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**Things get Messi for Iranian lookalike**



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## TURKEY AIMS TO BOOST GCC TIES AMID FREE TRADE TALKS

AMIR, ERDOGAN TO LAY CORNERSTONE OF NEW KUWAIT AIRPORT



Min 27°  
Max 39°  
High Tide 11:20 & 23:59  
Low Tide 05:18 & 17:52

## SISI RECEIVES MEMBERS OF JOINT COUNCIL



KUWAIT: Egyptian President Abdel Fattah Al-Sisi (center) meets members of the joint Kuwait-Egypt Economic Cooperation Council yesterday, including (from left) Nawaf Al-Enezi, Tariq Al-Sultan, Masoud Hayat, Awwad Al-Khaldi, Sheikhha Al-Bahar, Bader Nasser Al-Kharafi, Shaima Al-Mulla and Salem Al-Othaina. — KUNA

KUWAIT: Egyptian President Abdel Fattah Al-Sisi met Kuwaiti members of the joint Kuwait-Egypt Economic Cooperation Council yesterday. The Egyptian presidency's official spokesman Alaa Yousuf said the president welcomed the Kuwaiti side of the joint council and lauded the role the council has been playing since its establishment in Nov 2015 in supporting economic relations between the two countries.

Sisi said Egypt is keen on continued contacts with Kuwaiti investors to remove any obstacles they face. He confirmed the importance of the private sector's role in strengthening economic cooperation between the two

countries through increasing investments and commercial exchange to serve mutual interests. The president spoke about the progress in economic reform and executed national projects headed by the development project in the Suez Canal region, that besides the steps taken to provide an attractive atmosphere for investments, the latest of which was the approval of a new investment decision.

Yousuf said Kuwaiti members of the council welcomed the visit of the Egyptian president to Kuwait, and said they are keen on increasing their investments in Egypt in light of what they see are serious changes in

many aspects. They also lauded the economic reform steps the Egyptian government has taken and its contribution to improving the business climate. They said they are looking forward to the next meeting of the council, especially since the meetings provide a good opportunity to discuss new cooperation projects in Egypt.

Yousuf said the meeting discussed cooperation with Kuwait companies, and proposals and ideas by the Kuwaiti side were heard. The meeting was attended by Bader Nasser Al-Kharafi, Sheikhha Al-Bahar, Shaima Al-Mulla, Salem Al-Othaina, Tariq Al-Sultan, Masoud Hayat, Awwad Al-Khaldi and Nawaf Al-Enezi.

KUWAIT: Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan yesterday said he aimed to boost economic and military ties with Arab Gulf states, as talks on a free trade zone deal pushed ahead. Erdogan, who is expected in Kuwait today, said Ankara was involved in "high level strategic dialogue" with the six-nation Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC), KUNA reported. Erdogan also confirmed that talks on a free trade zone between Turkey and the GCC were underway.

During his visit, Erdogan and HH the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah are expected to lay the foundation stone of a \$4.3-billion airport expansion project awarded to Turkish firm Limak Holding. The expansion will triple capacity to 25 million passengers over the next six years, and is the largest contract to date for a Turkish company in Kuwait. Erdogan said Turkish firms were involved in projects worth a total \$6.5 billion in the state.

Trade volume between the two countries was \$1.3 billion last year, with Turkish exports representing \$431 million, Erdogan said. Turkey's trade volume with the GCC states - Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia and the UAE - is currently around \$17 billion, up from \$1.7 billion in 1999. — AFP (See Page 3)

## GHANEM: REVOKED CITIZENSHIPS WILL BE RETURNED SOON

By B Izzak

KUWAIT: National Assembly Speaker Marzouq Al-Ghanem said yesterday that the citizenships that were revoked almost three years ago will be reinstated "very shortly". Responding to criticism by Islamist opposition MP Mohammad Hayef over the issue, Ghanem thanked HH the Amir and other lawmakers who worked on this goal. He however gave no dates. Hayef complained in statements on Sunday that the issue had unnecessarily taken very long, especially after HH the Amir promised to order to resolve the issue after meeting with a number of lawmakers several weeks ago. But Ghanem blasted Hayef for his "unnecessary" criticism, saying he seems to be "creating trouble".

Continued on Page 13

## MACRON FACES CHALLENGES

PARIS: Emmanuel Macron won warm backing from his European allies yesterday after his resounding victory in France's presidential election but the focus at home shifted to whether he can govern the country without a traditional party. At 39, the former investment banker will become France's youngest-ever president when he is inaugurated next weekend after crushing far-right leader Marine Le Pen on Sunday. Although the centrist politician faces a huge task ahead to unite a fractured and anxious country, his win has been greeted with relief by EU leaders and financial markets.

"Emmanuel Macron carries the hopes of millions of French people and also

many in Germany and across Europe," German Chancellor Angela Merkel told reporters. Fervently pro-European Macron is hoping to re-energize the Franco-German engine at the heart of the 28-member bloc, which is seen as critical now that Britain is set to leave. "We Germans must now help him," Foreign Minister Sigmar Gabriel said.

At his victory party outside the Louvre on Sunday, the classical music lover walked on to the stage to the strains of "Ode to Joy", the anthem of the EU, rather than France's La Marseillaise. Final results showed Macron won a higher-than-expected 66.1 percent of the vote against

Continued on Page 13

## MARZOUQ: DEAL NEAR TO EXTEND OIL OUTPUT CUT

KUWAIT: Kuwait's oil minister said yesterday he believes that oil producers will extend their production cuts for another six months at their meeting later this month. "There is almost consensus on the significance of extending the (reduction) agreement for at least six more months," Oil Minister Essam Al-Marzouq, who heads a committee overseeing compliance to the cuts, said in a statement. With oil prices dropping back under \$50 a barrel last week there has been renewed pressure on OPEC members and Russia whether they will extend their production cuts at a meeting in Vienna on May 25.

Both Russia and Saudi Arabia, the world's biggest oil producers, both signalled yesterday their support for extending the production cut that aims to ease a global supply glut. "Russia is in solidarity with the efforts of our partners to rebalance the market and considers that the joint initiative to stabilize the world oil market is currently effective," energy minister Alexander Novak said, Russian news agencies reported. "We are discussing different options and consider that an extension for a longer period will help to speed up the return of the markets to a healthier condition."

At the same time Saudi Arabia's energy minister Khalid Al-Falih also said in Kuala Lumpur that he was "rather confident the agreement will be extended into the second half of the year and possibly beyond", Bloomberg reported. "The producer coalition is determined to do whatever it takes to achieve our target of bringing stock levels back to the five-year average," Falih was reported as saying.

OPEC members agreed in November to cut production by 1.2 million barrels per day for six months beginning from the start of the year in a bid to reduce the glut of oil supplies on the shore up prices. The move was also partly matched by non-cartel producers led by Russia. The Kuwaiti minister said his country strongly backs efforts to extend the "historic" deal, adding that the fruits of the cuts will appear in the coming few months with the decline in world crude inventories. — AFP



PARIS: Outgoing French president Francois Hollande (right) and French president-elect Emmanuel Macron talk as they walk during the ceremony yesterday marking the 72nd anniversary of the victory over Nazi Germany during WWII under the Arc de Triomphe monument. — AFP (See Pages 10 & 14)

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**KUWAIT:** His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah bids farewell to Egyptian President Abdelfattah Al-Sisi.



**Egyptian President Abdelfattah Al-Sisi meets with a number of Kuwaiti businessmen.—Amiri Diwan photos**

# PRESIDENT SISI LEAVES KUWAIT

**KUWAIT:** Egyptian President Abdelfattah Al-Sisi and his accompanying delegation left Kuwait yesterday, ending an official visit to the country. He was seen off at the airport by His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, National Assembly Speaker Marzouq Al-Ghanem, Deputy Chief of the Kuwait National Guard Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah and His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-Hamad Al-Sabah.

Also seeing off the Egyptian leader at the airport were First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Defense Sheikh Mohammad Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Interior Sheikh Khaled Al-Jarrah Al-Sabah, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance Anas Al-Saleh, and Minister of State for Cabinet Affairs and Acting Minister of Information Sheikh Mohammad Al-Abdullah Al-Mubarak Al-Sabah, in addition to senior commanders of the army, police, National Guard and the Fire Service Directorate.

Prior to his departure yesterday, Sisi received at his residence in Bayan Palace the Kuwait Fund for Arab Economic Development's (KFAED) Director General Abdulwahab Al-Bader. The Egyptian



**His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah bids farewell to Egyptian President Abdelfattah Al-Sisi.**

President also hosted a number of Kuwaiti businessmen. The meeting was attended by Head of the Honorary Mission of the Amiri

Diwan, Advisor Mohammad Dhaifallah Sharar. Furthermore, Sisi received Speaker Ghanem and a number of National Assembly



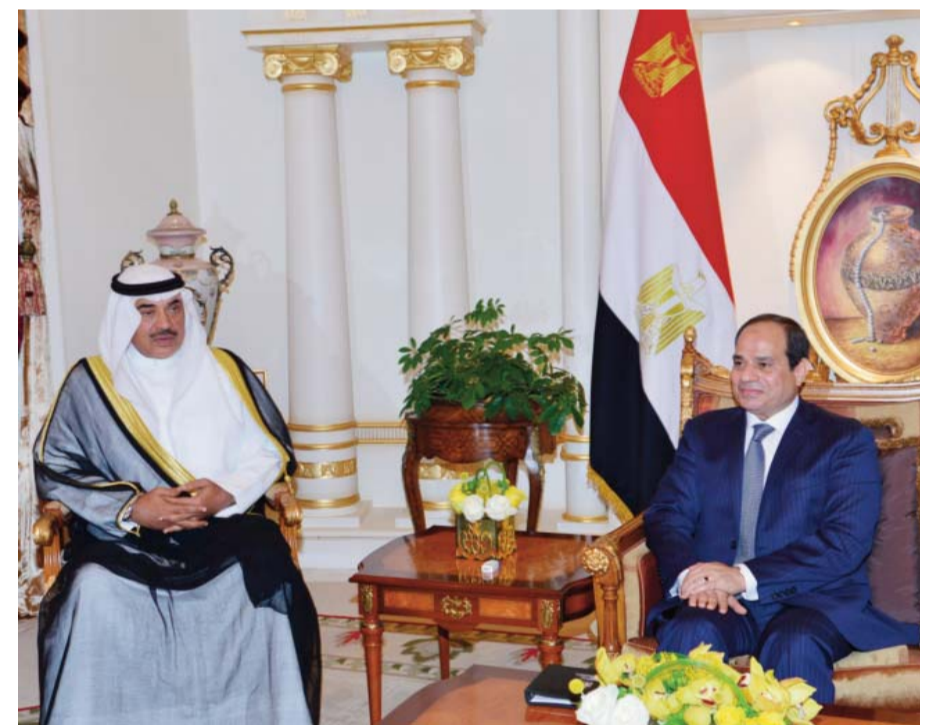
**His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-Hamad Al-Sabah bids farewell to Egyptian President Abdelfattah Al-Sisi.**

lawmakers, in addition to His Highness Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak, Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled and Anas Al-Saleh. Later, His Highness

the Prime Minister hosted a dinner banquet in honor of the visiting Egyptian President and his accompanying delegation. — KUNA



**His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah sees off Egyptian President Abdelfattah Al-Sisi.**



**Egyptian President Abdelfattah Al-Sisi meets with First Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah.**



**Egyptian President Abdelfattah Al-Sisi meets with Parliament Speaker Marzouq Al-Ghanem and a number of National Assembly lawmakers.**



**Deputy Prime Minister and Defense Minister Sheikh Mohammad Al-Khaled Al-Sabah greets Egyptian President Abdelfattah Al-Sisi during a dinner banquet hosted by His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-Hamad Al-Sabah.**



**Egyptian President Abdelfattah Al-Sisi meets with His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-Hamad Al-Sabah, and Finance Minister Anas Al-Saleh.**



**Egyptian President Abdelfattah Al-Sisi meets with Kuwait Fund for Arab Economic Development's (KFAED) Director General Abdulwahab Al-Bader.**

# TURKEY PINS GREAT ATTENTION TO BOOST ECONOMIC TIES WITH KUWAIT: ERDOGAN

‘AIRPORT PROJECT EMPHASIZES THE ADVANCED LEVEL REACHED BY TURKISH COMPANIES’

**KUWAIT:** Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan said yesterday that his country attaches great importance to the development of its economic and trade relations with Kuwait, one of the most stable, secure and prosperous countries in the region.

Erdogan said in an exclusive interview ahead of his official visit to Kuwait today that Turkey and Kuwait share common interests and relations between them are rapidly developing compared to political relations. He said that his presence at the ceremony of launching the new Kuwait International Airport project, which will be completed by Limak Holding Company, one of the first Turkish companies, is a great honor for him in terms of emphasizing the advanced level reached by Turkish companies worldwide.

The Turkish President expressed his hope for greater participation of the Turkish companies in the completion of the infrastructure projects that Kuwait aspires to achieve as part of its development plan for 2035. He expressed his thanks and gratitude to His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah and the Kuwaiti government for the tremendous support to Turkish companies.

He pointed out that the two countries have great potential to develop their relations in investment, trade, defense industries, tourism and other fields. He expressed his hope for an increase of mutual investment, expressing readiness of his country to exchange its experiences with Kuwait in the field of defense industries.

In this regard, Erdogan said that the meeting of the Joint Committee on Cooperation to be held at the level of heads of government in the coming months will address these issues in detail, stressing the need to hold meetings of the Joint Economic Committee and the Business Forum every now and then in order to improve the economic and trade relations between the two countries to the required level. He pointed out that the volume of trade exchange between the two countries in the first quarter of this year reached \$152 million, recording an increase of 17 percent compared to the same period of 2016. He added that the volume of trade exchange between Ankara and Kuwait amounted to \$1.287 billion last year, as the volume of Turkish exports to Kuwait reached \$431 million while the value of imports reached \$856 million, saying he



**ANKARA:** This March 2017 file photo shows Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan welcoming His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah during his most recent visit to Turkey. —KUNA

looks forward for more efforts to increase bilateral trade while taking into account the potential of the two countries.

#### Kuwaiti tourists

Erdogan expressed his happiness for the influx of Kuwaiti tourists to Turkey, noting that his country hosted about 180,000 Kuwaiti visitors last year and 30,000 in the first quarter of 2017. The Turkish president said that the agreement on cooperation in the field of tourism signed by the two countries during the visit of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah to Ankara last March would give a new impetus to this area.

He pointed out that the State of Kuwait ranked first in the field of real estate investment in the Gulf countries, as Kuwaitis own more than 6,000 properties in Turkey so far, expressing his belief that investment in this sector will see more increase in the coming period. As for the volume of direct investment that Kuwait has been making since 2002 in Turkey, which has become an investment attraction, Erdogan said that it amounted to about \$1.7 billion, as well as the activity of 280 Kuwaiti companies in Turkey now. The Turkish president confirmed that his country was able to bring

foreign direct investment worth \$176.6 billion between 2003 to 2016, thanks to the favorable investment climate of which \$12.3 billion achieved last year, calling on Kuwaitis to increase investment in Turkey.

In contrast, Erdogan pointed to the presence of seven Turkish companies with Turkish capital operating in Kuwait, pointing out that the Turkish construction companies have achieved in Kuwait through 30 projects huge achievements totaling about \$6.5 billion. He expressed his belief that the Turkish companies will contribute to the development of Kuwait even further in the coming periods, while meeting the confidence entrusted to, stressing the interest of Turkish businessmen in the Gulf region in general and Kuwait in particular.

#### GCC relations

On his country's relations with the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries, the Turkish president stressed that one of the priorities of Turkish foreign policy is to strengthen and deepen its relations with the member states of the GCC in all economic, trade, tourism, military and defense industries in line with the excellent political relations between the two parties, in bilateral or multilateral events.

He pointed out that the relations between Ankara and the Gulf countries are based on a cohesive platform, thanks to the cooperation mechanisms established with the governments of the countries at the bilateral level, thus, prompting the development of new cooperation projects, expressing hope for establishing such mechanisms with all Gulf countries and diversifying relations with them.

In this context, Erdogan pointed to the existence of a high-level strategic dialogue mechanism between Turkey and the Gulf Cooperation Council, saying "we are establishing the ground of our relations with the GCC countries in an integrated manner".

The Turkish president said that a decision was taken to resume negotiations between Turkey and the GCC on the free trade agreement at the last meeting held in Riyadh on October 13, expressing the hope that the outcome of these negotiations will be positive for both Turkey and the Gulf countries.

#### Exchanged visits

Erdogan's visit to the country comes less than two months after His Highness the Amir paid a visit to Turkey, thus signaling extent of the bilateral relations' develop-

ment over the past years. In May last year, His Highness the Amir headed the Kuwaiti delegation at the global summit for humanitarian action hosted by Istanbul. Meanwhile, Erdogan came to Kuwait in April 2015, only months after assuming power. The bilateral relations date to many decades ago and turned official in 1969, when the two countries signed an accord for establishing diplomatic relations, followed with opening the two states' embassies in 1970.

The relationship turned warmer and closer in the 1990s when Ankara firmly stood on Kuwait's side in face of the Iraqi aggression. Following the 1991 liberation, the late Amir paid an official visit to Ankara expressing gratitude for the honorable stance.

In 1997, Kuwait hosted the late Turkish president Suleyman Demirel who held talks with the late Amir Sheikh Jaber on the ties and issues of common interest. Kuwait for its part backed the Turkish legitimacy when it was targeted with a futile bid to oust it in July 2016, when His Highness the Amir cabled the Turkish president congratulating him on success of the legitimacy and democracy. Economic relations have been improving too. An official visit by His Highness the Amir to Turkey March 2017 was crowned with a number of accords for cooperation in tourism and military sectors.

The first official visit to Turkey by His Highness the Amir in 2008 was marked with inking seven agreements for cooperation in economic, scientific and technical affairs. Another visit to Ankara in 2013 ended with signing eight deals in the sectors of aviation, education, health and defense industries. The former Turkish president Abdullah Gul came to Kuwait in 2014, where the two sides inked agreements for military training and maritime transports. Officials from the two countries over the past years signed several treaties for cooperation in expertise exchange, training, military education and joint military drills.

The Kuwaiti-Turkish commission held its first session in 2013 tackling cooperation in the political, economic, technical and cultural fields. As to investments, the Kuwaiti businesses in Turkey were estimated at \$5 billion in 2015. The trade exchanges used to be in the range of \$600 million but they climbed to \$2 billion over the past few years. Some 70,000 Kuwaiti tourists go to Turkey every year. — KUNA



**KUWAIT:** His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-Hamad Al-Sabah chairs the Cabinet's meeting yesterday. — KUNA

## CABINET WELCOMES TURKISH LEADER'S VISIT

**KUWAIT:** The Kuwaiti Cabinet yesterday welcomed the visit to be started by Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan to Kuwait today, which is part of existing good relations between both friendly countries. The cabinet voiced confidence during its routine weekly meeting that the visit will lead to fulfilling its goals of promoting and developing cooperative relations between both friendly countries, Minister of State for Cabinet Affairs Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah Al-Mubarak Al-Sabah said in a statement following the cabinet's weekly meeting. The cabinet was apprised of the outcomes of the visit paid by Egyptian President Abdel Fattah el-Sisi to Kuwait on May 7-8, and bilateral talks on distinguished historical ties between Kuwait and Egypt, along with the latest regional developments. In this context, the ministers voiced satisfaction with the fact that both sides shared the same views on different issues of both sides in a friendly atmosphere that prevailed the talks.

During the meeting, First Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah briefed the ministers on the outcomes of the recent visit by a European Union (EU) delegation to Kuwait, where

ways of promoting bilateral ties and the latest regional and international developments were discussed. He also kept the cabinet posted on the results of the recent visit to Kuwait by UN Secretary General's special representative and Chairman of the UN Assistant Mission in Iraq Yan Kobish.

Then, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance Anas Al-Saleh elaborated on the results of the 106th meeting of the GCC's financial and economic cooperation committee at the level of ministers of finance and economy, during which pan-Gulf integration was addressed. Furthermore, the ministers asked concerned state agencies to take all necessary measures to facilitate and speed up the completion of the new terminal at Kuwait International Airport.

On the other hand, the cabinet condemned a recent 'terrorist' attack on a UN camp in north Mali, which left nine troops dead or wounded. The cabinet reiterated Kuwait's objection to such criminal acts that runs counter to all heavenly religions and human values and norms. The cabinet also congratulated French President-elect Emmanuel Macron, wishing him best of luck and a further promotion and development of existing friendly relations between Kuwait and France. — KUNA

## AMIR CONGRATULATES FRENCH PRESIDENT-ELECT MACRON

HH. SHEIKH SABAH RECEIVES GCC CHIEF

**KUWAIT:** His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah sent a cable of congratulation on Sunday to President-elect Emmanuel Macron for his victory in the presidential election in France.

In his cable, His Highness the Amir expressed on his behalf and on behalf of the Kuwaiti government and people, his sincere sentiments and best wishes for securing the trust of the French people, praising as well historic ties between the two nations. His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah and His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Jaber Mubarak Hamad Al-Sabah both sent similar cables to President Elect Macron on the occasion. Meanwhile, National Assembly Speaker Marzouq Al-Ghanem sent two cables of congratulations, one to French Parliament Speaker Claude Bartolone and the second to French President of the Senate Gerard Larcher. In his cables, Ghanem expressed best wishes over France's presidential elections.

In other news, His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah received yesterday at Bayan palace First Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Sheikh Sabah Khaled Hamad Al-Sabah and Secretary General of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) Dr Abdul Latif Al-Zayani. During the meeting, they discussed the most important issues on the agenda of the Gulf Cooperation Council's (GCC's) 17th Consultative meeting as well as GCC summit with

the United States in addition to Arab-Islamic summit with the United States to be held in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA). The meeting was attended by Deputy Minister of Amiri Diwan

Affairs Sheikh Ali Jarrah Al-Sabah. Separately, His Highness the Crown Prince received yesterday Chief of the National Security Bureau Sheikh Thamer Ali Sabah Al-Salem Al-Sabah. — KUNA



**KUWAIT:** His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah meets with Secretary General of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) Dr Abdul Latif Al-Zayani. — KUNA



**His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah meets with Chief of the National Security Bureau Sheikh Thamer Ali Sabah Al-Salem Al-Sabah.**



The Palace of Justice

## MAN SENTENCED TO JAIL FOR CITIZENSHIP FORGERY

By Meshaal Al-Enezi

**KUWAIT:** The court of appeal yesterday sentenced a GCC national to four years in jail with labor for forgery, as he had used fake documents to get Kuwaiti citizenship. Meanwhile, the court of appeal also upheld the criminal court's verdict sentencing citizen Salem Al-Doussari (aka Abu Refaa) to five years in jail with labor over a state security case filed against him for slander over social media networks. Notably, the psychiatric diseases hospital issued a report about the suspect's mental health, stating that he was aware of his actions.

Ibn Sina Hospital

Al-Sabah Medical zone director Dr Afrah

Al-Sarraf announced that preparations are in progress to build the new Ibn Sina Hospital with a bed capacity of 296. Speaking on the sidelines of launching the physiotherapy awareness week organized by Ibn Sina's Physiotherapy Department under the title "Physiotherapy for a Better Life," Sarraf said that expansion construction at Mohammed Al-Bahar center was over and that the new building includes surgery rooms and outpatient departments. Sarraf added that 23 percent of Kuwait Kidney Center, which is donated by the public committee for donation collection, has been completed. She also noted that a new kidney transplant center donated by the heirs of Sheikha Jassem Al-Marzouq is currently being designed.

## VACCINATING ANIMALS NECESSARY TO PROTECT HUMANS AGAINST INFECTIONS

**KUWAIT:** Protecting animals against diseases is key to prevent infections in humans, said the Public Authority for Agriculture and Fish Resources (PAAAFR). There are hundreds of viral and bacterial diseases that could be transmitted from animals to humans, PAAAFR's official Ghanim Al-Sanad said yesterday.

Factors that could cause infections in humans include lack of hygiene, eating non-sterilized foods or neglecting the vaccination of animals, he noted. There are several fatal diseases such as bird and swine flu and rabies, said Sanad. He added that there are infections caused by consuming products of sick animals such as 'brucella.'

Deputy director general for animals affairs Zahra Al-Wazan warned against cat-scratch disease, a viral infection that enters the human body through open wounds caused

by cats. Symptoms include fever, itchy skin and swollen lymph glands, she added.

She also spoke of other dangerous diseases caused by direct contact with sick animals, such as rabies, which leads to paralysis and in many cases death. The authority has taken serious measures to prevent the spread of such diseases, including establishing veterinary clinics.

It also tasked specialized departments with monitoring all types of animal diseases, provide vaccinations for both animals and humans and enforce safety measures in animal products, said Wazan. Meanwhile, the official noted that PAAAFR is holding different seminars and workshops to bring awareness to the dangers of animal diseases, in cooperation with local and international bodies. — KUNA

# GRILLING DEBATES LIKELY TO BE DELAYED

### KUWAIT AIRWAYS REHIRS 19 PILOTS

By A Saleh

**KUWAIT:** It is very likely that today's parliamentary session might not feature active discussions for two reasons - the absence of most ministers who will join the official delegation welcoming Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan, and the government's rejection of many bills listed on the agenda's agenda, such as military and employee pensions, reducing the age of retirement and the number of people to be granted citizenship this year.

Informed sources said that a government-parliament confrontation will start today with MP Shuaib Al-Muwaizri's grilling motion filed against Housing Minister Yasser Abul, who is expected to ask for a two-week deferral, because the government would be busy with the new airport ceremony and his wish to prepare his responses.

The sources stressed that an even mightier confrontation would be in tomorrow's session, when His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-Sabah is due to face two grilling motions filed by MPs Mohammed Al-Mutair, Waleed Al-Tabtabaei and Marzouq Al-Khalifa, whose membership was annulled by a court order. Moreover, the sources stressed that the premier was ready to discuss both motions behind closed doors despite some lawmakers' objections. The sources added that the government is sure the second motion would be scrapped because it is unconstitutional. In addition, the sources stressed that the grillers so far do not have the support of 10 MPs to sign a non-cooperation motion.

Pilots rehired

Kuwait Airways has rehired 19 out of 37 pilots who had been earlier shifted to work in other government bodies after it offered them three options - to retire and get a 36-month salary



The National Assembly

indemnity, continue working for Kuwait Airways after its privatization or transfer to work for any government body with the same financial privileges. Meanwhile, informed sources said that Kuwait Airways will receive its new Boeing ER300-777 named 'Boubyan' on Thursday to be the seventh of its new 10-plane fleet. The sources stressed that the three remaining planes would be delivered by the end of July.

Examination centers

The Ministry of Health (MoH) stressed that it has no problem applying the decisions and

recommendations made by the GCC Supreme Council's 37th meeting in Bahrain in December pertaining with expat labor examination centers in GCC states.

In this regard, MoH assistant undersecretary for public health affairs Dr Majeda Al-Qattan stressed that all GCC embassies were committed to electronically connecting GCC expats' medical examination programs, stop dealing with health centers that are not accredited by the GCC health ministers' council and have the council follow medical examination standards.

## HARMFUL BACTERIA CAUSED FISH DEATH: EPA

**KUWAIT:** Harmful bacteria caused fish kill recently in Kuwait Bay, the Environment Public Authority (EPA) said yesterday. The fish "are subject to environmental stress for several reasons, including the effect of sewage on specific shorelines" in Kuwait, EPA's deputy director for technical affairs Mohammad Al-Enezi said at a press conference. He added that the dead fish

were of the species locally known as 'chem,' noting that they were exposed to wastewater, industrial drainage or illegal encroachment. 'Chem' fish are similar to but not to be confused with the catfish, and is not favored for eating by bulk of the Kuwaitis.

On Sunday, Kuwait's Public Authority of Agriculture Affairs and Fish Resources (PAAAFR)

announced that the perished fish phenomenon in the Arabian Gulf waters has diminished. A press release by PAAAFR said that sea surveillance conducted over the previous three days showed that no perished fish was found, noting that the fact that decomposed fish was found floating over the water surface indicated that this phenomenon was on the wane. — KUNA



Scenes from a campaign launched by Kuwait Fire Service Directorate in Mangaf.



By Hanan Al-Saadoun

**KUWAIT:** Farwaniya police arrested a gang of Asian nationals for stealing electric cables and construction material. Police received information about thefts from construction sites, so detectives worked on the case and arrested one of the suspects. He led them to his partner, who was also arrested.

Campaign

Kuwait Fire Service Directorate launched a campaign in Mangaf after a fire in a mall on Friday. Its public relations department said 27 malls and shops were inspected, and several citations were issued as well as several warnings for violating building codes.



This handout photo shows cables busted with a number of suspects who were arrested yesterday.



Scenes from a campaign launched by Kuwait Fire Service Directorate in Mangaf.

### PHOTO FEATURE



**KUWAIT:** A reader of Kuwait Times, JP, sent in these photos to show the terrible and unsafe conditions of a local park in Salmiya, block 10. As can be seen from the photos, the playground equipment is damaged and has not been repaired or replaced, the area is unclean and is not fit for children to play in. We hope that the proper authorities will take notice of Kuwait's public and community spaces and do more to maintain and protect these areas.

# JAZEERA AIRWAYS CONCLUDES SPONSORSHIP OF KUWAIT TIMES PHOTOGRAPHY COMPETITION

SUPPORTING GROWING TALENTS ACROSS KUWAIT



The second winner Jacek Wozniak (center) poses with Hamad Al-Matar (left) and Abd Al-Rahman Alyan.



The sixth winner Mohammad Al-Saleh poses with Hamad Al-Matar and Abd Al-Rahman Alyan.

**KUWAIT:** Jazeera Airways, the first private airline in Kuwait and the Middle East, announced the conclusion of its sponsorship of the 11th Kuwait Times Photography Competition under the theme 'Kuwait Scenery'. This competition aimed at capturing and promoting artistic skills by showcasing beautiful landscapes across Kuwait. The lucky winners were recognized during an awards ceremony, which recently took place at Holiday Inn Hotel.

The nationwide competition served

as a platform to display the creativity of Kuwaitis and expatriates, as well as to encourage photographic skills in the country. Professional and amateur photographers from all ages and races came together to creatively feature and document different settings and natural landscapes in Kuwait. This year, more than 150 participants joined the competition, submitting around 900 works, which were then reviewed by a panel of judges consisting of professional photographers.

Commenting on Jazeera Airways' sponsorship of the annual competition, Rohit Ramachandran, Chief Executive Officer at Jazeera Airways said, "We are proud to support this competition, which is in fact a partnership to form overall community awareness about art, an integral part of our culture. As a proud Kuwaiti airline, we remain committed to supporting activities that inspire a sense of patriotism and spearhead creativity and skills-building."

Jazeera Airways' exclusive airline sponsorship of the competition falls under the airline's social corporate strategy, which places an important role on supporting creativity and innovation in Kuwait while enabling an equal opportunity to exhibit individual talent, as a testimony to its continuous efforts at enhancing and empowering national pride amongst Kuwaitis and those living in Kuwait.

Since its inception over 12 years ago, Jazeera Airways has strengthened its presence by currently flying to over 15 destinations and continues to serve as a beacon of excellence for innovative products and services to enhance travel experience on ground and in the air. Only recently, Jazeera Airways introduced a dedicated business lounge adjacent to its respective gates at Kuwait International Airport and is now scheduled to reveal its brand-new terminal that will showcase a broad portfolio of advanced technological and innovative solutions, as a testimony to its pioneering spirit. This is in addition to its newly launched WhatsApp phone number for all Jazeera passengers and interested customers, as well as its mobile app designed for those wishing to book their tickets or check in online, and many other innovative ideas that promise to change the travel experience in Kuwait and the region.



The seventh winner Anwar Ahmed poses with Hamad Al-Matar and Abd Al-Rahman Alyan.

## 7TH PROTEGES PROGRAM UNDERWAY

By Nawara Fattahova

**KUWAIT:** The seventh edition of The Proteges program was launched during a press conference held yesterday at KIPCO Tower. The program is being held in partnership between the Kuwait Projects Company (Holding) and The Proteges. Rana Al-Khaled, Mentor, The Proteges said that the program was founded to offer life and leadership skills to young Arabs. "These are the skills they need to lead the Arab world. The Proteges is a mentorship program designed to positively influence the youth and push them towards realizing their potential and improve themselves," she noted.

The main goal of this program is to search for talented youth and give them a chance to excel. "We hope that these youth gained knowledge and life experience through their participation in The Proteges, which will change their lives forever. This is the reason for being here today to launch the seventh edition of The Proteges program," added Khaled.

The program was designed for youth aged between 16 to 24 years. "We encourage all youth whether studying in school or university to register for The Proteges program for next year as soon as possible. For the past four years, all the main companies of Kuwait Projects Company Group supported the program. For instance, the American University of Kuwait offered its campus to host the training courses that took place in Kuwait. Also, OSN offered its satellite channels to advertise the program, in addition to

other services provided by the companies," she pointed out. The Proteges is an all-inclusive program that combines workshops, lectures, activities, challenges, games and fun. "These activities are guided by a group of most talented experts across multiple fields - the mentors. This year the foreign trip will be to Germany and the Czech Republic, where the students will undergo specialized training courses at Berlin University, which one of the best universities in the world. We thank KIPCO for supporting the program for the next six years," concluded Khaled.

Abeer Al-Omar, CSR Director, KIPCO, highlighted the aim of Kuwait Projects Company (Holding) and its sub-companies to support and encourage talented youth. "We aim to have a generation that is aware of its future responsibility, so we continue our strategic partnership with The Proteges. We trust the excellent achievements of the 25 students that they accept annually, who were carefully chosen for this program," she said.

KIPCO is supporting the program to ensure its continuity through offering its services and products to meet the needs of the participating students. "Eight sub-companies of KIPCO are sponsoring the program annually, including Burgan Bank, KAMCO, United Real Estate Co, Gulf Insurance Group, Qurain Petrochemical Industries Company, American University of Kuwait, OSN, Kuwait Hotels Company and United Networks Company," stressed Omar. The Proteges program will start on July 9, 2017 and will continue for six weeks. Students can apply for the eighth edition through the website: [www.theproteges.org](http://www.theproteges.org).



**KUWAIT:** (From left) Rana Al-Khaled, Mentor, The Proteges, Abeer Al-Omar, CSR Director, KIPCO and Dana Hamadah, Project Manager, The Proteges attend the press conference. — Photo by Joseph Shagra



(From left) Kuwait Times Deputy General Manager Adnan Saad, Zain Kuwait's Corporate Communications and Relations Director Waleed Al-Khashti, and Kuwait Times Editor-in-Chief Abd Al-Rahman Al-Alyan pose with one of the winners.

## ZAIN STRATEGIC PARTNER OF 'KUWAIT BEAUTIFUL AND GREEN' COMPETITION

ENCOURAGING YOUNG ARTISTIC TALENTS IN ART COMPETITION ORGANIZED BY KUWAIT TIMES

**KUWAIT:** Zain, the leading telecommunications company in Kuwait, announced its Strategic Partnership of the 'Kuwait Beautiful and Green' drawing competition for the fourth year running. The competition, organized by Kuwait Times, came under the patronage of Sheikh Mohammed Abdullah Al-Mubarak Al-Sabah, Minister of State for Cabinet Affairs and Acting Minister of Information.

Zain Kuwait's Corporate Communications and Relations Director Waleed Al-Khashti took part in awarding the first-place winners in the presence of Kuwait Times Editor-in-Chief Abd Al-Rahman Al-Alyan as well as the ambassadors of Australia, Ukraine, and Azerbaijan. The competition witnessed overwhelming participation from both public and private schools from across Kuwait.

Zain's support to this initiative for the fourth year running came in line with its Corporate Sustainability and Social Responsibility strategy towards the education sector, through which the company encourages and supports

efforts that contribute to offering the proper environment for the youth to unleash their creativity. The competition witnessed immense participation of over 14,850 students from public and private schools, including special needs schools. The competition aimed at encouraging students to showcase their artistic skills by drawing paintings that portray a beautiful and green Kuwait. Zain believes the development of the communities in which it operates is a very important part of the company's overall success. The company considers education as a core element in the community development process, and it will continue to support it to contribute to the further progress of the education sector.

Zain's partnership of the competition for four years springs from the company's core belief that social responsibility is a significant corporate element. The company believes that supporting initiatives such as this one provides young people with skills and tools necessary to help them highlight and develop their skills.

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SHOOTING ON AL-AQSA STREET?

**KUWAIT:** Interior Ministry authorities are investigating a report of a shooting on Al-Aqsa street. According to a citizen who called police, shots were fired during an altercation on the street between unknown persons following a three-car traffic accident. Everyone involved fled the scene, however, before police arrived. A car bumper, with the license plate attached, was found at the scene and police are investigating.

Family feud turns violent

A violent family fight took place in Al-Qasr, Jahra area, ending in the injury of seven persons, who attached medical reports with their complaints. Investigations revealed that sharp objects were used. A student who lives in Saad Al-Abdullah area went to Al-Naeem police station with a medical report stating that he had a stab wound in the chest, then another student; his brother, submitted a similar report. Both said they had a fight with five of their family members and named a police officer. The officer, when called by investigators, submitted his own medical report indicating injuries to his hand. Two additional members of the family, another policeman and a fireman and a fifth who works in the civil implementation department participated in the fight. The two brothers said they were beaten by the other five without reason. Others said the fight was the result of a family dispute.

Luxury car stolen in Rumaithiya

Rumaithiya police station has issued a circular regarding a red luxury car that was reported stolen while parked near a co-op society. The car belongs to a 60-year old citizen.

Carpenter wanted

Salam police have placed the name of a carpenter on the wanted list after charging him with swindling a citizen. The man agreed with the citizen to build a wedding stand (kousha), for her son's wedding. She paid him KD 500 in advance, but the man did not fulfill the contract.

Phone listing fraud

A citizen accused a store clerk of registering four telephone lines in her name without her knowledge. She said she was surprised when she received a call from a telecom official asking her to pay bills to avoid legal action, then discovered that four lines were set up in her name. A case has been filed and investigations are ongoing.

Swindler caught

Criminal detectives solved nearly 14 cases of swindling of up to KD 200,000. Detectives learned about a bedoon who claimed to be a Gulf national and inviting local investors to do business with him. He was arrested and confessed to taking investments and then disappearing with the money. At least one of his victims is a well-known personality in Kuwait.

— Translated from the Arabic press



WORLD RED CROSS AND RED CRESCENT DAY JOINT STATEMENT

**T**adateru Konoe, President of the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies and Peter Maurer, President of the International Committee of the Red Cross released the following joint statement yesterday on the occasion of the World Red Cross and Red Crescent Day:

Across the world, crises are increasingly complex and humanitarian need is vast. More and more lives are being destroyed by armed conflict, violence, and climate change; and when natural disasters strike, they are more severe and numerous. The complex new dynamics at play during natural disasters, conflict and violence means the work of our Red Cross and Red Crescent volunteers and staff is more important than ever. On World Red Cross and Red Crescent Day, we recognize the incredible contribution and achievements of the millions of volunteers and staff around the world who keep our commitment to humanity every day.

As Presidents, we see the incredible impact that Red Cross and Red Crescent workers from around the world are making in communities large and small every day. And we are humbled.

From Syria to Somalia and Nepal to Nigeria we see just how brave our people are, often putting their own lives in danger to help people in need, and sometimes making the ultimate sacrifice in the line of their humanitarian duties. We are proud and grateful for their life-saving and life-changing work, even under the most dangerous and difficult of circumstances, and for the difference they are making around the world. Since the days of our founder Henry Dunant, the history of the International Red Cross

and Red Crescent Movement has been one of partnership. The intractable humanitarian issues our world faces will not be solved only by organizations. They will also be solved by people who come together fueled by a determination and passion to alleviate human suffering. This is the Movement. This is you.

Red Cross and Red Crescent volunteers and staff walk the last mile to ensure that no one is left behind. They accompany people in making the first mile in their recovery. Their role is critical in providing urgent life-saving assistance, as well as in working with communities to help them recover, to be safer, stronger and more resilient to future crises. In places of conflict and disaster, our volunteers and staff are adapting, finding creative and innovative ways to reach people in need and help them in the face of these challenges.

Our volunteers and staff use local solutions to meet the needs of vulnerable people, whoever they may be, wherever they may be, and whatever they may need. They are truly grounded in the local community - they live there, work there, understand the culture, languages and needs, and are best placed to develop local solutions with support from the global Red Cross and Red Crescent membership.

We have seen Red Cross and Red Crescent staff and volunteers running a snake farm to educate the public about snakes and milk anti-venom to treat snake bites; we have seen them forming wheelchair basketball teams to give landmine victims a sense of purpose and community; and we have seen them using therapy dogs to bring comfort and smiles to marginalized, socially excluded, and lonely people.

REASONS BEHIND NAMING HIJRI MONTHS

By Dr Saleh Al-Ojairi

The reasons behind naming the Hijri months (in the Islamic calendar) are as follows:

**Muharram:** Because Arabs banned fighting in that month and considered it 'Haram.'

**Safar:** Because Arab tribes used to invade other lands in that month and leave them devastated and empty (Sofran). They also used to leave their own houses empty whenever they went out to invade the others.

**Rabi' Al-Awwal and Rabi' Al-Thani (Akhar):**

*The weather got extremely hot during Ramadan.*

*'Ramdha' means extreme heat*

Because the land became very fertile in these two months and Rabi' means spring.

**Jumada Al-Awwal and Jumada Al-Thani:** Because the water froze (Yatajammad in Arabic) due to extreme cold weather in these two months.

**Rajab:** Because Arabs used to trim their tree branches then. It is a glorified month and people stopped fighting in it. The Arabic verb 'Rajab' means feared and glorified.

**Sha'ban:** Because Arab tribes used to divide into teams (Yatasha'ab) in preparation to raid others following a no-war period during Rajab.

**Ramadan:** Because the weather got extremely hot during this month. 'Ramdha' means extreme heat. Linguistically, when we say 'Ramdhat Al-Hijarah', this means that rocks turned very hot because of the sun's heat.

**Shawwal:** That is when female camels raise their ears declaring the start of their mating season. 'Shalat' means raised or lifted.

**Du Al-Qi'dah:** It was the time when Arabs stopped fighting. It might have been also used to refer to camel calf (Qidan in Arabic and the singular is Qo'oud). It also meant taming and riding camel's calves.

