

## ● CHINA

## Supercar race crash pair jailed

TWO men have been sentenced to up to five months in jail for dangerous driving after they crashed a Lamborghini and a Ferrari in a Fast and Furious-style race through Beijing.

The Chaoyang District Court sentenced Tang Wentian, 21, to five months and Yu Muchun, 20, to four.

The court said Tang's Lamborghini reached speeds of 179 kph (111 mph) and that Yu's Ferrari went over 165 kph (102 mph) in their race on the rainy night in April. The speed limit was 70 kph (43 mph) on the road they were on.

More than 110 cases of reckless driving have been filed in the district this year.

## ● UNITED STATES

## Letterman signs off for last time

**US TALK show host David Letterman has been ushered into retirement by four US presidents, who declared "our long national nightmare is over".**

The recorded introductory slot featuring President Barack Obama and former presidents George Bush, Bill Clinton and George W Bush referenced President Gerald Ford's declaration when he took office following the resignation of Richard Nixon in 1974.

Letterman, 68, said goodbye after 33 years and 6,028 broadcasts of his late-night shows on CBS and NBC.

## ● USA

## Janice Dickinson to sue Bill Cosby

MODEL Janice Dickinson, 60, is suing Bill Cosby, 77, for defamation over denials by the comedian's representatives after she accused him of drugging and raping her in 1982.

The allegations were first made in an interview with Entertainment Tonight last year, after numerous other women accused Cosby of inappropriate sexual conduct dating back several decades.

The lawsuit says Dickinson sought a retraction of the denials from Cosby but this was denied.

"Cosby knows he drugged and raped Ms Dickinson," the lawsuit states. "He knew calling her rape disclosure a lie was a false statement."



## ● GERMANY

## Police find lamb living in brothel

**GERMAN police have detained a 25-year-old prostitute for keeping a three-week-old lamb named Birke as a pet.**

The woman and her lamb were discovered during a narcotics raid. Prostitution itself is legal in Germany, but keeping a lamb in a brothel evidently is not.

Police said the woman showed them a letter from veterinary authorities laying out the conditions in which a lamb should be raised. Those conditions did not include inside a brothel, so she was forbidden to keep the lamb, police said.



David Bates, 18, a New Orleans McDonald's worker

## ● UNITED STATES

## Pay protest at McDonald's HQ

MORE than 1,500 employees descended on McDonald's headquarters in Illinois on Wednesday, before the company's annual shareholders' meeting yesterday, to step up pressure to raise wages.

The Fast for 15 campaign is calling on McDonald's to meet a "living wage" of \$15 (£9.70) per hour. The US federal minimum wage is \$7.25.

The firm is facing falling sales in the US market, which is worth 40 per cent of its income.

McDonald's dismissed the protest in a statement: "The protest in Oak Brook is the latest instance in an \$80 million publicity campaign organised and paid for by the Service Employees International Union."

## ● GERMANY

## Right-wing bid to oust leader

**A CO-LEADER of the eurosceptic party that has been siphoning votes from Chancellor Angela Merkel's conservatives has attacked its founder Bernd Lucke.**

The Alternative for Germany (AfD) party has won seats in five state assemblies since August. It was created in 2013 to oppose eurozone bailouts.

Frauke Petry, who leads the AfD's right wing, told Die Welt newspaper that Lucke, a moderate, has "disqualified himself to lead the party", adding that she plans to run against him for the leadership.

# Merkel: Riga summit is not against Russia

## Chancellor defends Eastern Partnership in Bundestag

● GERMANY

BY BRIGITTE HARPER  
IN BERLIN

**G**ERMAN Chancellor Angela Merkel has insisted a summit of EU leaders and six former Soviet states “is not directed against anyone, it’s not against Russia”.

The summit is taking place in the Latvian capital Riga – and in the shadow of Russia’s role in the conflict in eastern Ukraine.

Merkel told the Bundestag – the lower house of the German parliament – that the EU’s Eastern Partnership “is not an instrument for pursuing an expansionist EU policy”.

EU leaders at the Riga summit will hold talks with counterparts from Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine.

There is concern in Latvia and its neighbours, Estonia and Lithuania, over Russia’s annexation of Crimea and support for pro-Russian rebels in eastern Ukraine, with the three Baltic states having lived under Communist Russia’s control until 1991.

EU trade and association agreements aim to encourage ex-Soviet states to adopt EU standards not

only in trade, but in human rights and governance.

