

3 SUBSCRIPTION

# Kuwait Times



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Kuwait Times

MONDAY, MARCH 6, 2017

JAMADA ALTHANI 8, 1438 AH

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Querrey shocks Nadal to lift ATP Acapulco title



Kuwait Times Special Supplement on

**PAKISTAN** INSIDE

Prime Minister's visit to Kuwait



150 FILS  
NO: 17159  
40 PAGES

## EXPAT HEALTH FEE INCREASES READY TO BE IMPLEMENTED

### MOH TO LAUNCH IVF CENTERS, DENIES BLOOD SHORTAGE IN KUWAIT



Min 12°  
Max 25°  
High Tide 06:05 & 16:55  
Low Tide 11:22

## REVOKED CITIZENSHIPS TO BE REINSTATED SOON

By B Izzak

KUWAIT: National Assembly speaker Marzouq Al-Ghanem said yesterday he was optimistic of imminent solutions to a number of issues amid moves by lawmakers to find an amicable deal for the citizenships revoked by the government over two years ago. Ghanem told reporters in a brief statement that MPs have made several moves and said that he is optimistic that such efforts will result in solutions very soon. He did not elaborate, but said that problems can be resolved through dialogue and understanding and not through threats and escalation.

Ghanem's statements came as a number of opposition lawmakers said that efforts were underway to bring back Saad Al-Ajmi, an opposition activist, who was deported to Saudi Arabia soon after his citizenship was revoked in mid-2014. Activists on social media and former MPs said

that Ajmi, the former spokesman of the opposition Popular Action Movement, was expected to return today.

Ajmi however denied on his Twitter account that he has received any intimation to repatriate him to the country after he was deported in April 2015. Ajmi thanked all those who made any effort to resolve his ordeal. He was one of several dozen opposition activists and their relatives who had their citizenships revoked as part of a crackdown on the opposition.

Pro-government MP Saadoun Hammad said a number of lawmakers met with HH the Amir yesterday and discussed returning the revoked citizenships. He said the lawmakers felt "positive signs" from the Amir. He provided no further details. Opposition MP Mohammad Al-Dallal said meetings have been held between lawmakers and the government over the revoked citizenships and that a number of ideas and proposals have been discussed.

Continued on Page 13



KUWAIT: Minister of Health Dr. Jamal Al-Harbi opens a new health center in eastern Ahmadi yesterday. — KUNA

## PAKISTANI PM ARRIVES ON OFFICIAL VISIT

ISLAMABAD: Pakistani Prime Minister Muhammad Nawaz Sharif will pay a two-day official visit to Kuwait from today. During the visit, Sharif will meet the Kuwaiti leadership for an in-depth review of various aspects of the traditionally close and brotherly relations between the two countries. The prime minister will hold delega-

tion level talks with his Kuwaiti counterpart HH Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-Hamad Al-Sabah. Both sides will review the progress made so far under various existing agreements and MoUs in various fields. Sharif will address gatherings of select Kuwaiti investors, as well as members of the Pakistani community residing in Kuwait.

KUWAIT: Well-informed sources said that the proposed fee increases for health services provided to expats are in the final stages of implementation, and are awaiting the signature and approval of the health minister. But some lawmakers have rejected increasing the fees collected from expats out of fear of such a move's consequences on citizens and out of consideration of the circumstances of 'brotherly Arab expats'. Some have called for the increases to be imposed after a well-studied law.

According to a report in Al-Rai daily, the sources denied any intention to cancel the increases and stressed that not putting them into force in February as previously promised by Health Minister Jamal Al-Harbi did not mean freezing the decision recommended by the parliamentary health affairs committee. "The decision is made and it is only a matter of time," the sources emphasized.

Continued on Page 13

## KUWAIT 56 COMBO



KD 3.100

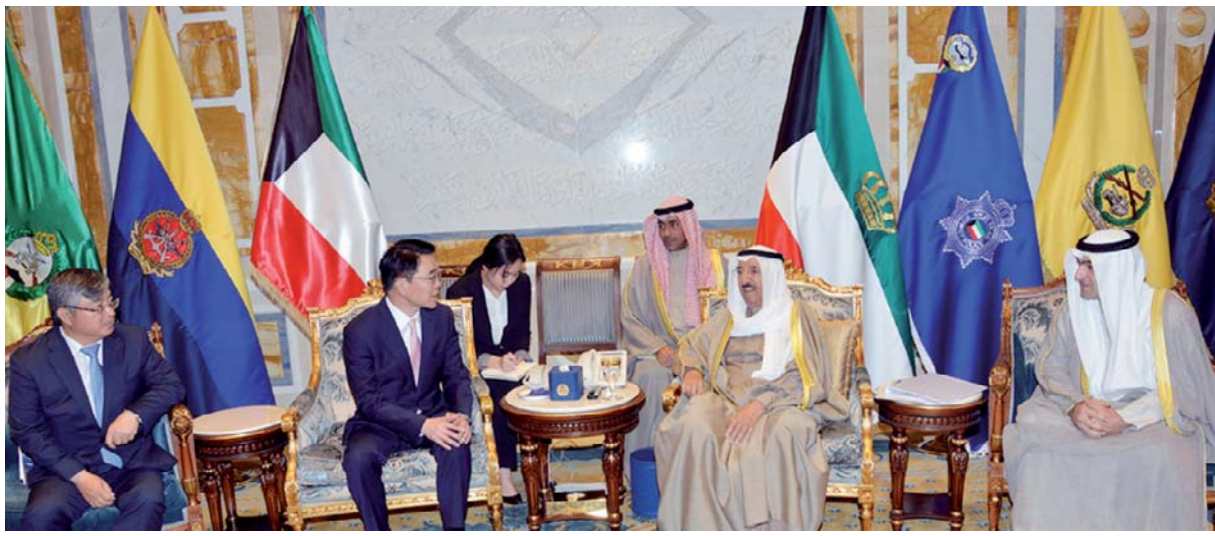
15 Fried shrimp, 3 fried fish, fries, coleslaw, tartar sauce, bread & cola

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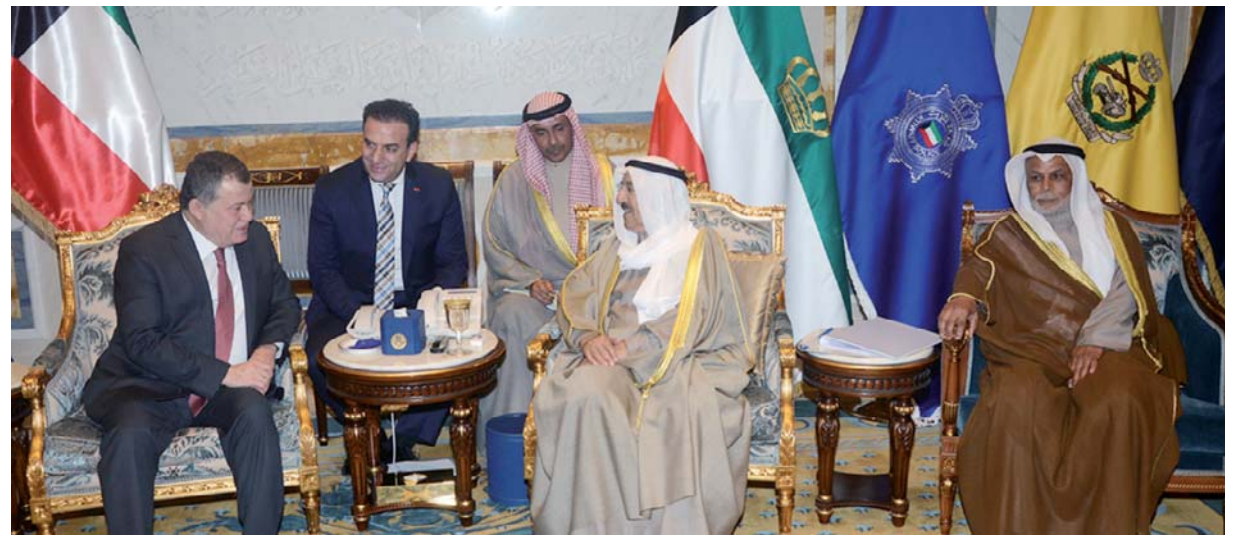


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**KUWAIT:** His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah meets with South Korean Minister of Land, Infrastructure, and Transportation Kang Ho-in.—KUNA photos



**His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah meets with Turkish President of the Court of Cassation Ismail Rustu Cirit.**

# AMIR MEETS SOUTH KOREAN MINISTER

## HIS HIGHNESS CONGRATULATES KUWAITI JET SKI CHAMPION

**KUWAIT:** His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah accompanied by Minister of State and Minister of Services Affairs Yasir Abul received at Bayan Palace yesterday South Korean Minister of Land, Infrastructure, and Transportation Kang Ho-in and his accompanying delegation. The meeting was attended by Deputy Minister of Amiri Diwan Affairs Sheikh Ali Al-Jarrah Al-Sabah, Director of Public Authority for Housing Bader Al-Wugayyan.

Minister Abul later introduced the visiting minister to His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-Hamad Al-Sabah; who later hosted Chairman of the Public Authority for Communications Salem Al-Othaina, accompanied by the visiting regional chairman of Huawei Global.

Meanwhile, His Highness the Amir received Kuwaiti HEAD of the Higher Court and Constitutional Court Yusuf Al-Mutawa'a, accompanied by Turkish President of the Court of Cassation Ismail Rustu Cirit. The meeting was attended by Sheikh Ali Al-Jarrah and Director Kuwait Institute for Legal Judicial Studies Advisor Abdullah Al-Essa. The audience was attended by the Chinese Ambassador to the State of Kuwait Wang Di.

Earlier yesterday, His Highness the Amir received His Highness the Crown Prince

Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, His Highness the Prime Minister, Speaker of the National Assembly Marzouq Al-Ghanem, and First Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah. In the meantime, His Highness the Crown Prince received Ghanem, His Highness Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak, Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Defense Sheikh Mohammad Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah, as well as Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Interior Sheikh Khaled Al-Jarrah Al-Sabah. His audience for day also included Minister of State for Cabinet Affairs, Acting Minister of Information Sheikh Mohammad Al-Abdullah Al-Mubarak Al-Sabah and Chief of the National Security Bureau Sheikh Thamer Ali Sabah Al-Salem Al-Sabah.

Separately, His Highness the Amir sent a cable to the 2016 World jet ski champion, Kuwait's Yousef Al-Abdulrazzaq, congratulating him on a feat that has become emblazoned on the pages of Guinness World Records.

His Highness the Amir heaped praise on Abdulrazzaq for his achievement, wishing him further success in regional and global sports events. His Highness the Crown Prince, His Highness the Prime Minister and Speaker Ghanem sent similar cables to the world's top jet skier.



**His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-Hamad Al-Sabah meets with Chairman of the Public Authority for Communications Salem Al-Othaina, accompanied by the visiting regional chairman of Huawei Global.**

## FOREIGN MINISTER HOSTS UN ENVOY FOR YEMEN



**KUWAIT:** First Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah meets with UN envoy for Yemen Ismail Ould Cheikh Ahmad. — KUNA

**KUWAIT:** First Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah hosted yesterday the visiting UN envoy for Yemen Ismail Ould Cheikh Ahmad. The two sides during the audience held at the ministry headquarters discussed latest developments in Yemen and international efforts aimed at finding a political settlement to the crisis.

Minister Sheikh Khaled renewed the State of Kuwait's support for all efforts exerted by the UN Secretary General Envoy for Yemen for sake of restoring security and stability to brotherly Yemen. The meeting was attended by senior ministry official and the Kuwaiti ambassador to Yemen, Fahad Saad Al-Mai'a.

Separately, Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled hosted the newly-assigned Ethiopian Ambassador to the State of Kuwait Abdulaziz Ahmad Adam. During the reception at his bureau, Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled expressed good wishes to the new Ethiopian envoy and hoped to see the bilateral relations between Kuwait and the African nation 'progress and prosper'. The audience was attended by senior ministry officials. —KUNA

## AMIR TO PATRONIZE KU STUDENTS' GRADUATION

**KUWAIT:** His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah is set to patronize today a ceremony marking the graduation of Kuwait University's (KU) students for the academic year 2015-2016, as well as marking the University's gold Jubilee. The ceremony will take place at 10:30 am (local time) at Sheikh Abdulla Al-Jaber Al-Sabah the theatre in Shwaikh.

His Highness the Amir's patronage of the ceremony is the culmination of 50 years of excellence, KU's President said yesterday. In a statement to the press, Dr Hussein Al-Ansari said that top students will be adorned with an honorary order for their commitment and diligent efforts.

On the skills they acquired during the course of their academic careers, Ansari said it would serve them well as they foray into the job market. Moreover, the KU President revealed that an honorary doctorate will be bestowed upon His Highness the Amir as a token of appreciation for his contributions, in a gesture reminiscent of when the United Nations (UN) christened His Highness the Amir a 'Humanitarian Leader.' On a mission that spanned 50 years, Ansari said that KU has become synonymous with quality education and scientific research, two factors he described as cornerstones of development and prosperity. — KUNA

## DOCTOR AFFIRMS FAMILY MEDICINE'S NECESSITY

**ABU DHABI:** Family medicine has proven quite instrumental in diagnosing illnesses in Kuwait and other countries for it partially aids individuals adopt healthy habits and life style, a Kuwaiti physician says. Dr Huda Al-Duwaisan, head of the primate health care faculty at Kuwait Institute for Medical Specialization, says family medicine provides protective and initial care, in addition to early diagnosis for the patients.

Dr Duwaisan, herself specialized in family medicine, was speaking in a statement after she took part in the fourth edition of the World Organization of Family Doctors' Conference, hosted by the UAE capital. This medical specialization provides best means to combat hereditary diseases and arrange shifting patients, who suffer from serious sickness, to specialists, she said. Kuwait's Medical Specialization Faculty of Primary Healthcare seeks to increase number of personnel serving in the family medicine sector because it treats a wide range of illnesses and conditions including

hereditary, psychological illnesses thus saving some money and time for the patients.

Some 30 percent of the medical staff in Kuwait work in the sector of primary care, says Dr Duwaisan. Elaborating, the Kuwaiti doctor said that she and her fellow conferees examined issues related to regional medical centers, namely Al-Abdullah Al-Abdulhadi medical center, classified by the World Health Organization as one of the top centers of this medical domain in the Middle East.

This Kuwaiti center has trained physicians from 13 Arab countries on the family medicine. Dr Al-Duwaisan revealed Kuwait would host in March 2018 the fifth conference of the World Organization of Family Doctors (WONCA). On sidelines of the WONCA's conference in Abu Dhabi, the Kuwaiti delegation distributed booklets and displayed a documentary about Kuwaiti health, cultural and tourist landmarks. — KUNA



**Officials and diplomats attend the forum.—Photos by Joseph Shagra**

## AWQAF MINISTER EXTOLS AMIR'S PATRONAGE OF JAAFARI WAQF FORUM

**KUWAIT:** Minister of Awqaf and Islamic Affairs Mohammad Al-Jabri highly commended yesterday that His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-



**KUWAIT:** Secretary-General of the General Secretariat of Awqaf Mohammad Al-Jalahma delivers a speech on behalf of Awqaf Minister Mohammad Al-Jabri during the forum.

Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah's patronage of Jaafari Waqf Forum as a reflection of his belief in the significant social role of Jaafari endowments.

The minister made the remark in a keynote speech delivered on his behalf by Secretary-General of the General Secretariat of Awqaf Mohammad Al-Jalahma during the Jaafari Waqf Forum held yesterday. The forum is a genuine reflection of fervent and efforts to promote the significant role of endowments in serving the society, added Jabri, who doubles as Minister of State for Municipal Affairs.

This can be achieved through the seminars and activities of the three-day forum where scholars, academicians and stakeholders can share views and experience on endowment and humanitarian domains, he noted. The event is mainly intended to look into a holistic economic development strategy aiming at giving the

General Secretariat of Endowments a pioneering role in social and economic development, he added. The forum is considered a catalyst for developing fresh ways for safe investment of endowments involving funds and assets in order to earn the highest possible revenues of endowments, the minister pointed out.

Meanwhile, Chairman of the Forum's Preparatory Committee Usama Al-Sayegh said Jaafari endowments have been enjoying the support of His Highness the Amir since they were launched in Kuwait. He added that the organizing committee has chosen 'Economic Endowment... Life and Development' as the title of this year's forum thanks to the remarkable development of Jaafari endowments. He hoped that the forum would come up with concrete outcomes that could push forward the development of endowments in the country. —KUNA



**KUWAIT:** Deputy Foreign Minister Khaled Al-Jarallah met yesterday with Kuwait Army Chief of Staff Lieutenant General Mohammad Al-Khodher. The two sides examined agenda of the forthcoming meeting that would group the foreign, interior undersecretaries and the GCC chiefs of staff, due in Saudi Arabia. — KUNA



# MINISTRY DENIES REPORTS ON TERMINATING EXPAT TEACHERS

## EXPATS IN PUBLIC SECTOR ON THE RISE

By A Saleh

**KUWAIT:** The Ministry of Education's (MoE) Human Resources Director Soud Al-Jowaisri strongly denied social media reports about terminating 800 expatriate teachers. Speaking in a statement he made to German news agency DPA, Jowaisri explained that expatriate teachers who had been notified of the termination of their contracts were those teaching computer science in the primary stage, where the subject was cancelled from the curriculum. Their termination would be effective from August. "Hearsay stories about terminating expat teachers of social studies, Islamic studies and science is absolutely untrue," he under-

lined, explaining that there are extra teachers in these subjects, while many Kuwaiti teachers of these subjects are awaiting recruitment in these positions. "It is a general policy of nationalizing teaching staff members annually by 25 percent," he underlined, noting that computer teachers in intermediate and secondary stages would not be terminated. "The terminated teachers knew of this procedure since last year, but the former minister ordered postponing the process till this year," Jowaisri added, noting that special cases of expat teachers like those having children studying in the final years of secondary stage or those from countries stricken with war like Syria and Yemen are still being considered by the

undersecretary. Jowaisri stressed that the total numbers of terminated teachers is still being assessed. He added that changing the specialty from teaching computer science to mathematics was up to the supervision.

Notably, a large group of expatriate teachers were notified of the termination of their contracts in February. In addition, MoE had cut expatriate teachers' rent allowance from KD 150 to KD 90, which disturbed many of them and made some resign, while others sent their families back home because they couldn't afford the cost of living in Kuwait any more.

showed that expats working in the public sector increased by four percent in 2016, ie by 3,900, to make the total number rise to around 100,000; a rate that is seen to be contrary to state plans to 'Kuwaitize' public posts. The statistics showed that despite the deficit and government plans, expat government employees increased by 3,900 in 2016 compared with only 1,250 in 2015 - a 212 percent increase. Other statistics showed that 20 percent of these expats hold undergraduate degrees, 38 percent of them are 'bachelors' and that their average monthly wages are KD 691, while Kuwaitis get an average of KD 1,470 - 113 percent higher than expats.

**Four percent**  
In other news, official statistics

### News

In brief

#### Official call for investing in South Jahra city project

**KUWAIT:** The Kuwait Authority for Partnership Projects called yesterday on local and international companies to apply for investing in the labor towns project in South Al-Jahra. The statement noted that such call comes in ordinance with the government intent to activate the partnership program between public and private sectors, based on the 116 law of 2014. The authority added South Al-Jahra would include residential units, services for the workers "with humanitarian, environmental and health specifications according to international responsibilities and moralistic responsibilities. The project will also help in resolving traffic problems particularly where workers mingle with residents and will regulate security, health and social status of the expatriates. The labor towns project, forecast to accommodate up to 20,000 limited-income workers, will be promoted for investment by means of forming a Kuwaiti shareholding company, according to BOT basis. —KUNA

#### Gold price drops

**KUWAIT:** Gold price dropped by 2.7 percent, \$34, reaching \$1,222 per ounce, due to a bullish US dollar and forecast raise of the US interest rate, Sabaek Al-Kuwait for precious minerals company said in a statement yesterday. It forecast the price in the near future to range between \$1,225 and 1,245 per ounce and may leap to \$1,275 per ounce, in case the US Federal Reserve opted to delay the interest rate hike to June. —KUNA

#### MPs' immunity lifted

**KUWAIT:** The parliament's legislative and legal affairs committee yesterday approved stripping MP Ahmad Al-Fadhel of his parliamentary immunity. MP Mohammad Al-Dallal, the panel's chairman, said in a statement that the committee members discussed during a session prior topics namely laws for combating corruption, contradiction of interests and employments in leading and judicial posts. The commission approved setting up a public authority against narcotics and bills related to military retirees' payments. It rejected a bill on establishing a council for higher education and scientific development due to some constitutional irregularities and blessed another regarding amendments on the work in the private sector's law. — KUNA



**KUWAIT:** Damage left by a fire reported in a Khaitan apartment Saturday night.

## MULTIPLE INJURIES IN KHAITAN FIRES

By Hanan Al-Saadoun

**KUWAIT:** Three people suffered smoke inhalation in a fire that hit a Khaitan building Saturday night. Firefighters rushed to the scene in response to an emergency call, and immediately began to evacuate the building following their arrival. They were able to tackle the blaze which engulfed a fifth floor apartment, and prevented the flames from spreading to nearby apartments. Paramedics treated three persons who suffered smoke inhalation onsite. An investigation was opened to determine the cause of the fire. Separately, Jleeb Al-Shuyoukh and Ardhiya firemen rescued a child who was trapped in a flat during a fire in a building. The girl was handed to paramedics as she suffered smoke inhalation and superficial burns on her body. The fire was put out, and an investigation is ongoing to find out the cause of the blaze.

#### Suicides

A Bangladeshi man committed suicide in Fintas. He worked as a driver, and his body was recovered by the coroner. Meanwhile, an Indian maid hanged herself to death in Jleeb Al-Shuyoukh inside a toilet. Investigations are underway.

#### Theft

A citizen in Abdullah Al-Salem accused her Ethiopian maid of stealing jewelry worth KD 250,000.

#### Sentenced

The cassation court sentenced two employees at Nuwaiseeb border outlet to 10 years in jail for helping the accused in the Fintas group Hamad Al-Haroun to escape from the country.



Firefighters tackle a blaze.

# KUWAIT PLANS MINIMUM POWER OUTAGES DURING SUMMER: OFFICIAL

**KUWAIT:** The Ministry of Electricity and Water is well prepared for upcoming summer season, Minister Essam Al-Marzouq said. The ministry has prepared well for summer season with aim of limiting prospected power outages, said Marzouq, who doubles as the Minister of Oil. He was speaking in a statement on sidelines of opening the project for expanding Al-Sabbayyah power station (Phase II).

Surplus of the prospected electric production would in the range of 2,700 megawatts, he said, also noting that station's full capacity stands at 16,700 MW. As to outages' causes, he said they happen due to extreme heat which increases pressure on the cables or the relays or as a result of accidental damage in the cables. Kuwait's electric network is one of the best in the world, according to international quality indexes, the minister said, affirming that there has been no delay in maintaining the electric installations.

On the GCC power grid, he said it saves 1,200 MW. Kuwait, he said, benefited twice from the regional joint network last year-using up 500 MW. On the project of expanding Al-Sabbayyah station, signed on May 28, 2015, he said it secures 500 MW, at a value of KD 105 million. This venture had been executed ahead of ending schedule and went into operation on February 23rd. — KUNA



**KUWAIT:** Ministry of Electricity and Water engineers pose with minister Essa Al-Marzouq and other ministry officials during a ceremony to open a project to expand Al-Sabbayyah power station. —Photos by Fouad Al-Shaikh



### Legalese

## EMPLOYMENT ISSUES

By Attorney Fajer Ahmed

**W**e are blessed in Kuwait (and the GCC) to have such a diverse workforce. Some countries or some communities are homogeneous; you will find that all the people in that community are from one race and one background, but fortunately in Kuwait we are a sea of humans, and it amazes me how much we can learn from each other. I am also personally blessed that I get to write for people, to share the knowledge I have, and to have people contact me.

But it also breaks my heart to see so many people affected in Kuwait with employment issues. And because we are a sea of humans, it is difficult for many of us to understand a law that is written in the state's official language: Arabic. Many people in Kuwait do not speak the official language. They cannot and will not need to understand to read and write in Arabic. It is difficult for them not just to understand the law, but also the process, and the way things are done here. So today, I will be answering common questions about employment law and more importantly, the necessary action that my readers can take by themselves or with a help of a lawyer.

#### Employment issue

**Question:** I want to go to Shoon for an employment issue, do I really need a lawyer? Should I get a lawyer? And what should I keep in mind?

**Fajer:** Before I answer the questions, I want to explain what Shoon is. 'Shoon' is a word dubbed for a department under the Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs. It is the first stop for any legal issue concerning employment. For a case to go to court, a complaint needs to be filed in Shoon first, where an investigator will try to mediate the situation first and attempt to resolve the matter amicably for both the employee and the employer, but if that does not work out, an investigation takes place. Then the issue is transferred to court, and another lengthy process happens, where the issue is transferred from court to an expert and then back to court. Then there is a verdict (that can be appealed) and assuming the verdict is final, it needs to be executed. That is also a lengthy process. There is one Shoon in every governorate in Kuwait.

Do you need a lawyer for all of this? Although many people figure things out at Shoon without a lawyer, I suggest that if you can afford to get one then do. Employment cases are lengthy as explained above and therefore costly. How much do they cost? It really depends on what documents you have, what you are asking for and so many other important factors. A lawyer that gives you a price without sitting with you to discuss the case would be lying to you. I have so many potential clients that call the firm asking "how much will it cost me?" I respond "I do not know, come in first for an initial consultation." This bothers them, but I would be dishonest if I gave them a price, because I might not need to go to court. I would not suggest something to my clients unless it was necessary and although many call saying they want to go to court, it just might not be the best process for them.

#### Common mistakes

**Question:** Since you are a lawyer with experience in commercial and employment law, what are the most common mistakes that people make, or that your clients make, which can be avoided in the future?

**Fajer:** This is a very broad question. Instead of focusing on the mistakes one can make (there are too many to enumerate), let us think about what actions an employee can do to protect themselves in the future. Some of the most common being:

1. If you are going to resign, do it in writing.
2. If your boss agrees to your resignation, get it in writing.
3. If your boss makes any statement that can affect you in the future legally, get it in writing.
4. Read your contract carefully.
5. Ask for a copy of your contract.
6. Check your work permit.
7. Always try to figure things out amicably.
8. Research.

I have plenty of articles available on the Legalese section of the Kuwait Times website, [www.KuwaitTimes.com](http://www.KuwaitTimes.com), please read them.

For any legal questions or queries, email [ask@fajertelawyer.com](mailto:ask@fajertelawyer.com).

## UNIONIST HOPES REFORM WOULD COVER PRIVATE MEDICAL SECTOR

By Meshaal Al-Enezi

**KUWAIT:** Chairman of the Union of Private Medical Professions Owners Dr Adel Ashkanani expressed hope that the ongoing reform at the Ministry of Health would include the private medical sector as well. He added the problem currently facing the sector is the use of 10 dilapidated cottages as the premises of the medical licenses department, including various sections serving six governorates. "This is unacceptable in 2017 in a rich country like Kuwait," he underlined, noting that modernizing the department and using electronic systems would stop manipulations and prevent the loss of files. "Where are the millions of dinars the state allocated for shifting to the e-government system?" he wondered. Ashkanani also expressed hope that the department's new director would be given enough authorities to help him develop the department, especially since both the minister and the acting assistant undersecretary visited the department a few days apart. "We do hope the reform you started in other sectors would include the private one," Ashkanani said, addressing the minister.

#### Acting undersecretary

Meanwhile, Health Minister Dr Jamal Al-Harbi yesterday deputized the assistant undersecretary for technical affairs Dr Waleed Khaled Al-Falah to do the duties of acting undersecretary, after former undersecretary Dr Khaled Al-Sahlawi resigned last week.

#### Inheritance cases

Minister of Justice And Minister of State for Assembly Affairs Dr Faleh Al-Azeb said prolonging hearing inheritance cases in courts for many years (up to 20 in some cases) divides families, because the disputes and grudges would trickle down to the grandchildren, which is not acceptable amongst the same family members in Kuwait. Azeb added that he was seriously considering cooperation with the judicial power to allocate special courts for inheritance-related cases in order to cut those cases' hearing periods.



# THE UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF STATE'S REPORT

## Part II

### Section 6: Discrimination, societal abuses, and trafficking in persons:

#### Women

**Rape and domestic violence:** Rape carries a maximum penalty of death, which the courts occasionally imposed for the crime; spousal rape is not a crime.

Authorities did not effectively enforce laws against rape. Violence against women continued to be a problem. There were reports alleging that some police stations did not take seriously reports by both citizens and noncitizens of rape and domestic violence.

Media reported two to three dozen rape cases, but government statistics were unavailable. Incidents of rape were likely underreported to authorities due to intense social stigma associated with sexual violence crimes. Many victims were noncitizen domestic workers. When reported, police typically arrested and investigated alleged rapists and, in a limited number of cases, prosecuted the accused. In September 2015 the Court of Cassation revoked a life sentence on a citizen for raping a Filipina woman and instead sentenced him to death.

The government does not publish statistics on violence against women. A local women's advocacy NGO estimated 20,000 women were victims of some form of domestic violence or abuse during the year. The law does not specifically prohibit domestic violence, but in some instances courts try such cases as assault. A victim of domestic violence may file a complaint with police requesting formal charges be brought against the alleged abuser. Victims, however, did not report most domestic abuse cases, especially outside the capital. There were no known shelters specifically for victims of domestic violence. In July 2015 the government established two hotlines for reporting domestic violence. The hotlines are operational only during the working hours and are operated by staff with limited training. Calls and cases are referred to professional social workers. In some cases hospitals denied treatment for victims of sexual assault who had not reported the case to the police first. In December 2015 a noncitizen woman who was raped sought medical care at a hospital but was informed that a police officer would have to interview her first.

### NGO estimates that 20,000 women were victims of domestic violence

A woman may petition for divorce based on injury from spousal abuse, but the law does not provide a clear legal standard regarding what constitutes injury. Additionally, a woman must provide at least two male witnesses (or a male witness and two female witnesses) to attest to such injury.

Other harmful traditional practices: Officials did not report any honor killings during the year. The penal code penalizes some honor crimes as misdemeanors. The law states that a man who sees his wife, daughter, mother, or sister in the "act of adultery" and immediately kills her or the man with whom she is committing adultery faces a maximum punishment of three years' imprisonment and a fine of 225 dinars (\$743).

**Sexual harassment:** Human rights groups characterized sexual harassment in the workplace as a pervasive and unreported problem. No specific law addresses sexual harassment, but the law criminalizes "encroachment on honor," which encompasses everything from touching a woman against her will to rape, and police strictly enforced this law. The government deployed female police officers specifically to combat sexual harassment in shopping malls and other public spaces. Perpetrators of sexual harassment and assault faced fines and imprisonment.

**Reproductive rights:** There were no reports of government interference in the right of couples and individuals to decide freely the number, spacing, and timing of children; to manage their reproductive health; and to have access to the information and means to do so free from discrimination, coercion, and violence. The information and means to make decisions, as well as skilled attendance during prenatal care, essential obstetric care, childbirth, and postpartum care were freely available. While the government did not provide any formal family planning programs, contraceptives were available without prescription to citizens and noncitizens: 44 percent of women ages 15-49 used a modern type of contraceptives, and 16 percent of women had an unmet need for family planning, according to UN Population Fund 2015 estimates.

**Discrimination:** Women do not enjoy the same legal status and rights as men, but citizen women enjoyed many political rights, including the right to vote and to serve in parliament and the cabinet (see section 3, Elections and Political Participation). Sharia (Islamic law) courts have jurisdiction over personal status and family law cases for Sunni and Shia Muslims. Sharia, as implemented in the country, discriminates against women in judicial proceedings, freedom of movement, marriage, child custody, and inheritance. There were no known cases of official or private-sector discrimination in, credit, owning and/or managing a business, and housing. Discrimination in employment and occupation occurred with respect to both citizen and noncitizen women. Secular courts allow any person to testify and consider male and female testimony equally, but in sharia courts,



Kuwait passed laws to guarantee more rights for domestic helpers, but those measures fell short to prevent violations last year, the report says. (Image Credit: Matthijs de Bruijne via <http://gdr.cascoprojects.org>)

which govern personal status matters such as marriage, divorce, child custody and inheritance issues, the testimony of one man equals that of two women.

The 1984 Kuwaiti Family Law Code prohibits marriage between Muslim women and non-Muslim men. The law does not require a non-Muslim woman to convert to Islam to marry a Muslim man, but many non-Muslim women faced strong economic and societal pressure to convert. In the event of a divorce, the law grants the father or his family sole custody of children of non-Muslim women who do not convert. A non-Muslim woman who does not convert to the religion of her husband is also ineligible for naturalization as a citizen and cannot inherit her husband's property unless specified as a beneficiary in his will. Inheritance is also governed by sharia, which varies according to the specific school of Islamic jurisprudence. In the absence of a direct male heir, a Shia woman may inherit all property, while a Sunni woman inherits only a portion, with the balance divided among brothers, uncles, and male cousins of the deceased.

Female citizens are unable to pass citizenship to their noncitizen husbands or their children; however, exceptions were made for some children of widowed or divorced female citizens (see section 2.d., Stateless Persons). In August the government awarded citizenship to 180 children of Kuwaiti widows and divorcees. Male citizens married to female noncitizens do not face such discrimination. In May parliament approved awarding loans up to 70,000 dinars (\$231,000) for single Kuwaiti women. The law grants a "housewife allowance" to non-working women age 55 and older.

Women experienced discrimination in the workplace. According to government statistics, women comprised only 14 percent of legislators, senior officials, and managers. In October the country's highest court ordered an end to affirmative action for male applicants to medical schools on grounds it is unconstitutional. Prior to this court ruling, female applicants were required to demonstrate a higher minimum grade point average than male applicants. The law requires segregation by gender of classes at all universities and secondary schools, although it was not always enforced.

A limited number of women attained leadership positions in the private sector as heads of corporations, but only one woman served as a minister in the cabinet. In 2014 the first 22 female employees of the Public Prosecutor's Office completed their training and became public prosecutors, a prerequisite for appointment as a judge. In August the Supreme Judicial Council ruled that after serving as prosecutors for three years women would be eligible to serve as judges.

#### Children

**Birth registration:** Citizenship derives entirely from the father; children born to citizen mothers and noncitizen fathers do not inherit Kuwaiti citizenship unless the mother is divorced or widowed from the noncitizen father and may then facilitate the child's application for citizenship. The government desig-

nated with the disclosure of the practice. A children's rights law, passed in March 2015 establishing legal protections for abused children, was implemented in January. In November the government opened a hotline for reporting instances of child abuse.

**Early and Forced Marriage:** The legal marriage age is 17 for males and 15 for females, but girls continued to marry at a younger age in some tribal groups. The government reported there were 3,808 married females between the ages of 15-19.

**Sexual exploitation of children:** there are no laws specific to child pornography, because all pornography is illegal. There is no statutory rape law or minimum age for consensual sexual relations, although premarital sexual relations are illegal.

#### Anti-Semitism

There were no known Jewish citizens and an estimated few dozen Jewish foreign resident workers. Anti-Semitic rhetoric often originated from self-proclaimed Islamists or conservative opinion writers. These columnists often conflated Israeli government actions or views with those of Jews more broadly. Reflecting the government's nonrecognition of Israel, there are longstanding official instructions to teachers to expunge from English-language textbooks any references to Israel or the Holocaust. The law prohibits companies from conducting business with Israeli citizens, including transporting them on their national airlines.

#### Persons with disabilities

The law prohibits discrimination against persons with permanent physical, sensory, intellectual, and mental disabilities, in employment, education, air travel and other transportation, access to health care, or the provision of other government services. It imposes penalties on employers who refrain without reasonable cause from hiring persons with disabilities. The law also mandates access to buildings for persons with disabilities. The government generally enforced these provisions. Noncitizens with disabilities neither had access to government-operated facilities nor received stipends paid to citizens with disabilities that covered transportation, housing, job training, and social welfare costs. The government still has not fully implemented social and workplace aides for people with physical, and in particular, vision disabilities.

There is a disability law, and a parliamentary Committee for Disabled Affairs. Under that law the monthly allowance given to the mother of a disabled child or the wife of a person with disabilities is 600 dinars (\$1,980), and families of citizens with disabilities are eligible to receive grants worth up to 20,000 dinars (\$66,000). During the year the government reserved a small number of admissions to Kuwait University for citizens with disabilities, and there was regular media coverage of students with disabilities attending university classes. Nonetheless, authorities did not provide noncitizens with disabilities the same educational opportunities, and noncitizen students with disabilities experienced a lack of accessible materials and lack of reasonable

accommodations in schools.

Children with disabilities attended public school, but information on whether there were patterns of abuse in educational settings was unavailable. Representatives from ministries, other governmental bodies, Kuwait University, and several NGOs constituted the government's Higher Council for Handicapped Affairs, which makes policy recommendations; provides direct financial aid to citizens with disabilities; and facilitates their integration into schools, jobs, and other social institutions. The government supervised and contributed to schools and job training programs oriented to persons with disabilities.

#### National/racial/ethnic minorities

Approximately 70 percent of residents were noncitizens, many originating from Egypt, the Indian subcontinent, and Southeast Asia. Societal discrimination against noncitizens and bidoon was prevalent and occurred in most areas of daily life, including employment, education, housing, social interaction, and health care. As part of expanded activity against illegal residents, police stopped, arrested, and sometimes deported noncitizens believed to be using private automobiles as taxis. This action disproportionately affected the noncitizen laborers who could not afford

their own automobiles or taxi fares.

#### Acts of violence, discrimination, and other abuses based on sexual orientation and gender identity:

Consensual same-sex sexual conduct between men and cross-dressing are illegal. The law punishes consensual same-sex sexual activity between men older than 21 with imprisonment of up to seven years; those engaging in consensual same-sex sexual activity with men younger than 21 may be imprisoned for as long as 10 years. No laws criminalize sexual behavior between women. The law imposes a fine of 1,059 dinars (\$3,495) and imprisonment for one to three years for persons imitating the appearance of the opposite sex in public. Transgender persons reported harassment, detainment, and abuse by security forces. In August police arrested three cross-dressers in a mall. The police ordered the individuals to have their heads shaved and opened an investigation.

Societal discrimination and harassment based on sexual orientation and gender identity occurred; to a lesser extent, officials also practiced such discrimination, usually upon discovering that a person stopped for a traffic violation did not appear to be the gender indicated on the identification card. Transgender men and women often faced rejection by their families and, in some cases, disputes over inheritances.

No registered NGOs focused on LGBTI matters, although unregistered ones existed. Due to social convention and potential repression, LGBTI organizations neither operated openly nor held gay pride marches or gay rights advocacy events.

#### HIV and AIDS social stigma

Local human rights NGOs reported no accounts of societal violence or discrimination against persons with HIV/AIDS, but persons with HIV/AIDS did not generally disclose their status due to social stigma associated with the disease. The Ministry of Health estimated there were 209 citizens with HIV. Foreign citizens found to be HIV-positive faced immediate deportation.

#### Other societal violence or discrimination:

Unmarried men continued to face housing discrimination based solely on marital status. The law prohibits single men from obtaining accommodation in many urban residential areas. Single noncitizens faced eviction due to a decision by the municipality to enforce this prohibition and remove them from residences allocated for citizens' families, citing the presence of single men as the reason for increasing crime, a burden on services, and worsening traffic. Although no law prohibits it, single and unaccompanied citizen and noncitizen female residents traditionally are not allowed to check into hotels.

#### Section 7: Worker rights:

##### a. Freedom of association and the right to collective bargaining

The law protects the right of workers to form and join trade unions, bargain collective-

Manpower, there were 2.52 million workers in the country. Only 19 percent of the total workforce were citizens. Most citizens (76 percent) worked in the public sector, in part because the government provided lucrative bonuses to citizens, including retirement funding.

The law prohibits antiunion discrimination and employer interference with union functions. It provides for reinstatement of workers fired for union activity. Nevertheless, the law empowers the courts to dissolve any union for violating labor laws or for threatening "public order and morals," although a union can appeal such a court decision. The Ministry of Social Affairs and Labor can request the Court of First Instance to dissolve a union. Additionally, His Highness the Amir may dissolve a union by decree.

Foreign workers, who constituted more than 80 percent of the workforce, may join unions only as nonvoting members after five years of work in the particular sector the union represents, provided they obtain a certificate of good conduct and moral standing from the government. They cannot run for seats or vote in board elections. Both the International Labor Organization and the International Trade Union Confederation criticized the citizenship requirement for discouraging unions in sectors that employ few citizens, including much of private-sector employment, such as construction.

The government enforced applicable laws, with some exceptions, and procedures were generally not subject to lengthy delay or appeals. The government treated worker actions by citizens and noncitizens differently. While citizens and public sector union leaders and workers faced no government repercussions for their roles in union or strike activities, companies directly threatened noncitizen workers calling for strikes with termination and deportation.

In April, 20,000 Kuwaiti workers in the oil sector went on strike due to proposed future benefit reductions. The strike lasted three days, ending when the government stated it would refuse to negotiate as long as the strike continued. In May, 1,200 foreign oil workers also went on strike due to nonpayment of wages. The government intervened and resolved the strike when it assured the workers they would be paid.

##### b. Prohibition of forced or compulsory labor

The law prohibits and criminally sanctions

### Incidents of forced labor and conditions indicative of forced labor occurred

forced or compulsory labor "except in cases specified by law for national emergency and with just remuneration." In June the National Assembly passed amendments to the private-sector labor law providing for increased worker rights to include subjecting employers to fines for failure to pay worker's wages and for recruiting workers from abroad but failing to provide employment.

Although the law prohibits withholding of workers' passports, the practice remained common among sponsors and employers of foreign workers, and the government demonstrated no consistent efforts to enforce this prohibition. Employers confined some domestic and agricultural workers to their workspaces by retaining their passport and, in the case of some domestic workers, locked in their work locations. Workers who fled abusive employers had difficulty retrieving their passports and authorities deported them in almost all cases. The government usually limited punishment to assessing fines, shutting employment firms, issuing orders for employers to return withheld passports, or requiring employers to pay back wages. As of September the government closed six recruitment agencies and stated it had received and investigated 3,100 complaints from workers, more than half of complaints were resolved amicably in favor of the worker. The government also received 9,087 salary-related labor complaints, of which 6,123 were referred to the labor courts for adjudication while 463 cases were resolved through arbitration.

Some incidents of forced labor and conditions indicative of forced labor occurred, especially among foreign domestic and agricultural workers. Such practices were usually a result of employer abuse of the sponsorship system (kafala) for noncitizen workers. Employers frequently illegally withheld salaries from domestic workers and minimum-wage laborers.

According to various reports, North Korean laborers, estimated to number between 2,000 and 4,000, worked in forced labor conditions, averaging 15-hour days with no freedom of movement and living in squalid conditions. Former North Korean laborers and officials indicated that employers paid worker salaries to a North Korean government-owned company instead of directly to the individual workers. Kuwait served as the only point of aerial disembarkation for all North Korean laborers in Gulf Cooperation Council countries. In October the government halted all North Korean flights to Kuwait in response to repeated requests from concerned governments, and in November the government ceased issuing work visas for North Korean workers.

Domestic servitude was the most common type of forced labor, principally involving foreign domestic workers employed under the sponsorship system, but reports of forced labor in the construction and sanitation sectors also existed. Forced labor conditions for migrant workers included nonpayment of wages, long working hours, deprivation of food, threats, physical and sexual abuse, and restrictions on movement, such as withholding passports or confinement to the workplace.

## Companies directly threatened noncitizen workers calling for strikes with termination and deportation

nates religion on birth and marriage certificates. The government often granted citizenship to orphaned or abandoned infants, including bidoon infants. Parents were sometimes unable to obtain birth certificates for their bidoon children because of extensive administrative requirements, which prevented such children from accessing public services such as education and health care.

**Education:** Education for citizens is free through the university level and compulsory through the secondary level. Education is neither free nor compulsory for noncitizens. A 2011 Council of Ministers decree extended education benefits to bidoon. The government requires Islamic religious instruction in public schools for all students. The government also requires Islamic religious instruction for Muslim students in private schools that have one or more Muslim students, regardless of whether the student is a citizen or not. In August 2015 the government allowed 5,000 children of bidoon families to attend public schools.

**Medical care:** Lack of identification papers sometimes restricted bidoon access to public medical care.

**Child abuse:** There was no reported societal pattern of child abuse. Most cases likely went unreported due to social stigma associ-

ly, and conduct legal strikes, with significant restrictions. The government, however, did not always respect these rights.

The law does not apply to public-sector employees, domestic workers, or maritime employees. Discrete labor laws set work conditions in the public and private sectors, with the oil industry treated separately. The law permits limited trade union pluralism at the local level, but the government authorized only one federation, the Kuwait Trade Union Federation (KTUF). The law also stipulates any new union must include at least 100 workers and that at least 15 of the total number must be citizens.

The law provides workers, except for domestic workers, maritime workers, and civil servants, a limited right to collective bargaining. There is no minimum number of workers needed to conclude such agreements.

Public-sector workers do not have the right to strike. Private-sector workers have the right to strike, although cumbersome provisions calling for compulsory negotiation and arbitration in the case of disputes limit that right. The law does not prohibit retaliation against striking workers or prevent the government from interfering in union activities, including the right to strike.

According to the Public Authority for



# ON HUMAN RIGHTS PRACTICES FOR 2016: KUWAIT

As of September employers filed 18,385 "absconding" reports against employees versus 37 complaints filed by domestic workers against their employers in accordance with the new domestic labor law.

The Public Authority for Manpower operated a shelter for abused domestic workers, and as of July, according to a government source, the shelter had a capacity of 500 victims and housed on average 350 at any one time. International and national organizations had relatively open access to workers residing in the shelter and reported adequate living conditions. After observers accused male guards of abusing and sexually harassing some of the women, the shelter modified security arrangements to forbid male security guards from entering the operating and lodging areas of the shelter.

In July the government began implementing the 2015 domestic worker labor law that requires employers to grant domestic workers a maximum 12-hour workday, with one day off per week and 30 days paid leave per year. The law also establishes a minimum wage of 60 dinars (\$198), end-of-service benefits-one month's wage for every year worked-and bans

## Although the law prohibits withholding of workers' passports, the practice remained common

abuse. At year's end a female citizen was serving a 10-year prison term for abusing a domestic worker. In December 2015 an appeals court overruled a lower court's acquittal of a female citizen for assaulting her domestic worker. In February the Court of Cassation upheld the appeals court verdict, and the citizen was sentenced to three and one-half years in prison.

Numerous media reports highlighted the problem of visa trading and human rights. Arrests of visa traffickers and illegal labor rings occurred almost weekly. Since workers cannot freely change jobs, they were sometimes willing to leave their initial job due to low wages or unacceptable working conditions and enter into an illegal residency status with the hope of improved working conditions at another job. As of August the public prosecutor's office had referred 606 recruiting firms for prosecution for illegal issuance of residency permits.

### c. Prohibition of child labor and minimum age for employment

The law prohibits child labor. The legal minimum age for employment is 18, although employers may obtain permits from the Ministry of Social Affairs and Labor to employ juveniles between 15 and 18 in some nonhazardous trades. Juveniles may work a maximum of six hours a day with no more than four consecutive hours followed by a one-hour rest period. Juveniles cannot work overtime or between 7 pm and 6 am.

Although not extensive, there were credible reports that children of South Asian origin worked as domestic laborers. Some underage workers entered the country on travel documents with falsified birth dates.

The government made efforts to enforce laws regulating child labor. Approximately 450 Ministry of Social Affairs and Labor inspectors routinely monitored private firms for labor law compliance, including laws against child labor. Noncompliant employers faced fines or a forced suspension of their company operations. Nevertheless, the government did not consistently enforce child labor laws in the informal sector, such as in street vending.

### d. Discrimination with respect for employment and occupation

The law prohibits discrimination in employment based on race, sex, gender, and disability. The government immediately deports HIV-positive foreign workers, and there is no protection for workers based on sexual orientation. No laws prohibit labor discrimination based on language, non-HIV communicable diseases, or

social status, but there were no reported cases of discrimination in these areas.

Discrimination in employment and occupation occurred with respect to both citizen and noncitizen women. Domestic workers were at particular risk of discrimination or abuse due to the isolated home environment in which they worked.

The law states that a woman should receive "remuneration equal to that of a man provided she does the same work," although it prohibits women from working in "dangerous industries" and in trades "harmful" to health. Educated women contended the conservative nature of society restricted career opportunities, although there were limited improvements. While women were 72 percent of college graduates from Kuwait University, they were underrepresented in the number of students sent to study internationally, likely due to continued societal concerns about permitting young women to study away from their families. Prior to an October court ruling, female medical school applicants were required to demonstrate a higher minimum grade point average than male applicants. According to government statistics, the female workforce participation rate was 58 percent while according to the World Bank the percentage of women in the workforce was 45 percent.

### e. Acceptable conditions of work

The law sets the national minimum wage in the private sector at 65 dinars (\$215) per month. The actual minimum wage for domestic workers was 60 dinars (\$198) per month. Most low-wage employees lived and worked in the country without their families, and employers provided at least some form of housing.

The law limits the standard workweek to 48 hours (40 hours for the petroleum industry), and gives private-sector workers 30 days of annual leave. The law also forbids requiring employees to work more than 60 hours per week or 10 hours per day. The law provides for 13 designated national holidays annually. Workers are entitled to 125 percent of base pay for working overtime and 150 percent of base pay for working on their designated weekly day off.

The government issued occupational health and safety standards that were current and appropriate for the main industries. For example, the law provides that all outdoor work stop between 11 am and 4 pm during June, July, and August, or when the temperature rises to more than 120 degrees Fahrenheit in the shade. A worker could file a complaint

against an employer with the Public Authority for Manpower if the worker believed his safety and health were at risk.

The law and regulations governing acceptable conditions of work do not apply to domestic workers. The Ministry of Interior has jurisdiction over domestic worker matters and enforces domestic labor working standards via the new domestic labor law that was implemented in July.

The Ministry of Social Affairs and Labor is responsible for enforcement of wage and hours, overtime, and occupational safety and health regulations of nondomestic workers. Enforcement by the ministry was generally good, but there were gaps in enforcement with respect to unskilled foreign laborers. Several ministry officials cited inadequate numbers of inspectors as the main reason for their inability to enforce the laws to the best of their abilities.

Approximately 450 labor inspectors monitored private firms. The government periodically inspected enterprises to raise awareness among workers and employers and to assure that they abided by existing safety rules, controlled pollution in certain industries, trained workers to use machines, and reported violations.

The Ministry of Social Affairs and Labor monitored worksites to provide for compliance with rules banning summer work and recorded hundreds of violations during the year. Workers could also report these violations to their embassies, the KTUF, or the Labor Disputes Department. Noncompliant employers faced warnings, fines, or forced suspensions of company operations, but these were not sufficiently substantial to deter violators.

Workers submitted complaints to the Public Authority for Manpower Labor Relations. In the first 10 months of the year, the Labor Disputes Department received 12,187 complaints from workers; these complaints were either about contract issues such as nonpayment of wages or about difficulties transferring work visas to new companies. Most of the complaints were resolved in arbitration, with the remaining cases referred to the courts for resolution.

At times the Public Authority for Manpower intervened to resolve labor disputes between foreign workers and their employers. The authority's labor arbitration panel sometimes ruled in favor of foreign laborers who claimed violations of work contracts by their employers. The government was more effective in resolving unpaid salary disputes involving private sector laborers than those involving domestic workers.

Foreign workers were vulnerable to unacceptable conditions of work. Domestic workers and other unskilled foreign workers in the private sector frequently worked substantially in excess of 48 hours a week, with no day of rest.

Domestic workers had little recourse when employers violated their rights except to seek admittance to the domestic workers shelter where the government mediated between sponsors and workers either to assist the worker in finding an alternate sponsor or to assist in voluntary repatriation. There were no inspections of private residences, the workplace of the majority of the country's domestic workers. Reports indicated employers forced domestic workers to work overtime without additional compensation.

Some domestic workers did not have the ability to remove themselves from an unhealthy or unsafe situation without endangering their employment. There were reports of domestic workers' committing or attempting to commit suicide due to desperation over abuse, including sexual violence, or poor working conditions. In July, the government implemented the domestic labor law (68/2015) that provides legal protections for

## Numerous media reports of sponsors abusing domestic workers

domestic workers for the first time. The law establishes a formal grievance process and identifies the Domestic Labor Department at the Ministry of Interior as the sole arbitration entity for domestic worker labor disputes. A worker not satisfied with the department's arbitration decision has the right to file a legal case via the labor court. As of November the department had conducted 1,387 inspections of domestic worker recruiting agencies and closed 76 of them for failing to meet the requirements of the new law.

Several embassies with large domestic worker populations in the country met with varying degrees of success in pressing the government to prosecute serious cases of domestic worker abuse. Severe cases included those where there were significant, life-threatening injuries.

Note: parts of the reports were removed in accordance with Kuwait's press and publications law

## Women comprised only 14 percent of legislators, senior officials, and managers

employing domestic workers below age 20 or more than 50 years of age. Parliament also voted in 2015 to establish a shareholding company for recruiting domestic workers. The law went into effect in May, and the board of the shareholding company was established in November. The government regularly conducted information awareness campaigns via media outlets and public events, and otherwise informed employers, in order to encourage compliance by the public and private recruiting companies with the new law.

There were numerous media reports throughout the year of sponsors abusing domestic workers or significantly injuring them while they tried to escape; some reports alleged abuse resulted in workers' deaths. Female domestic workers were particularly vulnerable to sexual abuse. Police and courts were reluctant to prosecute citizens for abuse in private residences but prosecuted serious cases of abuse when reported. According to a high-level government official, authorities prosecuted several cases of domestic worker

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Crime

Report

MAID LOCKS SELF UP AFTER DISPUTE WITH SPONSOR

**KUWAIT:** A domestic helper who had differences with her sponsor found out that she will be sent back home, so she locked herself inside the bathroom and refused to come out. The sponsor called police after he failed to convince the maid to unlock the door. Police arrived to the scene and broke the door open, then placed the maid under arrest on charges of attempted suicide after she reportedly tried to kill herself inside the bathroom.

Suicide

An Indian woman committed suicide by hanging inside the psychiatric hospital, according to police. The woman had been admitted to the hospital by her employer, a cleaning company which claimed that she exhibited unstable behavior. A case was filed for further investigations.

'Daesh member' caught

An Egyptian man suspected of being a member of Daesh terrorist group was caught at the border attempting to enter Saudi Arabia. He told police during investigations that he intended to go to Iraq through Saudi Arabia. Police found six video clips about Daesh operations and maps of his movements. He was taken to state security.

Husband charged

A citizen who went to a Salmiya cafe found his wife smoking shisha, which angered him. He chased her out of the cafe and slapped her in public. The woman went to the police station and filed charges against him.



Fistfight

A citizen in Hawally deflated the tires of a car that was parked in his parking spot. The car's owner got into an argument with the man after discovering what he did, and they two engaged in a heated exchange that escalated into a fistfight. The car's owner filed a complaint at the police station. Investigations are underway.

Theft

Two Kuwaiti women were taken to the police station after a cosmetics store owner pressed theft charges against them. The man handed police surveillance camera tapes showing the two ladies appearing to steal expensive perfumes and cosmetics. — Translated by the Arabic press



WHY NOW?

By Yousif Abdullah Al-Enezi

I have always avoided discussing religion because I strongly believe that Islam is greater and more honorable than to be contained in an article, book, law, or even to be interpreted through legal or constitutional articles. I believe so because Almighty Allah said "This day I have perfected your religion for you and completed my favor unto you, and have chosen for you as religion Al-Islam" (Al-Maeda-3).

Allah has bestowed upon Kuwait the blessing of Islam in addition to numerous other bounties for which we ought to be thankful and grateful. Many of our previous sheikhs like Mulla Marshad, Mulla Othman, Mulla Al-Khenaini, Mulla Al-Husainan and others did Kuwait so many good favors without showing any eagerness towards assuming power, influence or personal gains and interests.

I still remember my Islamic studies teacher at Merqab primary school; Mulla Yousif Al-Henayyan, from which I started a long journey from Merqab alleys to the Caribbeans, and from the Bahamas beaches to the Amazon and African jungles. I also remember my religion teacher at Hawally intermediate school; Mahmoud Shawqi Al-Ayyoubi after all those years because of his simple and outstanding way of explaining his lessons making them easily memorized. May Allah bless their souls.

This is how Kuwait and its people used to be like. They had strong social bonds bring people of all sects together. They had mutual respect and affection between rulers and subjects. On the other hand, and in view of the changes storming the region including our country, we are starting to see fangs and claws trying to devour our nation, while at the same time some clergymen and MPs propose a bill to Islamize laws. Such a proposal has raised so many arguments and calls for other divisions and questions about banks and investment funds, doctrinal differences and reducing the powers of the political leadership which will subject its decisions to legislators' approval.

I beg MPs who filed the proposal to allow us to express our opinion on this matter. I have been through a similar experience while serving in Algeria in the period of 1989-1991 when it was dominated by the Islamic Salvation Front (ISF), which blackmailed the public through slogans like 'Be With Allah, Be With ISF.' This slogan created so much political and intellectual disagreement among Islamic parties and groups such as ISF, led by sheikh Abbas Madani, the Algerian Hamas group led by Mahfouz Nahnah, Yousif Ben Khaddah group and others.

Despite those disagreements, all those groups supported 'The Faithful President' in invading Kuwait and the ISF (that belongs to the Muslim Brotherhood) was the one that antagonized Kuwait and its people the most. These disagreements developed into using violence, burning villages and slaughtering entire families and the situation remained so tensed until the army interfered and the Liberation Front took over.

So, this is a sincere call from the bottom of my heart to the distinguished MPs to strongly be on Kuwait's side, its people and its leadership as there is nothing we currently need more than uniting to chop off any hands trying to tamper with our nation's security while strongly emphasizing that Islam is our religion, Mohammed (PBUH) is our prophet and the Quran is our holy book and source of guidance.

—Translated by Kuwait Times

Al-Anbaa

DEPRESSION AND OFFICIALS

By Saleh Al-Shayebi

I recently saw a chart that showed countries with high rates of depression. I was shocked to see Kuwait's name on it. It was exactly opposite to what I thought. For many reasons, a friend of mine who showed me the chart was more shocked than me. "How can a rich and politically stable country, where citizens enjoy full rights and a fair percentage of democracy, freedom of expression and many more privileges, be stricken with depression?" he wondered.

My friend's exclamation is justified. In countries with such characteristics, people should be happy rather than depressed. My response to him was that those very privileges that ought to make people happy might be the reason for their depression. In this regard, I recalled the statistics we read about the world's highest suicide rates in the most luxurious, rich and prosperous countries.

Yes, Kuwaitis do enjoy high rates of income and access to all basic public services including education, medical treatment and social aid. The state is responsible for providing all citizens' needs including housing

and so many other amenities. Kuwaiti citizens enjoy relative political freedom by having an elected parliament, a constitution, free press and many others.

On the other hand, corruption is dreadfully prevailing and destructive. Those who used to have empty pockets now own millions-worth of money in their bank accounts.

Sectarianism and dividing people into classes are prevailing in the Kuwaiti society. Everybody is becoming more materialistic. All these elements destroy and weaken a man's spirit and turn him into an easy prey for depression and other diseases.

In addition, the affluence Kuwaiti individuals enjoy has made them used to easy lofty living and high sensitivity. Therefore, they are more vulnerable to depression because they lack psychological defenses needed to counter such a disease. So, have our senior officials heard about this? Will they work on solving this problem? Or are they themselves the cause of depression?

