

# Friday Times

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**8** KJA: 'Collaboration' future theme of Mubarak Al-Kabir, Faw ports



**37** Philippines to close Boracay island to tourists for 6 months



**44** Record-breaking Aussies make waves in the pool



## Bollywood bad boy Salman Khan jailed

See Page 20

## Local

## Ethiopians are back!



Local Spotlight

By Muna Al-Fuzai

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**E**thiopian domestic labor will soon return to Kuwait after years of absence due to a recruitment ban. The Kuwaiti ambassador to Ethiopia told KUNA on Wednesday that he met the Ethiopian minister of labor to discuss the issue of the return of Ethiopian workers to Kuwait. The Kuwaiti official said he requested interested candidates to go through specialized habilitation centers and undergo psychological tests. This demand was made because of a number of horrific killings by Ethiopian domestic helpers due to what was rumored to be mental illnesses.

According to the Kuwaiti ambassador, the Ethiopian minister confirmed the existence of training centers for the workers. The ambassador also said Kuwait is expected to work on a new draft agreement between Kuwait and Addis Ababa.

Turning to the archives of the local press before the official ban, I think it is necessary to mention some of the headlines that shocked the Kuwaiti society, including: "Ethiopian woman beheads woman on her wedding day in Jaber Al-Ali" and "Ethiopian maid kills female Lebanese employer".

It is natural that these sensationalized murders and attempted murders provoked the Kuwaiti community, especially with repeated reports of such crimes by Ethiopian workers in only a few short months. The nationality of the helper was always mentioned and the crimes were often violent and grisly. I guess it was a normal reaction that led the National Assembly to demand that Ethiopian domestic workers be banned from Kuwait. I think the call to subject domestic workers to undergo examinations to ensure they are free from any psychological diseases and get a certificate of sound mental health is reasonable.

But this is not enough. When a killing occurs, everyone thinks of the victim and the family, but few think what led this worker to violence in the first place. Yes, I agree that psychological conditions and mental illness could be a reason, but extreme poverty in the workers' home countries as well as abusive treatment at the hands of nearly all-powerful employers can also ignite hatred in the heart, which leads to such crimes. Let's remember that these helpers come from a far and troubled place and they are in need of kindness and good treatment by the family to make them feel safe and fairly treated. This is required and important regardless of nationality.

Also, aside from possible physical abuse, there is verbal abuse. I think that it is necessary to take care of the social and humanitarian relationship that makes the helper comfortable in the house in which she works.

The dilemma now is that many in the Kuwaiti society believe that all Ethiopians are violent, which is an unjust stereotype. I think it is unfair to have such a perception about all Ethiopians, because in every nationality and workplace there will be bad persons and good. The circumstances of the person and their living conditions may be a reason to commit a crime and not due to belonging to a particular community or state. The Ethiopian embassy must try to change this view, because it is unjust and racist. It is also necessary to have constant communication between the worker and the embassy before and after arriving in Kuwait.

I believe psychological evaluations should be carried out on workers as part of the procedures and conditions for the approval of domestic employment, whether Ethiopian or other nationalities.



KUWAIT: Street lamps were installed on streets around Kuwait using wooden poles.

## Kuwait History: More than 100 years of electricity

By Sara Al-Mokhaizim

**T**he people of Kuwait used to depend on basic fuels, such as oil extracted from sesame and coconut, to illuminate homes and streets before the introduction of electricity more than 100 years ago. Electricity was first introduced to Kuwait in the early 1900s when Sheikh Mubarak bin Sabah Al-Sabah (the seventh ruler of Kuwait 1896-1915) imported a small power generator to light up the wedding party of his son Sheikh Hamad Al-Mubarak.

Tracing the history of electricity, Mohammad Abdul-Hadi Jamal, a Kuwaiti historian, wrote in his book "trades, crafts and traditional commercial activities in old Kuwait," that a group of Kuwaiti tradesmen founded the country's first national electrical company in 1933.

The company, called the national company for electricity, launched a power generating plant in the following year with two diesel-powered generators each of which had a capacity of 3 kilowatts and produced 400-volt direct current.

The two generators used to operate day and night alternately and the power generated was used for lighting only; a few people had kerosene refrigerators, Jamal said.

The power plant, located on the seaside in Sharq neighborhood, supplied the nearby shops and homes with electric current for the first time on April 1, 1934. By the end of the year, the number of subscribers hit 60 and rose to 400 in the following year.

Few years later, use of electricity expanded from lighting to powering fans; late Sheikh Ahmad Jaber Al-Sabah used a small air conditioner at a room in his palace later on.

Kuwait Municipality and the electricity company agreed to install 50 lamps at some streets and marketplaces at a monthly rate of 2.5 rupees per lamp. As the number of subscribers hit 700 in 1940 despite the economic recession resulting from the WWII, the company decided to gradually shift from direct (DC) to alternating current (AC) with a triangle wave, 380/220 voltage and 50 Hz frequency; the AC replaced the DC totally in 1950.

In 1949, the company launched a second power generating plant in Merqab area, which had two generators with 200 Kw capacity per each. The economic boom and accelerated industrialization in the country fueled up demand for electricity and



added strains on the existing plants; thus prompting the government to step in and buy the shares of the national company for electricity in 1951.

The general directorate of electricity replaced the company and took charge of power generation and distribution; it launched the first steam-powered plant in Al-Shoaiikh area in 1952 near the coast of the Arabian Gulf. — KUNA

Kuwait  Times

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## Local



# Streetside bargainers:

## Your car for a good price

By Faten Omar

Catching the attention of customers is tough in many businesses, but the work is even harder if one has to stand all day long streetside, waiting for prospective clients and forcing them to pay attention. This is the work of the “shretiyah” (one who bargains). These ‘shretiyah’ men wait at the entrance of car showrooms in Rai to give you a deal you can’t refuse in exchange for your used car. Kuwait Times interviewed a shretiyah to learn more about the work of these bargainers.



Mubarak Al-Shammari, 36, said the work they do is hard, and that many customers do not like them. “We may seem annoying, but our work benefits everybody,” he said. “The car showrooms in Rai are the best place where you can find people coming to buy new cars, and in return they want to sell their old cars. Here we offer them a price to buy their old car and it’s their choice whether to sell or not. Moreover, any person coming to a car showroom to buy a new car will need cash quickly to pay the advance for the new car,” he reasoned.

Whether you are an expatriate or a citizen, Shammari and his colleagues claim to complete the required paperwork at a good price. “Most companies will make you go through a lot of processes, but we get things done smoothly and quickly. After we buy the car, we fix it and put it up for auction at the ‘haraj’ used car market,” he explained.

“In the past, the work was easy and very convenient. Now people are very hesitant about dealing with us, although we buy their cars at a price that suits both of us. The market was very good, but unfortunately today, technology has imposed itself on us. Most people turn to websites and search for cars that meet their specifications, value, color and everything else. The web-

## Local



“ In the past, the work was easy and very convenient. Now people are hesitant to deal with us, although we buy their cars at a price that suits both of us. ”

sites and apps have destroyed the auction market,” Shammari rued. He said used car websites have proliferated among people of all ages and smartphones have made things easier, so people are reluctant to go to used car markets.

For Shammari, this work is not his dream job, but it is a means of living, something that he wishes people understand.

“There are many things that bother us, most notably security patrols and the police. They do not want us to stand here and offer to buy people’s cars. But we do not force anyone to sell their cars. They want to control us and prevent us from doing our work - on the other hand, they cannot control traders on car websites, those who affix their cards on used cars for sale or traders who place ads with their phone numbers in newspapers and car magazines and write in bold ‘We buy used cars,’” Shammari argued.



Freelance used car dealers, known locally as “shretiyah” often wait on the roadside near major dealerships in order to catch would be customers before they enter showrooms in Al-Rai. The men bargain with car owners to buy their used cars at discount prices rather than trade them at the car dealerships. — Photos by Yasser Al-Zayyat

# The adventure **bus ride**

By Jamie Etheridge

**W**onder is that feeling that everything in the world is amazing, fresh and new. As we grow up, we lose the sense of wonder and the world often becomes a boring or difficult place to live. A child, however, can find wonder in the everyday in a way that most adults no longer can.

In order to tap into this wonder and encourage exploration, I recently took my kids for an adventure bus ride to Kuwait City. My daughters have for some time now been fascinated with all modes of transport. They've asked to ride a fire truck, want to take a boat ride and nearly every morning on our way to school, they point to the red double-decker bus plying its route along Al-Taawon Street.

So on a recent Friday morning, we got up early and announced over breakfast that today "we were going to play tourist". The girls immediately jumped up and started scrambling to get dressed and pack for their trip. We brought snacks, notebooks and colored pencils, their instant cameras and of course, books to read on the journey - and headed out.

The bus stops a block from our house. We waited for about five minutes in the morning sun until bus 999 pulled up, which runs from Kuwait City through Salmiya, Salwa and then down to Fahaheel and back again.

The buses are beautiful - bright, fire engine red, and they tower over other vehicles on the road. The girls immediately rushed into the bus once it had stopped and climbed the spiral staircase up to the second deck. They chose seats at the far back, pulling aside the curtains in order to see out as we rode along.

We talked a bit about why people take buses and how public transportation can help reduce the energy we use and the impact this has on the environment.

Truth is that most people do not take the bus out of concern for the environment. As in most cities and towns, Kuwait's bus riding public is predominately low-income workers, housemaids, office workers and shop workers. There is the occasional group of kids, though some bus drivers will refuse to stop for teenagers due to their sometimes unruly behavior.

Since the double-decker buses are still relatively new, the insides are clean and mostly-graffiti free, air-conditioned and without the unpleasant odors often found on public transport.

The bus moved through the morning traffic with ease. Despite its height, the bus didn't feel unsteady and the kids eagerly switched seats a few times to get different 'views' of the traffic.

As a long-time driver, I seldom have the opportunity to view Kuwait from the passenger seat. The added height of the double-decker bus made it possible to see over walls and into some of the compounds and complexes in Salmiya. I never realized there was so much indoor greenery and so many open



spaces tucked quietly among all the high-rise buildings and government complexes.

Speaking with a few other passengers, we heard a lot about the odd things you can see riding a bus. "Once there was a man walking down the street in his pajamas with no shoes," said Mary, a Filipina heading to the church in Kuwait City on her day off. "I still wonder what was he doing? Where was he going?"

Another passenger, a man in his 40s who didn't want to give his name, said he has been taking the bus in Kuwait for 22 years. "The worst is summertime. There may be less traffic on the roads, but you can wait forever at the bus stop. It's better now - there are more buses, but fares have gone up too."

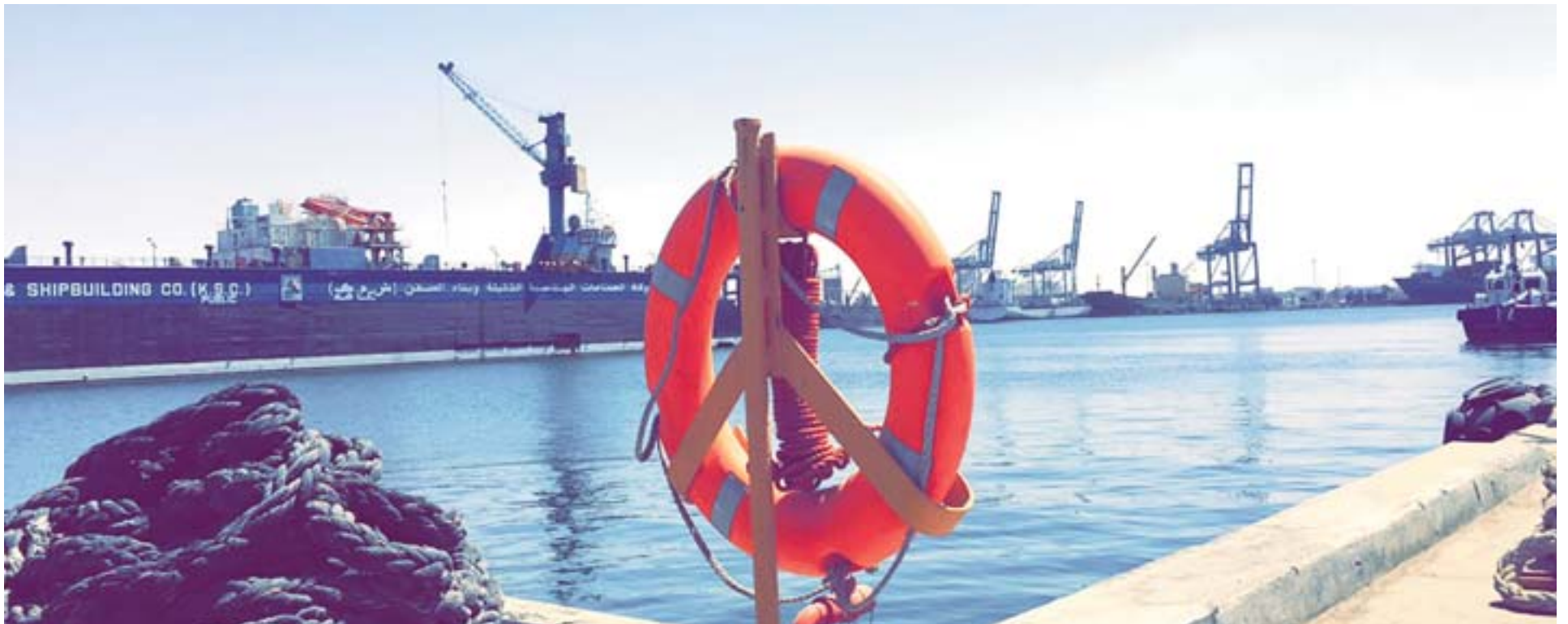
The vast majority of Kuwait's 3 million plus expatriate population is comprised of low-wage earners. Though many own cars and utilize taxis or company transportation, a significant portion of the population rides public transport. In 2016, the most recent year for which data is available, public and private bus companies combined sold around 88 million passenger tickets, according to the Central Statistics Bureau, down from 90 million tickets in 2015. For three adults, we paid 750 fils from Salwa to Salmiya, one way. The children rode free.

Our adventure was cut short thanks to gathering dust clouds on the horizon. And we weren't the only ones. The bus was about half filled with passengers heading into Kuwait City in the morning. By the time we caught the return bus, the weather had transformed into a full-scale dust storm and the bus was packed with folks heading home.



**KUWAIT:** Photos show a recent bus trip to Kuwait City. The double-decker bus is popular in the public's imagination, often associated with London's iconic double-decker buses but now seen in many cities around the globe. — Photos by Jamie Etheridge

## PHOTO OF THE DAY



View of a marina at Shuwaikh Harbour —KUNA

# Kuwaiti woman to ski to the North Pole

**KUWAIT:** Lamees is part of the Euro-Arabian North Pole Expedition 2018, spending 10 days on the shifting ice of the Arctic Ocean to reach the top of the world. The 28-year-old is a designer who specialises in creating digital animations but is someone who thrives on challenges and new adventures.

“A mediocre route paved with familiarity never interests me,” she said. “It is the beauty of exploration and encountering the unknown that keeps me alive. I enjoy the process of adapting and living in the wilderness.”

Explaining why she wanted to be a part of the expedition, Lamees said: “I want to be a part of a mixed cultural journey. We might all come from different parts of the world, but we all have the same instinct. We all want to challenge ourselves to ski to the North Pole, and to be a part of nature.”

“Unity and sticking together as human beings is a very crucial act that we need nowadays and I am honored to represent my country and my culture on this expedition.”

The North Pole expedition aims to foster greater dialogue and understanding between women from Western and Arabian cultures.

“We want to send a strong and positive message about gender equality and the need for greater cultural understanding,” said expedition leader, Felicity Aston MBE, from the UK. “The world is facing global problems - such as climate change - that can only be tackled with global solutions. That requires everyone



talking to each other more.” In 2012, Aston became the first person in the world to ski across Antarctica alone and without the aid of kites, machines or dogs - a journey of 1,744km that took her 59 days to complete.

The Euro-Arabian team will be sleeping in tents on the ice when they are not skiing, and will haul in sledges everything they need to survive in the Arctic. As well as the perils of temperatures as low as -40C, other hazards the team will face include movements of the pack ice that may split apart to reveal open water or push together to form walls of ice that have to be crossed. There is also the threat of polar bears.

The team will next week head to the remote Arctic archipelago of Svalbard from where they will fly to the floating ice station known as ‘Barneo’. They will start their ski journey across the Arctic ice to the North Pole from the station.



Preparations for the expedition have been ongoing for nearly two years including training expeditions in Iceland and Oman. The team will be conducting two important science experiments during the expedition and will be sharing their experiences live from the ice with schools and via social media. Updates will be posted on [www.euroarabianexpedition.com](http://www.euroarabianexpedition.com).

The expedition is sponsored by cybersecurity firm Kaspersky Lab, as well as Engie, Poseidon Expeditions, OmanTel and I Feel Slovenia.

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An intrepid team of 11 women, including Lamees Nijem of Kuwait, are set to launch a daring adventure to ski over 100km in treacherous conditions to reach the North Pole.

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## Local

# KJA: 'Collaboration' future theme of Mubarak Al-Kabir, Faw ports

Kuwait's role in Ahwar recognition lauded • IJS: Media visit to boost ties



Managing Director of the Chibaish Nature Office of Iraq Jassem Al-Asadi meets the Kuwaiti media delegation visiting the southern provinces of Basra and Dhi Qar. — KUNA



Trustee of Kuwait Journalists Association (KJA)  
Adnan Al-Rashed



Editor-in-Chief of Kuwait Times  
Abd Al-Rahman Al-Alyan



The visiting Kuwaiti media delegation takes a boat trip.



Head of the Iraq Journalists Syndicate (IJS)  
Moaid Al-Lami

**BASRA:** Collaboration and not competition should be the theme in the rapport between Kuwait's Mubarak Al-Kabir Port and Basra's Faw grand port, a Kuwaiti journalist said yesterday. Many discrepancies arose around this issue in the past by both parties, yet the idea of collaboration is one of many hopeful visions tabled by the Kuwaiti media delegation, noted Adnan Al-Rashed, Trustee of Kuwait Journalists Association (KJA). His statements to KUNA came as part of a number of ideas by Kuwaiti journalists currently visiting southern Iraq, namely Basra and Dhi Qar governorates.

"Uncertainty should be replaced with cooperation, which could extend even further should the Kuwaiti private sector be provided with the opportunity to invest in port management for other hubs in Basra, which would have a positive impact on bilateral relations," Rashed, who is also coordinator of the visit, pointed out. Another proposal by the delegation was the establishment of a railroad between Kuwait and Basra; a project of multiple benefits for both sides in addition to other Gulf states, be they commercial or related to conventional or religious tourism, he said.

Organizing trips and exchanging visits for college and school students from both countries is another idea that will

immensely contribute in buttressing social and cultural bonding between Kuwaiti and Iraqi peoples, as well as helping to create a "collective memory" of good and neighborly relations for generations to come, Rashed noted, pointing out that "this particular visit came upon the wish of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah".

On his part, Editor-in-Chief of Al-Anbaa Youssef Al-Marzouq said despite the "difficulty" of achieving some of these proposals on the ground, both parties could achieve more on popular and private sector levels, especially since Iraq is an investment-attracting destination. Meanwhile, Media Advisor at HH the Prime Minister's Diwan Hassan Al-Sayegh said the Kuwaiti delegation suggested during a meeting with Basra's local government officials to work on rehabilitating Safwan border crossing and turning it into a vital economic link between cities in Iraq and the Gulf, which will boost trade volume both ways. The KJA delegation also includes KUNA Deputy Director General for Editorial Saad Al-Ali, Editor-in-Chief of Kuwait Times Abd Al-Rahman Al-Alyan and others.

#### Al-Ahwar marshes

Managing Director of the Chibaish Nature Office of Iraq Jassem Al-Asadi praised yesterday the role played by Kuwait in including the Al-Ahwar marshes in southern Iraq in UNESCO's list of World Heritage sites. The official's remarks came during his reception of the visiting Kuwaiti media delegation to the southern provinces of Basra and Dhi Qar, a trip organized by the Iraq Journalists Syndicate (IJS). During their stay,

the delegation visited an exhibition for photos and handicrafts by the inhabitants of the Al-Ahwar marshes, after which they went on a boat trip.

The media group also visited the famous reed houses, known as mudhif, inside the village of Chibaish. These houses, made from reed sticks, are considered one of the oldest forms of architecture in the southern regions of Iraq, dating back to the Sumerian civilization more than 7,000 years ago. Asadi presented a detailed explanation of the nature and history of the marshes, which extend more than 9,600 km. He explained how it was exposed to the most severe destruction and drying in 1991, which led to the migration of most of the local people.

Despite all challenges facing the area, the local government managed to overcome the water flow problem in 2003 and was able to extend the marshes area again. This helped in recognizing Al-Ahwar marshes as a UNESCO global heritage site due to its biodiversity and the presence of large quantities of endangered animals, fish and migrating birds.

The current visit of the Kuwaiti media delegation to Basra and Dhi Qar provinces will develop relations, said the Head of the IJS Moaid Al-Lami yesterday. In statement to KUNA, Lami said the visit will hopefully lead to the development of investment and tourism opportunities and boost media and cultural relations. The rapprochement between societies will stimulate the economic and cultural movement, he said, adding that the Kuwaiti media delegation have more of a clear idea of the stable conditions in both the provinces of Basra and Dhi Qar. — KUNA



## Local

## Aoun: Ties with Kuwait strong



BEIRUT: Lebanese President Michel Aoun receives a Kuwaiti delegation led by Minister of State for National Assembly Affairs Adel Al-Kharafi. — KUNA

BEIRUT: Lebanese President Michel Aoun yesterday emphasized the strong ties and bonds of fraternity, friendship and cooperation between his country and Kuwait. Receiving a Kuwaiti delegation led by Minister of State for National Assembly Affairs Adel Al-Kharafi, the president highly appreciated HH the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad

Al-Jaber Al-Sabah's support to Lebanon. Kharafi conveyed to Aoun the Amir's greetings, reaffirming the well-established bilateral ties. The delegation acquainted Aoun with the goals of the first Kuwaiti-Lebanese municipal forum that kicks off in Beirut tomorrow for exchanging expertise between the two sides. — KUNA

## Ghanem says Arab world not isolated; AIPU lauds Kuwait

CAIRO: Minimum coordination among the Arabs is crucial and proves that the nation is not isolated, affirmed Kuwait National Assembly Speaker Marzouq Al-Ghanem. The speaker, addressing the 27th meeting of the Arab Inter-Parliamentary Union (AIPU), cited as a tangible example Kuwait's success during the recent conference of the Inter-Parliamentary Union in enlisting in the agenda an unscheduled topic stipulating support for Jerusalem. States from all continents backed the Kuwaiti proposal to add the Jerusalem issue to the agenda "because we addressed it with a sound and clear language and because our proposal was based on UN references and the international law", Ghanem said.

The Israeli delegation, during the IPU conference, sought to obstruct the Kuwaiti diplomacy and render the draft resolution on Jerusalem null and void. "The Israeli enemy does not want to mention Jerusalem in our address or curricula and certainly not at the second global political gathering," he said. "I do not desire to get involved in monotonous rhetoric about unity and integration... I merely call for coordination and harmony in stances..." Ghanem noted. The speaker stressed he will remain an ardent advocate of "anything Arab... in spite of the national deterioration at the economic and social and political levels".

Meanwhile, Speaker of Egypt's House of Representatives Ali Abdel Aal yesterday lauded Kuwait's role in backing Arab issues and hosting of the International Conference for the Reconstruction of Iraq (KICRI). Abdel Aal's remarks were delivered on his behalf by Saad Al-Jamal, Chairman of the Arab Affairs Council in the Egyptian parliament at the AIPU conference. Iraqi Parliament Speaker Salim Al-Jubouri also expressed sincere gratitude and



CAIRO: National Assembly Speaker Marzouq Al-Ghanem addresses the 27th meeting of the Arab Inter-Parliamentary Union. — KUNA

appreciation of Kuwait and HH the Amir Sheikh Sabah for hosting KICRI and contributing in achieving stability in his country.

Speaker of the House of Representatives of Morocco Al-Habib Al-Maliki commended, in his speech, the success achieved by the "emergency item" that was submitted jointly by Kuwait, UAE, and Bahrain to the agendas of the 138th Assembly of the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) in Geneva on protecting the legal legitimacy of Jerusalem. — KUNA

## Worker falls to death

By A Saleh

KUWAIT: An Egyptian construction worker was killed instantly after he fell from the tenth floor of an under-construction building in Salmiya.

## Man slaughtered

A 51-year-old citizen was found slaughtered in bed at his house in Oyoum in Jahra. Security sources said two of his female relatives fainted on seeing the body and were rushed to hospital for treatment. Initial investigations showed that the deceased had a criminal record. Further investigations are in progress to identify the killer/s and their motives.



Construction workers mourn over the body of a colleague who fell to his death.

## NEWS IN BRIEF

## Amir congratulates Queen, Prince

KUWAIT: HH the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah sent yesterday a congratulatory cable to Queen Elizabeth II of the UK on the successful surgery Duke of Edinburgh Prince Philip underwent. The Amir sent a similar cable to Prince Philip, wishing him utmost health. HH the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah and HH the Premier Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-Hamad Al-Sabah sent similar cables to the Queen and Prince. — KUNA

## NSB chief meets US envoy

KUWAIT: Kuwait's National Security Bureau chief Sheikh Thamer Al-Ali Al-Sabah discussed issues of mutual importance with US Ambassador to Kuwait Lawrence Silverman yesterday. The officials tackled means of cooperation, bilateral relations and regional and international affairs of mutual concern, read a statement by the bureau. The two then attended a graduation ceremony for several bureau staff, who completed a training course co-organized by the US embassy. — KUNA



KUWAIT: National Security Bureau chief Sheikh Thamer Al-Ali Al-Sabah meets US Ambassador to Kuwait Lawrence Silverman. — KUNA

## Kuwait, Russia discuss developments

KUWAIT: Kuwait's Deputy Foreign Minister Khaled Al-Jarallah met yesterday with Russia's Ambassador Alexi Solomatin. During the meeting, the two sides discussed recent regional and international developments. They also tackled a number of aspects regarding their bilateral relationship. — KUNA



KUWAIT: Deputy Foreign Minister Khaled Al-Jarallah meets Russian Ambassador Alexi Solomatin. — KUNA

## Kuwait supports Yemeni people

KUWAIT: Kuwait, through its non-permanent membership in the UN Security Council and meetings with relevant parties seeks to mitigate sufferings of the Yemeni people, Kuwaiti Deputy Foreign Minister Khaled Al-Jarallah said Wednesday. In remarks to reporters following his participation at a ceremony held by the Senegalese embassy in Kuwait marking Senegal's national day, Jarallah said "we have managed, through the UNSC membership, to serve this issue", stressing Kuwait's continued support for Yemen. The Kuwaiti participation in the Geneva conference upon a call by the UN to support the UN humanitarian response in Yemen is a manifestation of Kuwait's backing of the Yemeni people, he made clear.



Philippines' Duterte to take Rohingya refugees

Saudi Arabia's first new cinema to open April 18



ISTANBUL: Women cry as people gather outside the Osmangazi University, after a university employee killed four fellow staff members in a shooting, in the western Turkish city of Eskisehir. —AFP

# Researcher kills four staff at Turkish university

## Attacker detained and taken for questioning

**ISTANBUL:** A researcher killed four fellow staff members in a shooting yesterday at a university in the western Turkish city of Eskisehir, in one of the deadliest incidents of its kind seen in Turkey. Deadly shootouts—often caused by arguments that degenerate into violence—are relatively common in Turkey. But a shooting on a campus is highly unusual. Those killed were the deputy dean of the education faculty, faculty secretary and two lecturers at Osmangazi University, the university said in a statement.

The attacker, himself a researcher at the education faculty, was later detained after initially trying to flee the scene, the Dogan news agency said. Police were questioning him. The university's rector Hasan Gonen confirmed to

CNN-Turk television that four people had been killed. He said the attacker—named by state media as Volkan B—initially went to the dean's office and shot at the others after finding it empty.

Gonen described the individual as a “problematic” person who had been verbally insulting the academic personnel. “We are launching an investigation into the researcher. He was a problematic person... I believe he targeted the personnel as a result of psychological problems,” he said. He

added the university did not know how the man had entered the university grounds with a gun but did not think the incident had any links to terror. Campuses in Turkey are usually well guarded.



### Campuses in Turkey are usually well guarded

olent attack. “We are extremely sad. The chief prosecutor's office is tackling the incident,” said Eskisehir governor Ozdemir Cakacak.

### Shock and panic

Eskisehir, a city of nearly one million, is on the railway line between Ankara and Istanbul and has rarely been the scene of any kind of violent

Some reports said the attacker had also upset staff members by alleging that they were members of the group of Fethullah Gulen blamed for the 2016 failed coup.

Dogan said that the attack sparked panic at the university, with both students and teachers in a state of shock. Television pictures showed shocked staff and students gathering outside the university's main entrance. Many ambulances were sent to the area. Some pictures showed tearful staff speaking on mobile phones seeking to assure relatives that they were not harmed. Turkey has in recent years been hit by a string of deadly attacks blamed on Kurdish militants and jihadists. However there was no indication of any link between yesterday's shooting and extremist activity.—AFP

International

# Saudi Arabia's first new cinema to open April 18

## Theatres will not be segregated by gender

LOS ANGELES/RIYADH: Saudi Arabia's first cinema in more than 35 years will open on April 18 in Riyadh, the capital, the authorities said on Wednesday after agreeing with AMC Entertainment Holdings to open up to 40 theatres over the next five years. Movie theatres will not be segregated by gender like most other public places in the deeply conservative Muslim kingdom, and the first screening will be Marvel's superhero movie "Black Panther," a source familiar with the matter told Reuters.

