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# US, foreign leaders gather for Bush funeral in show of unity

## Sheikh Nasser hands Amir's message to George W Bush

### Saudi king invites Amir to GCC meet; Qatar invited too



KUWAIT: HH the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah meets Secretary General of the Gulf Cooperation Council Abdullah bin Rashid Al-Zayani at Bayan Palace yesterday. — KUNA

KUWAIT: Secretary General of the Gulf Cooperation Council Abdullah bin Rashid Al-Zayani yesterday delivered a written letter from Saudi King Salman bin Abdulaziz Al-Saud to HH the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, which included an invitation to attend the 39th session of the GCC Supreme Council scheduled on Dec 9.

The Amir received Zayani, accompanied by Kuwaiti Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah, at Bayan Palace. Zayani conveyed to HH the Amir great thanks and appreciation of his directives for enhancing the Gulf joint action process.

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WASHINGTON: A divided Washington led by the nation's five living presidents put on a show of unity yesterday at the poignant state funeral of George HW Bush, as America bade farewell to its 41st president. Donald and Melania Trump shared a front row pew at Washington National Cathedral with past presidents Barack Obama, Bill Clinton, Jimmy Carter and their wives as an honor guard brought Bush's flag-draped casket into the packed prayer hall. George W Bush delivered a rousing and deeply personal eulogy - at times punctuated by laughter - as he sang the praises of his father and predecessor as commander-in-chief, who died Friday at age 94.

"He was born with just two settings - full throttle, then sleep," Bush said. "To us, his was the brightest of a thousand points of light," he added in reference to his father's signature call to volunteerism. "When the history books are written, they will say that George HW Bush was a great president of the United States." Bush's eulogy followed an uplifting performance by Irish tenor Ronan Tynan - a friend of Bush who sang to the president in his dying hours.

HH Sheikh Nasser Al-Mohammad Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah, the representative of HH the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, paid a visit to George W Bush on Tuesday and handed him a written message from the Amir. In the message, HH the Amir expressed deep sadness over the demise of "the cordial friend, your father, His Excellency George Bush, the 41st president



WASHINGTON: HH Sheikh Nasser Al-Mohammad Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah hands a written message from HH the Amir to former US president George W Bush on Tuesday as Kuwaiti Ambassador to the US Sheikh Salem Abdullah Al-Jaber Al-Sabah (right) looks on. — KUNA

of the friendly United States of America".

The Amir noted in the message to Bush that he dispatched his personal envoy Sheikh Nasser to the funeral of his father, re-expressing his heartfelt condolences on his demise. "We affirm that we have lost a dear friend...particularly dear to the Kuwaiti people who will never forget him as a supporter of justice." HH the Amir recalled the

deceased ex-president's brave stance in support of Kuwait, namely his emphatic rejection of the flagrant Iraqi aggression and his leading role in forming the international coalition for the liberation of Kuwait."

Yesterday's state funeral caps a day-long homage that saw Bush lie in state for two days in the US Capitol rotunda.

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### News in brief

#### Chaperones for female workers?

KUWAIT: Al-Rai daily reported yesterday that the Public Authority for Manpower has stopped issuing work permits to Moroccan and Tunisian women younger than 40 unless they are accompanied by a first-degree relative (father, brother or husband). This decision was taken at the request of both countries, it said. The decision applies also to Lebanese women who need security clearance. In an ambiguous response, Manpower Authority Director Ahmed Al-Moussa yesterday said the report is "inaccurate", adding the labor law bans women from working in hazardous jobs, those posing health risks and those violating public morals. — Meshaal Al-Enezi

#### Killer turns himself in

KUWAIT: Detectives solved the mystery behind the death of a woman whose body was found in the Salmiyah desert, and discovered that the woman was killed by her brother. The suspect, a Kuwaiti, turned himself in to Jahra police yesterday. He confessed that he had killed his sister over family disputes and left her body in the Salmiyah desert, according to security sources. A man had called police on Monday to report that he had found a dead body in the Salmiyah desert. The woman, believed to be in her thirties, had her throat slashed and there were bruises on her body. — Hanan Al-Saadoun

#### Trump asks OPEC for no cuts

WASHINGTON: US President Donald Trump yesterday urged OPEC members not to slash production at their upcoming meeting, saying global oil prices should remain low. "Hopefully OPEC will be keeping oil flows as is, not restricted. The World does not want to see, or need, higher oil prices!" Trump said on Twitter. — AFP

## Dubai rebuffs Kuwait bid to release funds

DUBAI: Dubai's ruler has resisted efforts by Kuwait to release nearly \$500 million in frozen funds at the heart of a money laundering probe straining relations between the two Gulf allies, according to correspondence seen by Reuters. The investigation is taking place as the United Arab Emirates tightens financial regulations to fight a perception among some foreign investors that it is a hot spot for illicit money flows owing to its free trade zones and proximity to Iran, the

target of US sanctions.

The frozen funds belong in part to the Kuwait government and have been frozen at Dubai's state-owned Noor Bank since late 2017, when the emirate's public prosecutor, in collaboration with Kuwait's prosecutors, started probing the lawfulness of their transfer to Dubai from the Philippines. Executives involved deny wrongdoing. "I am fully confident the joint efforts of Kuwait's Public Prosecutor Office and Dubai's Public Prosecutor Office will result in fair solutions to this case and utilize the legal system to address damages incurred by shareholders," Dubai ruler Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Al-Maktoum said in a letter dated Nov 3.

He was responding to a letter sent by Kuwaiti Prime Minister HH Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-Hamad Al-Sabah in September asking for help to release the funds. "In light of the severe damages to government agencies

and other investors due to the continued freeze on these funds, we ask your highness to direct your relevant entities to swiftly release the funds," Sheikh Jaber had written. Reuters obtained a copy of both letters.

The correspondence is the latest twist in a case between two of the richest countries in the Gulf Cooperation Council. The \$496 million in question belong to Port Fund, a Cayman Islands-registered fund that is part of a Kuwaiti private equity group. Two government entities, Kuwait's port authority and the country's pension fund, had invested in the fund and are owed around \$200 million. Kuwait's prosecutors have charged two Port Fund directors for allegedly embezzling funds that the Kuwait Port Authority and the Public Institution for Social Security had invested in Port Fund. The executives deny that.

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KUWAIT: Workers are seen at the Kuwait Global Steel Services factory in Amghara yesterday. — Photo by Yasser Al-Zayyat

## Muwaizri shuns panel meeting on PM grilling

By B Izzak

KUWAIT: Leading opposition MP Shuaib Al-Muwaizri, who has sought to grill the prime minister over rain mismanagement, yesterday did not attend a meeting by the National Assembly's legal and legislative committee to study the legal status of the grilling. The grilling was supposed to have been debated last week but the government argued that it violated the constitution and demanded that it should be referred to the legal committee to determine if it can be debated or not.

The committee had invited Muwaizri for a meeting yesterday to hear his viewpoint on the issue but he abstained from the meeting without notifying the panel, rapporteur of the committee MP Khalil Abul said. Abul said that Muwaizri was informed of the meeting by

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## Local

# Amir, Libyan Prime Minister discuss ways to achieve stability in Libya

## Speaker, Prime Minister receive visiting Libyan premier



**KUWAIT:** His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah meets with Chairman of the Presidential Council of Libya and Prime Minister Fayeze Al-Sarraj. — Amiri Diwan and KUNA photos



**National Assembly Speaker Marzouq Al-Ghanem meets with the visiting Libyan Prime Minister Fayeze Al-Sarraj.**



**His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-Hamad Al-Sabah receives Libyan Prime Minister Fayeze Al-Sarraj.**

**KUWAIT:** His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah received yesterday at Bayan Palace His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah. His Highness the Amir also received His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-Hamad Al-Sabah and Chairman of the Presidential Council of Libya and Prime Minister Fayeze Al-Sarraj and his accompanying delegation. During the meeting, they discussed the situation in Libya and efforts aimed at achieving security and stability in the brotherly country in a way that preserves

the sovereignty and unity of the Libyan territories. The discussion also included the latest developments in the region, and ways to support efforts to enhance solidarity and unity of the Arab World in order to face challenges and maintain security and stability.

Earlier yesterday, His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-Hamad Al-Sabah received National Assembly Speaker Marzouq Al-Ghanem, who was accorded a formal reception and the National Anthems of Libya and Kuwait were played, followed by the guest inspecting the guard of honor. The reception was attended by Deputy Prime Minister

and Minister of Foreign Affairs Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of State for Cabinet Affairs Anas Khaled Al-Saleh and Chief of the Accompanying Mission of Honor, Advisor at His Highness the Prime Minister's Diwan Sheikh Salem Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah, in addition to senior commanders of the Army and National Guard as well as a number of senior state officials and the two countries' ambassadors.

The visiting Libyan official also met with National Assembly Speaker Marzouq Al-Ghanem, and the two

officials discussed the recent happenings in Libya as well as the latest developments within the regional and international spheres. The meeting was attended by National Assembly MPs Dr Abdulkareem Al-Kanderi, Dr Khalil Abol, and Mubarak Al-Harees. Ambassador of Kuwaiti to Tripoli Mubarak Al-Adwani also attended the meeting. In other news, His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah received His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-Hamad Al-Sabah at Bayan Palace yesterday. — KUNA

## Govt upgrades e-services to confront corruption: Minister

By Faten Omar

**KUWAIT:** Under the patronage of His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-Sabah and in cooperation with the Central Agency for Information Technology (CAIT), the 6th E-Government Forum (EGOV6) kicked off on Tuesday under the motto 'Managing Transformation Towards Digitalization' in the Al-Baraka Ballroom of Crowne Plaza hotel. The forum focused on managing change during the digital transformation journey.

On the sidelines of the forum, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of State for Cabinet Affairs Anas Khaled Al-Saleh said raising the level of digital services in Kuwait is a big concern of the government, adding that the aim of upgrading electronic services is to confront corruption through e-services that remove the human element in the completion of any transaction.

Saleh, who heads the board of CAIT, said that Minister of Commerce and Industry Khaled Al-Roudhan, who heads the committee concerned with upgrading the automation of government services, presented a report at the meeting of the Council of Ministers. He pointed out that after the presentation by Roudhan, the economic committee of the Council of Ministers was instructed to review government agencies that need support and which were late in providing their services electronically to find out the causes of delays and resolve obstacles to enable these agencies to raise the level of their services.

During his opening speech, Engineer Qussai Al-Shatti, the Acting General Manager of CAIT, said electronic services are a regular product of e-government programs implemented by Kuwait in order to improve government services provided to citizens and residents, adding that the e-government project and electronic services are receiving attention from the political leadership, and the prime minister specifically.

Shatti said the organization has the support



**Qussai Al-Shatti** — Photos by Joseph Shagra



**Yousef Al-Marzouq**

to achieve the e-government project and to raise the level of competitiveness regionally and internationally. He said this conference comes at a time when a series of decisions were obtained from the Council of Ministers aimed at pushing government agencies to accelerate the implementation of 'Managing Transformation Towards Digitalization.'

Yousef Al-Marzouq, General Manager of Nouf EXPO, noted that the slogan of the E-Government Forum this year - 'Managing Transformation Towards Digitalization' - is one of the basic necessities of success for any work done on a permanent basis, whether related to information technology or others. "The good management of change is the guarantee to implement work plans efficiently and deal well with the constant changes that we are subjected to, along with our ability to make the right decisions in a timely manner and contribute to the success of institutions to achieve their goals and avoid pitfalls during their career," he pointed out.

"While we are fully aware of the administrative and technical complexity of the e-government program and integrated and intelligent government services, we are confident that the

Central Information Technology Agency and other information centers of other government entities are capable of developing their policies and systems so that they can manage the variables that surround them to contribute to the success of their national mission of moving government services in Kuwait to the ranks of developed countries and building an information society," Marzouq added.

NoufEXPO, in collaboration with CAIT, is holding the sixth E-Government Forum - Managing Change Towards Digitalization from Dec 4-6, 2018. The forum focuses on change management practices that need to be implemented in order to boost the e-government program implementation and make the best use of all available resources along the way. The forum is accompanied by an exhibition where many government organizations in Kuwait are presenting their various projects and e-services. Several companies and institutions are participating in the forum and presenting various solutions for ministries and government institutions in order to help achieve the desired e-government goals including securing data and government systems.



**The new recruits at Gulf Bank.**

## Gulf Bank champions Kuwaitization with 377 new hires in 2018

**KUWAIT:** Gulf Bank continues to lead Kuwait's banking sector in its support of Kuwaitization. Since the beginning of the year, 377 Kuwaitis have been hired by the bank, across various departments. Aligned with the government's initiative of Kuwaitization, Gulf Bank advocates this vision through training and development and the employment of Kuwaitis for a better and more prosperous Kuwait. The Bank is invested in the professional development of Kuwaiti talent, and in providing them with opportunities to build a career and develop essential skills within the financial sector.

Salma Al-Hajjaj, General Manager of Human Resources, Gulf Bank, said: "Harnessing local talent has always been at the heart of Gulf Bank's vision. Over the years, we have developed a number of Kuwait-based mentoring and training programs to ensure that present and future employees achieve their full potential. From our AJYAL Graduate Development Program, to our bank wide learning and development program, including the recently launched Direct Sales Academy, created to increase the professional workforce in the field. We are proud to facilitate the development of Kuwaiti talent across all stages of their careers."

"Gulf Bank is proud to announce that we have achieved 72.5 percent Kuwaitization to date. We, in the HR department, have applied a recruitment strategy focused on the development of Kuwaiti youth, utilizing partnerships with several education institutions, including



**Salma Al-Hajjaj**

MGRP, PAAET, Kuwait University and select private universities. Through a series of training and work opportunities, these partnerships have provided Kuwaiti youth with more experience, developing their skills and knowledge prior to entering the labor market. The bank would like to extend thanks to our partners for their commitment to the program, as well as their faith in us, as advisors and mentors to Kuwait's younger generations. We look forward to continuing forward with our partnerships in our mission to unlock the potential of young Kuwaiti talent," Hajjaj added.

Gulf Bank has a long-standing commitment to the Kuwaitization of the private sector, fostering an environment which appeals to Kuwaiti talent and allows them to unlock their full potential. Developing their talent, knowledge and skills in order to contribute to both the banking sector and Kuwait.

## Alghanim Industries participated in 35th NUKS Conference

**KUWAIT:** Alghanim Industries, one of the largest private companies in the region, sponsored the 35th annual conference of the National Union of Kuwaiti Students (NUKS) USA branch. The conference took place from 22 to 24 of November in Dallas, Texas, under the slogan 'Kuwait and its Youth.' The event was held under the patronage of First Deputy Prime Minister and Defense Minister Sheikh Nasser Sabah Al-Ahmed Al-Sabah. This is the 11th participation of Alghanim Industries in this annual student event, which underscores its commitment to youth, education, and local talent.

The annual event was attended by Kuwait's Ambassador to the United States Sheikh Salem Al-Sabah, along with a number of public figures and experts in various fields. The student-led conference featured an array of informative panel discussions covering a multitude of topics that are of interest to Kuwaiti youth including the economy, sports and society. These informative sessions were coupled

with various entertainment segments including stand-up comedy and entertainment.

Reflecting its ongoing pursuit for qualified Kuwaiti candidates, Alghanim Industries' Human Resources Department was present at the event's career fair, answering queries about the company and the different career opportunities it provides, including internships, training and job opportunities.

Visitors of Alghanim Industries' booth at the event were enrolled in a draw, and winners were announced towards the end of the event, with valuable prizes that include travel tickets and electronics. Commenting on Alghanim Industries' sponsorship of this year's NUKS conference, Chief Human Resources Officer at Alghanim Industries, Henning Schlutt, said: "We are always eager to interact with young Kuwaiti talent who have the passion and ambition to join our professional and result-driven company. The NUKS career fair is a great opportunity to meet potential candidates who can



**Kuwait's Ambassador to the United States Sheikh Salem Al-Sabah visits Alghanim Industries' booth.**

join Alghanim Industries to start a rewarding career in a collaborative and diverse work environment."

The sponsorship of the annual NUKS conference in the United States comes as part of Alghanim Industries' corporate social responsibility (CSR) program, which is focused on empowering the underprivileged, supporting education and encouraging entrepreneurship. Alghanim was a strategic sponsor for the seventh annual Tmkeen Youth Symposium, an initiative that

provides youth with valuable insights about entrepreneurship from industry leaders, academics and experts, held under the patronage of the HH the Amir of Kuwait Sheikh Sabah Al Ahmad Al Sabah. The company is proud of its long-standing relationship with INJAZ Al-Arab, and is among the largest supporters INJAZ-Kuwait, a youth program that focuses on delivering educational programs on entrepreneurship, financial literacy and work readiness.

Local

# Amir attends KFAS awards ceremony for scientific achievements and contributions

KFAS Director stresses need to prepare for future of massive technological development



KUWAIT: His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah and top state officials attend the Kuwait Foundation for the Advancement of Sciences' (KFAS) awards for scientific achievements and contributions. — Amiri Diwan photos

KUWAIT: His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah attended and patronized at Sabwa Al-Sabah's Hall yesterday the Kuwait Foundation for the Advancement of Sciences' (KFAS) awards for scientific achievements and contributions. His Highness the Amir was received at the event by Director General of KFAS Dr Adnan Shihab-Eldin and members of the foundation's board. His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, Speaker of the National Assembly Marzouq Al-Ghanem, His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-Hamad Al-Sabah, and senior state officials attended the ceremony.



Dr Adnan Shihab-Eldin

After screening a KFAS achievements and projects documentary, the foundation's Director Dr Shihab-Eldin said that since establishment in 1976, KFAS had been the entity that gathered scientists eager to carry the torch of development and progression in Kuwait. The leadership's honoring of scientists and innovators since the first KFAS awards in 1979 was a key element in supporting this important component of development, said the director who affirmed that His Highness the Amir, KFAS Chairman of the Board, continued this important legacy. He indicated



His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah and Director General of KFAS Dr Adnan Shihab-Eldin pose for a group picture with the awarded individuals.

that while the leadership played a significant role in supporting KFAS, the private sector also provided assistance to the development of science in Kuwait.

The world is currently experiencing the 'Fourth Industrial Revolution,' a term describing the fusion of physical, biological, and digital technologies, said Dr

Shihab-Eldin who stressed that it was vital for Kuwaiti society to gear up towards a future of massive technological development and groundbreaking scientific discoveries. KFAS is well aware of the forthcoming age; therefore, the foundation is focusing its efforts on various fields such as renewable energy and resources that are friendly to the

environment, affirmed the director. He indicated that KFAS was eager to contribute to the state's Kuwait Vision 2035, which will propel the country towards a bright future. Upon the conclusion of the speech, His Highness the Amir proceeded to present awards to the winners of this year's event. — KUNA



His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah and His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah arrive to the venue.



His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah receives a memento from Director General of KFAS Dr Adnan Shihab-Eldin.



Director General of KFAS Dr Adnan Shihab-Eldin welcomes National Assembly Speaker Marzouq Al-Ghanem.



His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah honors winners during the ceremony.



## Local

## Photo of the Day



KUWAIT: A worker is seen at the Global Steel Services factory in Amghara yesterday. —Photo by Yasser Al-Zayyat

# Kuwait, Egypt ink eight memorandums of understanding, executive programs

## Egypt appreciates Kuwait leadership, people for support in hard time: FM

**KUWAIT:** Capitalizing on their strong and historical political relations, Kuwait and Egypt have signed several memorandums of understanding (MoUs) and executive programs to boost cooperation in various domains. The pacts were signed Tuesday in Kuwait at the conclusion of the twelfth session of the Higher Kuwaiti-Egyptian committee which was co-chaired by Kuwait's Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah and Egyptian Foreign Minister Sameh Shoukry and was attended by representatives of 42 public and private bodies from both countries. Among the inked agreements are a memo of understanding for enhancing security cooperation and another memo for linking their electronic labor systems. They also included six executive programs for cooperation in the coming two years in the following realms: labor, culture, education, higher education and scientific research, official media, and sports.

### Package of agreements

The new package of agreements takes the number of cooperation agreements, MoUs and programs signed between the two countries since 1963 up to 148, said Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled in a press statement. He also noted that the Kuwait Fund for Arab Economic Development (KFAED) had financed 48 key projects in various sectors in Egypt. Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled pointed out that the Kuwaiti investments in Egypt had blossomed to \$15

billion in the past few years. He estimated the number of Kuwaiti companies and firms operating in Egypt at 1,227. Moreover, the volume of trade exchange had also ballooned in past four years to \$3 billion, he boasted. The Kuwaiti top diplomat unveiled that there were over 100,000 Kuwaitis visit Egypt every year and nearly 64 regular weekly flights between the two countries. He shed lights on the contributions of the Egyptian labor and professionals in Kuwait. He reiterated commitment to exert more efforts to cement cooperation in all economic and development sectors and to push bilateral relations to brighter future that meets the aspirations of the leaders and peoples of the two nations.

Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled commended the great development and construction contributions of approximately 700,000 Egyptians working in different public and private sectors in Kuwait. In this regard, he recalled with appreciation the historic, enlightenment role of the Egyptian educational missions — which came to Kuwait in coincidence with the start of the modernization and the development process — and their remarkable role in building a scientific base in the country. Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled underlined the importance of synergy to counter the growing challenges and rapid changes in the region.

Meanwhile, Minister Shoukry lauded the deeply-rooted relations between the two sisterly countries. He expressed admiration of Kuwait's wise foreign policy and its distinguished relations

with all regional and world countries. Kuwait had adopted moderation, reasoning and rationalism in handling regional and international crises, he noted, expressing his belief in these noble principles and values. He hoped the higher committee would help take joint cooperation to new height and urged businesspeople and economic actors to work out a mutually-beneficial comprehensive and strategic partnership to ameliorate economic and trade cooperation. He stressed the need to increase trade exchange to live up to the strong political relations. He concluded that Egypt was looking forwards to hosting the coming meeting of the higher committee in Cairo next year.

### Support in hard times

In the meantime, Shoukry said that the Egyptians, at official and popular levels, highly appreciate the Kuwaiti leadership and people for their support. "We will not forget the support of Kuwait and its Amir for the Egyptian people during hardtimes," Shoukry told a press conference in Kuwait. He said he met with His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah and exchanged views over Arab and international issues of mutual interest, specially that Kuwait represented the Arab group in the UN Security Council. Kuwait and Egypt's points of view over conflicts in the region were identical, he said.