—Translated by Kuwait Times

On the other hand, corruption is dreadfully prevailing and destructive

KIB SPONSORS 4TH EDITION OF 'FUTURE MAKERS' PROJECT

**KUWAIT:** In line with the Bank's commitment to actively contribute to national economic development, Kuwait International Bank (KIB) recently provided its gold sponsorship to the 4th 'Future Makers' project, organized by the Kuwait Industries Union (KIU). Following the success of the first three editions of the project, "Future Makers 4" returned this year with an occupational training program, designed specifically for newly graduated students looking to work in the industrial sector.

The latest edition of the program focused on practical training and on-site experience. The program included introductory meetings for the participating students at the Kuwait Chamber of Commerce and Industry. It also featured introductory meetings for soon-to-graduate students from both the Australian College of Kuwait (ACK) and the American University of the Middle East (AUM), as well as students from the College of Technological Studies (CTS). "Future Makers 4" also included field visits to industrial areas in Sabhan and Ashrej, as well as an internship program within the industrial sector.



Nawaf Najia

Sabhan and Ashrej, as well as an internship program within the industrial sector.

Nawaf Najia, Manager of the Corporate Communications Unit at KIB, stated: "KIB's sponsorship of this project comes in line with our continuous efforts to support youth across all fields and sectors, as we believe that they are the architects of the future and the leaders of tomorrow. Our participation also reflects our commitment to helping realize the vision of His Highness the Amir regarding the importance of encouraging the development of all sectors in the country, most importantly the local industrial sector - in an effort to transform Kuwait into a financial and trade hub in the region."

Meanwhile, Director General at KIU, Huda Al-Baqshi, thanked all the sponsors of the program, adding that their support embodies the true principles of partnership between the public and private sectors. Baqshi also noted that there is a global trend of countries focusing on supporting creative economies and developing local industries, given their role as important sources of national income. Accordingly, KIU seeks to develop projects and initiatives that contribute to advancing the local industrial sector, in addition to developing programs that aim to encourage youth to enter the industrial sector, said Baqshi.

It serves to note that through its comprehensive social responsibility program, KIB has devoted special attention to supporting educational initiatives targeting the youth segment, which seek to enhance their abilities and stimulate their creative and productive energies. In doing so, the Bank aims to support young talents, helping them achieve their dreams and enabling them to contribute positively towards building a better future for Kuwait.



CBK CELEBRATES NATIONAL ANNIVERSARIES WITH PATIENTS

**KUWAIT:** The Commercial Bank of Kuwait (CBK) recently shared National and Liberation days' celebrations with patients of the Palliative Care Center, where the bank's team was received by the center's director Dr Hassan Al-Doussari and other officials.

Speaking on the occasion, Amani Al-Wer'a, CBK's Assistant General Manager for Advertising and Public Relations, said that the step was taken to share the national ceremonies with patients and their parents, and help spread joy among them

during this dear occasion. Separately, CBK decorated a truck that was used by the Farwaniya Governorate during its participation in a parade held on the Arabian Gulf Road to celebrate the national holidays.



**KUWAIT:** Kuwait Fire Services Directorate (KFS) carried out a fire drill recently in cooperation with the Ministry of Defense, in order to enhance coordination between them in terms of handling emergency cases.





**Thousands of Turkish women rally for Erdogan's powers**

## KIM MURDER THRUSTS NORTH KOREAN EMBASSY CENTRE STAGE

# TRUMP: CONGRESS MUST PROBE OBAMA POWER ABUSE

## TRUMP LACKS EVIDENCE WHILE OBAMA DENIES CLAIMS

**PALM BEACH:** The White House demanded yesterday that Congress investigate whether former President Barack Obama abused his executive powers in connection with the 2016 presidential election. President Donald Trump leveled that claim on Saturday when he accused his predecessor of tapping telephones at Trump Tower. But Trump offered no supporting evidence, a spokesman for Obama denied the claim as "simply false" and lawmakers in both parties asked for proof.

White House press secretary Sean Spicer said in a statement yesterday that reports "concerning potentially politically motivated investigations immediately ahead of the 2016 election are very troubling." President Donald J. Trump is requesting that as part of their investigation into Russian activity, the congressional intelligence committees exercise their oversight authority to determine whether executive branch investigative powers were abused in 2016," Spicer said. It was unclear what reports Spicer was referring to, and what prompted Trump to make the allegation.

Spicer ended the statement by saying that neither the White House nor Trump will comment further "until such oversight is conducted." In a series of morning tweets Saturday, Trump suggested Obama was behind a politically motivated plot to upend his campaign. He compared the alleged events to "Nixon/Watergate" and "McCarthyism!" And he called Obama a "Bad (or sick) guy." The Watergate break-in during the Nixon administration led to President Richard Nixon's resignation and the conviction of several aides.

### Nixon/Watergate?

Republican Sen. Joe McCarthy's reckless and unsupported charges of communist infiltration in federal government during the 1950s gave rise to the term "McCarthyism." After Trump's well-received speech to Congress on Tuesday, the tweets reflected the president's growing frustration with the swirling allegations about his advisers' ties to Russia, which are under FBI investiga-



**WASHINGTON:** In this file photo, US President Donald Trump speaks in the Roosevelt Room of the White House in Washington. — AP

tion, and his team's inability to overcome them. Trump lashed out at his senior team during an Oval Office meeting Friday, according to one White House official.

The White House did not respond to questions about what prompted the president's accusations that Obama had tapped his phones. Presidents cannot legally order wiretaps against US citizens. Obtaining wiretaps would require officials at the

Justice Department to seek permission from the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Court, which is shrouded in secrecy. Trump said in the tweets that he had "just found out" the information, though it was unclear whether he was referring to a briefing, a conversation or a media report.

The president has in the past tweeted about unsubstantiated and provocative reports he reads on blogs or conservative websites. The morning

tweets stand out, even for the perpetually piqued Trump, given the gravity of the charge and the strikingly personal attack on the former president. Trump spoke as recently as last month about how much he likes Obama and how much they get along, despite their differences. Trump contended that the wiretapping occurred in October at Trump Tower, the New York skyscraper where he ran his campaign and transition. He also maintains a resi-

dence there. "How low has President Obama gone to tapp my phones during the very sacred election process? This is Nixon/Watergate. Bad (or sick) guy!" he tweeted, misspelling 'tap.' Obama spokesman Kevin Lewis said a "cardinal rule" of the Obama administration was that no White House official ever interfered in Justice Department investigations, which are supposed to be conducted free of political influence.

### Disclosures

"As part of that practice, neither President Obama nor any White House official ever ordered surveillance on any US citizen," Lewis said, adding that "any suggestion otherwise is simply false." Rep. Adam Schiff of California, the senior Democrat on the House Intelligence Committee, said in a statement that Trump was making "the most outlandish and destructive claims without providing a scintilla of evidence to support them."

Sen. Ben Sasse, R-Nebr., urged Trump to explain what he knows about the wiretapping allegations, "ideally to the full public, and at a bare minimum to the US Senate." Trump has been trailed for months by questions about his campaign's ties to Russia. The questions have been compounded by US intelligence agencies' assessment that Russia interfered with the election to help Trump triumph over Hillary Clinton, along with disclosures about his aides' contacts with a Russian official.

Those disclosures have already cost retired Gen. Michael Flynn his job as national security adviser and prompted calls from Democrats for Attorney General Jeff Sessions to resign. On Thursday, Sessions withdrew from overseeing the FBI probe after acknowledging he did not disclose his campaign-season contacts with Russia's ambassador to the United States when asked during his confirmation proceedings. Sessions, a US senator at the time, was Trump's earliest Senate supporter. The Sessions revelations deepened the president's anger over what he sees as his team's inability to get ahead of the Russia allegations. — AP



**MANAMA:** In this file photo, Bahraini lawmakers participate in a special session of parliament to discuss how to handle the uprising in the Gulf island kingdom, convened in Manama, Bahrain. — AP

## BAHRAIN PARLIAMENT APPROVES MILITARY TRIALS FOR CIVILIANS

**DUBAI:** Bahrain yesterday approved a constitutional change allowing military courts to try civilians, the kingdom's latest rollback on reforms made after its 2011 Arab Spring protests that likely will stoke an ongoing government crackdown on dissent. Activists warn the amendment will allow an undeclared state of martial law on the island near Saudi Arabia that's home to the US Navy's 5th Fleet. Loyalists of Bahrain's rulers call the change necessary to fight terrorism as the persistent low-level unrest that followed the 2011 demonstrations has escalated recently in tandem with the crackdown.

The island's 40-member Consultative Council, the upper house of the Bahraini parliament appointed by King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa, voted for the measure yesterday. Their approval came less than two weeks after the 40-seat Council of Representatives, the parliament's elected lower house, passed it with little opposition. The bill revises a portion of Bahrain's constitution by removing limitations on who military courts can try.

Bahrain is a predominantly Shiite island ruled by a Sunni monarchy. Government forces, with help from Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates, crushed the 2011 uprising by Shiites and others who sought more political power. In the wake of the protests, military courts tried hundreds of defendants. A government-appointed investigation after the protests criticized the use of the courts, saying they were employed "to punish those in the opposition" and raised "a number of concerns about their conformity with international human rights law."

"This came from the Bahraini king and for him to sign off on this amendment means that he is personally approving the new repressive measure and all the consequences it will have," Sayed Alwadaei, the director of advocacy at the Bahrain

Institute for Rights and Democracy, said in a statement. "The responsibility for this de facto martial law lies at his feet." Bahrain's government did not immediately respond to a request for comment about the constitutional change.

This is not the first step away from reforms Bahrain made after the protests. Already, the kingdom has restored the power of its feared domestic spy service to make some arrests. Since the beginning of a government crackdown in April, activists have been imprisoned or forced into exile. Bahrain's main Shiite opposition group has been dismantled. Independent news gathering on the island also has grown more difficult. Meanwhile, a series of attacks, including a January prison break, have targeted the island. Shiite militant groups have claimed some of the assaults.

Bahrain on Saturday accused Iran's Revolutionary Guard of training and arming some militants. In January, Bahrain executed three men found guilty of a deadly bomb attack on police. Activists allege that testimony used against the condemned men was obtained through torture. The executions and increasing crackdown have been linked by activists to the end of US President Barack Obama's administration and the start of Donald Trump's. Under Obama, the US held off on finalizing a multi-billion-dollar deal for F-16 fighter jets amid

American concerns about human rights issues in Bahrain. Since Trump took office, there has been growing speculation in Washington that the deal might be pushed through. "In a year where the new Trump administration is dismissing human rights from its foreign policy to Bahrain and the Gulf and preparing to sell arms without conditions, this is a dangerous sign of things to come," Husain Abdulla, the executive director of the group Americans for Democracy and Human Rights in Bahrain, said in a statement. — AP



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## NETANYAHU TO PRESS PUTIN ON IRANIAN INFLUENCE IN SYRIA

**JERUSALEM:** Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said yesterday he will meet Russian President Vladimir Putin this week in Moscow to press for a limit to Iran's influence in Syria. Israel is deeply concerned over whether Syria's civil war will result in its arch-foe Iran having increased its power in the neighboring country. Netanyahu, who has held a series of talks with Putin in recent months related to Syria, said he planned to meet the Russian leader on Thursday.

Russia has been conducting an air war in support of Syrian President Bashar al-Assad's regime, and Iran also supports Assad. "Syria and the effort to formulate an agreement there will be at the centre of our conversation," Netanyahu said at the start of Sunday's cabinet meeting. "In the context of this agreement, or without it, Iran is trying to establish itself permanently in Syria, with a military presence on the ground and at sea, and also a gradual attempt to open a front against

us on the Golan Heights," he said. "I will express to President Putin Israel's sharp and vigorous opposition to this possibility." Israel seized 1,200 square kilometers of the Golan from Syria in the Six-Day War of 1967 and later annexed it in a move never recognized by the international community. Israel opposes Assad, but has sought to avoid being dragged into the Syria's civil war. However, it has carried out strikes there to stop arms deliveries to the Lebanese militia Hezbollah, which

fighters alongside Assad's forces. Israel fought a war against Hezbollah in 2006.

Last year, Netanyahu and Putin agreed to set up a "hotline" to avoid accidental clashes between their forces, and the Israeli premier said further discussions would be held on the issue this week. "I hope we will be able to reach certain understandings in order to reduce possible friction between our forces and theirs, as we have successfully done up until now," he said. — AFP



**KHARUFIYAH:** Displaced Syrian children, who fled their hometowns due to clashes between regime forces and the Islamic State (IS) group, sit on a wheel outside a tent in Kharufiyah, 18 kilometers south of Manbij. — AFP

## NORTH SYRIA EXODUS AS FAMILIES FLEE ASSAULT ON IS

**MANBIJ, Syria:** More than 65,000 people have been forced to flee fighting in northern Syria, ravaged in recent weeks by dual offensives on the Islamic State group, the United Nations said yesterday. The UN's humanitarian agency (OCHA) said that tens of thousands of people have left their homes in northern Aleppo province, particularly around the former jihadist stronghold of Al-Bab. "This includes nearly 40,000 people from Al-Bab city and nearby Taduf town, as well as 26,000 people from communities to the east of Al-Bab," OCHA said.

Turkey-backed rebels seized Al-Bab from IS on February 23 after several months of fighting. OCHA said the nearly 40,000 people displaced from the town fled north to areas controlled by other rebel forces, and that the "high contamination" of unexploded bombs and booby traps set by retreating jihadists was complicating efforts to return. And since February 25, OCHA said, another 26,000 people fled violence further east, where Syrian government forces supported by Russian air power have also been waging a fierce offensive against IS. Many of those fleeing the violence sought refuge in areas around Manbij, a town controlled by the US-backed Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF). An AFP correspondent in Manbij said that long queues of families were still forming at checkpoints leading to the town yesterday. Pick-up trucks full of children and women wearing full black veils were being searched individually by SDF personnel before being allowed to enter.

### Fled with nothing

The Syrian Observatory for Human Rights monitoring group said Saturday that 30,000 people had been displaced by the government's offensive on IS jihadists. The Russian-backed push is aimed at IS-held Khafsa, the main station pumping water into Aleppo. Residents of Syria's second city have been without mains water for 48 days after the jihadists cut the supply. Regime forces retook

full control of the city last year. Yesterday, Russian and regime warplanes bombarded IS positions in support of Syrian troops, which had advanced to around 14 kilometers from Khafsa, the Observatory said.

Since war broke out in Syria in March 2011, more than half of its population has been forced to flee their homes. Aleppo province hosts tens of thousands of displaced Syrians, many in camps near the Turkish border. "We left our homes with nothing: no fuel, no bread. Our children are starving," said Jumana, a 25-year-old Syrian woman who fled the clashes with her two children. "Daesh (IS) was shelling us, the airplanes were hitting us. Our children were terrified. We were barely able to save ourselves," she said on the outskirts of a village around 18 kilometers from Manbij.

### Very difficult circumstances

Ibrahim al-Qufan, co-chair of Manbij's civil administration, said on Saturday that fleeing families were "suffering very difficult circumstances." "The numbers of displaced people here are still rising because of the clashes between the Syrian regime and Daesh (IS)," Qufan said. Syria's multi-front conflict is approaching its seventh year and has killed more than 310,000 people, defying international efforts to stem the violence. Another round of UN-brokered peace talks ended Friday in Geneva.

The negotiations between government and rebel delegations limped along for several days but stumbled on the issue of counter-terrorism. Russia began its air war in support of President Bashar al-Assad's forces in September 2015, and its help has been instrumental in re-capturing large areas from IS and rebels, including Aleppo and the famed desert city of Palmyra, which fell from jihadist hands last week. Rebel backer Turkey sent its own troops into Syria in August to fight both IS and Kurdish forces, some of which Ankara considers "terrorists." — AFP

## AT LEAST 2 KILLED IN NEW DRONE STRIKES ON AL-QAEDA IN YEMEN

**ADEN:** Drones fired missiles at suspected al Qaeda targets in two separate attacks in Yemen on Saturday, local sources said, in what appeared to be a third successive day of US strikes against militants in the Arab country. Tribal sources and residents said one of the pilotless aircraft unleashed its missiles on a vehicle travelling on the outskirts of the southern city of Ahwar, killing two suspected Al-Qaeda members inside. Another fired at a crowd of suspected al Qaeda militants in Al-Saeed, in the adjacent province of Shabwa, but there were no reports on casualties in that incident.

Asked to comment, a Pentagon spokeswoman said the US military had conducted additional strikes on Friday night and would provide more details today. On Friday the military said it had carried out over 30 strikes over the previous two days in three Yemeni provinces, and did not rule out conducting more. The operations, using manned and unmanned aircraft, highlight

the increasing US military focus on a group that has gained in strength by exploiting the chaos of the country's civil war. Local Yemeni officials and residents have said that at least nine suspected Al-Qaeda members died in two separate drone strikes on Thursday.

US military strategy in Yemen has become a hot political issue after a commando raid in January, authorized by President Donald Trump, resulted in the death of US Navy SEAL William "Ryan" Owens. Critics questioned the value of the mission, drawing a fierce rebuttal from Trump, who said it had yielded vital intelligence. After pulling out of Yemen in 2015, the US military started returning in small numbers last year to support a successful push orchestrated by the United Arab Emirates, with support from Saudi Arabia, that ejected al Qaeda from the city of Mukalla, where it had raised tens of millions of dollars by taking over the country's third largest port. — Reuters

## IRAN'S AHMADINEJAD JOINS TWITTER DESPITE BAN

**TEHRAN:** Iran's hardline former president Mahmud Ahmadinejad became the latest leader to join Twitter yesterday, despite having been instrumental in getting it banned from the country. Ahmadinejad's first tweet from his personal account was a video in which he called on people to follow him at @Ahmadinejad1956. "In the name of God Peace be upon all the freedom loving people of the world," he wrote in English. Despite the service being blocked for ordinary citizens, many of Iran's top officials tweet regularly, including President Hassan Rouhani and Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif.

Even the office of supreme leader Ali Khamenei maintains accounts in several languages. Iranian users who get round the restrictions using privacy software were quick to point out the irony that Twitter was banned following

mass protests against Ahmadinejad's re-election in 2009. The protests, which followed accusations of election-rigging, were considered the first time in the world the service was used to promote and organize demonstrations, and earned the nickname "The Twitter Revolution".

Twitter and other social media sites would go on to play a significant role in protests around the Middle East during the so-called "Arab Spring" in the following years. Ahmadinejad, who was president from 2005 to 2013, has been pushing for a return to frontline politics in the run-up to the presidential election in May. However, his erratic and insubordinate style saw him fall out with the conservative establishment during his time as president, and Khamenei advised him last year against running again. — AFP

## THOUSANDS OF TURKISH WOMEN RALLY FOR ERDOGAN'S POWERS 'IF WOMEN ARE THERE, DEMOCRACY IS THERE'

**ISTANBUL:** Thousands of pro-government women filled an Istanbul arena yesterday in support of a "Yes" vote in next month's referendum on boosting Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan's powers. Waving Turkish flags, women shouted "Of course, Yes!" ahead of the April 16 vote on constitutional changes that would give Turkey an executive presidency similar to political systems in France or in the United States, AFP correspondents at the scene said. Erdogan's ruling Justice and Development Party (AKP) is running the "Yes" campaign, saying the changes would bring political stability.

The vote is widely seen as a referendum on Erdogan himself because the proposed plan could see him stay in power until 2029. Opponents however say the changes that would grant sweeping new powers to the head of state would make parliament dysfunctional and promote a one-man model. Pro-government supporters gathered at the 12,500 capacity sports complex, known as Abdi Ipekci Arena, outside Istanbul's ancient city walls, with the campaign theme: "Yes! If women are there, democracy is there."

The gathering was organized by the pro-government Women's and Democracy Association (KADEM), whose deputy chair is Erdogan's younger daughter Sumeyye Erdogan Bayraktar. "For the survival of our country, it is a very important decision," said AKP supporter Ayse Gurcan, who came to the event from Erzurum province in eastern Turkey. "We must make our choice in a healthy way and I believe that everyone will say 'Yes'," she said. Another woman,



**ISTANBUL:** A woman wears a mask as she takes part in a march yesterday at Bakirkoy district in Istanbul, ahead of the World women day. — AFP

Zehra Ferahtay, said the approval of constitutional changes would unify Turkey especially after the failed coup attempt in July to oust Erdogan's government.

"Yes, I support the presidential system and especially after July 15, we must be more united and together for this country," she said. Saliha Mantar, wearing an Islamic headscarf, said

women had been granted more rights since Erdogan came to power as prime minister in 2003 and as president in 2014. "We, women, promise to be always behind our leader," she said, referring to Erdogan. Critics however argue if the plan is approved, Turkey would lurch toward authoritarianism, saying it would not be a system based on checks and balances. — AFP

## DUBAI POLICE QUESTION BRITISH DAREDEVIL IN SKYSCRAPER CLIMBS

**DUBAI:** A British daredevil known for his vertigo-inspiring online videos chronicling his climbs up buildings and construction cranes was interrogated by Dubai police over his recent ascents in the sheikhdom, authorities said yesterday. James Kingston's interrogation comes as the city-state has fashioned itself as an extreme-sports haven, whether that means tourists skydiving over the man-made Palm Jumeirah archipelago or professionals base-jumping off of the Burj Khalifa, the world's tallest building.

But those adrenaline-seeking activities have the blessing of the city's rulers, unlike people like Kingston, whose most-recent video saw him shimmy over a fence at an active construction site in downtown Dubai in broad daylight while offering a running commentary. Kingston told The Associated Press in a message yesterday that he had been detained and released hours later, without elaborating. That's after he wrote online

Saturday that "four undercover agents plucked me from my hotel room earlier today with no warning." The state-owned newspaper Emarat Al Youm quoted Dubai police Brig. Gen. Salem Khalifa al-Rumaithi on Sunday as confirming police had "summoned" Kingston over recent climbs in the sheikhdom. Al-Rumaithi said Kingston previously had been arrested in 2014 after climbing to the top of the Princess Tower in Dubai Marina, which at over 400 meters is the second-tallest building in Dubai.

Dubai police later issued a statement to the AP saying Kingston "was not arrested, but was asked to sign a statement that he will not attempt to perform such stunts in Dubai."

"Kingston's dangerous stunts on buildings in Dubai violated Dubai's strict regulations prohibiting such activities," the statement said. British Embassy officials did not immediately respond to requests for comment from the AP.

Kingston's detention is the second major incident involving stunts on Dubai's skyscrapers. In February, Dubai police contacted a Russian model who posted images online of herself, holding onto only a man's hand, dangling over the side of 300-meter Cayan Tower.

"These pictures certainly attract huge numbers of hits on social media. But the risk involved makes them highly questionable," the state-owned The National newspaper later opined. "Is fleeting social media fame really worth risking your life for? Does it set a good example for others?" For Kingston, the climbing sees him earn money from selling T-shirts and posters commemorating his stunts, and he's also written a book about his exploits. But it may be a bit more than financial. While on top of a Dubai crane in his most-recent video, Kingston stopped to look out on the glittering Burj Khalifa. He said: "I would love to stand on top of that: Goals." — AP



**MOSUL:** Iraqi security forces launch a rocket against Islamic State militants' positions during clashes in the western side of Mosul, Iraq, yesterday. — AP

## WAVE OF IS CAR BOMBS TARGETS IRAQI TROOPS IN WEST MOSUL

**BAGHDAD:** Iraqi troops encountered the "heaviest" clashes yet with Islamic State group fighters yesterday in western Mosul since the start of the new push more than two weeks ago, according to a senior commander. Maj. Gen. Haider al-Maturi of the Federal Police Commandos Division told The Associated Press that IS militants dispatched at least six suicide car bombs, which were all destroyed before reaching the troops. The militants, he said, are moving from house to house and deploying snipers.

The wave of heavy resistance comes as Iraqi forces launched attacks against IS-held neighborhoods in western Mosul from three points Sunday morning. The Federal Police are closing in on the city's main government complex in the Dawasa neighborhood and Iraq's special forces are attempting to push into the Shuhada and Mansour neighborhoods. IS fighters have "some mortar (teams) and snipers positioned inside homes," said Iraqi special forces Maj. Ali Talib, explaining that US-led coalition airstrikes have helped destroy some of the IS defenses,

but clashes are still ongoing. Al-Maturi, of the federal police, said his troops are now some 500 meters away from the government complex. The push on Mosul's west was launched about two weeks ago after the eastern half of the city was declared "fully liberated" in January.

The operation to retake Mosul officially began in October after more than two years of slowly clawing back territory from IS militants. IS overran nearly a third of Iraq - including Mosul the country's second largest city - in the summer of 2014. — AP





VIENNA: In this file photo police forces stand in front of demonstrators during a rally of the group Austrian protesters against migrants in Vienna, Austria. — AP

## EUROPE'S TREND: AUSTRIA, ONCE OPEN, NOW SHOWS MIGRANTS DOOR

VIENNA: Austria was among the first countries in Europe to put out the welcome mat when waves of people fleeing war and poverty reached the continent. Now, its focus is showing them the door. Parliament is set to pass a law stripping pocket money, food and shelter from those denied asylum, potentially leaving them on the street. The interior minister proudly touts figures showing Austria as the European Union's per-capita leader in expelling those rejected.

Austrian courts are toughening up too. On Thursday, eight Iraqi men were sent to prison for up to 13 years for the gang rape of a German woman on New Year's Eve more than a year ago. Lawyer Andreas Reichenbach, who defended one of the men, said the stiff sentences were a signal to migrants that "when they come to Austria, that such behavior won't be tolerated." In Germany, where during the height of the influx Chancellor Angela Merkel insisted "we will manage," the government now considers some areas of Afghanistan "safe," and has started returning failed asylum-seekers to those regions.

Additional tough measures have followed Berlin's deadly Christmas market attack by rejected Tunisian asylum-seeker Anis Amri and gains by the nationalist Alternative for Germany party. The pro-migrant attitudes that once led thousands of Austrian volunteers to turn out with food, shelter and advice to the first asylum-seekers are still heard some places, but they appear outnumbered. "We have to keep welcoming those who have nowhere else to go," said Marlis Bosch. "We in Austria have more than enough to share."

A survey of 10 EU member countries last month showed 65 percent of the 1,000 Austrian respondents favored stopping all immigration from Muslim nations. Only Poles scored higher - at 71 percent - on Britain's

Royal Institute of International Affairs survey. But anti-migrant sentiment in Poland has been fueled by the government. Not so in Austria. Former Chancellor Werner Faymann urged Austrians to deal generously with migrants as late as fall 2015, even as his government worked to secure its borders. But he was forced out last year after migrant policies threatened to tear apart his government coalition after he took a harder line.

### Hardening migrant policies

His successor, Christian Kern, has found little choice but to stay tough - or risk boosting the right-wing Freedom Party and its message that migrants are overwhelmingly behind the kind of crimes the eight Iraqis were convicted of Thursday. Freedom Party candidate Norbert Hofer, who advocates a tough line on migrants, was narrowly defeated in December in Austria's presidential election. Polls continue to show his populist party with the most voter support.

But Kern's Social Democrats have almost caught up since he took office less than nine months ago and continued hardening the country's migrant policies. Also gaining support on a tougher migrant stance is the centrist People's Party, the Social Democrats' coalition partner. Party member Sebastian Kurz, Austria's foreign minister, is advocating setting up North African holding camps for would-be emigres from there. The Austrian government plans to stop all support for those whose asylum requests have been rejected - including meals, shelter and a monthly allowance of 40 euros (about \$40). If Interior Minister Wolfgang Sobotka has his way, those refusing to leave will also pay high fines and end up in compounds until they are forcibly deported. The coalition's majority in parliament means that approval of the draft law is virtually certain. — AP

# MAINE, UTAH REPUBLICANS WANT TRUMP TO UNDO MONUMENTS

## OBAMA HAD USED HIS POWER TO PRESERVE MORE LAND

PORTLAND: Republican leaders in Maine and Utah are asking President Donald Trump to step into uncharted territory and rescind national monument designations made by his predecessor. The Antiquities Act of 1906 doesn't give the president power to undo a designation, and no president has ever taken such a step. But Trump isn't like other presidents. Former President Barack Obama used his power under the act to permanently preserve more land and water using national monument designations than any other president.

The land is generally off limits to timber harvesting, mining and pipelines, and commercial development. Obama created the Katahdin Woods and Waters National Monument in Maine last summer on 87,500 acres of donated forestland. The expanse includes part of the Penobscot River and stunning views of Mount Katahdin, Maine's tallest mountain. In Utah, the former president created Bears Ears National Monument on 1.3 million acres of land that's sacred to Native Americans and is home to tens of thousands of archaeological sites, including ancient cliff dwellings.

Trump's staff is now reviewing those decisions by the Obama administration to determine economic impacts, whether the law was followed and whether there was appropriate consultation with local officials, the White House said. Maine Republican Gov. Paul LePage is opposed to the designation, and says federal ownership could stymie industrial development; and Republican leaders in Utah contend the monument designation adds another layer of unnecessary federal control in a state where there's already heavy federal ownership.

The Utah Legislature approved a resolution signed by the governor calling on Trump to rescind the monument there. In Maine, LePage asked the president last week to intervene. Newly sworn-in Interior Secretary Ryan Zinke has said he'll fight the sale or transfer of public lands. But he also believes states should be able to weigh in. The National Parks Conservation Association has vowed to sue if Trump, the Interior Department or Congress tries to remove the special designations.

### Foolish dream

"Wherever the attack comes from, we're ready to fight, and we know the public is ready to fight if someone comes after our national parks and monuments," National Parks Conservation Association spokeswoman Kristen Brengel said. In Maine, the prospect of undoing the designation is further complicated by deed stipulations requiring the National Park Service to control the land and a \$40 million endowment to support the monument, said Lucas St Clair, son of Burt's Bees co-founder Roxanne Quimby, who acquired the land.

Three of the four members of Maine's congressional delegation want the monument to stand to avoid reopening a divisive debate in towns sur-



PORTLAND: In this file photo, Roxanne Quimby, the founder of Burt's Bees, poses next to white pine in Portland, Maine. — AP

rounding the property. "Rather than re-ignite controversy in a region that is beginning to heal and move on, I hope we can allow the monument to continue to serve as one important part of a multifaceted economic revitalization strategy which is already underway," said independent Sen. Angus King. Utah Republicans, however, appear to be ready for a scrap. Rep. Jason Chaffetz raised the issue when he met with Trump and he asked the House Appropriations Committee to cut funding for the monument. "Not one elected official in Utah that represents the Bear Ears region supports the designation of a national monument. With the

stroke of a pen, President Obama, having never visited the area, created a monument the size of Delaware, Rhode Island and Washington, DC, combined," he said.

In the region near Maine's Mount Katahdin, both supporters and many opponents want to see the monument work. They hope it will help revitalize the economy. Millinocket Town Council Chairman Michael Madore once described the park as a "foolish dream." Now, he says, "We have accepted it as part of our landscape. Until such time as it's overturned, we're going to work with the people who've involved with it to help the local economy." — AP

## NY HEADSTONES OVERTURNED AMID ANTI-SEMITISM RISE

NEW YORK: Five tombstones were overturned in an historic Jewish cemetery in New York, police said yesterday, the latest in rising number of apparent anti-Semitic incidents across the United States. Officers were called to the cemetery Saturday evening and an investigation is being conducted to determine whether or not it is a hate crime, a police spokesman said. In recent weeks, there have been scores of bomb threats against US Jewish organizations and at least three other Jewish cemeteries have been desecrated.

Some critics have blamed President Donald Trump's sometime incendiary rhetoric and

policies, which they say stokes feelings of insularity and xenophobia, for the sharp rise in acts of intolerance.

The Anti-Defamation League, a national civil rights group dedicated to the fight against anti-Semitism, last week recorded 121 threats against Jewish institutions in 36 US states and two Canadian provinces since Jan 1, labeling the surge an "epidemic." Last month, New York State Governor Andrew Cuomo promised a \$25 million grant to boost security and a \$5,000 reward for information leading to arrests and convictions for hate crimes. — AFP

## JUDGE GIVES EXTENSION TO TRUMP LAWYERS IN TRAVEL BAN SUIT

SEATTLE: A federal judge in Seattle on Friday granted a two-week extension to the Justice Department in a lawsuit alleging that President Donald Trump's immigration order is blocking efforts by legal residents to reunite with their children who are trapped in war-torn countries. US District Judge James Robart, who halted enforcement of Trump's immigration order nationwide in February in a separate case brought by the states of Washington and Minnesota, said in his order that the federal government could have more time before responding to plaintiff's efforts

to have the case certified as a class-action lawsuit. The Justice Department argued that Trump intends to rescind the order and replace it with a new, substantially revised executive order that may "influence the shape of the legal issues ... in ways relevant to the class certification question." After being repeatedly postponed, a White House official said Thursday a replacement order now won't be unveiled until next week at the earliest.

Robart also said he understood the frustrations of the parents and Northwest Immigrant Rights Project,

who filed the lawsuit, over Trump administration statements that seemingly contradict those made by federal government lawyers. "The court understands Plaintiffs' frustrations concerning statements emanating from President Trump's administration that seemingly contradict representations of the federal government's lawyers in this and other litigation before the court," the order said. Nevertheless, Robart said, the court will continue to rely on statements coming from the federal attorneys.

The lawsuit filed in Seattle's US District Court in late January claims Trump's order barring people from seven predominantly Muslim countries from entering the US is unconstitutional. It asked for a judge to intervene and stop the application of the part of the order that suspends visas to citizens of those seven countries.

Juweiya Abdiaziz Ali, one of the plaintiffs, is a US citizen living in Seattle who started the process in August of bringing her son from Somalia. But Trump's order has her worried that her son's visa process will be indefinitely suspended, she said. Like thousands of others, those named in the lawsuit pursued the immigrant visa process that includes hundreds of dollars in filing fees, security screenings, medical examinations and interviews, Matt Adams, the group's legal director said previously. The Trump administration has defended the order, saying more restrictions are needed to protect the US from future terrorist attacks. The new deadline for federal government attorneys to respond to the motion is March 20. — AP



SEATTLE: This still image taken from United States Courts shows Judge James Robart listening to a case at Seattle Courthouse in Seattle. — AP

## US COOPERATION NEEDED AS ASYLUM SEEKERS FLOW INTO CANADA

OTTAWA: As greater numbers of refugees flow from the United States into Canada by land, US-pledged cooperation has become essential, Canada's public safety minister said Saturday. With US President Donald Trump beginning to tighten enforcement of immigration rules, and more than 11 million undocumented migrants living in the United States, crossings into Canada have been increasing since the beginning of the year.

"We need to have a very good cooperative, seamless arrangement with the US to fully appreciate where the flow began, and all of the factors that are contributing to the migration," said Public Safety Minister Ralph Goodale during a visit to Emerson, Manitoba.

The recent wave of migrants to Canada originated mostly from East Africa and war-torn nations such as Syria. "We need to make sure that we all have the same data and information about the makeup of this migration. It is clearly affecting Canada as the migrants come across the border," Goodale said.

"The Americans have indicated that they are equally interested in fully getting the facts and understanding the genesis of this and we will work collaboratively and seamlessly with them," he added.

But he did not say what that cooperation would look like, or when it would happen. Federal police and immigration officials said some refugees appeared to have intended from the start to come to Canada after flying to the United States on a visitor visa.

Others decided to come only after they were denied asylum south of the border, or because they feared deportation amid the current US crackdown. From January 1 to February 21, a total of about 4,000 people filed refugee claims in Canada, up from 2,500 during the same period last year.

The figure includes border jumpers and those arriving from the United States at border checkpoints. Local officials say at least 180 asylum-seekers have crossed the border near Emerson since January. — AFP



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## POLAND PUTS FORWARD RIVAL CANDIDATE TO EU'S TUSK

**WARSAW:** Poland said Saturday it was proposing a Polish Euro-MP for the EU presidency to succeed Donald Tusk, whose second term is opposed by the governing rightwing Law and Justice Party (PiS). Tusk, who has been president of the European Council since December 2014, had so far been the sole candidate. "The Polish government proposes the candidacy of Jacek Saryusz-Wolski for the presidency of the European Council," the foreign ministry said in a statement.

Tusk, a centre-right Polish prime minister from 2007 to 2014, has been sharply at odds with Poland's rightwing government over a range of issues including changes to state media and the constitution. He became president of the European Council, gathering EU heads of state or government, after a Belgian, Herman van Rompuy. The Council meets in Brussels next Thursday to discuss whether to give Tusk a second term after his first mandate expires on May 31.

The issue may also be raised Monday when French, German, Italian and Spanish leaders meet in Versailles, France, to discuss the future of the EU, French diplomatic sources said. Saryusz-Wolski, 68, an MEP since 2004, is a member of the European People's Party (EPP), gathering Christian Democrat and centre-right parties. Within the constellation of Polish politics, he is

a member of the opposition Civic Platform, although the centrist group has recently distanced itself from him. After Saturday's announcement, Civic Platform expelled Saryusz-Wolski from its ranks, which will trigger his exclusion from the EPP group.

### Rival candidate doomed

Tusk's problems with PiS stem greatly from a vitriolic relationship with party boss Jaroslaw Kaczynski. Kaczynski accuses him of bearing "moral responsibility" for the death of his twin brother Lech Kaczynski, who was then president, in an air disaster in 2010 that also killed 95 others. When the PiS—which supports the theory the plane was brought down in an attack—took power in October 2015 it re-opened the inquiry into the causes of the disaster. Kaczynski has long said that he believes foul play caused the crash. Polish and Russian investigators have never found any evidence to support the claim.

Tusk seems to have support among a majority of European leaders for a second term. Poland by itself cannot block a second term as approval does not require unanimity. "Mr Tusk should not be the victim of his own country's bid to dismiss him. That wouldn't be right," a French diplomatic source said.



**VALLETTA:** This file photo shows European Council President Donald Tusk speaking to the press as he arrives in Valletta. — AFP

"Tusk is in a very strong position," a European diplomat said. He also said Tusk did not need his country's backing to run for a second term. He has

already met the sole condition to run-by confirming his will to do so during a recent summit in Malta. EPP chief Joseph Daul tweeted that "the EPP family stands fully behind" Tusk.

### EU-Polish friction

Even though the EU appears set to rally around Tusk, Poland's move shows the extent of Warsaw's animosity towards him.

The EU and Poland have been at loggerheads over a series of policies introduced by the PiS, including a string of judicial reforms that saw critics take to the streets in large demonstrations. "I can't imagine supporting a candidate who fights against his own government."

"I also can't imagine that the other EU member states would support a candidate who doesn't have the support of his own government," Polish Foreign Minister Witold Waszczykowski said Saturday. The foreign minister also said Saryusz-Wolski was in Brussels to try to rally support for his candidacy. An attempt at a Warsaw meeting on Thursday to secure the support of the so-called Visegrad 4 nations—the Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland and Slovakia—ended in failure. — AFP



**BREST:** This picture shows a police station in Brest, western of France. — AFP

## SISTER, BROTHER-IN-LAW IN CUSTODY IN FRENCH MISSING FAMILY PROBE

**NANTES, France:** The sister and brother-in-law of Frenchman Pascal Troadec who has been missing along with his wife and two children since mid-February were remanded in custody yesterday, sources close to the case said. The couple had already been questioned by police at the beginning of the inquiry into the mysterious disappearance of the Troadec family, the sources said confirming reports in a local newspaper.

Nantes prosecutor Pierre Sennes confirmed that two people were in custody but declined to give their identities. The two were detained in the Brittany city of Brest, the region the Troadecs came from and where several personal items belonging to members of the family have been found. Pascal Troadec, his wife Brigitte, and their son Sebastien, 21, and daughter Charlotte,

18, went missing on Feb 16. In searches at the parents' home in a suburb of Nantes, police discovered Sebastien's cellphone and his mother's watch covered with blood.

Traces of blood from Sebastien and the parents, but not Charlotte, were found throughout the house, as well as signs of efforts to clean them up. Police said in a bulletin dated February 24 that Sebastien was suspected of "putting in place a macabre plan aimed at snuffing out the members of his family and maybe himself". Investigators have found Sebastien's car and a jogger discovered items belonging to his sister Charlotte in a forested area three hours by car from where she was last seen. A judicial probe into murder, abduction and illegal confinement was opened today. — AFP



**GLASGOW:** Leader of the Scottish Conservative and Unionist Party Ruth Davidson reaffirms her opposition to independence at the party's conference in Glasgow. — AFP

## SCOTTISH OPPOSITION INSISTS NO NEW INDEPENDENCE VOTE

**GLASGOW:** Scotland's opposition leader insisted Saturday there should be no second referendum on Scottish independence, urging the governing nationalists to concentrate on making the best of Brexit rather than exploiting it for another secession push. Scottish Conservative leader Ruth Davidson told the party's conference in Glasgow that First Minister Nicola Sturgeon of the Scottish National Party (SNP) was trying to bounce the country into a new referendum.

Scotland voted to stay in the United Kingdom by 55 percent in the 2014 vote. It also voted by 62 percent for the UK to remain in the European Union last year, while the UK-wide vote was to leave, which Sturgeon seized upon. She has said Brexit makes a second independence referendum "highly likely." Many in her left-wing secessionist party hope she will announce a fresh bid at the SNP conference on March 17-18, with Britain set to trigger two years of divorce talks with the EU by the end of the month.

Davidson, leader of the second-biggest party in the semi-autonomous Scottish Parliament, reaffirmed her opposition to independence. "Scotland said no to independence. Scotland is saying: stop trying to bounce us into another referendum," she told her centre-right party. "The Scottish Conservative and Unionist Party will never waver in our determination to stand up for the decision we made as a country. We will fight you every step of the way."

"We said 'no', we meant it. Are you listen-

ing, Nicola? No second referendum. "We deserve a Scottish government that is focused on helping Team UK get the best Brexit deal for all of us, not using it to revive its independence obsession."

### Nationalists protest outside

Outside the conference, around 200 nationalists gathered to protest, chanting "Tory scum" and waving banners calling for another referendum. Susan McGilvray, 41, an SNP member from East Ayrshire on Scotland's west coast, told AFP: "I would love to see the call for a second referendum." While polls have shifted slightly, support for independence remains in a minority. McGilvray said: "We might lose it, but no one ever got anywhere by saying 'what if?'"

The Scottish Parliament does not have the authority to hold a second independence referendum. It must seek the permission of the staunchly unionist British Prime Minister Theresa May. John Menzies, 48, an SNP councillor from Hamilton near Glasgow, was among several dozen motorcyclists who gathered under the banner "Bikers for Yes." May, Britain's Conservative leader, would be "very silly" if she blocked a fresh referendum, he argued.

"That would irk even more of the Scottish people, who then go on and vote for independence," he said. On Friday, May told the conference in Glasgow that the SNP's "obsession" with independence and "tunnel vision nationalism" had caused it to neglect running Scotland's public services properly. — AFP

## FILLON'S WIFE BREAKS SILENCE OVER FAKE JOBS SCANDAL

### FILLON'S WIFE CARRIED OUT A LOT OF DIFFERENT TASKS

**PARIS:** The wife of scandal-hit French conservative presidential candidate Francois Fillon broke her silence yesterday over the "fake jobs" scandal that threatens to engulf his bid for power. The former prime minister hopes to keep his election hopes alive with a rally in Paris but he is struggling to regain the initiative after a week in which members of his team deserted him. Their departures followed Fillon's disclosure that he would face charges over claims he gave his British-born wife and two of their children bogus parliamentary jobs.

In her first interview since the allegations of nearly 900,000 euros (\$950,000) in pay, Penelope Fillon told Le Journal du Dimanche she had carried out "a lot of different tasks" for her husband during his lengthy political career. She had also urged him to "keep going to the end" but said only he could make the decision to stay in the race. Fillon, who turned 63 on Saturday, was once the frontrunner in an election in which Marine Le Pen is attempting to steer the far-right into power in a major European country.

But Fillon's support plummeted after the financial claims were made and he is now polling third behind Le Pen and 39-year-old centrist Emmanuel Macron. French lawmakers are allowed to employ family members, but investigators are looking into what work Penelope did after it emerged she did not even have a pass for the National Assembly building. "He needed someone to do a lot of different tasks, and if it wasn't for me, he would have paid someone to do it, so we decided it would be me," Penelope told the paper.

The former prime minister has claimed the accusations are politically motivated, even suggesting he believes the ruling Socialist government is behind the investigation. He told supporters Saturday their opponents were trying to "intimidate" them. The danger for the conservative Republicans party is that an election that they once expected to win handily could slip away if Fillon remains their candidate. Polls currently show he could be eliminated in the first round of the two-stage contest on April 23, leaving Le Pen and Macron to contest the May 7 runoff.

The Republicans' decision-making body is to meet Monday evening a day earlier than planned—"to evaluate the situation," the party said Saturday. Pressure grew on Fillon after it emerged police had



**PARIS:** This file photo shows French right wing candidate for the upcoming presidential election Francois Fillon, right, and his wife Penelope during a campaign rally in Paris. — AFP

raided his country manor house near Le Mans on Friday looking for evidence. His Paris apartment was searched on Thursday. With some members of his party urging him to drop out, yesterday's rally on the Trocadero plaza opposite the Eiffel Tower—heavy rain is forecast—will be a test of how much confidence remains.

### Mr Clean

Fillon was a surprise winner of the conservative nominating contest in November, campaigning as a "Mr Clean" unscathed by the legal difficulties of his opponents and pledging to slash half a million civil servants' jobs. But the claims about his expenses have led to barbs from critics that his moral authority has been undermined. On Wednesday, Fillon revealed he would meet investigating magistrates on March 15 and be charged. His wife is also to face charges. Fillon had previously said he would step down if such a development happened. But, to the dismay of many of his aides, he angrily accused the judicial system of bias and vowed to fight on.

His foreign affairs point man and campaign spokesman have quit and the leader of the small

centrist UDI party said it was withdrawing its backing. On Saturday, five members of the European Parliament from the Republicans also called for another candidate to be appointed before the March 17 deadline. With just seven weeks to go before polling begins, the entourage of 71-year-old former premier Alain Juppe has said he is prepared to take over. But Juppe, who is more centrist than Fillon, also has baggage—he was given a suspended jail sentence in 2004 over a party funding scandal.

### Juppe popularity

Yet a poll on Friday showed Juppe would vault into the lead if he stood. The financial accusations have added to an already open race. Le Pen, 48, campaigning on an anti-immigration and anti-EU platform, has sought to capitalize on the anti-establishment sentiment that propelled US President Donald Trump to power and led to the British vote to leave the European Union. Polls currently show however that the National Front chief will be beaten in the second round by either the fast-rising Macron or the conservative candidate. — AFP

## ANTI-ISLAM DUTCH MP WILDERS UPBEAT DESPITE POLLS' SLIDE

**THE HAGUE:** Anti-Islam Dutch politician Geert Wilders yesterday brushed off a slump in polls saying he was confident of a strong showing in upcoming elections, which he vowed would also boost Europe's far-right. Just 10 days before the March 15 vote, the firebrand politician and his Freedom Party (PVV) appears to have slipped into second place behind the Liberal party of incumbent Prime Minister Mark Rutte after months of leading the opinion polls.

"I am confident we will all have excellent results," Wilders told a gaggle of mainly foreign journalists, referring also to France's far-right presidential hopeful Marine Le Pen. "Even if that will not be the case, the genie will not go back into the bottle... certainly things will change in Europe," he insisted. In an odd press conference, Wilders gathered reporters from international organizations in a street in an Amsterdam industrial area, surrounded by a heavy security detail of uniformed and plain-clothed police officers.

Boosted by the polarizing debate over immigration, and initially by the victory of Donald Trump in the US presidential race, Wilders had been leading polls since late last year. The Dutch vote is seen as a key litmus test of the rise of populist and far-right parties ahead of other national elections to be held across Europe later this year. But the latest collated polls by the Dutch website Peilingwijzer (Poll indicator) from seven different agencies on Saturday showed Rutte's VVD party would now win 23 to 27 seats in the 150-seat lower house of parliament, with the PVV set to garner 22-26 seats if elections were held today.

"Many of my colleagues (opponents) today are now copying our thoughts. The whole campaign today in Holland... is about immigration, national identity, values and the EU," said Wilders. "They are copy-cats and that's why we are losing votes," he said. The 53-year-old has courted controversy with his headline anti-Islam, anti-immigrant stance and his incendiary insults against Moroccans and Turks. He has vowed in his party's one-page manifesto that if elected he would ban the sale of Korans, close mosques and Islamic schools, shut Dutch borders and ban Muslim migrants. — AFP



**AMSTERDAM:** Firebrand anti Islam lawmaker Geert Wilders, center, answers question from the media during an election campaign stop outside De Telegraaf newspaper buildings in Amsterdam Netherlands, yesterday. — AP

## TWO GIRLS SWEEPED OUT TO SEA IN MARSEILLE

**MARSEILLE:** A four-year-old girl is dead and her eight-year-old sister missing after both were swept out to sea by a large wave in the southern French port of Marseille, a source close to the case said yesterday.

The girls' father was also submerged by the stormy seas but survived after quickly being rescued by nearby fishermen. According to maritime authorities, the wave struck the family on Saturday around 6.00 pm (1700 GMT) near the southern edge of the city.

The four-year-old was recovered on Saturday and taken to a nearby hospital suffering from cardiac arrest. She died during the night, according

to the source. Her sister has still not been found and rescue efforts resumed yesterday. Water temperatures Saturday night hovered at 12 degrees Celsius, while waves rose to 2.5 meters.

"Immediately, a number of measures were taken to man a search," authorities said, including using a rescue vessel, the city's naval firefighters, and a rescue helicopter. Eleven departments in the Bouches-du-Rhone region had been placed on orange alert Saturday morning for strong winds—but it was lifted after weather conditions improved. In February, a 33-year-old man drowned after being swept out to sea as he was fishing on the Marseille coast. — AFP



## SRI LANKA REJECTS UN CALL FOR FOREIGN JUDGES IN WAR PROBE

**COLOMBO:** Sri Lankan President Maithripala Sirisena has rejected a fresh appeal from the United Nations to allow international judges to investigate alleged war-era atrocities, vowing to not prosecute soldiers. "I am not going to allow non-governmental organizations to dictate how to run my government. I will not listen to their calls to prosecute my troops," the president said in remarks distributed by his office yesterday. The UN on Friday criticized Sri Lanka's "worryingly slow" progress in addressing its wartime past, urging the government to adopt laws allowing for special hybrid courts to try war criminals. In his first remarks since the UN Human

Rights Council in Geneva handed down a new scorecard on Sri Lanka, Sirisena rebuffed calls for international judges to probe abuses committed during the island's 37-year civil war.

Sri Lanka has resisted calls to establish a special court to investigate allegations that government forces killed up to 40,000 Tamil civilians in the final months of fighting, which ended in May 2009.

Sirisena, a member of the majority Sinhalese community, received the support of the Tamil minority after promising accountability for excesses carried out by the largely Sinhalese military.

He had agreed to a UN Human Rights Council resolution in October 2015 which called for special tribunals and reparations for victims and gave Sri Lanka 18 months to establish credible investigations. But the deadline lapsed without those commitments being met.

The UN said coalition politics in the unity government Sirisena formed after ousting former strongman leader Mahinda Rajapakse were likely to blame for the slow pace of progress. Last week the main Tamil political party accused Sirisena of failing to deliver on his promises, and urged the UN to hold his administration to account.

### Inadequate response

Sirisena's response marks a sharp shift in his policy towards accountability and reconciliation, which had earned him the praise of international observers. "A charge sheet is now brought against our forces with a demand to include foreign judges to try them," he said in a speech to troops in the northern peninsula of Jaffna, the Tamil heartland. The defiant tone contrasted with his Foreign Minister Mangala Samaraweera, who asked the Human Rights Council for more time, promising that his country remained committed to seeking justice.

At least 100,000 people were killed dur-

ing the separatist war between government forces and rebels from the Tamil Tigers group, with atrocities recorded by both sides. In its report, the UN said abuses including torture remain widespread in the ethnically divided island nation of 21 million, with "a prevailing culture of impunity" partly to blame. The UN acknowledged that Colombo had made some positive advances on constitutional and legal reforms, limited land restitution and symbolic gestures towards reconciliation. But it cautioned that the measures taken so far had been "inadequate, lacked coordination and a sense of urgency." — AFP

## SIKH MAN WOUNDED IN LATEST SUSPECTED US HATE CRIME SHOOTING

**LOS ANGELES:** Authorities are investigating the suspected hate crime shooting of a Sikh man at his home near Seattle, media reported Saturday, just days after an engineer from India was fatally shot in Kansas. The 39-year-old Sikh was working on his car in his driveway in Kent, Washington just south of Seattle, when a man walked up late Friday wearing a mask and holding a gun. The Seattle Times newspaper reported that the partially-masked gunman, after exchanging words with the victim, said "Go back to your own country" before pulling the trigger, shooting him in the arm.

Authorities are investigating the shooting as a suspected hate crime, according to the Seattle Times, which did not provide the nationality of the victim. The daily reported that police are continuing to search for the gunman. Jasmit Singh, a leader of the Sikh community near Seattle, told The Seattle

Times that the victim has been released from the hospital. "He is just very shaken up, both him and his family," Singh said. "We're all kind of at a loss in terms of what's going on right now, this is just bringing it home. The climate of hate that has been created doesn't distinguish between anyone."

The incident follows a shooting at a Kansas bar last month that killed 32-year-old engineer Srinivas Kuchibhotla, causing shockwaves felt around the country. A second Indian engineer, Alok Madasani, was injured in the Kansas shooting carried out by a white gunman whom witnesses said screamed racial slurs and told his victims to "get out of my country" before opening fire. The Sikh Coalition, a New York-based civil rights group, asked local and federal authorities in a statement Saturday to investigate the latest shooting as a hate crime. — AFP

## PAKISTAN'S POLICE FIND BODY BEARING MARKS OF IS EXECUTION

**MULTAN:** Pakistani police have found body of a man in the central city of Multan with chained feet, tied hands, and wearing a Guantanamo-style orange jumpsuit. Police officer Gul Mohammad said Saturday that the body found near a state-owned television station with gunshot wounds to the head. The body was identified as that of Azhar Jilani, who was abducted in June 2014.

A message reading "Daesh Pakistan"

was scrawled on the back of the victim's jumpsuit — using the Arabic acronym for the Islamic State group.

The message accused the victim of being an "agent." Pakistani officials and politicians have mostly depicted IS presence in the country as negligible, but the group has repeatedly claimed responsibility for terrorist attacks including one at a Sufi shrine last month that killed 88 people. — AP

## FIVE LOCAL POLICEMEN KILLED IN TALIBAN ATTACK

**KABUL:** At least five members of the Afghan security forces were killed early yesterday morning when their checkpoint came under an insurgent attack in north-eastern Kunduz province, an Afghan official said. Gen. Abdul Hamid Hamid, provincial police chief in Kunduz, said a large group of Taliban fighters attacked the post near the city of Kunduz. Meanwhile, 18 insurgents were killed by airstrikes in the Imam Sahib district of Kunduz province, according to a statement released by the Interior Ministry. Three others were wounded while five vehicles and an ammunition stockpile were destroyed, the statement added.

"The key terrorists killed in the operation were involved in planning and implementing several terror attacks in Kunduz province," said the statement. Elsewhere in the northern province of Faryab, a district police chief died when a bomb that had been attached to his car detonated, said Karim Yuresh, spokesman for the provincial police chief. Another policeman was wounded in the explosion Saturday evening. The Taliban claimed responsibility for the attack. In a separate incident in Faryab province, Yuresh said a local security forces commander was killed when insurgents attacked a police checkpoint. — AP



**SRINAGAR:** Government forces guard during a gun-battle at Haffo village, 43 kilometers south of Srinagar, India, yesterday. — AP

## THREE KILLED DURING 15-HOUR FIREFIGHT IN INDIAN KASHMIR

**SRINAGAR:** A police officer and two suspected militants were killed in Indian-administered Kashmir during a fierce 15-hour gunfight overnight, an official said yesterday, triggering clashes between protesters and government forces.

The firefight erupted late Saturday when Indian soldiers and counter-insurgency police, acting on a tip-off, surrounded a home believed to be occupied by militants in southern Nazneenpora village. Soldiers detonated explosives during the siege, which stretched into the early hours as both sides exchanged heavy gunfire. "Two militants were killed in the encounter. We also lost a boy of SOG,"

director general of police S P Vaid said, referring to the slain officer from the Special Operations Group. A Major was also critically wounded in the battle, an army officer said, speaking on condition of anonymity as he was not authorized to talk to the press. Defying orders to stay indoors as the skirmish escalated, hundreds of villagers descended on the scene, throwing rocks at government forces in a bid to aid the besieged militants, a police officer said.

The clashes resumed Sunday as protesters chanting pro-freedom slogans descended near the scene of the firefight, said the officer who

asked to remain anonymous. Police and the Indian army routinely complain that civilians assist militants during clashes with armed forces, a frequent occurrence in the divided and volatile state. For decades rebel groups have fought the roughly 500,000 Indian troops deployed in the region, demanding independence or a merger with Pakistan for the majority Muslim region. Kashmir has been split between India and Pakistan since the end of British rule in 1947. Both claim the territory in its entirety. The fighting has left tens of thousands, mostly civilians, dead. — AFP

## MILLIONS OF SOUTH AFRICANS WILL BE PAID BENEFITS ON APRIL 1

**JOHANNESBURG:** The government will continue paying millions of South Africa's most vulnerable people social security payments on April 1, despite not signing a new deal with an existing service-provider, the minister of social development said yesterday. The South African Social Security Agency (SASSA) is scrambling to ensure that as many as 17 million people continue to receive their money, despite concerns that retaining the existing service provider is both unlawful and costly.

For millions of South Africa's most vulnerable, SASSA money is often the difference between an empty or a full belly. "We will continue paying social grants beyond March 31 when the contract with the current service provider comes to an end," Minister of Social Development

Bathabile Dlamini told the media. "As has been the case in the past no one will go unpaid." Dlamini said the South African Post Office's more than 2,600 outlets will be used as one of the payment services for social security in the transition and future phases.

In an attempt to resolve the looming crisis, President Jacob Zuma held talks on Saturday with Minister of Finance Pravin Gordhan and Dlamini to ensure that social security payments are made from April 1.

The existing contract, run by Cash Paymaster Services, part of technology company Net1 1 UEPs Technologies, has been in doubt since South Africa's highest court ruled in 2014 that the tender process to acquire its services was unlawful. It ordered that a new contract to be

negotiated. SASSA has so far failed to find a new service provider to take up the service at the start of April or set up its own payment agency.

SASSA Officials said last week the agency had opted to renew the deal with Cash Paymaster Services despite the court order.

A new deal however, has not yet been signed. The social security payment debacle saw the director-general of the social development ministry, Zane Dangor, announcing his resignation on Saturday over differences with Dlamini. "Dlamini has utterly failed to ensure that SASSA was ready to take over the distribution of grants at the end of this month ... and has allowed the situation to reach crisis point," said Bridget Masango of the opposition Democratic Alliance. — Reuters



**KABUL:** This photo shows Afghan security forces respond to a suicide attack in Kabul, Afghanistan. — AP

## BANGLADESH BANS EXTREMIST GROUP BEHIND BLOGGER MURDERS

**DHAKA:** Bangladesh yesterday outlawed a group which claims links to Al-Qaeda and is blamed for the machete murders of nearly a dozen atheist bloggers, foreigners and gay rights activists. "The government thinks the activities of Ansar al Islam, a militant group and organization, is detrimental to the country's peace and order," the home ministry said in a statement. "The organization is banned in Bangladesh as its activities are considered a threat to public security."