**Du Al-Hijjah:** It was when Arabs went on pilgrimage (Hajj). —Translated by Kuwait Times

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AHLI UNITED BANK HOSTS MINORS AUTHORITY TEAM

**KUWAIT:** Underscoring the excellent relations between Ahli United Bank (AUB) and the Public Authority for Minors Affairs (PAMA), the bank received two groups from PAMA and conducted for them an intensive training program on the work of many of the bank's departments, including Treasury, Private Banking Services Department, Wealth Management and Risk Management. The program, which was designed to acquaint the bank's guests with the nature of the banking business, marks the start of close cooperation between Ahli United Bank and the Public Authority for Minors Affairs.

The visiting delegation had the opportunity to experience and gain a clear knowledge of the way the bank

provides its world class banking products and services, how it succeeds in understanding and catering for the aspirations of its customers. The delegation also gained a first-hand knowledge of the way the bank operates according to the provisions of the Islamic sharia, and its vision and role in discharging its social responsibility.

Musaed Al-Muheeb, from the Investment Department at PAMA has coordinated with Rasha Saud Jaafar, Senior Manager of Private Banking Services and Wealth Management at AUB to arrange and supervise the visit and the training program. Jaafar made a detailed presentation on the role the bank plays in providing private banking and wealth management services to its customers in line with the best

global standards. During the visit, AUB honored the authority's delegation in the presence of Dr Abdullatif Ahmed Al-Sanan, PAMA's Deputy General Manager for Developing the Minors' Funds, Motaz Alrafie, Senior Deputy Chief Executive Officer of AUB's Banking Group, and Medhat Tawfik, General Manager of Private Banking Services and Wealth Management at the bank. Both sides foresee that cooperation between them will extend to include several other aspects.

Speaking at the honoring ceremony, Dr Abdullatif Ahmad Al-Sanan thanked the management of AUB for hosting and training the members of PAMA's delegation, and said he looked forward to a closer cooperation between the authority and the bank.



KIB: REGISTRATION FOR QURAN COMPETITION STILL ONGOING

**KUWAIT:** Kuwait International Bank (KIB) announced that registration for its annual Ramadan Quran Memorization Competition is still open. The annual competition, which is taking place under the title 'the best of you are those who learn the Quran and teach it', is organized by the bank for the children of its customers. The last date of registration for the competition is Thursday May 25th, as the competition is set to take place during Ramadan at KIB's head office, specifically during the period from 11th to 15th June.

KIB has been keen on organizing this competition annually, in an effort to foster strong religious values and principles within the local community. This competition seeks to encourage the younger generations to uphold the traditions of proper Quran recitation, within the context of friendly, competitive environment.

Speaking about the competition, Dr Hisham Abdul Hai, Sharia Coordinator at KIB commented: "At KIB, we are

extremely proud to organize this competition annually for the children of our customers. This year, competition will be divided into four categories based on participants' ages, namely: Participants born between 2008 and 2010 will recite surat Al-Naza'at, Al-Infitar and Al-Aa'la, participants born between 2005 and 2007 will recite surat Al-Waq'a'a, participants born between 2003 and 2004 will recite surat Yasin and participants born between 2000 and 2002 will recite surat Al-Kahf."

Abdul Hai added that KIB has allocated a total sum of KD 6,000 in prizes to the lucky winners. He further lauded the efforts made by the Bank within the context of its leading social responsibility program, especially its initiatives devoted to promoting stronger religious values. Abdul Hai also noted that those wishing to participate in the competition can register their children at KIB branches by providing a copy of their child's national ID and their debit card.



**Chinese lawyer's family says US helped them flee**

**CLASH OVER US MIDDLE-SCHOOL SEX ASSAULTS: DID THEY HAPPEN?**



**DAMASCUS: Syrian families of opposition fighters gather at a staging point in the Barzeh neighborhood of the capital yesterday as they wait to be evacuated. — AFP**

**FIRST EVACUATIONS FROM DAMASCUS DISTRICT**

**DAMASCUS:** Syrian rebels and their families began evacuating from a district of Damascus for the first time yesterday, bringing the government closer to recapturing all of the capital. The evacuation began days after regime backers Russia and Iran and rebel supporter Turkey signed a deal to implement "de-escalation zones" where the government and opposition will halt hostilities. Foreign Minister Walid Muallem yesterday rejected any role for the United Nations or international forces in monitoring the zones.

The deal to evacuate Barzeh district mirrors similar agreements for opposition-held territory elsewhere, allowing fighters safe passage in exchange for surrender. State television cited the Damascus provincial governor as saying a first wave of 1,022 people, including 568 fighters, had left Barzeh yesterday. The channel added that the evacuation would continue for five days, but that rebels who chose to stay could do so if they registered with the government. Those leaving will head to the rebel-held province of Idlib, in Syria's northwest.

The evacuation deal was struck late Sunday night, and dozens of people gathered in Barzeh from yesterday morning. An AFP photographer saw rebel fighters carrying light weapons looking on as children and women in brightly-colored headscarves pulled shabby suitcases and duffel bags. A source from the pro-government National Defense Forces said rebel fighters would be allowed to take their "personal weapons" with them.

Negotiations were ongoing for a similar deal in the district of Qabun, in Damascus's northeast, which forces loyal to President Bashar Al-Assad have been shelling heavily for weeks. "We are working on Qabun and there is the Yarmouk

camp, where talks are underway for the evacuation of armed groups," Muallem said during a news conference yesterday.

**'De-escalation' zones**

Assad's government controls all but six districts of Damascus: Barzeh, Qabun, Jobar, Tishreen, Tadamon, and Yarmouk camp. The evacuation is a first in the capital, but the Barzeh agreement follows a model of "reconciliation deals" that have been implemented across the country. The government touts such deals as the best way to end the six-year conflict, which erupted in March 2011 with anti-regime protests and has killed over 320,000 people. But the opposition says it is forced into them by heavy government bombardment and siege tactics.

Yesterday's evacuation began as battlefronts quieted in Syrian territory included in four "de-escalation zones" agreed by Russia, Iran and Turkey. The agreement, inked in the Kazakh capital Astana, does not include Damascus city. It mandates an end to hostilities, including air strikes, in specified zones for six months. The deal came into effect on midnight Friday, with fighting subsiding, but the co-sponsors have until June 4 to submit maps finalizing the borders of the zones. It calls for continued fighting against the Islamic State group, which is largely absent from the areas where the zones will be implemented, as well as former Al-Qaeda affiliate Fateh Al-Sham Front. Fateh al-Sham has a powerful presence particularly in Idlib province, which is included in the zones, where it is allied with other opposition groups. The deal says the "de-escalation zones" would be bordered by security areas with checkpoints and observation centers "ensured by the forces of the guarantors by consensus", but

that "third-party" monitors could also be deployed. But yesterday, Muallem rejected UN or international monitors. "We do not accept a role for the United Nations or international forces to monitor the agreement," he said. He added there could be a role "as the Russian guarantor has said, for military police", but it was unclear if he was referring to Syrian or foreign units. Russia meanwhile said yesterday it had tabled a draft UN Security Council resolution backing the safe zone deal. A source at the UN told Russia's Interfax news agency

that "a vote on the draft will take place possibly this week". The agreement has been received with caution by Washington, with US Defence Secretary Jim Mattis saying yesterday it was being studied. "Does this proposal have a hope for ending this war? We'll have to look at it. The devil is always in the details, so we are going to have to look at the details," he said. Russia has said warplanes belonging to the US-led coalition fighting IS will be barred from operating in the four "de-escalation zones". — AFP

**NEW HAMAS CHIEF IN FIRST GAZA PUBLIC APPEARANCE**

**GAZA CITY:** The new leader of Hamas made his first public appearance in the new role yesterday, visiting a solidarity tent in his native Gaza for hunger-striking Palestinian prisoners held by Israel. Ismail Haniya replaced Qatar-based Khaled Mashaal in the Palestinian group's top position, as head of the political bureau. His win in secret internal elections was announced on Saturday. Haniya's rise was the latest sign of a power shift in the Islamic militant Hamas from the diaspora to Gaza, which has been under Hamas rule since a 2007 takeover.

This shift comes at a time of growing financial pressure on the territory by Hamas' main rival, Western-

backed Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas, who in recent weeks has been trying to force the group to cede ground in Gaza. Haniya, a former Hamas prime minister in Gaza, could be hampered in his new leadership role by movement restrictions. Israel and Egypt imposed a border blockade on Gaza after the Hamas takeover a decade ago, keeping the territory's borders sealed most of the time. Hamas leaders have been able to travel abroad from time to time, but only with Egyptian coordination.

For his first appearance as Hamas leader, Haniya chose a symbol of elusive Palestinian unity - a solidarity tent where several political factions

are represented, including Hamas and Abbas' Fatah movement. The hunger strike of close to 900 Palestinian prisoners, who demand better conditions from Israel, reached its 22nd day yesterday. "It's my honor to shoulder the responsibility of leading the political bureau of this large movement of holy resistance," Haniya said after arriving at the tent in downtown Gaza City. He said that the fate of the prisoners remains a top priority for Hamas.

Haniya arrived at the tent in a white SUV, accompanied by bodyguards. Local officials and security chiefs lined up to greet him. Haniya, who also served as Mashaal's deputy for four years, is a familiar figure in Gaza, a tiny sliver of land on the Mediterranean with 2 million people. He was born in the Shati refugee camp on the outskirts of Gaza City, where he still lives in a heavily guarded compound.

Haniya was named Palestinian prime minister in 2006, after Hamas defeated Fatah movement in parliament elections. Abbas dismissed Haniya in June 2007, after the Hamas takeover of Gaza. Hamas ignored the dismissal and a Haniya-led Hamas government remained in place in Gaza, while Abbas appointed a rival administration in autonomous West Bank enclaves under his control. The Haniya administration resigned in 2014, as part of a deal with Fatah to set up a transitional government for both the West Bank and Gaza that was to pave the way for national elections. The deal collapsed, with both political camps refusing to relinquish control in their respective territories. — AP



**GAZA: New Hamas leader Ismail Haniya (center) shakes hands with a person upon his arrival to a solidarity tent for hunger-striking Palestinian prisoners held by Israel in the main square in Gaza City yesterday. — AP**

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## ONE MILLION CHILD REFUGEES FROM SUDAN CIVIL WAR

**NAIROBI:** More than 1 million children have fled South Sudan's civil war, two United Nations agencies said Monday, part of the world's fastest growing refugee crisis. Another 1 million South Sudanese children are displaced within the country, having fled their homes due to the civil war, said the U.N.'s child and refugee agencies in a statement yesterday.

"The future of a generation is truly on the brink," said Leila Pakkala, UNICEF's Regional Director for Eastern and Southern Africa. "The horrifying fact that nearly one in five children in South Sudan has been forced to flee their home illustrates how devastating this conflict has been for the country's most vulnerable."

The civil war has worsened South Sudan's ethnic divisions and UN officials have said parts of the country is experiencing ethnic cleansing and is at risk of genocide. Roughly 62 percent of refugees from South Sudan are children, according to the UN statement, and

more than 75,000 children are alone or without their families. Roughly 1.8 million people have fled South Sudan in total. "No refugee crisis today worries me more than South Sudan," said Valentin Tapsoba, UNHCR's Africa Bureau Director. "That refugee children are becoming the defining face of this emergency is incredibly troubling."

For children still living in South Sudan, the situation is still grim. Nearly three quarters of children are out of school, according to the UN statement, which is the highest out-of-school population in the world. An official famine was declared in two counties of South Sudan in February, and hundreds of thousands of children are at risk of starvation in the absence of food aid, according to the UN.

More than one thousand children have been killed or wounded in the East African nation's civil war. Both sides have pledged not to recruit child soldiers, but have ignored their promises. A UN offi-

cial, who spoke on the condition of anonymity, said that opposition groups are recruiting inside UN displacement sites. The official spoke on the condition of anonymity because of lack of authorization to speak to the media.

South Sudan's civil war began in Dec 2013 and has killed tens of thousands of people. South Sudan's government forces "continue to target civilians in violation of the law of armed conflict," the United States, United Kingdom, and Norway, and European Union said on Monday, one of the most critical statements by foreign governments against the East African nation as it experiences a sharp rise in ethnic attacks.

"Large government offensives in Yui, Waat, Tonga and Kodok have resulted in even more tragic humanitarian consequences, displacing 50,000 to 100,000 individuals in recent weeks," the statement said. "These actions stand in direct conflict with the government's stated aim of a political solution to the conflict." —AP



In this photo taken April 4, 2017, South Sudanese children arrive at the Imvepi refugee settlement in northern Uganda. — AP

## CHINESE LAWYER'S FAMILY SAYS US HELPED THEM FLEE

### AMERICAN OFFICIALS ARE WILLING TO PUSH BACK

**BEIJING:** Stuck in a Bangkok jail with a deportation order against her, Chen Guiqiu waited with dread over what seemed certain to come next. A Thai immigration official showed her surveillance video of the jail entrance, where more than a dozen Chinese security agents were waiting. Within minutes, Chen feared, she and her two daughters would be escorted back to China, where her husband, the prominent rights lawyer Xie Yang, was held on a charge of inciting subversion - and where punishment for attempting to flee surely awaited her.

After weeks on the run, Chen was exhausted,

Hunan University. By early February, the pressure was becoming unbearable. Seemingly unable to extract a confession out of Xie, the authorities turned up threats against Chen and, increasingly, those close to her. When police detained Chen's 14-year-old daughter as she tried to board a train for Hong Kong, Chen knew a travel ban had been placed on their names. That was when she decided to contact Bob Fu, a Christian rights activist based in Texas who has helped several high-profile dissidents flee China, including Chen Guangcheng, a blind rights lawyer whose 2012 flight to the US Embassy in Beijing

waiting for her outside, she appeared likely to meet a similar fate.

#### Frantic Escape

In Texas, Fu was dumbfounded by news of Chen's arrest. He sprang into action to alert the State Department, and his associates in Thailand, who quickly located her in the jail. According to Fu, US officials made it into the facility on March 3 while Chen was in court, found Chen's daughters and stayed with them while they searched for the mother. Finally, through their Thai contacts in the jail, the Americans located her and convinced Thai officials to let them whisk her out the back, said Fu and another person with knowledge of the operation, who spoke on condition of anonymity because the person was not authorized to speak publicly.

The family piled into a car and sped through Bangkok's congested streets headed for the airport while Fu, 12 time zones away, frantically tried to book flights and prepare the family's requisite US paperwork. But the Chinese agents were not far behind. Despite her deportation order, Chen was stopped at the airport by Thai immigration officials who explained that they were under immense Chinese pressure to prevent her departure. In an hours-long standoff at the airport, the person with knowledge of the operation said, the confrontation between the Chinese, American and Thai officials nearly boiled over into a physical clash.

Chen and Fu declined to explain what happened next, citing diplomatic sensitivities, other than that the family eventually made it to the US on March 17. It is unclear whether Chen was housed in the US Embassy in the intervening weeks or whether and how a deal was negotiated to allow Chen's departure from Thailand. A spokesman for China's foreign ministry said yesterday he was not aware of the matter. The Ministry of Public Security did not respond to faxed requests for comment. Thai and US authorities declined to comment on Chen's experience.

Justin Higgins, a State Department spokesman for East Asia, said that in general the US "urges China to release all of the lawyers and activists detained in the July 9, 2015, crackdown and remove restrictions on their freedom of movement and professional activities." It's unusual for US officials to take such bold action to help Chinese citizens - in Chen's family's case, human rights workers say. But the citizenship of Chen's younger daughter, who was born 4 years ago in the US while Xie was studying in the country on a sabbatical, was likely a key factor.

Compared to previous years, when China's diplomacy with its neighbors touched mostly on economic and national security issues, Beijing increasingly demands foreign governments' cooperation when it hunts for fugitives, even those whom other countries may view as political dissidents. "China is exporting its human rights abuses beyond its borders," said Susan Shirk, chair of the 21st Century China Center at the University of California, San Diego, and former deputy assistant secretary of state for East Asia. "The Thai government has always tried to maintain good relations with the US and with China," Shirk said, "but these kinds of cases make that balancing act very difficult."

#### Muscular

The US may be changing its stance on China, given Trump's effusive praise for Xi and Secretary of State Rex Tillerson's recent remarks that Washington will not force human rights issues on other nations. Yet Chen's case suggests that America is still willing to confront China on thorny rights issues, at least when US citizens are involved. "This administration appears to be more muscular, more assertive, and we're seeing 'Putting Americans First' play out," said John Kamm, the founder of the Dui Hua Foundation in San Francisco who has advised US administrations on Chinese human rights issues. — AP

## GRIM BACKDROP IN MULLING NEXT STEP IN AFGHANISTAN

**WASHINGTON:** As the Trump administration weighs sending more troops to Afghanistan, the 16-year war grinds on in bloody stalemate. Afghan soldiers are suffering what Pentagon auditors call "shockingly high" battlefield casualties, and prospects are narrowing for a negotiated peace settlement with the Taliban. The insurgents may have failed to capture and hold a major city, but they are controlling or influencing ever more territory. "The situation is deteriorating," said Stephen Biddle, a George Washington University professor and close Afghan war observer.

This grim picture forms the backdrop for administration deliberations on a way ahead in Afghanistan, where US troops are supporting beleaguered Afghans against the Taliban insurgency and stepping up attacks on an extremist group considered an Islamic State affiliate. The three most recent US deaths in Afghanistan were in combat last month against the IS affiliate, which also was the target of a much-publicized US airstrike April 13 using the "mother of all bombs."

President Donald Trump will receive a proposed new approach to the war within a week, according to Theresa Whelan, a Pentagon policy official. "The interest is to move beyond the stalemate," she told senators, offering as a preview little more than an echo of the Obama administration's goal that Afghanistan "reaches its potential."

Whereas Trump called for significant changes to how the US fights IS in Iraq and Syria, he has said far less about the much longer US war in Afghanistan. The basic pillars of President Barack Obama's strategy - supporting Afghan forces rather than doing the fighting for them and seeking a political settlement with the Taliban - are likely to remain in place, defense officials said.

Testifying on Capitol Hill with Whelan, Gen Raymond Thomas, commander of US Special Operations Command, said the new strategy could include more US troops and changes in what the military calls "rules of engagement," laying out when force can be used. The US combat role officially ended in December 2014. Thomas' troops operate separately, targeting Al-Qaeda and IS fighters.

#### Failure Risk

The Pentagon is considering a request for roughly 3,000 more troops, as the US commander in Afghanistan has advocated, mainly for training and advising. The larger question is what they would do and how they'd fit into a broader strategy for stabilizing Afghanistan. Sen John McCain, the Senate Armed Services Committee chairman, has warned the administration that it is risking failure. Referring to the stalemate, he told Thomas, "If the present status quo prevails, then there's no end to it." But it's unclear what Trump can do. Biddle said the Taliban have little incentive to negotiate a peace deal and "the battlefield trend is against it."

Anthony Cordesman, a defense analyst at the Center for Strategic and International Studies, said Afghan forces aren't capable of securing the country. Unless Trump adopts "a far more decisive approach," security could collapse "either slowly and painfully over years or as a result of some shattering military defeat or critical political power struggle at the top that divides the security forces and the country," he said.

Army Gen John Nicholson, the top US commander in Afghanistan, wants an infusion of US and allied troops to bolster support for the Afghan army. But his request took a back seat to a broader administration review of Afghan policy and a push for NATO to contribute more troops. Both of those matters will be discussed at a NATO summit May 25. The US says it has 8,400 troops in Afghanistan, one-quarter of which are for the counterterrorism mission.

Fatigue may be setting in. The war is now in its third US presidency and American taxpayers have committed \$66 billion to equipping and supporting Afghan security forces. Although Afghans have become more effective in recent years, they've been unable to break the Taliban's grip on substantial amounts of territory. The government controls 60 percent of the country's 407 districts, slightly up over the past several months. But in January 2016, the government controlled 71 percent. The Taliban's total now stands at 29 percent, according to a Pentagon inspector general report last month. It cited a "shockingly high" figure of 807 Afghan troops killed in just the first two months of this year. — AP



In this March 17, 2017 photo and released by China Aid, Chen Guiqiu (right) holds a 'Welcome to America' sign with her daughters Xie Yajuan, 15, and Xie Yuchen, 4, after arriving at an airport in Texas. — AP

and so was her luck. A Christian, she prayed: "Don't desert us now, not like this." Help arrived, from America. US Embassy officials managed to enter the facility just in time to whisk Chen and her daughters out a back door. The Chinese agents outside soon realized what had happened and pursued them, finally meeting in a standoff at the Bangkok airport where Chinese, Thai and US officials heatedly argued over custody of the family.

Chen and her supporters disclosed details of her family's March escape for the first time to AP. Their journey reveals the lengths that China's government has been increasingly willing to go to reach far beyond its jurisdiction in the pursuit of dissidents and their families. The saga also demonstrates that in at least some cases, American officials are willing to push back, even at a moment weeks before President Donald Trump and Chinese leader Xi Jinping were to meet in Florida. The Trump administration has been criticized for downplaying human rights in foreign policy, but may have viewed Chen's case as special - if not for herself then for her youngest daughter, a 4-year-old American citizen.

#### Ordeal

The family's ordeal began July 9, 2015, when the Chinese government launched a nationwide crackdown on human rights lawyers. Chen's husband, Xie, a lawyer who represented evicted farmers and pro-democracy activists, was among dozens detained in the "7-09 crackdown" and, months later, charged with crimes against the state.

In January, Chen helped release her husband's account of being beaten, deprived of sleep and otherwise tortured while in detention - drawing further condemnation of Beijing by Western governments. Police summoned Chen for hours-long meetings where, she said, they threatened to evict her, deny her children schooling and have her fired from her job as a professor of environmental engineering at

sparked diplomatic tensions. "We're going on a trip," Chen told her daughters the morning of Feb 19. They headed south from their home in central China, then crossed into at least two countries without paperwork. There were nights, she said, when they had nowhere to sleep and days when they had nothing but a bag of chocolates to eat. Traveling by foot and car for five days, they finally arrived at a safe house in Bangkok whose owners knew Fu.

Even though Chen took precautions, never turning on her phone or accessing the internet, Chinese authorities had gotten wind that she might be in Thailand. While she was in hiding, Chinese security agents forced her 70-year-old father, her sister, her university employer and other relatives and friends to fly with them to Bangkok in an unusual attempt to locate her.

Less than a week later, on March 2, Thai police, directed by a Chinese translator who Chen believed was from the Chinese Embassy, barged into the safe house, seized her belongings and sent the family to detention. It is unclear how they were located. Chen appeared in immigration court the next morning. She was accompanied by the translator, who took away Chen's phone and snapped pictures of Chen's court documents with her own phone camera. A judge ruled that Chen had entered the country illegally and ordered her deported. The translator paid for her legal proceedings and fine.

An increasing number of Chinese in recent years have sought refuge in Thailand only to be sent back. In 2015, Thailand deported two Chinese dissidents who the United Nations recognized as refugees, a journalist who feared Beijing's persecution and 109 minority Uighurs who said they had fled repression. Later that year, a Hong Kong publisher of books on Chinese political gossip vanished from his Thai home and into Chinese custody, alarming the international community.

As Chen was taken back to the jail to pick up her children and things, with Chinese officials



ASAD KHIL, Afghanistan: In this April 17, 2017 photo, a US soldier patrols in this village near the site of a US bombing in the Achin district of Jalalabad, east of Kabul. — AP

## NEW HAMAS CHIEF STEP TOWARD INT'L ACCEPTANCE

**GAZA CITY:** Ismail Haniya's election as Hamas chief is another sign that the Islamist movement is seeking to soften its image and show it can offer a viable alternative to Mahmoud Abbas, analysts said. Considered a terrorist group by the United States and the European Union, Hamas has taken steps in recent days that are seen as a bid to ease its international isolation while not alienating hard-liners within the movement.

Before announcing Haniya as its new leader on Saturday, replacing Khaled Meshal, who completed his maximum two terms, the movement that controls the Gaza Strip released a new policy document last week somewhat easing its stance on Israel. The moves come with 82-year-

old Palestinian president Abbas losing popularity and a behind-the-scenes succession battle taking shape. Hamas remains deeply divided from Abbas's more moderate Fatah, which is based in the occupied West Bank. Some analysts say the recent steps could eventually help smooth the way for Hamas' entry into the Palestine Liberation Organization, which it has never joined, and open a path for dialogue internationally. The PLO is considered the international representative of Palestinians both in the Palestinian territories and the diaspora. Others warn however that Hamas still has much to do to significantly change the international community's attitude toward it, with many pointing out that it has not recognized Israel.

While its new policy document accepts the idea of a Palestinian state within territories occupied by Israel in the Six Day War of 1967, it continues to speak of liberating all of historic Palestine, including what is today Israel. It stresses however that its struggle is not against Jews because of their religion but against Israel as an occupier. — AFP

In what is seen as a bid to improve relations with Egypt, the document also does not refer to the Muslim Brotherhood, which was closely linked to Hamas when the Palestinian organization was formed.

"Ismail Haniya is the most appropriate person to promote this document to Arab and international leaders," said Gaza political scientist Mukhaimer Abu Saada. The former

Palestinian prime minister, he added, was from Hamas's pragmatic camp. One strategy could see Hamas seek to improve relations with European countries, a European official based in Jerusalem said, particularly with "Abbas under pressure at home and (US President Donald) Trump not giving any clear sign of willing to meet Abbas's basic demands".

In Washington last week, Abbas met Trump in their first face-to-face encounter, with the US president saying he wanted to achieve the decades-long goal of Israeli-Palestinian peace. He has however pledged strong support for Israel and backed away from the United States' long commitment to a two-state solution, saying he could back one state if it meant peace. — AFP



# CLASH OVER US MIDDLE-SCHOOL SEX ASSAULTS: DID THEY HAPPEN?

## GRANDMOTHER INSISTS OFFICIALS COULD HAVE DONE MORE



**CARACAS: Opposition activists and members of the National Orchestra System hold a demonstration against the recent deaths of young people by security forces - within opposition protests - on Sunday. —AFP**

## OPPOSITION REJECTS MADURO PLAN TO REWORK CONSTITUTION

**CARACAS:** President Nicolas Maduro's plan for an elected assembly to draw up a new Venezuelan constitution faced headwinds Sunday, when opposition parties refused to join the process amid continuing violent anti-Maduro protests. Although several opposition leaders had separately rejected Maduro's plan for a "people's" assembly, the center-right Democratic Unity Roundtable (MUD) formally announced Sunday that it would not participate. "We cannot take part in a fraudulent process," former presidential candidate Henrique Capriles said, appearing at a news conference with other MUD leaders. "We have a constitution, and the government cannot repeal it by act of force."

But some analysts said they fear the opposition is leaving the way open for Maduro to change the constitution at will, possibly cementing his grip on power. Capriles effectively ruled out any opposition presence at a meeting on constitutional revision to be held yesterday at the presidential palace. Opponents plan to march to the headquarters of the education ministry in central Caracas instead to explain their position.

MUD rejects Maduro's proposal to elect half the members of the constituent assembly by voting in sectors it says are government-controlled, while the rest would be chosen in municipal elections. Capriles maintains that Maduro - whose leadership is rejected by seven of 10 Venezuelans, according to polls - is trying to avoid a general election, the main demand of the opposition protests since April 1. There is no provision in the current constitution for the sector-by-sector elections, Maduro says.

### Explaining the 'flaws'

Opposition leaders said Sunday that they plan an intense day of protests to demand elections and an end to the "repression" of demonstrations, which have left 36 people dead and hundreds injured or jailed. Citizen assemblies would be held today to explain the "flaws" in the constituent assembly, deputy Stalin Gonzalez said. He said there would be a march Wednesday on the Supreme Court and other judicial offices around the country, and other protests Thursday and Friday.

None of the demonstrations has managed to reach the center of the capital,

considered a bastion of Chavismo, the left-wing ideology created by Maduro's predecessor, Hugo Chavez. On Sunday, the presidential panel guiding the constituent assembly process, led by Elias Jaua, met with youth group leaders. Jaua, a former vice president and foreign minister, told them the assembly would provide a path to peace and co-existence between the opposing sides.

Some analysts warned that MUD's decision to sit out that process could leave the way open for the government to change the constitution at will. "If the opposition maintains its position," political scientist Luis Salamanca said. "Maduro could change the very model of the state to perpetuate his grip on power." "Do not leave the space free," he warned, adding, "this could be the last election in Venezuela."

Maduro's plan has drawn widespread international criticism. The United States, Mexico, Brazil and Spain have said that any process to modify the constitution requires universal suffrage. Chile has said the process is worsening an already bad political crisis, and Luis Almagro, secretary general of the Organization of American States (OAS), has called the process "fraudulent". But Maduro insisted his hands were tied, insisting that he was dealing with an alleged "armed insurgency" seeking to oust him. "There are two paths: either there is peace or there is fascism. Either we rewrite the constitution or we bow to interventionism," he told aides by phone late Sunday.

### Musical protest

In eastern Caracas, a thousand demonstrators sang or played drums, violins and guitars as they marched Sunday against the violence of the past month. "Music is my only weapon," said the cardboard shield held in one hand by a demonstrator, as he carried a guitar in the other. "We want to assert the values of musicians," said Anyibel Trejo, an 18-year-old with a viola. "We are not terrorists. They are killing us. We are with the people, united."

An 18-year-old violinist was among the 36 protesters killed so far. He was honored at the march. Carmari Garcia, who works for the National Orchestra System, said she wants to see a new president. It is time for "the dictatorship to end." Opposition leader Leopoldo Lopez agreed, calling for more protests. —AFP

**ESTILL, South Carolina:** The numbers are horrific: At least four students, ages 11 to 14, victimized by as many as 30 kids in one of the largest single cases of sexual assault reported on US school grounds. And yet four years later, it's as if nothing happened. The sheriff's office investigated and filed an incident report, but eventually stopped asking questions after multiple fruitless attempts to discuss the case with a prosecutor. Estill Middle School said it couldn't determine what, if anything, happened in the gym bathroom. The former school principal couldn't even recall the incident when asked about it.

But to the grandmother of two girls who claimed they were forced by classmates to perform oral sex, there is no doubt that something terrible happened. She filed a lawsuit against the school district for failing to keep kids safe from harm. "They were at a schoolhouse, where they were supposed to be protecting my kids," she said. In a yearlong investigation, The Associated Press uncovered about 17,000 official reports of sex assaults by students in US elementary and secondary schools over a four-year period. That tally is an undercount because such attacks are widely under-reported, and states vary in their efforts to track, classify and catalog sexual violence by students.

AP's analysis was based on state education records and supplemented by federal crime data, where the 2013 incident reported at Estill Middle School stood out. Boys and girls ranging from 11 to 16 were sneaking into the gym bathroom to engage in sexual activity, according to the sheriff's office investigative report, which classified the conduct as forcible rape, forcible fondling and disorderly conduct.

"The teachers, staff, and administration regularly failed to supervise students in the gym and regularly allowed students of the opposite sex to enter the bathroom with each other," the grandmother's suit alleges, claiming the school demonstrated "gross negligence" by allowing, or at least turning a blind eye to, student sex on school grounds.

### 'A He Said, She Said'

In a March 2013 incident report, Deputy Quintina Orr of the Hampton County Sheriff's Office said she was initially called in to investigate a bullying incident involving several sixth-grade girls, who told her they'd seen the others having sex in the bathroom over many months. Orr, the school's resource officer, also reported the vice principal said that on Feb 22 she saw "several males running out of the girls restroom inside the gym" during fifth period and asked Orr to investigate further.

Orr spoke with everyone involved, she told AP in a recent interview. Many of the kids said they'd engaged in sexual activity in the bathroom, or that they'd seen others doing it. No one told her explicitly that they were forced, Orr said, but one girl gave her pause: She seemed to have a developmental disability. Because of the ages involved - and the kids' legal inability to consent - Orr reported that what happened inside the bathroom was, at worst, forcible rape.

She listed five victims: Two 11-year-olds, two 12-year-olds and a 14-year-old. Twenty-nine boys and girls were listed as potential perpetrators, including some who she said stood watch outside the bathroom to warn if adults approached. (The numbers in her report differ slightly from the federal data, which included four victims and 30 culprits.)

Four years later, Orr thinks she was wrong to use the word "rape," though she noted she never got any guidance from the prosecutor's office on the correct charge. In hindsight, "sex crimes, sexual misconduct" would have been a more appropriate description, she said. Sitting behind his desk at the Hampton County Sheriff's Office, Lt Perry Singleton agrees. He said Orr was a good law officer, but that she used the wrong terminology and that "sexual assault" would have been better.

In the end, it didn't matter. Singleton said he and Orr pursued the case with a prosecutor, several months after the incident and presented her with the students' statements. But they never heard anything. Orr pressed on, her report showed. She tried calling the prosecutor on her cellphone and at her office several times over the next month. She noted in her report that the rape crisis center, where some of the girls had been referred, wanted to know why no charges had yet been filed.

When she approached Singleton again, he told her "not to worry about it." "It was a he-said, she-said," Singleton told AP. "There was nobody who said, 'I did this.' It was just, 'I saw him do this, I saw her doing that.' There was nothing concrete, and we would have had a problem if that case went to court."

Duffy Stone, Hampton County's chief prosecutor, said his office didn't pursue criminal charges because the students' statements were wildly inconsistent and their ages made it almost impossible to determine who would be considered a victim and who a perpetrator. Under state law, if both children were under 14, neither could legally consent to sex. Asked if any of the children said they were forced into sex, Stone said no, "none that we could prove."

The principal at the time, Synetria Hawkins, is now an assistant at the school. Orr wrote in her report that when Hawkins was asked whether she had time to review video footage of the gym on the day of the Feb. 22 incident to match it to student statements, she said no. When contacted by AP, Hawkins said she did not remember the sheriff's office investigation. She did not return multiple messages left on her school voicemail, cellphone and at her home seeking further comment.

It is not clear to what extent the school itself investigated, as required under federal law and US Education Department guidelines. Orr's report noted that "a few parent interviews were conducted" along with plans for further meetings with students and parents. In a statement to AP, the school district said it interviewed the students and their parents or guardians but

that no one was disciplined "due to inconsistent stories among the students allegedly involved and a lack of evidence indicating that the alleged behavior occurred."

Ralph Smiley, an attorney representing Hampton County District 2, said he could not provide any details on the school's investigation and declined to comment on whether any policies were changed as a result of the incident. In its response to the grandmother's lawsuit, the school maintained it did nothing wrong, and suggested that if the girls suffered, they were "comparatively negligent in instituting, engaging in, and continuing the conduct which resulted in (their) injuries."

### Struggles in the 'Corridor of Shame'

"The school told us it was the girls' fault," the grandmother said, lips curled, "that they wanted it." She bristles at assertions that the

territory. They believed they had little or no choice if they wanted their kids to get any kind of education."

This was not the first time Estill faced allegations that students were being victimized - and that little was done to stop it. The sheriff's deputy that Orr replaced as school resource officer, Larry Heyward, was convicted last year of sexually assaulting a student at the school and sentenced to 15 years in prison.

Heyward's victim, now 19, wonders why his teachers never asked any questions when week after week, month after month, Heyward would pull him out of class and into his office, where much of the abuse occurred. Or why nobody said anything when Heyward choked or Tased the boy in the hallway, in full view of students, teachers and administrative staff.

"I just don't understand why me and two other boys were sent to his office every week



**ESTILL, South Carolina: In this Jan 31, 2017 photo, a school bus drives through Estill. —AP photos**

girls were willing participants. The girls weren't perfect, she said. They made mistakes just like anybody. But at 12 years old, they should have never been put in this position. She spoke on condition that her name not be used, because the girls and her other grandchildren still go to district schools. In a town this size, word gets around.

She lives in a tiny trailer in a town 20 minutes outside of Estill where the walls shake each time a train roars by. At home, she could watch the girls. But at school, she trusted someone else to look after them. "Why weren't they supervised?" she said. "What will happen to other children?" Estill lies in the heart of South Carolina's Low Country. Its population, now 2,000, dwindled by nearly 16 percent between 2000 and 2010. Weather-worn homes are crumbling and storefronts are boarded up. Industry here died long ago.

Most parents have no choice but to send

and nobody ever noticed that. Nobody bothered to notice," he said. The AP is not identifying him because it does not name victims of sexual abuse. Orr believes the Heyward case affected students in the school, leading them to act out sexually. In its wake, she said, the school district failed to give students counseling or training on "how to report what's wrong and what's right."

Lara Hart, an attorney who represented Hampton County District 2 in the lawsuit against the state, noted that children sometimes are harmed on campus, even at the most affluent schools. "Children are hurt because children are hurt everywhere, for a variety of reasons. We try to protect them as much as we can," she said. "I feel a lot for Hampton 2. They do the very best they can but they don't have much. These children have a lot of needs, and they can't get a leg up. It's a hard, hard job and they need more support. At the end of the day,



**ESTILL: This Jan 31, 2017 photo shows Estill Middle School, where one of the nation's largest single sexual assault cases reported on school grounds was reported in 2013.**

their children to the public schools. Ninety-eight percent of students at Estill Middle are African-American; more than 90 percent receive free or reduced lunch. Decades ago, the school district joined others in suing the state, arguing that funding reliant on property taxes made it impossible for rural schools in this economically depleted region to provide even a "minimally adequate" education for their mostly poor students. In 2014, the state Supreme Court ruled in their favor.

Bud Ferillo, who made a documentary about these schools in 2005 and now runs a program about race and inequality at the University of South Carolina, said that the crumbling buildings and dismal learning conditions that characterized the "Corridor of Shame" schools were only part of the problem.

"Everything from violence to inappropriate sexual behavior can happen when nobody's looking," he said. "I heard about it a lot from both administrators and teachers, and even from some parents who knew that they were sending their children each day into dangerous

it's the children who are suffering."

But the grandmother insists that school officials could have done more, worked harder to figure out why the girls were left alone in the gym. Her girls, she said, are still suffering. One went wild: She started acting out at school, so badly that she was sent for a stint at juvenile detention. The other went silent: She stopped seeing friends, and asked to be home-schooled. Neither wants to talk about it ever again, not even to the attorneys trying to assist in a civil suit the grandmother filed against the district.

The grandmother said she isn't after money. She just wants to make sure her granddaughters - now in high school - and her other grandchildren will be safe at school. "How could you let that happen to a 12-year-old child?" said the girls' aunt, standing at the grandmother's bedside with a hand on her shoulder. "How could you let them go from our home, where we're protecting them, to the school and let that happen? How could you have let that happen when we put our child in your care? How could you have let that happen?" —AP

## MEXICO ARMY FIGHTS SURGE IN VIOLENCE FOR POPPY CONTROL

**COYUCA DE CATALAN, Mexico:** The Mexican army says its fight against surging opium production that feeds US demand is increasingly complicated by the rise of smaller gangs disputing wild, ungoverned lands planted with ever-stronger poppy strains. The gangs have engulfed the state of Guerrero in a war to control poppy fields, turning inaccessible mountain valleys of endemic poverty and famous beach resorts into Mexico's bloodiest spots.

Colonel Isaac Aaron Jesus Garcia, who runs a base in one of the state's most unruly cities, Ciudad Altamirano, told Reuters on an operation to chop down poppies high in the Guerrero mountains that violence increased two years ago when a third gang, Los Viagra, began a grab for territory. Bodies are discovered almost daily across the state, tossed by roads, some buried in mass graves. In Ciudad Altamirano, the mayor was killed last year and a journalist gunned down in March at a car wash.

"These fractures (in the gangs) started two years ago, and that caused this violence that is all about monopolizing the production of the drug," Jesus Garcia said. From this frontline of the fight against heroin, Jesus Garcia sees a direct link between a record US heroin epidemic that killed nearly 13,000 people in 2015 and violence on his patch. "The increase of consumers for this type of drug in the United States has been exponential and the collateral effect is seen here," Jesus Garcia said.

Heroin use in the United States has risen five-fold in the past decade and addiction has more than tripled, with the biggest jumps among whites and men with low incomes. Jesus Garcia said the task of seeking out poppy fields in one of Mexico's poorest and least accessible regions, rising above the beach resorts of Acapulco and Ixtapa, was practically end-

less. His 34th Battalion and others send platoons of troops on foot for month-long expeditions every season. They set up camps and fan through treacherous terrain, part of a campaign that destroys tens of thousands of fields a year.

One such field visited by Reuters was deep in a lawless region six hours from Ciudad Altamirano through winding dirt roads thick with dust that rose into the mountains. It was irrigated by a lawn sprinkler mounted on a pole that sprayed water over less than a hectare of poppies and fertilizer bags were piled nearby, basic farming techniques the soldiers nevertheless said were a sign of growers' new sophistication. A dozen troops fanned out, chopping down the flowers with machetes.

### Higher Yields

Army officials said gangs use poppy varieties that produce higher yields and more potent opium from smaller plots, and that its higher value is driving violent competition between gangs. "Now we see more production of poppy in less terrain, and it has to do with the quantity of bulbs each plant has," said Lieutenant Colonel Jose Urzua as he showed bulbs oozing valuable gum from slits. He explained opium is often harvested by families.

In these tiny mountain hamlets opium has grown for decades, officials said, but a coffee plague and the US opiate epidemic has led farmers to plant much more. The harvest has become central to Guerrero's economy, also dependent on cash sent home by immigrants. One army official said the field seen by Reuters could produce around 3 kilos of opium, fetching up to \$950 per kilo from traffickers who sell it for up to \$8,000. "There aren't many alternatives here," said a woman selling soft drinks and snacks from a pine shack by a dirt road. Her husband grows poppies, and she said anyone who runs a business faces extortion by gangs. —Reuters

## MARINE LE PEN - FAR-RIGHT FIREBRAND WHO HAS SHAKEN UP FRENCH POLITICS

**PARIS:** Marine Le Pen took her crushing defeat in France's presidential election with trademark combativeness, saying her "historic" score confirmed her party's status as France's "biggest opposition force". The 48-year-old anti-EU and anti-immigration "candidate of the people" scored between 33.9 and 35 percent of the vote, projections showed-double her father Jean-Marie Le Pen's score

in the 2002 election. But her score fell far short of forecasts, despite the stars appearing to be aligned in her favour after the victory of fellow nationalist Donald Trump in the US election and Britain's vote to leave the EU.

An unbowed Le Pen immediately announced plans to undertake "a profound transformation" of the FN and to continue the fight between "patriots and globalists" in

June's general election. Her more than 10 million voters-up from 7.6 million in the first round testify to the success of her bid to demonize her party by purging it of overt anti-Semitism and racism. But centrist Emmanuel Macron's decisive win showed continuing strong resistance to her policies, with Le Pen's proposal to dump the euro acting as a red flag to many voters.

