 My Little Pony
- 22:31 Transformers: Rescue Bots
- 22:53 Heroes Of The City
- 23:21 Pound Puppies
- 23:43 Qumi Qumi
- 23:54 Littlest Pet Shop

**nickelodeon HD**

- 00:12 Henry Danger
- 00:36 Get Blake
- 01:00 Sanjay And Craig
- 01:24 Rabbids Invasion
- 01:48 Breadwinners
- 02:12 SpongeBob SquarePants
- 02:36 SpongeBob SquarePants
- 03:00 Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles
- 03:24 Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles
- 03:48 Henry Danger
- 04:12 Nicky, Ricky, Dicky & Dawn
- 04:36 Breadwinners
- 05:00 Breadwinners
- 05:24 Game Shakers
- 05:48 100 Things To Do Before High School
- 06:12 SpongeBob SquarePants
- 06:36 Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles
- 07:00 The Loud House
- 07:24 Rabbids Invasion
- 07:48 Winx Club
- 08:12 Get Blake
- 08:36 Harvey Beaks
- 09:00 Breadwinners
- 09:24 Sanjay And Craig
- 09:48 Henry Danger
- 10:12 Game Shakers
- 10:36 Get Blake
- 11:00 Winx Club
- 11:24 SpongeBob SquarePants



## LOYAC HOLDS FIRST GULF YOUTH FESTIVAL

**O**n the second night of the First Gulf Youth Festival organized by LOYAC's Academy for Performance Arts (LAPA), artists Abdul Aziz Luiz and Jassim Mohammed recently attracted a huge audience at Al Shaheed Park's amphitheatre.

After doing single performances, both singers joined in a duet that highly appealed to the audience when they sang very sentimental hits.

Also performing on the same concert was the Arts Musical Group led by maestro, Mohammed Al-Robai'an.



## KUWAIT CITY MARTHOMA SALMIYA ZONE ORGANIZE FAMILY PICNIC

**K**uwait City MarThoma Salmiya Zone organized a family picnic in Wafra chalet. A.M. Mammen inaugurated the picnic and Parimanam Manoj welcomed the gathering and Reji P. Thomas expressed the vote of thanks.

Competitions were organized for the children and adults. Various programs and games activities were

coordinated by the Jinoj John Mathew & Nitya John. The event helped to bring a strong fellowship among members. It was really an unforgettable experience to many families and they will cherish this experience for quite some time. Ganamela was performed by Kumari Anna Elizabeth Raju & Kiran P.U.

The picnic concluded by distributing prizes to the

winners of different events. The overall picnic event was led by the conveners namely Mathew P. Thomas, Alexander K John, Alex Lukose, A.M. Mammen, Nishant Thomas, Koshy Oommen, Reji P. Thomas, Raju Kurukavelil, Ronnie Tom Varghese, Alwin Abraham & Reji Varghese.





Writers, directors, producers and stars who attended the First International Konkani Film Festival in Kuwait, honored at the hands of His Excellency Ambassador Shri Sunil Jain .

## FIRST FILM FESTIVAL UNITES KONKAN COMMUNITY

The first ever International Konkani Film Festival held in Kuwait was a celebration of cinema par excellence that will certainly be talked about for years to come.

The festival spread over 2 days (25th & 26th February) brought a continuous flow of audience to the American International School auditorium.

The fest's forward-looking heart is apparent from the words of chief organizer Shri Carmo Santos who expressed a dream to make the event an annual platform for Konkani film premieres and award ceremonies.

His Excellency Shri Sunil Jain, Indian Ambassador to Kuwait, chief guest at one of the movies, had a word of praise for Goan Cultural Centre-Kuwait, who arranged the festival in association with T-Bush International Films and the Konkani community of the Holy Family Cathedral. "It is a delight to know this is the first international Konkani film festival and Kuwait is the host," stated Shri Jain further adding, "we shall support Konkani art, language and films, always."

It should be noted Konkani films has a limited scope. Just a handful of Goan and Mangalorean films are produced in a year. Limited audience, difference in dialects and lack of resources has been a drawback to Konkani cinema for long.

However, this has gradually vanished with the release of great movies in recent times. Many Goan stars are seen in Mangalorean movies while Mangalorean artistes are working together in Goan films too.

Ester Noronha, lead actress of Noshibacho Khell, who was present at the festival, has sung for Nachom-iaKumpasar and is lined up to feature in a forthcoming Goan film.

### Movies screened & delegates present

Select movies that were screened at the Kuwait festival included Big Ben, Nirmon, Home Sweet Home-2, Enemy, Noshibacho Khell, and Nachom-ia Kumpasar.

A number of dignitaries, personalities and artistes representing films were on visit to Kuwait to be part of the festival.

Present among the special invitees were



Shri Sunil Jain, Ambassador of India, with the festival coordinators T-Bush and Carmo Santos.

Glen Barretto - producer, and Simon D'Silva - Co-producer of Nachom-ia Kumpasar; Swapnil Shetkar - producer/writer/director/, and John D'Silva - lead star of Home Sweet Home-2; Nilesh Newalkar and Armando Fernandes - producers of Nirmon; Mark de Araujo - producer/writer/director/lead actor of Big Ben; Henry D'Silva - producer and Ester Noronha - lead actress of NoshibachoKhell.

### Vote of thanks

In his vote of thanks Carmo Santos specially singled out Tibush Rebello of T-Bush International Films for praise in making the festival a success, and the Kuwait Church for supporting the Film Festival.

He also thanked all sponsors, supporters, volunteers, executive members of Goan Cultural Centre-Kuwait, all dignitaries, directors, producers, artistes who attended the festival.

During the closing ceremony Carmo

expressed sadness at some elements of the Goan community who wanted to disrupt the festival.

The 2-day festival was compered by Anjali Amonkar and Gasper Crasto.

### Film festival proceeds

In a statement, Carmo revealed that

funds raised from the Konkani Film Festival shall be donated towards the construction of Bahrain Cathedral.

Dedicated to Our Lady of Arabia, once completed, the cathedral will be the biggest church in the Middle East Gulf holding 2,600 congregants at a time, and will serve about 2.5 million Catholics.

## PROMINENT INDIAN ONCOLOGIST DR VP GANGADHARAN TO GET NSH GLOBAL HARMONY AWARD



Reputed Indian Oncologist Dr VP Gangadharan has been chosen as the recipient of the First NSH Global Harmony Award - 2017 by the NSH Global Village Harmony NSH GVH), an award winning organization connected with the Indian Embassy in Kuwait.

Dr VP Gangadharan will receive this honour from the President of NSH GVH, Sabu in a glittering function on 24 Feb 2017. Persons of high ranks and merits had a series of discussions, led by Sabu, and finally chosen him for his excellent medical service, combining high professional skill, with compassion and personal bondage, saving many precious lives and alleviating pain and suffering.

### EMBASSY OF INDIA HOLIDAY NOTICE

The Embassy shall remain closed on Monday, 13th March, 2017 on the occasion of the festival of Holi. However, emergency consular services will be rendered by the Mission.



In this picture taken on Thursday, men smoke cigarettes during lunch in a restaurant in the Yurakuchu neighborhood of Tokyo. — AFP

## SMOKING PARADISE JAPAN TRIES TO KICK THE HABIT

### POWERFUL TOBACCO LOBBY SEEKS TO STUB OUT MEASURES

**TOKYO:** Japan is moving to pass its strictest-ever smoking laws, but the country's powerful tobacco lobby wants to stub out measures that were adopted years ago by other developed nations. The government is keen to change Japan's image as a puffing paradise—smoking is still allowed in most bars, restaurants and cafes—as Tokyo gets set to host millions of visitors for the 2020 Olympics.

The health ministry is to submit a proposed law to parliament by June that would ban smoking in many restaurants, as well as public facilities. If approved, rule-breakers would face a penalty of 300,000 yen (\$2,600). But the proposals, unveiled last week, have already been watered down from an initial push for a broad ban on indoor smoking, which ran up against strong opposition from former state monopoly Japan Tobacco (JT) and many small business owners, who fear they'll lose customers.

Establishments can build a separate smoking room under the latest proposal. And places with less than 30 square metres (320 square feet) of floor space would not be affected by the restrictions at all—excluding a huge number of establishments in space-challenged Japan.

"It would be better if it's completely banned" in restaurants, Kumiko Tanaka, a 27-year-old non-smoker, told AFP. "But I don't mind as long as smoking areas are strictly separated."

Even the less-expansive rules could be headed for trouble, however, as opposition brews within the ruling Liberal Democratic Party (LDP). Gaffe-prone finance minister Taro Aso recently questioned the long-established link between smoking cigarettes and lung

cancer. And this week, the LDP's parliamentary affairs chief Wataru Takeshita bemoaned the proposals, as a group in his party suggested restaurant owners instead be allowed to choose—and display their smoking status on the door. "As a cigarette lover, I feel like this is not a good idea—how would I live if smoking is banned everywhere?" Takeshita told reporters.

#### 'Really late'

Japan's government gets billions of dollars annually in cigarette tax revenue, and still owns a one-third stake in JT—the third-biggest global tobacco company with brands including Winston, Camel and Benson & Hedges. This conflict leaves anti-smoking campaigners fuming in a country where cigarettes sell for around 430 yen (\$3.75) a pack, and carry only modest health warning labels.

It is a far cry from other developed nations, including Australia and France, which have wide-ranging bans on smoking in public places and large, graphic health warnings on cigarette packs, which sell for two or three times more than in Japan. Almost 50 countries have blanket bans on smoking indoors. "We are really late," said Yumiko Mochizuki, a board member at the Japan Society for Tobacco Control (JSTC).

"And we were given a very bad score by the World Health Organization." The global health body has given Japan its lowest rating for efforts to prevent passive smoking—just 10 percent of restaurants are non-smoking. Japan even scores poorly among other Asian nations with smoking cultures such as China and South Korea.

"Countries such as the Republic of

Korea, Hong Kong, Singapore, Australia, New Zealand, Vietnam and cities including Beijing and Shanghai China... have already introduced comprehensive smoking bans," said Susan Mercado, a Manila-based director at the WHO. Smoking kills some 130,000 people in Japan annually, with another 15,000 dying of second-hand smoke related illnesses, Mercado added.

Despite its many smoking venues, tobacco use in Japan has been falling in line with a broader global trend. More than half of Japanese men smoked in 2000. That number dropped to just below 30 percent in 2016.

#### 'Unbalanced, unreasonable, excessive'

Japan Tobacco said the proposed smoking rules are cause for concern. "We are worried that the bill would be unbalanced, unreasonable and excessive," the company said. Japan cannot be compared to other nations with strict indoor-smoking bans because outdoor smoking is limited to certain designated areas, JT said. More than 240 Japanese municipalities restrict lighting up on city streets, meaning smokers must get their fix in clearly marked smoking zones.

But the decade-old bylaws were brought in more to promote good manners and keep cigarette butts off the streets rather than for public health reasons. Campaigners said less smoking will be a hit with millions of tourists visiting for the Olympics in three years, and might just enhance Japan's famous service culture, known as *omotenashi*. "It's the last ingredient that we need to give people our best hospitality," said JSTC president Manabu Sakuta. —AFP

## SEA TURTLE FLAPS FLIPPERS IN 1ST REHAB SWIM AFTER SURGERY

**BANGKOK:** Bank the green sea turtle flapped her flippers with vigor in her first swim after a life-saving operation to remove a heavy mass of swallowed coins from her stomach. Veterinarians in Bangkok put the turtle in water Friday for the first time since her surgery four days ago to see how well she could move. The turtle was gently lowered into a large plastic tank and very quickly began swimming as best as she could in the restricted space.

"It's fantastic! She is responding very well," said Dr Nantarika Chansue, who led the team from Chulalongkorn University's Veterinary Faculty. "Now she is very happy and looks like normal turtle."

The 25-year-old turtle was rescued from a pool in the seaside town of Sri Racha by the Thai navy. The cause of her ill health was revealed by 3D scans that showed she had been eating the coins thrown into her pool by passers-by who believed doing so would bring them luck or longevity.

Over the years, the loose change got stuck in the turtle's digestive tract, cracking her ventral shell and causing a life-threatening infection. The surgeons needed four hours to remove 5 kilograms (11 pounds) of money, counting 915 coins of various currencies. Some are still inside. Veterinarians hope Bank will pass them naturally.