Shoukry said he conveyed a letter to His Highness the Amir from Egyptian President



KUWAIT: Officials attend the twelfth session of the Higher Kuwaiti-Egyptian committee. —KUNA

Abdulfatah Al-Sisi over regional developments. The letter, he said, included an invitation to His Highness the Amir to visit Egypt. Shoukry meanwhile said Kuwait was keeping Egypt updated with the issues on the UNSC agenda, especially regarding Arab and African matters.

On Palestine, Shoukry said Egypt sought to solve the Palestinian cause to achieve the Palestinian state on the 1967 borders with East Jerusalem as its capital. "There is a coordination

with the Palestinian Authority to reach this objective," he added. Egypt, along the Arab countries, supports the Palestinian Authority and its president Mahmoud Abbas, said Shoukry. The Egyptian top diplomat also called on Libyan parties to sit on the negotiations' table, unite the Libyan forces to restore stability in the country. Shoukry rejected any move to block navigation in international waters and said Egypt supported the UN-sponsored talks between the Yemeni parties. —KUNA

## NatMed joins Horeca 2019 sponsors

**KUWAIT:** The National Medical Consumable Industries Company (NatMed) announced participating as a sponsor in the Horeca Kuwait 2019 exhibition, which is set to be organized by Leaders Group in collaboration with Hospitality Services Company at Kuwait International Fairground in Mishref in the period of January 14-16, 2019.

In this regard, NatMed's Managing Director Mohammad Ahmad Al-Sarraf stressed that changes in the world of trade and services made specialized exhibitions such as Horeca Kuwait indispensable in order to set successful marketing strategies for any sector at national, regional or international scales.

Speaking on the sidelines of a ceremony held to sign the sponsorship contract, Sarraf stressed that NatMed thinks highly of Horeca Kuwait as a unique exhibition, adding that his company would display products and services of interest to participating hotels and restaurants including disposable aluminum and plastic packs and over 2,000 items of other paper and plastic products used in food serving and packaging, in addition to disposable medical products.



Mohammad Al-Sarraf

## Automated system to prevent visa trafficking

By Meshaal Al-Enezi and Agencies

**KUWAIT:** The Public Authority for Manpower's deputy director for human resources and financial affairs Sultan Al-Shaalani said the authority is exerting unprecedented efforts to fight marginal labor, and in this regard, it recently signed a memorandum of understanding with Egypt to recruit Egyptians through automated electronic transactions between both countries. Shaalani added that the e-linkage system, due to be used by the begin-

## Education ministry urged to give incentives for Kuwaiti staff

By A Saleh

**KUWAIT:** Well-informed educational sources stressed the need to reach a final decision on the incentives

ning of 2019, will help recruit only skilled and qualified labor as well as help fight visa trafficking.

### Sales' license

The Ministry of Commerce and Industry (MoCI) announced reducing the number of procedures needed to apply for a special sales' license to only one form that can be easily accessed online, instead of the previous 15 paper ones. The ministry added that applicants can apply online at [www.moci.gov.kw](http://www.moci.gov.kw), fill the needed form and file it within minutes, which cuts down the paperwork cycle.

### Fugitive caught

Jahra police arrested a citizen sentenced to four years in prison and sent him to the sentences implementation department, Al-Rai reported yesterday. The suspect was driving without a license, then refused to

pull over, so he was chased. When he left the car and started running, he was caught.

### Smuggling foiled

Nuwaiseb customs officers arrested a passenger for attempting to smuggle hashish and two bottles of imported liquor. He was sent to concerned authorities, reported Al-Rai.

### Blackmail

A Syrian woman lodged a complaint against a person who pestered her with indecent images and messages after midnight, so police referred the complaint to detectives, who were able to identify him as an Egyptian man working in a phone store. After he was arrested, he justified his actions by saying "I want to marry her", according to an Al-Rai report. The woman said she had left the phone for repairs at his store. The suspect faces legal action.

offered to certain Ministry of Education (MoE) Kuwaiti staff members such as psychiatrists, accountants and other technical staff because too much work is needed to serve MoE with 116,000 employees, which made citizens refrain from accepting such jobs and opt instead for other less demanding government jobs.

The sources added that MoE suffers from a dire shortage in the aforementioned jobs after the CSC terminated many expats who had been doing them and citizens appointed to replace them were scared off by the amount of work and the job duties they had to perform in lieu of what they considered as 'low salary'.

"This made 329 out of 379 citizens expected to graduate as social workers and psychiatrists seek out

other jobs, leaving only 50 who sought MoE jobs," the sources explained, warning of a serious shortage in other technical jobs such as accountants. "MoE used to have over 300 accountants and this number has drastically dropped," the sources remarked, urging lawmakers to pass a law on citizens' salaries to put an end to this problem.

In other news, informed sources said that "Kuwaiti cultural attaches abroad have not received any decision from the ministry of higher education concerning cancelling Minister Al-Azmi's decision of banning studies abroad for those with high school certificates granted more than two years earlier." They further explained that only a few exceptions for certain cases had been made.

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Powerful 7.5 quake off New Caledonia triggers tsunami

## India drains lake after discovery of HIV-infected body



PULHEIM: Policemen stand in front of the residential building of the owner of an Italian Osteria restaurant in Pulheim near Cologne, western Germany, after the man, a main suspected, was arrested in an anti-mafia raid. — AFP

# Mafia hit by huge international sweep

## Dozens of 'Ndrangheta mafia suspects nabbed

**THE HAGUE:** Police arrested dozens of suspected mobsters in Europe and South America yesterday in a huge international swoop targeting Italy's notorious 'Ndrangheta mafia clan, officials said. Around 90 people accused of involvement in drug trafficking, money laundering and violent crime were arrested in raids in Germany, Italy, the Netherlands, Belgium and Suriname. Hundreds of police took part in the operation, seizing four tons of cocaine, 120 kilos of ecstasy and two million euros (dollars) in cash from locations including Italian restaurants and ice cream parlors.

The crackdown on the powerful organized crime syndicate based in Calabria, southern Italy, came just a day after Italian police arrested the new boss of the separate Sicilian mafia. "Today we have issued a clear message to criminal alliances across Europe, and they are not the only ones who can work across borders," Filippo Spiezia, deputy head of the EU's judicial agency Eurojust, told a press conference in The Hague. He said the "unprecedented and extraordinary result" targeted "dangerous members of the 'Ndrangheta family deeply involved in drug trafficking and money laundering".

### Italian restaurants

The 'Ndrangheta—which derives its meaning from the Greek word for heroism—is made up of numerous village and family-based clans in Calabria, the rural, mountainous and under-developed "toe" of Italy's boot. Despite intense police attention and frequent arrests, the organization has continued to extend its reach. It has surpassed Sicily's Cosa Nostra and the Naples-based Camorra in influence thanks to control of the cocaine trade and is the sole mafia organization to operate on all continents, according to anti-mafia prosecutors. Officials hailed yesterday's operation—dubbed "Operation Pollina"—as a serious blow to the group. Italian police said 90 people had been arrested in all countries in the sweep targeting the 'Ndrangheta and its "projections across South America."

In Germany, yesterday's operation focused on restaurants, offices and apartments, mainly in the states of North Rhine-Westphalia and Bavaria region. German prosecutors said 47 suspects had been targeted and 65 premises were being searched. Dutch prosecutors said the investigation began after they

noticed money laundering at two Italian restaurants in the southern Netherlands that showed criminal links with Germany and Calabria, home of the 'Ndrangheta. Using an often family-based network spread out around Europe, drugs would come into the Dutch port of Rotterdam and the Belgian port of Antwerp before being moved around the continent.

Prosecutor Fred Westerbeke said they had also probed ice cream parlors, adding that together with restaurants "the suspicion is that the mafia organization is laundering money through these establishments and they are used as a cover for their criminal organizations." He also confirmed that there had been raids in Suriname, a small South American country that was once a Dutch colony. Dutch NOS television said the 'Ndrangheta were mainly active in the Netherlands in drug smuggling through the country's huge flower export market.

### 'Decisive hit'

The Belgian operations were concentrated on the Limburg area, home to many people of Italian descent

who moved there after World War II to work in coal mines, Belgian prosecutors said. Italian anti-mafia prosecutor Federico Cafiero De Raho said the operations would affect the 'Ndrangheta's drug trafficking operations around the world, including Colombia, Ecuador and Brazil. But he warned that it was "just a first step", saying the arrests were "nothing for the 'Ndrangheta, there are thousands of people who should be arrested and billions that should be seized".

The European police agency Europol however said it was a "decisive hit against one of the most powerful Italian criminal networks in the world". European Parliament President Antonio Tajani, who is Italian, sent "congratulations" to the police forces involved, adding: "Europe fights 'Ndrangheta criminal groups". On Tuesday, Italian police arrested new Cosa Nostra boss Settimino Mineo and dozens of other suspects in Sicily in a major swoop. Jeweler Mineo, 80, was detained along with at least 45 others just before he was due to be appointed official heir to notorious mafia boss Toto Riina who died in prison last year. — AFP

## The 19 Christian martyrs of Algeria

**ALGIERS:** The 19 Roman Catholic clergy to be beatified as martyrs in Algeria on Saturday were assassinated between 1994 and 1996 amid a brutal war between Islamic militants and government forces. Mostly French nationals, the men and women were declared martyrs by the Vatican in January 2018, since they were murdered "in odium fidei", or out of hatred for the faith. Here is a summary of the killings.

### Four White Fathers

On December 27, 1994 attackers armed with automatic rifles gunned down four missionaries at their rectory at Tizi Ouzou, about 100 kilometers east of the capital Algiers. From the Missionaries of Africa order—also known as the White Fathers—they were French nationals Jean Chevillard, 69, Alain Dieulangard, 75, and Christian Chessel, 36, and Belgian Charles Deckers, 70. Two days later, the radical insurgent Armed Islamic Group of Algeria (GIA) claimed responsibility, in rapid revenge for the December 26 killing of four of its men who had hijacked an Air France plane and were shot dead by French forces.

The group, the most radical of the insurgent organizations then at war with Algeria's secular government, said at the

time its "forces will continue the extermination of Christian crusaders." The four GIA hijackers seized the plane on the tarmac at Algiers airport on December 24, killing three of its more than 200 passengers and crew. After the plane landed at Marseille airport two days later, it was stormed by elite forces who killed the abductors and freed the passengers.

### The monks of Tibhirine

On the night of March 26 to 27, 1996, gunmen stormed the Notre Dame de l'Atlas monastery in Tibhirine, about 80 kilometers southwest of Algiers, and kidnapped seven French Trappist monks. The GIA announced on May 23 it had slit their throats, blaming the French government's refusal to negotiate with them. Algeria's army said they found the heads of the victims on May 30; the bodies were never seen again. The Algerian government maintained the massacre was another crime by the Islamists. But this version came into doubt after allegations from various witnesses that the army itself may have been responsible, either through blunder or to discredit the Islamists. The seven were: Christian de Cherge, 59; Luc Dochier, 82; Paul Favre-Miville, 56; Christophe Lebreton, 45; Michel Fleury, 51; Celestin Ringear, 62; and Bruno Lemarchand, 66.

### Bishop of Oran

Bishop Pierre Claverie, 58, was killed with his driver on August 1, 1996 when a remote-controlled bomb exploded at his residence in Oran in western Algeria. Claverie, a dual French-Algerian nation-



TIBHIRINE, Algeria: Photo shows the graves of seven French Trappist monks at the Tibhirine monastery. — AFP

al, was attacked after returning home from a meeting with the then French foreign minister. He had publicly condemned atrocities attributed to Islamic fundamentalists and his killing was blamed on the GIA. The murder was met with outrage in Algeria and France, coming only weeks after the kidnapping and murder of the monks of Tibhirine.

### Killed in Algiers

Two French nationals were gunned down in a library in the Casbah suburb of Algiers in May 1994. Of the 19 clergy to be beatified on Saturday, they were the first to lose their lives. Brother Henri Verges, 63, and Sister Paul-Helene Saint-

Raymond, 67, were killed while they were helping young Algerians to prepare for their examinations. The GIA claimed the killings. In October 1994 two Spanish Augustinian nuns—Esther Paniagua Alonso, 45, and Caridad Alvarez Martin, 61—were shot dead en-route to prayers in the residential, working class Bab El-Oued area. In September 1995 two more nuns—Jeanne Littlejohn, 61, of Maltese nationality and Denise Leclerc, 65, from France—were shot dead returning from prayers in the capital's poor Belcourt district. In November the same year French nun Odette Prevost, 63, was killed in an attack in the Kouba district, a working class area of central Algiers. — AFP

## Cuba launches net on mobile phones

**HAVANA:** Cubans will be able to access the internet on their mobile phones from today, state-run telecoms monopoly ETECSA said, marking a milestone for what has long been one of the Western Hemisphere's least connected countries. Nearly half of the Communist-run country's 11.2 million residents have cellphones although not all will be able to afford mobile internet. In a news show broadcast late on Tuesday, ETECSA executives announced a range of packages valid for 30 days from 600 MB for the equivalent of \$7 dollars to 4 GB for \$30. Without a package, 100 MB will cost users \$10.

The cost will be out of reach for many Cubans as the average state wage is around \$30 per month, and many people rely on remittances from relatives abroad or side gigs to get by. "It was about time this became a possibility for Cubans too," said Havana resident Joaquin Montiel, 58. "But for some, like me, it's still a remote one." Montiel said he would not be able to afford a cellphone with 3G technology on his wage of less than \$20 per month as a salesman in a state company. Cuba has lagged far behind most countries in Web access, whether because of a lack of cash, a long-running US trade embargo or concerns about the flow of information.

Until 2013, internet was largely only available to the public at tourist hotels on the island. But the government has since made boosting connectivity a priority, introducing cybercafes and outdoor Wi-Fi hotspots and slowly starting to hook up homes to the Web. — Reuters

International

# Turkey seeks arrest of two Saudi crown prince's allies

## US senators mince no words after CIA chief briefing

ISTANBUL: A Turkish prosecutor has demanded that arrest warrants be issued against two Saudi nationals close to Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman over the murder of journalist Jamal Khashoggi, a Turkish source close to the investigation said yesterday. Khashoggi, 59, was killed shortly after entering the Saudi consulate in Istanbul on October 2 to obtain paperwork for his upcoming marriage. The chief prosecutor's office in Istanbul filed an application Tuesday to obtain the warrants for Ahmad Al-Assiri and Saud Al-Qahtani, described in court documents as being "among the planners" of the murder of the Washington Post contributor Khashoggi.

Assiri often sat in during Prince Mohammed's closed-door meetings with visiting foreign dignitaries and Qahtani was a key counselor to the crown prince. Both were sacked after Riyadh admitted Khashoggi was killed in the Saudi consulate. According to Turkey, a 15-member Saudi team was sent to Istanbul to kill Khashoggi. Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan has said the order to kill Khashoggi came from the highest levels of the Saudi government, but has insisted it was not King Salman. Riyadh has since detained 21 people over the murder. Despite speculation that the powerful crown prince ordered the hit, the kingdom has strongly denied he was involved.

### US senators blast Saudi

Meanwhile, two key US Republican senators said a briefing by the CIA's director only strengthened their conviction that Saudi Arabia's crown prince directed the murder of journalist Jamal Khashoggi. The explosive new declarations by members of President Donald Trump's own party run counter to the White House narrative downplaying possible links between Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman and the October killing of journalist and palace critic Khashoggi at the kingdom's Istanbul consulate.

"I have zero question in my mind that the crown prince directed the murder and was kept apprised of the situation all the way through it," Senate Foreign Relations Committee Chairman Bob Corker told reporters after CIA director Gina Haspel briefed a small group of senators. "If MBS were in front of a jury, he'd be convicted in less than 30 minutes," Corker said, using the prince's initials. Fellow Republican Senator Lindsey Graham, a Trump ally who has joined a growing collection of lawmakers urging the president to take a far tougher stance against Riyadh, also attended the hour-long closed-door briefing, and minced no words afterwards.

Graham said in withering criticism of an American ally that, "there's not a smoking gun but a smoking saw." The South Carolina senator was directly repudiating comments by top Trump administration officials, including Defense Secretary Jim Mattis, who just last week said there was "no smoking gun" implicating the crown prince.

US newspapers, including The Wall Street Journal, have reported that the CIA has evidence that Prince Mohammed exchanged 11 messages with his close aide Saud Al-Qahtani, who allegedly oversaw the murder, just before and after it took place. Some of the most important evidence may be an audio recording of the murder that Turkey said it has distributed. Graham said that was not played in Tuesday's briefing.

The Saudi government went into damage control mode, with a spokesperson for the Saudi Embassy, Fatimah Baeshen, saying the kingdom maintains its "steadfast" commitment to the US-Saudi relationship and does "categorically reject" accusations linking the prince to the killing. "At no time did HRH the Crown Prince correspond with any Saudi officials in any government entity on harming Jamal Khashoggi, a Saudi citizen," she said on Twitter.

Graham stressed that he believes the crown prince



WASHINGTON: Sen Lindsey Graham (R-SC) responds to questions from reporters following a closed briefing at the US Capitol by CIA Director Gina Haspel for Senate leaders on the killing of journalist Jamal Khashoggi. —AFP

has put the decades-long US-Saudi relationship at risk. After reports that the CIA concluded that the crown prince ordered Khashoggi's assassination in the Istanbul consulate on October 2, Trump warned that US-Saudi ties and oil market stability were too important to rock over the scandal.

Under mounting pressure from lawmakers who wanted action against Riyadh, Mattis and Secretary of State Mike Pompeo told senators there was no direct evidence linking the crown prince to the murder. Graham rejected their assessment outright, saying "you have to be willfully blind" not to conclude that the murder was orchestrated by people under Prince Mohammed's command. Democrats provided similar reactions after the briefing, which was given

to leaders of Senate committees that focus on national security.

"I am now more convinced than I was before—and I was pretty convinced—that in fact the United States must have a strong response to both the war in Yemen as well as the killing" of Khashoggi, Senate Democrat Bob Menendez said. With many senators furious about being excluded from the briefing, Senate Minority Leader Chuck Schumer demanded Haspel "brief the full Senate without delay." The White House faced a rebuke last week when the Senate voted to advance legislation that would end US support for the Saudi-led coalition fighting a war in Yemen, which has been described as the world's worst humanitarian crisis. —Agencies

### News in brief

#### 'Texas Seven' member executed

WASHINGTON: Texas executed a man Tuesday who, along with six others known as the "Texas Seven," killed a police officer during a 2000 crime spree before being arrested thanks in part to the television program "America's Most Wanted." Joseph Garcia, 47, was executed by lethal injection and pronounced dead at 6:43 pm local time (0043 GMT) in the death chamber in Huntsville. Sentenced to 50 years in prison for killing a friend during a fight, Garcia and six other inmates at the Connally high-security prison in southern Texas participated in an infamous escape. The men attacked guards for their uniforms and forced another to open the door. —AFP

#### US indicts four suspects

WASHINGTON: The US government announced charges Tuesday against four men it said laundered money and arranged tax avoidance schemes through the Panama firm at the center of the "Panama Papers" scandal. The four were affiliated with Mossack Fonseca, the law firm that helped thousands of clients around the world move money offshore to protect it from taxes. Named in the 11-count indictment were Ramses Owens, 50, Dirk Brauer, 54; Richard Gaffey, and Harald Joachim Von Der Goltz, 81. Owens is a Panamanian attorney who worked for Mossack Fonseca. Brauer, a German national, was an investment manager for Mossack Asset Management, which was closely affiliated to Mossack Fonseca, the Justice Department said. —AFP

#### Police bust arms arsenal

SOFIA: Bulgarian police have busted a huge illegal weapons arsenal in a garage in the capital Sofia, seizing dozens of rifles, guns and pistols, the interior ministry announced yesterday. Sixty-five Kalashnikov rifles, 37 Scorpion guns and 43 pistols were seized in the operation conducted by the police's counter-terrorism unit over the weekend, the ministry's anti-organized crime chief Ivaylo Spiridonov told a press conference. Police also found eight kilograms of highly explosive black powder, 14 rocket-propelled grenade launchers and tens of thousands of cartridges, he added. —AFP

#### Ecuador vice president resigns

QUITO: Ecuador's vice president has resigned over allegations by a former aide that she took kickbacks while serving as a lawmaker five years ago. Maria Alejandra Vicuna announced her resignation on Twitter, saying the South American country did not deserve the "instability" caused by the crisis. It came a day after President Lenin Moreno distanced himself, suspending her from the post to allow her time to fight the allegations. In Ecuador, the vice president can only be sacked through an impeachment process in the national assembly, which last week called on her to resign. Vicuna has been in the post for just over a year. —AFP

## US soldier gets 25 years in prison for backing ISIS group

LOS ANGELES: A US soldier based in Hawaii was sentenced on Tuesday to 25 years in prison for attempting to provide support to the Islamic State group also known as ISIS. Ikaika Erik Kang, 35, whose sentence was part of a plea agreement, will also be under at least 20 years of supervised release after he completes his prison term. "Kang swore to defend the United States as a member of our military, but betrayed his country by swearing allegiance to ISIS and attempting to provide it material support," John Demers, assistant attorney general for national security, said in a statement.

According to authorities, Kang, a sergeant in the US Army, became sympathetic to ISIS by at least early 2016 and regularly watched propaganda videos published online by the terror group while expressing a desire to become a member. Prosecutors said he spoke in detail about committing specific acts of violence including launching attacks at public gatherings such as the Honolulu Christmas Parade and planning a suicide bombing at his army barracks.

In June and July of last year, he met with undercover FBI agents posing as people with connections to ISIS and provided them with sensitive material. He also supplied the agents with a small aerial drone and military-style clothing and gear. On another occasion, he provided two undercover FBI employees—one pretending to be a high-ranking ISIS leader and another an ISIS fighter—with a two-hour combat training session to hone their fighting and marksmanship skills. Kang was arrested after he swore allegiance to ISIS during a ceremony conducted by the purported ISIS leader. —AFP

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## International

# French government signals more concessions to pacify protesters

## Macron under fire as 'yellow vest' protesters fume

PARIS: The French government signaled yesterday that it was prepared to make further concessions to "yellow vest" protesters, even raising a possible rollback on a controversial move to cut taxes for high earners last year. President Emmanuel Macron faces a crucial few days as he seeks an end to more than two weeks of protests which degenerated on Saturday into some of the worst violence in central Paris in decades. The former investment banker was heckled by a crowd as he visited a burned out government building in Puy-en-Velay in central France on Tuesday night, just hours after a new opinion poll showed his approval rating at just 23 percent.

