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# Qatar to invest \$15bn in Turkey; Sheikh Tamim meets Erdogan

## Ankara slaps retaliatory tariff hikes on key US products

**ANKARA:** Qatar yesterday promised to make a \$15 billion direct investment in Turkey which was hit by a currency crisis amid a widening diplomatic standoff with the United States. Qatar's royal court released a statement saying the Qatari amir "issued directives that will see the State of Qatar to provide a host of economic projects, investments, and deposits" worth \$15 billion to support the Turkish economy. Presidential spokesman Ibrahim Kalin praised Turkish-Qatari relations on Twitter. "Qatar has pledged \$15 billion of direct investments in Turkey. Turkish-Qatari relations are based on solid foundations of true friendship and solidarity," he wrote. "The fundamentals of the Turkish economy are robust and Turkey will emerge stronger from this process," he added.

The announcement came after Qatar's Amir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al-Thani held lunchtime talks with Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan. A presidential source also confirmed Doha's pledge to "rapidly implement the \$15 billion investment package". Turkish Finance Minister Berat Albayrak, who is Erdogan's son-in-law, and his Qatari counterpart Ali Sharif Al-Emadi were present at the talks in the capital Ankara. Turkey and Qatar, a very close US ally, have become close economic and political partners in recent times.

Meanwhile, Turkey hiked yesterday tariffs on imports of several key US products in retaliation for American sanctions against Ankara, as a bitter dispute between the two allies that has battered the

Turkish lira showed no sign of ending. The lira - which lost just under a quarter of its value on Friday and Monday - however continued to claw back some ground on financial markets, rallying around five percent against the dollar.

A court meanwhile rejected an appeal for the release of American pastor Andrew Brunson - whose detention for almost two years sparked the crisis - leaving no immediate solution to the Turkey-US row in sight. The lira's fall had raised fears Turkey was on the verge of a fully-fledged economic crisis, especially in its banking system, that could spill over into Europe and other markets. Turkish Vice President Fuat Oktay said that the tariff hikes were ordered "within the framework of reciprocity in retaliation for the conscious attacks on our economy by the US administration".

The hikes were published in Turkey's Official Gazette in a decree signed by Erdogan, who has repeatedly described the crisis as an "economic war" that Turkey will win. President Donald Trump had previously announced that the United States was doubling steel and aluminium tariffs on Turkey. The Turkish tariff increases amount to a doubling of the existing rate, the state-run Anadolu news agency said, in an apparent parallel response to Trump's move. The decree said the move brought tariffs to 50 percent on imports of US rice, 140 percent on hard alcoholic drinks like spirits, 60 percent on leaf tobacco and 60 percent on cosmetics.

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**ANKARA:** Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan (right) and the Qatari Amir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al-Thani shake hands prior to talks yesterday. — AFP

### News in brief

#### Banks to provide free SMS alerts

**KUWAIT:** The Central Bank of Kuwait has instructed all local and foreign banks in the country to provide their clients with free Short Message Service (SMS), giving them real-time transaction alerts. The SMS service encompasses all debit card transactions as well as online banking, but clients can be contacted through other means if they choose so, Governor Mohammad Al-Hashel said in a statement. He revealed that the service will be up and running on Sept 16 and is part of plans to provide customers with top-notch banking services, helping banks to deal with any potential cyber threats. Hashel also described the measure as a surveillance tactic that assures clients of foolproof security, given the alarming rise in banking fraud. — KUNA

#### 22 kids die in Nile accident

**KHARTOUM:** At least 22 children drowned on their way to school when their boat capsized in swollen waters of the Nile river north of the Sudanese capital yesterday, official media said. A woman on board also died when the vessel carrying more than 40 children sank about 750 km from the capital, SUNA news agency reported. It said the small boat was overloaded, carrying about 30 sacks of sweet potatoes and 10 bags of grain in addition to the children and the woman, an employee at a local hospital. HH the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah extended his deepest condolences over the deaths in a cable he sent to Sudan's President Omar Al-Bashir, saying he was distraught over the lives lost in the tragic accident. HH the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah and HH the Prime Minister Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-Hamad Al-Sabah sent similar messages. — Agencies

#### Jordan charges 5 with 'terrorism'

**AMMAN:** Five suspected militants arrested during a deadly raid in a town northwest of Amman were charged with terrorism offences in Jordan's state security court yesterday. Three alleged militants were killed and five others detained on Saturday when security forces raided a building in the town of Salt. The operation, which also left four members of Jordan's security forces dead, was linked to a bomb blast Friday that killed a policeman and wounded six others at a music festival in a nearby town. The court's prosecutor accused the five detainees of "carrying out acts of terrorism that led to the death of a person and the demolition of a building" and "conspiracy to carry out terrorist acts". It also charged them with the "possession and manufacturing of explosives for use in illegal activities" and the "possession of weapons and ammunition for use in illegal activities". — AFP

## Kerala flood toll jumps to 67, airport closed

**KOCHI:** The flood toll in India's southern tourist hotspot of Kerala jumped to 67 after another 25 deaths were reported yesterday, with more than 50,000 people seeking shelter in relief camps, a state official told AFP. Kerala, famed for its pristine palm-lined beaches and tea plantations, is battered by the monsoon every year but the rains have been particularly severe this season, flooding hundreds of villages and prompting the authorities to suspend flights in and out of the region.

"Twenty five deaths were confirmed earlier in the evening. The situation is bad in many parts of the state and the number (of deaths) will likely increase," a senior official from the Kerala State Disaster Management Authority told AFP. Unconfirmed local media reports mentioned a much higher toll and cited ongoing efforts to reach many flooded areas. The official added that authorities had issued a "red-alert" warning in all 14 districts of the flood-ravaged state, with heavy downpours expected over the next 24 hours in many of the worst affected areas.

Kerala Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan's office announced on Twitter that Kochi International Airport - the main gateway to the region - would be closed until Saturday "due to heavy rains".

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**ERNAKULAM, India:** Fire and rescue personnel evacuate residents in an inflatable boat from a flooded area in Mupphathadam near Eloor in Kerala yesterday. — AFP

## Sweet taste of success: Syrian's journey from Gitmo to pastries

**MONTEVIDEO, Uruguay:** Ahmed Ahjam spent more than 12 years in the Guantanamo Bay prison for terror suspects, but now he has seen a dream come true by starting a business in the country that welcomed him when the nightmare ended. "Ahmed Ahjam. Arab gastronomy," reads a sign marking the small food stand that Ahjam has opened Monday in Uruguay's capital with help from city hall. He mainly sells sweets. Ahjam, 41 and born in the northern Syrian city of Aleppo, arrived here in 2014 along with six other prisoners from Guantanamo under an accord signed by the United States and Uruguay.

Washington was seeking countries willing to accept such inmates so it could move to empty the facility for terror suspects that was notorious for mistreating prisoners. Ahjam was one of the roughly 780 people sent to Guantanamo prison since 2002. His stand has small chalkboards advertising some of his wares: Baklava, the sesame paste tahini or Uruguayan-style candy. Ahjam now aims to make a new life in Uruguay thanks to this undertaking he began by selling his treats on Facebook. "For me it is a dream come true. It is very important in my new life. I am very grateful to the Uruguayans who are close to me. I am going to work very hard," Ahjam told reporters as he inaugurated his stand. He declined to take questions.

US Department of Defense officials believe he fought US and Coalition forces in the Tora Bora mountain cave complex in Afghanistan used by late Al-



**MONTEVIDEO:** Syrian Ahmed Adnan Ahjam, a former Guantanamo inmate, offers sweets during the opening of his Arab gastronomy shop at the Mercado Agricola on Aug 13, 2018. — AFP

Qaeda leader Osama bin Laden. He fled bombardment before being captured by Pakistani authorities. According to Department of Defense records, he was handed over to US authorities in the Afghan city of Kandahar in Jan 2002 and incarcerated at Guantanamo from June 14, 2002. Many of the assertions in the records are contested by former Guantanamo detainees and their lawyers and cannot be independently verified.

This is a success story that comes out of an integration initiative that has had its ups and downs here. Uruguay took in the Guantanamo prisoners in exchange for economic aid that grows smaller and smaller over time. These men had trouble integrating into Uruguayan society and finding work. One of them left several times, only to come back, until he managed to depart definitively this year.

Continued on Page 24

## Somali-American, trans woman win US primary nods

**WASHINGTON:** Christine Hallquist won the Democratic gubernatorial nomination in the US state of Vermont on Tuesday, moving a step closer to becoming the nation's first transgender governor, US media projected. In another groundbreaking political moment, Somali-American state legislator Ilhan Omar claimed victory in her primary in Minnesota, putting her on track to become one of the first female Muslim members of the US House of Representatives.

"HISTORY MADE! @christineforvt just became the first trans/non-binary gubernatorial candidate from a major political party in American history!" the Victory Fund, an organization that supports LGBTQ candidates, tweeted about Hallquist. But she still faces an uphill battle in the general election, when she is projected to face Republican incumbent Phil Scott, who has been in office since 2016.

Hallquist transitioned while heading the Vermont Electricity Coop, several years before launching her gubernatorial bid. In 2015, "Christine made the decision, after years of holding it inside, to come out as her true self, a transgender woman, becoming the first business leader in the country to transition while in office," according to her campaign's website. "Working to ensure that Vermont remains the special, inclusive and progressive place that it has always been... is what motivates

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# Kuwait Airways proud of Amir's support; launches flights from new terminal: Chief

All passengers will use the new terminal by late September



KUWAIT: His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah meets with Kuwait Airways' chairman Yousef Al-Jassem yesterday. — KUNA photos



Kuwait Airways' chairman Yousef Al-Jassem and other officials greet a passenger before boarding her flight at Kuwait International Airports' newly-built terminal 4 yesterday.

KUWAIT: National Carrier Kuwait Airways is proud of His Highness the Amir's efforts to propel the airline to new levels, its chairman Yousef Al-Jassem said yesterday. The flag carrier has already launched a number of flights out of Kuwait International Airports' newly-built terminal 4 (T4), Jassem said in a statement after meeting with His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah. He said that "travelers are more satisfied

now with the airline than ever before," much to the delight of His Highness the Amir, pointing out that all Kuwait Airways passengers will be flying out of the new terminal T4 by late September. "His Highness the Amir has offered me sage advice germane to the aviation industry," Jassem said, which will prove valuable to Kuwait Airways' quest for prominence.

Meanwhile, Kuwait Airways announced that it

has transported 4,654 pilgrims from Kuwait through 16 flights to Prince Mohammed bin Abdul-Aziz International Airport in Medina and King Abdul-Aziz International Airport in Jeddah. Meshal Al-Dalk, the regional director of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) in Kuwait Airways, affirmed that Kuwait Airways is always keen to provide the best services to the pilgrims.

He also pointed out the keenness of the Board of

Directors of Kuwait Airways, represented by the Chairman to make all efforts, energies and possibilities to serve the pilgrims of Kuwait. Dalk praised the efforts of the Kuwaiti consulate members in Jeddah to provide all the services to the pilgrims, while at the same time praising the cooperation with the authorities in Saudi Arabia to facilitate the entry of Kuwait's pilgrims. Kuwait consulate in Jeddah provided a phone number in case of emergency: 0535571133.

## Ooredoo volunteers participate in airport initiative

KUWAIT: Ooredoo Kuwait is participating through its volunteer program in the 'Airport Friends' initiative, which includes hundreds of youth working under the guidance and supervision of the Directorate General of Civil Aviation. The volunteers will be assisting travelers in the Kuwait Airport Main Terminal and the new Terminal 4 building. Ooredoo's contribution to this initiative comes to reiterate its commitment to enrich the experience of youth in the field of volunteerism, and its continuous efforts to collaborate with government entities on nationwide initiatives.

In a statement to the press, Ooredoo Kuwait underscored the company's commitment to translate its core values of caring, connecting, and challenging into actionable initiatives involving youth and corporate social responsibility. She noted that the com-

pany is proud to be part of a national event such as the expansion of Kuwait International Airport, especially during the busy season of the summer, which coincides with the season of Hajj, the Muslim pilgrimage. The volunteers are divided into three teams, working for four hours each, under the guidance and supervision of the consultant at the Directorate General of Civil Aviation Fouad Boushehri.

Ooredoo Kuwait launched its volunteer program in 2015, aiming to help youth who have interest in the field of volunteerism by providing them with the necessary training before matching them with volunteer opportunities. Training provided include CPR, first aid, time management, in addition to other skills of relevance to youth today such as photography and video editing. The program attracted more than 300 participants this year, and its volunteer have worked on more than 120 initiatives since the start of the program. One of the main initiatives that the volunteers handle annually is the Ramadan iftar meal distribution, where they deliver hundreds of meals to the needy in various locations across Kuwait in addition to the Ooredoo's iftar tent.

Ooredoo Kuwait is proud to be continuously working with different gov-



ernment entities, such as the Ministry of State for Youth Affairs and the Youth Public Authority, to support

youth and help them with different initiatives, with a great focus on charitable activities.

## KFH participates in hajj awareness campaign

KUWAIT: Kuwait Finance House (KFH) participated in the Hajj awareness-raising campaign in collaboration with the Ministry of Health (MOH). KFH team gave a send-off to pilgrims when they departed for the pilgrimage to the Holy Land of Makkah. This initiative comes as part of the bank's social responsibility and efforts to participate in all social, religious and national events that are of interest to the society.

KFH provided the pilgrims with helpful instructions in the holy places. A booth of the Media Office at the airport was accessible to pilgrims to offer some medical checkups in addition to some instructions and leaflets that help the pilgrims in their journey.

KFH team received and bid farewell to the pilgrims at the Kuwait International airport wishing them a blessed pilgrimage and safe return to home. KFH presence at the airport reiterates its commitment towards optimally assuming the corporate social responsibility, while reflecting its collaboration efforts with the concerned authorities.



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Local

# Amir, Crown Prince meet senior officials at Bayan Palace

## Amir receives cables of condolences on Sheikha Fareeha's death

**KUWAIT:** His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah received His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah at Bayan Palace yesterday. His Highness the Amir also received National Assembly Speaker Marzouq Ali Al-Ghanem, His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-Hamad Al-Sabah and His Highness Sheikh Nasser Al-Mohammad Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah. Furthermore, His Highness the Amir received Canadian Ambassador to Kuwait Martine Moreau on the occasion of the end of her tenure.

Meanwhile, His Highness the Crown Prince received Ghanem, His Highness Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak, His Highness Sheikh Nasser Al-Mohammad, Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah, as well as Deputy Premier and Minister of Interior and Acting Minister of Defense Sheikh Khaled Al-Jarrah Al-Sabah.

In the meantime, His Highness the Prime Minister received Chairperson of Kuwait Journalists Association (KJA) Fatma Hussein Al-Essa, KJA Secretary Adnan Al-Rashid and Secretary General of the Supreme Council for Planning and Development (SCPD) Khaled Mahdi at Bayan Palace. They discussed key development issues and means of resolving them. They also looked into the role of NGOs in supporting development plans and boosting performance of government departments.

In other news, His Highness the Amir



**KUWAIT:** His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah meets with His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah.



His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah meets with Canadian Ambassador to Kuwait Martine Moreau. —KUNA photos



His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-Hamad Al-Sabah meets with Chairperson of Kuwait Journalists Association (KJA) Fatma Al-Essa, KJA Secretary Adnan Al-Rashid, and Secretary General of the Supreme Council for Planning and Development Khaled Mahdi.

received several cables of condolences yesterday over the death of Sheikha Fareeha Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah. His Highness the Amir received cables from King of Morocco Mohammed VI, Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan, President of Djibouti Ismail Omar Guelleh, Prime Minister of the Kurdistan Regional Government of Iraqi Kurdistan Nechirvan Barzani, and representative of UAE President, Sheikh Sultan Bin Zayed Al-Nahyan. His Highness the Amir also received a phone call from the King of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan Abdullah II Bin Al-Hussein, who expressed his condolences over the passing away of Sheikha Fareeha. —KUNA

## Kuwaiti delegation in Gaza to hire new teachers

**GAZA:** Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas on Tuesday lauded the efforts made by a delegation from the Kuwaiti Ministry of Education to contract with dozens of Palestinian teachers for the coming school year. In a phone call with Mansour Al-Thafeiri, head of the delegation, President Abbas asked him to convey his greetings to His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah and

the Kuwaiti people and government. He expressed hope for being able to receive the delegation when they return from Gaza Strip to the West Bank city of Ramallah.

Meanwhile, Palestinian Minister of Education Dr Sabri Seidam said the Kuwaiti delegation interviewed and contracted with 150 Palestinian teachers from Gaza Strip and the West Bank. "There is a file for the reserves that includes 30 teachers," the Palestinian news agency Wafa quoted Seidam as saying. The Palestinian minister thanked Kuwait for the trust placed in the Palestinian teachers.

In the meantime, Thafeiri thanked President Abbas for his keenness on the success of the delegation in their mission in Palestine. The delegation arrived from Ramallah to Gaza City on Tuesday midday and headed for Beit Hanon, north of the Gaza Strip, yesterday morning to continue their mission. —KUNA

## Kuwait, US FMs discuss ways of cementing strategic partnership

**KUWAIT:** Kuwait's Deputy Premier and Foreign Minister Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah and US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo discussed Tuesday means of cementing the 'solid' strategic partnership. Pompeo called Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled to discuss ways of developing this partnership at many levels, the foreign ministry said in a statement. The two men also discussed regional and international developments, as well as issues of mutual interest. —KUNA



Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled




Mike Pompeo

## Delegation completes inspection of pilgrimage campaigns

**KUWAIT:** Kuwait Fire Service Directorate (KFS) announced yesterday that its delegation in Makkah completed their inspection of Kuwaiti pilgrimage campaigns and pilgrims' safety.

Head of the delegation Colonel Omar Al-Kanderi said in a statement that the delegation have insured that all the campaigns are meeting the requirements, and that this check is for the safety of the pilgrims and their possessions. "These safety checks will continue throughout the whole Hajj season until all pilgrims return home safely, and the delegation is working hand in hand with inspectors of the Ministry of Awqaf and Islamic Affairs and the Ministry of Health to insure the Kuwaiti campaigns in Makkah," the statement added. —KUNA






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# Manpower authority cancels 58,164 invalid work permits

## Strategic payroll alternative project not priority for government

By Meshaal Al-Enezi and A Saleh

KUWAIT: The Public Authority for Manpower cancelled 58,164 work permits that are registered but no longer valid, Deputy General Manager for bringing and employing workers' recruitment Hassan Al-Khader said. This action was taken as per article 35 of rules of granting work permits which states that the authority can cancel work permits automatically in many cases including the elapsing of six months of the employee being outside the country, unless he has a permit from the residency affairs department, or in case of deportation, he added.

### Payroll alternative

The government will not make the strategic payroll alternative project among its priorities in the coming parliamentary term, although some MPs demanded its discussion and inclusion on the parliament's agenda, informed sources said. The government believes the project burdens the state's general budget with new commitments, and as the government's policy is to reduce expenditure, the salary alternative project will not be considered before dealing with the financial deficit for the next three years, the sources explained.

The sources said the government decided to resort to dealing with the salaries chapter in the general budget, starting with employing Kuwaitis in the private sector and having non-government establishments comply with the percentages of Kuwaitis hired,

as a decision will be issued before the yearend to increase percentages of Kuwaitis in banks, communications companies and administrative jobs.

### Retirement

Minister of Public Works and State Minister for Municipality Affairs Hussam Al-Roumi sent 14 employees in supervisory jobs who served for 32 years into retirement from Sept 1. The employees were informed of the decision through warnings to undersecretaries of their sectors.

Meanwhile, Chairman of the Board of Ministry of Public Works' Labor Union Anwar Al-Azmi said Director General of Public Authority for Roads and Transportation Ahmad Al-Hussan is ignoring laws and decisions by not looking into complaints of his employees, especially those related to employment violations against employees in his office and elsewhere. Azmi said the secretary general was met with regards to the complaints and he promised to look into them, but during a meeting with the board members, denied that such a meeting took place. He asked Roumi to stop all violations by the director general to protect public funds and respect the law.



## Health ministry investigates 'curtain change' video

### Investigation

The health ministry stated on its Twitter account that it investigated a video clip on social media showing some cleaning workers changing curtains that separate patients while patients are present, which is something that must not be done. The ministry added that disciplinary action was taken against the nursing staff and the contracting company was fined. An official source said the ministry is keen on the privacy and comfort of patients and providing quality treatment to them. The source said official channels should be followed to complain.

### Eid campaigns

The supervision and consumer protection department at the Minister of Commerce and Industry said campaigns will continue during Eid Al-Adha by teams in Kuwait's six governorates. It said plans have been prepared to prevent any establishment from monopolizing any product or service. Consumers can complain through the hotline 135 round the clock and through social media.

### Privatization

Former secretary general of Kuwait engineering assembly, which is a union for Kuwaiti engineers, said

the Ministry of Electricity and Water's privatization project did not present a clear view on the workers' situation following privatization. It also did not present clear guarantees to assure the workers, so "we appeal to MPs to play their role and defend the rights of those who elected them and adopt their demands. In this regard, he demanded efforts to approve allowances such as the danger, pollution, hard labor and other allowances, and increase salaries of all ministry employees who will remain in the ministry by a minimum of 15 percent. The employee who does not go to the company should have the right to be transferred to another ministry or government authority with a guarantee of a similar salary.



Hassan Al-Khader

### In appreciation

Municipal Council member Maha Ahmad Al-Baghy proposed naming a street, area or any of the new cities after the late Sheikha Fareeha Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah in appreciation for her contributions to Kuwait and society.

## Man leaves with KD 4,000 transferred to his account

KUWAIT: A court employee transferred KD 4,000 to the account of an Egyptian man by mistake and failed to retrieve it. Meanwhile, detectives found out that the person who received the money has already left the country. The issue began when the owner of an engineering company, to whom the money should have been transferred, claimed he was swindled by a person, in addition to forgery of an official document by an employee at the court. Detectives' investigations led to identifying the employee, and when questioned, he said it was not deliberate and he was not able to recover the money. He said he prepared a summons for the person and gave it to Fintas police, then told the judge about what happened and a travel ban was issued, but the suspect had already left the country by then. Investigations continue.

### Forged degrees

The Capital prosecution summoned several suspects to be questioned on suspicions of forging their degrees. Among the suspects questioned is a colonel, who was shown evidence of forgery, which gained him undeserved incentives. Some were released on bail.

### Electrocuted

The body of an Asian man was recovered by the coroner after he was electrocuted to death. The Jahra Hospital investigator told police that an Indian who arrived in hospital died while being transferred to the ICU. The incident took place while he was repairing electric wires.

### Impersonation

Salam detectives sent a Sri Lankan man to the public prosecution for forgery and impersonation. The suspect confessed to stealing the ID of a Bangladeshi man, then went to a communications company and told the employee the ID was his - he then gave his fingerprints to get a phone and a line. The Bangladeshi man told police he received a call from a communications company asking him to pay for his line and phone, but he denied ever going to the company. Detectives found where the suspect got the phone and identified him, leading to his arrest. He confessed to the charges.

### Kidnapping and harassment

Hawally prosecution is investigating a case of kidnapping and harassment of an Arab woman by a citizen who owns medical clinics, as he has faced such accusations before. The Arab woman, who works in one of these clinics, told Salmiya police while she was waiting for a relative, she was surprised by the clinic owner offering her a ride. The woman refused, but he forced her in the car against her will, then committed an indecent act. Investigations continue to find the truth. — Translated by Kuwait Times from Al-Rai

## Embassy investigating Kuwaitis' safety after bridge collapse

ROME: Kuwait's Embassy in Rome believes all Kuwaiti residents and visiting tourists are safe in Italy after a motorway bridge collapsed in the northwest city of Genoa leaving dozens injured or killed. The embassy is in contact with authorities, whom have initially confirmed no foreign nationals amongst the rising tally of those found dead or hurt amid ongoing search and rescue operations. Immediately after the incident, embassy staff made contact with Kuwaitis with a registered presence in the country, particularly those in coastal areas such as Genoa, all of whom have been accounted for, read a statement. Several hotlines have been made available for the public in case of emergency or to request information regarding family members. Embassy in Rome: (+39)388-909-466, (+39)366-210-8903 and (+39)329-496-6232. Consulate in Milan: (+39)331-720-7743. — KUNA

## Imprisoned military, police personnel to be released on Eid

KUWAIT: The Ministry of Defense announced yesterday a decision to release military personnel imprisoned for disciplinary offenses on the occasion of the forthcoming Eid Al-Adha. Kuwait Army Chief of Staff Mohammad Al-Khuder ordered release of these personnel, in line with instructions by First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Defense Sheikh Nasser Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah. This graceful gesture emanates from the minister's belief that the personnel should be able to share the Eid joys with their families.

Meanwhile, Kuwait's Ministry of Interior announced a decision to release all of the police members jailed for discipline cases, on the occasion of Eid Al-Adha, starting Sunday. The Ministry's Public Relations and Security Media Department said in a press release that the Ministry Undersecretary Issam Al-Naham issued the decision on the instructions of Deputy Prime Minister and Interior Minister Sheikh Khalid Al-Jarrah Al-Sabah. — KUNA

## Kuwait keen on supporting youth: Minister

KUWAIT: Minister of Information and Minister of State for Youth Mohammad Al-Jabri said Tuesday Kuwait government was keen on supporting youth specially that they represent the largest segment of the society. Jabri was speaking after honoring Meshaal Al-Otaibi, a Kuwaiti engineer who had recently won a prize for the best scientific research in architecture at a conference in Paris, France, recently.

The government of Kuwait, he added, was relentless in its support of Kuwaiti youth and innovators. Otaibi won among 500 people from around the world at the 2nd European Conference on Industrial Engineering and Operations Management (IEOM). The engineer said he was proud to see flag of Kuwait hoisted high at the IEOM. Otaibi was nominated by US University of Kansas to participate in IEOM to represent the US, but he categorically rejected this and insisted on representing Kuwait.

Otaibi said after winning the award his scientific research aimed at determining the effect of air distribu-



KUWAIT: Minister of Information and Minister of State for Youth Mohammad Al-Jabri honors Meshaal Al-Otaibi. — KUNA

tion systems in buildings and the thermal comfort for visitors and occupants of these buildings based on the height of the ceiling as well as reducing the amount of energy consumption by 40 percent. This research contributes to the preservation of the environment by saving energy and reducing the carbon footprint of buildings. — KUNA

## Official asserts importance of Gulf media cooperation

ABU DHABI: A Kuwaiti media official stressed Tuesday importance of cooperation among Gulf countries to keep up with the latest developments in media technology and to enhance the role of the Gulf media at all levels. Assistant Undersecretary of External Media sector in the Ministry of Information Faisal Al-Mutalaqqem made the statement during a ministry's delegation visit to a number of media institutions, television and radio channels in the Emirates, including Emirates News Agency (WAM) in Abu Dhabi.

Mutalaqqem added that the aim



ABU DHABI: Assistant Undersecretary of External Media sector in the Ministry of Information Faisal Al-Mutalaqqem is seen during his visit to the Emirates News Agency (WAM). — KUNA

of such visit is to also strengthen media cooperation between Kuwait and UAE, and exchange experiences in the fields of audio-visual, printed news, and mechanism of employing technical techniques, modern equipment and innovative means in various media sectors. The Kuwaiti official explained that such visit included meetings with several media leaders

in various outlets in Abu Dhabi and tackling media issues and methodologies aimed at improving the level of Gulf media on the continental and international levels. Mutalaqqem noted that the close cooperation between Kuwait and the UAE in the media field is an addition to the strong relations between the two countries in all fields. — KUNA

## CONDOLENCES

Kuwait Times Editor-in-Chief, management and staff convey their deepest condolences to

John Fernandez  
on the sad demise of his

# Father

May his gentle soul rest in peace

Local

# Minister of Social Affairs denies reports she will be chief auditor

## Audit Bureau to host INTOSAI-Donor Cooperation Steering Committee meeting

By Nawara Fattahova and Agencies

**KUWAIT:** Minister of Social Affairs, Labor and Minister of State for Economic Affairs Hind Al-Sabeeh denied yesterday reports about the intention to name her head of the Audit Bureau in "a prospected cabinet reshuffle."

Minister Sabeeh, in a statement, described such reports as absolutely false. "This matter has not been raised at all," she affirmed. Minister Sabeeh says she is honored to remain serving in her current post, in line with an Amiri Decree, re-affirming that she is pursuing her duties in the ministry as regular.

### Upcoming meetings

Separately, the State Audit Bureau (SAB) held a press conference yesterday at its premises in Shuwaikh to announce the upcoming INTOSAI-Donor Cooperation Steering Committee (IDSC) meeting and the Capacity Building Committee (CBC) meeting that will be held from Sept 3 to 6, 2018 at SAB. This is considered the biggest event of the Supreme Audit Institutions (SAIs) in 2018. Various major international audit authorities will be participating in this meeting, in addition to many professional bodies and organizations interested in this field.

The CBC is considered the right hand of the International Organization of Supreme Audit Institutions (INTOSAI). "The main tasks of the Capacity Building Committee are to build the capabilities and professional capacities of SAIs through train-

ing, technical assistance and other development activities," said Abdulrazzaq Abdulkareem, Director of the Control Department on Production and Manufacturing of Oil Institutions during the press conference. "CBC aims to improve the role of the SAIs through developing the qualifications and capabilities of these institutions. It also provides information that helps INTOSAI in deciding issues related to the SAIs' abilities. It also cooperates with donors and partners in supporting the projects that help building the abilities of the audit institutions' staff," he added.

Abdulkareem also spoke about the goal of this meeting. "This meeting aims to highlight the challenges and chances of developing capacities in order to find solutions including reaching donors to support financing INTOSAI. It also aims to strengthen the professional skills of INTOSAI auditors and support the development of local and regional institutions," he stressed. "SAB is hosting this year's meeting to benefit from the numerous experiences of major institutions participating in this meeting. The directors of most of these institutions will be attending this event, in addition to many experts and consultants from the field, so SAB employees will benefit from them. Furthermore, various useful workshops will be held and recommendations will be made at the end of the meeting," he explained.

### The role of donors

"Some countries don't have enough resources to cover their participation in some activities or to organize joint auditing programs with developed countries,



**KUWAIT:** State Audit Bureau officials (from left) Abdulrazzaq Abdulkareem, Essam Al-Mutairi, and Iman Al-Huweidi attend a press conference to announce the upcoming INTOSAI-Donor Cooperation Steering Committee meeting and the Capacity Building Committee meeting. — Photo by Yasser Al-Zayyat

so these countries need financial and technical support to execute these programs in order to raise their technical and professional abilities. So these needs are presented as projects to donors such as the World Bank, Saudi Arabia, South Africa and Sweden," concluded Abdulkareem.

Iman Al-Huweidi, Senior Member of the Technical Office for Auditing Sector of Independent Institutions,

spoke about the activities of the meeting. "About 100 participants will attend the meeting representing 49 countries and institutions. The meeting will discuss many issues including the work abilities of SAIs with weak performance, supporting the HR capital of SAIs, visual presentation of the ARABOSAI, and many other panel discussions, in addition to the various workshops that will be held," she pointed out.



The ambassador addresses the gathering.



Kuwaiti singer Mubarak Al-Rashid renders an Indian patriotic song.



**KUWAIT:** Indian Ambassador K Jeeva Sagar hoists the national flag of India. — Photos by Yasser Al-Zayyat



Indian embassy officials during the celebration.

## Indian Embassy celebrates Independence Day

By Sajeev K Peter

**KUWAIT:** Braving the excruciating summer heat, thousands of Indians flocked to the Indian Embassy yesterday to celebrate India's 72nd Independence Day. Indian Ambassador K Jeeva Sagar hoisted the national flag at 8 am in the presence of embassy officials and community members, followed by

the singing of the national anthem. The ambassador then read out Indian President Ram Nath Kovind's address to the nation on the occasion, outlining the growth and development of the world's largest democracy over the last seven decades after its independence in 1947.

Addressing the huge crowd gathered at the premises, the ambassador said: "For every Indian, Independence Day is an occasion to rejoice and a day to be proud of." Jeeva Sagar, who took over as India's ambassador in Kuwait six months ago, also underscored the historically close and warm relations between Kuwait and India. "I have the opportunity to listen to several Kuwaitis who speak about India in great admiration. They have high regard for India's freedom, diversity, culture, family values, education and its vast diaspora," the ambassador said.

The ambassador said he is quite proud of representing

a country that is able to supply everything to the world today, from domestic help to satellites. Applauding the Indian expatriate community in Kuwait and assuring them of the embassy's continuous support, Jeeva Sagar said: "Wherever the Indian diaspora is there, people respect you because of the way you behave and the way you contribute to the best of the country of your residence." The large crowd during the celebration represented a cross-section of the largest expatriate community in Kuwait, reflecting India's ethnic, linguistic, religious and cultural diversity. Many cultural programs were held to mark the occasion that included a musical band by the Bohra community and singing of patriotic songs by various Indian cultural associations like Saradhi Kuwait and Kannada Koota. Popular Kuwaiti singer Mubarak Al-Rashid enthralled the crowd by singing two Hindi patriotic songs.



The ambassador garlands the statue of Mahatma Gandhi.

## Sidra Center operates on 1st int'l patient

**DOHA:** Sidra Medicine treated its first international patient at the newly opened Heart Center last month, ushering in an era of reverse medical tourism for the institution. Sidra Medicine is set to create a regional center of excellence in pediatric and congenital cardiology, building on the strength of its international team, state-of-the-art equipment and specialty expertise in children's and adult congenital health.

The 29-day-old patient was flown to Qatar from Kuwait for an emergency operation to correct a heart defect that left her heart unable to properly pump blood throughout her body. Born prematurely, the baby girl weighed just 1.3 kg at the time of the operation which took two hours. She will need to return to Sidra Medicine for a series of procedures over the coming months to correct the defect.

