

**Silk Road reflects Kuwait 2030 vision for global trade**



**Jakarta Christian governor jailed for two years for blasphemy**



**Kuwait International Fashion Week: Day 2**



**Alves special sends ruthless Juventus into final**



## AMIR, ERDOGAN LAUNCH NEW AIRPORT TERMINAL PROJECT

TURKISH PRESIDENT CALLS TO BOOST TRADE WITH GULF



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### IS THE SKY FALLING?



By Badrya Darwish

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The market is scared nowadays. It's very gloomy, and it's not due to dust storms and bad weather. Instead, the atmosphere is highly affected by a lack of confidence in the economic situation in Kuwait. No one is spending, and everyone is putting their money in their pockets. They are just buying the necessities of life - the majority of what we spend is on food.

There is an atmosphere of dull stagnancy when you go to the market. Why is this? The economy is actually not doing that bad and oil prices have been rising steadily, reaching around \$50 per barrel, which is a great improvement for us. As it is, our budget is set for \$45 per barrel. So we aren't hurting, and we still see the government financing mega projects not less than before - actually even more. But the government keeps saying 'deficit' after 'deficit' after 'deficit', without giving us thorough details.

Actually, they don't know the impact on the market when they keep saying that the financial sky is falling. The sky is not falling. The government and its plans are failing to revive the market and to rebuild our confidence in Kuwait's economic future. On the contrary, it's very depressing that we keep hearing about humongous amounts - millions of dinars - lost to corruption and payoffs, bribery, etc.

May I ask one question? I'm not an economic expert, but why doesn't the government deal directly with suppliers for major issues like weapons, arms, airplanes or oil tankers? Why does it need a middleman? This is what encourages corruption. Another major problem is that there is no transparency in any sector of the government. And please don't tell me privatization will solve this problem. Actually, you will end up making the rich richer and the poor poorer.

And worst of all, the government continues to talk about the bad economic shape of the country while it's doing nothing to grow the economy and rebuild it. We need confidence in the market. We need optimism in the market. Not someone to distress and keep telling us we are broke. Especially when we have hundreds of billions of dollars in investments we could use.

All these subsidy cuts - water, fuel, electricity, KOC employees' benefits, etc, etc - actually have a reverse effect. Was all of this really necessary? They make us scared and less likely to invest or expand or grow our businesses and our economy. It's like a game to psych us out. They've killed the morale of the nation.



KUWAIT: HH the Amir of Kuwait Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah and Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan launch the start of construction of a new Kuwait International Airport terminal yesterday. — KUNA (See Page 3)

By Nawara Fattahova and Agencies

KUWAIT: HH the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah and Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan officially launched the start of construction of a new terminal at Kuwait International Airport yesterday, in a ceremony attended by senior dignitaries from Kuwait, Turkey and the Gulf.

The new passenger terminal is being built by award-winning Turkish construction company Limak Holding and a local partner, Kharafi National. The expansion will triple capacity to 25 million passengers a year and accommodate all types of aircraft through 51 gates and stands. It is the largest contract to date for a Turkish company in Kuwait.

"This project is a testament to the special ties shared by Kuwait and Turkey," Erdogan noted, adding that he was confident that "Kuwaitis would soon reap the benefits of a robust aviation sector". The Turkish president pointed out that "there has been substantial progress and development in Kuwait as of late and that the region is fortunate to have His Highness the Amir".

"We want to develop trade volume with the Gulf states, which last year reached \$17.4 billion," Erdogan said. "Compared with the potential we have, this size is below the required level," the Turkish leader said. Erdogan, who told reporters he was happy with his government's political ties with the GCC, had previously said he aims to boost cooperation in the economic and defense sectors. Turkish companies have been awarded around \$51 billion of contracts across the GCC over the

Continued on Page 13

## GOVT WILL ONLY DEBATE 'CONSTITUTIONAL' GRILLING

By B Izzak

KUWAIT: The National Assembly will debate the grilling of HH the Prime Minister Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-Sabah today, as the government is expected to demand deleting a number of "unconstitutional" issues in the two grillings. The premier faces a variety of accusations in the two grillings filed by five opposition lawmakers. The two will be debated on the same day, to be followed by the debate of a third grilling against State Minister for Housing Affairs Yasser Abul. These are the first questionings against the prime minister in this Assembly, elected in November.

Justice Minister Faleh Al-Azab said the government will accept to debate "what is constitutional and reject what is unconstitutional", a clear reference that one of the two grillings contains issues not in line with the constitution. He said the government will not accept to deal with issues against the constitution. The government has a strong backing in the Assembly and is certain to win any vote in the Assembly over the grilling. It is even backed by a good number of opposition MPs who believe that the grillings were not filed at an appropriate time.

Even if the two grillings are debated in full, the grillers will find it difficult to secure the support of 10 MPs to sign on a non-cooperation motion against the prime minister. If they manage to secure

the required 10 signatures to file the non-cooperation motion, it is impossible to secure the required 25 votes to approve the motion, especially with many opposition lawmakers rejecting such a motion at this time.

MP Mohammad Al-Dallal said yesterday that the Islamic Constitutional Movement (ICM), the main opposition bloc in the Assembly, does not believe that filing a non-cooperation motion against the prime minister now is appropriate. The two grillings accuse the government of the prime minister of mismanagement, squandering public funds, imposing new charges on citizens and revoking citizenships of political opponents.

But in an attempt to discredit the grillers at least over the citizenship issue, a special committee formed by the government to study reinstating revoked citizenships issued a statement saying it will resolve the issue soon. The committee said it has received 184 applications from people who had their citizenships revoked by the government, adding it will soon start studying the applications in order of priority. The statement attempts to show that the government is serious about reinstating the revoked citizenships.

Also, the four opposition figures who had their citizenships revoked by the government almost three years ago issued a statement demanding that their cases should not be involved in the political crisis.

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SEOUL: South Korean presidential candidate Moon Jae-In (right) of the Democratic Party greets his supporters at a park near the presidential Blue House yesterday. — AFP

## LANDSLIDE WIN FOR MOON IN SOUTH KOREA ELECTION

SEOUL: Left-leaning former human rights lawyer Moon Jae-In won South Korea's presidential election by a landslide yesterday, according to an exit poll, sweeping to power on a yearning for change after a tumultuous scandal. The ballot was called to choose a new president after Park Geun-Hye was ousted and indicted

for corruption, and took place against a backdrop of high tensions with the nuclear-armed North. Voters were galvanized by anger over the sprawling bribery and abuse-of-power controversy that brought down Park, which catalyzed frustrations over jobs and slowing growth.

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## INDIA FINDS IT HARD TO END CASH LOVE AFFAIR

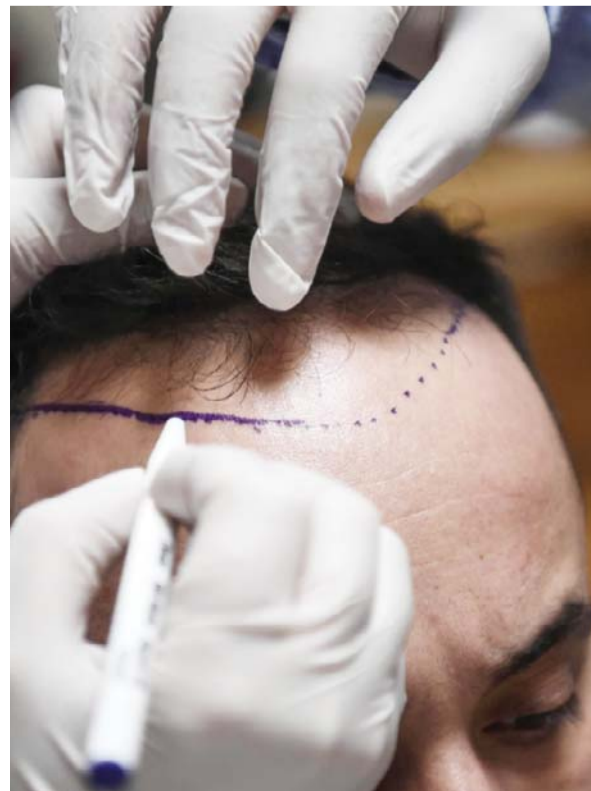
NEW DELHI: Fat wads of bank notes move across counters in Old Delhi's gold and diamond district in one of many challenges to six months of Indian government efforts to suffocate the black market. Cash has been king in the dusty narrow streets of Chandni Chowk since the jewelry market was set up by Emperor Shah Jahan in the 17th century. The owners now largely shrug off "demonetization" by modern-day ruler Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

In a shock move on Nov 8 last year, Modi cancelled all 1,000 (\$15) and 500 rupee notes in circulation, rendering about 86 percent of India's currency void. Amid street protests, the decision triggered massive queues outside banks as the authorities struggled to print enough new notes. Chandni Chowk is not alone in resisting the digital economy. At least 80 percent of business in India is estimated to be conducted in cash, much of it avoiding

tax as well as fuelling corruption. "I'm sticking to cash," one gold and diamond dealer, Kapil, who declined to give his last name, told AFP at his store in the backstreets. "There have been many raids on the shops here so I don't keep as much stock of ready jewelry as I used to, but I don't take any cheques or cards," he said. "Only cash." Most of the gold, silver and diamond dealers approached in Chandni Chowk told AFP that while a percentage of their transactions had switched to digital cards, cash still dominates.

Last year Kapil sold jewelry worth nearly 10 million rupees (\$155,000) but declared sales of just 500,000 rupees (\$7,770). But it is not just the sellers who prefer the tax-friendly cash system. "Customers still want to pay in cash to save paying tax," Ranjeev Panjali, whose family has been in the jewelry business for the past 60 years.

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ISTANBUL: A hair specialist checks a patient on April 27, 2017. — AFP

## HAIR THERAPY BOOSTS TOURISM IN ISTANBUL

ISTANBUL: On his to-do list for his trip to Istanbul, Palestinian tourist Jameel wants to visit the Blue Mosque and take a tour on the Bosphorus, like any other tourist. But he has one more, less conventional purpose - to have 1,500 strands of hair implanted one by one, in an increasingly popular anti-hair loss treatment in the Turkish metropolis. With over 300 clinics specialized in hair transplant alone, Istanbul is becoming a growing hub in the industry, attracting patients from all over the world but mainly from the Middle East and the Gulf.

Experienced surgeons, advanced technology and relatively low prices are a plus for many tourists. And its growth in the last couple of years has come as a boon for a city where foreign tourism has fallen drastically since a spate of terror attacks in 2016. "I came to Turkey for the hair transplant and a bit of tourism. Turkey has an excellent reputation when it comes to hair implants," 27-year-old Jameel said, speaking to AFP after the

surgery at an Istanbul hospital, on condition of not using his full name.

Faisal Abu Ahmad, from Saudi Arabia, said his uncle underwent the treatment in Turkey and so he followed suit. "Rapid hair loss pushed me to undergo the operation. I started getting bald spots," he said. At the tourist hubs of Istanbul such as Taksim Square, it is hard to miss the men wandering around with shaved heads and bandages after their operations, proudly sporting the branded headbands of their clinics. They have become so ubiquitous that residents of Istanbul joke that a man with a bandaged head could be the city's new symbol.

"Prices are very, very attractive. However, the second most critical element is the quality of this treatment," said Talip Tastemel, the general manager of Clinic Expert. "Turkey is very advanced in cosmetic surgeries and hair transplantation, so the patients are buying a very high quality treatment at a quarter of the

Continued on Page 13

# ASAR, ICC CO-ORGANIZE SEMINAR ON ARBITRATION 'ENHANCING KUWAIT'S ARBITRATION LEGAL FRAMEWORK'

**KUWAIT:** ASAR - Al-Ruwayeh and Partners (ASAR), Kuwait's leading corporate, litigation and finance law firm, co-organized a leading seminar on arbitration with the International Court of Arbitration of the International Chamber of Commerce - Paris (ICC). The ICC is one of the oldest and most renowned arbitration institutions in the world and received in 2016, 966 new cases involving 3,099 parties from 137 countries, which constitutes a record year since the establishment of the Court in 1923.

The seminar was held yesterday at the JW Marriot Hotel in Kuwait City with the presence of the French and Ukrainian ambassadors, senior representatives from the ICC, renowned arbitrators and arbitration practitioners from Kuwait and the region and ASAR partners and lawyers, who shared significant insights on the new ICC rules of arbitration and the arbitration legal framework in Kuwait.

The seminar was specifically designed and organized to shed light on the latest amendments to the ICC Rules of Arbitration which came into force as of March 1, 2017 and the arbitration legal landscape in Kuwait which requires certain enhancements to strengthen foreign investors' protection and encourage them to increase their investment in the country.

The seminar was comprised of two panels and featured

key note speeches by ICC senior representatives, Ziva Filipic and Sami Jouerbi, Professor Mohammad Abdulwahab (vice President of the ICC International Court of Arbitration), Dr Yousef Al-Ali (former minister of Commerce and Industry of Kuwait) in addition to ASAR's representatives, Ahmed Barakat and Ibrahim Sattout.

The first panel highlighted the expedited procedures system introduced by the latest amendments to the ICC Rules of Arbitration designed for cases of lower value claims i.e., which does not exceed \$2 million) with reduced scales of fees. These procedures aim to accelerate the arbitration proceedings through, among others things, the referral of the matter to a single arbitrator (as opposed to three arbitrators) notwithstanding any contrary agreement between the parties, permitting the arbitrator to decide on the dispute based on the documents exchanged by the parties without the need to held hearings, and issuing the arbitral award within a six months period.

The second panel focused on the arbitration legal landscape in Kuwait and discussed the main challenges for investors with respect to arbitration in Kuwait, including the restrictions set by the Council of Ministers' decisions of 1988 and 1990 on government institutions, ministries and government owned companies to resort to arbitration with respect



**KUWAIT:** (From left) Ziva Filipic, Sami Hoerbi, and Mohammad Abdel Wahab attend the seminar. — Photo by Yasser Al-Zayyat

to contracts and projects implemented in Kuwait except with the approval of the Council of Ministers, the enforcement of foreign arbitral awards on the basis of the New York Convention of 1958 for the enforcement of foreign arbitral

awards, and the various enhancements to the arbitration legal framework and which are critical to strengthen foreign investors' confidence and to render Kuwait a more attractive venue for arbitration in the region.

Ahmed Barakat, Managing Partner at ASAR said: "It gives ASAR great pleasure to have co-organized such a prominent event with the ICC International Court of Arbitration; we are also honored to have had the presence of the French and Ukrainian ambassadors in addition to the prominent and renowned speakers. We have been working closely with public institutions and ministries in Kuwait and with international customers and have been aware of the importance and role of arbitration in encouraging foreign investments by providing investors with familiar tools to address disputes in the most efficient, fair and impartial manner.

Ibrahim Sattout, Partner at ASAR said: "Today's seminar has played a major role in outlining the importance for Kuwait of having a strong arbitration legal framework in line with international standards. It is of prime importance to have these types of platforms organized among the public authorities, industry experts and other key market players to exchange ideas on how to enhance the efficiency, reliability and transparency of the investment market landscape in Kuwait."

With dedicated offices in Kuwait and Bahrain coupled with its associated offices and relationships, ASAR provides clients across an extensive range of industry sectors with bespoke, practical legal advice and support for their business activities in Kuwait, Bahrain, across the GCC and beyond. The firm has been consistently rated as the leading corporate and litigation firm in Kuwait by reputable legal guides such as the International Financial Law Review (IFLR), Chambers Global Guide, and Legal 500. In 2016, ASAR was acknowledged as the IFLR Kuwaiti Law Firm of the Year; an award which ASAR has been delighted to receive for eight consecutive years.

## INT'L FINANCIAL EXPERTS URGE FISCAL REFORMS IN ARAB COUNTRIES

**KUWAIT:** A number of international financial experts stressed on the need on Monday for fiscal reforms to a number of Arab countries so as to address budget deficit caused recently by low oil prices and political unrests in some countries. The IMF Middle East Center for Economics and Finance (CEF), jointly with the Arab Fund for Economic and Social Development, held a symposium that discussed the economic and social implications of fiscal reforms in Kuwait and the Arab world. CEF's Director Oussama Kanaan said that the symposium, which was the sixth high-level forum organized by the CEF jointly with the AFESD, aimed at stimulating discussion on emerging regional and global issues that are of special interest to the public and policymakers in Kuwait and the wider Arab community.

He argued that the topic of fiscal reform has become increasingly important for a number of Arab countries, especially given rising pressures due to heightened conflict, a migration and refugee crisis, and, especially for GCC countries, low oil prices. A common challenge for most countries in the region has been the design and implementation of prudent fiscal policies with socially desirable patterns of public expenditures and efficient tax systems that are conducive to inclusive, equitable economic growth, he added.

### New environment

Meanwhile, Stephane Roudet, who leads the yearly IMF mission that appraises Kuwait's economic situation (the IMF Article IV Consultation mission), focused his remarks on the need for fiscal reforms in Kuwait. He started by highlighting the new environment in which GCC countries operate, that is characterized by durably lower oil prices and a deterioration in fiscal positions. Against this backdrop, Roudet explained why fiscal reforms are necessary in Kuwait, highlighting three broad objectives.

He noted that reforms should aim at gradually reducing the government deficit and financing needs, while creating room for growth-enhancing investment over the medium term. He stressed the need to ensure that Kuwait continues saving a sufficient part of its oil wealth for future generations. He explained that delinking government expenditure from volatile oil revenue would help maintain macroeconomic stability.

Roudet also flagged several spending areas where potential fiscal and efficiency gains are large, including the wage bill as well as subsidies and transfers. He pointed out that a public wage reform that allows for flexibility in setting wage increases would be important to better control future wage growth, welcoming the important steps taken by the government over the past year to raise gasoline and utility prices and encouraged further rationalization of energy subsidies, which benefit the wealthy more than the less well-to-do and reduce energy efficiency. Eric Le Borgne, Practice Manager for the Middle East and North Africa in the Macroeconomics and Fiscal management Global Practice of the World Bank, referred to significant steps taken in many countries toward consolidating spending, rolling back subsidies, and strengthening fiscal management.

He added that, mostly, fiscal policies in MENA countries still largely reflect an implicit "social contract" between governments and citizens, stating that this is evident among oil importers and oil producers alike, where fiscal policy is directed towards consumption spending, generous subsidies and large public sector workforce. He said this has affected fiscal sustainability, limited the amount of fiscal resources available for growth enhancing expenditures, and also created major distortions. Public investment is low, compared to current government spending. Some GCC countries spend on infrastructure, but here the problem is of excess, and low value-for-money spending. — KUNA

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**KUWAIT:** (From left) President of the Directorate General for Civil Aviation Sheikh Salman Al-Sabah, His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan, His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, Limak Chairman Nihat Ozdemir, Minister of Public Works Abdulrahman Al-Mutawa and Director of His Highness the Amir's office Ahmad Al-Fahad pose for a group photo during a ceremony to launch a new terminal at Kuwait International Airport yesterday. — Amiri Diwan photos



Minister of Public Works Abdulrahman Al-Mutawa presents a memento to Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan, as His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah looks on.

# AMIR HOLDS OFFICIAL TALKS WITH TURKISH PRESIDENT ERDOGAN CONCLUDES ONE-DAY VISIT TO KUWAIT



His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah shakes hands with Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan during the ceremony, as construction works can be seen in the background.

**KUWAIT:** His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah held official talks with visiting Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan at Bayan Palace yesterday, in presence of His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah. First Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah, senior state officials and the Turkish leader's accompanying delegation were present at the talks.

Deputy Minister of Amiri Diwan Affairs Sheikh Ali Jarrah Al-Sabah said the talks had handled historical relations between Kuwait and Turkey, which are always characterized by mutual understanding and sincere willingness to promote and developing bilateral cooperation in various fields.

The talks also included ways of utilizing mutual investment opportunities and the current regional and international developments, he said. The official talks were held in a friendly atmosphere that reflected mutual understanding and friendship, reflecting both sides' willingness to bolster and consolidate existing bilateral cooperation in all domains. Later, His Highness the Amir held a luncheon banquet in honor of the visiting Turkish President and his accompanying delegation at Bayan Palace.

Erdogan and his delegation left Kuwait later yesterday, ending up a one-day official visit to the country, during which he participated in a ceremony to launch a new terminal at Kuwait International Airport. The Turkish leader was seen off at the airport by His Highness the Amir, His Highness the Crown Prince, National Assembly Speaker Marzouq Ali Al-Ghanem, His Highness Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak, Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Defense Sheikh Mohammad Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah, Deputy Minister of Amiri Diwan Affairs Sheikh Ali Jarrah Al-Sabah, senior officials of the army, police, Kuwait National Guard (KNG) and Kuwait Fire Service Directorate (KFSD). — KUNA



(From left) Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan, His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah and His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah arrive to attend a ceremony to launch a new terminal at Kuwait International Airport yesterday.



Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan makes his address.



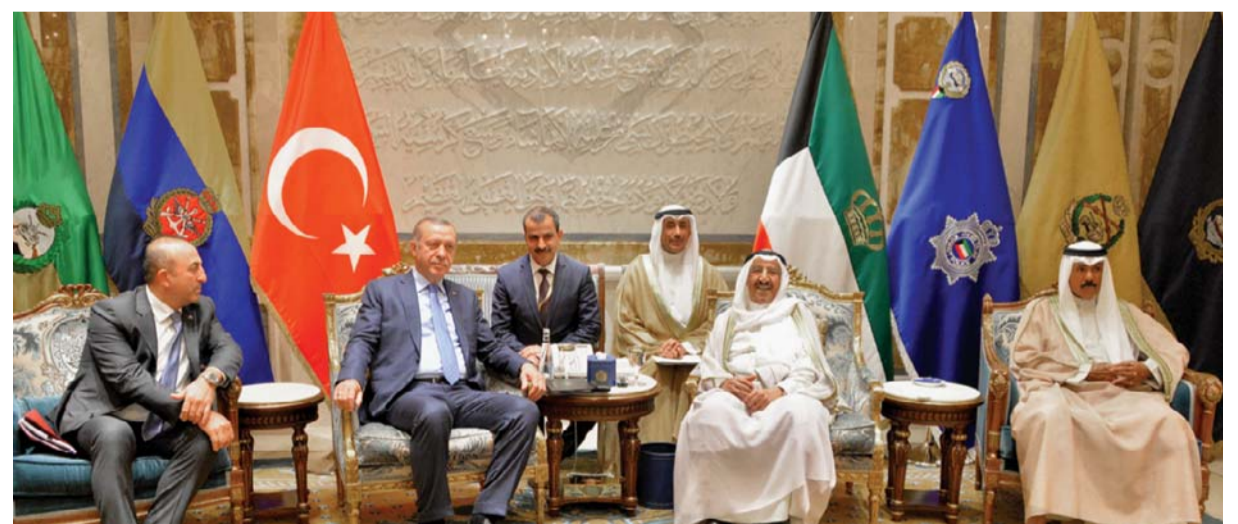
President of the Directorate General for Civil Aviation Sheikh Salman Al-Sabah delivers his speech.



Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan, 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 and other senior officials attend the ceremony.



His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah welcomes Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan to Kuwait.



His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah meets with Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan, in presence of His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah.



His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah bids farewell to Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan at the conclusion of his visit to Kuwait.



National Assembly Speaker Marzouq Al-Ghanem greets Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan during a luncheon banquet hosted by His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah.



Ongoing construction works at the site of the new Kuwait International Airport terminal.



The 'Silk City' project.



The Jaber Causeway.

# SILK ROAD REFLECTS KUWAIT'S 2030 VISION FOR GLOBAL TRADE FUTURE

## \$10 TRILLION TRADE EXPECTED IN FIVE YEARS

**KUWAIT:** The initiative of the Silk Road Economic Belt and the 21st Century Maritime Silk Road is a long-term opportunity to achieve economic prosperity in world's countries, mainly the Arab ones. This initiative is in line with the visions of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah aiming to transform Kuwait into a global commercial hub by 2030, and also to establish the 'Silk City' project launched in 2006. This embodies new horizons and wider ambitions to revive the historic Silk Road.

The initiative of the Belt and Road includes two sections; First the Silk Road Economic Belt which links China with Europe via Central and Western Asia, and the 21st Century Maritime Silk Road which extends from south of China to southeast of Asia and Africa. The Belt links more than 60 countries, with expected investments ranging between \$4 and 8 trillion, and serves 4.4 billion people, making up 63 percent of the world's total population.

**\$10 trillion**  
Trade amongst countries along the Belt and Road is expected to hit \$10 trillion in the five upcoming years. According to figures issued by Chinese government, China has invested about \$50 billion in countries along the Belt and the Road since 2013. The State of Kuwait will take part in this Road with several development projects, which materialize the 'Kuwait's 2030' vision.

The Silk City project, one of the world's largest, includes the Jaber Causeway, which links strategically Kuwait to the northern region. The city's project, which accommodates up to 700,000 people, contains the establishment of a 1001-meter tower, which is a world's height one. Investments of the projects are expected to hit \$100 billion.

The Jaber Causeway, the fourth longest one in the world, constitutes a key factor in developing and setting up the free economic zone in northern Kuwait where five islands



The 'Silk City' project.

2015. China ranked first in trade exchange with Kuwait. Total trade between China and Arab countries amounted to \$251 billion in 2014, an increase of 5.2 percent compared with 2013, ranking the second largest trading partner of these states. The two sides seek to speed up trade volume to \$600 billion in the next 10 years.

Last year, China announced during a conference that it would allocate, in collaboration with Arab countries, special loans estimated at \$15 billion, and commercial loans worth \$10 billion for Middle East countries, in addition to establishing two funds with Qatar and UAE for joint investments worth \$20 billion. According to statistics by China's ministry of commerce, total imports and exports volume between China and countries along the Belt and Road reached about \$914 billion in 2016, while new projects contracts fulfilled by China in the countries along the Road hit about \$126 billion, an increase of 36 percent. At the beginning of this year, China's non-financial direct investments with countries along the Belt and Road amounted to \$10.6 percent of the total foreign investment, a rise of 1.2 percent compared with 2016.

China has established a fund of \$40 billion in 2015 to provide investment services to economies of countries along the Road. China has built so far 56 trade and economic cooperation zones with more than 20 countries along the Belt and Road. Accumulated investment of these zones exceeded \$18.5 billion.

The Belt and Road Forum for International Cooperation will be held in Beijing in May, with the participation of heads of states, premiers, ministers and academics from more than 80 countries. The State of Kuwait will participate in this event, with a high-profile delegation headed by Minister of the Amiri Diwan Affairs Sheikh Nasser Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah. — KUNA



Construction works at the Jaber Causeway project.

are expected to establish near Iran's and Iraq's beaches.

The project of setting up the five islands includes the establishment of Mubarak Al-Kabeer port, which will help the country be open to the world commercially and economically, and serves Kuwait's interests with Iraq and Iran.

The port will be a key pivotal of regional transport linking the earth to sea via several means of transportations like high ways and railways. Such projects will contribute greatly to achieving partnerships between both public and private sectors to materialize the vision of His Highness the Amir.

### Bilateral ties

The State of Kuwait has deep-rooted relationships with China for a long time; their diplomatic ties have been established since 1971. And Kuwait was the first country that signed a document of cooperation in taking part in the initiative of reviving the Silk Road since 2013.

In 1982, Kuwait Fund for Arab Economic Development contributed, for the first time, to financing 37 projects in China estimated at KD 380 (\$950 million). In 2015, China's total exports to Kuwait hit \$5 billion, while its imports from this Gulf country reached \$807 million, according to specialized statistic in

## THE WORLD MIGRATORY BIRD DAY: PRESERVING SPECTACULARS OF NATURE OVER 400 KINDS SPOTTED IN KUWAIT

**KUWAIT:** The world marks today the World Migratory Bird Day (WMBD); an annual awareness-raising campaign that highlights the need for the conservation of migratory birds and their habitats. Initiated in 2006, the WMBD has a global outreach and is an effective tool to help enhance knowledge of the threats facing migratory birds, their ecological importance, and the need for international cooperation to conserve them. Every year, action is taken and public events are organized, including bird festivals, education program, exhibitions and bird-watching excursions, to mark the occasion.

'Sustainable Development for Wildlife and People.' WMBD 2017 will also highlight the interdependence of people and nature, and more especially people and migratory animals - in particular birds, as they share the same planet and thus the same limited resources. This year's campaign aims at increasing awareness on the need for a sustainable management of our natural resources, demonstrating that birds conservation is also crucial for the future of humankind.

### Important stopover

Ghanim Al-Sanad from Public Authority for Agriculture Affairs and Fish Resources (PAAAFR) stressed the distinct geographical location of Kuwait as an important stopover for migratory birds during their seasonal perilous journey. Many rare birds stopover on Kuwait's coasts and islands on their way to the final destination, which urges harder work to provide better hosting environment and safer flyways, Sanad added. Marking the WMBD is an occasion to high-



A migratory bird spotted in Kuwait.



A migratory bird spotted in Kuwait.

light the importance of birds as a key element of biodiversity and promoting environmental tourism, he said. Sanad said that that there was

more than a billion around the world. There are many different migration patterns. The majority of birds migrate from northern breeding areas to southern wintering grounds.

However, some birds breed in southern parts of Africa and migrate to northern wintering grounds, or along lines of latitude, to enjoy the milder coastal climates in winter. Other birds reside in lowlands during the winter months and move to higher altitudes for the summer.

### Two routes

According to the PAAAFR official, birds arrive in Kuwait through two routes: the first from East Europe, to Turkey, Syria, then Kuwait. The second from Central and Southern Russia, crossing Kuwait to the Arabian Peninsula. The two migration seasons are in the Spring, February and March, an Autumn, October.

Birds that come to Kuwait's skies include eagles, hoopoes, cranes and flamingos. Kuwait has established some 11 natural protectorates to attract more migratory birds, in addition to several public and private parks, as well as green areas on roadside, Sanad said. The number of migratory birds spotted in Kuwait has exceeded over 400 kinds, of which usually build nests and hatch. — KUNA



Migratory birds spotted in Kuwait.

Such activities are undertaken through the year because that countries or regions observing the peak of migrations at different times, but the main day for the international celebrations is 10 May. Through the 2017 theme 'Their Future is our Future,' WMBD will throw light on the



A nature reserve in Jahra.

# FISHERMEN UNION RESPONDS TO EPA 'ACCUSATIONS'

By Meshaal Al-Enezi and A Saleh

**KUWAIT:** In response to EPA's report about the fish death investigation results, Kuwait Fishermen Union issued a statement yesterday they criticized EPA's deputy director for technical affairs Mohammed Al-Enezi's for reiterating blame on fishermen for the disaster, although experts had stressed that the main reason was seawater contamination resulting from sewage water and industrial waste draining into the sea. "Enezi is still blaming fishermen without any proof although he knows that the dead fish were found in

Kuwait Bay, which is a no-fishing area," said the statement, urging Enezi to define the 'fishermen' he referred to and who he accused of dumping unwanted and unsellable catches off Doha. "He has to explain whether he meant professional or amateur fishermen or picnickers," the statement added, accusing Enezi of working on expelling fishermen from Al-Shamlan Harbor; a strategic commercial fishing site in Sharq, regardless of their losses and abusive treatment, represented by EPA's filing of 180 citation tickets to boats docked in the harbor in one day. The union stressed that EPA had finally confessed that there are 50 sewage water drainage outlets into Kuwait Bay.

Affairs Mohammed Al-Jabri concerning referring a former assistant undersecretary and other top Public Authority for Agricultural Affairs and Fish Resources (PAAAFR) employees to the public prosecution over charges of distributing ranches in Kabd to people who did not match allocation conditions. Jowaisri added that 18 ranches had been distributed without getting prior approvals, and that the issue was investigated by the anti-corruption authority, which found the prosecuted officials guilty of profiteering.

Separately, Municipal Council member and head of the technical committee Fahd al-Sane' urged PAAAFR Director Faisal Al-Hasawi to investigate reports about Saudi Arabia imposing a temporary ban on importing poultry from Kuwait over suspicions of avian flu infections. Sane called for a daily check of all Kuwaiti poultry products including chicken and eggs and notifying consumers in case of detecting any infections.

Kuwait Municipality's public relations department announced launching an electronic linkage between the imported foodstuff department and the fruit and vegetable testing lab. Speaking on the occasion, imported foodstuff director Ahmed Al-Daihani stressed that the e-linkage would facilitate swift and confidential exchange of information about the tested specimens.

### Trial operation

Minister of Social Affairs and Labor an Minister of State for Economic Affairs Hind Al-Sabeeh stressed that the new automated system at the Public Authority for Manpower will be launched in June. Sabeeh added that the system was experimentally launched in eight major private sector companies and upon her request, it would be implemented in over 100 other companies to make sure it is 100 percent ready.

## News

in Brief

### Kuwait denies reports on lifting Syria's suspension

**CAIRO:** Kuwait dismissed recent reports claiming that First Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah stated unfreezing the suspension of Syrian membership at the Arab League. Kuwait's permanent representative at the Arab League Ambassador Ahmad Al-Baker said yesterday membership suspension were totally untrue. Al-Baker reiterated Kuwait's commitment to the Arab League's earlier resolution freezing Syria's membership. — KUNA

### Panel assures impartiality

**KUWAIT:** A committee formed ad hoc to look into cases of Kuwaiti citizenship abrogation has underlined its commitment to investigate the issue in a transparent and objective manner. The committee's secretary Dr Nayif Al-Ajmi said yesterday that it is incumbent upon the panel to carry out its mandate promptly, given the sensitivity of the matter. Moreover, he said that the committee has held a raft of meetings recently and progress has thus far been satisfactory. Ajmi revealed that the committee is meticulously examining 184 cases of citizenship that have been rescinded, noting that it is due to file its first report once the cases are sorted out. — KUNA

### NPT implementation

**VIENNA:** Creating a Middle East without weapons of mass destruction (WMD) will lead to peace and security in the region, said a representative for the GCC states to a meeting on the International Atomic Energy Agency's (IAEA) Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) yesterday. This statement was delivered by Deputy Permanent Delegate to the UN headquarters in Vienna, first Secretary Abdullah Al-Obaidi during the first preparatory meeting for the conference to review the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) in 2020. Implementing the NPT tenets was the responsibility of all members who signed the treaty which aim at protecting the world from WMD, said Obaidi, adding that nuclear facilities in the region should be inspected to make sure that not one country has the capability to launch a devastating attack. The Kuwaiti diplomat showcased to the meeting the GCC efforts in implementing the NPT, saying that from 2010 to 2015, the GCC made sure to promote efforts to clear the world from destructive weapons. — KUNA

### Prosecution

Municipal Council's Deputy Chairman Meshaal Al-Jowaisri hailed a decision made by the Minister of Awqaf and Islamic Affairs and Minister of State for Municipal

## MINCED BEEF, CUCUMBERS SEE PRICE RISE THIS WEEK

By Nawara Fattahova

**KUWAIT:** Last week Kuwait Times began monitoring the prices of some basic foodstuffs ahead of Ramadan. It is a common belief that food prices skyrocket during the holy month and we want to put the idea to the test by tracking a range of everyday items.

The weekly price survey includes the prices per kilogram for seven different kinds of commodities bought in a local coop and compared week by week. These items were chosen due to their popularity in use in kitchens in Kuwait and because they are not ones controlled by government price controls.

Items included: Eggs, milk, chicken, minced meat, tomatoes, lemons and cucumbers. Comparing the prices from last week to this week, we found the price of cucumbers and minced meat have increased. (see accompanying tables). All other prices held steady. Supply, especially of fresh fruits and vegetables can impact prices as can weekly discounts organized by local supermarkets and coops.

Read the Kuwait Times each week as we follow the prices and report on them ahead of Ramadan.

### Co-ops

Commodity	First week of May	Last week of April
One kilogram of fresh Saudi chicken	KD 1.760 (KD 1.085 for frozen chicken)	KD 1.760
One kilogram of fresh minced meat (beef)	KD 3.000	KD 2.750
One kilogram of local tomatoes	550 fils	550 fils
One kilogram of African lemons	660 fils	660 fils
One kilogram of local cucumbers	100 fils	50 fils
One liter of local milk (KDCow)	430 fils	430 fils
One carton of eggs (30 eggs per carton)	KD 1.100	KD 1.100

### Supermarkets

Commodity	First week of May	Last week of April
One kilogram of fresh Saudi chicken	KD 1.400	KD 1.400
One kilogram of fresh minced meat (beef)	KD 2.150	KD 2.150
One kilogram of local tomatoes	495 fils	495 fils
One kilogram of African lemons	775 fils	775 fils
One kilogram of local cucumbers	145 fils	145 fils
One liter of local milk (KDCow)	315 fils	315 fils
One carton of eggs (30 eggs per carton)	790 fils	790 fils



A handout photo showing drugs found with a suspect who was arrested yesterday.

## MAN ARRESTED WITH 3.5 KG DRUGS

By Hanan Al-Saadoun

**KUWAIT:** Drugs Control General Department learned about a citizen importing drugs via courier companies hidden in postal packages. The suspect was arrested and 3.5 kg of hashish, along with other drugs including cocaine and 'chemical' (a variety of 'Spice' or synthetic cannabinoids) were seized. Officers also found hashish oil and wax that are used in processing hashish and its derivatives.

### Agreement

A memorandum of understanding was signed between the National Guard and Interior Ministry to exchange several security missions between the two sides. Interior Ministry Undersecretary Lt Gen Mahmoud Al-Dousary headed the Interior Ministry's side, while Lt Col Hashim Al-Rifae headed the National Guard's side.

### Crackdown

Kuwait Municipality's public relations department said the Capital branch emergency team raided a food warehouse in Rai and found 6.75 tons of spoiled food, which was confiscated and destroyed. The store was closed administratively. Head of the team Zaid Al-Enezi said the spoiled food included cheese with mold on it.

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Crime

Report

WOMAN BEATEN BY HUSBAND, STEPSON

**KUWAIT:** A citizen and his son beat the citizen's wife - a Gulf national - in her house. The woman went to Mubarak Hospital with bruises and grazes on her face to get a medical report. She then went to the police station and told them she was beaten by her husband and stepson because of previous disputes. Police are investigating.

Theft

A Filipina domestic helper disappeared from her sponsor's house with jewelry and five watches worth KD 2,500. The citizen, who lives in Salam, noticed her maid was missing. When she looked for her, she was nowhere to be found. She said that her passport, documents, jewelry and watches were missing. So she went to the police station and lodged a complaint. Detectives are working on the case.

Damage

Detectives are looking for a cabbie who deliberately hit a citizen's car and verbally insulted him before escaping. The citizen went to Nugra police station and told police he had a traffic dispute with the roaming taxi driver, so he rammed into his car, causing extensive damage, then escaped. The citizen gave police the license plate number of the taxi.

Assault

Two girls decided to settle their differences with an Iraqi woman by beating her in an area between the two Sulaibkhat graveyards, injuring her hand and face. The woman gave police details of the two girls including their phone numbers - one girl did not answer the call, while the second denied the Iraqi's claims and said she cannot go to the police station. Detectives were asked to arrest them for questioning.



