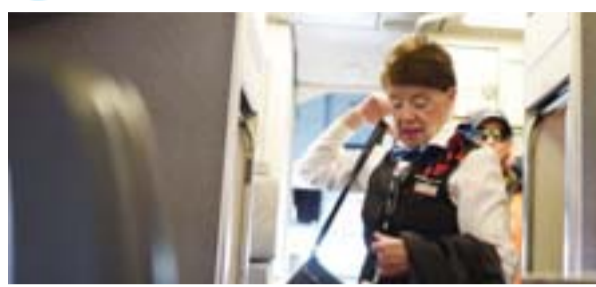




**4** Grand Zoo: A Kuwaiti dream project in works



**32** Time flies? Not for a US air hostess who's 81 years old



**15** Dominant Barca move 14 points clear of Real



**16** Qatar beat Yemen, Bahrain and Iraq draw in Gulf Cup



## Christians mark holidays with an eye on security

### Govts nervous after Trump's Jerusalem announcement

QUETTA/JAKARTA: Christmas church services and other celebrations are being held this weekend under the gaze of armed guards and security cameras in many countries after Islamic State gunmen attacked a Methodist church in Pakistan as a Sunday service began. Majority-Muslim countries in Asia and the Middle East were particularly nervous after US President Donald Trump's recent announcement he intends to relocate the US embassy in Israel to Jerusalem, a decision that has outraged many Muslims.

In Indonesia, the world's biggest Muslim-majority country, police said they had stepped up security around churches and tourist sites, mindful of near-simultaneous attacks on churches there at Christmas in 2000 that killed about 20 people. Muslim volunteers in Indonesia are also on standby to provide additional security if requested. "If our brother and sisters who celebrate Christmas need ... to maintain their security to worship, we will help," said Yaqut Chiolil Qoumas, chairman of the youth wing of the Nahdlatul Ulama, one of the country's biggest Muslim organizations.

In Cairo, where a bombing at the Egyptian capital's largest Coptic cathedral killed at least 25 people last December, the interior ministry said police would conduct regular searches

of streets around churches ahead of the Coptic celebration of Christmas on Jan 7. Egypt's Christian minority has been targeted in several attacks in recent years, including the bombing of two churches in the north of the country on Palm Sunday in April.

At the Heliopolis Basilica, a Catholic cathedral in northeastern Cairo, security forces had set up metal detectors at the main doors and police vehicles were stationed outside ahead of masses on Dec. 25, which marks Christmas Day for Catholic and Protestant Christians. German police brought in experts and an explosives robot to investigate a suspicious package at a Christmas market in the city of Bonn late on Friday. Germany is on high alert a year after a failed Tunisian asylum seeker killed 12 people when he hijacked a truck and drove it into a Berlin Christmas market.

In the Pakistani city of Quetta, members of a Bethel Memorial Methodist Church were repairing the damage done by a pair of suicide bombers who attacked during a service last Sunday, killing 10 people and wounding more than 50. Broken pews and damaged musical instruments were still strewn around church grounds on Thursday, with about a dozen police standing guard.

Continued on Page 11



BEIRUT: Lebanese Prime Minister Saad Hariri poses for a picture with children from various orphanages as they celebrate Christmas in the capital yesterday. — AFP

### Turkey to change embassy street name in UAE row

ISTANBUL: Turkey plans to change the name of the street where the embassy of the United Arab Emirates is located to Fakhreddin Pasha, the historical figure at the center of a diplomatic row caused by a retweet, the state-run Anadolu agency said yesterday. UAE Foreign Minister Sheikh Abdullah bin Zayed Al-Nahayan retweeted last week accusations that Ottoman forces led by Fakhreddin Pasha stole money and manuscripts from Madinah in 1916 during World War One when the city was under Ottoman rule. Madinah is now part of Saudi Arabia.

The mayor of the Turkish capital Ankara ordered preparations to change the name of the street where the UAE mission is located to that of the former commander and onetime governor of Madinah, Anadolu said. Without naming him, Erdogan suggested on Thursday that the UAE minister was ignorant. The UAE charge d'affaires in Ankara was also summoned to the foreign ministry over the issue. UAE officials had no immediate comment on dispute. — Reuters

### 133 killed as tropical storm hits Mindanao

MANILA: The death toll from a tropical storm in the southern Philippines climbed swiftly to 133 yesterday, as rescuers pulled dozens of bodies from a swollen river, police said. Tropical Storm Tembin has lashed the nation's second-largest island of Mindanao since Friday, triggering flash floods and mudslides. The Philippines is pummeled by 20 major storms each year on average, many of them deadly. But Mindanao, home to 20 million people, is rarely hit.

Police, soldiers and volunteers used shovels to dig through mud and debris as they searched for bodies in the village of Dalama yesterday. "The river rose and most of the homes were swept away. The village is no longer there," police officer Gerry Parami told AFP by telephone from nearby Tubod town. Rescuers meanwhile retrieved 36 bodies from the Salog River in nearby Sapad town yesterday.

The bodies in Sapad were swept downriver from a flooded town upstream called Salvador, Rando Salvacion, the Sapad town police chief, told AFP. Authorities in Salvador said they had retrieved 17 other bodies upstream. Tubod, Salvador and Sapad are in Lanao del Norte, which is one of the provinces hardest hit by Tembin. "The people received ample warnings. But as we are rarely hit by typhoons, people living near rivers did not take them seriously," Salvador police



A general view of the flooded municipality of Kabacan in North Cotabato is seen on the southern island of Mindanao yesterday after Tropical Storm Tembin dumped torrential rains across the island. — AFP

chief Wilson Mislores told AFP. The death toll for Mindanao's Zamboanga peninsula also rose to 28, and police said 81 people were missing after mud and rocks swept down coastal communities in Sibuco and other fishing towns. Landslides had blocked rescue and relief

convoys to the impoverished region, officials said yesterday. Tembin struck less than a week after Tropical Storm Kai-Tak left 54 dead and 24 missing in the central Philippines, straining the disaster-prone nation's resources. — AFP

### Aardvark, four meerkats killed in London Zoo fire

LONDON: A large fire at London Zoo killed an aardvark and four meerkats yesterday, while several staff were treated for smoke inhalation. The zoo, which attracts 1.2 million visitors a year, was closed following the predawn blaze but said it would reopen again today. It took 72 firefighters more than three hours to bring the fire under control, after it broke out in the Animal Adventure cafe and spread quickly to an adjacent shop.

"Sadly our vets have confirmed the death of our nine-year-old aardvark, Misha. There are also four meerkats still unaccounted for, but we are now presuming these have also died," a statement from the zoo said.

Continued on Page 11



LONDON: A firefighter attends to help control a fire that broke out at a cafe and shop at London Zoo yesterday. — AFP

### Oman opens oryx reserve to ecotourists

HAIMA, Oman: The Gulf sultanate of Oman is looking to carve itself a new niche in ecotourism by opening up a sanctuary for one of the desert's most fabled creatures - the Arabian oryx. Once extinct in the wild, the rare member of the antelope family famed for its elegant horns has been dragged back from the precipice in a sprawling reserve fenced off for decades from the public. That changed last month when authorities for the first time officially opened the sanctuary to visitors - part of a broader bid by Oman to boost tourism as oil revenues decline.

On a recent outing, wildlife rangers in SUVs patrolled the sandy plains of the reserve in central Oman's Haima province, spotting groups of grazing oryx and other



This file photo taken on March 1, 2016 shows an Arabian oryx at the Arabian Oryx Sanctuary in Umm Al-Zamool near the UAE's border with Oman and Saudi Arabia. — AFP

indigenous species. For years, the main goal has been a basic one - ensuring the oryx can survive by focusing on "helping the animals here reproduce and multiply", said sanctuary spokesman Hamed bin Mahmoud Al-Harsousi.

But now, as numbers have ticked up from just 100 some two decades ago to almost 750 today, the authorities began eyeing another role for the reserve.

Continued on Page 11

# Apparatus' handling of bedoon problems absolute failure: MP

## Public sector must be exclusive to citizens: Lawmaker

By A Saleh

KUWAIT: MP Nasser Al-Dousery stressed that even though the parliament rejected his proposal to form a special committee to handle the affairs of bedoons (stateless people), he still believes that bedoons have been subjected to a lot of injustice and should not be deprived of their civil rights. Dousery added in a statement that he will resume following up proposals that he and his colleagues made in the previous term, including subjecting the currently independent Central Apparatus for Illegal Residents Affairs to the Interior Ministry following what he described as an 'absolute failure' in solving bedoons' problems. He also called for solving the problems of bedoons who had been forced to get fake passports only to get their pension as well as suggesting granting citizenship to at least 2,000 of those meeting the conditions this year.

### Public reaction

MP Riyadh Al-Adsani said that he was a member of a parliamentary committee formed to probe the multi-million-dinar bank deposits' case in the two previous parliaments, saying that he brought up lists containing the names of politicians in question and sums deposited in each of their bank accounts. Commenting on the National Assembly's break-in case, Adsani said that the incident happened as a form of public reaction against the sudden increase in some lawmakers' bank accounts, and promised to expose the truth by holding whoever was involved accountable. He also noted that those who broke into the parliament did not stay inside for long and did not form a rally inside, which calls for acquitting them from such charges.

### Public sector

MP Khalil Al-Saleh said that the parliamentary replacement and employment committee will meet tomorrow to set a road map for its work and stressed that approving the formation of the committee was a

great step towards activating the parliament's role in this regard. Saleh also expressed hopes that the government will cooperate with the committee to solve the unemployment problem because it is high time that employment in the public sector is made exclusively for citizens. He added that the committee will work on gradually replacing expatriates with citizens in the public sector until the unemployment problem is solved. He added that figures show an increase in appointing expats in state departments, who now make up 30 percent of manpower in the public sector with an increase of 2.5 percent compared to 2012.



MP Nasser Al-Dousery



MP Riyadh Al-Adsani



MP Khalil Al-Saleh

### Housing units

The Public Authority for Housing Welfare recently excluded 227 out of the total of 693 housing applications filed by disabled citizens to receive housing units in Southern Khaitan, said informed official sources, noting that 32.1 percent of the applicants filing to get one of the 1,448 units in the project were citizens with disabilities. The sources added that accepting allocation applications from disabled citizens does not necessarily mean they will get the unit as allocation is done according to date and type of application, as recommended by former housing minister Yasser Abul.

### Disciplinary penalties

The oil sector recently imposed some administrative disciplinary penalties on employees who had violated regulations set by Kuwait Petroleum Corporation (KPC) and its subsidiaries. The new

penalties start with written notices and end up with dismissal except in two cases when a violator is immediately dismissed if he works under the effect of or possesses alcohol or drugs on work sites, carries matches, lighters, flammable substances or smokes in restricted areas. The new strict penalties' chart also includes dismissal in case of disobeying work-related instructions from superiors or violating the safety, health and environmental instructions.

### MPW projects

The Ministry of Public Works (MPW) stressed that the contractors in Sheikh Jaber Causeway project had not committed any punishable safety violations of the contract's conditions, adding that there is full coordination and cooperation concerning all projects supervised by the Public Roads Authority. Commenting on cancelling the Jahra ministries complex project, MPW said that the cabinet had issued a decision during a meeting held on July 7, 2017 pertaining with authorizing MPW to build service centers in West Oyoun, South Metla', Nawaf Al-Ahmed City, Jahra City and Sabah Al-Ahmad City with accordance to the fourth structural plan, instead of the ministries complex, as suggested by the structural plan's advisors.

## Kuwaitis 3rd largest real estate buyers in Turkey in Nov

ANKARA: Kuwaitis bought 151 real estate properties in Turkey last month, ranking third after Iraqis, 405, and Saudis 239, official data revealed. Russians came fourth,

135, and Afghans fifth, 105, according to data revealed by the Turkish Statistical Institute on Friday. Real estate sales to foreigners reached 2,152 real estate in November, a rise of 21.4 percent year-on-year.

Istanbul topped the list of cities targeted by real estate buyers, 728, followed by Antalya, 491, then Bursa, 142, and Yalova, 128, and finally Sakarya, 94. Generally, real estate sales in Turkey hit 122,732 units in November, marking a fall of 7.5 percent compared to the same month in 2016. —KUNA

## Murder-suicide probe in Bneid Al-Gar crime

By Hanan Al-Saadoun and Agencies

KUWAIT: Police are investigating a possible murder-suicide case involving a Bneid Al-Gar resident believed to have stabbed his girlfriend to death before taking his own life. Police and paramedics headed to a building in the area in response to an emergency call, and found an Asian man lying dead in the building's yard. Investigations revealed that the man had leaped to his death from a seventh floor apartment, where police later found a woman dead from a stab wound in the neck. Preliminary investigations indicate that the man likely killed his girlfriend following a dispute then committed suicide. Police could not find any IDs on the scene. Investigations are ongoing to identify the two and reveal the exact circumstances of the case.

### Smuggling foiled

Kuwait International Airport customs officials foiled an Arab man's attempt to smuggle 200 Tramadol tablets into Kuwait, which he had kept inside his body. When the suspect passed through the body X-ray system, foreign objects were found inside his body. The man was taken to Farwaniya Hospital where the drugs, including two pieces of hashish, were removed under medical supervision. The man was taken to the proper authorities after that for further action. Separately, two Asians were sent to Drugs Control General Department when 23 imported liquor bottles and 65 water bottles believed to contain liquor were found in their car.

### Drug abuse

Farwaniya police arrested a man who was caught smoking a joint in his car behind a co-operative society in Andalus. Patrol officers also found half a joint inside the man's car. He was sent to concerned authorities.

### Traffic dispute

A man and a woman, both citizens, got into a dispute over traffic. The dispute escalated, resulting in an assault while causing a traffic jam. Police took both to the police station and charged them accordingly.

### Cross-dresser arrested

A male citizen was arrested for wearing women's clothes and lipstick. Police found a bag full of makeup with him in Fintas. He was taken to vice detectives departments.

### Fight

Two Syrian neighbors ended up in Fintas police station after exchanging blows. The two women started a fight accusing each other of gossiping which resulted in their husbands' involvement. Neighbors called police who took them to the police station. Meanwhile, two bedoons attacked a Gulf national who went to their diwaniya. The victim handed police a medical report stating that he suffered a fractured hand. A heated discussion between the three escalated into a fight where the two bedoon brothers beat their foe up before kicking him out of the diwaniya.

## Greece's top lawmaker invited to visit Kuwait

BRUSSELS: Acting charge d'Affaires at the Kuwaiti Embassy in Athens Mubarak Al-Hajri met with Greek parliament speaker Nikos Voutsis on Friday. During the meeting, Hajri delivered Voutsis a letter from Kuwaiti National Assembly Speaker Marzouq Al-Ghanem, the Kuwaiti diplomat said. Ghanem's letter included an invitation to Greece's top maker to visit the State of Kuwait, he added. —KUNA

local spotlight

## Domestic labor: Luxury or need?



By Muna Al-Fuzai

Muna@kuwaittimes.net

A huge debate is on these days in the Kuwaiti society over the high cost of recruiting a new domestic worker and the entry of a new government company in the labor market as a solution to control the problem of high fees for domestic labor recruitment. I believe that domestic labor is not a need or luxury - as a consumerist society, we should deal with the issue the same way as the fast food industry. This is my personal opinion regarding the subject of domestic employment in Kuwait.

Let us be clear - in Kuwait, many citizens and expatriates, whether Arabs or others, depend on domestic workers, and of course they want to get the best in terms of fees. It is really unfortunate that domestic workers have become a necessity for many people. They think that they cannot feel comfortable except in the presence of a servant, whether a man or a woman, and even force them to travel with them because they do not want to take care of their children or cook or clean or prepare their own things.

The total number of domestic workers in Kuwait is around 669,000 laborers. The department of domestic labor in 2016 issued 27 suspension orders to some domestic labor offices for a period of three to six months, while revoking the license of 68 offices for violations of the domestic employment law.

I think that the problem of domestic labor is a problem of the culture of the society that is dominated by laziness, dependency and avoiding family responsibilities. What is the need to hire a maid for a small family consisting of one child, for example, or as some believe there must be a maid for each child? It is a wrong culture and has negative repercussions on society.

There is an absence of the understanding and acceptance of the idea that a domestic worker is an employee with a work contract and has rights and duties, and is not enslaved. The only difference is that at the end of the day, he/she sleeps in the same house with the family. The dispute between many people and the domestic labor offices led the government to establish a government company to reduce the high fees of recruitment, where the rates have exceeded more than KD 1,000.

Al-Durra Company for Domestic Work was established in accordance with law no. 69 of 2015 as a Kuwaiti company specialized in recruiting workers. Its ownership is divided between the Union of Cooperative Societies (60 percent), the Kuwait Investment Authority (10 percent), the Public Institution for Social Insurance (10 percent) and Kuwait Airways (10 percent).

But some people are wondering if this modern company will be able to resolve this social dilemma within two years of its establishment. I think that such a perception is illogical. A new company cannot enter this old trade market and impose its terms easily. It needs time, just as any other trade. I wish the government had tried to develop a specific approach in dealing with the subject, starting with the existing offices, because they know how things work either in Kuwait or offices abroad.

The talk about the existence of some pressure against the new government company should not be ignored without the intervention of the government, because it is a company that has been established with the money of many government agencies. I think the high recruitment fees of domestic labor is a normal thing, because at the end of the day, it is pure trade.

I agree that it is necessary to establish controls on bringing domestic workers on everyone, starting with determining the number of workers depending on the family size. Also, the strictness and verification of the possibility of the family owner to meet the duties prescribed both in terms of wages and weekly leave for the worker is imperative, along with not forcing non-Muslims to wear the hijab and to work specific hours. These are minor but essential rights. I believe that unless we resolve all these issues, the fees will only be one element of an endless chain.

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Local

# Entrepreneurs pitch startups to Kuwait's investment community at Zain Demo Day

## Company concludes its Zain Great Idea accelerator program

### Who are Zain's entrepreneurs?

**\* Khaled Al-Mutawa: StudentHub**  
StudentHub is a recruitment platform that provides students and fresh graduates with career opportunities that include full and part-time jobs, internship programs, and volunteering opportunities. The platform allows students to gain experience and help build their CVs.

**\* Mohammad Al-Dakheel: Scoot**  
Scoot is an application developed to ease the process of placing and processing pick-up orders in restaurants and cafes without the need to wait in lines. It helps both customers and vendors by providing them with an easy-to-use app and a hassle-free back-end.

**\* Fahad Al-Nouri: Yalfish**  
Yalfish is the first online store specialized in seafood delivery, allowing customers to conveniently make their payments using credit/debit cards utilizing the online payment feature, POS devices, or cash upon delivery.

**\* Nasser Al-Qatami: Orddr**  
Orddr.com is the B2B platform for the food industry, connecting major food suppliers to hotels, restaurants, and cafes. It provides extra value through tools such as sales management, in-depth analytics, and reporting for easy invoicing.

**\* Ahmad Al-Obaid: Armada**  
Armada is a marketplace for last mile delivery services that utilize a crowd-sourced fleet sourced from logistics partners and freelance drivers. Armada has three main products: an on-demand delivery platform, a delivery API, and an enterprise fleet solution.

**\* Abdulwahab Al-Zankawi: Swap**  
Swap is a secure, fast and simple application that allows peer-to-peer money transfers.

**\* Mai Al-Razuqi: MyDikaan**  
MyDikaan.com is an online fashion marketplace that targets small to medium businesses, allowing local entrepreneurs to sell their products and showcase their talents in a unique one-stop shop destination.

**\* Khalid Al-Amiri: Li3ib**  
Li3ib is a sports booking platform that solves two main issues for the casual athlete: where to play and who to play with. Our platform allows users to discover new sports venues, select and pay for the specific hour they prefer, and invite their friends all through the convenience of their smartphones.

**\* Noora Al-Askar: Nutribox**  
Nutribox is your personal nutritionist in your pocket! An interactive on-demand healthy food and nutrition marketplace. Our vision is to reimagine healthy eating in the Arab World, becoming the biggest market player, with a mission to positively empower people to lead healthier lives.

**\* Noor Al-Otaibi: Day Out**  
Day Out is a comprehensive child focused marketplace, which allows parents to easily locate and book classes and/or activities for their children on demand. We aim to provide families and vendors with the most simple and convenient way to connect.

**\* Yousef Al-Fares: Tic**  
What lasts longer than a marathon? Great race memory. Tic is a platform that helps sports event organizers to provide their thousands of participants to document the achievements and their hard work with photos that will last forever.

**\* Abdulla Al-Osaimi: Displayed**  
Displayed is a cloud-based content management system that has various models. Currently, it enables business owners to have their own unique digital display menu/brochure App without any coding or design experience. Optimize your layout to promote special products, services and offers. Build customer loyalty and engagement. Manage your content instantly from anywhere. Displayed does it all in a snap!



Eaman Al-Roudhan delivers her speech.



Eaman Al-Roudhan and Zain's executive management are pictured at the event.

**KUWAIT:** Zain, the leading telecommunications company in Kuwait, recently concluded the fourth edition of its Zain Great Idea accelerator program, where Zain's entrepreneurs pitched their startups to Kuwait's investment community at Zain Demo Day, the final phase of the program.

Zain Demo Day, the final phase of Zain Great Idea, aimed at providing Zain's 12 entrepreneurs with the opportunity to meet capital ventures, investment firms, and investors who showed interest in their bright tech startups. The event witnessed the attendance of Zain's executive management headed by Zain Kuwait Chief Executive Officer Eaman Al-Roudhan.

During her opening speech, Roudhan said: "I would like to thank our strategic partners Brilliant Lab and Mind The Bridge for their exceptional support, which led our program to the success it enjoys today."

Roudhan continued: "throughout the past three editions of ZGI and until the fourth edition that we are concluding today, our main goal has always been to support innovation and entrepreneurship in Kuwait by offering a healthy environment up to international standards for creative Kuwaiti youth who have great ideas. We are proud that we have embraced and trained hundreds of Kuwaiti innovators and helped accelerate their projects from ideas on paper and into real business that operate in the market."

Roudhan added: "Zain strongly believes in the role played by technology and telecommunications in our lives nowadays. Looking at the young demographics of our society, it is important to direct our support and empowerment at young people and drive their creativity into the future. We look at startups as the perfect environment to find such young innovators and help drive them into success."

Roudhan concluded: "I would like to thank all who contributed in making this program a success. I would also like to thank the investors who attended today and showcased their interest in supporting our entrepreneurs. Finally, I would like to thank the entrepreneurs' families, who are considered their first

and most important supporters during their journey to success."

### Innovation strategy

The Zain Great Idea (ZGI) accelerator program is an initiative established by Zain in association with Brilliant Lab, a startup accelerator Service from Kuwait, and Mind The Bridge, a global organization bridging the world through entrepreneurship education for startups, enterprises and investors to succeed in global markets. Mind The Bridge is based in Silicon Valley with offices in San Francisco and London.

ZGI has been one of the most successful initiatives Zain presented to the Kuwaiti market as part of its comprehensive innovation and entrepreneurship strategy. Throughout three successful two-year programs (2010-11, 2013-14, and 2015-16), ZGI empowered, trained, and invested in hundreds of creative and driven Kuwaiti youth, of which many now own thriving and active Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (SMEs) to this day.

The first phase of the program, the ZGI boot camp, lasted for over two weeks at the company's main headquarters, where the participants learned about the tech startup culture and workings from leading mentors from Stanford University, IE Business school, entrepreneurs and regional and international venture capital firms. From over 130 participants, 12 bright entrepreneurs were chosen to continue to the second phase, the International Accelerator Program in Silicon Valley, London, and Berlin.

Throughout two weeks at Silicon Valley, one week at London, and a day at Berlin, Zain's entrepreneurs underwent intensive workshops, seminars, and field visits to the biggest tech companies in the world to enrich their knowledge and further develop their startups. During the final phase, the ZGI Demo Day, Zain brought together its entrepreneurs with Kuwait's investment community, where they showcased their startups to investors and venture capitals and had the chance to fully-launch their ideas in the market.



### Zain committed to supporting innovation



Eaman Al-Roudhan is seen with the attendees during the event.



An entrepreneur showcases his tech startup.



Waleed Al-Khashti delivers his speech.

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TIK TOK (SoKu, The Avenues): 22200726  
Al Hamra Luxury Center: 22270207

## Local

# Grand Zoo: Kuwaiti dream project in the works

## KD 112 million project proposed west of Jahra Road

**KUWAIT:** While many people like to visit the current zoo in Al-Omariya area, especially during the winter season, a dream for a grand facility to host animals of various kinds is still lingering in the minds of people living in Kuwait. The Public Authority for Agriculture Affairs and Fish Resources (PAAAFR) recently proposed a KD 112 million (\$336 million) Grand Zoo project to be opened west of Jahra Road.

Top officials at PAAAFR, including Director General Faisal Al-Hasawi and Deputy Director Dr Ali Al-Qattan, said that the project, which will attract millions of visitors, was still in its early stages. The project will be separated into five zones, which includes parking, entry and exit gates, and open-air animals' displays, in addition to areas for services, paths, and utilities.

The project will generate job opportunities for both Kuwaitis and expatriates. The private sector might be involved in the process of building the zoo. The project had been planned since the 1970s and 1980s; however, it was put on halt due to the Iraqi invasion.

The project came back to light in 2008 and PAAAFR was assigned to study its prospects. The initial estimate of the project was at KD 20 million (\$60 million). The current zoo in Omariya, opened in 1968, will continue to operate, but the grand zoo project will be more of an open-air experience. —KUNA



KUWAIT: Pictures of animals in the Omariya zoo. —KUNA

## 23rd group of participants graduate from 'ABK Academy'

**KUWAIT:** Al-Ahli Bank of Kuwait (ABK) congratulated the 23rd group of students who recently graduated from the 'ABK Academy,' during a ceremony that was held for the 20 participants who successfully completed the four week intensive program.

The 23rd round of training consisted of two main parts. The first was classroom facilitation focused and the second was 'on the job' training, whereby the candidates had the opportunity to be fully engaged in the work culture within the Bank, and the day to day operations that presented them with a valuable hands on experience.

ABK Academy has graduated a total of 518 candidates to date; preparing a substantial number of individuals to take on jobs within the bank. This type of involvement and contribution is of tremendous value not only to national youth, who gain a wealth of insight into banking as a profession, but also to the bank who has the chance to train and employ local talent.

Kuwait's youth have always been of primary interest to



KUWAIT: ABK's 23rd Academy graduates pose in a group photo with the bank's management.

ABK. With the launch of the ABK Academy in 2009, the bank has been able to encourage youth to consider a career in banking. The Academy covers multiple areas in the banking profession, with particular focus on customer

service, which is the backbone of any successful company.

The ABK Academy was launched as an educational platform that focuses on training students and individuals seeking a job opportunity in the banking sector. By

engaging with these participants, the bank is able to build on existing potential and talent, and better identify the areas in the bank, in which they could put this positive energy to work.

## Painter, researcher put final touches on 'Kuwait Panorama II'

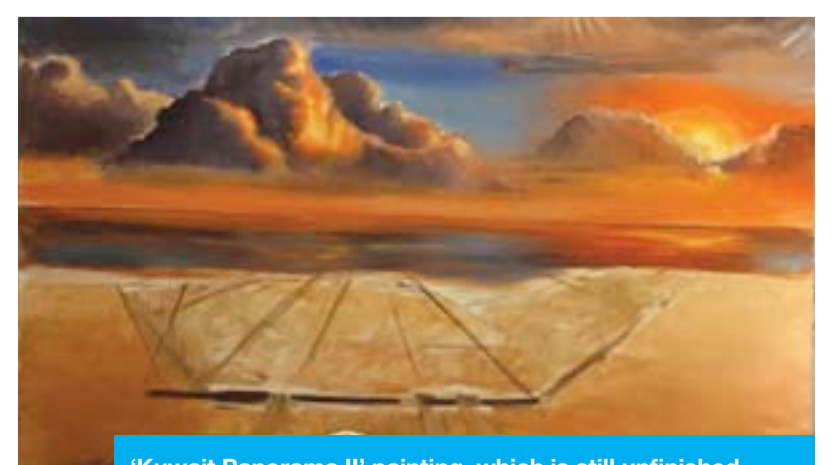
**ANKARA:** A Kuwaiti plastic artist and a researcher are working on the final touches of the 'Kuwait Panorama II,' an artwork that depicts the Second Kuwait City and the Second Soor (Wall) of 1860. Artist Asad Bunashi and researcher Bashar Khalifu, member of the Kuwait Historians Association, made the announcement on the sidelines of a gallery organized by the Kuwaiti embassy in Ankara, Turkey under the theme 'Mankind and wisdom of creation.' Bunashi said they have been facing difficulties to find reliable sources and clear pictures of the city in 1860.

Both the painter and the researcher collected the very few sources

and old maps from the Center for Research and Studies on Kuwait, and received assistance from a host of Kuwaiti historians for the historical painting that will show present and future generations the city looked in the past.

The basic lines of the painting have already been drawn, main roads, landmark buildings, mosques and towers, as well as the extension of streets since the 'Kuwait Panorama I' (Kuwait in 1760), with the population twice doubled over a century. There is still need for further sources, the British Library in London, the Ottoman Archive in Istanbul and a research center in Portugal, Bunashi said. He expected 'Kuwait Panorama II' to be completed and displayed over the coming six months.

Work on 'Kuwait Panorama I' started in 2006 and was accomplished in a year, depicting Kuwait's image in 1760. 'Kuwait Panorama II' is an extension of 'Panorama Kuwait I,' Khalifu said. He added that the first one comprised 17 landmarks of Kuwait, while the second will have up to 60. Khalifu pointed to huge similarities between the cities of Kuwait and Amsterdam. Kuwait is a typical image of the Netherlands' capital - known for its artistic heritage - in terms of the first, second and third walls, gates and roads. —KUNA



'Kuwait Panorama II' painting, which is still unfinished.

Local

Photo of the Day



KUWAIT: Coastal view of Kuwait City during sunset. —KUNA

Weekly roundup of Kuwait's charitable action

**KUWAIT:** Living up to its UN-bestowed status as an International Humanitarian Center, Kuwait continued providing humanitarian aid to some countries all over the world throughout the week. Starting from Riyadh, Kuwait's Patients Helping Fund (PHF) on Sunday launched a clinic at Aden International Airport in Yemen, which aims to provide urgent healthcare to incoming and outgoing travellers. In a statement in Riyadh, PHF said the airport expressed gratitude for the initiative, which witnessed the construction of the clinic and stocking it up with necessary medicine and equipment.

The Kuwait-established fund has made tangible contributions to healthcare facilities in the governorate of Aden, providing them with equipment and ambulances, mentioned the airport's director Tareq Abdo.

Since December of 2015, the 'Kuwait by your side' campaign had been providing non-stop relief aid and humanitarian support to the Yemeni people after the war there crippled the country. The campaign issued a report from its headquarters in Aden, Yemen, recounting two years of humanitarian efforts. Despite the ongoing war as well as the huge natural and logistic obstacles, the campaign managed to deliver necessities in addition to food and water to the most devastated areas in Yemen.

The campaign distributed \$100 million worth of relief aid and materials in three phases with each costing \$17, \$23, \$53 million respectively. The current chair of the 'Kuwait by your side' campaign Raed Ibrahim said that the past two years saw the campaign aiding well-off Yemenis as well as the poor, affirming that the current situation in Yemen had left everyone affected. In coordination with the legitimate Yemeni government in Aden, the campaign focused its efforts in providing water, education, health, refuge, and food. The campaign was launched by His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah as part of various Kuwaiti groups providing relief aid to war-stricken Yemen. Meanwhile, the campaign has handed over a power line for a water project in the town of Shibam, Hadramout Governorate, Yemen, after it was constructed. The project will help secure stable supply of drinking water for people in the town, the campaign said in a statement Tuesday.

Up to 60,000 people in the Shibam District will benefit from the project whose total costs hit YER 22 million (\$90,000), the statement quoted the top official of the Authority of Water and Sanitation in Wadi Hadramout. Director General Amer Al-Amri said that the newly established power line would help people a lot.

Praising Kuwait's major humanitarian role in Yemen, Amri thanked the Kuwaiti-Yemeni Relief Agency for the

projects that enhance the governmental authority. Director of the power line project in "Kuwait by your side" Salim Bashmaha, said that it is the sixth of its kind the campaign has carried out in Hadramout. It is one of the strategic projects to provide water security in the Governorate, he stressed. In 2018, the campaign is planning several projects to provide water and other services in Hadramout.

Syria crisis

In Amman, the UN children's organization has said Kuwait has been one of UNICEF's largest donors to help children affected by the Syria crisis as its contributions to the fund since 2013 has reached \$144 million.

"Generous contributions from the State of Kuwait have helped UNICEF expand its assistance to children affected by the crisis in Syria," Geert Cappelaere, UNICEF's Regional Director for the Middle East and North Africa, said in a press statement Tuesday. Thanks to this funding, UNICEF will continue providing children inside Syria and refugee host countries with essential support for water, sanitation, hygiene, education, health and nutrition, he added. The current conflict in Syria that entered its seventh year continues to hit children the hardest inside Syria and in neighboring countries, where millions are living as refugees.

With Kuwait's backing, UNICEF and partners have reached 15.5 million people with essential humanitarian assistance this year in Syria, he said. The UNICEF official noted that nearly two million children were enrolled in formal education and nearly one million nursing and pregnant mothers were counseled on appropriate nutrition for their young children and babies. He indicated that between 2014 and 2017, UNICEF was able to rehabilitate water supply systems, provide water treatment disinfectants and water purification tablets.

UNICEF praises Kuwait and its people for leveraging global support for children impacted by the crisis in Syria, he pointed out. UNICEF continues to depend on Kuwait and its people as a major donor for humanitarian and development aid for the world's most vulnerable children, he concluded. In Gaza, a sum of \$3.96 million, the third and final part of a Kuwaiti donation for the reconstruction of the Gaza Strip, will be disbursed to beneficiaries soon, the Palestinian government said on Wednesday.

Up to 560 families, whose houses were destroyed in the Israeli 2014 war on Gaza will benefit from the sum, Palestinian Minister of Public Works and Housing Mufeed Hasayneh said. In the name of the Palestinian leadership and people, Hasayneh thanked His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, the Kuwait Fund for Arab Economic Development (KFAED) and the Kuwaiti people for their non-stop support to the Palestinian people. In October 2014, Kuwait pledged \$200 million as part the \$5.4 billion donation made at Cairo's donors conference for the Gaza Strip. —KUNA

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Pakistan Hazaras find a safe space in social venture

## 'At least 10,000 killed' in 1989 Tiananmen crackdown

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DHADING, Nepal: Nepali Christians take part in a church service in Lapa village in Dhading, some 100 kms northwest of Kathmandu. Despite strict laws that ban religious conversion, Christianity has spread rapidly over the last two decades in Nepal, where many see it as an escape from the deeply entrenched caste system. —AFP

# Christianity spreads despite conversion ban

## An escape from Nepal's deeply entrenched caste system

**RICHET:** More than two years after an earthquake flattened the Nepali village of Richet, most residents are still living in makeshift shelters. Only the church has been rebuilt—paid for by Christian missionaries whose influence in the mainly Hindu country is growing. Despite strict laws that ban religious conversion, Christianity has spread rapidly over the last two decades in Nepal, where many see it as an escape from the deeply entrenched caste system. The Himalayan nation was ruled by a Hindu monarchy for over two centuries until the overthrow of the monarchy in 2008 and also has a strong Buddhist tradition, particularly in the mountainous north.

But the remote Lapa Valley where Richet is located is now predominantly Christian. Many residents are recent converts to the faith, among them Rika Tamang, who became a Christian after his mother fell ill and the family struggled to pay for the animal sacrifices a local shaman encouraged them to make. "Whatever I had, I had to offer as a sacrifice to god," said Tamang, now the pastor of his village in the Lapa Valley. "Once I converted to Christianity I didn't have to make sacrifices. I was relieved of that burden."

According to the 2011 government census, Christians make up less than 1.5 percent of Nepal's population of 29

million. But Christian groups estimate the number at more than 3 million. Locals said the census tended to classify people by the faith associated with their family name, meaning many converts were excluded. Richet is in the northern district of Dhading, one of the first areas where Christianity took hold. It has since spread throughout the country through an active network of evangelical churches. But some say well-funded foreign missionaries are using aid to convert people in the impoverished country.

### Community tensions

In Richet the dust had only just begun to settle from the powerful earthquake in April 2015 when a group of South Korean and Singaporean missionaries turned up. They sur-

veyed the damage and left. A few months later bags of cement arrived to rebuild the village's church. It was the same story in the nearby village of Kachet, where a new church paid for by South Korean missionaries was nearing completion when AFP visited recently.