Led by Dr Olivier Ghez, Division Chief of Cardiac Surgery, and supported by a team of many Sidra Medicine experts, the successful operation opens up possibilities for regional patients in need of Sidra Medicine's specialist expertise who can now access care closer to home. Patients in Qatar and the region now have access to state-of-the-art equipment and an international team of experts able to perform the most complex cardiological procedures in a familiar cultural setting with a team who speak their language.

"The entire Heart Center team feels

incredibly grateful to have been entrusted with the care of our smallest patient to date. We would like to thank the family and the Kuwait Oil Company for entrusting a precious life into our care. We have built an incredibly close and fruitful partnership with colleagues in Kuwait who have been instrumental in enabling Kuwaiti patients to access care at Sidra Medicine. We look forward to working closely together in the future," said Professor Ziyad M Hijazi, Chair of the Department of Pediatrics and Director of the Heart Center.

The Sidra Medicine Heart Center offers a wide range of services including cardiac surgery, interventional therapies, electrophysiological therapies, cardiac anesthesia, perfusion, extracorporeal membrane oxygenation (ECMO), cardiac intensive care, non-invasive cardiology, outpatient and inpatient cardiac care, as well as fetal cardiology.

The Heart Center is equipped with state-of-the-art equipment and facilities designed to enable clinical teams to achieve the highest standard of care and the best possible experience for patients and their caregivers.

•Cardiac Catheterization and Electrophysiology Labs: Sidra Medicine currently has three cardiac catheterization suites. One of the rooms is dedicated to advanced electrophysiological procedures with 3D mapping equipment. Another room is a Siemens hybrid suite equipped with an advanced catheterization machine in an operating room environment. This room, which is the only one of its kind in the Middle East, enables the team to work hand-in-hand on complex cases that will require open-chest surgery and interventional therapy at the same time.

• Cardiac Operating Theater: Among the many operating theaters at Sidra Medicine, one room is dedicated to cardiac surgical



Dr Olivier Ghez



Professor Ziyad Hijazi



The heart center's team.

procedures. This room is equipped with the latest technology to enable surgeons to perform the most complex operations on the tiniest of patients.

•Non-Invasive Imaging: The Heart Center has ample space to see nine patients

simultaneously. Each room has a state-of-the-art Philips IE33 echo machine. Further, the center has a high-tech Exercise Laboratory which enables the team to assess cardiac patients and evaluate their abilities to enroll in athletic activities.

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'Sleeping elephant'  
 India has woken up

**Brunson: Pastor at centre of Turkey-US row and market turmoil**

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GENOA: This general view shows abandoned vehicles on the Morandi motorway bridge the day after a section collapsed in the north-western Italian city of Genoa. —AFP

# Anger grows as bridge toll hits 39

## 35 cars, trucks plunge onto railway tracks as bridge caves in

GENOA: Rescuers scoured crushed mountains of rubble for victims of a bridge collapse in Genoa as the toll rose to 39 yesterday and Italy's government blamed the company in charge of motorways for the disaster. A vast span of the Morandi bridge caved in during a heavy rainstorm in the northern port city on Tuesday, sending about 35 cars and several trucks plunging 45 meters onto the railway tracks below.

At least 39 people are known to have died and 15 injured, according to Italy's Civil Protection service. Children aged eight, 12 and 13 were among the dead, Interior Minister Matteo Salvini said yesterday, adding that more people were still missing. Three Chileans, who live in Italy, and three French nationals were also killed, according to their respective diplomatic services. Hundreds of rescuers continued their search yesterday after scouring the huge piles of concrete and twisted metal overnight by floodlight, hoping to find survivors.

The tragedy has focused anger on the structural problems that have dogged the decades old bridge and the private sector firm Autostrade per l'Italia, which is currently in charge of operating and maintaining the country's motorways. Italy's government said it intended to revoke the company's contract and hit it with a fine of 150 million euros (\$170 million). Deputy prime minister Luigi Di Maio, who arrived in Genoa yesterday morning, earlier said the tragedy "could have been avoided".

"Autostrade should have done maintenance and didn't do it," he said.

Aerial footage of the viaduct shows lines of abandoned vehicles stretching across the remaining section of the bridge, with one truck perched towards the edge of a gaping precipice where a huge part is missing. Fire official Emanuele Gissi, who told AFP that three bodies were retrieved during the night, said two large cranes were set to be used in the rescue and recovery operation, which is expected to take days. "All accessible spaces have been explored, now we are moving the largest pieces of debris," Gissi said. "We cannot know if there are survivors remaining, but it's our job to search."

More than 200 meters (650 feet) of the 1960s bridge crumpled without warning as traffic crossed the busy stretch of motorway on Tuesday, in the deadliest disaster of its kind in Europe since 2001. The collapse came as the bridge was undergoing maintenance work while the Liguria region, where Genoa is situated, experienced torrential rainfall. Italian President Sergio Mattarella said a "catastrophe" had hit Genoa and

the whole of Italy. "Italians have the right to modern and efficient infrastructure that accompanies them safely through their everyday lives," Mattarella said.

**'I went down with the car'**

Genoa's leading public prosecutor Francesco Cozzi yesterday said that the incident "definitely wasn't bad luck".

"We need to respond to just one question: Why did this happen?" As cars and trucks tumbled off the bridge, Affi Idriss, 39, a Moroccan lorry driver, just managed to come to a halt in time. "I saw the green lorry in front of me stop and then reverse so I stopped too, locked the truck and ran," he said.

Some that plunged down with the bridge managed to escape unscathed, including a former goalkeeper for Italian Serie A club Cagliari. "I was driving along the bridge, and at a certain point I saw the road in front of me collapse, and I went down with the car," Davide Capello told TV news channel Sky TG24. The incident is the latest in a string of bridge collapses in Italy, a country prone to damage from seismic activity but where infrastructure

generally is showing the effects of a faltering economy. Pope Francis also sent his condolences to the victims, saying the tragedy has "caused desperation among the population", at a service for the feast of the Assumption.

**'Tragedy waiting to happen'**

Genoa, home to half a million people, is located between the sea and the mountains of northwestern Italy. Its rugged terrain means that motorways that run through the city and the surrounding area are characterized by long viaducts and tunnels. The Morandi viaduct, completed in 1967, spans dozens of railway lines as well as an industrial zone with several factories.

It has been riddled with structural problems since its construction, which has led to expensive maintenance and severe criticism from engineering experts. On Tuesday specialist engineering website "Ingegneri.info" published a piece that highlighted how the bridge had always presented "structural doubts", calling it "a tragedy waiting to happen". One factory, immediately next to one of the viaduct's support columns, was virtually empty on Tuesday on the eve of a national holiday, and seems to have sustained minimal damage. "I live nearby and I cross the bridge every day on foot," said Ihou Toure, 23, a translator. "I was never sure of it, you'd always hear these noises whenever lorries were going over." When I heard it had collapsed, I wasn't surprised. —AFP



**More people still missing**

to soon gain more motorways. It recently teamed up with the German-Spanish group Hochtief-ACS to buy for 18.2 billion euros the Spanish firm Abertis, which calls itself the world's top motorway operator with 8,600 kilometres of toll roads in 15 countries.

## Italy's Atlantia under scrutiny

PARIS: Italian group Atlantia, whose operation of half of Italy's motorways is under risk following the collapse of a bridge in Genoa killing at least 39 people, is a major operator of toll roads and airports which is expanding rapidly internationally to become one of the world's leading operators of infrastructure. Its prime asset is Autostrade per l'Italia, which according to information published by Atlantia manages 2,855 km of Italian toll highways directly and another 165 km through five subsidiaries with separate concessions, including the A10 highway where a segment of an overpass collapsed on Tuesday.

Deputy prime minister Luigi Di Maio yesterday charged that the tragedy "could have been avoided" and that it was clear that Autostrade per l'Italia was at fault for not carrying out maintenance. The Italian government said it intended to fine the firm 150 million euros and cancel its concession. It was unclear if the entire concession or just management of the A10 motorway was at stake. Atlantia said on its website that it has spent 11.4 billion euros to improve 923 km of Italian motorways, and was waiting for approval from authorities to build a bypass around Genoa.

Atlantia's history is intertwined with Autostrade per l'Italia, which was privatised in 1999 and acquired by investors including the Benetton group. In 2003 the motorway and other infrastructure assets were separated and the holding company, which eventually took the name Atlantia, was listed on the Milan stock exchange. Atlantia owns 88 percent of Autostrade per l'Italia, which accounted for just under two-thirds of its 5.97 billion euros in revenue last year. Atlantia earned a net profit of nearly 1.2 billion euros for the year.

Overall it operates more than 5,000 km of motorways in Brazil, Chile, India and Poland. It also operates the Mount Blanc tunnel and recently became the top shareholder in Getlink, which operates Channel Tunnel, buying a 15.5 percent stake that controls over a quarter of voting rights for nearly 1.1 billion euros. Atlantia stands



GENOA: This general view taken yesterday, shows the rubble of the collapsed section of the Morandi motorway bridge. —AFP

to soon gain more motorways. It recently teamed up with the German-Spanish group Hochtief-ACS to buy for 18.2 billion euros the Spanish firm Abertis, which calls itself the world's top motorway operator with 8,600 kilometres of toll roads in 15 countries.

Atlantia will own 50 percent plus one share of the joint venture that will own Abertis. The Italian group entered the airport management business in 2013 with contracts for Rome's two airports, Fiumicino and Ciampino. In 2016, Atlantia together with French electricity firm EDF bought 60 percent stakes held by the French state in the airports in the Nice, Cannes and Saint-Tropez airports. Atlantia's share price fell by more than 10 percent at one point during trading on Tuesday, closing the day down 5.4 percent at 23.54 euros. The Milan stock exchange was closed for a holiday yesterday. —AFP

## Walk in the woods: Missing Japan kid found unharmed

TOKYO: A two-year-old boy who went missing in woods in western Japan has been found unharmed after three days alone, apparently surviving on river water as volunteers hunted desperately for him. Yoshiaki Fujimoto disappeared on Sunday morning in the Yamaguchi region while out walking with his brother and grandfather, and the search for him made headlines nationwide. Police and locals combed the woods looking for him, but it was a 78-year-old volunteer from a neighboring region who stumbled upon the toddler yesterday morning.

"I shouted 'Yo-chan'," Haruo Obata told local television, a red towel wrapped around his head against the summer heat. "He replied 'yes, here' and there he was," added Obata, a retiree who said he regularly volunteers in disaster relief efforts. The toddler was sitting on a rock, with his bare feet in a small puddle of water in front of him, Obata said. "At first, I didn't think it was a human," he told reporters. "But there he was. I thought my heart was going to stop." The toddler's miraculous survival is all the more astonish-

ing given the hot weather in Japan in recent weeks, with local media saying the temperature where he went missing hit 34 degrees Celsius (93 degrees Fahrenheit) during his three-day ordeal.

The woodland area has creeks and rivers, and some media speculated the resourceful tot, who turned two on Monday while he was missing, survived by drinking from them. "He doesn't have any major injuries, just a few scratches and slight dehydration," said Hiroyuki Nishihara, an official at the local hospital treating Fujimoto. "But his life isn't in danger and he will be able to leave the hospital very soon." The toddler disappeared on Sunday after his grandfather let him walk back alone to the house-around 100 meters away-where the child's mother was waiting. But Fujimoto never made it to the house, and appears to have wandered off en route, prompting a massive manhunt that gripped Japan during its quiet summer season.

Drones with optical and thermal cameras, search dogs and helicopters were drafted in for the search, along with around 160 police and more volunteers. But in the end, he was found just a few hundred meters from where he disappeared, to his family's relief. "I couldn't help but squeeze him tight," his tearful mother Mio Fujimoto told local television. "I'm so grateful my son returned safely... He is sleeping tight now, he seemed relieved but tired." "That this volunteer would come all the way here, all we can do is offer thanks from the bottom of our hearts," the boy's grandfather added. —AFP

## International

Israel reopens Gaza crossing;  
Egypt and UN push for truce

## The crossing - a vital lifeline for Gazans

**GAZA:** Israel reopened its only goods crossing with the Gaza Strip yesterday after closing it to most deliveries on July 9 over months of border tensions, as relative calm returned and truce talks pressed ahead. The crossing is a vital lifeline for Gazans and their crippled economy, but Israel had closed it to goods except for food and medicine to pressure Hamas, the Islamist movement that runs the blockaded Palestinian enclave. The opening came as speculation increased over negotiations mediated by Egypt and UN officials to reach a long-term truce between Israel and Hamas.

Israel's security cabinet was reportedly meeting to discuss the indirect talks, but Defense Minister Avigdor Lieberman said any deal must include Hamas returning the remains of two soldiers it is believed to be holding—a major sticking point. Israel and Palestinian militants in Gaza, including Hamas, have fought three wars since 2008 and tension since late March has led to fears of yet another full-blown conflict. There have been three severe military flare-ups since July, the latest occurring on Thursday, when Israel responded to some 180 rockets and mortars fired from Gaza with widespread air strikes.

**'In your hands'**

Lieberman warned that the crossing would again be closed if there was further violence and called on Gazans to pressure Hamas. "Our message is that you must put pressure on the

Hamas leadership," he told Israeli public radio. "It is all in your hands. If calm prevails, you benefit. If the violence resumes, you lose." An AFP journalist at the goods crossing, known as Kerem Shalom, said dozens of trucks carrying various types of goods began passing into

**"It is all in your hands. If calm prevails, you benefit"**

the Gaza Strip. Israel also returned the fishing zone it enforces off the strip to nine nautical miles in the south of the enclave. The limit is six nautical miles in the north, which borders Israel. On July 9, Israeli authorities closed the crossing to most deliveries, partly in response to kites and balloons being flown across the border carrying firebombs to burn Israeli farmland, causing hundreds of thousands of dollars in damage. Food and medicines have been allowed through, but fuel and cooking gas had been intermittently blocked, including since August 2. All other goods were turned away. The fuel ban exacerbated an electricity crisis in the Gaza Strip, which already suffers from

severe power shortages and relies on generators in many cases.

UN officials have repeatedly called for the blockade to be lifted, citing deteriorating humanitarian conditions in the enclave of two million people. Israel says it is necessary to stop Hamas from obtaining weapons or materials that could be used for military purposes. Gaza's only other goods crossing is at Rafah on the Egyptian border.

That checkpoint had largely been kept closed in recent years, but Egypt opened it in mid-May and it has mostly remained so since. At the moment, the crossing is only open to people, according to Egyptian sources, but a Hamas source said goods such as cement and fuel have passed through since the May reopening.

**Truce talks**

Gaza border protests broke out on March 30 and have led to months of tension. At least 169 Palestinians have been killed in Gaza by Israeli fire since March 30, mostly during clashes and protests. One Israeli soldier was shot dead by a Palestinian sniper in July. The efforts by Egypt and UN officials to reach a long-term truce face major hurdles. Officials from Hamas and its allies Islamic Jihad travelled to Egypt on Tuesday for talks, a Hamas source said. The negotiations have led to political recriminations in Israel. Education Minister Naftali Bennett of the far-right Jewish Home party said Tuesday he would



**RAFAH:** Palestinian fishermen prepare their boats along a beach in Rafah in the southern Gaza Strip yesterday. — AFP

oppose a deal based on "a temporary calm."

It was the first explicit public comments by an Israeli minister on the negotiations. Bennett, who has ambitions to be prime minister in the future and is a member of the security cabinet, also used the statement to criticize Lieberman, a political rival. He said he opposed a ground

offensive into Gaza, but noted he had put forward an alternative plan to exact "a decisive price from Hamas." Lieberman said yesterday "we have never spoken with Hamas and we will never do so. We receive proposals from the UN." Regarding Bennett's comments, the defense minister dismissed them as "slogans." — AFP

**'Day of joy';  
Greek soldiers  
fly home**

**THESSALONIKI:** Greece yesterday hailed a "day of joy" as two Greek soldiers held in a Turkish prison for more than five months on espionage charges were released in a surprise move by Ankara. "This is a day of joy... we share the joy of their families," junior foreign minister George Katrougalos, who accompanied the pair home, said on arriving at Thessaloniki airport. The soldiers, Lieutenant Angelos Mitretodis and Sergeant Dimitrios Kouklatzis, had been detained since March for illegally crossing the border in a case that has stoked tensions between Athens and Ankara.

The two were "dumbstruck" when their release was announced, their Turkish lawyers told the media. "We want to thank all those who supported us," Mitretodis told reporters at the airport. The surprise release came as Greece celebrated the Feast of the Assumption in honor of the Virgin Mary, one of the country's foremost religious events. Underscoring the importance of the case for Greece, senior officials were swiftly dispatched to Turkey on board the prime minister's state jet to collect the soldiers. The pair could be seen on public broadcaster ERT dressed in their uniforms. They were greeted by a guard of honour, Greek officials and their parents.

**'New chapter'**

"I hope that their release will mark a new chapter for Greek-Turkish relations," Greek Defense Minister Panos Kammenos told

reporters. Greek Prime Minister Alexis Tsipras welcomed the Turkish court's move as an "act of justice". Their release will "contribute to a reinforcement of friendship, good neighborhood and stability in the region," Tsipras said in a statement. The soldiers told Turkish prosecutors shortly after their arrest in March that they mistakenly crossed the border after getting lost in the fog. The case added to a long list of troubles between Turkey and Greece which, though both NATO members since 1952, have tense relations.

On Tuesday, Turkish media reported that a court in Edirne region had ruled that the two soldiers would now be tried without being held in detention. The court had previously refused several requests for the two soldiers to be released from detention. The European Union had also backed member state Greece in the dispute, condemning the detention of the soldiers and calling for their release. The release order for the two men - which was wholly unexpected - comes as Turkey is engulfed in a bitter dispute with its NATO ally the United States which has seen the Turkish lira plunge to record lows.

Turkey charges the two soldiers with "attempted military espionage" as well as entering a forbidden military zone. The prosecution said the pair testified they entered the Turkish side by tracking footprints in the snow and filmed images on their mobile phones to send to higher ranking officials. Their surprise release came amid another spike in tensions between the two neighbors. A day earlier, Greece's general staff had ordered a freeze in cultural contacts with the Turkish army. Athens and Ankara have also clashed over Turkish demands that Greece extradite eight Turkish troops wanted over the July 2016 attempted coup aimed at unseating President Recep Tayyip Erdogan. — AFP

**Belongings:  
Precious objects  
gathered by  
Rohingyas**

**COX'S BAZAR:** The Rohingya had no time to consider what to take as Myanmar forces drove the Muslim minority into Bangladesh in a crackdown a year ago likened by the UN to ethnic cleansing. Some fled with little more than the clothes on their backs and children on their hips. But what they did manage to bring tells an intimate story about the plight of a long persecuted and stateless people.

**'This isn't immaterial'**

Jalal Ahmed prised the faded tin number plate marked with Burmese characters off the front of his family's home as they packed up their lives and left Rakhine state. "When we were leaving, we knew we would need something to prove we were Rohingya, and proof of our residency," he told AFP in the doorway of the shanty where he lives with his family in a vast refugee camp in southern Bangladesh. The Ahmed family had lived in a proud two-storey wooden home in their village for countless generations, Jalal's grandfather Abdul said. Jalal, a 52-year-old businessman, said the plate was not a memento but a connection to his past before the misery of refugee life. "This isn't immaterial," Jalal said. "We carried it with us because wherever we go, this will show that we belong to a place."

**Our identity**

Mohammad Ayaz, 12, brought a faded old photograph of his family with him on the long journey from Myanmar. It shows 17 people —

his grandparents, siblings and parents, aunts and uncles - posing for an official portrait holding signs marked with Burmese script. The Rohingyas are reviled in Myanmar as illegal immigrants, branded "Bengalis" and denied citizenship and basic rights and freedoms. "We will need this photo when we go back to Myanmar, to identify who is who from our family," he told AFP, folding up the creased photograph for safekeeping. "It's a very important picture. We will need this."

**Feeding the needy**

Asaru Begum knew the journey to Bangladesh would be long and arduous, especially for her children and grandchildren. So she brought cooking pots to gather water, stew rice and green chillies, and perform ablutions for prayer while hiding out in the hills. "I brought the pots and rice because I knew the children would get hungry after two days' journey," she told AFP, pointing to the pots she still treasures today. "I brought them so I could feed the babies. They cry a lot when they are hungry."

**'I miss school'**

Mohammad Khares, a diligent pupil with dreams of going to university, was in his final year of high school when violence erupted in his village. "I miss school very much. I was about to graduate. I was this close. That really hurts," the crestfallen 20-year-old said. There are no schools in the camps, so Khares has used his Bengali and English language skills to find piecemeal work with foreign aid groups helping the refugees. His school ID card is precious. Most Rohingyas receive little or no schooling in Myanmar so his card - bearing his photograph, credentials and official seal — is a rare privilege and a passport to opportunity. "When I go back to Myanmar, I want to resume my studies. But they might ask, 'what proof do you have of your education?' This card will prove that I was a Class 10 (final year) student," he said. — AFP

**Brunson: Pastor  
at the centre of  
Turkey-US row**

**ISTANBUL:** Only weeks ago it would have seemed fanciful to draw a link between the fate of an American pastor in Turkey, a crisis between two NATO allies and turmoil on global financial markets. But Andrew Brunson, a Protestant clergyman who had lived in Turkey for a quarter of a century without disturbance, is now at the centre of a bitter row pitting Washington against Ankara that caused the lira to crash and the economic jitters to spread globally.

Brunson's world was turned upside down on October 7, 2016 when he and his wife Norine were arrested in a government crackdown following a failed coup bid in July that year aimed at toppling President Recep Tayyip Erdogan. Norine was released two weeks later but Brunson was kept in jail and then charged with assisting two organizations regarded by Turkey as terror groups: the group of Fethullah Gulen blamed for the putsch and the outlawed Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK). Brunson, who marked his 50th birthday behind bars on January 3, faces 35 years in jail if convicted.

His arrest received relatively little media coverage at the time and efforts by US officials to release him were given initially only a very low profile in public. But his continued detention for almost two years - without being convicted - has turned into one of the

**In Syria's Golan,  
Russia forces seek  
a handover to UN**

**GOLAN HEIGHTS:** Near an abandoned United Nations observation point whose wall had been riddled with bullets, Syrian and Russian policemen gazed across the Golan Heights near the Israeli border. The faded UN logo on the hut's rusty roof was barely visible in Tal Krum, just inside the buffer zone that separates war-torn Syria to the east, from the Israeli-occupied Golan Heights to the west.

His back to the hilly Israeli side, the Russian army's Lieutenant-General Sergei Kuralenko on Tuesday told reporters on an organized press tour how "stability" had returned to the buffer zone. Apart from "a few problems with the Islamic State" jihadist group in its southern tip, the demilitarized zone was "entirely under control of Syrian military police", Kuralenko said.

"Everything is ready" for the return of UN troops, he said, after the peacekeepers were forced to withdraw in 2014. With help from its Russian ally, President Bashar Al-Assad's regime has expelled rebels and jihadists from large parts of the country's south since June. After retaking most of the two southern provinces adjacent to the buffer zone, regime forces last month raised their flag inside, above the key border crossing of Quneitra. The Russian military police have set up four observation points along the demarcation line on the Syrian side of the buffer zone, Kuralenko said, and plan to set up four more in the near future. They are "willing to hand them over to the UN if it says it is ready to ensure the monitoring of the Golan alone", he said.

**'Ensure security'**

Israel seized 1,200 square kilometers of the Golan from Syria in the 1967 "Six-Day War" and later annexed it in a move never recognized internationally. In 1974, a UN peace-

keeping mission was created to monitor the ceasefire line separating Israelis from Syrians. But in 2014, the United Nations Disengagement Observation Force was forced to withdraw after Syrian rebels and jihadists overran it, briefly kidnapping more than 40 Fijian UNDOF troops. UNDOF resumed its activities on the Syrian side in February, and earlier this month carried out its first patrol since 2014 to the Quneitra crossing. "There should be no military forces in the area of separation other than those of UNDOF," according to a UN Security Council resolution in June.

With that in mind, Russia is demining the areas around the observation posts abandoned in 2014 to help establish secure patrolling routes for the UN troops, Kuralenko said. "Our mission here is to ensure security so that the UN flag can fly above their posts and that (UNDOF) work without restriction in the zone," he said.

A UN spokesman was not immediately available for comment. But on Tuesday, Syrian Defense Minister Ali Abdullah Ayub received



**AL HAMIDIYAH, Syria:** A member of the Russian military police and Syrian government forces patrol near the village Al-Hamidia in the Syrian Golan Heights. — AFP

keeping mission was created to monitor the ceasefire line separating Israelis from Syrians. But in 2014, the United Nations Disengagement Observation Force was forced to withdraw after Syrian rebels and jihadists overran it, briefly kidnapping more than 40 Fijian UNDOF troops. UNDOF resumed its activities on the Syrian side in February, and earlier this month carried out its first patrol since 2014 to the Quneitra crossing. "There should be no military forces in the area of separation other than those of UNDOF," according to a UN Security Council resolution in June.

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the PKK and Gulen's group.

Turkish officials insist that the case has been misportrayed in Western media and Brunson has serious charges to answer over links to the failed coup bid. "Shame on you, shame on you. You are exchanging your strategic partner in NATO for a pastor," Erdogan told the US after the latest tensions erupted. But the US has insisted Brunson is an innocent man who is being unfairly held. Trump has repeatedly tweeted his support for Brunson, describing him as a "fine gentleman", a "Christian leader in the United States" and a "respected US pastor" whose continued holding by Turkey was a "total disgrace". The White House said Tuesday Trump was experiencing a "great deal of frustration" that Brunson has still not been released. The row has become symbolic of a malaise between the two nations that extends far further than this case.

Turkey is furious that the US has failed to hand over Gulen to face trial and also over the conviction and imprisonment of Turkish banker Mehmet Hakan Atilla for busting US sanctions against Iran. Turkish officials have rejected claims that Ankara engaged in "hostage diplomacy" by jailing Brunson in the hope of winning US concessions elsewhere. Yet last September, Erdogan suggested that Turkey could free Brunson if Washington handed over Gulen, who lives in self-imposed exile in Pennsylvania. "They say 'give us the pastor'. You have a preacher (Gulen) there. Give him to us, and we will try (Brunson) and give him back," Erdogan said. — AFP

**Iranians?**

During the media tour Brigadier-General Muhammad Ahmad, from Syria's military police, accused the peacekeepers of fleeing when they were needed in 2014 but said they were welcome to return. "The UN is welcome-if it wants to cooperate with Russia and with us," he said. In Hamidiyah, less than a kilometer from the demarcation line with Israel, buildings lay in ruins and the white dome of its mosque appeared battered by bombardment.

In front of a destroyed bridge, two Syrian policemen observed a Russian military convoy drive past twice, flying its country's flag and with its gyrating lights on. Syrian military police patrol the area, "from time to time" helped by Moscow's forces, Russian army spokesman Igor Konachenkov told journalists on the press tour. — AFP

## International

# Pennsylvania's report lists over 300 'predator' priests

## Clergymen accused of abusing over 1,000 children

**NEW YORK:** More than 300 "predator" priests in Pennsylvania are accused of abusing over 1,000 children across seven decades, a grand jury said yesterday in a devastating report that decried a systematic cover-up by the Catholic Church. It is thought to be the single most comprehensive report to date into abuse in the US church, since The Boston Globe first exposed pedophile priests in Massachusetts in 2002.

But while Tuesday's report led to charges against two priests, one of whom has pleaded guilty, the majority of those responsible are dead and the vast majority of crimes happened too long ago to prosecute, officials said. The two-year investigation by a grand jury into all but two Pennsylvania dioceses turned up dozens of witnesses and half a million pages of church records containing "credible allegations against over three hundred predator priests."

More than 1,000 child victims were identifiable, but the "real number" was "in the thousands," the grand jury estimated, given those children whose records were lost or who were afraid to ever come forward. Victims were often traumatized for life, driven to drugs, alcohol and suicide, the grand jury said. The only recourse was to recommend changes to the law and expose what had happened to make sure such widespread abuse was never repeated. One cleric raped a seven-year-old girl in hospital after she had her tonsils out, the report said. Another child drank juice, only to wake up the next morning bleeding from his rectum and unable to remember what had happened.



### 2 priests charged; one pleads guilty

**'Abuse, deny, cover up'**  
A priest forced a nine-year-old boy to give him oral sex, then rinsed out his mouth with holy water to "purify him." Another priest abused five sisters from the same family, including one from the age of 18 months to 12 years. When the youngest victim of the family told her parents in 1992, a police search of the priest's home found panties, plastic containers of pubic hairs, vials of urine and sexually suggestive photographs of young girls. The church ignored credible allegations against him for years, and the priest died awaiting trial.

Pennsylvania's Attorney General Josh Shapiro said. "The pattern was abuse, deny and cover up," Shapiro said. "As a direct consequence of the systematic cover-up by senior church officials almost every instance of child sexual abuse we found is too old to be prosecuted." So far only two new priests are being charged with crimes that fall within the statute of limitations. One, accused of ejaculating in the mouth of a seven-year-old, pleaded guilty earlier this month, prosecutors said.

### 'Hide it all'

The other allegedly assaulted two boys, one of them for eight years starting from the age of eight. His alleged crimes continued until 2010. The grand jury called for changes in the law that would scrap the statute of limitations for child sex abuse, give victims more time to file civil lawsuits and tighten legislation compelling people to report abuse they find out about. "Despite some institutional reform, individual



**NEW YORK:** In this file photo, Cardinal Donald Wuerl, the Archbishop of Washington, waits outside St Patrick's Catholic Church prior to the 24th annual 'Blue Mass'. Cardinal Donald Wuerl, the former bishop of Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania came under intense scrutiny following a sweeping grand jury report which found credible allegations against more than 300 predator priests and identified over 1,000 victims in decades of child sex abuse. —AFP

leaders of the church have largely escaped public accountability," the report said.

"Priests were raping little boys and girls, and the men of God who were responsible for them not only did nothing; they hid it all. For decades." Church elders were instead promoted and predator priests allowed to remain in ministries for 10, 20 even 40

years after leaders learned of their crimes as the list of victims got longer and longer, Shapiro said. Between 5,700 and 10,000 Catholic priests have been accused of sexual abuse in the United States, but only a few hundred have been tried, convicted, and sentenced for their crimes, according to the watchdog Bishop Accountability. —AFP

### News in brief

#### Death threats to ministers

**STOCKHOLM:** Swedish prosecutors yesterday charged a 42-year-old man with sending death threats and an unidentified white powder to 21 cabinet ministers, including the prime minister. In August last year, the suspect sent an envelope containing the white powder and a letter saying "you will soon be dead" to each minister's home address, including Prime Minister Stefan Lofven, Deputy Prime Minister Isabella Lovin and Defense Minister Peter Hultqvist, prosecutors said in a charge sheet. "These crimes are aggravated because the threats were exacerbated by the powder in each letter which appeared to be poisonous or explosive," prosecutor Eva Wintzell said in a statement. Analysis of the powder concluded it was harmless. The man, who has been held in police custody since May, denies the charges. "These threats against elected officials are particularly serious as they pose a threat to democracy," Wintzell said. —AFP

#### Top Buddhist leader quits

**BEIJING:** The head of China's government-run Buddhist association quit his post yesterday amid an investigation into allegations that he coerced several nuns into having sex with him. Xuecheng, a Communist Party member and abbot of the Beijing Longquan Monastery, is one of the most prominent figures to face accusations in China's growing #MeToo movement. In a 95-page report that circulated online late last month, two monks accused Xuecheng of sending explicit text messages to at least six nuns, threatening or cajoling them to have sex with him, claiming it was a part of their Buddhist studies. The same report also claimed the Beijing Longquan Monastery is in financial trouble. China's top religious authority launched an investigation shortly after the allegations were made public. —AFP

#### Student leader detained

**DHAKA:** Bangladesh police said they had arrested a prominent student leader yesterday, in the latest detention of government critics following protests that brought Dhaka to a standstill earlier this month. Authorities have taken social media activists, journalists and students into custody in the days since the demonstrations were violently dispersed. Lufun Nahar Luma was arrested at her grandfather's home in the north of Bangladesh where she had been "hiding" since the end of the protests, said Sirajganj district police chief Abdur Razzaque. "There is an allegation that she has conspired against the government," Razzaque said. Dhaka and other cities were paralyzed for more than a week as tens of thousands of young students blocked the streets to demand road safety measures, following the death of two teenage pedestrians in a bus accident. —AFP

#### Sri Lanka editor's abduction

**COLOMBO:** Sri Lanka's ex-president Mahinda Rajapakse is to be questioned over the 2008 abduction of a newspaper editor, police said yesterday, as authorities investigate the former leader and his family over allegations of murder and fraud. Investigators believe a group of military officials behind the abduction of the Nation news editor Keith Noyahr was also responsible for the assassination of another newspaper editor fiercely critical of Rajapakse. The Criminal Investigations Department has told Rajapakse he will be questioned at his home in Colombo on Friday, police spokesman Ruwan Gunasekera said. Noyahr's abduction, which prompted widespread criticism, came after he published an article criticizing a top military commander. He was snatched from outside his home near Colombo as he returned from work, and was released - battered and bruised - in the streets of a suburb of Colombo a few hours later. —AFP

## Hard-hit Venezuela churches forced to accept plastic for donations

**CARACAS:** Venezuela's collapsing economy has forced churches and priests to get creative in order to keep their coffers full as four years of recession and a projected one million percent inflation rate hit everyone hard. Citizens are limited in the amount of cash-itself almost worthless-they can withdraw from banks each day and, given the minimum monthly salary worth around \$1.50, it doesn't go very far. "The little cash I have is for the bus ticket," said Gladys Angel, a 58-year-old accountant who also keeps her cash for shopping, where things can cost three times more when paying by card.