Drugs

Police stopped two male youths dancing in Salmiya and found them under the influence of drugs. The two Kuwaitis were dancing to loud music in their car. Both had 'chemical' tablets (a variety of 'Spice' or synthetic cannabinoids) on them. They were sent to concerned authorities.

Cables stolen

Farwaniya police raided a fenced-off yard owned by a Bangladeshi and found it full of copper cables, electric transformers and paint cans he stole from houses under construction. The discovery was made when police noticed a man walking with a large quantity of copper wire, so they asked him to stop, but he threw the wires and fled. Police chased him till he reached the fenced-off area, where he disappeared. Police found the material and a Bangladeshi woman, who said she was his wife. She said her husband steals the material from houses under construction, then sells it to people he knows for cheap. The woman was detained and police are looking for the suspect. — Translated from the Arabic press



BURGAN BANK SERVED AS GOLD SPONSOR AT AUM CAREER FAIR

**KUWAIT:** Burgan Bank participated in the 2017 American University of the Middle East (AUM) Career Fair as a gold sponsor aiming at providing students with dynamic and progressive career opportunities at the Bank. The event took place in the AUM University Campus during April 2017. Applying world-class standards for career planning and development, Burgan Bank seeks to continuously inject new blood and fresh thinking to its dynamic workforce by identifying and attracting promising young graduates, where they can learn, grow and thrive within the Bank. The participation and sponsorship of the AUM Career Fair is a reflection of Burgan Bank's long-term commitment to help nurture talent by guiding them in their career path, build closer relationships with academic

institutions and open up employment opportunities for exceptional candidates. The Bank believes it is an investment to attract and develop human capital: an important asset and ally on the bank's journey to excellence. Commenting on the positive turnout of students, Halah El-Sherbini - Group Chief Human Resources and Development Officer said, "Burgan Bank seizes every opportunity to meet high caliber candidates that are innovative and progressive and that will seamlessly fit into our dynamic environment. We have built a working culture that attracts top talent across the board and will continue to offer career opportunities to candidates who are at par with our standards, fit our working environment and requirements, and would love a challenging and

highly innovative opportunity. We are known for our evolutionary fluidity and hope to find candidates that will fit our pace, help us grow, and enable us to nurture their growth as well; We are molding young leaders of tomorrow along the way." Burgan Bank's team welcomed the new enthusiastic applicants and led the discussion with a comprehensive overview of the technical and operational aspects of the bank, followed by an explanation of the recruitment process and expectations of the career path after gaining entry. Burgan Bank Group is a diverse regional financial powerhouse which now includes more than 850 employees in Kuwait and a wide network of 186 branches strategically distributed across Kuwait, Middle East, North Africa, and Turkey.



الجريدة Al-Jarida

EXCITING PLAY, GENIUS DIRECTOR

By Abdulmohsen Jum'a

Ever since the current parliament (2016) came to office, so many issues were discussed, creating media breakthrough stories and headlines that soon vanished and were forgotten. It is just as if we are living a theatrical performance played in Kuwait with both the parliament and the cabinet in the backstage area. Meanwhile, the director is looking for a climax in each of the acts to attract the attention of the bored audience; that is the Kuwaiti people, and our politicians are excelling in playing various roles, making dialogues and creating various plots.

When this parliament started its tenure, MPs raised the motto of the regional and international suspension of Kuwait's sports activities. They grilled a minister and knocked him out of office then they ignored the whole issue and abandoned it. They then focused on the Kuwait demography imbalances, which led to making fiery statements against expats. However, a parliamentary session that was scheduled to discuss the problem was never held, and then the whole issue was ignored.

The following issue was the withdrawal of citizenships, which ended up in the same way it started. And now we have a new act on stage under the name of grilling motions. It is full of action, parliamentary statements, having some transactions approved and adjustment of our politicians' financial statuses. The play's director, or directors, are professionally running the show while those benefiting from the situation are having their interests being taken care of despite all the shouting and 'too much ado about nothing'.

Even when laws are passed, they end up into nothing, similar to the case of the national labor allowance law which was issued 15 years ago to fix demographic imbalances. So many exceptions were made and many companies and banks have manipulated the law in many ways. In addition, have the anti-monopoly, the consumer protection, the public fund protection and the housing laws achieved their set goals? The situation is more than a political crisis. It is a structural malfunction that requires reviewing and developing our political and constitutional systems. Current situations with shouting, tension and political instability cannot go on any longer because it will not solve the country's problems. —Translated by Kuwait Times

WARBA BANK ORGANIZES OMRAH TRIP FOR ITS EMPLOYEES AND THEIR FAMILIES

**KUWAIT:** With the holy month of Ramadan approaching, the month of forgiveness and mercy; Warba organized an Omrah trip to the Holy Lands for the Bank's employees and their families from April 27 to 29, 2017. The Bank's initiative stems from its prime objective to provide its employees with the opportunity to fulfill the teachings of the Islamic religion within the framework of the Bank's social and religious activities.

The trip, being the first organized by the Bank for its employees, is to be an annual tradition. The Bank's initiative witnessed a strong response amongst the employees; whereas more than 40 employees from various departments, and their families joined. The trip involved visiting Makkah and completing the Omrah rituals, followed by competitions that combined an atmosphere of both friendship and religious knowledge among the staff, in which the winners were rewarded with symbolic prizes.

Regarding this initiative, the bank confirmed that the trip supervisors were keen on providing all kinds of support, while ensuring the ideal atmosphere required for this religious journey of purity and self-peace. The involvement of the families of the staff helped to create a friendly and family environment that in turn strengthened the spiritual bonds. Being a leading Islamic bank, Warba is constantly seeking to support its employees and provide them with all comforts, as well as facilitating opportunities for them to practice Islamic religious duties.



KFH SPONSORS 'ARAB YOUTH CAPITAL' ACTIVITIES

**KUWAIT:** Kuwait Finance House (KFH) recently signed two agreements with the Ministry of State for Youth Affairs; one for enhancing cooperation and partnership, and the second for supporting activities to be held as part of Kuwait being selected the 'Arab Youth Capital'.

Speaking during a special ceremony attended by officials from both sides, the Ministry of State for Youth Affairs' Undersecretary Sheikha Al-Zain Sabah Al-Nasser Al-Sabah hailed KFH's efforts and keenness on sponsoring youth activities. She added that KFH was the first bank to sign an agreement to sponsor Kuwait's celebrations as the Arab Youth Capital.

Meanwhile, KFH's Chief Strategy Officer Fahad Khaled Al-Mukhaizeem said that both agreements reflect KFH's commitment towards youth,

and stressed that KFH was the only regional bank that supports and sponsors a group of young entrepreneurs.

He added that the bank had organized over a 100 initiatives for national youth potentials the previous year.



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**Big child webcam sex bust reveals rising abuse**



**JAKARTA:** Indonesian Muslim protesters against Jakarta governor Basuki Tjahaja Purnama alias Ahok chant after a trial at the North Jakarta court yesterday. (Inset) Purnama speaks to his lawyers after judges delivered their sentence.—AFP

# JAKARTA GOV JAILED FOR BLASPHEMY

SENTENCE ON PURNAMA MUCH HARSHER THAN PROSECUTORS HAD SOUGHT

**JAKARTA:** Jakarta's Christian governor was jailed for two years yesterday after being found guilty of blasphemy, in a shock decision that has stoked concerns over rising religious intolerance in the world's most populous Muslim-majority nation. Islamic hardliners outside the Jakarta court shouted "God is greatest!" as news came through that Basuki Tjahaja Purnama would be sent to prison for insulting Islam, a surprisingly harsh punishment after prosecutors recommended only probation.

Purnama, Jakarta's first non-Muslim governor for half a century and its first ethnic Chinese leader, looked calm when the verdict was announced and said he would appeal, as some of his supporters in court burst into tears. He was immediately transferred to jail and authorities said his deputy would take over running Jakarta for the final few months of his term. Hundreds of his supporters descended on the prison shouting "Free Ahok" - Purnama's nickname - and violently shook the gate of the facility.

The 50-year-old was hauled into court last year to face trial on charges of insulting the Holy Quran while campaigning for re-election, after the blasphemy accusations sparked a series of mass protests in Jakarta spearheaded by radical groups and encouraged by his rivals. Tuesday's jail sentence and his loss last month to a Muslim challenger in the Jakarta vote, which he had once been favorite to win, has fuelled fears that hardliners are growing increasingly influential and that the country's much-vaunted tol-

erant brand of Islam is under threat. "It's another big step in the slow decline of religious freedom in Indonesia," said Andreas Harsono, Indonesia researcher for Human Rights Watch, after Purnama was jailed. The United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights expressed concern and urged Indonesia to review its blasphemy laws, while the European Union called on Jakarta to uphold its "long-standing tradition of tolerance and pluralism". Indonesia, 90 percent of whose 255 million people are Muslim, has a long tradition of pluralistic values and is home to substantial populations of Christians, Hindus and Buddhists. But there has been a rise in attacks on minorities in recent years.

**'He has insulted us'**

The five-judge panel at the Jakarta court found Purnama guilty of blasphemy after a months-long trial, in a case criticized as politically motivated. Announcing the verdict, presiding judge Dwiarto Budi Santiaro said Purnama was "convincingly guilty of committing blasphemy and is sentenced to two years in prison" and ordered him to be detained. Blasphemy carries a maximum jail term of five years in Indonesia but the sentence was a surprise as judges typically follow the recommendation of prosecutors - in this case, they had proposed two years of probation.

Analysts said the shock verdict could be a result of Purnama's political rivals putting pressure on the country's

notoriously corrupt judiciary to remove him from power as soon as possible. President Joko Widodo, an ally of the governor, urged people to respect the decision of the court but added that "we must also respect the move by Basuki Tjahaja Purnama to file an appeal". Outside the court, hun-

dreds of Islamic radicals wearing white Muslim skullcaps celebrated as they heard about the jail sentence. "Thank God, he should be jailed - this is right. He has insulted us," Bachtiar, 38, who like many Indonesians goes by one name, told AFP. — AFP

## US DRONE BACK ON EARTH AFTER NEARLY TWO YEARS IN SPACE

**WASHINGTON:** After a nearly two-year sojourn in space, the US military drone X-37 B is back on Earth, fueling wild ideas about its mystery mission. Looking like a small version of an old NASA space shuttle, the craft touched down Sunday in Florida, ending a 718-day voyage around the Earth, the US Air Force announced. Just under 30 feet (9.1 m) long and with a nearly 15-foot wingspan, the X-37 B was blasted into low Earth orbit atop a rocket. Since its first flight in 2010, it has sparked all kinds of speculation about its real purpose.

Some think it might be a space-based bomber that could strike objectives on Earth at a moment's notice. Others suspect it is a potential

"killer satellite," capable of destroying or damaging enemy satellites. Or perhaps it is a super spy plane, orbiting Earth to keep watch on enemy territory as needed. Fears that the world is on the brink of an arms race in space is behind some of those theories.

**Weapon of war?**

Satellites are crucial to the functioning of national economies as well as military operations, and the United States, China and Russia are all thinking about ways to defend them against attack. No doubt they are also looking at ways to attack their adversaries' satellites. In 2015, the mysterious behavior of a Russian satellite fueled speculation that Moscow was

developing attack satellites capable of maneuvering in space to zero in on other satellites.

But many experts doubt that the X-37 B is the prototype for a true weapon of war or espionage. "The X-37 is the size of a pick-up truck - it would be difficult to have an effective weapon on board," says Victoria Samson, an expert with the Secure World Foundation, an advocate of sustainable development in space. Moreover, the X-37 B would not be very maneuverable once in space, because its only source of power are solar panels. "Generally speaking, to maneuver up in orbit requires a tremendous amount of fuel. So I can't imagine that they would be doing a lot of maneuvering," Samson said.

Mark Gubrud, a physicist and expert on military space technologies at the University of North Carolina, says the idea that it is a maneuverable spy satellite doesn't make much sense either. "It has very little maneuver capability in orbit, and it can't reach high altitudes, only low Earth orbit," he said in an email. "If you want to make a stealthy, maneuvering satellite, you will not weigh it down with wings and landing gear and make it so visible from Earth that even amateurs are able to track it."

The X-37 B's fourth flight was spotted six days after its launch in 2015 by a network of amateur satellite trackers, according to the website Spaceflight101.com. It disappeared for several months in 2015 following a change in orbit, and again in February 2017 after another maneuver, but was later found again, the website said.— AFP



**The US Air Force's X-37B Orbital Test Vehicle mission 4 lands at NASA's Kennedy Space Center Shuttle Landing Facility in Florida on Monday. — AFP**



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## SYRIAN REFUGEES IN LEBANON STRUGGLE AFTER EVICTION

**BEKAA VALLEY, Lebanon:** Sitting in a dimly lit room with his three-year-old son on his lap, Taha points to the boy's lips where a rat had bitten him twice while he was sleeping in the night. With a look of hopelessness, Taha, a refugee from Syria, explains how he and his family of seven now live in a horse barn in the Bekaa Valley after last month they were served eviction notices to leave their camp by the Lebanese army. Taha and his family are among an estimated 10,500 Syrian refugees ordered to leave the makeshift camp, with the Lebanese military citing security reasons as the refugees were camped near the Rayak air base.

The Bekaa sits in eastern Lebanon bordering Syria. Known for its lush rolling hills of olive groves, vineyards and grand Mediterranean houses, it is now peppered with clusters of tents built from wood, plastic and canvas. Lines of clothing hang out to dry as children play games with discarded tires. "The (Rayak) eviction is the biggest we have seen so far in the Bekaa with a total of 86 informal tented settlements receiving evic-

tion notices," the United Nations refugee agency, UNHCR, told the Thomson Reuters Foundation in a statement.

Taha, a father of six, who fled from Raqqa, Syria two years ago when Islamic State captured his city, told the Thomson Reuters Foundation that he was given two days to leave his tent. He left with dozens of family members who were in a cluster of tents and ended up finding a plot of land nearby but had difficulties getting approval to reconstruct their tents. Taha and his family ended up homeless. "We were in the street for three days," Taha said. "No proper food or drink."

They survived off of tea and bread, Taha said, until they found a new home in the Bekaa in a horse barn divided into different rooms by wood and plastic and shared with 50 other people. The barn floor is covered by pieces of carpet topped with cushions that double as beds. Nearby is the single toilet used by everyone in the barn.

The Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC), a humanitarian aid group that has been helping the refugees in the Bekaa

Valley, said many families had been forced to move several times. "We have been witnesses already (to) a few of these cases where they have been actually forced to move twice or three times," Giovanni Rizzo, NRC area manager in the Bekaa Valley, told the Thomson Reuters Foundation. "This obviously puts the family in extreme, dire conditions."

The Lebanese army told the Thomson Reuters Foundation in a statement the evictions were to "preserve the security of the (military) airport and protect the camps from terrorists attempting to infiltrate inside these camps." Beyond spending what little money they have to move, Rizzo said moving can also take children out of the classroom, disrupting their already haphazard education. Three of Taha's daughters all under the age of 10 missed several days of school. But after fleeing the horrors of Syria's war, Taha is resigned. "We totally lost the ability to fear at all," he said. "We don't get scared."

**'Sleeping in our Clothes'**  
Refugees who fled the six-year-old

war in neighboring Syria make up a quarter of Lebanon's population, and most live in severe poverty in makeshift camps across the country as the government opposes the creation of formal ones. The fertile Bekaa Valley is home to more than 300,000 refugees making it the most densely populated area of refugees in all of Lebanon. Since the eviction was ordered there has been no designated place where the refugees can relocate to.

"They need an approval from the municipality and many of the municipalities surrounding the evicted area ... are already hosting a big population of refugees," said the NRC's Rizzo. "They are not willing to receive more refugees in their territory." According to UNHCR, around 4,300 families have already moved within the Bekaa Valley, but some, like Abdallah's family of 11, have no place to go and have stayed put. "We are waiting. We are sleeping in our clothes for fear the army will come to us in the morning," Abdallah, who did not want to give his full name, told the Thomson Reuters Foundation.

Abdallah and his family fled from Raqqa, Syria to Lebanon in 2012 and have lived in this tent in the Bekaa Valley for four months, having already been moved on twice. Abdallah's tent is covered in a patchwork of plastic sheets - topped with tires, pieces of wood and metal to give it stability. Inside their clothes are strung up on hooks and the family sits on a dirty carpet. A kitchen is fashioned in one part of the tent with baby formula, tea cups, a broken refrigerator and a pot of yesterday's rice and soup saved for the day's meal.

The 47-year-old said he had been searching for a new spot to rebuild his tent, but can't find anywhere for his family to go. "Even if the army comes and breaks this (tent) down on our heads we would stay here," said Abdallah, who is the only one in his family who has legal residency in Lebanon - meaning the rest of his family are at risk as they move through checkpoints. While he dreams of taking his family back to Syria one day, Abdallah describes his refugee life as a "tragedy." "Every day that goes by is worse than the one before," he said. —Reuters

## ABBAS READY TO MEET BIBI AS PART OF TRUMP PEACE EFFORTS

### US PRESIDENT TO VISIT BETHLEHEM 'SOON'

**RAMALLAH:** Palestinian president Mahmoud Abbas said yesterday he was ready to meet Israel's prime minister as part of peace efforts by Donald Trump, who is expected to visit the Palestinian territories "soon". The US president is expected in Israel later this month as part of his first foreign trip and Abbas said "we are looking forward to his visit soon to Bethlehem" in the occupied West Bank, with speculation it will occur on May 23. Abbas met the US president in Washington last week for their first face-to-face talks.

"We told him that we were ready to collaborate with him and meet the Israeli PM (Benjamin Netanyahu) under his auspices to build peace," Abbas told reporters as he met with German President Frank-Walter Steinmeier. Trump announced last week that his first foreign trip as president will include stops in Saudi Arabia, Israel and the Vatican - the spiritual centers of Islam, Judaism and Catholicism. The stop in Israel is expected on May 22, though it has not been officially confirmed.

A senior Trump aide last week did not rule

out the possibility of a presidential visit to the West Bank, but said that it was likely to be contingent on security and Abbas taking concrete steps toward peace. Trump has been seeking ways to restart Israeli-Palestinian peace efforts, which have been at a standstill since a US-led initiative collapsed in April 2014. As he hosted Abbas in Washington, Trump confidently predicted that a peace agreement was within grasp, brushing aside the complexities of a decades-old conflict that has bedeviled successive US leaders. "We will get it done," Trump said, flaunting what he has described as his deal-making prowess. "It is something that I think is, frankly, maybe not as difficult as people have thought over the years."

#### Embassy move

Abbas said yesterday that "we told him again of our commitment to a peace based on justice, with international resolutions and the two-state solution as references". Trump has however sent mixed signals over the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

He backed away from the US commitment to the two-state solution - Israel and an independent Palestinian state side-by-side - when he met Netanyahu in February. He said he would support a single state if it led to peace, delighting Israeli right-wingers who want to see their country annex most of the occupied West Bank.

Trump also vowed during his campaign to move the US embassy in Israel from Tel Aviv to the disputed city of Jerusalem, a prospect that alarmed Palestinians but which has been put on the back burner for now. At the same time, he has urged Israel to hold back on settlement building in the West Bank, a longstanding concern of Palestinians and much of the world. One of Trump's top advisers, Jason Greenblatt, held wide-ranging talks with both Israelis and Palestinians during a visit in March.

In his comments yesterday, the 82-year-old Abbas did not mention whether he would stick to previous Palestinian pre-conditions for talks with Netanyahu. They have included a halt to Israeli settlement building, the release of prisoners and a deadline for the end of the occupation of the West Bank. Netanyahu has said he is ready to meet Abbas at any time as long as it is without preconditions, but Palestinians say years of negotiations with the Israelis have not ended the occupation.

The last substantial public meeting between Abbas and Netanyahu is thought to have been in 2010, although there have been unconfirmed reports of secret meetings since then. Many analysts have little faith that a renewed peace effort can lead to significant progress. Netanyahu leads what is seen as the most rightwing government in Israeli history, while Abbas is unpopular among Palestinians and may face difficulty in making significant compromises.

June will mark the 50th anniversary of the Six Day War, which led to Israel's occupation of the West Bank, the Gaza Strip, east Jerusalem and the Golan Heights. Steinmeier, who also held talks with Netanyahu on Sunday, spoke of Germany's commitment to the two-state solution. "From our point of view, there is no other negotiable solution," the German president said. "The urgency of the situation, the time that has passed and the changes on the ground make it imperative that the next attempt succeeds." — AFP



**RAMALLAH:** Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas (right) shakes hands with German President Frank-Walter Steinmeier during their meeting in this West Bank city yesterday. —AP

## IRAQI FORCES ADVANCE IN WEST MOSUL

**MOSUL:** Iraqi forces are making swift progress in west Mosul, officers said yesterday, retaking several neighbourhoods on their way to a final showdown with jihadists in the Old City. With Iraq's biggest military operation in years set to enter its eighth month in a week, the Islamic State group was only holding on to a handful of neighborhoods in west Mosul. Forces from the elite Counter-Terrorism Service "liberated the Northern Industrial Area on the western side," said the Joint Operations Command coordinating the war against IS in Iraq.

The JOC said the forces "raised the Iraqi flag after inflicting losses to the enemy." It added that another, small neighborhood called 30 Tammuz had also been retaken yesterday. On Monday, Iraqi forces retook full control of Al-Haramat, a large neighborhood on the edge of the city, according to several senior military officers. The gains are part of a new push which Iraqi forces launched last week in northwestern Mosul and has already wrested back several neighborhoods from the jihadists. The latest operations make it harder than ever to flee for the few hundred IS fighters estimated to remain in Mosul.

#### Trapped civilians

The jihadists who have been defending their last major bastion in the country for more than six months have offered limited resistance in recent days, apparently regrouping in the Old City for a last stand. IS only controls a handful of neighborhoods around the Old City, where at least 250,000 civilians are still trapped and living in dire conditions, according to aid officials and rights groups. The narrow streets of the Old City, one of the heritage jewels of Iraq, will make it difficult for federal forces to take on the jihadists, who have had three years to set up their defenses.

Elite forces might have to undertake dismounted raids, which could take a heavy human toll on units that have been fighting IS for more than two years uninterrupted. The presence of a large civilian population, which either chose not to leave or was prevented from doing so by IS, also complicates any final assault to seal victory in Mosul. Iraqi forces launched a major offensive on Oct 17 to retake Mosul,

which IS seized in June 2014. They secured the eastern side of the city, which is divided by the Tigris river, in January.

The United Nations says 434,000 people fled their homes in west Mosul, since a fresh push was launched there on February 19. The influx of displaced people is compounding one of the world's biggest humanitarian crises, for which the aid community has warned a funding effort was required.

#### Relentless displacement

The UN yesterday announced it had opened a new camp east of Mosul as it seeks to provide assistance to the steady flow of displaced who will soon have to cope with Iraq's scorching summer temperatures. "Despite the enormous risks, the number of people fleeing West Mosul shows

no sign of slowing down," said the UN refugee agency's Iraq representative, Bruno Geddo. "We still fear more large outflows of people from the west of the city, which is why UNHCR and partners continue to prepare new camps ready to receive those fleeing Mosul, who are desperately in need of assistance," he said in a statement.

Baghdadi, who made his only public appearance at a mosque in the old city of Mosul in July 2014, has urged his men to fight to the death to defend what was the de facto Iraqi capital of his now crumbling "caliphate". IS still holds the towns of Tal Afar and Hawijah, as well as pockets of territory elsewhere in Iraq, including in remote desert areas near the borders with Jordan and Syria. According to the Iraqi authorities, IS now controls less than seven percent of Iraq, down from more than a third in 2014. — AFP



**MOSUL:** Members of the Iraqi forces guard a position in the northwestern Al-Haramat neighborhood yesterday during the ongoing offensive to retake the area from Islamic State (IS) group fighters. — AFP



**COPENHAGEN:** Danish Prime Minister Lars Loekke Rasmussen (right) gestures during a meeting with US Secretary of Defense James Mattis in the Prime Minister's Office at Christiansborg Castle yesterday. — AFP

## MATTIS: TURKEY TO PLAY ROLE IN FIGHT FOR RAQQA

**COPENHAGEN:** The United States and Turkey will work together as operations continue to retake the Islamic State group's Syria bastion of Raqqa, Pentagon chief Jim Mattis said yesterday. His remarks come weeks after Turkey launched air strikes against a key US-backed Kurdish militia ground force, drawing an angry response from Washington. "Our intent is to work with the Turks, alongside one another to take Raqqa down," Mattis said, speaking at a news conference following an anti-IS summit in Copenhagen. "We are going to sort it out and figure out how we are going to do it, but we are all committed to it."

But the United States does not envision Turkey actually participating in the ground offensive for Raqqa, which IS has held for more than two years. Turkish war planes carried out strikes on Kurdish People's Protection Units (YPG) forces in Syria on April 27 and also hit Kurdish forces in neighboring Iraq in what Ankara described as "terrorist havens". Turkey says YPG fighters are linked to Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK) separatists inside Turkey, who have waged an insurgency since 1984 that has killed over 40,000 people.

But Washington has backed the YPG with training and air support and the Kurds make up much of the Syrian Democratic Forces. The SDF have largely surrounded Raqqa and are expected to begin an offensive shortly, though it is not clear what role the YPG will play. "The tactical activities on the ground - I don't want to go into details right now," Mattis said.

Mattis met with Basat Ozturk, deputy undersecretary at the Turkish defense ministry, during the anti-IS conference. The US-led coalition fighting IS in Iraq and Syria discussed the campaign's next steps as the jihadists' "caliphate" around Raqqa is collapsing. Though officials warn that military action will continue for some time, they are generally upbeat about the progress and quickening momentum of the fight. "We examined the enemy situation and discussed the next steps to make sure we are all on the same sheet of music. We are going to further accelerate this fight,"

Mattis said after the summit. After months of brutal, street-by-street combat, IS has now lost control of most of its stronghold of Mosul in Iraq, while the jihadists have become largely isolated in Raqqa. Several coalition countries are keeping a nervous eye on the region as IS-held territory diminishes. Thousands of foreign fighters remain in Iraq and Syria, and coalition nations - particularly in Europe - are bracing for a possible wave of battle-hardened jihadists returning home.

According to a senior US administration official, Interpol has identified 14,000 foreign fighters it knows have travelled to Syria and are still alive. The largest numbers come from Tunisia, followed by Saudi Arabia. Thousands more have travelled from Europe, including 100 or so from Denmark, said the official, who asked not to be named. The international law enforcement agency Interpol is now part of the anti-IS coalition, becoming the alliance's 68th member.

#### Bombs in cupboards

The campaign against IS began in autumn 2014 and has seen the Iraqi security forces - backed with coalition training and air power - reverse humiliating losses and recapture several key cities including Ramadi and Fallujah. Iraq's second city Mosul is now mainly back under Iraqi control, though IS continues to hold the Old City on the west side, where its fighters are preparing for a bloody last stand.

In Syria, coalition-backed Kurdish and Arab forces have been gradually recapturing towns and villages, with the focus now on isolating Raqqa ahead of a major offensive to seize back the city after more than two years of jihadi rule. US President Donald Trump came to power on a pledge to destroy IS. Though much of the groundwork had already been laid and the coalition had conducted thousands of strikes, US military leaders credit Trump with delegating their greater authority, enabling a quickening pace of operations. Critics say the additional strikes have accelerated the rate of civilian deaths. — AFP

## INMATES ON HUNGER STRIKE DESPITE 'SNACKING' CLAIMS

**JERUSALEM:** More than 880 Palestinian prisoners held by Israel remained on a hunger strike yesterday, the 23rd day of their protest - a number that's about the same as before the release of a video Israel said shows the strike leader secretly eating in his cell. Supporters of Marwan Barghouti say the video, released on Sunday and purported to show him snacking, is a fabrication intended to break the prisoners' morale. Near an Israeli military installation in the West Bank, Palestinian activists on Tuesday erected a 5x4-meter-tall mosaic portrait of Barghouti made from glass shards, to show support for him and the strike.

"We, the Palestinian people, have high trust in Marwan, and we don't listen to the Israeli allegations," said activist Abdullah Abu Rahme. "Marwan will lead the strike until it accomplishes its goals." Abu Rahme said work on the mosaic began before the release of the video.

The prisoners are demanding better conditions, including more family visits. Israeli officials have alleged that Barghouti, widely seen as a potential successor to Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas, launched the strike to further his political ambitions.

Israel's public security minister, Gilad Erdan, accused Barghouti of being a "murderer and a hypocrite". Barghouti, 58, is serving five life terms after an Israeli court convicted him of directing attacks during a Palestinian uprising that killed five people. Barghouti, in prison since 2002, never mounted a defense, saying the court had no jurisdiction over him. Meanwhile, Israel Prison Service spokeswoman Nicole Englander said 882 prisoners were still on a hunger strike yesterday. She said one has been hospitalized and another underwent medical checks. Last week, the number of hunger strikers ranged from 850 to 890. —AP





WASHINGTON: Former acting Attorney General Sally Yates (right) and former Director of National Intelligence James Clapper testify on Monday before the US Senate Judiciary Committee on Capitol Hill. — AFP

## TRUMP INSISTS NO EVIDENCE OF COLLUSION WITH RUSSIA

WASHINGTON: US President Donald Trump insisted there is no evidence he colluded with Russia after a Senate hearing that highlighted warnings that his former national security advisor was vulnerable to Russian blackmail. With the issue of the president's ties to Moscow back in the spotlight, Trump took to Twitter to dismiss as "old news" the Senate testimony Monday by former acting attorney general Sally Yates about his former national security advisor Michael Flynn.

Instead, Trump chose to play up former director of national intelligence James Clapper's acknowledgement during the same hearing that he was not aware of any evidence of collusion between the president and Russia, which American intelligence has concluded tried to sway the US election in Trump's favor. "Director Clapper reiterated what everybody, including the fake media already knows - there is 'no evidence' of collusion w/ Russia and Trump," Trump said.

Clapper, however, had added that he had not been aware that the issue was under investigation by the FBI until it was publicly revealed in March, suggesting the agency might have evidence he wasn't privy to. Asked about it, Yates said answering the question would require revealing classified information. But she noted that "you should not draw from that an assumption that that means that the answer is yes."

### Yates' warning

Yates, a Barack Obama appointee sacked by Trump early in his presidency, took the stand alongside Clapper during the hotly-anticipated three-hour hearing of the Senate Judiciary Committee. Yates confirmed reports that she had told the White House, six days into Trump's administration, that Flynn, a former military intelligence chief, had not been honest with Vice President Mike Pence about his discussions with the Russian ambassador to Washington, leaving him vulnerable to leverage from Moscow.

It nevertheless took 18 days before the president, pressed by Pence and others, dismissed the retired army lieutenant general, who had advised him on security issues throughout the 2016 presidential campaign. "We believed that General Flynn was compromised with respect to the Russians," Yates told the hearing in her first public comments on the scandal which has dogged the opening

months of Trump's presidency. "This was a problem because not only did we believe that the Russians knew this but that they likely had proof of this information. And that created a compromise situation, a situation where the national security advisor essentially could be blackmailed by the Russians."

Yates, who was fired on Jan 30 after defying Trump over his contested travel ban, did not say what Flynn discussed with ambassador Sergey Kislyak in a number of December 2016 phone calls, which were secretly monitored by US intelligence. Pence said in January that Flynn denied those calls involved sanctions placed on Russia by the Obama administration in response to its election meddling.

### Obama warned Trump

Trump has repeatedly branded the issue of Russian interference "fake news" despite the US intelligence community's conclusion that President Vladimir Putin himself was behind the meddling. In a series of tweets Monday evening, Trump doubled down on that stance. "The Russia-Trump collusion story is a total hoax, when will this taxpayer funded charade end?" fumed one post, while in a second the president targeted Yates - claiming she had "said nothing but old news!" after earlier assailing her for allegedly leaking classified information.

Known as a tough and independent prosecutor, Yates has been a target of Trump's ire since her refusal in January to support his controversial immigration ban on nationals from several Muslim-majority nations - for which he fired her. Yates' comments came after former Obama officials revealed that the outgoing president himself firmly warned Trump against naming Flynn as national security advisor, just two days after the November 8 election.

Obama had cautioned against Flynn, whom he fired in 2014 as head of the defense intelligence agency, due to his poor record in administration and personnel management. In separate testimony Monday, Clapper called Russia's interference in last year's election "a clarion call for vigilance and action against a threat to the very foundations of our democratic political system." "I believe they're now emboldened to continue such activities in the future, both here and around the world, and to do so even more intensely," he said.—AFP

# TRUMP MUSLIM COMMENTS COULD HAUNT HIM IN APPEAL

COURT UNCONVINCED IT CAN IGNORE PRESIDENT'S STATEMENTS

RICHMOND, Virginia: The first federal appeals court to hear a challenge to President Donald Trump's revised travel ban appeared unconvinced that it should ignore the Republican's repeated promises on the campaign trail to bar Muslims from entering the country. An attorney for the president urged the 4th US Circuit Court of Appeals on Monday to focus on the text of the religiously neutral executive order rather than use campaign statements to infer that the policy was driven by anti-Muslim sentiment.

But that idea was challenged by some members of the 13-judge panel, which is examining a ruling that blocks the administration from temporarily barring new visas for citizens of Iran, Libya, Somalia, Sudan, Syria and Yemen. "Is there anything other than willful blindness that would prevent us from getting behind those statements?" asked Judge Henry Floyd, who was appointed to the court by President Barack Obama.

The 4th Circuit ruling is crucial for Trump, whose travel ban is expected to end up in the US Supreme Court. The 4th Circuit is the first appeals court to examine the revised travel ban, which Trump's administration rewrote in an attempt to thwart legal challenges. It's unclear when the judges will issue their written decision. Trump's attorneys likely see the moderate court as friendlier territory than the 9th US Circuit Court of Appeals, which conservatives have long attacked for being too liberal. The 9th Circuit is scheduled to hear another challenge to the revised travel ban next week.

The 4th Circuit "is historically quite conservative and quite pro-government, so for the Trump administration to lose before the full 4th Circuit I think would be quite a body blow for the second version of the executive order," said Stephen Vladeck, a professor at the University of Texas law school. A federal judge in Maryland who blocked the revised travel ban in March cited Trump's comments as evidence that the executive order is a realization of Trump's promised Muslim ban.

The administration argues that the court shouldn't question the president's national security decisions based on campaign statements. The countries were chosen because they present terrorism risks and the ban applies to everyone in those countries regardless of religion, it says. "This is not a Muslim ban. Its text doesn't have to anything to do with religion. Its operation doesn't have anything to do with religion," Acting Solicitor



RICHMOND, Virginia: American Civil Liberties Union Attorney Omar Jadwat gestures as he speaks after a hearing before the 4th US Circuit Court of Appeals on Monday. — AP

General Jeffrey Wall told the court.

Omar Jadwat, an attorney for the American Civil Liberties Union, noted that Trump's call for a "total and complete shutdown" of Muslims entering the US remained on his campaign website even after he took office. That call, which was still online earlier yesterday, appeared to have been taken down by the afternoon hearing. Jadwat said the administration has failed to provide a legitimate national security reason for the policy. "The order is completely unprecedented in our nation's history," Jadwat said.

Judge Paul Niemeyer repeatedly challenged Jadwat's arguments, questioning the wisdom in opening the door to using a president's past to evaluate the constitutionality of a policy. "Can we look at his college speeches? How about his speeches to businessmen 20 years ago?" asked Niemeyer, who was tapped by President George HW Bush.

The first travel ban in January triggered chaos and protests across the country as travelers were stopped from boarding international flights and detained at airports for hours. After a three-judge panel of the 9th

Circuit refused in February to let the travel ban take effect, the administration tweaked the order and issued a new one. The new version made it clear the 90-day ban covering those six countries doesn't apply to those who already have valid visas. It removed language that would give priority to religious minorities and erased Iraq from the list of banned countries.

But critics said that although the new executive order affects fewer people, it remains a realization of Trump's promised Muslim ban and cannot stand. Even if the Trump administration wins in the 4th Circuit, the travel ban will remain on hold unless it also overturns a federal judge's decision in Hawaii. Vladeck said the Supreme Court may be more willing to hear the case if there's a split among the appeals courts.

But Richard Primus, a professor of constitutional law at the University of Michigan law school, said he thinks the Supreme Court will ultimately hear the case no matter what the appeals courts decide. "A case this big, a case this salient, is one that some of the justices are not going to want to pass up," he said.—AP

## US ANTI-MUSLIM BIAS INCIDENTS INCREASE

BOSTON: When the Masjid Al-Kareem mosque in Providence, Rhode Island, received a threatening letter in November calling Muslims a "vile and filthy people", its members were frightened enough they asked for and got extra police protection. The 42-year-old mosque was far from alone. The letter it received was one of 2,213 anti-Muslim bias incidents in the United States last year, according to a report released yesterday by the Council on American-Islamic Relations.

The report found a 57 percent increase in the number of incidents in 2016, up from 1,409 in 2015. Incidents increased 5 percent from 2014 to 2015. While the group had been seeing a rise in anti-Muslim incidents prior to Donald Trump's stunning rise in last year's presidential primaries and November election victory, it said the acceleration in bias incidents was due in part to Trump's focus on militant Islamist groups and anti-immigrant rhetoric.

Rhode Island's oldest mosque was only threatened, while others in Florida and Texas were set ablaze in cases ruled arson. But the knowledge of how common threats had become was far from comforting for Faissal Elansari, a member of the mosque's board. "Hearing about it is not the same thing as when you receive it, it was definitely a weird feeling," Elansari said. CAIR officials decided in September to start what they intend to be quarterly reports after noticing a pickup in complaints beginning in 2014, following the rise of Islamic State killings in the Middle East and attacks inspired by the group in Europe and the United States.

"There was this widespread sense that we were going right back to how it was after 9/11," when al Qaeda hijackers launched coordinated attacks on New York and Washington, sparking a wave of anti-Muslim sentiment, said Corey Saylor, director of the CAIR department on monitoring and combating Islamophobia. "We wanted to be able to put something factual out there." The accounting includes a wide variety of bias incidents, from assaults and

street harassment, to employment discrimination, to what the group considers unwarranted contact by the Federal Bureau of Investigation. It also shows a rise in anti-Muslim hate crimes to 260 in 2016, up 44 percent from 180 a year earlier. That includes all crimes recorded where CAIR saw evidence of anti-Muslim bias, not just those where hate crime charges were brought, Saylor said.

CAIR attorneys reviewed each incident reported and eliminated cases that were later disproved, including a New York City woman who alleged she had been attacked by Trump supporters shortly after his election. She was later arrested and charged with making up the encounter. Trump promised during his campaign to impose a temporary ban on Muslims coming to the United States, presenting this as a way to prevent militant Islamist attacks. His early executive orders intended at putting a temporary stop on citizens from a half-dozen Muslim majority countries have been blocked by challenges in court.

His administration has denied any intention of religious discrimination in the travel ban, saying it is intended purely as a national security measure. Muslims are not alone in experiencing an uptick in bias. A report released last month by the Anti-Defamation League recorded a 34 percent rise in anti-Semitic acts in 2016. "The 2016 presidential election and the heightened political atmosphere played a role in the increase," the ADL concluded in its report.