The group, which claims to be a Bangladesh branch of Al-Qaeda in the Indian Subcontinent, took credit through social media for a spate of gruesome murders that sparked a fierce security crackdown on extremists. In February 2015 the group claimed responsibility for the stabbing murder of Avijit Roy, an American

atheist author of Bangladeshi origin, outside a book fair in Dhaka. Last April the group butchered two leading gay rights activists at an apartment in the capital, just weeks after murdering a secular activist.

Police have rejected any suggestion the group is linked to outside extremists, instead describing it as a cell of home-grown extremist outfit Ansarullah Bangla Team (ABT). ABT was banned in May 2015 after one of its leaders was arrested and two members were sentenced to death for the murder of an atheist blogger in February 2013. At least seven Islamist militant groups have now been outlawed in Bangladesh. The largest Islamist political party Jamaat-e-Islami was banned in 2013 after a top court ruled that its charter clashed with the constitution. — AFP

**NEW DELHI:** Five nuns and a doctor are on the run in India after being accused of concealing the birth of a baby to a teenager who alleges that a priest raped her, police said yesterday. Arrest warrants have been issued for the six and for two hospital staff. They are accused of concealing the 16-year-old's delivery from authorities and hiding the baby in a Catholic orphanage at Kunnur in the southern state of Kerala. "They deliberately hid the incident from officials," Prajish Thottathil, a senior police officer, said, adding some of the accused likely also knew about the alleged assault.

Three of the accused work at a private hospital while the rest were associated with the orphanage where the baby was left. The accused priest Robin Vadakkumchery was arrested last week after the victim gave birth in February, prompting an investigation. Under Indian law doctors and hospitals must report all teenage pregnancies and deliveries to authorities. Sex-consensual or otherwise-with a person aged under 18 is considered rape in India. The victim told investigators the accused priest raped her at a church-run school last year.

She and her family said they were unaware of the pregnancy until she complained of stomach pain and was taken to hospital, where she gave birth. A child rights organization tipped off police about the secret delivery, triggering an investigation that revealed the alleged involve-

ment of the priest. Churches in Kerala have faced accusations of sexual abuse in the past. Two autobiographies by former Catholic nuns have in recent years revealed the scale of sexual exploitation by priests and the prevalence of

same-sex relations in convents. Last year a priest was sentenced to 10 years in prison by a Kerala court for raping a 12-year-old girl in 2014. Nearly one-fifth of the coastal state's 34 million people follow Christianity. — AFP



**KOCHIN:** In this photograph, Indian police officials escort priest Robin Vadakkumchery, center, after his arrest in Peravoor, some 300kms north of Kochin in the southern Indian state of Kerala. — AFP



## BODY OF BEHEADED GERMAN HOSTAGE FOUND: PHILIPPINES

**MANILA:** The body of an elderly German hostage who was beheaded by Islamic militants has been found, the Philippine government said yesterday. The Abu Sayyaf, a kidnap-for-ransom network that has pledged allegiance to the Islamic State group, murdered Jurgen Kantner, 70, last week after its demands for 30 million pesos (\$600,000) were not met. Military officials said marines found Kantner's body on Saturday evening in the militants' remote southern island

stronghold of Sulu. "The Philippine government is deeply saddened but resolved as ever to respond to the recent discovery of the body of Mr Jurgen Kantner," President Rodrigo Duterte's spokesman Ernesto Abella said in a statement. Troops have clashed with the Abu Sayyaf in recent days, leaving 29 soldiers injured and 14 militants' dead, according to the military which says it has been unable to recover the bodies of slain guerrillas.

"It was not easy to find it because of the fighting with the Abu Sayyaf kidnap group that resulted in the wounding of 29 of our men and in the wounding of many of the enemy," said Colonel Cirilito Sobejana, head of an anti-terror task force in the southern islands. He said the government was arranging with the German embassy to repatriate Kantner's body for burial. Kantner's yacht, the Rockall, was found drifting on Nov 7 off the southern Philippines with the body

of his female companion, Sabine Merz, who had been shot.

The Abu Sayyaf claimed the kidnapping. Kantner's remains are in a military hospital morgue in Sulu while officials prepare documentation for transporting the body, authorities said. President Rodrigo Duterte has apologized for failing to save Kantner and said the military had stepped up operations against the militants.

The Abu Sayyaf, established with

seed money from Osama bin Laden's Al-Qaeda network, has been kidnapping foreigners and locals for decades and holding them for ransom. It is believed to still hold at least 19 foreigners and six Filipino hostages.

The group, blamed for the nation's worst terrorist attacks, has used the support of local communities, millions of dollars in ransom and collusion with corrupt local officials to defy decades of military operations.—AFP



**KUALA LUMPUR:** Journalists chase a North Korean diplomatic vehicle as it leaves the North Korean Embassy in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, yesterday. —AP

## KIM MURDER THRUSTS NORTH KOREAN EMBASSY CENTRE STAGE

RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN COUNTRIES WORSENS SINCE ASSASSINATION

**KUALA LUMPUR:** North Korea's embassy in Kuala Lumpur has become ground zero in its high-profile diplomatic row with Malaysia over the murder of Kim Jong-Nam, providing a rare glimpse into the workings of the reclusive regime. On Saturday Malaysia gave the North's ambassador 48 hours to leave the country, the latest blow to a relationship that has rapidly worsened since the estranged half-brother of North Korea's leader was assassinated.

The murder, carried out with the nerve agency VX at Kuala Lumpur International Airport on Feb 13, and the subsequent dispute have pushed Pyongyang's usually determinedly low-profile diplomats into the spotlight. South Korea says the North's regime ordered the killing and Malaysia has named several North Koreans as suspects, although four of them left the country on the day of the killing. There has been intense media speculation that two of the suspects may be hiding inside the embassy.

Pyongyang's envoys meanwhile have blasted Malaysia's investigation as biased and demanded the return of the body. On Friday police issued an arrest warrant for one of the men believed holed up in the embassy, a North Korean airline employee. They also requested that the other, the second secretary at the mission, assist the probe. "They (the suspects) could be in the North Korean embassy as it is the safest place against questioning or possible arrest," a senior government official, who did not want to be named, said. The embassy, a two-storey neo-

colonial house with a North Korean flag fluttering defiantly, is situated in Kuala Lumpur's well-heeled Bukit Damansara area known for its hipster cafes and restaurants. For three weeks international media have been camped outside, awaiting the next doorstep statement and watching the comings and goings of black embassy cars and deliveries of ginseng chicken soup. "This is extremely rare for a North Korean embassy to be in the spotlight because Pyongyang is usually low-profile," said Dr Roy Rogers, from the Department of International and Strategic Studies at the University of Malaya.

Malaysia formally established diplomatic relations with North Korea in the boom years of the 1970s. "North Korea, despite its reclusiveness is part of the Non-Aligned Movement and Malaysia was trying to be a leader among developing countries," Ibrahim Suffian, a political analyst with the Merdeka Centre think-tank, said.

### Discreet meetings

"Malaysia tried to have a diplomatic footprint larger than its actual size," he added. As long ago as 2000 the United States and North Korea held abortive talks in the Malaysian capital on curbing the North's missile program. Pyongyang opened its embassy in 2003, providing a conduit between it and the wider world, with Kuala Lumpur serving as a discreet meeting place for talks with Washington. Last October former US diplomats held closed-door talks with senior Pyongyang officials in the city. There were also

more covert operations. A recent report by a UN Panel of Experts, identifying a front company run by North Korean intelligence out of Malaysia, exposed Kuala Lumpur to criticism that it had been naive in its dealings with Pyongyang. "I don't think (Malaysian authorities) were naive. They should know what the North Koreans are doing in the country. They let it slip," said Faisal Hazis, head of the Asian Studies Centre at the National University of Malaysia.

The Vienna Convention of 1961 grants diplomats and embassies protection, and some believe the suspects will use this to avoid prosecution or arrest if they are in the embassy. "It potentially can become like the Assange case," said Ibrahim, referring to Julian Assange, the founder of the secret-spilling Wikileaks website, who has found refuge at the Ecuadoran embassy in London since 2012. "A lot depends on Malaysian authorities' patience," he added.

Malaysia is now hardening its stance. With the ambassador's expulsion order and the cancellation of a rare visa-free travel deal with North Korea, it is edging close to severing diplomatic ties. "We are closer but not equal to severing ties," said Oh Ei Sun, a senior fellow at the S Rajaratnam School of International Studies in Singapore. "If they continue to make baseless accusations, refuse to cooperate with the investigations, or the investigations conclude that the assassination was state-sponsored, then indeed it could get worse diplomatically," he added.—AFP

## MALAYSIA ARRESTS SEVEN FOR LINKS TO MILITANT GROUPS

**KUALA LUMPUR:** Malaysia has arrested six foreigners and one Malaysian for suspected links to militant groups including Islamic State, the police chief said yesterday. The Southeast Asian nation has been on high alert since suicide bombers and gunmen linked to Islamic State launched multiple attacks in Jakarta, the capital of neighboring Indonesia, in January 2016.

A grenade attack on a bar on the outskirts of the Malaysian capital, Kuala Lumpur, in June last year wounded eight people. Islamic State claimed responsibility for the attacks, the first of such attacks on Malaysian soil.

Malaysia has arrested hundreds over the last few years for suspected links to militant groups. In the latest arrests made between Feb 21 and Feb 26, one Malaysian and one Indonesian were detained for planning to

launch a large-scale car bomb attack using a "vehicle borne improvised explosive device," before leaving to join IS in Syria, Inspector-General of Police Khalid Abu Bakar said in a statement. The two were part of an Islamic State cell that received instructions from Muhammad Wandy Muhammad Jedi - a known Malaysian IS fighter in Syria.

One East Asian, with a fake student visa, had connections to an East Asian militant group that sends its members to Malaysia before heading to Syria to join Islamic State, Khalid said. Four Yemenis arrested were suspected of being part of a Yemeni insurgent group. They were also part of a syndicate forging travel documents. Police seized multiple international passports and 270,000 ringgit (\$60,650) in cash in different currencies from the four.—Reuters

## POWERFUL AFTERSHOCK HITS QUAKE-STRICKEN PHILIPPINES

**MANILA:** One person was killed and 41 injured yesterday when a powerful aftershock hit a southern Philippine city still recovering from a quake last month, authorities said. The 5.9-magnitude quake struck the southern city of Surigao and surrounding areas, causing two houses and several walls to collapse, government seismologists and civil defense officers said. A 65-year-old woman died of a heart attack while 41 people were treated for injuries mostly caused by falling objects, civil defense officials said.

The quake also knocked out power for several hours in the city of 152,000 people. It was just one of over a hundred

aftershocks to hit Surigao City on Mindanao island since a 6.5-magnitude quake on Feb 10 left eight dead and over 250 injured. Its epicenter was outside Surigao City in the same area as the epicenter of last month's tremor, the government seismology office said.

The Philippines lies on the so-called Ring of Fire, a vast Pacific Ocean region where many of the world's earthquakes and volcanic eruptions occur. Before the February 10 quake, the last lethal one to hit the country was a 7.1-magnitude tremor that left over 220 people dead and destroyed historic churches when it struck the central islands in October 2013.—AFP



**SURIGAO:** A house is seen partially damaged after an earthquake struck Surigao City in the southern island of Mindanao yesterday. —AFP

## DEADLY FLOODS HIT SOUTHERN ZIMBABWE

**TSHOLOTSHO, Zimbabwe:** From kitchen items to livestock and even her house, Assa Mkwanzani says she has "lost it all" to floods that have hit southern Zimbabwe. "We lost all our blankets, pots and cooking utensils, our goats and chickens as well because of the heavy rains," Mkwanzani said in the southern district of Tsholotsho, about 200 kilometers north of Bulawayo. Since December, floods have killed 246 people, injured 128 and left nearly 2,000 homeless, Saviour Kasukuwere, Zimbabwe's minister of local government, said last week. Those who have survived the floods say they have lost their possessions.

"The only thing we managed to save is that suitcase with a few clothes," said Joice Ncube, another villager. Like Mkwanzani, she is now housed at a camp where survivors are crammed in tents and plastic shelters and survive on charity. "We have 850 to 900 people here. They were airlifted by helicopters after being marooned," said, Sibongile Nyoni, an official with the Ministry of Women Affairs, Gender and Community Development stationed at the camp. For weeks heavy rains have been pouring in Zimbabwe, especially southern parts of the country, ending a years' long drought.

This southern African country last week appealed to international donors for \$100 million to help those affected by the floods, which have washed away bridges and roads and cut off some communities. President Robert Mugabe, currently in Singapore for medical treatment, declared the floods to be a national disaster. Just last year, a

regional drought largely induced by the El Nino weather phenomenon killed livestock and forced people to forage for food in forests and seek drinking water from parched river beds in many parts of Zimbabwe.

### Drought ends, downpour begins

Desperate for rainfall, some people revived a long-abandoned tradition, dating to pre-colonial times, of rain-making ceremonies. In parts of Zimbabwe, traditional leaders and spirit mediums, with the support of the government, led ceremonies atop mountains and other sacred places to appeal to ancestral spirits for rain. Others who no

longer believe in traditional customs held Christian prayers. The drought has ended and now people are suffering from the downpour. Some people in the rural areas of Matabeleland North province are unable to reach the safety of clinics and schools.

Dams have overflowed, raising concerns about communities living downstream. Five bridges on major highways have been swept away nationwide, Transport Minister Joram Gumbo said. In Tsholotsho, homes, mainly grass-thatched huts, have crumbled. Debius Sibanda, 20, is one of the few villagers who still returns to his family's home in

Mbanyana village "to check out if everything is still OK." Women balancing bags on their heads trudge through the mud carrying food for those still in the village taking care of remaining livestock.

The rest of the villagers are at the camp, on the lookout for a sign of the arrival of food donors. Zimbabwe's cash-strapped government is already struggling to meet routine commitments such as the payment of state workers' salaries. Thousands of nurses in state hospitals went on strike last week over a lack of year-end bonus payments, straining an already dire situation at the poorly resourced hospitals.—AP



**TSHOLOTSHO:** Villagers carry food and other belongings as they walk across a puddle along a flooded path heading towards Sipepa flood victims camp from Mbanyana village in Tsholotsho district, in Matabeleland North Province. —AFP



**HUE:** Japan's Emperor Akihito, left, and Empress Michiko wave to bid farewell as they depart from the Phu Bai airport in the central city of Hue for Thailand, ending their six-day long royal visit in the Southeast communist country yesterday. —AFP

## JAPAN'S EMPEROR IN THAILAND TO PAY RESPECTS TO LATE KING

**BANGKOK:** Japanese Emperor Akihito has arrived in Bangkok to pay his respects to the late Thai King Bhumibol Adulyadej, following a weeklong trip to Vietnam aimed at winning support against Chinese expansionism. The monarchies - two of a handful remaining in Asia - have maintained close ties. Bhumibol first visited Japan in 1963, touching off a decades-long friendship with numerous visits back

and forth, most recently a visit by Akihito to Thailand in 2006.

Akihito, accompanied by his wife, Empress Michiko, was to lay wreaths and sign a condolence book at the Grand Palace in Bangkok yesterday before meeting with King Vajiralongkorn Bodindradebayavarangkun, who ascended the throne after the death of his widely revered father in October. —AP





In this March 4, 2017 photo, a ship floats on River Danube with the skyline of Passau, Germany in the background during sunset. From left to right are St Stephen's Cathedral, the old city hall and St Paul's Church. — AP

## REVOKED CITIZENSHIPS TO BE REINSTATED SOON

Continued from Page 1

He praised the efforts of the Assembly speaker and the prime minister, adding that the discussions are serious and urged MPs against using constitutional tools at this time, because these issues cannot be resolved through threats. Dallah said the coming few days will be decisive for the issue, adding that returning the revoked citizenships and providing the judiciary the right to handle nationality cas-

es are at the top of lawmakers' priorities. A draft law stipulating to allow the judiciary to look into citizenship issues is expected to be debated by the Assembly tomorrow or on Wednesday amid reports that the government is objecting to the key amendment.

Meanwhile, Shiite MP Khaled Al-Shatti called for returning the citizenship of a number of Shiites whose nationalities were revoked in the 1980s as part of the ongoing debate about returning revoked citizenships.

## EXPAT HEALTH FEE INCREASES READY...

Continued from Page 1

The sources pointed that the entire issue of increasing the fees is now on Harbi's desk pending a meeting to be held within a few days to decide on implementing it. "All health ministry facilities are ready to apply the new fees," added the sources, noting that the total revenues hospitals collected for various services, tests and hospital stays is only KD 3.3 million, which is much lesser than the actual cost of the services.

MP Hamad Al-Harshani said fee increases for health services provided to expats is necessary, but preferred imposing increased rates that would not affect expats. He also called for special fees for Arab expats. MP Adel Al-Damkhi called for briefing lawmakers on any government project to increase fees on expats, because the matter needs meticulous study. MP Marzouq Al-Khalifa has rejected increasing fees on expats entirely, arguing such increases would ultimately affect citizens, because healthcare providers will end up increasing the prices of the services they provide to citizens.

Meanwhile, the ministry of health is planning to open in vitro fertilization (IVF) centers in primary health clinics,

Minister of Health Dr Jamal Al-Harbi said yesterday. In a speech during the launch of a new health center in eastern Ahmadi, Harbi noted that the ministry is on the cusp of initiating a number of key development projects, as he revealed plans to open three new clinics this month.

Moreover, he said that the ministry is in the process of revamping healthcare in Ahmadi, adding that the new center is a sprawling facility that stretches over 2,415 sq m. He pointed out that the center is an all-encompassing one that contains a plethora of medical departments. The minister added that the ministry has major plans in store to ameliorate healthcare services in the country.

The ministry of health also categorically denied rumors that have gone viral on social media about a purported blood shortage in the country. Dr Reem Al-Radwan, in charge of blood transfusion at the ministry, said in remarks to KUNA that Kuwait's blood supplies are stable, denying reports claiming that there is shortage due to soaring surgeries. She was speaking on sidelines of the conclusion ceremony of the national blood donation campaign organized on the occasion of the national days. Up to 1,500 persons donated blood during the campaign. — Agencies

## DUTCH SUPPORT MUSLIMS AS MP VOWS TO SHUT MOSQUES

**AMSTERDAM:** Hundreds of Dutch citizens met at an Amsterdam mosque yesterday to show solidarity with the country's Muslim population, as an anti-Islam MP again vowed to shut mosques and ban the Holy Quran saying they were deeply worried about the rise of discrimination against Muslims in the European country.

"It's very important that we make our voice heard. We as a Muslim community pose no danger whatsoever to society," said Najem Ouladali, one of the organizers of the meeting which also included members of Amsterdam's gay and lesbian community. "In fact, we are victims too of Islamic extremism," added another speaker, Abdou Menebhi, who chairs a Moroccan organization in The Netherlands.

Various estimates put The Netherlands' Muslim population between 840,000 to 960,000 people, or around 5.0 percent out of a population of some 17 million people. Most Muslims are from Turkish or Moroccan descent, according to the Dutch central statistics office.

Talk during the meeting, which was paused for afternoon prayers, constantly returned to Dutch firebrand far-right MP Geert Wilders, who is campaigning ahead of elections on an anti-Islam ticket. The 53-year-old Wilders has courted controversy with his hardline anti-Islam, anti-immigrant stance and his incendiary insults against Moroccans and Turks. He has vowed in his party's one-page manifesto that if elected he would ban the sale of Qurans, close mosques and Islamic schools, shut Dutch borders and ban Muslim migrants.

Support however for Wilders and his extreme stance

seems to have withered in recent days according to the latest polls. "We believe that what Wilders is doing is very dangerous to our society," Ouladali told AFP after the mosque meeting, speaking in Dutch. Ineke van der Valk, a researcher at the University of Amsterdam told the meeting that incidents of hate crimes against Muslims were on the rise in The Netherlands. Since 2015 incidents involving discrimination have almost doubled and there were at least 54 incidents involving mosques - like threatening letters displaying Nazi symbols she said. "There has been a worrisome rise in this kind of activity in our country," Van der Valk said.

Meanwhile the firebrand Wilders again vowed to close mosques, should he become prime minister after the vote, seen as a key litmus test of the rise of populist and far-right parties ahead of other national elections to be held across Europe later this year. "Closing mosques may be more difficult but you can do it," Wilders told journalists in an industrial suburb of Amsterdam earlier at a press meeting. "You have to change the constitution. It takes time, certainly in Holland... but I am a lawmaker and if anyone can change the constitution and propose this, it's me," Wilders said.

Just 10 days before elections Wilders and his Freedom Party (PVV) appears to have slipped into second place behind the Liberal party of incumbent Prime Minister Mark Rutte after months of leading the opinion polls. "I am confident we will all have excellent results," Wilders told a gaggle of mainly foreign journalists, referring also to France's far-right presidential hopeful Marine Le Pen. "Even if that will not be the case, the genie will not go back into the bottle... certainly things will change in Europe," he insisted. — AFP

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## Factbox

## MEDIA STRUGGLES FOR BALANCE IN COVERING HOSTILE TRUMP ADMIN

Facing a White House which has been unrelenting in its attacks on the media, news organizations are struggling to find the right balance in covering President Donald Trump's administration. Reporters and media groups are increasingly finding they are part of the story, after Trump's denunciation of "fake news" and his branding of media groups as "the enemy of the people."

Most news organizations have promised to fulfill their responsibility to report aggressively, without being vindictive. "The goal is to be tough, but to be fair. The fairness part is an important part of the equation," said Richard Benedetto, an adjunct professor of journalism at American University who was a White House correspondent for USA Today. The White House may have some justification for claiming the press is unfair: an NBC survey last month found 53 percent of Americans believed the media was exaggerating problems in the Trump administration. "There seems to be a lack of concern about being fair," Benedetto said. "It's become kind of personal." Before Trump's inauguration, Politico writer Jack Shafer said the press "ought to start thinking of covering Trump's Washington like a war zone, where conflict follows conflict, where the fog prevents the collection of reliable information directly from the combatants, where the assignment is a matter of life or death."

### Dogged, and Impartial

Reuters editor-in-chief Steve Adler said the news agency planned to do its job in Washington as it does in other countries where governments are hostile to the press. The agency responds to difficult conditions "by doing our best to protect our journalists, by recommending ourselves to reporting fairly and honestly, by doggedly gathering hard-to-get information - and by remaining impartial," Adler said in a January memo to staff.

Karen North, a professor at the University of Southern California's Annenberg School, said objectivity has become complicated as more journalists feel a need to connect with readers by offering personal thoughts on social media. North said some reporters feel a need to rebut the president on his favorite platform, Twitter. "We have the president speaking directly to the people through Twitter," North said. In the fast-paced Twittersphere, she said, reporters are not just churning out facts but "they're also putting out their opinion through social media." North noted that news organizations are also struggling for ways to keep the attention of their viewers and readers. "Especially with the internet, with digital media, news has to compete with entertainment," she said. "So there's a huge mandate now for news to be entertaining or at least to be engaging in a way that draws attention."

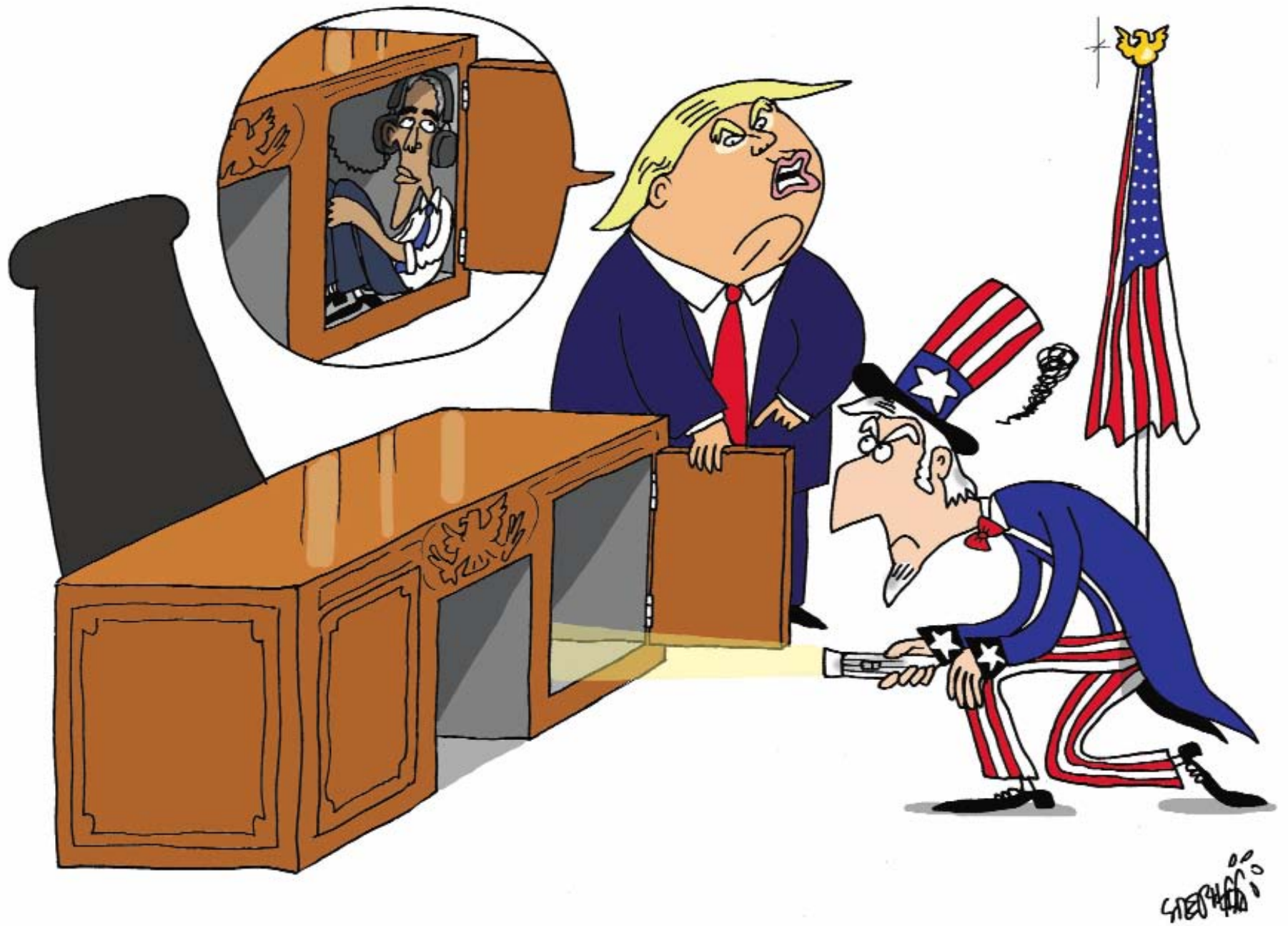
### Crossing a Line

New York Times public editor Liz Spayd acknowledged that some reporters in their Twitter messages during the campaign may have gone "over the line" and cast doubt on their objectivity. Trump has tested the limits of the media meanwhile not only by attacking the press as "dishonest," but by stretching or ignoring facts about the economy, crime, and the probe into his own circle's contacts with Russia during the campaign. Some newspapers, notably the New York Times, have decided to brand Trump's statements "lies".

The Wall Street Journal has ordered a more restrained interpretation of Trump's conduct, drawing protests from the editorial staff against chief editor Gerry Baker. There are no shortage of opinions on how the press should deal with the Trump problem. Some analysts say the media should turn the other cheek, others say they should boycott or ignore Trump's efforts. Some news organizations are stepping up their investigative efforts.

Nic Dawes, a former journalist who now works for Human Rights Watch, says the news industry has a difficult task in dealing with an administration hostile to the press. Trump is seeking "to undermine the basic information infrastructure of democracy. His ultimate target is accountability in the largest sense," Dawes said in a blog for the Columbia Journalism Review. "The war for freedom of the press in the Trump era must be fought on many fronts," Dawes wrote. "If journalists insist on appearing neutral, they will avoid asking hard-edged questions or calling a lie a lie." — AFP

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## TURKEY, US ON COLLISION COURSE OVER YPG

Turkey is ruling out compromise with the United States over the involvement of Kurdish militia fighters in an assault in Syria, an obstacle for Washington's plan to deploy its strongest allies on the ground in a decisive showdown with Islamic State. Donald Trump has made defeating Islamic State one of the key goals of his presidency, and his new administration received a draft Pentagon plan on Monday to accelerate the campaign.

Raqqa in Syria, one of Islamic State's two de facto capitals along with Mosul in Iraq, is expected to be the scene of the final battle to crush the jihadists' self-proclaimed Caliphate sometime this year, after a US-backed Iraqi government assault on Mosul already under way since October. But putting together a united ground force to take Raqqa has so far proven a confounding task in Syria, where the United States, Turkey, Russia, Iran and Arab states have all backed local forces in a multi-sided civil war since 2011. All the foreign powers oppose Islamic State, but their Syrian proxies have mainly fought against one another.

Turkey, with the second largest army in NATO, is adamant that Washington should switch support for the planned Raqqa offensive from the Kurdish YPG militia to Syrian rebels Turkey has trained and led against Islamic State for the past year. For the US administration, nervous about whether the Turkish-backed force is large enough and sufficiently trained, the decision sets Trump's wish for quick battlefield victories against the need to maintain its strategic alliance with Turkey.

Ankara views the YPG as the Syrian extension of the Kurdish PKK militant group, which has fought an insurgency in Turkey's southeast since 1984 and is considered a terrorist group by both the United States and European Union. "Our soldiers will not be fighting together with people who shot us and killed our soldiers and are trying to kill us," one senior Turkish security official, briefed on recent meetings between Turkish and US strategists, told Reuters. "This message was delivered to the Americans."

President Tayyip Erdogan reinforced the point on Tuesday, saying Turkey "cannot accept" any alliance with the YPG. Prime Minister Binali Yildirim told the ruling AK Party that "working side by side with any terrorist group" was out of the question. Erdogan, who had an increasingly

testy relationship with President Barack Obama, has welcomed Trump's election as a chance for a fresh start. But the two NATO allies appear to be on a collision course over strategy in Syria.

US Army Lieutenant General Stephen Townsend, who commands the US-led coalition effort against Islamic State in Iraq and Syria, told a Pentagon news briefing on Tuesday a role for the Kurds was still in Washington's plan. "There are going to be Kurds assaulting Raqqa for sure," he said. "The number, the size of them, and how many Kurdish units are participating... I can't really say right now."

He said he had seen no evidence linking Washington's Kurdish allies to attacks on Turkey. He did not specifically name the YPG, which fights as part of a US-backed alliance called the Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF) that also includes Arabs. Turkish officials say the links between the YPG and PKK are beyond dispute and that the group's advances will fuel anti-Kurdish sentiment in predominantly Arab parts of Syria such as Raqqa, and threaten Syria's territorial integrity.

### Many Alternatives

Turkey entered Syria last August in support of a 3,000-strong force of Free Syrian Army (FSA) rebels, in an operation called Euphrates Shield. It took Jarabulus on the Euphrates river, cleared Islamic State fighters from a roughly 100 km stretch of the border, then moved south to Al-Bab, a strategic town now all but secured after three months of fighting against Islamic State.

Turkey's aim was also to stop the YPG from crossing the Euphrates westwards and linking three mainly Kurdish cantons it holds in northern Syria, preventing it from carving out a self-governing territory analogous to Iraq's autonomous Kurdish region. Turkey fears that would embolden its own large Kurdish minority to try to forge a similar territory inside Turkey. One plan Ankara has presented to Washington would have a Turkish-led FSA force of around 10,000 push south to Raqqa from the YPG-held border town of Tal Abyad. That would roll back YPG gains and separate two of the Kurdish-dominated cantons. Washington has so far been non-committal. "We told them there are many alternatives for Raqqa and they didn't dis-

agree," said one Turkish official familiar with the talks. "They said 'we understand your sensitivities, we don't recognise their (YPG) territorial ambitions.' Turkey and its Syrian rebel force was 'ready at any time to do Raqqa, after clearing al-Bab,' the official said. A second senior Turkish official, exasperated at US willingness to work with a NATO ally's enemy, said some in Washington argued they had already invested too much in the YPG to pull out. But he said military planning was still under way and US generals had "taken all this (Turkish) feedback back to Washington."

### Local Control

Turkey says it has another 7,000 trained Syrian rebels ready on top of the 3,000-strong force active in Euphrates Shield, to which Arab fighters from the US-backed SDF would be welcome. "We told them we have enough forces, enough Free Syrian Army. Your generals can see them with their own eyes," the first Turkish official said of the discussions with US counterparts. "Everything needed militarily was concretely explained. They were briefed on the numbers, the strategy and the map."

One possible compromise solution may be that the force that assaults Raqqa, potentially including the YPG, quickly withdraws and turns the city over to local control, including the largely Arab forces backed by Turkey. "I'm not really sure it really matters what the composition is of the force that goes there to liberate it," said Townsend, the US commander. "What matters really in my mind is the composition of the force that stays there and governs and secures Raqqa after it's liberated from ISIS." A similar agreement in Manbij, some 120 km northwest of Raqqa, quickly broke down. The YPG helped capture the city from Islamic State last year in a US-backed campaign operating under the SDF umbrella, on the understanding with Turkey that it would then withdraw. Turkey says the YPG remains in the city, and the Turkish army and allied Syrian rebels attacked nearby villages held by the Kurdish militia on Wednesday, a spokesman for the local authorities in the city said. Turkish officials fear their increasingly warm ties with Russia, one of the main sponsors of Syrian President Bashar Al-Assad, could also complicate their efforts to deepen battlefield alliances with the United States. — Reuters

## TRUMP HOTEL POLITICAL CAPITAL OF US CAPITAL

At a circular booth in the middle of the Trump International Hotel's balcony restaurant, President Donald Trump dined on his steak - well-done, with ketchup - while chatting up British Brexit politician Nigel Farage. A few days later, major Republican donors Doug Deason and Doug Manchester, in town for the president's address to Congress, sipped coffee at the hotel with Rep Darrell Issa. After Trump's speech, Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin returned to his Washington residence - the hotel - and strode past the gigantic American flag in the soaring lobby. With his tiny terrier tucked under an arm, Mnuchin stepped into an elevator with reality TV star and hotel guest Dog the Bounty Hunter, who particularly enjoyed the Trump-stamped chocolates in his room.

It's just another week at the new political capital of the nation's capital. The \$200 million hotel inside the federally owned Old Post Office building has become the place to see, be seen, drink, network - even live - for the still-emerging Trump set. It's a rich environment for lobbyists and anyone hoping to rub elbows with Trump-related politicians - despite a veil of ethics questions that hangs overhead. "I've never come through this lobby and not seen someone I know," says Deason, a Dallas-based fundraiser for Trump's election campaign. For Republican Party players, it's the only place to stay. "I can tell you this hotel will be the most successful hotel in Washington, DC," says Manchester, adding that he would know because he has developed the second-largest Marriott and second-largest Hyatt in the world. Manchester says Trump's hotel will attract people based on its location near the White House and Congress, the quality renovation and the management team.

Then there's also the access. Although Trump says he is not involved in the day-to-day operations of his businesses, he retains a financial interest in them. A stay at the hotel gives someone trying to win over Trump on a policy issue or political decision a potential chit. That's what concerns ethics lawyers who had wanted Trump to sell off his companies as previous presidents have done. "President Trump is in effect inviting people and companies and countries to channel money to him through the hotel," said Kathleen Clark, a former ethics lawyer for the District of Columbia and a law professor at Washington University in St. Louis. She said the "pay to play" danger is even greater than it would be if people wanted to donate to a campaign to influence a politician's thinking. Spending money at a Trump property "is about personally enriching Donald Trump, who happens to be the president of the United States." The White House strongly disputes there's any ethical danger in Trump's business arrangements.

### 'Beautiful'

Trump can see his hotel from the White House. When a Fox News interviewer mentioned that to him recently, Trump responded, "Isn't that beautiful?" But while the interviewer pointed out that he can see the property from his desk in the Oval Office, Trump said, "I'm so focused on what I'm doing here that I don't even think about it." Still, Trump couldn't resist the short trip over there for dinner on his only weekend night out in Washington since becoming president. A reporter for the website Independent Journal Review was tipped off about Trump's dining plans and sat at a table near him. He noted the president's dinner fare and companions, who also included daughter Ivanka Trump and her

husband, Trump adviser Jared Kushner. On other nights, the posh hotel is the kind of place where on a mid-February evening, you could bump into Trump television personality Katrina Pierson having cocktails with Lynne Patton, a former Trump Organization executive who's now working at the Department of Housing and Urban Development. Trump campaign and inauguration hands Tom Barrack, Boris Epshteyn, Nick Ayers and Rick Gates are among the many who have stayed there in recent weeks.

Rooms start at above \$500 most nights, according to the hotel's website and a receptionist. That's up hundreds of dollars from when the hotel first opened, not long before Election Day. Patricia Tang, the hotel's director of sales and marketing, declined to answer questions about how business is going. The hotel has become a staging area for big political events. Eric and Donald Trump Jr posed for dozens of selfies with admirers at the hotel that bears their name before attending their father's White House ceremony in late January to announce Judge Neil Gorsuch as the president's pick for the Supreme Court.

Deason ran into the Trumps and fellow Texas donor Gentry Beach while at a meeting at the hotel that day with Trump's campaign adviser Rudy Giuliani. During inauguration week, when Trump himself repeatedly visited, the hotel was "literally the center of the universe," Deason said. Last Tuesday, as Trump gave his first address to Congress, lobbyists and politicians watched the four large flat-screens above the bar, two tuned to Fox news and two to CNN. In what hotel staff said was an effort to avoid some of the obvious politics of the place, the TVs were muted, so people followed along on their own devices.

As Trump wrapped up, applause rose

through the lobby and bar. Mnuchin valed to admirers gathered in the bar as he strolled through after Trump's speech. Mnuchin is one of the New Yorkers working in Washington who call it home during the week. White House economic adviser Gary Cohn is another. Linda McMahon, who heads the Small Business Administration, also has been staying there. Administration officials "have been personally paying a fair market rate" for their accommodations, White House spokeswoman Lindsay Walters said.

Even Trump's closest friends pay to stay. Billionaire Phil Ruffin, Trump's partner for his Las Vegas residential tower, said he shelled out \$18,000 per night while he was in town for the inauguration, which he said surprised him since he'd given \$1 million to Trump's inauguration committee. Ruffin says he lightly complained about the high rate to the president. "He said, 'Well, I'm kind of out of it.' So I didn't get anywhere, didn't get my discount," Ruffin recalled.

Trump's continued ownership of his hotel and other businesses has spawned lawsuits and ethics complaints, but so far no action on any of them. One accommodation Trump says he is making on the ethics front is to donate profits from foreign governments that spend money at his hotels. Last week, Kuwait's ambassador Sheikh Salem Al-Sabah and his wife hosted a reception in the hotel's presidential ballroom, in what was one of the first known instances of foreign money changing hands with the hotel division of the Trump Organization since he became president. A spokeswoman for the Trump Organization did not respond to questions about whether the money from the Kuwait Embassy has been or will be donated. Mnuchin attended. — AP



### LEVERKUSEN SACK HEAD COACH SCHMIDT

**BERLIN:** Bayer Leverkusen regretfully sacked coach Roger Schmidt despite still being in the Champions League following their humiliating 6-2 Bundesliga thrashing at Borussia Dortmund. The 49-year-old is the ninth coach to be fired by a Bundesliga club this season. Schmidt, who took charge in July 2014, was dismissed after three straight defeats in all competitions and with Leverkusen mired in mid-table. In view of the current sporting development, we have come to the conclusion that a separation is painful, but unavoidable, for the further development of Bayer 04, managing director Michael Schade said in a statement yesterday. I personally very much regret this because we have a great deal to thank Roger Schmidt for. During his term we have qualified for the group stages of the Champions League three times and he has also implemented our philosophy of developing young players into internationals and thus creating lasting values. Leverkusen's wretched recent run started with a 4-2 first-leg defeat at home to Atletico Madrid in the last 16 of the Champions League on February 21. —AFP



### GOLF

## JUSTIN THOMAS MAKES AN ACE, TAKES LEAD IN MEXICO

**MEXICO CITY:** Justin Thomas made a hole-in-one and surged into the lead with a 5-under 66 on a Saturday of high entertainment in the Mexico Championship. Thomas hit a 6-iron from 239 yards that one-hopped into the cup on the par-3 13th. He added a pair of birdies that gave him a one-shot lead over Dustin Johnson, with Phil Mickelson and Rory McIlroy right behind. Such a world-class leaderboard should have been enough to delight the crowd at Chapultepec Golf Club. There was so much more. Johnson, in his debut at No. 1 in the world, was tied for the lead when his second shot on the 16th got stuck in a tree. He walked back to the original spot and hit the next one to 15 feet, and the ball fell out of the tree as he was walking to the green. He made the putt to salvage a bogey and shot 66. "It happens," Johnson said, and no one knows that better. Mickelson didn't hit a fairway on the back nine until the 16th hole and at one point took as many drops as he had birdies. Even so, Lefty managed to make three straight birdies until closing with a bogey for a wild round of 68. He was two shots behind, along with McIlroy, who didn't make a birdie over his last seven holes and shot 70. At nearly 7,800 feet of elevation, the final round fig-

ures to be up in the thin air. That might even include Jordan Spieth, who set the course record with an 8-under 63 and was among a dozen players within five shots of the lead. It starts with Thomas, the 23-year-old who already has three victories in this PGA Tour wraparound season, two of them at the start of the year in Hawaii. He was hanging around the leaders when he made his hole-in-one on the 13th. "It looked perfect," he said. "I think I said, 'Go in.' You might as well say it," Thomas said while watching the shot on a TV monitor. "I haven't hit too many shots exactly how I wanted. I liked this result." Lee Westwood, who has played in more World Golf Championships than anyone since they began in 1999, shot 31 on the back nine for a 66 and was three behind, along with Spanish rookie Jon Rahm, who had a 67. Mickelson's caddie, Jim "Bones" Mackay, was back to work after coping with a stomach virus on Friday. He didn't walk a straight line the way Mickelson was hitting it off the tee. During one stretch, Mickelson hit one out of eight fairways. He only hit four fairways and eight greens for the round, and he still managed to go into yesterday just two shots off the lead. —AP

### BADMINTON

## ANEEF, BASTIAN LIFTS DOUBLE CROWN IN 6TH IBAK-PIZZAHUT MASTER'S CUP

### ILAYARAJA CLAIMS SINGLES TITLE

**KUWAIT:** The 6th IBAK - Pizzahut Master's Cup was held on February 23 and 24 at IBAK Gym, Salwa. Master's Cup is the most prestigious of domestic badminton tournaments in Kuwait. Over 200 players from over 10 different nationalities participated in this year's edition. Over a hundred volunteers and six hundred spectators made this event a grand success. The event was inaugurated by Ms Yasmin, Marketing manager Pizza Hut, in the presence of Dr Manimara Chozhan, Chairman IBAK, KT Chandras, General Secretary IBAK, Saravanan, Tournament Director, Prasad Thandassery, Joint Tournament Director and Ms Aisha, Assistant Marketing Manager Pizzahut. The qualifying and preliminary league round robin started on the 23rd and the finals were played on the 24th. This year's Masters Cup saw fierce competition and sprung out several surprise finalists. **This year's Master's Cup was played in five categories.**

1. Flight 1 doubles - Professional
2. Flight 2 doubles- Advanced
3. Flight 3 doubles- Intermediate
4. Flight 4 doubles- Lower intermediate level
5. Open Singles

**Winners**  
**Flight 4 - Open Doubles Lower Intermediate**  
 Winner: Carandang, Jimmy+Julius, Marc

Runner up: Abhilash, Ajay+Kumar, Karthik  
 Semifinalist: Sumesh, Addison+Sumesh, Arden Paul  
 Semifinalist: Balasubramaniyam, Parthasarthy+Parthasarthy, Jayanth

**Flight 3 - Open Doubles Intermediate**  
 Winner: Bancud, Melvin+Rivera, Ryan  
 Runner up: Dinesh Ram+Kunnil, Thomas J  
 Semifinalist: Ramesh, Dhruva+Siraj, Adnan  
 Semifinalist: Behnan, Pradeep+Malayil, Shibub

**Flight 2 - Mens Doubles Advance**  
 Winner: Joy, Subin K+Varghees, Subin  
 Runner up: Aktar, Arif Sayed+Singh, Vikas  
 Semifinalist: Mathew, Joby+Punnackal, Sajeev  
 Semifinalist: Chandran, Sayju+Rawat, Anikit

**Flight 1- Mens Doubles Professional**  
 Winner: James, Bastian+Latheef, Aneef K  
 Runner up: Ajayakumar, Sayooj+Paul, Sanil  
 Semifinalist: Ferooqi, Abdul Jabbar+Kalliparambil, Badar  
 Semifinalist: Putra, Gede+Rezka, Nanang

**Singles**  
 Winner: Ilayaraja  
 Runner up: Kalliparambil, Badar  
 Semifinalist: Ferooqi, Abdul Jabbar  
 Semifinalist: James, Bastian  
 The prizes were given away by the Executive committee members of IBAK.

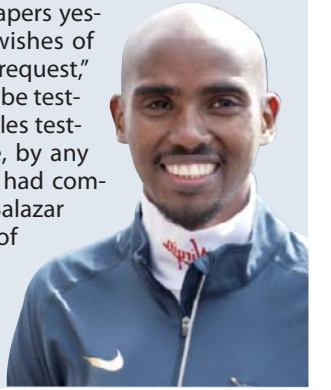


### LYLES AND BERRY SET WORLD INDOOR BESTS AT US CHAMPS

**NEW MEXICO:** Teenager Noah Lyles ran the fastest indoor 300 metres of all-time as he and weight thrower Gwen Berry set world bests at the US championships on Saturday. Lyles, 19, clocked 31.87 seconds at high altitude Albuquerque, New Mexico, to clip one-hundredth of a second off fellow American Wallace Spearmon's 2006 best of 31.88. "I have been doing a lot of endurance and speed work ... so I was really confident in what I could do," said Lyles, one of America's top young sprinters. Berry unleashed a toss of 25.60 metres on her final throw, bettering the previous best of 25.56m by American Brittany Riley in 2007. "I really injured [my back] four weeks ago, and two weeks ago I wasn't even going to come but I fought it out," said Berry. World records are not recognised in the two events because they are held so infrequently. Lyles, the 2016 world under 20 100m gold medalist, narrowly missed making last year's Olympic team as he finished fourth in the 200 at the American trials. Runner-up Paul Dedewo also dipped under 32 seconds, finishing in 31.92 seconds, the third-fastest time ever indoors. —Reuters

### FARAH HAPPY TO BE DRUG-TESTED ANYWHERE

**LONDON:** Four-time Olympic champion Mo Farah says he is happy to be drug-tested "any time, anywhere" and for any of his historical samples to be reanalysed. The Briton has repeatedly denied any wrongdoing and says he has nothing to hide, after a leaked United States Anti-Doping Agency (USADA) report suggested that his coach had "almost certainly" broken anti-doping rules. Following more media claims at the weekend, Farah said in quotes reported by several British newspapers yesterday that he was happy to comply with the wishes of any anti-doping authority. "I'm not aware of any request," he said. "But as I've said many times, I'm happy to be tested any time, anywhere and have any of my samples tested or retested now or at any time in the future, by any official body." USADA last weekend confirmed it had compiled a dossier on controversial coach Alberto Salazar following a report accusing the athletics guru of dangerously using drugs to boost the performance of his athletes. Farah has remained fiercely loyal to his coach, who has denied all accusations of wrongdoing. —AFP



**JEONGSEON:** Italy's Sofia Goggia, center, celebrates with second placed United States' Lindsey Vonn, left, and the third placed Slovenia's Ilka Stuhec after winning the women's World Cup Super G race at the Jeongseon Alpine Center in Jeongseon, South Korea, yesterday. — AP

### ALPINE SKIING

## GOGGIA EDGES VONN FOR SECOND DAY ON 2018 OLYMPIC COURSE

**JEONGSEON:** Sofia Goggia edged Lindsey Vonn into second place at a World Cup event for the second time in two days, winning the Super-G at the 2018 Olympic course yesterday to follow her victory in the downhill. Goggia of Italy finished 0.04 seconds ahead of Vonn in the Super-G, 24 hours after beating the 32-year-old American by 0.07 in the downhill to capture her career first World Cup win. Prior to this weekend, which is also serving as a test event for the Jeongseon Alpine Centre ahead of the 2018 Pyeongchang Olympics, Goggia had nine podium finishes without taking center-spot. "I really like the course," Goggia said. "I tried to push as hard as I could ... this win

means a lot to me." Vonn, who is still progressing on her comeback after breaking her arm last November, has not won a Super-G at a World Cup event since January last year. "Of course, I am disappointed to be a few hundredths from two wins but I always feel like in skiing, the luck will come back to you," Vonn said. "I am hoping that next year, that luck can come back and I can be on the top podium." Vonn is looking forward to returning to the course, located around 214 kilometers (133 miles) east of Seoul, next February for the Olympics. "The main point of this weekend is that I am confident on this hill," she said. "I really like it. I know what I can do to be faster."

Ilka Stuhec of Slovenia had to settle for third place, on consecutive days, finishing 0.53 seconds behind Goggia in the Super-G on the 1.99-kilometer (1 1/4 mile) course. Stuhec moves to first place in the season standings ahead of Tina Weirather of Leichenstein, who placed ninth here on Sunday, to lead the race for the Super-G crystal globe with a round remaining. Goggia moved to fifth spot. Stuhec also leads the season downhill standings ahead of the last event in Aspen later this month. "I know the chances are good for me now but we still have one more race to go in each event," Stuhec said. "I also have to fight for it and just do my best." —AP

## PARK WINS WOMEN'S CHAMPIONS WITH PUTTING MASTERCLASS

**SINGAPORE:** South Korea's Park In-Bee put on a putting masterclass to win the LPGA's Women's Champions tournament yesterday after overnight leader Michelle Wie blew her chances when she four-putted for double bogey. Park shot a superb final round of eight-under 64 to finish at 19-under 269 and capture her first title since her gold medal at last year's Rio Olympics. Ariya Jutanugarn of Thailand finished second at 18-under after closing with a 66, while rising South Korean star Park Sung-Hyun was a further two strokes back in third after a fourth successive 68. Wie led by two strokes after birdieing the third and fourth holes but lost her place at the top of the leaderboard when she four-putted from within 12 feet for a double-bogey 7 on the par-5th. The American closed with a 72 to finish tied for fourth at 14-under alongside Canada's Brooke Henderson (66) and last year's winner Jang Ha-Na (69). "Overall, I can't complain, but right now it stings a little bit," Wie said. "Obviously I wanted to walk away with the trophy, but there's so many leaps and strides forward that I made this week. I'm really proud of myself." The world number one Lydia Ko also shot 72 in her last round to end up in joint ninth. The New Zealand teenager has not won since July last year, a drought by her normally impeccable standards, and is trying to find her best after switching her coach, caddie and clubs. Park was playing just her second tournament after taking a six-month break to recover from a thumb injury. But she showed no signs of rustiness as she reeled off nine birdies in 13 holes between the 5th and 17th holes to open up a decisive gap over a star-studded field featuring 19 of the world's top 20 players. With her grandfather following her progress from the galleries, the seven-time major winner knocked in an astonishing sequence of long putts, including one from almost 30 feet on the 17th that proved decisive, to capture her 27th professional title, her 18th on the LPGA Tour and

her second in Singapore. "He's 83 this year and he's very dedicated. Last week, I played 28 holes one day and he followed too," Park said. "He always comes to the green. My husband and my dad, they always take the shortcut but he doesn't take the shortcut. He's just that into my game." Park made her only bogey of the day on the 18th when she hit her approach into a greenside bunker, but still managed to break the course record for the new Tanjong layout at the Sentosa Golf Club. "My putting was amazing today, obviously," Park said. "Yesterday I was really disappointed with my putter. I couldn't make any putts yesterday and obviously I made up for it today. "Pretty much everything I looked at wanted to drop in." Jutanugarn, the world num-

ber two and reigning British Women's Open champion, was level with Park after 10 holes and said she was awed by how well the South Korean played. "She's the best player," said Jutanugarn. "I learnt a lot from her. She's very calm. I feel like she makes every putt. I don't think she missed one today." Park, playing in the penultimate group with Jutanugarn and Jang, had to endure a longer than expected wait before receiving her winner's trophy when play was halted for 50 minutes just moments after she finished her round. Organisers ordered play stopped because of lightning in the area, with just the final grouping of Sung, Wie and Ko still on the course but out of contention. —AFP



**SINGAPORE:** Inbee Park of South Korea poses with her trophy after winning the HSBC Women's Champions golf tournament held at Sentosa Golf Club's Tanjong course yesterday, in Singapore. — AP



## WOODLEY EDGES THOMPSON, KEEPS BELT IN DULL FIGHT AT UFC 209

**LAS VEGAS:** Although the sequel had nowhere near the drama of the original, both fights ended with Tyron Woodley's hands on the UFC welterweight belt.

Woodley retained his 170-pound title with a desultory majority decision over Stephen "Wonderboy" Thompson at UFC 209 on Saturday night. Alistair Overeem also stopped Mark Hunt in the third round of an entertaining heavyweight bout at T-Mobile Arena, and Rashad Evans debuted at middleweight with a split-decision upset loss to 39-year-old Australian judoka Daniel Kelly.

Until the final 30 seconds of their five-round rematch, Woodley (17-3-1) and Thompson (13-2-1) failed to recapture

the excitement of their memorable majority draw last November. Woodley put on a cautious, tactical fight until he caught Thompson with a right hand late, landing several big shots on the ground.

"It wasn't the most exciting fight, like you guys were used to the last time," Woodley said. "Sometimes chess is move by move. ... When you fight someone for the second time, it's like a chess match, you don't want to give up anything. I knew that his game plan was going to be to keep it on the outside and not let me get in close because that's where I do the most damage, and he did a great job. He made it very hard to get it in close." Thompson made it to the bell, but

two judges scored the bout 48-47 for Woodley, with a third seeing it 47-47. "Disappointed, man," Thompson said. "Worked my whole life to get here. I thought I won the fight, but you can't leave it in the judges' eyes."

Woodley and Thompson both fought with abandon and got themselves into dangerous positions in their first bout in New York but survived for only the third draw in a title fight in UFC history.

"I guess it doesn't matter what the first fight was like," UFC President Dana White said. "The second fight can be not as good." The rematch opened with two action-free rounds as both fighters sized each other up amid boos from the Vegas

crowd. Woodley landed a takedown in the third, and Thompson did damage with kicks in the fourth, but neither contender produced anything resembling the urgency expected by the fans, who took to chanting "Fight! Fight! Fight!" in the fifth. Woodley eventually obliged, and it might have swung the entire fight in his favor. Woodley landed 66 total strikes to Thompson's 42, and the champ had the fight's only takedown.

"He's a tough kid," Woodley said. "I rocked him, and that's the round that probably got me the win."

The UFC 209 card lost one of the year's most anticipated bouts one day earlier when Khabib Nurmagomedov

was hospitalized while struggling to make weight. The unbeaten Russian was scheduled to fight Tony Ferguson for the interim lightweight title.

The UFC hoped the card could make up for the loss of those two all-action fighters, but the main event wasn't great.

Earlier on the pay-per-view portion of the UFC 209 card, veteran Dutch kickboxer Overeem (42-15) flattened Hunt to bounce back solidly from his knockout loss to Stipe Miocic in his heavyweight title shot last September.

Overeem also fought through food poisoning that sent him to the hospital on the night before this fight, although he didn't reveal it. —AP

### NHL

## BACKSTROM'S POWER-PLAY GOAL LIFTS CAPITALS OVER FLYERS

**WASHINGTON:** Nicklas Backstrom scored a power-play goal in overtime to lift the Washington Capitals over the Philadelphia Flyers 2-1 on Saturday night and extend their franchise-record home winning streak to 15. Backstrom ended the Capitals' power-play frustrations by beating Steve Mason 3:25 into overtime for his 20th goal of the season. It came with Flyers defenseman Michael Del Zotto in the penalty box for holding, the 12th minor penalty of the game. Dmitry Orlov also scored for NHL-leading Washington, which got 30 saves from Braden Holtby. Mason stopped 22 of 24 shots, while Sean Couturier snapped out of his offensive slump to score Philadelphia's goal. The Flyers went 0 for 6 on the power play and are 0 for 15 this season against the Capitals.

### BLACKHAWKS 5, PREDATORS 3

Brian Campbell scored with 1:05 remaining to lead the Chicago Blackhawks over the Nashville Predators for their seventh straight win. Patrick Kane scored twice, including an empty-netter after Campbell's goal, and Jordin Tootoo and Jonathan Toews also scored for Chicago. Corey Crawford made 32 saves. Viktor Arvidsson scored twice and Calle Jarnkrok also had a goal for Nashville, which has lost two straight.

### CANADIENS 4, RANGERS 1

Carey Price made 26 saves and the Montreal Canadiens extended their winning streak to five games with a victory over the New York Rangers. Shea Weber, Artturi Lehkonen, Andrew Shaw and Jordie Benn scored for the Canadiens, who are in first place in the Atlantic Division. Max Pacioretty and Alex Galchenyuk each had two assists for Montreal, which has won six of seven. That streak started with a shootout win over the Rangers on Feb. 21 at Madison Square Garden. Chris Kreider scored and Henrik Lundqvist made 31 saves for the Rangers, who have lost three of their past four.

### BRUINS 3, DEVILS 2

Ryan Spooner scored midway through the third period to lift the Boston Bruins over the New Jersey Devils for their eighth victory in 10 games under interim coach Bruce Cassidy. Brandon Carlo and Torey Krug also scored for the Bruins, and backup goalie Anton Khudobin stopped 15 shots. Cassidy took over for fired coach Claude Julien on Feb. 7. Kyle Palmieri and Devante Smith-Pelly had goals for the Devils, who dropped their sixth straight (0-4-2) as their playoff hopes continue to fade. Cory Schneider made 37 saves.

### LIGHTNING 2, SABRES 1, SO

Brayden Point and Nikita Kucherov scored in a shootout and the Tampa Bay Lightning defeated the Buffalo Sabres. Tyler Johnson scored in regulation for the Lightning and Andrei Vasilevskiy made 31 saves as Tampa Bay bounced back on the second night of a back-to-back after losing 5-2 in Pittsburgh on Friday. Ryan O'Reilly had a goal and Robin Lehner made 31 saves for Buffalo, which has lost four of five - and all three meetings with Tampa Bay this season. The Sabres were without leading scorer Kyle Okposo, who has injured ribs and will be out at least a week.



**WASHINGTON:** Wayne Simmonds #17 of the Philadelphia Flyers slides into goalie Braden Holtby #70 of the Washington Capitals in the first period at Verizon Center on Saturday in Washington, DC. — AFP

### STARS 2, PANTHERS 1

John Klingberg scored the winning goal with 1:07 left and the Dallas Stars beat the Florida Panthers. Klingberg shot from the right circle and the puck went high into the net over the shoulder of James Reimer. The Stars won for the fourth time in six games. Jamie Benn also scored a goal and had an assist for Dallas. Kari Lehtonen made 41 saves. Tyler Seguin had two assists. Jonathan Huberdeau scored the Panthers' goal. Reimer made 32 saves for Florida, which has lost five of its past six.

### SENATORS 3, BLUE JACKETS 2

Zack Smith scored a short-handed goal in the third period and the Ottawa Senators beat the Columbus Blue Jackets. Viktor Stalberg got his first goal since joining the Senators ahead of Wednesday's trade deadline. Erik Karlsson scored his 11th of the season and Craig Anderson made 25 saves. Brandon Saad and Sam Gagner scored for the Blue Jackets. Joonas Korpi also played just his eighth game this season and made 24 saves. This was the first regulation loss for Columbus in five games (3-1-1).

