

# Friday Times

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## Local

## Digital currencies



Local Spotlight

By Muna Al-Fuzai

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The Venezuelan president recently said that his country plans to launch a new digital currency to cope with the financial crisis caused by the financial embargo imposed by the United States. The new currency will be called “petro”, and will enjoy guarantees from Venezuela’s oil and gas reserves and natural resources of gold and diamonds.

The Venezuelan president said the move will allow for new forms of international funding for economic and social development in the country. I believe the man has to do what he has to do to save and protect his country, and if issuing a new digital currency is one way for a solution, so be it.

The statement led to a debate among many people. The new Venezuelan digital currency will be guaranteed by certain factors by the government, but it is not the only virtual currency in the cloud today, which is filled with crypto-currencies that entered global markets and caused a media uproar. Will the world see new changes in financial transactions? How will governments face it, and should individuals resist the temptation to deal with these currencies?

As Venezuela is on its way to issuing the new virtual currency, the world is witnessing a strong surge of another digital currency - bitcoin - causing confusion and a race by some people to get hold of it. More companies are encouraging and training people to use this new currency online. I wonder if virtual currencies such as bitcoin and others are legal or not. Are we waiting for more virtual currencies which may be supported by governments, such as the case in Venezuela? The matter is still under discussion.

The digital currencies have several different names and are usually referred to as digital, virtual, encrypted or electronic currencies. Yet I keep thinking if it is just a bubble that will soon burst, or a genius invention that will change the face of financial transactions in the future. There is a split in opinions among individuals and financial institutions on this subject. While some are thinking of buying all they can of the new virtual currencies, some are hesitant to avoid losses.

I think that in the case of bitcoin, there are no logical reasons for its high price, as it is now. The Reserve Bank of India has refused to consider it a legal currency. They are right in seeking to protect their resources and reputation. But there are some people and a few governments who believe that virtual currencies will change the face of the world in the future.

In my opinion, crypto-currencies are a brilliant invention, but there have been no significant changes to the lives of individuals or investments after years of their launch, which makes me worried. In addition, the sharp and sudden fluctuations in rates without good or apparent reasons make it an investment fraught with dangers and more akin to gambling rather than an investment.

But if financial institutions are persuaded to adopt crypto-currencies as legal tender that eliminates the typical problems of everyday currencies such as counterfeiting, for example, by providing users and traders of these currencies with adequate safeguards to protect their money and control possible attempts of money laundering, then it would bring a new change to today’s world.

But it seems that so far, the old school of financial institutions has not granted its approval to such an upgrade. I think the world needs to support new financial tools, but only if enough international guarantees are given, such as in the case of Venezuela, for example. It might be worth thinking and considering then.



Flowers bloom in a local garden in Kuwait City. A renewed interest in local parks, outdoor urban spaces and gardens has led to the development or refurbishment of green spaces in Kuwait. — Photo by Yasser Al-Zayyat

## Spending the holidays abroad



IN MY VIEW

By Salman Al Mutawa

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Don’t do it. During my second year studying in the US, I decided to experience the holidays in America for the first time. I wouldn’t return to Kuwait to spend time with my family. Instead, I would stay here and experience the culture during Christmastime and New Year’s.

I had forgotten two things, or maybe I was misguided by the media. The first was that Americans and Europeans spend the holidays with their families, and seeing as I do not have any family in America, I would not be having the holiday “experience”. Instead, I spent that time eating Chinese food, because those restaurants were the only ones that were open.

The second thing I forgot was how beautiful Kuwait is during the winter - the cool weather and camping culture was something that I did not appreciate until I missed it.

Watching my family and friends enjoy their breaks in the desert with their loved ones only made my stay in the United States more mundane. And guess what? Most of my friends in the US at the time were Khaleejis, so who

did I spend time with? No one. Why? Because they were all in Kuwait enjoying campfires.

Another factor that I did not take into consideration was the change of environment returning to your family provides you. During a study break, your mind and body rest from the stress of being in an institution. However, I have found that remaining close to the environment that you are taking the break from makes it more difficult to completely cut that part out of your subconscious, even for a little while.

As a result, most students who do not travel during the break do not get to hit that “refresh” button. In some cases, and this has happened to me, the following semester felt twice as exhausting as a normal semester, because I did not have that sense of complete disconnect from my surroundings.

So, if you are still on the edge about returning home for the New Year’s break and need to decide, let me do it for you. Book your ticket now. Shoo. Enjoy your family and loved ones - your apartment isn’t going to go anywhere. It’ll be waiting for you exactly the way you left it come January 2018.

“The second thing I forgot was how beautiful Kuwait is during the winter”

Kuwait Times



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## Local



# How to 'legally' enjoy Kuwait's camping season



By Nawara Fattahova

The camping season in Kuwait began on Nov 15 and will end on March 15, 2018. During Kuwait's camping season, people can register the location of their camp after paying a fee and deposit. Certain sites have been allo-

*These legal locations for camping are specified along with the instructions on the official website of the municipality: [www.baladia.gov.kw](http://www.baladia.gov.kw)*

cated by the Municipality for camping, which people have been urged to respect. These legal locations for camping are specified along with the instructions on the official website of the municipality: [www.baladia.gov.kw](http://www.baladia.gov.kw). The applicant will have to pay a fee of KD 50 and a deposit of KD 300 during the registration. The applicant will get the deposit back after leaving the campsite at the end of the season without any violations.

The camping locations are in two governorates: Ahmadi and Jahra. "There are eight camping areas within the two governorates spread over 640 square kilometers. These include four service and security locations, where staff from the interior ministry, health ministry and the municipality are present. The municipality also issues licenses to cooperative societies to set up temporary markets to serve the campers," Abdulmuhsen Abalkhail, Public Relations manager for Municipality told Kuwait Times.





Photos show various camping sites and tents set up during Kuwait's camping season which runs from November to March. In recent years, the Municipality has cracked down on destruction of the desert camping areas, organizing licensing for camping and levying fines on those who leave trash, equipment and other debris behind. — Photos by Joseph Shagra and Yasser Al-Zayyat

“Those who want to set up a camp can choose the exact location on the municipality application according to the GPS. Sometimes people don't reach the correct location. But if they reach the correct location and find other people camping there, they can complain, as this camp will be illegal and our inspectors will remove it,” he said. “Illegal camps will be removed by the Municipality after posting a warning letter, and the owner

of the camp will have to pay for the removal expenses. But illegal camps pitched at legal locations can get a license,” he explained.

### Conditions

“The applicant should be at least 21 years old of any nationality and should register on the municipality website, where he has to enter the GPS location and pay the fee and deposit. He should also register the same tele-

phone number that is registered with his bank account to receive the password to complete the registration. Two weeks after the camping season ends, he will get back the deposit in the same bank account,” stressed Abalkhail.

### Fines

“People should avoid using cement for building their camps, disturbing the soil, littering and other harmful activities. According to environment law no. 42/2016, environmental violations can result in heavy fines - up to KD 5,000. Municipal inspectors are now authorized to issue fines for environmental violations, in addition to municipal violations,” he said.

Almost 1,000 licenses have been issued by the municipality this season. “Every person who registers for a camp on the website is entitled to an area of 1,000 square meters. This year, a new condition was added to the regular procedures of registration - that after the camping season ends, the camper should obtain an official letter from the Environment Public Authority stating the campsite is free of violations. Only then will he get back his deposit,” concluded Abalkhail.



## Local

## PHOTO OF THE DAY



Infantino and Minister of Commerce and Industry and Acting Minister of State for Youth Affairs Khaled Al-Roudhan speak with Kuwaiti youth during a tour of the Jaber Al-Ahmad International Stadium. — Photo by Yasser Al-Zayyat

## Social media trends turning marriages upside down

By Ben Garcia

Divorce is one of many issues handled by attorney Dr Ahmed Batahi Al-Mutairi. But he believes that helping families resolve their legal disputes is his strength, and he enjoys his work. According to him, the trend of increasing divorce rates is universal, noting that Kuwait has a high number of divorce cases too. "This I think is related to the fast changes in reality, coupled with trends in technology," he said.

An article published by Kuwait Times recently said the rate of divorce in Kuwait has climbed to 60 percent, but Mutairi rejected this report, claiming that it's only 30 percent. "The reason behind this is the very nature of man, who feels superior to a woman. They want to reaffirm their manhood by showing their superiority over women. But this is also influenced by social media trends - communication is turning marriages upside down nowadays," he said.

Mutairi, 47, is an active lawyer, and was a judge at the court of cassation from 1997 to 2001. He completed his university degree at the Islamic University of Madinah in Saudi Arabia and his PhD at Al-Jinan University in Lebanon. For many years, the ministry of justice in Kuwait was his second home, where he was assigned to render judgments on many cases. In 2012, he decided to start his own law firm, which consists of four outstanding lawyers, two consultants and six office staff.



Dr Ahmed Batahi Al-Mutairi

Every morning, before going to work, Mutairi prepares himself for another challenging day, and prays for wisdom and for his family. "I pray regularly to ask Allah for guidance when deciding a case. I always decide with full honesty and do what is best based on our law and responsibility as a human being," he told Kuwait Times.

Mutairi has a fixed daily schedule. From waking up to drinking coffee, from reading the local newspapers to perusing the pile of documents on his desk, everything has a fixed time. At 8 am, the court opens, and his normal workday ends at noon. "At 1 pm, I talk to the families or witnesses and schedule meetings with

case officers or attorneys and deliberate on the merits of the case," he said.

Even though he has his own law firm now, Mutairi is always on the go. "I have many plans for the day. I don't sleep if I don't finish my objectives for the day. I don't step out if I haven't accomplished my goals. I share the same approach with the people I am working with," he said. His law firm, which is located across the ministry of justice, has handled many extramarital affairs and divorce cases. "The bottom line is that all we humans want is to be happy and content in life - this is why my firm believes in helping people as much as we can."

## Be pretty and write



IN MY VIEW

By Athoob Alshuaibi  
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Recently the Kuwait International Bookfair took place and as almost every year, it was accompanied by demands and calls from those objecting to the banning of books. Writers, novelists, artists and human rights activists - we find them silent throughout the year, except at this particular time. Surprisingly, there are a great number of objectors, but we have never heard that anyone has submitted a literary or artistic work that stimulates the book censorship issue.

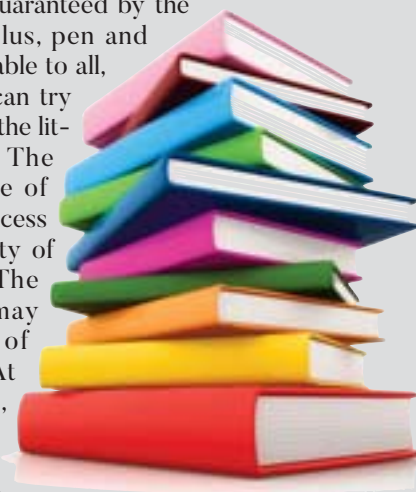
The second contradiction that is seen is the practice of the censors and their disdain through social media for Kuwaiti fashionistas breaking into the world of novel writing, forgetting that freedom of speech and expression is guaranteed by the constitution. Plus, pen and paper are available to all, and everyone can try their fortune in the literary arena. The actual measure of any writer's success is the popularity of her books. The writer's star may fade for lack of productions. At the same time, the number of published books is not a criterion of success. It's quality over quantity.

Their discontent shows an effort to confine literary arts to the elites, much like what the early 19th century photographers did after Kodak launched the first commercial film camera to the public in 1888. In addition, nothing is worse than firing sentences on books based on their covers. In the end, good will out itself. Not to mention that many of Kuwait's fashionistas are educated women, and their interest in fashion is a credit to them, and not against them.

Literary snobbishness is the worst thing a writer can reach, because he pays himself a mandate to criticize others, to favor work of another, objecting to his author, and sometimes without reading the content. One author was shocked by what he called "the invasion of fashionistas of the literary world," and said that the book fair has become now a place to gather nausea and feces, corn and shawarma.

I believe that beautiful, successful women have proved to the world that the universal French belief that beauty is frequently accompanied by stupidity and a lack of intelligence - according to the famous proverb: "Just shut up and be pretty" - is no longer fit for intellectual consumption.

This article is a letter of appreciation to all the fashionistas who spoke and weren't afraid, and succeeded in adding a drop in the river of literature.



# Australia showcases premium food products



KUWAIT: Warren Hauck, Ambassador of Australia to Kuwait, speaks during the event. — Photos by Joseph Shagra



Executive Chef Tim Hollands.



Some agri-food products on display.

By Ben Garcia

**KUWAIT:** Kuwait is the largest live sheep export market for Australia and is the second largest importer of dairy products, says Warren Hauck, Ambassador of Australia to Kuwait as he spoke at the launch of 'Taste Australia' event Wednesday night. A group of agriculture people from the State of Victoria presented its prime food products at Radisson Blu Hotel in front of invited guests. The Horticulture Innovation Australia, Meat Livestock Australia in partnership with the Australian Trade and Investment Commission are in the road show in the Middle East (Saudi Arabia, UAE and Kuwait) to show-

case its unique food and beverages experience.

"With the growth of food import sales in Kuwait, which increased by around 8.76 percent in 2016, Kuwait continues to be strong partner for Australian network," he said. "The Middle East region has been an important export market for the Australian dairy industry. In 2016/2017, Australia exported over 41,000 tons of dairy products to the region worth nearly 159 million Australian Dollars. Kuwait, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates have been the top three importing countries for Australia's safe and quality dairy products."

The Middle East and North Africa market is now Australia's largest in terms of sheep meat exports, according to Hauck. "The

total volume of lamb and mutton meat combined exported in 2016 was 123,320 tons with a value of 694.3 million Australian Dollars," he said. "Australia beef, veal and offal exports to the region have also seen growth in high value items such as grain-fed beef, angus and Wagyu products."

Australian food products can be found in all supermarkets in Kuwait. The 'Taste Australia' was also used as a venue for exhibiting agri-food from Australia and showcasing the skills of Executive Chef Tim Hollands who demonstrated in front of the attendees some of his menus using Aussie premium food products. It was also designed to network for some food suppliers in Kuwait.

## 'Jedareyat' voluntary team turns walls into canvases

**KUWAIT:** The Kuwaiti 'Jedareyat' team, a voluntary group aim at transforming walls in Kuwait into artistic drawings. By doing so, the team is delivering a positive message of awareness to the community, and gives young people the opportunity to demonstrate their artistic talents and thoughts.

The team currently decorating and transforming walls of power generators in Safat area, downtown Kuwait, is part of a national youth initiative sponsored by the Ministry of Electricity and Water. Team leader Sulaiman Al-Roudhan said yesterday that the team's goal is to add color and value, as well as reduce visual pollution in public places. There will be more cooperation in the coming period with other government bodies in an attempt to provide illustrations inspired by Kuwaiti history, he said. One of the main objectives of the team



is to involve various actors in society and allow young people to practice their hobbies by providing them with space for creativity, he noted.

There was no specific plan for the inception of the team; it was done spontaneously

and out of passion, he said. The selection of team members comes according to previous archive material and experience, Roudhan noted, pointing out that participation in the team is open to all and not only for professional painters. — KUNA



## Local

# Prime Minister sponsors, attends launch of strategic oil complex

## Complex to maximize economic return of oil: Oil Minister

**KUWAIT:** His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-Hamad Al-Sabah yesterday sponsored and attended the launch ceremony of the Kuwait Integrated Petrochemical Industries Company's (KIPIC) Al-Zour Oil Complex. The ceremony was attended by First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of the Interior Sheikh Khaled Al-Jarrah Al-Sabah, and Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance Anas Al-Saleh, together with a host of Sheikhs and senior state and His Highness the Premier's Diwan officials.

Numerous CEOs and senior officials of the Kuwait Petroleum Corporation (KPC) subsidiary companies, and diplomats were also present. Minister of Oil and Minister of Electricity and Water Essam Al-Marzouq, and KIPIC's CEO Hashim Sayed Hashim delivered statements at the ceremony, which also featured a documentary on the mega project.

Al-Zour is one of the strategic projects for the State of Kuwait, aiming to provide more energy to meet the local demand and to provide high quality products for exports, as well as achieving the aspired self-sufficiency of power. After the ceremony, His Highness the Prime Minister said that the project would enhance expertise of the Kuwaiti cadres, qualifying them to manage more oil projects in the future. The government proceeds with studying, and implementing strategic development projects in the oil and non-oil sectors for the good of the Kuwaiti people and the foundations that care for them.



**KUWAIT:** Oil Minister Essam Al-Marzouq honors His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-Hamad Al-Sabah during the launch ceremony of Al-Zour Oil Complex. — KUNA

### Economic return

Al-Zour Refinery is the only one in Kuwait designed to process Kuwaiti heavy crude oil, gaining it strategic importance to maximize the economic return of oil wealth, Marzouq said. The refinery project will produce low-sulphur fuel oil (LSFO), mainly for the local power plants, Marzouq said in a speech during the ceremony.

The complex includes three mega projects, Al-Zour Refinery, the LNG Import Facilities, and the Petrochemicals Complex. Marzouq said the projects would give an impetus to the national econ-



**His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-Hamad Al-Sabah attends the launch ceremony of Al-Zour Oil Complex.**

omy, through creating new opportunities for developing local projects in downstream industries and logistical services. It will also offer new jobs to Kuwaitis.

The LNG Import Facilities project, will enhance the strategic role of the Kuwait Petroleum Corporation (KPC), backing its commitment to provide the country's needs of energy, both today and in the future, as well as achieving the highest added-value of the integration process, the minister noted.

KIPIC will produce the optimal mix of natural

gas and LSFO for electricity plants, besides a surplus of the crude and diesel for export purposes "making utmost utilization and maximizing the economic return of our oil wealth," Marzouq said.

As for the Petrochemicals Complex, the minister said it will integrate with the Al-Zour Refinery to provide high-quality products, such as p-Xylene (para-xylene), polypropylene and gasoline, besides motor fuel for local use and exports. Marzouq thanked His Highness the Premier for his support to the oil sector, and his eagerness to follow up its development projects. — KUNA

## UK-Kuwaiti Steering Group draws up plan to bolster bilateral ties

**KUWAIT:** The joint UK-Kuwaiti Steering Group has drawn up a joint work plan aiming to promote relations and preserve mutual interests between the two countries through the next six months, Kuwait's Foreign Ministry announced on Wednesday.

Following the group's 11th meeting, the ministry said in a statement that the two sides agreed to continue developing cooperation in the domains of immigration, trade, security, defense, cybersecurity, healthcare, science, education, environment and culture.

The statement underlined the importance of continuity of work within the framework of the group for cementing ties and achieving the mutual objectives. Work at the sub-groups covers various fields which stress the continuation of building on the basis of the

relationship between the two countries, the statement noted. It affirmed that defense, security and trade are the cornerstone of the bilateral relationship which is being developed to live up to the current challenges, including cybersecurity.

On security, the talks focused on facing common challenges, including the protection of aviation security through the improvement of international standards at airports, the statement said. On economy, the statement stressed the need of commitment to supporting efforts by the Kuwaiti-British partnerships so as to increase mutual commercial and investment bonds. The talks also discussed means of fostering cooperation in healthcare, in addition to mutual commitment to removing obstacles for strengthening bonds of commerce, investment, study and tourism between the two countries, it made clear. The statement further pointed to common concern towards boosting cooperation in education, scientific research, environment protection and culture. On politics, the two sides shared views on the latest developments in the Middle East region and the pressing issues, it said, referring that the British side expressed its support to Kuwait's mediation efforts aiming to resolve the Gulf crisis.

The British government has praised the wise leadership of His Highness the Amir

Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah and the role of Kuwait in establishing security and stability in the region, according to the statement. The statement referred that the British side congratulated His Highness the Amir on the success of the 38th GCC Summit hosted by Kuwait on Tuesday. The joint work plan drawn up by the joint group will be approved by Kuwait's Deputy Foreign Minister Khaled Al-Jarallah and British Minister for Middle East affairs Alistair Burt during a next meeting, the statement concluded.

Burt had welcome the holding of the GCC in Kuwait, and urged GCC states to take further steps towards resuming full cooperation. "The UK and GCC are close partners on a range of issues, and we welcome the attendance by all GCC member states at the Summit hosted by Kuwait this week," Burt said in a press statement Wednesday. He underlined that the unity amongst GCC members is important for the Gulf's stability and security.

"We urge our GCC partners to build on the Summit and take further steps towards resuming full cooperation," he added. He expressed admiration of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah for hosting the summit. "The UK fully supports his continued mediation efforts towards a resolution of differences between GCC member states," he concluded. — KUNA

## GCC peoples have a lot in common: Ministry

**KUWAIT:** The points of agreement among the peoples of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) are more than the points of disagreement, Minister of State for Cabinet Affairs and Acting Minister of Information Sheikh Mohammad Al-Abdullah Al-Mubarak Al-Sabah said Wednesday. "The holding of the 38th summit in time signals that GCC peoples have a lot in common," he said in a meeting with representatives of Arab press organizations covering the summit.

On the level of representation at the summit, Sheikh Mohammad said Kuwait has had the honor of welcoming the representatives of any leader of a GCC member country. Dealing with Kuwait mediation in the GCC crisis, he said this mediation derives its credibility from the impartiality of the mediator. His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah believes it is his duty to continue his efforts to restore trust among the brothers in the GCC, the minister added. — KUNA



**Sheikh Mohammad Al-Abdullah Al-Mubarak Al-Sabah**



## Local

# Parliament speaker meets Palestinian Ambassador

## Kuwait regrets US recognition of Jerusalem as Israeli capital

**KUWAIT:** Kuwaiti National Assembly Speaker Marzouq Al-Ghanem yesterday met with Palestinian Ambassador to Kuwait Rami Tahboub. The meeting was attended by Kuwait MPs Mubarak Al-Harees and Yussef Al-Fadhala.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs had stated on Wednesday that the State of Kuwait followed with profound regret the US decision to recognize Jerusalem as capital of Israel and move its embassy to the holy city. Such a unilateral move contravenes the UN resolutions on maintaining the political, historical, legal and humanitarian status quo in Jerusalem, an official of the ministry official said in a statement reported by Kuwait News Agency (KUNA).

The US decision runs counter to the international laws and conventions, and puts in peril the future of the Middle East peace process, the official cautioned. He expressed concern over the adverse repercussions of the US move on security, peace and stability in the region, which is already fraught with peril. He voiced hope that the US administration would reconsider its move and focus on the peace efforts based on the international legitimacy, the two-state vision for peace and the Arab peace initiative.

Meanwhile, at least 14 MPs submitted a proposal yesterday to host a special session at the National Assembly on Wednesday to discuss the ramifications of the US decision.



**KUWAIT:** Kuwaiti National Assembly Speaker Marzouq Al-Ghanem meets with Palestinian Ambassador to Kuwait Rami Tahboub. — KUNA

## US embassy alerts citizens of possible protests

**KUWAIT:** The United States embassy in Kuwait sent the following letter to US citizens in the country, giving general guidelines of how to react to possible protests that might take place in Kuwait in response to US President Donald Trump's announcement to recognize Jerusalem as Israel's capital:

"The recent announcement that the United States recognizes Jerusalem as the capital of Israel and plans to relocate the US Embassy from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem may spark protests, some of which have the potential to become

violent. US Embassy Kuwait reminds US citizens of the need for caution and awareness of personal security.

"Review your personal security plans; remain aware of your surroundings, including local events; and monitor local news for updates. Maintain a high-level of vigilance, take appropriate steps to enhance your personal security and follow instructions of local authorities. Avoid areas of demonstrations, and exercise caution if in the vicinity of any large gatherings, protests, or demonstrations.

"These are some measures you can take to increase your personal safety: Avoid crowds. Large gatherings can quickly become dangerous; Keep a low profile. Be aware of how others dress and behave in public and try to blend in; Vary your routes and times of travel. Being less predictable makes you more difficult to target; Be aware of your surroundings. Understand what "belongs" and what does

not; Avoid traveling alone. Avoid isolated areas, especially after dark. Tell friends, colleagues, or neighbors where you are going and when you intend to return; Know where you are going and your destination. Find exits and have a plan to escape. Select "safe havens" along your route, such as government buildings, friends' residences, shops or restaurants, or gas stations; Always carry a charged cell phone. Make sure you have programmed emergency numbers in all your family members' phones; Be prepared to postpone or cancel activities; Report concerns you may have to the police and to the US Embassy in Kuwait.

"US citizens are strongly encouraged to maintain a high level of vigilance, be aware of local events, and take the appropriate steps to bolster their personal security. If you perceive a threat, or are the victim of a crime, in Kuwait, dial 112."

## Parliament to convene Sunday on unity

**KUWAIT:** Kuwaiti National Assembly Speaker Marzouq Al-Ghanem said yesterday he has invited government and officials to attend a special session on Sunday to discuss how to promote national unity. "There is a request from MPs to hold a special session on Sunday regarding internal and external events," Ghanem said in a press release. He said he has extended invitations to government and deputies accord-



ing to Article 72 of the parliament's statutes. The speaker hoped that there would be "political breakthroughs" in the near future, emphasizing

that it was necessary to shore up the country's internal front and unify ranks in order to address external challenges. — KUNA

## Kuwait keen on combating human trafficking

**DOHA:** Kuwait voiced keenness yesterday to protect humans from trafficking and smuggling as a form of contemporary slavery and a blatant violation of human rights and fundamental freedoms guaranteed by international laws. Kuwait has taken several measures, including enacting legislations that affirm its serious desire to combat such crimes, Director of Public Protection and Anti-Human Trafficking Department at the Interior Ministry Colonel Haitham Al-Othman said. His remarks came on the sidelines of the fifth World Interpol Conference on Combating Human Trafficking and Smuggling of Migrants. The Kuwaiti law 91/2013 on human trafficking and the smuggling of migrants states on combating these crimes and is consistent with international organizations, he noted.

He pointed out that his administration also has organized awareness campaigns pertaining that law which focuses on citizens and residents as well as law enforcement. Othman added that there is cooperation with a number of sectors inside the ministry, the Public Authority for Manpower, and the UN International Organization for Migration in terms of detecting crime, training and coordination in this regard. Othman explained that since its establishment, the Department became aware of a number of cases, which were later shifted to the General Prosecution to enforce the law. More than 300 people representing more than 90 countries participated in the two-day conference. — KUNA

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# International

FRIDAY, DECEMBER 8, 2017



Qatar, France sign \$1bn fighter jet agreement amid Gulf crisis

LA mansions threatened as fierce California wildfires rage

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SIDON: Palestinian students waving the national Palestinian flag and a model of Jerusalem's Dome of the Rock mosque protest in the streets of the southern Lebanese port city of Sidon yesterday against US President Donald Trump's recognition of Jerusalem as Israel's capital. —AFP (See Pages 12 and 14)

## World slams Trump's Jerusalem move

Saudis call move 'irresponsible,' Qatar warns of 'serious repercussions'

**RAMALLAH, Palestinian Territories:** US President Donald Trump's recognition of Jerusalem as Israel's capital sparked Palestinian protests, clashes and a call for a new intifada yesterday as fears grew of fresh bloodshed in the region. Trump's announcement also prompted an almost universal diplomatic backlash that continued yesterday, with fresh warnings from Turkey, the European Union and Russia.

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu however lavished praise on Trump, saying his name would now be associated with Jerusalem's long history and urging other countries to follow his lead. The Israeli military deployed hundreds more troops to the occupied West Bank amid uncertainty over the fallout, while clashes between Palestinians and Israeli security forces erupted in various areas.

In a speech in Gaza City, Hamas leader Ismail Haniya called for a new intifada, or uprising. Protests were held in West Bank cities including Ramallah, Hebron and Nablus, as well as in the Gaza Strip. Israeli forces dispersed several hundred protesters with tear gas at a checkpoint at the entrance to Ramallah, while the Palestinian Red Crescent reported dozens

wounded from tear gas, rubber bullets and live fire in the West Bank.

Saudi Arabia yesterday slammed US President Donald Trump's decision to recognize Jerusalem as Israel's capital, calling the move "unjustified and irresponsible". Trump ended seven decades of US ambiguity on the status of the disputed city on Wednesday, prompting an almost universal diplomatic backlash and fears of new bloodshed in the Middle East. He also kicked off the process of moving the US embassy from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem.

"The kingdom expresses great regret over the US president's decision to recognize Jerusalem as the capital of Israel," said a Saudi royal court statement carried by the official Saudi Press Agency. The decision goes against the "historical and permanent rights of the Palestinian people", the royal court said, calling on Trump to reconsider his decision. "The kingdom has already warned of the serious consequences of such an unjustified and irresponsible move," the statement said. "The US move represents a significant decline in efforts to push a peace process and is a violation of the historically neutral American position on Jerusalem."

### Dangerous step

Saudi King Salman on Tuesday had warned Trump that moving the US embassy for Israel to Jerusalem was a "dangerous step" that could rile Muslims worldwide. Trump's announcement appears to have cast a pall over relations between Saudi Arabia and the US, which have warmed in the months after his election, with the president choosing the Gulf kingdom for his first overseas visit in May. While the two countries have long been allies, Riyadh viewed Trump's predecessor Barack Obama as overly friendly with its arch-nemesis Iran. Israel and Saudi Arabia have no official diplomatic relations. Meanwhile, Qatar's emir has warned President Trump that his decision to recognize Jerusalem as Israel's capital would have "serious repercussions", according to a statement from Doha's foreign ministry yesterday.

### 'Darker times'

EU diplomatic chief Federica Mogherini said the decision could take the region "backwards to even darker times." Russia said it viewed the move with

"serious concern" and Saudi Arabia called it "unjustified and irresponsible."

Palestinian leaders were outraged, with president Mahmud Abbas saying Trump had disqualified the United States from its traditional role as peace broker in the Middle East conflict. Palestinian shops in east Jerusalem, including the Old City, as well as in the West Bank were largely shuttered and schools closed on Thursday after a general strike was called.

"By this decision, America became a very small country, like any small country in the world, like Micronesia," Salah Zuhikah, 55, told AFP in Jerusalem's Old City. "America was a great country for us and everyone." Trump's move left many angry US allies struggling to find a diplomatic response. Through gritted teeth, Britain described the move as "unhelpful" and France called it "regrettable." Germany said plainly that it "does not support" Trump's decision. Eight countries including Britain, France and Italy pressed for an emergency meeting of the UN Security Council in response, which was set for today. —AFP

## International

# EU vows push to make Jerusalem capital for Palestinians too

## ‘Only realistic solution to the conflict is based on two states’

**BRUSSELS:** The EU’s top diplomat pledged yesterday to reinvigorate diplomacy with Russia, the United States, Jordan and others to ensure Palestinians have a capital in Jerusalem after US President Donald Trump recognized the city as Israel’s capital.

The European Union, a member of the Middle East Quartet along with the United States, the United Nations and Russia, believes it has a duty to make its voice heard as the Palestinians’ biggest aid donor and Israel’s top trade partner.

“The European Union has a clear and united position. We believe the only realistic solution to the conflict between Israel and Palestine is based on two states and with Jerusalem as the capital of both,” EU foreign policy chief Federica Mogherini told a news conference.

She said she would meet Jordan’s foreign minister today, while she and EU foreign ministers would discuss Jerusalem with Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu in Brussels on Monday.

“The European Union will engage even more with the parties and with our regional and international partners. We will keep working with the Middle East Quartet, possibly in an en-

larged format,” said Mogherini, citing Jordan, Egypt and Saudi Arabia, as well as Norway. “We remain convinced that the role of the United States ... is crucial,” she said.