Her rehabilitation has involved manipulating her limbs to make sure the muscles don't stiffen up after being out of water for a prolonged period, and checking that the surgical scar does not get infected. But there are lingering concerns.

"The wound healing seems to be OK and there is no secondary infection because we are using sterile seawater," said Nantarika, "but we have checked her blood and her nickel concentration is very high so we have to work on that." —AP



**BANGKOK:** Head of Chulalongkorn University's veterinary medical aquatic animal research center Nantarika Chansue, left, injects saline solution as part of rehabilitation treatment for 25-year-old green sea turtle "Bank" in Bangkok yesterday. —AP

## VIENNA ZOO CULLS 20 PELICANS AFTER BIRD FLU VIRUS FOUND

**VIENNA:** An Austrian zoo culled 20 pelicans yesterday after it found the entire group was infected with the highly contagious H5N8 bird flu virus, the zoo said.

Vienna's Schoenbrunn Zoo tested its pelican flock, one of the largest of any zoo worldwide, after the virus was found in one pelican earlier this week. The virus has spread widely

across Europe and the Middle East since late last year, leading to the slaughter of hundreds of thousands of poultry and the confinement of flocks indoors.

The zoo's Dalmatian pelicans had been kept in a tent since December as a preventive measure but one of them became acutely ill on Monday and was killed. —Reuters



In this picture taken on Thursday, men smoke cigarettes during lunch in a restaurant in the Yurakuchu neighborhood of Tokyo. — AFP

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The zoo's Dalmatian pelicans had been kept in a tent since December as a preventive measure but one of them became acutely ill on Monday and was killed. —Reuters

# WOMEN'S HEALTH SERVICES FACE CUTS IN REPUBLICAN BILL

## TWO HOUSE PANELS APPROVE LEGISLATION

**WASHINGTON:** Women seeking abortions and some basic health services, including prenatal care, contraception and cancer screenings, would face restrictions and struggle to pay for some of that medical care under the House Republicans' proposed bill.

The legislation, which would replace much of former President Barack Obama's health law, was approved by two House committees on Thursday. Republicans are hoping to move quickly to pass it, despite unified opposition from Democrats, criticism from some conservatives who don't think it goes far enough and several health groups who fear millions of Americans would lose coverage and benefits. The bill would prohibit for a year any funding to Planned Parenthood, a major provider of women's health services, restrict abortion access in covered plans on the health exchange and scale back Medicaid services used by many low-income women, among other changes.

Washington Sen. Patty Murray, the top Democrat on the Health, Labor, Education and Pensions Committee, said the legislation is a "slap in the face" to women. She said it would shift more decisions to insurance companies.

"You buy it thinking you will be covered, but there is no guarantee," Murray said. House Republican leaders said the bill, which is backed by President Donald Trump, will prevent higher premiums some have seen under the current law and give patients more control

over their care. "Lower costs, more choices not less, patients in control, universal access to care," House Speaker Paul Ryan, R-Wis, said Thursday. The abortion restrictions and cuts to women's health care could draw opposition from some Republican women.

Sens. Lisa Murkowski of Alaska and Susan Collins of Maine have both said that a prohibition on Planned Parenthood funding shouldn't be part of the bill. Last month, before the legislation was released, Murkowski told the Alaska state legislature that she doesn't believe that taxpayer money should go toward abortions but added, "I will not vote to deny Alaskans access to the health services that Planned Parenthood provides." Support from Collins and Murkowski will be crucial once the bill moves to the Senate, since there are 52 Republicans and the GOP will need 50 votes to pass it.

### A look at how the bill would affect women's health care: Planned parenthood

Republicans have tried for years to block federal payments to the group, but weren't able to do so with Democrat Barack Obama in the White House. Now that Republican Donald Trump is president, they are adding the one-year

freeze in funding to their bill. Most GOP lawmakers have long opposed Planned Parenthood because many of its clinics provide abortions. Their antagonism intensified after anti-abortion activists released secretly recorded videos in 2015 showing Planned Parenthood officials discussing how they sometimes provide fetal tissue to researchers, which is legal if no profit is made.

Federal dollars comprise nearly half of the group's annual billion-dollar budget. Government dollars don't pay for abortions, but the organization is reimbursed by Medicaid for other services, including birth control, cancer screenings and treatment of sexually transmitted diseases. The group has said the vast majority of women seek out those non-abortion services.

Ryan boasted this week that the bill is a "conservative wish list," as it "ends funding to Planned Parenthood and sends money to community centers." Democrats argue that many of the other clinics are already overloaded and would not be able to meet the increased demand for screenings and other services. Under Obama's health law, health plans on the exchange can cover elective abortions, but they must collect a separate premium to pay for them so it's clear that no federal funds are used. —AP



Sen Patty Murray



This undated handout from Biopixel shows a coral reef suffering from bleaching on the Great Barrier Reef. Australia's iconic Great Barrier Reef is experiencing an unprecedented second straight year of mass coral bleaching, scientists said yesterday. —AFP

## AUSTRALIA SEES SECOND YEAR OF BARRIER REEF BLEACHING

**SYDNEY:** Australia's Great Barrier Reef is experiencing an unprecedented second straight year of mass coral bleaching, scientists said yesterday, warning many species would struggle to fully recover.

The 2,300-kilometre (1,400-mile) reef suffered its most severe bleaching on record last year due to warming sea temperatures during March and April. Bleaching is once again occurring, the government's Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority said after an aerial survey off Australia's eastern coast on Thursday. "Regrettably, the temperatures have been high on the Great Barrier Reef this summer as well and unfortunately (we) are here to confirm... a mass coral bleaching event for the second consecutive year," the Authority's reef recovery director David Wachenfeld said in a Facebook video.

"And importantly, this is the first time we've ever seen the Great Barrier Reef bleached two years in sequence. We've seen heat stress build since December."

The agency said more bleaching was being observed in the central part of the reef, which last year escaped widespread severe bleaching. The 2016 bleaching was more severe in the northern areas of the bio-diverse site. —AFP

CLINIC PAGE



Kuwait Times THE LEADING INDEPENDENT DAILY IN THE ARABIAN GULF

Dr. Fahad Al-Mukhaizeem  
  
 د. فهد علي المخيزيم  
 استشاري أطفال  
 M.B. Bch. FRCPC. FAAP. PEM

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## KNCC PROGRAMME FROM THURSDAY TO WEDNESDAY (09/03/2017 TO 15/03/2017)

Channel	Time	Program	Channel	Time	Program
<b>SHARQIA-1</b>	11:45 AM	LOGAN	11:30 PM	LOGAN	2:00 PM
HAMAH - Kuwaiti Film	2:30 PM	<b>MARINA-1</b>	LOGAN	4:45 PM	LOGAN
HAMAH - Kuwaiti Film	4:00 PM	KONG: SKULL ISLAND	LOGAN	7:30 PM	LOGAN
HAMAH - Kuwaiti Film	5:45 PM	HAMAH - Kuwaiti Film	LOGAN	10:15 PM	LOGAN
HAMAH - Kuwaiti Film	7:15 PM	LOGAN	THE DEVIL'S DOLLS	1:00 AM	
HAMAH - Kuwaiti Film	8:45 PM	HAMAH - Kuwaiti Film	<b>AL-KOUT.3</b>		
HAMAH - Kuwaiti Film	10:15 PM	HAMAH - Kuwaiti Film	THE HOLLOW POINT	12:30 PM	
KONG: SKULL ISLAND	12:15 AM	KONG: SKULL ISLAND	THE DEVIL'S DOLLS	2:30 PM	
		KONG: SKULL ISLAND	THE HOLLOW POINT	4:30 PM	
		KONG: SKULL ISLAND	THE DEVIL'S DOLLS	6:30 PM	
		KONG: SKULL ISLAND	THE HOLLOW POINT	8:45 PM	
		KONG: SKULL ISLAND	THE DEVIL'S DOLLS	10:45 PM	
		KONG: SKULL ISLAND	THE HOLLOW POINT	12:45 AM	
<b>SHARQIA-2</b>	12:15 PM	<b>MARINA-2</b>	12:00 PM		
HAMAH - Kuwaiti Film	1:45 PM	KONG: SKULL ISLAND	2:45 PM		
KONG: SKULL ISLAND	4:15 PM	KONG: SKULL ISLAND	5:15 PM		
KONG: SKULL ISLAND	6:45 PM	KONG: SKULL ISLAND	7:45 PM		
KONG: SKULL ISLAND	9:15 PM	KONG: SKULL ISLAND	10:15 PM		
KONG: SKULL ISLAND	11:45 PM	KONG: SKULL ISLAND	12:45 AM		
<b>SHARQIA-3</b>	1:30 PM	<b>MARINA-3</b>	1:15 PM		
LOGAN	4:15 PM	LOGAN	2:30 PM		
LOGAN	7:00 PM	HAMAH - Kuwaiti Film	4:00 PM		
LOGAN	9:45 PM	LOGAN	6:45 PM		
LOGAN	12:30 AM	LOGAN	9:30 PM		
		LOGAN	12:15 AM		
<b>MUHALAB-1</b>	12:30 PM	<b>AVENUES-1</b>	1:00 PM		
KONG: SKULL ISLAND	1:30 PM	KIKORIKI	1:00 PM		
HAMAH - Kuwaiti Film	3:00 PM	THE DEVIL'S DOLLS	3:00 PM		
FRI	5:30 PM	THE DEVIL'S DOLLS	5:00 PM		
KONG: SKULL ISLAND	7:00 PM	KIKORIKI	7:00 PM		
HAMAH - Kuwaiti Film	10:00 PM	THE DEVIL'S DOLLS	9:00 PM		
BADRINATH KI DULHANIA-Hindi	11:30 PM	THE DEVIL'S DOLLS	11:00 PM		
		THE DEVIL'S DOLLS	1:00 AM		
<b>MUHALAB-2</b>	1:00 PM	<b>AVENUES-2</b>	1:30 PM		
LOGAN	2:15 PM	KONG: SKULL ISLAND-3D-4DX	4:00 PM		
HAMAH - Kuwaiti Film	3:45 PM	KONG: SKULL ISLAND-3D-4DX	6:30 PM		
LOGAN	6:30 PM	KONG: SKULL ISLAND-3D-4DX	9:00 PM		
LOGAN	9:15 PM	KONG: SKULL ISLAND-3D-4DX	11:30 PM		
LOGAN	12:05 AM	KONG: SKULL ISLAND-3D-4DX			
<b>MUHALAB-3</b>	12:00 PM	<b>AVENUES-3</b>	11:30 AM		
KONG: SKULL ISLAND	2:30 PM	THE HOLLOW POINT	1:30 PM		
KONG: SKULL ISLAND	5:00 PM	THE HOLLOW POINT	3:45 PM		
KONG: SKULL ISLAND	7:30 PM	THE HOLLOW POINT	6:00 PM		
KONG: SKULL ISLAND	10:00 PM	THE HOLLOW POINT	8:15 PM		
KONG: SKULL ISLAND	12:30 AM	THE HOLLOW POINT	10:30 PM		
		THE HOLLOW POINT	12:45 AM		
<b>FANAR-1</b>	11:30 AM	<b>360°-1</b>	12:30 PM		
HAMAH - Kuwaiti Film	1:00 PM	LOGAN	3:15 PM		
HAMAH - Kuwaiti Film	2:30 PM	LOGAN	6:00 PM		
HAMAH - Kuwaiti Film	4:00 PM	LOGAN	8:45 PM		
THE HOLLOW POINT	5:30 PM	LOGAN	11:30 PM		
HAMAH - Kuwaiti Film	7:30 PM	LOGAN			
HAMAH - Kuwaiti Film	9:00 PM	LOGAN			
HAMAH - Kuwaiti Film	10:30 PM	<b>360°-2</b>	12:15 PM		
HAMAH - Kuwaiti Film	12:05 AM	HIDDEN FIGURES	3:00 PM		
		HIDDEN FIGURES	5:45 PM		
<b>FANAR-2</b>	12:45 PM	HIDDEN FIGURES	8:30 PM		
THE DEVIL'S DOLLS	3:00 PM	HIDDEN FIGURES	11:15 PM		
THE HOLLOW POINT	5:00 PM	<b>360°-3</b>	11:45 AM		
THE DEVIL'S DOLLS	7:00 PM	HAMAH - Kuwaiti Film	1:30 PM		
THE HOLLOW POINT	9:00 PM	KONG: SKULL ISLAND	4:00 PM		
THE DEVIL'S DOLLS	10:45 PM	KONG: SKULL ISLAND	6:30 PM		
THE HOLLOW POINT	12:45 AM	KONG: SKULL ISLAND	9:00 PM		
		KONG: SKULL ISLAND	11:30 PM		
<b>FANAR-3</b>	1:00 PM	<b>AL-KOUT.1</b>	11:30 AM		
KONG: SKULL ISLAND	3:30 PM	KONG: SKULL ISLAND	2:00 PM		
NO FRI+SAT	6:00 PM	KONG: SKULL ISLAND	4:30 PM		
KIKORIKI	8:30 PM	KONG: SKULL ISLAND	7:00 PM		
KONG: SKULL ISLAND	11:00 PM	KONG: SKULL ISLAND	9:30 PM		
		KONG: SKULL ISLAND	12:05 AM		
<b>FANAR-4</b>	12:30 PM	<b>AL-KOUT.2</b>	12:15 PM		
LOGAN	3:15 PM	HAMAH - Kuwaiti Film			
LOGAN	6:00 PM				
LOGAN	8:45 PM				
LOGAN					