Priests have had to adapt and start accepting donations by card payments rather than the traditional passing around of a wicker basket for churchgoers to drop in some coins, or even notes. Before giving his blessings, Father Alirio Suarez reminds the faithful that they can make donations using a "point of sale," as locals call the payment terminal, which has become an essential in church as the crucifix, chalice and ciborium.

"The payment terminal has not saved us, but it's helped alleviate the situation. People are generous with the payment terminal, you can see the difference," Suarez, from the El Paraiso parish in

Caracas, told AFP. On Sundays, when there are seven masses and many more faithful in attendance, Suarez's San Alfonso church can collect four million bolivars in cash-less than one US dollar on the black market. "That won't buy you a kilogram of meat," said Suarez, 53. Card payments however can triple the amount of cash coming in, although the priest has to borrow the payment terminal from a charity.

"If it wasn't for the payment terminal, things would be going very badly," he said, acknowledging that many people simply cannot afford to donate anything. The transaction itself takes place in the sacristy, affording parishioners privacy, and perhaps also easing embarrassment for the church. Venezuela has been crippled by food and medicine shortages and failing public services such as water, electricity and transport. President Nicolas Maduro's government has finally decided to act-but the decision to shave five zeros off the currency, known as redenomination, has been roundly criticized by analysts who say it fails to address the root causes of Venezuela's economic meltdown.

### Receipts replace money

In the meantime, bank notes are so scarce that they change hands for three times their face value on the black market. It's not just bank card payments being accepted by churches, but also bank transfers. At the Precious Blood church in an upmarket Caracas neighborhood, Juan Manuel Leon's congregation drop their bank transfer receipts in



**CARACAS:** A volunteer collects the tithe during a mass at La Coromoto Church, in Caracas. The shortage of cash in the country has forced churches to accept 'plastic money' for the tithe. —AFP

collection baskets to prove their generosity. "Paper money is replaced by transfer receipts. That's how they're solving the problem," Leon, 52, told AFP. It's a form of payment used also for weddings and christenings. Leon says his parishioners have suggested he install a payment terminal "at the entrance, and when we pass it we'll pay and then drop the receipt" in the collection basket. "People get creative in a crisis," added Leon. The problem is that ingenuity can only get you so far.

Banks don't have payment terminals to hand out to clients, and some companies

sell them for \$600 each: that's 300 times the salary of many people. With little in terms of donations coming in, priests have had to make savings wherever possible. No longer do they hand out free leaflets with the Sunday bible readings, and candles are extinguished as soon as mass is over to make them last longer. Leon had to collect flour, scarce in these parts, for the nuns who make communion wafers. Other priests were sent back to Spain due to a lack of medicine. "We ask God to keep us in good health because there aren't any medicines, or when there are they cost a ton," he said. —AFP

## Nebraska conducts first US execution using fentanyl

**CHICAGO:** Nebraska on Tuesday carried out America's first execution using fentanyl - the opioid at the center of the country's deadly overdose crisis - as part of a previously-untested, four-drug combination. Carey Dean Moore, sentenced to death for two 1979 murders, was the first prisoner executed in the Midwestern state in 21 years, in what was its first ever lethal injection. The 60-year-old was pronounced dead at 10:47 am. The execution lasted approximately 20 minutes, according to Scott Frakes, director of the Nebraska Department of Correctional Services. Moore's execution survived a last-minute legal challenge from a drug company and protests about the new lethal injection protocol. It was a pivotal test for Nebraska, where the state legislature abolished the death penalty in 2015, only to see voters reinstate it the next year in a referendum. The state last performed an execution in 1997 by electric chair. "I recognize that today's execution impacts many people on many levels," said Frakes. The execution was carried out with "professionalism, respect for the process and dignity for all involved," he said.

### Questions about drugs used

The lethal injection consisted of the sedative diazepam to bring on unconsciousness, the painkiller fentanyl citrate, the muscle relaxer cisatracurium to stop breathing, and potassium chloride to stop the heart. Only potassium chloride has been used before in executions. Robert Dunham, director of the Death Penalty Information Center, said the new procedure was an indication of the trouble states are having in acquiring death penalty

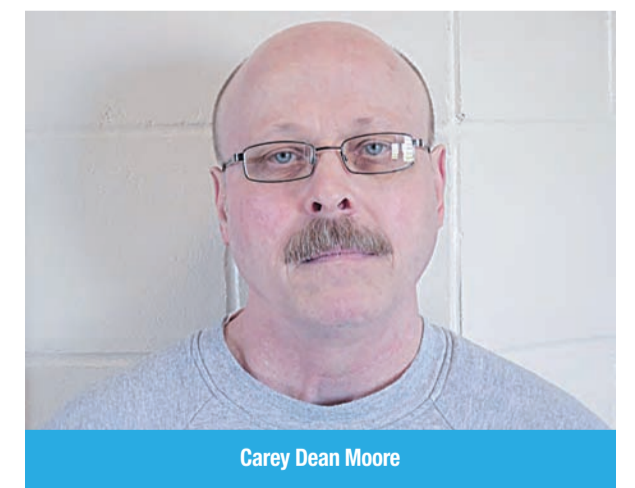
drugs. "It indicates that states are looking for drugs that are available," Dunham told AFP.

Pharmaceutical manufacturers and providers have been increasingly hostile to selling such drugs to states. Officials across the country have had to scramble to find the execution drugs they need or find alternatives. Dunham said Nebraska's use of fentanyl was problematic, because use of the powerful opioid is closely controlled by law, and the state has not disclosed its source for the drug. "The manner in which they obtained it is highly questionable," he said.

### Courts weigh in

Last week, German drug maker Fresenius Kabi challenged Nebraska with regards to two other drugs in the protocol, claiming the company was the likely source of the substances, and if so, Nebraska improperly obtained them. It demanded that the state disclose the source of its drugs. But the state insisted the drugs were legally acquired and both a federal judge and an appellate court sided with Nebraska. Even the pope himself was not able to change Moore's fate. Two weeks ago, Pope Francis changed the Catholic Church's teaching, declaring the death penalty "inadmissible" in all cases. Nebraska Governor Pete Ricketts, a Catholic who supported the reinstatement of the death penalty, was resolute.

"While I respect the pope's perspective, capital punishment remains the will of the people," Ricketts said. A handful of demonstrators gathered during the rainy morning to protest the execution. A small group also gathered in the early evening in the state capital Lincoln to criticize the governor's decision. "Ricketts would kill Jesus," one protester's sign read. The American Civil Liberties union also criticized the governor, saying he had carried out an execution "shrouded in secrecy." "The 38-year-long journey to this execution further proves what we've been saying all along: The ACLU believes the death penalty in America is a broken process from start to finish and should



Carey Dean Moore

be abolished nationwide," the group said in a statement.

### 'I am guilty'

Moore had been on death row for 38 years and did not want further delays of his execution. In 1980, while still in his early 20s, he was sentenced to death for the killings the year prior of two Omaha taxi drivers five days apart. Expressing contrition, he admitted to fatally shooting the first driver during a robbery committed with his brother, and killing the second driver to "foolishly" prove to himself that he could commit murder on his own. In his final words, Moore alluded to a written statement dated August 2, in which he pointed to other Nebraska death row inmates who claim their innocence. "I am guilty, they are not," he wrote. "Why must they remain there one day longer?" Moore also asked forgiveness from his brother. Moore's execution was the 16th in the United States this year, according to the Death Penalty Information Center. —AFP



International

# Modi pledges Indian manned space mission and healthcare

## PM says 'sleeping elephant' India has woken up

**NEW DELHI:** India will send a manned mission to space by 2022 and introduce health insurance for half a billion of its citizens, Prime Minister Narendra Modi pledged yesterday in a keynote speech ahead of an expected election campaign. Modi, speaking from the ramparts of the historic Red Fort in New Delhi, told a crowd of supporters that "sleeping elephant" India had awakened and was ready to take its place in the global economy.

In a marathon speech, the nationalist leader promised India would soon become only the fourth country—after the United States, Russia and China—to get someone beyond Earth's atmosphere. "India will send into space—a man or a woman—by 2022, before that if possible," Modi said adding that the chosen astronaut would be "carrying the national flag." The prime minister also announced a huge health insurance scheme—providing annual cover of about \$7,000 for 500 million Indians—would be rolled out next month.

"It is high time we ensured that the poor of India get access to good quality and affordable healthcare," he said, adding that the scheme would cover the equivalent of the population of the European Union. "It is essential to ensure that we free the poor of India from the clutches of poverty in which

they cannot afford healthcare." The scheme—dubbed 'Modicare'—has been described as the world's biggest government health insurance initiative.

### 'Sleeping elephant'

Modi was speaking in the final Independence Day address of his five-year term, touting his economic credentials ahead



### India ready to take its place in the global economy

of an election he is expected to call early next year. "India is now the land of reform, perform and transform. We are poised for record economic growth," the prime minister said. "Today the world says that the sleeping elephant has woken up, is walking and has joined the race," Modi added. India has seen annual economic growth of around seven

percent since he took over—though the rupee is now under attack in the fallout from the Turkish lira crisis. India's main opposition Congress party dubbed Modi's address "hollow" and said that it had not answered questions about the economy, relations with China and Pakistan, and corruption allegations. "We wish that at least in his last speech, he would have spoken the truth," Congress spokesman Randeep Singh Surjewala told the Press Trust of India news agency.

### Space race

India has invested heavily in its space program in the past decade, stepping up a rivalry with China. It is aiming to send an unmanned mission to the moon in January 2019, the Indian Space Research Organization (ISRO) announced last week. The Chandrayaan-2 orbiter will aim to put a craft with a rover onto the moon's surface to collect data. Chandrayaan-1, launched in 2008, orbited the moon and sent a probe to the surface, in a controlled crash landing. India also launched an orbiter to Mars in 2013 which is still operational and in 2017 launched a record 104 satellites in one blast-off.

New Delhi is competing with other international players for a greater share of the



**NEW DELHI:** Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi gestures while delivering his speech as part of India's 72nd Independence Day celebrations, which marks the 71st anniversary of the end of British colonial rule, at the Red Fort in New Delhi yesterday. — AFP

satellite market, and is known for its low-cost space program. The technologies to realize Modi's space pledge had already been developed in India, said ISRO chairman K Sivan. "We have already developed the technology

like human crew module, environment control and life support system. Before undertaking the launch, we will have two unmanned missions," Sivan told Press Trust of India after Modi's speech. — AFP

## Searching for loved ones in the ashes of Ghazni, Afghanistan

**GHAZNI:** Residents searched coffins for loved ones and scuffed through the ashes of burned buildings as the scale of the devastation in Afghanistan's Ghazni became clear yesterday, six days after a Taliban assault cut off most communication. Fighting appeared to have ceased in the provincial capital, just two hours drive from Kabul, nearly a week after the Taliban first launched their assault late Thursday, in the process destroying telecommunications towers and slowing the flow of information from the city to a trickle.

Many residents have already fled the city, adding to the influx of people displaced by violence that has long strained resources in Kabul. Those left behind have spent days hiding in basements, struggling to keep children and each other calm as the sound of intense ground fighting and US airstrikes boomed overhead. With food and water growing short, they were warily coming out on to the streets to find loved ones lost and livelihoods destroyed.

Outside of Ghazni's central hospital women and soldiers cautiously inspected the bodies filling wooden caskets scattered near the entrance. There, the corpses of what appeared to be Afghan security forces, Taliban fighters and civilians were left during the melee. Attendants wore gas masks while others covered their faces with scarves and shawls as they peeled back the

sheets covering the corpses and examined the faces of the dead, searching for family members. "We request the government to move the dead bodies piled up in the provincial hospital. People are suffering from the smell of the bodies," said one resident. With mobile service partially restored to pockets of Ghazni yesterday for the first time in days, others were frantically calling loved ones, praying for answers. "Since the morning, I have received about a hundred calls from friends, relatives and colleagues asking if I was alive," said resident Abdul. "Today for the first time someone from the hospital called me to say that my cousin was wounded," said another, Zargham, as he ran toward the medical facility after days of agonising over her fate.

### 'Nothing left here'

Information coming from the city remains patchy and difficult to verify. The UN special representative for Afghanistan has said reports indicate that the civilian death toll from the fighting was "immense", with unverified tolls suggesting more than 100 civilians were killed in the clashes. Officials said at least 100 Afghan security forces had also died in the battle, while US authorities added that hundreds of Taliban fighters were killed. "We received around a hundred dead bodies — most of which were security forces and police but also there were some civilians among them," said Abdul Basir Ramaki, the head of Ghazni provincial hospital.

The carnage unleashed also underscored the devastating economic impact of the nearly 17-year-old conflict. During the fighting an entire market was razed by the onslaught. Shops and stalls in the sprawling bazaar were reduced to ash by raging fires that may ultimately destroy the livelihoods of the owners. — AFP

## 37 die as suicide attacker targets school in Kabul

**KABUL:** At least 37 people, the majority of them students, were killed when a suicide blast ripped through a school in a Shiite area of Kabul yesterday, officials said, the latest assault on Afghanistan's war-weary capital. Around a dozen ambulances rushed to the Mawoud education centre in the western part of the city, where students and relatives described pulling bloodied victims from the rubble of a classroom that had been crowded with teenagers preparing to go to university.

"At around 4 pm this afternoon, a suicide attacker who had strapped explosives to his body detonated himself inside the Mawoud

education centre," police spokesman Hashmat Stanikzai said. "In the explosion 37 people were killed, more than 40 injured," he said, adding that the "absolute majority" of them had been students. He warned the toll could rise. Other officials have put it at as high as 48 people killed, with scores more injured. It was not clear how many students were at the centre at the time of the attack.

One witness, another student named Ali Ahmad, said as many as 100 students may have been inside when the bomber struck, but officials have not yet confirmed the figure. "My brother has been injured, possibly killed, because he wasn't breathing when I took his bloodied body out of the bloody, burning classroom," one man, who gave his name as Assadullah, said. He had been nearby when he heard the blast, and ran to the centre, he told AFP. His brother, Nusratullah, was around 17 years old, he said, sobbing over the phone. "He was a smart and energetic boy, top of his class," Assadullah said. "Now... I am not sure he will survive." There was no immedi-

ate claim of responsibility for the attack, which was swiftly condemned by President Ashraf Ghani in a statement. Both the Taliban and the Islamic State group (IS) have carried out devastating, high-profile attacks in Kabul in recent months, but the Taliban quickly denied they were involved.

### Grinding conflict

The assault underscores the price that ordinary Afghans have paid in the grinding conflict as the country reels from a recent upsurge in militant violence, including a massive, days-long Taliban onslaught on the eastern city of Ghazni. Afghan forces appeared to have finally pushed Taliban fighters from the strategic provincial capital yesterday, as shopkeepers and residents warily returned to the streets after days of intense ground fighting and US airstrikes. Security forces were on patrol and no militants were in sight in the centre of the shattered city, with fighting which began late Thursday seeming to have finally ceased. — AFP

## Japan emperor expresses WWII 'remorse' as PM avoids war shrine

**TOKYO:** Japan's Emperor Akihito yesterday expressed "deep remorse" about his nation's wartime acts, as Tokyo marked the 73rd anniversary of the end of World War II. The carefully choreographed annual ceremony is the last Akihito and his wife Empress Michiko will attend before the emperor abdicates in April. "Reflecting on our past and bearing in mind the feelings of deep remorse, I earnestly hope that the ravages of war will never be repeated," the 84-year-old monarch

said in a televised address.

"Together with all of our people, I now pay my heartfelt tribute to all those who lost their lives in the war, both on the battlefields and elsewhere, and pray for world peace and for the continuing development of our country." It was Akihito's father, war-time emperor Hirohito, who announced his decision to surrender in a radio address on August 15, 1945. Japan signed documents officially formalizing the surrender on September 2, 1945. Though he has no political power, Emperor Akihito has hinted throughout his reign at pacifist views, sharply at odds with the aggressive expansionism Japan pursued under his father's rule. He has annoyed Japanese right-wingers by acknowledging that his country inflicted "great suffering" in China, and expressing regret over Japan's brutal rule of the Korean peninsula. Japan's Prime Minister Shinzo Abe also spoke at the ceremony, pledging to remember war dead while building a peaceful future. "Never again will we repeat the devastation

of war. Humbly facing history, we shall stand firm on this pledge," he said, avoiding any specific expression of regret. Abe has been criticized for what some see as a revisionist attitude to Japan's wartime record, though he has softened his rhetoric as he works to improve ties with Beijing. In recent years, he has avoided visiting the controversial Yasukuni shrine that honors Japan's war dead, including convicted war criminals, offering a ritual cash donation instead. Previous visits by Abe and other senior Japanese politicians have angered China and other Asian neighbors.

Yasukuni honors some 2.5 million people, mostly Japanese, who perished in the country's wars since the late 19th century. It also enshrines senior military and political figures convicted of war crimes by an international tribunal after World War II. Abe last visited in December 2013 to mark his first year in power, sparking fury in Beijing and Seoul and earning a diplomatic rebuke from close ally the United States. — AFP

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ADVERTISING : 24835616/7  
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## China student activists cast rare light on labor unrest

When Shen Mengyu graduated with a master's degree from a top Chinese university in 2015, she could have landed a comfortable job in government or at one of China's internet giants. Instead, she went to work at a car parts factory in the southern city of Guangzhou, pursuing her interest in labor activism. In May, she was fired for organizing workers at the plant. Undeterred, she began advocating for workers trying to form an autonomous trade union at Jasic International, a welding machinery exporter in nearby Shenzhen.

Shen is part of a cohort of activists across China who have been supporting and publicizing worker protests and detentions at a time of slowing economic growth. The activists include students and recent graduates, as well as retired factory workers and Communist Party members. While they appear to be small in number, the activists are drawing rare attention to calls for greater union representation from Chinese workers, particularly in the south, where demands for more pay are growing.

This unrest poses a challenge for the ruling Communist Party, which opposes independent labor action and punishes protesters. It also views the activists as a threat to its authority. Shen told Reuters last week she believed the authorities had been intimidating her parents to get her to stop her activism. On Saturday night, after dining with her parents near the Jasic factory, Shen was bundled into a car by three unidentified men, two student activists from Peking University who were at the scene told Reuters.

"Mengyu was shouting 'What are you doing? Let me go, let me go'," one of the activists said. "Everything happened so quickly, we ran to get help and by the time we came back she and the car had disappeared." The students said they reported the abduction to the police, who doubted their account and refused to take down crucial parts of their statement. They were also told that video cameras at the location of the incident were broken.

Calls to Shen and the police went unanswered on Monday. Local police said on their official social media account Monday that they had been in contact with Shen's parents. "This is a matter regarding a family dispute, it is not a kidnapping," it said, without further explanation. Reuters was unable to reach Shen's parents.

### Worker protests

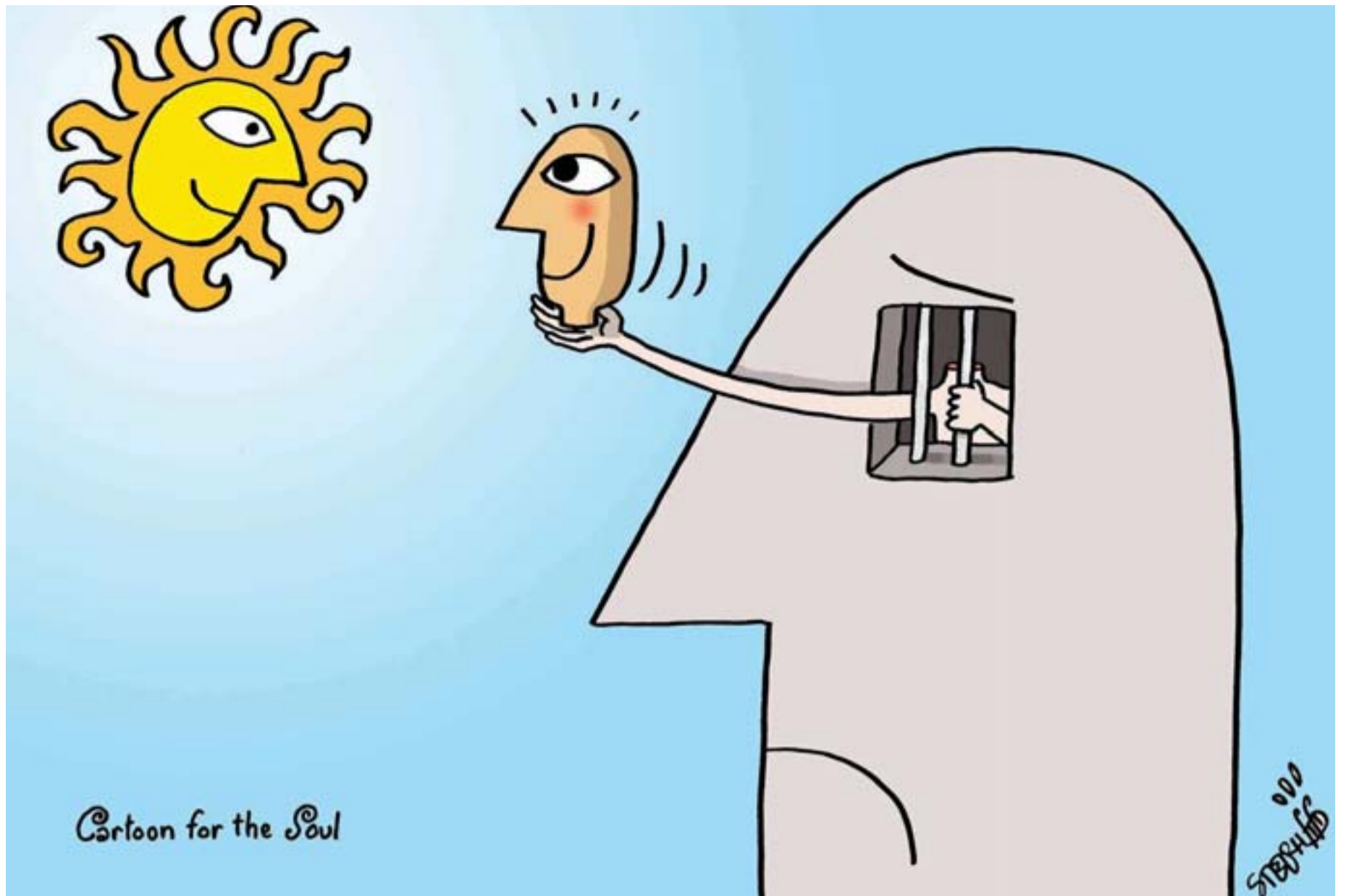
Protests at the Jasic factory broke out in early July after seven workers attempting to form a union and elect their own leaders were laid off. On July 27, after two weeks of protests, the police detained 29 people, including laid-off workers, their families and supporters. Hundreds of Chinese university students penned open letters on social media in support of the workers, and around 20 travelled to Shenzhen, in Guangdong province.

Unions in China have to register with the official All-China Federation of Trade Unions. Rights groups, however, say the federation is often more responsive to the demands of management than workers. On Aug. 6, around fifty student activists and supporters of the Jasic workers protested outside the police station where the workers were detained in Shenzhen.

"Lots of fellow students say: This incident is about workers, what does this have to do with students? I'll tell them one thing: today's students are tomorrow's workers," said Yue Xin, 22, a recent graduate of Peking University, in a video from the protest she shared online. Yue, currently a factory worker in southern China, gained prominence in April for pressing her university to make public an investigation into a decades-old rape and suicide case.

The people who travelled to Shenzhen have been facing pressure from their universities, parents and officials, according to nine activists interviewed by Reuters. "My university advisor has called me repeatedly, accusing me of being involved in illegal activities," said one activist from a Guangdong university. The activist said he had been told "to think very carefully about what I was doing and how it might impact my studies and my future."

Some supporters were intercepted on their way to Shenzhen and sent home, the students said. In interviews, some activists said they were motivated by growing inequality in China, and heard about worker protests in online forums before posts were removed by authorities. They said they were also exposed to labour issues at student-run university clubs and reading groups. "Both my parents are factory workers so I have always had an interest in labour rights," said one of the activists who saw Shen taken away. — Reuters



## PIF may only play minor part in Tesla plan

Elon Musk told investors this week that "obviously, the Saudi sovereign fund has more than enough capital needed" to finance taking Tesla private. The fund is estimated to have over \$250 billion in assets. But it is not that simple. The Public Investment Fund (PIF) has many claims on its resources, both financial and political. More than half of its assets are tied up in large Saudi companies whose stocks could be difficult to sell en masse. The PIF has made substantial commitments to other technology companies or investments, including a \$45 billion agreement to invest in a giant tech fund led by Japan's Softbank.

Then there's \$3.5 billion invested in US ride-sharing firm Uber, the \$1 billion pumped into Virgin Group's space ventures, and another \$20 billion tentatively committed to an infrastructure investment fund planned with Blackstone. There is also pressure to spend money at home, where a slumping economy has driven unemployment among Saudi citizens to record highs. "They could handle part of taking Tesla private, but not necessarily a large part of it and certainly not all of it," a banker at a major Gulf firm operating in Saudi Arabia said.

Musk has not put a formal buyout proposal to Tesla's board, the company said on Tuesday. The Tesla CEO has said he does not believe he would need to raise the full \$72 billion value placed on Tesla by his \$420-a-share

bid because he expects many existing shareholders - including himself with 20 percent of the company - to roll their shares into a private Tesla. The Saudi PIF already holds about a 5 percent stake in Tesla. Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman, who heads the PIF, is driving to diversify the Saudi economy beyond oil exports by developing new industries. Participation in a Tesla deal could bring Saudi Arabia closer to developing a domestic car industry or playing a role in Musk's electric battery manufacturing or space activities.

What Prince Salman, PIF managing director Yasir Al-Rumayyan and other officials of the fund decide will be crucial to Musk's take-private effort. Musk said on Monday that Rumayyan had voiced support for Tesla going private and that talks with the PIF, along with other investors, were continuing. Spokesmen for the fund, as well as Saudi government officials, have so far declined any comment on Musk's statements. But bankers familiar with the secretive PIF said on Tuesday they had seen no sign yet of it preparing to commit to a Tesla deal.

### Many assets, including real estate, are not liquid

#### Illiquid assets

Those bankers added that although the fund is huge, many of its assets are not liquid and readily available cash is limited. The PIF said last October that it had some \$230 billion of assets under management, and

analysts think this figure has now probably swelled to more than \$250 billion, largely as a result of a rise in the Saudi stock market. But stock exchange data shows \$140 billion or more of the PIF's assets are in big Saudi companies such as Saudi Basic Industries (SABIC) and National Commercial Bank. These could not be monetized quickly without driving down prices in the local stock market, while selling many of them would conflict with another of the PIF's declared roles, to help Saudi firms "grow into regional and global leaders".

Meanwhile, in Saudi Arabia's illiquid market, selling real estate to raise money does not look like a near-term option. "The PIF is not nearly as liquid as people might like to think," an international banker who deals with the fund said. However, the PIF may get two infusions of cash in the coming months and is seeking to raise between \$6 billion and \$8 billion in its first commercial loan, sources have told Reuters, adding that there was no mention of any acquisition linked to the debt.

And national oil giant Saudi Aramco said last month it was working on a possible purchase of a strategic stake in SABIC from the PIF. A complete purchase of the PIF's 70 percent holding would give the fund about \$70 billion. Bankers expect the Aramco purchase to take at least several months to negotiate, however, and the PIF has already committed itself to large projects planned to stimulate the Saudi economy. These include a \$500 billion business zone in the northwest of the country, multi-billion dollar real estate developments in Makkah and Madinah, and a huge entertainment area outside Riyadh. "If it spends tens of billions of dollars overseas and the domestic economy is still slumping, it won't look good to some Saudis," the Gulf banker said. — Reuters

## Marked for demolition? Ugandans on pipeline route fear land loss

Ugandan farmer James Mubona, 73, looked pensive as he sat in a blue plastic chair under a mango tree next to three of his four wives, one breast-feeding a five-month-old baby, contemplating the imminent loss of his 22-acre farm to an oil pipeline. The government is set to take about half of the land, which feeds Mubona's 20 children and numerous grandchildren, to build the world's longest electrically heated oil pipeline from northwest Uganda to Tanzania's Tanga port on the Indian Ocean.

"I am worried because I don't know where to go when this land is taken," Mubona told the Thomson Reuters Foundation from Kyakatemba village in Hoima District, a poor region along Uganda's western border with the Democratic Republic of Congo. "When the pipeline takes a bigger portion of your land and you remain with a small portion, what do you do with that small portion?" Uganda discovered crude reserves estimated by government geologists at 6.5 billion barrels in the Albertine rift basin more than 10 years ago.

The east African country aims to refine crude oil domestically and export some via a 1,445-km pipeline through neighboring Tanzania by 2020. An energy ministry official told Mubona that a chunk of his land will be used to run a 30-metre wide pipeline, road and power line from the refinery to the sea. Uganda signed an agreement in April with a consortium, including a subsidiary of General Electric, to build and operate a 60,000-barrel-a-day refinery that will cost up to \$4 billion, the president's office said.

Yusuf Masaba, a spokesman for Uganda's energy ministry, said the entire pipeline route had been mapped out and plans to compensate and resettle people were at an advanced stage. "Once the government valuer is done with valuation, then compensation will be done. I cannot say when they will be compensated," Masaba told the Thomson Reuters Foundation. "We are not going to break people's homes to pass the line. There are no set-

lements in the areas that the pipeline is going to pass," he said, emphasizing that the government is only going to acquire farmland, not houses.

#### Empty

Mubona will not be the first Ugandan to lose land to the oil project, which the government hopes will spur economic growth, pay down the national debt and reduce poverty. More than 7,000 people were evicted from 13 neighboring villages in Hoima District in 2012 for the refinery and a new international airport, which will fly in oil equipment, according to the energy ministry. In Kyakaboga resettlement village, some 50 km west of Mubona's family, about 50 concrete, three-bedroom houses with red iron roofs stood in neat lines. More than a dozen lay empty.

The urban-style houses were built for families that lost their land and homes to the refinery and opted to be compensated with an equivalent amount of land, rather than cash. "I can't live here," said Christop Opio, one of the small minority who chose resettlement over money when the government acquired his land in Kabaale for the airport. "It looks like a camp and there is no privacy. All houses are so close together," he said, gesturing at the two rows of houses, as construction workers in orange and red reflector jackets laid stones to build a

police station in the midday sun. Many families who have been resettled on the 530-acre plot complained that they could not keep livestock at the tightly-packed modern houses, unlike at their old rural homes, and that their new farmland was too far away, he said.

#### Red crosses

The families who chose cash compensation have not fared much better, activists said. Innocent Tumwebaze, chairman of the Oil Refinery Residents Association, which represents evictees, said the 4.5 million shillings (\$1,230) per acre compensation was too little to buy land in the same area. "We were compensated using outdated rates," he said, standing outside his house in Kyakaboga resettlement village.

Masaba said land is valued according to the market price in the area and that people who choose to receive cash compensation agree to the rate before accepting the money. "There is no one who is forced to take compensation they don't agree to. We have a grievance mechanism and they can also go to court," he said by phone. Some men who received the cash, as the customary landowners, deserted their families and disappeared to towns, abandoning their wives and children, who are staying with relatives. "Issues of compensation have broken up many families," Tumwebaze said. — Reuters



Christop Opio points at where his house used to be in Kabaale village before they were evicted for the construction of an airport in Hoima District in Uganda on July 14, 2018. — Reuters

## Business

THURSDAY, AUGUST 16, 2018

**12** US retail sales rise solidly; productivity accelerates**13** Sudanese hit by bread shortages as currency crunch escalates**14** Turkish Airlines reached highest load factor in July with 85.3%

ISTANBUL: Skyscrapers are pictured at the financial and business district Maslak yesterday in Istanbul. World markets fell yesterday with commodities-linked assets hit by dollar strength, while the Turkish lira recovered further. — AFP

# US stocks sink amid renewed worries

## Global markets slip into negative territory again

**NEW YORK:** Wall Street stocks tumbled yesterday as renewed worries about Turkey offset solid US retail sales data. About 30 minutes into trading, the Dow Jones Industrial Average was down 1 percent to 25,019.70. The broad-based S&P 500 fell 1.1 percent to 2,809.07, while the tech-rich Nasdaq Composite Index plummeted 1.4 percent to 7,763.55.

The Turkish lira continued to rally from record lows yesterday, but Ankara hiked tariffs on a spate of US goods in retaliation for American sanctions on Turkey.

US retail sales rose 0.5 percent in July to \$507.5 billion, overshooting analyst forecasts, which had called for a token 0.1 percent increase. Among individual stocks, Macy's slumped 11.2 percent amid disappointment over the department store chain's forecast. The retailer projected overall annual sales ranging from flat to a 0.7 percent increase compared with fiscal 2017. Constellation Brands dropped 8.8 percent after announcing a \$4 billion deal to significantly boost its stake in Canopy Growth, a Canadian cannabis company. US-traded shares of Canopy Growth shot up 28.4 percent. Stock markets falter; ki lira firms

European shares slipped into negative territory yesterday after a doubling by Turkey of tariffs on some US imports soured sentiment and weak commodity prices impacted miners. Bearish Asian markets, a strengthening dollar and a surprise 2 percent fall in Chinese technology giant Tencent Holdings' earnings also weighed. "In a market highly sensitive to downside sentiment, today's Tencent result could prove a

fresh catalyst for continued emerging market pressure," said Douglas Morton from Northern Trust Capital Markets.

At 1330 GMT, the pan-European STOXX 600 was down 1 percent with most major bourses trading lower as Wall Street opened in the red. Auto stocks were among the worst performers, pushing the DAX down to a six-week low after Turkey doubled tariffs on US alcohol, car and tobacco imports. The auto sector was down 1.7 percent, near lows hit when trade war fears gripped markets at the start of July. "The imposition of punitive tariffs on a raft of US imports is hardly indicative of the Turkish authorities being ready to embark on some sensible monetary and fiscal measures to combat the crisis," said Neil Wilson of markets.com. Miners were down 3.3 percent and at an eight-month low as renewed anxiety over trade piled pressure on a sector already dented by falling copper prices.