Mogherini, who also spoke to Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas, threw her weight behind Jordan’s King Abdullah, saying he was “a very wise man” that everyone should listen to as the custodian of the Muslim holy sites in Jerusalem.

Trump’s decision stirred outrage across the Arab and Muslim world and alarm among U.S. allies and Russia because of Jerusalem’s internationally disputed status, and the Palestinian Islamist group Hamas urged Palestinians to abandon peace efforts and launch a new uprising against Israel.

Mogherini stressed all 28 EU governments were united on the issue of Jerusalem and seeking a solution envisaging a Palestinian state on land Israel took in a 1967 war, but policy divisions within the bloc have weakened its influence.

“This is the consolidated European Union position,” she said, saying EU foreign ministers made that clear to US Secretary of State Rex Tillerson on Tuesday in Brussels. Hurdles for the

### EU plans meetings with Palestinian and Israeli leaders



## US ‘pulled the pin on bomb’ with decision: Turkey

**ANKARA:** The United States has primed a bomb in the Middle East with its decision to recognize Jerusalem as Israel’s capital, Turkish Prime Minister Binali Yildirim said yesterday.

Yildirim said Turkey’s stark differences with Washington, which have already strained ties between the NATO allies, meant that an overwhelming majority of the Turkish people were now unsympathetic toward the United States. “The United States has pulled the pin on a bomb ready to blow in the region,” Yildirim told a conference in Ankara. President Donald Trump on Wednesday reversed decades of US policy by recognizing Jerusalem as the capital of Israel and promising to move the US Embassy there. Following the decision, hundreds of protesters gathered outside the US consulate in Istanbul; on Thursday, there was a heavy police presence with uniformed soldiers patrolling the roof.



**ANKARA:** People hold signs and shout slogans during a protest against the US president’s decision to officially recognize Jerusalem as the Israeli capital, yesterday near the US Embassy in Ankara. —AFP

“Today, more than 80 percent of our citizens are cold towards the United States and they are right to be so,” Yildirim said, without giving a source for the figure. Bilateral relations had already been hurt by Washington’s support for the Syrian Kurdish YPG militia, seen by Ankara as an extension of the Kurdistan Workers’ Party (PKK), which has for decades waged an insurgency against the Turkish state.

In addition, Ankara has been angered by the United States’ refusal to extradite US-based Muslim cleric Fethullah Gulen, whom it accuses of orchestrating last year’s attempted military coup. —Reuters



**BETLEHEM:** Palestinian children look at vandalized graffiti depicting US President Donald Trump and slogans against US Vice President Mike Pence painted on Israel’s controversial separation barrier in the West Bank city of Bethlehem during clashes with Palestinian protestors near an Israeli checkpoint yesterday. —AFP

EU include its range of positions, ranging from Germany’s strong support for Israel to Sweden’s 2014 decision to officially recognize the state of Palestine. The EU is also perceived by

some in Israel as being too pro-Palestinian, partly because of the EU’s long-held opposition to Israeli settlements in the occupied West Bank, diplomats say. —Reuters

## Hezbollah blasts Trump’s decision as aggression

**BEIRUT:** Hezbollah lawmakers said yesterday that US recognition of Jerusalem as Israel’s capital constituted an aggression against Palestine and resistance was the only way to recover lost rights.

US President Donald Trump’s decision marks the “worst and most dangerous” to come from any American administration, Lebanese Hezbollah’s parliamentary bloc said.

Trump reversed decades of US policy on Wednesday by recognizing disputed Jerusalem as the capital of Israel. The decision has imperiled Middle East peace efforts and upset the Arab world and Western allies alike. Trump announced his administration would move the US Embassy to Jerusalem, a process expected to take years and one his predecessors did not undertake to avoid inflaming tensions.

The Hezbollah parliamentary bloc “calls on Palestinians, Arabs, and Muslims ... to move swiftly and efficiently,” lawmaker Hassan Fadlallah said in a televised statement.

“The only way to recover rights is the way of resistance”, and Trump’s declaration has eliminated negotiation as a method, the statement said. The status of Jerusalem—home to sites holy to the Muslim, Jewish and Christian religions—represents one of the biggest obstacles to a peace deal between Israelis and Palestinians.

The international community does not recognize Israeli sovereignty over the entire city, believing negotiations should resolve its status. No other country has its embassy in Jerusalem.

The U.S. decision would have “catastrophic repercussions that threaten regional and international security and stability,” the Hezbollah statement said. It “represents a treacherous and wicked aggression against Palestine, its people, Islamic and Christian shrines, and the Arab and Islamic worlds”.

Israel views Iran-backed Hezbollah as the biggest threat on its borders. The Shi’ite political and military movement has sent arms to the Palestinian territories, its leader Sayyed Hassan Nasrallah said last month. Hezbollah and Israel fought a war in 2006, which killed around 1,200 people in Lebanon, mostly civilians, and 160 Israelis, most of them troops. The two have avoided major confrontation since that month-long battle, though tensions rose again earlier this year. —Reuters

# Qatar, France sign \$1bn fighter jet agreement amid Gulf crisis

## Doha calls to resolve regional rift with 'dignity'

**DOHA:** Qatar announced yesterday a deal to buy 12 French-built Rafale fighter jets, as it faces a boycott by neighboring Gulf states in the region's worst political crisis in years.

The 1.1-billion-euro (\$1.3-billion) order, announced during an official visit by French President Emmanuel Macron, allows for an option to buy a further 36 jets. It comes on top of a 2015 agreement on the purchase of 24 Dassault Aviation-built Rafale warplanes. Also yesterday, Qatar Airways announced a 5.5-billion-euro (\$6.4-billion) deal to buy 50 Airbus A321 passenger planes, with an option for 36 more. The two countries also signed a three-billion-euro (\$3.5 billion) deal on the operation and maintenance of the Doha Metro, currently being built as the country prepares for the football World Cup in 2022.

The lucrative contracts were inked in the presence of Macron and Qatar's Emir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al-Thani. Qatar also signed a letter of intent to buy 490 VBCI armored vehicles from Nexter, a French government-owned weapons manufacturer, in a potential deal worth 1.5 billion euros (\$1.7 billion), the Elysee said. The military contracts come at a time of heightened tensions in the Gulf, where a Saudi-led boycott of Qatar is in its sixth month.

Since June 5, Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, Bahrain and Egypt have diplomatically isolated Qatar. The four countries also cut off all air and sea links to Qatar and closed the only land terminal for the tiny peninsula.

Speaking about the crisis at a later joint press conference with Macron, Sheikh Tamim reiterated Qatar's calls for a negotiated settlement. "Qatar's sovereignty is above all considerations. We want to resolve the rift but not at the expense of our sovereignty and dignity," he said.

The French president urged a diplomatic solution through regional mediator Kuwait. "I reiterated to the emir France's support for Kuwait's mediation efforts and my wish for a quick solution," Macron told reporters.

Qatar's Emir called yesterday for a negotiated settlement to a damaging dispute with other Gulf states, but insisted any solution should not come at the expense of "our sovereignty and dignity." "Qatar's sovereignty is above all considerations. We want to resolve the rift but not at the expense of our sovereignty and dignity," Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al-Thani said at a joint press conference with visiting French President Emmanuel Macron.



**DOHA:** French President Emmanuel Macron (left) and Qatari Emir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al-Thani watch as their foreign ministers sign bilateral agreements in the Qatari capital Doha yesterday—AFP

"If the brothers want to resolve the dispute, we are ready," Sheikh Tamim said. "Any solution should be founded on a clear basis acceptable by all and the non-interference in the sovereignty of others." —AFP

Kuwait Times

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## International

# Trump's Jerusalem move brings little change, big risk of violence

## Concept of two-state solution in jeopardy

**JERUSALEM:** US President Donald Trump's recognition of Jerusalem as Israel's capital may bring little immediate concrete change but risks sparking another round of violence in a conflict that has lasted decades.

While Trump waded deep into the Israeli-Palestinian conflict with Wednesday's declaration on Jerusalem, many analysts said his main audience was the president's right-wing Christian political base in the United States. Still, the recognition, though it came with pledges of pursuing peace, risks igniting yet another round of violence in the region.

A series of clashes and protests erupted in the West Bank, Gaza Strip and east Jerusalem in the wake of the decision yesterday, while armed Islamist movement Hamas called for a new intifada, or uprising. Ghassan Khatib, a former Palestin-

ian Authority minister, said he did not believe a full-blown intifada would result, but it was too early to know to what degree unrest will occur.

"I think there will be a wave of popular protests," he told AFP. "I don't know for how long. It depends on several factors, including how Israel responds to it." Trump's move also drew global condemnation, including from traditional US allies who insisted on what has been the consensus in the international community: Jerusalem's status

must be negotiated by Israel and the Palestinians.

Jerusalem remains a strong rallying cry for not only Palestinians, but also Muslims worldwide as the location of the Al-Aqsa mosque compound, Islam's third-holiest site. The compound is located at the site that is also the holiest in Judaism, known to Jews as the Temple Mount, and the city is considered by Jewish Israelis to be their 3,000-year-old capital.

### 'License to run amok'

Jerusalem's status is perhaps the most difficult issue to resolve in Israeli-Palestinian peace efforts, with both sides claiming it as their capital.

"Nothing is ever sure in the Middle East, so it's unclear whether he is completely discrediting himself as mediator in the peace process between Israelis and Palestinians,"

said Yossi Alpher, an adviser to former Israeli premier Ehud Barak.

"But it is certain that the recognition of Jerusalem as capital of Israel is detrimental to the process."

Whether unrest would eventually spiral, either in the Palestinian territories or the wider region, was being closely watched, while questions were also being raised over whether a peace process is still possible. Palestinian president Mahmud Abbas



### Decision could hand a license to run amok



**VIENNA:** US Secretary of State Rex Tillerson speaks during the 24th Ministerial Council of the Organization for Security and Co-Operation in Europe (OSCE) at the Hofburg palace in Vienna yesterday. —AFP

do with the US law and a US decision and every country has a right to decide what it wants to decide as to its embassy in Israel," Tillerson said.

Earlier, US officials told reporters that when Trump was making his decision Tillerson had asked for time to check that US embassies were protected from any protests.

But, publicly, he has strongly supported the move. In Brussels, this week, European leaders made it clear that they want Jerusalem's final status to be decided through direct negotiations as part of a final peace deal. —AFP



**NABLUS:** Palestinian protestors shout slogans against US President Donald Trump's decision to recognize Jerusalem as the capital of Israel, in the West Bank city of Nablus yesterday. —AFP

said Trump had disqualified the United States from its role as traditional peace broker in the Middle East conflict, while others went further.

Saeb Erekat, secretary-general of the Palestine Liberation Organization and longtime chief negotiator for the Palestinians, said he had destroyed the two-state solution—the focus of years of international peace efforts.

Nahum Barnea, a columnist for Israeli newspaper Yedioth Aharonot, said "it would be ill-advised to overstate the importance" of Trump's speech

since it was done for domestic political reasons.

But he noted, like many others, that reactions to it could spin out of control, with extremists on both sides encouraged. "The impact of the speech won't lie in the words comprising it, but in the way that the parties interpret it," he wrote.

"The Palestinians might despair and resort to violence; the right-wing parties in Israel might seek to accelerate annexation (of the West Bank)... Trump, they might think, has given them licence to run amok." —AFP

## On Jerusalem, Trump obeys will of US people: Tillerson

**VIENNA:** US Secretary of State Rex Tillerson said yesterday that, in recognizing Jerusalem as the capital of Israel, President Donald Trump was obeying the will of the American people. Tillerson is in Europe on a three-city tour and his talks with America's allies have been partly overshadowed by global outrage at Trump's controversial decision.

But Washington's top diplomat has stood by his boss and insists the decision has not marred what has otherwise been a very positive reception from EU and NATO colleagues.

"The president is simply carrying out the will of the American people," Tillerson said at a news conference with Austria's Foreign Minister Sebastian Kurz. The former oilman said Trump had merely implemented an existing American law that obliges the president to one day move the US embassy from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem.

"Nothing is different other than the president has now implemented the 1995 law," he said, insisting Washington wants Israel and the Palestinians to negotiate a peace deal. "This has to

## Niceties aside, Greece and Turkey take the gloves off for Erdogan visit

**ATHENS:** Greece and Turkey squared up to each other over old disputes yesterday during a state visit by Tayyip Erdogan to Athens, the first such by a Turkish head of state in 65 years and one which quickly exposed long-held historical grievances.

Uneasy allies in NATO and at odds over a host of issues from ethnically split Cyprus to air space, diplomatic niceties were set aside after early remarks by Erdogan to Greek media that a treaty defining their borders may need reviewing. The 1923 Treaty of Lausanne defined the borders of modern-day Turkey, and by extension, Greece. In an unusually blunt exchange during a welcoming ceremony, President Prokopis Pavlopoulos ruled out any change to the treaty while a stern-looking Erdogan, seated beside him, said there were details in the treaty which required clarity.

The visit earlier got off to a rocky start when Turkish F-16s accompanying Erdogan's aircraft were headed off by Greek jets when they entered Greek airspace. The pilot of the Turkish presidential aircraft had refused to be escorted by Greek aircraft, Greek military

sources said.

"This is the bedrock of our friendship," said Pavlopoulos, referring to the treaty and pointedly telling his VIP guest he was a Professor of Law. "This is the basis which supports our friendship .. this is not negotiable." Erdogan responded by saying it was a treaty signed 94 years ago and did not apply only to Greece or Turkey but also included countries such as Japan. It was also supposed to protect the Turkish minority in northern Greece.

In Northern Greece, he said, Greece insisted on calling the 100,000 Turkish community there Muslim rather than using the term "Turkish".

"The necessary support is not being provided to them in terms of investments ... and there is discrimination going on," Erdogan said.

"They can't accept the word 'Turk' being written outside a school," Erdogan, who was to visit the region today, said. The two NATO partners teetered on the verge of war in 1974, 1987 and 1996 over long-running disputes on ethnically divided Cyprus, mineral rights in the Aegean Sea and sovereignty over uninhabited islets in that sea.

Although relations have improved, many Greeks believe Turkey has territorial aspirations against their country. Turkey has also accused Greece of harboring individuals involved in the coup attempt against Erdogan in July 2016. —Reuters

## International

# Putin's ex-minister, facing 10 years in jail, asks forgiveness

## Case 'absurd' and a 'monstrous and cruel provocation'

**MOSCOW:** Alexei Ulyukayev, a former Russian economy minister who faces 10 years in prison on bribery charges, insisted on his innocence yesterday while asking Russians to forgive him for ignoring the injustices of Russia's political system. Giving his final speech in court yesterday, he reiterated his claim that the case was "absurd" and a "monstrous and cruel provocation".

A top cabinet member in Putin's government, Ulyukayev is the highest-ranking official arrested during Vladimir Putin's 18 years in power. He is accused of receiving a \$2 million bribe from Igor Sechin, chief executive of the state oil giant Rosneft, who is considered the second most powerful man in Russia.

A judge is expected to deliver the verdict in his trial on December 15.

Ulyukayev, who is under house arrest, voiced his regret that he had not

paid enough attention to the plight of ordinary Russians while in office. "I am guilty of too often agreeing to compromise, of choosing the easy way, and all too often preferred my career and prosperity to standing up for principles," he said.

"It's only when you yourself face misfortune that you come to realize how hard people's lives are, what injustices they encounter." "But when everything is good you shamefully turn away from people's grief. Forgive me for that, people.



I am to blame towards you."

He appeared calm but regularly wiped his forehead with a handkerchief. He compared Sechin—who has refused to appear in court despite being repeatedly summoned—to the devil, and expressed his amazement that Sechin had effectively "disappeared into thin air".

"Only the smell of sulphur has remained in the air," he said. Prosecutor Boris Neparozhny called earlier this week for Ulyukayev to serve a 10-year sentence in a "harsh regime" penal colony and pay a fine of 500 million rubles (\$8.5 million).

It would be the harshest punishment ever for a top official in modern Russia. Ulyukayev, 61, said that he might not survive a decade in prison but said that "history will vindicate me".

He was arrested last year while still a minister, allegedly caught red-handed in a sting operation supervised by the FSB security service in which Sechin handed him a bag of dollars.

According to the prosecution, Ulyukayev asked for a \$2 million bribe to approve Rosneft's acquisition of a stake in Bashneft, another state-run oil company. Ulyukayev's arrest stunned the country's elites, with Putin eventually sacking him from the post he had held since 2013.

Greminger, the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe's secretary general, admitted as talks began.

After long resisting the idea, Russia now wants a UN peacekeeping force to help end the war between Kiev and Russian-backed separatists in the east of the country that has killed more than 10,000 people since 2014.

But under Russia's vision, the force will have a limited mandate to protect the OSCE's ceasefire monitors. Western powers, led by the United States, want a force with a robust mandate that would allow it to protect the 600 OSCE monitors there, police ceasefire lines and investigate ceasefire breaches across eastern Ukraine. They fear that a United Nations mission that only polices the front line would serve to create a frozen conflict that would de facto lock in Russian gains from its intervention in Ukraine.

### 'Vexing' situation

Addressing the opening OSCE session, Lavrov accused Western powers of seeking to "disrupt specific consideration" of a draft UN Security Council resolution to set up a UN force to escort the OSCE under its current mandate. The US idea of a robust force, he argued, would amount to "an occupational administration ... in order to bury a package of measures unanimously approved by the UN Security Council and to solve this problem by force". —AFP

### Putin likely to run for reelection



**MOSCOW:** A man looks at a painting depicting Russian president Vladimir Putin at the "SUPERPUTIN" exhibition at UMAM museum in Moscow on December 6, 2017. —AFP

Investors are watching the case for signs of Russia's future direction as Putin is widely ex-

pected to run for re-election in a March election, which would extend his rule until 2024. —AFP

## US and Russia clash over Ukraine as OSCE meets

**VIENNA:** The United States and Russia clashed over the crisis in Ukraine as OSCE foreign ministers met in Vienna yesterday, casting doubt on efforts to negotiate terms for a UN peacekeeping force.

The regional body has 57 members, but all eyes were on US Secretary of State Rex Tillerson and Russia's Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov, who were due to meet one-on-one later in the day. At stake are efforts to end the brutal war between Kiev government forces and Russian-backed separatists in eastern Ukraine by deploying a United Nations force to protect the OSCE's unarmed monitoring mission.

Moscow and Washington both back such a mission in principle but disagree over its mandate, and as ministers sat down together in Vienna's magnificent Hofburg Palace there was little sign of a breakthrough. "We've reached an absolute low point regarding confidence between the main players," Thomas

## UN to assess if either side trying to 'sabotage' Syria talks

**GENEVA:** The mediator of UN-led Syrian peace talks in Geneva will assess next week whether either side is trying to sabotage the process, he said yesterday, after President Bashar Al-Assad's negotiators said they would turn up five days late.

"We shall assess the behavior of both sides, government and opposition, in Geneva," UN envoy Staffan de Mistura said. "And based on that we will then decide how this... can be a building up or not, or a sabotage of Geneva."

If either side were seen to be sabotaging the process it could have "a very bad impact on any other political attempt to have processes elsewhere," he said. He said the Geneva rounds of talks were the only peace process backed by the UN Security Council, although there were many other initiatives being planned. He did not elaborate, but Rus-

ian President Vladimir Putin, who is seeking re-election next year, has suggested holding a "Syrian Congress" in the Russian city of Sochi early in 2018.

Diplomats see Putin's plan as a bid to draw a line under the war after seven years of fighting and to celebrate Russia's role as the power that tipped the balance of the war and became the key player in the peace process.

The Geneva talks have failed to build up any speed despite eight rounds of negotiations.

After months away from the UN talks, the two sides returned to Geneva at the end of November, with de Mistura hoping to discuss an agenda including constitutional and electoral reform.

But the government delegation arrived a day late and left after two days, saying the opposition had "mined the road" to the talks by insisting that Assad could not play any interim role in Syria's political transition. The delegation returned to Damascus to "consult and refresh", but chief negotiator Bashar Al-Ja'afari initially threatened not to come back, which the opposition said would be "an embarrassment to Russia". De Mistura said yesterday that Ja'afari's delegation had confirmed it would return on Sunday, five days later than expected. —Reuters

## International

# Trump's eldest son questioned in US Congress about Russia

## Republicans criticize probes

**WASHINGTON:** President Donald Trump's eldest son, Donald Trump Jr., declined to discuss with lawmakers on Wednesday a conversation he had with his father about emails related to a June 2016 meeting he attended with Trump associates and Russians, a congressional panel member said.

Representative Adam Schiff, the top Democrat on the US House of Representatives Intelligence Committee investigating allegations of Russian interference in last year's US election, said Trump Jr. answered the "overwhelming majority" of questions from committee members in his hours of testimony.

But Trump Jr. claimed attorney-client privilege in declining to respond to queries about that discussion with his father because a lawyer was in the room when it took place. The discussion between then-Republican candidate Trump and his son took place after the emails became public, Schiff said. Trump Jr. released the emails in July.

"In my view there is no attorney-client privilege that protects a discussion between father and son," Schiff told reporters after the closed-door testimony had ended.

"We will be following up with his counsel," Schiff said. Representative Mike Conaway, the Republican leading the investigation, said Trump Jr. had answered all of his questions.

"Mr Trump was cooperative at all times," Conaway said. Trump Jr. arrived and left without being seen by reporters. Lawmakers said they want to question him about a meeting with a Russian lawyer in June 2016 at Trump Tower in New York at which he had said he hoped to get information about the "fitness, character and qualifications" of former Secretary of State Hillary Clinton, the Democrat who was his father's presidential election opponent.

It was at least the second time Trump Jr. has testified to a congressional committee investigating any Russian meddling in the election and possible collusion with Moscow by the Trump campaign.

He arrived shortly before 10 am EST (1500 GMT) and was questioned for most of the next eight hours by members of the intelligence panel. A person familiar with knowledge of Trump Jr.'s testimony said Trump had said repeatedly he did not remember things he was asked about, including some details about information provided by Russians during

the Trump Tower meeting. Department of Justice Special Counsel Robert Mueller is also investigating. He has announced the first charges of Trump associates, and Trump's former national security adviser, Michael Flynn, has pleaded guilty to lying to Federal Bureau of Investigation agents.

The House intelligence panel also released on Wednesday a transcript of testimony last week of Erik Prince, a Trump supporter and founder of the Blackwater military contractor. A focus of that testimony was a report that Prince tried to set up a "back channel" for communications between Trump associates and Russia. Prince denied such a plan.

Trump Jr.'s appearance coincided with criticism of the Russia probes from some of his father's fellow Republicans, who control both houses of Congress and accuse investigators of bias against Trump. Other lawmakers, Republicans as well as Democrats, say the goal of the investigations is to guarantee the integrity of US elections, not to target Trump

and his associates.

Trump Jr, like his father, denies collusion with Russia. US intelligence agencies concluded that Russia attempted to influence the 2016 campaign to boost Trump's chances of defeating Clinton. Moscow denies any such effort.

Some Republicans criticized Mueller, the FBI and the Department of Justice at a news conference on Wednesday, ahead of congressional testimony on Thursday by the director of the FBI, Christopher Wray. Republican House members accused the Justice Department and the FBI of bias against the president and having been too easy on Clinton during the investigation of her use of a private email server while leading the State Department. However, Clinton has made no secret of her belief that then-FBI Director James Comey's announcement just before the election that the bureau was investigating potential new evidence in the lengthy email probe cost her the White House.

Also on Wednesday, Representative Bob Goodlatte, the Republican chairman of the House Judiciary Committee, announced a hearing next week with Deputy Attorney General Rod Rosenstein, citing "serious concerns" about reports on the political motives of staff on Mueller's team. —Reuters



### Trump Jr denies collusion with Russia

## Luxury LA mansions threatened as fierce California wildfires rage

**LOS ANGELES:** Local emergency officials warned of powerful winds yesterday that will feed wildfires raging in Los Angeles, threatening multi-million dollar mansions with blazes that have already forced more than 200,000 people to flee. Authorities issued a "purple" alert—never used before—because of the extreme danger, warning that winds could reach 80 miles an hour (128 kilometers an hour), severely limiting firefighting efforts.

"As expected winds have increased dramatically," Cal Fire, the agency responsible for fire protection in the state, said on Twitter. "Stay alert and prepared in case of evacuations. If you feel unsafe, evacuate."

The flames have swallowed about 80,000 acres (32,000 hectares) in just over a day since the "Thomas" fire, currently the state's largest, broke out, leaving at least one person dead in an area about 45 minutes' drive from downtown LA. High winds caused another wave of wildfires to erupt on Tuesday night, including one in Los Angeles' affluent Bel-Air neighborhood. The area battled gridlocked traffic as residents fled ash and smoke that churned over the smoldering hillside in the second-largest US city. Fire crews worked to save luxury homes threatened by the flames.

### Celebrities evacuated

Los Angeles Mayor Eric Garcetti said more than 230,000 people had been forced from their



**OJAI, CA:** The Thomas Fire burns in the mountains near Ojai, California. Strong Santa Ana winds are rapidly pushing multiple wildfires across the region, expanding across tens of thousands of acres and destroying hundreds of homes and structures. —AFP

homes in Los Angeles and Ventura counties. "Very strong winds" blowing from the northeast to the southwest were causing the fire to balloon, he said, warning Angelenos to be ready to flee at a moment's notice.

In Bel-Air, that's exactly what they did. The "Skirball" fire ignited Wednesday morning and quickly grew to engulf about 150 acres around the district, home to celebrities and billionaires including SpaceX CEO Elon Musk and pop superstar Beyonce.

Police knocked on doors and used loudspeakers to make sure everybody had left their mansions.

"They told even us to leave," one of the officers said. Among the last to go was Evan Kleib, a bearded photographer, locking his door. He put his

camera and his dogs in his vintage burgundy car and left the home where he has lived for several years, its fate uncertain. US media reported that the Bel-Air Moraga Estate of media tycoon Rupert Murdoch, which contains a vineyard, was threatened by the wildfire. The singer Lionel Richie cancelled a concert to help his ex-wife flee the area, while comedian Chelsea Handler and designer Adrienne Maloof were among celebrities tweeting that they had to evacuate. Among those evacuated was model Chrissy Teigen, wife of singer John Legend. "Never thought I'd get to actually play what I thought was a hypothetical game of what would you grab if there were a fire," Teigen wrote on Twitter. "We are fine and we will be fine, thinking of everyone else affected and continuing my life-long intense love of firefighters," she added. —AFP

## Displaced by mining, Peru villagers spurn shiny new town

**NUEVA FUERABAMBA, Peru:** This remote town in Peru's southern Andes was supposed to serve as a model for how companies can help communities uprooted by mining. Named Nueva Fuerabamba, it was built to house around 1,600 people who gave up their village and farmland to make room for a massive, open-pit copper mine. The new hamlet boasts paved streets and tidy houses with electricity and indoor plumbing, once luxuries to the indigenous Quechua-speaking people who now call this place home.

The mine's operator, MMG Ltd, the Melbourne-based unit of state-owned China Minmetals Corp, threw in jobs and enough cash so that some villagers no longer work. But the high-profile deal has not brought the harmony sought by villagers or MMG, a testament to the difficulty in averting mining disputes in this mineral-rich nation.

Resource battles are common in Latin America, but tensions are particularly high in Peru, the world's No. 2 producer of copper, zinc and silver. Peasant farmers have revolted against an industry that many see as damaging their land and livelihoods while denying them a fair share of the wealth. —Reuters



## International

# China criticizes India over crashed drone on border

## Incident could cause more friction along border

**BEIJING:** China expressed “strong dissatisfaction” with India yesterday over the recent crash of an Indian drone in Chinese territory, an incident that could cause more friction along their disputed border.

Indian and Chinese troops confronted each other between June and August this year - at one stage even resorting to scuffling and throwing stones - on a remote plateau near the borders of India, its ally Bhutan, and China, in the most serious and prolonged standoff in decades. The nuclear-armed Asian giants have tried to develop their ties in recent years but there is still deep distrust over their disputed border, which triggered war in 1962.

China’s defense ministry said in a statement the Indian drone had crashed in “recent days” but it did not give a location.

“This action by India violated China’s ter-

ritorial sovereignty. We express strong dissatisfaction and opposition,” Zhang Shuili, a military official in China’s western battle zone command, was quoted as saying in a ministry statement.

“China’s border defense forces took a professional and responsible attitude in conducting an inspection of the device,” Zhang said, adding that the military would “resolutely defend” China’s sovereignty and security.

The Indian army said an unmanned aerial vehicle was on a training mission over Indian territory when it developed technical problems

and crossed a so-called line of actual control separating the countries’ militaries.

Indian border guards alerted their Chinese counterparts about the drone soon afterwards, an Indian army spokesman said. China had provided the Indian army with details about where the drone came down and Indian authorities were investigating, Colonel Aman Anand said in a statement.

“The matter is being dealt with in accordance

with the established protocols,” Anand said. China also lodged diplomatic “representations” with India, Chinese foreign ministry

spokesman Geng Shuang told a regular briefing. “China asks India to immediately stop its activities of using unmanned aircraft near the border, and to work alongside China to maintain the border area’s peace and tranquility,” he said.

After the weeks of confrontation on the wind-swept Doklam plateau this year, the two sides agreed to an “expeditious disengagement” of troops about a week before Chinese President Xi Jinping and Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi met in an effort to mend ties at a summit in China in September.

But the mountainous border remains sensitive for both sides. In November, China criticized a visit by Indian President Ram Nath Kovind to the remote state of Arunachal Pradesh, which China claims, saying China opposed any activities by Indian leaders in disputed areas. — Reuters

“  
Drone on training mission developed technical problems”

## India’s Modi fights to protect home base in election

**NEW DELHI:** Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi was in the final phase of campaigning yesterday to retain power in his home state and stave off the most serious challenge yet from a combined opposition.

The election for a new legislature in the western state of Gujarat this weekend is turning out to be a greater challenge for Modi than anticipated, the polls show, as rival parties seize on discontent caused by a slowing economy. Gujarat is where Modi earned his spurs as a business-friendly chief minister who cut red tape and graft and turned it into an economic powerhouse.

But an unpopular national tax and a shock move last year to withdraw most currency in a fight against graft has hurt Gujarat, like the rest of the country, and its businessmen are making loud complaints. Three big polls carried out in the run-up to the vote on Saturday and next week have predicted a victory for Modi’s ruling Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) but with a greatly reduced majority.

An ABP-CDS poll this week gave the BJP 91-99 seats in the 182-member state house and the main opposition Congress 78-86, suggesting a close fight. To win a



**AHMEDABAD:** Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi (centre right) shaking hands with a local Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) candidate before addressing a rally at Surendranagar, some 130 km from Ahmedabad. —AFP

party needs 92 seats.

The surveys have often gone wrong, though, and Modi himself remains far more popular across the country than his rivals including Rahul Gandhi who is leading the Congress charge to weaken Modi in his home base. Modi has thrown himself into the campaign, addressing dozens of rallies over the past month, saying he alone could deliver on development. On Thursday, he was due to address party colleagues on their mobile phones to ensure a strong voter turnout.

Amit Shah, the president of the BJP, said the party had full confidence in Modi’s ability to deliver an emphatic victory.

“He knows that only an absolute majority in Gujarat polls will legitimize his reforms and silence critics,” Shah said. Votes from the election will be counted on Dec.18 and the results announced the same day.