### LOST

Original document policy No. 633001693 - Hameeda Perveen 633001707 - Mohammad Shabbir DV the State Life Insurance Corporation of Pakistan, Gulf Zone is reported to have been lost. Anyone finding the same or claiming any interest in it should communicate with the Manager Kuwait State Life office - Ph: 22452208. (C 5278) 6-3-2017

### CHANGE OF NAME

I Lalusabgari Shaik Shavali S/o Lalusabgari Allabakash holder of Indian Passport No. L0032343 and Civil ID No. 269101009241 has changed my name to Shaik Shafi S/o Shaik Mahaboob Basha. Hereinafter in all my dealings and documents. I will known by name of Shaik Shafi. (C 5281)

I Murtuza S/o Asger Khanji holder of Indian Passport No. M6718923 and civil ID No. 290061101911 has changed my name to Murtaza Asger Khanji hereinafter in all my

dealings and documents. I will be known by name of Murtaza Asger Khanji. (C 5282)

I Husain S/o Asger Khanji holder of Indian Passport N8636914 and Civil ID No. 292083101241 has change my name to Husain Asger Khanji hereinafter to all my dealings and documents. I will known by name Husain Asger Khanji. (C 5282) 8-3-2017

The public is hereby notified that MS. MARIBINI TALUNGO MOSANIP has filed with the Embassy of the Republic of the Philippines, State of Kuwait, a Migrant Petition for Change of First Name of her daughter in the Report of Birth filed with the Embassy on 12 May 2016 under Registry Number KT-ROB-475-2016. The First Name of child should read as ELAIZAH instead of ALYAM. Any person having knowledge and/or claiming interest or may be adversely affected by said Petition, file his written opposition with the Embassy within ten (10) working days. (C 5279)

### Prayer timings

<b>Fajr:</b>	<b>04:44</b>
<b>Shorook</b>	<b>06:03</b>
<b>Duhr:</b>	<b>11:58</b>
<b>Asr:</b>	<b>15:21</b>
<b>Maghrib:</b>	<b>17:54</b>
<b>Isha:</b>	<b>19:10</b>

## Hospitals

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

## Clinics

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

SATURDAY, MARCH 11, 2017



Flight Schedule

DIAL 161 FOR AIRPORT INFORMATION

Arrival Flights on Saturday 11/3/2017

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 11/3/2017

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
FDB	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

Photography

Find and circle all of the Photography terms that are hidden in the grid. The remaining letters spell the name of a type of camera.

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

- APERTURE
- BALANCE
- BELLOWS
- BLOWUP
- CAMERA
- CLOSE UP
- COLOR
- CONTRAST
- CROPPING
- DARKROOM
- DEVELOPER
- ENLARGEMENT
- ENLARGER
- FILTER
- FIXING BATH
- FLASH
- FOCAL LENGTH
- FRAME
- HOT SHOE
- LIGHT METER
- LIGHTING
- NEGATIVE
- OVEREXPOSURE
- PANNING
- PANORAMA
- PARALLAX
- PHOTOFINISHER
- POSITIVE
- PRINT
- PROCESSING
- RANGEFINDER
- RETOUCHING
- SAFELIGHT
- SATURATION
- SHUTTER
- SLIDE
- STOP BATH
- TELEPHOTO LENS
- TINT
- TRIPOD
- UNDEREXPOSURE
- VIEWFINDER
- ZOOM LENS

Yesterday's Solution

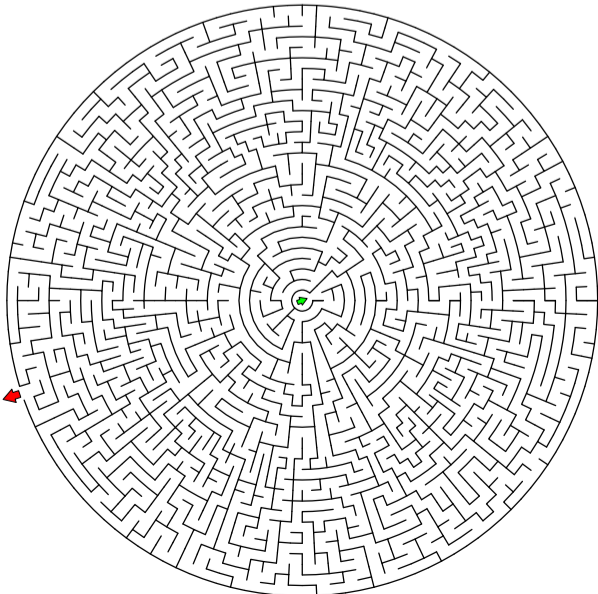
Phonetic Alphabet

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

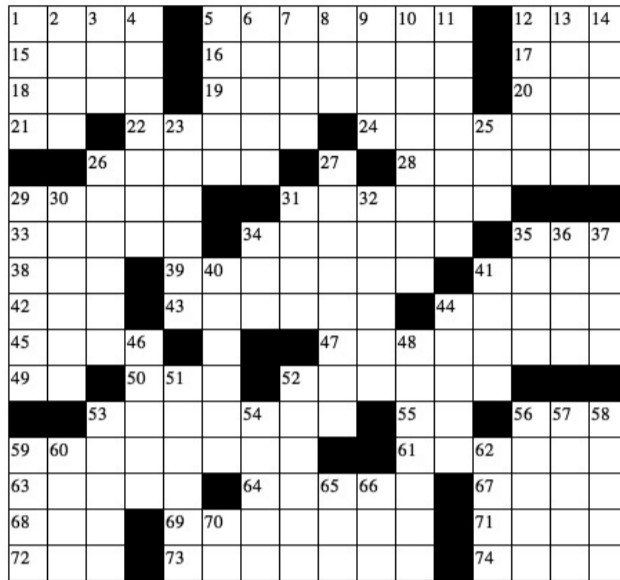
- ALPHA
- BRAVO
- CHARLIE
- DELTA
- ECHO
- FOXTROT
- GOLF
- HOTEL
- INDIA
- JULIET
- KILO
- LIMA
- MIKE
- OSCAR
- PAPA
- QUEBEC
- ROMEO
- SIERRA
- TANGO
- UNIFORM
- VICTOR
- WHISKEY
- X-RAY
- YANKEE
- ZULU

The hidden word is: NOVEMBER

CHALLENGING MAZE



CROSSWORD 1544



ACROSS

1. Someone who works (or provides workers) during a strike.
5. The dialect of Sotho spoken by the Basotho.
12. Of southern Europe.
15. A Chadic language spoken south of Lake Chad.
16. Type genus of the family Elephantidae.
17. The month following February and preceding April.
18. Large sweet juicy hybrid between tangerine and grapefruit having a thick wrinkled skin.
19. A sign of something about to happen.
20. Water frozen in the solid state.
21. A brittle gray crystalline element that is a semiconducting metalloid (resembling silicon) used in transistors.
22. Erect leafless flower stalk growing directly from the ground as in a tulip.
24. (psychology) An urge to accept or approach a situation or an object.
28. Large terrestrial monkeys having doglike muzzles.
29. The brightly colored garments of a jockey.
33. Capital and largest city of the Czech Republic.
38. Of flax, hemp, or jute, so as to promote loosening of the fibers from the woody tissue.
39. Resembling or characteristic of a prophet or prophecy.
42. The compass point midway between northeast and east.
43. Used improperly or excessively especially drugs.
45. Affected manners intended to impress others.
47. Myth about the ultimate destruction of the gods in a battle with evil.
49. The district occupied entirely by the city of Washington.
50. A knockout declared by the referee who judges one boxer unable to continue.
55. Being nine more than forty.
59. A town in southeastern New Mexico on the Pecos River near the Mexican border.
61. Austrian physician who tried to treat diseases with a form of hypnotism (1734-1815).
63. A projecting bay window corbeled or cantilevered out from a wall.
64. Minute floating marine tunicate having a transparent body with an opening at each end.
67. Forbidden to profane use especially in South Pacific islands.
68. (informal) Of the highest quality.
69. Resembling or characteristic of or appropriate to an elegy.
71. According to the Old Testament he was a pagan king of Israel and husband of Jezebel (9th century BC).
72. A boy or man.
73. A decorative framework to conceal curtain fixtures at the top of a window casing.
74. A small cake leavened with yeast.

DOWN

1. Marked by excessive complacency or self-satisfaction.
2. An enclosure made of wire or metal bars in which birds or animals are kept.
3. A federation of North American labor unions that merged with the Congress of

- Industrial Organizations in 1955.
4. The second month of the Hindu calendar.
5. One of the green parts that form the calyx of a flower.
6. Run away secretly with one's beloved.
7. (used especially of vegetation) Having lost all moisture.
8. Select as an alternative.
9. (Greek mythology) The Titaness who was mother of Helios and Selene and Eos in ancient mythology.
10. A bell that is held in the hand.
11. Someone who guards the entrance to a building.
12. Pertaining to or containing any of a group of organic compounds of nitrogen derived from ammonia.
13. United States anarchist (born in Italy) who with Bartolomeo Vanzetti was convicted of murder and in spite of world-wide protest was executed (1891-1927).
14. Clean with one's bill, of birds.
23. Any of several plants of the genus Manihot having fleshy roots yielding a nutritious starch.
25. The compass point that is one point south of due east.
26. Any of various small terrestrial isopods having a flat elliptical segmented body.
27. Relating to or affecting the viscera.
30. Conducive to peace.
31. A platform raised above the surrounding level to give prominence to the person on it.
32. Included seven times in every 19 years.
34. A unit of heat equal to the amount of heat required to raise one pound of water one degree Fahrenheit at one atmosphere pressure.
35. Stubbornly unyielding.
36. Type and only genus of the family Tytonidae.
37. A branch of the Tai languages.
40. Become imbued.
41. Any of a number of fishes of the family Carangidae.
44. Administer an oil or ointment to.
46. A particular kind (as to appearance).
48. A contorted facial expression.
51. The third month of the civil year.
52. A member of an agricultural people of southern India.
53. Not still wet.
54. A city in northwestern Switzerland.
56. A member of the Siouan people formerly living in the Missouri river valley in NE Nebraska.
57. Cubes of meat marinated and cooked on a skewer usually with vegetables.
58. A popular island resort in the Netherlands Antilles.
60. Type genus of the family Arcidae.
62. A thrusting blow with a knife.
65. United States sculptor and architect whose public works include the memorial to veterans of the Vietnam War in Washington (born in 1959).
66. Committee formed by a special-interest group to raise money for their favorite political candidates.
70. A white soft metallic element that tarnishes readily.

Yesterday's Solution

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

Daily SuDoku

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

Yesterday's Solution

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

## CYCLING

## BRITISH CYCLING OPERATED 'CULTURE OF FEAR' SAYS LEAKED REVIEW

**LONDON:** British Cycling has been accused of creating a "culture of fear", with a leaked review also saying it made a "shocking and inexcusable decision" to reverse findings into allegations of sexism.

The Daily Mail, citing Friday a leaked draft copy of an independent review into British Cycling by UK Sport, said an inquiry led by British Cycling's grievance officer Alex Russell found "considerably more" than one of the nine claims against former technical director Shane Sutton by rider Jess Varnish could be proven. It was revealed in December that Australian coach Sutton, who together with Dave Brailsford has been widely credited for overseeing the transformation of British Cycling into a medal-winning powerhouse, had been found guilty of one count of using inappropriate language but that insufficient evidence could be found to support eight other charges.

