

**Williams scores another winner**

Composer's work on new Star Wars film is less prominent, but still bears testament to his genius

**Atlantis of the Middle East**

Treasures from Egypt's lost land of Thonis, 300 years before the rule of Alexander, on display in London

**Peanuts: the beagle has landed**

Charlie Brown, Snoopy, Lucy and gang hit the big screen ... and our reviewer says you're in for a treat



# The National

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**No ignoring this elephant**

A Palestinian boy sits on top of a wall with an elephant painting in the Shati refugee camp, Gaza City. The mural is part of the work being done by two dozen artists who are trying to brighten citizens' lives by decorating the walls and doorsteps of all houses along 1.5 kilometres of the camp, including the home of Hamas chief Ismail Haniyeh. Report and more photos, turn to a3. Hatem Moussa / AP Photo

## Prophet's values of mercy and justice needed today

### Birthday anniversary a chance to spread his values to world

Haneen Dajani

ABU DHABI // Religious leaders celebrating the Prophet Mohammed's birthday said people should follow his examples in humanitarian matters and justice.

Dr Ahmed Al Haddad, Grand Mufti of Dubai, yesterday said extremists did not understand the Prophet's message of mercy and brotherhood.

"Muslims should spread to the world Islam's message, which recognises all humans as Allah's creations," said Dr Al Haddad. This, he told an event in Dubai

held by the General Authority of Islamic Affairs and Endowments, or Awqaf, ruled out violence against others.

Islamic scholars gathered yesterday for a forum on values drawn from the Prophet's legacy.

"This beautiful anniversary comes as the world is suffering from terrorism that has damaged the Islamic world and its civilisation, and has distorted the values of the religion more than any other enemy throughout history," said Dr Mohammed Al Kaabi, head of Awqaf.

The Prophet's birthday brought a chance to revive forgiveness, civilised coexistence and mercy, "and reintegrate them in modern values and civilisations", said Dr Al Kaabi. "This is our message in this critical period."

He said the recent military alliance between 34 Muslim

countries followed the Prophet Mohammed's example.

Dr Al Kaabi said that at the age of 15, the Prophet spoke up for a treaty among tribes to stand by oppressed people of Mecca, or others. After he became a messenger, he praised the tribes' decision and described how happy he felt to have been part of it.

He was also a great example of how to run a family and society, said Awqaf's Omar Al Habtour.

The Prophet's life is rich with examples of mercy, etiquette, and respect of women, children, the elderly and the disabled.

Dr Mahmood Al Hawari, of Al Azhar University in Cairo, stressed the importance of loving the Prophet and making him a role model of mercy and forgiveness.

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## Deck the halls with boughs of plastic

### Real Christmas tree leaves a bigger carbon footprint

Naser Al Wasmii

ABU DHABI // The smell of sap, the scattering of needles, the carbon footprint ...

You may think you are doing your bit for the environment by decking your halls with a real Christmas tree this year.

But scientists say that a plas-

tic tree from China is by far the greener option.

Ahmed Al Hashmi, director of biodiversity at the Ministry of Environment and Water, says that tree sitting in a bucket in your lounge room should be outside collecting carbon.

"All trees offset carbon because through photosynthesis the biochemical process combines sunlight, water and carbon dioxide absorbed from the air," Mr Al Hashmi said.

Trees also store the carbon dioxide captured from the air. A UK Forestry Commission

report shows they store up to 0.5 kilograms of carbon a year, equal to 2kg of carbon dioxide.

The most common Christmas tree is the Douglas fir and the most common height 2 metres, making them about 10 years old.

Their lifespan can be more than 500 years and sometimes more than 1,000, says the National Wildlife Federation, meaning an average of almost 1,000kg of carbon dioxide is not being trapped.

Tree, continued on 4 →  
→ Christmas in the UAE, a4

## Iraqis close in on ISIL's last posts in Ramadi

### City near liberation but campaign of bombings kills 15

BAGHDAD // Iraqi forces closed in on ISIL's last posts in central Ramadi yesterday, to retake the city they lost in May.

A day after pushing deep into the city centre, forces led by the elite counter-terrorism service

inched towards the government compound in Ramadi, the capital of Iraq's vast Anbar province.

"The anti-terrorism troops are now poised to break into the Hoz area where the government compound is located," a brigadier general in the force said.

Recapturing the compound would mark another key step towards full control of Ramadi.

Meanwhile, a wave of attacks across Iraq killed at least 15 civilians yesterday.

In the Shiite-majority town of Khalis, about 80 kilometres north of the Iraqi capital, a car bomb inside a bus station killed three people and wounded 10, a police officer said.

A second car bomb exploded at the town's outdoor grocery market, killing four civilians and wounding eight.

Five bombs went off in commercial areas in and around Baghdad, killing eight civilians and wounding 35, police said.

Government forces, which have been supported by daily air strikes from the US-led coalition, had to move carefully through devastated Ramadi, whose deserted streets were littered with rubble and shrapnel.

Retreating ISIL fighters usually booby-trap their abandoned posts, plant roadside bombs and move in tunnels that can be trapped with explosives.

Iraq, continued on 2 →

# Dh17.5bn approved for capital projects

Executive Council, led by Crown Prince, sets aside billions for major housing, infrastructure and other developments

The National staff

ABU DHABI // The Executive Council yesterday allocated Dh17.5 billion for housing, infrastructure, education and other projects across the emirate next year.

The committee, chaired by Sheikh Mohammed bin Zayed, Crown Prince of Abu Dhabi and Deputy Supreme Commander of the Armed Forces, yesterday met to sign off on capital developments for the year.

The largest slice of the budget, Dh5.9bn, will go towards housing projects, while Dh4.3bn has been set aside for infrastructure, Dh1.8bn for education, Dh614 million for government facilities and Dh644m for social centres.

Three contracts were awarded for the Dh2.36bn Emirati Neighbourhood project in Madinat Zayed, to house 370,000 citizens.

The contracts for the 4,500-hectare project will cover roads, 2,755 residential plots, 37 mosques, 47 gardens and 13 primary and high schools.

The Western Region will receive a 50-kilometre road linking Madinat Zayed to Al Marfa in works worth about Dh664m.

The Executive Council also reviewed the progress of continuing work including Al Maqta

Gateway Project, linking all of parts of Abu Dhabi's import and export business and making cargo transfer easier among the emirate's ports.

They discussed the progress of the 62km, eight-lane road between Seih Shuaib and Sweihan, with a total cost of Dh2.1bn.

Also on the agenda was the implementation of the 453 hectares National Housing Development Project in Jebel Hafeet in Al Ain, with 3,000 homes, eight mosques and other facilities.

Council, continued on 2 →

### Deficit likely to decrease

Judicious cuts in spending have led to forecasts for a smaller fiscal deficit this year.

The deficit for the three months ending in September was Dh13 billion, Ministry of Finance data showed yesterday.

Spending for the three months fell 21 per cent compared with the same period last year, with subsidies and grants down 50 per cent.

→ Full report, Business, b1



### WHY YOU RIDE

'Ideas toolkit' allows employers to show staff why they should leave cars home, a5

### more

### DH11M SCAM FAIL

Trio order jewellery in Dubai then lure shopowner and his son to Paris, a5



### LESS MEANS MORE THIS YEAR

Fewer star names at Mubadala tennis event but it's looking in fine shape, s6

### STATE OF SAUDI

King Salman says development and security are top priorities for 2016, a7

### DEMAND TO SLOW

Opec's last outlook for year says there will be little growth in demand for its oil, b1



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