**'The French nation'**

Tapping into fury with the failures of mainstream parties to address France's deep economic malaise, she presented the election as a chance to save "the French nation and civilization". But her proposals to leave the euro and hold a referendum on EU membership rang alarm bells in France and beyond, with analysts fearing it could bring down the curtain on the union after Brexit. A trained lawyer who ironically started out defending illegal immigrants facing deportation, Le Pen brought her sharp tongue to a blistering final debate between the two rivals on Wednesday but floundered when pressed by Macron on her economic proposals.

**'Party of patriots'**

Le Pen had taken steady steps to rehabilitate the FN as a "party of patriots" after taking the helm in 2011. That meant breaking with her father, whom she kicked out of the party in 2015, a fate that would meet dozens of other FN members caught making anti-Semitic statements. Revamping the FN's xenophobic ethos into a message of bring-

ing immigration under control served as a dog whistle to far-right partisans while broadening the party's overall appeal. But the anti-Semitism and revisionism that once defined the FN were never far from the surface. Le Pen herself said last month that the French are not responsible for an infamous roundup of 13,000 Jews in Paris during World War II by police acting on orders from the Vichy regime. The candidate is also being probed after tweeting pictures of Islamic State atrocities.

**Funding scandals**

During the campaign she studiously avoided using her tainted family name, and swapped the FN's trademark flame logo for a blue rose, using the slogan "Choose France". But she never strayed far from the FN's stock themes of immigration and Islamic fundamentalism-hot-button issues after a string of jihadist attacks in France that have killed more than 230 people since 2015. "With me there would never have been the migrant terrorists of the Bataclan," she told supporters, referring to the Paris concert hall where dozens were killed in the November 2015 attacks.

**'Inelegant and unjust'**

Her father launched a scathing attack on his daughter on the eve of her election defeat Sunday. "She has character, she doesn't lack that. But you also need other qualities," Jean-Marie Le Pen told Britain's Sunday Times in an interview, adding that they had

not spoken since she kicked him out of the party in 2015 for comments equated to Holocaust denial. "What she did was a bad thing," he said. "It wasn't fair. It was inelegant and unjust."

Marine Le Pen, a member of the European Parliament since 2004, led the FN to victory in the 2014 EU elections with 25 percent of the vote. Several investigations hang over the FN and Le Pen's entourage in funding scandals involving the European Parliament. For now, the FN is not expected to make Le Pen pay for Sunday's loss, despite vocal criticism from within the party. On whether the FN will keep it in the family, Le Pen's niece Marion Marechal-Le Pen says she has "absolutely no desire" to stand in the next presidential election in 2022.

**Rocky early life**

Le Pen developed a tough shell after a tumultuous childhood. When she was eight, a bomb ripped through the Paris apartment building where the family lived, slightly injuring six people but sparing the Le Pens. Eight years later, her mother Pierrette walked out on her husband and three daughters, sensationally resurfacing shortly afterwards posing nude in Playboy magazine. "It was a huge shock," Le Pen, who did not see her mother for 15 years, said last year. Now herself a twice-divorced mother of three, she keeps her private life out of the spotlight, appearing rarely as a couple with her partner, FN vice-president Louis Aliot. —AFP



**PARIS:** A woman with a mask depicting former French presidential election candidate for the far-right Front National (FN) party Marine Le Pen gestures next to French and European citizens waving France's national flag and Europe's flags to celebrate the defeat of the French far-right party Front National (FN). —AFP

## BATTERED EUROPE GETS REPRIEVE WITH MACRON ELECTION VICTORY

ANALYSTS WARN THAT POPULIST TIDE MAY RISE AGAIN

**BERLIN:** Europe's political establishment entered 2017 in a state of panic. Britain had voted to leave the European Union six months before and the United States had just elected a president who was hostile to their grand project and the values it stood for. The same forces that had led to Brexit and Donald Trump - popular anger with distant elites, economic inequality and immigration - threatened to hit the continent hard in a year in which Europe's largest countries were holding elections.

seen as a guarantor of peace and prosperity but one which is now struggling to find its "raison d'être" after years of crisis.

Macron's victory represents a reprieve for Europe and the liberal democratic values for which it has stood for more than half a century. The nightmare scenarios that were whispered about in European capitals in early 2017 have not materialized. Europe has been given another chance. Those are the main messages from Macron's victory and they

like an earthquake at the time, triggering a broad "Republican front" to block him. In this election the sense of shock and anti-Le Pen front proved far weaker. On Sunday night she took to a stage in Paris and called on "all patriots" to join her in opposition to the new president.

Nigel Farage, former leader of Britain's UKIP party and a leading campaigner for Brexit, said what many in Europe may be thinking when Sunday night celebrations wear off: "If Marine sticks in there,

sage of hope served as a model for the French candidate is a cautionary tale for what can happen when some promises go unfulfilled. "Macron has 12 to 15 months to take the necessary decisions so that the benefits are visible before the end of his term," said a senior German official who requested anonymity.

At the European level, he must convince German Chancellor Angela Merkel - who looks on track to win re-election in September after another strong performance by her conservatives in the regional vote on Sunday - to develop a common vision for taking Europe forward. The good news is that Macron and Merkel are likely to have other like-minded leaders to work with. Mark Rutte, the liberal prime minister of the Netherlands, fended off a challenge from far-right Freedom Party leader Geert Wilders in an election in March.

And next year may see the return of another young pro-European centrist in Matteo Renzi, who was forced to resign as Italian prime minister in December, but now looks on course for a comeback after regaining the leadership of his Democratic Party (PD) in a primary vote last week. "Hard to overemphasise how much this will change the narrative about the EU. No longer the world's sick man," tweeted Nicolas Veron, an economist at Brussels think tank Bruegel. Still, the anti-establishment wave seems unlikely to disappear anytime soon. In Poland and Hungary, right-wing governments are already flouting EU rules.

And opposition politicians like Le Pen and Wilders have gained a stronger platform from which to promote their messages. They may also learn lessons from their recent defeats. Le Pen said on Sunday that the National Front would be completely overhauled. Her deputy said the party would get a new name. And her father Jean-Marie said her campaign had been undermined by its proposals to quit the euro and the European Union, suggesting they might temper policies that spooked many French voters. "Even if the globalists have won today, it doesn't mean that the populists won't win tomorrow," said Daniele Antonucci of Morgan Stanley. —Reuters



**PARIS:** French president-elect Emmanuel Macron (left) waves to the crowd next to his wife Brigitte Trogneux in front of the Pyramid at the Louvre Museum in Paris. —AFP

The biggest risk of all was France, a country with an ailing economy, historic ambivalence towards the EU and a politician, in National Front leader Marine Le Pen, who seemed well positioned to seize on voter fears. Instead, on Sunday, Le Pen was soundly defeated by Emmanuel Macron, a 39-year-old independent who ran on an unashamedly pro-European platform. Macron urged the French to embrace rather than reject globalization. And he vowed to work with Germany to relaunch the European Union, a project long

were reflected in the reactions from Europe on Sunday. "Hurrah Macron President! There is hope for Europe!" Italian Prime Minister Paolo Gentiloni tweeted. German Chancellor Angela Merkel's spokesman called it a victory for a "strong united Europe" and for German-French friendship.

**Warning**

But the French vote was also a warning. Le Pen's National Front won 35 percent of the vote, nearly double what her father Jean-Marie secured in 2002, a result which hit the nation

she can win in 2022." Macron and his fellow European leaders face a formidable challenge over the next five years to prevent that from happening.

For his part, Macron must unite a deeply divided country and deliver on his promise to inject new life into its moribund economy by delivering jobs for young people and hope for the immigrants in depressed working class suburbs around France's major cities. Former US president Barack Obama who openly backed Macron last week and whose mes-



**Photo shows migrants and refugees on a rubber boat before to be rescued by the ship Topaz Responder run by Maltese NGO Moas and the Red Cross, off the Libyan coast in the Mediterranean Sea. —AFP**

## OVER 200 MIGRANTS FEARED DEAD IN THE MEDITERRANEAN

**TRIPOLI:** More than 200 migrants are feared to have died in the Mediterranean over the weekend, according to testimony from survivors, and several bodies, including that of an infant, have washed up on a Libyan beach. About 7,500 people have been rescued off the coast of Libya since Thursday, the Italian and Libyan coastguards said. Two groups of survivors told the organizations that hundreds drowned when their rubber boats began to deflate before rescuers arrived. More than 60 are feared dead and three bodies were recovered on Saturday, survivors brought to Sicily on Sunday told Italian coastguards. The boat left Libya carrying about 120, they said.

There was some discrepancy in the numbers. Based on its interviews with some of the survivors in Pozzallo, Italy, the UN refugee agency estimated the number of dead at more than 80. Separately, Libya's coastguard picked up seven survivors over the weekend who said they had been on a boat packed with 170 migrants. Aid agency International Medical Corps, which gave medical care to the survivors, also confirmed their account. "We rescued on Sunday seven illegal migrants - six men and a woman," said Omar Koko, a coastguard commander in the western city of Zawiya. "According to these survivors,

there were 170 on board the boat, which sank because of overloading."

Among those missing were more than 30 women and nine children, Koko said. Eleven bodies washed up on the shore west of Zawiya, said Mohamad Krifa, a spokesman for the Red Crescent in Zawiya. "All the bodies are of female victims and there is a girl of less than one year old," he said. Last week, survivors said a young man found shot dead on one of the rubber boats had been killed by a smuggler for his baseball cap. The UN refugee agency says that, excluding the latest shipwrecks, more than 1,150 people have disappeared or died so far this year trying to reach Italy from North Africa, where a breakdown of law and order has allowed people smugglers to operate with impunity.

Migrant arrivals to Italy by sea are up about 30 percent this year on 2016, when a record 181,000 came. "The increasing numbers of passengers on board vessels used by traffickers, with an average of 100 to 150 people, are alarming and the main cause of shipwrecks," United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees Filippo Grandi said on Sunday. "Risks are increased by the worsening quality of vessels and the increasing use of rubber boats instead of wooden ones," Grandi said. —Reuters

## SPD GOES BACK TO 'DRAWING BOARD'

**BERLIN:** Germany's Social Democrats (SPD) reviewed a "difficult situation" yesterday after a second regional poll defeat this year, losing momentum as they gear up to challenge Chancellor Angela Merkel in September's national election. The left-leaning SPD now risks a triple whammy in another regional election on Sunday in the large western state of North Rhine-Westphalia (NRW), where past votes have served as indicators of the national mood. The party enjoyed a revival in opinion polls after nominating former European Parliament president Martin Schulz in January as its candidate to run against Merkel.

But the "Schulz effect" failed to deliver in Saarland, where his party flopped in a March state poll. On Sunday in Schleswig-Holstein, the SPD suffered an even bigger blow as it failed to defend incumbent state premier Torsten Albig, who had governed since 2012. "Slap for Schulz!" ran a front-page headline in Monday's edition of mass-selling daily Bild. Albig said the SPD would reflect on why it lost in Schleswig-Holstein - a defeat that will almost certainly see the party ousted from power in a state election for the first time since 2012. "We

will find an answer even if we don't really have one today," Albig, standing alongside Schulz, told SPD supporters.

**Blunted policy edge**

Schulz said SPD leaders were "this morning... in a difficult situation." "...At such times, when one has to accept a loss, a basic principle applies for the SPD perhaps more than other parties: the principle of solidarity with one another," he said before he and Albig left the podium walking in opposite directions. The party needs to rally quickly if it is to hold onto power in NRW, a traditional SPD stronghold where it again enjoys the incumbency advantage but risks losing to Merkel's conservatives, as in Schleswig-Holstein.

A survey by pollster Forschungsgruppe Wahlen on Friday showed the SPD and Merkel's Christian Democrats (CDU) tied on 32 percent in NRW. Schulz has sought to focus the national election debate on fighting inequality, trying to sharpen the SPD's policy edge, which has been blunted by spending seven of the last 11 years sharing power as junior coalition partners with the CDU. —Reuters

## JOY IN BRUSSELS, BUT MACRON FACES TOUGH EU CHALLENGES

**BRUSSELS:** France's choice of pro-EU Emmanuel Macron over eurosceptic Marine Le Pen has sparked euphoria in Brussels, but analysts warn his ambitions for profound change in the European Union will prove challenging. Praise for Macron poured in from the EU capital, with Europe's top officials hailing his win as a much needed check to a populist wave that delivered Brexit and the election of Donald Trump in the United States.

"Happy that the French chose a European future," said European Commission President Jean-Claude Juncker as EU observers noted triumphantly on Twitter that Macron had the EU anthem "Ode to Joy" play as he took the stage for his victory rally. Despite widespread doubts, analysts agreed that the sheer scale of his victory-Macron beat Le Pen with 66 percent of the vote-gave one of the EU's most powerful member states a small window to change the bloc.

This sweeping win is "a splendid opportunity to reform France and forge a deal with Germany and other European countries to strengthen the cohesion of the EU and the euro-zone," said analyst Holger Schmieding of Berenberg Bank in Germany. However, the results "also carry a stark warning (as) ... voters rebuked the traditional mainstream parties. Almost half of voters had fallen for anti-EU

candidates in the first round," Schmieding added. European Parliament President Antonio Tajani said that Macron, and those celebrating his victory, should not ignore the lessons of Le Pen. "We must begin to work to change Europe because we must not underestimate the voters who voted for Le Pen and those who stayed at home," Tajani said.

**'Politically difficult'**

Macron, a former banker and economy minister, wants to strengthen the EU and the euro-zone in deeper ways than any major leader in Europe has dared in a generation. His changes could involve giving the EU more powers and they are extremely popular with EU officials in Brussels. Macron's promises include a plan to set up a separate budget for the 19 countries that use the common currency. He also proposes giving the euro-zone its own parliament and finance minister. "His reform program aligns perfectly with the European framework (in Brussels)," said analyst Amandine Crespy at ULB university in Brussels. Until now, ideas involving more Europe have been largely ignored as too idealistic when nationalism and euroscepticism were on the rise across the EU. "Pushing through these reforms at EU level could prove politically difficult as other EU partners may

want to focus on alternative priorities such as migration and security," said Robin Huguénot-Noel, policy analyst at the European Policy Centre.

**'Brave the protests'**

The first and crucial step will be to get Germany, the bloc's most powerful member, onside. To do that, Macron is banking on delivering to Germany what it has always wanted from France: meaningful pro-market reforms. "That's why the win is reassuring and many in the EU hope that France will move on with fiscal reforms like other countries have done," Crespy said. But Macron's willingness to placate Germany has led critics at home to portray him as the puppet of Chancellor Angela Merkel.

Le Pen hit out before the polls that France would be governed by a woman after the vote-either herself or Merkel. Macron will get his first taste of the challenges ahead on Thursday when the European Commission delivers its economic forecasts for EU members. The expectation is that France will once again be in the firing line for public overspending and in danger of facing penalties for not delivering on reforms. Macron has pledged to do so in his first weeks in office but the proposed changes will likely face fury in France. "Macron will need to brave some protests." —AFP

## S KOREA'S FRUSTRATED YOUNGER VOTERS DEMAND CHANGE

**SEOUL:** Thirty years after South Korea became a democracy, voters born in the period go to the polls today frustrated over their prospects and demanding change as growth slows and job prospects fade. The decades-long "Miracle on the Han"-named after the river that flows through Seoul-propelled the country from a war-ravaged ruin to Asia's fourth-largest economy and the ranks of the OECD.

But its younger voters complain bitterly that times have changed dramatically from their parents' generation, when hard work paid off with wealth and success regardless of social origin. Unemployment among youth-defined as those under 30 - has risen for five consecutive years to hit an all-time high of 9.8 percent in 2016, more than double the overall average. South Korea is a notoriously performance-driven country, where the pressure to get into a prestigious university is so intense that most children begin after-hours studies at cramming centres while at primary school.

But for those in their 20s and 30s, attending the best educational institutions no longer guarantees a decent job, with companies reluctant to hire in the face of slowing growth, now below three percent a year. According to reports, the



**SEOUL:** Supporters of South Korean presidential candidate Hong Joon-pyo of the Liberty Korea Party salute to a national flag during an election campaign in Seoul yesterday. — AP

giant conglomerates that dominate the economy such as Samsung, SK and Hyundai receive hundreds of thousands of applications a year for just a few thousand positions. A Korea Economic Research Institute poll of the country's 500 largest companies last month showed nearly a quarter of respondents

planned to reduce new hires or not recruit at all in the first half of the year.

With their entry into the workforce indefinitely delayed, college graduates spend years filling out job forms. Even more distressing is a sense of despair that the lack of opportunities compared with the past, and far more competition,

means they will never improve their position in a country with a rigid class structure. "I think the biggest problem is inequality," said Park Hye-Shin, a 27-year-old student at Hankook University of Foreign Studies. "You can't climb the social ladder no matter how hard you try. Even if you attend the best university, every step you take in life is contest after contest."

### Spoon theory

The stinging sense of social unfairness is epitomized by the popular so-called spoon theory—a spin-off from the English idiom of someone rich being "born with a silver spoon in their mouth". Befitting a highly stratified society, there are three levels in the South Korean version—wealthy "gold spoons" born to rich families, "silver spoons" who enjoy the support of comfortably-off parents, and "dirt spoons" from low-income families with no hope of social advancement. The mounting economic and social frustrations were underlying drivers of the giant anti-corruption protests last year, when millions of South Koreans took to the streets to demand president Park Geun-Hye's removal.

She was sacked by the country's top court in March, triggering today's vote, and now those in their 20s and 30s-who

made up the largest slice of the demonstrators-want their votes to bring about tangible change. "The presidential election was brought on by the people so it is more meaningful," said I Gyeong-Eun, a 22-year-old student at Hanyang University. "Voting is essential but it doesn't stop there. It will only be the beginning." Under-30s normally have the lowest voter turnout of any South Korean age group, but Gallup Korea survey show an astonishing 93 percent saying they will "definitely vote".

### No solution

"Youths were at the core" of the anti-Park protests, said Koo Jeong-Woo, a sociology professor at Sungkyunkwan University, and had "an underlying yearning for change in society's unjust systems". Frontrunner Moon Jae-In of the centre-left Democratic Party, who holds an overwhelming lead in opinion polls, has promised a "people-centred economy" and vowed to create 810,000 new jobs, mostly in the public sector, with about a third allotted to younger applicants. His rival Ahn Cheol-Soo has promised to hand out monthly subsidies of around 500,000 won (US\$440) to young employees at small- and medium-sized companies in an effort to match the wages of larger firms. — AFP



**TOKYO:** Indian Defense Minister Arun Jaitley (right) reviews an honor guard with his Japanese counterpart Tomomi Inada upon his arrival at Defense Ministry in Tokyo yesterday. — AFP

## JAPAN, INDIA TO STRENGTHEN THEIR DEFENSE COOPERATION

**TOKYO:** Japan and India affirmed yesterday plans to strengthen their military cooperation amid rising tension in the Asian region. Indian Defense Minister Arun Jaitley told his Japanese counterpart, Tomomi Inada, in Tokyo that his country hopes to pursue a strategic partnership with Japan for regional peace and stability.

His visit comes at a time of rising tension in the region, including territorial rows in the South China Sea and nuclear and missile threats from North Korea. Jaitley welcomed a planned trilateral naval exercise among the US, India and Japan in July as a way of strengthening cooperation in the Asia-Pacific. "This is all reflective of the level of cooperation our armed forces have with each other," he said. Japan and

India have been stepping up defense cooperation amid China's increased assertiveness in the region.

China has long been wary of joint maritime exercises between India and the United States. Japan, a staunch US ally that hosts about 50,000 American troops, has in recent years developed military cooperation with other countries, including Australia, France, Britain and the Philippines. Prime Minister Shinzo Abe has sought to expand Japan's defense role and capability amid security concerns over China and North Korea.

Jaitley, who is also India's finance minister, visited Japan to attend an annual meeting of the Asian Development Bank that ended Sunday. — AP

## SOUTH KOREA CANDIDATES IN A FINAL PUSH FOR VOTES

### NORTH KOREA ASSAILS CONSERVATIVES

**SEOUL:** South Korea's presidential hopefuls made a final push for votes yesterday, with the left-leaning candidate a clear favorite, as the North assailed the outgoing conservative government a day before the polls. A former pro-democracy activist and human rights lawyer, Moon Jae-In of the Democratic Party—who favors engagement with Pyongyang—has been leading opinion polls for months. The final Gallup Korea survey of the campaign ahead of today's vote gave him 38 percent, far ahead of centrist Ahn Cheol-Soo on 20 percent. Today's vote was called to choose a successor to Park Geun-Hye after her impeachment for corruption and abuse of power.

The campaign has focused largely on jobs and the economy, with North Korea less prominent despite high diplomatic tensions between Washington and Pyongyang over its nuclear and missile ambitions. Moon has promised to reinvigorate the South's sluggish growth and create more jobs, and hinted at a more flexible approach towards its nuclear-armed neighbor. The front-runner advocates dialogue and reconciliation with the North to defuse the situation and eventually lure it into negotiations that have been at a standstill for years—an approach criticized by his conservative opponents.

Pyongyang on Monday slammed the South's conservatives—who have been in power for a decade—as "senseless traitors seeking only confrontation and war" who were responsible for the "tragic" state of North-South relations. An editorial in Rodong Sinmun—the mouthpiece of the ruling Workers' Party of Korea—acknowledged that an election was taking place, and said conservatives were scheming to retain power. The North has carried out two nuclear tests and a series of missile launches since the start of last year and Washington has said military action was an option, sending tensions spiraling.

### 'Judgment day'

Moon—who lost to Park in the last election in 2012—has benefited electorally from the anger over the scandal that brought her down, which



**SEOUL:** South Korean presidential candidate Moon Jae-In (left) of the Democratic Party poses with his family members during his election campaign in Seoul yesterday. — AFP

saw millions of South Koreans taking to the streets in candlelit demonstrations to demand her removal. Ahead of a packed day of last-minute rallies across the country, Moon asked voters to deliver him a hefty mandate. "With landslide support with tens of thousands of votes, a miraculous change like a natural cataclysm is possible," he said at his campaign headquarters in Seoul.

"I will work as the people's president from the day I am selected by the people." Centrist Ahn similarly vowed to "head straight to work at the presidential office of Cheong Wa Dae" if he wins and address urgent issues regarding the country's security, diplomacy and economy. In December Moon said that if elected, he was willing to visit North Korea ahead of the United States, the South's security guarantor with

28,500 troops based in the country. The comments were seized on by opponents who accuse him of being soft on nuclear-armed Pyongyang.

He sought to backtrack, saying he meant defusing tensions was an issue of utmost urgency and he would meet US President Donald Trump before any other leaders. Hong, from the ousted Park's Liberty Korea party—who placed level with Ahn in some surveys last week, the last ones available under South Korean law said security would top the agenda if he won. "Tomorrow is judgment day for the pro-North, leftist forces," Hong said. "Please help me win by a landslide so it's impossible for them to pick a fight." A high turnout is expected—even more than the last vote's 75.8 percent with over a quarter of South Koreans already having voted in early ballots last week.— AFP

## ISLAMIC STATE'S LEADER IN AFGHANISTAN KILLED

**KABUL:** The head of Islamic State in Afghanistan—described as the mastermind behind high-profile attacks including an assault on a military hospital that claimed at least 50 lives—has been killed, US and Afghan officials said. Abdul Hasib, whose group is affiliated with IS in Iraq and Syria, was killed last month in a targeted raid by special forces in the eastern province of Nangarhar, the presidential palace in Kabul said in a statement.

The second leader of the jihadist group to be killed by US and Afghan forces in less than nine months, his death came days after Washington dropped its largest non-nuclear bomb on IS hideouts in the same area. Analysts described him as "obscure", but authorities ascribed responsibility to him for assaults in Kabul, including the savage attack on a military hospital in March when assailants stabbed bedridden patients and threw grenades into crowded wards.

"He had ordered the attack" on the hospital, the presidential statement said, adding that Kabul will fight IS and other extremist groups "until they are annihilated". NATO commander in Afghanistan General John Nicholson confirmed Hasib's killing and warned that "any ISIS member that comes to Afghanistan will meet the same fate." "This is the second ISIS-K emir we have killed in nine months, along with dozens of their leaders and hundreds of their fighters," he added, using the acronym denoting the group's local affiliate, Islamic State Khorasan Province.

The first, Hafiz Saeed, was killed in a US airstrike also in Nangarhar province in July last year. Like Hasib, his death was seen as a setback, but not a mortal blow to the group. NATO spokesman Captain Bill Salvin later elaborated on the raid said: "There were women and children in the compound" where Hasib was killed. "The assault force was able to safely separate the women and children from the combatants and there were no civilian casualties," he said.

Salvin added that "more than 500" IS fighters have been killed since an offensive began against them in March, though he could not immediately provide an estimate on how many remain. Kabul-based analyst Ahmad Saeedi said the killing was unlikely to affect the group in a dramatic way because he would be quickly replaced. "Dozens of Daesh fighters have been killed in eastern Afghanistan, but it did not bring positive change," he said, using the Arabic acronym for the group.

### Battlefield losses

First emerging in Afghanistan in 2015, the jihadist group overran large parts of Nangarhar and Kunar provinces, near the Pakistan border. Their part in the Afghan conflict had been largely overshadowed by the much stronger Taleban. But their profile grew as they claimed responsibility for a series of bloody attacks, notably in Kabul, including the hospital assault. According to the US Forces-Afghanistan, defections and recent battlefield losses have reduced the local IS presence from a peak of as many as 3,000 fighters to a maximum of 800.

There has still been no official word from NATO forces on the toll from the GBU-43/B Massive Ordnance Air Blast, dubbed the "Mother of All Bombs", dropped in Nangarhar last month. The blast killed at least 95 jihadists, according to the Afghan defense ministry, but NATO officials have said they are still assessing the damage. Journalists have been prevented from reaching the blast site, but Salvin said fighting was still ongoing in the area. The attack triggered global shockwaves, as observers questioned the bomb's use against a militant group that is not considered as big a threat to Afghanistan as the Taleban.

The Pentagon will ask the White House next week to send thousands more troops to Afghanistan to break the deadlocked fight against the Taleban, a senior official said Thursday. — AFP



**JAKARTA:** Indonesian protesters from the Hizb ut-Tahrir Indonesia hold a demonstration in support of Muslim clerics at the National Monument in Jakarta. Indonesia said yesterday it will disband the local branch of radical Islamic group Hizb ut-Tahrir, as concerns grow about hardline influence in the world's most populous Muslim-majority. — AFP

## INDONESIA TO DISBAND RADICAL ISLAMIST GROUP HIZB UT-TAHRIR

**JAKARTA:** Indonesia said yesterday it would disband the local branch of radical Islamist group Hizb ut-Tahrir, as concerns grow about hardliners in the world's most populous Muslim-majority country. Hizb ut-Tahrir, which calls for Islamic law and wants to unify all Muslims into a caliphate, has been operating for decades in Indonesia and has a large following.

While most people practice a moderate form of Islam in Indonesia, fears have been growing about the influence of radicals—particularly after mass protests last year against Jakarta's Christian

governor which were led by hardliners. Announcing the plan to disband the organization in Indonesia, Chief Security Minister Wiranto said: "The government needs to firmly take legal steps to disband HTI (Hizb ut-Tahrir Indonesia)." "HTI's activities... could threaten public security and order and endanger the unity of Indonesia," added the minister, who like many Indonesians goes by one name. He said authorities would go to court to get the group dissolved but insisted that the decision did not mean the government was against all Muslim organizations.

Hizb ut-Tahrir, which has branches around the world, is already banned in several countries. It could not immediately be reached for comment. The group regularly stages protests, and some of its members were involved in the demonstrations against Jakarta governor Basuki Tjahaja Purnama. The Indonesian branch often demonstrates against the United States. Purnama last month lost the election for the next Jakarta governor to a Muslim challenger after the mass protests, which were triggered by claims he insulted the Quran. He was put on trial for blasphemy over the allegations and will be sentenced Tuesday. — AP

## 'REVENGE PORN' ON THE MASS SCALE IN AUSTRALIA

**SYDNEY:** Researchers yesterday urged tougher laws to protect victims of "revenge porn" in Australia after a survey revealed abuses, including shooting and sharing intimate images without permission, on a "mass scale". One in five Australians have fallen prey to abusive behavior, including having intimate photographs taken without consent and then confronting threats to share them on social networks, a government-funded national study of more than 4,200 people revealed.

Academics at Monash University and RMIT University found that men and

women were equally likely to be targeted, while 50 percent of those from minority groups, like Aboriginal Australians and those with disabilities, reported some form of abuse. About a third of those who identified as lesbian, gay or bisexual had fallen victim. Researchers behind the survey—the most comprehensive on the subject ever in Australia—said legislation needed to be strengthened, adding "revenge porn" had emerged at such a rapid pace that laws were "struggling to catch up".

"Our survey only captured those victims who had become aware their images

had been distributed, whereas some victims may never discover that their images have been taken and distributed," Monash senior criminology lecturer Asher Flynn said. The most common type of abuse was taking intimate images without consent. Some 11 percent of victims saw their images distributed without their consent, with some 40 percent of those being shared across social media platforms like Snapchat and Facebook. A vast majority of those who experienced "sextortion", or threats to share their images, said they suffered from anxiety as a result, with many fearing for their safety.

About half of the victims said their perpetrators were male, about a third that the violator was female while 13 percent said the offender was unknown. "We need to rethink our approach both from a legal perspective but also as a community, to change attitudes that often blame the victims and play down the very real harm caused by image-based abuse," said RMIT legal studies lecturer Anastasia Powell. The study recommended a range of reforms, including improved support services for victims such as a dedicated helpline similar to one established in Britain in 2015.

It is also proposed making image-based abuse a crime under federal telecommunications law, instead of the current piecemeal legislative approach across Australia's states. At present, only Victoria and South Australia have specific laws that criminalize the distribution of intimate or invasive images without consent. Facebook this month announced plans to curb the spread of intimate images with the use of photo-matching technology to prevent copies being shared once the issue is reported and confirmed and the pictures removed. —AFP

## 'THE LAOS CONNECTION'

### MR X AND THE CARTELS HOOKING SE ASIA ON PILLS

**BANGKOK:** The downfall of millionaire "Mr X", long shielded by cash and contacts in Laos, has highlighted the role of the secretive, communist country in showering pills across Southeast Asia. Allegedly a key figure among gangs buying drugs from Myanmar's meth labs, Laotian Xaysana Keophimpha—dubbed 'Mr X'—is believed to have used his graft-riddled country to shuttle narcotics south, first through Thailand then onto Malaysia.

The heavy-set 42-year-old was arrested by armed Thai police on 19 January at Bangkok's main airport en route to Laos where he lived freely, revelling in a lifestyle of celebrity parties and supercars. He denies charges of drug possession and smuggling. But subsequent police operations have turned up several more men accused of running drugs through Laos, an opaque coun-

try whose role in the regional narcotics trade is gradually emerging. They are the suspected middlemen of the 'Golden Triangle', shifting pills, ice and heroin from the world's second largest drug producing zone to a regional market.

Among the accused is Xaysana's friend Sisouk Daoheung—a minor Laos celebrity with a penchant for thoroughbred horses and a shared devotion to fast cars and fancy holidays flaunted on social media. If police are right, their ostentation in one of Asia's poorest countries was funded by smuggling highly-addictive caffeine-laced methamphetamine pills better known as 'yaba' or crazy medicine—and crystal meth (ice). "From Xaysana's phone and Facebook records it was clear he and Sisouk are friends... their (drug) groups are connected," Thai Police Major-General Supakit Srijantranon said last week.



**BANGKOK:** Thai narcotics police put away yellow packages of 'ice', or crystal meth, and ketamine hidden in green tea bags after a press conference at the Office of the Narcotics Control Board in Bangkok. —AFP



**BANGKOK:** Tun Hung Seong, dubbed 'The Malaysian Iceman' is seen in custody following his arrest on suspicion of trafficking methamphetamine from Thailand to Malaysia, at the Office of Narcotics Control Board in Bangkok. —AFP

### Meth men

At \$8 a pop in Thailand, the best yaba pills rise in price the further they move from source, bringing extraordinary rewards to the traffickers. Stamped with a distinctive 'WY', the pink and green pills of the Myanmar drug labs are supercharging everyone from Malaysian farm hands to Bangkok's "Hi-So" (high society) party crowd.

Each year regional seizures break records, according to the UN's crime agency. That points to better law enforcement, they say, but it also shows that the cartels can ramp up production at will to cover losses. The highest quality pills (15-20 percent meth purity) come from the factories of the North and South Wa-armed ethnic groups marshalling a self-governing state on the Myanmar-China border and by the Lahu hill tribe. Poor, corrupt and bordering five countries, Laos makes for an ideal transit route to the rest of Southeast Asia.

Drugs are shifted across the Mekong river into Thailand then onto Malaysia and beyond. Thailand is being hit hard by the trade. Between October last year and April, Thailand seized 74 million pills, according to the kingdom's Narcotics Control Board (NCB), as well as two tons of crystal meth and 320 kilograms of heroin. Official estimates say the kingdom has around 1.3 million addicts, with drug convictions accounting for the bulk of Thailand's prison population of 290,000—the tenth highest incarceration rate in the world. "Drugs are destroying everything."

They affect the security of our country, our society and people," NCB secretary-general Sirinya Sitdichai said. Cops are fighting back and say they have battered three major Laos-linked drug networks, confiscating tens of millions of dollars-worth of assets including hotels, cars, cash and even a horse riding school in Vientiane. They are still hunting a fourth group led by Usman Salameang, a Thai believed to be holed up in Laos, wanted for moving gear through Thailand's violent border area into Malaysia. "He is the only big boss we are still trying to arrest," Sirinya said.

### All roads lead to Laos

Historically, communist Laos has been reluctant to admit it has a drug problem. But under Prime Minister Thongloun Sisoulith the country is keen to show it is flushing out criminals and corrupt officials. The recent arrests are part of his get-tough message to the drug gangs. Last year Laos authorities reeled in a record 144 kilograms of crystal meth and nearly 21 million yaba pills. The once toothless Lao National Commission for Drug Control and Supervision (LCDC), has been beefed up under control of the Ministry of Public Security. The fall of Xaysana and co. is being bundled up as victory for intelligence-sharing between Laos and Thailand. But with many western embassies still unable to post specialist narcotics police in Laos it is hard to get facts on the country's suspected role as a haven for drug producers.

The LCDC did not respond to AFP requests for comment. And while Laos authorities sweep up mid-ranking henchmen they do not touch "the major organized crime behind significant production and trafficking," according to Jeremy Douglas of the UNODC. Questions remain over how high-profile suspects could have operated beyond the law for so long. One reason for that impunity is their aversion to publicity and violence—in contrast to their Latin American peers—a western drug enforcement official said, requesting anonymity. They live by a maxim of "Don't bring attention to your operations. You work in silence, you work in the dark." —AFP



**In this undated photo, a Chinese H-6K bomber patrols the islands and reefs in the South China Sea. —AP**

## RECENT DEVELOPMENTS OVER SOUTH CHINA SEA

**BEIJING:** A look at recent developments in the South China Sea, where China is pitted against smaller neighbors in multiple disputes over islands, coral reefs and lagoons in waters crucial for global commerce and rich in fish and potential oil and gas reserves:

### China Naval Air exercises

China's state broadcaster has shown navy fighter bombers taking part in exercises over the South China Sea, including one involving the detection and expulsion of foreign military surveillance aircraft such as those deployed regularly in the area by the US and others. The video shown on CCTV's military channel over the weekend shows a squadron of two-seater Xian JH-7 Flying Leopards flying in formation and dropping bombs on targets in the ocean below.

Other video showed planes flying just meters above the ocean surface. Following that, pilots were "notified that foreign aircraft had entered our airspace to conduct surveillance. One of the planes taking part in the exercise was immediately ordered by the tower to break off and intercept the foreign aircraft," the report said. That plane increased its elevation and "responded effectively," seizing the commanding position and "successfully expelling" the foreign aircraft, it said. The report did not say when the exercise took place but said training this year was designed to be more realistic and focused on specific situations, taking the Chinese aircraft to the limits of their range and capability.

"In the process of unceasingly challenging ourselves, the building of our team of talents has entered the fast lane," Tian Junqing, commander of an unidentified South China Sea naval air force regiment, told the station. "The overall combat capability of the force is increasing by stages, forging a formidable force that dares to fight and thunders over the South China Sea." Missions by US Navy surveillance planes flying in international airspace off the Chinese coast are a particular bone of contention for Beijing.

Twice last year US and Chinese aircraft came close, in one instance to within 15 meters of each other. In August 2014, a Chinese fighter jet came within 9 meters of a Navy P-8 Poseidon reconnaissance plane off

Hainan Island—a major military hub—and carried out a series of risky maneuvers, including rolling over it. In April 2001, a Chinese jet fighter collided with a US surveillance plane over the South China Sea, leading to the death of the Chinese pilot and China's detention of the 24 US crew members for 10 days. The US and China in 2015 signed rules of behavior to make air-to-air encounters safer, but some analysts say they don't go far enough.

### Book on sea claims

A Philippine Supreme Court justice has released a book that questions China's historic claims to most of the South China Sea and said he will distribute it online to try to overcome China's censorship and reach its people. Supreme Court Senior Associate Justice Antonio Carpio said his e-book can be downloaded for free in English now and will be made available later in Mandarin, Vietnamese, Bahasa, Japanese and Spanish to help more people understand the basis of the Philippines' stand against China's territorial claims.

Carpio said public opinion, including in China, can help pressure Beijing to comply with an arbitration ruling last year that invalidated China's historic claims based on a 1982 maritime treaty. Carpio helped prepare the arbitration case, which the Philippines largely won. China has dismissed the ruling and continued to develop seven artificial islands in the South China Sea's Spratly archipelago. China's construction of the islands on disputed reefs has alarmed rival claimants and the United States.

In the book, titled "The South China Sea Dispute: Philippine Sovereign Rights and Jurisdiction in the West Philippine Sea," Carpio uses old maps, photographs, excerpts from the arbitration ruling, Chinese government statements and documents to question the validity of China's claims. Carpio warns in the book that China may be planning to build more island outposts at Luconia Shoal off Malaysia and Scarborough Shoal off the northwestern Philippines. If it constructs an island base at Scarborough, China would have enough radar coverage of the South China Sea to be able to impose an air defense identification zone similar to what it did a few years ago in the East China Sea in a region where it has a territorial dispute with Japan, he said. —AP

## CHINA HUMAN RIGHTS LAWYERS SEEN AS 'ENEMIES OF THE STATE'

**BEIJING:** A leading Chinese human rights lawyer went on trial yesterday for inciting subversion, in a case which sparked an international outcry after claims he was tortured. Xie Yang, who had worked on numerous cases considered politically sensitive by China's ruling Communist Party, was among hundreds of legal staff and activists detained in summer 2015. The "709 crackdown"—named after the date of the first disappearance on July 9—was the toughest against civil society for years. The majority were released on bail, but last year courts found six of them guilty of serious crimes, with sentences ranging from no additional jail time to seven years in prison. The fate of three leading rights lawyers, including Xie, is unclear. Here are their stories:

### Xie Yang

Police in the southern city of Changsha detained Xie on July 11, 2015, placing him under "residential surveillance"—a form of detention where suspects can be held incommunicado for six months—before formally arresting him. Xie had worked on numerous politically sensitive cases, such as defending mainland supporters of Hong Kong democracy activists. He told his lawyers in early 2017 that police had "extensively employed sleep deprivation, long interrogations, beatings, death threats, humiliations" to try to force him to confess to wrongdoing and incriminate colleagues, according to US-based charity

Chinese Human Rights Defenders. But at the start of his trial, a transcript from the Changsha Intermediate People's Court said Xie denied being tortured. The court also said Xie admitted having experienced "brainwashing" in Hong Kong and South Korea in order to "overthrow the existing system and develop Western constitutionalism in China".

### Li Heping

Li, a partner at the Beijing Global Law Firm, has been a vocal critic of the communist party since the late 1990s. A devout Christian and supporter of religious freedom, Li has defended members of the banned Falungong movement as well as environmentalists and victims of forced eviction. Li went missing on July 10, 2015 and the following January was charged with "subversion of state power". His wife Wang Qiaoling said his treatment has left him suffering psychological damage. A court in Tianjin on April 28 sentenced Xie to a three-year suspended sentence following a secret trial. Li's current status is unclear. Since his sentencing, his wife said she has not heard from him.

### Wang Quanzhang

Wang, a lawyer with the now defunct Beijing Fengrui law firm, specialized in cases involving farmers' land rights, labor camps and criminal rights. The state-run Xinhua news agency accused his firm of running a "criminal syndicate" and serving as a platform

for masterminding illegal activities to incite "social disorder." Fengrui had frequently defended victims of sexual abuse, members of banned religious groups and dissident scholars, among others. Wang was charged in January 2016 with "inciting subversion of state power" and "picking quarrels and provoking troubles". He is being held in a detention centre in Tianjin and has been denied access to a lawyer, according to rights groups. It is not known when he will stand trial.

### What will their fate be?

Courts are tightly controlled by the communist party, with guilty verdicts in 99.9 percent of criminal cases. Out of the 19 known trials of human rights activists and lawyers in 2016, 16 were convicted of "political" offences such as subversion and inciting subversion. In an annual report in March, Chief Justice Zhou Qiang cited the harsh punishments imposed on rights defenders as the legal system's top accomplishment last year. The cases were meant to "further discredit the human rights lawyers," said Patrick Poon, China researcher for Amnesty International. But the crackdown did not seem to have scared people away from the work. "There are still quite a lot of people... doing advocacy." One of them was attorney Jiang Tianyong, who disappeared last November while trying to visit the wife of a detained lawyer. Police say he is under residential surveillance. His relatives say they have not heard from him. —AFP



**BEIJING:** Wives of detained rights lawyers (from left) Li Wenzu, Wang Qiaoling, Fan Lili, Liu Ermin, Wang Yanfang and Chen Guiqiu pose for photos in front of China's Supreme People's Procuratorate in Beijing. —AP

## MACRON FACES CHALLENGES

Continued from Page 1

33.9 percent for Le Pen, which many of her allies view as a disappointment. The result was the third blow for far-right groups in Europe after election losses in the Netherlands and Austria, but many analysts expect them to remain a force because of deep concerns about immigration, identity and globalization.

Le Pen nevertheless won the support of 10.6 million people. "Let's not fool ourselves: The score shows that... there is a real desire for far-right extremism in the population," French historian Nicolas Lebourg told French newspaper Liberation. In a sign of French disenchantment with politics, about one third of the electorate either abstained or cast blank or spoiled votes.