The ruling failed to satisfy either Sutton, who resigned in April last year but who has repeatedly denied misconduct, or Varnish,

who had her funding removed after failing to qualify for Rio 2016.

Varnish said Sutton's response was to tell her to "go and have a baby". Eventually, a review into the culture of British Cycling's world-class performance programme led by British Rowing chair Annamarie Phelps was set up. According to the Mail, the leaked draft review said British Cycling looked to change Russell's conclusions in a bid to retain the highly-regarded Sutton. "The actions of the British Cycling board in that regard are shocking and inexcusable," the paper quoted the review as saying. "They also call into serious question whether the composition of the British Cycling board is fit to govern a national sporting body." The review reportedly said British Cycling had been badly governed for years.

## 'BULLYING'

According to the Mail, the review said former performance director Brailsford, now in charge at track outfit Team Sky, had been

an "untouchable" figure. Management was "characterised by fear and bullying from leadership figures".

"Since the late 2000s, cracks in terms of the climate and culture have been present," the report added, according to the Mail. "Instead of being repaired as they should have been, those cracks were ignored in pursuit of medal success."

That will make uncomfortable reading for UK Sport who've repeatedly emphasised their "no compromise" formula for funding that is based solely on prospects of that medal success.

British Cycling, responding in a statement, said it now accepted "that the world class programme leadership focused on athlete performance and medal delivery without sufficient care and attention to the overall staff and athlete culture and environment". Last week, British Cycling was criticised by United Kingdom Anti-Doping before a committee of lawmakers for failing to keep proper records of drugs given to rid-

ers. UKAD chief executive Nicole Sapstead revealed to a committee of lawmakers that British cycling officials had told her that information relating to star rider Bradley Wiggins had been lost after a team doctor's computer was stolen on holiday in Greece in 2014. An eight-time Olympic gold medallist, Wiggins has faced repeated questions about his medical history since Russian hackers Fancy Bears revealed documents last September which showed he received TUEs (therapeutic use exemptions) for the corticosteroid triamcinolone to coincide with three major races in 2011, 2012 and 2013 — including his victory in the 2012 Tour de France.

TUE's are official notes allowing athletes to use otherwise banned substances for the treatment of legitimate medical conditions. But many within cycling claim the system is open to abuse. Wiggins, however, has always denied any wrongdoing and insisted he needed the treatment to deal with a pollen allergy. — AFP

CHIEFS BEAT HURRICANES  
26-18 IN SUPER RUGBY

**HAMILTON:** The Wellington-based Hurricanes failed the first test of their Super Rugby title defense yesterday when beaten 26-18 by the Hamilton-based Chiefs in a rain-drenched third round match. After beating the Sunwolves 83-17 and the Melbourne Rebels 71-6 in their first two matches, the Hurricanes seemed likely to mount a formidable defense of their first Super Rugby title. But in their first match against a New Zealand opponent, they were substantially outplayed by the Chiefs who adapted better to conditions made marginal by an almost unprecedented rainstorm which brought flooding to New Zealand's upper North Island.

The match was decided in the first half when the Hurricanes were reduced to 13 men by yellow cards awarded for inconsequential offenses which allowed the Chiefs to score two tries and lead 17-6 at halftime.

The Hurricanes mounted a brief rally, scoring a try which cut the lead to 23-18 after 78 minutes but the Chiefs were able to ease away to a more comfortable victory with a penalty in injury time. The Chiefs have now won their first three matches of the season against New Zealand opponents, beating the Dunedin-based Highlanders, Auckland-based Blues and the Hurricanes ahead of next weekend's match against the last-placed Melbourne Rebels.

Their ability to maintain discipline and control in horrendous conditions decided the match. "Sometimes you get those conditions and it definitely changes the way you play footy," Chiefs captain Sam Cane said. "You've got to tactically be pretty smart and your defense has got to be strong."

"I thought although with ball in hand we weren't as clinical as we could be, in pretty trying conditions we were good enough to get it done. "We did take our chances and we chanced our arm a few times, especially in that first half when there were chances to take a shot at goal and we backed our set piece." The Hurricanes played most of the first half under extreme pressure when they lost flanker Ardie Savea to a yellow card for collapsing a maul and lock Michael Fatialofa for a no-arms tackle. The Chiefs scored through lock Brodie Retallick to take a 7-3 lead after 15 minutes when they exploited numbers at a scrum with Savea in the sin-bin. They then scored a vital try to winger Tony Pulu on halftime when Fatialofa was still in the sin bin, taking a 17-6 lead to the break.

Fullback Damien McKenzie maintained a perfect kicking record in appalling conditions, landing penalties which took the Chiefs to leads of 20-6 and 23-11 and made any Hurricanes comeback more difficult.

Winger Julian Savea scored in the 78th minute but McKenzie re-established an emphatic margin with his final penalty. "I think the Chiefs showed us, especially in the first half, the discipline side of things," Hurricanes captain Dane Coles said. "I think they kicked into space well which put us on the back foot and our set piece didn't go too well in the first half which got them in the game." —AP

## RUGBY

JONES GETS CRANKY AS  
ENGLAND EYE HISTORY

**LONDON:** It's strange trying to create a siege mentality when your team have won 17 Tests in a row but that appears to be England coach Eddie Jones's approach heading into today's Calcutta Cup clash against Scotland at Twickenham. Victory this weekend would see England equal world champions New Zealand's record of 18 successive Test wins by a 'tier one' nation and might even be enough to retain the Six Nations title should Wales beat Ireland yesterday.

A win would also leave England going for back-to-back Grand Slams in Dublin next weekend. Jones has overseen 16 of England's 17 consecutive victories and has won all his matches as Red Rose coach since taking charge following the team's first-round exit on home soil at the 2015 World Cup. The Australian has been widely praised for his central role in England's revival, yet appeared personally insulted when his team were left perplexed by Italy's 'no ruck' ploy at Twickenham last time out, saying it was as unsporting as underarm bowling in cricket.

Jones, possibly annoyed at being outfoxed, however, briefly-England still scored five second-half tries in a 36-15 win over Italy-remained tetchy after naming his side on Thursday. "There was someone confused in the first half and it wasn't our players," said Jones. Of course, so long as England keep winning, Jones can pretty much say what he likes in a bid to ease the pressure on his team. There was certainly some method in his comments about Scotland, with the former Australia and Japan boss saying: "Scotland's a well-coached side and Vern Cotter is a good rugby coach so they will participate in the spirit of the game."

## FARRELL CONFUSION

It was an attempt to limit Scotland while praising them, although Cotter's men showed an eye for a trick when centre Alex Dunbar joined a line-out before scoring against Ireland. But Jones's response to a question about the fitness of centre Owen Farrell, who suffered a training ground leg injury on Thursday, was surreal, with the coach proclaiming the goal-kicker "doubtful" before, moments later, declaring he would be "alright"

Jones has made three changes, with wing Jack Nowell, centre Jonathan Joseph and scrum-half Ben Youngs all earning a recall. Meanwhile fit-again powerhouse back-row Billy Vunipola returns to the bench, with Nathan Hughes retaining the No 8 shirt. England also have strength in depth at loosehead prop, where Joe Marler has held off



**PARIS:** In this Saturday, March 19, 2016 file photo, England's Ben Youngs celebrates the victory after the Six Nations international rugby match between France and England at the Stade de France stadium in Saint-Denis, outside Paris. England recalled backs Ben Youngs, Jonathan Joseph and Jack Nowell for Scotland's visit to Twickenham in Six Nations rugby today. —AP

Mako Vunipola, Billy's brother, to win his 50th cap. Marler and his front row colleagues could be key to the outcome, as Scotland have struggled at the scrum this season in the absence of injured cornerstone prop WP Nel.

And for all Stuart Hogg is a leading candidate to tour New Zealand with this year's British and Irish Lions, England will look to test the dashing Scotland fullback's much-talked about defence. But if the likes of rampaging lock Johnny Gray can disrupt England up front, mercurial Scotland fly-half Finn Russell could still feature heavily.

Scotland last won at Twickenham in 1983 and, even more significantly perhaps, it's nine years since they beat England anywhere. But this Six Nations has already seen Scotland defeat both Ireland and Wales and it will be the Scots, rather than England, who claim the Triple Crown if they record just their fifth win at Twickenham this weekend.

Cotter, who made just one change, with Hamish Watson replacing injured back-row forward John Hardie, said: "England haven't lost for a long while and we are playing them at home. "I thought with Italy's ruck tactics they adapted well but they'll be annoyed about that and they won't want to be caught out again. — AFP

BASEBALL

## DOMINICAN REPUBLIC HAMMERS CANADA IN WBC OPENER

**MIAMI:** Defending champion Dominican Republic exploded for four runs in the second inning as they routed Canada 9-2 in their World Baseball Classic opener on Thursday. Wellington Castillo hit a two-run homer in a four-run second inning and Jose Bautista blasted a three-run home run in the sixth in front of a crowd of 27,000 at Marlins Park.

In the night match, Italy belted four home runs early and rallied behind a five-run ninth inning to upset Mexico 10-9. Right handed pitcher Carlos Martinez tossed a solid game in his tournament debut as the 25-year-old pitched four innings, allowing just three hits and one run for the Dominicans. He also had three strikeouts and one walk.

The bullpen did the rest as Fernando Rodney and Jeurys Familia combined to strike out all three Canadian batters they faced in the ninth.

Canada falls to 3-6 all time in the tournament as

they are trying to advance beyond pool play to the second round for the first time.

Both Pool C teams resume play at Marlins Park on Saturday, when Canada takes on Colombia and the Dominican Republic faces the Americans.

Following their highly anticipated game against the USA, the Dominicans conclude play against Colombia on Sunday.

Former Major League Baseball all-star Ryan Dempster took the loss for Canada. The 40-year-old Dempster gave up four runs in the second inning in his first competitive game since the 2013 World Series.

Dempster is one of 63 former MLB players in the international tournament. There are just 25 MLB players from last season taking part as many owners expressed concerns that their players might get injured.

Baseball's birthplace, the United States, has never won the WBC. The US pitchers are Tampa Bay's Chris Archer, Washington's Tanner Roark, Toronto's Marcus Stroman and Kansas City's Danny Duffy, but few relievers have recent MLB experience.

Mexico had a comfortable four-run lead heading into the bottom of the ninth before their collapse in Guadalajara.

Italy's John Andreoli hit a walk-off single to cap the final inning comeback. Francisco Cervelli, Chris Colabello and Alex Liddi hit consecutive doubles to get the rally started.

Two of four teams advance from first-round pools in Seoul, Tokyo, Miami and Guadalajara, into second-round play at Tokyo and San Diego that will determine the four semi-finalists who play March 20-21 in Los Angeles. The 16-team competition concludes with the final at Dodger Stadium on March 22. — AFP



**ORLANDO:** In this Monday, March 25, 2013 file photo, Tiger Woods, left, and Arnold Palmer share a laugh during the trophy presentation after Woods won the Arnold Palmer Invitational golf tournament in Orlando, Fla. Tiger Woods won't be at the Arnold Palmer Invitational next week and still doesn't know when he will play again. — AP

## TIGER TO MISS ARNOLD PALMER INVITATIONAL AT BAY HILL

**PALM HARBOR:** Tiger Woods won't be at the Arnold Palmer Invitational next week and still doesn't know when he will play again.

Woods announced on his website Thursday night that ongoing rest and rehabilitation on his back will keep him away from Bay Hill and the tournament he has won a record eight times. Woods said he was particularly disappointed because of a week at Bay Hill to celebrate the life of the tournament host.

Palmer died in September at 87.

"This is the one event I didn't want to skip," Woods said. It will be the fourth consecutive year that Woods does not play Bay Hill dating to his two-shot victory in 2013 that returned him to No. 1 in the world. That was the 77th victory of his PGA Tour career.

Woods won twice more that season, but none since then. He has plunged to No. 713 in the world due to playing only 19 times on the PGA Tour dating to the start of 2014 because of injuries.

And he didn't offer much insight into when he would play next.

"Presently, I have no timetable for my return to golf, but my treatments are continuing and going well," Woods said.

