

## MADURO SEEKS TO BLOCK RECALL

**CARACAS:** Venezuelan President Nicolas Maduro's allies asked the Supreme Court on Monday to block a bid to call a referendum on sacking him, accusing the opposition of "fraud". The move casts doubt on the recall vote sought by the opposition, which accuses the high court of pro-Maduro bias and has clashed with it repeatedly since winning control of congress in December. Maduro's opponents warn Venezuela risks exploding into unrest without a vote on sacking the leftist leader, whom they blame for an economic crisis marked by severe shortages of food, medicine and electricity.

The opposition is racing to call a referendum by the end of the year, and has submitted a petition with 1.8 million signatures to start the lengthy process. But Jorge Rodriguez, the head of a panel appointed by Maduro to oversee the recall push, said he had filed a complaint asking the Supreme Court to "protect Venezuelans' constitutional rights" by intervening. Electoral authorities have accepted 1.3 million signatures submitted by the opposition as valid - well above the threshold of 200,000.

Last week, they said they would proceed to the next stage: Verifying those 1.3 million signatories' identity with fingerprint scans from June 20 to 24. Speaking to journalists outside the Supreme Court, Rodriguez said it would be "perpetrating a brutal fraud to authorize (the opposition) to proceed to the next stage". He did not elaborate on the scope of the complaint or the specific action it sought. "What we're seeking is the defense of the constitution. This farce put on (by the opposition)... was trying to create a climate where violence would erupt," he said. The opposition is rushing to complete the recall process by January 10, the cutoff to trigger new elections. After that date, a successful recall vote would simply pass power to Maduro's hand-picked vice president.

### Food Protest Death

Home to the world's largest oil reserves, Venezuela has skidded into an economic catastrophe as global crude prices have collapsed over the past two years. The country is running out of cash to import food, medicine and other basic goods, which it largely buys abroad. The crisis is threatening

Maduro and the state-led top-down economic model he inherited from his late predecessor, Hugo Chavez. Maduro faces increasingly violent protests, whether organized by the opposition or spontaneously erupting among Venezuelans sick of standing in long lines for scarce food.

There has also been a sharp increase in looting, violent crime and vigilante justice. A 21-year-old man was killed and 12 people wounded when a food protest turned violent Friday in the eastern town of Cariaco. A video posted online showed police and soldiers threatening protesters when shots rang out, sowing panic among the demonstrators. It was unclear who shot the victims. The government's rights ombudsman, Tarek William Saab, called for "an exhaustive, objective, independent and impartial investigation". Bus drivers meanwhile went on strike Monday in 18 of Venezuela's 24 states, saying the lack of spare parts was making their jobs impossible. The move hits close to home for Maduro, a former bus driver.

### International Pressure

A top opposition leader, Henrique Capriles, launched a tour of Latin American countries to rally support for the bid to remove Maduro. "The situation in Venezuela is not a matter for indifference," he told reporters in Paraguay, the first stop on a trip that also includes Argentina and Brazil. "It can affect what happens in Paraguay and in all the countries in the region. Do not abandon us." At the Organization of American States' general assembly in the Dominican Republic, a young Venezuelan man taking part in a youth forum drew his government's ire by urging it to accept food aid.

"We believe in humanitarian aid, but it's different to use it in the way it's being used in this case, to hide an unacceptable interventionist agenda," said Bernardo Alvarez, Venezuela's ambassador to the regional group. Maduro accuses the United States and the Washington-based OAS of conspiring against his government. The OAS permanent council is due to discuss the crisis in Venezuela on June 23. Foreign Minister Delcy Rodriguez accused OAS chief Luis Almagro of being a "putschist" for calling the meeting. — AFP



**LONDON:** An arrangement of newspapers yesterday shows the front page of the Sun daily newspaper with a headline urging readers to vote 'Leave' in the June 23 EU referendum. — AFP

# SUN BACKING BOOSTS BREXIT MOMENTUM AHEAD OF VOTE

**LONDON:** An endorsement from the top-selling Sun tabloid boosted the campaign for Britain to leave the EU in next week's referendum yesterday as the increasing prospect of a Brexit weighed on global investor confidence. With the June 23 vote approaching, four out of the last five published opinion polls have put the "Leave" camp ahead. Fears of the potential economic fall-out from Britain becoming the first country to leave the 28-member bloc have spooked investors, sending global stocks sliding and boosting demand for German government bonds, a safe haven.

The decision by Rupert Murdoch's Sun tabloid to endorse a Brexit is a further boost for the "Leave" campaign, although it is not a surprise, given the paper's eurosceptic coverage in recent months. In a front page editorial, the paper urged its 4.5 million readers to "BeLEAVE in Britain", saying: "We must set ourselves free from dictatorial Brussels."

The endorsement, the first such declaration by a major national newspaper, increases the pressure on Conservative Prime Minister David Cameron's "Remain" side, which several reports Tuesday said was now in "panic" mode. The "Remain" camp also published a letter from 60 health experts - former heads of various colleges representing medical staff specialities - warning of the risks that a Brexit presented to the state-run National Health Service.

Opposition Labour leader Jeremy Corbyn, his most senior lawmakers and a dozen trade union leaders also warned that 525,000 public sector jobs could be lost if a "leave" vote sparks a recession, as some experts predict. Late yesterday, two of the biggest names on both sides of the debate were to go head-to-head in a debate hosted by the Huffington Post, YouTube and the Daily Telegraph. Former Scottish National Party (SNP) leader Alex Salmond, who is backing "Remain", was to debate with lead Brexit campaigner Boris Johnson, the former Conservative mayor of London tipped as a future prime minister.