Despite his clear win, Macron gave a sober victory speech and there was little euphoria yesterday, reflecting the gloomy national mood after years of economic malaise and a string of terror attacks since 2015. And his ambitious reform agenda is likely to face fierce resistance from trade unions and far-left opponents. Yesterday, Macron appeared alongside Socialist President Francois Hollande at World War II commemorations, a cordial meeting of the once close friends who became estranged when Macron launched his presidential bid last year.

Commentators were already focused on Macron's next battle as part of his planned "revolution" of French politics: Parliamentary elections on June 11 and 18. Macron, Hollande's former economy minister, started his own independent movement "En Marche" (On The Move) in April last year but has no traditional party behind him. He faces a huge challenge to forge the working parliamentary majority he will need to push through his reforms. "It's all well and good running on a ticket of cutting 120,000 public sector jobs, a 60-billion-euro cut in public spending and a lowering of the unemployment rate to 7.0 percent, it will be another getting it through the French parliament," said Michael Hewson, an economist at online trading platform CMC Markets.

Macron also wants to ease France's famously rigid labor

laws he believes fuel high unemployment, improve education in deprived areas and increase welfare protection to the self-employed. En Marche's 577 candidates will be announced by Thursday, secretary general Richard Ferrand said, adding that the movement would be renamed "La Republique en Marche" (The Republic on the Move).

One of Macron's other priorities will be to name a prime minister who will govern between now and the parliamentary elections, and perhaps beyond. Macron said before Sunday's vote he had made his choice but would not reveal the name. He has previously said he would like to appoint a woman. He will inherit a demoralized and fearful country, worried about the economic impact of globalization and changes to French identity caused by immigration.

Sylvain Crepon, a French sociologist and a leading expert on Le Pen's National Front (FN), said the party "has managed to implant its identity politics across the political spectrum". Le Pen has signalled her desire to transform her anti-immigration, anti-EU party into the main opposition to Macron, but there were already signs of an internal ideological battle about which direction to take. "I think we need to stay faithful... to the fundamentals of the National Front," Jean-Marie Le Pen, Marine's 88-year-old estranged father and hardline co-founder of the party, said Sunday.

Sunday's vote underlined France's economic and geographical divisions, with Macron popular among more educated, middle-class voters in cities, but viewed with suspicion or hostility by blue-collar workers. In the first protest against his policies, several thousand people demonstrated in Paris, chanting "anti-capitalists" as they marched through the capital. "A majority of people were against Marine Le Pen, and I'm happy about it, but there's not a majority for Mr Macron's project," a spokesman for far-left presidential candidate Jean-Luc Melenchon, Alexis Corbiere, told LCI TV. In an early plea for unity, Macron reached out to Le Pen's supporters after their vicious election battle. "I will do everything I can over the next five years to ensure that people no longer have any reason to vote for extremes," he said. — AFP



TEHRAN: Reza Parastesh, a doppelganger of Barcelona and Argentina's footballer Lionel Messi, poses for a picture with fans in a street in the Iranian capital yesterday. — AFP

## THINGS GET MESSI FOR LOOKALIKE

TEHRAN: Iranian student Reza Parastesh looks so much like his sporting hero Lionel Messi that it almost landed him in jail for disrupting public order this week. So many people came out to take selfies with Parastesh in the western city of Hamedan over the weekend that police rushed him into a station and impounded his car to stop the chaos and clear traffic. The resemblance is so uncanny that Eurosport UK reportedly used his photo by accident on Twitter recently when talking about the real Messi.

The furore began a few months ago when Parastesh's football-mad father pressured the 25-year-old into posing in a number 10 Barcelona jersey and sending the pictures to a sports website. "I sent them one night and by the morning they had called me and said I should come in quickly for an interview," he told AFP. Despite his early reluctance, Parastesh soon grew into his new role, cutting his hair like Messi and often donning the Barca jersey when he goes out.

It has paid off - he is fully booked with media interviews and has even landed modelling contracts. "Now people really see me as the Iranian Messi and want me to mimic everything he does. When I show up somewhere, people are really shocked," he said. Iranians are obsessed with football, and Parastesh finds himself constantly besieged by fans looking for a selfie. "I'm really happy that seeing me makes them happy and this happiness gives me a lot of energy," he added.

Parastesh loves football but has never played profes-

sionally, though he is working on some tricks so he can better play the role. He remembers very well the last game between Iran and Argentina during World Cup 2014, when Messi's 91st-minute goal robbed the Islamic republic of a place in the last 16. Reza's dad was furious. "After the game, my dad called me and said don't come back home tonight... why did you score a goal against Iran? I said: But that wasn't me!" Parastesh said, laughing.

His goal now is to meet his hero in Barcelona, and maybe even land a job as his understudy. "Being the best player in footballing history, he definitely has more work than he can handle. I could be his representative when he is too busy," he said. — AFP



Reza Parastesh

## GHANEM: REVOKED CITIZENSHIPS...

Continued from Page 1

The Assembly meanwhile holds its regular sessions today and tomorrow, and is scheduled to debate two grillings against the prime minister by opposition MPs. MP Shuaib Al-Muwaizri said yesterday that he has decided to join MPs Waleed Al-Tabtabaei and Mohammad Al-Mutairi in their grilling, replacing Marzouq Al-Khalifa, who had signed on the grilling before the constitutional court stripped him of his membership and declared Farraj Al-Arbeed the new lawmaker. As a result, Muwaizri will take part in the two grillings because he had already signed the other grilling along with MP Riyadh Al-Adasani. Adasani said that the move will not weaken his grilling.

Head of the Assembly's budgets committee MP Adnan Abdulsamad yesterday said that Kuwait's direct losses from the stoppage of oil production in the neu-

tral zone with Saudi Arabia have amounted to KD 1.7 billion. Abdulsamad said there are other indirect losses like the expected damage in equipment as a result of ceasing operations.

Crude production at the offshore Khafji oilfield was halted by Saudi Arabia in Oct 2014 due to environmental reasons, while output at the onshore Wafra oilfield was halted several months later. The two fields were pumping around 500,000 barrels per day when operations were shut down. The production was being shared equally between the two countries. Oil Minister Essam Al-Marzouq had said that operations in the neutral zone will resume within a few weeks. The company handling the area has been preparing for the resumption of production.

The Assembly's environment committee yesterday discussed with the environment authority the issue of the dead fish. The committee said that the Assembly will today ask it to investigate the mass deaths.

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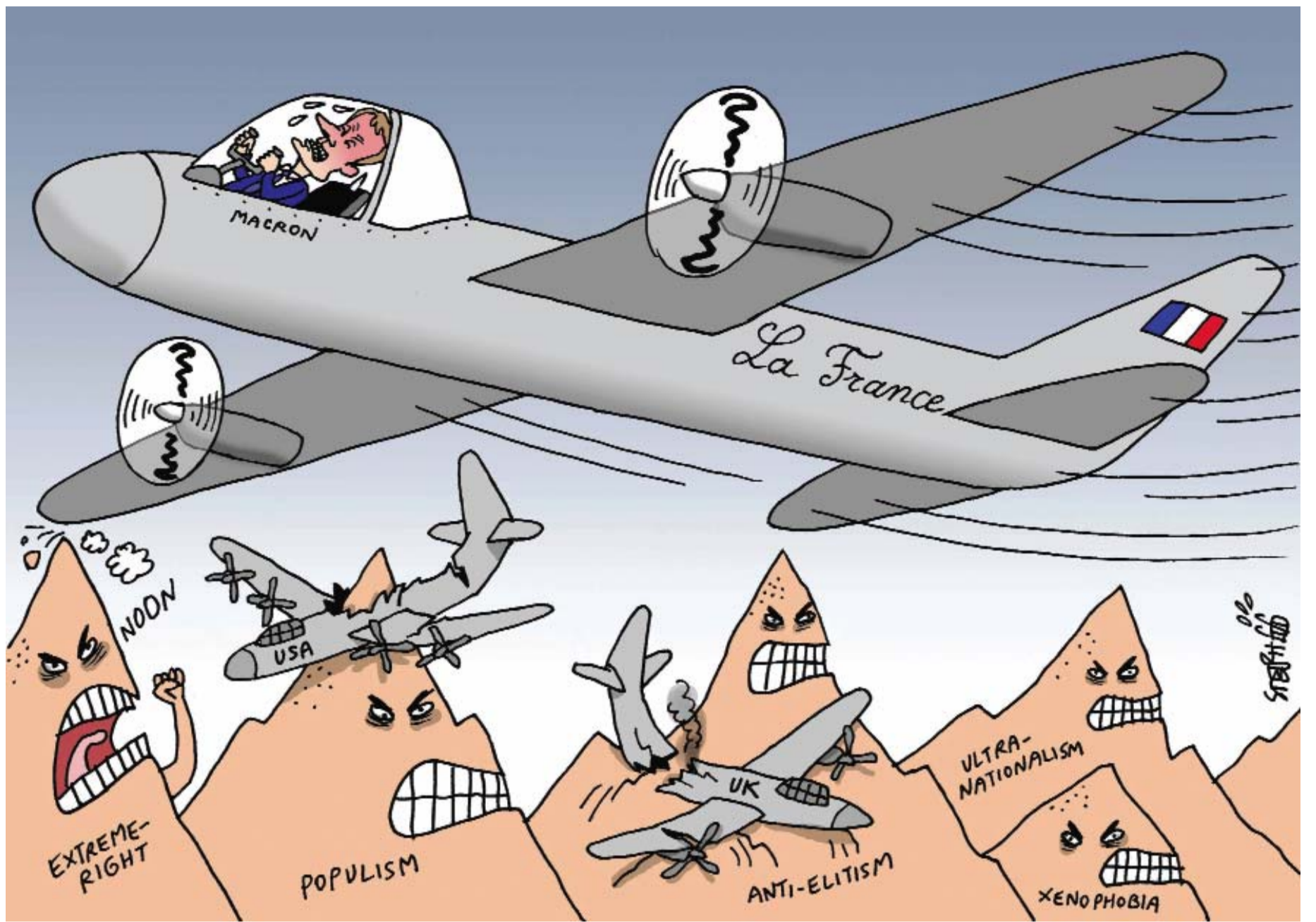
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## MACRON BANKS ON 'MAJORITY AMPLIFIER'

Unknown just three years ago, and with a party only 12 months old, Emmanuel Macron has seized the presidency against all the odds. His challenge now is to govern. To do that he must build a parliamentary majority that supports his election pledges in June legislative elections, when France's two established parties will put their huge machines to work. Macron has at least one thing in his favour: the "majority amplifier" effect of an electoral system designed by post-war leader Charles de Gaulle specifically to maximize presidential independence from parliament.

Last week, the first opinion survey for the legislative elections showed Macron's new movement "En Marche!" could win between 249 and 286 mainland France seats in the lower house. Even a figure at the bottom of that range would be a good outcome for him. He only needs 289 for an absolute majority, and the poll excluded 42 seats in Corsica and overseas. It foresaw centrist and conservative parties winning around 200-210 mainland seats, the far-right National Front 15-25 and the Socialists 28-43.

"In the lowest-case scenario, En Marche would still be the largest political grouping, which would be enough to try to constitute a majority. The question would then be how and with whom," said OpinionWay's Bruno Jeanbart, who directed the poll. En Marche is only a year old and has never fielded candidates before. Only 14 have been named so far, and at first glance a majority looks unlikely.

But that reckons without de Gaulle's amplifier - known as the "fait majoritaire" by French political scientists. France has a two-round system in all national elections, giving voters a second chance to choose their "least worst" option. This tends to draw in votes that reinforce the legitimacy of a directly elected president, especially if, like Macron, he has a centrist program. When they come directly after presidential elections, the legislative elections typically see a collapse in turnout among disappointed voters and a stronger turnout from those who got the president they wanted.

De Gaulle himself relied on the newly-created "Union for the New Republic" in 1958, and President Valéry Giscard

d'Estaing in 1978 set up the centrist "Union for the French Democracy" - like Macron, redrawing France's political map for their own purposes. The last legislative vote in 2012 also showed the "fait majoritaire" in action. Socialist Francois Hollande garnered less than 30 percent in the first rounds of both the presidentials and the legislatives, yet came

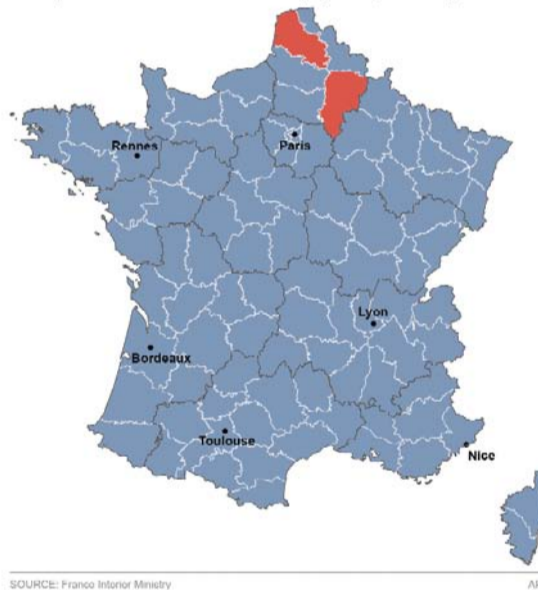
away with over 40 percent of the second-round legislative vote and, with help from 17 Green party MPs, governed with a comfortable majority.

"Macron can totally have an extremely solid majority of at least 350 MPs," said Xavier Chinaud, an electoral expert. He added that to reach that number, the president would have to employ tactics like poaching popular MPs from other parties.

### France presidential elections



ROUND TWO GEOGRAPHIC RESULTS  
 French presidential runoff, by department. Le Pen won a majority in only two departments, but it was her National Front party's strongest showing ever.



### Cohabitation?

The old parties will put up a fight, especially the conservative Republicans, who feel robbed of victory by the Macron factor and by the financial scandal that hobbled their candidate Francois Fillon. Now led by Francois Baroin, they hope for enough seats to force Macron into France's fourth "cohabitation" since 1958. Cohabitation does not have to mean paralysis, but rather that the prime minister and his camp in parliament have the upper hand over the president.

Prime Minister Lionel Jospin had the advantage in the 1990s, pushing Socialist legislation including a reduction in the working week to 35 hours under the nose of conservative President Jacques Chirac. Economist Christopher Dembik of Denmark's Saxo Bank sees a cohabitation with the Republicans as the second most likely scenario - the first being a Macron majority that may rely on ad-hoc coalitions with smaller groupings.

The smaller groupings could come from either side of the En Marche! boundary. The Socialists are torn between the radical left of their defeated candidate Benoit Hamon and the more centrist, pro-business branch led by former premier Manuel Valls. There are also reports that the centrist arm of The Republicans is considering splitting off to form its own party, with which Macron might be able to work. Macron has said he wants half of his future MPs to have no prior lawmaking experience. The first 14 candidates listed include a farmer, a hospital manager and entrepreneurs. But being an unknown newcomer might not matter. According to Opinionway, only 38 percent of French people can name their MP. — Reuters

### Focus

## FIVE CHALLENGES FOR FRANCE'S PRESIDENT

Emmanuel Macron, who exit polls say won France's presidential elections on Sunday, may have seen off the competition in the race for the Elysee Palace but will face daunting challenges when he takes office. The 39-year-old must unite a deeply-divided country, roll back unemployment and try to nudge a fractious EU along the path of reform - but he first faces a battle to secure a governing majority in legislative elections due next month.

### Reunite France

Macron, a pro-European centrist and former banker, takes over a divided country where nearly half of voters backed extremist candidates - critical of the EU, globalization and "elites" - in the first round of the election. The "two Frances" are divided geographically - one urban, more affluent and open to reform; the other, concentrated in the northern rust-belt and in disadvantaged areas of the countryside. It was this latter France that voted for Macron's far-right opponent, Marine Le Pen. Macron knows that many voters backed him not out of conviction but simply to stop Le Pen taking power, and his support could evaporate at the parliamentary elections. "Will the Macron-Le Pen divide - which is a national, existential identity divide, not the usual left-right split - continue into the legislative election? I tend to think so," said analyst Stephane Rozes of the CAP thinktank.

### The impossible majority?

Macron has promised to move beyond traditional left and right parties to create a new majority in the center. He launched his En Marche! (On the Move) party less than a year ago but managed to attract hundreds of thousands of supporters. He finished first in the first round of the election with a quarter of the vote. In the runoff against Le Pen, he notched up almost two-thirds of the vote, according to exit polls. Now he must convert his extraordinary rise - unprecedented in recent French history - into a solid presence in the National Assembly.

After his success in the presidential race, Macron believes that the French people will give him another victory in parliamentary elections, which will take place on June 11 and 18. But the traditional center-right, whose candidate Francois Fillon crashed out in the first round amid a fake jobs scandal, hopes to strike back and force Macron into a coalition arrangement in parliament. The far left, emboldened by the first-round success of candidate Jean-Luc Melenchon, who took an unexpectedly high 19.6 percent, is also aiming for a strong showing.

### Labor law battle

Macron has lamented France's failure to solve its unemployment problem. French joblessness runs at 10 percent, which compares with an average of 8.0 percent across the EU and just 3.9 percent in neighboring Germany. Like his predecessors, Macron will be judged above all on employment, and he has vowed to force through reform of France's hidebound labor laws using executive orders during his first months in office. This accelerated procedure, bypassing parliament, could mean a fiery start to his term as France's highly activist unions would likely bring protests out onto the streets, as they did last year when Socialist Prime Minister Manuel Valls used the tactic. Macron wants to cut unemployment to seven percent by 2022 by liberalizing employment laws, cutting business rates and loosening restrictions in France's 35-hour working week.

### Terror threat

The killing of a policeman on the Champs-Elysees in central Paris just three days before the first-round vote was a sobering reminder of the terror threat hanging over France. More than 230 people have been killed in jihadist attacks in France since January 2015, many carried out in the name of the Islamic State (IS) group. "IS is open about its desire to smash national cohesion by exacerbating tensions between Muslims and the rest of the population," said Marc Hecker of the French Institute of International Relations. Hecker pointed to the dangers posed by hundreds of French IS fighters returning home from Syria and Iraq in the coming years. With no previous experience in such matters, Macron has to move quickly to show he has a grip on these challenges and his role as military commander-in-chief. General Jean-Paul Palomeros, who advised Macron, predicted that France's military commitments in the Middle East and Africa would continue unchanged. Macron has also said he wants to reinforce the EU's external borders and has called for a major increase in resources for the Frontex agency.

### EU reform

Macron sees a reinvigoration of the France-Germany alliance as crucial to relaunching the EU after the shocks of Brexit and the migrant crisis. He plans to tour European capitals during his first months in charge to set out a "five-year roadmap to give the eurozone a true budget and to create a Europe of 27 for the environment, industry and managing migration". Vincenzo Scarpetta, analyst at Open Europe, warned Macron may be biting off more than he can chew. — AFP

## DESPITE LE PEN'S LOSS, POPULISM LIVES ON

It's a triple-whammy. The last six months have seen three European elections and three defeats for far-right populists. The tempting conclusion is that populism's destructive ability to dismantle old worlds without having credible blueprints for building new ones has been contained for now - at least in western Europe. In Austria, in the Netherlands and now in France, not only were there no cigars for Norbert Hofer, Geert Wilders and Marine Le Pen, but they got, at best, no closer than sniffing distance to power. Hofer came nearest, with 46 percent of the vote for Austria's presidency in December. Le Pen lost by a projected 30 percentage points in Sunday's presidential runoff to Emmanuel Macron, an economically liberal, socially responsive middle-way pro-European.

European moderates and the political establishment can release the breath they've been holding. The populist contagion that convinced 52 percent of Britons last year that their future would be brighter outside the European Union and made working-class Americans believe that a reality TV star would champion their interests from the White House has been kept offshore, quarantined, away from the heart of mainland Europe.

But for how long? Despite the electoral setbacks, populism is down but not out, still growing in strength and influence. Not only did Le Pen make France's presidential runoff for the first time, improving on her third place in 2012, she picked up many more than the 5.5 million votes that went to extreme-right candidate Jean-Marie Le Pen, her father, at the same stage in 2002. In the Netherlands, despite campaigning on a meager one-page platform, Wilders' anti-Islam, anti-immigration and anti-EU Freedom Party gained five seats, becoming the second-largest party in parliament, in March elections.

Even before these advances, right-wing European populist parties saw their share of seats and votes climb from around 6 percent in the 1960s to more than 13 percent this decade, according to a 2016 study from the Harvard Kennedy School. Left-wing populist parties fared even better, from few votes and almost no seats in the 1960s to low double-digit percentages this decade. France's campaign this year redrew the nation's political landscape, throwing out mainstream parties from left and right and putting electoral newcomer Macron in the presidential Elysee Palace. Populist politics sold like hot baguettes.

A larger slice than ever of the French electorate, fraught with anxiety and anger about globalization's bruising impact on jobs and security, saw solace in Le Pen's promis-

ing, Macron's champagne populism - his "I'm not like the others" spiel - stretched credibility but was still a key ingredient in his winning recipe. In power, Macron now becomes the French state's first line of defense against the populist challenge from Le Pen and, on the far left, from Jean-Luc Melenchon, who surged late in the race.

Their combined 14.7 million first-round votes - nearly 41 percent of the total - confirmed them as formidable forces and positioned them to snap at Macron's heels from either side. To govern effectively, Macron needs legislative elections in June to deliver a working majority to his new centrist movement called "En Marche!" - "Forward!" That is far from guaranteed. Should Macron - like Trump - prove unable to quickly turn campaign pledges into action, Le Pen and Melenchon will be even better-armed next time with vote-getting arguments. — AP

## GASPING EU GETS A BREATH OF FRESH AIR

Today is Europe Day, and this year European Union leaders got to unwrap their present a bit early. French voters elected as president Emmanuel Macron, whose platform espouses a stronger EU and a tough line in negotiations on Britain's exit from the bloc. Perhaps just as important, they rejected far-right contender Marine Le Pen, whose EU bashing knows few bounds. But if champagne corks are popping in Brussels, beware of the hangover: Brexit negotiations could go horribly wrong. Italian elections could see an anti-euro movement become the biggest party. Greek finances could wreck the value of the shared European currency.

Despite overwhelming support for Macron across the continent, the new French leader remains a political novice, untried and untested on European issues. And even as he celebrates European unity, he has argued that the bloc needs a fundamental retooling. "It makes it tough to predict how he will act - in France and also in the EU," said Hendrik Vos, a European policy analyst at Ghent University in Belgium.

For a dozen years, the European Union has slumped from one crisis to another, from referendum losses to bailout emergencies, a situation so dire that the term "muddling through" has taken on a ring of deliverance instead of setback. Last year was particularly bad, with Britain's vote to leave the bloc on June 23 producing the

most cathartic day in the EU's 60 years. Suddenly, the ever-expanding union started to shrink. The election in the United States of President Donald Trump created even more panic, especially after he showed such delight at Brexit and potential further breakaways that the EU threatened it would "promote the independence of Ohio and Austin, Texas" if he didn't stop.

2017 looked set to be even worse for the union, with firebrand Geert Wilders leading the Dutch polls for March elections and Le Pen rising in France, both thriving on their hatred for anything even remotely linked to the EU. After Trump's election proved unpredictability was the norm, anything could happen. But Wilders disappointed in the Dutch polls, and Le Pen fell short Sunday. The German elections are up next, in September, and both Chancellor Angela Merkel and Socialist challenger Martin Schulz have impeccable pro-EU credentials.

Little wonder there are some shoots of optimism this spring. Macron campaigned for the European Union at a time when it was fashionable and politically expedient to dump on it. Now he has to deliver on his words. Key will be his relationship with the German leader. Germany and France have been the twin engine driving the European Union as it grew from six members to 28. Former world war enemies, they stuck together as much of the continent gelled around their drive for unity. — AP

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### FURY-JOSHUA FIGHT BOOKED APRIL 2018

**LONDON:** Tyson Fury has claimed that London's Wembley Stadium has already been booked for a heavyweight super-fight between himself and fellow Briton Anthony Joshua in April next year. Fury, 28, has not fought since dethroning Wladimir Klitschko as world heavyweight champion in November 2015 because of drug issues and mental health problems. But he is back in training and following Joshua's epic victory over Klitschko at Wembley last month, Fury says Joshua's promoter Eddie Hearn is working to organise a bout between the pair. "Eddie Hearn has already booked Wembley Stadium for next April," Fury told Monday's edition of The Daily Telegraph. "There isn't another stadium where it should take place. I would fight Joshua in October, but I believe Klitschko will take the rematch." Joshua, 27, stopped Klitschko in the 11th round of their bout to add the vacant WBA and IBO titles to his IBF crown. —AFP



### NORTH KOREA-MALAYSIA GAME TO BE PLAYED IN PYONGYANG

**KUALA LUMPUR:** An Asian Cup qualifier between North Korea and Malaysia will be played in Pyongyang, the Asian Football Confederation (AFC) announced yesterday, despite strained ties over an assassination in Kuala Lumpur. The killing of Kim Jong-Nam—the estranged half-brother of North Korean leader Kim Jong-Un—in February sparked a diplomatic row which saw both countries banning each other's citizens from leaving and withdrawing their ambassadors. South Korea accuses the North of masterminding the killing and Malaysian police at the time named several North Korean suspects. The AFC said the match would take place in the North Korean capital on June 8 after Malaysian football officials confirmed there were no longer any travel restrictions. Malaysia had originally been due to play the match in Pyongyang on March 28 as a lead-up to the 2019 tournament in the United Arab Emirates. But Malaysian officials at the time banned the team from playing in Pyongyang, citing security fears, and the AFC decided to postpone the tie due to "escalating diplomatic tension". — AFP

### NARINE'S 15-BALL HALF-TON MATCHES THE IPL RECORD

**NEW DELHI:** West Indies all-rounder Sunil Narine equaled an Indian Premier League record as he hit a whirlwind half-century off just 15 balls to lead Kolkata Knight Riders to a big win over struggling Royal Challengers Bangalore. Narine smashed a 17-ball 54 — including six fours and four sixes — as Kolkata reached the 159-run target in 15.1 overs to win by six wickets late on Sunday. Narine and Australian Chris Lynn put together a 105-run opening partnership in the first six overs of Sunday's game. Lynn needed 22 balls to make his 50 at Bangalore's M Chinnaswamy Stadium. He was outdone by Narine who, despite being better known for his off-spin bowling, matched Yusuf Pathan's 15-ball half-ton for Kolkata in 2014. "I'm surprised too. Lynn just said keep your eyes on the ball, keep focused and swing at it. I try to keep it simple," Narine said. —AFP



CHICAGO: The New York Yankees celebrate their win against the Chicago Cubs yesterday at Wrigley Field in Chicago, Illinois. The Yankees defeated the Cubs 5-4 in eighteen innings.— AFP

# YANKEES BEAT CUBS 5-4 IN 18 INNINGS

**CHICAGO:** Starlin Castro drove in Aaron Hicks with a fielder's choice in the 18th inning as the New York Yankees beat the Chicago Cubs 5-4 early yesterday morning in Major League Baseball's longest interleague game ever by innings. The teams combined for a major league-record 48 strikeouts in baseball's longest game of the season by innings, wrapping up in a tidy 6 hours, 5 minutes. The Cubs trailed 4-1 before rallying in the ninth against Aroldis Chapman, who helped them win the World Series last year for the first time since 1908. Hicks struck out four times, but he came up with a huge play in the final inning. He led off with a bunt single against Pedro Strop (0-2) and advanced to second when catcher Willson Contreras threw it into right field for an error. With one out and Hicks on third, Castro hit a bouncer up the middle. Shortstop Addison Russell tried to throw home, but it was wide and Hicks scored easily. Chasen Shreve (1-0) pitched three scoreless innings, striking out pinch-hitting pitcher Kyle Hendricks with runners on first and second for the final out in New York's fifth straight win. The Yankees (20-9) improved to 19-5 since they opened the season with four losses in five games. They also matched their high-water mark from last season at 11 games over .500.

#### MARLINS 7, METS 0

Shortly after scheduled starter Matt Harvey was suspended by the New York Mets, Giancarlo Stanton hit two more monstrous home runs off fill-in Adam Wilk that led the Miami Marlins to an emphatic victory over the Mets on Sunday. Harvey was suspended for three days without pay for an undisclosed violation of team rules. General manager Sandy Alderson announced the punishment

in a brief statement before the game. Multiple media reports indicated the penalty stemmed from the pitcher failing to show up at the ballpark Saturday. Making his first start of the year while Edinson Volquez recovers from a blister problem, Jose Urena (1-0) and three relievers combined on a one-hitter as the Marlins snapped a three-game losing streak and handed the Mets their first shutout this season. Rene Rivera led off the sixth inning with a clean single against Urena. Wilk (0-1) was brought up from Triple-A Las Vegas on short notice to make his first major league appearance since 2015. The journeyman left-hander was no match for Stanton, whose 20 home runs at Citi Field are the most at any visiting ballpark by a player since 2011. Adeiny Hechavarria also homered for the Marlins.

#### RED SOX 17, TWINS 6

Sandy Leon hit a pair of two-run homers and Chris Sale struck out 10 as Boston romped out of town with a big victory over Minnesota fueled by a season-high five homers and which finished with a 10-run ninth inning. Sale (3-2) reached double-digit strikeouts for the sixth straight time, stretching his major league-leading total to 73. The lanky left-hander briefly lost the lead in a four-run fifth while the Twins batted around, but Leon broke the tie in the sixth with a two-out homer off Minnesota ace Ervin Santana (5-1). Dustin Pedroia, Andrew Benintendi and Mookie Betts also homered for the Red Sox, who set a season high in runs for the second straight game. Mitch Moreland had four RBIs.

#### INDIANS 1, ROYALS 0

Mike Clevinger and four relievers combined

on a one-hitter as Cleveland edged Kansas City. Carlos Santana had three hits, including an RBI single in the fifth that followed Yan Gomes' double. Clevinger (1-0), making his first start in place of injured ace Corey Kluber, gave up a one-out double to Salvador Perez in the fourth. Clevinger walked four and struck out five in 5 2/3 innings. Bryan Shaw struck out all four batters he faced. Andrew Miller pitched a perfect eighth, keeping his ERA at 0.00 over 15 2/3 innings this season, and Cody Allen got three outs for his ninth save in nine chances. He retired Brandon Moss with two runners on to end it. Danny Duffy (2-3), who had given up 12 runs and 19 hits over 9 2/3 innings in losing his previous two starts, held the Indians to one run over 6 2/3 innings.

#### ORIOLES 4, WHITE SOX 0

Chris Tillman pitched five sharp innings in his season debut as Baltimore beat Chicago to complete a three-game sweep. Trey Mancini had three hits and drove in a run for the Orioles, who took an early 4-0 lead against Jose Quintana (2-5) and coasted to their fourth straight victory. Sidelined since March with right shoulder bursitis, Tillman came off the disabled list to join an unstable rotation in need of another arm. After walking the first two batters and working out of a bases-loaded jam in the first, Tillman (1-0) bounced back nicely in his first appearance since the 2016 AL wild card game. Brad Brach got two outs for his seventh save. Baltimore finished its first three-game home sweep of the White Sox in 18 years and improved to 20-10 for the first time since 2005.

#### BREWERS 6, PIRATES 2

Eric Thames broke out of his slump with a home run and three hits to send Milwaukee past Pittsburgh. Travis Shaw and Jesus Aguilar also went deep for the Brewers. Thames connected for a solo shot in the ninth inning off Johnny Barbato, his first homer in 10 games after hitting 11 in his first 20 games. Thames had gone 4 for 27 in his last seven games. Zach Davies (3-2) won his third straight decision as the Brewers avoided being swept in the three-game series. He allowed two runs and four hits in 5 2/3 innings with seven strikeouts. Tyler Glasnow (1-2) pitched a career-high 6 1/3 innings but took the loss. Fellow rookie Jose Osuna hit a two-run homer for the Pirates.

#### BLUE JAYS 2, RAYS 1

Joe Biagini and four relievers combined on a three-hitter and Darwin Barney hit a tiebreaking homer in the eighth inning to help Toronto beat Tampa Bay. The Blue Jays took two of three from the Rays to win a road series for the first time this season (1-4-1). It also was just the fifth time in 31 tries since 2007 that Toronto won a series at Tropicana Field (5-23-3). Biagini allowed an unearned run, two hits and struck out four over four innings in his first major league start. The

right-hander was inserted into the Toronto rotation after 74 career relief appearances due to injuries to Aaron Sanchez and J.A. Happ, and Mat Latos being designated for assignment. Aaron Loup, Ryan Tepera (2-1), Joe Smith and Roberto Osuna combined to hold Tampa Bay to one hit over five innings. Osuna earned his fourth save. Barney put the Blue Jays up 2-1 with his first homer of the year. He connected off Alex Cobb (2-3), who gave up four hits in eight innings.

#### CARDINALS 6, BRAVES 4, 14 INNINGS

Tommy Pham hit two homers, including a two-run drive in the 14th inning as St. Louis recovered after blowing a four-run lead to complete a three-game sweep of Atlanta. Pham's long shot in the 14th off Josh Collmenter (0-1) drove in rookie Magneuris Sierra, who reached on second baseman Jace Peterson's fielding error. Recalled from Triple-A Memphis on Friday, Pham had a career-high four hits and drove in three runs. Freddie Freeman's 11th homer off Brett Cecil in the eighth tied the game, completing the Braves' comeback from a 4-0 deficit. Matt Carpenter had a first-inning homer for St. Louis. He went deep in all three games during the series. Sam Tuivailala (1-0) tossed two scoreless innings and Kevin Siegrist got his first save.

#### PHILLIES 6, NATIONALS, 5, 10 INNINGS

Freddy Galvis hit a sacrifice fly in the 10th inning to give Philadelphia a comeback win over Washington. Pinch-hitter Aaron Altherr connected for a tying, three-run homer in the eighth and the Phillies rallied to avoid a three-game sweep. Odubel Herrera led off the bottom of the 10th with a checked-swing double off Blake Treinen (0-1). After Altherr was intentionally walked, pitcher Vince Velasquez batted for reliever Hector Neris and reached on a bunt single. Treinen fanned Andres Blanco, but Galvis drove in the winning run with a liner to center. Jayson Werth had four hits, including two homers, for the Nationals. Neris (1-1) tossed two scoreless innings for the win. Galvis also hit a two-run double in the fourth.

#### ASTROS 5, ANGELS 3

Jose Altuve hit a three-run homer during Houston's four-run third inning, and Evan Gattis also went deep against Los Angeles. Mike Fiers (1-1) pitched five innings and earned his first victory of the season with a boost from the bullpen, which threw four scoreless innings of two-hit ball. Ken Giles rebounded from a rough blown save in Anaheim on Friday to pitch the ninth for his eighth save, and the AL West leaders won for the sixth time in eight games. Yunel Escobar hit two home runs for the Angels, who have lost four of five. Two-time AL MVP Mike Trout sat out with a tight left hamstring for the third time in four games. Matt Shoemaker (1-2) pitched five-hit ball into the seventh, but was undone by the Astros' big inning capped by

Altuve's fifth homer.

#### REDS 4, GIANTS 0

Scott Feldman pitched a four-hitter and Scott Schebler and Zack Cozart homered off Johnny Cueto as Cincinnati beat San Francisco for its season-high fifth straight win. The Reds took three in a row for their first sweep of the Giants since 2013, outscoring them 31 5 during the series. Feldman (2-3) was 1-5 in six career starts against the Giants going into the game. He easily handled a slumping lineup, striking out five and walking one while throwing 119 pitches. He got his first shutout since 2014 with Houston. Cueto (4-2) was the Reds' ace for eight seasons. In two starts against them since being traded in 2015, he has given up 10 runs in 12 innings. He struck out a season-high 10 and allowed six hits over seven innings this time.

#### ROCKIES 5, DIAMONDBACKS 2

Tyler Chatwood pitched two-hit ball into the eighth inning before exiting after deflecting a drive with his pitching hand, while Mark Reynolds homered for a third straight game in Colorado's rain-delayed victory over Arizona. Pat Valaika lined a two-run homer and Charlie Blackmon added a solo shot into the second deck as the NL West leaders took two of three from the Diamondbacks. Chatwood (3-4) was cruising until he tried to corral Daniel Descalso's infield hit to start the eighth. Greg Holland pitched a 1-2-3 ninth for his 13th save in as many chances. Taijuan Walker (3-2) gave up three runs - one earned - in 5 2/3 innings.

#### ATHLETICS 8, TIGERS 6

Ryan Healy hit a two-run homer to cap a three-run ninth inning against Francisco Rodriguez as Oakland rallied for the second straight day to beat Detroit. Rajai Davis drew a leadoff walk from Rodriguez (1-4), and Jed Lowrie lined a tying double. One out later, Healy hit a towering home run. Healy's game-ending heroics came less than 24 hours after Adam Rosales hit a two-out, two-run single off Rodriguez in the ninth inning to beat the Tigers. Yonder Alonso homered for the fifth time in six games for Oakland. It was Alonso's ninth home run this season, tying his career high set in 155 games in 2012. Santiago Casilla (1-1) retired three batters for the win. James McCann put the Tigers ahead with a two-run homer in the sixth.

#### MARINERS 4, RANGERS 3

Kyle Seager hit a tiebreaking home run in the eighth inning as Seattle rallied late to defeat Texas. Down 3-0, the Mariners scored three times in the seventh. Pinch-hitter Danny Valencia tied it with a two-run single. Seager connected in the eighth off Sam Dyson (0-4) for his second homer of the season. Marc Rzepczynski (1-0) got one out for the win. Edwin Diaz worked a perfect ninth for his sixth save. — AP

## Baseball results/standings

NY Yankees 5, Chicago Cubs 4 (18 innings); Cincinnati 4, San Francisco 0; Seattle 4, Texas 3; Oakland 8, Detroit 6; Houston 5, LA Angels 3; Colorado 5, Arizona 2; Philadelphia 6, Washington 5 (10 innings); Cleveland 1, Kansas City 0; Boston 17, Minnesota 6; Baltimore 4, Chicago White Sox 0; Milwaukee 6, Pittsburgh 2; St. Louis 6, Atlanta 4 (14 innings); Miami 7, NY Mets 0; Toronto 2, Tampa Bay 1.

| American League Eastern Division |    |    |      | National League Eastern Division |               |    |    |      |     |
|----------------------------------|----|----|------|----------------------------------|---------------|----|----|------|-----|
|                                  | W  | L  | PCT  | GB                               |               | W  | L  | PCT  | GB  |
| NY Yankees                       | 20 | 9  | .690 | -                                | Washington    | 21 | 10 | .677 | -   |
| Baltimore                        | 20 | 10 | .667 | 0.5                              | NY Mets       | 14 | 16 | .467 | 6.5 |
| Boston                           | 17 | 14 | .548 | 4                                | Miami         | 13 | 17 | .433 | 7.5 |
| Tampa Bay                        | 16 | 17 | .485 | 6                                | Philadelphia  | 13 | 17 | .433 | 7.5 |
| Toronto                          | 11 | 20 | .333 | 10                               | Atlanta       | 11 | 18 | .379 | 9   |
| Central Division                 |    |    |      | Central Division                 |               |    |    |      |     |
| Cleveland                        | 17 | 13 | .567 | -                                | Cincinnati    | 17 | 14 | .548 | -   |
| Minnesota                        | 15 | 14 | .517 | 1.5                              | St. Louis     | 16 | 14 | .533 | 0.5 |
| Chicago White Sox                | 15 | 15 | .500 | 2                                | Chicago Cubs  | 16 | 15 | .516 | 1   |
| Detroit                          | 15 | 17 | .469 | 6                                | Milwaukee     | 16 | 16 | .500 | 1.5 |
| Kansas City                      | 10 | 20 | .333 | 7                                | Pittsburgh    | 14 | 17 | .452 | 3   |
| Western Division                 |    |    |      | Western Division                 |               |    |    |      |     |
| Houston                          | 21 | 11 | .656 | -                                | Colorado      | 20 | 12 | .625 | -   |
| LA Angels                        | 16 | 17 | .485 | 5.5                              | LA Dodgers    | 17 | 14 | .548 | 2.5 |
| Seattle                          | 15 | 17 | .469 | 6                                | Arizona       | 18 | 15 | .545 | 2.5 |
| Oakland                          | 14 | 17 | .452 | 6.5                              | San Diego     | 12 | 20 | .375 | 8   |
| Texas                            | 13 | 19 | .406 | 8                                | San Francisco | 11 | 21 | .344 | 9   |



## KUWAIT SEASON ENDS WITH FEDERATION TOURNAMENT

By Abdellatif Sharaa

**KUWAIT:** Kuwait Federation (2016-2017) season ended yesterday with the Federation General Tournament under the patronage of President of Kuwait and Arab Tennis Federation Sheikh Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Abdallah Al-Jaber Al-Sabah. The tournament

began April 29, with 74 players representing Tadamon, Sahel, Salmiya, Shabab, Sulaibkhat, Qadisiya, Kuwait, Yarmouk, Khaitan and Kazima clubs. The final match was also attended by KTF Vice President Abdelsamad Al-Aryan, Yarmouk SC Board Member and Director of Tennis Hussein Al-Ghareeb, Khaitan SC Hakem Al-Enezi, KTF Treasurer Faleh Al-

Otaibi, Assistant Treasurer Ahmad Al-Qallaf and Board Member Ali Al-Daihani.

In the Singles Final Match, Yarmouk club player Abdallah Yacoub Maqdis met Kuwait's Club player Abdelrahman Al-Awadhi and defeated him (6/4-6/4). In the Doubles Match, Yarmouk's Abdallah Maqdis and Hassan Al-Mousa won the first place, followed by

Khaitan's Hamid Al-Sulaihen and Ali Abdelredha. The 3rd place went to Kuwait's Abdelrahman Al-Awahi and Tamim Al-Hallaq.

The final standings are as follows - Yarmouk (343 points); Kuwait (183 points); Khaitan (137 points); Salmiya (100 points); Kazima (50 points); Shabab (40 points); Qadisiya (26 points); Tadamon (19 points); Sulaibkhat (16

points) and Sahel (13 points). International Referee, head referee at KTF Barrak Abdelmohsen Jawaheri won the best referee during the season. President of KTF and ATF Sheikh Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Abdallah Al-Sabah congratulated the winning teams and wished the rest best of luck. He expressed satisfaction with the levels of many players.

## NO SURPRISES IN INDIA'S BELATED CHAMPIONS TROPHY SQUAD

**NEW DELHI:** India recalled fit-again opener Rohit Sharma and spin trump card Ravichandran Ashwin as the holders finally named their squad for next month's Champions Trophy in England and Wales yesterday. Unhappy with cricket's new revenue model, which considerably slashes their share from global events in the 2015-23 cycle, India failed to submit a squad by an April 25 deadline, triggering panic among advertisers. Several members of the Indian board (BCCI) favored withdrawing from the tournament in protest but court-appointed administrators, who are currently supervising BCCI operations, rallied against such a drastic move.