"We are happy that we don't need to be under the sky when we go to church for prayers," said Richet resident Aman Tamang. "But we would be happier if we had got grants for rebuilding our homes as well." Prashant Tamang, a community leader in the nearby village of Borang that has clung to its

Buddhist heritage, said the selective distribution of aid had created tensions between communities. "Dispute arises sometimes when Christians pressure poor people to adopt their religion by helping them in the time of need," he said.

### Jail for proselytizing

Proselytizing has long been illegal in Nepal. But a new criminal code that will come into force in August 2018 increases the potential jail sentence from three to five years and states that foreigners sentenced of the crime will be deported after serving their time. Activists say it seeks to curb the rapidly growing Christian community, and have drawn parallels with Pakistan's strict blasphemy laws, which are often used to stir mob violence against minority groups.

"We have seen how that has played out in Pakistan. If you have inadequate safeguards then the laws in Nepal can be misused as well," said Steven Selvaraj, South Asia expert with the UK-based Christian Solidarity Worldwide advocacy group. Nepal's growing network of evangelical churches continues to draw people, and many are concerned that the new law could be used against them. "The church in Nepal is taught in a way that all believers are taking the commandment of Jesus Christ to go out and tell others about Jesus," said Tanka Subedi, a Kathmandu pastor. "So there is quite a big risk that they may be arrested and given trouble, put in jail and also fined."—AFP



## Proselytizing has long been illegal in Nepal

## Catalonia: What next?

**BARCELONA:** The victory of the separatist camp and parallel success of an anti-secession party in Catalan elections highlights the region's stark division and leaves it exposed to huge political and economic uncertainty, analysts say.

### Divided

Voters in the wealthy Spanish region on Thursday handed three separatist groupings a new absolute majority in parliament. Their supporters were uncowed by turmoil over their failed bid for secession, which has seen Madrid impose direct control on the region. Anti-secession party Ciudadanos also scored high, winning the biggest result of any individual party with 37 out of 135 seats. That was a sign of division in the region, despite widespread outrage at Madrid's hardline stance on the crisis. "We're now in a more polarized society that is at loggerheads," said Oriol Bartomeus, politics professor at the Autonomous University of Barcelona. "The possibility of agreeing on a solution is more remote now than a year ago."

### Puigdemont home?

While Ciudadanos won the most votes and seats, it remains far behind the three separatist groupings combined and lacks suitable coalition partners. So the onus is on the three separatist groupings to join forces to form a regional government—seen as a likely outcome despite the divisions among them. The list headed up by Carles Puigdemont, who was sacked as Catalan president by Madrid, came second. But he is in self-imposed exile in Belgium, wanted in Spain on charges of rebellion, sedition and misuse of public funds.

His former deputy Oriol Junqueras and other Catalan leaders are in jail pending a probe into the same charges. Rafael Arenas, law professor at the Autonomous University of Barcelona, says Puigdemont could choose to come back, which would mean immediate detention. He could still be sworn in as an MP but would be unable to attend parliamentary sessions, says Arenas, a scenario that would bode "confrontation" and "scandal." The other option would be for Puigdemont to remain in Belgium, and he and his jailed



BRUSSELS: Axed Catalan president Carles Puigdemont smiles during a press conference in Brussels, days after the Catalonia's regional election. —AFP

deputies hand over their seats to their number-two candidates and let them form a government.

### Other secession bid?

Whether separatists will attempt another push for independence remains a mystery. For Ines Arrimadas, Ciudadanos' candidate in Catalonia, the region's stark divide doesn't give them a mandate to do so. "The independence drive didn't make sense yesterday, and today it makes even less sense," she said Friday. There will be fresh pressure for negotiations between Madrid and the separatist camp. But Spanish Prime Minister Mariano Rajoy on Friday rejected a call by Puigdemont to meet him face to face.

### Economic consequences

The independence drive has hit Catalonia's dynamic economy. As uncertainty persists, tourism has cooled, as have employment and spending. More than 3,100 companies have moved their legal headquarters away, and the continued uncertainty won't help. "The regional economic outlook is expected to deteriorate further, with knock-on effects for the national economy unless growth in other regions can compensate," ratings agency Moody's said. "No one is going to invest in Catalonia until the situation clears up," added economist Jose Carlos Diez.—AFP

## Religion: France fights jihadists who recruit through sport

**GENTILLY:** Boxing, football, bodybuilding and jihad: most of those who have carried out terrorist attacks in France also played organized sport, and clubs, particularly in the Paris region, are worried. The problem might still be rare, but clubs are training their staff to detect radicalization on the playing fields in a country which has been frequently targeted by jihadists. "Leo, a young footballer, has changed recently. He is late to training because he says he has to go to the mosque to pray beforehand, and he refuses to shake hands with women. What do we do?"

Faced with this question from an instructor, the eight club officers from different sports round the table think hard. At the start of this training day, the only one of its kind in France, at the headquarters of the Ile de France sports committee in Gentilly, a suburb south of Paris, the regional vice-president, Patrick Karam, had exhorted those present to be "intransigent" in the face of radicalization. According to French government figures, of the 8.7 million registered members of sports clubs in France, some 829 individuals had been flagged as radicalized by November, 147 of those in the Ile de France. The proportion might be small, but sports club, led by martial arts, football and bodybuilding are—the government says—the number one place of radicalization in France, ahead of places of worship. In Lagny-sur-Marne, in the eastern suburbs of Paris, the local government banned two coaches suspected of radicalisation at a football club in November.

### Trapped by fundamentalists

In Paris, a former junior judo star was thrown off a coaching course because "he refused to salute the mat, saying that he could only bow his head before the Prophet and that he did not

wish to speak to women," one of the officials who tried in vain to persuade the trainee to change said. The home-grown terrorists who have carried out attacks in France have frequented sports clubs, and several were linked to each other in this way, said one of the speakers at Gentilly, Mederic Chapatoux.

"We are not asking you to be informers but to play your role as educators and to protect these youngsters," said Karam, assuring the participants of "absolute confidentiality" in the reporting process to protect them from possible retaliation in their neighborhoods. These are risks that one of the participants at Gentilly, Corinne—not her real name—knows well. Her son "was beaten up one night by a gang" who did not want the sports association she runs on their turf in the eastern suburbs of Paris. Corinne is angry with the local mayor who ended up closing the sports hall. "The unemployed young people have been trapped by drug trafficking or the Muslim fundamentalists. Several went to Iraq or Syria, two are in prison for planning a terrorist attack." As for the case of Leo, a dialogue with his brother and the support of social services allowed the young footballer to resolve his family problems which had pushed him to breaking point.

"We kept the channel with him open, which is essential," said the instructor who had come from National Committee of Liaison and Prevention (CNLAPS), which serves as a resource for clubs and associations. The CNLAPS instructor offered another case study based on real characters. "Dany and Robin, 24-year-old twins who had served time in prison for drug trafficking and had become very religious, divide their time between the mosque and sport. They have married and envisage going with their wives to Egypt to learn Arabic. They hang out with two youngsters from your boxing club."

In the face of a "strong signal" of the departure of a family member who might be going to Iraq or Syria and the risk of "infection" of the two young men, the majority of participants choose to signal the case to the authorities. "You must not hesitate. The recruiters move very fast," the instructor emphasized. After the session, a number of those present expressed their satisfaction. Corinne said she "feels less isolated" and that she sees that there are mechanisms "to help us." "This gives us guidelines and tools just in case," said Christine, who helps run a football club in the outskirts of Paris.—AFP

## International

# Abbas breaks with US over Jerusalem - for how long?

## Washington a 'dishonest mediator'

**RAMALLAH:** Palestinian president Mahmud Abbas has broken with Washington over its recognition of Jerusalem as Israel's capital but, popular as it is domestically, analysts question how long that tough stance can last. The 82-year-old Abbas is habitually cautious but, as protests have gripped the Palestinian territories since US President Donald Trump's controversial policy shift, he has adopted unusually harsh language.

He refused to receive US Vice President Mike Pence during a scheduled visit later cancelled earlier this week, and on Friday said he would accept no further US role in the Middle East peace process. Washington was a "dishonest mediator", he said, and "we will no longer accept any plan from it". That stance plays well with Palestinians for whom Jerusalem is the iconic symbol of nationhood. Some 86 percent of respondents said they backed severing ties with the United States in a recent opinion poll.

Abbas also announced they would seek full membership at the United Nations. But Washington is the only power that holds any real sway over Israel, currently ruled by what is widely regarded as the most right-wing government in its history. Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has repeatedly criticized the United Nations and the European Union, two of the other members of the so-called Quartet of mediators in the peace process. Abbas has sent envoys to the fourth-Russia-and also to China to try to secure their engagement.

But Israel knows no government is as well disposed to it as the United States and is unlikely to accept any other mediator. That puts Abbas in a bind. His popularity ratings have plummeted in recent years as his policy of working with Israel and the United States in the hope of a negotiated settlement has led nowhere. One recent poll found that some 70 percent of Palestinians want him to step down. His

term as president expired in 2009 but political divisions have prevented fresh polls.

### Saving face

Nine Palestinians have now been killed in clashes with Israeli troops since Trump's announcement and each one puts more pressure on Abbas not to back down. "The Americans for a long time have been with the Israelismore Zionist than the Zionists," one protester, Imad Mohammed said. "But Trump, because he is stupid and undiplomatic, has shown America's true face."

Offer Zalberg of the International Crisis Group think-tank said Abbas would look "to consolidate the international consensus in opposition to the US position and to refuse negotiations as long as there is no fair mediator." "Abbas sees this policy as his least worst option," Zalberg said. But he stressed there would be a cost-without Washington as mediator, there would be no more peace talks. Nadia Hijab, executive director of Palestinian think-tank Al-Shabaka, said Abbas would need to obtain significant concessions to return to the table without losing face. "The obvious thing would be for the Americans to step back from Jerusalem recognition but I can't see Trump doing that," she said. "Short of that, Abbas would look very bad if he went back to talks."

## Palestinian leader shuns US vice president

### On the ground

Grant Rumley, author of a book on Abbas, said Palestinian leaders know "deep down that they'll need the US at some point." As such, Trump has calculated "the Palestinians will eventually come back to the table," he said. In the short term, the Palestinians risked losing a significant chunk of the more than \$400 million in annual aid they get from Washington, Rumley said. Draft legislation currently going through Congress would make some aid



**RAMALLAH:** Israeli border guards detain a Palestinian man (left) during clashes with Palestinian protesters north of Ramallah in the Israeli occupied West Bank as protests continue in the region amid anger over the US president's recognition of Jerusalem as its capital. —AFP

conditional on Abbas blocking payments to the families of Palestinians killed while carrying out attacks against Israelis. Many Palestinians consider such attacks resistance against military occupation and Abbas has held out against cutting the payments for years. But without Trump's support, the so-called Taylor Force Act could see US aid cut by more than half.

Israel has also announced thousands of new homes in settlements in the Palestinian territories since Trump's

election, with his administration's public criticism of such expansions less vocal than under Barack Obama. Abbas's riposte has been a renewed drive for full recognition of Palestinian statehood but Rumley said that will do little to change the reality of Israeli occupation. "The international campaign has diminishing returns at this point. It was useful when peace talks were on the horizon for garnering leverage," he said. "International recognition does little to change the reality on the ground." —AFP

## Traders in Old Mosul rebuild their ruined market

**MOSUL:** Fed up with waiting for assistance from the Iraqi authorities to materialize, traders at the ravaged Bab Al-Saray market in Mosul's Old City are rebuilding their shattered businesses themselves. After months of silence, the sound of construction work and returning commerce is finally filling the historic district devastated by the months-long battle to force out the Islamic State group. "I was the first to open my shop some two months back after cleaning it up with the help of other traders," ironmonger Zanoun Younes Rajab, 44 said. The father of five and neighboring stallholders had to each fork out 25,000 dinars (\$20, 18 euros) just to clear the rubble blocking their street. In the neighboring alleys—where grocers and carpenters are looking to start plying their trades again—it is the same story.

### Still dangerous

The market, part of which dates back over 1,300 years to the time of the Umayyad caliphate, bears the scars of the fierce fighting that saw IS jihadists finally kicked out of Iraq's second city in July. Shopfronts are blasted, ceilings have caved in, wooden beams are broken, stocks have been plundered. Under the rubble lie rotting corpses of jihadists killed in street-to-street clashes or by air strikes from a US-led coalition.

There is not much left intact in what was once one of Mosul's busiest neighborhoods. Gateways leading into the market have been pulverized and accessing some areas remains dangerous because of the threat of unexploded munitions or IS booby traps, despite assurances by security officials. But this has not put off some traders from trying to bring the district back to life. Builders are busy fixing roofs or mending the shattered pavements. "We did not wait for the city authorities because they are very slow and it would surely take months longer," said spice seller Abu Ahmed.



**BENGHAZI:** Libyan armed forces cadets perform maneuvers during their graduation ceremony at the military academy in eastern Benghazi. —AFP

### 'No reconstruction plan'

Mayor Zouhair Al-Araji insists that local officials are doing all they can "with the little we have at our disposal". Most equipment was stolen or destroyed, electricity and water are still out in parts of town and many roads remain impassable. He instead points the finger of blame further up the chain to the authorities in Baghdad. "Up until now we have only been relying on ourselves as the central government still has no reconstruction plan for Mosul," he said. That means that it is

down to the market traders to try to return some of the missing life. Abu Nabil, 65, could not wait any longer as time slipped by after the official announcement of Mosul's liberation. His carpet stall is the oldest in the market and has been passed down from father to son for generations in his family. "I cannot imagine my life without my work and my shop, so today I am cleaning it up and starting to bring back everything I saved before the fighting," he said. "Our shop is our soul, we cannot live without it in peace." —AFP

## Jewish trove hidden from Nazis, Soviets gives up its secrets

**VILNIUS:** For decades, a confessional in a church in Lithuania's capital Vilnius kept a precious secret: a trove of documents offering an unprecedented glimpse into Jewish life in Eastern Europe before and during the Holocaust. The cache, with documents dating back to the mid-18th century, includes religious texts, Yiddish literature and poetry, testimonies about pogroms as well as autobiographies and photographs. "The diversity of material is breathtaking," David Fishman, professor of Jewish History at New York's Jewish Theological Seminary, told AFP via telephone, describing the discovery as a "total surprise". "It's almost like you could reconstruct Jewish life before the Holocaust based on these materials because there is no aspect and no region and no period that is missing," he added. The trove was discovered earlier this year during a cleanup of the church that was used as a book repository during Soviet times. The documents, together with a larger cache found in Vilnius nearly three decades ago, are "the most significant discovery for Jewish history since the discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls in the 1950s", Fishman said.

### 'Jerusalem of the North'

Among the most treasured finds are several original manuscripts of poems written in the Vilnius ghetto by celebrated Yiddish poet Avrom Sutzkever, including the haunting "To My Brother". "We had the versions that he reconstructed from memory and published right after the war," Fishman said of Sutzkever, who survived the Holocaust. "Now we have the manuscripts that he actually wrote in the ghetto and there are differences—that was a very powerful find." An 1857 agreement between the Jewish water carriers in Vilnius and the city's famous Ramailes rabbinic Talmudic academy, or yeshiva, offers a telling insight into everyday life 160 years ago. —AFP

## Clashes highlight fragility of South Sudan ceasefire

**ABA:** As South Sudan's warring parties haggled over a ceasefire deal this week, dozens of refugees streamed into neighboring Democratic Republic of Congo, fleeing what they said was a fresh government offensive. The apparent push to recapture the key rebel stronghold of Lasu came as mediators tabled a ceasefire agreement in Addis Ababa, which was signed by major parties to the four year conflict on Thursday and is to go into force on December 24.

However with South Sudanese rebel forces vowing to take back their stronghold of Lasu in Central Equatoria State—regardless of the ceasefire—the fragility of the deal was thrown into stark relief. "I'm not sure the government wants peace. If they wanted peace, why would they attack Lasu so that we have to run again with our children," said Betty Moriba, a 28-year-old mother of five. Having fled violence twice before, Moriba grabbed her children at the first sound of gunfire and ran towards the

DRC, but was unable to salvage any of the family's prized possessions.

She and other witnesses say President Salva Kiir's troops attacked Lasu on Sunday, which has served as the headquarters for the Riek Machar's SPLA-IO, the main opposition movement in South Sudan. "They came with armoured vehicles and machine-gun-mounted pick up trucks," SPLA-IO spokesman Lam Paul Gabriel told AFP over the phone from Kampala. Gabriel said the two sides fought each other for several hours on Monday morning before the rebels withdrew. He has vowed to launch a counter-offensive if government forces do not pull out.

Army spokesman Santo Domic Chol denied troops had launched an offensive on the town, accusing the rebels of attacking a government position as well as looting a village for food-forcing troops to step in to save civilians. "We have been ordered not to engage hostilities by pursuing rebels (but) at times we will fight if we are attacked in our positions which is what happened in Lasu."

However it was unclear what government position he was referring to—as both civilians and an official document released earlier this month indicated the area was under rebel control. "These government soldiers came from Yei and they were shooting guns and killing people.

That's what made us come this way," said James Mana, one of the fresh arrivals in the DRC, near the town of Aba. Congolese authorities registered more than 200 refugees in the last five days. Smoke could be seen rising from a village across the border.

### 'Cost and consequences'

South Sudan this month entered into its fifth year of a war that has killed tens of thousands of people and driven nearly four million from their homes. The UN Security Council warned last week that there would be "cost and consequences" for any side who blocks "last chance" peace efforts mediated by the regional authority IGAD, in a bid to revitalise a shattered peace agreement.

The peace deal was signed in 2015 to end 21 months of civil war between Kiir's government and Machar's rebels which broke out just two years after independence in 2011. However the deal effectively collapsed in July 2016, when fresh fighting in the capital Juba forced then-first vice president Machar out of the country and his supporters back to battling the government in the bush. Violence spread to the southern region of Equatoria, forcing over a million people to flock to neighboring Uganda and the DRC in what has become the biggest refugee crisis on the continent. —AFP

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## International

# For ailing US nuclear industry, new plants a shot in the arm

## Two new reactors at the Vogtle plant in Georgia

WASHINGTON: The US nuclear power industry got a boost this week when state authorities in Georgia gave the go-ahead to complete construction on two new reactors. But this may not reverse the industry's recent decline. The Georgia Public Service Commission on Thursday approved construction of Vogtle reactors three and four, the last planned reactors of this type in the United States. A project in South Carolina was halted in July.

The two new reactors at the Vogtle plant in Georgia are expected to enter service at the end of 2022. "Demonstrating we can build and complete new nuclear plants here in America will help us regain our leadership in a technology we invented," Maria Korsnick, president of the Nuclear Energy Institute in Washington, said in a statement. "America's pre-eminence in nuclear energy makes our country safer because it allows us to influence and control how this technology is used around the world."

Currently there are 99 reactors in the United States, accounting for about 20 percent of the country's electricity generation. But apart from the Vogtle project, no other reactor is under construction and none have come on line since last year. President Donald Trump has shown much more interest in reviving coal power than nuclear, even though Energy Secretary Rick Perry on Twitter called the Vogtle decision "an important milestone for the future of clean, reliable, and American nuclear energy!"

Nuclear power often is considered clean energy

because it does not contribute to climate change. But the industry's image took a beating after 1979's Three Mile Island accident, in Pennsylvania, which caused a radiation leak, followed by more serious accidents at Fukushima, Japan in 2011 and Chernobyl in Ukraine in 1986. No new US reactors were brought on line between 1996 and 2016, with the bulk of construction dating to the 1970s and 1980s. But the United States is still the world's largest producer of nuclear energy.

### 'Last new plant standing'

The bankruptcy earlier this year of one of the sector's main players, Westinghouse, which had been acquired by Japan's Toshiba, did not help matters. Its AP1000 technology is being used in the construction of the two new reactors at the Vogtle plant. Westinghouse collapsed under the weight of colossal debt, which Toshiba must now repay before it can sell off the

assets of the subsidiary, which still has eight AP1000 reactors in construction in the United States, South Korea and China, as well as a dozen projects in the planning stages.

While it does not contribute to climate change, environmental activists oppose nuclear power because of the risks it poses and the need to handle and process the radioactive waste it generates. The Southern Alliance for Clean Energy condemned the Vogtle plant approvals, calling the project mismanaged and five-years behind schedule, with costs having doubled to \$27 billion.



MIDDLETOWN: This file photo shows Three Mile Island Nuclear Generating Station site in Middletown, PA. The facility is on an island in the Susquehanna River, south of Harrisburg, the state capital. —AFP

"As the last new nuclear power plant standing this should be a lesson: these nuclear facilities cannot be built on time nor on budget," and are vulnerable to corruption and mismanagement, executive director Stephen Smith said in a statement. The Sierra Club had a similar reaction. "Georgia Power should scrap this disaster immediately and

instead transition away from dangerous nuclear and fossil fuel-based electric generation and toward a 100 percent clean energy economy that creates good jobs, protects our environment and shields our communities from the gross financial risks associated with bad bets like Vogtle," the organization said in a statement. —AFP

## US targets Russia 'Thieves-in-Law'

WASHINGTON: US authorities moved Friday to blacklist one of Russia's oldest and most notorious organized crime gangs, the so-called "Vory v Zakone" or "Thieves-in-Law." The group emerged from the Soviet Union's brutal gulags and its members are now kingpins in an underworld network that has spread far beyond Russia. Those prisoners who agree to live by its code on the outside, and are "crowned" with its secret tattoos, now operate in cities from East Asia to the United States.

Authorities have targeted the Thieves before, but the Treasury's designation of the entire network as a "Transnational Criminal Organization" is the first measure that treats them as a single group. And in doing so, Washington seems to be confirming that the threat posed by the fabled "Russian mafia" from the former Soviet republics is a more organized one than previously supposed.

"The Thieves-in-Law is a Eurasian crime syndicate that has been linked to a long list of illicit activity across the globe," said John Smith, director of the Treasury's Office of Foreign Assets Control. "Treasury is designating the Thieves-in-Law as part of a broader strategy to disrupt the financial infrastructure of transnational criminal organizations that pose a threat to the United States and our allies." Under the designation, US individuals and firms are banned from doing business with the group or designated persons linked to it, and any assets held by the Thieves on US soil can be frozen.

As a "TCO", the Thieves-in-Law join a list that includes outfits such as Japan's Yakuza racketeers, the Camorra mafia of Naples, Mexican cartel Los Zetas and the MS-13 drugs gang from Central America. In 2012, a former US administration had placed a group known as the "Brothers Circle" on the list. This gang active in robbery, racketeering and drug trafficking in Russia, Central Asia and the Gulf included some Thieves-in-Law, but at this stage US law did not designate the whole organization. On Friday, in addition to listing the Thieves-in-Law, the Treasury named four members-alleged veteran mobsters whose addresses and multiple identity papers span Russia, Central Asia, Israel, Belgium and Italy.

### Stalinist gulag

A luxury spa hotel in the Russian resort of Sochi is listed as a front organization and a Moscow publishing house and public relations agency is said to be owned by a Dubai-based suspect. Professional criminals developed traditions and rituals in the jails of the 19th century Russian Empire and in the prison camps of the 20th century Stalinist gulag system. Those who followed the code - refusing to assist state authority, renouncing family life, serving jail time and vowing never to make a living through honest means-are "crowned" as Vory v Zakone. After the fall of the Soviet Union, in Moscow's newly capitalist free-for-all Russia's organized crime gangs joined its oligarch investors and economic migrants on the road to the West. By 1995, US officials had arrested their first alleged Thief-in-Law in New York. He served nine years for extortion and was later expelled back to Russia.

More arrests have followed and this year an alleged Vory member was among two dozen people rounded up by US authorities for "violence, fraud, identity theft, and trafficking in stolen goods." The identities of the suspects blacklisted along with their organization on Friday give an insight into the global reach of the modern day organization. Zakhary Kalashov, described by Treasury as a "crowned Thief-in-Law" was extradited from the United Arab Emirates to Spain in 2006 on money-laundering charges. Deported to Russia in 2014, he has since been arrested there on extortion charges and is suspected of arms-trafficking. The 64-year-old is said to have been born in Georgia, but carries a Russian passport. —AFP

## Need for food, arms spurs Boko Haram attacks

KANO: A surge in Boko Haram attacks in Nigeria's restive northeast despite a sustained military offensive against the jihadists is being driven by a need to replenish food and weapon supplies, security and local sources say. In recent months, fighters from two of the main factions of the hardline Islamist group, led respectively by Abubakar Shekau and Abu Mus'ab Al-Barnawi, have launched attacks on troops, hit-and-run raids and suicide bombings in towns and villages across the region.

The upsurge followed a relative lull after months of military offensives against the insurgents which saw them routed from their strongholds, prompting the government to declare them a spent force. "The increased Boko Haram attacks are in desperate response to the ongoing military operations that have cut off the terrorists' supply lines for food, weapons and ammunitions," a senior military officer involved in the operation in Maiduguri, capital of Borno state said.

"They are fighting back to secure these essential items they so desperately need because they know they will die whichever way, as hunger is a silent killer," said the army officer, who asked not to be identified by name because he was not authorized to speak to the media. "No doubt Boko Haram (fighters) are starving and are desperately in search of food," agreed Mamman Sani, a fisherman in the town of Baga on the shores of Lake Chad. "They are attacking military locations for weapons and raiding villages for food," he added.

### Increasingly bold

In the latest such attacks, on December 13, fighters from the Barnawi faction, which has the backing of the Islamic State group, made a failed attempt to take over a military base in Mainok, a village outside Maiduguri, though they succeeded in seizing four vehicles, two of them armoured. On November 21, a Boko Haram suicide bomber blew himself up at a mosque in Mubi in neighbouring Adamawa state, killing at least 50 worshippers. Last month, fighters briefly overran Magumeri, about 50 kilometers north of Maiduguri, forcing troops to withdraw until reinforcements arrived.

And this month, two suicide bombers killed at least 13 people and injured more than 50 in Bui, a town about 185



GWOZA, Nigeria: Photo shows an aerial view shows part of Gwoza, north-eastern Nigeria. For several months, suicide attacks, raids on villages, or attacks against the Nigerian army perpetrated by jihadist group Boko Haram increased in northeastern Nigeria. —AFP

kilometres south of Maiduguri. Worried by the increased attacks, Nigeria's military authorities replaced the army commander in charge of the counter-insurgency operation in the region. "The terrorists are attacking military locations, particularly those with few troops, to cart away equipment, instill fear and bolster their capabilities," said a local militia member who is assisting the military in the fight against the jihadists.

He said that on December 10, Shekau, the shadowy leader of Boko Haram's other main faction and the former deputy of the group's founder, led about 400 fighters in an attack on a military post in Bita, a village near the border with Cameroon. He said the jihadists forced the troops to withdraw before hauling away weapons and heading back to their nearby sanctuary in the Sambisa forest—an area which the military claimed had been seized in December last year. The eight-year Boko Haram insurgency has

killed 20,000 people and forced 2.6 million out of the homes, prompting a humanitarian crisis in the region. The violence has also taken a heavy toll on a military already overstretched by unrest in Nigeria's oil-producing region along with efforts to halt clashes between farmers and herders, as well as by peacekeeping operations elsewhere in Africa. President Muhammadu Buhari said recently that Nigeria was considering recalling troops on peacekeeping missions in Guinea Bissau to bolster the counter-insurgency operation at home. On December 4, the two Boko Haram factions met in Duguri on Lake Chad to discuss a truce after days of clashes in the Dikwa area in northern Borno, according to sources close to the negotiation. The two sides agreed to forge a common front against the military, the sources added. But the peace talks collapsed days later after the killing of 18 members of Barnawi's faction by Shekau's fighters. —AFP

## Migrants risk lives on snowy Alpine paths to reach France

NEVACHE: African migrants are increasingly braving the snow-clad Alps in efforts to evade immigration police and reach France from Italy, often taking treacherous high-altitude passes that locals warn will lead to deaths. The Alps have seen weeks of heavy snowfall after an early onset of winter, making efforts to cross the border more difficult and dangerous than in previous years. "There's going to be a death any day now," Jean-Gabriel Ravary, a mountain guide based in the Alpine town of Nevache, told AFP. "There's a whole catalogue of dangers that could bring tragedy," said Ravary, who has worked in the region for 42 years.

Nevache can be reached via the Echelle pass which runs between Italy and France and lies at an altitude of 1,762 meters. Temperatures often dip to minus 20 degrees Celsius (minus 4 Fahrenheit) in the winter-not counting the wind chill factor. There is an easier route via the Montgenevre pass, but it is more heavily

patrolled by border police. Once on the French side migrants face the added risk of getting lost, according to activists who say signposts have been removed. Alain Mouchet, a volunteer and mountaineer who organizes nightly outings in search of stranded migrants, said between 10 and 12 people were arriving in the area every day.

Like the volunteers, Mouchet said the gendarmes are struggling with the arrivals: "They weren't hired to run after kids in the snow." Last Sunday, dozens of guides rallied together to warn of the risks faced by migrants attempting to make the crossing. Other locals have joined efforts to support the new arrivals, arguing that they have a duty to help people in danger. Police recently rescued one young man from Guinea from an avalanche, winching him out by helicopter. He was barefoot, according to a guide who gave his name only as Etienne. "He had gone through hell in Libya, in the Mediterranean, and now again maybe here in France," he said.

### People in distress

The migrants have typically been refused asylum in Italy, and want to try their luck in France-although under the so-called Dublin Regulation, France has the right to send them back across the border. Until recently it was relatively easy to cross into France thanks to the unmanned border between the two countries. But



NEVACHE: Mountain professionals stand linked together with ropes, as they take part in a rally to warn of the dangers to migrants in crossing passes in the Alps during the winter, in Nevache, French Alps. —AFP

monitoring has tightened as the volume of arrivals has grown in recent years.

And French President Emmanuel Macron, elected in May, has vowed that his government will be "inflexible" in its policy of expelling economic migrants who have

no right to asylum. Macron's centrist government has promised to open up new legal avenues for refugees to travel to France, while cracking down on others who are in France to avoid poverty back home, rather than war or persecution. —AFP



International

# Pakistani Hazara women find a safe space in social venture

## Shiite ethnic minority often targeted by extremists

QUETTA: Working at "Hazara", a restaurant in the Pakistani city of Quetta, is a potentially deadly political act: all of the greasy spoon's employees are female members of a Shiite ethnic minority often targeted by extremists. The outlet is named after the ethnic Hazara who make up a large part of Pakistan's Shiite minority, which accounts for about 20 percent of the country's 207-million Sunni-majority population.

The Hazara, whose Central Asian features make them easily recognizable, are a soft target for Sunni militants who consider them heretics. The Shiite community's presence is particularly strong in Quetta—the restive capital of impoverished Balochistan province—that also serves as the headquarters of the Afghan Taliban, and where sectarian attacks are frequent. The eatery is located in Hazara Town, one of two neighborhoods in Quetta where the community is guarded by armed checkpoints. The protection is necessary: Hazaras—who make up roughly 500,000 of the city's 2.3 million population—are living practically under siege.

In October, three Hazara vegetable vendors who ventured outside their enclave were shot in the head at point-blank range, just the latest in a series of attacks targeting the group. They still live with the violent memory of two attacks in January and February 2013 that killed nearly 200 of its members. Following the second, which hit a local market in Hazara Town, residents protested by refusing for several days to bury their dead—an emotional gesture in the Muslim world where the deceased must be buried on the same day or the next. The events had a powerful effect on Hameeda Ali Hazara, a member of the local community, whose house adjoins the site of the first attack.

"I told myself that I had to help the victims,"

Hameeda said. She set up Hazara restaurant, which opened two months ago, hoping to provide a way to help families and female victims of sectarian attacks. She has three employees who are all victims of violence, she said, including one who lost her husband during a bomb attack. According to Abdul Khaliq Hazara, chairman of the Hazara Democratic Party between 1,500 and 2,000 members of the community have been murdered in Balochistan. An additional 75,000 to 100,000 have fled violence elsewhere in the country or abroad with some "drowning at sea" before reaching their destination, he says.



### Hazaras living practically under siege

International Labor Office. Women's employment drops to two percent in the service sector in Balochistan, a place that operates largely according to patriarchal tribal customs. The meager incomes available to women generally come from home-made embroidery or small-scale trading at markets. "Opportunities to start a business or join a company are rare" for them, said Hameeda. Her restaurant initiative also aims to push the staff to "seize work opportunities instead of staying home with a needle and thread", she says.

A chance that Masooma—a cook and waitress at the eatery as well as a student—grasps: "I work here to earn money for my family but also to pay my schooling." "My family supports me in my decision to be employed here," she insists. To prevent inappropriate behavior from customers unused to seeing women at work, Hameeda posted signs urging consumers to be "pleasant to waitresses and talk to them with due regard for

**'Den of obscenity'**  
To the difficulty of being Hazara is added that of being a woman in very conservative community. In Pakistan, women account for just 25 percent of the labor force, according to the latest figures from the



QUETTA: Hameeda Ali Hazara (top left), who is from the Shiite ethnic minority Hazara community and runs the "Hazara" restaurant, chats with customers at the eatery in Hazara Town, a neighborhood in Quetta. —AFP

moral values". Cameras have also been installed as a security measure and in a bid to prevent harassment. "The atmosphere here is very quiet, anyone can come with their family," says patron Pervaiz Ahmad, a local banker.

"It's a good idea to support women in business," he adds, detailing the menu: chicken and rice, hamburger and fries, salad, and sodas. But not everyone is of the same opinion. Hameeda said she has been harassed and

threatened by those who brand her initiative a "disgrace" and a breach of "honor".

"I am continuously receiving threats on social media... and phone calls asking me to shut this restaurant because it is den of obscenity," she says, adding that she has called on authorities to guarantee her security. "Such things cannot discourage me," she says. "I am the real face of my Hazara community and Balochistan." —AFP

## 'At least 10,000 killed' in 1989 Tiananmen crackdown

BEIJING: At least 10,000 people were killed in the Chinese army's crackdown on pro-democracy protesters in Beijing's Tiananmen Square in June 1989, according to a newly released British diplomatic cable that recounts the bloodshed in gruesome detail. The document, made public more than 28 years after the event, describes injured girls being bayoneted, bodies being ground up by armored vehicles and human remains being flushed into the sewers. "Minimum estimate of civilian dead 10,000," the then British ambassador Alan Donald said in the secret telegram to London seen by AFP at Britain's National Archives.

The estimate, given on June 5, 1989, the day after the crackdown, is almost 10 times higher than that commonly accepted at the time of several hundred to more than a thousand dead. But experts questioned by AFP said the 10,000 figure seemed credible. Donald's account gives horrific details of the violence unleashed on the night of June 3-4, when the army entered Beijing to end seven weeks of protests on Tiananmen Square, the symbolic heart of Communist power.

During their advance, armored personnel carriers "opened fire on the crowd (both civilians and soldiers) before running over them in their APCs", wrote the ambassador. He said his source was a person who "was passing on information given him by a close friend who is currently a member of the State Council"—the Chinese cabinet. He said the source had previously proved reliable "and was careful to separate fact from speculation and rumor".

Once the soldiers arrived in Tiananmen Square, "students understood they were given one hour to leave square but after five minutes APCs attacked," Donald wrote.

"Students linked arms but were mown down including soldiers. APCs then ran over bodies time and time again to make 'pie' and remains collected by bulldozer. Remains incinerated and then hosed down drains." "Four wounded



BEIJING: File photo taken on June 4, 1989 shows a girl wounded during a clash between the army and students near Tiananmen Square in Beijing. —AFP

girl students begged for their lives but were bayoneted," Donald said, adding: "Army ambulances who attempted to give aid were shot up." At the end of June 1989, the Chinese government had said suppression of the "counter-revolutionary riots" had killed 200 civilians and several dozen police and military.

### 'Primitives'

Nearly three decades after the crackdown, the communist regime continues to forbid any debate on the subject, mention of which is banned from textbooks and the media, and censored on the Internet. There was no sign of reaction to the report on Chinese social media, where an army of online censors blocks any reference to the Tiananmen crackdown and most things critical of the Communist Party. Donald said the atrocities were committed by the 27th Army, who he described as "60 percent illiterate and are called primitives".

He said the crackdown had created deep rifts within the military and that "some members of the State Council con-

sidered that civil war is imminent". As to the credibility of the toll, former student protest leader Xiong Yan, who is now an American citizen, said: "I think it's reliable." China scholar Jean-Pierre Cabestan also said the figure was credible, pointing out that recently declassified US documents gave a similar assessment. "That's two pretty independent sources which say the same thing," said Cabestan, a professor at Hong Kong Baptist University.