Saudi Arabia had some cinemas in the 1970s but its powerful clerics closed them, reflecting rising Islamist influence throughout the Arab region at the time. In 2017, the government said it would lift the ban as part of ambitious economic and social reforms pushed by Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman. He is currently touring the United States seeking investments to help broaden the economy and lessen its dependence on oil.

Saudi Arabians are avid consumers of Western media and culture. Despite the cinema ban, Hollywood films and recent television series are widely watched at home and discussed. AMC's first cinema will be located in the King Abdullah Financial District in a building originally intended to be a symphony concert hall, AMC Chief Executive Adam Aron said in an interview. The main theatre will have about 500 leather

seats, orchestra and balcony levels and marble bathrooms, he said. Three more screens will be added by mid-summer. "We think it's going to be the prettiest movie theatre in the world," Aron said. "It's a dramatic building."

To serve a population of more than 32 million, most of whom are under the age of 30, Saudi Arabia wants to set up around 350 cinemas with over 2,500 screens by 2030, which it hopes will attract nearly \$1 billion in annual ticket sales. "The restoration of cinemas will ... help boost the local economy by increasing household spending on entertainment while supporting job creation in the Kingdom," Culture and Information Minister Awwad Alawwad said in a statement.

AMC is partnering with the Public Investment Fund (PIF), Saudi Arabia's main sovereign wealth fund. A handful of other theatre operators are ready to build in Saudi Arabia if they win clearance, John Fithian, president of the US-based National Association of Theatre Owners, told reporters. Fithian said he met government officials in Riyadh in December to work out issues such as what type of material would be permitted on movie screens. He said he believes most Hollywood movies will be allowed, though some will require editing.

AMC's Aron said he expects the same versions of films shown in Dubai or Kuwait will be



suitable for Saudi Arabia. "Hollywood has long ago dealt with the sensitivities of the Middle East and have adjusted film product accordingly," he said. "Major Hollywood studios are showing films all over the Middle East." Separately, Six Flags Entertainment said it planned to develop a

theme park in Riyadh with PIF. Cirque du Soleil will stage its first performance in the country on September 23, according to a statement from the General Entertainment Authority. The GEA also said it reached a deal for other live shows such as "Disney on Ice."—Reuters

Kuwait Times

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## International

# Fears of fresh violence ahead of new Gaza protest

## 'We do not intend to change the rules of engagement'

**GAZA CITY:** Palestinians readied yesterday for new protests along the Gaza border and Israel warned that its open-fire rules would not change as fears of fresh violence rose a week after the bloodiest day in years. Thousands of Palestinians are again expected to gather at five spots near the Gaza border today, while Israeli soldiers and snipers will take up positions on the other side of the fence.

Protest organizers said they were planning to try to stop smaller numbers of protesters approaching the fence and hurling stones or rolling burning tires at Israeli troops, who killed 18 Palestinians last Friday. It was the bloodiest day since a 2014 war. Another two Gazans have been killed since. But widespread social media calls for protesters to bring tires to burn and Israel's pledge to prevent damage to the fence and infiltration attempts have raised fears of more deaths.

Young Palestinians have been gathering tires and carting them near the border to burn and create a smokescreen to make it harder for Israeli snipers. Some have been walking the streets collecting money to buy tires. Israeli Defense Minister Avigdor Lieberman vowed that open-fire rules would not change. "If there are provocations, there will be a reaction of the harshest kind like last week," Lieberman told public radio. "We do not intend to change the rules of engagement."

### A mistake

Last Friday's protest near the Gaza border was attended by tens of thousands of Palestinians. A smaller number strayed from the main protest and approached the heavily fortified

fence on the border with Israel. Israel says troops opened fire only when necessary against those throwing stones and firebombs or rolling tires at soldiers. It said there were attempts to damage the fence and infiltrate Israel, while alleging there was also an attempted gun attack against soldiers along the border.

It accuses Hamas, the Islamist movement that runs the Gaza Strip and with whom it has fought three wars since 2008, of using the protests as cover to carry out violence. But questions have mounted over Israel's use of live fire, with Palestinians saying protesters were fired on while posing no threat to soldiers. Rights groups have criticized the army's actions, while the European Union and UN chief Antonio Guterres have called for an independent investigation.

Human Rights Watch called the deaths "calculated" and illegal. Yesterday, an Israeli rights group launched a prominent campaign calling on soldiers to refuse to fire on unarmed Palestinians. The campaign led Israel's public security minister to suggest the rights group, B'Tselem, should be investigated for calling for sedition. Hamas has meanwhile offered compensation of \$3,000 to the families of protesters killed and \$500 for those seriously injured.

The protests calling for Palestinian refugees to be able to return to their former lands in what is now Israel are supposed to last six weeks, coinciding with the expected opening of the new US embassy in Jerusalem in mid-May. The US embassy move has led to deep anger among Palestinians, who see the annexed eastern sector of Jerusalem as the capital of their future state. Asaad abu Sharkh, a

said Kwun Hyuk-ki, one of the five-member South Korean delegation to the talks. He declined to give details, saying the two sides will meet again for further discussions on a date yet to be fixed. This month's summit will be only the third of its kind since the 1950-53 Korean War ended with an armistice. It is set to take place at the South's Peace House in the border truce village of Panmunjom, the same building in which yesterday's meeting was held.

Attention has been particularly focused on details of how Kim should be received when he crosses the military demarcation line to the South. News reports said Kim is likely to be welcomed by South Korean military guards of honor, because two former South Korean presidents were met by North Korean honor guards when they visited Pyongyang for the previous summits in 2000 and 2007.

The two sides are also believed to have discussed whether to allow live broadcasting of the summit for the first time, as the previous two summits were recorded and aired later. —AFP

“ There will be a reaction of the harshest kind ”



GAZA CITY: Palestinian men drive a trailer loaded with tires in Rafah, in the southern Gaza Strip.—AFP

spokesman and member of the organizing committee of the protests dubbed the Great March of Return, said better attempts will be made on Friday to keep Gazans from approaching the fence. "I think this was a mistake, a mistake of organization from us because we shouldn't have let people (go to the border)," he said. "But at the same time we were not expecting the Israelis to shoot to kill." He added that "I don't think there is going to be another massacre." Israel says more than half of the dead were members of militant groups, including the armed wing of Hamas.

Hamas's armed wing has claimed only five of them, saying they were participating "in popular events side-by-side with their people". Mil-

itant group Islamic Jihad has claimed at least one of the dead as a member, but said he was not carrying a weapon when he was shot.

### To Jerusalem we go

Smaller protests have continued since Friday, while preparations for the large demonstration for this coming Friday have also been underway. On Wednesday, a few hundred people gathered near the border east of Gaza City, with some performing the traditional Palestinian dabke dance near specially erected tents. A newly married couple celebrated by driving near the crowd, while a group of children sang the Palestinian chant of "To Jerusalem we go, with millions of martyrs."—AFP

## Two Koreas meet to plan landmark summit

**SEOUL:** Officials from North and South Korea discussed protocol headaches and other logistics of a rare summit later this month, which will see Kim Jong Un become the first North Korean leader to set foot in the South since the end of the Korean War. Kim and the South's president Moon Jae-in are due to meet on April 27 at the South's side of the demilitarized zone for the landmark inter-Korean summit. Yesterday's working-level meeting was aimed at ironing out the protocols, security measures and media coverage of the summit, the South's presidential office said.

"We had sincere talks for four hours straight",

## Major fire at Istanbul hospital, patients evacuated

**ISTANBUL:** A major fire yesterday broke out at a hospital in Istanbul, with patients urgently evacuated into the street and firefighters battling to control the blaze. Television pictures showed flames and black smoke engulfing the multi-storey hospital building in the Gaziosmanpasa district of Istanbul, with patients wheeled out into the street in their sick beds. The huge fire, which started in the roof, turned the side of the building into a burned-out shell and sent a massive cloud of black smoke into the evening sky visible from all over the city.

Speaking at the scene, Istanbul governor Vasip Sahin said the fire services had managed to bring the blaze partly under control. Echoing comments by other officials, he said there were no current reports of casualties. "So far there is no sad news. God willing, it will stay that way," he told the crowds outside in comments broadcast by television. He said that the fire had been on the outer part of the building—rather than the inside—but a "lot of smoke" had penetrated inside which emergency services were now seeking to expel.

Pictures showed scenes of panic as staff and patients flooded into the streets to escape the fumes. Health Minister Ahmet Demircan, who was rushing to the scene Istanbul, has informed President Recep Tayyip Erdogan of developments, Turkish television said. Gaziosmanpasa mayor Hasan Tahsin Usta told CNN-Turk television there were no reports at the moment of casualties.—AFP

## International

# Russia demands answers in spy probe ahead of UN talks

## Crisis leads to biggest wave of tit-for-tat expulsions

**MOSCOW:** Russia warned Britain yesterday it could no longer ignore Moscow's "legitimate" questions over a spy poisoning scandal, hours ahead of urgent UN Security Council talks on the spiraling diplomatic crisis. "It will not be possible to ignore the legitimate questions we are asking," Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov said hours before a meeting of the UN Security Council, which is due to discuss the spiraling diplomatic crisis between Russia and the West.

Britain blames Russia for the March 4 poisoning on UK soil of former double agent Sergei Skripal with what it says was a Soviet-made military-grade nerve agent. The crisis has led to the biggest wave of tit-for-tat expulsions of diplomats between Moscow and the West in recent memory. Early yesterday morning some 60 US diplomats ordered out of Russia left their embassy compound in Moscow.

Russia called a meeting of the global chemical watchdog on Wednesday over the Salisbury incident, but failed in its bid to join the probe by the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW). Russia then requested a UN Security Council meeting yesterday at 1900 GMT in New York. Speaking in Moscow, Lavrov called for a "substantial and responsible" probe and the "presentation of evidence", reiterating that Russia was ready for "joint work".

## Former soldier Bio wins Sierra Leone vote but rival vows to contest

**FREETOWN:** Sierra Leone's opposition challenger Julius Maada Bio secured his first term in office as a civilian Wednesday when he was declared winner of a presidential run-off-but his opponent vowed to contest the result. Bio, a former soldier who briefly led a military junta more than two decades ago, won 51.81 percent of ballots in last month's election in the West African country, according to official results. He defeated Samura Kamara, presented as successor to outgoing President Ernest Bai Koroma and candidate of the ruling All People's Congress (APC), in power for a decade.

Kamara secured 48.19 percent of the vote, but swiftly challenged the outcome given by the National Election Commission (NEC). Cheers and songs erupted among thousands of Bio's supporters gathered in the capital Freetown on Wednesday evening. Shortly after the announcement, Bio was sworn in as president and handed a symbolic baton of command by the country's top judge. But hopes for a smooth transition were soon thrown into doubt after Kamara said he was rejecting the NEC's figures.

"We dispute the results and we will take legal ac-

At the same time, he alleged the Skripal case was used by Britain as "a pretext, either made up or staged, for the groundless expulsions of Russian diplomats". President Vladimir Putin said on a visit to Ankara on Wednesday that "common sense" must prevail to avoid "this damage in international relations". Moscow was unable to get the required two-thirds of votes from members to approve a joint investigation at Wednesday's OPCW meeting.

Diplomatic sources told AFP that six countries voted in favor of the Russian draft motion but 15 were against while 17 abstained, mainly countries from the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM). Russia's UN ambassador Vasily Nebenzia said the meeting in New York would focus on a letter sent by British Prime Minister Theresa May accusing Moscow of carrying out the attempted assassination.

### Facing off in the Hague

Wednesday's bid to secure a joint probe saw a day of bitter rhetoric between Moscow and Britain and its western allies. London slammed the joint probe idea as "perverse". "We will not agree to Russia's demand to conduct a joint investigation into the attack in Salisbury because the UK-supported by many other countries-has assessed that it is highly likely that the Russian state is responsible for this attack," British chemical arms expert

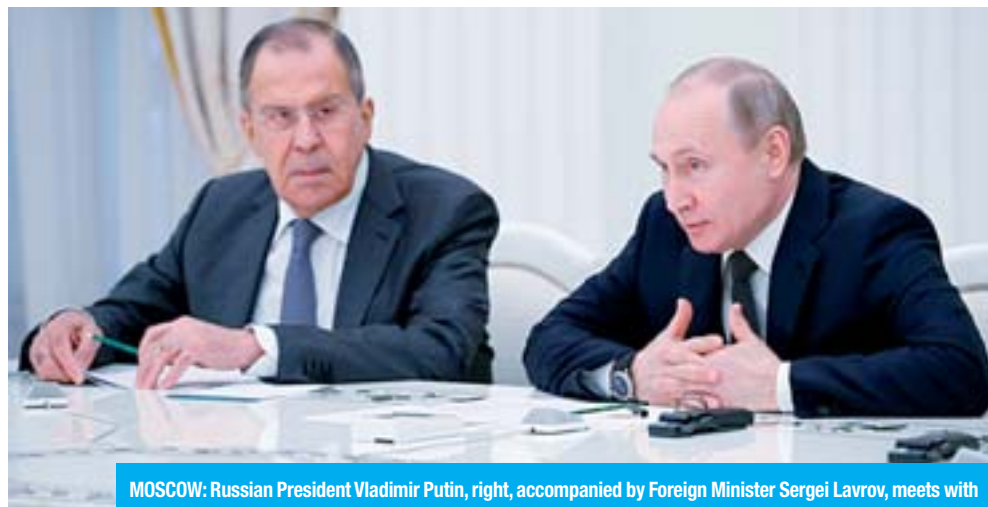
tion to correct them," Kamara said in a televised address, calling on his supporters to stay calm. The results, he added, "do not reflect the party's many concerns about massive ballot box stuffing, supernumerary votes, and other irregularities." The official results of the vote had been delayed by a dispute over the method of tallying that left ballot papers from 11,000 polling stations uncounted.

The count took days longer than planned because of widespread distrust of the internet, which led the APC party to insist on the compilation of results by hand as safer than electronic counting. In the town of Wellington, an hour by road from the coastal capital Freetown, AFP journalists saw results transmitted by more than 3,000 polling stations treated swiftly by about 40 operators in a centralized regional system. But in a dusty barn next to the computerized centre, NEC officials were on Tuesday painstakingly reading the very same data out loud in the presence of observers from political parties, who noted the results.

### Ugly campaign

The election campaign was characterized by ugly verbal exchanges and sporadic violence with Bio accusing the APC of using police intimidation against his party. Police reported a string of attacks on candidates and supporters on both sides since the first round on March 7 — which Bio narrowly won-after which Kamara declared that "the safety and security of Sierra Leone is in our hands". Bio, a straight-talking retired brigadier, blasted the government's closeness to China, while Kamara presented himself as a continuity candidate. —AFP

“ A pretext, either made up or staged ”



**MOSCOW:** Russian President Vladimir Putin, right, accompanied by Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov, meets with Chinese Foreign Minister at the Kremlin in Moscow. —AFP

John Foggo told the OPCW's governing executive council.

British Foreign Secretary Boris Johnson hailed the defeat of Russia's bid. "The purpose of Russia's ludicrous proposal at The Hague was clear-to undermine the independent, impartial work of the international chemical weapons watchdog," he said, adding Moscow's main goal was "to obscure the truth and confuse the public." Bulgaria's ambassador Krassimir Kostov, speaking on behalf of the European Union, said the EU had "full confidence in the UK investigation".

Britain is carrying out its own probe, with independent technical assistance from OPCW experts. Sergei Naryshkin, head of Russia's SVR foreign intelligence, warned Wednesday that both sides must avoid tensions escalating to the dangerous levels of the Cold War. Accusations of Moscow engineering the attack were a "grotesque provocation crudely concocted by the British and American security services," he said. He added it was important not to bring matters to a new Cuban Missile Crisis, referring to the 1962 standoff between the Soviet Union and the United States. —AFP

## EU tracking 65,000 migrant smugglers

**BRUSSELS:** European law enforcement officials say they are tracking at least 65,000 migrant smugglers, twice as many as at the height of the migration crisis three years ago, as the illegal trade booms. Despite a drop in the number of migrants successfully crossing the Mediterranean since Europe's biggest migration crisis since World War II erupted in 2015, the EU's police agency Europol said demand for smugglers was still "huge".

Many new suspects have also been identified, Europol added, as investigators in European countries track one of the fastest growing forms of international organized crime. "At the end of last year we had 65,000 smugglers in our data bases," Robert Crepinko, head of Europol's European Migrant Smuggling Centre, said at his offices in The Hague. Europol reported in September 2015 there were some 30,000 suspected smugglers before the number jumped to nearly 55,000 by the end of 2016, then some 10,000 more in 2017.

Sixty-three percent of those whose nationalities it has identified are from Europe, including 45 percent from Balkan countries, according to Europol figures. Fourteen percent are from the Middle East, 13 percent from Africa, nine percent from eastern

Asia and one percent from the Americas. Crepinko said smuggling is "still a booming business" worth billions of euros despite a drop in migrant arrivals last year following EU cooperation deals with Turkey and Libya, the main gateways to Europe.

Libya is currently the main migrant springboard to Europe where reports of enslavement on top of other horrific abuses of sub-Saharan Africans prompted urgent action at an EU-Africa summit in Abidjan in November. Thousands of migrants were quickly repatriated from Libya to their home countries under a deal reached at the meeting. French President Emmanuel Macron also announced the two sides would share more intelligence to "dismantle the networks and their financing and detain traffickers."

### No quick wins

But Crepinko said further law enforcement cooperation depends on obtaining guarantees that human rights will be respected, a challenge when dealing with many African governments. "That's why there will be no quick wins in that," the Europol official said. Since last year, Europol has been operating on a new legal basis that restricts information it can share with non-EU countries. But the agency cited recent successes in cooperation including the break-up of a gang sending young Nigerian women to Spanish cities for prostitution. —AFP

## International

# Six Vietnam activists jailed for attempt to overthrow state

## Accused spared of harshest sentence

**HANOI:** Six activists were jailed for between seven and 15 years yesterday for “attempting to overthrow the state”, the harshest sentences in years as the communist country tightens its grip on critics. The one-party state routinely locks up lawyers, bloggers and dissidents, but critics say a conservative leadership in charge since 2016 is waging a crackdown that has sent a chill throughout the dissident community.

The six defendants convicted yesterday, including prominent lawyer Nguyen Van Dai who got 15 years in jail, were sentenced after a one-day trial held under heavy security in the Vietnamese capital, lawyers said. The defendants were all charged under Article 79 for attempting to overthrow the state, the lawyers said. The case has drawn international scorn and gained widespread attention in the country, where independent civil society groups, political parties and media are all barred by the communist state.

Article 79 carries the maximum penalty of death, but the accused were spared the harshest sentence. The activists are linked to the Brotherhood for Democracy, a nationwide network of activists that says it has about 80 full-time members. They were accused of carrying out human rights training, pushing for multi-party democracy and receiving funds from overseas, according to the indictment.

“At the trial today, no evidence showing the defendants’ attempt at overthrowing the state

was given,” lawyer Le Luan told AFP after the one-day trial. “The charge was very much groundless,” he said. Five of the accused have been previously convicted, included lawyer Dai who has long been a thorn in the side of the communist authorities. Dai served four years in prison in 2007 for anti-state activity. He was arrested along with his assistant Le Thu Ha—who was sentenced to nine years yesterday—in December 2015.

Both were initially accused of anti-state propaganda before it was increased to the more serious charge of attempting to overthrow the state. The others, Pham Van Troi, pastor Nguyen Trung Ton, Truong Minh Duc and Nguyen Bac Truyen have been in custody since July 2017. They were handed between seven and 12 years in jail. “The trial has been so unfair and illogical. My husband and his friends did nothing wrong,” Dai’s wife, Vu Minh Khanh, said in tears after the trial. “All of them refused having committed any crime. Everything they did was not illegal,” she said.

### Protesters detained

Earlier yesterday, several supporters of the dissidents were hauled off by plainclothes police as they tried to march to the courthouse in central Hanoi. The group carried signs reading “Democracy is not a crime” and “Oppose suppression of Brotherhood for Democracy” before their march was broken up. At least two were



**HANOI:** Vietnam’s prominent lawyer Nguyen Van Dai, center, and other political activists stand in a courtroom during their trial in Hanoi.—AFP

hauled into unmarked vans by plainclothes security agents and others put on a bus, according to an AFP reporter at the scene.

Rights groups have decried the uptick in arrests and convictions over the past two years, including Amnesty International which said this

week there are at least 97 dissidents behind bars in Vietnam. Vietnam’s foreign ministry spokeswoman Le Thi Thu Hang rejected claims that activists are being targeted and said the state is “ensuring and promoting human rights” in line with international law.—AFP

## Sudan repatriates seven female ‘IS members’ from Libya

**KHARTOUM:** Sudanese security agents on Wednesday brought home from Libya seven Sudanese women who they said were members of the jihadist Islamic State group. The seven women, dressed in traditional Sudanese clothes and wearing headscarves, were shown to journalists at Khartoum airport where they were welcomed by their relatives amid chants of “Allahu Akbar”.

Three children were also brought along with the women, an AFP correspondent reported. The group, which included twin sisters, had arrived from the Libyan city of Misrata, security officials said. “The seven women were members of Da’esh and some had even participated in fighting on the battlefield,” Brigadier Tijani Ibrahim of Sudan’s powerful National Intelligence and Security Service (NISS) said using the Arabic acronym for IS.

The women had gone to Libya in 2014 and 2015 to join the jihadist group, Ibrahim told reporters, as the women stood in a line against a wall with their heads bowed. “Thanks to Allah, we have returned to our country,” said one of the women, who made a brief statement to reporters and did not give her name. Ibrahim said experts will talk to the women to understand what made them join IS. “After that, we will try to reintegrate them into the Sudanese society,” he said.

The group was welcomed by relatives waiting at a hall inside the airport, some of whom cried and hugged the women when they were brought in by security agents. A relative of one of the



**KHARTOUM:** Sudanese security agents show journalists seven Sudanese female members of the Islamic State group who were brought to Khartoum.—AFP

three children brought along with the women said that her father had taken her two brothers to Libya three years ago. “My father took them telling them that they were going for a trip,” she told AFP on condition of anonymity.

“One of my two brothers and my father were killed in Libya.” Sudanese officials say dozens of young Sudanese men and women had joined IS over the past few years. Several groups of students from Sudan—some holding Western passports—had travelled to Syria, Iraq and Libya to join the group. Sudanese media has reported the deaths of some of the students while fighting for the group in the three countries.—AFP

## Russia gulag historian walks free after child pornography trial

**PETROZAVODSK, Russia:** A Russian gulag historian who has exhumed Stalin-era mass graves was yesterday found not guilty of child pornography charges and released following a trial that supporters have denounced as a sham. “I am free,” shouted historian Yury Dmitriyev after he was released in the courtroom in the city of Petrozavodsk in northwestern Russia following an outcry from rights activists and liberals.

But Dmitriyev, who had spent more than a year in pre-trial detention, was found guilty of firearm possession charges and released on conditions that will limit his freedom. The 62-year-old, who is the head of rights group Memorial’s branch in Karelia in northwestern Russia, called the ruling “just”. “Because nothing bad had happened,” he said after the closed-door hearing. Activists have said the case against Dmitriyev was an attempt by authorities to muzzle the outspoken historian who has called attention to one of the darkest chapters in Russia’s history.—AFP

## International

# Oklahoma teachers demand more school funding

## Schools remain closed as protest stretches

**OKLAHOMA CITY:** First-grade teacher Kelly Lamerton is passionate about education, but working four jobs just to survive has left her close to the breaking point. “Some days I get home at 10:00 pm and I can’t get a full night of rest,” said the 28-year-old, who in addition to teaching youngsters how to read supervises them on the school bus, sells snacks at sports games and works at a church daycare service. She’s now one of thousands of determined educators, supported by students and parents, demonstrating in front of the legislature in Oklahoma’s capital demanding change.

“

Enough is enough

”

The teachers of this state in the heart of

America, where oil is a predominant industry, are among the lowest paid in the country. Their salaries start at \$31,000 per year before taxes. To survive, many have taken on two, three, four, or five odd jobs—working nights and weekends, or during their summer holidays. As the protest stretched into its third day, hundreds of schools remain closed and anger was boiling over. “Enough is enough,” said Larry Cagle, an English teacher who is also one of the movement’s leaders. “We have no intention of returning to school. We’re prepared to wind up until the summer.”

“We haven’t had a raise in a decade, and we’ve endured cuts every single year for the past 10 years,” added Cagle. The result: ever-fuller classes, dilapidated school buildings, and

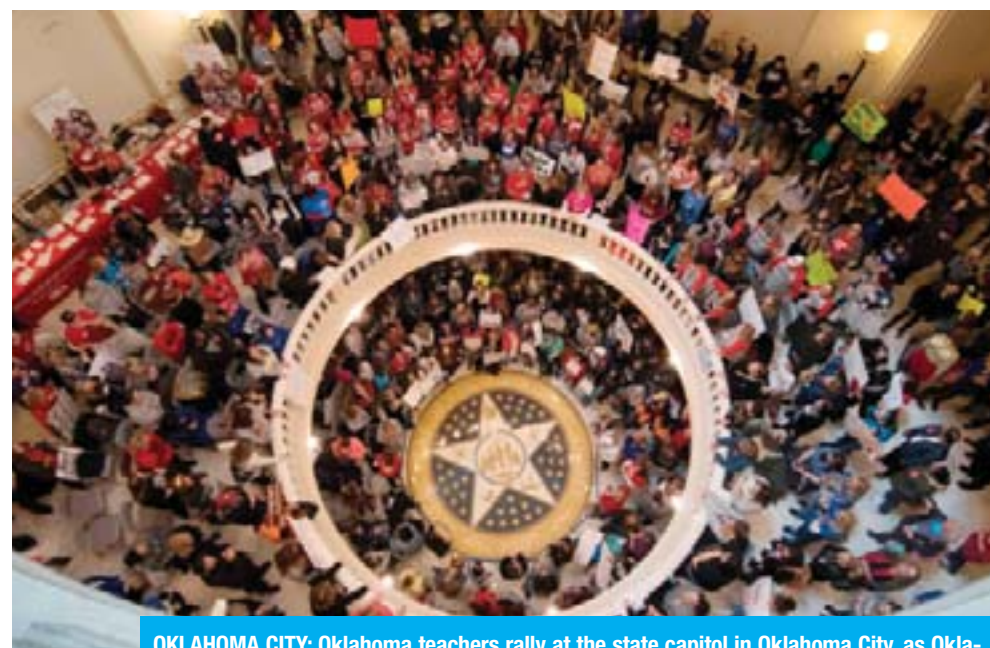
often inexperienced teachers. Oklahoma lawmakers last week approved a pay increase of \$6,000 per year on average for each teacher, a concession teachers consider insufficient. Governor Mary Fallin, in an interview with CBS, called the teachers “teenagers who want a new car.” The demonstrators say they are asking for a \$10,000 raise to stop the exodus of teachers to neighboring states, where they can earn an

average of \$15,000 more per year for the same level of experience. And, most importantly, teachers say they want a \$200 million budget increase to renovate and equip schools that have been left to wither. Twenty-nine-

year-old Klarissa Brock says that when she returned from vacation this year, her classroom was flooded due to burst pipes that had frozen during Oklahoma’s brutal winter.

The school administration had turned off the heat to save money. All of her classroom equipment was ruined. Another teacher describes classes of 40 students, some of whom have to sit on the floor, because they lack enough desks and chairs. Mark Lianney, who has three decades of teaching experience, teaches 150 students but only has 32 social science textbooks, which are falling apart from years of use.

The 57-year-old son of a teacher-tall and imposing, and carrying a sign saying: “This teacher should have been a cowboy”—tells AFP



**OKLAHOMA CITY:** Oklahoma teachers rally at the state capitol in Oklahoma City, as Oklahoma becomes the latest state to be plagued by teacher strife.—AFP

that he personally pays for photocopies to distribute to students. Behind him, a DJ is spinning pop music to energize demonstrators, and a stage is set for speeches later in the day.

### ‘The pendulum has swung too far’

“Funding schools shouldn’t be historical. It should be normal,” says a sign held by Becky Horton, who is sitting in a folding

chair, with blankets to cope with the bitter cold. The 44-year-old music teacher buys sheet music herself, and funds all activities, outings and instruments through fundraisers that rely on parents or charities. The exasperation is overtaking Oklahoma, and similar teacher strikes have taken place in Kentucky, Arizona, and other US states where teachers are underpaid. —AFP

## Migrant caravan members plead with Trump: ‘Give us a chance’

**MATIAS ROMERO, Mexico:** The Central Americans crossing Mexico in the migrant caravan that has infuriated President Donald Trump are fleeing gang violence, poverty and political repression. Here are five of their stories.

### Trump has no idea

At 38 years old, Oscar Dalis is making his second attempt to reach the United States. There are no jobs in his native El Salvador, he says, and the violence has gotten so bad “you can’t live there.” Brutal turf wars between gangs like MS-13 and Barrio 18 have given the country the highest murder rate in the world. Dalis says Trump has no idea what he and the other caravan members are fleeing.

“He had everything in life from the time he was born. But we poor people need whatever chance the rich ‘gringos’ can give us,” he said. The last time Dalis

tried to reach the US, two years ago, he paid a people smuggler \$5,000 to take him there, he says. His mother had to mortgage her house to raise the money. But the smuggler swindled him. This time, he says, he is determined to cross the border no matter what—illegally, if he has to.

### Gangland violence

Carol Torres, 26, fled Honduras after her abusive husband hired gang hitmen to attack her, she says. “They dragged me from my house, brought me all the way to the border and told me to get out of the country,” she said. She was forced to leave behind her two children, ages five and nine, she says, her vacant eyes fixed on the horizon. She says she plans to settle in Tijuana, on the Mexican side of the border not cross into the United States. “I don’t believe in the American dream, because the president over there is a son of a bitch who doesn’t like immigrants,” she says.

