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UNIVERSAL HOSPITAL  
Wings of Wellness



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أجنحة العافية

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# THE GULF TIME

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## Yemen

**Yemen's al Qaeda leader vows to attack America in new video** — The leader of Al Qaeda's wing in Yemen has vowed to attack the United States, in a video apparently showing a gathering of the group celebrating a mass jailbreak of fighters. The 15-minute video, dated March 2014 and posted on a website used by Islamists, shows masked men waving al Qaeda's black flag and celebrating the arrival of the freed prisoners.

Its authenticity could not be independently verified. "The Crusader enemy, dear brothers, still possesses cards which he moves around. We have to remember that we are always fighting the biggest enemy," says a man speaking in the open in a mountainous area, whom the video identifies as its leader Nasser al-Wuhaiishi.

"We have to remove the cross, (and) the bearer of the cross, America," said Wuhaiishi, who appeared with his face uncovered, wearing a T-shirt and sporting the dagger common among Yemeni men. The video, entitled "Images from the reception of the freed prisoners from Sanaa's central prison", included testimony from fighters involved in the jailbreak.

Abdulrazzaq al-Jamal, a journalist who has interviewed members of al Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP), said it was the largest known gathering of al Qaeda in Yemen. "It included about 400 people, and these are not all the members of the group. This gathering is a confirmation that al Qaeda is gaining strength and influence," he said. — Reuters

## Pakistan

**TTP refuse to extend ceasefire, will continue talks**

— The Pakistani Taliban Wednesday said they would not extend a ceasefire called to help negotiations with the government but said they were still committed to the peace talks process. The Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) announced a one-month ceasefire at the start of March as the government sought a negotiated end to their bloody seven-year insurgency.

"TTP's central shura (council) has unanimously agreed not to extend the ceasefire," the group said in a statement. "However, the talks process will continue with complete sincerity and seriousness, and whenever a clear development comes from the government side, the TTP will not hesitate to respond with a serious move."

The announcement comes three days after Pakistan's Interior Minister Chaudhry Nisar Ali Khan said the process was about to enter a "comprehensive" phase. — AFP

## Jordan

**Jordanian jets strike vehicles on Syrian border**

— Jordanian military warplanes struck a convoy of vehicles as they were trying to enter Jordan from Syria, the army said in a statement Wednesday, in an unusual move at a time of tensions between the desert kingdom and Damascus.

A Syrian military official said the vehicles did not belong to the Syrian army. The Jordanian military statement said the attack happened at 10:30 a.m. (0730 GMT) after "camouflaged" vehicles driving in a rugged area near the border ignored demands to stop from security forces. The statement said Jordanian aircraft fired warning shots at the vehicles, but they did not stop. The warplanes then destroyed the vehicles.

The statement did not say how many vehicles were in the convoy, nor did it offer casualty figures. It also did not specify whether the vehicles were targeted on Syrian or Jordanian soil. Immediately after news emerged of the airstrikes, a Syrian military official said no military vehicles had been heading toward the Jordanian border, according to a statement released on state-run television. "What was targeted by Jordanian aircraft does not belong to the Syrian Arab army," the statement said. The strikes occurred after Syrian aircraft killed at least four people early Wednesday in a rebel-held town along the Lebanese border. — AP

# NATO's boost to Ukraine defenses

## Agrees to deploy more forces in eastern Europe



Pro-Russian activists block a column of Ukrainian men riding on Armoured Personnel Carriers in the eastern Ukrainian city of Kramatorsk on Wednesday. — AFP

**B**RUSSELS: NATO said Wednesday it will deploy additional air, sea and land forces in eastern Europe in response to the worsening crisis in Ukraine and will take further action if needed.

"Today (Wednesday) we have agreed a package of military measures," NATO head Anders Fogh Rasmussen said after a meeting of ambassadors of all 28 members of the transatlantic alliance. "We will have more planes in the air, more ships on the water... and more readiness on the land," he said, adding that NATO defence plans will be "reviewed and reinforced".