Trump made his first public condemnation of anti-Semitic incidents in February after a spate of bomb threats to Jewish community centers and vandalism in a Jewish cemetery. He was criticized by Jewish groups for responding too slowly. At the Providence mosque, one of about 30 to receive similar threatening letters following Trump's election, Elansari said there has been an upside to the threat: "A lot of brothers and sisters from the Jewish and Christian communities gave us a lot of support, they called and sent support letters."—Reuters



This aerial photo shows Ile Mercier, Quebec covered in floodwater on the Riviere des Prairies, on Monday. The bridge leading to the island is closed with its residents evacuated. — AP

# CANADIAN ARMY ROLLS IN AFTER DEVASTATING FLOODS

PIERREFONDS, Canada: Canada mobilized its army to help thousands of flood victims try to hold back waters and save their homes Monday after the worst flood in half a century struck, but authorities were optimistic that rising water levels would soon crest. Several rivers and lakes have overflowed their banks in Quebec province, between Gatineau in the Canadian capital region and Montreal 200 km downstream. The ground is saturated and unable to absorb any more water.

But recent heavy rains have started to subside and "as of Wednesday, we expect to see the situation begin to improve," Quebec Public Safety Minister Martin Coiteux announced. Some 2,500 homes in Quebec and more than 300 in Ontario have been flooded, and at least 1,500 people have been ordered to evacuate - most of them in the Canadian capital region. In Pierrefonds, one of the hardest-hit regions near Montreal, Johanne Aubin spent the morning pumping water from her basement using a pump from her backyard swimming pool.

The flooding took her and most others here by surprise, and she barely had time to erect a small sandbag wall around her property. After days of fighting an exhausting battle to hold back the waters, often in vain, despair has started to set in. Most of the streets here are flooded,

forcing locals to travel by canoe or other small boat. Resident David Swidzinsky has been ferrying neighbors to safety, or back to their homes to collect precious belongings that had been missed in the rush to get out when a state of emergency was declared.

People "broke out in tears (seeing the devastation) when I brought them home to fetch their bags," he said. A few streets over, a dozen soldiers tirelessly filled sandbags. Across eastern Canada, hundreds of thousands of sandbags have been used and Ottawa has asked suppliers for up to four million more, said officials. Pierrefonds resident John Parker spent his day hauling wet furniture and personal belongings to the curb, as a pump and hose sputtered water from his flooded basement over another wall of sandbags.

"It just kind of tires you out. You move around, get one window fixed and the next window gets full of water," he told AFP. "It's surrounded the whole house now, and it's coming into the garage. "It will get better, because it can't get any worse," he said. The Canadian army has deployed 1,650 troops to help stem the flooding, reinforcing dikes, protecting critical infrastructure including water treatment facilities and bridges. Military helicopters and boats also are on standby.

### 'Dealing with imponderables'

"With this kind of a disaster, it's not where there's a singular event like a dam bursting or a building exploding or a bridge collapsing," commented Public Safety Minister Ralph Goodale. "This is the gradual building of precipitation where circumstances physically on the ground can change dramatically without notice in a very short span of time. So everybody was dealing with imponderables."

Goodale called it the worst Canadian flood in "50 years" but added that the situation was improving in Ontario, where high water levels in Lake Ontario threatened coastal communities including parts of Toronto, Belleville to the east and the Thousand Islands region, which is home to fabled 19th century mansions and cottages. "I have never seen so much water between Ottawa and Montreal," Sophie Gregoire-Trudeau, the wife of the prime minister, told broadcaster RDI.

The day before, Prime Minister Justin Trudeau accompanied by his two young children, had traveled to the town of Terrasse Vaudreuil west of Montreal to help locals fill sandbags. There are "exceptional circumstances" behind the flooding, explained Quebec Environment Minister David Heurteil, pointing to a month of rain coming on the heels of a spring thaw after a "severe winter."—AFP



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## BIG CHILD WEBCAM SEX BUST REVEALS RISING ABUSE

**MABALACAT:** The suspected pedophile could see people banging on his front door. But were they neighbors? Cops? One had letters on her jacket. As David Timothy Deakin googled "What is NBI?" from the laptop on his bed, the Philippines National Bureau of Investigation smashed their way into his cybersex den. Children's underwear, toddler shoes, cameras, bondage cuffs, meth pipes and stacks of hard drives cluttered the stuffy, two-bedroom townhouse. Penciled on the wall, someone had scrawled, "My Mom and Dad love me." In his computer were videos and images of young boys and girls engaged in sex acts. "Why is everyone asking about children coming into my house?" said Deakin, 53, bare-chested and slick with sweat, his breath sour and glasses foggy, his wrists bound with a zip tie. Deakin's arrest on April 20 reveals one of the darkest corners of the internet, where pedophiles in the US, Europe and elsewhere pay facilitators in the Philippines to sexually abuse children, even babies, directing their moves through online livestreaming services. This relatively new crime, webcam sex tourism, is spreading rapidly. The United Nations describes "alarming growth of new forms of child sexual exploitation online."

### An epidemic

The FBI says it's epidemic, and that at any given moment, 750,000 child predators



**MABALACAT:** A suspected child webcam cybersex operator, David Timothy Deakin (from Peoria, Ill., with his hands tied behind his back) is seen during a raid by investigators. — AP

are online. Almost every case stems from the Philippines, where good English speakers, increased internet connections and widespread international cash transfer systems combine with widespread poverty and easy access to vulnerable kids. There have been as many as three busts a week there this spring. The youngest victim ever, rescued a few weeks ago, was an infant, 2 months old. Most are under 12.

This spring The Associated Press watched a raid, rescue and launch of a major investigation that continues to play

out on both sides of the world. "This should serve as a warning," said NBI anti-human trafficking chief Janet Francisco, who led the case. "We will really put them in jail and they will die in jail." Even as police burst in, Deakin was streaming illicit content through the anonymous Tor network. Agents said he had a webpage open to wipe his phone clean. They tied him up with an iPhone charging cord before he could hit the button.

AP and investigators asked him repeatedly why he had the obscene images stored on his computer. "There



**MABALACAT:** Underwear is wedged behind the faucet of the bathroom sink inside the home of suspected child webcam cybersex operator, David Timothy Deakin. — AP

was no children in front of the cam in my house, not even dressed, as far as I know, not even with their fringing mothers as far as I know," he said. But he said the images and videos may have slipped in when he downloaded massive files using BitTorrent, a data tool used legitimately by academics and artists, but also by child pornographers. FBI agents looking for abusers search BitTorrent to spot people sharing exploitive images.

### Blackmagic livestreaming

Deakin said he grew up in Peoria,

Illinois, in a splintered family. He was licensed as a roofing contractor in his 30s, seasonal work which left winters free; he used the time to study computers. He moved to the Philippines in 2000 for a job setting up internet service providers and installing Blackmagic livestreaming production programs. In recent years, Deakin said, he earned \$30 an hour as a systems administrator. But his home was filled with junk, his refrigerator near empty. Stacks of used egg cartons fell from the shelves, and a half-eaten pot of cold rice sat on the stove. — AP

## 11 SOUTH KOREAN, CHINESE CHILDREN DIE IN BUS CRASH

### BUS BURSTS INTO FLAMES IN A TUNNEL

**BEIJING:** Eleven South Korean and Chinese kindergarteners and their driver were killed when a school bus crashed and burst into flames in a tunnel in eastern China yesterday, officials said. The children were aged between three and six and attended a South Korean international school in the city of Weihai, Shandong province, local authorities said. A teacher was seriously injured in the tragedy, which reverberated in South Korea, whose acting president expressed sorrow.

The Weihai propaganda department said five of the young victims were South Korean and six were

Chinese. But a South Korean consular official in the eastern city of Qingdao told AFP that 10 of the children were South Korean, though five of them were dual Chinese nationals. The official also said the children were aged four to seven. Weihai authorities said the children were on their way to the Weihai Zhongshi South Korean International School when the accident occurred at the Taojiakuang tunnel at around 9:00 am.

An amateur video posted by the People's Daily on its Twitter account shows cars driving away from the bus, which was stopped near a wall as flames reached the

tunnel's ceiling. The video's authenticity could not be immediately verified. The cause of the crash was under investigation. South Korea's Acting President Hwang Kyo-Ahn voiced "grave sadness" over the tragedy, which occurred as the country went to the polls to elect a new president. Hwang told the foreign ministry to mobilize "all diplomatic resources" to handle the accident and keep the parents of the young victims informed of any developments.

### 58,000 road deaths

Deadly road accidents are common in China, where traffic regula-

tions are often flouted or go unenforced by police. There were more than 180,000 traffic accidents and 58,000 deaths in 2015, authorities said in December. The country's frequently overcrowded long-distance buses are particularly prone to high fatalities. Ten people were killed and 38 injured in March when a bus collided with a cement truck in the southwestern province of Yunnan. At least 18 people were killed when a minibus plunged into a lake in the central city of Wuhan in December. Last November, a pile-up on an expressway in the northern province of Shanxi killed 17 people and damaged 56 vehicles. — AFP



**JAKARTA:** Muslim protesters shout slogans during a protest against Jakarta's Christian Governor Basuki Tjahaja Purnama outside a court where his trial is held in Jakarta yesterday. — AP

## WHY RELIGIOUS INTOLERANCE IS ON THE RISE IN INDONESIA

**JAKARTA:** A guilty verdict and two-year jail sentence for Jakarta's Christian governor Basuki Tjahaja Purnama on blasphemy charges have fuelled concerns about the erosion of religious freedoms in Indonesia. Faith-based tension has been mounting in recent years in the world's most populous Muslim-majority country, undermining its pluralist reputation. Here are three points that explain the issue:

### Clubbed, hacked, stoned

Indonesia has often been praised for its moderate, inclusive brand of Islam, and the constitution guarantees freedom of worship for six religions. However the archipelago's sizeable religious minorities—mainly Christians and Muslim Shiites and Ahmadi—have been increasingly targeted as more conservative forms of Islam grow in popularity. Some Christian churches and mosques where Muslim minorities pray have been closed due to pressure from hardliners. Shiites and Ahmadi—regarded as heretics by some Sunnis—have been forced from their homes in mob attacks and on occasion even killed. In one of the most high-profile cases, a group clubbed, hacked and stoned three defenseless Ahmadi to death in front of police in 2011 in western Java, sparking international outrage.

### Radicals on the rise

During the three-decade rule of dictator Suharto, authorities sought to run the country along secular lines, largely keeping religion out of public life and limiting the influence of hardline groups. Following Suharto's downfall in 1998 and Indonesia's transition to democracy, more conservative forms of Islam—often influenced by harsher

brands of Middle Eastern Islam—have had space to flourish. The new freedoms have allowed the growth of hardline groups, such as the Islamic Defenders Front (FPI), and successive governments have been criticised for failing to tackle the radicals for fear of being accused of attacking Islam. "Post-Suharto, there has been quite a significant 'Islamisation' of society," said Bonar Tigor Naipospos, deputy head of Indonesian rights group Setara Institute. "As long as it is to enhance people's and society's obedience to God, that's okay, but we are now seeing a different phenomenon—the rise of radicalism."

### Indonesia's image to 'suffer'

Hardline groups such as the FPI, once considered fringe organizations, played a key role in organizing protests against Purnama, and analysts say they will feel emboldened after his jailing and last month's election loss. The accusations that Purnama insulted Islam centered on comments he made during a speech in September last year ahead of the vote for the next Jakarta governor. He lightheartedly accused his opponents of using a Koranic verse to trick people into voting against him. A video of his comments was posted online, sparking fury across the nation and leading to mass protests in Jakarta. The saga, which led to Purnama being hauled into court to face trial on blasphemy charges, was seen as having contributed heavily to his loss to a Muslim opponent in a ballot he had been expected to win. Yohanes Sulaiman, an analyst from the Indonesian Defense University, said the country's image as a bastion of tolerant Islam would "suffer" following the court decision. — AFP



**SRINAGAR:** Kashmiri students throw stones on Indian policemen during a protest in Srinagar, Indian controlled Kashmir yesterday. — AP

## KASHMIR'S BRUTAL STORIES GET CARTOON TREATMENT

**SRINAGAR:** Through sombre black and white drawings, graphic novelist Malik Sajad tells the brutal story of his native Kashmir in the 1990s, as an armed insurgency against Indian rule reached its bloody peak. Sajad's debut graphic novel "Munnu" is his account of growing up in the Kashmir Valley, one of the most spectacular but also most heavily militarized places on earth.

The story is set in Srinagar, the main city in Indian-administered Kashmir, against a backdrop of clashes, curfews and arbitrary detentions as the Indian army suppressed a separatist insurgency that reached its peak in the 1990s. "You grow up grappling with paranoia. And also cynicism a little, but a cynicism informed by reality," the 29-year-old told AFP in an interview in Srinagar, where he recently returned after a decade abroad. The shopping centre where he agrees to meet is deserted and despite the breathtaking scenery that surrounds it, Srinagar has an air of sadness.

"I prefer when it rains here, nature joins you in that sadness. When it is sunny, it becomes really unsettling," said Sajad. The black and white drawings in the novel have the jarring, angular look of German expressionist art. Rather than having human features, the Kashmiris in the story are represented as hanguls—a local species of deer endangered because the army has encroached on its habitat. Sajad started drawing cartoons for newspapers at the tender age of 13 and went on to study art. But said he always felt a close affinity with literature, making the graphic novel format an obvious choice.

### 'People die like flies'

He believes the lives of all in Kashmir are shaped by the "volatile atmosphere" of the region, where an anti-India insurgency has claimed thousands of lives since 1989. The Kashmir valley has been tense since last month, when eight people were killed by police and paramilitaries during election day violence. Dozens of Kashmiris were killed last summer in violent clashes between government forces and stone-throwing protesters angered by the death of a charismatic and popular rebel leader in a police shoot-out.

The mountainous region is held in part by Pakistan and India, but claimed in full by both, and has triggered two of the three wars fought by both since their independence from Britain nearly 70 years ago. Thousands of soldiers from both sides still face off along the disputed frontier known as the Line of Control. Sajad's book was published in 2015 in Britain, but it took another six months for it to come out in India. He says he never found out why, but his publisher told him authorities were slow to provide the ISBN number that all published books must have. — AFP



**SRINAGAR:** Kashmiri cartoonist Malik Sajad poses for a photograph at his home in Srinagar. — AFP

## HINDU NATIONALISTS PROMISE 'SUPERIOR' BABIES, FAIRER SKIN

**NEW DELHI:** A Hindu nationalist organization is promising to help Indian couples conceive "superior" babies with high IQs and fairer skin than their parents, sparking media criticism. Karishma Mohandas Narwani, head of the Garbh Vigyan Sanskar project, said it advised prospective parents on how to undergo a "purification" process to ensure their babies were born free of all vices. "We have to ensure the seed is good, which means the quality of the sperm and the ovum has to be top-class," Narwani, a practitioner of Ayurvedic medicine said yesterday.

"If that is taken care of, then the baby will have the desired mental, physical and spiritual quality." She said couples could produce "superior offspring" by following the organization's advice on everything from diet to thinking good thoughts. "Actually our aim is to produce superior offspring, full of values and cul-

ture. The secrets are all there in our ancient Hindu texts," said Narwani. The project, whose name translates as "scientific purification of the womb", is based in Gujarat, the western home state of Hindu nationalist Prime Minister Narendra Modi. It is treating around 400 couples.

Narwani denied newspaper reports that it was linked to the Rashtriya Swayamsewak Sangh (RSS), an influential right-wing Hindu organisation seen as the ideological fountainhead of Modi's Bharatiya Janata Party. But she said she was working with the help of Arogya Bharti, a group often described as the health wing of the RSS. Ashok Kumar Varshney, an RSS campaigner and secretary of Arogya Bharti, said the group's methods made it possible for "parents with low IQ to have offspring with high IQ." "It is also possible for a dark-skinned couple to have fair babies," he added. — AFP

## INDIA FINDS IT HARD TO END CASH LOVE AFFAIR

Continued from Page 1

The government followed up the banknote action by banning all cash transactions above 200,000 rupees in March. It has promoted e-wallets and offered incentives for businesses that adopt digital payments.

The government said that the amount of tax collected in February was 10 percent higher than for the same month last year. It insists it is looking for long-term change. But the action so far has not deterred wily and wary Indians. All sales witnessed by an AFP reporter during a visit to the gold market on a recent afternoon were in cash. "Demonetization has had no impact at all," said the proprietor of a store who declined to give his name. "You can never remove cash from our system."

Cash withdrawals from bank machines are rising. In March the figure stood at 2.2 billion rupees, up 0.6 percent from the same month last year. And the government action hit the economy, at least temporarily. India's impressive growth fell to 7.0 percent in the final quarter of 2016

from 7.3 percent in the previous three months. That could yet be revised down as the full picture emerges.

Agriculture and real estate are as sensitive to the cash economy as Old Delhi gold dealers. "Property sales have slowed in Delhi, but not just because of demonetization," said a real estate agent in the capital, who asked that his name not be revealed. "Cash is more difficult, but more often than not there are big piles of notes on the table," he added.

Ironically, jewelers made money in the initial days of the government cash ban as stunned consumers swapped suddenly worthless notes for gold, a traditional safe haven. "There is not a single shop in this entire market that didn't make money during demonetization," one shop owner, who declined to be named, said with a laugh. The owner said he doubled sales last year to 20 million rupees owing to the government action. The government's "longer-term success will depend on whether Indians return to cash in large numbers," the Stratfor consultancy said in a recent report. It predicted that Modi will not give up attempts to "steer India's economy away from cash". — AFP

## HAIR THERAPY BOOSTS TOURISM IN ISTANBUL

Continued from Page 1

normal cost" in some other countries. Package offers for foreign patients include pickup from the airport, hotel accommodation, the surgery itself and tourism.

Around €1,200 (\$1,312) would get a patient three days in Istanbul and a top quality medical treatment, whereas the same surgery could cost up to €6,000 in Europe, or only slightly less in the Middle East. The operation is carried out with Follicular Unit Extraction (FUE) where tiny hairs are taken out one by one from areas where the patient still has hair, like the nape of the neck. After the harvesting, they are implanted in the areas where the patient has lost hair. The procedure takes around eight to 10 hours, while the tiny transplanted hairs can take weeks or months to take root and grow.

Emre Ali Kodan, consultant for the Health Tourism Association, said 5,000 foreign patients undergo hair transplants in Turkey every month, with the vast majori-

ty coming from the Middle East and the Arabian Peninsula, including Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates and Qatar. "We are setting our sights on a 10-percent increase in hair transplant alone (in 2017). It would not be a dream to reach up to 6,500 patients a month," he told AFP. Patients from Greece, Italy and Russia are also showing interest, he said.

"Despite the decline in the tourism sector in 2016, we see a five-percent growth in health tourism, based on statistics," Kodan said, adding that the aim was to achieve up to seven billion dollars in revenue this year. Tastemel said the hair treatment sector was showing a resilience lacking in other branches of the tourism sector, which saw revenues plummet more than 17 percent in the first three months of this year compared to the same period in 2016. "Even when there were problems in the tourism industry it didn't affect the medical tourism domain very much," he said. "We kept doing a high number of operations even during the crisis period." — AFP

## AMIR, ERDOGAN LAUNCH NEW AIRPORT...

Continued from Page 1

past 14 years, Erdogan said. Turkish firms have been involved in projects worth a total of \$6.5 billion in Kuwait. Erdogan also touched on HH the Amir's recent visit to Turkey, which has been a magnet for some 180,000 Kuwaiti tourists. He added that the terminal "fits into Kuwait's 2035 development plan". "Peace and prosperity in the world is contingent on the stability of our region and Kuwait's special ties with Turkey could be the catalyst for increased cooperation in the Middle East," Erdogan said

Minister of Public Works Abdulrahman Al-Mutawa said the project is designed to handle 25 million passengers a year and is scalable for an additional 25 million in the future. "It's designed to the highest international standards - a Class A classification, the highest airport classification. The airport is environmentally friendly and energy efficient and will recycle water to be used in irrigation and landscaping. In addition, the airport will include solar panels placed on the roof to generate enough energy to power 10 percent of the terminal's electricity consumption, making it one of the best airports in the world once construction is completed," he said.

Mutawa said the ministry of public works has ensured that this vital project will create many job opportunities for Kuwaiti youth and local companies. "Forty Kuwaiti engineers will work on this project, in addition to a group of technicians, administrative and accounting staff. We also ensured the transfer of knowledge and technology to our national cadres and companies," added Mutawa.

The project is part of an \$8.2 billion strategic development plan for the Kuwait airport that also includes a new runway, a control tower and a smaller passenger terminal, President of the Directorate General for Civil

Aviation Sheikh Salman Al-Hmoud Al-Sabah said. The development plan is expected to be completed in 2020. Sheikh Salman noted that this dynamic and important project will meet the aspirations of travelers in terms of advanced systems, technologies, services and high levels of safety and security, in addition to being an environmentally-friendly project.

Over the past 10 years, air traffic has increased by 10 percent annually, with the numbers of passengers travelling through Kuwait International Airport reaching 12 million passengers in 2016. "According to projections and forecasts, the number of passengers is expected to exceed 23 million in 2027. This project will contribute to the development of the country's economy and tourism and will enhance Kuwait's status globally by keeping up with the continuous developments of air traffic and offering investment opportunities to the private sector that guarantee financial returns to the state's treasury and create job opportunities for Kuwaiti youth in all specialties," stressed Sheikh Salman.

The new terminal was initially scheduled to be completed within six years, but Limak Chairman Nihat Ozdemir predicted it may be done within four years. "This airport will be a state-of-the-art landmark airport by all measures, and a world-class gateway for Kuwait. This project is more than a construction project - it's a link between the two countries: Kuwait and Turkey, between two economies, between two societies. As a result of this link, new technologies are currently being introduced and transferred, new jobs are currently being created in Kuwait, and planned local procurement in Kuwait will be in the hundreds of millions of dollars, all while we train and equip Kuwaiti men and women of the future through the various education and empowerment initiatives that we are pursuing in Kuwait today," he said.

## LANDSLIDE WIN FOR MOON IN SOUTH KOREA...

Continued from Page 1

They gave Moon, of the Democratic Party, who backs engagement with the North, 41.4 percent support, according to the joint survey by three television stations. Conservative Hong Joon-Pyo - who dubs Moon a "pro-Pyongyang leftist" was far behind on 23.3 percent, with centrist Ahn Cheol-Soo third on 21.8. The result was "a great victory of great people" who wanted to create "a country of justice... where rules and common sense prevail", Moon told cheering supporters on Gwanghwamun Square in Seoul - where vast crowds gathered for candlelit protests over several months to demand Park's removal.

The graft scandal plunged the South into political turmoil and bitter division, but Moon promised healing, telling the crowd: "I will be president for all South Koreans." On the square, freelancer Koh Eun-Byul, 28, told AFP: "I am so happy because now there is hope for some meaningful change." National elections are public holidays in South Korea and preliminary figures showed a turnout of 77.2 percent - the highest for 20 years in a presidential poll. With 40 percent of the vote counted, results showed Moon with a slightly smaller share than the poll forecast, but not enough to matter.

The campaign focused largely on the economy, with North Korea less prominent. But after a decade of conservative rule Moon's victory could mean significant change in Seoul's approach towards both Pyongyang and key ally Washington. The 64-year-old - accused by his critics of being soft on the North - advocates dialogue to ease tensions and to bring it to negotiations. He is seen as favoring more independence in relations with the US, Seoul's security guarantor with 28,500 troops in the country. Their presence, he told reporters during the campaign, was "important not only to our own security but also to the global strategy of the US".

Moon also says he would be willing to visit Pyongyang to meet Kim and advocates resumption of some of the inter-Korean projects shuttered by his predecessors, including the Kaesong joint industrial zone. In Seoul's prosperous Seocho district, 72-year-old doctor Chung Tae-Wan backed Moon's conservative opponent Hong, telling AFP he did so because "security is the most important thing". But for many South Korean voters, corruption, slowing growth, unemployment and even air pollution from China top the list of concerns. — AFP

## GOVT WILL ONLY DEBATE 'CONSTITUTIONAL'...

Continued from Page 1

The liberal National Democratic Movement said in a statement that it feels the four figures were pressurized to issue the statement. The statement demanded the reasons of revoking the citizenships and the legal mechanism of returning them must be made public and those responsible must be held to account. The lat-

est developments are likely to trigger an intense political crisis in the country, although the survival of the prime minister is certain.

In the Assembly session yesterday, MPs agreed to ask the Assembly's environment committee to investigate the mass death of fish in Kuwaiti waters in the past few weeks. They asked the committee to submit its report within one month.



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## Focus

TRANSLATED FORECASTS  
AIM TO AID FARMERS

When farmers in northern Burkina Faso speak about the direction of the wind, they refer to the direction it is blowing in. Burkina Faso's meteorological agency, however, classifies wind by the direction it comes from. That means that when state forecasters warn of a strong west wind, farmers find an east wind coming gusting along, flattening their faith in forecasts. But a new guide aims to solve that problem - and help farmers build better resilience to climate change - by translating the French and English words commonly used in weather forecasts not just into northern Burkina Faso's local languages but also its culture.

The guide, for instance, translates the French and English word "eclipse" - the total or partial disappearance of the sun or moon - into the much more colorful term Burkinabe farmers would use for the phenomenon, said Malick Victor, a journalist from Chad who led development of the translation guide. "If on local radio I want to announce an eclipse, I need to say that 'Tomorrow, according to the meteorological forecast, the cat will catch the moon or the sun,'" Victor said. "Right now, the language used (by forecasters) is so technical and not designed for the farmer," he said. "But if we give it to the farmer in a way they can understand, then we can use it."

## Too Hot To Go Out?

Victor's guide - a dictionary of more than 500 French and English meteorological terms with equivalent translations in Moore, Fulfulde and Gulimancema, northern Burkina Faso's three most-spoken languages - was created as part of the British government-funded Building Resilience and Adaptation to Climate Extremes and Disasters (BRACED) program. The three-year program aims to give some of the world's most climate-vulnerable people, in countries from Myanmar to South Sudan, the tools they need to prepare for more extreme weather and fend off more frequent climate shocks without slipping into worsening poverty.

Victor, who works for media non-profit Internews as part of Zaman Lebidi, a BRACED project led by anti-poverty charity Christian Aid, started the guide last year after noticing that efforts to get better seasonal forecasts to farmers through radio broadcasts weren't working effectively, in large part because of translation issues. To sort out the problems, he brought together farmers, journalists from local radio stations, community leaders and meteorological agency officials, who over two days decided on 517 key terms that needed better translation.

In Burkina Faso, for instance, farmers have little use for terms like winter and summer, instead dividing the year into periods of different rainfall and winds, such as the hot Saharan Harmattan wind season or the monsoon period. Efforts to broadcast expected high temperatures also don't make much sense for remote rural farmers without temperature gauges, Victor said. "But if you can say whether it's a day you can go outside with your animals or not, that can help," he said.

The guide notes that it hopes to "remove the risk of misunderstanding" between meteorologists, who accuse journalists of misinterpreting weather information; journalists, who accuse meteorologists of being inaccurate; and farmers who aren't sure they can trust any of the information they're getting.

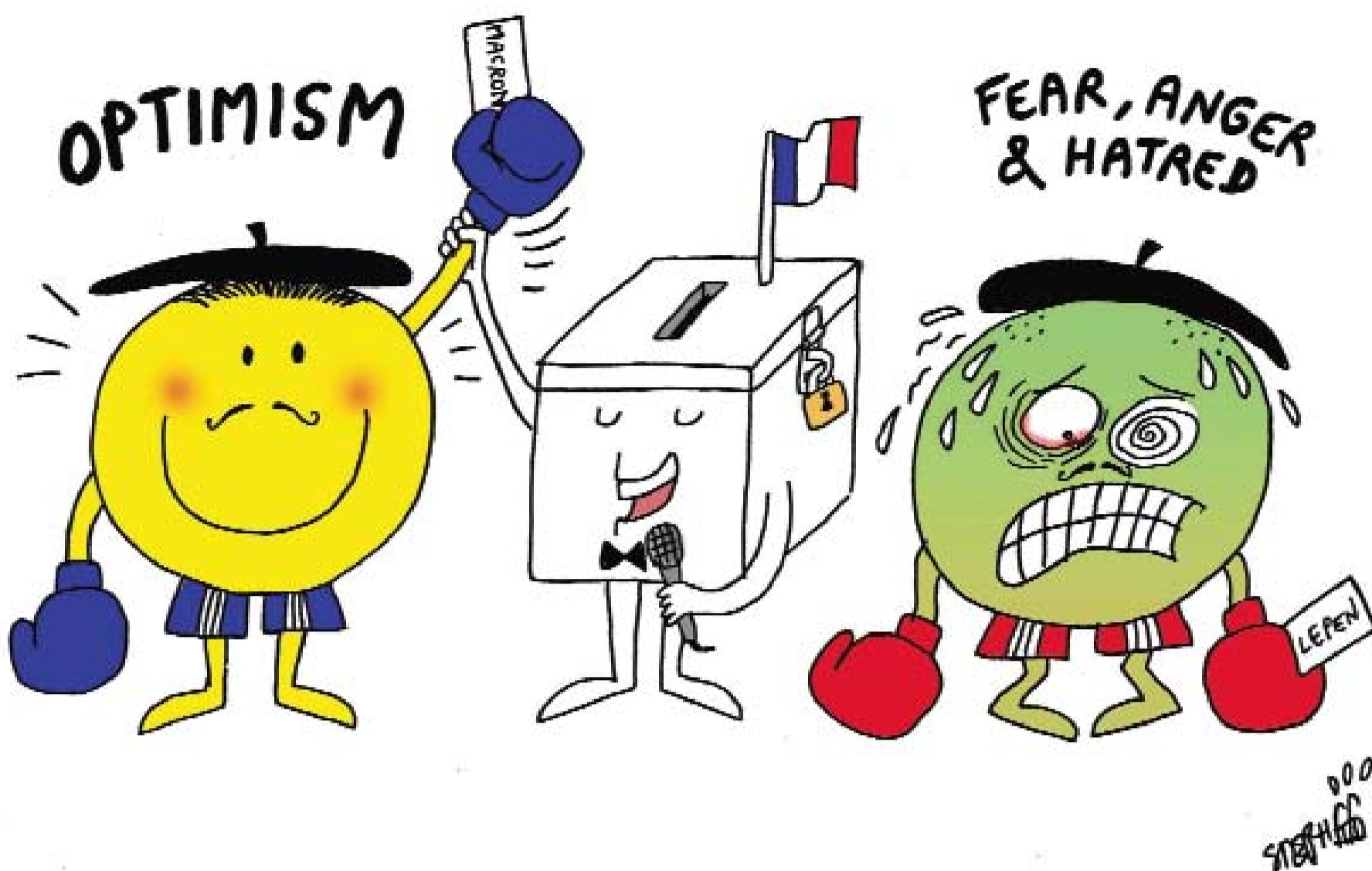
## Simple Language

Edmund Henley, who organized technical assistance to the project from the UK's Met Office, said the effort is not the first to try to put complicated meteorological terms into other languages. A World Meteorological Organization website, for instance, offers translations of scientific terms into Arabic, Mandarin, Russian and Spanish, among other languages. But the Burkina Faso effort is unusual both in taking on local languages and making a "huge effort to get things into terms that are understandable to people," Henley said. "They had to think, 'What are we trying to get across?'"

The guide's focus on creating simple French and English equivalents for more complicated meteorological terms also means the guide is likely to be widely useful beyond Burkina Faso's borders, he said. The translation project, backed by more than a dozen partner organisations - including Burkina Faso's meteorological agency and other national institutes, the country's radio and television groups, King's College London and German charity Welthungerhilfe - is now moving on to establishing mobile phone abbreviations for key terms.

That will make the better-tuned weather information more widely available by text message as well as on radio and television, Victor said. "With abbreviations we can get it short," he said. "We know all the farmers in rural areas don't listen to the radio or read newspapers or look at television. But SMS doesn't need radio coverage." Burkina Faso's government, which has encouraged the project, has indicated it intends to reprint and more widely distribute the new guide, and hopes to expand the translation effort to more of the country's approximately 60 languages. —Reuters

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## TAINTED PORTUGAL CORK INDUSTRY FIGHTS BACK

A decade ago, shares in the world's largest cork producer, Corticeira Amorim, didn't look like a great bet. Its biggest customer, the wine industry, was flirting with cheaper products that threatened cork's dominance: Screw tops and plastic stoppers. Many premium wine-makers had spurned cork, blaming it for occasionally tainting wines with a mouldy taste. That was then. The cork industry has since staged a comeback: Lisbon-listed Amorim's share price has soared almost sixfold and cork exports from Portugal, the world's dominant producer, have just regained their peaks of 15 years ago.

"When you go back 12, 15 years, the forecast for cork was anything but optimistic. Where we are today is a completely different territory from what most people thought possible then," said Carlos de Jesus, Amorim marketing director. Sales of plastic stoppers shaped like a cork and aluminium screw caps, made by firms such as Australia's Amcor, surged to account for almost half of the US market, the world's largest consumer of wine, in 2009, according to the US-based Cork Quality Council.

Screw tops took over the Australian market, and are now used to seal most bottles produced in South Africa and Chile too. However, cork has rallied, partly by investing in research to eliminate cork taint - a dank, mouldy smell sometimes caused by microscopic fungi found in cork-tree bark - and persuading some wine-makers to ditch aluminium and plastic. Cork has raised its US market share to around 60 percent, and its share of the global market, which Amorim estimates is worth about \$1.3 billion a year, stands closer to 70 percent. But the battle for market share has only just begun. China is emerging as a huge new market as its middle class of more than 100 million people develops a taste for wine. Cork and its rivals are engaged in a battle for the hearts and minds of China's wine lovers - and for now cork seems to be winning. "It is a tradition. It represents prestige," said Matthew Gong, Shanghai-based spokesman for major Chinese wine importer ASC Fine Wines. However, he added, Chinese consumers would

become less sensitive to the question of cork or screw cap as the market grew, especially younger people drinking cheaper wines. "More and more consumers don't mind as much whether the closure is a cork or a screw cap," he said. "But for top wines, clearly cork is preferred."

Cork exports to China jumped 22 percent in 2016, according to cork makers' association APCOR. As the biggest buyer of Australian wines, China also has the potential power to influence how producers seal their bottles in that predominantly screw-top market. Amcor did not respond to a Reuters request for comment. However, The Winemakers' Federation of Australia denied cork makers were making inroads. "It's definitely not a move in Australia or New Zealand. We are still very much screwcap for its convenience," said Chief Executive Tony Battaglene. He said about 90 percent of bottles produced in Australia are sealed via screw top.

## Lasers &amp; Robots

In the war with screw tops and plastic, Amorim has recruited robots, lasers and a battery of chromatographic analysis machines which can detect the almost invisible signature of taint - the chemical compound TCA - in a few parts per trillion, or equivalent to one drop in enough water to fill 20 Olympic swimming pools. Bark is carefully stripped from cork oak trees in Portugal's central-south Alentejo region. Then at Amorim factories near the northern city of Porto, equipment processes it into slabs that are steam-treated, cut into smaller pieces and fed by robotic arms into machines that punch out stoppers. These are sorted and polished using lasers.

The finest-quality stoppers are still punched by hand before passing through the humming rows of chromatographic analyzers. Amorim's NDTech process is among the technologies that sprang from more than €700 million (\$766 million) invested by the Portuguese industry in new equipment and research, and other companies hope to catch up soon. The industry has also launched cheaper

TCA-free stoppers made from shredded cork for lower-end wine makers. They are made by Amorim and others such as French-Portuguese Lafitte Group.

The R&D drive was a response to the industry's cork taint crisis, which peaked in the early 2000s when even European makers of premium wines began joining the switch to screw caps. In 2005, Laroche Wines, owned by AdVini, sealed all of its Chablis, including high-end Grands crus, with screw caps. But 10 years later, the French winery, which has annual sales of €25 million, has switched back. It uses cork for all its Grand cru, Premier cru and most selection wines. At the end of last year, it started sealing its top wines with NDTech.

"After the big cork pollution crisis, the cork industry was on the defensive. The incredible work they did changed things... The cork quality increased drastically in the last 10 years," said Gregory Viennois, technical director at Laroche. Joao Rui Ferreira, head of APCOR and CEO of cork stoppers maker WFScore, said cork was not aiming to return to its total domination of the late 20th century, when it held 95 percent of the global market. Instead, it was focusing on premium wines in what is now a much larger overall market. "The trends are very clear. Wine consumption in the world is moving from volume to value..." Ferreira said.

## Unconvinced

Influential wine critics are still not convinced. For them, taint remains a serious problem for cork. APCOR estimates that up to 1.2 percent of wine bottles are still ruined by TCA, but some producers and critics cite anecdotal evidence that the actual proportion is much higher. Lisa Perotti-Brown, a reviewer for the Robert Parker Wine Advocate website, wrote in April that during a recent tasting of more than 900 wines from California's Sonoma County she had to discard up to 8 percent of the samples because they were corked. She warned that even at levels below the detection threshold hawked by Amorim, TCA can still damage the wine, muting or otherwise dulling the aromas and flavors. —Reuters

## POPULAR AHOK TARGETED BY HARDLINE ANGER

Jakarta's Christian governor, who was jailed for blasphemy yesterday, won much praise for his efforts to clean up the traffic-choked megacity but his popularity could not save him from Islamic hardliners angered by his comments about the Holy Quran. With his outspoken, combative style and can-do attitude, Basuki Tjahaja Purnama cut an unusual figure among the political elite in Muslim-majority Indonesia, where politicians typically take a more gentle, persuasive approach.



Basuki Purnama

But the tall, bespectacled politician, who was the city's first non-Muslim governor for half a century and first ever ethnic Chinese leader, quickly overcame any doubts about his leadership as he took concrete steps to improve the city of 10 million. The 50-year-old - known by his nickname Ahok - regularly railed against corruption in one of the world's most graft-ridden countries and led sting operations to catch lazy bureaucrats, drawing praise from a public weary of the city's inefficiencies. The former deputy governor inherited the top job in 2014 after his predecessor Joko Widodo won the presidency. On Purnama's watch, roads were repaired, pavements improved, more parks started appearing in the city and its notoriously filthy rivers were cleaned up. Some of his policies - particularly a drive to evict poor, riverside communities - caused anger, but many Jakartans said their lives had changed for the better since he took power. Until the blasphemy controversy, he was favorite to win last month's gubernatorial election in Jakarta.

## 'Fearless leader'

Aleksius Jemadu, a political expert at Pelita Harapan University near Jakarta, praised Purnama for his "courageous attitude". "Ahok is a rare figure, he's fearless. He appeared when the Indonesian people were thirsting for an honest leader," he told AFP. But it was never going to be easy for someone from a religious and ethnic minority to hang on to such a powerful position, particularly when he was not elected to it in the first place.