The 15-member squad unveiled by chief selector MSK Prasad contained no real surprises. Rohit returned from a thigh injury and the right-hander will be joined by southpaw Shikhar Dhawan, who owes his own comeback primarily to a shoulder injury for Lokesh Rahul. The selectors were also probably influenced by the fact that Dhawan was adjudged man-of-the-tournament when India won the last edition of the eight-team event, also held in England and Wales, four years ago. "Ajinkya Rahane would be the back-up opener," Prasad told reporters.

Off-spinner Ashwin returned to the side after skipping the ongoing Indian Premier League (IPL) with a hernia and Prasad said it was more tactical than anything else. "It was not really a serious injury. The franchise was magnanimous enough to accept our request to rest him," Prasad explained. "He represented India in the last international game... It's not like others who have undergone surgeries and are getting rehabilitat-

ed." The selectors considered left-arm unorthodox bowler Kuldeep Yadav before deciding a spin attack comprising Ashwin and Ravindra Jadeja, aided by part-timer Yuvraj Singh, should be sufficient.

Kuldeep, Suresh Raina, Dinesh Karthik, Rishabh Pant and Shardul Thakur are all put on a standby list. India's pace attack was bolstered by the return of Mohammed Shami, whose recurring foot injuries kept him out of the one-day side since March 2015. Former captain Mahendra Singh Dhoni retained his place in the squad amid whispers that the wicketkeeper-batsman's "finisher" reputation was on the wane. "We only talk about his batting form, he's an invaluable asset to this team," Prasad said. "When it comes to crunch situation, his input... I think he has got one of the best brains, and is the best person to guide (skipper) Virat (Kohli).

"In the last 10-12 years that MSD (Dhoni) played for his country, he never had a bad day with the gloves. We always treat him more like a batsman, not many appreciate the phenomenal work he has done behind the wickets. "According to me, he's still the best wicketkeeper in the world," said Prasad, a former India stumper. The top eight sides in the world rankings compete in the Champions Trophy. India begin their Group B campaign against arch-rivals Pakistan at Birmingham on June 4. Squad: - Virat Kohli (captain), Shikhar Dhawan, Rohit Sharma, Ajinkya Rahane, MS Dhoni, Yuvraj Singh, Kedar Jadhav, Hardik Pandya, Ravichandran Ashwin, Ravindra Jadeja, Mohammed Shami, Umesh Yadav, Bhuvneshwar Kumar, Jasprit Bumrah, Manish Pandey.— Reuters



**NASHVILLE:** Nashville Predators center Ryan Johansen (92) scores the winning goal against St. Louis Blues goalie Jake Allen (34) during the third period in Game 6 of a second-round NHL hockey playoff series on Sunday, May 7, 2017.— AP

## PREDATORS ADVANCE

**LOS ANGELES:** Ryan Johansen's tiebreaking goal at 3:15 of the third period lifted Nashville Predators to a 3-1 win over the St. Louis Blues and a 4-2 series victory, advancing the Predators to the Western Conference finals for the first time in the franchise's 19-year history. It was the second marker of the playoffs for Johansen, who took Viktor Arvidsson's feed in the slot, deked from forehand to backhand and beat Jake Allen for the biggest goal in Predators history, giving the home side a 2-1 advantage. Calle Jarnkrok sealed it with an empty-net marker at 19:00, making him

Nashville's 14th different goal-scorer of the playoffs. Goalie Pekka Rinne and the Predators' defense made the lead stick. Rinne made 23 saves, none bigger than his pad stop on Kyle Brodziak at the goalmouth about halfway through the third period. Rinne has permitted just 14 goals in 10 games in the playoffs.

### OILERS 7, DUCKS 1

Edmonton Oilers finally built a lead that Anaheim Ducks couldn't overcome. After blowing a 2-0 advantage in Game 4 and 3-0 lead late in the third period in Game 5, the

Oilers came out flying, scoring five first-period goals en route to a 7-1 win on Sunday in Game 6 of a Western Conference semifinal series. Edmonton evened the series and forced a decisive Game 7 on Wednesday in Anaheim. The winner will face the Predators in the Western Conference finals. Ducks killer Leon Draisaitl, who now has 20 points against Anaheim in 11 regular-season and playoff games in 2016-17, paced the attack with a hat trick plus two assists. Mark Letestu also had two goals and two assists. Rickard Rakell got one for the Ducks.—Agencies



## BLESSEN GEORGE MEMORIAL VOLLEYBALL TOURNAMENT

**KUWAIT:** Fahaheel Sports Club Indoor Stadium will host the 4th Blessen George Memorial Volleyball tournament 2017 from June 10 till 12. Organizers of this tournament visited Kuwait Volleyball Association (KVA) and met with President Waleed Aman in the presence of Secretary General Abdallah Kayed. Waleed Aman told the organizers that KVA will provide referees to ensure the success of the tournament. Six Teams including Kuwait National Senior Team, two top Kuwaiti Clubs and three Indian Club Teams compris-

ing of the best players currently playing for Indian National /State Teams and top Clubs in India will test their skills in the Tournament.

Volleyball is one of the most attractive and thrilling games to watch. The matches of Blessen George Memorial Volleyball Tournament 2017 will feature six star packed teams from India and Kuwait as they compete in high voltage drama of passion and intensity - displaying sublime skills of thunderous smashes, awesome airy duels and powerful serves.

## IOC HEADS TO LA

**LOS ANGELES:** The race for the right to stage the 2024 Olympics heads into the home straight this week as a team of International Olympic Committee delegates arrives in Los Angeles to inspect the city's bid for the Games. With just four months to go until the crunch vote in Lima that will decide the victors of the bidding war, the IOC Evaluation Commission will spend three days running the rule over Los Angeles before heading to rival Paris next week. The final months of campaigning have been dominated by intrigue over the possibility that the IOC may seek to award both the 2024 and 2028 Summer Games when it votes in the Peruvian capital on September 13.

The IOC has set up a working group to study that possibility, widely seen as a move

to lock in what are viewed as two high-quality, low-risk bids at a time when fewer and cities are willing to take on the vast cost of staging the games. Publicly, however, neither Los Angeles nor Paris bid officials have been willing to entertain the possibility of accepting 2028 hosting rights as a consolation prize for missing out on 2024.

Paris co-chairman Tony Estanguet said in March it was "now or never" for 2024 and that the French capital would "not come back for 2028." Los Angeles counterpart Casey Wasserman stopped short of issuing an ultimatum, but maintained the city remained focused only on 2024. "No one's a candidate for 2028. I think that's a hypothetical and it's not worth discussing," Wasserman told AFP in a recent interview.—AFP

### GOLF

## KIM EDGES ARIYA TO WIN LPGA MATCH PLAY TITLE

**MEXICO CITY:** South Korea's 12th-ranked Kim Sei-Young edged Thailand's third-ranked Ariya Jutanugarn 1-up in Sunday's final to win the Lorena Ochoa Match Play title and capture her sixth career LPGA triumph. Kim, the 2015 LPGA Rookie of the Year, collected her first victory since last June's Meijer LPGA Classic, winning the first three holes and fighting off a late comeback to win the first LPGA match-play event since 2012. "It was a really tough day today," said Kim, who trailed for only four of the 95 holes she played at Club de Golf Mexico. "I never had such a hard win like today. I am happy that I was able to win and hold this trophy." Ariya, who captured the first of her five LPGA titles exactly a year ago, had defeated American Michelle Wie 4 and 3 in the morning semi-finals while Kim downed 25th-ranked compatriot Hur Mi-Jung 5 and 4. Hur outlasted Wie in 22 holes in the third-place match.

Kim led after every hole all day, winning the first three holes in both her matches and holding on for victories. She opened the final birdie-eagle-birdie to jump 3-up on Ariya with threes at the first and second and a two at the par-3 third. Kim kept that lead to the turn as both women followed with six pars. Ariya won her first hole with a par 4 at the 10th to pull within 2-down and both birdied to halve the par-5 11th as the tension grew. Kim birdied the 12th, stretching her lead back to 3-up, but Ariya answered by winning the par-3 14th when Kim made bogey, trimming the lead to two with four to play. Both parred to halve the 15th and par-3 16th, Kim lipping out a birdie putt that would have clinched the victory.

Kim then hit her tee shot wide right and out of bounds at the par-5 17th and would lose the hole to Ariya's birdie, leaving her 1-up on the 18th tee. "I tried to stay calm but I really couldn't," Kim said. "My hands were shaking, my legs were shaking too. It was really hard to keep calm." Both parred the last, however, and Kim had her

victory. In the third-place match, Wie leaped ahead 5-up after 10 but Hur took the next three holes then parred to win the 15th and 17th to square the match. Both made bogeys at 18 to force extra holes. On the 20th, Hur chipped in and Wie matched her birdie. They both parred 18 again on the 21st hole but Wie's par putt at the 16th lipped out to hand Hur the win.

### ARIYA DOWNS WIE IN SEMIS

In the semi-finals, Ariya birdied the par-5 sixth and Wie lost the par-4 eighth and 12th holes on bogeys. Ariya birdied the par-3 14th to go 4-up

and parred the 15th to halve the hole and seal the triumph. Hur, seeking her third career LPGA title and first since 2014, had upset world number one Lydia Ko of New Zealand in the third round. But she was undone from the start in the semi-finals as Kim opened birdie-eagle-par with threes on each hole to jump ahead and a birdie to win the par-5 sixth for a 4-up lead. Kim began the back nine by winning the par-4 10th with a par. Hur won her only hole with a birdie at the 12th and birdied 13 but Kim eagled to win the 13th and matched Hur's birdie to halve the par-3 14th and close out the victory.—AFP



**MEXICO CITY:** Sei Young Kim of South Korea imitates a selfie as she poses with the Lorena Ochoa Match Play Trophy after the final round of the Citibanamex Lorena Ochoa Match on May 7, 2017.— AFP





LA TURBIE: (Left to right) Monaco's French forward Kylian Mbappe Lottin, Monaco's French forward Valere Germain, Monaco's Brazilian defender Fabinho, Monaco's Portuguese midfielder Bernardo Silva, Monaco's Moroccan midfielder Nabil Dirar and Monaco's Argentinean forward Guido Carrillo take part in a training session yesterday. — AFP

## MISSION IMPROBABLE FOR ATLETICO AND MONACO

**PARIS:** Atletico Madrid and Monaco will attempt to overturn daunting first-leg deficits in the Champions League semi-finals this week and publicly they insist they can pull off the improbable. Atletico coach Diego Simeone went as far as to say that coming back from 3-0 down to holders Real Madrid in their derby at home would be "impossible" for other teams but not his.

"I've told the players it is very difficult, that we are facing the best team in the world, who score goals in every game, but that it is possible," the Argentine said after Atletico guaranteed a top-four finish in La Liga with a 1-0 win over Eibar on Saturday. "I am convinced of it. If I wasn't I wouldn't say it. If we are united and

understand that it is a semi-final at home, we have a chance." Cristiano Ronaldo, who was rested at the weekend, and his Real teammates can expect a fiery reception at the Vicente Calderon on what promises to be an emotional occasion.

Wednesday's clash will be the final European game at the Vicente Calderon because Atletico move to the new 67,000-capacity Wanda Metropolitano next season. Atletico's fans gave the team full-throated support at the weekend, staying on after the final whistle against Eibar, and the players responded by returning for a lap of honor. Captain Gabi said they wanted to repay the fans: "Once again they haven't left us behind. "This group

of players lacks a big comeback and we hope it is on Wednesday." Real have beaten Atletico twice in three years in the Champions League final and a Ronaldo hat-trick his second treble in as many matches in the competition-brushed aside Simeone's men in the first leg.

It would take a staggering capitulation for Real to fail to reach the final in Cardiff on June 3 as they chase a league and European double. Coach Zinedine Zidane made nine changes to his side but they still thrashed already relegated Granada 4-0 at the weekend with James Rodriguez and Alvaro Morata scoring doubles. The Frenchman warned his side they would need to produce the "perfect game" against Atletico but believes Real are in prime condi-

tion at a crucial juncture, having rested most of his starting XI. "Over nine months if you play every game, sometimes you are empty by the end of the season. We are the opposite, physically we are very strong and that is good news for the end of the season," he said ominously.

### 'FIVE PERCENT CHANCE'

Like Real, Italian champions Juventus on the verge of retaining their Serie A title are strong favorites to dispatch Monaco and they hold a commanding 2-0 lead from the first leg in France. Marshaled by veteran goalkeeper Gianluigi Buffon, Juventus have conceded just two goals in the Champions League this season and offered Monaco's free-scoring attack

hardly a sniff last week. It is unthinkable that a side that shut out Lionel Messi and Barcelona over two legs in the quarter-finals will concede three times on Tuesday, especially with the game in Turin.

But Monaco are the leading scorers in Europe's top leagues and in the 18-year-old striker Kylian Mbappe have the most wanted player in world football. Monaco coach Leonardo Jardim is not one to make sweeping statements, but he refuses to believe that the tie is over and an early goal for his young side would put the home fans on edge. "It is difficult but we need to keep believing. The best thing is to believe it is possible, even if we only have a five percent chance," the Portuguese said.—AFP

## EVRA SCORES RARE GOAL; MARSEILLE BEAT NICE 2-1

**PARIS:** Patrice Evra scored his first goal for Marseille in Sunday's 2-1 victory over Nice to extinguish the visitors' hopes of claiming an automatic Champions League qualifying spot. Ricardo Pereira and Dalbert both hit the post for Nice inside the opening 15 minutes, but Marseille grabbed the lead when Bafetimbi Gomis headed in his team-leading 18th goal of the season. Mario Balotelli equalized shortly after half-time, bundling in from close range to set a new career best with his 15th league goal of the campaign. France international Evra popped up with the winner on 66 minutes with a diving header from a Maxime Lopez cross to nudge Marseille ahead of sixth-placed Bordeaux and into the final Europa League berth.

"Evra? I'm happy for him, but aside from his decisive goal the team performed well," said Marseille coach Rudi Garcia. Nice suffered just a third defeat of the season and were officially eliminated from the title race. They will finish third with Paris Saint-Germain six points clear in second place and owning a far superior goal difference. Lyon face a monumental challenge to turn around a 4-1 deficit in next Thursday's Europa League semi-final second leg against Ajax, but Bruno Genesio's side are at least destined to return to the competition next term after a 3-2 home win over Nantes. Valentin Rongier gave Nantes a first-half lead at Parc OL, but Nabil Fekir equalised from the penalty before Maxwell Cornet's brace either side of a Guillaume Gillet effort left Lyon five points clear of Marseille in fourth. Monaco took another big stride towards securing their first Ligue 1 crown since 2000 with a 3-0 victory at Nancy on Saturday. Leonardo Jardim's men lead PSG by three points with a game in hand and need just one win from their final three matches to all but sew up a remarkable league triumph. PSG though retained an outside chance of denying Monaco with a 5-0 rout of bottom side Bastia as Edinson Cavani scored twice-but also missed a penalty to climb up to 33 goals for the campaign. — AFP



MARSEILLE: Olympique de Marseille French defender Patrice Evra (right) vies for the ball with Nice's French defender Arnaud Souquet (left) during the French Ligue 1 football match between Olympique de Marseille (OM) and Nice at the Velodrome stadium in Marseille on May 7, 2017.—AFP

## DZEXO SHINE; ROMA ROUT BELEAGUERED AC MILAN

**MILAN:** Edin Dzeko scored twice to help Roma to a 4-1 victory at AC Milan on Sunday and keep the capital side's title chances mathematically alive. It was his 27th league goal of the season and the Bosnia-Herzegovina forward needs just two more to equal Rodolfo Volk as the Roma player with the most goals in a Serie A season. Volk set the target as far back as the 1930-31 campaign. Dzeko also moved two clear of Torino forward Andrea Belotti in the race for the top goalscorer award. "Coming here and scoring four goals is never easy, we had an almost perfect 90 minutes," Dzeko said. "It's a pity we conceded a goal but in general we should be happy. "I'm happy with my season, I've worked hard all

year and these results give me confidence. But first I look at the team's results rather than my personal ones." Roma moved back into second, seven points behind Juventus. The Bianconeri could clinch an unprecedented sixth successive Serie A title at Roma next Sunday. Third-placed Napoli is a point behind Roma with three rounds remaining. The new era at Milan continued without a win. It has now lost two matches and drawn two since the \$800 million takeover by Chinese-led Rossoneri Sport Luxembourg ended Silvio Berlusconi's 31-year reign.

It would have been worse for Milan, if not for teenage goalkeeper Gianluigi Donnarumma, who pulled off two fantastic

saves to tip strikes from Diego Perotti and Radja Nainggolan onto his post. "Roma was superior to Milan, the players and the coach," Milan coach Vincenzo Montella said. "We believed we could fight back, we managed to get back in the game, but because of carelessness they again extended their advantage. "From tomorrow I want to see the necessary fury to honor the end of the season ... The lads are making great sacrifices. That doesn't mean we can't do better and we have to do so in these three matches."

### LAZIO 7, SAMPDORIA 3

Roma took just eight minutes to break the deadlock as, following a swift exchange of passes with Mohamed Salah, Dzeko curled into the right side of the net. And Dzeko doubled his tally shortly before the half-hour when he headed in a corner. Milan thought it had got back into the match in the 76th with a diving header from Mario Pasalic following a corner but Roma restored its two-goal advantage two minutes later when former Rossoneri forward Stephan El Shaarawy curled a fantastic strike into the top right corner. Daniele De Rossi crowned a brilliant night for the visitors with a late penalty after Gabriel Paletta was sent off for hauling down Salah. Lazio's freescoring ways continued as it put seven past Sampdoria to take its tally to 16 goals in its past three matches and secure at least Europa League football. It took Lazio less than two minutes to open the scoring at the Stadio Olimpico as Keita Balde Diao ran on to Sergej Milinkovic-Savic's through ball and fired past Christian Puggioni from a tight angle. Lazio goalkeeper Thomas Strakosha performed a stunning double save on Milan Djuricic and then Karol Linetty in the 17th.

Sampdoria's chances of turning the match around evaporated moments later when Milan Skriniar was shown a straight red card for a tackle from behind on Keita and Ciro Immobile converted the resulting

penalty. Linetty got one back for Sampdoria in the 32nd but Wesley Hoedt bundled in a corner three minutes later, shortly before Felipe Anderson converted another penalty for Lazio. Stefan de Vrij netted the home side's fifth on the stroke of halftime. There was a brief respite for Samp at the start of the second half before Senad Lulic headed in Lucas Biglia's cross in the 65th for 6-1 and Immobile doubled his tally five minutes later following a one-two with Keita. Fabio Quagliarella netted another consolation for Sampdoria in the 72nd and converted a penalty in stoppage time.

### GENOA 1, INTER MILAN 0

Inter Milan's miserable run continued as it fell to its fifth defeat in six matches to leave it three points behind Milan and the final Europa League spot. Genoa, which appealed for an early penalty when Gary Medel tripped Giovanni Simeone, broke the deadlock in the 70th. Samir Handanovic pushed Miguel Veloso's long-range shot onto the bar but Goran Pandev netted the rebound to punish his former team. Inter had a chance to snatch a point three minutes from time when it was awarded a penalty after Nicolas Burdisso handled in the area but Genoa goalkeeper Eugenio Lamanna got down brilliantly to palm Antonio Candreva's spot kick off the line. Inter midfielder Geoffrey Kondogbia was sent off for dissent moments later.

### OTHER MATCHES

Atalanta was held to a 1-1 draw at Udinese but still look all but certain to qualify for Europe next season as it remained fifth, nine points ahead of Inter. Fiorentina rescued a 2-2 draw at Sassuolo in a match that saw Nikola Kalinic's penalty saved and Gonzalo Rodriguez sent off for the visitors. Palermo was relegated after drawing 1-1 at Chievo Verona and joins Pescara, which lost 1-0 at home to Crotone. Empoli beat Bologna 3-1.—AP



MILAN: AS Roma's Bosnian forward Edin Dzeko (right) is congratulated by comrades after scoring during the Italian Serie A football match AC Milan vs AS Roma at the San Siro stadium in Milan. — AFP

### Extras

#### Maradona to coach UAE second division

**FUJAIRAH:** Football great Diego Maradona has been appointed as coach of second division side Al-Fujairah in the United Arab Emirates. The former Argentina star, now 56, has been out of management since being sacked by Dubai's Al-Wasl in 2012 but has now found a new role in the UAE second tier. A statement on the club's Twitter feed on Sunday read: "Officially: Maradona as coach of Fujairah" Maradona himself wrote on his official Facebook page: "I want to tell you that I'm the new coach of Al-Fujairah SC, in the second division of the United Arab Emirates." Attaching a picture of himself posing with an Al-Fujairah shirt with his name and his famous number 10 on the back, he added: "Here are my new colors!" Maradona won the 1986 World Cup with his country and reached the final four years later, and twice won Italy's Serie A with Napoli. His career also took in Barcelona, Sevilla and his beloved Boca Juniors and he is typically mentioned alongside ex-Brazil striker Pele in discussions about the best player of all time.

#### Borussia Dortmund coach 'nearing exit'

**BERLIN:** Borussia Dortmund coach Thomas Tuchel is likely to leave the club at the end of the season after public disagreements with the Bundesliga side's bosses, German media said yesterday. The latest sign of friction came at the weekend when chief executive Hans-Joachim Watzke admitted his relationship with Tuchel was strained over the decision to play their Champions League quarter-final first leg a day after a bomb attack on their team bus last month. Tuchel, 43, complained in the aftermath of the 3-2 defeat by Monaco that he had not been involved in the decision "at all", but Watzke at the weekend hit back and said that was not true. "Against Watzke, Tuchel can not win," the tabloid newspaper Bild said yesterday, while the local WAZ newspaper said that Watzke had the support of Dortmund chairman Reinhard Rauball in the row between the pair. "Hans-Joachim Watzke has shown for years that in difficult situations he does not think of himself, first of all he thinks of the club," Rauball told several media outlets. Tuchel's contract expires in 2018 but he looks likely to be gone within weeks.

#### Wallace, Villa fire NYCCF past Atlanta

**NEW YORK:** Reigning Major League Soccer Most Valuable Player David Villa celebrated his contract extension with New York City FC with a goal in Sunday's 3-1 win over Atlanta United. Former Spain and Barcelona star Villa returned from a one match absence due to illness and quickly made his presence felt at Yankee Stadium. Gathering a pass from Rodney Wallace on the flank, he maneuvered through a clutch of Atlanta defenders and fired from the left. Atlanta keeper Alec Kann tried to dive for the save, but Villa's shot rocketed off the inside of the right post into the back of the net for a 1-0 New York lead in the 17th minute. Villa's strike came four days after the club announced he had inked a deal to stay in the Big Apple through the end of the 2018 season. Wallace scored in the 60th minute and helped set up Maximiliano Moralez's goal just a minute later for New York, who have won four of their last six matches. Carlos Carmona scored in the 39th minute for Atlanta, who have only one win in their last six outings in their debut season in the league.

#### Swansea survival would be 'biggest achievement'

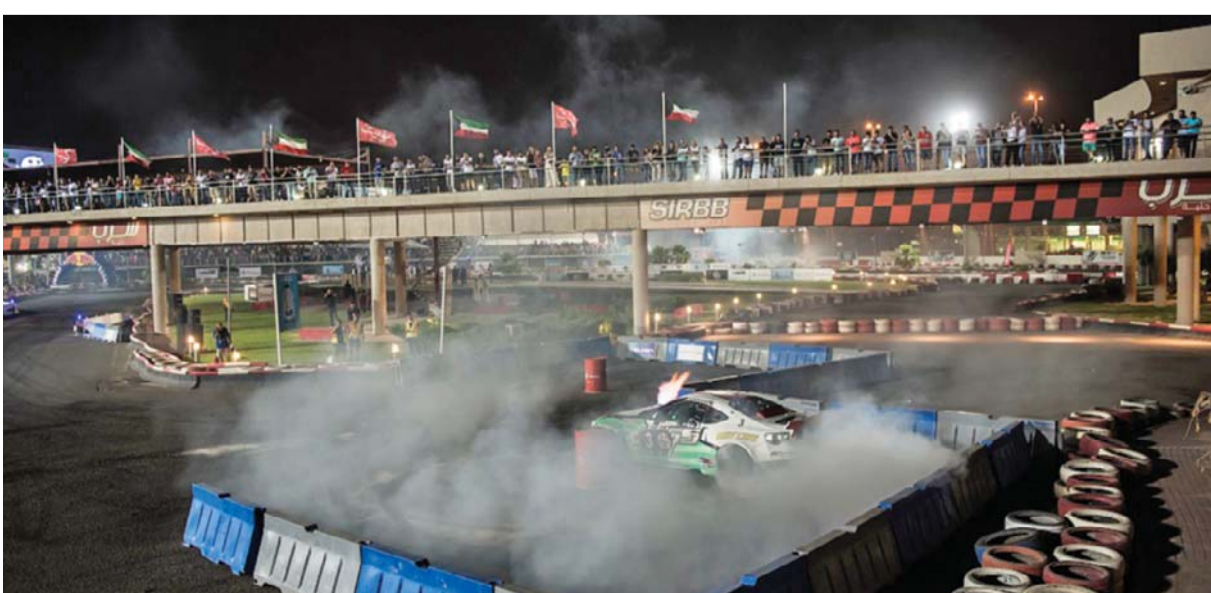
**LONDON:** Swansea City manager Paul Clement believes avoiding Premier League relegation this season would be a bigger achievement than winning major trophies as assistant manager at Real Madrid, Chelsea and Paris St Germain. Clement was Carlo Ancelotti's assistant at Real Madrid when they lifted their 10th European Cup in 2014 and was also a part of the coaching staff when Chelsea won a league and FA Cup double in 2010. Since taking charge at the Liberty Stadium in January, the 45-year-old has overseen a major uplift in the club's fortunes, guiding them out of relegation zone with a 1-0 win over Everton on Saturday. "I've been in a very privileged position in the past to have worked with some fantastic teams... and got my hands on some unbelievable silverware," Clement told the British media. "But this will be the best by far if we manage to stay in this league, because I'm the one making the decisions. "It was difficult for the supporters and for the players. I was the third coach in one season, so it will be a fantastic achievement if we do it."



## Ali Makhseed - Red Bull Car Park Drift 2017 Kuwait's Champion



All eyes were on Kuwait's Sirbb Circuit last Friday as competitors taking part in Red Bull Car Park Drift set the ground on fire with the crowning of Ali Makhseed as 'King of Drift' for the year 2017, scoring 375 points in total on his Toyota GT86. The big annual event was held in the presence of Lebanese national Abdo Feghali, drift and rally world champion, and under the sponsorship of the Public Authority for Youth & Sports, Basel Salem Al-Sabah Motorsport Club, Drag 965, GoPro, Acqua Eva, Al Anbaa Newspaper, Kuwait Times, Falken tires, Shop & Ship and Total.





Kuwaiti national Ali Makhseed was honored to be crowned as champion of the 2017 competition, outperforming both Kuwaiti nationals Fahed Al-Jadeai who ranked 2<sup>nd</sup> with 360 points on his Nissan Silvia and Abdullah Al-Jadi who ranked 3<sup>rd</sup> with 317 points on his Nissan 350Z.

The trophy and prizes were awarded by Basel Al-Sabah Club officials, spearheaded by the club's director manager Saif Awadh Al-Mutairi. As a result of his winning, Makhseed was qualified to participate in the Regional Final to be held in Doha as a representative of his country Kuwait.

**A Busy Day Par Excellence**

The Kuwaiti people of all ages gathered on Friday the 5<sup>th</sup> of May 2017 to follow up on the event and after qualifying rounds were held Thursday evening, the 11 participants braced themselves for the finals which ended with Makhseed being declared as champion. In the first stage, Mesyar Abu Shaibah, champion of the 2016 edition of the championship, started with the challenge, followed by Ali Makhseed who did not make any mistake in the track that was designed under the supervision of Abdo Feghali and thus, got the highest score of 375 points out of 400 enabling him to win the title.

Drifter Faisal Al Shuwaiee's turn was next; he presented an outstanding show yet he made a mistake while turning around a fixed point. Amid applause and cheering at the stands and in the VIP area, Al-Shuwaiee was followed by drifter Fahed Al-Jadeai who also made a mistake. As well, Hamad Al Hajeri, Mohammed Abdul Razzak, Abdul Hadi Al-Hujailan, Jordanian national Louay Abu Ayyash and Sagr Al Ghanem managed to be qualified to the second round of the competition.

**From Eight to Four**

After the first stage, eight drifters were qualified: Sagr Al Ghanem who did not pursue the challenge due to a malfunction, Hamad Al-Hajri, Louay Abu Ayyash, Fahed Al-Jadeai, Faisal Al-Shuwaiee, Mesyar Abu Shaibah, Abdullah Al-Jadi and finally Ali Makhseed.

Then, Ali Makhseed, Faisal Al Shuwaiee, Abdullah Al Jadi and Fahed Al Jadeai were qualified but Ali Makhseed who scored the highest number of points was crowned as champion.

**BMX and Motorbike Side Acts**

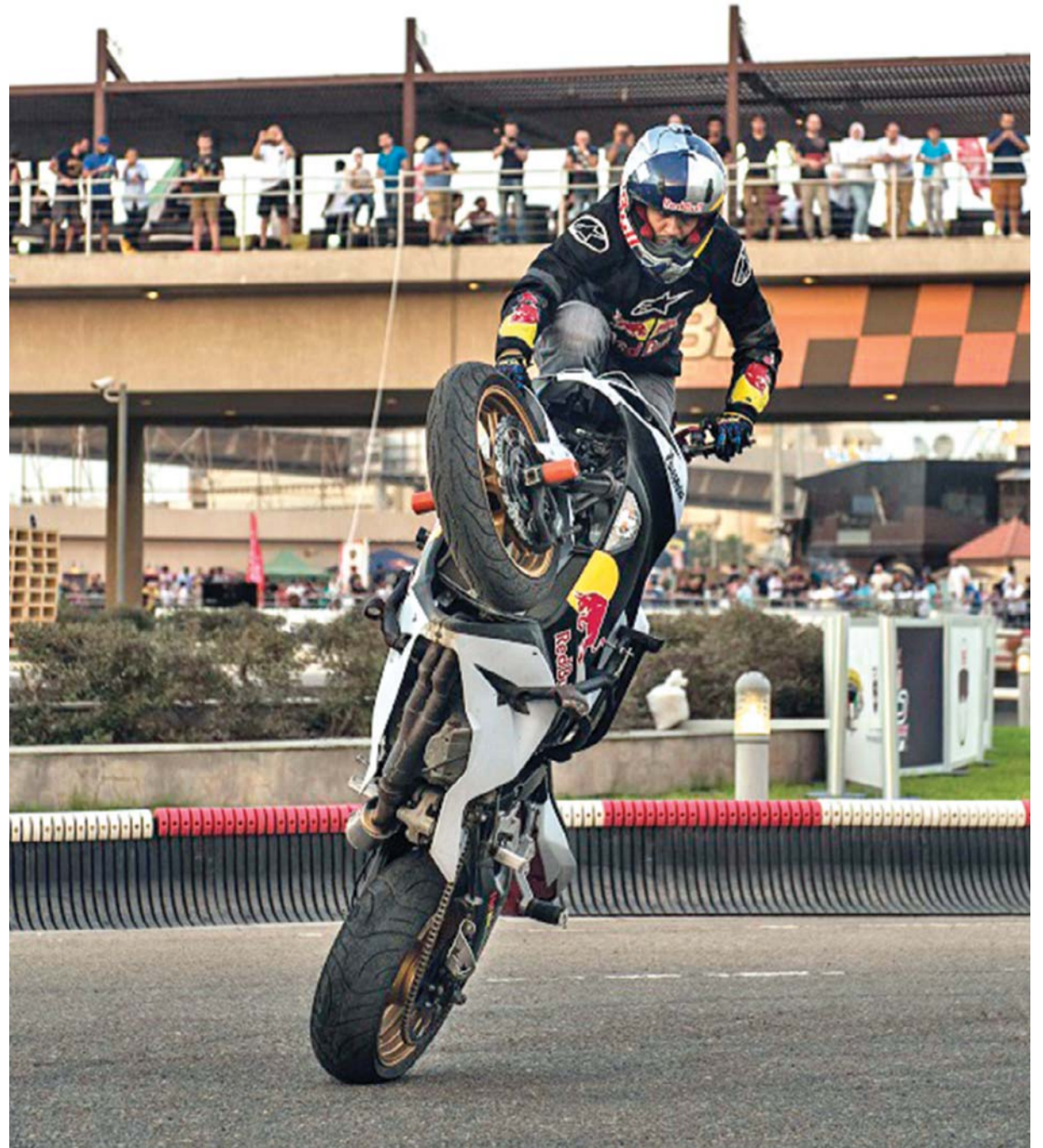
As the first stage of the championship's final race wrapped up, motorbike champion Shade Al-Dhaheeri presented an electrifying show. He drove his bike and controlled it in a standing position and then turned around with it amid the astonishment of the audience who crowded up on the seats and around the track.

In turn, Kuwaiti Red Bull champion Mansour Al Safran presented a BMX show that was applauded and cheered by the audience at Sirbb Circuit.

**Ali Makhseed Expresses Happiness**

Ali Makhseed, the champion of Red Bull Car Park Drift, said he was very happy to receive this title amid a raging competition that set the stands on fire. "I did not expect to win although I am convinced of my distinctive overall performance. I extend my thanks to the event organizers and I am excited to participate in the Regional Final of Red Bull Car Park Drift to be held in Qatar at the end of this year". The champion also lauded the team's overall performance in spite of the malfunctions that occurred.

Basel Al-Sabah Club's director manager Saif Awad Al Mutairi also praised the power of races, the way the participants were qualified and the seriousness shown by the Kuwaiti youth in playing such championships in Kuwait, adding that the club is participating for the first time in Sirbb Circuit.



# Sports

Ali Makhseed crowned the 'King of Drift'



Evra scores rare goal as Marseille overpower Nice



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TORONTO: Cleveland Cavaliers guard Kyrie Irving (2) is fouled by Toronto Raptors guard DeMar DeRozan (10) as Raptors guard Cory Joseph (6) reaches in during the second half of Game 4 on Sunday, May 7, 2017. — AP

## CAVALIERS POWER INTO EASTERN CONFERENCE FINALS

**LOS ANGELES:** The NBA champion Cleveland Cavaliers powered into the Eastern Conference finals on Sunday, downing the Toronto Raptors 109-102 to complete a four-game sweep of their playoff series. LeBron James scored 35 points with nine rebounds and six assists as the Cavaliers subdued the desperate Raptors to remain unbeaten in eight games in these playoffs. They're the first team to win eight games in a row over consecutive post-season runs. "It's never easy especially in a close-out game," said Cavaliers guard Kyrie Irving, who scored 11 of his 27 points in the fourth quarter and added nine assists.

"There's desperation at their end and desperation at our end." In the Eastern Conference finals, the Cavaliers will play either the Boston Celtics or Washington Wizards for a place in the NBA Finals. John Wall tallied 27 points and 12 assists as the

Wizards defeated the Celtics 121-102 Sunday to level their series at 2-2. Kyle Korver scored 18 off the bench as his 16 first-half points helped the Cavaliers erase an 11-point first-quarter deficit and take a 61-49 half-time lead.

With their backs against the wall, down 16 points early in the third quarter, the Raptors responded, taking a 93-92 lead with 6:38 to play. "The closeout game is always tough," Cavaliers coach Tyrone Lue said. "They came out and competed, took an early lead, went up 11." "It was a tough game for us. We knew it would be, coming into a hostile environment." But it marked the second straight year that the Cavs eliminated the Raptors from playoffs on their home floor. They beat them in six games in the Eastern Conference finals last season.

Serge Ibaka scored 23 points for the Raptors.

DeMar DeRozan added 22 with eight assists. But with Kyle Lowry on the bench for a second straight game with a sprained ankle, the Raptors couldn't match the Cavs' firepower. Irving put Cleveland in front with a three-pointer with 5:34 to play and made two free throws. His lay-up with four minutes left had Cleveland up by eight. The Cavs out-scored Cleveland 17-9 over the final 6:15, Irving producing all 11 points in one key 11-2 Cavs run.

James played the entire fourth quarter-but he'll have plenty of time to rest since the conference finals won't start before May 15. In a closeout game, Lue said, "he tries to go as far as we need him in that fourth quarter." "I tried to get him out for a couple of minutes, but he said, 'No, I'm fine,'" added Lue, who did make sure that James got a bit of a breather by calling a timeout on the heels of a Toronto 20-second timeout. James will be playing

for a seventh consecutive NBA Finals appearance, having had four in a row with Miami and the past two with Cleveland, and his eighth overall. James is 3-4 in his trips to the championship series.

### WIZARDS 121, CELTICS 102

Bradley Beal scored 29 points and Washington reeled off 26 straight points in the third quarter to beat Boston in Game 4 of their Eastern Conference semifinal series. John Wall finished with 27 points after missing his first nine shots and 12 assists for the Wizards, who evened the best-of-seven series 2-2 after Boston won the first two games at home. Washington shot 52.4 percent from the field and outscored Boston 42-20 in the third quarter. Wall, Beal and Markieff Morris combined for 34 points in the period. Isaiah Thomas led the Celtics with 19 points.

### ROCKETS 125, SPURS 104

James Harden recorded a double-double, and Houston's bench was exceptional in a romp over San Antonio in Game 4 of a Western Conference semifinal series at Toyota Center. The Rockets hit 19 of 43 3-point attempts to even the best-of-seven series at 2-2, with the Spurs set to host Game 5 on Tuesday at AT&T Center. Harden was superb throughout, recording game highs in points (28) and assists (12) to resuscitate an offensive attack that went silent as the Spurs rolled to victories in Games 2 and 3. Guards Eric Gordon (22 points) and Lou Williams combined to score 35 off the bench for Houston, which did lose reserve center Nene to a left groin injury. Spurs forwards Kawhi Leonard and LaMarcus Aldridge scored 16 points apiece, while Jonathan Simmons tallied 17 points off the San Antonio bench.—Agencies

## UNITED GIVES UP ON LEAGUE AS MOURINHO'S CAUTION BACKFIRES

**MANCHESTER:** Manchester United might finish the season with two trophies, a place in the Champions League and a genuine sense that the club's old aura is slowly being restored. Not a bad start to the Jose Mourinho era, many will say. Still, there are some signs that would trouble even the most ardent of United fans. First is the obvious one: the league standings. United is in fifth place - it could be sixth come tomorrow evening - with two weeks of the season left, and the team is likely to finish outside the top four for the third time in the past four years.

Another is a glance at the team's away record against its biggest rivals. United hasn't scored a goal in five away matches against teams in the top six this season, including the loss to Chelsea in the FA Cup. Then, there are recent examples of Mourinho's cautious approach: Playing with 10 men behind the ball for the entire second half in the Manchester derby by last month. Or attacking midfielder Henrikh Mkhitaryan taking over throw-in duties from Matteo Darmian against Arsenal on Sunday so the left back could return to the defensive line.

Mkhitaryan, the player of the year in Germany last season with his flair and vision, virtually played as a wing back at Emirates Stadium, as did playmaker Juan Mata on the right flank. This was hardly the boldness that marked out United under Alex Ferguson. Yesterday marked four years since Ferguson announced his retirement after almost 27 years in charge at Old Trafford, and, after the forgettable tenures of David Moyes and Louis van Gaal, United finally has a manager of Ferguson's gravitas in Mourinho.

Like Ferguson, Mourinho is a winner - capturing the League Cup in February and potentially the Europa League in two weeks is testament to that - but will Mourinho ever recreate the swashbuckling sides of the Ferguson era? After 25 games and nearly 200 days, United's

longest unbeaten run in a single season is over following the 2-0 loss at Arsenal. As are the team's top-four ambitions, if you listened to Mourinho after the game. At the end of it all, the question has to be asked: Was it worth it? United drew 12 of those 25 games and still finds itself only in fifth place. Wouldn't it have been better for United to go for it more in some matches, and therefore risk defeat, in an attempt to turn draws into wins?

Instead, Mourinho finds it easier to set his side up to not lose. Where he has gambled, however, is relying on winning the Europa League to secure a Champions League qualification spot, rather than achieve it via a top-four finish in the Premier League. His lineups and risk-averse tactics for recent matches against City and Arsenal may have ensured United won't climb above its current position of fifth. "Trophies make history," Mourinho said. "Not league positions." Mourinho has injury problems, although they are starting to clear, and United is in the midst of a grueling schedule of a match every three or four days. They've played 59 games and counting this season.

Still, the club has spent something approaching \$600 million on new players over the last three off-seasons - \$375 million across two summers under Van Gaal and close to \$200 million under Mourinho - and has a deep squad. A supposedly weakened starting team against Arsenal still cost about \$300 million to assemble. Paul Pogba, signed for \$116 million in August as the most expensive player in soccer history, hasn't had the impact that was expected. But that may be because his game is slightly negated by Mourinho's tactics and the way the team is set up. There is set to be more heavy spending in the upcoming off-season, ahead of Mourinho's second year in charge. There will be no excuses, then, if United fails to mount a genuine title challenge.—AP



LONDON: Manchester United's Portuguese manager Jose Mourinho gestures on the touchline during the English Premier League football match between Arsenal and Manchester United at the Emirates Stadium in London on May 7, 2017. — AFP

## FIFA FINANCES 'SOLID'

**MANAMA:** FIFA president Gianni Infantino claimed yesterday that the finances of football's governing body were "extremely solid", despite it posting a \$369 million loss earlier this year. Speaking at the Asian Football Confederation's congress in Bahrain, Infantino said the losses were in line with FIFA's "business model" and there was no need for it to give "artificial" figures.

"In spite of what some have been trying to write or to say, FIFA's finances are extremely solid," Infantino told delegates in a short address. He added that it was normal for FIFA to make losses for three years and then "make revenue" during the fourth financial year, when a World Cup takes place. "That's how the business model is conducted," he continued. "We don't need to tell you other stories, we don't need to make our figures artificial (or) look better by some accounting measures." "The situation is that the finances of FIFA are extremely solid." FIFA has said previously that its losses could increase throughout this year, but rebound in 2018 to a profit of \$1 billion, largely due to TV deals from the Russian World Cup.