### Political persecution

William Gomez, 24, says he decided to leave his native Honduras because President Juan Orlando Hernandez—elected in a questionable vote last year—has unleashed a wave of political repression. “He pays the police to kill those of us who oppose him,” he says. A machine operator, he says there is no work at home. All he wants is a chance to earn an honest living, he said. “The people in this caravan are workers, we’re not murderers,” he says. “We’re



**MATIAS ROMERO, Mexico:** A Central American migrant and his baby are pictured at a makeshift camp in Matias Romero, Oaxaca State, Mexico as they take part on the ‘Migrant Via Crucis’ caravan towards the United States.—AFP

not who he thinks we are.”

### Entrepreneurial spirit

Henry Benitez, 20, is a born entrepreneur. In his native Honduras, he sold sweets to commuters, but he couldn’t take his stock with him when he left. Even here, though, in the mountains of southern Mexico living with a caravan of destitute migrants, he has managed to set up an impromptu shop, selling cigarettes,

candy and snacks.

Arriving in Mexico with nothing, he begged for money until one day a man gave him 50 pesos, he says. He bought two packs of cigarettes, selling his smokes one by one for a tiny profit—which he then reinvested in more stock. He appealed to Trump: “Give us migrants a chance... We’re all human, we’re all God’s children. You are flesh and blood, just like us.”—AFP

## International

# Fear and isolation for Myanmar's remaining Rohingya

## Status of Rohingya in Rakhine hangs by a thread

**MRAUK U, Myanmar:** By the twisted standards of Myanmar's Rakhine state, Abdullah is one of its more fortunate Rohingya residents. The 34-year-old is alive, his village is intact and he is able to make a living—albeit a meager one—in his homeland as a farmer. Abdullah's Rohingya Muslim minority are disappearing fast from Myanmar. Some one million of them—around two-thirds of their entire stateless community—have been forced over the border to refugee camps in Bangladesh by successive waves of persecution.

The latest has expelled some 700,000 Rohingya since August, when the army launched a campaign of violence that the UN says amounted to “ethnic cleansing”. Abdullah's village of Shan Taung is near the temple-studded town of Mrauk U, not far from the epicenter of the most recent crackdown in northern Rakhine but partly sheltered from its worst excesses by a range of forested mountains.

He is among the 500,000 Rohingya that the UN estimates remain in Myanmar, some confined to camps after previous rounds of violence while others are spared by wealth, luck or-like

the villages in Abdullah's area—simply by isolation from the latest military campaign. Yet their lives are still shaped by tension and fear in a mainly-Buddhist country that has methodically stripped the Muslim minority of legal rights and security.

The status of the Rohingya in Rakhine hangs by a thread in the wake of the army crackdown, which has seen Myanmar troops and ethnic Rakhine mobs accused of burning Rohingya villages, and of raping and murdering their residents. Shan Taung, with its 4,500-strong Rohingya population, appears peaceful. Fishermen dry their catch in the sun, farmers bring in the rice paddy and children play at the side of the road.

But fear has sharply segregated the Rohingya Muslims and the ethnic Rakhine Buddhists living nearby. The Rohingya say they risk a beating—or worse—if they stray into territory the Rakhine regard as their own, while few trust the police to protect them. It wasn't always this way, says Abdullah, explaining he once had Rakhine friends and stayed with a Rakhine family while studying at university in the state capital, Sittwe.

“

They don't say good things

”



**UKHIA:** A Rohingya refugee looks out from a school window at Kutupalong refugee camp in Bangladesh's Ukhia district. — AFP

“They no longer treat me like they used to,” he tells AFP. “They don't say good things.” Communal relations have disintegrated in recent months around Mrauk U town, where several people died recently after police opened fire on

an ethnic Rakhine nationalist protest. “We do not trust each other anymore,” a Rakhine youth told AFP, asking not to be named. “Rakhines are also watching each other to make sure no one from the town is friends with Muslims.” — AFP

## Bangladesh seeks death penalty for drug traffickers

**DHAKA:** Bangladesh wants to punish methamphetamine traffickers with the death penalty, officials said yesterday, as authorities confront the growing popularity of the dangerous and addictive drug. The proposal to crackdown on the spread of methamphetamine, known locally as “yaba”, comes after Bangladesh seized more than 40 million pills of the narcotic in 2017 — double the previous year.

Authorities want to elevate yaba to a Class A banned substance, meaning traffickers would face the death penalty instead of life behind bars. “We'll raise the punishment for yaba trafficking. In the new law the maximum punishment will be (the) death sentence,” Jamaluddin Ahmed, the head of Bangladesh's narcotics control department, said. Bangladesh law enforcement say the drugs are smuggled across the porous border from Myanmar.

Ahmed said traffickers had been more active since August, when Rohingya refugees fleeing violence in Myanmar began pouring into Bangladesh. Gangs had been using the Rohingya as mules and hiding drugs in fishing boats used to ferry the persecuted Muslims to safety. “Recently there has been such a huge inflow of yaba from Myanmar that it has become increasingly difficult for us to control it. As a result, its use has also increased,” Ahmed said. Raids of fishing boats have uncovered huge hauls of the drug. Authorities said last week that nine million yaba tablets were seized in less than three months as the refugee influx reached its peak. Nearly two million pills were discovered in a single haul. — AFP

## Sri Lanka prime minister wins no-confidence vote

**COLOMBO:** Sri Lanka's Prime Minister Ranil Wickremesinghe defeated a no-confidence motion in parliament late Wednesday but political tensions rose after 13 MPs from an allied party voted against him. Wickremesinghe said he would hold talks with President Maithripala Sirisena after coming through the battle by 122 votes to 76. Sirisena has criticized the prime minister's handling of the economy and has in the past called on Wickremesinghe to stand down.

Thirteen members of Sirisena's Sri Lanka Freedom Party (SLFP) joined opposition lawmakers to vote against the prime minister, whose United National Party is the largest single party in the 225-member assembly. “We have started a lot of work and made many changes—democracy, economy and rural development,” the prime minister told reporters after the vote. “We also faced problems such as drought, cost of living and some economic issues, we will study both positives and negatives and move forward.”

Wickremesinghe said he will meet Sirisena soon to discuss how to proceed with their government, which was formed in 2015. SLFP ministers were among the rebels who voted against the government. “We will continue to be in the government,” Sports Minister Dayasiri Jayasekara, one of the 13, said after the vote. But MP Hector Appuhamy, a Wickremesinghe supporter, said: “If they have any backbone, they should now leave the government.” Sirisena joined hands with Wickremesinghe's United National Party to end strongman president Mahinda Rajapakse's decade in power in a January 2015 election. But the pair have become embroiled in a power struggle, especially over the econ-



**COLOMBO:** Sri Lankan Prime Minister Ranil Wickremesinghe receives blessings from a Buddhist monk, as he offers prayers at a temple in Colombo following a marathon debate in parliament. — AFP

omy and corruption, which has divided the coalition leadership. Sirisena publicly blamed Wickremesinghe, a free-market champion, for mismanaging the economy as Sri Lanka's growth plunged to a 16-year low of 3.1 percent in 2017.

A large bond scandal at Sri Lanka's central bank—which fell under Wickremesinghe's portfolio until Sirisena took it away last month—deepened the acrimony between the two leaders. The prime minister was cleared of any wrongdoing but was accused of trying to protect a former central bank governor, who is a suspect in the insider-trading scam. The no-confidence motion was moved by an opposition group led by Rajapakse, who humiliated the governing coalition in a surprise blitz at the local elections in February. — AFP



# Taleban vows revenge over Afghan airstrike

## At least 59 people were killed in the airstrike

**KUNDUZ, Afghanistan:** The Taleban has vowed to “take serious revenge” after an Afghan airstrike in an area controlled by the militant group killed or wounded dozens of people, many of them children. The government and military have said the Afghan Air Force (AAF) hit a Taleban base in the northeastern province of Kunduz on Monday where senior commanders were meeting to plan attacks. But Afghan security sources and witnesses have said that AAF helicopters struck a madrassa in Dashte Archi district where a graduation ceremony for religious students was under way.

At least 59 people were killed, including Taleban commanders, according to security sources. Health officials said at least 57

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Aircraft bombarded innocent children

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wounded were taken to hospital in the provincial capital Kunduz. The Taleban issued a statement late Wednesday saying it “condemns in the strongest terms this major crime and vows to take serious revenge against the perpetrators”. An AFP photographer was among the first journalists to visit the scene of the airstrike on Wednesday after receiving permission from the Taleban. It is deep inside Taleban-controlled territory and normally inaccessible to the media.

The madrassa and mosque appeared to be undamaged. But in a field adjacent to the religious compound, where the graduation ceremony was purportedly held, AFP saw a hole in the ground that locals said was made by a rocket, though that could not be verified. AFP also saw large piles of hats, turbans and shoes that



**KUNDUZ, Afghanistan:** This photograph shows Afghan residents walking near a religious school following an airstrike in the Taleban-controlled Dasht-e Archi district in Kunduz province. —AFP

were said to belong to the victims of the airstrike. At least half a dozen freshly dug graves could be seen nearby.

Abdullah, 40, who lives near the compound housing the madrassa and mosque and was invited to attend as a member of the local community, said that he saw the airstrike happen. “We were about to finish the ceremony at 1:00 pm when (Afghan military) aircraft bombarded innocent children,” he said Wednesday. “People were panicked. Children and elders were also wounded in the bombardment.” Government officials in both Kabul and Kun-

duz have given conflicting figures for the number of casualties, with some denying any civilians had been killed or that a madrassa had been hit. Afghan officials have been known to minimize civilian casualties. The Afghan military initially denied civilians were among the dead and wounded, but later blamed the Taleban for shooting them. It said 18 Taleban commanders were killed and 12 were wounded in the airstrike. But Naim Mangal, a doctor at the hospital where most of the wounded were taken, said that “all the victims” had been “hit by pieces of bomb, shrapnel”. — AFP

## Central bank officials called on by police to aid in PNB fraud probe

**NEW DELHI:** Four senior Indian central bank officials have been called on by investigators to help explain banking processes as police probe deeper into the \$2 billion fraud at India’s Punjab National Bank, sources familiar with the matter said yesterday. A federal police source said earlier yesterday the agency was questioning four top Reserve Bank of India (RBI) officials — three chief general managers and a general manager-in relation with the fraud at state-run PNB, but the source did not elaborate on the line of questioning.

Two other sources, privy to the RBI officials’ meetings with investigators, said the central bank officials were being called upon to explain how banking processes work and that there was no

suspicion of any wrongdoing on their part. The RBI could not be immediately reached for comment. In what has been dubbed the biggest fraud in India’s banking history, two jeweler groups have been accused of defrauding banks by raising loans from overseas branches of Indian lenders using nearly \$2 billion of fraudulent guarantees issued by rogue Punjab National Bank staff at a Mumbai branch.

PNB has said it is working with investigative agencies and regulators in the probe, in which authorities have so far arrested 20 people including executives from the state-run bank. The RBI has faced criticism that it failed to detect the long-running fraud, or correct a breakdown of normal practices at the nation’s second-largest state-run bank. The regulator, however, has argued that it had “very limited authority” over state-run banks and called for reforms to give the RBI more powers to police such lenders.

In a strongly worded speech last month, RBI Governor Urjit Patel said there were numerous limitations in the RBI’s powers over state-run lenders, such as its inability to remove directors, or replace management. While the RBI regulates all banks in India, state-run banks are also regulated by the government, which owns majority-stakes in them. — Reuters

## India’s finance minister unwell with kidney ailment, cancels tour

**NEW DELHI:** Indian Finance Minister Arun Jaitley is unwell and has cancelled a visit to London next week for annual economic talks, government officials said yesterday. Jaitley, a prominent member of Prime Minister Narendra Modi’s inner circle, went to Delhi’s All India Institute of Medical Sciences for tests related to a kidney ailment, officials at the Finance Ministry and at the medical facility said.

A medical report is due today, one of the Finance Ministry officials said. They declined to be named because of the sensitivity of the matter and the Finance Ministry did not make any formal comment on the minister’s health.

Jaitley, 65, was due to meet Britain’s finance minister Philip Hammond at the India-UK economic dialogue and deliver a talk on “Looking Ahead to 2022: India’s Global Vision” at Chatham House, a policy think tank. The organizers of the talk said the program had been cancelled, without giving a reason. “He will not visit London next week as he is not keeping well,” one of the Indian officials said. Jaitley skipped a meeting of finance ministers from the Group of 20 countries in Argentina last month. He told Reuters at the time he was not in a position to take a long flight. In 2014 he had a gastric bypass operation to keep his diabetes in check. — Reuters

## International

# Philippines' Duterte to take Rohingya refugees

## Duterte withdraws from International Criminal Court

**MANILA:** Philippine President Rodrigo Duterte said yesterday "genocide" was taking place in Myanmar and he was willing to accept Rohingya Muslim refugees fleeing from it, though Europe should help too. The United Nations and rights groups say some 700,000 people, most of them Rohingya, have fled from Myanmar into Bangladesh since August last year when Rohingya militant attacks on the security forces sparked a military crackdown.

The United Nations and several Western

countries have said the Myanmar action constitutes ethnic cleansing but Myanmar rejects that. It says its security forces have been conducting legitimate operations against "terrorists". Duterte, in a wide-ranging speech to farmers and agriculture officials at the presidential palace, touched on various issues including his recent decision to withdraw from the International Criminal Court over its decision to open a preliminary investigation into his bloody war on drugs.

Drawing the ire of officials in Myanmar, Duterte then expressed sympathy for the Rohingya and offered to help. "I really pity the people there," Duterte said. "I'm willing to accept refugees. Rohingyas, yes. I will help but we should split them with Europe." He also mentioned the inability of the international community to resolve problems in Myanmar. "They can't even solve the Rohingya. That's what genocide is, if I may say so," Duterte said.

Myanmar has rejected any suggestion genocide is taking place and its government spokesman, Zaw Htay, said Duterte's comments did not reflect the real situation. "He doesn't know anything about Myanmar," Zaw Htay said. "The usual behavior of that person is to speak without restraint. That's why he said that." Duterte's comments were broadcast live on television and later included in a transcript of his speech, issued by his office.

Such a denunciation by a Southeast Asian leader of a neighbor is rare. Both the Philippines

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**That woman, she is my friend**

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**MANILA:** In this file photo Philippine President Rodrigo Duterte delivering his speech during the 121st founding anniversary of Philippine army at the army headquarters in Manila.—AFP

and Myanmar are members of the Association of South East Asian Nations which has long upheld a convention of withholding criticism of fellow members. Duterte did not refer by name to

Myanmar leader Aung San Suu Kyi, who has been heavily criticized abroad for failing to stand up for the largely stateless Rohingya, only saying: "That woman, she is my friend."—Reuters

## Flight returns to Singapore after bomb hoax

**SINGAPORE:** A flight operated by budget airline Scoot yesterday escorted back to Singapore by fighter jets after a bomb hoax and a passenger was arrested. The plane bound for Hat Yai in southern Thailand landed safely at Changi Airport at 3:23 pm just over two hours after it had taken off, said an airline statement. It was escorted by two Singapore air force fighter jets, said Scoot, the budget arm of Singapore Airlines. The Straits Times newspaper said this was usual procedure for such incidents.

"Scoot flight TR634 bound for Hat Yai has returned to Changi Airport due to an alleged bomb threat on board... All aboard the aircraft were safe, including six crew members," the airline statement said. It added that the flight had been retimed to 6:30pm. "Three passengers were offloaded for follow on investigation and we are working closely with the authorities to ensure the safety of our guests," Scoot added.

Police confirmed that a 41-year-old man had been arrested for making a false bomb threat. He was travelling with two others. A source close to the investigation said that the man is Singaporean. "Police have checked the plane and the baggages of the passenger that made the bomb threat and his two travelling companions and found no threat," the statement said.—AFP

## Tearful reunion highlights plight of China's missing children

**BEIJING:** A tearful reunion between parents and their missing daughter after an agonizing 24-year search has put a spotlight on the vexed issue of child trafficking and disappearances in China. Wang Mingqing and his wife Liu Dengying, from southwest Sichuan province, lost their three-year-old daughter in 1994 when she vanished after being momentarily left alone at the family's fruit stand. "I looked up and down the street, crossed the bridge, looked everywhere. She was nowhere to be found," Wang told the official Xinhua news agency.

The couple gave up their fruit business for several years to focus on their search, soliciting the help of local police and welfare organizations. But the efforts were in vain and their daughter became one of the thousands of children that go missing in China every year, often kidnapped and trafficked by illegal adoption rings. Refusing to give up, Wang became a taxi driver in 2015 in the forlorn hope of one day picking up a passenger who might miraculously turn out to be his daughter.

And then a breakthrough. Earlier this year, a woman living thousands of kilometers away

in Jilin province contacted Wang after spotting a sketch of what his daughter may look like today along with the family's story on the internet. Results of a DNA test confirmed that the woman, Kang Ying, is Wang's lost daughter and on Tuesday the family had an emotional reunion in the city of Chengdu.

"From now on, dad is here. You don't need to worry about anything... Daddy never forgot you, never stopped searching for you," video footage of the event showed a tearful Wang telling Kang. His two other children, a boy and a girl, had prepared signs saying "sister, we missed you" to greet Kang, who is married and has a son and daughter. "The whole world told me I didn't have a real (biological) mother-but I do!" she was quoted as saying by the local news website thecover.cn. Unaware of her origins, Kang said she had lived as a child with her adopted parents, less than 20 kilometers from Wang's home in the same county.

### Underground network

The story made waves on social media, with dozens of parents sharing information about their search for missing children. There are no official statistics on the number of children who go missing in China every year. The exact circumstances of Kang's disappearance remain unknown. A missing persons alert system launched by the Ministry of Public Security in May 2016 has broadcast information about 2,767 missing children and managed to find nearly 2,700 of them as of March 15, data from the ministry showed.

But many more are believed to be abducted each year and sold to underground

adoption agencies. In the past, China's one-child policy—which expanded to two in 2015 — and a preference for sons fuelled the trafficking of children. "To reduce the red-tape and time required to go through the formal adoption process, an underground network of kidnapping gangs emerged to accommodate those who are willing to pay more," Matt Friedman, a former UN regional manager of anti-trafficking in Asia, said.

"Most couples who adopted from these networks didn't know that the infants they brought home were stolen from hospitals or communities," Friedman said. Wang told thecover.cn that during his quest to find his daughter, he met dozens of parents who had lost their children, some due to trafficking.

### DNA database

In his three years as a taxi driver, Wang drove around Chengdu with information about his daughter on a large sign on the rear window of his cab. He also gave leaflets to passengers to spread the word. In the end, help came in the form of a forensic expert and sketch artist, Lin Yuhui, who contacted Wang after reading about his plight. Lin created a portrait of how Wang's daughter might look as an adult and helped circulate it on Chinese social media and to police stations nationwide.

When she saw the image, Kang Ying contacted Wang saying she was "shocked" by its resemblance to her. "But I was sceptical at first because a few women had contacted us in the past, claiming to be my daughter," Wang told thecover.cn. "But DNA tests later disproved their claims." —AFP

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Friday|Times

# Lifestyle

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Cosplayers dressed as God of War character Kratos (right) and his son Atreus attend the Middle East Film & Comic Con in Dubai. —AFP

**Salman Khan sentenced to five years for killing antelopes**

# BOLLYWOOD STAR **SALMAN KHAN** SENTENCED TO FIVE YEARS FOR KILLING ANTELOPES



Indian Bollywood actor Salman Khan (center) arrives at the airport in Jodhpur ahead of a verdict in the long-running blackbuck poaching case. — AFP photos



Indian Bollywood actor Salman Khan arrives at a court to hear the verdict in the long-running wildlife poaching case against him in Jodhpur.

**B**ollywood superstar Salman Khan was sentenced to five years prison yesterday by an Indian court for killing endangered wildlife nearly two decades ago. Khan, regarded as the bad boy of Indian cinema, was taken into police custody and driven to jail

after the sentencing amid chaotic scenes outside court. But the actor, who denied poaching the rare antelopes known as black bucks in 1998, can still appeal his conviction for a crime that has gripped celebrity-obsessed India for years. "The court has given a five-year jail term and fined Salman Khan 10,000 rupees (\$150)," prosecution lawyer Mahipal Bishnoi told reporters outside the court in the Rajasthan city of Jodhpur.

Hundreds of police were deployed outside the courtroom to keep back fans who massed to support the body-building actor best known for his macho roles. Khan, one of the Indian movie industry's most bankable stars, wore black sunglasses and a figure-hugging black shirt as he walked briskly from a white SUV to the courthouse flanked by security.

Four other Bollywood stars—Saif Ali Khan, Sonali Bendre, Tabu and Neelam Kothari—were also accused of joining the hunting trip but were acquitted for lack of evidence. Khan, whose legion of fans emulate his dis-

tinct hairstyle and fashion, has accused Rajasthan's forest department of framing him over the black buck case. His defence lawyers had suggested the black bucks died of natural causes such as overeating, and claimed there was no evidence they had been shot.

#### Controversial bad boy

The 52-year-old has been dogged by multiple charges since undertaking the infamous hunting safari in protected forest land while shooting a film in Rajasthan. The Bishnois, a Rajasthan tribe seen as custodians of the region's wildlife, filed a complaint against the actors. Khan spent a week in prison in 1998 when first accused of using unlicensed arms to shoot the black buck. Last year he was cleared by a court over the alleged use of unlicensed guns on the expedition. A higher court is challenging his acquittal. Khan was also found guilty of killing gazelles on the hunting trip and served a very brief stint in jail in 2006, but was later acquitted on appeal. Controversy has followed the Bollywood bad boy

since he burst onto the silver screen in the 1980s. He was cleared in 2015 of killing a homeless man in a hit-and-run accident. That decision is now being challenged in the Supreme Court. Indian courts can often take years—and sometimes decades—to pronounce verdicts. He was also accused of assaulting a former Miss World and provoked a firestorm in 2016 by saying his workout schedule for a film left him feeling "like a raped woman".

But the off-screen drama has done little to dampen his appeal. The actor known as "bhai", meaning "brother" in Hindi, enjoys a cult-like status with the majority of his devotees, young men who envy Khan for being unmarried at 52. Bollywood film industry analyst Komal Nahta said the conviction and any jail term would only delay movies but not seriously harm his career. "He is a superstar whose films guarantee huge box office numbers," Nahta told AFP. "A jail term might affect a few films that are in the pipeline."

"These films can wait as they have not yet begun production and at present it would only mean a loss of time rather than money investment." Khan remains one of Bollywood's biggest draws despite his off-screen drama, starring in more than 100 films and television shows. According to Forbes, he made \$37 million in yearly earnings to finish second behind Shah Rukh Khan in the 2017 Bollywood rankings. Both the Khans are among the top 10 most highly paid actors in the world. The Bollywood heart-throb's latest blockbuster "Tiger Zinda Hai" (Tiger is alive) collected some \$85 million worldwide. — AFP



In this file photo Indian black bucks, also known as the Indian antelope, lock horns at an enclosure at the Zoological Park in New Delhi.

## The off-screen antics of Bollywood bad boy Salman Khan

**A**ccused of killing a homeless man, hunting endangered wildlife and assaulting a former Miss World, Bollywood superstar Salman Khan's off-screen life is almost as dramatic as the epics he stars in. As the Hindi cinema icon is jailed for five years for killing rare antelopes, here are some of the other major controversies that have enshrined Khan as Bollywood's bad boy.

#### Deadly hit-and-run

Khan was in a vehicle in Mumbai, the home of Bollywood cinema, in 2002 when it mounted the curb and killed a homeless man sleeping on the pavement. He was found guilty of culpable homicide and sentenced to five years in prison, but the verdict was overturned in a higher court in 2015. His acquittal is being challenged in the Supreme Court.

#### Miss World scandal

Khan, who has never married, was accused of assaulting former Miss World Aishwarya Rai during a closely-watched relationship which ended more than a decade ago. The superstar denied ever hitting the Bollywood actress and dismissed rumors about their high-profile liaison, including that he threatened to jump off the roof of her apartment during a heated argument.

#### Bomber gaffe

In 2015, Khan sparked outrage when he urged India's top court to spare the life of a bomb plotter convicted over a series of blasts that killed hundreds in Mumbai. Protesters rallied outside his home after Khan declared the man innocent, but the Bollywood action hero later retracted his remarks under a hailstorm of criticism.

#### "Reprehensible" comments

A year later Khan was back in hot water over another insensitive quip, this time likening his intense training schedule for a film to feeling "like a raped woman". India's National Commission for Women demanded Khan apologize for the "reprehensible" remarks. Khan mused that he should talk less to stay out of trouble. His father, Bollywood screenwriter Salim Khan, made an apology of sorts on his son's behalf.

#### Bodyguard assault

Indian police in 2016 charged Salman Khan's bodyguard for illegal possession of a firearm and assaulting a waiter at a pub in Mumbai. The bodyguard, Gurmeet Singh Jolly has worked with Khan for decades and is known to be a close confidante of the controversial superstar.

#### Raising eyebrows

In 2013, Khan—who today remains unmarried at 52 — straight-faced declared on national television that he was a virgin and saving himself for his future bride. The interviewer, stunned by the incredulity of this confession, asked about the coterie of beautiful women with whom Khan was often seen fraternizing. The buff bachelor replied they were all just friends. — AFP



Indian Bollywood actress Tabasum Fatima Hashmi, known as Tabu, arrives at the airport in Jodhpur ahead of a verdict in the long-running blackbuck poaching case.



Indian Bollywood actress and designer Neelam Kothari arrives at the airport in Jodhpur ahead of a verdict in the long-running blackbuck poaching case.



This file photo shows Spanish actress Penelope Cruz (left) and Spanish actor Javier Bardem (right) standing during the 65th San Sebastian Film Festival, in the northern Spanish Basque city of San Sebastian. — AFP photos



In this file photo Iranian born filmmaker Asghar Farhadi, winner of the Best Foreign Film Award for 'A Separation,' poses in the press room at the 84th Annual Academy Awards.

## Penelope Cruz and Javier Bardem film to open Cannes film festival

The Cannes film festival will open next month with Iranian master Asghar Farhadi's new film "Everybody Knows", starring Penelope Cruz and Javier Bardem, the organizers said yesterday. The psychological thriller shot in Spanish will also compete for the Palme d'Or—the first time in a decade that an opening film will be in the running for the fes-

tival's top prize. While Farhadi won an Oscar and the Golden Bear at Berlin for his 2011 breakthrough film, "A Separation", he has never taken the Palme d'Or, although two of his later films—"The Past" (2013) and "The Salesman" (2016) — won best screenplay and best actor and actress prizes.

"Everybody Knows", which also features the

Argentine star Ricardo Darin, tells the story of a woman played by Cruz who returns from Buenos Aires to her native village in Spain with her husband and children. Cruz and Bardem are the golden couple of Spanish-language cinema, and have starred in several films together including last year's "Loving Pablo", about a journalist who falls

in love with the notorious Colombian drugs lord, Pablo Escobar. Farhadi, 45, is one Iran's most renowned directors, who has made a name for himself with tense and carefully crafted stories both inside and outside his homeland. The film will be released in France on May 9, the day after the 11-day festival begins. — AFP

## 'Arousing emotions' with Bosnian rock a la francaise

Even if few can understand their lyrics, including the band members themselves, Bosnian rock fans have taken a new local group that sings only in French to their hearts. The band is called Jall Aux Yeux, a linguistic play on the name of a small Bosnian village pronounced in a French accent, and their music is full of references to France. Thirty-one-year-old Jure Petrovic, who writes the lyrics, is the only one among the band's seven musicians to speak the language of Moliere.

Singer Sanel Jusic simply memorizes the words to the songs phonetically. "I'm like a blind man and it is Jure who guides me on this road," the 33-year-old school art teacher told AFP. "It's the melody that drives me. French is a beautiful language, complicated but melodious, and I have the impression that it allows me to arouse emotions in the audience," he said. Although the French language has lost its footing in Bosnia in recent years, that has not deterred fans from going to performances by the band, which is currently on tour ahead

of the release of its debut album. Like most of his band mates, Jusic even struggles to pronounce the name of the band, which was founded in 2016. The name Jall Aux Yeux derives from that of a village near the northwestern town of Bihac called Zaluzje, of which Petrovic said he was particularly fond. In Bosnian, the word "zal" (pronounced "jal") means sorrow. "Since in our band nobody speaks Chinese, we decided to do it in French," Petrovic quipped.

In Bosnia, the use and popularity of the French language is decreasing as schools increasingly opt to teach English, German or even Turkish. In Bihac, a town of 56,000 inhabitants, French is not taught in any school. So, as a teacher of Latin, history and French, Petrovic has no chance currently of teaching the latter. He writes the songs in French, he says, so as "not to forget" the language.

### 'Dose of oxygen'

"This band is really cool. I feel like I got a dose of oxygen," Asja



Members of Bosnian band 'Jall aux Yeux' Sanel Jusic (center), Jure Petrovic (right) and Adnan Suljanovic pose within a promotional concert.

to build up a following. His texts are full of references to French culture and history, such as "The Plague" by Camus, the St. Bartholomew's Day massacre of French Huguenots in 1572 or Gypsy jazz great Django Reinhardt, who spent most of his life in France. But they also often echo Bosnia's violent history. "What about bloodshed in the name of ideals?" sings Jusic. "What about the mother without her children, what about children without their parents? I wash my hands of the matter, but they are covered with blood."

In another song, he references the 1947 Albert Camus novel to celebrate the return of peace: "The bacillus is gone, the plague is gone," he sings. "This is a universal theme... The plague of Bosnia is war, but also society after the war, its inability to move towards the future" in an ethnically divided country, Petrovic told AFP. Nearly 100,000 people died in the country's inter-ethnic war in the 1990s.