### JETS 6, AVALANCHE 1

Blake Wheeler and Nikolaj Ehlers each had a goal and two assists, leading the Winnipeg Jets past the Colorado Avalanche. Making his 10th straight start in goal, Connor Hellebuyck almost had his second straight shutout for the Jets until Gabriel Landeskog scored with 15.4 seconds left in the game. He made 22 saves a day after he had a 29-save shutout against the St. Louis Blues. Patrik Laine scored his NHL rookie-leading 32nd goal, Mark Scheifele had his 27th, Ehlers notched his 21st and Wheeler his 20th. Ben Chiarot added his first goal of the season in his 53rd game, and Jacob Trouba had his sixth.

### OILERS 4, RED WINGS 3

Connor McDavid had a goal and an assist and the Edmonton Oilers started an eight-game homestand with a victory over the Detroit Red Wings. Zack Kassian, Jordan Eberle and Patrick Maroon also scored for the Oilers, who have won two games in a row. Cam Talbot stopped 22 shots. Anthony Mantha, Darren Helm and Dylan Larkin scored for the Red Wings, who have lost two straight. McDavid blazed past a pair of defenders and beat goalie Petr Mrazek on the backhand for his 22nd goal of the season just two minutes into the game.

### CANUCKS 4, KINGS 3

Sven Baertschi scored twice, Ryan Miller made 41 saves and the Vancouver Canucks ended a four-game losing streak by holding on for a win over the Los Angeles Kings. Henrik Sedin had a goal, Nikolaj Goldobin scored in his Canucks debut and Bo Horvat had three assists as Vancouver won in regulation for just the second time in its last nine games. Trevor Lewis and Anze Kopitar each scored a power-play goal, Alec Martinez scored a short-handed goal and Ben Bishop made 17 saves in his home debut for Los Angeles, which missed out on a chance to move three points ahead of St. Louis for the second wild card in the Western Conference. —AP



**LONDON:** British boxer David Haye (L) goes on the offensive against compatriot Tony Bellew (R) during their heavyweight boxing match at the O2 Arena in London on Saturday. Tony Bellew stunned bitter rival David Haye to win their eagerly-awaited heavyweight clash with an 11th round stoppage. — AFP

### BOXING

## BELLEW STUNS HAYE WITH 11TH-ROUND STOPPAGE

**LONDON:** Tony Bellew humbled his bitter British rival David Haye with a shock 11th round win in a non-title heavyweight fight at the O2 in London on Saturday. Former WBA world heavyweight champion Haye suffered a suspected snapped Achilles tendon in the sixth round, leaving him an easy target as he stumbled and limped around the ring for second half of the fight. Unable to move away from Bellew's blows, Haye got up from a count in the seventh round and bravely battled on until he was knocked out of the ring in the 11th round.

As he was climbing back into the ring, Haye's trainer Shane McGuigan threw in the towel to stop the fight. Haye afterwards called for a rematch after a third career loss in his 31st fight which has shattered his hopes of facing one of the world heavyweight champions in the next 12 months.

Bellew, the reigning WBC world cruiserweight champion who stepped up a division, enjoyed silencing Haye's pre-fight taunts and claimed: "I'm the most valuable heavyweight in the world outside the world champions."

Bellew said he would be willing to meet Haye again at Goodison Park, home of Everton football club. Among many insults which included the threat to "hospitalise" Bellew, Haye said he would quickly knock out his opponent in the non-title heavyweight bout. Few predicted "Bomber" Bellew would pull off an upset and bookmakers made him 4-1 to win, with Haye a long odds-on betting favourite at 1/6 on.

### THIRD CAREER LOSS

Bellew, who stepped up a division to face Haye, a former world champion at cruiserweight and heavyweight, profited from Haye's injury but had shown promise in the early rounds.

Haye, who flew to Germany earlier in the week to see a specialist about his Achilles, bravely fought on through the pain but his hopes of another big pay day are now in serious doubt after a third career loss.

Four times Bellew was able to get to Haye and a left hook knocked the Londoner off balance. Haye, 36, who was last world heavyweight champion in 2011, missed with a lot of punches in the opener but had more success in the second. Bellew, 34, who weighed in nearly a stone lighter than 16-stone (101 kg) Haye, caught Haye with right hands in the third when his rival missed with shots.

After failing to stop it early, Haye continued to try to land the one big knockout punch and in the fourth he nearly did it with a right and left to the jaw that shook Bellew.

Bellew did well to back pedal away from trouble but was caught by another big right on the ropes in the fifth round.

But the fight turned in the sixth round when Haye slipped, perhaps on some water, and appeared to damage his right Achilles.

After twice falling to the canvas, which were ruled no knockdowns, Haye was left limping around the ring and an easy target for Bellew who forced a legitimate knockdown later in the round. Haye refused to pull out at the end of the round but it was just target practice for Bellew in the seventh round with Haye unable to move

away from danger.

Haye stumbled back to his corner at the end of the seventh like a drunk at times as Bellew

landed clean shots at will. In the 11th, Haye was sent through the ropes by a combination and McGuigan had seen enough. —AFP

## WBA CHAMPION THURMAN WINS WELTERWEIGHT UNIFICATION BOUT

**NEW YORK:** WBA champ Keith Thurman defeated Danny Garcia by a split decision Saturday night to claim the WBC welterweight belt in a unification clash between a pair of unbeaten champions. Thurman successfully defended his title for the third time, winning a tactical defensive struggle by scores of 116-112, and 115-113 on two of the judges' scorecards. The other judge had it 115-113 for Garcia. "Ain't no robberies happening tonight," said Thurman, who improved to 28-0 with 22 knockouts. Saturday's matchup between the 28-year-old Americans was only the third time in history that two undefeated fighters fought to unify welterweight world titles and the first since Oscar de la Hoya faced Felix Trinidad in 1999. Thurman is the first fighter in the division to hold multiple titles since Floyd Mayweather held the WBA, WBC and WBO belts after defeating Manny Pacquiao in 2015.

"I thought I outboxed him. I thought it was a clear victory," Thurman said. "You heard the scorecards. I knew it had to go to me. 'This is your boy Keith 'One Time' Thurman and still champion of the world. One time became 'Two Time' baby."

There were no knockdowns as the 12-round fight at the Barclays Center turned into a strategic battle. Thurman was the aggressor, scoring early then staying out of trouble in the final rounds for the victory.

Garcia went long moments without throwing a punch, content to wait for Thurman to attack then try to counter. But Thurman

always seem to land one or two good punches in the closing seconds of each round.

Thurman landed more power punches (102-81) and jabs (45-41) than Garcia. He felt he did enough in the first nine rounds to slow the tempo down the rest of the way.

"I was not giving the fight away. I felt like we had a nice lead and we could cool down," he said. "I felt like we were controlling the three-minute intervals in every round."

"There was some tough rounds, but at the end of the day I knew I did what I had to do to win." Garcia suffered his first loss in 34 fights. He was warned for a low blow in the seventh round. At the end of the 11th he seemed confused and headed to the wrong corner before Thurman tapped him on the shoulder and pointed him in the right direction.

### SHRUGS OFF LOSS

Garcia thought he had won the fight raising his hands in victory after the first two scores were announced then shrugging off the defeat as Thurman celebrated another title defence. "I came up short tonight but I gave it my all," Garcia said. "I thought I was the aggressor. I pushed the pace of the fight."

"I came to fight and it didn't go my way-oh well." Thurman is now 7-0 with three knockouts in world title fights. He's hoping the victory brings a shot at Filipino superstar Pacquiao or Britain's Kell Brook, the International Boxing Federation champion who is 36-1 with 25 knockouts. —AFP



**NEW YORK:** Danny Garcia congratulates Keith Thurman after losing a split decision against him for the WBA/WBC Welterweight unification Championship at the Barclays Center in Brooklyn, New York on Saturday in New York City. —AFP



## MINNOWS BANGLADESH SEE BEST CHANCE TO BEAT SRI LANKA

**DHAKA:** Bangladesh will be hoping to improve their woeful away record with a win against an under-strength Sri Lanka side when a two-Test series against the hosts gets underway in Galle tomorrow. The Test minnows have won just three of their 45 away matches—two against the West Indies in 2009 and one against Zimbabwe in 2013 — but have shown considerable improvement since their last victory abroad. At home, Bangladesh have won four Tests since 2014, drawn five and conceded only three. They showed impressive recent form against India and New Zealand in away matches despite los-

ing both. Sri Lanka have a good record at home and beat Australia 3-0 in the last series they hosted in August 2016. But some heavyweight stars have pulled up stumps, something the tourists hope to capitalise on.

"This is probably our best chance to beat Sri Lanka," said Bangladesh captain Mushfiqur Rahim.

"Maybe they are inexperienced after several retirements. We will try to match them," Bangladesh will be buoyed by the return of paceman Mustafizur Rahman, who has not played a Test since his debut series against South Africa in 2015. But

the tourists will not get ahead of themselves and are cautious of Sri Lanka's impressive home record.

The hosts have won their last five Tests on home soil and will be captained by experienced left-arm spinner Rangana Herath, who replaces injured regular Angelo Mathews.

The Sri Lankan cricket board did not say why Mathews was dropped, but he returned home last month halfway through the South African tour after twisting his ankle. Sri Lanka coach Graham Ford said he expects a tough series against Bangladesh, who drew their first

Test at Galle during a previous visit in 2013. "We were fortunate to get over the line on that occasion. They have a few players who were part of that squad still playing for Bangladesh and this will be another competitive series," he said.

The second Test in Colombo from March 15-19 will be Bangladesh's 100th since gaining full status 17 years ago.

The teams are also scheduled to play three 50-over One-Day Internationals before facing off for two Twenty20 Internationals at the tail-end of the tour, which wraps up on April 6.

Sri Lanka squad: Rangana Herath

(capt), Dimuth Karunaratne, Niroshan Dickwella, Upul Tharanga, Dhananjaya de Silva, Kusal Mendis, Asela Gunaratne, Dinesh Chandimal, Suranga Lakmal, Lahiru Kumara, Nuwan Pradeep, Vikum Sanjaya Bandara, Dilruwan Perera, Lakshan Sandakan, Malinda Pushpakumara. Bangladesh: Mushfiqur Rahim (capt), Tamim Iqbal, Liton Das, Soumya Sarkar, Mominul Haque, Shakib Al Hasan, Mahmudullah Riyad, Sabbir Rahman, Mustafizur Rahman, Taijul Islam, Mehedi Hasan, Taskin Ahmed, Mosaddek Hossain, Kamrul Islam Rabbi, Subashis Roy, Rubel Hossain. — AFP

### TENNIS

## QUERREY SHOCKS NADAL TO LIFT ATP ACAPULCO TITLE

**ACAPULCO:** Unseeded American Sam Querrey stunned second-seeded Rafael Nadal 6-3, 7-6 (7/3) on Saturday to win the ATP Mexico Open and end the Spaniard's run of perfection in Acapulco.

Querrey, ranked 40th in the world, fired 19 aces, backed up by powerful, precise groundstrokes, en route to his first career victory over Nadal in five meetings. The Spaniard, the 2005 and 2013 champion, had never even lost a set in Acapulco.

"I'm ecstatic," Querrey said. "To do it against Rafa makes it even a little sweeter." Querrey captured his ninth ATP title in an impressive week that saw him beat four top-10 players—Belgian David Goffin, Austrian Dominic Thiem, Australian Nick Kyrgios and sixth-ranked Nadal.

He's projected to return to the top 30 in the world rankings today. "It's definitely a tournament that I'm going to remember for the rest of my life," Querrey said. "It's just one of those weeks where I got in the zone and everything was working for me. I hope I can have more like this."

"After the match against Goffin, I knew I could go far here if I continued to play at that level," he added. "My forehand and

backhand were great and my serve bailed me out of trouble when I needed it."

Nadal, playing his first tournament since falling to Roger Federer in five sets in the Australian Open final, was denied his first hard court title since Doha in 2014.

Querrey surrendered just four points on his serve in the opening set and he broke Nadal at love to seize a 5-3 advantage. He served it out comfortably, firing a forehand winner on his second set point after just half an hour.

Nadal made more inroads in the second set, but couldn't convert any of his six break chances. That included five in the eighth game—three of which Querrey neutralized with aces. They went on serve to the tiebreaker, where Nadal faltered first.

A brace of baseline errors from Nadal gave Querrey a 6-3 lead and a chance to serve for the title, with Nadal sending a forehand long on the American's first match point.

"He played very well, almost reaching perfection," Nadal said. "I played under a lot of pressure because of his serve and baseline game. He left me with very few options, and the few I had he also played good." —AFP



**BANGALORE:** Australian batsman Matthew Renshaw (R) is watched by India's wicketkeeper Wriddhiman Saha (L) as he plays a shot during the second day of the second cricket Test match between India and Australia at The M. Chinnaswamy Stadium in Bangalore yesterday. —AFP

### CRICKET

## MARSH AND RENSHAW GIVE AUSTRALIA EDGE IN 2ND TEST

**BANGALORE:** Opener Matt Renshaw said managing a challenging pitch would be the key to defeating India after his dogged half-century helped Australia take a crucial first-innings lead in the second Test yesterday.

The left-hander, who started the day on 15, made a 196-ball 60 before Shaun Marsh struck another half-century for the visitors on a grueling second day in Bangalore.

Australia were 237 for six at stumps on the second day, leading India by 48 runs at M Chinnaswamy Stadium. Matthew Wade on 25 and Mitchell Starc on 14 were at the crease.

"It was a grind. The plan was to try and bat as long as possible and wear the Indian bowlers down," 20-year-old Renshaw told reporters.

"We know that the fourth innings chase is going to be quite hard out there. Hopefully we get a substantial lead out there and the bowlers can do a successful job, like they did in the first."

Marsh top-scored with a gritty 66 before Indian seamer Umesh Yadav lured him into a tired-looking shot that was caught at short mid-wicket just before close of play.

Left-arm spinner Ravindra Jadeja claimed three wickets, including the key scalps of Australia skipper Steve Smith (8) and Renshaw on a pitch that offered variable bounce.

Fast bowlers Ishant Sharma and Yadav, with a wicket each, unsettled the visiting batsmen but regular partnerships helped Australia surpass India's first-innings score of 189.

Renshaw cited problems with variable bounce. "It was probably a bit harder against the quicks because it's not bouncing as much, and some (balls) are going up, so I think that challenge is probably the biggest," he said. Australia were faltering at the tea break on 163-5, but Marsh returned to score his sixth Test fifty while

SCOREBOARD	
<b>BANGALORE, India:</b> Scoreboard at stumps on day two of the second Test between India and Australia in Bangalore on yesterday.	
<b>India 1st innings 189</b> (L. Rahul 90, K. Nair 26; N. Lyon 8-50)	M. Starc not out 14
<b>Australia 1st innings</b> (overnight 40-0; D. Warner 23 not out, M. Renshaw 15 not out)	Extras (b8, lb2, nb5) 15
D. Warner b Ashwin 33	Total (6 wickets; 106 overs) 237
M. Renshaw st Saha b Jadeja 60	To bat: S. O'Keefe, N. Lyon, J. Hazlewood
S. Smith c Saha b Jadeja 8	Fall of wickets: 1-52 (Warner), 2-82 (Smith), 3-134 (Renshaw), 4-160 (Handscomb), 5-163 (M. Marsh), 6-220 (S. Marsh)
S. Marsh c Nair b Yadav 66	Bowling: Sharma 23-6-39-1 (3nb), Yadav 24-7-57-1 (1nb), M. Marsh lbw b Sharma 0, M. Wade not out 25
P. Handscomb c Ashwin b Jadeja 16	
M. Marsh lbw b Sharma 0	
M. Wade not out 25	

he and Wade put on 57 for the sixth wicket.

### RUNS AT A TRICKLE

Marsh had his share of luck, surviving a few close calls against the Indian bowlers, including nicking a Yadav delivery on 14 off the glove. The appeal was turned down and India did not opt for the review.

Earlier Renshaw put on 52 runs with Marsh to keep the Indian attack temporarily at bay as runs came at a miserly rate of roughly two an over.

The left-handed opener, who had scored 68 in the first innings in Pune, looked ready to take off after hitting Jadeja for the first six of the match, but the bowler got his revenge two balls later. Jadeja saw Renshaw emerge from his crease and fired the ball down the leg side. Wicketkeeper Wriddhiman Saha completed the stumping in quick time.

"We felt like we were just about to get on top of the game when I got out, so it was quite frustrating from that point of view," said Renshaw.

"If we had probably got a few more runs, me

and Shaun Marsh, then we could have had complete control of the game."

Runs came at a trickle in the morning session, with the visitors scoring just 47 in 29 overs as two of their top batsmen Warner (33) and Smith were sent back to the pavilion. Ashwin bowled Warner to get the opener for an eighth time in 12 Tests, while Smith battled hard for 52 deliveries before being caught by Saha off a wily Jadeja. The morning was enlivened by banter between the lanky Sharma and Smith, who traded barbs as the day progressed, with Indian skipper Virat Kohli also exchanging a few words with the Aussie batsmen.

Indian batsman Cheteshwar Pujara said India would have a better game plan in their second innings and were still very much in the match.

"We have already seen the ball is keeping low. They have to bat in the last innings... we will put up a better show in the next innings," said Pujara. The visitors lead the four-match series 1-0 after beating India in the first Test in Pune inside three days. — AFP



**ACAPULCO:** Sam Querrey of the US celebrates with the trophy after beating Rafael Nadal of Spain 6-3, 7-6 (7/3) in the ATP men's singles finals of the Mexican Tennis Open in Acapulco, Guerrero State, Mexico, on Saturday. —AFP

## KUWAIT 8TH OPEN TENNIS TOURNAMENT

By Abdellatif Sharaa

**KUWAIT:** Kuwait 8th Open Tennis Tournament continues with heavy participation of players both citizens and expats in various groups.

In the Under 11 category Abdelrahman Al-Abdallah defeated Mohammad Al-Falakawi 9-2, Fahad Al-Ameera defeated Hamza Al-Sibzali 9-0, Haidar Al-Saleh defeated Fahad Al-Daihani 9-3, Abdallah Dibrab defeated Antonios Al-Samrani 9-1, Abdallah Al-Sarhan defeated Khalid Al-Mutairi 9-0 and Essa Murad defeated Eszeldien Kamal 9-0.

Abdelaziz Khalid defeated Mohammad Qalli 9-5, Hadi Sabah defeated Hamad Al-Khashnam 9-1, and Ahmad Al-Humaidan defeated Abdallah Al-Nasser 9-0.

In the Under 13 category Mohammad Bu Abbas defeated Hazim Abu Salem 6-4, 6-2, Bader Al-Sarraf defeated Dhari Al-Naqeeb 6-0, 6-0 and Salman Taher defeated Al-Faisal Saleem 6-0.

In the men singles Dawood Sayyed Hashim defeated Anand Ramakrishnan 6-0, 6-0, Ali Al-Qallaf defeated Hussein Behbehani 6-1, 6-2, Abdelrahman Burahma defeated Ahmad Abdelaziz 6-2, 6-1 Abdallah Al-Qallaf defeated Tariq Al-Qaderi 6-0, 6-0, Mohammad Al-Failakawi defeated Ali Daalah 7-5, 6-1 and Hussein Shams defeated Mohammad Al-Quzuq 6-3, 6-1. In the pioneers above 55 doubles Mubarak Redha and Andy Soldmon defeated Khalid Tubailah and Shikar Shitti 6-2, 6-2.





## ENGLAND STUNS US WOMEN 1-0 IN SHEBELIEVES CUP SOCCER

**HARRISON:** While Jill Ellis never wants to see the United States women's soccer team lose a game, the coach believes good things can come out of a setback, especially in an event without a major prize.

Such was the case Saturday when substitute Ellen White scored on a rebound in close in the 89th minute and England stunned the Americans 1-0 in the second round of the SheBelieves Cup at Red Bulls Arena before a sellout crowd of 26,500.

"I think sometimes you fail, the lesson hits home harder in terms of you feel the sting of it," Ellis said after the US lost its second game at home since 2004. "When I see the players, I say this is why we play those teams so we can learn about ourselves, so we can test ourselves."

It marked the first time that England has beaten the United States since a friendly in 2011, and the first time in the states. It was only England's fourth win in 14 games (4-9-1) against the US.

The only other loss at home was to China in late 2015. White, who entered in the 76th minute, scored her 20th goal in 60 games with England, just seconds after Lucy Bronze cracked a shot off the crossbar moments following a corner kick. Two US defenders collided trying to clear the ball and White ripped it past goalkeeper Ashlyn Harris. "It was a fantastic moment for myself to obviously score for England on the home soil of the USA and to get the win," White said. "It was an unbelievable feeling. The team put in a fantastic performance. I am proud of every member of the squad. To get a win and three points on the board is an unbelievable feeling."

The feeling was a lot different than the last game for England. It dropped a 2-1

decision to France on Wednesday on a goal on the final kick of the contest.

England manager Mark Sampson said everyone contributed.

"It's got to be to win in America," he said. "There's not been too many teams to do that. They have a very proud home record, so to come here and win is an important result for us. I'm just really proud of the team on the back of that France defeat."

Until the goal, it appeared it would be a scoreless draw. Neither team had a good scoring chance in the second half that was played in temperatures in the 20s with a wind chill that made it feel like 10 degrees.

"It was really cold," England midfielder Fara Williams said. "It took ages for the players to warm up. Even at the end of the game people were still cold."

Each team had an outstanding scoring chance in the first half.

Rose Lavelle, making her first start for the United States, was stopped point blank by England goalkeeper Siobhan Chamberlain in the 16th minute.

Chamberlain said the save was almost self-defense. "I think I hit it right at the goalie," Lavelle said. "I wish I could have buried that one." Harris used her right arm to stop Nikita Parris in the 6-yard box in the 31st minute.

In the first match of the day, French goalkeeper Sarah Bouhaddi stopped a first-half penalty kick, and France and Germany played to a scoreless draw. After two rounds, France leads the tournament with four points. The United States and England have three and Germany one. The round-robin finishes tomorrow in Washington with the US facing France and Germany playing England. — AP



**HOUSTON:** Houston Rockets guard Patrick Beverley, center, fights for the ball with Memphis Grizzlies center Marc Gasol, left, and guard Mike Conley in the second half of an NBA basketball game, Saturday, in Houston. — AP

### BASKETBALL

# HARDEN'S 33 POINTS LEAD ROCKETS OVER GRIZZLIES

**HOUSTON:** James Harden turned a torrid stretch in the third quarter into his NBA-leading 49th double-double as the Houston Rockets topped the Memphis Grizzlies 123-108 at Toyota Center to split the season series. Harden scored 20 of his game-high 33 points in the third, including 15 consecutive points for the Rockets (44-19), who stretched a two-point lead to their first double-digit advantage at 72-62 on a Harden dunk at the 6:06 mark. Harden added 11 assists while Rockets center Clint Capela paired a career-high 24 points with 11 rebounds for his 10th double-double this season. Eric Gordon (18 points, 6-for-8 on three-pointers) and Nene (11 points) paced a Houston bench that contributed 45 points. The Rockets also finished 18 for 42 on three-pointers.

### SPURS 97, TIMBERWOLVES 90 (OT)

Kawhi Leonard scored 34 points, including six in overtime, as San Antonio shrugged off three and a half lackadaisical quarters of play with a furious comeback that netted a victory over Minnesota at the A&T Center. Leonard's two baskets and a pair of free throws gave the Spurs a 94-90 lead with 2:21 left in the extra period and a Danny Green putback of his own missed shot with 18.6 seconds remaining cemented the win for San Antonio.

### CLIPPERS 101, BULLS 91

Jamal Crawford scored 25 points off the bench, Chris Paul scored 17 and four starters reached double figures for Los Angeles in a win over Chicago. Crawford scored 17 points in the second half when the Clippers erased a six-point halftime deficit and led by as many as 16 points. Blake Griffin had 16 points and J.J. Redick finished with 13 for Los Angeles.

### BUCKS 101, RAPTORS 94

Khris Middleton scored a season-high 24 points and Spencer Hawes added 16 as Milwaukee beat Toronto at the Bradley Center. Middleton hit 9-of-14 shots in 30 minutes of action while being part of the starting lineup for a second consecutive night and just the third time this season. Giannis Antetokounmpo finished with 21 points while Malcolm Brogdon added 17 for Milwaukee.

### HEAT 120, CAVALIERS 92

Cleveland opted to rest All-Stars LeBron James and Kyrie Irving, and Miami took advantage, earning a win at American Airlines Arena. Goran Dragic led the Heat with 23 points. Hassan Whiteside added 20 points and 13 rebounds. The Heat made 18 three-pointers, the most by Miami this season and the second most in franchise history. The Heat, which has won 18 of its past 22 games, kept pace with the Detroit Pistons in the battle for the eighth and final playoff position in the Eastern Conference.

### PISTONS 136, 76ERS 106

Detroit, coming off an unsettling loss, righted the ship as Kentavious Caldwell-Pope scored 26 points and Marcus Morris added 22 to lead the Pistons past Philadelphia. Reggie Jackson contributed 21 points and Tobias Harris had 20 off the bench for Detroit, which achieved a season-high point total three days after a 109-86 loss in New Orleans.

### TRAIL BLAZERS 130, NETS 116

CJ McCollum scored 31 points and Portland defeated Brooklyn at Moda Center. Al-Farouq Aminu chipped in 23 points and Damian Lillard collected 19 points and 11 assists for the Trail Blazers, who won their second straight game with

their highest point total of the season.

### HORNETS 112, NUGGETS 102

Kemba Walker scored 27 points, Marvin Williams had 14 points and 12 rebounds,

and Charlotte ended its seven-game road trip with a win over Denver. Nicolas Batum had 21 points and eight assists for Charlotte, which won for fourth time in the last 18 games. — Reuters

### NBA results/standings

Portland 130, Brooklyn 116; Charlotte 112, Denver 102; Houston 123, Memphis 108; San Antonio 97, Minnesota 90 (OT); LA Clippers 101, Chicago 91; Milwaukee 101, Toronto 94; Miami 120, Cleveland 92; Detroit 136, Philadelphia 106.

Eastern Conference				Western Conference				
Atlantic Division				Northwest Division				
W	L	PCT	GB					
Boston	40	22	.645	-	Utah	38	24	.613
Toronto	37	26	.587	3.5	Oklahoma City	35	27	.565
NY Knicks	25	37	.403	15	Denver	28	34	.452
Philadelphia	23	39	.371	17	Portland	26	35	.426
Brooklyn	10	51	.164	29.5	Minnesota	25	37	.403
Central Division				Pacific Division				
Cleveland	42	19	.689	-	Golden State	50	11	.820
Indiana	31	30	.508	11	LA Clippers	37	25	.597
Chicago	31	31	.500	11.5	Sacramento	25	36	.410
Detroit	30	32	.484	12.5	Phoenix	20	42	.323
Milwaukee	28	33	.459	14	LA Lakers	19	43	.306
Southeast Division				Southwest Division				
Washington	36	24	.600	-	San Antonio	48	13	.787
Atlanta	34	27	.557	2.5	Houston	44	19	.698
Miami	29	34	.460	8.5	Memphis	36	27	.571
Charlotte	27	35	.435	10	Dallas	25	36	.410
Orlando	23	39	.371	14	New Orleans	24	38	.387



**HARRISON:** United States' Allie Long (L) battles England's Millie Bright and Demi Stokes for the ball as the United States and England women's national teams play in the SheBelieves Cup in Harrison, NJ, on Saturday. — AFP

### SOCCER

## GARNER'S STAR TURN PLEASING TO RANGERS MANAGER'S EYE

**GLASGOW:** Rangers interim manager Graeme Murty praised the impact substitute Joe Garner made as his hat-trick fired them to a 6-0 Scottish Cup quarter-final win over Hamilton. The 28-year-old English forward replaced Kenny Miller at half-time with the hosts leading 1-0 thanks to a Martyn Waghorn penalty and it took him just over two minutes to add his name to the score-sheet. Garner then spent 11 minutes off the pitch receiving stitches to a cut below his eye after a clash of heads with Hamilton's Blair Adams before returning to score twice after Jon Toral and Clint Hill had increased Rangers' lead.

The former Preston striker enjoys a cult status amongst the Rangers support for his combative style, but had only scored four times before Saturday's treble. Murty, who was in charge of the Under-20 side before being asked to step up when Mark Warburton and his staff were sacked last month-was pleased to see Garner prove his doubters wrong. "We said to him (Garner) from the bench that he had to come on and show why he is here," Murty said. "He has gone on and he has scored straight away. The clash of heads was awful I have to say and I hope their guy is alright. "People were saying to me to get someone on but I knew he was coming back so we were just patient. "The medical team did a great job and he managed to go on and get a few

more goals." Murty said he was happy the players had listened to his pleas to do themselves justice after a disappointing season on their return to the Premiership.

"I challenged them at half-time to go and take their chances and they did and the result is what we just saw there," said Murty. Garner had been lucky to stay on the pitch to claim his hat-trick as he escaped with just a booking in the 55th minute after catching Hamilton's Dougie Imrie on the thigh with a wild swing of his boot. However, Murty felt referee John Beaton had made the correct decision. "I thought it was clumsy rather than malicious," said Murty, who is unsure whether he will still be in charge for next weekend's Old Firm derby with Celtic.

His opposite number Martin Canning didn't agree and felt Rangers keeper Wes Foderingham could have also been sent off in the first half for handling the ball outside his box. "I don't think it is a penalty that goes against us and the goalkeeper is probably a yard or two outside the box when he handles the ball and I think Garner's tackle is a sending off," moaned Canning. Rangers were joined in the last four by holders Hibernian, who defeated ten men Ayr United 3-1.

On Sunday, Celtic take on St Mirren at Parkhead while Aberdeen host Partick Thistle in the other quarter-final. — AFP



**CARSON:** FC Dallas forward Cristian Colman (9), of Paraguay, and Los Angeles Galaxy defender Dave Romney, right, vie for the ball during an MLS soccer match, Saturday, in Carson, Calif. — AP

## WENGER: NO REGRETS OVER SANCHEZ GAMBLE

**LIVERPOOL:** Arsene Wenger insisted he had no regrets at leaving Alexis Sanchez out of Arsenal's starting line-up after his team's 3-1 defeat at Liverpool.

The Arsenal manager, whose future at the Emirates is a subject of speculation, took the surprising decision to name Sanchez to the bench, bringing on the Chilean international at half-time. But Wenger explained his decision as a purely tactical one and claimed he did not regret his selection. "I have no special regrets, the only regret is to have lost the game," said Wenger.

"Look, the thinking was that we had to go more direct. We wanted to play two players who are strong in the air. After that to bring Alexis Sanchez on in the second half. "Of course, I believe in the second half it was easier for the strikers and you could see the difference in the performance of (Olivier) Giroud and (Theo) Walcott because we dominated midfield much more. "Everybody will come to the same conclusion but I'm strong enough and lucid enough to analyse the impact. "I don't deny Alexis Sanchez is a great player. I bought him, I always played him and he has developed well. A decision like that is not easy to make but you always have to stand up."

Arsenal trailed to goals from Roberto Firmino and Sadio Mane at the interval but Sanchez's introduction saw a much-improved second half from the Gunners and a goal from Danny Welbeck, assisted by the substitute. Georginio Wijnaldum secured an important win for the home side with the final goal in injury-time. Wenger would not discuss Sanchez's mood after the game although TV pictures appeared to show him looking disgruntled on the Arsenal bench during the first period. "I don't think I need to go into every

individual situation," said Wenger. "What was good in the second half was the collective performance. What was bad in the first half was the collective performance. That for me is a much more rational explanation than all the rest. "You focus on what you want. I believe for every single player it's the same. When everybody tells you you need to buy strikers and you buy them and then everybody says, why don't you keep them on the pitch. But it's impossible." Liverpool's win was the perfect response to the criticism Jurgen Klopp's team took following their surprise defeat at Leicester on Monday. "It was good again," said Klopp. "Coming up to the game we had a really hard week. I found a few words, that were not asking for friendship after the Leicester game." "The next day we analysed and it was not enjoyable for me when I did it or the players when they saw it.

"But there was a point in the week that we had to finish with the Leicester game. There were so many bad individual performances. "We are the roller coaster. Lots of ups but too many downs. Only if you are really silly do you let the bad things influence you more than the good things. "Then I watched training again late in the week and I thought, okay, the boys showed what they are capable of.

"If you had asked me on Wednesday if we could win I would have said no. On Thursday, I would have said maybe. But on Friday I knew we could win." Klopp admitted that he had expected Sanchez to play at Anfield and that his arrival at half-time caused his team an anxious five minutes as they adjusted. But he insisted he was not surprised by his omission. "In 17 years as a manager I'm not surprised about line-ups," he said. "Except maybe if a player breaks his leg last week and plays then I want to meet the doctor!" — AFP



PREVIEW

CONTE WARY OF CARROLL ON RETURN TO WEST HAM

LONDON: Chelsea manager Antonio Conte expects a searching examination when his side return to West Ham United's London Stadium today, scene of one of their four defeats this season.

Only Liverpool, Arsenal and Tottenham Hotspur have bested leaders Chelsea in the Premier League, but Conte's men were knocked out of the League Cup by West Ham following a 2-1 loss in October.

Chelsea's 10-point lead is likely to have been eroded by the time they take to the field at the former Olympic Stadium and Conte says they will have to produce a much sharper display than on their last visit. "I hope so because the result wasn't good for us and we want to try to take three points," said the Italian. "It will be a difficult game. We all

know the difficulty of derbies, but we are preparing very well for this game, in the right way with great commitment and focus. "For sure it will be a tough game and also we will know the results of the other teams, so there will be positive or negative pressure. But we are ready to play this game and try to do better than last time."

Chelsea's defeat at West Ham occurred amid a run of 13 straight wins in the league and came after Conte made a number of changes to his starting XI. But with in-form winger Eden Hazard expected to shrug off a knock received in training, Chelsea will be at full strength for Monday's derby.

West Ham will be without winger Michail Antonio following his dismissal in last weekend's 1-1 draw at Watford,

while Angelo Ogbonna (knee) and Diafra Sakho (back) remain out.

Andy Carroll returns after two games out with a groin injury, however, and captain Mark Noble believes the towering striker could make the difference for Slaven Bilic's men. "Andy is massive for us whenever he is fit and everyone knows it," Noble told the club website.

"He was fit for 11 (league) matches over Christmas and New Year and scored six goals, so we need to keep him available. "Andy knows how important he is to our team and he hates not being involved with the lads on the training pitch. Having a fit Andy Carroll is a massive boost for us."

'CHELSEA CAN SLIP'

Carroll missed the League Cup win

over Chelsea and failed to find the target when West Ham lost 2-1 at Stamford Bridge in August, but Conte remains mindful of the threat he poses.

"Andy Carroll is a really good player, very strong physically and we must pay great attention," he said. "But we must pay attention to the whole West Ham team because in the League Cup they beat us. "We are preparing different solutions to limit the strengths of our opponent, but it's important for us to play our idea of football, bring our philosophy, try to play, score, defend very well and play with high intensity."

While Chelsea continue to carry the air of champions-elect, their momentum has slowed since their autumn surge and they have won just one of their last four away games in the league.

West Ham manager Bilic, meanwhile, believes the title race is far from over. "It is still very open. There are many, many points available," said the Croatian.

"Like the clubs below us. Let's say we are in the position of Chelsea, or even better, regarding the clubs in the relegation zone.

"We are not afraid of our position, but you know that you need points to stay up and improve.

"Those teams who are down there, like Sunderland, Hull, they are hoping and planning to get the points. They know if they get the points they have a chance. "It is the same with Chelsea and the five teams chasing them. They still think they have a chance to catch Chelsea if Chelsea slip, and they can slip in every game." — AFP

SOCCER STANDINGS

ENGLISH PREMIER LEAGUE TABLE

Table with columns P, W, D, L, F, A, Pts. Rows include Chelsea, Tottenham, Man City, Liverpool, Arsenal, Man United, Everton, West Bromwich, Stoke City, Southampton, West Ham United, Burnley, Watford, Bournemouth, Leicester City, Swansea City, Crystal Palace, Middlesbrough, Hull City, Sunderland.

Table with columns P, W, D, L, F, A, Pts. Rows include Roma, Napoli, Atalanta, Inter Milan, Lazio, AC Milan, Fiorentina, Torino, Sampdoria, Chievo, Sassuolo, Cagliari, Udinese, Genoa, Bologna, Empoli, Palermo, Crotone, Pescara.

SPANISH LA LIGA TABLE

Spanish La Liga table after yesterday's early match (played, won, drawn, lost, goals for, goals against, points):

Table with columns P, W, D, L, F, A, Pts. Rows include Barcelona, Real Madrid, Sevilla, Atletico Madrid, Real Sociedad, Villarreal, Eibar, Athletic Bilbao, Espanyol, Celta Vigo, Alaves, Las Palmas, Valencia, Real Betis, Malaga, Leganes, Deportivo, Granada, Sporting Gijon, Osasuna.

FRENCH LIGUE 1 TABLE

French Ligue 1 table after yesterday's 1400 GMT match (played, won, drawn, lost, goals for, goals against, points):

Table with columns P, W, D, L, F, A, Pts. Rows include Monaco, Paris SG, Nice, Lyon, Bordeaux, Marseille, Saint-Etienne, Rennes, Angers, Toulouse, Guingamp, Nantes, Montpellier, Caen, Metz, Lille, Nancy, Dijon, Bastia, Lorient.

ITALIAN SERIE A TABLE

MILAN: Italian Serie A table ahead of yesterday's late game (played, won, drawn, lost, goals for, goals against, points):

Table with columns P, W, D, L, F, A, Pts. Row includes Juventus.



MADRID: Atletico Madrid's Argentinian midfielder Angel Correa (L) controls a ball beside Valencia's Argentinian defender Ezequiel Garay during the Spanish league football match Club Atletico de Madrid vs Valencia CF at the Vicente Calderon stadium in Madrid yesterday. — AFP

SOCCER

WITH TORRES WATCHING, ATLETICO MADRID BEAT VALENCIA 3-0

MADRID: With veteran striker Fernando Torres watching his team play just three days after collapsing on the field, Atletico Madrid comfortably defeated Valencia 3-0 to regain fourth place in the Spanish league yesterday.

Antoine Griezmann scored a goal in each half and Kevin Gameiro added another as Atletico rebounded from two winless games and again moved into position to fight for a Champions League spot. It was Atletico's first game since Torres dropped to the ground unconscious after going up for a challenge and then hitting his head on the ground late in the match at Deportivo La Coruna on Thursday.

Torres was motionless for several moments at the Riazor Stadium in La Coruna. The 32-year-old forward was immediately hospitalized, but escaped any serious head or spine injuries and was released a day later.

"We are happy that he was here with us," Griezmann said. "Hopefully he will be playing again as soon as possible, because we need him." Torres stood up and applauded the crowd after it loudly chanted his name at the Vicente Calderon Stadium. Torres, who won two European Championships and one World Cup with Spain, is expected to be cleared to return to training this week. Griezmann scored in the 10th and 83rd minutes, while Gameiro got on the board in the 48th.

"We got off to a bad start in the first half and that cost us a goal, and then we got off to a bad start again in the second half and it cost us another goal," Valencia defender Ezequiel Garay said. "We knew we were playing against a very difficult opponent." Atletico was coming off a 2-1 home loss to Barcelona and a 1-1 draw at Deportivo, results that virtually ended the team's title chances. It trails leader Barcelona by 11 points after 26 matches, but it cut the gap to third-placed Sevilla to six points. Sevilla plays at Alaves on Monday.

The top three teams automatically qualify for the Champions League next season, while the fourth-placed club has to go through a playoff. Diego Simeone's team has a 4-2 first-leg lead over Bayer Leverkusen in the Round of 16 of this year's Champions League.

Barcelona and second-placed Madrid won their league matches on Saturday. Madrid is one point behind the Catalan club but has a game in hand at Celta Vigo. Valencia is 13th, safely away from the relegation zone.

SPORTING GIJON 0, DEPORTIVO LA CORUNA 1

Deportivo La Coruna defeated Sporting Gijon in a game between relegation-threatened teams. Pedro Mosquera scored the winner with a header just before halftime, helping Deportivo snap an eight-game winless streak and open a

four-point gap on the first team in the relegation zone, Granada. Sporting, winless in four games, dropped to 19th - two points behind Granada. It

was the first win for new Deportivo coach Pepe Mel, who made his debut in the team's 1-1 home draw against Atletico last week. — AP

BARCA TARGET PSG 'MIRACLE' AFTER MESSI-INSPIRED ROUT

BARCELONA: Ivan Rakitic believes "a miracle" is possible when Barcelona attempt to overturn a 4-0 first leg deficit against Paris Saint-Germain in their Champions League last 16 tie on Wednesday. No side in Champions League history has ever come back from four goals down, but Barca hopes were raised by the sensational form of Lionel Messi in Saturday's 5-0 rout of Celta Vigo.

"We will give everything from the first minute to the last," the Croatian international told Spanish TV station Movistar. "We will try and hopefully we can produce a miracle." Messi scored two incredible individual goals to open and close the scoring as Barca remained one point clear of Real Madrid at the top of La Liga. The five-time World Player of the Year had a hand in all three other goals too as he teed up Neymar for a sensational chip and crossed for Samuel Umtiti to score his first Barca goal, whilst Rakitic was also on the scoresheet.

In their first outing since coach Luis Enrique announced he will step down at the end of the season, Barca produced arguably their best performance of the campaign.

The Catalans also smashed Sporting Gijon 6-1 in their previous outing-both scorelines

which would be good enough when PSG visit in midweek. And Enrique said he couldn't have wished for a better build-up to the ultimate challenge. "That it is one of our best performances in the last few months is without doubt," he said. "If I had to choose the way in which we would go into the Champions League game against PSG it would be very similar to these last two games: scoring lots of goals, the team gaining confidence and the players getting stronger." "I think we are in great form for a very difficult tie, that is not lost yet.

"I am sure we are going to have opportunities to get ourselves back in it and we will try until the death." Enrique's name was chanted by an enthralled crowd at the Camp Nou on Saturday. Banners were also raised towards the end of the match willing Barca's players to believe in the most unlikely of comebacks against PSG. "The fans value a lot what these players have won, the hunger they have and what they show in every game," added Enrique. "In my time here I have never once seen a poor attitude in any of my players. "Barca fans should be loyal and, above all, have confidence that the team can come back." — AFP



BARCELONA: Barcelona's Lionel Messi, center, runs with the ball past Celta's defenders during a Spanish La Liga soccer match between Barcelona and Celta at the Camp Nou stadium in Barcelona, Saturday. Messi scored twice in Barcelona's 5-0 victory. — AP

JUVENTUS DRAWS FOR THE FIRST TIME IN LEAGUE THIS SEASON

MILAN: There is still a glimmer of hope for Roma and Napoli. Juventus was prevented from going 10 points clear in Serie A as a lethargic performance saw it held 1-1 at Udinese yesterday. It was Juve's first draw in the league this season. Leonardo Bonucci was both hero and villain as he was outmuscled for Duvan Zapata's opener but leveled on the hour.

Juventus moved eight points clear of Roma and 10 ahead of Napoli. There are 11 rounds remaining. "We gained a point on Roma," Juventus coach Massimiliano Allegri said. "We were coming from a very hard period, where we played very important matches and today we faced a Udinese side which deserved to draw.

"When you can't win certain matches, you mustn't lose them ... it's an important point. And even with a win, the title race wouldn't have been over."

After Napoli won 2-1 at Roma on Saturday, Juventus knew it could take a decisive step toward an unprecedented sixth successive title.

Udinese had picked up only one point from its previous four matches, scoring just one goal. But it took the lead eight minutes from halftime as Zapata held off Bonucci and beat Gianluigi Buffon at the near post. Juventus struggled to create real opportunities but leveled when Bonucci headed in Paulo Dybala's free kick. Udinese coach Luigi Delneri was dismissed immediately after for dissent.

The home side almost restored its lead two minutes later but Danilo's header came off the base of the left post, although it looked as if Buffon had it covered.

ATALANTA 0, FIORENTINA 0

Atalanta failed to keep up the pressure in the race for a Champions League spot as it was kept at bay by Fiorentina goalkeeper Ciprian Tatarusanu.

Gian Piero Gasperini's side had emerged as surprise contenders for a top-three finish after beating Napoli last weekend but it slipped five points below the Champions League qualifying spots.

Atalanta laid siege to the goal but could not find a way through due to a combina-

tion of wayward finishing and excellent saves by Tatarusanu. He also somehow managed to claw Andrea Petagna's effort off the line and out off the upright late on.

Lazio can move a point above Atalanta with a win at Bologna later.

CAGLIARI 1, INTER MILAN 5

Ever Banega made the most of a rare start as he scored one and set up another to help Inter Milan comfortably beat Cagliari. Inter is fifth and remains six points behind third-placed Napoli.

Ivan Perisic scored twice as Inter bounced back from last week's 3-1 defeat at home to Roma. "We got what we wanted, to react at the right moment and in the best way possible after the defeat to Roma," Perisic said. "We still believe in third place. "Today we showed we are on the right path. We will give our utmost until the end." Cagliari gave Inter Milan an early scare as Joao Pedro lobbed Samir Handanovic and Gary Medel had to acrobatically clear off the line. Inter broke the deadlock in the 36th when Ivan Perisic controlled Banega's chipped pass with his right foot and hit it past Gabriel with his left.

Banega doubled Inter's lead three minutes later with a free kick into the top left corner. Cagliari got back into it shortly after. Handanovic did well to keep out David Di Gennaro's free kick but the ball was crossed back in for Marco Borriello to head home.—AP

Live Matches on TV (Local Timings)

Table with columns Team 1, Team 2, Time. Row: West Ham United v Chelsea 23:00

Table with columns Team 1, Team 2, Time. Row: Deportivo Alaves v Sevilla 22:45



# Sports

**Bellew stuns  
Haye with 11th  
round stoppage**



**Querrey shocks  
Nadal to lift ATP  
Acapulco title**



MONDAY, MARCH 6, 2017

ENGLAND STUNS US WOMEN 1-0 IN SHEBELIEVES CUP SOCCER Page 18



LONDON: Tottenham Hotspur's Toby Alderweireld, right, heads the ball towards goal during the English Premier League soccer match between Tottenham Hotspur and Everton at White Hart Lane in London, yesterday. — AP

## KANE DOUBLE KEEPS SPURS IN TITLE HUNT

**Tottenham 3**

**Everton 2**

LONDON: Harry Kane extended his hot streak with a blistering brace as Tottenham beat Everton 3-2 to close the gap on leaders Chelsea to seven points yesterday. Kane opened the scoring with a thunderous first-half strike at White Hart Lane and netted again after the break to take his goal tally to 24 in 28 games this season. Everton forward Romelu Lukaku, Kane's closest rival in the race to finish as Premier League top scorer, got one back before Dele Alli struck for Spurs in the closing moments. There was still time for Enner Valencia to score Everton's second, but Tottenham held on for a third victory in their last four league games.

Kane's prolific form puts a little more pressure on runaway leaders Chelsea, who must win at West Ham on Monday to restore their 10-point advantage. "Harry is one of the best. I repeat that not only if he scores, even if he does not score. He was fantastic. He deserves all the praise," Spurs coach Mauricio Pochettino said. "We deserved to win. I feel very proud. We're in a very good position here." Everton could have no complaints about their first defeat in their last 10 league games, a setback which dents their hopes of qualifying for the Europa League. Tottenham had an early penalty appeal when Kyle Walker surged past Leighton Baines into the area, but the Everton defender recovered impressively, just getting a foot on the ball with his last-ditch challenge. Although Spurs were monopolising possession, all the neat passing from Pochettino's men hadn't forced Everton goalkeeper Joel Robles into action. Sensing that his team needed to be more direct, Kane took matters into his own hands to break the deadlock in the 20th minute. When Kane found himself on the ball 30 yards from

goal, he quickly moved menacingly towards the penalty area and, with Everton midfielder Gareth Barry fatally failing to close him down, the Spurs star was free to unleash a superb strike that flashed past Robles.

### KNOCKOUT BLOW

Kane should have netted again moments later when he collected Alli's pass and cleverly cut inside Baines for a close-range effort that was straight at Robles. Christian Eriksen smashed the rebound over the crossbar and the Tottenham midfielder was off target with another opportunity, this one steered wide after he broke clear. After watching Merseyside boxer Tony Bellew's win against David Haye in a heavyweight bout on Saturday evening, Everton boss Ronald Koeman took to social media to hail the Everton fan's "warrior" spirit. But there was little of that against-the-odds mentality from Everton, who failed to lay a glove on Tottenham in a one-sided affair. Victor Wanyama nearly doubled Tottenham's lead when his long-range effort cannoned off a post. Pressing for the knockout blow after the

interval, Tottenham defender Jan Vertonghen stormed into the Everton area, but couldn't beat Robles from an acute angle. If Everton were to halt Spurs' serene progress, they needed much better service for the isolated Lukaku. Instead they shot themselves in the foot and gifted Kane his second goal in the 56th minute. Robles rolled the ball out to Morgan Schneiderlin and, with two Tottenham players lurking nearby, he passed to Ashley Williams, but not quickly enough to stop Alli stealing possession. A quick pass put Kane clean through and the England international kept his composure to slot a cool finish past Robles. It took 80 minutes for Everton to give Lukaku a sight of goal and he snapped up the chance, taking Ross Barkley's pass, accelerating away from the stumbling Vertonghen and firing home. Tottenham were unfazed and Alli made a well-timed run to flick Harry Winks's smart free-kick past Robles in the 90th minute. Valencia's close-range finish in stoppage time came too late for Everton to undo Kane's latest heroics. — AFP

## CITY EASE PAST SUNDERLAND TO KEEP UP TITLE CHASE

**Sunderland 0**

**Man City 2**

SUNDERLAND: Sergio Aguero proved he is still vital to Manchester City's cause as the Argentine paved the way for a routine 2-0 victory at bottom club Sunderland yesterday. Having lost his place last month to young Brazilian Gabriel Jesus there has been speculation about his future, but he was at his razor-sharp best as third-placed City closed the gap on Premier League leaders Chelsea to eight points. He opened the scoring three minutes before half-time when he dinked in Raheem Sterling's low cross-taking his tally to five goals in his last three games in all competitions. Leroy Sane made it 2-0 just before the hour mark after a superb pass by David Silva sent him in on goal. Sunderland struck the post through Jermain Defoe when it was 0-0 but offered little apart from hard graft. With a home game against Stoke City to come on Wednesday, City can move into second place and there

are signs, after a fourth consecutive league win, that they are finding another gear at the perfect moment in the season. And having recovered from a run of six games without a goal, Aguero is back to his best form. "I am happy and was very pleased with display of Sergio. When a huge player is left out people ask, "Why? Why? Why?" Guardiola said. "In the future I want to involve both Gabriel Jesus and Sergio when they're fit. "Sergio helped us a lot in our game and in the build up. It was brilliant." Sunderland had worked tirelessly to restrict City in the first half but were undone by a move of real quality. Yaya Toure fed the ball to Silva who in turn released Sterling and when he delivered a low cross Aguero ghosted into space to flick a close-range effort past Pickford for his 12th league goal of the season and 23rd in all competitions. Sane finished off Sunderland with shot off the post and City could have doubled their lead in the closing stages as Sunderland tired. Apart from the ever-willing Defoe, Sunderland offered little threat after that and remain bottom with only 19 points-six adrift of safety-after a third consecutive defeat. "I hope our players understand the position that we're in, but we're not panicking," manager David Moyes said. — Reuters



SUNDERLAND: Manchester City's Argentinian striker Sergio Aguero (C) vies with Sunderland's Irish defender John O'Shea (L) and Sunderland's Swedish midfielder Sebastian Larsson (R) during the English Premier League football match between Sunderland and Manchester City at the Stadium of Light in Sunderland, north-east England yesterday. — AFP





JAZEERA AIRWAYS CELEBRATES INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY



BEIJING: A general view shows the opening session of the National People's Congress, China's legislature, in Beijing's Great Hall of the People yesterday. China's top economic official trimmed the country's growth target and warned yesterday of dangers from global pressure for trade controls. —AFP

# CHINA TRIMS GROWTH TARGET FOR 2017

## OFFICIAL WARNS AGAINST GLOBAL PRESSURE FOR TRADE CONTROLS

BEIJING: China's top economic official trimmed the country's growth target and warned yesterday of dangers from global pressure for trade controls as Beijing tries to build a consumer-driven economy and reduce reliance on exports and investment.

In a speech to the national legislature, Premier Li Keqiang promised more steps to cut surplus steel production that is straining trade relations with Washington and Europe. He pledged equal treatment for foreign companies, apparently responding to complaints Beijing is trying to squeeze them out of technology and other promising markets.

Li's report set the growth target for the world's second-largest economy at "around 6.5 percent or higher, if possible." That is down from last year's 6.7 percent expansion but, if achieved, would be among the world's strongest, reflecting confidence efforts to create new industries are gaining traction.

The premier called for attention to the risks of China's surging debt levels, which economists see as a rising threat to growth. Li announced no major initiatives, but that was widely expected as the ruling Communist Party tries to avoid shocks ahead of a congress late this year at which President Xi Jinping is due to be given a second five-year term as leader. Analysts expect Chinese leaders to use the leg-

islative meeting to emphasize reducing financial risks and keeping growth stable.

At a time of demands in the United States and Europe for trade controls, Li warned China faces "more complicated and graver situations" at home and abroad.

"Both the de-globalization trend and protectionism are growing," Li said. "There are many uncertainties about the direction of the major economies' policies and their spillover effects, and the factors that could cause instability and uncertainty are visibly increasing." Chinese leaders have publicly defended free trade in response to President Donald Trump's promises to raise duties on Chinese goods, though Beijing's trading partners complain China is the most closed major economy.

### Trump policies

China "may be adversely affected" if Trump goes ahead with "tough policies," but the impact should be limited, said economist Song Lifang at Renmin University in Beijing. "With China's domestic economy still in the phase of transformation, the tasks for China's economic growth are arduous but with great potential," said Song.

Growth has cooled steadily since 2010 as communist leaders try to develop a consumer-driven economy and reduce reliance on trade, heavy industry and investment.

The latest growth target is in line with those reforms and efforts to create a "moderately prosperous society," Li said. Chinese leaders have tried to downplay the significance of the growth target and shift focus to improvements in incomes, consumer spending and other factors. But the target is closely watched as a forecast of economic performance, which has repercussions throughout Asia, where China is the biggest trading partner for all its neighbors.

Li acknowledged concerns about the rising dangers of debt, though he said the financial system is stable. "We must be fully alert to the buildup of risks related to non-performing assets, bond defaults, shadow banking and Internet finance," said Li.

Banking and securities regulators already have said their priority this year is reducing risk and watching financial industries more closely following a 2015 stock price collapse and warnings investors are engaged in a dangerous new bout of speculative trading. Beijing's reliance on repeated infusions of credit to prop up growth since the 2008 global crisis has driven up debt, prompting concern it could trigger a banking crisis or drag on the economy.

Total debt owed by local Chinese governments, companies and households has soared from the equivalent of 150 percent of annual economic output before 2008 to about 260 per-

cent. Regulators have begun trying to hammer out deals to reduce debt loads at state companies but private sector economists say they need to move faster.

Economists have warned setting a growth target too high could force Beijing to resort to stimulus spending, setting back efforts to reduce reliance on investment and debt.

Sunday's report calls for creating 11 million new jobs, an increase from last year's target of 10 million in a possible sign of increased official optimism. Li promised to eliminate 50 million metric tons of steel production capacity. That would help to reduce the flood of Chinese exports that is depressing global prices and prompting complaints by Washington and Europe that thousands of jobs are in danger.

Li also promised to eliminate 150 million tons of coal production capacity. He didn't mention other industries such as aluminum in which China's trading partners complain excess capacity supported by government subsidies is distorting global markets. Li promised "equal opportunities" and "fair rules" to private companies in the state-dominated economy. He promised changes including cutting taxes for the smallest businesses and simplifying the process of registering up a private company.

Party leaders have pledged repeatedly to give entrepreneurs, who create most of China's new

jobs and wealth, a bigger economic role. But reform advocates complain state companies still control industries from banking to telecoms to energy and benefit from monopolies, low-cost bank loans and other favors. Li also promised foreign companies equal treatment with their Chinese counterparts under a government development strategy dubbed "China Manufacturing 2025."

That follows complaints by US and European business groups that Beijing appears to be trying to squeeze foreign companies out of promising markets including software and other technology. Turning to political affairs, Li warned Beijing would not tolerate any movement by self-ruled Taiwan's popularly elected government toward formal independence.

"We will resolutely oppose and contain separatist activities for Taiwan independence," he said.

A spokesman for the finance ministry told The Associated Press that the spending on China's military, the world's second-highest after the United States, would rise 7 percent this year to 1.044 trillion yuan (\$151 billion), marking the smallest percentage annual growth rate this century. However, unlike in previous years, the defense budget figure was not released in the documents distributed to journalists. Beijing's military spending has grown by double digits almost every for most of the past two decades. —AP



LONDON: This file photo taken on January 31, 2017 shows British Chancellor of the Exchequer, Philip Hammond leaving Downing street after the weekly cabinet meeting in central London. —AFP

# UK NEEDS FINANCIAL RESERVES IN THE TANK FOR BREXIT: HAMMOND

LONDON: Britain's Finance Minister Philip Hammond said he would keep "reserves in the tank" to see the economy through its looming Brexit challenge, signalling little room for extra spending in this week's budget despite better news on borrowing. He also said tensions were now easing with other European Union countries after Prime Minister Theresa May shocked her peers by saying no deal was better than a bad deal.

Hammond is due to deliver a budget plan on Wednesday which will be overshadowed by the triggering of the two-year Brexit process which is expected this month. Britain's economy coped surprisingly well with the initial shock of June's referendum, meaning official growth forecasts for 2017 will probably be raised sharply in the budget.

It also means Hammond will probably announce a modest fall in the amount of money that Britain needs to borrow over the next five years. But he said yesterday that he will not be relaxing his strategy of fixing what remains one of the biggest budget deficits among the world's big rich economies.

"If your bank increases your credit card limit, I don't think you feel obliged to go out and spend every last penny of it immediately," Hammond told BBC television.

"I regard my job ... as making sure that our economy is resilient, that we have got reserves in the tank." In a separate interview with ITV television, he said an improvement in the short-term outlook for borrowing did not mean that things would necessarily be better over the longer term. Britain's government is under pressure to spend more on its health system and its care for the elderly as well as its often violent prisons and a host of other services. Hammond acknowledged the strains but he said cash was not the only answer and some authorities were coping better than others. Further ahead, the government needed to rethink how it will fund its plans to cope with an ageing population, he said.

### Better EU mood music

Despite its robust response to the Brexit vote in 2016, the outlook for Britain's economy remains clouded by its approaching split from the bloc which buys about half its exports.

Hammond said yesterday that the tone of private discussions between Britain and other members of the EU had improved. "Whatever is being said publicly ahead of the negotiation, the private messaging is that people are now engaging with this more as a shared problem, something that we have to solve together," he told ITV. "There is an increasingly pragmatic approach."

In January, May prioritized tighter controls on migration over continued membership of the bloc's single market. In the same month, Hammond suggested Britain could slash its corporate tax levels if it did not get a good Brexit deal. As well as setting aside money to cushion Brexit's impact on the economy in the coming years, Hammond is seeking to fix Britain's long-standing problem of low productivity growth which has made it reliant on often volatile spending by consumers.