Corporate earnings triggered some share price moves: Danish wind turbine maker Vestas jumped 3.9 percent after reporting better-than-expected second-quarter operating profits and launching a 200 million-euro (\$227 million) share buy-back. Noting the "sharp margin beat along with stable

pricing," UBS analysts maintained their "buy" rating on the stock. Also in Denmark, audio equipment maker William Demant fell 9 percent after it published a trading update that Bernstein analysts said lifted its guidance "perhaps less than consensus would have hoped for".

In the UK, Admiral rose to the top of the FTSE 100, gaining 3.6 percent, after posting a 9 percent rise in first-half pre-tax profit. Hikma Pharma posted the best performance by mid-sized listed firms, up 7.5 percent, after raising its outlook.

Atlantia, which owns Autostrade per l'Italia, was down 5.4 percent after Italy's transport minister called for senior managers of the company - which operated the bridge that collapsed in Genoa on Tuesday - to resign. Shares in Air France-KLM were up 0.9 percent after reports its board was likely to appoint Air

Canada's chief operating officer, Benjamin Smith, as its new boss. China stocks extended losses yesterday to a third straight day of declines as worries over the country's cooling economy and the yuan's descent to a 15-month low knocked investor confidence. The blue-chip CSI300 index fell 2.4 percent to 3,291.98 points, while the Shanghai Composite Index

closed down 2.1 percent at 2,723.26 points. The declines follow downbeat economic data reported on Tuesday, which comes as a trade war with the United States threatens to pile more pressure on the world's second-largest economy.

To support growth, China has rolled out a \$14 billion urban railway plan and pushed local governments to speed up issuance of special bonds for funding infrastructure projects.

The yuan weakened to a 15-month low yesterday and flirted with a key support level not seen since 2008 as the dollar extended gains and a raft of data pointed to further slowing in China's economy. "While the PBOC has propped up the yuan against the US dollar by raising FX risk reserve requirements, the recent plunge in the currencies of some emerging economies (eg. Argentina and Turkey), triggered by debt and geopolitical risks, have adversely affected sentiment," Gao Ting, Head of China Strategy at UBS Securities, wrote in note.

Sectors retreated across the board, with the CSI300 sub-index tracking consumer firms dropping 2.8 percent and the sub-index tracking healthcare firms plunging 3.8 percent.

Both sectors have come under heavy pressure in recent weeks amid a scandal around domestically made vaccines that has undermined broader consumer confidence, as well as heightened worries about the domestic economy and the trade outlook. Leading liquor maker Jiangsu Yanghe Brewery closed down 4.9 percent at a four-month low, while Tonghua Dongbao Pharmaceutical plunged the maximum allowed 10 percent. — Agencies

## China vows to curb debt despite fresh stimulus for cooling economy

**BEIJING:** China's state planner pledged yesterday to keep debt levels under control even as Beijing rolls out fresh stimulus to support the stumbling economy as a trade war with the US deepens. The comments by the National Development and Reform Commission (NDRC) came a day after China reported surprisingly weak data that showed investment growth has slowed to a record low.

To stabilize business conditions and weather the trade war, Beijing is stepping up infrastructure spending and injecting more funds into the banking system, which is lowering borrowing costs. New loans by China's largely state-backed banks surged 75 percent in July from a year earlier. But some China watchers fear Beijing's shift in priorities may mark a return to its unrestrained, credit-fueled growth, reversing years of work by regulators to reduce risks in the financial system and stem a rapid build-up in debt. NDRC spokesman Cong Liang told a media briefing that new spending on roads, railways, elderly

care and education will not be as heavy as in the past and will aim to meet real demand, reducing the risk of over-capacity.

Authorities are also hoping to attract private investment in such projects to reduce the government's debt burden, he said, noting that regulators are relaxing restrictions on local governments' ability to sell special bonds to fund projects. Several large rail projects have been announced in just the last few days. Yesterday, the NDRC gave Jiangsu Communications Holdings the green-light to sell up to 20 billion yuan (\$2.90 billion) of so-called enterprise bonds, or debt issued by state-owned firms. Of the proceeds, 12 billion yuan will be used to finance high-speed railway and toll road projects. The issuance was the biggest enterprise bond approved by the NDRC since mid-June. In a more tangible sign of pump-priming, builders and engineers started work on a revamp of a train station in southwest Beijing on Monday. The station is said to be the biggest in Asia by size, and the project is budgeted to cost 7.2 billion yuan.

However, analysts such as Capital Economics have cautioned that new projects are unlikely to put a floor under economic growth until the middle of next year.

### Growth target intact

Cong reiterated a pledge made by the ruling Communist Party's Politburo last month that China will still meet this year's economic growth target of around 6.5 percent, despite the trade war. Analysts say that will surely require more spending, but Cong maintained that the government will push ahead with its "structural deleveraging" in a gradual and orderly way.



## China stocks extend rout

Canada's chief operating officer, Benjamin Smith, as its new boss. China stocks extended losses yesterday to a third straight day of declines as worries over the country's cooling economy and the yuan's descent to a 15-month low knocked investor confidence. The blue-chip CSI300 index fell 2.4 percent to 3,291.98 points, while the Shanghai Composite Index

Highlighting the dangers policymakers face in stimulating the slowing economy without fueling asset bubbles, data yesterday showed China's new home prices accelerated at their fastest pace in almost two years in July. Cong said China would "resolutely curb" property price rises.

"We still have sufficient capacity to cope with impact from escalating trade frictions, and ensure the successful completion of the economic and social development goals set at the beginning of the year," Cong said. At the start of this year, China's leaders had made risk and debt reduction their top priority, even if it led to somewhat slower growth. That scenario appeared to be playing out roughly to plan earlier in the year, before the trade war erupted, with growth easing only slightly to 6.7 percent in the second quarter year-on-year.

Some economists are now cutting their second-half and full-year growth estimates for China in the wake of Tuesday's weak readings. While stressing it does not see a hard landing for the world's second-largest economy, ING said in a note it has trimmed its 2018 forecast to 6.6 percent from 6.7 percent.

It sees growth cooling to 6.5 percent and 6.3 percent in the third and fourth quarters, respectively, as tougher US tariffs start to bite. So far, official data shows trade frictions have had limited impact on the economy, and any impact from higher tariffs will be "controllable", the NDRC's Cong said.

Many local governments and state firms are still saddled with debt following China's massive stimulus during the global financial crisis. Despite some progress in its risk crackdown in the last few years, China is still among the economies most at



JIANGSU: A vendor receives money from a customer at a vegetable stall in Nantong in China's eastern Jiangsu province. — AFP

risk of a banking crisis, the Bank for International Settlements (BIS) said earlier this year.

China's overall debt level rose 2.7 percentage points in 2017 to 250.3 percent of gross domestic product, according to the central bank. The corporate debt ratio fell 0.7 percentage points to 159 percent of GDP - the first decline since 2011, but the household debt ratio climbed 4 percentage points to 55.1 percent of GDP. — Reuters

Business

# Kuwait's CA surplus highest in 3 years thanks to stronger oil prices

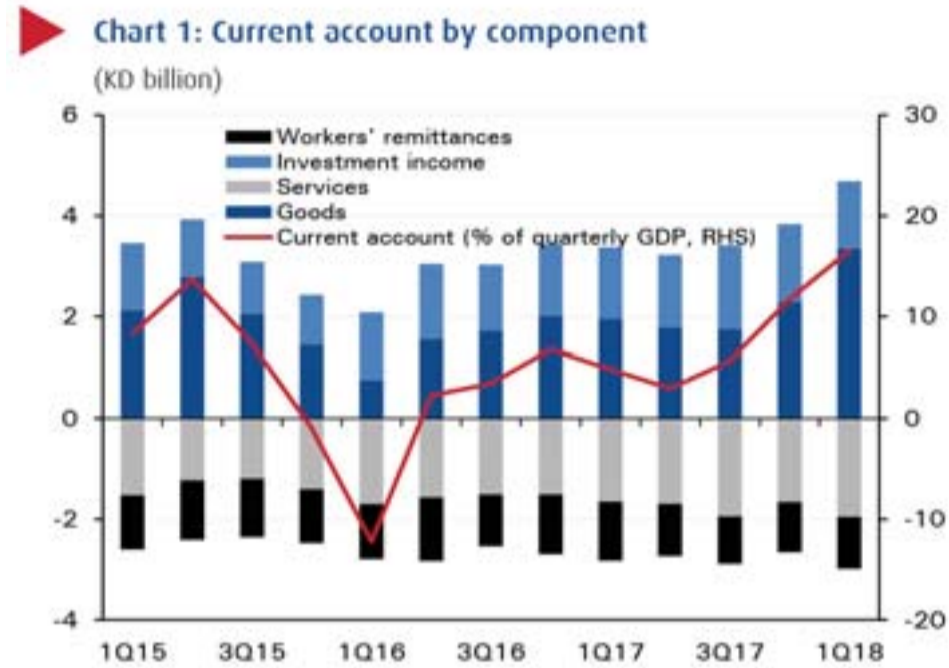
## Trade surplus in 1Q18 rose to KD 3.4 billion

KUWAIT: Kuwait's current account registered its highest surplus in three years in 1Q18 at KD 1.7 billion (17 percent of quarterly GDP), up from KD 1.2 billion in 4Q17. A rise in the trade surplus, supported by higher oil prices, more than offset a widening services deficit, lower investment income, and higher remittances.

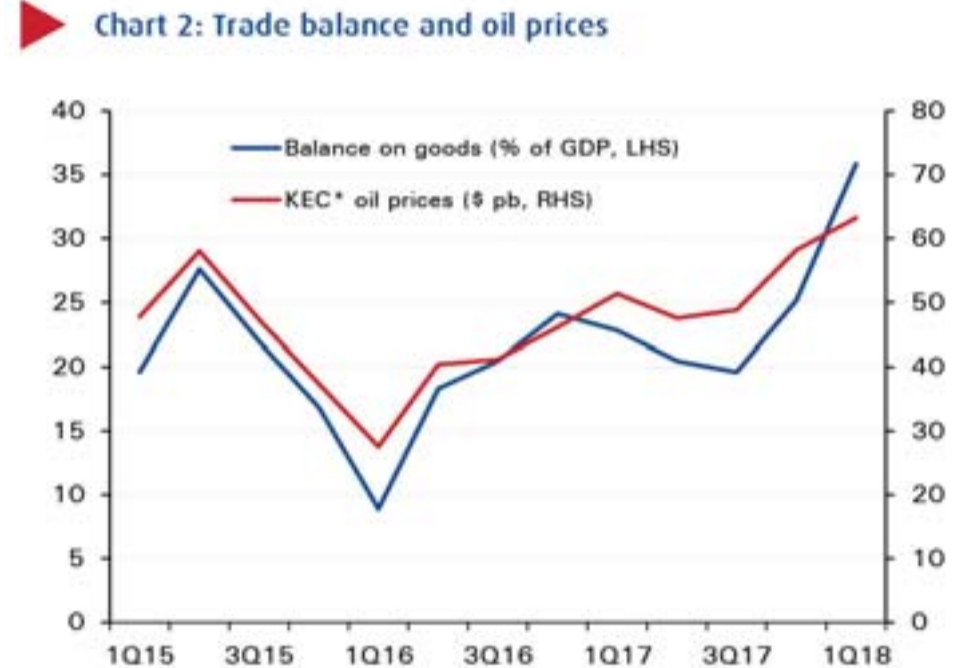
The trade surplus in 1Q18 rose to KD 3.4 billion from KD2.3 billion in 4Q17, lifted primarily by higher oil receipts and non-oil exports, while imports held steady. The price of Kuwait Export Crude averaged \$63 per barrel in 1Q18, a 9 percent q/q increase, helping oil receipts add KD 193 million during the quarter despite the OPEC+ production cap, to reach KD 4.4 billion. Higher petrochemical prices, which move closely with oil prices, and strong demand from Asia also helped support non-oil exports.

Goods imports were little changed on the quarter, with modest growth relative to last year (+4 percent y/y), but still hinting at healthy domestic demand. Implementation of government development projects and the improving business environment kept the import of intermediate goods robust. Meanwhile, stronger consumer spending was reflected in higher vehicle and food imports.

The deficit in the services balance widened to KD 1.9 billion against a backdrop of improving economic prospects. An expansionary fiscal plan, in addition to higher oil prices, helped support domestic



Source: Central Bank of Kuwait



Source: Central Bank of Kuwait, Kuwait Export Crude

confidence. Growth in travel services was also robust, while the ongoing execution of development projects (infrastructure and administrative) fed into higher demand for construction and governmental services. Investment income eased for a second consecutive quarter, weighed down by a wobbly global equity market. 1Q18 witnessed higher financial volatility that neg-

atively impacted the return on foreign financial holdings by domestic investors.

Remittances, on the other hand, increased following two quarters of declines, topping once again KD 1 billion, as the effect of fuel subsidy cuts and various fee increases on income seem to have faded. Growing uncertainty over the outlook of expat employment and living costs,

in light of intensified Kuwaitization efforts and a proposed tax on remittance outflows, which never materialized, may have also contributed to the increase in outflows.

Meanwhile, the financial account deficit eased to KD 1.4 billion in 1Q18, from KD 4 billion in 4Q17. Large net portfolio outflows were slightly offset by a positive FDI balance due to divestments by residents

from controlling interests abroad. Other investment outflows, however, were minimal in 1Q18, after totaling KD 1.7 billion the previous quarter, as a significant repatriation of currency and deposits by the government (KD 1.1 billion) had offset outflows used for foreign asset accumulation and the settlement of foreign debt by local corporates.

## US retail sales rise solidly; productivity accelerates

WASHINGTON: US retail sales rose more than expected in July as households boosted purchases of motor vehicles and clothing, suggesting the economy remained strong early in the third quarter. Other data yesterday showed worker productivity growing at its fastest pace in more than three years in the second quarter, but a drop in labor costs pointed to moderate wage inflation. Strong domestic demand supports expectations the Federal Reserve will raise interest rates in September for the third time this year.

The Commerce Department said retail sales increased 0.5 percent last month. But data for June was revised lower to show sales gaining 0.2 percent instead of the previously reported 0.5 percent rise. Economists polled by Reuters had forecast retail sales nudging up 0.1 percent in July. Retail sales in July increased 6.4 percent from a year ago. Excluding automobiles, gasoline, building materials and food services, retail sales advanced 0.5 percent last month after a downwardly revised 0.1 percent dip in June. These so-called core retail sales correspond most closely with the consumer spending component of gross domestic product.

Core retail sales were previously reported to have been unchanged in June. Consumer spending is being supported by a tightening labor market, which is steadily pushing up wages. Tax cuts and higher savings are also underpinning consumption.

July's increase in core retail sales suggested the economy started the third quarter on solid footing after logging its best performance in nearly four years in the second quarter.



NEW YORK: In this file photo, a shopper looks at sneakers at Stadium Goods in New York. US consumers dipped deeper into their pockets in July 2018, increasing spending for the sixth month in a row and getting the third quarter off to a healthy start, the government reported yesterday. — AFP

Gross domestic product surged at a 4.1 percent annualized rate in the April-June period, almost double the 2.2 percent pace in the first quarter. While the economy is unlikely to repeat the second quarter's robust performance, growth in the July-September period is expected to top a 3.0 percent rate.

The Fed increased borrowing costs in June and forecast two more interest rate hikes by December. Prices of US Treasuries fell and the US dollar added slightly to gains immediately after the release of the data. US stock index futures were trading lower.

### Productivity

Last month, auto sales rose 0.2 percent after edging up 0.1 percent in June. Sales at clothing stores rebounded 1.3 percent after declining 1.6 percent in June. Receipts at service stations increased 0.8 percent. Online and mail-order retail sales increased 0.8 percent, likely boosted by Amazon.com Inc's "Prime Day" promotion. That followed a 0.7 percent rise in June. Americans spent more at restaurants and bars, lifting sales 1.3 percent.

But receipts at furniture stores fell 0.5 percent and sales at building material stores were unchanged last month. Spending at hobby, musical instrument and book stores declined further in July, falling 1.7 percent.

In a separate report yesterday, the Labor Department said nonfarm productivity, which measures hourly output per worker, rose at a 2.9 percent annualized rate in the April-June quarter. That was the strongest rate since the first quarter of 2015.

Data for the first quarter was revised lower to show productivity increasing at a 0.3 percent pace instead of the previously reported 0.4 percent rate. Economists had forecast productivity growing at a 2.3 percent rate in the second quarter. Compared to the second quarter of 2017, productivity increased at a rate of 1.3 percent. The government also revised data going back to 1947, which did not materially change the picture of lackluster productivity growth, though unit labor costs were stronger than previously estimated in 2017 because of upward revisions to hourly compensation. — Reuters

prices of computers games - which are often volatile - and transport fares. The National Institute for Economic and Social Research, a think tank, said its measure of core inflation, stripping out extreme price moves, fell and looked set to bring inflation down to the Bank of England's 2 percent target within a year.

When the BoE raised interest rates this month, it forecast inflation at just above 2 percent in two years' time. But many private economists think inflation will prove to be weaker than the BoE is predicting. Sterling, which has fallen in recent weeks on concerns about the lack of an agreement on Britain's leaving the European Union and the weak outlook for rate hikes, fell slightly after yesterday's data.

The CPI hit a five-year high of 3.1 percent in November, when the inflationary effect of the pound's tumble after the Brexit vote reached its peak. OIL PRESSURE Another measure of inflation, the retail price index, rose by 3.2 percent, its weakest rise since March 2017. For rail travellers, many annual ticket price increases from January will be set by that reading. There is some pressure in the pipeline for consumers. The cost of raw materials for manufacturers was 10.9 percent higher, the biggest annual rise in over a year, reflecting an increase of more than 50 percent in oil prices. Manufacturers raised the prices they charged by 3.1 percent, weaker than June's 3.3 percent but slightly above the forecast in the Reuters poll. — Reuters

## UK inflation rises for first time in 2018, seen falling soon

LONDON: Britain's inflation rate rose in July for the first time in 2018, keeping the squeeze on many households' budgets, but there were signs that the pick-up was a blip and inflation might fall faster than the Bank of England thinks.

Consumer price inflation rose at an annual rate of 2.5 percent in July after holding at 2.4 percent in the previous three months, matching economists' forecasts in a Reuters poll. It was the first time since November that inflation gained pace, slowing the recovery in spending power for consumers. "These figures show that the cost of living squeeze is not yet a thing of the past," said Tej Parikh, an economist at the Institute of Directors, an employers' group.

Average earnings, including bonuses, rose an annual 2.4 percent in the three months to June, the Office for National Statistics said on Tuesday, extending a long run of pay rises below their pre-financial crisis levels. But economists noted the inflation rise was driven largely by one-off factors, such as a rise in

## Significant short-term market impact to no-deal Brexit: UK's Hunt

RIGA: The short-term market impact will be significant if Britain leaves the European Union without a deal, British Foreign Secretary Jeremy Hunt said during a visit to Latvia yesterday. Britain is due to quit the EU in less than eight months, but the government has yet to agree with Brussels the terms of its departure. It has stepped up planning for the possibility of leaving without a formal agreement.

Sterling fell last week, in part on concern about the state of negotiations and the chance of a no-deal Brexit. Asked about the possible market reaction to leaving without a deal, Hunt said at news conference: "Well, of course, there will be significant short-term impact, but I think in these situations the British economy would find a way to get through it and, indeed, we would find a way ultimately to thrive and be successful."

Latvian Minister of Foreign Affairs Edgars Rinkevics, who met with Hunt yesterday to discuss Brexit, told the same news conference he now estimated the possibility of reaching a deal by the March 29 exit day was 50-50. Hunt said he did not want to put a percentage on it.

"Of course, there is this risk of a no-deal. But I think there are a growing number of countries that

recognize that would be a very, very big mistake not just for the United Kingdom, but for the EU as well," he said.

"So rather than speculating on exact percentages, let's work hard to make sure that doesn't happen."

During a visit to Helsinki on Tuesday, Hunt said the risk of a no-deal Brexit has been increasing and everyone needed to prepare for the possibility of a "chaotic no-deal Brexit".

Both London and Brussels say they want to reach agreement at an Oct. 18 EU Council, but diplomats think that target date is too optimistic. EU Brexit negotiator Michel Barnier rejected key elements of British Prime Minister Theresa May's new trade proposals last month.

Economists say failure to agree the terms of leaving would do serious damage to the world's fifth-largest economy as trade with the EU, Britain's largest market, would become subject to tariffs.

Supporters of Brexit say there may be some short-term pain for the economy, but that long-term it will prosper when cut free from the EU. Meanwhile, some lawmakers are pushing for a rerun of the 2016 referendum. — Reuters

## EXCHANGE RATES

BAHRAIN EXCHANGE COMPANY WLL			
CURRENCY	BUY	SELL	
<b>Europe</b>			
British Pound	0.379539	0.393439	
Czech Koruna	0.005386	0.014686	
Danish Krone	0.042163	0.047163	
Euro	0.337145	0.350845	
Georgian Lari	0.114642	0.114642	
Hungarian 0.000976	0.001166		
Norwegian Krone	0.032027	0.037227	
Romanian Leu	0.057052	0.073902	
Russian ruble	0.004557	0.004557	
Slovakia	0.009104	0.019104	
Swedish Krona	0.029147	0.034147	
Swiss Franc	0.298898	0.309898	
<b>Australasia</b>			
Australian Dollar	0.211222	0.223222	
New Zealand Dollar	0.193065	0.202565	
<b>America</b>			
Canadian Dollar	0.227263	0.236263	
US Dollars	0.300400	0.305700	
US Dollars Mint	0.300900	0.305700	
<b>Asia</b>			
Bangladesh Taka	0.003008	0.003809	
Chinese Yuan	0.042850	0.048350	
Hong Kong Dollar	0.036700	0.039450	
Indian Rupee			0.003868
Indonesian Rupiah			0.000017
Japanese Yen			0.002650
Korean Won			0.000258
Malaysian Ringgit			0.070644
Nepalese Rupee			0.002633
Pakistan Rupee			0.001918
Philippine Peso			0.005717
Singapore Dollar			0.215105
Sri Lankan Rupee			0.001567
Taiwan			0.009738
Thai Baht			0.008805
<b>Arab</b>			
Bahraini Dinar			0.792588
Egyptian Pound			0.014390
Iranian Rial			0.000084
Iraqi Dinar			0.000201
Jordanian Dinar			0.425181
Kuwaiti Dinar			1.000000
Lebanese Pound			0.000151
Moroccan Dirhams			0.022523
Omani Riyal			0.784591
Qatar Riyal			0.079349
Saudi Riyal			0.080117
Syrian Pound			0.001291
Tunisian Dinar			0.106262
Turkish Lira			0.044492
UAE Dirhams			0.081479
Yemeni Riyal			0.000990
			0.004638
			0.000023
			0.002830
			0.000273
			0.076644
			0.002973
			0.002688
			0.006017
			0.226105
			0.002147
			0.009181
			0.009355
			0.809088
			0.020108
			0.000086
			0.000261
			0.434181
			1.000000
			0.000251
			0.046523
			0.790271
			0.084289
			0.081413
			0.001511
			0.114282
			0.055992
			0.083179
			0.001070

## Business

# Tijari declares operating profit before provision KD 54.1m for H1 of 2018

## CBK makes a net profit of KD 6m for first six months of 2018

**KUWAIT:** Commercial Bank of Kuwait announced an operating profit before provision KD 54.1 million compared to KD 53.2 million for the 1st half of 2017. The net profit of KD 6.0 million for the first six months of 2018 is higher by KD 4.0 million as compared to last year. The Bank witnessed growth in all the key areas of its business. Net interest income grew by 2.8 percent, fee income by 2.0 percent, dividend income by 14.1 percent and the foreign exchange income grew at robust rate of 157.9 percent.

Sheikh Ahmad Duajj Al-Sabah, the Bank's Chairman, commented that the Bank's strategic objectives to diversify its income sources and mitigation of risks, particularly geographical and sector concentration are being pursued. This strategy bore its fruit and will continue yielding benefits in the future too. The loans portfolio is now well diversified by reduced concentration in higher

risk sectors and the deposit base has also grown.

Sheikh Ahmad added that Bank's total assets are KD 4,262 million, mainly comprising of KD 2,137 million of loan portfolios and KD 489 million of investment securities. The Banks' conservative approach towards growth, maintenance and improvement in the quality of its assets will continue during rest of year 2018 in order to meet the challenges of volatile economic and geopolitical situation in the region, as the main emphasis is on quality not quantity. Sheikh Ahmad further commented that the Bank will continue its balanced strategy and actively continue financing new projects of national importance with public and private partnership by efficient management of risks and associated returns. Sheikh Ahmad further added that the Bank's capital adequacy ratio at the end of June 2018 was at 19.0 percent, the leverage ratio at 11.9 percent, net stable funding ratio at 116.0 and liquidity coverage ratio

at 210 percent, this comfortably exceeds the regulatory requirement set by the Central Bank of Kuwait. The Bank continues to demonstrate its cost leadership with operational efficiency, a competitive advantage for the Bank, which continues to maintain one of the lowest cost/income ratios among Kuwait banks at 30.3 percent for the half year ended 30th June 2018.

He pointed out that we will continue investing in technology and human capital to meet the customers' expectations by providing effective and efficient service at all touch points through digitalization and simplification of processes and ease of contact. Some of the new initiatives taken during current year are introduction of largest prize money in the histo-



Sheikh Ahmad Duajj Al-Sabah

ry of banks in Kuwait to Najma account holders, and customers can now complete several tasks online through the mobile application, without having to visit a branch, such as: update civil ID information, enable their cards (debit/credit) before travelling, NFC on debit card payments (tapping card) and create and activate beneficiaries. Moreover, customer can have easy access to their accounts by using face ID feature on their iPhone.

Sheikh Ahmad took the opportunity to thank the Bank's shareholders, valued customers, staff and regulatory authorities, emphasizing that the Bank's Management continues to implement all the required policies to protect the interest of all stakeholders.

## Sudanese hit by bread shortages as currency crunch escalates

**KHARTOUM:** Bread shortages have hit Sudan, with wheat traders blaming a foreign currency crisis for shortages of the staple that have left people queuing for hours outside bakeries. Sudan's economy has been struggling since the south seceded in 2011, taking with it three-quarters of its oil output and depriving it of a crucial source of foreign currency. The crisis has deepened over the past year as a black market for US dollars has effectively replaced the formal banking system after the Sudanese pound was devalued, making it more difficult to import essential supplies such as wheat. A doubling of the price of bread in January triggered demonstrations after the government eliminated subsidies, although so far there was no sign of protests this time.

At Banet neighborhood in the town of Omdurman, in Khartoum, dozens of people stood in a long line outside the Modern Bakery. "This is unbearable," said 53-year-old Abdullah Mahmoud, a day laborer, who said he had been queuing for two hours for bread. "I had been here since the morning and I still don't have any bread."

Fatima Yassin, 36, in a queue for women, said: "Everything is expensive and bread is not available. We have a difficult life and the government doesn't care about us." Similar queues were seen in other cities near the capital. Sudan imported 2 million tons of wheat in 2017, the government said in December, compared with 445,000 tons produced locally. One Khartoum bakery owner, Ahmed Saleh, said he had had no flour since Monday.

"We stopped working since yesterday because we did not get our share of flour," he told Reuters.



**KHARTOUM:** A Sudanese man hands a bag of bread to a customer at a bakery in the capital Khartoum. Khartoum and other parts of Sudan have been hit by shortages of the basic staple, with people lining up for hours outside bakeries.

### Black market

Any flare-up over shortages could prove tricky for the government. In January, authorities arrested a prominent opposition leader and confiscated newspapers to try to stop unrest from spreading. Only last week, Sudan's ruling party announced that it would back any new bid by President Omar Al-Bashir, to run again in the 2020 election, a move that would require a constitutional amendment.

Government officials were not immediately available to comment on the crisis. But the Khartoum state governor, Abdel-Rahim Mohammed Hussein, said in remarks carried by state news agency SUNA on Monday that the state would receive its share of wheat supplies in the "next couple of days", without elaborating.

Private sector wheat traders, who were given responsi-

bility for imports by the government at the start of this year, blamed the flour shortages on the foreign currency shortages. One trader said that businessmen were increasingly being forced to buy foreign currency at a higher rate on the black market to finance imports. "At the same time, the government sets the sale price for flour at an unreal dollar rate," one trader told Reuters. "We cannot sell flour at a loss," he added.

The price of the Sudanese pound had been declining since the beginning of the year after the government devalued the currency to 18 per US dollar, more than double its peg of 6.7 pounds to the dollar. The pound, which has since been devalued further and is now officially set at 29 pounds to the dollar, was trading at 40 pounds to the dollar on the black market on Tuesday. — Reuters

## PwC failed to flag BHS risks ahead of retailer's collapse, says regulator

**LONDON:** PwC should have flagged significant doubts over the future of BHS in an audit that was completed just days before the now collapsed British retailer was sold for a token one pound in 2015, a regulator said yesterday.

BHS, which was sold in 2015 by billionaire retailer Philip Green's Taveta Group, had 163 stores and 11,000 staff when it collapsed a year later, triggering a political firestorm. The Financial Reporting Council (FRC) watchdog in June fined PwC a record 6.5 million pounds (\$8.3 million) and former partner Stephen Denison 325,000 pounds. Denison was also effectively banned from auditing for 15 years. After pressure from lawmakers and a court challenge by Taveta, the FRC published documents yesterday detailing eight allegations of misconduct that prompted the penalties. The FRC said that in the Taveta audit for the year ending Aug. 30, 2014, PwC and Denison gave no consideration to potential red flags that could have impacted BHS' ability to continue trading.

"They failed to gather any audit evidence on which to conclude that the going concern assumption was appropriate," it said. "Based on the audit evidence obtained, they should have concluded that a material uncertainty existed about BHS Group and BHS's ability to continue as going concerns." PwC said yesterday it was sorry its work fell well below the professional standards expected. "This is unacceptable and we agreed the settlement recognizing that it is important to learn the necessary lessons," it said in a statement. PwC is one of the world's top four auditors, along with KPMG, Deloitte and EY, which check the books of most blue-chip companies across the globe.

They are coming under intense scrutiny in Britain over how they failed to spot company collapses and for juggling audits and more lucrative non-audit work for the same clients. Lawmakers have called the FRC "toothless"



over its handling of the BHS audit and the watchdog's powers are being independently reviewed. The documents are likely to spark fresh calls for the audit and non-audit operations of the big four audit firms to be split up. The FRC said in the year to Aug. 30, 2014, the value of PwC's non-audit fees from Taveta was more than eight times the value of its audit fees. Denison only recorded only two hours' work on the audit of Taveta Group, which including BHS, despite being the lead partner. He left the bulk of the work to juniors, one of whom had just a year's post-qualification experience, the FRC said. But he recorded 31 hours on non-audit services.

### Liabilities

BHS had significant net liabilities, had had to make provision for loss-making stores and had very significant deficits in its defined-benefit pension schemes, the FRC

## Canadian tipped as new CEO for Air France-KLM

**PARIS:** Air France-KLM may name its new chief executive during a board meeting today, French newspaper Liberation reported, tipping Air Canada's chief operating officer Benjamin Smith as the winning candidate. The Franco-Dutch airline has been searching for a new boss since Jean-Marc Janaillac resigned in May, having gambled his job on getting Air France staff to accept a new pay deal after months of strikes.

The nomination of a Canadian to lead Air France-KLM would be unprecedented since the two operators



Benjamin Smith

merged in 2004 to create what was then Europe's biggest airline.

The group has previously favored French CEOs. Air France-KLM told AFP yesterday that the nomination process was ongoing and "nothing has been decided for the moment". Smith notably led labor negotiations with pilots' and flight attendants' unions ahead of the launch of low-cost operator Air Canada Rouge, signing ten-year agreements with both of them. Such experience might come in useful at Air France-KLM, which has suffered months of disruptive and costly strikes by French staff demanding better salaries.

Janaillac had offered a seven-percent pay rise over four years, saying he would quit if it was rejected—only for 55 percent of staff to vote down the offer. Smith led the expansion of Air Canada to more than 200 destinations on six continents as well as the launch of its budget sister airline, according to its website. He entered the airline business in 1990 with Air Ontario, later opening his own travel agency. His potential nomination has already raised complaints from Philippe Evain, head of French pilots' union SNPL, who said appointing him would mean "giving the keys of Air France to the Americans". Air France shares have plunged more than 35 percent since the start of the year, although they have stabilized since Janaillac's departure. The group this month estimated the cost of the 15 days of French strikes between February and June at 335 million euros (\$391 million). It reported net profits of 109 million euros for the second quarter—down sharply from 593 million for the same period last year, although that figure was boosted by new accounting rules. — AFP

## Atlantia, Italy's motorway operator under scrutiny

**PARIS:** Italian group Atlantia, whose operation of half of Italy's motorways is under risk following the collapse of a bridge in Genoa killing at least 39 people, is a major operator of toll roads and airports which is expanding rapidly internationally to become one of the world's leading operators of infrastructure.

Its prime asset is Autostrade per l'Italia, which according to information published by Atlantia manages 2,855 km of Italian toll highways directly and another 165 km through five subsidiaries with separate concessions, including the A10 highway where a segment of an overpass collapsed on Tuesday.

Deputy prime minister Luigi Di Maio yesterday charged that the tragedy "could have been avoided" and that it was clear that Autostrade per l'Italia was at fault for not carrying out maintenance.

The Italian government said it intended to fine the firm 150 million euros and cancel its concession. It was unclear if the entire concession or just management of the A10 motorway was at stake.

Atlantia said on its website that it has spent 11.4 billion euros to improve 923 km of Italian motorways, and was waiting for approval from authorities to build a bypass around Genoa.

