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# Kuwait rejects breach of laws, but ready to work with Manila

## Duterte says Kuwait work ban for Filipinos ‘permanent’

**KUWAIT/MANILA:** Kuwait rejects any breach against its sovereignty or laws and will act decisively against any relevant attempt, Deputy Foreign Minister Khaled Al-Jarallah affirmed yesterday in reference to a diplomatic row with Manila. Jarallah, reacting to remarks by Philippine President Rodrigo Duterte yesterday, said Kuwait was ready to cooperate with Manila to explore all means to address labor issues, including 800 Filipino citizens who are currently in shelters.

Duterte yesterday said the temporary ban on Filipinos going to work in Kuwait is now permanent, intensifying the diplomatic stand-off over the treatment of migrant workers in the state. Duterte in February prohibited workers heading to Kuwait following the mur-

der of a Filipina maid whose body was found stuffed in her employer's freezer. The resulting row deepened after Kuwaiti authorities last week ordered Manila's envoy to leave the country over videos of Philippine embassy staff helping workers in Kuwait flee allegedly abusive employers.

The two nations had been negotiating a labor deal that Philippine officials said could result in the lifting of the temporary ban but the recent escalation in tensions has put an agreement in doubt. "The ban stays permanently. There will be no more recruitment for especially domestic helpers. No more," Duterte told reporters in his hometown in the southern city of Davao.

Speaking after a meeting held by Kuwaiti

authorities yesterday regarding the row, Jarallah said Kuwait is keen on maintaining the safety and rights of all expatriates including the Filipino community within the labor laws of the country, which have been praised by international human rights agencies. He appreciated the contributions of Filipinos, who are working in different sectors.

Jarallah said Kuwait shared Duterte's desire to maintain deeply-rooted relations, citing Manila's support of Kuwait during the 1990-91 Iraqi invasion. He said "the historic friendship" between the two countries "could help overcome this exceptional circumstance". Jarallah said Kuwait was looking forward to working with the Philippines to honoring mutual interest.

Around 262,000 Filipinos work in Kuwait, nearly 60 percent of them domestic workers, according to the Philippines' foreign ministry. Last week the Philippines apologized over the rescue videos but Kuwaiti officials announced they were expelling Manila's ambassador and recalling their own envoy from the Southeast Asian nation. Kuwait also detained four Filipinos hired by the Philippine embassy and issued arrest warrants against three diplomatic personnel, Manila said.

The Philippines' ambassador Renato Pedro Villa told AFP on Saturday he will leave Kuwait on Wednesday, adding that he refused to comply with Kuwaiti demands for the names of staffers suspected of being involved

Continued on Page 11



Khaled Al-Jarallah

## Pompeo talks tough on Iran, urges Gulf unity

**TEL AVIV:** US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo lashed out at Iran during a rapid tour of Middle East allies yesterday ahead of a crucial White House decision on whether to quit the nuclear deal with Tehran. After setting off on his first diplomatic trip only hours after being sworn in, Pompeo met with Saudi and Israeli leaders yesterday, two countries with especially close strategic bonds with the United States.

Both also have a common enemy in Iran, and Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has repeatedly called for the nuclear deal to either be altered or scrapped, though most world powers see it as key to preventing Tehran from

obtaining atomic weapons. "Iran's ambition to dominate the Middle East remains," Pompeo said while standing next to Netanyahu after their two-hour meeting at defense headquarters in Tel Aviv. He reiterated that US President Donald Trump will withdraw from the nuclear deal with Iran "if we can't fix it".

Netanyahu said "Iran is trying to gobble up one country after the other". "Iran must be stopped," the premier said. "Its quest for nuclear bombs must be stopped. Its aggression must be stopped." Both Netanyahu and Saudi leaders appeared delighted that Pompeo, like US President Donald Trump, included their countries on his first foreign trip since taking office. The former CIA chief and congressman showed similar affection, telling Netanyahu that he was an "incredibly important partner, occupy a special place in my heart too".

Pompeo met earlier yesterday with Saudi King Salman in Riyadh, after dinner on Saturday with Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman. He later flew to Jordan, wrapping up a

weekend of talks with some of Iran's most fervent foes in the region. Pompeo accused Iran of destabilizing the Middle East, including through its support for Syria's President Bashar Al-Assad and for Shiite rebels in Yemen.

"(Iran) supports proxy militias and terrorist groups. It is an arms dealer to the Houthi rebels in Yemen and Iran conducts cyber-hacking campaigns. And it supports the murderous Assad regime," he said at a joint press conference with Saudi Foreign Minister Adel Al-Jubeir. "Unlike the prior administration we will not neglect the vast scope of Iran's terrorism. Gulf unity is necessary and we need to achieve it."

Iran's President Hassan Rouhani said the nuclear deal was "not negotiable". "The nuclear deal or any other subject under its pretext is not negotiable in any way," he told his French counterpart Emmanuel Macron in a phone call, quoted by the presidency website. "Iran will not accept any restrictions beyond its commitments."

Continued on Page 11



RIYADH: Saudi King Salman (right) shakes hands with US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo as he receives him in the capital yesterday. — AFP

## Qatar to scrap exit system for workers



DOHA: Qatari minister Issa Al-Nuaimi cuts a ribbon with ILO's Moussa Oumarou to inaugurate the ILO Qatar project office yesterday. — AFP

**DOHA:** Qatar could agree a deal within a fortnight to abolish its controversial exit visa system which requires workers to obtain their employers' permission to leave the country, labor experts said yesterday. The possibility of a landmark deal came as the International Labor Organization (ILO) opened an office in Doha, part of an agreement under which the United Nations agency will oversee wholesale labor reform by the 2022 World Cup host. "We are looking now about the final details of the exit visa, we expect a deal within the next two weeks," said Sharan Burrow, general secretary of the International Trade Union Confederation and a once-vocal critic of Qatar's labor laws.

Other sources with knowledge of negotiations on the issue confirmed a deal was expected to be announced soon. The exit visa system has long been savaged by critics of Qatar's labor practices as a prime example of the Gulf state's exploitation of its vast migrant workforce, which numbers some two million. Qatar has come under intense international pressure and scrutiny since it won the right to host the World Cup, for which it has said it is spending \$500 million a week on major infrastructure projects.

Labor Minister Issa Saad Al-Jafali Al-Nuaimi, who cut a ribbon at the opening of the ILO office, said the inauguration was "another step towards

Continued on Page 11

## King launches construction of Saudi mega-park

**RIYADH:** Saudi Arabia's King Salman has launched construction of an "entertainment city" near Riyadh, part of a series of multi-billion dollar projects aimed at helping the oil-dependent kingdom diversify its economy. The project is part of a sweeping reform and investment program dubbed "Vision 2030", the brainchild of Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman, who also attended the launch ceremony at the site on Saturday evening.

Authorities have touted the 334-sq km project in Qiddiya, southwest of the capital, as the kingdom's answer to Disneyland. Its first phase, which includes high-end theme parks, motor sport facilities and a safari area, is expected to be completed in 2022, officials say. They hope the park will draw in foreign investment and attract 17 million visitors by 2030. The kingdom this month hosted its first public film screening in over 35

Continued on Page 11



RIYADH: Saudi King Salman (center) and his son Crown Prince Mohammed (right) stand behind the logo of Qiddiya, an "entertainment city", during a groundbreaking ceremony on Saturday. — AFP

## Saudis embrace Americana at Royal Rumble

**DUBAI:** Saudi Arabia embraced 'trashy' Americana over the weekend, hosting a WWE Royal Rumble event for which a video clip of scantily clad female wrestlers drew euphoric cheers from men and women alike. The promotional video elicited a quick mea culpa from the governmental organizers in the Muslim kingdom with conservative mores. "We apologize to the viewers and attendees who watched the WWE event held in Jeddah yesterday, for the clips aired of women dressed indecently," the kingdom's General Sports Authority said in a statement Saturday. Such images, it said, were "banned" and would remain so.

That didn't stop Saudi attendees from

posting videos of the uncensored moment on social media. In a video posted on Instagram, a jumbo-tron in Jeddah lit up with the WWE's latest promo video, which was also shown on big screens at the event itself, in which female wrestlers did not actually take part. "We're not afraid of dreamin' big, we're not afraid to bring the fight. Wanted the best of both worlds, and it starts here tonight," belted out female wrestling stars - washboard abs and cleavage on display, alongside their tattooed male counterparts.

A mixed-gender audience is still a novelty in the land of Islam's holiest sites. But World Wrestling Entertainment (WWE) enjoys a cult-like following across the Middle East. Stars like John Cena are household names and he got a warm reception on Friday night in Jeddah. Euphoric cheers from men and women could be heard throughout the event.

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JEDDAH: John Cena (right) competes with Triple H during the World Wrestling Entertainment (WWE) Greatest Royal Rumble event in this Saudi coastal city on April 27, 2018. — AFP



# Amir meets with the Chinese President's special representative

## Sheikh Sabah condemns ballistic missiles attack on Saudi Arabia



KUWAIT: His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah meets with the Chinese President Xi Jinping's special representative Yang Jiechi. — KUNA photos



His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah meets with Speaker of the National Assembly Marzouq Ali Al-Ghanem.



His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah meets with His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-Hamad Al-Sabah.

KUWAIT: His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah received yesterday at Seif Palace Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah, and the Chinese President Xi Jinping's special representative, member of the political office of the central committee of Communist Party of China and director of the central foreign affairs commission office Yang Jiechi, and his accompanying delegation. The meeting was attended by the Minister of Amiri Diwan Affairs Sheikh Ali Jarrah Al-Sabah.

Earlier yesterday, His Highness the Amir received Speaker of the National Assembly Marzouq Ali Al-Ghanem, His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-Hamad Al-Sabah and First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Defense Sheikh Nasser Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah.

In other news, His Highness the Amir strongly condemned an attack from Yemen in

which four ballistic missiles were fired against the Saudi city of Jazan, but were intercepted and destroyed by the Saudi forces. His Highness the Amir, in a cable to Saudi King



### Amir condoles Guatemala over ex-president's demise

Salman bin Abdulaziz, said this "systematic hostile act" aimed at undermining security and safety of Saudi Arabia and people living in the Kingdom.

This attack, asserted His Highness the Amir,

violated international values and principles. He reiterated Kuwait firm support to Saudi Arabia's measures to preserve the country's security and stability. His Highness the Amir prayed to Allah the Almighty to bestow his protection upon Saudi Arabia and its people. His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah sent a cable to King Salman to express his condemnation of the four ballistic missiles' attack against Jazan. His Highness the Prime Minister sent a similar cable, while Ghanem sent a cable to Saudi Shura Council president Dr Abdullah Al Al-Sheikh Saturday to condemn the attack.

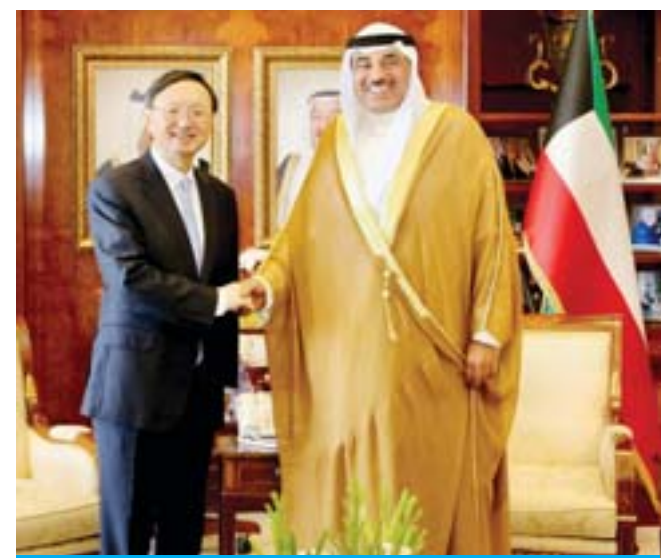
Separately, His Highness the Amir sent a cable of condolences to President of Guatemala Jimmy Morales on demise of the former president of the republic, Alvaro Arzu. His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah and His Highness the Prime Minister sent similar cables to President Morales. — KUNA



His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah meets with First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Defense Sheikh Nasser Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah.

## Foreign Minister, Chinese official push for closer ties

KUWAIT: Kuwait's Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah held talks yesterday with Chinese President Xi Jinping's special representative Yang Jiechi, focusing on developing bilateral relations. The discussions between the Chinese official, who is on an official visit to the country, and the Kuwaiti foreign minister also included issues of mutual concern and the latest political happenings around the world. Meanwhile, Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled went on to host a luncheon in honor of the Chinese official and the delegation accompanying him. The encounter was attended by a bevy of Kuwaiti diplomats and senior foreign ministry officials. — KUNA



KUWAIT: Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah meets with Chinese President Xi Jinping's special representative Yang Jiechi. — KUNA

## CBK organizes open day at Magic Planet

KUWAIT: The Commercial Bank of Kuwait (CBK) announced organizing an open day for My First Account's customers at Magic Planet at the Avenues on Saturday May 5, 2018 from 11 am to 4 pm. This open day comes as part of the events and activities the bank frequently arranges for My First Account's customers, and which suit their ages and aim at enhancing communication at all times between this customer segment and the bank.

Magic Planet is one of the largest indoor kids oriented entertainment centers in Kuwait and has

branches across the Middle East. It is equipped with several games and offers numerous activities such as climbing, bumping cars, roller coaster and many other electronic games.

As such, CBK's marketing team will be present at Magic Planet to welcome My First Account's customers who in turn should present their MFA cards at the entrance to receive a pre-loaded card to play the games in addition to a discount from McDonalds located inside Magic Planet.

While urging its First Account Customers to visit the Avenues and enjoy this open day diverse activities, CBK emphasizes its continued efforts to arrange such activities for My First Account's customers highlighting the fact that MFA is a saving account especially designated for children aged from 0 to 14 years old. The Account contributes in a perfect way for parents who want to secure a better future for their children and saving money for them from an early age.

## Two Kuwaiti poets top Katara contest

DOHA: Kuwait's Mohammad Al-Harbi and Sultan Al-Ajmi won the first and second positions respectively at the Third Katara Prize for Prophet's Poet Competition on Saturday. In the category of "Al-Nabati" poetry, a variant of classical poetry that is popular in the Arabian Peninsula, Al-Harbi's "Kaabat Al-Ushaq" won the top prize valued at one million Qatari riyals while Al-Ajmi's "Haa Meem" won the QAR 700,000. Qatar's Salem Al-Merri came in the third place, winning QAR 400,000 for his "Mawled El-Noor" (birth of light) poem.

In the classical poetry category Egypt's Mohammad

Ismail was leading with his "Wasaya Al-Nour" (commandments of the light), winning QAR one million. Lebanon's Hassan Al-Askari came in the second place, winning QAR 700,000 for his "Moqtareban min Sidrat Al-Nor;" he was followed by Al-Hassan Al-Ahmadi, of Morocco, who won QAR 400,000 for his "Hadil Lehamam Makkah."

Speaking after winning the top award, Harbi voiced joy for his successful vying against veteran poets from various parts of the Arab world. "It is a great honor for me to win the title of the Prophet's Poet," he said. Commending the objectives of the contest, he said, "the competition comes as a tribute to the noble values of our religion and the tradition of Prophet Mohammad, May Peace Be upon Him." The award ceremony was attended by Director General of Katara Cultural Village Dr Khaled Al-Seleiti who congratulated the six winning poets on their achievements. —KUNA

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## Local

# GCC-Europe committee adopts Kuwaiti proposals

Both sides share the same views on issues discussed



KUWAIT: National Assembly Speaker Marzouq Al-Ghanem meets with members of visiting delegations participating in the meeting of the GCC Parliamentary committee tasked with relations with the European Parliament. — KUNA



Secretary-General of the Kuwaiti National Assembly Ouda Al-Rowaei (right) attends the meeting of the GCC Parliamentary committee tasked with relations with the European Parliament.

KUWAIT: A GCC parliamentary committee charged with the promotion of relations with the European Parliament has adopted three recommendations tabled by the Kuwaiti National Assembly. The proposals, which were granted during the second meeting of the committee held in Kuwait yesterday, include seeking EU support for Arab and Gulf positions against the recent US decision to move its embassy in Israel from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem. The second recommendation is pertinent to the safety of Muslims in Europe amid anti-Muslim rhetoric there.

The third suggestion calls for developing and promoting economic relations and boosting trade exchange between GCC and European countries.

Emerging from the meeting, Secretary-General of the Kuwaiti National Assembly Ouda Al-Rowaei, who headed the meeting, said in a press statement the gathering was "fruitful", noting that both sides shared the same views on issues discussed. The first meeting of the committee was held in Doha in October 2015.

Delegations from parliaments or shura councils from the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries had arrived in Kuwait Saturday to participate in the two-day meeting of GCC Parliamentary committee tasked with relations with the European Parliament. Al-Dustour news network said the delegates came from the United Arab Emirates (UAE), Oman, Qatar and Saudi Arabia. — KUNA

## Saleh discusses bilateral ties with Cairns

KUWAIT: Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of State for Cabinet Affairs Anas Al-Saleh discussed yesterday with the UK Secretary of State for Wales Alun Cairns bilateral relations between the two friendly countries and ways to strengthen them in all domains. During the meeting, Saleh praised the special historical relationship between Kuwait and the UK. — KUNA



KUWAIT: Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of State for Cabinet Affairs Anas Al-Saleh meets with the UK Secretary of State for Wales Alun Cairns. — KUNA

## Economic Council awards KISR

KUWAIT: The Afro-Asian Economic Council (AAEC) has offered its 2030 Sustainable Development Award for Arab government to the Kuwait Institute for Scientific Research (KISR) Arab government, as a representative of Kuwait, AAEC said yesterday.

Kuwait has won the AAEC's prize, organized in New York lately, in the category of ministries, and government institutions and agencies, due to their role for activating frameworks of sustainable development. The win crowns the role of government agencies in the implementation of Arab policies, resolutions, plans and strategies, as well as economic vision

relevant to sustainable development, a statement said.

Deputy head of the AAEC and President of the Prize Essam Abul-Hassan, was quoted as praising the Arab ministries, institutions, agencies, academies, universities and scientific research centers, among them Kuwaiti ones, for activating frameworks of sustainable development. Abul-Hassan called for connecting the Arab academic, scientific and research agencies and government bodies together to provide bases to support development strategies in the region to compete with world economies.

Based on the initiative of the Euro-Arab Environment Organization (EAEO) in Geneva, Switzerland, and a number of businessmen, the AAEC was founded in 2017, as an economic, non-governmental, and independent legal personality council that aims developing the African and Asian investment relations in different economic aspects and activities. — KUNA

## Kuwait reiterates stance on Sahara

KUWAIT: Kuwait yesterday reaffirmed its principled and firm stance on Morocco's territorial integrity and the importance of solving the 'Moroccan Sahara' dispute within the framework of the Kingdom's sovereignty. An official source at the Foreign Ministry said Kuwait's stance

on the issue has remained unchanged and that "Morocco's Sahara" is the term adopted as part of the discourse of Kuwait's foreign policy. The source cited Kuwait's support to the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) Resolution 2414 of last Friday on the issue. — KUNA

## Saudi princess hails Kuwaiti women as unparalleled

KUWAIT: The numerous achievements of Kuwaiti women have not only put them on a pedestal but serve as a precedent for others to follow, said a Saudi princess yesterday. The women of Kuwait have risen to the upper echelons of society, the honorary chairperson of the Jordan-based organization Etaam for Training and Development Princess Deema Al Saud

said. The Saudi princess, who had just participated in a recently-concluded conference over women and social responsibility, explained that the purpose behind the organization is to allow women the chance to translate their thoughts into actual success stories. "We are not asking for gender parity, rather, we are looking for justice and respect," she stressed.

Princess Deema revealed that the organization has partnered with various institutions from across the world to help further its agenda, which, in a nutshell, is to help women get their businesses started. As an advocate of women's rights, the Saudi princess has won numerous accolades, including being named as the British Board's ambassador of noble intentions and peace. — KUNA

## TV, radio should produce quality programs: Minister

KUWAIT: Information Minister Mohammad Al-Jabri said Saturday that the state-run TV and radio should produce and present quality media and cultural programs. TV and radio "are important tools that educate and enlighten ... towards development and progress," Jabri, also Minister of State for Youth, said dur-

ing a meeting with information ministry's executive management to discuss programs for holy month of Ramadan. Jabri also said it was important to maintain decency and social values in all programs. He said all programs should be assessed before broadcast, calling for honoring the taste of the public. — KUNA

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## Local

## Photo of the Day



KUWAIT: A man casts his fishing net at a beach in Kuwait City. —Photo by Yasser Al-Zayyat

# Symposium helps discover disabled people's skills, promote integration

## ‘Move to Improve’ symposium concludes fourth edition



Chairman of the ‘Move to Improve’ symposium’s organizing committee Dr Faisal Al-Mousawi honors members of Kuwait’s wheelchair basketball team.



Participants pose for a group picture.

**KUWAIT:** Chairman of the ‘Move to Improve’ symposium’s organizing committee Dr Faisal Al-Mousawi lauded the success of the fourth edition of the event which was held this past Saturday at Jumeirah hotel. The event took place under the patronage of Information Minister, State Minister for Youth Affairs Mohammad Al-Jabri, who was represented by Mishal Al-Subaie, while Sheikha Sheikhha Al-Abdullah Al-Sabah also attended.

“This gathering is considered one of the largest events held to discover skills of people with disabilities in the Arab world in all fields, including sports, theater, literature, and formative arts, and showcase the skills of

the disabled, particularly those who are socially isolated, so that they can be integrated in the society,” Dr Mousawi said.

He added that the event included practical competitions on stage between healthy and disabled individuals, while members of Kuwait’s wheelchair basketball team were honored for winning the bronze medal in the special Olympics that took place in Abu Dhabi last month.

Dr Mousawi also sent a message to every family of a disabled person, saying that they should be proud and integrate their son into the society. “This this is our goal,” he proclaimed, adding that he is considering forming a union for the disabled under the government’s

care that aims to “bring the abilities of this group together to bring out their skills in all fields.”

Meanwhile, Information Minister Mohammad Al-Jabri said in a speech read by Subaie on his behalf that the ministry is keen on implementing the instructions of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah to provide all support to people with disabilities in order to improve their skills and utilize their abilities in all fields. “These efforts have resulted in them winning several medals in the special Olympics,” he said, adding that the ministry participated for the fourth year in the symposium in order to gather all efforts to serve this segment of the society.



KUWAIT: Chairman of the ‘Move to Improve’ symposium’s organizing committee Dr Faisal Al-Mousawi (right) honors Sheikhha Sheikhha Al-Abdullah Al-Sabah.

## Academy, MGRP hosts gathering with private hospitals

**KUWAIT:** Life Science Academy, in cooperation with the Manpower and Government Restructuring Program (MGRP) held its first open guidance gathering with private hospitals in Kuwait, and people who applied to the Kuwaitization Advancement in Private Healthcare (KAPH).

Director of training at the Life Science Academy Mohammad Al-Khalaifi said that the idea of meeting directors and representatives of human resources in private hospitals and clinics came after two orientation meetings for those who were selected to be part of the program after they passed all stages of evaluation tests and personal interviews. The meeting took place in the presence of MGRP representatives so that all those present would know their commitments and requirements, he added.



KUWAIT: Director of training at the Life Science Academy Mohammad Al-Khalaifi (right) speaks during the gathering.

The gathering was organized after candidates who passed all stages showed hesitance when they met with MGRP representatives, and were unsure of the information they received about available jobs, advantages, and average salaries of the fresh graduates, Khalaifi added. “The idea of the program came about as we felt that a large number of applicants had various specialties such as law, engineering, information, nursing, pharmacy, etc, and not only customer service and relations with the patients,” he added.

## Kuwait beacon of culture, free thought: Novelist

**TUNIS:** The State of Kuwait has been a beacon of culture, intellectual freedom, and a destination of Arab intellectuals, mainly female novelists, said a Kuwaiti female novelist on Saturday. Fatma Al-Ali made the statement at the conclusion of the 22nd session of Arab female intellectuals association held in the Tunisian city of Sousse.

She added that she presented a paper during the event, noting that she reviewed cultural scene in Kuwait, which includes theaters, clubs, opera house and cultural centers. She pointed out that such institutions represent a major support for Arab intellectuals, mainly the female writers.

Ali explained in the paper that Arab female novelist is

currently facing two main challenges: the male view of cultural movement in Arab societies and “efforts of extremist thought to penetrate the cultural arena and work to exclude women.” She stressed that Arab female writer made several successes and gains, and presented varied work arts. The Arab female writer has contributed mainly to combating different social phenomena and developing societies, Ali noted.

The Kuwaiti novelist indicated that “Arab female novelist has developed her level and managed to write fictions, and scientific novels as well as others. Ali warned that “extremists and success enemies have succeeded, over the last year, to affect badly our Arab societies, their individual and public freedoms, and teaching curricula.

However, she stressed that “extremists’ attempts to dominate the Kuwaiti cultural scene have failed because Kuwait has been a beacon of culture and free thought.” The 22nd session came to a close today, with the participation of a number of Arab female writers, poetesses, novelists, critics and others. They were from Egypt, Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, Morocco and Tunisia. —KUNA



## Local

# Plans to terminate 3,108 expats in public sector by March 2019

## ‘Kuwaitization’ plan to be completed by 2022

By A Saleh

**KUWAIT:** The replacement committee at the National Assembly confirmed that the government is implementing the ‘Kuwaitization’ plan during the coming years, with plans to complete it by 2022. Informed sources said a list of expat employees whose jobs will be terminated during the coming fiscal year, which started in April and runs through March 2019, is 3,108 expats in 48 state departments, starting from July.

As for the population structure, the source said the Civil Service Commission sent to the National Assembly the number of citizens who were nominated for employment since 2014, which is 75,476, while 16,468 expats were appointed in the health and education ministries where no applications by Kuwaitis are available. It said that with the employment of 8,156 citizens in 20 days since the start of April, the country witnessed the largest employment in its history.

The number of citizens working in state departments related to civil service is 256,048 compared to 78,439 expats, 31,362 of whom work in education, 34,789 in health and 2,931 in the Awqaf ministries. The committee rejected in its first report a proposal to commit state departments to submit a report every six months to the National Assembly that includes the number and description of jobs where Kuwaitis were appointed by replacement. Committee rapporteur MP Safa Al-Hashem said the committee proposed finding solutions to eradicate the unemployment problem that is getting worse year after year.



**8,156 citizens employed in 20 days**

**Oil sector**  
Kuwait Petroleum Corporation (KPC) and its subsidiaries spent KD 18.3 million during the 2017/2018 financial year for medical treatment of expatriate employees and their families at Ahmadi Hospital. Treatment of expats during the past five years in the oil sector cost KD 95 million. The number of expat patients in Ahmadi Hospital has dropped in the past few years as a large number of workers were transferred to contractors as part of the Kuwaitization process. The number of patients in Ahmadi Hospital dropped from 110,600 in 2013/2014 to 79,700 in 2017/2018.

The latest statistics approved by KPC show that there are 3,000 expat employees in the oil sector in various specialties. Despite the drop in patient numbers at Ahmadi Hospital during the past five years, the individual cost rose to reach KD 229.5 during the latest fiscal year compared to KD 162.7 during 2013/2014.

### Bogus certificates

Education Minister Hamid Al-Azmi said the committee investigating bogus certificates of Kuwait University hasn't completed its job yet, adding that the ministry will send the results to MPs as soon as they are ready. Azmi said the examination mechanism of the certificates goes through the appointment committee at the scientific department, then after checking, it goes to the appointments committee at the college, then to the university appointments committee and deputy university rector for scientific affairs, then it is referred to



Kuwait University rector for approval.

As for the Public Authority for Applied Education and Training (PAAET), Azmi said a ministerial decision was issued to form an investigation committee in the bogus certificates issue, and a report was sent to the public prosecution in this regard. He said none of the authority's leaders have been accused yet and the matter is in the hands of the public prosecution. On

procedures of appointing expats, he said professors and teachers are appointed according to decision 480/2001 with regards to amending the rules and regulations of education and training facilities at PAAET, so contracting with expats professors and teachers will not be considered final until after their degrees are authenticated within three months from the decision's issue.



## Speed limit painted on left emergency lanes

By Hanan Al-Saadoun

**KUWAIT:** The General Traffic Department painted speed limit signs on the left emergency lane on Fahaheel road as part of efforts to help motorists abide



by traffic laws. Signs baring the ‘45’ number, which is the speed limit for driving on the emergency lane, will also be painted on roads where driving on the left emergency lane is allowed – such as Maghreb, Riyadh and Fifth Ring Roads, the Interior Ministry's relations and security information department said in a statement yesterday.

If a vehicle is caught in the left lane on the designated roads during the allowed times over-speeding by 30 km or more over the set limit, a citation will be issued, and if found outside the allowed hours, it will be ticketed too, the department said.

The roads where driving on the left lane is allowed are as follows:

- After Sixth Ring Road in the direction of the city.
- King Abdulaziz Road from Sixth Ring Road until Third Ring Road on both directions.
- King Fahd Road from Sixth Ring Road to First Ring Road in both directions.
- Fifth Ring Road from King Abdulaziz Road until Andalus in both directions.
- King Faisal Road from Sixth Ring Road until Fourth Ring Road in both directions.
- Ghazali Road from Sixth Ring Road until Fourth Ring Road in both directions.
- Sixth Ring Road from the intersection with King Abdulaziz until Farwaniya Hospital/Ardhiya in both directions.

Control General Directorate (DCGD) Brig Bader Al-Ghadouri received tips about an Iranian selling opium. The suspect was persuaded to sell drugs to an undercover agent and was arrested during the exchange. He told authorities about three of his compatriots, who all sold drugs. All were arrested and said the drugs were brought by sea.

### Drug possession

Ahmadi police arrested two men and a woman under the influence of drugs in a car in Mahbouda. The three – a male and female citizen and a bedoon man – also had drugs on them. The suspects – all ex-convicts – denied any connection with the illicit substances. They were sent to the Drugs Control General Department.

### Reckless driver arrested

Ahmadi police foiled a reckless driver's attempt to escape, and he was arrested following a chase. His car was impounded. The suspect was showing off in Fintas and was reported by passersby.

### Missing girls found

Police arrested two Saudi sisters in Sharq late at night after finding they were reported missing by their families at Andalus police station. The girls had attempted to evade police.

### Mugging suspect detained

Ahmadi detectives solved three cases filed against an unidentified person – for mugging, posing as a detective as well as stealing a vehicle, which was used in the muggings. The vehicle was found with the suspect, and victims identified the suspect in a line-up. A security source said Abu Halifa detectives learned about a bedoon involved in muggings and posing as a detective. The bedoon was arrested and confessed to committing two crimes against expats. He said the vehicle he stole was left running.

—Translated by Kuwait Times from Al-Rai

## Audio systems stolen from six mosques

**KUWAIT:** The director of Farwaniya governorate's mosque department complained to police about repeated thefts of audio systems from mosques. He said six mosques in Khaitan, Farwaniya and Riggae had their audio systems stolen, adding that the thefts take place during the period between opening the mosque's door and before the azan is made. The Ministry of Awqaf and Islamic Affairs issued an administrative circular that the muezzin should open the mosque's door 15 minutes before azan, and close it 45 minutes after the azan. The mosque will remain open between Maghrib and Isha prayers, while the circular is effective in Jleeb, Khaitan, Riggae and Farwaniya mosques.

### Grace period

A security source said the number of expatriates who took advantage of the grace period for residency violators to leave without having to pay fines or correcting their status after paying fines (KD 600 to KD 1,000) is 57,123 expats. The source added that 20,946 expats corrected their status, while 36,177 expats left the country with the possibility of returning back. The source said the number of violating expats is 155,000.

### Drug trafficking charges

Four expatriates were sent to drugs prosecution and charged with trading in drugs, and 2.5 kg of opium was sent along with them. The arrests were on the orders of Interior Ministry Assistant Undersecretary for Criminal Security Maj Gen Khalid Al-Dayeen. Director General of the Drug



Dr Fahad Al-Afasi

## Minister stresses arbitration's role

**KUWAIT:** The use of arbitration in administrative judiciary is a concrete step towards ensuring justice, Kuwait's Minister of Justice Dr Fahad Al-Afasi said yesterday. Afasi, who doubles as Minister of Awqaf and Islamic Affairs, made the remarks in a two-day Arab forum over administrative judiciary, which revolves around the application of judicial methods in the settlement of disputes. He highlighted the significance of such events that provide opportunities for judges to discuss crucial matters in the legal realm, pointing out that litigation remains the most established method in resolving disputes.

The Kuwaiti minister spoke of how arbitration represents a viable and reliable alternative to get to the bottom of quarrels, given the simplicity and effectiveness of the procedure. Meanwhile, the president of the Arab Union of Administrative Judiciary Ahmad Abulazam placed emphasis on arbitration as well, saying that the procedure has been in use for as long as the human race existed. He expressed hope that the forum would prove instrumental in promoting a developed legal system across the wider Arab region. — KUNA

Legalese

## Be kind and supportive



By Attorney Fajer Ahmed

This week must have been a rollercoaster of feelings for both Filipinos in Kuwait and the Kuwaitis that have Philippines closely in their lives. Kuwaitis have always had very close ties to the Philippines, while there are around 260,000 Filipinos in Kuwait presently. Some families have Filipino nannies that raise their kids, and many Kuwaiti small business owners have Filipinos managing their restaurants. They are teachers, doctors, engineers, cleaners, hairdressers and so on – I could go on about the job descriptions of the many Filipinos I meet on a daily basis. Our lives are intertwined within society and we influence each other greatly.

I have faith in both the Kuwaiti and the Philippine government that they will both do what is best for their peoples and their economies. I therefore do not have any political opinions, but would like to make things clear from a legal aspect to both parties:

1. Regardless if your employee has decided to go home or for any reason is requesting to go home, please make sure you still pay them all their rights, such as end of service benefits.

2. Please understand that all employees have the right to leave their workspace at any time – salaries may be deducted but you cannot force them to stay somewhere, whether it is an office or a house. The Kuwaiti government does not support modern-day slavery.

3. Please refrain from keeping passports of employees – it is against the law.

4. Although not stated by the law, please always be kind, as hard as it may be at times.

A big thank you to all the expats in Kuwait that are working hard and providing us with services that are much needed, and a big thank you to all the Kuwaitis that have provided jobs and opened up their homes and businesses, trusting the expat community. It is very sad-denning to see negative remarks going both ways, when we have always had a loving and supportive environment in Kuwait (even though there have been negative and violent situations)! Please be kind and supportive.





London voters to punish PM, party

## Thrifty at 50: Pakistan keeps ageing Mirages flying



PANMUNJOM: North Korea's leader Kim Jong Un (right) talks with South Korea's President Moon Jae-in at a bench on a bridge next to the military demarcation line at the truce village of Panmunjom. —AFP

# N Korea offers to shut nuke test site

## Trump presses for full denuclearization

SEOUL: North Korean leader Kim Jong Un plans to invite experts and journalists from the United States and South Korea when the country closes its nuclear test site in May, Seoul officials said yesterday, as US President Trump pressed for total denuclearization ahead of his own unprecedented meeting with Kim. On Friday, Kim and South Korean President Moon Jae-in vowed "complete denuclearization" of the Korean peninsula in the first inter-Korean summit in more than a decade, but the declaration did not include concrete steps to reach that goal.

North Korea's state media had said before the summit that Pyongyang would immediately suspend nuclear and missile tests, scrap its nuclear test site and instead pursue economic growth and peace. Kim told Moon that he would soon invite the experts and journalists to "open to the international community" the dismantling of the facilities, the Blue House said.

"The United States, though inherently hostile to North Korea, will get to know once our talk begins that I am not the kind of person who will use nuclear weapons against the South or the United States across the Pacific," Moon's press secretary Yoon Young-chan quoted Kim as saying. "There is no reason for us to possess nuclear weapons while suffering difficulties if mutual trust with the United States is built through frequent meetings from now on, and an end to the war and non-aggression are promised." Kim said there were two additional, larger tunnels that remain "in a very good condition" at the Punggye-ri test site beyond the existing one, which experts have said had collapsed after repeated explosions, rendering much of the site useless.