The finance ministry announced the government would spend more on skills training for 16- to 19-year-olds, addressing a concern of businesses who worry that Brexit will mean they will find it harder to employ migrant workers. —Reuters



# WHAT TO PREPARE FOR YOUR BUSINESS PRESENTATION?

Depending on the job you have, the number of times you will be asked to prepare a presentation varies. However, it will most likely happen at least once in your career. Whether it's pitching an idea to the marketing team, revealing a product to customers and clients, or even an assessment for your new dream job, you will need to polish your presentation skills in order to succeed at your endeavor. Leaving all preparations to the last minute will usually lead to a drop in the presentation's quality, which defies what every individual or business aims for. An excellent presentation requires excellent preparation. So next time you have a presentation, whether for a new job or your current one, make sure to tick off the checklist below, prepared by the career experts at Bayt.com.

## 1. Prevent technical issues

Many presentations are aided by visuals, objects, or demonstrations - all of which should be readily available when you're in the spotlight. This is why you need to make sure everything is working beforehand. Spend some time practicing and resolving all technical matters prior to the

## Bayt.com weekly report

presentation. Also, try to avoid gimmicks. Even though they work well at grabbing attention, they are also highly distracting; which is the last thing you want to do.

## 2. Follow the timeline

Before you delve into the content of your presentation, your audience should have an overview. This gives them a sense of time and a sense of where they stand throughout the session. A confused audience will not pay attention and will lose their focus easily. For your own sake, consider having a more detailed outline of your points. Some speakers have that outline memorized, but you can also have it on paper to refer to during the presentation. It helps you stay on the right track but don't use it as reading material.

## 3. Relax

Let your body, eyes, and gestures all do the talking. In other words, do not be a robot! Monotonous voices and

standing still will bore the audience, leaving them uninterested in what you are talking about. But also remember that too much movement can be distracting as well. If you find public speaking intimidating and you think it affects your performance, take some courses to help you with your soft skills!

## 4. Use numbers

People respond better when there is research and numbers to back up what you say. Use numbers that your audience can understand and relate to. An example would be showing how much revenue you expect your new marketing strategy to generate. Sharing such data is both appealing, relevant, and makes your presentation memorable as well.

## 5. Dress for the occasion

Presentations rely on visuals. Even with the lack of

visual aids, the speaker becomes the focus. This is why you need to put as much thought into your looks as your presentation. Dress according to occasion and the audience you are presenting to. You can always opt for smart wear and simple colors as not to give any excuse for distractions.

## 6. Be yourself

At the end of the day, you are what makes your presentation memorable and impactful. Don't be scared to be yourself. Make a joke here and there. Implement your talents into the presentation when suitable. Share anecdotes that people can relate to. You are the reason for the success of your presentation! Bayt.com is the #1 job site in the Middle East with more than 40,000 employers and over 26,750,000 registered job seekers from across the Middle East, North Africa and the globe, representing all industries, nationalities and career levels. Post a job or find jobs on www.bayt.com today and access the leading resource for job seekers and employers in the region.



## FINNAIR TO CANCEL FLIGHTS DUE TO SERVICE STAFF STRIKE

**HELSINKI:** Finland's state-controlled airline Finnair said it cancelled 15 flights yesterday and for tomorrow due to a strike by Finnish airport service workers. Service workers went on a five-hour strike on Friday and the action is likely to be expanded tomorrow after trade unions and business representatives failed to resolve a pay dispute. "The strikes and support strikes taking

place on Monday ... will have a significant impact on Finnair's operations despite the fact that Finnair is not in any way a party to the labour dispute," the company said in a statement yesterday. The cancelled routes were mainly domestic, while one was between Helsinki and Gothenburgh, Sweden. Finnair said all passengers should also prepare for delays tomorrow. — Reuters

# INDONESIA MINING POLICY SHIFT SPARKS FRESH TURMOIL

MANY THINK COUNTRY BECAME AN UNCERTAIN PLACE TO INVEST

**JAKARTA:** A controversial U-turn on mineral exports has sparked turmoil in Indonesia's key mining sector, providing a fresh headache for firms struggling to work in Southeast Asia's biggest economy. Despite sitting atop some of the world's most abundant natural resources, successive governments have failed to take advantage of its vast riches, with critics blaming badly thought-out and nationalistic policies that make the country an uncertain place to invest. And the latest overhaul has sparked a potentially damaging standoff with one of the United States' biggest miners and a major investor in the country. Jakarta in January relaxed a 2014 landmark ban on shipments of raw mineral ores, which was originally aimed at spurring the domestic smelting industry but led to mine closures, job losses and a fall in government revenues.

While some firms may stand to benefit from the sudden rollback, it has infuriated companies that invested large amounts in Indonesia on operations for smelting, the process of extracting metals from their ores. In addition, the government asked firms to sign new permits that critics say offer less protection-triggering a standoff with US giant Freeport-McMoRan, which has stopped shipments from its huge copper and gold mine in the east.

The move is the latest in a series of regulatory changes from the government that have caused jitters among miners, with some foreign firms choosing to exit Indonesia rather than deal with such an unpredictable environment. "One of the inherent problems in the Indonesian mining industry over the last few years has been the lack of consistency in government policy, with the government changing its mind quite regularly and unexpectedly," Bill Sullivan, a Jakarta-based lawyer and mining expert, told AFP.

Authorities have raised taxes and royalties on shipments and demanded that foreign miners reduce the stakes in their Indonesian operations to less than half.

## Heading for the exit

In June US gold mining giant Newmont sold its share in an Indonesian mine to local investors after more than three decades operating in the archipelago, citing more onerous regulations as a factor. And Rio Tinto, the world's second-biggest miner, is reportedly considering walking away from its stake in Freeport's vast Grasberg mine in Papua province owing to the current row.

Economic nationalists have pushed putting stricter conditions on foreign firms in a bid to reap greater profits from the industry, but critics fear the moves could backfire by scaring off investors at a time policymakers are already struggling to reignite slowing economic growth.

As resource-rich nations benefit from a jump in commodity prices after years of declines, the regulatory uncertainty means Indonesia may not fare as well. The latest policy change has sparked a fierce row with Freeport, which says it has given the government more than \$16.5 billion in taxes and other payments since 1991.

The US miner has refused to bow to the gov-

ernment's demands to sign a new deal without additional assurances, stopped work at Grasberg-the world's second-biggest copper pit-started laying off workers, and threatened to sue the government.

"Right now we are at an impasse with the government," Freeport chief executive Richard Adkerson said during a visit to Jakarta last month. Under the changes to Indonesia's export ban, miners will be able to export nickel ore and bauxite as well as concentrates of other minerals under certain conditions, instead of having to process them in Indonesia.

The amendments went further than analysts had expected, although some exports are still banned. For investors who have already ploughed money into constructing smelters,

including many Chinese firms, the U-turn on the ban is a disaster. "People who have invested millions of dollars in Indonesia can only pray now that the government will revoke the regulation," said Jonatan Handoyo, executive director of Indonesia's main smelter industry association.

Despite the outcry, officials are unrepentant with the finance ministry predicting the reversal could boost government coffers by \$3.12 billion in the next five years.

Even if the government does not hit such an optimistic target, the policy overhaul may still turn out to be a good thing in the long term, said mining expert Sullivan. "Indonesia is clearly being forced to rethink its position regarding resource nationalism and focus more on economic reality," he said. — AFP



This picture taken in Kendawangan, West Kalimantan on Borneo island shows a smelter Alumina refinery of PT. An overhaul of Indonesian mining rules has sparked fresh concern for investors in a sector long plagued by uncertainty and triggered a fierce battle with one of the world's biggest miners. — AFP



This picture taken in Kendawangan, West Kalimantan on Borneo island shows a truck carrying material next to piles of bauxite materials at a mining belonging to Harita group in Kendawangan. — AFP

## US HOMEBUYERS SEEK ALTERNATIVE TO CRAMPED APARTMENT LIVING

**SAN FRANCISCO:** Whether it's would-be homebuyers frustrated by rising US home prices or renters eager for an alternative to cramped apartment living, many are increasingly opting to rent a house.

The dynamic has persuaded developers like Irvine, California's AHV Communities to roll out communities of newly built houses for rent. Founder and Chief Executive Mark Wolf spoke recently with The Associated Press about the company's business model and the trends it sees driving demand for new single-family rental houses.

**Q: The vast majority of builders build houses for sale. Why build rental houses now, when the tight inventory of homes for sale favors sellers?**

**A:** While everyone deserves and should own a home, not everyone can own a home. So we really wanted to provide a unique, niche product to the market that really adds value to the end user. When you look at our rent and you look at our product, the value is off the charts.

The rent is similar to that of what you would rent an apartment for in the neighborhoods we're in. And you get someone a house, which is what everybody wants, but not everybody can afford.

**Q: Could you explain how you go about developing these communities?**

**A:** We build communities of single-family homes for rent, managed and maintained just like an apartment, kind of like a country club setting. We put a fitness center, pool, clubhouse and onsite daily management for the

community. We serve as the quarterback from day one until the finish line. We have a whole staff that monitors land process and vertical building. We design these houses. We build these houses for sustainability and durability. We want these to be long-term, livable solutions for folks.

**Q: How many communities do you have in the works right now?**

**A:** We recently launched two new communities near Austin: Pflugerville and Georgetown. Those have infrastructure going in-streets, sewer, water, and all that stuff. Those should be vertical come summer time. The Pflugerville deal, that's going to be 84 units plus a clubhouse. And then we have another deal up in Georgetown that's going to be 92 units, plus a clubhouse. Continuing along in Texas, we have two more projects we're closing in the next 45 days. One for 250 units in west San Antonio. And we have another deal in New Braunfels, which is just north of San Antonio and south of Austin, for 211 units. We're looking at markets like Texas, like the Carolinas, like Tennessee, like Florida ultimately.

**Q: You are based in California, but focused on developing these rental communities in the South and Rust Belt. Why?**

**A:** Land prices have a lot to do with it. You can still find reasonable land in the cities we're in. There are a lot of things we look for when we identify a market. Strong apartment rents, that's key and crucial because we look at the alternative to our homes as apartments. — AP



Mark Wolf

## EXCHANGE RATES

### AL-MUZAINI EXCHANGE CO.

#### ASIAN COUNTRIES

Japanese Yen	2.689
Indian Rupees	4.571
Pakistani Rupees	2.919
Sri Lankan Rupees	2.034
Nepali Rupees	2.866
Singapore Dollar	216.060
Hongkong Dollar	3.946
Bangladesh Taka	3.831
Philippine Peso	6.132
Thai Baht	8.756

#### GCC COUNTRIES

Saudi Riyal	81.694
Qatari Riyal	84.142
Omani Riyal	795.608
Bahraini Dinar	813.470
UAE Dirham	83.408

#### ARAB COUNTRIES

Egyptian Pound - Cash	20.450
Egyptian Pound - Transfer	17.537
Yemen Riyal/for 1000	1.230
Tunisian Dinar	134.810
Jordanian Dinar	431.290
Lebanese Lira/for 1000	2.041
Syrian Lira	2.183
Morocco Dirham	30.924

#### EUROPEAN & AMERICAN COUNTRIES

US Dollar Transfer	306.150
Euro	327.180
Sterling Pound	384.680
Canadian dollar	234.780
Turkish lira	83.310

Swiss Franc	307.460
Australian Dollar	237.110
US Dollar Buying	304.950

#### GOLD

20 Gram	252.060
10 Gram	128.950
5 Gram	65.320

### DOLLARCO EXCHANGE CO. LTD

#### Rate for Transfr

US Dollar	305.950
Canadian Dolla	229.450
Sterling Pound	377.705
Euro	326.590
Swiss Frank	309.890
Bahrain Dinar	811.050
UAE Dirhams	83.690
Qatari Riyals	84.915
Saudi Riyals	82.515
Jordanian Dinar	432.690
Egyptian Pound	18.998
Sri Lankan Rupees	2.025
Indian Rupees	4.578
Pakistani Rupees	2.918
Bangladesh Taka	3.853
Philippines Peso	6.079
Cyprus pound	168.015
Japanese Yen	3.680
Syrian Pound	2.425
Nepalese Rupees	3.865
Malaysian Ringgit	69.665

Chinese Yuan Renminbi	44.915
Thai Bhat	9.735
Turkish Lira	83.985

### BAHRAIN EXCHANGE COMPANY WLL

#### CURRENCY BUY SELL

British Pound	0.371110	0.381110
Czech Korune	0.004006	0.016006
Danish Krone	0.039611	0.044611
Euro	0.320647	0.329647
Norwegian Krone	0.032258	0.037458
Romanian Leu	0.084889	0.084889
Slovakia	0.009188	0.019188
Swedish Krona	0.029998	0.034998
Swiss Franc	0.297928	0.308928
Turkish Lira	0.077243	0.087543
Australian Dollar	0.224867	0.236867
New Zealand Dollar	0.210059	0.219559
Canadian Dollar	0.223828	0.232828
Georgina Lari	0.138343	0.138343
US Dollars	0.302200	0.306600
US Dollars Mint	0.302700	0.306600
Bangladesh Taka	0.003503	0.004087
Chinese Yuan	0.042983	0.046483
Hong Kong Dollar	0.037407	0.040157
Indian Rupee	0.002653	0.004750

Indonesian Rupiah	0.000018	0.000024
Japanese Yen	0.002602	0.002782
Kenyan Shilling	0.003032	0.003032
Korean Won	0.000255	0.000270
Malaysian Ringgit	0.065062	0.071062
Nepalese Rupee	0.002965	0.003135
Pakistan Rupee	0.002681	0.002971
Philippine Peso	0.005996	0.006296
Sierra Leone	0.000068	0.000074
Singapore Dollar	0.211876	0.221876
South African Rand	0.017517	0.026017
Sri Lankan Rupee	0.001667	0.002247
Taiwan	0.009867	0.010047
Thai Baht	0.008401	0.008951

Bahraini Dinar	0.805895	0.814395
Egyptian Pound	0.013829	0.023082
Iranian Riyal	0.000085	0.000086
Iraqi Dinar	0.000190	0.000250
Jordanian Dinar	0.426354	0.435354
Kuwaiti Dinar	1.000000	1.000000
Lebanese Pound	0.000158	0.000258
Moroccan Dirhams	0.020168	0.044168
Nigerian Naira	0.001270	0.001905
Omani Riyal	0.789163	0.794843
Qatar Riyal	0.083321	0.084771
Saudi Riyal	0.080593	0.081893
Syrian Pound	0.001299	0.001519
Tunisian Dinar	0.129774	0.137774
Turkish Lira	0.077470	0.087770
UAE Dirhams	0.081970	0.083670
Yemeni Riyal	0.000996	0.001076



# GLOBAL EQUITIES SHINE IN FEBRUARY

## NBK Capital Global Markets Review

**KUWAIT:** Global equities continue to perform well ending the month up 2.6 percent as measured by the MSCI All World Index. The rally was led by the US and emerging markets. President Trump continues to be a positive force on US equities, which closed up 3.7 percent for the month as measured by the S&P 500. Other major markets ended the month with gains, whereas the GCC region was down 0.8 percent, as measured by the MSCI GCC Countries. Commodities had mixed performance for the month with Gold closing up 3.1 percent and Brent Oil closing down 0.2 percent. As of the end of this month, oil producers remain compliant with the OPEC deal terms.

US manufacturing continues expanding with the ISM Manufacturing PMI for February coming in at 57.7, slightly higher than January's number of 56. ISM Non-Manufacturing PMI was also higher in February, at 57.6 versus the 56.5 in January. The labor market continues to be strong with Initial Jobless Claims at 223,000 compared to the previous month's claims of 242,000. Durable goods orders increased to 1.8 percent in January from -0.8 percent in December. Housing starts declined in January by 2.6 percent from the previous month although building permits increased

from 1.228m in December to 1.285m in January. US retail sales for January was positive at 0.4 percent although lower than the prior month. Existing home sales was also up in January at 5.7m compared to the December's reading of 5.5m. Consumer confidence was up 2.9 percent for the month of February, with a reading of 114.8 versus 111.6 in the prior month.

The UK Manufacturing Purchasing Managers Index (PMI) was 54.6 for the month of February, slightly lower than January. The Consumer Price Index for January, YoY, was 1.8 percent compared to 1.6 percent in December. Retail sales performed poorly in January dropping to 1.5 percent from a reading of 4.6 percent December. Consumer confidence also dropped for the month of February to -6 from -5 in January.

### UK equities

The eurozone Markit Manufacturing PMI for the month of February was 55.4 compared to the January figure of 55.2 indicating continued expansion. The Markit Services PMI preliminary reading increased to 55.6 in February from 53.7 in January further showing improvement in business activity. Consumer confidence was unchanged from the previous month at -6.2, while CPI for the

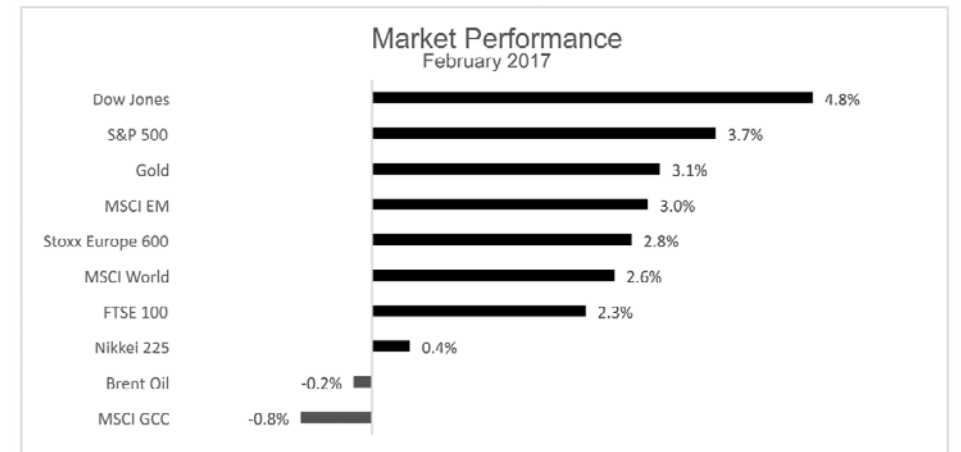
## NBK CAPITAL

Eurozone area, on a year on year basis for the month of January, was also unchanged at 1.8 percent. European equities rose in January by 2.8 percent, as measured by the Stoxx Europe 600.

Japan exports, on a year on year basis in January was positive at 1.3 percent, although it dropped from 5.4 percent in December. Imports for the same time-period were up 8.5 percent from the -2.6 percent in December. The Nikkei Manufacturing PMI for February was at 53.3, slightly below the prior month's reading of 53.5, indicating Japanese manufacturing is continuing to expand. Housing starts were up year on year for the month of January at 12.6 percent compared to 3.9 percent for the month of December.

Japanese equities were slightly up in February, as measured by the Nikkei 225, increasing 0.4 percent.

China's imports and exports both expanded year on year during the month of January at 7.9 percent and 16.7 percent. Overall, the country recorded a trade surplus for January of RMB 354.5b compared to RMB 335b in December. The Caxin Manufacturing PMI for the month of February was 51.7 compared to



51 in the previous month while the Non-manufacturing PMI was slightly down at 54.2 from 54.6 in January.

The CPI reading year on year for January was reported at 2.5 percent coming in above expectations and the previous month's reading of 2.1 percent.

Emerging market equities continued to perform well in February up 3.0 percent while Chinese equities, as measured by the Shanghai Stock Exchange Composite Index, also performed well posting gains of 2.6 per-

cent. The GCC equity markets had mixed performances for the month of February. Saudi experienced the largest decline at -1.8 percent followed by Kuwait at -0.8 percent and Dubai at -0.3 percent. Bahrain's equity market was the star performer gaining 3.5 percent followed by Qatar gaining 1.0 percent. Abu Dhabi and Oman were almost flat for the month posting a gain of 0.07 percent each. Egypt's index did not continue its rally from the previous month, decreasing 5.8 percent in February.

## TIGHT US MARKET HITS HOUSING RECOVERY

**WASHINGTON:** The US housing market, a key economic driver, is exceedingly tight, with supply struggling to meet demand as the sector recovers a decade after the housing crisis, analysts say.

But persistent and pent-up demand among would-be homeowners could spur builders to boost construction, helping to ease pressure on the market for new homes. Inventory of homes for sale has remained stagnant even while the pace of sales returns to pre-crisis levels.

"What I hear from realtors pretty much across the country is that if they had more inventory they could make more sales," Lawrence Yun, chief economist at the National Association of Realtors, told AFP. Home sales jumped in January, with sales of existing homes rising 3.3 percent, the fastest monthly rate since early 2007, while sales of new homes increased nearly four percent, with buyers in the Northeast snapping up the largest volume of single-family houses in nine years.

While demand has been bolstered by steady job creation and a pickup in wages in 2016, that exuberance has not translated into an increased supply of homes available. Inventory for existing homes has fallen for 20 months in a row, and the number of homes for sale for every 1,000 households fell 47 percent between January 2008 and January of this year, according to figures from the residential real estate website Trulia.

As the housing market continues to reemerge from the 2008 financial crisis precipitated by a housing bubble and mortgage crisis-prices are recovering. The median price for a new home rose 34 percent between January of 2008 and January of this year. Existing home prices have risen for 59 straight months, hitting a median of \$228,900 in January-up 7.1 percent over the same month last year.

And 30-year mortgage rates also have moved sharply higher since the end of 2016, rising to 4.17 percent in February, up half a point year-on-year, according to government-sponsored mortgage agency Freddie Mac.

### Construction lagging

NAR's Yun told AFP tight supply could see sales of existing homes flatline in 2017 after hitting an annual rate of 5.7 million units sold in January. "That may actually be the yearly high," he said.

Compared to the population, the pace of new home construction currently is at about 64 percent of its 50-year average and rising slowly, according to Trulia. Analysts point to a range of reasons to explain the drop off in housing inventory.

Yun noted that zoning, regulations and a tight labor market can create barriers for construction, while homeowners may be reluctant to sell, believing a peak in prices is yet to come.

Investment firms bought up a large share of the supply of existing homes in the wake of the financial crisis, converting many into rental properties, keeping suitable single-family houses off the market, he added. "Apparently they're unwilling to unload because rent growth is very profitable and they just want to ride it out," he added. Builders may also feel that rental is where the money is. December saw a stunning 54 percent jump in the construction of multi-unit buildings, although that measure can be volatile.

The hot rental market is fueled in part by the fact many people are unwilling or unable to borrow to buy a home in the wake of the crisis.

The share of people aged 18 to 34 living with parents or relatives has been steadily rising since the late 1980s and is now approaching 40 percent, according to Trulia. As those millennials get jobs and move out in a growing economy, they are likely to form a new cohort of renters before buying their first homes.

Ralph McLaughlin, the chief economist at Trulia, told AFP the construction sector was still suffering from low capacity after the housing crisis. Furthermore, some housing markets are suffering "price spread," where the gap between the costs for starter, mid-range and luxury houses grows, making it harder for home-owners to trade up.

This can help shrink inventory by reducing turnover, according to McLaughlin. "You may be less likely to make that hop and more likely to make the rock you're on your home," he said.

Patrick Newport of IHS Global Insight said sales volumes had yet to recover from the housing crisis and demand had room to run, which could exacerbate the inventory crunch.

"Every year, the housing numbers get a little bit better. We're healing but we're still not back to normal," he said. —AFP

## KFH CAPITAL ARRANGES EQUATE SUKUK, SUPPORTS ECONOMY, SAYS AL-MARZOUQ

### DEBUT SUKUK FOR A KUWAITI CORPORATE IN ACCORDANCE WITH CMA LAW

**KUWAIT:** Chief Executive Officer—KFH Capital, affiliated to Kuwait Finance House Group, Abdulaziz Nasser Al-Marzouq said that KFH Capital acted as a global coordinator and book runner for EQUATE SUKUK SPC Limited's ("EQUATE SPC") in collaboration with different global institutions. In addition, KFH Capital also acted in collaboration with HSBC, as Program Arrangers for its debut \$ 500 million Sukuk offering under the \$ 2.0 billion Trust Certificate ("Sukuk") Issuance Program. Equate issuance is rated Baa2 by Moody's and BBB+ by Standard & Poor's. It has been listed on the Irish Stock Exchange.

Al-Marzouq added in a press release that EQUATE Sukuk is the first issuance approved for a Kuwaiti Corporate by Capital Market Authority as per the new CMA Law. He applauded the cooperation between the CMA and the issuance participants. He voiced hope that this move is a starting point for further issuances from Kuwaiti Corporates, and a call for taking advantage of Sukuk product as a significant financing tool in the global markets. Sukuk receive huge investors' interest and turnout as they play a key role in boosting the expansion and growth plans.

Al-Marzouq stated that the 7-year Sukuk offering will mature in February 2024. The issuance was well received by banks, financial institutions and fund managers globally, with 7 times oversubscription and an order book of \$ 3.7 billion.

He said that the issuance witnessed the participation of 270 investors from Middle East, Europe and Asia, indicating the pricing was very competitive to the conventional bonds. This affirms the importance of Sukuk at the global level.

The 7-year Sukuk were priced competitively with a profit rate of 175 basis points over the 7-year mid-swap

rate arriving at a coupon of 3.944 percent. During the book building process the initial price thoughts were released at MS + 210a which was later revised to MS+187a and finally the Sukuk was priced at MS+ 175 bps on the basis of strong demand from investors. This affirms the robust financial position of EQUATE.

Mohammad Husain, EQUATE Group's Chief Executive Officer commented: "We are very proud of our debut Sukuk issuance which marks our second successful transaction in the global debt capital markets. We are especially proud of the strong investor reception, which is a true testament to the quality of EQUATE Group's credit." He expressed his thanks to KFH Capital in recognition of the efforts exerted to take approvals and for the coordination with the CMA and concerned authorities to make the issuance successful.

Al-Marzouq indicated that this success is a continuation of KFH effort in boosting the industrial sector in the country, particularly the petrochemicals. KFH is keen on supporting the national economy by offering financing services. KFH participated previously in offering credit facilities to different projects of EQUATE. Al Marzouq affirmed that KFH stands as a strategic partner in projects in the oil and gas sector, and petrochemical and other important sectors.

It is worth noting that Citigroup Global Markets Limited, HSBC Bank plc, J P Morgan Securities plc and KFH Capital Investment Company KSCC and NBK Capital acted as Global Coordinators. Citigroup Global Markets Limited, HSBC Bank plc, J.P. Morgan Securities plc, KFH Capital Investment Company KSCC, NBK Capital, MUFG Securities EMEA plc, Mizuho International plc, National Bank of Abu Dhabi P.J.S.C. and SMBC Nikko Capital Markets Limited acted as Joint Lead Managers.



Abdulaziz Al-Marzouq



Mohammad Husain



**ATHENS:** Greece's Prime Minister Alexis Tsipras (right) and his French counterpart Bernard Cazeneuve leave after a press conference at Maximos Mansion in Athens. — AP

## TSIPRAS CAUTIONS GREEK UNCERTAINTY 'NOT SMART'

**ATHENS:** Drawing out Greece's troubled fiscal talks and creating uncertainty during tough times for Europe is not a smart choice, Greek Prime Minister Alexis Tsipras warned yesterday. Greece's EU and IMF creditors have been locked for months in a standoff over debt relief for Greece and budget targets demanded from Athens. The International Monetary Fund believes demands on Greece sought by the Europeans are too ambitious.

But if the eurozone is going to stick with its plans, then the IMF wants the necessary tax hikes and pension cuts to meet them before it will lend further to Athens.

"Returning to uncertainty is not the smartest choice, especially while Europe is facing major challenges," Tsipras told the Greek weekly Documento. With the European Union already reeling from Brexit, Tsipras argued that Greece's current rescue program—its third since 2010—would collapse if his government were to fall. His leftist-led coalition has just 153 MPs in the 300-seat parliament, and it is unlikely that even the charismatic Tsipras could push through another package of painful austerity reforms.

"A breakdown in talks in order to lead

the country to elections would cause a de facto collapse in the (bailout)," Tsipras claimed. He added that creditors had "no choice" but to trust his leftist government to take the country out of an economic crisis continuing for an eighth year.

"Either this government succeeds or the rescue programs will fail," Tsipras said. Following a long standoff between the EU and the IMF over debt relief and budget targets, talks between Greek officials and representatives from its creditors aimed at freeing up fresh funds resumed in Athens this week. Also yesterday, Germany's Spiegel magazine said Greece and its eurozone partner countries were now close to a deal. Spiegel said this would include debt relief, a lower primary surplus target, IMF support and recognition of the country's debt as sustainable-plus immediate reforms to be adopted by Athens.

The German and Greek finance ministries declined to comment on the report. At a Eurogroup meeting on February 20, Athens agreed to discuss additional tax and pension reforms and labour market regulation. But Tsipras yesterday insisted these reforms would have "zero" fiscal impact in the austerity-worn nation. — AFP

## CHINESE PROTEST AGAINST SOUTH KOREA'S LOTTE

**BEIJING:** Dozens of people holding Chairman Mao posters protested in China's Jilin province yesterday, calling for a boycott of South Korean goods as part of a backlash against the country's Lotte Group.

The retail giant has faced growing opposition in China since signing a deal to provide land for a US missile-defence system tomorrow. The plan to install the Terminal High-Altitude Area Defense (THAAD) system was prompted by threats from North Korea, but Beijing fears the move will undermine its own military capabilities.

"No to THAAD! Boycott Korean goods!" chanted the protesters in northern Jilin province.

"Patriotism starts with me! Long live the Communist Party!" Similar protests have sprouted across the country, as Lotte suffers setbacks in several of its Chinese ventures from last month's government-ordered halt of a \$2.6 billion theme park

project to apparent cyber-attacks on company websites. Citing fire violations, authorities in Liaoning's Dandong city have also suspended the operation of Lotte Mart, the Yonhap news agency reported on Saturday.

Earlier this week, major tour operators confirmed to AFP that trips to South Korea have been suspended "due to policy and safety factors."

China has repeatedly denounced THAAD as a threat to its security, with a foreign ministry spokesman saying "the consequences entailed will be borne by the US and the Republic of Korea".

Calls are growing in China for Beijing to use the carrot and stick of its huge market to raise pressure on South Korea to abandon the THAAD plan. The stakes are high for Lotte, which has invested more than ten trillion won (\$8.76 billion) in its Chinese operations since 1994. — AFP



**Residents hold posters of late communist leader Mao Zedong during a protest calling for a boycott of South Korean goods in Jilin, in China's northeast Jilin province yesterday. — AFP**



# AS WALL ST SURGES, MORE ARE WORRIED ABOUT VALUATION

**NEW YORK:** The US stock market's surge since the election has reignited a debate on valuation and whether the market can go higher still after hitting some significant milestones.

The Dow on Wednesday soared above 21,000 points for the first time following President Donald Trump's first major address to Congress. After pulling back on Thursday, stocks tentatively resumed the upward climb on Friday, finishing slightly higher. Analysts say Trump's more conciliatory tone during his Tuesday night congressional address lifted hopes he will win approval for tax cuts and other growth measures strongly backed by the market.

Market watchers also are heartened by

improving US data on jobs, consumer confidence and service sector activity. That better economic data has permitted investors to bid stocks higher in spite of red flags on Trump's approach to trade, immigration, foreign policy and other issues.

Still, some analysts suspect the market is near a top. "When you look at valuations today, it's hard to see it going up eight or 10 percent unless earnings go up a lot," said David Levy, portfolio manager at Republic Wealth Advisors.

"On a short-term basis, the market is extremely overbought." Many market watchers assess valuation with the price-to-earnings ratio, a benchmark of total market capitalization to

earnings. That ratio now stands at almost 30, its highest level since 2002 following a 12 percent rise in the S&P 500 since the election. "The best argument for avoiding US stocks is simple: valuation," Nicholas Colas, chief market strategist at the ConvergeX brokerage, said in a note earlier this week.

Colas' analysis looked at the S&P 500's performance since 2002, concluding that while the seven percent annual growth rate lagged the increase over a longer period of time, it was still "nicely positive."

**Stocks vulnerable to Fed**  
But those gains were made possible in large

part due to low interest rates enacted after the 2008 financial crisis. Current low interest rates are a main reason "we are not in a bubble territory or anything of the sort," investor Warren Buffett told CNBC earlier this week.

"Measured against interest rates, stocks actually are on the cheap side compared to historic valuations," Buffett said. "But the risk always is that interest rates go up a lot, and that brings stocks down." In fact, the Federal Reserve expects to raise the benchmark lending rate multiple times in 2017, perhaps as soon as this month.

Fed Chair Janet Yellen said on Friday another interest rate increase could be "appropriate" following the central bank's meeting March 14-15 if US employment and inflation remain in line with expectations Colas said there is still an avenue for stocks to climb higher in a world of rising interest rates if corporate profits rise.

That could happen if Trump succeeds in cutting taxes. "For the next 15 years, however, earnings will almost certainly have to go it alone if stocks are to replicate the performance of the last decade and a half," he said. — AFP



**NEW YORK:** Jonathan Niles (left) and Jay Woods work on the floor of the New York Stock Exchange. — AP

Daily Kuwait Stock Exchange Report										
Sunday 05 March 2017										
Index	Change	Closing	Last Closing	High	Low					
Price index	▲ 37.52	6,804.56	6,767.04	6,818.65	6,766.22					
Weighted Index	▲ 1.35	425.89	424.54	426.13	423.31					
KSX 15	▲ 6.49	976.98	970.49	976.98	967.45					
Trades										
Security	High	Low	Volume	Value (KD)	Trades	Last	Change			
MARIN	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	58	▲ 0.0			
IPG	445	430	50,800	21,901	3	430	▼ -15.0			
NAPESCO	1,340	1,340	212,150	284,281	5	1,340	▲ 100.0			
ENERGYH	43.5	41.0	142,900	6,086	11	43.5	▲ 0.0			
GPI	51	49.5	4,723,121	235,777	94	50	▲ 0.0			
ABAR	90	87	117,686	10,471	14	90	▲ 5.0			
<b>Oil &amp; Gas</b>			<b>5,246,757</b>	<b>558,516</b>	<b>127</b>	<b>1044.55</b>	<b>▲ 35.24</b>			
KFOUC	320	320	2,872	919	1	320	▲ 5.0			
BPCC	580	570	33,278	19,168	3	570	▲ 0.0			
ALKOUT	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	700	▲ 0.0			
ALQURAN	325	325	126,111	40,986	15	325	▲ 0.0			
<b>Basic Materials</b>			<b>162,261</b>	<b>61,074</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>1308.29</b>	<b>▲ 4.38</b>			
KCEM	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	490	▲ 0.0			
CABLE	540	540	171,300	92,502	20	540	▼ -20.0			
SHIP	224	218	54,168	11,809	5	224	▼ -4.0			
PCEM	1,080	1,080	8,000	8,640	3	1,080	▼ -20.0			
PAPER	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	420	▲ 0.0			
MRC	80	79	30,000	2,395	2	79	▼ -10.0			
ACICO	305	305	78,200	23,851	15	305	▲ 0.0			
GMCC	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	325	▲ 0.0			
HCC	188	168	108,970	18,873	5	188	▲ 10.0			
BMMC	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	160	▲ 0.0			
NICBM	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	204	▲ 0.0			
EQUIPMENT	59	57	381,673	22,117	15	57	▼ -1.0			
NCCI	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	50	▲ 0.0			
GYPSUM	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	95	▲ 0.0			
SALBOOKH	73	70	825,951	59,395	39	72	▼ -2.0			
AGLTY	590	570	1,903,468	1,101,998	71	580	▼ -10.0			
EDU	210	210	50	11	1	210	▲ 6.0			
CLEANING	53	52	534,800	28,294	11	53	▼ -1.0			
KGL	66	63	420,121	26,758	15	65	▲ 1.0			
KCCP	184	184	700	129	1	184	▼ -6.0			
HUMANSOFT	3,000	3,000	198,857	596,571	4	3,000	▲ 0.0			
NAFAS	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	220	▲ 0.0			
GFC	50	48.0	38,444	1,846	2	50	▼ -1.0			
MAYADEEN	32.0	31.5	351,361	11,071	11	31.5	▲ 0.0			
CGC	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	500	▲ 0.0			
MTCC	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	56	▲ 0.0			
UPAC	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	830	▲ 0.0			
ALFACO	248	244	75,520	18,527	7	248	▼ -2.0			
MUBARRAD	79	73	4,484,954	342,591	117	77	▲ 2.0			
LOGISTICS	72	71	822,680	59,148	25	72	▲ 1.0			
SCEM	88	88	43,800	3,837	3	88	▲ 0.0			
GCEM	89	88	234,500	20,721	14	89	▲ 0.0			
QIC	85	85	6,257	532	2	85	▼ -2.0			
FCEM	89	89	321,643	28,628	7	89	▲ 1.0			
RKWC	102	100	14,942	1,467	2	100	▲ 0.0			
SPEC	88	85	462,300	40,051	41	87	▼ -1.0			
<b>Industrials</b>			<b>11,572,157</b>	<b>2,521,758</b>	<b>438</b>	<b>1498.71</b>	<b>▼ -2.77</b>			
KSH	184	184	19,950	3,671	1	184	▲ 0.0			
NSH	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	59	▲ 0.0			
PAPCO	110	106	31,355	3,366	3	110	▲ 10.0			
CATTL	246	236	97,233	23,585	16	244	▼ -2.0			
DANAH	104	98	11,140,151	1,125,269	329	102	▲ 5.0			
FOOD	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	2,620	▲ 0.0			
<b>Consumer Goods</b>			<b>11,288,689</b>	<b>1,155,910</b>	<b>349</b>	<b>1215.42</b>	<b>▲ 21.10</b>			
MHC	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	350	▲ 0			
ATC	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	920	▲ 0			
YIACO	290	285	5,000	1,445	2	290	▲ 0			
<b>Health Care</b>			<b>5,000</b>	<b>1,445</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>1442.13</b>	<b>▲ 0.00</b>			
KCIN	1,500	1,420	35,499	53,109	10	1,480	▼ -20			
KHOT	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	250	▲ 0			
SULTAN	75	70	449,049	31,702	26	70	▼ -5			
CABLETV	24.5	23.5	46,080	1,097	19	24.0	▲ 0			
EYAS	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	385	▲ 0			
IFAHR	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	192	▲ 0			
QULAFUEL	136	128	2,241,031	293,852	104	130	▲ 0			
MUNTAZAHAT	86	86	280,000	24,080	8	86	▼ -1			
JAZERA	590	580	52,325	30,372	7	590	▲ 0			
SCOR	138	132	318,147	43,125	43	132	▲ 0			
FUTUREKID	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	124	▲ 0			
ALRAI	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	178	▲ 0			
ZIMAH	64	59	1,121,964	68,709	44	60	▼ -3			
Mezzan	990	980	111,610	109,378	2	980	▲ 0			
<b>Consumer Services</b>			<b>4,655,705</b>	<b>655,423</b>	<b>263</b>	<b>952.95</b>	<b>▼ -8.57</b>			
ZAIN	485	475	1,010,335	484,374	63	485	▲ 10			
OOREDOO	1,240	1,200	71,353	87,372	12	1,200	▼ -20			
HITSTELEC	53	52	976,071	51,267	43	53	▲ 1			
VIVA	820	820	16,413	13,459	23	820	▲ 0			
<b>Telecommunications</b>			<b>2,074,172</b>	<b>636,471</b>	<b>141</b>	<b>648.78</b>	<b>▲ 3.46</b>			
NBK	760	750	1,038,298	780,501	37	760	▲ 0			
GBK	248	246	718,000	177,648	15	248	▲ 0			
CBK	430	420	82,829	35,554	7	430	▲ 0			
ABK	305	300	2,506	752	2	305	▲ 0			
ALMUTAHED	445	440	146,425	64,487	13	440	▼ -10			
KIB	244	242	640,555	155,363	24	244	▲ 0			
BURG	340	330	7,890,527	2,625,807	97	335	▲ 5			
KFIN	620	610	1,517,490	925,754	64	620	▲ 10			
BORRYAN	435	425	637,871	274,194	32	425	▼ -5			
AUB	244	238	1,966,055	471,525	42	242	▲ 2			
ITHMR	58	54	12,428,502	695,077	227	55	▼ -1			
WARBABANK	275	265	588,541	159,113	108	275	▲ 5			
<b>Banks</b>			<b>27,655,599</b>	<b>6,365,777</b>	<b>668</b>	<b>973.10</b>	<b>▲ 1.74</b>			
KINS	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	310	▲ 0			
GINS	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	690	▲ 0			
AINS	500	500	10,000	5,000	1	500	▲ 0			
WINS	104	104	10,142	1,055	3	104	▲ 0			
KUWAITRE	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	186	▲ 0			
FTI	66	62	85,600	5,487	17	65	▲ 3.0			
WETHAQ	52	46.5	399,780	20,429	20	52	▲ 3.5			
BKIKWT	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	365	▲ 0			
<b>Insurance</b>			<b>505,522</b>	<b>31,971</b>	<b>41</b>	<b>1124.91</b>	<b>▲ 19.26</b>			
Trades										
Security	High	Low	Volume	Value (KD)	Trades	Last	Change			
SOKOUK	46.5	45.5	535,278	245,885	137	46.0	▲ 0.5			
KRF	75	73	3,149,500	231,798	43	73	▲ 0.0			
URC	98	96	60,255	5,837	9	96	▼ -1.0			
NRE	108	102	1,561,950	163,812	54	104	▲ 0.0			
SRE	390	390	200,000	78,000	2	390	▲ 0.0			
TAM	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	450	▲ 0.0			
AREEC	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	180	▲ 0.0			
MASSALEH	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	49.0	▲ 0.0			
ARABREC	44.0	42.5	1,500,048	84,858	52	43.0	▲ 0.0			
ERESCO	48.0	46.5	457,744	21,497	20	47.0	▲ 0.0			
MABANEE	850	840	231,950	197,140	15	850	▲ 10.0			



## IT AUDITS PLUMMET AS IRS LOSES AGENTS TO BUDGET CUTS

**WASHINGTON:** As millions of Americans file their income tax returns, their chances of getting audited by the IRS have rarely been so low. The number of people audited by the IRS in 2016 year dropped for the sixth straight year, to just over 1 million. The last time so few people were audited was 2004. Since then, the US has added about 30 million people.

The IRS blames budget cuts as money for the agency shrank from \$12.2 billion in 2010 to \$11.2 billion last year. Over that period, the agency has lost more than 17,000 employees, including nearly 7,000 enforcement agents. A little more than 80,000 people work at the IRS.

IRS Commissioner John Koskinen said budget cuts are costing the federal government between \$4 billion and \$8 billion a year in uncollected taxes. "We are the only agency if you give us more people and money, we give you more money back," Koskinen said in an interview.

So is it safe to cheat on your taxes? Not necessarily, according to tax experts. "I don't think it's open season for people to cheat," said Joseph Perry, a partner at the accounting firm Marcum. "I think there are a certain group of people that will always try to push the envelope to get away with things that they think they can get away with."

As Koskinen put it: "If you're a taxpayer, you don't want to roll the roulette wheel and have the little white ball land on your number because then we're not very happy." Most people don't have much of an opportunity to cheat on their taxes because the IRS collects a lot of information to verify taxpayers' finances. Employers report wages, banks report interest, brokerages report capital gains and lenders report mortgage interest.

In 2016, the number of people audited by the IRS dropped by 16 percent from the year before. Just 0.7 percent of individuals were audited, either in person or by mail. That's the lowest audit rate since 2003. The higher your income, the more likely you are to get audited. The IRS audited 1.7 percent of returns that reported more than \$200,000 in income. Agents audited 5.8 percent of returns that reported more than \$1 million in income.

Both audit rates were steep declines from the year before. The most well-known audit in Washington is one on President Donald Trump, who has cited it in refusing to release his tax returns. The IRS, however, has said an audit would not prevent an individual from releasing the returns.

Corporate audits were down by 17 percent last year. Just 0.49 percent of corporations were audited, the lowest rate in at least a decade. Republicans in Congress

began cutting money at the IRS after they took control of both the House and Senate in the 2010 elections. They became more enthusiastic about the spending cuts after it became public that the agency had improperly singled out conservative political groups for extra scrutiny when they applied for tax-exempt status during the 2010 and 2012 elections.

Koskinen was not at the IRS when the political groups were mistreated, but some Republicans in Congress have been unhappy with his cooperation in their investigations.

When asked about IRS money, many Republican lawmakers inevitably mention the mistreatment of conservative groups. "Go look at all the areas where they've wasted money, mismanaged taxpayer resources," said Rep. Jim Jordan, R-Ohio. "Not to mention the fact that, you know, one of the reasons we went after them so hard is they did target people for their political views." Democrats argue that it's a costly move. "You know, when somebody doesn't pay, that means that others pay more," said Rep.

Richard Neal of Massachusetts, the top Democrat on tax-writing House Ways and Means Committee. "But I think there's no question that the majority (Republicans) here and apparently the president, they have had a target on the IRS." Tony Reardon, president of the National Treasury Employees Union, which represents IRS workers, questioned Trump's proposal to increase military spending by billions while the GOP targets the IRS.

"The IRS collects 93 percent of our nation's revenue. You cannot increase defense spending and cut IRS funding at the same time. It does not add up," Reardon said. Most federal agencies are bracing for budget cuts under the Trump administration, though Koskinen said he is making the case that the IRS already "gave at the office." It's unclear, however, how much influence Koskinen will have in the Trump administration. He was appointed by President Barack Obama and his term ends in November.

Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin offered the IRS a bone at his confirmation hearing when he acknowledged that adding agents would increase tax revenues. The department oversees the IRS, and Mnuchin was appointed by Trump. "I can assure you that the president-elect understands the concept of where we add people and we make money," Mnuchin said at the hearing, which was held before Trump's inauguration. "He'll get that completely. That's a very quick conversation with Donald Trump." —AP



## ZAIN ENTERS JOINT VENTURE WITH CAR-SHARING SPECIALIST YOYO

ZAIN POSITIONING ITSELF TO BENEFIT FROM \$30BN GLOBAL MARKET BY 2020

**BARCELONA:** Zain Group, the leading mobile telecom innovator across the Middle East and Africa, announces a joint venture with YOYO, (www.driveyoyo.com) one of the most innovative digital startups in Turkey, to bring an exciting car sharing club model initially to Bahrain, and later expanded across the Zain regional footprint and the MENA region.

It is forecasted that the total car sharing market globally could reach as high as \$30 billion in 2020, fulfilling the prediction of Ford Executive Chairman Bill Ford, great-grandson of Henry Ford who is quoted as saying: "The future of transportation will be a blend of things like car sharing, public transportation, and private car ownership."

The agreement was penciled during a ceremony during the Mobile World Congress in Barcelona attended by Zain Group CEO, Scott Gegenheimer; Zain Bahrain GM Mohammed Zainalabedin; Emre Gurkan, Zain Group Chief Strategy and Development Officer and Berkman Cavusoglu, Co-Founder and CEO of YOYO.

YOYO is a vehicle sharing club in which registered members, via an app on their smartphones, are easily able to reserve and use vehicles as they require, even for an hour or as long as they require. The way the YOYO service works is that a customer can select a vehicle from any location in the city in which the service is available and reserve it for any time period. Doors of the hired vehicle are unlocked by the customer's membership card or mobile application, with the vehicle's keys found inside. The members can return back their cars to another parking station and leave the cars by locking again from their smartphones; without any hassle.

From Zain's perspective, this joint venture of participating in the fast growing "shared economy" vertical, underlines the company's culture of innovation as it looks to bring new and appeal-

ing services to the region. Zain believes the ease-of-use of the YOYO application and the logistical convenience of the service it provides are key differentiators that will drive its success across the region.

Commenting on the joint venture agreement with YOYO, Scott Gegenheimer, Zain Group CEO said, "We are enthusiastic about delivering new business models to our customers and to the region in general, and we look forward to our customers in Bahrain having the first experience of this compelling new service."

Gegenheimer continued, "It really is a special case when a service can be delivered that makes people's lives easier, while at the same time having a positive social impact on issues such as pollution and congestion. We already have a successful agreement in place with UBER, and we believe this latest arrangement with YOYO has very potential for rapid adoption across our markets and beyond."

Zain Bahrain General Manager, Mohammed Zainalabedin said, "Zain Bahrain is determined to offer its customer the latest in digital services that improve their livelihoods and their mobile experience. We believe the Bahrain community will welcome the YoYo car sharing service, and we are excited by the impending launch of this service to our customers. Zain Bahrain is keen to play its role in maintaining the Kingdom's leading position in the region's telecommunication sector."

Berkman Cavusoglu, Co-Founder and CEO of YOYO said, "We believe momentum for car-sharing services is gathering pace all the time, and for us this is a perfect opportunity to expand into new markets such as the Middle East. For the last three years, we have been very heavily focused on younger demographics of people aged between 25-35, and now we are keen to also explore foreign markets and move into the

B2B space. We feel our joint venture with Zain Group will help us achieve both of these strategic objectives, and we are obviously very excited to be partnering with a telco with the reach and reputation that Zain possesses."

YOYO already counts over 20,000 members in Turkey, who use the service regularly, with more than 200 unique reservations being registered every day. The car-sharing customer base is forecast to grow to be nearly 15 million in Europe by 2020, with there being nearly 240,000 shared chartering vehicles across the continent by that time.

Zain is confident that such a service will be welcomed by many commuters across all its markets, as it provides a simple, cost-efficient and effective option for road travel in addition to supporting the reduction of congestion and pollution.

The joint venture with YOYO builds on the programs launched under Zain's Digital Frontier and Innovation (ZDFI) initiative, which was established in 2014. ZDFI is charged with launching Zain into the digital space with the view to growing the company through new innovative business streams, which add to the company's financial viability and market capitalization. ZDFI focuses on the areas of innovation; digital services; corporate venturing; and smart cities, with the ultimate aim of Zain becoming a regional innovation trendsetter.

Zain is a leading telecommunications operator across the Middle East and Africa, providing mobile voice and data services to over 47 million active customers as of 31 December, 2016. With a commercial presence in 8 countries, Zain operates in: Kuwait, Bahrain, Iraq, Jordan, Saudi Arabia, Sudan and South Sudan. In Lebanon, the Group manages 'touch' on behalf of the government. In Morocco, Zain has a 15.5% stake in 'INWI', through a joint venture.



**WASHINGTON:** In this March 22, 2013 file photo, the exterior of the Internal Revenue Service building in Washington. —AP

## UKRAINE REACHES PRELIMINARY AGREEMENT WITH IMF

**KIEV:** The International Monetary Fund said Saturday it had reached a preliminary agreement with Ukraine that could see the war-scarred and cashed-starved nation receive fresh aid in the first half of the year.

The news was particularly good for the ex-Soviet republic because the IMF statement referred to a loan of \$1 billion (0.9 billion euros) and not the lesser sums discussed in earlier months.

Ukraine also gets the reprieve of not having to go through the unpopular measure of raising its pension age to get the cash. The step had been initially demanded by the IMF but strongly opposed to by Ukrainian lawmakers who want to avoid a voter backlash.

"The IMF staff has reached agreement with the Ukrainian authorities on an updated Memorandum of Economic and Financial Policies," the Fund's Ukrainian mission chief Ron van Rooden said in the statement. "This paves the way for consideration of the third review of the arrangement under the Extended Fund Facility (EFF) by the IMF's Executive Board ... In the second half of March," the statement said in reference to a \$1 billion loan.

The IMF's board usually follows through with such preliminary agreements and disburses aid once all the details have been hashed out.

The IMF had dragged its feet in disbursing help to Ukraine because of its unwillingness to follow through on tough belt-tightening measures.

It is far behind schedule since striking the \$17.5 billion deal in the first

half of 2015. Ukraine has thus far seen only \$7.3 billion of that money.

### Fighting economic stagnation

This has forced the pro-Western government to step up its pressure and ram through detested legislation such as the raising of utility bills. Those had previously been state-subsidized and posed an extra burden on Ukraine's shallow coffers. The country has also repeatedly failed in its efforts to launch a meaningful privatization drive that could help fill in the budget gap.

Attempts to put up land for sale have also been resisted by nationalist lawmakers and their allies who comprise a powerful contingent of the chamber. Yet Ukraine has also seen some welcome news.

Advice from the IMF has helped it pull out of a tailspin 2014-2015 recession that saw the economy shrink by an astonishing 17 percent. Annualized inflation reached nearly 50 percent in the most dire days. The IMF did not provide any details about what concessions Kiev may have made in this round.

Ukraine is waging a multi-front battle against economic stagnation and a Russian-backed insurgency in the east of the country that has claimed more than 10,000 lives. The nearly three-year war is at a stalemate and shows few signs of reaching a resolution. Sporadic upsurges in violence such as last month's flareup in the town of Avdiivka claim dozens of lives. But the economy of one of Europe's poorest countries grew by about one percent last year and is on course to expand by 2.2 percent in 2017. —AFP

## CALIFORNIA HIGH-SPEED RAIL READY TO LAY SOME TRACK

**SACRAMENTO, Calif:** After years of prep work, Gov. Jerry Brown's finance department decided Friday that California's \$64 billion high-speed rail project is ready to lay some track.

The administration approved the rail authority's request to spend \$2.6 billion on work in the Central Valley. The decision lets the authority ask the state treasurer's office to sell a portion of the nearly \$10 billion in bonds voters approved in 2008 for a bullet train. However, the first 29-mile segment of track isn't expected to be completed until at least August 2019.

The bullet train's long-term prospects remain clouded because of uncertainty over funding and several pending lawsuits. Significant federal help is required, and the Republican-controlled Congress does not support the project. Private money also is needed but none has been secured yet.

The treasurer previously issued \$1.15 billion of the bonds that went for administration and on work to connect the new system to existing tracks, leaving the bulk of the money unspent. Finance Director Michael Cohen approved the Central Valley



**The supports for a 1,600-foot-viaduct to carry high-speed rail trains across the Fresno River are seen under construction near Madera, Calif. —AP**

plan while downplaying a Federal Railroad Administration risk analysis that included a worst-case scenario for the costs of the project. He instead cited the authority's more optimistic analysis and an independent consultant's review that he said found that "the cost estimates and contingencies in this plan are reasonable."

Brown is a vocal advocate of the

rail project, and his administration includes the finance department, so Friday's decision is not surprising. The authority will ask the state treasurer to sell a portion of the bonds this spring to help pay for construction of 119 miles of rail in the Central Valley from Madera to Shafter, authority spokeswoman Lisa Marie Alley said.

Cohen delayed a decision on the

authority's related request for \$600 million for Caltrain in the San Francisco Bay Area. Bullet trains travel on electrified rails, and the California authority's business plan calls for the two systems to share lines along the Peninsula Corridor in the Bay Area.

Cohen said in a separate letter that he is waiting because the Federal Transit Administration last month delayed a decision on whether to approve a \$650 million federal grant for electrification.

"The state's substantial investment in this critical infrastructure improvement project is ready to move forward, the only remaining piece is action by the federal government on their contribution," Alley said in a statement referring to the Federal Transit Administration's delay. Congressional Republicans have urged the administration to reject the application, and the agency said last month that it is deferring a ruling until the project is considered as part of President Donald Trump's budget. Although congressional Republicans oppose the plan, Trump has previously spoken positively about high-speed rail. —AP

## BURGAN BANK ANNOUNCES WINNERS OF YAWMI DRAW

**KUWAIT:** Burgan Bank, the second largest in terms of assets, announced today the names of the daily draw winners of its Yawmi account draw, each taking home a cash-prize of KD 5,000.

### The lucky winners are:

1. Jaber Aasi Rafia Khalaf
2. Ayad Sulaiman Salamah Shalash
3. Abdulwahab Abdulsamad Taqi
4. Sakena Yaqoub Yousef Murad

In addition to the daily draw, Burgan Bank also offers a Quarterly Draw with more chances to win higher rewards, offering the chance to one lucky customer to win KD 125,000 every three months. The Yawmi Account offers daily and quarterly draws, wherein the quarterly draw requires cus-

tomers to maintain a minimum amount of KD 500 in their account for two months prior to the draw



date. Additionally, every KD 10 in the account will entitle customers to one chance of winning. If the account balance is KD 500 and above, the account holder will be qualified for both the quarterly and daily draws.

Burgan Bank encourages everyone to open a Yawmi account and/or increase their deposit to maximize their chances of becoming a winner. The higher the level of the deposit, the higher the likelihood to win.

For more information on opening a Yawmi account, the new quarterly draw or on any of the bank's products and services, customers are urged to visit their nearest Burgan Bank branch. Customers can also log on to Burgan Bank's www.burgan.com for further information.



## JAZEERA AIRWAYS CELEBRATES INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY SPECIAL FARES FOR WOMEN TRAVELLING IN MARCH



**KUWAIT:** Jazeera Airways, the first private airline in Kuwait and the Middle East, is celebrating International Women's Day by announcing special fares exclusively for women travelling to all destinations during the month of March.

Starting March 1st, women of all ages will be eligible to a 25 percent discount when booking Business Class between March 1st and March 9th to travel anytime until March 31st, 2017. Also, all women traveling on March 8th will have free access to the Jazeera Lounge where they will be treated to a seamless and relaxing experience before their journey as they shall enjoy space, comfort and connectivity including freshly prepared delicious bites and drinks from the Jazeera Lounge buffet.

Commenting on Jazeera Airways' special promotion designed exclusively for women, Dr Mohamed Barakat, VP

Marketing and Product said, "Women are a prominent and growing segment of Jazeera Airways' customer base and an important part of our workforce. As a Kuwaiti airline, we remain committed to supporting women across all walks of life as they are a key force that builds stronger economies and healthier societies, and is thus worth celebrating". He continued, "This year's celebration of International Women's Day is a combined effort to recognize our women's accomplishments and a dedication to all their hard work".

Jazeera Airways' exclusive offer for women during the month of March falls under the airline's social corporate responsibility to contribute to all segments of society. The International Women's Day represents a fantastic opportunity to recognize and promote the important role women play in the Kuwaiti society and worldwide. Jazeera

Airways urges all women who wish to travel in March to avail the special offer designed as a token of appreciation towards them. It is worth mentioning that the offer is only redeemable via call center (177) from Kuwait.

Established in 2005, Jazeera Airways is a Kuwait Stock Exchange-listed company serving popular destinations in the Middle East. The airline operates a fleet of Airbus A320 aircrafts with two class cabins comprising a Business Class and an Economy Class. Business Class travelers get both an upgraded experience and exclusivity, starting with exclusive check-in lines, business lounge access, up to 60 kilograms in free baggage allowance, and an exclusive on-board cabin. The airline's Economy Class offers travelers free baggage allowance of 40 kilograms and free on-board meals with a changing menu every month.

## LONDON'S ICONIC CABS TAKE ON FULL GULF AIR BRANDING

### AIRLINE OPERATES DOUBLE DAILY SERVICES IN UK

**MANAMA:** London's iconic cabs were recently adorned with full Gulf Air branding on them as part of a campaign with taxi advertising specialist Sherbet Media, advertising Bahrain's national carrier's network, one-stop-shop website and

worldwide call centre. For over one month, Gulf Air branded London cabs operated across the central and greater London area.

On the successful taxi advertising campaign, Gulf Air's UK Country Manager Rashid

Al-Gaoud commented: "We wanted to raise awareness of Gulf Air in one of the airline's key markets, and to do so in a truly standout way. With Sherbet Media we achieved this. We gained great brand awareness from this campaign with positive feedback from a broad spectrum of residents and visitors who saw and used the Gulf Air branded taxis in various locations throughout London."

Gulf Air has had a strong presence in the United Kingdom since its first flight to London in 1970, and currently operates a double daily service to London Heathrow Airport offering passengers a choice of morning and evening flights. Boasting one of the largest regional networks with multiple daily flights to ten cities across the Middle East, Gulf Air is well-positioned to facilitate two-way movement between Europe, Asia and several key destinations in the Middle East and North Africa.

