

INTERNATIONAL

Baghdad Rocked By A Spate Of Suicide Bombings In Shiite Areas

Several bombings tore through Iraq's capital city just hours apart on Sunday. The attacks in and around Baghdad, which are believed to have primarily targeted Shiite Muslims, killed more than two dozen people and left dozens more wounded. Early Sunday in Sadr City, a predominantly Shiite suburb, Iraqi government officials say an attacker drove a car rigged with explosives into a large fruit and vegetable market. "A soldier at the gate of Jamila market opened fire on a suicide car bomb after noticing a suspect vehicle but the terrorist blew up his car," Iraq's interior ministry spokesman Saad Maan said, according to Agence France-Presse. Al-Jazeera reports that at least 12 people were killed and 50 more — including the soldier who opened fire on the car — were wounded in the bombing. The Islamic State claimed responsibility for the attack in a statement posted online. Shortly afterward, a suicide bomber detonated explosives at a market elsewhere in the city, in another predominantly Shiite neighborhood, according to The Associated Press. The AP says nine shoppers were killed and another 16 wounded in that bombing, adding: "Three additional bombings in and around the capital killed seven people and wounded 24 others." No group has immediately claimed responsibility for those attacks, but they, too, are believed to be the work of ISIS, which has conducted a campaign of concentrated violence in Baghdad in recent weeks. In fact, Sadr City was targeted with another suicide bombing just days ago. The Islamic State, a group of Sunni jihadi militants, considers Shiite Muslims to be apostates and frequently targets members of the religious sect.

China's Poorest, Trying To Stay Warm, Add Greatly To Smog

An overloaded coal truck rumbles down from the steel factory and hits a bump, sending chunks of its black cargo skittering and click-clicking along the asphalt. Waiting by the roadside, a farmer swaddled in thick, cotton-padded winter clothing scrambles into onrushing traffic to pick up the pieces. Four hours a day, four days a week, the villager, whose surname is Shen, comes to a spot near her home where a never-ending procession of coal trucks runs into uneven pavement. A thousand little bumps in the road keep Shen and her husband from freezing in winter. "If I don't come out here, I stay cold," Shen says as she drops a few more recovered chunks into a sooty burlap sack. In one winter, Shen says, she could burn more than 2 tons of coal, worth more than 1,800 yuan (\$260). Across vast swaths of northern China's countryside, residents go to great lengths to burn untreated coal in home stoves despite government efforts to ban the practice and introduce cleaner - but costlier - types of coal or electrical heating. That dependence represents one of many challenges facing Beijing as it tries to curb the choking smog that's become a flashpoint for public discontent with the ruling Communist Party. Experts say coal-fired power plants and steel and cement mills are the main contributors to year-round smog, but household coal-burning in rural areas is a major cause of the spike in pollution during winter, when thick, gray soup-like clouds of dust smother Chinese cities, often forcing highways and airports to close.



2017 SUBDISTRICT - RADIO SPEAKING SCRIPT - B

Stuck: London Commuters Face Stress In Subway Strike

Millions of commuters cycled, trudged and waited in snaking bus queues Monday as a strike by London Underground station staff shut down much of the city's subway network. Scores of Tube stations and many of the city's subway lines were closed during the morning rush hour, forcing Londoners to walk, use overcrowded buses, seek scarce taxis or work from home. Some took to bicycles, weaving through slow-moving traffic. "It is really scary out there, cyclists are taking huge chances," doctor Simon Quantrill said. "The traffic is mad." The strike also closed subway links from Terminals 4 and 5 at London Heathrow airport and connections at London's major train stations. The 24-hour strike began Sunday evening, and service isn't expected to get back to normal until Tuesday morning. Transport unions are protesting job cuts and ticket-office closures, citing safety issues.

German Prosecutors Close Germanwings Crash Investigation

German prosecutors said Monday they had closed their investigation into the crash of a Germanwings plane in the French Alps almost two years ago, concluding there were no indications that anybody other than co-pilot Andreas Lubitz had been involved in the intentional crash. "We have closed the case, there will be no further investigations," Duesseldorf prosecutor Christoph Kumpa told The Associated Press on Monday. On March 24, 2015, Lubitz locked Germanwings Flight 9525's captain out of the cockpit and deliberately set the plane on a collision course with a mountainside. All 150 people aboard, including Lubitz, were killed. The plane had been on its way from Barcelona to Duesseldorf. Among the passengers was a group of 15 students and two teachers from a high school in the western German town of Haltern who were flying home from an exchange trip to Spain. Lubitz had in the past suffered from depression, but authorities and his airline later deemed him fit to fly. In the months ahead of the crash, Lubitz suffered from sleeplessness and feared losing his vision, but he hid that from his employer. Prosecutor Kumpa said no third party was involved or aware that Lubitz was planning to crash the plane. Christof Wellens, a lawyer representing 35 families who lost loved ones in the crash, told the AP that some relatives were upset that the case had been closed. "Some relatives view the closure of the case in Germany with horror because there are a lot of emotions, even two years after their family members were murdered," Wellens said. "They don't understand why only Germanwings and Lufthansa should be responsible. I think there are actual people who could be held responsible too."