His aggressive, outspoken style, an advantage when taking on bungling officials, turned out to be a double-edged sword that contributed to his downfall. In September last year, in a speech to a group of fishermen during early campaigning for the elections, he accused his

opponents of using a Quranic verse to trick them into voting against him. The comments were filmed and went viral online - providing ammunition for fringe hardline groups who had long railed against a non-Muslim leader ruling the capital and his political opponents who were keen to oust him from the job and embarrass his ally Widodo.

Despite his apologies and insistence that he only intended to attack his rivals, not the Quran itself, hundreds of thousands of conservative Muslims took to the streets of Jakarta in mass rallies last year, organized by hardliners and encouraged by his rivals. Under intense public pressure, authorities

put him on trial for blasphemy and his popularity slumped. He lost last month's election to a Muslim challenger and Tuesday was jailed for two years for blasphemy, a shock decision after prosecutors recommended only probation.

Purnama was born into a well-off family on Belitung island in western Indonesia, and studied geology at university in Jakarta, before returning to his village and going into business. His father urged him to use his talents to help those less fortunate than himself, and he entered local politics in 2004. He was elected to the national parliament in 2009, where he met Widodo. — AFP

## MOON: ACTIVIST, LAWYER, PRESIDENT

## Arrested and expelled

Moon was born on the southern island of Geoje in 1952 during the Korean War after his parents fled the North. His father was a menial worker at a prisoner-of-war camp while his mother peddled eggs in the nearby port city of Busan, with the baby Moon strapped to her back, the politician wrote in his autobiography. He entered law school in Seoul in 1972 but was arrested and expelled for leading a student protest against the authoritarian rule of dictator Park Chung-Hee - the ousted president's father.

Moon returned to school in 1980 only to be arrested again. His close friendship with future president Roh began in 1982 when they opened a law firm in Busan focusing on human and civil rights issues. Both became leading figures in the pro-democracy protests that swept the country in 1987 and led to South Korea's first direct presidential elections the same year.

When Roh entered politics, Moon continued with his legal practice in Busan, defending students and workers arrested for leading protests and labour strikes. But a year after Roh's unexpected election victory in 2002, Moon joined the administration as a presidential aide, tasked with weeding out official corruption and screening candidates for top government posts, before rising to become his chief of staff. "I was always happy due to the fact that I was able to help others with what I had been trained to do," Moon said in his autobiography.

The 64-year-old has promised to curb the concentration of economic power in the hands of the chaebols, the family-oriented business groups whose ties to government have been exposed in the wide-ranging scandal that saw Park impeached. — AFP



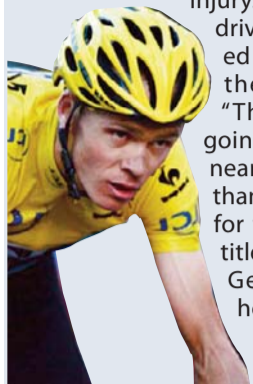
Moon Jae-In

The projected winner of South Korea's presidential election is a former special forces soldier, pro-democracy activist and human rights lawyer. An exit poll forecast a landslide victory for left-leaning Moon Jae-In of the Democratic Party, giving him 41.4 percent support, 18 percentage points ahead of his nearest challenger. Victory will cap a political career that began with student activism in the days of military rule, when he was convicted of taking part in illegal protests. The election came after millions of South Koreans took to the streets in candlelit demonstrations to demand the removal of Park Geun-Hye, who was sacked by the country's top court in March over a corruption scandal and is now in custody awaiting trial.

The irony is that he was once chief of staff to liberal president Roh Moo-Hyun, who committed suicide in 2009 after being questioned over graft allegations. "Corruption is the biggest issue in South Korean politics," says Robert Kelly of Pusan National University. "That's absolutely true. Every South Korean president has gotten into trouble for corruption and bribery and graft and things like that, of varying degrees." But Moon boasts a clean image himself, said Kim Neung-Gou, president of online newspaper Polinews, and has been "riding on waves of protests against Park and accumulated corruption".

## DRIVER 'DELIBERATELY' KNOCKED CHRIS FROOME OFF HIS BICYCLE

**LONDON:** Reigning Tour de France champion Chris Froome said yesterday he was deliberately knocked off his bicycle by a hit-and-run driver while training in southern France. The British rider posted a picture of his badly damaged bike on Twitter but said he had escaped injury. "Just got rammed on purpose by an impatient driver who followed me onto the pavement!" tweeted the 31-year-old Froome, a three-time winner of the Tour, road cycling's most prestigious race. "Thankfully I'm okay. Bike totaled. Driver kept going!" The picture was geotagged from Beausoleil, near Froome's home in Monaco, and retweeted more than 12,000 times in just a few hours. Froome rides for the British-based Team Sky and will defend his title when the Tour de France begins in Dusseldorf, Germany, on July 1. Sky said Froome returned home to get a spare bike and continued his training after the incident. — AFP



## JIANGSU END ADELAIDE UNITED'S CAMPAIGN

**ADELAIDE:** A late goal from midfielder Ji Xiang clinched a 1-0 win and top spot for Jiangsu Suning in the AFC Champions League Group H, ending Adelaide United's Asian campaign in Adelaide. Ji scored with a clinical finish nine minutes from the end of normal time to net the Chinese team's winner off only their second shot on target for the match. Adelaide, who needed to win and hope that South Korea's Jeju United would lose to Japan's Gamba Osaka to progress to the knockout phase, bombarded the Jiangsu goal with 20 shots, including nine to one in the opening half, but could not score. But coupled with their defeat, Jeju downed Gamba Osaka 2-0 at home to advance to the round of 16. Adelaide, ACL finalists in 2008, finished third in the group, five points behind Jeju, after an Asian campaign which returned one win, three draws and three losses. Jiangsu left their overseas stars Brazil's Alex Teixeira and Colombian Roger Martinez at home and were also without suspended Brazilian international Ramires. Adelaide were Australia's last hope of making it through to the knockout rounds after Western Sydney Wanderers and Brisbane Roar failed to get out of their respective groups. — AFP

## FLOOD QUITS TOULOUSE AS LYON SIGN S AFRICAN DUO

**TOULOUSE:** English fly-half Toby Flood has quit fallen French Top 14 giants Toulouse by mutual agreement, the club said yesterday. The 31-year-old had a year left on his contract but "will not see out his final season with the club" which he joined in 2014. The former England international has played 60 games for Toulouse scoring 337 points. Capped 60 times for England, he previously played for Newcastle Falcons and Leicester Tigers. His departure is the 12th from the club which has had a disastrous season, the 19-time French champions failing to make the Top 14 play-offs for the first time in 41 years. Elsewhere in the Top 14 yesterday, Lyon signed South African forwards Francois van der Merwe from defending champions Racing 92 and Etienne Oosthuizen from Super Rugby side Sharks. And Bordeaux-Begles announced the arrival of Rory Teague as their new backs coach. The 32-year-old has worked on England's coaching staff since last year and will travel with the England squad for the two-Test tour in Argentina next month before taking up his new position in France. — AFP



**BALTIMORE:** Anthony Rendon #6 of the Washington Nationals forces out Mark Trumbo #45 of the Baltimore Orioles at second base in the fifth inning during a baseball game at Oriole Park at Camden Yards on May 8, 2017. —AFP

# YANKEES PULL ALL-NIGHTER, HAMMER REDS

**CINCINNATI:** Brett Gardner and Matt Holliday homered and Japanese pitcher Masahiro Tanaka won his fifth consecutive start as the New York Yankees shook off a long game and a short night's sleep, beating Cincinnati 10-4 in Major League Baseball on Monday for their sixth victory in a row. The Yankees have the best record in the majors at 21-9 and are 12 games over .500 for the first time since the end of the 2015 season. Their biggest challenge was overcoming the fatigue from an 18-inning, 5-4 win at Wrigley Field early Monday. The Yankees didn't land in the Cincinnati area until 5:08 a.m., and the sun was up when some of them finally fell asleep. Players sipped caffeinated drinks and yawned in the clubhouse pregame. Tanaka (5-1) gave them what they needed after their all-nighter, going seven innings on 112 pitches to rest the bullpen. He allowed four runs - Joey Votto drove in three with a single and a homer - while ending the Reds' five-game winning streak. Gary Sanchez got New York going with his

bases-loaded single in the first off Rookie Davis (1-2), a former Yankees prospect.

### ORIOLES 6, NATIONALS 4

Trey Mancini capped a three-homer binge in the first inning against Gio Gonzalez as Baltimore beat Washington for its season-high fifth straight victory. Kevin Gausman (2-3) limited baseball's most potent offense to two runs over seven innings. He retired the first 10 batters and struck out eight in his longest outing of the year. Joey Rickard hit a leadoff homer and Mark Trumbo added a solo shot before Mancini connected with a runner on to make it 4-0. The Orioles hold a 37-24 advantage over their neighboring rivals in the so-called "Beltway Series," which began in 2006. Caleb Joseph had a career high-tying four hits for the Orioles. Baltimore (21-10) owns the second-best record in the majors behind the AL East-leading New York Yankees. Bryce Harper homered and drove in two runs for the Nationals. After the Orioles let a six-run cushion shrink to three,

Brad Brach worked the ninth for his eighth save. After Brach gave up a one-out RBI double to former Oriole Matt Wieters, pinch-runner Trea Turner strayed too far from second base on a groundout to first and the game ended with a rundown in which Adam Lind was tagged out between third and home. Gonzalez (3-1) came in with a National League-leading 1.64 ERA for the team with the best record in the NL.

### BLUE JAYS 4, INDIANS 2

Marcus Stroman pitched six shutout innings and Kevin Pillar made a sensational catch in center field as Toronto beat Cleveland in a playoff rematch. Ryan Goins hit a two-run homer and Justin Smoak added a two-run single as the Blue Jays beat the team that eliminated them from last year's AL Championship Series. Former Blue Jays slugger Edwin Encarnacion, who signed a \$60 million, three-year contract with Cleveland last winter, received a warm welcome and a video tribute in his return to Toronto. Encarnacion got a standing ovation before his first at-bat and went 2 for 3 with a walk. Pillar made the defensive play of the game - perhaps the season - in the sixth, diving on the warning track in center to catch a deep drive by Jose Ramirez and strand runners at second and third. The remarkable grab was one of several plays that helped Stroman (3-2) escape jams. Toronto turned inning-ending double plays in the second, fourth and fifth. Goins hit a two-out homer off Trevor Bauer (2-4) in the second. Roberto Osuna finished for his fifth save.

### ROYALS 7, RAYS 3

Nate Karns struck out 10 while pitching into the seventh inning and Eric Hosmer had three hits as Kansas City busted out of an offensive slump to beat Tampa Bay. Kansas City matched its best run output of the year and set a season high with 13 hits. Drew Butera homered and drove in his first two runs of the season, helping the Royals win for the fourth time in 17 games. Karns (2-2) allowed two runs in 6 1/3 innings. Blake Snell (0-3) yielded four runs and 10 hits over five innings. He failed to get an out in the

sixth for the 10th time in his last 11 starts.

Oct. 5 in the NL wild-card game.

### METS 4, GIANTS 3

Neil Walker hit a game-ending single with two outs in the ninth inning as the New York Mets put turmoil aside to beat reeling San Francisco. Michael Conforto scored for New York's first walk-off win this season, giving the Mets their seventh victory in 10 games. Jeurys Familia (1-0) needed just five pitches in a perfect ninth, finishing a five-hitter started by Jacob deGrom, who struck out 11 in six innings. Hunter Pence and Buster Posey homered for San Francisco. Josh Osich (0-1) took the loss. New York has been dealing with drama all homestand, from an injury that will likely keep star pitcher Noah Syndergaard out until after the All-Star break to a suspension of pitcher Matt Harvey, who failed to show up for a game. The Giants, who have lost five of six, were playing at Citi Field for the first time since beating the Mets 3-0 last

### CARDINALS 9, MARLINS 4

Cardinals ace Carlos Martinez drove in four runs, compensating for the two homers he gave up to Marcell Ozuna and leading St. Louis over Miami for its season-best fourth straight win. Martinez (2-3) came into the game hitless this year. He hit a two-out, three-run double off Adam Conley (2-3) in the second inning and singled home a run in the fourth. Martinez struck out seven in six innings and finally received some run support. Miguel Socolovich pitched three innings to earn his first career save. Miami's Giancarlo Stanton hit his 11th homer in the ninth, his third shot in two days. Ozuna also has 11 homers. Matt Carpenter had a two-run triple for the Cardinals, who have won seven consecutive road games. Marlins manager Don Mattingly was ejected for arguing balls and strikes after Martinez struck out the side in the second. — AP

## Baseball results/standings

LA Dodgers 12, Pittsburgh 1, San Diego 5, Texas 1, Oakland 3, LA Angels 2 (11 innings), Kansas City 7, Tampa Bay 3, NY Yankees 10, Cincinnati 4, NY Mets 4, San Francisco 3, St. Louis 9, Miami 4, Toronto 4, Cleveland 2, Baltimore 6, Washington 4.

American League					National League				
Eastern Division					Eastern Division				
	W	L	PCT	GB					
NY Yankees	21	9	.700	-	Washington	21	11	.656	-
Baltimore	21	10	.677	0.5	NY Mets	15	16	.484	5.5
Boston	17	14	.548	4.5	Philadelphia	13	17	.433	7
Tampa Bay	16	18	.471	7	Miami	13	18	.419	7.5
Toronto	12	20	.375	10	Atlanta	11	18	.379	8.5
Central Division					Central Division				
Cleveland	17	14	.548	-	St. Louis	17	14	.548	-
Minnesota	15	14	.517	1	Cincinnati	17	15	.531	0.5
Chicago White Sox	15	15	.500	1.5	Chicago Cubs	16	15	.516	1
Detroit	15	15	.500	1.5	Milwaukee	16	16	.500	1.5
Kansas City	11	20	.355	6	Pittsburgh	14	18	.438	3.5
Western Division					Western Division				
Houston	21	11	.656	-	Colorado	20	12	.625	-
LA Angels	16	18	.471	6	LA Dodgers	18	14	.563	2
Oakland	15	17	.469	6	Arizona	18	15	.545	2.5
Seattle	15	17	.469	6	San Diego	13	20	.394	7.5
Texas	13	20	.394	8.5	San Francisco	11	22	.333	9.5



**SAN DIEGO:** Carlos Gomez #14 of the Texas Rangers gets caught in a run down between second and third base by Trevor Cahill #38 of the San Diego Padres during the second inning of a baseball game at PETCO Park on May 8, 2017. — AFP



**TALLADEGA:** AJ Allmendinger (47) flips on the backstretch in a crash involving multiple drivers, including Trevor Bayne (6) and Joey Logano (22), bringing out a red flag during the Camping World 500 auto race at Talladega Superspeedway in Talladega, Ala.— AP

## STENHOUSE WRITES NEW CHAPTER AS A NASCAR WINNER

**TALLADEGA:** "I have a boyfriend, his name is Richard." With those eight words spoken by Danica Patrick in 2013, everything Ricky Stenhouse Jr had accomplished in his career became a footnote. He was suddenly "Danica's boyfriend." The princess of auto racing had finally found her prince charming, mullet and all. The moment the fellow NASCAR drivers went public with their relationship, Stenhouse was thrust into a spotlight that had nothing to do with his racing resume. He was an accessory. Because he was a young driver trying to make it in the big leagues with a team on a rapid descent into mediocrity, Stenhouse had little chance to stand on his own.

He was, for the first few years, the man on Danica's arm. But ever so slowly, he chipped away at his craft. He got better and has been hands-on in the long, painful rebuild at Roush Fenway Racing. All the while, it was Patrick

standing by his side, pushing him to work harder, eat healthier and simply be better. Now Stenhouse is a Monster Energy Cup Series winner, and it was his famous girlfriend who was there to greet him Sunday when he pulled into victory lane at Talladega Superspeedway.

It was their first trip to the podium as a couple, and because she'd crashed out earlier in the race, she'd been able to watch him use a last-lap pass of Kyle Busch to nab his first victory in 158 career Cup starts. She was in street clothes for the celebration that began when she leaned in for a big kiss. This was a huge moment. For Stenhouse. For his father, who was almost arrested trying to climb a fence to cross the track to get to his son in his biggest moment. For the couple that races but doesn't win. The moment, for once, belonged to Stenhouse. "Both of our main focus is to go

out and run well and win races and do what we have to do to do that," Stenhouse said of Patrick. "She understands that I'm going to go to the shop a lot, and to have that support and her knowing where I'm coming from is great to have. I don't mind being known as her boyfriend. She doesn't mind being known as my girlfriend. It goes either way, and we couldn't be in a better place right now." NASCAR was there to celebrate with the couple, Stenhouse the latest new face to win in a series undergoing a serious changing of the guard. At 29, Stenhouse is still young enough to develop into a star. His victory at Talladega earned him a spot in the All-Star race and, likely, the playoffs. He did it for a Roush team that was once the pride of the Ford camp but has been on a decline for years.

The team that once fielded Mark Martin, Matt Kenseth, Carl Edwards, Jeff Burton and

Greg Biffle and won back-to-back championships in 2003 and 2004 has downsized to just two drivers and a lot of sub-par finishes. But Roush has slowly established a bit of consistency, and the improvement is evident through 10 races this year. Trevor Bayne is 16th in the standings. Stenhouse has nearly hit career highs in every category, is 12th in the standings, and most important to the organization, both have a shot to make the 16-driver playoff field.

"I think it means everything for us," team President Steve Newmark said. "Ricky has had ample opportunity to mail it in, yet he's at the shop at 6:30 a.m. working with the guys on occasion, and he has really taken that leadership mantle. He and Trevor both have stepped up, and that's really what's brought us back." The Talladega victory was such a sweet redemption for Stenhouse, a Mississippi native

who considers it his home track. And it was in 2014 - the last year a Roush driver had won a race before Sunday - that Stenhouse embarrassingly failed to qualify at Talladega. He had to stay for the race, honor sponsor commitments, watch Patrick race and wonder if he was on a sinking ship with Roush.

Still, he had won a pair of Xfinity titles with Roush and he had faith the team could win again. "I believed in all the guys that I had around me and the team, that they still wanted the same thing that I wanted, and that was to get back in victory lane, to compete, and to know that we're here every weekend like we were in the Xfinity Series," Stenhouse said. "I want that feeling here. We're not there yet, but they know we're here. We're on some of them's radar screen. We're not on all of them yet. There's teams that don't look at us throughout practice yet, but they will." — AP



**CEFALU:** Riders climb in direction of the Mount Etna during the 4th stage of the 100th Giro d'Italia, Tour of Italy, cycling race from Cefalu to Etna volcano yesterday in Sicily. Slovenian Jan Polanc of team UAE conquered the prestigious Giro d'Italia fourth stage to Mount Etna yesterday as Luxembourg's Bob Jungels took the race leader's pink jersey. — AFP

### CYCLING

## JUNGELS IN GIRO PINK AS POLANC CONQUERS ETNA

**ETNA:** Slovenian Jan Polanc conquered the prestigious Giro d'Italia fourth stage to Mount Etna yesterday as Luxembourg's Bob Jungels took the pink jersey to keep the race lead with his Quick Step team. Climbing specialist Polanc, who races for the United Arab Emirates (UAE) team, was part of a four-man breakaway that pulled free early in the 181 km ride from Cefalu.

Despite being left on his own for the last 16 km of the 18.1 km climb to the summit, Polanc held on to solo over the finish line in just over 4hr 55min. "It was probably the hardest day of my life," said Polanc. And most of the peloton agreed. While locals are used to seeing sparks from the regular eruptions on Europe's highest active volcano, a tough headwind ended hopes of a

stage four duel between defending champion Vincenzo Nibali and Colombian challenger Nairo Quintana.

"The climb was difficult with a constant headwind, especially after a long break," added Polanc, who finished 19secs ahead of Russia's Ilnur Zakarin after the Katusha rider made a last-gasp bid for glory. A reduced peloton containing all the main favorites crossed the line 29secs behind the Slovenian, Britain's Geraint Thomas (Sky) beating France's Thibaut Pinot to finish third and claim precious bonus seconds that moved him up to second overall. The Welshman, leading Team Sky's bid for glory along with Spaniard Mikel Landa, is now six seconds behind Jungels with compatriot Adam Yates (Orica) in third at 10. — AFP

## ROBERTS TO LEAD WALES AGAINST TONGA, SAMOA

**LONDON:** Veteran centre Jamie Roberts will captain a Wales squad featuring 13 uncapped players for the two Tests away to Tonga and Samoa next month. With regular captain Alun Wyn Jones in a British and Irish Lions squad led by former Wales skipper Sam Warburton for the combined side's upcoming tour of New Zealand, Wales were on the hunt for a new on-field leader for their internationals against Tonga in Auckland on June 16 and Samoa in Apia a week later.

"I'm immensely honored to be named captain of Wales for this year's summer tour," said Roberts, 30, in a Welsh Rugby Union (WRU) statement yesterday as the 32-man squad was announced. "It's a proud moment for myself, but more importantly my family and a position of responsibility that I will take huge pride in." Roberts added: "I am excited for the new players in the squad as they get the chance to test themselves at this level, and also for the more established players who now have a chance to become leaders in this team." There have been alterations to the backroom staff too, with Wales boss Warren Gatland in charge of a Lions squad where interim coach Rob Howley is one of his assistants. As a result, forwards coach Robin McBryde will be in overall charge

against Tonga and Samoa.

Roberts, capped 91 times by Wales, failed to gain selection for this year's Lions after starring in the combined side's 2-1 series triumph in Australia four years ago after also featuring in their 2009 tour of South Africa. Now at London club Harlequins, Roberts was one of the most experienced players available to McBryde after Gatland selected 12 Wales internationals in his 2017 Lions squad. "We've got a good mix of experience and youth in this squad," said McBryde who, following the Welsh call-ups to the Lions, named 13 uncapped players in his party for the Tests against the Pacific island nations.

"The senior players will be expected to display their leadership qualities and we want the younger men to show they've got what it takes to handle the intense international environment." One of the uncapped players is in-form back-row forward Thomas Young. The son of former Wales and Lions prop David Young, his coach at Wasps, the 24-year-old scored three tries in a 35-15 win over defending champions Saracens on Saturday as the Midlands club finished top of the regular season English Premiership standings ahead of the title-deciding play-offs.—AFP

## CURRY LEADS WARRIORS ROUT OF JAZZ TO COMPLETE SWEEP

**LOS ANGELES:** Stephen Curry scored 30 points as the Golden State Warriors wrapped up a series sweep with a 121-95 rout of the Utah Jazz on Monday. The Warriors advanced to a Western Conference finals showdown against either Houston or San Antonio after overcoming a fleeting Utah rally to take the series 4-0 at Salt Lake City's Vivint Smart Home Arena. It was a second consecutive 4-0 series victory for the Warriors, who also opened a sweep against Portland in the opening round of the playoffs.

"We gotta good thing going, we're playing well," Curry said afterward. "Tonight we had an opportunity to seal the deal and thankfully we came out on top," added Curry, praising the Warriors all-round offensive display. "That's our approach to every game. We don't know who's going to have a hot night. We want to keep that going," he said. The Warriors laid the foundation for the win with a devastating first quarter performance which saw them pour on 39 points to open up a double-digit lead against a shell-shocked Utah.

"Guys really came out focused," said Warriors forward Draymond Green, who had a triple-double. "We knew what the game plan was and executed that game plan. I think the most important thing, though, is we imposed our will on the game. We had the game at our pace." The Jazz battled back to reduce the deficit to eight points at half-time at 60-52. Utah remained in touching distance throughout the third period but the Warriors always looked capable of finding an extra gear when it mattered. The decisive period came at the end of the third period when both Curry and Andre Iguodala both hit three-pointers in quick succession to help the Dubs pull away to 93-79 heading into the fourth quarter.

### LESSONS THROUGH WINNING

That burst of scoring was a foretaste of what was to follow in the fourth quarter, with the Warriors pulling further clear to wrap up victory by a 26-point margin. Curry was one of five Warriors players to hit double figures, with Klay Thompson adding 21 points and Kevin Durant 18. Green added 17 points, 10 rebounds and 11 assists for a triple-double. For Utah, Gordon Hayward top scored with 25 points while Shelvin Mack had 18 and Dante Exum 15.

Curry meanwhile played down the suggestion that the Warriors may suffer deeper into the playoffs after romping through the first two rounds without dropping a game. "Every team that we've played had a lot of pride," Curry said. "We haven't lost but within these games we've really had to check ourselves. "You can learn lessons through winning and that's what we've done." Jazz star Hayward, who may have played his last game for the team as he prepares for free agency, said Utah had been defeated by a "historically great team." "They make you pay for your mistakes," Hayward told reporters. "You have to be almost perfect every possession, or else they turn it into a 9-0 run or 10-0 run. "You can't have one mental lapse against them. This was a great learning experience for us. They showed why they are who they are, and we're not quite there yet. But you have to take positives from it." — AFP



**SALT LAKE CITY:** Shelvin Mack #8 of the Utah Jazz and Andre Iguodala #9 of the Golden State Warriors fight for the loose ball during the 2017 NBA Playoffs on May 8, 2017. —AFP



**SALT LAKE CITY:** The Utah Jazz cheerleaders perform during the game between the Jazz and the Golden State Warriors on May 8, 2017. — AFP



# SCOTT NOT READY TO FADE INTO GOLFING SUNSET



Adam Scott

**FLORIDA:** Adam Scott is confident his best days are still ahead, even though almost three years have passed since he enjoyed a short reign as world number one. As he heads to this week's Players Championship in Florida, where he burst onto the American golf scene with a win in 2004, Scott is working towards peaking for the business section of the season, after flirting with contention at the US Masters where he finished equal ninth. At 36, an age traditionally slightly past a player's peak, he has peace of mind that comes with having won a major, the 2013 Masters, and believes that being largely injury-free should allow him to continue playing well for many years. "I still feel like I've got a long window," the Australian world number 11 told Reuters at last week's Wells Fargo Championship, where he tied for 36th. "I've at least won my first major. Five years ago there was definitely a sense of urgency because I hadn't won a

major and I felt I was a good enough player to, and (was wondering) is it going to happen? "I'm relatively stress-free, injury-free. I want (success) just as much as I wanted it before." Scott spent 11 weeks as the world's top-ranked player, supplanting Tiger Woods in May 2014. He is trying to juggle the demands of top-level golf with family life. He has a 2-year-old daughter, with Swedish wife Marie expecting their second child in August. As much as he enjoys life at home during his time off, Scott admits to watching plenty of golf on television, and getting itchy feet when he watches his peers.

Long regarded as one of the premier long-game exponents, he says his short game has improved under the tutelage of Australian instructor Matt Ballard, even if it did not look like it at Augusta. "My short game was really sharp the first few events," he said. "At Augusta it wasn't as good as I would have liked but I put

myself in some pretty tough spots too, so it's unfair to be too critical. I've definitely seen some improvement." Scott is older than the current top five in the world, and has watched with interest as Dustin Johnson has taken a grip on the number one ranking.

Johnson won three straight starts, before finishing tied second in the Wells Fargo Championship, despite being rusty after time off recovering from a fall that hurt his back and kept him out of the Masters. But Scott observed that a golfer's place in the pantheon of greats was measured over a career, not a couple of months. "He's in a sweet spot at the moment where everything feels very easy and free, a place where we all occasionally get to," Scott said of Johnson. "But you've got to keep it there for a few years and I did for a while but it's slowly getting back to where I'd like it to be at the moment and hopefully I'm back up challenging for some majors soon." — Reuters

## PGA TOUR EXTENDS FEDEX SPONSORSHIP FOR 10 YEARS

**PONTE VEDRA BEACH:** The PGA Tour announced a 10-year extension for the title sponsorship of the FedEx Cup, giving the lucrative series continuity for another decade and allowing some flexibility as the tour explores reshaping its season. Terms of the new deal were not disclosed yesterday, though PGA Tour Commissioner Jay Monahan said he expects the payout to "increase significantly" from its \$35 million bonus pool and \$10 million prize for the winner. It keeps the same name of the FedEx Cup for the first 21 years of the competition.

"I think it's critical, and it's a historic day," Monahan said. The FedEx Cup began in 2007 as a way to give the PGA Tour a definitive close to its season once the four major championships ended in August. Tiger Woods won the first edition of the FedEx Cup and remains the only two-time winner. Rory McIlroy won it last year. Before the FedEx Cup came along, the tour season began in January and ended in late October or early November. The FedEx Cup brought massive restructuring with a points system for players to qualify for four playoff events that culminated with the Tour Championship and the FedEx Cup champion.

The tour now is looking to tighten the schedule even more so that the FedEx Cup ends before the start of the NFL season. That could involve moving The Players Championship back to March (instead of this week), and cooperation from the PGA of America to consider moving the PGA Championship to the spring. "For now, we're just announcing the extension through 2027," Monahan said. "As we went

through this process, we've identified a number of ways for us to continue to enhance the magnitude and consequence of the FedEx Cup, and ... that's complicated.

There's still some other moving parts that we need to get to before we'll be able to announce any additional changes." Monahan said the "foreseeable future" is the current schedule that starts in October (three weeks after the Tour Championship) and ends in late September. He said the tour has not made any "firm decisions" on change. "I think FedEx has a great deal of confidence that wherever we end up with our schedule on a long-term basis and however we create the FedEx Cup season and the playoffs, all of that will be done in a way that's going to be in the best interest of the Cup and our players," Monahan said. Patrick Fitzgerald, the senior vice president of integrated marketing for FedEx, said the company based in Memphis, Tennessee, only wants the FedEx Cup to end at a point of "maximum excitement for the tour."

"I don't know what the best answer will be yet, and that's why we are so fortunate that we have a close, collaborative working relationship with the tour, and they have a very clear view of some potential things that could change and how that would affect things," he said. "So I'm confident that if the schedule changes, it will be in the best interest of golf and of the FedEx Cup." The extension through 2027 goes well beyond the tour's television contracts with NBC, CBS and Golf Channel, which expire in 2021. The tour signed its latest network deal in 2011 when Tiger Woods was recovering from leg injuries and the breakdown of his personal life. —AP

## BONINO INCIDENT PUTS FOCUS ON EMBELLISHMENT IN HOCKEY

**PITTSBURGH:** With one head-snap motion, Nick Bonino of the Pittsburgh Penguins reminded everyone about hockey's dirty little secret of embellishment. Not the same kind of player flopping that occurs in, say, the NBA, and it's certainly not done at the same volume seen in soccer, where diving is used effectively at the highest levels even as it is ridiculed and (occasionally) penalized. In hockey, exaggerating a potential penalty to get a call against the opponent has long been part of the game - especially in the Stanley Cup playoffs, when everyone's looking for an edge - and embellishment is simply reality even though the NHL has taken steps to stop it for more than a generation.

Bonino sold a high-sticking penalty against Washington's TJ Oshie last week when replays showed the Pittsburgh forward was never hit in the face late in Game 4. The Penguins got a power play, making it easier to hang on for a win. Canadian TV pundit Don Cherry ripped Bonino for being "phony," retired defenseman Mike Commodore predicted he won't draw a penalty the rest of the playoffs and forward-turned-analyst Mike Johnson wished there was a way to suspend a player for deliberately and clearly fooling the referees.

"It's a tough job to call those, but I think there's times that everyone steps over the line and it's not called," Nashville Predators defenseman Ryan Ellis said. "It's in the game, and it happens." Embellishment runs counter to the principles of hockey that prize toughness and playing through pain. Faking it simply seems way out of place. But in the modern NHL where hooking, holding and other

obstruction fouls are called tighter and power plays are so important, drawing penalties is a skill that is worth its weight in goals, points in the standings, wins and possibly even money on the next contract.

"You always get guys saying they'll do anything to win this time of year," veteran Capitals defenseman Brooks Orpik said. "If that's what you feel is necessary, then I guess that's what you do. I think a majority of guys in the league aren't comfortable doing that." Game officials can call embellishment minors, of course, but the league also watches for them and a panel votes weekly on possible infractions, with repeat offenders announced publicly.

Since the NHL added fines and the public shaming for embellishment before the 2014-15 season, director of hockey operations Colin Campbell said, incidents that get reviewed by the league office are down sharply, from 35-40 incidents per week in 2014-15 to just 20-25 this season. Plays like Bonino's bring fresh headlines, but Campbell said he feels embellishment is no longer rampant after saying in June 2014 it was "out of control." Four embellishment penalties have been called on the ice through Sunday in these playoffs after 18 during the regular season according to Scouting the Refs, a website that tracks NHL officials (the NHL does not release the statistic).

Predators defenseman PK Subban was fined twice along with eight other players once in 2014-15 and Toronto Maple Leafs center Nazem Kadri was fined twice last season as 11 others were publicly announced as embellishers. —AP



**PITTSBURGH:** Nick Bonino #13 of the Pittsburgh Penguins faces off against Nicklas Backstrom #19 of the Washington Capitals in Game Six of the Eastern Conference Second Round during the 2017 NHL Stanley Cup Playoffs at PPG PAINTS Arena on May 8, 2017. — AFP



**PITTSBURGH:** Andre Burakovsky #65 of the Washington Capitals scores past goaltended Marc-Andre Fleury #29 of the Pittsburgh Penguins and Ron Hainsey #65 in Game Six of the Eastern Conference Second Round during the 2017 NHL Stanley Cup Playoffs on May 8, 2017. — AFP

### NHL

## CAPITALS THRASH PENGUINS; BURAKOVSKY AT THE DOUBLE

**PITTSBURGH:** Andre Burakovsky scored twice as the Washington Capitals thrashed the Pittsburgh Penguins 5-2 to level their Eastern Conference semi-final series on Monday. TJ Oshie opened the scoring in the first period before Burakovsky grabbed his first of the night in the second period to give the Caps a deserved 2-0 lead at Pittsburgh's PPG Paints Arena. Nicklas Backstrom, John Carlson and Burakovsky all struck in quick succession to fire Washington into a commanding 5-0 lead in the third period to all but guarantee victory. Two late goals from Jake Guentzel and Evgeni Malkin were mere consolation for the Penguins, who at one stage had led the best-of-seven series 3-1. "Since Game 3, we've had a calmness about what we're doing. We're having fun now," said Capitals coach Barry Trotz.

The series will now be settled in a decisive Game 7 in Washington today. Penguins coach Mike Sullivan offered no excuses after the defending champions fluffed another chance to wrap up the series. "It's frustrating," Sullivan said. "You've got an opportunity to win a game like this and win a series at home. To a man, we weren't good enough." The Capitals attacking dominance was backed by a solid display in goal by Braden Holtby who made 16 saves. Penguins goalie Marc-Andre Fleury was given a torrid time, blocking 21 of 26 shots. Pittsburgh struggled to generate any early fluency and their first shot on goal didn't arrive until 12:17 of the first period, a long clear by Brian Dumoulin.

Washington opened the scoring on the same power play, when Backstrom released Evgeny Kuznetsov who set up Oshie for a 1-0 lead. Fleury kept Pittsburgh in touch with several key saves, including a superb block from Alex Ovechkin in the left circle. The Penguins were also given a scare when Sidney Crosby, in only his second game back from a concussion, suffered a bloody nose from a team-mate's stick. The Canadian star was also sent crashing into the boards during a Penguins power play. Washington's early pressure was rewarded when Burakovsky doubled the lead at 6:36 of the second after forcing a turnover by Ron Hainsey.

The game was settled with a flurry of scoring in the third, with Backstrom beating Fleury for 3-0 before Carlson added a power-play goal to make it 4-0 at 11:17 of the third. Burakovsky then rifled a shot past Fleury at 12:29 for 5-0. Caps goalscorer Oshie believes momentum is now firmly with Washington heading into the decider. "It gives us a little bit more confidence," Oshie said. "We have to be pretty mature about this, though. We know it's not going to be the exact same story. They're not just going to go away. They're Stanley Cup champions for a reason. We'll regroup. We're going to enjoy this. It was a fun one tonight for us, but we definitely have to regroup and get refocused on the start for Game 7." —AFP

### CRICKET

## PROTEAS' RABADA SHOULDERS ENOUGH TO CARRY THE BURDEN

**NEW DELHI:** Kagiso Rabada's shoulders are big enough to carry the burden of being a pace spearhead but he is also looking to strike a balance between bowling flat out and staying the course, the South African speedster said. Fast bowlers are cricket's most vulnerable players and South Africans are already fretting over the workload of a 21-year-old who is tipped to lead the Proteas attack for years to come, at least once Dale Steyn heads off into the sunset.

While his pace-bowling Delhi team mate Pat Cummins has spent much of the five years since his sensational test debut wrapped up in cotton wool by a fearful Cricket Australia, Rabada has been playing pretty consistently since his international bow. Still, Rabada, who first represented his country in 2014 and turns 22 later this month, reckons his young body has coped reasonably well with the considerable rigours of playing cricket in all three formats. "I think the older I get, the hard it will get, definitely," he said in an interview. "But I'm not there yet. So right now it feels nice, I feel like I can do that."

With the ball in his hand, Rabada is always looking for wickets but a parallel search is also on to find ways to ensure he does not burn out. "Have I found the balance?" he shrugs. "I don't know. That's an ongoing process ... There are also some precautions you take to avoid certain mishaps. "I think I've been training nicely, doing what I need to do. I'm continuously finding that balance - how much to bowl, how much to rest and how much to train." Rabada announced his arrival as an emerging talent on the world stage in 2015 by claiming a record six for 16, including a hat-trick, in his one-day debut against Bangladesh.

His 71 wickets from 17 tests further attest to his potential as a future leader of the Proteas attack but at the moment the strapping right-arter has a more rudimentary approach to his role in the national team. "My role in the South Africa team is to try and get wickets, to field well and to try and score some runs down the order," he added. "I don't see myself as a leader, no one's told me that." Rabada played six matches for Delhi Daredevils in the ongoing 2017 Indian Premier League before returning home and he said the Twenty20 tournament was "a huge network of ideas."

He cited interactions with Cummins and team "chief mentor" Rahul Dravid, the India test batting great, to illustrate his point. "Myself and Pat,

we are basically the same age and bowl the same thing with very similar actions. We talk about different things about bowling, networking once again," he said. "Speaking to someone like Rahul Dravid, his batting experience and what he found hard... what he finds hard, a lot of batsmen would find hard too," Rabada added. "So you get insight, as a bowler, from a bowler and a batter." Rabada feels the IPL has had a profound impact on Indian cricket, bringing financial stability to the game and broadening the local talent pool. Twenty20 cricket's constant innovations have caught the fancy of the young fans in South Africa and the country has launched the T20 Global Destination League scheduled for later this year. Rabada, one of its marquee players, hopes it will have an impact in South Africa comparable to that the IPL has had in India. — Reuters



**NEW DELHI:** Delhi Daredevils bowler Kagiso Rabada delivers a ball during the 2017 Indian Premier League (IPL) Twenty20 cricket match between Delhi Daredevils and Sunrisers Hyderabad at The Feroz Shah Kotla Cricket Stadium in New Delhi. — AFP



# EGYPT'S MAGIC GROUP SOCCER TOURNAMENT

‘NO TO DRUGS... NO TO ADDICTION’

**KUWAIT:** ‘No to drugs... no to addiction, youth are the true wealth’ is the title of Egyptians Magic Group soccer tournament, which was launched at the Boulevard playgrounds on Thursday and Friday with the participation of 16 teams.