### 'Balkan madness, French freedom'

Influenced by multiple genres, including jazz, blues, pop-rock, punk as well as Bosnia's traditional sevdah folk music, the band's style mixes guitar, bass, drums, trumpet, saxophone and mandolin. "It's an organic music, very lively. It is not chained by any rules, it is natural and diverse," said drummer and percussionist Adnan Suljanovic, 45, an English teacher. In a country devastated by the 1992-1995 war and later exhausted by more than 20 years of inter-ethnic disputes, the musicians—all teachers with one exception—want to convey "joy" and "optimism," said Suljanovic. "With a bit of our Balkan madness and French freedom, passing through our literary filter pushed by Jure, we arrive at something rather nice," he said. —AFP



Members of Bosnian band "Jall aux Yeux" perform on March 16, 2018 during a promotional concert in Sarajevo. — AFP photos



People pose for a picture with cosplayers, dressed as Star Wars characters, during the Middle East Film & Comic Con yesterday in Dubai. — AFP photos



Cosplayers dressed as storm troopers and darth vader (center) attend the Middle East film and Comic-Con event.

# Middle East Comic Con kicks off in Dubai

In a traditional robe, dark sunglasses and a fake moustache, the cosplayer lurked in the corner posing as an FBI agent in the Middle East: welcome to Comic Con in Dubai. Dozens of youths turned up in their comic best for the seventh edition of the Middle East Film and Comic Con, which runs from yesterday to Saturday. Headlining the event this year are Kristian Nairn-Hodor from Game of Thrones—alongside Ezra “The Flash” Miller and Doctor Who’s Jenna Coleman. Comic Con is expected to draw some 70,000 fans of geek culture, according to the organizers, all of whom are hoping to get a glimpse of their favorite stars.

Emirati Saad Ibrahim and his two young sons arrived at the event dressed in head-to-toe Star Wars costumes: dad as Anakin Skywalker, and his two boys as the villains Darth Vader and Kylo Ren. “We brought the children to have a good time,” he said,

adding that his family attended the event every year. “It’s great fun, and they get the chance to meet their superheroes.” DC Comics and Marvel Cinematic Universe, the two giants of the field, both enjoy wide popularity across the Middle East, which is also home to a wide fanbase of Japanese anime. And the market, according to industry insiders, is poised to grow. “The Middle East is this untapped market and it’s huge,” said Suzy Pallet of the multinational event group Informa, which is organizing the Middle East Comic Con edition.

“From a historical point of view, they were brought up on anime, they were brought up on comics, and that’s ... grown into this love,” she told AFP. “It’s just the same as any other region, but so much more in terms of the young population.” At the opening, Emiratis mingled with members of Dubai’s varied expatriate communities, from India to Britain to Nigeria. “This is my first time here,” said Sanaa, an Indian expat in a bright pink wig. “It’s amazing. People get to meet and learn about more comics. Kids these days don’t know anything about comic books.”

Founded in 1970 as the Golden State Comic Book Convention, San Diego Comic-Con is now the main annual event in the comic world, featuring panels and workshops led by stars of film adaptations and remakes of industry staples. Comic-Con now has spin-offs across the globe, spreading as far as ultraconservative Saudi Arabia which last year hosted its first version of the event. — AFP



Cosplayers dressed as the Prince and Princess from the Prince of Persia franchise.



A cosplayer dressed as God of War character Atreus.



Cosplayers dressed as Superman, Wonder Woman and Batman attend the Middle East Film & Comic Con.



Cosplayers attend the Middle East film and Comic-Con event.



A cosplayer attends the Middle East film and Comic-Con event.

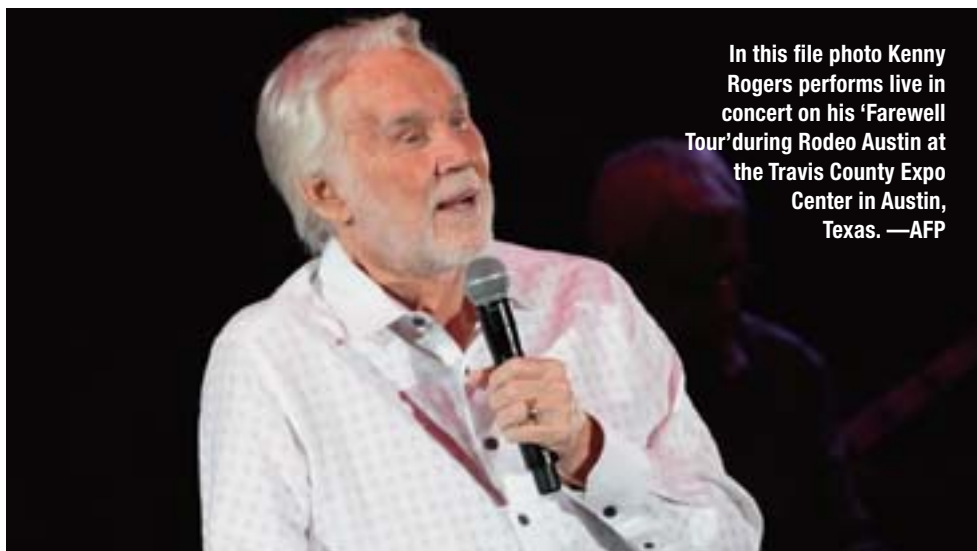


A cosplayer attends the Middle East film and Comic-Con event.

# Country legend Rogers cuts short farewell tour

Country legend Kenny Rogers on Wednesday scrapped the final dates on what he has billed as a farewell tour, citing unspecified health concerns. The 79-year-old singer, best known for the hits “Lady” and “The Gambler,” has been “working through a series of health challenges,” his management said in a statement. “His doctors fully expect the outcome to be great, but they have advised him to cancel all performances through the end of the year to focus on recuperation,” it said. Rogers, whose easygoing ballads have won him a fan base well beyond the country world, spent much of the past two years on a tour that culminated in a star-studded farewell concert in October in Nashville.

He scrapped dates that were to include two nights at the Beacon Theatre in New York and an appearances at the Stagecoach country festival in California. “I didn’t want to take forever to retire,” Rogers said in the statement. “I’ve



In this file photo Kenny Rogers performs live in concert on his ‘Farewell Tour’ during Rodeo Austin at the Travis County Expo Center in Austin, Texas. —AFP

thoroughly enjoyed this opportunity to say farewell to fans over the course of the past two years,” he said, adding that he could “never properly thank them for the encouragement and support they’ve given me throughout my career.” The Texas-born singer came to prominence through his collaborations with Dolly Parton and his appearances on film and television programs, especially “The Muppet Show.”

He has found mainstream appeal by bringing rockabilly and jazz touches to his light country songs, as well as by recording popular renditions of Christmas favorites.

Rogers, who has been married five times, said when announcing the final tour that he wanted to spend more time with his family including twin sons who are now 13. While primarily active in the United States, he is the namesake of a chicken restaurant chain that remains active in Asia and the Middle East after closing down at home. — AFP



# The World Premiere of ‘Rampage’

(From left) Actors Jake Lacy, Jeffrey Dean Morgan, Naomie Harris, Jason Liles, Dwayne Johnson, Malin Akerman, Joe Manganiello, Breanne Hill, Jack Quaid and PJ Byrne arrive at the premiere of Warner Bros. Pictures’ ‘Rampage’ at the Microsoft Theatre in Los Angeles, California. — AFP photos



Actor Danny Trejo attends the World Premiere of ‘Rampage’.



Actress Alexandra Daddario attends the World Premiere of “Rampage”.



Actor Dwayne Johnson arrives at the premiere of Warner Bros Pictures’ “Rampage”.



Actress Sofia Vergara attends the World Premiere of “Rampage”.



Pakistani devotees of the Sheedi ethnic group play traditional music at the shrine of Sufi Hasan-Al-Marooof Sultan Manghopir, during the Sheedi Mela or crocodiles festival, on the outskirts of Karachi.



Pakistani devotees of the Sheedi ethnic group play traditional music at the shrine of Sufi Hasan-Al-Marooof Sultan Manghopir.



Pakistani devotee of the Sheedi ethnic group grinds herbs and dry fruits to prepare a sacred drink for the rituals at the shrine of Sufi Hasan-Al-Marooof Sultan Manghopir.



## CROCODILES GUARD SECRETS OF PAKISTAN'S LOST AFRICAN PAST

**D**ancing and chanting in Swahili at a crocodile shrine outside Karachi, hundreds of Pakistani Sheedis swayed barefoot to the rhythm of a language they no longer speak—the celebration offering a rare chance to connect with their African roots. For many Sheedis, the swampy crocodile shrine to Sufi saint Haji Syed Shaikh Sultan—more popularly known as Mangho Pir—is the most potent symbol of their shared African past, as they struggle to uncover the trail that led their ancestors to Pakistan.

Many, like 75-year-old Mohammad Akbar, have simply given up the search for their family's origins. The descendants of Africans who have been arriving on the shores of the subcontinent for centuries, the Sheedis rose to lofty positions as generals and leaders during the Mughal Empire, which ruled swathes of South Asia. But, actively discriminated against during British rule, their traditions began to fade, and they found themselves wholly shunned when Pakistan was created in 1947, absent from the

country's elite political and military circles.

Figures are scant but it is generally accepted that Pakistan holds the highest number of Sheedis on the subcontinent, upwards of around 50,000 people. But their history has been scantily written, making it difficult if not impossible for Sheedis—including even those like Akbar whose ancestors arrived in Pakistan relatively recently—to trace their antecedents. "I came to know in the 1960s that my grandfather belonged to Zanzibar, and we contacted the Tanzania embassy to find our extended family," Akbar told AFP outside his home in Karachi. "We were told that we can never reach them until we can identify our tribe, which we don't know," he said. "I never tried again."

His plight is common, with little in the way of documentation or scholarship on the community. What is available suggests many arrived as part of the African slave trade to the east—a notion rejected by many Sheedis, most of whom now reside in southern Sindh province. "We don't subscribe to the theories that someone



## Lifestyle | Feature



brought us as slaves to this region because Sheedis as a nation have never been slaves," argues Yaqoob Qanbarani, the chairman of Pakistan Sheedi Ittehad, a community group. Others say the community's origins can be traced back to the genesis of Islam, claiming a shared lineage with Bilal—one of Prophet Muhammad's closest companions.

As the knowledge of their origins has faded, so too have many of their traditions, including the vestiges of Swahili once spoken in parts of Karachi. "Swahili has been an abandoned language for some generations now," says Ghulam Akbar Sheedi, a 75-year-old community leader. "I remember that my grandmother would extensively use Swahili phrases in our daily conversation," says 50-year-old Atta Mohammad, who now struggles to remember even a few sayings.



Pakistani devotees of the Sheedi ethnic group play traditional music at the shrine of Sufi Hasan-Al-Marroof Sultan Manghopir, during the Sheedi Mela or crocodiles festival, on the outskirts of Karachi.

#### 'Captured by spirits'

With so many traditions lost to the past, the Sheedi mela, or festival, at the Mangho Pir shrine has assumed rich significance and been the epicentre of the community in Sindh for centuries. They no longer know why it is held there, they are simply following in the steps and repeating the words of their ancestors. "It attracts the Sheedi community from all over Pakistan," Qanbarani tells AFP. "We celebrate Mangho Pir mela more than Eid," he adds. The celebration features a dancing procession known as the Dhamal, with men and women in trance-like states—a rare sight in conservative, often gender-segregated Pakistan. "The Dhamal dance... is done with great devotion and much delicacy," says Atta Mohammad, who spoke with AFP at the festival. "Some of us are

captured by holy spirits." Mehrun Nissa, 65, prepares a sacred drink during the mela while translating from what she says is a Swahili dialect. "Nagajio O Nagajio, Yo aa Yo.... means now we are leaving to have a drink from the bowl," she explains. Mangho Pir is also home to over 100 lumbering crocodiles that waddle between the devotees near a swampy green pond where they have lived for generations. Legend holds that lice on the Sufi saint's head transformed into the reptiles who now live at the shrine. The oldest crocodile—known as More Sawab, and believed to be anywhere between 70 and 100 years old—is feted at the festival's climax with garlands and decorative powder while being fed chunks of raw meat.

#### Honoring the crocodile

Even this tenuous link to the community's past is in danger of being severed, however. The celebrations this March were the first time the festival has been held in nine years, after rising extremism saw Sufi shrines come under threat across Pakistan, with repeated gun and suicide bomb attacks. "The situation was not suitable for us as children and women also participate in the mela," said Qanbarani, as heavily armed police commandos flanked the crowd. But with dramatic improvements in security in recent years the community hopes to continue the mela, celebrating traditions that have survived slavery, colonization, and modernization. "It is a Sheedi community belief that by honoring the crocodile our whole year will pass in peace, tranquility and prosperity," explains Mohammad. "We look forward to celebrating the mela next year too, and forever." — AFP



Pakistani devotees of the Sheedi ethnic group slaughter a goat to be sacrificed for crocodiles at the shrine of Sufi Hasan-Al-Marroof Sultan Manghopir.



Pakistani devotees of the Sheedi ethnic group play traditional music at the shrine of Sufi Hasan-Al-Marroof Sultan Manghopir.



Pakistani devotees of the Sheedi ethnic group dance at the shrine of Sufi Hasan-Al-Marroof Sultan Manghopir, during the Sheedi Mela or crocodiles festival.



Pakistani devotees of the Sheedi ethnic group pray at the shrine of Sufi Hasan-Al-Marroof Sultan Manghopir, during the Sheedi Mela or crocodiles festival.



## Kitchen Wise: Serve baked chicken thighs with lemon pickles

By Sara Moulton

Preserved lemons, aka lemon pickles, are a delicious and unique treat that have long delivered a ton of salty and acidic crunch to the cuisines of North Africa, the Middle East and South Asia - and to America in recent years.

You can buy lemon pickles at a specialty store (or online) or you can make some at home. But both options have their problems. Lemon pickles from the store are often left to overstay their welcome and become rancid on the shelf, while making them at home can take up to a month because that's how much time they need to cure. Plus, you're generally forced to make a big batch because a minimum critical mass is required to produce enough juice to cover the lemons as they cure.

This recipe offers a much quicker way to make lemon pickles. Usually, the lemons are cured whole. Here they are sliced thin, layered with salt and left to cure at room temperature for 12 to 48 hours - your choice - although the longer they cure, the softer the texture and the stronger the flavor. Once cured, there's nothing left to do but rinse off your lemon pickles and decide which of a whole range of dishes they should glorify. You can add them as a garnish to soups, stews and roasted vegetables, chop and combine them with fresh herbs to top fish, slide them into a grilled cheese sandwich, or stir them into grain dishes.

What about those artichokes? They're in the recipe because they play so nicely with lemons. I've called for frozen or canned artichokes, although you're welcome to use fresh artichokes if you have the energy to cut them into hearts. (They'll be delicious.) If you do roll with the canned or frozen kind, just be sure to pat the artichokes very dry and cook them in a hot pan to achieve a nice golden color. The beauty of this recipe is that once the lemon pickles are good to go, it takes no time at all to throw everything together.

### Baked Chicken Thighs with Artichoke Hearts and Lemon Pickles

#### Ingredients

Start to finish: 13 hours, (40 minutes hands-on)  
 Servings: 8  
 2 1/2 lemons, preferably thin-skinned  
 1 tablespoon extra-virgin olive oil  
 8 medium chicken thighs  
 One 14-ounce can artichoke hearts, drained, or one 9-ounce box defrosted frozen artichoke hearts  
 1/2 cup coarsely chopped fresh cilantro, parsley or dill

#### Preparation

Rinse the lemons well and slice them crosswise 1/4-inch thick. Arrange half of the slices in one layer (or slightly overlap-

ping) in the bottom of a noncorrosive baking dish or pie plate and sprinkle half the salt evenly over the slices. Repeat with the remaining slices and salt, cover and leave at room temperature for at least 12 hours and up to 48 hours. Rinse the lemons and remove the seeds. Only half will be used in this recipe; keep the second half, covered, in the refrigerator for other uses. The pickles will keep for two weeks in the fridge.

Preheat the oven to 350 F. In a large ovenproof skillet heat the 1 tablespoon oil over medium-high heat. Season the chicken with salt on the skin side, reduce the heat to medium and working in batches if necessary (if all the chicken doesn't fit easily in the pan), cook the chicken skin side down until the skin is nicely browned. Transfer the pieces to a plate and repeat with the remaining chicken if it didn't all fit in the pan the first time. Pour off all but 2 tablespoons of the fat left in the pan.

Pat the artichoke hearts very dry using paper towels. Add them to the skillet and cook them over medium-high heat, turning them occasionally until they are golden. Turn off the heat, return the chicken to the skillet, skin side up, and add half the pickled lemon slices. Put the skillet on the middle shelf of the oven. Bake the chicken for 20 minutes or until it is just cooked through. Transfer the chicken, artichokes and lemon slices to each of eight plates and pour some of the juice from the bottom of the skillet over each portion. Sprinkle with cilantro and serve right away.

# COOKING ON DEADLINE: **Simple Vegetarian Spring Pasta Salad**

By Katie Workman

A great pasta salad is a beautiful thing. It anchors a picnic, potluck or buffet with aplomb. It's portable, flexible, and easily and often vegetarian. One of the first things I made for my then-boyfriend's (now husband's) parents was a pasta salad, and for whatever reason, it won them over and became a most-requested dish.

Pasta salads are also such a nice way to play around with seasonal vegetables, so you can change things up all year. Spring and summer are peak moments to scoop up the great produce at the farmers' market, grab a box of pasta, and quickly turn all of it into a crowd-pleasing and easy side or main dish. I tend to pack in the vegetables, and the results are beautiful and nicely tilted toward the healthy side.

In this recipe, the asparagus and sugar snap peas get a bit more tender and keep their bright green color after a quick simmer, and the best part is that you can add them right into the pasta at the end of the cooking time; that saves a step and an extra pot. If you chop the leafy greens, they will blend into the salad more, but sometimes I like to leave them whole and have the whole thing be kind of a cross between a pasta salad and a regular salad.

You can make this salad ahead of time, up to one day. Ideally, leave the arugula, spinach and basil out and add them right before serving. Adding the greens at the last minute keeps them from getting wilted and darkening. Also, hold off on the tomatoes: Tomatoes really should never see the inside of a refrigerator, and since you'll have to refrigerate this salad to keep it fresh, tossing in the tomatoes at the very end will keep them from getting slightly mealy.

If you have made the salad ahead, let it sit at room temperature for at least 20 minutes to take the chill off before serving, so the flavors all come shining through. Also, if you refrigerated the salad, the pasta will have absorbed the dressing a bit; add an extra drizzle of olive oil, and give it a toss to get it nice and glistening again.

## SIMPLE VEGETARIAN SPRING PASTA SALAD

### Ingredients

25 minutes start to finish

Serves 8

1 pound dried spiral pasta (or cavatappi, ziti, fusilli or other salad-friendly shaped pasta)

2 cups (8 ounces) halved sugar snap peas

2 cups (1-inch pieces) asparagus

2 cups baby or roughly chopped arugula

2 cups baby or roughly chopped spinach

1 bell pepper (red, yellow, or orange), finely diced

1 pint cherry tomatoes, cut in half, or quarters if larger

1/2 cup sliced scallions

1/2 cup extra virgin olive oil

2 tablespoons mayonnaise

1/4 cup rice vinegar

1 tablespoon Dijon mustard

1/2 cup chopped shallots

1/2 cup slivered fresh basil

1/3 cup finely grated Parmesan cheese

### Preparation

Heat a large pot of salted water to a boil. Cook the pasta according to package directions, but 1 minute before the pasta is tender, add the sugar snap peas and the asparagus. Cook for 1 minute, then drain the pasta and the vegetables and rinse under cold water. Drain well. Place the pasta, sugar snap peas and asparagus in a bowl with the arugula, spinach, peppers, tomatoes and scallions.

In a small bowl or container, combine the olive oil, mayonnaise, vinegar, mustard, shallots, basil, salt and pepper. Pour this dressing over the pasta salad and toss well to combine. Add the Parmesan and toss again. Taste and adjust the seasonings as needed.



# Wild Thailand Exploring Khao Sok National Park



The national park is home to over 300 different bird species, including the white-throated kingfisher.

**U**p there - can you see them?' Scanning the evening sky above the jungle, they were alarmingly easy to spot: hundreds of *Pteropus vampyrus* - or flying foxes - out on an evening feeding mission. With a wingspan approaching 1.5m, the giant bats filled the horizon in a flapping black swarm. It was my first night in southern Thailand's Khao Sok National Park, and a dramatic introduction to the wildlife I knew lurked in this ancient rainforest.

Some say the biodiversity of Khao Sok exceeds that of the Amazon. Most agree that at over 160 million years old, the evergreen rainforest here is one of the oldest in the world. Whichever list it tops, the fact this 738-sq-km expanse of national park exists at all in its current state - alive with whooping gibbons, flashing hornbills and with such richness of flora and fauna that an entomologist on honeymoon once picked up a rock and discovered a new species - is something to be grateful for. And this biodiversity haven owes a few thanks to an unexpected twist of fate.

From 1975 to 1982, at a time when Thailand was losing 3% of its forest cover a year to the logging industry, a group of communist insurgents made a stronghold in the caves of Khao Sok. From here they acted out guerrilla warfare against the Thai government, inadvertently also keeping loggers, miners and hunters at the park's fringes, allowing the jungle inside to thrive.

And thanks to them, thrive it does. Treetops shake with

monkeys and birds, winged lizards bounce from branch to rock, and sky-high bamboo stalks bathe everything in a stripey green light. Located inland between the Andaman and Gulf coasts, Khao Sok is often overlooked by travelers in favour of southern Thailand's coastal resorts and islands. But for anyone wishing to swap beach beats for tranquil jungle trails, lake swimming, cool bat-filled caves and the chance to spot a wealth of indigenous species in their natural habitat, this secret garden is an easy getaway.

## Swinging gibbons and tarantula nests

Just being in the park means coming face to face with nature, but the best way to experience Khao Sok's wild bounty is on a guided jungle trek. It is possible to trek independently and trails from the park headquarters are well-maintained and easy-to-follow, but the knowledge of the local guides will enhance your trip ten-fold. They'll point out the woven funnel of a tarantula nest or the scratches on a tree made by a Malayan sun bear, and will give lessons on the jungle's medicinal plants and birdsong.

Most of the big mammals in the park - wild elephants, sun bears, clouded leopards and tigers - will remain elusive to trekkers, but the cracking of jackfruit should soon alert you to the presence of primates. Long-tailed macaques are an almost guaranteed sight, with troupes making bold acrobatic displays right on the trail. White-handed gibbons and spectacled langurs are a rarer and more rewarding spot. Gibbons stick to the high



Khao Sok National Park is one of the oldest rainforests in the world and is home to hundreds of indigenous animal and plant species.

branches making long, Tarzan-like swings through the trees; a joy to behold. Gaurs, tapirs and barking deer can sometimes be seen or heard, especially in the wet season (June to October).

On night safaris, the jungle takes on another persona as it squeaks and hisses with insects and some 30 bat species, including 8 varieties of megabat. This is also the time to look out for a tiny mouse deer, the smallest hooved animal in the world,

or the big glassy eyes of a slow loris. When in bloom, special treks to see the *Rafflesia kerrii* are put into operation. With a diameter reaching 90cm, it's the largest flower in the world, and, in Thailand, only grows in Khao Sok.

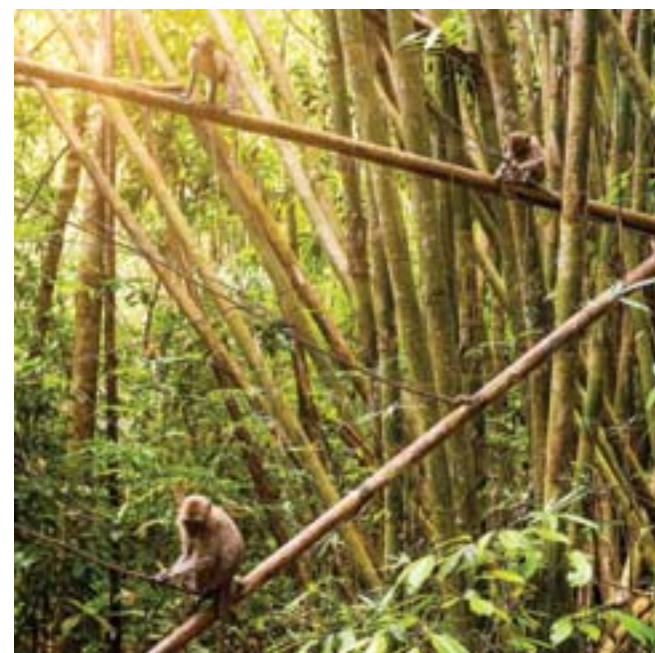
#### Raft houses and swimming in Chiaw Lan Lake

This vast 165-sq-km lake sprawls in the middle of the park, a sparkling blue jewel in the crown of its attractions. It's a magical place where huge karst mountains rise from the water. Some reach over 900m - three times the height of those in Vietnam's Halong Bay. The jungle growth at the lake's edge shimmers emerald in the reflected light. It seems peculiar that something so naturally stunning could be a modern invention, but the lake was formed in 1982 when the Ratchaprapha Dam was constructed.

To fully appreciate the tranquility of the lake, an overnight stay in a floating raft house is a must, and access is by a thrilling long-tail boat ride across the vast lake. The accommodation is rustic, but this is more than made up for by glorious lake swimming and the dawn mist rolling over the water to the whoops of gibbon calls.

#### Bats and stalactites: cave tours

For fans of the dark delights of spelunking, there are several intriguing caves to visit, including Tham Si Ru - the cave used as a secret hideout by communist insurgents in the late 1970s. Two of the easier to access are Pra Kay Petch (Diamond) and



Listen out for rustling trees: a sure sign there are monkeys nearby; families of long-tailed macaques are a common sight.



The shy and mysterious mouse deer is a native to the park.

## Lifestyle | Travel



Pakaran (Coral) caves, both of which include a long-tail boat or raft trip to the cave entrance, and fabulous rock formations inside. A more intrepid experience is a guided trek through Nam Thalu cave. Not for the faint-hearted, the trek involves wading in subterranean streams through an increasingly narrow passage and should not be carried out in the rainy season when flash flooding is a real risk.

#### Make it happen

Khao Sok National Park is located inland from the Andaman Coast of southern Thailand, around two hours' drive from Khao Lak, or an hour from Surat Thani. From Surat you can catch a bus going towards Takua Pa; from the Andaman Coast, take a Surat Thani-bound bus. Buses stop on Rte 401, 1.8km southwest of the park headquarters, which has useful maps for trekking and other information. Most visitors see the park on a two- or three-night organised tour which will usually include accommodation, activities such as trekking and caving as well as a stay in a floating raft house on Chiaw Lan Lake, and transfer from Surat Thani or Khao Lak. Tours can also be arranged with most of the lodges in the park itself. We recommend avoiding any package offering elephant riding.

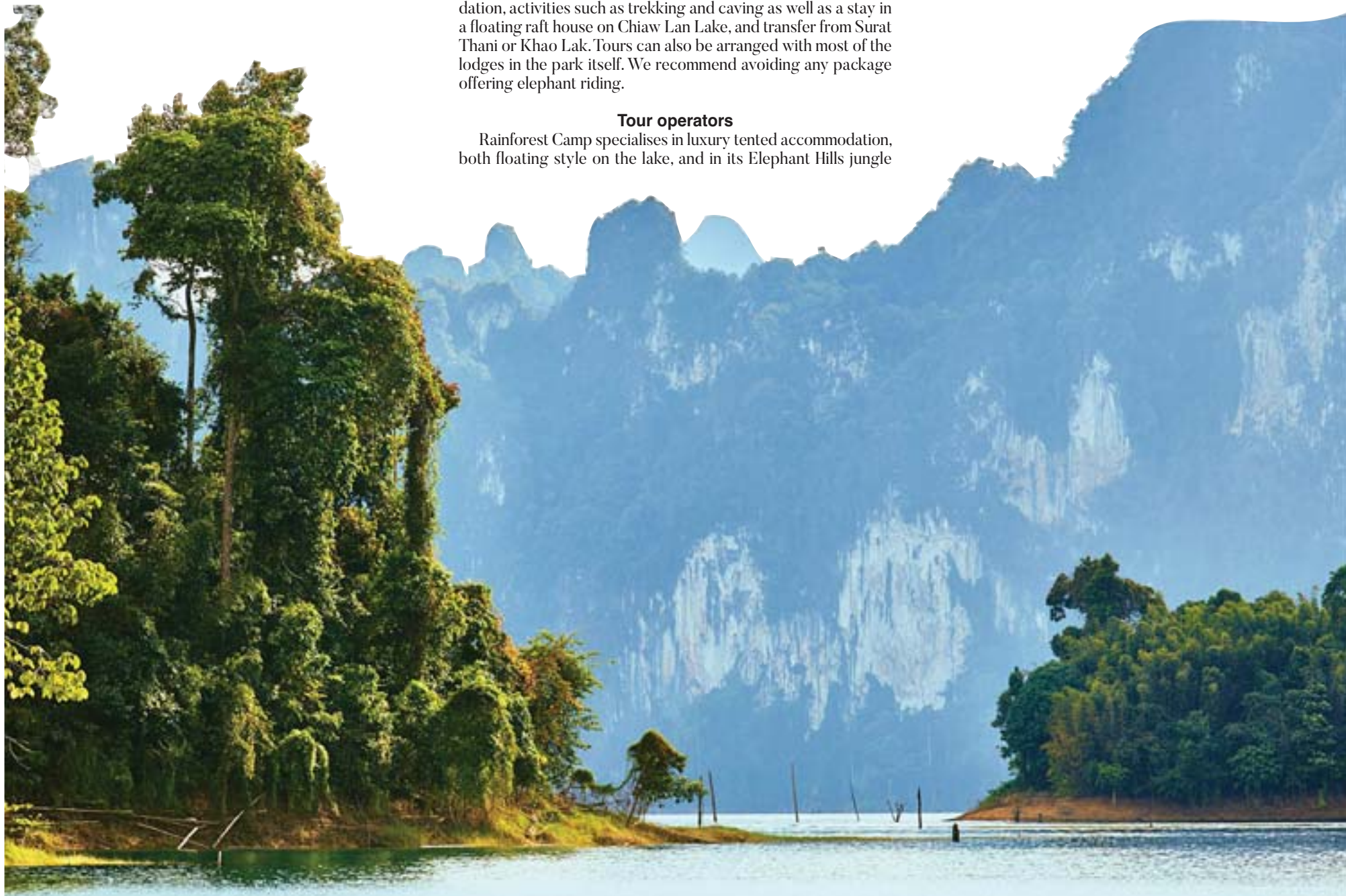
#### Tour operators

Rainforest Camp specialises in luxury tented accommodation, both floating style on the lake, and in its Elephant Hills jungle

lodge. Its two-night, three-day package (from THB 20,372) includes transfers, meals, a non-riding elephant interaction, guided trekking and a night on the lake.