Kim's promise shows his willingness to "preemptively and actively" respond to inspection efforts to be made as part of the denuclearization process, Yoon said. To facilitate future cross-border cooperation, Kim pledged to scrap the unique time zone Pyongyang created in 2015. He said the North would move its clocks forward 30 minutes to be in sync with the South, nine hours ahead of Greenwich Mean Time. Kim also reaffirmed that he would not use military force against the South and raised the need for an institutional mechanism to prevent unintended escalations, Yoon said.



### Kim to invite US, S Korea experts for shutdown

The United States or the demilitarized zone dividing the two Koreas, a Blue House official told reporters, declining to elaborate. A senior US official has said Singapore is being considered as a possible venue for the Trump-Kim summit. "Trump said it was good news for not only the two Koreas but the whole world that they affirmed the goal of realizing a nuclear-free Korean peninsula through a complete denuclearization," Blue House spokesman Kim Eui-kyeom told a separate briefing.

"Moon told Trump that Kim said he and Trump would get along with each other, ... and Trump said he was looking forward to talks with Kim and there would be a very good result," Trump, who called the 75-minute chat "a long and very good talk" on Twitter, said his summit with Kim would take place sometime in the next three to four weeks. "It's going be a very important meeting, the denuclearization of the Korean peninsula," he said at a campaign rally in Washington, Michigan, on Saturday.

The White House said Trump and Moon during the call "emphasized that a peaceful and prosperous future for North

Korea is contingent upon its complete, verifiable, and irreversible denuclearization." Most of the specific commitments outlined in the official declaration signed by Kim and Moon focused on inter-Korean relations and did not clear up the question of whether Pyongyang is willing to give up its arsenal of nuclear weapons and ballistic missiles. Abe's office said yesterday that Trump and Abe highlighted the significance of Pyongyang's taking concrete steps towards denuclearization in their phone call.

Trump had informed Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe that he would urge North Korea to promptly resolve its abductions of Japanese citizens, the White House said. Moon also had a phone call with Abe yesterday and said he had discussed the abduction issue with Kim during the summit "in substantial detail," the Blue House spokesman said. Pyongyang admitted in 2002 to kidnapping 13 Japanese in the 1970s and 1980s to train spies. Five of them returned to Japan, but Tokyo suspects that hundreds more may have been taken.

"Moon relayed Abe's wish for a normalization of bilateral ties to Kim based on the clearing of historical legacy issues, and that Kim expressed his willingness to talk to Japan at any time," the official said. Later on, Moon informed Russian President Vladimir Putin of the summit's outcome in a separate call, and proposed a joint study on trilateral cooperation over rail, gas and power infrastructure involving North Korea, the Blue House said. Putin stressed the need for the summit to lead to trilateral projects, and invited Moon to Russia for a summit and the World Cup in June, Moon's office said. —Reuters

## Tunisian Islamist party endorses a Jewish candidate

MONASTIR: Decked out in a striking blue suit and white shirt, matching his political allegiance, Simon Slama rubs shoulders with fellow candidates ahead of Tunisia's municipal elections. Nothing unusual about that—except he is the only Jewish candidate, standing for the Islamist Ennahdha party. A public relations stunt for some; a sign of genuine liberalization for others. But even if Slama fares dismally come the May 6 poll, his candidacy has become a major story in the nation. This will be the first municipal vote since former dictator Zine El Abidine Ben Ali fell from power in 2011. And while Slama looks at ease, joyously clapping hands on the campaign trail in the coastal town of Monastir, the 54-year old sewing machine repairman's decision to run drew fierce initial opposition from loved ones.

"All my family were against my choice. My brother was angry and my wife went days without speaking to me," the candidate tells AFP, with a timid smile and a nervous fidget of the hands. "But I managed to convince them." Slama and his relatives are among the small number of Jews still living in Tunisia. The community in the North African nation has shrunk from several hundred thousand before independence in 1956, to just 1,200 today. While Jews in the country, which is overwhelmingly Muslim, once served as lawmakers and even ministers, they have long since slipped to the margins of politics. Slama believes his candidacy is helping to change all that and has already "removed fears for Jewish Tunisian citizens".



MONASTIR, Tunisia: Simon Slama, the only Jewish candidate on the Islamist Ennahdha party's list for the municipal elections distributes flyers on a visit to a local souk (market) while campaigning yesterday. —AFP

despite its history as an Islamist party he opted for Ennahdha out of political conviction, describing it as "the most active and the most serious on the political scene". "Ennahdha has changed its strategy—it is no longer a religious party, it is a civil party," he says.

The party is a junior partner in a coalition led by President Beji Caid Essebsi and his Nidaa Tounes party. Taking stock from its experience in power after the 2011 revolution, it has worked hard to modernize its image. It opposed a project to criminalize any attempt to normalize relations with Israel: a vote on the proposal was dropped this winter. Now some of its leading candidates are women who don't wear the Islamic veil. All of these changes—including Slama's candidacy—have drawn derision from some political opponents who accuse the group of simple opportunism to bolster its vote. Top Nidaa Tounes official Borhane Bassais called it a "political striptease".

**Torah and Quran**

Others say that interest in Slama's candidacy highlights that while Jews can practice their religion freely they remain an anomaly in Tunisia—and shows the country still has a long way to go on minority rights. The media frenzy is testament to "this obsession we have of judging (people) on the basis of something so personal as their religious conviction," says Yamina Thabet, an official for Tunisia's Association for the Support of Minorities. —AFP

## Migrants at US border ask Trump to have heart

TIJUANA: Olga Caballero and her four children set out from southern Mexico a month ago as part of a US-bound caravan that infuriated President Donald Trump. Now, having reached the border with the wealthy United States on Tuesday, this Honduran woman is asking the anti-immigrant Trump to show compassion and remember that he, too, is a father. Caballero and her children—whose ages range from two to 16 - spent the first night in Tijuana, across the border from San Diego, as part of a caravan of 120 migrants including 50 minors who arrived on two buses.

Since the so-called Viacrucis Migrant set out on March 25, or Palm Sunday, these poor and hearty Central Americans have crossed Mexico on foot, on trains and in buses. "My biggest fear was that I would fall asleep and one of my kids would fall from the train. Everybody was crowded up against a railing, and I sat up all night watching them," said Caballero, who is 35. The caravan is a tradition that dates back to 2010 and is designed to draw attention to the plight of destitute Central Americans crossing through Mexico to try to reach the US and the promise of a better life. This time, it set out with 1,000 people, but they have since dispersed, with some now traveling on their own.

Irineo Mujica of the migrant rights group Pueblo Sin Fronteras (People Without Borders) that organized the procession said that some 600 of the original thousand remain grouped together. About half have begun filing papers to stay in Mexico and the other 300 plan to request asylum in the United States. Media coverage of the US-bound caravan triggered a flurry of furious tweets from Trump, who ordered thousands of National Guard troops to the US-Mexican border and called on Mexico to stop the migrants. He also linked the issue of migration to the signing of a revamped North American Free Trade Agreement.

Later Wednesday, the Department of Homeland Security warned the migrants against trying to enter the country illegally or filing false immigration claims, saying they will be arrested if they do. Mexico rejected pressure from Trump. It gave the migrants a one-month transit pass to decide if they want to seek refuge in Mexico, go back home or keep trudging toward the United States. Lisandro Guerrero, a Honduran traveling with his wife, decided to stay in Mexico even though he made it all the way to Tijuana on the border with the US. He will stay in Tijuana seeking work and at some point bring over his nine children. "If they do not want us there," he said of the United States, "why go? It is better to stay in Mexico which is welcoming us with open arms, thanks to God."

**Compassion**

Caballero had a message for Trump: "I would like him to put his hand on his heart, and I would ask if he has ever been a father. Because only a parent knows what it means to be ready to do absolutely anything for your children." She says she will ask the Americans for asylum because violence from street gangs in Honduras makes life impossible there. "That is why we are here. It is not that we covet another country," she said, her voice breaking with emotion. Among this group there are only about 20 men, including the Honduran Gualdin Omar, 20, who will also ask for asylum to escape the gangs, known in Spanish as "maras."

"Because of the maras you cannot even go out on the street. No one leaves home," said this young farmer, who used to grow corn and beans. Omar says he is sure he will achieve the American dream, and challenged Trump: "I tell Donald Trump to get ready for when we get there." Upon their arrival at the border, the migrants were fed roast chicken, beans, rice and tortillas. Along the way, they found solidarity as people provided them with food and clothing. "The good thing is there have been lots of good people who supported us a lot," said Honduran Reina Garcia. Tristan Call, a member of People Without Borders who accompanied these travelers, said Mexicans responded to what he called Trump's "hatred" and bent over backwards to help the Central Americans. —AFP



International

# Islamic State ally stakes out territory around Lake Chad

## Islamists woo locals with seeds, fertilizer, grazing

**MAIDUGURI:** From the shores of Lake Chad, Islamic State's West African ally is on a mission: winning over the local people. Digging wells, giving out seeds and fertilizer and providing safe pasture for herders are among the inducements offered by Islamic State in West Africa (ISWA), which split from Nigeria's Boko Haram in 2016. "If you are a herder, driver or trader, they won't touch you just follow their rules and regulations governing the territory," said a herder, who moves cattle in and out of ISWA territory and whose identity Reuters is withholding for his safety. "They don't touch civilians, just security personnel."

The campaign, which has created an economy for ISWA to tax, is part of the armed insurgent group's push to control territory in northeastern Nigeria and in Niger. ISWA stretches farther and is more entrenched than officials have acknowledged, according to witnesses, people familiar with the insurgency, researchers and Western diplomats who have for the first time provided details of the group's growing efforts to establish a form of administration in the Lake Chad area.

A map produced by the US development agency in February and seen by Reuters shows how ISWA territory extends more than 100 miles into the northeastern Nigerian states of Borno and Yobe, where government has in many areas all but vanished after a decade of conflict. The Islamists have not been defeated, as Nigeria says, and researchers say ISWA, less extreme than Boko Haram, has evolved into the dominant group. The US map paints a similar picture, with ISWA operating in much of Borno.

"Islamic State has a terrible reputation for being so brutal around the world, and people can't imagine an Islamic State faction could be more moderate (than Boko Haram)," said Jacob Zenn, of The Jamestown Foundation in Washington DC.

### Islamic State West Africa group split from Boko Haram

studies Boko Haram at the French National Centre for Science Research. "It opens the longer game of trying to create a connection to people," he said, adding that if ISWA succeeds it may become a greater threat than Boko Haram. In 2015, Nigeria's President Muhammadu Buhari pledged to finish off Boko Haram. Officials maintain this has been achieved, although the conflict continues into its tenth year. A presidency spokesman declined to comment for this story.

**'They are not a govt'**  
Analysts estimate that ISWA has 3,000-5,000 fighters, about double Boko Haram's strength. But ISWA's territory is not completely secure. The Nigerian air force often bombs, and troops from Lake Chad countries attack the insurgents' domain around its shores and islands. Nigeria's armed forces "just see them as Boko Haram," said Brigadier General John Agim, spokesman for the Nigerian

The Lake Chad countries - Nigeria, Niger, Chad and Cameroon have long neglected the region, allowing ISWA to create a stronghold from which to launch attacks. Its gains contrast with setbacks for Islamic State in Syria and Iraq. It makes sense for ISWA to organize the local economy and raise taxes, said Vincent Foucher, who



**MAIDUGURI:** A bomb from air strike by the Nigerian airforce lies on the ground after cross fire between the military and Boko Haram Islamists in Maiduguri. —AFP

military, at a briefing. "We are not interested in the faction, what has that got to do with it?" "They are not a government, they kidnap girls from schools," Agim told Reuters in a separate interview.

The military has announced an operation "to totally destroy Boko Haram locations in the Lake Chad Basin" - ISWA's domain - and end the insurgency within four months. But ISWA has so far proven intractable in its Lake

Chad bases, where troops have been unable to make effective inroads, according to a Western diplomat who follows the group. The Nigerian military had "completely lost the initiative against the insurgency," they said. The diplomat said ISWA was ready to cede less important areas because the military cannot hold them. "However, they maintain absolute control over the islands and immediate areas near them where they train, live, etc." —Reuters

## Palestinian forum Abbas rivals fume, see power grab

**GAZA:** Political rivals accused Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas yesterday of pushing ahead with a rare and disputed national decision-making meeting to tighten his grip on power and sideline them. Abbas has billed today's convening of the Palestinian National Council (PNC), a 700-member assembly within the umbrella Palestinian Liberation Organization, as a chance to forge a united front against Israel and the United States.

But the event in Ramallah, the Palestinian hub in the Israeli-occupied West Bank, has revived old feuds between Abbas's Fatah party and rivals from Islamist and other factions, many of whose members cannot attend due to Israeli restrictions. Last week, 109 PNC members urged Abbas to postpone the meeting to allow greater participation. The call went unheeded, and yesterday, censure of the president became more pointed.

"The PNC meeting that will be held in Ramallah is not legitimate, is factional, and does not represent all of the Palestinians," Mushir Al-Masri, a lawmaker with the Islamist group Hamas, told reporters at a meeting of PNC critics in Gaza. The Gaza Strip, under de facto Hamas control since 2007, has been a focus of Palestinian infighting. Though Hamas formally resubmitted to Abbas's authority last year, their reconciliation has been held up by disputes over power-sharing. "We stress the need to regain Palestinian unity and end the policy of exclusion and unilateralism by the leadership of the Palestinian Authority and its hijacking of Palestinian institutions," said Masri.

Khader Habib of Islamic Jihad, a Hamas political ally, accused Abbas of "holding the PNC meeting to stress his



**KHAN YUNIS:** Mourners console the mother (center) of 15-year-old Palestinian teenager Azzam Oweida during his funeral in Khan Yunis in the southern Gaza Strip, as he succumbed to his wounds a day after he was shot by Israeli forces in clashes along the Gaza border. —AFP

exclusion of all those who oppose him". "The president is keen for the conference to bring about only decisions that suit his own project," Habib told Reuters. Hamas and Islamic Jihad oppose Abbas' strategy of peace talks with Israel. However, diplomacy has been on hold since 2014 and many Palestinians' views have hardened over US President Donald Trump's recognition late last year of Jerusalem as Israel's capital.

The PNC last met in extraordinary session in 2009 to

replace several members of the PLO's Executive Committee. It last held a regular session in 1996. Political analysts in Gaza said a PNC meeting without wide factional representation would weaken the legitimacy of any decisions it may take. Earlier yesterday, dozens of masked youths gathered on the Palestinian side of the Gaza Strip's main crossing with Israel, threatening to block any PNC official from leaving for the West Bank to attend today's session.—Reuters

## Nigerian president's US visit to focus on security, economy

**LAGOS:** Nigerian President Muhammadu Buhari is to meet President Donald Trump in Washington today, the first African leader to be received by Trump's White House administration. All eyes will be on Trump after he earlier called African nations "shithole" countries, a damaging remark he has since denied. Trump's relationship with the continent suffered a further setback in March when former secretary of state Rex Tillerson was fired while in Nigeria on his first trip to the continent. As a result, the visit revealed little about Trump's Africa policy.

Buhari's visit comes after Trump met German Chancellor Angela Merkel on Friday and French President Emmanuel Macron last week to discuss the contentious Iran nuclear deal and biting trade sanctions. According to a White House statement, the talks will focus on fighting terrorism and insecurity, economic growth and democratic development in Nigeria, set to hold presidential polls in February next year. Nigeria is entering its ninth year fighting Boko Haram extremists, who have devastated the northeast of the country and killed over 20,000 people in a bloody quest to establish an Islamist state.

Buhari is also battling a so-called herdsman crisis, a sectarian conflict hardening along religious lines that has claimed scores of lives this year in escalating violence. "I think both sides have a clear agenda in this meeting and it's security and economic issues. They both have something to gain," J. Peter Pham, director of the Africa Center at the Washington-based Atlantic Council said. "On President Trump's side, it's definitely putting that controversy behind him," Pham said. "On President Buhari's side, it's having the prominence of being the first African leader received at the White House in this administration."

### Improved relations

In spite of Trump's remarks, Nigeria's relationship with the United States has improved since he came into office, according to Lauren Blanchard, African affairs specialist



**Nigerian President Muhammadu Buhari**

with the Congressional Research Service. "(The visit) is intended to signal that the United States continues to see Nigeria as one of its most important partners on the continent," Blanchard said.

"Cooperation has improved over the course of President Buhari's tenure but not as fast as both sides would like," she added. Buhari, who like Trump has a tendency to make gaffes, had lambasted former President Barack Obama shortly after coming into office for refusing to sell Nigeria weapons to fight Boko Haram. "Unwittingly, and I dare say unintentionally, the application of the Leahy Law Amendment by the United States government has aided and abetted the Boko Haram terrorists," Buhari said during a visit to Washington.

Under the legislation, the US is prevented from offering weapons or training to countries where there is credible information of human rights abuses by authorities. In contrast, Trump's administration has gone ahead with the reported \$496 million sale of up to a dozen Super Tucano aircraft, a plane with surveillance and attack capabilities, set to be delivered in 2020. The deal has recently come under scrutiny in Nigeria, a country with endemic corruption, where lawmakers are accusing the president of illegally withdrawing funds to purchase the planes.

While no major trade announcements are expected, Trump and Buhari will also be talking about ways to deepen economic cooperation. "There is the security element and the economic element that dovetails with Trump's agenda to push American business," said Pham. Buhari, who is seeking re-election in 2019, is likely to play up his administration's agriculture reforms and underline his commitment to democracy. —AFP

## Questions mount over bloodshed in C African capital

**BANGUI:** Nearly three weeks after more than two dozen people were killed in the worst fighting in the Central African Republic's capital since 2015, what happened on that fateful day remains clouded by contradictions. On April 10, hours-long clashes unfolded in a mainly Muslim flashpoint district, sparking a wave of anger at UN peacekeepers tasked with shoring up the volatile nation. According to the UN mission MINUSCA, the fighting began when a joint patrol of Rwandan UN troops and the Central African army (FACA) was attacked on the outskirts of the mainly Muslim PK5 district as they pursued a security sweep against militia groups.

Hospital workers say 27 people were killed and more than a hundred injured a toll that mounted over several days as casualties were brought in. One of the fatalities was a UN soldier. In a dramatic protest, local people brought in 17 bloodied corpses with bullet wounds the day after the killing and laid them in front of the UN base in the centre of Bangui. They said the fatalities were simply unarmed civilians—a version fiercely contested by MINUSCA, which is struggling to overcome accusations of inaction and sexual abuse by some of its troops in the past.

"We need to find out if it was the peacekeepers or the FACA who shot these people, and if so, whether they were unarmed civilians or fighters," said an observer, speaking on condition of anonymity. One of the UN's most ambitious peacekeeping operations, MINUSCA deployed 12,000 troops and police to CAR, which exploded into bloodshed after the 2013 overthrow of longtime leader Francois Bozize by a mainly Muslim rebel alliance, the Seleka. Bozize's successor, Faustin-Archange Touadera, elected in 2016, can only claim to control a fraction of the country—the rest is in the sway of ex-rebels and vigilante militias. One of the fatalities on April 10 was Oumar Ibrahim Bachir. "He was just a trader," his uncle, Zubeir, told AFP last Monday. "That day, he went out to buy medicine for his child at the Sambo pharmacy. —AFP

## Actress 'sex-for-rent' claim sparks debate

**ACCRA:** An actress who said women needed men to take care of them has sparked fierce debate in Ghana and widened the focus about sexual harassment in the country. Moesha Boduong said the economy was so bad in Ghana that she was forced to have a relationship with a married man in order to pay her bills. "You just need someone to take care of you. You can't make enough money as a woman here," Boduong told CNN in an interview aired recently in the United States.

Boduong has since been pilloried by high-profile Ghanaians for her comment and quickly apologized, saying her experience was "not a reflection of what happens in most homes". But the interview struck a nerve in the conservative West African nation, where sexual harassment is an issue but is rarely talked about. "Sex-for-marks" scandals regularly make the news in Ghana and in nearby Nigeria.

Nigerians are currently following the case of a female student who recorded a conversation with a university lecturer, who demanded sex in exchange for good marks. The student says he failed her because she refused. "The angst that has greeted this scandal is not misplaced," columnist Monday Philips Ekpe wrote in the ThisDay newspaper on Friday. "Stories about lecturers who seek to satisfy their sexual passion not minding the mental and emotional trauma their victims suffer are common. "These unscrupulous men sometimes refer to the girls as 'bush meat'."

### 'Victim blaming'

In Ghana, an investigation has been launched into allegations that high school girls in the central Ashanti region were sexually harassed by their school staff. Maame Akua Awerbeba, a representative of activist group Pepper Dem Ministries, told AFP there was a pervasive gender power imbalance in Ghana that needed to be addressed. "Look at the system, that is what gives men the power and gives girls the need to do these things for money for things as basic as rent." Awerbeba said sexual harassment was widespread across Ghana. "Their lecturers are harassing them to sleep with them to get the marks," she said. In a 2011 study published in the Cambridge Journal of Education, researchers found the most common form of sexual harassment at two Ghanaian universities was sex-for-grades.

Dilys Sillah, the founder of a sexual abuse awareness non-profit operating in London and Accra, said Boduong's comment reflected Ghana's hierarchal society. Those with status and power are protected, said Sillah, explaining that often victims do not see the point in speaking out. "There are people when they commit certain crimes no-one will come out and say anything. You may even find situations when other victims may be involved but they will not speak out." In the case of sex-for-grades, women are often seen as responsible. "Until we recognize child sexual exploitation is real and it's a crime we will continue to victim-blame," said Sillah. "We need to put the responsibility on the adult." Earlier in April, two Ghanaian sisters were jailed after they assaulted a lecturer who demanded sex to boost their marks.

### Speaking out

For many people in Ghana, the time is right for the country to have a #MeToo movement, following the lead of women who have spoken out after suffering sexual mistreatment by men. George Ossom-Batsa, a professor of religion at the University of Ghana, said Boduong should be praised for her honesty. "Instead of condemning her she needs to be given credit for making society aware of what is actually happening on the ground," he said. "It's only in that way that the ills in society could be fought or addressed." Eve Akagbo, a 27-year-old copywriter living in Accra, said she was aware of the "sex-for-marks" issue in Ghana. She said she believes that hard work is enough but is sympathetic to others who feel the need to look to a man for support. In her eyes, it's a "personal choice." —AFP



International

# Cold case culture: When writers revive the stalled investigations

## Book sparks renewed interest in US murders

**LOS ANGELES:** US detectives analyzed DNA to capture the former policeman alleged to be the notorious “Golden State Killer” but it was a book that sparked renewed interest in the murders. “I’ll Be Gone in the Dark,” a chilling true-crime bestseller by Michelle McNamara, was published after she died suddenly in her sleep in 2016, and is to be adapted into a documentary series for HBO.

Joseph James DeAngelo, 72, arrested after a 40-year search, was charged Friday with the 1978 murders of a newlywed couple shot dead in Rancho Cordova, a suburb of California’s capital Sacramento. He is a suspect in 10 other murders committed in California between 1976 and 1986, according to authorities, while the Golden State Killer has been linked by DNA or other evidence to more than 50 rapes.

“Think you got him, Michelle,” McNamara’s husband, the entertainer Patton Oswald, tweeted following the arrest on Tuesday, with horror writer Stephen King and the actor Rob Lowe also praising her steadfast work. It was the latest in a string of stalled or dead cases given fresh impetus by journalists, including the probe into real estate tycoon and multiple murder suspect Robert Durst, and the dubious conviction of Adnan Syed made famous by the acclaimed “Serial” podcast. Sacramento County Sheriff Scott Jones has denied that McNamara’s book put investigators on DeAngelo’s trail but admitted it had revived public interest and generated a flood of new leads.



### Chilling true-crime bestseller - ‘I’ll Be Gone in the Dark’

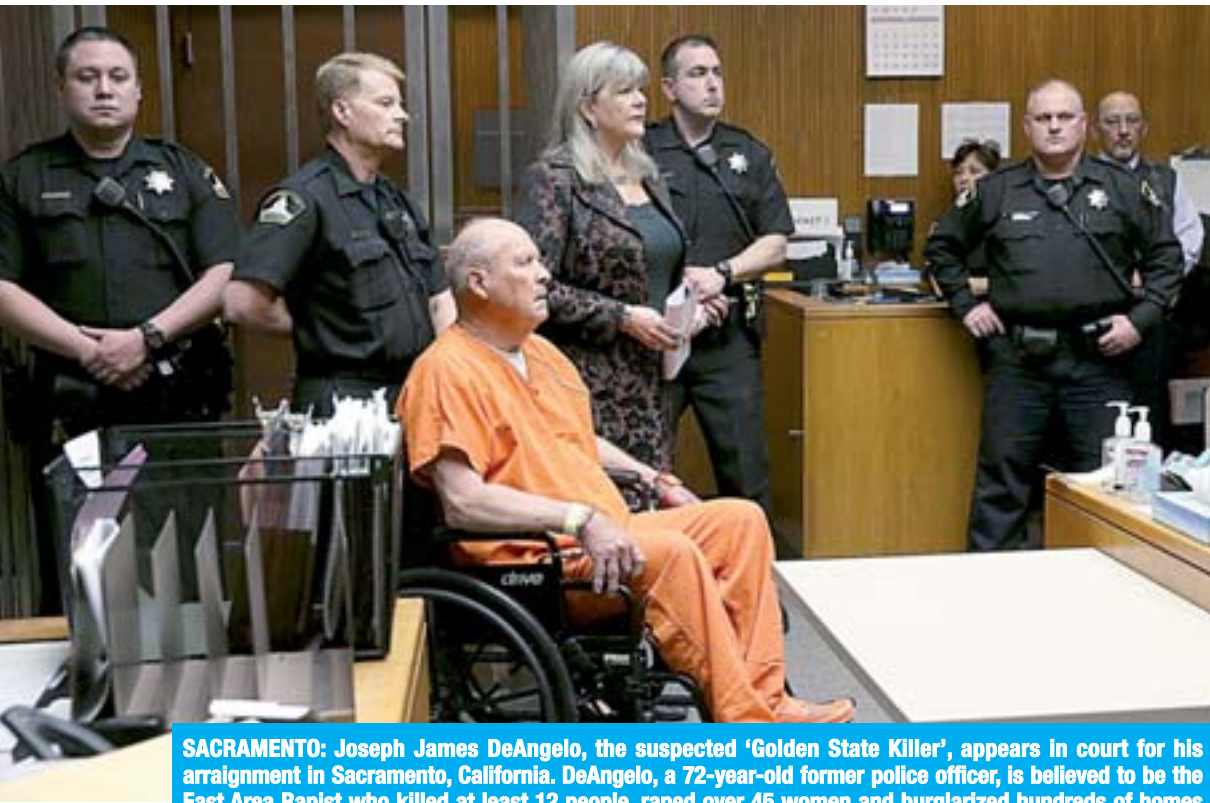
one of the crimes, likely drawn by the killer, in the correct calculation that the story would prompt calls. Paul Holes, a now-retired Contra Costa County District Attorney’s Office investigator whom McNamara contacted for her book, considered her “an investigative partner,” he told CBS news magazine show “48 Hours” last year.

“It was nice to be able to talk to someone who knew as much about the case, and that she could talk the case with me and rattle off things,” added Erika Hutchcraft, of the Orange County District Attorney’s Office, on the same program. McNamara came up with the “Golden State Killer” moniker for her quarry, whom she suspected was military or police-trained, given his ability to handle weapons and the care he took to wear gloves. She wrote that she had come to know almost everything about the killer, from his blood type to his penis size-“conspicuously small”-and that he was built “like a runner or a swimmer.”

**‘Remember when we played?’**  
“One victim’s phone rang 24 years after her rape. ‘You want to play?’

a man whispered. It was you. She was certain,” McNamara said in her book, addressing the killer directly. “You played nostalgic, like an arthritic former football star running game tape on a VCR. ‘Remember when we played?’ I imagine you dialing her number, alone in a small, dark room, sitting on the edge of your twin bed, the only weapon left in your arsenal the firing up of a memory, the ability to trigger terror with your voice.”

Even though satisfied that the police would eventually use advances in science to flush out the killer, the insomniac author had become exhausted, taking powerful anti-anxiety drugs that contributed to her death. “He can’t hurt me, I say, not realizing that in every sleepless hour, in every minute spent hunting him and not cuddling my daughter, he already has,” McNamara



**SACRAMENTO:** Joseph James DeAngelo, the suspected ‘Golden State Killer’, appears in court for his arraignment in Sacramento, California. DeAngelo, a 72-year-old former police officer, is believed to be the East Area Rapist who killed at least 12 people, raped over 45 women and burglarized hundreds of homes throughout California in the 1970s and 1980s. —AFP

wrote. Launched in December 2015, Netflix’s “Making a Murderer” featured the 2007 killing of Teresa Halbach in Wisconsin, for which Brendan Dassey was convicted. The series raised questions about the US legal system and prompted many to believe Dassey and his uncle Steven Avery were wrongly convicted of the killing.

A federal court in Wisconsin found in 2016 that Dassey, over the course of multiple interviews, had been tricked into confessing-both by police and an unsympathetic private investigator working for his defense attorney. Business magnate Robert Durst was arrested three years ago in a New Orleans hotel room hours before the final episode of the six-part HBO investigative documentary “The Jinx: The Life and

Deaths of Robert Durst.” The series delved into the disappearance of his wife in 1982 as well as the killing of his friend Susan Berman in 2000 and the 2001 death of a neighbor in Texas who was found dismembered.

Perhaps the greatest “real crime” hit of all, the “Serial” podcast from the team behind public radio show “This American Life,” raised doubts over Adnan Syed’s conviction for the 1999 murder of his ex-girlfriend. Journalist Sarah Koenig’s investigation, one of the most downloaded podcasts in history, highlighted shortcomings in the police probe and the work of Syed’s lawyer. Last month, an appeals court ordered a new trial, finding that Syed, 37, had received ineffective counsel and ruled that his 2000 conviction can be vacated, subject to an appeal by the state. —AFP

## Armenia opposition stages show of force ahead of election

**YEREVAN:** Supporters of Armenia’s protest leader Nikol Pashinyan took to the streets yesterday, hoping that a massive show of force will propel the opposition leader to power in a key election in two days. Flag-draped demonstrators blocked intersections, sang songs, played music and chanted slogans in support of Pashinyan in the capital Yerevan. “We are witnessing a decisive moment,” said Arut Khachatryan, a 17-year-old high school pupil, adding that the ruling Republican Party should quit politics.

Vartan Madatyan, a 34-year-old accountant, added: “We will continue protests until the people’s candidate comes to power.” “I hope that the Republicans will have enough common sense not to cling to power, and vote for Nikol.” Ex-Soviet Armenia has been in the grip of a severe political crisis for the past two weeks, with the country’s veteran leader Serzh Sarkisian stepping down after a decade in power in the face of major protests. Opposition lawmaker Pashinyan, 42, has thrown down the gauntlet, saying his colleagues in parliament should elect him to succeed Sarkisian as prime minister in Tuesday’s vote.

### Crunch time

On Saturday, after days of frantic negotiations, two major parties said they would back Pashinyan, but he was still six votes short of the 53 he needs from the 105-seat legislature. He needs the backing of some members of the ruling Republican Party, which has 58 seats. The party has said it will wait until all candidates are nominated by Monday and then decide who to back. Pashinyan—who is the leader of the small Civil Contract party-has been the only candidate nominated for the country’s top job so far. Eduard Sharmazanov, vice speaker of parliament and the ruling party’s spokesman, has said he personally doubted that Pashinyan was a suitable candidate.

In a bid to break the deadlock and drum up support, Pashinyan also called on his supporters to stage a major rally yesterday evening. “Our fantastic rallies and meetings across the country have affected the situation in a powerful way,” he told supporters in a video address. “Everything will be fine, we just need to consolidate our victory.” The Prosperous Armenia Party, which holds 31 seats, threw its weight behind Pashinyan on Saturday. A smaller party, the Armenian Revolutionary Federation, quit the ruling coalition and said it would also back the opposition leader.

### ‘Rats from a sinking ship’

Some analysts said they expected a number of Republican Party lawmakers to defect and give their votes to the protest leader, sealing his victory. “I am sure that at least six people from the Republican Party – like rats from a sinking ship-would vote for Pashinyan,” said analyst Ervand Bozoyan. Observers have expressed fears that the turmoil could destabilize the Moscow-allied nation which has been locked in a territorial dispute with Azerbaijan for decades. Moscow has urged compromise and Russian President Vladimir Putin earlier this week spoke by phone with the interim head of government, stressing the importance of the upcoming election. —AFP

## London voters to punish PM, party

**LONDON:** Voters in London are expected to punish Prime Minister Theresa May’s Conservative Party at local government elections this week which could embolden critics of her Brexit strategy, but are not expected to trigger her downfall. London and some other regions will on Thursday elect the local officials in charge of day-to-day public spending – a vote as much about issues like refuse collection and road repairs as it is about the national debate on immigration and May’s plan to take Britain out of the European Union after a 2016 referendum.

The elections are seen as a bellwether of public sentiment and polls show voters are ready to deliver a critical verdict on both May’s leadership and her party’s eight years spent pursuing a policy of public spending cuts to shore up Britain’s finances. “A government that’s been in power for eight years with an austerity program is naturally going to suffer at elections,” said Robert Hayward, a former Conservative lawmaker who now sits in parliament’s upper house and specializes in polling analysis.

A YouGov survey published on April 26 gave the opposition Labor Party, led by Jeremy Corbyn, a 22 percentage point lead over the Conservatives in London, putting it on course for its best performance in the capital for 40 years. Thursday’s vote will come less than a year after a snap parliamentary election splintered the previously rock-solid foundations of May’s position, stripping her party of its majority in a vote she had expected to win easily.

## Thessaloniki subway dig unearths secrets of ‘city under the city’

**THESSALONIKI:** Shovels and brooms in hand, some two dozen workmen trudge around the remains of an ancient villa, deep beneath the bustle of modern-day Thessaloniki. Suddenly, one of them breaks away to deliver the latest find-a small clay head of a hook-nosed, bearded man with an ugly grin. “Probably a votive offering,” notes the junior archaeologist on duty. A 15-year subway project in Greece’s northern metropolis, scheduled to be completed in 2020, has shed light on unknown facets of daily life in the 2,300-year-old city’s history. The excavation has brought to light Thessaloniki’s central 6th-century highway and other urban works, filling in gaps in the city’s long history for archaeologists.

“We did not know such important urban changes had been carried out in this era, probably under (Byzantine Emperor) Justinian,” said Polyxene Adam-Veleni, head of the culture ministry’s Thessaloniki antiquities department. “We were surprised to discover the road in such exceptional condition. This phase of the city’s history was mostly unknown to us,” she told AFP. Other finds such as the villa are older, dating to the late fourth century AD. On the floor of the villa’s hot bath, archaeologists found a gold ring. “It was probably dropped by a young woman who made the mistake of taking her jewelry into the baths,” a site archaeologist said.

### Trade hub for centuries

Built in the fourth century BC and named after the half-sister of Alexander the Great, Thessaloniki was an important hub of the Roman Empire and later became the second city of the Byzantine Empire. It continued to grow under the Ottoman Empire with the arrival in the 15th century of thousands of Sephardic Jews expelled from Spain. The excavation has turned up over 300,000 items of importance, including 50,000 coins, in addition to two marble plazas, a 15-metre (nearly 50-foot) fountain and an early Christian



**THESSALONIKI:** Construction crews and archaeologists work on the excavation of an ancient site under the city centre of modern Thessaloniki. —AFP

church. Alongside the stone-paved road, the Decumanus Maximus, crews also found the remains of mud-bricked workshops where jewelers plied their trade-as they still do today, in blocks of flats above the subway dig.

Golden wreaths and jewellery were also found in over 5,000 graves and tombs along the subway route, but it was another, more humble discovery that excited archaeologists, Adam-Veleni said. “We found vessels shaped like hand grenades. Initially we couldn’t figure out their purpose. Then we realized they were used to store mercury for the making of jewelry,” she said. “This plain object was extremely valuable to us. Because ultimately it gave us the interpretation that it was used in these workshops,” Adam-Veleni said.