Gujarati businesses - who form the core of Modi’s support base - have complained about the new Goods and Services Tax as aggravating tough economic conditions.

Jagdish Desai, a sanitary ware manufacturer, said the complex tax procedures had come on top of slowing demand and he had to fire 3,000 workers.

“Modi will have to pay a political price for our financial distress.” — Reuters

## Rohingya refugee crisis a ‘grave security risk’, ICG warns

**YANGON:** Prolonged displacement of Rohingya refugees in squalid Bangladeshi camps poses a “grave security risk”, conflict analysts ICG warned yesterday, raising the specter of militants recruiting among the displaced and launching cross-border attacks on Myanmar. Raids by the Arakan Rohingya Salvation Army (ARSA) on August 25 sparked the vicious Myanmar army response which has forced more than 620,000 Rohingya to flee Rakhine state for Bangladesh.

ARSA “appears determined to regroup and remain relevant” and may draw on desperate Rohingya refugees languishing in camps for future operations, the ICG International Crisis Group said in the report. The group may “shift to cross-border attacks” using Bangladesh as a base for recruitment and training, the study said, cautioning the risk of an ever-deepening cycle of violence is all too real.

“Such attacks would have profoundly negative consequences,” straining Myanmar-Bangladesh relations and worsening contempt for the Rohingya “that would further diminish prospects of an eventual refugee return”.

Global outcry over the refugee crisis, one of the worst in recent history, has triggered a hyper-defensive response inside the country, where anti-Rohingya attitudes have hardened since ARSA’s emergence. Myanmar does not recognize the Rohingya as a distinct ethnic group eligible for citizenship, instead calling them “Bengali”, suggesting they are illegal immigrants. In another serious looming risk, ICG warned that Rohingya’s plight has become a “cause celebre of the Muslim world” with Al-Qaeda, Islamic State and other global jihadi groups calling for attacks on Myanmar. — AFP

## International

# N Korea says US threats make war unavoidable

## China says war is not the answer and urges calm

**SEOUL:** Two American B-1B heavy bombers joined large-scale combat drills over South Korea on Thursday amid warnings from North Korea that the exercises and US threats have made the outbreak of war “an established fact”.

The annual US-South Korean “Vigilant Ace” exercises feature 230 aircraft, including a range of the US military’s most advanced stealth warplanes, and come a week after North Korea tested its most powerful intercontinental ballistic missile (ICBM) to date which it says can reach the mainland United States.

A spokesman for the North’s foreign ministry blamed the drills and “confrontational war-mongering” by US officials for making war inevitable. “The remain-

ing question now is: when will the war break out?” the spokesman said late on Wednesday in a statement carried by North Korea’s official KCNA news agency. “We do not wish for a war but shall not hide from it.” China, North Korea’s neighbor and lone major ally, again urged calm and said war was not the answer.

“We hope all relevant parties can maintain calm and restraint and take steps to alleviate tensions and not provoke each other,” Chinese

Foreign Ministry spokesman Geng Shuang said in a statement.

“The outbreak of war is not in any side’s interest. The ones that will suffer the most are ordinary people.” Tensions on the Korean peninsula have risen markedly in recent months after North Korea’s latest missile and nuclear tests, conducted in defiance of UN Security Council resolutions and international condemnation.

### Strategic bombers

On Wednesday, a US B-1B bomber flew from the Pacific US-administered territory of Guam to join the exercises, which will run until today. The flights by the B-1B, one of America’s largest strike aircraft, have

### Two US B-1B bombers join air drills



played a leading role in Washington’s attempts to increase pressure on North Korea to abandon its weapons programs.

In September, B-1Bs were among a formation of US military aircraft that flew further north up North Korea’s coast than at any time in the past 17 years, according to the US Pacific Command. That prompted North Korea’s foreign minister, Ri Yong Ho, to warn that the North could shoot down the US bombers even if they did not enter



**PYONGYANG:** North Korean senior ruling party leader Ri Su-Yong (third right) talks with Jeffrey Feltman (3rd L), the UN’s undersecretary general for political affairs, at Mansudae Assembly Hall in Pyongyang yesterday.—AFP

North Korean airspace. “B-1B bombers have been regularly dispatched to the Korean peninsula over the past years; however, it seems that the US Air Force might have enhanced its training to better prepare for actual warfare,” said Yang Uk, a senior fellow at the Korea Defence and Security Forum.

While B-1Bs are no longer equipped to carry nuclear weapons of their own, they would be key to any strike targeting major North Korean facilities, he said. “That’s why North Korea has been making such a big deal when B-1B bombers are flying overhead.” —Reuters

## Malaysian PM puts party on war footing before polls

**KUALA LUMPUR:** Malaysian Prime Minister Najib Razak put his party on a war footing yesterday as polls loom, vowing to “fight till the end” despite a massive financial scandal that has rocked his government.

The leader told the annual assembly of his United Malays National Organization (UMNO) — which has ruled Muslim-majority Malaysia for six decades at the head of a coalition—that the country was facing a “crucial election”. “In this battle we fight till the end, in this election we will emerge victorious”, he told thousands of cheering delegates wearing the red colors of his party in Kuala Lumpur.

He also took a swipe at veteran former premier Mahathir Mohamad, who has come out of retirement in a bid to try to oust his government, comparing him to toppled Zimbabwe leader Robert Mugabe. Elections must be called by August at the latest. Najib did not hint at a date in his speech but speculation is swirling that they will be take place early next year. Najib’s chances of winning a third term have been dented by explosive graft allegations. Billions were looted from the IMDB sovereign wealth fund that he founded in complex overseas deals which are being investigated in several countries.

Both Najib, who made no mention of the scandal during Thursday’s speech, and the fund deny any wrongdoing. The US Justice Department has led the charge in tackling the alleged pillaging, launching lawsuits through which it is seeking to re-



**KUALA LUMPUR:** Malaysia’s Prime Minister Najib Razak (center) inspects a ceremonial guard of honor during the annual congress of his ruling party, the United Malays National Organization (UMNO), in Kuala Lumpur yesterday.—AFP

cover \$1.7 billion in assets thought to have been purchased with looted money, from artwork to high-end real estate. This week US Attorney General Jeff Sessions told a conference in Washington that the IMDB scandal was “kleptocracy at its worst”.

### Election race upended

The election race has also been upended by the emergence of Mahathir, who led Malaysia for 22 years, as a key figure in the main opposition alliance. The 92-year-old has teamed up with his former nemesis, Anwar Ibrahim, a jailed opposition leader and one of the country’s most charismatic politicians. In his speech at the UMNO gathering, the most closely watched event in Malaysia’s political calendar, Najib, 64, accused Mahathir of having “crossed the line” by uniting with former political foes. He said it was strange there were still people willing to be led by Mahathir, adding that “former Zimbabwe president Mugabe, who is the same age as him, has now been rejected by his own people”. —AFP

## China, accused of abuses, hosts human rights forum

**BEIJING:** China touted its political and development model as it hosted an inaugural global human rights forum yesterday, even as activists slammed the country’s own abuses. President Xi Jinping has overseen a sweeping crackdown on civil society since taking power in 2012, targeting everyone from human rights lawyers to celebrity gossip bloggers.

Hundreds of activists have been detained in the past five years while internet censorship has intensified. And China became the first country since Nazi Germany to allow a Nobel Peace Prize laureate to die in state custody when democracy activist Liu Xiaobo succumbed to liver cancer under heavy police guard in July.

But some 300 participants gathered in Beijing’s Great Hall of the People to hear about the country’s “human rights development path with Chinese characteristics” at the South-South Human Rights Forum.

Some attendees came from countries with their own checkered human rights record. “There’s no one size fits all approach in human rights practices,” said Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi. “No one is in a position to lecture others on human rights.” He highlighted China’s achievements in poverty reduction as an example of the country’s efforts to improve rights. Beijing says it has reduced its poverty rate to four percent and seeks to eradicate poverty by 2020.—AFP

FRIDAY, DECEMBER 8, 2017

# LifeStyle

[www.kuwaittimes.net](http://www.kuwaittimes.net)

African penguins clad in Christmas-themed costumes go for a stroll with their keeper at Hakkeijima Sea Paradise amusement park in Yokohama, a suburb of Tokyo.— AFP

**Santa's creepy chum gives  
Austrians a scary thrill**

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## Sirb Al-Hamam competes at Delhi International Film Festival



Photo shows director Ramadhan Khasrouh (center) with Kuwaiti actor Dawoud Husain (right) and Cynarist Razi Al-Shatti.



Photo shows director Ramadhan Khasrouh.

Kuwaiti film 'Sirb Al-Hamam' (The Pigeon Flock) will be screened at the Delhi International Film Festival in India under the Arab film category. Kuwait will compete with 20 films from all over the Arab world, including Tunisia, Morocco, Algeria, Iraq, Palestine, Jordan, Syria and Lebanon. The event takes place on Sunday. The film's director 'Ramadhan' said that this participation is very important given the importance of the Indian movie industry.

The full and continuous support of Sheikha Intesar Salem Al-Ali Al-Sabah for the film from the beginning has become evident through the festival's interest in the participation of the film for its quality and professionalism in the film industry. 'Sirb Al-Hamam' is expected to participate in more than six international festivals in the coming period.

### 'Twilight Zone' series gets third reboot by top US comic

Are you ready to re-enter "The Twilight Zone?" US television channel CBS announced Wednesday it will resurrect the science-fiction series, in a bid to boost its subscription-based streaming platform CBS All Access. Comedian-turned-director Jordan Peele-known for directing mystery thriller "Get Out," which is heading into awards season-will helm the reboot. First broadcast in 1959, "The Twilight Zone" was a pioneer in television drama, known for its suspenseful music composed by French-Romanian Marius Constant and the black-and-white spiral of the credits.



The series had no regular characters: each episode was instead a standalone exploration of fantasy, science-fiction, psychology and metaphysics, with dramatic tension always at the forefront. However, the series did have an omnipresent narrator-portrayed by the show's writer, Rod Serling. "The Twilight Zone" also featured performances from several film stars—from Buster Keaton to Robert Redford, along with the likes of Mickey Rooney, Lee Van Cleef and William Shatner.

It served as inspiration for several other shows, including Charlie Brooker's "Black Mirror" (Netflix), itself a hit offering unsettling, satirical explorations of the modern world. It has already been remade twice, broadcast from 1985 to 1989 on CBS and again between 2002 and 2003 on the cable channel UPN. Director and actor Peele will serve as executive producer on this third revival, alongside Simon Kinberg, best known for his work on the "X-Men" franchise.

Peele made an impression as a director with his first film, "Get Out," released in February. Despite a \$4.5 million budget, the critically acclaimed tale of a young black man meeting his white girlfriend's sweet-turned-sinister family earned \$175 million—with takings of \$254 million internationally. "Too many times this year it's felt we were living in a twilight zone, he said. "I can't think of a better moment to reintroduce it to modern audiences." —AFP

## Rian Johnson expanding 'Star Wars' for new trilogy



(From left) Director Rian Johnson, actors Mark Hamill, Daisy Ridley, Adam Driver, Oscar Isaac, John Boyega, Kelly Marie Tran, Laura Dern, Domhnall Gleeson, Gwendoline Christie and Andy Serkis attend the press conference for the highly anticipated Star Wars: The Last Jedi at InterContinental Los Angeles in Los Angeles, California. —AFP photos

As "Star Wars" fans gear up for "The Last Jedi," the anticipated next installment in the Skywalker series, its star and writer-director shed some light on how the franchise was mapping a future beyond the beloved characters. Rian Johnson, writer-director of "The Last Jedi," will be overseeing a new trilogy of "Star Wars" films that will explore far-away corners of the galaxy, Walt Disney Co said in November. "I'm just in the very beginning phases of coming up with it so right now the sky is kind of the limit," Johnson said while promoting "The Last Jedi" last week.

"The appeal of it to me is to do a new story told over three movies, to have that kind of canvas, to be in the Star Wars world

and to have the feel of a Star Wars film," he said. The new stories will not follow the Skywalker saga, which George Lucas kicked off with 1977's "Episode IV: A New Hope."

Disney purchased Lucasfilm in 2012 for \$4 billion, and rebooted the "Star Wars" franchise with the Skywalker trilogy and standalone films like "Rogue One: A Star Wars Story." Johnson's "The Last Jedi" picks up the Skywalker story after 2015's blockbuster "The Force Awakens," in which a new generation of characters was introduced with returning favorites Han Solo (Harrison Ford), Princess Leia (Carrie Fisher) and Luke Skywalker (Mark Hamill). Fisher died last year. —Reuters



African migrants (from left) Yaya from Senegal, Mohamed from Guinea-Conakry, Bassirou from Burkina Faso, Bakari from Ivory Coast, Issa from Burkina Faso and Sekou from Ivory Coast, show some of the bags they made at the "Lai-Momo" headquarters. — AFP photos



Photo shows bags made by migrants at the "Lai-Momo" headquarters.

# From Libya's migrant hell to Italy's handbag fashion world



Employees of the Parisian subway company RATP, rename the Duroc subway station to 'Durock Johnny' in tribute to late French singer Johnny Hallyday. — AFP

## Paris renames metro station after rock star Johnny Hallyday

Paris transport bosses have renamed a metro station after the legendary French rock star Johnny Hallyday, whose death has plunged France into mourning. As speculation mounted that the singer will be given a state funeral, the RATP transport authority paid its own homage by temporarily changing the name of the Duroc station near Invalides where Napoleon is buried to "DuRock Johnny". Known as the "French Elvis", Hallyday, 74, lost his long battle with lung cancer on Wednesday.

Adored by young and old, hard-living Hallyday was almost a national monument, selling more than 110 million records despite being almost unknown outside the French-speaking world. Television channels cleared their schedules to broadcast tribute shows to the star who first came to fame in late 1950s yet managed to cleverly adapt to changing musical styles. President Emmanuel Macron led the mourning by declaring that "there is something of Johnny in all of us", and his officials said he and his wife Brigitte would attend the funeral.

Speculation is rife that Hallyday, who survived a tough childhood after being abandoned by his alcoholic father, will be given a full state funeral, complete with a procession down the Champs Elysees, the grand ceremonial avenue of the French capital—an honor usually reserved for France's greatest heroes. — AFP

From forced labor in Libya to a job as a founding member of an Italian fashion start-up, Bassirou has come a long way in two years, thanks to his skills with scissors. The 26-year-old Burkina Faso native is the star student of a novel project aimed at training asylum seekers in one of Italy's most emblematic crafts: making leather handbags. And after a 15-month apprenticeship, Bassirou has just become the first employee of a small company set up with the aim of turning the project into a self-sustaining venture.

"It is a great opportunity," he says of his new career move. "I had done a bit of cutting and sewing back home but that was with cloth, not leather." "It wasn't easy at the start, every little thing seemed difficult, but after a certain point, you get the hang of it." Bassirou left Burkina Faso in west Africa, and a partner then pregnant with his now two-year-old daughter, in 2015. He says he fled because he feared for his life in the tumultuous aftermath of yet another military coup in the impoverished former French colony.

Now he is awaiting the outcome of his application for asylum in Italy and is one of some 400 recently-arrived immigrants being looked after by Lai-Momo, a social cooperative that runs the EU-funded leather skills project in the small town of Lama Di Reno near Bologna. The decision to leave home was not an easy one, Bassirou says, and it is one he might have reconsidered had he known of the horrors that awaited him in Libya, the jumping off point for most Africans trying to get to Europe.

### 'It's slavery'

Shocking recent images of slave auctions in the troubled north African state came as no surprise. "These are things that are really happening in Libya," Bassirou told AFP TV. "I had a bit of a taste of it. They put us in a prison. At any time they could come and get us to do forced labor, all sorts of jobs. They never gave us enough to eat. "All that, it's slavery," he said. Bassirou endured these conditions for four months before the traffickers controlling his fate finally put him onto an inflatable dinghy packed with over 100 others. After many fraught hours at sea, mostly spent praying

it would not sink, the overcrowded dinghy was spotted by a British ship.

"At the moment we were rescued there was a bit of a stampede to get off and the boat started taking on water. In the end they got everyone off." The date, March 20, 2016, is etched permanently in his memory. "These are things you don't forget easily," he says. Now he dreams of being able to open his own shop, but the future path of his life remains uncertain, as is the case for tens of thousands like him in overcrowded reception centers across Italy.



Issa, a migrant from Burkina Faso, works on a sewing machine with the help of a volunteer at the "Lai-Momo" headquarters.

Few of them will benefit from the kind of support that has helped Bassirou pursue his education to Italian high school level, or the distraction from the stress that comes with living in limbo. "Doing this (working), you are going to have positive rather than negative thoughts, you're thinking that when you're finished, you'll have a trade," he says.

### 'Return issue not easy'

A total of 15 migrants have completed the first round of training and another 18 have just started, including Bassirou's compatriot, Issa. The 21-year-old recounts a similar tale about his time in Libya. "I have friends who are still there in slave camps," Issa says. Having made it to Italy, he is now relieved to have escaped the frustrated

boredom that is the lot of many asylum seekers. "Before I came here, I was in another house, just sleeping all the time, doing nothing," he says. "Now I feel much more relaxed. I have contact with (local) people and I'm beginning to learn the language." Not all the apprentices can realistically aspire to the proficiency Bassirou has attained. As some have limited literacy and numeracy, lessons in cutting have to be preceded by an introduction to basic concepts of measuring and geometry. "The objective is to provide people with the

ability and skills they need

to enter the labor market here in Italy, but also in the event of a possible return to their country of origin," said Lai-Momo's president, Andrea Marchesini Reggiani.

The Lama Di Reno project is part of a wider program overseen by the Ethical Fashion Initiative run by the United Nations and WTO-backed International Trade Centre with the aim of creating new economic opportunities in developing countries to help curb irregular migration. People like Bassirou say going home is not an option they can contemplate, for now. And Marchesini Reggiani admits that the emphasis on voluntary repatriations can be problematic, given the risks, sacrifices and struggles involved in many migrants' journeys to Europe. — AFP



A Neapolitan pizza maker takes out of the oven a pizza celebrating the Unesco decision to make the art of Neapolitan 'Pizzaiuolo' an 'intangible heritage' at the Pizzeria Brandi in Naples.



Members of the Pizzaioli Acrobats Coldiretti perform 'twirling' pizza to celebrate the Unesco decision to make the art of Neapolitan 'Pizzaiuolo' an 'intangible heritage' in Naples.

## Naples pizza twirling wins coveted UNESCO 'intangible' status



A pizza maker prepares a pizza at the pizzeria Sorbillo in Naples.



A pizza maker prepares a pizza at the pizzeria Sorbillo in Naples.



A pizza maker works at the pizzeria Sorbillo in Naples.

Naples' pizza twirling joined UNESCO's list of "intangible heritage" yesterday, securing the coveted status alongside a host of cultural treasures including a Saudi art form traditionally practiced only by women. The art of 'pizzaiuolo'-which has been handed down for generations in the southern Italian city-was given the nod by the UN cultural body's World Heritage Committee, who met on the South Korean island of Jeju. It comes after some two million people signed a petition to support Naples' application, according to Sergio Miccu, head of the Association of Neapolitan Pizzaiuoli-no doubt buoyed by his offer of complimentary pizza if the age-old culinary tradition joined the prestigious list.

"We'll be giving out free pizza in the streets," Miccu earlier told AFP. The custom goes far beyond the pizzaiuolo's spectacular handling of the dough-hurling it into the air in order to "oxygenate" it-to include songs and stories that have turned pizza-making into a time-honored social ritual. "Victory!" Maurizio Martina, Italy's minister for agriculture, food and forestry, wrote on Twitter. "Another step towards the protection of Italy's food and wine heritage." In a statement, Martina said the recognition came after a years-long campaign. "The art of the Neapolitan pizza-maker contains Italian know-how ... especially traditional knowledge that has been transmitted from generation to generation," he said.

Alfonso Pecoraro Scanio, a former agriculture minister who attended the proceedings in Jeju, said in a video posted on Twitter: "Long live the art of Neapolitan pizzaiuolo!" The pizza's humble ancestor, a plain affair usually tarted up with a bit of lard,

initially emerged as a cheap, easy and fast way to feed the city's army of poor, said historian Antonio Mattozzi. But despite being an immediate hit with the locals, pizza failed to take off outside the city at first, Mattozzi told AFP.

It took Queen Margherita's love of the classic tomato, mozzarella and basil version to fire up the imagination and taste buds of diners far and wide-at least that is how the story goes. Hoping to win

the hearts of the commoners, the Italian queen asked in 1889 to try their favorite dish. And while she was unconvinced by anchovy and Parmesan-topped versions, the basil delight won her over.

### Saving tradition

Thirty-four candidates were in the running to join UNESCO's list of intangible heritage, created in 2003 mainly to raise awareness, although the

agency also sometimes offers financial or technical support to countries struggling to protect their traditions. The list already included more than 350 traditions, art forms and practices from Spain's flamenco dancing to Indonesian batik fabrics, to more obscure entries such as a Turkish oil wrestling festival and the Mongolian coaxing ritual for camels.

Saudi Arabia was among those celebrating on Jeju, claiming the tag for Al-Qatt Al-Asin-elaborate interior wall paintings traditionally done by women. The art, which promotes solidarity among women, is handed down through observation. Bangladesh claimed victory with its tradition of Shital Pati, an intricate weaving craft using strips of green cane to produce mats and bedspreads.

Another winner was the traditional horseback game of Kok Boru in Kyrgyzstan, where players score points by putting a goal's carcass in an opponent's goal-though the dead animal is replaced with a mould in the modern-day version. An array of traditions struggling to survive will also be given special support after being placed on an "urgent safeguarding list". These include a whistled language that developed in Turkey as a way to communicate across steep mountains and rugged topography but is now threatened by mobile phones.

Morocco will also get help to protect Taskiwina-a martial dance that developed in the western High Atlas mountain range and involves shaking one's shoulders to the rhythm of tambourines and flutes. UNESCO said globalization and young people's rejection of traditional heritage had driven the practice "closer to oblivion". — AFP



Neapolitan pizza makers Antonio Starita (second right), Gino Sorbillo (second left), Enzo Coccia (left) and another man (right) pose with a pizza under the statue of Pulcinella, a symbol of Naples. — AFP photos

# Santa's creepy chum gives Austrians a scary thrill



Participants perform during a procession of 'Krampus' monsters in Schwadorf.

Austrian financial adviser Ernst Eigner is ugly and scary. But only in his "Krampus" costume with red glowing eyes and horns to frighten naughty children and "evil spirits". His troupe is just one of an estimated 850, with 10,000 members around Austria marauding through towns and villages over the Christmas period in "Krampuslauf" parades. "We are spreading the tradition of scaring away evil spirits," Eigner told AFP as he donned his outfit before one such event in Schwadorf near Vienna. "Just symbolically though of course," he said, resplendent in his shaggy Roman centurion-cum-zombie costume, animal bones dangling here and there.

It starts off innocently, with Santa—or rather Saint Nicholas—giving out sweets. But fear is in the air because soon come his satanic sidekicks, dozens of them. Wave after wave bound in, stomping around a roaring fire that sends sparks into the night sky, clanging cow bells attached to their backs and brandishing whips and blazing red flares. With heavy metal blaring, the several hundred spectators in the market town watch behind safety barriers as the demonic creatures prowl around menacingly, leering at the public.

But apart from one tearful little girl, everyone has fun. The monsters high-five with kids as they slope off back to their lair—actually the local school—to get changed. "We are trying to make it look brutal but our whips are only made of horse hair," Eigner assures us. "People can hardly feel it if we hit them."



## Black angels and orcs

It's a booming trend, with ever more groups springing up to satisfy a seemingly insatiable demand, and not just in Austria but in southern Germany and further afield too. One of Austria's biggest parades, in Schladming south of Salzburg, involves some 800 monsters and attracts 8,000 spectators paying 12-15 euros (\$14-18) per adult. Yet, while it may be inspired by past customs, the phenomenon has moved and evolved far beyond its supposed origins in the remote valleys of the Alps. Head-to-hoof in dark fur with horns, a tail and a lolling red tongue, from the 16th century Krampus traditionally appeared on December 5, the eve of Saint Nicholas

Day. "Children would be tested on religious knowledge by Saint Nicholas. He would reward them but couldn't punish them. That was Krampus's job," ethnologist Helga Maria Wolf told AFP. "Even into the 1960s, the pair would visit families on request," she said. "Perchten" meanwhile, figures of good and evil whose origins are possibly pagan, would emerge in early January or in the carnival season before Lent, the Christian period of fasting. Traditional Perchten processions still exist, such as in Gastein in western Austria where 140 creatures from mythology and legend "drive out winter" every four years. But in recent decades, Krampus and Perchten have merged into hybrids, incorporating other influences from

horror movies to heavy metal music, and appearing from early November onwards. In Schwadorf there was Death himself and an assortment of witches, monks, red-faced Satans, black angels and other beasts resembling "Lord of the Rings" orcs.

## Confronting fears

Every Krampus season however, Austrian newspapers are full of stories about drunken young men dressed up as monsters causing injuries and mayhem. In one such recent event in the town of Voelkermarkt, police were called after at least six people were injured, reportedly after two rival Krampus groups clashed. One therapist near Salzburg, Andrea Hammerer, runs a yearly seminar helping people who are scared to go outdoors at this time of year.

"The sound of the bells goes right to the unconscious," Hammerer told AFP. "We get people to confront their fears, we bring in people dressed up as Krampus." Krampus performers say spectators can be the problem, grabbing their horns and throwing beer to wind them up. Some groups held a demo in Klagenfurt recently to protest against negative media coverage. But a whiff of danger is perhaps also part of the fun. "There's a nice word for it—'angstlust'," the pleasure of fear, Wolf said. "People love rollercoasters for example. There's a kind of comforting frisson about it." "When I was little I was a tiny bit scared," said Lukas, 13, getting ready in Schwadorf to appear in his Krampus disguise. "But then I became one." — AFP

## Skydiving Santa crashes on Florida beach with Elf on a Shelf

A skydiving Santa looking to make a grand entrance while taking an Elf on the Shelf to a 9-year-old girl crashed into a tree and light pole before hitting a Florida beach and breaking his leg. News outlets say George Krokus was dressed as Santa Claus during a Saturday skydive to deliver toys to the Tampa Bay Beach Bums Operation Santa Charity Volleyball Tournament.

Madison Spiers saw the crash and later found a note from the "elf" named Kristoff who visits her house during the holidays. It said, "As we were about to land this big tree jumped right out in front of us!" She tells Bay News 9 that Kristoff is no stranger to adventure. The elf sported a bandaged leg while staying with the recovering Krokus. — AP

A keeper clad in a Santa Claus costume feeds Magellanic penguins in a water tank as part of Christmas events at Hakkeijima Sea Paradise amusement park in Yokohama, a suburb of Tokyo. —AFP





Young surfer Rickson Falcao, 10, rides a wave at Saquarema's beach in Rio de Janeiro state, Brazil.



Young surfer Rickson Falcao, 10, rides a wave at Saquarema's beach in Rio de Janeiro state. — AFP photos

## New generation of Brazilians aims at world surf glory

Slightly built and aged just 10, Rickson Falcao looks no match for the waves crashing onto Brazil's Atlantic coast, but within seconds of launching his board, the kid surfer is transformed. Waves rise and curl and foam and in the middle of them the tiny figure of Falcao on his shortboard swoops about like a dolphin. "He has no fear. He'll surf anything," says lifeguard Flavio Souza, 23, watching Falcao cross himself, then paddle through the booming water off the beach in Saquarema, east of Rio de Janeiro.

Brazilians have been surfing for decades. In the last few years, though, they've got scarily good. The sudden influx of talent even has its own name—the "Brazilian storm." It's a storm led by superstar Gabriel Medina who blew down the doors of the sport's elite club dominated by US, Hawaiian and Australian athletes when he became World Surf League champion in 2014. The next year it was the turn of another Brazilian, Adriano de Souza, and today, 12 out of the top 44 in the rankings are from Brazil, something unimaginable just a short time ago.

Medina will get another shot at the crown when he tries to dethrone Hawaiian John John Florence at the Billabong Pipe Masters starting in Hawaii this Friday—the last event in the 2017 championship. And if anyone in the traditional surfing bastions still hopes that the "Brazilian storm" will dissipate, they'd be advised to check the forecast coming out of Saquarema. Falcao, who lives and goes to school next to the water, and spends half of every day surfing, began when he was two. He's now racking up age-group trophies, as are several of his beach buddies—and is remarkably focused. "He has the

psychology of an athlete. That's very important," says his mother Rejane Falcao, 37, who doubles as coach and manager and PR agent. The tousle-haired boy, sitting in his tiny home, surrounded by trophies, doesn't sound remotely big-headed when he describes his dream in a quiet voice: "My dream? To be world surfing champion." And along Saquarema beach, where Medina is considered an idol, he's not the only one. "Most of us, all of us who surf, want to be world champion," he said.

### Cradle of champions

Despite its vast Atlantic coastline, Brazil has few areas with world class surfing waves. Until recently,

it also had only a small middle class with the means to travel. One traditional hotspot has always been near Sao Paulo, where Medina is based. The other is Saquarema, a sleepy seaside city famous for a beautiful church on a rocky promontory, dividing two long beaches—each lashed by consistently good breaks. Locals call Saquarema the Maracana of Brazilian surfing, referring to football's grand temple in Rio de Janeiro. Where New York is synonymous with yellow cabs and university cities are often crowded with students on bicycles, in Saquarema you quickly get used to people of all ages wandering down streets with a surfboard under their arm.

At the core of that local culture is Luiz Augusto

de Matos, a burly retired firefighter who opened the Saquarema Surf School in 1990 and dedicated himself to turning generations of toddlers into wave wizards. Today he has 30 students. Alumni range from Alessandra Vieira, the 1994 world amateur champion at the age of 14, to elite surfer Raoni Monteiro. One of Brazil's most promising young female surfers on the junior circuit, Carol Bonelli, also grew up in Saquarema, although she trains with Medina. "All these kids have a future," Matos, 50, said. "Our project is to take them small and to raise them. Rickson (Falcao) is another one. It's a cradle of champions."

### Brazilian 'avalanche'

The "Brazilian storm" lacks the financial heft powering Australia, Hawaii and mainland US competitors. With Brazil only just coming out of deep recession and the Rio state government struggling to pay even for basic services, de Matos and other enthusiasts rely largely on love for the sport. Even exceptional athletes like Medina, he said, "carry Brazil-Brazil doesn't carry them." But there are signs of change. Rickson Falcao's mother said he now receives 500 reais (\$155) a month from the federal government's sports subsidy program known as "bolsa atleta."

And this year the Saquarema surf school teamed up with a local gym dedicated to specialized surfer training. The atmosphere in the facility—where you can strengthen specific muscles used in paddling or practice balancing on wobbly boards—is a long way from the laid back image associated from the old hippy days of surfing. — AFP



Diego Souza (right), 8, exercises with the assistance of his surfing teacher David Santos, 38, at the "Inside Fit" surf training center.