Anurak Community Lodge is situated in a tranquil spot apart from the park's main hub, and runs day tours including trips (but no overnight stay) to Chiaw Lan Lake, trekking, tubing and rafting on the Sok River. Its 18 bungalows (from THB 2900 a night, without activities) are surrounded by lush vegetation.

Rickshaw Travel is a UK-based operator specialising in immersive travel experiences. It offers a three-night, four-day tour of the park (from £468 per person), with transfers, accommodation in a community-run lodge, meals, an English-speaking guide and a night on a floating raft house on Chiaw Lan Lake. The Khao Sok trip is one of several short tours that can be combined into a longer holiday.— ([www.lonelyplanet.com](http://www.lonelyplanet.com))



## Comic

### WORD SEARCH

#### Summer

Find and circle all of the summer words that are hidden in the grid. The remaining letters spell an additional summer item.

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

- |          |             |               |              |
|----------|-------------|---------------|--------------|
| ANTS     | FISHING     | JULY          | SUNBURN      |
| AUGUST   | FLIES       | JUNE          | SUNGLASSES   |
| BARBECUE | FLOWERS     | MOSQUITOES    | SUNSCREEN    |
| BASEBALL | GARDENING   | NO SCHOOL     | SUNSHINE     |
| BEACH    | GOLF        | PICNIC        | SUNTAN       |
| BEES     | GREEN GRASS | ROLLER BLADES | SWEAT        |
| BICYCLE  | HAT         | SANDALS       | SWIMMING     |
| BLUE SKY | HIKING      | SKATEBOARD    | U V RAYS     |
| BOATING  | HOLIDAYS    | SOCCER        | WASPS        |
| BREEZE   | HOT         | SOLSTICE      | WATER FIGHTS |
| CAMPING  | ICE CREAM   | SPRINKLERS    | WATERMELON   |

### CROSSWORD 1877



#### ACROSS

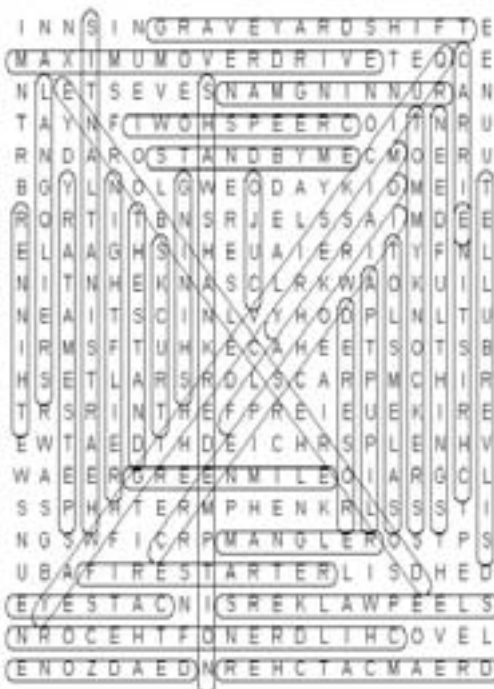
- (British) A waterproof raincoat made of rubberized fabric.
- Take the staples off.
- The syllable naming the first (tonic) note of any major scale in solmization.
- A constellation in the southern hemisphere near Telescopium and Norma.
- A short film and commentary about current events.
- Any of various primates with short tails or no tail at all.
- (British) A member of the military police.
- Relating to the deepest parts of the ocean (below 6000 meters).
- Goddess of the dead and queen of the underworld.
- Water buffalo of the Philippines.
- An authoritative direction or instruction to do something.
- The sign language used in the United States.
- A shoe covering the ankle.
- After noon.
- A brittle silver-white metalloid element that is related to selenium and sulfur.
- Make uniform.
- An island in the Netherlands Antilles that is the top of an extinct volcano.
- Having relatively few calories.
- The residue that remains when something is burned.
- A proposition deducible from basic postulates.
- Make powerless and unable to function.
- An alloy of copper and zinc (and sometimes arsenic) used to imitate gold in cheap jewelry and for gilding.
- Greater than normal in degree or intensity or amount.
- A broad flat muscle on either side of the back.
- A fencing sword similar to a foil but with a heavier blade.
- Having the leading position or higher score in a contest.
- A state in New England.
- A soft silver-white ductile metallic element (liquid at normal temperatures).
- A stately Protestant (especially Lutheran) hymn tune.
- The fourth month of the civil year.
- An ancient Assyrian city on the River Tigris across from the modern city of Mosul in the northern part of what is now known as Iraq.
- A loose sleeveless outer garment made from aba cloth.
- Give encouragement to.
- Wind god.
- An orange-brown antelope of southeast Africa.
- Tasting like vinegar.
- Any place of complete bliss and delight and peace.
- Used of a single unit or thing.
- Unusually great in size or amount or degree or especially extent or scope.
- A structure in which animals lay eggs or give birth to their young.

#### DOWN

- Made from residue of grapes or apples after pressing.
- A particular geographical region of indefinite boundary (usually serving some special purpose or distinguished by its people or culture or geography).
- A genus of Pyralidae.
- (usually followed by 'to') Not having the necessary means or skill or know-how.
- Type genus of the Nepidae.
- The compass point midway between south and west.
- Anterior pituitary hormone that stimulates the function of the thyroid gland.
- (of farmland) Capable of being farmed productively.
- A tricycle (usually propelled by pedalling).
- (of panes of glass) Fixed in place by means of thin strips of lead.
- An extension at the end and at right angles to the main building.
- Tropical woody herb with showy yellow flowers and flat pods.
- An organization of countries formed in 1961 to agree on a common policy for the sale of petroleum.
- Goddess of the dead and queen of the underworld.
- Social status or position conferred by a system based on class.
- English scholastic philosopher and assumed author of Occam's Razor (1285-1349).
- Attack someone physically or emotionally.
- (Irish) Mother of the ancient Irish gods.
- An unpredictable outcome that is unfortunate.
- The univalent unsaturated organic radical C3H5.
- French novelist.
- Anything of material value or usefulness.
- The subject matter of a conversation or discussion.
- Foul with waste matter.
- A member of a social and cultural elite especially a descendant of an Old New England family.
- An undergarment worn by women to support their breasts.
- An ancient Hebrew unit of dry measure equal to about a bushel.
- A republic in central Europe.
- Excessively fat.
- (Greek mythology) The god of the underworld in ancient mythology.
- A card game for 2 players.
- Being one more than ten.
- A liquid preparation used on wet hair to it a tint.
- Avoid or try to avoid, as of duties, questions and issues.
- Very dark black.
- A very young child (birth to 1 year) who has not yet begun to walk or talk.
- Of or relating to or characteristic of Thailand of its people.
- A complex red organic pigment containing iron and other atoms to which oxygen binds.
- Opinion or judgment.
- English Pre-Raphaelite painter (1827-1910).
- Electronic warfare undertaken to prevent or reduce an enemy's effective use of the electromagnetic spectrum.
- A United States unit of weight equivalent to 2000 pounds.

### Yesterday's Solution

#### Stephen King Movies



- |                      |                    |                     |                      |
|----------------------|--------------------|---------------------|----------------------|
| AFT PUPIL            | DEAD ZONE          | MAXIMUM OVERDRIVE   | SHAWSHANK REDEMPTION |
| CARRIE               | DODDIES CLAIBORNE  | HESEY               | SHENING              |
| CAT'S EYE            | DREAMCATCHER       | NEEDFUL THINGS      | SILVER BULLET        |
| CHILDREN OF THE CORN | FIRESTARTER        | NIGHT FLIER         | SLEEPWALKERS         |
| CHRISTINE            | GRAVEYARD SHOT     | RET SEMATARY        | STAND BY ME          |
| CREEPSHOW I          | GREEN MILE         | QUICKSILVER HIGHWAY | THE STAND            |
| CREEPSHOW II         | HEARTS IN ATLANTIS | ROSE RED            | THINNER              |
| CLOO                 | LANGOLIERS         | BURNING MAN         | TOMMYKNOCKERS        |
| DARK HALF            | MANGLER            | SALEM'S LOT         | TRUCKS               |

The hidden sentence is: IN NOVETSEEN SEVENTY FOUR DOUBLEDAY RELEASED CARRIE WHICH WAS STEPHEN KING'S FIRST PUBLISHED NOVEL.

### Yesterday's Solution



### Daily SuDoku

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

### Yesterday's Solution

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

## TV Listings

**OWN MOVIES**  
**ACTION**

00:35 Cyborg X  
02:15 The Phantom  
04:00 Kung Fu Yoga  
06:00 Mission: Impossible - Rogue Nation  
08:15 Bad Company  
10:15 Shanghai Noon  
12:10 Resident Evil: Vendetta  
13:50 Mission: Impossible - Rogue Nation  
16:05 The Net  
18:05 Eagle Eye  
20:05 Deepwater Horizon  
22:00 Rollerball  
23:45 Under Siege

**ANIMAL PLANET HD**

00:45 The Animals' Guide To Survival  
01:40 Preposterous Pets  
02:35 Swamp Brothers  
03:00 Swamp Brothers  
03:25 Whale Wars  
04:15 North Woods Law  
05:02 Wildest Latin America  
05:49 Untamed & Uncut  
06:36 Swamp Brothers  
08:15 The Animals' Guide To Survival  
09:10 Preposterous Pets  
10:05 Wildest Latin America  
11:00 Swamp Brothers  
11:28 Swamp Brothers  
11:55 Whale Wars  
12:50 North Woods Law  
13:45 Preposterous Pets  
14:40 Wildest Latin America  
15:35 Untamed & Uncut  
16:30 River Monsters  
17:25 The Vet Life  
18:20 Dr. Jeff: Rocky Mountain Vet  
19:15 Preposterous Pets  
20:10 Swamp Brothers  
20:38 Swamp Brothers  
21:05 The Vet Life  
22:00 Dr. Jeff: Rocky Mountain Vet  
22:55 Wildest Latin America  
23:50 Untamed & Uncut

**BBC FIRST**

00:00 Hold The Sunset  
00:30 Mum  
01:00 Death In Paradise  
01:55 Holby City  
02:50 Orphan Black  
04:15 Mum  
04:45 Hold The Sunset  
05:15 The Coroner  
06:00 EastEnders  
07:00 Holby City  
08:00 Hold The Sunset  
08:30 The Detectorists  
09:00 EastEnders  
09:30 Bad Move  
09:50 I Want My Wife Back  
10:20 Death In Paradise  
11:20 Casualty  
12:15 Holby City  
13:10 The Detectorists  
13:40 EastEnders  
14:10 Casualty  
15:05 Bad Move  
15:30 I Want My Wife Back  
16:00 The Detectorists  
16:30 Maigret  
18:00 I Want My Wife Back  
19:00 Death In Paradise  
20:00 The Last Post  
21:00 Father Brown  
21:50 Poldark  
22:45 I Want My Wife Back  
23:20 The Detectorists  
23:50 Death In Paradise

**crime & investigation network**

00:00 The Zodiac Killer: Case Closed?  
01:00 The Eleven  
01:55 Homicide Hunter  
02:50 The First 48

03:45 The Zodiac Killer: Case Closed?  
04:30 The Eleven  
05:15 The First 48  
06:00 Live PD: Police Patrol  
06:30 Live PD: Police Patrol  
07:00 It Takes A Killer  
07:20 The First 48  
08:05 Cold Case Files  
08:50 Homicide Hunter  
09:35 The First 48  
10:30 Crimes That Shook Australia  
11:25 Crimes That Shook Britain  
12:20 Cold Case Files  
13:15 Leah Remini: Scientology And The Aftermath  
14:10 The First 48  
15:05 Crimes That Shook Australia  
16:00 Homicide Hunter  
17:00 Monster In My Family  
18:00 Monster In My Family  
20:00 Live PD: Police Patrol  
20:30 Live PD: Police Patrol  
21:00 Crimes That Shook Britain  
22:00 Waco: Madman Or Messiah

**Discovery Family**

00:30 Kids Do The Craziest Things  
00:55 Kids Do The Craziest Things  
01:20 Space Dealers  
02:10 Secret Space Escapes  
03:00 How The Earth Works  
03:50 Bear Grylls: Born Survivor  
04:40 Tanked  
05:30 How It's Made  
05:55 How It's Made  
06:20 Kids Do The Craziest Things  
06:40 Kids Do The Craziest Things  
07:00 Bear Grylls: Born Survivor  
07:50 How It's Made  
08:40 Kids Do The Craziest Things  
09:05 Kids Do The Craziest Things  
09:30 Tanked  
10:20 How The Earth Works  
11:10 Guinness World Records Smashed New Zealand  
11:35 Guinness World Records Smashed New Zealand  
12:00 The Carbonaro Effect  
12:25 The Carbonaro Effect  
12:50 How It's Made  
13:15 How It's Made  
13:40 Kids Do The Craziest Things  
14:05 Kids Do The Craziest Things  
14:30 Tanked  
15:20 Bear Grylls: Born Survivor  
16:10 How The Earth Works  
17:00 Guinness World Records Smashed New Zealand  
17:25 Guinness World Records Smashed New Zealand  
17:50 The Carbonaro Effect  
18:15 The Carbonaro Effect  
18:40 Kids Do The Craziest Things  
19:05 Kids Do The Craziest Things  
19:30 How It's Made  
19:55 How It's Made  
20:20 Tanked  
21:10 Guinness World Records Smashed New Zealand  
21:35 Guinness World Records Smashed New Zealand  
22:00 The Carbonaro Effect  
22:25 The Carbonaro Effect  
22:50 How The Earth Works  
23:40 Bear Grylls: Born Survivor

**ID**

00:45 Death On A Submarine  
01:40 Evil Lives Here  
02:35 Bride Killa  
03:30 Deadly Sins  
04:25 Blood Relatives  
05:20 I Almost Got Away With It  
06:10 Nightmare Next Door  
07:00 Who On Earth Did I Marry?  
07:25 Betrayed  
08:15 Blood Relatives  
09:10 Evil Stepmothers  
10:05 I'd Kill For You  
11:00 Forbidden: Dying For Love  
11:55 Betrayed  
12:50 I Almost Got Away With It  
13:45 Nightmare Next Door  
14:40 American Monster  
15:35 I Am Homicide  
16:30 Betrayed  
17:25 Blood Relatives  
18:20 I Almost Got Away With It

19:15 Nightmare Next Door  
20:10 American Monster  
21:05 A Crime To Remember  
22:00 The 1980s: The Deadliest Decade  
22:55 Shadow Of Doubt  
23:50 Murder In The Heartland

**Disney Channel HD**

00:00 Hank Zipzer  
00:25 Alex & Co.  
00:45 Disney Mickey Mouse  
00:50 Evermoor Chronicles  
01:15 Sabrina Secrets Of A Teenage Witch  
01:40 Sabrina Secrets Of A Teenage Witch  
02:05 Binny And The Ghost  
02:30 Binny And The Ghost  
02:55 Hank Zipzer  
03:15 Disney Mickey Mouse  
03:20 Hank Zipzer  
03:45 Alex & Co.  
04:10 Alex & Co.  
04:35 Sabrina Secrets Of A Teenage Witch  
05:00 Sabrina Secrets Of A Teenage Witch  
05:25 Binny And The Ghost  
05:45 Disney Mickey Mouse  
05:50 Rolling With The Ronks S1 Splits  
06:00 Elena Of Avalor  
06:25 Bunk'd  
06:50 Bunk'd  
07:15 K.C. Undercover  
07:40 K.C. Undercover  
08:05 Raven's Home  
08:30 Miraculous Tales Of Ladybug...  
08:55 Star vs The Forces Of Evil  
09:20 Tangled: The Series  
09:45 Elena Of Avalor  
10:10 Hotel Transylvania: The Series  
10:35 Stuck In The Middle  
11:00 Stuck In The Middle  
11:25 Liv And Maddie  
11:50 Liv And Maddie  
12:15 Bizaardvark  
12:40 Bizaardvark  
13:05 Jessie  
13:30 How To Build A Better Boy  
15:00 Hotel Transylvania: The Series  
15:10 K.C. Undercover  
16:00 Raven's Home  
16:25 Miraculous Tales Of Ladybug...  
16:50 Miraculous Tales Of Ladybug...  
17:15 Stuck In The Middle  
17:40 Hotel Transylvania: The Series  
18:05 Hotel Transylvania: The Series  
18:30 Tangled: The Series  
18:55 Tangled: Short Cuts  
19:00 Tangled: The Series  
19:25 Liv And Maddie  
19:50 Liv And Maddie  
20:15 Disney Mickey Mouse  
20:20 Elena Of Avalor  
20:45 Elena Of Avalor  
21:10 Bizaardvark  
21:35 Bizaardvark  
22:00 Miraculous Tales Of Ladybug...  
22:25 Miraculous Tales Of Ladybug...  
22:50 Lolirock  
23:10 Sabrina Secrets Of A Teenage Witch  
23:35 Binny And The Ghost

**Disney Junior**

00:00 Trulli Tales  
00:30 PJ Masks  
00:55 Trulli Tales  
01:20 Henry Hugglemonster  
01:35 Calimero  
01:50 Henry Hugglemonster  
02:05 Art Attack  
02:30 The Hive  
02:40 Loopdidoo  
02:55 Henry Hugglemonster

03:10 Art Attack  
03:35 Loopdidoo  
03:50 Calimero  
04:05 Art Attack  
04:30 Henry Hugglemonster  
04:45 Henry Hugglemonster  
05:00 Art Attack  
05:30 Henry Hugglemonster  
05:45 Loopdidoo  
06:00 Henry Hugglemonster  
06:15 Calimero  
06:30 PJ Masks  
07:00 Trulli Tales  
07:30 Jungle Junction  
07:50 Handy Manny  
08:10 PJ Masks  
08:30 Vampirina  
09:00 Mickey And The Roadster Racers  
09:30 Mickey Mouse Clubhouse  
10:00 Puppy Dog Pals  
10:30 Puppy Dog Pals  
11:00 The Lion Guard  
11:30 The Lion Guard  
12:00 Sofia The First  
12:30 Sofia The First  
13:00 PJ Masks  
13:30 PJ Masks  
14:00 P-King Duckling  
14:30 Vampirina  
15:00 Puppy Dog Pals  
15:30 Sofia The First  
16:00 PJ Masks  
16:30 Mission Force One  
17:00 The Lion Guard  
17:30 Puppy Dog Pals  
18:00 Trulli Tales  
18:30 Mickey And The Roadster Racers  
19:00 Sofia The First  
19:30 The Lion Guard  
20:00 Vampirina  
20:30 PJ Masks  
21:00 Trulli Tales  
21:30 Sofia The First  
22:00 P-King Duckling  
22:30 Puppy Dog Pals  
23:00 Mission Force One  
23:30 PJ Masks

**Discovery Channel HD**

00:15 Ice Cold Gold  
01:05 Killing Fields: Murder Isle  
01:50 Manhunt With Joel Lambert  
02:35 Kidnap And Rescue  
03:20 Impossible Engineering  
04:05 Flying Wild Alaska  
04:50 Dirty Jobs  
05:35 Storage Hunters  
06:00 Factory Line  
06:23 Dallas Car Sharks  
06:45 Storage Hunters  
07:10 Storage Wars Canada  
07:35 Flying Wild Alaska  
08:20 Factory Line  
08:45 Dallas Car Sharks  
09:10 Dirty Jobs  
09:55 Flying Wild Alaska  
10:45 Dirty Jobs  
11:30 Ice Cold Gold  
12:20 Factory Line  
12:43 Dallas Car Sharks  
13:05 Storage Hunters  
13:30 Storage Wars Canada  
13:55 Dirty Jobs  
14:40 Ice Cold Gold  
15:30 Storage Hunters  
15:53 Storage Wars Canada  
16:15 Manhunt With Joel Lambert  
17:05 Factory Line  
17:28 Dallas Car Sharks  
17:50 Impossible Engineering  
18:40 Fire In The Hole  
19:25 Ice Cold Gold  
20:15 Impossible Engineering  
21:00 Street Outlaws vs Fast N' Loud  
21:50 Gear Week  
22:40 Fast N' Loud  
23:30 Street Justice: The Bronx

**XD**

06:00 Penn Zero: Part Time Hero  
06:25 Penn Zero: Part Time Hero  
06:50 Minutemen  
08:20 Disney Mickey Mouse  
08:25 Milo Murphy's Law  
08:35 Mech-X4

09:00 Walk The Prank  
09:25 Marvel's Spider-Man  
09:50 Milo Murphy's Law  
10:20 Lab Rats Elite Force  
10:45 The Suite Life On Deck  
11:10 Gravity Falls  
11:35 Pair Of Kings  
12:00 Marvel's Spider-Man  
12:25 Two More Eggs  
12:30 Mighty Med  
12:55 Kirby Buckets  
13:20 Kirby Buckets  
13:45 Supa Strikas  
14:10 Disney Mickey Mouse  
14:15 Supa Strikas  
14:40 Right Now Kapow  
15:05 Right Now Kapow  
15:30 Milo Murphy's Law  
15:55 Two More Eggs  
16:00 The Suite Life Of Zack & Cody  
16:25 Lab Rats  
16:50 Walk The Prank  
17:15 Mech-X4  
17:40 Marvel's Spider-Man  
18:05 Kickin' It  
18:30 Randy Cunningham: 9th Grade Ninja  
18:45 Kickin' It  
19:10 Mini Ninjas  
19:25 Walk The Prank  
19:50 Marvel's Rocket And Groot  
19:55 Mech-X4  
20:20 Penn Zero: Part Time Hero  
20:45 Gamer's Guide To Pretty Much Everything  
21:10 Kid vs. Kat  
21:35 Marvel's Rocket And Groot  
21:40 Disney Mickey Mouse  
21:45 Lab Rats  
22:10 Lab Rats  
22:35 Phineas & Ferb  
23:00 Programmes Start At 6:00am

**EHD**

00:05 WAGs Atlanta  
00:55 WAGs Atlanta  
01:50 El News  
02:50 WAGs  
03:40 WAGs  
04:35 WAGs  
05:30 Celebrity Style Story  
06:00 Second Wives Club  
06:55 El News Middle East  
07:10 Second Wives Club  
08:10 El News: Daily Pop  
09:10 WAGs Miami  
10:10 WAGs Miami  
11:05 WAGs Miami  
12:00 El News Middle East  
12:15 Revenge Body With Khloe Kardashian  
13:10 Revenge Body With Khloe Kardashian  
14:05 Revenge Body With Khloe Kardashian  
15:00 El News Middle East  
15:15 El News: Daily Pop  
16:15 WAGs Atlanta  
17:10 WAGs Atlanta  
18:05 WAGs Atlanta  
19:00 El News  
20:00 Botched  
21:00 Botched  
22:00 Botched  
23:00 El News Middle East  
23:15 Hollywood Medium With Tyler Henry

**itv HD CHOICE**

00:10 Who's Doing The Dishes?  
01:00 Emmerdale  
01:30 Coronation Street  
02:00 Coronation Street  
02:30 The Chase  
03:25 Cannonball  
04:20 The Jonathan Ross Show  
05:15 Royal Recipes  
06:15 Who's Doing The Dishes?  
07:10 The Chase  
08:05 Cannonball  
09:00 The Jonathan Ross Show  
09:55 Royal Recipes  
11:00 Who's Doing The Dishes?  
11:50 The Chase  
12:45 Emmerdale  
13:15 Emmerdale  
13:45 Coronation Street

14:15 Who's Doing The Dishes?  
15:10 The Chase  
16:00 Dancing On Ice  
17:50 Royal Recipes  
18:50 Emmerdale  
19:15 Emmerdale  
19:45 Coronation Street  
20:10 The Chase  
21:00 Dancing On Ice  
22:50 Emmerdale  
23:15 Emmerdale  
23:40 Coronation Street

**H2 HD**

00:00 Ancient Top 10  
01:00 Brad Meltzer's Decoded  
02:00 The Universe  
02:50 Ancient Aliens: The Ultimate Evidence  
03:40 Ancient Impossible  
04:30 The Lost Evidence  
05:20 How 2 Win  
06:10 How 2 Win  
07:00 Ancient Top 10  
08:00 Brad Meltzer's Decoded  
09:00 The Universe  
10:00 Ancient Aliens: The Ultimate Evidence  
11:00 Ancient Impossible  
12:00 The Lost Evidence  
13:00 Ancient Top 10  
14:00 Brad Meltzer's Decoded  
15:00 The Universe  
16:00 Ancient Aliens: The Ultimate Evidence  
17:00 Ancient Impossible  
18:00 Ancient Top 10  
19:00 Brad Meltzer's Decoded  
20:00 The Universe  
21:00 Ancient Aliens  
22:00 Missing In Alaska  
23:00 The Lost Evidence

**NAT GEO people HD**

00:15 Poh & Co.  
00:45 Maximum Foodie  
01:10 Lyndey Milan - Taste Of Australia  
01:40 Food Lover's Guide To The Planet  
02:05 Poh & Co.  
02:35 Confucius Was A Foodie  
03:30 What's For Sale?  
03:55 What's For Sale?  
04:25 Dog Whisperer  
05:20 Dog Whisperer  
06:15 World's Biggest Festival: Kumbh Mela  
07:10 Food Lover's Guide To The Planet  
07:35 Poh & Co.  
08:05 Confucius Was A Foodie  
09:00 What's For Sale?  
09:25 What's For Sale?  
09:55 Dog Whisperer  
10:50 Dog Whisperer  
11:45 World's Biggest Festival: Kumbh Mela  
12:40 Food Lover's Guide To The Planet  
13:05 Poh & Co.  
13:35 Bangkok Airport  
14:30 What's For Sale?  
14:55 What's For Sale?  
15:25 Dog Whisperer  
16:20 Dog Whisperer  
17:15 The Peninsula: The Making Of A Gala  
18:10 Eat Street  
18:35 Poh & Co.  
19:05 Bangkok Airport  
20:00 What's For Sale?  
20:30 What's For Sale?  
21:00 Dog Whisperer  
22:00 Dog Whisperer  
22:55 The Peninsula: The Making Of A Gala  
23:50 Eat Street

**NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC CHANNEL HD**

00:10 Nazi Scrapbooks From Hell  
01:00 Apocalypse: The Second World War  
02:00 Chain Of Command



## TV Listings

03:00 One Strange Rock  
04:00 Nazi Scrapbooks From Hell  
05:00 Fly Me To The Stars  
06:00 Mega Factories  
07:00 Jane  
09:00 Situation Critical  
10:00 Locked Up Abroad  
11:00 Miracle Hospital  
12:00 The Witch Doctor Will See You Now  
13:00 Mega Factories  
14:00 For The Love Of Fashion  
15:00 Years Of Living Dangerously

16:00 Locked Up Abroad  
17:00 Brothers In War: American Heroes  
18:00 Nazi Scrapbooks From Hell  
19:00 Apocalypse: The Second World War  
20:00 Locked Up Abroad  
20:50 Brothers In War: American Heroes  
21:40 Nazi Scrapbooks From Hell  
22:30 Apocalypse: The Second World War  
23:20 Engineering Connections



00:20 Big Cat Odyssey  
01:10 World's Deadliest Compilations  
02:00 Hyena Queen  
02:50 Vacations Gone Wild  
03:45 Wild 24  
04:40 World's Weirdest Brains And Babies  
05:35 Hyena Queen  
06:30 Vacations Gone Wild  
07:25 Wild 24  
08:20 World's Weirdest Brains And Babies  
09:15 Snakes In The City  
10:10 Untamed Philippines  
11:05 World's Weirdest Brains And Babies  
12:00 Shark Junction  
12:55 Betty White Goes Wild!  
13:50 Animal Fight Club  
14:45 Wild 24  
15:40 Animals Gone Wild  
16:35 Snake Underworld  
17:30 Wild Indonesia (2015)  
18:25 Chasing Rhinos  
19:20 Wild 24  
20:10 Animals Gone Wild  
21:00 Snake Underworld  
21:50 Wild Indonesia (2015)  
22:40 Chasing Rhinos  
23:30 Shark Junction



00:12 Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles  
00:36 Rabbids Invasion  
01:00 Rabbids Invasion  
01:24 Sanjay And Craig  
01:48 Sanjay And Craig  
02:12 Winx Club  
02:36 Winx Club  
03:00 Harvey Beaks  
03:24 Harvey Beaks  
03:48 Rabbids Invasion  
04:12 Rabbids Invasion  
04:36 Breadwinners  
05:00 Breadwinners  
05:24 The Loud House  
05:48 SpongeBob SquarePants  
06:12 Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles  
06:36 Harvey Beaks  
07:00 Breadwinners  
07:24 Get Blake  
07:48 Sanjay And Craig  
08:12 Rabbids Invasion  
08:36 The Loud House  
09:00 Regal Academy  
09:24 Winx Club  
09:48 100 Things To Do Before High School  
10:12 Game Shakers  
10:36 School Of Rock  
11:00 Rufus  
11:48 I Am Frankie  
12:12 Rank The Prank  
12:36 Massive Monster Mayhem  
13:00 Hunter Street  
13:24 Nicky, Ricky, Dicky & Dawn

13:48 Toon Marty  
14:00 Toon Marty  
14:12 Harvey Beaks  
14:36 Breadwinners  
15:00 Blurt!  
15:48 SpongeBob SquarePants  
16:12 Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles  
16:36 The Loud House  
17:00 Toon Marty  
17:12 Toon Marty  
17:24 Massive Monster Mayhem  
17:48 Hunter Street  
18:12 Henry Danger  
18:36 Nicky, Ricky, Dicky And Dawn  
19:00 School Of Rock  
19:24 Game Shakers  
19:48 The Thundermans  
20:12 SpongeBob SquarePants  
20:36 Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles

21:00 Harvey Beaks  
21:24 Breadwinners  
21:48 Get Blake  
22:12 Sanjay And Craig  
22:36 Rabbids Invasion  
23:00 The Loud House  
23:24 Regal Academy  
23:48 Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles



00:07 Max & Ruby  
00:28 Ben & Holly's Little Kingdom  
00:39 Kiva Can Do!  
00:50 The Day Henry Met  
00:56 Blaze And The Monster Machines  
01:17 Blaze And The Monster Machines  
01:39 Paw Patrol  
01:50 Kid-E-Cats  
01:55 Kid-E-Cats  
02:01 Shimmer And Shine  
02:23 Nella The Princess Knight  
02:36 Paw Patrol  
02:59 Max & Ruby  
03:22 Dora The Explorer  
03:45 Sunny Day  
04:07 Nella The Princess Knight  
04:30 Shimmer And Shine  
04:53 Wallykazam!  
05:16 Zack & Quack  
05:27 The Day Henry Met  
05:32 The Day Henry Met  
05:38 Blaze And The Monster Machines  
06:00 Rusty Rivets  
06:13 Paw Patrol  
06:37 Dora The Explorer  
07:00 Nella The Princess Knight  
07:22 Kiva Can Do!  
07:33 Kiva Can Do!  
07:44 Blaze And The Monster Machines

08:07 Paw Patrol  
08:29 Shimmer And Shine  
08:52 Nella The Princess Knight  
09:14 The Day Henry Met  
09:20 Paw Patrol  
09:44 Rusty Rivets  
10:06 Wallykazam!  
10:30 Bubble Guppies  
10:53 Team Umizoomi  
11:15 Kid-E-Cats  
11:21 Shimmer And Shine  
11:44 Sunny Day  
12:07 Max & Ruby  
12:29 Ben & Holly's Little Kingdom  
12:40 Kiva Can Do!  
12:50 The Day Henry Met  
12:57 Blaze And The Monster Machines

13:40 Paw Patrol  
13:52 Kid-E-Cats  
13:57 Kid-E-Cats  
14:03 Shimmer And Shine  
14:25 Nella The Princess Knight  
14:37 Paw Patrol  
15:00 Max & Ruby  
15:23 Dora The Explorer  
15:46 Sunny Day  
16:08 Nella The Princess Knight  
16:31 Shimmer And Shine  
16:54 Wallykazam!  
17:17 Zack & Quack  
17:28 The Day Henry Met  
17:32 The Day Henry Met  
17:38 Blaze And The Monster Machines

18:00 Rusty Rivets  
18:13 Paw Patrol  
18:37 Dora The Explorer  
19:00 Nella The Princess Knight  
19:22 Kiva Can Do!  
19:33 Kiva Can Do!  
19:43 Blaze And The Monster Machines  
20:06 Paw Patrol  
20:29 Shimmer And Shine  
20:52 Nella The Princess Knight  
21:14 The Day Henry Met  
21:20 Paw Patrol  
21:43 Rusty Rivets  
22:06 Wallykazam!  
22:30 Bubble Guppies  
22:54 Team Umizoomi  
23:16 Kid-E-Cats  
23:22 Shimmer And Shine  
23:45 Sunny Day



01:00 Alice Through The Looking Glass  
03:00 The Princess Diaries 2: Royal Engagement  
05:00 Zootropolis  
07:00 The Muppets  
09:00 Alice Through The Looking Glass  
11:00 The Princess Diaries 2: Royal Engagement  
13:00 Monsters University  
15:00 Pete's Dragon  
17:00 Pirates Of The Caribbean: Curse Of The Black Pearl  
19:30 Pirates Of The Caribbean 2: Dead Man's Chest  
22:15 Monsters University



00:00 The Americans  
01:00 Grimm  
01:50 The Last Kingdom  
02:40 Lethal Weapon  
03:30 S.W.A.T.  
04:20 The Americans  
05:20 Chicago Med  
06:10 The Night Shift  
07:00 Good Morning America  
09:00 The View  
10:00 S.W.A.T.  
11:00 Chicago Med  
12:00 The Night Shift  
13:00 Chicago Fire  
14:00 Lethal Weapon  
15:00 The View  
16:00 Live Good Morning America  
18:00 The Night Shift  
19:00 Chicago Med  
20:00 Chicago Fire  
21:00 Survivor: Ghost Island  
22:00 Once Upon A Time  
23:00 WWE Experience



01:30 Baby, Baby, Baby  
03:05 Hearts Of Spring  
04:40 Little Loopers  
06:20 Nacho Libre  
08:00 Men At Work  
09:45 Little Loopers  
11:25 Nacho Libre  
13:05 Men At Work  
14:50 We Bought A Zoo  
17:00 Are We Done Yet?  
18:40 Dad's Army  
20:30 They Came Together  
22:00 Mean Machine  
23:45 Double Trouble



01:30 Far From Men  
03:20 The Hollars  
05:00 The Great Gatsby  
07:30 The Shamer's Daughter  
09:15 Far From Men  
11:00 The Hollars  
12:30 Chitty Chitty Bang Bang  
14:55 The Field  
16:50 The Dressmaker  
18:50 The Salesman

21:00 Stand By Me  
22:40 Miami Blues



00:50 Felix The Toy Rabbit And The Time Machine  
02:25 Ivan The Incredible  
03:55 Help And Freedom  
05:35 The Adventures Of Scooter The Penguin  
07:05 The Swan Princess: Pirate Today, Princess Tomorrow  
08:30 The Secret Of Kells  
10:00 The Apple & The Worm  
11:25 Back To The Sea  
13:05 Rainbow Valley Heroes  
14:45 Help And Freedom  
16:25 The Adventures Of Scooter The Penguin  
17:55 Free Birds  
19:25 Back To The Sea  
21:05 Simba The King Lion  
23:10 Emilie Jolie



00:05 Havana  
02:25 Bottle Rocket  
04:00 Dan In Real Life  
05:45 Spotlight  
06:15 Man In The Moon  
08:00 Bottle Rocket  
09:35 Dan In Real Life  
11:15 Lorenzo's Oil  
13:35 Madagascar 2  
15:05 Hotel For Dogs  
16:45 Leatherheads  
18:45 Babylon A.D.  
20:20 Due Date  
22:00 Kung Fu Hustle  
23:45 American Pie



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



00:45 Bombay Velvet  
03:00 Bombay Velvet  
03:15 Bhoot Unkle  
05:00 Bumboo  
07:10 Jab Pyaar Kisise Hota Hai  
10:10 Prem Shakti  
12:40 Raju Ban Gaya Gentleman  
15:25 Sunday  
17:45 Pyaar Ke Side Effects  
20:00 Neerja

22:20 Dolly Ki Doli



01:30 The Quiet American  
03:00 The Quiet American  
03:15 Her  
05:15 Monkey Kingdom  
06:45 When Love Came To Town  
08:30 Foxcatcher  
10:45 Nine  
12:45 Proof  
14:30 The Quiet American  
16:15 The Conspirator  
18:15 Monster  
20:00 Zero Dark Thirty  
22:30 Gangs Of New York



00:00 Mistresses  
01:00 Mistresses  
02:00 Grey's Anatomy  
03:00 Married At First Sight  
04:00 Project Accessory  
05:00 Devious Maids  
06:00 Mistresses  
07:00 Mistresses  
08:00 Grey's Anatomy  
09:00 Married At First Sight  
10:00 Project Accessory  
11:00 Devious Maids  
12:00 Mistresses  
13:00 Mistresses  
14:00 Grey's Anatomy  
15:00 Married At First Sight  
16:00 Project Accessory  
17:00 Mistresses  
18:00 The Fashion Fund  
19:00 The Fashion Fund  
20:00 Project Runway All Stars  
21:00 Project Runway  
22:00 Project Runway  
23:00 Grey's Anatomy



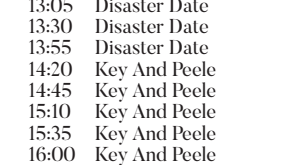
00:20 Say Yes To The Dress  
01:05 90 Days To Wed  
01:50 90 Days To Wed: Before The 90 Days  
02:35 Erick: The Boy With No Face  
03:20 Outdaughters: Busby  
04:05 My Extreme Excess Skin  
04:50 Two In A Million: Girls Made Of Glass  
05:35 Say Yes To The Dress  
06:00 Outdaughters: Busby  
06:45 Outdaughters: Busby  
07:30 Outdaughters: Busby  
08:15 Say Yes To The Dress  
09:00 Cake Boss  
09:25 Say Yes To The Dress UK  
13:10 The 685-Lb Teen  
13:55 Say Yes To The Dress  
14:40 Cake Boss  
17:00 Little People, Big World  
17:50 Diva Brides  
18:20 Say Yes To The Dress UK  
18:50 Hair Goddess  
19:40 Cake Boss  
20:10 Say Yes To The Dress UK  
20:35 Say Yes To The Dress UK  
21:00 Hair Goddess  
21:50 Little People, Big World  
22:40 Too Ugly For Love?  
23:30 Return To Amish

00:20 Say Yes To The Dress  
01:05 90 Days To Wed  
01:50 90 Days To Wed: Before The 90 Days  
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19:40 Cake Boss  
20:10 Say Yes To The Dress UK  
20:35 Say Yes To The Dress UK  
21:00 Hair Goddess  
21:50 Little People, Big World  
22:40 Too Ugly For Love?  
23:30 Return To Amish



00:05 This Is Not Happening  
00:30 Another Period  
00:55 Chris Ramsey Stand Up Central  
01:20 Nightcap  
01:45 The Opposition With Jordan Klepper  
02:10 South Park  
02:35 Real Husbands Of Hollywood  
03:00 The Daily Show With Trevor Noah

03:25 South Park  
03:47 South Park  
04:10 Ridiculousness Arabia  
04:40 Workaholics  
05:05 Workaholics  
05:30 Workaholics  
05:55 Workaholics  
06:20 Workaholics  
06:50 I Live With Models  
07:15 Lip Sync Battle  
07:40 Lip Sync Battle  
08:05 Lip Sync Battle  
08:30 Lip Sync Battle  
08:55 Friends  
09:20 Friends  
09:45 Friends  
10:10 Hillbillies For Hire  
10:35 Hillbillies For Hire  
11:00 Friendszone  
11:25 Friendszone  
11:50 Friendszone  
12:15 Friendszone  
12:40 Friendszone  
13:05 Disaster Date  
13:30 Disaster Date  
13:55 Disaster Date  
14:20 Key And Peele  
14:45 Key And Peele  
15:10 Key And Peele  
15:35 Key And Peele  
16:00 Key And Peele  
16:30 Workaholics  
16:55 Workaholics  
17:20 Friends  
17:43 Friends  
18:06 Friends  
18:29 Friends  
18:52 Friends  
19:15 Nathan For You  
19:40 Workaholics  
20:02 Comedy Central Presents  
20:30 Comedy 3alwaf  
20:30 Graves  
21:00 The Daily Show With Trevor Noah  
21:30 The Opposition With Jordan Klepper  
22:00 Demetri Martin: Person  
22:50 This Is Not Happening  
23:12 Comedy Central Presents  
23:40 Comedy 3alwaf  
23:40 The Daily Show With Trevor Noah



00:20 Forged: Iron & Fire  
00:45 Pawn Stars  
01:10 Swamp People  
02:00 American Pickers  
02:50 The Curse Of Oak Island  
03:40 Hoard Hunters  
04:30 Hoard Hunters  
05:15 Swamp People  
06:00 Alone  
10:10 Ice Road Truckers  
14:20 American Pickers  
18:30 Forged: Iron & Fire  
20:10 Counting Cars  
20:35 Car Hunters  
21:00 Forged: Iron & Fire  
21:25 Car Hunters  
21:50 Alone  
22:40 Alone  
23:30 Alone



00:20 Forged: Iron & Fire  
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01:10 Swamp People  
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06:00 Alone  
10:10 Ice Road Truckers  
14:20 American Pickers  
18:30 Forged: Iron & Fire  
20:10 Counting Cars  
20:35 Car Hunters  
21:00 Forged: Iron & Fire  
21:25 Car Hunters  
21:50 Alone  
22:40 Alone  
23:30 Alone



01:00 WWE Wal300ha  
01:30 ABB FIA Formula-E Highlights  
02:30 Amsoil Arenacross  
03:30 Formula Drift Highlights  
04:00 Formula Drift Highlights  
04:30 WWE Wal300ha  
05:00 ABB FIA Formula-E Highlights  
06:00 Indycar Highlights  
07:00 Asian Le Mans Series Highlights  
08:00 Monster Energy AMA Supercross Highlights  
10:00 Asian Le Mans Series Highlights  
11:00 This Week In WWE  
11:30 WWE Wal300ha  
12:00 WWE Bottom Line  
13:00 WWE Afterburn  
14:00 Drone Racing League  
15:00 WWE Wal300ha

## Stars

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

You are chosen to lead the way for an entire group of people; be careful not to collapse yourself into this situation. You could be in danger of biting off more than you can chew, much less swallow; learning how to say no just isn't easy for you, and that makes for a hard lesson! You can see the best way to do something, but you know some people won't like it; telling these people what to do is best. Something or someone new catches your eye at work; a new person or item is indicated but whatever this is gets your total attention! There is a strong sense of dissatisfaction at home and you could possibly change your address. You're very willing to meet people halfway to keep things as cordial and positive as possible. An old, reliable hobby takes you away from stress, restoring your confidence and happiness.

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

Your emotions could seem drained and frail; what you used to want is forgotten, all you can think of is what you want now! It seems as though you're set on neutral and have come to a standstill as you don't want to make an effort in a certain, important area of your life; this may be a great time for preparation instead of taking action. It's pretty clear that you're in the driver's seat today as plans have to be made and come together for a number of people; you dive into the details with good expectations. Your support network operates like a well-oiled machine. You feel a wonderful sense of belonging and acceptance. The day unfolds so smoothly that it's almost scary! You're following the path of creating good karma, it's becoming as easy as breathing! The theme of the evening is peace and quiet.

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

The changes you're going through may not be compatible with your spouse or roommate; this person strongly disagrees with something you're involved in. You could feel like starting your weekend early to avoid a certain task you dread; go in and take care of this as you know you can! Someone helps you carry a burden that's grown almost heavier than you can bear; this is a situation that's been around for a long time. You're able to take things in the right direction and motivate others to join you. You have a very helpful thought exactly when you need it; this is a most positive development! Something turns out better than you ever thought it could. Making choices or decisions regarding your work is best done at another time; you will know when the time's right. Rest, relax, smile with friends this evening.

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

Practical ways don't desert you when you have to put something together with a lot of effort and only a little funding. Long talks with those you're close to help with a decision you simply don't want to make. Emotions run high but you seem to clear the air and move forward with well put together plans! You're able to function without thinking in a busy environment that demands a fast pace. New beginnings are strongly forecast. You make it no secret that you're not afraid to test different waters. You could become overly protective of someone who doesn't need or like it; your enormous heart sometimes causes you trouble! As you look back, you see that something you did for someone made a positive difference in their life. You have strong energy and a fabulous outlook that can only bring smiles and laughter.

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

Your financial and material abundance is very strongly indicated at this time; all your hard work is paying off! Try not to collapse yourself into your spiritual or material prosperity; remember where you started and who helped you along the way, this is important! You could find, if you're not careful, that your belongings control you and not the other way around; you aren't happy when you feel trapped and this could cause those feelings. Your help is needed by friends who got themselves in too deeply. You figure out how something is done. A long-time hobby could create extra income. You could be in a position to make a difference by keeping your mouth closed; a certain person is wondering what you will do. You have a firm grasp of positive and negative karma. Your flash and vitality are admired.

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

You make a decision regarding a trip that could change things; you know what's right in this particular situation. You crave affection and attention from someone you love; you may encounter a new source of romantic activity or reignite an old flame! Someone makes a comment that could hurt your feelings but be aware this is completely unintentional. If you feel overly sensitive, take a quick moment to breathe and recharge; when psychic abilities are highlighted you may have to work differently and try to focus more closely upon your tasks! You don't enjoy knowing what others are thinking, but you can't help it; this does, however, put you ahead of the game in many ways! An unexpected invitation appeals to you. Finding a new source is at the top of your list regarding a hard to find product you love.

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

You could experience frustration on either the home front or on the job; either way, you manage to work through this by focusing on what you're supposed to do. You contemplate changing your diet or exercise program to regain energy. A supplier you have used for quite some time goes away; this could cause budgetary issues, but not for long. Tensions could mount because of something going wrong but you don't stress out because someone provides an incredible solution that works. Being on top of things puts you in the best place ever! You receive an answer regarding something you have applied for. You make a very good impression on some people you meet for the first time. Your refinement and intelligence shine brightly in a social setting. Spending quality time with like-minded people tonight is indicated.

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

You feel unencumbered as you head straight toward your hopes, dreams and goals; this is a time of ambition and confidence that takes you to the next level! Your aspirations are within reach and planning the process of acquisition flows like the river. Pertaining to your love life, you want something new and exciting, fresh, like a new start; this could mean a new relationship or adding something to your current one that takes you to a more satisfied place. Your eccentric personality is attractive to someone you spend time with. An invention you've had in mind might show up on television; instead of missing out, you go straight to the next and start development! A very sensitive matter involving a coworker lands on your doorstep; your diplomatic ability saves the day! Let your good mood shine.

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

Balance, justice, equality relating to all things in life appeal to you now. Problems and setbacks are considered teachers and friends; this creates a strong atmosphere of winning! A willingness to listen to intuition, gut feelings all things relating to spiritual gifts takes you to the best places to gain understanding. Experiencing, and living with, the best life has to offer is of key importance to you now. A strong sense of independence pushes you forward. You seem to pull answers and solutions to you effortlessly. You're in the mood for sensuality and affection. Timing is everything and it's on target just now! Getting to the bottom of a curious situation makes you feel much better. Curling up with a good book or film makes your night.

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

You may feel out of touch with intuition. No one seems to be available to give advice or offer a listening ear. Your independent ways save the day when you're able to make it through a tough undertaking alone. Going inward is indicated as you look honestly at yourself and what motivates you in certain situations. What others want becomes clear to you as the day unfolds. Going out on the town appeals to you, but a certain complication could cause you to think twice. You have an idea you think could change the course of an important project, but someone may strongly disagree! You may be frustrated by someone new and perhaps make a bad decision. You find yourself with an opportunity to dine in the star shine with someone you truly, completely love.

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

You're ready to put things in order in your work and home life; now's your chance to eliminate unneeded items and get what's left organized. Regrouping and rearranging files, furniture and pictures creates a more manageable energy in your life and helps get you through the tough times. You feel the fog lifting; someone seeks you out for your advice on a disruptive situation; your input helps bring this negative situation to a positive end. The heavens forecast that your ability to get to the heart of the matter is almost invincible at this time. Food, exercise and meditation could become strong focuses for you for quite some time. Make an effort to relax this evening and let the day's work go. Someone invites you out for dinner, drinks or coffee. Some alone time tonight helps you recharge body and mind.

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

Welcome to a day you remember as being one of your best in a while! Positive energy is with you as you perform tasks with no re-dos; making progress toward the end of a large project is icing on the cake. Your belongings for work and home require your attention as you clean and put them in perfect order; you hate the hassle of not being able to find things. You have an opportunity to understand someone else's side of the story if you can remain quiet and listen with honest ears; this could actually be something you're glad to hear. Frustrations are merely a part of life on earth, you realize this and go with the flow. There may be a need for your help in directing a certain project with children; this could also mean animals or the elderly. Your family life is rich with loved ones making good memories.

## COUNTRY CODES

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

## Health

# Taxes key in war on 'lifestyle' disease

**PARIS:** Global health leaders declared war on lifestyle diseases yesterday, decrying the impact of tobacco, alcohol and soft drinks on the world's poor, while calling for taxes to curb consumption and finance healthcare. In half-a-dozen studies in *The Lancet*, a leading health journal, experts detailed the link between poverty and non-communicable diseases (NDCs) such as stroke and diabetes, and made the case for consumer taxes opposed by industry and many politicians.

NDCs, which also include heart disease and cancer, "are a major cause and consequence of poverty worldwide," said Rachel Nugent, vice-president of RTI International, a non-profit health policy institute

in Seattle, and chair of The Lancet Taskforce on Non-Communicable Diseases (NDCs).

Many of the United Nation's Sustainable Development Goals, which run to 2030, will remain out of reach unless governments invest in policies that break the chains binding unhealthy habits and so-called "lifestyle" diseases, she said. "Every year, almost 100 million people are pushed into extreme poverty because of out-of-pocket health spending," Adhanom Ghebreyesus, head of the World Health Organization, wrote in a comment, also in *The Lancet*. "The costs of treating NDCs are a major contributor to this global scandal."

NDCs are responsible for 38 million deaths-

nearly half before the age of 70 — each year, a large share of them caused or aggravated by smoking, excessive drinking and/or unhealthy diets, according to the WHO. One of the UN's 2030 goals is to reduce deaths from NDCs by a third.

In 2011, world leaders at the UN general assembly pledged to develop national plans for the prevention and control of NDCs, and set targets to benchmark progress. But few have followed through. "There has been a broad failure globally and in countries to act on the commitments made in the 2011 Political Declaration," Richard Horton, editor-in-chief of *The Lancet*, and senior editor Jennifer Sargent, wrote in an editorial.

## Harm of taxes 'overstated'

One of the most controversial remedies proposed for getting people to cut back on smoking and the consumption of alcohol or soda pop is point-of-sale taxes. Opponents argue such levies penalize the poor most of all, and amount to a regressive tariff. The new studies show a more nuanced reality.

Research looking at the impact of price hikes in 13 poor, emerging and wealthy countries, for example, found that-for alcohol and sugary snacks-low-income households were more likely than wealthy ones to cut back, leading to incremental health gains. —AFP

# CLINIC PAGE



Kuwait Times

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## Expected Weather for the Next 24 Hours

**BY DAY:** Partly cloudy with light to moderate variable wind to south easterly wind, with speed of 12 - 35 km/h with a chance for scattered rain.

**BY NIGHT:** Partly cloudy with light to moderate freshening at times south easterly wind, with speed of 15 - 40 km/h with a chance for rain that might be thundery at times.

WEATHER WARNING			No Current Warnings	
STATION	MAX. EXP.	MIN. REC.	SFC. CHART 05/04/2018 0000 UTC	
KUWAIT CITY	31 °C	22 °C		
KUWAIT AIRPORT	30 °C	20 °C		
ABDALY	32 °C	19 °C		
BUBYAN	-- °C	-- °C		
JAHRA	32 °C	20 °C		
FAILAKA ISLAND	29 °C	21 °C		
SALMIYAH	28 °C	22 °C		
AHMADI	-- °C	-- °C		
NUWAISIB	29 °C	22 °C		
WAFRA	32 °C	20 °C		
SALMY	32 °C	17 °C		

4 DAYS FORECAST						
DAY	DATE	WEATHER	Temperatures		Wind Direction	Wind Speed
			MAX.	MIN.		
Friday	04/06	Cloudy and rising dust with a chance for rain that might be thundery at times	29 °C	22 °C	SE	15 - 45 km/h
Saturday	04/07	Partly cloudy with a chance for rain that might be thundery at times	32 °C	21 °C	SE	15 - 40 km/h
Sunday	04/08	Partly cloudy with a chance for scattered rain	34 °C	19 °C	VRB-SE	08 - 30 km/h
Monday	04/09	Partly cloudy	33 °C	20 °C	VRB-SE	10 - 38 km/h

PRAYER TIMES	
Fajr	04:13
Sunrise	05:34
Zuhr	11:51
Asr	15:23
Sunset	18:08
Isha	19:27

RECORDED YESTERDAY AT KUWAIT AIRPORT	
MAX. Temp.	32 °C
MIN. Temp.	22 °C
MAX. RH	82 %
MIN. RH	18 %
MAX. Wind	SE 50 km/h
TOTAL RAINFALL IN 24 HR.	.53 mm



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Saudia	22426306
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# Business

FRIDAY, APRIL 6, 2018

**38** US trade deficit rises to near 9-1/2-year high



**39** Macron takes hard line on rail reform, unions decry 'arrogance'



**40** Almost 80% of UK firms pay men more than women: Data



MALAY, the Philippines: Tourists pose for photos along a beach on Boracay island in Malay town, Aklan province, central Philippines. —AFP

## Philippines to shut holiday hotspot Boracay

### Boracay drew 2m tourists; generated \$1bn in 2017

**MANILA:** A decision by Philippine President Rodrigo Duterte to shut the holiday hotspot of Boracay, which he has called a “cesspool”, prompted airlines to cut flights yesterday, as hotels prepared for cancellations and businesses appeared resigned to a move the government said was non-negotiable.

Duterte late Wednesday ordered the closure of Boracay for six months from April 26 in a bid to rescue from ruin a once idyllic island that drew 2 million tourists and generated over a billion dollars in revenue last year. Domestic airlines offered customers full refunds or flights elsewhere, but said they would still operate a limited number of flights to Boracay’s gateways, Caticlan and Kalibo, to serve residents, which number about 50,000.

Cebu Pacific, Philippine Airlines and AirAsia Philippines said they would scale down services to the two airports from April 26 to Oct. 25, and add more to other popular beach and dive destinations, including Cebu, Palawan and Bohol. Cebu Pacific, the dominant domestic carrier, said it cancelled 14 daily round-trip flights and anticipated a loss of \$3 million to \$5 million over the six months. The government this week estimated the closure could shave 0.1 percent off 2018 GDP.

Discovery World Corp, which operates a lavish 88-room resort in Boracay, said the closure would have a significant impact on its financial health, citing the resort’s large contribution to revenue. The company’s shares dropped as much as 7.5 percent yesterday. The government made it clear it was ready to take a temporary hit on tourism. “We have to swallow the bitter pill if we wish to sustain and protect the island of Boracay,” Frederick Alegre, assistant secretary for tourism, told a news conference. “It is a temporary setback but we will recover the glory days of Boracay.”

Located off the northern tip of the central island of Panay, Boracay’s white sand, lively nightlife and abundant water sports are a constant draw for visitors. In recent years, growing numbers of Asian visitors, particularly from China, have been straining the resources of beach resorts in countries like Philippines and Thailand.

#### Catalogue of breaches

Since February, Philippine officials have been scrambling to inspect the island and record a catalogue of construction and permit breaches after Duterte, in one of his trademark public outbursts, said Boracay’s turquoise waters smelled “of shit” because sewage was ending up in the sea. He has vented fury at an explosion of unlicensed developments on the crowded 10-square-kilometre (4-sq-mile) island,

including encroachments on forest and beach land. So far, the authorities have found 948 illegal structures, half of which they aim to destroy during the closure.

The government has yet to provide specifics about the rehabilitation, but Epimaco Densing, assistant secretary of the interior, yesterday said a soft opening could take place within 3-4 months, after drainage systems were fixed and illegal structures dismantled. Priorities, officials said, were overhauls to roads, sewage treatment and waste disposal facilities to handle about 90

to 115 tons of waste a day, of which only 30 tons is brought out off the island, according to the interior ministry.

The local tourism industry has urged a delay to the planned closure and a gradual introduction, something the authorities say cannot work. Boracay Foundation Inc, the largest business group on the island, was meeting yesterday to discuss its response to the closure.

Jose Clemente, president of the Tourism Congress of the Philippines, said businesses needed time to adjust. “We are a bit depressed right now,” he said. “I really feel for the people in Boracay,” he added. “They really need to find ways to be employed, or at least keep their head above water for the next six months.”

The government said it will have a 2 billion peso (\$38.4 million) “calamity fund” to try to help an estimated 30,000 people on Boracay whose livelihoods depend on tourism, directly and indirectly.

The impact on hotels and resorts has yet to be fully assessed. Boracay, one of 7,300 islands in the archipelago nation, hosts 1,800 businesses, including global hotel chains like Shangri-La and Movenpick, and locally listed companies Megaworld Corp and Manila Water. —Reuters



**Airlines cut back flights, hotels gear for cancellations**

## Business

# US trade deficit rises to near 9-1/2-year high

## Weekly jobless claims increase 24,000 to 242,000

**WASHINGTON:** The US trade deficit increased to a near 9-1/2-year high in February, with both exports and imports rising to record highs, but the shortfall with China narrowed sharply.

News of the worsening trade deficit comes as the United States and China are embroiled in tit-for-tat tariffs which have rattled global financial markets. It also underscores the challenges confronting President Donald Trump's "America First" trade policies aimed at eradicating the deficit.

The Commerce Department said yesterday the trade gap rose 1.6 percent to \$57.6 billion, the highest level since October 2008. The deficit has now risen for six straight months. The goods trade deficit was the highest since July 2008 and the surplus on services was the lowest since December 2012. Economists polled by Reuters had forecast the trade gap widening to \$56.8 billion in February. Part of the rise in the trade deficit in February reflected commodity price increases.

The politically sensitive goods trade deficit with China fell 18.6 percent to \$29.3 billion. The deficit with Mexico surged 46.6 percent in February. The Trump administration on Tuesday targeted 25 percent tariffs on some 1,300 Chinese industrial technology, transport and medical products, to force changes in Beijing's intellectual property practices. China swiftly retaliated on Wednesday with a list of similar duties on key American imports including soybeans, planes, cars, beef and chemicals. Trump, who claims the United States is being taken advantage of by its trad-

ing partners, has already imposed broad tariffs on imported solar panels and large washing machines. He has also slapped 25 percent import duties on steel and 10 percent on aluminum.

While these actions may prove politically popular with Trump's working class political base, especially in states hard-hit by factory closures and import competition, analysts warn they could undercut economic growth and raise prices for both consumers and producers. Strong economic growth, which is drawing in imports, and the Trump administration's \$1.5 trillion income tax cut package will worsen the trade deficit, economists say.