The announcement came as Ukrainian and pro-Russian

## Air and sea reinforcements and exercises planned

forces faced off and after President Vladimir Putin warned the country was on the brink of civil war, stoking fears of outright Russian intervention. Rasmussen refused to detail what new forces would be deployed and where, but said they would result in increased air sorties over the Baltic Sea, with additional ships there and in the eastern Mediterranean.

The decision will be implemented "immediately" and "more will follow, if needed, in the weeks and months to come," he added. As the Ukraine crisis

has unfolded, NATO has taken a number of similar steps, with the United States sending fighter aircraft to the Baltic states and Poland to bolster confidence in member countries once ruled by Moscow.

Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania — which border Russia and have sizeable ethnic Russian populations — have all sought reassurance, as have Ukraine neighbours Poland and Romania. But Russia, especially under Putin, has regarded NATO's eastward expansion as a direct security threat. The former Soviet states "are increasingly worried as they see the crisis getting worse by the hour," said one diplomat. **More stories on P-7**

## Mohamed bin Zayed receives Australian MPs



Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan receives an Australian delegation, representing all Australian states. His Highness welcomed the Australian Members of Parliament (MPs), hoping that their visit would contribute to enhance outstanding friendship ties and cooperation between the UAE and Australia. — WAM

## NYPD puts end to Muslim surveillance programme

**N**EW YORK: Muslim groups and civil liberties advocates applauded the decision by New York Police Department officials to disband a controversial unit that tracked the daily lives of Muslims as part of efforts to detect terror threats, but said there were concerns about whether other problematic practices remained in place.

The Demographics Unit, conceived with the help of a CIA agent working with the NYPD, assembled databases on where Muslims lived, shopped, worked and prayed. Plain-

clothes officers infiltrated Muslim student groups, put informants in mosques, monitored sermons and catalogued Muslims in New York who adopted new, Americanised surnames.

NYPD spokesman Stephen Davis confirmed that detectives assigned to the unit had been transferred to other duties within the department's Intelligence Division.

Linda Sarsour, the executive director of the Arab American Association of New York, said she was among a group of advocates at a private meeting last week with police at which the de-

partment's new intelligence chief, John Miller, first indicated the unit — renamed the Zone Assessment Unit — wasn't viable. She applauded the decision but said there's still concern about the police use of informants to infiltrate mosques without specific evidence of crime.

In a statement, Mayor Bill de Blasio, a Democrat, called the move "a critical step forward in easing tensions between the police and the communities they serve, so that our cops and our citizens can help one another go after the real bad guys."

— AP/P-8

## Ferry sinks in SKorea

Four dead and 284 missing, mostly high school students

JINDO, SOUTH KOREA

**S**outh Korean rescuers and dive teams worked frantically under floodlights as fears rose for nearly 300 people missing after a ferry sank Wednesday with 462 on board, mostly high school students bound for a holiday island.

National disaster agency officials said 174 people had been rescued, leaving 284 "unaccounted for". There were four confirmed deaths, including a female crew

member and a student.

The 6,825-tonne Sewol listed violently, capsized and finally sank — all within two hours of sending a distress signal at 9:00am (0000 GMT). Dramatic television footage showed terrified passengers wearing life jackets clambering into inflatable boats with water lapping over the rails of the vessel as it sank 20 kilometres (13 miles) off the southern island of Byungpoong.

The passengers included 325 students

from a high school in Ansan just south of Seoul, who were travelling with their teachers to the popular island resort of Jeju.