## OUSTED MISS TURKEY FACES 'UP TO ONE YEAR JAIL' OVER TWEET

The winner of Turkey's national beauty pageant, who was forced to hand back her crown over a contentious tweet, is facing up to one year in jail on charges of "publicly denigrating" elements in Turkish society, a report said yesterday. Itir Esen, 18, won Miss Turkey 2017 in September but then had her crown taken away because of what organizers said an "unacceptable tweet" she sent around the first anniversary of the July 15, 2016 coup attempt. As a result, she missed the chance to represent Turkey in the Miss World competition

in China and prosecutors also opened a criminal probe against her. In the tweet, she compared the blood shed in her menstrual cycle with that of the 249 people who lost their lives during the failed coup and are now celebrated in Turkey as martyrs. "I am having my period this morning to celebrate the July 15 martyrs' day. I am celebrating the day by bleeding on behalf of our martyrs' blood," she wrote. Turkish prosecutors are seeking up to one year jail for Esen on charges of "publicly denigrating some part of society based on their class, race, religion,

sect, gender or regional differences," the private Dogan news agency quoted the indictment as saying.

An Istanbul court is due to decide whether to approve the indictment within 15 days, Dogan said. After the tweet was discovered, Esen's title was handed to Asli Sumen, who came second and who will now represent Turkey in the Miss World contest in China on November 18. Esen had confirmed she posted the tweet which she said was written "carelessly" but added that it had no political aims. Critics say the state of

freedom of expression is deteriorating in Turkey under President Recep Tayyip Erdogan as thousands have been prosecuted for social media postings deemed to have insulted the Turkish leader since he came to office in 2014.

Prosecutors in 2015 launched an investigation against former Miss Turkey beauty queen Merve Buyuksarac on charges of insulting Erdogan through social media posts. But her 14-month sentence was suspended on condition that she does not reoffend within the next five years. —AFP



# The 'Rat Eaters' of Bihar: India's poorest people?



A member of the Musahar community roasting a rat at Alampur Gonpura village in the eastern Indian state of Bihar. — AFP photos



A member of the Musahar community holding a rat at Alampur Gonpura village.



A boy of the Musahar community eating roasted rat.

The rat kept crawling over Phekan Manjhi's arm as he battled to pin it to the ground before he eventually managed to kill it with repeated blows to the head. The execution drew applause from neighbors huddled around the 60-year-old in a grimy courtyard outside his mud and straw hut. Another meal lined up for the Rat Eaters—some of India's poorest people. Phekan said it would take 15 minutes to prepare the rat stew, as he dissected the animal with his fingernails.

"Almost everyone here loves this and knows how it's prepared," he added. Phekan is one of about 2.5 million Musahars—'Rat Eaters'—one of India's most marginalized communities. Even the browbeaten low-caste Dalits look down on them. "They are the poorest amongst the poorest and rarely hear about or get access to government schemes," said Sudha Varghese, who spent three-decades working among Musahars in the northern state of Bihar, where most live and survive as dollar-a-day laborers.

## Rat eater minister

"It's a daily struggle for the next meal and diseases like leprosy are an everyday reality," added Varghese, who was awarded India's top civilian honor for her work. Phekan's neighbor in the village of Alampur Gonpura, 28-year-old Rakesh Manjhi, bemoaned his life. "We sit at home all day with nothing to do. Some days we get work at the farm, on

other days we go hungry or catch rats and eat it with whatever little grain we can get," Rakesh said. "Governments may have changed but nothing has changed for us. We still eat, live and sleep as our ancestors," said Phekan as he took the roasted rat off the fire and poked the tender meat.

He cut the flesh with his hands into a bowl and added mustard oil and salt. The feast disappeared in seconds as a dozen men and half-naked children grabbed what they could. "Nothing but education can change our lives and future," said Jitan Ram Manjhi, who in 2014 became the first Musahar chief minister of any Indian state. His nine-month tenure heading Bihar, one of India's most populous states, is considered a huge achievement for the Musahars. "My community is so down-trodden that I think even government records don't yet show its real numbers, which could easily be around eight million," Jitan Ram added.

## Training for life

As a child, the former minister herded cattle for a rich landowner who employed his parents as laborers. "They were almost like bonded laborers, getting one kilogram of grain for each day's work. Even today, things haven't changed much for many," he added. Well-intentioned programs are often privately-run-like the Shoshit Samadhan Kendra residential school for Musahar boys on the outskirts of the state capital Putna. "I

started the school around a decade back with only four students and today it has 430, from remote Musahar communities across the state," founder JK Sinha told AFP. He discovered how Musahars live while on a police raid as a young officer four decades ago. "They were cramped in a small hut with pigs and the filth. It was shocking. Inhumane. I can't forget it," Sinha said.

RU Khan, the school principal, said the Musahars face discrimination, seclusion and squalor wherever they gather. "Most still only work as farm laborers who are forced to catch rats or snails in fields and scavenge for grain if the crop fails," Khan said. Out of 430 pupils at Shoshit Samadhan Kendra, 117 lost their fathers at an early age. "Once here, it takes us at least a month to teach them the most basic personal and social skills-like using toilets, personal hygiene, washing hands or eating food," Khan said.

The regular education only starts after. But once given a chance, the boys are proud to get the opportunity to improve their lives. Bihar's Welfare Department Minister Ramesh Rishidev insisted that life has improved for the Musahars.

"We've been working hard with the different communities, which includes the Musahars," the minister said. "Our workers go to the communities to get their young enrolled in schools. They are linked to government skills and training projects to get them employment opportunities," he added. — AFP

## Da Vinci sold for \$450 mn is headed to Louvre Abu Dhabi



Christie's employees pose in front of a painting entitled *Salvator Mundi* by Italian polymath Leonardo da Vinci at a photocall at Christie's auction house in central London on October 22, 2017 ahead of its sale at Christie's New York. — AFP

'*Salvator Mundi*,' a painting of Christ by Leonardo Da Vinci that recently sold for a record \$450 million, is heading to the Louvre Abu Dhabi in a coup for the bold new museum, it announced Wednesday. The move became possible after a little-known Saudi price reportedly bought the painting last month. The Louvre Abu Dhabi, the first museum to bear the Louvre name outside France, has been billed as "the first universal museum in the Arab world," in a sign of the oil-rich emirate's global ambitions.

"Da Vinci's *Salvator Mundi* is coming to #LouvreAbuDhabi," the museum said on Twitter in Arabic, English and French. The post displayed an image of the 500-year-old work but did not identify its owner. Auction house Christie's has also steadfastly declined to identify the buyer, whose purchase in New York for \$450.3 million stunned the art world. "Congratulations," Christie's said in a tweeted reply to the Louvre Abu Dhabi.

The New York Times on Wednesday, citing documents it reviewed, identified the buyer as Saudi Arabia's Prince Bader bin Abdullah bin Mohammed bin Farhan al-Saud, whose country forbids the official worship of Christ or any other religion except Islam. Prince Bader has no history as a major art collector but is a friend and associate of Saudi Arabia's powerful Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman, the Times said. Prince Mohammed, in turn, has been called an admirer of Abu Dhabi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Zayed Al-Nahyan. The French weekly *le Journal du Dimanche* earlier reported that two investment firms were behind the painting's purchase as part of a financial arrangement involving several museums. The newspaper said that the work will be lent or resold to museums, largely in the Middle East and Asia. Prince Bader is listed as a director of Houston-based Energy Holdings International, Inc. The firm's website describes him as "one of Saudi Arabia's youngest" entrepreneurs, present in sectors including real estate, telecommunications and recycling. The sale more than doubled the previous record of \$179.4 million paid for Pablo Picasso's "The Women of Algiers (Version O)" in 2015, also in New York.

## High ambitions in Abu Dhabi

The Louvre Abu Dhabi opened on November 8 in the presence of French President Emmanuel Macron, who described the new museum as a "bridge between civilizations." It is the first of three museums slated to open on the emirate's Saadiyat Island, with plans also in place for an edition of New York's Guggenheim. The island will also feature the Zayed National Museum, which had signed a loan deal with the British Museum—although the arrangement has come increasingly into question due to construction delays.

Featuring a vast silver-toned dome, the Louvre Abu Dhabi was designed by French architect Jean Nouvel, drawing inspiration from Arab design and evoking both an open desert and the sea. The museum opened with about 600 pieces including items from early Mesopotamia. — AFP

# A berry tart in under an hour, using a **olive-oil cake base**



By Melissa D'arabian

**D**uring the holidays, we could all use a fantastic tart recipe in our hip pockets. Tarts are a perfect festive end to any dinner party, and they make a lovely gift for a neighbor. If the thought of making homemade crust intimidates you, or if you just prefer not to take in so many fat calories densely packed into a sheet of pastry, stick with me. The tart I'm talking about today uses a simple olive-oil cake as the base, which is then topped with fresh berries.

I took inspiration from a fruit-topped sponge-cake, and turned the idea into a recipe that could be made start-to-finish in about an hour, and much of that time is baking or cooling. I whipped up a speedy orange-olive oil cake (and it's technically-speaking a quick-bread, but our secret!) and made that the base, which works well with either regular flour or most gluten-free flours I have tried.

I used a pie pan with a raised center, a worthy minimal investment if you do any amount of bak-

ing. Buy one and you'll find a thousand uses for it. But if you don't have the special pie mold, use a regular tart or pie pan, and your results will be equally delicious. To create the pretty filling, I tossed a couple of cups of berries in a little orange marmalade thinned with hot water.

Place the syrupy berries on the cake - maybe take an extra minute or two to arrange them nicely for a bakery-made look - and sprinkle on some powdered sugar to serve. The cake itself has a mere 1/3 cup of sugar in the recipe, letting the raspberry topping offer most of the sweetness. The result is a gorgeous dessert or afternoon tea accompaniment that feels more indulgent than it actually is.

#### Orange and raspberry tart Base:

1 cup all-purpose flour  
3/4 teaspoon baking powder  
1/4 teaspoon baking soda  
1/4 teaspoon salt  
Pinch cinnamon

1 egg  
1/3 cup granulated sugar  
1/3 cup olive oil  
1/2 teaspoon vanilla extract  
Zest of one orange, about 2 teaspoons  
Juice of one orange, plus enough water to make 1/3 cup  
Topping:  
About 2 cups fresh raspberries, or other berries or sliced fruit  
2 tablespoons orange marmalade  
2 tablespoons boiling water  
Powdered sugar for dusting, optional  
Preheat the oven to 350 F.

In a medium bowl, sift the flour, baking powder and soda, salt, and cinnamon. Whisk dry ingredients together and set aside. In another medium bowl, whisk together the egg and sugar vigorously until mixture is pale yellow, about 1 minute. Whisk in the oil, extract, zest and juice mixture and mix until well-blended. Scrape the wet ingredients into the dry ingredients with a

rubber spatula and stir gently until combined, but do not overmix.

Line the bottom of an 8-inch pie pan with raised center with parchment paper (cut round to fit), and spray liberally with nonstick spray. (If raised center pie pan is unavailable, use a regular 8-inch tart or pie pan.) Pour the batter into the prepared pan, and bake until the center springs back when gently pressed, about 25-30 minutes. Let the cake cool for 15 minutes before gently unmolding and chilling in the freezer for 15 minutes to cool completely. (Or, allow cake to cool at room temperature for another 30 minutes.)

Meanwhile, place the orange marmalade and boiling water into a medium bowl and whisk until jam is loosened. Add the berries and stir to coat. Add an extra tablespoon of water if mixture is dry. Flip the cake over so the concave side is up. Use a toothpick, skewer or fork to poke holes into the bottom of the cake. Spoon the raspberry mixture onto the cake and arrange the berries so they are pretty. Just before serving, garnish with a dusting of powdered sugar, if desired. —AP



# Chocolate Peppermint Cookies are a holiday treat

By Sara Moulton

If, like me, you're a fan of dark chocolate peppermint bark at Christmastime, you're going to love these cookies. Your friends and family will, too. But you'll have to plan ahead because the batter is so soft it needs to chill overnight before scooping. The main ingredient here is 1 1/2 pounds of chocolate, which guarantees an intensely chocolate-y flavor. The cookie's base is made of a combination of unsweetened and bittersweet chocolate. Afterward, additional chunks of the bittersweet chocolate - along with the crushed mint candy - are folded in.

The key to this recipe's success is good quality bittersweet chocolate - that is, a brand that contains at least 60 percent cacao. The higher the percentage of cacao in a chocolate bar, the darker and more intense the flavor. That's why we're adding chunks of chocolate instead of chocolate chips - bittersweet bar chocolate contains much more cacao than most chips.

Chopping the chocolate will take a little time. I recommend using a serrated knife for the job.

As for crushing the peppermint candies, the best way is to put them in a re-sealable plastic bag and then gently whack away at the bag with a rolling pin. The easiest way to portion out the batter is with a 1-ounce ice-cream scoop rather than a spoon - and it'll make the size of the cookies more consistent, too; just dip it in hot water between each scoop.

I suggest baking a single tray of cookies at a time because the cookies don't cook evenly when there's more than one tray. Finally, be careful not to overcook them. The cookies should be soft to the touch when you pull them out of the oven. That way they'll remain nice and gooey. As you might imagine, these cookies are delicious year-round. If you decide to make them during a season when peppermint candies are scarce, just leave them out and add 1 1/2 tablespoons of powdered espresso. You will end up with outstanding mocha cookies.

## Chocolate Peppermint Cookies

### Ingredients:

1 pound bittersweet chocolate

4 ounces unsweetened chocolate  
8 tablespoons unsalted butter, cut into tablespoons  
4 large eggs, at room temperature  
1 1/2 cups sugar  
2 teaspoons vanilla extract  
60 grams (about 1/2 cup) all-purpose flour  
1/2 teaspoon baking powder  
1/4 teaspoon table salt  
1 cup (about 5 ounces) hard red-and-white peppermint candies

Coarsely chop one-half of the bittersweet chocolate and all of the unsweetened chocolate. In a medium metal bowl combine the coarsely chopped chocolates and the butter; set the bowl over a saucepan of barely simmering water, making sure the bottom of the bowl is not touching the water, and melt the mixture, stirring often. Remove from the heat as soon as all of the chocolate is just melted.

Meanwhile, in a medium bowl with electric beaters (or in a stand mixer), beat the eggs and sugar on medium speed until the mixture is very thick and pale, about 10 minutes. Beat in the

vanilla. In a small bowl sift together the flour, baking powder and salt. Chop the remaining bittersweet chocolate into chocolate-chip size pieces. Chop or crush the peppermint candies into 1/4- to 1/3-inch pieces.

Fold the melted chocolate mixture into the egg mixture using a large rubber spatula. Add the flour mixture and fold it in until it is just incorporated. Add the chip-size bittersweet chocolate and the peppermint pieces and stir gently, just until incorporated. Cover and chill the mixture overnight.

Preheat the oven to 350 F. Line 3 large baking sheets with parchment paper, scoop out the batter into balls about 1 and half-inches wide (the size of a walnut shell) and arrange them on the baking sheets, leaving an inch of space between them. Working with one sheet pan at a time, bake the cookies on the middle shelf of the oven for 9 to 11 minutes, until they are shiny on top and set around the edges but still soft to the touch on top. Let them sit on the sheet pans for 5 minutes and then transfer them to a rack to cool completely. —AP

## Lifestyle

# Kids



## COLOR ME

### Recipe

## Healthy Chocolate Hummus



#### Ingredients:

2 cups cooked, unsalted chickpeas  
3-4 tablespoons unsweetened cocoa powder\*  
2 tablespoons peanut butter OR almond butter  
1/4 cup maple syrup  
1 teaspoon vanilla extract

#### Directions:

Add all ingredients into the cup of a large food processor, and puree until smooth. Serve with fresh fruit, crackers, or pita chips.

\*Note: Use 3 tablespoons of cocoa for a lighter, "milk" chocolate hummus, and 4 tablespoons for "dark" chocolate hummus.

## DID YOU KNOW?

**R**ats breed so quickly that in just 18 months, 2 rats could have created over 1 million relatives.

The blue whale can produce the loudest sound of any animal. At 188 decibels, the noise can be detected over 800 kilometers away.

Horses and cows sleep while standing up.

Giant Arctic jellyfish have tentacles that can reach over 36 meters in length.

Locusts have leg muscles that are about 1000 times more powerful than an equal weight of human muscle.

Hummingbirds are so agile and have such good control that they can fly backwards.

Instead of bones, sharks have a skeleton made from cartilage.

Insects such as bees, mosquitoes and cicadas make noise by rapidly moving their wings.

The horn of a rhinoceros is made from compacted hair rather than bone or another substance.

Sharks lay the biggest eggs in the world. Even when a snake has its eyes closed, it can still see through its eyelids.

Unlike humans, sheep have four stomachs, each one helps them digest the food they eat.

Despite the white, fluffy appearance of Polar Bears fur (which is transparent), it actually has black skin.

As well as being a famous Looney Tunes character, the Tasmanian Devil is a real animal that is only found in the wild in Tasmania, Australia. It is the largest carnivorous marsupial in the world.

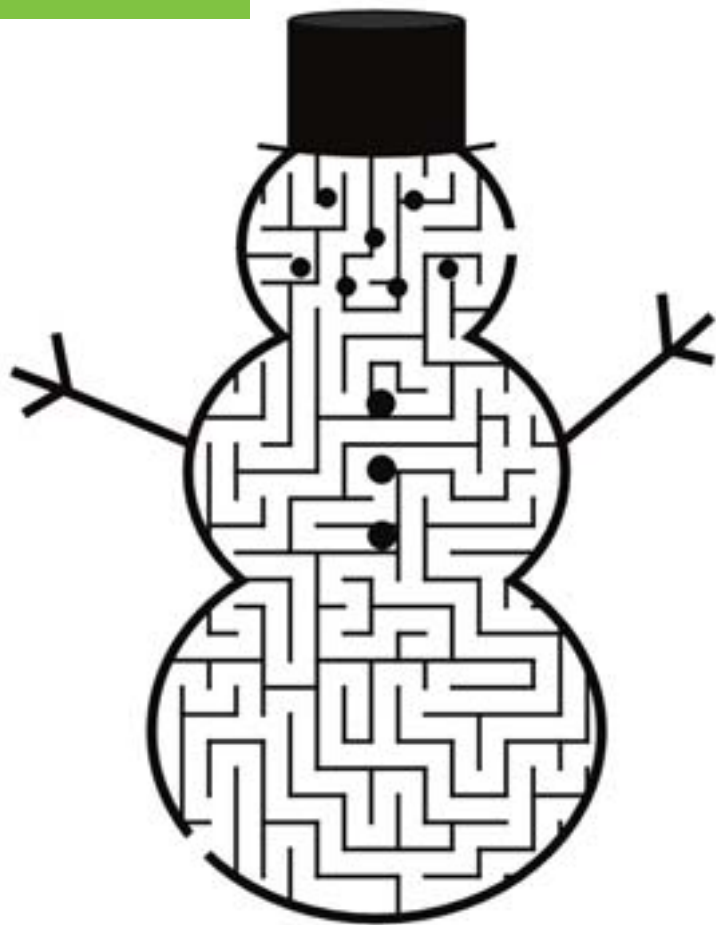
The average housefly only lives for 2 or 3 weeks.

Mosquitoes can be annoying insects but did you know that it's only the female mosquito that actually bites humans.

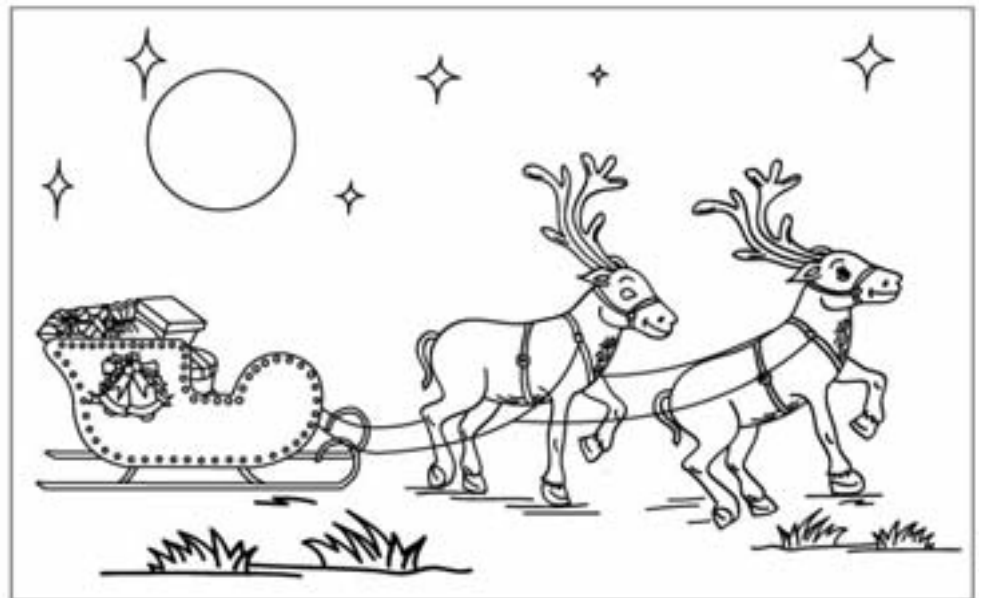
Cats use their whiskers to check whether a space is too small for them to fit through or not.



Maze



Spot the difference



Sudoku

		4		2	6			
9	6	7	5					
			8		4			
	8					2	9	6
		9	7					5
	3	1				8		
		6				3		
				1			6	

8	1	4	9	2	6	5	3	7
9	6	7	5	3	1	4	2	8
3	5	2	8	7	4	6	1	9
7	8	3	1	4	5	2	9	6
6	2	9	7	8	3	1	4	5
1	4	5	2	6	9	7	8	3
4	3	1	6	9	7	8	5	2
2	9	6	4	5	8	3	7	1
5	7	8	3	1	2	9	6	4

Egg Bubbles

**What you'll need:**  
 A clear glass or jar  
 Hot water (adult supervision is a good idea when using hot water)  
 An egg  
 A magnifying glass

**Instructions:**  
 Place the egg carefully into the glass or jar.  
 Carefully pour hot water into the glass or jar until it is nearly full.  
 Leave the glass or jar on a table or flat surface and watch the egg closely for a few minutes (the glass may become hot so be careful).  
 Use your magnifying glass to closely examine what is happening.

**What's happening?**  
 After surrounding the egg with hot water you will notice tiny bubbles forming on the egg shell which eventually bubble their way to the surface.  
 An egg contains a small air pocket at its larger end between the shell and egg white.

When the air trapped inside this small pocket begins to heat up it expands and tries to find a way out of the shell, but how does it escape?

They're too small to see under normal conditions but with the help of a magnifying glass you can see that egg shells contain thousands of small holes called pores (human skin has pores too).

The pores allow air to pass through the shell, making it look like the egg is breathing as the air expands and is forced through the shell.



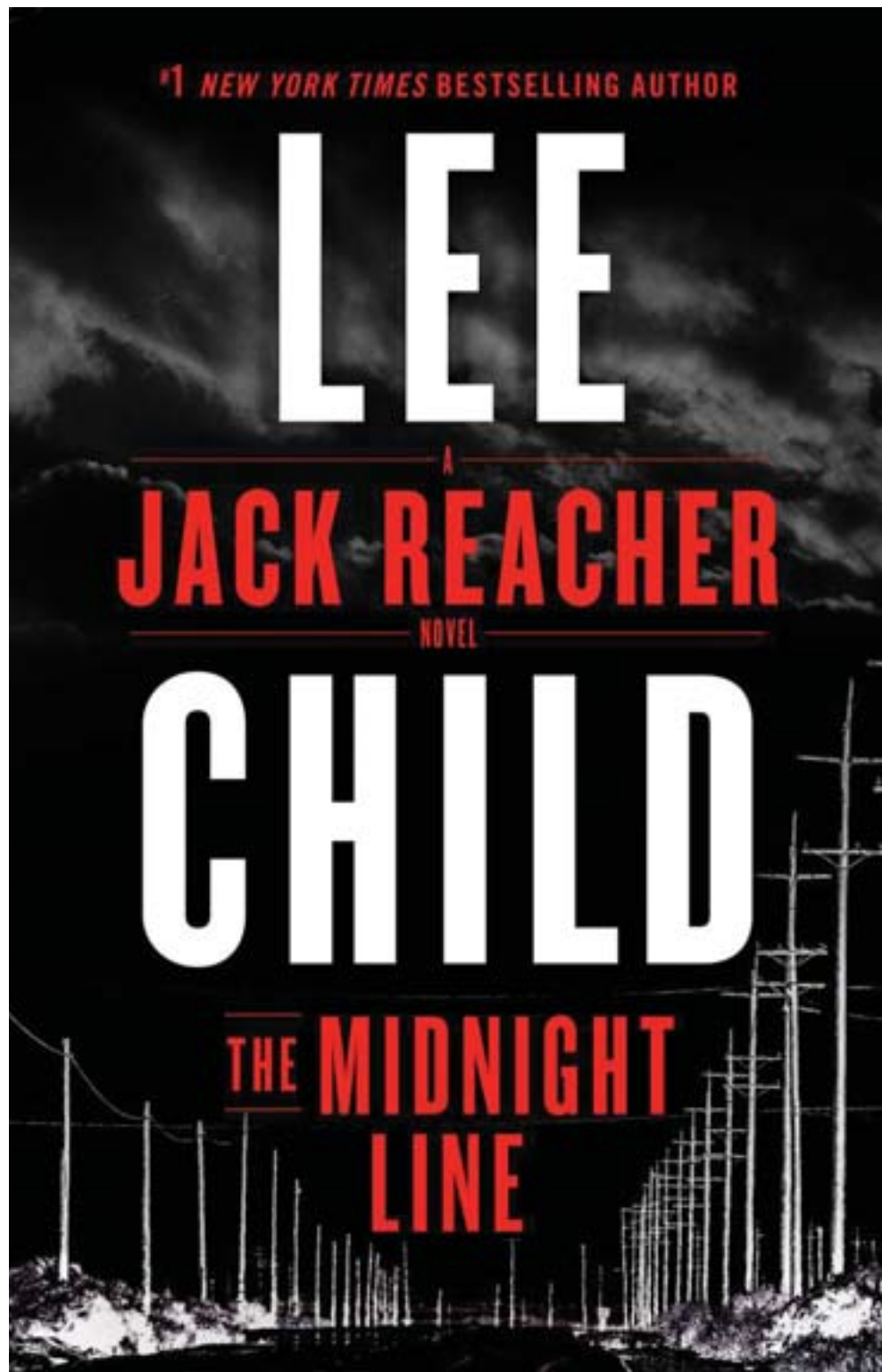
# A gentler Jack Reacher emerges in Lee Child's latest novel

By Janet Maslin

Lee Child gives his books such nondescript titles that you often need a mnemonic to remember what they're about. "The Midnight Line" is another forgettable name, so what should we call it? I started out thinking of it as "the one with the West Point ring": That's a plot point unlike anything in Child's previous best-selling Jack Reacher

books, and it turns up in Chapter 1, so it's no spoiler. But by the time I closed the new novel, it was "the one that breaks your heart."

There's an unexpected Jack Reacher on display here. It turns out he can actually be a compassionate person (much more so than in "Personal," the oddly impersonal 2014 novel in which he works with a team to stop an assassin). But Child knows better than to start "The Midnight Line" with Mr. Nice Guy. Reacher



has a reputation to live up to, after all: drifter, loner, knuckles the size of walnuts, etc.

When "The Midnight Line" begins, Reacher is in a spiritual nowhere, after having managed to spend three whole days with Michelle Chang, his simpatico partner from "Make Me." (That's the one about the mysterious Midwestern small town called Mother's Rest, which Reacher decided might be hinky just on the basis of its name. Good call.) Michelle has left a note comparing Reacher to New York City ("I love to visit, but I could never live there"), so he's on his own again. And it's off to the bus station - where else? - and another destination unknown.

At a rest stop, he sees that West Point class ring in a pawnshop. As a West Point man, Reacher knows how hard-won these rings are, and how much distress it must have taken to make a graduate pawn one. So he's interested. And it's a daintily-sized woman's ring. More interested. He cuts his trip short and decides to find out how the ring got in the window.

Child excels at taking a seemingly small matter like this and going from zero to 60 with it. But this time the acceleration happens credibly, and doesn't head toward an impossibly outsize denouement, which has happened in too many Reacher books to mention; going from tiny ring to missile silo is not outside the realm of Child's imagination. The hunt takes Reacher first to a Rapid City, SD, laundromat, whose owner, Arthur Scorpio, seems to be running some kind of illegal business.

Naturally, Reacher threatens to toss Scorpio in a tumble dryer on high heat if he won't provide details. Then Reacher meets a private detective who is trying to find the very same small-fingered woman. And they both wind up in a remote corner of Wyoming that Child summons especially well. Not all of his books are as powerfully visual as this one. They often feature long straight roads and empty landscapes. "The Midnight Line" describes old railroad land that's sparsely populated, etched with unmarked trails and long, rocky driveways; neighborly if your idea of a neighbor is a stranger 20 miles away, and understandable to Reacher

only because the Army taught him how to read topographical maps. It's a great place to hide.

And an easy place in which to become addicted to opioids. The pieces of the plot come together as Reacher's military pride and the community's illicit opioid use intersect. The bad actors are nominally the dealers, but "The Midnight Line" doesn't demonize its villains the way Child's books usually do. And the addicts aren't dismissed or treated as stereotypes. The book voices strong convictions about the issues that are raised here, and it's no stretch given Reacher's principled military background. The last chapters have more emotional heft than anything Child has written before.

Each Reacher book has to include certain basics to keep his fans happy. There has to be fighting, so Child choreographs a ridiculous biker bashing very early. (Name of the bikers' leader: Jimmy Rat.) Child can write these scenes on autopilot by now, because there are only so many ways Reacher can strategize, maneuver and clobber. The series' humor and insult quotas are nicely filled. So is its educational one, as Child explains the history of heroin as an American product, and outlines another drug-related type of American tragedy that would be a spoiler here.

This book adds its share of classic moments to the Reacher canon. There's a wonderful scene in which the big guy is staked out by some cowboys. True, he completely misunderstands what they want from him. But he still dials his classic move up to 11: "He stood chin up, his full height, shoulders back, hands loose, not a circus freak, but a little bigger all around than a normal big guy, enough so they noticed."

Plus the eyes, which he found most people liked, except he could blink and come back different, like changing the channel, from a happy show to some bleak documentary about prehistoric survival a million years ago." That's the kind of swagger that has kept this franchise so satisfying. But "The Midnight Line" is the rare book in which Reacher mostly doesn't have to act that way. And shouldn't. And becomes too moved even to try.

## Comic

### WORD SEARCH

#### Comedy Movies 2

Find and circle all of the comedy movies that are hidden in the grid. The remaining letters spell an additional comedy movie.