Woods was out of competition for 15 months because of two back surgeries in the fall of 2015. He played his Hero World Challenge in the Bahamas the first week of December, returned to the PGA Tour two months later at Torrey Pines (missed cut) and then withdrew after a 77 at the Dubai Desert Classic with back spasms.

Woods withdrew from the Genesis Open at Riviera - he even canceled his press conference and the Honda Classic. "We're not talking about an extended break," his agent, Mark Steinberg at Excel Sports Management, said in Los Angeles.

And yet that's what this appears to be. Woods withdrew from Dubai on Feb. 3. The Masters, which starts April 6,

would be his next logical option. Woods is not eligible for the Dell Match Play in two weeks, and he has never played the week before the Masters.

When he stepped away because of the scandal in his personal life in Thanksgiving 2009, Woods did not play for roughly five months until he showed up at Augusta National. He shot 68 the first round and tied for fourth.

But he was coping with back issues in 2010. The Arnold Palmer Invitational is set for a big week of emotions and celebrations, featuring a bronze statue to be unveiled near the first tee, and Palmer's cart parked behind the 16th tee of Bay Hill, his favorite spot to watch.

Woods noted that both his children were born at the Winnie Palmer Hospital for Women & Babies, and he said he thought of the King as a "close friend." "He will be greatly missed and can never truly be replaced," Woods said. — AP

## HERMAN GRABS VALSPAR LEAD, STENSON TWO SHOTS BACK

**FLORIDA:** Henrik Stenson wielded a hot putter to card a flawless seven-under-par 64 in the opening round at the Valspar Championship in Florida on Thursday. On a day when American journeyman Jim Herman came up trumps with a 62 for a two-shot lead, Swede Stenson displayed a touch on the greens that will serve him well at next month's Masters.

The British Open champion rolled in seven birdies, including a 50-footer and a 35-footer in ideal morning conditions on the Innisbrook Resort's Copperhead Course at Palm Harbor.

One month before the year's first major, Stenson has already turned an eye towards Augusta National, where he has no top-10 finishes in 11 starts.

"This is one tournament of a few leading up to Augusta so we want to get some answers where the game's at," the world number six told Golf Channel.

"I'm very happy with that, especially putting. Long game I can go the range and work on a little bit. I don't think I've been playing super good any time going into Augusta, so I'm just working away. "We've got some work to do but I'm not too worried about it."

Stenson, 40, finished second at the Dubai Desert Classic on the European Tour five weeks ago, before last week exiting the WGC-Mexico Championship during the first round due to a stomach bug.

He and all of the other leaders on Thursday played in the morning, enjoying calm conditions on a day when the afternoon starters averaged more than two strokes higher.

"The morning is the time for scoring around here," he said. "It's certainly a good idea to be quick out of the blocks and we did that."

Stenson's 64 was matched by American Russell Henley, while leader Herman reeled off five birdies in his first seven holes en route to the lead.

"I was driving the ball really well, putting myself in position for good iron shots and I was putting really well. That all usually adds up to a pretty good score," said Herman.

The 39-year-old is a late bloomer who enjoyed a coming out party in 2016, winning the Houston Open.

A former club pro at Trump National Bedminster in New Jersey, he was a frequent golf partner of United States President Donald Trump. — Reuters



**PALM HARBOR:** Brian Harman hits off the 11th tee during the second round of the Valspar Championship at Innisbrook Resort Copperhead Course yesterday in Palm Harbor, Florida. — AFP

BADMINTON

# OLYMPIC CHAMP CHEN LONG OUT OF ALL ENGLAND

**BIRMINGHAM:** China's Olympic champion Chen Long was dumped out of the All-England Open on Thursday, losing in the second round to Tanongsak Saensomboonsuk, the world number 12 from Thailand, 21-16, 21-19.

Seven months and an absence of competition made Chen vulnerable and so did Tanongsak's sensible strategy of not too frequently attacking an opponent who creates brick-wall mid-court defence and turns it into damaging counter-attack.

Chen fought hard to close a five-point deficit to 19-19 in the second game, and might well have improved had the match gone to a decider.

Instead on the next point he hurtled a smashed wide, and then lifted the shuttle a little too short to

defend against Tanongsak's attack on match point.

"Every player wants to win this title and I did too," said 28-year-old Chen. "My ambition is to get back my form." The upset could help Lee Chong Wei, the top-seeded three times former champion from Malaysia, who survived for the second day with an ailing knee and who might now meet Tanongsak in the semis.

Lee again proved himself once again a master of adaptability and economy while enduring the discomfort of his knee injury and overcoming Wang Tzu Wei, a young and ambitious world number 21 from Taiwan, en route to the quarter-finals.

Lee defended economically, controlled most of the rallies at a pace at which he felt comfortable, and

mixed up the patterns cleverly as he squeezed through 21-18, 21-18.

"I just tried to forget my injury," the world number one said, when asked what he had been trying to do. One hour after Chen's defeat, the other Olympic singles champion almost followed him to the exit.

Carolina Marin was within two points of defeat at 17-19 in the second game against He Bingjiao, a 19-year-old left-hander who looks like China's next great women's singles hope, before surviving 15-21, 21-19, 21-10. Marin next plays Ratchanok Intanon, the former world champion from Thailand, while the top seeded Tai Tzu Ying saved three game points in a 27-25, 21-11 win over Minatsu Mitani of Japan and faces Pusarla Sindhu, the Olympic silver medallist. — AFP

# BERNIER GETS 100TH WIN AS DUCKS STOP BLACKHAWKS

**CHICAGO:** Jonathan Bernier made 43 saves for his 100th NHL win as the Anaheim Ducks cooled off the Chicago Blackhawks with a 1-0 victory Thursday night. Corey Perry scored in the second period as Anaheim ended Chicago's seven-game winning streak despite being outshot 43-26 on the night. Corey Crawford stopped 25 shots for the Blackhawks. They lost for the second time in their past 14. Bernier's second shutout this season and 14th of his career helped the Ducks pull ahead of idle Edmonton for second place in the Pacific Division. Bernier made his sixth straight start with John Gibson sidelined by a lower-body injury. Perry stopped a 10-game scoring drought with his 12th goal at 17:44. He hadn't connected since scoring twice on Feb. 9 at Buffalo.

**SHARKS 4, CAPITALS 2**

Logan Couture scored two power-play goals as San Jose beat Washington in a matchup of division leaders. Joe Thornton



**CHICAGO:** Jonathan Toews #19 of the Chicago Blackhawks looks to pass under pressure from Brandon Montour #71 of the Anaheim Ducks at the United Center on Thursday in Chicago, Illinois. — AFP

## NHL results/standings

Los Angeles 3, Nashville 2 (OT); San Jose 4, Washington 2; NY Islanders 4, Vancouver 3 (OT); Colorado 3, New Jersey 2; Calgary 5, Montreal 0; Ottawa 3, Arizona 2 (OT); Anaheim 1, Chicago 0; Toronto 4, Philadelphia 2; Tampa Bay 4, Minnesota 1; Carolina 4, NY Rangers 3.

**Western Conference**

**Central Division**

	W	L	OTL	GF	GA	PTS
Minnesota	42	17	6	214	155	90
Chicago	42	19	5	198	165	89
Nashville	32	24	11	197	191	75
St. Louis	33	27	5	178	183	71
Winnipeg	30	32	6	204	216	66
Dallas	27	30	10	188	216	64
Colorado	19	44	3	129	217	41

**Pacific Division**

San Jose	40	19	7	184	154	87
Anaheim	35	22	10	173	168	80
Edmonton	35	23	8	188	174	78
Calgary	37	26	4	184	182	78
Los Angeles	32	28	6	164	166	70
Vancouver	28	30	9	156	192	65
Arizona	23	35	8	159	213	54

**Eastern Conference**

**Atlantic Division**

Montreal	38	22	8	185	171	84
Ottawa	38	22	6	178	171	82
Boston	35	26	6	188	175	76
Toronto	30	22	14	201	197	74
Tampa Bay	31	26	9	183	182	71
Florida	29	25	11	162	183	69
Buffalo	27	28	12	169	196	66
Detroit	25	29	11	161	196	61

**Metropolitan Division**

Washington	44	15	7	214	143	95
Columbus	42	17	6	207	149	90
Pittsburgh	41	16	8	230	184	90
NY Rangers	43	23	2	219	179	88
NY Islanders	32	23	11	196	197	75
Philadelphia	31	27	8	172	197	70
Carolina	27	27	10	160	186	64
New Jersey	25	30	12	149	192	62

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

and Joe Pavelski also scored for the Sharks, who have won five of their past six games. Jannik Hansen, acquired in a Feb. 28 trade with Vancouver, appeared in his first game with the Sharks and recorded the first assist on Thornton's goal. Daniel Winnick and Brett Connolly scored for the Capitals, who lost their second straight since winning five of six. Martin Jones had 25 saves for the Sharks. Braden Holtby stopped 20 shots for Washington.

**LIGHTNING 4, WILD 1**

Nikita Kucherov scored two goals, the first on a power play less than seven minutes into the game, helping Tampa Bay beat Minnesota. Kucherov assisted a goal by Andrej Sustr, giving him nine goals and eight assists in his past eight games. Victor Hedman also scored, and Andrei Vasilevskiy made 32 saves. Vasilevskiy is 4-0-1 since the trade of Ben Bishop to Los Angeles, and the Lightning are 9-2-3 in their past 14 games. Marco Scandella scored for Minnesota with 3:58 remaining, only the Wild's second goal in regulation time in their last three games. Western Conference-leading Minnesota has lost three of four for the first time since early December. The loss also broke the Wild's streak of 10 straight wins after a loss.

**FLAMES 5, CANADIENS 0**

Brian Elliott had 24 saves for his first shutout of the season while Johnny Gaudreau had a goal and three assists as Calgary beat Montreal for its eighth consecutive victory. Gaudreau has 13 points (three goals, 10 assists) during the Flames' streak. It's the longest streak for Calgary since it also won eight in a row in November 2005. Mark Giordano, Sean Monahan, Michael Stone and Micheal Ferland also scored. Montreal had won six in a row.

**HURRICANES 4, RANGERS 3**

Rookie Sebastian Aho scored the go-ahead power-play goal with 7:32 remaining in Carolina's comeback victory over New York. Aho also scored the tying goal with 10:56 to play and added an assist. Jeff Skinner also scored, Valentin Zykov had a goal in his first NHL game, and Cam Ward made a season-best 40 saves. Mika Zibanejad scored two power-play goals, and Chris Kreider added a power-play goal and an assist for the short-handed Rangers. They were without injured goalie Henrik Lundqvist and winger Rick Nash.

**SENATORS 3, COYOTES 2, OT**

Erik Karlsson scored his second goal of the game 40 seconds into overtime to lift Ottawa past Arizona for its fifth straight victory. Karlsson tied it at 2 midway through the third. Jean-Gabriel Pageau also scored, and Mike Condon made 39 saves. Brendan Perlini and Lawson Crouse scored for Arizona.

**MAPLE LEAFS 4, FLYERS 2**

Frederik Andersen made 36 saves while Tyler Bozak had a goal and an assist as Toronto beat Philadelphia. William Nylander, Mitch Marner and Nazem Kadri also scored for the Maple Leafs. They have won two straight after dropping five in a row. Wayne Simmonds and Shayne Gostisbehere scored for the Flyers.

**AVALANCHE 3, DEVILS 2**

Francois Beauchemin scored with 1:14 left to lift Colorado past New Jersey and hand the Devils their ninth straight loss. Nathan MacKinnon and Rene Bourque also scored for Colorado, and Calvin Pickard had 25 saves. Taylor Hall and Stefan Noesen scored for New Jersey, and Cory Schneider stopped 19 shots. —AP

## HALES, ROOT HIT TONS AS ENGLAND ROUT HAPLESS WINDIES

**BRIDGETOWN:** Centuries by Alex Hales and Joe Root powered England to a crushing 186-run victory over the hapless West Indies in the third and final one-day international on Thursday. Replying to the tourists' total of 328 all out off 50 overs, the home side were bundled out for just 142 off 39.2 overs, suffering their worst margin of defeat ever in a one-dayer against the English and being swept 3-0 by the same opponents for the first time since 1991.

Sidelined for almost two months by a hand injury sustained in India, Hales belted 110 on his return while Root followed up his assured match-winning 90 not out in the second game in Antigua with 101.