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McDonald's Sells China Business In Deal Worth Up To \$2.1b

Fast-food giant McDonald's is selling a controlling stake in its China business to a group of investors led by state-owned Chinese conglomerate Citic in a deal worth up to \$2.1 billion, the companies said Monday. The transaction is part of a global business overhaul being carried out by the American company to keep up with changing tastes that have resulted in declining sales. Under the terms of the deal, Citic Ltd. and its investment management unit Citic Capital will acquire 52 percent of the business while another partner, Washington-based private equity firm The Carlyle Group, will own 28 percent. McDonald's will retain a 20 percent stake. About two-thirds of the China operation's 2,640 outlets, including 240 in Hong Kong, that are now owned by McDonald's will be refranchised. The China business, which employs more than 120,000 people, is valued at up to \$2.1 billion, according to the agreement. Under McDonald CEO Steve Easterbook's restructuring plan launched in 2015, the company wants franchisees to take over more company-owned outlets, giving local managers more decision-making power to respond to Asian customers. McDonald's is China's second-biggest fast-food company after Yum Brands' KFC, which has more than 5,000 locations. It has faced trouble recently in China after it was caught in a food safety scandal when a supplier was found selling expired meat. McDonald's will get cash and new shares under the terms of the agreement, which is for 20 years. The deal, which still needs approval from regulators, is expected to be completed by mid-2017.

NATIONAL

Iconic Sequoia 'Tunnel Tree' Brought Down By California Storm

A powerful winter storm in California has brought down an ancient tree, carved into a living tunnel more than a century ago. The "Pioneer Cabin Tree" sequoia, in Calaveras Big Trees State Park, saw horses and cars pass through it over the years. More recently, only hikers were allowed to walk through the massive tree. Over the weekend, a powerful winter storm slammed into California and Nevada, prompting flooding and mudslides in some regions. The Associated Press reports it might be the biggest storm to hit the region in more than a decade. On Sunday, a volunteer at the state park reported that Pioneer Cabin had not survived. "The storm was just too much for it," the Calaveras Big Tree Association wrote on Facebook. It's unclear exactly how old the tree was, but The Los Angeles Times reports that the trees in the state park are estimated to be more than 1,000 years old. Sequoias can live for more than 3,000 years. The iconic tree was one of just a few tunneled-through sequoias in California. The most famous was the Wawona Tree, in Yosemite National Park; it fell during a winter storm in 1969 at an estimated age of 2,100 years. The other remaining sequoia tunnels are dead or consist of logs on their side, the Forest Service says.



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After Half a Century, Inmates Resurrect the Norfolk Prison Debating Society

Half a century ago, a team of inmates in a Massachusetts prison held an outstanding record on the academic debate circuit. By 1966 the Norfolk Prison Debating Society boasted 144 wins and only 8 losses. They won and lost against Harvard, MIT, Princeton and the like. But when a more punitive approach to prisons swept across the U.S., the debate team dissolved. Until now. On stage, five Boston College students sit opposite the prison debaters as the moderator introduces the topic: the future of our planet, climate change. Resolved: that the U.S. should impose a tax on greenhouse gas emissions. Norfolk Prison will argue in favor. James Keown speaks first. "There's a storm coming," Keown says in his opening statement. "When it first hits the Boston area the ocean will surge into East Boston, the seaport, and parts of the downtown waterfront." Dan Throop, captain of the prison's debate team, adds some spectacle, coming on stage in a surgical mask. "After listening to our opponents' first two arguments, we may have to check the carbon dioxide levels in this auditorium today," Throop says to the audience. But when Boston College's MacDonald comes out, it starts to look like these college students could win over the judges, maybe even the audience. "If you want I can hand you back the surgical mask, because under your plan we're going to have even dirtier air than we have right now," MacDonald says. For the last two years, this group of inmates has been fighting to resurrect the Norfolk Prison Debating Society. Keown says everything comes down to this debate. "This is a humanizing event to me," Keown says. "I mean, this is about we have a place in this world and we have a voice and we have something to share." It's meant hours of training. They got one day a week together in a classroom, then back to their cells to rehearse alone. While their opponents had the Internet, these guys — several of whom didn't finish high school — relied on their sisters and moms to send them articles. And then, Keown says, there was getting a college to come in and make this all real. "It's less about the competition, and it's more about those outside the wall willing to come in and say, we'll meet you where you're at," he says.