The subway’s construction was commissioned in 2003, with work beginning three years later. It should have been completed in 2012. But the project stalled amid debate on how to best preserve the antiquities found, says Yannis Mylopoulos, chairman of state subway builders Attiko Metro. The archaeological excavations alone cost over 75 million euros (\$93 million), according to the company. “The city was called to decide, metro or antiquities? This was a false dilemma... we are doing both.” —AFP



**LONDON:** A video grab from footage broadcast shows Britain’s Prime Minister Theresa May speaking during the weekly Prime Minister’s Questions (PMQs) in the House of Commons. —AFP

eral policies on immigration and social issues. The Conservatives currently control only eight of 32 boroughs outright. Labor’s surprise surge in popularity under Corbyn, a crucial factor in May 2017’s election flop, was also strongly felt in London. The party won 54.5 percent of votes in London last year – more than any other party for at least 70 years. Factor in deep spending cuts overseen by May and her predecessor David Cameron, and the unpopularity of Brexit in a city that voted 60-40 against it – compared with a 52-48 percent margin in favor nationally, and some of the remaining Conservative strongholds are expected to be under threat. —Reuters

## Armenia’s street protests pose no danger to Kremlin

**MOSCOW:** The Kremlin is famous for its hatred of “col- or revolutions” but Armenian protests present no danger to Moscow because the rallies eschew anti-Russian slogans and Yerevan is hugely dependent on Moscow’s military and economic aid. Over the past days Moscow has conspicuously sought to distance itself from a political crisis in Armenia which saw the country’s leader Serzh Sarkisian ousted this week from his new post of prime minister after serving a decade as president.

Even on Thursday, as top Russian officials led by Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov welcomed Armenian officials for talks in Moscow, the Kremlin insisted that the crisis remained the South Caucasus country’s domestic affair. Analysts said that no matter who eventually comes to power in Armenia, he will maintain close ties to Russia. “The Russian leadership proceeds from the fact that Armenia will stay with Russia under any political regime,” Konstantin Kalachev, head of the Political Expert Group think tank in Moscow, told AFP.

“Armenia’s key problem is a security problem, the threat of major war with Azerbaijan,” he said, adding that Armenia would be closely tethered to Russia until a territorial dispute over Nagorny Karabakh was solved. “And it will never be solved,” he added. Azerbaijan and Armenia have for decades been locked in a bitter dispute over Nagorny Karabakh, a breakaway statelet with an Armenian ethnic majority that is internationally recognized as part of Azerbaijan. Frequent exchanges of fire along Karabakh’s volatile frontline has been a persistent problem and the risk that Azerbaijan could use the crisis in Armenia to its advantage has not been lost on politicians in Yerevan and Moscow. —AFP



International

# From dead voters to blackouts: Malaysia braces for ‘filthy’ poll

## Malaysian activists gear up to battle widespread cheating

**KUALA LUMPUR:** “Phantom” voters, electoral roll tampering, mysterious power blackouts during recounts—Malaysian activists are gearing up to battle widespread cheating at what they fear will be the dirtiest election in the country’s history. Prime Minister Najib Razak is facing a tough test at the May 9 poll due to a corruption scandal surrounding state fund IMDB, discontent over rising living costs, and a challenge from veteran ex-leader Mahathir Mohamad.

While vote-rigging has plagued previous Malaysian elections, observers fear the high stakes mean that cheating by the long-ruling Barisan Nasional (BN) coalition will be more rampant than ever before. In response, opposition and civil society groups are training poll monitors to prevent fraud, while leading electoral reform group Bersih has set up an online platform to report instances of alleged rigging.

“This election is not just dirty, it is filthy,” Bridget Welsh, a Malaysia expert from John Cabot University, told AFP. “Najib’s insecurity is delegitimizing the electoral process.” Even before a single ballot has been cast, Bersih lamented the poll had descended into an “open auction with votes for sale” due to local leaders—mainly from BN but also the opposition—giving out cash and gifts such as TVs and food hampers. Concerns have been raised about the electoral roll, with Bersih saying that it had so far received over 80 complaints from the public. These include reports of so-called “phantom” voters, such as people who have died but still appear on the list, or people whose names have appeared without them registering.

At the last election in 2013, when BN lost the popular vote for the first time since Malaysia gained independ-

ence from Britain in 1957, there were numerous allegations of cheating. There were reports of “dubious” voters including foreigners being flown into key constituencies in Malaysia to vote for BN. Supposedly indelible ink, used in a Malaysian general election for the first time and touted by the government as a guarantee against multiple voting, was found to wash easily off people’s fingers. Sudden electricity blackouts at polling centers were also experienced during vote recounts, fuelling suspicions of ballot tampering—something the ruling coalition denied.

No contest, but a beating  
In the hope of stemming what they expect to be a tsunami of cheating, Bersih and other groups are training volunteers to monitor voting on polling day. At a recent session in a Kuala Lumpur hall, about 100 volunteers were being given pointers by Invoke, a think-tank linked to opposition group the People’s Justice Party. They gathered around trainers who were pretending to be polling agents and teaching them how to check for suspicious activity.

“We’re doing this to ensure nothing funny happens on polling day,” Invoke official Matthew Lai told AFP. “There are too many avenues to cheat.” Despite their efforts, Bersih—which led massive protests against Najib at the height of the IMDB scandal—is not confident that reports of alleged violations will be taken seriously, and says complaints made at the last election were not. There are some instances of alleged poll rigging that it is already too late to fight. In March the government pushed a redrawing of electoral boundaries through parliament, in a move that critics say unfairly favors the ruling coalition by creating constituencies dominated by their Muslim Malay supporters.

BN however insists that Malaysian elections are conducted fairly. “There’s no such thing as cheating here... In our system, even the opposition can win,” Information Minister Salleh Said Keruak told AFP. Najib is tipped to retain power at the election. Critics say this will be partly due to vote rigging but admit other factors such as a robust domestic economy will help him. Still the presence of 92-year-old Mahathir, who is heading the opposition, has made life more difficult for him.



**PEKAN, Malaysia:** Candidates wait after handing over election documents during the nomination day ahead of the country’s 14th general election in Pekan. “Phantom” voters, electoral roll tampering, mysterious power blackouts during recounts—Malaysian activists are gearing up to battle widespread cheating at what they fear will be the dirtiest election in the country’s history. —AFP

### ‘Even opposition can win’

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Mahathir came out of retirement to take on Najib, his former protege, in response to the IMDB scandal, which allegedly saw billions looted from the state fund in a campaign of fraud and money-laundering. Najib and IMDB deny any wrongdoing. While Mahathir has predicted enormous cheating, critics say this is rich coming from a man who faced numerous accusations of fraud at polls during his own time in office. However, Welsh from John Cabot University said that vote-rigging has become more serious under Najib: “Elections are supposed to be a contest—Najib wants it to be a beating.” —AFP

## Thrifty at 50: Pakistan keeps ageing Mirages flying

**KAMRA:** The sprawling complex at Kamra, west of Islamabad, reverberates at the thundering take-off of a Mirage Rose-1, the latest ageing fighter jet to have been gutted and reassembled by the Pakistani Air Force. Fifty years after Pakistan bought its first Mirages, many planes in the venerable fleet are still being patched up, overhauled and upgraded for use in combat, years after conventional wisdom dictates they should be grounded. That includes one of the first two planes originally purchased from France’s Dassault in 1967, which was in a hangar at Kamra after its record fifth overhaul when AFP visited recently.

The techniques they have developed are reminiscent of—but far more high-tech and lethal than—the improvised methods used to keep classic American cars running on the streets of Havana. “We have achieved such a capability that our experts can integrate any latest system with the ageing Mirages,” says Air Commodore Salman M Farooqi, deputy managing director of the Mirage Rebuild Factory (MRF) at the Kamra complex.

Pakistan bought its first Mirages to diversify its fleet, which in the late 1960s largely consisted of US-built planes: F-104 Starfighters, T-37 Tweet Birds and F-86 Sabres. The Mirage became a popular choice, with the Air Force buying 17 different variants in later years, eventually owning the second-highest number of the fighter jets after France. They performed bombing missions during Pakistan’s failed war with India in 1971 – one of the shortest conflicts in history, lasting just 13 days and leading to the creation of Bangladesh.

But Mirages flew on, also carrying out reconnaissance missions in India, and intercepting and shooting down Soviet and Afghan planes that violated Pakistani



**KAMRA, Pakistan:** A Mirage aircraft of the Pakistan Air Force (PAF) takes off at the Pakistan Aeronautical Complex after an overhaul at the Mirage Rebuild Factory (MRF) in Kamra, west of the capital Islamabad. —AFP

airspace during the Soviet war. Usually the jet has two or three life cycles, each spanning around 12 years. But overhauling them abroad was expensive for Pakistan, a developing country whose budget is already disproportionately tilted towards its military and which has historically received billions in military assistance from countries such as the US. So, with the help of experts from Dassault, the air force decided if you want something done for the right price, you’ve got to do it yourself.

### Makeover

The Mirage Rebuild Factory was established at the Pakistan Aeronautical Complex (PAC) in 1978, and in the years since has saved “billions” of dollars for Pakistan, according to Group Captain Muhammad Farooq, in charge of one of the maintenance hangars—though he said the exact figure was difficult to pin down.

The planes take some seven weeks to be overhauled and repainted, he said, adding that usually the MRF has the capacity for more than a dozen planes a year. Its calendar for the next decade or so is already

booked up. At least eight different Mirage variants, including the Mirage 5-EF, Mirage III-DP and Mirage-III Rose-1, were in one of the maintenance hangars when AFP visited. Engineers and technicians were dismantling cockpit instrument panels and landing gear while undertaking a “non-destructive inspection”, essentially an X-ray to detect faults in the wings and airframe.

Dozens of engines awaiting overhaul were piled in one hangar. Even planes that had suffered accidents such as fires breaking out have been patched back together at the facility. Pakistan has also been buying up discarded Mirages from other countries to bring through the facility, said retired Air Marshal Shahid Lateef. The most important technological improvement, developed with the help of South Africa, is the ability to integrate air-to-air refueling, Farooqi said. The “identification of friend and foe” (IFF) system, which detects when a Mirage has been locked on to by the system of another plane, was also a key development, he said.—AFP

## Outrage as WWII sex slave memorial removed in Manila

**MANILA:** Advocacy groups voiced outrage yesterday after a memorial to women forced to work as sex slaves to Japanese soldiers during World War II was taken down in Manila. City authorities said the bronze sculpture of a blindfolded woman, which was on a bayside promenade in the Philippine capital, was removed Friday to make way for a drainage and footbridge project. However, advocacy groups for the memory of so-called “comfort women” wondered whether the Philippine government had yielded to Japanese displeasure over the memorial.

While Japan occupied the Philippines during the war, it is now one of the Philippines’ top investors, trading partners and aid donors. After the statue was installed in January, some two kilometers from the Japanese embassy, Tokyo said the move was “very unfortunate”. “The Japanese government is working hard... they also wanted to get rid of a similar statue in New Jersey,” said Rechilda Extremadura, executive director of Lila Pilipina, an organi-

zation of comfort women survivors and advocates. “This is a desecration of Filipino women’s dignity as it casts a foul insult on hundreds of Filipina sex slaves victimized under the Japanese occupation,” women’s group Gabriela said.

Manila’s public works department could not be reached for comment and the Japanese embassy in the Philippines did not immediately respond to an email. Historians say up to 200,000 women, mostly from Korea but also other parts of Asia including the Philippines and China, were forced to work in wartime military brothels for Japanese invasion troops. The number of Philippine women involved is believed to number in the hundreds. Activists have in recent years set up dozens of statues in public venues around the world, many of them in South Korea, in honor of the victims.

The statues have drawn the ire of Tokyo, which has apologized to Seoul over the issue and has since pressed for the removal of one of the statues outside its embassy there. Philippine officials had approved the statue in Manila, which was funded by a Filipino-Chinese philanthropist to highlight the suffering of comfort women. Asked about the statue’s removal, President Rodrigo Duterte yesterday conceded he knew little about it but urged Filipinos not to “insult” Japan. —AFP

## Jail for top Indonesia politician a ‘turning point’ in graft war

**JAKARTA:** A hefty 15-year prison term for one of Indonesia’s top politicians, who allegedly even staged a car crash to evade arrest, could be a turning point in the country’s war on corruption, observers say, as anger boils over against powerful figures living above the law. Setya Novanto’s case sparked a mix of rage and disbelief as the disgraced house speaker tried to dodge arrest on graft charges, capped by his suspicious crash into a utility pole shortly after his palatial estate was raided. The car accident—widely believed to have been engineered—landed Novanto in a Jakarta hospital bed with medical tubes up his nose, apparently one step ahead of pursuing anti-corruption investigators.

The images sparked a flurry of mocking online memes, including the popular #SaveTiangListrik (save the electric pole) hashtag. It later emerged that Novanto’s now-indicted lawyer had booked his hospital room before the accident happened. The 62-year-old—hailed by Donald Trump as one of Indonesia’s most powerful men several years ago—then un-

successfully claimed that a bout of diarrhoea left him unable to participate in his trial.

On Tuesday, he was hit with one of Indonesia’s heaviest sentences for corruption after being convicted of taking millions of dollars in kickbacks and bribes linked to the national roll-out of government ID cards. Novanto, dubbed Mr Teflon, had escaped corruption allegations before—including being caught on tape trying to extort a US-based miner—and his conviction marked the highest-profile victory in recent memory for Indonesia’s Corruption Eradication Commission (KPK). “I think this is a milestone for the Corruption Eradication Commission and the anti-corruption movement in general,” said Adnan Topan, coordinator for the non-profit Indonesia Corruption Watch. “Setya Novanto is very powerful. He has a strong network.”

Novanto was among dozens of politicians, government officials and businessmen implicated in the scandal, which saw an estimated \$170 million syphoned off the \$440 million ID card project. It was the latest example of graft in a country where the legacy of notoriously corrupt dictator Suharto, suspected of looting billions of dollars from state coffers, still looms large. Indonesia ranked 96th out of 180 countries on Transparency International’s 2017 corruption index.—AFP

### News in brief

#### Iran ‘prostitutes’ report

**TEHRAN:** The head of Iran’s reformist newspaper Shargh was arrested after residents of a northeastern city accused the paper of defamation over a report on “prostitution” there, Iranian media said yesterday. Mehdi Rahmani was “summoned (by the courts) after a complaint by a group of residents of the Shahid Rajai neighborhood of Mashhad,” the semi-official ISNA news agency reported, quoting the city’s deputy prosecutor Hassan Heydari. “The newspaper had described some of the district’s women as prostitutes.” Mashhad’s Khorassan newspaper said Rahmani had been detained after failing to pay bail set at 500 million riyals (around \$9,000/7,500 euros). —AFP

#### Taiwan factory blaze

**TAIPEI:** Seven people—five of them firefighters—died in a fire that broke out late Saturday in an electronics factory in northern Taiwan, the local fire department said. The inferno raged through the eight-floor building of a circuit board maker, located in an industrial district in Taoyuan City. Seven firefighters were trapped by large fallen objects as they tried to search for people inside the factory. They were rescued yesterday but only two survived. The two others killed were factory workers from Thailand. Seven other firefighters were injured, five of them suffering burns from an unidentified liquid, according to the fire department. —AFP

#### Lebanese briefly detained

**BEIRUT:** Israel’s army said yesterday that it had briefly held a Lebanese woman who crossed the border and then repatriated her, a detention Beirut denounced as an abduction. The Lebanese army said that the woman, Nohad Dali, was taken on Saturday evening from Shebaa, a small disputed area that Israel regards as part of the Golan Heights, which it captured from Syria in 1967, but which Beirut says is Lebanese territory. “An Israeli enemy patrol carried out the abduction of Nohad Dali,” a Lebanese army statement said. —Reuters

#### Afghan voter registration

**KABUL:** Afghanistan is air-dropping leaflets as it steps up efforts to boost the low number of voter registrations for upcoming legislative elections, amid concerns that a poor turnout will undermine the credibility of the poll. A series of attacks on voter registration centers across the war-torn country, including a suicide bomb in Kabul a week ago, has deterred many Afghans from signing up to participate in the October 20 ballot. Just over 650,000 adults had registered by Saturday, a fortnight after the two-month long process began, data compiled by the Independent Election Commission (IEC) showed. —AFP

#### The ‘Windrush generation’

**LONDON:** British Prime Minister Theresa May is under pressure to introduce legislation guaranteeing a promise of compensation and help applying for citizenship made to long-term residents from the Caribbean incorrectly labeled illegal immigrants. For almost two weeks, British ministers have been struggling to explain why some descendants of the so-called “Windrush generation”, invited to Britain to plug labor shortfalls between 1948 and 1971, are being denied basic rights because of trouble documenting their status. The Windrush scandal overshadowed the Commonwealth summit in London earlier this month and has raised questions about May’s six-year stint as interior minister before she became prime minister in the wake of the 2016 Brexit referendum. —Reuters



## Analysis

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## Catalonia and Basque Country: Separatists go different ways

With the Basque Country and Catalonia going their different ways, the Spanish government has avoided the nightmare of a joint independence front between the two wealthy regions. The northern Basque Country, home to 2.2 million people - roughly one in four said to be a separatist - wants to live in peace, taking advantage of the expected dissolution of separatist group ETA after decades of bloody attacks.

That contrasts sharply with Catalonia, where about half its 7.5 million people back independence and the region is now locked in a tense stand-off with Madrid. "The interests today of the two regions are very different. One wants to protect what they have won; the others (Catalans) want more," said Pablo Simon, a political science professor at Carlos III University in Madrid.

### Shared history

The two regions have felt close since the 19th century, when elite-led nationalist movements first appeared. Both are industrial centres and they watched with a certain detachment as the rest of the country - rural and largely illiterate - collapsed into chaos after Spain lost its last colonies, notes Spanish historian Carlos Gil Andres. General Francisco Franco's 1939-75 dictatorship was then a time of repression with the public use of their distinct languages banned.

But it was in the Basque region that the response was more radical. ETA, set up in 1959, is blamed for the deaths of at least 829 people to 2010 in its campaign of bombings and shootings to achieve independence. In Catalonia, nationalist group Terre Lliure set up in 1978 and which like ETA was Marxist, carried out only one killing. It disbanded in 1991.

### 'New coexistence'

In 2003 Basque regional premier Juan Jose Ibarretxe proposed a status of "free association" with Spain. He also wanted - long before Catalonia - a referendum on self-determination but the plan was rejected by parliament in Madrid. Basque nationalist politicians however chose to respect democratic rules and avoid the confrontation with Madrid that Catalan leaders took on. Today all sides in the region "want to build a new coexistence" and "avoid a repetition" of the years of violence, said Agus Hernan of the Forum Social, a group which is close to families of ETA prisoners. The ruling conservative nationalist PNV party "realized that radicalization would keep them from power," said Inaki Oyarzabal, a Basque senator with the conservative Popular Party.

### Unequal tax powers

There is another key difference - the Basque Country has since the 19th century had the power to collect its own taxes and decide for itself how to spend the money. Basque leaders negotiate roughly every five years the "cupo", the amount they must give Madrid to pay for public services, said Simon. They are therefore used to dealing with Madrid and are interested in maintaining the status quo. This tax-and-spend advantage of the Basques fuels resentment in Catalonia.

The situation there has been made worse by "a perfect storm" driven by the drastic austerity measures adopted after the 2007-8 economic crisis and anger over corruption, said Borja Ventura who has written on both regions. In 2011, the then head of the Catalan regional government, Artur Mas, was forced to enter the regional parliament by helicopter to avoid a crowd that had surrounded the building to protest austerity. Ventura recalled. "And a way to bring people to his side was to mobilize them against an external enemy," he said, referring to the Spanish state.

### Civil disobedience

Catalonia demanded the same "fiscal autonomy" but Madrid was unwilling to concede a region which accounts for 19 percent of Spanish economic output the same costly privileges enjoyed by the Basque Country which accounts for just six percent. Over the following years, Catalan separatists repeatedly challenged Madrid's authority and the decisions of the national courts until, on October 27, 2017, the parliament they controlled voted to break away from Spain after a banned independence referendum.

Oyarzabal, the Basque senator, said "there is no terrorism" in Catalonia but he likened the region's separatist drive to a "coup d'etat". Catalans reject outright any suggestion their struggle can be compared to that of the Basques. Joan Tarda, a lawmaker for Catalonia separatist party the Republican Left, said any comparison with the years of violence in the Basque Country "is an insult to intelligence and it trivializes terrorism". "We opted for an enormous act of civil disobedience. But we will not deviate from our civic and peaceful method," he added. —AFP



## Facebook may crimp political campaigns

Facebook's new focus on protecting private user data is likely to change the game for many campaigns, making it harder to deliver highly targeted, personal political messages. The changes unveiled by the huge social network following an outcry over the hijacking of data on 87 million Facebook members by Cambridge Analytica could be significant for campaigns. The new privacy effort could limit "microtargeting" using the social network, a technique used successfully by Donald Trump's campaign in 2016 and others.

"Microtargeting is a big deal for campaigns, because they have to decide how they spend money and who they target," said Joseph Hall, chief technologist for the Center for Democracy & Technology. He is leading a research project on election privacy and security. "Any clamping down on data collection is going to have a large effect on campaigns." Microtargeting is not new - marketing specialists used public records before the Internet era - but the trove of data from social networks, often combined with that of data brokers, has made it easier to identify population segments based on income, political affiliation and other factors.

### Less precision

Hall said that if Facebook clamps down on its user data to campaigns, "They won't be able to target on a granular basis. That's not a bad thing, but campaigns hate it because it costs more money." Campaign consultants note that Facebook is not a source of voter data - with the major exception of Cambridge Analytica - but instead a targeting tool for ads based on data collected from other sources.

Facebook appears to be making it harder to use software tools to automatically match members of the social network with other affiliations. "I can target women between the ages of 21 and 35 who like Planned Parenthood, but I can't target Mary Smith," said one Democratic political operative who

asked to remain anonymous. "It's not clear if we'll be able to target voters as accurately and cheaply as in recent years."

Even with a stricter privacy environment, digital is expected to account for 20.1 percent of the \$8.8 billion spent this year in the United States on congressional and state election ads, according to the consulting firm Borrell Associates. That compares with less than one percent in the 2014 elections, according to Borrell. But it's down slightly from an estimate earlier this year, the firm said, because of "shyness about Facebook use following the Cambridge Analytica scandal."

Facebook has announced it would verify the identities of anyone placing political ads on its platform and follow procedures in a bill called the "Honest Ads Act" for labeling of candidate messages. It remains unclear how Facebook will adapt new EU privacy rules for the US market, such as the ability to easily opt out of targeted ads. "I think Facebook will provide as much incentive to opt in as possible," said Mark Jablonowski, chief technical officer of DSPolitical, an ad tech firm that works with Democratic candidates. "If Facebook users do opt out (in large numbers) that would have a major impact on Facebook revenue and targeting capabilities. It would have fairly far-reaching implications for the whole advertising industry."

Jules Polonetsky, CEO of the Future of Privacy Forum, said that "it's not just a Facebook issue," because consultants and candidates can obtain detailed voter data from other, sometimes "sketchy" sources. Polonetsky said some political consultants are advertising ways to reach "angry" voters, which may lead to incendiary ads, whether via social media, email or other methods. "I fully expect candidates will do everything possible to win, using any available data they can Hoover up, and apologize for it later," Polonetsky said.



Protestors from the pressure group Avaaz demonstrate outside Portcullis house where Facebook's Chief Technology Officer Mike Schroepfer was questioned by members of parliament in London on April 26, 2018. —AFP

### Like Netflix or Spotify

Chris Wilson, CEO of the political consulting group WPAI, which works with Republican candidates, warned against going too far in restricting social media data use. "Facebook has given Republicans an important resource that allows candidates to go directly to voters with messages on issues they care about," Wilson said. "If we push too hard and Facebook changes their rules so that we can't do the same things as Netflix or Spotify at the individual level, that would be sad for the future of democracy."

Michael Cornfield, a George Washington University political scientist who leads a research project on social media in campaigns, said the public focus on Facebook and privacy is probably transitory and will have little impact on upcoming elections. "Data privacy has not

been a big issue because few people see it costing them personally," he said. Cornfield said he expects campaigns to use the Facebook Live video platform and increase use of artificial intelligence to target voters.

Facebook has also promised labels and verification for ads on hot-button political issues which are not for specific candidates. But it may have trouble living up to that pledge, said Young Mie Kim, a University of Wisconsin professor who led research on 2016 Facebook political ads. Kim said many disputed 2016 ads were "dark" posts by anonymous groups, shown only to small numbers of users without mentioning a candidate's name. "It is incredibly difficult to define an issue ad - even policymakers do not completely agree on this," she said. "Facebook will have a very difficult time defining what are political ads." —AFP

## Sex scandals deepen Chile mistrust in Catholic church

Despite a strong Catholic tradition, Chile is witnessing a growing rift between the people and the church, sharpened by a string of sexual abuse scandals that until recently had been ignored by the pope. The extent of the rift became clear in January when Pope Francis visited Chile and sparked outrage by hugging Juan Barros, a controversial bishop who has been accused of covering up abuses by another priest in the 1980s and '90s.

Questioned by journalists, Francis responded abruptly, saying there was "not a single piece of proof" against Barros in remarks that caused widespread anger among those who had been abused by the other priest, Fernando Karadima. But the pontiff apologized and quickly moved to dispatch the Vatican's top abuse investigator to collect evidence, later acknowledging he had made "grave mistakes" in his handling of the scandal.

And he also pledged to meet with the victims, inviting three of them to the Vatican to discuss the extent of abuse within the church in Chile. All three were abused in the 1980s by Karadima, who at the time was an influential priest who trained seminarians in an affluent area of the capital, Santiago. It was only in 2011 that he was convicted of abusing children by the Vatican, which ordered him to retire to a "life of prayer and penitence" and barred him from any

public ministry. But the victims were unable to pursue a criminal case against him in Chile because the statute of limitations had expired.

### 80 church leaders accused

Next month, the pope will also meet with Chilean bishops to discuss the findings of the probe by his investigator, Archbishop Charles Scicluna. Beyond Karadima, nearly 80 Catholic clergymen have been accused of sexually abusing children in Chile, according to BishopAccountability, an American NGO that tracks such cases. And a recent poll showed that seven out of 10 Chileans disapprove of the way in which the Catholic church has handled the scandal.

Aware of what could be coming down the line, Santiago's archbishop, Ricardo Ezzati, recently suggested to Barros that he resign "for the good of the people of God". The visibility of the Karadima case and the testimony of the three victims who have spoken out on behalf of the abused - Jose Andres Murillo, James Hamilton and Juan Carlos Cruz - has dealt a major blow to a church seen as elitist and distant from the concerns of a modern society.

### A growing disaffection

But Chile's disaffection with the church began back in the 1990s with the return of democracy to the country, says Luis Bahamondes, an expert on religion at the University of Chile. Despite the fact that part of the Catholic church sided with those persecuted by the country's military dictatorship, when democracy returned, it went "from having a more social role to one that was driven by traditional values," distancing itself from many worshippers.

In a country where some 70 percent of the population describe themselves as Catholic,



Chilean sexual abuse victims (from left) Jose Andres Murillo and his wife, James Hamilton and his wife, and Juan Carlos Cruz, attend the Sunday Angelus prayer delivered by the Pope from the window of the apostolic palace overlooking St Peter's Square yesterday. —AFP

only a third say they have confidence in the institution, a Mori survey revealed this week. Chileans had to wait until 2004 before they were able to get divorced, and it was only in 2017 that women were legally allowed to have an abortion in cases of rape, or threat to the mother's life or deadly birth defects. Same-sex couples still cannot marry nor can anyone who is transgender change their identity on a passport, although this year's Oscar's triumph of "A Fantastic Woman", a Chilean film about a transgender woman, which won best foreign film, has gone a long way to changing that.

'Increasingly remote from the people'  
But Bahamondes denies talk of a "rift,"

pointing out that most of the population still identify as Catholic, saying it is more a sense that they simply don't feel that the church represents them, which is particularly true among the youth. President Sebastian Pinera, himself a practicing Catholic, on Thursday said he was saddened by the fact that the church "is increasingly remote, not only from worshippers but from people in general," which is not only happening in Chile but across Latin America. During his visit in January, Pope Francis himself acknowledge that people prefer leaders "who know how to be compassionate, how to lend a hand, to stop and help those who have fallen," while criticizing the "elitist" attitude of certain clergy. —AFP



# Security Council envoys hear of rapes, murders from Rohingyas

## Kuwaiti ambassador says int’l community has great interest in resolving crisis

KUTUPALONG, Bangladesh: Hundreds of Rohingya staged a demonstration yesterday as UN Security Council envoys visited refugee camps in Bangladesh where about 700,000 people who have fled Myanmar in the past year have sought sanctuary. Some of the Muslim refugees broke down in tears as they told the ambassadors harrowing stories of murder and rape in Myanmar. The demonstrators waved placards demanding justice for atrocities against the refugees until they were dispersed by police.

Senior diplomats from the 15-member Security Council - including permanent members the United States, Russia, China, Britain and France - arrived in Bangladesh on Saturday for a four-day visit to the camps. They will go on to Myanmar where they are to meet civilian leader Aung San Suu Kyi. Myanmar has faced intense international pressure over the military clampdown against the Rohingya launched last August that the

United Nations has called "ethnic cleansing".

The Security Council has called for the safe return of the Rohingya and an end to the discrimination against them. However, deputy Russian ambassador Dmitry Polyanskiy, whose country has supported Myanmar, warned that the council did not have a "magic stick" to resolve what is now one of the world's worst refugee crises. "We are not looking away from this crisis, we are not closing our eyes," the Russian diplomat told reporters. Britain's UN ambassador Karen Pierce said the Rohingya "must be allowed to go home in conditions of safety". "It may take some time but we'd like to hear from the government of Myanmar how they wish to work with the international community," she said.

**Safety needed**

The UN envoys first visited Konarpara camp, a no man's land between Bangladesh and Myanmar where

some 6,000 Rohingya have been trapped on bleak scrubland since the bloodshed began last year. The camp's Rohingya leader Dil Mohammad said council envoys spoke with some women victims of the violence in Myanmar's Rakhine state, as well as community elders. "We told them that we're staying here to save our lives. We're very much eager to go back to our land, provided our security is ensured by the UN," Mohammad told AFP.

Later, the diplomats went to the giant Kutupalong camp where hundreds of Rohingya staged the protest that was dispersed by police before the envoys arrived. A second was later held in the camp. "We want restoration of our citizenship under Rohingya ethnicity. We want security and return of our confiscated land and properties," said Rohingya leader Mohibullah. The council members were "shocked" by the accounts of rapes, murders and torture endured by the Rohingya in Rakhine, according to Mohibullah.

Myanmar has said the military operation in Rakhine was to root out extremists and has rejected nearly all allegations that its security forces committed atrocities. The Security Council delegation is to meet with Bangladesh's Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina today before leaving for Myanmar. They are to go on a helicopter flight over Rakhine to see the remains of villages torched during the violence. Kuwait's Ambassador Mansour Al-Otaibi said the visit was not about "naming and shaming" Myanmar, but that "the message will be very clear for them: The international community is following the situation and has great interest in resolving it." On Friday, Human Rights Watch called for the Rohingya crisis to be referred to the International Criminal Court. "The lack of a UN Security Council resolution has left the Myanmar government convinced that it has literally gotten away with mass murder," HRW executive director Kenneth Roth told reporters in Yangon. — AFP

## Qatar to scrap exit system for workers...

Continued from Page 1

ensuring Qatar has a labor system that reflects global best practice". "The government of Qatar now has another partner to promote and protect the rights of our guest workers," he said. A deal to establish an ILO office in Qatar was struck last October after Doha agreed to a package of labor reforms which also included introducing a minimum wage and a grievance

procedure for workers. Doha and the ILO have signed a three-year program of technical cooperation on labor issues.

Human rights group Amnesty International said in a statement yesterday that Qatar should introduce "a timetable for meaningful" reform. Qatar should "urgently publish a robust and effective plan of action to remove the excessive restrictions that enable employers to trap migrant workers in exploitative situations", it said. Qatar's pledge to reform labor laws comes as it faces regional political pressure after a group of Saudi-led countries abruptly froze ties with Doha last June, accusing it of supporting terrorism and fostering ties with regional rival Iran, charges denied by Doha. —AFP

## King launches construction of...

Continued from Page 1

years, having lifted a decades-long ban on cinemas last year. In February, Saudi Arabia's General Entertainment Authority said it would stage more than 5,000 festivals and concerts in 2018, double last year's figure, and pump \$64 billion into the sector in the com-

ing decade. Saudis currently splurge billions of dollars annually to see films and visit amusement parks in neighboring tourist hubs like Dubai and Bahrain. The kingdom has also sought to court investors with three hi-tech "giga projects", funded in part by its sovereign wealth fund.

Aside from Qiddiya, the kingdom has unveiled blueprints for NEOM - billed as a regional Silicon Valley to be built from scratch - and a reef-fringed resort destination on the Red Sea. Skeptics have questioned the viability of the projects, worth hundreds of billions of dollars, in an era of cheap oil. — AFP

## Kuwait rejects breach of laws...

Continued from Page 1

in the rescues. Duterte yesterday described the treatment of workers in Kuwait as a "calamity". He said he would bring home Filipina maids who suffered abuse as he appealed to workers who wanted to stay in the state. "I would like to address to their patriotism: come home. No matter how poor we are, we will survive. The economy is doing good and we are short of our workers," he said.

About 10 million Filipinos work abroad, seeking high-paying jobs they are unable to find at home, and their remittances are a major pillar of the Philippine economy. The Philippine government has for decades hailed overseas workers as modern heroes but advocacy groups have highlighted the social cost of migration, tearing families apart and making Filipinos vulnerable to abuse.

Duterte lashed out at Kuwait in February, alleging employers routinely rape Filipina workers, force them to work 21 hours a day and feed them scraps. However after the latest row, Duterte used a conciliatory tone as he addressed the "diplomatic ruckus" on Saturday. "Apparently it seems as if they have anger against Filipinos... I do not want to send (workers) because apparently you do not like Filipinos," he said in a speech before Filipinos in Singapore. "Just do not hurt them. I plead that they'd be given a treatment deserving of a human being," he said in the same event.

Duterte said workers returning from Kuwait could find employment as English teachers in China, citing improved ties with Beijing. Describing China as a "true friend", he said he would use Chinese aid to fund the workers' repatriation. Duterte added he was not after "vengeance". "I'd address myself to the Kuwait government and the people: Thank you for helping my countrymen all these years. It is a debt of gratitude that after all you were able to help. So I have no anger, no hatred," he said. — Agencies

## Saudis embrace Americana at...

Continued from Page 1

The event would not have been possible before the meteoric rise of Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman, who has curtailed the power of the religious establishment and sought to cater to his generation's desires. "We want to live normally," the young prince told investors in Riyadh in Oct 2017.

The unapologetically staged event featured another cathartic moment, when the Iranian-American Daivari brothers entered the ring, waving an Iranian flag. Saudi Arabia and Iran are arch-foes in the region, respective Sunni and Shiite powerhouses competing for influence from Iraq to Yemen. But on Friday, the rivalry played out in a scripted crowd-pleasing segment. Just as four young Saudis - selected as WWE prospects at a recent

tryout in Jeddah - entered the ring, the Iranian-American brothers showed up as spoilers.

"Uh-oh," the announcer said, as a greased-up Ariya Daivari pushed one of the Saudis against the ropes. "I don't see you doin' nothing," Daivari challenged. The Saudi paused, feigning shock, then pushed back - sending his opponent crashing to the floor and staring up in amazement. "Oh and a big kick! Faisal took out Daivari's older brother," the announcer shouted. The crowd broke out in cheers for the four young Saudis as the Iranian spoilers slunk away, clutching their backs and grimacing.

While the smack-down may have seemed like an immature take on the regional rivalry, it was in keeping with exaggerated WWE tradition. The spectacle earned the approval of The Iron Sheikh, another Iranian-American who earned his nom de guerre playing a generic Middle Eastern villain for decades in the ring. Following the Greatest Royal Rumble, he tweeted: "HOW COME EVWEYONE LOOK LIKE WANNABE IRON SHEIK?" — AFP

## Pompeo talks tough on Iran...

Continued from Page 1

Trump is due to decide on May 12 whether to re-impose sanctions on Tehran, putting in peril a landmark 2015 nuclear accord. Britain, France and Germany all remain committed to the deal, saying it is the best way to keep Tehran from getting the bomb. But Trump and America's Middle East allies argue the deal, approved by Trump's predecessor Barack Obama, was too weak and needs to be replaced with a more permanent arrangement and supplemented by controls on Iran's missile program.