### DODD LOSES COUNCIL VOTE

Infantino was speaking a day after FIFA formally announced a partnership deal with Qatar Airways for the Gulf carrier to be its "official airline" for a host of major tournaments, including the 2018 and 2022 World Cups. Under the terms of the deal-unlikely to appease FIFA critics-the Gulf carrier will also sponsor the 2017 Confederations Cup, the Club World Cup, and the women's World Cup. It comes as FIFA struggles to find new sponsors since corruption scandals which engulfed football's governing body in 2015.

Yesterday's congress also saw the AFC finally elect members to the all-powerful FIFA Council. China's Zhang Jian, South Korea's Chung Mong Gyu and the Philippines' Mariano Araneta were all elected unopposed. The third seat was made available after Kuwaiti powerbroker Sheikh Ahmad Al-Fahad Al-Sabah, who is facing corruption allegations in the US, which he denies, stood down.

The council seat reserved for a woman delegate was won by Bangladesh's Mahfuza Akhter Kiron, who beat Australia's high-profile candidate Moya Dodd 27 votes to 17. The original vote had been delayed since last September when the AFC abandoned their extraordinary congress in Goa after just 27 minutes. That meeting was abruptly cancelled after Saoud Al-Mohannadi, the Qatar Football Association vice-president, was stopped at the very last minute from standing for election for the FIFA council. He was then banned from football for a year after being accused of not cooperating with a FIFA corruption enquiry.

However, last month, in a rare reversal, Mohannadi won his appeal against the ban handed down by a FIFA ethics committee. This exoneration came too late for him to apply to stand for the council again. He was present for the vote yesterday, but made no comment afterwards. The AFC president, Bahrain's Sheikh Salman bin Ibrahim Al-Khalifa, raised the prospect that the ban on Iraq from hosting football matches could soon end. "Hopefully we will see some news from our council in the next two days," he said. "Hopefully Iraq will have friendly games very soon." The main FIFA congress also takes place in Bahrain this week, on May 11. — AFP



## VIVA REPORTS KD 10 MILLION NET PROFIT FOR Q1 2017 REVENUES IN FIRST QUARTER REACH KD 66.9 MILLION

**KUWAIT:** VIVA, Kuwait's fastest-growing and most developed telecom operator, announced the financial results for the first quarter ended on 31 March 2017; whereby VIVA's net profit grew to reach KD 10 million recording a growth of 2 percent compared to the same period last year; whereas the revenues in the first quarter in 2017 reached KD 66.9 million. VIVA achieved these results due to a bundle of innovative products and offers launched recently to meet all customers segments' needs and aspiration, in addition to customer-focused marketing campaigns.

Commenting on the Q1-2017 financial results, Dr Mahmoud Ahmed Abdulrahman, the chairman of viva said: "Despite the high competition witnessed in the Kuwaiti Telecom Market, VIVA was able to achieve a growth in the profitability and good levels of revenues, in addition to sustain the operational efficiency that led to generating positive return to our shareholders. The witnessed growth in VIVA's profits was a result of the approved business strategy to be one of the most developed telecom companies in Kuwait and the region. Also, our positive and key role, as a pioneer telecom company, always contributes in providing smart telecommunications solutions to satisfy our customers' aspirations and needs."

He added: "VIVA was able to achieve net profit of KD 10 million (earnings per share of 20 fils) during the Q1- 2017 compared to net profit of KD 9.8 million (earnings per share of 20 fils) during Q1-2016. These results achieved by VIVA during the first quarter of 2017 reflect the efficient business strategy adopted by the company to achieve outstanding results despite of the increasing competition. Also, VIVA managed to achieve positive earnings for its shareholders as a result of the commitment to elevate



**Dr Mahmoud Ahmed Abdulrahman**

the quality of customer service and improving the operational efficiency".

### VIVA goals

On his part, Eng Salman bin Abdulaziz Al-Badran, VIVA's CEO said: "Results of Q1-2017 came in line with VIVA goals and boundless ambitions to achieve an increase in its operational revenues and strengthen its leadership in the telecom market. It is noteworthy to mention that, VIVA has won many awards including "Best Telecommunications Company of the year, Kuwait 2016" by International Finance Magazine in recognition of the telecom firm's exceptional performance and leadership role through innovative solutions and technology, which serve all the segments in the Kuwaiti market, the "Best Contact Centre Experience", "Excellence Governance Award", "VIP Customer Service Award", ISO/IEC 27001:2013 certification for Information Security Management System, attaining global status by meeting applicable mandatory requirements from two leading entities International Organization for Standardization (ISO) and the



**Eng Salman bin Abdulaziz Al-Badran**

International Electrotechnical Commission (IEC). In addition VIVA successfully established the first Voice Over LTE (VoLTE) interconnection in the Middle East and North Africa region in partnership with a local network, and was the first telecom company in Kuwait that has successfully tested the fifth-generation "5G" in its lab enabling customers to exchange information and communicate at high speed."

Al-Badran added: "VIVA has achieved good levels of profitability which improved the company's financial and operational efficiency. As a result, VIVA recorded revenues of KD 66.9 million during Q1-2017 and achieved net profit of KD 10 million (earnings per share of 20 fils), whereas the operating profit has reached KD 10.7 million during the same period. On the other hand, VIVA customer base has reached 2.3 million at the end March, 2017. VIVA's financial results reflected its ability to compete, sustained revenues and maintain its position as the second largest telecom operator in the Kuwaiti market in term of revenues in the telecom sector.



### Competitive edge

The company managed to decrease its leverage ratio due to its conservative financial policy to reach 0.3x at the end of March 2017 as compared to 0.7x recorded at end of March 2016. He added: "We will continue our hard work in implementing our strategy to maintain our competitive edge and achieve further growth and success in the Kuwaiti telecom market through offering innovative products and services in line with the latest technology to meet our customers' needs."

VIVA is the fastest-growing telecom operator in Kuwait. Launched in December 2008, VIVA makes things Possible for its customers by transforming communication, information and entertainment experiences. The company has rapidly established an unrivalled position in the market through its customer centric approach. VIVA's quest is to be the mobile brand of choice in Kuwait by being transparent, engaging, energetic and fulfilling. VIVA continues to take a considerable share of the market by offering an innovative range of best value products, services and content propositions; a state of the art, nationwide network and world-class service. VIVA offers internet speeds of more than 100 Mbps, due to the implementation of the most advanced fourth generation (4G LTE) network in Kuwait resulting in superior coverage, performance and reliability.



# 2017

## First Quarter

## Total Revenues

# 66.9

KD million

The Board of Directors of Kuwait Telecommunications Company (VIVA) is pleased to announce to its shareholders that the company has achieved a net profit of KD 10.0 million during the first Quarter of the financial year 2017.

| Operating Profit   | Net Profit         | EPS                | Subscribers               |
|--------------------|--------------------|--------------------|---------------------------|
| 10.7<br>KD million | 10.0<br>KD million | 20<br>Kuwaiti fils | 2.3<br>Million subscriber |

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## GULF BANK WELCOMES NEW RED ACCOUNT WINNERS

**KUWAIT:** Gulf Bank was pleased to welcome the new winners of the fourth monthly red account draw on Thursday, 4 May 2017, and present them with their Apple prizes.

Nourah Mohammed Shlaitan Al-Dosari, winner of the iPhone 7 Plus-red product, Shahad Ahmed Sayed Sulaiman Albukhari, winner of the iPad Pro, and Haya Ibrahim Saleh Jehail, winner of the Apple Watch, all visited Gulf Bank Head Office where Manal Barakat - Manager of redTM and Nassour Consumer greeted them and handed them the prizes.

Gulf Bank's red account draw was held in the bank's head office on Monday, April 24, 2017, under the supervision of Ministry of Commerce and Industry. Gulf Bank's red is an

account for high school students, college and university students aged between 15 and 25. Eligible customers will get the chance to enter the draw automatically and on a monthly basis, upon transferring their student allowances.

Each month, an iPhone 7 plus, an iPad Pro, and an Apple Watch will be gifted to three lucky winners monthly and until January 2018. The next draw dates are announced as follows:

- \* May 22, 2017
- \* June 29, 2017
- \* July 24, 2017
- \* August 21, 2017
- \* September 28, 2017
- \* October 23, 2017
- \* November 20, 2017
- \* January 11, 2018

In addition to the Apple prizes, students will have the opportunity to win a Fiat 500c -Model 2017 at the annual car draw, upon transferring their allowance! Also, movie tickets at all Cineescape theatres will be available for only KD 2 seven days a week by simply being a red account holder; not to mention the exclusive offers from Edfa3ly, which is an international internet shopping services company.

Gulf Bank invites all students to take part in its red account draws, as they might be the lucky winners for year 2017! To take part in the red account draws, prospective customers can open an account at any one of Gulf Bank's 56 branches, transfer online using the Bank's App or through the bank's website at [www.e-gulfbank.com](http://www.e-gulfbank.com).



Manal Barakat with the red account winners



SEOUL: South Korean presidential candidate Moon Jae-In (center) of the Democratic Party speaks during his election campaign in Seoul yesterday. —AFP

## IF ELECTED, MOON MAY PUT ECONOMY AHEAD OF JOBS

**SEOUL:** The man tipped to be elected South Korea's new president has said he wants to hire more firefighters, teachers and policemen, but his main objective will be to protect a fragile recovery in Asia's fourth-largest economy. Moon Jae-in is the favorite to win today's election and become the first liberal president in South Korea in nine years. But he seems unlikely to raise taxes or radically change policies followed by conservative governments, economists say.

Moon has hired conservative economist Kim Kwang-doo as his adviser for economic policy, and media have said he may be named prime minister or a senior cabinet minister in the new administration. Like Kim, some of Moon's other key advisers are also long-time advocates of tax cuts and lower regulations. People who have worked closely with the Moon campaign say the presidential frontrunner will be careful not to hurt a fragile economic recovery. That implies no radical change in policies for now, which will be positive for markets.

But sticking with conservative policies may mean that Moon's plan for 500,000 new jobs per year could run into hurdles, affecting a key voter segment. More than 11 percent of people who are 15-29 years old and eligible to work were unemployed in March, much higher than South Korea's overall unemployment rate of 4.2 percent, according to Statistics Korea.

"Moon doesn't seem more liberal than other presidential candidates. I think at first he attempted to do something radical, but now he seems to have changed course, emphasizing market stability," said Stephen Lee, chief economist at Meritz Securities.

"It looks like they're aiming for a soft landing." Recent economic data show exports have been rising for six straight months while first quarter growth surged, prompting the central bank and government to upgrade forecasts.

In the 389-page election manifesto from Moon's liberal Democratic Party, only four pages are devoted to how his administration will raise money for new jobs and other welfare projects. Details are limited to vague descriptions, like "strengthening taxation for the rich" and "higher fines for unfair practices." Moon, repeatedly asked by other candidates in several election debates how he will fund hundreds of

thousands of new jobs, did not offer details or mention new taxes as a means.

Rather than broadly raising corporate and income taxes, Moon will focus on the super-wealthy and top corporate earners, his campaign advisers say.

"The basis for the policies is liberal, but the execution method is moderate. I think this is because (Moon's people) do not want to worry the mainstream public," said a high-ranking government official, who declined to be named. The official is part of a government team that examines candidates' pledges to plan ahead and prepare policy for a smooth handover.

### Park's former adviser

Kim, who has been spearheading Moon's economic plans, is a former adviser to conservative ex-president Park Geun-hye's campaign in 2012 who was responsible for her campaign pledges to cut taxes and relax corporate regulations. Park was impeached in March over a corruption scandal. Kim told Reuters in a recent interview he was courted by Moon last year to join his campaign and that he was moved by the frontrunner's "genuine heart" to revive the economy. Kim declined to comment for this story.

Kim, a professor at Sogang University, is frequently named in local media as a possible prime minister or other high-ranking Cabinet post. He did not take any official role in Park's administration.

Also helping Moon are Cho Yoon-je, former presidential economic adviser for Roh Moo-hyun who has served stints at the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund, and Kim Sang-jo, a professor who has been nicknamed "chaebol sniper" for his shareholder activist campaign in the past two decades. Chaebol refers to South Korea's powerful family-run conglomerates.

Cho is also known for his views that the economy should function centred on markets, not the government. Both names have also appeared in media as strong candidates for top government positions. Moon's economic team will have to maintain a still fragile recovery against growing protectionist policies in the United States and elsewhere, as well as tackling high youth unemployment, rising household debt and a rapidly ageing population. —Reuters

## BUFFETT'S 'CARNIVAL' ATTRACTS SHOPPERS, THE SLEEP-DEPRIVED

**OMAHA, Neb:** Katie Ryerson and her father took a train from their hometown of Columbus, Ohio, to Omaha, Nebraska, for her first Berkshire Hathaway Inc shareholder meeting, a weekend the conglomerate's billionaire chief Warren Buffett calls "Woodstock for Capitalists."

They were part of a crowd expected to top last year's estimated 37,000. Shareholders filled the downtown CenturyLink Center's 18,000-seat arena, plus overflow rooms, on Saturday for the meeting itself with the man dubbed "The Oracle of Omaha." "My dad bought shares of Berkshire for me when I was born," said Ryerson, a student at Michigan's Hillsdale College. "It is amazing," she said in an exhibit hall where stockholders thronged to buy products made by Berkshire units. "So many people are dedicated to the same thing. I'm kind of overwhelmed."

Buffett and Berkshire Vice Chairman Charlie Munger taught and entertained shareholders as they answered more than five hours of questions at the meeting, the weekend's main event.

It was also a time for many to shop and eat. The Fruit of the Loom unit erected crowd-control barriers after crowds overwhelmed its display area last year. A line to get inside early on Friday afternoon stretched 150-deep.

"Very interesting, like a carnival atmosphere," Les Magee, a retired accountant from Gainesville, Florida, who was attending his first meeting, said as he waited on that line. "It's like Disney, because of the lines." See's Candies sold most of the 21,714 pounds of confections it brought. And by the time doors were closing on Saturday afternoon, Dairy Queen was down to two boxes of unsold frozen treats. It had brought 25,000 dessert bars and Blizzards. Buffett got his usual vanilla-orange bar for free this year. "We're always going to buy a few things," said Joseph Schwartz, a retired carpenter from Omaha, after he purchased Ginsu knives. "We never go to the meeting. He starts talking about derivatives, and I would go to sleep." Other shareholders get little sleep. —Reuters

## GERMAN INDUSTRY ORDERS RISE FOR SECOND MONTH IN A ROW

### INDUSTRY GROUPS WELCOME MACRON'S VICTORY IN FRANCE

**BERLIN:** High demand from abroad boosted German industrial orders in March, data showed yesterday, a second-in-a-row rise analysts saw as a sign the sector is overcoming past volatility and will contribute to growth in coming months.

Contracts for "Made in Germany" goods were up by 1 percent on the month, the Economy Ministry said, the first time since November 2015 that new orders increased for two months in a row.

"Combined with buoyant confidence indicators today's new orders data suggest that industrial production could finally gather some momentum," ING Diba economist Carsten Brzeski said in a note to clients. "There is increasing evidence that contrary to previous cycles industrial production could be the lagging factor of the current positive economic expansion," he added.

The March figure was on a par with the Reuters consensus forecast and followed an upwardly revised rise of 3.5 percent in February. In January orders fell by 6.8 percent.

A breakdown of the March data showed domestic demand fell by 3.8 percent and foreign orders were up by 4.8 percent, with bookings from eurozone countries rising by 6.8 percent. The euro zone has been revived by the European Central Bank's expansive monetary policy, and that recovery is good news for German exporters.

"Demand for exports is becoming buoyant, supported above all by a positive development in the euro zone," said Sophia Krietenbrink

of the DIHK Chambers of Commerce. Highlighting the importance of the eurozone to Germany, German business associations and economists yesterday welcomed the election of pro-European Union politician Emmanuel Macron as president in France, Germany's second most important trading partner after China. "There is a big relief in the engineering industry that the pro-European camp has prevailed in

France," said Carl Martin Welcker, president of the VDMA engineering association.

"With Macron, Germany has won a partner to advance necessary reforms together in the EU."

The BDI industry association also welcomed Macron's victory over far-right candidate Marine Le Pen, who had threatened to pull France out of the EU. Germany wants France and other euro zone economies to implement painful

reforms that would make them more competitive. Euro zone peers want Germany to boost investments, which would reduce its budget surplus.

The German economy is expected to grow 1.5 percent this year. Quarterly growth is expected to nearly double to 0.7 percent in the first quarter from 0.4 percent in the final three months of last year.

Preliminary first quarter growth data is due on Friday. —Reuters



FRANKFURT: A display showing the German Stock Market Index DAX is pictured at the stock exchange in Frankfurt yesterday. —AFP

## CHINA'S APRIL EXPORTS RISE BUT SLOW FROM MARCH

**BEIJING:** Chinese exports rose for the second consecutive month in April, official data showed yesterday, boosted by improving global demand, but at a slower pace than in the previous month.

Exports were up 8.0 percent year-on-year to \$180 billion, while imports were up 11.9 percent at \$142 billion. That pushed the trade surplus to \$38 billion from \$23.9 billion in March, according

to customs figures. "Growth in exports shows robust global demand," Xia Le, a Hong Kong-based economist at Banco Bilbao Vizcaya Argentaria SA, told Bloomberg News.

"China's financial deleveraging has just started, and will weigh on the domestic economy. Imports will reflect that trend first," Xia said. Exports to the huge US market increased by 11.7 percent in April compared to 19.7 percent a

month earlier, while shipments to the European Union rose four percent.

The figures follow official and private surveys showing that factory activity expanded at a slower-than-expected pace in April. China's export data had improved in March as fears of a trade war with the United States eased after US President Donald Trump's stance on Beijing softened after a cordial summit with President Xi Jinping. Trump reversed course on an election campaign promise to label Beijing a currency manipulator and slap punitive tariffs on Chinese imports.

"Today's trade data suggest that growth momentum weakened slightly in April," according to an analysis by Nomura investment bank, adding that it expects the economy to grow 6.8 percent year-on-year in the second quarter, compared to 6.9 percent in the first three months of 2017. While exports increased at a slower rate than March, when they soared by 16.4 percent, they marked a second consecutive month of growth after a 1.3 percent fall in February.

The latest data suggests a "softening momentum in China's export growth" in the second quarter, according to Betty Wang, an economist at Australia and New Zealand Banking Group.

But the "pipeline of electronic products in the global supply chain is still likely to keep China's export outlook stable through 2017," Wang said in a note. The weaker import data "mirrors" a softening of commodity price growth in April, with year-on-year growth of global oil prices and domestic iron ore prices slowing sharply compared with previous months, she said.

"Commodity prices, China's iron ore inventory pile-up, and credit tightening may weigh on China's import outlook in the near term," Wang said. —AFP



BEIJING: A woman holds a bag for shade as she walks along a business street in Beijing yesterday. Chinese exports rose for the second consecutive month in April, official data showed yesterday, boosted by improving global demand but the increase was slower than the previous month. —AFP

## REPORT: EUROPE'S \$6.9BN COAL SUBSIDIES NOT PRODUCTIVE

**LONDON:** The 10 European countries with the highest rates of climate-changing emissions from energy use are spending around 6.3 billion euros (\$6.89 billion) year on coal subsidies, money that could instead be invested in energy technologies of the future, researchers said yesterday.

Those countries - from Britain to Spain - produce 84 percent of the European Union's energy-related greenhouse gas emissions, with Germany and Poland the largest emitters. "Governments have

often used the energy transition, including a shift to renewables, as a justification for extending and introducing new subsidies to coal," the researchers said in a report published yesterday.

Part of the reasoning is that "when the wind doesn't blow and the sun doesn't shine, you need power on stand-by to provide the grid," said Shelagh Whitley, a co-author of the report and head of the climate and energy program at the Overseas Development Institute (ODI), a London-

based think tank. "Instead of governments supporting technologies which are part of the future energy system ... they're subsidizing centuries-old technology," she said.

A better use of the funds could be investment in new technologies such as batteries to store renewable power, as well improvements in energy efficiency and installing demand systems in factories and businesses that can help them power up or power down in times of high demand or low supply. —Reuters

## GIG ANNOUNCES KD 2.8 MILLION Q1 2017 NET PROFIT

**KUWAIT:** Gulf Insurance Group (gig) announced a net profit of KD 2.8 million (\$ 9.2 million), or 15.73 fils per share, for the financial period ended March 31, 2017 compared with KD 3.3 million (\$ 10.8 million) for the same period last year with a decrease of KD 0.5 million (\$ 1.6 million) or 14.7 percent. This decrease is due to the group's share of results from its subsidiaries.

Shareholder equity reached KD 86.2 million (\$ 282.7 million), reflecting a growth of 4.7 percent or KD 3.9 million (\$12.8 million) as at March 31, 2017 compared with the same period last year.

Book value per share reached fils 481 compared with fils 460 as at December 31, 2016. Gross written premium reached KD 78.5 million (\$257.3 million), with an increase of 30.5 percent compared with the same period last year of KD 60.1 million

(\$197.1 million). Net investment income and sundry income reached KD 4.2 million (\$13.6 million) compared to KD 2.4 million (\$7.9 million) with the same period last year with increase of 72.2 percent.

Net technical reserves were raised from being KD 106.4 million (\$ 348.9 million) on December 31, 2016, reaching KD 117.2 million (\$ 384.3 million) as at March 31, 2017. This increase represents a growth of 10.1 percent, supports the company's technical operations and to protect the policyholders rights, thereby strengthening gig's ability to withstand emergencies and risks that may rise in the future.

Total assets reached KD 409.4 million (\$1.34 billion) as at March 31, 2017, an increase of KD 33.6 million (\$110.1 million) or 8.9 percent from Dec 31 2016.

Khaled Al-Hasan, gig's CEO, said, "Our

results of the 1st quarter of 2017 reflect the growth we have achieved. This is also a strong indication of the Group's ability to protect its assets and shareholders' equity. It is also in line with our constant strive to provide the best insurance services to our clients across all markets we operate in, supported by our strategy for regional expansion and increasing our domestic and regional market share."

He added, "We thank our clients for these achievements, as well as the support of our shareholders, namely KIPCO - Kuwait Projects Company (Holding) - and Fairfax Middle East Ltd. I would also like to express my sincere appreciation to our dedicated employees for their efforts."

Gulf Insurance Group is the largest insurance Group in Kuwait in terms of written and retained premiums, with operations in



**GIG Group CEO Khaled Al-Hasan** both life and non-life insurance. Gulf Insurance has become one of the largest insurance networks in the Middle East and

North Africa with companies in Saudi Arabia, Jordan, Lebanon, Syria, Egypt, Algeria, Iraq, Bahrain, Emirates, Turkey and Kuwait. Its reported consolidated assets stand at \$1.34 billion as at 31 March 2017.

KIPCO - Kuwait Projects Company - is Gulf Insurance Group's largest shareholder, followed by the Canadian-based Fairfax Financial Holding Ltd.

Gulf Insurance Group enjoys the privilege of being the first triple-rated insurance group in Kuwait. The group holds a Financial Strength Rating of 'A' (Excellent) and issuer credit rating of 'a' with stable outlook from AM. Best Europe - Rating Services Limited, a Financial Strength Rating of BBB+ with stable outlook from Standard & Poor's and an Insurance Financial Strength Rating (IFSR) of 'A3' from Moody's Investors Service carrying a stable outlook.

## GULF BANK ANNOUNCES WINNERS OF AL-DANAH DAILY DRAWS

**KUWAIT:** Gulf Bank held its Al-Danah daily draws on 7 May 2017 announcing the names of its winners for the week of 30 April - 4 May 2017. The Al-Danah daily draws include draws every working day for two prizes of KD 1,000 per winner.

### The winners are:

(Sunday 30/4): Shareefa Abdullah Ali Sakeer, Ruba Ziad Sheikh Yousef (Monday 1/5): Maral Nadeem Toutounji, Hanaa Hassan Abdullah Hmoud (Tuesday 2/5): Waleed Najaf Faraj Al-Faraj, Waleed Abdulmohsen Saad Al-Fulajj (Wednesday 3/5): Amal Jamil Amine, Eassa Rajab Mohamed Al-Abden (Thursday 4/5): Ibtisam Rajab Mohammed Ameen, Majed Mohammed Rasheed Abdullah Al-Rasheed

Gulf Bank's Al-Danah 2017 draw lineup includes daily draws (2 winners per working day and each receive KD1,000). Al-Danah's 2nd Quarterly draw for the prize of KD250,000 will be held on 29 June and the 3rd quarterly draw for the prize of KD500,000 will be held on 28 September. The final Al-Danah draw for KD1 million will be held on 11 January, 2018 whereby the Al-Danah millionaire will be announced. Five reasons why the Al-Danah account is the best:

- 1) Kuwait's single biggest yearly cash prize of KD 1 million
- 2) Kuwait's biggest quarterly cash prizes, up to KD500,000
- 3) Two winners of KD1,000 every working day
- 4) The most chances to win
- 5) Only bank that transfers your chances to win from year to year

Only Al-Danah makes millionaires. Al-Danah also offers a number of unique services including: the Al-Danah Deposit Only ATM card which helps account holders deposit their money at their convenience; as well as the Al-Danah calculator to help customers calculate their chances of becoming an Al-Danah winner.

Gulf Bank's Al-Danah account is open to Kuwaiti and non-Kuwaiti residents of Kuwait. Customers require a minimum of KD200 to open an account and the same amount must be maintained as for customers to be eligible for the upcoming Al-Danah draws. If the customer's account balance falls below KD200 at any given time, a KD2 charge will be made on a monthly basis to the account until the minimum balance is met. Customers who open an account and/ or deposit more will enter the daily draw within two days.



## HALA FEBRUARY WINNERS RECEIVE RENAULT CAPTURS FROM RENAULT AL-BABTAIN



**KUWAIT:** Abdulmohsen Abdulaziz Al-Babtain Company (AABC), the authorized dealer of Renault vehicles in Kuwait, delivered all the Renault Captur vehicles to the winners of Hala February 2017 winners.

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 & 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 & were able to test drive Renault newest models.

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. Al-Babtain Group was founded in 1948, to present a model of honesty, integrity and total dedication, gaining a solid reputation in the State of Kuwait and the Middle East area. Today, Al-Babtain Group has licensing rights for some of the world's leading brands

stretching the globe from the USA to the Far East.

For more than 60 years, Al-Babtain Group has experienced continued success and a large measure of this success came from the Group's advanced flexible management style and long-term vision. These astounding results were achieved due to a versatile strategic formula focusing on growth amongst its sphere of activities; including automotive, technology, investment, information technology, industrial and Finance. The automotive sector is the main activity within Al-Babtain Group's business, which represents some of the bestselling brands in Kuwait, in addition to heavy equipment. The Abdulmohsen Abdulaziz Al-Babtain Co. (AABC) is proud to be the exclusive agent and distributor of leading Japanese, European (French) and Chinese vehicles in Kuwait such as Nissan, Infiniti Renault & Citroen.

**KD 1,000**

**CONGRATULATIONS TO THE AL DANAH WEEKLY WINNERS**

The Largest Prize Linked to a Bank Account January 2017

GUINNESS WORLD RECORDS RECORD HOLDER

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بنك الخليج GULF BANK

## WARBA BANK ANNOUNCES 14TH WITHDRAW ACCOUNTS

TOTAL MONTHLY PRIZES AMOUNT TO KD 20,000

**KUWAIT:** Warba Bank, Kuwait's best investment bank and corporate consultancy firm, organized the 14th withdraw for the Sunbula account, under the supervision of Ministry of Commerce and Industry's representative. Winners were announced for the monthly withdrawal that gives clients to the opportunity to win prizes up to KD20,000.

option for clients, as it allows them to save and achieve financial returns on their assets. It is also worth mentioning, that since its start, Warba bank is keen on developing innovative banking solutions that aims primarily to discern the bank's clients and promote Islamic banking sector. As 2017 began, Warba bank started with launching a number of Islamic banking products that reach international standards in quality and flexibility, and all within the range of exclusive solutions provided by the bank.

The winners of the 14th withdraw are: Hasan Ahmad Hussain Bo Abbas, and Eissa Abdullah Eissa Alhoshan. Both of them has won a prize of KD5,000 each.

As for the prize of KD1,000 the winners are the following:

Anaam Yousef Jassim Almubarak, Fehaid Aqoub Sultan Almutairi, Jamelah Salman Maraimi, Hanaa Jaser Abdullah Alshammari, Naser Meshal Mesehel Alshaalani, Bader Shuaib Rashed Albaker, Naser M A Taqi, Rashed Mohammad Hamad Alhajri, Abdulaziz Saeed Yousef Bin Saif and Nayef Mohammad Habeeb Alhmaili.

It is also worth mentioning that Warba bank provides the chance for everyone to open a Sunbula account through Warba website, or by visiting any of the bank's branches distributed all over Kuwait. As for Warba bank's current clients, they are able to open Sunbula account through Warba online application for smartphones



It is worth mentioning that Warba Bank's Sunbula account is witnessing a huge popularity for what the valuable prizes and facilities it provides. Warba bank was keen, since the beginning of 2017, on adding development and innovations to the account which pleased the clients.

The development included increasing the number of winners up to 12 and the total prize value up to KD20,000. The clients are entitled to enter the monthly draw for every 10 KD deposited in their accounts, which makes the Sunbula account the ultimate

## DIGITIZATION KEY FOR REGION TO RETAIN LEADERSHIP IN LOGISTICS

**DUBAI:** Supply chain optimization took center stage at the ninth GPCA Supply Chain Conference, which took place between 2-4 May 2017 at the Rosewood Hotel in Abu Dhabi. During the event, speakers highlighted logistical efficiency as a top industry priority in the GCC as traditional supply chains across the globe are evolving towards a connected, smarter, and increasingly more efficient ecosystem. Held under the theme 'Agile and Efficient GCC Supply Chains - The Role of Technology', the conference brought together industry experts who discussed the benefits of supply chain digitization in a complex and changing marketplace.

In addition to logistical efficiency, other challenges such as nascent infrastructure, complicated protocols and mounting geopolitical risks were also drawn attention to at the conference. Within digitization, the role of technology in enabling petrochemical companies in the region become leading global players and distinct opportunities to leverage technology to improve agility and efficiency of a supply chain were also discussed. The GCC is currently the second fastest growing region in terms of petrochemical production globally after China, growing by 9% per annum between 2005-2015. Going forward, expansions are set to continue, driven primarily by Saudi Arabia, Oman and the UAE, which collectively plan to add about 14 Mtpa of petrochemical capacity by 2025.

To address these factors, companies are working on several programs, including streamlining documentation and attestation. The role of digitization in enabling this shift was highlighted, with technology making supply chain operations more efficient from the point of view of a petrochemical producer as well as that of logistics providers.

The conference was officially opened by Mohammad Husain, President and CEO, EQUATE, with Ziad Labban, CEO, Sadara Chemical Company, delivering the keynote session on building an agile and efficient GCC chemicals supply chain. The session outlined challenges facing new petrochemical companies in the GCC, focusing on the importance of robust supply chains in enabling growth.



**Ziad Al-Laban, CEO, Sadara, delivers the keynote address at the 9th GPCA Supply Chain Conference.**

### Structure

Hosnia Hashim, Deputy Chief Executive Officer - Olefins and Aromatics, PIC and Board Chairperson, EQUATE, touched upon the role of organizational structure in driving efficiencies. She also stressed the importance of business team connectivity, citing that supply chains are the sum of several cross-functional collaborations and emphasizing how streamlining the shipping industry can result in a lesser surplus of empty containers at GCC ports.

Dr. Abdulwahab Al-Sadoun, Secretary General, GPCA, commented: "Through close collaboration with industry partners, including logistics service providers, GPCA has been advancing service standards that enable more sustainable and transparent operations."

These are furthering national visions of regional governments and reinforcing the GCC's position as a distinctive logistical gateway. To remain a competitive global player, a collective focus on investment, innovation, policy and human capital will be needed. GPCA will continue to champion its key

initiatives such as Responsible Care(r) and Gulf SQAS to encourage collaboration across the industry and contribute to the creation of a sustainable regional world-class supply chain network."

A workshop on procurement in the inaugural day discussed procurement transformation and the prerequisites to embark upon a transformation program alongside key success factors for the implementation of e-procurement platforms. The same day, the conference also hosted the third edition of Leaders of Tomorrow, the GPCA's latest initiative aimed at building local human capital in the region.

The seminar was especially designed for GCC students who wish to pursue a career in the supply chain field, and providing them with key insights into how to build a career in the industry.

Leaders of Tomorrow is considered the first official collective initiative, where industry stakeholders collaborate in shaping skills and preparing the future industry leaders with the requisite skillsets to succeed.

## AUSTRALIA'S RETAIL SLUGOUT ADDS TO WORRY OVER WEAK INFLATION

**SYDNEY:** A fierce price war among retailers is threatening to keep a lid on improving inflation in Australia, compounding the problems of policymakers struggling to support still-weak domestic demand. An uptick in consumer inflation has lowered the chance of another rate cut this year, but competition from global retailers such as Amazon.com Inc is set to keep prices under pressure - good news for shoppers but worrying for the central bank.

The country's biggest retailers are suffering from a long spell of deflation that is unlikely to subside soon. Amazon and German supermarket chain Kaufland want to fortify their global presence Down Under and will join recent entrants such as H&M, Uniqlo and Aldi. The Reserve Bank of Australia (RBA) said on Friday that "height-

ened competitive pressures" in the retail sector were among key factors keeping inflation subdued. "The arrival of further new foreign retailers will be an important influence on final retail prices over the next few years," the RBA said in its quarterly statement on monetary policy in which it expects underlying inflation may only fully return to its 2-3 percent target band by mid-2019. Worried about deflation risks, the RBA slashed rates twice last year to a record low 1.50 percent. It is widely expected to hold rates until mid-2018 but subdued consumer prices could become a trigger for a move lower, and push the Australian dollar weaker. "While consumers will benefit from lower prices, ongoing weakness in retail inflation is a key factor weighing on the broader inflation outlook," said ANZ economist Jo Masters. — Reuters

## RECORD AND SHARE WITH THE NEW LEGRIA HF SERIES

**KUWAIT:** Canon Middle East, world leader in imaging solutions, yesterday unveiled a refreshed LEGRIA HF series with the introduction of the LEGRIA HF R806, LEGRIA HF R86 and LEGRIA HF R88. Offering an easy-to-use, quality HD video camera experience for families and memento seekers, the updated line retains the features of their predecessors and adds more creative control including flexible slow and fast motion effects, enhanced low light capability for clear and colourful movies and an all new body finish.

### Creative features with class leading technology

Each of the camcorders now offer the ability to change frames rates mid-recording with the new 'Flexible' slow and fast motion effects. Whether you're slowing down at the crucial moment candles are blown out, or

speeding up as your loved one dives from the board, you can add comic or dramatic effects with ease. To ensure your videos look natural and well lit, the Highlight Priority mode is backed-up with an improved Backlight Correction, which can now be selected directly when shooting. The combination of the two settings helps the camcorder analyse the scene to ensure all the detail is captured and the contrast between light and dark is sharper, even in bright scenes.

To help you navigate every setting the colourful 7.5cm high-res touch screen offers access to an easy-to-use interface, while Automatic scene takes the pressure away by intelligently changing the settings for you. With a long battery life, these camcorders keep going, and the LEGRIA HF R86 and LEGRIA HF R88 include built-in storage to let you capture more.

The entire LEGRIA HF line is equipped with powerful Intelligent IS with 5 axis stabilisation, which helps balance out any camera shake, even at high levels of zoom. Whether you're capturing your baby's first steps or holiday fun in the sun, your video will stay steady while you rush to keep up with the action. Let far-away details come closer with the 32x optical zoom, an impressive 57x Advanced Zoom and reliable Auto Zoom Framing Assist to

make sure you never miss a shot. For sound that brings your videos to life, Audio Scene Select adds the optimum setting for any scene to get the best audio quality. The LEGRIA HF R88 also contains the WA-H43 wide angle lens adapter to provide an even wider angle of coverage, great for situations where you are shooting in a confined space or for capturing a stunning landscape.

### Enhance connectivity

The connectivity features of the new LEGRIA HF series let you to share your videos in an instant. The LEGRIA HF R86 and LEGRIA HF R88

both include built-in Wi-Fi and Dynamic NFC, and are now fully compatible with the Canon Camera Connect App and Canon Connect Station CS100. For a range of connected features the LEGRIA HF R806 is FlashAir compatible.



## DIGITAL SHADOWS EXPANDS ITS EXECUTIVE LEADERSHIP

**DUBAI:** Digital Shadows, the industry leader in digital risk management, continues to strengthen its management team by announcing the appointment of Dan Lowden as Chief Marketing Officer, Schwark Satyavolu joining the company's board and Paul Kenealy joining as Director of Intelligence.

Digital Shadows finished 2016 with its third consecutive year of triple-digit revenue growth, and experienced significant customer expansion in both the United States and Europe, across verticals such as financial services, pharmaceuticals, retail, and technology. The company expanded rapidly and opened a new office in Dallas to add to the sites in San Francisco and London.

Dan Lowden has more than 20 years of executive-level experience in technology marketing. He has driven brand leadership and marketing excellence that substantially grew startups and large enterprises in security, mobile computing, wireless services, enterprise software and cloud. As CMO at Digital Shadows he will lead all aspects of the company's strategic marketing efforts to expand its global market presence, develop new partnerships and relationships, and continue to focus on customer needs.

Previously Dan was Chief Marketing Officer at Invincea, a machine learning next-gen antivirus company that was recently acquired by Sophos. Prior to that, he was VP of Marketing at vArmour, a leading data center and cloud security company. Previous roles also include VP of Marketing at Digby (acquired by Phunware), and VP of Marketing and Business Development at Wayport (acquired by AT&T). In addition, he has held marketing leadership positions at IBM, NEC, and Sharp Electronics. Dan holds a Bachelor of Science in Finance from Rider University and an MBA in International Business from Rutgers Graduate School of Management.

Industry veteran Schwark Satyavolu has joined the company's Board and will bring considerable expertise and advice to the business. Schwark is a General Partner at Trinity Ventures focusing on Fintech, Security



Dan Lowden, Chief Marketing Officer, Digital Shadows.



Schwark Satyavolu, Board Member, Digital Shadows

and Artificial Intelligence investments. For almost 20 years, he has built and complied with security standards for some of the largest financial institutions in the country. Schwark co-founded two Fintech companies - Yodlee (YDLE, acquired by Envestnet in 2015) and Truaxis (a Trinity portfolio company acquired by MasterCard in 2012). Before joining Trinity, Schwark served as EVP at LifeLock and head of Mastercard's global rewards and offers initiatives.

Paul Kenealy has joined Digital Shadows as Director of Intelligence tasked with expanding the company's human led closed source coverage and intelligence. Kenealy has 14 years experience running intelligence programs and was previously at KPMG where he was responsible for Cyber Threat Intelligence and Response. He has also held cybersecurity roles at Barclays Bank and Betfair amongst other companies. Since joining, Kenealy has already expanded the Digital Shadow's human led closed source coverage and intelligence capabilities.

"We are excited to be able to attract executives of the caliber of Dan, Paul and Schwark to join the Digital Shadows team," said Alastair Paterson, Co-Founder and CEO of Digital Shadows. "Customer demand for Digital Risk Management has never been higher and we are looking forward to the next phase of our growth as we deliver our industry leading SearchLight(tm) service to help organization's recognize and reduce their digital risks, including cyber threats, data leakage, and reputational risks."

Digital Shadows provides insight into an organization's digital risks and the threat actors targeting them. The Digital Shadows SearchLight service combines scalable data analytics with human analysts to monitor for cyber threats, data leakage, and reputational risks. Digital Shadows continually monitors the Internet across the visible, deep and dark web, as well as other online sources to create an up-to-the minute view of an organization's digital risk and provide it with tailored threat intelligence. The company is jointly headquartered in London and San Francisco.

## FACEBOOK REMOVES ACCOUNTS IN FIGHT AGAINST FAKE NEWS

**LONDON:** Facebook says it has deleted tens of thousands of accounts in Britain ahead of the June 8 general election in a drive to battle fake news. The tech giant also took out newspaper advertisements in Britain's media offering advice on how to spot such stories. The ads suggest that readers should be "skeptical of headlines," and to "look closely at the URL."

The company says it has made improvements to help them detect fake news accounts more effectively. Simon Milner, the tech firm's UK director of policy, says the platform wants to get to the "root of the problem" and is working with outside organizations to fact check and analyze content around the election. Milner says Facebook is "doing everything we can to tackle the problem of false news."

Facebook has come under intense pressure to tackle the spread of false stories, which came to prominence during the US presidential election last year when many inaccurate posts were widely shared on it and other social media services. Ahead of the June 8 parliamentary election in Britain, it urged its users in the country to be skeptical of headlines that look unbelievable and to check other sources before sharing news that may not be credible. It said it would also delete bogus profiles and stop promoting posts that show signs of being implausible. "We have developed new ways to identify and remove fake accounts that might be spreading false news so that we get to the root of the problem," said Simon Milner, Facebook's director of policy for the UK.

The effort builds on the company's recently expanded campaigns to identify fake news and crack down on automated profile pages that post commercial or political spam. Facebook suspended 30,000 accounts in France ahead of the first round of its presidential election last month and uses outside fact-checkers in the



SAN JOSE: In this April 18, 2017 file photo, conference workers speak in front of a demo booth at Facebook's annual F8 developer conference in San Jose, Calif. — AP

country. It has also previously taken out full-page ads in German newspapers to educate readers on how to spot fake news. With the headline "Tips for spotting false news," the adverts in Britain listed 10 ways to identify whether a story was genuine or not, including looking closely at a URL, investigating the source, looking for unusual formatting and considering the authenticity of the photo. Facebook said it had taken action against tens of thousands of fake accounts in Britain after identifying patterns of activity such as whether the same content is being repeatedly posted. "With these

changes, we expect we will also reduce the spread of material generated through inauthentic activity, including spam, misinformation, or other deceptive content that is often shared by creators of fake accounts," Facebook said.

Social media sites including Twitter and YouTube are also facing pressure in Europe where governments are threatening new laws and fines unless the companies move more quickly to remove extremist content. Facebook has hired more staff to speed up the removal of videos showing murder, suicide and other violent acts. — Agencies

## IS PAKISTAN'S SOLAR POWER POISED TO TAKE OFF AMID ENERGY CRISIS?

**ISLAMABAD:** Solar energy production in Pakistan is poised to take off - just as the South Asian country is ramping up coal production to help plug a crippling power crisis, energy experts say.

New high quality solar maps - essential to securing financing for major solar projects - show Pakistan is one of the world's best countries for producing solar energy because of its arid climate and latitude. "Pakistan's solar potential is huge," said Jamil Masud, an energy expert who helped draft Pakistan's national renewable energy policy.