The British ambassador's report was "not particularly astonishing considering how crowded it was in Beijing, the number of people mobilized" against the Chinese government, said Cabestan, who was in the Chinese capital in the days leading up to the crackdown. Former student leader Feng Congde, now also based in the United States, pointed out that Donald had sent another telegram three weeks later putting the death toll at between 2,700 and 3,400. Feng said that toll was quite credible and fitted with figures from the Chinese Red Cross, who at the time estimated 2,700 fatalities, and by student committees based on hospital reports.—AFP

## Trump looks to the sky to force Taleban to the table

ABOARD AIR FORCE TWO: The war in Afghanistan may be entering its 17th year, but screams of military jet engines in the twinkling skies above Bagram Airfield show no sign of quieting. This city-scale military base just north of Kabul has like similar facilities in Kandahar and Jalalabad—become central to Donald Trump's promise to succeed where his predecessors failed, and end the Afghan war on favorable terms.

Trump concluded a months-long strategy review in August. During that soul searching, the White House came to believe that the Obama administration underutilized America's total aerial superiority. The skies, they believe, could hold one key to unlocking the conflict. Trump will likely send a few thousand more troops to the country—a development sure to grab the headlines—but the days of having 100,000 US military personnel in the country are over. The ground war is likely to fall more

and more to Afghan government forces, and early political efforts will be trained, in part, on getting Pakistan to stop providing safe havens for jihadists across the border. But the first tangible moves have been a significant increase in the tempo and intensity of airstrikes, an effort to take the war to the Taleban. The US, which is the only foreign force in Afghanistan carrying out airstrikes, targeted the Taleban and Islamic State group militants with 751 bombs and missiles in September, the month after the strategy review.

That was up 50 percent from August and the highest since October 2010, according to US Air Force data. US Air Force personnel on the ground in Afghanistan report a significant shift in how airpower is being used. Before, jets patrolled for up to four hours waiting to provide air support to ground forces. But they often returned to Bagram without having fired a shot in anger.

### Chocks away

Today, according to Captain Lyndsey Horn, they are much more likely to come back having engaged the Taleban, the Islamic State group or having targeted an opium production facility. "For a long time here we stagnated," said a second officer. "The effects so far are positive, the long term effects are harder to tell." Vice President Mike Pence, who on Thursday became the most senior member of the Trump administration to visit Afghanistan,



JOINT BASE ANDREWS: US Vice President Mike Pence poses for photos with troops after arriving at Joint Base Andrews, Maryland on December 22, 2017. Pence returned from a surprise trip to Bagram Air Field in Afghanistan. —AFP

says the strategy is starting to make a difference in Taleban morale.

"President Ghani informed me that in 2017 we have eliminated more senior leaders of the Taleban than were eliminated in all the prior years combined," Pence said after his meeting in Kabul. "They have begun to see a sea change in the attitudes among the Taleban" he added. The Taleban "are now beginning to question their future,

and our hope is, as we take the fight to the enemy... that eventually the enemy will tire of losing and will be willing to come forward." Lofty claims of progress are hard to verify, and the Taleban were able to lift their momentum even after the deaths of their first two chiefs, including Mullah Akhtar Mansour who was killed by a US drone strike in 2015 ordered by Trump's predecessor Barack Obama. —AFP

### News in brief

#### Christmas attack plot

LOS ANGELES: Federal agents arrested a former US Marine on Friday for allegedly plotting a Christmas attack in San Francisco inspired by the Islamic State jihadist group, according to court documents. Tow truck driver Everitt Aaron Jameson, 26, was planning to target the city's busy Pier 39 tourist spot, according to an affidavit submitted by FBI Special Agent Christopher McKinney. The suspect outlined to undercover agents how he wanted to use explosives to target crowds at the pier between December 18 and 25 because "Christmas was the perfect day to commit the attack." Jameson professed not to need an escape plan as he was "ready to die," according to the document. The suspect's home in Modesto, California, was raided by FBI agents on Wednesday, where they allegedly found his last will and testament along with several weapons and ammunition.

#### Israel arrests 3 Turks

JERUSALEM: Israel police have arrested three Turkish tourists at a holy site in Jerusalem after an "incident" following Muslim prayers, a police spokesman said yesterday. Micky Rosenfeld said the Turks were arrested after being "involved in an incident in Jerusalem's Old City after Friday prayers on the Temple Mount", the Jewish term for the Al-Aqsa mosque compound, without proving details. The three were likely to face an Israeli court later on Saturday, Rosenfeld said. A video circulating on social media shows a number of men wearing red shirts with the Turkish flag scuffling with police forces in the Old City. Turkey's state-run news agency Anadolu said two of the three men, who hold dual Turkish and Belgian citizenship, were arrested for "assaulting Israeli police and resisting police". The third man was accused of "disturbing public order and taking part in an illegal demonstration", according to Anadolu.

#### 'Fake news' jibe

WASHINGTON: The new US ambassador to the Netherlands accused an interviewer of peddling "fake news" and disputed comments he made in 2015 about the country being in "chaos" because of Muslims, only to then deny using the "fake news" claim in a bizarre exchange on Dutch television on Friday. Pete Hoekstra made the blunder while being questioned by a journalist from Dutch broadcaster NOS over remarks made at a 2015 conference. When challenged by the reporter about comments he made at the 2015 event, in which he referred to "chaos" and "no-go zones" in the Netherlands, Hoekstra responded: "That is actually an incorrect statement—we would call it fake news. I never said that." But in a clip played from the event, Hoekstra can be heard saying: "The Islamic movement has now gotten to a point where they have put Europe into chaos."

#### Mexico's violent year

MEXICO CITY: 2017 was Mexico's most violent year in two decades, with 23,101 murders carried out between January and November, according to official figures released Friday. The number of murders in the first 11 months of this year surpassed the previous record of 22,409 killings during the whole of 2011. In November alone, 2,212 murders were recorded—while 2,380 killings were carried out in October, making it the most violent month since the authorities began keeping records two decades ago. Violence has surged across Mexico since former president Felipe Calderon's government declared war against the country's powerful drug cartels in late 2006. This year, the violence spread to states which had previously escaped clashes between cartels—including Baja California Sur, a northwestern state popular with tourists where the murder rate has more than doubled from last year's total.

## Analysis

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## Worries about 'Arabization' of Malaysia

Malaysia's growing ties to Saudi Arabia - and its puritan Salafi-Wahhabi Islamic doctrines - are coming under new scrutiny as concerns grow over an erosion of traditional religious practices and culture in the multiethnic nation. A string of recent events has fuelled the concern. Hostility toward atheists, non-believers and the gay community has risen. Two annual beer festivals were cancelled after Islamic leaders objected. A hardline preacher, accused of spreading hatred in India, has received official patronage.

The government has backed a parliamentary bill that would allow the sharia court wider criminal jurisdiction over Muslims in the state of Kelantan. And after religious officials supported a Muslim-only laundromat, Malaysia's mostly ceremonial royalty made a rare public intervention, calling for religious harmony.

Marina Mahathir, the daughter of Malaysia's longest serving prime minister, Mahathir Mohamad, publicly lashed out at the government for allowing the "Arabization" of Malaysia. Marina, who heads the civil rights group Sisters in Islam, told Reuters Saudi influence on Islam in Malaysia "has come at the expense of traditional Malay culture". Her father, 93, now heads the opposition alliance.

Saudi Arabia's fundamentalist Wahhabi beliefs have strongly influenced Malaysia - and neighboring Indonesia - for decades, but have strengthened considerably since Najib became prime minister in 2009 and began cosying up to the kingdom. The relationship came under a harsh spotlight when nearly \$700 million wound up in Najib's bank account in 2013. Najib said it was a donation from the Saudi royal family, rebutting allegations it was money siphoned from the IMDB state investment fund he had founded and overseen. Malaysia's attorney-general cleared him of any wrongdoing.

The trend toward a politicized brand of Islam in Malaysia, a middle-income emerging market, has alarmed Malaysia's non-Muslims, including ethnic Chinese who comprise a quarter of the population and dominate private sector commerce. It is also a concern for foreign investors, who account for nearly half the local bond market and have invested \$8.95 billion in project investments in the first nine months of this year.

The government denies actively promoting Wahhabi-style Islamic conservatism. Najib has been largely silent about the recent religious controversies. Critics have accused the prime minister, whose governing coalition lost the popular vote in the last general election but retained a simple majority in parliament, of playing on fears that Islam and Malay political power will be eroded should the opposition win. An election is due by mid-2018.

### Election Calculations

Militancy has also been on the rise in Malaysia, which from 2013 to 2016 had arrested more than 250 people with alleged ties to Islamic State, many of whom were indoctrinated with hardline interpretations of Islam. After the visit of the Saudi monarch this year, Malaysia announced plans to build the King Salman Centre for International Peace to bring together Islamic scholars and intelligence agencies in an effort to counter extremist interpretations of Islam.

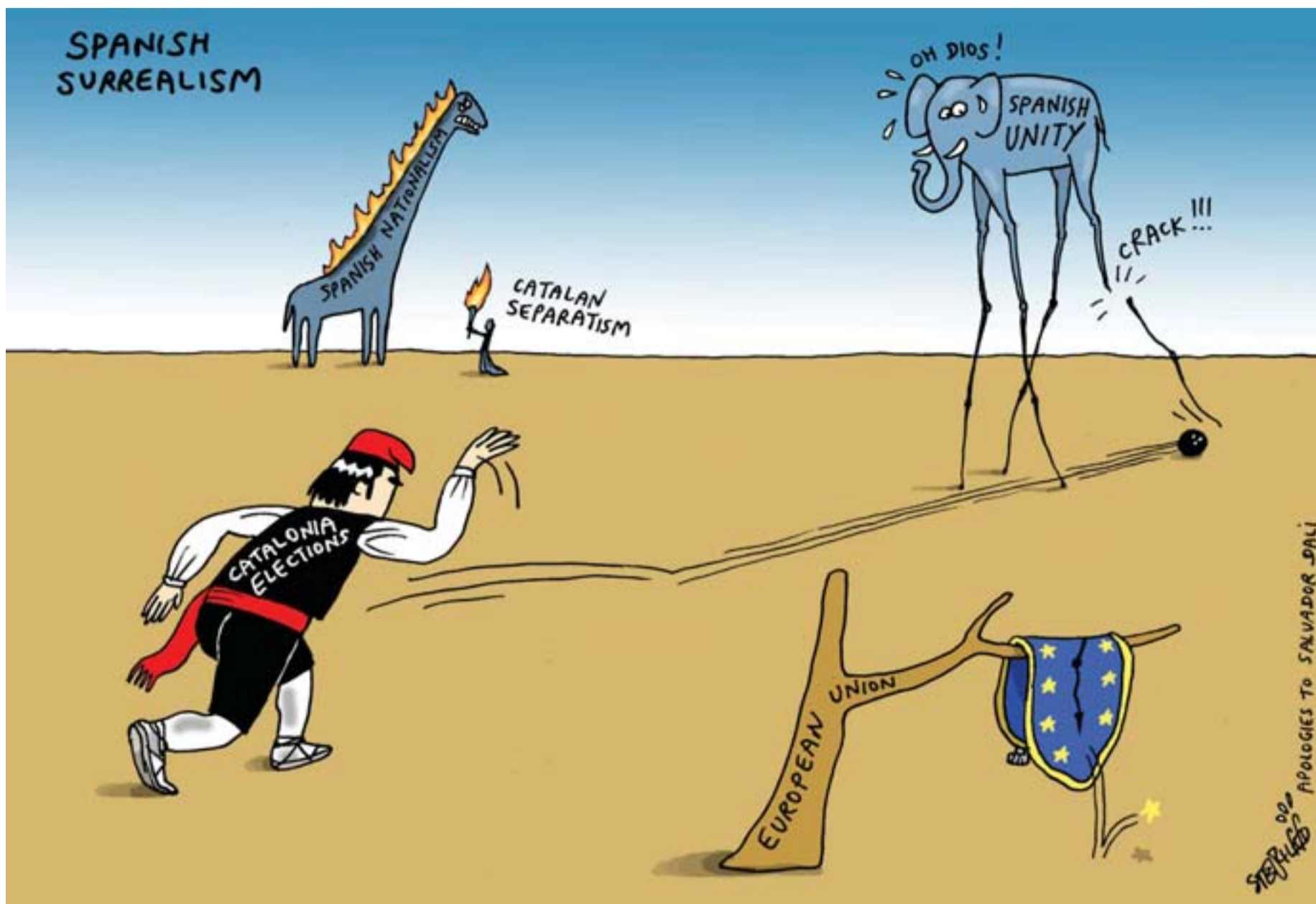
The center, which is being built on a 16-hectare plot in the administrative capital of Putrajaya, will draw on the resources of the Saudi-financed Islamic Science University of Malaysia, and the Muslim World League, a Wahhabi Saudi religious body. Saudi Arabia has long been funding mosques and schools in Malaysia, while providing scholarships for Malaysians to study in the kingdom. Many of them find employment in Malaysia's multitude of Islamic agencies, said Farouk Musa, chairman and director of the moderate think-tank, Islamic Renaissance Front.

One of the most worrisome doctrines they preach in multicultural Malaysia is 'al-wala' wa-al-bara' or 'allegiance and disavowal', Farouk said. "This doctrine basically means do not befriend the non-believers (al-kuffar), even if they are among the closest relatives. "We have never heard of Islamic scholars forbidding Muslims to wish Merry Christmas before, for example. Now, this is a common phenomenon," he said.

The adoption of Arab culture and interpretations of Islam is a result of greater exposure to Middle Eastern people and universities, said Abdul Aziz Kaprawi, a member of the Supreme Council of Najib's political party, the United Malay National Organization. "The extensive usage of social media also accelerated the external influence on the locals," he told Reuters. The government is not promoting Wahhabism but rather the doctrine of "wasatiyyah", or moderation and balance, to accommodate Malaysia's multicultural society, said Abdul Aziz, who is also a federal deputy minister.

Karima Bennoune, the United Nations Special Rapporteur for cultural rights, expressed concern in a report after her September visit to Malaysia about the deepening involvement of religious authorities in policy decisions. She said this was influenced by "a hegemonic version of Islam imported from the Arabian Peninsula" that was "at odds with local forms of practice". She also expressed concern about "the banning of books, including some about moderate and progressive Islam, in the country when the government extols these very concepts abroad".

Marina Mahathir said religious departments, staffed with Saudi graduates, "are now consulted on absolutely everything, from movies to health and medicine to insurance, all sorts of things that they do not necessarily have any expertise in". —Reuters



## How to make millions selling passports to Africa

In the tiny nation of the Comoros Islands, lying off the east coast of Africa, Albert Karaziwan is a big man - even though he doesn't live there. He's been a roving ambassador for the country, has twice attended the United Nations General Assembly with the Comoros delegation and holds three current Comoros diplomatic passports. But Karaziwan is not a politician or a professional diplomat or a native of the Comoros. He's an international businessman, born in Syria and a citizen of Belgium, whose company Semlex Group has supplied and made passports or other ID documents for the Comoros and over a dozen other African nations.

A Reuters examination of Semlex emails, corporate records and signed contracts found that Karaziwan has won business in the Comoros and elsewhere in Africa - on paper worth hundreds of millions of dollars - through political connections, sometimes without going through open tender processes and sometimes while making payments to intermediaries.

At the same time, presidential decrees and other documents from the Comoros shed new light on how Comoros passports, supplied by Semlex, are being bought by foreign citizens, some of whom are suspected by Comoros and foreign authorities of being security threats. Reuters determined that at least two buyers of Comoros passports are people accused by US authorities of breaking sanctions against Iran.

Karaziwan's political links are remarkable. In the Comoros, where Semlex first won a contract to supply passports and other documents in 2007, he was made a special adviser and roving ambassador by former president Ahmed Abdallah Mohammed Sambi. At least eight of his staff and associates acquired Comoros honorary consulships, according to Comoros government documents reviewed by Reuters. The honorary consulships, nominated between 2010 and 2012, ranged from Mombasa to Monaco.

On receiving questions from Reuters, Sambi indicated he would answer but did not respond by the time of publication. Karaziwan is listed on a Comoros government database as having three current Comoros passports. The database shows his Belgian wife, Catherine Laurent, was issued with a Comoros diplomatic passport in 2010, and that their 27-year-old son, Alexandre, who works for an IT consultancy in Brussels, also has one. Some Semlex staff were also issued with them.

Reuters was unable to determine why the Comoros granted these credentials or why the Karaziwans and Semlex associates may have sought them. In general, according to law enforcement officials, such passports and consular nominations facilitate travel, open doors and, in some cases, make doing business easier. Karaziwan did not respond to a request for an interview or to questions sent to him by email. A Brussels-based lawyer representing Semlex, Francois Koning, said Karaziwan would not comment for this article, claiming that unidentified third parties were manipulating Reuters with the aim of damaging Karaziwan and Semlex.

Laurent said she had no role at Semlex and did not know whether she had a Comoros diplomatic passport. "It is possible, but I don't use one, so I am not sure," she said. Alexandre Karaziwan did not respond to several requests for comment sent to him via his LinkedIn account. Albert Karaziwan's activities have come at a cost for many ordinary citizens of Africa, the world's poorest continent, Reuters inquiries show.

In April, Reuters reported how Karaziwan struck a deal to supply biometric passports to the Democratic Republic of Congo for which its citizens have to pay \$185 each. Congo previously charged \$100 for passports. The current deal arranged for \$60 from each passport to go to an obscure Gulf company owned by a close relative of Congo's President Joseph Kabila, according to documents and a source familiar with the arrangements.

This year, Mozambique terminated a 10-year Semlex contract, potentially worth several hundred million dollars, that had been awarded in 2009 by the country's previous government. The deal was struck without an open tender, two sources close to Semlex said. The current Mozambique government says Semlex invested a fraction of the \$100 million it had promised to spend on training, electronic scanners at borders and other infrastructure. It says citizens have lost out from the deal.

When the passports were introduced, they cost Mozambique citizens \$80 while the average income per capita was under \$500 per year, though currency changes meant the cost later fell in dollar terms. A review of the contract published in 2015 by Mozambique's Centre for Public Integrity (CIP), a transparency organization, said official figures showed that the state collected just 8 percent of the revenues from ID documents produced

between 2011 and 2014. In October, Semlex issued a statement in Mozambique saying it had shut down its operations in the country, but alleging that its contract had been "unjustifiably" terminated. It called for an independent audit; the government rejected that request. A government official told Reuters the contract was terminated because Semlex had not met "the rules we agreed upon". He did not elaborate.

In the Comoros, a parliamentary commission of inquiry is investigating the sale of passports to foreigners to determine whether the process has been legal, who has been involved and where revenues have gone. Investigators have found that more than 2,800 Comoros diplomatic passports have been issued since 2008 in a country with a population of about 800,000. In that period, at least 184 diplomatic passports were sold to non-Comorans, data gathered by the investigators shows.

Since Semlex still produces all Comoros passports, the commission is investigating the company's role in the matter. Dhoulkamal Dhoihir, vice president of the Comoros National Assembly and chairman of the commission investigating the passports issue, said: "Semlex is a key player - we have convoked Karaziwan to come here." The commission summoned Karaziwan in September, hoping he would give evidence. Semlex said Karaziwan would be available for questioning on Nov 20. He did not turn up.

### Commissions for Officials

Karaziwan was born in Aleppo, Syria, in 1958, in a family of eight children. In the 1980s, he moved to Brussels to study and went on to marry Laurent. Over the years, Karaziwan developed businesses in real estate, restaurants and hotels, according to his company website and corporate documents. He set up Semlex in 1992 and prospered. In a copy of his CV shared with colleagues in 2008, Karaziwan said his businesses had a combined value of



## Karaziwan also involved in Comoros program to sell citizenship

€100 million. Semlex is a family company and not listed on a stock exchange. Its main operating unit, Semlex Europe, has a core of only about a dozen employees, according to company documents. Semlex emails reviewed by Reuters show the informal way Karaziwan and his associates have worked behind the scenes to punch above their weight.

In June 2004, for example, Helder Tavares Proenca, a writer and politician, was named as Semlex's agent in the West African country of Guinea-Bissau, according to Semlex documents reviewed by Reuters. In Nov 2005, Proenca became defense minister and in early 2006 Semlex won contracts to supply the country with passports, visas, ID cards and foreign resident cards, according to Semlex copies of the agreements.

Semlex documents show the company paid Proenca at least €80,000 (\$94,000) between 2004 and 2009. Proenca was killed in 2009 in an assassination that police suspected was related to drug smuggling. Arnaldo Mendes, an official in charge of identification issues in Guinea-Bissau's justice ministry, said he could not comment on whether Proenca had influenced the awarding of contracts under a previous government.

In 2010, Semlex employees discussed in emails what percentage of revenue they would have to pay former and serving Guinea-Bissau officials to secure a further contract to provide the country with passports and resident cards for foreigners. According to Semlex emails reviewed by Reuters, a proposal was made to pay a commission amounting to 20 percent of the price each citizen would have to pay for a passport and 15 percent of the revenue that Semlex received for residence permits issued to foreigners.

On Jan 24, 2011, a Semlex official asked Karaziwan to sign off on the offer. The next day, Karaziwan replied: "You can confirm it." However, Guinea-Bissau government officials told Reuters Semlex did not win a further contract. Other Semlex emails show that company staff described some payments as bribes. In Nov 2010, Michele Bauters, the firm's finance manager, asked an employee to detail how he had spent nearly €80,000 pro-

vided in cash for operations in Africa, according to Semlex emails reviewed by Reuters. Much of the money had gone on rent and utility bills, the employee said, and €10,000 had gone on a "pot de vin" - French for bribes. The employee's explanation for what had happened to half of the €10,000 was blunt: "A bribe that Albert Karaziwan made me pay recently." In response to the employee's apparent irritation at being asked for explanations, Bauters said Karaziwan had merely wanted to know how the money had been spent and made no reference to the mention of bribes. Bauters did not respond to requests for comment by email. When Reuters rang Semlex headquarters, staff several times said she was busy.

Other documents illustrate how Semlex appears to benefit more than the state coffers of countries that agree to its deals. In 2013, Semlex extended an existing contract with Madagascar to supply passports and more than doubled the amount it charged. Under the new deal, citizens have to pay €36.25 (around \$47) for a passport; of that, the state receives €2.5 and Semlex gets €33.75, a contract between the two sides shows. Previously, Semlex received €15.50 per passport, the prior contract shows.

The cost of making such passports can be modest. Invoices from Imprimerie National, a French state-owned printing firm that used to produce blank passports for Semlex to complete with personal details, show that Semlex paid €1.75 to €2 per document for projects in Madagascar, Gabon and Comoros in 2007 and 2008. Semlex now has its own printing operation to produce passports.

### Diplomatic Post

Through his high-level connections, Karaziwan was able to help non-Comoros individuals become representatives of the islands. From May 2010 to May 2011, Karaziwan was in frequent contact with Ibrahim Fahmi Said, then minister of foreign affairs in the Comoros, about diplomatic appointments, Semlex emails discussing honorary consulships show. In July 2010, Karaziwan sent Fahmi a CV belonging to a Lebanese businessman called Nizar Dalloul. Karaziwan attached a covering letter saying he was corresponding in reference to Dalloul's nomination as the Comoros ambassador to UNESCO in Paris.

"As already discussed with the president, it would be good to move forward to nominate him quickly," Karaziwan wrote to the foreign minister. Dalloul was officially named ambassador on Sept. 1 that year, according to a decree signed by the Comoros president. Dalloul told Reuters that the possibility of being UNESCO ambassador arose during talks he had with former Comoros president Sambi. He said he was named ambassador, but the appointment was rescinded shortly afterwards when Sambi left power. After this happened, Karaziwan did not seek to get him reinstated, Dalloul said.

In an emailed response to questions, Fahmi told Reuters that Dalloul had been named an ambassador by the president, not by him as foreign minister. He said Karaziwan had a role because he was an adviser to the president. Fahmi said any relationship he had with Semlex was purely linked to work he did for the company as a lawyer, and that he did not receive any payment from them in relation to his work as a minister. A spokesman for UNESCO said he could not comment on the matter.

Dalloul runs a company called Comium, which describes itself as a provider of internet services in Lebanon, Iraq and other areas of the Middle East, and as a leading provider of telecoms in Africa. He said he met Karaziwan through a friend who was looking for potential investors in the Comoros. Reuters could not establish why Karaziwan wanted to help Dalloul become a UNESCO ambassador.

Karaziwan also became involved in a Comoros program to raise cash by selling citizenship. The plan was mainly aimed at the stateless bedoon people of Kuwait and United Arab Emirates who, for a variety of reasons, do not have citizenship of any country. The program offered the Gulf governments a way of helping the bedoon without giving them citizenship, and it offered the Comoros a way to raise revenue, according to the law authorizing the scheme.

Comoros government documents from 2012 show that the country was paid just over \$4,500 for each citizenship issued. However, Comoros citizenship and passports were also sold outside the official program to non-bedoon people - sometimes at much higher prices, according to Comoros investigators and sources with direct knowledge of Semlex operations. The passports are potentially valuable because they offer a citizenship with no tax obligations and can be used to open bank accounts and facilitate travel in the Gulf and beyond, law enforcement officials say.—Reuters



An Emirati child presses his face in onto a camel's during the Mazayin Dhafra Camel Festival in the desert near the city of Madinat Zayed, 150 km west of Abu Dhabi, yesterday. The festival, which attracts participants from around the Gulf region, includes a camel beauty contest, a display of UAE handcrafts and other activities aimed at promoting the country's folklore. — AFP

## Christians mark holidays with an eye...

Continued from Page 1

"We're making efforts to complete repairs and renovation before Christmas, but it seems difficult in view of the lot of damage," said Pastor Simon Bashir, who was leading the service when the attackers struck. He was not hurt.

The government of Baluchistan province, of which Quetta is capital, plans to deploy 3,000 security personnel in and around 39 Christian churches today and tomorrow. Provincial police chief Moazzam Jah Ansari told Reuters volunteers from churches were also being trained to conduct body searches and identify worshippers entering churches. Pakistan's Christian minority, which makes up about 1 percent of the population of 208 million, has been a frequent target of militants,

along with Shiites and Sufis.

In the eastern Pakistani city of Lahore, where an Easter Day bombing in a park last year killed more than 70 people, police Detective Inspector General Haider Ashraf said every church would be monitored with CCTV cameras as part of security measures. Christian Kaleem Masih lost his aunt in the Easter attack, which was claimed by Islamic State, and his wife was wounded, but he said they would be attending Christmas services. "Christmas is our holy day," Kaleem said. "We will fulfill our religious duty by celebrating it with smiles on our faces."

In Malaysia, a police official said Trump's decision on Jerusalem increased worry about attacks. "We are concerned not only with safety at churches and places of worship but also any threats by Islamic State or any other security threat following the Jerusalem issue," said Malaysia's Inspector-General of Police Mohamad Fuzi Harun. Jerusalem, revered by Jews, Christians and Muslims alike, is home to Islam's third holiest site and has been at the heart of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict for decades. — Reuters

## Oman opens oryx reserve...

Continued from Page 1

"There has been more interest in its tourism potential - to take advantage of its uniqueness and rare animals," Harsousi told AFP.

The story of the Arabian oryx - sometimes referred to as the Arabian "unicorn" due to its distinctive profile - is one of miraculous survival. Hunted prolifically, the last wild member of the species was killed in Oman by suspected poachers in 1972. The species only clung to existence thanks to a program to breed them in captivity and in the early 1980s a batch of 10 were released into Oman's Arabian Oryx Sanctuary.

Since then, regenerating the oryx has been an often precarious process. The Omani sanctuary sprawls over 2,824 sq km of diverse terrain - from flat plains to rocky slopes and sandy dunes. Its own fate has been nearly as tortured as that of the oryx it houses. In 2007, the sanctuary became the first place ever to be removed

from UNESCO's World Heritage list as the government of Oman turned most of it over to oil drilling.

Now, as oil prices have plunged over the past few years, it is the wildlife once again that has become an increasing priority for the authorities. Harsousi puts the current number of Arabian oryx in the sanctuary at 742 and says that other species are flourishing there too. "In the past three years, we have been able to increase the number of the Arabian gazelle, known as sand gazelles, from 300 to about 850," he added. In addition to the animals, there are 12 species of trees that provide a habitat for diverse birds.

Oman has been on a push to transform itself into a tourist draw - pitching its beach resorts to luxury travellers and desert wilderness to the more adventurous. Officials in the sultanate told AFP that a major tourism plan would be announced within a matter of weeks. Those working at the oryx sanctuary hope that it can help play a lead role in luring visitors to the country. But there are also fears that greater openness could see the return of an old foe - hunters. With that in mind security is being kept tight, said Abdullah Ghassab Obaid, a wildlife guard at the reserve. "Thirty guards and a police patrol are working to provide security in the reserve to prevent any infiltration." — AFP



AMRITSAR: Indian schoolchildren wear Santa Claus outfits as they listen to their teacher at a school yesterday. — AFP

## Aardvark, four meerkats killed...

Continued from Page 1

It said keepers living at the zoo in Regent's Park had responded quickly to the fire, which began shortly after 6:00 am (0600 GMT), and some staff had required medical attention.

The London Ambulance Service said it had treated eight patients at the scene, six for smoke inhalation and two for minor injuries. One of these, a firefighter who suffered a minor wrist injury, was taken to hospital as a precaution, the London Fire Brigade said. "We have keepers living on site and they, along with our security team, responded incredibly quickly to move animals to safe locations within their enclosures," the zoo said.

It added: "All other animals in the vicinity are being monitored closely by our vets, but early signs suggest they have not been affected. We will continue to monitor

them over the coming days. We are all naturally devastated by this, but are immensely grateful to the fire brigade, who reacted quickly to the situation to bring the fire under control. It's too soon to speculate on the cause of the fire but we will be working very closely with fire investigators over the coming days and weeks to ascertain the cause."

The zoo was closed yesterday, but it said that after consultations with fire experts, "we are confident that we can safely open the zoo tomorrow". The zoo opened in 1828 and is now a leading conservation organization as well as a major tourist attraction. According to the Visit Britain tourism agency, it attracted 1.21 million visitors last year, making it the ninth most popular paid-for attraction in the country.

London Fire Brigade officer Clive Robinson said that three-quarters of the cafe and shop, and half the roof, had been damaged by the fire, which also affected a nearby animal petting area. "When they arrived our crews were faced with a very well-developed fire," he said. "They worked incredibly hard in arduous conditions to bring it under control as quickly as possible and to stop it from spreading to neighboring animal enclosures." — AFP

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## Sports

# Austria's Hirscher closes in on Tomba World Cup mark

## Hirscher moves 29 points ahead of Kristoffersen in overall standings

**MADONNA DI CAMPIGLIO:** Austria's Marcel Hirscher recovered from a mid-race wobble to claim his 49th World Cup win in the night slalom at Madonna di Campiglio in Italy on Friday to go top of the overall standings. The six-time overall World Cup winner finished just ahead of world champion Luca Aerni of Switzerland and Norway's Henrik Kristoffersen, winner of the previous two editions.

In the Dolomites resort, Hirscher had the fastest time in the first run and managed to hold a 0.04sec advantage on Aerni with Kristoffersen at 0.05, allowing the Austrian to reclaim the overall World Cup lead from the Norwegian.

Hirscher fought back after from two major errors mid-way down the second run which could have cost him victory. The experienced Austrian-whose preparation for the season was hampered by a fractured left ankle last August-managed to find a way to regain his speed. He moves just one win away from legendary Italian Alberto Tomba's 50 World Cup victories. "It's a

great honour to be just behind Tomba," said Hirscher, who had not won in the Italian resort of Madonna since 2012. Hirscher moves 29 points ahead of Kristoffersen in the overall standings but Kristoffersen leads the Austrian in the slalom standings despite having not yet won a race this season with six podium finishes.

It was Hirscher's fourth win of the Winter Olympic season, coming on the legendary Canalone Miramonti slope where he had a narrow miss two years ago when a drone camera fell from the sky as he was coming down the piste.

The 28-year-old was an Olympic slalom silver medallist at Sochi in 2014, and with the 2018 Games just over a month away from February 9 to 25, he looks like the man to beat at Pyeongchang.

In an extremely competitive race Switzerland's Daniel Yule finished fourth at 0.07, ahead of other outsiders such as Austrian Manuel Feller and Britain's Dave Ryding. The World Cup tour next heads to Bormio in the Italian Alps for the downhill on December 28 and combined the following day. — AFP



**Hirscher fought back after from two major errors**



**MADONNA DI CAMPIGLIO:** Austria's Marcel Hirscher (C), winner, Switzerland's Luca Aerni (L), second, and Norway's Henrik Kristoffersen celebrate on the podium of the FIS Alpine World Cup Men's Slalom in Madonna di Campiglio, Italian Alps. — AFP

## Alghanim Lotus sponsors Gulf Run Karting Race

**KUWAIT:** Sponsoring the GulfRun Karting Race held this season at Sirbb Circuit and attended by thousands of racing cars and karting fans, Alghanim Lotus introduced its latest iconic car, the 2018 Evora 400, in a unique display which also gave visitors and enthusiasts the chance to experience the fastest and most luxurious car in the world in a virtual reality (VR) simulation.

In addition to an unprecedented experience of driving a true sports car and one that has redefined the meaning of advanced engineering and fast driving, Alghanim Lotus provided an Evora 400 as the race pace car, fully branded with the Gulf Run colors and announcing the start of the race.

Ranked as the fastest car to be manufactured by Lotus this century, Evora 400 generates a maximum speed of 300 kilometers per hour, and an acceleration of 0-100 kilometers in 4.2 seconds. The new Evora was also able to lap the chal-

lenging test track at the Lotus Headquarters in Hethel, Norfolk at a scintillating six seconds faster than previous models.

The new Lotus Evora 400 is one of the latest pure and focused supercars engineered by Lotus, combining high performance with the legendary Lotus benchmark handling, making it the idea car for young adults and everyday fast cars fans.

Adding to the exclusive experience of driving the hand-built Evora 400, manufactured in a limited number each year, Alghanim Lotus provides customers with a superior customer service from the purchase of the car to the after-sale services, ensuring that each customer is provided with the highest quality of quality, professionalism and luxury which position Lotus cars as leaders in the automotive market.

Also as part of its commitment to adding value to customers, Alghanim Lotus unveiled an exclusive and competitive financing solutions to own the luxurious Evora 400 with monthly installments starting from KD 625, in addition to the three-year unlimited mileage warranty which includes three years of free service and a one-year full coverage insurance policy for free. Car enthusiasts can also be the first to know what is new by following Alghanim Motors on Instagram at @AlghanimLotusKW



Zain's representative awarding one of the winning teams.

## Zain awards winners of GulfRun Karting Endurance Race

**KUWAIT:** Zain, the leading telecommunications company in Kuwait, awarded the winning teams of GulfRun's Karting Endurance Race as part of its main sponsorship of the region's most popular motorsport activity.

Zain's main sponsorship of the latest edition of this unique motorsport event comes in line with the company's strategy to support the youth and sports sectors, as well as part of its belief in the importance of encouraging the various initiatives that cater to Kuwaiti sports on local and regional levels.

GulfRun 12 commenced with the Karting Endurance Race, which followed international regulations and was supervised by certified marshals who flew in from France to regulate the race in accordance to FIA regulations. Over 20 teams participated in the 12 - 24 hours non-stop endurance races in a highly competitive and safe environment.

GulfRun activities will continue to include the sport cars show that will take place soon at Murooj, where participants will showcase their sport cars and thrill visitors. GulfRun will also include the race to be held at Bahrain International Circuit in the Kingdom of Bahrain, which is considered as a true test of



GulfRun's organizers honoring Zain for its sponsorship.

participants' motorsport skills.

GulfRun is considered an ideal and safe alternative to street racing, which threatens the lives of many people, many of them young

drivers, every year. Through GulfRun, motorsport enthusiasts are able to showcase their talents within professional and certified grounds.

## Woods splits with swing coach Como

**LOS ANGELES:** Tiger Woods will press on with his comeback in 2018 without the aid of a swing coach, announcing on Twitter on Friday that he is splitting with Chris Como. Woods says he has no imme-

mediate plans to replace Como, who began working with the 14-time major champion in November of 2014.

"Since my fusion surgery, I have been working hard to relearn my own body and golf swing," Woods tweeted. "I've done this by primarily relying on my feel and previous years of hard work with Chris."

"For now, I think it's best for me to continue to do this on my own. I'm grateful to Chris Como for his past work, and I have nothing but respect for him."

Woods' career had already been disrupt-

ed by injury when he began working with Como, and he has made just 12 US PGA Tour starts since then. He missed all of the 2015-16 season, and after yet another back surgery in April was sidelined until the Hero World Challenge in the Bahamas in November — his first tournament in 10 months.