Sears and Kmart closing 150 stores

Sears said it would close 109 Kmart stores and 41 of its namesake Sears outlets. The announcement came on the same day that Sears disclosed plans to sell its iconic Craftsman tool brand to Stanley Black & Decker. The company did not say how many workers would be affected by the store closures. A spokesperson for Sears was not immediately available for comment. Sears closed 78 stores last year and more than 200 in 2015. But the news also follows disappointing holiday results from other retail stores: Macy's-- which is also closing stores and laying off workers -- and Kohl's. Sears CEO Eddie Lampert said in a statement that the company was "taking strong, decisive actions...to stabilize the company and improve our financial flexibility in what remains a challenging retail environment." The company noted that while the 150 stores collectively reported sales of \$1.2 billion over the past 12 months, they also lost about \$60 million. Sears has to stop the bleeding somehow, because the entire company is losing money.



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Low Pay In State Legislatures Means Some Can't Afford The Job

In Georgia, lawmakers are set to pass a more than \$20 billion budget this year and grapple with a failing hospital system. But Georgia, like many other states, faces a serious human resource problem in its legislature: Salaries are often low and many would-be politicians can't afford to be lawmakers. Former Georgia state Rep. Jones loved serving in the General Assembly even as she juggled raising two kids and running a law practice. But she left after one term because the job didn't pay enough. "I absolutely believe that we need to increase the wage for legislators to keep up with the times," said Jones. Lawmakers in Georgia make \$17,342 a year, plus a per diem for lodging and meals when the legislature is in session and reimbursement for mileage. Serving in the Georgia Legislature is considered a part-time job but it took much more of Jones' time than that and she had to hire extra help for her law firm.

Chevy Bolt Gets Top Car Award; Pacifica Top Utility Vehicle

The Chevy Bolt has been named top car in North America, an important milestone for a car General Motors hopes will finally get Americans hooked on electric vehicles. The Honda Ridgeline grabbed the honor for top truck. Utility vehicles were honored separately for the first time, with the Pacifica minivan from Fiat Chrysler snagging that award. The honors were announced Monday morning at Detroit's Cobo Center as the North American International Auto Show's press preview days kicked into high gear. The Bolt beat out the Genesis G90 and Volvo S90 for the car award. The electric car from Chevrolet went on sale late last year. It gets more than 200 miles per battery charge, which is more than the average American drives in a day. The Bolt also sells for around \$30,000 when a federal tax credit is included. Electric vehicles have failed to catch on with most American consumers, but General Motors hopes the improved range and price help shift opinions. Mark Reuss, GM's head of global product development, described the Bolt as a "moon shot." "We didn't have all the answers when we started the program - in terms of how far we were going to get range-wise, how light are we going to get the car and ... sell price," he said. "We hit on all cylinders on this, so to speak, even though there's not any in the car."

WEATHER

- Today: Mostly cloudy, with a high near 28. West wind 10 to 15 mph.
- Tonight: Partly cloudy, with a low around 21. West wind 5 to 10 mph becoming south after midnight.
- Wednesday: Partly sunny, with a high near 38. South wind 10 to 15 mph.
- Wednesday Night: Partly cloudy, with a low around 27. West wind 10 to 15 mph.
- Thursday: A 20 percent chance of snow after 1pm. Increasing clouds, with a high near 30. Breezy, with a west wind 15 to 20 mph, with gusts as high as 30 mph.
- Thursday Night: A 20 percent chance of snow before 7pm. Cloudy, then gradually becoming partly cloudy, with a low around 20. Northwest wind around 15 mph, with gusts as high as 30 mph.