Jubeir said Riyadh supports "efforts aimed at improving the nuclear deal" and called for further sanctions against Iran for its "violations of international decisions on ballistic missiles, its support for terrorism and its interference in the affairs of countries in the region". Pompeo said the nuclear deal "in its current form" does not do enough to make sure Iran never possesses atomic weapons.

President Emmanuel Macron of France and Chancellor Angela Merkel of Germany left Washington this week after talks with Trump which failed to secure any promise to keep the deal alive. In Washington, National Security Advisor John Bolton also said Trump was still considering his options. "He has made no decision on the nuclear deal, whether to stay in

or get out," Bolton told Fox News yesterday.

Absent from Pompeo's agenda were any meetings with the Palestinian leadership, which is boycotting the White House over its decision to move its embassy in Israel from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem, expected to occur on May 14. Pompeo said in Tel Aviv that "we are incredibly proud" of the decision. Senior Palestinian official Ahmed Majdalani told AFP the policy of boycotting Trump's administration would continue. Pompeo made mention after meeting Netanyahu of the White House wanting a "lasting and comprehensive peace" between Israel and the Palestinians, but other issues took center stage.

Speaking to reporters on the flight to Tel Aviv, Pompeo said he discussed calls from Trump for Saudi Arabia and other Middle East allies to contribute more to regional stability, including in Syria where the United States has more than 2,000 troops. "We had good conversations about that, it's a complicated problem in Syria," he said, adding that he was "confident" of Saudi help but that it was too soon to discuss details.

He also said he was "hopeful" of an end to the Gulf crisis that has seen Saudi Arabia and regional allies impose a diplomatic and trade embargo on fellow US ally Qatar. "They're going to figure this out... We've got a common challenge in Iran and I think they all recognize that." The United States, which has military bases in both Qatar and some of the countries lined up against it, is trying to mediate the Qatar feud. Trump publicly sided with the Saudis and Emiratis early in the crisis, but is now pushing for a resolution to maintain a united front against Iran. — Agencies



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# Celtics win game seven to oust Bucks from playoffs

## Anthony rejects future reserve role with Thunder

**LOS ANGELES:** Terry Rozier and Al Horford scored 26 points each as the Boston Celtics routed the Milwaukee Bucks 112-96 in game seven to book their spot in the second round of the NBA playoffs. The Celtics' victory in Saturday's deciding game was their fourth win at the Boston Garden as the home teams won all seven games in the Eastern Conference series. "We got it done that is the most important thing," said Rozier. "Before this series everybody doubted us. But we believed in each other and it worked out for us."

The storied Celtics franchise is now 36-0 lifetime when leading a playoff series 2-0, and they will try to make it 37 straight when they face the Philadelphia 76ers in the next round. Game one is today in Boston. "We got to pay attention to details and take away what they want to do," Rozier said of the next round. Jayson Tatum tallied 20 points for the Celtics in the win.



### Warriors rolled over the New Orleans Pelicans

finished with 16 points, 15 rebounds, 11 assists, and Kevin Durant tallied 26 points and 13 rebounds for the defending champion Warriors who took command of the contest in the second quarter.

"We knew we had to come out and get the ball moving," Green said. "Make sure everyone was a threat on the floor and we did. We knew we could pick them apart." Anthony Davis paced the Pelicans' attack with 21 points and 10 rebounds while Jrue Holiday had just 11 points on a disappointing four-of-14 shooting.

Golden State Warriors sharpshooter Stephen Curry will sit out the second round playoff opener against New Orleans, but is "very likely" to play Game Two, coach Steve Kerr revealed before tip-off on Saturday. Curry has not played since March 23 due to his sprained left knee but the twice MVP has been back on the practice court and recently completed his first full 5-on-5



**BOSTON:** Marcus Smart #36 of the Boston Celtics takes a shot against Malcolm Brogdon #13 of the Milwaukee Bucks in Game Seven of Round One of the 2018 NBA Playoffs at TD Garden on Saturday in Boston, Massachusetts. The Celtics defeat the Bucks 112-96. — AFP

elimination of Giannis Antetokounmpo from the playoffs. Antetokounmpo, whose blend of size and athleticism has earned him the nickname the "Greek Freak," finished with 22 points and nine rebounds. Khris Middleton scored 32 and Eric Bledsoe chipped 23 in the loss. Boston led 50-42 at the half despite going one-for-12 from beyond the arc. Horford had 14 points and seven rebounds at halftime, while Bledsoe led the Milwaukee attack with 12 points.

The Bucks narrowed the Boston lead to three points early in the third, but Boston scored 11 of the last 15 points in the quarter to seize command. "Wasn't able to win on the road, but we pushed the series to game seven," Antetokounmpo said. "A lot of the guys in the locker room have never been in game sevens. It's a new experience. Now we know now what it takes to win a game seven."

### WARRIORS CRUSH PELICANS

In Oakland, Draymond Green posted his fourth career playoff triple double as the Golden State Warriors rolled over the New Orleans Pelicans 123-101 in the opening game of their second round series. Green

scrimmage.

"When you've been out five weeks and want to play in the playoffs, I don't think one scrimmage is enough even though he feels great," Kerr told reporters. "He wants to play and he pleaded his case. He wasn't happy but he understood. So we're going to sit him tonight and he's very likely to play in Game Two." The defending champion Warriors defeated San Antonio 4-1 in the best-of-seven first round series without him but they will be anxious to welcome him back for the Pelicans series. Golden State, who are seeking their third NBA title in four years, host Game Two tomorrow.

### JAZZ LOSE INJURED RUBIO

The Utah Jazz will be without injured point guard Ricky Rubio when they open their NBA second-round playoff series against the Houston Rockets on Sunday, the team said Saturday. "Ricky Rubio (left hamstring strain) is out tomorrow for Game 1 in Houston," the team confirmed in a brief statement as ESPN reported the Jazz fear the Spaniard could be sidelined for 10 days.

Rubio exited Friday's series-clinching 96-91 victory over the Oklahoma City Thunder in the first quarter, not

long after a behind-the-back pass to teammate Rudy Gobert. Rubio missed several games late in the regular season with soreness in his left hamstring. Rookie Donovan Mitchell, who took over the bulk of point guard duties after Rubio's departure, tweeted his support.

"We gon hold it down for you Rick!" Mitchell posted on Twitter on Saturday. But Rubio's absence is a big blow for the Jazz as they prepare to tackle a Rockets team whose 65-17 regular season led the league and was a franchise best. The Rockets dispatched the Minnesota Timberwolves 4-1 in the first round.

Meanwhile, Carmelo Anthony isn't interested in sticking around in Oklahoma City as a bench player for the Thunder. A day after the Thunder were eliminated from the first round of the NBA playoffs, Anthony said during his exit interview on Saturday that such a role was out of the question. "I'm not sacrificing (with) no bench role," he said. "I think everybody knows I've sacrificed damn near everything, and was willing to sacrifice nearly everything for this situation to work out."

The 33-year-old forward spent significant time on the bench during the Thunder's first-round loss to the Utah Jazz. Anthony, who averaged 16.2 points, 5.8 rebounds and 1.3 assists for the season, can opt out of the final year of his contract, which is worth \$28 million, and not return to the Thunder in 2018.

And he indicated he was mulling that option after a sometimes frustrating campaign that followed his trade from the New York Knicks on the eve of training camp.

Anthony waived his no-trade clause with the Knicks to make the move happen, with the Thunder hoping he would join established star Russell Westbrook and another OKC newcomer, Paul George, to form a Big Three that would see them challenge the Golden State Warriors and Houston Rockets in the Western Conference.

But Anthony said that with the trio joining forces so close to the start of the season "everything was just thrown together" and his role wasn't properly defined. —Agencies

## Zain awards winners of Hunting and Equestrian Club's festival

**KUWAIT:** Zain, the leading telecommunications company in Kuwait, participated in awarding the winners of speed races in the Hunting and Equestrian Club's Conclusion Festival for the season 2017-2018 under the patronage of HH the Prime Minister Sheikh Jaber Mubarak Al-Hamad Al-Sabah and the attendance of his representative Farwaniyah Governor Sheikh Faisal Al-Homoud Al-Malek Al-Sabah.

Zain's strategic partnership with the Hunting and Equestrian Club came in line with the company's belief in the importance of taking part in projects and initiatives that strengthen the valuable Arabian identity and cherished Kuwaiti culture, reflecting the vital role of the private sector in contributing to the preservation of the heritage, culture and history of Kuwait.

Zain took part in awarding the winners of the final speed race, which is the concluding activity for the current season of the Hunting and Equestrian Club's program. The program featured a great number of activities including horse jumping competitions, speed races, cultural festivals, and more. The programs attracted many Arabian horse owners from inside and outside of Kuwait, as well as a large number of Arabian horse admirers from the public.

Zain stressed its keenness in providing the needed support and encouragement to all activities and initiatives that further pushes the national economic and touristic development wheel. The company is



committed to continuing to support all kinds of national projects that support the national economy and offer innovative ideas that contribute to the further progress of Kuwait. The Hunting and Equestrian Club is considered a distinguished national sporting venue that is popular among the public and witnesses support from the country. The club's athletes achieve many titles in the many races and sporting events they participate in all year round.

## Brilliant Bjork seals first European title

**BEIJING:** Alexander Bjork won his first European Tour title in stunning fashion after carding a seven-under 65 to emerge from a packed China Open field in a dramatic final round yesterday. "I can't describe the emotions. I'm really, really happy," said the Swede, who entered the day a shot off the pace and was part of a six-way tie for the lead at one point before winning by two strokes at 18-under par.

"I'm really proud of the way I played today," added the world number 112. "It's probably one of the best rounds I've ever played. I would say the best round, given the situation. I didn't make pretty much any mistakes today so I'm super happy." The 27-year-old will now leap into the top 10 in the European Tour Race to Dubai and as high as 72nd in the world today after receiving a bumper cheque for \$525,000 at the \$3.2 million event co-sanctioned by Asian Tour on his 44th European Tour start.

Jordan Smith earlier signed for a brilliant 64 to set the clubhouse target at 16 under par, but Bjork took the lead on his own for the first time with a birdie on 15 after a classy up-and-down from a sand trap. Spaniard Adrian Otaegui joined him in top spot but another birdie on the 17 left Bjork with an nervous clubhouse wait at 18-under par 270.

A three-putt on the 17th from Otaegui left him two behind and when he and fellow overnight leader Matt Wallace both failed to make eagles at the par-five 18th Bjork was able to celebrate. Spain's Otaegui did make a birdie at 18 to take second place on his own at 17-under. Fellow Spaniard Jorge Campillo shared third at 16-under par with the English pair of Smith and Wallace.

The 27-year-old Bjork first hit the front with a stunning approach to the opening hole and further birdies on two par-fives, the fourth and eighth, plus another at the 11th left him one behind Smith who



**BEIJING:** This handout photo taken and released yesterday by the Asian Tour shows Alexander Bjork of Sweden posing with the winner's trophy of the China Open golf tournament in Beijing. — AFP

stormed to the top of the leader board after a flawless round featuring eight birdies. Otaegui holed a brilliant downhill sweeping 25-foot left-to-righter on the second to get his final-round 67 going. Wallace was level par for his round after 10 holes as he overcame a double-bogey on the fourth but a tremendous back nine with birdies on the 11th, 12th, 15th and 17th kept his hopes alive. Denmark's Lucas Bjerregaard also carded a magnificent eight-under 64 to lift himself to sixth pace on his own. —AFP

## Ko leads at Lake Merced in search of LPGA win

**SAN FRANCISCO:** Former world number one Lydia Ko, seeking her first win since 2016, takes a one-stroke lead into the final round of the LPGA Mediheal Championship after firing a five-under par 67 on Saturday. The New Zealand star, who has slumped to 18th in the world rankings during an LPGA title drought stretching back to the Marathon Classic in July of 2016, topped the leader board on 11-under 205, one shot in front of American Jessica Korda.

It's the first time since her last victory that Ko has led after 54 holes of an LPGA event, but the player who turned 21 on Tuesday said she wouldn't put pressure on herself chasing an elusive win. "I've got to play as best I

can, stay focused and have a lot of fun and if it happens that's great," Ko said. "But I think the most important thing for me is to stay positive. I know there's still a lot of golf to be played."

Overnight leader Korda, seeking her second LPGA victory of the season, left her birdie attempt at the 18th short, settling for a one-under 71 and 206. Australian Minjee Lee was alone in third after a 68 for 208. Thailand's Moriya Jutanugarn, who claimed her first LPGA title last week in Los Angeles, signed for a 71 and headed a group sharing fourth on 210 that also included Colombia's Mariajo Uribe (68), American Ryann O'Toole (69) and England's Charley Hull (73).

For Ko, the friendly confines of Lake Merced Golf Club could be just the place to end her drought. Although Ko had 11 top-10 finishes across the 2017 season but has looked a far cry from the fresh-faced teenager who tore the scene apart back in 2015. Five victories, including her first Major at the Evian Championship, took Ko to the very pinnacle of women's golf that year as she became the game's youngest ever world number one aged just 17. — AFP

## Pakistan Star wins Queen Elizabeth II Cup

**HONG KONG:** Pakistan Star clinched the Queen Elizabeth II Cup for jockey William Buick in Hong Kong yesterday, the highlight of three Group One spring races with a total purse of HK\$58 million (\$7.4 million). Known for being unpredictable, the five-year-old stormed to victory by a large margin in the final strides and finished the 2,000-metre course in just over two minutes.

"He's quite a famous horse for his antics so I was aware of him and I was aware of what he can do," Buick said after the race, adding Pakistan Star "felt beautiful today". "When I found out that I was riding him, I took on board all of the information I knew about the horse and also thought it was quite important to ride him with a fresh mind and just be

very positive about the horse," the winning jockey said.

The prize money for the Audemars Piguet QEII Cup had been boosted up from last year's HK\$20 million to HK\$24 million. Italian jockey Alberto Sanna finished second on Gold Mount, while Australian Hong Kong-based jockey Brett Prebble rode Eagle Way to finish third. Australian jockey Zac Purton was another star of the day, riding four-year-old gelding Ivictory to triumph in the 1,200-metre Chairman's Sprint race.

"I was fortunate enough to get on him and at the right time," he said of Ivictory. Purton claimed his first Hong Kong Cup last year in the city's Longines International Races, one of the world's richest race meetings. Already on a winning streak, Purton snapped up the 1,600-metre Champions Mile with Beauty Generation, surging from a relatively slow start to seal its victory. "He's just so honest, he goes out and runs the same race every time. When he gets the circumstances to suit him, you get to see how good he is," Purton said of the horse. — AFP



# Hamilton wins chaotic Baku battle to lead title race

## Lewis registers his first victory in seven races, 63rd of his career

**BAKU:** Defending world champion Lewis Hamilton claimed his first win of 2018 yesterday and took over as leader of the title race when he triumphed in a dramatic, crash-strewn Azerbaijan Grand Prix. The 33-year-old Briton, who had struggled for outright pace, managed to steer his Mercedes through a chaotic race and capitalize on others' misfortunes to register his first victory in seven races and the 63rd of his career. Sebastian Vettel of Ferrari looked set to turn pole position into a victory until a second Safety Car intervention left him lunging to pass Valtteri Bottas and locked up and ran off.

Bottas then seemed sure to win, but suffered a sudden right rear puncture on his Mercedes after running over metal debris on the straight. Hamilton flew past to return to the top of the podium "That was quite an emotional race, to be honest," said hamilton, who now leads the championship by four points from Vettel. "Valtteri deserved to have the win and also Sebastian did a great job. I was very fortunate today so it feels a bit odd to me to be here." Vettel managed to continue and finish fourth ahead of his teammate Kimi Raikkonen and Mexican Sergio Perez of Force India. Carlos Sainz finishing fifth for Renault and Charles Leclerc sixth for Sauber, his first points finish.

Fernando Alonso finished seventh for McLaren ahead of Canadian Lance Stroll of Williams, Stoffel Vandoorne in the second McLaren and New Zealand's Brendon Hartley of Toro Rosso who scored his first point in F1. The race was heavily punctuated by accidents which included one in which the two Red Bulls of Daniel Ricciardo and Max Verstappen collided while fighting for fourth place in the closing stages, the pair having banged wheels and battled for positions throughout the race. They ended up among the seven

retirements on a challenging day on the second-longest circuit on the calendar.

### RED BULL WIPE-OUT

In cooler conditions with a strong blustery wind, the drama unfolded from the start. As the lights went out, Vettel was away fast enough from his 53rd pole to hold off Hamilton in second, but behind them mayhem erupted. Raikkonen, starting sixth, attempted to pass inside Ocon's Force India, but the Frenchman turned in and as the pair collided he crashed into the wall. In the surrounding chaos, Sergey Sirotkin was also contacted and he went down an escape road while Raikkonen limped back to the Ferrari pits. The luckless Alonso suffered punctured right front and rear tyres. The multiple incidents required a Safety Car before the action settled and racing resumed, after five laps.

Vettel pulled away to open a three seconds lead ahead of the tight and fast Baku street track.

On lap 11, Nico Hulkenberg lost control of his Renault and clipped a wall at Turn Four as Ricciardo began a series of attacks on his Red Bull team-mate, the pair banging wheels to the consternation of their pit wall. At the front, Vettel was in control and opened up a 3.6 seconds lead despite Hamilton recording fastest laps.

"These tyres are done," complained Hamilton, who pitted to switch to 'softs' after 22 laps, rejoining third behind Bottas, but ahead of Verstappen. Vettel led the Finn by 12.5 seconds after 25 laps. The Red Bulls continued providing thrills as they fought for fourth, Ricciardo passing Verstappen outside Turn One before the Dutch tyre regained the place inside Turn Two.

With 20 laps to go, Vettel finally pitted and passed the



**BAKU:** Winner Mercedes' British driver Lewis Hamilton (C) celebrates next to second placed Ferrari's Finnish driver Kimi Raikkonen (L) and third placed Force India's Mexican driver Sergio Perez on the podium of the Formula One Azerbaijan Grand Prix at the Baku City Circuit in Baku yesterday. — AFP

lead to Bottas, but rejoined 8.5 seconds ahead of Hamilton. A frustrated Hamilton complained about back markers, but began clawing back time, recorded a fastest lap and then saw Bottas go eight-tenths quicker. A tense and high-speed conclusion was clearly in prospect before, after their pit-stops had reversed positions, Ricciardo rammed into Verstappen under braking for Turn One on lap 41.

The Safety Car was deployed again and the leaders

pitted for new ultra-soft tyres to set up a charging 10-lap finale. The action resumed with four laps remaining and promptly delivered even more twists as Vettel lunged to take the lead from Bottas, but locked up and fell to fourth.

Then, with two laps remaining, Bottas suffered a right rear punctured after running over debris. "Oh my God, it just blew up on me," he said as Hamilton took the lead ahead of Raikkonen and Perez. — AFP

## Blues plunge further into funk with Jaguares loss

**WELLINGTON:** The Auckland Blues' creation of unwanted history as the first New Zealand side to lose to the Jaguares in Super Rugby has plunged the team into a fresh crisis. With playoffs hopes on a knife edge before May, the Blues were humbled 20-13 by the Argentine side at Eden Park on Saturday, their fifth loss in six games. Having finished ninth last year, hopes had been high for Tana Umaga's side to make a run at the postseason.

But they have won just two of their nine matches this campaign and again sit bottom of the New Zealand conference on 13 points. "We know we are underperforming as a whole so that is a challenge and we live for the challenge," Umaga told reporters. "We are not getting it right on the field at the moment but we are not far away."

The small crowd that braved torrential rain on Saturday saw the Blues take a 13-5 lead at half-time playing into a strong wind before tactically falling apart in the second spell. They failed to kick deep into Jaguares territory and were kept pinned inside their own half. Umaga has steadfastly refused to criticize his players but came close on Saturday. "It's a pretty simple game with the wind, isn't it?" he said. "It's up to everyone to understand the plan. "There are key people that need to make those decisions, and I



**AUCKLAND:** Jeronimo De la Fuente of the Jaguares (C) is tackled by the Blues Tumua Manu (R) and Akira Ioane (L) during the Super Rugby match between the Auckland Blues of New Zealand and the Jaguares of Argentina at Eden Park in Auckland on Saturday. — AFP

don't believe they did."

### Apologies and injuries

The Blues won the last of their three titles in 2003 and have been back to the playoffs just twice since. Their struggles in the current term have turned off fans and television viewers, and prompted an apology from acting captain James Parsons on Saturday. The poor form has not been helped by a horrendous injury toll and with 19 players unavailable this week, Umaga had to look outside his wider training group.

Conference rivals Waikato Chiefs, however, have kept winning amid a similar injury crisis and, unlike the Blues, have beaten other New Zealand sides. The Blues haven't defeated compatriots since Umaga's first

game in charge, the 2016 season-opener against the Otago Highlanders. They can still sneak into the playoffs as the eighth-best team if they can start winning again. But it would be a long road back. The Chiefs, the side directly above them in fourth place in New Zealand, are on 26 points and have played one fewer game.

Umaga's bosses have stood by the former All Blacks captain, even as patience wears thin. "There is plenty of support for Tana within New Zealand Rugby and the Blues," Blues chief executive Michael Redman said last week. "We haven't been able to deliver and changing coaches every cycle hasn't worked for the Blues previously ... our preferred option would be to try to work with the group we have." — Reuters

## Eagles swoop for Australian player Mailata in NFL draft

**LOS ANGELES:** The Super Bowl champion Philadelphia Eagles made Australian Jordan Mailata the 233rd overall pick in the NFL draft on Saturday, hoping the towering 20-year-old can successfully transition from rugby league to American football. "It's been an absolute brainstorm of an experience," Mailata told NFL Draft Live after being selected in the seventh round of the annual intake of new talent.

Mailata, who previously suited up for the South Sydney Rabbitohs in the National Rugby League, had admitted earlier to NFL.com that he wasn't

expecting to be drafted. But his imposing physical attributes likely convinced the Eagles to take a chance that Mailata, listed as an offensive tackle, could earn a place on their roster.

He's six feet, eight inches tall and 346 pounds — and wowed scouts at his pro day demonstration by running the 40-yard dash in 5.12 seconds. In recent months, Mailata has been training and studying the intricacies of the game at the IMG Academy in Bradenton, Florida, trying to fast-track his pursuit of his NFL dream.

The Eagles traded up from their 250th pick to the number 233 spot to take Mailata with their final selection of the proceedings. "I'll never forget this day for the rest of my life," said Mailata, who arrived on Saturday in Dallas—where the draft began amid massive fanfare at the Cowboys' AT&T Stadium on Thursday. "There were a lot of emotions today ... especially when it came down to the last 30 picks, but it's been a great experience as a whole," he said. — AFP

## Wolff defends Hamilton over publicity 'grenade'

**BAKU:** Mercedes team chief Toto Wolff laughed off Bernie Ecclestone's suggestion that Lewis Hamilton is "a bit tired" of Formula One as nothing more than a publicity "hand grenade". While Hamilton declined to react to the former commercial supremo's comments, Wolff said he took them with a smile.

"All of us very much respect Bernie, but we have also learned to take the comments with a smile," said Wolff. "Lewis is remarkably easy with these kinds of things - I think that he sees it pretty relaxed. "Bernie comes in and throws a hand grenade and it's in the papers - it's great. It's Bernie's way - he got all of you here (into F1) and me, and he made the sport big. "It's the off-track and on-track narrative and another thing to write about and talk about."

Hamilton is still motivated, said Wolff, who added that there had been an overreaction to Mercedes failure to win any of the three season-opening races. "How the news is running these days, was oscillating between exuberance and depression, and back again," he said. "When things are not going in the right direction it's doom, and when you win two races in a row it's the utter Mercedes dominance destroying the sport."

"Maybe it's somewhere in the middle. We haven't collectively performed on the level we would want to in the last races. "There were three races we could have won and we didn't, that's a fact. But I still see the fire and the desire to win very much burning in Lewis." Wolff was speaking ahead of the Azerbaijan Grand prix, where Hamilton shared the front row with pole sitter Sebastian Vettel in a Ferrari.

### 'VIRTUAL GARAGES'

Formula One champions Mercedes are against any future ban on the use of 'virtual garages', the factory-based control centers used during grand prix weekends by teams to back up engineers at racetracks. "I think it's a very bad idea because we've invested in the virtual garages," Mercedes team boss Toto Wolff told reporters at the Azerbaijan

Grand Prix.

Such hi-tech operations rooms, directly linked in real-time to cars and systems at the track, are widely used by top teams to circumvent restrictions on the number of personnel allowed into the paddock. They are also important sources of revenue, however, with teams using them to engage sponsors. Formula One's commercial rights holders want to limit spending and make a more level playing field when current agreements expire at the end of 2020.

They also want to put more emphasis on drivers, rather than armies of engineers working out of sight, and getting rid of such control centers has been mooted. Wolff, however, said that the virtual garage was "a great selling proposition" for partners and sponsors. "Actually, there's not only engineers in our virtual garage back at Brackley," the Austrian explained. "We have sponsors there, we are trying to have co-operations with high-tech companies and this is the part they are most interested in. "As far as I know, many teams have managed to commercialize the race support structures back in the factories and of course it gives you an advantage if you've got more brains working on solutions and problems. "For us it has become a point of sale." — Agencies

## Six-try Montpellier book Top 14 semi-final spot

**PARIS:** Montpellier booked their place in the French Top 14 semi-finals on Saturday with a six-try 45-13 victory over Pau while three-time European champions Toulon wrapped up a play-off spot. With 81 points, Montpellier are guaranteed to finish the regular season on top of the table as they look to win a first French title. Their 17th win of the season came courtesy of a second-half rampage after they were just 10-6 to the good at the interval.

South Africa centre Francois Steyn had grabbed the opening score on 23 minutes. After the break, All Blacks World Cup winner Aaron Cruden and Fiji winger Nemani Nadolo, with his 17th try of the season, extended the lead. Forwards Bismarck du Plessis, Paul Willemse and skipper Louis Pienaar converted all six tries and knocked over a penalty for a 15-point personal haul.

It's only the second time in Montpellier's history that they have reached the semi-finals after their initial 2014 breakthrough. Saturday's

win was also their 13th in 13 games at home with 11 of those yielding bonus points. "We are happy to be in the semi-finals, and after the match against Lyon next week, we will have time to prepare for the semi-final, which gives us the opportunity to work together for three weeks," said Montpellier coach Vern Cotter.

The semi-finals take place in Lyon on the weekend of May 26. "The first half today was a warning," added the wary New Zealand coach. "We need to impose our game and not just rely on reacting in the second half as we did today." Toulon ran in eight tries in a 59-13 demolition of Castres to book their place in the play-offs for the seventh year running.

Josua Tuisova got the first of a pair of tries for Toulon after just five minutes, Facundo Isa (22), Ma'a Nonu (34) and then Mathieu Bastareaud touching down to give the hosts a convincing first-half lead. Alby Mathewson (76), the league's top scorer Chris Ashton (79), and Raphael Lakafia (80+1) touched down late for Toulon. Toulon have 73 points, three ahead of Toulouse and Racing92 who both have a game to play. Lyon remains fifth after losing to Oyonnax 39-18 while Castres hang onto the sixth and final play-off spot. Stade Francais defeated Brive 30-22 to confirm their defeated opponents' relegation. However, the Paris giants are not necessarily safe from a relegation play-off as Oyonnax's win kept them three points behind Stade with just one round of regular-season games left to play. —AFP



## Sports

# Pliskova overhauls Vandeweghe to win Stuttgart Grand Prix title

## Thanks for the wild card: Vandeweghe

**STUTTGART:** Karolina Pliskova recovered from a slow start to beat CoCo Vandeweghe 7-6 (7/2), 6-4 and claim the Stuttgart Grand Prix title yesterday.

The Czech fifth seed earned the second clay trophy of her career after Prague three years ago. She was the first from her country to play in the German final.

“I had such great support this week from the public and my team,” said Pliskova, who collected her trophy after being driven across the court in the flame-red Porsche 718 Boxster cabriolet which came along with her prize money. “CoCo played so well all week.” The 16th-ranked Vandeweghe enjoyed a great run in Germany’s automotive capital after starting as a wild card entry because her agent forgot to enter her in the event.

The Californian, whose career-long aversion to clay began evaporating during the best week of her life on the dirt, upset three top 10 players - US Open champion Sloane Stephens, world number one Simona Halep and France’s number seven Caroline Garcia.

“Thanks for the wild card,” Vandeweghe said. “I’ve had a fantastic week. “I tried my best in the final but I didn’t quite get there. Karolina played really well.

“I missed this year, but maybe next...”

Vandeweghe had won three of their four previous meetings, but lost to the Czech in the Stuttgart second round a year ago. The American had not dropped serve in her two wins prior to the final. On Sunday, Pliskova broke three times in a one and three-quarter hour victory. Vandeweghe started by breaking Pliskova in the opening game before the Czech found her rhythm to break back in the fourth game. The set then tightened with both women relinquishing little on serve. In the tiebreaker, Vandeweghe again jumped into an early lead. But Pliskova won six consecutive points and earned three set points from a second-serve ace.

One was enough as the Czech found the line on a return to take the early lead.

Pliskova took a 3-2 lead in the second set and broke for a second time in the set to lead 5-2.

It took her two attempts to serve out victory, losing serve in the eighth game, but Pliskova settled affairs in her next service game as her opponent’s backhand went long on match point. Vandeweghe had been aiming to become the first American champion in Stuttgart since Lindsay Davenport in 2005. — AFP



**STUTTGART:** Karolina Pliskova from the Czech Republic poses with her trophy and her new Porsche car she got after winning the WTA Tennis Grand Prix in Stuttgart, southwestern Germany, yesterday. —AFP

## Ighalo double hands SIPG first Chinese Super League loss

**HONG KONG:** Changchun Yatai’s former Watford striker Odion Ighalo scored both goals as they beat Chinese Super League leaders Shanghai SIPG 2-1 yesterday, handing Vitor Pereira’s side their first defeat of the season.

SIPG won their opening six games of the new campaign but have now picked up one point from their last two games after being held to a draw by Tianjin Teda last weekend. “Our opponents taught us a lesson today,” said former Porto coach Pereira.

“Football is actually very simple. When you attack, everyone attacks together and you must maintain the formation. “You have to be compact defensively and defend together, but the team I saw today was not like that. “We attacked and lost the ball and we were scattered everywhere, leaving a lot of space.

“This is not our way of playing. We need to learn from this kind of game.” SIPG remain on 19 points from the first eight games of the season but have had their lead trimmed to just one point after Shandong Luneng claimed a third win in a row with a 2-1 victory over Henan Jianye.

Jin Jingdao scored twice for Li Xiaopeng’s side after Christian Bassogog had given Henan the lead after 39 minutes as Shandong increased the pressure on the leaders. Seven-times defending champions Guangzhou Evergrande have also closed in on SIPG, with Fabio Cannavaro’s side now two points behind Pereira’s team. Yu Hanchao’s injury time header gave Evergrande a 1-0 win over Jiangsu Suning.

That was Jiangsu’s first defeat since Cosmin Olaroiu replaced Fabio Capello at the helm in March and leaves the club from Nanjing in sixth place, six points off top spot. Beijing Guoan moved up to fourth with their first win in four games after three successive draws as Roger Schmidt’s side claimed a 4-3 win over struggling Guizhou Zhicheng.

Jonathan Viera scored twice and Ba Dun hit a third as Beijing took a three-goal lead by the 26th minute before Babacar Traoray pulled one back for Guizhou. Cedric Bakambu restored Beijing’s cushion three minutes after the restart and, while Traoray netted twice more to complete his hat-trick in the final 15 minutes, the side from the capital took all three points.

Dalian Yifang are still looking for their first win of the season after slipping to a 1-0 defeat against Shanghai Shenhua and Guangzhou R&F returned to winning ways as Renatinho scored the only goal of the game against Chongqing Lifan.

Ezequiel Lavezzi hit a brace as Hebei China Fortune added to Paulo Sousa’s troubles with a 3-0 win over Tianjin Quanjian and Beijing Renhe secured all three points against Tianjin Teda with a 1-0 victory courtesy of a goal from Benjamin Moukandjo. — Reuters

## Ramos homers, Rays beat Boston for 8th straight win

**BOSTON:** Denard Span, Wilson Ramos, Carlos Gomez and Johnny Field all homered Saturday as the Tampa Bay Rays won their eighth straight game, plastering the Boston Red Sox 12-6 at Fenway Park in Boston. Scoring in every inning but the first and fourth, Tampa Bay finished with 18 hits in its latest offensive onslaught. The Rays have scored a whopping 63 runs in their hot stretch, plating eight runs or more in six different games. Ryan Yarbrough (1-1) pitched four innings of relief for his first big league victory. He permitted three hits and two runs, walking none and fanning six. Starter Yonny Chirinos lasted only two-plus innings, yielding six hits and three runs with two walks and three strikeouts. David Price (2-3) was tagged with the loss after a shaky 5 2/3 innings. Price gave up eight hits and six runs, five of them earned, walking four and whiffing five.

### DIAMONDBACKS 4, NATIONALS 3 (10 INNINGS)

Left fielder David Peralta had three hits and his first multi-homer game and A.J. Pollock walked with the bases loaded to force in the winning run in the 10th inning when Arizona became the first National League team in 111 years to win its first nine series with the victory at Nationals Park. The Diamondbacks (19-7) tied their best start in franchise history while becoming the first NL team to win its first nine series since the 1907 Chicago Cubs, who won their first 11. Seattle won its first nine in 2001. Ryan Zimmerman and Howie Kendrick homered for the Nationals, who have lost six of seven.

### RANGERS 7, BLUE JAYS 4

Robinson Chirinos hit two solo home runs, Jurickson Profar hit a two-run blast, and 44-year-old Bartolo Colon pitched seven effective innings as visiting Texas defeated Toronto. Colon (1-0) allowed three runs and six hits and struck out two. Shin-Soo Choo had three RBIs for the Rangers, who have taken the first two games of the three-game series and have won three in a row overall. Kevin Pillar hit two solo homers and Lourdes Gurriel Jr. hit one solo shot for the Blue Jays, who have lost four in a row, all at home.

### MARINERS 12, INDIANS 4

Seattle scored multiple runs in three of the first four innings as it cruised to a win in Cleveland. The early flurry was more than enough for Mike Leake (3-2), who bounced back from one of the worst starts of his career and earned the win after allowing four runs on six hits and one walk while striking out six over six innings. The Mariners took the lead before Carlos Carrasco (4-1) recorded an out as Dee Gordon led off with a single and scored on Jean Segura’s two-run home run. Nelson Cruz homered with one out to extend the lead to 3-0. Cruz finished with four hits and was a triple shy of the cycle.

## Sunderland sack Coleman as club put up for sale

**LONDON:** Sunderland sacked manager Chris Coleman yesterday, and then announced that owner Ellis Short was selling the club following the northeast side’s relegation to the third tier of English football.

Sunderland said Short plans to sell to a group led by Stewart Donald, chairman of Eastleigh, a non-league club in the south of England. Sunderland have dropped from the Premier League to League One in under 12



**BOSTON:** Eduardo Nunez #36 of the Boston Red Sox attempts to throw the ball to first as he falls in the eighth inning on a ball hit by Jesus Sucre #45 of the Tampa Bay Rays at Fenway Park on Saturday in Boston, Massachusetts. — AFP

### TWINS 3, REDS 1

Right-hander Jake Odorizzi (2-2) allowed just a second-inning home run, and he and the bullpen dodged several threats in beating visiting Cincinnati to end Minnesota’s eight-game losing streak. The Twins scored two runs in the fourth off Reds starter Sal Romano (1-3), one on a double from Eduardo Escobar and the other on a sacrifice fly from Robbie Grossman, and they added a run in the fifth on catcher Mitch Garver’s solo home run. In six innings, Odorizzi gave up five hits, one of which was Scott Schebler’s third home run, with two walks and three strikeouts. Fernando Rodney, who had blown three straight save opportunities, walked two of the first three batters he faced in the ninth inning before getting two infield pop-outs to get his third save.

### GAME 1: WHITE SOX 8, ROYALS 0

Rookie Daniel Palka collected four hits and hit his first career homer as visiting Chicago rolled to a victory in the opener of a day-night doubleheader with Kansas City. Playing in his third career game, Palka went 4-for-5 and scored three times as the White Sox won their third straight game and improved to 5-0 this season against the Royals. Carson Fulmer (2-1) allowed four hits in a career-high seven innings. He struck out three, walked three and threw a career-high 109 pitches.