### Exports, imports rise to record high



"By our calculations, the tax legislation and two-year budget deal will add \$205 billion to the federal budget deficit this year, which increases the nominal trade deficit by \$75 billion," said Ryan Sweet, an economist at Moody's Analytics in West Chester, Pennsylvania. "In 2019, the tax legislation and budget deal will boost the federal deficit by \$480 billion, boosting the trade deficit by \$161 billion. Therefore, we expect trade to be a drag on US GDP growth this year and next."

US financial markets were little moved by data.

### Drag on growth

When adjusted for inflation, the trade deficit slipped to \$69.11 billion from \$69.96 billion in January. Still, the so-called real trade deficit is above the fourth-quarter average of \$66.81 billion.

This suggests trade would subtract from first-quarter gross do-

mestic product. Trade sliced 1.16 percentage points from fourth-quarter GDP growth. The economy grew at a 2.9 percent annualized rate during that period. In February, exports of goods increased 2.3 percent to \$137.2 billion, boosted by shipments of industrial materials and supplies as well as sales of motor vehicles and engines. There were also increases in exports of capital goods such as civilian aircraft and drilling and oilfield equipment.

Exports to China were unchanged in February.

Goods imports jumped 1.6 percent to \$214.2 billion in February, lifted by imports of food, industrial materials and supplies, and capital goods. Imports of services rose to a record \$47.8 billion from \$46.8 billion in January, likely boosted by royalties and broadcast license fees related to the Winter Olympics.

Imports from China declined 14.7 percent in February. In a separate report on Thursday the Labor Department said initial claims for state unemployment benefits rose 24,000 to a seasonally adjusted 242,000 for the week ended March 31. Economists polled by Reuters had forecast claims rising to 225,000 in the latest week. Last week's increase likely reflected difficulties adjusting the data around moving holidays like Easter and school spring breaks. The labor market is considered to be near or at full employment. The jobless rate is at a 17-year low of 4.1 percent, not too far from the Federal Reserve's forecast of 3.8 percent by the end of this year. The claims data has no bearing on March's employment report, which is scheduled for release on Friday. According to a Reuters survey of economists, nonfarm payrolls probably increased by 193,000 jobs in March. The unemployment rate is forecast falling one-tenth of a percentage point to 4.0 percent. —Reuters

## China will win any trade war with US: Media

**BEIJING/WASHINGTON:** China has never surrendered to external pressure and it will win any trade war with the United States, the nation's state media stressed in the hours after the world's two top economies targeted each other with planned steep tariffs.

In Washington, US administration officials continued to seek to allay market fears of a trade war, and expressed a willingness to negotiate a resolution with China. "There is a process here. There's going to be some back and forth, but there's also some negotiations," White House National Economic Council Director Larry Kudlow said. "I think we are going to get a deal over a period of time," he said in an interview with Fox Business Network.

China's ambassador to the United States Cui Tiankai told reporters in Washington on Wednesday that Beijing preferred to resolve the trade dispute through negotiations, but China's official mouthpieces took a tougher stance. The ruling Communist Party's People's Daily newspaper said Beijing's quick counter-move after Washington announced new tariffs this week had caught the Americans off guard. "Within 24 hours of the US publishing its list, China drew its sword, and with the same strength and to the same scale,

counterattacked quickly, fiercely and with determination," the paper said in a commentary yesterday.

"The confidence to know that will win the trade war comes from the scale of [China's] consumer market," the paper said, noting that China's market potential is incomparable to other economies.

Many American consumer product and industrial companies see the Chinese market as a big source for future growth given the continued rise in the number of people joining both the middle class and the wealthier levels of Chinese society. The United States' proposed list of \$50 billion in duties on Chinese goods is aimed at forcing Beijing to address what Washington says is deeply entrenched theft of US intellectual property and forced technology transfer from American companies.

China hit back within hours with its own threatened tariffs on US imports including soybeans, planes, cars, whiskey and chemicals. The official Xinhua news agency said late on Wednesday that the US tariffs proposal would cost the United States "dearly." "China will not be afraid or back down if a trade war is unavoidable. The country has never surrendered to external pressure, and it will not surrender this time either," Xinhua said.

Kudlow had told Fox News on Wednesday, "I believe that the Chinese will back down and will play ball." Neither of the tariff lists issued by the two countries have gone into effect yet. Washington will hold public comment period expected to last around two months, and Chinese officials have said its implementation will depend on US action.

### "Bullying tactics"

Shortly after US President Donald Trump's administration issued its list, China's ambassador to the World Trade Organization urged all of the trade body's members to join with China to counter US trade abuses.

"China's counter tariffs are a spectacular way of standing up to America's bullying tactics, not only for itself, but for other countries threatened by the United States' new trade policies," the

nationalist Global Times said in an editorial yesterday.

China's commerce ministry said yesterday it has initiated a WTO dispute resolution procedure over US tariffs on its imports of steel and aluminum. The Ministry of Commerce said the US measures against its steel and aluminum were not for maintaining national security, as Washington has said, but rather were in aid of trade protectionism.—Reuters



**WASHINGTON:** The US trade deficit increased to a near 9-1/2-year high in February, with both exports and imports rising to record highs, but the shortfall with China narrowed sharply. — AFP

## Business

# Macron takes hard line on rail reform, unions decry 'arrogance'

## French PM wants to end SNCF's loss-making days

**PARIS:** Emmanuel Macron's prime minister said yesterday the government would not back down in a shake-up of France's state-owned SNCF railways, prompting accusations of arrogance from unions who said further strikes would go ahead as planned.

Rail services were crippled over the past two days as unions launched three months of rolling stoppages, marking the toughest test yet of Macron's push for broad economic reform - with faint echoes of a protest that escalated to topple a government in 1995.

Prime Minister Edouard Philippe described as non-negotiable government plans to stop hiring of railway workers on generous job-for-life contracts - a stance that the head of the most moderate of the four striking unions called unacceptable.



The CFDT would take part in the next stoppage, scheduled for Sunday, because "what the government has proposed is not acceptable," its leader Laurent Berger told BFMTV.

Philippe also rejected union demands to clarify the government's position on a state takeover of 46 billion euros (\$57 billion) of SNCF debt, saying those talks would only happen if and when the rest of the SNCF reorganization was agreed. "When we presented this

reform we said a number of things were not negotiable," he told France Inter radio, listing the end of the SNCF monopoly, the restructuring of the SNCF and an end to recruitment on decades-old terms.

### Warning lights

Macron won power in May pledging to modernize France, and has pushed through other reforms, including cuts in wealth tax and an easing of job protection laws, with little trouble so far. Polls also show a majority of French support his SNCF reform plans, though there are signs the mood could shift. For now there appears no imminent risk of the rail protests escalating into a broader backlash as in 1995 over social welfare reform, which ultimately led to President Jacques Chirac dissolving the

### Battle lines drawn over employment rights

government. But other protests are simmering, even if they have for now not coalesced into a single, more potent movement. Students unhappy about changes in entry-selection criteria have mounted blockades and sit-ins at universities in several cities, while CGT union members have led industrial action at rubbish incineration site in Paris.

An Elabe poll on Wednesday showed a six-point increase in those supporting the protests



PARIS: French CFDT trade union leader Didier Aubert (center) speaks with media representatives ahead of a meeting with Minister for Transport Elisabeth Borne in Paris yesterday. —AFP

to 44 percent, and slightly more than half said the government should amend its plans for the SNCF in light of the unions' demands.

Philippe Martinez, head of the hardline CGT, the dominant union among some 150,000 staff at the SNCF, accused Philippe and the government of resorting to blackmail.

"They're basically saying 'everything's up for discussion, except what we decided before you entered the room,'" he told public service channel Franceinfo TV.

The CFDT union's Berger added that, while he was neither pro- nor anti-Macron, "you cannot change a country if you don't bring people on board. The government will stumble if it keeps acting arrogantly." Macron has so far kept his distance and left his ministers to battle in defence of the SNCF shake-up.

During a visit yesterday to a care facility for autistic children, Macron brushed off questions on the SNCF and said health sector reforms were on the way too. —Reuters

## India keeps interest rate unchanged

**MUMBAI:** India's central bank yesterday kept interest rates at a seven-year-low despite inflation concerns and a recent spurt in economic growth. The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) said the benchmark repo rate—the level at which it lends to commercial banks — would remain unchanged at 6.0 percent.

Analysts had predicted the central bank would not move despite rising global oil prices.

Monetary authorities are also anxious not to cause jitters after a \$2 billion fraud scandal at the country's second largest state lender Punjab National Bank (PNB). The central bank's policy report said inflation was expected to firm up before moderating for the financial year 2018-19. It also expressed concerns over rising oil prices.

It said "volatile" international prices in recent weeks have "adversely impacted the outlook for crude oil prices". India imports nearly 80 percent of its oil. Currently, India's retail inflation has slowed to 4.44 percent while the GDP figures for the quarter to December 31 showed signs of revival with an annual



MUMBAI: Reserve Bank of India (RBI) Governor Urjit Patel looks on during a news conference at the bank's head office in Mumbai yesterday. —AFP

nual rate of 7.2 percent growth.

But inflation may rise to 5.3 percent in the June quarter well above the RBI's target of 4 percent, Bloomberg reported. India's economy has suffered a downturn blamed on a shock cash ban that withdrew most of India's high-value banknotes from circulation, and the launch of a new nationwide goods and services tax. Corporate and banking scandals could peg back growth and cloud the investment climate if regulations are tightened, analysts at Goldman Sachs said, according to Bloomberg. —AFP

## Canada reports progress on NAFTA

**OTTAWA/MEXICO CITY:** Mexico, Canada and the United States have made good progress in their bid to modernize the NAFTA trade pact but still have work to do, Canadian Foreign Minister Chrystia Freeland said on Wednesday. Freeland also said she would be flying to Washington for a meeting yesterday with US Trade Representative Robert Lighthizer, who is pushing hard for a quick deal in principle to finish before a July 1 presidential election in Mexico. The three members of the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) could announce by mid-April the outlines of a settlement that would likely tackle the key issue of autos content while leaving other contentious chapters to be dealt with later, say sources familiar with the matter. "We're making good progress on NAFTA ... having said that, we're not there yet," Freeland told business executives in Winnipeg. The meeting was televised.

One of the biggest chapters to be resolved is a US demand that the North American content of vehicles made in NAFTA nations be increased to 85

percent from 62.5 percent. A Mexican source said US negotiators had shown "some flexibility" on the issue, adding that the three nations were now looking at alternatives. Only six of the roughly 30 chapters have been closed and wide differences remain on topics such as dispute resolution and government procurement. Canadian officials do not see how the three nations can close the remaining chapters in the next two weeks, a source familiar with Canada's negotiating position said on Wednesday.

"There's a possibility they could come up with a symbolic agreement in principle that signaled they had reached a consensus on five or six key issues," said the source, who requested anonymity given the sensitivity of the situation. Chief negotiators will meet in Washington next week and there are no current plans for an eighth round of talks, which officials had earlier suggested would start on April 8, the source added. US President Donald Trump has threatened to ditch NAFTA if it cannot be reworked to his satisfaction, and talks to modernize the 24-year-old treaty have dragged on since August. Trump's top economic adviser, Larry Kudlow, predicted on Wednesday that there would be "some positive news on NAFTA ... and I think the stock market is going to love that." Moises Kalach, a senior member of the CCE business lobby, which represents Mexico's private sector in the NAFTA talks, said he expects signs of progress even if ministers do not reach a formal agreement. —Reuters

## Business

# US-China rivalry poses risks, benefits for Latin America

## Brazil, Argentina respond cautiously to tariffs

**MENDOZA, Argentina:** As the trade dispute between the United States and China was gaining steam last month, a half-dozen Chinese dancers and a person in a panda bear suit paraded across a stage inside a hotel lobby in the heart of Argentina's wine country.

The March 24 ceremony celebrated the Washington-based Inter-American Development Bank's (IDB) choice to hold its next annual meeting in Chengdu, China, a decision criticized by the United States, whose regional influence has been increasingly challenged by the Asian economic superpower.

Just over a week later, China imposed tariffs on a range of US products from frozen pork to wine in response to US President Donald Trump's decision to place tariffs on steel and aluminum from countries including China.

The trade fight, which escalated further on Wednesday with China targeting key American imports including soybeans, planes and cars in retaliation for proposed US tariffs on \$50 billion in Chinese goods, has left Latin America in the middle, analyzing risks and opportunities.

"The US is forcing countries in the region to choose between the US and China," said Margaret Myers, director of the Latin America and the World program at the Inter-American Dialogue. "It's putting Latin American countries in a very challenging position while at the same time

not offering a particularly attractive policy."

China, whose demand for raw materials increased during rapid economic growth the past two decades, is already the top trade partner for countries ranging from Brazil, Latin America's largest economy and the world's top soybean exporter, to tiny Uruguay.

Rather than celebrating a chance to gain market share, Brazil and Argentina responded cautiously to the tariffs on Wednesday. Brazil's Agriculture Ministry declined to comment.

Argentina, the world's No 3 soy exporter, said it was "analyzing the situation."

Analysts in both countries said, however, the tariffs could force China to purchase more soybeans and soy-based products from South America.



### Seven LatAm countries poised to join AIIB

David Malpass, the US Treasury Department's undersecretary for international affairs, said at a March conference in Buenos Aires that China's hosting of next year's IDB meeting "does not serve the interests of the Western Hemisphere."

In response, IDB President Luis Alberto Moreno noted that the IDB would hold a special meeting for the bank's 60th anniversary in Washington next year, saying: "We have found the best

of all worlds." Trump's trade policies and rhetoric about immigration have disturbed even the most US-friendly governments in Latin America.

Before the United States temporarily exempted Brazil from planned steel tariffs, a Foreign Ministry official said trade relations between the two countries were in "uncharted waters."

Argentina is threatening to take Washington to the World Trade Organization over biodiesel import tariffs. While the United States is the IDB's largest shareholder, it backed out last year of one of the bank's key funds.

Still, China's perceived disregard for projects' social and environmental costs has generated opposition within Latin America. Civil society

groups from Ecuador, Argentina and Peru set up an alliance to present information on "multiple human rights violations" linked to Chinese investments to the United Nations, according to a February statement from global nonprofit alliance Civicus.

#### More Chinese players

Chinese foreign direct investment, or FDI, in the region has increased by \$70 billion since 2012, according to the Adrienne Arsht Latin America Center. While the United States remains the largest source of FDI, its share fell to 20 percent in 2016 from 25.7 percent in 2015 and 24 percent in 2012, according to the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean.

Data from the Inter-American Dialogue and Boston University show lending from Chinese state-run banks to countries in the region exceeded \$20 billion in 2015 and 2016. Since 2005, those loans have exceeded combined financing to the region from the IDB, World Bank and CAF, a Latin American development bank. Commercial banks like ICBC are becoming increasingly active, Myers said, and the Asian American Infrastructure Bank (AIIB) - a 2-year-old Beijing-based multilateral lender - is seeking to partner with the IDB on projects in the region, such as roads, railways, ports or tunnels that could improve connectivity with Asia. —Reuters

## Markets underestimate risk of an accidental trade war: Analyst

**LONDON:** In a round of interviews and media briefings on Wednesday, Trump administration officials downplayed the risk of a US trade war with China, insisting tariff threats are just the first round in negotiations. The concerted attempt to calm market nerves came after the two countries each published a list of potential targets for higher tariffs in a dispute over intellectual property and technology transfer.

"There's no trade war here," the US president's top economic adviser Larry Kudlow said in an interview with Fox Business Network. "What you've got is the early stages of a process which will include tariffs, comments on the tariffs, then ultimate decisions and negotiations. There are already back-channel talks going on," Kudlow said. "These are just the first proposals ... we're putting it out for comment, it's going to take a couple of months, I doubt there will be any concrete action for several months."

The same talking points were echoed by other senior officials including Trump's press secretary, his commerce secretary and his hawkish foreign trade adviser. The soothing message appeared to work, with US equity indices reversing earlier losses as investors concluded the risk of threatened tariffs actually being imposed was low. But investors and traders are probably underestimating the difficulty of the negotiations and the risk the United States and China could drift into a damaging confrontation by accident. —Reuters

## Almost 80% of UK firms pay men more than women: Data

**LONDON:** Almost eight out of 10 companies and public sector bodies operating in Britain pay men more than women overall, said data published yesterday confirming long-standing gender inequality in the workplace. Prime Minister Theresa May introduced laws last year to force all employers with more than 250 staff to submit their gender pay gap details to the Government Equalities Office, which has now published a slew of data. Some 10,015 businesses complied with Wednesday's midnight deadline for submissions, while those who failed to do so face the prospect of legal action.

Some 78 percent of commercial businesses and public sector organizations pay male staff more than female colleagues, according to yesterday's data cache.

However, 14 percent of respondents revealed that they pay women more than men, while eight percent had no gender pay gap. The average gap-or percentage difference between the average male salary and the average female salary-across all companies that submitted details stood at 12 percent.

May this week vowed to tackle the "burning injustice" of the gender pay gap and has compared the battle with the women's suffrage campaign a century ago. Britain's second only female prime minister after Margaret Thatcher wants to push toward pay equality, meaning the same money for a comparable job-from back-office staff to highly-paid board members.

#### 'Major injustices'

Yesterday's data meanwhile revealed that local newspaper group North Wales News Media fared the worst, with 85.2



**LONDON:** A woman shelters from the rain beneath an umbrella as she walks past talking men in the City of London. Employers with more than 250 staff have until midnight on Wednesday to publish the gender pay gap within their companies. —AFP

percent of men paid more than women.

Millwall Holdings, the parent group of Millwall Football Club, reported an equivalent figure of 80 percent. Ireland's Ryanair had one of the biggest gaps, with women paid 71.8 percent less than men on average. The airline claimed its data had been affected by the "relatively low numbers" of female pilots in the aviation industry. Ryanair has a total of 554 UK pilots, of which 546 are men and just eight are women.

"A hundred years ago, some women first won the right to vote," May said earlier this week.

"But for all the welcome progress in the decades since, major injustices still hold too many women back. "When I became prime minister, I committed myself to tackling the burning injustices which mar our society. One such is the gender pay gap." —AFP



## Business

# ECB, BoE unlikely to go off-piste after snow-induced slowdown

## British services PMI weakest since 2016 Brexit vote

**LONDON:** Heavy snow slowed activity in Europe's dominant service industry last month but with growth still relatively strong, policy expectations for the European Central Bank and Bank of England are unlikely to change.

Businesses across the eurozone ended the first quarter with their weakest expansion since the start of 2017 as bad weather and a strong currency combined to curb growth in new orders, a business survey showed yesterday. It was a similar story in Britain, where a sister survey said the Siberian weather system meteorologists called "the Beast from the East" weighed on services, which expanded at the slowest rate since just after the vote to leave the European Union in June 2016.

Survey compiler IHS Markit said the PMIs pointed to a solid first quarter growth rate of 0.6 percent in the euro

zone, but only half that in Britain, which is due to leave the EU in just under a year's time.

But the ECB will probably decide this summer to slash its bond purchases if things develop as expected, policymaker Ewald Nowotny said last week. The BoE is widely expected to raise interest rates next month for only the second time since the global financial crisis a decade ago.

"The ECB is pretty much set on its course anyway. The Bank of England is a little more interest-

ing in the sense that the rate decision is a bit more imminent," said Peter Dixon at Commerzbank.

"But the general perception is that this all appears to be more of a weather-related effect and as a consequence we can look through." The BoE sees British inflation as running too high. Even though it is below target in the eurozone, the ECB is looking to wind down its huge stimulus programme in coming months.

Eurozone inflation rose to 1.4 percent as anticipated last month, preliminary official data showed on Wednesday, still some distance from the ECB's 2 percent target ceiling. In Britain, where sterling's fall since the Brexit vote has driven inflation up, prices rose a slower than expected 2.7 percent annually in February - though considerably above the central bank's 2 percent target.

The BoE kept interest rates steady last month but two policymakers unexpectedly voted for a hike, reinforcing the view among economists that borrowing costs will rise in May.

### Slowdown won't deter BoE, ECB

#### PMIs slip on the ice

IHS Markit's euro zone Final Composite Purchasing Managers' Index, seen as a good overall indicator of growth, fell to 55.2 in March from February's 57.1, and revised down slightly from

55.3. That was the sharpest one-month drop in almost six years, but it remains well above the 50 mark separating growth from contraction.

#### Who wins?

Currency markets generally dislike trade intervention, and previous protectionist efforts by the US government have weakened the dollar. Perhaps the biggest risk for the US currency is a possible exodus of capital, analysts said. "For the dollar right now I see a lot more risk to the downside than upside. With the current political atmosphere in Washington there's a lot more still to come from this," said Jeremy Cook, head of FX strategy at WorldFirst.

While transfers out of dollar-based assets can take years if not decades because of the greenback's status as the world's premier reserve currency, recent trends among central banks and sovereign wealth funds indicate a slow shift. The US dollar's share of currency reserves reported to the International Monetary Fund declined in the final quarter of 2017 to a four-year low, latest data showed.

Any significant rise in risk sentiment would outweigh any short-term advantage the dollar would have against emerging markets in its role as a safe-haven bet, Cook said.

In the midst of the US-China trade tension, the dollar has weakened in three of the last five sessions against the yen, down more than 5 percent so far this year. Against the Swiss franc, the greenback has fallen 1.4 percent so far in 2018. —Reuters

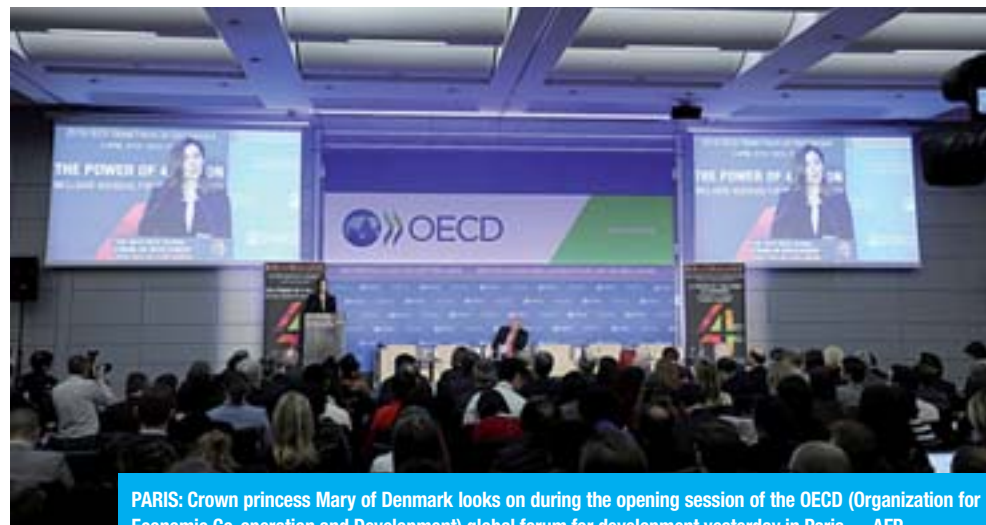
## Dollar edges up as trade war fears fade

**LONDON:** The dollar rose to a two-week high against a basket of major currencies yesterday, encouraged by a rebound on Wall Street and signs the United States may negotiate a resolution to a trade dispute with China. Beijing on Wednesday imposed tariffs on key US imports including soybeans, planes, cars, beef and chemicals in response to similar measures from the United States.

That prompted a rally in the yen, often sought in times of market turmoil, and left investors broadly reluctant to take on new positions in risk assets as US shares tumbled.

But the dollar yesterday recouped losses after President Donald Trump's economic adviser said the US administration was negotiating with China, not engaging in a trade war.

"Moderation and negotiation seems to be next on the agenda ... the fallout in the foreign exchange market remains muted," said Hans Redeker, global head of currency strategy at Morgan Stanley in London. The dollar rose 0.1 percent against a basket of six major currencies to 90.20. In a broader sign that global currency markets had not been rattled, a basket of cur-



PARIS: Crown princess Mary of Denmark looks on during the opening session of the OECD (Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development) global forum for development yesterday in Paris. —AFP

its lowest reading since July 2016 and a bigger fall than any economist had forecast in a Reuters poll.

Reports earlier this week showed Britain's construction PMI dropped sharply in March, although manufacturing held up better. "At face value, the latest UK services PMI looks very concerning ... but it seems that 'the Beast from the East' played a big role in this miss," noted James Smith at ING.

"In reality, this means that policymakers will likely choose to look through this latest data when they meet next in May." —Reuters

other see-saw session on Wall Street that saw equities rally impressively into the close.

Traders have been spooked by tit-for-tat accusations and measures between China and the United States that some fear could lead to a full-blown trade war between the world's top two economies. China unveiled plans Wednesday to hit major US exports in retaliation for US tariff plans detailed the day before. "It's hard to see how anyone wins in this but investors currently, despite the declines we've seen, are expressing confidence that a solution will be found before a full blown trade war erupts," said Erlam.

The Dow whipsawed nearly 800 points between its session low and peak on Wednesday before finishing with a gain of one percent.

Analysts said the catalyst for the turnaround was comments by recently appointed White House economic advisor Larry Kudlow, who suggested Trump's strident approach to China was a negotiating tactic to win concessions.

"I understand the stock market anxiety. I get that," Kudlow told Fox Business. "I think at the end of this whole process, the end of the rainbow, there's a pot of gold."

Meanwhile, borrowing costs across the eurozone rose yesterday, as stock markets recovered from a selloff triggered by escalating Sino-US trade tensions, curbing the demand by safe-haven debt. —Reuters

## World stocks bounce back as trade fears ease

**LONDON:** Global stocks railed higher yesterday as investors judged recent trade war fears were overblown, dealers said. In Europe, the French and German stock markets battled higher with 1.8-percent gains, while London rose 1.2 percent.

Tokyo led the gainers in Asia, climbing a solid 1.5 percent as the more positive market sentiment reduced demand for the haven yen, pushing the currency down. Hong Kong and Shanghai were closed for holidays. "Investors are expressing confidence that a solution will be found before a full-blown trade war erupts," said Craig Erlam, senior analyst at trading firm Oanda.

However, he also sounded a note of caution over the lingering market concerns. "The reality is that a trade war remains a real possibility," warned Erlam. "US President Donald Trump is looking to pick a fight with the world's second largest economy, a fight he believes is easy to win, and China is willing to go toe to toe with the United States even if it means inflicting harm at home." The more bullish outlook for stocks came on the heels of an-

## Sports

# Raptors rout Celtics, Pistons knocked out of playoff race

## Eastern Conference supremacy heads down to the wire

**LOS ANGELES:** DeMar DeRozan scored a team-high 16 points as the Toronto Raptors defeated the Boston Celtics 96-78 on Wednesday as the battle for the NBA's Eastern Conference supremacy heads down to the wire. Every Raptors player but one recorded at least two points and the Raptors crushed the Celtics to equal their franchise record in wins for the season while extending their lead atop the standings.

The Raptors now have a three-game cushion over the Celtics for first place in the Atlantic Division and the Eastern Conference. "I am very confident we can get it done. We got a great opportunity but we still got to go ahead, be professional, and finish games out," said all-star guard Kyle Lowry. Lowry delivered 13 points, five rebounds and five assists as the Raptors improved to 56-22 on the season. It was Lowry's highest scoring outing in the past four games and even more importantly it halted the team's two-game losing skid.

Fred VanVleet came off the bench for 15 points while Delon Wright had eight points, nine rebounds and eight assists. Marcus Morris scored 21 points for the Celtics, who dropped to 53-25. With a win on Wednesday, Boston would have won the tiebreaker between the two teams and moved to just a game back of Toronto for first in the conference.

Terry Rozier had two points and nine rebounds in his return to the Celtics lineup as Boston was held to a season low in points. Rozier sat out Tuesday's 106-102 loss to the Milwaukee Bucks with a left ankle sprain. The Raptors had five losses in their past 10 heading into the contest, including a 110-90 defeat in Boston on Sunday. In Detroit, JJ Redick scored 25 points as the

Philadelphia 76ers won their 12th straight game with a 115-108 win over Detroit, eliminating the Pistons from the playoff race.

The Sixers are rolling along without star Joel Embiid who missed a fourth straight game because of a concussion and surgery to repair a facial fracture. "Everyone in this room has stepped up since Joel went down, and we know we're capable of winning games without him," Australian guard Ben Simmons said. "We told him to get ready for the playoffs and that we'll take care of everything else. Now we're showing that we can do that."

The Pistons had their five-game winning streak snapped, and their defeat clinched a post-season spot for the Milwaukee Bucks. The Eastern Conference playoff field is now set, although the actual matchups are still being determined. Anthony Tolliver scored 25 points for the Pistons. Detroit was without forward Blake Griffin, who missed his fourth straight game because of a sore ankle. Elsewhere, Kelly Olynyk scored 19 points and the Miami Heat beat the Atlanta Hawks 115-86, capping a sweep of back-to-back games between Southeast Division rivals.

### Lakers 122, Spurs 112 (OT)

Kyle Kuzma bombed in a 3-pointer in the first minute of overtime, and Kentavious Caldwell-Pope added a clincher three minutes later, helping Los Angeles outlast visiting San Antonio. Kuzma finished with a game-high 30 points for the Lakers, who were without Lonzo Ball (knee) and Brandon Ingram (concussion). LaMarcus Aldridge had a team-high 28 points for the Spurs, who were missing Manu Ginobili (rest). The loss was costly to the Spurs, who fell into a tie with

games as the club's designated hitter.

Ohtani is the first player since Babe Ruth for the Boston Red Sox in 1919 to start on opening day in a non-pitching role, then also start on the mound in his first 10 games. The rookie sensation won his first big league pitching start in Oakland on the weekend. Besides the homer, he had a single on Wednesday to lead off the 10th inning as the Angels won three innings later when Zack Cozart hammered a walk-off homer.