"The government is waking up to its potential," said Masud, a director of Hagler Bailly Pakistan, an energy and environmental consulting firm in Islamabad. "With the prices of (photovoltaic panels) falling drastically in the last four years, the switchover to renewables will happen - gradually." Pakistan's current national power shortfall is estimated to be more than 6,000 megawatts, causing long power outages across the country. The country is building nearly a dozen coal power plants over the next 15 years with Chinese investment, as part of its attempts to end the crisis.

But Pakistan also has a range of major solar projects in the pipeline, amounting to more than 4,400 megawatts in potential power, said Amjad Awan, chief executive officer of the federal government's Alternative Energy Development Board (AEDB), an autonomous body working under the Ministry of Water and Power.

Until now, the country's lack of detailed solar maps - needed by major investors, especially US companies - has held back development of renewable energy, said Ali Habib, managing partner of Shama Solar, a company based in Lahore. That changed in March, when Pakistan became one of the few developing countries to produce the maps. They were developed by the AEDB and World Bank, drawing on data from nine solar data stations and 12 wind masts installed across the country.

"This is credible data according to which banks can give funding to potential projects," said Awan. "The government can now do the appropriate zoning and develop solar and wind areas."

### 'Better than Germany'

The solar maps highlight which regions are most suitable for solar power generation. The southwestern province of Balochistan - a desert area with little cloud cover or air pollution - has the country's largest solar potential, they show. "The maps reveal that even areas ... receiving the least average annual irradiation are better than Germany's best regions for solar power generation," said Masud. Germany is a world leader in producing solar energy, and uses detailed solar maps to assess its own solar resources. Pakistan's data has been made public as part of the Global Solar Atlas website, giving commercial scale projects ready-to-use seasonal and monthly data.

This means investors do not have to spend signifi-

cant time and money gathering data for their projects. Instead, "they can instantaneously acquire certified data of 'bankable' quality that should be acceptable to commercial financing institutions," said Masud. That can substantially lower the costs around projects, which in turn encourages companies to set up large-scale solar power facilities, he said.

### Solar 'already taking off'

Frustrated with constant power cuts, consumers are already installing small-scale roof-top solar systems for their homes and businesses.

"Solar is already taking off in Pakistan - it's going to challenge grid-connected power," said Fariel Salahuddin, an energy specialist based in Karachi. "Roof-top solar panels are growing organically and as for the grid-connected solar projects, lots of pieces are coming together like regulation, tariffs, investments and grid capacity," she added.

Pakistan's National Electric Power Regulatory Authority (NEPRA) has issued guidelines for net metering so consumers can now sell excess solar energy they produce back to the grid, Salahuddin said. One of the first licenses for net metering was issued to Pakistan's parliament building in Islamabad, which switched to solar energy last year. Some banks have started financing home solar systems, which are cropping up across the country. The Islamabad Electric Supply Company has introduced net metering, and other power companies in large cities such as Lahore and Karachi will be following suit "in a matter of months, not years" said AEDB's Awan. However, the

government still needs to simplify connection rules and procedures for small-scale solar power to be more widely adopted, Masud said.

"There are several procedural and commercial details to be worked out before rooftop photovoltaic panels become a common sight in Pakistan, but it's only a matter of time before it does," said Masud. Pakistan already has one major solar park - the Quaid-e-Azam Solar Park in Bahawalpur, built with Chinese investment. It produces 400 megawatts with plans to rise to 1,500 megawatts of solar production. "Not just the Chinese, but many other companies from countries like Germany and the United States are coming into Pakistan to invest in solar energy," said Vaqar Zakaria, the chief executive officer of Haigler Bailly Pakistan. "However, the support and incentives being offered for coal-based power generation are far more attractive than those being offered for investment in solar power," added Zakaria.

### Coal burning

However, despite its considerable solar and wind potential and the rapidly decreasing costs of renewable energy, Pakistan continues to focus on building its coal-powered generating capacity.

The government plans to add 10,000 megawatts of coal energy to the country's energy mix by 2020. "Solar and wind have their limitations. Solar can't produce electricity at night," said Shama Solar's Habib. "Every country needs a base load that can run all the time - and that still comes from coal and gas or oil." — Reuters



This Wednesday, March 29, 2017, file photo shows a sign outside the Comcast Center in Philadelphia. — AP

## COMCAST, CHARTER COMMUNICATIONS STEP INTO WIRELESS

**NEW YORK:** Rival cable operators Comcast and Charter Communications said yesterday that they will work together as they prepare to offer cellphone wireless plans to customers. The companies said that while they will offer wireless services separately to customers, behind the scenes they will work together on things like customer billing and managing the platform customers use to order devices. The cable and internet providers said the agreement will save money and help them compete with national wireless providers.

Rivals AT&T Inc. and Verizon Communications Inc. already offer wireless plans, as well cable and internet service. Comcast expects to launch its Xfinity Mobile service in the next several weeks.

Charter, based in Stamford, Connecticut, expects to introduce its unnamed service next year. Both wireless services will work on the Verizon Wireless network. As part of the deal, Comcast and Charter agreed that they wouldn't buy other wireless companies for one year, or make related deals without consulting each first. — AP

## AMAZON SWEEPS US MARKET FOR VOICE-CONTROLLED SPEAKERS

**SAN FRANCISCO:** Amazon.com Inc is dominating the nascent market for voice-controlled speakers, research firm eMarketer said yesterday.

The e-commerce giant's Amazon Echo and Echo Dot devices will claim a 70.6 percent share of the US market this year, the study found. The speakers feature Alexa, Amazon's voice-controlled aide, which users can tell to play music, order an Uber or turn on the house lights.

That puts it far ahead of Alphabet Inc's Google Home, a similar gadget that has a 23.8 percent share, and less successful offerings from other tech companies. The number of active US users will more than double for the devices this year, to 35.6 million, eMarketer said. The report underscores Amazon's progress in making Alexa and its speech-recognition technology an integral part of customers' lives. More users means more data that can improve Alexa's understanding and could make it a top platform for voice, like Windows is for desktop.

Amazon does not disclose Echo sales figures but has said it had trouble keeping the product in stock. Device sales and extra revenue from shoppers placing orders via Alexa could generate \$10 billion for Amazon by 2020, RBC Capital Markets analyst Mark Mahaney said in a recent note. And that does not include potential revenue from others using Alexa as a platform. Google's share is expected to grow, though. Tests by analysts have shown the technology underpinning the Google Home to match or be superior to competitors. A survey by Mahaney found the device's brand awareness in the United States already equaled 80 percent of Alexa's, despite being on the market for fewer months.

The statistics from eMarketer focused on speakers and left out other virtual assistants: notably, Apple Inc's Siri and Microsoft Corp's Cortana. More than 60 million in the United States will use virtual assistants at least once monthly in 2017, the report said. That's over a quarter of US smartphone users. — Reuters

## YEMEN CHOLERA OUTBREAK KILLS 25 PEOPLE IN A WEEK

**SANAA:** A cholera outbreak in Yemen killed 25 people this week, the World Health Organization said, as two years of war continues to wreak havoc on the impoverished country's health and sanitation system.

The deaths from the diarrheal disease which is carried in food and water tainted by human faeces are among 1,360 cases that the United Nations agency reported since April 27. Some severe cases can kill

within hours unless treated with intravenous fluids and antibiotics.

"(This) is extremely alarming. We are facing a reactivation of the cholera epidemic," Nevio Zagaria, the WHO's representative in Yemen, said. "The cause is that there is two years of war in Yemen. There is a huge impact on the infrastructure, the electricity power is on and off, the water pumping stations are not functioning regularly and this has an impact on the quality

of water." A previous outbreak subsided last winter, Zagaria said, and the country has experienced a total of around 27,000 cases including 130 deaths during the conflict. Yemen's conflict pits the Iran-allied Houthi movement and elements of the military against the Saudi-led military coalition backing the internationally recognized government.

Largely stalemated in nationwide battlefronts, the war has plunged millions into

poverty, displaced millions of others and killed more than 10,000 people.

The UN said a child aged under five dies of preventable causes every 10 minutes in Yemen. A dispute over control of the central bank has also left most public sector salaries in Sanaa and other Houthi-run northern lands unpaid since October. Street cleaners have gone on strike for their wages, leaving mountains of garbage cluttering main boulevards.

Meanwhile, hospitals are strained by low supplies and cash-strapped staff who in some cases can barely afford transportation to work. Women and young children, crumpled in pain from the diarrhea, sat on mattress laid in the hallway of a crowded Sanaa hospital. "I've been lying here since 7.30 in the morning and watching death and suffering. No one came to give me any treatment, not even a needle," lamented patient Ali al-Hamzy. — Reuters

## NIGERIA RACES TO CONTAIN DEADLY MENINGITIS OUTBREAK

**ZAMFARA, Nigeria:** When six-year old Mohammed Waziga arrived at a health centre in northwest Nigeria complaining of joint pains and drowsiness, he was given an injection and sent home without any concerns. However his suffering grew worse and his family rushed him to a different facility in Zamfara state, where he was diagnosed with meningitis, marking yet another case in an outbreak which has killed more than 800 people so far this year in the north.

"We are grateful to Allah that he got better," his grandmother Zainab said at the health centre, sitting next to Mohammed who was lying on a makeshift bed under a shea tree because there was no room for him in any of the wards. "He keeps asking me when we will go home, and I worry again that I will lose him," she said.

Thousands of meningitis cases have been reported by the health ministry in the northern states Zamfara, Kebbi, and Sokoto since November 2016, in Nigeria's worst outbreak of the disease since it killed more than 2,000 people in 2009. Meningitis is the inflammation of tissue surrounding the brain and spinal cord, which can be caused by viral or bacterial infections. It spreads mainly through kisses, sneezes, coughs and in close living quarters.

Nigeria has launched a mass vaccination campaign and started conducting house-to-house searches to identify those afflicted with meningitis for treatment, as the state and aid agencies race to contain the surge in infections in recent months. "What is important now is that we provide an information vaccine to our people, on how the virus is contracted and warn against cross infection," said Yusuf Lawal, state coordinator for the Maternal, Newborn and Child Health (MNCH2) program.

In mainly Muslim Zamfara, home to over

3.2 million people and known for its strict religious Sharia code, health centres are full to the brim, with makeshift wards made of bamboo setup outside of hospital grounds for sick and recovering patients. "Initially the response from the state government was not appropriate," said Bature Mannir, secretary of the Nigerian Medical Association (NMA).

State governor Abdulaziz Yari was reported by local media last month as saying the outbreak was God's punishment for sin. "However things changed and the (response) is yielding a very good result as the number of cases has drastically reduced," Mannir added. "The state and all other stakeholders need to sustain the tempo until the situation is contained."

The state government has set up a committee to distribute vaccines and drugs, while aid organizations like Medecins Sans Frontieres (MSF) are working with the Nigeria Centre for Disease Control (NCDC) to try to control the meningitis outbreak. At least 1.3 million vaccines have been acquired, 500,000 of which were provided by World Health Organization, according to the federal government. Yet given the regular occurrence of meningitis, which killed 33 people in Nigeria last year, more must be done to strengthen health systems in the affected states, say experts like Mannir.

Such investment may be a long way off as the government struggles to deal with its first recession in 25 years amid falling oil prices, and a humanitarian crisis created by Islamist militant group Boko Haram, Nigeria observers say. Sitting in a clinic in Zamfara, where her two sons, aged 13 and four, were recovering from meningitis, Zainab Abdulazeez stared at the empty bed of a child who died during the night. "I cried and cried ... it could have been my children." —Reuters



**GERMANY:** In this file photo giant machines dig for brown coal at the open-cast mining Garzweiler in front of a smoking power plant near the city of Grevenbroich in western Germany. — AP

## CLIMATE TALKS OPEN IN BONN, WITH ALL EYES ON WASHINGTON

### TRUMP YET TO ANNOUNCE WITHDRAWAL FROM THE PACT

**BONN:** Uncertainty over America's future in the climate-rescue Paris Agreement loomed large over UN talks that opened in Bonn yesterday to work out the nuts and bolts of implementing the hard-fought international deal. US President Donald Trump has yet to announce whether he intends keeping a campaign promise to withdraw Washington from the pact in whose birth his predecessor, Barack Obama, was instrumental.

"There's no question that if the US withdraws it is going to create difficulties... in the negotiations," Paula Caballero of the World Resources Institute think-tank said as climate envoys met for their first session since Trump's arrival in the White House. She was confident, though, that these challenges would not be "unsurmountable," noting that businesses, cities and individual US states were firmly on track to a green energy future.

A total of 196 countries - all except Nicaragua and Syria - are parties to the 2015 deal which Trump threatened to "cancel". The 11-day Bonn huddle is meant to start drafting a "rulebook" to guide member countries in the practical execution of the pact, which seeks to brake global warming by curbing fossil fuel emissions. But the negotiations risk being overshadowed by fears that the world's number two carbon polluter will withdraw and throw the entire process into disarray.

#### Competitiveness

The US did send a delegation to the talks,

though smaller than in previous years. Delegation head Trigg Talley, who represented the US under Obama, declined to answer questions on the team's new brief. Earlier, a State Department official told AFP: "We are focused on ensuring that decisions are not taken at these meetings that would prejudice our future policy, undermine the competitiveness of US businesses, or hamper our broader objective of advancing US economic growth and prosperity."

Obama and China's Xi Jinping led a diplomatic push which saw the deal sealed in the French capital in 2015, after years of tough bartering. Widely hailed as the last chance to stave off worst-case-scenario global warming, the pact was savaged by a campaigning Trump, who called climate change a "hoax" perpetrated by China. With the rest of the world on tenterhooks ever since, Trump has said he will make his decision before the next G7 meeting on May 26-27 in Sicily. Some fear a US withdrawal from the agreement would dampen enthusiasm among other signatories for ramping up national emissions-cutting targets. Current pledges place the world on track for average global warming of around three degrees Celsius over pre-Industrial Revolution levels - far above the limit of two degrees Celsius targeted in the Paris deal.

The Trump administration has already proposed slashing funds for the UN climate science panel, for the Green Climate Fund that helps poor countries combat global warming, and for

the UN climate forum under whose auspices the negotiations take place.

#### US waffling

There has been a chorus of appeals from US and foreign business leaders, politicians and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) for Washington not to abandon the agreement. Yesterday, 200 global investors managing more than \$15 trillion (13.7 trillion euros) in assets, urged the G7 rich country group, which includes the US, to "stand by their commitments to the Paris Agreement". "Global investors are eager to open their wallets to a low-carbon future," said Mindy Lubber, president of CERES, a non-profit organization that works with North American companies on sustainable projects. "But it won't happen without clear, stable policy signals from countries worldwide - in particular, the US government whose waffling on the Paris Climate Agreement is hugely troubling," she said in a statement.

The key mission of the May 8-18 meeting in Bonn is to start drafting "rules" for putting the agreement into action: what information must countries include in their emissions updates, for example, and how must they report? The rulebook must be finished by 2018. "In Bonn this week it's important that progressive forces come together to manage any fall-out resulting from any US retreat," said analyst Mohamed Adow of Christian Aid, which tracks climate impacts on poor countries. — AFP



**VATICAN CITY:** In this file photo, Brother Guy Consolmagno, a Jesuit astronomer at the Vatican's Observatory, right, shows to visitors the Globe of planet Mars from the collection of the Specola Vaticana. — AP

## VATICAN CELEBRATES BIG BANG TO DISPEL FAITH-SCIENCE CONFLICT

**VATICAN CITY:** The Vatican is celebrating the big-bang theory. That's not as out of this world as it sounds. The Vatican Observatory has invited leading scientists and cosmologists to talk black holes, gravitational waves and space-time singularities as it honors the late Jesuit cosmologist considered one of the fathers of the idea that the universe began with a gigantic explosion. The Tuesday-Friday conference honoring Monsignor George Lemaitre is being held at the

Vatican Observatory, founded by Pope Leo XIII in 1891 to help correct the notion that the Roman Catholic Church was hostile to science. The perception has persisted in some circles since Galileo's heresy trial 400 years ago, even though the observatory and Catholic universities around the globe have produced top-notch science over the centuries. In 1927, Lemaitre was the first to explain that the receding of distant galaxies was the result of the expansion of the universe, a result he obtained by solving equations of Einstein's theory of general relativity.

Lemaitre's theory was known as the

"primeval atom," but it is more commonly known today as the big-bang theory. "He understood that looking backward in time, the universe should have been originally in a state of high energy density, compressed to a point like an original atom from which everything started," according to a press release from the Observatory. The head of the Vatican Observatory, Jesuit Brother Guy Consolmagno, says Lemaitre's research proves that you can believe in God and the big-bang theory.

"Lemaitre himself was very careful to remind people - including Pope Pius XII - that the creative act of God is not something that happened 13.8 billion years ago. It's something that happens continually," Consolmagno said yesterday. Believing merely that God created the big bang means "you've reduced God to a nature god, like Jupiter throwing lightning bolts. That's not the God that we as Christians believe in," he said. Christians, he said, believe in a supernatural God who is responsible for the existence of the universe, while "our science tells us how he did it." —AP

## AUSTRALIAN CUSTOMS DESTROYS UNIQUE PLANT SPECIMENS

**SYDNEY:** Australian customs officials destroyed two irreplaceable plant specimens that were being loaned to scientists by international institutions, prompting the agriculture department to concede that some missteps had occurred enforcing strict quarantine laws. France's National Museum of Natural History and New Zealand's Landcare Research Allan Herbarium had sent the samples of lichen specimens, which dated back to the 19th Century, to Australia to help research, but they were intercepted by customs officers due to inaccurate paperwork.

A spokesman for the Department of Agriculture said the packages did not give any indication of the intrinsic value of the samples, and the customs officers held onto them for longer than they were required before deciding they posed a potential biosecurity threat and incinerating them.

"The department concedes the unintentionally proceeding with destruction of the specimens was premature," a spokesperson for the Australian government department said in an emailed statement.

"But it does highlight the importance of the shared responsibility of Australia's biosecurity system, and the need for adherence to import conditions." Neither the French nor New Zealand institutions were informed of the decision to destroy their lichen. Nor were the Australian scientists who were due to receive the samples. Normally a sender or recipient would be informed if there was a threat to destroy imported items. Michelle Waycott, professor of plant systematic at the University of Adelaide and chair of the Council of Heads of Australasian Herbaria, said the specimens were set to be used to determine whether new plant species had been discovered in Australia. — Reuters

## ABORTION ISSUE DENTS DEMOCRATS EFFORT TO PROMOTE NEXT GENERATION

**OMAHA:** Democrats desperate for fresh faces cast 37-year-old Heath Mello as a pragmatic, next-generation leader who could win in the Nebraska heartland. Yet his anti-abortion stance has become a flashpoint for the national party. If Mello prevails today in his bid for Omaha mayor, it's a promising sign, he says, for a candidate "with a proven record of working bipartisan and tackling some big issues and, yes, to some extent, is a pro-life Catholic Democrat." He is challenging Republican incumbent Jean Stothert.

Mello's bid has exposed the cultural divisions within the party over the decades-old issue of abortion. It's also proved a major embarrassment for the new party chairman, Tom Perez. Top Democrats had planned a stop in Omaha at a rally for Mello, but abortion rights groups were outraged. National Abortion and Reproductive Rights Action League President Ilyse Hogue called the DNC's promotion of Mello "not only disappointing, it is politically stupid."

Caught off-guard, Perez reversed himself, saying "every Democrat, like every American, should support a woman's right to make her own choices," and called on Democrats to speak with "one voice." They didn't. At the April 20 rally in Omaha, Sen. Bernie Sanders, the Vermont independent who sought the Democratic presidential nomination last year, endorsed Mello and asked, "Omaha, are you ready for a political revolution?" Perez, who had been scheduled to attend, instead campaigned for a Georgia candidate.

The party chairman's actions angered several moderate Democrats and frustrated others as the party struggles for relevance. In the last decade, Democrats have lost about 1,000 elected posts from the White House to Congress to the 50 statehouses, a power deficit the party has not seen nationally in 90 years. In Nebraska, where Republicans control every congressional and statewide office, Democrats don't have the luxury of being choosy, Mello supporter Abbie Raikes said. "As liberals in Nebraska, you become accus-



**NEBRASKA:** Omaha Democratic candidate for Mayor Heath Mello walks through the Dundee neighborhood while canvassing for votes in Omaha, Nebraska. — AP

tom to making compromises" said Raikes, a 45-year-old public health professor at University of Nebraska Medical Center in Omaha. Raikes, talking with Mello in her near-west Omaha neighborhood last week, supports him in part for plans to promote affordable housing, not because he backed a half-dozen abortion restrictions during eight years in the legislature. After all, the highest-ranking Democrat outside of the state legislature is the mayor of Lincoln.

Democrats must invite new faces with diverse viewpoints into its leadership, said Rep. Tim Ryan of Ohio, who described Perez's reaction to Mello as "really damaging." "Requiring everybody to fit some purity test is a recipe for disaster," said Ryan, who unsuccessfully challenged Rep. Nancy Pelosi for House Democratic leader last year. "There are

going to be people who are Democrats who may not check all the boxes. But they are with you 80 percent of the time and can win in tough places."

#### Future-focused style

Anti-abortion Democrats have almost disappeared in Congress. Only three senators fit the description, and all three - Bob Casey of Pennsylvania, Joe Donnelly of Indiana and Joe Manchin of West Virginia - are up for re-election next year in states President Donald Trump won in 2016. Pelosi last week told The Washington Post that abortion should not be a litmus test for Democrats. In the state legislature, Mello represented an older, ethnically diverse, working-class district in south Omaha, a few miles from the nation's one-time railroad and meatpacking epicenter. — AP

### NORWAY AUTHORIZE SLAUGHTER OF 2,000 REINDEER TO ERADICATE DISEASE

**OSLO:** The Norwegian government yesterday authorized the slaughter of a herd of around 2,000 reindeer in a bid to eradicate a brain-destroying disease, after several cases were detected in Norway for the first time in Europe. In chronic-wasting disease (CWD), a cousin of mad-cow disease and already present in North America, deer brains turn spongy, causing the animal to lose weight and die. It is contagious among deer and reindeer but not known to pass from animals to humans.

The disease was detected for the first time in Europe last year in Norway, with three known cases of reindeer infected in a single herd and two other cases among moose-though the latter cases were considered to be of less concern since moose do not live in herds. To prevent the spread

of the disease, the Norwegian Food Safety Authority which oversees animal health issues-called for the slaughter of the affected herd, which has between 2,000 and 2,200 wild reindeer living in the southwestern mountainous region of Nordfjella.

In a letter sent Monday to the authority, the agriculture ministry gave the green light "based on the knowledge we have today and the unanimous recommendations of experts." The herd, which represents about six percent of Norway's total reindeer population, is to be eradicated by May 1, 2018, the ministry said. The Food Safety Authority has until June 15 to present an action plan. Possibilities being considered include rounding up the animals for slaughter, or extending hunting in the region.—AFP

### KENYA HOPES TO DOUBLE MATERNITY LEAVE TO BOOST MOTHER AND CHILD

**NAIROBI:** Kenya will double maternity leave to six months from three if a bill before parliament is passed in a bid to boost the health of mothers and babies. But the new law has been opposed by employer groups who say businesses cannot afford to give women the time off, even though the second three months would be optional, unpaid leave. "Doctors advise that mothers should breastfeed exclusively for six months. I want mothers to have this time," lawmaker Boniface Gatobu who proposed the legislation said.

"The main motivation for this bill is the health of the mother and the child." Kenya has high rates of child malnutrition. The 2014 Kenya Demographic and Health Survey (KDHS) found that 61 percent of children under six months were exclusively breastfed, a sharp increase from 32 percent five years earlier.

Last year business lobby groups unsuccessfully opposed proposals obliging companies to set aside breastfeeding areas with breast pumps and fridges for employees with infants.

Employers' representatives said the new bill would damage the career chances of young women in the workplace. "If passed, the bill will hurt the chances of employment for women of child bearing

age," said Jacqueline Mugo, executive director of the Federation of Kenya Employers. "It is not that we do not understand that mothers need time with their children, but it is impractical," she said. "Our economy cannot sustain such time offs and the bill is counterproductive."

In Nairobi, 42-year-old secretary and mother of two Salome Nang'oni said she quit her first job because her boss told her to come back to work just seven weeks after she gave birth to her first child. She said if passed, the new law would help women balance work and domestic life. "We will get to have more time with our children and also be more comfortable while at work knowing that our young ones got the best possible start to their lives," she said.

"It is such things that will also make employees loyal to their employers." In March, India legislated to more than double maternity leave, extending fully paid leave to 26 weeks from 12 weeks and ensuring a work from home option for working mothers. According to a 2013 report from the Pew Research Center, Estonia offered the most paid time off for parental leave, about two years. Hungary offers at least one and a half years of paid leave.—Reuters



SELANGOR: Malaysian Customs officials stand as seized pangolin scales are displayed during a press conference at Customs office in Sepang, Malaysia yesterday. — AP photos

## RECORD HAUL OF PANGOLIN SCALES SEIZED IN MALAYSIA

**KUALA LUMPUR:** Malaysian customs officers have seized more than 700 kilograms of pangolin scales, the country's largest haul of the scales considered by some to have medicinal properties, officials said yesterday. The 712kg haul worth 9,184,800 ringgit (\$2.12 million) was made last week in two separate seizures. On May 2, eight gunny sacks of the scales weighing 408kg were found at a Kuala Lumpur airport warehouse. They are believed to have arrived on a flight from Accra, Ghana, which transited in Dubai.

Two days later, 10 more sacks weighing 304kg were found and seized. These were supposedly on a flight from Kinshasa, DR Congo, to

Nairobi, Kenya, transiting in Dubai before reaching Kuala Lumpur. Malaysian officials say they are investigating. Pangolins are indigenous to the jungles of Indonesia, parts of Malaysia and areas of southern Thailand, and their meat is considered a delicacy in China. Four pangolin species can also be found in Africa.

A 2016 report by wildlife monitor TRAFFIC and the University of Adelaide indicated a rise in the African pangolin trade since 2000. Increasingly they are smuggled to Southeast Asia from Africa, but the majority go to China. The shy pangolin's brown scales are made of nothing more than keratin—the same substance

as fingernails—but are highly prized in Vietnam and China where they are misleadingly touted as bearing medicinal properties.

Soaring demand for the products has seen an estimated one million pangolins plucked from Asian and African forests over the past decade. The Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES) meeting in Johannesburg last September voted overwhelmingly to ban trade in the endangered pangolin, the world's most heavily trafficked mammal. When threatened or attacked, Pangolins curl into a defensive ball, making it easy for them to be picked up by human hunters.—AFP



GERMANY: Animal keeper Silvio Dietzel bottle feeds ring-tailed lemur baby 'Heather' at the Affenwald Straussberg animal park in Straussberg, central Germany. — AFP

### FRANCE BANS CAPTIVE BREEDING OF DOLPHINS, KILLER WHALES

**PARIS:** France on Saturday banned the breeding in captivity of dolphins and killer whales under tighter rules that campaigners hope will eventually herald the end of shows involving the animals. Environment Minister Segolene Royal had on Wednesday signed a version of the legislation introducing "tight controls on the reproduction of dolphins", her ministry said in a statement. But she has since decided the rules need to be "more radical", her ministry told AFP on Saturday, particularly after learning that "some animals were drugged" in aquariums.

The new rules ban the captivity of all whales, dolphins and porpoises, except for orcas and bottlenose dolphins already held in authorized aquariums. Animal rights activists hailed the ban as a "historic French advance". "In plain terms, this means the end of breeding, exchange and import programs," five conservation groups including One Voice and Sea Shepherd said in a joint statement.

"Without possible replenishment, this quite simply means the scheduled end of marine circuses on our territory."

But the move sparked anger from Jon Kershaw, head of the Marineland Antibes dolphin show park in southern France, who told the Var-Matin newspaper it was a "bombshell" for establishments like his. The new rules notably also require "an increase of at least 150 percent of pools to allow the animals to live in less proximity from visitors and other animals", the ministry said, as well as banning chlorine in treating the water. Direct contact between the animals and the public is also now forbidden.

Water parks and aquariums have six months to conform to the new rules, and a three-year deadline for expanding their pools.

Parks such as Marineland Antibes—the biggest attraction of its kind in Europe—have faced growing criticism in recent years over their animals' living conditions.—AFP

# CLINIC PAGE



Kuwait Times  
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## OOREDOO CONCLUDES LECTURES FOR KUWAIT INTERNATIONAL LAW SCHOOL

Ooredoo, the fastest network in Kuwait, proudly concluded a series of lectures presented over the course of the past four months in Ooredoo Kuwait's head office to the students of Kuwait International Law School. The series of lectures is part of Ooredoo and the school's memorandum of understanding.

In a statement to the press, Ooredoo Kuwait reiterated their investment in supporting youth taking part in shaping their academic future. Ooredoo aims to have a proactive role in exposing students to the challenges of working in the dynamic private sector, especially in the telecom industry which is one of the most fast-paced sectors. Ooredoo also underscored their belief in youth.

The memorandum of understanding between the two entities gives Kuwait International Law School students the opportunity to intern at Ooredoo Kuwait and get exposed to the various functions fulfilled by different departments across the organization. High-scoring students can also get an opportunity to intern in some of Ooredoo Group's operating companies outside Kuwait.

Empowering youth is among Ooredoo's top priorities through its CSR strategy. The company has recently signed a memorandum of understanding with the Ministry of State for Youth Affairs, to support youth projects and initiatives. Ooredoo is continuously working with the ministry to enrich youth experience in a variety of fields, with a focus on volunteerism.



Chaudhary Abdul Ghafoor, Managing Director of Pakistan Tourism Development Corp, receives a memento from Hafiz Shabbir. Abdul Ghafoor also had telephonic discussion with Mujahid Iqbal to promote Pakistani tourism in Kuwait, and invited him to visit his office in Pakistan to discuss further details.



### ABK FEMALE CARDHOLDERS RECEIVE EXCLUSIVE OFFER FROM ALTA FITNESS WOMEN'S GYM

Al-Ahli Bank of Kuwait (ABK) is presenting its ABK female cardholders, customers and staff members with an exclusive 20 percent discount from Alta Fitness Women's Gym upon signing up for a six-month or annual memberships, as part of its ABK Advantage discount program. The offer is valid for all female ABK Cardholders and will run until March 4, 2018. In order to benefit from this offer, ABK Cardholders are required to make their payments using their Premium ABK cards, namely Visa Infinite, Visa Signature or Prestige Salary Account cards. ABK's Advantage Discount Program aims to offer its customers with unique and exclusive offers through various partnerships, which offer value added services and enrich the overall banking experience with ABK.



### BURGAN BANK OFFERS DISCOUNTS TO PREMIER BANKING CUSTOMERS AT HILTON KUWAIT RESORT

Burgan Bank is delighted to announce a special offer of up to 20 percent discounts at the Hilton Kuwait Resort for its Premier customers entitling them to enjoy a 20 percent off on their stay during the weekends (excluding public holidays) as well as at The Spa on all treatments. In addition to 15 percent discount on food and beverages outlets at the Teatro Restaurant, Song Bird Cafe, Wave Breaker, Palm Court Terrace and Health Club membership. Hilton Kuwait Resort is an ideal getaway and contemporary resort along Kuwait's beautiful coastline where modern style meets classic Arabian hospitality. The promotion is valid until February 2018 and to avail it, customers should use any of the following cards: Premier ATM Card, VISA Platinum Credit Card or Qatar Airways Platinum Credit Card. Premier customers at Burgan Bank are accustomed to frequent rewarding experiences with promotions and offers carefully chosen to bring affluence with priority and recognition, thus making banking with Burgan Bank a more enjoyable experience. Burgan Bank encourages its Premier customers to avail this exciting opportunity and take advantage of the entitlements presented to you.



The Sabah Al-Ahmad Center for Giftedness and Creativity honored seven Kuwaiti inventors during a ceremony it hosted recently. The inventors invented 16 new inventions and obtained internationally recognized patents through the center, which is affiliated to the Kuwait Foundation for the advancement of sciences.

## A LOOK INTO THE PAPER

By Hussain Aljamali

On Tuesday, March 14th, my Creative Writing Class and I visited The Kuwait Times in Shuwaikh. In Creative Writing class we studied about journalism and the ethics of journalism, and this is important because after I visited the newspaper factory I came to appreciate all of the hard work put into these newspapers.

I had a great experience in Kuwait Times as I strolled around the newspaper factory and saw the process first hand, it was really amazing and interesting. The process takes long hours of hard work and the employees often have to work till midnight to make the newspapers. We also sat down with Adnan Saad, the Deputy General Manager, and he gave us an overview of The Kuwait Times. He told us how this newspaper was started and how it developed and got more attention in Kuwait. He also gave us very valuable information about how you would profit from a newspaper, and in addition

to that he gave us some information and tips about journalism.

What I liked the most about our tour of The Kuwait Times was the vibe in the workplace. It was so happy and cheerful; it seemed that everyone really liked their job and they were very welcoming and friendly. I also like how organized the workplace was, for example the printing factory.

On this field trip I learned a lot of things about newspapers. One thing that I learned was that The Kuwait Times was established in the early 1960's and it is one of the few English newspapers in Kuwait. I also learned that advertisements are the main source of income in the newspaper industry.

In conclusion, I have benefited from this field trip greatly as I have learned many new things relating to newspapers and journalism. I would also like to thank The Kuwait Times and everyone who works there for their warm welcome and the information that they have provided us with.



Students visit Kuwait Times

Students from the Kuwait American School (KAC) visit Kuwait Times.

## A JOURNEY TO JOURNALISM

By Abdullah Al Shatti

As a Creative Writing class went on a field trip to The Kuwait Times a couple of weeks ago. We went on this field trip to learn more about journalism since that is our topic this quarter. This story is important because people need to know the hard work that goes into publishing a story. I was impacted by this since I never really knew that all of this hard work and dedication goes into making the newspaper.

At The Kuwait Times we met with the Deputy General Manager, Adnan Saad, who has been working there for 12 years. He told us that Kuwait Times was the first English newspaper in Kuwait which was created in 1961 by Yousef Al-Alyan. We later went on a tour of the facilities and we got to see all the fascinating and different machines from the printers to the cutting machines in different parts of the building in which each part is vital.

The thing that I liked the most in our visit was the cutting machine since it was very satisfying seeing a large blade cut through roughly 2000 to 3000 pieces of paper like butter. I was really surprised with all the hard work the people put into trying to make the newspaper from the way an article is written to how the actual newspaper looks. I personally learned to appreciate the newspaper a little bit more since it is not an easy task to make one newspaper let alone 40,000 each day.

I really enjoyed my time at The Kuwait Times since it was a great learning experience. I have even started reading the newspaper now. Hopefully we get to go back there again because I really liked knowing the history of the newspaper and the vision of the people that worked there.

## OUR FIELDTRIP TO KUWAIT TIMES

By Boshra Al-Mousawi

During the third quarter, our Creative Writing class was learning all about journalism, its ethics, and we created our own newspaper. So what better way of understanding the process of publishing a newspaper, than going on a field trip to the first English language paper in the Gulf region? The class and I were kindly welcomed at their headquarters in Shuwaikh, where we got to sit down with Deputy General Manager, Adnan Saad, who informed us about all about making the newspapers, and eagerly answered our questions.

He gave us a brief summary of the history of The Kuwait Times. He told us that the Kuwait Times newspaper was the first English newspaper not only in Kuwait, but in all of the Gulf. The founder and editor of the Kuwait Times was Yousef Al-Alyan who started this newspaper 56 years ago in 1961. He explained to us that the newspaper was categorized into local news, international, entertainment, sports, obituary, congratulations, and much more. The Kuwait Times also publishes a free 80-page tabloid called The Friday Times, which is also a first in the country. He also explained how the newspaper made money, since it costs a lot to run a daily newspaper.

One of the questions that we asked

him was 'How do you manage to publish the news on time?'. He explained to us that they have news reporters working from the morning until about five in the evening. Once the news and information was collected, the journalists from various departments would gather around and write articles until about midnight. Another question was, 'What do they do with the excess paper left from publishing?'

His answer was surprisingly that they thought of sponsoring a recycling company in Kuwait, where both parties would benefit from the paper. Another important question was, 'What are some struggles that the newspaper are facing or have faced?'

He answered that a major struggle was competition, since after the Kuwait Invasion, another twelve newspapers opened, therefore, it was hard for them since they weren't the only English newspaper in the region. Another struggle, was the technological advancement of the world, affecting the buyers of newspapers. A lot of people nowadays prefer to receive their news and information from the internet, rather than the good ol' newspaper. However, The Kuwait Times found a partial solution to this company, by creating a website and an app, in order to catch up. However, this still doesn't solve the problem fully, since the number of buyers in the country is declining.

One thing that surprised me was

that they were the only newspaper that agreed to welcome us at their headquarters. The reason behind that was that one of the newspaper's aims is to be part of the community. They want to involve more people, especially the youth, with the newspaper, by creating photography or artistic contests, with rewards from their sponsors such as Canon. They also do that by drawing attention to other cultures in Kuwait, such as leaflets all about Australia, or celebrating the diverse traditional holidays such as Christmas, and Easter. They do that to become a part of the community and to gain more buyers, which is another thing that interests me in The Kuwait Times. They seem to have a policy of 'hitting two birds with one stone', since they aspire to connect their unique work and increasing the buyers in the same time.

In conclusion, our newspaper field trip was far more interesting than we anticipated, and was informative and educational nevertheless. It showed us a perspective of how hard it is to set up a whole private sector newspaper company, in a foreign language, with professional journalists from various departments, news reporters, printing and editing workers that all work into creating a fifty-four paged newspaper. So, every time I glance at a newspaper, I do not ignorantly criticize its flaws, but rather empathize with their hard work.

## JOURNALISM AND BEYOND

By Ahmed Al-Sammak

Earlier this month my Creative Writing class and I went on a field trip to the Kuwait Times newspaper. The purpose of the field trip was to learn about journalism, the tasks journalists perform and the process of making a newspaper. Throughout the course of the field trip I witnessed the challenges of journalism and the challenges of being a journalist or being in a newspaper staff.

When we arrived at The Kuwait Times in Shuwaikh, the first thing we did was meet the Deputy General Manager, Adnan Saad. He has been working at The Kuwait Times for more than 12 years now. He told us about the vision of the newspaper and its history. Later he told us how hard it was for newspapers to find different ways of getting more income for the newspaper. The next part of the tour was to see the newspaper was done. It was very messy. It is a really long process and has a variety of machines that are needed for the making of the newspapers. Next, we saw the area where other books or newspapers were printed and all I can tell you is that a lot of man power is needed for the books and newspapers to be made efficiently. Finally, we settled in a room where the managing editor told us about the process that journalists go through to write a suitable article.

I admired the effort that journalists put in to making an article. They search about a topic for a whole day then go to their computers and type suitable article for the readers, without knowing how the readers will react. It is a tough thing to handle. I was surprised by the process of printing the articles. Although the actual printing didn't take a lot of time, it took a lot of massive machines. Something else I did not know about newspapers is that they are printed at around 3-5 am. I also learned that journalists work all day non-stop to write an article and they are done with the articles by midnight then they are edited and ready to be printed on the next edition of the newspaper.

The staff of a newspaper go through a lot to try and make a master piece article out of the final copy of the newspaper. It takes effort and commitment to write a story, and it needs patience to edit and print. From this field trip, I did not only learn about journalism I learned that the ethics that journalists use I can use in my daily life. Besides, who know maybe newspapers will be read more frequently than tablets someday and be popular like they used to be.

## FIELD TRIP TO THE KUWAIT TIMES

By Omar Muzaffar

On March 14, 2017, my classmates and I went on a field trip to The Kuwait Times. We learned about the process of writing and printing a newspaper. The people working there showed us the different machines used to properly publish and create a newspaper. My group and I met with the Deputy General Manager Adnan Saad, and he showed us

the amount of work that goes into developing a newspaper.

Our experience at The Kuwait Times was something I will cherish forever, as it proved to me that handwork always pays off. At the beginning of the day, Adnan Saad explained to us how much it costs to put out or publish an article in a newspaper. I was astounded by the price as it was way over my expectations. News companies would rely on other sources like maga-

zines, to gain enough income.

I liked how organized their whole structure was, as they had a place for printing, a place for cutting, a place for editing, and a place for gathering information. I also loved how they gave us a tour of the whole manufacturing facility. It showed how well thought out and well prepared they were to receive a group of students.

I was surprised by the cost of publishing a certain article in a newspaper. Adnan

Saad told us that they often rely on creating other sources to make money for the newspaper. They also told us that sponsors provide the largest portion of the money they make, as simply putting a logo on a newspaper can lead to making thousands in income. In conclusion, it was a very good day and we learned a lot about the work that goes into a 150 fil newspaper. I hope to visit that facility again one day and maybe help with the work they do.

## MY EXPERIENCE AT KUWAIT TIMES

By Alemad Ziad

On March 14, 2017 the Creative Writing class at Kuwait American School went on a field trip to the Kuwait Times newspaper, which is located in Shuwaikh. The purpose of this field trip was to learn more about journalism since our elective class has been learning about journalism for the quarter. This field trip was important because we learned about the marketing, the printing,

the editing, the cutting and basically everything that goes into making a newspaper.

The experience at Kuwait Times was truly one to remember. The staff that took care of us there was extremely friendly and welcoming and answered every question we had to ask them. They also showed us around the office and the printing area. This was fascinating to see so much work going into a newspaper.

One of the things I liked there was the hospitality.

Deputy General Manager Adnan Saad welcomed us into his office and gave us a lecture about the marketing of the newspaper. Another thing that really impressed me was the printing and all the hard work that goes into doing it. They use gigantic rolls and heavy machinery to print 40,000 copies every day around the year!

In conclusion, the trip was very fun. As I said it was one to remember. I hope to visit that place again in the upcoming years.



## ACK BARBEQUE DONATIONS TO CANCER AWARE NATION

The Australian College of Kuwait (ACK) focused on its social corporate responsibility (CSR) by organizing its third ACK Health Day event in the aim of raising awareness on healthy living and gathering proceeds for donations.

The theme chosen for the Health Day event was 'Australia' to showcase the healthy lifestyle of this wonderful country. Stage shows, booth activities and sport activities were amongst the functions that took place during the event. The Australian Embassy was very pleased to know that ACK chose Australia as the theme of their event and offered their generous support by providing many of the bunting, Australian flags and decorations for the event's scenery. The Australian Ambassador Warren Hauk even gave a speech on stage and attended the event with his parents to enjoy the occasion.