### Polls Point To a Brexit

A YouGov poll for The Times yesterday gave the "Leave" camp 46 percent, compared to 39 percent for "Remain" - the fourth survey since Friday to put them ahead. However, a new ORB poll for the Daily Telegraph, also published yesterday, put "Remain" on 49 percent, compared to 44 percent for "Leave". A compilation of the six latest polls by the WhatUKThinks research project, which excludes undecided voters, puts the Brexit camp ahead by 51 percent to 49 percent.

Bookmakers Ladbrokes and William Hill are still expecting Britain to stay in the EU, but have slashed their odds from a probability of 85 percent three weeks ago to about 60 percent. A string of financial institutions, including the

IMF, have warned of the economic turmoil that could follow a Brexit, and the pound was at a two-month low yesterday. Asian stock markets extended a global sell-off Tuesday following heavy losses in New York and Europe. Yields on German sovereign bonds, a benchmark of financial security, were pushed into negative territory for the first time, meaning investors were paying to hold them.

### Migrant Benefit Changes Upheld

The economic risks of a Brexit have featured heavily in the referendum campaign, alongside immigration, which the "Leave" side says can only be brought under control if Britain frees itself from EU freedom of movement rules. In its editorial, The Sun warned that staying in the bloc left Britain "powerless" to reduce the influx of hundreds of thousands of EU workers every year, which it said put "catastrophic pressure" on public services.

Cameron says that new rules restricting welfare payments to migrants, which he negotiated with other EU leaders before calling the referendum in February, will help limit the numbers by reducing incentives to move to Britain. In a potential boost to his case, the European Court of Justice yesterday backed Britain's right to limit payments for children of European migrants, after a challenge by the bloc's executive arm. — AFP



**HOUSTON:** Supporters of Venezuela display a banner against their president Nicolas Maduro as they wait for the start of the Copa America Centenario football tournament match against Mexico on Monday. — AP

## FBI 'CONFIDENT' THAT ORLANDO GUNMAN WAS 'RADICALIZED'

**ORLANDO:** The gunman who launched the worst terror attack on US soil since 9/11 at a gay nightclub in Orlando was radicalized by Islamist propaganda, officials said, amid reports he was a club regular. Lone gunman Omar Mateen killed 49 and wounded another 53 before he was killed when police stormed the Pulse, one of Orlando's most prominent gay venues, early Sunday. The attack is reminiscent of the November 13 suicide attack on the Bataclan concert hall in Paris, where 90 people were massacred when jihadist gunmen opened fire on concertgoers.

A total of 130 people died across the French capital that night in a series of shootings and suicide bomb attacks. The FBI said Mateen had been radicalized by Islamist propaganda, but found no evidence - contrary to the Paris attacks - that the shooting had been coordinated from abroad. The Islamic State group claimed that Mateen was acting as "one of the soldiers of the caliphate in America." US investigators believe that Mateen was a "lone wolf" inspired by Islamist propaganda to carry out what President Barack Obama dubbed "an act of terror and an

act of hate." FBI chief James Comey said his agents found no evidence that the attack had been directed from outside the United States, "and we see no indication that he was part of any kind of network." Agents are instead looking into the possible role of anti-gay bigotry. The FBI was "highly confident" Mateen had been "radicalized" while consuming online propaganda, Comey said, adding that he claimed allegiance to Islamic State leader Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi in a series of calls during the attack.

### Mateen a club regular?

In a further twist to the story, four people said Mateen, 29, had been a regular at the gay club, the Orlando Sentinel newspaper reported late Monday. "Sometimes he would go over in the corner and sit and drink by himself, and other times he would get so drunk he was loud and belligerent," Ty Smith told the Sentinel. Smith said he had seen Mateen inside at least a dozen times. "We didn't really talk to him a lot, but I remember him saying things about his dad at times," Smith said. "He told us he had a wife and child." Another Pulse regular, Kevin West, told the Los Angeles Times that Mateen messaged him on and off for a year using a gay chat app. Other club goers told local media and MSNBC News that Mateen had been using multiple gay apps, including Grindr, with mutual acquaintances to "hook up." Mateen's wife, Noor Zahi Salman, was not cooperating in the probe, a law enforcement official told the Sentinel. However agents have talked extensively with Mateen's ex-wife, Sitora Yusufiy, who said he had beat her. Relatives and acquaintances portrayed Mateen as an unstable man prone to violence who expressed homophobic views. The slaughter raised questions about US counterterrorism strategy and gun laws. The FBI said it had investigated Mateen, a US citizen of Afghan descent, but cleared him of extremist ties. Nevertheless Mateen legally bought a rifle and a handgun. — AFP

## HCA International Hospitals



HCA is an American company providing world-class private hospital care in London

Tel: +44 (0)20 7034 8564  
Internationalreferrals@hcahealthcare.co.uk  
www.hcainternational.com

**HCA Hospitals**  
World-Class Healthcare



## VACANCIES



Under the framework of the Institutional Capacity Development for Implementation of the Kuwait National Development Plan (ICDI/KNDP) project, and under the supervision of the General Secretariat of the Supreme Council of Planning and Development (GSSCPD) and The United Nations Development Program (UNDP).

The United Nations Development Program Kuwait office is pleased to announce the following vacancies:

- 1- Specialist in Demography and Register Census
- 2- Small and Medium Enterprise (SME) Development Specialist
- 3- Specialist in Economic and Administrative Projects.

To view the complete terms of references, please visit the UNDP's career website at the following link:  
[www.kw.undp.org/content/kuwait/en/home/operations/jobs](http://www.kw.undp.org/content/kuwait/en/home/operations/jobs)