Gulf Air flights can be booked online at gulfair.com, the airline's one-stop-shop website, where customers can also find a suite of additional online services offering hotel bookings, car rentals and travel insurance. Gulf Air, the national carrier of the Kingdom of Bahrain, commenced operations in 1950, becoming one of the first commercial airlines established in the Middle East. Today, Gulf Air is a major international carrier serving 41 cities in 24 countries spanning three continents. The airline operates one of the largest networks in the Middle East, with double daily flights or more to 10 regional cities, in addition to select destinations in the Indian Subcontinent and Europe, from its hub at Bahrain International Airport. Gulf Air serves all its destinations with a combination wide and narrow body fleet totalling 28 modern aircraft. Renowned for its traditional Arabian hospitality, evidenced by the airline's signature family and business friendly products, Gulf Air is committed to being an industry leader and developing products and services that reflect the evolving needs and aspirations of its passengers.

Gulf Air connects Bahrain to the world and, as such, is a key national infrastructure asset, serving as a powerful driver for the economy and supporting the Kingdom's on-going economic growth.

Gulf Air has been the Title Sponsor of the FORMULA 1 GULF AIR BAHRAIN GRAND PRIX ever since it made history as the first Formula 1 Grand Prix to be held in the Middle East in 2004. In addition, the airline has been Official Carrier of the biennial Bahrain International Airshow since it was first held in 2010.



## ADEL EL-LABBAN NAMED 'CEO OF THE YEAR-MIDEAST 2016'

**KUWAIT:** The London-based EMEA Finance magazine has named Adel El-Labban, Group CEO and Managing Director of Ahli United Bank, as CEO of the Year, Pan Middle East 2016, in recognition of his vision, leadership and outstanding contributions to the regional banking industry.

The announcement was made at EMEA Finance's Middle East Banking Awards 2016, held in Dubai on March 1, 2017, and attended by banking and business leaders from across the Middle East.

In recognizing El-Labban, Christopher Moore, Publisher and CEO of EMEA Finance magazine, said: "At EMEA Finance, we recognize CEOs who have truly moved their banks forward, and whose vision and leadership empower those they direct and reward shareholders simultaneously".

"El-Labban's career and leadership is a textbook success story. He has brought together and employed his unique vision and diverse experiences to build a world-class business model for AUB, growing it into one of the region's powerhouses and consistently increasing its key financial metrics year-on-year. The decade he spent at the helm of Commercial International Bank and building it into Egypt's largest private bank, has included many firsts for Egyptian and Middle Eastern banking. We are privileged to honour tonight his impressive

track record and outstanding contributions to the regional financial industry".

In accepting the award, Adel El-Labban, said: "It is both a great honour and a humbling experience to receive this recognition by the well-regarded EMEA Finance, and to accept it on behalf of the 4000 colleagues whom I have been privileged to work with across AUB Group. This award is an outcome of and testament to our collective efforts since 2000 to build a strong and professional regional banking group, one which earns and maintains the trust of our shareholders, customers and the communities we serve at large".

Throughout his career, El-Labban had received a string of honours and recognitions, including for his "Distinguished Services to Arab Banking" by the Arab Bankers Association (United Kingdom) in 2015 and for his 'Outstanding Contribution to Financial Services' by Euromoney in 2011. He was also awarded a 'Lifetime Achievement Award' by Banker Middle East in 2011 and in 2010 the Union of Arab Banks named him 'Arab Banker of Year 2009'.

Under El-Labban stewardship, AUB won several top regional awards from leading international publications, including most recently 'Bank of the Year Middle East Award 2016' for the second time by 'The Banker', the leading monthly publication of Financial Times Group.

## ABBVIE BIOPHARMACEUTICALS GMBH CERTIFIED AS ONE OF THE TOP EMPLOYERS KUWAIT 2017

**KUWAIT:** AbbVie Biopharmaceuticals GmbH is proud to announce that it has been officially certified by the Top Employers Institute for its exceptional employee offerings. The institute has just announced the results of this year's research into the employee conditions of significant employers worldwide and AbbVie Biopharmaceuticals GmbH met all the criteria to be one of the selected organizations to achieve the Top Employers Kuwait.

Commenting on this achievement, Dr Alaa Toson/ GM Abbvie Kuwait said: "We are delighted to be officially recognized as a leading employer and be awarded the prestigious Top Employers Kuwait 2017 Certification. It's another milestone achieved due to Abbvie commitment to providing excellent employee conditions while developing talents throughout all levels of the organization and we strive to continuously optimize employment practices"

Crucial to the Top Employers Certification is the completion of a stringent research process, and meeting the required standard in order to achieve Certification.

To further reinforce the validity of the process, all answers were independently audited, meaning this research has verified AbbVie Biopharmaceuticals GmbH's outstanding employee conditions and

earned them a coveted spot among a choice group of certified Top Employers.

The Top Employers Institute globally certifies excellence in the conditions that employers create for their people.

The Top Employers Institute assessed AbbVie Biopharmaceuticals GmbH's employee offerings on the following criteria:

- Talent Strategy?
- Workforce Planning
- On-Boarding
- Learning & Development
- Performance Management
- Leadership Development
- Career & Succession Management
- Compensation & Benefits
- Culture



Dr Alaa Toson

David Plink, CEO at the Top Employers Institute: "Optimal employee conditions ensure that people can develop themselves personally and professionally. Our comprehensive research concluded that AbbVie Biopharmaceuticals GmbH provides an outstanding employment environment, and offers a wide range of creative initiatives, from secondary benefits and working conditions, to performance-management programs that are well thought out, and truly aligned with the culture of their company."

## Amazing news from Al-Tijari...

Al-Najma account gives you the biggest daily prize in Kuwait!



## AL-TIJARI ANNOUNCES WINNERS OF AL-NAJMA ACCOUNT DRAW

**KUWAIT:** Commercial Bank of Kuwait held the Al-Najma Account daily draw yesterday. The draw was held under the supervision of the Ministry of Commerce & Industry represented by Abdulaziz Ashkanani.

The winners of the Al-Najma daily draw are: Shah Mohammad Sher Khan — KD 7000, Hamed Fathi Hamed Abdulradhi — KD 7000, Taibah Basheer Al-Basheer — KD 7000, Mavelil Thomas Reji — KD 7000.

Al-Najma awards are now brighter and bigger than ever. With the revamped Al-Najma account, all your dreams will be turned to reality. On top of offering the highest daily prize in Kuwait for KD 7,000, now our Mega prize draws got bigger to reach KD 250,000.

The new prizes scheme for Al-Najma account Daily draw to win KD 7000

Quarterly draws to win great prizes that would start from KD 100,000 to KD 250,000

1ST QUARTER — KD 100,000, 2ND QUARTER — KD 150,000, 3RD QUARTER — KD 200,000, 4TH QUARTER — KD 250,000.

With Al-Najma you have more chances to win greater prizes

- Each KD 25 kept in your account gives you one chance to win
- Each KD 25 kept in your account for one week will give you a chance to enter the daily draw.
- Each KD 25 kept in your account for 3 months will give you chance to enter the quarterly draw.

Additional features

- ATM card
- Issue a credit card against your account
- Obtain all CBK banking services

You deserve to win! Open an account now with just KD 500 and you will enter all draws.



# FLIP THE SCRIPT: CURSIVE SEES REVIVAL IN SCHOOL INSTRUCTION

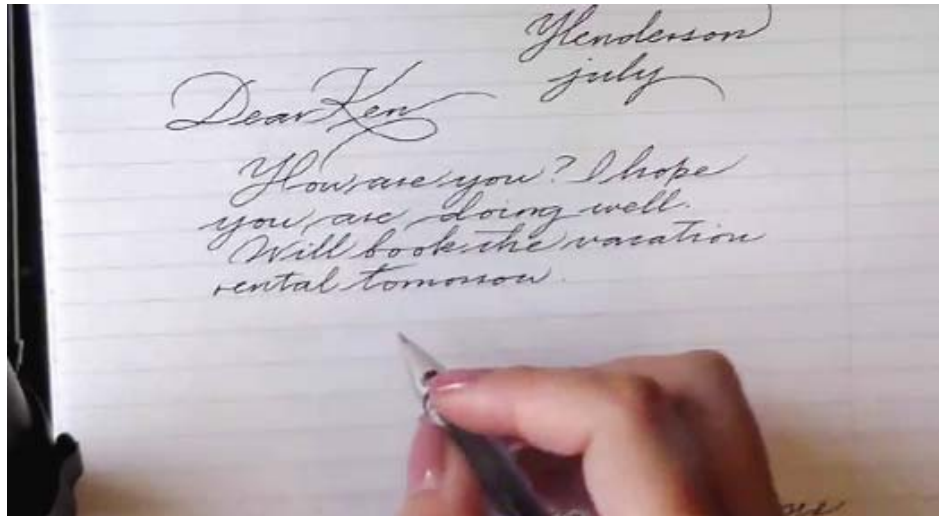
**NEW YORK:** Cursive writing is looping back into style in schools across the country after a generation of students who know only keyboarding, texting and printing out their words longhand. Alabama and Louisiana passed laws in 2016 mandating cursive proficiency in public schools, the latest of 14 states that require cursive. And last fall, the 1.1 million-student New York City schools, the nation's largest public school system, encouraged the teaching of cursive to students, generally in the third grade. "It's definitely not necessary but I think it's, like, cool to have it," said Emily Ma, a 17-year-old senior at New York City's academically rigorous Stuyvesant High School who was never taught cursive in school and had to learn it on her own.

Penmanship proponents say writing words in an unbroken line of swooshing l's and three-humped m's is just a faster, easier way of taking notes. Others say students should be able to understand documents written in cursive, such as, say, a letter from Grandma. And still more say it's just a good life skill to have, especially when it comes to signing your name.

## Generation gap

That was where New York state Assemblywoman Nicole Malliotakis drew the line on the cursive generation gap, when she encountered an 18-year-old at a voter registration event who printed out his name in block letters. "I said to him, 'No, you have to sign here,'" Malliotakis said. "And he said, 'That is my signature. I never learned script.'" Malliotakis, a Republican from the New York City borough of Staten Island, took her concerns to city education officials and found a receptive audience. Schools Chancellor Carmen Farina distributed a handbook on teaching cursive writing in September and is encouraging principals to use it. It cites research suggesting that fluent cursive helps students master writing tasks such as spelling and sentence construction because they don't have to think as much about forming letters.

Malliotakis also noted that students who can't read cursive will never be able to read historical documents. "If an American student cannot read the Declaration of Independence, that is sad." It's hard to pinpoint exactly when



cursive writing began to fall out of favor. But cursive instruction was in decline long before 2010, when most states adopted the Common Core curriculum standards, which say nothing about handwriting.

Some script skeptics question the advantage of cursive writing over printing and wonder whether teaching it takes away from other valuable instruction.

Anne Trubek, author of "The History and Uncertain Future of Handwriting," said schools should not require cursive mastery

any more than they should require all children to play a musical instrument.

"I think students would all benefit from learning the piano," she said, "but I don't think schools should require all students take piano lessons." At PS 166 in Queens, Principal Jessica Geller said there was never a formal decision over the years to banish the teaching of cursive. "We just got busy with the addition of technology, and we started focusing on computers," she said.

Third-graders at the school beamed as they prepared for a cursive lesson this past week. The 8-year-olds got their markers out, straightened their posture and flexed their wrists. Then it was "swoosh, curl, swoosh, curl," as teacher Christine Weltner guided the students in writing linked-together c's and a's.

Norzim Lama said he prefers cursive writing to printing "cause it looks fancy." Camille Santos said cursive is "actually like doodling a little bit." Added Araceli Lazaro: "It's a really fascinating way to write, and I really think that everybody should learn about writing in script." — AP



**DUBAI:** Elon Musk, the co-founder and chief executive of Electric carmaker Tesla, gestures during a ceremony in Dubai. Tesla announced the opening of a new Gulf headquarters in Dubai, aiming to conquer an oil-rich region better known for gas guzzlers than environmentally friendly motoring. —AFP

# DELL CHANGES ECONOMICS OF IOT WITH NEW EDGE GATEWAY SERIES

## MORE FLEXIBILITY, CONNECTIVITY AND REAL-TIME INTELLIGENCE

**BARCELONA:** Dell Technologies, the broadest Internet of Things (IoT) infrastructure solutions provider, announced the new Dell Edge Gateway 3000 Series, offering customers flexibility, connectivity and real-time intelligence from harsh environments and small spaces. The 3000 Series includes three unique models targeted specifically for use cases and embedded solutions in the industrial automation, energy, transportation, and digital signage. With the 3000 Series Gateway, customers will be able to securely transfer and analyze important data at the edge of the network to glean real-time intelligence from the physical world. Ideal deployments include locations such as a vehicle, a refrigerated trailer, a remote oil pump in the desert, digital signs in an elevator or inside of the HVAC units on a roof-top of a casino.

Customers are looking for faster, real-time analysis of the massive amount of data produced by devices on their networks, to perform immediate, smart decision-making. For some, it's too expensive to move all the data from the edge of the network near the devices to the data centre. Computing at the edge helps determine which data is interesting, relevant and needs to be sent back to the data centre or the cloud for further analytics and longer term storage, saving bandwidth and reducing costs and security concerns. Dell offers a complete edge to core to cloud portfolio of infrastructure for industrial IoT solutions that includes everything from Edge Gateways, security and manageability solutions, data centre infrastructure and connectivity.

"As the number of connected devices becomes more ubiquitous, we know that intelligent computing at the edge of the network is critical. The IoT continues to enhance customer experience, drive business growth and improve lives, making it central to organizations' digital transformation strategies," said Dermot O'Connell, vice president, OEM and IoT Solutions, EMEA, Dell EMC. "The small and mighty 3000 Series opens up new opportunities for our customers and partners to get smarter with their data and make big things happen."

The Gateway 3000 Series joins Dell's award-winning line of IoT-enabling hardware including the Edge Gateway 5000 Series and Embedded Box PC 3000 and 5000 Series. All solutions benefit from Dell's end-to-end support services, including the Base Hardware Warranty, or optional Dell ProSupport for up to five years, and Dell Deployment services. ProSupport on the Gateway 3000 Series includes proactive, automated support, 24x7 access to ProSupport engineers and Advanced Exchange to minimize downtime with a quick unit replacement. There's



also pre-qualification with 65+ technology and service providers in the award-winning Dell IoT Solutions Partner Program, inclusion in over 20 scalable, repeatable IoT blueprints and financing options through Dell Financial Services. The Gateway 3000 Series is designed by Dell's expert team of rugged product engineers and put through a rigorous 10-step testing process in our IoT Labs. The product line was designed for scale per tens of thousands of hours of feedback through customer advisory councils, industry consortiums and market feedback.

The rugged 3000 Series is complementary to its big brother, the 5000 Series, which is designed to excel in fixed use cases that require modular expansion, large sensor networks and more advanced edge analytics. The 3000 Series is ideal for both fixed and mobile use cases requiring smaller sensor networks, tight spaces, and more simple analytics.

"The new Dell Edge Gateway 3000 Series powered by Intel provides powerful edge analytics in a compact form factor. The series bridges the data needs of traditional operational technology with the manageability demands of IT," Ken Caviaas, general manager, IoT Group (IOTG), Intel. "We're excited to continue our great partnership with Dell to help our collective IoT customers connect what matters."

### All three models include:

- An Intel Atom processor
- 2 GB RAM and 8 GB eMMC storage (32 GB and SD card for additional storage options)

- Ethernet, USB, certified for Wi-Fi, Bluetooth LE
  - Integrated 3G or 4G LTE cellular options for select countries
  - Support for hot or cold operating temperature extremes from -30°C to 70°C
  - Integrated digital GPS, accelerometers, and atmospheric pressure sensors
  - Supports a wide input power range from 12-57 VDC (with vehicle transient voltage protection)
  - Ability to be powered via Power-over-Ethernet (PoE)
  - Ignition pin for easy operation while connected to a battery powered device
- Differentiating features between the three models include:
- Industrial Automation and Energy Management, Model 3001; Multi-function I/O port and programmable serial ports (RS-485/422/232).
  - Transportation and Logistics, Model 3002; GPS tracking, support for accelerometers and other MEMS devices, CAN bus for land/marine protocols, integrated ZigBee for mesh sensor networks.
  - Digital Signage and Retail, Model 3003; Display Port output for video displays (2560x1600) and 3.5mm line in/line out for quality audio streaming. While each model is designed to meet core needs in its respective target market, the overall 3000-series line is suitable to many other industries and use cases. Additional I/O needs can be addressed via 3rd party USB dongles and Distributed I/O options as required.

# TECH DREAMER REACHING FOR SUN, MOON AND STARS

By Elon Musk

**SAN FRANCISCO:** Sending tourists for a trip around the moon is the latest big idea launched by Elon Musk, a Silicon Valley star known for turning his passions into visionary enterprises.

Musk has become one of the United States' best-known innovators. He was a founder of payments company PayPal, electric carmaker Tesla Motors and SpaceX, maker and launcher of rockets and spacecraft. SpaceX recently announced that two private citizens have paid money to be sent around the Moon in what would mark the farthest humans have ever traveled to deep space since the 1970s.

In a sector where entrepreneurs often speak of "moonshots," Musk is one of the biggest dreamers. The 45-year-old South Africa-born entrepreneur has channeled a dot-com fortune into a series of ambitious ventures. Besides being the head of SpaceX and Tesla, Musk is the chairman of SolarCity, a solar panel installer recently bought by Tesla.

He also operates his own foundation focusing on education, clean energy and child health. And he drafted a paper detailing the feasibility of an ultra-fast "Hyperloop" rail transport system that would transport people at near supersonic speeds, then made it freely available to enterprises willing to pursue the project.

### 'Doesn't sit around'

"He is a visionary who has some key passions which he pursues with vigor," Jackdaw Research chief analyst Jan Dawson said of Musk. "He doesn't sit around and wait for people to do something about them; he goes out and does it himself." Musk's penchant for rocketing after his passions may appear to spread him thin, but he has built a record of success. Musk appears strong on painting big ideas in broad strokes and then enlisting people skilled at tending to the nuts-and-bolts work needed to follow through, say observers.

"He doesn't seem to be able to focus," analyst Rob Enderle of Enderle Group said. "He just likes coming up with the ideas and is good at picking other people who can deal with the plumbing—that is why he is able to do a lot of stuff."

And while some may wonder whether hubris or realism reigns in Musk's moves, his businesses have gained value, with the jury still out on the wisdom of the Tesla acquisition of SolarCity. "He can certainly

sell his ideas," Enderle said. "The fact his businesses have held together so long indicates he is not a con man."

### Fighting against evil

Musk more than a year ago took part in creating a nonprofit research company devoted to developing artificial intelligence that will help people and not hurt them. Musk found himself in the middle of a technology world controversy by holding firm that AI could turn on humanity and be its ruin instead of a salvation.

Technology giants including Google, Apple and Microsoft have been investing in making machines smarter, contending the goal is to improve lives. "If we create some digital super-intelligence that exceeds us in every way by a lot, it is very important that it be benign," Musk said at a conference in California.

He reasoned that even a benign situation with ultra-intelligent AI would put people so far beneath the machine they would be "like a house cat." "I don't love the idea of being a house cat," Musk said, envisioning the creation of neural lacing that magnifies people's brain power by linking them directly to computing capabilities.

### Living in a game

Some of his ideas have prompted questions about whether Musk is a visionary or mad scientist. He has raised eyebrows with a theory that the world as it is known may be a computer simulation. "I've had so many simulation discussions it's crazy," Musk said while fielding a question on the topic at the conference.

He maintained that "the odds that we are in base reality is one in billions." Musk lives in Los Angeles and holds US, Canadian and South African citizenship. He moved to Canada in his late teens and then to the United States, earning bachelor's degrees in physics and business from the University of Pennsylvania. After graduating, Musk abandoned plans to pursue further studies at Stanford University and started Zip2, a company that made online publishing software for the media industry.

He banked his first millions before the age of 30 when he sold Zip2 to US computer maker Compaq for more than \$300 million in 1999. Musk's next company, X.com, eventually merged with PayPal, the online payments firm bought by Internet auction giant eBay for \$1.5 billion in 2002. Forbes estimates Musk's current net worth at \$13.4 billion. — AFP

# HYPERCARS MINGLE WITH STATION WAGONS AT GENEVA AUTO SHOW

**FRANKFURT:** Europe's automakers face huge questions: the impact of Britain's decision to leave the European Union, President Donald Trump's proposed border tax on imports, the uncertain prospects for electric vehicles. Meanwhile, they have to keep selling cars in a ferociously competitive European market.

That mix of anxiety about the future and the need to market hot products today will mark the 87th Geneva International Motor Show. The show convenes tomorrow and Wednesday at the Palexpo center next to Geneva's airport for two days of vehicle unveilings to journalists and CEO interviews. It then opens to the public Thursday and runs through March 19.

### Here are major themes likely to mark the show. RIDING HIGH IN SUVs

A key trend at Geneva show will be the shift from minivans to small sport-utility vehicles, which combine car-like features such as plush interiors and sleeker rooflines with off-road features like high clearance. PSA Group's Citroen C-Aircross concept is expected to replace the current C3 Picasso. General Motors Co.'s Opel will show off its Crossland X, a model that turned out to be a sign of things to come: it was developed with the PSA Group, which has agreed to

purchase Opel. The deal is expected to be announced today.

In SUVs, consumers like the rugged, utilitarian look and the higher riding position, which gives drivers a feeling of safety, says Tim Urquhart, principal analyst at IHS Automotive. And for the companies, "you can sell the same technology for a higher margin," Urquhart said. Small SUVs can reuse many of the mechanical foundations of small cars, spreading manufacturing costs.

In the higher price range, Range Rover's Velar boasts a six-cylinder gasoline engine that reaches 100 kph (62 mph) in only 5.3 seconds. Other model launches include the convertible version of the E-Class from Daimler AG's Mercedes-Benz

luxury brand; Daimler's Mercedes-AMG performance division will offer a station wagon with a big 4.0 liter engine and acceleration like that of a sports car - 0-100 kph (0-62 mph) in 3.5 seconds. Not to be outdone in the family transport department, rival BMW is coming ahead with a station wagon version of its 5-Series.

### HYPERCARS

Geneva is usually a good show for stunning, unbelievably fast sports cars costing hundreds of thousands, or more. Ferrari has the 812 Superfast, equipped with a 12-cylinder engine generating 789 horsepower. Singapore-based Vanda Electrics Pte Ltd. offers the racer-like, low-slung Dendrobium. The Huayra Roadster from Italy's

Pagani stands out with a bold curve running from roofline through roof pillar to the hood. It's powered by a gigantic 6.0 liter, 12-cylinder engine turning out 764 horsepower.

### TRUMP, BREXIT

Companies with assembly or parts production in Britain - such as Ford, General Motor's Opel division, BMW, and Nissan - face decisions about what to do with investment and production there as Britain prepares to leave the EU. Prime Minister Theresa May is due to trigger Brexit this month, starting two years of negotiations on a new trading relationship between Britain and the EU. The main concern is whether Britain leaves without retaining some access to the EU's tariff-free single market. The auto industry is vulnerable as it depends on the supply of parts that cross many borders before a car is complete. Similar uncertainty is coming from Trump's talk of a tax on imports from factories in Mexico. It's a potentially big development - though it hasn't happened yet.

### ELECTRICS

The auto industry has sunk billions into developing new electric cars, but they won't stand out at the Geneva show as they did at the Paris show last year, when Volkswagen and Daimler both made a big deal about battery-powered concept cars. — AP



**GENEVA:** This undated photo provided by Daimler AG shows Mercedes X-Class cars. The cars will be shown at the Geneva Auto Show in Geneva, Switzerland that starts tomorrow with media days. — AP

# TYPO CAUSED AMAZON'S BIG CLOUD-COMPUTING OUTAGE

**NEW YORK:** Amazon says an incorrectly typed command during a routine debugging of its billing system caused the five-hour outage of some Amazon Web Services servers on Tuesday.

In a summary posted online, the Seattle company says a command meant to remove a small number of servers for one of its S3 subsystems was entered incorrectly and a larger set of servers was removed. A full restart was

required, which took longer than expected due to how fast Amazon Web Services has grown over the past few years. Amazon says it is making changes to its system to make sure incorrect commands won't trigger an outage of its web services in the future.

Amazon is the world's largest provider of cloud services, which entails hosting companies' computing functions on remote servers. — AP





## SYRIA FARMERS FEAR IS TO FLOOD EUPHRATES VILLAGES

**TUWAYHINA, Syria:** Syrian farmers near the Euphrates river are terrified the Islamic State group will literally open the floodgates to defend its stronghold Raqqa, drowning their tiny villages in the process. Water levels of the Euphrates, which snakes down through northern Syria and east into Iraq, have shot up over the past month near the militant group's de facto capital, Raqqa city. Residents of the modest farming villages scattered on the river's eastern bank say they are afraid the jihadists will destroy the Tabqa dam, Syria's largest, to slow advancing anti-IS forces.

"If IS goes through with its threat of blowing up the Tabqa dam, then all areas around the southern part of the river

could be under water," said Abu Hussein, 67. He spoke to AFP in Tuwayhina, a small village that was recently recaptured by the US-backed Syrian Democratic Forces east of the river and around 10 km from the dam. Abu Hussein said "hundreds of villages and fields" could be submerged if IS opens the gates of the dam, which lies around 50 km upstream from Raqqa city. "They don't even fear God. And if someone doesn't fear God, then I'm afraid of him."

The Tabqa dam sits 500 m from the eponymous town, an IS stronghold since 2014 where many of its most senior commanders are based. Tabqa is a key target of the SDF's months-long drive for Raqqa, and its fighters have already

advanced to just five kilometres from the town. "We're hearing that Daesh is planning on blowing up the Tabqa dam," said Raheel Hassan Mahmoud, 58, in the village of Bir Hamad, using an Arabic acronym for IS. "If this happens, it means most of Raqqa and Deir Ezzor will drown, while other towns die of thirst and crops and livestock die," he told AFP.

### 'Catastrophic implications'

Hassan, a 35-year-old in nearby Bir Hassan, said he expected IS would flood the villages as a last resort. "It could open up the dam's gates to cover itself as it withdraws, in case it's no longer able to resist in the area," he said. The UN's humanitarian coordination agency

(OCHA) says water levels of the Euphrates have risen 10 m since late January. The UN said the increase was "partly due to heavy rainfall and snow". But it also pointed the finger at air strikes near the dam, "which, if further damaged, could lead to massive scale flooding across Raqqa and as far away as Deir Ezzor" province to the southeast.

Any further rises in the water level or damage to the Tabqa dam "would have catastrophic humanitarian implications in all areas downstream", the UN warned. The SDF's drive for Raqqa is backed by air strikes from the US-led coalition bombing jihadists in Iraq and Syria. A member of the Syrian team still working at the dam warned that "the battle, if it lasts

much longer, will have serious repercussions on the dam". The source, who spoke on condition of anonymity out of fear of reprisals by IS, said the dam was at risk of damage as the fighting draws near - but so was his team.

"The technicians will be forced to flee in order to escape death. This is another danger, because the dam cannot be left without someone controlling it," the source warned. Before Syria's conflict erupted in 2011, about 40,000 people lived in Tabqa, according to geography expert Fabrice Balanche. Another 20,000 lived in the smaller city of Thawrah, just south of the dam. Construction of the Tabqa dam was completed in 1973 with help from the Soviet Union. —AFP

## BRINGING WATER TO KENYA'S DROUGHT-STRICKEN WILDLIFE

**VOI, Kenya:** In a wildlife sanctuary in southern Kenya the relentless sun has bleached savannah grasses and dried up rivers, turning water holes first into muddy pits and now, dust bowls. Herds of elephant, buffalo and zebra have gathered near one of the holes, where for six months, pea farmer Patrick Mwalua has been delivering water to them in a rented blue truck. After the rains failed for the third time in November, Mwalua was so distressed by the obviously weak and thirsty animals that he began seek-

drink up to 190 liters of water in one sitting - have in recent months carried out often deadly raids on villages in search of water. To the majority of locals struggling to survive the failure of their crops, these wildlife neighbors are little more than a menace and competition for land and resources.

### 'The animals come running'

However Mwalua believes it is crucial to protect the wildlife, arguing "we are the voice of the animals". He reached out to foreigners,

\$200,000 - most of that in the past two weeks, as word spread about Mwalua's initiative. "It has blown my mind," said Mwalua, who plans to buy his own water truck and dig a borehole in the park.

Meanwhile the David Sheldrick Wildlife Trust - famed for rearing orphan elephants - has now joined him in trucking in water to the water hole. In a sign of the crisis the region faces, the charity has drilled 13 boreholes over the years, Angela Sheldrick, who runs the trust, told AFP.

water pumps, they see the swirling snake tracks in the sand. Desperate for water and a cool place to shelter as drought and climate change affect their habitat, snakes increasingly come into contact with people. As a result, snakebites have shot up so much in recent years that the Kenya Wildlife Service (KWS) is trying to amend a law to stop having to compensate those bitten, which costs millions of euros per year.

### Deadlier than poaching

The main water source for Tsavo West is Lake Jipe, which straddles the border with Tanzania. According to Kipongoso, its level has dropped 10 m in a decade. "At the same rate it means in another four or five years it will be a swamp, in another 15 years it will be a dust bowl. That means Tsavo West is dead, finished," he warned. He blames the water problems on "sheer human activity" in catchment areas. In the nearby Amboseli park, during the 2009 drought, 14 elephants were killed by poachers, while another 99 died because of lack of water, according to KWS figures.

"What all that means is we need now to stop focusing on poaching and start facing the imminent catastrophe which is the mass death of elephants and wildlife from lack of water," Kipongoso said. "The only way you can do that is landscape rehabilitation," he said, referring to reverting the land to its state before human activity changed it.

Mwalua's undertaking is exhausting. Bleary-eyed, he eats a quick breakfast of Swahili sweet bun and tea before embarking on the 70-km journey. Delivering the 12,000 liters of water is a slow, hour-long drive that he sometimes makes several times a day, despite suffering from kidney failure requiring twice-weekly dialysis. But he perks up when he sees the waiting animals.

On a February afternoon, clouds gather above the savannah and a rare burst of rain fills the air with an earthy petrichor but doesn't stick around long enough to penetrate the soil. Weeks of driving rain are needed to break the drought, and forecasters are already gloomy about the next rainy season due this month. —AFP



**Buffalo approach a watering hole after a bowser water tanker delivers water to thirsty wildlife at the Tsavo-west national park, after traveling 70 km from the town of Voi, approximately 400 km southeast of Kenya's capital Nairobi, on Oct 19, 2016. —AFP**

ing donations to bring water to the Taita Hills sanctuary.

The 41-year-old was haunted by the memory of a 2009 drought, which the International Fund for Animal Welfare estimates led to the loss of 40 percent of the animals in the neighboring Tsavo West National Park. "It was so sad. I saw it myself and I felt very bad and I said this thing should never happen again," he told AFP. Over his lifetime, Mwalua has seen the climate change drastically, with droughts causing chronic water shortages and increased conflict between villagers and wildlife.

Thirsty elephants - which can

who had participated in a conservation program he runs, to ask for donations to pay for the \$250 (237-euro) truckloads of water. At first, he would pour it into natural water holes but quickly realized that much was soaked up by the baking earth, so turned instead to a cement hole near a tourist lodge.

The animals "come running the moment they see the truck, they even know the timings. When they are really thirsty they even drink when the truck is emptying," the lodge's assistant manager Alex Namunje told AFP. A GoFundMe crowdfunding page, set up by an American friend, has raised over

### Snakebites

While conservationists praise Mwalua's efforts, they warn that climate change and human activity have affected water supply so badly it will take much more to solve the problem. "It is a good initiative but how much water can we truck into Tsavo? How many boreholes can you sink?" asked Jacob Kipongoso, head of the Tsavo Heritage Foundation. Conflict between humans and wildlife is only going to get worse, he believes. One deadly clue is the snakes' behavior.

Every morning, in Kipongoso's village, when women go to the



**MONROVIA:** James Harris, the husband of Salome Karwah, looks at pictures of his wedding day in his home on March 2, 2017. —AFP

## LIBERIAN ICON DIES GIVING BIRTH AFTER SURVIVING EBOLA

**MONROVIA:** In Nov 2014, Salome Karwah of Liberia graced the cover of Time magazine as a symbol of strength and humanity after surviving Ebola and using her experience to help others with the virus. But last month, Karwah died shortly after giving birth to her fourth child - and her husband blames the stigma attached to Ebola. "My wife died because she was not catered to by nurses and doctors. The reason, I believe, is because she is an Ebola survivor," James Harris said. "I am saying this because I heard some nurses telling friends not to go near my wife because she is a survivor."

The outbreak of Ebola in West Africa starting in 2013, which hit Liberia the hardest, infected nearly 29,000 people by conservative estimates, killing more than a third. Karwah worked as a counsellor for Medecins Sans Frontieres (MSF) after recovering from Ebola in the summer of 2014, helping others to cope with the psychological toll of the hemorrhagic fever. One evening in February, Harris said, his wife was admitted to hospital in the capital, Monrovia, where she gave birth by caesarian section. She returned home just two days later, telling her husband that some of the nurses refused to touch her.

### 'She did not deserve this'

Complications soon developed, and Harris rushed to hospital seeking help. His concerns were dismissed by one doctor, and he was told to go to a pharmacy to buy an injection for his wife. The medication was nowhere to be found, however,

and Karwah was dead shortly afterwards. "My wife was an Ebola survivor. She contracted the virus during the outbreak and she recovered," Harris said, bouncing the healthy new baby on his knee. "She saved lives, she held babies who had Ebola, and she helped them to get better. She did not deserve this kind of treatment."

Karwah lost her parents, brother, aunts, uncles, cousins and a niece to Ebola, according to Time. In an article for The Guardian in Oct 2014, Karwah wrote of the Ebola survivors she helped: "I help them with all my might because I understand the experience - I've been through the very same thing." Her photograph was chosen for the cover of Time when those fighting the Ebola outbreak were named person of the year. The hospital has refused to comment on her death, but Liberia's chief medical officer, Francis Kateh, told AFP that the authorities were investigating the case.

Karwah's brother, Reginald Karwah, said her body was tested for Ebola and the result came back negative. Many Ebola survivors continue to suffer high levels of shame and discrimination, which has been exacerbated by findings that the virus can stay in certain parts of the body for at least nine months after a patient has recovered. Liberia also has some of the world's highest maternal mortality rates, according to the United Nations. The UN's Population Fund has said that access to life-saving care has deteriorated since the Ebola outbreak because of the strain it has inflicted on the country's fragile health system. —AFP

## PUSH FOR HEALTHIER NAIL SALONS IN CALIFORNIA FINDING SUCCESS

**OAKLAND, California:** It was the swag-bags that convinced community health organizer Julia Liou to redraw the battle plan in a fight to reduce the hazardous chemical exposures of nail-salon workers, most of them low-paid Asian immigrant women. In 2005, Liou watched at California's state Capitol as dozens of lobbyists gave away bags of lipsticks and other beauty goodies to excited legislative staffers. It was part of the beauty and chemical industries' effort to defeat a bill to ban one of the thousands of industrial compounds used to make manicure and pedicures prettier and longer lasting.

Liou and her colleagues lost on that bill. But the state Capitol cluster-swing emerged as a defining lesson for Liou, underscoring how hard it would always be to go lobbyist-for-lobbyist against the US beauty industry, with its \$62 billion in estimated revenue last year. That episode has given rise to a San Francisco Bay Area grassroots campaign of salon workers, health workers and local officials that has taken hold in California and is gaining increasing national support and recognition from the US Environmental Protection Agency, Harvard's John F Kennedy School of Government and others.

"I realized we need to bring the voices of the community there ... to really articulate what was really happening, what workers were experiencing on the health side," said Liou, development director of Asian Health Services, a clin-

ic and outreach program in Oakland's Chinatown where staffers first took note more than a decade ago of how many nail-salon workers were dealing with cancer, headaches, miscarriages and other health problems.

Since then, the California Healthy Nail Salon Collaborative that Liou co-founded has spearheaded a California effort to reduce the toxicants that salon workers touch and breathe. Cities and counties taking part in the program certify salon owners who voluntarily ban suspect ingredients and nail products and who provide proper ventilation, gloves and masks for

workers. Last year, California lawmakers passed legislation supporting the certification program.

### Certification

The health complaints voiced by the country's more than 400,000 nail-salon workers, mostly immigrants from Vietnam, the Philippines, South Korea and other Asian countries and many with limited English or political experience, have gotten more attention over the last decade. In New York, Gov Andrew Cuomo has mandated ventilation systems and other measures to reduce chemical

exposure in nail salons. Some businesses and local groups around the US have tried self-certifying healthy nail salons.

But California's voluntary program stands out for the local government certification and for giving salon owners and workers the say on what health measures salons could best afford, as well as the training and encouragement to speak out on their health concerns. One morning this winter, TV crews, state and federal officials, and salon workers crowded inside a storefront nail salon in the San Francisco suburb of Alameda. The gathering celebrated the salon as one of the newest of 143 in the Bay Area and the Southern California city of Santa Monica to win local government certification as a healthy salon.

On the sidewalk outside, the owner of another salon, Van Nguyen, stood and cried. In support of the program, Nguyen had told California policymakers of miscarriages she suffered and the debilitating skin ailments that plagued a son she carried to full term. Having earlier won certification for her own San Francisco nail parlor, Nguyen, 46, was proud she had spoken out to protect other workers. But she mourned the harm she believes she did to her offspring through long days working with glues, removers and polishes. "I had misfortune, but I did the best I can," Nguyen said. "I don't want anyone else to suffer like me." —AP



**ALAMEDA, California:** In this Nov 30, 2016 photo, Lan-Anh Truong performs a manicure at her Leann's Nails salon. —AP

## OUCH: TAKING THE STING OUT OF MEDICAL EXPENSES

**WASHINGTON:** Medical expenses are a burden whenever they hit, but a recent study found they're most common around this time of year. The study found that one in six families makes a major medical payment in any given year, and they tended to occur in the first few months of the year. The study found the median payment was \$1,143 and most households take more than a year to recover from the hit.

Although the reason for the timing is unclear, researchers at economic think tank JP Morgan Chase Institute who conducted the study hypothesize that people are either putting off treatment or bill paying until tax refund time when they can afford it, or simply facing a fresh new set of deductibles and other out-of-pocket insurance expenses to meet for the year.

We gathered a few expert tips for managing the pain of medical expenses:

### Save

It's much easier to bear big expenses when you have some emergency savings. If you don't have much set aside, you aren't alone. Two-thirds of Americans would have difficulty coming up with the money to cover a \$1,000 emergency, according to a poll conducted by The Associated Press-NORC Center for Public Affairs Research. Start small, automate your savings and try to keep your hands off it unless you really need it.

Other preventative steps include staying within your health insurer's network or bundling your care so you

reach deductibles sooner. You may also want to get an estimate of costs ahead of time so you can better prepare. Some providers and insurers will help with this or you can use Amino, a free online service that estimates the costs of many common health care procedures.

### Verify

Review all your bills carefully when they arrive. About half of medical bills contain errors, said Caitlin Donovan of the National Patient Advocate Foundation. Make sure you are being billed only for services and goods you received. If you feel like you are being billed for something that should be covered by insurance, reach out to your plan for an explanation. You can also appeal any decision by your insurer not to pay. There are companies that will audit bills for you to make sure they are correct. Some, like Remedy, will only take a percentage of what they save you as payment. You can also reach out to a patient advocate organization for assistance.

### Seek aid

If you cannot foot the bill at all, seek help as soon as possible. Hospitals are often willing to negotiate the amount you owe or set up a payment plan. Ask if they have a financial assistance plan or know of one that could help you. There are many nonprofit organizations set up specifically to help people manage their medical bills. Also consider seeking help from friends or family with a crowdfunding page, such as Gofundme.com. —AP



## RUSSIA'S HIDDEN SEX WORKERS RISK VIOLENCE, DISEASE

**SAINT PETERSBURG:** Vladimir Putin recently quipped that Russian prostitutes are "the best in the world" as he dismissed unsubstantiated rumors that Moscow had incriminating evidence on Donald Trump. But the reality is that Russian sex workers operate in a hidden world outside the law and out of sight - making them doubly vulnerable to infection and abuse, as AFP journalists found after being granted rare access to an illegal brothel.

In a grand Stalin-era tower block in the north-western city of Saint Petersburg, a woman in her 30s opens the door of an apartment, introducing herself as Inna, the receptionist of this so-called salon. "Go into the kitchen. Nadya's working, but Nastya and Madina are in there," she says. Nastya, 31, and Madina, 20, are wearing T-shirts over flimsy nighties and are drinking tea in the small kitchen. The women only agree to speak to AFP because they trust an accompanying activist from the only NGO in Russia for sex workers called Serebryanaya Roza, or Silver Rose.

The activist, Regina Akhmetzyanova, spends her evening going to such clandestine brothels to give out condoms and to offer sex workers an HIV test. This is particularly important for prostitutes since infection rates in Russia are currently growing, with more than 103,000 new cases identified in 2016, up five percent on the previ-

ous year, while the real total is likely to be significantly higher.

Prostitutes admit they come under pressure to have unsafe sex. "They've beaten me and threatened me with a knife, forced me to do it without a condom," said Madina, who is from Uzbekistan and speaks only basic Russian. "I've had difficult situations with clients many times, for sure," added Nastya, who came to the city from the Urals region. "I've learnt not to show my fear."

### 'Absolute pariahs'

"Russian prostitutes are absolute pariahs who have no real way of defending themselves," says Silver Rose's founder, Irina Maslova. Maslova knows what she is talking about. The slim blonde in her 40s says she spent six years selling sex in the city before becoming an activist in 2003 and one of the few public advocates for prostitutes' rights. While prostitution is illegal in Russia, it is punishable by a fine of just 1,500 rubles (\$26).

Pimps theoretically face up to three years in jail but are harder to convict since this requires police to track financial flows. Activists say this legal ban is often used by police as an excuse not to investigate crimes against sex workers. "We're told our profession doesn't exist, that means, we don't exist for the government on the one hand, but on the other hand, since (prostitution) is an adminis-

trative offence, sex workers are totally defenseless and without rights," complains Maslova.

The NGO chief believes that only legalization of prostitution can bring an end to the abuses against the women and aims to create what she calls a "trade union for sex workers". There seems little prospect of this currently as officials and lawmakers back conservative policies and stress the importance of fidelity in HIV prevention campaigns. Prostitution officially did not exist in the Soviet Union but the first prostitutes targeting foreigners appeared in the late 1980s, taking payment in coveted hard currency.

In the 1990s, prostitutes openly solicited for trade on Moscow streets. Since the early 2000s, women have largely disappeared into brothels in residential blocks that may masquerade as massage parlors and operate allegedly under protection from corrupt police. In 2015, the Kommersant business daily reported that brothels were routinely "protected" by those in the police department supposed to fight internal corruption, citing several former police officers.

### 'We're still people'

In Saint Petersburg, Russia's second largest city, activists estimate there could be between 4,000 and 6,000 women who earn their living from prostitution. "These women have all differ-

ent backgrounds," says Akhmetzyanova. "There are students, divorced women and even housewives - their husbands don't know or at least claim they don't." Only some 10 percent work on the streets, while most work in brothels in city apartments, shared by a group of prostitutes with a security guard and receptionist, who takes calls from clients.

Clients find them from small ads pasted on the walls of buildings or on bus stops offering "leisure" or "girls" or simply giving women's names and a phone number. In the brothel, Akhmetzyanova prepares to test the women for HIV when the entry phone rings. "Quick, girls, quick!" says Inna, looking at the video from a security camera by the door, showing a man going up to the apartment.

Nastya and Madina take off their T-shirts, put on high heels and run out. About 10 minutes later, Madina comes back alone: The client has chosen Nastya. Every night, the three women who work here have around 10 to 15 clients between them but only receive half of the 2,000 rubles (\$34) per hour that each pays. The third woman Nadya, 33, comes back after her client leaves. She is married but her unemployed husband does not know her line of work. She sighs as she says: "We do what we do of our own accord, that's true. But we're still people all the same and it would be nice to be treated that way sometimes." —AFP

## CHINA VOWS BLUE SKIES

**BEIJING:** China will work to clear its skies by increasing investment in clean energy and punishing polluters, Premier Li Keqiang said yesterday in comments aimed at mollifying public anger over chronic smog. Swathes of northern China were blanketed under toxic smog this winter, affecting more than 100 million people and forcing government agencies to take emergency measures to curb pollution. "Environmental pollution remains grave, and in particular, some areas are frequently hit by smog," Li told delegates to the rubber-stamp National People's Congress (NPC) in opening its annual session. But "we will make our skies blue again", he said in his annual state-of-the-nation speech.

Pollution has plagued China for years, with the dramatic fouling of the country's air, water and soil representing the dark side of breakneck economic growth that has lifted hundreds of millions out of poverty. Li listed a series of measures China will take this year to help clear the air, including upgrading coal-fired power plants to make them less polluting, reducing coal-fired heating, and implementing "round-the-clock monitoring" of industrial pollution.

He said China would "basically" scrap all high-emission vehicles and pursue a three percent cut in emissions of sulphur dioxide and nitrogen oxide - key components of the country's toxic smog. "Faster progress in work to improve the environment, particularly air quality, is what people are desperately hoping for," Li said. China also will decrease its energy consumption per unit of GDP by 3.4 percent and reduce coal-fired power capacity.

China has long promised to clean up its act, but the pledges have taken a back seat to ensuring rapid economic growth, which the government sees as critical for guaranteeing social stability. "Environmental issues are the most important because this affects people every day and leaves problems for the next generations," Chang Chunbin, a NPC delegate from Hong Kong, told AFP. "To solve pollution the authorities have to add power behind their laws to better enforce environmental protection policies."

The ruling Communist Party is seeking to make a difficult transition away from dependence on heavily polluting industries to a more service-oriented economy fuelled by consumer demand. Last year GDP grew 6.7 percent, the slowest rate in a quarter of a century, and Li yesterday lowered the growth target to "around 6.5 percent" for 2017.

Maintaining the desired growth rates has so far meant spinning up the output of goods like steel, coal and cement, whose production is heavily polluting. But the government is increasingly having to balance its concern over an economic slowdown with fears of a public backlash over environmental pollution. In recent months, police have cracked down on protests sparked by pollution in several major cities and moved to censor complaints about bad air online. —AFP

## FINANCE CAPITAL KARACHI TURNED 'INTO RUBBISH BIN'

**KARACHI:** Neighbors forced their way into Mohammad Umair's home battling smoke and flames in a desperate bid to rescue his young family - he and his wife survived, their children did not. The fire began in a heap of garbage which blocked the narrow alley outside the five-storey building and quickly spread inside, engulfing the family as they slept that night. The tragic case has angered citizens of Karachi already frustrated by a failing waste management system, who are calling for more to be done.

Umair, a 31-year-old cloth merchant, breaks down as he explains that two of his children died before they even reached the hospital. "The third one, Abdul Aziz, died while the doctors were trying to save his life," Umair adds, recalling the cluster of doctors working frantically but futilely around the tiny body of his infant son. Police have yet to find out what caused the rubbish to catch fire but it spread quickly to their first floor apartment, filling the lone bedroom they shared where the family were all sleeping together.

Umair's wife Shameen blames the city and its citizens for her children's deaths. "Those who dump trash and those who do not fulfil their duties to clean up are responsible," she says flatly, eyes dry as she stands with her husband among the cinders of their former home. "Who else?" Shameen is perhaps the most tragic figure to point fingers at waste management authorities accused of corruption and ineptitude, but she is not the first or the only one. "The present capacity and resources of (the city) cannot cater to the quantum of garbage being generated daily," AD Sajjani, chief of the provincial Solid Waste Management Board (SWMB) set up in 2015 to deal with the garbage disposal, told AFP bluntly.

Karachi, a megacity of towering high rises and sprawling illegal settlements on the Arabian Sea, saw its growth explode in recent decades after waves of migration, largely refugees fleeing the war in Afghanistan and Pakistan's tribal areas. Its population of at least 20-25 million produces roughly 12,000 tonnes of trash daily, officials say. Municipal authorities are able to remove about half, says Sajjani - though sceptics argue it is far less. The rest is strewn in the streets and alleys, some organic and decomposing in the sweltering heat of the port, the rest piling higher and higher.

Alarmingly, some officials and residents are improvising - burning the leftover garbage, largely plastic waste, says Imran Sabir, a senior official at the



**KARACHI:** In this photograph taken on Jan 24, 2017, Pakistani youths search for their ball as they walk amongst dumped garbage in a residential area of Karachi. —AFP

Environment Protection Agency (EPA) for Sindh province. "The plastic burns and releases toxic gases", some of which are carcinogenic, he says. The burning goes on for months at a time beneath hazy skies in some parts of the city.

### Radical change needed

There are two landfill sites located in Karachi's western outskirts, Sajjani of the SWMB said - but they are far from the city centre, on traffic-clogged roads, and at any rate are already overflowing. Political bickering and finger-pointing make solutions hard to grasp. "This city has been turned into a huge rubbish bin," Karachi's former mayor Mustafa Kamal roared at a public rally recently. Kamal, who served as mayor until 2010, blamed sheer

corruption and the gross incompetence of his political rivals, citing kickbacks on waste disposal contracts and even the diesel used to run the garbage trucks.

But current mayor Waseem Akhtar, elected in 2016, complains he has no money and no power, his authority taken away by the provincial government, which in turn has now brought in Chinese contractors to manage garbage disposal in at least two of the city's five districts. Many believe the real fix can only come if authorities and citizens address the root of the problem: rampant consumption and waste by millions of residents in a city where there is no recycling, no attempt to curb the use of plastic and no one willing to take responsibility for cleaning up. Local culture must be "radically transformed", warns KMC's Zaman. —AFP

# CLINIC PAGE



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## RENAULT AL-BABTAIN SUCCESSFULLY ENDS HALA FEB 2017 SPONSORSHIP

Abdulmohsen Abdulaziz Al-Babtain Company (AABC), the authorized dealer of Renault vehicles in the State of Kuwait ended with great success its sponsorship for the 18th edition of Hala February, the country's annual festival that is held during the month of February and witnesses a range of entertaining activities and enthusiastic participation from locals and the GCC region.

Renault Al-Babtain's sponsorship of this year's mega event was considered key to the brands Corporate Social Responsibility portfolio as the participation demonstrates its commitment towards the community amidst a festive atmosphere during Kuwait's National and Liberation days.

Renault Al-Babtain participated at the festival's opening ceremony, the Parade ceremony which welcomed hundreds of visitors at Salem Al-Mubarak Street, one of Kuwait's oldest and most

popular avenues. Renault Al-Babtain marked its presence by displaying three of its most internationally appraised models; the luxurious Renault Talisman, the all-new revamped Renault Koleos and the fashionable Renault Captur.

Renault Al-Babtain also sponsored Hala February horseback riding tournament that was held for two days at Kuwait Riding Center; and honored first place winner with a brand new Renault Captur. Visitors were able to also interact with Renault Al-Babtain's staff on site and were able to test drive Renault newest models.

Moreover, exciting activities were held that the public enjoyed; Renault Captur vehicles were displayed in several Coops in Kuwait including Al-Ferdaws, Al-Shamiya, Mubarak Al-Kabeer and Al-Qurain, Jleeb Al-Shuyoukh, and Al-Andalous. Draws took place also at different local shopping centers including Rimal Mall, Kout Mall, City Center, and Al-Liwan Mall. People had the chance

to win different gifts as well and Renault Captur vehicles as mega prize. Esraa Youssef Al-Wazzan was one of the last winners who won a Renault Captur through sending an sms to Alo Febraayer program on Nabd Kuwait 88.8 FM.

Amal Alzarqawy was another winner who participated and won her Renault Captur in Kout mall. Renault Al-Babtain displayed its all-new Renault Koleos in Kout mall for the whole week and people had the chance to benefit from the special offers during the month of February.

Renault Al-Babtain also sponsored the mini football tournament that was held for children where both local and international teams competed including Manchester city, Inter Milan, Barcelona, Espanyol, Al-Arabi, Qadsiya and others. The company's sponsorship demonstrates its commitment towards society as it strives to remain one of the most admired and trusted automobile brand in Kuwait.



Abtal Barcelona representing Kuwait in Neymar Jr's Five in Brazil last year.



The winning team in action.



Brazilian star Neymar and the winning team of Neymar Jr's Five 2016.

## RED BULL NEYMAR JR'S FIVE RETURNS TO KUWAIT

Neymar Jr recently launched the second edition of his signature five-a-side tournament and spoke about his own hopes and dreams. Neymar Jr's Five made an instant impact in its debut year in 2016, with more than 10,000 teams and 65,000 players in 47 countries, including Kuwait, vying for overall victory in the world's biggest five-a-side football tournament. This time it will be bigger than ever, with regional qualifiers in more than 50 countries and a rule change giving more players the chance to compete.

Barcelona's famous star and Brazilian professional footballer Neymar Jr provides a unique opportunity to thousands of footballers to participate in the national qualifiers kicking off end of the month. Neymar, who was also announced the best football player of the year

in 2015, invites all players aged 16 to 25 to form a team of 5 and join the championship.

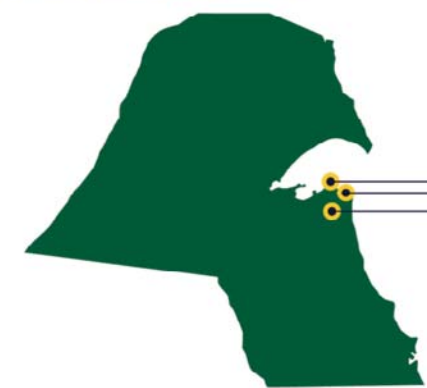
After the enormous success and global growth of Neymar Jr's Five held in 3 locations: Goal Shaab (21 and 22 March), Premier Sport Academy in Bayan (26 and 27 March), Hassan Abul in Dasma (3 and 4 April), concluding in the national final which will be held on 6th April.

"It is a fun, fast and technical game - it is the kind of football I've always loved to play and this time we play it with a special twist to it: the five-player teams lose one player each time they concede a goal until there are no players left, or the 10-minute game ends. This will be even more exciting," says Neymar Jr. "In 2017, I hope to win more games, more titles

and to score many more goals - as always. I want to continue evolving as an athlete and to help my team mates on the pitch, both for Barcelona and the Brazilian national team," he added, revealing his dreams and aspirations.

Last year, 128 teams signed up for eight national qualifiers in Kuwait, and only Abtal Barcelona were lucky enough to represent Kuwait in the World Final and compete with 49 other teams from all over the world, vying the chance be Neymar Jr's guests in Barcelona, Spain at the Camp Nou in order to watch a Barcelona game as VIPs. Teams of five to seven players can sign up now on [www.neymarjr5.com](http://www.neymarjr5.com) for a chance represent Kuwait in Brazil and meet Neymar!

### National Qualifiers Dates & Locations:



- 4 & 3 APR  
DASMA  
HASSAN ABUL
- 22 & 21 MAR  
SALMIYA  
SHAAB  
GOAL VENUE
- 27 & 26 MAR  
BAYAN  
EVERTON  
ACADEMY VENUE

Kuwait's qualifiers dates and locations.



## DURRAR TOASTMASTERS CLUB CELEBRATES SECOND ANNIVERSARY

Durrar Toastmasters Club, Reggae, Kuwait, celebrated its second anniversary on January 28, 2017. The meeting was held at American University of Kuwait (AUK). It was a joint meeting with Durrar Gavels Club (a club where children between the ages of 12 to 18 years learn leadership and communication skills).

With a theme 'Down the Memory Lane' the meeting rekindled the happy memories of the members journey in Toastmasters. Durrar Toastmasters Club was chartered on January 22, 2015 for the people living in and around Al-Reggae in Kuwait. The club that started with 22 members and now it has 31 members at present.

In the short span of two years, the

club has already made a name for itself amongst the Toastmasters fraternity in Kuwait winning prestigious distinguished club program (DCP) points and by adding many feathers to its cap in the form of ribbons, medals and educational achievements. Members from Durrar Toastmasters have made a mark in the Area and Division level competitions in Kuwait winning trophies.

The Club's enthusiastic team, led by Vice President - Public Relations Suhaan Abdul Munaf compiled the Club's second newsletter commemorating the celebrations. The souvenir, titled 'Durrar Toast' had 'Reflections' as its theme and contained contributions from the Executive Committee, members and members of the Durrar Gavel Club. The

Mohammed Makhlof, Program Quality Director - District 20 Toastmasters, released the souvenir. The Club's second anniversary celebration was supported by Al-Mulla International Finance Company, Kuwait College of Science and Technology, Pediasure, Al-Hasawi Group and Infotech Training Institute. The grand celebrations had variety of speeches with Raj Dhanasekaran giving his graduation speech to become a Competent Communicator and R Sathyamurthy presenting a monodrama. The highlight of the evening were a laugh second humorous speech presented by Gav Milan on troubles of facing the exams. Gav Milan is the 2016 Gavels Humorous Speech Champion. Sunilkumar Singh, a mentor for many of

the Durrar Toastmasters and Gavellers, also treated the members and guests with a 'Laughter Yoga Therapy'.

The Durrar Toastmasters club also organized the Club Contest on February 4, 2017 in American University of Kuwait. The Club Contest comprised of Table Topic Contest, Evaluation Contest, International Speech Contest and Humorous Speech Contest. Each contest was well set and well organized. In all seven contestants participated. R Sathyamurthy swept the contest winning the first place in all the four contests, while Toastmasters Aji Panicker (humorous speech), Baljit Singh (evaluation and table topics) and Mary Mathew (international speech) won the second prizes.

## GULF BANK LAUNCHES INSTANT ATMS REWARDS WITH BURGER KING

Gulf Bank announced the launch of the second new instant reward campaign on the use of its ATMs, providing an offer in collaboration with Burger King which started on March 1, 2017 and will run for two months until April 30, 2017.

Gulf Bank is the only Bank in Kuwait that offers to all its ATM users, across Kuwait, coupons attached to ATM receipts providing coupons for a free chicken royale with every King size meal purchased from Burger King. These coupons will be attached to the front of the ATM receipts giving easy and practical access to enjoy a treat from Burger King upon showing the coupons.

The offer, which is exclusive at Gulf Bank ATMs, only, allows customers to benefit from the vicinity of the ATMs and Burger King Restaurants across the country. With each withdraw or transaction done on Gulf Bank's ATMs, customers will indulge themselves along with their families, in a delicious meal. Gulf Bank is committed to providing the best and most innovative services and offers to its customers, and this campaign is only a proof of its continuous efforts. To find out more about the Bank's latest news, customers can visit the bank's bilingual website at [www.e-gulfbank.com](http://www.e-gulfbank.com), call the Customer Contact Center on 1805805, or visit one of Gulf Bank's 56 branches in Kuwait.

### WHAT'S ON - SUBMISSION GUIDELINES

All photos submitted for What's On should be minimum 200dpi. Articles must be in plain text and should include name and phone numbers. Articles and photos that fail to meet these requirements will not be published.

Please send them to [news@kuwaittimes.net](mailto:news@kuwaittimes.net)





Ambassadors and their spouses pose for a group picture during a ceremony to celebrate the International Women's Day. —Photos by Joseph Shagra



President of IWG Elena Solomatina, the spouse of the Russian Ambassador to Kuwait.



Maribel Duarte Gonzalez, the First Secretary of the Embassy of Cuba to Kuwait.



Ambassadors hold flowers to present to their wives on the occasion.



Painter Rasa Romanova.



(From left) Narjis Al-Shatti, Nibal Bourisly and Elena Solomatina.



Palestinian Ambassador Rami Tahboub presents flowers to his wife.



Ambassadors and IWG members cut the cake during the ceremony.