Woods, who said he was finally playing without pain, finished tied for ninth in the field of 18. Woods' performance in the Bahamas had his tour colleagues looking forward to his return to regular competition, but he has yet to announce his schedule for 2018. — AFP



Sports

# Lightning Bolt destroys Windies as New Zealand clinch series

Worker and Munro give New Zealand a flying start



CHRISTCHURCH: New Zealand's Henry Nicholls bats during the second one-day international (ODI) cricket match between New Zealand and the West Indies at Hagley Oval in Christchurch yesterday. — AFP



CHRISTCHURCH: New Zealand's Trent Boult appeals for a LBW call on West Indies batsman Jason Mohammed during the second one-day international (ODI) cricket match. — AFP

CHRISTCHURCH: A career best seven for 34 by Trent Boult destroyed the West Indies as New Zealand wrapped up their one-day international series with a game to spare in Christchurch yesterday.

Boult had three for six after his first three overs as the West Indies fell apart at the start of their innings after being set an imposing 326-run target. The tourists struggled through to 121 before Boult finished off the tail to give New Zealand victory by 204 runs to go with their five-wicket win in the first ODI on Wednesday.

When Boult had finished off the West Indies top order, Lochie Ferguson plucked out the middle with three wickets in 10 deliveries, including Jason Mohammed and Rovman Powell with successive balls.

New Zealand, sent into bat first, posted a healthy 325 for six after an impressive final 10 overs by Henry Nicholls and Todd Astle which produced 103 runs. Nicholls, given out lbw on 22 but reinstated on review when replays showed the ball would have missed the stumps, went on to be unbeaten on 83 at the close.

Astle went for 49 in the final over after the pair had

put on a whirlwind 130 for the sixth wicket. George Worker and Colin Munro gave New Zealand a flying start, reaching 50 off 40 deliveries before Sheldon Cottrell removed Munro (30) and his replacement Neil Broom (six) in quick succession.

Worker and Ross Taylor kept the run rate at better than a run-a-ball in a 58-run partnership until Worker, who had been dropped on seven, was removed by Ronsford Beaton for 58. West Indies captain Jason Holder reduced New Zealand to 186 for five when he removed Tom Latham and Taylor in the space of 11 balls, leaving Nicholls and Astle to build the formidable target.

Nicholls' 83 came off 62 balls and included two sixes and seven fours, while Astle faced 45 deliveries for his 49 but only reached the boundary three times. For the West Indies, Sheldon Cottrell took three for 62. The West Indies struggled throughout their reply with Shai Hope's 23 their best performance with the bat.

The third and final match in the series will be on Tuesday at Hagley Oval where New Zealand have now won all seven ODIs they have played there. — AFP

## SCOREBOARD

Scoreboard in the second One Day International between New Zealand and West Indies yesterday in Christchurch, New Zealand.

New Zealand Innings		West Indies Innings	
G. Worker c R. Powell b Beaton	58	E. Lewis c Bracewell b Boult	10
C. Munro c J. Mohammed b Cottrell	30		
N. Broom c Holder b Cottrell	6		
R. Taylor c K. Hope b Holder	57		
T. Latham c K. Hope b Holder	20		
H. Nicholls not out	83		
T. Astle b Cottrell	49		
D. Bracewell not out	5		
Extras (lb-3 w-14)	17		
Total (for 6 wickets, 50 overs)	325		
Fall of wickets: 1-50 C. Munro, 2-66 N. Broom, 3-124 G. Worker, 4-169 T. Latham, 5-186 R. Taylor, 6-316 T. Astle			
Did not bat: M. Henry, L. Ferguson, T. Boult			
Bowling: S. Cottrell 10-0-62-3(w-2); J. Holder 10-0-52-2(w-1); R. Beaton 8-0-60-1(w-3); S. Gabriel 10-0-75-0(w-3); A. Nurse 10-0-45-0(w-4); R. Powell 2-0-28-0(w-1).			
		K. Hope b Boult	4
		S. Hope c Latham b Boult	23
		S. Hetmyer c Worker b Boult	2
		J. Mohammed c&campb Ferguson	18
		J. Holder c Munro b Ferguson	13
		R. Powell b Ferguson	0
		A. Nurse c Worker b Boult	27
		S. Cottrell c Latham b Boult	8
		R. Beaton not out	12
		S. Gabriel b Boult	0
		Extras (lb-1 nb-1 w-2)	4
		Total (all out, 28 overs)	121
		Fall of wickets: 1-10 K. Hope, 2-15 E. Lewis, 3-21 S. Hetmyer, 4-52 S. Hope, 5-70 J. Mohammed, 6-70 R. Powell, 7-86 J. Holder, 8-100 S. Cottrell, 9-121 A. Nurse, 10-121 S. Gabriel	
		Bowling: M. Henry 7-0-36-0; T. Boult 10-3-34-7; D. Bracewell 5-0-19-0(w-2); L. Ferguson 4-0-17-3(nb-1); T. Astle 2-0-14-0.	
		Result: New Zealand won by 204 runs	

## England owe under-fire skipper Root a win: Bairstow

MELBOURNE: England's players owed under-fire skipper Joe Root their utmost to turn the tables on dominant Australia in the showpiece Boxing Day Test in Melbourne, wicketkeeper Jonny Bairstow said yesterday. The Ashes has already been decided with Australia taking the first three Tests, but England is scrambling to avoid an embarrassing 5-0 series whitewash. Bairstow said captain Root was coping with the growing pressure and the England team was working hard to break their run of outs against the Australians in the fourth Test, starting at the Melbourne Cricket Ground on Tuesday. "We don't just owe him (Root), we owe ourselves as well," Bairstow told reporters. "It's something that you don't come away and work as hard as we work to get nothing out of at all."

"So without doubt in these next two games it's a case of, in our eyes, a two-Test series now and that's exactly how we've got to look at it. "We've got to go out there and try and win both of these Test matches."

Root has been in the firing line leading a disastrous England tour and has been blasted by former Australia captain Ricky Ponting as looking like a "little boy" who has been a "bit soft" during the Ashes defeat.

Ponting senses Root is struggling to command the respect a leader needs, and suggests that has been demonstrated by some of England's off-field controversies. "Those things show a complete lack of respect for him as captain," Ponting told reporters.

"To be honest, I think he has been under pressure right from the start because of things that have been happening off the field." Bairstow "headbutted" Australia's Cameron Bancroft in a bar in October, while this month England Lions batsman Ben Duckett was suspended for pouring a drink over England bowler James Anderson.

## Pakistan announce squad for New Zealand ODIs

KARACHI: Pakistan have recalled experienced opener Azhar Ali for their one-day international series in New Zealand next month, but left batsman Ahmed Shehzad and allrounder Imad Wasim out of the squad. Former captain Ali's return meant there was no



PERTH: England captain Joe Root (L) speaks with bowler Stuart Broad (R) on day four of the third Ashes cricket Test match. — AFP

Ponting said England need Root to "step up big time" and criticised him for being "too shy" in his post-match news conferences. "The way he answered a lot of the questions after the game last week seemed almost like a little boy," said Ponting. "You need to be more than that as a leader, especially when things aren't going well. It just looks like it has been a little bit soft."

### ENGLAND 'BLOWN AWAY'

Ponting, who captained Australia in 77 of his 168 Tests between 1995 and 2012, said England had been "blown away" in the series. Despite Root winning all three tosses, Australia won by 10 wickets in Brisbane, 120 runs in Adelaide and an innings and 41 runs in

place in the 15-member squad for Shehzad, who failed to impress against Sri Lanka in the United Arab Emirates last month. Pakistan won all five ODIs against Sri Lanka, but go into the five-match New Zealand series having lost eight of their last 11 ODI series.

"We kept the conditions in New Zealand in mind and the recent performances of some players in the domestic tournament," chief selector Inzamam-ul-Haq said after the squad announcement yesterday.

Ali was rested for the Sri Lanka series, but is now fully fit after recovering from a knee problem, Haq added. Fast bowler Junaid Khan has been ruled out of the New Zealand ODIs because of a fracture in his

right foot, and Wasim failed a fitness test after reporting discomfort in his knee.

Fast bowler Aamer Yamin replaces Junaid in the squad. Sarfraz Ahmed continues as captain, having led Pakistan to victory in the Champions Trophy in June. Pakistan's first ODI against New Zealand is in Wellington on January 6. The two sides will also play three Twenty20s, for which Pakistan will make a separate squad announcement. Pakistan - Sarfraz Ahmed (captain), Azhar Ali, Fakhar Zaman, Imam-ul-Haq, Babar Azam, Shoaib Malik, Mohammad Hafeez, Haris Sohail, Faheem Ashraf, Shadab Khan, Mohammad Nawaz, Mohammad Amir, Hasan Ali, Aamer Yamin, Rumman Raees. — Reuters

## Cricket enters new era with four-day Test

CAPE TOWN: Cricket will venture into new territory when South Africa tackle Zimbabwe in the first official four-day Test match to be played at St George's Park in Port Elizabeth starting on Tuesday.

It is an experiment, which will also be played with a pink ball as a day/night encounter, that has been met with more enthusiasm in Zimbabwe than their hosts, who will have a number of their experienced campaigners back in action.

Zimbabwe coach Heath Streak believes cutting a day from the game will force teams to score quicker, and that means taking more risks, which could play into the hands of so-called minnow nations. "In terms of higher and lower ranked (teams), it is much harder to bat a team out (of the game) because in doing so you might make it harder to win the test," Streak said this week.

"It's a challenge, though the 98 overs in a day does make it a four-and-a-half day test. It will be interesting and exciting to be part of, hopefully it is something that does work out for the future of test cricket."

Zimbabwe warmed up for the fixture with a five-wicket loss to a South African Invitation XI in Paarl, a game that was played under lights. There were half-centuries for Hamilton Masakadza, Ryan Burl and Chamu Chibhabha, but the rest of the batsmen struggled over the two innings against a largely inexperienced bowling attack.

Captain Graeme Cremer was the pick of the tourists' bowlers as his leg-spin provided eight wickets in the match. Fast bowler Blessing Muzarabani and Burl, both uncapped at test level, could make their debuts.

### AB IS BACK

South Africa have batsman AB de Villiers available for selection again after he ended his self-imposed exile from Test cricket, while Dale Steyn, Vernon Philander and Morne Morkel have all recovered from injuries to bolster the seam attack.

Steyn played in the warm-up game in Paarl and although he bowled well within himself, the fast bowler created a number of chances off the bat in his wicketless 12 overs while conceding just 16 runs.

"He has been a champion bowler for a long time and along with James Anderson is probably the best of the modern generation in terms of wickets taken, games played and the way he has led the South African attack for a number of years," South Africa coach Ollis Gibson told reporters.

The match is the start of a busy summer for South Africa, who also play three home five-day Tests against India and four versus Australia, to go with a number of matches in the shorter formats. — Reuters

## Sports

# Rockets' Harden slams officials after second straight 50-point game

## Golden State regain top spot in Western Conference

LOS ANGELES: Austin Rivers caught fire in the second half and, with some help from Lou Williams, shot the short-handed Los Angeles Clippers past the Houston Rockets 128-118 on Friday night at Toyota Center. Rivers scored 30 of his team-high 36 points on 10-of-18 shooting in the second half, drilling 5 of 10 3-pointers down the stretch to keep the injury-riddled Rockets (25-6) at bay. Williams, traded by Houston in the off-season as part of the blockbuster Chris Paul acquisition, scored 32 points. Rivers and Williams combined to shoot 13 for 24 from behind the arc to offset another breathtaking performance from Rockets guard James Harden, who posted his second consecutive 51-point outing. Harden finished 15 of 28 from the floor and 15 of 16 from the free-throw line while adding eight assists. Eric Gordon chipped in 28 points for Houston, which closed a season-long seven-game homestand with consecutive losses to the Los Angeles teams.

### Warriors 113, Lakers 106

Golden State regained the top spot in the Western Conference, rallying from a fourth-quarter deficit to win its 11th straight game. Kevin Durant had 33 points (12 on free throws) to lead the Warriors, who have beaten the Lakers the last 10 times they've met in Oakland. Rookie Jordan Bell (20 points and 10 rebounds) and Draymond Green (13 points and 11 rebounds), returning from a four-game absence, complemented Durant with double-doubles for the Warriors. Rookies Kyle Kuzma (27 points and 14 rebounds) and Lonzo Ball (24 points) paced the Lakers, who had taken the Warriors to overtime in their two previous meetings this season. Julius Randle added 21 points for the Lakers (11-19), who were coming off a 122-116 win at Houston.

### Thunder 120, Hawks 117

Russell Westbrook hit the winning 3-pointer with 1.4 seconds left to lift Oklahoma City past Atlanta. The NBA's reigning MVP, Westbrook finished with 30 points and 15 rebounds. Carmelo Anthony finished with 24 points and Paul George scored 17 for the Thunder. Atlanta's Marco Belinelli was a big reason for keeping the game close as he scored 27 points on 10-of-18 shooting. Ersan Ilyasova added 22 points and Malcolm Delaney had 20.

### Bucks 109, Hornets 104

Giannis Antetokounmpo and Khris Middleton combined for 14 points in the fourth quarter as Milwaukee closed the game with an 9-0 run to beat Charlotte Hornets. Middleton led Milwaukee with 28 points and Antetokounmpo added 26. Eric Bledsoe struggled from distance, going 1 of 6, but hit 7 of 10 from the line to finish with 24 points while adding 10 assists, five rebounds and three blocked shots. Kemba Walker connected on four 3-pointers and finished with a game-

high 32 points for the Hornets, who went 12 of 26 from beyond the arc and shot 44 percent (39 of 88) overall.

### Nets 119, Wizards 84

Forward Rondae Hollis-Jefferson had 21 points, 11 rebounds and six assists, and swingman Caris LeVert had 17 points and six rebounds as six players scored in double figures to power Brooklyn's rout of Washington. The Nets snapped a four-game losing streak with its second home win over Washington in 10 days. Spencer Dinwiddie had the hot hand out of the halftime break, scoring the Nets' first 11 points of the second half on the way to 15 in the third quarter. Forward Kelly Oubre had 13 points and guard John Wall added 10 points for the Wizards, who were held below 100 points for the fourth time in the last six games.

### Pelicans 111, Magic 97

DeMarcus Cousins had 26 points, 11 rebounds and six assists, leading New Orleans to an easy victory over Orlando. New Orleans guard Jrue Holiday scored 24 points for the Pelicans. All-Star forward Anthony Davis had 20 points and 11 rebounds. It was the first time in the last 13 games the Pelicans held a team

under 100 points. Jonathon Simmons led the Magic with 22 points and eight rebounds. Nikola Vucevic had 21 points and eight rebounds.

### Pistons 104, Knicks 101

Tobias Harris led seven Detroit players in double figures with 24 points and the Pistons pulled out a victory over New York. Andre Drummond had 18 points and 15 rebounds for the Pistons. Reggie Bullock supplied 14 points. Stanley Johnson and Antony Tolliver tossed in 12 apiece and Reggie Jackson and Ish Smith added 10 apiece. Kristaps Porzingis led the Knicks with 29 points and nine rebounds. Enes Kanter contributed 22 points and 16 rebounds and Courtney Lee added 16 points for the Knicks.

### Heat 113, Mavericks 101

Wayne Ellington scored 28 points to lead Miami past Dallas. Ellington shot 10 of 16 from the field and hit a career-high eight 3-pointers, including four in the fourth quarter. Josh Richardson scored 24 points on 11-of-14 shooting and Tyler Johnson finished with 19 points for Miami. The roster-depleted Heat lost another starter to injury after starting guard Dion Waiters limped off the court with an apparent left ankle injury late in the first quarter and didn't return. Yogi Ferrell scored 23 points, and hit 9 of 13 3-pointers for Dallas. The Mavericks hit 17 3-pointers.

### Nuggets 102, Trail Blazers 85

Nikola Jokic scored 27 points and Wilson Chandler added a season-high 21 points and 11 rebounds as



ORLANDO: Nikola Vucevic #9 of the Orlando Magic shoots the ball against the New Orleans Pelicans on Friday at Amway Center in Orlando, Florida. — AFP

## NBA results/standings

Golden State 113, LA Lakers 106; Denver 102, Portland 85; Miami 113, Dallas 101; LA Clippers 128, Houston 118; Milwaukee 109, Charlotte 104; Oklahoma City 120, Atlanta 117; Brooklyn 119, Washington 84; Detroit 104, NY Knicks 101; New Orleans 111, Orlando 97.

Eastern Conference					Western Conference				
Atlantic Division					Northwest Division				
	W	L	PCT	GB					
Boston	26	9	.743	-	Minnesota	19	13	.594	-
Toronto	22	8	.733	1.5	Denver	17	15	.531	2
NY Knicks	17	15	.531	7.5	Oklahoma City	17	15	.531	2
Philadelphia	14	17	.452	10	Portland	16	16	.500	3
Brooklyn	12	19	.387	12	Utah	15	18	.455	4.5
Central Division					Pacific Division				
Cleveland	24	9	.727	-	Golden State	26	6	.813	-
Milwaukee	17	13	.567	5.5	LA Clippers	13	18	.419	12.5
Detroit	18	14	.563	5.5	LA Lakers	11	19	.367	14
Indiana	18	14	.563	5.5	Sacramento	11	20	.355	14.5
Chicago	10	21	.323	13	Phoenix	12	22	.353	15
Southeast Division					Southwest Division				
Washington	17	15	.531	-	Houston	25	6	.806	-
Miami	17	15	.531	-	San Antonio	22	11	.667	4
Charlotte	11	21	.344	6	New Orleans	16	16	.500	9.5
Orlando	11	22	.333	6.5	Memphis	9	23	.281	16.5
Atlanta	7	25	.219	10	Dallas	9	24	.273	17

Denver drilled Portland. Gary Harris scored 17 points for the Nuggets, who snapped a two-game losing streak. Jokic, who made 12 of 21 field goal attempts, added eight rebounds and six assists. CJ McCollum

scored 15 points and Shabazz Napier had 14 for the Trail Blazers, who were without leading scorer Damian Lillard. Portland has lost three straight overall and six in a row at home. — Reuters

## Froese scores first goal as Montreal edge Flames

MONTREAL: Byron Froese scored his first goal of the season and also had an assist as the Montreal Canadiens edged the Calgary Flames 3-2 on Friday at the Scotiabank Saddledome. Nicolas Deslauriers and Brendan Gallagher also scored for the Canadiens (16-15-4), who have won two straight games and three of their past four. Making his 12th straight start in net for Montreal, Carey Price made 21 saves to improve his record to 11-10-2. Michael Ferland and Matthew Tkachuk scored for the Flames (18-15-3), while goalie Mike Smith finished with 32 saves.

### Sabres 4, Flyers 2

Evander Kane had a goal and an assist to lead the Buffalo Sabres to a 4-2 win over the Philadelphia Flyers on Friday night. Jack Eichel had a pair of empty-net goals and Ryan O'Reilly also scored for the Sabres (9-19-7), who snapped a three-game losing streak. Robin Lehner made 33 saves. Michael Raffl and Shayne Gostisbehere scored for the Flyers (15-13-7), who lost for only the third time this month (7-3-0). Brian Elliott made 33 saves.

### Panthers 4, Wild 2

The Panthers erased two deficits and finally seized the lead on Connor Brickley's rebound goal midway through the third period, carrying Florida to a 4-2 win over the Minnesota Wild on Friday night. Tied at 2-2 in the third period, Brickley slammed home a rebound for his third goal at 11:14 after goalie Alex Stalock made a save on Keith Yandle's shot following a scramble around the Wild goal. Ryan Suter and Daniel Winnik scored for Minnesota, and Stalock made 30 saves. Florida has won its last two games despite trailing 2-1 entering the third period. The Panthers also won Tuesday night in Arizona. — Reuters



## Ooredoo releases song celebrating national football team's return

KUWAIT: Stemming from its deep-rooted belief in its responsibility towards people, Ooredoo released a special song celebrating the return of Kuwait's National Football Team to the field officially after two years of suspension. The song, which utilizes melodies that resonate crowd cheers in football fields, urges people to get out and cheer for the national football team. The song is produced by Senyar Productions and written by Saad Al-Meslim, composed by Fahad Al-Nasser and performed by Ibrahim Dashti. The song's video features a number of prominent social media influencers: Abodka, Ali Mubarak, Areej Al-

Tahous, Jawa Al-Bahar, Zaina Al-Houti, Mohammed Merza, Fawaz Al-Essa, Munira Al-Kulaib, Shahin Al-Ali, and Shahin Al-Shahin. It also features Kuwaiti actor Mohammed Al-Hamali, and Kuwait Drag 965 Team.

Ooredoo reiterated in a statement that the song is a dedication to the Kuwait National Football Team and its supporters on the happy occasion of returning to the field after two years of suspension. The company also stressed its commitment to sharing the joy with the nation, stemming from the company's core values of caring and connecting.

## Espanyol inflict Atletico's first league defeat

MADRID: Atletico Madrid failed to put pressure on La Liga leaders Barcelona ahead of El Clasico at Real Madrid as they slumped to a first La Liga defeat of the season 1-0 at Espanyol. Sergio Garcia struck the only goal two minutes from time when he swept Esteban Granero's cross past a helpless Jan Oblak to hand Espanyol a much-needed win to ease their relegation fears. Atletico remain six points adrift of Barca, but could end the year nine points back if the Catalans move a huge step towards the title

with victory away to Real.

"You could see that whichever of the two teams made a mistake was going to lose the game," said Atletico boss Diego Simeone. "They didn't make any mistakes, we did, and that is why we lost." However, Simeone refuted suggestions Atletico had blown a golden opportunity to cut the gap on Barca at the top to three points. "Is it a step backwards to lose for the first time in 20 matches?"

Hopefully, it takes another 20 for us to lose again." Simeone's men will be able to call on Diego Costa when they return to action in January and the need for the Brazilian-born Spanish international striker's aggression and firepower was in evidence during an insipid 90 minutes from the visitors.

"We lost because we didn't take our chances," said Atletico midfielder Koke. "Hopefully with the arrival of Diego we will be more prolific." Leo Baptistao should have handed Espanyol an early lead when his attempted chip

floated wide with just Oblak to beat.

At the other end, Antoine Griezmann thought he had won a penalty when he was upended by Pau Lopez. However, the referee's original decision to award the spot-kick was overruled by the linesman's offside flag.

Diego Godin had a goal rightly ruled out for the visitors after the break for a clear push on an Espanyol defender. Substitute Kevin Gameiro had Atletico's best chance 13 minutes from time, but fired straight at Pau Lopez with Saul Niguez begging for a cross to apply a simple finish.

And Atletico were for once punished for a rare slip in concentration at the back when former Real Madrid midfielder Granero's pinpoint cross was converted by Garcia for his first La Liga goal since returning to the Catalans from Qatar side Al-Rayyan. Defeat also ended an unbeaten run on the road of over a year for Atletico as Espanyol jumped up to 14th, five points above the drop zone. — AFP

Sports

# Dominant Barcelona move 14 points clear of Real Madrid

## Suarez misses two huge chances

**MADRID:** Barcelona took a huge step towards regaining the La Liga title as goals from Luis Suarez, Lionel Messi and Alexis Vidal beat bitter rivals Real Madrid 3-0 at the Santiago Bernabeu yesterday to open up a 14-point lead over the European champions.

In a recurring theme of this season Madrid were made to pay for Cristiano Ronaldo and Karim Benzema missing first-half chances as Barca took control after half-time.

Suarez rounded off a flowing counter-attack to open the scoring before Messi blasted home a penalty after Madrid defender Dani Carvajal was sent-off for punching the ball off the goal line.

And Messi was the creator as Vidal rubbed salt into Real's wounds deep into stoppage time.

"The league isn't finished, we haven't even completed the first half of the season," claimed Barca boss Ernesto Valverde on his side's seemingly unassailable advantage.

However, victory extends Barca's unbeaten run to 25 games in all competitions as they moved nine points clear of second-placed Atletico Madrid and exacted revenge for a 5-1 thrashing on aggregate in the Spanish Super Cup at the hands of Real in August.

Madrid do still have a game in hand over Barca to marginally reduce the gap at the top, but their efforts in the new year are now likely to be more focused on becoming the first side to win three consecutive Champions League titles in over 40 years. "We are down because it is a defeat that hurts," said Madrid boss Zinedine Zidane. "Madrid never give up, whatever happens. It is a difficult moment because we've lost by three goals. I could say we don't deserve it, but that is football." Despite the clash between the Spanish capital's and Catalonia's two giants taking place just two days after three parties favouring inde-

pendence for the prosperous region from Spain retained an absolute majority in the Catalan parliament, there was little attention paid to politics inside the ground once the action got underway.

### REAL RUE RONALDO MISKICK

It could have been very different for the hosts if Ronaldo had buried a huge opportunity when he completely miskicked just 10 minutes in.

Barca didn't threaten at all until the half hour mark when Messi finally found some room in a congested midfield to pick out Paulinho's late run and the Brazilian's acrobatic effort was matched by a flying save from Keylor Navas.

Seconds later it was Marc-Andre ter Stegen to demonstrate why he has been one of the keys to Barca's success this season by getting an outstretched toe to turn Ronaldo's fiercely struck shot behind.

Benzema was inches away from giving Real a half-time lead as he headed against the post two minutes before the break. However, Barca came out a different side in the second period to almost certainly put the title out of Madrid's reach. "In the second-half we managed to impose our control on the game," added Valverde. Nine minutes after the break Sergio Busquets's

calm opened up the Madrid midfield as he fed Ivan Rakitic and Sergi Roberto eventually crossed to Suarez to apply the finishing touch. Suarez was spared the embarrassment of missing two huge chances in an incredible goal mouth scramble that led to Barca's second. Navas saved Suarez's first effort before he fired against the post with the goal at his mercy, but Paulinho's follow-up was punched off the line by Dani Carvajal. Messi dispatched the resulting penalty into the top corner to kill the game as a contest and was the



**MADRID:** Barcelona's Spanish defender Gerard Pique (L) vies with Real Madrid's Spanish defender Sergio Ramos during the Spanish League "Clasico" football match Real Madrid CF vs FC Barcelona at the Santiago Bernabeu stadium in Madrid yesterday. — AFP

creator for Barca's third in stoppage time when Vidal's drive squeezed in under Navas.

Barca's perfect weekend was rounded off as Valencia missed the chance to move into second place ahead of Atletico Madrid as they suffered a third defeat in four games. Carlos Bacca scored the only goal as

Villarreal won 1-0 at Mestalla and Valencia will also start the new year without top scorer Simeone Zaza, who was sent-off after seeing two yellow cards in 60 seconds just before the hour mark. Atletico were also beaten for the first time in La Liga this season 1-0 at Espanyol on Friday. — AFP

## Saudi spoils Kuwait's comeback to int'l competitions

By Ahmad Jabr

**KUWAIT:** It took 60 minutes before Kuwait scored its first goal in international competitions in nearly two years. But its first win after its FIFA ban was lifted will have to wait for another day. Saudi Arabia scored two goals in its opening match of the 23rd Gulf Cup against the host country Kuwait, who pressed late in the second half but failed to score an equalizer in front of a capacity crowd of 63,000 at Jaber Al-Ahmad International Stadium on Friday.

### EARLY RUST

Saudi Arabia took advantage of Kuwait's shaky performance at the start of the match, setting the pace early and putting pressure against Kuwait's defense, which managed to thwart multiple Saudi attacks. Eventually, Kuwait was able to shake off the rust from nearly two years of inactivity with three scoring opportunities in 10 minutes, which all missed the mark. The first goal of the match came in the 13th minute when Salman Al-Moasher put Saudi Arabia ahead with a goal assisted by Ahmad Al-Fareedi. Kuwait tried to score an equalizer after that, but all their scoring opportunities were unsuccessful.

The final 15 minutes of the first half saw Saudi Arabia regain control of the match, keeping pressure on the Kuwaiti defense, while their own defense took care of Kuwait's counterattacks. Kuwait had a great scoring opportunity in the 36th minute when Faisal Al-Harbi sent a cross to an attacker, who hit the post.

### ATTACK MODE

Kuwait started the second half in attack mode, shooting twice and missing the target. But the Saudis took advan-

tage of a counterattack to score the second goal five minutes into the half with a shot by substitute Mukhtar Fallatah that ended in the back of Humaid Al-Qallaf's net. Moasher, who scored Saudi Arabia's first goal, assisted the second. Down by two, Kuwait began to press urgently against the Saudi defense until a scoring opportunity came in the 58th minute. Substitute Abdullah Al-Braiki received Badr Al-Mutawaa's pass and fired a shot that beat Assaf Al-Qarni, sending the capacity crowd into a frenzy. Kuwait piled the pressure looking for an equalizer, but the Saudi players kept their composure and fended off multiple attacks. The Kuwaiti players eventually started showing signs of fatigue as time winded down. Saudi Arabia controlled the pace in the last five minutes of the match, and except for a dangerous shot that narrowly missed the Saudi net in the 90th minute, Kuwait had no real chances to score. Saudi Arabia managed to maintain their lead until the final whistle, which came after four minutes of extra time. Saudi defender Omar Ibrahim Othman was named Man of the Match.

### MORE CHEMISTRY

Kuwait football team manager Boris Bunjak admitted that his squad lacked harmony, saying in a press conference following the match that his players 'need time' to develop more chemistry. All in all, Bunjak said that he was satisfied with his team's performance, adding that the defeat "does not mean quitting in the next matches." Meanwhile, the Saudi team coach said his team panicked during the second half due to the pressing of the Kuwaiti players. Following their 2-1 loss in the tournament's opener, Kuwait is now under pressure to win its next two matches against Oman tomorrow and the United Arab Emirates on Thursday. Meanwhile, Saudi Arabia - participating in the tournament with its second team instead of its first which qualified recently for the 2018 World Cup - look comfortable heading into their last two matches in Group A competitions after securing three points in the opener.

The opening match took place in front of a jam-packed crowd as fans filled up the stadium long before the game started. There were reports that the gates were closed more than an hour before kick-off. The match was preced-



**KUWAIT:** Kuwait's national team player Sultan al-Enezi (L) vies for the ball against Saudi's national team player Ahmad al-Fraidi during the 2017 Gulf Cup of Nations match between Kuwait and Saudi Arabia at the Sheikh Jaber Al-Ahmad Stadium. —Photo by Yasser Al-Zayyat

ed by a spectacular opening ceremony that featured a fireworks show and performances of patriotic songs by prominent Kuwaiti singers. His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah led top state officials in attendance. This was Kuwait's first official match since FIFA lifted its ban on the state on December 6, 2017 - nearly two years after it was imposed in January 2016. The remarkable attendance numbers reflected Kuwaitis' eagerness to see their national team back in action.

### UAE BEAT OMAN

In the second Group A match on Friday, the United Arab Emirates (UAE) earned three points after beating rival Oman 1-0. Ali Mabkhoot scored UAE's sole goal from the penalty spot in minute 27 in the match that was also held at Jaber International Stadium. Oman began the game pressing for an early goal but their attacks did not materialize. The UAE and Oman met for 15 times during the Gulf Cups. UAE won 10 times while Oman won three matches. They drew twice.

## Zain launches new campaign to celebrate 'Gulf Cup 23'

**KUWAIT:** Zain, the leading telecommunications company in Kuwait, announced the launch of an all-new campaign to celebrate the commencement of the 23rd Arabian Gulf Football Cup hosted by the State of Kuwait during December 2017 - January 2018.

Zain's latest campaign includes exclusive offers specially tailored for Zain customers as well as for Kuwait's guests coming from across the GCC to cheer their national teams during 'Gulf Cup 23'. The company will also hold a number of exciting competitions on its official social media channels and present valuable prizes on a daily basis. The company will spare no efforts to celebrate this much-anticipated sporting event that brings together the nations of the Arabian Gulf together.

The new campaign includes an exclusive offer for Zain's postpaid and prepaid customers, where they will enjoy FREE unlimited Internet for social media usage during the Gulf Cup 23 period (until 5 January 2018). To

enjoy this special offer, customers who are already subscribed to an Internet Plan should simply send the code "G23" to 90009, and their Internet capacity will not be charged for social media usage on Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and Snapchat.

Zain also introduced an exclusive offer for Kuwait's guests who are attending the tournament from across the GCC. Guests can enjoy FREE Internet roaming during the Gulf Cup 23 period (until 5 January 2018) by connecting to Zain's network as soon as they arrive to Kuwait. The offer is valid for Zain's customers from KSA and Bahrain, Omantel's customers from Oman, and Vodafone's customers from Qatar.

Zain's new campaign will also feature a comprehensive program on the company's official social media channels during the Gulf Cup 23 period. The program includes daily competitions and valuable prizes featuring the great Kuwaiti commentator Khalid Al Harban. Zain will also visit Kuwaiti Diwanis and offer football-loving crowds the opportunity to express their excitement about the on-going matches. Zain also sponsors the "Gulf Cup 23" program on KTV3.

Zain will always be committed to being at the forefront of Kuwaiti sports supporters across all local, regional, and international arenas. During 2014, Zain offered free flights for Kuwait's supporters to fly over to Riyadh and support their national team during 'Gulf Cup 22'. The company is keen on supporting the national team, and wishes them all the best of luck during the exciting matches of 'Gulf Cup 23'.



Zain's family wishes Kuwait's national team all the best of luck.

**12** Austria's Hirscher closes in on Tomba World Cup mark

**14** Rockets' Harden slams officials after second straight 50-point game

**15** Dominant Barcelona move 14 points clear of Real Madrid



MANCHESTER: Manchester City's Argentinian striker Sergio Aguero (R) heads the ball to score their third goal during the English Premier League football match between Manchester City and Bournemouth at the Etihad Stadium in Manchester, north west England, yesterday. — AFP

## Aguero gives City 17th straight win

### Chelsea frustrated in Everton stalemate

LONDON: Manchester City racked up a 17th consecutive Premier League victory after Sergio Aguero's 100th and 101st Etihad Stadium goals inspired a 4-0 win over Bournemouth yesterday. Aguero scored twice and set up Raheem Sterling as Pep Guardiola's side made it 18 wins and one draw in the first half of the season and provisionally opened up a 14-point lead at the top of the table.

Chelsea were held to a 0-0 draw at improving Everton, while bottom club Swansea City started life without sacked manager Paul Clement by drawing 1-1 at home to Crystal Palace. Manchester City are now two wins away from equalling the record for consecutive wins in Europe's top five leagues, which was set by Guardiola's Bayern Munich in 2013-14.

They have already become the first team to score 100 goals in the English top flight in a calendar year since Liverpool in 1982. City manager Guardiola welcomed back Vincent Kompany from injury and David Silva, who had missed their two previous games due to personal reasons, and saw his side take a 27th-minute lead. Aguero met Fernando's cross with a diving header to bring up a century of goals in front of City's

fans since his 2011 move from Atletico Madrid. The Argentina striker's dinked pass set up Sterling to smash home City's second goal—and his 16th of the season—in the 53rd minute before Aguero headed in his second. City substitute Danilo completed the scoring late on.

rubber-stamping a victory that sent Bournemouth into the relegation zone. Everton continued their improvement under new manager Sam Allardyce by extending their unbeaten run to six league games with a dogged 0-0 draw at home to champions Chelsea.

The visitors dominated, but the closest they came to scoring was when Everton centre-back Ashley Williams headed Victor Moses's cross against his own crossbar in the 76th minute. "I think we dominated the game and had lots of chances to score," Chelsea head coach Antonio Conte told Sky Sports. "I think this result is unfair. Everton deserve

credit, but we deserved to win."

### NEWCASTLE END WINLESS RUN

Chelsea, who were without the suspended Alvaro Morata, will fall five points below second-place Manchester United if Jose Mourinho's side prevail at Leicester City in yesterday's late game. Swansea remain four points adrift of safety at the foot of the table after drawing against Palace, with player-coach Leon Britton taking charge of the team following Clement's dismissal. Palace, now unbeaten in eight league games, took the lead through Luka Milivojevic's penalty just before the hour, but Jordan Ayew levelled for Swansea with a drilled effort 13 minutes from time. Joe Allen starred as Stoke City registered a timely 3-1 win over second-bottom West

Bromwich Albion to ease some of the pressure on manager Mark Hughes. Wales midfielder Allen scored and set up a goal for Eric Choupo-Moting, with Ramadan Sobhi adding a late third after Salomon Rondon had replied for West Brom, who have gone 18 games without victory in all competitions.

Newcastle United climbed out of the relegation zone after ending a run of nine league games without victory by edging West Ham United 3-2 in an entertaining encounter at London Stadium. After Marko Arnautovic gave West Ham an early lead, Newcastle hit back through Henri Saivet, Mohamed Diame and Christian Atsu. West Ham forward Andre Ayew atoned for squandering a penalty at 2-1 by scoring to make it 3-2 in the 69th minute, but the east London club tasted defeat for the first time in four league games.