The tournament is characterized with its good organization, with very strict rules to ensure the safety of players and make sure it comes out very well. The quarter finals will take place on Thursday as eight teams qualified.

Al-Ahli Al-Masri will play Dark Hourse stars will play Boulevard, Egypt's Brazil will play the Republic and Alexandria Union will play BuTraika Lovers. One hundred and seven 107 goals were scored at the groups stage, as the strongest attack

came from Egypt's Brazil with 17 goals, while it also has the strongest defense. The highest score was by Abu Traika Lovers against Al-Ahliam (8-0). The highest scoring group is the fourth with 34 and the least is the third group with 22 goals.

The general organizer of the tournament Sarah Shalabi said she is happy with participating teams compliance with the rules. The tournament aims at getting the youth acquainted with each other and promote the tournament's title.



## BOUCHARD BEATS FALLEN IDOL SHARAPOVA IN MADRID

**MADRID:** Eugenie Bouchard claimed she had the support of the tennis world after matching her fighting talk with some thrilling tennis to shock Maria Sharapova 7-5, 2-6, 6-4 in the second round of the Madrid Open on Monday. Bouchard called Sharapova “a cheater” last week and was also critical of the Russian's welcome back to the sport after a 15-month doping ban with a series of wildcards for big events.

The world number 60 admitted she was extra motivated to face her former idol and it showed with signs of the form she has lost over the past few years since reaching the Wimbledon final in 2014 in a bruising near three-hour contest. “I was actually quite inspired before the match because I had a lot of players coming up to me privately wishing me good luck,” said Bouchard. “Players I don't normally speak to, getting a lot of texts from people in the tennis world that were just rooting for me. “I wanted to do it for myself, but also all these people. I really felt support. “It showed me that most people have my opinion, and they were just maybe scared to speak out.”

### TOPSY-TURVY

Sharapova claimed to have not been distracted by media circus surrounding the match and that her disappointment comes from losing, not who she lost to. “I think I would be worried about myself if I sat here and said I'm pretty happy with losing a tennis match, no matter who I face, no matter what round it is, whether it's the first round or final of a Grand Slam. “I'm a big competitor. What you work for so many hours every single day is to be on the winning end of matches. “Today was just not that day. Of course, I'm disappointed. That's what's going to make me a better player. That's what's going to win me more tournaments and

more Grand Slams.”

Bouchard battled back from 4-2 down to claim a topsy-turvy first set and she edged a marathon 11th game before serving it out for just her second set in five meetings with Sharapova. However, adversity brought out the best in the five-time Grand Slam champion as Sharapova found the precision to match her power in the second set, reeling off four straight game from 2-2 to level at one set all. Both players struggled to hold serve in the deciding set as a total of 14 break points were squandered.

However, Bouchard held her nerve when serving for the match at 5-4 as she saw off two break points and an unfortunate let cord on her first match point. The Canadian jumped for joy after delivering the final blow before the two exchanged a very frosty handshake at the net. Bouchard will face top seed Angelique Kerber, who fought back from 5-3 down in the deciding set to overcome Katerina Siniakova 6-2, 1-6, 7-5 earlier on Monday, in the third round. Kerber has had an inconsistent season and her fragile form was on show in the course of the first two sets. The German romped through the opening set in 27 minutes but then had to save six break points for her only game in the second. Siniakova served for the match at 5-4 in the deciding set, but Kerber should impressive fight to win the last four games. World number three Karolina Pliskova was dumped out 6-3, 6-3 by Latvia's Anastasija Sevastova. In the men's Madrid Masters there were comfortable wins for Thomas Berdych, Grigor Dimitrov and Nick Kyrgios. However, 15th seed Gael Monfils bowed out in a wild match against French compatriot Gilles Simon 0-6, 6-0, 7-6 (7/0). Andy Murray begins his quest for a third title in Madrid on Wednesday when he faces Romanian Marius Copil.— AFP



**MADRID:** Eugenie Bouchard from Canada celebrates after defeating Maria Sharapova from Russia at the end of their Madrid Open tennis tournament match in Madrid, Spain, Monday, May 8, 2017. — AP

## OOREDOO APPOINTS RAKAN AL-HASAWI AS AMBASSADOR

**KUWAIT:** Ooredoo, the fastest network in Kuwait, proudly sponsoring Kuwaiti equestrian Rakan Al-Hasawi as its brand ambassador for the current season 2017-2018. The sponsorship comes in alignment with the company's commitment to enriching youth and supporting their passions. Al-Hasawi won a number of awards locally and regionally, such as the CHI Al-Shaqab horse hurdles competition in Qatar, in addition to the Kuwait Police Show Jumping Tournament

and the Kuwait Riding Center Tournament, in addition to the Hala Febrayer 2017 which was sponsored by Ooredoo Kuwait recently, among other competitions.

In a statement regarding this, Ooredoo Kuwait's Corporate Communications Senior Director Mijbil Alayoub said, “We have great pride in the achievement of young promising Kuwaiti show jumper Rakan Al-Hasawi. Our commitment to supporting youth is deep-rooted within our core values in Ooredoo

Kuwait. We hope to see more success in the future, and we look forward to bigger achievements on an international scale.” 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.



### RUGBY

## WHO WILL ‘LADY LUCK’ FAVOR AT THE WORLD CUP DRAW?

**TOKYO:** Rugby's leading nations will be hoping for a big slice of luck at today's 2019 World Cup draw, where seedings stacked with dangerous teams could throw up more than one ‘Pool of Death’. More than two years before the tournament in Japan, the draw ceremony in historic Kyoto could go a long way to deciding who will lift the trophy in Yokohama on November 2, 2019. England fell victim to a nightmare scenario at the last World Cup, where the hosts failed to reach the knock-out stages after being drawn against Wales, Australia, Fiji and Uruguay.

This time around, for the tournament's first edition in Asia, New Zealand, England, Australia and Ireland make up the top seeds to be divided among the four pools of five. The second band of seeds is Scotland, Wales, South Africa and France, while the third contains dangerous floaters in Argentina, the 2015 semi-finalists, Georgia, Italy and hosts Japan. Another eight teams from Oceania, Europe, the Americas and Africa will be added after qualifying, with 10th-

ranked Fiji, Tonga and Samoa among the leading contenders.

It raises the possibility of New Zealand, the two-time defending champions, South Africa, Argentina and Samoa all landing in the same pool, along with a host of other treacherous combinations. A strong showing by Japan is considered crucial for attendances and atmosphere as the World Cup arrives, for the first time, in a country where rugby isn't a mainstream sport. But the Brave Blossoms, who stunned South Africa at the last World Cup, are bullish, with winger Akihito Yamada saying he hoped to draw England and their ex-Japan coach Eddie Jones.

### ‘FIRST GAME WILL BE KEY’

“I'd like to get Eddie's team, England. I want him to see Japan's new style of rugby after four years,” insisted Yamada. Captain Shota Horie said: “All the teams will be strong so I don't have any real preferred opposition. The first

game will be key so we will prepare for that as if our lives depend on it.” Steve Hansen's New Zealand are striving to complete a hat-trick of World Cup victories, while England, up to second in the rankings under Jones, are dreaming of ending the All Blacks' dominance.

South Africa, Australia, Wales and France are likely to be revamped and revitalized by 2019, while Argentina and Japan will look to build on their successes of 2015. Rugby is striving to make inroads into Asia, including China, where World Rugby announced a \$100 million investment from Alisports, an offshoot of e-commerce giant Alibaba, last year. Participation in Asia has almost doubled since 2009 to more than 500,000 players, according to the governing body, which hopes to have one million new players in the region by 2019. The World Cup will be played in 12 stadiums across Japan, with 75 percent of the population living within an hour's drive from a match venue, organizers say.— AFP

## RECENT ROUT BOOSTS ATLETICO MADRID HOPES

MADRID: It was a match more than two years ago that is keeping Atletico Madrid hopeful of a comeback against Real Madrid in the Champions League semifinals. Atletico needs to overturn a 3-0 loss from the first leg today, but it wasn't too long ago that fans at the Vicente Calderon Stadium witnessed the type of feat that can put Atletico in the final. It was on a Saturday afternoon in February 2015 that Atletico had one of its greatest victories over Madrid, a 4-0 rout in the Spanish league. That was Atletico's only win over Madrid by a difference of three goals in the last four decades, but it's what has been giving many fans and players some hope ahead of the team's difficult task at the Calderon.

"We already beat them by four goals in the Calderon, with Cristiano (Ronaldo) playing and all," Atletico midfielder Jorge "Koke" Resurreccion said after the first leg. "You never know what's going to happen in soccer, just ask Paris Saint-Germain. We are going to keep fighting." The Spanish teams remain very similar to what they looked like in that encounter in 2015. At the time, Atletico was already touted as the third force in Spanish soccer under coach Diego Simeone, and three of the goals scored on that cold day in the Spanish capital came from players still on the team - Tiago Cardoso, Saul Niguez and Antoine Griezman.

The other goal was scored by Mario Mandzukic, who now plays for Juventus. A repeat of that performance would be just what Atletico needs this time. It was in control from the start and scored early goals to take a 2-0 lead by the 17th minute, then added the third not long after halftime and closed the scoring a few minutes from the end. A 3-0 win by Atletico today would send the game into extra time and, possibly, a penalty shootout.

Madrid had nine starters in 2015 who are still on the current team, including Toni

Kroos, Gareth Bale, Karim Benzema and Ronaldo, who scored a hat trick in the first leg last week to give his team a commanding advantage going into today's game. "It's going to be very difficult, but this is soccer," Simeone said. "Unexpected things can happen and we will fight until the last drop of hope. We will try to do something impossible, but we are Atletico Madrid and we just might be able to do it." Atletico is trying to avoid losing to Madrid for the fourth straight season in the Champions League. It had heart-breaking losses in the finals in 2014 and 2016, and also was eliminated in the 2015 quarterfinals.

"It's very difficult to overturn this result but we will keep believing until the end because that's our mentality and we will be playing with our fans behind us," Atletico defender Stefan Savic said. Regardless of the outcome, it should be an emotional game for the home crowd at the Calderon. Atletico will be playing its last European game at the stadium before moving into a new venue next season. Atletico has won 29 of its last 35 European games at home, with only two losses. It hasn't lost in 10 straight home games in European competitions. "The fans have always been with us in the most difficult moments and it's not going to be any different this time," Niguez said. "We have to give everything we have for them." — AP

**Live** Matches on TV (Local Timings)

UEFA CHAMPIONS LEAGUE  
Atletico de Madrid v Real Madrid 21:45  
beIN SPORTS HD 1

ENGLISH PREMIER LEAGUE  
Southampton v Arsenal 21:45  
beIN SPORTS HD 2



MADRID: Real Madrid's Nacho Fernandez (left) and Sergio Ramos (right) fall in front of Isco during a training session in Madrid yesterday. Real Madrid will play against Atletico Madrid today in a Champions League semifinal, 2nd leg soccer match. — AP

## NETHERLANDS APPOINTS DICK ADVOCAT AS COACH

THE HAGUE: Dick Advocaat was appointed Netherlands coach yesterday with the tough task of leading the struggling team to next year's World Cup in Russia. With the Dutch national team languishing in fourth place in Group A, the Royal Dutch Football Association appointed Advocaat as coach and Ruud Gullit as his assistant for the remainder of the qualifying campaign. If they manage to get the team to Russia, they will stay in charge for the tournament, federation technical director Hans van Breukelen said. Advocaat was not present at a news conference to announce his appointment; he will remain with his current club, Fenerbahce, until the end of the Turkish league season.

The 69-year-old Advocaat, who was appointed for his third stint in charge of the national team, won praise in 2015 for saving Sunderland from relegation in the Premier League and will need a similar escape to avoid the Netherlands missing its second straight major tournament after last year's European Championship in France. The Netherlands is six points behind Group A leader France. Only the group winner is

guaranteed a place at the World Cup. The vastly experienced Advocaat has previously coached Russia, Belgium and Serbia, as well as club teams including PSV Eindhoven, Glasgow Rangers, Zenit St Petersburg and Sunderland. Gullit, a former Chelsea coach, captained the Netherlands to its only major tournament success, the 1988 European Championship.

Advocaat's predecessor, Danny Blind, was fired in March after the Dutch lost to Bulgaria in a 2018 World Cup qualifier. Van Breukelen said the hunt for a replacement focused on finding somebody "who can increase discipline in the (players') group and bring back the joy to our play." Joy has been in short supply for the three-time World Cup runner-up since the team's form went into free fall after reaching the semifinals of the World Cup in Brazil. Van Breukelen conceded that the search for a new coach was tough, with some possible candidates unavailable or unwilling. Everton coach Ronald Koeman and former Ajax coach Frank de Boer were both identified as possible successors shortly after Blind was fired. — AP

## PALACE-HULL GAME BIGGER THAN CUP FINAL: ALLARDYCE

LONDON: Crystal Palace's Premier League game against Hull City on Sunday is massive and "bigger than a cup final" as both teams fight to avoid the drop, manager Sam Allardyce has said. An impressive run in April saw Palace climb to 12th in the table but three consecutive defeats, including last Saturday's 5-0 loss to Manchester City has left them at 16th, four points above 18th-placed Hull, with two games left to play. A draw at home against Hull will ensure safety for Palace but a loss will leave their fate hanging till the last day of the season, when they travel to fifth-placed Manchester United. "The game is bigger than a cup final," Allardyce told British media. "Because at stake is everyone's status in the Premier League."

"You are part of one of the biggest sporting brands in the world. It keeps the club buoyant and the south London area active and live." "So it is a massive game for us all, and our players have to hold their nerve and produce a massive performance."

Allardyce said that his players' mental strength is key to getting past the final two games of the season. "Put your best game in your mind for the rest of the week and say to yourself on a daily basis, 'that is what I am going to produce,'" Allardyce added. "Mindful rehearsal is very important. If the players get positive thinking right from the start of the week, it will help them with a nervy state of affairs."

West Ham United left Tottenham Hotspur's title hopes in tatters with a shock 1-0 win last week and they have now set their sights on derailing Liverpool's top-four bid, defender Jose Fonte said. West Ham are currently 12th but have the same number of points (42) as both Southampton (10th) and Bournemouth (11th), though Southampton have played two games less. West Ham did the double over Liverpool last season and drew 2-2 at Anfield in December, and Fonte said they were going all out to continue their run against the Merseyside club. — Agencies



MANAMA: A member of staff walks towards the building hosting the AFC, Asian Football Confederation Congress 2017, in Manama. The specter of fresh corruption scandals hangs over the annual gathering of world soccer leaders, two years after the FIFA Congress was shaken by the exposure of far-reaching fraud. — AP

## FIFA'S UPHILL STRUGGLE TO REGAIN TRUST, SPONSORS

MANAMA: Even after a year under new leadership, FIFA is still pleading with the world: Trust us. The message is proving as hard to sell as sponsorship of the World Cup. It's no wonder. Gianni Infantino arrives at his second congress as FIFA president with his "crisis is over" declaration at last year's gathering of soccer's 211 nations looking remarkably outlandish. Criminal investigations are still exposing shady transactions. The suitability of members of the ruling council remains in doubt. Reforms intended to curb the powers of the president and restore FIFA's credibility are being eroded.

Against this backdrop, FIFA has been trying to persuade commercial backers to sign up after so many were scared off by the corruption that plagued the Sepp Blatter era. FIFA's leadership was able to start its congress week in Bahrain by trumpeting the arrival of Qatar Airways to fill the airline sponsorship category that has been vacant for more than two years. But the deal was anticipated given it is the state-owned carrier of the 2022 World Cup hosts. A true test of the confidence of FIFA's new hierarchy will come when major international corporations sign up that are not from China, Russia or Qatar - the source of all of FIFA's new World Cup deals in recent years. New sponsors in traditional strongholds like Japan and the United States have yet to convince shareholders they should partner with a scandal-tainted organization. Many were scared off in 2015 when FIFA's reputation was shredded by widespread bribery being exposed after high-ranking executives were arrested in Zurich hotel raids. "We hope that more (sponsors) will come before the end of the year," FIFA secretary general Fatma Samoura said. "That was a strong signal from Qatar Airways to recognize the new leadership of FIFA is working toward restoring the image of FIFA and that there is climate of trust that is really here to push for more partnerships." Trust, according to Samoura, also comes through a new generation of officials being elected to the FIFA Council.

"It's a strong demonstration that gender empowerment," Samoura said, pointing to Mahfuza Akhter of Bangladesh being elected on Tuesday as Asia's female representative at FIFA. It was a surprise result. Moya Dodd, an outspoken critic of corruption and prominent champion of women's football, lost to Akhter, who couldn't name the Women's World Cup holder in a post-election interview. American soccer stars Alex Morgan and Carli Lloyd were among those to express surprise at the setback for Dodd, an Australian lawyer who is still on the Asian Football Confederation executive committee.

"I'm sure she will land on her feet somehow in football," said Samoura, who was hired last year as FIFA's first female secretary general. "She has football in her heart and I'm sure that FIFA or another confederation or her home federation will continue to make good use of her skills." Those skills were used by a reform committee in 2015 that helped to reshape FIFA following the US Department of Justice indictments of soccer officials. The progress of some reforms, however, appears to have stalled - despite Infantino helping to draft them in the FIFA-appointed advisory panel while he was a presidential candidate.

Power should have drained from the presidency to the CEO-like secretary general, but Infantino has retained a Blatter-like grip on executive authority. A new FIFA Bureau that was not on the reform program now has given more authority to Infantino and the six regional confederation leaders, whose decisions need not be ratified by a 37-strong council that replaced the discredited executive committee. "That can be the appearance," CONCACAF President Victor Montagliani said, "but I think the collaborations at the council level and the discussions are quite healthy. The bureau is there to act in between when the council meets. If there are decisions that are needed on a timely basis for operational issues they have to be made."

The most recent addition to the bureau and council is Ahmad Ahmad, who ended Issa Hayatou's 29-year grip on power in Africa in March. But the FIFA vice president has unwelcome links to the tainted old regime. Email correspondence between Ahmad and an aide to disgraced former FIFA presidential candidate Mohamed bin Hammam of Qatar was published by British newspaper The Sunday Times in 2014. The emails from 2010 detailed Ahmad reminding Bin Hammam that he promised money to help Ahmad's re-election campaign to lead the Madagascar federation.

The Bin Hammam aide who Ahmad was



The 24th Boeing 787 airplane purchased by Qatar Airways is photographed, during a delivery ceremony in Everett, Wash. FIFA has signed up Qatar Airways as a sponsor through 2022 when the World Cup is staged in the Gulf nation. — AP

emailing was banned for life by the FIFA ethics committee in January for involvement in unethical payments made to soccer officials. "If it's your idea, take it, give it," Ahmad responded vaguely when asked about the payments today. "Ask him. Don't ask me." FIFA has lost two officials recently following fresh American revelations about wrongdoing. FIFA audit committee member Richard Lai, an American citizen from Guam, pleaded guilty to wire fraud conspiracy charges related to taking around \$1 million in bribes including at least \$850,000 from Kuwaiti officials. The cash was to buy influence and help recruit other Asian soccer officials prepared to take bribes, Lai said in court in New York.

Kuwaiti powerbroker Sheikh Ahmad Al Fahad Al Sabah was implicated in the investigation and, despite maintaining his innocence, he quit the election to regain his seat on the FIFA Council this week. Lai is under a formal FIFA

ethics investigation, and the claims against Sheikh Ahmad will also be scrutinized. But the fate of the independent ethics officials who have convicted corrupt FIFA officials is also uncertain. There has been speculation that Hans-Joachim Eckert, the ethics judge who brought down Blatter, could be replaced along with ethics investigator Cornel Borbely.

They must seek re-election at Thursday's congress but FIFA has repeatedly declined to provide lists of candidates to lead its judicial bodies. Infantino is suspected of a personal motive to install new ethics leadership, although he hasn't called for Eckert and Borbely to go. The former UEFA general secretary was frustrated that he faced an ethics investigation last year for his use of private jets early in his presidency. The case cast doubt over the "new era" in FIFA proclaimed last year by Infantino. The old FIFA ways continue to seem hard to shake off. — AP

## WENGER DETERMINED TO RETAIN FULL CONTROL

LONDON: Arsene Wenger has ruled out working alongside a director of football if he stays at Arsenal, saying he must have full control of the Premier League club. The Frenchman's hardline stance puts him on a potential collision course with members of the Arsenal hierarchy who reportedly want to bring in a director of football this summer to work with Wenger. Wenger has called the shots at the north London club since he joined in 1996 and said he had no interest in having his authority diminished, even as his future remains mired in uncertainty and with the fans restless. "I'm the manager of Arsenal Football Club and as long as I'm manager of Arsenal Football Club, I will decide what happens on the technical front, that's it," Wenger, 67, said on the eve of today's league match at Southampton. "I don't

know what director of football means. Is it somebody who stands in the road and directs play right and left? I don't understand and I never did understand what it means."

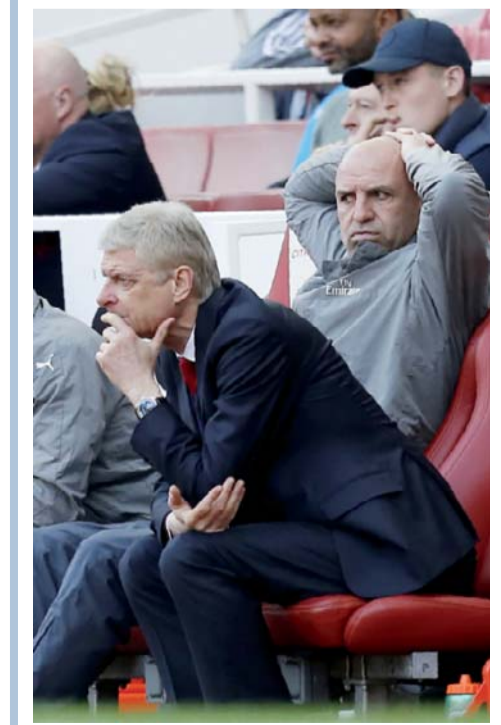
Wenger previously said that he had made up his mind about his future and would announce it in March or April, but no announcement was forthcoming. His Arsenal contract expires at the end of this season and while a fresh deal is reportedly on the table, some Arsenal fans have called for his head after a disappointing run that saw them humiliated in the Champions League to Bayern Munich and fall out of the Premier League top four. Asked if he would now reveal his decision over whether to sign the contract, he replied simply: "No."

### WENGER SURPRISED

Arsenal are in danger of failing to qualify for the Champions League for the first time in Wenger's long reign, even though Sunday's 2-0 win over Manchester United moved them to within six points of fourth-placed Manchester City with a game in hand. While the Premier League and Europe has been a source of frustration, Arsenal will contest their third FA Cup final in four seasons later this month, while Sunday's success saw Wenger at last get the better of Jose Mourinho at the 13th attempt.

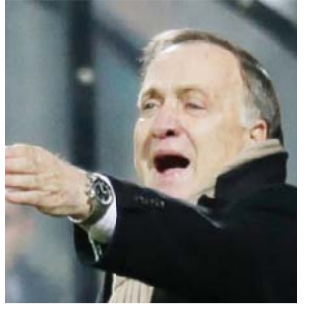
"It gives us still a chance to go into the top four," said Wenger. Former United defender Phil Neville criticised the cordial way players from both sides were seen joking and hugging each other before kick-off, a far cry from the frosty atmosphere that pervaded his own encounters with the Gunners. "I think I understand that the pundits are a bit surprised by that because 10 or 15 years ago that did not exist," Wenger said.

"But it is an overall, international thing now. You can watch Real Madrid against Barcelona - it's the same because people play together, come from the same country." I was surprised as well I must say, but I must confess as well that it doesn't stop the players to focus and concentrate after on the game." Arsenal, beaten 4-0 by Southampton in last season's corresponding fixture at St Mary's, travel to the south coast with a fitness doubt over Laurent Koscielny after the defender suffered a calf injury against United. — AP



LONDON: Arsenal's French manager Arsene Wenger (left) and his assistant Steve Bould watch from their seats during the English Premier League football match between Arsenal and Manchester United on May 7, 2017. — AFP

## Sports

Curry's 30 lead  
Warriors rout  
of Jazz 121-95Netherlands picks  
Dick Advocaat as  
national coach

WEDNESDAY, MAY 10, 2017

BOUCHARD BEATS FALLEN IDOL SHARAPOVA IN MADRID

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TURIN: Juventus' defender from Brazil Alex Sandro (up) heads the ball during the UEFA Champions League semi final second leg football match Juventus vs Monaco yesterday at the Juventus stadium. —AP

## ALVES SENDS RUTHLESS JUVE INTO FINAL

TURIN: A stunning Dani Alves volley helped Juventus stroll into their second Champions League final in three years yesterday as a 2-1 win on the night completed a 4-1 aggregate victory over over-classed Monaco. Brazilian wing-back Alves's 25-yard strike followed Mario Mandzukic's opener for the treble-chasing Italian champions as any semblance of a contest was snuffed out by half-time. Teenage superstar Kylian Mbappe pulled a goal back for the principality club after the break, his sixth of the competition.

But there was never any realistic prospect of them threatening to overturn a 2-0 deficit from last week's first leg. It will be the ninth time Juventus, runners-up in 2015, had contested the final of Europe's elite club competition. And on this evidence, Massimiliano Allegri's sinewy, battle-hardened squad stand a good chance of adding to the club's meagre return of two triumphs when they meet either Atletico Madrid or Real Madrid in Cardiff on June 3.

Allegri made only one change from last week's first leg line-up but was soon forced to restore it as Germany midfielder Sami Khedira, returning from suspension, lasted only 10 minutes before limping off to make way for Claudio Marchisio. For Monaco, the loss of Nabil Dirar to injury in the warm-up meant a hasty return for Benjamin Mendy as coach Leonardo Jardim opted to match Juve's 3-5-2 set-up. The results were initially encouraging and Mbappe squeezed a fifth-minute shot past Gianluigi Buffon from a tight angle and held his head in his hands as it came back off the inside of the post, although the offside flag had come up.

## Subasic kept busy

The home supporters had to wait quarter of an hour to see their side emerge meaningfully from their own half. But they

were soon being treated to some slick entertainment that at times left the visitors looking like spectators. Paulo Dybala made amends for slicing Gonzalo Higuain's knockdown wide from the edge of the area by deftly playing his fellow Argentinian into a one-on-one with Monaco goalkeeper Danijel Subasic. It was the kind of chance the striker usually gobbles up but this one was fluffed with a semi-shanked attempt to dink the ball over the goalkeeper. Mandzukic had a similar chance but saw his toe-poked effort saved by Subasic before Andrea Raggi's last-ditch block denied Dybala.

But a goal was coming and it duly arrived 12 minutes before the break after a move that began with a Buffon throw out. Dybala supplied Alves on the right and his deep cross picked out Mandzukic advancing on the back post. Again Subasic saved at close range but the rebound fell kindly for the Croatian striker to

thump the loose ball into the roof of the net. The deflated body language of Monaco's young side told its own story and any doubt about the outcome disappeared a minute before the interval. Subasic did well again to keep out Dybala's effort with another close-range stop and he got a firm fist to the resulting corner.

But the clearance fell invitingly for Alves 25 yards out and the Brazilian's volley was timed sweetly enough to beat the Monaco goalkeeper to his left by sheer pace. Comprehensively outplayed, Monaco restored a bit of pride when Mbappe pulled a goal back midway through the second period. Portugal midfielder Joao Moutinho was the architect, working his way into the left side of the box. His cross was clipped low from the byline and Mbappe showed quick feet to bundle it over the line in a manner reminiscent of a young Thierry Henry, also once a Monaco prodigy — AFP

## MIDDLESBROUGH RELEGATED AS CHELSEA CLOSE IN ON EPL TITLE



LONDON: Chelsea manager Antonio Conte said his side were "another little step" from the Premier League title after they crushed Middlesbrough 3-0 to move to within touching distance of glory. Tottenham Hotspur's surprise defeat at West Ham United last week handed Chelsea the initiative and they can now seal a second title triumph in three years if they win at West Bromwich Albion on Friday. "We're very close. We must be honest. But we need to do another little step and win another game," Conte told reporters after Monday's match, which condemned Middlesbrough to relegation. "For sure now I'm a bit relaxed. This step was big for us, a big win. "Now we need to do another step. We have the possibility to do this on Friday against West Brom.

"For sure it won't be easy, because West Brom is a really good team, a physical team, and we must pay great attention." We are very close, but we need another step to become champions of the Premier League, which would be a fantastic achievement for us." While victory at West Brom will deliver the title, Chelsea also have home games against Watford and Sunderland in which to snare the three points they need to make it across the finish line. Cesc Fabregas was Chelsea's match-winner, inventively creating goals for Diego Costa and Nemanja Matic either side of half-time at a festive Stamford Bridge.

Marcos Alonso also found the net in the first half. Fabregas began the season on the bench after new signing N'Golo Kante took his place, but he has played an increasingly prominent role in recent weeks. "Cesc is one of the best examples of our season,"

Conte said. "Because in this season, Cesc at the start didn't play a lot. And then through hard work, he improved a lot. And then he's playing in every game. "This development of Cesc is our development, because we started the season with a lot of problems. But through hard work, together we found the right way. "Cesc is showing (himself) to be a fantastic player and I'm pleased for him. Because I saw in this season that he put himself in this team in every moment, if he played or didn't play. Now he's deserving this."

## Boro 'devastated'

Needing victory to stand a realistic chance of preserving their top-flight status, Boro succumbed to a defeat that sent them into the Championship alongside northeast rivals Sunderland. Conte made a point of saluting Boro's travelling fans after the game. "It's great to see a team that got relegated and to see the fans clapping the players and the players staying there to receive the applause and to clap the fans," said the Italian.

"It's important to celebrate your win, but also to have great respect and clap this type of situation. "Because I think this situation happens only in England. In Italy it's very, very difficult to see a team getting relegated and the players receive (applause)." Boro manager Steve Agnew said his dressing room was "devastated". "We've worked so hard for a number of years to get back into the Premier League and we know how tough the Premier League is," he said. "Obviously we've come up short."

Agnew, who took over in a caretaker capacity after Aitor Karanka was sacked in March, would not be drawn on whether he would like the role on a permanent basis. "I don't think it's about my situation. It's about the football club," he said. "We all know it's a Premier League football club in terms of everything about it—the supporters, the stadium, the training ground. The infrastructure is all there. "So we have to finish the season strong. We have two games to go. We need to gain more points. "And then everything moving forward will be towards getting Middlesbrough Football Club back into the Premier League as soon as possible." — AFP



LONDON: Chelsea's Cesar Azpilicueta (right) competes for the ball with Middlesbrough's Adam Foreshaw during the English Premier League soccer match between Chelsea and Middlesbrough on Monday, May 8, 2017. — AP

## INFANTINO VOWS TO FIGHT RACIST 'IDIOTS'

MANAMA: FIFA president Gianni Infantino said he intends to talk with Pescara midfielder Sulley Muntari, the victim of racist abuse in Italian football, and vowed to fight racist "idiots". Muntari was booked for complaining about racist abuse during a match at Cagliari and subsequently suspended, although that sanction was later lifted.

The Ghanaian then walked off the field in protest in the final minutes of the game. Infantino told reporters yesterday that he intended to talk with Muntari and would give him FIFA's "full solidarity". The FIFA president also said he would be discussing the issue with Italian Football Federation President Carlo Tavecchio about the issue. "Of course I will speak to Tavecchio, I will speak to Muntari as well... we will work together," Infantino, who is in Bahrain for Thursday's FIFA Congress, said. Asked what could be done about the issue, Infantino said: "Fight. Continue to fight. It's good to bring these things out when they happen. We have to work. We have to work on the people."

Infantino said the protocol, established by UEFA in Europe, with a series of stadium announcements leading up to a possible stopping of the game, should be applied. "Unfortunately idiots, there are always idiots everywhere but we have to fight them," he said. Muntari said he had complained that parts of the crowd, including a group of children, had hurled racist insults at him from the start of the game in Cagliari on April 30. The player said the referee told him to stop talking to the crowd and ended up showing him the yellow card for dissent in the 90th minute. The decision to punish Muntari has been widely criticized and the player himself has said FIFA and UEFA are not taking the issue of racism seriously.

But FIFA Secretary General Fatma Samoura rejected that charge and said the organization had the structures to deal with the problem. "I don't have to call people anytime that they have been victim of an abuse. We have a committee that is in charge of monitoring those actions. And the committee will take action," she told reporters. — Reuters



**Toyota and KFH open new leasing office**

**OIL MARKET REMAINS SHAKY DESPITE OPEC'S EFFORTS**



**SYDNEY: A pedestrian walks past a construction site of a residential development in downtown yesterday. — AFP**

**AUSTRALIA HITS BANKS WITH HIGHER TAXES**

**GOVERNMENT FORECASTS A\$29.4BN DEFICIT FOR 2017/18**

**CANBERRA:** The Australian government pledged to deliver a small budget surplus in 2020/21, slapping big banks with new taxes to end more than a decade of deficits that have threatened its prized triple-A credit rating. Flagging in the polls, the Liberal Party-led coalition conservative government, also promised to fast track major rail and road projects and delivered some sweeteners for home buyers in an overheated property market in its annual budget yesterday.

Treasurer Scott Morrison said the country's profitable banks, which have been under fire in recent months amid a series of misconduct scandals, would bear the brunt of a budget "re-set" as he abandoned so-called "zombie savings" worth some A\$13 billion. Those savings, including welfare reforms, had artificially reduced the red ink in the budget after they were blocked by opposition lawmakers in a hostile Senate where the government has a wafer-thin majority. The backflip resulted in a bigger A\$29.4 billion deficit for 2017/18 than the A\$28.7 billion forecast at the mid-year review in December. But the budget forecast a A\$7.4 billion surplus in 2020/21, an improvement on A\$1.08 billion at the mid-year review. Australia's A\$1.7 trillion economy has outperformed many of its rich world peers since the global financial crisis, but it has in more recent years struggled to manage the end of a mining investment boom that underpinned much of its wealth.

"We must live within our means and this is an honest budget," Morrison said, adding that a new six-basis point levy on big banks' liabilities, to kick in on July 1, would raise A\$6.2 billion over the next four years. Morrison described the measure, along with a A\$8.2 billion income tax increase on workers, as "basically a Senate tax" to get the budget back into balance as demanded by ratings agencies or risk losing its triple-A credit rating.

Marie Diron, associate managing director of Moody's Investors Service, said the agency assessed Australia's fiscal strength as "very high, a key support to the government's triple-A rating and stable outlook" after the budget. Diron added that the removal of the zombie measures "enhances

the transparency and predictability of budget outcomes, a credit positive." Mervyn Tang, director of Asia-Pacific sovereigns at Fitch Ratings, said the new revenue measures in the budget implied a faster reduction in the government deficit. He said Fitch would look closer at new policy measures on the economy and housing market. "factors we have identified as rating sensitivities in our previous review."

Standard & Poor's did not immediately comment on the budget. But Australian Bankers' Association Chief Executive Anna Bligh criticized the new tax, which Morrison warned banks against passing on to consumers. "Contrary to the government's claim that the tax will only be levied on banking liabilities, the reality is that it will affect the entire banking system," Bligh said in a statement. "This new tax is not a well thought out policy response to a public interest issue, it is a political tax grab to cover a budget black hole."

**Housing affordability**

With the latest Newspoll showing the government trailing the opposition Labor Party at 52 points to 48 points, the budget contained measures to appease an electorate angry that a surging property market means they are unlikely to achieve the great Australian dream of owning their home. Morrison said the government will establish a A\$1 billion National Housing Infrastructure Facility and allow first time home buyers to save extra funds into their pension accounts to use for a purchase deposit.

The Reserve Bank of Australia (RBA) last week held interest rates at a record low 1.50 percent, citing concern about fuelling more borrowing in the country's red-hot property market. Another A\$1.2 billion will be raised over the next four years by imposing a levy on foreign workers, another issue that has been heavily debated publicly, with Prime Minister Malcolm Turnbull promising earlier this year "Australian jobs for Australians." Another A\$4 billion will come from taxes on multinationals as the government expands its anti-tax avoidance laws to include trusts and foreign partnerships.

The budget forecast real GDP at 2.75 percent in 2017/18, strengthening to 3 percent through to 2020/21. That compares with the RBA's estimates of 2.75-3.75 percent by mid-2018 through to June 2019. It sees the unemployment rate at 5.75 percent in 2017/18, easing from a 13-month high of 5.9 percent currently while it pegged the consumer price index (CPI) at 2 percent, climbing to 2.5 percent by 2020/21.

Underlying inflation is stuck below the RBA's target band of 2-3 percent with wages crawling at their slowest pace on record. Morrison outlined plans to deliver A\$75 billion in infrastructure funding and financing over the next years as the base of Australia's next growth wave. The flagship project is an A\$8.4 billion Melbourne to Brisbane inland railway to begin construction next financial year. — Reuters

**S&P, NASDAQ HIT RECORD HIGHS AS VOLATILITY DROPS**

**NEW YORK:** The S&P 500 and the Nasdaq touched record highs for the second straight day yesterday following a spate of upbeat corporate earnings, while Emmanuel Macron's victory in the French presidential election improved risk appetite. The VIX, Wall Street's "fear gauge," hit its lowest level in more than a decade earlier in the day. A lower VIX typically indicates a bullish outlook for stocks. The 10-year US Treasury yield rose to its highest in a month, while gold prices fell, indicating a shift in investor preference for riskier assets.

However, analysts cautioned against investor complacency, especially after the market's strong run since Donald Trump's elections as US president. "In the short-term, investors can enjoy this run, but they should start to hedge their positions and look for safety," said Christian Magoon, chief executive at Amplify ETFs in Chicago, Illinois. "Given world events, common sense would say there should be at least average volatility in daily price movement on the S&P 500. The index seems to be very lethargic."

The index has not moved more than 0.4 percent in either direction in the past 11 trading days. At 11:03 am ET the Dow Jones Industrial Average was up 8.97 points, or 0.04 percent, at 21,021.25, the S&P 500 was up 2.03 points, or 0.08 percent, at 2,401.41 and the Nasdaq Composite was up 23.57 points, or 0.39 percent, at 6,126.23. Five of the 11 major S&P sectors were higher, while the typically defensive plays such as utilities and telecom services fell. Shares of Valeant Pharmaceuticals jumped more than 16 percent after the company posted its first profit in six quarters.

Endo International, Office Depot and Marriott also rose after reporting better-than-expected quarterly earnings. Wayfair surged to an all-time high of \$62.65 after the online furniture retailer revenue beat analysts' expectations. Declining issues outnumbered advancers on the NYSE by 1,462 to 1,304. On the Nasdaq, 1,439 issues rose and 1,214 fell. The S&P 500 index showed 37 52-week highs and three lows, while the Nasdaq recorded 80 highs and 38 lows. — Reuters

**MACRON WIN IS 'GOOD NEWS' FOR ASIA: IMF**

**SINGAPORE:** Emmanuel Macron's victory in the French presidential election is "good news" for trade-reliant Asia as it eases fears of rising protectionism in Europe, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) said yesterday.