S A B R I N A R A T A T O U I L L E M E  
E I S T O O T N B E S T I N S H O W A L  
O P A R E N T H O O D I C E A G E T N P  
N T S T I R C R A Z Y O G R A F H Y A O  
N O S I D A M Y L L I B D A V E O P L E  
S M A D A H C T A P E R G Y T T F H Y P  
H H K I N G P I N N R R A R O S F A Z S  
R O X A N N E O A T O U A G R N I P E S  
L M Z T N A S L L U H M H E N D C P T E  
R E H T N A P K N I P E H T L I E Y H L  
I A B T H R I D S C C T J R R E S G I H  
G L M O I H H R A U O E O E T A P I S T  
G O G A W O T D B R I W A O R U A L A U  
N N E E G F D R B F S N M C O K C M R N  
I E A D T Y I S O E O M S C A S E O A N  
K I A H S S E N N W Y E K G P D A R N O  
R Y N H S U M Y G B L C F L L M E E A N  
O G A O L A A A O E U U A I M A F M B U  
W C L B I W M Y R D R S B E L F E E Y J  
K H O R S E F E A T H E R S E P I R T S

- |                |                |                 |                  |
|----------------|----------------|-----------------|------------------|
| AIRPLANE       | DUCK SOUP      | LIFE OF BRIAN   | SABRINA          |
| ANALYZE THIS   | EMMA           | MASH            | SPLASH           |
| ANTZ           | FARGO          | OFFICE SPACE    | STRIP CRAZY      |
| ARTHUR         | GET SMART      | PARENTHOOD      | STRIPES          |
| BANANAS        | GROUNDHOG DAY  | PATCH ADAMS     | THE JERK         |
| BEST IN SHOW   | HAPPY GILMORE  | POLICE ACADEMY  | THE PINK PANTHER |
| BILLY MADSON   | HOME ALONE     | RAISING ARIZONA | THE TRAMP        |
| BLUES BROTHERS | HORSE FEATHERS | RATATOUILLE     | TOMMY BOY        |
| BOWFINGER      | ICE AGE        | REAL GENIUS     | TOOTSIE          |
| BULWORTH       | JUNG           | ROXANNE         | WAYNES WORLD     |
| CADDYSHACK     | KINGPIN        | RUTHLESS PEOPLE | WORKING GIRL     |
| DAVE           |                |                 |                  |

### Yesterday's Solution

#### Comedy Movies 1

S C F R B U B R O B E R I S L O R  
T A N L E S H E K I L S Y I I R L  
R I T O C B L R U A E S C H B U D E A  
L I T C M W R G I F M L B E E I B E E  
L C H A I B A C O N I L L A U R O B E I  
A E U D A L Y C U N Z R S Y L O S A  
C R R U R D B H S A G I E C L L A S  
L O T C L I L L A N T A G L H S N  
U M S K I R O H L L B P L C H A P L A  
E H N S A H N N S I L A W A C C C H  
L S O O F M E M E C U R C H A G E R  
E U O P A R T R B T A C O G A S  
S L E T S I U I H E R U I L L E S  
N A T I A H N A M S E T S L S M Y

- |              |                |                |
|--------------|----------------|----------------|
| ALL OF ME    | FLETCH         | OH, GOD!       |
| ANNIE HALL   | GHOSTBUSTERS   | PLAZA SUITE    |
| BABE         | HAPPY GILMORE  | REPO MAN       |
| BEING THERE  | HARVEY         | RUSHMORE       |
| BOG          | HOLIDAY        | SHREK          |
| BOB ROBERTS  | HOTSHOTS       | SLACKER        |
| BULL DURHAM  | LEGALLY BLONDE | SLAP SHOT      |
| CARS         | LIAR LIAR      | SLEEPER        |
| CAT BALLOU   | LOCAL HERO     | THE RUTLES     |
| CITY SLOKERS | MALLRATS       | TOOTSIE        |
| CLERKS       | MANHATTAN      | TRADING PLACES |
| CLUELESS     | MEATBALLS      | UNCLE BUCK     |
| DUCK SOUP    | MOONSTRUCK     | YES MAN        |
| ELECTION     |                |                |

The hidden movie title is: CLOUDY WITH A CHANCE OF MEATBALLS

### CROSSWORD 1779



#### ACROSS

- Characteristic of a mob.
- A city in Taiwan.
- A piece of furniture that provides a place to sleep.
- Any of various fishes with short tails or no tail at all.
- Canadian writer (born in Sri Lanka in 1943).
- A metal-bearing mineral valuable enough to be mined.
- Having leadership guidance.
- A narrow headband or strip of ribbon worn as a headband.
- Especially of a ship's lines etc.
- Singing jazz.
- A loose material consisting of grains of rock or coral.
- Mechanical device consisting of a toothed wheel or rack engaged with a pawl that permits it to move in only one direction.
- South American wood sorrel cultivated for its edible tubers.
- A state in midwestern United States.
- (Old Testament) In Judeo-Christian mythology.
- Cubes of meat marinated and cooked on a skewer usually with vegetables.
- Work made of interlaced slender branches (especially willow branches).
- The flesh of animals (including fishes and birds and snails) used as food.
- The mission in San Antonio where in 1836 Mexican forces under Santa Anna besieged and massacred American rebels who were fighting to make Texas independent of Mexico.
- An antibody in blood serum that attaches to invading microorganisms and other antigens to make them more susceptible to the action of phagocytes.
- Worthy of imitation.
- Towards the side away from the wind.
- Mild yellow Dutch cheese made in balls.
- An associate degree in nursing.
- The blood group whose red cells carry both the A and B antigens.
- Avatar of Vishnu.
- American Revolutionary patriot.
- Any of numerous local fertility and nature deities worshipped by ancient Semitic peoples.
- A lump on the body caused by a blow.
- A small cake leavened with yeast.
- Coins collectively.
- A unit of electrical resistance equal to the resistance between two points on a conductor when a potential difference of one volt between them produces a current of one ampere.
- A feeling of strong eagerness (usually in favor of a person or cause).
- French physicist who invented polarized light and invented the Fresnel lens (1788-1827).
- A reproach for some lapse or misdeed.

#### DOWN

- A master's degree in library science.
- An organization of countries formed in 1961 to agree on a common policy

- for the sale of petroleum.
- English monk and scholar (672-735).
- A small amount (especially of a drink).
- Squash bugs.
- The content of cognition.
- A person who eats human flesh.
- A member of a seafaring group of North American Indians who lived on the Pacific coast of British Columbia and southwestern Alaska.
- A reptile genus of Iguanidae.
- A city in north-central India.
- A piece of information about circumstances that exist or events that have occurred.
- A table (in a restaurant or bar) surrounded by two high-backed benches.
- Annual to perennial herbs of the Mediterranean region.
- A city in north-central India.
- A piece of information about circumstances that exist or events that have occurred.
- Mildly acid red or yellow pulpy fruit eaten as a vegetable.
- A game in which numbered balls are drawn and random and players cover the corresponding numbers on their cards.
- Make more intense, stronger, or more marked.
- Lower in esteem.
- The act of scanning.
- Lacking in light.
- A quantity of no importance.
- A genus of Ploceidae.
- Flesh of any of various freshwater fishes of the families Centrarchidae of North America or Cyprinidae of Europe.
- A city in central Alabama on the Alabama river.
- Type genus of the Coerebidae.
- In such a manner as could not be otherwise.
- A public promotion of some product or service.
- The ninth month of the Moslem calendar.
- Very dark black.
- A kind of sedan chair used in India.
- (astronomy) The angular distance of a celestial point measured westward along the celestial equator from the zenith crossing.
- The branch of computer science that deal with writing computer programs that can solve problems creatively.
- A Bantu language spoken by the Kamba people in Kenya.
- An area that includes seats for several people.
- Consisting of or involving two parts or components usually in pairs.
- European twining plant whose flowers are used chiefly to flavor malt liquors.
- Little known Kamarupan languages.
- A Loloish language.
- An artificial source of visible illumination.
- A United Nations agency to promote trade by increasing the exchange stability of the major currencies.
- (Irish) The sea personified.
- A logarithmic unit of sound intensity equal to 10 decibels.
- A brittle gray crystalline element that is a semiconducting metalloids (resembling silicon) used in transistors.

### Yesterday's Solution

P A D P E D I C A B Y A R D  
A D E A C E R O L A A R E A  
C A N C E L S U E Z T U N G  
A R E O L A R P A B O R A D  
B A L T I C A L B U L A  
A S T A A F F R A Y  
T H A I W B A R H O B B S  
R I G D O K N E E A L A  
I A E A O S A G E C U B A N  
P H E L L E M D I O N A E A  
S I R O C C O R H  
A F T F O H M A T O A K A  
P E R F E C T A C L O S E D  
P L E A A H E A D A K A B A  
A L A R B E T W E E N N A N  
L A D E G R A N D A D A B A

### Daily Sudoku

		5		1				
9		4	6					8
		1	2		8	9		5
1						8		
8								4
		6						2
6		2	8		7	1		
	9				2	4		6
				6		5		

### Yesterday's Solution

6	5	8	3	2	4	1	7	9
1	4	3	6	7	9	5	2	8
7	9	2	8	5	1	3	4	6
4	8	7	5	1	6	9	3	2
3	1	9	2	4	8	7	6	5
2	6	5	9	3	7	4	8	1
8	3	1	4	6	5	2	9	7
5	2	6	7	9	3	8	1	4
9	7	4	1	8	2	6	5	3

## TV Listings



Start time Title  
08/12/2017  
OSN Movies Action HD  
00:05 Wyrmswood: Road Of The Dead  
01:50 Resident Evil: Vendetta  
03:30 Operation Chromite  
05:25 Crossfire  
07:00 The Tower  
09:05 Savage Dog  
10:40 Iron Man 3  
12:50 Shanghai Knights  
14:50 Crossfire  
16:25 Captain America: The First Avenger  
18:30 War Of The Worlds  
20:30 Knight And Day  
22:30 Assassins Tale



01:10 Code Of Silence  
03:00 Man Down  
04:40 Captive  
06:30 Close Range  
08:05 Code Of Silence  
09:55 Man Down  
11:35 Captive  
13:25 The Hollow One  
15:10 Tell Me How I Die  
17:05 Pressure  
18:45 The Blair Witch Project  
20:15 Runaway Jury  
22:30 Deception



01:00 True Heart  
02:35 Get Santa  
04:20 The Good Dinosaur  
05:55 Rio  
07:35 True Heart  
09:10 Alvin And The Chipmunks: Chipwrecked  
10:40 The Good Dinosaur  
12:15 Pirates Who Don't Do Anything  
13:45 Alvin And The Chipmunks: The Road Chip  
15:20 Zootropolis  
17:10 The Kids From 62-F  
18:50 The Adventure Club  
20:20 Pirates Who Don't Do Anything  
21:50 Alvin And The Chipmunks: The Road Chip  
23:25 The Kids From 62-F



00:15 Resident Evil: The Final Chapter  
02:05 Bravetown  
04:00 Aloha  
05:45 Finding Dory  
07:20 Hello, My Name Is Doris  
08:50 Aloha  
10:35 Captain America: Civil War  
13:05 Queen Of Katwe  
15:10 Pete's Dragon  
16:55 Monster Trucks  
21:00 Smurfs: The Lost Village  
22:35 Lights Out



00:35 Drunk Wedding  
02:05 The Mexican  
04:10 Are We Done Yet?  
05:45 Spy Hard  
07:10 Big Mommas: Like Father, Like Son  
09:00 Leap Of Faith  
10:50 The Guilt Trip  
12:30 Spy Hard  
13:55 Big Mommas: Like Father, Like Son  
15:45 Undercover Brother  
17:15 The Family Fang

19:05 Life Or Something Like It  
20:50 Elizabethtown  
22:55 The Parole Officer



00:10 Carol  
02:10 A Birder's Guide To Everything  
03:50 The Wave  
05:45 Every Thing Will Be Fine  
08:00 Operation Avalanche  
09:45 Every Thing Will Be Fine  
12:00 An Inconvenient Truth  
13:45 East Side Sushi  
15:50 New York Stories  
18:05 The Apartment  
20:20 Stand By Me  
22:00 The Man Who Knew Infinity  
23:55 Scent Of A Woman



01:05 Victor And The Secret Of Crocodile Mansion  
02:55 Amila's Secret  
04:15 Back To The Sea  
06:00 Emilie Jolie  
07:20 Back To The Sea  
09:00 Ivan The Incredible  
10:25 An American Tail: Fievel Goes West  
11:45 Louis & Luca And The Snow Machine  
13:10 Victor And The Secret Of Crocodile Mansion  
15:05 Amila's Secret  
16:25 Free Birds  
17:55 Louis & Luca And The Snow Machine  
19:20 Micropolis  
21:00 Hocus Pocus Alfie Atkins  
22:20 Free Birds  
23:45 Ivan The Incredible



02:10 The Runner  
03:45 I Am Number Four  
05:40 The SpongeBob Movie: Sponge Out Of Water  
07:15 Creed  
09:30 Die Hard  
11:50 I Am Number Four  
13:45 Bridge Of Spies  
16:15 Nacho Libre  
17:55 Seven Years In Tibet  
20:15 Hudson Hawk  
22:00 Black Snake Moan



01:20 The Untouchables  
03:25 Hollywood On Set  
06:45 Hollywood On Set  
07:15 Stolen From The Womb  
08:45 Aaliyah: The Princess Of R&B  
10:15 It Could Happen To You  
12:00 Days Of Our Lives S12  
15:20 The Fifth Monkey  
17:00 Virtuosity  
18:45 Awakenings  
20:45 Ironweed  
23:02 Awakenings



01:00 Havoc  
02:15 Meskada  
03:45 Begin Again  
05:30 Dr. T And The Women  
07:30 Million Dollar Baby  
09:45 Into The Woods  
11:45 02:22  
13:30 Ask The Dust  
15:30 Havoc  
16:45 Henry's Crime  
18:30 The Time Being  
20:00 Cinderella

21:45 Shanghai  
23:30 Cypher



00:00 Man Of The Year  
02:00 Acceptable Risk  
03:00 The Code  
04:00 Body Of War  
05:30 Touchy Feely  
07:00 Lock Charmer (A.K.A El Cerrajero)  
08:20 Border  
09:55 3 Backyards  
11:25 Movie Talk Legends: Lauren Bacall  
11:55 It Might Get Loud  
13:35 A Small Section Of The World Stutterer  
14:40 Lock Charmer (A.K.A El Cerrajero)  
16:20 Border  
17:55 3 Backyards  
19:25 Paper Covers Rock  
21:00 Movie Talk Legends: Audrey Hepburn  
21:30 Movie Talk  
22:00 Music Of The Heart



00:15 Mom  
00:40 Mom  
01:05 The Middle  
01:30 The Middle  
01:55 Bette!  
02:20 Angie Tribeca  
02:45 The Good Place  
03:15 Late Night With Seth Meyers  
04:00 The Tonight Show Starring Jimmy Fallon  
04:50 The Ellen DeGeneres Show  
05:40 Brothers  
06:05 Bette!  
06:30 The Goldbergs  
06:55 Imaginary Mary  
07:20 Late Night With Seth Meyers  
08:10 The Ellen DeGeneres Show  
09:00 The Tonight Show Starring Jimmy Fallon  
09:50 The Simpsons  
10:15 The Last Man On Earth  
10:40 Dr. Ken  
11:05 Bette!  
11:30 The Ellen DeGeneres Show  
12:20 The Goldbergs  
12:45 Imaginary Mary  
13:10 Mom  
13:35 Mom  
14:00 The Middle  
14:25 The Middle  
14:50 Dr. Ken  
15:15 The Simpsons  
15:40 The Last Man On Earth  
16:05 The Ellen DeGeneres Show  
17:00 The Goldbergs  
17:30 Imaginary Mary  
18:00 Mom  
18:30 Mom  
19:00 The Middle  
19:30 The Middle  
20:00 Life In Pieces  
20:30 Fresh Off The Boat  
21:00 The Tonight Show Starring Jimmy Fallon  
22:00 Man Seeking Woman  
22:30 Dr. Ken  
23:00 Powerless  
23:25 Late Night With Seth Meyers



00:40 Lethal Weapon  
01:30 S.W.A.T.  
02:20 American Crime  
03:20 The Night Shift  
04:10 APB  
05:00 Good Morning America  
07:00 The View  
07:45 The Chew  
08:30 Supergirl  
09:20 The Night Shift  
10:10 APB  
11:00 Time After Time  
11:45 Lethal Weapon

12:30 The View  
13:15 The Chew  
14:00 APB  
15:00 Live Good Morning America  
17:00 Bones  
18:00 Time After Time  
19:00 Survivor: Heroes v. Healers v. Hustlers  
20:00 The Amazing Race  
21:00 This Is Us  
22:00 Empire  
23:00 Time After Time  
23:50 Claws



00:00 The Knick  
01:00 Girls  
01:30 Girls  
02:00 Snowfall  
03:00 Michelle Wolf: Nice Lady  
04:00 Mr. Robot  
05:00 Plastic Disasters  
06:05 Path To War  
08:50 Into The Storm  
10:30 Hard Times: Lost On Long Island  
11:30 Empire Falls: Part I  
13:20 Empire Falls: Part II  
14:45 Tsunami: The Aftermath (Part 1)  
16:25 Tsunami: The Aftermath (Part 2)  
18:00 From The Earth To The Moon  
19:00 Beware The Slenderman  
21:00 Chance  
22:00 Berlin Station  
23:00 Jerrod Carmichael: Love At The Store



00:00 American Crime  
01:00 The Art Of More  
01:50 Claws  
02:40 Lethal Weapon  
03:30 S.W.A.T.  
04:20 American Crime  
05:20 The Night Shift  
06:10 APB  
07:00 Good Morning America  
09:00 The View  
09:45 The Chew  
10:30 Supergirl  
11:20 The Night Shift  
12:10 APB  
13:00 Time After Time  
13:45 Lethal Weapon  
14:30 The View  
15:15 The Chew  
16:00 APB  
17:00 Live Good Morning America  
19:00 Bones  
20:00 Time After Time  
21:00 Survivor: Heroes v. Healers v. Hustlers  
22:00 The Amazing Race  
23:00 WWE Experience



00:55 Anacondas: The Hunt For The Blood Orchid  
02:35 The Magicians  
03:25 Snow White: A Tale Of Terror  
05:10 Warehouse 13  
06:00 Stargate SG-1  
06:50 Stargate SG-1  
07:40 Stargate SG-1  
08:30 Stargate SG-1  
09:20 Stargate SG-1  
10:10 Stargate SG-1  
11:00 Smallville  
11:50 Smallville  
12:40 Smallville  
13:30 Smallville  
14:20 Smallville  
15:10 Face Off  
16:00 Face Off  
16:50 Evan Almighty  
18:30 Dark Matter  
19:20 Face Off  
20:10 Face Off  
21:00 The Mummy  
23:10 Anacondas: The Hunt For The Blood Orchid



00:00 Married At First Sight  
01:00 Married At First Sight  
02:00 Mom vs. Matchmaker  
02:30 Mom vs. Matchmaker  
03:00 Fashion StartUp  
04:00 Project Accessory  
05:00 Fashion Star  
06:00 Married At First Sight  
07:00 Married At First Sight  
08:00 Mom vs. Matchmaker  
08:30 Mom vs. Matchmaker  
09:00 Fashion StartUp  
10:00 Project Accessory  
11:00 Fashion Star  
12:00 Married At First Sight  
13:00 Married At First Sight  
14:00 Mom vs. Matchmaker  
14:30 Mom vs. Matchmaker  
15:00 Fashion StartUp  
16:00 Project Accessory  
17:00 Mistresses  
18:00 Project Runway  
19:00 Project Runway  
20:00 Making Mr. Right  
21:00 Grey's Anatomy  
22:00 Grey's Anatomy  
23:00 Grey's Anatomy



00:00 Jenny And Reza's Fabulous Food Academy  
00:30 Jenny And Reza's Fabulous Food Academy  
01:00 Private Chef  
01:30 Private Chef  
02:00 Diners, Drive-Ins And Dives  
02:30 Diners, Drive-Ins And Dives  
03:00 Man Fire Food  
03:30 Man Fire Food  
04:00 Chopped  
05:00 Guy's Grocery Games  
06:00 Barefoot Contessa  
06:25 Barefoot Contessa  
06:50 Bake With Anna Olson  
07:15 The Kitchen  
08:05 The Pioneer Woman  
08:30 The Pioneer Woman  
08:55 Siba's Table  
09:25 Siba's Table  
09:55 Bake With Anna Olson  
10:25 Bake With Anna Olson  
10:55 The Kitchen  
11:45 Cooking For Real  
12:10 The Pioneer Woman  
12:35 The Pioneer Woman  
13:00 Siba's Table  
13:30 Siba's Table  
14:00 Diners, Drive-Ins And Dives  
14:30 Diners, Drive-Ins And Dives  
15:00 Chopped  
16:00 The Kitchen  
17:00 Bake With Anna Olson  
17:30 Bake With Anna Olson  
18:00 Chopped  
19:00 Holiday Baking Championship  
20:00 Extreme Cake Wars  
21:00 Paul Hollywood - City Bakes  
22:00 Diners, Drive-Ins And Dives  
22:30 Diners, Drive-Ins And Dives  
23:00 Chopped



Fine Living  
00:00 Island Life  
00:30 Island Life  
01:00 Renovation Raiders  
02:00 Beachfront Bargain Hunt  
02:30 Island Life  
03:00 Caribbean Life  
03:30 Caribbean Life  
04:00 Island Life  
04:30 Island Life  
05:00 Caribbean Life  
05:30 Hawaii Life  
06:00 Extreme Homes  
07:00 House Hunters  
07:30 House Hunters  
08:00 House Hunters

08:30 House Hunters  
09:00 Giada At Home  
09:30 Giada At Home  
10:00 Desperate Landscapes  
10:30 Desperate Landscapes  
11:00 Kitchen Cousins  
11:30 Kitchen Cousins  
12:00 Flea Market Flip  
12:30 Flea Market Flip  
13:00 Tiny House, Big Living  
13:30 Tiny House, Big Living  
14:00 House Hunters  
14:30 House Hunters  
15:00 Beachfront Bargain Hunt  
15:30 Beachfront Bargain Hunt  
16:00 The High Low Project  
16:30 The High Low Project  
17:00 Renovation Raiders  
18:00 Going Yard  
18:30 Going Yard  
19:00 Vacation House For Free  
20:00 Beachfront Bargain Hunt  
20:30 Beachfront Bargain Hunt  
21:00 Yard Crashers  
21:30 Yard Crashers  
22:00 House Hunters  
22:30 House Hunters  
23:00 Giada Entertains  
23:30 Giada Entertains



00:05 South Park  
00:30 Idiotsitter  
00:55 Lip Sync Battle UK  
01:20 Lip Sync Battle UK  
01:45 Graves  
02:15 Chappelle's Show  
02:40 Real Husbands Of Hollywood  
03:00 The Daily Show With Trevor Noah  
03:25 Idiotsitter  
03:50 Lip Sync Battle UK  
04:15 Lip Sync Battle UK  
04:40 Workaholics  
05:05 Workaholics  
05:30 Workaholics  
05:55 Workaholics  
06:20 Workaholics  
06:50 I Live With Models  
09:20 Punk'd (Bet)  
09:45 Important Things With Demitri Martin  
10:10 Important Things With Demitri Martin  
10:35 Important Things With Demitri Martin  
11:00 Kroll Show  
11:25 Kroll Show  
11:50 Kroll Show  
12:15 Kroll Show  
12:40 Kroll Show  
13:05 Disaster Date  
13:30 Disaster Date  
13:55 The Dude Perfect Show  
14:20 The Dude Perfect Show  
14:45 Ridiculousness Arabia  
16:00 Important Things With Demitri Martin  
16:25 Important Things With Demitri Martin  
16:50 Lip Sync Battle UK  
17:15 Lip Sync Battle UK  
17:40 Friends  
19:45 Detroiters  
20:07 Workaholics  
20:30 Graves  
21:00 The Daily Show With Trevor Noah  
21:30 South Park  
22:00 Amy Schumer-Mark Normand: Don't Be Yourself  
22:50 Comedy Central Roast Of Charlie Sheen



BBC First HD  
00:25 Holby City  
01:20 Bad Move  
01:55 Uncle  
02:20 Mum  
02:50 Last Tango In Halifax  
03:45 Call The Midwife: Christmas Special 2015  
04:25 EastEnders  
04:55 Doctors  
05:30 Bad Move



## TV Listings

06:00 EastEnders  
06:30 Casualty  
07:25 Holby City  
08:15 Doctors  
08:50 Doctors  
09:20 Doctors  
09:50 Doctors  
10:25 Doctors  
10:55 Casualty  
11:50 Holby City  
12:45 EastEnders  
13:20 EastEnders  
13:50 EastEnders  
14:20 EastEnders  
14:55 Casualty  
15:50 Doctors  
16:20 Doctors  
16:55 Doctors  
17:30 Doctors  
18:00 Doctors  
18:35 Casualty  
19:30 The Detectives  
20:00 Poldark  
21:00 Poldark  
22:00 Line Of Duty  
22:55 War And Peace  
23:50 Doctors



00:20 Say Yes To The Dress UK  
00:42 Say Yes To The Dress UK  
01:05 90 Day Fianc?: Happily Ever After?  
01:50 Say Yes To The Dress  
02:35 Oprah: Where Are They Now?  
03:20 Little People, Big World: Wedding Farm  
04:05 Toddlers & Tiaras  
04:50 Ultimate Shopper  
05:35 Say Yes To The Dress UK  
06:00 Outdaughters: Busby Quints  
06:45 Outdaughters: Busby Quints  
07:30 Little People, Big World: Wedding Farm  
08:15 Outdaughters: Busby Quints  
09:00 Say Yes To The Dress UK  
09:25 Obsessive Compulsive Cleaners  
10:10 Obsessive Compulsive Cleaners  
10:55 Love, Lust Or Run  
11:17 Love, Lust Or Run  
11:40 Love, Lust Or Run  
12:02 Love, Lust Or Run  
12:25 Love, Lust Or Run  
12:47 Love, Lust Or Run  
13:10 Oprah: Where Are They Now?  
13:55 Oprah: Where Are They Now?  
14:40 Cake Boss  
15:02 Cake Boss  
15:25 Cake Boss  
15:47 Cake Boss  
16:10 Cake Boss  
16:35 Cake Boss  
17:00 Little And Looking For Love  
17:50 Meet The Putmans  
18:50 Outdaughters: Busby Quints  
19:40 Cake Boss  
20:10 Say Yes To The Dress UK  
20:35 Say Yes To The Dress UK  
21:00 Outdaughters: Busby Quints  
21:50 Sister Wives  
22:40 My Giant Life  
23:30 Return To Amish



00:10 Who's Doing The Dishes?  
01:00 Emmerdale  
01:30 Coronation Street  
02:00 Coronation Street  
02:30 The Chase  
03:25 I'm A Celebrity...Get Me Out Of Here!  
04:50 Gino's Hidden Italy  
05:15 Murdoch Mysteries  
06:10 Who's Doing The Dishes?  
07:05 The Chase  
08:00 I'm A Celebrity...Get Me Out Of Here!  
09:10 Catchphrase  
10:05 Murdoch Mysteries  
10:55 Who's Doing The Dishes?  
11:50 The Chase  
12:45 Emmerdale  
13:15 Emmerdale  
13:45 Coronation Street

14:15 Who's Doing The Dishes?  
15:10 The Chase  
16:00 I'm A Celebrity...Get Me Out Of Here!  
17:00 5 Star Family Reunion  
17:50 Murdoch Mysteries  
18:45 Emmerdale  
19:15 Emmerdale  
19:45 Coronation Street  
20:10 The Chase  
21:00 I'm A Celebrity...Get Me Out Of Here!  
22:00 5 Star Family Reunion  
22:50 Emmerdale  
23:15 Emmerdale  
23:40 Coronation Street



00:50 Untamed & Uncut  
01:45 Treehouse Masters  
02:40 Cats 101  
03:35 Meet The Orangutans  
04:00 Meet The Orangutans  
04:25 Whale Wars  
05:15 Whale Wars  
06:02 Deadly Islands  
06:49 Untamed & Uncut  
07:36 Orangutan Island  
08:00 Orangutan Island  
08:25 Meet The Orangutans  
08:50 Meet The Orangutans  
09:15 Treehouse Masters  
10:10 Cats 101  
11:05 Deadly Islands  
12:00 Meet The Orangutans  
12:28 Meet The Orangutans  
12:55 Whale Wars  
13:50 Whale Wars  
14:45 Cats 101  
15:40 Deadly Islands  
16:35 Untamed & Uncut  
17:30 Treehouse Masters  
18:25 Keeping Up With The Kruger  
19:20 Wildest Africa  
20:15 Cats 101  
21:10 Shamwari: A Wild Life  
21:38 Shamwari: A Wild Life  
22:05 Keeping Up With The Kruger  
23:00 Wildest Africa  
23:55 Deadly Islands



00:00 Homicide: Hours To Kill  
01:00 The First 48  
02:00 Britain's Darkest Taboos  
03:00 It Takes A Killer  
03:30 It Takes A Killer  
04:00 Homicide: Hours To Kill  
05:00 The First 48  
06:00 Britain's Darkest Taboos  
07:00 Homicide Hunter  
08:00 Nightmare In Suburbia  
09:00 It Takes A Killer  
09:30 It Takes A Killer  
10:00 Homicide Hunter  
11:00 Homicide: Hours To Kill  
12:00 Escaping Polygamy  
13:00 Leah Remini: Scientology And The Aftermath  
14:00 It Takes A Killer  
14:30 It Takes A Killer  
15:00 Homicide Hunter  
16:00 Homicide: Hours To Kill  
17:00 The First 48  
18:00 It Takes A Killer  
18:30 It Takes A Killer  
19:00 Homicide Hunter  
20:00 Homicide Hunter  
21:00 Homicide Hunter  
22:00 Homicide: Hours To Kill  
23:00 When Life Means Life  
00:05 Origins  
00:30 Destroyed In Seconds  
00:55 Destroyed In Seconds  
01:20 Weather Gone Viral  
02:10 Bermuda Triangle Exposed  
03:00 Ultimate Survival  
03:50 Destroyed In Seconds  
04:15 Destroyed In Seconds  
04:40 How It's Made  
05:05 How It's Made  
05:30 Origins  
05:55 Origins  
06:20 Nextworld  
07:00 Destroyed In Seconds

07:25 Destroyed In Seconds  
07:50 Origins  
08:15 Origins  
08:40 How It's Made  
09:05 How It's Made  
09:30 Nextworld  
10:20 Ultimate Survival  
11:10 Kids Do The Craziest Things  
11:35 Kids Do The Craziest Things  
12:00 Deception With Keith Barry  
12:50 How It's Made  
13:15 How It's Made  
13:40 Nextworld  
14:30 Destroyed In Seconds  
14:55 Destroyed In Seconds  
15:20 Origins  
15:45 Origins  
16:10 Ultimate Survival  
17:00 Kids Do The Craziest Things  
17:25 Kids Do The Craziest Things  
17:50 Troy  
18:40 Nextworld  
19:30 How It's Made  
19:55 How It's Made  
20:20 Destroyed In Seconds  
20:45 Destroyed In Seconds  
21:10 Kids Do The Craziest Things  
21:35 Kids Do The Craziest Things  
22:00 Troy  
22:50 Ultimate Survival  
23:40 Origins



00:50 Guilty Rich  
01:45 Hollywood Horror Story: People Magazine...  
02:40 Murder By Numbers  
03:35 Reasonable Doubt  
04:30 Guilty Rich  
05:25 The Locator  
05:50 The Locator  
06:20 I Almost Got Away With It  
07:10 Swamp Murders  
08:00 The Locator  
08:25 Deadline: Crime With Tamron Hall  
09:15 The Locator  
09:40 The Locator  
10:10 Swamp Murders  
11:05 Shadow Of Doubt  
12:00 Evil Stepmothers  
12:55 Deadline: Crime With Tamron Hall  
13:50 I Almost Got Away With It  
14:45 Swamp Murders  
15:40 Shadow Of Doubt  
16:35 The Perfect Murder  
17:30 Deadline: Crime With Tamron Hall  
18:25 The Locator  
18:50 The Locator  
19:20 I Almost Got Away With It  
20:15 Swamp Murders  
21:10 Shadow Of Doubt  
22:05 Murder Calls  
23:00 American Monster  
23:55 I Speak For The Dead