Pascal Gross's fourth goal of the season earned Brighton and Hove Albion a 1-0 win at home to Watford, while Laurent Depoitre cancelled out Charlie Austin's opener as Huddersfield Town drew 1-1 at Southampton. Sixth plays seventh later as upwardly mobile Burnley welcome Tottenham Hotspur to Turf Moor. — AFP



### Swansea remain four points adrift of safety

### Qatar beat Yemen 4-0, Bahrain, Iraq draw in Gulf Cup

KUWAIT: Qatar yesterday beat Yemen 4-0 in their group first match at Kuwait Sport Club's stadium, part of the 23rd Arabian Gulf Cup.

Akram Afif scored Qatar's first goal in the early minutes, only for Mahdi Ali to expand the lead with another goal in the fifth minute.

Al-Muez Ali's header scored the third goal for Qatar in minute 18.

Yemen tried hard to narrow the gap but instead Qatar scored their fourth goal of the night in minute 40 of the second half.

Qatar and Yemen are in the same group that also consist of Bahrain and Iraq.

In a late match, Bahrain and Iraq finished their 23rd Arabian Gulf Cup opening match with one goal each yesterday.

The first game of the clash, held at Kuwait Sport Club stadium, was average and the two teams were conservative in their movements.

Bahrain kept attacking and Jamal Rashed finally opened the score in the 34 minute of the second half.

But the Iraqis did not quit and succeeded in equalizing the score sheet via Muhammad Karrar's header in the 42nd minute. Tomorrow, Kuwait clashes with Oman and UAE play Saudi Arabia. — KUNA



KUWAIT: Iraq's forward Mohammad Abdul-Raheem celebrates after scoring a goal against Bahrain during their 2017 Gulf Cup of Nations football match. — AFP



## Business

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 24, 2017

**19** Al-Sayer & Toyota hold National Skills Contest**20** Wall Street wanes ahead of holiday**21** NBK- Egypt celebrates its 10th anniversary

WASHINGTON DC: US President Donald Trump offers pens to the press after signing a tax reform bill in the Oval Office of the White House on Friday in Washington, DC. —AFP

# Trump signs sweeping tax overhaul

## Tax cuts set to impact every corner of the economy

WASHINGTON DC: President Donald Trump on Friday signed into law a sweeping overhaul of the US tax code, two days after the Republican plan was adopted by Congress in a major political victory.

Making good on a vow to push through the tax cuts before Christmas, Trump endorsed the bill shortly before departing for a year-end break at his Mar-a-Lago resort in Florida, pulling forward a formal signing initially planned for January.

"I watched the news this morning and they were all saying, will he keep his promise, will he sign it by Christmas?" Trump told reporters gathered in the Oval Office. "And I called downstairs and said 'Get it ready, we have to sign it now.'" Trump this week celebrated his first major legislative victory since taking office a year ago as Congress passed the \$1.5 trillion overhaul, set to impact every corner of the economy through dramatic tax cuts for corporations and temporary reductions for individuals. "As you know, \$3.2 trillion in tax cuts for American families," Trump said. "And they're going to start to see that because

we're signing today." He added that "we're going to bring back probably \$4 trillion from overseas," and said corporations "are literally going wild over" the prospect. "This is something that Republicans wanted for years and Democrats wanted for years and yet it never got done. Now it's being done." Opposition Democrats have branded the tax plan a giveaway to the wealthiest that risks blowing a hole in the national debt, and a CNN poll showed that 55 percent of Americans oppose the tax reform.

But House Speaker Paul Ryan thinks they will be won over once they start to reap the benefits. He proclaimed

immediately after Trump's signing: "The biggest tax reform in a generation is now the law

of the land. "As promised, the American people will begin the new year with a new tax code."

Trump—who did not hold a traditional year-end news conference before departing Washington—seized on the occasion to speak at length to reporters, enumerating the achievements of his first year in office.

"We have more legislative victories than any other president," he said—an assertion not supported by facts. He has signed into law fewer than 100, mostly minor, pieces of legislation, fewer than his nine predecessors

according to the GovTrack website. "This is the caper, because this is again the biggest tax cut, the biggest reform of all time," he said, while vowing that infrastructure reform would be a domestic priority for 2018. Trump left the White House right after the signing, for what he told reporters would be a working holiday. "We'll be working in Florida, I'll be working very hard during that Christmas because we have many things we're talking about, including North Korea, including a lot of things happening in the Middle East as you know." The US leader also signed into law a short-term funding bill that will keep the federal government running until January 19, averting a looming shutdown.

The temporary funding extension gives more time to lawmakers from both parties to reach an agreement on funding for the remainder of the 2018 fiscal year, which ends September 30. The bill adopted by Congress on Thursday also unlocks four billion dollars to build a new missile base in Alaska, and to repair US Navy ships damaged in recent accidents. —AFP



### President signs bill just before departing on holiday

## Hamleys opens largest store in Beijing

BEIJING: British toy retailer Hamleys opened its largest store in the world in Beijing yesterday, just two days before Christmas as debate played out over whether the holiday should be banned in the Communist country.

Christmas elves, a teddy bear parade and a curiously slender Santa marked the opening of the five-storey emporium—double the size of Hamleys' flagship London store—in the capital's Wangfujing shopping district. The launch comes two years after Chinese shoe company C banner acquired Hamleys from its previous owner, France's Groupe Ludendo, for £100 million (\$153 million).

"In China, the holiday is just for kids. It's a time to have fun and get some new toys," said Daisy Yan, one of the hundreds of locals that flooded into the store.

"This place is too expensive though. The toy car my son picked out costs 10 yuan more than most other stores," she told AFP. A stuffed lemur had a 1619 yuan (\$245) price tag and a Hello Kitty ornament cost a whopping 2208 yuan (\$335). Hamleys bears engraved



BEIJING: Customers walk out after shopping on the opening day of a new Hamleys store, the iconic British toy retailer now Chinese-owned, in Beijing yesterday. —AFP

with "I love China" on one paw were less, at 129 yuan (\$20).

The well-loved British toy retailer, founded by William Hamley in London in 1760, already has branches in the cities of Nanjing and Xuzhou in China's affluent eastern Jiangsu province. It has been gradually expanding internationally since the mid-2000s, opening stores in Dubai and Moscow, among other cities. While

the practice of religion is tightly regulated in China, Christmas has emerged as a popular occasion for its increasingly affluent middle class to exchange gifts. But according to reports this week in state media, families of Chinese Communist Party members and officials in southern Hunan province have been ordered to "resist rampant Western festivals" to focus on "building a socialist culture". —AFP

## Fuel shortage in oil-rich Angola tests new president

LUANDA: Angola has suffered a week of fuel shortages, a bitter irony for one of Africa's leading oil producers, and a hardship that some people blame on opponents of President Joao Lourenco. The majority of petrol stations in the capital Luanda have had long lines of motorists for seven days now, all waiting for the chance to fill up their tanks. "We don't have any more," said Henriques Carvalho, a pump attendant in the Bairro Popular district. "I've come here to refuel but demand has been so great that we sold our last few litres tonight. I'm waiting for the next tanker."

In front of each pump, lines of trucks and cars stretch out of view. "I've been queuing for two hours," said Gisela Manuela from behind the wheel of her sedan. "I've already tried three other petrol stations—all in vain. Hopefully it will be better here." Several other filling sta-

tions in provinces outside Luanda have also run dry, according to residents contacted by AFP. Rationing has caused the price of fuel to surge on the black market. One litre of super unleaded has more than tripled in Luanda—surging from 160 to 500 kwanzas (0.80 euros to 2.50 euros).

Though the impacts of the shortages are clear for all to see, the reasons are not. A week ago the state oil company Sonangol acknowledged "delays in processing fuel at the country's ports because of minor issues around the payment of certain suppliers". But in a statement Sonangol insisted that it was "not short of fuel" and that there was "no reason to be alarmed". It promised that the rationing was simply to guarantee supply during the festive year-end period. Sonangol declined to comment further when contacted by AFP.

Angola, along with Nigeria, is one of Africa's biggest oil producers, pumping 1.7 million barrels per day. But because there is no domestic refining capacity, processed petrol and diesel must be imported from abroad. The drop in the price of oil, the country's economic lifeblood, since 2014 has plunged the economy and the government's finances into a crisis from which Angola has struggled to extricate itself. Sonangol, which makes the largest annual contribution to state coffers, has found itself in particularly dire financial straits. —AFP

# Infiniti's VC-Turbo - world's first production-ready VC ratio engine

## Smart power and greater control to optimize fuel efficiency

**KUWAIT:** Infiniti's VC-Turbo engine is the world's first production-ready variable compression ratio engine - and it makes its production debut on the new QX50. This unique variable compression technology represents a breakthrough in combustion engine design - the QX50's 2.0-liter VC-Turbo continually transforms, adjusting its compression ratio to optimize power and fuel efficiency. It combines the power of a 2.0-liter turbocharged gasoline engine with the torque and efficiency of an advanced four-cylinder diesel engine.

The VC-Turbo changes its compression ratio seamlessly with an advanced multi-link system, continuously raising or lowering the pistons' reach to transform compression ratio - offering both power and efficiency, on demand.

A high compression ratio gives greater efficiency, but in certain applications poses the risk of premature combustion ('knocking'). A low compression ratio allows for greater power and torque, and avoids knocking. In operation, the QX50's VC-Turbo engine offers any compression ratio between 8:1 (for high performance) and 14:1 (for high efficiency). Deploying smart power for greater control, the empowering engine exemplifies INFINTI's driver-centric approach.

The engine delivers 268 hp (200 kW) @ 5,600 rpm and 280 lb ft (380 Nm) @ 4,400 rpm. The VC-Turbo's specific power output is higher than many competing turbocharged gasoline engines, and comes close to the performance of some V6 gasoline engines.

Equipped with the VC-Turbo engine, the QX50 is competitively efficient, delivering gasoline fuel economy of 27 mpg. In front-wheel drive specification, this offers a 35 percent improvement in fuel efficiency over the V6 gasoline engine in the previous QX50, while the new all-wheel drive model's 26 mpg represents a 30 percent improvement.

Other highlights include compact packaging and

weight-saving technologies. The engine block and cylinder head are cast in lightweight aluminum alloy, while the transformative multi-link components are manufactured in high-carbon steel alloy. Compared to INFINTI's 3.5-liter VQ V6 engine, the 2.0-liter VC-Turbo weighs 18kg less and requires less space in the engine bay.

The engine employs the world's first multi-link system and an electric motor with a unique Harmonic Drive reduction gear to transform its compression ratio. The VC-Turbo can switch between both Atkinson and regular combustion cycles without interruption, enabling greater efficiency and performance as it transforms.

Under the Atkinson cycle, air and fuel intakes overlap, allowing the fuel in the combustion chamber to expand to larger volumes for greater efficiency. As the compression ratio drops, the engine reverts to a regular combustion cycle - intake, compression, combustion, exhaust - in separate phases to enable greater performance. The VC-Turbo engine combines a number of existing INFINTI technologies to realize its variable nature. The engine employs both MPI (multi-point injection) and GDI (gasoline direct injection) to balance efficiency and power in all conditions:

- GDI improves combustion efficiency and performance, and enables the engine to avoid knocking at higher compression ratios
- MPI mixes fuel and air earlier, enabling complete combustion in the chamber for greater efficiency at low engine loads
- The engine switches between both at regular engine speeds, with both sets of injectors able to work in conjunction under higher loads.
- The QX50's 2.0-liter VC-Turbo engine employs the world's first active engine mount vibration damping system, called an Active Torque Rod (ATR), to reduce engine noise even further. The QX50 is the only car in

### Production debut on the new QX50



its class to offer this kind of technology.

Illustrating the brand's role as an innovator in powertrain technology, INFINTI introduced the

world's first active engine mount for a diesel engine in 1998. INFINTI developed the ATR between 2009 and 2017, with a focus on reducing its size and weight.

### Bayt.com weekly report

## Overqualified for a job? You can work around it

**KUWAIT:** It is surprising that qualified and experienced candidates may sometimes struggle because they are "overqualified". After all, it stands to reason that the more qualified a candidate is, or the more decorated their CV is, the better they are for a particular role. However, there are a few reasons why employers are reluctant to hire someone they consider overqualified for a position.

Unfortunately, when a hiring manager receives an application from someone whose qualifications exceed the basic requirements of the position by a large margin, it raises a red flag in their mind. The manager might find themselves baffled as to why this candidate wants this job or wondering if they can even afford to hire them.

When an employer spots an overqualified candidate, they may feel that the applicant is using this job role as a placeholder or a temporary gig until they land a better paying, more suitable and senior position elsewhere. Hiring takes a lot of time and money, so an employer might choose to skip over an application they are apprehensive about in favor of candidates

who suit the job description and required years of experience more closely.

However, if you feel that you are at a risk of being sent to the "overqualified" list, don't worry too much. There is a way around it. Your application materials just have to tell the right story and persuade the employer you are not settling for a low-level job to kill time.

Bayt.com, the Middle East's leading job site has compiled a list of tactics to help you work around your 'overqualified' status and get that job.

#### 1. Stay humble

Humility is royalty without a crown. Be careful not to unintentionally exude arrogance or self-importance and resist the temptation to flaunt your extra degrees. Some of your qualifications may be irrelevant to that particular hiring manager. At the end of the day, the company wants someone who is a good fit for the role. If the hiring manager happens to point to your over-qualification, be humble and sincere. Acknowledge that you might have more experience than what they are looking for, but express how excited you are about the company and the role. You should also mention that you are looking forward to contributing to the best of your abilities.

Make it unquestionably clear that you have their best interests in mind. You should aim to outline in full what you intend to bring to the table and how that will benefit the organization, while being careful not to give off a condescending impression. Do your research on the company, demonstrate that you understand the prob-

lems they might be facing and present solutions. When applying for a job below your career level, you want to exude the wide-eyed curiosity of a lower level employee with the seasoned skills of someone who has been in the business for a while.

#### 2. Fine-tune your CV

An employer might think a candidate with your level of experience will consider some of the tasks associated with the position to be beneath them. If you are in a supervisory role, a subtle way to tackle this preconception is to take on tasks you might otherwise assign to others and list them on your CV. By doing that, prospective employers will see that those responsibilities are not 'beneath you' as they previously may have thought. Of course, you should also be honest with yourself about why you want this role and whether or not you really will be able to do these tasks without complaint.

#### 3. Practice flexibility

This is probably one of the most difficult tactics to commit to, but sometimes in order to get a position you are overqualified for, you will have to be willing to make some sacrifices. One can question the fairness of it all, but the reality of it is that you will be going up against other candidates. Candidates who may be less qualified than you are, but will settle for lower pay. You need to be flexible with your salary as it might encourage the employer to overlook your over-qualification and consider you for the role. You can always check Bayt.com

Salaries and get a clearer idea of what compensation to expect for each different position.

#### 4. Treat your cover letter as your mouthpiece

In order to get the job, you will have to convince the employer that you are here for the long run. Whether you actually are or not is irrelevant. You will still need to persuasively assert that your interest in the job is not solely for its potential as a temporary fix to an unemployment situation. Use your cover letter to express your reasons for wanting this particular job and make a case for how this role will give you experience and put you in a favorable position in the progression of your career.

#### 5. Sell your experience

Think about what your years of experience can bring to the position you are applying for, even if employers do not explicitly ask you to discuss it. Instead of viewing yourself as "overqualified", view yourself as a highly competent professional whose experience brings something extra to the company. Assert that you are perfectly capable of handling the job in question and that your extra qualifications and skills means that you will be able to assume additional responsibilities in less time than it would take them to hire someone else for the role.

Lastly, keep faith. A positive attitude brings about positive outcomes. Continue trying your best and waste no time in applying for all the jobs that interest you.

### EXCHANGE RATES

#### AL-MUZAINI EXCHANGE CO.

##### ASIAN COUNTRIES

Japanese Yen	2.690
Indian Rupees	4.720
Pakistani Rupees	2.760
Sri Lankan Rupees	1.975
Nepali Rupees	2.961
Singapore Dollar	225.670
Hongkong Dollar	38.733
Bangladesh Taka	3.645
Philippine Peso	6.012
Thai Baht	9.250

##### GCC COUNTRIES

Saudi Riyal	80.814
Qatari Riyal	83.235
Omani Riyal	787.032
Bahraini Dinar	804.700
UAE Dirham	82.509

##### ARAB COUNTRIES

Egyptian Pound - Cash	20.160
Egyptian Pound - Transfer	16.978
Yemen Riyal/for 1000	1.216
Tunisian Dinar	123.610
Jordanian Dinar	427.090
Lebanese Lira/for 1000	2.019
Syrian Lira	0.000
Morocco Dirham	32.565

##### EUROPEAN & AMERICAN COUNTRIES

US Dollar Transfer	302.850
Euro	358.880
Sterling Pound	406.730

Canadian dollar	236.600
Turkish lira	79.910
Swiss Franc	309.500
Australian Dollar	233.950
US Dollar Buying	301.650

##### GOLD

20 Gram	249.070
10 Gram	127.450
5 Gram	64.570

#### DOLLARCO EXCHANGE CO. LTD

Rate for Transfer	Selling Rate
US Dollar	302.400
Canadian Dollar	238.005
Qatari Riyals	406.005
Sterling Pound	359.795
Euro	300.860
Swiss Frank	802.595
Bahrain Dinar	82.725
UAE Dirhams	83.545
Jordanian Dinar	81.500
Egyptian Pound	427.795
Sri Lankan Rupees	17.077
Indian Rupees	1.978
Pakistani Rupees	4.723
Bangladesh Taka	2.740
Philippines Peso	3.668
Cyprus pound	6.012
Japanese Yen	17.995
	3.665

Syrian Pound	1.590
Nepalese Rupees	2.956
Malaysian Ringgit	74.840
Chinese Yuan Renminbi	46.470
Thai Bhat	10.225
Turkish Lira	79.560

#### BAHRAIN EXCHANGE COMPANY

CURRENCY	BUY Europe	SELL
British Pound	0.399445	0.406945
Czech Korune	0.005964	0.015264
Danish Krone	0.044196	0.049196
Euro	0.353835	0.361335
Georgian Lari	0.134844	0.134844
Hungarian 0.001141	0.001331	
Norwegian Krone	0.032345	0.037545
Romanian Leu	0.064785	0.081635
Russian ruble	0.005194	0.005194
Slovakia	0.009023	0.019023
Swedish Krona	0.032310	0.037310
Swiss Franc	0.300028	0.311028

Australasia		
Australian Dollar	0.225787	0.237787
New Zealand Dollar	0.206794	0.216294

America		
Canadian Dollar	0.232554	0.241554
US Dollars	0.298650	0.303070
US Dollars Mint	0.299150	0.303070

Asia		
Bangladesh Taka	0.003298	0.003882
Chinese Yuan	0.044544	0.048044
Hong Kong Dollar	0.036824	0.039574
Indian Rupee	0.004130	0.004771
Indonesian Rupiah	0.000018	0.000024
Japanese Yen	0.002587	0.002767
Korean Won	0.000271	0.000286
Malaysian Ringgit	0.070580	0.076580
Nepalese Rupee	0.003021	0.003191
Pakistan Rupee	0.002579	0.002869
Philippine Peso	0.005917	0.006217
Singapore Dollar	0.219924	0.229924
Sri Lankan Rupee	0.001697	0.002277
Taiwan	0.010002	0.010182
Thai Baht	0.008918	0.009468

Arab		
Bahraini Dinar	0.796269	0.804769
Egyptian Pound	0.014736	0.020454
Iranian Riyal	0.000084	0.000085
Iraqi Dinar	0.000186	0.000246
Jordanian Dinar	0.422401	0.431401
Kuwaiti Dinar	1.000000	1.000000
Lebanese Pound	0.000155	0.000255
Moroccan Dirhams	0.022130	0.046130
Omani Riyal	0.0780045	0.785725
Qatar Riyal	0.078868	0.083808
Saudi Riyal	0.079647	0.080947
Syrian Pound	0.001283	0.001503
Tunisian Dinar	0.117287	0.125287
Turkish Lira	0.074213	0.084513
UAE Dirhams	0.081002	0.082702
Yemeni Riyal	0.000984	0.001064

Business

# Al-Sayer & Toyota Genuine Spare Parts hold National Skills Contest 2017

Team effort towards better customer care



The winner



The runner-up

**KUWAIT:** Mohamed Naser Al-Sayer (MNSS) and Toyota Genuine Spare Parts Division, a subsidiary of Al-Sayer Holding recently conducted National Skills Contest 2017 for their salesmen. The contest is part of its ongoing endeavor to improve customer service standards by rigorous evaluation of their product knowledge and technical skills. Criteria for nominating winners were basic attire, communication and negotiation skills, accuracy as well as process lead time.

The event held at Al-Sayer Ballroom at Ardiya was attended by Mubarak Naser Al-Sayer CEO, Mohamed Ali Hilal Business Director Parts and Accessories, Desmond Lew Business Director Parts and Group Logistics, Saied Mohamed Taih Al Shurafa Deputy General Manager Parts and Accessories, Tanaka representative from Toyota Motor Corporation (TMC) along with employees from Spare Parts Division. The skill Contest is one of the major initiatives to appreciate the efforts of salesmen and provide essential support to update their product knowledge.

Mubarak Al-Sayer appreciated all employees for their efforts to adapt with advanced Toyota technologies and customer care expertise reflecting best in the business values. Tanaka representa-



tion from TMC credited the MNSS initiative to improve the knowledge and technical skill set of employees.

From 22 sales personnel across all parts branches who participated in the contest, five were shortlisted for the final stage after rigorous tests of theoretical Knowledge in basic automobile, product, part number, vehicle line-up, new

model and electronic parts catalogue. The final contestants were challenged in various perspective including product knowledge, customer handling skills and parts identification skills during live role-play on stage.

**Winners of Skill Contest 2017**  
**First prize:** Aksar E. Asharaf,



**Second prize:** Sadiqali.P  
**Third prize:** Prajith Kakkol Thodi  
**Fourth prize:** Mansoor Parakkal  
**Fifth Prize:** Renjith Mohanan Mohanan

Mohamed Ali Hilal thanked all contestants and congratulated the winners for their dedicated effort in making the program another milestone

event in the history of MNSS and Desmond Lew encouraged everyone to redefine the targets and exceed expectations.

The event was concluded with address by Saied Mohamed Taih Al-Shurafa who congratulated all members for their spectacular team work and also thanked all who supported towards the grand success of the program.

## LuLu Hypermarket rewards winners of 'Live For Free' promotion

**KUWAIT:** LuLu Hypermarket, the largest and most popular retail chain in the region, organized a prize distribution ceremony on Thursday, 21 December at its Al-Rai outlet. During the ceremony, gift vouchers were handed over to winners of the recent 'Live For Free' promotion. The event was held in the presence of top LuLu management, special guests and a large crowd of well-wishers.

During the 11-day 'Live For Free' promotional campaign, which was held from 29 November to 9 December at all LuLu outlets, raffle coupons were handed out to shoppers for every purchase of KD 5 worth of goods. Following a raffle draw for 25 winners, the first prize winner was awarded the bumper prize of KD600 worth gift vouchers, while 24 other winners each received gift vouchers worth KD200 each.

LuLu Hypermarket's overwhelming success in the region and the reason it continues to draw in customers in such large numbers lie in the combination of a number of factors, including wide-range of high-quality products sourced from around the world, its value-for-money offers, its regular and innovative promotions, and, most importantly, its customer-centric business approach that places the customer before everything else.



## Venezuela reports economy shrank by 16.5% in 2016

**WASHINGTON:** Venezuela's economy shrank a massive 16.5 percent in 2016, according to an official government filing to the US Securities and Exchange Commission

(SEC). The oil-rich but impoverished country attributed the collapse to a contraction of 9.9 percent in the oil sector and 16.1 percent in the non-oil economy. The 150-page report, received on Thursday by the SEC, also reported inflation at 274.4 percent, and an unemployment rate of 7.5 percent in the calendar year ending on December 31, 2016.

And it revealed a sharp drop in Venezuelan imports in 2016, when purchases totaled \$16.4 billion, half of the \$33.3 billion of the previous year. "Since 2015, there has been increasing political and social unrest due to shortages of basic consumer goods as a result of a drop in domestic food production; limited access to imports as a

result of currency restrictions; smuggling; hoarding and other distribution problems," the report noted.

It also classed 11.3 percent of the population as "extremely poor" in 2014, the last year the figures were available, up from 7.1 percent in 2012. The SEC requires detailed economic filings from foreign governments that issue their debt in the US. Venezuela is going through an acute economic crisis that intensified in 2014 with the fall in oil prices, the source of 96 percent of its export revenue. There is a major shortage of food and medicines and a hyperinflationary spiral that, according to analysts, will exceed 2,000 percent in 2017. — AFP

## Jet Airways flies into 2018 with a super promotion

**KUWAIT:** Jet Airways, India's full-service, premier international airline, continues their countdown to 2018 with a special promotion to take you into the New Year.

Guests making bookings starting December 23, 2017 and lasting until January 2, 2018, will enjoy extensive savings of up to 20 percent off on its flights from Kuwait to India and beyond to destinations including Bangkok, Colombo, Dhaka, Hong Kong, Kathmandu, and Singapore. The limited period sale will be offered on a first-come, first-serve basis and will be valid for both one way and return journeys, allowing guests to plan their forthcoming travel well in advance. Tickets booked as part of the promotion will be valid for travel from January 15, 2018 onwards with applicable terms and conditions. The special fares will be applicable only on flights operated by Jet Airways and guests can book their tickets via the airline's website at www.jetairways.com, the airline's mobile app or by contacting their travel agent.

Bipin Balakrishnan, Country Manager-Kuwait, Jet Airways, said, "This exciting year end promotion offers our guests a final opportunity to pencil in their 2018 travel plans as we bid farewell to 2017. The offer is an invaluable opportunity for our guests to travel home, meet friends and family or take on adventures in the Far East. It is another way in which we offer exceptional value to those travelling with us".

### For Rent

In a Luxurious and Privileged Compound at Abou Halifa Region Facing the National Park and the Sea

Duplex & Triplex Villas

3/4 Bedrooms + 3/4 Bathrooms  
+Big Salon + Separate pool  
All Master Bathrooms is Marble

Volleyball Court / Basketball Court / Hotel Lobby  
Pools + Jacuzzi / Billiard / 213 Car Parking Areas

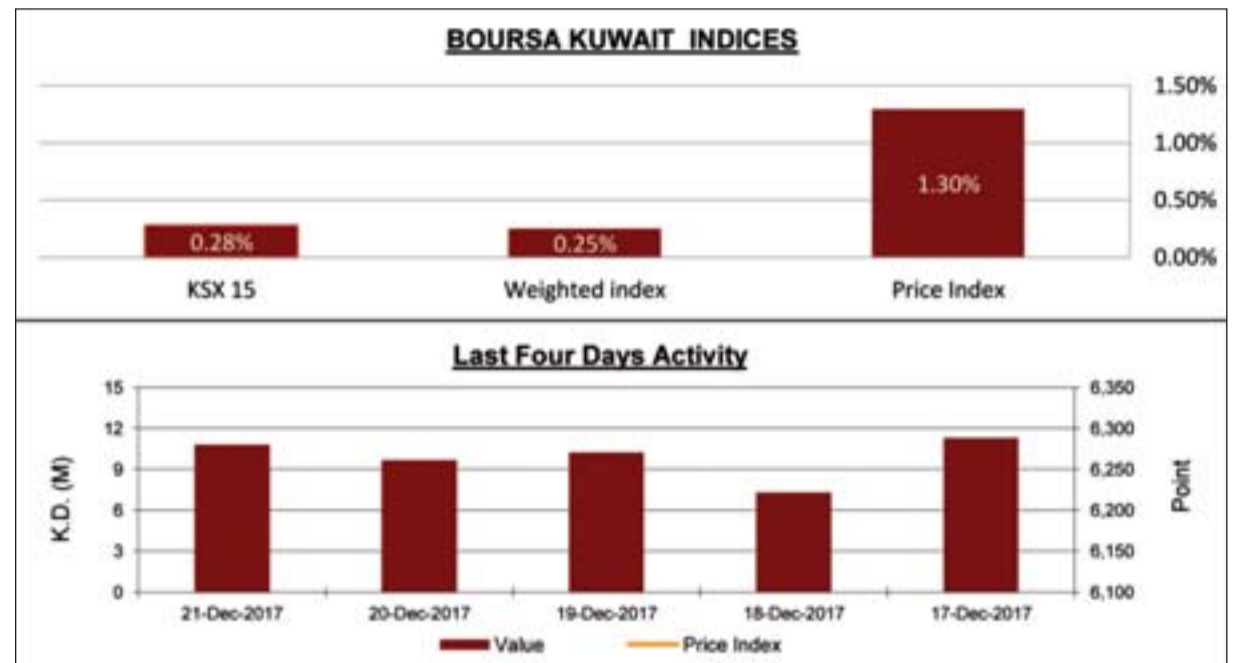
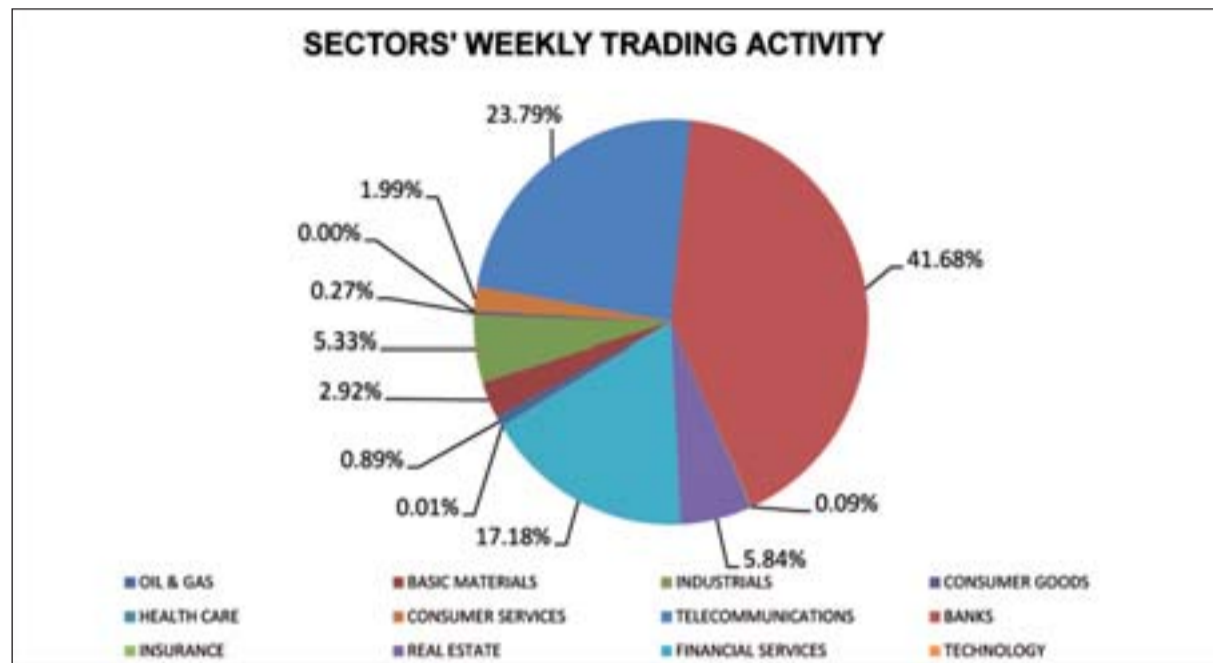
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## Business

Bayan weekly market report

# Boursa Kuwait recovers after weeks of lackluster trading

## Trading activity picks up towards year-end



Sector	Volume	To Market %	Value	To Market %
OIL & GAS	7,297,219	2.26%	441,098	0.89%
BASIC MATERIALS	2,942,297	0.91%	1,439,756	2.92%
INDUSTRIALS	13,894,873	4.31%	2,629,779	5.33%
CONSUMER GOODS	1,435,292	0.44%	133,100	0.27%
HEALTH CARE	0	0.00%	0	0.0000%
CONSUMER SERVICES	12,828,236	3.98%	982,839	1.99%
TELECOMMUNICATIONS	29,503,136	9.15%	11,732,252	23.79%
BANKS	66,035,042	20.47%	20,558,032	41.68%
INSURANCE	412,636	0.13%	45,787	0.09%
REAL ESTATE	72,153,150	22.37%	2,877,795	5.84%
FINANCIAL SERVICES	116,028,255	35.97%	8,472,654	17.18%
TECHNOLOGY	52,406	0.02%	5,496	0.01%

Sector	Last Week Closing	Previous Week Closing	Weekly Ch. %	Annual Ch. %
OIL & GAS	968.73	967.87	0.09%	24.09%
BASIC MATERIALS	1,236.38	1,224.97	0.93%	23.05%
INDUSTRIALS	1,919.19	1,833.36	4.68%	42.79%
CONSUMER GOODS	827.24	852.55	-2.97%	-26.47%
HEALTH CARE	1,510.51	1,510.51	0.00%	21.38%
CONSUMER SERVICES	930.19	926.58	0.39%	0.61%
TELECOMMUNICATIONS	543.31	545.79	-0.45%	-14.60%
BANKS	901.18	895.74	0.61%	7.64%
INSURANCE	1,033.54	1,031.44	0.20%	3.95%
REAL ESTATE	898.37	882.77	1.77%	3.24%
FINANCIAL SERVICES	612.96	625.33	-1.98%	2.66%
TECHNOLOGY	503.34	497.65	1.14%	-17.10%

KUWAIT: Boursa Kuwait ended last week in the green zone. The Price Index closed at 6,413.72 points, up by 1.30 percent from the week before closing, the Weighted Index increased by 0.25 percent after closing at 400.78 points, whereas the KSK-15 Index closed at 912.58 points up by 0.28 percent. Furthermore, the week's average daily turnover increased by 21.57 percent, compared to the preceding week, reaching KD 9.86 million, whereas trading volume average was 64.52 million shares, recording an increase of 17.22 percent.

The trading activity during the last week showed that the market witnessed a strong fluctuated performance, however was able to realize a weekly growth for its three indices and was able to continue recording gains for the second consecutive week, supported by the random purchasing operations that included some heavy stocks, in addition to the quick speculations that concentrated on the small-cap and idle stocks, which came in parallel with the improved trading levels of the value and the volume. The market was able to increase despite the profit collection operations witnessed during the week's sessions, where the three indices tended to decrease during some sessions, but the market was able to end the week in the green zone.

The Boursa recorded during the last five sessions market gains over KD 140 million, as the market capitalization for the total listed companies in the Regular Market reached by the end of the week KD 26.96 billion, up by 0.54 percent compared to its value in a week earlier, where it was KD 26.82 billion. On an annual level, the market cap gains reached 6.11 percent compared to its value at end of last year, where it reached then KD 25.41 billion. (Note: The market cap for the listed companies in the Regular Market is calculated based on the average number of the outstanding shares as per latest available official financial statements).

On the other hand, last week witnessed an increase of 51 stock out of 157 listed stock in

the Regular Market, compared to a week earlier, while 81 stock dropped, and 25 stock remained unchanged.

As far as the daily trading activity, the market initiated the first session of the week with mixed closings for its three indices, whereas the Price and Weighted indices were able to increase supported by the purchasing operations executed on some small and mid-cap stocks, while the profit collection operations that concentrated on a limited number of heavy stocks contributed to the negative impact on the KSK-15 Index which ended the session in the red zone. On Monday's and Tuesday's sessions, the Boursa indices continued its fluctuation for the three indices, as the Price Index continued in recording gains supported by the quick speculative operations that concentrated on the small-cap stocks, in addition to the auction dealings that witnessed purchasing operations on the idol stocks, while the Weighted and KSK-15 indices decreased by the end of the session under the influence of the continued profit collection operations of some leading stocks.

On Wednesday's session, the fluctuation continued to control over the three indices where positions switched as the traders changed preferences, whereas the Price Index fell in the red zone affected by the profit collection operations that included some small-cap stocks that witnessed mixed increases in the previous sessions, while the Weighted and KSK-15 indices were able to detour upward to be able to compensate a part of its previous losses supported by the return of the purchasing operations on the leading and heavy stocks. Thursday's session witnessed a closing of the three indices in the green zone for the first time in the week, as a result to the collection operations that included many listed stocks of both leading or small-cap ones, which enabled the Weighted and KSK-15 to compensate its previous losses and pass the red zone on the weekly level, and enhance the Price Index gains as well.

For the annual performance, the Price Index ended last week recording 11.58 percent annual

gain compared to its closing in 2016, while the Weighted Index increased by 5.44 percent, and the KSK-15 recorded 3.11 percent growth.