Atlantia's history is intertwined with Autostrade per l'Italia, which was privatized in 1999 and acquired by investors including the Benetton group. In 2003 the motorway and other infrastructure assets were separated and the holding company, which eventually took the name Atlantia, was listed on the Milan stock exchange. Atlantia owns 88 percent of Autostrade per l'Italia, which accounted for just under two-thirds of its 5.97 billion euros in revenue last year. Atlantia earned a net profit of nearly 1.2 billion euros for the year.

Overall it operates more than 5,000 km of motorways in Brazil, Chile, India and Poland.

It also operates the Mount Blanc tunnel and recently became the top shareholder in Getlink, which operates Channel Tunnel, buying a 15.5 percent stake that controls over a quarter of voting rights for nearly 1.1 billion euros. Atlantia stands to soon gain more motorways. It recently teamed up with the German-Spanish group Hochtief-ACS to buy for 18.2 billion euros the Spanish firm Abertis, which calls itself the world's top motorway operator with 8,600 kilometers of toll roads in 15 countries. Atlantia will own 50 percent plus one share of the joint venture that will own Abertis.

The Italian group entered the airport management business in 2013 with contracts for Rome's two airports, Fiumicino and Ciampino. In 2016, Atlantia together with French electricity firm EDF bought 60 percent stakes held by the French state in the airports in the Nice, Cannes and Saint-Tropez airports. — AFP

## FOR RENT

In a Luxurious and Privileged Compound at Abou Halifa Region Facing the National Park and the Sea



### 3 Bedrooms Apartments:

3 Bedrooms + 3 Bathrooms (2 Master) + Big Salon

### Duplex Villas:

3 Bedrooms + 3 Bathrooms + Big Salon + Pool

### Triplex Villas:

4 Bedrooms + 4 Bathrooms (2 Master)

+ Big Salon + Pool

All Master Bathrooms is Marble

- Volleyball Court

- Basketball Court

- Hotel Lobby

- Pools + Jacuzzi

- Billiard

- 213 Car Parking Areas



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## Business

# Burgan Bank's operations in Turkey fully hedged against lira fluctuations

## Eguren: We are not anticipating any major impact

**KUWAIT:** Burgan Bank Group commented yesterday, in light of the current situation in Turkey, that Burgan Bank A.S. - Turkey has not had any major impact on its profitability in its operations as a result. It stated that its strategic decision to fully hedge its investment in the Turkish subsidiary's capital has protected it from currency fluctuations in the Turkish Lira. Burgan Bank A.S. - Turkey is currently running in business as usual mode with no interruptions.

Eduardo Eguren, Group Chief Executive Officer commented: "at present, we are not anticipating any major impact. We are prudent in our risk model and have enjoyed lower than market averages of non-performing loan ratios in Turkey being very selective in the credit front and minimizing our exposure to customers with high leverage or aggressive speculative positions." "We have healthy margins and our liquidity is at

sound levels and with no material FX positions in Turkey, the Bank is set to navigate well through the turbulences. Our business model is solid and well prepared to handle volatility if it persists. We are in Turkey for the long run," added Eguren.

**"We are in Turkey for the long run"**

The pre-emptive approach of hedging Burgan Bank Group's investment in the capital of Burgan Bank A.S. - Turkey was taken in 2015 with the aim of minimizing geo-political and economic turbulence: a move which has enabled the Bank to confront volatility unharmed over the last few years. At this point,

Burgan Bank A.S. - Turkey is well-poised to face volatility, to support customers, and to remain competitive in the long run.

Established in 1977, Burgan Bank is the youngest commercial Bank and second largest by assets in Kuwait, with a significant focus on the corporate and

financial institutions sectors, as well as having a growing retail, and private bank customer base. Burgan Bank has majority owned subsidiaries in the MENAT region supported by one of the largest regional branch networks.

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.



Eduardo Eguren



## Gulf Bank extends best wishes for Eid Al-Adha

**KUWAIT:** On the blessed occasion of Eid Al-Adha, and as per the approved guidelines set by the Kuwait Banking Association (KBA), all Gulf Bank branches and its head office will be closed Monday, 20 August to Thursday, 23 August 2018, and will resume working on Sunday, 26 August 2018.

On Sunday, 19 August 2018 specific branches will be operating to service our customers, those include the Gulf Bank Head Office, Fahaheel 1 branch, Jahra 1 branch, Salmiya Co-op branch, Farwaniya 1 branch as well as Hawally branch.

Ahmed Al-Ameer, Assistant General Manager for External Communications at Gulf Bank said "During Eid Al-Adha break, Gulf Bank's customers will continue to be served round-the-clock through its dedicated Customer Contact Center, which is reachable by dialing 1805805. Moreover, Gulf Bank's Interactive Teller Machines (ITMs) will be available during the Eid holidays from 10am till 3:30pm in Jabriya, Adan, Fahaheel (Al-Ghanim Electronics), and Al-Salam (South Surra). Clients can also place any query using the WhatsApp service on 65805805 or access the Bank's online portal, (www.e-gulfbank.com) to find out more about the latest products and services; or download the Mobile Banking App's (App store/Android) to monitor accounts and conduct self-service banking transactions, or view its social media channels".

Gulf Bank extends its warmest congratulations and best wishes to the Amir of the State of Kuwait, His Highness Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah; His Highness the Crown Prince, Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah; and His Highness the Prime Minister, Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-Hamad Al-Sabah and to the people of Kuwait on the occasion of Eid Al-Adha.



Ahmed Al-Ameer

## Panasonic's new water dispensers to add luxury to modern Mideast kitchens

**KUWAIT:** Panasonic to reinvent the contemporary Middle Eastern kitchens with the introduction of new water dispensers that combine cutting edge innovation with stylishly elegant look. Designed in statement-making black and metal finish, Panasonic's water dispensers break the monotony of the plain white plastic design of common water dispensers - a perfect way to achieve that touch of chic luxury without compromising on reliability and functionality.

The range includes two top loading water dispensers, SDM-WD3238TG and SDM-WD3128TG, and the bottom loading SDM-WD3438BG model. Ideal for both homes and offices, these appliances have been engineered with Panasonic's advanced technologies to

deliver maximum reliability, optimum usability and top-notch level of safety. Among the key features are:

- Hot, cold and normal water options - icy-cold, piping hot or room temperature water at your fingertips from a single fast-flowing spout
- LED light indicators - for safe and easy water dispensing in low-light conditions
- Stainless steel hot and cold-water reservoir - ideal for eliminating the 'plastic' water taste common with some water dispensers
- Child safety lock for hot and cold-water tank - to prevent accidents from unsupervised access by the little ones
- Double safety device - to prevent overheating
- Anti-finger proof stainless steel cabinet doors - for a clean, polished look always

Keisuke Nakagawa - Director of Consumer Marketing Division, Panasonic, said, "Building on Panasonic's extensive and innovative history in home appliances, our water dispensers are specially-designed to meet the needs of our Middle Eastern customers who appreciate unique features that make a genuine difference. These appliances - while adhering to top Japanese quality standards - were also built with an upscale modern style, in line with our efforts of creating luxury home concepts accessible to almost every-



one. We are confident to say that our water dispensers are great additions to Panasonic's popular range of premium home appliances that boast industry-leading technology."

All Panasonic water dispenser models are now available at all Best Al-Yousifi Electronics showrooms and authorized distributors.

## Turkish Airlines reached highest load factor in July with 85.3%

**KUWAIT:** Turkish Airlines, who has recently announced the results of passenger and cargo traffic in July, achieved the highest July load factor (LF) in its history with 85.3 percent. Despite the high base of July 2017, growth in the number of passengers, revenue per kilometer and load factor, has been an important indicator of the continued increase in global interest to Turkey and Turkish Airlines.

### According to July 2018 Traffic Results;

- The passenger growth trend continued in July, thus total number of passengers carried went up by 4 percent reaching 7.8 million passengers, and Load Factor went up to 85 percent.

- In July 2018, Total Load Factor improved by 1.5 points, with an increase of 2 percent in capacity (Available Seat Kilometer), while international LF increased by 1.7 points to 84.9 percent, domestic Load Factor stood at 88 percent.

- Excluding international-to-international transfer passengers (transit passengers), number of international passengers went up by 7 percent.

- In July, cargo/mail volume continued the double digit growth trend and increased by 20 percent, compared to the same period of 2017. Main contributors to the growth in cargo/mail volume, are Middle East with 33 percent increase, Europe with 26 percent increase, Africa with 26 percent increase, N. America with 32 percent increase and Far East with 16 percent increase.

- In July, Africa, N. America and Far East showed load factor growth of 5.5 points, 3.5

## Drive safe and save with Nissan special aftersales offer this season

**KUWAIT:** In line with the brand's strategy to offer optimal convenience and seamless driving experiences, Abdulmohsen Abdulaziz Al-Babtain Company (AABC), the sole authorized dealer of Nissan vehicles in the State of Kuwait, announces its latest aftersales offers applicable on all Nissan vehicles. Exceeding customer expectations and needs, the new offer is part of an ongoing effort to facilitate the requirements of all of its owners.

To keep up with the "Back to School" season, owners of Nissan models will now be entitled to a 30 percent discount on car parts, 15 percent off on service labor with 13 points free checkup. Nissan Al-Babtain provides the perfect opportunity for customers to service their car before the fall season.



points and 4 points, respectively.

### According to January-July 2018 Traffic Results;

- During January-July, increase in demand and total number of passengers was 13 percent and 15 percent, respectively, over the same period of last year. Total number of passengers reached to 43 million.

- During January-July, total Load Factor improved by 4 points up to 81 percent. While international Load Factor increased by approximately 4 points up to 81 percent, domestic load factor went up by 2 points to 85 percent, thus recording the highest load factor in Turkish Airlines history for the period of January-July.

- Excluding international-to-international transfer passengers (transit passengers), number of international passengers went up significantly by 18 percent.

- Cargo/mail carried during the first seven months of 2018 increased by 26 percent and reached 779 thousand tons.



Nissan Service centers are equipped with the latest tools and devices and is managed by skilled, and trained service advisors. Nissan Al-Babtain in an effort to accommodate its loyal customers, the popular brand presently owns 9 Nissan service centers and 14 Parts Outlets located in strategic locations around Kuwait.

## Pay for Britain's top bosses rises 23%

**LONDON:** Pay packages for the bosses of Britain's 100 biggest listed firms rose 23 percent over the past year, fuelled by payouts for the CEOs of house builder Persimmon and industrial firm Melrose Industries, a survey showed yesterday.

Excessive corporate pay has attracted public anger since the financial crisis and Prime Minister Theresa May has denounced the gap between the amounts paid to bosses and average workers as irrational and unhealthy. The survey by the Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (CIPD) and the High Pay Centre think-tank showed the average income for chief executives of companies in the FTSE 100 share index was 5.7 million pounds (\$7.25 million) in their financial year ending in 2017, up 23 percent from the previous year.

The increase far exceeds the 2.5 percent increase in average (mean) salaries for British workers to 29,009 pounds, according to the Office for National Statistics.

A similar study a year ago showed bosses' average pay had dropped by 17 percent over the previous year. CIPD said the strong performance of the stock market in the years to 2017 was probably a factor in this year's increase but that this should prompt questions about the contribution of individual bosses to share performance as opposed to other factors such as economic context or the wider workforce. —Reuters

## Sterling suffers longest losing streak since 2008

**LONDON:** Sterling fell yesterday for the twelfth consecutive day as the U.S. dollar strengthened, leaving the pound at its weakest since June 2017 and facing its longest losing streak since the depths of the financial crisis in 2008. Sterling has weakened sharply in August as traders grow increasingly worried that the UK will crash out of the European Union next year without a trade deal, and as the dollar has surged.

Yesterday, the pound slipped further to a new 13-month low of \$1.2689 while the dollar extended its recent rally, and after UK price rises for the month of July came in as expected. A twelfth session of losses would match its record in August 2008.

Against the euro, after initially strengthening, the pound gave up most of its gains and was up 0.1 percent to 89.180 pence per euro. "It's not just a question of Brexit, it's also a recognition that the UK economy has not been particularly strong," Aviva Investors head of multi-asset funds Sunil Krishnan said.

"So, recognizing there will be a great deal of volatility in sterling in both directions as we have news and rumor around Brexit you can see a weakening trend for sterling...we are generally underexposed to sterling and position for sterling to weaken a bit more from here," he said.

Consumer price inflation nudged up to 2.5 percent year-on-year in July from 2.4 percent the previous month, in line with a Reuters poll of analysts, data showed yesterday.

The rise is the first time inflation has picked up in 2018 and leaves many British households still feeling squeezed - workers' wages have failed to keep up with inflation for much of the past decade.

Data this week showed British workers' wages rising at their slowest rate for nine months, up 2.4 percent annually, although there was a surprise fall in the unemployment rate.

"What is likely to be more concerning domestically is that inflation is once again outpacing wage growth, which will lead to the question over whether the Bank of England (BoE) might be tempted to lean towards another increase in UK interest rates," FXTM market analyst Jameel Ahmad said.

The pound was largely unmoved by the inflation data, with the performance of the dollar a bigger factor for the currency yesterday. UK retail sales data is due today. —Reuters

## Technology &amp; Science

## Zain offers the new Samsung Galaxy Note9 for pre-order

## An exclusive offer for Samsung's latest revolutionary device

**KUWAIT:** Zain, the leading telecommunications company in Kuwait, announced the offering of the all-new Galaxy Note9 for pre-order. The company offers Samsung's latest flagship device with an exclusive offer when pre-ordered from Zain's Online Store. Zain offers the new generation of Samsung's flagship device knowing the passion its customer base - the biggest in Kuwait - has for the latest and most advanced products in the world of technology. The all-new Galaxy Note9 introduces many unique features that makes it one of the most revolutionary smart devices available in the market.

Zain customers can now register through the company's online store to enjoy the exclusive limited time offer when pre-ordering the all-new Galaxy Note9, which includes complementary JBL headphones and Bluetooth speakers (worth KD 134.80). The offer is available until 24 August on Zain's Online Store via the link [zain.to/note9](http://zain.to/note9).

The all-new Galaxy Note9 includes a number of unique and revolutionary features, including super internal storage of up to 512GBs, high-performing 10nm AP (application processor), up to 8 GBs of RAM, an all-new Bluetooth enabled S Pen now with intelligence for ultimate control, dual Aperture that adapts like the human eye for stunning shots during day or night, as well as a 4000mAh battery that lasts through the day on one single charge.

This offering comes in line with Zain's aim to provide its customers with a superior telecommunications experience, and springs from its core understanding of their needs. The company aims at providing its customers with an unmatched experience on Zain's most advanced network. Zain emphasized its commitment to the needs of the largest customer base in Kuwait, and will continuously look into expanding its horizons to introduce the latest and most advanced solutions in the market to meet its customers' unique needs and aspirations.

## Be the first to own Galaxy Note9

For every pre-order, enjoy complimentary JBL headphones and BT speakers worth KWD 134.80 this Eid.\*



## Germany paves way for 'third gender' option

**BERLIN:** The German government yesterday approved a draft law allowing a third gender option on birth certificates for babies who are not distinctly male or female. In a move described by the justice minister as "long overdue", Chancellor Angela Merkel's left-right coalition passed a bill permitting children born intersex to be registered as "various".

The measure follows a ruling by Germany's top tribunal last November that current regulations on civil status are discriminatory against intersex people, noting that the sexual identity of an individual is protected as a basic right. Germany has since 2013 allowed babies born with characteristics of both sexes to leave the gender options of male and female blank.

The Federal Constitutional Court gave parliament until the end of 2018 to amend the current legislation. The decision was in favor of an appeal brought by an intersex adult and said that courts and state authorities should no longer compel intersex people to choose between identifying as male or female. Intersex is a broad term encompassing people who have sex traits, such as genitals or chromosomes, that do not entirely fit with a typical binary notion of male and female. Justice Minister Katarina Barley, whose office drafted the bill, said the legislation marked a big step forward by requiring a new gender option from birth.

"No one should be discriminated against on the basis of their sexual identity," she said, adding that the new category would give intersex people a greater sense of "dignity and positive identity". According to the United Nations, between 0.05 and 1.7 percent of the global population is intersex-about the same percentage that have red hair.

Sometimes this is apparent at birth, at other times it becomes noticeable in puberty. Family Affairs Minister Franziska Giffey said the next step in Germany would be updating the legal standing of transsexual people, including barring any required medical examinations to determine a person's biological sex. Portugal last month joined Denmark, Ireland, Malta, Norway and Sweden to become the sixth European country to grant the right to self-determination of transgender identity. The law also prohibited surgical procedures on intersex babies so they can themselves choose their gender later in life. —AFP

## 'Monster Hunter' held as China hits pause on new video games

**SHANGHAI:** China appears to have halted approvals of new online game licenses, with reports yesterday that a government shake-up was causing paralysis in the world's biggest gaming market. The hold-up has battered shares of market leaders like Tencent, which have plunged since the company said it had been ordered to remove hit game "Monster Hunter: World" from sale, only days after its debut.

Bloomberg News reported Wednesday that China had stopped approving any new mobile games as part of a wider shake-up of the market. Checks of the National Radio and Television Administration's online list of approved games showed that no new titles had been added since May. The list is normally updated regularly.

Quoting unnamed sources, Bloomberg said approvals for online, console and mobile games have been stalled for months by regulatory person-

nel changes linked to President Xi Jinping's ongoing consolidation of power, leaving developers stranded. China's Economic Daily in June had quoted the Ministry of Culture and Tourism, the other state body involved in approvals, as saying the agencies were undergoing "organizational adjustments."

Regulators have also balked at approving games featuring violence and gambling, Bloomberg quoted a source saying, as Xi pushes a "purification" campaign in media and entertainment. Hong Kong-listed shares in Tencent, which derives much of its income from games, dropped more than three percent on Wednesday and are down around 10 percent since last week's announcement.

A Tencent spokeswoman did not immediately respond to a request for comment. Other Chinese game developers also lost ground on Wednesday after reports of the approval freeze emerged. Perfect World ended 0.11 percent lower and 37 Interactive was down 0.86 percent, after both fell more than one percent earlier in the session. Alpha Group shed 2.27 percent. "For new game approvals, there will continue to be a drag," Alicia Yap, a Citigroup internet research analyst told Bloomberg. "If they previously didn't get an approval, it seems that there will



A screen grab from 'Monster Hunter: World'

continue to be a hold on that."

China is the world's largest gaming market, with an estimated \$37.9 billion in revenue, according to research by Newzoo. Xi dramatically strengthened his grip at a Communist Party leadership congress late last year, becoming the most powerful Chinese leader since Mao Zedong. Subsequent government personnel changes are widely believed to have led to a logjam in some decision-making, partly as officials avoid making major moves until the dust settles.

China's gaming industry in particular has drawn government attention over concerns about violent content and game addiction. Under pressure to curb gaming marathons on Tencent's smash hit "King of Glory" mobile multiplayer battle game, the company last year started restricting daily playing times for children. Some analysts expect Tencent to post a drop in mobile gaming revenue when it announces earnings for the most recent quarter later yesterday. —AFP

## 'Fortnite' gaming star defends not playing with women

**SAN FRANCISCO:** "Fortnite" star Tyler "Ninja" Blevins on Monday defended not streaming video game play with women, saying it was to guard against marriage-wrecking rumors. Blevins took to Twitter to address a furor that erupted online after his reasoning for not streaming live play with women was shared at gaming website Polygon.

"While I understand some people have implied my views mean I have something against playing with women, I want to make clear the issue I'm addressing is online harassment, and my attempt to minimize it from my own life," Blevins said in a message at his verified @ninja Twitter account with more than three million followers. "It is something that affects all streamers, especially ones that make their relationships public."

Critics accused the US gamer of reinforcing a gender stereotype that the

world of gaming and eSports is for men. "I really like Ninja, but this feels like a cop out," a fan tweeted. "You are free to do what you want, but understand you are encouraging a system that already heavily excludes women." Blevins has millions of subscribers to his channels on Google video sharing platform YouTube and Amazon-owned Twitch, reportedly earning more than \$500,000 monthly thanks to his fans. "Fortnite" is a global sensation, with entertaining play and commentary a hit with online viewers. "Fortnite" became an eSports phenomenon after the release late last year of a free "Battle Royale" mode that lets up to 100 players vie to be the last character standing on ever-shrinking terrain. Hip-hop superstar Drake set a streaming record on Twitch in March, drawing 628,000 viewers for a live stream of him battling for survival in the shoot-'em-up adventure with players including Blevins.

In the Polygon interview, Blevins said that streaming fame comes with online viewers intensely scrutinizing words and actions, reading into what they see and potentially starting rumors of flirting or



NEW YORK CITY: Tyler "Ninja" Blevins puts Fortnite for Android to the test on the new Samsung Galaxy Note9 at Samsung's launch event. —AFP

affairs that could wreck a marriage. He and his wife, also a gamer, recently celebrated one year of marriage "I didn't see it as a hit against women at all," streamer

@MissAliCatt tweeted in an exchange about the Ninja news. "He just wants to make his wife happy and in my opinion that's amazing." —AFP

## New Caledonia protects huge swathe of coral reefs

**NOUMEA:** New Caledonia agreed Tuesday to tougher protections around a huge swathe of some of the world's last near-pristine coral reefs, in a move conservationists hailed as a major breakthrough. The Pacific nation, a French overseas territory, is home to a rich array of wildlife including 2.5 million seabirds and over 9,300 marine species, such as dugongs — marine mammals related to manatees — and nesting green sea turtles, many of which thrive in and around remote zones off the island nation's coast.

The archipelago boasts some of the world's healthiest reefs, including Astrolabe, Petrie, Chesterfield and Bellona, which are considered exceptional examples of coral ecosystems. After years

of work, the New Caledonia government Tuesday voted to set up marine protected areas (MPAs) surrounding the reefs, and to strengthen an existing one around Entrecasteaux, which is already a UNESCO World Heritage site.

The move will see 28,000 square kilometers of waters safeguarded from commercial and industrial fishing and other exploitation, helping conserve habitats and allow marine life to feed and reproduce undisturbed. Tourist activity around the reefs is also set to be more rigorously controlled. According to the South Pacific Tourism Organisation, New Caledonia had 27,000 visits in the first three months of the year, making up around six percent of trips to the South Pacific region.

"This is the kind of leadership we need to see in coral reef conservation and we applaud it," said John Tanzer, the head of oceans for WWF International. "With good management, these marine protected areas will help maintain fish populations and ecosystem health that will build the reef's resilience to the impacts of climate change in future."

Christophe Chevillon, head of the Pew

Bertarelli Ocean Legacy in New Caledonia, which helped draft the plans, said it would elevate the territory as a global leader in ocean protection, but more could still be done. "Although we believe this to be a major breakthrough, we are convinced that New Caledonia can still go further and lead the way for other Pacific countries," he told AFP. "In fact, the 28,000 square kilometres protected only represents two percent of the Coral Sea Natural Park."

The MPAs fall within New Caledonia's enormous 1.3 million-square kilometre Coral Sea Natural Park, which was established in 2014 and covers the country's entire exclusive economic zone. Protections here, such as limiting shipping and banning shark, turtle and whale fishing, are not as comprehensive as under an MPA. Coral reefs, which only cover 0.1 percent of the ocean's surface but support a quarter of known marine species, are on the decline globally, threatened by climate change, pollution and overfishing. WWF estimates the world has already lost about half of its shallow water coral reefs. —AFP

## Researchers find security flaw in Intel chips

**WASHINGTON:** Researchers have discovered a new security flaw that could let hackers pry information from supposedly secure virtual vaults in Intel chips, the company warned on Tuesday. Intel said software updates are already available and it did not appear anyone had taken advantage of the "Foreshadow" vulnerability, which has been likened to troubling "Meltdown" and "Spectre" flaws exposed in computer chips early this year.

"If used for malicious purposes, this class of vulnerability has the potential to improperly infer data values from multiple types

of computing devices," Intel said on its website. "Intel has worked with operating system vendors, equipment manufacturers, and other ecosystem partners to develop platform firmware and software updates that can help protect systems from these methods," it said.

The "Meltdown" and "Spectre" flaws roiled the Silicon Valley chip maker, prompting a series of lawsuits and a congressional inquiry about Intel's handling of the matter. "We are not aware of reports that any of these methods have been used in real-world exploits, but this further underscores the need for everyone to adhere to security best practices," Intel executive vice president and general manager of product assurance and security said of "Foreshadow" in a post on Intel's website. "Once systems are updated, we expect the risk to consumer and enterprise users running non-virtualized operating systems will be low." —AFP

# CLINIC PAGE



Kuwait Times

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What's On

# Pakistan Embassy celebrates Independence Day



The Ambassador of Pakistan to Kuwait HE Ghulam Dastgir hosted a flag hoisting ceremony at the embassy to celebrate the 72nd Independence Day of Pakistan. Embassy staff and a cross section of the Pakistani community in Kuwait attended the event. — Photos by Fouad Al-Shaikh

## A SLOW-COOKING BARBECUED BEEF BRISKET

By America's Test Kitchen

In researching recipes for barbecued brisket, we found that cooks could agree on one thing: slow-cooking (for up to 12 hours) to tenderize the meat. We wanted to figure out a way to make cooking this cut of meat less daunting and less time-consuming, and we wanted to trade in a professional smoker for a backyard grill.

We brined the brisket to season it throughout and to make sure the meat remained juicy even after hours on the grill. In our tests, we had trouble figuring out how to maintain a low temperature in the grill without frequently refueling. But then we realized that fire can burn down as well as up. We layered unlit briquettes on the bottom of our grill and added hot coals on top for a fire that burned consistently in the optimal 300 F range for about 3 hours. We then transferred the brisket to the oven to finish cooking.

Note: If your brisket is smaller than 5 pounds or the fat cap has been removed, or if you are using a small charcoal grill, it may be necessary to build an aluminum foil shield in order to keep the brisket from becoming too dark. To do this, make two 1/2-inch folds on the long side of an 18-by-20-inch piece of heavy-duty aluminum foil to form a reinforced edge. Place the foil on the center of the cooking grate, with the reinforced edge over the hotter side of the grill. Position the brisket fat side down over the cooler side of the grill so that it covers about half of the foil. Pull the foil over the brisket to loosely tent it. Some of the traditional accompaniments to barbecued brisket include barbecue sauce, sliced white bread or saltines, pickle chips, and thinly sliced onion.

### BARBECUED BEEF BRISKET

**Ingredients:**  
**Servings:** 8-10  
Start to finish: 7 hours and 15 minutes,



plus 30 minutes to rest brisket  
1 (5- to 6-pound) beef brisket, flat cut, untrimmed  
2/3 cup salt  
1/2 cup plus 2 tablespoons sugar  
3 wood chunks, preferably hickory, or 2 cups wood chips (if using gas)  
3 tablespoons kosher salt  
2 tablespoons pepper  
1 (13 by 9-inch) disposable aluminum roasting pan (if using charcoal) or 1 (9-inch) disposable aluminum pie plate (if using gas)

### Preparation:

Lightly score brisket fat cap in 1-inch crosshatch pattern, being careful not to cut into meat. Dissolve salt and 1/2 cup sugar in

4 quarts cold water in large container. Submerge brisket in brine, cover, and refrigerate for 2 hours.

While brisket brines, soak wood chunks in water for at least 1 hour; drain. If using gas, soak wood chips in water for 15 minutes, then drain. Using large piece of heavy-duty aluminum foil, wrap chips in 8 by 4 1/2-inch foil packet. (Make sure chips do not poke holes in sides or bottom of packet.) Cut 2 evenly spaced 2-inch slits in top of packet.

Combine remaining 2 tablespoons sugar, kosher salt, and pepper in bowl. Remove brisket from brine and pat dry with paper towels. Transfer to rimmed baking sheet and rub salt mixture over entire brisket and into slits.



## Carrefour Kuwait Celebrates Indian Independence Day



**Kuwait, 15 August 2018:**

Carrefour Kuwait, which is operated by Majid Al Futtaim, the exclusive franchisee of the Carrefour brand in 38 countries across the Middle East, Africa and Asia participated in the festivities of the 72nd Indian Independence Day held at the Embassy of India in Kuwait. This participation emphasized on the deeply-rooted relationships between Kuwait and India.

To mark this day, Carrefour joined the crowd to wish India a Happy Independence Day by contributing to the occasion with a taste of India, providing guests with sweets and offering over 1,500 goodie bags that included high-quality Indian food items. Committed to offering the best value for money, customer service and convenience, Carrefour presented its loyalty programme MyClub to the guests.

Representatives of Carrefour greeted the Ambassador Jeeva Sagar, as well the officials of the mission and their families on this special occasion.



## Greek Roasted Chicken Breasts

By Katie Workman

Oregano, lemon, garlic, glugs of olive oil ... these are just a few of the ingredients that make Greek food so appealing. They match up well with all sorts of other hero ingredients, from potatoes to chicken to seafood.

In this recipe, chicken gets a nice soak in a Greek marinade with all of those delicious flavors and then is simply roasted in the oven. You can use that time to putter around making a salad, and trying to get someone else to set the table. Try serving them up with some simply cooked millet or orzo, and a very lightly dressed baby greens salad.

Boneless chicken breasts with the skin left on have a few really good things going for them. One, the skin keeps the chicken

moist as it cooks. Two, the skin crisps up in the hot oven, and I know of few chicken-loving people who don't covet the crispy skin. Three, the absence of the bone allows the chicken to cook more quickly than bone-in chicken.

Boneless chicken breasts with the skin are not always easy to find pre-packaged in the supermarket, but you can ask the butcher to cut the bones out for you. You can also, of course do it yourself with a steady hand and a very sharp knife, but feel no shame if this isn't within your comfort zone. Boneless, skinless chicken breasts are also just fine, and if you want to use bone-in chicken breasts, just add another 15 to 20 minutes of cooking time. You could serve these with some wedges of lemon in case people want one last hit of fresh, tart citrus.

### GREEK ROASTED CHICKEN BREASTS

**Ingredients:**  
**Serves 4**  
Start to finish: 30 minutes plus marinating time  
1/4 cup olive oil  
1 teaspoon minced garlic  
1 tablespoon fresh lemon juice  
1 tablespoon vinegar  
2 teaspoons dried oregano  
2 teaspoons coarse salt  
1/2 teaspoon freshly ground black pepper  
4 boneless skin-on chicken breasts (6 to 8 ounces each)  
Lemon wedges to serve

### Preparation:

In a large bowl, container or sturdy zipper-top bag, combine the olive oil, garlic, lemon juice, vinegar, oregano, salt and pepper. Stir or shake to combine thor-



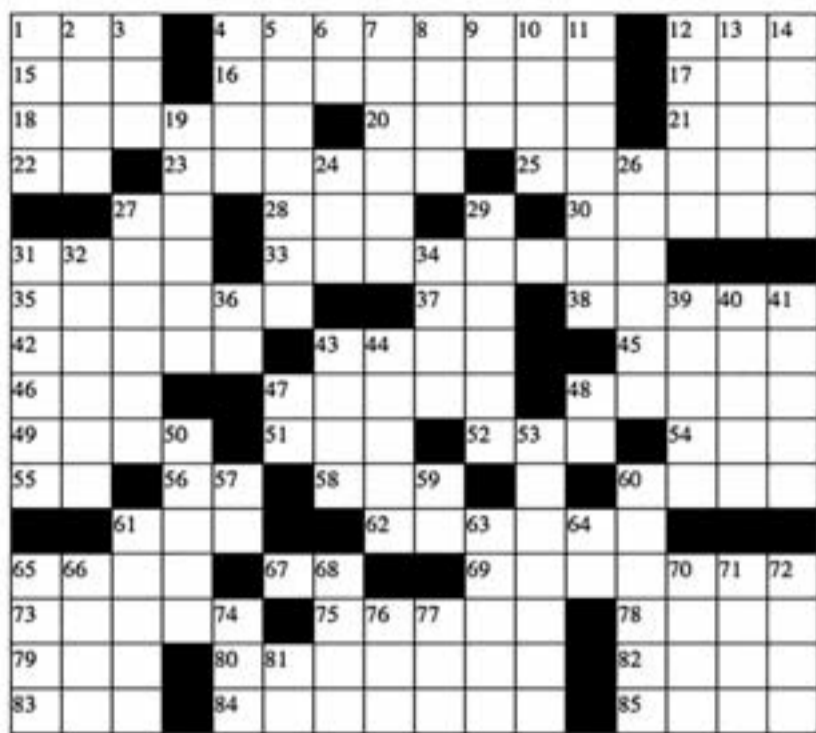
oughly. Add the chicken, turn it to coat well, and then cover or seal and refrigerate for 12 to 24 hours (or even up to 2 days).

Preheat the oven to 450 degrees F. Line a rimmed baking sheet with aluminum foil and

spray with nonstick cooking spray. Remove the chicken from the marinade and place on the baking sheet skin side up. Roast for about 25 minutes until cooked through. Serve hot, warm or cold, with lemon wedges if desired.