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STATE

Outdoor Groups Open To Fee Increases Suggested By DNR

Conservation groups say they're willing to pay more to hunt, fish and even paddle to help the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources make up a budget deficit. The DNR has proposed increasing fees for fishing and hunting licenses by \$3 and \$4 respectively in a report prepared for lawmakers. They're also considering dropping discounts to close a \$5 million deficit. State lawmakers have to OK the changes but conservation groups such as Ducks Unlimited support paying more. Ducks Unlimited Spokesman Chris Sebastian said they want habitat restoration work to be fully funded. "It takes a lot of resources within the DNR to do these services, and we're committed to working with other groups to try to find a solution to see what is the best way to close that gap, that funding gap," Sebastian said. The DNR reports hunting and fishing license sales declined between 2006 and 2015. License revenue dropped by more than \$13 million. Kayaking, canoeing and even paddleboarding could get more expensive in the state as well. The DNR report also suggested possible registration or launch fees for paddlers. Jeff Mazanec of North East Wisconsin Paddlers said he's generally supportive if money is used for docks and launches designed for paddlers. But at the same time he said a blanket registration fee for kayaks could be expensive for groups like his. "We own nearly 50 kayaks and use them, really, for educational purposes. To maintain registrations on all those boats, that would be quite burdensome," Mazanec said. Aside from the revenue raising suggestions in the DNR report, Gov. Scott Walker has touted raising fees at state parks by anywhere from \$5 to \$10.

Review Finds UW-Madison Police Acted Appropriately In Classroom Arrest

Two University of Wisconsin-Madison police officers who entered a classroom to make an arrest in April acted within their authority, according to the conclusion of an administrative review of the arrest. The review also offered recommended changes for the department. UW-Madison student Denzel McDonald was arrested April 14 on 11 graffiti charges and one disorderly conduct charge. McDonald was accused of spray-painting anti-racist graffiti around campus between October 2015 and April 2016. The arrest sparked controversy on campus because Officers Matt Schirmacher and Justin Zurbuchen entered a classroom where a class was underway to make initial contact with McDonald. The review found their actions might have been unusual, but they weren't inappropriate, according to a statement on the department's website. The officers said they spent two weeks trying to contact the student for questioning at his residence and by phone before going to his class. Still, the statement said the department implemented recommendations made in the review. The department is adopting procedures and training specific to making arrests in classrooms, ensuring supervisors are aware when officers plan to enter classrooms, changing training procedures so day- and night-shift workers are equally exposed to trainings and giving Schirmacher and Zurbuchen additional training on calling supervisors in situations that would benefit from "supervisory intervention." In May, the Madison district attorney declined to charge McDonald with vandalism and instead referred him to a community restorative court.

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Wisconsin Farmland Values Steady As Other Midwest States See Declines

The value of Wisconsin farmland has remained steady in 2016, unlike the rest of the Midwest. Almost every state in the Corn Belt saw decreases to farmland values this year thanks to low commodity prices. Iowa's land values fell for the third year in a row, something that hasn't happened since the 1980s. But Dennis Badtke, chief appraiser from Badgerland Financial, said Wisconsin land prices are surprisingly strong. "We're looking at land values and are really surprised to see that land values have held as well as they have considering what's happened to commodity prices," Badtke said. "But people still have enough cash and people still have borrowing capacity and are optimistic about the the future." Farm appraiser Arlin Brannstrom said the state's diverse agriculture industry makes it more resilient to the impact of low prices. "Wisconsin is a little bit different than most of the rest of the Corn Belt in terms of the dependence on row crops only," Brannstrom said. "We grow a lot of alfalfa crops, we have a lot of farms that are using livestock and are dependent on having enough acreage to dispose of their animal nutrients." Brannstrom said Wisconsin could see a decrease in land value in 2017 as rental rates for farmland decline and higher interest rates make loans less attractive. "A lot of the land that we see changing hands is financed by either commercial banks or farm credit associations and as those interest rates go up, it's certainly going to put a little bit more pressure on the cash flow for new land acquisitions," Brannstrom said.

Whooping Crane Researchers Evaluate First Year Of New Reintroduction Techniques

Researchers say a major change in the whooping crane reintroduction effort in the eastern United States is working so far, but it will take a few years to know if the goal of improved crane chick survival is achieved. Last fall was the first time in a 16-year crane reintroduction program that humans in costumes didn't help train crane chicks to migrate south behind ultralight aircraft. Instead, with humans observing remotely, adult cranes raised 12 chicks at a national wildlife center in Maryland and at the International Crane Foundation near Baraboo. The foundation's Anne Lacy explained that the chicks were then placed with other adult cranes in the wild in central and eastern Wisconsin. Predators killed three chicks, but Lacy said, "It's hard to say what led up to that. There was a thought that one might have been exhibiting a sign of illness, or it might have been seen as lethargic – not flying very strongly. So that may have made it easier to be predated." Lacy said the remains of the dead birds are being analyzed. Eight other chicks have flown south with adult whooping cranes or sandhill cranes. One chick hatched and raised by adult cranes at the Crane Foundation and released into the wild did not fly south. So in mid-December, researchers drove the crane, named Bryce, to the Wheeler National Wildlife Refuge in Alabama. Bryce was soon seen in the company of another whooping crane released by ICF last fall that successfully made her migration earlier in December. Lacy said she hopes the new training procedure continues. "I think the lesson here is to stay the course," she said. "To really believe in the body of knowledge we have in these institutions." Lacy added that it won't be known if more cranes successfully reproduce until the young birds sexually mature in about three years.