### Sectors' Indices

Eight of Boursa Kuwait's sectors ended last week in the green zone, three recorded declines, whereas the Health Care sector's index closed with no change from the week before. Last week's highest gainer was the Industrial sector, achieving 4.68 percent growth rate as its index closed at 1,919.19 points. Whereas, in the second place, the Real Estate sector's index closed at 898.37 points recording 1.77 percent increase. The Technology sector came in third as its index achieved 1.14 percent growth, ending the week at 503.34 points.

On the other hand, the Consumer Goods sector headed the losers list as its index declined by 2.97 percent to end the week's activity at 827.24 points. The Financial Services sector was second on the losers' list, which index declined by 1.98 percent, followed by the Telecommunications sector, as its index closed at 543.31 points at a loss of 0.45 percent.

### Sectors' Activity

The Financial Services sector dominated a total trade volume of around 116.03 million shares changing hands during last week, representing 35.97 percent of the total market trading volume. The Real Estate sector was second in terms of trading volume as the sector's traded shares were 22.37 percent of last week's total trading volume, with a total of around 72.15 million shares.

On the other hand, the Banks sector's stocks were the highest traded in terms of value; with a turnover of around KD 20.56 million or 41.68 percent of last week's total market trading value. The Telecommunications sector took the second place as the sector's last week turnover was approx. KD 11.73 million representing 23.79 percent of the total market trading value. —Prepared by: Studies & Research Department - Bayan Investment Co.

	Last week	Price Index	Weighted Index	KSK 15
Weekly	6,413.72	400.78	912.58	912.58
Previous week	6,331.72	399.78	910.07	910.07
Change (Point)	82.00	1.00	2.51	2.51
Change (%)	1.30%	0.25%	0.28%	0.28%
Annual	5,748.09	380.09	885.02	885.02
Last year	5,748.09	380.09	885.02	885.02
Change (Point)	665.63	20.69	27.56	27.56
Change (%)	11.58%	5.44%	3.11%	3.11%

	Last Week	Previous Week	Ch. %
Volume	322,582,542	275,183,841	17.22%
Value (K.D.)	49,318,589	40,568,913	21.57%
Deals	13,483	11,791	14.35%

	Last Week	Previous Week	Weekly Ch. %	Annual Ch. %
26,958,918,763	26,815,318,909	26,815,318,909	0.54%	6.11%

Company	Last Week Closing	Previous Week Closing	Ch. (fils)	Ch. %
REAM	345.00	250.00	95.0	38.00%
NAFAIS	1,100.00	800.00	300.0	37.50%
CABLETV	18.10	14.80	3.3	22.30%
PAPCO	84.00	70.00	14.0	20.00%
REMAI	39.00	34.00	5.0	14.71%

Company	Last Week Closing	Previous Week Closing	Ch. (fils)	Ch. %
NIH	53.00	62.50	-9.5	-15.20%
UPAC	585.00	670.00	-85.0	-12.69%
PAPER	250.00	285.00	-35.0	-12.28%
SHIP	206.00	233.00	-27.0	-11.59%
SCEM	82.00	92.00	-10.0	-10.87%

## Wall Street wanes ahead of holiday

NEW YORK: Major global stock indexes slipped on Friday in light pre-holiday trade, exacerbated by weakness in several blue-chip companies' shares, while Spanish bond yields rose after separatists won a Catalan election.

Shoe and apparel maker Nike Inc.'s shares dropped 2.3 percent after it forecast muted current-quarter revenue growth, highlighting its struggles to regain market share in North America from Adidas. UnitedHealth Group Inc slid 0.7 percent after the health insurer agreed to buy Chilean healthcare company Banmedica SA for \$2.8 billion.

Despite the dip, Wall Street ended the week higher after rallying sharply ahead of a \$1.5 trillion tax cut bill that passed in Washington on Wednesday. US President Donald Trump signed the tax overhaul into law on Friday.

Stock markets around the world shot up as the law, seen as boosting corporations and leading to economic growth,

advanced through both chambers of the Republican-dominated Congress.

Spanish stocks were among the biggest losers, confirming analyst expectations that any shake-out from the Catalonia vote would be mostly confined to Spain.

Madrid's benchmark IBEX 35 index of top companies ended the session around 1.2 percent lower after the Catalan vote injected new uncertainty into one of Europe's biggest economies. With turnout at a record high of 82 percent, Thursday's election handed a mandate back to the region's ousted separatist leaders after they campaigned from exile and behind bars. "Investors in Spain lost their Christmas cheer," said IG analyst Jasper Lawler.

"It's a frustrating result for shareholders invested in Spain to capture the country's rising economic fortunes. Political disruption looks like it will be an ongoing feature of investing in Spain."

"It's been a strong week," said Mark Luschni, chief investment strategist at Janney Montgomery Scott in Philadelphia. "Whether the market is up a little bit or down a little bit is not indicative of larger trends ... It's easy to push things around when not many people are trading."

Investors were also winding down ahead of the Christmas holiday on Monday. The Dow Jones Industrial Average fell 28.23 points, or 0.11 percent, to close at 24,754.06, the S&P 500 lost 1.23 points, or 0.05 percent, to 2,683.34 and the Nasdaq Composite dropped 5.40 points, or 0.08 percent, to 6,959.96. MSCI's gauge of stocks across the globe gained 0.02 percent.

For the week, the S&P rose 0.29 percent, the Dow added 0.42 percent and the NASDAQ gained 0.34 percent. In Europe, the premium investors demand for holding Spanish bonds over top-rated German peers fell to its lowest in almost three months as Catalonia held an independence election. The euro slid 0.1 percent to \$1.1858, but Europe's common currency was still up nearly 13 percent this year, on track for its best yearly performance in 14 years.

US Treasury yields, which reached a nine-month peak after the American tax vote, pushed slightly higher as investors hung up their hats before Christmas and ahead of next week's supply of short-to-medium-term government debt. The yield curve, while mildly flatter on the day, was on track for its largest weekly steepening since July following the bill's passage, which was seen as hastening the pace of

interest rate increases.

Investors appeared to brush off US data on durable goods orders, personal spending, new home sales and consumer sentiment. Next week, investors will watch for the release of December US consumer confidence survey data. Economists polled by Reuters expect it to decline from its strongest levels since late 2000.

In commodities, oil prices waned in light trading but remained near their highest since 2015 on pledges from OPEC leader Saudi Arabia and non-OPEC producer Russia that any exit from crude output cuts would be gradual. Palladium prices jumped to 17-year highs as strong demand from auto catalyst makers reinforced the prospect of market shortages, while gold rose for the sixth straight session to a 2-1/2-week high on US economic data. In cryptocurrencies, bitcoin once again became an eye-catching mover, this time because it plunged by nearly 30 percent to below \$12,000, before recovering to trade above \$14,000, still down nearly 9 percent. Investors dumped bitcoin in manic trading after its blistering ascent to a peak close to \$20,000 prompted warnings by experts of a bubble. —Agencies

Business

# National Bank of Kuwait - Egypt celebrates its 10th anniversary

## NBK strengthens its position in Egyptian market



Group CEO and Chairman of National Bank of Kuwait - Egypt Isam Al-Sager



Managing Director of National Bank of Kuwait - Egypt Dr Yasser Hassan with others during the celebration

**KUWAIT:** National Bank of Kuwait-Egypt (NBKE) - celebrated 10th anniversary of presence in Egypt. The Bank entered into the Egyptian market in 2007 through one of the most successful transactions in the banking sector, acquisition of Al-Watany Bank becoming one of the first Gulf banks to enter into the Egyptian market as proof of the Group's confidence in the importance of this market, its growth prospects, assets and strong potentials.

The ceremony was attended by several senior government officials, public figures, Bank clients and media professionals who were welcome by Nasser Al-Sayer, Chairman of the National Bank of Kuwait, Isam Al-Sager, Group CEO, Shaikha Al-Bahar, Deputy Group CEO, Salah Al-Fulajj, CEO-Kuwait, Sulaiman Al-Marzouk, Deputy CEO- Kuwait, George Richani, Head of International Banking Group, and from Egypt, Dr Yasser Hassan, CEO and Managing Director of NBK - Egypt, Yasser Al-Tayeb - Deputy Managing Director of NBK-Egypt, Board Members of NBK-Egypt, and senior members of the Bank.

On this occasion, Isam Al-Sager, Group CEO at National Bank of Kuwait and Chairman of National Bank of Kuwait-Egypt, underlined his pleasure with the success achieved by NBK since the groups' decision to enter the Egyptian market in such a way that exceeded the Group's expectations and it also confirmed the Group's confidence in the market, which is considered a long-term strategic alternative for them.

an opportunity for any economic institution aspiring to increase business volume.

He also pointed out that NBK-Egypt's powerful and increased profits over years generated from operational profits as a result of improved business environment, especially in recent years, reflect stability of the Egyptian economic situation, and indicated that this stability will create new opportunities for the bank (in investment and finance) that will contribute to improving integration of services between the Bank and the Group and strengthen its position in the

position in the Egyptian market and realizing its expansion vision through the implementation of an ambitious development and restructure plan. Since then, NBK-Egypt has witnessed a significant leap in its performance and accomplishments seeking to achieve growth rates exceeding the average of the Egyptian banking sector, especially in recent years.

He added that NBK-Egypt adopts a flexible business model depends on the harmonization between the exhaustive study of the Egyptian market and absorption of global developments and their implications on the one hand and the complex changing client needs on the other hand. He emphasized that the NBK-Egypt has always been interested in keeping alignment with NBK Group, since the first moment he had joined the Group in terms of applying the highest standards of banking, providing the best services to its clients and building strong relationships with them based on trust; as the Bank is always keen on developing its services provided to both individuals and companies, through providing financing solutions and offering high and innovative banking products which meet their actual needs and are based on an accurate and exhaustive market survey in line with the position of the Bank as a regional and global leader and its strong financial position, strong budget and successful strategy.

Hassan also pointed out that the success achieved by the NBK in Egypt demonstrates the success of the group's vision towards the Egyptian local market, in which we aim to strengthen our position and work on increasing growth rates during the upcoming period. He added that most of the profits of NBK-Egypt are generated from credit transaction with corporate sector, where the Bank's credit portfolio includes a wide range of companies that deal with it, which reflects the diversification of the Egyptian economy. He also noted that the bank seeks to strengthen its position in the retail banking sector during the upcoming period.

Hassan added that the upcoming period will witness further expansion of the Bank in various banking sectors in order to attract more clients, individuals, companies, and SMEs to develop the volume of its work at the same time apply financial inclusion among all segments of society.

"We are seeking to increase geographical distribution of the Bank through increasing our branch networks. The Bank now has 43 branches spread over the most vital locations in various Egyptian governorates and cities which we seek to increase them to 60 branches by 2020. NBK-Egypt is also one of the smallest number of banks in Egypt which have an Islamic license alongside the conventional license, where it has two Islamic branches enabling the bank to offer Sharia compliant financing as well as traditional banking services," he continued.

It is worth mentioning that NBK-Egypt has achieved remarkable results and significant developments over the ten years since its entry into the Egyptian market recording profitable third quarter of a net EGP 1.16 billion this year against EGP 240 million in



### Bank declares success of its expansion strategy

Egyptian market.

Al-Sager confirmed that NBK Group's investments in Egypt are long-term strategic investments, as NBK-Egypt is deemed one of the most significant external affiliates of the bank, and underlined that it becomes more important to the Group over time through its unceasingly growing profits which promote its contributions to the gross profits of the Group.

He added that NBK's name has been associated with quality, trust and safety



2007 at more than 376%. The volume of Bank assets also grown from about EGP 12.4 billion in 2007 to more than EGP 55.7 billion at the end of the last September, with an increase of 349 percent. The Bank has also managed, through its Credit sector outstanding teamwork and young cadres, to establish a loan portfolio for individual clients and corporates exceeding EGP 25 billion against EGP 7 billion by the end of 2007, with an increase of portfolio turnover to more than 257 percent. Client portfolio deposits accumulated to more than 300 percent to reach EGP 40 billion against EGP 10 billion by the end of 2007. The Bank's satisfactory results have also supported property rights which recorded about EGP 4.3 billion by the end of the third quarter this year.

Since its entry into the Egyptian market in

tion protocols Between the Bank and the Association to develop some of the most needy villages and providing work for some poor families; Misr El Kheir Foundation is also supported by the Bank through sponsoring the participation of people with disability: deaf and hard of hearing, in ASDAA Association in several robot competitions which resulted in their qualification to win these competitions and travel to Costa Rica to participate in the finals of the International Robot Olympiad. In addition to the Bank's donation to support teachers' scholarships, the Bank is keen to channel a large part of its charitable contributions to educational activities, recognizing the importance of the educational process within the community, which begins with the proper rehabilitation of teachers who are



Pictures of the concert

Al-Sager said that the Egyptian economy remains one of the largest economies in the Arab region that has a positive prospect for growth and great capacity to face developments that will support its pursuit to grow and maintain its coherence and strength. Therefore, the Egyptian market will remain one of the main markets focused upon by NBK's external strategy as it is a promising market that provides strong avenues for growth considering the huge economic opportunities available thereto; the leap in the Egyptian population to more than 100 million people; and increased requirement for financial and banking services is deemed

since it was established in 1952 as the first national bank and joint stock company in the State of Kuwait and the Arab Gulf region, due to its compliance with the highest standards of banking business; provision of the best services to its clients; and its keenness on building close and strong relationships with them based on trust extending over generations.

Dr Yasser Hassan, CEO and Managing Director of NBK- Egypt, on his part said that the Bank's success in Egypt over 10 years since joining the NBK Group in 2007 was the result of the Bank's work in Egypt according to a clear strategy enhancing its



2007, NBK-Egypt has been working to fulfill its social responsibility to serve the Egyptian society through its donations and contributions to many bodies while focusing on supporting health and education in line with the policy of the NBK Group believing that these two activities are of great significance to the development of the society and can push it forward towards a better future for the children. Some of the most important bodies the Bank were keen on sponsoring financially and providing support to were, included but not limited to:

Al-Orman Charity Association, to which donations provided by the Bank on regular basis through direct donations to support some of the Association's activities such as Shefaa Al-Orman Hospital for the treatment of cancer in upper Egypt through coopera-

responsible for the education of young people. The Bank contributed many times to the free of charge scholarships provided in cooperation with the American University in Cairo, to train several teachers in public schools and to provide them with the latest methods and techniques in the field of education in addition to many other charitable contributions in various fields through cash grants or through buying some devices and supplies for some charities, which the Bank selects carefully to ensure that donations and contributions are accessible by those who are entitled to.

It is worth mentioning that NBK was established in 1952 as the oldest and most authentic national bank and financial institution in the State of Kuwait and the Arab Gulf region. NBK is one of the largest and most prestigious Arab banks which achieved the highest credit ratings in the Middle East by credit rating agencies such as Moody's, Standard & Poor's and Fitch, which emphasized the strength of its financial indicators, the quality of its assets, its strong capital, the expertise of its administrative body, the clarity of its strategic vision and the availability of a stable financing base. NBK also maintains its position among the top 50 safest banks in the world for twelve consecutive years. NBK Group today has the largest domestic and international network of 153 branches and affiliates covering four continents around the world, and is spreading across the United States, Europe, the Gulf States, the Middle East, China and Singapore.



## Technology

# Israel dope dealers boost business with smokescreen

## Telegrass sparks alarm among drug counselors, police

**JERUSALEM:** It only takes a tap on a smartphone to reveal it: a world of dealers posting photos of their products and promises of top-quality marijuana. "It's like e-bay," one Israeli user, who declined to give his name, said. "Thousands of pictures of weed." Telegrass, an Israeli platform for drug-dealing, has won praise from its users but sparked alarm among drug counselors and police. Amos Dov Silver, a 33-year-old Israeli, founded it in March as a channel on the encrypted messaging app Telegram.

A dual Israel-US citizen, he now lives in the United States "for fear that he'll be arrested" in Israel, according to Haaretz newspaper. Telegrass lets sellers list their wares and prices, exchanging self-deleting messages with buyers to set up deliveries. "We don't know exactly how many people are using the platform, however we have over 100,000 registered users," Silver said in an online chat. "We will have better statistics in the future."

The platform is in Hebrew, as is Silver's open Facebook page, which hosts general discussions and news on marijuana-related issues and says it has 22,442 followers. "Ground zero is Israel and therefore we work mostly there. However we plan to grow internationally in the future," he said.

### A phenomenon

The Israeli buyer, who asked to be identified only by the initial J, said the platform creates a marketplace "where you can buy weed and its products anonymously online with small risk" and with a wide range of

product choices. He added that the communal nature of Telegrass gives individual buyers a degree of security. "If you get screwed by a seller-you pay for five grams of weed and he only gives you three-you have someone to go to," he said.

Sellers have to undergo identity checks to be able to post, he said. "Their details are in the hands of the people who run the system" and they can sanction rogue dealers by removing them from the service, thereby hitting their trade, he said. J added that while the buyer must identify him or herself to the seller, the latter has a strong interest in deleting that information after the transaction is completed so as not to leave evidence.

Israel police spokesman Micky Rosenfeld said that online drug trafficking was a "phenomenon" in Israel, although he did not comment specifically on Telegrass. "Police are taking action against individuals who use apps to try and buy and sell mainly marijuana," he said. "We're tracking phone devices and individuals who are trying to make transactions and arrests are made accordingly." Silver describes himself as a marijuana legalization activist who is not in it for financial gain. "The motivation is 100 percent ideological and the goal is legalization," he said. "I get a basic living income." Telegram did not respond to a request for comment.

### Robin Hood of cannabis

There is a certain level of tolerance for marijuana use in Israel, with the government in March approving a plan to partially decriminalize it in favor of fines and



**JERUSALEM:** This file photo shows an Israeli smoking a marijuana joint in Jerusalem during a rally at the Rose garden, to celebrate 420 and to express their defiance of current laws. —AFP

treatment. The plan, based on recommendations from a committee set up to study the issue, applies only to instances of personal use. Producing, selling and buying cannabis would remain criminal offences. The plan has yet to be implemented, but Orit Sternberg, of the Israel Anti-Drug Authority, said that the publicity surrounding it created a public perception that legalization was just around the corner.

She said that it was no coincidence that Silver launched Telegrass at exactly the same time. "He exploited the momentum in a very clear and commercial way," she said. "Although there was absolutely no

change in legislation, young people understood that it was alright and he is riding that wave." Opponents of Telegrass say it lulls both sellers and buyers into a false sense of security, arguing that the pre-deal identity checks required of both sides leave them open to blackmail and extortion.

Silver's supporters retort that setting up transactions online in advance is less hazardous than trusting chance encounters in clubs or on the streets. Sternberg said Silver "is becoming a kind of hero... the Robin Hood of cannabis, as if he is giving them a safer and better life." —AFP

“Thousands of pictures of weed”

”

## How to take your holiday pictures like a pro



The best holidays are those you can look back years later on and still recall the joyful moments as if it were only yesterday. As memories can fade away, pictures are the best reminders of lovely moments we spend with loved ones. Once upon a time, we needed a DSLR camera to capture those moments. Not anymore.

Whether you're an enthusiastic photography amateur or a seasoned pro, the Huawei Mate 10 Series smartphones are the indispensable photographic tools to beautifully capture your moments and immortalize them. Here are some pro tips on how to consider for better holiday pictures that will rock your Instagram feed.

### 1. Explore the camera

Here's another thing to do before your holiday starts: sit down with your smartphone and get to know it very well. Explore every feature in it and snap as many pictures as you can. The feature-packed Huawei Mate 10 Series smartphones offer an amazing camera experience thanks to their Leica-branded dual camera setup that's unquestionably the best highlight.

Offering the world's largest aperture of f/1.6, the phones pack in a 20 MP monochrome and 12 MP RGB sensors, an Image Optical Stabilization (IOS), as well as 4-in-1 hybrid zoom. The Summilux-H lenses on the main camera have been completely reworked to boast the aperture and produce exceptional low-light photography. So if you really want impressive pictures, why not try out the different camera features that will help you out?

### 2. Get advantage of artificial intelligence

Even though the Leica dual camera setup on Huawei 10 Series smartphone is impressive in and of itself, the artificial intelligence embedded into the processor Kirin 970 can help perfect your shots with real-time object and scene recognition. Having learnt more than 100 million objects, the processor uses data collected from the camera, identifies the subject you want to take, and automatically fine-tunes the camera settings to capture a DSLR-like picture. Trust us! Relying on technology will help you achieve the perfect shot.

### 3. Get closer and snap intelligent selfies

Don't be afraid to get closer to your subject's face. The Huawei Mate 10 Series smartphones' cameras use artificial intelligence to identify people's faces and adjust automatically the settings; this allows your phone to produce a shallow depth-of-field effect,



leaving the background out of focus, while keeping your subject's face features sharp. And here's a handy tip! Sometimes blurring out the background a little can bring the subject into sharper definition.

### 4. Don't be afraid to capture the action

Blurred pictures are a thing of the past. The Huawei Mate 10 Series smartphones offer an amazing AI-assisted feature that allow you to capture the motion without blur. So if you want to capture a car moving at 200km/h, kids running or people twirling, worry no more! The HUAWEI Mate 10 Series smartphones are assisted by artificial intelligence to detect and capture motion while reducing blur and delivering exceptional pictures of moving subjects.

### 5. Get out in the dark

To improve your night photography skills, it's very important to go out in the dark and take as many pictures as you can. Play around with the different lights and perspectives and try different angles. As challenging as night photography can be, there's nothing quite like capturing the vibrant night-time city life and energy. The Huawei Mate 10 Series smartphone's AI-powered intelligent photography settings allow you to take amazing night snaps: assisted by artificial intelligence, the camera will be able to pull out the details and reduce the noise, thus delivering sharp and clear pictures. You can walk the streets capturing street lamps, bulbs, headlights, candles, which create circular beads of colored light that add an artsy feel to your shots.

### 6. Create some monochrome magic

This is the best thing you can experience with the Huawei Mate 10 Series. The smartphones are



equipped with dedicated monochrome Leica camera lenses that produce breathtaking and amazingly detailed black and white pictures, thus giving your pictures a timeless feel. Get into the festive spirit, celebrate moments and immortalize memories with your Huawei Mate 10 Series smartphone! Happy holidays!

## Friendly 'robocop' helps police in Hungary

**SZOLNOK, Hungary:** A talkative little robot has been enlisted by police in Hungary to help bring an electric jolt to presentations in schools and pensioner clubs. "Hi kids!" said robot "Robi" to a class of primary school children in Szolnok, 100 kilometers east of Budapest. "Some things you need to be careful with when using the internet..." he continued in a tiny voice. About 40 centimeters tall and 20 wide (16 by eight inches), and weighing 1.6 kilograms, Robi's 16-part body stood on a table, gesturing as he talks.

"It grabs the attention more if a robot is talking," Robi's programmer Csaba Erdos, a police educational instructor, said. "It's a new way of communicating and presenting," he said. Robi has been operational in the Jasz-Nagykun-Szolnok county since May, and Erdos, 38, said there are plans to have similar robots jumping into action soon around the country. Most weeks Erdos takes Robi with him to help at presentations to school kids and elderly people on themes like crime prevention, digital security and road safety.

During a break to recharge-after 30 minutes of talking Robi needed more power-one boy at the Tiszaparti school told AFP that he hadn't seen a talking robot before, apart from in the "Transformers" cartoon. "His voice took a while to get used to but I loved it, he was very clever," said 10-year-old Milan Markus. After the talk, the children laughed as they all tried to mirror his robot moves.

Occasionally Robi also greets reporters at press conferences, where he gives advice on how to avoid crimes like break-ins. He can even answer questions, "as long as they are pre-programmed," said Erdos. Sporting a police logo on his chest, the friendly Robi can also help engender trust in the police, Erdos said. "Robots can be a force for good, helping and supporting people, rather than replacing or threatening them, as they are sometimes portrayed in films, he said.—AFP

## Facebook promises personalized music in first label deal

**NEW YORK:** Facebook announced a licensing deal Thursday with Universal Music Group, its first with a major label, as the social media giant promised more personalized, interactive music features for its two billion users. The move marks a new foray into music by Facebook, which despite its global conquest has been low-key in developing music functions compared with fellow tech titans Apple, Google and Amazon.

Universal-home to some of the biggest names in music from The Beatles to Elton John and Lady Gaga-billed the agreement as its latest success in securing more revenue from songs in an age of round-the-clock Internet sharing. Universal will license its music recordings and videos around the world for use on Facebook as well as on Instagram and the virtual reality site Oculus, which are both owned by Mark Zuckerberg's company.

Facebook said users will eventually have access to a vast library from Universal, allowing them to upload licensed music or share it through Messenger. The two companies, in a joint statement, said they were developing more personalized functions in a bid to "develop the next generation of music products that best engage social consumers." —AFP

Health

# New recall of Lactalis baby milk over salmonella fears

## Latest recall involves 720 batches sold in France

PARIS: French baby-milk maker Lactalis on Thursday ordered the recall of all of the production of one of its factories since February over fears of possible contamination with salmonella. Lactalis, one of the world's top dairy producers, had already recalled around 7,000 tons of infant formula milk two weeks ago. But in what it described as "a precautionary measure" on Thursday, it had now decided in consultation with the health authorities to recall "all infant formula and nutritional products manufactured and conditioned in the Craon factory" in north western France.

"Information received from the health authorities as well as the results of initial investigations carried out... led the group to issue a second recall, this time of all products manufactured since February 15, 2017 using a specific drying tower at the factory," the statement said. The latest recall involves 720 batches of products sold in France and overseas, compared with the initial recall of 625 batches on December 10. It concerned powders and infant cereals of the group's Picot and Milumel brands, as well as the Taranis powdered amino-acid mix, the company said.

"We now know that there has been a low-level dispersed contamination within Craon factory, due to work during the first 2017 semester," it explained. The Craon site was shut down on December 8 "for a thorough and comprehensive audit," it added. On Monday, the health authorities said that 23 infants had been identified as having drunk formula milk produced at Craon and who had caught salmonellosis.

Around a dozen of the infants had been hospitalized, but had subsequently been discharged and were "doing well", the authorities said. The father of one three-



CRAON: This file photo shows the Cella dairy company's infant milk factory that belongs to the LNS Lactalis group in Craon, western France. —AFP

month-old baby, who drank the milk, and the UFC Que Choisir consumer association, said Monday they had filed a complaint against Lactalis.

### Very sensitive products

By recalling all of the factory's production, Lactalis was applying "the principle of maximum precaution," said Jehan Moreau, director of the French National Federation of Dairy Industries or FNIL. "Infant milks are very sensitive products and no risks should be taken. But it's a terrible decision for them, because it will constitute a huge shortfall," Moreau told AFP. Salmonellosis is a food poisoning that

ranges from mild gastroenteritis to more serious infections. It is potentially more dangerous for young children, the elderly or weak.

The health ministry asked parents "not to use, where possible", the products concerned. In the worst case, pediatricians recommend boiling the milk for two minutes. Lactalis has set up a 24-hour helpline for consumers. "We wish to extend our sincerest apologies to the families affected. We are well aware of the seriousness of the situation and fully understand the anxiety and inconvenience that have been caused," it said in a statement. —AFP

## Modern-day Mowgli: Indian toddler forges bond with monkeys

DHARWAD, India: He is still too young to talk, but a two-year-old Indian boy has become a modern-day Mowgli and a subject of local intrigue after befriending a gang of langur monkeys. Samarth Bangari's unusual friendship was discovered when the youngster was spotted alone in his village in southern India playing with nearly two dozen grey langurs.

The infant's uncle Barama Reddy said it was "strange" for the monkeys to behave like that, and villagers feared the boy would be attacked while his parents worked in a nearby field. But it soon became clear they were more than comfortable in his presence, with the youngster happy to share some of his food with the visiting troupe. The monkeys kept returning, day after day, to visit their young friend in Allapur, roughly 400 kilometers from the city of Bangalore, his uncle said. "Since that day, the monkeys haven't missed a day. They come to the house around the same time," Reddy said.

"Even if he is sleeping, they first wake him up, and then sit with him for an hour or two." The unusual relationship piqued local interest, and soon people began visiting the house



BANGALORE: In this photograph Indian child Samarth Bangari, 2, feeds langur monkeys in a field near his home in Allapur in India's southwest Karnataka state. —AFP

to catch a glimpse of young Samarth tottering around the farm with 20 langurs in tow. Thinking the monkeys must enjoy the company of children, another youngster was plonked next to Samarth but the langur pack became aggressive, Reddy said.

He said Samarth was now a local legend due to his "special bond" with the monkeys, whose sounds he mimics even though he cannot speak yet. "Everyone thinks that he is special and they are communicating with each other, and can understand what is being said," Reddy said. Mowgli was a character in "The Jungle Book", Rudyard Kipling's tales about a boy who grew up in the wild in India, and is often used as a shorthand for people who are able to bridge the human-animal divide. —AFP

CLINIC

PAGE

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What's On

# International Women Group celebrates Christmas and New Year



The International Women Group recently celebrated Christmas and New Year at Al-Jawhara ball room, Crowne Plaza. The ceremony included a Christmas tree, seasonal music and a Santa who spread cheer and joy around amongst participants. The ceremony was attended by the group members, ambassadors' spouses and female dignitaries. The ceremony also included Armenian folkloric dancers supervised by the Armenian ambassador's spouse Lilet Galastian, Chinese music played by the Chinese child Abdullah and many competitions.

Speaking on the occasion, the Russian ambassador's spouse Eleina Solimanin congratulated the members on the occasion of New Year and wished them a blessed one ahead and also thanked Crowne Plaza. On her part, IWG's media advisor Narjis Al-Shatti stressed that IWG celebrates all occasions due to the fact that the group includes spouses of international ambassadors designated in Kuwait regardless of race or religion.



## 'Lavan' by Crafters Co. serves up authentic Indian cuisine

Crafters Company, the creators of delectable and innovative restaurant concepts and cuisines in Kuwait, yesterday unveiled their latest casual-dining concept, Lavan. The restaurant serves traditional Indian cuisine in a unique open kitchen concept and marble-infused setting, with dishes served straight from a custom tandoor oven. Lavan first debuted earlier this month at its new location on Khalid Ibn Waleed St, Kuwait City, and is the latest addition to the Crafter's fast growing restaurant portfolio.

Seamlessly combining modern and classic elements and design, high ceilings and large windows adorn the space filled with slatted wood and marble accents in a convivial setting. The restaurant's unique open kitchen concept offers customers an outlet to satisfy their curiosity, chefs to showcase their cooking skills, and engulfs all diners with the aroma of delicious Indian cuisine being prepared; making it the ideal place for a one-of-a-kind, interactive casual-dining experience with your loved ones.

A Crafters Company spokesperson said: "When we first set out to create Lavan we wanted to not only create dishes that were authentic and rich with flavor, but also offered in a dining environment unlike any other in Kuwait. Spending months on research and travelling around India to find the perfect



cooking facilities and recipes, our experience and passion shines through our menu and we invite you to join us for an authentic taste of India in the heart of Kuwait."

Lavan's menu features a mix of fresh ingredients infused in tastefully and traditionally made dishes, including a combination of curry, biryani, and tandoori dishes cooked in a custom tandoor oven where handmade naan bread is also baked fresh daily.

Established in 2010 by two Kuwaiti entrepreneurs on a journey to create the ultimate concept dining experience in the region, Crafters Company brings almost a decade of food-service experience to their new endeavor with the launch of Lavan. Based in Kuwait, Crafters are the curators behind original dining concepts: Triangle, Ridley's Burger, Bao Steamed Bun, and Haute Gourmet Hot Dogs.



## ACK organizes 'Go Green' event

As part of ACK's corporate social responsibility (CSR), the Occupational Health and Safety Department organized its fourth Health Day event with the theme 'ACK Goes Green'. ACK's community worked together to shed light on the environment and its effect on human health. Participated Guests included Kuwait Environment Public Authority, Public Authority of Agricultural Affairs and Fish Resources, Tadweer Waste Treatments, Kuwait Oil Company - Export Operations & Marine Operations Support Services Group, and Nestle.

The event covered environment-related topics including waste management, reusing and recycling, effects of the environment on living being and animals, and more. ACK's Business Management students played an integral role in organizing the Environmental Health Day, as students have been studying Event Management

this semester and relished the opportunity to put their new-found event skills into real life practice.

They were responsible for planning and implementing a large number of activities for children and adults, as well as creating a diverse program that included slippery slides, magic shows, various sports and educational games in line with the theme of the event: 'ACK Goes Green'. Students from the School of Engineering hosted a recycling gallery as part of their applied learning studies. They displayed their unique, innovative and of course recycled items for sale with all proceeds going to charity.

Projects included a recycling bin using solar panel; water tank for pets constructed from recycled material; chairs made from tires, coat hangers and tubes; and many more. This semester, the Health Day promotion raised 1,000 KWD which was donated to Cancer Awareness Nation (CAN). The donation entity, CAN, was very satisfied with ACK's continuing commitment and appreciative of our patrons' donations. Further ACK Health Days with different themes will continue to be held each semester by the college to raise awareness about important topics that lead to healthy living.





TV



00:50 Frontera
02:35 Drop Zone
04:15 Captain America: The First Avenger



00:50 Untamed & Uncut
01:45 Shamwari: A Wild Life
02:40 Shamwari: A Wild Life



00:35 Cold Feet
01:25 Cold Feet
02:20 The Good Karma Hospital



00:00 Homicide Hunter
01:00 Homicide Hunter
02:00 My Haunted House



00:08 The Half Hour
00:30 Workaholics
00:55 The Daily Show - Global Edition

17:45 Disaster Date
18:10 Ridiculousness Arabia
18:35 Lip Sync Battle UK



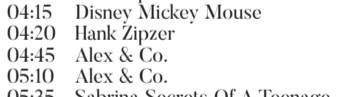
00:30 Ultimate Survival
01:20 North America
02:10 North America
03:00 North America



00:50 Paranormal Lockdown With Nick Groff
01:45 Obsession: Dark Desires
02:40 The Perfect Murder



00:05 Disney Mickey Mouse
00:10 Sabrina Secrets Of A Teenage Witch



00:05 Disney Mickey Mouse
00:10 Sabrina Secrets Of A Teenage Witch

And Cat Noir
20:35 Disney The Lodge
21:00 Alex & Co.