Their second-wicket partnership was worth 192 runs, the most for any wicket in a

one-dayer at the Kensington Oval. "This innings was really special because I wanted to get back into the thick of things," said man of the match Hales.

"It was frustrating being on the sidelines and I was desperately keen to perform." Seeking to avoid a whitewash in the series and needing rankings points to earn automatic qualification for the 2019 World Cup, the West Indies hardly helped their cause by extending the epidemic of dropped catches that afflicted them in the first two matches in Antigua. Root was missed twice early in his innings, the first lapse by Evin Lewis at mid-wicket off fast bowler Alzarri Joseph being the easier of the two. They proved very costly. Joseph, the 20-year-old Antiguan pacer who replaced injured fellow fast bowler

Shannon Gabriel, claimed four expensive wickets but looked the most threatening after West Indies captain Jason Holder won the toss for the third consecutive time and chose to put England in.

He accounted for the attacking Jason Roy in just the sixth over of the innings and should have had more early success but for Lewis' costly error. He came back for an effective second spell though and together with Holder, slowed England's breakneck progress to what looked like being a total well in excess of 350. Holder claimed three for 41 off his ten overs. However if there was any encouragement from the bit of resistance towards the end of the innings, it all dissipated within the first four overs of the West Indies reply with the top three again

succumbing to the England seamers.

Jonathan Carter top-scored with 46 in the middle-order but the match was long over as a contest with man of the series Chris Woakes and fellow fast-medium bowler Liam Plunkett taking three wickets each.

Pacer Steve Finn also played his part in the demolition with two wickets while leg-spinner Adil Rashid finished off the affair in bright afternoon sunshine to the delight of thousands of celebrating England supporters. "This is extremely frustrating, we just didn't compete in this match," said a disconsolate Holder in reflecting on another embarrassing setback for his team.

"I thought we committed too many errors in the field and didn't bowl consistently well. We can only go forward from this." — AFP



**GALLE:** Bangladesh cricketer Soumya Sarkar (3L) watches as Sri Lankan cricketer Dinesh Chandimal (R) drops a catch during the fourth day of the opening Test match between Sri Lanka and Bangladesh at the Galle International Cricket Stadium in Galle yesterday. — AFP

### BANGLADESH OPENERS, BAD LIGHT KEEP LANKA AT BAY

**GALLE:** Opener Soumya Sarkar scored his second half-century of the match as Bangladesh kept their faint hopes of saving the first Test against Sri Lanka alive in Galle yesterday. Set a daunting target of 457 runs, Bangladesh reached 67-0 before bad light brought early stumps on the fourth day with the visiting side still needing 393 runs for an improbable win on the final day.

Soumya, who made 71 runs in the first innings, led the batting charge with an unbeaten 53 while his opening partner Tamim Iqbal took the unusual role of an anchor, scoring 13 not out. The fourth day's play ended 14 overs early as thick clouds hovered over the ground, much to the frustration of the hosts who were desperate to hammer home their advantage by clinching a wicket in the final session. Umpires called off play after Asela Gunaratne conceded three runs off his first ball that was declared a rare back-foot no ball, leaving him with the highly unusual figure of 0-0-3-0.

Sri Lanka declared their second innings at 274-6, just five overs into the session, after local boy Upul Tharanga slammed his third Test century and second against Bangladesh.

#### ACCELERATE

Tharanga was out for 115 at the end of a 171-ball innings that featured 11 fours and three sixes before he was bowled by off-spinner Mehedi Hasan. Left-arm spinner Shakib Al Hasan bowled Asela Gunaratne for a duck in the next over and Mehedi dismissed Niroshan Dickwella for 15 to give Bangladesh something to celebrate in another taxing day for the visitors. Dinesh Chandimal rode his luck after being dropped by Soumya Sarkar at slip on 12 to stay unbeaten on 50 before the declaration came with the dismissal of Dilruwan Perera, who made 33. Earlier in the second session, Shakib removed Sri Lanka's first innings hero Kusal Mendis who made 19 before hoisting a catch to Taskin Ahmed at square leg boundary. Mendis scored 194 in the first innings. Sri Lanka began their second innings in the morning cautiously as they scored 87 runs for the loss of opener Dimuth Karunaratne, who gave a catch to Mahmudullah at square leg off Taskin Ahmed after making 32. —AFP

## FIRE ALARM DRAMA AS S AFRICA EDGE AHEAD

**DUNEDIN:** South Africa shrugged off a ground evacuation because of a fire alarm to reach 38 for one in the first Test against New Zealand yesterday, a lead of five runs. With the game evenly poised after an absorbing first three days, both sides were hoping looming rain over the weekend did not dictate the outcome. "It does seem pretty even but we don't know what the weather holds. But hopefully we can make a game of it, it's always nice to get a result," said South Africa's man of the moment Keshav Maharaj. Maharaj claimed his first five wicket haul to halt the New Zealand innings at 341 with a Kane Williamson ton and the heroics of an injury-hit Ross Taylor giving them a 33-run first-innings lead.

BJ Watling, who contributed to New Zealand's total with 50, believed a result was still possible with "one crazy session" that could change the balance. "We've just got to (take) each session at a time and see what that leaves us with," he said.

"You can't play a game of cricket expecting it to rain because sometimes it doesn't and you get caught out. It's just the nature of the beast." South Africa lost opener Stephen Cook for a duck in the first over of their second innings and, despite a 20-minute delay when the University Oval was evacuated after a fire alarm in the main grandstand, they survived without further loss until bad light stopped play.

Firemen who searched the area blamed steam for setting off the alarm and when play resumed, in gathering gloom, New Zealand's spinners were unable to find success against Hashim Amla, who was unbeaten on 23, and Dean Elgar (12). Cook was caught behind off Trent Boult without scoring on the fourth ball, and walked rather than seek a review-although replays were unable to detect the ball hit the bat.

#### VALUABLE HALF-CENTURIES

Earlier Williamson's 130 plus valuable half-centuries from Jeet Raval and Watling-along with Taylor's late return despite a calf injury-carried New Zealand to 341.

It was the first time in seven Tests dating back to 2012 that New Zealand

have led South Africa after the first innings. Williamson brought up his 16th Test century, putting him level with

Taylor and one behind the New Zealand record of 17 held by the late Martin Crowe. — AFP



**DUNEDIN:** South Africa's Dean Elgar watches the ball past wicketkeeper New Zealand's BJ Watling during the first cricket test at University Oval, Dunedin, New Zealand, yesterday. —AP

### SCOREBOARD

Scoreboard at stumps on the third day in the first Test between New Zealand and South Africa on Friday in Dunedin, New Zealand.

**South Africa 1st innings 308** (D. Elgar 140, T. Bavuma 64, F. du Plessis 52; T. oult 4-64)

**New Zealand 1st innings** (Overnight: 177-3)

T. Latham c de Kock b Philander	10
J. Raval c Elgar b Maharaj	52
K. Williamson c de Kock b Rabada	130
R. Taylor not out	15
H. Nicholls c Amla b Maharaj	12
J. Patel c du Plessis b Philander	16
J. Neesham c de Kock b M. Morkel	7
B. Watling b Maharaj	50
M. Santner c Maharaj b M. Morkel	4
N. Wagner c Duminy b Maharaj	32
T. Boult b Maharaj	2
Extras (lb-8 nb-2 w-1)	11
Total (all out, 114.3 overs)	341
Fall of wickets: 1-15 T. Latham, 2-117 J. Raval, 3-165 H. Nicholls, 4-184 J. atel, 5-193 J. Neesham, 6-277 K.	

Williamson, 7-297 M. Santner, 8-304 B. Watling, 9-324 T. Boult, 10-341 N. Wagner.

#### Bowling:

K. Rabada 30-7-92-1(w-1); V. Philander 27-11-67-2(nb-2); M. Morkel 24-6-62-2; K. Maharaj 28.3-7-94-5; J. Duminy 5-0-18-0.

#### South Africa 2nd innings

S. Cook c Watling b Boult	0
D. Elgar not out	12
H. Amla not out	23
Extras (lb-3)	3
Total (for 1 wickets, 18 overs)	38
Fall of wickets: 1-0 S. Cook	
To bat: F. du Plessis, J. Duminy, T. Bavuma, Q. de Kock, V. Philander, K. Maharaj, M. Morkel, K. Rabada	
<b>Bowling:</b> T. Boult 4-2-6-1; N. Wagner 4-1-8-0; M. Santner 5-2-6-0; J. Patel 5-2-15-0.	

**GYMNASTICS**

## ACCUSERS ASK USOC TO DECERTIFY USA GYMNASTICS

**LOS ANGELES:** An attorney representing more than 70 women gymnasts who say a national team doctor sexually abused them called upon the US Olympic Committee (USOC) on Thursday to decertify USA Gymnastics as the sport's governing body.

The move by lawyer John Manly came as the USOC board of directors met in Los Angeles amid speculation officials want USA Gymnastics president Steve Penny to resign.

"The reasons for our request for the decertification of USA Gymnastics by the USOC are straightforward, clear and indeed required under federal law," Manly said in a statement.

"Without question, the serial rape and molestation of hundreds of girls, by coaches, trainers and other USA Gymnastics' staff materially inhibits these

women's ability to participate in their sport and is discriminatory.

"If that is not enough to justify the decertification of USA Gymnastics, then what is?"

Asked on Twitter what such a move would mean, 1996 US Olympic gold medal gymnastics team member Dominique Moceanu—who at 14 was the youngest Olympic gold medalist ever—replied, "It means it's a clean slate. Everybody goes ... USOC appoints new governing body."

More than 50 alleged victims of Larry Nassar have filed lawsuits against USA Gymnastics in state and federal courts. Nassar, the national team doctor from 1996 to 2015, is in jail after being charged with criminal sexual conduct with a pre-teen and violating federal child pornography laws.

Nassar, who is jailed in Michigan, was charged last month on 36 counts of criminal sexual conduct. He has denied the claims by former US gymnasts, saying he only provided proper medical treatments. Manly called the notion of Penny's resignation being a sufficient punishment "too little too late."

**CRIMINAL ALLEGATIONS**

While the USOC cannot fire Penny, it can bring pressure upon USA Gymnastics, whose board can dismiss Penny, who stands accused of failing to immediately report sex abuse allegations against Nassar brought to his attention in 2015.

In a letter to USOC president Larry Probst, Manly said the 80 criminal allegations of sexual abuse pending against Nassar are "despicable." —AFP

**BASKETBALL**

## WESTBROOK TRIPLE-DOUBLE LEADS THUNDER OVER SPURS

**OKLAHOMA CITY:** Russell Westbrook had his 31st triple-double of the season to help the Oklahoma City Thunder beat the San Antonio Spurs 102-92 in the NBA on Thursday night. Westbrook had 23 points, 13 rebounds and 13 assists to match Wilt Chamberlain's 1967-68 campaign for the second-most triple-doubles in a season. Victor Oladipo scored 20 points, and Enes Kanter added 14 points and 10 rebounds for the Thunder. They snapped a four-game losing streak. Kawhi Leonard scored 19 points for the Spurs, who had won nine straight. San Antonio dropped two games behind the Golden State Warriors in the race for the best record in the NBA. Tony Parker, Manu Ginobili and Kyle Anderson sat out for the Spurs. Ginobili rested, Parker had back stiffness and Anderson had a sprained right knee.

**PISTONS 106, CAVALIERS 101**

Andre Drummond had 20 points and 16 rebounds, and



**OKLAHOMA CITY:** Oklahoma City Thunder center Enes Kanter grabs a rebound between San Antonio Spurs center Pau Gasol (16) and forward LaMarcus Aldridge (12) during the fourth quarter of an NBA basketball game in Oklahoma City, Thursday. Oklahoma City won 102-92. — AP

Detroit scored the first 13 points of the fourth quarter before holding off injury-plagued Cleveland. LeBron James had 29 points, 13 rebounds and 10 assists - and threw down over a half-dozen tremendous dunks - but the Cavaliers have now lost three straight and five of their last seven. J.R. Smith played for Cleveland after a thumb injury had kept him out since December, but Kevin Love and Kyle Korver were out, and the Cavaliers lost Andrew Bogut earlier in the week with a broken leg. Cleveland led 80-73 after finishing the third quarter with a 22-5 run, but the Pistons started strong in the fourth, and a tip-in by Reggie Jackson gave Detroit an 82-80 advantage. Kyrie Irving had 27 points for Cleveland.