Changyong Rhee, director of the fund's Asia and Pacific Department, said Macron's win over far-right candidate Marine Le Pen, an economic nationalist, had made him more optimistic that major trade tensions would ease. "If you asked me this question (on rising protectionism) three to six months ago, I would probably have answered that I am very seriously concerned on the possibility of trade tensions in the global economy," he told reporters in Singapore.

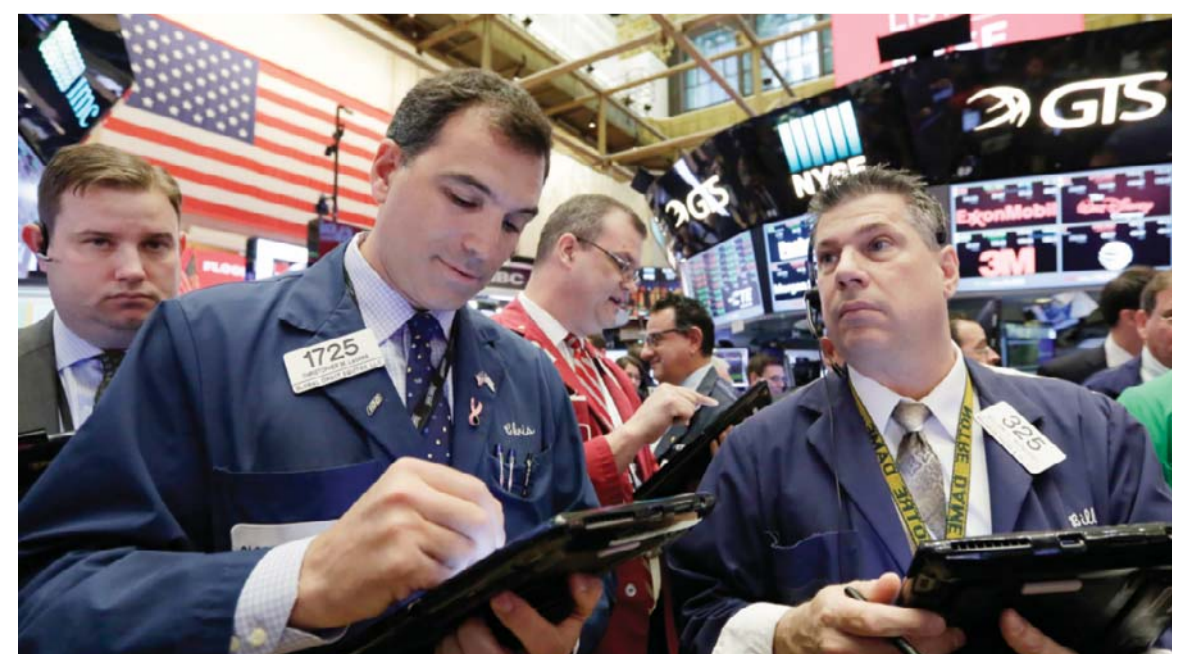
"But now I feel a little bit better," he added, citing a meeting between US President Donald Trump and his Chinese counterpart Xi Jinping last month and Macron's victory on Sunday.

"I think the result of the French elections really show

that it's good news to open trade and globalization, and it reduces the uncertainties of the eurozone," Rhee said. "So I think at this moment I am a little bit more optimistic that these trade tensions will resolve without bigger tensions."

The IMF's latest economic outlook had flagged increasing protectionism in Asia's major trading partners and tightening global financial conditions as key downside risks to regional growth.

"Asian economies are particularly vulnerable to trade shocks... given the reliance of many Asian economies on exports, more protective trade policies would generate a significant negative impact on the region," said the report issued last month. It said the Asia-Pacific was expected to remain the world's fastest growing region this year and next, at 5.5 percent and 5.4 percent, but growth was "clouded with significant uncertainty". — AFP



**NEW YORK: Traders Christopher LaGana (foreground left) and William McInerney (right), work on the floor of the New York Stock Exchange yesterday. The S&P 500 and the Nasdaq touched record highs for the second straight day yesterday following a spate of upbeat corporate earnings. — AP**



# NBK EGYPT POSTS £329.5M NET PROFIT IN Q1

**KUWAIT:** NBK-Egypt, a subsidiary of the National Bank of Kuwait (NBK), recorded net profits of £329.5 million (KD 8.5 million) during the first quarter of 2017, compared to £186.6 (KD 6 million) in the same period last year. The bank's assets grew by 35.1 percent to reach £52.7 billion by the end of March 2017, compared to £39 billion in the same period in the previous year.

In addition, total deposits grew by 25.5 percent to reach £38.9 billion, compared to £31 billion in the same period the previous year. Net loans and client facilities grew by 60.2 percent by the end of March

2017 to £25 billion, compared to £15.6 billion in the same period of the previous year.

NBK Group's CEO and Chairman of NBK-Egypt Essam Jassem Al-Sager stressed that this confirms the bank's success in enhancing its status in Egyptian markets with its positive and promising development opportunities. "We aim to boost our position in Egypt and increase the pace of development in a way that reflects our optimistic view of the Egyptian economy," he underlined. NBK-Egypt's Managing Director Dr Yasser Hassan said that once again, the bank continues its powerful performance and high



Essam Jassem Al-Sager

Yasser Hassan

development rates in all financial indicators despite the local and international challenges capital markets have been witnessing and the local changes after the flotation of the Egyptian pound at the end of last year. Hassan added NBK managed to do so thanks to its wise policies based on diversifying and balancing all sources of income and loan portfolios on the one hand, and offering the most flexible funding solutions on the other. NBK-Egypt is a member of NBK Group and was established in Egypt in 1980. It has 41 branches in the best locations in various Egyptian governorates and cities.



**TOKYO:** In this April 11, 2017 file photo, Toshiba Corp's President Satoshi Tsunakawa bows during a press conference at the company's headquarters in Tokyo. — AP

## TOSHIBA WRANGLES WITH WESTERN DIGITAL OVER CHIPS UNIT SALE

**TOKYO:** Money-losing Japanese electronics company Toshiba is sparring with its US joint venture partner Western Digital over the planned sale of Toshiba's computer-chip business. Tokyo-based Toshiba Corp. needs cash from such a sale to shore up its finances after it suffered massive losses in its nuclear power division.

Toshiba warned Western Digital to stop interfering, according to letters obtained yesterday by The Associated Press. The letters from the company's lawyers, dated May 3, accused Western Digital of "improper" interference. Western Digital bought SanDisk, Toshiba's longtime partner in making flash memory chips, last year. It has argued the sale might violate terms of the joint venture with Toshiba, according to the letters.

Such sales can be sensitive because they involve the transfer of technology. Several companies, including Western Digital, are reportedly interested in acquiring Toshiba's prized chip-making business. Another is Hon Hai of Taiwan, also known as Foxconn, a major supplier to Apple, which has acquired Japanese electronics company Sharp Corp. South Korea's SK Hynix is also reportedly a bidder.

A Japanese consortium including gov-

ernment-affiliates like the Development Bank of Japan and the public-private Innovation Network Corp of Japan are said to be preparing a bid with US private equity firm Kohlberg Kravis Roberts. The financial newspaper Nikkei reported last month that Western Digital might join that effort. But Western Digital's chief executive, Steve Milligan, said in an interview with the Japanese broadcaster NHK shown Tuesday that the company was not satisfied with the minority stake it could obtain if it joined with the consortium in buying the chip business.

Toshiba is projecting a trillion yen (\$9 billion) in losses for the fiscal year that ended in March, although auditors have refused to sign off on its earnings report. The company is also embroiled in an accounting scandal. Further raising doubts over its future viability, Toshiba's US nuclear unit Westinghouse Electric Co. filed for bankruptcy protection in March. Four nuclear reactors that Westinghouse is helping to build in South Carolina and Georgia are behind schedule and billions of dollars over budget, as costs soar after the nuclear disaster in Fukushima, northeastern Japan, six years ago. — AP

## US TREASURY UPGRADES WEBSITE TO BETTER TRACK FEDERAL SPENDING DATA

**WASHINGTON:** The US Treasury yesterday launched an upgrade of a website to allow for the first time the tracking of all federal government spending categories, which totaled \$3.85 trillion last year.

The new Beta.USAspending.gov website culminates a three-year initiative to improve the existing USAspending.gov to provide a broader view of government spending than the grant and procurement data previously available on the site. The project brings together some 400 different data sets from more than 100 federal agencies, extracting spending information from thousands of divergent computer systems across the government. It also is designed to be machine readable, with open source code allowing private companies to analyze and develop commercial applications for the data, said a senior Treasury official working on the project. The beta site is launching with year-to-date data for fiscal 2017, with historical data to be added later. The data will be updated quarterly, the official said. The spending site upgrade was mandated by the Data Accountability and Transparency Act of 2014, a bipartisan law

aimed at shedding new light on federal spending by making data readily available.

"The new site provides taxpayers with the ability to track nearly \$4 trillion in government spending from Washington, D.C. directly into their communities and cities," Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin said in a statement. "Greater access to data will drive better decision making and strengthen accountability and transparency - qualities central to the Administration's focus on a more innovative and effective government," Mnuchin said.

The new version of the site makes clear with a prominent block chart what budget works already know that more than half of all federal spending is consumed by three categories: Social Security (23.9 percent), Medicare (14.9 percent) and National Defense (14.9 percent). The beta site is expected to run alongside the original for several months in order to collect feedback from users to help plug "holes" in the data and make the site more user-friendly, the Treasury official said. The site will also be expanded to show sources of contributions to federal tax revenues by state. — Reuters

# GERMAN INDUSTRIAL OUTPUT POINTS TO SOLID GROWTH

## EXPORTS PROVE RESILIENT, IMPORTS SOAR

**BERLIN:** German industrial production fell by less than expected in March and trade proved resilient, data showed yesterday, supporting robust growth expectations for the first quarter.

The reports followed by a day data showing Germany industrial orders rose for the second consecutive month in March, the first time since 2015. Germany's quarterly economic growth, to be released on Friday, is now expected to pick up to 0.6 percent in the first quarter from 0.4 percent in the final three months of last year.

Industrial output edged down by 0.4 percent on the month, yesterday's data from the Economy Ministry showed. This was better than the consensus forecast in a Reuters poll for a drop of 0.6 percent. The decline was driven by a 2.5 percent fall in energy output. Manufacturing production was down 0.5 percent while construction output rose 1.5 percent.

The February reading was revised down to a rise of 1.8 percent from a previously reported increase of 2.2 percent. In January, industrial production rose by 1.3 percent.

In the first quarter as a whole, industrial production rose 1.4 percent on the quarter, the ministry said. The Economy Ministry said the industrial upswing in the first quarter had momentum. "Industrial orders and sentiment indicators suggest a continuation of this positive trend," it said. "All in all, despite the small drop in March, industrial production should have returned as a growth driver for the German economy," ING economist Carsten Brzeski said. While construction remains a strong source of economic growth, industrial production and investments are set to finally catch up with the rest of the economy, he added. Separate data released from the Federal Statistics Office showed that seasonally adjusted exports rose by 0.4 percent on the month to hit a record high of 105.4 billion euros. This came in better than the consensus forecast in a Reuters poll for a rise of 0.2 percent.

Imports jumped by 2.4 percent also to hit the highest value recorded in a month of 85.8 billion euros. This was much stronger than a predicted increase of 1.0 percent. The seasonally adjusted

trade surplus narrowed to 19.6 billion euros (\$21.41 billion) from a revised 21.2 billion euros in February, below the Reuters consensus forecast of 20.9 billion euros. "Germany is clearly benefitting at the moment from the revival of the global economy. And Germany still seems to have the right products, such as cars and machines, which are in demand all over the world," Sal. Oppenheim analyst Ulrike Kastens said. "But these good figures will increase the pressure on Germany to reduce the high trade and current account surpluses."

The overall robust readouts were the latest in a batch of solid economic figures and will help centre-right Chancellor Angela Merkel burnish her economic credentials ahead of a Sept. 24 federal election, when she will seek a fourth term. The figures also underline the strength of the economy compared to its peers. German Foreign Minister Sigmar Gabriel has urged Merkel's conservatives to adopt a less rigid stance in fiscal policy towards France after the election of the pro-reform centrist Emmanuel Macron as president. — Reuters



**BOSTON:** In this May 18, 2016 file photo, a woman passes a "We're Hiring!" sign while entering a clothing store in the Downtown Crossing of Boston. The Labor Department reported on job openings and labor turnover for March. — AP

## US JOB OPENINGS RISE SLIGHTLY IN MARCH

**WASHINGTON:** Steady job growth has left US employers with an increasingly shallow pool of unemployed workers to consider hiring, something that could lead to faster wage gains.

The number of job postings for each unemployed person fell in March to its lowest level in more than 16 years, according to a report released yesterday by the Labor Department. This means that businesses may face fewer qualified applicants for jobs and could choose to increase pay in order to attract workers - possibly causing wages to accelerate after several years of sluggish growth.

Employers posted a seasonally adjusted 5.7 million jobs in March, a slight 1.1 percent increase from February. Meanwhile, past hiring gains meant there was a steep decline among

the unemployed seeking work during the same period. As a result, there is the equivalent of 1.25 jobless people for each opening - the best ratio since January 2001. Hiring in March edged up a mere 0.2 percent and is still running below the levels seen in January and December, a sign that employers may not be finding workers. But more Americans felt confident enough in March to quit their jobs, as the number of quits rose 2.6 percent to 3.1 million. Workers typically quit either when they have another job or are optimistic they can find one - and possibly receive a pay raise. Along with separate measures that small businesses and construction firms are finding it difficult to hire workers, the increasingly tight job market should help to deliver pay raises, noted Wells Fargo economist Sarah House.

"With a 17-year high share of small businesses reporting jobs are hard to fill, an acceleration in quits would bode well for a pick-up in wage growth later this year," House said in an analysis. The government said last week that employers added a net total of 211,000 jobs in April and 79,000 in March. But on average over the past three months, employers have added 174,000 jobs a month - an average that economists say is closer to the underlying trend. The unemployment rate dipped a tenth of a point to 4.4 percent. Those figures are net gains after layoffs, quits and retirements are subtracted from overall hiring. Tuesday's data come from the Job Openings and Labor Turnover survey, or JOLTS. They are more detailed and provide a fuller view of the job market than the monthly jobs report. — AP

## RETAIL FUNK: STORES FACE BIGGEST CHALLENGES SINCE RECESSION

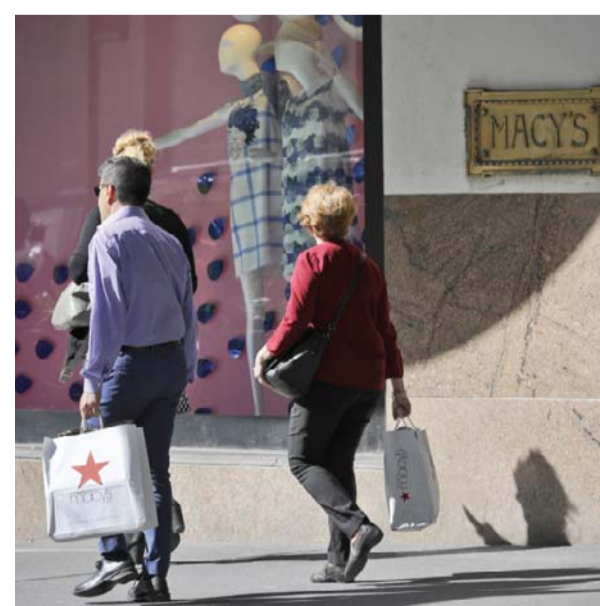
**NEW YORK:** It's starting to look a lot like the Great Recession redux for retailers. More than twice as many stores have closed this year than at the same point last year. Bankruptcies are far outpacing last year's rate. Retailers slashed jobs at the sharpest pace in seven years this spring. And retailers collectively could report the biggest drop in first-quarter profits since 2009.

This time, the culprit's not the economy but shoppers whose habits have changed profoundly and permanently, as they shop online more and look for deals. The results this week from department stores like Macy's, Kohl's and J.C. Penney are expected to illustrate the latest damage by the spending shift and the dominance of Amazon. "The first-quarter reports will show how difficult the mountain retailers will have to climb," said Ken Perkins, president of research firm Retail Metrics LLC. "Things are far better from an economic perspective than before when the sky was falling." But he says people are increasingly spending on experiences and shopping on phones and tablets, "and stores are facing pressure from off-price stores and Amazon.com."

Perkins estimates that the 114 retailers he tracks will see an average drop of more than 5 percent in first-quarter earnings, marking the second straight quarter of declines and third in the last six quarters. But he thinks there's even a chance they could surpass a 7.1 percent drop in the fourth quarter of 2013 that would make it the worst quarter since 2009. Moreover, 22 percent are expected to post losses, the

highest percentage since the second quarter of 2009. And he forecasts that nearly half of the retailers will see total sales revenue fall, nearing the level of the last downturn. The bad news for retail has been relentless of late: The Limited closed all its remaining 250 stores. Payless ShoeSource is shuttering nearly 400 stores as part of its bankruptcy reorganization.

Others chains that have shuttered all their stores or retrenched include Abercrombie & Fitch, BCBG and Wet Seal. Mall anchors like Macy's and J.C. Penney are closing locations. And Sears Holdings Corp. has said there's "substantial doubt" about its future, though it has insisted that its actions to turn around its business should help reduce that risk. Perkins believes the rash of store closings and job cuts will be a minor burden on the economy. The vast majority of retail workers are paid less than the hourly average earnings per hour of \$25, so the impact is far less than losing higher-paying manufacturing jobs, he says. But Frank Badillo, director of research at MacroSavvy, believes the effect will be wider. "The economic effects tend to reinforce the widening income inequality and redistribution that favor 'haves' over 'have nots', professional class over the working class and urban over rural," Badillo said. Shoppers like Martha Shaughnessy, 38, are changing the landscape. The San Francisco resident says she does about three-quarters of her buying - from household goods to clothing - online or from her phone. She says even four years ago it was less than half. She likes Instacart for groceries, places like Zulily



**NEW YORK:** In this May 2, 2017 photo, shoppers walk by a Macy's window in New York. Retailers' first-quarter earnings reports are expected to show challenges that stores face as they struggle with shoppers' accelerating shift online and increasing competition. — AP

for clothing for her two toddlers and Everlane.com for clothes for herself.

"There are certain things like mobile payments that have made it easier to shop online than in person," she said. "It's rare I go to the mall. It's more of an occasion than a habit." She also says she's discovered new brands online.

The National Retail Federation, the nation's largest retail trade group, is sticking with its annual sales growth forecast of 3.7 to 4.2 percent over 2016. But that includes a hefty expected bump of 8 percent to 12 percent from online and other non-store business. Matthew Shay, the group's CEO and president, says consumers are in good financial shape given a healthier job market and other economic factors, but acknowledges the industry is more turbulent. He points to bright spots like home improvement chains and off-price retailers like TJX Cos., which are still expected to have strong results. "Retail is not in any long-term danger," Shay said, but "the pace of change is accelerating." He says stores need to dramatically step up their investments in e-commerce. Department stores have pledged to do better and adapt, expanding their exclusive merchandise and beefing up their online services. But they and other clothing-dependent stores have struggled to prove themselves to shoppers.

The clothing sector may be at a tipping point when it comes to online shopping for that category. Cooper Smith, an analyst at research firm L2, estimates that about 18 to 22 percent of clothing sales will be online this year. That's a critical juncture. — AP

PARIS STOCKS REBOUND; DOLLAR GAINS ACROSS BOARD

LONDON: The Paris stock market rebounded yesterday after sliding the previous session in the wake of Emmanuel Macron's French presidential victory.

gaining around half a percent each. In foreign exchange, "the euro continues to see weakness against the dollar and the pound, as the excitement of the French election fades," said Chris Beauchamp, analyst at IG trading group.

South Korean election
In Asia, Tokyo's Nikkei stocks index ended down 0.3 percent after jumping more than two percent to a 17-month high Monday.

South Koreans went to the polls yesterday to choose a new president after Park Geun-Hye was ousted and indicted for corruption, against a backdrop of high tensions with the nuclear-armed North.

Voters have been galvanized by anger over the sprawling bribery and abuse-of-

power scandal that brought down Park, which catalyzed frustrations over jobs and slowing growth. Left-leaning Moon Jae-In, a former human rights lawyer, has held a commanding lead in opinion polls for months.

Europe's index of leading 300 shares rose 0.5 percent to a near-two year high of 1,555 points, Germany's DAX rose 0.7 percent to a record high, and Britain's FTSE 100 added 0.6 percent.

Asian stocks did not perform as well, with China's seventh consecutive decline - the longest losing streak for four years - weighing on the region more broadly.

That would see the S&P 500 move beyond Monday's all-time record 2,401 points as the VIX index of implied volatility on the index - dubbed the Wall Street "fear gauge" - remained below 10.00, anchored near Monday's lowest closing level since December 1993.

"It's calm sailing today for stock markets," ETX Capital senior markets analyst, Neil Wilson, said.

Victory for business-friendly centrist Emmanuel Macron in France and earnings were also supportive for equities, he said, adding: "So far, there is precious little to halt the rotation from bonds to stocks."

The FTSEuroFirst hit its highest for nearly two years, and the index of top 50 euro zone stocks its highest for 18 months. In Germany, shares in Commerzbank rose more than 2.5 percent after it posted forecast-beating profits in the first quarter, and mining companies were among leading gainers.

MSCI's broadest index of Asia-Pacific shares outside Japan slipped 0.1 percent and Japan's Nikkei fell 0.26 percent. The

MSCI World index, which touched a record high overnight, dropped about 0.1 percent.

In bond markets the 10-year US Treasury yield rose to 2.394 percent, its highest in a month. The two-year yield held steady at 1.33 percent, meaning the yield curve rose to its steepest for more than two weeks.

The US yield curve had flattened last week to its lowest since the presidential election in November as investors fretted over the impact that higher interest rates will have on the economy.

Another hike in June is almost certain, according to market pricing, and investors now appear more convinced that the economy will take that in its stride, which could give the Federal Reserve more room to carry on tightening.

"For the most part, developed country central banks are pretty static when it comes to monetary policy," Standard Bank's head of G10 strategy in London, Steve Barrow, said. "Only the Fed is actively changing interest rates."

The positive sentiment also boosted the dollar. It rose 0.5 percent against the yen to 113.80 yen and the euro fell 0.2 percent to \$1.0895, another sign of its vertigo near \$1.10.

The dollar index was up 0.3 percent at 99.38. In commodities, oil market sentiment swung between optimism over statements from major oil-producing countries that supply cuts could be extended into 2018 and lingering concerns over slowing demand and a rise in US crude output. — Agencies

Daily Kuwait Stock Exchange Report

Table with columns: Index, Change, Closing, Last Closing, High, Low. Rows include Price Index, Weighted Index, KXSX 15.

Table with columns: Security, High, Low, Volume, Value (KD), Trades, Last, Change. Rows include MARIN, IPG, NAPESCO, ENRGGYH, GPI, ADAR, Oil & Gas, KFOUC, BPCO, ALKOUT, ALQURAIN, Basic Materials, KCAM, CABLE, SHIP, PCHEM, PAPER, MRC, ACICO, HCC, KBMMC, NICBM, EQUIPMENT, NCCI, GYPSUM, SALBOOKH, AGTLY, EDU, CLEANING, KGL, KPCO, HUMANSOFT, NAFAS, GFC, MAYADEW, CGC, MTCC, UPAC, ALAFCO, MUBARRAD, LOGISTICS, SCEM, GCHEM, QIC, FCEM, RKWC, SPEC, Industrials, KSH, NSH, PAPCO, CANTL, DANAH, FOOD, Consumer Goods, MHC, ATC, YAACO, Health Care, KCIN, KHOT, SULTAN, CABLETV, EYAS, IFAHR, OULAFUEL, MUNTZAHAT, JAZEERA, SOOR, FUTURKAZID, ALMAI, ZIMAH, Mezzan, Consumer Services, ZAIN, OOREDOO, HITSTELEC, VIVA, Telecommunications, NBK, GBK, CBK, ABK, ALMUTAHED, KIB, BURG, KFIN, BOUBAYN, AUB, ITHMR, WARBARANK, Banks, KINS, GINS, AINS, WINS, KUWAITRE, FTI, WETHAQ, RKKWIT, Insurance.

Table with columns: Security, High, Low, Volume, Value (KD), Trades, Last, Change. Rows include SOKOUK, KRE, URC, NRE, SRE, TAM, AREEC, MASSALEH, ARABREC, ERESO, MABANEE, INJAZZAT, INVESTORS, IRC, ALTJARIA, SANAM, AAYANRE, AQAR, ALAQARIA, MAZAYA, ADNC, THEMAR, TIJARA, TAAMEER, ARKAN, ARGAN, ABYAR, MUNSHAAT, FIRSDUBAI, KBT, REAM, MENA, ALMUDJON, MARAKEZ, REMAL, AWJ, Real Estate, KINV, FACIL, IFA, NINV, KPROJ, COAST, SECH, SGC, ARZAN, MARKAZ, KMEFIC, ALAMAN, ALOLA, ALMAL, GIH, AAYAN, BAYANINV, OSOUL, KFIC, KAMCO, NIH, UNICAP, MADAR, ALDEERA, ALSALAM, EKTITAB, ALMADINA, NOOR, TAMINV, EXCH, KSHC, ASIYA, GNAHC, AMWAL, ALIMTIAZ, MANAZEL, NIND, BIHC, SENRGGY, AGHC, KPCC, TAHSILAT, JEERANH, EKHOLDING, GFH, INOVEST, Financial Services, Investment Instruments, ASC, OSOS, HAYATCOMM, Technology, SANAD, ALFAQ, ALSHAMMEL, EFFECT, AJWAN, MASAKEN, DALQAN, ALHID, MIDAN, THURAYA, AMAR, Parallel Market.

National Bank of Kuwait Financial Markets Daily Report At 02:00 PM Previous Day

Global Stock Indices table with columns: Index, Previous Close, Last Price, Change, Daily Performance, Yearly Performance.

MENA Stock Indices table with columns: Index, Previous Close, Last Price, Change, Daily Performance, Yearly Performance.

Global Currencies Exchange Rate table with columns: Currency, Kuwaiti Dinar, Saudi Riyal, US Dollar, Euro, Sterling Pound, Swiss Franc, Japanese Yen, Australian Dollar.

MENA Currencies Exchange Rate table with columns: Currency, US Dollar, Kuwaiti Dinar, Saudi Riyal, Bahraini Dinar, Qatari Riyal, Omani Riyal, Emiratis Dirham, Egyptian Pound.

Global Interest Rates table with columns: Currency, 1-Week, 1-Month, 3-Month, 6-Month, 1-Year.

Global Bond Yields table with columns: Country, 2-Year, 5-Year, 10-Year, 30-Year.

Commodities table with columns: Index, Previous Close, Last Price, Change, Daily Performance, Yearly Performance.

Source: National Bank of Kuwait





## 2017 MAZDA 6: NEW LEVEL OF INNOVATION AND DESIGN

NEW MAZDA 6 REMAINS ONE OF THE VERSATILE AND FUN-TO-DRIVE VEHICLES IN ITS CLASS



By **Faten Omar**

**KUWAIT:** Kuwait Automotive Imports Co WLL (KAICO) - Al-Shaya and Al-Sagar, the exclusive distributor for Mazda vehicles in the Kuwait, invited Kuwait Times for a test drive at the weekend to get a feel of the new features of the 2017 Mazda 6, a mid-size sedan that offers more than it looks.

Mazda has taken the 6 to a whole new level of innovation and design with updates to the interior, as well as new safety features. Mazda's design philosophy is built on three pillars - KODO design (soul of motion), jinba ittai (driving experience) and Sky active technology (engine, transmission, body and chassis). There is absolutely no denying that the 2017 Mazda 6 remains one of the most practical, versatile and fun-to-drive vehicles in its class.

Mazda, a powerful Japanese manufacturer with a rich history in the automotive world, has been a leading brand in the industry for the past few years, making it the first and best choice for many cars enthusiasts around the world. The new Mazda 6 has received a set of modifications and improvements:

### The drive

New for 2017 Mazda 6 is Skyactiv Vehicle Dynamics G-Vectoring Control. This feature allows attaining a smoother, less tiring drive according to Mazda engineers. This system automatically adjusts power delivery and cornering enhancement and although the effect is subtle, drivers who have a better feel of the road will sense it. The SKYACTIV-BODY design was designed to achieve two contrasting goals, lighter weight with better safety (solid body), achieved through innovative engineering, improved construction and materials.

Mazda6 features a 2.5-liter four-cylinder that delivers 184 horses and 185 lb. ft. of torque. This engine mates to a fine shifting Sport mode six-speed automatic geared for both acceleration and performance.

However, the six-speed transmission performed very efficiently, changing gears at a very low rpm when in normal mode, with the primary aim to preserve fuel. Every aspect of the vehicle is engineered to maximize driving dynamics and efficiency: from body construction and engine technology, to the chassis and transmission. Skyactiv technology is just one of the ways Mazda makes driving better.

### KODO design

KODO is "Soul of Motion". It's the inspiration behind the design of Mazda 6 vehicle. Created to transform ordinary sheet metal into something that embodies the vitality of a living being, the KODO design featured on the Mazda6 with a sleek, sporty and modern

look that Mazda's vehicles are instantly recognizable.

Seeing one of Mazda's cars should invoke the feelings you get from appreciating a work of art! Seeing its sculpted beauty and the shifting reflections as it catches the light, evoking speed, grace and power, you'll feel an irresistible urge to drive it. Mazda 6 is offering a Premium Package that includes Nappa leather, detailed stitching on the steering wheel and available amenities.

Mazda's interiors are renowned for being stylish and straightforward, and this is no different. The dashboard greets the centre console with pronounced double stitching which adds a sense of sophistication. There are also patches of soft-touch materials through the cabin which increases the creature-comfort effect.

### JINBA-ITTAI Theory

JINBA-ITTAI is a Japanese four-character compound describing unity of horse and rider which is pertinent to Yabusame, Japanese mounted archery. Mazda adopted that term to describe a driver's connection with the car.

It reflects the feeling that the sense of oneness between a rider and his beloved horse is the ultimate bond. When Mazda is designing the layout of its vehicles they start with the human being, and place essentials such as the steering wheel, accelerator and brake pedal where they are easy to operate in a way that feels natural. All Mazda vehicles aim to provide Jinba-ittai, or "horse and rider as one", driving and correct driving position forms the very foundation of achieving this feeling of unity. That's why this "human-centered" philosophy is at the root of every layout and design decision we make.

### Safety

Just about every comfort and safety convenience is standard on the Grand Touring, including dual-zone climate, heated power front seats, leather trim sport seats, rear view safety camera, Bluetooth, USB, navigation, head-up display, blind spot with cross-traffic alert, remote and push button start, alloy pedals, floor mats, Bose 11-speaker HD/stereo/SiriusXM, Mazda infotainment system, paddle shifters, power moonroof, high intensity headlamps, fog lamps and much more.

Enhanced safety features standard on Grand Touring include forward obstructive warning, smart city brake support, smart



brake support, a novel traffic sign recognition system, lane departure warning, lane keep assist, traction control and much more. These modern safety enhancements unite with the safety features on

every Mazda6, which include all the airbags, four wheel disc ABS, electronic brake assist, dynamic stability, traction control and more. Your Mazda dealer will gladly explain all the

features of the Mazda6 when you visit, including I-Loop and enhanced safety.

In summary, 2017 Mazda6 is athletic, looks great and delivers good economy. The 2017 Mazda6 is a frontrunner in the mid-size division.





# TOYOTA AND KFH OPEN NEW LEASING OFFICE

AL-SAYER PARTNERS WITH KFH TO OPEN SPECIAL OFFICE AT TOYOTA AL-RAI SHOWROOM



**KUWAIT:** Mohamed Naser Al-Sayer and Sons (MNSS), one of the Al-Sayer Group Holding Companies in cooperation with Kuwait Finance House "Baitak" opened a special office, at MNSS showroom in Al-Rai on the 4th ring road, to provide customers with renting and maintenance services for Toyota vehicles.

The official opening ceremony and cutting of the ribbon was attended by Ahed Al-Eissa Executive Manager of cars and renting products, Bengt Schultz Chief Operating Officer Al-Sayer Group Holding, Scott McNicol General Manager Retail Toyota Group Sales MNSS along with representatives from KFH and Al-Sayer. According to Johan Heislitz "At Toyota all vehicle segments have growing and with

the opening of new KFH leasing office we are pleased to be putting our focus on the leasing market. From a customer service standpoint we aim to serve them better through such convenient service facility."

### Operational leasing

With the operational leasing option from

KFH you can drive a car without having to worry about its maintenance. Clients can choose from a wide variety of carefully picked car models that suit their demands and decide on the period of the lease contract ranging from 12 to 26 months. Leasing from KFH also comes with a variety of customized options that guarantee our client peace of mind at all times.

### Advantages & benefits

- \* Full maintenance throughout the duration of your lease term.
- \* Full Takaful insurance cover throughout the duration of the leasing period.
- \* A substitute car when the leased car is under maintenance or repair for more than 24 hours.
- \* 24 / 7 road-side assistance.
- \* A wide range and variety of categories and models that will surely meet the client demands.
- \* Option to drive the leased car beyond Kuwaiti borders.
- \* Client salary transfer is not required.
- \* Fast processing and immediate approval of the client transaction.

Ahed Al-Eissa said "The renting cars office will offer renting cars and maintenance services only for Toyota vehicles in cooperation with Toyota agency. Such step represents a significant transformation in the leasing products movement and strengthens the close and continuous relation with MNSS."

He also thanked Toyota dealer management for giving them the chance to serve customers who want to rent cars of any model from this famous brand through special renting office that is considered the first at the level of automobile dealerships in Kuwait. On this occasion, and only for one month, "Baitak" offers special prices on renting Toyota cars as an added value to all the other benefits provided to car renting customers at "Baitak".



**CONGRATULATIONS**

**KD 25,000**

**TRANSFER & WIN**

**HESSA KHALED KHALAF ABDULAZIZ ALMUKHAIZEEM WINNER OF SALARY Q1 DRAW PRIZE**

## HESSAH AL-MUKHAIZEEM WINS KD 25,000 CASH PRIZE IN GULF BANK'S SALARY DRAW

**KUWAIT:** Gulf Bank is pleased to announce the lucky winner of its first quarterly Salary Account draw. Hessa Khalid Khalaf Abdulaziz Al-Mukhaizeem the winner of the KD 25,000 cash prize, was announced during the draw event, which was held live on 8.8.8 PM 'Rabaa Al-Diwaniya', on Monday 8th of May, in the presence of a representative from the Ministry of Commerce and Industry.

The newly launched offer is tailored for Kuwaiti customers, and allows them to benefit from a number of unique offers by transferring their salaries to Gulf Bank.

The new salary account offer gives new customers the opportunity to either receive a KD 100 cash gift upon transferring their salaries to Gulf Bank or an interest free loan. Customers must have a minimum salary of KD 500 and are fully eligible for

the offer following their first salary transfer to Gulf Bank. Customers can also enjoy a one year free of charge Visa or MasterCard credit card, as well as a chance to apply for loan up to KD 70,000, or a consumer loan up to KD 15,000.

Existing and new customers who transfer their salaries to Gulf Bank are automatically enrolled in the quarterly draws and have the chance to win valuable cash prizes, including three quarterly prizes of KD 25,000, in addition to Kuwait's largest salary prize of KD 250,000 in the last draw.

**The draw dates are scheduled as follows:**

- \* 7 August 2017 for the prize of KD 25,000
- \* 6 November 2017 for the prize of KD 25,000
- \* 8 February 2018 for the grand prize of KD 250,000

## MAKE A LIFE, NOT JUST A LIVING

**KUWAIT:** The Middle East has always been a region that places high importance on family values. However, recent studies show that there is an increasing imbalance between time spent at work versus quality family time. Centrepont, Middle East's largest fashion retailer, conducted a survey last year that showed over 48 percent of respondents claimed that they do not get sufficient time with their family. This year the brand surveyed over 500 people across the region and found that close to 40 percent state that they've missed out on a special occasion due to work obligations.

Research has shown that close bonds to family and having a strong emotional support system have a significant positive impact on our health. Centrepont has taken it upon itself to encourage families in the region to balance their priorities and make time for loved ones to celebrate the upcoming World Family Day on May 15th. The region's leading retailer understands the benefits that quality family time can have on an individual's well-being and wants to play its part in the happiness of its customers across the Middle East.

In these tech-drenched, immediate-gratification days, individuals are in a constant need to be living in the fast track and striving for successful career growth. With many parents working longer hours, there is lesser time spent with children. The recent survey also showed that over a fifth of the respondents have less than one meal a day with their families, leading to loved ones complaining that they do not get to spend enough time with them. Studies have shown that a start of a healthy work life balance is having a meal with your children away from distractions such as the TV, video games and cell phones. This goes a long way in encouraging conversations that you would like to, or need to have with your children.

Among the respondents surveyed, an overwhelming 96 percent live with families. This continues to be a popular trend in the region and the numbers are significantly higher than families in the Western world. However, despite a high rate of individuals living with families, lack of quality time spent with family continues to be an issue that can be addressed. However, it is heartening to note that a majority of the respondents claimed that they treasure meaningful one-on-one time spent together with family. In particular, parents surveyed said that balancing your priorities as parents also teaches children to bring balance to their lives. Centrepont's latest initiative, #MakeTimeForFamily highlights the most important factor in balancing your priorities through a campaign that stems from the brand's continued work in support of families in the run up to World Family Day. Centrepont has partnered with Fun City to gift free rides passes across stores in UAE, Kuwait, Qatar, Oman, Bahrain and

select stores in KSA for every purchase made on 15th May. Simon Cooper, Head of Centrepont, says, "It wasn't always the case where I realised how much I have been consumed by work obligations until I started missing on important events. Promising my personal time to my family at least once a day is important to develop that quality time with them. I want my children to start balancing their priorities and we at Centrepont have always encouraged our loyal customers to never take quality time with family for granted and create irreplaceable memories."

### SOTC ANNOUNCES NEW APPOINTMENT OF GENERAL SALES AGENT IN KUWAIT

**KUWAIT:** SOTC has announced the new appointment of a General Sales Agent for Kuwait. The appointment of Ejaza General Trading Co W.L.L - GSA will ensure that potential customers can avail of the outstanding products and services that SOTC offers.

Speaking on this, Daniel D'souza, head sales, India and NRI Markets, SOTC Travel, said, "I am pleased to announce the appointment of Ejaza General Trading Co W.L.L as GSA to represent SOTC in Kuwait. We look forward to their support in helping SOTC magnify its sales within this important market." The new appointment is an endeavor by SOTC to offer customers with a one-stop solution for all their holiday requirements. In addition to booking great holiday packages

here, travellers can also avail of various deals and exclusive discounts being offered by SOTC to various destinations like USA, Europe Australia, New Zealand Japan and China.