The so-called "yellow vest" protests began on November 17 in opposition to rising fuel taxes, but they have since ballooned into a broad challenge to Macron's pro-business agenda. One of the frequent demands from the protesters, who are mostly from rural or small-town France, is a repeal of Macron's move last year to cut the ISF "fortune tax" which was previously levied on high-earners. "If something isn't working, we're not dumb, we'll change it," government spokesman Benjamin Griveaux said on RTL radio yesterday morning, saying the wealth tax would be evaluated between now and late next year.



### Ex-investment banker heckled

Macron, 40, made the issue one of his key campaign pledges ahead of his election in May 2017, arguing that punitive taxes on the wealthy discouraged job creation and led many entrepreneurs to leave France. Griveaux stressed that re-instating the ISF "is not on the table for now," but Equality Minister Marlene Schiappa said she would argue to bring it back unless the tax cut could be shown to be effective. "The government has been too technocratic and took too long to respond" to the protests, she told France 3 television Tuesday in a withering assessment of the management of the current political crisis.

### U-turn on taxes

On Tuesday, Prime Minister Edouard Philippe announced the first major U-turn of Macron's presidency when he suspended for six months a rise in fuel taxes scheduled for January 1. Griveaux stressed that the tax hikes could be scrapped permanently if no agreement was reached during consultations over the next six months. "We're not in politics to be right. We're in politics so that things work out," he said. A source in the prime minister's office also told AFP that "the government has not necessarily played all of its cards", with further concessions such as a further cut in residence taxes possible. Many "yellow vest" protesters, named after the high-



PARIS: A picture shows burned cars in a street of Paris after clashes during a protest of Yellow vests (Gilets jaunes) against rising oil prices and living costs.— AFP

visibility jackets they wear, have said that Philippe's rollback on fuel taxes is not enough and have called for new protests in the capital on Saturday.

Two truck driver unions have also called an indefinite sympathy strike to begin Sunday night, and the protests have spread to dozens of schools nationwide as students denounce tougher university entrance require-

ments. Farmers will also consider whether to mount a day of demonstrations and possibly road blockades next week, the head of the FNSEA agricultural union said. Barricades at fuel depots are also causing shortages in some areas of France, while Paris businesses are bracing for new clashes which could erupt between protesters and police on Saturday.— AFP

## 'Badass' national security women offer Democrats Trump antidote

HENRICO: Virginia Democrat Abigail Spanberger had a potent defense against attacks by President Donald Trump and other Republicans casting her party as weak on national security: her career as a covert CIA counter-terrorism officer. In November's elections, she was one of five Democratic women with national security or military backgrounds who captured Republican-held US House of Representatives seats. "The Badasses," as the women have dubbed themselves, had no political experience. Yet several won districts Republicans dominated for decades.

For Democrats hoping to make additional inroads with Trump voters ahead of the 2020 US elections, the women offer a roadmap for connecting with a wide spectrum of the electorate - from a Democratic base clamoring for change to conservatives drawn to their national security credentials. Democrats already are planning to recruit more House candidates with service backgrounds and will begin raising money early next year, Democratic Party sources said.

The women who were successful this year will be important in the party's efforts in 2020 to keep control of the House, as well as win back the Senate and White House by driving overall enthusiasm for the Democratic ticket, the sources said. While there is a question mark about whether a woman with national security experience will end up on the presidential ticket, some see such a candidate as



WASHINGTON: US Representative-elect Abigail Spanberger (D-VA) shows a scarf after an office lottery for new members of Congress on Capitol Hill in Washington, DC.— AFP

Democrats' best hope to take on Trump. "The top traits for Trump's nightmare opponent would be a young, charismatic woman with a national security background," said David Wasserman, a senior analyst at the nonpartisan Cook Political Report.

These candidates were the "secret sauce" for Democrats in Republican-leaning areas this year, said Celinda Lake, a Democratic pollster whose firm has worked with leading party groups like the Democratic National Committee. Spanberger will be the first woman to represent her central Virginia district and the only Democrat since the 1970s. Elissa Slotkin, a former CIA analyst, returned her Michigan district to Democratic control for the first time in nearly 20 years. Mikie Sherrill, a former Navy pilot and federal pro-

secutor, won a New Jersey district represented by Republicans since the mid-1980s.

Elaine Luria, a former Navy officer, beat Republican incumbent Scott Taylor, also a veteran, in southern Virginia. Chrissy Houlahan, an engineer and former Air Force officer, won her redrawn Pennsylvania district after 15 years of Republican representation. Voters were less inclined to believe claims that the women would support policies like open borders or back calls from some liberals to abolish the Immigration and Customs Enforcement agency, Lake said. "Democrats have a problem, not just in being perceived as liberal, but that liberal often ends up being perceived as weak," Lake said. "But you can't run 'weak' against these women - they're tougher than nails." — Reuters

## US special prosecutor Mueller recommends no jail time for Flynn

WASHINGTON: Robert Mueller, the special prosecutor in charge of the Russia election meddling probe, recommended Tuesday that President Donald Trump's former national security advisor Michael Flynn face no jail time due to his "substantial" cooperation with the investigation. Mueller said in a court filing that Flynn, who admitted last year to lying about his contacts with Russians following Trump's November 2016 election victory, had helped in his and other unspecified federal criminal investigations, including being interviewed 19 times.

Mueller also told the Washington Federal court that despite his "serious" offense, the retired three-star general and former Pentagon intelligence chief had a strong record of military and public service. The surprise recommendation came ahead of Flynn's upcoming sentencing, which had been postponed four times over the past year. Those postponements indicated that, once hostile to the investigation that threatens Trump and his inner circle, he had possibly become a valuable witness.

"Given the defendant's substantial assistance and other considerations set forth below, a sentence at the low end of the guideline range - including a sentence that does not impose a term of incarceration - is appropriate and warranted," Mueller said in a memorandum to the court. Flynn's was the first guilty plea secured by the Mueller investigation into alleged collusion between Trump's election campaign and Russia. His position as a top-level insider in the campaign, accompanying Trump to key events, making a keynote speech at the July 2016 Republican convention, and then taking hold of the White House national security apparatus in Trump's first weeks in office, made him a potentially extremely valuable witness.

But many thought his own problems had likely compromised that value. In an interview with investigators on January 24, 2017, four days after Trump's inauguration, Flynn lied about conversations he had the previous December with Russia's ambassador to the US, Sergei Kislyak. In those conversations, apparently recorded by US intelligence, Flynn



Gen Michael Flynn, former national security advisor to US President Donald Trump

appeared to be trying to undermine the policy of then-President Barack Obama by making separate political deals with Moscow.

Additional federal criminal investigations - Obama at the time was planning sanctions on Russia for its interference in the 2016 election. Flynn urged the Russians not to retaliate, suggesting Trump would reverse the sanctions. Within weeks, Flynn was forced to resign after it was alleged that he also had lied to top White House officials about his Kislyak talks. Then in March 2018, in a second interview with the FBI, Flynn lied about the fact that before and after the election, he had a \$530,000 lobbying contract on behalf of Turkey that he had not reported.

"At the time, the defendant was a national security advisor and surrogate for the Trump campaign who opined publicly on foreign policy and national security issues," the sentencing memorandum noted. Despite the light sentence recommendation, the memorandum gave no hint as to what Flynn had told the Mueller team about the operations of the Trump campaign and its Russia ties. Mueller has identified numerous contacts, including efforts by Trump aides during 2016 to set up a meeting between him and Russian President Vladimir Putin. —AFP

## Powerful 7.5 quake off New Caledonia triggers tsunami

NOUMEA: A powerful 7.5-magnitude earthquake struck near New Caledonia yesterday, triggering a tsunami alert and emergency evacuations across a swathe of the South Pacific, but there were no reports of serious damage or injuries. Authorities said the quake, followed by at least 20 strong aftershocks, was centered about 170 kilometers southeast of New Caledonia's Loyalty Islands at a depth of just 10 kilometers. Island residents said the initial quake shook the walls of buildings and in places turned the sea foamy.

Tsunami waves were recorded moving out from the epicentre, prompting people to flee to high ground. The Pacific Tsunami Warning Center initially warned surges of up to three meters (10 feet) could be expected and shallow quakes of that magnitude can be devastating. But the centre later reported waves measured by its monitors around the region only reached about 72 centimeters on the island of Tanna, Vanuatu. Civil defense officials in Noumea said tsunami waves hit parts of the Loyalty Islands and the Isle of Pines, but caused no damage.

"Reports from the area confirm that the strength of the tsunami has

fallen significantly and there is no longer a major risk for the population," said a spokesman for the civil defense department. "There have been no injuries or damage," he said. Almost three hours after the quake, the Hawaii-based Pacific Tsunami Warning Center reported the threat stemming from the initial quake "has now passed". Multiple aftershocks of up to magnitude 6.6 hit the area in the hours following the initial quake, according to the US Geological Survey. The quake triggered emergency warning systems in New Caledonia, where residents received an urgent text message directing them to go to refuges immediately.

Basile Citre, a municipal official on the Loyalty Island of Mare, said he had been in a meeting at the town hall when he felt a small tremor followed by a bigger shock. "The building shook, but there was no damage," he told AFP. "When the sirens sounded, the population headed for higher ground for safety. For now, nothing serious has happened." A spokesman for the Vanuatu geohazards observatory said the sparsely populated island of Tanna was expected to be most affected but no evacuations had been ordered.— AFP

## A different Brexit? British lawmakers take back control

LONDON: British MPs have voted to give themselves a bigger say in what happens if, as expected, Prime Minister Theresa May's Brexit deal is rejected by the House of Commons next week. Here is what happened and the possible impact it could have on Britain's withdrawal from the European Union next March.

### What happened?

During a procedural discussion at the start of the debate on the Brexit deal on Tuesday evening, a number of MPs from May's Conservative party tabled an amendment seeking to influence what happens if that deal is rejected in a vote on Tuesday next week. The amendment, backed by former attorney general Dominic Grieve among others but opposed by the government, was passed in the House of Commons by 321 votes to 299.

### What does it say?

If the Brexit deal is rejected, the government must return to the Commons within 21 days to make a statement on what happens next. The Grieve amendment removes the requirement that any motion arising from this statement be con-

sidered "in neutral terms"—essentially, it allows MPs to amend it.

### What impact could this have?

Former minister Oliver Letwin, who backed the Grieve amendment, said the priority was to avoid the potentially calamitous situation of Britain leaving the EU with no deal. "It could be that at that time there is somewhere across this House a majority in favor of some solution that would avoid us leaving without a deal," he told the debate. MPs could in theory table an amendment asking the government to reopen negotiations with the EU or demand a second referendum or seek to delay Brexit or perhaps even try to stop it altogether. Letwin said he backed May's deal but if that failed, suggested a Norway-style agreement, where Britain joins the European Economic Area (EEA) - an option several Conservative MPs are pushing.

### Can MPs stop Brexit?

MPs are sharply divided over the various possible versions of Brexit, and both the Conservatives and Labor have committed to leaving the EU. However, everything might change if May's deal is taken off the table. Brexit supporters say any direction the Commons gives the government would not be legally binding. Some suspect dirty tricks, noting the Conservative rebels who backed Grieve's amendment include some of May's close allies. The amendment's success reinforces the prime minister's previous warnings to eurosceptics that if they reject her deal, they risk having no Brexit altogether.— AFP



International

# Growing split in Seoul over N Korea threatens Korea detente, nuke talks

## Unification Minister faces pressure from both S Korea, US

SEOUL: When Seoul was preparing to open a liaison office in the North Korean city of Kaesong this summer after a decade of virtually no contact with its longtime enemy, South Korean officials had heated debates over whether they should seek approval from Washington. Some top aides to President Moon Jae-in stressed it was an issue for the two Koreas alone and there was no need to involve their US ally, two people with knowledge of the situation told Reuters. But to the surprise of several officials at the meeting, Unification Minister Cho Myoung-gyon argued Washington must be consulted because Seoul's plans might run afoul of sanctions imposed on North Korea over its nuclear weapons program.

Two dozen countries including the Britain, Germany and Sweden already have embassies in Pyongyang, and other officials saw the proposed liaison office as a far lower-level of contact with the North. And they certainly did not expect Cho to be a leading advocate of strict enforcement of sanctions. Cho was Moon's personal choice to head the ministry, whose prime mission is to foster reconciliation, cooperation and eventual reunification with the North. Cho, whose 30 year public service history has been inextricably linked to reunification, was even sacked from the ministry in 2008 over his "dovish" stance toward Pyongyang.

At the suggestion of Cho and senior diplomats, Seoul ultimately sought US consent before opening the office in September, one of the sources said. All the sources spoke to condition of anonymity due to sensitivity of the matter. Cho declined to comment for this article, but a senior official at the Unification Ministry said it was aware of criticisms of Cho. "Inter-Korean ties are unique in their nature, but it's

been difficult, and there's North Korea's duplicity. It's a dilemma we face, or our fate," the official said, asking not to be named because of the sensitivity of the issue.

### Negotiator or roadblock?

The previously unreported debate among Moon's top officials illustrates a growing divide within South Korea over how to progress relations with the North while keeping Washington on side. Some corners of the administration argue Seoul can't afford to be seen veering from the US-led sanctions and pressure campaign until Pyongyang gives up its nuclear weapons program, while others feel closer inter-Korean ties can help expedite the stalled diplomatic process, several officials close to the situation say.

"If the internal rift leads to moving too quickly with the North without sufficient US consultations, it could pose a setback to not only the nuclear talks but also the alliance and inter-Korean relations," said Shin Beom-chul, a senior fellow at the Asan Institute for Policy Studies in Seoul. After the inter-Korean thaw gave way to reconciliation efforts between North Korean leader Kim Jong Un and US President Donald Trump earlier this year, Trump asked Moon to be "chief negotiator" between the two. That task has become increasingly difficult as

Washington and Pyongyang blame each other for the faltering nuclear talks.

US officials insist punishing sanctions must remain until North Korea completely denuclearizes. North Korea says it has already made concessions by dismantling key facilities and Washington must reciprocate by easing sanctions and declaring an end to the 1950-53 Korean War. "Unlike other advisers, Minister Cho has balanced his staunch desire for peace with an understanding of the importance of retaining a strong South Korea-US alignment," said Patrick Cronin of the Centre for a New American Security, an Asia expert in close touch with both US and South Korean officials.



### Division within risks discord between US and S Korea

#### Mounting frustration

"Some alliance discord is inevitable and not worrisome. What would be worrisome would be a clear rupture in partnership for managing North Korea."

South Korea-US approaches for managing North Korea." The presidential Blue House declined to comment, but Moon told reporters on Monday the view that there was discord between South Korea and the United States was "groundless" because there is no difference in the two countries' positions on the North's denuclearization.

A third source familiar with the presidential office's thinking said there was mounting frustration with Cho within the

Blue House and even inside the Unification Ministry amid concerns he worried too much about US views. "What the president would want from him as the unification minister is to come up with bold ideas to make his pet initiatives happen," the source said. During three summits this year, Moon and Kim agreed to re-link railways and roads, and when conditions are met, restart the joint factory park in Kaesong and tours to the North's Mount Kumgang resort that have been suspended for years.

None of those plans have made much headway, either because sanctions ban them outright, or as in the case of Kaesong, Seoul took time to convince skeptical US officials that cross-border projects wouldn't undermine sanctions. North Korea itself has been an unpredictable partner. Discussions through the Kaesong office have been few and far between, with Pyongyang's negotiators often failing to show up for scheduled weekly meetings without notice, Unification Ministry officials say.

Even so, the Kaesong move has caused tensions with Washington. US officials told Seoul that South Korea's explanations on the Kaesong office were not "satisfactory," the South's Foreign Minister Kang Kyung-wha told a parliamentary hearing in August. Washington was also caught off guard when a group of businessmen who used to operate factories in the now-closed Kaesong industrial park were invited for the opening ceremony of the office, a diplomatic source in Seoul said. The allies launched a working group last month led by their nuclear envoys to coordinate North Korean policy. It was borne out of US desire to "keep inter-Korean relations in check," the source said. —Reuters

## British middleman held in India over helicopter deal

NEW DELHI: The alleged British middleman in a dicey helicopter deal between India and an Anglo-Italian firm was remanded in custody yesterday after being extradited by the UAE, authorities said. Christian Michel James is accused of arranging kick-backs to Indian officials to secure a deal for AgustaWestland to supply New Delhi with 12 helicopters for 556 million euros (\$630 million) in 2010. Brought in from the United Arab Emirates late Tuesday, James appeared in a Delhi court amid tight security. He will remain in police custody initially for five days and be allowed to meet his lawyer for one hour twice a day during this period, lawyers said.

Italian prosecutors suspect illegal sweeteners worth about 10 percent of the contract, or some 55 million euros, were paid out in bribes. India cancelled the deal in January 2014. James, who in previous interviews with Indian newspapers denied any wrongdoing, was detained in Dubai in February 2017 following an Indian arrest warrant and an Interpol notice. Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi's Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) has sought to capitalize politically on the scandal as the contract was signed under the previous government of the Congress party.

Addressing a rally in the northwestern state of Rajasthan yesterday, Modi said: "We have brought back the middleman. He will spill the beans." The BJP said on Tuesday that the case could spell "serious trouble" for the "first family" of Congress, referring to the party's long-powerful Nehru-Gandhi dynasty, Indian media



NEW DELHI: British national Christian Michel James (center), the alleged middleman in a deal between India and Anglo-Italian helicopter firm AgustaWestland, is pictured in a vehicle while leaving a district court in New Delhi yesterday, following his extradition from the United Arab Emirates. —AFP

reported. The Congress party had earlier alleged that the BJP government managed to force James to sign a false confession naming its former party chief Sonia Gandhi in exchange of exoneration

from any charges. In Italy, the former head of AgustaWestland and of parent company Finmeccanica were given jail sentences in 2014 over the scandal but they were later acquitted. —AFP

with HIV, a regional official said yesterday. The virus is usually transmitted through sexual intercourse, infected blood and from an infected mother to the baby in her womb or through breast-feeding, but the villagers' alarm at the discovery a week ago drove the demand for the lake to be drained, the official added.

"We tried our best to assure the villagers that we would get the water tested, but they did not budge and even refused to come near the lake," said Naveen Hullur, who is in charge of the area. The lake near the village of Morab in Karnataka, about 440 km (273 miles) from the state's capital of Bengaluru, covers 32 acres (13 hectares). It is a key source of drinking water for more

than 1,000 people who live in the drought-affected region and earn their livelihoods by farming.

The drainage operation has run for the last four days and fresh water from a nearby canal is to be used to replenish the lake over the next four to five days, Hullur added. He did not provide additional details. It was not immediately clear what the cost of the drainage operation is. Public health officials in the region did not immediately respond to telephone calls and email messages from Reuters to seek comment. The HIV virus which causes AIDS is not spread in air, water or in food, or by sharing cups, bowls, cutlery, clothing, or toilet seats. —Reuters

## Cameras, drones: Rio de Janeiro to put electronic eyes on crime

RIO DE JANEIRO: Rio de Janeiro state is moving ahead with plans to deploy security cameras and drones to help fight crime, according to its next governor, a far-right politician loyal to president-elect Jair Bolsonaro. A tender to install 30,000 cameras will be launched soon, Wilson Witzel, who takes up the governorship of the southeast Brazilian state in January, told a media conference late Monday. "Security is our priority," he said. On Tuesday Witzel traveled to Israel to view drones that could be used to monitor armed drug gangs.

O Globo, a Brazilian news outlet, said it understood the drones included combat versions capable of firing weapons, which could be used for targeting gang members in hard-to-access favelas, or high-density slums. The governor-elect was also reportedly to inspect Israeli-made cameras with face-recognition. Witzel's communications teams did not confirm details of the Israel visit when contacted by AFP. It said the "diverse activities" on his trip included "learning about drone technology." Witzel won Rio de Janeiro state's gubernatorial election on October 28 with 60 percent of the vote. He benefited from a far-right wave that swept Bolsonaro to the presidency.

Like Bolsonaro, the former federal judge has vowed a crackdown on crime that plagues Brazilian streets. Rio de Janeiro state last year recorded more than 5,300 murders. Shortly after his election, Witzel stirred controversy by saying he intended to authorize police snipers to kill armed criminals even if they presented no threat to officers. In his media conference Monday, Witzel said he would invest heavily in security, regardless of the parlous finances of Rio de Janeiro state, which has been on the verge of bankruptcy for several years. —AFP

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## Power of Mexico's populist president

If you really want to understand contemporary Mexico, skip "Narcos" and watch the series "Un Extranero Enemigo". Instead, the drama about the horrifying crackdown on the student movement on the eve of the 1968 Mexico City Olympics captures the essence of one-party authoritarianism under the long-ruling PRI, the Institutional Revolutionary Party. Its characters are the commander of internal security forces, student protest leaders, the sly CIA station chief, then-president Gustavo Diaz Ordaz, and the cabinet members jockeying to succeed him. But at heart, the protagonist of "Enemigo" is the unvarnished, omnipotent power radiating from the presidency.

"Enemigo" may seem like an odd introduction to the era of Andres Manuel Lopez Obrador (known as AMLO), the populist Mexican president sworn into office on Saturday to succeed PRI president Enrique Pena Nieto. AMLO says he is assuming power to represent Mexico's powerless, the millions left behind by the nation's fitful modernization. And one of the central paradoxes of populism, even in its well-intentioned version, is that it takes an awful lot of power and force to vindicate the interests of the powerless against entrenched elites. AMLO is determined to reconstitute the awesome power of the presidency, not to crack down on the disaffected left as Diaz Ordaz did, but to champion it.

Mexico opened up to the outside world a generation ago, the generation between the period depicted in "Un Extranero Enemigo" ("An Unknown Enemy") and the current moment, embracing free trade and an electoral democracy. The results were positive for Mexico's educated elite, and for the considerable number of families who joined the global middle class and turned the country into a massive buyer of US goods. Voters invested in the steady development of this more globalized Mexico turned down AMLO's retro vision of a more statist, self-contained Mexico in the 2006 and 2012 elections.