Stars

CROSSWORD 1987



ACROSS

1. One of the five major classes of immunoglobulins.
4. A port and fashionable resort city on southern Mexico's Pacific coast.
12. An anxiety disorder characterized by chronic free-floating anxiety and such symptoms as tension or sweating or trembling of light-headedness or irritability etc that has lasted for more than six months.
15. The cry made by sheep.
16. A solemn supplication ceremony prescribed by the church.
17. A lyric poem with complex stanza forms.
18. The crease at the junction of the inner part of the thigh with the trunk together with the adjacent region and often including the external genitals.
20. The capital and principal port of Tunisia.
21. A statement that deviates from or perverts the truth.
22. A state in north central United States.
23. A motley assortment of things.
25. Drained of energy or effectiveness.
28. An international organization of European countries formed after World War II to reduce trade barriers and increase cooperation among its members.
30. Roman Emperor who succeeded Tiberius and whose uncontrolled passions resulted in manifest insanity.
31. A unit of subjective loudness.
33. Examined carefully and methodically.
35. In or belonging to the air or operating (for or by means of aircraft or elevated cables) in the air.
37. An associate degree in nursing.
38. Follower of Rastafarianism.
42. Egyptian statesman who (as President of Egypt) negotiated a peace treaty with Menachem Begin of Israel (1978-1981).
45. Denuded of leaves.
46. A user interface in which you type commands instead of choosing them from a menu or selecting an icon.
49. A collection of objects laid on top of each other.
51. Thickening of tissue in the motor tracts of the lateral columns and anterior horns of the spinal cord.
52. Title for a civil or military leader (especially in Turkey).
54. The compass point midway between east and southeast.
55. A public promotion of some product or service.
56. A state in midwestern United States.
58. A graphical record of electrical activity of the brain.
62. Rock, sway, or nod.
65. (usually followed by 'to') Having the necessary means or skill or know-how or authority to do something.
67. An official prosecutor for a judicial district.
69. A genus of Nymphalidae.
73. Submerged aquatic plant having narrow leaves and small flowers.
75. A republic in West Africa on the Gulf of Guinea.
78. A river in north central Switzerland that runs northeast into the Rhine.
79. A loose sleeveless outer garment made from aba cloth.
80. Having the skin scraped off.
82. A person who has lied or who lies repeatedly.
83. An enclosed space.
84. A festival featuring African-American culture.
85. Bulky grayish-brown eagle with a short wedge-shaped white tail.

DOWN

1. Wading birds of warm regions having long slender down-curved bills.
2. Port city in northwestern Belgium and industrial center.
3. 10 grams.
4. A particular geographical region of indefinite boundary (usually serving some special purpose or distinguished by its people or culture or geography).
5. Become gelatinous.
6. A soft white precious univalent metallic element having the highest electrical and thermal conductivity of any metal.
7. The basic unit of money in Macao.
8. (Sumerian) Sun god.
9. United States sculptor and architect whose public works include the memorial to veterans of the Vietnam War in Washington (born in 1959).
10. A skullcap worn by nuns under a veil or by soldiers under a hood of mail or formerly by British sergeants-at-law v.l.
11. United States chemist (born in Norway) noted for his work in thermodynamics (1903-1976).
12. Italian histologist noted for work on the structure of the nervous system and for his discovery of Golgi bodies (1844-1926).
13. A farewell remark.
14. Performance of moral or religious acts.
19. (Greek mythology) The Muse of astronomy.
24. (in Scotland or Ireland) A mountain or tall hill.
26. A member of an agricultural people in southeastern India.
27. Tropical deciduous or evergreen trees or shrubs of the family Boraginaceae.
29. Genus of Old World tropical herbs.
32. Freed from illness or injury.
34. A Tibetan or Mongolian priest of Lamaism.
36. A highly unstable radioactive element (the heaviest of the halogen series).
39. A dress worn primarily by Hindu women.
40. A hairdo formed by braiding or twisting the hair.
41. Yellow-fever mosquitos.
43. A rapid series of short loud sounds (as might be heard with a stethoscope in some types of respiratory disorders).
44. Realistic Norwegian author who wrote plays on social and political themes (1828-1906).
47. A soft silvery metallic element of the alkali earth group.
48. (Akkadian) God of wisdom.
50. A genus of temperate and arctic evergreen trees (see spruce).
53. A city in southeastern Spain.
57. A radioactive element of the actinide series.
59. Of or related to the genital and urinary organs or their functions.
60. Cereal grass widely cultivated for its grain.
61. (anatomy) Of or relating to the ilium.
63. Infections of the skin or nails caused by fungi and appearing as itching circular patches.
64. A hard gray lustrous metallic element that is highly corrosion-resistant.
66. A small cake leavened with yeast.
68. A city in northern India.
70. Dense growth of hairs covering the body or parts of it (as on the human head).
71. A theocratic republic in the Middle East in western Asia.
72. (used especially of vegetation) Having lost all moisture.
74. East Indian tree bearing a profusion of intense vermilion velvet-textured blooms and yielding a yellow dye.
76. Imperial dynasty that ruled China (most of the time) from 206 BC to 221 and expanded its boundaries and developed its bureaucracy.
77. An edge tool used to cut and shape wood.
81. The use of bacteria or viruses of toxoids to destroy men and animals or food.

Yesterday's Solution



STAR TRACK



Aries (March 21-April 19)

You seem to work best today when exchanging ideas with others. You may find yourself in a group who is able to throw ideas back and forth until problems are conquered and much progress is made. This is an ideal situation for you today. You may find this to be an extremely productive day in the workplace. Later this even you may find you have a deep desire to connect with friends, neighbors, and love ones. Great connections can be made, and fences can be mended with little effort. You exude a sincerity to those you love and are met with open arms. Aries. This is a time of grace and happiness in your world.



Taurus (April 20-May 20)

You may feel torn between two worlds. You may find conflict when delegating your time between family life and home. You will have to get your priorities straight and try to find a balance between the two. You may find that you feel led to pass up a career opportunity because of the effect it will have on your personal life. Remember, family is forever. The tie that binds. Not everything in life revolves around money. This is a time you may come to realize, money can not buy happiness.



Gemini (May 21-June 20)

Just because it is easy doesn't make it right. You may be very tempted today to take a shortcut. If you can not tell yourself this is the right thing to do, you should steer clear of making the wrong decision. Doing the right thing never goes unnoticed. In the long run, you will be rewarded for going the extra mile and doing the right thing. You may find this gives you a grasp for all that is spiritual. Your ideas are more of a spiritual sense and you will be able to really get your point across when you share your ideas and life lessons with others today.



Cancer (June 21-July 22)

You have an appreciation for your responsibilities. What is right is right, and what is wrong is wrong. This is a motto for you. This way of thinking has brought you a long way on your path towards success. You are focused and driven and most of all, honest. By not cutting corners nor taking the easy way out, you have developed a good reputation for having an excellent work ethic. You have a lot to be proud of and you may find many opportunities beginning to come your way.



Leo (July 23-August 22)

Make time for your loved ones. Don't wait for a holiday or special event. What is a little thing to you can make a big difference in the life of someone you care about. You are creative enough to turn a small act into a big memory. Take the time. Make the effort. You will find it rewarding.



Virgo (August 23-September 22)

You have the ability to find beauty in everything and everyone surrounding you. In a way you may find this as a weakness because this can cause you to over indulge. This may include material things or involve your investing too much of yourself into others. Resist that urge at this time. You may find a child or someone younger who is close to you as a disappointment and find yourself at odds with them. This is temporary, and you should resist the urge to make permanent decisions that affect your living situation or theirs at this time. You may feel as if your level of authority is being challenged today and find it difficult to react. Virgo, see this as a positive and know that now is just not the time.



Libra (September 23-October 22)

Your dedication and devotion to friends and family you have earned a deep level of respect from those closest to you. You may feel if you should be allowed to claim some of these friends on your taxes as dependents as it seems every time you turn around they are there with their hand out. This is the price you pay for being the dependable and responsible one of the group. You would not trade your friends for anything. You value the level of respect they have for you. Today you find yourself surrounded by friends seeking your advice and asking for your helping hand. Libra, you are a wonderful friend. Your thoughts and dreams seem to be ever present at this time. It is a great time to sit and think and maybe reach out to share this with someone close to you.



Scorpio (October 23-November 21)

Make sure to spend some time outdoors today. This is a day the beauty of creation will be filled with special meaning for you. It seems everything may take on a more special meaning in your life now. A positive attitude and an open mind seem to take you far in this world. You have both. When you choose to be happy, you will be happy. You have an attitude that no one nor anything can steal your joy. This is the answer. This is the way to face your day and conquer the world.



Sagittarius (November 22-December 21)

You may feel as if you are on the outside looking in today. Difficulty getting your point across to others could find you frustrated. Group situations may be the thing to avoid for you today. This day would be best spent taking some time to yourself. Step outside and take a breath of fresh air. Find a way to have a little escape and clear your mind. You will be back to your old self in no time.



Capricorn (December 22-January 19)

You may feel as if someone is cutting you off today. They may be making it difficult for you to express yourself. This may put you in a mood to shut down and keep to yourself. Know any obstacle you face today will be short-lived and temporary. Frustration may come over you. Time will eliminate these obstacles. You will be back to your old self shortly. Keep a positive attitude today.



Aquarius (January 20- February 18)

You can really get your thoughts and ideas across. Your communication skills are on point today. You may find yourself being especially kind to a friend and feeling a desire to share the love in your heart with all who surround you. You may find others admire the kindness you show to others and are drawn to you. You could enjoy being the recipient of many compliments today. Others seem to notice your belongings, your good taste, and the way you treat those around you. Your goodness and emotions seem to be accented today and you should expect much support from your friends and family.



Pisces (February 19-March 20)

You are hungry for knowledge. Eager to see what all this world has to offer you. You are at your best when visiting with siblings or neighbors today. A great time to sit and express your views and feelings about some situations that have bothering you. Getting things off of your chest will help you regain focus. You are getting back on track.

Wordsearch Puzzle

90's Songs 2

Find and circle all of the 1990's songs that are hidden in the grid. The remaining letters spell an additional song.

Wordsearch grid for 90's Songs 2. The grid contains letters that form words like 'AGAIN', 'BABY', 'ESCAPE', etc. The remaining letters spell out 'MY HEART WILL GO ON'.

Yesterday's Solution

90's Songs 1

Wordsearch grid for 90's Songs 1. The grid contains letters that form words like 'ALL STAR', 'BLACK VELVET', 'CARNIVAL', etc. The remaining letters spell out 'MY HEART WILL GO ON'.

The hidden song title is: MY HEART WILL GO ON

Daily SuDoku

9x9 Sudoku grid with some numbers pre-filled. The grid is:
 

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

Yesterday's Solution

9x9 Sudoku grid with the solution filled in. The grid is:
 

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

# Lifestyle

THURSDAY, AUGUST 16, 2018



Palestinian artisan Ayoub Al-Zaatari works at his workshop where he produces various kinds of hand-made drums and musical instruments, using clay, wood and leather in the southern West Bank city of Hebron. Zaatari, an artisan who has run his own business for more than 40 years, produces different musical instruments including the Arabian bowed string instrument, Rababa, Tambourine, Darbuka (goblet drum) and sells them in Israel and the occupied West Bank. — AFP

## KENYAN FARMERS TOAST GROWING EUROPEAN DEMAND FOR AVOCADOS

It may be loved and derided as the go-to millennial brunch, but avocado toast is proving a boon for Kenyan farmers as they cash in on the seemingly ever-growing enthusiasm. Across Kenya's ochre fields, farmers are switching coffee and tea for avocados in a bid to profit from increasing European demand for that most Instagrammable of dishes. Among them is Simon Kimani, 73, who tends five acres (two hectares) of avocado trees. "Recently when the avocado trade started growing up we thought that it is better to plant avocados, that's how I started," he says, pointing to his first trees, planted less than a decade ago. Avocado toast is becoming a staple of European menus, says Laura Hannoun, a blogger who has listed the top-10 places to order the simple, hip dish which can set one back 14 euros (\$16).

"The fair price is between 10 and 11 euros," says the 25-year-old. In Kenya, smallholder farmers grow avocados and sell them on to exporters. Kimani's buyer is Bernard Kimutai of Fair Trade Company Limited. Kimutai has seen a sharp increase in exports of the popular Hass avocado in recent years. "In 2016 we exported 20 tonnes, in 2017 we did about 40 tons," he says, hoping to double the figure again this year.

Harvesting is a low-tech affair: a broken wooden ladder and an old machete are all it takes for Kimani and his two employees to chop down the hard, green avocados, collected young so they reach Europe ripe. In this way, Kimani produces around 28,000 avocados per year, and is paid the equivalent of a little over 10 euro cents each. In European supermarkets, where they are sold alongside others from Chile, Israel and Mexico, they easily fetch 10 times that amount, if not more. "One hundred



percent of (our) avocados are for export. We try to improve the quality to make sure that what we get from the farmer is 90 percent exportable," says Kimutai, adding that any that do not make the grade are sold on to oil-processing companies.

### Health and wealth

Kenya's temperate climate is well-suited to avocado cultivation, especially around the high altitude town of Thika, north of Nairobi, where Kimani has his farm. In its terraced orchard, avocado trees grow alongside banana and coffee trees as part of a well-planned multi-culture that keeps the soil fertile. But for Kimani, avocado is the crop of choice. "With the coffee there is a lot of work to manage the coffee but with avocados it is easier, to have more money, less labor," he says. Less than three years since planting his first avocado trees, he now takes in two harvests a year. The Kenyan government is also onside, even providing courses to help farmers learn new skills, says Kimutai.

"The Kenyan government has encouraged farmers to grow more avocados because of the market." Kenya is the world's sixth largest exporter of avocados—with three percent of the world's total—and Africa's biggest, producing 63,000 tons last year. The strong demand from European countries allows companies like Kutaisi's to export throughout the year. "Demand is going high, especially in the rich countries where they care more about health, considering that avocados in Kenya are produced organically."

Renowned as a healthy food, full of vitamins, fibre and trace elements, avocado is an increasing staple of European diets. Hannoun eats avocado at least once a week, usually on toast, maybe with a poached egg or some pomegranate. "It fulfills my desire for something tasty, while being healthier than pancakes or burgers," she says. —AFP



A 63-year-old Kenyan avocado farmer Simon Kimani Gachogu tending to his crop in Kandara, central Kenya. — AFP photos



An undated handout picture released by the British Metropolitan Police Service (MPS) in London shows a 12th century Buddha statue stolen from India 57 years ago that is to be returned to the Indian High Commissioner in London. — AFP

### Stolen 12th century Indian Buddha statue found in London

A 12th century bronze Buddha statue stolen from an Indian museum 57 years ago has surfaced in London and is now being returned to the country, police said yesterday. The statue with silver inlay was one of 14 stolen from the Archaeological Survey of India site museum in Nalanda in the east of the country in 1961. It was spotted at a trade fair in Britain in March this year, prompting an investigation by the Art and Antique Unit of London's Metropolitan Police. They alerted the owner and dealer, who are not accused of any wrongdoing, and who agreed for it to be returned to India.

The statue was handed over to the Indian High Commission in London in a ceremony yesterday. "This underlines how law enforcement and the London art market are working hand in hand to deliver positive cultural diplomacy to the world," said arts minister Michael Ellis in a statement. Detective Constable Sophie Hayes of the Art and Antique Unit added: "Particular credit must go to the eagle-eyed informants who made us aware that the missing piece had been located after so many years." — AFP

## Lifestyle | Gossip



## Backstreet Boys returning to MTV VMAs for red carpet pre-show

**B**ackstreet Boys will be among the performers at the 2018 MTV Video Music Awards red carpet pre-show. The 'I Want It That Way' hitmakers and newcomers Bazzi and Bryce Vine will warm up guests as they arrive at Radio City Music Hall in New York City on August 20. It has not been announced which song the boyband - comprised of Nick Carter, Kevin Richardson, Brian Littrell, AJ McLean and Howie Dorough - will perform yet. Pop stars Ariana Grande and Shawn Mendes and rappers Post Malone and Travis Scott are among performers at the main ceremony. Jennifer Lopez is this year's recipient of the Michael Jackson Video Vanguard Award, following in the footsteps of past honorees including Beyoncé, Justin Timberlake, Madonna, Janet Jackson and Pink. Speaking about being selected for the prize, she previously said: "I grew up in the MTV era. I was watching all the way back from Tina Turner, Bruce Springsteen and Madonna and

Janet [Jackson] and Michael [Jackson], all of them. They were my inspirations to get into the music business, to do what I did. Their videos inspired me to do the videos I did. Now, to be 20 years in and here and winning this award, it's just mind blowing." 'Bodak Yellow' hitmaker Cardi B leads the way with the most nominations, having stacked up a whopping 10 nods in total, although it is unknown whether or not she'll be able to attend the ceremony, after giving birth to her daughter Kulture Kiari - whom she has with rapper Offset - just over a month ago. Closely behind her are Jay Z and Beyoncé - who released their joint album 'Everything is Love' earlier this year - who have eight nominations for their collaborative effort, whilst Childish Gambino and Drake both secured seven nods, and Bruno Mars bagged six. The red carpet pre-show airs live on MTV from 8pm.

## Slash refuses to fuel new Guns N' Roses music rumors

**S**lash is keeping tight-lipped about the prospect of new music from Guns N' Roses. The 53-year-old guitar slayer recently teased the chances of a new record, but now he's refused to comment as to whether the heavy metal band's frontman Axl Rose has sent him new songs to approve. In an interview with Rolling Stone magazine he was asked if himself and guitarist Duff McKagan will be recording parts on any new songs, to which he replied: "I think probably the best way to look at it, if something happens, then it happens. There you go." Asked if the 'Sweet Child O' Mine' singer performed the tracks to him, he coyly added: "Yeah. You know what? I'm not lighting that fuse." The 'Civil War' rockers - also comprised of Richard Fortus and Dizzy Reed - are currently on their 'Not In This Lifetime World Tour', but the

future of the band appears to be left open at this stage, with Slash explaining that overcoming his "bulls\*\*t with Axl, 56, has left them in an unexpected position. He admitted recently: "There's not a lot for me to say about it except that it's been a huge weight off my shoulders. As soon as we started the rehearsals Axl and I got past a couple of decades' worth of bulls\*\*t, and found the camaraderie again. "It was only meant to be two shows and a couple of warm-up gigs. Now we're touring the world." Teasing the possibility of a new record, Slash said: "It's been talked about. I think everybody wants to do it, and we'll just see what happens. We've been busy doing this running around the planet." Guns N' Roses' last record was 2008's 'Chinese Democracy'.

## PERLMAN AND PITT TO STAR IN RUN WITH THE HUNTED



**R**on Perlman and Michael Pitt will star in 'Run With the Hunted'. The pair have joined the cast of the indie-drama, which will be written and directed by John Swab. They join William Forsythe, Mark Boone Jr, Brad Carter, Dree Hemingway, Slaine, Brad Carter, Kylie Rogers, Sam Quartin and Gore Abrams in the movie, which tells the story of a young man who commits murder to save his best friend. He is forced to leave her behind when he runs away from their hometown and falls in with a gang. 15 years later she starts working with a private investigator and decides to find the man who saved her life. Swab - who is also producing the movie - told The Hollywood Reporter: "The diverse cast we've assembled each brings something different to the film, and we're thrilled to be able to tell the story with this group of people that includes both veteran actors and newcomers." Jeremy M. Rosen will also produce the movie, while Perlman, Wes Hull, Viviana

Zarragoitia, Ali Jazayeri, Scott Thomas, Giles Daoust, Catherine Dumonceaux, David Lugo, Josh Crook, Todd Remis, David Moscow and Renee Willett will executive produce. Meanwhile, it was previously revealed that 'Stranger Things' star David Harbour will take over from Perlman as the titular character in the 'Hellboy' reboot. The plot follows Hellboy as he battles with a medieval evil wizard who is hell-bent on destroying humankind. Milla Jovovich will star as the Blood Queen and Ian McShane as Professor Broom - the scientist who adopts the titular demon child. Originally titled as 'Hellboy: Rise of the Blood Queen', it was previously reported that the reboot will simply go by the name of 'Hellboy'. Unlike the original franchise by Guillermo del Toro - which was PG13 - this film will be R-rated, following in the footsteps of other successful R-rated movies including 'Deadpool' and 'Logan'.



## Anthony Mackie to star in The Woman in the Window

**A**nthony Mackie is in talks to star in 'The Woman in the Window'. The 'Captain America' actor could be set to join Amy Adams and Gary Oldman in Joe Wright's new movie, which is an adaptation of the book by A.J. Finn. Variety reports, Adams, 43, is set to play the role of Dr Anna Fox, who hides away in her New York home, where she drinks excessively and spends time spying on those around her. Gary Oldman will star as the patriarch of the family that lives across the street. The film - which also features Julianne Moore, Wyatt Russell and Brian Tyree Henry - takes a dark turn when Adams' character witnesses something she shouldn't have from her own apartment. Tracy Letts has adapted the screenplay, while Scott Rudin and Eli Bush are producing. Before beginning production on 'The Woman in the Window', Anthony is completing work on 'Point Blank', the Netflix remake of the 2010 French crime drama by Fred Cavayé. The plot is closely tied to the original film, with Mackie playing a nurse whose pregnant wife is kidnapped by a murder suspect at his hospital. A synopsis for the original film stated: "Samuel, a nurse working at a hospital when his pregnant wife is kidnapped before his very eyes. Knocked unconscious, he comes to and discovers that a dangerous criminal named Sartet is responsible, and if he's ever to see his wife again, he must do Sartet's bidding. "Samuel quickly finds himself pitted against rival gangsters and trigger-happy police in a deadly race to save the lives of his wife and unborn child." Cavayé previously opened up about his ambitions for the project, saying that he wanted to provoke an emotional response from the audience. He said: "I wanted to make an interactive film, make it so that the viewer runs with the protagonist, at the same time. I wanted to make an entertaining film, one that gives the viewer a maximum of emotion." The new movie is directed by Joe Lynch, who worked on the action/horror 'Mayhem', while Adam G. Simon has written the screenplay.



## Laura Dern in talks to star in Little Women adaptation

**L**aura Dern is reportedly in talks to star in Greta Gerwig's adaptation of 'Little Women'. The 51-year-old actress - who stars in the hit TV series 'Big Little Lies' - has held discussions about joining the movie's star-studded cast, which features the likes of Meryl Streep, Emma Stone, Florence Pugh and Saoirse Ronan, according to The Hollywood Reporter. The upcoming movie is based on Louisa May Alcott's novel of the same name, which tells the story of four sisters as they transition from childhood to womanhood. Nothing has been officially revealed about Laura's potential role, but it's been speculated that she may be wanted for the part of the girls' mother, Margaret. Greta, 35 - who directed 2017's 'Lady Bird' - has been hired to write the script and she is also expected to direct the project. Greta received Best Director and Best Original Screenplay nominations at the

Academy Awards for 'Lady Bird' and although she ultimately didn't win either accolade, she hopes her success will inspire other female filmmakers. Speaking prior to the awards ceremony, she shared: "I remember very well when Sofia Coppola was nominated for Best Director and won Best Screenplay [for 'Lost in Translation' in 2004] and what that meant to me. "And I remember when Kathryn Bigelow won for Best Director and how it seemed as if possibilities were expanded because of it. "I genuinely hope that what this means to women of all ages - young women, women who are well into their careers - is that they look at this and they think, 'I want to go make my movie.' Because a diversity of storytellers is incredibly important and also I want to see their movies. I want to know what they have to say! So I hope that's what it does."



## Research reveals gender disparity in Hollywood

**M**ale characters outnumbered their female counterparts by two to one in Hollywood's most successful films, research shows. A report published in the journal 'Sex Roles', which has been authored by Conor Neville and Phyllis Anastasio of Saint Joseph's University, has underlined the extent of the gender gap in America's film industry, showing that a little over 32 percent of characters in 50 of America's top-grossing movies of 2016 were female. However, a similar study in 2005 found that 28 percent of all characters and 27 percent of lead roles were filled by women, suggesting the overall landscape has marginally improved. Neville explained: "Progress has been made, but men still outnumber women two to one in film, which means that the more powerful representations of women seen in our sample are

not getting the screen exposure comparable to their proportion in the real world." In recent years, a number of Hollywood's most high-profile female stars have bemoaned the lack of opportunities for women in the movie business. But Shailene Woodley has praised Nicole Kidman and Reese Witherspoon for "reshaping" the entertainment industry. The 26-year-old star worked with the Oscar-winning actresses on 'Big Little Lies' - which was developed and produced by the pair - and is grateful for what they have been doing to promote opportunities for women. She said: "They've reshaped the industry for women and continue to do so, so that actors like myself and Zoe [Kravitz, her co-star] can have that liberty to express ourselves and thrive in an environment that doesn't class us as a minority or devalue our worth due to our gender." Despite

this, Shailene believes there is still a long way to go and that true equality will only have been achieved when gender stops being a point of reference. She added: "We need to stop referencing gender entirely. "Big Little Lies" was referred to as a 'show led by five women'. When do we ever say, 'Wow! A show led by five men, that's amazing'? "It describes the standard and level we're still at and I want to work towards a moment when we never think to question or advertise such a thing. "I want it to be the norm and it will be the norm - but there's a way to go." — Bang Showbiz





Taiwanese American street artist Isaac Hou performing with a Cyr wheel in Taipei. — AFP photos



Isaac Hou (center) performing with a Cyr wheel in Taipei.



Taiwanese American street artist Isaac Hou playing the Brazilian musical instrument berimbau at his home in Taipei.

# In the hoop: Taiwan's spinning street artist

Isaac Hou is one of Taipei's best-known street artists, famous for his mesmerizing acrobatics using a giant spinning hoop. The 37-year-old Taiwanese American is a master of the metal Cyr wheel, whirling himself around while stretched out inside the ring. He performs on stage and television but still busks, drawing crowds in various spots around Taiwan's capital, mainly in the shopping district of Xinyi.

Hou, who also practices the Brazilian dance-like martial art capoeira, as well as ballet, jazz and tango to balance his body, says he finds street performing liberating. "The reason I wanted to become a street performer is because I saw it as a job without an unpleasant boss, having a great deal of freedom, a way to travel," Hou told AFP.



Isaac Hou performing with a crystal ball in Taipei.



Isaac Hou sitting inside a Cyr wheel during a performance in Taipei.



Isaac Hou stretching before practicing with a Cyr wheel at the Ta An Sport Centre in Taipei.



Isaac Hou (right) shaking hands with a boy after a performance in Taipei.

But the freedom he finds as a street artist also has its complications. "It's hard to maintain a good schedule for a long period of time. When you have too much free time it's easy to get distracted," he said. When Hou starts losing his way, he says the key is to just keep going. "I guess what works for me is to keep putting one foot in front of the next, to keep doing something even if it seems pointless, to try to go out and do things and see people." — AFP

Taiwanese American street artist Isaac Hou (right) and his wife Magdalena Zieba, a Polish-Canadian, making breakfast together at their home in Taipei.



Isaac Hou practicing with a Cyr wheel.



Isaac Hou and a woman posing for a selfie in Taipei.



Taiwanese American street artist Isaac Hou practicing with a crystal ball at the Ta An Sport Centre in Taipei.

## Lifestyle | Features



Singer Aretha Franklin performs onstage during a ceremony of the Elton John AIDS Foundation at Cathedral of St John the Divine in New York City. — AFP

## Ailing Aretha Franklin visited by Stevie Wonder, Jesse Jackson

Aretha Franklin, the legendary soul singer who has fallen gravely ill, was visited at her Detroit-area home on Tuesday by fellow recording artist Stevie Wonder, US civil rights leader Jesse Jackson and ex-husband Glynn Turman, her publicist said. Franklin, 76, a one-time gospel singer whose reign as the "Queen of Soul" has spanned more than 50 years, is under hospice care at her home, according to publicist Gwendolyn Quinn. Quinn declined to discuss Franklin's ailment, but said: "She's seriously ill."

The singer, whose hit songs include "Chain of Fools" and "Think," has a long-standing professional relationship with Wonder, with whom she performed 13 years ago at the Annual Soul Train Lady of Soul Awards in Pasadena, California. She and Turman were married from 1978 to 1984.

In her heyday of the 1960 and 1970s, Franklin dominated the music charts with hits including "I Never Loved a Man (The Way I Love You)," "Baby, I Love You," "You Make Me Feel Like A Natural Woman," and "Respect," a cover of an Otis Redding tune that became a song of empowerment during the US civil rights era. Franklin's fans, including former US President Bill Clinton, have taken to social media to express their thoughts. "Like people all around the world, Hillary and I are thinking about Aretha Franklin tonight & listening to her music that has been such an important part of our lives the last 50 years," Clinton said in a tweet on Monday night. — Reuters

## GREGORY PECK'S GRANDSON TO PLAY SPOCK IN NEW 'STAR TREK'

Actor Ethan Peck-whose grandfather was Hollywood legend Gregory Peck-has been cast as iconic half-Vulcan science officer Spock in CBS's "Star Trek: Discovery." The hiring sees the relatively obscure 32-year-old boldly go where stars Zachary Quinto and most famously-Leonard Nimoy have gone before. "Through 52 years of television and film, a parallel universe and a mirror universe, Mr. Spock remains the only member of the original bridge crew to span every era of 'Star Trek,'" executive producer Alex Kurtzman said in a statement. "The great Leonard Nimoy, then the brilliant Zachary Quinto, brought incomparable humanity to a character forever torn between logic and emotion."

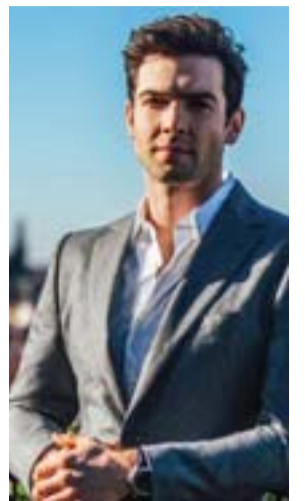
The show launched in 1966 with a five-year

mission "to boldly go where no man has gone before," and became a multi-billion-dollar cultural phenomenon, adored by fans the world over. Nimoy was introduced as Spock in the original series, as the first officer to Captain James T. Kirk (William Shatner), and both Nimoy and Quinto took on the role in the 2009-16 rebooted trilogy.

"We searched for months for an actor who would, like them, bring his own interpretation to the role," Kurtzman added. "An actor who would, like them, effortlessly embody Spock's greatest qualities, beyond obvious logic: empathy, intuition, compassion, confusion, and yearning."

Peck-known for ABC sitcom "10 Things I Hate About You"-will be unveiled in the second season of "Star Trek: Discovery," due for

release in early 2019 on the CBS All Access streaming service. Known for his quiet dignity, Peck's grandfather was one of the great stars of Hollywood's golden era, starring in such classic movies as "Roman Holiday" and "Cape Fear." He picked up five Oscar nominations, winning for "To Kill a Mockingbird," and died in June 2003 at the age of 87. The announcement comes days after British star Patrick Stewart, 78, revealed he would be reprising his role as Jean-Luc Picard in a new CBS Star Trek series centering on the character's life post "Star Trek: Next Generation," which ran from 1987 until 1994. — AFP



Ethan Peck

## 'Where is Fan Bingbing?': Chinese star goes dark amid pay crackdown

One of China's biggest and wealthiest film stars, actress Fan Bingbing, has disappeared from public view as authorities probe alleged tax evasion by entertainers, sparking growing fan speculation over her fate. The 36-year-old actress, model, and producer has been a household name in China for years and tasted Hollywood success with a role in the 2014 blockbuster "X-Men: Days of Future Past."

But Fan, usually active on social media, has gone dark online and has reportedly not been seen in public for weeks. "Will Fan Bingbing go to prison?" asked one of hundreds of thousands of recent postings about her on China's popular Twitter-like Weibo platform, while others speculated she had been banned from movies or was under house arrest.

Fan's troubles began in May when a former presenter for state-run China Central Television (CCTV), Cui Yongyuan, posted purported contracts online that suggested she had received under-the-table payments. The documents Cui posted suggested Fan was officially paid 10 million yuan (\$1.45 million) for a project while unofficially receiving an additional 50 million yuan-all for four days of work.

So-called "yin and yang" dual contract arrangements-with one contract for income declared to tax authorities while the other is kept secret-are reported to be used in

China to evade taxes. After the documents posted by Cui went viral, the national tax administration announced it had instructed authorities in eastern Jiangsu province to investigate alleged use of such dual contracts in the entertainment industry. Fan was not mentioned by name but she has businesses registered in Jiangsu.

### 'Slander'

Exorbitant pay for Chinese film and television stars has been a subject of online debate for years, and Fan led Forbes magazine's list of top-earning Chinese celebrities

in 2017 with income of 300 million yen. A statement released by Fan's studio said she was the victim of "slander", but did not dispute the authenticity of the documents Cui released. The actress has gone unusually quiet on social media with no original postings to her personal Weibo account since late May.

State news agency Xinhua reported in late June that five Chinese government agencies, including the tax authority and the film and broadcast regulator, would crack down on excessive pay and tax evasion in entertainment. The trend had pushed up production costs and encouraged youths "to blindly pursue stardom", the agency said.

It also re-affirmed guidelines released last year capping pay for those appearing in movies, television shows, and online programs to 40 percent of production costs and pay for lead actors to no more than 70 percent of the budget for performers. Nearly a dozen Chinese film producers and video sites last week announced they also would boycott "unreasonable" pay for actors. Fan is one of five leading international actresses cast in the forthcoming Hollywood spy thriller "355", alongside Jessica Chastain and Penelope Cruz. — AFP



Bingbing



## Kuwait National Cinema Company launches reimagined Cinescope brand ahead of Eid Al-Adha

Kuwait's leading entertainment company in Kuwait and gulf region, Kuwait National Cinema Company (KNCC), is rolling out its rebranded Cinescope across all its locations. Coinciding with the rebrand roll-out, KNCC is opening a new multiplex at Al-Kout Mall, which was revealed during a prestigious inauguration ceremony. This marks a strategic milestone for KNCC not only for its rebrand, but also as part of its plans for further expansion as it cements its key position as the premium entertainment company in the Kuwait and wider GCC.

For more than six decades KNCC has been a pioneer in Kuwait and the GCC's movie and entertainment history, with grand plans to continue its leading momentum, committed to delivering unmatched services and products for years to come.

Commenting on the rebranding, KNCC Business Development Manager, Khaled Issam Al-Marzouq said that the launch of the new brand embodies KNCC's strategy of improving its services and keeping pace with the latest developments in the global entertainment industry. This, he added, is particularly evident in the company's delivery of the latest screening innovations, offering cinema viewers sublime moviegoing experiences packed with enjoyment and thrill.