### GAME 2: ROYALS 5, WHITE SOX 2

Eric Skoglund recovered from allowing a leadoff homer to Tim Anderson and pitched a career-high seven sharp innings as host Kansas City Royals won the

nightcap of a day-night doubleheader against the White Sox. Skoglund (1-2) gave up Anderson’s homer five pitches into the game and then retired the next 15 hitters. Alex Gordon drove in his first three runs of the season with a two-run single in the first off Dylan Covey (0-1) and an RBI double off Juan Minaya in the eighth as the Royals stopped a 10-game home losing streak, one shy of the team record set in 2013.

### CUBS 3, BREWERS 0

Jose Quintana threw seven scoreless innings and Javier Baez and Tommy La Stella each drove in runs as host Chicago recorded its third straight win over Milwaukee. Quintana (3-1) continued his string of quality starts for the Cubs, allowing just two hits with seven strikeouts and one walk. He has thrown 24 consecutive scoreless innings against the Brewers. Milwaukee starter Junior Guerra (2-1) made his third straight strong start, allowing one run on three hits with six strikeouts and two walks in six innings. Guerra retired eight of the first nine batters he faced before surrendering a pair of two-out hits in the third inning.

### GAME 1: DODGERS 15, GIANTS 6

Chase Utley and Joc Pederson each had four hits and rookie Walker Buehler (1-0) won for the first time as visiting Los Angeles rolled past San Francisco in the first game of a doubleheader. The Dodgers set a franchise record by coming to the plate 27 times with runners in scoring position, going 12-for-27 in those situations. The Dodgers had 20 hits, including nine for extra bases. Giants starter Chris Stratton (2-2) lasted just 1 1/3 innings, giving up six runs on six hits with four walks.

before I owned it.” The deal is subject to English Football League approval, with Donald confirming he intends to sell Eastleigh who play in the National League—the division below the three tiers of the English Football League that in turn sit beneath the elite English Premier League. Coleman, 47, replaced Simon Grayson in November but won just five of his 29 games, losing 16 times.

“Sunderland AFC announces that manager Chris Coleman and his assistant Kit Symons have been released from their contracts,” said the earlier club statement. “The club would like to place on record its sincere thanks to Chris and Kit for their tireless efforts in what has been a hugely disappointing season for everyone involved with the club.”

Sunderland’s relegation to the third tier for the first time in 30 years was sealed by a 2-1 loss at home to Burton last weekend. — AFP

months following two successive relegations, with Short admitting in a statement his disappointment at how his stewardship of the Black Cats had ended.

“It is no secret I have been trying to sell Sunderland but I have waited until the right group came along that have the experience, finances and plan to take this great club back to where it deserves to be,” he said.

“Overall my chairmanship has not gone the way I would have wished; the many high points of a decade in the Premier League have been overshadowed by the low points of the last two terrible seasons. “I was therefore determined to ensure that I leave Sunderland in the best possible hands and in the best possible state to turn the corner.”

Short added: “To achieve this, higher offers from less qualified buyers were rejected and I have paid off all debts owed by the club and leave it financially strong and debt free for the first time since years



# Let’s make history, Guardiola tells record-chasing City

## City now within two points of Premier League points record

**LONDON:** Pep Guardiola challenged Manchester City to make history after the champions equalled the Premier League record for most wins in a season with an imperious 4-1 victory at West Ham yesterday. Guardiola's side now have 30 wins this term, matching the record set by Chelsea last season, and will take sole possession of the milestone with one more success in their last three games.

Sweeping West Ham aside with their trademark swagger, City went ahead through Leroy Sane before an own goal from their former defender Pablo Zabaleta doubled the lead. Aaron Cresswell's free-kick reduced the deficit before half-time, but Gabriel Jesus and Fernandinho netted for City after the interval. Simply untouchable for most of the season, City are bidding to cement their status as one of the all-time great Premier League teams by rewriting the record books.

“We have a chance to be the best team in the history of England, with more points, we are trying to do it next Sunday (against Huddersfield),” Guardiola said. “Always you have to play for something. Once we won the Premier League, the target was the numbers.

“We have a chance to break the records, but it's not easy, we have to play good. It's good to fight.” City have scored 102 league goals in 35 games, making them the fastest English top-flight side to reach the century mark since Everton in 1931-32. They are one goal short of the Premier League record of 103 set by Chelsea in 2009-10.

Guardiola's team also need three more points to eclipse Chelsea's 95-point Premier League record from 2004-05. “We are professional. We didn't celebrate the moment we were champions,” Guardiola added.

“Next season the target will be to keep this consistency”

“The numbers are there. Hopefully we will achieve one more win to get 96 points.” Ominously for their title rivals, Guardiola believes City can be even better next season. “Always you can do better. Football is never done otherwise I wouldn't be here next season,” he said.

“Next season the target will be to keep this consistency. In the recent past, teams couldn't do that. “Our level was so high, but there are 20 guys winning the Premier League for the first time. We are a young team. That's good.” West Ham have won once in their last eight league fixtures and sit just three points above the relegation zone.

“I'm not as anxious as when I first came in because we were in the bottom three then,” Hammers boss David Moyes said. “If we can win one of our home games I think we'll be ok.” After being given a guard of honour by West Ham's players before kick-off, City set about dismantling

their generous hosts.

### NORMAL SERVICE RESUMED

It was Sane who landed the first blow in the 13th minute, although the German winger's 14th goal of the season owed more to good fortune than great inspiration. Taking possession on the right-hand side of the West Ham area, Sane was granted too much time and space by the home defence. He took full advantage, unleashing a powerful strike that took a wicked deflection off West Ham defender Patrice Evra on its way past the wrong-footed Adrian. When City struck again in the 27th minute, the farcical manner of the goal left the ragged Hammers red-faced. Adrian's rash sprint off his line let in Raheem



**LONDON:** Manchester City's German-born striker Lukas Nmecha (2nd R) vies with West Ham United's English midfielder Mark Noble (L), West Ham United's Senegalese midfielder Cheikhou Kouyate (C) and West Ham United's Portuguese midfielder Joao Mario (R) during the English Premier League football match between West Ham United and Manchester City at The London Stadium, in east London yesterday.—AFP

Sterling for a shot that was headed clear, but the ball was worked wide to Kevin De Bruyne. De Bruyne sent over a low cross which Adrian could only deflect towards Hammers defender Declan Rice, whose panicked clearance hit Zabaleta and trickled into the net.

City paid for a brief dip in the 42nd minute when Cresswell bent his free-kick over the wall and through

Ederson's weak attempted save. But normal service was resumed in the 53rd minute when Jesus bagged his 16th goal of the season. Sterling, picked out by Jesus, made a fine run and pin-point pass that allowed the Brazilian to steer home from close-range. City weren't finished yet and Fernandinho buried Sterling's pass in the 64th minute to seal the rout. —AFP

## Juventus gains crucial title edge after late comeback downs Inter

**MILAN:** Juventus battled past 10-man Inter Milan with two late goals giving the champions a 3-2 win in the San Siro on Saturday to reopen a four-point lead at the top of the Serie A table. Inter looked as if they would pull off an unlikely victory as the hosts led until three minutes from the whistle despite playing more than 70 minutes a man down after Matias Vecino was sent off. But Milan Skriniar turned the ball into his own net after 87 minutes with Gonzalo Higuain heading in the winner two minutes later.

“I have to congratulate the lads, it was an important step towards the Scudetto,” said Juventus coach Massimiliano Allegri. “It was a beautiful night of football between two teams who had to win. “Winning at San Siro is very complicated, they did very well at 10. We know that to win the championship we have to win all of our games.” Juve's lead had been cut to one point after their defeat by Napoli in Turin last week.

Maurizio Sarri's Napoli travel to Fiorentina bidding to match the champions and keep their push for a third title after 1987 and 1990 alive. Saturday's defeat damages Inter's hopes of Champions League football next season as they stay fifth behind Roma and Lazio with just three games to play. “It will be hard to put this defeat behind us,” said Inter coach Luciano Spalletti. “This match meant a huge amount to us and the team deserved a different result. “We used up a lot of energy being a man down and in the final moments it hurt us.”

Douglas Costa fired in the opener for Juventus after 13 minutes following a cross from Juan Cuadrado. Minutes later Vecino was shown red for a foul on Mario Mandzukic. Juventus thought they had scored a second just before half-time but the video assistant referee (VAR) showed Blaise Matuidi was offside when he found the net. Mauro Icardi headed in the equalizer for Inter seven minutes after the break for his 27th goal this season, and the hosts took the lead when the ball bounced in off Juventus defender Andrea Barzaghi.

But in a late flurry a Cuadrado shot across goal took a deflection off Skriniar and Higuain headed in from close range off a Paulo Dybala free-kick. In a bizarre finish, Allegri was sent to the stands for coming onto the pitch to celebrate. “It looked as if it was over, like against Napoli it looked as if it was going to end in a draw and we lost,” said Higuain in reference to last week's 1-0 loss



**MILAN:** Inter Milan's defender Joao Miranda de Souza Filho from Brazil jumps for the ball with Juventus' midfielder Blaise Matuidi from France (R) during the Italian Serie A football match Inter Milan Vs Juventus on Saturday at the 'San Siro Stadium' in Milan. — AFP

to second-placed Napoli. “It's a very important win and a great confidence booster.”

### ROMA WARM UP FOR LIVERPOOL

Earlier 10-man Roma warmed-up for next week's must-win Champions League clash with Liverpool by easing to a 4-1 win over struggling Chievo to consolidate third place. Eusebio Di Francesco's side are three points ahead of Lazio who play Torino on Sunday with Inter staying a further point back in fifth. Edin Dzeko scored in either half with Patrik Schick and Stephan El Shaarawy also on target as Roma overran the side from Verona despite being a man down after Juan Jesus saw red 10 minutes into the second half.

Roma next face Liverpool in the Stadio Olimpico on Wednesday where they have to overturn a 5-2 first-leg

the stats speak very well,” the Italian manager added.

### ‘KILL THE GAME’

“I think even today we could be more clinical to kill the game, but instead we kept the game in balance. “Against West Ham, it happened the same. We dominated and created many chances, but we scored only one goal. “It could have happened the same today. I think this season we are not clinical and in the last period we are winning but also playing a little bit where we could kill the game but don't.”

Chelsea require Spurs to falter or for Liverpool to be so wrapped in their Champions League campaign they drop further points. The Blues are grinding out wins, as they did against a spirited but toothless Swansea, but they are reliant on others to slip up, regardless of whatever they achieve themselves in their three remaining league matches.

“The situation is not in our hands, but the only way to put a bit of pressure to Tottenham is to get three points in every game,” said Conte. “It won't be easy, we know they (Tottenham) will play against Watford on Monday but you know very well football is not simple. “It is not simple to win a game in this league, but for sure our situation is not in our hands.”

After Fabregas had curled home a sublime shot fol-

lowing Hazard seizing on a mistake by Andy King in the fourth minute, Chelsea failed to make the most of other clear opportunities. While Chelsea look upwards for others to stumble, Swansea are looking downward with increasing nervousness. This was their sixth game without a win and they are now just a point above the bottom three-the teams that will be relegated at the end of the season.

**SWANS' PENALTY PAIN**

There was urgency and desperation enough in Swansea's game, but little quality in front of goal and the biggest mark left by top scorer Jordan Ayew was on the neck of Chelsea skipper Gary Cahill when he arrived with a late elbow—an incident which referee Jon Moss somehow missed. Both managers claimed it escaped their attention, too, with Swansea boss Carlos Carvalhal more agitated by Moss's refusal to award a penalty after a lunge by Cahill on Nathan Dyer.

“I saw it,” Carvalhal said. “The defender tries to get the ball but he doesn't see Dyer. He takes the ball and Dyer together. “Outside the area it's a foul, so in the area it must be a penalty.” He added: “In general I think we did enough to achieve minimum one point. If we carry on playing like that, it's sure that we will win the points we need.” — AFP

## Celtic rout Rangers to secure another Scottish league title

**GLASGOW:** Celtic hammered arch Glasgow rivals Rangers 5-0 as they secured a seventh successive Scottish title with an emphatic Old Firm victory yesterday. This win, achieved in front of their own fans at Celtic Park, gave Brendan Rodgers' side an unassailable 10-point lead at the top of the Scottish Premiership table over Aberdeen, who can only take a maximum of nine points from their three remaining league games.

Rangers are three points further back in third place. Celtic are now just two shy of the record of nine Scottish titles in a row they already share with Rangers. The Hoops' title party started early as they went 3-0 up before half-time. Odsonne Edouard gave Celtic an early lead before Edouard and James Forrest added two more goals late in the opening period.

Two minutes after the break, Tom Rogic made it 4-0 with Callum McGregor scoring Celtic's fifth goal in the 53rd minute. Defeat did little for Rangers caretaker manager Graeme Murty's hopes of holding onto his job, amid speculation the Gers are set to appoint Liverpool great Steven Gerrard as their new permanent boss.

### UNBEATEN STREAK

Rodgers, who was Gerrard's manager at Liverpool for the latter part of the celebrated midfielder's Anfield career, is now unbeaten in 11 games against Rangers since he arrived in Glasgow in 2016 — a run made up of nine wins and two draws. The Northern Irishman is also just a Scottish Cup final win over Motherwell away from guiding Celtic to an unprecedented second successive domestic treble. “The performance was really pleasing, under the pressure and given the game,” Rodgers told Sky Sports.

“You have to play football and today we did the basics really well,” he added. “We were outstanding and could have had more goals...It's been a brilliant season by the players.” Rangers goalkeeper Jak Alnwick made his Old Firm debut in place of the injured Wes Foderingham. Alnwick made a couple of saves but the writing was on the wall for Rangers, with Edouard opening the scoring in the 14th minute when he turned in a Kieran Tierney cut-back from close range. It looked like Rangers might head into the break just a goal behind but that hope was dashed four minutes before half-time. Rangers' Graham Dorran lost possession and Forrest sent Edouard clear into the visitors' box, where he drove a low shot past Alnwick and into the far corner. And there was still time for Celtic to extend their lead prior to the end of the first half when Forrest struck from 10 yards.

Barely had the second half got underway before Rogic made it 4-0 from the edge of the box and McGregor added a fifth goal after he was played in by Edouard. There was still plenty of time left in the game for Celtic to surpass their biggest win over Rangers—a 7-1 success back in 1957 — and the only surprise was that they didn't add to their tally of goals. Celtic fans, however, were more than happy with a final scoreline of 5-0. —AFP

## Goals are the missing ingredient for Chelsea

**SWANSEA:** Antonio Conte may have kept alive Chelsea's hope of Champions League football, but he admitted Saturday there has been something missing this season-goals. The Blues manager achieved his 50th victory in the Premier League, a 1-0 win away to Swansea, thanks to Cesc Fabregas's 50th goal in the competition, but Conte was dissatisfied by the London club's fourth successive victory in all competitions.

The win in south Wales saw fifth-placed Chelsea close to within two points of capital rivals Tottenham Hotspur in the race for a top-four finish. Spurs play Watford today. But Eden Hazard, who set up Fabregas for his fourth-minute winner, is Chelsea's leading scorer this season with a modest 12 goals. “Our top scorer has scored only 12 goals, and if your best scorer has scored only 12 goals it means it is very difficult to fight for something this season,” said Conte. “That is the reality-

Live			Matches on TV
			(Local Timings)
ENGLISH PREMIER LEAGUE			
Tottenham	Hotspur v Watford	22:00	
beIN SPORTS HD 2			
SPANISH LEAGUE			
Real Betis	v Malaga	22:00	
beIN SPORTS HD 3			



**12** Brilliant Bjork seals first European title



**13** Hamilton wins chaotic Baku battle to lead title race



**14** Pliskova overhauls Vandeweghe to win Stuttgart Grand Prix title



MANCHESTER: Manchester United's Belgian midfielder Marouane Fellaini (C) goes close with this attempt during the English Premier League football match between Manchester United and Arsenal at Old Trafford in Manchester, yesterday. — AFP

## Fellaini header inflicts more woe on Wenger

### Wenger given Old Trafford send-off by Ferguson



MANCHESTER: Arsenal's French manager Arsene Wenger (C) is greeted by Manchester United's former manager Alex Ferguson (L) and Manchester United's Portuguese manager Jose Mourinho (R) during a presentation before the English Premier League football match. — AFP

**MANCHESTER:** Arsene Wenger was honoured by Manchester United on his final visit to Old Trafford as Arsenal manager, but left beaten once more on the field as Marouane Fellaini's stoppage time header handed the hosts a 2-1 win.

Wenger was greeted by former United boss Sir Alex Ferguson and current manager Jose Mourinho before kick-off and even presented with a glass memento. However, the Frenchman was left empty-handed when it came to points as defeat left sixth-placed Arsenal mathematically out of the race for a top-four finish.

Fellaini rose highest to flick home the winner after Henrikh Mkhitaryan's second-half strike against his former club had cancelled out Paul Pogba's early opener. United have now sealed their place in the Champions League next season and move closer to their target of finishing at least second best to champions Manchester City by opening a five-point gap on Liverpool.

Ferguson told the United website ahead of the game that his clashes for many years with

Wenger's strongest Arsenal sides over a decade ago "made the Premier League." But it was a sign of how far Arsenal have fallen that Wenger made eight changes from the side that drew 1-1 with Atletico Madrid in the first leg of their Europa League semi-final on Thursday as he had already given up hope of a top-four finish.

Alexis Sanchez became the latest of a number of leading Arsenal players to leave towards the end of Wenger's reign in search of more success and more money in January.

And in his first appearance against his former club, the Chilean was heavily involved in the opening goal on 16 minutes. Romelu Lukaku picked out Sanchez at the back post and after his header was deflected onto his own post by Hector Bellerin, Pogba had the simple task of tapping into an unguarded net.

Wenger included club record signing Pierre-Emerick Aubameyang and Mkhitaryan, who was the makeweight for Sanchez to move in the other direction, among a side littered with youngsters. But it was the visitors who posed the greater

threat for the remainder of a soporific first 45 minutes. Mkhitaryan dragged a shot from the edge of the box just wide before Aubameyang's tame header was too close to David de Gea. United suffered a blow at the start of the second period when Lukaku limped off to be replaced by Marcus Rashford.

And the hosts soon also lost their lead when Mkhitaryan pounced on some slack United defending to fire across De Gea into the bottom corner to muted celebrations despite enduring a troubled 18 months under Mourinho before joining the Gunners.

United struggled to create in their search for a winner, but Arsenal failed to heed their warning when Rashford was denied by the offside flag after Fellaini's header came off the post a minute from time. Moments later Fellaini rose highest once more to meet Ashley Young's cross and the Belgian's looping header found the far corner to leave Arsenal still without a point away from home in the Premier League this year. — AFP

## Rampant Nadal cruises to 11th Barcelona title

**BARCELONA:** Rafael Nadal won his 11th Barcelona title yesterday when he breezed past Greek teenager Stefanos Tsitsipas 6-2, 6-1 in the final.

It was world number one Nadal's 55th career clay-court title while he also extended his winning streak on the surface to 46 consecutive sets. The 31-year-old Spaniard won his 11th Monte Carlo Masters last weekend also without dropping a set.

Yesterday's victory reinforced his status as the overwhelming favourite to lift the French Open for an 11th time in June. Nadal now has 77 titles overall while his career clay-court match record stands at 401 wins against just 35 defeats. His win yesterday was greeted by ticker-tape and a video review of all his titles on the centre court in Barcelona which now bears his name. "It's really emotional to see that video. I never dreamed of having a career like this," said the 16-time Grand Slam title winner. "Last year, they made a video of my 10 titles here. Now they have had to make another video for 11 — it makes me feel like I am ageing. "Thanks to everyone for making the tournament so special and thanks to my family who have been with me even when things have not been so smooth."

Tsitsipas, 19 years old and ranked 63, was

the first Greek man to make an ATP final since Nicholas Kalogeropoulos in Des Moines back in 1973. He was also the youngest Barcelona finalist since Nadal in 2005. "Stefanos, you had an incredible week. You have a great future and I wish you great success," added Nadal of an opponent who will become just the second teenager in the world top 50 next week after Canada's Denis Shapovalov. Nadal needed just 77 minutes to claim victory yesterday. After racing through the opening set, he was quickly 3-0 up in the second before Tsitsipas carved out a degree of hope in the fourth game when he had two break points.

They were quickly saved by Nadal who then claimed the title on a third match point in the seventh game when the teenager dumped a one-handed backhand into the net. — AFP



BARCELONA: Spain's Rafael Nadal poses with his trophy after winning the Barcelona Open ATP tournament final tennis match in Barcelona yesterday. —AFP



MONDAY, APRIL 30, 2018

**18** EQUATE receives 3 awards from ASSE for excellence

**19** Dollar makes a comeback amid higher yields and lower tensions

**21** Flydubai to operate to 5 points in Iraq


# KFH reports KD 44m net profit for Q1

## Results confirm success of KFH's strategy of innovation: Al-Marzouq



KUWAIT: Chairman of Kuwait Finance House (KFH) Hamad Abdulmohsen Al-Marzouq said that KFH has, by the grace of Allah, reported net profits of KD 43.97 million for the first quarter of 2018 for KFH shareholders compared to KD 38.59 million for the same period last year, i.e., an increase of 13.9 percent.

Net finance income for Q1 this year reached KD 138.39 million, i.e., a growth of 38.2 percent compared to the same period last year. Total operating income for the first quarter of the year reached KD 180.11 million, i.e., a growth increase by 12.2 percent and net operating income reached KD 110.30 million, i.e., a growth of 11.7 percent compared to the same period last year.

Earnings per share for the first quarter of 2018 reached 7.03 fils, compared to 6.17 fils for the same period last year, i.e., an increase of 13.9 percent. Finance portfolio reached KD 9,497 billion, i.e., an increase of KD 290.9 million or three percent compared to end of last year. Total deposits reached KD 11,764 billion, i.e., an increase of KD 167.3 million or 1.4 percent compared to end of last year.

Al-Marzouq said that KFH has achieved positive results despite the economic challenges. The realized profits confirm the success of KFH's strategy of the development of current customer base, innovation based on the new financial technology, financial growth and achievement of operational excellence, while achieving harmony among KFH group banks to ensure sustainable growth, enhance service and risk policies and adhere to regulations for achieving rewarding returns for

**Hamad Abdulmohsen Al-Marzouq**

shareholders and investors.

Al-Marzouq added in a press release, that KFH focuses efforts on core banking business, improving asset quality while delivering superior innovation and customer service excellence in an effort to achieve its vision of leading the international development of Islamic financial services, and becoming the most trusted and sustainably most profitable sharia-compliant bank in the world. He indicated KFH was a pioneer in rolling out a large variable package of advanced banking and investment products to meet customers' finance and investment needs as per the highest international standards of quality,

efficiency and security.

KFH group banks in Turkey, Malaysia, Bahrain and Germany have continued their outstanding and successful performance in accordance with the set plans and strategies to benefit from the elements of strength in each market in which they operate and achieve more coordination and expansion in joint projects.

Al-Marzouq reiterated KFH's willingness to participate in financing major and infrastructure projects which are considered as strategic and significant in KFH business, yet as part of KFH's contribution to the development efforts and assisting companies to develop their work. KFH financed different mega projects in Kuwait and the countries where it operates which include credit facility agreement of KD 12.6 million for financing Terminal II building for Kuwait International Airport, and 200 million euros credit facility for the construction of Canakkale Bridge in Turkey. In addition, KFH and Kuwait Projects Company Holding (KPCO), signed a Memorandum of Cooperation (MOC) stating that KFH offers sharia-compliant financing solutions for individual purchasers of residential or commercial property in Jeddah, Al-Madina District real estate development project. He indicated KFH leadership position in the sukuk market noting the bank has succeeded in arranging the issuance of \$1 billion Sukuk for Dubai Islamic Bank. The vast experience of KFH Group in the Sukuk issuance has positioned it as a trustworthy and highly recognized organization by major corporates and

### HIGHLIGHTS

- Net finance income increased by 38.2% to KD 138.4 million
- Total operating income increased by 12.2% to KD 180.1 million
- Net operating income increased by 11.7% to KD 110.3 million
- Growth of the financing portfolio increased by 3% to KD 9.5 billion,
- Depositors' accounts increased by 1.4 percent to KD 11.8 billion
- Harmony among KFH group banks to ensure sustainable growth and profitability
- Financing Development Project a Strategy of Bank Business
- Efficiency in Bank Applications of Arranging Sukuk
- Tangible Indicators of success in innovation and Fintech at KFH

governments globally. The various structures used by KFH Group in arranging sukuk have made sukuk to be highly competitive and efficient.

### Positive ratings

Al-Marzouq emphasized that the positive ratings of KFH by international rating agencies and the prestigious international awards granted by global institutions are considered as a positive indicator on the soundness and growth of KFH. KFH is in the premier market in Bursa Kuwait. KFH considers customers' dedication, trust and loyalty as the best prize ever awarded and the true reality of its efforts at the group level.

KFH's social responsibility and contribu-

tion was diversified and comprehensive for development of society, thus reinforcing the concept of "sustainable growth". KFH has adopted certain fundamental aspects to perform its social role including education, health, youth, and people with special needs to confirm the leadership in social responsibility.

Al-Marzouq conveyed his sincere thanks to all shareholders and customers for their continuous and valuable support and trust in KFH activities and business. He extended his appreciation to all regulatory authorities for their support. He appreciated the efforts of KFH staff and the executive management who reaped the fruits of their distinguished performance.

## Aramco appoints first woman to the board

DUBAI: Saudi Aramco, the world's top oil company which is preparing to go public, said yesterday it has appointed new members to its board including a female executive, a milestone for Saudi Arabia and the oil industry where there are few women executives. The appointments, which bring in more international experience, come as the Saudi government plans to float around 5 percent of Aramco in an initial public offering (IPO) - the world's largest - later this year or early 2019.

Saudi Arabian Minister of Finance Mohammed Al-Jadaan and Minister of Economy and Planning Mohammed Al-Turajwi were appointed as members

of the board of directors, Aramco said in a statement. They are joined by Lynn Laverty Ebenhan, the former chairman, president and CEO of US oil refiner Sunoco Inc. from 2008 to 2012. Other new members also include Peter Cella, former president & CEO of Chevron Phillips Chemical Co. LP, and Andrew Liveris, director of DowDuPont Inc., and the CEO of the Dow Chemical Company. Liveris's appointment is effective as of July 1, Aramco said.

The five new members of Aramco's board will join six returning members including Saudi Energy Minister Khalid Al-Falhi, who is also Aramco's chairman, and Amin Nasser, Aramco's CEO. Minister of State Ibrahim Al-Jassaf and Managing Director of the government-owned Public Investment Fund (PIF) Yasir Al-Rumayyan also remain on the board.

The outgoing board members are Majid Al-Moneef, advisor to the Saudi Royal Court; Khaleel Al-Sultan, Director of King Fahd University of Petroleum and Minerals; and Peter Woelke, former managing director of the World Bank and former vice president

of the International Finance Corporation. Appointment decisions to the new 11-member board of directors are made by the Saudi government.

### First woman on board

Ebenhan was named by Forbes as one of the world's most powerful women in 2008. Prior to her role at Sunoco, Ebenhan was the executive vice president of global manufacturing for Royal Dutch Shell, where she worked for more than 28 years.

She also served on Baker Hughes's board of directors from 2012 to July 2017 and sits on the board of GlaxoSmithKline. Only a handful of Saudi women are appointed to the board of major Saudi companies but that is slowly changing in the conservative kingdom, where women are subject to a male guardianship system which in many cases restricts their opportunities to work.

Last year, the Saudi Stock Exchange appointed Saudi Minister of Economy and Planning as its first female chair. She was the first woman to chair a major government financial



Lynn Laverty Ebenhan

institution in the kingdom. In 2004, Lubna Olayman became the first woman to be elected to the board of Saudi Hollandi Bank, now called Alawwal Bank. In 2006, Lubna was one of four new appointments by PIF to the board of Ma'aden, the Gulf's largest miner. The Olayman family controls one of Saudi Arabia's largest conglomerates. —Reuters



# EQUATE receives 3 awards from ASSE for excellence

Awards for making strides in investing and managing workplace risks



**KUWAIT:** EQUATE Petrochemical Company, a global producer of petrochemicals, recently added to its growing list of accomplishments by receiving three awards at the 2018 American Society of Safety Engineers (ASSE) GCC Excellence Awards.

During the ceremony, EQUATE's Environment, Health & Safety (EH&S) Director Mohammad Al-Shamary, said: "Achieving excellence is not about tools and policies, but it is about having an integrated EH&S culture. This is an essential part of the company's success and we will continue to strive to get even better in our EH&S practices. Our highest priority is the health and safety of our people, communities and the environment. It is an honor to be recognized by ASSE for excellence in our EH&S efforts."

Organized by the Kuwait Chapter of ASSE, the award ceremony is an annual event that recognizes the Arabian Gulf region's organizations that have made significant strides in investing and managing workplace risks and developing EH&S per-

formance. The awards extended to EQUATE included the Platinum Award for Manufacturing for the 10th consecutive year, the Gold Award for Excellence in Engineering & Construction and finally the Gold Award for the Best HSE Initiative.



## Company's EH&S initiatives applauded

EQUATE's EH&S achievements include a number of initiatives, such as Kuwait's only seawater cooling towers, Kuwait's first CO2 recovery project as well as having the first Kuwaiti agreement to reduce CO2 emissions

in ocean transportation. EQUATE is the first petrochemical company in the Middle East to obtain the new Responsible Care (RC) 14001:2015 certification from DNV-GL.

The EQUATE Group is a global producer of petrochemicals and the world's second largest producer of Ethylene Glycol (EG). The Group has industrial complexes in Kuwait, North America and Europe that annually produce over 5 million tons of Ethylene, EG, Polyethylene (PE) and Polyethylene Terephthalate (PET). The products are marketed throughout Asia, the Americas, Europe, the Middle East and Africa. The EQUATE Group's shareholders include Petrochemical Industries Company (PIC), The Dow Chemical Company (Dow), Boubyan Petrochemical Company (BPC) and Qurain Petrochemical Industries Company (QPIC). The Group is a leading enterprise that pursues sustainability wherever it operates through partnerships in fields that include the environment, economy and society.



## In remote China, a high-tech auto plant flags global challenge

**ZHANGJIAKOU, China:** While auto workers in Germany and South Korea fight to save their jobs, one of China's youngest auto brands is gearing up to build sport utility vehicles at a new factory with digitally-connected robots and a fresh workforce of 1,800 people.

A three-hour drive from the Chinese capital Beijing, the Lynk & Co plant in Zhangjiakou combines technology and manufacturing know-how from the Geely and Volvo Cars units of China auto giant Zhejiang Geely Holding Group. The 12 billion yuan (\$1.89 billion) investment is a bright, freshly painted example of the challenge confronting long-established auto factories in mature industrial economies.

As automakers adopt a new generation of manufacturing technology, industry officials are confident that they can deploy the same packages of robots, assembly line designs and digital quality control systems anywhere in the world - and train people to do the tasks robots cannot yet perform.

Plant manager Tong Xiangbei is in the vanguard of a tech revolution that enables automakers to put new factories in remote places like Zhangjiakou, a city of four million people in Hebei province and far from many of Geely's parts makers.

"With this team, we could go anywhere and replicate this factory," Tong, 42, who previously worked at Ford Motor Co., told Reuters during the first media tour of the factory.

The ability to build cars in almost any location that has electricity and decent roads is one factor behind Peugeot SA's clash with German workers over proposed cost-cutting at Opel brand factories once owned by General Motors. GM this week agreed to invest \$3.6 billion in its money losing South Korean operations only after unions representing workers at its plants agreed to allow the shutdown of a factory in Gunsan, Korea and gave concessions GM said will save \$400 to 500 million a year.

With Lynk & Co, Geely is targeting younger and less affluent buyers than typical Volvo customers, but who still demand more sophistication and technology than a standard Geely Automobile Holdings Ltd car for the mass market in China. Lynk & Co vehicles already are competing with GM, Peugeot and other automakers in China. The brand plans to begin production at a plant in Belgium in 2019, and begin sales in Europe in 2020. Geely and Volvo have said they plan to bring the brand to the United States, but have not said when. — Reuters

## US Fed to hold fire amid rising market sensitivity

**WASHINGTON:** Markets do not expect the US Federal Reserve to raise interest rates this week, as policymakers take time to assess how much pressure is building in world's largest economy.

The central bank's Federal Open Market Committee, which is due to begin a two-day meeting tomorrow, has signaled it will key lending rate at least twice more this year after kicking it up a notch last month. But Wall Street since February has shown a tendency to swoon at the faintest hint the Fed might consider moving at a more aggressive pace.

And data that suggest the Fed might move four times this year under newly-installed Fed Chairman Jay Powell has generated wild volatility in share prices. While the central bank will leave the benchmark lending rate untouched on Wednesday when it announces the outcome of the meeting, investors will be reading anxiously between the lines for signs of how concerned officials appear to be about rising wages and inflation. After years at with interest rates at zero in the aftermath of the global financial crisis, the US central bank has nudged the rate up six times since the first move in December 2015, moving in increments of 0.25, or 25 basis points.

"There's just a level of disbelief that the Fed would actually raise rates a hundred basis points in a year, as if a hundred basis points is a lot," economist Joel Naroff told AFP.

"You've got this 10 years of low rates and people thinking it's almost a birth right," he added. "That's creating a lot of the uncertainty." Powell's nomination to lead the Fed was widely seen as a White House signal of continuity with the end of Fed Chair Janet Yellen's era, which saw low interest rates, tame inflation, rallying markets and steady growth. But since taking office in February, Powell has managed to spook the markets at virtually every turn. At his debut congressional testimony that month, stocks turned negative, particularly on Powell's remark that the central bank's mandate did not include boosting Wall Street returns.

"We don't manage the stock market, we manage stable prices and maximum employment," he said. The Dow lost 1.2 percent that day. The index also fell 0.2 percent following Powell's first post-FOMC press conference in March, when the central bank hiked and raised its long-term interest rate forecast by a tenth to 2.9 percent.

**No 'Powell Put'**

Two weeks later, Powell delivered his first speech as Fed chair, saying the central bank wanted to avoid raising rates either too quickly or too slowly. Stocks fell 2.3 percent in the wake of his comments, seemingly disappointed he had not promised to slow future rate increases in light of a possible trade war with China. Kathy Bostjancic, head of US macro

investor services at Oxford Economics, said mounting inflation could indeed force the Fed to move faster than Wall Street likes, shattering hopes the central bank will act to protect stock prices.

"I do think Chair Powell will be careful as all Fed officials are but I don't believe that there's this so-called 'Powell Put,'" she said, referring to the idea the central bank chief would attempt to put a floor under stock prices. "I don't think he could easily give deference to the equity market and enable this idea." Since the FOMC raised rates in March, economic data have pointed to continued steady growth and signs wages are rising at long last, which would be expected to boost inflation. GDP expanded by a better-than-expected 2.3 percent in the first quarter and is projected to return to around three percent in the second quarter, and job creation remained strong.

Inflation has turned up the heat. A quarterly measure of the core Personal Consumption Expenditures price index, the Fed's preferred measure, which strips out volatile food and fuel prices, surged above the Fed's two percent target to 2.5 percent, its strongest quarter since 2007.

Naroff said Powell would be careful not to send markets nosediving—which could spill over into business confidence and hurt the real economy—even though markets are not his primary concern.