He finally won on his third try in July, an unexpectedly resounding, mandate-conferring triumph, as a result of previous governments' failure to broaden and deepen development, not only to lift more Mexicans out of poverty, but to temper rampant corruption and establish peace and the rule of law in the parts of the country rendered ungovernable by violence and insecurity. The gap between the country's First World modernity and connectivity in some parts of its economy, and its Third World inequality and governance in too many areas, had become too glaring, too unsustainable. And so plenty of centrist independent-minded voters decided to roll the dice on the populist candidate clamoring for the interests of "the people" all these years, figuring that he might close the gap without necessarily being able to reverse Mexico's decades-long opening to the outside world.

These voters might be proven wrong. As AMLO said in his inaugural address in the Mexican Congress, his will be a "profound and radical transformation" of Mexico. By winning substantial majorities in both chambers of Congress and in a majority of state legislatures for his "Morena" movement, AMLO will preside in a manner more reminiscent of Classic PRI all-powerful rulers than more recent presidents, pursuing what he immodestly has coined the country's "Fourth Transformation" (the third, if you're wondering, was the revolution of 1910).

In a speech at the "AMLOfest" in Mexico City's iconic Zocalo (the city's main square) that followed his swearing-in, the new president went through a mind-numbing recitation of 100 campaign promises that he will now act upon (#42, no government official will be able to close down streets, ignore red lights, or park illegally). Many of his more popular pledges have been about cracking down on the corruption, impunity and privilege of those AMLO decries as the "power mafias".

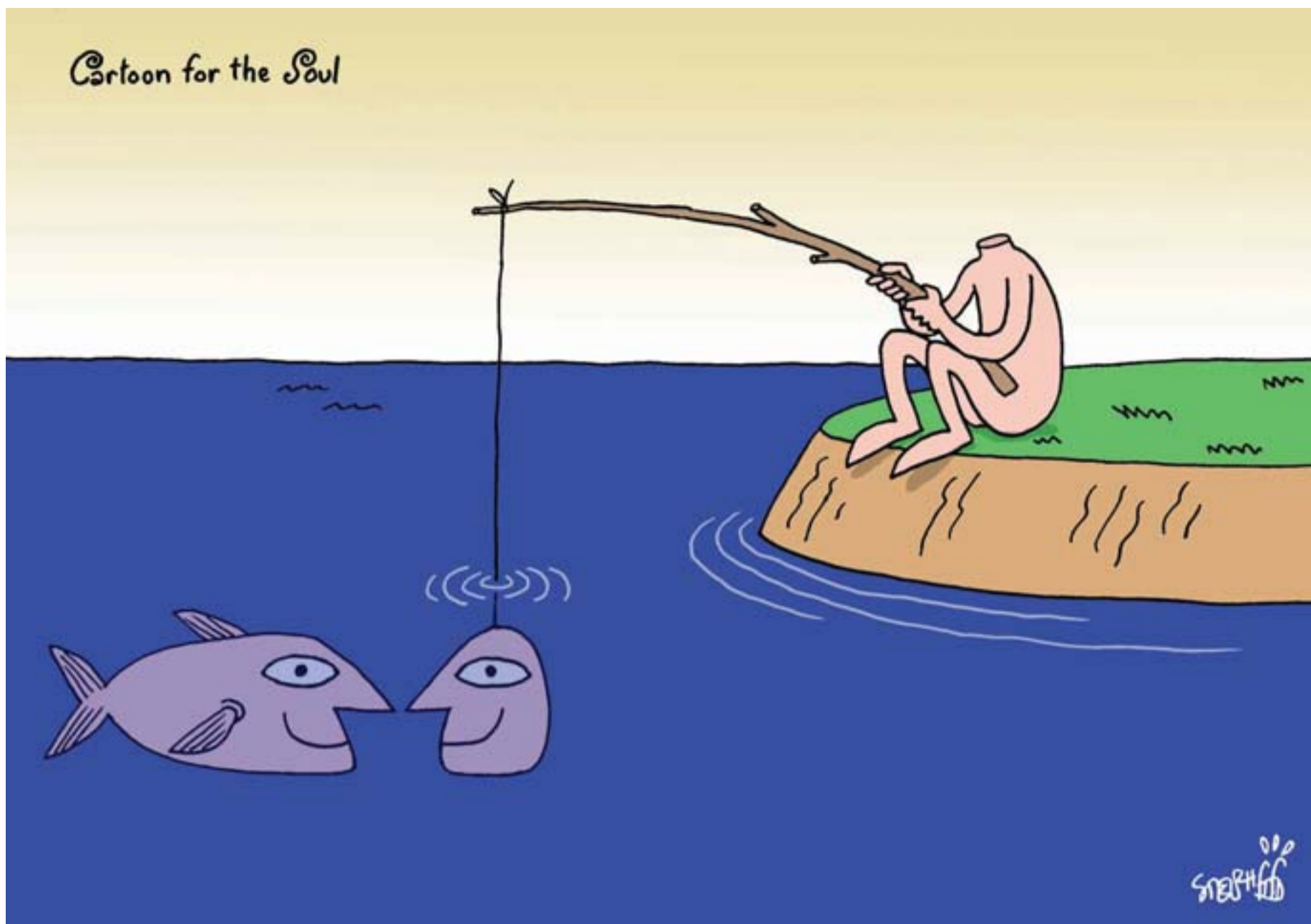
He is abolishing pensions for ex-presidents, selling the presidential Boeing 787, reassigning the commander-in-chief's security detail, refusing to live in the presidential mansion, and cutting the pay of some senior federal employees. The popularity of this ostentatious austerity is understandable, but it also represents an assertion of power, a move to transcend established institutional norms and practices and make clear who gets to set the rules.

## 'Consulta popular'

AMLO's most decisive act during the transition was to signal to the nation's globalized elite that they'd be grounded until certain things changed in the country. The president-elect in October scrapped plans for a new \$13 billion international airport outside Mexico City, never mind the fact that construction had begun back in 2015, contracts had been signed, commitments made, and experts insisted it was needed. AMLO had rallied against the project as candidate and his dislike for it was ratified by an impromptu "consulta popular", an informal pop-up referendum he organized to allow "the people" to weigh in.

That move, and AMLO's admonition that such consultas displacing technocratic governance will become the new normal (including the alarming promise of a biennial vote for people to weigh in on whether he should stay in office), triggered a decline in the Mexican stock market and in the value of the peso. But on Sunday, a day after the inaugural euphoria, reports surfaced that the government would proceed for now with the new airport's financing and work until it had a better handle on the legal consequences of pulling the plug.

AMLO is also establishing an office of federal "super delegate" in each state to coordinate federal spending, alarming remaining non-Morena governors who see in this a usurpation of their sovereignty. After flirting with the idea of an amnesty for drug traffickers during his campaign, AMLO shocked his own base after the election by proposing a new National Guard to take on the fight (subject to an upcoming consulta, of course). Conversely, after spending much of his campaign promising to make the ruling "power mafias" accountable for their past corruption, AMLO is now saying he isn't inclined to prioritize such prosecutions, for the sake of national unity. —Reuters



## Caught in storm: Cargo ship and tons of grain

When the Island Bay cargo ship arrived from Beirut at the Kerch Strait, gateway to the Azov Sea, it sailed into a perfect storm of geopolitics and bad weather. The following day, Russia opened fire on three Ukrainian naval ships, impounded them and detained their sailors, some of them wounded. It then blocked the strait by putting a tanker underneath a new bridge it has built linking the Russian mainland to the Crimean peninsula it annexed from Ukraine in 2014. While the world digested the implications of the Nov 25 incident, the most explosive clash in recent years, Russia said it had reopened the channel to the Azov Sea, which is shared by Russia and Ukraine.

But Island Bay remained at anchor outside the strait, lashed by gale force winds and sleet, its hull icing over while cargo ships amassed on either side. On Monday, a week on, the captain reported seeing 20 vessels awaiting clearance to cross. Reformatory data that day also showed 20 Ukraine-bound vessels held up at the strait since Nov 25, with two others allowed through. Meanwhile, Island Bay's cargo of 5,500 tonnes of wheat, destined for flour mills in Libya, waited in the Ukrainian port of Berdyansk.

The saga of the ship is a window on the leverage Moscow has over Ukraine's Azov seaboard, affecting dock workers, port operators, brokers and farmers who depend on the route. Russia, whose coast guards began inspecting traffic in the Kerch Strait eight months ago, blamed inclement weather for the delay. But on Sunday, when the skies cleared, just a handful of ships passed through; by Monday evening, the Island Bay's captain's

frustration was beginning to show.

"It is acceptable weather for transit. Coast guards have own opinion," his log, seen by Reuters, said. That day, he reported seeing just two ships cross into the Azov Sea. Ukraine says the hiatus is one of many since the Russian spot-checks began in May, when Russia opened the Kerch bridge, interrupting exports of grain and steel and imports of coal. Moscow denies any disruption.

## The stevedores

In Berdyansk's port, where icy winds had recently ripped off the roof of a nearby shed, staff of stevedore company Ascet Shipping were reading the daily reports from the Island Bay with growing concern. Ascet loads almost a million tonnes of Ukrainian grain a year onto cargo ships in Berdyansk and was waiting to load the Island Bay; its size means each day of waiting time costs around \$2,000-\$2,500, Ascet's chief executive, Denis Rusin, said. This has made Berdyansk an unpopular port in recent months.

"Ship owners do not want to go to Berdyansk," said Rusin, whose clients include US firm Cargill, one of the world's largest dry bulk and tank shipping companies. "Buyers are refusing to bet on passage." Since Russia and Ukraine clashed in the strait, Ukraine has introduced martial law in 10 regions, including the Azov Sea coast - highlighting the risks of doing business with Berdyansk. "For us this was the worst week in recent years," Rusin said. "Clients have stopped considering the possibility of signing contracts for delivery in January, let alone February or spring," he said.

## The port

Some Ukrainian politicians have accused Moscow of trying to strangle Ukraine's Azov Sea ports in preparation for an invasion from the east, following on from Crimea's annexation and the subsequent breakaway of Russian-speaking eastern Ukraine. Moscow says that idea is a fantasy dreamt up by Ukraine's pro-Western leaders ahead of elections next year. It says it has the right to patrol the strait. But Berdyansk's businesses say the patrols target ships bound for Ukraine, causing damaging delays.

The recent escalation in tensions has not affected ships coming to pick up grain from the Russian side of the Azov Sea, according to Sergei Filipov, director of trading firm QAM7 Dubai, which has operations there. He said inspections have delayed travel by the usual two or three days. On its eleventh day at anchor in Kerch Strait, with skies finally clear, Island Bay reported to Berdyansk: "We called everywhere to make guards (come and) inspect the vessel, but their intentions cannot be explained."

The situation has sent Rusin racing to further revise down his business forecasts. Climbing onto the windswept roof of his office on Friday, he pointed to a single truck of grain where multiple trucks used to line up along the dock. "We had expected to load around 150,000 tonnes over the next three months... Maybe 200,000," he said. Now the company is preparing for anything between 50,000 tonnes and no business at all, he said. "This was a change of plan that happened this week."

The Azov Sea grain supply chain makes up just 2 to 3 percent of Ukraine's agricultural exports, deputy central bank chief

Dmitry Sologub said. But for the southeastern Zaporozhye region, home to 1.8 million people, it is critical. At the government Port Authority in Berdyansk, officials said they feared for the port's future as clients look to other locations with direct access to the Black Sea. "Of course we would prefer (to use other ports)," said Erdem Sekreter, fleet manager at Turkey's Bayraktar shipping group, which has two ships waiting to cross the Kerch Strait to reach the Ukrainian coast. "It is getting more expensive for ship-owners to go to the Azov Sea - the Ukrainian side of course," he added. "We are paying out of our pocket now."

## Farmers and traders

Bison Group owns 40,000 hectares of arable land in Zaporozhye region and exports much of its harvest via Berdyansk. With ship-owners raising freight charges to factor in the new risks in the Azov Sea, the costs will be passed down to grain producers, Bison deputy director Igor Serov said. "It hits agricultural producers really hard." Prices will have to go down by at least \$10 per tonne, a trader at Atria Brokers, which handles Berdyansk grain, said.

But producers may not have other options. The railway infrastructure is not in place to send exports via Black Sea ports instead, Serov said, and transferring grain by truck to Odessa, for example, would cost an extra \$40 per tonne. Buyers are also pulling back, afraid of the risks. "Our sales have fallen," the Atria trader said. "It has affected us in a fundamental way." Every day Island Bay's cargo sits in port, it racks up costs for traders. Grain can spoil, and storage costs are steep. —Reuters

## Street protests, a French tradition par excellence

Since the Revolution more than two centuries ago, burning barricades and street protests have been a feature of French political life - and experts say President Emmanuel Macron has had his first taste of their power. Jogging through one of the poshest districts of Paris last weekend, 33-year-old Belgian Augustin Terlinden suddenly found himself face-to-face with a car going up in flames. "Evidently the revolutionary tradition is still very much alive in France," he said with a smile.

Some 200 cars were torched and more than 400 people arrested during the "yellow vest" demonstrations on Saturday, the worst clashes in the capital in decades. "Paris is burning," read headlines in the international press. What started in mid-November as road blockades over fuel taxes has spiralled into violent protests against Macron, seen by demonstrators as out of touch with ordinary people.

On Tuesday, in a bid to quell the demonstrations, his government announced the fuel tax hikes would be suspended for six months. It was an unprecedented U-turn from a president who previously vowed he would not be swayed. Abroad, some observers have been tempted to see in the protests confirmation that rebellion is something that simply runs in French blood. Swiss newspaper Le Temps described France, which executed its king in an ultimate act of anti-elitism in 1793, as a "country which has always given in to temptations of violence".

## 'The state must listen'

But Michel Pigenet, a historian at the Paris 1 university who specializes in social movements, insists otherwise. "Violence during demonstra-

tions is not a particularly French tradition," he said. "But it's true that France has a tradition of collective mobilization which has given rise to a sentiment that 'the state must listen to us, one way or another.'" When he came to power in May 2017, Macron vowed that protests would not blow him off course in his bid to dynamize the French economy and attract investment.

Mass demonstrations plagued the five-year term of his Socialist predecessor Francois Hollande, who was forced by protests to abandon a so-called "eco tax" on heavy goods vehicles. But the French penchant for refusing to take government policy lying down has far deeper roots. Published four years after the Revolution erupted, the 1793 constitution safeguarded a "right to insurrection" against any government that was not listening to the people. While that constitution is long gone, "the idea is still there," Pigenet said.

## Protests 'get results'

Olivier Cahn, a professor at the University of Tours, said the tradition has taken root because protests "often get results" in France. After the momentous May 1968 protests which rocked French society - and left several dead - the government raised the minimum wage by a third. In 1986, reforms denounced by critics as introducing selective university education were axed after the death of a student. And in 2006, violent protests prompted the government to scrap a new type of job contract, which was intended to make hiring easier but was seen by critics as increasing economic insecurity.

On the other hand, top-down protests organized by trade unions have often fizzled in recent years, like the mass demonstrations in 2016 which failed to kill off labor reforms. "There is a growing movement which wants more violent methods than those led by the unions, which are considered a bit humdrum," said Erik Neveu, a sociologist at the Sciences Po Rennes university. That may help explain why public support for the "yellow vests" has remained fairly high despite its increasing violence. —AFP

## Phantom-like Mueller holds Washington spellbound

He hovers over Washington's seething political swamp like The Phantom. No one ever sees Robert Mueller, the special counsel leading the Russia collusion investigation; he never speaks. But he's constantly present, showing his hand through a trickle of court filings, each one stoking speculation through the halls of government, in offices and barrooms, and over dinner tables: What does he have on Donald Trump?

Eighteen months into his investigation, Mueller has the US capital spellbound. He threw tantalizing new bait to Russia-gate adepts late Tuesday when he recommended to a court that Trump's former national security advisor Michael Flynn, who had lied to investigators about his own Russia contacts, be let off without any jail time. While Flynn was guilty of a "serious" offense, Mueller said in a court filing, he had fully cooperated with investigators in multiple cases, and submitted to interviews 19 times.

What Flynn told them, though, Mueller wasn't saying. It all adds to a mystique about the veteran prosecutor, who is depicted in fan memes as a Star Wars Jedi or a character from Game of Thrones. "Mueller is coming," they warn ominously. Liberals see Mueller as a warrior against injustice, and are whipped up by every court document containing a tidbit that potentially links the president to a crime. Republicans are afraid to even imagine what damage their party faces from the outcome of the probe. Trump, meanwhile, seems more on edge with each new court filing,

blasting out tweets calling the probe an "illegal witch hunt."

## Invisible star

It's an extreme makeover for the 74-year-old former Marine, who was a public prosecutor battling the mafia and Russian spies before taking the lead of the Federal Bureau of Investigation just one week in advance of the devastating Sept 11, 2001 terror attacks. Director of the FBI for 12 years, he was a very public figure, respected but hardly beloved. Now, he is the invisible star of Washington. Yet he is barely known by the people that cheer and fear him. Gaunt and stately, he has only been spotted in public a handful of times this year, reported and heavily forwarded on social media: alone, with no security, crossing a Washington street; dining in a low-key restaurant; getting help at the Georgetown Apple store with his wife of 52 years, Anne Standish.

"Even special counsel needs occasional IT support," tweeted communications consultant Meghan Pianta, who snapped a photo of the couple with one of the Apple techies. In July, he was also spied in Washington National Airport waiting for a flight, unwittingly just feet away from Donald Trump Jr., the president's son who is believed to be a target of the investigation. Mueller lives in a gated community in Northern Virginia, and arrives at and leaves work at a non-descript office building in southwest Washington unseen through the parking garage.

He doesn't visit the White House to talk with Trump's lawyers; they go to him. Mostly, his two dozen seasoned investigators and prosecutors do the public work, making court appearances and filings, and likewise letting documents speak for them. Few know what Mueller is like in person. Is he the brusque taskmaster who demanded results in the 9/11 investigation barely 24 hours after it took place? Or the quiet, patient but determined chess-player that the Russia collusion investigation's steady march suggests? —AFP

## Business

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VIENNA: In this file photo, OPEC ministers attend the informal meeting of the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) on the eve of the 173rd OPEC Conference in Vienna. —AFP

# Saudis to persuade Russia to join oil cuts

## Moscow resists deep cuts, Riyadh under pressure from Trump not to cut

VIENNA: Saudi Arabia sought to persuade Russia yesterday to cut oil production substantially with OPEC next year in an attempt to arrest a decline in the price of crude and prevent another global glut.

OPEC meets today in Vienna, followed by talks with allies such as Russia tomorrow. The producer group's de facto leader, Saudi Arabia, has indicated a need for steep reductions in output from January but has come under pressure from US President Donald Trump to push oil prices even lower. Russian Energy Minister Alexander Novak told reporters he had held a "good" meeting with his Saudi counterpart Khalid Al-Falih yesterday and that they would have more talks. Saudi Arabia has indicated it wants the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries and its allies to cut output by at least 1.3 million barrels per day, or 1.3 percent of global production.

Riyadh wants Moscow to contribute at least 250,000-300,000 bpd to the cut but Russia insists the amount should be only half of that, OPEC and non-OPEC sources said. Oman's oil minister said he believed OPEC and its allies would reach a deal this week to cut oil production.

"It is not easy but we will always work together with our colleagues," United Arab Emirates Energy Minister Suhail bin Mohammed Al-Mazroui told reporters in Vienna when asked about Russia's position. A source close to the Russian Energy Ministry said: "No one is eager to cut unless there is an emergency. It is the United States where we are seeing the bulk of the increase in oil output. OPEC and Russia will be very careful about voluntary 'blood-letting'." Russia, Saudi Arabia and the United States have been vying for the position of top crude producer in recent years. The United States is not part of any output-limiting initiative due to its strict anti-trust legislation and fragmented oil industry.

### Trump raises pressure

Oil prices have fallen by almost a third since October to around \$61 per barrel after Saudi Arabia raised production to compensate for a drop in Iranian oil exports due to fresh US sanctions. Washington also gave sanctions waivers to some buyers of Iranian crude, further raising fears of an oil glut next year. Possibly complicating any OPEC decision is the crisis around the killing of journalist Jamal Khashoggi at

the Saudi consulate in Istanbul in October. Trump has backed Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman despite calls from many US politicians to impose stiff sanctions on Riyadh.

"How can the Saudis cut substantially if Trump doesn't want a big cut?" said Gary Ross, chief executive of US-based Black Gold Investors and a veteran OPEC watcher. "Trump is worried about the Fed and inflation. So he wants low prices now. Also if Saudis are obnoxious with a deep output cut, it will spur the Democrats in Congress to go more actively for the Nopec legislation and the withdrawal of US support for the Saudi-backed forces in the war in Yemen," Ross said.

The Nopec legislation being discussed by US lawmakers could make it possible to sue Saudi Arabia and other OPEC members for price fixing.

Bob McNally, president of US-based Rapidan Energy Group, said OPEC was stuck between a rock and a hard place given pressure from Trump on one hand and the need for higher revenues on the other. "We think OPEC will try to come up with a fuzzy production cut ... It won't be called a



Saudi Energy Minister Khalid Al-Falih

cut but will effectively mean a cut, which will also be difficult to quantify," McNally said. —Reuters

## China vows quick trade moves as US sends mixed signals

BEIJING: China vowed yesterday to move swiftly to strike a trade consensus with the United States, even as mixed signals on the detente from self-described "Tariff Man" Donald Trump's administration upset global markets. Trump sowed more confusion as he opened the door to lengthier negotiations with China, suggesting that they could extend beyond a 90-day deadline to reach a deal to avoid a massive tariff increase. But the Chinese commerce ministry said negotiators will "actively push forward negotiations within 90 days in accordance with a clear timetable and roadmap" —marking Beijing's first public acknowledgement of the deadline announced by the US at the weekend.

The ministry lauded Trump's talks with President Xi Jinping at the weekend as "successful" and said it was "confident" their agreement would be implemented. The ministry vowed to start implementing "specific matters" that were agreed-saying "the sooner the better"—but did not provide any details. Trump and Xi agreed on a trade war truce on the sidelines of a G20 summit in Argentina on Saturday, holding off on new tariffs and giving negotiators three months to reach an agreement.