"Kuwait National Cinema Company has come a long way since its establishment in 1954 and is now the region's leading provider of entertainment, and particularly cinematic offerings," Al-Marzouq said. "Over the years, the company has upheld its values of catering to all

ages and tastes, while also respecting local customs and traditions when it comes to the movie-choosing process. Furthermore, KNCC boasts a unique set of theaters of an unparalleled cutting-edge technology and unique design".

Cinescope Al-Kout Mall is the latest addition to a host of Cinescope cinemas spread throughout Kuwait. Enriching the entertainment offering of Al-Kout Mall, in Fahaheel, the new multiplex offers nine new state-of-the-art theaters, with seating of 1,586 combined, including premium choices for maximum convenience and luxury, all featuring an extraordinary design with the utilization of the most developed cinematic technologies, including IMAX with Laser and 4DX. Moreover, 17 points of sale and nine self-payment devices have been set up for an easier and smoother payment service. Cinescope Al-Kout Mall will also see the launch of an unprecedented service in Kuwait, allowing visitors to pre-order their choice of food and beverage online. Not having to stand in long queues anymore, the visitors will enjoy faster entry into the cinema.

"Kuwait National Cinema Company is making significant investment to enhance the moviegoing experience, with plans to increase the number of its cinemas to more than 105 across the whole of Kuwait by 2022. All of our theaters will be equipped with cutting-edge designs and technology for an innovative experience that exceeds visitors' expectations" Al-Marzouq concluded.

Asserting its status as the entertainment destination of choice in Kuwait, the company is redeveloping a number of its main Cinescope



cinemas, equipping them with the latest audio-visual technologies. One of those, Dolby Cinema, will see the introduction of the laser-based Dolby Vision technology as well as Dolby Atmos surround sound, and is expected to open in the final quarter of the current year in 360 Mall. KNCC is also working on the redevelopment of Cinescope Avenues and Cinescope Al-Muhallab, in tandem with numerous projects that are still in progress. These include Cinescope cinemas in The Assima Project, Kuwait City, and three new cinemas within Souq Al Kout, under a unique new brand line expanding the KNCC portfolio.



# Classifieds

Thursday, August 16, 2018

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## Expected Weather for the Next 24 Hours

**BY DAY:** Hot with light to moderate north westerly wind to light variable wind, with speed of 08 - 30 km/h .

**BY NIGHT:** Relatively hot with light to moderate north westerly wind, with speed of 12 - 32 km/h .

WEATHER WARNING			No Current Warnings		
STATION	MAX. EXP.	MIN. REC.	SFC. CHART 15/08/2018 0000 UTC		
KUWAIT CITY	45 °C	33 °C			
KUWAIT AIRPORT	46 °C	28 °C			
ABDALY	47 °C	27 °C			
BUBYAN	-- °C	-- °C			
JAHRA	47 °C	30 °C			
FAILAKA ISLAND	43 °C	28 °C			
SALMIYAH	42 °C	34 °C			
AHMADI	43 °C	33 °C			
NUWAISIB	44 °C	30 °C			
WAFRA	46 °C	28 °C			
SALMY	45 °C	26 °C			

4 DAYS FORECAST						
DAY	DATE	WEATHER	Temperatures		Wind Direction	Wind Speed
			MAX.	MIN.		
Thursday	08/16	Very hot	47 °C	30 °C	NW-VRB	08 - 30 km/h
Friday	08/17	Very hot and some high clouds will appear	48 °C	33 °C	NW	15 - 38 km/h
Saturday	08/18	Very hot and some high clouds will appear	48 °C	34 °C	NW	15 - 40 km/h
Sunday	08/19	Very hot	47 °C	33 °C	NW	15 - 40 km/h

PRAYER TIMES	
Fajr	03:50
Sunrise	05:16
Zuhr	11:54
Asr	15:28
Sunset	18:29
Isha	19:51

RECORDED YESTERDAY AT KUWAIT AIRPORT	
MAX. Temp.	45 °C
MIN. Temp.	30 °C
MAX. RH	25 %
MIN. RH	08 %
MAX. Wind	NW 46 km/h
TOTAL RAINFALL IN 24 HR.	0 mm

## 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

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Tel: 24314839 / 24318720 - E-mail: bhasin@qualitynet.net  
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**Airlines**

Kuwait Airways	171
Jazeera Airways	177
Wataniya Airways	22 066 536
Turkish Airlines	1884918
American Airlines	22087425
Jet Airways	22087426
FlyDubai	22924455
Qatar Airways	22414400
KLM	22423888
Royal Jordanian	22425747
British Airways	22418064/5/6
Air France	22425635
Emirates	22430224
Air India	22921555
Sri Lanka Airlines	22438184
Egypt Air	22424444
Swiss Air	22421578
Saudia	22421516
Middle East Airlines	22426306
Lufthansa	22423073
	22422493

Directorate General of Civil Aviation Home Page ([www.kuwait-airport.com.kw](http://www.kuwait-airport.com.kw))

## Flight Schedule

**DIAL161 FOR AIRPORT INFORMATION**

Arrival Flights on Thursday 16/8/2018				Departure Flights on Thursday 16/8/2018			
Airlines	Flt	Route	Time	Airlines	Flt	Route	Time
MSC	405	Sohag	00:05	ABY	702	Damascus	13:30
FEQ	441	Asyut	00:05	THY	122	Sharjah	13:35
THY	772	Istanbul	00:15	JZR	767	Istanbul	13:40
DLH	625	Dammam	00:50	JZR	144	Doha	13:55
KAC	102	London	00:50	JZR	124	Bahrain	14:00
KAC	504	Beirut	00:50	MSR	611	Cairo	14:00
WAN	976D	Baku	00:55	JZR	552	Alexandria	14:05
JZR	539	Cairo	01:00	AXB	394	Kozhikode	14:10
PGT	858	Istanbul	01:15	UAE	872	Dubai	14:15
RJA	642	Amman	01:35	WAN	865	TZX	14:30
WAN	714	AGP	01:35	FEQ	242	Alexandria	14:50
UAE	853	Dubai	01:40	KAC	673	Dubai	15:00
KLM	446	Bahrain	01:45	KAC	661	Abu Dhabi	15:00
THY	1464	Istanbul	01:50	GFA	691	Muscat	15:00
KKK	1268	Istanbul	02:00	GFA	222	Bahrain	15:00
AXB	395	Kozhikode	02:00	FDB	060	Dubai	15:05
JZR	267	Beirut	02:10	JZR	188	Dubai	15:10
GFA	211	Bahrain	02:15	QTR	1079	Doha	15:15
ETH	620	Addis Ababa	02:15	SVA	501	Jeddah	15:45
QTR	1086	Doha	02:30	KAC	775	Riyadh	15:55
THY	768	Istanbul	02:40	KAC	785	Jeddah	16:00
JZR	553D	Alexandria	02:50	FDB	8066	Dubai	16:00
ETD	305	Abu Dhabi	03:05	KNE	506	Jeddah	16:00
OMA	643	Muscat	03:05	KAC	743	Dammam	16:05
MSR	606	Luxor	03:05	KAC	563	Amman	16:10
RBG	215	Sohag	03:05	KAC	619	Doha	16:15
KAC	418	Manila	03:05	ABY	128	Sharjah	16:15
KAC	382	Delhi	03:10	ETD	304	Abu Dhabi	16:20
MSR	612	Cairo	03:15	OMA	646	Muscat	16:20
PGT	860	Istanbul	03:25	KAC	615	Bahrain	16:40
QTR	1076	Doha	03:30	KNE	532	Jeddah	16:55
JAI	572	Mumbai	04:00	MSR	576	Sharm el-Sheikh	16:55
LMU	510	Cairo	04:00	KAC	675	Dubai	17:00
KAC	152	Istanbul	04:15	SAW	706	Damascus	17:00
KAC	784	Jeddah	04:30	KNE	536	Taif	17:05
JZR	609	Hyderabad	04:30	KAC	503	Beirut	17:15
THY	1414	TZX	05:05	FDB	052	Dubai	17:20
FDB	069	Dubai	05:05	QTR	1073	Doha	17:25
DHX	170	Bahrain	05:10	UAE	858	Dubai	17:40
THY	770	Istanbul	05:15	KAC	381	Delhi	17:45
KAC	544	Cairo	05:20	NIA	362	Alexandria	17:50
JZR	603	Mumbai	05:25	KAC	343	Chennai	18:00
KAC	344	Chennai	05:30	KAC	283	Dhaka	18:00
KAC	332	Trivandrum	05:40	SVA	511	Riyadh	18:15
KAC	362	Colombo	06:00	JZR	184	Dubai	18:20
BAW	157	London	06:10	GFA	216	Bahrain	18:20
WAN	338	Alexandria	06:25	JZR	608	Hyderabad	18:25
KAC	284	Dhaka	06:25	JZR	240	Amman	18:30
QTR	8511	Doha	06:35	JZR	512	Sharm el-Sheikh	18:30
KAC	206	Islamabad	06:40	JZR	538	Cairo	18:35
JZR	561D	Sohag	06:40	THY	1283	TZX	19:05
KAC	678	Dubai	06:45	JZR	266	Beirut	19:15
RBG	559	Alexandria	06:50	QTR	1081	Doha	19:20
KAC	302	Mumbai	07:00	KAC	151	Istanbul	19:20
JZR	605	Ahmedabad	07:05	MSR	621	Cairo	19:30
FDB	8397	Dubai	07:15	GFA	218	Bahrain	19:50
JZR	143	Doha	07:20	FDB	064	Dubai	19:50
KAC	354	Bengaluru	07:45	RJA	641	Amman	20:00
FDB	053	Dubai	07:50	ABY	124	Sharjah	20:00
KAC	358	Kochi	08:00	KAC	331	Trivandrum	20:10
KAC	384	Delhi	08:05	RBG	556	Alexandria	20:20
WAN	342	Sohag	08:10	JZR	602	Mumbai	20:30
WAN	529	Asyut	08:15	NIA	162	Cairo	20:30
UAE	855	Dubai	08:25	FDB	058	Dubai	20:30
WAN	352	Luxor	08:30	UAE	876	Dubai	20:35
ETD	301	Abu Dhabi	08:55	DLH	624	Dammam	20:50
ABY	125	Sharjah	09:00	KAC	357	Kochi	21:00
JZR	503	Luxor	09:00	KNE	353	Bengaluru	21:00
IRA	667	Esfahan	09:05	QTR	232	Riyadh	21:00
SAW	703	Damascus	09:30	OMA	648	Muscat	21:05
QTR	1070	Doha	09:30	BEI	408	Beirut	21:15
FDB	055	Dubai	09:40	JZR	550	Alexandria	21:30
SYR	341	Damascus	10:00	KAC	301	Mumbai	21:35
SVA	512	Riyadh	10:00	QTR	1089	Doha	21:50
THY	1516	TZX	10:05	DHX	171	Bahrain	21:50
GFA	213	Bahrain	10:40	KAC	203	Lahore	22:00
MEA	404	Beirut	10:55	ETD	308	Abu Dhabi	22:05
QTR	1074	Doha	11:00	KLM	445	Bahrain	22:10
JZR	541	Cairo	11:05	KAC	1543	Cairo	22:15
JZR	165	Dubai	11:45	ALK	230	Colombo	22:20
AHY	5101	Baku	11:55	KAC	383	Delhi	22:25
WAN	134	Doha	12:20	THY	1401	ADB	22:25
KAC	114	Bahrain	12:20	KAC	860	Dubai	22:35
SAW	709	Latakia	12:30	KAC	783	Jeddah	22:50
MSC	411	Asyut	12:30	GFA	220	Bahrain	22:50
UAE	871	Dubai	12:45	ETD	310	Abu Dhabi	23:00
THY	766	Istanbul	12:45	QTR	1083	Doha	23:20
ABY	121	Sharjah	12:55	WAN	337	Alexandria	23:40
MSR	610	Cairo	13:00	TRQ	231	KRT	23:55
JZR	239	Amman	13:00				
JZR	357	Mashhad	13:05				



A long exposure photograph shows lightning during a storm over the Taravo valley and the Petreto-Bicchisano village yesterday on the French Mediterranean island of Corsica. — AFP

# Media counters Trump with #EnemyOfNone campaign

WASHINGTON: Branded "enemy of the people" by Donald Trump, the US news media is responding with a campaign aimed at countering the president's narrative and highlighting the importance of a free press. More than 200 news organizations are to participate in a coordinated campaign Thursday with editorials about the importance of an independent media and a social media hashtag #EnemyOfNone.

## Cannot sit back

The move comes in response to a call by the Boston Globe amid a growing sense of unease that Trump's rhetoric is harmful to a free press and may even incite violence against journalists. The Boston daily said it called on editorial boards nationwide to write and publish editorials denouncing a "dirty war against the free press". The coordinated effort comes amid Trump's ongoing claims of "fake news" from media outlets that publish unfavorable articles and calling mainstream media outlets the "enemy". Free press advocates argue that Trump's efforts threaten the role of the press as a check against abuse of power in government and imperils the constitutional First Amendment protection

for journalists.

"I don't think the press can just sit back and take it, they need to make their case when the most powerful man in the world tries to undercut the First Amendment," said Ken Paulson, a former editor-in-chief of USA Today who heads the Newseum's First Amendment Center and is dean of communications at Middle Tennessee State University. But Paulson questioned whether editorials would be effective. "The people who read editorials don't need to be convinced," he said. "They are not the ones trying to shout you down at presidential rallies."

In the face of a White House onslaught, Paulson said the media needs a broader "marketing" campaign to highlight the importance of a free press as a core value. The campaign also faces the potential for galvanizing supporters of the president around the notion that the media is out to get him. "The media are organizing an ever more deliberate and public attack on @realDonaldTrump and on the 'deplorable' half of the country who support him. And the media wonders why we think they are 'fake news?'" tweeted Mike Huckabee, a former Republican governor who is a Fox News commentator.

Columnist James Freeman of the Wall Street Journal, owned by Trump ally Rupert Murdoch, said the campaign "probably isn't the best way to expand readership among the rightward half of the electorate". Freeman added: "If the Globe's effort is actually not intended to broaden its audience but instead to energize those who already oppose the president, this again may be a strategy more suited to politics than to journalism." Even some Trump critics have reservations about the campaign. Politico media writer Jack Shafer said the coordinated effort "is sure to backfire". "It will provide Trump with the circumstantial evidence of the existence of a national press cabal that has been convened solely to opposes him," he said.

## Striking a nerve

But media rights advocates say the stakes are too high to allow the president's claims to go unchecked. Some say Trump's comments have incited threats against journalists covering his events, and may have created a climate of hostility that opened the door to violent attacks like the June fatal attack on the Capital Gazette in Annapolis, Maryland. An Ipsos poll released

this month found 43 percent of Republicans agreed that the president should have the authority to close news outlets engaged in "bad behavior". "I don't know of any other industry that would not fight back," said Lucy Dalglish, dean of journalism at the University of Maryland. "The framers of our country recognized that information freely gathered and freely disseminated is of paramount importance," and thus enshrined in the constitution, she said.

Dan Kennedy, a journalism professor at Northeastern University, said the message is important even if it sparks a backlash. "It's worthwhile for newspapers to reaffirm their values and the importance of the First Amendment in a coherent, coordinated way," he said. Joining the effort Tuesday, New York Times editorial page editor James Bennet said, "At a time when newspapers around the country are under real commercial and political pressure, we think it's important to show solidarity." "I think the Globe struck a nerve," said Dalglish. "The journalists who work at these organizations know they are not enemies of the people, they are working on behalf of the people every day." — AFP

## Sweet taste of success: Syrian's...

Continued from Page 1

But Ahjam seeks just the opposite: he wants to remain in the country that welcomed him. "It is highly symbolic that someone who is a refugee finds an alternative way to live, a productive thing to do. Everyone deserves an opportunity," said Montevideo mayor Daniel Martinez, who was at the opening of the food stand.

Ahjam's store, which also serves coffee and juices, is located in the Montevideo Farmers Market, which used to be a wholesale venue but underwent a makeover to feature food stands, cultural exhibits and shops. His project was developed with help from a city agency called Cedel. "In Syria he was a jeweler. These are different markets and times now, and in wanting to live in Uruguay and develop himself here, he thinks the cuisine of his country could be a way to make a living," said Veronica de Gregorio, who runs one of the departments at Cedel. "He is not in the program because he is a former prisoner at Guantanamo but rather because he has entrepreneurial spirit," she added. — AFP

analysts say such measures are artificial stopgaps and do not deal with the core issues hurting Turkey's economy - especially inflation approaching some 16 percent - which are crying out for a sharp interest rate hike.

As a court in the western Turkish city of Izmir rejected a new appeal to free Brunson yesterday, Kalin said the US needs to be respectful of the judicial procedures in Turkey. Erdogan has warned Turkey could seek alternative partners, pointing to Ankara's strong ties with Russia, Iran and China. "The US is our major trade partner but it's not the only one," Pekcan, the trade minister, was quoted as saying by the official Anadolu news agency. "We have other partnerships and alternative markets."

Turkish officials have been keen to emphasize that Ankara wants to retain strong ties with Europe, which has also expressed deep unease with Trump's trade policies. Erdogan spoke on the phone with German Chancellor Angela Merkel yesterday, the Turkish presidency said while he is due to speak with French President Emmanuel Macron today. Relieving tensions in a case that annoyed Brussels, a Turkish court Tuesday released two Greek soldiers detained since March on espionage charges for illegally crossing the border. An Istanbul court also ordered the release of Amnesty International's Turkey chair Taner Kilic who has spent more than a year in jail over alleged links to a failed coup in 2016. — Agencies

## Somali-American, trans woman win

Continued from Page 1

Christine to seek the honor and opportunity to serve the people of Vermont as its next governor," it says.

Hallquist beat out James Ehlers, a Navy veteran and environmentalist, and Brenda Siegel, the executive director of a dance festival, to win the Democratic nomination. Also among the primary candidates was 14-year old schoolboy Ethan Sonneborn, who took advantage of a quirk in the constitution of the bucolic northeastern state that imposes no age minimum on running for governor. Despite praise for Sonneborn's "maturity" and political awareness, his campaign attracted calls for Vermont lawmakers to close the loophole.

In Minnesota, Ilhan Omar - a Somali-American state

legislator who is Muslim and wears a headscarf - declared victory in her primary race - a result also reported by US media. "Ilhan Omar has been declared the winner of the primary election in the race for Congress to represent Minnesota's Fifth District," a statement on her website said. "As the first refugee elected to Congress (and the second Muslim woman after Rashida Tlaib of Michigan), Ilhan will bring a unique perspective and new energy to our nation's capital," it said.

Tlaib, a 42-year-old former social worker, won a Democratic primary last week in a safe seat in Detroit. With no Republican or third-party candidates, she is positioned to enter the House of Representatives with the November midterm elections. "Tonight we are celebrating because we engaged and empowered our community and we won!" Omar said in the statement. "Together, each and every one of us are the inspiration we need to keep fighting for a democracy that gets us closer to the American promise of prosperity for all and the hope for a better tomorrow," she said. — AFP

## Qatar to invest \$15bn in Turkey as Sheikh...

Continued from Page 1

Trade Minister Ruhsar Pekcan said Turkey had doubled tariffs on 22 products imported from the United States, saying the tariffs were together worth an additional \$533 million. Erdogan's spokesman Kalin added: "Turkey is not in favor of an economic war with anyone but when attacked... will take all necessary steps."

Erdogan on Tuesday said Turkey would boycott US electronic goods like iPhones. Moves by the central bank to ensure Turkish banks have liquidity and a planned conference call by Turkish Finance Minister Berat Albayrak, who is Erdogan's son-in-law, today have gone some way to reassuring investors. Some 3,000 investors registered to join Albayrak's planned teleconference, the private NTV broadcaster reported.

The lira was trading yesterday at 6.0 to the dollar, a gain in value on the day of 5.2 percent. It was boosted after the Turkish banking regulator cut the amount of funds banks can use for currency swap trading, limiting the possibilities for speculating against the lira. But

## Kerala flood toll jumps to 67...

Continued from Page 1

and resultant flooding". Vijayan held emergency meetings with rescue officials in the state late yesterday and discussed the situation with Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

The chief minister has requested the deployment of additional personnel from the Indian army, navy and other emergency forces who are already working across the state, which is home to around 33 million people. "Our state is in the midst of an unprecedented flood havoc," Vijayan said earlier this week. "The calamity has caused immeasurable misery and devastation."

Authorities have opened the gates of 34 reservoirs as water reached dangerous levels. Vijayan's office yesterday said that the authorities were also worried about rising water levels in the massive Mullaperiyar dam, and urged officials in the neighboring state of Tamil Nadu to release water from the reservoir. Hundreds of villages have been flooded, more than 10,000 km of roads and thousands of homes have been destroyed or damaged across the state, officials said.

"We have asked all airlines, domestic and foreign, to reschedule their Cochin flights either from Trivandrum or from Calicut," Suresh Prabhu, India's civil aviation minister said on Twitter. "For international flights, this will require special dispensation which has been granted considering the emergency DGCA (Directorate General of Civil Aviation) is coordinating," he added. The US embassy last week advised Americans to avoid Kerala, which drew more than one million foreign tourists last year, according to official data. — AFP



## Sports

# Singapore pin hopes on Schooling as Nicol David seeks fifth gold

## 'My goal for Asian Games is to do my best for the country'

**SINGAPORE:** Singapore will be looking to make a splash in the pool at the Asian Games in neighbouring Indonesia this month as Olympic gold medallist Joseph Schooling leads a strong swim team aiming to surpass the six medals they claimed at Incheon four years ago.

Texas-based Schooling made history for the tiny island nation when he claimed its first Olympic success in the 100m butterfly at the 2016 Rio Games and he will hope to improve on the three medals, one of each colour, he took home from Korea.

"My goal for Asian Games is to do my best for the country, bring glory to Singapore and helping out the younger kids, we have a young team and I'm super excited particularly for the relays," the 23-year-old told local media.

Schooling is pencilled in for five events in Jakarta as he builds momentum towards the 2020 Tokyo Olympics and while he is aiming high in Indonesia, Singapore is refusing to set medal goals for the record-sized squad it is sending to the Games.

A total of 265 athletes in 21 sports will be making the short trip across the Java Sea with Singapore officials looking for success in three specific disciplines. "With the largest Team Singapore contingent heading to the Asian Games, we are certainly expecting the best of them," Asian Games chef de mission Lee Wung Yew said at a recent flag presentation ceremony.

"If you are looking at medal expectations, we are looking at three main sports—sailing, bowling and swimming—but we are also looking at possibly nice surprises in other sports as well."

Across the causeway in Malaysia, squash all-time great Nicol David will be hoping to emerge from what is likely to be her final Asian Games appearance with a fifth individual gold medal, 20 years after winning her first as a 14-year-old.

"The Asian Games is held once every four years... I'll not take things for granted," said David, who also has two team golds and has returned to Kuala Lumpur from her home in Amsterdam to focus her training on the Asian Games.

David will be the top seed in the individual event but she is expecting a tough challenge from opponents representing Hong Kong and India. Malaysia, who like Singapore will send a record contingent to Indonesia, will also be hoping for success in tennis, badminton, diving, karate, badminton, track cycling and sepak takraw after the nation claimed 33 medals, five golds, in Incheon.

However, the 440-strong squad will be missing long-time world number one badminton player Lee Chong Wei, whose hopes of finally winning a maiden Asian Games title at the age of 35 have been scuppered by a respiratory-related illness. — Reuters



Joseph Schooling

## India's gender-row sprinter gets Asian Games chance

**HYDERABAD:** Four years after she was forced out of the Asian Games in a row over her gender, Indian sprinter Dutee Chand said she was determined to make up for lost time as she finally gets her chance in Indonesia.

Chand, affected by the same condition, hyperandrogenism, which has dogged the career of double Olympic champion Caster Semenya, fought and won a lengthy court battle to remain in the sport she loves.

Now the 22-year-old is hoping for a redemptive medal at her long-delayed Asian Games debut in Jakarta, where she also has her eye on lowering India's 100m record for the second time in two months. "I am just so happy. I missed the 2014 Asian Games due to the hyperandrogenism row, so it's my chance to prove my worth," Chand, whose hero is Usain Bolt, told AFP after a training session in Hyderabad.

"I hope my hard work pays off," she said. "I never thought of quitting. It's always a dream for an athlete to

represent their country and what happened was not my fault." It has been a difficult road for Chand, who was born in rural poverty and suffered the psychological trauma of gender testing when she was just a teenager after showing elevated levels of testosterone in 2014.

After being diagnosed with hyperandrogenism, a condition which produces high testosterone levels, Chand was barred from competing under the International Association of Athletics Federation's rules at the time. However, Chand took her case to the Court of Arbitration for Sport, which finally ruled in her favour earlier this year.

"We are six sisters as my mother had wanted a son but that did not happen. We were poor and even getting two meals was tough. So I took to sports to earn money and improve myself," she said.

"I just wanted to run and had never heard of high testosterone and all that. So for those four years I was under tremendous mental pressure and could not concentrate on my training.

"I didn't take drugs or anything of that sort, it's all natural. All human bodies are different. Natural hormones cannot be reduced or increased. Finally people understood this and I won the case."

### SHORT-SIGHTED DECISION

This year, the IAAF changed its rules to target middle-distance runners, who include Semenya, citing evidence that races between 400m and a mile had been

most affected by women with high testosterone levels.

While South Africa's athletics federation has pledged to challenge the ruling, Chand is able to compete as she runs the 100 and 200m, thanks partly to another quirk of her physiology—short-sightedness.

"I concentrate on 100m because I am short-sighted," said Chand, who originally ran long-distance.

"My first coach retired in 2008 and the new coach said I can only train you for 100 and 200m. So I started running short distance and there has been no looking back," she added.

At India's Inter-State Championships in June, Chand set a new national record of 11.29 sec, still some way off the long-standing Asian mark of 10.79 set by China's Li Xuemei in 1997.

"I hope I can win a medal but you never know. The Asian Games is a big competition with top runners," said Chand. Ramesh Nagapuri, Chand's coach since 2012, said it is difficult for athletes to rediscover their rhythm after a long break—but stressed that she has come back ready for a fight.

"Somehow we are trying to patch up but it's like a wound, it will heal up but the scars will be there," said Nagapuri, while overseeing her training at the Gopichand Academy in Hyderabad.

"Frankly we are planning to do better than the 11.29sec at the Inter-State. Anything that is better we will take," Nagapuri said with a smile, before pushing Chand to go harder again in training. — AFP

## Shooters, wrestlers shoulder India's burden of expectations

**NEW DELHI:** India will be banking largely on their shooters, wrestlers and boxers to deliver gold at the Asian Games in Indonesia to better the 57-medal mark they achieved in Incheon four years ago. India, who struggle at the Olympics despite their population, have done reasonably well in the quadrennial continental event, only twice finishing outside the top eight since hosting the first Asiad in 1951.

They won at least 10 golds in each of the last four Games and the Aug 18-Sept. 2 multi-sports competition will be a timely indicator ahead of the Tokyo Olympics in 2020. "India was ranked eighth in the last Asian Games and every effort has been made... to ensure we win more medals this time and improve our overall standings," Indian Olympic Association President Narinder Batra said at a farewell for the athletes. Spearheading India's golden pursuit will be the shooters, who topped the medal tally in this year's Mexico World Cup, finishing ahead of United States and China and be headlined by a trio of talented teenagers. Anish Bhanwala, 15, became India's youngest Commonwealth Games gold medallist when he won the men's 25m rapid fire pistol, snatching the honour from 16-year-old Manu Bhaker who had won the women's 10m air rifle finals on the Gold Coast barely a week before.

A third teenager, rifle shooter Elavenil Valarivan, will be another strong contender after landing two junior World Cup gold medals setting a new world record in the process. The wrestling mat could prove equally high-yielding and Bajrang Punia's sizzling form makes the 2014 silver medallist India's best bet for a gold in Jakarta.

The freestyle wrestler won the 65kg gold at the Commonwealth Games and was not required to attend trials for the Asiad. In the women's section, Gold Coast champion Vinesh Phogat (50kg) will be a strong contender for the gold medal.

New training methods introduced by Argentine-born Swedish coach Santiago Nieva have been credited for the Indian success in recent boxing tournaments. Vikas Krishan, who won the lightweight gold at Guangzhou in 2010 but took silver when he moved to middleweight four years later, is seeking his third successive Asiad medal.

India have won all nine kabaddi gold since its inclusion in 1990 and the trend is unlikely to change, while anything less than gold will be a disappointment for the men's hockey team who were runners-up in the Champions Trophy.

Commonwealth Games javelin champion Neeraj Chopra also gave himself a major morale boost on the Gold Coast in a rare athletics success for the country and the 20-year-old will be the flag-bearer in Jakarta. — Reuters

## Indonesia's richest man going for gold at Asian Games

**INDONESIA:** Billionaire tobacco tycoon Michael Bambang Hartono may not be the oldest competitor at the Asian Games, but he is the richest. The 78-year-old head of cigarette giant Djarum Group is set to represent host Indonesia on its bridge team at the world's second-biggest multi-sport event, which kicks off Saturday in Jakarta and co-host city Palembang.

Hartono was narrowly beaten in the age category by 81-year-old Malaysian bridge player Lee Hung Fong, who is seven decades older than the youngest athlete, nine-year-old Indonesian skateboarder Aliqqa Novvry Kayyisa.

But unlike his octogenarian bridge rival, Hartono, along with brother Robert, has been named Indonesia's richest man by Forbes magazine which also ranked him the 75th wealthiest in the world.

Hartono is estimated to have a net worth of some \$16.7 billion from his interests in tobacco, banking and communications. Talk about business—especially his tobacco fortune—wasn't on the table when Hartono gave a rare media interview this week, however.

"I play bridge to keep my memory sharp. My other hobby is tai chi, which helps me stay focused," he told domestic news agency Antara. Hartono—who reportedly started playing bridge at age six—was instrumental in convincing a sceptical Olympic Council of Asia to give the card game its first spot at the Asian Games.



**JAKARTA:** This picture taken on August 11, 2018 shows Indonesian billionaire tobacco tycoon Michael Bambang Hartono announcing his participation as a competitor on Indonesia's bridge team at the 2018 Asian Games in Jakarta. — AFP

"At first, the OCA declined to include bridge, as it appears to resemble gambling," he told Antara. Hartono, who has competed several times in the World Bridge Championships, said he is shooting for gold at the Asian Games. But he'll forego a 1.5 billion rupiah (\$102,000) cash prize that the Indonesia's government

gives top medallists.

"If I managed to win gold, I would donate the government's cash prize to the athletes training program," he said. Indonesia is hosting some 11,000 athletes and 5,000 officials from 45 Asian countries for the August 18 to September 2 Games. — AFP

## Tarnished weightlifting fights for Olympic survival at Asian Games

**JAKARTA:** Doping-ravaged weightlifting begins its Asian Games competition on Monday without a banned traditional powerhouse and with the sport's boss warning it would "slowly disappear" if it were to lose its Olympic status.

No fewer than 12 world records were broken at an explosive 2014 Asiad in Incheon but now the sport needs to prove it can comply with world anti-doping

standards to lift the threat of Olympic expulsion.

China dominated four years ago with seven golds, five silvers and two bronzes, but none of their lifters will be in Jakarta. They are among nine nations currently serving a 12-month International Weightlifting Federation (IWF) ban after their reanalysed drugs tests from the 2008 and 2012 Olympics returned at least three positives. Kazakhstan, who were prominent with one gold and three silvers in 2014, are another of the nine banned, while Malaysia have pulled their team because of their own poor doping record. North Korea have seen three of their four gold-medal winners from Incheon 2014 subsequently banned for failed drugs tests, but remain favourites to top the medal count in China's absence.

Weightlifting is assured of its place at the Tokyo 2020 Olympic Games but the

drugs-tarnished sport is attempting a cultural change to prevent it being dropped from the programme for Paris 2024.

IWF president Tamas Ajan issued a stern warning last month that the sport would fall off the map if it were to lose its Olympic status. The IWF delivered a report in June detailing how it had met anti-doping requirements demanded by the International Olympic Committee (IOC).

However, the IOC decided to leave to sport on probation until after the Asian Games and November's World Championships. "I have a question: what will happen with weightlifting if it is not on the (Olympic) programme?" the Romanian-born Hungarian Ajan asked delegates at the IWF congress in Tashkent last month.

"I don't give the answer because you know it: weightlifting will slowly disappear." Ajan appealed to delegates to ensure their

nations remained squeaky clean, with the IOC due to discuss the matter again at its executive meeting in Tokyo from November 30 to December 2.

"Please cut out everything that leads them to bringing their anabolic steroids, their growth hormones or any other things," implored Ajan, according to website inside-thegames.com. "Don't use anything."

Meanwhile North Korea will try to shake off their own poor doping record to dominate the Jakarta weightlifting medals. The competition sees eight men's and seven women's weight divisions with the combined weight for the two lifting disciplines—snatch and clean and jerk—deciding the placings.

North Korea are sending six men and six women led by pocket rocket Om Yun Chol. The 2012 Olympic champion Om is just 1.51 metres (4ft 11in) tall and broke his own

men's 56kg world record to win gold in Incheon four years ago, sparking exuberant celebrations. But the secretive nation's other three gold medallists from Incheon are in disgrace. Women's 75kg winner Kim Un Ju was banned for two years for steroids just three months after her Incheon triumph.

Her 58kg compatriot and fellow gold medallist Jong Hwa Ri tested positive for anti-asthma drug clenbuterol. Kim Un Guk, the men's 62kg winner, failed a test for letrozole in 2015 and is banned until December next year. Silver medallists Kim Kwan-Song (men 77kg), Ryo Un-Hui (women 69kg) are also serving four-year doping bans. Iran are likely to sweep the men's heavier classes with world-record holders Kianoush Rostami (85kg) and Sohrab Moradi (94kg), and former super-heavyweight (+105kg) world record holder Behdad Salimkordiasabi all entered. — AFP

## Sports

# Cleared Ben Stokes fuels fiery debate about his future

## 'There are clauses in an England cricketer's contract'

**LONDON:** England star Ben Stokes may have been cleared of affray but former cricket luminaries while agreeing his behaviour was well below that expected of a man seen by many as a role model are divided as to whether he should face further punishment.