"If the stock markets are totally flat this year and he gets a hundred basis points, he'll be a happy camper." — AFP

## EXCHANGE RATES

Al-Muzaini Exchange Co.	
ASIAN COUNTRIES	
Japanese Yen	2.806
Indian Rupees	4.630
Pakistani Rupees	2.602
Sri Lankan Rupees	1.933
Nepali Rupees	2.902
Singapore Dollar	230.250
Hongkong Dollar	38.311
Bangladesh Taka	3.593
Philippine Peso	5.793
Thai Baht	9.679
GCC COUNTRIES	
Saudi Riyal	80.210
Qatari Riyal	82.644
Omani Riyal	781.445
Bahraini Dinar	798.990
UAE Dirham	81.946
ARAB COUNTRIES	
Egyptian Pound - Cash	0.000
Egyptian Pound - Transfer	17.039
Yemen Riyal/for 1000	1.208
Tunisian Dinar	126.080
Jordanian Dinar	423.910
Lebanese Lira/for 1000	2.005
Syrian Lira	0.000
Morocco Dirham	33.227
EUROPEAN & AMERICAN COUNTRIES	
US Dollar Transfer	300.700

Euro	371.670
Sterling Pound	426.390
Canadian dollar	238.080
Turkish lira	74.520
Swiss Franc	315.860
Australian Dollar	234.090
US Dollar Buying	299.500
GOLD	
20 Gram	260.520
10 Gram	133.180
5 Gram	67.430
Dollarco Exchange Co. Ltd	
Rate for Transfer	Selling Rate
US Dollar	301.000
Canadian Dollar	235.025
Sterling Pound	421.915
Euro	369.235
Swiss Franc	297.965
Bahrain Dinar	800.470
UAE Dirhams	82.355
Qatari Riyals	83.585
Saudi Riyals	81.160
Jordanian Dinar	425.820
Egyptian Pound	17.013
Sri Lankan Rupees	1.916
Indian Rupees	4.538
Pakistani Rupees	2.604
Bangladesh Taka	3.611
Philippines Peso	5.770
Cyprus pound	17.915

BAHRAIN EXCHANGE COMPANY WLL		
CURRENCY	BUY	SELL
British Pound	0.411214	0.418714
Czech Korune	0.006346	0.015646
Danish Krone	0.045015	0.050015
Euro	0.360865	0.368365
Georgian Lari	0.138050	0.138050
Hungarian 0.001136	0.001326	
Norwegian Krone	0.033844	0.039044
Romanian Leu	0.064488	0.081338
Russian ruble	0.004835	0.004835
Slovakia	0.008972	0.018972
Swedish Krona	0.030824	0.035824
Swiss Franc	0.299378	0.310378
Australasia		
Australian Dollar	0.221023	0.233023
New Zealand Dollar	0.207975	0.217475
America		
Canadian Dollar	0.230117	0.239117
US Dollars	0.297550	0.301950
US Dollars Mint	0.298050	0.301950

Asia	
Bangladesh Taka	0.002981 0.003763
Chinese Yuan	0.046119 0.049619
Hong Kong Dollar	0.036683 0.039433
Indian Rupee	0.003982 0.004709
Indonesian Rupiah	0.000017 0.000023
Japanese Yen	0.002682 0.002862
Korean Won	0.000273 0.000288
Malaysian Ringgit	0.073167 0.079167
Nepalese Rupee	0.002780 0.003120
Pakistan Rupee	0.001984 0.002754
Philippine Peso	0.005676 0.005976
Singapore Dollar	0.222510 0.232510
Sri Lankan Rupee	0.001612 0.002192
Taiwan	0.010350 0.010530
Thai Baht	0.009223 0.009773
Arab	
Bahraini Dinar	0.793501 0.802001
Egyptian Pound	0.013914 0.019632
Iranian Riyal	0.000083 0.000085
Iraqi Dinar	0.000203 0.000263
Jordanian Dinar	0.420844 0.429844
Kuwaiti Dinar	1.000000 1.000000
Lebanese Pound	0.000155 0.000255
Moroccan Dirhams	0.022592 0.046592
Omani Riyal	0.777188 0.782868
Qatar Riyal	0.078566 0.083506
Saudi Riyal	0.079353 0.080653
Syrian Pound	0.001278 0.001498
Tunisian Dinar	0.119617 0.127617
Turkish Lira	0.069438 0.079738
UAE Dirhams	0.080703 0.082403
Yemeni Riyal	0.000980 0.001060



## Business

## NBK MONEY MARKETS REPORT

# Dollar makes a comeback amid higher yields and lower tensions

## Doubts over Iran supply keep oil prices afloat

**KUWAIT:** After the worst start to the year since 1987, the dollar is finally making its comeback. The greenback has been struggling to gain ground despite the fact that the Federal Reserve has been raising interest rates and widening the interest rate differential with other major economies. This was due to a number of factors, not the least of which is the current US pursuit of trade protectionism under Donald Trump. Additionally, US officials' talked down the US dollar at the beginning of the year, adding further downward pressure. Coupled with talks about other central banks also looking to shift gears and end their recession-era policies, the dollar was left licking its wounds for the majority of the year as investors priced in a higher risk premium. Until last week.

The past week saw the dollar enjoy one of its best performances since 2016, wiping away most of its losses in 2018. Trade protectionism fears have been calmed after widespread optimism regarding an imminent NAFTA deal. Furthermore, markets see a light at the end of the tunnel in terms of tensions with China. US Treasury Secretary Mnuchin will be visiting China in an attempt to reach some sort of understanding after recent escalation of a trade war. Also a catalyst for dollar strength was the US-10 year Treasury yield breaking the 3 percent level for the first time since 2014.

Regarding the US economy, consumer confidence levels increased in April while new home sales increased more than expected. The data

signaled some strength in the economy despite signs that growth slowed in the first quarter. Meanwhile, house prices rose in February which, coupled with strong consumer confidence, should underpin consumer spending.

In the commodities market, oil prices were kept afloat as doubts over Iran's supply increased after Trump threatened new sanctions on Iran. Trump also threatened to withdraw from the international nuclear deal with Iran, calling it "ridiculous" and "insane" and saying "it should have never, ever been made". During the week, Brent Crude prices reached \$75 for the first time since 2014 as the OPEC supply cut continued. Meanwhile, gold dipped to a 6-week low as the dollar jumped and 10Y Treasury yields broke the three percent level for the first time since 2014.

### UK and Europe

The Euro fell to a low of 1.2053 against the dollar last week, a level not seen since January of this year. One might think this was due to a dovish ECB, which held rates at their meeting on Thursday. However, that was not the case. ECB President Mario Draghi hailed "solid" euro zone growth, while at the same time acknowledging a slow-down in the Eurozone economy. The ECB was not overly concerned by the recent moderation in growth, and described the eurozone economy as still experiencing a solid and broad based expansion. The ECB also continued to see the risks to their growth outlook as broadly balanced,

although understandably expressed more concern over downside risks posed by the recent shift to more protectionist trade policies. The dip in the Euro after the press conference was mainly due to dollar strength rather than Euro weakness, as a roaring dollar marched on towards an outstanding weekly performance.

Meanwhile in the UK, the sterling pound recorded a second week of losses after official data showed economic growth slumped in early 2018, prompting investors to scale back their bets that interest rates will rise in May. The yield on two-year gilts, which are highly sensitive to rate expectations, fell by more than seven basis points to as low as 0.794 percent, the lowest level since March 16. The last time the two-year gilt yield fell that much in one day was Nov. 2, when the Bank of England raised rates for the first time in more than 10 years but said it expected only "very gradual" increases as Brexit approached. The growth data indicated that Britain's economy grew at its weakest pace since the fourth quarter of 2012, expanding by just 0.1 percent in the first quarter of 2018. The pound ended up falling 240 points during the past week alone, ending it at a level of 1.3778.

### Asia

During its meeting on Friday, Japan's central bank continued holding its rates. This time however, the bank abandoned the timeline it had set for hitting its inflation target in a sur-



prise move analysts say is aimed at keeping market expectations for more stimulus in check. Bank of Japan Governor Kuroda noted the omission of a target timeframe was aimed at preventing markets from betting on additional easing each time the BOJ pushed back the timing for hitting its price goal. Kuroda added that "while there's no change to our commitment to achieve our price goal at the earliest date possible, there's considerable

uncertainty on the outlook". The Japanese yen lost ground to the US dollar, as the latter attempted to erase all losses incurred in 2018. The USD/JPY pair rose 141 points during the week, breaking the 109.00 level for the first time since February.

### Kuwait

USDKWD opened at 0.30080 yesterday morning.

## Mozambique cracks open its cashews to boost the economy



**NAMPULA, Mozambique:** Armendo Joaquim Balanca, a cashew nuts farmer shows off his tree and plants in Nampula, Mozambique. — AFP

**NAMPULA, Mozambique:** Mozambique is going nuts about cashews, and they're boosting the economy's health. The country's cashew nut industry, one of the world's biggest, was dealt a body blow first by the 1977-1992 civil war and then by a controversial World Bank assistance package. Now, the government is looking to help the curved, nutrient-packed nut to recover its past glory. In Nampula, in the country's north, the end of cashew nut season sees a processing factory burst into activity. Dozens of workers labor under a scorching hot roof, baked by the sweltering heat as they separate nut from shell with a stamp of the foot.

Condor Nuts, where they work, is one business that has seized on the support offered by the government having opened a plant in a suburb of Nampula in the heart of cashew country 10 years ago.

Condor boss Americo Matos told AFP that he was just getting started. "At the moment, we process 8,000 tons of nuts every year," he said. "Our goal is to quickly grow that to 10,000 tons a year and then, with our second factory, the company targets an overall capacity of 20,000 tons per year." In Condor's warehouses, sacks brimming with nuts are piled several feet high. Hundreds of workers-as many as 1,000 at peak times-are on hand to cut, open and peel the harvest, often by hand. For working five or six hour days in noisy conditions, the workers are paid 45 euros (\$55) a month, barely more than the minimum wage. "Demand is very strong. We manage to sell everything we produce, the future is bright," Matos said.

### Europe's hungry for cashews

Business is also booming for Armendo Joaquim Balanca, whose 140 cashew trees produced two tons of nuts last year. "That brought in 140,000 meticals (1,850 euros, \$2,288)," he said. "I invested half and used the rest to pay medical costs and the children's school fees." Buoyed by his success, he now plans to plant 500 new trees. Since 2010, cashew consumption has surged in Europe, where the nuts have gained in popularity primarily because of their health benefits.

Almost three million tons are harvested worldwide every year with Ivory Coast's crop leading the way with an annual production of 725,000 tons, followed by India and Vietnam.

With output of just 140,000 tons every year, Mozambique lags behind the top three producers but is closing the gap-and has big ambitions. "The productivity of the cashew trees is increasing and our plans are, in the near future, to reach the historic level of 200,000 tons of nuts a year," said Prime Minister Carlos Agostinho do Rosario.

That symbolic figure was reached in the 1970s-the golden age of cashew farming-but the civil war brought the sector to its knees. When peace returned, the World Bank imposed a neoliberal economic recovery strategy that shook the sector. Experts forced the government to end a tax which had funded development of the industry locally, convinced that the export of raw nuts would be more profitable for producers.

### 'A good opportunity'

The impact was devastating: 10,000 factory jobs were lost while the income of more than a million farmers went into freefall. "The goal of the World Bank was to ensure that the prices were at a level high enough to be sustainable," said the current head of the World Bank's Mozambique office Mark Lundell. "There were difficulties in implementing the project," he admitted. "Our focus has always been on trying to support the industry."

Cashew nuts are now one of the crops fuelling growth in the agricultural sector. Today, almost half of the raw products are now processed locally. "Without local industry, the producers would not have been unleashed," said the government's cashew industry promoter Jaime Chissico. "We process far more locally than our African rivals and, with the increasing demand for processed products, we are in a good position." And while competition is fierce with India and Vietnam, Mozambique is holding its own and attracting international investors. Jan Le Grange, the South African owner of 1,300 hectares (3,200 acres) near Namialo to the east of Nampula, initially grew soya.

But an overly dry year followed by a season of excessive rain forced him to rethink his plans. "I decided to go for cashew trees," he said, citing stable global demand and resilient prices. Le Grange just planted 30,000 cashew trees, a number he soon hopes to triple. "It is a good opportunity. I'm very optimistic," he said. — AFP

## Poland looks east to plug manpower gap

**WARSAW:** From behind the wheel of his new Mercedes, a Polish entrepreneur eyes the bus in front of him. It features an ad from an employment agency boasting "Builders, welders: workers from Ukraine and Bangladesh". Speaking of the Warsaw logistics company he manages, the entrepreneur tells AFP: "Right now we mostly take on Ukrainians and some Belarusians."

"We practically no longer have Poles. They're all working in Germany or Britain," he said on condition of anonymity. Demographers believe the situation will only get worse, posing a threat to Poland's continuous streak of economic growth since the fall of communism in 1989.

The current child-rearing generation is having only half the number of children than those born in the post-WWII baby boom. Combined with the exodus of skilled workers to Western Europe, where salaries are higher, the result is that a labor shortage looms. According to official forecasts, by 2030 one in five jobs will be vacant. Poland's economy will need 20 million workers at a time when the working age population will be down to 16 million people.

The agricultural sector, at least, is not short on workers, who work on millions of small farms and are more numerous than their French or German counterparts. But shifting some of those workers away to other sectors will not be enough to solve the manpower problem elsewhere. Nor can the hole be plugged by hiring the jobless-the unemployment rate was 6.6 percent last month. And encouraging older workers to stay on past retirement age won't be a solution for all jobs.

### Seeking construction workers

In the construction sector, the deficit is already at 100,000 people, according to the deputy president of Poland's union of construction employers, Rafal Baldys Rembowski.

The country's biggest construction firm Budimex, which is controlled by Spain's Ferrovial, is on the hunt for 1,000 extra workers, according to spokesman Krzysztof Koziol.



**WARSAW:** People wait at the regional department of foreigners' affairs where foreigners can get work and residency permits in central Warsaw. To keep its economy growing, Poland is banking on workers from abroad. — AFP

"We're seeing a labor shortage in our company, but the same goes for our subcontractors, who are also complaining," he told AFP. "Sometimes they offer to provide us with construction equipment but then add that they don't have anyone to drive it," he added.

"We're short on practically all workers: masons, carpenters, concrete mixers, plasterers, pavers, drivers, machine operators. Too few foremen and engineers too."

Despite recent legislation requiring shops to close on Sundays, large supermarket chains like French giants Auchan and Carrefour have not had to fire staff. "We actually have a hard time recruiting people," said one supermarket official who preferred to remain anonymous.

Poland, which closed its doors to refugees for security reasons, must rethink its immigration policy, according to Development Minister Jerzy Kwiecinski. "Our economy already needs foreign workers and in the future we'll need more and more," he told reporters last month. He spoke after the government announced plans to adapt Poland's migration policy to job market needs by favoring the entry of workers in sectors where there are vacancies.

### Banking on foreigners

The plan is also to dissuade Poles from

moving abroad for work, and encouraging those already gone to return home-and bring their businesses along with them. The government also wants to make it easier for foreigners to come to Poland to study subjects crucial to the economy.

Other government plans include expanding Polish language instruction for foreigners and simplifying formalities. Even without the planned incentives, Poland has been attracting workers from abroad for years. Mainly Ukrainians, they often come without work permits or visas which, given the laws in place, makes it necessary for them to return home every three months before crossing back into Poland three months later.

Those who work off the books also risk a fine. The central bank estimates that one million Ukrainians currently work in Poland, and expects that figure could rise by nearly a third in the coming years. That dwarfs the 235,000 foreigners who received official work permits last year. "We Ukrainians come to Poland to make money. That's the only reason," said Maria Andreikiv, a pensioner who cleans houses in Warsaw. "My monthly pension in Ukraine is 1,370 hryvnias (43 euros, \$52). Here, I'll make that in a day. And prices in Ukraine aren't that much different from those in Poland," she said. — AFP

## Long battle to stop companies bribing Africa for contracts

**PARIS:** A spectacular probe into French tycoon Vincent Bolloré over suspected graft in Africa marks a rare exception among corporate titans doing business south of the Sahara. Bolloré-charged on Wednesday over contracts to operate ports in Guinea and Togo-is by far the most prominent business leader to be investigated in France for suspicious activities in Africa.

Campaigners have hailed the development as a break from decades of judicial indifference or nods and winks from the government over dubious deals in the former French colonies. The investigation stems largely from laws that are less than 18 months old. The so-called Sapin II Law, passed in December 2016, compels French firms to take preventive

steps against graft. It also beefs up measures dating back to 2000 that enable punishment of corrupt practices used to win public contracts abroad.

Under Sapin II, "corruption is punishable in all circumstances and in any place, even if it is a crime committed abroad", said Thierry Dal Farra, director of the public business law department in UGGC Avocats, a large Paris-based firm of attorneys. The tougher legislation came after years of criticism by the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) and specialized NGOs which accused France of turning a blind eye to corporate corruption abroad. The Bolloré probe breaks new ground in France-but the United States already goes much further. Its prosecutors are empowered to pursue non-American companies for economic crimes committed outside US soil-such cases often culminate in hefty fines.

### Competition without ethics

If France is a European example of tighter regulation, ferocious competition from China-the main trading partner of the African conti-

nent-is deemed a hurdle to abolishing bad practices. "Emerging nations that will take decades to incorporate ethical concerns into their search for market share" are a major obstacle, said William Bourbon, head of an anti-corruption association called Sherpa. "The most stereotypical are the Chinese, who intimidate the entire world and who, when it comes to corruption in Africa, act with complete impunity," he said. Already losing ground, French companies in Africa face seeing their share of contracts threatened by potentially unfair competition.

"We would really like everybody to play by the same ground rules. We need competitors who are subject to the same requirements, shared regulations and reciprocity," said a spokesman for MEDEF, France's principal employers' organization.

Last week, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) announced the adoption of new guidelines providing for more systematic assessment of corruption in its 189 members, stressing that bad practice undermines growth, investment and tax revenue. Many African countries are only too well adapted to underhand deals. — AFP







## Business

# Flydubai to operate to 5 points in Iraq, restart Sulaimaniyah flights

## Flydubai first carrier from UAE to operate direct flights to Kurdish city

**KUWAIT:** Flydubai, the Dubai-based airline, announced yesterday that flights to Sulaimaniyah will resume from 10 May 2018. The carrier now operates to five points in Iraq including Baghdad, Basra, Erbil and Najaf. The decision to relaunch the flights was taken following the Iraqi authorities' announcement that that the airport reopened in March 2018.

Flydubai is the first carrier from the UAE to operate direct flights to the Kurdish city with a twice a week service from its Dubai hub to Sulaimaniyah International Airport. The frequency is set to increase to three times a week from June this summer.

Flights FZ205/206 will operate between Dubai International Airport, Terminal 2 and Sulaimaniyah International Airport on Thursdays and Sundays and will be the 92nd destination on the codeshare list with Emirates.

Commenting on the recommencement of flights to Sulaimaniyah, Ghaith Al-Ghaith, Chief Executive Officer of flydubai, said: "We are pleased to see the direct air links between the UAE and Sulaimaniyah return after three years of suspension. Flydubai first operated to the Kurdish city in 2010 and we have seen over the



years the positive demand from the region. We look forward to further strengthening our network in Iraq, a key market that has been witnessing a rise in investment, trade and tourism."

Sulaymaniyah's economy today relies on tourism, agriculture and a rising number of

SMEs, most of which are involved in the building trade. The city is also home to the second biggest museum after the national museum in Baghdad, and hosts a number of Kurdish and ancient Persian artefacts dating back to 1792-1750 BC.

Iraq is an important market for flydubai



Sulaimaniyah

served by 46 weekly flights. Operating from Dubai's aviation hub, passengers from Iraq have access to a wide network of destinations in Europe, Asia, India and Russia. Flydubai recently announced the launch of flights to Helsinki in Finland and inaugurated a number of routes

including Dubrovnik in Croatia, Krakow in Poland and Kinshasa in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. The carrier has grown its network to more than 95 destinations in 48 countries, served by a fleet of 61 modern Boeing 737 aircraft.

## Burgan Bank announces winners of Yawmi account draw



**KUWAIT:** Burgan Bank, the second largest in terms of assets, announced yesterday the names of the daily draw winners of its Yawmi account draw, each taking home a cash-prize of KD 5,000.

### The lucky winners are:

1. Emad Jumaah Ali Abdullah
2. Naser Khaleel Tayyar Zeri
3. Naser Merdas Mefleh
4. Faisal Faleh Ayed Alsubaiei
5. Naseef Elias Dagher

In addition to the daily draw, Burgan Bank also offers a quarterly draw with more chances to win higher rewards, offering the chance to one lucky customer to win KD 125,000 every three months. The Yawmi Account offers daily and quarterly draws, wherein the quarterly draw requires customers to maintain a minimum amount of KD 500 in their account for two months prior to the draw date. Additionally, every KD 10 in the account will entitle customers

to one chance of winning. If the account balance is KD 500 and above, the account holder will be qualified for both the quarterly and daily draws.

Burgan Bank encourages everyone to open a Yawmi account and/or increase their deposit to maximize their chances of becoming a winner. The higher the level of the deposit, the higher the likelihood to win.

The Bank has continuously improved its performance over the years through an expanded revenue structure, diversified funding sources, and a strong capital base. The adoption of state-of-the-art services and technology has positioned it as a trendsetter in the domestic market and within the MENA region. Burgan Bank's brand has been created on a foundation of real values - of trust, commitment, excellence and progression, to remind us of the high standards to which we aspire. 'People come first' is the foundation on which its products and services are developed.

## Kareena Kapoor Khan launches 216th global showroom of Malabar Gold & Diamonds in Delhi



**NEW DELHI:** Malabar Gold & Diamonds, one among the BIG 5 jewelry retailers globally with a strong retail network of over 215 retail outlets spread across nine countries has strengthened its presence in India's capital region by opening a new store. The new store located at South Extension Part-1 in New Delhi, is the 216th store globally. Bollywood Star Kareena Kapoor Khan inaugurated this wonderful store to the public on 27th April in the presence of MP Ahammed, Chairman - Malabar Group, Shamlal Ahmed, Managing Director - International Operations, Malabar Gold & Diamonds, Abdul Salam KP, Group Executive Director - Malabar Group, Asher O, Managing Director - India Operations, Malabar Gold & Diamonds, Nishad AK, Group Executive Director, Malabar Group, management team members, media and well-wishers.

The jewelry retailer now has five outlets in the NCR and is also planning three more outlets in the region, apart from another four stores in Haryana and Punjab. Recently it opened a show-

room at Sector 18, Noida. "This is in sync with our well-laid-out expansion plans to open 500 showrooms by 2022, thus spreading our wings globally and emerging as the sole leader in jewelry trade. The customer trust is our biggest trigger for the expansion and growth over the last 25 years. The quality and the uniqueness of designs make Malabar a preferred choice for the customers world over. We are committed to the satisfaction of each customer we cater to" said Group Chairman MP Ahammed.

The company recently signed up Miss World Manushi Chhillar, as its brand ambassador, and it was the first brand endorsement by the petite Miss World who brought home the world crown after 17 years. Kareena and Manushi together recently kicked off the Brides of India Season-6 campaign based on the theme 'Celebration Bride', showcasing an extensive array of aesthetically crafted jewelry that perfectly blend with the themes and essence of different cultures and traditions across the country.

## Aman Exchange launches Aman Kuwait mobile app

**KUWAIT:** Aman Exchange announced the launch of the Aman Mobile application known as "Aman Kuwait" on both IOS and Android platforms. The "Aman Kuwait" app is one of the most customer friendly Mobile applications developed in Kuwait for remittances. Aman Customers, who are already registered on the Aman Exchange Online application, can download the App and access Aman services.

Starting operations in July 2015, Aman Exchange has been in the forefront of providing digital services to its customers. Launching the service, General Manager of Aman Exchange, Adel Yousef Al-Muzaini, noted that needs of both IOS and Android

users have been addressed by the company. E D Titus, Head of Operations, said Aman Exchange has recently launched Western Union Digital Service as well. This service to all corridors has exclusively been launched by Aman Exchange amongst all exchange companies in Kuwait and it is offered at a very attractive introductory commission of KD 0.5 only for a limited period.

Adel Muzaini expressed his happiness on being able to successfully live up to the expectations of the remittance community for products making remittance a pleasant experience. With both Aman Kuwait Mobile App and Western Union Digital App, Aman Exchange becomes the pioneer money exchange company in Kuwait to offer the services of sending both cash on counter and credit to account digitally. Customers in Kuwait can now remit from the comfort of their home or office and forget parking worries or dust or heat!

The Aman Kuwait App can be accessed from the IOS store or the Android Playstore.



Adel Yousef Al-Muzaini (left) and E D Titus

The Western Union Digital App is also available on the website at WU.Com and can be downloaded from the Kuwait store on IOS and from Android playstore as well. Both the apps are accessible at [www.amankuwait.com](http://www.amankuwait.com) Aman Exchange Kuwait is always in the forefront of devising better ways to serve the customers in Kuwait.

## VIVA launches Samsung Galaxy J7 Pro packages

**KUWAIT:** VIVA, Kuwait's fastest-growing and most developed telecom operator, launched the new Samsung Galaxy J7 Pro, with postpaid commitments. Postpaid customers are now eligible to own this device upon signing two years commitments with one

of VIVA's postpaid packages starting at KD 10, and enjoy KD 10 balance minutes and 10 Gb + 10 GB bonus internet.

Samsung Galaxy J7 Pro is powered by Exynos 7870 Octa, a 1.6 GHz octa core processor, Mali-T830 MP1 GPU and 3 GB RAM with 16, 32 or 64 GB of internal storage and a 3600 mAh Li-ion battery.

It is fitted with a 5.5-inch FHD Super AMOLED screen and has a 13 megapixels rear camera with LED flash, f/1.7 aperture and auto-focus and a 13 megapixels front facing camera with f/1.9 aperture, also equipped with LED flash.



## Flydubai receives industry recognition

**KUWAIT:** Dubai-based flydubai was recognized by Sheikh Ahmed bin Saeed Al-Maktoum, Chairman of flydubai for the contribution and support it has given to the development of Dubai as a global hub for aviation. Hamad Obaidalla, Chief Commercial Officer at flydubai, received the award on behalf of the airline.

In addition, flydubai was recognized by the readers of Business Traveller Middle East magazine at this year's Business Traveller Middle East Awards held during the Arabian Travel Market (ATM) at the Palazzo Versace, Dubai. The recognition reflects flydubai's commitment to enhance connectivity and deliver convenient and reliable travel services.

Ghaith Al-Ghaith, Chief Executive Officer at flydubai, commented on the occasion: "We are pleased to be recognized across the business by the industry during the Arabian Travel Market. It demonstrates the hard work of the flydubai team and the recognition by our passengers of the exceptional travel experience we offer across our network. In the last 12 months, flydubai embarked on a number of initiatives including an extensive codeshare partnership with Emirates offering passengers the opportunity to travel on a single ticket across the world and most recently the launch of Holidays by flydubai, for travellers to book holiday packages consisting of flights, hotels and optional ancillary services. This recognition marks the success of these initiatives as well as the introduction of our new Boeing 737 MAX 8 aircraft with a fully flat bed in Business Class."

flydubai was also recognized for its work with dnata, the Emirates Innovation Lab and IBM in successfully completing a Proof of Concept (PoC) using Blockchain Technology for Airfreight Transportation in Dubai. It received the Editor's Choice Award for Special Achievements in Air Cargo at this year's Logistics Middle East Awards.

Since the start of 2018, flydubai has announced the start of 10 new destinations



Mohamed Hassan, Vice President of flydubai Cargo (centre left) with Ghaith Al-Ghaith

on its network. With the recent start of flights to Dubrovnik, Kinshasa and Krakow and upcoming route launches to Catania, Helsinki and Thessaloniki flydubai's comprehensive network has grown to over 90 destinations in

47 countries. flydubai has taken delivery of six Boeing 737 MAX 8 aircraft which will enhance flydubai's operational performance, while offering passengers an exceptional travel experience.



Flydubai cabin crew with the Business Traveller Middle East Award



Health

New beginning for Taiba Hospital

**KUWAIT CITY:** Taiba Hospital, Kuwait's leading private healthcare provider, revealed its new brand identity and logo, announcing the beginning of a new chapter with fresh branding that reflects its spirit of progress and advancement.

The brand identity utilizes tones of the blue color with a modern design, conveying the vision and aspirations of Taiba Hospital, which aims to be the hospital of choice for patients and physicians alike in the region. The same modern design elements were used in renovating the hospital facilities, ensuring that patients have a positive and satisfactory experience.

Adopting the new brand identity is the final phase of a wider expansion plan for Taiba Hospital and its core services. The refurbished hospital building has the capacity of 110 beds, and boasts a number of high-standard facilities that include: two MRI suites, an advanced CT Scan Suite, Intensive Care Units for surgical and cardiac patients of all age groups, 5 high-tech operating theaters, and one Hybrid OT with the highest standards of technology in the healthcare industry.

In tandem with its achievement in being



Mr Rashed Al Fadala

The new spacious patient suites and rooms are elegantly furnished to easily accommodate guests, suitable for holding baby receptions.

Commenting on the completion of the expansion plan, Taiba Hospital's Chief Executive Officer Rashed Al Fadala emphasized the hospital's commitment to providing the best services in the industry to patients and visitors, elevating the status of the healthcare sector in Kuwait. He noted, "Throughout the process of expansion, everyone of the Taiba Hospital family worked with utmost dedication and commitment to provide patients and visitors with the best services possible. Despite some challenges, we completed the expansion project which doesn't only target upgrading the infrastructure, but also our human resources."

He added: "To better achieve our goals at leading the industry, we worked extensively



over the past years to recruit some of the best talent in Kuwait in various fields, including medical and administrative experiences whose efforts are instrumental in achieving our goals." The hospital's staff proudly include some of Kuwait's most prominent doctors and surgeons in different fields, including Orthopedics, Gastroenterology, Cardiology, and Internal Medicine.

Rising autism rate in US an 'urgent' concern

**TAMPA:** The autism rate in the United States has climbed to one in 59 children, up from prior estimates of one in 68, a US government report said. Calling the neurodevelopmental disorder an "urgent public health concern," the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) said the change represents an uptick from 1.5 percent to 1.7 percent of children. The latest figures are "broad and startling," said Walter Zahorodny, an associate professor of pediatrics at Rutgers New Jersey Medical School who led the New Jersey portion of the study.

The prevalence of autism in the United States was just one in 5,000 in 1975, and has been mounting steadily in recent years, rising 150 percent since 2000, the CDC said. Researchers are still unclear what causes autism, or why it appears to be on the rise. In 2014, the CDC said one in 68 US children had autism, a rate the agency said appeared to remain steady in 2016.

"It is now clear that what we saw in 2016 was just a pause along the way," said Zahorodny. The CDC report said some of the change in prevalence in recent years "could be due to improved autism identification in minority populations, although autism is still more likely to be identified in white children than in black or Hispanic children." Autism

is also about four times more common in boys than girls. Certain risk factors are linked to autism, such as being born to parents over age 30, maternal illness during pregnancy, genetic mutations, birth before 37 weeks gestation and multiple births.

"These are true influences that are exerting an effect, but they are not enough to explain the high rate of autism prevalence," said Zahorodny. "There are still undefined environmental risks which contribute to this significant increase, factors that could affect a child in its development in utero or related to birth complications or to the newborn period. We need more research into non-genetic triggers for autism."

People with autism may display a range of symptoms including repetitive movements, difficulty communicating, and discomfort in social situations. Some excel at non-verbal skills such as mathematics. States included in the research were Arizona, Arkansas, Colorado, Georgia, New Jersey, Maryland, Minnesota, Missouri, North Carolina, Tennessee and Wisconsin.

New Jersey had almost twice the nationwide rate, at 2.9 percent, or one in 34 kids. The lowest rate was in Arkansas, with one in 76 kids affected. Data for Thursday's report came from health and special education records of 325,483 children who were eight years old in 2014. While the figures, which come from the Autism and Developmental Disabilities Monitoring (ADDM) Network, are not representative of the entire nation, health experts widely consider them a benchmark of the autism rate in the United States. —AFP

Enzyme that affects ageing, cancer decoded, claims study

**PARIS:** Elated scientists announced the completion of a 20-year quest to map the complex enzyme thought to forestall ageing by repairing the tips of chromosomes in plants and animals, including humans. Decoding the architecture of the enzyme, called telomerase, could lead to drugs that slow or block the ageing process, along with new treatments for cancer, they reported in the journal Nature.

"It has been a long time coming," lead investigator Kathleen Collins, a molecular biologist at the University of California in Berkley, said in a statement.

"Our findings provide a structural framework for understanding human telomerase disease mutations, and represent an important step towards telomerase-related clinical therapeutics."

Part protein and part RNA-genetic material that relays instructions for building proteins-telomerase acts on microscopic sheaths, known as telomeres, that cover the tips of the chromosomes found inside all cells. In humans, each cell contains 23 pairs of chromosomes, including one pair of sex chromosomes-the "X" and "Y"-that differ between males and females.

Australian-American biologist Elizabeth Blackburn, who shared the 2009 Nobel Prize in Medicine for discovering telomeres and their protective function in the 1970s, likened them to the tiny plastic caps that keep shoelaces from fraying. Eventually, however, shoelace tips and telomeres do break down: every time a cell divides the telomeres get worn a little bit more, until the cell stops dividing and dies. This, biologists agree, is probably central to the natural ageing process. But there is a twist.

A 'Wow!' moment

In 1985 Blackburn discovered telomerase, and its remarkable capacity to extend a cell's lifespan by essentially rebuilding telomeres with extra bits of DNA, much in the same way that retreading a tyre can make it nearly as good as new. Telomerase, in other words, was revealed to be a key agent in longevity. It can also be linked to disease.

"Inherited genetic mutations that compromise telomerase function cause disorders," said Michael Stone, a professor at the Center for Molecular Biology or RNA at the University of California, Santa Cruz. A deficiency of the enzyme could accelerate cell death. At the other extreme, too much telomerase "supports unbridled cell growth in most human cancers," he wrote in a commentary, also in Nature.

But early efforts to develop drugs that could control the enzyme's expression-essentially switching it on or off-"were hampered by an incomplete understanding of the structure and organization of the telomerase complex," Stone added. To crack the telomerase code, Collins and her team used a state-of-the-art cryo-electron microscope (Cryo-EM) to see the enzyme in action at unprecedented resolutions of seven or eight angstroms.

An angstrom is one ten-billionth of a metre long. Cryo-EM can decipher the molecular structures of compounds that cannot be crystallized and imaged with X-rays. It's developers won the 2017 Nobel Prize in Chemistry. "When I got to the point where I could see all the subunits-we had 11 proteins in total-it was a moment of 'Wow! Wow! This is how they all fit together'," said lead author Thi Hoang Duong Nguyen, a post-doc at UC Berkeley's Miller Institute for Basic Research in Science.

A 2010 study showed that ageing could be reversed in mice that were treated with telomerase. And in 2011, scientists found a way to transform age-worn cells from people over 90 into rejuvenated stem cells indistinguishable from those found in embryos. In lab experiments, several critical markers of ageing in cells were "reset", including the size of telomeres. —AFP

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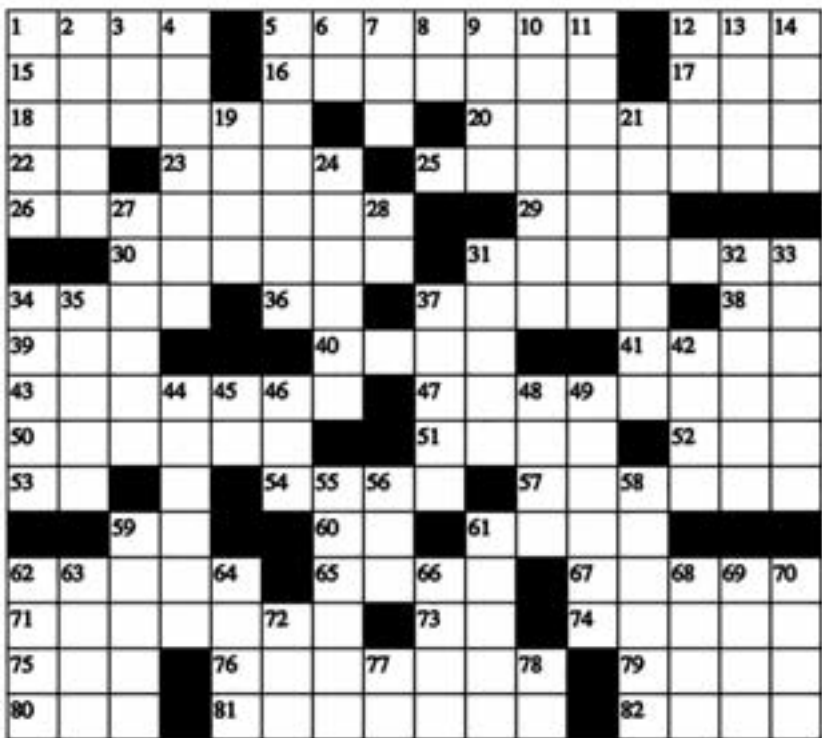
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Stars

CROSSWORD 1896



- ACROSS
- DOWN
1. Containing or filled with salt.