China pledged to buy more from the United States and the White House said the two sides would negotiate "structural changes" to thorny issues plaguing relations, but few details and no dollar amounts were disclosed. But the verbal

detente was broken yesterday as China's foreign ministry lashed out at criticism from US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo. Pompeo's remarks "go contrary to the spirit of the consensus between our two leaders," foreign ministry spokesman Geng Shuang told reporters.

Noting the applause at the end of Xi-Trump summit, Geng asked: "I don't know why people clapping at that time now mean by saying this type of thing, what are their intentions?" Pompeo said in Brussels on Tuesday the US could abandon some international agreements to thwart bad actors like China, which he accused of cynically exploiting World Trade Organization rules.

### 'REAL deal'

Adding to the confusion, Trump indicated on Tuesday that the trade talks could go beyond the March 1 deadline. "The negotiations with China have already started. Unless extended, they will end 90 days from the date of our wonderful and very warm dinner with President Xi in Argentina," Trump tweeted. But the US leader kept up the threats as he warned that he was ready to make China "pay for the privilege" of selling in the US market if the negotiations fail. While he said he would "happily sign" a fair deal that addresses US concerns, he warned: "remember, I am a Tariff Man."

The change in tone and the increased confusion over what was achieved at the meeting contributed to a sharp decline in the US stock market, which plunged on Tuesday, driven lower by trade worries and fears for future US economic growth. Chinese shares closed lower on Wednesday amid similar doubts. As part of the truce, Trump agreed to hold off on plans to raise the tariffs on \$200 billion in Chinese imports to 25 percent beginning January 1, leaving them at the current 10 percent rate. The tone of Trump's latest tweets show an apparent shift from 24 hours earlier, when he was unreservedly triumphant, saying relations with China had taken a "BIG leap forward." —AFP

## Lagarde urges US, others to reject 'dystopian' path

WASHINGTON: Countries that go it alone and fail to adapt to new economic realities could face a "dystopian" future where an angry majority is left behind, IMF chief Christine Lagarde warned Tuesday.

She urged world leaders to remember the lesson of the global recession that followed the 2008 financial crisis: "International cooperation is essential, not optional." The managing director of the Washington-based global crisis lender issued yet another plea to governments, notably the United States, to back away from protectionism and confrontation.

At a time when US President Donald Trump is engaged in global trade conflict that the IMF says puts world economic growth at risk, Lagarde said she is pleased by the "significant progress" over the weekend to defuse the US-China trade dispute. But asked about the sharp decline in US stock markets—which fell more than three percent due to concerns over the trade war and the impact on the economy—Lagarde urged patience. "Compared to what we've gone through its progress," she said.

Lagarde delivered her message about the need for global economic cooperation wrapped in praise for the key leadership role the US plays in the world. In the economic prosperity that followed World War II, "We learned

from the past, got creative, and changed for the better," she said in a lecture at the US Library of Congress.

"None of this would have been possible without the United States. This country challenged the international economic order when it needed challenging. It forged compromise when compromise was necessary."

And it was in the US interest to take a leading role because "a stronger and more stable world paid dividends for the US," she said. "This success did not come at the expense of other nations," Lagarde said. "On the contrary. This country's collaborative leadership paved the way not only for decades of opportunity here in America, but also for growth that spread across the world."

That contrasts sharply with Trump's "America First" rhetoric and his view of trade as a zero-sum game in which imports equate to countries taking money out of the country.

### Anger and anxiety

Policies like that could lead to an "age of anger," where inequality soars and millions are left behind, Lagarde cautioned. Much of the anger erupting worldwide and the economic anxiety "is a legacy of the crisis," she said in response to a question.

In Britain, it was channeled into fear of foreigners and led to Brexit, but she said there is "more regret in the UK than there was only six months ago," as the consequences of leaving the European Union become apparent.

To avoid the "dystopian scenario," countries must adapt, improving cooperation among governments, to strengthen oversight, reduce corruption and reform tax collection. That will free up resources to improve infrastructure and education. —AFP

## Business

## NBK report on international markets

# Global growth concerns weigh on markets; Fed rate hike soon

## Tensions remain high in UK over Brexit after deal with EU

KUWAIT: After a rough October, international financial markets remained under pressure in November as concerns over global economic growth weighed on equities and benchmark bond yields fell. Worries over the demand outlook and a potential market glut also saw oil prices continue the plunge that started in October, with November seeing the largest monthly fall - some 22 percent - in ten years. There was positive news in early December however, with the US and China striking an agreement on trade that sees the US hold off from tariff hikes on imports from China scheduled for January and China purchase more US goods to reduce the trade gap. Although the 90-day deal could yet break down as talks on a permanent arrangement proceed, it at least signals both sides' willingness to reach an accord and also eases immediate fears over the impact of an escalating trade war on world growth.

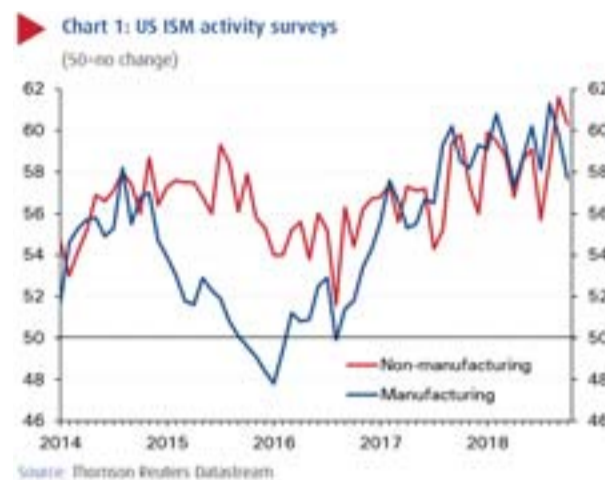
### US growth to remain strong in Q4

Activity levels in the US economy remain in good shape, with the second estimate of GDP confirming growth of 3.5 percent in 3Q18 backed by robust consumer spending, while high frequency indicators point to a strong, if more moderate, outcome in Q4. ISM surveys of both manufacturing (57.7) and non-manufacturing (60.3) activity for October eased slightly from September, but both remain well above historical averages and some softening from previous levels is welcome on sustainability grounds given reported capacity pressures.

Indeed, 'nowcasts' from the Atlanta and New York Fed point to annualized growth of 2.5 percent in Q4 and a consensus view of 2.7 percent, which are still above estimates of the economy's long-term potential.

Backed up by steadily rising wage growth, solid employment gains and unemployment at its lowest levels since the 1960s, consumer spending rose by a stronger-than-expected 5.0 percent y/y in October, slightly softer than average for Q3 but above income growth of 4.3 percent. With subdued news on inflation (see below), spending is also robust in 'real' terms. There are hints however that the labor market could be approaching a turning point. The weekly jobless claims figures have been gradually edging up and rose for the third consecutive week up to November 24th, which could point to a less-than-stellar November employment report when it is released mid-December.

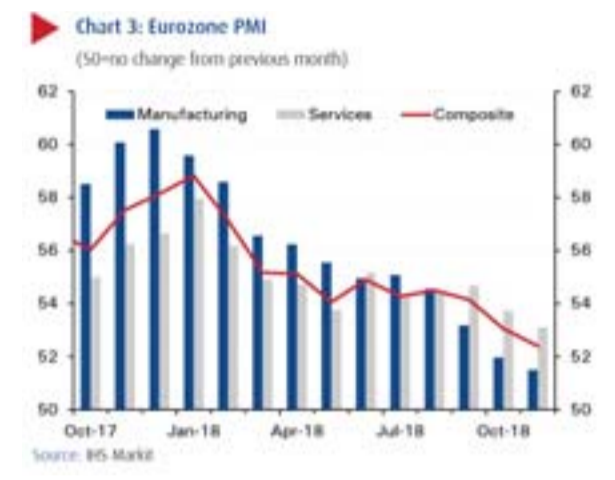
The weakening housing market could eventually start to weigh on the consumer sector going forward, with latest data pointing to further deterioration. The decline in new and existing home sales has gathered pace, with the former down 12 percent y/y in October, and house price increases have slowed. Housing is often seen as a bellwether of the broader economy, but the Federal Reserve, while concerned about possible weakness, sees the slowdown as an appropriate moderation due to rising mortgages rates, recent changes in taxation and pressures on affordability affected by rising material and labor costs. Improvements in



Source: Thomson Reuters Databream



Source: Thomson Reuters Databream



Source: IHS Markit

household balance sheets over the past decade should also limit the macroeconomic impact of any housing market downturn.

Inflation under the Fed's preferred gauge - the core personal consumer expenditure measure - eased back to 1.8 percent y/y in October and below the bank's 2.0 percent target. In further dovish news, Fed Chairman Jay Powell said in a late November speech that interest rates were now closing in on 'neutral' levels, implying that the Fed Funds target rate may not need to rise as fast as initially expected. Futures market expectations for a rate hike following the Fed's December 18-19th meeting have in fact firming to 83 percent from 70 percent a month ago, but policy next year is now expected to be tightened less quickly than before, with a more than 70 percent chance of at most one further hike through 2019. This would suit President Trump, who said the Fed is "way off base" with its policy tightening.

### Eurozone activity data

Momentum in the eurozone economy continued to falter in November, as the month's composite PMI of 52.4, the weakest in four years, reflected further softness in both manufacturing and services, underpinned by declining export momentum and demand for new orders. Economic sentiment (109.5) was also down for an eleventh consecutive month and echoed the aforementioned risks. Meanwhile, November's core inflation eased to 1.0 percent, lower than analysts had expected, with suspicions that the weaker business climate is discouraging businesses from passing through higher input prices to consumers. Despite the slowdown, however, ECB president Mario Draghi reconfirmed the bank's desire to end its asset purchase program in December 2018, attributing economic weakness to a return to normal growth levels after outperforming in 2017.

On the political front, tensions persist over the stand-off between Italy and the eurozone, while on a more positive note, France and Germany agreed to push for an independent budget for the single currency area, paving the way for greater integration that might help avoid or mitigate future crises. Political tensions in

the UK over Brexit also remain high despite the government finally striking a withdrawal agreement with the EU. The deal faces stiff opposition in the UK parliament and if voted down mid-December, the UK may be forced to exit the EU without a deal, triggering financial and economic disruption.

### Japan's GDP contracts

Tepid demand and natural disaster-related effects led to a 1.2 percent decline in Japan's annualized GDP in 3Q18, its second decline this year, and lending support to the Bank of Japan's (BoJ) ultra-loose monetary policy stance. Nonetheless, thanks to strong second-quarter data, GDP growth has so far averaged 0.9 percent for the 2018 fiscal year ending in March 2019 and is expected to recover in the near-to-medium term mainly thanks to continued strength in capital spending. To this end, growth appears on track to meet government projections of 1.5 percent for FY2018. Meanwhile, core inflation was unchanged in October at 1.0 percent y/y, still well below the BoJ's 2 percent target.

Newly-released manufacturing data pointed to further signs of a slowdown in the Chinese economy. The official purchasing manager's index fell from 50.2 in October to 50.0 in November, indicating no month-on-month growth for the first time in over two years, as new orders continued to struggle to eke out gains and as export orders fell for the sixth consecutive month. However, the recently-agreed tentative trade deal with the US, under which the US will for now refrain from increasing tariffs at the start of next year, is likely to offer the external sector some reprieve.

### OPEC rethink on output

Oil markets have been roiled by oversupply concerns and anxieties over weakening oil demand against a backdrop (now somewhat eased) of US-China trade frictions. Brent crude closed out a second consecutive month of declines in November, falling by 22 percent during the month to \$58.7/bb for the steepest one-month fall since the 2008 financial crisis.

Market sentiments have shifted overwhelmingly bearish amid record high US crude production (aver-

aging 11.7 mb/d in November) and near two-year high OPEC supplies (+130 kb/d to 32.9 mb/d in October). Money managers' bets on Brent falling further are at their highest in fifteen months. November's precipitous price drop has forced OPEC to consider once again cutting production to stabilize prices; the group's advisory board recommended cuts of 1.3 mb/d, or 4 percent, from October levels to bring supply and demand back into balance. More clarity should come after the meeting of OPEC and Russian-led non-OPEC producers on 6 December.

Non-oil activity in the region continues to tick along, although with oil prices falling below the fiscal break-even price level for most GCC states, diversification drives and non-oil revenue-generating plans are once again in the spotlight. Saudi Arabia embarked on a major multi-billion dollar provincial investment drive in November and rolled out the second phase of the \$19 billion private sector stimulus program. The Emirati authorities, meanwhile, continued with their plans to boost FDI, legalizing 100 percent foreign ownership of companies operating throughout the emirate from the previous threshold of 51 percent. 10-year visas for highly skilled expatriates were also approved, in a bid to attract top-tier talent. Inflation ticked up a little in Saudi Arabia in October (2.4 percent y/y) due to higher food costs but nearly halved in the UAE (to 1.6 percent) on the back of a steep decline in housing costs. Lending activity continued to gain traction in both countries, with private sector credit growth in Saudi Arabia rising to a sixteen-month high of 1.7 percent y/y in October.

Meanwhile, the Egyptian government is proposing an amendment to taxes on banks whereby banks holding more government debt will pay higher taxes. If adopted, this could lead to higher private sector lending, make government debt less attractive and thereby raise government borrowing costs. The central bank has decided to terminate its FX repatriation mechanism, which commits it to allow foreign investors to repatriate investments in local securities. By forcing investors to go to the interbank market, this move could lead to more exchange rate flexibility.

## NBK Capital monthly report

## Despite volatility, global markets remain positive

KUWAIT: Global markets managed to end November on a positive note albeit in a still volatile environment. Markets which drifted lower most of the month were boosted during the last week by the comments of Fed Chairman J. Powell before the Economic Club of New York in which he said interest rates "remain just below the broad range of estimates of the level that would be neutral for the economy". Markets took this as a sign that the tightening cycle is close to an end and the three rate hikes previously expected in 2019 are now less likely. This comes after his comments back in October in which he suggested that the Fed was a "long way" from neutral and which many analysts blame for the market rout last month.

The MSCI All Countries World Index managed to gain 1.30 percent during November narrowing its year to date losses to 4.32 percent. US indices returned to positive performance for the year with the S&P 500 up 3.24 percent after a 1.79 percent return in November, while the Dow Jones Industrial Average registered 1.68 percent for the month bringing its year-to-date performance to 3.31 percent. The tech-heavy NASDAQ underperformed with a monthly gain of 0.34 percent. Treasury yields retreated during the month with the 10-year Bonds closing the month at 3.0 percent after retreating last month high of 3.25 percent in early November. The Markit manufacturing PMI slowed marginally in November to 55.4 from 55.7 for the previous month, while the Services PMI declined to 54.4 from 54.8 over the same period.

### Europe drops

The Stoxx Europe 600 Index declined by 1.14 percent during November bringing its losses since the beginning of the year to 8.14 percent. The French CAC40 declined by 1.76 percent dragged down by the ongoing riots in France, while the German Dax retreated by 1.66 percent. For the year, the DAX is down 12.85 percent while the CAD40 is down 5.81 percent. Europe's third quarter Gross Domestic Product remained stable at 1.7 percent on a preliminary basis. Consumer confidence retreated further in November to -3.9 from -2.7 registered in October. The preliminary

# NBK CAPITAL

Markit Manufacturing and Services PMIs weakened to 51.5 and 53.1 in November from 52 and 53.7.

The ongoing volatility in global markets in addition to the upcoming vote on the Brexit deal on the 11th of December added to the rout in UK equities. The FTSE 100 declined by 2.07 percent in November by losing its year-to-date performance to a negative 9.20 percent. The Gfk Consumer Confidence declined to a new low of -13 in November compared to a reading of -10 in October and a consensus estimate of -11 while the Markit manufacturing PMI rebounded to 53.1 in November from 51.1 for the previous month.

### Nikkei 225 regains ground

After a nearly 10 percent decline in October, Japan's Nikkei 225 Index managed to regain some ground advancing 1.96 percent in November but still falling 1.82 percent short of breaking even for the year. Third quarter annualized GDP declined by a preliminary 1.2

percent against estimates of a decline of 1.0 percent while the GDP deflator recorded -0.3 percent for the same period. The Nikkei manufacturing PMI showed a slight decline as it registered 52.2 for November compared to a revised 52.9 for the October. The Consumer Confidence Index retreated marginally in November to 42.9 against a reading of 43.0 in October. Unemployment, on the other hand, inched higher to 2.4 percent against estimates of 2.3 percent and a previous reading in September of 2.3 percent.

Following the IMF downgrade, the OECD said that trade tensions and higher interest rates are slowing down the global economy. The organization lowered its outlook for global GDP to 3.5 percent in 2019 from a previous projection of 3.7 percent. It said the slowdown would be worst in emerging markets that will see capital outflows as interest rates in the US continue to rise. China is expected to grow at the slowest rate in 30 years at 6.0 percent down from a current 6.6 percent mainly driven by the impact of US tariffs. Despite the outlook downgrade, which was discounted in October, emerging markets had a breather in the last week of November after the dovish interest rate comments of the Fed chairman. The MSCI EM staged a robust performance during the last week of November to close the month up 4.06 percent boosted mainly by a solid performance in India, Turkey, Brazil, and Russia as well other Asian markets. The MSCI Asia ex-Japan was up 5.24 percent in November. In China, however, the pic-

| Index              | MTD    |
|--------------------|--------|
| Brent Oil          | -22.2% |
| MSCI GCC           | -2.09% |
| FTSE 100           | -2.07% |
| Stoxx Europe 600   | -1.14% |
| Shanghai Composite | -0.56% |
| Gold               | 0.47%  |
| MSCI World         | 1.30%  |
| Dow Jones          | 1.68%  |
| S&P 500            | 1.79%  |
| Nikkei 225         | 1.96%  |
| MSCI EM            | 4.06%  |

ture was not as bright. After spending most of the month in positive territory, the Shanghai Composite closed down 0.56 percent on signs that there might be additional tariffs imposed by the US on China.

The slide in oil which started in October intensified during November. Brent lost 22.2 percent of its value to close the month at \$58.7/b, while WTI dipped briefly below \$50.0/b before closing the month at \$50.93. Fears of excess supply dominated the market ahead of the OPEC meeting in December and the G20 summit in Buenos Aires, especially that Russia seemed reluctant to join any move to cut back production. The Russian position, however, became clearer after the end of the month when President Putin announced an agreement with Saudi Arabian Crown Prince to extend output cuts in a meeting on the sidelines of the G-20 meeting in Argentina.

### Kuwait best performer in GCC

In light of the heightened volatility in global markets and the slide in oil prices, the performance of GCC markets was mostly negative. The S&P GCC Composite declined by 2.04 percent in November dragged by a negative performance in Saudi, which retreated by 2.58 percent, and the UAE, where Dubai and Abu Dhabi declined by 4.16 percent and 2.69 percent respectively. Kuwait was the best performer in the GCC for November as the Boursa Kuwait All Share Index edged up by 1.33 percent, Bahrain came second with 1.07 percent, while Qatar recorded a marginal increase of 0.62 percent for November after having added almost 5 percent the previous month. In the Broader MENA region, the S&P Pan Arab Index was down 1.69 percent and Egypt's EGX 30 up marginally by 0.52 percent.

### Market Performance November 2018



Business

# Microsoft demonstrates the power of 'AI for government'

## 6th E-Government Forum (EGOV) being held in Kuwait

**KUWAIT:** Microsoft yesterday participated as the platinum sponsor at the 6th E-Government Forum taking place from 4-6 December at the Al-Baraka Ballroom, Crowne Plaza Hotel, in Kuwait City. The company demonstrated the power of its Cloud and Artificial Intelligence solutions to accelerate the government's efforts towards e-services and drive digital transformation across all sectors in the country.

Currently in its 6th year, the E-Government forum (EGOV6) in collaboration with Kuwait's Central Agency for Information Technology (CAIT), focuses on 'Managing Change towards Digitization' and places emphasis on the change management practices that need to be implemented in order to boost e-Government program implementation, and make the best use of all available resources along the way.

"Kuwait is undergoing a massive transformation and is seen accelerating towards the digital era," said Qusai Al-Shatti, Deputy Director General for Information Technology Sector at Kuwait's Central Agency for Information Technology. "Our objective is to empower the government entities in the country with innovative and state-of-the-art technologies to accelerate digitization and achieve sustained growth. In this process, it is imperative for us to rely on a technology provider who can deliver on these lines and can be relied upon. We are proud to have a partner like Microsoft on our side in this journey of to become a truly digital and connected government of Kuwait".

The EGOV6 also features a technology exhibition, where Microsoft experts demonstrated a broad range of AI tools and innovations that can accelerate e-services in the government sector. Delegates visiting the

Microsoft stand, gained the opportunity to get hands-on experience of latest cutting-edge solutions including cognitive computing, machine learning and use cases on face recognition, chatbots, emotion detection and object analysis - aimed at enabling better and secure engagement of citizens, empowerment of government employees, optimization of operations and transformation of public services.

"The Government of Kuwait is ambitiously steering towards achieving the country's Vision 2035 of 'New Kuwait' with a strong focus on digital transformation," said Charles Nahas, General Manager, Microsoft Kuwait. "Cloud and Artificial Intelligence can be at the heart of this journey to fuel digitization and accelerate e-services in the public sector to address challenges and meet citizen expectations. Our participation at this year's EGOV6 is to reiterate Microsoft's commitment and support the government's vision, as well as commend the role played by agencies such as the CAIT, in driving this transformation - and delivering the power to the country's government agencies to achieve more."

Microsoft speakers also participated at the forum and addressed delegates on the power of artificial intelligence, cloud, cyber security and related technologies. Mohammed Zayed, Senior Cyber-Security Solutions Specialist for Microsoft Kuwait, gave a talk on the Culture Transformation for Identities & Information Protection in a Cloud Era, and the responsibility that Leaders and Security Officers carry in driving a secure digital transformation to protect their organizations from potential cyber-attacks. Firas Bou Fakhereddine, Technology solutions Professional for AI & Big Data for Microsoft Kuwait, addressed



**KUWAIT:** Qusai Al-Shatti, Charles Nahas and other officials during the 6th E-Government Forum in Kuwait

delegates on the role of Artificial Intelligence and how it is accelerating innovation, and bridging the gaps in society for individuals, organizations and governments to achieve more.