Kluber struck out Ohtani looking in the third inning. Ohtani also made his Tuesday home debut a memorable one, collecting three hits, including the three-run homer that cleared the wall in right-center field and gave the Angels a 6-2 lead in the first inning. Ohtani had struggled during spring training for the Angels, prompting some observers to question whether he was ready to make his major league debut.

However, he has assuaged those concerns during his performances since the opening of the season. "I don't have anything to say to those (critics)," Ohtani said through an interpreter. "I had bad results, so I guess they have the right to say bad stuff about me. We just got started. I'll just take it day by day and try to help the team." —AFP



TORONTO: Fred VanVleet #23 of the Toronto Raptors goes to the basket against the Boston Celtics on April 4, 2018 at the Air Canada Centre. —AFP

Oklahoma City for the fifth spot in a tightly bunched Western group. The Spurs are now tied in the loss column not only with the Thunder but also Minnesota and New Orleans.

### Magic 105, Mavericks 100

Aaron Gordon poured in 20 points and six Orlando players scored in double figures against Dallas. Jamel Artis added 18 points for Orlando, which has won two straight. The Mavericks trailed for all but the first three minutes of the game but fought back to within 97-96 on an Aaron Harrison 3-pointer with 2:58 to play. Mario Hezonja immediately answered with a jumper and Khem Birch

followed with another bucket to increase the Magic's advantage to 101-96 with 1:09 left.

### Heat 115, Hawks 86

Kelly Olynyk scored 19 points off the bench as Miami beat host Atlanta for the second time in as many nights. Olynyk hit five 3-pointers, all coming in the second quarter, and Josh Richardson also scored 19 points for the Heat, who clinched a playoff spot with their Tuesday win over the Hawks. Miami grabbed solo possession of sixth place in the Eastern Conference by half a game over two teams that were idle Wednesday, the Milwaukee Bucks and Washington Wizards. —Agencies

## Ohtani homers as Angels win in 13 innings

**ANAHEIM:** Japanese dynamo Shohei Ohtani homered in his second straight game on Wednesday, delivering a two-run shot in the fifth inning as the Anaheim Angels beat the Cleveland Indians 3-2 in 13 innings. The Angeles two-way star belted a shot off American League Cy Young winner Corey Kluber to go along with his three-run homer in his first at-bat at home for Anaheim on Tuesday night.

"Shohei got hold of it," said manager Mike Scioscia of the 23-year-old right hander who is batting .429. "That's a big hit in the game. You can see the bat speed and you can see the power. As he goes on, there is a lot more he has to absorb. He has a tremendous upside and he has swung the ball very well the last two nights." Ohtani, who is scheduled to pitch for the Angels on Sunday, has six hits in 14 at-bats in three

## Surfing great Fanning signs off with a dramatic finish

**SYDNEY:** Three-time world surfing champion Mick Fanning, who made global headlines after fighting off a shark on live television, narrowly missed a fairytale ending to his career yesterday when he lost in the final of his last event. The Australian, 36, announced last month he was retiring from the sport after 17 years and was seeking to sign off with a record fifth Pro Bells Beach title and his 23rd world tour win.

In a tense morning, he reached the final of the event in the Australian state of Victoria but lost to 23-year-old Brazilian Italo Ferreira. "It's really special, I always wanted to finish here at Bells just because I felt calmer," Fanning told organizers of the World Surf League after coming in second place. "It's a very special moment with the crowd, all my

best friends are here and then to be out in the final with Italo and just see how much it meant to him... it sort of made me feel better. "It's been an amazing career and I want to thank everyone along the way."

Stephanie Gilmore, 30, another Australian surfing icon, earlier beat Hawaiian Tatiana Weston-Webb to win the women's title. Bells Beach holds special significance for Fanning, who began his competitive career there in 2001 as a teenage wildcard. He went on to become world champion in 2007, 2009 and 2013 and forged one of surfing's most well-known rivalries with American Kelly Slater.

The Australian made global headlines in 2015 when he survived a shark attack-captured on live television-during the J-Bay Open in Jeffreys Bay, South Africa. It was a tumultuous year for Fanning, who also had to deal with his brother's death and a marriage break-up, and he competed sporadically in 2016. Fanning said last month he still loved surfing but needed a "fresh challenge". "I still love the game but can't find the motivation and dedication required to compete for world titles anymore. I'm just not enjoying it as much as I was in the past," he wrote on Instagram. —AFP

## Sports

# Cash-rich IPL gambles on return to 'spirit of cricket'

## The desire to avoid further controversy is clear

**NEW DELHI:** The billionaire Indian Premier League starts tomorrow aiming to prove that it is about the "spirit of cricket" rather than success at all costs, after the banning of Steve Smith and David Warner over a Test cheating storm. The lucrative but scandal-tainted Twenty20 tournament has spent the last few years battling its own series of controversies.

So when news broke that Smith and Warner—who had both been due to captain IPL teams—had been barred by Cricket Australia for 12 months over last month's ball-tampering row in South Africa, India's cricket board quickly followed

suit. With Smith's side, the Rajasthan Royals, returning from a two-year corruption ban, they could not afford to have kept their disgraced skipper.

Along with the Chennai Super Kings, the Royals are one of two franchises back in the Indian league this season after a two-year hiatus for separate illegal betting scandals. Meanwhile IPL founder Lalit Modi remains in self-imposed exile in Britain, refusing to return to India to face corruption charges. For the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI), which earns huge sums from the lucrative Twenty20 tournament, the desire to avoid further controversy is clear.

"The BCCI hopes that the cricketers participating in the IPL hold the highest regard for the spirit of cricket and code of conduct for players and match officials," it said at the height of the Australia cheating storm. Warner-

charged with masterminding the Cape Town ball-tampering plot—has also been dropped from his IPL team, the Sunrisers Hyderabad.

### 'Gentleman's game'

Rising Indian stars have been made well aware of the need to redeem cricket's image in its stronghold country. "There is always a lot to

learn from everything, but I always believe that cricket is a gentleman's game," Delhi Daredevils wicket-keeper-batsman Rishabh Pant said this week when asked about the Australia scandal. "The sport should be played in the

“ Cricket is a gentleman's game ”

same spirit.”

Despite the troubles, the IPL's appeal is on the rise. Rupert Murdoch's Star India signed a five-year \$2.55 billion broadcast deal for IPL rights last year that gave a new boost to the coffers of the world's wealthiest cricket board. And the pyrotechnics, cheerleaders and huge pay cheques have still attracted top foreign stars to play in India's sweltering heat. "The IPL towers over everything in cricket, and among cricketers, although that is not all that matters," noted Australian writer Gideon Haigh. "India also has a sharp appetite for national success and prestige, which IPL also gratifies, but on its own cannot meet. "This will continue to underpin support for and engagement with Virat Kohli's team," he said.

### 'One man's loss'

The player auction held ahead of the new

Cricket Australia whether they accepted their punishment or would opt for a hearing, as is their right.

"I have today let Cricket Australia know that I fully accept the sanctions imposed on me," Warner said on Twitter. "I am truly sorry for my actions and will now do everything I can to be a better person, teammate and role model." CA chief executive James Sutherland said late Thursday the bans were "significant penalties" that were "not imposed lightly". "The events of Cape Town have severely affected the game," he added. "We know the players will return to playing the game they love, and in doing so, we hope they rebuild their careers and regain the trust of fans."

Like Smith and Bancroft, Warner had held a tearful press conference on his return to Australia last week to accept responsibility for his part in the scandal that also saw coach Darren Lehmann quit. But he pointedly evaded questions about whether the ball-tampering plot was his idea, whether it was the first time, who



HYDERABAD: Sunrisers Hyderabad cricket team head coach Tom Moody (C), team mentor VVS Laxman and bowling coach Muttiah Muralitharan (R) take part in a promotional event in Hyderabad on April 5, 2018, before the start of the 2018 Indian Premier League cricket tournament. —AFP

season was another show of India's riches. England all-rounder Ben Stokes will again be the player to watch after being bought by the Royals for \$1.96 million in the January sale. New Zealand's Kane Williamson will be in the spotlight after being appointed Hyderabad's captain. Warner led the side to the IPL title in 2016.

Williamson is now the only foreign captain in the eight-team league once dominated by imports. Test player-turned-commentator Aakash Chopra believes the tournament will not lose its sheen despite losing two top per-

formers. He insists that new stars will rise. "The IPL is a fantastic tournament, everybody forgets. You only focus on who is there. The charm will remain. Life goes on, cricket carries on. One man's loss is another man's opportunity," said Chopra. The Mahendra Singh Dhoni-led Super Kings will open the tournament, with its \$8 million in prize money, against holders the Mumbai Indians at the Wankhede Stadium on Saturday night. The eight team tournament runs through to May 27 when the battle for the four million dollar first prize will be held in Mumbai. — AFP

## Warner joins teammates in accepting ban

**SYDNEY:** Former Australia cricket vice-captain David Warner yesterday said he will not be challenging his 12-month ban for ball-tampering and would strive to be a better teammate and role model. His decision, just hours before a deadline, followed a contrite Steve Smith and Cameron Bancroft also accepting their sanctions on Wednesday.

Warner and Smith were last week suspended from international and domestic cricket for a year, while opening batsman Bancroft was exiled for nine months over the incident during the third Test in South Africa that shocked the sport. The trio had until late Thursday to tell

else was aware of it and whether he had been made a scapegoat. He had not commented further since taking to social media a day later to confirm he was seeking advice on whether to challenge the ban.

Warner, 31, is seen as having the most at stake, admitting he was "resigned to the fact" he may never play for Australia again after being identified as the mastermind of the plan to use sandpaper to scratch the surface of the ball. Smith was charged with knowledge of the potential ball-altering plot, but Warner was charged with developing it and instructing Bancroft to carry it out. Since the scandal erupted, Warner and Smith have both lost a lucrative Indian Premier League contract and been dumped by sponsors.

The Australian Cricketers' Association on Tuesday called for the bans to be reduced, arguing the punishment was disproportionate to previous ball-tampering cases. ACA president Greg Dyer also said the contrition expressed by players had been "extraordinary" and should be



SYDNEY: Australian cricketer David Warner speaks at a press conference at the Sydney Cricket Ground (SCG). —AFP

taken into account, urging a relaxation to allow the men to return to domestic action sooner. With the World Cup and an Ashes series in 2019, supporters of the players believe they need to be playing state cricket to be in the type of form that could warrant selection. — AFP

## Sports



# Record-breaking Aussies make waves in the pool

## They posted a blistering three minutes 30.05 seconds

**GOLD COAST:** Australia shattered the women's 4x100 meters freestyle world record for their second gold medal on the opening night's finals at the Gold Coast Commonwealth Games yesterday. The team of Shayna Jack, Bronte Campbell, Emma McKeon and Cate Campbell went 0.60 seconds under Australia's previous world record set at the 2016 Rio Olympics.

They posted a blistering three minutes 30.05 seconds with Cate Campbell bringing home the world record with a flying final leg of 51.00secs. Australia beat home Canada and England for their second gold medal of the opening night after Olympic champion Mack Horton claimed the 400m freestyle final earlier in the program.

Horton became Australia's first 400 meters freestyle winner at the Commonwealth Games since the great Ian Thorpe with his victory. Horton swam a perfectly judged race to reel in team-mate Jack McLoughlin and England's James Guy to win gold in three minutes 43.76 seconds. Horton tracked the leading duo in the first half of the race before making his charge in the final 150m. Horton, who upset Chinese defending champion Sun Yang to snatch gold at Rio two years ago, joined five-time Olympic champion Thorpe, who was the last Australian man to win the 400m free in Manchester in 2002. Fittingly, Thorpe presented Horton with his gold medal at the podium presentation.

"It's really about swimming to win. It was a good race with James—he's always out quick,"

Horton said. "I knew I had to mow him that last 200. I was still a bit soft and slow in that first 200. "It's good. Just swimming in front of the home crowd is unreal. I probably feel more emotion here than in Rio (2016 Olympic Games) because the whole crowd is cheering for you. "That didn't happen so much in Rio. Ten thousand people cheering for you is pretty unreal." It was Horton's third career Commonwealth Games medal after winning 4x200m freestyle gold and 1,500m freestyle silver in Glasgow in 2014.

### 'Second every time'

England also claimed two gold medals on the opening night with Aimee Wilmott denying Hannah Miley's bid for a Scottish record three consecutive 400m individual medley gold medals and James Wilby dethroning Scottish defending champion Ross Murdoch in the 200m breaststroke. Wilmott, beaten by Miley in the 2014 Glasgow final, fought back tenaciously in the final freestyle leg to pip the Scot by 0.26secs with Australia's Blair Evans third.

"I've been second almost every single time," Wilmott said. "I've raced against Hannah in every meet and I've been second every time. I knew that this time it could have been me if I just swam the race a little bit better." Miley was 0.03secs ahead heading into the final leg but Wilmott finished strongly for the gold medal. Miley, 28, was bidding to become the first Scot to claim three consecutive golds in the same



**GOLD COAST:** Australia's team, Cate Campbell, Emma McKeon, Bronte Campbell and Shayna Jack pose with their medals after winning the swimming women's 4x100m freestyle relay final during the 2018 Gold Coast Commonwealth Games at the Optus Aquatic Centre. —AFP

event at the Commonwealth Games after winning gold at Delhi 2010 and Glasgow 2014.

Wilby came with a late rush to tip out Murdoch in the 200m breaststroke final by 0.27secs in 2:08.05 with Australian Matt Wilson third. Canada's Taylor Ruck upset the fancied Australians Ariarne Titmus and defending champion Emma McKeon to win the 200m freestyle gold.

Ruck set a new Games record of 1:54.81 to deny the fast-closing Titmus by just four-hundredths of a second in a desperate finish, with McKeon taking bronze. The 17-year-old Titmus is the rising star of Australian swimming after becoming the first Australian woman in 14 years to complete the 200m/400m/800m freestyle treble at the selection trials last month. —AFP

## 3 golds, a record and a mullet for Aussie cyclists

**BRISBANE:** Australia went some way towards easing the pain of Rio 2016 as the Commonwealth Games hosts sealed a hat-trick of track cycling golds yesterday, demolishing a world record along the way. Roared on by a capacity crowd at the Anna Meares Velodrome in Brisbane, the Australians romped home against old rivals England in the men's 4,000m team pursuit in a record 3mins 49.804sec, beating the 3:50.265 set by Britain at Rio.

The Australians also triumphed in the women's team pursuit and women's team sprint—each time over New Zealand—to carry home three of the four golds up for grabs on the first day of track cycling action. The men's team sprint title went to New Zealand with England again pipped into silver. All the medals were shared between Australia, New Zealand, England and Canada, but it was the home nation



**BRISBANE:** The Australia team competes in the men's 4000m team pursuit finals track cycling event during the 2018 Gold Coast Commonwealth Games at the Anna Meares Velodrome. —AFP

who excelled.

In front of the watching Camilla, wife of Britain's Prince Charles, it was a measure of redemption for the under-pressure home racers. The Australian cycling team went to the Olympics two years ago aiming to win at least three golds, but they returned home with none and instead it was Britain who dominated on that occasion. Alex Porter was part of the record-setting Australian men's team, the first in history to go under 3mins 50sec in the team pursuit. "I'm ecstatic, I'm still lost for words and I think it will take a while

to sink in," said Porter, proudly sporting a 1980s-style blonde mullet. "When we crossed the line I felt relief and we were ecstatic to see that we'd broken the world record." On his eye-catching if outdated hairstyle, Porter said: "It was a deal with my brother to grow a mullet a few months ago. What is more Aussie than a mullet?"

Team-mate Sam Welsford said that to go below 3:50 was "unreal". "I'm over the moon with excitement. We're in our home country—that is what dreams are made of. This is what we strive for every day." —AFP

## Tongan braves sharks to swim at Gold Coast

**GOLD COAST:** A Tongan swimmer who trains in shark-infested waters to represent his country at the Commonwealth Games struck a blow for the sport's minnows with a brave effort yesterday. As superstars Mack Horton and Chad le Clos soaked up the adulation of the Gold Coast crowd, 17-year-old Finau Ohuafi's fourth place in his 50 meters butterfly heat went completely unnoticed. But the teenager's brave performance was all the more remarkable given the parlous state of swimming in Tonga.

"I'm not used to swimming in pools," Ohuafi said after finishing 50th of 54 — more than four seconds behind le Clos over one lap. "We don't have pools in Tonga. There is a 25m pool at a hotel where we go to train, but we swim in the sea. It's difficult because you don't have starting blocks." Ohuafi, who chose swimming over rugby when he was 11, revealed that he has been spooked by sharks off the Pacific island when he trains.

"For me it's nice to swim in the sea but one time me and my cousin were training we saw a shark," he said after making his Commonwealth Games debut. "We had just done our warm-up and my cousin tapped me on the leg to warn me. I looked down and saw it." —AFP

# Wings for Life World Run returns to battle spinal cord injury

## Run for Those Who Can't at Boulevard on May 6



**KUWAIT:** At 2 pm on May 6, 2018, tens of thousands across the globe will run, roll, and walk in the Wings for Life World Run. The charity run has one goal: to raise funds for Wings for Life, a foundation that supports the most promising spinal cord research projects in the world, all asking different questions to find a cure. You can join the Wings for Life World Run yourself by downloading the app or visiting [www.wingsforlifeworldrun.com](http://www.wingsforlifeworldrun.com). It has been five years since the Wings for Life World Run charity event started the world running as one. Every year, it has grown bigger, better and smilier as hundreds of thousands of runners and wheelchair participants start running from the Catcher Car at the same time – 2pm Kuwait time – over the world, alone with the app or together in events.

In those five years, the event has blossomed into a global movement with die-hard fans running year after year. It has grown and developed as a race and as a community. As a charity event, it has raised millions for the Wings for Life Foundation to fund research into a cure for spinal cord injury.

Because that is what it is all about – running for those who can't; running for people with spinal cord injury, whose lives changed in a heartbeat from a slip, trip or everyday accident.

Day and night, spring and autumn, on May 6, 2018, Wings for Life World Run participants will once again walk, run and roll to stay ahead of the Catcher Cars for as long as they can. They dive into the fun of the race, enjoying the sense of togetherness and the rush of excitement as either the real Catcher Car in the events or a virtual Catcher Car in the App approaches from behind, pushing each person to keep going and feel the pride of finishing.

As ever, the 2018 Wings for Life World Run promises a wonderful atmosphere. The Catcher Cars – some driven by celebrities – will chase participants in the event locations until they pass them and end their race. The 2018 edition also sees the growth of the Organized App Runs, so people can run their own track alone, create or join a local community to share in the joy and spirit of the day, or explore the world and be a part of an Organized App Run somewhere they have always wanted to visit. This is a race for everyone – no experience required, but having fun is a must.

The Wings for Life World Run encourages everyone of all



abilities to join the race – from absolute beginners to international athletes. The real and the virtual Catcher Car makes everyone's race personal, means everyone finishes and everyone is part of a global running movement that focuses on the

power of good, with 100% of registration fees and donations going directly to spinal cord research.

Sign up for the Kuwait organized app run by downloading the app or visiting [www.wingsforlifeworldrun.com](http://www.wingsforlifeworldrun.com)

## Sports

# Liverpool's European DNA shows itself in atmosphere of Anfield

## It transforms into a swirling cauldron of noise

**LIVERPOOL:** There is something special about Liverpool's Anfield on European nights as it transforms into a swirling cauldron of noise capable of inspiring its hosts and intimidating their foes as Manchester City discovered on Wednesday. Big games create big atmospheres, but the noise level inside the stadium for Liverpool's 3-0 victory in the Champions League quarter-final, first leg was noticeably louder than for the January league clash between the two clubs. Anfield can disappoint the tourist visiting for a domestic league game. Once the ritual, communal singing of 'You'll Never Walk Alone' is done, the passion seems to dissipate. But that certainly was not the case on Wednesday.

European success is in Liverpool's DNA and their supporters feel it. A banner in the Kop end reminded everyone of the five European titles won by the club - from 1977's first triumph, in Rome against Borussia Moenchengladbach to the extraordinary comeback in the 2005 final against AC Milan in Istanbul. It is an unequalled pedigree for an English club and one which Manchester City, whose sole continental success

came in the 1970 European Cup Winners' Cup, can only hope of one day matching.

City manager Pep Guardiola often talks of the qualities that the big, experienced clubs in Europe, like his old side Barcelona and their rivals Real Madrid, are able to produce in the Champions League. Coping with the big occasion and hostile environments is certainly one of them. On Wednesday, City looked rattled, however much they may protest to the contrary, not only by the early goals they conceded but by the febrile atmosphere before the game, inside and outside the stadium. City's team bus was met by hundreds of home fans who had lined the narrow streets at the entrance to Anfield and objects, including bottles and cans, were thrown at the vehicle carrying the players. Liverpool apologized for the incident, which is sure to be investigated by European football's governing body UEFA.

### Big games create big atmospheres



### Passion and hostility

City manager Guardiola, while critical of the incident, did not use it as an excuse for his players, who made such a poor start to the game, and



**LIVERPOOL:** Liverpool supporters cheer during the UEFA Champions League first leg quarter-final football match between Liverpool and Manchester City, at Anfield stadium. — AFP

midfielder Kevin De Bruyne dismissed the idea that it had an impact on their performance. "No, it doesn't change anything. As long as you keep the violence down there's nothing wrong with it," De Bruyne said.

That incident was unsavory, but the atmos-

phere inside the stadium was the right kind of passion and hostility. It is hard to believe that the sheer noise levels, from all four corners of the ground, did not impact on the City players as they struggled to cope with the swarming and pressing of Juergen Klopp's side. — Reuters

## Police probes City bus attack

**LIVERPOOL:** British police have launched an investigation to identify those responsible for an attack on Manchester City's team bus before their Champions League quarter-final against Liverpool at Anfield. Missiles were thrown at the vehicle as it arrived at the stadium on Wednesday ahead of the first leg at Anfield, which Liverpool won 3-0.

Manchester City coach Manel Estiarte posted footage of the attack on Instagram. The sound of objects striking the vehicle can be heard in the video, filmed from inside the bus as it drives slowly towards the stadium. His post is accompanied by the comments: "No words. Unacceptable." Match commander superintendent Paul White said police were aware of the damage caused to the Manchester City bus.

"Thankfully, no one on the bus was injured, but injuries were caused to two of our officers when projectiles were thrown towards the bus," he said. "The officers and stewards are there to protect the public and keep them safe. "This behavior by a number of people who threw bottles, cans and pyrotechnics towards the bus is completely unacceptable and we will conduct enquiries to identify who was responsible and bring them to justice. "We worked very closely with both clubs to ensure the safety of the public and the teams themselves, and it is disappointing to see that a number of people behaved in this appalling way." — AFP

## City's season bruised after Champs League thumping

**LIVERPOOL:** Manchester City could already be crowned Premier League champions by the time they host Liverpool for the second leg of their Champions League quarter-final but they risk an anti-climactic end to a memorable season. Even the most comprehensive of title triumphs may fail to mask the crushing disappointment of an exit from the Champions League, which looks probable after a 3-0 first leg defeat at a frenzied Anfield on Wednesday.

A three-time Champions League winner as a player and coach, Guardiola has taken the best part of two years and £500 million (\$700 million) in transfer fees to mould City in his image, but his quest to turn the club into a European power-at least this season-was likely rendered futile by 19 mad minutes. Mohamed Salah, Alex Oxlade-Chamberlain and Sadio Mane struck in quick succession in the first half as Liverpool rode a wave of emotion at their historic ground in their first Champions League quarter-final for nine years.

Oliver Kay, the chief football correspondent for The Times newspaper, said City's problems against Liverpool should not detract from a remarkable season. "None of this is to diminish the plaudits that Guardiola and his players have received for their form in the Premier League, which, by any measure, aesthetic or statistical, has been extraordinary," he wrote. "Yet the manner in which they were laid bare will haunt Guardiola all summer unless



**LIVERPOOL:** Manchester City's Spanish manager Pep Guardiola looks on before during the UEFA Champions League first leg quarter-final football match between Liverpool and Manchester City. — AFP

they can recover in the second leg of this tie in Manchester on Tuesday," he added. "This was not meant to happen-not at this stage of City's evolution."

### Bus attack

The Premier League leaders, who can sew up the title if they beat Manchester United at home on Saturday, knew what they were up against from the moment they approached the stadium in Liverpool, with their bus battered by cans and bottles in unsavory scenes. Guardiola said that experience had not unsettled his side, and the opening 10 minutes were testament to that as City stroked the ball around calmly in a manner they have become accustomed to this season. — AFP

## Sports

# Barca eyes Liga record of 38 games without defeat

## Can match Sociedad's 38-year-old unbeaten run

**BARCELONA:** Barcelona coach Ernesto Valverde will target a record-equaling 38th straight game without defeat when his side host Leganes tomorrow, a Liga milestone which former bosses Johan Cruyff, Pep Guardiola and Luis Enrique were incapable of achieving. The runaway leaders have not lost in the league since going down 2-0 at Malaga on April 8, 2017 and can match Real Sociedad's 38-year-old unbeaten run against Leganes, who are 14th in the standings with their top-flight status virtually guaranteed.

Barca have a nine-point lead over nearest challengers Atletico Madrid at the top of the standings and could further widen that gap by the end of the week-end, with Atletico facing a grueling derby away to champions Real Madrid on Sunday. The

Catalans looked destined to fall painfully short of the record, which has stood since 1980, when they were two goals down with two minutes left at Sevilla last week but quick-fire strikes from Luis Suarez and Lionel Messi sealed a 2-2 draw.

That late fight back was the eighth time this season they had come back from a losing position in the league to either win or draw and was

the latest demonstration of the inner steel that has underpinned Valverde's debut campaign in charge. Barca are also unbeaten in the Champions League this campaign and took a giant stride towards the semi-finals of the competition by beating AS Roma 4-1 on Wednesday, staying on course for a treble.

### An emphatic win

The Catalans were not at their best against Roma and benefited from two own goals, yet the fact they were able to record such an emphatic win without hitting top gear was another sign of how robust they have become under Valverde. "All I care about is that the team keeps on winning," said midfielder Ivan Rakitic following the victory over Roma. "We are still winning and we

are growing in every game. Right now we are at the most exciting stage of the season but also the toughest part."

With eight games remaining and no away trips against top-eight opposition left, Barca are also strongly-placed to become the first team in the history of La Liga to finish a season without tasting defeat. They do, however, still have to



**BARCELONA:** Puppets depicting (L-R) Barcelona's Uruguayan forward Luis Suarez, Barcelona's Spanish defender Gerard Pique, Barcelona's Argentinian forward Lionel Messi and Barcelona's Spanish midfielder Andres Iniesta holding yellow balloons are pictured during the UEFA Champions League quarter-final first leg. — AFP

play at home to champions Real Madrid and fourth-placed Valencia. Real Sociedad narrowly missed out on going a whole Liga campaign unbeaten in 1980, losing their penultimate game of

the season to Sevilla, which ended a 38-game unbeaten spell across two campaigns and also saw them surrender the league title to Real Madrid. — Reuters



### Staying on course for a treble

## Kyokushin Karate Championship to kick off at Kuwait Sports club

By Abdellatif Sharaa

**KUWAIT:** The 2nd All-Asia Weight Category Kyokushin Karate Championship (IKO), will kick off at 4 pm today at Kuwait Sports Club Hall, under the patronage of Director General of Public Authority for Sports Dr Humoud Fulaiteh and in the presence of Director of Sports Hamid Al-Hazim, Director of Sports Union and Committees Khalifa Al-Tarawah, President of Kuwait Sports Club Abdelaziz Al-Marzouq, his Deputy Khalid Al-Ghanim, Secretary General of Karate Federation Emad Behbehani, President of the Asian Federation Peter Chong, Secretary General of International Kyokushin Organization (IKO) Katsuhito Gorai along with ambassadors of participating countries and other officials.



**Kuwait National Team**

Chairman of the Higher Organizing Committee Khalid Al-Munaye said his staff was ready to start the competition adding that the technical meeting will be held in the morning in the presence of heads of delegations. He said that this is the strongest amongst all the other Asian competitions for qualification purposes to the world championship set to be held in Nov 2019 in Tokyo. The winner will directly qualify to the Tokyo 2020

Olympics. Saudi Arabia, Singapore, Bangladeshi, Pakistan, Malaysia, Iran and the host country Kuwait have all send their most talented participants. Kuwait will be represented by Omar Al-Duaij in the under 70kg, Abdallah Behzad and Ahmad Haider in the under 90kg, Ahmad Abdelsamad Ali, Salah Behzad and Mohammad Al-Saleh in the open above 90kg. The doors will be opened for the public at 3 pm.

## Miracle man Woods seeks Masters magic

**AUGUSTA:** Tiger Woods faced the acid test of Augusta National yesterday, teeing it up in the 82nd Masters in search of his first major title in a decade. The 42-year-old, who calls himself a walking miracle less than 12 months after spinal fusion surgery, has astonished in his latest return from injury, a pair of top-five finishes on the PGA Tour fueling expectations that he can resume his pursuit of Jack Nicklaus's all-time record of 18 major wins.

Six-time champion Nicklaus and three-time winner Gary Player fired the ceremonial opening shots Thursday to get the first major of 2018 underway. In bright sunshine and chilly temperatures, Austin Cook nabbed the first birdie of the tournament. Woods, making his first major start since missing the cut at the 2015 PGA Championship, was due to tee off at 10:42 a.m. (1442 GMT) alongside Australian Marc Leishman and England's Tommy Fleetwood.

While Tiger has drawn the lion's share of attention this week, his comeback bid is just one of the compelling stories in what's shaping up to be a classic Masters. Phil Mickelson, 47, has his sights set on a fourth green jacket after notching his first win in five years at the WGC Mexico Championship. Northern Ireland's Rory McIlroy seeks to complete a career Grand Slam after a sensational final-round 64 carried him to victory at Bay Hill. — AFP

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KOLKATA: The Indian Premier League (IPL) Twenty20 cricket tournament trophy is pictured during a press conference ahead of the start of the tournament. — AFP

## Cash-rich IPL gambles on return to 'spirit of cricket'