**CLIPPERS 114, GRIZZLIES 98**

Austin Rivers scored 20 points and Chris Paul added 19 points and seven assists to lead Los Angeles past Memphis. The Clippers solidified their hold on the fifth seed in the Western Conference, while Memphis continued a skid that has reached four straight. J.J. Redick scored 15 points, Jamal Crawford and Blake Griffin had 14 apiece, and Griffin added 12 rebounds. Marc Gasol led Memphis with 20 points, and Zach Randolph had 18 points and 11 rebounds.

**LAKERS 122, SUNS 110**

D'Angelo Russell scored 28 points, including six 3-pointers, as the Los Angeles Lakers snapped an eight-game losing streak by beating Phoenix. Jordan Clarkson added 19 for the Lakers, who stopped an 11-game skid in Phoenix, where they hadn't won since Jan. 5, 2011. Los Angeles lost 137-101 in its previous game in Phoenix on Feb. 15, the most one-sided Suns win in the series' history. The Lakers took the lead to start the second half and were up by as many as 21 Thursday night. A late Phoenix run made it a seven-point game before Los Angeles scored the final five points. Devin Booker scored 23 for the Suns. Marquese Chriss added 18, and T.J. Warren finished with 17.

**TRAIL BLAZERS 114, 76ERS 108 OT**

Jusuf Nurkic had a career-high 28 points and 20 rebounds as the Portland Trail Blazers beat the Philadelphia 76ers in overtime. Nurkic also had eight assists and six blocks in Portland's fourth straight win. Damian Lillard finished with 24 points but did not make a 3-pointer, snapping a streak of 42 games with at least one 3. Philadelphia rookie Dario Saric had a season-best 28 points, while Robert Covington added 24 in the 76ers' sixth loss in seven games. — AP

**NBA results/standings**

LA Lakers 122, Phoenix 110; Portland 114, Philadelphia 108 (OT); LA Clippers 114, Memphis 98; Oklahoma City 102, San Antonio 92; Detroit 106, Cleveland 101.

**Eastern Conference**

**Atlantic Division**

	W	L	PCT	GB
Boston	41	24	.631	-
Toronto	38	26	.594	2.5
NY Knicks	26	39	.400	15
Philadelphia	23	41	.359	17.5
Brooklyn	11	52	.175	29

**Central Division**

Cleveland	42	21	.667	-
Indiana	33	31	.516	9.5
Detroit	32	33	.492	11
Chicago	31	33	.484	11.5
Milwaukee	30	33	.476	12

**Southeast Division**

Washington	39	24	.619	-
Atlanta	35	29	.547	4.5
Miami	31	34	.477	9
Charlotte	28	36	.438	11.5
Orlando	24	41	.369	16

**Western Conference**

**Northwest Division**

Utah	41	24	.631	-
Oklahoma City	36	29	.554	5
Denver	29	35	.453	11.5
Portland	28	35	.444	12
Minnesota	26	37	.413	14

**Pacific Division**

Golden State	52	12	.813	-
LA Clippers	39	26	.600	13.5
Sacramento	25	39	.391	27
Phoenix	21	44	.323	31.5
LA Lakers	20	45	.308	32.5

**Southwest Division**

San Antonio	50	14	.781	-
Houston	44	21	.677	6.5
Memphis	36	29	.554	14.5
Dallas	27	36	.429	22.5
New Orleans	25	40	.385	25.5

## AFC POSTPONES MALAYSIA, NORTH KOREA MATCH IN PYONGYANG

**KUALA LUMPUR:** Malaysia's 2019 Asian Cup qualifier against North Korea due to be played in Pyongyang later this month has been postponed, the Asian Football Confederation announced yesterday.

The Football Association of Malaysia (FAM) had made a request not to play the March 28 fixture in the North Korean capital under pressure from its government following the recent breakdown in relations between the two countries.

The countries have become embroiled in a growing row after Malaysia accused North Korea of assassinating Kim Jong Nam, the estranged half-brother of Pyongyang ruler Kim Jong Un, at Kuala Lumpur International Airport on Feb. 13.

"The Asian Football Confederation Competitions Committee have today decided to postpone the AFC Asian Cup UAE 2019 Final Round Qualifier between

DPR Korea and Malaysia," the regional governing body said in a statement.

"The match was scheduled to be played in the DPR Korea capital Pyongyang on March 28... but the AFC Competitions Committee have taken the decision to postpone the tie after escalating diplomatic tension between the Governments of DPR Korea and Malaysia.

"A new date for the game will be announced in due course."

The two nations were due to open the final phase of qualifying for the Asian Cup finals hosted by the United Arab Emirates with a Group B encounter at Pyongyang's Kim Il Sung Stadium.

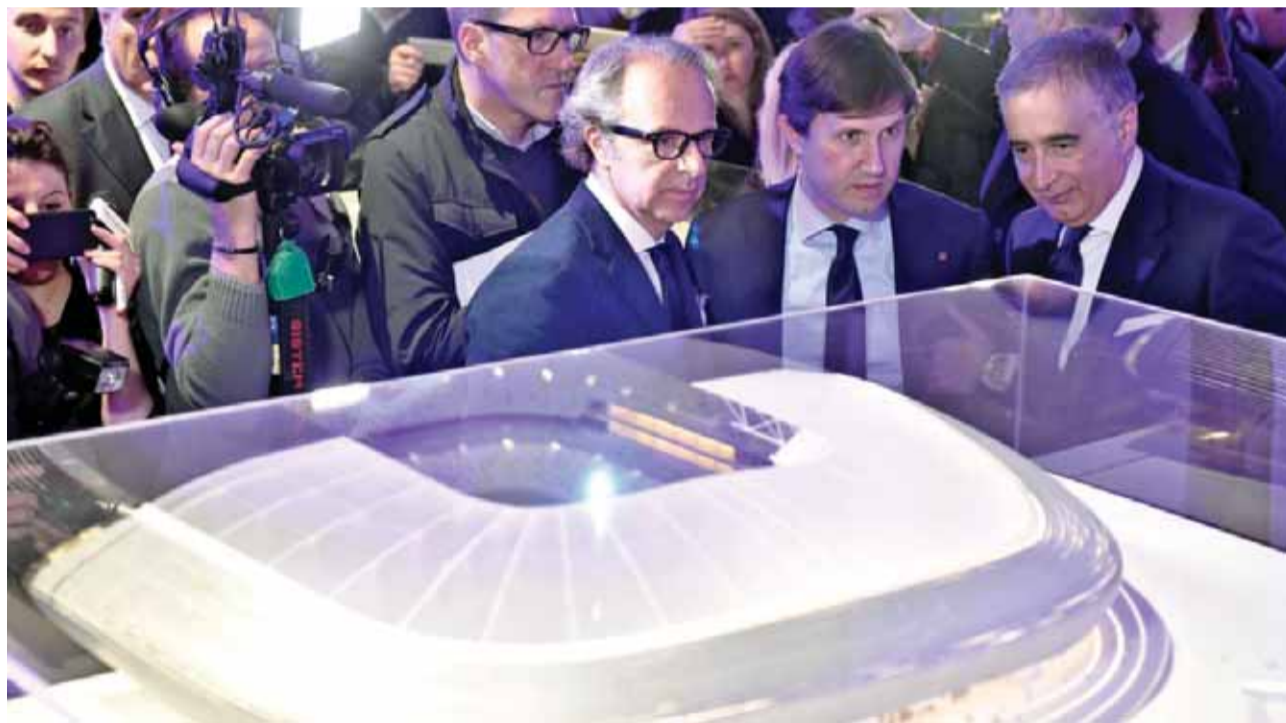
FAM reacted by releasing a statement saying the AFC had acted appropriately given tensions had yet to subside. "FAM welcomes the decision made by

the AFC because it is seen as the most appropriate measures for the safety of the players and team officials," the association said.

Hong Kong and Lebanon will also play in North Korea during qualifying for the 2019 Asian Cup, the continent's equivalent of the European Championships.

Hong Kong FA chief executive Mark Sutcliffe on Thursday also called for the match to be postponed, adding that the tie could be played in Pyongyang at a later date when relations between the countries had improved.

Despite the postponement of the North Korea tie, Malaysia still plan to travel to the Philippines for an international friendly against their Southeast Asian neighbours at the Rizal Memorial Stadium in Manila on March 22. — Reuters



**FLORENCE:** Fiorentina's owner Diego Della Valle, left, Florence's mayor Diego Nardella, center, and Fiorentina's executive president Mario Cognini, right, look at a plastic model of the new stadium in Florence, Italy, yesterday. Fiorentina has unveiled plans for a new stadium yesterday, which it hopes to be playing in by 2021. The new stadium will seat 40,000 people, with the closest fans being only seven meters from the field. — AP

### PREVIEW

## LINCOLN DREAMING OF ARSENAL SCALP IN FAIRYTALE QUARTER-FINAL

**LONDON:** Non-league Lincoln City have enjoyed a fairytale run to the quarter-finals of the FA Cup and are now dreaming of piling more misery on Arsene Wenger and Arsenal today.

The sides meet at the Emirates Stadium with under-pressure Wenger knowing an unthinkable defeat against fifth-tier opposition would surely spell the end for him in north London.

Lincoln have already seen off Premier League side Burnley, two clubs from the second-tier Championship and one from the third-tier League One in their remarkable run to the last eight.

They are the first non-league club to reach this stage of the competition since 1914, although they are at the very top of the non-league pyramid, sitting top of the National League and on course to return to the Football League after a six-year absence.

Nevertheless, defeating Arsenal

would eclipse all else and go down as the greatest ever FA Cup shock. And while Danny Cowley's side appreciate the scale of the challenge, they believe they can use the discontent at the Emirates Stadium in their favour.

"The boss said if we can go there and be in the game after 15 or 20 minutes then the crowd might turn on them and we might have 60,000 supporting us instead of 9,000," said skipper Luke Waterfall.

"You never know, it's one of those situations where they want the manager out so there might be a lot of Arsenal fans going to that game wishing we can get something out of that game to see the end of the manager. "We've got to use it to our advantage.

"The pressure is massively off us this time, all the pressure is on Arsenal. "They are only fighting on this front now—the FA Cup is all they've got to play for so they're going to be trying

ridiculously hard to beat us and go on and win the FA Cup."

### OZIL DOUBTS

The doubts over Wenger's long reign at Arsenal being extended won't cease if they end Lincoln's run but defeat would pretty much ensure his time was up.

The 67-year-old Frenchman still has the backing of the board despite the humiliation of the 10-2 aggregate score in exiting the Champions League to Bayern Munich in midweek.

The Gunners enter the clash with morale further dented over splits appearing in the squad, Theo Walcott confirming Chilean star Alexis Sanchez had clashed with team-mates prior to the Liverpool defeat last Saturday.

For the Lincoln game, Wenger has continued doubts due to illness over Mesut Ozil, Danny Welbeck and Alex Iwobi. — Reuters

## RANGERS TURMOIL WON'T DISTRACT CELTIC: RODGERS

**GLASGOW:** Celtic manager Brendan Rodgers insists the uncertainty at bitter rivals Rangers will not affect them in Sunday's Old Firm derby at Parkhead.

Rangers have been in turmoil on and off the pitch in recent weeks since Mark Warburton and his backroom team departed Ibrox last month.

Graeme Murty was placed in interim charge and has recorded three wins and two defeats in his five games. The Under-20s coach is likely to continue in the dugout for the fourth Old Firm derby of the season.

That is despite Portuguese coach Pedro Caixinha looking set to take the job permanently after being granted permission from Qatari club Al-Gharafa to join Rangers.

However, Rodgers believes the Rangers players will put the managerial situation to the back of their minds and will be concentrating on trying to inflict a first domestic defeat of the season on Celtic.

"The players are professional enough to get on with it," Rodgers said.

"Graeme's done an excellent job."

"It's not an easy situation when you're working with the younger players and then you've got to step into the position when the manager goes. "I'm sure whatever way it works out for him, he'll have benefited from it."

### 'WE HAVE TURNED THE CORNER'

Celtic are 33 points ahead of third-placed Rangers at the top of the Scottish Premiership and have won all three Old Firm encounters this term, including a 5-1 league victory at Celtic Park in their first meeting of the season.

Another win would put them on the verge of securing a sixth successive title win and hurt their rivals chances of catching Aberdeen in second spot.