Microsoft partner, Blackstone also shared the booth with the company and showcased its AI solutions built on the Microsoft Azure Platform. Blackstone showcased the Intelligent Assistant, a chatbot powered by AI that is capable of understanding conversation phrasing and provide human-like conversations to the

end user, enabling government entities to automate customers services and business processes. The company also showcased Predictive analytics and Facial Recognition solutions that can enable government entities to better serve and protect citizens. In line with the showcase, Wajih Yahyaoui, Managing Partner at BlackStone eIT, also delivered a session during the Egov Summit on the 'Role of AI in transforming Public sector institutions' and make the most out of these technologies.

## Microsoft empowering Kuwait in leveraging Cloud and AI: Nahas

By Islam Al-Sharaa

**KUWAIT:** Microsoft has a very close partnership with the Kuwait government for the last 15 years and it has been empowering the government in leveraging cloud and artificial intelligence. "We are also part of the 2035 Vision of the New Kuwait and our role is to empower the government in terms of their digital transformation and technology," said Charles Nahas, General Manager, Microsoft Kuwait, in an exclusive interview with Kuwait Times yesterday on the sidelines of 6th E-Government Forum currently being held in Kuwait. Excerpts:

**Kuwait Times: How is Microsoft helping Kuwait use ICT system to provide government services?**

**Charles Nahas:** Thank you very much for the time. Microsoft has been in Kuwait for more than 15 years, and we have a very close partnership with the government of Kuwait throughout all these years. Our role is really to empower the government in terms of their digital transformation and in terms of technology - to achieve more. So, throughout these years we are enabling them to develop new services, and using the technology internally to improve their productivity, improve governance and so on.

Overall in general we are also empowering them in leveraging cloud and in particular artificial intelligence. This is probably the focus in line with our efforts, and in terms of supporting them to come up with new services to drive, and either offer to the citizens, or for them to be able to work together and achieve digital transformation for the government. I think that's a very

important aspect and is crucial for Kuwait. It's also part of the 2035 vision of the new Kuwait. And this is where we're playing our role in supporting the government.



**Charles Nahas,**  
General Manager,  
Microsoft Kuwait

**KT: See, ITA and Microsoft recently signed an MoU. How much progress has been made?**

**Charles:** We have seen great progress in this area. This MoU was signed in August this year under the patronage of His Highness and we're very excited about this and its components. We're going to partner with CITRA to provide the government with technologies around blockchain, IOT, cloud, cybersecurity and artificial intelligence. And so, we have a number of elements that we are working on with the government. We already have had a number of follow up meetings and actions in place. One of the upcoming actions that will be announced shortly is a workshop for different government entities to train them on how to leverage artificial intelligence in their departments.

**KT: How is Microsoft working with Kuwait in the fields of Smart Cities and Artificial intelligence?**

**Charles:** In terms of Artificial Intelligence, what we're trying to do is a number of things. We're trying to first of all, explain what artificial intelligence is and what it can do for governments and organizations. And what we are also trying to do - is enable the government and people to understand AI, by training them on how to use AI tools. We are also going to share our experiences with AI in government from across the world, and show what other governments have achieved using AI; but more importantly we are going to support them on using AI, which will enable different ways for them to leverage it and understand best how it works and function in their field. This way,

they will be the in the best position to really leverage that. From our perspective, it's about providing them the infrastructure, and the support. And as you may know, we have recently announced that we will be building two datacenters in the Middle East. This will be able to provide the capabilities, because AI is basing its functions in the cloud network.

**KT: What obstacles does Kuwait face in implementing the eGovernment system to eliminate paper, and what is Microsoft's role in that?**

**Charles:** What we see is that there is still a lot of potential for eGovernment services in Kuwait. For us, it's really about defining strategies for the eGovernment and after that defining the components that's going to be needed for these services. And then, providing the different systems for this. It's not only Microsoft, I believe, all companies in the IT sector will come together and provide these capabilities. The way we are approaching this is by working closely with agencies such as CAIT and CITRA to come up with an overall strategy. We're also working with other government entities such as: Ministry of Health, Ministry of Finance, Ministry of Awqaf to understand in terms of what they need for eservices, and the capabilities they require to fuel their own digital transformation. And then, this all happens in line with the overarching strategy of the government that we are supporting the central entities on.

**KT: Anything more to add, to say?**

**Charles:** We're very excited to participate in the eGov event. We've been participating every year for the past six years. This is a great opportunity for us to share in terms of what can be done in the government sector. We also have a number of Microsoft speakers that are going to come and part knowledge at Egov.

We're also bringing a lot of experiences from across the world in government, and make them available to work with the Kuwait government in their digital transformation journey and we're very passionate about that. We are also excited about the opportunity that AI brings - it is a revolutionary technology that will empower the government in terms of transforming and providing leading services for its citizens.

## With inflation at more than 20%, Turkey sticks to 5% target

**ISTANBUL:** Turkey's central bank said yesterday it would stick with a 5 percent inflation target, a deeply ambitious goal after this year's currency crisis sent the inflation rate soaring to a 15-year high of 25 percent.

The bank said it would change its monetary policy stance if exchange rate moves had a lasting effect on price stability, helping the lira gain nearly 1 percent against the dollar. It also stressed coordination with government policy in fighting inflation, saying its first objective was to bring down inflation to single digits, and then gradually reduce it and stabilize it at around 5 percent.

Inflation remains one of the most pressing problems for Turkey's economy, after it weathered a currency crisis earlier this year. Investor concerns about the bank's ability to rein in prices - and a diplomatic rift with the United States - sent the lira tumbling as much as 47 percent. It has since recovered somewhat but is still down some 30 percent, year-to-date. "If exchange rate movements permanently affect price stability, the CBRT will change its monetary policy stance and give the necessary reaction," it said in its 2019 monetary and exchange rate policy document, released yesterday.

The lira firmed to 5.3390 to the dollar from 5.3843 on Tuesday, when it was hit by concerns about potential premature monetary policy easing after a lira rebound and tax cuts helped push inflation below 22 percent. "The central bank's stress on a monetary policy focused on inflation seriously reduced selling pressure on the lira, indeed reversing it," said a treasury desk trader at one bank, adding an early rate cut had, in recent days, begun to be priced in.

"This text does not contain any comments pointing towards the Dec. 13 MPC (monetary policy committee meeting) but it is important in showing it may make a similar assessment at the MPC stressing inflation," the trader said.

### Coordination

The currency sell-off has driven up the prices of everything from food to fuel, and has deepened worries about the broader impact on the real economy and banks. Inflation was at 21.6 percent last month, near its highest in a decade and a half. "The inflation target has been kept at 5 percent as per the agreement reached with the government," the bank said.

"Fiscal discipline is essential in fighting inflation. The coordination between monetary policy and fiscal policy is therefore crucial with respect to disinflation and macroeconomic rebalancing," the bank said.

Finance Minister Berat Albayrak has stressed the importance of coordination between fiscal and monetary discipline in fighting inflation, although economists have said the financial markets would be more convinced by stronger messages to guarantee the bank's independence. Much of the lira sell-off was sparked by comments from President Tayyip Erdogan, a self-described "enemy of interest rates", who has repeatedly called for lower borrowing costs. — Reuters

## Trump meets with German auto execs

**WASHINGTON:** Donald Trump met Tuesday with executives of Germany's three top auto manufacturers, amid efforts by Washington and Brussels to resolve the US president's complaints about imbalanced trade in the sector. After the talks, the executives sounded optimistic about averting Trump's threat to impose tariffs on auto imports.

The White House said Trump had encouraged the automakers to produce more in the United States, where they are already significant manufacturers.

"The president shared his vision of all automakers producing in the United States and creating a more friendly business environment," the White House said in a statement following the meeting. In July, Washington and Brussels announced a truce in their tit-for-tat tariff battle after Trump threatened to impose duties on European auto imports, citing national security.

Daimler CEO Dieter Zetsche, who knows the US well, as he used to live here and ran Chrysler, gave an upbeat assessment after Tuesday's talks with Trump.

"I would say that this implicit potential threat (of tariffs) was reduced," said Zetsche.

He added, "there was a very positive, pleasant atmosphere." Volkswagen chief executive Herbert Diess also expressed optimism. "That's basically why we are here-to avoid the additional tariffs, and I think



**In this file photo, US President Donald Trump speaks at the American Center for Mobility in Ypsilanti, Michigan with General Motors CEO Mary Barra and other auto industry executives. Trump threatened to cut subsidies to General Motors. —AFP**

we are on a good way." Diess added, "I think we made a big step forward to avoid the tariffs."

BMW, which maintains a major auto plant in South Carolina, said Tuesday the meeting had been "constructive" but that responsibility for international trade policy "rests solely with the relevant political institutions"-meaning Brussels will have the final say.

Within two years, the company said it plans to add

1,000 positions to the 10,000 workers employed in South Carolina at the Spartanburg plant, and is considering adding a second US site for power trains.

Earlier, Commerce Secretary Wilbur Ross had said the aim of the meeting was to pare down the \$30 billion trade deficit the US has with Germany in cars and auto parts, which amounts to half the \$66 billion total deficit with the European nation. — AFP

## Business

# Ooredoo wins a total of 18 awards at Stevie International Business Awards

## Ooredoo presented with Grand Stevie Award as the third most honored organization

DOHA: Ooredoo won 15 awards at the 2018 International Business Awards (IBA) ceremony and 3 awards at the 2018 Stevie Awards for Women in Business. The Stevie Awards are held annually to honor the achievements and positive contributions of organizations worldwide.

As the organization receiving the third most accolades at the IBA, Ooredoo was also presented with a Grand Stevie Award Trophy. This is the fifth consecutive year that Ooredoo has been recognized at the IBA awards for its ability to integrate business innovation and the development of market-leading product offerings with a strong community-focused approach.

Ooredoo received 5 Gold Stevie Awards including 'Best New Product or Service of the Year' for rolling out commercial 5G network, which recognizes its achievements in its digital-first strategies. Another Gold Stevie Award was received for 'Marketing Campaign of the Year' for Ooredoo's 'Enjoy the Internet' campaign, which engaged millions of people through a series of fun and inviting videos, quizzes as well as new interactive platforms.

Two additional Gold Awards were won by Ooredoo Algeria in the 'Mobile Site & App Awards' category, for its innovative app Haya! Chiche, as well as Ooredoo Kuwait in the 'Communications Department of the Year' category, for the department's efforts toward youth empowerment and digitization.

Importantly, Ooredoo Oman also attained a Gold Stevie in the 'Achievement in Women-related

Corporate Social Responsibility' category for its Incubators for Women project, a testament to Ooredoo's continuous efforts and investments towards supporting female empowerment.

Commenting on these wins, Sheikh Saud bin Nasser Al-Thani, Group CEO, Ooredoo, said: "We are delighted by this prestigious international recognition of our work. These awards acknowledge our capabilities to provide innovative solutions to our customers while fulfilling our mission of enriching people's lives across the globe by enabling them to access and enjoy the best digital experiences."

Ooredoo also won 10 Silver Stevie Awards, including 'Most Innovative Company of the Year' and 'Technical Innovation of the Year' for Ooredoo Group as one of the world's first companies to commercialize its 5G capabilities.

Other Silver Stevies won by Ooredoo include: 'Company of the Year - Telecommunication', 'Corporate Social Responsibility Program of the Year' for Indonesia Belajar, 'Customer Service Department of the Year' for Ooredoo Myanmar, 'Viral Marketing Campaign of the Year' for Tunisia Migalo, 'Best New Product or Service of the Year' for Indosat Ooredoo 4.5G.

Ooredoo Kuwait also received 1 Silver Stevie for 'Communications or PR Campaign of the Year' for its iPhone X Launch.

At the Women in Business Awards, key female Ooredoo executives were also recognized for their out-



standing performances. Ooredoo Myanmar's Chief Officer of Sales and Distribution, Htar Thant Zin, attained a Silver Stevie for 'Female Executive of the Year' while Shaima Al-Najdi, Acting Chief Technology Officer of Ooredoo Kuwait was awarded a Silver Stevie for 'Woman of the Year - Technology'.

Ooredoo was also recognized with 3 Bronze Stevie Awards, including 'PR Campaign/Program of the Year' for 5G Launch Campaign in Qatar and 'Most

Innovative Company of the Year' for Ooredoo Maldives, highlighting its vision of Digital Maldives and highly inclusive broadband access through its wide spread of 4G to every island.

Other Bronze Stevies include: 'Best New Product or Service of the Year' for Ooredoo Myanmar M-Pitean, a mobile money solution that serves the unbanked population and supports Myanmar's overarching goal of financial inclusion.

## MGD lifestyle jewelry opens at Fahaheel

KUWAIT: Malabar Gold & Diamonds (MGD), among the largest jeweler retailers globally, opened its new lifestyle jewelry outlet at Dabous Street, Fahaheel on 30 November. The outlet was jointly inaugurated by Major Ali Hamdan Al-Daihani - Chief Advisor of Farwaniya Governorate and M. P. Ahammed, Chairman - Malabar Group in the presence of Shamlal Ahamed, Managing Director - International Operations, Malabar Gold & Diamonds, Abdul Salam KP, Group executive director in the presence of well-wishers and other invited guests. On the same day, MGD's new regional office was also opened on the 19th floor of Panasonic Tower, Fahad Al-Salem Street, Kuwait City.

MGD is well-known for its diverse and varied product offerings including trendy jewelry of 18K, 21K and 22K gold, as well as beautiful collections embellished with diamonds, uncut diamonds, precious gems or pearls. There are other jewelry pieces designed in a simple style to be practical and convenient for daily use without compromising on service or quality. This concept is aimed at the youthful teenagers, working



KUWAIT: Malabar Gold & Diamonds (MGD) inaugurates its new lifestyle jewelry outlet at Dabous Street, Fahaheel.

women and those fashion and style oriented individuals who are keen on unique jewelry at competitive prices.

The key features of this retail concept are transparency, assured quality and competitive pricing on the best range of jewelry pieces that are light weight, trendy and unique. MGD boasts the best and ideal gifts for either oneself or your loved ones. Furthermore, this brand has other benefits like cash buy back

and lifetime free maintenance on jewelry.

The brand new MGD Lifestyle outlet at Dabous Street is the one-stop shop for the best product offerings to satisfy a multitude of taste and lifestyles. Malabar Gold & Diamonds has always been at the forefront in gold jewelry manufacturing, wholesaling and retailing, and has ambitions to retain its position as the 'most-preferred' jewelry retailer in the market.

## VIVA inaugurates its flagship store at Marina Mall

KUWAIT: VIVA, Kuwait's fastest-growing and most developed telecom operator, has inaugurated its flagship store at Marina Mall in coincidence of its 10th year anniversary, in the presence of CEO of Group STC Eng Nasser Bin Suleiman Al-Nasser, VIVA's Chairman Dr Mahmoud Ahmed Abdulrahman and VIVA's CEO Eng Salman Bin Abdulaziz Al-Badran.

Commenting on this occasion, Al-Badran said: "VIVA aims through its stores to serve a large segment of customers, to provide them convenience and satisfy their needs and requirements. This move will bring

VIVA and its customers closer and keep them posted regularly with the latest products and plans."

He added: "The increase in customer base requires strengthening and renewing of our stores, to provide the best services and products according to the latest and best standards in the world of technology to our customers. In addition to our stores' services, VIVA's customer care line at 102 is ready round the clock and up to public holidays, to provide outstanding service to our valued customers through team of specialties."



## Warba Bank to hold Al-Sunbula draws today

KUWAIT: Warba Bank, "the Best investment Bank" and "Best Corporate Bank" in Kuwait, will be organizing its monthly draws which includes: Al-Sunbula Account monthly draw and the 45th weekly draw for Al-Sunbula Account today at 11 am in presence of a representative from the Ministry of Commerce and Industry and the bank officials.

Al-Sunbula Account is the perfect choice for all customers who wish to save money and achieve steady returns while simultaneously have the opportunity to win cash prizes throughout the year. Due to the high traffic on this account, for its offerings of unparalleled opportunities, Warba Bank has worked on enhancing Al-Sunbula account to provide customers with more benefits. Such enhancements include increasing the number of winners and the frequency of the draws. Now, on every Thursday the Bank holds draws for 5 weekly winners of KD 1,000 each. In addition, the Bank continues its monthly draws held on the first Thursday of every month, with cash prizes of KD 30,000 divided amongst 4 winners: two winners getting KD 10,000 each, and two winners getting KD 5,000 each.

Thus, the new development of Al-Sunbula account has increased the total number of winners to 24, and the total amount of prizes to 50,000 KD instead of 30,000 KD. As for the chances for winning, each customer is eligible to enter the draw against each KD 10. It is noteworthy, that Warba Bank has recently launched the Al-Sunbula Fixed Deposit, which provides depositors with high returns of up to three percent, as well as getting monthly chances to win in Al-Sunbula Account draws.

Furthermore, Warba Bank has launched its latest Customer Onboarding solution, in line with its ambitious five-year strategy that enables non-Warba Bank customers to request opening Al-Sunbula account in an easy electronic manner through the Bank's website without having to visit any of the Bank's branches, by following five simple steps that might take up to five minutes. New customers will be able to request opening the account at anytime, anywhere, and the Bank will receive, process and pass the new application for approval through whole new and unique electronic system used to implement this service. Warba Staff will then contact the customer to determine the appropriate time to visit the branch to get required signatures, verify the customer's identity, deliver his/her debit card, and activate the account.

## US crude oil reserves rise to record despite production boom

LONDON: US crude oil reserves hit record levels at the end of 2017, as annual reserve additions outstripped production for the eighth time in nine years, government data published last week shows.

Reserve growth is the main reason predictions about future oil shortages have been repeatedly proved wrong.

US policymakers have long fretted about the damage to the economy and national security of exhausting domestic oil reserves ("Oil scarcity ideology in US national security policy", Stern, 2012).

As early as 1909, the US Geological Survey was predicting reserves might be exhausted by 1935 ("Petroleum resources of the United States - Report of the National Conservation Commission", GPO, 1909).

Scarcity concerns became prominent again in the 1940s, the 1970/80s and the 2000s ("Market madness: a century of oil panics, crises and crashes", Clayton, 2015). Policymakers responded by pressing for more conservation, encouraging the development of overseas reserves, reserving domestic supplies for future military needs, or experimenting with alternatives.

But scarcity forecasts have underestimated the impact of improvements in technology, mostly driven by price changes, of which shale extraction has been the most recent and dramatic.

And we will have cooked the planet through global warming long before we run out of fossil fuels.

"No mineral, including oil, will ever be exhausted," wrote the late Morris Adelman, an economist at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology ("Genie out of the bottle", 1995). "If and when the cost of finding and extraction goes above the price consumers are willing to pay, the industry will begin to disappear." And as former Saudi oil minister Zaki Yamani observed in 2000:

"Oil will be left in the ground. The Stone Age came to an end, not because we had a lack of stones, and the oil age will come to an end not because we have a lack of oil." The oil age, too, will end, if and when it is replaced by a superior energy source - just as mainframe computers, buggy whips and typewriters have all been largely superseded. But it won't end for lack of oil. Proved oil reserves increased by 6.4 billion barrels (19.5 percent) in 2017 compared with the previous year, according to the US Energy Information Administration ("U.S. crude oil and natural gas proved reserves", EIA, Nov. 29).

These are estimated volumes of oil that analysis of geologic and engineering data demonstrates with reasonable certainty are recoverable under existing economic and operating conditions. Estimates change in response to new field discoveries, greater understanding of existing fields, technology and changes in prices and costs, as well as the amount produced. — Reuters

## Turkish Airlines sponsors 'Turkish Week' at the Avenues Mall

KUWAIT: The Kuwait office of Turkish Airlines, Europe's best airline, announced its sponsorship of the upcoming 'Turkish Week' in partnership with the Turkish Embassy and Souk Safar Kuwait. Honoring decades of strong bilateral ties, the three-day event is scheduled to take place between 6-8 December 2018 at the Avenues Mall.

As part of the festivities, visitors, and customers will enjoy an exquisite performance by Cagman Ensemble, a legendary Turkish band who will perform on Thursday from 1-4pm. Visitors will also enjoy a journey through culinary treats and traditional Turkish delights by DO&CO, Turkish Airlines award-winning onboard catering company. Its flying chef will bring the

world's finest flavors to satisfy the most discerning of palates.

Turkish Airlines sponsorship of the event celebrates the best of Turkish hospitality and participation to Souk Safar, a recently launched one-stop shop for individual and family travelers. Located at the Avenues Mall, Souk Safar provides professional travel advice, competitive holiday packages, international insurance, visa, and driving license assistance that also boasts a dedicated Turkish Airlines desk.

Turkish Airlines invites the people of Kuwait to attend the festivities and enjoy the exclusive opportunity to discover Turkey's renowned delights. It also encourages customers to visit its new desk at the heart of the Avenues.

Technology & Science

# Russian tech giant Yandex unveils first smartphone

## Yandex to have its own smart speaker 'Alice'

MOSCOW: Russian internet giant Yandex yesterday launched its first ever smartphone, ending several weeks of suspense for tech fans over the highly anticipated launch. The company behind the most widely used search engine in Russia and the ex-Soviet region has recently diversified to defend its market share against Google, creating popular phone apps to order taxis and takeaway food.

The new smartphone, called Yandex.Phone, will go on sale today in Russia and also online. It will cost 17,990 rubles and will work with the Android system. While the design was created by Yandex, the phone is made in China. Yandex's various apps for payment, music, maps, taxi and food are pre-installed on the phone, which will also use a smart speaker called Alice (Alisa in Russian), which is similar to Amazon's Alexa.

"We built Yandex.Phone to offer Russian users a smartphone that is equipped with all the localized tools that help users better navigate their daily routines," Yandex official Fyodor Yezhov was quoted as saying in a press release. "Within the smartphone, the Yandex apps are presented in the

form of an ecosystem with Alice at its centre. It's not necessary to open individual apps to solve a task—just ask Alice."

The phone signals a major new phase in Yandex's development and is designed to rival giants like Apple, Samsung and Huawei. Yandex started in the 1990s as a search engine similar to Google but has since expanded into every corner of the Russian internet with apps that Russians use every day. The smartphone's launch comes after the company last month disappointed tech enthusiasts by summoning journalists to what turned out to be a presentation not of the smartphone but of its smart speaker.