00:20 Street Outlaws  
01:05 Finding Escobar's Millions  
01:50 Treasure Quest: Snake Island  
02:35 The Wheel: Survival Games  
03:20 Diesel Brothers  
04:05 Deadliest Catch  
04:50 Alaska: The Last Frontier  
05:35 How Do They Do It?  
06:00 Strip The City  
06:45 Boy To Man  
07:30 How Do They Do It?  
07:53 How Do They Do It?  
08:15 Boy To Man  
09:00 Gold Divers  
09:45 Strip The City  
10:30 Auction Kings  
11:00 Auction Kings  
11:25 How Do They Do It?  
11:50 How Do They Do It?  
12:17 Auction Kings  
12:47 Fast N' Loud  
13:37 Fast N' Loud  
14:27 Misfit Garage  
15:17 Street Customs 2008  
16:02 Street Customs 2008

16:47 Street Customs 2008  
17:32 Fast N' Loud  
18:22 Fast N' Loud  
19:12 Garage Gold  
19:42 Garage Gold  
20:10 Gold Rush  
21:00 Street Outlaws  
21:50 Garage Rehab  
22:40 Misfit Garage  
23:30 Gold Rush



00:00 Million Dollar Genius  
01:00 Ultimate Guide To The...  
02:00 Clash Of Warriors  
03:00 Missing In Alaska  
03:50 Ancient Aliens  
04:40 Decoding The Past  
05:30 Million Dollar Genius  
06:20 Ultimate Guide To The...  
07:10 The Universe  
08:00 Clash Of Warriors  
09:00 Missing In Alaska  
10:00 Ancient Aliens  
11:00 Decoding The Past  
12:00 Million Dollar Genius  
13:00 Ultimate Guide To The...  
14:00 Clash Of Warriors  
15:00 Missing In Alaska  
16:00 Ancient Aliens  
17:00 Decoding The Past  
18:00 The Universe  
19:00 Ultimate Guide To The...  
20:00 Clash Of Warriors  
21:00 Missing In Alaska  
22:00 Ancient Aliens  
23:00 Cowboys & Outlaws



00:21 Ultimate Wheels  
01:11 American Pickers  
02:00 Swamp People  
02:50 Counting Cars  
03:15 American Pickers  
04:05 Time Team  
05:00 Counting Cars  
05:25 Counting Cars  
06:00 Aussie Pickers  
06:50 Aussie Pickers  
07:40 Ultimate Wheels  
08:30 Hunting Hitler  
09:20 Hunting Hitler  
10:10 Hunting Hitler  
11:00 Aussie Pickers  
11:50 Aussie Pickers  
12:40 Alone: Lost And Found  
13:30 Pawn Stars South Africa  
13:55 Pawn Stars South Africa  
14:20 Ice Road Truckers  
15:10 Ice Road Truckers  
16:00 Ice Road Truckers  
16:50 Ronnie O'Sullivan's American Hustle  
17:40 Ronnie O'Sullivan's American Hustle  
18:30 Ultimate Wheels  
19:20 Cars That Made America  
21:00 The Warfighters  
21:50 New Age Of Terror  
23:30 Hunting Hitler



00:15 Lee Chan's World Food Tour  
00:45 Lee Chan's World Food Tour  
01:10 Rustic Adventures Italy  
01:40 Food Lover's Guide To The Planet  
02:05 Food Lover's Guide To The Planet  
02:35 Charlie Luxton's Homes By The Sea  
03:30 George Clarke's Amazing Spaces  
04:25 What's For Sale?  
04:50 What's For Sale?  
05:20 Stepping Out  
05:45 Stepping Out  
06:15 Bad Trip  
07:10 Food Lover's Guide To The Planet  
07:35 Food Lover's Guide To The Planet  
08:05 Charlie Luxton's Homes By The

Sea  
09:00 George Clarke's Amazing Spaces  
09:55 What's For Sale?  
10:20 What's For Sale?  
10:50 Stepping Out  
11:15 Stepping Out  
11:45 Bad Trip  
12:40 Food Lover's Guide To The Planet  
13:05 Food Lover's Guide To The Planet  
13:35 Charlie Luxton's Homes By The Sea  
14:30 George Clarke's Amazing Spaces  
15:25 What's For Sale?  
15:50 Cesar's Recruit: Asia  
16:20 Stepping Out  
16:45 Stepping Out  
17:15 Bad Trip  
18:10 Bad Trip  
19:05 What's For Sale?  
19:30 Cesar's Recruit: Asia  
20:00 Stepping Out  
20:30 Stepping Out  
21:00 Bad Trip  
22:00 Bad Trip  
22:55 Food Lover's Guide To The Planet  
23:20 Food Lover's Guide To The Planet  
23:50 Charlie Luxton's Homes By The Sea



00:10 Straits Dreams  
01:00 Supercar Megabuild  
02:00 Airport Security: Colombia 2.5  
03:00 Science Of Stupid  
03:30 Science Of Stupid  
04:00 Straits Dreams  
05:00 Crowd Control  
05:30 Crowd Control  
06:00 Taiwan: Tropic Of Extremes  
07:00 Facing...  
08:00 Seconds From Disaster  
09:00 Crowd Control  
09:30 Crowd Control  
10:00 Airport Security: Colombia 2.5  
11:00 Hard Time  
12:00 Brain Games  
12:30 How To Win At Everything  
13:00 Supercar Megabuild  
14:00 Seconds From Disaster  
15:00 Facing...  
16:00 Airport Security: Colombia 2.5  
17:00 Hard Time  
18:00 The Long Road Home  
19:00 No Man Left Behind  
20:00 Airport Security: Colombia 2.5  
20:50 Hard Time  
21:40 The Long Road Home  
22:30 No Man Left Behind  
23:20 Brain Games  
23:45 How To Win At Everything



00:20 Hyena Queen  
01:10 Jobs That Bite!  
02:00 Savage Island Giants  
02:50 Wild 24  
03:45 Wild Case Files  
04:40 Photo Ark  
05:35 Savage Island Giants  
06:30 Wild 24  
07:25 Wild Case Files  
08:20 Photo Ark  
09:15 Snakes In The City  
10:10 Nature's Greatest Talents  
11:05 The Miracle Cheetah  
12:00 Shark Men  
12:55 Croc Inside Out  
13:50 Animal Fight Club 4.5  
14:45 Cameramen Who Dare  
15:40 Photo Ark  
16:35 Snake City Compilations  
17:30 Wild 24  
18:25 1000 Days For The Planet  
19:20 Cameramen Who Dare  
20:10 Photo Ark  
21:00 Snake City Compilations  
21:50 Wild 24  
22:40 1000 Days For The Planet  
23:30 Shark Men



00:40 Mythbusters  
01:30 How Do They Do It?  
01:55 Food Factory USA  
02:20 Street Science  
02:45 Street Science  
03:10 Space Pioneer  
04:00 Prototype This  
04:48 Mythbusters  
05:36 How Do They Do It?  
06:00 Food Factory USA  
06:24 Street Science  
06:48 Street Science  
07:12 Space Pioneer  
08:00 How Do They Do It?  
08:26 Prototype This  
09:14 Mythbusters  
10:02 Space Pioneer  
10:50 How Do They Do It?  
11:14 Food Factory USA  
11:38 Street Science  
12:02 Street Science  
12:26 Prototype This  
13:14 Mythbusters  
14:02 How Do They Do It?  
14:26 Food Factory USA  
14:50 Space Pioneer  
15:38 Prototype This  
16:26 Street Science  
16:50 Street Science  
17:14 Mythbusters  
18:02 Space Pioneer  
18:50 Prototype This  
19:40 Mythbusters  
20:30 How The Universe Works  
21:20 How Do They Do It?  
21:45 Food Factory USA  
22:10 Space Pioneer  
23:00 How The Universe Works  
23:50 Prototype This



05:00 Bali  
05:15 Chuck And Friends  
05:40 Om Nom Stories  
05:50 Kids Crafting  
05:55 Boj  
06:10 Lucky Fred  
06:25 Thomas And Friends  
06:40 Chirp  
06:55 My Little Pony  
07:20 Angelina Ballerina  
07:35 Sandra, The Fairytale Detective  
07:50 Playdate  
08:00 Barney And Friends  
08:30 64 Zoo Lane  
08:45 Transformers: Rescue Bots  
09:10 Om Nom Stories  
09:20 Kids Crafting  
09:25 Littlest Pet Shop  
09:50 Franny's Feet  
10:15 Mouk  
10:30 Boj  
10:45 Kit 'n' Kate  
10:55 What's The Big Idea?  
11:00 Transformers: Rescue Bots  
11:25 Bali  
11:40 My Little Pony  
12:05 Lucky Fred  
12:20 Thomas And Friends  
12:35 Angelina Ballerina  
12:50 Transformers: Rescue Bots  
13:15 Barney And Friends  
13:45 64 Zoo Lane  
14:00 Chirp  
14:15 What's The Big Idea?  
14:25 Kit 'n' Kate  
14:30 Playdate  
14:40 Franny's Feet  
15:05 Thomas And Friends  
15:20 Mouk  
15:35 Boj  
15:50 Sandra, The Fairytale Detective  
16:05 Littlest Pet Shop  
16:30 My Little Pony  
16:55 Looped  
17:10 Barney And Friends  
17:40 Angelina Ballerina  
17:55 Lucky Fred  
18:10 Qumi Qumi  
18:25 Transformers: Rescue Bots  
18:50 What's The Big Idea?  
19:00 Bali  
19:15 Kit 'n' Kate  
19:25 Littlest Pet Shop

Stars



**Aries (March 21-April 19)**

You're quite fiery, especially when it's time to speak your mind -- or ask for answers you know you deserve. You've never been shy about asking those questions, either, even if they're not polite. Now that you've got a hot topic on your mind and you know there's no other way to solve it than to ask around, you're more than willing to risk tarnishing your reputation a little to get the answers you're after.



**Taurus (April 20-May 20)**

wo of your most famous qualities are needed right now, and while many don't have what it takes to answer, you most certainly do. You need to listen quietly while others are chatting about absolutely nothing. Then, when you speak, tell the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth. That all comes easily to you, but try not to be too smug as you watch others struggle to keep quiet with what they know -- or don't know.



**Gemini (May 21-June 20)**

You're in a restless, and no matter where you are, there's someplace else you'd rather be. While you might ordinarily be able to distract yourself until you can find a practical way to get out, you're unwilling to waste a moment now. Cut to the chase -- announce to one and all that you've got someplace to be, and get yourself there. It's time for the next step on your journey.



**Cancer (June 21-July 22)**

If you just can't bear the thought of heading out and being with other people in the big, loud world, why force yourself? You don't have to go out -- and everyone who knows and loves you should understand. If they want to see you badly enough, they should also be smart enough to call and ask for an audience. If you do somehow get lonely, let them visit, but if not, schedule something for later. Absence really does make the heart grow fonder!



**Leo (July 23-August 22)**

You've been a bit worried about someone close lately, and they should say or do something that subtly lets you know you were right. You've been wondering if they might be getting a bit too possessive, though they've done a great job of hiding it. Once you have your proof -- and it should come soon, if you pay attention -- you need to decide what to do next.



**Virgo (August 23-September 22)**

You don't usually make decisions without thinking them through all the way, especially when it comes to career matters. Still, something has been offered recently that sounds far too good to pass up. If you're interested and ready to jump -- and you most likely are, at least on the inside -- you need to investigate the possibilities. You might not have to do anything uncomfortable with right now -- but soon, maybe.



**Libra (September 23-October 22)**

You are involved with someone you met as if through magic. Just about everything that's happened since seems to have carried that same lovely, magical tone. Today, when jealousy is almost sure to strike, don't let anything endanger what you've got. A little bit of jealousy can be a compliment, which means you love someone enough to value them. Too much implies insecurity, so know where to draw the line.



**Scorpio (October 23-November 21)**

You're not exactly famous for your love of light-hearted, frivolous conversation -- in fact, you often use just one word for every three that other folks blurt out without even thinking. At the moment, though, you've got quite a bit to say, and while your sweetie is amazed, there's no doubt that they sit still and listen. That is what you're after, right?



**Sagittarius (November 22-December 21)**

You know that life is a series of extended vacations that we're fortunate enough to go on with a carefully chosen, well-suited travel companions -- friends, family members and select strangers that don't stay that way for long. You're due to meet someone new and wonderful now -- or maybe more than one person -- who wants to tag along for the ride on the next leg of your trek. Are you ready?



**Capricorn (December 22-January 19)**

Your regal, royal bearing and the mantle of authority you wear so easily and so well can sometimes intimidate those around you -- but in a good way! You have the power to decide whom to let into your world and whom to banish from it. If someone has been trying to edge their way in, don't hesitate to give them a good shove back out. If they're this pushy now, imagine how they might act a bit further down the road.



**Aquarius (January 20- February 18)**

Whether you believe in reincarnation or not doesn't matter right now -- everyone has had the experience of feeling like we've known someone forever, even though it's only been a few months (or minutes). You have learned to pay careful attention to this weird sort of thing, so when you cross paths now with someone who seems familiar, you don't hesitate to say so, and even to ask where they've been all your life!



**Pisces (February 19-March 20)**

More often than not, emotional situations don't seem to work out the way they should (or at least as they do in the movies), but now, thanks to some highly unusual circumstances, a magical ending is actually on the agenda. Your job is to refuse to turn a Hollywood ending into something out of Shakespeare -- you'd rather live a comedy than a tragedy, right?. Do your part and make a dream come true.

**COUNTRY CODES**

Afghanistan	0093	Jordan	00962
Albania	00355	Kazakhstan	007
Algeria	00213	Kenya	00254
Andorra	00376	Kiribati	00686
Angola	00244	Kuwait	00965
Anguilla	001264	Kyrgyzstan	00996
Antigua	001268	Laos	00856
Argentina	0054	Latvia	00371
Armenia	00374	Lebanon	00961
Australia	0061	Liberia	00231
Austria	0043	Libya	00218
Bahamas	001242	Lithuania	00370
Bahrain	00973	Luxembourg	00352
Bangladesh	00880	Macau	00853
Barbados	001246	Macedonia	00389
Belarus	00375	Madagascar	00261
Belgium	0032	Majorca	0034
Belize	00501	Malawi	00265
Benin	00229	Malaysia	0060
Bermuda	001441	Maldives	00960
Bhutan	00975	Mali	00223
Bolivia	00591	Malta	00356
Bosnia	00387	Marshall Islands	00692
Botswana	00267	Martinique	00596
Brazil	0055	Mauritania	00222
Brunei	00673	Mauritius	00230
Bulgaria	00359	Mayotte	00269
Burkina	00226	Mexico	0052
Burundi	00257	Micronesia	00691
Cambodia	00855	Moldova	00373
Cameroon	00237	Monaco	00377
Canada	001	Mongolia	00976
Cape Verde	00238	Montserrat	001664
Cayman Islands	001345	Morocco	00212
Central African Republic	00236	Mozambique	00258
Chad	00235	Myanmar (Burma)	0095
Chile	0056	Namibia	00264
China	0086	Nepal	00977
Colombia	0057	Netherlands (Holland)	0031
Comoros	00269	Netherlands Antilles	00599
Congo	00242	New Caledonia	00687
Cook Islands	00682	New Zealand	0064
Costa Rica	00506	Nicaragua	00505
Croatia	00385	Nigar	00227
Cuba	0053	Nigeria	00234
Cyprus	00357	Niue	00683
Cyprus (Northern)	0090392	Norfolk Island	00672
Czech Republic	00420	Northern Ireland (UK)	0044
Denmark	0045	North Korea	00850
Diego Garcia	00246	Norway	0047
Djibouti	00253	Oman	00968
Dominica	001767	Pakistan	0092
Dominican Republic	001809	Palau	00680
Ecuador	00593	Panama	00507
Egypt	0020	Papua New Guinea	00675
El Salvador	00503	Paraguay	00595
England (UK)	0044	Peru	0051
Equatorial Guinea	00240	Philippines	0063
Eritrea	00291	Poland	0048
Estonia	00372	Portugal	00351
Ethiopia	00251	Puerto Rico	001787
Falkland Islands	00500	Qatar	00974
Faroe Islands	00298	Romania	0040
Fiji	00679	Russian Federation	007
Finland	00358	Rwanda	00250
France	0033	Saint Helena	00290
French Guiana	00594	Saint Kitts	001869
French Polynesia	00689	Saint Lucia	001758
Gabon	00241	Saint Pierre	00508
Gambia	00220	Saint Vincent	001784
Georgia	00995	Samoa US	00684
Germany	0049	Samoa West	00685
Ghana	00233	San Marino	00378
Gibraltar	00350	Sao Tome	00239
Greece	0030	Saudi Arabia	00966
Greenland	00299	Scotland (UK)	0044
Grenada	001473	Senegal	00221
Guadeloupe	00590	Seychelles	00284
Guam	001671	Sierra Leone	00232
Guatemala	00502	Singapore	0065
Guinea	00224	Slovakia	00421
Guyana	00592	Slovenia	00386
Haiti	00509	Solomon Islands	00677
Holland (Netherlands)	0031	Somalia	00252
Honduras	00504	South Africa	0027
Hong Kong	00852	South Korea	0082
Hungary	0036	Spain	0034
Ibiza (Spain)	0034	Sri Lanka	0094
Iceland	00354	Sudan	00249
India	0091	Suriname	00597
Indian Ocean	00873	Swaziland	00268
Indonesia	0062	Sweden	0046
Iran	0098	Switzerland	0041
Iraq	00964	Syria	00963
Ireland	00353	Taiwan	00886
Italy	0039	Tanzania	00255
Ivory Coast	00225	Thailand	0066
Jamaica	001876	Toga	00228
Japan	0081	Tonga	00676

# UN pledge to tackle lead poisoning

**NAIROBI:** Irene Akinyi Odinga has lead poisoning. With no money for treatment, the young mother of two stares death in the face. "I feel very bad," the 25-year-old said on the sidelines of a UN pollution conference, shivering in a thick jacket in the warm Kenyan sun. "I have constant headaches. I cannot walk long distances, I can't even cook for my own children." Odinga is one of dozens of inhabitants of the Owino Uhuru slum near Mombasa, Kenya's second-largest city, who say they were poisoned by a plant recycling lead-acid batteries, the type used in cars.

"My father, my brother, my husband all worked at the smelter," Odinga says. "I washed their (work) clothes." She suspects this is how the lead got in her system. Addressing the scourge of lead pollution, a health hazard particularly in poor and middle-income countries, was a focus of the UN Environment Assembly (UNEA) held in the Kenyan capital Nairobi this week. On Wednesday, environment ministers adopted a resolution expressing concern about the health and environmental impacts of lead-acid battery recycling. "Exposure to lead, including lead in paint and in waste

lead-acid batteries, can cause serious lifelong damage, especially in children, such as loss of IQ and behavioural problems," it said.

"Exposure of pregnant women to high levels of lead can cause miscarriage, stillbirth as well as malformations," the resolution noted. Lead exposure is estimated to cause nearly half a million deaths each year, according to the World Health Organization. It accounts for more than one in ten cases of intellectual disability, 2.5 percent of global heart disease, and about the same percentage of strokes. —AFP

## CLINIC PAGE



**Kuwait Times**  
THE LEADING INDEPENDENT DAILY IN THE ARABIAN GULF

**Dr. Fahad Al-Mukhaizeem**  
فهد علي المخيزيم  
Consultant Pediatrician إستشاري أطفال  
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# Kuwait Times Classifieds

Friday, December 8, 2017



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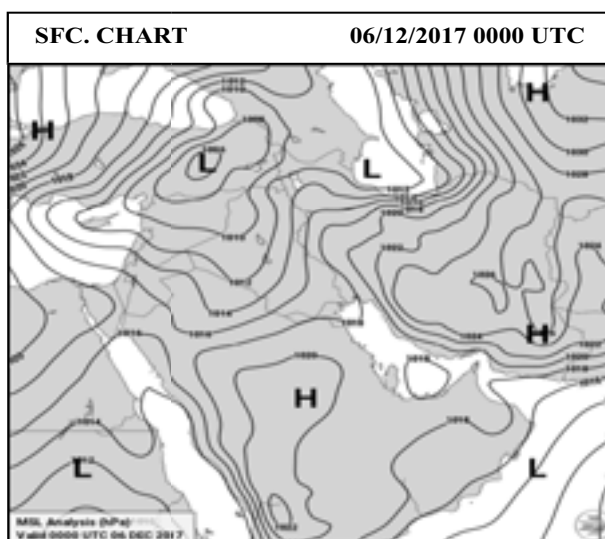
## Expected Weather for the Next 24 Hours

**BY DAY:** Partly cloudy with light variable wind to light to moderate south easterly wind, with speed of 08 - 32 km/h .

**BY NIGHT:** Partly cloudy to cloudy with light to moderate freshening over costal areas south easterly wind, with speed of 15 - 45 km/h .

<b>WEATHER WARNING</b>	No Current Warnings
------------------------	---------------------

STATION	MAX. EXP.	MIN. REC.
KUWAIT CITY	23 °C	14 °C
KUWAIT AIRPORT	24 °C	05 °C
ABDALY	24 °C	07 °C
BUBYAN	21 °C	07 °C
JAHRA	25 °C	09 °C
FAILAKA ISLAND	23 °C	11 °C
SALMIYAH	21 °C	15 °C
AHMADI	22 °C	14 °C
NUWAISIB	25 °C	10 °C
WAFRA	24 °C	07 °C
SALMY	23 °C	08 °C



4 DAYS FORECAST						
DAY	DATE	WEATHER	Temperatures		Wind Direction	Wind Speed
			MAX.	MIN.		
Thursday	12/07	Cloudy to partly cloudy with rising dust	22 °C	11 °C	SE-NW	20 - 55 km/h
Friday	12/08	A significant decrease in temperature with a chance for rising dust	16 °C	06 °C	NW	15 - 40 km/h
Saturday	12/09	Cool	16 °C	05 °C	NW	15 - 40 km/h
Sunday	12/10	Cool	17 °C	06 °C	NW	12 - 35 km/h

PRAYER TIMES	
Fajr	05:04
Sunrise	06:28
Zuhr	11:39
Asr	14:31
Sunset	16:49
Isha	18:11

RECORDED YESTERDAY AT KUWAIT AIRPORT	
MAX. Temp.	24 °C
MIN. Temp.	04 °C
MAX. RH	72 %
MIN. RH	18 %
MAX. Wind	SW 18 km/h
TOTAL RAINFALL IN 24 HR.	0 mm

### CHANGE OF NAME

**I, Shaik Shabbir Hussain, S/o Shaik Ibrahim** holder of Indian Passport No. M3439430 & Civil ID no. 275072002729 hereby changed my name to Shaik Rafi Hussain hereinafter in all my dealings and documents. (C 5368)

**I, Pathakamuri Sreeramulu, S/o P.Seshaiah,** holder of Indian Passport No. M4638172 & Civil ID no. 270051016475 H.No.2/19-A, Singanavaripalli, Mittamidapalli Post, Rajampet, Kadapa, A.P. My name wrongly mentioned in Passport as Patkamuri Kistaiah. But my correct name is Pathakamuri Sreeramulu.

**I, Kamineni Venkata Subbaiah, S/o K.Vengaiah,** holder of Indian Passport No. L8616295 & Civil ID no. 266111201399 H.No.12/3, Turpu Street, Varadayagaripalli, Rajampet, Kadapa, A.P. My surname wrongly mentioned in Passport as Kurrapati Venkata Subbaiah. But my correct surname is Kamineni Venkata Subbaiah.

**I, Kamineni Lakshmi Devi, W/o Kamineni Venkata Subbaiah,** holder of Indian Passport No. P6324075 & Civil ID no. 280071008965 H.No.12/3, Turpu Street, Varadayagaripalli, Rajampet, Kadapa, A.P. My surname wrongly mentioned in Passport as Kurrapati Lakshmi Devi. But my correct surname is Kamineni Lakshmi Devi. 7-12-20197

**I, Thankakumar Thankappan Chellamma S/o Thankappan,** holder of Indian Passport No. L4906126 & Civil ID No. 274022801878 has changed my name to Sudheer Kumar Thankappan hereinafter in all my dealings and documents. (C 5365) 3-12-2017

### LOST

**Lost Indian Passport J1331475, Name: Kalidindi Sujata** on 29th November 2017 at airport, finder please inform 97942497. (C 5367) 7-12-20197



## AIRLINES

American Airlines	22087425
	22087426
Kuwait Airways	171
Jazeera Airways	177
Jet Airways	22924455
FlyDubai	22414400
Qatar Airways	22423888
KLM	22425747
Air Slovakia	22434940
Olympic Airways	22420002/9
Royal Jordanian	22418064/5/6
Reservation	22433388
British Airways	22425635
Air France	22430224
Emirates	22921555
Air India	22438184
Sri Lanka Airlines	22424444
Egypt Air	22421578
Swiss Air	22421516
Saudia	22426306
Middle East Airlines	22423073
Lufthansa	22422493
PIA	22421044
Alitalia	22414427
Balkan Airlines	22416474
Bangladesh Airlines	22452977/8
Czech Airlines	22417901/2433141
Indian Airlines	22456700
Oman Air	22958787
Turkish Airlines	22453820/1



## PHARMACIES ON 24 HRS DUTY

GOVERNORATE	PHARMACY	ADDRESS	PHONE
Ahmadi	Sama Safwan Abu Halaifa Danat Al-Sultan	Fahaheel Makka St Abu Halaifa-Coastal Rd Mahboula Block 1, Coastal Rd	23915883 23715414 23726558
Jahra	Modern Jahra Madina Munawara	Jahra-Block 3 Lot 1 Jahra-Block 92	24575518 24566622
Capital	Ahlam Khaldiya Coop	Fahad Al-Salem St Khaldiya Coop	22436184 24833967

# Business

FRIDAY, DECEMBER 8, 2017

**39** Bitcoin surges past \$15,000 for first time as concerns mount



**40** European Investment Bank planning 7-8 bln euro subsidiary



**41** IMF warns on brewing risks in China's financial system



Senegal : Senegalese dancers perform during the inauguration ceremony of the Blaise Diagne International Airport in Diass.—AFP

## Senegal economy hopes for takeoff as new airport opens

### Airport will be key test of Senegal's economic fortunes

**DIASS, Senegal:** Senegal's president opened a flagship new airport yesterday seen as the central plank of government plans to boost the economy and create a west African regional hub. President Macky Sall toured the brand new Blaise Diagne International Airport accompanied by several west African heads of state in the town of Diass, 47 kilometers from the capital of Dakar, while a plane from new airline Air Senegal is expected make the first symbolic takeoff this afternoon.

Sall's supporters gathered in their thousands to celebrate the opening, banging drums and chanting slogans outside, according to AFP journalists at the scene. The airport will be a key test of Senegal's economic fortunes as the president seeks re-election in 2019. Work began in 2007 on the 645 million-euro (\$767 million) airport under former president Abdoulaye Wade, but unforeseen problems and a change of construction company have repeatedly delayed the project and doubled anticipated costs.

Blaise Diagne-named after the Senegalese MP who was the first African elected to France's parliament—is at the heart of Sall's "Emerging

Senegal" plan, which includes the construction of a new city, Diambiadio, close to the site in Diass. As the country invests more heavily in tourism, Senegal is also betting on the facility's strategic position close to several beach resorts that are already heavily frequented by European holidaymakers.

"The airport will be key in the promotion of 'Destination Senegal,'" Prime Minister Mahammed Boun Abdallah Dionne said in a speech on Tuesday, adding that airport services at the site would contribute to the development of the special economic zone nearby. With a capacity of three million passengers, Blaise Diagne will still rank far below the busiest African airports and a long way off challenging Nigeria in the west African region, though plans for up to 10 million travellers are in the pipeline, according to officials.



#### Sall's Emerging Senegal plan

**Uncertainty for new airline**  
Passenger numbers have increased in recent years at Dakar's current airport in the middle of the city, leading to long waits at security and contributing to chronic traffic jams, and the old Leopold Sedar Senghor airport will become a military airfield from Friday.

The new airport boasts six footbridges direct to flight cabins, and will be able to service a range of aircraft including Airbus's massive A380s. Work was completed on the 4,500-hectare site with 2,000 hectares unused in case of required expansion-by Turkish consortium Summa-Limak after a disagreement with Saudi Arabia's Bin Laden construction derailed the final stage of preparations.

But bets on whether Blaise Diagne would

open on time have lasted until the last minute amid complaints by major European airlines over fuel capacity and regulations. Summa-Limak will operate the airport for the next 25 years, furthering ever-closer economic ties between Ankara and Dakar. A train linking the airport with the city is not expected to open for years, leaving taxi drivers in pocket but ordinary travelers nervous of arriving on time for flights in a city with unpredictable traffic.

Backed by loans from France's development agency the African Development Bank (ADB), the West African Development Bank (BOAD) and Islamic lender the Islamic Development Bank (IDB), officials are celebrating the airport's completion—but the future of Senegal's new airline is less certain. Air Senegal still does not have all the licenses required to begin commercial flights and has a fleet of just two ATR 72-600s, but Aviation Minister Maimouna Ndoeye Seck said international ambitions for the airport meant a well-performing national airline was "a necessity". —AFP

## Business

# Dollar hits 2-week high on US tax reform optimism

## World stocks snap 2-day losing streak

**LONDON:** The dollar rose to its highest level in two weeks yesterday over optimism the United States would successfully push through tax reforms, while world shares rebounded after two straight days of losses. The US currency slipped against the safe-haven Japanese yen on Wednesday after US President Donald Trump said he would recognize Jerusalem as the capital of Israel - a move that imperiled Middle East peace efforts and provoked widespread condemnation.

But amidst a broader climb in global stocks yesterday, the greenback rose 0.3 percent against the yen to trade at 112.60 yen, and hit a two-week high against a basket of peers. The MSCI World Index, which tracks shares in 47 countries, was up 0.1 percent. Underpinning some of the dollar's gains analysts said was some cautious optimism on progress over US tax reforms. US

Senate Republicans agreed to talks with the House of Representatives on sweeping tax legislation on Wednesday, amid early signs that lawmakers could bridge their differences and agree on a final bill ahead of a self-imposed Dec 22 deadline. "The dollar is fighting back a little bit but there's still some caution, as it could still be a few weeks until we know the outcome of the tax reform bill," said Rabobank currency strategist

Jane Foley, in London. "The yen will be sensitive if geopolitical tensions rise again, and I think there's inevitability to that, so I don't think there's going to be too much upside for dollar/yen in this environment," she added.

Upbeat US private-sector employment data released on Wednesday also provided some support to the dollar. But strategists said the currency would trade in narrow ranges until the release of the closely watched non-farm payrolls report on Friday. Bitcoin soared to a record high of more than \$14,500, up almost 7 percent on the day and continuing a staggering surge from less than \$1,000 at the beginning of the year.

“Dollar is fighting back a little

### Stocks recover

European stock markets appeared to take their cues from a general recovery in tech stocks overnight in Asia and Wall Street. The pan-European STOXX 600 was up 0.2 percent with tech stocks initially up 0.5 percent. Financials, industrials and healthcare shares also added points to the index. "We have seen some aggressive moves in Asia, whereas Europe seems to be a bit more subdued," said David Madden, analyst at CMC Markets in London. "It's almost like European markets look for an excuse to selloff but it takes them a lot to be

lift too many restrictions. Environmentalists want to entirely block opening the state's Arctic National Wildlife Refuge to drilling.