The 27-year-old New Zealand-born all-rounder faces an internal disciplinary enquiry by the Cricket Discipline Commission (CDC) following his acquittal by unanimous decision of a jury on Tuesday.

Former Derbyshire batsman and qualified solicitor Tim O'Gorman is heading the investigation. Stokes's teammate Alex Hales—who was with him during the late night brawl outside a club in Bristol, southwest England, last September but was not charged—will also face the enquiry. However, former England captains Mike Atherton and Nasser Hussain whilst both abhorring his behaviour are at odds with each other as to whether he should be punished further. "With a not-guilty verdict, the way forward seems, to me, to be clear enough and should not involve further punishment," Atherton writes in *The Times*. Atherton, who captained England in 54 of his 115 Test matches, conceded Stokes's heavy drinking that night and what ensued afterwards "is not exactly acceptable behaviour for an England player during international duty". "There are clauses in an England cricketer's contract—such as bringing the game into disrepute—that could yet result in punishment," the 50-year-old commented. "Although Stokes was never formally suspended from the England team, his non-selection for the Ashes came about clearly as a result of the events in Bristol. He missed the most high-profile series in which an England cricketer can play, essentially a six-month ban." Hussain, capped 96 times and captained England 45 times till stepping down from the post in 2003, argued differently saying the images caught on CCTV cannot just be ignored and the

governing body the England and Wales Cricket Board (ECB) have to act.

"Some people would argue that Ben Stokes has had it tough, and has served his time in missing the Ashes, but I see it differently," he told *The Daily Mail*. "The ECB should not now take the easy option."

"It is far too serious an issue, and the footage far too serious, for people to think about moving on and brushing things under the carpet."

### 'DOESN'T EVERYONE?'

Former England spinner Vic Marks says in *The Guardian* there is no doubt Stokes "brought the game into disrepute" on a "feral night out" which does nothing to promote the image of the game the ECB wants to display to families.

Marks draws comparison between Stokes and a superstar all-rounder of another era and one he played with in the great Somerset side of the 1970s and 80s, Ian Botham. "The very best cricketers often ooze invincibility; they are never out and never wrong," wrote Marks. "They feel invulnerable, capable of dominating any situation. I have witnessed this at close quarters when playing alongside Ian Botham." Marks, who played six Tests and 34 One Day Internationals for his country, says Stokes, though, suffers from being a star in a time when social media can destroy you within seconds but compares the professionalism these days of sports stars management teams to those in Botham's day. "In Botham's era the backroom staff were not so sophisticated," observed Marks. "He once had an agent, Tim Hudson, whose response to an allegation about Ian smoking cannabis was famously, 'Doesn't everyone?'"

Marks suggests Stokes take former Australian skipper Ricky Ponting as a role model in moving forward.



**BRISTOL:** File photo shows England cricketer Ben Stokes leaves Bristol Crown Court as the trial breaks for lunch, in Bristol, south-west England on August 13, during his trial on charges of affray. — AFP

"Ponting had his moments of madness in bars as a young Australian cricketer and was dropped in 1999 after an incident in Sydney which left him unconscious in the early hours of the morning," writes Marks.

"He was not required to go to court but he acknowledged a problem with alcohol and his off-field behaviour, and with appropriate help he resolved it before going on to have the most brilliant of careers." — AFP

## Curran follows late father in signing for Northamptonshire

**LONDON:** Ben Curran is to play county cricket for Northamptonshire, the club his late father Kevin gave eight years of his career to, as he signed a two-year contract yesterday.

The 22-year-old batsman — whose brothers Tom and Sam play for Surrey and have both been capped by England — played for the first team in a T20 match last week, but it has been his performances for the second XI that have secured him the contract which begins next season.

"Ben has scored heavily in all formats for us in the 2's as well as continuing to churn out runs for the MCCYC's (MCC Young Cricketers)," head coach David Ripley told the county side's website.

"He deserves an opportunity and we look forward to working with him over the next two seasons. He has a lot of competitive spirit and I know he will make the most of his chance." Curran's father Kevin was an all-rounder who played for Zimbabwe at the 1983 and 1987 World Cups, as well as for 14 years in the county championship, firstly with Gloucestershire and then Northamptonshire.

He tragically died aged just 53 of a heart attack in 2012 whilst out jogging in Zimbabwe. Ben said the fact he is following in his father's footsteps added to the significance of his first professional contract. "I'm delighted to have signed for Northants," he said. "The fact that my Dad played here too it makes it even more special to be able to represent this County." — AFP

## Gary Stead named NZ cricket coach

**WELLINGTON:** New Zealand Cricket appointed former Test batsman Gary Stead as the new Black Caps coach yesterday, with pundits describing him as a steady pair of hands to replace predecessor Mike Hesson.

Stead, 46, was a journeyman opening bat, playing just five Tests in 1999 before being dropped. But he has excelled as a coach, guiding Canterbury to domestic titles in 2014, 2015 and 2017. He also took the national women's team, the White Ferns, to the 2019 World Cup final.

Stead was given a two-year contract and said he wanted to continue the improvement the Black Caps had shown under Hesson. "This is a well-established and high-performing Black Caps side with an excellent captain in Kane Williamson and a real desire to win series and titles," he said. "It's an honour and a privilege to be part of that. I can't wait to get started." Former batsman Peter Fulton said Stead would build on Hesson's legacy. "He'll be very well organised, a lot of detail and a really good thinker about the game," he told *Radio Sport*.

"New Zealand Cricket have made it pretty obvious they were keen for someone who's going to come in and not rock the boat too much." NZC chief executive David White said he was "delighted" to appoint a coach who had proven high-performance experience.

"He has excellent qualifications, a solid temperament, vast experience, and is open to innovation," he said. Hesson announced his departure in June, even though he had a year left on his contract, saying he had run out of steam and wanted to spend more time with his family.

He oversaw improvements in all formats of the game, but the highlight of his six-year tenure was New Zealand's appearance in the final of the 2015 World Cup. — AFP

## Tennis world to vote on Davis Cup shake-up

**LOS ANGELES:** The most radical overhaul in the 118-year history of the Davis Cup could be given the green light today as the tennis world gathers in Florida to vote on sweeping reforms which have divided the sport.

Around 120 delegates at the International Tennis Federation's annual meeting in Orlando will decide whether proposals by federation chief David Haggerty are to be given the go-ahead. Haggerty's plan will see the Davis Cup's sprawling existing format, stretched across the calendar year and played in all corners of the globe, condensed into a season-ending 18-nation event played at a single, neutral venue.

Haggerty told AFP in a conference call on Tuesday that the overhaul would boost the ITF's ability to spread development funding across the globe, pumping around \$25 million back into the sport.

"The ITF is the only organisation that puts money into the development of the game," Haggerty said. "And that's what this project enables us to do. The money that we make will be put back to the nations for their development programs and the future of tennis."

The reforms have the backing of a \$3 billion partner-

ship from the Kosmos investment group, founded by Barcelona football star Gerard Pique and supported by Japanese billionaire Hiroshi Mikitani.

The ITF maintains the new-look Davis Cup would boost the profile of the tournament, which was first held in 1900 when the United States defeated Britain at the Longwood Cricket Club in Boston, Massachusetts.

Under the new proposed format, 18 teams would play in the Davis Cup finale, split into six groups of three teams. Six group winners and two runners-up would then advance to knockout rounds.

Unlike current Davis Cup ties, which comprise four singles and one doubles, ties would feature only two singles and a doubles game. Federation chiefs say the revamped competition would effectively create a fifth Grand Slam event, increase prize money and allow the Davis Cup to attract top players by freeing up space on the calendar.

Yet the changes have appalled some of the greatest names ever to grace the competition. Past Australian Davis Cup captains and players including Rod Laver, John Newcombe and Lleyton Hewitt were united in condemning the proposed overhaul.

### 'DEATH OF DAVIS CUP'

Newcombe, a five-time champion as a player, described the overhaul as "a recipe for the death of the Davis Cup as we know it." "The Davis Cup is 118 years old and was the forerunner that made tennis into an international sport," Newcombe said.

Hewitt disparaged the changes as little more than a "money grab" which ignored the tournament's history.

Haggerty however said Tuesday that while "change is difficult sometimes," he had been encouraged by positive feedback from delegates in Florida this week.

"The mood is good. The reception has been very positive," he said. "We just want to do the right thing for tennis...The new model allows the ITF to fulfil the mission in a much better way."

"Having more resources to put behind the development of tennis is the most important thing for an international federation." The overhaul has also won support from Serbian star Novak Djokovic.

The 13-time Grand Slam winner believes a change in format is long overdue. "I think that format needs to be changed. And I'm all in favour of that," Djokovic said in Toronto last week. "You play one year, and then the next year you don't play. It's just the scheduling of this kind of format so far has been pretty bad."

The Davis Cup reforms require two-thirds majority support from ITF delegates in Orlando today. If successful, the new format would be launched in November of 2019, with Europe guaranteed to host the first two editions of the new-look event.

One complication however could well be the introduction of a revamped World Team Cup due to take place in Australia in the first week of 2020. The tournament, which has the backing of the ATP and Tennis Australia, will feature 24 teams and offer prize money and rankings points.

ATP executive chairman Chris Kermode has acknowledged the problems of staging the new event just six weeks after the proposed Davis Cup, describing the scheduling as "insane." — AFP

## NBA releases Philippines' Clarkson for Asian Games

**MANILA:** Cleveland Cavaliers guard Jordan Clarkson will suit up for the Philippines at the Asian Games in Indonesia, the country's basketball federation announced yesterday, just days after the NBA said it would not release him for the event.

The National Basketball Association granted a "one-time exception" for the 26-year-old Clarkson and two Chinese players—Houston Rockets centre Zhou Qi and Dallas Mavericks forward Ding Yanyuhang—to represent their countries at the 2018 Asiad.

Born in the United States, Clarkson is eligible to play for the Philippines as it is his maternal grandmother's country of origin. "This action of the NBA will no doubt cheer the hearts of Filipinos here and all over the world," the Philippines' national basketball federation said in a statement.

The US league had earlier refused Clarkson permission to play in tournament, being held in Indonesia from August 18 to September 2. The Asian Games are the world's largest multi-sport event after the Olympics, but are not among the competitions NBA players are allowed to participate in under an agreement between the league and FIBA, basketball's world governing body. "My heart is full of gratitude for everyone who helped make this happen. See you all very soon!" Clarkson wrote on Facebook, and posted a photo of himself in a Philippines shirt. A purported NBA announcement confirming the decision was posted on the website of its local broadcast partner, but could not be independently verified. The league's representatives in Manila could not be reached for comment yesterday.

Clarkson joined the NBA in 2014 and has a career average of 14.1 points, 3.2 rebounds and 2.8 assists, most of them during a spell at the Los Angeles Lakers. He played two games off the bench in the 2018 NBA finals against eventual champions Golden State Warriors.



**Jordan Clarkson**

The Philippines had originally withdrawn from the Asian Games men's basketball tournament after 10 of their first-team players and two coaches were hit with suspensions and fines after an on-court brawl with Australia at a World Cup qualifier last month.

The decision was later reversed after an intervention by the office of President Rodrigo Duterte. Winners of four Asiad basketball golds—but none after 1962 — the Philippines are in a tough group this year, which includes favourites China. — AFP

## Sports

# Champions League glory not pivotal to being judged a success: De Bruyne

‘It is a tournament, you need to be good at the right time’

LONDON: Manchester City don't need to win the Champions League to be judged a success, claims Belgian star Kevin de Bruyne in an interview with the BBC. European club football's most prestigious trophy has proved elusive to City despite the hundreds of millions invested in players since Abu Dhabi United Group bought the club in 2008 with a semi-final appearance in the 2015/16 season under Manuel Pellegrini their best showing.

However, De Bruyne-whose Champions League hopes were dashed by Premier League rivals Liverpool last season-tells the BBC winning the league crown last season probably ranks as a greater achievement than if one were to win the Champions League.

"I don't agree that we have to win the Champions League to be a success," said De Bruyne, who has been with City since 2015. "It is a big title to win but in the Champions League you don't need to have the consistency that you need in the league.

"We were great for the whole year, maybe a bit less against Liverpool, and so we were out." De Bruyne speaks with even more recent painful experience of disappointment at a major tournament with Belgium beaten by eventual champions France in the World Cup semi-finals.

"It is a tournament, you need to be good at the right time," he said. "In the league if you have a bad spell then you are running behind. It is a different prospect,

cup games are different to a league."

De Bruyne, who scored a stunning goal in Belgium's 2-1 World Cup quarter-final win over Brazil, says he enjoys a professional relationship with City manager Pep Guardiola. Guardiola is filmed in the eight part documentary series 'All or Nothing' made by Amazon covering City last season-which is to be aired on the streaming service Amazon Prime on Friday-telling the players if they felt they would play better by hating him then they should do so.

"Pep has different relationships with everyone," De Bruyne told the BBC. "I am lucky that I like to play the way already that he implemented so it was an easier transition, more natural." De Bruyne, who unlike his former Genk team-mate Thibaut Courtois did not enjoy a successful time when he joined Chelsea in 2012 and was eventually sold to German outfit VfL Wolfsburg in 2014, concedes levity can be in short supply in Guardiola's pep talks. "Pep can be intense," said the 27-year-old who scored eight goals and provided 16 assists in City's title win which yielded several records including passing 100 points. "In the end sometimes it can be an overload (of information from him) but every person in life has that when they are at work. We cope with it fine.

"You don't have to shout at him, you talk like an adult, you are both people who came here to win as a team. If you explain what you are thinking then there is no problem." —AFP



Kevin de Bruyne

## Chinese fans cry foul over footballing body's drastic bans

SHANGHAI: Players and coaches traipse before the Chinese Football Association (CFA) like naughty school children to plead their innocence, then await their fate. It is rarely good news. With global interest in Chinese football growing, the CFA has been busy dishing out bans, fines or warnings for on- and off-field misdemeanours that would go unpunished or receive a mere wrist slap in most countries.

Kicking a water bottle in anger? That will cost you 15,000 yuan (\$2,200) and a three-game ban. Wearing jewellery while playing for China? Banned from the team for a year. Criticising a referee? A 20,000 yuan fine and two-match stadium ban.

Attempting to guess the harsh extent of the CFA's weekly punishments has become something of a sport itself among fans who vent their exasperation online. The regular "punishment notices" are jokingly referred to by some supporters as the "routine CFA Xiaoping calligraphy exhibition"-disciplinary committee director

Wang Xiaoping signs each notice.

Chinese football has come under increasing official scrutiny in recent years after President Xi Jinping expressed ambitions of Chinese football someday rivaling the world's best.

After clubs took that cue too far and went on a massive spending spree for foreign players, authorities last year imposed caps on transfers to prevent "irrational" expenditure. Ji Zhe, an expert on Chinese football, said the rash of punishments showed a "lack of consistency and transparency about the rules".

"The severity of the bans is perhaps also another way for the CFA and the CSL to exert control and practise an old Chinese saying, 'Kill the chicken to scare the monkey,'" said Zhe, director at sports marketing firm Red Lantern, which specialises in China.

### 'CAUSING CHAOS'

Expensive foreign coaches and players-whose presence in the country has put the Chinese Super League (CSL) on the footballing map-have not escaped censure. Shanghai SIPG's Oscar, who at 60 million euros (\$67.9 million) was the most expensive player ever in Asian football when he arrived in 2017, was banned for eight matches last season for kicking the ball at an opponent, triggering an all-out brawl.

Team-mate Hulk wore a T-shirt in support of his fellow Brazilian-cue two-match ban. Andre Villas-Boas, SIPG's coach at the time, was also hit with a two-game

ban because he wrote on Instagram in defence of Oscar: "355 career games; 5 years in the English Premier League; 47 appearances for Brazil; 70 goals. ZERO RED CARDS!!! 8 games suspended."

Villas-Boas, hardly the bad boy of the English Premier League while in charge at Chelsea and then Tottenham Hotspur, was also later banned for eight games after he criticised a referee. The Portuguese spent only one season in China before leaving last November. There are suggestions that the bans were a major reason for him quitting.

The CFA's disciplinary organs came under the spotlight again last week when they banned Changchun Yatai midfielder Zhang Li for six games after he "interfered with the normal order of the game, causing chaos and adverse social impact".

Zhang had been accused of using a racial slur against Shanghai Shenhua's Senegalese striker Demba Ba, but the punishment notice made no mention of that. Zhang strenuously denies using a racist word and has threatened to sue, prompting many to ask: if racism wasn't mentioned, why the long ban?

Zhe said the disciplinary spree may be "a sign that the rule book is not as comprehensive as it should be-I do know that one exists." "It feels like it's a ban-by-committee mechanism and each incident is treated individually and at the whim of the committee, whoever that might be." AFP asked the CFA about its disciplinary procedures but it declined to comment. —AFP

## Messi to skip Argentina friendlies

BUENOS AIRES: Captain Lionel Messi will miss Argentina's next four friendly matches, according to local press reports on Tuesday. The five-time Ballon d'Or winner previously retired from the national side after their 2016 Copa America final defeat by Chile before returning to help them qualify for this year's World Cup.

The two-time world champions will face Guatemala in Los Angeles on September 7 and Colombia in New York four days later, before two friendlies later in the year against as-yet unnamed opponents.

"Messi will not return this year and there are doubts about his future," proclaimed Argentinian daily Clarin. News website Infobae said: "He will take a rest period, but that doesn't mean he's quitting." "It is the coach who will say, when the time comes, what the situation is concerning Messi," a team spokesman told AFP. Lionel Scaloni has been in temporary charge of Argentina since Jorge Sampaoli left after their disastrous World Cup tournament in Russia, where they were beaten 4-3 in the last 16 by France after an embarrassing 3-0 group-stage loss to Croatia.

He will name his first squad for the visit to the United States later this week. "It's very personal. Leo must take his time to think about it," said Carlos Tevez, who is in Barcelona for Boca Juniors' friendly on Wednesday at the Camp Nou.

"It's understandable... even if he doesn't come back. When the international side play, rightly or wrongly, we criticise him. It's bad for the team and for him... I understand because I've been in that situation." Messi's next chance to win his first major international title will be the 2019 Copa America in Brazil. —AFP

## Croatia World Cup keeper Subasic retires

ZAGREB: Croatia goalkeeper Danijel Subasic announced his international retirement yesterday one month after starring in the World Cup final. "The time has come after 10 years on the national team to say goodbye my favourite jersey," Subasic wrote in a letter published by the Croatian Football Federation (HNS), a day after striker Mario Mandzukic retired.

"I made my decision long before the World Cup because my dream was to end my career with the national team at a World Cup," Subasic added. "The one in Russia was the most emotional moment of my career... thank you all," added the Monaco goalkeeper.

The native of Zadar made his debut for the "Vatreni" (Fiery Ones) in 2009. At the World Cup in Russia he was the hero in the last 16 against Denmark, making three penalty saves in a nail-biting shootout.

In the quarter-finals, he stopped two goalbound shots to help eliminate hosts Russia, before seeing off England and then falling to France in the final. His international retirement comes after Croatia striker Mario Mandzukic and defender Vedran Corluka also announced their international retirements. —AFP

## Zaha signs new five-year deal at Palace

LONDON: Wilfried Zaha has signed a new five-year contract with Crystal Palace to extend his stay at Selhurst Park until 2023, the Premier League club said yesterday. British media reported the 25-year-old forward agreed a new deal worth 130,000 pounds (\$165,360) per week, making him the highest-paid player at the club.

The Ivorian international netted a career-high nine league goals and made three assists to help Palace secure an 11th-place finish last season after a disastrous start. Zaha, who had an unhappy season at Manchester United in 2013-14 before returning to Palace, had been linked with potential moves to Chelsea and Tottenham Hotspur during the transfer window but no deal materialised.

"Wilf grew up a stone's throw from Selhurst Park from the age of four, and has been with the club since he was 12," Palace chairman Steve Parish said in a statement. "This agreement is yet another example of his lifelong commitment to the club, and our commitment to him. This is an amazing day for everyone here at Palace, our supporters and of course Wilf - and is richly deserved." — Reuters



BANDUNG: Hwang Hee-chan (L) of South Korea tussles for the ball against Husain Alkhayyat (C) and Sayed Mohamed Shubbar (R) of Bahrain during the football competition of the 2018 Asian Games at the Si Jalak Harupat Stadium in Bandung yesterday. — AFP

## Military precision as Son's Korea arch past Bahrain 6-0

BANDUNG: Son Heung-min watched from the bench as South Korea tore apart Bahrain 6-0 at the Asian Games yesterday to boost the Tottenham Hotspur striker's chances of avoiding military service by winning gold. Son, who only joined the squad this week, cheered on the defending champions as Hwang Ui-jo netted a first-half hat-trick and Kim Jin-ya, Na Sang-ho and Hwang Hee-chan also scored in their opening Group E game. Spurs gave Son, 26, special permission to play the Asian Games, where the gold medal represents his last chance of winning a reprieve from his 21 months'

compulsory military service.

As he warmed the bench wearing a black tracksuit top, Hwang quickly took the game away from outclassed Bahrain with his triple strike within 26 minutes in the first half. The prolific Gamba Osaka forward hammered the opening goal from close range on 17 minutes, before Kim Jin-ya grabbed the Koreans' second on the rebound six minutes later.

Hwang's turn and shot on made it 3-0 on 36 minutes, and he could have had another if he had arrived a split-second earlier as Na Sang-ho's effort trickled over the line. But Hwang soon brought up his hat-trick with a finish from a tight angle, two minutes before half-time, as South Korea turned 5-0 ahead and in total control.

Bahrain saw more of the ball as South Korea eased off in the second half, but they were unable to find a way past World Cup goalkeeper Jo Hyeon-woo who is also hoping to avoid military service. — AFP

## Whitlock's to play 100th in All Blacks side

SYDNEY: All Blacks lock Sam Whitlock will play his milestone 100th Test on Saturday as New Zealand stick with their strongest possible unit to play a confident Australia in Sydney. Whitlock becomes only the eighth All Black to achieve the milestone, and does so with the world champions under pressure to defend a remarkable run over their neighbours.

At stake in the opening Rugby Championship clash of the season is the first round of the Bledisloe Cup, a trophy contested annually between New Zealand and Australia which the All Blacks have held since 2003.

Australia are buoyed by beating the All Blacks the last time they met, and although they lost the 2017 series 2-1, fly-half Bernard Foley showed their underlying boldness this week by saying they have set a target of keeping the All Blacks scoreless. Such confidence dictated to the All Blacks that there was no room to experiment this weekend. Coach Steve Hansen has not been swayed by calls to start developing multiple combinations ahead of next year's World Cup, and particularly to use rising fly-half star Richie Mo'unga.

"The Bledisloe means a lot to this team and we have the opportunity to show just how much on Saturday night," Hansen said when naming his best-available side today. Jack Goodhue has overtaken Anton Lienert-Brown at outside centre, otherwise the back line was predictable with Ben Smith, Waisake Naholo and Rieko Ioane filling the back three. With Sonny Bill Williams not available, Ryan Crotty is at inside centre with Beauden Barrett and Aaron Smith in the halves and starting their 26th Test together. Kieran Read and Brodie Retallick, who missed the series against France in June, return to the side with Read resuming the captaincy. —AFP

**25** Indonesia's richest man going for gold at Asian Games

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## Record-setting Acuna hits 2 more HRs

Cards outlast Nationals for 7th straight win



ATLANTA: Left fielder Ronald Acuna, Jr #13 of the Atlanta Braves hits a 3-run home run in the seventh during the game against the Miami Marlins at SunTrust Park on Tuesday in Atlanta, Georgia. — AFP

**ATLANTA:** Rookie Ronald Acuna Jr hit two home runs, one of them to lead off the game on the first pitch, sending the Atlanta Braves to a 10-6 win over the visiting Miami Marlins on Tuesday. Acuna hit a leadoff home run for the third straight game, and he became the youngest player in baseball history to go deep in five consecutive games. The Venezuelan phenom was 3-for-5 with four RBIs. He has 19 homers in his rookie season, including eight in his past eight games. Acuna, 20 years, 239 days old, already had become the youngest player ever to homer four games in a row, accomplishing that feat when he blasted long balls to open both ends of a Monday doubleheader against the Marlins. The Braves have won four in a row. They improved to 11-3 against Miami and 39-19 against the National League East, which Atlanta leads by two games over the second-place Philadelphia Phillies.

### RED SOX 2, PHILLIES 1

Brock Holt, pinch-hitting for right-hander Rick Porcello, made the starting pitcher a winner by hitting the tiebreaking home run in the eighth inning as visiting Boston beat Philadelphia in the opener of a two-game interleague series. The scorching Red Sox have won five in a row and 11 of 12. Boston is on pace for 115 wins, one shy of the single-season record shared by the 1906 Chicago Cubs and

2001 Seattle Mariners. Philadelphia has lost four of five. The Phillies fell into sole possession of the second wild card in the NL, one game behind the Milwaukee Brewers.

### CARDINALS 6, NATIONALS 4

Kolten Wong homered and had three RBIs to back the solid pitching of John Gant, who also hit a home run for his first career hit, as St. Louis handled visiting Washington at Busch Stadium. The victory was the seventh in a row and ninth in the last 10 games for the Cardinals, who are now a season-best 10 games over .500. St. Louis has scored six or more runs in its past six games. Meanwhile, stumbling Washington has lost three straight and four of its past five games and have fallen back to .500.

### ROCKIES 5, ASTROS 1

Nolan Arenado clubbed his 30th home run, and visiting Colorado extended its winning streak to four games with a victory at Houston. Arenado, starting as the designated hitter because of his sore right shoulder, drilled a 96 mph fastball from Justin Verlander (11-8) the opposite way to right field with one on and two outs in the sixth inning. The struggling Astros had claimed a 1-0 lead a half-inning earlier only to surrender it in short order and extend their home losing skid to nine games. Colorado improved to 12-

5 on the season in interleague play.

### BLUE JAYS 6, ROYALS 5

Kevin Pillar hit a two-run home run with two outs in the eighth inning and had three RBIs to help Toronto come back for a win at Kansas City, Mo. Pillar went 2-for-4 for Toronto. Catcher Danny Jansen also hit a solo shot for the Blue Jays, his first career homer in his second major league game. Ken Giles struck out two in a perfect ninth to earn his second save for the Blue Jays after recording 12 saves for the Astros. Adalberto Mondesi had a career-best four hits, including two doubles, plus an RBI and three stolen bases for the Royals. Kansas City completed a franchise-record 14th straight errorless game.

### INDIANS 8, REDS 1

Corey Kluber cruised to his major league co-leading 15th victory and Jose Ramirez hit his 36th homer as Cleveland rolled past host Cincinnati. Kluber (15-6) pitched seven innings of one-run ball, allowing five hits and two walks while striking out seven. Ramirez continued to torment the Reds this season, going 3-for-5 with a solo homer, two RBIs and three runs. In the five games against Cincinnati this year, Ramirez is 10-for-23 with five homers and 11 RBIs.

### TWINS 5, PIRATES 2

Jake Cave drove in the go-ahead run in the fourth inning, and Miguel Sano added a late two-run home run as Minnesota downed Pittsburgh in Minneapolis. Jorge Polanco was 2-for-4 with two RBIs and two runs for the Twins, who had lost four of their previous five games. Minnesota's Jake Odorizzi (5-7) struck out nine in 5 2/3 innings. He gave up two runs and four hits, and he walked two. David Freese was 3-for-4 with a run for Pittsburgh, which lost its second straight and fell for the third time in four games.

### YANKEES 4, RAYS 1

J.A. Happ allowed a career-low one hit in seven scoreless innings and won his third consecutive start as host New York recorded a victory over Tampa Bay. Happ (13-6) allowed only a fourth-inning single to C.J. Cron while striking out four and walking four. The veteran left-hander improved to 3-0 with a 1.89 ERA since being acquired from Toronto for Brandon Drury and Billy McKinney on July 26. Austin Romine hit a two-run homer, Aaron Hicks hit an RBI single, and Greg Bird added insurance in the eighth with a run-scoring double as the Yankees won for the seventh time in nine games since getting swept in a four-game series at Boston.—Reuters

## Federer beats Gojowczyk, Kvitova ousts Williams

**CINCINNATI:** Roger Federer began his US Open preparation with a quick 6-4, 6-4 defeat of Peter Gojowczyk in his first ATP Cincinnati Masters appearance since 2015. The 20-time Grand Slam champion, who turned 37 last week, is pacing his tennis year, playing a limited schedule and skipping events when he feels the need to rest.

He has missed the last two editions of this tournament because of injury. Eighth seeded Petra Kvitova used her precision serve to overpower Serena Williams 6-3, 2-6, 6-3 in their second round match on Tuesday night.

Federer's defeat of the 47th-ranked German in 72 minutes marked his first step towards a possible eighth title at the tourna-

ment. "I felt good in that first match, to be honest, walking out, hardly any nerves. I think I knew what I had to do," Federer said.

"It's fast-court tennis. I knew my opponent was going to go for it and take big cuts at the ball. So there is only so much you can really do. "It's nice to have played a match so that my last match was not the Anderson match... you've kind of turned the page. It's a good thing. "The goal is now to recover from this match, take the positives with me. Of course the big goal is the US Open." The contest was the first for the Swiss since losing to Kevin Anderson in five sets in the Wimbledon quarter-finals on July 11. Eighth seed Dominic Thiem was forced to withdraw without hitting a ball. He was from a virus.

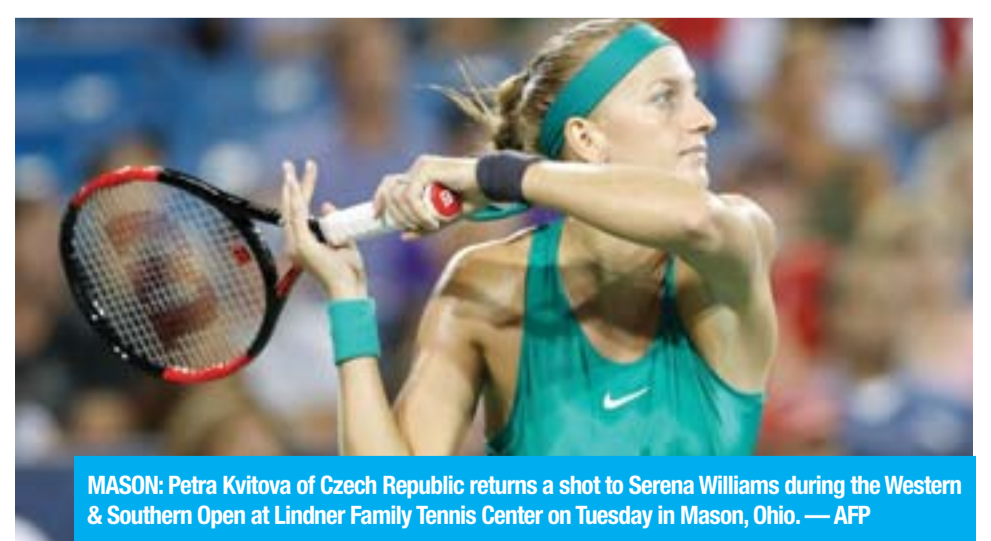
The Austrian played just one losing match last week in Toronto on the hardcourts since making a late switch from post-Wimbledon clay. Nick Kyrgios served 39 aces, including one to save match point, to power into the second round with a dramatic 6-7 (2/7), 7-5, 7-6 (11/9) win over Denis Kudla.

Last year's losing finalist finally saw off the American on his sixth match point. The Australian will next face Croatian Borna Coric, who beat Daniil Medvedev 6-2, 6-3. Weekend

Toronto finalist Stefanos Tsitsipas tired late in a 7-5, 6-3 loss to Belgian 11th seed David Goffin. South Korea's Chung Hyeon rallied past a struggling Jack Sock for a 2-6, 6-1, 6-2 victory. Chung handed the slumping American an eighth straight defeat, with Sock's last win coming in the opening round at Rome three months ago. Unseeded Milos Raonic advanced past Serb Dusan Lajovic 6-3, 6-3 at the combined ATP and WTA event, the last major tune-up prior to the US Open on August 27. In the women's draw, the second set of the Kvitova-Williams contest was significant for Williams because it was her first set win this season against a top 10 opponent.

The 23-time Grand Slam champion won her first round match over Daria Gavrilova in straight sets, 6-1, 6-2, on Monday, but appeared to run out of gas in the third set against Kvitova. Just two weeks ago, Williams suffered the worst defeat of her career in San Jose when she was crushed 6-1, 6-0 in 51 minutes by world No. 39 Johanna Konta.

"I'm still at the very beginning. You know, this is a long comeback. I just began. Definitely at the very, very beginning," Williams said. "I'm getting there, and I'm going to just continue to work hard, and



MASON: Petra Kvitova of Czech Republic returns a shot to Serena Williams during the Western & Southern Open at Lindner Family Tennis Center on Tuesday in Mason, Ohio. — AFP

hopefully I'll start winning more matches."

Czech ninth seed Karolina Pliskova made a personal breakthrough as she beat Agnieszka Radwanska for the first time after seven previous straight-sets losses to the Pole, winning 6-3, 6-3. "It was a tough round for me because I've never beaten her, never even tak-

en a set," said Pliskova. "I was so happy when I won the first set because I thought, 'Finally, one set for me.'"

Australian 16th seed Ashleigh Barty defeated Czech teenager Marketa Vondrousova 6-3, 7-5, while 14th-ranked Elise Mertens topped Magdalena Rybarikova 6-4, 6-2.—AFP