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SPORTS

Badgers men's basketball: Caleb Swanigan, Purdue halt Wisconsin's 9-game winning streak

While the offensive numbers were gaudy during a nine-game winning streak by the University of Wisconsin men's basketball team, there was one caveat that couldn't be ignored: That body of work was built against defenses that ranged from average to downright porous. When the Badgers ran into a team that knows a thing or two about defending Sunday afternoon at Mackey Arena, the result wasn't pretty. Sophomore forward Caleb Swanigan finished with 18 points and 13 rebounds to help No. 20 Purdue roll to a 66-55 victory over No. 13 UW, leaving the Big Ten with no unbeaten teams after two weeks of conference play. It was the first loss in more than six weeks for the Badgers (13-3, 2-1 Big Ten), who shot 39.0 percent from the field and finished with a season-low 0.859 points per possession. UW, which shot 40.0 percent from 3-point range during its winning streak, went 2 of 14 from the 3-point range against the Boilermakers (14-3, 3-1). The Badgers hadn't seen a defense as good as Purdue's since their last defeat, a 71-56 setback against North Carolina in the final of the Maui Invitational more than six weeks ago. "We have to make shots against a team like this," UW coach Greg Gard said. Sophomore forward Ethan Happ scored 17 points to lead the Badgers, while senior forward Nigel Hayes added 10. Senior guard Bronson Koenig, fresh off a 5-of-5 performance from 3-point range during a victory at Indiana on Tuesday night, finished with nine points and was held scoreless from beyond the arc until finally breaking through in the closing seconds. After posting his 14th double-double in 16 games this season, Swanigan explained a game-plan that the Boilermakers executed very well. "We were going to make Happ shoot over our size all night, and he was going to make some. And same with Nigel, he was going to make some shots, just don't foul him and don't give Bronson 3s," Swanigan said. "That's when they get their offense rolling." While Purdue's defense deserves much of the credit, some of the Badgers' issues were self-inflicted. UW outscored the Boilermakers 34-20 in the paint, but that disparity could have been larger had the Badgers done a better job finishing around the rim.

Tiger Woods can win again, analysts say

Tiger Woods hasn't won on the PGA Tour in more than 40 months. NBC Sports and Golf Channel analyst Mark Roling said Wednesday the winless drought could end in the next 12 months. "Can he win?" Roling said. "All the stars are going to have to align, and I think it's going to have to be the kind of a golf course where he really isn't trying to overpower it." Roling, along with Johnny Miller and fellow NBC Sports and Golf Channel analyst David Duval, previewed the upcoming year. Much of the conversation dealt with Woods, the former world No. 1 a record 683 weeks who is now ranked No. 652. Due to recurring back problems — he had two back surgeries in the fall of 2015 — Woods hasn't played on the PGA Tour since finishing in a tie for 10th in the 2015 Wyndham Championship. He made his return to competitive golf in December at the Hero World Challenge at Albany Golf Club in the Bahamas. While Woods finished 15th in the field of 18, he and winner Hideki Matsuyama did lead the field in birdies with each making 24.

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COMMERCIALS

Female (soft narrative):

I saw him from across the room. His clothes, his hair, the way he walked, I knew he was the one for me. And as he moved closer we almost made eye contact before he paid for his produce and walked out of the grocery store. (SFX - record scratch)

Stop dreaming, start dating...FOR REAL. With True ah-MOOR. (nice music in)

True ah-MOOR is a new upscale speed dating service that unites area singles, to mingle and connect. Conducted as "mini dates", it's perfect for the busy professional, and those without time to meet others outside their circle of friends. Each couple has 8 minutes to chat before moving on to the next table. And just 24 hours later, you'll be notified of matches, and potentially the love of your life. To reserve YOUR spot with True ah-MOOR call 626-90-67. Each event is hosted at a nice restaurant, with a socially relaxed, yet intimate atmosphere. Limit 10 couples per event. That's 626-90-67.

If you don't find your match, you'll at least make some great friends.

True ah-MOOR... where connections are made. Call 626-90-67.

Male driver: The roads have emptied. Only us left. Kids sleeping in back. Cat's eyes shine bright. White lines roll by. The rhythm of the street lights. Radio hums quietly. Rain starts. Hypnotic wipers. Pull in. Hot latte and apple pie. Ease back into the darkness.

VO: Over 600 McDonald's open 24 hours. We are awake. *SFX: Five-note McDonald's sting.*