ConocoPhillips Alaska Inc, in partnership with Anadarko Petroleum Corp, submitted the seven bids, totaling \$1.16 billion, for tracts in the NPR-A. Results were revealed in a bid opening conducted in Anchorage by the US Bureau of Land Management. The ConocoPhillips-Anadarko bids were for tracts along the southern border of ConocoPhillips' Greater Mooses Tooth unit, where oil production is expected to start next year.

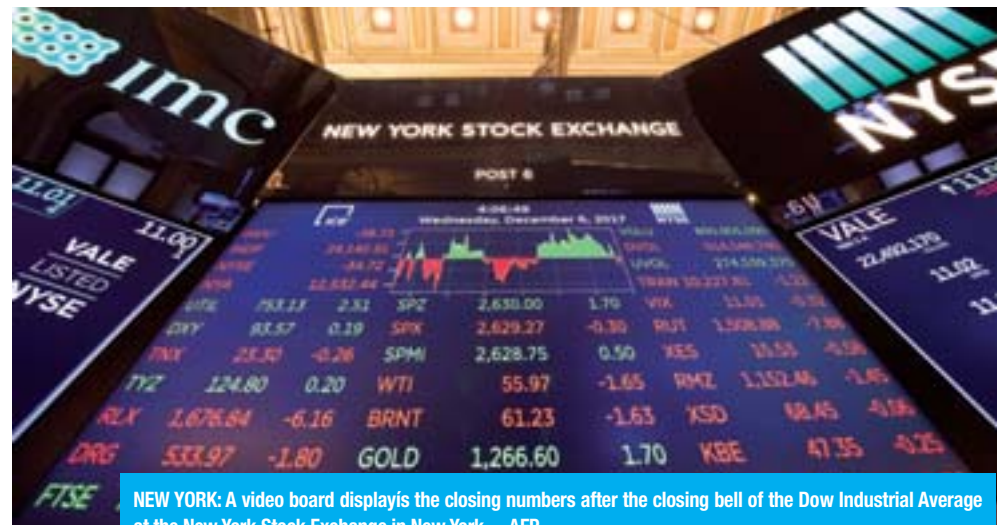
"Lease sale interest is unpredictable," Ted Murphy, associate director of the BLM's Alaska office, said in a telephone news conference after the sale. "We don't know what industry, ultimately, will be interested in getting from year to year." Last year's NPR-A lease sale drew \$18.8 million in bids, led by ConocoPhillips, for 67 tracts covering 613,529 acres.

One environmentalist said the results on Wednesday suggest that the Trump administration is overestimating industry's desire to drill new Arctic territory. "It seems, from my perspective, that it's this mentality that if we open it, industry will come. And that's not necessarily true," said Lisa Baraff of the Fairbanks-based Northern Alaska Environmental Center. —Reuters

## Alaskan oil lease sale brings few bids despite vast territory offered

**ANCHORAGE, Alaska:** An oil-and-gas lease sale that raised concerns with environmentalists due to the vast amount of acres offered in Arctic Alaska drew few bids on Wednesday, government officials said. Seven bids were received, covering about 80,000 acres - or less than 1 percent of the 10.3 million acres offered in the National Petroleum Reserve in Alaska by the Trump administration. It was, by far, more territory than ever offered in any of the previous 12 NPR-A lease sales held since 1999.

The sale was the latest move by the administration of President Donald Trump, a Republican, supporting his pledge to make the United States "energy dominant" by boosting output of oil, natural gas and coal. Environmentalists have generally accepted some oil development in the National Petroleum Reserve but worry the Trump administration will



NEW YORK: A video board displays the closing numbers after the closing bell of the Dow Industrial Average at the New York Stock Exchange in New York.—AFP

convinced to actually push higher."

Shares in the energy sector, which weighed on shares earlier in Wall Street and Asia, rose in Europe, as oil prices recovered from a big fall on Wednesday. US West Texas Intermediate crude futures traded at \$56.13 per barrel in European trade, up 0.3 percent on the day. Brent futures gained 0.4 percent to \$61.45 per barrel. MSCI's broadest index of Asia-Pacific shares outside Japan edged up 0.2 percent as some technology bellwethers rebounded, with Tencent rising over

3 percent and Alibaba more than 2 percent.

In Japan, the Nikkei jumped 1.5 percent, recouping much of its 2.0 percent loss the previous day, which was its biggest fall since late March. The price of copper, seen as a barometer of global economic health because of its extensive industrial use, also fell sharply earlier this week, raising worries about the world growth outlook. Copper traded at \$6,576 a ton, up 0.5 percent on the day and above a two-month low of \$6,507.5 touched on Tuesday.—Reuters

## Political risks keep emerging stocks near 2-mth lows

**LONDON:** Political risks and a firm dollar kept emerging markets in check yesterday, with equities trading near two-month lows and currencies losing more ground against the greenback. A selloff in tech shares had pummeled emerging shares on Wednesday but while the sector enjoyed a small recovery, the broader emerging equity index seasawed around flat. The focus is now on the United States where Congress and the White House face a Friday deadline to raise the debt limit and avert a shutdown in government spending.

On currency markets the rand and the lira tumbled half a percent against the greenback, which is close to two-week highs, while the rouble weakened to new two-week lows, hurt by the finance ministry's plans to raise dollar purchases. Markets will also be wary of adding more emerging market risk before events such as Friday's US jobs data, next week's expected 25 basis-points US rate rise and a central bank meeting in Turkey which will be key to stabilizing the lira.

"It seems we are heading into a mini 'perfect storm' for emerging markets. Optimism on US tax reforms is supporting dollar and US yields, while equity markets are experiencing a decent cor-



TOKYO: Businessmen walk past a stock quotation board flashing the Nikkei 225 key index of the Tokyo Stock Exchange in front of a securities company in Tokyo.—AFP

rection and portfolio flows are turning negative," Credit Agricole wrote, predicting more pressure in coming days. JPMorgan's ELMI Plus index, a key emerging currency gauge, closed on Wednesday at two-week lows. South African stocks traded at six-week lows, extending Wednesday's plunge, which was the biggest daily fall in a year.

The losses were caused by a selloff in Steinhoff shares when the firm announced an investigation into accounting irregularities. Steinhoff remained under pressure falling another 32 percent in Johannesburg. In the Gulf, Qatari stocks fell 0.3 percent, reversing recent gains that were driven by hopes of a resolution to its diplomatic dispute with other Gulf states. Those hopes have been dashed.—Reuters

## Business

# Bitcoin surges past \$15,000 for first time as concerns mount

## Bitcoin to be offered on CBOE Futures Exchange

**LONDON:** Bitcoin ploughed past \$15,000 to a fresh record yesterday, triggering a warning the cryptocurrency was “like a charging train with no brakes” and prompting fresh concern about its looming launch on mainstream markets. It struck a new high of \$15,075 in European trading hours, according to Bloomberg News. The rally came just a day after the virtual currency, which has been used to buy everything from an ice cream to a pint of beer, hit the \$12,000 mark for the first time, while it has soared more than 50 percent in value in just one week.

Bitcoin—which came into being in 2009 as a bit of encrypted software and has no central bank backing it and no legal exchange rate—has risen from a 2017 low of \$752 in mid-January and surged dramatically in the past month. The increased interest has been driven by growing acceptance among traditional investors of an innovation once considered the preserve of computer nerds and financial experts.

But some, including the US Federal Reserve, have warned against dabbling in bitcoin as it could threaten financial stability, and fears of a bubble have increased as the price has soared. “Bitcoin now seems like a charging train with no

brakes,” said Shane Chanel, from Sydney-based ASR Wealth Advisers. “There is an unfathomable amount of new participants piling into the cryptocurrency market.” But he warned: “Once the hype slows down, we will most certainly see some sort of correction.”

### Financial industry concerns

There are mounting concerns about its introduction into the mainstream financial system after US regulator the Commodity Futures Trading Commission last week cleared the way for bitcoin futures to trade on major exchanges, a decision which analysts say has helped spur the recent rally. Bitcoin is to be offered on the CBOE Futures Exchange from this weekend and on the world’s biggest futures venue, the Chicago Mercantile Exchange (CME), from December 18.

The Futures Industry Association, which groups some of the world’s biggest derivatives brokerages, criticized the plans in a letter to the regulator, saying that contracts are being rushed through without the risks being properly weighed up. “A more thorough and considered process would have allowed for a

“ Like a charging train with no brakes ”



**NEW YORK:** In this file photo, a bitcoin logo is displayed at the Inside Bitcoins conference and trade show in New York.—AP

robust public discussion among clearing member firms, exchanges and clearing houses,” said the association. Transactions happen when heavily encrypted codes are passed across a computer network.

The NiceHash marketplace was meanwhile on Thursday investigating a security breach resulting in the theft of bitcoin. “Clearly, this is a matter of deep concern and we are working hard to rectify the matter in the coming days,” NiceHash said in a statement. “In addition to undertaking our own investigation, the incident has been reported to the relevant authorities and law

enforcement and we are co-operating with them as a matter of urgency.”

Bitcoin and other virtual currencies use blockchain, which records transactions that are updated in real time on an online ledger and maintained by a network of computers. In 2014 major Tokyo-based bitcoin exchange MtGox collapsed after admitting that 850,000 coins—worth around \$480 million at the time—had disappeared from its vaults. Bitcoin’s use on the underground Silk Road website, where users could use it to buy drugs and guns, also raised suspicions about the virtual money.—AFP

## ExxonMobil, Chevron, Shell paid no tax in Australia for 2016

**MELBOURNE:** Exxon Mobil Corp and Chevron Corp paid no tax in Australia in the 2016 financial year, the third year in a row, despite reporting billions of dollars in income from operations in the country, a report from the tax office showed yesterday. Exxon Mobil, which has oil and gas production in the Bass Strait and a stake in the giant Gorgon LNG project among other assets in Australia, reported A\$6.7 billion in income, but it reported a loss for taxable income and paid no tax, similar to the previous two years.

Exxon said it had no taxable income as it has invested nearly A\$18 billion over the past few years on major projects including Gorgon and the Kipper Tuna Turrum field. “As these multi-billion investments were completed in 2017 and have started production, the amount of tax paid by ExxonMobil Australia is anticipated to increase significantly,” said Travis Parnaby, a spokesman for the oil major.

Chevron reported A\$2.1 billion in income for 2016 and paid no tax, while Shell Energy Holdings Australia – a unit of Royal Dutch Shell – re-



**NASHVILLE:** This photo shows Exxon service station signs in Nashville, Tennessee.—AP

ported A\$4.2 billion in income and A\$97 million in taxable income, but paid no tax. Chevron, operator of the Gorgon and Wheatstone LNG projects, said it expects to pay significant taxes once those projects are running at full tilt. Shell is also a partner in Gorgon LNG.

The Australian Taxation Office (ATO) started requiring big companies to disclose their tax payments two years ago in a push to curb al-

leged tax avoidance. Top global miners BHP Billiton and Rio Tinto and the oil and gas giants have all been accused of shifting income to countries like the Netherlands and Singapore where tax rates are lower. A probe by the Australian Senate into corporate tax avoidance that began in 2014 was extended this week, and is now due to issue a final report by the end of May 2018. In New Zealand, the new Labor

government yesterday proposed legislation to prevent multinationals from shifting profits out of the country. Its tax office estimated the measures could raise about NZ\$200 million a year. “Multinational companies are a welcome part of our economy but they must abide by the rules. They must pay their fair share of tax,” New Zealand Revenue Minister Stuart Nash said in a statement.

Australia’s and New Zealand’s company tax rates are 30 percent and 28 percent respectively. The Netherlands has a 25 percent rate. BHP Chief Executive Andrew Mackenzie defended the company’s tax payments this week, after Australian Tax Commissioner Chris Jordan was quoted in The Australian newspaper saying the ATO might take BHP and Rio Tinto to court to resolve questions about marketing hubs in Singapore, where the miners pay minimal tax.

Mackenzie said the fight with the tax office related to about 1 or 2 percent of BHP’s total tax payable in Australia. “We pay our fair share,” Mackenzie told the Melbourne Mining Club on Tuesday. The tax office won a landmark case against Chevron earlier this year over a disputed A\$340 million tax bill stemming from an intercompany loan with an exorbitantly high interest rate.

“On the back of solid growth in company profits and higher commodity prices, we are seeing a strong increase in company tax collections in 2016-17 which will be reflected in the data next year,” Australia’s Deputy Tax Commissioner Jeremy Hirschhorn said in a statement released with the tax data.—Reuters

## Business

# European Investment Bank planning 7-8 bln euro subsidiary

## EU members positive in principle

**LONDON:** Europe's largest development bank, the EIB, has laid out plans for a new subsidiary focused solely on non-EU projects that it hopes could also keep some of Britain's billions in the bank after Brexit, European Union sources said. The outline of the new offshoot, which would initially focus on countries fuelling Europe's migrant crisis and lend around 7-8 billion euros a year, was given to EU finance ministers at their meeting in Brussels on Tuesday, the sources told Reuters.

It aims to bring more of the EU's international development spending into a streamlined and market-savvy unit that would also be able to work hand-in-hand with the EU's various national development banks. A working group will now be formed to provide a more thorough examination by early next year, so that it can be factored into the first round of discussions on the EU's next 7-year spending cycle which starts in 2021.

"Nearly two-thirds of (EU) member states spoke in the meeting and in principle the reaction was positive, i.e. let's go on with the discussion," said one source who spoke on the condition of anonymity. "It is at the very early stage so they asked for more information... but the idea is that it will be a way to bundle Europe's external development policy to make it more efficient than it is today." Two other sources confirmed the proposals and the plan to mainly work - initially at least - in countries at

the source of the recent EU immigration flood.

Build better infrastructure and creating jobs should help to boost the appeal of staying put. "Consensus in EU countries is that one of the most effective ways to tackle the migration issues is to deal with it at the point of origin," said a second EU source. Another crucial element to the plan's chances of success could also be Brexit negotiations. The European Investment Bank currently invests between 70 - 80 billion euros a year, with around 10 percent or 7-8 billion of that spent outside of the EU from central Africa to Argentina in Latin America.

This is the money that would be redirected into the new EIB subsidiary but there could be a snag. Britain's departure from the EU is expected to see it take its 16 percent stake in EIB leaving a hole of up to 9 billion euros in its finances. The complex web of long-term projects means Britain might have to wait decades to get all its EIB money back. However the sources said the new subsidiary may be a way for the UK to keep at least some of its money in.

"It could be a way for the UK to continue engaging in development projects together with the EIB after Brexit," one source said pointing to the model could be the European Investment Fund (EIF) which is already open to non-EU members. Britain's finance minister Philip Hammond, was in Brussels for the ECOFIN meeting where the proposals were laid out.

In a speech in June he said it may be "mutu-



**LUXEMBOURG:** The logo of the European Investment Bank is pictured in the city of Luxembourg.—Reuters

ally beneficial" to maintain a post-Brexit relationship between the UK and the EIB. Asked by Reuters for a comment on the new proposals, a UK Treasury spokesman said: "The UK's future relationship with the EIB will be determined as part of the negotiations on our exit from the EU."

Though most countries were generally positive on the plan, one source said there were

some concerns it could dilute the influence EU member states and the Brussels-based European Commission have in international development spending. Another potential issue is that it could lead to a turf-war with the smaller, London-based, European Bank for Reconstruction and Development, which the EU states and the EIB itself are also shareholders in.—Reuters

## UK online gaming group eyes takeover of gambling chain

**LONDON:** GVC, owner of Foxy Bingo and Sportingbet websites, is in talks to buy British betting chain Ladbrokes Coral for up to £3.9 billion, the pair announced yesterday. The cash-and-stock bid, pitched at up to 203.70 pence per Ladbrokes share, would create an online-led gambling titan but faces hurdles amid a UK government crackdown on certain types of betting. The deal, the latest attempt at consolidation in the sector, would see Ladbrokes investors own 46.5 percent with GVC holding a majority of 53.5 percent.

"The enlarged group would be an online-led globally positioned betting and gaming business," a statement said. "The enlarged group would be geographically diversified with a large portfolio of businesses... with the scale and resources to address the dynamics of a rapidly changing global industry." GVC said an eventual price depended on the outcome of the British government's regulatory review of fixed-odds betting terminals.

The controversial electronic terminals currently allow Britons to stake as much as £100 per spin in betting shops, sparking outcry from gambling addiction charities. The government had stated in October that the maximum stake will be slashed to between £50 and £2. Meanwhile, yesterday's announcement follows an aborted merger attempt by Ladbrokes Coral's main rival William Hill late last year.—AFP

## Brazil cuts interest rate to record low seven percent

**RIO DE JANEIRO:** Brazil's central bank on Wednesday cut the key interest rate to a record low of seven percent, about half of what it was a year ago. The 0.5 percentage point drop in the Selic rate reflected the strong fall in inflation as Brazil emerges from a two-year recession. Back in October 2016, when the country's economy was still firmly in negative territory, the Selic was at 14.25 percent, with the bank fighting to tamp down any inflationary pressure.

From then, however, the bank embarked on the first of what are now 10 consecutive rate cuts, dropping under the 10 percent barrier in July for the first time in nearly four years. Inflation is now considered a low risk. Prices were rising at 10.6 percent in 2015 and 6.2 percent in 2016, but only hit 2.7 percent over 12 months last October. With that, the government hopes to see the start of a recovery in spending to help nudge the economy further into growth. President Michel Temer hailed the rate drop, in a



**BRAZIL:** Farmer shows hand-picked coffee beans on his family farm located in Forquilha do Rio, municipality of Dores do Rio Preto, Espirito Santo, Brazil.—AFP

video posted on social media. "With lower interest rates, clearly it is easier to live, work, buy and find housing," he said.

"This lowers rates throughout the whole banking system," he added. But the consultancy Gradual Investimentos insisted that "compared to other emerging economies, our rate is still quite high." The future of Brazil's huge but troubled economy remains clouded by uncertainty over next year's presidential elections and

continued wrangling over Temer's austerity reforms. The frontrunners for the 2018 election so far are leftist former president Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva and rightwing former army officer Jair Bolsonaro. Neither man is much welcomed by investors, who have been pushing Temer to enact the unpopular austerity reforms, especially cuts to the pension system. Temer argues the cuts are needed to bring reality to Brazil's unaffordable state budget.—AFP



## Business

# IMF warns on brewing risks in China's financial system

## Beijing drafts new rules to strengthen bank funding

**BEIJING:** The International Monetary Fund yesterday warned of brewing risks in China's banking system as it found dozens of crucial lenders needed to beef up their defenses against possible financial crises. The IMF report comes a day after regulators in Beijing drafted new rules to strengthen bank funding, and follows a number of alerts about a ballooning debt problem in the world's number-two economy. Near the top of the list in the IMF study on the stability of China's financial system is the need for banks to increase their capital to ward off risks from mounting debt.

China has largely relied on debt-fueled investment and exports to drive its tremendous economic growth, but the Fund said this model has reached its limits. Part of the problem lies in high growth targets, the IMF said, which incentivize local governments to extend credit and protect failing companies. "We recommend the authorities to de-emphasize the GDP (growth)," Ratna Sahay, deputy director of the IMF's Monetary and Capital Markets Department, said during a news conference. China should "incite local governments to strengthen supervision on risks", she added.

Abundant credit allows local governments to

hit high growth figures but now each extra dollar of debt is producing diminishing returns. The ballooning debt—estimated at 234 percent of gross domestic product by the IMF—adds financial risk and may weigh on China's future economic growth. "Credit growth is an important indicator of future financial distress, because lending standards often fall in the rush to make more loans," IMF experts warned in a blog post.

### Zombie companies

The Fund's experts carried out stress tests on dozens of banks. China's big four banks had adequate capital but "large, medium, and city-commercial banks appear vulnerable", the IMF said. It added that 27 out of the 33 banks tested—accounting for three-quarters of China's banking system assets—were "undercapitalized relative to at least one of the minimum requirements". While the country's banking system meets the requirements of global banking rules known as Basel III, "current circumstances warrant a targeted increase in capital", the report said.

"This would create a buffer to absorb potential losses that can be expected during the economic transition as credit is tightened and

“  
A few  
descriptions  
and views  
”

## VW executive gets seven years for US emissions fraud

**DETROIT:** A US-based Volkswagen AG executive who oversaw emissions issues was sentenced to seven years in prison and fined \$400,000 by a judge on Wednesday for his role in a diesel emissions scandal that has cost the German automaker as much as \$30 billion. The prison sentence and fine for the executive, Oliver Schmidt, were the maximum possible under a plea deal in August the German national made with prosecutors after admitting to charges of conspiring to mislead US regulators and violate clean-air laws.

"It is my opinion that you are a key conspirator in this scheme to defraud the United States," US District Judge Sean Cox of Detroit told Schmidt in court. "You saw this as your opportunity to shine ... and climb the corporate ladder at VW." Schmidt read a written statement in court acknowledging his guilt and broke down when discussing his family's sacrifices on his behalf since his arrest in January. "I made bad decisions and for that I am sorry," he said.

US Department of Justice trial attorney Benjamin Singer argued in court that Schmidt was "part of the decision making process" at VW to hide a scheme to fake vehicle emissions results and had opportunities tell regulators the truth. "Every

time he chose to lie," Singer said. In March, Volkswagen pleaded guilty to three felony counts under a plea agreement to resolve US charges that it installed secret software in vehicles in order to elude emissions tests.

US prosecutors have charged eight current and former Volkswagen executives. Six of those remain at large. Volkswagen rebounded from the scandal during the past year. Chief Executive Matthias Mueller last month predicted record deliveries of vehicles for the company this year, and the Volkswagen car brand has said it expects record deliveries for 2017, and raised its midterm profitability outlook. At the Los Angeles auto show last week, the head of Volkswagen's US operations declared, "we're back," citing improved US vehicle sales.

Schmidt was charged with 11 felony counts and federal prosecutors said he could have faced a maximum of up to 169 years in prison. As part of his guilty plea, prosecutors agreed to drop most of the counts and Schmidt consented to be deported at the end of his prison sentence. Schmidt was in charge of the company's environmental and engineering office in Auburn Hills, Michigan, until February 2015, where he oversaw emissions issues.

He returned to Germany the same month where he was told about the existence of the software. According to Schmidt's guilty plea, later that year he conspired with other executives to avoid disclosing "intentional cheating" by the automaker in a bid to seek regulatory approval for its model 2016 VW 2 liter diesels. The auto industry is still feeling the repercussions of Volkswagen's diesel cheating. —Reuters



WASHINGTON: The International Monetary Fund logo is seen inside its headquarters at the end of the IMF/World Bank annual meetings in Washington, US. —Reuters

implicit guarantees are removed." China's central bank said it disagreed with "a few descriptions and views" in the report. "The descriptions of the stress testing did not fully reflect the outcomes of the test," the People's Bank of China said on its website. The China Banking Regulatory Commission on Wednesday released a draft of fresh rules to tackle related issues.

The latest regulations call for new indicators to monitor commercial banks' liquidity and set related requirements. They will "strengthen

management of liquidity risk for banks and protect the safety and stability of the banking system", the commission said. In some cases local banks face pressure to lend to politically important companies, as local governments aim to maintain high employment even if that means cash-bleeding enterprises continue to operate. These loss-making firms, often state-owned, have come to be known as zombie companies, and banks and investors fund many of them as if they will not be allowed to fail. —AFP

## Uber paid Florida man to keep data breach secret: Sources

**SAN FRANCISCO:** A 20-year-old Florida man was responsible for the large data breach at Uber Technologies Inc last year and was paid by Uber to destroy the data through a so-called "bug bounty" program normally used to identify small code vulnerabilities, three people familiar with the events have said. Uber announced on Nov. 21 that the personal data of 57 million users, including 600,000 drivers in the United States, were stolen in a breach that occurred in October 2016, and that it paid the hacker \$100,000 to destroy the information.

But the company did not reveal any information about the hacker or how it paid him the money. Uber made the payment last year through a program designed to reward security researchers who report flaws in a company's software, these people said. Uber's bug bounty service - as such a program is known in the industry - is hosted by a company called HackerOne, which offers its platform to a number of tech companies. Reuters was unable to establish the identity of the hacker or another person who sources

said helped him. Uber spokesman Matt Kallman declined to comment on the matter.

Newly appointed Uber Chief Executive Dara Khosrowshahi fired two of Uber's top security officials when he announced the breach last month, saying the incident should have been disclosed to regulators at the time it was discovered, about a year before. It remains unclear who made the final decision to authorize the payment to the hacker and to keep the breach secret, though the sources said then-CEO Travis Kalanick was aware of the breach and bug bounty payment in November of last year.

Kalanick, who stepped down as Uber CEO in June, declined to comment on the matter, according to his spokesman. A payment of \$100,000 through a bug bounty program would be extremely unusual, with one former HackerOne executive saying it would represent an "all-time record." Security professionals said rewarding a hacker who had stolen data also would be well outside the normal rules of a bounty program, where payments are typically in the \$5,000 to \$10,000 range.

HackerOne hosts Uber's bug bounty program but does not manage it, and plays no role in deciding whether payouts are appropriate or how large they should be. HackerOne CEO Marten Mickos said he could not discuss an individual customer's programs. —Reuters

## Sports

# Capitals cruise to victory; Ovechkin scores his league-leading 21st goal

## Backstrom ends 21-game goal-scoring drought

**WASHINGTON:** Alexander Ovechkin scored his league-leading 21st goal, Nicklas Backstrom ended a 21-game goal-scoring drought, and Tom Wilson scored twice as the Washington Capitals cruised to a 6-2 victory over the sliding Chicago Blackhawks on Wednesday. Brett Connolly and Evgeny Kuznetsov also scored for the Capitals, who have won six of seven to move into a tie for second place in the Metropolitan Division. Lance Bouma and Jonathan Toews scored for Chicago.

**Maple Leafs 2, Flames 1 (SO)**  
Frederik Andersen made 47 saves, and William Nylander scored the decisive goal in a shootout as Toronto defeated Calgary. Mark Giordano scored for the Flames in regulation, and Morgan Rielly replied for the Maple Leafs. Mike Smith made 28 saves for Calgary.

**Ducks 3, Senators 0**  
Ryan Miller made 29 saves to earn his 40th career shutout, and Adam Henrique registered two goals as Anaheim defeated Ottawa.

The Ducks broke a three-game losing streak (0-1-2) by taking the opener of a three-game homestand. Anaheim has defeated the Senators in seven of the past nine meetings played at Honda Center. Ottawa lost its second straight game to start a season-high, seven-game road trip and has dropped nine of its last 10 contests. Craig Anderson made 19 saves.

### Flyers 4, Oilers 2

After breaking a 10-game losing skid with a win over the Flames in Calgary on Monday, Philadelphia continued its turnaround with a victory over Edmonton. Wayne Simmonds had a goal and an assist, and Jordan Weal, Dale Weise and Michael Raffl also scored for the Flyers, who were on an 0-5-5 run before Monday. Brian Elliott made 24 saves. Leon Draisaitl and Ryan Nugent-Hopkins got the goals for the Oilers. Goalie Laurent Brossoit, who gave up five goals— including four in the third period—in his most recent start, stopped 29 shots— Reuters



**WASHINGTON:** John Hayden #40 of the Chicago Blackhawks skates past Christian Djoos #29 of the Washington Capitals during the third period at Capital One Arena in Washington, DC. —AFP

## India-Sri Lanka Test series; the talking points

**NEW DELHI:** India clinched their ninth successive Test series win—equalling Australia's all-time record—after the drawn third and final match against Sri Lanka in New Delhi on Wednesday. AFP Sport highlights five talking points from the three-match series.

### Smoggy horror show

Sri Lankan players wore face masks to combat severe pollution during the smog-shrouded five-day game, which saw fast bowlers Suranga Lakmal and Mohammed Shami vomiting on the ground, apparently after inhaling the noxious air. Doctors slammed cricket authorities for putting players' health at risk, and although play was halted for about 20 minutes on day two, the game resumed. The fiasco could prove to be a death knell for Delhi as a Test venue at least during winter, when the capital's air pollution is at its worst.

### More records for King Kohli

Man of the series Virat Kohli plundered runs and records in all three matches. Nicknamed King Kohli, the prolific batsman is in the form of his life, hitting two double centuries in the series including a career-best 243 in Delhi. He became the first player to score six Test double tons as captain, surpassing West Indies great Brian Lara. Accumulating 610 runs in three matches at an average of 152.50, Kohli said "self-belief" had been key to his success. "It was a kind of a revelation that I can play in Tests

the way I can do in ODIs... if you can believe in yourself, you can achieve anything in any format," he said.

### India target perfect 10

India appear well-equipped to chase a record 10th successive Test series triumph during their South Africa tour starting January—particularly given the strong form of their fast bowlers. While spinners Ravichandran Ashwin and Ravindra Jadeja topped the bowling charts in the Sri Lanka series, pacemen Mohammed Shami and Ishant Sharma were lauded for their performances on a lifeless Delhi pitch. Earlier Bhuvneshwar Kumar claimed eight wickets in the opener in Kolkata. "Shami and Ishant's (bowling) rhythm was excellent and they were a revelation," said India's bowling coach Bharat Arun.

### Sri Lanka chaos continues

A selection drama back home even while the Delhi Test was still in progress highlighted the chaos gripping Sri Lankan cricket. The island's sports minister stopped nine cricketers from flying out to India to take part in the upcoming one-day series—Dayasiri Jayasekera, who once called the Sri Lankan players fat following failed fitness tests, was apparently unhappy with the choice of the team. Thisara Perera's side was finally cleared to travel.

### Bittersweet for Chandimal

Test skipper Dinesh Chandimal rounded off his series with a century in Delhi—but immediately learned he will play no part in the one-day matches. Chandimal himself put on a brave face, saying: "I got enough matches in ODIs against Pakistan and I didn't perform well ... This period (outside the team) I will use to become a good ODI player." But for many others the omission simply proved he is the latest victim of whimsical changes intended to rejuvenate the team's dipping limited-overs fortunes.—AFP

## Smog should stop play, India doctors tell cricket bosses

**NEW DELHI:** Cricket organizers must take pollution into account before allowing matches to go ahead, the Indian Medical Association told the country's governing body for the sport yesterday, after a smog-plagued Test match in New Delhi. The IMA said in a letter to the Indian cricket board it was "greatly troubled" by scenes of players wearing masks to protect themselves from air pollution many times the global safe limit during the third test match between India and Sri Lanka in New Delhi. Two players vomited on the pitch, and play had to be halted briefly.

"Exposure to air pollution increases the risk of lung and heart disease and may precipitate an acute potentially life-threatening event," it said in a letter to the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) seen by AFP. "When pollution levels are this high, everyone including healthy persons may experience some level of discomfort," said the letter, signed by IMA president KK Aggarwal. Pollution should be taken into account before allowing play to proceed in much the same way as for rain and poor light, he added. The BCCI said after this week's debacle at the Feroz Shah Kotla stadium that the Indian capital could be dropped as a venue during winter, when pollution levels tend to spike.