## IWG CELEBRATES INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY

By Faten Omar

The International Women's Group (IWG) celebrated International Women's Day at Crowne Plaza Hotel yesterday. The event was organized by the Russian Embassy in cooperation with Crowne Plaza Hotel. "The IWG meeting in March coincides with International Women's Day. This anniversary is considered rewarding for all women across the world for the roles that they play to develop societies," said Narjis Al-Shatti, a board member of IWG. "IWG is celebrating International Woman's Day with the participation of a num-

ber of diplomats and ambassadors, who will give their opinion on the role of women around the world who helped in developing their countries in all fields," she added.

Shatti pointed out that women succeeded to get their rights by fighting for them. "The woman fought for equal rights and the recognition of being an active member. She deserves to have this day to celebrate her accomplishments and encourage others. IWG is preparing for a spring festival on March 15 at Ruby Tuesday restaurant. We are going to visit Sheikh Nasser Al-Ahmed Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, Minister of Amiri Diwan

Affairs, this month. The ambassador of Uzbekistan has also invited IWG to visit Uzbekistan for two weeks, where we will visit the historical cities of Tashkent, Samarkand and Bukhara," she said.

Shatti said Ambassador of Canada Martine Mareau, First Secretary of the Embassy of Cuba Maribel Duarte Gonzalez, Second Counselor of the French Embassy Veronique Bertrand-Galli and Dr Nibal Bourisly, who used to work at the Kuwait Cultural Office in the UK, will share their stories of success as women.

Bourisly, the undersecretary general for academic and students' affairs at the private

university council, told Kuwait Times that "IWG invited me today to speak about my experiences and the challenges that I faced as a Kuwaiti woman outside Kuwait. I'm going to talk about the values that I gained during my career when I was in London. You should have a mentality to understand how to deal with different cultures. Once you erase differences or stereotyping people, it will become much easier."

She added that she worked at the Kuwaiti Cultural Office in London with people from more than 10 nationalities. "You have to understand their culture to understand them.

You have to understand the work ethics to learn from them for your work and own sake. One of the most important thing that I learned was the importance of global citizenship among our youth - we instill in them this kind of value. We provide them with the tools to live with all kinds of people. We encouraged Kuwaiti students in London to engage with the British society and not only with the closed Kuwaiti community," Bourisly said. At the event, IWG presented a documentary where the ambassadors spoke about women's role in the world and the sacrifices they made to obtain their rights.

## ABDULAZIZ BIN HUMAID FOUNDATION DISCUSSES WAYS TO FURTHER STRENGTHEN RELATIONS WITH KING KHALID FOUNDATION

Abdulaziz Bin Humaid Foundation received a delegation from the supporting partner King Khalid Foundation (KFF), the international, Saudi-based, philanthropic organization that is dedicated to humanitarian and development activities.

The meeting between the two entities was held at Ajman Youth Centre last week in the presence of ABHF's team, graduates from the Abdulaziz Bin Humaid Leadership Program (ALP) and Ajman Youth Centre's officials. The meeting aimed to exchange ideas and share experiences between the two foundations.

During the meeting, which was organized in collaboration with Emirates Foundation, the supporting partner, the two sides discussed standards that can be applied in the regional and international leadership programs. A number of suggestions were presented during the meeting for future implementations in collaboration with Abdulaziz Bin Humaid Foundation and its leading program—the ALP.

At the beginning of the meeting, Shaikha Ali Al-Nuaimi, Corporate Communication Manager,

Abdulaziz Bin Humaid Foundation, delivered a presentation on the foundation's community initiatives and GCC programs. The presentation highlighted the achievements made by the ALP since its inception and its young graduates, who are now filling senior positions in the public and private sector.

King Khalid Foundation's delegation presented the major development projects funded by the foundation in the KSA and highlighted some of the other humanitarian initiatives that are being carried out in collaboration with local and international organizations. The delegation presented the corporate strategy, objective, vision and mission of the KFF.

During the meeting, some of the graduates shared their success stories with the ALP followed by a presentation about Ajman Youth Centre, which was delivered by Ahmed Al-Raesi, the director of the center.

Shaikha Ali Al-Nuaimi said, "The visits by various delegations from the GCC and Arab countries aim to learn the best practices that are provided by our programs. Such visits are part of our strategic and future plans to further strengthen

relationships with the mother countries of our young participants."

"The meeting, which was held in collaboration with the Emirates Foundation, is in line with our strategy to boost relations with the KFF, our supporting partner," she added.

Mohammed Al-Ghifri, Head of Scholarship Centre at the King Khalid Foundation, said: "We are pleased to visit the ABHF and to have the opportunity to learn about ALP's unique initiatives and the services it provides to individuals and communities. We affirm our continued support of the ALP and its aims to create a positive social impact." He stressed the importance of ongoing communication with successful partners in the UAE for the purpose of exchanging ideas and experience.

Ghifri extended his thanks and appreciation to the organizers of the ALP for their hospitality and warm welcome. He lauded their outstanding efforts to introduce innovative programs. He wished success to the program in its endeavor to train and develop young individuals who are able to have a positive impact in their respective countries.





## OSN MOVIES ACTION

- 01:00 Starship Troopers
- 03:15 Sharknado 2: The Second One
- 05:00 The Throwaways
- 07:00 Escape
- 09:00 Pompeii
- 11:00 Blown Away
- 13:15 Big Game
- 15:00 Escape
- 17:00 The Machine
- 19:00 Survivor
- 21:00 Momentum
- 23:00 No Tears For The Dead

## ANIMAL PLANET HD

- 00:00 Treehouse Masters
- 00:55 Gator Boys
- 01:50 Gator Boys
- 02:45 Call Of The Wildman
- 03:10 Call Of The Wildman
- 03:40 In Too Deep
- 04:05 In Too Deep
- 04:35 In Too Deep
- 05:00 In Too Deep
- 07:02 Call Of The Wildman
- 07:25 Call Of The Wildman
- 07:49 River Monsters
- 08:36 Going Ape
- 09:00 Going Ape
- 09:25 Cats 101
- 10:15 Biggest And Baddest
- 11:10 In Too Deep
- 11:35 In Too Deep
- 12:05 Tanked
- 13:00 Preposterous Pets
- 13:55 Bondi Vet
- 14:50 Biggest And Baddest
- 15:45 Gator Boys
- 16:40 In Too Deep
- 17:05 In Too Deep
- 17:35 Tanked
- 18:30 Ten Deadliest Snakes With Nigel Marven
- 19:25 Dr. Jeff: Rocky Mountain Vet
- 20:20 Dr. Deer: Alaska Vet
- 21:15 Tanked
- 22:10 In Too Deep
- 22:35 In Too Deep
- 23:05 Dr. Jeff: Rocky Mountain Vet

## BBC FIRST

- 00:40 Doctors
- 01:10 Eastenders

- 03:05 Neal Brennan: Women And Black Dudes
- 04:00 The Daily Show With Trevor Noah
- 04:25 Catch A Contractor
- 05:15 Lip Sync Battle
- 05:40 Ridiculousness
- 06:05 Ridiculousness
- 06:30 Hungry Investors
- 07:20 Coaching Bad
- 08:15 Catch A Contractor
- 09:05 Disaster Date
- 09:30 Ridiculousness
- 09:55 Ridiculousness
- 10:20 Workaholics
- 10:45 Disaster Date
- 11:10 Ridiculousness
- 11:35 The It Crowd
- 12:00 Life Or Debt
- 12:50 Brotherhood
- 13:15 Lip Sync Battle
- 13:40 The It Crowd
- 14:05 Catch A Contractor
- 14:55 Ridiculousness
- 15:20 Life Or Debt
- 16:10 Comedy Central Presents Comedy Salvage
- 16:40 Ridiculousness
- 17:05 Ridiculousness
- 17:30 Disaster Date
- 17:55 Lip Sync Battle
- 18:25 Workaholics
- 18:50 Framework
- 19:39 The It Crowd
- 20:03 Bondi Ink
- 20:50 Disaster Date
- 21:13 The Jim Gaffigan Show
- 21:37 Brotherhood
- 22:00 The Daily Show With Trevor Noah
- 22:30 Important Things With Demetri Martin
- 22:54 Inside Amy Schumer
- 23:18 Inside Amy Schumer
- 23:42 Tosh.0

## Discovery Family

- 00:15 Destroyed In Seconds
- 00:40 Destroyed In Seconds
- 01:05 Destroyed In Seconds
- 01:30 Unchained Reaction
- 02:20 Unchained Reaction
- 03:10 Dirty Jobs
- 04:00 Dirty Jobs
- 04:50 Ultimate Survival
- 05:40 Bear Grylls: Born Survivor
- 06:30 Ultimate Survival
- 07:20 How It's Made
- 07:40 How It's Made
- 08:00 Dick n' Dom Go Wild
- 08:25 Awesome Adventures
- 08:50 Bondi Vet

- 13:55 Disney Mickey Mouse
- 14:00 Welcome To The Ponks
- 14:15 Gravity Falls
- 14:40 Hank Zipper
- 15:05 Star Darlings
- 15:10 Austin & Ally
- 15:35 Jessie
- 16:00 Bunk'd
- 16:25 Kirby Buckets
- 16:50 Sunny Bunnies
- 16:55 The Zhuzhus
- 17:20 Miraculous Tales Of Ladybug And Cat Noir
- 17:45 Elena Of Avalor
- 18:10 Stuck In The Middle
- 18:35 Descendants Wicked World
- 18:40 Girl Meets World
- 19:05 Bizaardvark
- 19:30 Bunk'd
- 19:55 Best Friends Whenever
- 20:20 Disney Mickey Mouse
- 20:25 The Next Step
- 20:50 Austin & Ally
- 21:15 Star Darlings
- 21:20 Shake It Up
- 21:45 Backstage
- 22:10 Liv And Maddie
- 22:35 Cracked
- 22:40 Dog With A Blog
- 23:05 Best Friends Whenever
- 23:30 Jessie
- 23:55 Tsum Tsum Shorts

## Disney Junior

- 00:00 PJ Masks
- 00:30 PJ Masks
- 00:55 PJ Masks
- 01:20 Henry Hugglemonster
- 01:35 The Hive
- 01:45 Loopedidoo
- 02:00 Henry Hugglemonster
- 02:15 Calimero
- 02:30 Art Attack
- 02:55 Zou
- 03:05 Loopedidoo
- 03:20 Henry Hugglemonster
- 03:35 Calimero
- 03:50 Zou
- 04:05 Art Attack
- 04:30 The Hive
- 04:40 Loopedidoo
- 04:55 Henry Hugglemonster
- 05:10 Art Attack
- 05:35 Loopedidoo
- 05:50 Calimero
- 06:05 Art Attack
- 06:30 Henry Hugglemonster
- 06:45 Zou
- 07:00 Art Attack
- 07:30 Henry Hugglemonster

- 15:20 Alaska: The Last Frontier
- 16:10 The Island With Bear Grylls
- 17:00 Deadliest Catch
- 17:50 Fast N' Loud
- 18:40 Misfit Garage
- 19:30 How It's Made: Dream Cars
- 19:55 How It's Made: Dream Cars
- 20:20 The Island With Bear Grylls
- 21:10 Storage Wars Canada
- 21:35 Storage Wars Canada
- 22:00 Gold Rush
- 22:50 Everest Rescue
- 23:40 Killing Fields

## Disney XD

- 00:00 Programmes Start At 6:00am KSA
- 07:00 Gravity Falls
- 07:25 Counterfeit Cat
- 07:50 Atomic Puppet
- 08:15 Star vs The Forces Of Evil
- 08:25 Danger Mouse
- 08:40 Supa Strikas
- 09:10 K.C. Undercover
- 09:35 Star Wars Freemaker Adventures
- 10:00 Lab Rats
- 10:25 Lab Rats
- 10:50 Danger Mouse
- 11:20 Supa Strikas
- 11:45 Supa Strikas
- 12:10 Counterfeit Cat
- 12:35 Pair Of Kings
- 13:00 Pair Of Kings
- 13:30 Future-Worm!
- 13:55 Lab Rats
- 14:20 Lab Rats
- 14:45 Atomic Puppet
- 15:10 Disney Mickey Mouse
- 15:15 Counterfeit Cat
- 15:40 Supa Strikas
- 16:05 Lab Rats
- 16:30 Gamer's Guide To Pretty Much Everything
- 16:55 Right Now Kapow
- 17:25 K.C. Undercover
- 17:50 Future-Worm!
- 18:15 Gravity Falls
- 18:40 Lab Rats
- 19:05 Disney Mickey Mouse
- 19:10 Mighty Med
- 19:35 Right Now Kapow
- 20:00 Atomic Puppet
- 20:25 Gamer's Guide To Pretty Much Everything
- 20:55 K.C. Undercover
- 21:20 Kickin' It
- 21:45 Mighty Med
- 22:10 Danger Mouse
- 22:40 Disney Mickey Mouse
- 22:45 Marvel's Avengers Assemble
- 23:10 Marvel Ultimate Spider-Man vs The Sinister 6
- 23:35 Booster

- 10:00 Anna Olson: Bake
- 10:20 Anna Olson: Bake
- 11:00 The Kitchen
- 12:00 The Pioneer Woman
- 12:30 The Pioneer Woman
- 13:00 Siba's Table
- 13:30 Siba's Table
- 14:00 Diners, Drive-Ins And Dives
- 14:30 Diners, Drive-Ins And Dives
- 15:00 Chopped
- 16:00 The Kitchen
- 17:00 Anna Olson: Bake
- 17:30 Anna Olson: Bake
- 18:00 Chopped
- 19:00 Guy's Grocery Games
- 20:00 Restaurant Stakeout
- 21:00 Mystery Diners
- 21:30 Mystery Diners
- 22:00 Restaurant Takeover
- 23:00 Iron Chef America

## itv CHOICE

- 00:40 Callie-Anne Cooks Into The Wild
- 01:10 The Chase
- 02:00 Emmerdale
- 02:30 Emmerdale
- 03:00 Coronation Street
- 03:30 The Jonathan Ross Show
- 04:25 Don't Tell The Bride
- 05:25 Tonight At The London Palladium
- 06:15 The Syndicate
- 07:15 The Chase
- 08:05 The Jonathan Ross Show
- 09:00 Don't Tell The Bride
- 10:00 Tonight At The London Palladium
- 11:00 The Syndicate
- 12:00 The Chase
- 12:50 The Jonathan Ross Show
- 13:45 Emmerdale
- 14:15 Coronation Street
- 14:45 Coronation Street
- 15:15 The Chase
- 16:10 The Jonathan Ross Show
- 17:00 Midsomer Murders
- 18:50 Broadchurch
- 19:45 Emmerdale
- 20:15 Coronation Street
- 20:45 Coronation Street
- 21:10 The Jonathan Ross Show
- 22:50 Midsomer Murders
- 23:00 Emmerdale

## H2 HD

- 00:00 Caligula: 1400 Days Of Terror
- 02:00 Pirate Treasure Of The Knights Templar
- 03:00 Ancient Top 10
- 04:00 The Human Calculator
- 04:50 Ancient Aliens
- 05:40 Caligula: 1400 Days Of Terror
- 07:20 Pirate Treasure Of The Knights Templar
- 08:10 The Universe
- 09:00 Ancient Top 10
- 10:00 The Human Calculator
- 11:00 Ancient Aliens
- 12:00 Caligula: 1400 Days Of Terror
- 14:00 Pirate Treasure Of The Knights Templar
- 15:00 Ancient Top 10
- 16:00 The Human Calculator
- 17:00 Ancient Aliens
- 18:00 Caligula: 1400 Days Of Terror
- 20:00 Patton 360
- 21:00 Cities Of The Underworld
- 22:00 Missing In Alaska
- 23:00 Ancient Aliens: The Ultimate Evidence

## H HD HISTORY

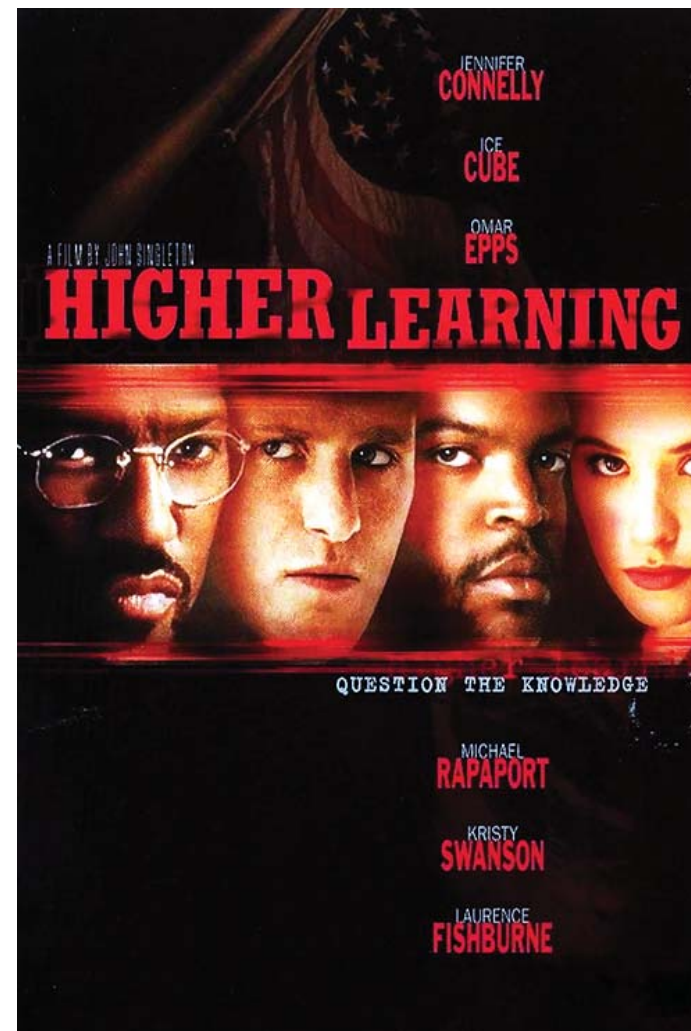
- 00:05 Car Hunters
- 00:30 American Pickers
- 01:20 Battle 360
- 02:10 Pawn Stars
- 02:35 Storage Wars
- 03:00 Storage Wars
- 03:25 Storage Wars
- 03:50 Storage Wars
- 04:15 American Pickers
- 05:05 Pawn Stars
- 05:30 Pawn Stars
- 06:00 Mountain Men
- 07:00 American Restoration
- 07:25 American Restoration
- 07:50 Shipping Wars
- 08:15 Shipping Wars
- 08:40 Counting Cars
- 09:05 Counting Cars
- 09:30 Pawn Stars
- 09:55 Pawn Stars
- 10:20 Storage Wars Miami
- 10:45 Storage Wars Miami
- 11:10 American Pickers
- 12:00 Billion Dollar Wreck
- 12:50 Time Team
- 13:40 Swamp People
- 14:30 Ax Men
- 15:20 Mountain Men
- 16:10 Shipping Wars
- 16:35 Shipping Wars
- 17:00 Counting Cars

## EHD

- 00:00 Fashion Police
- 01:00 Revenge Body With Khloe Kardashian
- 01:55 Famously Single
- 02:50 E! News
- 03:50 Botched
- 04:45 Botched By Nature
- 05:40 Botched By Nature
- 06:30 Fashion Bloggers
- 07:00 Mariah's World
- 07:55 E! News
- 08:25 Mariah's World
- 09:20 Mariah's World
- 10:15 Mariah's World
- 11:10 E! News
- 11:40 Celebrity Style Story
- 12:10 Keeping Up With The Kardashians
- 13:10 Keeping Up With The Kardashians
- 14:05 Keeping Up With The Kardashians
- 15:05 Keeping Up With The Kardashians
- 16:00 E! News
- 16:30 Celebrity Style Story
- 17:00 Celebrity Style Story
- 17:30 Celebrity Style Story
- 18:00 Fashion Police
- 19:00 Revenge Body With Khloe Kardashian
- 20:00 So Cosmo
- 21:00 So Cosmo
- 22:00 So Cosmo
- 23:00 Fashion Police

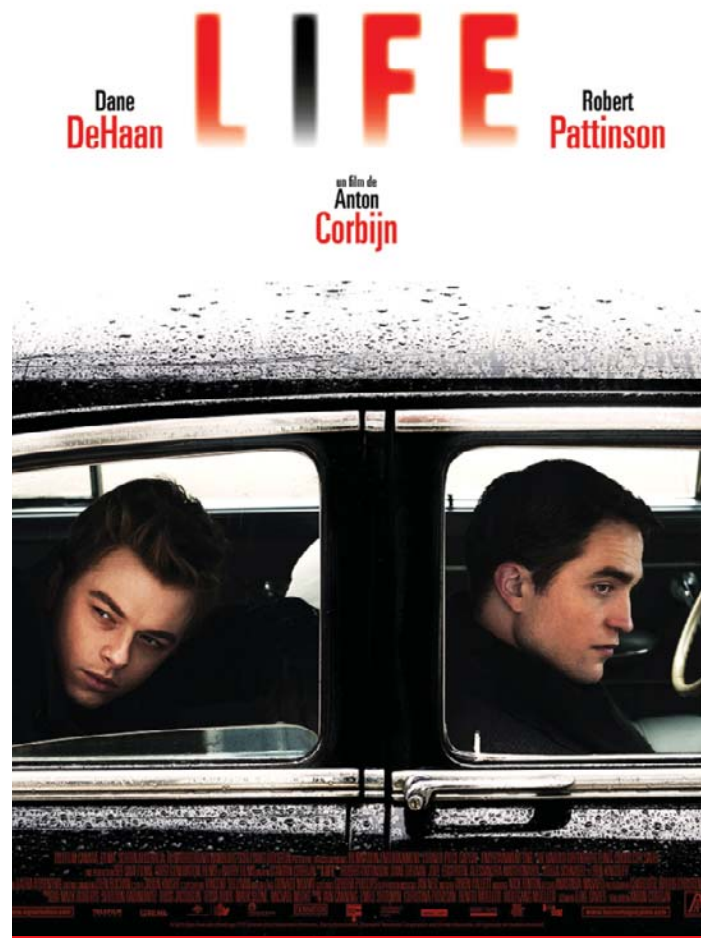
## food network

- 00:00 Food Network Star
- 01:00 Private Chef
- 01:30 Private Chef
- 02:00 Patricia Heaton Parties
- 02:30 Patricia Heaton Parties
- 03:00 Chopped
- 04:00 Food Network Star
- 05:00 Guy's Grocery Games
- 06:00 Roadtrip With G. Garvin
- 06:30 Roadtrip With G. Garvin
- 07:00 The Kitchen
- 08:00 The Pioneer Woman
- 08:30 The Pioneer Woman
- 09:00 Siba's Table
- 09:30 Siba's Table



HIGHER LEARNING ON OSN MOVIES HD

Un photographe. Un rebelle. Une légende.



LIFE ON OSN MOVIES COMEDY HD

- 17:50 Pawn Stars
- 18:15 Pawn Stars
- 18:40 Storage Wars
- 19:05 Storage Wars
- 19:30 Pawn Stars
- 19:55 Storage Wars
- 20:20 Mountain Men
- 21:10 American Pickers
- 22:00 The Curse Of Oak Island
- 22:50 Hunting Killer
- 23:40 Ronnie O'Sullivan's American Hustle
- 19:25 Predator Falls
- 20:20 Bear Nomad
- 21:10 Extreme Animal Babies
- 22:50 Freaks & Creeps
- 23:00 Snakes In The City
- 23:40 Predator Falls

## OSN MOVIES HD FAMILY

- 00:30 Gnomeo & Juliet
- 00:30 Ice Princess
- 04:30 Batman Unlimited: Animal Instincts
- 06:30 James And The Giant Peach
- 08:30 DuckTales: The Movie
- 10:00 Gnomeo & Juliet
- 12:00 James And The Giant Peach
- 14:00 Alone For Christmas
- 16:00 Home On The Range
- 17:45 The Parent Trap
- 20:00 High School Musical 3: Senior Year
- 22:00 Storm Rider

## OSN MOVIES HD COMEDY

- 00:30 OSN Movies Comedy HD
- 01:00 Don Peyote
- 03:00 Three Men And A Little Lady
- 05:00 5 To 7
- 07:00 The Final Girls
- 09:00 Three Men And A Little Lady
- 11:00 5 To 7
- 13:00 The Final Girls
- 15:00 Sister Act 2: Back In The Habit
- 17:00 Ana Maria In Novela Land
- 19:00 The Golden Child
- 21:00 Life
- 23:00 The Hooligan Factory

## OSN MOVIES HD FESTIVAL

- 01:00 Venus In Fur
- 03:00 Chariots Of Fire
- 05:00 The Express
- 07:15 Ronaldo
- 09:00 A Perfect Day
- 11:00 The End Of The Tour
- 13:00 Chariots Of Fire
- 15:00 Young Ones
- 17:00 Rosewater
- 19:00 Little Accidents
- 21:00 The Lobster
- 23:00 Ex Machina

## OSN MOVIES HD

- 01:30 Higher Learning
- 03:10 Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles
- 05:00 Louder Than Words
- 06:45 Gridiron Gang
- 09:00 Breakdown
- 10:45 Just Married
- 12:30 Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles
- 14:30 People Like Us
- 16:30 Ghostbusters
- 18:30 Independence Day
- 21:00 X-Men: The Last Stand
- 22:45 X-Men: First Class

## SC DISCOVERY SCIENCE

- 00:00 Close Encounters
- 00:25 Close Encounters
- 00:50 Close Encounters
- 01:15 Close Encounters
- 01:40 Close Encounters
- 02:05 Close Encounters
- 02:30 Close Encounters
- 02:55 Close Encounters
- 03:20 Close Encounters
- 03:45 Close Encounters
- 04:10 Mythbusters
- 05:00 Mythbusters
- 05:48 Mythbusters
- 06:36 Mythbusters
- 07:24 Mythbusters
- 08:12 Mythbusters
- 09:00 How Do They Do It?
- 09:26 Kings Of Construction
- 10:14 Mythbusters
- 11:02 Close Encounters
- 11:27 Close Encounters
- 11:50 How Do They Do It?
- 12:14 Food Factory
- 12:38 Mythbusters
- 13:26 Kings Of Construction
- 14:14 Mythbusters
- 15:02 How Do They Do It?
- 15:26 Food Factory
- 15:50 Close Encounters
- 16:15 Close Encounters
- 16:38 Kings Of Construction
- 17:26 Mythbusters
- 18:14 Mythbusters
- 19:02 Close Encounters
- 19:27 Close Encounters
- 19:50 Kings Of Construction
- 20:40 Mythbusters
- 21:30 NASA's Unexplained Files
- 22:20 How Do They Do It?
- 22:45 Food Factory
- 23:10 Close Encounters
- 23:35 Close Encounters

## NAT GEO WILD HD

- 00:30 Dangerous Encounters
- 01:20 Zoo Confidential
- 02:10 Dead Or Alive
- 03:00 Queen Of The Chase
- 03:50 Feast Of The Grizzly
- 04:45 Polar Bear Invasion
- 05:40 Wild Winter
- 06:35 Queen Of The Chase
- 07:30 Feast Of The Grizzly
- 08:25 Polar Bear Invasion
- 09:20 Wild Winter
- 10:15 World's Wildest: Animal Taboo
- 11:10 Animal Intervention
- 12:05 Feast Of The Grizzly
- 13:00 Great White Code Red
- 13:55 Lion Warrior
- 14:50 Maneater Manhunt
- 15:45 Bear Nomad
- 16:40 Extreme Animal Babies
- 17:35 Freaks & Creeps
- 18:30 Snakes In The City

## crime & investigation network

- 00:00 The Real Essex Boys
- 01:00 Crimes That Shook Britain
- 02:00 The Haunting Of...
- 03:00 My Ghost Story: Caught On Camera
- 04:00 The Real Essex Boys
- 05:00 Crimes That Shook Britain
- 06:00 The Haunting Of...
- 07:00 My Ghost Story: Caught On Camera
- 08:00 The First 48
- 09:00 Deadly Wives
- 10:00 Crimes That Shook Britain
- 11:00 Homicide Hunter
- 12:00 My Crazy Ex
- 13:00 My Crazy Ex
- 14:00 My Crazy Ex
- 15:00 My Crazy Ex
- 16:00 Deadly Wives
- 17:00 Crimes That Shook Britain
- 18:00 Homicide Hunter
- 19:00 Nightmare In Suburbia
- 20:00 It Takes A Killer
- 20:30 It Takes A Killer
- 21:00 The First 48
- 22:00 Crimes That Shook Britain
- 23:00 Deadly Wives

## Disney Channel HD

- 00:00 Kirby Buckets
- 00:25 Sabrina Secrets Of A Teenage Witch
- 00:50 Sabrina Secrets Of A Teenage Witch
- 01:10 Hank Zipper
- 01:35 Binny And The Ghost
- 02:00 Violetta
- 02:45 The Hive
- 02:50 Sabrina Secrets Of A Teenage Witch
- 03:15 Sabrina Secrets Of A Teenage Witch
- 03:40 Hank Zipper
- 04:05 Binny And The Ghost
- 04:30 Violetta
- 05:15 The Hive
- 05:20 Sabrina Secrets Of A Teenage Witch
- 05:45 Sabrina Secrets Of A Teenage Witch
- 06:10 Hank Zipper
- 06:35 Binny And The Ghost
- 07:00 Violetta
- 07:45 The Hive
- 07:50 The 7D
- 08:00 Jessie
- 08:25 Jessie
- 08:50 Tsum Tsum Shorts
- 08:55 Rolling To The Ponks
- 09:20 Elena Of Avalor
- 09:45 Bunk'd
- 10:10 Stuck In The Middle
- 10:35 Wizards Of Waverly Place
- 11:00 Wizards Of Waverly Place
- 11:25 A.N.T. Farm
- 11:50 A.N.T. Farm
- 12:15 Good Luck Charlie
- 12:40 Good Luck Charlie
- 13:05 Shake It Up
- 13:30 Shake It Up

## Discovery Channel HD

- 23:00 My Friends Tigger & Pooh
- 23:25 Gummi Bears
- 23:55 Minnie's Bow-Toons
- Discovery HD
- 00:30 Fast N' Loud
- 01:20 Misfit Garage
- 02:10 Rise Of The Warrior Apes
- 03:50 Legend Of Croc Gold
- 04:40 Fast N' Loud
- 05:30 Storage Wars Canada
- 06:00 How It's Made: Dream Cars
- 06:30 How It's Made: Dream Cars
- 07:00 Deadliest Catch
- 07:50 Misfit Garage
- 08:40 Fast N' Loud
- 09:30 The Island With Bear Grylls
- 10:20 Storage Wars Canada
- 10:45 How It's Made: Dream Cars
- 11:10 How It's Made: Dream Cars
- 11:35 Wheeler Dealers
- 12:25 Diesel Brothers
- 13:15 Street Outlaws
- 14:05 How It's Made: Dream Cars
- 14:30 Storage Wars Canada
- 14:55 Storage Wars Canada

## COMEDY CENTRAL

- 00:11 Chappelle's Show
- 00:35 The Daily Show With Trevor Noah
- 01:00 Neal Brennan: Women And Black Dudes
- 01:50 Inside Amy Schumer
- 02:15 Tosh.0
- 02:40 Tosh.0



# CLASSIFIEDS



MONDAY, MARCH 6, 2017

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**Kuwait Times**



## KNCC PROGRAMME FROM THURSDAY TO WEDNESDAY (02/03/2017 TO 08/03/2017)

Time	Channel	Programme	Time	Channel	Programme
11:30 AM	LOGAN	SHARQIA-1	8:30 PM	LOGAN	LOGAN
2:15 PM	HAMAH - Kuwaiti Film	HAMAH - Kuwaiti Film	10:00 PM	LOGAN	LOGAN
3:45 PM	HAMAH - Kuwaiti Film	HIDDEN FIGURES	12:45 AM	LOGAN	LOGAN
5:15 PM	HAMAH - Kuwaiti Film	HAMAH - Kuwaiti Film			
6:45 PM	HAMAH - Kuwaiti Film	FANAR-2			
8:30 PM	HAMAH - Kuwaiti Film	KIKORIKI. Legend of the Golden Dragon	1:00 PM	LOGAN	THE DEVIL'S CANDY
10:00 PM	HAMAH - Kuwaiti Film	KIKORIKI. Legend of the Golden Dragon	2:45 PM	LOGAN	A DOG'S PURPOSE
11:30 PM	LOGAN	ELOISE	4:30 PM	LOGAN	THE LEGO BATMAN MOVIE
		MERCURY PLAINS	6:15 PM	LOGAN	A DOG'S PURPOSE
		ELOISE	8:15 PM	LOGAN	THE DEVIL'S CANDY
		ELOISE	10:15 PM	LOGAN	THE DEVIL'S CANDY
		ELOISE	12:15 AM	LOGAN	THE DEVIL'S CANDY
12:00 PM	HAMAH - Kuwaiti Film	FANAR-3			
1:30 PM	LOGAN	MERCURY PLAINS	12:00 PM	LOGAN -2D -4DX	LOGAN -2D -4DX
4:15 PM	LOGAN	COMMANDO 2-Hindi	2:00 PM	LOGAN -2D -4DX	LOGAN -2D -4DX
7:00 PM	LOGAN	ELOISE	5:00 PM	LOGAN -2D -4DX	LOGAN -2D -4DX
9:45 PM	LOGAN	COMMANDO 2-Hindi	7:00 PM	LOGAN -2D -4DX	LOGAN -2D -4DX
12:30 AM	LOGAN	MERCURY PLAINS	10:00 PM	LOGAN -2D -4DX	LOGAN -2D -4DX
		MERCURY PLAINS	12:05 AM	LOGAN -2D -4DX	LOGAN -2D -4DX
1:15 PM	ELOISE	FANAR-4			
3:15 PM	ELOISE	LOGAN	1:30 PM	ELOISE	ELOISE
5:15 PM	LOGAN	LOGAN	4:15 PM	ELOISE	ELOISE
8:00 PM	LOGAN	LOGAN	7:00 PM	ELOISE	ELOISE
10:45 PM	ELOISE	LOGAN	9:45 PM	ELOISE	ELOISE
12:45 AM	ELOISE	LOGAN	12:30 AM	ELOISE	ELOISE
12:30 PM	ELOISE	FANAR-5			
2:30 PM	ELOISE	LOGAN	12:30 PM	LOGAN	LOGAN
4:30 PM	ELOISE	LOGAN	3:15 PM	LOGAN	LOGAN
6:30 PM	ELOISE	LOGAN	6:00 PM	LOGAN	LOGAN
8:30 PM	MERCURY PLAINS	LOGAN	8:45 PM	LOGAN	LOGAN
10:30 PM	ELOISE	LOGAN	11:30 PM	LOGAN	LOGAN
12:30 AM	ELOISE	LOGAN			
12:15 PM	LOGAN	MARINA-1			
3:00 PM	LOGAN	ELOISE	12:00 PM	ELOISE	360~1
5:45 PM	HAMAH - Kuwaiti Film	ELOISE	2:00 PM	ELOISE	ELOISE
7:15 PM	LOGAN	ELOISE	4:00 PM	ELOISE	ELOISE
10:00 PM	HAMAH - Kuwaiti Film	HIDDEN FIGURES	6:00 PM	ELOISE	ELOISE
11:30 PM	LOGAN	ELOISE	8:00 PM	ELOISE	ELOISE
		ELOISE	10:45 PM	ELOISE	ELOISE
		ELOISE	12:45 AM	ELOISE	ELOISE
1:15 PM	LOGAN	MARINA-2			
2:30 PM	HAMAH - Kuwaiti Film	LOGAN	1:00 PM	LOGAN	360~2
4:00 PM	LOGAN	THE DEVIL'S CANDY	1:45 PM	LOGAN	HIDDEN FIGURES
6:45 PM	LOGAN	LOGAN	3:45 PM	LOGAN	HIDDEN FIGURES
9:30 PM	LOGAN	LOGAN	6:30 PM	LOGAN	FRI
12:15 AM	LOGAN	LOGAN	9:15 PM	LOGAN	HIDDEN FIGURES
			12:05 AM	LOGAN	HIDDEN FIGURES
12:00 PM	HAMAH - Kuwaiti Film	MARINA-3			
1:30 PM	HAMAH - Kuwaiti Film	LOGAN	11:30 AM	LOGAN	360~3
3:00 PM	HIDDEN FIGURES	LOGAN	2:15 PM	LOGAN	JOHN WICK: CHAPTER 2
5:30 PM	HAMAH - Kuwaiti Film	HAMAH - Kuwaiti Film	5:00 PM	LOGAN	JOHN WICK: CHAPTER 2
7:00 PM	HAMAH - Kuwaiti Film	HAMAH - Kuwaiti Film	6:45 PM	LOGAN	ABY- Malayalam

## VACANCY

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### PRAYER TIMINGS

**Fajr:** 04:51  
**Shorook:** 06:10  
**Duhr:** 12:00  
**Asr:** 15:20  
**Maghrib:** 17:50  
**Isha:** 19:06



## Flight Schedule

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

**DIAL 161** FOR AIRPORT INFORMATION

Arrival Flights on Monday 6/3/2017				Departure Flights on Monday 6/3/2017			
Airlines	Fit	Route	Time	Airlines	Fit	Route	Time
KAC	614	Bahrain	13:30	MSR	611	Cairo	14:00
KAC	564	Amman	13:40	FDB	076	Dubai	14:05
KAC	231	Riyadh	13:55	UAE	872	Dubai	14:15
JZR	267	Beirut	00:30	KAC	693	Muscat	14:30
JZR	539	Cairo	00:40	KNE	382	Taif	14:50
KAC	102	London	00:55	FEG	932	Alexandria	14:55
THY	772	Istanbul	00:55	KAC	673	Dubai	15:00
FDK	803	Damascus	01:00	FDB	060	Dubai	15:10
KAC	742	Dammam	01:00	KAC	785	Jeddah	15:15
RJA	642	Amman	01:05	PAL	669	Dubai/Manila	15:20
QTR	1086	Doha	01:15	GFA	222	Bahrain	15:25
THY	764	Istanbul	01:50	QTR	1079	Doha	15:40
DLH	635	Doha	01:55	SVL	501	Jeddah	15:45
PGT	858	Istanbul	02:00	KNE	530	Jeddah	15:55
UAE	853	Dubai	02:30	KAC	619	Doha	16:00
GFA	211	Bahrain	02:30	ETD	304	Abu Dhabi	16:20
OMA	643	Muscat	02:55	KAC	357	Kochi	16:20
KKK	6506	Istanbul	02:55	ABY	128	Sharjah	16:30
FDB	069	Dubai	03:05	OMA	646	Muscat	16:35
ETD	305	Abu Dhabi	03:10	SAW	706	Damascus	16:55
MSR	612	Cairo	03:10	JZR	266	Beirut	17:05
CEB	0018	Manila	03:15	JZR	240	Amman	17:15
KAC	358	Kochi	03:30	FDB	052	Dubai	17:25
QTR	1076	Doha	03:30	QTR	1073	Doha	17:40
KAC	784	Jeddah	03:55	KAC	343	Chennai	17:40
KAC	418	Manila	04:25	KAC	363	Colombo	17:40
FEG	933	Sohag	05:00	UAE	858	Dubai	17:45
JZR	503	Luxor	05:10	JZR	538	Cairo	17:45
KAC	354	BLR	05:20	RJA	641	Amman	17:55
DHX	170	Bahrain	05:20	KAC	331	Trivandrum	18:00
KAC	332	Trivandrum	05:45	SVL	511	Riyadh	18:15
THY	770	Istanbul	05:55	KAC	353	BLR	18:15
KAC	384	Delhi	06:05	GFA	216	Bahrain	18:20
KAC	364	Colombo	06:05	JZR	184	Dubai	18:40
KAC	206	Islamabad	06:20	FDB	064	Dubai	19:05
BAW	157	London	06:40	JZR	124	Bahrain	19:15
PAL	668	Manila/Dubai	07:00	UAE	876	Dubai	19:30
FDB	5061	Dubai	07:15	QTR	1081	Doha	19:50
FDB	053	Dubai	07:50	ABY	124	Sharjah	20:05
KAC	302	Mumbai	08:20	GFA	218	Bahrain	20:15
UAE	855	Dubai	08:40	KAC	383	Delhi	20:30
KAC	382	Delhi	08:45	FDB	058	Dubai	20:35
ABY	125	Sharjah	09:05	KAC	775	Riyadh	20:45
ETD	301	Abu Dhabi	09:05	KNE	232	Riyadh	20:55
KAC	352	Kochi	09:10	KAC	1543	Cairo	21:00
QTR	1070	Doha	09:30	OMA	648	Muscat	21:10
FDB	055	Dubai	09:40	KAC	205	Islamabad	21:25
IRA	667	Esfahan	10:00	KAC	345	Ahmedabad	21:30
GFA	213	Bahrain	10:40	QTR	1089	Doha	21:35
SYR	341	Damascus	11:00	DLH	634	Doha	21:35
KAC	774	Riyadh	11:05	DHX	171	Bahrain	21:50
AXB	889	Mangalore/Bahrain	11:10	ETD	308	Abu Dhabi	22:15
JZR	165	Dubai	11:30	MEA	403	Beirut	22:20
FDK	801	Damascus	11:45	JZR	528	Asyut	22:25
MEA	404	Beirut	11:55	ALK	230	Colombo	22:25
KAC	744	Dammam	12:10	FDB	5054	Dubai	22:30
MSC	401	Alexandria	12:30	GFA	220	Bahrain	22:30
FEG	953	Asyut	12:35	KAC	301	Mumbai	22:45
JZR	561	Sohag	12:40	UAE	860	Dubai	22:55
FDB	075	Dubai	12:50	ETD	310	Abu Dhabi	23:05
UAE	871	Dubai	12:50	QTR	1083	Doha	23:20
MSR	610	Cairo	13:00				



CROSSWORD 1539



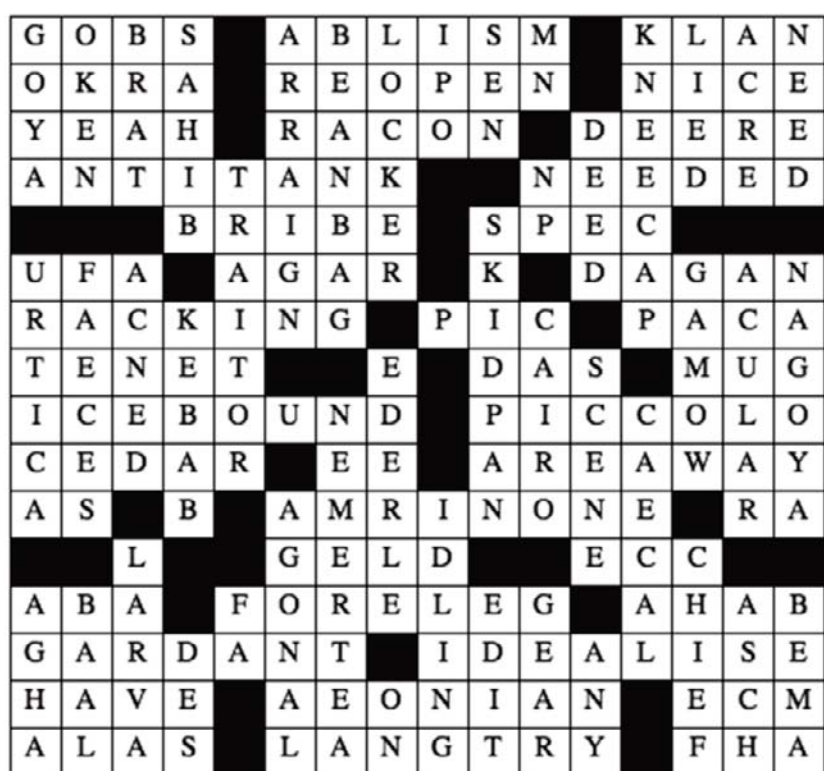
ACROSS

- A hotel providing overnight lodging for travelers.
- A mountain range in the northwestern United States extending through Washington and Oregon and northern California.
- The number that is represented as a one followed by 6 zeros.
- Of or relating to a member of the Buddhist people inhabiting the Mekong river in Laos and Thailand.
- (Linguistics) Relating to the ablative case.
- A flat wing-shaped process or winglike part of an organism.
- Affected manners intended to impress others.
- Lower in esteem.
- Type genus of the Majidae.
- Fiber of the flax plant that is made into thread and woven into linen fabric.
- A particular geographical region of indefinite boundary (usually serving some special purpose or distinguished by its people or culture or geography).
- A city in southern Turkey on the Seyhan River.
- Of or relating to the Olympic Games.
- An associate degree in nursing.
- Informal terms for a mother.
- A trivalent metallic element of the rare earth group.
- An officer who acts as military assistant to a more senior officer.
- A power unit equal to the power dissipated when 1 ampere flows across a potential difference of 1 abvolt (one ten-thousandth of a milliwatt).
- Electronic equipment that provides visual images of varying electrical quantities.
- An inflammatory disease of connective tissue with variable features including fever and weakness and fatigability and joint pains and skin lesions on the face or neck or arms.
- A small rounded boat made of hides stretched over a wicker frame.
- (Greek mythology) The god of the underworld in ancient mythology.
- 1 species.
- An Indic language.
- An almond-shaped neural structure in the anterior part of the temporal lobe of the cerebrum.
- United States lawyer and politician who formulated a production code that prescribed the moral content of United States films from 1930 to 1966 (1879-1954).
- A radioactive transuranic element produced by bombarding plutonium with neutrons.
- The fatty flesh of eel.
- A public promotion of some product or service.
- Any of numerous local fertility and nature deities worshipped by ancient Semitic peoples.
- Wild or domesticated South American cud-chewing animal related to camels but smaller and lacking a hump.
- A white linen liturgical vestment with sleeves.
- Aircraft landing in bad weather in which the pilot is talked down by ground control using precision approach radar.
- (informal) Of the highest quality.
- Pastry made with a cream cheese dough and different fillings (as raisins and walnuts and cinnamon or chocolate and walnut and apricot preserves).
- A barrier constructed to contain the flow of water or to keep out the sea.
- Experiencing or showing sorrow or unhappiness.

DOWN

- Tropical American tree grown in southern United States having a whitish pink-tinged fruit.
- Submerged aquatic plant having narrow leaves and small flowers.
- A water wheel with buckets attached to the rim.
- A white metallic element that burns with a brilliant light.
- The blood group whose red cells carry both the A and B antigens.
- A downhill race over a winding course defined by upright poles.
- An esoteric or occult matter that is traditionally secret.
- Inability to coordinate voluntary muscle movements.
- God of the underworld.
- (Old Testament) Adam's wife in Judeo-Christian mythology.
- A toxic nonmetallic element related to sulfur and tellurium.
- A flat-bottomed volcanic crater that was formed by an explosion.
- A river in central Europe that arises in northwestern Czechoslovakia and flows northward through Germany to empty into the North Sea.
- Mentally or physically infirm with age.
- The capital and largest city of Yemen.
- Tropical American tree producing cacao beans.
- Be earlier in time.
- Any expected deliverer.
- In favor of (an action or proposal etc.).
- A small picture inserted within the bounds or a larger one.
- Reduced in strength or concentration or quality or purity.
- (ecology) The process by which a plant or animal becomes established in a new habitat.
- A cleaning implement for sweeping.
- Eaten (or as if eaten) by worms.
- (Islam) The man who leads prayers in a mosque.
- A state of high honor.
- Made of fir or pine.
- Spiritual being attendant upon God.
- City in northeast Pakistan.
- East Indian tree bearing a profusion of intense vermilion velvet-textured blooms and yielding a yellow dye.
- Of or in or relating to the nose.
- Any of numerous ornamental shrubs grown for their showy flowers of various colors.
- (Irish) Chief god of the Tuatha De Danann.
- Type genus of the Alcidae comprising solely the razorbill.
- In bed.
- Balcony consisting of the forward section of a theater mezzanine.
- The process whereby heat changes something from a solid to a liquid.
- A woman hired to suckle a child of someone else.
- King of Saudi Arabia since 1982 (born in 1922).
- Someone who works (or provides workers) during a strike.
- God of love and erotic desire.
- Someone who engages in arbitrage (who purchases securities in one market for immediate resale in another in the hope of profiting from the price differential).
- Water frozen in the solid state.

Yesterday's Solution



STAR TRACK



Aries (March 21-April 19)

You explore new outlets for self-expression. Your timing should be perfect and those around you should find you most spontaneous. Look around for ways in which to strike a balance in your life. This will help you to feel the peace of mind that you strive to achieve. This month will present plenty of opportunities to enhance true romance. Lots of evenings will be spent in the enjoyment of social activities, whether it is with a loved one or with your many friends. Finances are strong all month and new ideas for investments next week may come across your path more than once. Check out these opportunities before you plunk down the money. Take advantage of this quiet evening to rest, catch up on your reading; refurbish your energies.



Taurus (April 20-May 20)

Your family circle is always pulsating with activity and you are an energetic and willing participant in many activities. You may even decide to help round up the kids so that some of the other people in the family can relax with some personal time. You may decide to broaden your interests by visiting a museum, exhibit, etc. You gain new perspectives. Your bright ideas keep you busy with creative endeavors and relationships. You will find your friends true to their word and very helpful. The more fact gathering and detail hunting you do the closer you are to making your dreams a reality. Make a list of repair needs that you can correct in April. You might enjoy planting a few spring flowers or vegetables tonight for a spring show.



Gemini (May 21-June 20)

Great temptations to spend money can be headed off by thinking of the future and what you really want instead of the desires of the moment. There are several times this year in which you see areas of your life where you will want to make improvements. You may be thinking about changes and improvements that may be needed in the neighborhood. Talking to neighbors and getting together a proposal for city approval on those improvements is progress. This is an easy, calm day that should find everything running smoothly. Duties and concerns demand your attention most of the afternoon. A rush of activity is understandable at this time of the year. Plan a meal for eating on the patio. A beautiful evening ahead is perfect for viewing the stars.



Cancer (June 21-July 22)

Deep appreciation of your friends, family and life status at this time leads to showering those you love with gifts and kind deeds. You are enterprising and may have several suggestions for entertainment ideas that the whole family could enjoy. Luck seems to be on your side now as plans, decisions and just finding your way through situations or projects will end in a positive way. Good advice from a guide or older person may be inevitable-listen. You may find yourself being put to good use by an elderly person later today. This may mean running shopping or cooking errands. Laughter and encouragement from others contribute toward making this a good day. Emotional security, a sense of belonging and nurturing are felt instinctively.



Leo (July 23-August 22)

This can be a great time to be with friends or family in an atmosphere of play. You can play a new role in the family now, particularly if you accept an unusual opportunity. You are cheerful and you encourage others with your positive attitude. Although you are not one to go backward, this is a day you may improve something old-turning lemons into lemonade. This may be the correction of an idea, a feeling or the improvement of some technique. A friend needs your help, but what the friend may really be asking is for you to do the work. Look for ways in which you can gently encourage this person. To be truly content, spiritual needs must be met and today you find that music is highly spiritual. Expressing affection is an easy matter this evening.



Virgo (August 23-September 22)

Today is all about family. When raising children it is always wise to create a backup system or a support system to take turns or take the children for a weekend or a date night. If you have family or friends with children about the same age as your children, a trade will certainly bring well-needed change for everyone. A library in your area may be open in the afternoon and you will find it a great place of discovery for children. With them busily cruising through a book or video, you can find music, movies, games or books on tape, or log onto the internet while you are there. Learn something new this evening and teach it to someone else. This can be anything from a simple joke or a song to perhaps the rules of the game you just checked out of the library.



Libra (September 23-October 22)

Organizing people and projects will become central to your lifestyle. Evaluate your standing at work or in your profession while you are at home today. You should not hesitate to plan on how you will execute new ideas and new projects-just as long as all the facts are known. There is a lot of energy petitioning you to strive to accomplish whatever you set out to do. To satisfy emotional needs, keep a powerful flow of energy and balance between both giving and receiving love and support. One-way risks rarely provide satisfaction. Today could be a most fulfilling day. You make a concentrated effort to be a mentor to the young. Smile! Your physical attractiveness is enhanced and there is a desire for intimacy and love with a partner this evening.



Scorpio (October 23-November 21)

This Monday has the look of being a high-energy day. Make a determined effort to remain flexible. If you feel inclined to spend lots of money, don't. Wait a while longer before splurging as there could be some unexpected bills you have forgotten. You are at your most practical when it comes to dealing and working with groups of people. You may feel confident volunteering for a young people's group. You know just what to do and can act without haste and emotion. You could also be most persuasive with others and may be called upon to clear away any misunderstandings. Take care when interacting with your friends. If you are slow to judge, you will go far. A good conversation with those you love this evening is possible this evening.



Sagittarius (November 22-December 21)

This is a good day, with lots of energy and ambition. Respect, status and achievement are central goals for you as a new phase begins in your life. You are productive with a midas-touch kind of experience. Creating a structure to empower and maintain your ideals and principles becomes a high priority-an article of faith. By taking on greater responsibilities of this kind, you inspire others. Taking care of some personal business is a major theme where your emotional orientation is concerned. Someone will seek you out for your psychological insight and understanding. A child who is bright and articulate plays a big role in your life this evening. You may find yourself teaching or helping this child with some type of homework.



Capricorn (December 22-January 19)

Reading material may provide new ideas for you this morning. Emotional security, a sense of belonging and nurturing are felt instinctively. You enjoy learning new things and you enjoy showing others what you have learned. This afternoon you find ways to give to others what you have been given. This may include patience, time, energy and a listening ear. You show your true appreciation for friends, family and the love of life they bring to you. While you are in this time element, you will benefit greatly from platonic relationships. Forgiveness, compassion and understanding come naturally when you look at life from an eternal perspective. If anyone ever does know such things, you will probably come to understand them as this cycle unfolds.



Aquarius (January 20- February 18)

A neighbor has a new activity and he or she may want you to join in the activity. A walk early in the morning is the perfect time to visit, get rid of a few calories and tone up a few muscles. Later today you may be visiting someone special and find yourself running errands all over the city for this person. Diving in and doing more than you wanted to do for another person makes one feel used. If you are feeling this way just now, sharing how you feel is important. Perhaps clearing up a misunderstanding is needed to create a healing. Later today, while going through the tax papers, you may see yourself finding good answers for ways that will help you increase your financial position. You may want to purchase a home or a car in the near future. You can do it.



Pisces (February 19-March 20)

You are quite competitive this morning and may want to enjoy a bicycle ride or some other type of activity that will allow you to join up with others this bright morning. If the weather is inclement, there are competitive things to do indoors but your own private competition is advised. For example, you could play the minute waltz, do pushups, play a game with a friend on the computer or internet, etc. Learning a foreign language may be one of your goals for this next year and now is not too late to begin a daily practice; travel could be the incentive. This is a period when the new, the different and the unusual will bring big influences to you, both psychologically and physically. Enjoy the day's celebration.

WORD SEARCH

Old TV Shows 4

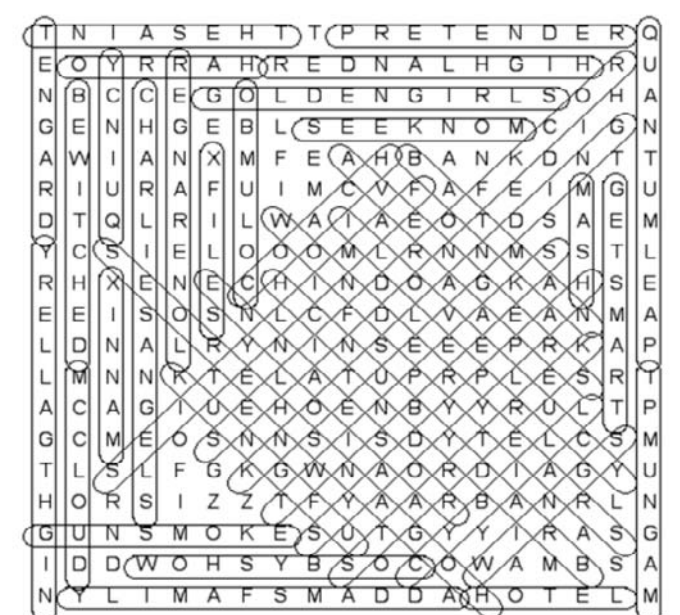
Find and circle all of the old TV shows that are hidden in the grid. The remaining letters spell the name of an additional old TV show.