The cause of the accident in fine weather was not immediately clear, although rescued passengers reported the ferry coming to a sudden, shuddering halt — indicating it may have run aground. In one of the worst incidents, nearly 300 people died when a ferry capsized off the west coast in October 1993. — AP

## Stay away from rumours: HAAD

MERS Coronavirus cases under control

**ABU DHABI:** The Ministry of Health (MoH) and Health Authority Abu Dhabi (HAAD) reassure citizens and residents that the few positive MERS Coronavirus contacts of the severe case last week are all well and we expect them to clear the virus within 10-14 days with no treatment. They are in hospital isolation and as such are not causing any risk

to the public or other patients. Individuals are requested to avoid rumours and refer to official reliable sources for information. MoH and HAAD confirm that the current situation is not a public health concern, and people should go about their normal daily activities. MoH and HAAD are dealing with the situation with full transparency. — WAM

## India set for sixth phase of poll battle

**N**EW DELHI: Polling begins today in 121 Lok Sabha constituencies spread over 12 states in the sixth phase of staggered general election, officials said Wednesday. Some 197 million electorate will be eligible to pick 121 members to the lower house of parliament from among 1,767 candidates in Bihar, Chhattisgarh, Jammu

and Kashmir, Jharkhand, Karnataka, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Manipur, Odisha, Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh and West Bengal.

The day will see election in all 28 Lok Sabha seats in Karnataka, 20 in Rajasthan, 19 in Maharashtra, 11 each in Odisha and Uttar Pradesh, seven in Bihar, six in Jharkhand, four in West Bengal, three in Chhattis-

garh and one each in Manipur and Jammu and Kashmir.

In West Bengal, all eyes are on Darjeeling where football icon Bhaichung Bhutia (Tribhuvan Congress). Bihar's 117 candidates also include former union home secretary R.K. Singh (BJP). In Uttar Pradesh, the 11 constituencies, include Moradabad, Nagina, Rampur, Aonla and Pilibhit. — IANS

## Bollywood urges voters to shun BJP

**MUMBAI:** More than 50 Bollywood filmmakers, actors and writers on Wednesday urged Indians not to vote for the party of Hindu nationalist hardliner Modi. The group signed an appeal calling on Indians to choose a "secular" party, without naming BJP.

The letter, endorsed

by directors Imtiaz Ali, Mahesh Bhatt and Zoya Akhtar, actress Nandita Das and singer Shubha Mudgal, comes as the BJP is tipped to win the biggest share of votes in the election. "The best thing about our country is its cultural diversity, its pluralism — the co-existence of a number of reli-

gions and ethnicities over centuries..." the letter said. "Today, that very sense of India is vulnerable."

The letter, which appeared on the *Mumbai Mirror* newspaper's website on Wednesday, called on Indians to vote for the secular party most likely to win in their constituencies. — AFP

## School helpline big hit with worried students, parents

ALKESH SHARMA

ABU DHABI

**D**oes mugging the facts ensure good result?... 'How can I inculcate positive attitude towards future when I am feel so scared at this moment'... 'I am having nightmares about my child's result, what could I do'...

Dozens of such inquisitive questions are being raised by anxious school students and their parents these days while they are calling at school helpline.

If students are worried about coping up with mounting pressure of studies then their parents are more concerned about ensuring some 'magic mecha-

nism' so that their child would score high grades.

"My elder son is studying science stream in 12th grade and it is the most crucial time of his career. As after this class, he would be graduating into college and everything like type of college and course depend on the marks that he would secure in this class. Now

our situation is just like an immature artist, who has been asked to craft a masterpiece. Therefore we badly needed such helpline, where we could have immediate redressal of our countless queries and doubts," said Tahira Karim, who is a homemaker and is residing in Abu Dhabi with her family.

A dedicated helpline was launched by Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE) for students of class tenth and twelfth. This helpline has emerged as boon for people residing here in United Arab Emirates (UAE). Launched in February this year, the first phase of this helpline would end on April 17 and

its next phase would start once the results of these classes are announced.

The helpline was launched in GCC (Gulf Co-operative Council) and the number for UAE helpline is 050 579 4542. Professor M Abubaker, a distinguished academician, has been assigned the counseling task.

Special report on P-13