Despite their incredible run, Rodgers is taking nothing for granted.

"Celtic v Rangers, the games I've been involved in so far, have been fantastic and of course we played well in the three games and got the result," the former Liverpool manager said.

"We always anticipate a tough game and I'm sure this one will be no different."

If beating their biggest rivals wasn't incentive enough, Rangers could deny Celtic a host of European records by claiming victory.

The reigning champions have won their past 22 Premiership games as they chase their own record of 25 league wins in a row and Benfica's European record of 29 successive victories set in 1971/72.

Rodgers' side are also well on course to smash Europe's largest ever title-winning margin of 31 points set by French giants Paris Saint-Germain in 2015/16 — they currently lead Aberdeen by 27 points.

Rangers will be weakened by the suspension of Joe Garner, who scored a hat-trick in last weekend's 6-0 thrashing of Hamilton Academical in the Scottish Cup.

However, striker Martyn Waghorn believes Rangers can become the first Scottish side to defeat Celtic this season and make up for the disappointment they suffered on their last visit. — AFP

## PEP GUARDIOLA FACES FA CUP Q-FINAL HEADACHE

**MIDDLESBROUGH:** Pep Guardiola faces a selection headache in today's FA Cup quarter-final at Middlesbrough as the Manchester City manager juggles the demands of competing for silverware on two fronts.

Guardiola must decide how many of City's best players to risk for at the Riverside Stadium as they have a crucial Champions League last 16 second leg clash with Monaco four days later.

The FA Cup offers the more realistic prospect of Guardiola's first trophy with City, but the Spaniard's success in Europe was a key factor in the decision to bring him to Manchester last year.

The former Barcelona and Bayern Munich boss will find his skills tested to the limit in what is a defining week for City's season.

His most recent attempt at squad rotation failed

when Guardiola decided to start Wednesday's Premier League home game against Stoke without his two best creative players.

David Silva was named as a substitute and Raheem Sterling was rested altogether as City drew 0-0, leaving them 10 points behind leaders Chelsea.

Guardiola has rested players for each of City's FA Cup games so far, but there are signs that he is taking the competition more seriously the further he progresses. Having made eight changes for their goalless fifth round tie at Huddersfield last month, he made only four for the replay, which City won 5-1.

Claudio Bravo, now the second-choice goalkeeper for league games, has come back in for the last two FA Cup ties and should play again at the Riverside Stadium, while full-back Pablo Zabaleta has also tended to be used in the competition.

Perhaps the biggest question revolves around Sergio Aguero. The Argentina striker was demoted to the bench following the January arrival of Gabriel Jesus from Brazilian club Palmeiras.

### INDISPENSABLE

Yet since Jesus broke his foot against Bournemouth on February 13, Aguero has proved indispensable. He scored twice in 5-3 first leg win against Monaco, and is City's best hope of the away goal they may well need in the principality to secure European progress. Guardiola cannot afford an injury to the striker, and so may decide to field Kelechi Iheanacho against Middlesbrough instead. City midfielder Yaya Toure hinted that there will be some changes on Saturday, saying: "We've got two games now where we need all the players." — AFP

## SAMP TARGET GENOA DERBY, INTER BATTLE ATALANTA

**MILAN:** Former Juventus striker Fabio Quagliarella said respective positions in the league table will be ignored today when Sampdoria face Genoa in derby "battle for 90 minutes".

With leaders Juventus hosting AC Milan later looking to extend their eight-point lead over second-placed Roma, who are in action tomorrow at Palermo, the focus of this weekend's Serie A action is on the Luigi Ferraris stadium.

Sampdoria, sitting 10th at 29 points off the lead, are nine points ahead of Genoa in 15th place in a season where top flight survival for both is the only objective.

Having won their home fixture 2-1 last October, Quagliarella is confident Marco Giampaolo's men can make it two in a row, telling Premium Sport: "We're going into this game totally relaxed, although it's a game that won't take into account our respective league standings."

"Our results recently have shown how well we're doing, but the derby is a match apart. It will be a battle for 90 minutes. Hopefully, we'll win our second this season."

While a shock win for Milan in Turin could throw the title race back open, the fight for European places continues apace.

Inter Milan, one of several teams battling for a coveted Champions League spot, face the acid test with the visit of high-flying Atalanta to the San Siro tomorrow.

Amid their best Serie A season to date, Atalanta sit fifth, one point ahead of Inter and five points behind Napoli in the third and last Champions League qualifying spot.

Portugal midfielder Joao Mario admits the Bergamo side pose a "difficult" challenge, but said: "On Sunday we can gift everyone at Inter with a win, that's what we want." — AP



**ROSTOV-ON-DON:** Manchester United's Marouane Fellaini, right, and Rostov's Christian Noboa fight for the ball during the Europa League round of 16 first leg soccer match between Rostov and Manchester United in Rostov-on-Don, Russia, Thursday. — AP

### SOCCER

## MOURINHO EYES PROGRESS DESPITE CHELSEA DATE

**ROSTOV-ON-DON:** Manchester United manager Jose Mourinho is hopeful the obstacle of a trip to Chelsea in the FA Cup does not hinder his side's prospects of completing a Europa League last-16 win over Rostov.

United drew 1-1 in Russia in the first leg of their tie on Thursday after Henrikh Mkhitaryan's first-half opener was cancelled out by an Aleksandr Bukharov strike shortly after the break.

It was a good result after a long trip for a match played on a shocking surface at the Olimp 2 stadium—so bad that Mourinho had questioned whether the match should have gone ahead at all.

United host Rostov in the return at Old Trafford next Thursday but before that they go to Chelsea in the FA Cup quarter-finals on Monday evening, meaning the Portuguese manager will have to adequately manage his squad

to avoid fatigue. And he acknowledged the importance of the Europa League as a potential route into next season's Champions League for a team currently sitting sixth in the Premier League.

"We want to keep the two goals open. In the Europa League, if you manage to go to the quarter finals, then in the quarter finals, you feel it so we have to try by every means," said Mourinho, whose side have already won the English League Cup this season.

"We have a trophy in our pocket which is always a good thing, a good feeling for everyone. But now we have the Premier league to try to be in the top four, we have the Europa League to try to beat Rostov, and on Monday we cannot go with a bad team."

"Manchester United is too big. It's not Chelsea's fault that we'll play on

Monday. So we have to make changes, for sure, but we cannot go to Stamford Bridge with a bad team."

Of the game in Rostov, the former Chelsea manager admitted disappointment at his side's inability to hold their lead but hinted that the outcome still suited him.

"You know, an away goal is always positive. It's better 1-1 than 0-0 but the game is open," said Mourinho, who won the UEFA Cup with Porto in 2003.

"The result is open and this Rostov team, they have experience at playing big matches, big opponents and big stadiums. I don't think it's a problem for them to compete against us."

"They play Sunday against Terek Grozny, we play Monday against Chelsea. For us, it's difficult but we are one step from being in the quarter-finals." — AFP

Live Matches on TV (Local Timing)	
<b>ENGLISH PREMIER LEAGUE</b>	
Everton v Albion	18:00
beIN SPORTS	
Middlesbrough v Sunderland	18:00
beIN SPORTS	
Crystal Palace v Tottenham	18:00
beIN SPORTS	
Hull City v Swansea City	18:00
beIN SPORTS	
Bournemouth v West Ham United	18:00
beIN SPORTS	
Arsenal v Leicester City	20:30
beIN SPORTS	
<b>SPANISH LEAGUE PRIMERA</b>	
Valencia v Sporting Gijon	15:00
beIN SPORTS	
Sevilla v Leganes	18:15
beIN SPORTS	
Malaga v Deportivo Alaves	20:30
beIN SPORTS	
Granada v Atletico de Madrid	22:45
beIN SPORTS	
<b>ITALIAN CALCIO LEAGUE</b>	
Genoa v Sampdoria	22:45
beIN SPORTS	
<b>GERMAN LEAGUE</b>	
Hertha Berlin v Borussia	17:30
beIN SPORTS	
Freiburg v Hoffenheim	17:30
beIN SPORTS	
Bayern Munich v Eintracht	17:30
beIN SPORTS	
Darmstadt v Mainz	17:30
beIN SPORTS	
Leipzig v Wolfsburg	17:30
beIN SPORTS	
Ingolstadt v Koln	20:30
beIN SPORTS	
<b>FRENCH LEAGUE</b>	
Monaco v Girondins	18:45
beIN SPORTS	
Montpellier v Nantes	22:00
beIN SPORTS	
Stade Rennes v Dijon	22:00
beIN SPORTS	
Guingamp v Bastia	22:00
beIN SPORTS	
Nancy Lorraine v Lille	22:00
beIN SPORTS	



# Sports



**Mourinho eyes progress despite Chelsea date**

47



**KAZAN:** In this Nov. 26, 2016 file photo FIFA President Gianni Infantino, right, and Vitaly Mutko, Russia's deputy prime minister in charge of sport, tourism and youth policies, arrive for a news briefing ahead of the draw for the soccer Confederations Cup 2017, in Kazan, Russia. Russia World Cup head Mutko has been barred from seeking re-election to FIFA's top decision-making body after failing an eligibility check because of his role as a deputy prime minister of Russia.— AP

## RUSSIA'S MUTKO 'BARRED FROM FIFA POST'

**ZURICH:** FIFA has barred Russian deputy prime minister Vitaly Mutko, chief organiser of the World Cup to be held in his country next year, from sitting on the world body's ruling council, a source close to FIFA told AFP yesterday.

Mutko, who has also been accused of involvement in Russia's sports doping scandal, is one of five European candidates for seats on the FIFA Council to be decided in April. The source said European football's governing body UEFA has been told he cannot stand. A FIFA watchdog blocked Mutko, who has had a seat on the FIFA top table since 2009, because of potential conflicts of interest with his government role, the source told AFP.

The decision is a new blow to the 58-year-old Mutko, an ally of President Vladimir Putin, who was barred from last year's Rio Olympics in the fallout from an inquiry which accused Russia of "state-sponsored" doping.

But the source denied that the doping scandal had played any role in the decision. Mutko has been elected by UEFA to represent them on FIFA's ruling body since 2009. But his FIFA seat is due for re-election in April and all candidates must be vetted by FIFA's control commission under new rules brought in after world football's corruption scandal.

Mutko has been ruled "not eligible" for a place, the source said. "This decision by the control commission was taken because of the deputy prime minister's post that Mr Mutko

occupies and so the possible interference and conflicts of interest," the source told AFP. FIFA's ethics code prohibits political interference in football affairs and the world body has in the past suspended national federations where governments have been judged to have taken control.

### 'POLITICALLY NEUTRAL'

Mutko said he would not appeal the decision, but stressed it would have no effect on Russia's preparations to host the 2018 World Cup. "They want the organisation to be politically neutral, so that civil servants and representatives of the authorities of different countries don't run in all bodies. It is their right," Mutko told the TASS news agency Friday.

Putin promoted Mutko from sports minister to deputy prime minister last October despite the controversy raging over doping in Russian sport.

A report by Canadian lawyer Richard McLaren for the World Anti-Doping Agency (WADA) said the sports ministry had organised the doping.

Mutko and the Russian government have strongly denied any involvement in the use of banned substances however.

The McLaren report "played absolutely no role in the decision of the commission," according to the source close to FIFA.

The commission can also not prevent Mutko from remaining

as head of Russia's 2018 World Cup organising committee. He is also head of the Russian federation. "That is not part of FIFA's jurisdiction," the source said.

### NEW UEFA RACE

The 55-member UEFA will choose its FIFA representatives at a congress in Helsinki on April 5.

The other four candidates are Hungary's Sandor Csanyi, Cypriot Costakis Koutsokoumnis, Dejan Savicevic of Montenegro and Iceland's Geir Thorsteinsson.

FIFA started its integrity check on candidates in December and there have been doubts about Mutko's eligibility since.

FIFA president Gianni Infantino denied however that he had asked Mutko to stand down as World Cup organiser because of the doping controversy.

When WADA released the first McLaren report last July, it called on FIFA to investigate Mutko.

A follow-up McLaren report implicated Mutko in the cover-up of a doping failure by an Uzbek player in the Russian Premier League. McLaren also said that as sports minister, Mutko must have known about the "state-sponsored" doping programmes used to help Russian athletes at the 2012 London Olympics, 2014 Sochi Winter Olympics, and the 2013 world athletics championships held in Moscow. — AFP