SOTC Travel Services Pvt. Ltd. (Formerly known as 'Kuoni Travel (India) Pvt. Ltd.') is a step-down subsidiary of Fairfax Financial Holdings Group; held through two companies, its Indian listed subsidiary, Thomas Cook (India) Limited (TCIL) and TCIL's subsidiary Travel Corporation (India) Ltd.

SOTC Travels is a leading travel and tourism company active across various travel segments including Leisure Travel, Business Travel, Incentive Travel and Destination Management Services.

## 5,000-FOLD DECREASE IN LARGEST SPAM BOTNET MAILINGS

**DUBAI:** According to Kaspersky Lab's "Spam and phishing in Q1 2017" report, the world's largest spam botnet, Necurs, demonstrated a relative decline in its fraudulent mailshot traffic. In December 2016, Kaspersky Lab's spam traps detected over 35 million fraudulent mailshots but in March 2017 that number fell to almost 7,000.

\* Total amount of malware attachments in email traffic decreased by 2.4 times, compared to the previous quarter.

\* More than half of all phishing attacks targeted the financial sector, including banks (almost 26 percent), payment systems (over 13 percent) and online shops (almost 11 percent).

turing legal communication platforms and password-protected attachments. Most likely this trend will continue, with documents protected by passwords considered trusted in the eyes of a victim. Moreover, these documents and not able to be scanned by the IT security solution," said Darya Gudkova, Spam Analyst Expert at Kaspersky Lab.

In 2016, Kaspersky Lab researchers identified a sharp increase in spam with malicious attachments, primarily with encryptors. Most of this traffic came from the Necurs botnet, which is currently considered the world's largest spam botnet. However, at the end of December 2016, the network practically stopped, and not just for the Christmas holidays. The botnet's spam was at a very low level for almost the entire first quarter of 2017.

Apparently, criminals were scared by increased hype around the encryptors and decided to suspend mass mailings. However, this decision is unlikely to result in the extinction of this attack vector.



**Darya Gudkova**

various transactions and CVs, or promised large sums of money. Frequently, the emails were sent on behalf of various existing small and medium-sized businesses, with all of the signatures and contacts proving the reliability of the sender.

Once a victim opened the documents, a malicious script was activated and downloaded malware onto computers. The malware payloads were diverse and included ransomware, spyware, backdoors, or a new modification of the notorious Zeus Trojan.

### Spam through legal services

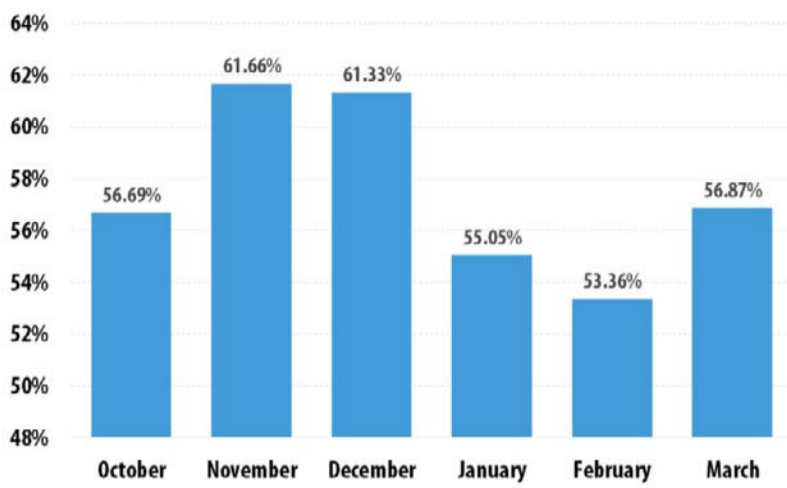
Modern email spam filters effectively

cope with the problem of detecting spam sent via emails. This provokes spammers to look for new channels to bypass the barriers. They are increasingly focusing on messengers and social networks to disseminate their advertising and fraudulent offers. Private messages are usually supported with notifications to the recipient's email. In this case, the email headers will be considered legitimate, unlike traditional email spam. This means that it will be possible to detect spam only by analysis of the message content. This is a much more difficult task, especially given the legal source of information and if the service address is added to the recipient's trusted list.

### Advice

Home users are recommended to use a security solution able to recognize and block malicious attachments and filter spam in desktop email apps, such as Kaspersky Total Security.

Kaspersky Lab recommends that businesses use security solutions with a dedicated functionality aimed at malicious attachments and spam. Small businesses can protect themselves with Kaspersky Small Office Security, which spots and blocks emails with spam. Larger companies can benefit from real-time cloud-assisted anti-spam scanning of all messages on Microsoft(r) Exchange and Linux-based email servers - with the Kaspersky Security for Mail Server application included with Kaspersky Total Security for Business.



Percentage of spam in global email traffic, Q4 2016 and Q1 2017

The Kaspersky Lab spam report also identified the following trends in the first quarter of 2017:

\* Global share of spam amounted to almost 56 percent of Q1 email traffic on average, compared to 59.9 percent in Q4 2016.

"At the beginning of 2017 we witnessed a number of changes in spam flows, including a sharp drop in the number of malicious mass mailings from the world's largest spam botnet. Amid this, the spam threat actors are gaining new footholds in anti-detection tricks and techniques, cap-

### Malicious emails with password-protected files

In the first quarter of 2017 spammers tended to complicate their anti-detection techniques in multiple ways. Among others, cybercriminals packed the malware in password-protected files. Once a user received the email, spammers provoked victims to open and archive in the usual way. They forged emails under order notifications from large retail stores, through

## HOW TO GET STARTED ON VAT IN THE GULF STATES

By Arun Khehar



**RIYADH:** The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia approved a 5 percent tax last week, after considering recommendations from the International Monetary Fund. The recent slide in oil prices world-

wide has diminished the amount of revenue flowing into the six-member Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC), which includes Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, Bahrain, Qatar, Kuwait and Oman. Thus, the IMF recommended a VAT to diversify the revenue stream across these countries.

More to the point, GCC countries are aware that the halcyon days of oil production won't last forever; more and more countries are exploring other, greener forms of energy. GCC leaders recognize the need to diversify their economies, in readiness for the day when the oil bubble bursts (e.g. the Vision 2030 plan in Saudi).

VATs have long been a standard source of revenue for other governments, including EU countries, Canada, Australia and many others. But this is the first time that companies in the GCC will have to collect it-and some reports indicate that they are facing challenges, which they are working to overcome.

This is not surprising. VAT is collected at nearly every stage of the supply chain, from raw materials to the final product sold in stores. Ultimately, the consumer ends up paying for the tax-but businesses are still responsible for collecting the money on behalf of the government, and reporting on how much they collected, along with how much they were able to deduct based on their own costs. It's also important to make provisions and plan ahead going forward, and to bring a culture of change management to the organization.

This means that the vast majority of GCC companies will not only need to ensure they accurately determine and report on VAT requirements but, even more importantly, do it efficiently by automating this whole new process.

### How can your company become compliant?

Fortunately, there are experts that have been dealing with VAT for decades in other countries. Here at Oracle, we have helped thousands of companies the world over to comply with local VAT requirements. New approaches include connecting VAT cloud services to on-premises ERP (such as Oracle E-Business Suite) or simply taking the opportunity to fully modernize the enterprise by deploying ERP in the cloud.

In either case, there is a benefit to placing tax functionality in the cloud-namely; you always have access to the latest version of the software. Unlike on-premises systems, which require lengthy upgrades, cloud applications are updated by the ven-

дор on a regular basis-so, if the amount of the VAT changes, or if another tax regulation is put in place, that functionality will be rolled out with the next release. And with the cloud, either of these approaches can be completed in a much shorter time frame than an on-premises implementation. Cloud implementations typically take weeks rather than years.

This is good news, considering that the VAT deadline is only a year away.

Established cloud providers like Oracle offer more languages, currencies and country-specific rules than other, smaller finance cloud providers. We also have an entire range of unique finance solutions covering the most basic to complex needs in the cloud-from standalone tax reporting applications to end-to-end finance processes, analysis and reporting. This makes Oracle a logical choice for GCC companies, whose requirements are specific to their own region and unlikely to be met by other vendors.

### Knowing where to start

So, where do you start to determine which approach is best for you? Deploy a new ERP in the cloud? Keep your core ERP and connect cloud VAT services? Or move some of your finance functions to the cloud?

### There are a number of factors to consider:

- What is the age of your existing ERP system? Are you running the latest version of the software, or are you on an old edition?

- In how many countries do you do business? The more geographies, currencies and languages you operate in, the more rules, regulations and compliance issues you will need to consider. It might be worth a full-scale migration to cloud in order to keep on top of all of the permutations.

- How many transactions does your ERP process in a day? The higher the transaction volume, the more important it is that your core system be scalable enough to meet demand.

- Are you looking at a full ERP replacement in the near future? If so, it might make sense to take a phased, "outside-in" approach-starting with tax applications in the cloud to meet the immediate VAT deadline, and then moving core ERP to the cloud at a later date.

No matter which approach you decide on, VAT is coming. Every GCC business will need to comply. I recommend that you form a project team as soon as possible to understand how VAT will impact your business and operating model.

Assess the capability of your existing systems to comply with the new regulations. And then, choose an implementation partner and a software vendor with the real experience and capabilities to meet your needs. If you would like to discuss further with me, I invite you to continue the discussion on Twitter using the hash tag

#VATinGCC -Arun Khehar is SVP Applications ECEMEA, Oracle



In the small Cuban town of Gaspar, four computer enthusiasts created their own version of Facebook with a pirate connection. — AFP

## CUBAN TOWN HOOKED ON PIRATE SOCIAL NETWORK

LOCAL TECHIES LAUNCH 'GASPAR SOCIAL,' CUBA'S ANSWER TO FACEBOOK

**GASPAR, Cuba:** On a traffic island in a country town, young Cubans are doing what most of their compatriots cannot: Surfing an online social network. In one of the least wired countries on Earth, Gaspar, population 7,500, is one of the most connected towns of all. Illegally, but with the grudging tolerance of the authorities, four local techies have launched "Gaspar Social"-rural Cuba's answer to Facebook.

"I think it's wonderful what these lads here in Gaspar have done. It was a healthy change for a town that had rather lost its spark," says Arletty Guerra, 22, one of the locals thumbing her smartphone.

More than that, Gaspar Social's promoters hope it will lead the rest of the communist island to greater connectivity.

### Social networking

Most Cubans must pay a \$1.50 an hour to connect via state telecom firm Etecsa's wifi points. Users of Gaspar Social do not. Though they cannot access the world wide web via Gaspar Social, they can share photos and videos with other users in the town.

It opened to the general public in October-two months before Etecsa installed the town's first official wifi hotspot. "In the beginning it was

a network just for playing video games," says one of its creators, municipal computer technician Osmani Montero, 23.

"Then we opened it to all the people in Gaspar and the number of users grew hugely in just a month."

### Extra capacity

Yoandi Alvarez, 30, a medical student, raised money to buy the first aerial and server for the network. "The antenna was near my house," he recalls. "There were users at two or three o'clock in the morning sitting in the doorway to get online, covered in quilts and blankets."

Some 500 of the town's 7,500 inhabitants have started using Gaspar Social. The team had to buy four extra relay antennas to handle the large number of users. To the chat and file-sharing functions it has added a news page-with state-authorized stories only.

### Not-so-wide web

Cuba's government has been gradually opening up the economy over the past decade. It has said it aims to provide internet access to all Cubans by 2020. But the online revolution has been slow in coming. In a country of 11 million people, there are just 317 public wifi hotspots.

Only selected groups such as scientists, journalists and doctors are allowed to have internet access in their homes. Small-scale local projects like Gaspar's "offer an alternative given Cuba's infrastructure problems," which prevent many homes from getting online, says Yudiavian Almeida, a computing specialist at Havana University. If just one home has an internet cable, using wireless technology "a whole network can be generated" for neighboring homes to get online, he says.

### Got a permit?

Gaspar Social is one of about 30 local networks launched by young amateurs in Cuba in recent years. They are unlicensed but the communist authorities tolerate them as long as they do not venture into politics or pornography. Gaspar Social's founders were called in last month after the network's success came to the attention of the ruling Communist Party.

They thought they were going to get shut down-but the officials gave them instructions on applying for a permit, raising hopes that the state may authorize projects like theirs. "They made it clear our network was illegal," Alvarez says. "But they said they wouldn't be taking our antennas down." — AFP

## PANDORA EXPLORES SALE AFTER SECURING \$150M

**NEW YORK:** Pandora, which dominates internet radio but has seen its model eclipsed by music streaming companies such as Spotify, said Monday it was open to buyers after securing a fresh \$150 million. Jim Feuille, the chairman of Pandora's board who a decade earlier pushed the model of free access, stepped down with the announcement that private equity firm KKR was injecting \$150 million. "Having secured a significant financial commitment from KKR to strengthen the company's balance sheet, we have positioned the company to evaluate any potential strategic alternatives, including a sale, in the 30 days before the financing is set to close," Feuille said in a statement.

The company appointed Tim Leiweke, the former CEO of entertainment and sporting event

giant AEG, to seek out new directors for the board and evaluate options. "The board is squarely focused on maximizing stockholder value as we move ahead," he said. Pandora's shares tumbled more than two percent Monday even as Wall Street struck a new record.

The recorded music industry has seen two years of solid growth thanks to the boom in streaming but Pandora has struggled to gain traction. Listeners have flocked to on-demand services such as Spotify, Apple Music and Deezer, while Pandora's model has been online radio stations, some of them automatically tailored to fit users' tastes, with money coming through advertisements.

Pandora, announcing its first-quarter results on Monday, said its number of active listeners

slumped to 76.7 million from 79.4 million a year earlier. But consolidated revenue went up six percent year-on-year in part due to the launch of Pandora Premium, which combines the platform's signature stations with an on-demand service.

Pandora said its subscriber base jumped to 4.71 million-a year-on-year rise of 20 percent, but well below Spotify's 50 million paying users. "Although it remains early days, we are enthusiastic about the recent launch of Pandora Premium," Pandora's founder and CEO Tim Westergren said in the earnings statement.

Unlike the globe-spanning on-demand services, Pandora is available only in the United States, Australia and New Zealand in part due to the complex rules governing radio around the world. — AFP

## NO HIGH-RISES, NO CONCRETE JUNGLE IN CHINA'S NEW SATELLITE CAPITAL

**BEIJING:** China will ban large-scale property development including towering skyscrapers in an ambitious new economic zone near Beijing, the leading local Communist Party official wrote in an editorial in the People's Daily yesterday.

"Every inch of land" in the Xiongan New Area will be carefully and deliberately planned, wrote Zhao Kezhi, party chief of Hebei province, where Xiongan is located.

The zone, around 100 km (60 miles) southwest of Beijing, will house some of Beijing's relocated "non-capital functions", though few other details have been announced, and most work appears to still be in the planning stages. News last month

of the scheme to set up the zone - to be modelled on the Shenzhen Special Economic Zone that helped kickstart China's economic reforms in 1980 - sent land prices soaring and prompted government warnings against speculation.

Zhao said Xiongan will not engage in "land finance", referring to the practice of local governments' reliance on revenue from selling land to developers for funding, and will effectively manage land prices, home prices and rents. Policymakers are also stressing green development in Xiongan, which Zhao reinforced by saying there would be no "high-rises, concrete jungles or glass curtains". — Reuters

## DISMANTLING NUCLEAR: GERMAN POWER FIRMS SELL NEW SKILLS

**FRANKFURT:** Energy groups E.ON and EnBW are tearing down their nuclear plants at massive cost following Germany's decision to abandon nuclear power by 2022, but they are seeking to turn a burden into business by exporting their newfound dismantling skills. Germany is the only country in the world to dump the technology as a direct consequence of Japan's Fukushima disaster in 2011, a decision that came as a major blow to the two energy firms which owned most of Germany's 17 operational nuclear stations.

E.ON and EnBW have already shut down five plants between them and must close another five by 2022. Not only are they losing a major profit driver - a station could earn 1 million euros (\$1.1 million) a day - but are also facing combined decommissioning costs of around 17 billion euros. This tough new reality has nonetheless forced them to rapidly acquire expertise in the lengthy and complex process of dismantling nuclear plants - presenting an unlikely but potentially lucrative business opportunity in a world where dozens of reactors are set to be closed over the next 25 years. They say their skills are attracting the interest of international customers. "We are increasingly getting requests from countries where

the decommissioning of nuclear plants is an issue or will become one," said a spokeswoman for E.ON's PreussenElektra division, which was formed last year to wind down the company's nuclear business and operate the plants in the interim period.

The unit, which employs about 650 decommissioning staff, said it was seeing particularly strong demand for its know-how in Japan, where 12 reactors are set to be closed down, adding that Mitsubishi Heavy Industries (MHI) was among its clients. EnBW formed its plant decommissioning division following the Fukushima disaster and it has about 500 staff. More recently, the division launched a consultancy service aimed at pitching for external work, including internationally.

It said it had won contracts with operators, research institutes and nuclear regulators in Germany and Europe, but declined to give names. A source familiar with the matter said that the group had advised all three Swiss nuclear plants operators - BKW Energie, Axpo and Alpiq - in dismantling projects last year and was still actively working for one of them.

MHI, Axpo and Alpiq all declined to comment. BKW said it was in contact with several firms active in dismantling, including

EnBW. E.ON and EnBW, which both regard decommissioning as a growth business, did not give figures for their decommissioning division's financial performance or targets, saying they did not break them out from the wider group.

### Westinghouse

E.ON and EnBW are, however, entering a crowded global market where they will have to compete with bigger rivals including market leader Areva, which has a 5,000-strong decommissioning team, privately-held Bechtel, Aecom and Fluor. With US nuclear services provider Westinghouse's Chapter 11 filing in March hitting one of the biggest names in the sector, all players are hoping to increase their slice of the action. There is plenty of work.

The International Energy Agency reckons that about 150 gigawatts of nuclear capacity, more than a third of the world's total, will be retired by 2040, with Europe accounting for the bulk at more than 40 percent. "Within the next few decades, the majority of nuclear plants currently in operation will approach the end of their useful lives, requiring either refurbishment or decommissioning," said Randy Wotring, president of Technical and Operational Services at US-based Aecom.

The market for nuclear decommissioning services is expected to nearly double to \$8.6 billion euros by 2021, from \$4.8 billion last year, according to research firm MarketsandMarkets. But only about a quarter is being outsourced by utilities, which prefer to keep much of the dismantling work in-house, industry sources said.

"The decommissioning market it is a tough one but also a promising one," said Arnaud Gay, executive vice president of International Operations at France's Areva, the world's top nuclear plant dismantler. It was promising because it was a rapidly expanding market, he added, but difficult because there was a fierce pressure on costs, given the work involved simply erasing an asset rather than building one that would produce value in the future.

### Long and costly

Plant dismantling work spans everything from project management to the removal of walls with low levels of radiation as well as more complex tasks such as using plasma cutters to take apart highly polluted parts, for example reactor pressure vessels. Based on current estimates from plant operators and consultancy Callan Associates, the average cost of dismantling a nuclear plant

with a capacity of about 1 gigawatt is 600-800 million euros.

Decommissioning can take anywhere between 10 to 40 years, depending on whether operators chose direct dismantling or nuclear entombment, where reactors are first sealed off to let radiation levels fall. The German utilities are seeking to focus on the project management experience they have gathered from closing their own reactors, and contract out some work to specialist companies.

Pointing to the value of good management, E.ON said it expected that more efficient processes and economies of scale would help it cut its own dismantling bill by about 1 billion euros, or 9 percent. The two companies will find themselves in competition with the likes of US firm Bechtel, which also functions as a project manager during dismantling processes and in March announced a foray into the European market in a joint venture with GE Hitachi Nuclear Energy. James Taylor, general manager of Bechtel's Environmental business - speaking about the ambitions of the German utilities - said it was early days and that such businesses were developed over decades. "It's a 40-year market so we are patient," he said.—Reuters

## CAMBODIA SEIZES 68 TONS OF FAKE COSMETIC PRODUCTS

**PHNOM PENH:** Cambodian authorities have confiscated 68 tons of fake cosmetic products that purported to be made in countries like Japan and South Korea, an official said, calling it the country's largest bust of counterfeit make-up. The cosmetics included bottles of hair dye, skin-whitening creams and shampoo worth "millions of dollars", said Meach Sophana, the head of government's counterfeit committee.

The goods were produced locally but labeled as products made in countries like Japan, South Korea, China, the US, Germany and Thailand, said Meach Sophana. Some of the cosmetics had fake branding from the luxury Japanese skin care firm Shiseido, he added. "This is a huge quantity in the history of counterfeit crackdowns in our country," the official

told reporters. He said three people, including two Chinese nationals, were detained in the raids on warehouses in the capital Phnom Penh and Kandal province in March and April following a month-long investigation.

Cambodian authorities would now investigate health hazards linked to the fake products, said Meach Sophana. "We often see news on Facebook or in newspapers that some (women) who used skin-whitening lotion suffered side effects and died, or had their skin damaged," he said. Skin whitening creams are popular in Cambodia, where many believe a lighter complexion reflects a higher status. That image is fuelled by the popularity of light-skinned models and actors on billboards and television. — AFP

## IN DROUGHT-HIT KENYA, SELLING WATER KEEPS CITY YOUTH IN BUSINESS, OFF DRUGS

**GITHURAI, Kenya:** Now onto his third job since finishing high school a decade ago, Festus Chege is hoping his latest venture as a water vendor in Githurai, a growing suburb to the south of Kenya's capital Nairobi, will pay off. Like many young people from poor families, the 30-year-old passed his high-school exams but lacked the funds to pursue his studies, confining him to work in the city's fast-expanding informal sector.

Kenya's current drought, which is affecting some 3 million people across the East African country, has led to a drop in water volumes in reservoirs serving Nairobi residents. The city authorities have been forced to ration water services, giving priority to critical facilities like hospitals, as well as manufacturers. Taps in poor households are now empty of piped water most of the time, and they have little choice but to buy their water from vendors like Chege.

"The water business is good," said Chege, who has been selling water for the past four months. "People call me to supply them with water as early as 4 am." Chege, who uses a rickshaw to transport the water, sells 20-litre drums of water for 50 shillings (\$0.49) each. In a day, he can supply as many as 40 drums, earning him 2,000 shillings - more than double a government clerk's wage. It's five times more than what he was making last year hawking secondhand clothes.

"There were days when I would find myself idle because of a lack of customers," said Chege. That's when he would join his friends to smoke bhang, a form of cannabis - a common pastime among young slum-dwellers who take the drug in secret dens. Now, Chege says he no longer has time to mess around with drugs because he is busy from dawn to dusk selling water.

In January this year, he joined a youth group called Ni Sisi Sasa ("It is our time"), which helps jobless young people in the neighborhood improve their lives. One activity it offers is water vending.

The group has a water depot in Githurai, which purchases its supply from the Kiambu County Council water unit. Group members like Chege buy water from the depot at low rates and resell it to local residents at a profit. "By the end of the year, I want to make enough money so that I can enroll in a teacher training college," said Chege. He plans

to continue supporting the group even if he realises his ambition of becoming a teacher.

### Growing population

According to the Nairobi City Water and Sewerage Company (NCWSC), the capital's residents need 740,000 cubic meters of water daily to meet demand. Currently only 462,000 cubic metres of water are being supplied due to declining water levels in the Ndakaini reservoir, said Philip Gichuki, NCWSC's managing director. The reservoir, which supplies 85 percent of the city's water, has a capacity of 70 million cubic meters, but due to poor rains this season, it is only around 40 percent full.

For instance, the Aberdares water tower in central Kenya - the source of rivers feeding the reservoir - has received just 250 mm of rain since December, way below the 1,000 mm it would normally receive in the rainy season, said Gichuki. "The shortage has forced us to ration water," said Nairobi County's executive officer for water, Peter Kimori. "Estates have been forced to look for alternative sources due to the rationing."

The county government plans to sink 140 boreholes in Nairobi's fringe estates to ward off future water shortages. But experts like Gichuki say more will be needed to meet demand in the capital due to its growing population, as rural migrants flock to areas like Githurai where many find work as manual laborers. According to the World Bank, there are over 4 million people around a tenth of Kenya's population - living in Nairobi and its suburbs. In 1963, when Kenya attained independence, the city was home to only a third of a million people.

### Creaking infrastructure

Gichuki said the solution was to upgrade the city's water infrastructure. "It has not been developed since post-independence days," said Gichuki. "This is leading to the increasing water pressure and shortage in Nairobi." Fred Kihara, water fund manager at The Nature Conservancy, an international NGO, said the worsening water problem in Nairobi is linked to climate change, as rainfall volumes in central Kenya have declined. On top of this, the government is not doing enough to conserve water towers like the Aberdares, he added, by preventing forests being cut down for farming, for instance. — Reuters



**FRANKFURT:** The zoo's latest acquisition, a panther chameleon, climbs on the branch of a small tree in its enclosure in the zoo in Frankfurt, Germany. — AP

## UNINVITED TAIWAN SAYS GOING TO UN HEALTH MEETING, WARNS CHINA ON TIES

### ASSERTIVE STAND FOR THE ISLAND TO EXCHANGE VIEWS

**TAIPEI:** Taiwan will send a delegation to a UN health meeting even though it does not have an invitation, the government said yesterday, warning China that attempts to exclude it could irreversibly damage ties. Self-ruled Taiwan has accused Beijing of obstructing its efforts to attend the May 22-31 annual meeting in Geneva of the World Health Assembly, the decision-making body of the World Health Organization (WHO).

China views democratic Taiwan as a renegade province to be retaken with the use of force if necessary, and says other countries and international organizations should not recognize it or treat as a separate country. Taiwan is not a member of the United Nations, which recognizes the "one China" policy centered on Beijing, and it never formally takes part in UN meetings. But it has in the past been given observer status at some conferences with Beijing's acquiescence.

Ties between the mainland and the island have worsened since the election last year of Taiwan President Tsai Ing-wen, of the independence-leaning Democratic Progressive Party (DPP) who - unlike the island's previous China-friendly administration - has not acknowledged the "one China" principle. Beijing warned last year that Taiwan's

acceptance of that principle was a condition for the retention of its observer status at the World Health Assembly (WHA).

In an unusually assertive stand for the island, its foreign ministry said Chen Shih-chung, minister of health and welfare, would lead a delegation to Geneva "to exchange views" with WHA members on global health and safety. Taiwan's top China policymaking official said Beijing's "rigid and confrontational" approach would have serious consequences. "Beijing authorities should carefully consider the serious consequences of insisting that Taiwan not be allowed to participate in the WHA and to continue to pressure Taiwan's international space," the island's Mainland Affairs Council said in a statement. That would "result in irreversible damage to cross-strait relations." In Geneva, WHO spokesman Christian Lindmeier said the matter was not yet resolved although invitations had been sent.

"Officially the deadline has passed but yet it is my understanding that the discussions are still ongoing and we are also on our side waiting for any developments." "To my understanding the one China policy is a UN-wide accepted policy," he told a regular UN briefing.

### Obstacle

A Chinese government delegation this month objected to a Taiwan attending a meeting in Australia on conflict diamonds, forcing the removal of Taiwanese delegates. In September, a UN aviation agency snubbed Taiwan by not inviting it to a conference in Canada.

Tsai's DPP said the government would not bow to Chinese pressure. Taiwan has said its allies and friends such as the United States, Canada and Japan have supported its attendance at the health meeting. It says health should not be politicized and that leaving Taiwan out of dialogue puts the world's health safety-net at risk. China said on Monday the island's DPP administration should bear "full responsibility" for their absence from the Geneva meeting, due to its refusal to accept "one China".

"This places an obstacle to Taiwan's participation," An Fengshan, a spokesman for China's Taiwan Affairs Office, said in a statement. Asked whether China had asked Switzerland to block the entry of the Taiwan delegation, Chinese foreign ministry spokesman Geng Shuang told a news briefing: "No matter what the DPP authorities in Taiwan do, they are doomed to fail." —Reuters

## AS DROUGHTS WORSEN, PHONES AND RADIOS LEAD WAY TO WATER FOR NIGER'S HERDERS

**GUILLOKI, Niger:** When Moumouni Abdoulaye and his fellow herders in western Niger used to set off on scouting missions in search of water, they feared for their livestock - and for their own lives. Unable to rely anymore on their traditional methods of predicting the weather amid increasingly erratic droughts and floods, and lacking modern climate information, they struggled to predict where, and when, they might find water in the vast arid region.

"We were living in limbo. Without knowledge, we constantly risked our lives," said Abdoulaye, seeking shade under a tree from the fierce midday sun in Niger's Tillabery region. But a project to involve the region's semi-nomadic people in the production of locally-specific, real-time weather forecasts - and provide them with radios and mobile phones to receive and share the information - is transforming the lives of tens of thousands of Nigeriens like Abdoulaye.

"Now we receive daily updates about rainfall, can call other communities to ask if they have had rain, and plan our movements accordingly," Abdoulaye said. In Niger, as across much of Africa's Sahel region, frequent droughts have impoverished many people and made it much harder to make a living from agriculture. That is happening in a West African country already consistently ranked at the bottom of the UN Human Development Index.

With climate change now exacerbating pres-

sures, experts say there is a growing and urgent need for better climate information, to ensure farmers and pastoralists are equipped to cope with unpredictable rainfall and climate shocks. Across Africa, only limited climate data is collected and made available and information services are often not well understood, user-friendly, or followed up to help people put the information to use in adapting to climate threats, experts say.

Ensuring that communities play a role - alongside state and aid agencies - in generating and sharing weather information is the best way to get them to use it and to build their resilience to the growing pressures, said Blane Harvey of the Overseas Development Institute (ODI). "Co-participation is very powerful because people will buy into a service if they've had a hand in producing it," he said. "Crucially, they bring in their local knowledge, which helps to downscale and triangulate more regionalized forecasts," added Harvey, a research associate at the London-based thinktank.

### Collaboration crucial

A lack of weather stations across Africa means that forecasts, produced by national meteorological agencies, tend to be too broad to be of much use at a local level. But a project launched in 2015, funded by the U.K. Department for International Development (DFID) and led by CARE International,

is trying to improve the quality of and access to climate data for farmers and pastoralists in western Niger. CARE's project under the Building Resilience and Adaptation to Climate Extremes and Disasters (BRACED) program aims to help 450,000 people become better prepared for climate shocks, including through giving them access to better forecasts.

The goal is to help them diversify their farming and find ways of making money which are not so heavily impacted by climate change, in order to better withstand climate pressures. For farmer Adamou Soumana, improved access to climate information has given his village a better understanding of the weather shocks they are encountering, and the confidence to adopt resilience boosting strategies such as using climate-adapted seeds, finding sustainable ways to harvest forest products, and storing harvests.

"Previously, if it rained in January, we rushed to plant our crops thinking the rainy season starts - when in fact it never comes before May," he said. "Now we understand climate shocks, and can plan our activities in advance. We feel more resilient," he said. The BRACED project has helped communities by acting as a broker between them and meteorological agencies, and ensuring agency partners are trained to interpret climate data, translate it into local languages and help people to make sense of the forecasts. — Reuters



**MINSK:** Swans take off on a lake near the village of Petrevichi, 165 km west of capital Minsk, Belarus. — AP

# FOSSILS SUGGEST HOMINIDS MAY HAVE LIVED ALONGSIDE MODERN HUMANS

**MAROPENG, South Africa:** Primitive hominids may have lived in Africa at the same time as humans, researchers said yesterday, in new findings that could change the understanding of human evolution. Fossils found deep in South Africa's Rising Star cave complex in 2013 have been dated by several expert teams with their findings suggesting the hominids, called *Homo naledi*, may have lived alongside *Homo sapiens*. It had previously been thought that the hominids were millions of years old.

A team of 20 scientists from laboratories and institutions around the world, including in South Africa and Australia, established the age of the fossils which suggests that *Homo naledi* may well have lived at the same time as humans. Their findings were published Tuesday in three papers in the journal *eLife*. The focus of the team's research has been South Africa's barely accessible Rising Star Cave system, part of the Cradle of Humankind World Heritage Site, about 50 kilometers northwest of Johannesburg.

The area has been an incredibly rich source of artifacts for paleontologists since it was first discovered. "There has been a great deal of speculation on how old *Homo naledi* was... Everyone who has examined the anatomy of *Homo naledi* has suggested that it would be in the millions of years," said project leader and researcher at Wits University, Lee Berger. He said it was possible that "this small-brain hominid species actually encountered *Homo sapiens*."

But now, having established the age of the fossils using six independent methods, the team estimates that they are between 236,000 and 335,000-years-old the beginning of the rise of modern human behavior, said Berger. Researcher John Hawks said that the separate discovery of new *Homo naledi* fossils-including a pristine skull-in two other caves "confirmed that we're looking at an anatomical



**JOHANNESBURG:** Paleoanthropologist and National Geographic Explorer-in-Residence, Professor Lee Rogers Berger, right, Gauteng Premier David Makhura, 2nd from right, Professor Johan Hawks, 3rd from right, from the University of Wisconsin-Madison, Paul Dirks, center, from James Cook University in Australia, University of Witwatersrand Vice Chancellor Adam Habib, 3rd from left, and Peter Schmid, 2nd from left, from University of Zurich unveil ONEOO near Johannesburg yesterday in South Africa.



pattern that is very different from any other common species".

"Humans, relatives of humans and distant relatives of humans such as *Homo naledi* were living here in southern parts of Africa throughout most of all our evolutionary history over the past 1.5 to 2 million years," Hawks told journalists. "Our evolution took place within a diversity of hominid lineages that existed with

each other throughout that time." Some experts disputed the findings of the team that discovered the initial fossils and named the new species *Homo naledi*, arguing that they were merely early *Homo erectus*.

**All sorts of possibilities**

"We're looking at a diversity of species in Africa in the latest stages of our evolutionary

history that no one had suspected would be there," said Hawks, an academic at the University of Wisconsin in the United States. "That implies that as our species arose, it arose with others, that there were a diversity of hominid species in Africa occupying these environments during what we had considered to be the critical time period of modern human origins."

Work has begun to also date the latest fossils to be found. Paul Dirks, a professor at Australia's James Cook University which is involved in the project, said that *Homo naledi*'s hand structure and the more recent era in which it is thought to have lived means it could have been a toolmaker. The new findings have shown that the history of evolution is far more complicated than a straight-forward sequential history, he said.

"We have many different branches on the family tree and it is only fairly recently that there is only one survivor on the landscape. The new dating of the fossils opens up all sorts of possibilities for an interchange of... behaviors between *Homo naledi* and *Homo sapiens*," Dirks added.

"This will have profound effect on archeology... (it is a) critical missing part of what happened in human evolution," said Berger, who described the findings as "a Rosetta Stone for us".

*Homo naledi* had a tiny brain, about the size of an orange and stood about 1.5 meters tall, weighing around 45 kilograms, experts say. *Homo naledi*'s teeth and skull are similar to those of early humans while their shoulders are more similar to those of apes. They had a brain about a third of the size of a modern human brain and curved fingers that are seemingly well suited for climbing. — AFP



**JOHANNESBURG:** A general view of ONEOO a new skeleton fossil findings of the Homo Naledi Hominin species is seen at the cradle of Human Kind in Maropeng near Johannesburg in South Africa. — AFP photos

**CLINIC PAGE**



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# 'MAKE IT HAPPEN' PROGRAM BUILDS AUTHENTIC ENTREPRENEURIAL CULTURE TO LAUNCH IN KUWAIT

The Kuwaiti National Fund (KNF) will take the lead in launching the 'Make It Happen' pre-incubation program, in collaboration with Al-Reyada Capital, Bad Idea, Women Mentor Forum (WMF), and era.media. Aimed at both Kuwaitis and non-Kuwaitis, 'Make It Happen' is an initiative that encourages youth to submit their business ideas in a non-threatening environment, and in return receive the guidance and necessary support to see their entrepreneurial dreams come to life. One of the program's primary objectives is to increase and sustain private sector employment in the near future for Kuwaitis, by facilitating a pipeline of creative, innovative, and dedicated future thought leaders and ideators.

Through 'Make It Happen', the Kuwait National Fund is working to provide a well-established platform that will bring to light the skills and talents possessed by youth in Kuwait. This allows KNF to move one step closer to achieving its overarching goal of shaping the Kuwaiti youth to become the main drivers of economic stability in the country, allowing for a brighter, more stable Kuwait.

The initiative is currently working with the first wave of the KNF ICT Hub entrepreneurs, who are providing local solutions across multiple industries. One of those entrepreneurs is Ali Karam, founder of Startup Ed Hub, who envisions a new generation of future-ready entrepreneurs having a direct impact on the prosperity of the society. Also inspiring are the female entrepreneurs and founders of Technocare, Aisha Alenezi and Aljazi Alajmi, who are looking to use the latest technologies to create caring devices and/or applications for patients and caregivers to improve their



quality of life. 'Make It Happen' would provide the type of encouragement to prepare such Kuwaiti youth for the growth of the society by aiding in developing their business ideas.

The program is devised to be all-inclusive, requiring no prior experience in entrepreneurship, technology, or otherwise. Where Bad Idea are bringing the global standards, rigor, and knowledge to the program, Al-Reyada, WMF, and era.media are focused on providing the insights to successfully produce a program that is localized in nature and relevant to the opportunities and challenges faced by innovators in Kuwait.

The 'Make It Happen' program is accredited by the University of Glasgow, with a Level 5 Scottish Qualification. The full program is typi-

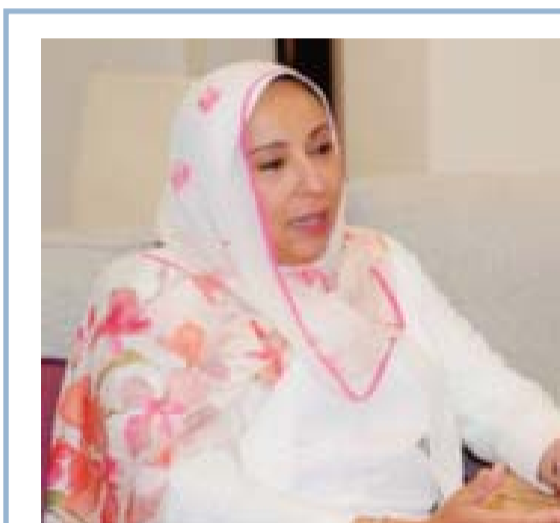
cally delivered with 5 Outcomes: Business Modeling, Pitching, Networking, Resource Management, and Investment Readiness. Together, these outcomes have been proven to be highly engaging, creating a significant increase in entrepreneurial awareness and enthusiasm.

Bad Idea, who are acting as the program's knowledge partners and consultants, perceive Kuwait as having the potential to be a world-leading entrepreneurial hub, given the small nation's embedded values of creativity, resourcefulness, tenacity, drive, and ambition. Alongside KNF, Al-Reyada Capital, WMF, and era.media, they hope to inspire a new generation of entrepreneurs through 'Make It Happen'.