The Yandex smartphone is not the first to be developed by a Russian company. In 2013 the YotaPhone, designed in Russia but also made in China, was launched with the gimmick of having screens on both sides. However it failed to set the market alight. This time the company behind the smartphone has much more clout. It is listed on the New York Stock Exchange and is renowned for its creative flair.—AFP



MOSCOW: A view of a Yandex.Phone during a presentation in Moscow. —AFP

## Kuwaiti doctor receives gold medal for best scientific research

KUWAIT: Kuwaiti doctor from Urology Department at Farwaniya hospital Dr Abdallah Al-Enezi received a gold medal for best scientific research in the field of Urology during the 15th Urology Conference of the Arab Urology Association which was held recently in Dubai. He received this honor for narrowing of the urethra, its causes and treatment in Kuwait. Many surgeons participated from Arab and European countries.

Head of Urology Department at Farwaniya hospital Dr Faisal Al-Hajiri congratulated Dr Al-Enezi for his achievement and urged Kuwaiti youth to get more involved in research, adding that 16 papers were presented at the Dubai Conference by the Kuwait Board. Al-Enezi expressed his happiness by calling it his greatest achievement stating that the success rate of widening urethra by a laparoscope is 60 percent and they are working on improving it. He concluded that the award is a culmination of hard work put in by a group of urologists and their outstanding work in the field.



## 'Cheating' gorillas show clever puzzle-solving

BRISTOL: Gorillas at a zoo in England have demonstrated a distinctly human trait while attempting to solve a new puzzle game - cheating. The gorillas were presented with a wall-mounted device where the aim is to guide a peanut through a series of obstacles by poking a stick through various holes to move it along. Eventually the peanut reaches the bottom of the device and drops out. Some gorillas, however, figured out an easier way to retrieve the nut.

"We've seen a lot of cheating behavior where they've been putting their lips up against the device and sucking the nut out which was not how we intended the device to be used. But it just shows you that they're very flexible, they're capable of creating new solving strategies to access the food," Dr Fay Clark from Bristol Zoo Gardens said. "They have some fascinating problem-solving abilities that have probably not been witnessed before," she added. Since first being introduced to the prototype device earlier this year, the scientists say

the game has proved a hit with the troop of endangered western lowland gorillas, who regularly returned to play with the game even when there were no more nuts to win. The 'Gorilla Game Lab' project from the University of Bristol and Bristol Zoological Society developed the game to encourage the gorillas' cognitive and puzzle-solving abilities.

The prototype device had to be strong enough to withstand a frustrated gorilla, which can be seven times stronger than humans. It also had to be engaging enough to keep them coming back for more. "With each of the modules in the game, they're removable so we can take the modules out, re-designed them and put in an additional module or change the actual structure. So it creates an endless stream of new and novel puzzles for them to solve," said engineer Dr Stuart Gray of the University of Bristol.

While the main aim of the project is to create a "positive psychological state of pleasure and satisfaction in the gorillas", the researchers are already setting their sights on more advanced models that would help zookeepers better understand both the mental and physical condition of the animal. "Things like eyesight, hearing, other cognitive functions - all of these could be measurable further on down the line," added Gray.—Reuters

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What's On



# British Ambassador attends Sportshall Athletics competition

British Ambassador to Kuwait Michael Davenport attended the Sportshall Athletics competition at The English School with the participation of New English School as well as The English School on December 5, 2018. Each school was represented by 20 students (both girls and boys).

Sportshall Athletics is an indoor form of track and field between the ages of 4 and 16 developed by a UK company Eveque. It was created to provide a safe environment for young athletes to train during cold and dark winters. Today Sportshall is the largest competition within the School Games framework in the UK with an estimated user-base

of over 3 million children. The programme focuses on fitness and multi-skill development providing a grounding for all sports. It is totally inclusive, encourages children to get fit and promotes friendship whilst having lots of fun.

Sportshall Athletics focuses on transforming the sports hall or gymnasium into an arena of fun-filled athletic activities using specially designed equipment. The Sportshall Athletics programme involves the students in exhilarating, confidence-building activities and competitions. Sportshall Athletics equipment has been exported to over 30 countries worldwide.

British Ambassador to Kuwait Michael Davenport said: "I'm delighted to attend this event and to bring to Kuwait British expertise in indoor athletics for school children. Healthy lifestyle, fitness and competition are values, which play a part in our lives and we are keen to spread these values among school children in Kuwait. Sportshall has been helping British children to stay active through indoor activities, which would otherwise be impossible due to cold or wet weather. In Kuwait, the weather offers different challenges but ones to which Sportshall can offer the same solutions. I would like to avail of this opportunity to

thank the Eveque Sportshall Team and the participating schools and in particular The English School for hosting the event."

Roxanne Simon, Director of Sport at The English School said: "Fitness, confidence, skills and team work, are just some of the benefits that are developed through this most worthwhile concept. Currently, elements of Sportshall Athletics are intertwined within our curriculum, however, we are very much looking forward to learning about how this can be developed further, to maximise the potential of our students."



## Jumeirah recognized as Aon Hewitt 2018 Best Employer in UAE

Jumeirah is proud to announce that for the second successive year it has been named as a 'Best Employer in the UAE' by Aon Hewitt, a leading global human resource consulting company. Ellen Dubois du Bellay, Chief Human Capital Officer, Jumeirah Group said: "Being voted Aon Hewitt Best Employer for 2018, for the second consecutive year, is a proud distinction. It recognizes our commitment to make Jumeirah 'Your Place to Shine in Hospitality' and the efforts we put into our people."

"Jumeirah is an exciting and dynamic work environment and we are immensely proud of what we have achieved in our ambitions to be an employer of choice. We recognize that our reputation for excellence and our position as a leading

luxury hotel company is built firmly upon our employees. Our colleagues consistently work hard and with unyielding dedication to deliver on our promise to create lasting memories and deliver a guest service which is beyond expectations. We thank them sincerely for their efforts every day," she added.

Under the leadership of Group CEO Jose Silva, Jumeirah's ambitious expansion plans to grow its portfolio of luxury hotels and resorts are well underway. In 2018 to date four new Jumeirah hotels opened: Jumeirah Royal Saray in Bahrain, Jumeirah Nanjing in China, Al Seef Hotel by Jumeirah in Dubai and Jumeirah at Saadiyat Island Resort in Abu Dhabi. Jumeirah Al Wathba Desert Resort & Spa, also in Abu Dhabi, will open on January 1, 2019.

Future openings include luxury hotels in China, Indonesia, Malaysia, Oman, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and the UAE. Jumeirah currently employs 14,000 colleagues from across 140 different nationalities and continues to offer a range of international employment opportunities across its portfolio of 23 hotels and resorts.

The Aon Hewitt Best Employers Middle East study was launched globally by Aon over 18 years ago. Best Employers has become an international benchmark for business, affording organizations the unique opportunity to assess and understand the level of engagement amongst their employees. The 2018 Aon Best Employers Middle East winners were selected based on ranking consistently high levels for employee engagement, organizational agility, engaging leadership and strong talent focus.

The rigorous process saw participating organizations assessed against Aon's regional database of more than 350 organizations and 275,000 employees. This year, nine organizations across the Middle East - including Jumeirah Group - were selected for the prestigious honor across sectors ranging from logistics, hospitality and F&B to aviation, pharmaceutical and e-commerce.



Ellen Dubois du Bellay

## ICSK celebrates Children's Day

Children's day was celebrated with great enthusiasm on the November 20, 2018 at Indian Community ICSK (Senior). The faculty took the initiative of unfolding their hidden talents to the students. The program was anchored by Srikala Dileep (IOD social science). The program began with the recitation of the Holy Quran followed by the Kuwait National Anthem and the prayer song. The flag hoisting and salutation was done by the Principal and Vice Principal respectively. Teachers of various departments represented the ICSK news desk.



## UNDP, MBRF launch future of knowledge: A foresight report

The United Nations Development Program (UNDP) and the Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum Knowledge Foundation (MBRF) unveiled the 2018 edition of the Global Knowledge Index (GKI), while also launching the world's first Future of Knowledge: A Foresight Report, a pilot study on the future fields of knowledge that will shape the transformation of knowledge societies, during the opening of the Knowledge Summit that took place in Dubai under the title "Youth and the Future of Knowledge Economy."

Under the umbrella of the partnership between UNDP and MBRF and within the Knowledge for All project, the results of 134 countries in the Global Knowledge Index (GKI) were released. The GKI provides valuable insights on knowledge assets that are key to more effective sustainable development. According to the results of the Global Knowledge Index, Switzerland retained its number-one rank, followed by Sweden,

Finland, United States and Luxembourg.

The United Arab Emirates broke into the world's top 20 countries, ranked 19 at the global level and first among all the Arab states, while retaining its second place globally on the economy index. In addition to the GKI 2018, UNDP and MBRF launched the results of the Future of Knowledge: A Foresight Report, a unique study covering 20 countries that reveals a new knowledge measurement tool using big data. The Report aims at better understanding the navigation of present societies to cope with the demands of the future fields that will shape the near and long-term future.

It alerts and guides policymakers, business leaders, researchers and civil society to the new emerging fields, i.e. artificial intelligence (AI), blockchain, cybersecurity, biotechnology and future skills that will become strategic for the future of societies. The Report puts our future in focus, be open and collaborative, and use our imagination, as the Reports state.

During the session "Future of Knowledge Model," a panel comprising Leif Edvinsson, Professor of Knowledge Capital at Lund University, Sweden, Jan Stureson, Founder of Resting - Advice from the Future, Laurent Probst, Partner at Price water house Coopers (PwC), Luxembourg presented the conceptual framework of the future knowledge model, the factors influencing the future of knowledge, and how countries might be impacted

positively, concluding that the "Future of Knowledge" as documented in the Report will empower forward-thinking strategy in the growth of knowledge economy and sustainable development around the world.

Organized by the Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum Knowledge Foundation (MBRF), the fifth Knowledge Summit kicked off on 5 December at the Dubai World Trade Centre. Held under the patronage of His Highness Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum, Vice President and Prime Minister of the UAE, Ruler of Dubai, and the directives of MBRF Chairman HH Sheikh Ahmed bin Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum, the summit bears the theme: "Youth and the Future of the Knowledge Economy" and tackles the topic of the knowledge economy. The Knowledge Summit 2018 brings together over 100 speakers including experts, decision makers and stakeholders from around the world in more than 45 discussion panels.

The Summit will also see an elaborate analysis of last year's Global Knowledge Index results to guide decision makers, experts, and researchers towards implementing developmental policies to improve the gaps. Throughout their partnership, the UNDP and MBRF shared a vision of promoting knowledge-based sustainable development in the Arab region and beyond, through pioneering projects and initiatives.

## ICAI Kuwait chapter holds family day

The Institute of Chartered Accountants of India (ICAI) Kuwait Chapter organized their signature annual event the 'ICAI family day' at Movenpick Hotel Al Bida'a Kuwait on November 30, 2018. The theme for this year's event was 'Hollywood Bollywood' and members were encouraged to dress according to theme. The lovely weather was the perfect setting for the festivities to begin. The event was well attended by more than 150 members and their families.

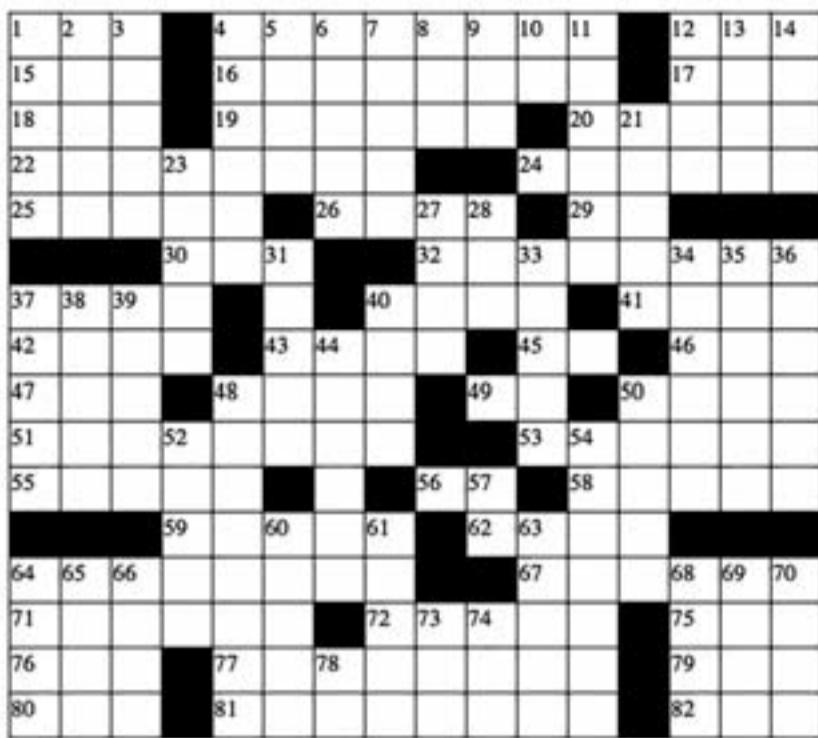
CA. Noel Joe Cherian, the Chairman of ICAI Kuwait Chapter gave the welcome address. A variety of entertaining events and activities like fancy dress, fashion show, face painting, talent show, Hollywood Bollywood bingo, Photo booth were some of the highlights of the day. The much awaited raffle draw had the members on their toes in anticipation of winning exciting prizes which included air tickets and the bumper prize of an all-expense paid trip to Istanbul, Turkey.

The members also bonded over a sumptuous lunch and snacks through the day. The event was organized by the Chapter's Social Committee which is headed by CA Ritu Sharma along with CA Trisha Dalmia, CA Sweta Chipra, CA Carmel Mathew and CA Aditya Dhanuka. The vote of thanks was delivered by CA Rabin Gonsalves, Executive Committee member.



Stars

CROSSWORD 2077



ACROSS

1. (astronomy) A measure of time defined by Earth's orbital motion.
4. (of a heraldic cross) Having a cluster of three buttons or knobs at the end of each arm.
12. Title for a civil or military leader (especially in Turkey).
15. (used especially of commodities) In the natural unprocessed condition.
16. Tuberosus or rhizomatous herbaceous perennials.
17. The central part of a car wheel (or fan or propeller etc) through which the shaft or axle passes.
18. (informal) Of the highest quality.
19. Any isomeric saturated hydrocarbon found in petroleum and used as a fuel and solvent.
20. (legend) Chalice used by Christ at the last supper.
22. North American hickory having loose gray shaggy bark and edible nuts.
24. Covered with small blisters.
25. Australian shrubs and small trees with evergreen usually spiny leaves and dense clusters of showy flowers.
26. A British peer ranking below a Marquess and above a Viscount.
29. Angular distance above the horizon (especially of a celestial object).
30. Counting the number of white and red blood cells and the number of platelets in 1 cubic millimeter of blood.
32. (rare) Of or occurring in summer.
37. The clock time given by a clock carried on board a spacecraft.
41. An underground enclosure with access from the surface of the ground or from the sea v 1.
42. (prefix) Indicating difference or variation.
43. (used of count nouns) Every one considered individually.
45. A bachelor's degree in religion.
46. A serve that strikes the net before falling into the receiver's court.
47. Of or relating to a member of the Buddhist people inhabiting the Mekong river in Laos and Thailand.
49. A trivalent metallic element of the rare earth group.
51. Genus of powdery mildews.
53. Common house and field crickets.
55. (from a combination of MODulate and DEModulate) Electronic equipment consisting of a device used to connect computers by a telephone line.
56. A unit of magnetomotive force equal to 0.7958 ampere-turns.
58. Relating to the deepest parts of the ocean (below 6000 meters).
59. A summary that repeats the substance of a longer discussion.
62. A Kwa language spoken in Ghana and the Ivory Coast.
64. The musical interval between adjacent keys on a keyboard instrument.
67. Come out into view, as from concealment.
71. Manufactured in standard sizes to be shipped and assembled elsewhere.
72. Tropical American trees with palmately compound leaves and showy bell-shaped flowers.
75. A river in north central Switzerland that runs northeast into the Rhine.
76. Aromatic bulb used as seasoning.
77. Term used in some classifications as nearly equivalent to the order Coraciiformes.
79. The force of workers available.
80. A master's degree in education.
81. A river in northeastern Brazil that flows generally northward to the Atlantic Ocean.
82. Fermented alcoholic beverage similar to but heavier than beer.

DOWN

1. Worthless material that is discarded.
2. Russian country house.
3. A squeeze with the fingers.
4. African tree having an exceedingly thick trunk and fruit that resembles a gourd and has an edible pulp called monkey bread.
5. Predatory black-and-white toothed whale with large dorsal fin.
6. The concentration of a solution as determined by titration.
7. Port city on southern Honshu in Osaka Bay.
8. (British) Your grandmother.
9. (meaning literally "born") Used to indicate the maiden or family name of a married woman.
10. The square of a body of any size of type.
11. A young eagle.
12. According to the Old Testament he was a pagan king of Israel and husband of Jezebel (9th century BC).
13. Antelope with white markings like a harness and twisted horns.
14. In a competent capable manner.
21. Antiquity that as survived from the distant past.
23. Any of various small chiefly tropical and usually nocturnal insectivorous terrestrial lizards typically with immovable eyelids.
27. Imprudently incurring risk.
28. Flower arrangement consisting of a circular band of foliage or flowers for ornamental purposes.
31. Relatively low in price or charging low prices.
33. A native-born Israeli.
34. (usually used in combination) Having value of a specified kind.
35. Sacred text of Zoroastrianism.
36. Of an instrument of certain death.
38. A cigar made with light-colored tobacco.
39. United States comic actor in silent films.
40. A dull persistent (usually moderately intense) pain.
44. A bin that holds rubbish until it is collected.
48. Trade name for a drug containing an antihistamine and a decongestant.
50. A feudal lord or baron in Scotland.
52. (printing) A short line at the end of the main strokes of a character.
54. A genus of Paridae.
57. A soft silvery metallic element of the alkali earth group.
60. Large dark-striped tropical food and game fish related to remoras.
61. Wood of a pecan tree.
63. Cubes of meat marinated and cooked on a skewer usually with vegetables.
65. A member of an Iroquoian people formerly living on the south shore of Lake Erie in northern Ohio and northwest Pennsylvania and western New York.
66. A form of rummy using two decks and four jokers.
68. Avatar of Vishnu.
69. A Gaelic-speaking Celt in Ireland or Scotland or the Isle of Man.
70. Bulky grayish-brown eagle with a short wedge-shaped white tail.
73. A period marked by distinctive character or reckoned from a fixed point or event.
74. Being one more than two.
78. A hard brittle blue-white multivalent metallic element.

Yesterday's Solution



STAR TRACK



Aries (March 21-April 19)

It seems as if you are entering a period of emotional change. You may have mixed emotions about some situations in your life, but you are torn between right and wrong and good and bad. You feel a great need to make some kind of changes in your lifestyle. The only thing that is bringing you any sense of peace is staying on the go and keeping your mind preoccupied to prevent dwelling on the problems at hand. Do whatever you need to do to keep peace in your world and stress at arm's length. This may be a time you have a great desire to further your education and gain as much knowledge as possible. We have always been told knowledge is power and it seems you long for power now. Spend your time taking in all this world brings your way.



Taurus (April 20-May 20)

Eternity is a measure of time you can not even begin to understand. Your thoughts are drawn to an imaginative and dreamy state. Your mind is a million miles away. The future is where you are focused. You want to know what tomorrow brings. You actually want to know you have total control of what tomorrow brings. To ensure a stable future you also know you need to make amends with your past. Your focus may drift to mending fences and repairing relationships. This is a very spiritual time in your life.



Gemini (May 21-June 20)

You may experience dissatisfaction with what you have or the people you are surrounded right now. Love may be absent from your vocabulary today. You may feel unloved or unloving. This is a time you feel as if you could escape to a desert island and no one would miss you. You feel as if there is no one you would miss either and the thought actually sounds appealing to you. We all need breaks and escapes from time to time and today is your time for that feeling.



Cancer (June 21-July 22)

You seem to have a desire to become more involved with friends, family, and your neighbors. Exchanging stories and life experiences with each other seem to really satisfy a need for gaining knowledge. You may feel as if communicating your feelings to others and the support you receive is very rewarding for you now. You may find yourself more understanding of the "why's" and "how's" of the world around you. Knowing what makes me people tick and what emotions they are hiding beneath the surface seems to intrigue you. Once you open up and let your walls down for love ones you may find they are more open with you.



Leo (July 23-August 22)

It seems like you have a few skeletons in your closet. Things could come back to haunt you from your past. You may find yourself realizing the past is just that. The past. Leave it where it belongs. You may find yourself emotional. Be sure to not let past experience prevent you from moving forward and bettering yourself. You deserve the best and now is a time to believe in yourself and move forward.



Virgo (August 23-September 22)

Being the center of attention may be very appealing to you today. Romance is in the air for you also. Remember the memories you make today can be looked back on for years to come with pride and adoration. Be sure and keep your emotions in check today and practice a bit of self-control when it comes to dealing with others. You may find it difficult to relax to day but take a deep breath and always remind yourself actions have consequences. Take each problem you encounter today and chalk it up to a new lesson learned. Today's issues may be best handled in a conservative manner even if that means taking some time to regroup and reorganize. Virgo, this small effort could help your day run more smoothly.



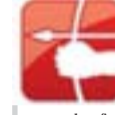
Libra (September 23-October 22)

You may feel your own inner need for change is facing opposition from someone in your life. It is a good time to keep watch over your shoulder. There may be some devious or underhanded things going on behind your back. Choose your company wisely and keep your circle small. Not everyone always has your best interest at heart. Jealousy seems to rear it's ugly head when it comes to someone who is close to you. This will pass but handle them with care. The tension in the air will soon clear. Try to be understanding of other's feelings. Take time to weed out the fake and spend more time with those who are real in your life.



Scorpio (October 23-November 19)

When it comes to fitting in with the younger crowd, you don't! You may find yourself at odds with a younger group. Wisdom is gained through experience. You know all too well until you have lived it you can not understand. How many times have you said, "If I knew then, what I know now?" No one could have convinced you back then. You have to realize you are speaking to deaf ears when giving advice to the younger generation. This could cause frustration but remember, it is through your mistakes that you gained your wisdom. Let them live. Let them learn.



Sagittarius (November 22-December 18)

You tend to live one day at a time with little thought for the future. It works for you. But, it may cause conflict with someone you care about who is a controller and needs structure and long-term planning. If you need that person in your life, you may want to consider compromise. (It's not an ugly word.) Don't expect too much. Controllers rarely make major changes. You adapt more easily. You could consider asking what you can do to make the relationship work better. That may mean adjusting your schedule occasionally, even when it is inconvenient.