00:00 PJ Masks
00:30 Vampirina
01:00 The Hive



00:15 Street Customs 2008
01:00 Fast N' Loud
01:45 Alaska: The Last Frontier



06:00 Disney11
06:25 Supa Strikas
06:50 Guardians Of The Galaxy

03:20 Celebrity Style Story
03:50 So Cosmo
04:40 So Cosmo



00:00 Man Fire Food
00:30 Man Fire Food
01:00 Restaurant: Impossible



00:15 Coronation Street
00:40 Coronation Street
01:00 The Chase



00:00 In Search Of Aliens
01:00 Blood And Glory: The Civil War In Color



00:20 Counting Cars
00:45 Counting Cars
01:10 Ax Men

21:00 Storage Wars
21:25 Storage Wars
21:50 American Pickers Best Of



00:15 Rustic Adventures Italy
00:45 A Is For Apple
01:10 Food School



00:10 Crowd Control
00:35 Crowd Control
01:00 Yukon Gold



00:20 The Naked Superhero
01:10 Animal ER
02:00 Savage Kingdom: Uprising

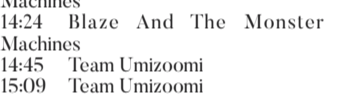


00:12 Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles
00:36 Rabbids Invasion
01:00 Rabbids Invasion

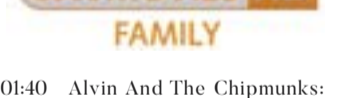
18:36 Nicky, Ricky, Dicky & Dawn
19:00 School Of Rock
19:24 Talia In The Kitchen



00:15 Shimmer And Shine
00:39 Shimmer And Shine
01:00 Max & Ruby



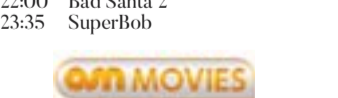
00:40 Albert
01:15 Paw Patrol
01:45 Nella The Princess Knight



01:40 Alvin And The Chipmunks: Chipwrecked



00:20 The Sitter
01:45 Lies & Alibis
03:20 The Mexican



00:40 Wild At Heart
02:50 Brooklyn
04:50 5 Flights Up



00:15 Emilie Jolie
01:35 Moomin And Midsummer Madness

04:20 Tom And Jerry: Back To Oz
05:50 A Town Called Panic
07:15 Krazzy Planet



00:25 Wanted
02:20 The Internship
04:20 Loch Ness



00:40 The Big Brain Theory
01:30 The Big Brain Theory
02:20 The Big Brain Theory



01:30 The Dead Girl
03:00 Hurricane Season
04:45 Kinky Boots



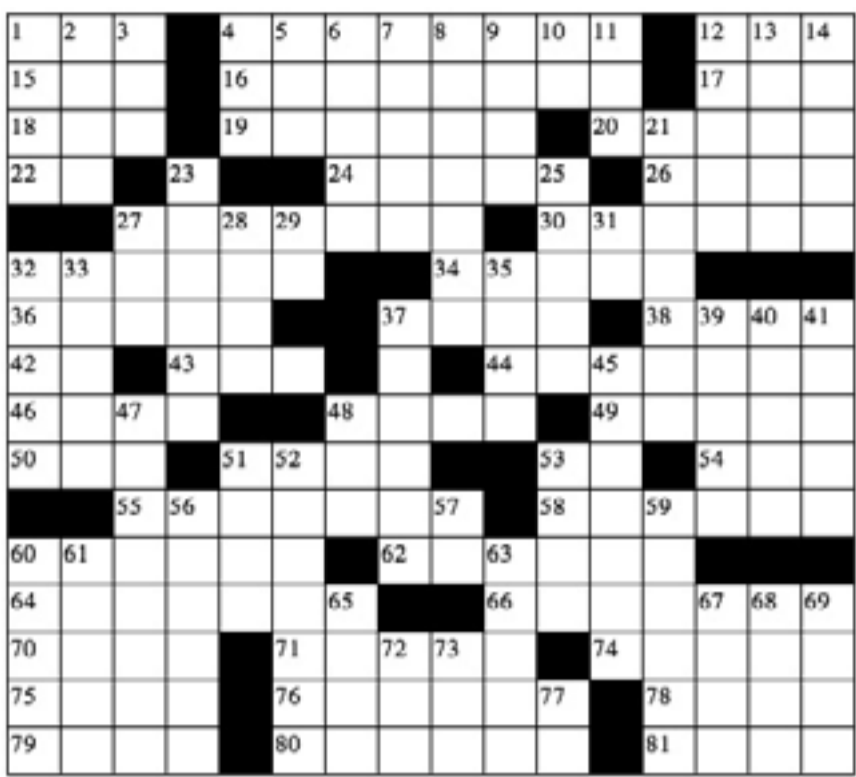
00:00 Project Runway
01:00 Project Runway
02:00 Wedding Band



00:20 Dr Christian Will See You Now
01:05 Botched Up Bodies

00:45 Toddlers & Tiaras
04:50 Toddlers & Tiaras
05:35 Say Yes To The Dress UK

CROSSWORD 1792



ACROSS

1. (computer science) A computer that is running software that allows users to leave messages and access information of general interest.
4. Small bitter fruit of the marasca cherry tree from whose juice maraschino liqueur is made.
11. A slight rounded elevation where the malleus attaches to the eardrum.
15. Resinlike substance secreted by certain lac insects.
16. Of or relating to Iran or its people or language or culture.
17. A lawman concerned with narcotics violations.
18. A loose sleeveless outer garment made from aba cloth.
19. (Sumerian and Akkadian) A demon personifying death.
20. A short erect tail.
21. A very young child (birth to 1 year) who has not yet begun to walk or talk.
23. German composer.
25. Infections of the skin or nails caused by fungi and appearing as itching circular patches.
27. The tenth month of the Moslem calendar.
28. Date used in reckoning dates before the supposed year Christ was born.
30. Before noon.
31. A compartment in front of a motor vehicle where driver sits.
33. A colorless explosive liquid that is volatile and poisonous and foul-smelling.
34. A boy or man.
36. A tricycle (usually propelled by pedalling).
41. Large west African tree having large palmately lobed leaves and axillary cymose panicles of small white flowers and one-winged seeds.
43. (Babylonian) God of storms and wind.
45. Italian operatic soprano (born in 1922).
47. The small projection of a mammary gland.
48. English film actress (1913-1967).
51. A kiln for drying hops.
52. Any of various strong liquors distilled from the fermented sap of toddy palms or from fermented molasses.
55. The world's largest desert (3,500,000 square miles) in North Africa.
57. The basic monetary unit in many countries.
59. A republic consisting of 26 of 32 counties comprising the island of Ireland.
63. (Scottish) Bluish-black or gray-blue.
66. A very loud utterance (like the sound of an animal).
68. Not only so, but.
69. Any plant of the genus *Reseda*.
72. An industrial city in northern France near the Belgian border.
74. A health resort near a spring or at the seaside.
75. A former agency (from 1946 to 1974) that was responsible for research into atomic energy and its peacetime uses in the United States.
76. A trellis on which ornamental shrub or fruit tree is trained to grow flat.
78. An oral poliovirus vaccine (containing live but weakened poliovirus) that is given to provide immunity to poliomyelitis.
79. Hormone released by the hypothalamus that controls the release of thyroid-stimulating hormone from the anterior pituitary.

80. Most direct.
81. 100 pyas equal 1 kyat.

DOWN

1. Divulge information or secrets.
2. A small cake leavened with yeast.
3. Someone who works (or provides workers) during a strike.
4. A unit of time equal to 60 seconds or 1/60th of an hour.
5. (Welsh) Lord of Annwn (the other world).
6. Tall perennial herb of tropical Asia with dark green leaves.
7. An agent that counteracts or neutralizes acidity (especially in the stomach).
8. The granite-like rocks that form the outermost layer of the earth's crust.
9. A town in southeastern New Mexico on the Pecos River near the Mexican border.
10. (Babylonian) The sky god.
11. (Of a piece of ground) Not have a crop sown on it.
12. Long-tailed brilliantly colored parrot of Central and South America.
13. A city in northwestern Turkey.
14. Of or pertaining to a number system having 8 as its base.
22. The 7th letter of the Greek alphabet.
24. The syllable naming the sixth (submediant) note of a major or minor scale in solmization.
26. Urge or force (a person) to an action.
29. The particular occupation for which you are trained.
32. Any of various spiny trees or shrubs of the genus *Acacia*.
35. Bar temporarily.
37. The lower house of the parliament of the Republic of Ireland.
38. Any branch of Shinto other than Kokka.
39. A large number or amount.
40. Being precisely fitting and right.
42. Sweet liqueur made from wine and brandy flavored with plum or peach or apricot kernels and bitter almonds.
44. Full of submerged reefs or sandbanks or shoals.
46. Small order of macroscopic fresh and brackish water algae with a distinct axis.
49. Large snake mackerel with rings like spectacles around its eyes.
50. A shoe without a tongue and with decorative lacing up the instep.
53. A hard brittle blue-white multivalent metallic element.
54. Unknown god.
56. A rare heavy polyvalent metallic element that resembles manganese chemically and is used in some alloys.
58. A state in New England.
60. Greek author of fables (circa 620-560 BC).
61. In small tight curls.
62. An Indian tree of the family *Combretaceae* that is a source of timber and gum.
64. A facial expression of contempt or scorn.
65. United States writer (born in Poland) who wrote in Yiddish (1880-1957).
67. A jaunty rhythm in music.
70. A potent estrogen used in medicine and in feed for livestock and poultry.
71. The residue that remains when something is burned.
73. The universal time coordinated when an event is received on Earth.
77. A radioactive metallic element that is similar to tellurium and bismuth.

Friday's Solution



STAR TRACK



Aries (March 21-April 19)

Because of your ability to be conservative, as well as thorough, someone may come to you with a proposal to take charge of some project requiring a conservative mind. You work through the business madness like no other person. Clear thoughts and answers are available to you and it is easy to see why higher-ups would call on you to help in a difficult job or in a deadline situation. You may tend to be somewhat of a loner this afternoon and find the simple life much more appealing. Hoopla and fanfare is just not your cup of tea. Perhaps all that rushing about during the day has created the need to find a quiet atmosphere for the evening. A loved one is most comforting this evening and the two of you may enjoy a long after-dinner stroll.



Taurus (April 20-May 20)

You may find it difficult to buckle down to your more routine duties this day. You could find yourself in a rather dreamy kind of mood. Perhaps a poem has been running around in your mind and you want to finish it. As a new life phase begins for you, satisfaction could be coming from your work, health or a creative venture. These things may lead to love and a new self-image if you will stick with them. If you have not taken a creative writing course, this next year might be a good time to consider it. It should be easy for you to enjoy and value your own life situation, or to feel particularly kind towards a friend or loved one. Someone may compliment you on your talents and the way that you handle yourself. Your domestic life is in a good place: harmony.



Gemini (May 21-June 20)

You are mentally alert and ready to achieve and accomplish a variety of subjects. You may be very convincing in what you say and think. With all of this emotional energy, you could lecture, teach or represent your company. Being closely involved with another person may well become your highest priority. Your career direction gets some real focus and life's problems seem easy to solve. You may find yourself benefiting from conversations with an older individual or someone in authority. Marriage contracts and partnerships are seen as a means of success and happiness. The most unusual people are attracted to you at this time. Show the world you have character and good taste. Lots of good news pours in at the same time. Get ready... Company is coming.



Cancer (June 21-July 22)

Today you contact those key people that can contribute to your business success. It is who you know, not necessarily what you know, that makes a difference—you are friendly. A stabilizing factor for your emotions may come from a marriage or other close relationship, which gives rise to great expectations now. This is a good time to enjoy your association and ties to other folks and to strive for peace and harmony in all of your endeavors. You may find yourself wanting to collect all of the information about a disturbing subject that you possibly can, in order to share with those around you. Knowing a little about many things is your calling card. Have faith in a loved one this evening. Do not worry about circumstances that are out of your control.



Leo (July 23-August 22)

You are most practical when it comes to dealing and working with others. You work hard at developing a system for getting things organized as a sense of ambition and common sense. All lines of communication could be open to you at this time and you may feel particularly in touch and in rapport with others. Now is a time when you can probably expect a little push in the right direction and some sort of positive recognition from those around you. Needing and wanting to be respected is an emotionally charged issue at this time and could be one of your motivating factors. You are called on to show off your talents this evening and you could find yourself in some sort of entertainment arena or piano bar: you are encouraged.



Virgo (August 23-September 22)

You could be flexing your independence today, as well as getting right in the middle of anything that is new, unusual or different. Get organized and pour your effort into the most important priorities. You may just relish getting away from the old tried and true routine this afternoon or you could work to set your sails in another direction—towards change. Community activities fascinate you. Look beyond the surface meanings for the insights you seek at this time. Responsibilities and outside commitments demand your attention. Your presence is beneficial and comforting to others. Tonight is a good time to update your checkbook, pay bills and look at ways in which you could take on a new financial strategy.



Libra (September 23-October 22)

Correct choices and deciding which path is best, may be at odds with your sense of value. You may not rate highly the easy way, or the clear-cut option, and may choose instead a more difficult path for your life experiences and lessons. There is a continued accent on your career. You may receive a challenging new assignment or job offer at this time. Your personality is valuable in business dealings. Friendships and involvement in group activities play a more important part in your life. Being able to communicate and get your message across to others is very important to you. Your timing should be perfect and those around you should find you most expressive. You could find yourself enjoying the support that is given to you at this time.



Scorpio (October 23-November 21)

You should be feeling really good about making your own way and discovering solutions to whatever problems you have. The good life and all that is fine and pleasurable may be what you value most just now. Expressing yourself comes quite naturally and works very well with your thoughts and ideas. Others will follow your lead at this time due to your power of persuasion. Expect a gratifying conversation between you and someone about whom you care deeply—a healing takes place. Some nice compliment may reach you today in the form of flattery on your preferences or personal effects. It should be a breeze to enjoy and find value in your own life circumstances. You feel especially good-hearted toward a friend or loved one this evening.



Sagittarius (November 22-December 21)

Today has every indication of being your day—you may find it particularly easy to express yourself. You appear very relaxed. Being able to understand those around you could create opportunities for you to be the go-between for problem-solving situations, if you want. You know how to give others encouragement, even when there seems to be no possible way. There is a sense of support and harmony from your co-workers and family, making this a happy time. These people could have a big impact on your goals and make a huge impression. Gathering and exchanging information becomes paramount. Expect a mentally and socially active period. Getting your personal affairs organized will help you along in your career path.



Capricorn (December 22-January 19)

You may find it easy to read people and that should give you a better understanding of and sensitivity to their needs, which in turn will put you in a position to communicate concerning groups and the community in general. Interacting with those in your neighborhood as well as your family helps to placate a big emotional need. Making sure you are understood when you speak is an important issue to you just now. You will, however, have no problem in convincing others of new projects or particular ideas—you just naturally have a talent for conversing with those around you. You will find it necessary to be out and about gathering new information to share with others. A pleasant conversation will ensue with loved ones tonight.



Aquarius (January 20- February 18)

Your mind is expeditious and your words are the only tools you need as you arrange last minute calls for some type of party food delivery. You may have to sew a seam, rearrange furniture, make phone calls to confirm engagements, but this is something you seem to enjoy doing. A party, big or small, is thrilling and anticipated every time you decide to host. Save yourself some frustrations and appoint a friend to help with some of these last-minute errands. A gift may be this friend's reward. There is enough time to sit down and prop your feet up to go over your list one last time. This evening you will find your company particularly witty and eccentric—fun. You enjoy adding to your friendships. You have some ideas on new adventures for next year.



Pisces (February 19-March 20)

Deep and penetrating discussions and investigative conversations could find you at your mental finest. Your perceptive abilities are at a high point. You have no problem in getting your thoughts and ideas across to other people at this time—good communication. An interest in charities or volunteering comes to your attention again and again. Self-sacrifice can be noble if the cause is worthy; otherwise, it can be a terrible waste. Now is the time to be sure which is which. You have the ability to know where to draw the line and now is the time to make those decisions and turn them into goals. An unexpected turn of events could be profitable this evening. Before you get the check you have spent the money in your mind—spend wisely.

Wordsearch Puzzle

Family Ties

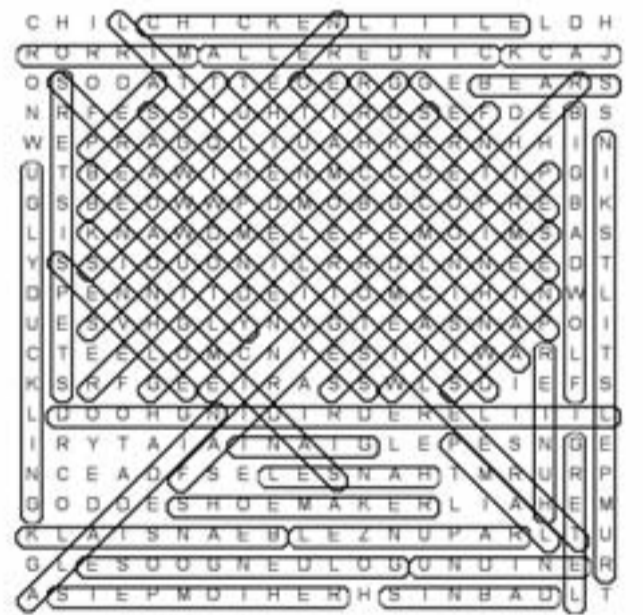
Find and circle all of the words that are hidden in the grid. The remaining letters spell a special occasion for families.



- |             |              |           |            |
|-------------|--------------|-----------|------------|
| ANCESTOR    | FATHER       | MOTHER    | SISTERS    |
| AUNT        | FOLKS        | NEICE     | SON        |
| BOND        | GENEALOGY    | NEPHEW    | SPOUSE     |
| BROTHERS    | GRANDPARENT  | NEWLYWED  | STEPPARENT |
| CHILDREN    | HALF BROTHER | OFFSPRING | TRIPLETS   |
| CLAN        | HALF SISTER  | PARENTS   | TWINS      |
| COUSINS     | HUSBAND      | PROGENY   | UNCLE      |
| DAD         | KIN          | RELATIONS | WIFE       |
| DAUGHTER    | MARRIAGE     | RELATIVES |            |
| DESCENDANTS | MOM          | SIBLING   |            |

Friday's Solution

Fairy Tales



- The hidden message is: CHILDHOOD ENDS WHEN FAIRY TALES CEASE TO DELIGHT

Daily SuDoku



Friday's Solution



# Classifieds

Sunday, December 24, 2017

**Kuwait Times**  
 Now you can browse  
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## Expected Weather for the Next 24 Hours

**BY DAY:** Clouds will increase gradually with light to moderate south westerly wind to south easterly wind, with speed of 06 - 26 km/h.

**BY NIGHT:** Partly cloudy with light to moderate south easterly wind to southerly wind, with speed of 10 - 30 km/h.

WEATHER WARNING			No Current Warnings		
STATION	MAX. EXP.	MIN. REC.	SFC. CHART 23/12/2017 0000 UTC		
KUWAIT CITY	24 °C	16 °C			
KUWAIT AIRPORT	28 °C	11 °C			
ABDALY	29 °C	10 °C			
BUBYAN	22 °C	14 °C			
JAHRA	28 °C	12 °C			
FAILAKA ISLAND	25 °C	16 °C			
SALMIYAH	22 °C	15 °C			
AHMADI	24 °C	18 °C			
NUWAISIB	27 °C	12 °C			
WAFRA	29 °C	10 °C			
SALMY	28 °C	11 °C			

4 DAYS FORECAST						
DAY	DATE	WEATHER	Temperatures		Wind Direction	Wind Speed
			MAX.	MIN.		
Sunday	12/24	Warm and some scattered clouds will appear	29 °C	12 °C	SE-S	12 - 35 km/h
Monday	12/25	Warm and some scattered clouds will appear	30 °C	13 °C	SE-VRB	08 - 30 km/h
Tuesday	12/26	Partly cloudy with a chance for rising dust	25 °C	13 °C	NW	15 - 45 km/h
Wednesday	12/27	Fair	22 °C	09 °C	NW	15 - 35 km/h

PRAYER TIMES	
Fajr	05:14
Sunrise	06:39
Zuhr	11:47
Asr	14:37
Sunset	16:55
Isha	18:17

RECORDED YESTERDAY AT KUWAIT AIRPORT	
MAX. Temp.	28 °C
MIN. Temp.	09 °C
MAX. RH	68 %
MIN. RH	17 %
MAX. Wind	S 21 km/h
TOTAL RAINFALL IN 24 HR.	0 mm

All times are local time unless otherwise stated. UP.0 2017/12/23 06:19 UTC V1.00 T2.4 2-1/ع.ع.ق

## REQUIRED

### INSPECTORS/SURVEYORS

**BACKGROUND:** ENGINEERS & CHEMISTS  
**PREFERABLE:** PAST EXPERIENCE IN OIL & GAS  
**PLUSES:** DRIVING LICENCE  
**COMPETITIVE SALARIES AND BENEFITS**

Interested email cv to:  
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CHANGE OF NAME

SITUATION VACANT

**I, Fouzia Khatoun W/o Syed Tariq Yusuf Aziz holder of Indian Passport No. Z1958980, hereby declared that I have changed my name to Fouzia Aziz. Hereafter, at all times in all records and dealings and documents. (C 5371) 24-12-2017**

**Maid** is needed to work as a part time in a flat located in Salmiya, salary is KD 100/month and time is flexible. Contact: 66417504. (C 5370) 21-12-2017

**Airline**

American Airlines	22087425
Kuwait Airways	22087426
Jazeera Airways	171
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

**NOTICE**  
 December 5, 2017

Mr. Mahabob Basha Shaik son of Mr. Shaik Allahakasha, resident of Neelakraopet, Ramapuram, Kadapa, AP and Ms. Sandhya Regula Godda daughter of Mr. Regula Godda Rama Rao, resident of 4 47 Durganagar, Saroor Nagar, Ranga Reddy, AP, both Indian nationals presently residing in Kuwait, have given notice of intended marriage between them under the Foreign Marriage Act, 1969. If anyone has any objection to the proposed marriage, he/she may file the same with the undersigned according to the procedure laid down under the Act/Rule within thirty days from the date of publication of this notice. Communications in this regard can be made by Email ([attachecons@indembkwt.org](mailto:attachecons@indembkwt.org)) / letters / telephonic calls ([00965-22550171](tel:00965-22550171), [00965-22533125](tel:00965-22533125)).

(Sanjeev-Saklani)  
 Atache (Consular) and Marriage Officer,  
 Embassy of India, Kuwait.  
 Ph: 00965-22550171 - 00965-22533125  
 Fax: 00965-22533110  
 Email: [attachecons@indembkwt.org](mailto:attachecons@indembkwt.org)  
[welfaresection@indembkwt.org](mailto:welfaresection@indembkwt.org)

**NOTICE**  
 December 18, 2017

Mr. Varun Ashoka Amin son of Mr. Amin Ashoka Sheena, resident of 82 B, 8th floor, Rishikunj, Yamuna Nagar, NR Millet Nagar, Andheri (West), Mumbai 400058, MS and Ms. Ojal Singh daughter of Mr. Satyendra Pal Singh, resident of Opp Durga Pooja Ground, B I Bajar, Bareilly Cantt, Bareilly, Uttar Pradesh, both Indian nationals presently residing in Kuwait, have given notice of intended marriage between them under the Foreign Marriage Act, 1969. If anyone has any objection to the proposed marriage, he/she may file the same with the undersigned according to the procedure laid down under the Act/Rule within thirty days from the date of publication of this notice. Communications in this regard can be made by Email ([attachecons@indembkwt.org](mailto:attachecons@indembkwt.org)) / letters / telephonic calls ([00965-22550171](tel:00965-22550171), [00965-22533125](tel:00965-22533125)).

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Directorate General of Civil Aviation Home Page ([www.kuwait-airport.com.kw](http://www.kuwait-airport.com.kw))

**DIAL 161 FOR AIRPORT INFORMATION**

Departure Flights on Sunday 24/12/2017					Departure Flights on Sunday 24/12/2017				
Airlines	Flt	Route	Time		Airlines	Flt	Route	Time	
JAI	572	Mumbai	00:05	AXB 393	Kozhikode	13:15			
JZR	267	Beirut	00:30	KAC 792	Madinah	13:20			
KAC	504	Beirut	00:30	KAC 774	Riyadh	13:40			
JZR	539	Cairo	00:50	PAL 668	Manila	14:00			
KAC	102	London	00:50	KAC 204	Lahore	14:10			
PGT	858	Istanbul	00:55	KAC 692	Muscat	14:15			
THY	772	Istanbul	00:55	KAC 618	Doha	14:20			
WAN	416	Beirut	01:05	QTR 1078	Dubai	14:20			
RJA	642	Amman	01:05	FDB 059	Tehran	14:20			
DLH	625	Bahrain	01:45	KAC 516	Dubai	14:25			
UAE	853	Dubai	01:45	KAC 672	Dubai	14:25			
THY	764	Istanbul	01:50	GFA 221	Bahrain	14:40			
ETH	620	Addis Ababa	02:15	SVA 500	Jeddah	14:45			
JZR	555	Alexandria	02:15	KAC 304	Mumbai	14:50			
QTR	1086	Doha	02:20	KNE 529	Jeddah	14:55			
GFA	211	Bahrain	02:30	KAC 662	Abu Dhabi	14:55			
WAN	548	KTM	02:40	KAC 788	Jeddah	15:10			
KKK	1268	Istanbul	02:55	ETD 303	Abu Dhabi	15:15			
OMA	643	Muscat	02:55	KAC 502	Beirut	15:30			
JZR	125	Bahrain	03:00	OMA 645	Amman	15:30			
PGT	860	Istanbul	03:05	FEQ 937	Muscat	15:35			
JZR	241	Amman	03:05	UAE 857	Sohag	15:45			
KAC	414	Bangkok	03:05	QTR 1072	Dubai	15:45			
ETD	305	Abu Dhabi	03:10	JZR 535	Cairo	16:00			
MSR	612	Cairo	03:15	ABY 127	Sharjah	16:00			
QTR	1076	Doha	03:50	KAC 118	New York	16:00			
LMU	510	Cairo	04:00	JZR 779	Jeddah	16:25			
KAC	382	Delhi	04:15	FDB 051	Dubai	16:40			
KAC	1544	Cairo	04:25	RJA 640	Amman	16:55			
KAC	418	Manila	04:25	KAC 542	Cairo	17:05			
KAC	784	Jeddah	04:35	SVA 510	Riyadh	17:15			
KAC	284	Dhaka	04:50	GFA 215	Bahrain	17:30			
FDB	069	Dubai	04:55	JZR 125	Bahrain	17:35			
JZR	609	Hyderabad	05:10	JZR 777	Jeddah	17:40			
DHX	170	Bahrain	05:20	WAN 984	Tbilisi	17:50			
JZR	143	Doha	05:25	UAE 875	Dubai	18:00			
THY	770	Istanbul	05:25	FDB 063	Dubai	18:10			
KAC	346	Ahmedabad	05:30	JZR 177	Dubai	18:15			
KAC	358	Kochi	05:40	MSR 620	Cairo	18:30			
KAC	332	Trivandrum	05:40	QTR 1080	Doha	19:00			
KAC	344	Chennai	05:50	KAC 744	Dammam	19:10			
KAC	678	Dubai	06:00	KAC 776	Riyadh	19:20			
KAC	302	Mumbai	06:10	ABY 123	Sharjah	19:25			
QTR	8511	Doha	06:25	RBG 555	Alexandria	19:25			
KAC	362	Colombo	06:25	GFA 217	Bahrain	19:30			
WAN	338	Alexandria	06:40	KAC 156	Istanbul	19:30			
BAW	157	London	07:10	JZR 483	Istanbul	19:40			
FEQ	933	Sohag	07:30	KAC 674	Dubai	19:45			
KAC	354	Bengaluru	07:35	FDB 057	Dubai	19:50			
FDB	053	Dubai	07:35	KAC 616	Bahrain	19:55			
KAC	384	Delhi	08:00	KAC 104	London	20:00			
UAE	855	Dubai	08:35	KAC 620	Doha	20:15			
IRC	528	Ahwaz	09:05	OMA 647	Muscat	20:20			
ABY	125	Sharjah	09:05	KAC 166	Rome	20:20			
ETD	301	Abu Dhabi	09:05	QTR 1088	Doha	20:45			
QTR	1070	Doha	09:10	DLH 624	Frankfurt	20:45			
FDB	055	Dubai	09:40	ALK 229	Colombo	21:20			
IRA	665	Shiraz	09:40	MEA 402	Beirut	21:20			
WAN	342	Sohag	10:15	ETD 307	Abu Dhabi	21:20			
MSC	415	Sohag	10:15	KAC 786	Jeddah	21:25			
GFA	213	Bahrain	10:40	KAC 172	Frankfurt	21:30			
WAN	114	Bahrain	11:00	UAE 859	Dubai	21:35			
SYR	341	Damascus	11:00	KAC 676	Dubai	21:40			
QTR	1074	Doha	11:20	GFA 219	Bahrain	21:45			
JZR	165	Dubai	11:30	KLM 445	Amsterdam	21:50			
WAN	134	Doha	11:55	WAN 116	Bahrain	21:50			
MEA	404	Beirut	11:55	KAC 564	Amman	22:00			
KAC	614	Bahrain	12:10	QTR 1082	Doha	22:05			
SAW	701	Damascus	12:30	ETD 309	Abu Dhabi	22:15			
FDB	075	Dubai	12:45	AIC 981	Chennai/Ahmedabad	22:25			
JZR	561	Sohag	12:45	JZR 241	Amman	22:40			
KAC	742	Dammam	12:50	JZR 185	Dubai	23:10			
UAE	871	Dubai	12:50	JAI 574	Mumbai	23:15			
MSR	610	Cairo	13:00	BBC 043	Dhaka	23:30			
				PIA 205	Lahore	23:40			
				FDB 071	Dubai	23:45			

## Lifestyle | Gossip

Lindsay Lohan owes  
\$100,710.55 in taxes

According to a recently filed Federal tax lien, obtained by The Blast, the 'Mean Girls' actress owes the huge sum for earnings during the years of 2010, 2014 and 2015. During that time, Lindsay filmed the OWN docuseries with Oprah Winfrey and had a small part in the movie 'Machete'. Meanwhile, it was recently revealed that Lindsay, 31, wants to relaunch her pop career. The actress released two albums, 'Speak', and 'A Little More Personal (Raw)', in 2004 and 2005 but a much-discussed third record never appeared, and the actress - who has been living in London and Dubai - revealed only a return to music would tempt her to move back to New York. Asked if she'd move back from New York, she said: "For music, maybe." But it isn't only singing that Lindsay wants to focus her attention on, as she's still interested in acting and admitted she would love the lead role in the planned live-action 'Little Mermaid' remake. Her comments came after she recently admitted she wants to reprise her role as Cady Heron in another 'Mean Girls' movie and plans to track down writer Tina Fey and producer Lorne Michaels during a trip to the US. The Hollywood star - who admitted she's "trying" to get the movie off the ground - said: "I'm in New York, so Tina Fey better be hiding or I'm going to find her and Lorne Michaels. I know where his desk is." Lindsay also revealed what she thinks her 'Mean Girls' character would be up to these days. She shared: "I'm thinking she's been living in Africa and adopts children, very Madonna." Lindsay enjoys living a low-key existence in the Middle East, where she's able to escape the pressures she would face at home.

Aaron Carter secretly  
dated his backing dancer

The 30-year-old singer recently came out as bisexual and admitted that he had to keep previous same-sex flings secret because he was afraid to be honest about his sexuality. Speaking to Us Weekly, he said: "It's an equal attraction. I can find a man very attractive. I can have attraction to them, like sexual attraction, and then, I can have the same thing for a woman. But I've never been in a relationship, full on with a male. When I was 17, I dated somebody. I'm not going to mention his name because I haven't gotten permission. "But it was one of my dancers and I really liked him. I thought he was good looking. He could tumble. He was just attractive to me. Even when I was younger, I had that attraction. "Well, actually, there was a time when I was like, 12 or 13, where me and my friend experimented with each other." Aaron admitted there were a number of factors which prevented him from revealing his sexuality before now. He said: "There were many years where I was like, 'Aww man, I'm afraid to talk about this.' Then two, people just come out by saying this just so they can gain LGBTQ community; three, there as all these concerns in my head. I was like, 'Man, how do I avoid that?' So I just wrote a very heartfelt letter, and talked about my experiences. That's what I like to talk about, my experiences, but it really all goes back to the music." Although Aaron is now open to dating men, he admitted that having a relationship with anyone is tough right now because of his busy career.

Petition to have Matt Damon  
removed from 'Ocean's 8'

Fans are horrified at the 47-year-old actor's comments on the recent spate of sexual assault allegations in Hollywood and they have demanded his cameo in the upcoming 'Ocean's 11' reboot is dropped. The petition, which is directed at producers George Clooney and Steven Soderbergh, says: "The all-female reboot of Oceans 8 was supposed to be an empowering film for women. The movie spotlight the talents of its tremendous female cast and showcase the savvy and prowess of its characters. "But that was before allegations that Matt Damon - who has a well-publicized cameo in Oceans 8 - not only ignored but enabled his friend Harvey Weinstein's inappropriate behavior by trying to squash a New York Times report in 2004 that detailed instances where Weinstein had used his position as a high-powered studio executive to harass and even assault women. "Damon also recently gave an interview where said he'd still work people who had been accused of sexual misconduct, on a "case-by-case" basis. This behavior is beyond enabling - it's just gross. Matt Damon should not be in this movie. "Damon's inclusion would trivialize the serious nature of the charges against sexual abusers like Weinstein - a show massive disrespect for the brave women speaking out. It would also send a terrible message about the inevitability of - and lack of accountability for - sexual harassment in the workplace that four in ten American women experience. "I'm calling on Oceans 8 producers George Clooney and Steven Soderbergh to toss Damon's Oceans 8 cameo where it belongs: on the cutting room floor. Will you join me? (sic)." Matt has previously admitted he was aware of one incident in which disgraced producer Harvey Weinstein sexually harassed Gwyneth Paltrow and he has been accused of trying to quash a 2004 report dealing with other allegations against Harvey.

Meghan Trainor is  
engaged to Daryl Sabara

The 24-year-old singer took to Instagram to announce that 'Spy Kids' actor Daryl, 25, popped the question last week and she shared a video on Instagram of the romantic moment. She wrote: "I SAID YESSSS!!!! For my 24th birthday, the love of my life @darylsabara made all of my dreams come true. He proposed to me under a tunnel of beautiful Christmas lights and surprised me with my family and friends. I'm still in shock. I've never been this happy! Thank you Daryl, my family and friends for making me feel like a real princess and thank you @ryan.trainor for this amazing video that I'm gonna watch over and over again (sic)." She later shared a gallery of pictures of them together and wrote: "I'm so happy it's you @darylsabara I knew it from the moment I met you." Daryl also posted the video on his own account and wrote: "Happy birthday to my soulmate. Thank you for changing my life forever and thank you for saying yes! You are the most beautiful fiance in the world. I love you @meghan\_trainor (sic)." Meghan and Daryl celebrated their one-year anniversary in July and Meghan previously explained that their mutual pal Chloe Grace Moretz set them up. She said: "I asked every person I met since day one, 'Find me a boyfriend!' Like, especially new friends too. Chloe Grace Moretz is a friend of mine, and day one of meeting her, I was like, 'You know anybody that I could date? Or love? Whatever'. And she's like, 'I know the nicest guy in the world, Daryl, and you should meet him.' I was like, 'Daryl? Okay.'" She also revealed that Daryl makes her feel "sexy".

Scherezinger having her  
first Christmas in LA

The 39-year-old singer - who is dating tennis player Grigor Dimitrov - is very excited to be flying her family in to California to spend the festive season in her new house as it so rare for her to play host to other people. She said: "I've just moved into my new house in LA, so I'm gonna fly my family to be with me. I don't think I've ever had Christmas in LA. I always go to Hawaii or Tennessee where my sister lives. "My nieces are my everything so I've built a bunk bedroom for them too. I live alone and I'm quite private. I don't really have people over anyway, so it's nice to take the opportunity at this time of year to have family over." In 2014, Nicole starred in 'Cats' in London's West End and flew her mother out to the UK to spend Christmas with her and they had the "best" time. She said: "We cook the same things for Thanksgiving and Christmas, turkey and ham and all the fixings, as we say. "Broccoli and cheese casserole, sweet potato casserole, lots of gravy. "When I was in 'Cats', I stayed at Andrew Lloyd Webber's flat and I had all my family out so we had Christmas there. "And it was this little kitchen and your grocery stores are so different, and I said to my mum, 'We are going to make it work.' And we had the best little Christmas." The former Pussycat Dolls star - who previously dated Lewis Hamilton - recently admitted she has "missed out" on some things in her personal life because of her dedication to her career. She said: "Anybody who is successful in what they do is making sacrifices. It's juggling and finding the balance. I've absolutely missed out on things in life. It is hard, I'm not going to lie. It can be lonely. I'm always on the road, I'm always by myself. I think anybody in this industry feels lonely."

Maya Jama is spending  
Christmas in London

The 24-year-old beauty - who is dating grime star Stormzy - usually returns to her parents in Bristol, South West England, for the festive season but her working commitments mean she won't be seeing her family until Boxing Day (26.12.17). She said: "I'm having Christmas in London for the first time ever. I used to always go back to Bristol. "But I'm going to stay in London because I'm actually working over Christmas, so it just makes it easier. "I'm going to go to Bristol on Boxing Day. "So I'm going to spend Christmas here and I'm super excited, [We'll be] just being cosy and having loads of food basically." Maya is of Swedish-Somali descent and her European heritage means her mother has always had her brood open one of their gifts on Christmas Eve. She explained to BANG Showbiz: "Tradition at my mum's house, because we're half Swedish where you're allowed to open, in Sweden you're allowed to open one present on Christmas Eve, so maybe they open all their presents on Christmas Eve. I don't know it's either all of them or one but my mum lets us open one on Christmas Eve, because of the Swedish tradition, so I get an early present." And the 'Cannonball' host has learned to choose the early gift strategically. She said: "When I was younger I always used to go for the biggest one. But now I go for ones that could be clothes because then I can wear them on Christmas day. I end up in pyjamas otherwise."

Tweedy loves  
'sparkly but  
subtle' make-up  
over the holidays

The 'Only Human' singer - who has nine-month-old son Bear with partner Liam Payne - embraces a bolder look for festive parties but doesn't want to be too obvious. She said: "I do love a bit of Christmas glitter. I'll probably go for a sparkly eye, but in a subtle way, so it glistens rather than shines. "I'm obsessed with the dark matte lip I wore to the Vogue 100-year anniversary gala, so I like to go with something similar but warmer. "For an event, I'd wear it with a chocolate smoky eye." The 34-year-old beauty admitted she doesn't look too great after a heavy night out. She said: "I don't look fresh after a late night! "I do love it when I have work and they put an under eye patch on me. It makes me feel a bit better anyway." The 'Fight for this Love' singer has learned that looking after her diet and exercise regime is the best starting point for her to look her best. She said: "What I've now realize is that eating right, exercising right and having good skin is the best starting point. "Recently, I've started taking a vitamin supplement a friend gave me as a baby gift. They seem to be working amazingly." Being a busy new mother, Cheryl has quickly picked up some tips to cut down her grooming regime. She said: "I put Bio-Oil in the bath. I don't have time to moisturise all over any more - this does it in one go."