"The BCCI has been sensitive on the smog and fog matter over the years," the board secretary Amitabh Choudhary said. Copies of the IMA's letter were also sent to India's chief justice and the International Cricket Council (ICC), which would have to approve any such changes. Sri Lanka have made no official complaint but their coach Nic Pothas said earlier it wasn't normal for players to suffer in that way. "I think it's the first time that everybody has come across that situation," he said after the first smoggy day's play. "There aren't too many rules regarding pollution."—AFP

## Sports

# Tokyo 2020 unveils bug-eyed the Olympic mascot hopefuls

**TOKYO:** Tokyo Olympic organizers unveiled a shortlist of three official 2020 Games mascots yesterday—from bug-eyed cartoon heroes to cuddly raccoons. The Olympic and Paralympic designs, which celebrate the themes of harmony, diversity and resilience, were unveiled by pupils at a Tokyo elementary school. After a bungled rollout of the official Olympic logo that led to it being scrapped following accusations of plagiarism, local organizers have left the selection of the Tokyo 2020 mascots in the hands of schoolchildren.

From December 11 to February 22, pupils at every elementary school across Japan—and Japanese schools overseas—will choose their favorite design, with each class casting a single vote. The winner will be announced on February 28. The competing mascots are instantly recognizable as “Made in Japan”, ranging in appearance from sci-fi cool to a glum-looking fox closer in spirit to the country’s beloved “yuru-kyara” (soft characters).

Design A’s futuristic blue-checked design with pointy ears and oversized eyes evokes Japanese manga, while Olympic organizers revealed it has a “strong sense of justice” and can apparently move faster than light. Its Paralympic cousin, meanwhile, sports red cheeks derived from cherry blossoms and possesses the ability, helpfully, to “talk with stones and the wind.” Design B pairs a cartoon hybrid of

a “lucky” cat and a fox draped in a red flame-like cloak with a blue lion-dog of the type seen guarding Japanese shrines—the common thread between them big round eyes resembling disco lights.

Olympic Mascot B also “loves to take naps underneath the sunlight,” said Japanese organizers, adding that it “gives happy energy to people by touching them with its tail.” The softer appeal of Option C, meanwhile, brings together a fox looking less than overjoyed at being decorated in prehistoric “magatama” beads and a red raccoon looking a little bemused by all of the commotion. Tokyo organizers will hope to make smooth progress on the mascots to build on recent momentum following a series of public relations disasters.

Last month, Tokyo opened its first new permanent venue for the 2020 Olympics—a welcome boost after plans for the main stadium were torn up by Prime Minister Shinzo Abe two years ago over its \$2 billion price tag. Designs for the official Games emblem were then scrapped amid a plagiarism row. There was more bad news in October when Olympic organizers admitted that prolonged summer rain had brought high levels of bacteria to a venue earmarked for triathlon and open water swimming. While Tokyo has taken successful measures to reduce costs, the International Olympic Committee has urged local organizers to try to further cut its current \$12 billion Games budget. —AFP



**TOKYO:** Schoolchildren pose beside a pair of official Tokyo 2020 Olympic Games mascots, one of three shortlisted pairs to be unveiled, at Kakezuka elementary school in Tokyo yesterday. —AFP

## Pyeongchang in a cold sweat over freezing Olympics

**SEOUL:** South Korea’s winter Olympics organizers have worries other than a ban on Russia competing, poor ticket sales and tensions over North Korea. They fear it may be too cold. The Pyeongchang Games in February may feel like the coldest Olympics in at least three decades because the main stadium lacks a roof, leaving an estimated 35,000 spectators, including world leaders, exposed to extreme cold for the opening ceremony.

The organizing committee’s concerns are contained in an internal document, seen by Reuters, which expects biting winds to make conditions inside the open-air stadium at the start of the Games seem like minus 14 degrees Celsius. That “feels-like” temperature is lower than the minus 11 degrees recorded at the 1994 Lillehammer Games in Norway, whose stadium also lacked a roof and is so far the coldest Olympics for which such data is available, the internal document shows. Reuters could not find comparable data for earlier Games.

South Korea, which built Pyeongchang’s \$58 million stadium without a roof to save time and money, plans a range of measures at opening and closing ceremonies to prevent people suffering hypothermia—from distributing hot packs and blankets to speeding up security checks, the internal document shows. Organizers also plan to use audience participation during pre-ceremony entertainment to help keep spectators warm, the document says without giving details. After the news last month that six people had reported hypothermia during a pop concert at the stadium, organizers are also considering installing more large windshields around the stadium, a sports ministry official said.

“These are stopgap measures,” said Shim Ki-joon, a ruling-party lawmaker, who sits on a parliamentary special committee set up to support the Games. “This is a very serious issue. This is creating a headache to not only the organisers but the presidential office, which sent officials to the venue to figure out ways to fight the cold,” he told Reuters. A presidential spokesman declined to comment on the matter. President Moon Jae-in has invited Chinese President Xi Jinping and Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe to the Games, among other VIPs. US President Donald Trump has committed to sending a “high-level” delegation, the White House has said. Some 160 VIPs will be offered thicker and bigger blankets than those given to other spectators, a committee official said. —Reuters

## Singapore revokes the citizenship of ‘match-fixer’

**SINGAPORE:** Singapore yesterday revoked the citizenship of a Malian-born footballer for allegedly being a member of a global match-fixing syndicate, authorities and reports said. Local media said Gaye Alassane, who played with a local club, was first detained in 2013 as part of a sweeping crackdown on match-fixing groups amid allegations that Singapore had become a hub for the illicit practice.

Announcing the latest move, the interior ministry said it had stripped citizenship from a 43-year-old who was an “active and trusted member” of a major syndicate which operated out of the Southeast Asian financial hub. “The individual’s serious criminal conduct not only undermined the integrity of Singapore’s financial system, but also law and order,” said a ministry statement.

The Straits Times newspaper identified him as Malian-born Alassane, a naturalized Singapore citizen who first came to the city-state in 1993. He is accused of travelling to other countries as part of match-fixing efforts and transporting bribe money. Allegations of Singapore

being used as base for football match-fixing stained the city-state’s reputation as one of the world’s least corrupt nations, and prompted authorities to launch a clampdown. Alassane was reportedly a member of a syndicate led by businessman Dan Tan, which experts said was one of the most aggressive in the world.

Tan was first arrested in 2013 after being repeatedly cited in Italian court papers for his role in transnational match-fixing. He has not faced trial or been charged—it can be difficult to bring cases against alleged match-fixers as witnesses are sometimes afraid of testifying—but remains behind bars under a tough law that allows for suspects to be detained without charge. Alassane was detained under the same law in 2013 but was later released and is now under police supervision.

He has the right to appeal the decision to revoke his citizenship, during which time he will stay in Singapore. “I was shocked when I heard the news this morning, and of course I feel terrible about it,” he told the Straits Times, adding that he had spent two years and three months in prison. “I’ve stopped everything to do with this kind of things (match fixing) ... But now I hear that they want to (revoke his citizenship), I’m really lost.” Police say global match-fixing generates billions of dollars a year in revenues, fuelled in part by the popularity of online betting on match results and game statistics. —AFP

## Sports

# James dominates Kings as Durant powers Warriors

**SACRAMENTO:** LeBron James scored 32 points as the Cleveland Cavaliers beat the Sacramento Kings 101-95 on Wednesday to tie a team record for consecutive wins. The Cavs won their 13th straight, and they can set a franchise record Friday against the Indiana Pacers. Cleveland previously won 13 in a row in March 2009 and in January-February 2010. Kevin Love scored 18 points with 13 rebounds for the Cavs, while Jeff Green scored 17 off the bench. Kyle Korver added 15 points as Cleveland rallied from a 14-point deficit in the third quarter. Zach Randolph paced the Kings with 18 points, and JaKarr Sampson set a career high with 16 rebounds.

## Warriors 101, Hornets 87

Kevin Durant totaled 35 points, 11 rebounds and 10 assists as Golden State beat Charlotte without Stephen Curry and Draymond Green. Durant finished 13 of 28 from the field and recorded his ninth career triple-double as the Warriors won while Curry sat with a sprained ankle and Green was out with a shoulder injury. Klay Thompson added 22 for the Warriors, who won their fifth straight and seventh in eight games. Kemba Walker led Charlotte with 24 points. Nicolas Batum added 15 and Dwight Howard finished with 14.

## Celtics 97, Mavericks 90

Kyrie Irving scored nine of his 23 points in the fourth quarter as Boston beat Dallas. Irving scored seven points in a span of 3:05 and then added another basket down the stretch to help Boston win its fourth straight. Al Horford had 17 points, eight rebounds, eight assists, three blocks and two steals. Rookie Jayson Tatum also scored 17 and grabbed 10 rebounds. Harrison Barnes led the Mavericks with 19 points and seven rebounds while Dirk Nowitzki had 16 points.

## Spurs 117, Heat 105

LaMarcus Aldridge scored 18 points to

lead a parade of teammates in double figures as San Antonio Spurs beat Miami. Eight of the 11 players who saw the court for San Antonio scored in double figures as Bryn Forbes hit for 17 points, Rudy Gay scored 16 and Patty Mills had 13 points. Tyler Johnson led Miami with 25 points off the bench, while Dion Waiters scored 22 and Josh Richardson added 19.

## Pelicans 123, Nuggets 114

DeMarcus Cousins had 40 points and 22 rebounds, and Jrue Holiday was right behind with 27 points and seven assists to lift New Orleans over Denver. Playing without forward Anthony Davis, who missed his third consecutive game with a strained adductor, the Pelicans erased an early 10-point deficit by pounding the ball inside to Cousins. The Nuggets were led by Gary Harris with 24 points, but they dropped to 3-9 on the road.

## Knicks 99, Grizzlies 88

Courtney Lee scored half of his 24 points in the second quarter as New York beat Memphis. Kristaps Porzingis returned from missing two games with an ankle injury to added 18 points on 8-of-19 shooting. Enes Kanter added 12 points and 12 rebounds for the Knicks, who won for the second time in seven games. Marc Gasol scored 17 points, and Tyreke Evans added 15 to lead the Grizzlies, who lost for the 11th time in 12 games.

## Bucks 104, Pistons 100

Andre Drummond scored 27 points and grabbed 20 rebounds, but it was not enough for the Detroit in a loss to Milwaukee. Drummond hit 12 of 15 shots but Detroit shot just 41.9 percent as a team and went 10-for-30 from beyond the 3-point arc in its season-high fourth straight loss. Tobias Harris added 21 and Avery Bradley finished with 20 for the Pistons. Giannis Antetokounmpo scored 25 points and grabbed 10 rebounds for Milwaukee, which also got 22 points from Eric Bledsoe and 21 from Khris Middleton.



CLEVELAND: Frank Mason III #10 of the Sacramento Kings drives to the basket but is fouled by Channing Frye #8 of the Cleveland Cavaliers during the first half at Quicken Loans Arena on December 6, 2017. —AFP

## Magic 110, Hawks 106 (OT)

Evan Fournier led all scorers with 27 points but left Orlando's win over Atlanta early in the extra period with a badly sprained right ankle. Fournier hit 12 of 21 shots and scored the first basket in overtime before limping off the court after landing on Nikola Vucevic's foot during the follow-through of his running floater. Aaron Gordon had 24 points and a season-high 15 rebounds for Orlando (11-15) while Vucevic added 22 and a season-best 16 rebounds. Dennis Schroder led the Hawks (5-19) with 26 points and seven assists.

## Pacers 98, Bulls 96

Victor Oladipo scored 11 of his 27 points in the fourth quarter, including a 3-pointer with 31.1 seconds left as Indiana rallied from a 16-point deficit in the final 9 1/2 minutes to beat Chicago. Oladipo made his shot after stealing the ball from Chicago's Denzel Valen-

line and was among five in double figures for Indiana. Bojan Bogdanovic added 17 points and Darren Collison contributed 14. Kris Dunn scored 19 points for Chicago, which dropped its 10th straight by getting outscored 29-13 and shooting 5 of 18 in the fourth quarter.

## Timberwolves 113, Clippers 107

Karl-Anthony Towns totaled 21 points and 12 rebounds as Minnesota beat Los Angeles. Jimmy Butler and Jeff Teague added 19 points apiece for Minnesota, which shot 55 percent. Andrew Wiggins contributed 16 points as did Taj Gibson, who also grabbed 14 rebounds. Reserve Lou Williams and Austin Rivers led the Clippers with 23 points. DeAndre Jordan collected 18 points and 21 rebounds as Los Angeles fell to 0-4 since losing Blake Griffin for two months to a left knee injury. —Reuters

## Giro d'Italia on rocky ride in Holy Land

**ROME:** The race for the Giro d'Italia's pink jersey risks being overshadowed by a political rumpus over the 2018 edition's departure from Jerusalem, with Israeli protests and US diplomatic policy threatening carnage. The cycling Grand Tour has already run into difficulty long before the first pedal is due to be pushed on May 4, first by labeling the city "west Jerusalem" rather than Jerusalem, due to conflicting Israeli and Palestinian claims over the Holy Land.

And the political headache has threatened to turn into a migraine over US President Donald Trump's recognition on Wednes-

day of Jerusalem as Israel's capital, while pledging to move the US embassy there from Tel Aviv, provoking a torrent of protest from Middle East and Muslim countries such as Jordan, Iran and Turkey, as well as both major Palestinian factions. Giro d'Italia race director Mauro Vegni said in September that the first three days of the 101st edition would be a time trial in Jerusalem followed by two sprint stages ending in Tel Aviv and Eilat, before the race returns to Italy for the final 18 stages.

It will be the first time any of cycling's three Grand Tours—the others being the Tour de France and Vuelta a Espana—start outside of Europe and fans were thrilled. Many also saw it as a homage to Italy's Gino Bartoli, a much-loved triple Giro winner who was recognized in 2013 as a "Righteous Among the Nations"—someone who had helped shield Jews from the Nazis in the Second World War. "It is a great privilege to host such an important sporting event and we invite all Giro enthusiasts to come to Israel," the country's sport minister Miri Regev said when the plan was first unveiled in September.

## 'Spectacular'

His tourism colleague Yariv Levin was no less pleased, boasting that starting the race for the pink jersey in Israel would "show its spectacular landscapes to millions of spectators in nearly 200 countries". That was before the "west Jerusalem" saga, however. Organizers had been keeping in line with most international opinion, which does not recognize Israel's claim to the entire city—including the occupied east—as its capital.

But an enraged Israel threatened to pull the plug unless organizers RCS Sport revised the stage start as Jerusalem, which they duly did. According to the Jerusalem Post, RCS Sport is to get four million euros (\$4.7 million) from Israel for hosting rights. Putting out one diplomatic fire, however, lit another. The Palestinians promptly accused the Giro of being "an accomplice to the Israeli military occupation and its significant violations of international law". Vegni pleaded with the Palestinians to leave politics out of it, admitting he feared the race could attract protesters. —AFP

## Sports

# Who will be crowned the 2017 King of Drift?

## Kuwait to host Red Bull Car Park Drift, for the first time, today



The time is upon us! After seven months since the kick off of the Red Bull Car Park Drift Series in Kuwait, in May, the series is back to Kuwait for the final that will welcome elite drifters competing for the crown of the 2017 King of Drift.

Over 2,500 spectators will visit Sirbb Circuit today to witness the exciting performance of sixteen finalists from fourteen countries, all with one aim; to be crowned the 2017 King of Drift.

Red Bull Car Park Drift final is held under the patronage of Sheikh Ali Fawaz AlSabah, organized by Basel Salem AlSabah Motor Racing Club, with cooperation of SIRBB Circuit and is partnered with Total, Falken, Shop & Ship, PS4, Nissan, Boubyan Bank, Drag 965, Acqua Eva and Trolley. Media partners, MBC Action, Kuwait Times and Aljarida cover this popular event.

With the home team advantage on their side, the Kuwaiti finalists, Ali Maksheed, Fahad Aljadei, and Abdullah Aljadi, are hoping to keep the crown in Kuwait. Last year's final in Oman witnessed an exciting turnout, with all three Omani drifters, topping the winners' podium. First time competitor, Haitham Al Hadidi, claimed the crown at the young age of 18, due to a stellar performance.

Kuwait's three drifters will face a fierce challenge for the sought-after King of Drift title, competing against drifters from thirteen other countries that have participated in the series. The 2017 series kicked off in Kuwait on May 5 and the competition has continued since then with qualifiers in Egypt, Lebanon, Mauritius, Bahrain, Tunisia, Jordan, Oman, Morocco, Qatar, and the United Arab Emirates and all winners go head to head today.

In order to be crowned the 2017 King of Drift, the drifters will have to score the highest on a variety of criteria. Aiming to elevate the competition year after year, Abdo Feghali, the Guinness World Book Record holder for the longest drift, has modified the criteria to challenge the drifters. This year their performance will be determined based on Car Look & Design (10%), Tire Smoke (10%), Car Sound (7%), Section 1 Drifting (15%), Section 2 Drifting (15%), Boxes (15%), Gates (15%), and Pendulum (13%).

This challenging competition leaves no room for error, as participants will lose points if they hit obstacles, drift the wrong way, or spin their car. In case of three penalties, the drifter will be disqualified.

It will not be an easy feat. Who will succeed in topping the podium? Find out today at Sirbb Circuit at 2:00 pm!



## Sports

# Inter Milan face a test of title hopes at champions Juventus

## The only unbeaten team in the league

**MILAN:** Having ended Napoli's unbeaten start to the league season last week, champions Juventus will try to do the same to Inter Milan when they host the Serie A leaders in a mouth-watering "Derby d'Italia" tomorrow. Inter were left as the only unbeaten team in the league after Juve won 1-0 last Friday away to a Napoli side which had not lost in the opening 14 games. The result last weekend also allowed Inter to go top with 39 points thanks to a 5-0 win over Chievo.

Juventus, third with 37 points, will top the standings if they win tomorrow although Napoli (38 points) would overhaul them if they can beat an improving Fiorentina at home on Sunday. Whatever the outcome, it is already clear that Juventus, chasing a seventh successive title, have far more of a fight on their hands than in previous seasons where they often left the rest of the field trailing in their wake. It is also evident that reports of Juve's demise have been premature.

The cracks which appeared during a 2-1 loss to Lazio - Juve's first home defeat in more than two years - and a 3-2 defeat at Sampdoria have quickly been filled by their pragmatic coach Massimiliano Allegri. They have been especially resolute in defense and their 2-0 win away to Olympiakos on Tuesday, which took them into the Champions League last sixteen, was their fourth successive clean sheet since the Sampdoria defeat. Morocco defender Mehdi Benatia has stepped into the defensive void left by the departure of Leonardo Bonucci, new signings forward Douglas Costa and midfielder Blaise Matuidi have fitted in quickly and Gonzalo Higuain is as deadly as ever in attack.

### Inter's renaissance

Juventus have one point more than they did at the same stage last season when they were top of the table with a four-point lead over Roma and AC Milan. The only worry is Argentine playmaker Paulo Dybala's lacklustre form. "It's



**MILAN:** Inter Milan's Croatian forward Ivan Perisic (2nd left) eyes the ball during the Italian Serie A football match Inter Milan vs Chievo on December 3, 2017 at the San Siro stadium in Milan. — AFP

not going so well for Dybala at the moment but it happened at this stage last season too," said Allegri. "Paulo needs to relax and keep doing the simple things, training hard and finding the right fitness levels."

Inter, meanwhile, have blossomed under Luciano Spalletti and are unrecognizable from last

season when they employed three coaches on the way to finishing seventh. Defender Andrea Ranocchia said it was the most united group he has seen in his six seasons with the club. "Spalletti is great because he treats everyone the same way.

It doesn't matter who you are or what your

salary is, we are all treated the same. "I've been at Inter for many years and it's the first time I've seen the dressing room like this," added the 29-year-old. Ranocchia said that spirit would be needed to deal with setbacks across a long season. "When things don't go our way, we must retain this same unity." —Reuters

## Zidane struggling to shore up Real Madrid defense

**MADRID:** Real Madrid coach Zinedine Zidane admitted injuries will force him into patching up a makeshift defense for tomorrow's visit of Sevilla after Raphael Varane joined an increasing list of absentees. The French international limped off holding his left leg as Madrid edged out Borussia Dortmund 3-2 in a Champions League thriller on Wednesday. However, with the defending champions already having secured their place in the last 16 of the Champions League behind Tottenham Hotspur in Group H, Zidane was more concerned with how Varane's absence could affect a busy end to the year for Real. After Sevilla, Zidane's men jet off to Abu Dhabi for the Club World Cup before hosting Barcelona in the Clasic on December 23.

Tomorrow's game is the French coach's primary concern, though, with Sergio Ramos, Dani Carvajal and Casemiro all sus-

pending, while Jesus Vallejo is also sidelined by injury leaving Nacho as Real's only fit centre-back. "With Rafa he has done some damage to himself, but we will see tomorrow when we do the scans as always," said Zidane. "He won't be there Saturday that is for sure. We have to look for solutions." Real have precious little room for error as they already trail La Liga leaders Barca by eight points. And further forward, Madrid could again be without Gareth Bale due to a calf problem. "I feel for the injured players, today it is Rafa but that is why we have a squad," added Zidane.

However, the French coach didn't rule out the possibility that the latest spate of injuries could force the club to reinforce the squad come January. "We have the possibility (to sign) from January 1 and we will see what happens in these 30 days." Injuries aside, it was another enjoyable Champions League night for Real as Cristiano Ronaldo set yet another record in the competition. The Portuguese, who is expected to pick up his fifth Ballon d'Or, fired a spectacular effort into the top corner to become the first player to ever score in all six group games in the one season. Ronaldo's European form - he has nine in the Champions League in total - is in stark contrast to his struggles in La Liga, where he has scored just twice in 10 appearances this season. "We wanted to end the group phase well with a win. I scored a great goal and got the record as well which is important, so I'm very happy," said Ronaldo. Madrid could face the likes of Paris Saint-Germain,

Manchester City, Manchester United or Liverpool in Monday's last-16 draw. However, Ronaldo believes the 12-time winners are capable of an upturn in form in the new year to carry them to a third straight Champions League title. "It is obvious that I like playing in this competition a lot, but the most important thing is to be able to get into the next round once more," he said. "Hopefully Real Madrid can win it for a third straight year." —AFP



### MATCHES ON TV LOCAL TIMING

SPANISH LEAGUE	
Deportivo Alaves v Las Palmas	23:00
beIN SPORTS	
GERMAN BUNDESLIGA	
Stuttgart v Bayer 04 Leverkusen	22:30
beIN SPORTS HD 5	
FRENCH LEAGUE	
Girondins de Bordeaux v Strasbourg	22:45
beIN SPORTS HD 6	

# 'Fab Four' fire seven-goal Liverpool into the last 16

## Cristiano Ronaldo claims new record

PARIS: Philippe Coutinho's hat-trick inspired Liverpool to score seven in their win over Spartak Moscow on Wednesday as they joined Sevilla, Shakhtar Donetsk and Porto in qualifying for the Champions League (CL) last 16. That quartet completed the line-up on the final night of group-stage action that was also notable for another Cristiano Ronaldo goals record in the competition.

The Portuguese superstar scored his ninth in the competition this season in reigning champions Real Madrid's 3-2 win at home to Borussia Dortmund. In doing so, he became the first player

to score in all six Champions League group-stage matches in a season while also equalling his Barcelona rival Lionel Messi's record of 60 group-stage goals in total. Liverpool have also been prolific this season, and their demolition of Spartak was the second time they had won 7-0 en route to finishing top of Group E—they beat Maribor 7-0 in October.

Jürgen Klopp's side were 3-0 up inside 19 minutes on a night that saw their 'Fab Four' run riot—Coutinho got his first hat-trick for the club, Sadio Mané scored twice and there was one each for Roberto Firmino and Mohamed Salah. "It's really difficult when we go to the next gear and use the space. It was nice to watch tonight," Klopp told BT Sport after guiding the Reds into the last 16 for the first time in nine years. As a re-

sult, there will be a record five English clubs in next Monday's draw, and they will not be able to face each other. Spartak's defeat meant Sevilla were through regardless of their 1-1 draw with Maribor in Slovenia. Maribor captain Marcos Tavares scored the opener, with Paulo Henrique Ganso coming off the bench to equalise for the Spaniards. Spartak go into the Europa League.



### Brazilians fire Shakhtar into the CL last 16

Kharkiv. Shakhtar only needed a draw, but took all three points, with Brazilian duo Bernard and Ismaily getting their goals. Bernard's opener was a beauty, but it was a mistake by City goalkeeper Ederson that allowed Ismaily to make it 2-0. Sergio Aguero's stoppage-time penalty handed a consolation to City, but this was their first defeat of the season and they have the Manchester derby this weekend.

Napoli had gone in front early on away to already-eliminated Feyenoord through Piotr Zielinski, but Nicolai Jorgensen equalised. Jeremie St Juste then made it 2-1 at the death for the Dutch champions after they had Tonny Vilhena sent off. "Now we want to go as far as possible in the Europa League," Napoli captain Marek Hamsik told Mediaset Premium. Porto

### Napoli out

Ukrainian giants Shakhtar are through to the last 16 in Group F at the expense of Napoli after beating Pep Guardiola's Manchester City—who had already won the section - 2-1 in



LIVERPOOL: Liverpool's Egyptian midfielder Mohamed Salah (center) is fouled by Spartak Moscow's Russian defender Georgi Dzhikiya (left) in the box to win a penalty during the UEFA Champions League Group E football match between Liverpool and Spartak Moscow at Anfield in Liverpool on December 6, 2017. —AFP

also new a win would take them through in Group G and the two-time European champions ran riot against a hapless Monaco, hammering last season's semi-finalists 5-2.

Vincent Aboubakar scored twice for the Portuguese club, with Yacine Brahimi, Alex Telles and Francisco Soares also netting. Monaco replied through a Kamil Glik effort and a Radamel Falcao header against his old club, while Porto's Felipe and Rachid Ghezzal for the visitors were sent off after an altercation in the first half. RB Leipzig were forced to settle for a Europa League spot in their debut European

campaign. They lost 2-1 at home to group winners Besiktas, for whom Talisca scored a last-minute winner after Naby Keita had cancelled out Alvaro Negredo's early penalty opener. Leipzig had Stefan Ilsanker sent off.

Real Madrid were already through before beating Dortmund in a Bernabeu thriller in Group H. Borja Mayoral put the holders in front and Ronaldo's stunning, record-setting strike came after just 12 minutes. Pierre-Emerick Aubameyang scored a brace to haul Dortmund level, but Lucas Vazquez won it for the hosts as the Germans drop into the Europa League. —AFP

## Stakes are high in Manchester derby

MANCHESTER: There have been few Manchester derbies with as much on the line as Sunday's meeting at Old Trafford of the top two teams in the Premier League—the most anticipated clash of the campaign so far. Pep Guardiola's City have built an eight-point lead following an unbeaten start to the season that has included 13 straight victories - equalling the record for the longest winning run in a single Premier League campaign. Not to be completely outdone, however, Jose Mourinho's Manchester United have equaled a historic club record by remaining unbeaten at Old Trafford for 40 matches in all competitions. And with former Barcelona boss Guardiola and ex-Real Madrid manager Mourinho having developed a fierce rivalry during their time together in Spain, Sunday's meeting promises to be one to savor.

The last team to beat United at home were City in September, 2016 and a repeat performance would leave the club, once derided as "noisy neighbors" by former United boss Alex Ferguson, 11 points clear at the summit. City have been playing some exhilarating football this campaign with coach Guardiola's style of play, which served him so well at his previous clubs, bringing the expected rewards after a disappointing lack of consistency last season. Yet while United have suffered two defeats on the road - to Huddersfield Town and Chelsea - they too have looked like champions at home. The 40 games unbeaten have included 29 wins and 11 draws with 85 goals scored and just 17 conceded. This season's Premier League record at Old Trafford is played seven, won seven - 20 goals for and just one against. —Reuters

### UEFA CHAMPIONS LEAGUE TABLES

PARIS: Final UEFA Champions League group tables after Wednesday's matches (played, won, drawn, lost, goals for, goals against, points):

Group A							Group E										
Manchester United	6	5	0	1	12	3	15	- qualified	Liverpool	6	3	3	0	23	6	12	- qualified
Basel	6	4	0	2	11	5	12	- qualified	Sevilla	6	2	3	1	12	12	9	- qualified
CSKA Moscow	6	3	0	3	8	10	9		Spartak Moscow	6	1	3	2	9	13	6	
Benfica	6	0	0	6	1	14	0		Maribor	6	0	3	3	3	16	3	
Group B							Group F										
Paris SG	6	5	0	1	25	4	15	- qualified	Man City	6	5	0	1	14	5	15	- qualified
Bayern Munich	6	5	0	1	13	6	15	- qualified	Shakhtar Donetsk	6	4	0	2	9	9	12	- qualified
Celtic	6	1	0	5	5	18	3		Napoli	6	2	0	4	11	11	6	
Anderlecht	6	1	0	5	2	17	3		Feyenoord	6	1	0	5	5	14	3	
Group C							Group G										
Roma	6	3	2	1	9	6	11	- qualified	Besiktas	6	4	2	0	11	5	14	- qualified
Chelsea	6	3	2	1	16	8	11	- qualified	FC Porto	6	3	1	2	15	10	10	- qualified
Atletico Madrid	6	1	4	1	5	4	7		RB Leipzig	6	2	1	3	10	11	7	
Qarabag	6	0	2	4	2	14	2		Monaco	6	0	2	4	6	16	2	
Group D							Group H										
Barcelona	6	4	2	0	9	1	14	- qualified	Tottenham Hotspur	6	5	1	0	15	4	16	- qualified
Juventus	6	3	2	1	7	5	11	- qualified	Real Madrid	6	4	1	1	17	7	13	- qualified
Sporting Lisbon	6	2	1	3	8	9	7		Borussia Dortmund	6	0	2	4	7	13	2	
Olympiakos	6	0	1	5	4	13	1		APOEL	6	0	2	4	2	17	2	

## IPL's spending could hit \$96 million

**NEW DELHI:** The Indian Premier League, one of the world's richest sports competitions, will let teams splurge up to \$12 million each on player salaries in 2018, an increase of 20 percent. After a meeting in New Delhi on Wednesday, the IPL governing council also said teams will have to spend a minimum of 75 percent of the salary cap each season.

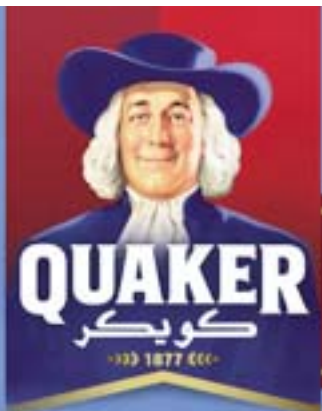
The decision means the eight IPL teams are likely to spend anywhere between \$72 million and \$96 million on players alone for just eight weeks of cricketing action in 2018. "Whatever changes we have come up with are all in the interest of the players," IPL chairman Rajeev Shukla said. "We are also looking to increase the prize money for the players in future." While most of India's big name players are already attached to fran-

chises, several players bagged lucrative deals in the IPL auction in February. England all-rounder Ben Stokes set a new record for a foreigner by joining the Rising Pune Supergiants for more than \$2 million.

England pace bowler Tymal Mills went to the Royal Challengers Bangalore for \$1.8 million, even though he had only played four Twenty20 internationals before that. The attractions of last-ball winning sixes, extravagant switch-hitting and rapid-fire centuries have made IPL a favorite of the masses, especially the younger generation. The IPL's 60 games are valued at roughly \$8.5 million each, not far off the estimated \$9.6 million per English Premier League match-and well over the \$6.2 million price tag attached to home internationals in India. — AFP



**NEW DELHI:** Indian team captain Virat Kohli (left) gestures towards the crowd as teammate Shikhar Dhawan looks on in this file photo. — AFP



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