- |              |              |                 |              |
|--------------|--------------|-----------------|--------------|
| ALIEN NATION | DUE SOUTH    | HERE'S LUCY     | PERRY MASON  |
| ALLY MCBEAL  | ELLEN        | IN LIVING COLOR | PEYTON PLACE |
| AMEN         | EMPTY NEST   | LARAMIE         | RHODA        |
| BANACEK      | F TROOP      | LOST IN SPACE   | RYAN'S HOPE  |
| BAYWATCH     | FALL GUY     | LOU GRANT       | SEA HUNT     |
| BLOSSOM      | FAMILY       | MAJOR DAD       | SPIN CITY    |
| CHICAGO HOPE | FELICITY     | MARTIN          | THE ROOKIES  |
| CHINA BEACH  | FRAGGLE ROCK | MATLOCK         | VEGAS        |
| COACH        | HART TO HART | MR BELVEDERE    | WISEGUY      |
| DEAR JOHN    | HAZEL        | NASH BRIDGES    | ZORRO        |

Yesterday's Solution

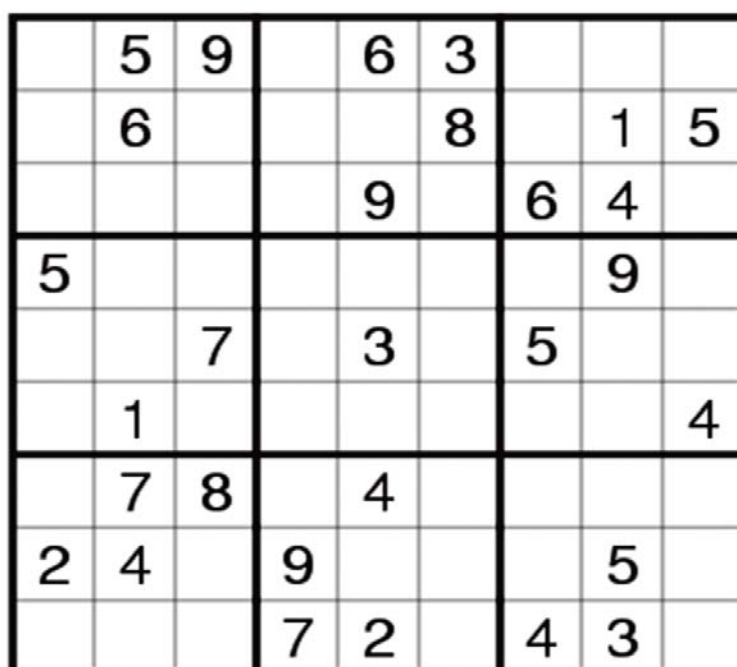
Old TV Shows 3



- |                  |                |               |                |
|------------------|----------------|---------------|----------------|
| ADDAMS FAMILY    | FAMILY TIES    | KNOTS LANDING | QUANTUM LEAP   |
| AVENGERS         | GET SMART      | KUNG FU       | QUINCY         |
| BATMAN           | GOLDEN GIRLS   | LONE RANGER   | ROCKFORD FILES |
| BEWITCHED        | GUNSMOKE       | MAGNUM P.I.   | ROSEANNE       |
| BRADY BUNCH      | HAPPY DAYS     | MANNIX        | STAR TREK      |
| CHARLIE'S ANGELS | HARRY O        | MASH          | THE SAINT      |
| COACH            | HIGHLANDER     | MCLOUD        | TWIN PEAKS     |
| COLUMBO          | HOGAN'S HEROES | MONKEES       | WINGS          |
| COSBY SHOW       | HOTEL          | NIGHT GALLERY | WONDER YEARS   |
| CYBILL           | I LOVE LUCY    | PRETENDER     | X FILES        |
| DRAGNET          |                |               |                |

The hidden TV show is: THE LIFE AND TIMES OF GRIZZLY ADAMS

Daily SuDoku



Yesterday's Solution





For labor-related inquiries and complaints:  
Call MSAL hotline 128

### Hospitals

Sabah Hospital	24812000
Amiri Hospital	22450005
Maternity Hospital	24843100
Mubarak Al-Kabir Hospital	25312700
Chest Hospital	24849400
Farwaniya Hospital	24892010
Adan Hospital	23940620
Ibn Sina Hospital	24840300
Al-Razi Hospital	24846000
Physiotherapy Hospital	24874330/9

### Clinics

Kaizen center	25716707
Rawda	22517733
Adaliya	22517144
Khalidiya	24848075
Kaifan	24849807
Shamiya	24848913
Shuwaikh	24814507
Abdullah Salem	22549134
Nuzha	22526804
Industrial Shuwaikh	24814764
Qadisiya	22515088
Dasmah	22532265
Bneid Al-Gar	22531908
Shaab	22518752
Qibla	22459381
Ayoun Al-Qibla	22451082
Mirqab	22456536
Sharq	22465401
Salmiya	25746401
Jabriya	25316254
Maidan Hawally	25623444
Bayan	25388462
Mishref	25381200
W Hawally	22630786
Sabah	24810221
Jahra	24770319
New Jahra	24575755
West Jahra	24772608
South Jahra	24775066
North Jahra	24775992
North Jleeb	24311795
Ardhiya	24884079
Firdous	24892674
Omariya	24719048
N Khaitan	24710044
Fintas	23900322



### PHARMACIES ON 24 HRS DUTY

GOVERNORATE	PHARMACY	ADDRESS	PHONE
Ahmadi	Sama Safwan Abu Halaifa Danat Al-Sultan	Fahaeel Makka St Abu Halaifa-Coastal Rd Mahboula Block 1, Coastal Rd	23915883 23715414 23726558
Jahra	Modern Jahra Madina Munawara	Jahra-Block 3 Lot 1 Jahra-Block 92	24575518 24566622
Capital	Ahlam Khalidiya Coop	Fahad Al-Salem St Khalidiya Coop	22436184 24833967
Farwaniya	New Shifa Ferdous Coop Modern Safwan	Farwaniya Block 40 Ferdous Coop Old Kheitan Block 11	24734000 24881201 24726638
Hawally	Tariq Hana Ikhlas Hawally & Rawdha Ghadeer Kindy Ibn Al-Nafis Mishrif Coop Salwa Coop	Salmiya-Hamad Mubarak St Salmiya-Amman St Hawally-Beirut St Hawally & Rawdha Coop Jabriya-Block 1A Jabriya-Block 3B Salmiya-Hamad Mubarak St Mishrif Coop Salwa Coop	25726265 25647075 22625999 22564549 25340559 25326554 25721264 25380581 25628241

### STATE OF KUWAIT DIRECTORATE GENERAL OF CIVIL AVIATION METEOROLOGICAL DEPARTMENT



Tel: (+965) 161 Ext: 2627 - 2630  
Fax: (+965) 24348714  
www.met.gov.kw

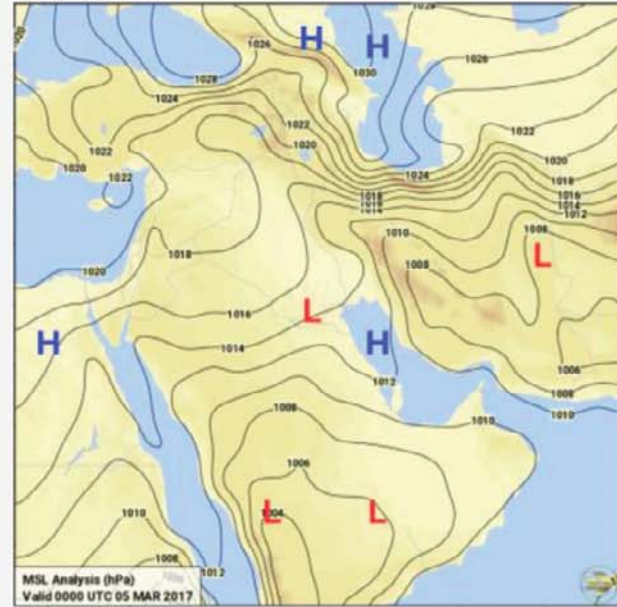
### Expected Weather for the Next 24 Hours

Issued 05/03/2017-07:00 LT UTC +3hr

Max Temperature 26 °C

**By Day** : Partly cloudy with light variable wind changing to light to moderate north westerly later on wind, with speed of 08 - 28 km/h with a chance for scattered light rain  
**By Night** : Cool with light to moderate north westerly wind, with speed of 12 - 35 km/h

#### SFC. CHART



#### Four-Day Forecast

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday
Expected Weather				
Min Temp °C	12	13	12	13
Max Temp °C	25	26	25	28
Wind Direction	north westerly	north westerly to light variable	north westerly to light variable	north westerly
Wind Speed km/h	15 - 35	06 - 28	08 - 30	10 - 32

All times are local time (GMT+3) unless otherwise stated

#### Warnings & Weather Watches

no warnings or weather watches

#### Kuwait Forecast

Station	MIN °C REC	Max °C EXP
KUWAIT CITY	17	25
KUWAIT AIRPORT	13	26
ABDALY	15	28
BUBYAN	14	21
JAHRA	16	27
FAILAKA ISLAND	15	24
SALMIYAH	17	23
AHMADI	17	23
JAL ALIYAH	13	27
QAROH ISLAND	16	23
UMM AL-MARADEM	16	22
NUWASIB	13	26
WAFRA	12	27
MANAGISH	13	26
SALMY	13	27
MUTRIBA	14	28

#### Recorded Yesterday at Kuwait Airport

Max Temp (°C)	26
Min Temp (°C)	11
Max Rel Hum (%)	80
Min Rel Hum (%)	27
Max Wind Speed (km/h) and Direction	28 SE
TOTAL RAINFALL IN 24 HR	0 mm

	Sunrise	06:09
	Sunset	17:50

#### Prayer Times

Fajr	04:50
Sunrise	06:09
Zuhr	12:00
Asr	15:20
Sunset	17:50
Isha	19:06

### INTERNATIONAL CALLS



Afghanistan	0093	Lithuania	00370
Albania	00355	Luxembourg	00352
Algeria	00213	Macau	00853
Andorra	00376	Macedonia	00389
Angola	00244	Madagascar	00261
Anguilla	001264	Majorca	0034
Antiga	001268	Malawi	00265
Argentina	0054	Malaysia	0060
Armenia	00374	Maldives	00960
Australia	0061	Mali	00223
Austria	0043	Malta	00356
Azerbaijan	00994	Marshall Islands	00692
Bahamas	001242	Martinique	00596
Bahrain	00973	Mauritania	00222
Bangladesh	00880	Mauritius	00230
Barbados	001246	Mayotte	00269
Belarus	00375	Mexico	0052
Belgium	0032	Micronesia	00691
Belize	00501	Moldova	00373
Benin	00229	Monaco	00377
Bermuda	001441	Mongolia	00976
Bhutan	00975	Montserrat	001664
Bolivia	00591	Morocco	00212
Bosnia	00387	Mozambique	00258
Botswana	00267	Myanmar (Burma)	0095
Brazil	0055	Namibia	00264
Brunei	00673	Nepal	00977
Bulgaria	00359	Netherlands	0031
Burkina	00226	Netherlands Antilles	00599
Burundi	00257	New Caledonia	00687
Cambodia	00855	New Zealand	0064
Cameroon	00237	Nicaragua	00505
Canada	001	Niger	00227
Cape Verde	00238	Nigeria	00234
Cayman Islands	001345	Niue	00683
Central African	00236	Norfolk Island	00672
Chad	00235	N. Ireland (UK)	0044
Chile	0056	North Korea	00850
China	0086	Norway	0047
Colombia	0057	Oman	00968
Comoros	00269	Pakistan	0092
Congo	00242	Palau	00680
Cook Islands	00682	Panama	00507
Costa Rica	00506	Papua New Guinea	00675
Croatia	00385	Paraguay	00595
Cuba	0053	Peru	0051
Cyprus	00357	Philippines	0063
Cyprus (Northern)	0090392	Poland	0048
Czech Republic	00420	Portugal	00351
Denmark	0045	Puerto Rico	001787
Diego Garcia	00246	Qatar	00974
Djibouti	00253	Romania	0040
Dominica	001767	Russian Federation	007
Dominican Republic	001809	Rwanda	00250
Ecuador	00593	Saint Helena	00290
Egypt	0020	Saint Kitts	001869
El Salvador	00503	Saint Lucia	001758
England (UK)	0044	Saint Pierre	00508
Equatorial Guinea	00240	Saint Vincent	001784
Eritrea	00291	Samoa US	00684
Estonia	00372	Samoa West	00685
Ethiopia	00251	San Marino	00378
Falkland Islands	00500	Sao Tome	00239
Faroe Islands	00298	Saudi Arabia	00966
Fiji	00679	Scotland (UK)	0044
Finland	00358	Senegal	00221
France	0033	Seychelles	00284
French Guiana	00594	Sierra Leone	00232
French Polynesia	00689	Singapore	0065
Gabon	00241	Slovakia	00421
Gambia	00220	Slovenia	00386
Georgia	00995	Solomon Islands	00677
Germany	0049	Somalia	00252
Ghana	00233	South Africa	0027
Gibraltar	00350	South Korea	0082
Greece	0030	Spain	0034
Greenland	00299	Sri Lanka	0094
Grenada	001473	Sudan	00249
Guadeloupe	00590	Suriname	00597
Guam	001671	Swaziland	00268
Guatemala	00502	Sweden	0046
Guinea	00224	Switzerland	0041
Guyana	00592	Syria	00963
Haiti	00509	Serbia	00381
Holland (Netherlands)	0031	Taiwan	00886
Honduras	00504	Tanzania	00255
Hong Kong	00852	Thailand	0066
Hungary	0036	Togo	00228
Ibiza (Spain)	0034	Tonga	00676
Iceland	00354	Tokelau	00690
India	0091	Trinidad	001868
Indian Ocean	00873	Tunisia	00216
Indonesia	0062	Turkey	0090
Iran	0098	Tuvalu	00688
Iraq	00964	Uganda	00256
Ireland	00353	Ukraine	00380
Italy	0039	United Arab Emirates	00976
Ivory Coast	00225	United Kingdom	0044
Jamaica	001876	Uruguay	00598
Japan	0081	USA	001
Jordan	00962	Uzbekistan	00998
Kazakhstan	007	Vanuatu	00678
Kenya	00254	Venezuela	00582
Kiribati	00686	Vietnam	0084
Kuwait	00965	Virgin Islands UK	001284
Kyrgyzstan	00996	Virgin Islands US	001340
Laos	00856	Wales (UK)	0044
Latvia	00371	Yemen	00967
Lebanon	00961	Yugoslavia	00381
Liberia	00231	Zambia	00260
Libya	00218	Zimbabwe	00263
Lesotho	00266		



### PRIVATE CLINICS

Ophthalmologists	
Dr. Abdallah Al-Mansoor	25622444
Dr. Samy Al-Rabeea	25752222
Dr. Masoma Habeeb	25321171
Dr. Mubarak Al-Ajmy	25739999
Dr. Mohsen Abel	25757700
Dr. Adnan Hasan Alwayl	25732223
Dr. Abdallah Al-Baghly	25732223
Ear, Nose & Throat (ENT)	
Dr. Ahmed Fouad Mouner	24555050 Ext 510
Dr. Abdallah Al-Ali	25644660
Dr. Abd Al-Hameed Al-Taweel	25646478
Dr. Sanad Al-Fathalah	25311996
Dr. Mohammad Al-Daory	25731988
Dr. Ismail Al-Fodary	22620166
Dr. Mahmoud Al-Booz	25651426
General Practitioners	
Dr. Mohammed Y Majidi	24555050 Ext 123
Dr. Yousef Al-Omar	24719312
Dr. Tarek Al-Mikhaezem	23926920
Dr. Kathem Maarafi	25730465
Dr. Abdallah Ahmad Eyadah	25655528
Dr. Nabeel Al-Ayoobi	24577781
Dr. Dina Abdallah Al-Rafea	25333501
Urologists	
Dr. Ali Naser Al-Serfy	22641534
Dr. Fawzi Taher Abul	22639955
Dr. Khaleel Abdallah Al-Awadi	22616660
Dr. Adel Al-Hunayan FRCS (C)	25313120
Dr. Leons Joseph	66703427

Plastic Surgeons	
Dr. Mohammad Al-Khalaf	22547272
Dr. Abdal-Redha Lari	22617700
Dr. Abdel Quttainah	25625030/60
Family Doctor	
Dr Divya Damodar	23729596/23729581
Psychiatrists	
Dr. Esam Al-Ansari	22635047
Dr. Eisa M. Al-Balhan	22613623/0
Gynaecologists & Obstetricians	
Dr. Adrian arbe	23729596/23729581
Dr. Verginia s. Marin	2572-6666 ext 8321
Dr. Fozeya Ali Al-Qatan	22655539
Dr. Majeda Khalefa Aliyami	25343406
Dr. Ahmad Al-Khooly	25739272
Dr. Salem soso	22618787
General Surgeons	
Dr. Amer Zawaz Al-Amer	22610044
Dr. Mohammad Yousef Basher	25327148
Internists, Chest & Heart	
Dr. Adnan Ebil	22639939
Dr. Mousa Khadada	22666300
Dr. Latefa Al-Duweisani	25728004
Dr. Nadem Al-Ghabra	25355515
Dr. Mobarak Aldoub	24726446
Dr. Nasser Behbehani	25654300/3

Paediatricians	
Dr. Khaled Hamadi	25665898
Dr. Abd Al-Aziz Al-Rashed	25340300
Dr. Zahra Qabazard	25710444
Dr. Sohail Qamar	22621099
Dr. Snaa Maarroof	25713514
Dr. Pradip Gupare	23713100
Dr. Zacharias Mathew	24334282
Dermatology	
Dr. Mohammed Salam Bern University	23845955
Dentists	
Dr. Anil Thomas	3729596/3729581
Dr. Shamah Al-Matar	22641071/2
Dr. Anesah Al-Rasheed	22562226
Dr. Abdallah Al-Amer	22561444
Dr. Faysal Al-Fozan	22619557
Dr. Abdalateef Al-Katrash	22525888
Dr. Abdallah Al-Duweisani	25653755
Dr. Bader Al-Ansari	25620111
Neurologists	
Dr. Sohal Najem Al-Shemeri	25633324
Dr. Jasem Mola Hassan	25345875
Gastrologists	
Dr. Sami Aman	22636464
Dr. Mohammad Al-Shamaly	25322030
Dr. Foaid Abdallah Al-Ali	22633135

Endocrinologist	
Dr. Abd Al-Naser Al-Othman	25339330
Dr. Ahmad Al-Ansari	25658888
Dr. Kamal Al-Shomr	25329924
Physiotherapists & VD	
Dr. Deyaa Shehab	25722291
Dr. Mused Faraj Khamees	22666288
Rheumatologists:	
Dr. Adel Al-Awadi	25330060
Dr. Khaled Al-Jarallah	25722290
Internist, Chest & Heart	
DR. Mohammed Akkad	24555050 Ext 210
Consultant Cardiologist	
Dr. Mohammad Zubaid MB, ChB, FRCP, PACC Assistant Professor Of Medicine Head, Division of Cardiology Mubarak Al-Kabeer Hospital	25339667
Dr. Farida Al-Habib MD, PH.D, FACC	2611555-2622555
Inaya German Medical Center	Te: 2575077 Fax: 25723123



GOSSIP

# Logan crew jealous of Sir Patrick Stewart



Sir Patrick Stewart left the 'Logan' crew jealous when he was carried around by Hugh Jackman. The 76-year-old actor's wheelchair bound character Professor Charles Xavier had to be carried up flights of stairs by Hugh's Wolverine in the new movie and Patrick admitted many of the people who worked with them on the shoot were extremely envious. He told USA Today: "There were numerous envious glances in my direction by certain members of the crew. 'I think that is one thing I shall have on my CV in the future-a Knight of the Realm and also the distinction of being carried in the arms of Hugh Jackman all around the Deep South of the United States. I look on it as a significant distinction.' And Patrick praised Hugh's strength as the star lugged him around the

film set. He said: "There was one moment where he had to pick me up off the floor and all of this is done in one shot. And I am glad to assure you, and the world at large, that I was never ever in any peril. Even when he was carrying me quickly up and down deep flights of stairs." Meanwhile, Hugh, 48, says 'Logan' is his final appearance as Wolverine and he's "loving" being able to enjoy fatty foods again now that he doesn't have to keep in shape for the role. He said: "Now I'm eating and loving it. Sometimes waking up at two in the morning just to have breakfast cereal, and then go back to bed. With it still in my lap." "It's sort of unbelievable to me, what I did for 17 years. The first one, I thought you could get into shape in three weeks. The director pushed all the 'shirt off' scenes to the very end. You stop

drinking water about 30 hours before you shoot. You lose ten pounds of water weight." And it isn't just Hugh who's happy he's no longer under pressure to stay slim, as his wife Deborah-Lee Furness is pleased he will no longer look better than her. Hugh said recently: "I think she's just happy I'm off that diet. She said, 'You've got to understand that your job as a husband is not to be in shape and make me look good.' And he revealed his wife didn't even want him to audition for Wolverine in the first place. He recalled: "She told me, 'Hugh, you were at the National Theatre with Sir Trevor Nunn, you cannot have claws coming out of your hands, this is ridiculous!'"

## ATOMIC KITTEN DONE MAKING ALBUMS

Natasha Hamilton says Atomic Kitten won't make any more albums. The 34-year-old singer - who has Josh, 14, Harry, 12, Alfie, six, and two-year-old Ella from previous relationships - has admitted the chances of the 'Whole Again' group putting out new music is slim as they are all focused on their separate projects and looking after their families. Asked if the trio - also comprised of Kerry Katona, 36, and Liz McClarnon, 35 - will release any new music, Natasha exclusively told BANG Showbiz: "Do you know what? Probably not. To release new music is so time consuming. Obviously I've got four children and to be on the road promoting that, it just isn't realistic anymore." Natasha said they have attempted to put some new tunes together in the studio, but it just didn't work out as it is "too big a job" for them with their other commitments. She said: "We did contemplate it. We did try before, we got into the studio and we had a few good songs, but it just became apparent

that it was just too big a job for us to do now with the stages we are at in our life. But the gigs we still love gigging." Although she has no plans to record new music, Natasha hasn't ruled out the possibility of having her own solo music career and would love to go on the road with a theatre show of some kind. She said: "I would love to have a solo music project. I have not written it off, who knows what the future holds? I'd love to do something more stripped back, maybe a theatre tour or something with a piano and a string quartet, a bit of brass. I'd love to do that. I am at my best when I am singing live on stage. "That is something I'd love to do and hopefully that will happen in the future, but no plans as of yet." Atomic Kitten released three studio albums during their peak, 2000's 'Right Now', 2002's 'Feels So Good' and their last 'Ladies Night' in 2003.



## Watson feared Stevens would break her foot in 'Beauty and the Beast'

Emma Watson feared Dan Stevens would break her foot when they danced together for 'Beauty and the Beast'. The 'Beauty and the Beast' stars rehearsed extensively for the film's iconic waltz to the titular song in the live adaptation of the classic fairytale, but the actress was "slightly terrified there might be a mishap because her co-star was on stilts and in heavy prosthetics for filming in character. She recalled: "Dan was essentially wearing steel-capped stilts. I was slightly terrified my foot was going to get broken or we were going to end up in a heap on the floor. So it had an extra edge to it." But Emma admitted rehearsing for the famous scene was the ideal way to bond with her co-star. She said: "It was actually a really good pre-film bonding. We got to know each other and learned to trust each other. I would recommend all couples go and dance together, stamp on each other's toes, be completely off-beat. It's perfect."

And the pair think the dance is a great "metaphor" for the relationship between their characters. Emma told Empire magazine: "A waltz is the perfect way to do that because you are dizzy and breathless. "You are having to put trust in the other person. You are learning how to keep time and rhythm with another person, not just yourself. It's the perfect metaphor." But despite the 26-year-old star's concerns about Dan's stilts, he insists he became very proficient with them. He said: "I got very good at stairs." And Dan found filming "liberating" as he'd get to shoot his scenes twice because of the facial capture process. He said: "Emma would come in, sit on the other side of the camera and play the scene again just to capture the facial expression. It was very liberating-you got two cracks at a scene."

## Hiddleston excited to play a hero in 'Kong: Skull Island'

Tom Hiddleston is thrilled to be playing a hero in 'Kong: Skull Island'. The 36-year-old actor has portrayed Thor's villainous brother Loki in the Marvel movies 'Captain America: Civil War' and 'Thor' but admitted it was lovely to be asked to play the good guy in the new action film. He told USA Today: "Action has always been a part of me. In the Marvel films, it's hidden in the playfulness and mischief of that character. But actually, there's several one-to-ones with 'Captain America' and 'Thor' where the action requires choreography. But 'Kong' puts all of that centre stage. "It's like, this (Tom's character former SAS tracker Captain James Conrad) is the guy you want on the ground in a jungle. It's lovely to be a hero." Tom's 'Kong' character is introduced to viewers with a bar fight scene but the actor admitted he would probably run from trouble in a similar situation. Explaining that he was trained by former members of Britain's Special Air Service and a retired Navy SEAL for the film, he said a paratrooper advised him: "If you get into a bar fight, the best thing to do is to pretend you don't know what you're doing and run, get the hell out of there. That's what he said. You don't want to get yourself in trouble." Meanwhile, Tom - who co-stars alongside Brie Larson and Samuel L. Jackson - recently admitted he was impressed by the "truly monstrous size and scale" of Kong in the movie. He said: "He is truly monstrous in size and scale and scope. He's 90 feet tall. We're captivated by Kong's power and majesty. He is the mystery of the unknown, he is a terrifying force of nature with an intelligence we don't understand."



## Ed Sheeran: The best songs come from pain

Ed Sheeran says the "best songs" come from pain. The 'Castle on the Hill' hit-maker took a year long hiatus from the music industry to give himself a break and work on his new music and he has revealed what he believes the success to songwriting is. He said: "I would say one thing - I think the best songs ever are made from pain but I'd say you can definitely still write close to that by being happy." And

the 26-year-old singer's new music "skewed" towards family and love as he didn't feel he had "anything to complain about". Speaking on the BBC Radio 2 Breakfast Show with Chris Evans, he added: "That was kind of why the album sort of leant towards the kind of family - my mom and my dad - because I didn't really have anything bad happen in my life. "I was in a really good place so I was like, 'What can I write about? I've got nothing to complain about.' So that's sort of why it skewed that way." Meanwhile, Ed previously teased his track 'Perfect' is "definitely" better than 'Thinking Out Loud'. Speaking before the album was released on Friday he said: "I felt that with the first album. I remember thinking I would never write a song as good as 'A Team'. And then 'Thinking Out Loud' came, and I was like, 'Oh, OK, well maybe it's not impossible.' "So going into this album, there was no worry at all because I knew I'd done it before. It's not like Thinking Out Loud will be the peak of my career. It's definitely happened on this album. There's definitely one that's better." Fans of Ed have the chance to win two VIP tickets - two places in a suite inclusive of full hospitality - to see him perform at the O2 arena London on Monday May 1 as part of Giveergy.com campaign to raise money for Save The Rhino International. Fans can buy tickets to enter a prize draw to win the highly sought-after tickets.



## Avril Lavigne signs to BMG US for sixth album



Avril Lavigne has signed a new record deal with BMG US to release her first album in four years. The 'Complicated' hitmaker had been on hiatus from the music industry after the release of self-titled record in 2013 and in the last two years she battled with Lyme Disease. But now she has confirmed that she is to put out her sixth studio LP this year and the whole process has been like therapy for the pop rock chick. Sharing her excitement at joining the label - which looks after her ex-husband Chad Kroger's band Nickelback, as well as, The Rolling Stones and Janet Jackson - she wrote on Twitter: "Incredibly excited to be a part of the @BMG\_US family & working with them on the release of #AL6! So excited to share more with you guys! (sic)" The 32-year-old beauty also shared a black and white video of herself playing the piano and talking about how emotional this record has been to make and how it came about by accident. In the short clip, she said: "For this album I have a

new team behind me and I've just signed with BMG. I've been working really hard on new music and it is a reflection of my journey over the last few years. At this point in my career and in my life, I just wanted to just put fresh energy around me and I feel like I've had somewhat of a rebirth in my life. "I've been faced with a lot and gone through a lot emotionally. The whole writing process has been therapeutic and empowering without trying to make an album, I'd made one." Avril previously insisted she is "coming out on the other side" following her battle with Lyme Disease, which can affect the skin, joints, heart, and nervous system. Sharing a picture on Facebook, she wrote at the time: "Overcoming Lyme Disease. Feels good to have my Dr smile and tell me how much progress I am making. I'm coming out on the other side batches!!! ?#Fighter? ?#F\*\*kLymeDisease? (sic)".

## DJ Khaled's hip-hop cruise

DJ Khaled's Summerfest cruise will feature a host of hip-hop stars. The producer has recruited Future, Lil Wayne, Migos and ASAP Rocky to join him and fans on the return voyage from Miami, Florida to the Bahamas from June 30 to July 3. Pitchfork reports that the "18s and over" cruise will feature a "Meet & Greet Reception," "Themed Parties" and "Partying and mingling up close and personal with the entertainers." Meanwhile, Chance The Rapper recently revealed that he is "very involved" with DJ Khaled's new album. The 41-year-old record producer is set to release his 10th studio album 'Grateful' later this year, and although the 'No Problem' rapper is unable to divulge any details because the project is "super top-secret" he says he plays a large part in the making of the record. When asked about his work on the album, Chance said: "It's actually super top-secret, but I'm very involved in the project and shout-outs to DJ Khaled for coming up on 10 summers." The 23-year-old rapper also gave insight into what it's like to work with DJ Khaled. Asked what advice he was given whilst in the studio with the producer, he said: "Love more. That's his thing. Love is key and that's real."





# Fashion designers turn to secondhand shops for inspiration

It is a humdrum secondhand clothing store in one of the most down-at-heel districts of the French capital. But for designer Francisco Terra and other rising stars of the Paris catwalk, the shop stuffed with shirts and skirts that sell for the price of a coffee is "a temple of fashion research". Terra loves the place so much he held his Paris fashion week show in the store, the flagship "friperie" of the Guerrisol chain. "It is not just people who don't have much money who shop here," the creator behind the Neith Nyer label said, "but all the stylists of the big labels who come to do their homework."

His show comes only six weeks after hip brand AVOC presented their menswear collection in another more upmarket vintage store. With high street chains going hell for leather for throwaway fashion, those in the know are embracing better quality vintage clothing while designers are turning to secondhand and charity shops for inspiration. Parisian friperies where the poor still buy pre-owned shoes and suits are now the haunt of hipsters and fashionistas looking for clothes that help them stand out. Putting together "a look is all about the

exclusivity of the piece", said Brazilian-born Terra, who worked for Givenchy and Carven before striking out on his own. "Today with mass market fast fashion, you can only find that in vintage of secondhand shops," he added.

### 'Upcycled' jeans

Influenced by Margiela and Jean Paul Gaultier, two fashion houses who have long embraced the art of recycling, 34-year-old Terra began to repurpose clothes for his own brand, which he named after his Austrian grandmother. His new show is set in a fictional future Tokyo in 2083. Faced with a chaotic economy, young people are forced to patching their ancestors' old clothes together to create their new styles. The storyline was inspired by the Japanese capital's thriving secondhand stores, Terra said, which often rework old clothes. Upcycling, as remaking existing clothes is called, has long been the trademark of a number of Paris labels, including streetwear brand Andrea Crews.

Upcycled jeans made from cut up old Levi's were also one

of the things that helped make French brand Vetements the label of the moment. Vintage is also a major theme at a trade fair running alongside Paris fashion week, which this year contains a shop bringing together some of the capital's "pre-worn" designer stores and the online luxury secondhand site Vestiaire Collective. Amnaye Nhas, a manager of one such luxury Paris store, Thanx God I'm a VIP, said sales rocket during the runway shows, particularly when labels revisit historic looks for coats and aviator jackets.

### Vintage can be reassuring

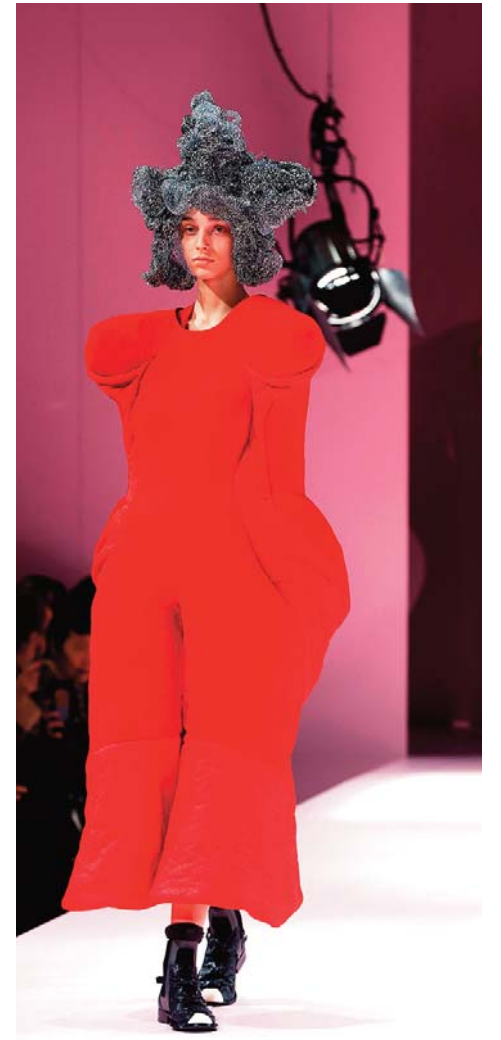
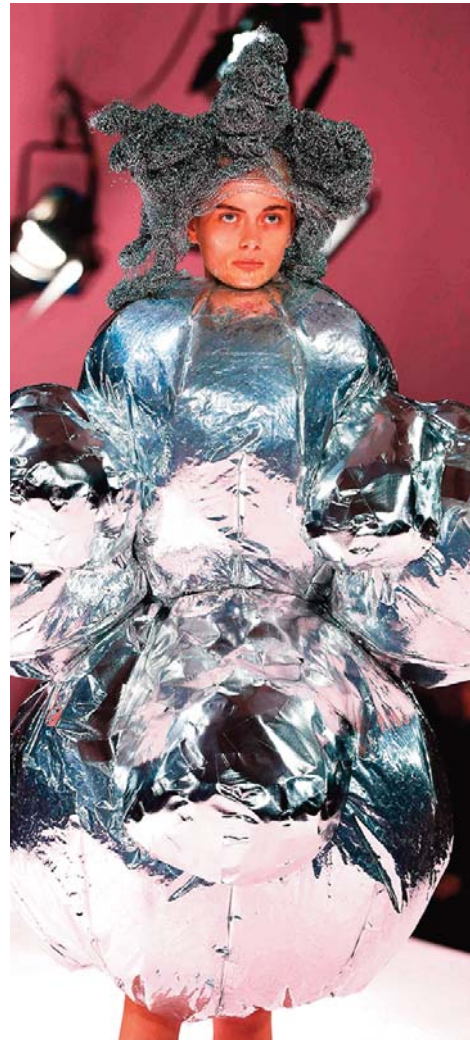
Her store only sells clothing from the very top designer labels. They refuse to handle anything in synthetic fibre and outfits have to be in perfect condition, she said. With prices ranging from 40 euros to 2,000 (\$42 to \$2,100), Nhas said their clients are demanding and know what they want. A green toned Leonard silk jacket is on sale for 995 euros, while a 1978 Burberry coat is priced at 450 euros. "Some customers are real sticklers" for designer labels, she said, "but others would nor-

mally shop in high street stores like Zara and just want to find something original to wear with that." Fashion historian Manuel Charpy said vintage mania is nothing new. "In the 19th century secondhand clothing was much more important than today, completely dominating the mass market" and items were sold again and again, he said.

The current hunger for vintage began out of economic necessity after the financial crisis of 2008, said trends specialist Cecile Poignant. The success of the American television series "Mad Men", set in the early 1960s also helped, she said. Vintage clothes "give people reassurance and historical anchorage in changing times", Poignant added. "It all has to do with the sense of insecurity people are living with today. We are a lot less sure than we were 30 years ago that the future will be brighter." — AFP



Models present creations by Comme des Garçons during the women's Fall-Winter 2017-2018 ready-to-wear collection fashion show in Paris. — AFP photos





FEATURES

# Bollywood celebrity becomes father to twins via surrogacy

**B**ollywood superstar Karan Johar announced yesterday he had become a father to twins through surrogacy, as India moves closer to controversially barring single people from becoming parents. The 44-year-old filmmaker, who is single, said he was ecstatic to become a parent "with the help of marvels of medical science", but did not disclose the identity of the surrogate who gave birth to his children—a boy and a girl. "This was an emotional yet a well thought out decision which I have taken after considering all the responsibilities and duties that come with being a parent," he wrote on Twitter.

Johar, one of Bollywood's most successful film producers, said his children were his "world and priority" and he

was ready to raise them. His newborn son was christened after his late father Yash Johar, a celebrated Bollywood filmmaker. His daughter has been named Roohi. In his autobiography "An Unsuitable Boy", Johar had expressed a desire to adopt or pursue fatherhood through surrogacy. He's not the first Bollywood star to chart the course, with actor Tusshar Kapoor fathering a son last year to a surrogate.

Surrogacy is a hot-button issue in India, where the "rent-a-womb" industry is worth between \$500 million and \$2.3 billion annually, making it the top destination worldwide for the procedure. India caused an outcry last year when it drafted a law making surrogacy only available to married Indian couples without children, barring

single people and homosexuals from this option. The bill is pending before parliament but if passed would outlaw commercial surrogacy in India. The bill drew broad criticism from doctors and some political parties but supporters maintain the commercialization of "motherhood" sees surrogate mothers exploited. — AFP

In this file photo, Bollywood film maker Karan Johar poses for photographers at the International Indian Film Academy (IIFA) Rocks Green Carpet for the 17th Edition of IIFA Weekend and Awards in Madrid, Spain. — AP



Writer/director Barry Jenkins (left) and writer Tarell Alvin McCraney pose in the press room with the Best Adapted Screenplay award for 'Moonlight'. — AFP

## AFRICAN AMERICAN OSCARS

### TRIUMPH MASKING REAL DIVERSITY WOES

**T**he triumph of black artists at the Oscars was seen as a signal that predominantly white Hollywood was making a serious effort to get a grip on its diversity problem. Yet scratch the surface and it is apparent that the battle has barely begun in an industry where Asians, Latinos and other minorities, not to mention women, remain sorely underrepresented on set-and in studio boardrooms. After the #OscarsSoWhite hashtag caught on in 2016 — the second straight year when no ethnic minority actors were nominated — Barry Jenkins's coming-of-age best picture "Moonlight" struck a chord last Sunday as a moving look at contemporary African — American life. There were six nods for black actors overall, as well as three documentary nominees telling African-American stories including Ezra Edelman's winning "O.J.: Made in America" and a screenplay win for Jenkins and his writing partner Tarell McCraney.

But critics have pointed out that race is not simply a black-and-white issue. Under growing pressure, the Academy has embarked on reforms in recent years to diversify the mix of its members, who may have become "more aware" of bias, according to Darnell Hunt, the professor in charge of UCLA's annual Hollywood Diversity Report. "But that's not necessarily a sign that the industry has changed, or that there's more diversity in the films being made. Studios are still (managed) by white men," he told AFP.

#### Exclusion

The latest edition of the study, published last month, notes that "despite the Academy Award nominations, the exclusion of people of color and women from Hollywood remains a concern." Minorities represent 40 percent of the US population but only 13.6 percent of actors and 10 percent of filmmakers. There was just one non-white, non-black acting nomination last Sunday for British-Indian Dev Patel while Syrian documentary shorts "The White Helmets" and "Watani: My Homeland" and Iranian director Asghar Farhadi's "The Salesman" were left to represent the entirety of Middle Eastern filmmaking.

It's not just an Oscars issue: Hispanics, Asians and Native Americans are the most woefully under-represented across the industry, while Middle Eastern actors find themselves typecast as terrorists. Discrimination against women is arguably a larger issue, with only 29 percent of lead roles being female

and, worse still, just 7.7 percent of productions directed by women according to the UCLA report, which analyzed movies and TV released in 2015. At the root of the problem, say campaigners, is the overwhelming homogeneity in boardrooms and also in Hollywood's many casting agencies, which place the talent. If you have a bunch of white men deciding what gets made, contends Hunt, they will inevitably green-light projects in their wheelhouse-action, sci-fi and superhero movies populated and made by people who look like them. The doom and gloom is in part mitigated, however, by baby steps towards a more inclusive future.

#### Last resort

Ryan Coogler, the 30-year-old rising African American star who directed "Creed," is currently shooting "Black Panther," a Marvel tentpole centered on a black superhero. Meanwhile Ava DuVernay, acclaimed for the feature "Selma" and Oscar nominated for the documentary "13th," has become the first African-American to make a film with a budget of more than \$100 million with the upcoming fantasy adventure "A Wrinkle in Time." Sceptics point out that white, male studio bosses are hardly clamoring to fall on their swords in the name of diversity.

But Sundance Institute director Keri Putnam says the solution lies not in executives vacating their seats, but in "inviting more people around the table." Josh Welsh, who heads Film Independent, the organizer of the annual Spirit Awards honoring indie filmmaking, believes that regulation may be the only long-term answer. Illinois and several other US states, for example, design their tax rebates system to award diversity, he points out. Online entertainment magazine Deadline recently reported that the federal Equal Employment Opportunity Commission was in settlement talks with the major studios to resolve charges that they systematically discriminated against female directors. The EEOC doesn't comment on its investigations, and charges are made public

only in the "last resort" instances where lawsuits are launched. Putnam notes meanwhile that executives are beginning to see inclusivity as a "business imperative" since films with diverse casts enjoy the highest global box office receipts and the highest return on investment. — AFP

# Senegalese film scoops top award at Africa film fest

**"F**elicite," a tale about a nightclub singer who has to scrape together funds to pay for her son's treatment after a road accident, scooped the top prize on Saturday at Africa's top cinema festival. The film won the Golden Stallion award at the Pan-African Film and Television Festival of Ouagadougou, held in the capital of Burkina Faso. The prize adds to the Silver Bear jury prize awarded to the film two weeks earlier at the Berlin Film Festival.

The film is directed by Senegalese-French Alain Gomis, who in 2013 was praised for "Tey" (in French, "Aujourd'hui," or "Today") — a story about a young Senegalese who knows he is about to die, and looks at his life through new eyes. The festival's Silver Stallion was awarded to "Un Orage Africain" (An African Storm), an anti-colonial tale by Benin director Sylvestre Amoussou, and the Bronze Stallion to "A Mile in My Shoes," a drama by Said Khallaf of

Morocco. Loosely modeled on the Cannes Film Festival, the event, known by its French acronym of FESPACO, is held every two years and accepts for competition only films made by African filmmakers. — AFP



Winner of the 25th Pan-African Film and Television Festival (FESPACO) Alain Gomis (center) receives the Yennega Stallion trophy from Burkina Faso's president Roch Marc Christian Kabore (right) and Ivory Coast's president Alassane Ouattara (left) at the Sports Palace in Ouagadougou.



President of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) Marcel de Souza (left) presents a special prize to Burkinabe film director Apolline Traore during the closing ceremony of the 25th Pan-African Film and Television Festival (FESPACO). — AFP photos

# One Direction's Tomlinson arrested in airport tussle

**O**ne Direction heartthrob Louis Tomlinson was arrested after an airport brawl with paparazzi that left two people injured, police said Saturday. The 25-year-old Briton was in the baggage claim at Los Angeles International Airport with a girlfriend Friday evening when he entered a tussle with a photographer, police said. "Witnesses stated that Tomlinson pulled the photographer to the floor by his legs causing the victim to fall backwards and strike his back and head on the floor," said airport police spokeswoman Officer Alicia Hernandez.

Tomlinson then also allegedly caused a woman in the area to fall when he grabbed her phone as she tried to record footage of the singer's companion, Hernandez said. The photographer was taken to a hospital but the extent of his injuries was not clear. The woman with the cellphone hurt her eye but was treated on site, Hernandez said. Tomlinson was taken into custody and released early Saturday morning after posting \$20,000 bond, a sheriff's department database showed.

He was ordered to appear before a court on March 29 to hear potential charges. He was arrested on allegation of simple battery, a misdemeanor that usually is settled by a fine. Tomlinson, who has sold more than 50 million records as part of One Direction, has been a favorite of the gossip pages. He had a son last year with Briana Jungwirth, a Los Angeles stylist whom he had briefly dated. The two were said to remain friends as they raised the child.



This file photo taken on December 1, 2015 shows Singer Louis Tomlinson of musical group One Direction performing onstage during 106.1 KISS FM's Jingle Ball 2015 presented by Capital One at American Airlines Center in Dallas, Texas. — AFP

One Direction, once known for a squeaky-clean image that drew massive crowds of teenage girls, has been on hiatus since late 2015, with former member Zayn Malik pursuing the most active solo career. Tomlinson has been working with Simon Cowell the judge of "The X Factor" show that launched One Direction on putting together an all-girl pop band. — AFP

# Sushi in Pyongyang: Japanese chef opens rare restaurant



Photo provided by Paektu Cultural Exchange, a sushi set is displayed on a table at the restaurant of Japanese sushi chef Kenji Fujimoto in Pyongyang, North Korea. — AP

**S**ushi in Pyongyang? At a restaurant run by a Japanese sushi chef famous for working for North Korea's late leader Kim Jong Il? Kenji Fujimoto has opened his sushi restaurant in the North Korean capital, according to Canadian Michael Spavor, a consultant with a long record of working in the communist state. He was involved with NBA star Denis Rodman's trips to North Korea, and the two spent days with North Korean leader Kim Jong Un, who succeeded his father after his death in 2011. Spavor said he was introduced to Fujimoto just last year, when he learnt about the chef's plans to open a restaurant in Pyongyang and tried to track it down early this year.

"I was quite excited, because I'd heard quite a lot about him," Spavor said. "So one day, for lunch, we met up, and we got along great, he speaks fluent Korean, so we spoke Korean, and that's when he mentioned to me he was planning on opening up a ramen restaurant or a sushi restaurant in Pyongyang." It's rare to find a Japanese business openly operating in North Korea, because of strained relations between the two countries. But Fujimoto is a special case. He worked for Kim Jong Il for many years. After Kim's death, Fujimoto reappeared in Pyongyang meeting with the new leader in images he shared with Japanese

media. Fujimoto's new restaurant in Pyongyang bears the name "Takahashi" outside its door. The main room with a sushi counter is very small, with just a handful of seats. Raw fish dishes sushi and sashimi have been available in Pyongyang for many years, but usually the fish is frozen before it comes to the table, so the customer can choose either to crunch it frozen, or wait until it defrosts and loses its texture. Neither option meets the usual standards.

According to the latest images, the food at Fujimoto's is much better. But prices are high by Pyongyang standards, starting at \$50 for a sushi set, and running to more than \$100. There are also cheaper options available from the noodle restaurant that operates together with Fujimoto's sushi room. "I think everyone in the world is aware that North Korea has its challenges and economic difficulties," Spavor said. "That being said, there are many Koreans in Pyongyang who are able to afford these kind of high-end restaurants," he said. "And keep in mind also that Pyongyang has a lot of foreign diplomats, UN workers, businessmen from China and other countries who can also dine at this restaurant." — AP

# JOYALUKKAS LAUNCHES THE INTERNATIONAL JEWELLERY FESTIVAL ACROSS GCC

**F**rom a single jewelry showroom in Abu Dhabi in 1987, Joyalukkas has grown into a multi awarded global jewelry retail chain with presence in 11 countries across the USA, UK, GCC, and Asia. Now on its 30th year, the world's favorite jeweler is set to take 2017 by storm with a series of promotions and offers to delight its over 10 million loyal patrons around the world. The International Jewellery Fest, opening on 2nd March, is only the beginning of the celebrations.

"The last 30 years have been very fulfilling for all of us at the Joyalukkas Group," says Joy Alukkas, Chairman & MD, Joyalukkas Group. "We've grown so much, and just these last few months achieved our lifelong dream of opening showrooms in the USA. Work is currently underway to make our presence known in more new locations. The International Jewellery Fest is a celebration of the many cultures and traditions that have influenced our jewelry through the years. It is a showcase of world-class designs which we are sure our loyal supporters would truly enjoy."

The Joyalukkas International Jewellery Fest is happening simultaneously at the global jewelry retailer's locations across the GCC, with a 0% deduction offer on old gold exchange as well as low making charges across all jewelry collections till 1st April 2017.





# Atop Palmyra's damaged theatre, Syrian musicians sing of return

'We're coming back, oh love, we're coming back'



A picture shows journalists at the site of the damaged Roman amphitheatre in the ancient city of Palmyra in central Syria, as part of a tour organized by the Syrian army. — AFP photos



Syrian musicians play at the site of the damaged Roman amphitheater.

**A**top the ruins of Syria's famed Palmyra theatre, recently recaptured from the Islamic State group, teenage musician Angel Dayoub sings an old Arabic favorite: "We're coming back, oh love, we're coming back." The 15-year-old's voice floats over the ancient Roman theatre, heavily damaged then abandoned by IS jihadists on Thursday as Russian-backed government forces drew near. "A little destruction won't stop us from coming here to play and sing on this stage, despite what happened to it," Dayoub tells AFP.

"I want to play music and sing everywhere that has seen the expulsion of IS, which hates singing and banned playing instruments," she says defiantly. Dayoub's rendition of Lebanese diva Fairuz's famous song is accompanied by fellow musicians of all ages playing violins, tambourines and the oud, the pear-shaped stringed instrument beloved in the Arab world. "We're singing 'We're coming back' because we will come back even stronger than before to rebuild Syria," she says. "Everyone will rebuild in their own way. We want to rebuild it with music and singing."

The city and its ruins, designated a UNESCO world heritage site in 1980, have traded hands several times during Syria's six-year war. IS first seized Palmyra in May 2015 and began to systematically destroy and loot the site's monuments and temples during a brutal ten-month reign. It used the ancient theatre as a venue for execution-style killings before being driven out in March 2016. The jihadists then recaptured Palmyra in December, blowing up the tetrapylon monument and part of the theatre.

### IS 'is darkness, music is light'

Young musicians flocked to the theatre during a press tour organized by the army at the weekend, playing to an audience of dozens of Syrian and Russian soldiers. Explosions can still be heard in the distance, as Syrian forces and their Russian allies press their offensive against IS north and east of Palmyra. "Daesh (IS) wanted to ban us from the theatre, to ban us from singing, but I want to challenge it, to beat it," says Maysaa Al-Nuqari, a teenage oud player. Dressed in a black leather jacket and combat boots, her curly hair dyed a deep red, Nuqari gestures at several nearby musicians to join the jam session. "Daesh is darkness, but music is light," she says.

Although the precise date of its founding is unknown, Palmyra's name is referred to on a tablet dating from the 19th century BC as a stopping point for caravans between the Mediterranean and the east. It developed into a wealthy metropolis thanks to trade in spices, perfumes, silk and ivory from the east and became known to Syrians as the "Pearl of the Desert." Palmyra's temples, colonnaded alleys and elaborately decorated tombs—some of the best preserved classical monuments in the Middle East—attracted more than 150,000 tourists a year before Syria's conflict broke out.



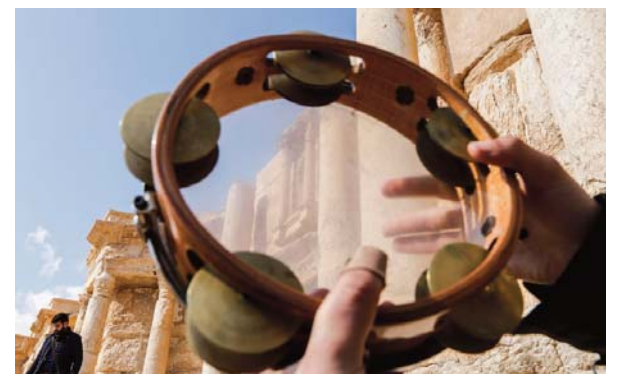
Syrian soldiers standing guard at the site of the damaged Roman amphitheater.

### 'A few scratches'

Now, the difficult task of assessing what remains of those celebrated monuments has been left to Wael Al-Hafyan, who heads the engineering unit in Homs province's antiquities department. The 40-year-old walks through the Old City, examining various artefacts and recording his observations in a small notebook. After a preliminary assessment, Hafyan says additional destruction is limited to the theatre's front including an arched recess behind the stage, as well as the explosion of the tetrapylon.

He broke down when he came across the theatre and the tetrapylon, once a 16-columned structure that marked one end of Palmyra's colonnade. IS reduced it to a pile of rocks in a massive explosion in January, lambasted by the UN as "a new war crime and an immense loss for the Syrian people and for humanity." "It's impossible for anyone with even an iota of humanity not to feel sad when they see this. I'm sad, and I will stay sad until Palmyra goes back to the way it was," Hafyan tells AFP.

But with international help and UNESCO's support, the engineer says, Palmyra can be restored. Asked to summarize what is left of Palmyra's renowned artefacts, Hafyan bites his lip and considers the question quietly. "All of Palmyra is left. Palmyra's history has remained," he answers. "A few scratches cannot distort its beauty. The enormity of what Daesh did here, all of its crimes, doesn't even amount to a scratch on this beautiful, glorious face that is Palmyra." — AFP



Syrian musicians play at the site of the damaged Roman amphitheater.



A view of the Great Colonnade in the ancient city of Palmyra in central Syria.



A fallen column at the site of the ancient city of Palmyra.



Syrian musicians play at the site of the damaged Roman amphitheater.



The damaged Roman amphitheater in the ancient city of Palmyra.



Syrian musicians play at the site of the damaged Roman amphitheater.



# Lifestyle

MONDAY, MARCH 6, 2017

Atop Palmyra's damaged theatre, Syrian musicians sing of return

39



Photo shows the red, pink and nectarine-colored streaks in the rock-hewn tomb of a second-century Roman governor in Petra, Jordan. — AP photos



Photo shows Amman Beach on Jordan's shore of the Dead Sea, which is actually a spectacular lake 1,400 feet (400 meters) below sea level.

## Exploring Jordan's cultural fusion

By Giovanna Dell'Orto

I squeezed through the narrow desert chasm just as the early-morning sun lit up the facade of the majestic Treasury building. The structure, originally a mausoleum, was carved from a red canyon some 2,000 years ago, when the city of Petra was a global trade center and its monuments a fusion of Arab and Greco-Roman cultures. Such reminders of harmonious co-existence, in Petra and throughout Jordan, make a trip here special. They are so fragile yet inspiring today, as violence batters much of the region. A terror attack struck Jordan a day before December attacks in Berlin and Ankara.

Both the vast, vibrant capital, Amman, and the remote, otherworldly desert landscapes are speckled with artistic masterpieces and profoundly moving sites of the Jewish, Christian and Islamic faiths. In the same restaurants where the rare niqab-clad women sit, only their eyes uncovered, fashionistas in tank tops may be seen whiling a weekend night away. In early spring, balmy enough for superb cuisine in fancy outdoor gardens and corner-store popsicles, I explored these highlights:

### Rose-colored city

From Petra's archaeological park gate, it's about a mile walk before the increasingly tight Siq gorge opens onto the 12-storey-high Treasury. Seeing for the first time its floral-topped columns, muscular sculptures and classical friezes emerge out of sandstone is as breathtaking as beholding the Colosseum or Machu Picchu.

But what took my breath away, literally, is that the iconic Treasury is only the best preserved of hundreds more buildings carved into and over Petra's wadis, desert valleys that in spring were lined with pink oleander in bloom. I hiked into a 7,000-seat theater, up to a massive mountaintop sacrificial altar and past monumental facades whose decorations ranged from geometrical steps to flowing colonnades.

To admire the red, pink and nectarine-colored streaks in the rock-hewn tomb of a second-century Roman governor, I skirted around a herd of camels, chatting with their young drivers. English is widely spoken, though uttering just a few Arabic words melts even border guards into supersized grins.

### Along the Jordan

Shukran (thank you) was the handiest word as Jordanians kept reaching out to this visibly foreign visitor, from the fruit vendor in Amman's souk gifting me just-ripe loquats to the family sharing their spicy grilled chicken picnic with my driver and me at Amman Beach on the Dead Sea.

The Dead Sea - actually a spectacular lake 1,400 feet (400 meters) below sea level - is so mineral-heavy that I bobbed weightlessly in its waters, with Israel and the West Bank on the opposite shore. I wore my most modest one-piece bathing suit, but elsewhere I never felt gender mattered: In the cities, face-covering veils seemed far rarer than women not wearing headscarves.

Just to the north, along the Jordan River at Bethany, is the site where John is believed to have baptized Jesus. Old and New Testament locales abound, as the sixth-century floor mosaic map of the region in St George Church in

nearby Madaba documents both accurately and with charming details such as date-laden palms.

### Capital time

Madaba, home to other mosaics portraying mythical figures, fruits, even an octopus, is less than an hour's drive from Jordan's capital, Amman. Standing on its monument-filled Citadel hill among kite-flying children, I took in the sand-colored panorama of charming villas and shiny malls, minarets and markets, narrow cafe-lined alleys and blocky apartment buildings. The opposite hillside opened onto the grand Roman theater, in whose plaza a kid made big loops on a scooter.

On a late Saturday night in the garden of Fakhr el-Din restaurant, our white tablecloth was barely visible under stuffed vine leaves, eggplant dip, tabbouleh salad, hummus with grilled meat, grilled halloumi cheese, fried minced lamb, chicken liver in pomegranate juice, kibbeh nayeh (raw lamb with cracked wheat) and fattoush (bread salad laced with sumac) - and that was only appetizers. I had to ask my two young Ammani friends, how far are we from the atrocities making headlines around the world? The Syrian border is about 80 kilometers (50 miles) away, they said, close enough that their families used to go there for picnics. At that, one of the best meals of my life became also a minuscule gesture of defiance and hope. — AP



Photo shows the road along Jordan's shore of the Dead Sea, which is actually a spectacular lake 1,400 feet (400 meters) below sea level with one of the highest levels of salinity in the world.

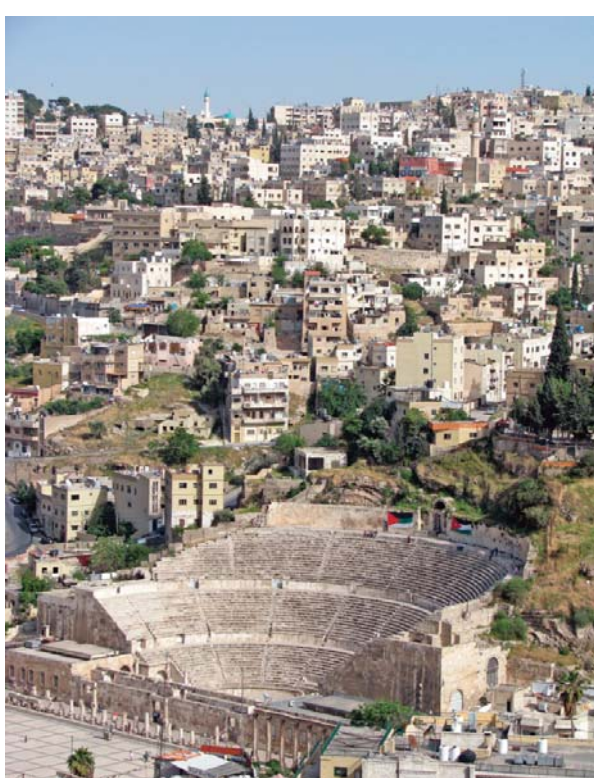


Photo shows the ancient Roman theater and a sand-colored panorama of Jordan's capital, Amman, as seen from the monument-filled Citadel hill.

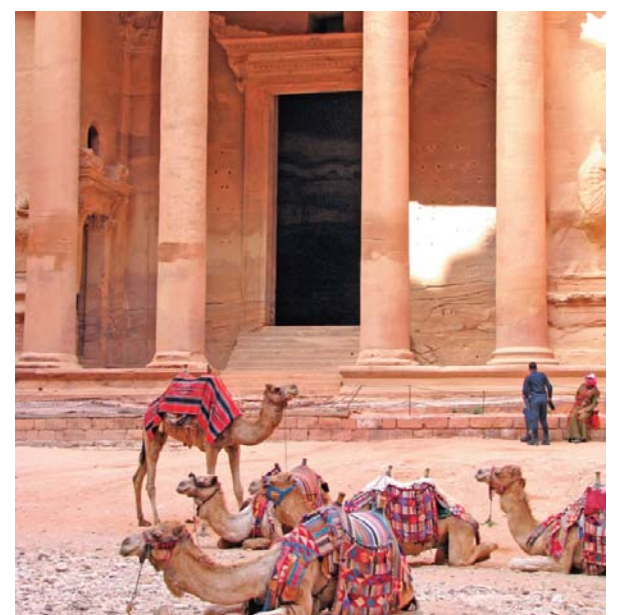


Photo shows camels in front of the Treasury building in Petra, the ancient rock-hewn city that is Jordan's blockbuster destination.



Photo shows the Treasury building in Petra as it first appears to visitors walking through the narrow Siq gorge

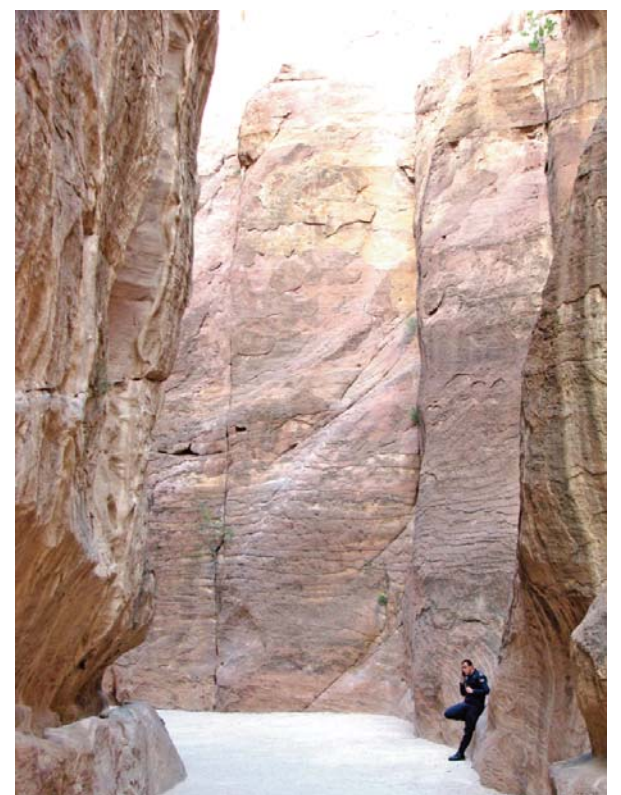


Photo shows a security officer talking on his phone in the Siq gorge in the vast archaeological site of Petra, Jordan.



Photo shows two young people talking among the ancient ruins of Amman's Citadel hill, the historical core of Jordan's capital which is seen sprawling behind them.



Photo shows ancient ruins on the monument-filled Citadel hill and, beyond, a panorama of Jordan's capital, Amman.



Photo shows camels against a panorama of the Royal Tombs in the ancient city of Petra, Jordan.