Merkel said the agreements were tailored to each individual state and that the EU would respect the wishes of Armenia, Azerbaijan and Belarus if they wanted to maintain close ties with Russia.

She added, however, that Russia cannot yet rejoin the G7 group of leading nations, which will meet in Elmau, southern Germany, next month.

“So long as Russia does not comply with basic common values, a return to the G8 format is not imaginable for us,” she said.

The Ukraine crisis erupted after the last Eastern Partnership summit, in Lithuania in November 2013, when former Ukrainian president Viktor Yanukovich, an ally of Russia, refused to sign the association agreement, in a reversal of policy.

He fled Ukraine’s capital Kiev in February 2014 amid anti-government protests, in which more than 100 people died.

The country’s new pro-Western government, formed after fresh elections, signed the association agreement, but the free trade element was suspended until January 2016 to address Russian concerns.

Merkel was also scheduled

to meet last night with French President François Hollande and Greek Prime Minister Alexis Tsipras for informal talks on the sidelines of the summit in Riga.

Meanwhile, the military in Kiev reported yesterday that one Ukrainian serviceman has been killed and eight wounded in fresh separatist attacks, as the Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) watchdog warned of a “worrying” spread of violence in eastern Ukraine.

Fighting has lessened significantly since a ceasefire between Ukrainian forces and Russian-backed rebels was declared in mid-February, but both sides accuse the other of violations and casualties are reported almost daily.

“Fighting has not died down along a broad stretch of the frontline from Krasnogorivka to Svitlodarsk,” Ukrainian military spokesman Oleksander Motuzanyk said, referring to government-controlled villages to the west and north-east of rebel-held Donetsk.

“The enemy is actively using heavy weapons... the area of fighting is expanding,” he said.

Ukraine this week seized on the capture of two prisoners it said were Russian soldiers who

had killed Ukrainian soldiers as further proof of direct Russian involvement in the conflict.

Yesterday, the OSCE said it had visited the men and reported that both said they had been to Ukraine “on missions” from Russia before.

“They claimed they were on a reconnaissance mission.

“They were armed but had no orders to attack ... one of them stressed repeatedly that there were no Russian troops involved in fighting in Ukraine,” the OSCE said in a statement.

Under the terms of February’s ceasefire agreement, brokered by Ukraine, Russia, Germany and France to end the conflict – which has killed more than 6,200 since last April – both sides should have withdrawn large-calibre weapons and tanks from the frontline.

The OSCE mission monitors weapons-holding areas in territory controlled by Kiev and by the rebels to make sure both sides are sticking to the terms of the truce.

Meanwhile, senior separatist commander Eduard Basurin accused government troops of wounding two rebel fighters and two civilians in attacks on rebel territory in the past 24 hours, separatist press service DAN reported.

● DOHA

## Amnesty: Qatar ‘still failing migrant workers’

BY ANGUS HARRISON  
IN DOHA

**QATAR** is failing to deliver on reforms for migrant workers a year after the Gulf nation announced plans to improve conditions for low-paid labourers building its highways, hotels, stadiums and skyscrapers, Amnesty International has said.

In a new report, the human rights group criticised the 2022 World Cup host for making no substantive changes on labour issues. The report was released a day after three major World Cup sponsors – Adidas, Coca-Cola and Visa – publicly pressured football’s world governing body, FIFA, to push Qatar to do more to improve labour conditions.

None of the companies is threatening to drop its sponsorship.

Like other energy-rich Gulf nations with relatively small populations, Qatar relies on an army of guest workers, many from South Asian nations.

Qatar responded to the report by asserting it has made “significant changes” to improve working conditions, citing a number of changes made over the past year, including efforts to boost the number of labour inspectors, provide better housing for workers and crack down on employers who break Qatari law.

“We are all dealing with the unique challenges brought about by rapid economic growth and the high population of expatriate workers seeking better opportuni-

ties,” the ministry of labour and social affairs said. In May 2014, officials outlined plans for legislation that could end in its current form the “kafala” system, which ties expatriate workers to a single employer. The draft law would also allow workers to obtain exit visas without having to secure their employers’ consent.

Amnesty’s Gulf migrant rights researcher Mustafa Qadri said: “We’ve had a year and not much has changed. The situation has probably worsened because you have more workers now.”

Amnesty said no new laws have been passed to protect the rights of domestic workers, and noted that migrant workers remain blocked from forming or joining trade unions.



Construction workers in Doha from Bangladesh take a break