Lifestyle | Gossip



**Bieber and Gomez seek guidance about their relationship**

The pair - who dated for a number of years in the past - have been spotted spending more and more time together and they have been reportedly getting advice about where to take their relationship next from Hillsong pastor Carl Lentz. A source told People magazine: "They don't want to repeat the same patterns as before. They've clearly had issues in the past, so they're receiving some guidance from Carl. They love each other [and] truly do want the best for each other." And Justin is said to be feeling "lucky" that he has rekindled his romance with the 'Bad Liar' hitmaker. An insider shared: "Justin wants to be a better man because he doesn't want to screw things up with Selena. He knows he's lucky to have this second chance and he's not taking it for granted. And the truth is, this 'transformation' hasn't been all that difficult for him because he wants it. "It's true that you can't change someone unless they want it, and he wants it now. He knows what's at stake. He would way rather spend a quiet night in with Selena than go get wasted and hook up with random girls. That lifestyle just doesn't appeal to him anymore. Selena is 100 percent the reason Justin turned his life around. She's the one that got him involved with church and that opened up a whole new group of friends to him too."

**Hefner's estate to sell off his ownership of Playboy**

The trustee of the estate has been given permission to sell all his ownership in Playboy, which he founded in 1953. At the time of his passing, Hefner owned a 33.8% equity interest in Playboy. Adam Streisand, the attorney for Hefner's estate, told The Blast: "Hef was an American original. He left Playboy in great hands, but with Hef gone, it's time for us to close that chapter and focus the future on Hef's charitable vision." Hefner's children will be able to keep their jobs within the company, but will just act as employees rather than have any ownership of the magazine. It comes after it was revealed Hefner put a clause in his will that said his widow and children must stay away from drugs to inherit his fortune. The documents state: "If the trustees reasonably believe that a beneficiary of any trust routinely or frequently uses or consumes any illegal substance so as to be physically or psychologically dependent upon that substance, or is clinically dependent upon the use or consumption of alcohol or any other legal drug or chemical substance that is not prescribed by a board certified medical doctor or psychiatrist in a current program of treatment supervised by such a doctor or psychiatrist, and if the Trustees reasonably believe that as a result the beneficiary is unable to care for himself or herself, or is unable to manage his or her financial affairs, all mandatory distributions (including distributions upon termination of the trust) to the beneficiary, all of the beneficiary's withdrawal rights, and all of the beneficiary's rights to participate in decisions concerning the removal and appointment of Trustees will be suspended."



**Eva Longoria will make a great mother, says husband**



The 'Desperate Housewives' star - who is four months pregnant with her and her husband Jose 'Pepe' Antonio Baston's baby - is such a "caring and motherly person already" and will be great with her future baby, according to her pals. A friend said: "Eva is such a caring and motherly person already. She's always looking out for those around her and going out of her way to help people. She comes from the most nurturing family and can't wait to pass that along to her baby. Eva and Pepe are already great parents to their three kids. One of the reasons Eva fell in love with Pepe is that he's an amazing father. Seeing him with his kids lit a spark in her to want to get pregnant." Eva has always been around children and will be a "natural" when it comes to motherhood. Another source added to People magazine: "Eva is used to being around babies. She always looked like a natural. There is no doubt she will be an amazing mom. Eva always had a different, amazing chemistry with Jose. Previous guys that she dated were boys. Jose is a family man, a successful businessman and seems more mature. It's very obvious they have a special marriage. They always walk around hand-in-hand and are very affectionate. Jose is very attentive and puts Eva on a pedestal. He treats her in a very special way." It comes after an insider revealed Eva had never "focused on" having children of her own until she met Jose's kids. They shared: "She loves kids, but it's not something she focused on. Meeting Pepe and becoming a stepmom made her more open to the idea. She loves his kids and now they're really excited to be expanding the family."

**Jackman and Furness knew they were going to adopt**

The 'Wolverine' star and his wife - who share Oscar, 17, and Ava, 12 - tried to conceive naturally but after "a couple miscarriages" and IVF struggles, the couple decided it would be best to adopt. Hugh shared: "Because of her age, we started [trying] straightaway when we were together. We struggled, a couple miscarriages, [in vitro fertilisation] - it was not easy. It was difficult, obviously particularly on Deb. I remember saying to her, 'We were always going to adopt - let's just adopt now.' "Our motivation behind adopting was, 'Where is the need?' And we just knew from talking with people in that space, when we were looking around, that the biggest need is in mixed-race kids. A lot of people go into [adoption thinking] it's really important to them for the kid to look like them, and honestly, for Deb and I, that just never even was an issue." And Hugh wants his children to grow up believing that personality defines you rather than your gender and the colour of your skin. Speaking in The Jess Cagle Interview, he added: "I believe in life and I want to tell my kids that your personality is interesting, it in some way very much defines you, the colour of your skin, whether you're a male, whether you're a female, but that's not who you really are. What really defines you is beneath all that."



**Khloe can't wait to pass on her Christmas traditions**



The 'Keeping Up With The Kardashians' star is expecting her first child with her boyfriend Tristan Thompson and is looking forward to the little tot's first Christmas next year so she can pass on all of the traditions her family do around the festive period. She wrote on her official website: "As you get older, I think you create your own traditions and they stem from what your parents instilled in you. The biggest holiday tradition I'm going to take from my mom is how she makes everything look perfect and feel incredibly special. I love walking into her home at Christmas and seeing all the decorations. This woman goes all out. I used to think it was too much, but over the past few years, she's rubbed off on me. Have you seen my decorations?! (sic)" Khloe will be having an early Christmas with Tristan as his basketball team - the Cleveland Cavaliers - are playing during the festive period. She will then jet back to Los Angeles to be with her family. She added: "Then, I'll fly back to [Los Angeles] a few days before my family's annual Christmas Eve party. My mom takes full control of Christmas Eve since she's been throwing the party for so long, so I let her do her thing! On Christmas morning, the whole family is together with the little kids - usually at Kourt's - opening presents and chilling in our pajamas. After that, we're all going to do our own thing the rest of the day."

**Eminem 'looks to' Jay Z**



The 'Love The Way You Lie' hitmaker really looks up to the 'Empire State of Mind' rapper and praised him for always "seeing what's going on in hip-hop". He said: "I look to Jay for a lot of s\*\*t. I look to Jay for where he's at in life and I look for 4:44, the punchlines. I'm listening to music in a way that most people probably aren't ... To me it's like, Jay is a good guy because he's a guide for ... It's almost like he can see what's going on in hip-hop. He's very in tune with the times and then he does something his own way, and then other people follow it. That's amazing to me, so I've always looked up to Jay for that." And the 45-year-old rapper - who recently unveiled his latest album 'Revival' - feels a lot of younger rappers look up to himself and Jay Z and hope their longstanding careers teach them that they can be in it for the long haul too. He told Complex magazine: "One of the things I feel like this generation of rappers established and rappers that are coming up - one of the things I think that it's important that they take from people like me [and] Jay Z, is that they should look to that and think in the mindframe of, I could not just have ... like hip-hop when it first started out, it was almost like you were lucky to get a five-year run. You were really lucky to get a 10-year run. It's been around for a long time, but I don't know if it's been around long enough to see how long someone can actually go for." — Bangshowbiz

**Carey to perform during 'Dick Clark's New Year's Rockin' Eve'**



The 'We Belong Together' hitmaker has been lined up to perform at the annual festive event, just 12 months after her New Year's Eve performance was plagued by technical hitches. A joint statement from Dick Clark Productions and Mariah said: "We can all agree that last year didn't go exactly as planned and we are thrilled to move forward together to provide America with an incredible night of music and celebration on Dick Clark's New Year's Rockin' Eve with Ryan Seacrest 2018. See you in Times Square!" Mariah had previously admitted she felt "villified" after the performance, which saw her singing out of time with the music. She said: "I didn't obsess over the New Year's Eve thing. I mean, I was upset about the fact that people didn't understand, but it's like, I can only explain it like this to you. It's like I'm the only one that has to make five million comebacks... For me there are different rules, I don't know why. I don't know why it's not OK that I was just vilified by the situation. "It's very difficult, especially the way the business is now. I truly love music and always have. It's not like ... 'Oh, here's a way to get famous.' It wasn't any of those things. It was my release, it was my everything and it still is. So I think that I'm just grateful that people still tune in." At the time, Mariah and her manager blamed "everybody" for the performance, which was described as a "mess".

**Adrienne Bailon wants to start a family in 2018**

The 34-year-old television personality and singer says it would be her "biggest dream come true" if she gets the chance to welcome a son or daughter into the world next year with her husband Israel Houghton. Speaking on The Real, which she co-hosts, Adrienne said: "My wish for next year would be to start a family. That would be my biggest dream come true, I've always said I want to be a mom. So um ... prayers up and we will see what happens ... It's just ... Oh my, no, I will die ... I will literally like ahh. No, I'm ... I have dreamt of being a mom. Like we've talked about it for years." Adrienne tied the knot with Israel in Paris, France in November last year and spoke of how "blessed and grateful" she felt after the big day. She shared at the time: "I genuinely just feel so blessed and grateful. I've honestly never been happier in my entire life. I've never felt what I feel right now. I can't even describe what it is, but it's such a peace mixed with total excitement. I'm so glad we chose such an intimate group of who have shared in our journey and know our hearts and that I honestly feel comfortable crying in front of. I didn't want to invite people I felt I had to put on a performance for. I wanted every moment to be genuine and really special and that's what it is going to be."



## Lifestyle | Features

## Meryl Streep's brand under threat over Weinstein denial

She started the year leading the chorus of opprobrium against President Donald Trump but 12 months on Meryl Streep, multiple Oscar-winner and doyenne of the liberal Hollywood elite, has become a target herself. The 68-year-old is coming under fire over her denials that she knew about the misconduct of movie mogul Harvey Weinstein, who is alleged to have spent his career sexually assaulting, harassing and intimidating women.

Streep has worked on several Weinstein produced films and jokingly referred to him as "God" at the 2012 Golden Globes. The pre-eminent actress of her generation, Streep has had a glittering 40-year career that has seen her play everything from a Nazi concentration camp survivor to an ABBA-singing mother. She earned her first of a record 20 Oscar nominations in 1979 for the Vietnam war drama "The Deer Hunter" and has won the coveted golden statue three times, most recently in 2012 as Margaret Thatcher in the Weinstein-distributed "The Iron Lady."

It was her political activism rather than her acting prowess that grabbed headlines during the last awards season, as she received widespread praise, and some criticism, for a speech at the Golden Globes denouncing Trump. All eyes turned to the actress again as the Weinstein controversy broke in early October, when Streep spoke out to say she was "appalled" by the "disgraceful" news and had no idea about the allegations.

Her denials over Weinstein have sparked incredulity, particularly among activists in the #MeToo social media movement against sexual

misconduct who have concluded that those closest to the disgraced producer must have turned a blind eye.

**'Hypocrisy'**

Rose McGowan, one of the campaign's most prominent advocates and an alleged victim of Weinstein, criticized Streep in a since-deleted tweet over plans for actresses to wear black to the Golden Globes in a silent protest against sexual assault. "YOUR SILENCE IS THE problem. You'll accept a fake award breathlessly & affect (sic) no real change. I despise your hypocrisy," McGowan tweeted.

Streep responded in a lengthy statement to the Huffington Post on Monday that she "did not know about Weinstein's crimes, not in the 90s when he attacked (McGowan), or through subsequent decades when he proceeded to attack others." The new denial has done little to silence her critics, however, and on Tuesday around a dozen posters appeared in Los Angeles, depicting Streep as an enabler of Weinstein, who has always denied nonconsensual sexual contact with any of his accusers.

Sabo, a 49-year-old rightwing guerilla artist and former US marine claimed responsibility for the posters, which show Streep with a red stripe across her face and the text, "She knew." He added that he had conceived the campaign as retaliation for Streep using her latest film "The Post" to attack Trump, who is facing accusations of his own by as many as 16 women who say he sexually assaulted them. Entertainment writer Ira Madison III wrote in a commentary for the Daily Beast that Streep's

denials rang true, arguing that the rough ride she has had over Weinstein is nothing more than a manifestation of the sexism inherent in show business.

**'Viciously attacked'**

"Here we are, attacking a woman for what she may or may not have known, when everyone seems to insist that everyone in the industry knew," he said.

"Why then, have George Clooney or Brad Pitt, not been as viciously attacked as Streep?"



This file photo taken on January 29, 2012 shows producer Harvey Weinstein and actress Meryl Streep attending the 18th Annual Screen Actors Guild Awards at The Shrine Auditorium in Los Angeles, California.



This file photo taken on November 15, 2017 shows actress Salma Hayek attending the Hollywood Foreign Press Association (HFPA) and InStyle celebration of the 75th Annual Golden Globe Awards season at Catch LA in West Hollywood.

Why not Bob Weinstein, his own brother, who's remained relatively unscathed from Harvey's downfall? Beneath the rarified air of the Hollywood Hills, the public seems less willing to give Streep the benefit of the doubt.

Celebrity branding expert Jeetendr Sehdev solicits opinions twice a year about the rich and famous from 2,000 randomly-selected adults across America as part of an ongoing study established in 2012. He said 58 percent of those surveyed in October on attitudes to the



This file photo taken on February 21, 2017 shows Meryl Streep attending the red carpet arrivals at the 19th Costume Designers Guild awards presented by Lacoste at the Beverly Hilton hotel in Beverly Hills. — AFP photos

Weinstein controversy "now feel negatively towards the once beloved Streep" following her initial denials. "Streep's claims that she didn't know are ludicrous and the kiss of death for her image in Hollywood," the bestselling author of The Kim Kardashian Principle told AFP.

He accused Streep of underestimating the intelligence of the public and the courage of female peers who had spoken out against Weinstein, adding that Clooney also had questions to answer over his response to the scandal. "Streep needs to apologize to her fans for not telling the truth. And perhaps explain what pressures she was feeling to make such a public statement to begin with," Sehdev said. "Many people assume that Weinstein reaches out to his close friends to see if they could speak out on his behalf and try to damage control. Were Streep and Clooney part of this pact?" — AFP

## Iranian director facing jail for film attacking corruption



It is not easy to lead a good and virtuous life in Iran if the film-maker Mohammad Rasoulof's latest film, "A Man of Integrity", is anything to go by. Its downtrodden hero struggles to make an honest rial from his goldfish farm, caught in a nightmarish, distorting fish bowl of corruption at every turn. The film, which won the prestigious Un Certain Regard prize at the Cannes film festival in May, is a damning

indictment of how the "daily reality of graft" is sapping the Islamic Republic.

"Corruption has penetrated every layer of society," Rasoulof told AFP by Skype from his home in Tehran, where he is effectively under house arrest since his passport was confiscated when he returned from the Telluride film festival in the US in September. The dark thriller tells the story of Reza, who refuses to pay a bribe for a loan that would save his business, and finds himself confronting a rotten array of officials and businessmen who run a small town in the north of the country. "Corruption goes from the bottom of the social ladder right to the top of the pyramid of power," said Rasoulof, whose earlier acclaimed films "Manuscripts Don't Burn" and "Iron Island" were banned in his homeland.

**'Country exhausted by graft'**

"A Man of Integrity" is unlikely to see the light of day there either despite being praised by Variety and the Hollywood Reporter as a "compelling... tense, engaging drama". Rasoulof, 34, already has a suspended 12-month prison sentence hanging over his head after he was arrested on set in 2010 with his friend, the "Taxi" director Jafar Panahi, who was subsequently banned from making films for 20 years.

Initially jailed for six years, Rasoulof's sentence was reduced on appeal. This time he faces similar charges of "propaganda against the regime" and "endangering national security". But the threat of prison did not stop Rasoulof squaring up to the uncomfortable truth he insists is undermining the country from within. Iranians are exhausted by graft, he said. "They want to leave it behind but they cannot, because corruption has become a system. This system forces you to be both corrupted, and a corrupter yourself. Even my friends are repulsed by it but cannot get away from it," he added. "People become oppressed and oppressors at the same time," Rasoulof argued.

**No free pass**

In the film, no one gets a free pass, not even Reza's long-suffering wife Hadis, the head of a secondary school. She does nothing to stop a girl being excluded because she comes from a religious minority. Nor is the fact that Reza is a goldfish farmer without significance. Iranians traditionally display goldfish on their tables for Persian New Year, Norouz, to symbolise renewal and perpetual life, and release them into ponds and rivers afterwards, where they inevitably perish.

President Hassan Rouhani tried to suggest a more humane alternative last year by putting an orange in his fish bowl. For now, Rasoulof's own fate is not dissimilar to that of his character's goldfish. "I am completely in the dark. I do not know what is going to happen," he told AFP. "But I will not allow myself to be beaten by it." "I cannot see my film being shown in Iran while I am waiting to be tried," he added, lamenting how the country's "intellectuals had either left, were in prison, or had been reduced to silence."

His French production company ARP has launched a petition on Change.org demanding that he be allowed to work and travel freely. "If people were not supporting me outside Iran... my situation would be a lot worse," Rasoulof added. "What keeps me going is that people do not forget me, and that my film will be seen." — AFP

## The French 'Romantic' pianist adored in China

His name may not be immediately recognizable but his music certainly is: best-selling French pianist Richard Clayderman's tunes are ubiquitous in public spaces, particularly in China where for decades, his blond hair and blue eyes have earned him the title "Prince Charming". Although his celebrity status has faded in the West, he remains adored in the Asian



nation, where he has played for 25 years.

"No one is a prophet in his own country," Clayderman told AFP ahead of his Christmas Day performance at Beijing's Great Hall of the People, the ruling Communist Party's state building on the edge of Tiananmen Square. The 63-year-old pianist is known worldwide for his 1976 "Ballad for Adeline." In his more than 40-year career, Clayderman says he has sold 60 million records internationally, making him one of the best-selling French musicians in history, alongside Mireille Mathieu, Jean-Michel Jarre and late Johnny Hallyday.

According to Clayderman's website, he has 70 Platinum discs to his credit. At the height of his celebrity, he was a television regular. In 1985, former US First Lady Nancy Reagan crowned him the "Prince of Romance." He had more modest success in his motherland. "At the end of the 1980s, I neglected France a little to meet the many requests I received from Japan, Southeast Asia and Latin America," Clayderman said. "Now, French people between 20 and 40 years old don't know me, even if I haven't been forgotten by older generations."

**'Thirsty for lightness'**

China is now the country where Clayderman performs the most. His first Chinese concert dates back to 1992, but his

melodies have been broadcast on the radio since the mid-1980s, when economic reforms opened China up to cultural products from the West. "His music arrived at the perfect moment," music critic Iao Fang told AFP. "People in China were coming out of a period where they heard only Communist revolutionary songs—they were thirsty for lighter melodies."

For the Chinese at the time, the piano was synonymous with European classical music, viewed as a more sophisticated genre than the love songs and simpler tunes from Hong Kong, Taiwan or the United States. "The melodies of Richard Clayderman seemed easily understandable, beautiful and emotionally rich from the first listen," said Du Jian, Clayderman's Chinese promoter. "His tapes could be found in practically every home." Xiao Kang, a 30-year-old Beijinger, said her father used to tape the pianist's music by sticking a recorder beside the radio. "Many Chinese people grew up with his music," she said.

Today, Clayderman's music can still be widely heard in China: online, in shopping



malls and hotel lobbies, elevators and in ringtunes. Many young pianists also continue to study his songs. His current tour in China, "The Splendor of Romanticism," a label often associated with France, includes 31 dates, with tickets priced between 380 and 2,018 yuan (\$58 to \$307).

"In 25 years of concerts here, I have seen China grow at an incredible speed," Clayderman said. "Uncomfortable, dirty

gyms with poor acoustics have been replaced by elegant and beautiful concert halls." Clayderman's enduring popularity is partly due to his "gentlemanly image", consistent with the Chinese perception of a Western Prince Charming, promoter Du said. "His blond hair and blue eyes are seen as complementary to his music, and in East Asia he has immediately attracted the public with this dual advantage." — AFP



## Tissot Femini-T: It's time to be inspired

Since its foundation, Tissot has created ladies' watches. The Tissot Femini-T is inspired by one of its gold women's models that dates back to the sixties. This re-edition stays true to the original watch with its distinctive cushion-shaped case design, which is echoed in the indices set with Top Wesselton diamonds. This gives the piece a true jewelry allure. Adding to the bracelet feel, is a beautiful pendant, composed of a chain and gorgeous natural water pearl, that can be found on the diamond-shaped lugs of certain models. This was a feature of the original watch's case design.

**Character**

The Tissot Femini-T stands out with class thanks to its originality. The collection offers multiple versions from a steel or rose gold PVD coated case matched with either a creme, black or red leather bracelet, all the way to all steel bangle versions with Top Wesselton Diamonds around the dials. It's time to let your personality express itself



through the Tissot Femini-T.

**Technical features**

- Swiss Made
- Quartz movement with battery end-of-life (EOL) indicator

- 316L stainless steel case
- Scratch-resistant sapphire crystal
- Water-resistant up to a pressure of 3 bar (30 m / 100 ft)
- Top Wesselton Diamonds

- Pendant with a natural water pearl depending on the model
- Leather strap with standard buckle
- All rose-gold execution is PVD coating
- Dimensions : 24.80mm. — 22.58mm

Lifestyle | Features

# 'Hallucination': When the mind fails to adapt!



The journalist Taleb Al-Shehri and his wife Heba Suleiman



Poster for 'Hallucination'

By Hassan Abdel Bari

Within the activities of Kuwait 18th Theatrical Festival, Super Star Art Production Company presented its play 'Hallucination', written and directed by Intisar Al-Haddad, at Al-Dasma Theatre. In fact, it has been a while since I have been to the love of my life - theatre - and watched a live performance. I can proudly state that it was one of my best nights here in Kuwait.



(Left to right) Dr Al-Daas, Ali Alyan and author and director, Al-Haddad.

The plot discusses the disappointment of many people who are helpless in facing corruption prevailing in many societies in the Arab world, which is indicated by using classical Arabic dialogue. This was elaborated through the main character - a journalist played by actor Taleb Al-Shehri, who strives throughout the events to pinpoint corruption and corrupt officials and help a simple handyman get his right in a house he had built but was unlawfully forced to relinquish to the government.

The journalist insists that the laborer files complaints demanding his right, but finally ends up in a mental asylum to be treated by a corrupt psychiatrist already bought by unseen corrupt officials to push the journalist further into madness and get rid of him, which eventually happens in the final scene.

The director's note on the brochure during the audience not to lose their mind and start hallucinating themselves proved right, at least for me, since she used special light effects and dramatic techniques such as using a flashback

scene within another, which was enough to get the audience to wonder what was going on and lose their sense of disbelief. She also used cinematographic images of Mandela, Superman, Guevara and the cartoonist Naji Al-Ali as a panoramic backdrop, in addition to an image of Al-Ali's iconic cartoon figure Hanzalah, with his back to the audience, giving an impression that he is trying to figure things out.

In addition to soliloquy scenes and monologues, the journalist also kept talking to his pen and paper, urging the pen to write about corruption and reassuring 'it' that it could only be punished by being broken and replaced by another; which actually happens to the 'journalist' himself eventually.

that he was actually fighting corruption by such 'feature stories'. This scene was another mind-twisting one for the audience.

Besides the main character, the cast also included actress Heba Suleiman, who marvelously played the wives of both the 'journalist' and the laborer; Osama Al-Bloushi playing the psychiatrist and forming the plot's comic relief; Suleiman Al-Marzouq (the laborer), Abdullah Al-Dubais (editor-in chief) and Mohammed Al-Khawajah (the government grievances' office employee).

A seminar followed the performance. It was moderated by Ali Alyan and was attended by the cast, Kuwait High Institute for Theatrical Arts playwriting professor Dr Sa'da Al-Daas,



Dr Ashraf Zaki is seen amongst the audience

In act II, the director used a hollow image of a human head with a maze inside indicating science's striving to unfold the secrets of the human mind. This was the background decoration of the mental asylum, where the journalist's wife eventually tells the doctor that her husband is schizophrenic and had never written for any newspaper. She said he used to write stories and paste them on newspapers, imagining

the Egyptian actors' syndicate chairman Dr Ashraf Zaki, Alexandria University drama professor Dr Rania Fathallah and many art lovers.

Finally, based on the concept of 'two minds are better than one', I believe the playwright Al-Haddad should have had another director do the job to come up with more creative ideas, especially about the lighting plan, actors' movement on stage and changing decorative props



The journalist trying to talk the laborer into filing a complaint.

between sets and scenes. In fact, and despite her successful writing attempts and experience, Haddad's directing skills seem to be more like those of a novice. Nonetheless, this is not meant

to undermine the effort exerted. It was a good performance, and hopefully, a promising step in a long path towards creativity and excellence for the entire cast.



Osama Al-Bloushi (psychiatrist)

## GET GLAMOROUS THIS GIFTING SEASON WITH CENTERPOINT

Get into the festive spirit this holiday season as Centrepoint, the Middle East's largest fashion retailer, introduces its latest in-store fashion drops. The new collection items are available across all Centrepoint stores and feature the much-loved brand's Splash, Babyshop, Lifestyle, and Shoe Mart. Get ready to step out in style with up-to-date winter fashion trends that are sure to turn heads.

Centrepoint's Winter 2017 collection is heavily inspired by the 90s, showcasing cosmo and grunge aesthetics. The collection also comes equipped with a variety of different pieces that will keep you on-trend during the cooler months. Babyshop will not only keep your kids warm but also keep them looking great in the most adorable new clothes and accessories. Featuring an eclectic bunch of trends, the winter collection flaunts a variety of colors, shapes, designs and patterns this season. The girls' collection is inspired by nature, animals and cozy winters, showcasing fun styles combined with fine details throughout. Varieties of pink, brown and white will be the main colors for the season.

For boys, the collection features a variety of street art, doodle inspired and dense all-over prints in a variety of winter shades from bright blue to darker greens and deep burgundy. Whether in school or prepping for the season's festivities, elevate kids' style and finish off their new outfits by dressing them in this season's trendiest shoes from Shoe Mart. The new selection features classic designs with twists, color blocking and soft urban palettes to achieve the look. The Splash collection features the ever-popular camouflage print as well as prairie, new textured clothing and embellished styles to make your clothes shine and sparkle- perfect for this time of year. The collection's color



palette is a combination of earthy and natural colors from rusty oranges and blush tones through to fuchsias and burgundy. There is also a focus on vibrant orange, black, blue and the iconic holiday colors of red and white.

Footwear for women is all about making statements this Winter. The Shoe Mart collection comes equipped with a variety of different pieces that will keep you on-trend during the cooler months. The range features new boots with buckles and faux fur, floral embroidery on shoes, and ruffled heels. Whilst the brand's athleisure sneakers and chunky platforms complement the more rugged styling of the season.

Grunge luxe, sports nostalgia and extreme utility trends remain at the forefront for men this season. The collection includes exaggerated details, oversized proportions, and wash silks with military references.

Splash makes a strong statement with its color choices this season, from bold red to ripe orange and hazard yellow. Quieter shades such as olives, camels, baked pinks, and rust tones have been designed to contrast and complement

the brighter tones. In Shoe Mart, purple haze and saddle brown work as richer base colors, whilst white, bright chartreuse and even a bold lilac add a fresh modern edge. The earlier tones ground the modern design of the shoes giving the collection a seasonal feel. Lifestyle has a wide range of new accessories for every fashionable look and home this season. With new launches from Charlotte Reid and Fiorelli - those coveting a new bag will be delighted with the range of designs from prints, through to monochrome in an assortment of flattering shades.

For the beauty fans, Centrepoint will be restocking its two new hair-care brands - Bedhead and Big Sexy Hair- just in time for those late-night parties! Whilst for make-up, this season offers a selection of pink, orange and red lipsticks ideal for a bold lip this holiday season. Also, new exotic fragrances will be in store from Heart & Home, Apsley and Millefiori Milano. Do visit any of the stores located at Al Rai, Avenues, Salmiya, Fintas, Jahra, Fahaeel, Sulaibhikhat, Kuwait City, Khaitan and Hawally for the latest Collection.



## Book chains better watch out: Amazon is coming to town

Bookstores are a go-to for the procrastinating gift-getter, a one-stop shop that has a little something for everyone. But there's a new kid on the block this holiday season as online giant Amazon creeps into the physical realm, with 13 brick-and-mortar stores across the United States and counting. In the upscale Washington suburb of Bethesda, the sector's transformation is playing out in full view: traditional bookstore Barnes & Noble is closing up shop and Amazon is coming to town-with a gleaming new store soon to open not two minutes' walk away.



The logo of US electronic commerce and cloud computing company Amazon. — AFP photos



Amazon CEO Jeff Bezos

"I think the elephant in the room is Amazon," said Donna Paz Kaufman, a Florida-based industry consultant. "Anybody in publishing is concerned about the tremendous market share that Amazon has garnered." Since it began soaring to e-commerce domination in 1995, Amazon has been a thorn in the side of independent bookstores and big-box chains alike, with Borders shuttered in 2011. Barnes & Noble's numbers, meanwhile, are dwindling. The regal, three-level Barnes & Noble in Bethesda feels like

more than just a store: coffee drinkers overlook passers-by, while children gather around a storytelling stage, decorated with woodland creatures.

### End of an era

But Barnes & Noble says it was unable to agree on a lease extension, and the shop will close in January after two decades. Up in arms, over 5,600 people signed a petition urging the Federal Realty Investment Trust-the property owner-to "strike a fair leasing deal" and keep Barnes & Noble open. Sarah Pekkanen, a local author whose first book signing was in the store, dubbed the closure "a loss."

"I bring my kids there all the time, I know some of the people who work there," she told AFP. "It's always sad when a good bookstore closes." Though itself a big-box store that at its zenith menaced independent sellers, long-time customer Liz Cummings said Barnes & Noble "became a part of the community." But although she is dismayed by the loss, Cummings, who directs a local writing center, is welcoming Amazon's neighborhood debut. "There's no concern as far as I can tell, because people want to be able to browse for books," said Cummings. "We'll take it." Amazon told AFP it will stock only bestselling or highly rated titles and feature local authors in the store, which it said is "all about discovery."

### 'Beyond the click'

For the industry, which includes an increasing number of independents according to the American Booksellers Association, welcoming Amazon is more of a challenge-but not something to pout over. "Our culture is at risk if there isn't diversity in the number of outlets selling books," said analyst Kaufman. She believes Amazon's move into the brick-and-mortar market-with stores selling books and technology like the Kindle e-reader and Fire tablet-is about accessing a certain type of customer. "We know that their interest in the bookstore world is really a portal," she said. "You have upscale, educated, higher income customers who are early adopters in technology." "They started with books because they wanted the profile of those customers that would then buy a lot of other things." — AFP

# Lifestyle

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 24, 2017



Staff of Hamleys welcome guests on the opening day of a new Hamleys store, the iconic British toy retailer now Chinese-owned, in Beijing on December 23, 2017. The well-loved British toy retailer, which was sold to a Chinese company in 2015, first opened in 1760 and has been expanding internationally, opening stores in locations ranging from Moscow to Dubai. — AFP

## Time flies? Not for 81-year-old US air hostess

Marley's 'Legend' notches record 500th week on US chart



Jamaican reggae star Bob Marley

Bob Marley and the Wailers' "Legend," the posthumous greatest hits collection that helped cement the reggae icon's legacy, has notched a landmark 500th week on the US chart. The compilation first released in 1984 stood at number 170 on the latest Billboard 200 chart of album sales in the week through December 14, tracking service Nielsen Music said after releasing its full list. "Legend" cements its place as spending the second most number of non-consecutive weeks on the benchmark US album chart.

It is still well below the record-holder: Pink Floyd's "The Dark Side of the Moon," which has spent 934 weeks on the list since 1973 — and was number 196 on the latest chart. "Legend," released three years after Marley's death from cancer at age 36, brings together the most recognizable songs of the Jamaican artist's career, including "Get Up, Stand Up," "No Woman, No Cry" and "Redemption Song." Like many greatest-hits collections, "Legend" has faced criticism among Marley's devoted fans who say it focuses only on anthemic hits without allowing the more nuanced look at the evolution of his Rastafarian faith and political views as heard on his albums.

But "Legend" indisputably has brought Marley to generations too young to have known him when he was alive. "Legend" has been so omnipresent in US dormitories that satirical newspaper The Onion in 2002 joked that university administrators were debating a nationwide ban. "Legend" has sold more than 15 million copies in the United States but only entered the top 10 on the chart in 2014 following an online sale. In Britain, "Legend" notched 12 weeks at number one and has spent a total of 803 weeks in the Top 100, narrowly below greatest hits collections by Abba and Queen. — AFP



American Airlines longest serving flight attendant, Bette Nash, 81 years old, gathers her belongings before disembarking from her daily return flight to Boston at Ronald Reagan Washington Airport in Arlington. (Right) Bette Nash, checks the passengers' seats for forgotten items before disembarking. — AFP photos

American Airlines Flight 2160 from Boston has just arrived in Washington, DC, and Bette Nash, 81, helps the passengers disembark. They embrace her, take photos, and express their thanks. It's always like this. After six decades crossing the skies as a flight attendant, Nash still has impeccable style, incredible energy and a constant smile. She has lost only one thing: her anonymity.

Kendra Taylor, a passenger, beams after taking a selfie with the octogenarian, whom she had hoped to meet. "When I saw her I was like, 'Oh my gosh! I just saw her on TV last week!'" In a dark suit accented by a colored scarf, with her hair in a bun, Nash lends herself to accolades and plays with the compliments. She is the undisputed star of the Airbus jet, rather than the captain, Mike Margiotta, who emerges from the flight deck.

"Very professional," he says of his model hostess. "She's got that old-school way of doing things." In the United States, pilots must retire at 65 but there is no such restriction on commercial flight attendants, of whom Bette Nash is probably the world's most senior. See her gliding through the terminal concourse, pulling her suitcase, and it's hard not to be taken by the admiring words one hears about her. "I start my day at 2:10 in the morning. I have two alarm clocks and when they go off I don't lie there, I get up," Nash says. At her home in Virginia, bordering Washington, Nash prepares food for her only son, who is disabled, and who will be waiting for her return to solid ground.

### From furs, to flip-flops

Primped, and fueled by "a couple of eggs," she arrives before sunrise at Ronald Reagan National Airport. Nash prefers the Washington-Boston-Washington route, on which she gets priority because of her incomparable seniority. She was 21 years young and Dwight Eisenhower was president when Eastern Air Lines recruited her as a "stewardess," a

word which—like Eastern itself—has disappeared from use.

At that time, travel by air was the preserve of a certain elite. "There were a lot of men because they were doing business, and women came on with their fur coats, and their finery and their hats and everything. You didn't have... the flip-flops and the sneakers and things you do today," Nash says. Her own uniforms ranged, through the years, from conservative, to elegant, and "wild."



In this undated picture from a personal album courtesy of Bette Nash, shows Bette Nash posing for a photo in her flight attendant uniform in Washington, DC.

"When (president) John Kennedy came into office and everything, things started opening up, so we wore crazy uniforms. We even had hot pants for a brief period, and these boots," she remembers. In those earlier times, which seem almost prehistoric, there were no plastic meal trays. Hostesses cooked lobster and duck a l'orange equally well, and carved the meat. In first class, passengers dined with silverware and porcelain. "We had five carts: we'd start with a beverage cart, then we'd have an hors d'oeuvre cart, then we'd have the entrees cart." Desserts followed, and then finally came "a cordial cart." There was no mixing of classes. Flights were either all first class or "tourist" class.

### A rare honor

In the less-opulent class, "we sold sandwiches and milk. Sandwiches were 50 cents and milk was 15 cents," Nash says. "We just had coffee, tea, hot chocolate and bouillon." Strikes, mergers, buyouts, Nash has gone through all the somersaults of the US aviation industry. She even worked for Trump Shuttle, an airline briefly owned by current President Donald Trump in the early 90s.

During one unforgettable approach to Washington, her plane was hit by turbulence so violent that part of a toilet separated, and it seemed as though a wing hit the ground. "It was just terrible," Nash said, recalling lightning that "kept on coming in and I think we even flew over the White House that night, which was really illegal." The plane had to return to New York. Ten years ago, for her 50th anniversary on the job, Nash's plane was welcomed on the tarmac by sprays of water from fire engines—an honor normally reserved for veteran pilots or the baptism of a new plane. Who imagined that Nash would still be there? "I am not going to work until I am 90," she says, before adding on the subject of retirement: "I don't want to think about it!" Bette Nash will celebrate her 82nd birthday on December 31. — AFP