5. Designed to incite to indecency or lust.

12. An ester of adenosine that is converted to ATP for energy storage.

15. A person who makes use of a thing.

16. Tropical evergreen trees or shrubs.

17. An enzyme that catalyzes the oxidation of many body compounds (e.g., epinephrine and norepinephrine and serotonin).

18. Italian poet (1569-1625).

20. An endocrine secretion that is transmitted by the blood to the tissue on which it has a specific effect.

22. An associate degree in nursing.

23. Any of the Hindu sacred writing.

25. A dark brown to greenish oleoresin that has a fragrant odor and is used as a fixative in perfumes.

26. Pig-sized tailless South American amphibious rodent with partly webbed feet.

29. The bureau of the Treasury Department responsible for tax collections.

30. East Indian tart yellow berrylike fruit.

34. Any of numerous local fertility and nature deities worshipped by ancient Semitic peoples.

36. Military action involving the use of electromagnetic energy to determine or exploit or reduce or prevent hostile use of the electromagnetic spectrum.

38. A Mid-Atlantic state.

39. A drug combination found in some over-the-counter headache remedies (Aspirin and Phenacetin and Caffeine).

40. (Babylonian) God of storms and wind.

41. Marked by casual disrespect.

43. A disease of plants characterized by the gradual dying of the young shoots starting at the tips and progressing to the larger branches.

47. Coextensive with the subkingdom Parazoa.

50. A member of an agricultural people in southeastern India.

51. An independent ruler or chieftain (especially in Africa or Arabia).

52. Black tropical American cuckoo.

53. Half the width of an em.

54. A Chadic language spoken south of Lake Chad.

57. Someone whose occupation is apply an overlay of gold or gilt.

60. An intensely radioactive metallic element that occurs in minute amounts in uranium ores.

62. English theoretical physicist who applied relativity theory to quantum mechanics and predicted the existence of antimatter and the positron (1902-1984).

65. Someone who wastes time.

67. Any of a group of heavenly spirits under the god Anu.

71. A state in the southeastern United States on the Gulf of Mexico.

73. A radioactive element of the actinide series.

74. Tropical American tree producing cacao beans.

75. The last (12th) month of the year.

76. A tricycle (usually propelled by pedalling).

79. Having the slant of a bevel.

80. An edge tool with a heavy bladed head mounted across a handle.

81. A member of the Siouan people formerly inhabiting the Black Hills of western South Dakota.

82. A Hindu theistic philosophy.

1. Wood of a sumac.

2. (Hindu) A manner of sitting (as in the practice of Yoga).

3. (Irish) The sea personified.

4. (informal terms) Small and of little importance.

5. Any of the enzymes that catalyze biological oxidation.

6. Minor or subordinate.

7. An inflammatory disease of connective tissue with variable features including fever and weakness and fatigueability and joint pains and skin lesions on the face or neck or arms.

8. A heavy odorless colorless gas formed during respiration and by the decomposition of organic substances.

9. An ancient Hebrew unit of dry measure equal to about a bushel.

10. A black mineral that is an ore of niobium and tantalum.

11. The membrane in the ear that vibrates to sound.

12. A primeval personification of air and breath.

13. (Irish) Mother of the Tuatha De Danann.

14. A composition written in metrical feet forming rhythmical lines.

19. The compass point that is one point north of northeast.

21. An old breed of powerful deep-chested smooth-coated dog used chiefly as a watchdog and guard dog.

24. A member of a widespread group of Amerindians living in northeastern South America.

27. Situated in a particular spot or position.

28. A highly unstable radioactive element (the heaviest of the halogen series).

31. Any location known for vice and corruption.

32. A city in northwestern Turkey.

33. The act of putting something in working order again.

35. Relating to or having the characteristics of bees.

37. Greek mythology.

42. A soft heavy toxic malleable metallic element.

44. African tree having an exceedingly thick trunk and fruit that resembles a gourd and has an edible pulp called monkey bread.

45. The blood group whose red cells carry both the A and B antigens.

46. A rotating disk shaped to convert circular into linear motion.

48. Port city that is the capital and largest city of Latvia.

49. Of or containing iridium.

55. A large fleet.

56. The United Nations agency concerned with the international organization of food and agriculture.

58. (law) A gift of personal property by will.

59. A support that steadies or strengthens something else.

61. Of or like a cecum.

63. A large genus of dicotyledonous trees and shrubs of the family Aquifoliaceae that have small flowers and berries (including hollies).

64. The head of a branch of an organized crime syndicate.

66. Large burrowing rodent of South and Central America.

68. The United Nations agency concerned with civil aviation.

69. An association of criminals.

70. A tiny or scarcely detectable amount.

72. The number that is represented as a one followed by 6 zeros.

77. Being nine more than forty.

78. A soft silvery metallic element of the alkali earth group.

STAR TRACK



Aries (March 21-April 19)

You're determined to improve your physical health and well-being: a surprise awaits you in this area as you're open to any good suggestions. Work becomes a priority as you discover something regarding the workplace you're not supposed to know. You strive to do whatever it takes to feel good about yourself and all that you do: continue on this path and you win! Hold off on making choices as the vibrations aren't strong for this; someone could demand an answer from you now. Someone invites you to a social gathering that could cause problems if you're not careful. If friends seem unsupportive, look closely at this as there are reasons you should consider. Fun, food and family are the highlight of your day as you gather later for a meal.



Taurus (April 20-May 20)

Your input helps clear up a situation no one else could figure out; give yourself a pat on the back! A new project demands that you go the extra mile, which you gladly agree to. Someone comforts you and agrees that you did the right thing in a certain situation: this helps you stop second-guessing yourself. You connect with someone you haven't seen in a long time and you pick up right where you left off; there aren't many friends you can do that with! You like to do things your way but this may put you in a very difficult position. You avoid drama at every turn when possible, today is no different; you may find yourself considering separating yourself from someone for this reason. You have the ability to create the environment you want.



Gemini (May 21-June 20)

You're tapped into the emotions of those around you and make every effort to please them. Time spent with those you love creates an energy of security and contentment. A day away from work finds you contemplating a flower or vegetable garden; you have got a strong talent for growing things. Your input is sought regarding a sensitive situation you have had to help with before; you could consider distancing yourself from this. You discover a wonderful surprise involving your finances: your hard work and close attention have paid off! A remodeling or rebuilding effort turns out to be fun. Commitment to your health is something you want, but you fear you lack the ability to fully commit. Believe in yourself and what you're capable of.



Cancer (June 21-July 22)

You receive encouragement and very good advice regarding a personal matter. Your safe, comfortable home is enjoyed by several loved ones today at a spur of the moment gathering. A strong need to be in control could cause problems; stepping back and letting others be in charge could be your best bet. During some free time you take the initiative to research new theories on life and death, and the purpose of both. A deep desire to be a better person drives you to change your ways in some areas of your life that have been problematic. Someone questions your attempts at evolving and understanding others; you know very well that this person should be ignored. You feel exhilarated but weary at the end of the day. Concentrate on resting this evening.



Leo (July 23-August 22)

Being surrounded by tranquility and security creates a grateful heart. You move further away from any negative attitudes you have. Someone stops in for a visit and compliments your excellent decorating or gardening skills; even though it's hard for you to accept a compliment, you can't help but smile as your hard work has paid off. Helping someone by showing them what to do brings fulfillment and satisfaction. You resist moving in a new direction at first, but realizing the benefits you agree this is necessary. This could be one of your very best decisions! Working on tax papers could bring you down until you realize things don't look too badly after all. Keeping company with a like-minded person opens your eyes to a certain situation.



Virgo (August 23-September 22)

You're on go when you're required to make quick decisions concerning someone other than yourself. You're able to communicate clearly with well-chosen words and deeds; your unique way of doing things proves most valuable. A person you don't care for ruffles your feathers as you dare to disagree with them; stick to your guns and do what you know to be the right thing. Becoming involved in a new area of endeavor excites and stimulates your body, mind and spirit. A person you barely know supports something you're doing that others might not understand. Loving someone comes easily as they show you their true self. A strong sense of satisfaction is what you get when you're able to see a positive difference in a loved one.

Wordsearch Puzzle

Weather

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



- BAROMETER
- BLIZZARD
- CELSIUS
- CLOUDS
- COLD
- CYCLONE
- DOWNPOUR
- DRIZZLE
- DROUGHT
- FAHRENHEIT
- FLOOD
- FLURRIES
- FOG
- FORECAST
- FREEZE
- FROST
- HAIL
- HOT
- HUMIDITY
- HURRICANE
- ICE
- LIGHTNING
- MIST
- MONSOON
- OVERCAST
- RAIN
- SHOWER
- SLEET
- SNOW
- SQUALL
- STORM
- SUNNY
- TEMPERATURE
- THERMOMETER
- THUNDER
- TORNADO
- TSUNAMI
- TYPHOON
- VISIBILITY
- WINDY



Libra (September 23-October 22)

Your energetic zest for life inspires others to follow your example. A reexamination of your support system is important as you could find yourself making some major changes in your personal life. Someone younger holds your heart in their hands: this may introduce a period of time for nurturing and revisiting the way you were raised. A new personal purchase brings big improvements to your physical appearance; this could somehow be related to the smart lifestyle changes you have recently made. Smiles and laughter strongly indicated! You begin something new that could offer extra income down the line; your talents are well-known and respected. This evening you may visit a place that's praised for their decadent deserts and delicious coffee.



Scorpio (October 23-November 21)

Catching the vibes of those around you helps energize the work you participate in with them! When you witness the circumstances of a friend, you become very thankful for your own. The comfort and attractiveness of your home creates security and contentment. You know what's best when a sticky situation crops up. You could become overly sentimental when you become attached to a new person; make sure you don't act foolishly or collapse yourself into this new relationship. Finding yourself taking leadership in important responsibilities isn't exactly what you wanted. Taking time out for some fun on the water or in the woods being close to nature is the best medicine at this time. A breath of fresh air brings rejuvenation and health.



Sagittarius (November 22-December 21)

You've grown weary of the same old thing; when you make changes, it could rub someone the wrong way. Some subjects that grab your attention could be controversial and sensitive to some; best keep what you're learning to yourself at this time. You're able to speak clearly and with passion; making yourself understood comes easily today. An old, special friend invites you for coffee or lunch. Making choices seems easier today than most, take advantage of this while it lasts. Your drive and motivation are very prominent. You find yourself attending a work-related function that attracts a large number of people. Being there for someone you love means so much more to this person than you know. When you love, you love deeply.



Capricorn (December 22-January 19)

Answers and quick comebacks are made with ease; clever words make an impression on a new acquaintance. New information has you wondering what's wrong with the world! You like to stay in the loop when expecting news of someone who's been ill. You're in the mood to talk on all levels, chatty or deep, doesn't matter. People find you attractive and intelligent by observing what you say and do. A certain situation causes you to wonder about the safety of a person you know and what you should do about it; intuition should be heeded. If you disagree with someone you may hesitate to speak up because this person's very sensitive. You could find that your mind is occupied with learning about mystic and paranormal issues tonight.



Aquarius (January 20-February 18)

You definitely want to have a discussion with your living partner but it's sensitive in nature; taking your time is strongly suggested right now. Time unfolds on its own terms and you could find this frustrating; this may just be the perfect exercise in learning patience. You long to create products or images or words that move the emotions of many. Someone could make the statement, chill out, you have got this! And you do! You feel far less shy and you're willing to jump out there and say things you might not have before! You're happy with the life you lead and very grateful; you're ready to take things to the next step in a domestic situation. You're feeling the effects of a lifestyle change you have made. Satisfied with yourself, rest well.

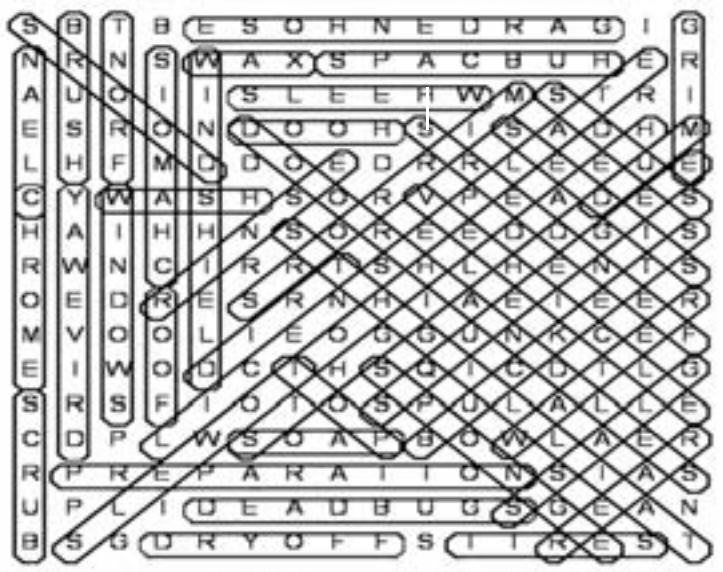


Pisces (February 19-March 20)

Information comes to you that could change things; remember to look at all sides and make fair judgements. Your involvement with community projects is indicated and this could involve safety or beautification matters. You have a desire to get your message across regarding an important detail: a nasty situation could be cleared up because of communication with the right person. Your words flow as you present your thoughts to a group. Influencing people comes easily now as you work to educate someone on an issue that could make things better for many. A new project is exactly what you need to distract you from something unpleasant; your natural talents only grow when they're used to create better conditions for those less fortunate.

Yesterday's Solution

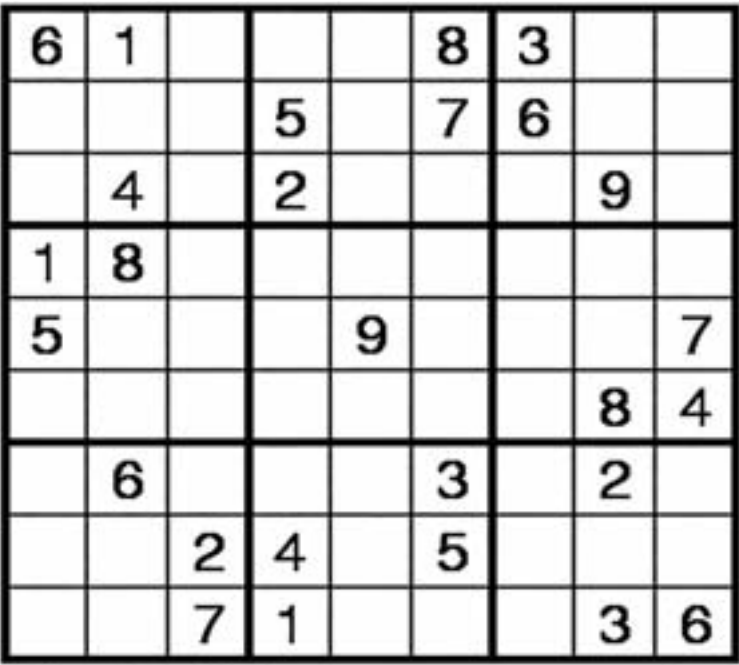
Washing a Car



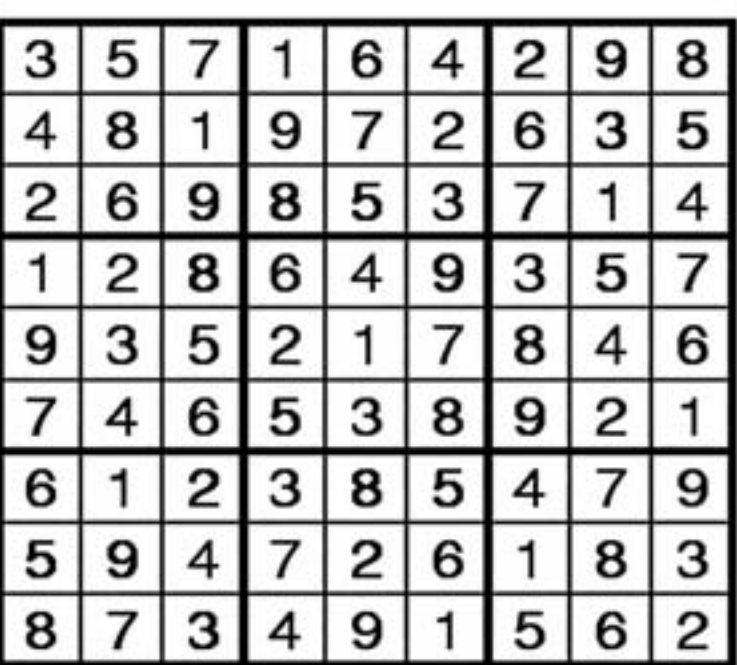
- BRUSH
- BUCKETS
- CHAMOIS
- CHROME
- CLEAN
- DEAD BUGS
- DIRT
- DOOR HANDLES
- DOORS
- DRIVEWAY
- DRY OFF
- FENDERS
- FRONT
- GARDEN HOSE
- GLASS
- GRIME
- HEADLIGHTS
- HOOD
- HUBCAPS
- LICENSE PLATE
- MIRRORS
- MUD
- PREPARATION
- REAR
- RINSE
- ROOF
- SCRUB
- SIDES
- SOAP
- SPONGE
- SQUEEGEE
- SUDS
- TAIL LIGHTS
- TIRES
- TOP
- TOWELS
- VEHICLE
- WASH
- WATER
- WAX
- WHEELS
- WINDOWS
- WINDSHIELD

The hidden message is: BIRD DROPPINGS

Daily SuDoku



Yesterday's Solution





Strategic Partner



# Kuwait Times recognizes artists through its 15th 'KUWAIT BEAUTIFUL & GREEN' contest



Adnan Saad, Deputy General Manager &amp; Organizer (Kuwait Times)

By Ben Garcia

**T**he venue was packed to capacity as attendees arrived in a steady flow. Everyone had a big smile on their faces, ready to hear the announcement of winners in this year's Kuwait Beautiful and Green Painting contest organized by Kuwait Times. The contest, in its 15th year, is the biggest such competition in the Middle East. The program started with a video presentation about Kuwait, which narrated the early life of many Kuwaitis before oil was discovered. Videos of Kuwait Times' founder Yousef Al-Alyan were also shown.

This year's contest saw 19,000 students from over 190 of Kuwait's public, private, bilingual and special needs schools taking part. Kuwait Times Deputy General Manager Adnan Saad opened the awards ceremony and welcomed the guests, including ambassadors of various countries. "Today, we celebrate the 15th anniversary of the Kuwait Beautiful and Green school painting competition organized jointly by Kuwait Times and Zain. We - Kuwait Times - are very pleased to organize such an activity which actually conveys messages about the significance of environmental protection to and through students. This activity helps link students to the environment and highlights the significance of protecting it," he said.

He apologized for the brief preparations due to the upcoming final exams of students and the holy month of Ramadan. "Participants' paintings showed how much they love Kuwait and the environment as well as their keenness on protecting it as a sustainable and infinite resource," Saad said. The competition also helps students explore their artistic skills and gain more self-confidence in activating their talents and relationship to the surrounding environment in homes, schools and the

community in general.

"It is a great thing when creativity stems from innocence and expressing feelings. Participating students have made wonderful paintings and proved their skills and creativity through artistic touches and appreciation of the values of beauty expressed by colors and the materials they used joyfully. This was clearly reflected in participants' works, which came as a truthful and transparent expression of a comprehensive vision, enabling students to focus on formative arts, express themselves and demonstrate their talents in their own ways and styles," he said. Adnan lauded the members of previous and present juries who expressed their rich and artistic experiences and knowledge in selecting the winning paintings. "I thank Ghada Abdul Kareem, Thuraya Al-Baqsam, Shorouq Ameen, Modhi Al-Hajji, Elina Khabbaz, Abdul Kareem Al-Enezi, Abdul Aziz Arti, Amira Ashkanani, Svetlana Arndt and many others," he said.

He thanked Zain Telecom's PR and communications manager Waleed Al-Khashti, Symphony Style Hotel Manager, Hardee's representative, Kuwait Times Editor-in-Chief Abd Al-Rahman Al-Alyan, distinguished



Group photo



Abdul Kareem Al Enezy, Head of Jury



Ahmad Abul and Hamad Mattar (ZAIN)



Group photo - juries, Ambassadors, sponsors with Abd Al-Rahman Alyan



A cross section of the audience

Sponsored by



Organized by



Hosted by







**Assad Bu Nashi, Abdul Kareem Al Enezy, Tareq Al Kouni (Egyptian Ambassador), Abd Al-Rahman Alyan, Adnan Saad, Hamad Mattar and Kareem Shawqi**



**Hamad Mattar , Director of External and Internal Relations (ZAIN)**

school principals, participating students, members of the distinguished jury committee and ladies and gentlemen of the audience. "Due thanks to all participating establishments for the efforts they exerted and for sponsoring and attending the awards ceremony of this year's students' painting competition held under the title 'Kuwait Beautiful & Green,'" he said.

Abdul Karim Al-Enezi, Head of Judging Committee, also thanked the organizers for investing resources in honing Kuwait's young talents. "I thank you for your interest in this annual contest as we celebrate its 15th year. The numbers are increasing year after year, and this year the number reached more than 19,000 students of both genders, who presented the most beautiful works, making it difficult for judges to pick the best among them, and this is why the number of winners in all categories will vary this year," he said.

"I want to reiterate not only to students but also to their teachers and parents, that they must get the complete idea about the contest's conditions. It has a very important message for the new generation, which is the protection of Kuwait's environment and how can we make Kuwait beautiful and green. Our children excelled with very beautiful paintings," Enezi said.

"Our aim today is not the large number I mentioned above, but the quality, idea and painting the piece according to requirements and not to repeat

or redraw some of past years' ideas that were already displayed at the time, or the winning works that were published in papers then. These are works that won with the ideas of those who drew them, and we as judges cannot pick them to win again, as we look for innovation and creativity, and a beautiful piece that comes from the heart and thought of the artist," he said. The jury head also thanked the teachers who took care of the students to draw beautiful paintings that express the goal behind this contest.

Many contestants and winners who participated in this year's competition were either winners or runners-up in several school competitions in Kuwait, including those from the special needs categories, like Lujane Al-Raggom of Manarat School, who took home the first prize. She likes drawing and painting, according to her art teacher Rania Al-Samir. "She finds peace in art and this is what she likes the most," Samir said. Lujane has won several competitions organized by various companies and NGOs. "She is an active girl and we fully support her through the appreciation of her work and helping her out in the combination of colors and drawing materials," Samir said.

"I am very happy to get this award. As a mother, I am very proud of my daughter - I feel like I am the winner. Bagging first place is excellent for a small kid like Sophia. I think she can improve, and this is great encourage-

ment from our part," said Victoria, mother of winner Sophia Park of the International British School (6-8 year category).

Eighth-grader Al-Juri Fahd Al-Rashid of Dasman Bilingual School (9-11 year category) was very happy to be named the winner from many contenders. She said she would love to share her award with her school and the people of Kuwait. "We work together on this, especially with my art teacher Nouran Al-Nadi - without her support, we wouldn't be able to come up with this beautiful artwork," she noted.

Tenth-grader Ghadeer Ibrahim was named winner in the 15-17 year category. Her teacher Fatma Al-Sawwagh was very overjoyed. "I knew it when the painting was done and presented to me. I was the first to laud her work. It was wonderful and I knew it will get a good review by the judges. I am very happy for her," she told Kuwait Times.

Another beautiful work of art was a painting by Munira Al-Zanki (special efforts category). It elicited several positive comments from people attending the event. "This was a fantastic drawing. She really has the hands and mind of a real art genius. I think she will soar in the world of art one day," a journalist said while examining the painting. Munira is a Grade 12 student at Fatma Al-Hashmia School, mentored by her teacher Nidaa Borusli.



**Abd Al-Rahman Alyan and Liza Thapsem – Director of Marketing & PR (Symphony Style Hotel)**



**Abd Al-Rahman Alyan, Adnan Saad and Hamad Mattar**



**Adnan Saad, French Ambassador, Palestinian Ambassador and his wife, Armenian Ambassadors wife**



**Adnan Saad, Kazakhstan Ambassador, Svitlana Arndt and Ukrainian Ambassador**

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KUWAIT BEAUTIFUL & GREEN

CATEGORY SPECIAL NEEDS



Adnan Saad, Asaad Bu Nashi, Abd Al-Rahman Alyan, Hammad Mattar and winners of Special Needs category



Lujane Al-Raggom - Manarat School



Eman Al Kandari - Al Kharafi



Mishaal Jarrlh Mahmoud - Dasman School



Bdoor Al-Rayahy - Anfal Group



Haya Meteib - Khalifa School



Yara Atoui - KES



Haya Al Shayaa - Nebrass



Anfal Bu Hamad





Strategic Partner



# KUWAIT BEAUTIFUL & GREEN

## CATEGORY 6-8



Asaad Bu Nashi, Abd Al-Rahman Alyan, Hammad Mattar, Adnan Saad and winners of 6-8 category



Sophia Park - International British School



Zahed Abdul Malik - Fahaheel Al-Wataneih Ahmadi



Roqaya Ali Dashti - Meshrif School



Salman Al Mohri - ACA Salmiya



Niva Aneesh - Karmel School



Muneerah Al Muhanna - ACA



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# Classifieds

Monday, April 30, 2018



STATE OF KUWAIT

DIRECTORATE GENERAL OF CIVIL AVIATION

METEOROLOGICAL DEPARTMENT

Tel: (+965) 161 Ext: 6819 - 6817

Fax: (+965) 24348714

www.met.gov.kw

### Expected Weather for the Next 24 Hours

**BY DAY:** Mostly Sunny with light to moderate variable wind to south easterly wind, with speed of 12 - 40 km/h .

**BY NIGHT:** Partly cloudy with light to moderate variable wind to north westerly wind, with speed of 08 - 28 km/h with a chance for scattered rain.

WEATHER WARNING	No Current Warnings		
STATION	MAX. EXP.	MIN. REC.	SFC. CHART
KUWAIT CITY	34 °C	23 °C	
KUWAIT AIRPORT	33 °C	20 °C	
ABDALY	32 °C	20 °C	
BUBYAN	28 °C	22 °C	
JAHRA	34 °C	22 °C	
FAILAKA ISLAND	29 °C	22 °C	
SALMIYAH	30 °C	24 °C	
AHMADI	31 °C	24 °C	
NUWAISIB	30 °C	21 °C	
WAFRA	32 °C	19 °C	
SALMY	34 °C	19 °C	

4 DAYS FORECAST						
DAY	DATE	WEATHER	Temperatures		Wind Direction	Wind Speed
			MAX.	MIN.		
Monday	04/30	Partly cloudy	35 °C	21 °C	NW	10 - 30 km/h
Tuesday	05/01	Partly cloudy with a chance for scattered rain	34 °C	20 °C	SE	12 - 38 km/h
Wednesday	05/02	Partly cloudy to cloudy with a chance for scattered rain later on	35 °C	23 °C	VRB-SE	10 - 35 km/h
Thursday	05/03	Cloudy causing rising dust with a chance for rain that might be thundery at times	36 °C	24 °C	SE	15 - 42 km/h

PRAYER TIMES	
Fajr	03:42
Sunrise	05:08
Zuhr	11:45
Asr	15:21
Sunset	18:23
Isha	19:47

RECORDED YESTERDAY AT KUWAIT AIRPORT	
MAX. Temp.	30 °C
MIN. Temp.	19 °C
MAX. RH	91 %
MIN. RH	39 %
MAX. Wind	SE 39 km/h
TOTAL RAINFALL IN 24 HR.	
1.77mm	

## Hospitals

Sabah Hospital	24812000
Amiri Hospital	22450005
Maternity Hospital	24843100
Mubarak Al-Kabir Hospital	25312700
Chest Hospital	24849400
Farwaniya Hospital	24892010
Adan Hospital	23940620
Ibn Sina Hospital	24840300
Al-Razi Hospital	24846000
Physiotherapy Hospital	24874330/9

## Clinics

Kaizen center	25716707
Rawda	22517733
Adaliya	22517144
Khaldiya	24848075
Kaifan	24849807
Shamiya	24848913
Shuwaikh	24814507
Abdullah Salem	22549134
Nuzha	22526804
Industrial Shuwaikh	24814764
Qadsiya	22515088
Dasmah	22532265
Bneid Al-Gar	22531908
Shaab	22518752
Qibla	22459381
Ayoun Al-Qibla	22451082
Mirqab	22456536
Sharq	22465401
Salmiya	25746401

### CHANGE OF NAME

I Natha Singh S/O Buta Singh R/O Kotli Ablu (Sri Muktsar Sahib) have changed my name to Natha Singh Brar. (C 5396) 24-4-2018

### ACCOMODATION

For Filipino ONLY  
Farwaniya block 1, near gulfmart. Available 25 of May, Contact 94418396 or 69972330 23-4-2018

### Looking for Job

## HR-Admin Executive

14 years experience in GCC with accounting background, looking for a suitable job.

Email: mazon\_bh@yahoo.com  
Mob: 00965-56625385

## EMERGENCY 112

## Airlines

American Airlines	22087425
	22087426
Kuwait Airways	171
Jazeera Airways	177
Jet Airways	22924455
FlyDubai	22414400
Qatar Airways	22423888
KLM	22425747
Royal Jordanian	
22418064/5/6	
British Airways	22425635
Air France	22430224
Emirates	22921555
Air India	22438184
Sri Lanka Airlines	22424444
Egypt Air	a22421578
Swiss Air	22421516
Saudia	22426306
Middle East Airlines	22423073
Lufthansa	22422493
PIA	22421044
Bangladesh Airlines	22452977/8



Directorate General of Civil Aviation Home Page (www.kuwait-airport.com.kw)

## DIAL161 FOR AIRPORT INFORMATION

Arrival Flights on Monday 30/4/2018				Departure Flights on Monday 30/4/2018							
Airlines	Flt	Route	Time	Airlines	Flt	Route	Time	RBG			
FEG	441	Asyut	00:05	AIC	982	Ahmedabad/Chennai	00:05	JZR	554	Alexandria	13:10
THY	772	Istanbul	00:15	KAC	417	Manila	00:25	THY	176	Dubai	13:10
KAC	102	London	00:50	JAI	573	Mumbai	00:30	JZR	767	Istanbul	13:40
KAC	504	Beirut	00:50	MSR	2615	Cairo	00:30	MSR	144	Doha	13:55
DLH	625	Dammam	00:50	FDB	073	Dubai	00:30	UAE	611	Cairo	14:00
JZR	539	Cairo	01:00	PIA	206	Lahore	01:00	KNE	872	Dubai	14:15
PGT	858	Istanbul	01:15	FEG	344	Sohag	01:05	KAC	382	Taif	15:00
JZR	267	Beirut	01:25	JZR	528	Asyut	01:05	FDB	222	Bahrain	15:00
RJA	642	Amman	01:35	WAN	415	Beirut	01:15	KAC	673	Dubai	15:00
UAE	853	Dubai	01:40	KAC	677	Dubai	01:30	QTR	060	Dubai	15:05
KKK	1268	Istanbul	02:00	THY	773	Istanbul	01:45	SVA	1079	Doha	15:15
ETH	620	Addis Ababa	02:15	DLH	625	Frankfurt	01:50	KAC	501	Jeddah	15:45
GFA	211	Bahrain	02:15	KAC	285	Dhaka	01:50	KAC	283	Dhaka	15:50
QTR	1086	Doha	02:30	KAC	363	Colombo	01:50	KAC	775	Riyadh	15:55
JZR	607	Kochi	02:55	JZR	502	Luxor	01:55	KNE	530	Jeddah	16:00
KAC	418	Manila	03:05	PGT	859	Istanbul	02:15	KAC	785	Jeddah	16:00
ETD	305	Abu Dhabi	03:05	THY	765	Istanbul	02:50	JZR	606	Kochi	16:00
OMA	643	Muscat	03:05	KKK	1269	Istanbul	02:55	KAC	743	Dammam	16:05
KAC	382	Delhi	03:10	ETH	621	Addis Ababa	03:05	KAC	563	Amman	16:10
MSC	415	Sohag	03:10	UAE	854	Dubai	03:30	ABY	128	Sharjah	16:15
MSR	612	Cairo	03:15	JZR	142	Doha	03:45	KAC	619	Doha	16:15
QTR	1076	Doha	03:30	OMA	644	Muscat	04:05	ETD	304	Abu Dhabi	16:20
JAI	572	Mumbai	04:00	ETD	306	Abu Dhabi	04:05	OMA	646	Muscat	16:20
KAC	346	Ahmedabad	04:15	MSC	416	Sohag	04:10	KAC	615	Bahrain	16:40
KAC	1544	Cairo	04:25	QTR	1087	Doha	04:15	SAW	706	Damascus	17:00
JZR	609	Hyderabad	04:30	MSR	613	Cairo	04:15	FDB	052	Dubai	17:20
KAC	784	Jeddah	04:30	JAI	571	Mumbai	04:15	QTR	1073	Doha	17:25
DHX	170	Bahrain	04:45	QTR	1077	Doha	05:05	KAC	361	Colombo	17:35
KAC	284	Dhaka	04:50	KAC	303	Mumbai	05:15	UAE	858	Dubai	17:40
FDB	069	Dubai	05:05	KAC	070	Dubai	05:35	KAC	381	Delhi	17:45
THY	770	Istanbul	05:15	FDB	070	Riyadh	06:00	KAC	331	Trivandrum	17:55
KAC	344	Chennai	05:30	JZR	786	Istanbul	06:05	SVA	511	Riyadh	18:15
KAC	332	Trivandrum	05:40	THY	771	Istanbul	06:30	GFA	216	Bahrain	18:20
JZR	561	Sohag	05:55	GFA	212	Bahrain	06:50	JZR	184	Dubai	18:20
BAW	157	London	06:10	RJA	643	Amman	07:00	JZR	608	Hyderabad	18:25
AIC	975	Chennai/Goa	06:15	AIC	976	Goa/Chennai	07:15	JZR	240	Amman	18:30
WAN	338	Alexandria	06:25	JZR	164	Dubai	07:15	JZR	266	Beirut	18:30
KAC	204	Lahore	06:30	KAC	167	Paris	07:20	JZR	538	Cairo	18:35
KAC	678	Dubai	06:45	KAC	413	Bangkok	07:30	WAN	135	Doha	18:40
WAN	342	Sohag	06:55	WAN	113	Bahrain	08:00	QTR	1081	Doha	19:20
KAC	302	Mumbai	07:00	JZR	778	Jeddah	08:00	KAC	345	Ahmedabad	19:20
JZR	143	Doha	07:20	KAC	501	Beirut	08:00	WAN	117	Bahrain	19:30
AZQ	4565	Baku	07:30	BAW	156	London	08:20	MSR	621	Cairo	19:30
JZR	529	Asyut	07:30	FDB	054	Dubai	08:35	GFA	218	Bahrain	19:50
KAC	354	Bengaluru	07:45	KAC	161	Geneva	09:00	FDB	064	Dubai	19:50
JZR	503	Luxor	07:50	KAC	691	Muscat	09:00	RJA	641	Amman	20:00
FDB	053	Dubai	07:50	KAC	117	New York	09:05	ABY	124	Sharjah	20:00
KAC	358	Kochi	08:05	KAC	787	Jeddah	09:05	JZR	552	Alexandria	20:05
KAC	384	Delhi	08:05	KAC	671	Dubai	09:15	FDB	058	Dubai	20:30
UAE	855	Dubai	08:25	AZQ	4566	Baku	09:30	KAC	357	Kochi	20:30
ETD	301	Abu Dhabi	08:55	ABY	126	Sharjah	09:40	UAE	876	Dubai	20:35
ABY	125	Sharjah	09:00	KAC	561	Amman	09:40	DLH	624	Dammam	20:50
IRA	667	Esfahan	09:15	KAC	773	Riyadh	09:45	KNE	232	Riyadh	21:00
QTR	1070	Doha	09:30	JZR	535	Cairo	09:45	KAC	353	Bengaluru	21:00
FDB	055	Dubai	09:40	UAE	856	Dubai	09:50	OMA	648	Muscat	21:05
IAW	157	Al Najaf	10:00	JZR	482	Istanbul	09:55	MEA	403	Beirut	21:15
MSC	405	Sohag	10:15	ETD	302	Abu Dhabi	10:00	KAC	1543	Cairo	21:20
AXB	889	Mangalore/Bahrain	10:20	KAC	101	London	10:00	KAC	301	Mumbai	21:35
JZR	787	Riyadh	10:30	KAC	541	Cairo	10:00	DHX	171	Bahrain	21:50
GFA	213	Bahrain	10:40	JZR	124	Bahrain	10:00	QTR	1089	Doha	21:50
MEA	404	Beirut	10:55	KAC	617	Doha	10:10	KAC	203	Lahore	22:00
SYR	341	Damascus	11:00	IRA	666	Esfahan	10:15	ETD	308	Abu Dhabi	22:05
QTR	1074	Doha	11:00	KAC	155	Istanbul	10:25	KLM	445	Bahrain	22:10
WAN	114	Bahrain	11:10	QTR	1071	Doha	10:40	ALK	230	Colombo	22:20
JZR	165	Dubai	11:45	FDB	056	Dubai	10:40	KAC	383	Delhi	22:25
WAN	134	Doha	12:20	IAW	158	Al Najaf	11:00	UAE	860	Dubai	22:35
RBG	553	Alexandria	12:30	MSC	406	Sohag	11:15	JZR	604	Ahmedabad	22:40
UAE	871	Dubai	12:45	AXB	890	Mangalore	11:20	GFA	220	Bahrain	22:50
THY	766	Istanbul	12:45	JZR	788	Riyadh	11:20	ETD	310	Abu Dhabi	23:00
WAN	542	KTM	12:50	GFA	214	Bahrain	11:35	QTR	1083	Doha	23:20
JZR	125	Bahrain	12:55	MEA	405	Beirut	11:55	SVA	515	Riyadh	23:30
MSR	610	Cairo	13:00	SYR	342	Damascus	12:00	WAN	337	Alexandria	23:40
KAC	774	Riyadh	13:30	JZR	776	Jeddah	12:05	SVA	503	Jeddah	23:45
				QTR	1075	Doha	12:10	JZR	560	Sohag	23:45



# Led Zeppelin's 50th anniversary tinged with sadness



**R**obert Plant doesn't want to celebrate Led Zeppelin's 50th anniversary because of the "darkness" it brings John Bonham's family. The 'Whole Lotta Love' hitmakers mark the milestone years since their first gig later this year and though the 69-year-old singer - who was badly injured in a car accident in 1975 and lost his son Karac, five, to a stomach virus two years later - can appreciate there will be some "great things" release to mark the occasion, he's very aware that it's also tinged with sadness, especially as it's been so long since their drummer passed away after choking on his own vomit following a

drinking binge. Asked if the prospect of new Led Zeppelin activity excites him, he said: "No. It just makes me realize how time flies and how long John Bonham has not been with us and what a price to pay for the whole thing. "To have gone through car wrecks and losing my child and then losing the guy who tried to help me get back into a creative place after losing my boy ... So really, everything is fine. It's 50 years but it's not 50 years - it's 38 years of darkness for a family (Bonham's). So all that hullabaloo is great and I'm sure there'll be some great things to come out of it." However, with his bandmate Jimmy Page recently confirming

he'll be working on more special releases to mark the occasion, Robert is looking forward to seeing what they will be. He told MOJO magazine: "I really can't wait to hear them - I might even get a free copy." The group's website previously teased that they will be giving their fans lots of "surprises" for their anniversary, including never-heard-before tracks. In a video posted on the Academy of Achievement website, Jimmy said: "There'll be Led Zeppelin product coming out, for sure, that people haven't heard, because I'm working on that. Next year will be the 50th year, so there's all manner of surprises coming out."