Bad Idea's Anthony Gerrard states, "I had the great pleasure of exploring the educational and entrepreneurial ecosystem in Kuwait during a visit in January. I met with a wide range of stakeholders across the education and startup communities, however it was the ambition in Talal Al-Ajeel, Managing Partner of Al-Reyada Capital, and determination of Mohammad Abdullah, Executive Director for the National Fund, that enabled me to come back to Kuwait and be part of the entrepreneurial revolution." He believes that the most effective way for youth to become catalysts for change and economic growth is through entrepreneurship, ensuring that the 'Make It Happen' program will be a step in this direction.

Anthony and his companies have been recognized by the European Union for demonstrating best practice in developing entrepreneurial curriculums. He is widely regarded as a Thought Leader in solving entrepreneurial problems and speaks at Social Innovation events across the EMEA region. Anthony is also a Guest Lecturer at Glasgow Caledonian University, and has presented to delegations from Taiwan, South Korea, and Thailand through the British Council. In 2015/16 he was highly commended for Social Entrepreneur of the Year, recognized for Outstanding Contribution by a Young Business Leader, and his company was nominated for eight awards, including Social Enterprise of the Year.



Sheikha Fadya Saad Al-Abdullah Al-Sabah

## AL-SAAD CHARITY HOSTS BAZAAR

Al-Saad Charity for Knowledge and Scientific Research will hold its second charity bazaar at Sheikh Salem Al-Ali ceremonial hall in Qortoba in the period of May 10-15, 2017 (starting from 5:00 pm). The Charity's Chairperson Sheikha Fadya Saad Al-Abdullah Al-Sabah noting that the bazaar would help in supporting Kuwaiti women and students. Saad added that ever since inception, the charity has been keen on highlighting Kuwaiti, GCC and Arab women potentials, as well as developing them and handling any weaknesses.

## MARINA HOTEL KUWAIT TRAINS LOYAC INTERNS

Marina Hotel Kuwait collaborated once again with the Lothan Youth Achievement Center (LOYAC), in an effort to host students for an extensive training program. The initiative reflects the hotel's proactive contribution to the development of the youth.

Building on the success of the previous seven years, Marina Hotel hosted two students Abdullatif Mohammad Fareed and Hasan Al-Hasan Al-Nasser for four weeks. The internship enabled the Kuwaiti youth to learn hands-on skills making them better prepared to embark on their professional careers.

During the training period, the interns understood the fundamentals of working within a hotel and the hotel's Housekeeping as well as Front Office departments. The internship program aims at empowering the interns and to provide them with better opportunities upon entering the job market by offering theoretical and practical components as along with a number of team building and recreational activities.

Nabil Hammoud, General Manager of Marina hotel said: "We are very pleased to cooperate with LOYAC, given its long history in creating career opportunities for youth at national levels. The interns' experience of being part of a team will help them develop their character, build more confidence and prepare them in the future for whatever decision they make. We are lucky to have the opportunity to host such talented and ambitious students and wish them all success in their careers."

"LOYAC's mission aims to develop the community and help it cope with the challenges of the future. This falls perfectly under Marina Hotel Kuwait's values, to support the Kuwaiti community to progress and build local talent" further concluded Hammoud



Nabil Hammoud with the students.

The interns were allotted tasks and provided with hands on experience of a professional ambience with its daily functionalities. They gained invaluable insight into work-life and environment, while benefitting from a professional service orientation. At the end of their internship period,

the interns were assessed and given feedback on their performance by their direct mentor. This collaboration is an annual internship program which offers college, university and high school students the opportunity to acquire first-hand experience in the hospitality industry.

## ORIENTATION FOR ICSK CLASS XI: USHERING IN A NEW ERA

The academic year 2017-2018 at The Indian Community School (Senior) Kuwait (ICSK), is being laced with newer avenues to explore and abundant goals to achieve. In its quest to provide quality education to its students the school organized an orientation program for the newly admitted students of class XI on 22 April 2017, prior to the formal initiation of the new scholastic session. The program was conducted in two separate sessions to incorporate all 300 students along with their parents.

The session commenced with the school prayer invoking the divine blessings followed by a poignant rendering of the welcome song by the school choir, Swaranjali. The congregation was ardently welcomed by Dr Sam Kuruvilla, the Vice Principal of ICSK (Senior). Niva Elna, supervisor-Senior Secondary in her introductory address exhorted the students to utilize the opportunities and appraised them of the various co-curricular activities specially designed for the holistic development of the children. The class teachers and joint class teachers introduced themselves to bridge the



ridges between the teacher and the taught. The Principal Dr V Binumon in his interactive session, spurred the students on with words of inspiration tinged with advice on mind management and decision making. He pointed out to the students that in order to be successful, they need to be focused with a controlled mind, humble and empowered, to reach their goal. The students were encouraged to pre-

pare and follow a proper methodology for achieving the academic goal. The students were briefed on the course details along with sixth subject option provided by the school. He also acquainted them with the academic calendar of the school and the promotion policy as per the CBSE by-law.

The orientation program sent out a clear message to the students that it is imperative

for them to work diligently and come up to the expected levels of competence with the support, guidance and encouragement of the dedicated faculty. It also enlightened them on time management, regularity to school, importance of planning, self-confidence and ill effects of procrastination. Students were educated on the resources provided during this session that would support students in their academic vision and help them to make healthy social choices. The session outlined a framework for success that could be attained by setting standards and working hard to reach them.

The first and second sessions culminated with a blessing ceremony followed by the vote of thanks by Abdul Rasheed, the program convener and Sunish Mathew, faculty from English department respectively. In fact, the students along with their parents dispersed with a greater optimism and extended their gratitude to Dr V Binumon for the inspiring and informative session. The session not just motivated the children but also gave them pointers to life and thoughts to ponder over.



Khalid Mohammad bin Sabti, Executive Vice President for Touristic Affairs at the Touristic Enterprises Company (TEC), resigned after 35 years in service in order to pursue a career in the private sector. TEC wishes Sabti best of luck in his future endeavors.



## KERALA LATIN COMMUNITY KUWAIT CONDUCTS 5TH ANNIVERSARY AND EASTER SANGAMAM

The inmates of Kerala Latin Community Kuwait (KLCK) conducted the 5th Anniversary and Easter Sangamam 2017 at Kuwait City Cathedral premises recently. KLCK President Rev Peter Mathew OFMCap presided over the function and the function was inaugurated by Rev Blany Pinto SDB (Parish Priest - St Therese Parish, Salmiya). KLCK treasurer Nelson welcomed the audience and KLCK Joint President Rev Paul Manuel OFMCap made an inspirational speech. KLCK General Secretary David Samson presented the Annual Report.

During his inaugural speech, Rev Blany Pinto SDB congratulate all the KLCK members in their 5th anniversary. The annual KLCK Souvenir magazine was released on the function by Rev Blany Pinto SDB presenting the first copy to Rev Peter Mathew.

Prizes were distributed for the various events comprised of coloring competitions for children, Quiz competition contest, Indoor and Outdoor games which were conducted during the year made the program unique. The Anniversary program convener Kishore Simon proposed the vote of thanks.

Preparations for the smooth conduct of function were



done under the supervision of various sub committees. The function concluded with various cultural extravaganza by KLCK inmates from different areas of Kuwait. The members felt well-nourished even before they were served with refreshments by the end of the program.

#SpiritofKuwait

The people are peers in human dignity and have, in the eyes of the Law, equal public rights and obligations. There shall be made no differentiation among them because of race, origin, language or religion.

- Article (29) -



مشكورة  
SALAMAT

#SpiritofKuwait



مشكور  
THANK YOU

#SpiritofKuwait



KUWAIT NATIONAL CINEMA COMPANY  
LAUNCHES #SPIRITOFKUWAIT CAMPAIGN

مشكور  
DHONNO-BAAD

#SpiritofKuwait



Kuwaiti National Cinema Company (KNCC) recently launched a public awareness campaign titled "Spirit of Kuwait" which celebrates the human rights, legal and moral foundations on which the State of Kuwait was founded, as well as the country's exemplary constitution that enshrines the values of justice and equality among individuals. The campaign expresses the nation's gratitude to everyone who has contributed to the continued development and prosperity of the nation without discrimination. The campaign includes a series of outdoor and print media vignettes, as well as videos that will be shown on KNCC's screens.

"We launched this campaign based on our belief in the role of the private sector and its social and humanitarian responsibility to serve the State of Kuwait," said Ahmed Al-Osaimi, CEO of KNCC. "It also comes as part of our commitment to spreading the positive social and moral values that the Kuwaiti society has been built on since its inception."

The campaign is comprised of several vignettes, the first of which highlights article #29 of the Kuwaiti constitution which states that people are

equal in human dignity and rights regardless of race, origin, language or religion. The remaining vignettes show images representing Kuwaiti individuals thanking expatriates of diverse backgrounds for their contribution to Kuwait's rise and prosperity.

"The country's contemporary history is characterized by its openness to the world and its welcome of many expatriate communities who all make their lives here," added Osaimi. "The campaign is dedicated to all those who have contributed towards the development of Kuwait and its society, and is a reminder of the human and moral values on which our beloved country was based, and an invitation for everyone to participate in expressing these values and feelings of gratitude."

The campaign includes a dedicated hashtag #SpiritofKuwait, which was launched on social media as a focal point for participation through photographs, comments and videos that embody the message of the campaign, to reaffirm the commitment of society to the country's values and ideals, and encourage the youth to embrace and practice them in their daily lives.

مشكورة  
SHUKRIYA

#SpiritofKuwait



RUSSIAN EMBASSY HOSTS CONCERT TO CELEBRATE 'VICTORY DAY'

The Russian Embassy hosted a concert on the occasion of the 72nd Anniversary of the Victory in the World War II. The event was attended by more than 300 guests. Ambassador of Russia to Kuwait Alexey Solomatn gave a speech and congratulated the audience on the upcoming Victory Day. Students of the Russian school and compatriots performed famous songs and dances created during the Great Patriotic war. The Moscow Cossack Choir were special guests of the evening. They performed traditional Cossack songs and dances beloved by the public. At the end of the show, the artists and guests sang the famous 'Victory Day' song all together.



Ambassador of Russia to Kuwait Alexey Solomatn delivers a speech during the ceremony. — Photos by Joseph Shagra











FEATURES



# 'Baahubali 2' becomes highest grossing movie in India

An epic battle movie from one of India's lesser-known film industries has trumped Bollywood by becoming the country's highest-grossing film to date, an industry analyst said yesterday. "Baahubali 2: The Conclusion", the final installment of a two-part fantasy adventure, has made more than 10 billion rupees (\$156 million) worldwide since hitting screens on April 28, according to experts. The south Indian movie, which is laden with special effects, has surpassed 2014 Bollywood blockbuster "PK", which made around \$120 million, as India's biggest-grossing movie yet. "Baahubali 2 has crossed ten billion rupees in worldwide gross collections, outdoing Aamir Khan's 'PK' which was previously the number one Indian film worldwide," Indian film

trade analyst Ramesh Bala said. Bollywoodhungama.com, which tracks India's movie industry, also reported that "Baahubali 2" had become the highest grossing Indian film worldwide in history. "Baahubali", meaning "The One With Strong Arms", tells the story of two warring brothers battling for control of a fictional Indian kingdom and its elaborate scenes has seen it compared to hit American movie "300". The SS Rajamouli-directed film features elaborate fight sequences and computer graphics including rampaging elephants and a bull stampede. It was shot in the Telugu and Tamil languages of southern India whose film industries, known as "Tollywood" and

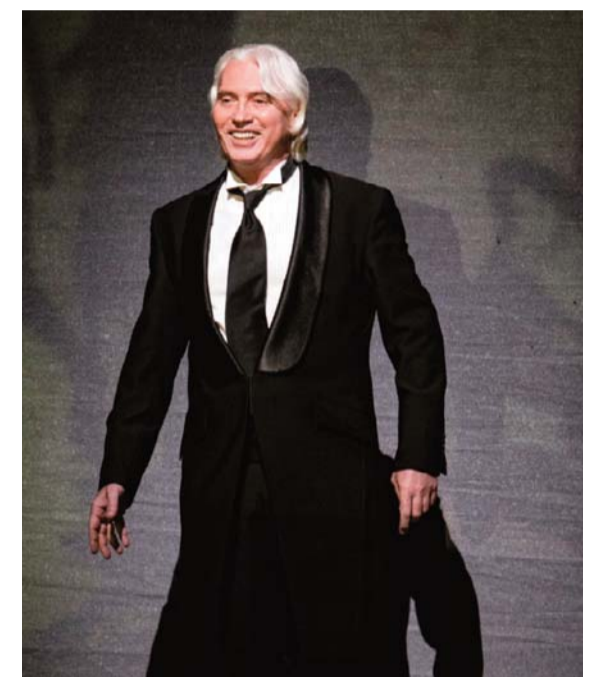
"Kollywood" respectively-are often overshadowed by Hindi-speaking Bollywood. The movie was dubbed into Hindi and other regional Indian languages and has sparked a wave of "Baahubali" mania across the country as fans flock to cinemas to find out how the series ends after the first film finished in a cliffhanger. "Baahubali: The Beginning" made around \$100m in worldwide ticket sales when it was released in 2015, according to industry estimates. The combined cost of making the two movies was about \$70 million, according to estimates, well below the budgets for major Hollywood films. — AFP

## Met Opera stars mark Lincoln Center anniversary

The Metropolitan Opera toasted 50 years at Lincoln Center with a Wagnerian-scale extravaganza Sunday that showcased its global talent roster from across multiple generations. The multimedia concert featured about 40 singers who normally carry an entire show, but were instead presented in one, or at most two numbers, usually a major aria or duet from a popular opera. The evening's dramatic highlight came early when Met General Manager Peter Gelb came out to introduce an artist whom he described as "defying all the odds" to return to the Met stage, in the evening's only performance that wasn't on the official program. Out walked star Russian baritone Dmitri Hvorostovsky who late last year withdrew from opera performances due to an ongoing battle with brain cancer. Hvorostovsky looked a bit gaunt and walked gingerly as he took the stage to loud cheers and a standing ovation. But he delivered an aria from Verdi's "Rigoletto" with ferocious gusto after which he blew kisses to the crowd, which stood for a second time. The Met's anniversary at Lincoln Center, a cultural plaza on the Upper West Side of Manhattan, comes at a challenging time for opera in the United States. Like other US opera houses, the Met has faced difficulty attracting enough new subscribers to replace older audience members who are in decline. But Sunday's concert sold out and drew an enthusiastic response from the audience, most

of whom stayed until the end. The show zipped from piece to piece and genre to genre with fast-changing sets that made ample use of video, but the sheer volume of material lengthened the event to five hours, much longer than expected. **Highlighting new stars** Interspersed with the music were a handful of video segments and vintage footage that included former president Dwight Eisenhower touting the building of Lincoln Center and a segment on how the design of the Met's signature chandeliers was spawned by an errant paint splatter on a sketch by architect Tadeusz Leski. Other segments featured artist Marc Chagall, whose murals hang in the Met, and legendary soprano Leontyne Price, who opened the Met in 1966 in "Antony and Cleopatra." The performance included several selections intended to whet the audience appetite for future Met shows, many featuring newer stars, such as South African soprano Pretty Yende, who joined Polish baritone Mariusz Kwiecien in a cheeky duet from Donizetti's comedy "Don Pasquale" and also sang alongside American Austrian bass-baritone Eric Owens in "Porgy & Bess." Yende is scheduled to sing the Donizetti opera in a future season, while Owens will appear in "Porgy" down the road. Others in this group included soprano Angela Meade and

tenor Michael Fabiano, both rising American singers, who appeared with Austrian bass Gunther Groissbock in Verdi's "I Lombardi." Mexican tenor Javier Camarena, who sang from Donizetti's "La Fille du Regiment," won cheers including several chants of "Viva Mexico." But the gala also showcased artists in the twilight of their Met careers, including conductor and music director emeritus James Levine, the only performer besides Hvorostovsky to get a standing ovation. Levine conducted the final portion of the evening, a high-point of which was a moving performance by Spanish legend Placido Domingo and veteran American soprano Renee Fleming, who joined forces for a love duet from Massenet's "Thais." The evening closed with a rousing choral number from "Aida" that included a screen backdrop with photos of Met stars of yore, including icons like the late Luciano Pavarotti, who still win cheers. — AFP

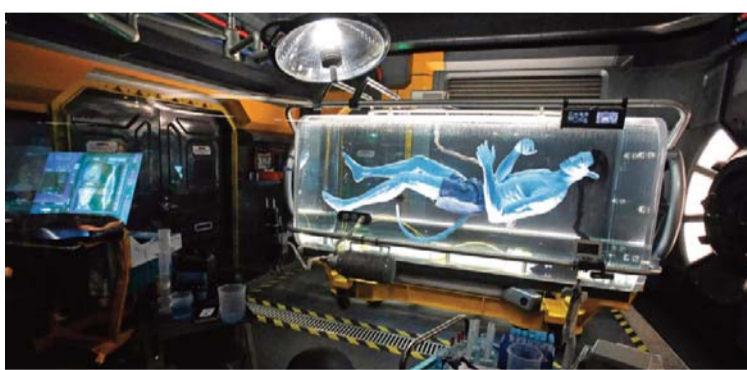


This photo released by the Metropolitan Opera shows Dmitri Hvorostovsky on stage at the 50th anniversary of the company's move to Lincoln Center for the Performing Arts, in New York.



This photo released by the Metropolitan Opera shows Dmitri Hvorostovsky on stage at the 50th anniversary of the company's move to Lincoln Center for the Performing Arts, in New York.

## A look at Disney World's new Pandora-World of Avatar land



In this photo, park guests will see a Na'vi in a science lab while in the queue for the Avatar Flight of Passage ride at Pandora-World of Avatar land attraction.



In this photo, Joe Rohde, design and production leader for Pandora-World of Avatar land attraction, explains about the caverns and the meaning of the cave drawings of the Na'vi, the native inhabitants of the planet Pandora at Disney's Animal Kingdom theme park.

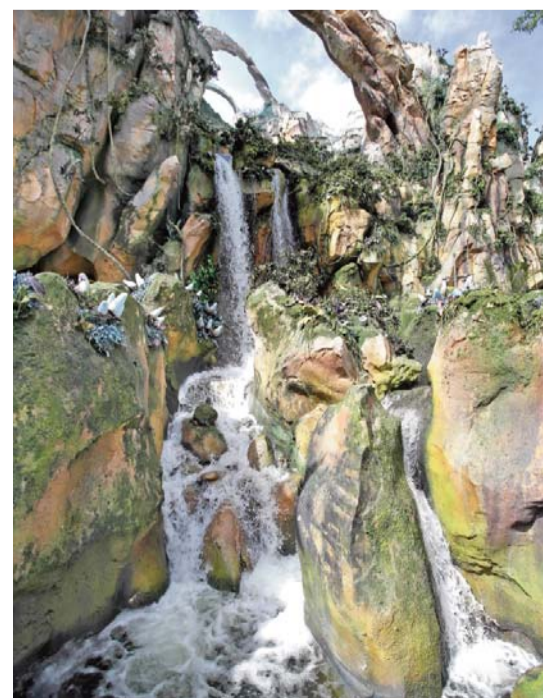


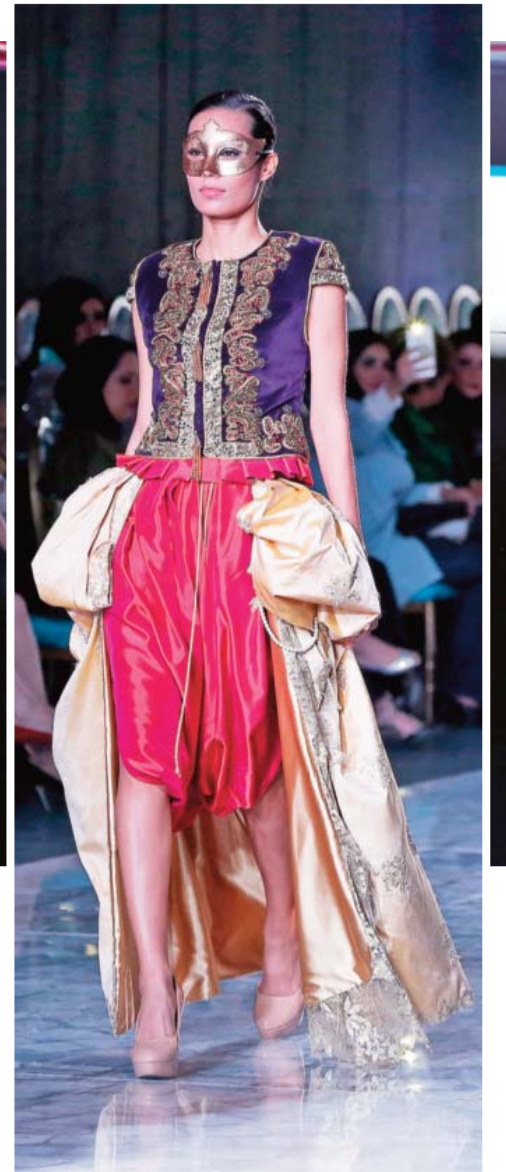
In this photo, some of the menu items are displayed at the Satu'li Canteen restaurant at Pandora-World of Avatar land attraction.

It's not a movie set, but visitors to Disney World's new Pandora-World of Avatar land are in for a cinematic experience. The 12-acre land, inspired by the "Avatar" movie, opens in Florida in late May at Walt Disney World's Animal Kingdom. It cost a half-billion dollars to build. The marquee attraction is Flight of Passage, where a 3-D simulator plunges riders into a cinematic world. You feel like you're riding on the back of a banshee, a bluish, gigantic, winged predator that resembles something out of the Jurassic era. Wearing 3-D glasses and straddling what resembles a stationary motorcycle, you're strapped in, then the lights go out, a screen in front lights up and you're swooped into a world of blue, gigantic aliens called Na'vi, with moon-filled skies, plunging waterfalls, jumping marine animals and towering ocean waves. The ride provides an enchanting and intoxicating five minutes that touches all the senses. Blasts of air and spritzes of mist hit your face, and as you fly through a lush forest, a woody aroma wafts through your nostrils. A visitor could go on the ride 20 times and not catch half the visual details. Disney designers are quick to say the new land is the star of the action, not the backdrop. "The character is being portrayed and played by the place itself and that's different than a set," said Joe Rohde, the design and production leader of Pandora -World of Avatar. Other aspects of Pandora can't quite compete with the excitement and immersion of Flight of Passage. Much of Pandora, at least during the daytime, is hard to distinguish from the rest of Animal Kingdom, Disney's almost 20-year-old zoological-themed park with lush landscaping, an emphasis on conservation and a Noah's ark range of animals. At night, though, Pandora transforms into a sea of color with glowing lights on artificial plants and even in the pavement. The enormous blue Na'vi aliens from the "Avatar" movie appear sparingly, really just on Flight of Passage and a second attraction called Na'vi River Journey. Before going on Flight of Passage, visitors walk through a tunnel in a faux mountain until they stumble upon a laboratory that includes a Na'vi floating in a tank. "It's not as simple as a guy in a costume painted blue walking around out here," Rohde said of the aliens. "We know they are cul-

turally present around us but we will meet them when we go on an excursion." **Floating mountains** The other main attraction, Na'vi River Journey, is an indoor river ride in the dark, lit up by glowing creatures and plants. The ride culminates with a Na'vi animatronic woman beating on drums as a chorus of voices reaches a crescendo. Images of the Na'vi riding horse-like creatures appear behind lush foliage, glimpsed in the distance from the river. Disney has been building attractions themed on movies since Disneyland opened in 1955 with rides inspired by Snow White, Peter Pan and Alice in Wonderland. Often, as with Pandora, the attractions open years after the movies debut. "Avatar" came out in 2009. Director James Cameron's sequel isn't due out until 2020. Lands based on "Star Wars" are scheduled to open in Disney parks in California and Florida in 2019. Pandora-World of Avatar isn't tied to a narrative from the film but rather tells a story set in the future, after humans degraded the jungle through industrial folly and a resurgence of nature overtakes the human-built environment. That theme is a recurring architectural motif, for example with a beverage stand and cantina made to look like they were built for industry by humans but then overrun by plant life. Throughout Pandora, real plants intermingle with artificial plants that resemble alien pods or Dale Chihuly glass sculptures. It's difficult to distinguish what is real. "We were trying to get as close as possible to fool the eye," said Zolt Hornay, a Disney creative executive. At the entrance, visitors hear a cacophony of bird chirps and animal cries. A circle of drums connected to faux tree roots allows visitors to drum and then get a response of drumming or pulsing lights. The focal points are a 135-foot mountaintop where Flight of Passage is located as well as "floating mountains" that appear to be suspended in air but are actually made of concrete. Engineers use tricks to make the park appear bigger than it is. The artificial foliage gets smaller as it goes higher on the mountain to give it the illusion of distance. Disney also is testing out a new way to order food at Pandora. Before going to the park, visitors can pull up a menu on the My Disney Experience mobile app, order lunch and go about visiting the park. When it's time to eat hours later, they can go to the canteen, tap on an app a button that notifies the cooks they are present. Several minutes later their food will be ready in a special line. Jon Landau, the executive producer of the original movie, says he hopes Pandora does for visitors what the film did for movie-goers. "I hope when people come to Pandora and their eyes will be open and they will look at the world a little differently when they go back across the bridge," Landau said. — AP

In this photo, landscaping consisting of real Earth plant species mixed with sculpted Pandora artificial flora is surrounded by ponds and gentle waterfalls at the Pandora-World of Avatar land attraction.





Models wear creations by Moroccan designer Faiza Antri Bouzar during the Kuwait fashion week in Kuwait City on May 8, 2017.

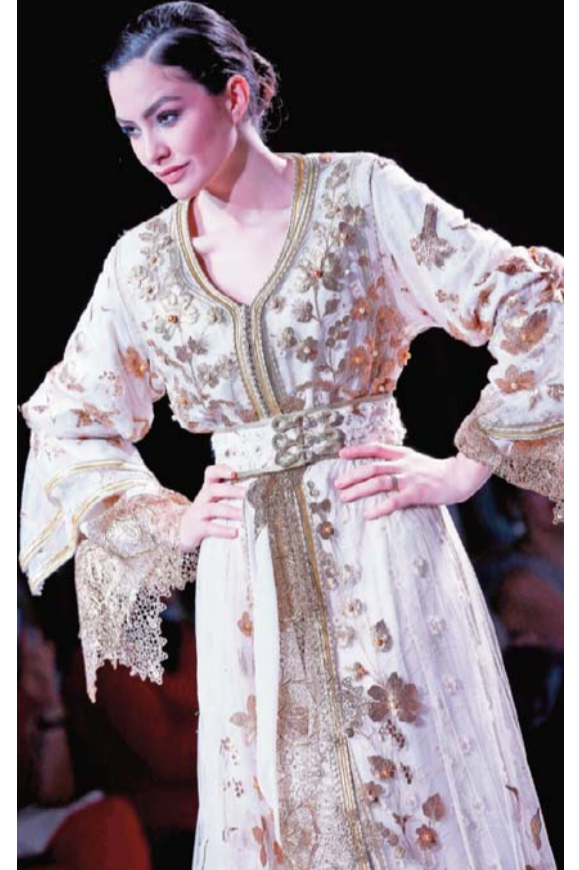
# KUWAIT INTERNATIONAL FASHION WEEK



By Nawara Fattahova

Models presented Oriental style designs on the second day of the Kuwait International Fashion Week event held from May 7 - 11, 2017 at Al-Hamra Business Tower in Kuwait City. The final part of the show was reserved for the Kuwaiti Abayas presented by Rasha Al-Wazzan. 20 international designers are 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, Holiday Inn Downtown and the media sponsor Kuwait Times.

Most of the fashion designers who participated on the second day were from Morocco and Algeria in addition to Kuwait and Lebanon. The designers were: Faiza Antri Bouzar, Fatima Zahra Idrissi, Alaa Najd, Renata Haute Couture, Karim Akrouf, Hadi Katra, Maryem Benamor (Mahe-mi), Myriam Bouafi and Rasha Al-Wazzan. More designers will be presenting their designs on the third day. In addition the showroom that is open daily from 6:00pm - 10:00pm.



Models wear creations by Renata Haute Couture during the Kuwait fashion week in Kuwait City on May 8, 2017.



Models wear creations by Moroccan designer Fatima Zahra during the Kuwait fashion week in Kuwait City on May 8, 2017.



Models wear creations by Algerian designer Karim Akrouf during the Kuwait fashion week in Kuwait City on May 8, 2017.



Designer Renata Haute Couture (L)



Designer Fatima Zahra Idrissi (L)



Designer Meryeme Bouafi (L)



Designer Meyeme Benamour (L)



Designer Alaa Najd



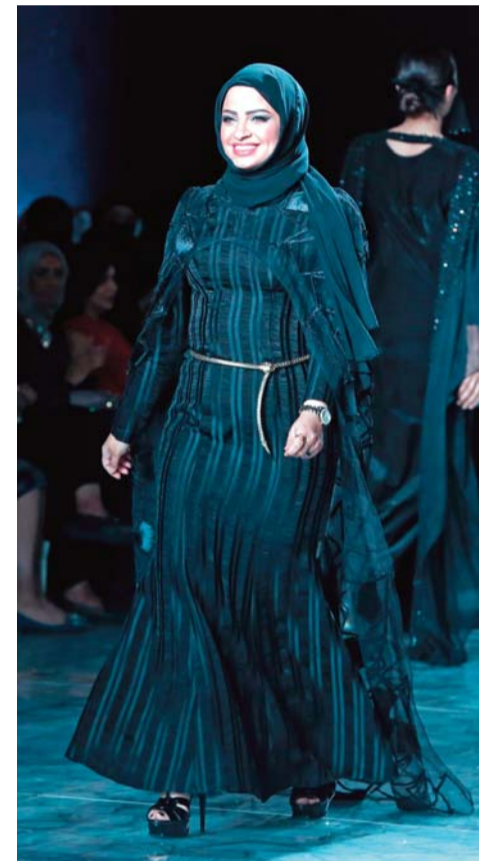
Designer Faiza Antri Bouzar (L)



Designer Karim Akrouf (L)



Designer Hadi Katra



Designer Rasha Al-Wazzan



Models wear creations by Moroccan designer Meryem Berrada during the Kuwait fashion week in Kuwait City on May 8, 2017.

Models wear creations by Kuwaiti designer Rasha Al-Wazzan during the Kuwait fashion week in Kuwait City on May 8, 2017.



A models wears a creations by Lebanese designer Alaa Najd during the Kuwait fashion week in Kuwait City on May 8, 2017.

# KUWAIT BEAUTIFUL & GREEN

## STUDENTS ART COMPETITION

### CATEGORY 9 TO 11 YEARS



(From right) Editor-in-chef Abd Al-Rahman Al-Alyan, Abd Al-Karim Al-Enzi, Waleed Al-Khashti, Ahmed Abul and H.E. Warren Hauck Australian Ambassador to Kuwait

**6-8 years old category**

Al-Ward Al-Rashid from ACA Al-Salmiya School won the grand prize for the 6-8 category having been able to skillfully and uniquely demonstrate her work through mixed-media. She used the Kuwait Times canvas but applied her imagination about the theme using colorful glass materials which remarkably demonstrated Kuwait's environment. It became uniquely special to juries as compared to the rest of her peers.

in the paintings of Sadin Al-Mesri of Al-Salam School won the heart of Kuwait Times jury in this year's competition. The theme was 'Kuwait Beautiful and Green.' He explained his thoughts about the theme in the most simple, logical but animated way of explaining things that a 9-11 year old understands. Elements of Kuwait's past were also skillfully integrated in the paintings. The sun and beautiful skies seemed to represent Kuwait's bright future.

strated Kuwait beautiful and Green in the most fascinating way. In her drawings she showed the spirit of Kuwait in green, dynamic and beautiful way. Liberation Tower and Kuwait Towers were in the backdrop and one could be amazed on how other iconic structures, life style and the desert life were integrated in one beautiful painting. No doubt on why her work was voted number one by the juries.

Ikhlas School was declared winner (15-17 years old category). Her work was filled with dynamic colors and natures. Her piece was the jury's chosen piece since it demonstrated the real theme and had the most fascinating impact through the sky, water and nature. This year's theme is 'Kuwait beautiful and green'. Aya's drawing has the most colorful and had unique features as it showed the backdrop of Kuwait's skyline and the people around. Mother Nature was represented in the form of a woman blowing a 'shofar-like shell' to represent the dynamism and activities in Kuwait, a major head turnaround while studying her paintings.

**9-11 category**

The butterfly, flowers and the Kuwait Towers

**12-14 category**

Salma Adel from ACA Al-Salmiya School work won the heart of this year's jury when she demon-

**15-17 category**

We all have our own interpretations of every painting that we see. As ordinary observer, we'll try to dissect Kuwait Times winner for this year's competition for each categories. Aya Karim of



Sadin H Al-Mesri - Al-Salam School



Category 9 to 11 paintings gallery



Zahra Al-Mahfoz - Om Al-Maradim School



miridula.p.r. - Indian educational school



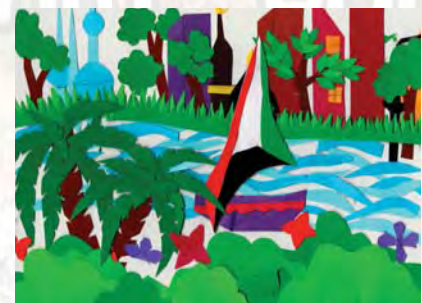
Jassica Mary - Indian Learning Academy



Hassan Al-Bathir - Abd Al-Rahman Al-Ghafiqi



Al-Budor Usama Salihi - Hawally Intermediate



Jassim Hassan - Kuwait Academy



Fatima Al-Zamami - Salma Bent Malek



Jesslyn Sara V. - Indian Community School



Jana Makanes - Al-Qotof



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# KUWAIT BEAUTIFUL & GREEN STUDENTS ART COMPETITION CATEGORY 12 TO 14 YEARS



Salma Adel - Al-Salmiya School



Category 12 to 14 paintings gallery



Rajalaxmi Palaresamuthu - Faips-Dps



Diya Mariam John - Indian Educational



Afnan Al-Misbah - Om Kalthum Bent Mohammed



Haia Ahmed Al-Bishi - Saadi Bent Oaf School



Rodaina Khorsheed - Al-Salmiya School



Vaishnav Anil Kumar - Indian Community



Rahma Mohammed - Hawally Intermediate



Noura Malallah - Lila Al-Qurashia



Sara Al-Smeri - Om Kalthum Bent Mohammed



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# Lifestyle

WEDNESDAY, MAY 10, 2017

Met Opera stars mark Lincoln Center anniversary

# 35



A model wears a creation by Moroccan designer Faiza Antri Bouzar during the Kuwait fashion week in Kuwait City on May 8, 2017. — Photo by Yasser Al-Zayyat

## Warner Bros releases trailer of 'Blade Runner' sequel

Warner Bros has released the first theatrical trailer for "Blade Runner 2049", the highly anticipated sequel to the 1982 Ridley Scott science fiction thriller "Blade Runner". Directed by Canadian Denis Villeneuve, the sequel to the dystopian cult classic is set in Los Angeles 30 years after the original film's setting.

Ryan Gosling stars as Los Angeles police officer K, a "blade runner" who tracks down and catches rogue "replicants", the dispo-

able bioengineered workers of the future. Officer K uncovers a dangerous secret that sends him on a mission to find Rick Deckard, the original "blade runner" played by Harrison Ford in the 1982 film. The trailer also features actors Jared Leto, Robin Wright and Dave Bautista. "Blade Runner 2049" appears set to hit cinemas internationally in early October. — Reuters



## KNIGHTS SWING SWORDS ON THE RED CARPET FOR 'KING ARTHUR'



King Arthur's knights rode out of the pages of legend and onto Hollywood Boulevard on Monday, as director Guy Ritchie's new film "King Arthur: Legend of the Sword" charting the exploits of the legendary British ruler held its world premiere. "Pacific Rim" star Charlie Hunnam plays Arthur in Ritchie's gritty, action-packed take on the tale.

Hunnam's Arthur is an orphaned street urchin, who must fight to claim

his throne from his uncle Vortigen - played by Jude Law - who murdered his parents. The film hits US cinemas on May 12. "If you are going to tell a story that has been told before you have to come in with a vision that makes it original and fresh," Hunnam told reporters at the premiere. "We thought it was more interesting to make him an everyman just like you or I." — Reuters

## Jay Z, Chili Peppers to headline Meadows Festival in New York

Jay Z is set to headline another music festival. The rapper is the top-billed act for this September's Meadows Music and Arts Festival in New York. The Red Hot Chili Peppers and Gorillaz are also listed atop the lineup. Future, Nas, Weezer and LL Cool J are among other notable acts for the three-day concert set to begin on Sept 15 at Citi Field in Queens, home of the New York Mets. This is the third music festival on Jay Z's plate in the coming months. He's also set to appear at the V Festival in England in August and his own Made in America Festival in Philadelphia over Labor Day weekend. The Meadows Festival is in its second year. — AP



In this file photo, Jay Z performs during a campaign rally for Democratic presidential candidate Hillary Clinton in Cleveland. — AP

## ABC announces revival of American Idol next season

ABC says it will revive "American Idol" after it has spent only one year off the air. The network announced yesterday that the music competition show that dominated television in the 2000s and minted stars like Carrie Underwood, Jennifer Hudson and Kelly Clarkson, will begin sometime in the next TV season. That season starts in September.

The series originally aired on Fox and was canceled due to fading ratings. But ABC Entertainment President Channing Dungey called it a "pop culture staple that left the air too soon." ABC left plenty of questions unanswered, including who will be the host and judges. ABC recently hired the show's old host, Ryan Seacrest, to be co-host with Kelly Ripa on the daytime talk show "Live." — AP

## Nicki Minaj pays college costs for Twitter fans



In this file photo, Musician Nicki Minaj is seen in Philadelphia. — AP

Nicki Minaj is putting some fans on scholarship. After a fan asked the hip-hop star if she would pay his college tuition on Twitter on Saturday night, Minaj agreed to pay fans' school costs - on the condition that they show her perfect marks. She wrote, "Show me straight A's that I can verify w/your school and I'll pay it." A few dozen fans took Minaj up on the offer, posting screenshots of their grades. Minaj replied individually to some throughout the night and agreed to pay other things like book costs and student loans. Minaj wrapped up the contest after a few hours, but she promised to do it again in a month or two. — AP

## Comic book legend Stan Lee announces Latin superhero

Comic book legend Stan Lee is 94 years old but still working on new characters-telling fans they can expect a Latin superhero by the end of the year. The creator of Spider-Man, the Fantastic Four and X-Men made the announcement in front of almost 20,000 fans at La Conque, the largest comic convention in Latin America, after being asked Sunday what kind of hero Mexico would need to address its social problems.

"I wanted this to be a surprise, but I'm personally working on a Latin hero that you'll be seeing at the end of the year. I want to make him as good as I can, as different as I can," Lee said. He took part in three days of activities at the convention in central Mexico, signing autographs and taking photos with fans who had come from Argentina, Chile, Colombia, Venezuela and even as far away as Belgium. "This city, in this country, has the greatest fans in the whole world! You people are spectacular. This convention is wonderful," he said. — AFP