ACK's Business Management students played an integral role in organizing the Health Day, as students have been studying Event Management this semester and relished the opportunity to put their new-found event skills into real life practice. They were responsible for planning and implementing a large number of activities for children and adults, as well as creating a diverse program that included slippery slides, magic shows, various sports and educational games in line with the event's 'Australian' theme.

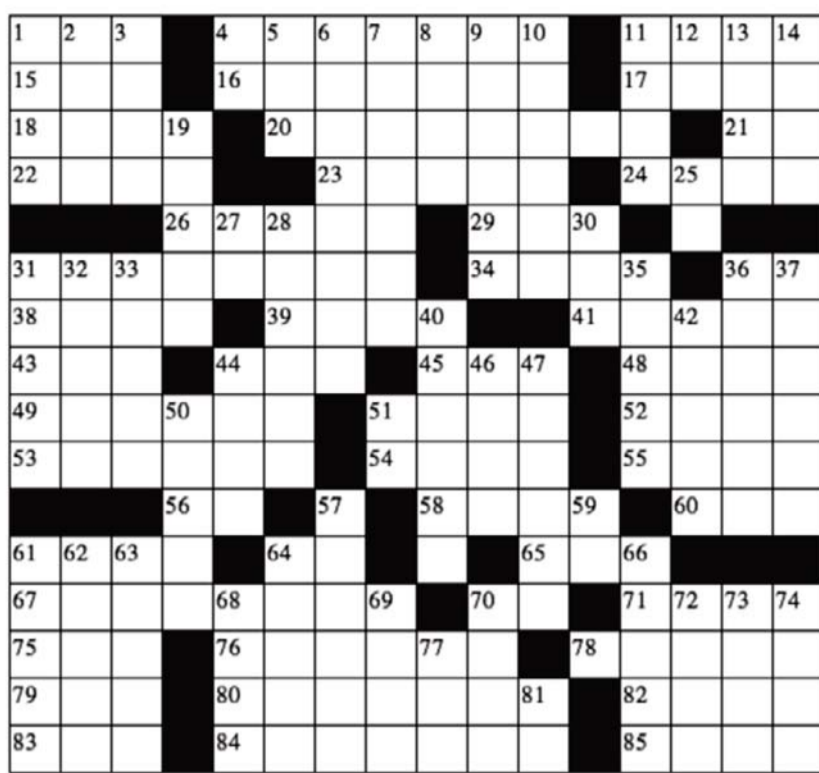
A major draw card was the barbeCURE that was hosted by ACK's faculty, staff and students. Money collected from the barbeque grills all went to Cancer Aware Nation (CAN). The donation entity, CAN, was very satisfied with ACK's ongoing commitment through this initiative that aims in spreading awareness to the people on healthy living. Further ACK Health Days with different themes will continue to be held each semester by the College.







CROSSWORD 1602



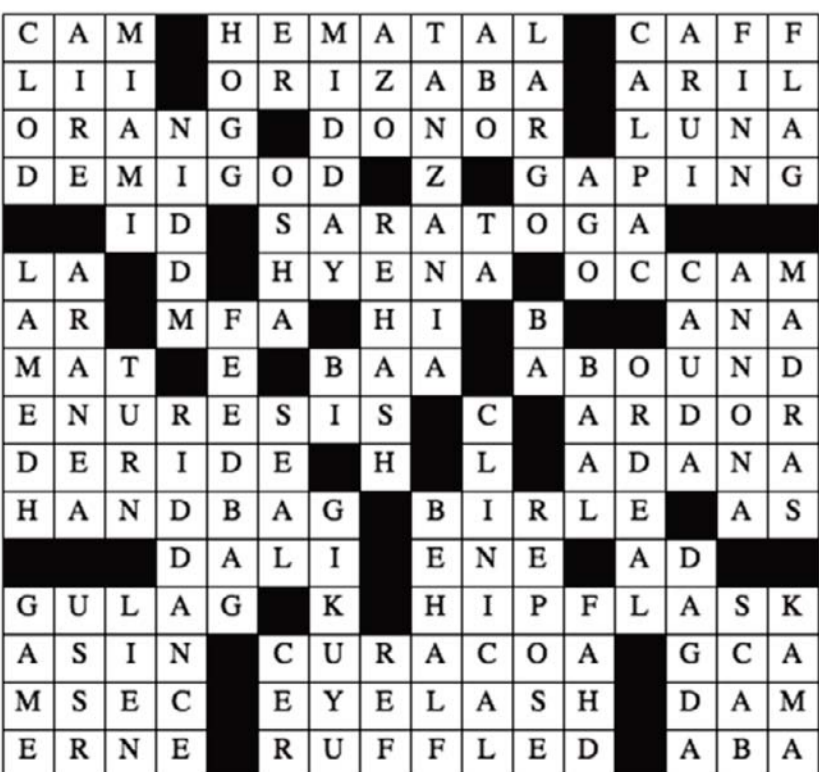
ACROSS

1. White crystalline compound used as a food additive to enhance flavor.
4. German-American Baptist denomination founded in 1708.
11. (Islam) The man who leads prayers in a mosque.
15. A Kwa language spoken by the Yoruba people in southwestern Nigeria.
16. A siren of German legend who lured boatmen in the Rhine to destruction.
17. An officer who acts as military assistant to a more senior officer.
18. An accidental hole that allows something (fluid or light etc.) to enter or escape.
20. Having minute nodules.
21. A colorless and odorless inert gas.
22. A city in northern India.
23. Rice cooked in well-seasoned broth with onions or celery and usually poultry or game or shellfish and sometimes tomatoes.
24. A river in north central Switzerland that runs northeast into the Rhine.
26. English theoretical physicist who applied relativity theory to quantum mechanics and predicted the existence of antimatter and the positron (1902-1984).
29. A compartment in front of a motor vehicle where driver sits.
31. City in central Iran.
34. A town in north central Oklahoma.
38. A beautiful and graceful girl.
39. Used as a Hindi courtesy title.
41. (botany) Especially of leaves.
43. A rapid bustling commotion.
45. Committee formed by a special-interest group to raise money for their favorite political candidates.
48. (of molten metal or glass) Formed by pouring or pressing into a mold n 1.
49. A warning against certain acts.
52. Money in the form of bills or coins.
53. Romanian violinist and composer (1881-1955).
54. Any of numerous local fertility and nature deities worshipped by ancient Semitic peoples.
55. On or toward the lee.
56. A toxic nonmetallic element related to sulfur and tellurium.
58. Of or relating to or characteristic of Thailand of its people.
60. A period marked by distinctive character or reckoned from a fixed point or event.
61. (Greek mythology) Goddess of the earth and mother of Cronus and the Titans in ancient mythology.
65. (Scotland) A small loaf or roll of soft bread.
67. Woody climbers of tropical Asia to Australia.
71. Highly excited.
75. The quantity that can be held in a mug.
76. (used of arms and legs) Bent outward with the joint away from the body.
78. Small genus of Eurasian aquatic perennial herbs.
79. A master's degree in business.
80. Any of several shrubs and vines of the genus Jasminum chiefly native to Asia.
82. The median ridge on the breastbone of birds that fly.
83. A river in north central Switzerland that runs northeast into the Rhine.
84. Two words that express opposing concepts.
85. Type genus of the Alcidae comprising solely the razorbill.

DOWN

1. The arch of bone beneath the eye that forms the prominence of the cheek.
2. A brace that extends from the rear of the keel to support the rudderpost.
3. Drought-tolerant herb grown for forage and for its seed which yield a gum used as a thickening agent or sizing material.
4. A metric unit of volume equal to one tenth of a liter.
5. An electrically charged particle.
6. A colorless liquid aldehyde.
7. A tricycle (usually propelled by pedalling).
8. The twelfth month of the civil year.
9. Lace again.
10. Of or relating to the Sioux people or their language and culture.
11. The United Nations agency concerned with atomic energy.
12. Destruction of heart tissue resulting from obstruction of the blood supply to the heart muscle.
13. The sixth month of the civil year.
14. Being nothing more than specified.
19. A family of Sino-Tibetan languages spoken in southeastern Asia.
25. The blood group whose red cells carry both the A and B antigens.
27. A state in the Rocky Mountains.
28. A wired or starched collar of intricate lace.
30. Top part of an apron.
32. A car that is closed and that has front and rear seats and two or four doors.
33. Be shown or be found to be.
35. The capital and largest city of Bangladesh.
36. Egyptian statesman who nationalized the Suez Canal (1918-1870).
37. Any of various plants of the genus Althaea.
40. News that updates your information v 1.
42. A river that rises in central Germany and flows north to join the Elbe River.
44. Small European freshwater fish with a slender bluish-green body.
46. A woman hired to suckle a child of someone else.
47. West Indian tree having racemes of fragrant white flowers and yielding a durable timber and resinous juice.
50. An analytic or interpretive literary composition.
51. A unit of information equal to one million (1,048,576) bytes.
57. Of or relating to theism.
59. A state in midwestern United States.
62. A popular island resort in the Netherlands Antilles.
63. Moth having nonfunctional mouthparts as adults.
64. Large dark brown North American arboreal carnivorous mammal.
66. A kind of heavy jacket ('windcheater' is a British term).
68. A Hindu prince or king in India.
69. Projectiles to be fired from a gun.
70. Very thin especially from disease or hunger or cold.
72. A Gaelic-speaking Celt in Ireland or Scotland or the Isle of Man.
73. An organization of countries formed in 1961 to agree on a common policy for the sale of petroleum.
74. Offering fun and gaiety.
77. A container.
81. The square of a body of any size of type.

Yesterday's Solution



STAR TRACK



Aries (March 21-April 19)

You will be extremely busy today. There will be many times where you will have to supply a solution to a particular problem. Be prepared to work hard. This is not a great time to attempt to plan a noon break with friends as you may find yourself less conversational. It would be good to walk or visit a pet or music store, if possible. Transferring your concentration to a lighthearted arena would do wonders for your energy level and enthusiasm as you return to the work expectations. Take care to examine all aspects of your work or dealings today-there is success! A long-awaited dialogue with an older person may take place later. You enjoy keeping up-to-date with the news regarding your friends, relatives or neighborhood events.



Taurus (April 20-May 20)

Today is a fine day... Your work benefits from your total concentration. This may be a good thing as you will be able to forget about personal plans for a while and relax your expectations of the day. Surprises happen all day long and, you are able to finish what you start in the work world. The noon break is fun with co-worker friends and somewhere in the visit there is talk of metaphysics, horoscopes and telling fortunes. You are also interested in the subject of writers and teachers that talk about self-help techniques. You might spend time in a bookstore after work for a short while. Young people want some of your time this afternoon and you enjoy their company. Later this evening you will want to have a camera handy.



Gemini (May 21-June 20)

Whether you are working in a place of business or at home, your attention is in getting things completed. If you find yourself working within a group today, you will be productive. You expect praise for your good works but this may not come on your time schedule so do not push. Emotions and feelings of those around you may be very clear allowing you to know what is expected of your energies and your time. If you have things you want to accomplish that might be a separate interest from the people you are with-set reasonable time limits before obligating yourself to new projects. This is a good time to use your writing skills as you can communicate with real originality. Learning ways to release the restlessness is beneficial to your health.



Cancer (June 21-July 22)

You waste few words when you describe or give instructions. You could be in a hurry, so if someone has a lot of difficulty in understanding what you want, be wise with your response. You have a natural sense of organization and come across as disciplined and careful, perhaps a little too sober. An inner vision, coupled with the ability to see the big picture, may find you working as a go-between with others. You could even have a special gift for spanning the generation gap, bringing older and younger spirits together. A love of animals, children, older people and the needy, is a lifelong trait that is visible today. It is easy for you to work with people in authority. There are opportunities for outdoor activity with friends this afternoon.



Leo (July 23-August 22)

Opportunities may go against your own sense of security and you may feel it is best not to take chances. This is a tough call when it comes to business and some compromise is perhaps the best way to a workable solution. Your career, practical vision and skills are of central importance to you now. You feel there is a waste of time if there is no organization and your actions are deliberate in this area of your life. Your reputation and image are a source of concern and you do everything you can to make them solid. You appear perhaps more charming and refined than usual this evening as people gather to celebrate or just simply gather together away from the workplace. Putting your best foot forward may take on a greater importance this evening.



Virgo (August 23-September 22)

Your work or career is in true harmony with the rest of your life. Much can be accomplished. You could gain from subordinates or young people just now as information or help is available for whatever you want to complete. You make your way through ideas and concepts, and you have a good ability to communicate and express them to others. Reading or attending a lecture on law, politics, education, travel or religion may be part of your day, which is productive. Your creative side is showing this afternoon when you help a friend decorate or update an old look. Your home environment, friends and surroundings in general become simplified and receive encouragement. Things may seem almost magical in the way they work out in your favor.



Libra (September 23-October 22)

Self-sacrifice and an understanding attitude on your part could have far-reaching effects on your own life-path and career during this time. You have improved your working abilities and higher-ups are taking note. This may mean that you are working more efficiently with others and this helps you to achieve bigger and more encompassing goals. Outer circumstances are favorable and it should be easy for you to push forward with regard to developing your career. You will have no problem moving up the professional ladder. Now is the time when personal insight into your most secret and psychological self may be possible. There is the possibility of new visions or sudden insights into your self-image or into your beliefs and dreams.



Scorpio (October 23-November 21)

Your idea of where you want to be in this life and where you really are with your goals are very close. You are progressing well with your goals and you will want to set some new goals soon. Do not be afraid that present goals will be forgotten as you begin to look into toward the future-they will soon be realized. This is a time of good fortune-when things open up in a very natural way for you. Situations are within your reach and it is easy to see which path is the one for you to take. Opportunities to improve and enlarge your friendships are available to you now. You may find yourself wanting to do almost anything today. This is a good time to project your image. Give yourself more credit for the original ways you handle family matters.



Sagittarius (November 22-December 21)

Go with the flow today. Trust in your own instincts. Your ideas are just as good, if not better, than someone else's ideas. Take a chance-try out your new ideas-you will have a feeling of accomplishment. Perhaps you are improving or updating a piece of technical equipment or some new computer software. Your perseverance pays off, particularly when you stop occasionally for a break or two-all work and no play, etc. A person that you were close to in the past may contact you this afternoon. An earnest effort in letting go of hard feelings can free you to move forward. This person has something special to offer you. This is a day of good surprises, opportunities, money and romance. A new game fills your evening hours.



Capricorn (December 22-January 19)

Investigating and examining results and statistics find you at your mental best. Your analytical abilities are at a high. This can be an expansive, creative and successful time-a time you may remember with much fondness. You are your warm, loyal and generous self today and others follow your example as you deal with the public and interact with others in the workplace. Your need for admiration and appreciation will certainly be met as you entertain and visit with friends this afternoon. Others could seek you out for your psychological insight and understanding. This could be a time to make changes in your environment. Any work toward creating a balance in your life will be beneficial. Good vibes are present all week long.



Aquarius (January 20- February 18)

You will make practical decisions concerning group issues today. A supervisor or higher-up is listening to your intelligent summations about how things should be run. You have a natural sense of what the public wants. You are always making new discoveries. Clear decisions affecting others are requested and triumphant. You have a great appreciation of how your life is going and this afternoon you will be able to enjoy the company of a good friend. You will both enjoy talking about what each of you has accomplished. Perhaps you will even be evaluating and reassessing your plans for the future. Life, like a good painting, has to be looked at occasionally to really appreciate the true essence. Friends may visit this evening.



Pisces (February 19-March 20)

Money, money, money-it seems to occupy your mind much of this day. You could be applying for a loan or looking to purchase a vehicle or home and there is almost a feeling of static electricity in the air. Easy does it, meaning, have more confidence. If you really need this new item to make your life work better, it will be yours! Be aware, however, that time and process may not meet with your own idea of how things should move along. Do not let these thoughts occupy your time-you will want to be attentive to your work. You are valued for your ability to make practical decisions and you could find yourself representing co-workers in sensitive issues. Clear decisions affecting others could be made by higher-ups as a result of your input.

WORD SEARCH

Animals 3

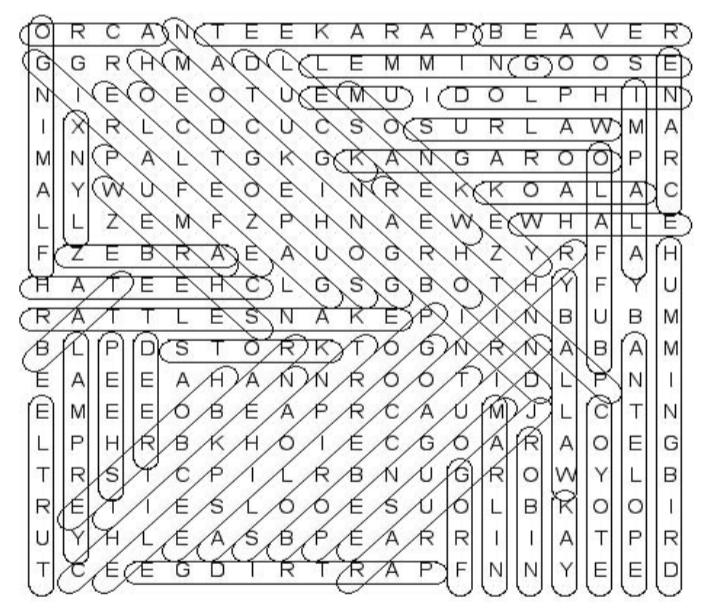
Find and circle all of the animals that are hidden in the grid. The remaining letters spell the name of an additional animal.



- |           |        |          |            |
|-----------|--------|----------|------------|
| ALBATROSS | EGRET  | LIZARD   | PUFFIN     |
| ALPACA    | ERMINE | LOON     | PYTHON     |
| ANACONDA  | FALCON | MARMOSET | SHARK      |
| ARMADILLO | FERRET | MARTEN   | SKUNK      |
| ASP       | FINCH  | MOLE     | SNAKE      |
| BADGER    | GERBIL | MONGOOSE | SQUIRREL   |
| CARIBOU   | GIBBON | MULE     | SWALLOW    |
| CHAMELEON | GROUSE | MUSKOX   | VULTURE    |
| CONDOR    | GULL   | OCELOT   | WARTHOG    |
| COUGAR    | HARE   | OSTRICH  | WILDEBEEST |
| COW       | HYENA  | PANDA    | WOLF       |
| CROCODILE | IGUANA | PHEASANT |            |
| DINGO     | LEMUR  | POSSUM   |            |

Yesterday's Solution

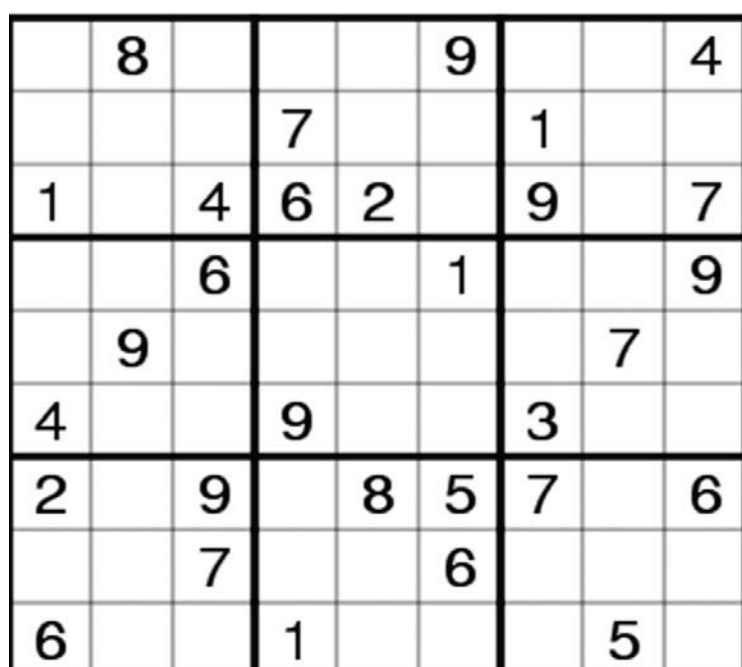
Animals 2



- |          |             |             |             |         |
|----------|-------------|-------------|-------------|---------|
| ANTELOPE | ELEPHANT    | JAGUAR      | ORCA        | SHREW   |
| BAT      | EMU         | KANGAROO    | PANTHER     | STORK   |
| BEAVER   | FLAMINGO    | KOALA       | PARAKEET    | TURTLE  |
| BOBCAT   | FROG        | LAMPREY     | PARTRIDGE   | WALLABY |
| BUFFALO  | GAZELLE     | LEMMING     | PENGUIN     | WALRUS  |
| CHEETAH  | GIRAFFE     | LYNX        | PORPOISE    | WEASEL  |
| CHICKEN  | GOOSE       | MARLIN      | PUMA        | WHALE   |
| COYOTE   | GORILLA     | MOCKINGBIRD | RABBIT      | YAK     |
| CRANE    | HEDGEHOG    | MONKEY      | RATTLESNAKE | ZEBRA   |
| DEER     | HORSE       | MOUSE       | RHINOCEROS  |         |
| DOLPHIN  | HUMMINGBIRD | OCTOPUS     | ROBIN       |         |
| DUCK     | IMPALA      | ORANGUTAN   | SHEEP       |         |

The hidden animal is: GRIZZLY BEAR

Daily SuDoku



Yesterday's Solution



# KUWAIT BEAUTIFUL & GREEN

## STUDENTS ART COMPETITION



Adnan Saad



(From left) Hani Qabeel, Waleed Al-Khashti, Abd Al-Rahman Al-Alyan, H.E Warren Hauck, H.E Almas Abdramanov, Abed Al-Kareem Al-Enezi, Adnan Saad and H.E Volodymyr Tolkach



Waleed Al-Khashti Corporate Communications & Relations Director

# KUWAIT TIMES ORGANIZES 'KUWAIT BEAUTIFUL & GREEN' PAINTING COMPETITION

By Ben Garcia

**KUWAIT:** 'Kuwait Beautiful & Green' painting competition organized by the Kuwait Times has recently concluded with the distribution of the awards and prizes held at JW Marriott, Kuwait City. The competition was attended by the representative of the Minister of State for Cabinet Affairs & Acting Minister of Information, Sheikh Mohammed Abdulla Al-Mubarak Al-Sabah who is the patron of the contest, Australian Ambassador to Kuwait Warren Hauck, Kazakhstan's Ambassador Almas Abdramanov and Ukrainian Ambassador to Kuwait Volodymyr Tolkach and Kuwait Times Editor-in-Chief Abd Al-Rahman Al-Alyan.

The jam-packed venue include visitors such as distinguished school principals, participating students, members of the distinguished jury headed by Abdul Karim Al-Enezi, Svitlana Arndt and Raj S. Kondal. Adding charm to the event, students from Indian Community School (Senior), Salmiya - Aneez, Mariam, Ankita, Shreya, Anupama, Terence

and Favin - presented a dazzling fusion dance. This year's competition has five categories; 6-8, 9-11, 12-14, 15-17 and the special needs. Here is the list of winners per categories:

**Special needs**

1. Yara Antoni, Kuwait English School
2. Jenan Safar, Manarat School
3. Haya Abd Al-Abdulaziz Al-Shaiaa, Al-Nibras School
4. Emad Poland, Kuwait Academy School
5. Johann Brandon D'Souza, Kuwait English School
6. Yousef Kalnder, Hope School
7. Abdullah Mousa Al-Azmi, Al-Nibras School
8. Mohamad Ali, Khalifa School
9. Nasser Al-Aqas, Dasman School
10. Hussein Akbar, Manarat School

**6-8 Category**

1. Al-Ward Al-Rashid, ACA Salmiya School
2. Fatima Al-Khandari, Om-Al-Maradem School

3. Anabelle Sappin, French School
4. Aayaat Amaan Pal, Indian Educational
5. Fatima Al-Mahpoz, Om Al-Maradem School
6. Maria Shamsaldeen, ACA Salmiya School
7. Aya Hamza Abo Ain, Al-Qutoof School
8. Muneerah Al-Muhanna, ACA Salmiya School
9. Alsha K. Saji, Carmel School
10. Nada Loai, Nottingham School

**9-11 Category**

1. Sadin Al-Mesri, Al-Salam School
2. Zarah Al-Manfoz, Om Al-Maradem School
3. Miridula P.R., Indian Educational School
4. Jessica Mary, Indian Leaning Academy
5. Hassan Al-Bathir, Abd Al-Rahman Al-Ghafiqi
6. Al-Budor Usama Salihi, Hawally Intermediate
7. Jassim Hassan, Kuwait Academy
8. Fatima Al-Zamani, Salma Bent Malek
9. Jessilyn Sarah V, Indian Community School
10. Jana Al-Makanes, Al-Qutoof

**12-14 Category**

1. Salma Adel, Al-Salmiya School
2. Rajalaksmi Palaresamuthu, FAIPS
3. Diya Mariam John, Indian Educational
4. Afnan Al-Misbah, Om Kalthum Bent Mohammed
5. Haia Ahmed Al-Bishi, Saadi Bent Oaf School
6. Rodaina Khorshed, Al-Salmiya School
7. Vaishnav Anil Kumar, Indian Community
8. Rahma Mohammad, Hawally Intermediate
9. Noura Malallah, Lila Al-Qurashia
10. Sara Al-Smeri, Om Kalthum Bent Mohammed

**15-17 Category**

1. Aya Karim, Ikhlas School
2. Sarah Khaled, Khalda Bent Al-Asoad School
3. Jumanna Kamal, Ikhlas School
4. Narjis Bin Nakhi, Al-Salmiya School
5. Amal Al-Ajmi, Fariah Bent Abi Al-Saalt
6. Dima Al-Jasim, Al-Asmaa Bent Al-Harith School
7. Fatima Bader Al-Azmi, Doha School
8. Nada Abd Al-Hakim, Al-Rawda School
9. Noura Al-Mutairi, Bayan School
10. Fatima Jawad, Fatima Al-Sarawi School



George Aoun and Adnan Saad



H.E Warren Hauck Australian Ambassador, Eleanor Hale, H.E. Almas Abdramanov Kazakhstan Ambassador, Svitlana Arndt, H.E Volodymyr Tolkach Ukraine Ambassador and Abd Al-Rahman Al-Alyan Editor-in-Chief of Kuwait Times



Teachers from Dasman School



H.E Almas Abdramanov, Svitlana Arndt and Adnan Saad



Teachers from Bayan School and Om Al-Maradem



Students from Doha Secondary School



Adnan Saad and Sherif Ismail with Indian Community School dance team Aneez, Mariyam, Anupama, Terence, Ankita, Favin and Shreya.



Luceen Waleed, performing a song



Strategic Partner



Sponsored by



# KUWAIT BEAUTIFUL & GREEN

## STUDENTS ART COMPETITION

### SPECIAL NEEDS



**Anfal Group**

This year participants had reached to over 14,850 participants from 165 schools studying in various stages aged 6-18 from various schools in Kuwait including public, private, bilingual and special needs schools, who all painted creative paintings reflecting their beloved Kuwaiti environment and their keenness on protecting it to keep Kuwait always beautiful and green, as greenery is a sustainable resource that never drains. Adnan Saad, Kuwait Times Assistant General Manager said this competition has

achieved its goal as a fact that 14,850 participants took part this year reflects students' great concern and care for the environment.

"This makes us say that this is the largest painting competition held regionally. Selecting the winning entries was not an easy or simple task. It took the jury panel great time and effort to assess and evaluate various entries and exchange many points of view. We have categorized entries according to participants' age, artistic elements

including lines, colors, ideas, genuineness, authenticity and techniques used by each age category until we selected the top 10 paintings in each of them," he said.

The competition brought together young, talented and promising students that really excelled in displaying their artistic talents and highlighting an art-loving generation capable of using art to express aspirations in their minds and hearts.

"Due thanks and appreciation to the parents,

school principals and art teachers who encouraged and supported these students and contributed in the success of this competition, which I hope will boost our children's knowledge about the importance of protecting the environment and keeping our country evergreen. Congratulations to all the winners and let us say that all participants are considered winners and deserve due thanks and appreciation. Well done and thanks for your efforts," Adnan added.



**Yara Antoni - Kuwait English School**



**Jenan Safar - Manarat School**



**Haya Abd Al-Aziz Al-Shaiaa - Al-Nibras School**



**Emad Poland - Kuwait Academy School**



**Johann Brandon d'souza - kuwait english school**



**Yousif Kalnder - Hope School**



**Abdullah Mousa Al-Azmi - Al-Nibras School**



**Mohammed Ali - Khalifa School**



**Nasser Al-Aqas - Dasman School**



**Hussain Akbar - Manarat School**

### The Winners of The Best Efforts



**Anfal Bo Hammad**

**Meshari Abul**

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# KUWAIT BEAUTIFUL & GREEN

## STUDENTS ART COMPETITION

### CATEGORY 6 TO 8 YEARS



In his speech Adnan also thanked the sponsors headed by Zain Telecom, Jazeera Airways, Samsung and Marriott Hotel, Kuwait. He also thanked the Minister of State for Cabinet Affairs & Acting Minister of Information, Sheikh Mohammed Al-Abdulla Al-Mubarak Al-Sabah for patronizing the annual competition of Kuwait Times. He also thanked Zain Corporate Communications

& Relations Director Waleed Al-Khashti, Kuwait Marriott Hotel General Manager George Oun, Samsung Regional Director for Middle East Hani Qabeel, Jazeera Airways and Hassan Al-Yousefi.

**Special Need**  
Participation of special need schools were also recognized at the event. Most of the awards

were also bagged by Anfal Group for Talented Special Needs, headed by one of the winner's parent Najat Muhammad Al-Reyahi. Her daughter, Anfal Bu Hamad, who is a down syndrome case bagged most of the awards. "I am very happy with the result of the special need category. I am very supportive of everyone, as a mother of down syndrome daughter, we have to really laud

the organizer for including this category on their competition, with this, they are not left behind but they are in the forefront of activities like this. I created this group to help and be part of these kid's achievements," she said.



Al-Ward Al-Rashid - ACA Salmiya School



Fatima Al-Kandri - Om Al-Maradem School



Annabelle Sappin - French School



Aayaat Amaan Pal - Indian Educational



Fatima Al- Mahfoz - Om Al-Maradem School



Maria Shamsaldeen - American Creativity Academy



Aya Hamza Abo Ain - Al-Qutoof School



Muneerah Al-Muhanna - American Creativity Academy



Alisha K Saji - Carmel School



Nada Loai - Nottingham British School

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AWARDS



Director Bill Condon, left, stands with actors Josh Gad, center, and Emma Watson, right, winners of Movie of the Year for 'Beauty and the Beast.'



Actors Hugh Jackman, left, and Dafne Keen are pictured in the press room.



Cast of 'Stranger Things,' winner of the Show of the Year pose, in the press room.

# 'STRANGER THINGS,' 'BEAUTY' WIN BIG AT MTV AWARDS

Nostalgic horror sensation "Stranger Things" and Disney's "Beauty and the Beast" shared the spoils Sunday at the MTV Movie and TV Awards, expanded and renamed this year to include television. Netflix's hit series took best show and best actor in a show for an emotional Millie Bobby Brown, one of its young stars, while best actor in a movie went to Emma Watson for "Beauty," which also picked up best film.

"The village in our fairytale wanted to make Belle believe that our world was smaller than the way that she saw it, with fewer opportunities for her, that her curiosity and passion for knowledge and her desire for more in life were grounds for alienation," said Watson, 27, of her iconic character. "I loved playing someone who didn't listen to any of that. I'm so proud to be a part of a film that celebrates diversity, literacy, inclusion, joy and love the way that this one does."

Daniel Kaluuya and Milton "Lil Rel" Howery, the stars of surprise smash hit thriller "Get Out," got the prizes for "next generation" and best comedic performance respectively. Best villain went to Jeffrey Dean Morgan for his turn as the bloodthirsty Negan in "The Walking Dead," while best hero was awarded to Taraji P. Henson for "Hidden Figures."

The MTV Movie and TV Awards, hosted this year by comic actor Adam DeVine, have been taking a sideways look at Hollywood since 1992, honoring films and their actors with "golden popcorn" statuettes. The nominees are decided by producers and MTV executives, while the winners are chosen by the public, who vote online.

**'More than a kiss'**

As a result, the awards have historically recognized commercial favorites, in contrast to the Oscars and other events

based on critical or industry acclaim. The annual celebration of youth pop culture expanded this year to include television, and MTV reverted to broadcasting the event live after pre-recording last year's show. The only hitch came when MTV was forced to cut short its red carpet as downtown LA was hit with an unseasonal hail storm that drenched celebrities and members of the press and public.

In another departure with convention it dispensed with gender distinctions in the categories, and awarded best kiss to a same-sex embrace. Ashton Sanders and Jharrel Jerome portrayed two African American teenagers exploring their sexuality in "Moonlight," which won best picture at the Oscars. "I think it is safe to say that it really is okay for us young performers, especially minority performers, to step out of the box and do whatever it takes to tell a story and whatever it takes to make a change," said Jerome, 19.

"This award is bigger than Jharrel and I. This represents more than a kiss," Sanders added. "This is for those that feel like the others, the misfits. This represents us." Meanwhile "Hidden Figures," which tells the previously little-known story of the vital contribution of African American women to the NASA space program, won a new "Fight Against The System" category. Vin Diesel, Michelle Rodriguez and Tyrese Gibson came on stage to accept a "generation award" for the "Fast and Furious" franchise.

Diesel thanked the generation of fans "willing to accept this multicultural franchise where it didn't matter what color your skin was." Hugh Jackman and debutante Dafne Keen, stars of "Logan," were recognized for best double act while Trevor Noah of "The Daily Show" got best host.



Actors Rebel Wilson, left, and Hailee Steinfeld, center, perform onstage.



Actress Millie Bobby Brown holds her trophy.

**WINNERS**

- MOVIE OF THE YEAR: "Beauty and the Beast"
- SHOW OF THE YEAR: "Stranger Things"
- BEST ACTOR IN A MOVIE: Emma Watson - "Beauty and the Beast"
- BEST ACTOR IN A SHOW: Millie Bobby Brown - "Stranger Things"
- BEST HOST: Trevor Noah - "The Daily Show"
- BEST DUO: Hugh Jackman and Dafne Keen - "Logan"
- BEST KISS: Ashton Sanders and Jharrel Jerome - "Moonlight"
- FIGHT AGAINST THE SYSTEM: "Hidden Figures"
- NEXT GENERATION: Daniel Kaluuya
- TEAR-JERKER: "This Is Us" - Jack (Milo Ventimiglia) and Randall (Lonnie Chavis) at karate
- BEST MUSICAL MOMENT: "You're the One That I Want" - ensemble, "Grease: Live"
- BEST COMEDIC PERFORMANCE: Milton "Lil Rel" Howery - "Get Out"
- BEST REALITY COMPETITION: "RuPaul's Drag Race"
- BEST HERO: Taraji P. Henson - "Hidden Figures"
- BEST VILLAIN: Jeffrey Dean Morgan - "The Walking Dead"
- BEST DOCUMENTARY: "13th"
- BEST AMERICAN STORY: "Blackish" — AFP



TV personalities Michelle Visage, winner of Best Reality Competition for 'RuPaul's Drag Race' poses in the press room during the 2017 MTV Movie and TV Awards at the Shrine Auditorium in Los Angeles, California.



TV personality RuPaul, winner of Best Reality Competition for 'RuPaul's Drag Race' — AFP photos



The cast of '13 Reasons Why' poses in the press room.



Actors Ashton Sanders, left, and Jharrel Jerome accept Best Kiss for 'Moonlight' onstage.



Actors Hailee Steinfeld, left, and Ansel Elgort speak onstage.



The cast of 'It' introduce a clip from their new film.



Taraji P. Henson poses in the press room with the award for best fight against the system for 'Hidden Figures.'

FASHION



Albert Oiknine

# Kuwait International Fashion Week

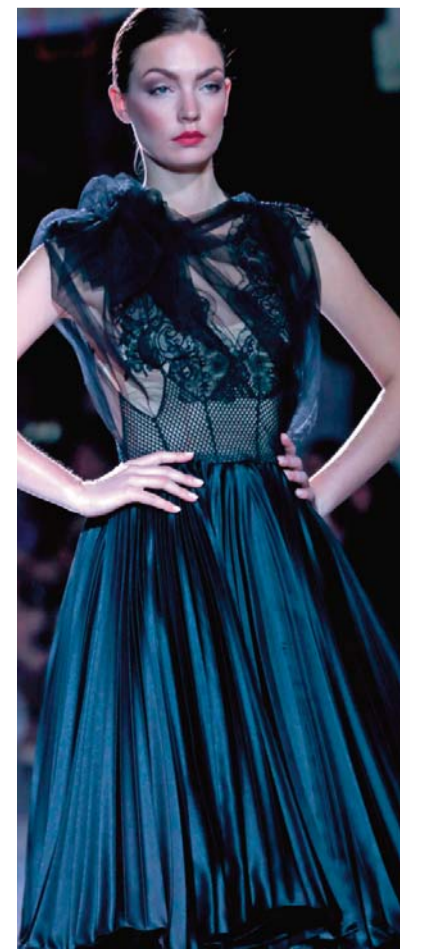
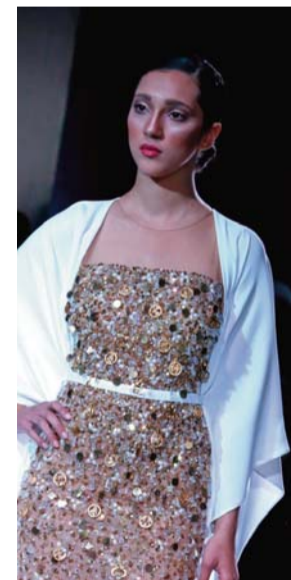
By Nawara Fattahova

Lovers of fashion enjoyed the beautiful fashion designs presented by local and international fashion designers during the unique Kuwait International Fashion Week event held from May 7 to 11, 2017 at Al-Hamra Business Tower. 20 international designers will be participating in this event that is being held in collaboration with Oriental Fashion Show. It is sponsored by Maserati, Al-Hamra, Lancome, Al-Arbash, Bon Voyage, Noble Dental Clinic, Auguri Center and the media sponsor Kuwait Times.

The first day included a mix of local and international designers including Bourjoisie, Nadia Bou Shahri, and Albert Oiknine. Their collection consisted of evening dresses from various colors and materials. Two wedding dresses were also presented. More designers will be presenting their designs in the remaining days. In addition, the showroom will be open daily from 6:00 pm to 10:00 pm.



Models display creation by Moroccan designer Albert Oiknine during the Kuwait international fashion week in Kuwait City. — Photos by Yasser Al-Zayyat



# Lifestyle

TUESDAY, MAY 9, 2017

'Stranger Things,'  
'Beauty' win big  
at MTV awards

# 38



In this photo, the Na'vi Shaman of Songs celebrates with music in Na'vi River Journey ride at Pandora-World of Avatar land attraction.

## Palestinian fashion designer breathes new life into tradition

**P**alestinian fashion designer Natalie Tahhan is hard at work in her Jerusalem studio, replacing the painstaking processes of cross-stitching and embroidery with a laptop computer and printed fabric. Taking inspiration from traditional Palestinian patterns, Tahhan designs patterns digitally and then has them printed on satins and silks before piecing together her garments. Her modern take on generations-old designs has attracted a keen following both locally and abroad, particularly in the Gulf, where she sells her clothes via the web.

"I wanted to do something new, modern, never seen on the market," the 27-year-old said, as she measured out fabric at her studio in her family home in Ras al-Amud, east Jerusalem. Palestinians have for centuries painstakingly sewn long black dresses and adorned them with red embroidery, in designs still worn today in rural areas and at marriages and other celebrations. The designs vary from region to region and tend to say something about the wearer.

"We can tell where the woman who wears it is from and if she is married or single," Tahhan said. Several young Arab designers have sought to modernize traditional wear and bring the dresses of their ancestors—an increasingly rare sight today—to a new generation. Tahhan, who studied in Doha and at the London College of Fashion, is among the few to do so in Jerusalem. She believes she is the only one to have

abandoned traditional embroidery for her new method.

As the Palestinian territories lack the equipment she needs, she has her fabrics printed in Dubai. They are then delivered to Jerusalem via Qatar and Jordan to circumvent the lack of direct shipments from the Gulf countries to Israel and the Palestinian territories.

### Proof of existence

Maha Saca, director of the Palestine Heritage Centre in the occupied West Bank city of Bethlehem, says she supports efforts to breathe new life into traditional designs. "Adding Palestinian motifs to modern wear is very important. It means we can wear a modern dress with Palestinian embroidery on it," she said. The centre, established in 1991, boasts the largest collection of traditional Palestinian dresses. "Embroidery is part of our identity and our proof of our existence in every Palestinian city and village," Saca said. "It shows the beauty and richness of our Palestinian heritage."

She is lobbying for traditional embroidery to be incorporated into Palestinian school uniforms. Saca said top-end handmade dresses can cost between \$1,500 and \$2,000 (1,400 and 1,800 euros) because of the long hours of labor involved and the cost of materials. She stresses the need to preserve hand-embroidering techniques, but accepts that clothes are being produced in new and more modern ways. "We sup-

port it 100 percent," she said. Tahhan's first collection, consisting of five white and violet satin capes with shimmering geometric patterns, sold out completely in less than three months at a price of \$550 (500 euros) a piece. Most of the sales were to Gulf clients who bought the items online.

### Really worth it

One of Tahhan's signature works is a cape inspired by designs from the West Bank city of Hebron, occupied by Israel for 50 years. The garment bears a succession of blue and pink squares over black fabric, and is open at the shoulders. Tahhan's light fabrics work well in the Gulf market, where heavy black felt or thick cotton can become unbearable under the burning sun. Her latest collection is called "Prints of Palestine."

Tahhan's location in Jerusalem, a city holy to Muslims, Christians and Jews, is also a plus for sales "despite the obstacles and difficulties" imposed by Israel's occupation, she said. Israel seized the West Bank and east Jerusalem in 1967. It later annexed east Jerusalem in a move never recognized by the international community. Palestinians see the eastern sector as the capital of their future state, while Israelis consider the entire city of Jerusalem their unified capital.

"I wanted to do something as a girl from Jerusalem," said Tahhan, her long black hair falling over her shoulders. "Why not create fashion here?"



"People love the idea of owning something made in Jerusalem, especially Palestinians abroad," she said. "When they buy something they feel they are taking with them a small piece of the city." — AFP

Palestinian fashion designer Natalie Tahhan measures fabric at her studio in the east Jerusalem neighborhood of Ras al-Amud.

— AFP photos



Palestinian fashion designer Natalie Tahhan displays some of her creations at her studio.