## Sting and Shaggy's album was 'happy accident'

**S**tung and Shaggy's album was a "happy accident". The two stars forged an unlikely friendship after the 'Oh Carolina' hitmaker joined the former Police rocker on stage to rap on his song 'Roxanne' and then went on to send him a song called 'Don't Make Me Wait', which led to them getting into the studio together initially to work on a Sting record but it soon turned into their joint effort '44/876'. Sting recalled: "We then started working on an album which was supposed to be mine." Shaggy added: "But I jumped on every song." Sting continued: "It's a conversation between two people from different cultures and it is based on mutual affection and I think he joy comes off the tracks. It's a happy accident." But while the pair are having fun together, the 'Message in a Bottle' hitmaker admitted their partnership won't last beyond one album and a tour. Sting, 66, said: "This was great fun to make but we did it because we wanted to surprise people. We've done that so it wouldn't be a surprise next time. But the tour is going to be great fun." Shaggy, 49, is looking forward to going out on the road with his friend but he still gets nervous about getting up on stage. He told HELLO! magazine: "I get professional nerves a bit. But once you are on, it is heaven, you just glide. It's like you are in your own living room." Sting quipped: "I just wonder what you are doing in my living room."



## Cruise to do most difficult stunts in Mission: Impossible - Fallout

**T**om Cruise will do his "most difficult stunts" in 'Mission: Impossible - Fallout'. The movie's director Christopher McQuarrie has revealed that Tom - who famously does his own stunts in the 'Mission: Impossible' film series - is set to take on the toughest that he's had to do so far for the new installment. McQuarrie told Collider.com: "Without question the biggest and most difficult stunts that he's ever done. Some of the most challenging stunts he's ever done. But, also, a much deeper story. A much more emotional story." Meanwhile, Tom recently revealed he thinks 'Mission: Impossible - Fallout' is the "most challenging" movie he's ever made. He said: "I work with people that I respect, and I want to work with fun people and hardworking people. Making 'Mission: Impossible' - they're not easy. They're the hardest. This is definitely the most challenging film I've ever made, because it's producing, it's acting, and we do all our own action work." Earlier this year, Tom was spotted balancing fearlessly on the top of London's Tate Modern building during filming for the movie. One bystander shared: "It was crazy - he was up there for ages. He was wearing a big coat, but it was so cold and windy. It just goes to show, I suppose, that he really does his own stunts." Tom had previously revealed how he spent up to 10 hours a day in rehab after breaking his ankle on set. He said: "It's still broken but I'm doing well. It's not fully healed but we are shooting and we have a release date so I just have to keep going. I spent 8-10 hours a day, seven days a week in rehab because we still have some major stunts to do."

## Steven Spielberg speaks of Schindler's List 'trauma'

**S**teven Spielberg says Robin Williams got him through the "trauma" of filming 'Schindler's List'. The legendary director credits the 'Mrs. Doubtfire' star - who passed away in August 2014 - for helping him through the tough filming for the period drama, which documents the persecution of Jewish people by the Nazis. Speaking at the Tribeca Film Festival's special 25th anniversary screening of the film, Steven revealed: "Robin called me. Robin knew what I was going through. Once a week he called me on schedule. He knew exactly what time it was in Poland, what time it was in San Francisco ... and he would do 15 minutes of stand-up on the phone, and I would laugh hysterically because I had to release so much. The way Robin is on the telephone, he'd always hang up on the loudest, best laugh you'd give him. He'd never say goodbye, just hang up on the biggest laugh." Spielberg - who took the helm of the movie - picked up the Best Picture and Best Director at the Oscars the following year but didn't feel like he could celebrate their win because of its harrowing subject matter. He shared: "That night wasn't really a celebration at all. I don't feel this movie is a celebration. The subject matter and the impact the film had on all of us ... took sort of the celebration out of that. It was wonderful to win, but at the same time I just remember how moved I was when Branko Lustig, our co-producer, showed the world that he was in Auschwitz, too, and had numbers on his arms."



## Rachel McAdams won't 'stay safe' in career



**R**achel McAdams doesn't want to "stay safe" with her career. The 'Disobedience' actress is keen to push herself out of her comfort zone with her work and loves the unpredictable nature of her job. She said: "I'm always looking to take on roles that push me further than I might like to go. I don't want to repeat myself and stay safe. One of the things I love about acting is how I never know exactly where a character is going to take me." When it comes to choosing her projects, the 39-year-old actress wants to find a "connection" to the character. She said: "I've never worried about [playing determined women]. I've worked on serious dramas, such as 'A Most Wanted Man' and I also played a nasty woman who tormented Owen Wilson in 'Midnight in Paris'. "I judge projects by the people involved and the quality of the writing. As long as I feel a connection to the character, I'm willing to play almost any role. Something either clicks in your head or it doesn't." The 'Notebook' actress is a "romantic" and enjoys working on love stories. She told Psychologies magazine: "I do have a romantic side. I enjoy stories that explore the nature of human relationships and especially what makes people want to be together and how they manage to stay together. "Love is such a precious and beautiful thing, but it seems so hard for people to sustain their love and appreciation for each other. I'm just fascinated by films that offer insights into that process." — Bang Showbiz

## Plan B's album 'cost him a lot'

**P**lan B's new album has "cost him a lot". The 'She Said' hitmaker is gearing up for the release of his LP 'Heaven Before All Hell Breaks Loose' but admits the album has meant he has had to give up family time with his four-year-old daughter. He said: "I don't want to miss her growing up. The past three months? I've not properly seen her, and it's tore me up. But this album has to be the best because, as a father, I need to show her how hard she needs to work. Yet it's cost me a lot, and I don't have to do another. There is a clock ticking down about life. Before her, it was just insatiable ambition. Then someone comes into your life, and your time with them means more to you." And the 34-year-old star wasn't planning to rap a lot on the new album as he didn't have "nothing to be angry about". He added to The Sunday Times' Culture magazine: "Rapping allows a lot more content into a song. A lot of my hip-hop was angry, and there is no better tool to voice that directly. With singing, it's soft and nice. It didn't feel right rapping [on the new album], as I didn't have anything to rap about ... I'd chilled out a lot when I started this album. I had nothing to be angry about. Then loads of s\*\*t went down, didn't it?"



# Plans to distribute prizes to winners during a major ceremony on May 12

Hardee's announces the name of the winner of the second Chevrolet car as part of its marketing campaign 'Upsize it and Win'

**Y**ousuf Abdullah Al-Houly won the first prize in the second week of the Hardee's campaign "Upsize it and Win" out four winners (a winner every week), which is a 2018 Chevrolet Camaro 2018 and four mobiles given by Hardee's to its customers. Houly was very happy with the surprise after being told he was the winner. He said he was with his family at home and could not believe the news, and did not think he would be the lucky winner of the 2018 Camaro. He added he used to ignore such coupons and not pay much attention, except this time, which came with a result contrary to his expectations. Houly said he is in constant contact with Hardee's and is a permanent customer due to its quality and new items. Houly said he lives in Jaber Al-Ahmad and did not know that the chicken fillet meal will lead him to own a 2018 Chevy Camaro. Director of Hardee's Kuwait Ahmad Zain said the Hardee's chain caters to all age groups. He said the contest was held in coordination with Talabat.com, adding that the goal behind the campaign is not only to increase sales, but to give an extra advantage to customers and the opportunity to win valuable prizes.



Director of licensing at the chain Ahmad Hafez said Hardee's applied for approval of the campaign by the Commerce and Industry Ministry, which cooperated and helped to launch the campaign in an organized manner. He said the "Upsize it and Win" campaign is for one month, giving winners a 2018 Chevrolet Camaro 2018 and four iPhones every week. Prizes will be handed out in a major ceremony that will be held under the supervision of the Commerce and Industry Ministry on May 12. Hafez said the draw is done under the supervision of Commerce and Industry Ministry, and the more coupons one has in the draw, the more the chances to win, adding the draw is conducted electronically. He said Hardee's has always been present, and what is new are its products, quality and speed. Its sales are always the highest among its competitors. Social media official Amnah Abduljaleel said Hardee's is among the most-ordered restaurants on Talabat.com, adding that she noticed enthusiastic reactions by customers to the "Upsize it and Win" campaign. She said there will be future cooperation with the Hardee's chain of restaurants.





A picture shows people visiting the famed silk road city of Samarkand. —AFP photos



People walking in front of the statue of Islam Karimov, who ruled the country from before independence in 1991 until his death in 2016, while visiting the famed silk road city of Samarkand.



Fatima Rakhmatova, 30, a member of a newly-formed Tourist Police, riding on a seagway in the famed silk road city of Samarkand.



Identical twins Zukhra and Fatima Rakhmatova, 30, members of a newly-formed Tourist Police, posing in the famed silk road city of Samarkand.



Identical twins Fatima and Zukhra Rakhmatova, 30, members of a newly-formed Tourist Police, speaking with men in the famed silk road city of Samarkand.

# Tourism boom to test Uzbekistan's thaw

**C**oiffed, cheerful and multilingual, identical twins Fatima and Zukhra Rakhmatova do not immediately resemble agents of ex-Soviet Uzbekistan's long-feared security apparatus. But the photogenic 30-year-old pair are frontline members of a newly formed, user-friendly Tourist Police deployed in the famed Silk Road city of Samarkand and other hotspots as a visitor boom sweeps the Central Asian country. The force, established in January, is viewed as part of a broader opening initiated by Uzbekistan's authoritarian government following a long period of self-enforced isolation.

More than 2.5 million tourists visited Uzbekistan last year, a 24 percent increase on the previous year, according to the UzDaily news site. "In the past I worked as a teacher and then as a wedding stylist. I even won a national prize as a stylist," recalls Zukhra Rakhmatova, one half of a sister act proficient in English, Russian, Farsi, Turkish and Japanese. "But our grandfather served in the force and our uncle too," Rakhmatova told AFP. "It was always our dream to serve."

### Change and continuity

Samarkand—a former power center positioned at the epicenter of millennia-old trade routes linking China and Europe—hosts symbols of authoritarian continuity as well as tentative reform. A short walk from the ceramic and marble dazzle of the three madrasahs towering over the city's old square is the statue of Islam Karimov, who ruled the country from before independence in 1991 until his death in 2016. Laid to rest in a grand mausoleum in Samarkand's historic center, Karimov is criticized by rights groups as the architect of one of the world's most repressive and closed-off police states.

Far from being disavowed, his monument is now

yet another photo opportunity for visitors and wedding parties in the city, where he was born in 1938 and remains widely revered. "Everyone makes mistakes but Islam Karimov is a hero. He worked day and night to protect the Uzbek people," said a 22-year-old bridesmaid posing for pictures by the monument. The young woman, who did not give her name but said she had travelled to Samarkand from the capital Tashkent, refused to say what "mistakes" she thought Karimov had made.

### Power struggle

Whether out of political pragmatism or genuine deference to a man he served for 13 years as prime minister, Karimov's successor, 60-year-old Shavkat Mirziyoyev has also continued to honor his mentor in public. In the aftermath of the former leader's death, new strongman Mirziyoyev likened him to a "father", even as he toned down some of the totalitarian excesses that defined Karimov's 27-year rule.

Foreign tourism, which grew by around a quarter during Mirziyoyev's first year in office emerged as a key battleground in a power struggle that pitted the new reform-touting president against regime hardliners. In February for instance, Mirziyoyev ordered the introduction of a 30-day visa-free regime for citizens of seven countries—Israel, Indonesia, South Korea, Malaysia, Singapore, Turkey and Japan—and relaxation of registration rules for citizens of 39 others. In cities like Samarkand, the changes were cheered by a population that endured long stretches of economic stagnation under Karimov.

"(We need to) open up of course!" said Malika Shakhimardonova, a chef at a mutton-grilling tea-house in the shadows of the Bibi-Khanyim Mosque, completed on the orders of medieval conqueror Tamerlane in the 15th century. "Let the tourists arrive

to us like brothers and sisters!" said Shakhimardonova, whose kitchen is expanding.

### 'Take photos and share them!'

Many saw significance in the fact that Mirziyoyev's relaxation of visa restrictions came days after Rustam Inoyatov, 73, who led the notorious national security service for over two decades, was dismissed. Inoyatov was widely reported to have blocked a previous effort by Mirziyoyev to revamp tourism and to have insisted on retaining long-standing security measures, including a blanket ban on photography in the capital's metro. Such bans, which occasionally saw visitors detained by police, were "rudiments of the Soviet Union" now consigned to the past, said the country's new 44-year-old tourism chief Aziz Abdulkhakov.

"We want tourists to take as many photos as possible. Put them on Instagram! It is the best advert for the country," he told AFP. The Rakhmatova sisters, who scoot around Samarkand on two-wheeled, motorized "Segways" and are trained to administer first aid, certainly seem far removed from the grimmer elements of a former communist police state. But Fatima jokes their dual presence on the tourism beat might sometimes give visitors a different impression. "Some tourists will see one of us close to one attraction then move on to another and find the other sister standing there," she explained. "They smile but sometimes give us a strange look. Probably because we are identical they think the police are following them around," she laughed. —AFP

# Jordan woos back nervous tourists

**W**ith its rock-hewn ancient city of Petra, lunar-like landscape of Wadi Rum and a medical tourism drive, Jordan is luring back foreign visitors scared off by regional upheaval and jihadist attacks. Abundant natural wonders and ancient treasures have long attracted tourists to the kingdom, traditionally seen as a haven of peace in a war-ravaged region. But after the Arab Spring uprisings convulsed the Middle East in 2011 and the Islamic State group (IS) later rampaged across neighboring Syria and Iraq, visitor numbers slumped.

Jordan welcomed seven million tourists in 2010, but arrivals plunged to around three million in each of the following two years, according to tourism board head Abed Al Razzaq Arabiyat. Efforts to reverse the slide suffered a major setback in 2016 with a string of attacks in the kingdom, a member of the US-led alliance against IS. A Canadian tourist was among 10 people killed in a shooting rampage claimed by the jihadists in Karak, home to one of the region's biggest Crusader castles. But the spillover from the Syrian conflict has since abated and in 2017 tourist arrivals rebounded to more than four million, officials say.



Tourists visit the Amman Citadel.

"Jordan has proved to be a safe haven in a region which is witnessing turmoil," Tourism Minister Lina Mazhar Annab told AFP in an interview. "Jordan is a very safe country. We are proving to be safer than a lot of European countries. It is a matter of perception." The country's goal is to bring annual tourist arrivals back up to 7 million by 2020, she said, guiding a group of visitors through the steep paths of the ancient Nabataean city of Petra with its rose-pink cliffs. The UNESCO World Heritage Site, which featured in the Hollywood film "Indiana Jones and the Last Crusade", was once a major



A general view show the Roman Theatre in downtown Amman. — AFP photos

crossroads for caravans transporting Arabian incense, Indian spices and Chinese silks.

### 'Huge cultural wealth'

Today Jordan's historical jewels are a major draw. "I came here because it's a country with huge cultural wealth," said French tourist Emmanuel Reneaume, visiting the Amman Citadel perched at the top of a hill in the capital. "Just behind us there are ruins, a Roman temple, a Byzantine church and an Umayyad mosque. It's exciting," he said. Jordan boasts 21,000 archaeological and historical sites that span millennia, according to the tourism board. They include the Roman ruins of Jerash, the Dead Sea and Wadi Al-Kharrar, or Bethany Beyond the Jordan, where some biblical historians believe Jesus was baptized. Such sites are helping to attract a growing number of tourists from Asian countries including Malaysia, Indonesia, China and India, according to the authorities. "People are coming back from all over the world," said the tourism minister. "This year, so far, it's looking great. The first quarter has been amazing. We also have seen growth of 15 percent in the number of visitors as well as tourism receipts."

Lacking in natural resources, the country of nearly 10 million depends on tourism for around 12 percent of

gross domestic product (GDP). In an attempt to diversify, the kingdom has sought to become a regional hub of medical tourism. "Between 250,000 and 300,000 foreign patients are admitted in Jordan each year, bringing in up to \$1.5 billion," said the president of the country's Private Hospitals Association, Fawzi Al-Hammouri. In March the government adopted a measure facilitating the entry of



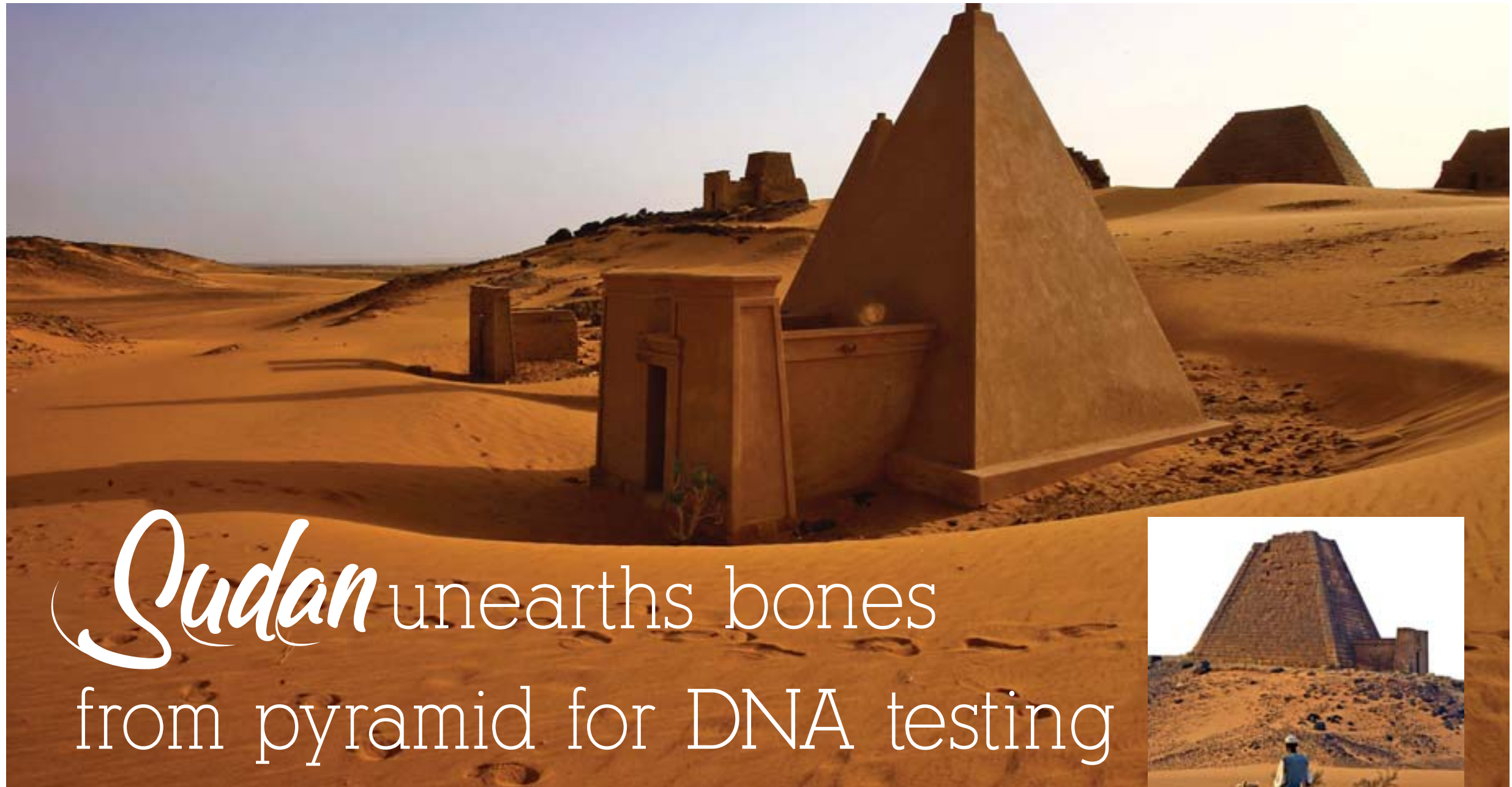
patients from Iraq, Yemen, Syria, Libya, Sudan, Chad and Ethiopia, allowing them to obtain a visa within 48 hours.

Samer Mostafa, a 50-year-old Iraqi who underwent open-heart surgery in a private hospital in the capital, said he was attracted by Jordan's "stable security situation, the cleanliness of its hospitals and the absence of power cuts in such facilities". Medical tourism now directly employs 35,000 people in Jordan, according to Hammouri. The majority of patients come from Saudi Arabia, Iraq, Libya, Sudan, Yemen, Syria and the Palestinian territories.

Jordan is also a stop for Muslim pilgrims visiting holy sites in the region. And now the kingdom hopes to woo more European visitors thanks to an agreement struck in February with low-cost airline Ryanair for 14 new routes between Europe and Jordan. All of which gives tourism agency owner Salama Khatar reason for optimism. "Business is good. Since August we are starting to return to the situation of 2010," Khatar said. —AFP

Tourists walk past the Temple of Hercules, a Roman temple that was built in 162-66 AD, as they visit the Amman Citadel.





# Sudan

## unearths bones from pyramid for DNA testing

Meroitic pyramids at the archaeological site of Bajarawiya, near Hillat ed Darqab, some 250 kilometers northeast of Khartoum. — AFP photos



Artefacts found in King Khalmani's burial chamber.



A Sudanese man rides a camel near the archaeological site of Bajarawiya.

Archaeologists in Sudan have reopened an ancient pyramid and extracted bones and artefacts, in order to carry out further examination including DNA tests. The items were found in one of three burial chambers in Meroitic pyramid number 9 in Bajarawiya, a UNESCO World Heritage site where a king from the Nubian period is believed to be buried. "Pyramid number 9 belongs to King Khalmani who reigned between 207 BC and 186 BC," Mahmoud Suleiman, the head of a team of archaeologists, told journalists in Bajarawiya, about 250 kilometers (155 miles) north of Khartoum, late Tuesday.

The bones so far discovered are believed to have belonged to more than one person and have been shown to journalists, including an AFP reporter, by a team of archaeologists in Bajarawiya. DNA tests should shed light on the relation between the bones, while further items are expected to be recovered from another of the pyramid's chambers, the team said. "In the coming days we will open" another of the three burial chambers, said Murtada Bushara, a second archaeologist from the team. This chamber "contains a coffin," Bushara added. The dig is raising hopes that the remains of King Khalmani himself may be uncovered.



Sudanese men ride camels past Meroitic pyramids at the archaeological site of Bajarawiya.



A Sudanese man rides a camel past a Meroitic pyramid at the archaeological site of Bajarawiya.

This is not the first time the pyramid has been the site of significant activity. American archaeologist George Reisner presided over a dig in 1923 and took artefacts back to Boston. Sudan's remote pyramids are not as grand as their better-known cousins in Egypt. The first archaeological digs in Sudan took place only about 100 years ago, much later than in Egypt or Greece. — AFP



Meroitic pyramids at the archaeological site of Bajarawiya.



Bones found in King Khalmani's burial chamber, in a Meroitic pyramid at the archaeological site of Bajarawiya.



Artefacts found in King Khalmani's burial chamber.



Meroitic pyramids at the archaeological site of Bajarawiya.

## Evidence of world's biggest child sacrifice found in Peru

Archaeologists in Peru have found evidence of the biggest-ever sacrifice of children, uncovering the remains of more than 140 youngsters who were slain alongside 200 llamas as part of a ritual offering some 550 years ago, National Geographic announced on Thursday. The site was located on top of a cliff facing the Pacific Ocean in La Libertad, a northern region where the Chimú civilization arose, an ancient pre-Columbian people who worshipped the moon. The cliff is located just outside the northwestern coastal city of Trujillo, Peru's third largest city which today has 800,000 inhabitants.

"While incidents of human sacrifice among the Aztec, Maya and Inca have been recorded in colonial-era Spanish chronicles and documented in modern scientific excavations, the discovery of a large-scale child sacrifice event in the little-known pre-Columbian Chimú civ-

ilization is unprecedented in the Americas-if not in the entire world," National Geographic said. The investigations were carried out by an international team led by National Geographic's Peruvian explorer Gabriel Prieto, of the National University of Trujillo, and John Verano, a physical anthropologist from Tulane University in New Orleans.

The team uncovered evidence of "the largest single incident of mass child sacrifice in the Americas-and likely in world history." "I, for one, never expected it," Verano told the magazine of the sacrifice site, known to the researchers as "Las Llamas." "And I don't think anyone else would have, either," he added. The excavations began in 2011 when the team uncovered the remains of 42 children and 76 llamas at a 3,500-year-old temple nearby.

By the time the excavations had finished five years lat-

er, they had uncovered more than 140 sets of child remains and 200 juvenile llamas, as well as rope and textiles dating to between 1400 and 1450. Located about 300 meters above sea level, the site is in the middle of a cluster of residential compounds in Huanchaco, a neighborhood bordering Trujillo.

**Hearts removed?**

"The skeletal remains of both children and animals show evidence of cuts to the sternum as well as rib dislocations, which suggest that the victims' chests were cut open and pulled apart, perhaps to facilitate the removal of the heart," the magazine said.

Researchers determined that the children were between the ages of five and 14, although most were between eight and 12 when they died, with their bodies buried facing west-out to sea. The llamas were all less

than 18 months and they were buried facing east, toward the Andes, they said. "It is ritual killing, and it's very systematic," Verano said.

The Chimú civilization extended along the Peruvian coast to where Ecuador begins, with its empire brought down by the Incas in around 1475, just a few decades after the sacrifice at Las Llamas. "Until now, the largest mass child sacrifice event for which we have physical evidence is the ritual murder and interment of 42 children at Templo Mayor in the Aztec capital of Tenochtitlan," National Geographic said, referring to what is modern-day Mexico City. — AFP



# Lifestyle

MONDAY, APRIL 30, 2018



A worker sets up a monumental piece named "Little By Little" created by "FAILE" (an anagram of A Life) a collective work by Canadian artist Patrick McNeil and US artist Patrick Miller in Strasbourg railway station, eastern France on April 25, 2018. This piece has been created in the context of "Happy 20", celebrating the 20th anniversary of the Strasbourg Modern and Contemporary Art Museum in 2018. — AFP

## The library of Ajaccio, Ali Baba's cave unexpected

A rare book on Egyptology, unpublished letters signed by Napoleon, a book signed by Gustave Eiffel on the "300-meter tower": it is in the modest Fesch library of Ajaccio that these forgotten treasures were discovered by chance these last months. It is "between the directory of Corsica and a Marc Levy", in the middle of "old dentures and cockroaches", that Vannina Schirinsky-Schikhmatoff, conservative missioned by the town hall of Ajaccio to restore order in the reserve of the library, discovered the "Thesaurum Hieroglyphicorum" which dates from 1610.

"This is the first book of Egyptology. The Museum of Man has a complete copy and the BNF (National Library of France) has an incomplete, in total there are seven listed in the world including three complete," she said, regretting that two pages missing in the copy found in Ajaccio. "The Corsicans are considered underdeveloped at the cultural level and for the first time, we have a work that places us at the world level", welcomes the curator of the library that dates from the early 19th century and is installed in the palace Fesch, in the pedestrian street of downtown Ajaccio.

Over the pages covered with engravings, we discover the finesse and extraordinary precision of the hieroglyphs of the book from the prestigious collection of Jean-Baptiste Colbert, one of the principal ministers of Louis XVI. For the Italian Egyptologist, Francesco Tiradritti, director of the Italian archeology mission in Luxor, it is "an important discovery".

### Treasure hunt

"We are setting up an international project around this book," says AFP expert, expected in Ajaccio in September.



The "Thesaurum Hieroglyphicorum" an extremely rare Egyptology book found the Fesch municipal library of Ajaccio, is pictured at the library in Ajaccio on the French Mediterranean island of Corsica. — AFP photos

According to Schirinsky-Schikhmatoff, he is working on "a scientific publication and a major exhibition". "This is a very important book that is at the root of modern Egyptology," adds Simone Martini, Italian art restorer commissioned by the Ajaccian town hall to intervene on this rare piece and a dozen old books. Among them, several incunabula, works printed before 1500, including "The Chronicles of Nuremberg" dating from 1493.

"The artistic and historical value of these works, like many others in the library, is remarkable," he insists. He started "washing" these books to rid them of mold and must complete their restoration in September. It is also by working on a Petrarch dating from 1496 that he himself

exhumed, between the wooden cover and the front page, two medieval parchments.

Vannina Schirinsky-Schikhmatoff also mentions the original and complete editions of Napoleon's Egyptian campaign, "fifteen volumes found at the four corners of the library", or "The Tower of 300 meters", "a double volume of Gustave Eiffel signed by his hand "which unites the plans of the iron lady of Paris. "I make the patrimonial rescue, it's like a treasure hunt", she summarizes, insatiable, presenting her latest find: letters written by several members of the imperial family, nine of which were signed by Napoleon, who escaped little in the trash.

"Letters not listed in the correspondence of Napoleon that we are the only ones to hold" and which date from the campaign of Germany of the emperor in 1813, she says, fulfilling that an unpublished is missing, "probably stolen".

Ajaccio's head of libraries, Elisabeth Perié, regrets that "there are many books missing, loans that have not been made" but stresses that the security of the library has now been strengthened. It is now conducting work to provide the "gold mine" with adequate humidity and temperature conditions, including protecting it from a sewage pipe that runs through the library's storage area.

Accomplices, Vannina Shirinsky-Schikhmatoff and Elisabeth Perié have no doubt that other treasures are still sleeping in the heritage room of the library whose inventory remains to be done. "It will take several lives, I have explored only 5 percent of the library," note, amused, the curator who dreams of exposing his findings to the public. — AFP

## DJ Avicii 'could not go on any longer'

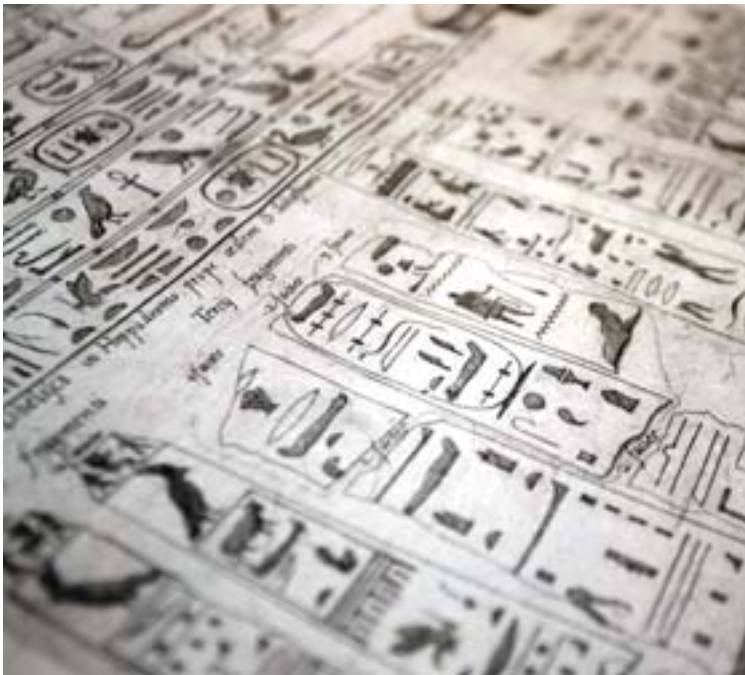
Swedish superstar Avicii, one of the world's most successful DJs who died a week ago aged 28, "wanted peace" and "could not go on any longer", his family said in an open letter on Thursday. The musician, whose real name was Tim Bergling, was found dead on April 20 in Muscat, the capital of the Gulf sultanate Oman, where he had been on holiday with friends. "He really struggled with thoughts about Meaning, Life, Happiness," his family wrote in the letter, seen by AFP. "He could not go on any longer. He wanted to find peace," they added.



A fan signs a paper in memory of Swedish DJ Tim Bergling, known as Avicii, during a gathering in his memory in the Omani capital Muscat. — AFP

A spokeswoman for the artist declined to confirm whether he had committed suicide. A police source in Oman said his death was not considered to be suspicious, adding that the circumstances would remain confidential at the request of the family. He had made no secret of his health problems, including pancreatitis, triggered in part by excessive drinking linked to his party lifestyle. "Tim was not made for the business machine he found himself in: he was a sensitive guy who loved his fans but shunned the spotlight," his family said. In 2016, Avicii stunned fans by announcing his retirement when he was just 26, saying that he wanted to leave the high-flying electronic music lifestyle.

"When he stopped touring, he wanted to find a balance in life to be happy and be able to do what he loved most-music," his family said. His biggest hits included "Wake Me Up," which went to number one across Europe in 2013 and featured the soul singer Aloe Blacc. Avicii—who for years was one of the world's most lucrative electronic musicians—in 2016 made number 12 on the list of top-paid DJs of Forbes magazine, which said he earned \$14.5 million in the previous year. — AFP



The "Thesaurum Hieroglyphicorum" an extremely rare Egyptology book found the Fesch municipal library of Ajaccio is being pictured.



Elisabeth Perié (left) director of the Fesch municipal library of Ajaccio, and Vannina Schirinsky-Schikhmatoff, curator commissioned by the Ajaccio city hall, stand in the library, as they look at the "Thesaurum Hieroglyphicorum".