Capricorn (December 22-January 19)

This is a great time to surround yourself with friends. You may find much encouragement and the support you are needing to move forward towards your goals. Others may begin to show much admiration toward you. You are noticed for your ambition and drive. You may find that others begin to come to you for advice. This is very flattering to you. They say imitation is the most sincere form of flattery and you are flattered that your peers seek your advice to become more like you. You may find yourself having a great appreciation of your thoughts and ideas. This is a great time to put some of this down on paper. Whether keeping notes or beginning a blog, keep a record of the thoughts that are running through your mind now. This may be very profitable for you in the future.



Aquarius (January 20- February 18)

You may be feeling two ways at once, you may not be truly sure just how you feel. There is a blur between right and wrong and you may not be able to tell the difference. You may feel a deep need for change. This may be a time you start to focus on developing new healthy habits. You may find yourself full of energy and drawn to see all the world has to offer. You are hungry for knowledge and may start to consider enrolling in classes or starting online studies. You are ready for a new venture. A new outlook and a new adventure may be about to begin for you.



Pisces (February 19-March 20)

You feel as though there is a place for everything and everything has a place. Anything out of place seems to really bother you. You are organized and not only able to organize things, but you really have a knack for organizing people. Your management skills are high. You know just the right person for the job. You are ambitious and determined to get things done. You have no shortage of self-respect. This is a time you seem to demand respect from others. You may find yourself torn between two worlds now.

Wordsearch Puzzle

Movie Actresses 1

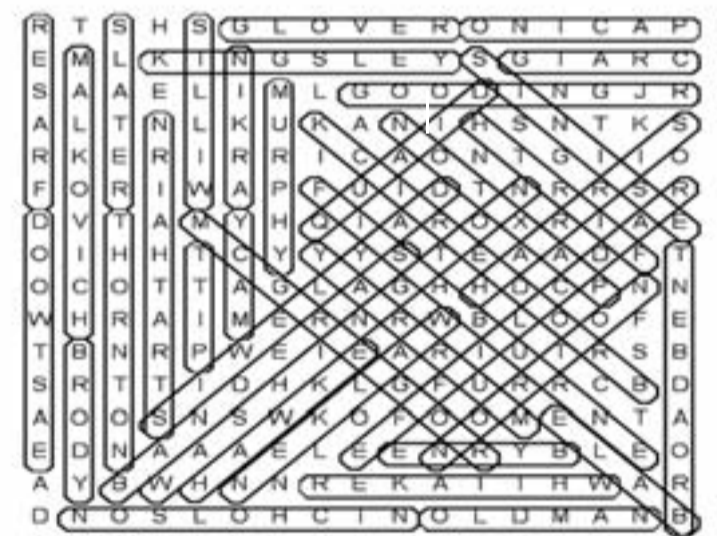
Find and circle all of the Movie Actresses that are hidden in the grid. The remaining letters spell the name of a movie for which Jodie Foster won an Oscar.



- |                    |                   |                    |
|--------------------|-------------------|--------------------|
| ADAMS, Amy         | CUTHBERT, Elisha  | LANE, Diane        |
| ALBA, Jessica      | DAVIS, Hope       | LONGE, Jessica     |
| ALLEN, Joan        | DENCHI, Judi      | MCDORMAND, Frances |
| BARRYMORE, Drew    | DIAZ, Cameron     | MIRREN, Helen      |
| BENING, Annette    | FANNING, Dakota   | MOORE, Demi        |
| BERRY, Halle       | FOSTER, Jodie     | PALTRON, Anna      |
| BIEL, Jessica      | GUGINO, Carla     | PAQUIN, Anne       |
| BLANCHETT, Cate    | HATHAWAY, Anne    | RICCI, Christina   |
| BLETHYN, Brenda    | HUNTER, Holly     | SWANK, Hilary      |
| BLUNT, Emily       | HUSTON, Anjelica  | THERON, Charlize   |
| CLOSE, Glenn       | JOLIE, Angelina   | THOMPSON, Emma     |
| CONNELLY, Jennifer | KEENER, Catherine | WATSON, Emily      |
| CUSACK, Joan       |                   |                    |

Yesterday's Solution

Movie Actors 3



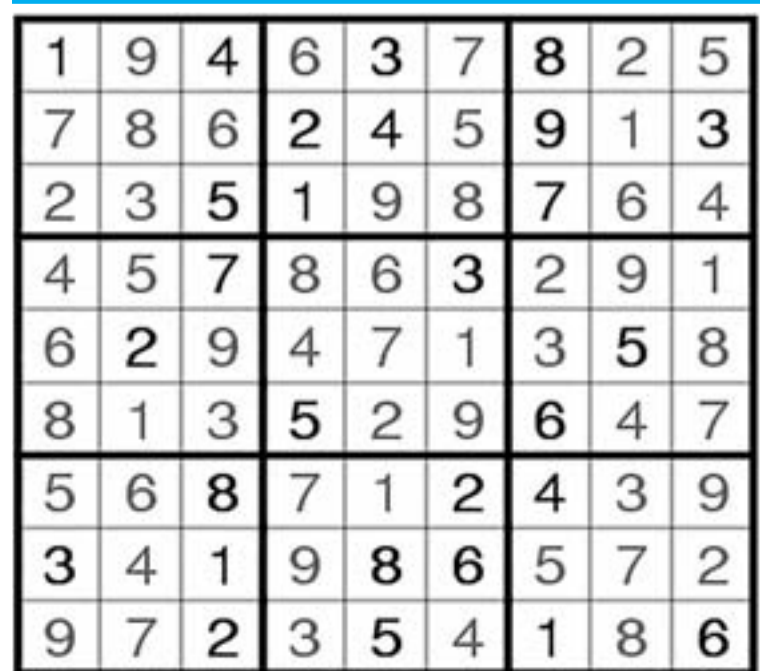
- |                     |                  |                     |
|---------------------|------------------|---------------------|
| ARKIN, Alan         | GLOVER, Danny    | PACINO, Al          |
| BALE, Christian     | GOODING JR, Cuba | PAXTON, Bill        |
| BANDERAS, Antonio   | HARRIS, Ed       | PITT, Brad          |
| BROADBENT, Jim      | HAWKE, Ethan     | QUAID, Dennis       |
| BRODERICK, Matthew  | KINGSLEY, Ben    | RADCLIFFE, Daniel   |
| BRODY, Adrien       | MACY, William H. | SINISE, Gary        |
| BYRNE, Gabriel      | MALKOVICH, John  | SLATER, Christian   |
| CRAIG, Daniel       | MCGREGOR, Ewan   | STRATHAIRN, David   |
| DAY-LEWIS, Daniel   | MURPHY, Eddie    | THORNTON, Billy Bob |
| EASTWOOD, Clint     | MURRAY, Bill     | WALKEN, Christopher |
| FIRTH, Colin        | NICHOLSON, Jack  | WASHINGTON, Denzel  |
| FISHBURNE, Laurence | NORTON, Edward   | WHITAKER, Forest    |
| FRASER, Brendan     | OLDMAN, Gary     | WILLIS, Bruce       |

The hidden movie title is: THE LAST KING OF SCOTLAND

Daily SuDoku



Yesterday's Solution



# Lifestyle

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 6, 2018



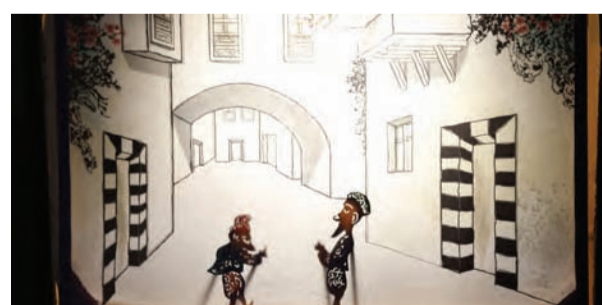
Members of Dance Centre Kenya (DCK) speak with the caricature 'sugar plum fairy' before the start of a production of the 'Nutcracker', a ballet primarily performed during the Christmas period as their fourth annual show, along with the Nairobi Philharmonic Orchestra playing the score by Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky at the National theater in Nairobi. DCK, founded by a few passionate families in early 2015, teach over 600 students at 3 studios in Nairobi, and provides lessons based on the Royal Academy of Dance Syllabus. Selected students in various schools and slums receive scholarships to promote developing their talents. — AFP



Syrian last shadow puppeteer Shadi Al-Hallaq holds his puppets Karakoz (left) and Eiwaz (right) before a presentation in Damascus. — AFP photos



Syrian last shadow puppeteer Shadi Al-Hallaq is seen moving his puppets Karakoz (right) and Eiwaz (left) from inside his booth.



Syrian last shadow puppeteer Shadi Al-Hallaq (unseen) moves his puppets Karakoz (left) and Eiwaz (right) from inside his booth.

## UN listing gives lifeline to Syria's last shadow puppeteer

In a crowded dark room, Syria's last shadow puppeteer crouches on stage, holding two intricate figures against a brightly lit silk screen and voicing their animated chatter. Hiding inside his booth and moving the silhouettes around on sticks, Shadi Al-Hallaq gave a proud performance on Monday night after his disappearing art finally received international recognition. Syrians last week received news that their war-battered country's shadow theatre has secured a coveted place on the UN's list of world treasures. "When they rang to congratulate me, it was like a day dream," said the puppeteer, a slim 43-year-old wearing a dark grey suit and warm beige scarf.

His two star characters—the naive but charming Karakoz and clever friend Eiwaz—would finally receive the limelight they deserved, he said. "There's no one in Syria who masters the art except me," said Hallaq, who learned it from his late father, a famed storyteller who performed in one of the capital's oldest coffee shops. "There are no regular shows anymore, though I have given performances in a few places over the past years," said the puppeteer, who previously worked as a taxi driver. The advent of digital entertainment as well as mass displacement due to conflict have contributed to the gradual decline of the art in Syria, the United Nations says.

Only a few such performers existed in the country before the war broke out in 2011, and a leading shadow puppeteer has since gone missing. Traditionally, shadow plays were held in coffee shops. A bright light would project the silhouettes of the puppets onto a silk screen, usually accompanied by dialogue and music. Often including humorous social commentary, they would star Karakoz and Eiwaz, as well as female characters and talking animals.

Hallaq's characters are crafted from cow leather, their clothes cut out with decorative patterns and painted with

watercolors "so the light can shine through". Karakoz is short and dons a large red hat, while Eiwaz sports an elegant moustache. As they move around before an arched alleyway, their witty banter entertains all generations. "My audience are old and young—from three years old to old men in coffee shops," Hallaq said.

The art form is said to be centuries old, long before the war that has killed 360,000 people and displaced millions from their homes. Some say Karakoz and Eiwaz are typical

Syrians from Damascus, while others say they are in fact originally Turkish. Since the United Nations cultural agency UNESCO classified his art as "in need of urgent safeguarding", Hallaq said things are looking up for his art and its two stars. "I thought I would have to bury them" away, he said. But now "a bright future awaits them in Syria. I will tour with them all over the country." — AFP



Syrian children watch a performance by the country's last shadow puppeteer Shadi Al-Hallaq in Damascus.

## Sean Penn in Istanbul to film Khashoggi documentary

American actor Sean Penn was in Istanbul yesterday to film a documentary about the murder of Saudi journalist Jamal Khashoggi in the kingdom's consulate, Turkish media reported. Khashoggi, a US resident since 2017, was killed during his visit to the consulate to obtain marriage-related paperwork on October 2. In one image shared by state news agency Anadolu, two-time Oscar winner Penn was seen outside the mission

where the Washington Post contributor was strangled before he was cut up into pieces by a 15-man Saudi team especially sent to Istanbul for the task.

The remains of the 59-year-old have not yet been found despite searches of the consulate and other places. The agency said Penn was also seen outside the consul-general's nearby residence. Pro-government daily Sabah said the actor wanted to meet Khashoggi's Turkish

fiancee, Hatice Cengiz, during his visit. Since Khashoggi was critical of Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman, there has been speculation the de facto leader of the kingdom ordered the hit.

Despite denials by Riyadh, Saudi Arabia's reputation has been tarnished, with US senators pointing the finger at the crown prince after a CIA briefing Tuesday. Penn has previously attracted controversy as a result of his

foray into politics and current affairs, and especially after he and Mexican-American actress Kate del Castillo interviewed Mexican drug lord Joaquin "El Chapo" Guzman while he was on the run. Penn, 58, won two Oscar awards for best actor for his roles in *Mystic River* and in *Milk*. — AFP



## Niall Horan is busy penning new songs

**N**iall Horan is busy writing new material. The 'Slow Hands' hitmaker took to Twitter recently to let his 39.3 million followers know he's hard at work making new songs for his follow-up to his debut solo album 'Flicker'. He wrote: "Exciting week ahead of writing! (sic)" The One Direction star recently admitted he feels like the "Benjamin Button" of pop as his career is going in reverse. The 25-year-old singer conquered the charts all over the world playing stadiums and arenas in all the major cities with the boyband - who are on an extended hiatus. Since going solo, Niall has had to start again with a new style of music but he has enjoyed

"going from arenas to smaller gigs" in a similar way to the literally character who ages in reverse. He said: "It's Benjamin Button - going from arenas to smaller gigs. I've got to play these places we never got to play in the band, people will have this thing where it's like, you know ... we don't all have to be as big as Ed [Sheeran]. "It's great to be like, on our level here, and still have these moments where you enjoy a theatre, personally I've been lucky enough to do the stadiums and it's amazing, but we went straight from 'The X Factor' to arenas, missed out a little bit." The 'On the Loose' singer confessed that he found it "different" while touring 'Flicker' but ultimately enjoyed

the opportunity to make the event "more about the gig than a show". He said: "At the start it was very different, like, smaller crew. Smaller venue. But then when you break it down, I was lucky enough in the past to do the large shows with the lights and the fireworks and the stadium audiences. And this has just been nice to make it more about the gig than a show. "I made an album that I've written completely myself, and worked hard on it. We spend eight or nine months recording something like that, and then releasing it, and then getting on the road."

## Jessie J looking forward to break



**J**essie J joked that she can't wait to hang up her "gold catsuit" after her current tour ends. The 30-year-old star is looking forward to some downtime after she wraps her current run in support of her latest LP, 'R.O.S.E.', at Cologne Palladium in Germany, yesterday. The singer - who is dating Channing Tatum - admitted she can't wait to get back to normality and be able to speak for long periods without fearing she will lose her voice. She quipped: "I never want to wear a gold catsuit ever again. [Laughs] Honestly, I'm just looking forward to not setting my alarm and eating three meals a day of whatever I want because I can do it in my kitchen. And just being with friends and family and being able to talk for as long as I want without being terrified I'm going to lose my voice." However, Jessie won't be away for too long, as she revealed she plans to hit the studio to work on her next record in the new year, which she teased will see her "challenge" anything she's ever done

before. Asked if it was "too soon" to talk about a follow-up to 'R.O.S.E.' yet, the 'Price Tag' hitmaker replied: "Oh no. I want to get straight back into the studio at the top end of next year." Jessie - who revealed at a recent concert that she was told four years ago she'd be unable to conceive a child - also opened up about pushing herself "emotionally" and "musically". She told Billboard.com: "I've pushed certain places in myself emotionally and musically and with my fanbase too. "My fanbase showed up for me this year: there was a lot of momentum. "It was like training for the Olympics musically. I don't want to say specifically what my next album will be. "But I definitely want to make something that will be a challenge to [what I've already done] in my career. Who knows if I can do it? However, that's the challenge I'm giving myself. But if it's the same melody with different lyrics, don't tell anyone. [Laughs]."



## Matty Healy: My age find it quite difficult to get into The 1975

**M**atty Healy admits people his own age may find it "quite difficult" to get into the new The 1975 album. The 29-year-old frontman accepts that some people find him "annoying at first" and that it can impact on their opinion of the band's music, and he thinks that's even more so the case with their two most recent records, 'A Brief Inquiry Into Online Relationships' and 2016's 'I Like It When You Sleep, for You Are So Beautiful yet So Unaware of It'. He told Radio X: "Kids are very smart. People are smart. There's so many young women who are into our band and I have learned so much from them. "And there is quite a tight door policy on our band. "It can be quite difficult to get into us, especially on our last two records. If you were someone like my age, because you have to like me and that takes time. "I'm annoying at the start, because there's so much. "So ... you have to let that happen and then you have to go 'actually, I get this.' But we'll get there." The 'Give Yourself A Try' singer says The 1975 would be a punk band if it was possible. He explained: "I like subversion of form. The same reason why I love being played on the radio next to Ariana Grande, but my lyrics being the way they are is because I could do that in punk music. "We could have been a punk band. "We could have been one of these bands, but I wanna actually be punk, but you can't actually be punk in punk anymore. I wanna be punk. "The only place to be punk is where there's no punk..."

## Emma Stone's Cruella to feature 'an 80s punk vibe'

**E**mma Stone's Cruella De Vil movie is reportedly set to feature an 80s punk vibe. The 30-year-old actress is set to play the central role in the live-action take on the '101 Dalmatians' villainess, and the upcoming movie will be made with a very distinctive feel in mind. Craig Gillespie - who helmed 'I, Tonya' in 2017 - is in early talks to direct 'Cruella', according to The Hollywood Reporter. Alex Timbers was initially set to direct the project, but he's been forced to walk away from the movie due to scheduling issues. 'Cruella' - which centers on the character first seen in the 1961 animated classic '101 Dalmatians' - is being produced by Andrew Gunn, Marc Platt and Kristin Burr. Meanwhile, Emma recently said her "organs shifted" after wearing a corset for a month while shooting 'The Favorite'. The Hollywood star had to wear the restrictive piece of clothing for her role in the historical movie, and Emma said she has a newfound sympathy for the women of the past who had to wear corsets every day, as she was left unable to breathe after just 30 days. Emma said: "Women existed like that for such a long time, which gives you a lot of sympathy for that time period and what they were going through. "For the first month, I couldn't breathe and I would smell menthol and it would make me think I was in a wide-open space and could breathe for a moment in time. "After a month, all my organs shifted - it was gross and if you don't have to, don't do it!"

## Lauren Jauregui: Leaving Syco will be a good change for Little Mix

**L**auren Jauregui believes Little Mix leaving Syco Records will be "good" for the band. The Fifth Harmony star and her bandmates were signed to Simon Cowell's label and Epic in a joint deal after coming third on the 2012 series of 'X Factor' in the US, and, after going solo and inking a deal with Columbia Records herself, she knows just how the 'Shout Out To My Ex' hitmakers will be feeling. Speaking to the Daily Star newspaper, she said: "I love Little Mix they are dope and they are killing it over here. "Change can be a good thing, I am on a different label now too, in the UK so it's natural." The 22-year-old star says that she is forever grateful to music mogul Simon and will always see him as a huge part of her journey. She said: "He's definitely a huge part of my personal story and a huge part of a lot of people's story. "I'm grateful forever for the opportunity because he's also the reason why I even auditioned for 'The X Factor' to begin with." As for her own music, Lauren says she is really into using her vocals as an "instrument" accompanied with guitar and "strong lyrics". On her solo material, the 'Expectations' singer said: "It's the beginning of a vibe. "I've been exploring my sound. "I gravitate towards the guitar and strong lyrics. "I'm using my voice as an instrument." Lauren is loving that there are so many strong female artists with something to say coming through. She said: "All these bad-ass women are having conversations. "I love hearing everyone's story and doing their own thing. "I love watching women win." Lauren previously defended Little Mix after they stripped bare for the promo for their single 'Strip'. The girl group - comprised of Jade Thirlwall, Perrie Edwards, Leigh-Anne Pinnock, and Jesy Nelson - released the music video for



the song last month, which features the four bandmates naked but covered in insults written across their bodies. And after they received backlash on Twitter for their decision to show their skin, fellow singer Lauren hit back at critics, claiming their clothing choices don't make them any "less empowered". One critic wrote: "Little Mix strip naked and are scrawled with insults: Yet again, young women pretend that going naked empowers them. It doesn't. It's just another cheap way to sell themselves. But I suppose it makes a nice change from this group dressing like hookers." To which she replied: "If your intention is the empowerment of women, how about you don't add yourself to the list of misogynists who deem what is appropriate enough to be 'respectable'. All forms deserve respect. They are no less empowered because of their clothing choices. Don't be salty they look [hot]. (sic)"

## X-Men and Deadpool 'to be seen in Marvel Cinematic Universe'

**'X**-Men' and 'Deadpool' will soon be seen in the Marvel Cinematic Universe, according to directing duo Joe and Anthony Russo. The brothers - who helmed 'Avengers: Infinity War' - are confident that some of the biggest movies and stories in the superhero universe will soon overlap. Speaking about the possibility, Joe told Deadline: "I'm sure of it. The acquisition of Fox is showing us where the future of the business is going to go." The cross-pollination of different movie franchises and characters is seen as one of the key features of the Disney-Fox merger. Anthony also revealed that Disney - which is known for its happily-ever-after approach to filmmaking - didn't attempt to block their efforts to develop unconven-

tional storylines during the making of 'Infinity War'. He shared: "The only way to drive a conversation is to surprise people. If you're constantly adhering to convention, you're not going to surprise people." Despite this, Joe feels that the movie industry stands on the cusp of a significant change, suggesting that the length of films could well become significantly shorter over the coming years. The director - who also helmed 'Captain America: Civil War' alongside his brother - explained: "The two-hour film has had a great run over 100 years. "But it's become very difficult to work in ... I'm not sure that the generation that's coming up will see the two-hour film as the dominant form of storytelling."



## Robbie reveals inspiration for Birds of Prey title

**M**argot Robbie thinks the title of 'Birds of Prey (And the Fantabulous Emancipation of One Harley Quinn)' reflects the movie's playful tone. The 28-year-old actress has reprised the role of Harley for the upcoming superhero movie, and Margot has now revealed the reason behind the film's unusually lengthy title. She shared: "It's not gonna be ... it's not a very serious movie, so we thought the title should reflect that. 'Birds of Prey' makes it sound very serious, and then that, you know, that's kinda like Harley adding her, like, 'Hey, I'm in this too.'" Margot revealed the title was inspired by her love of the comedy film 'The Hundred-Year-Old Man Who Climbed Out of the Window and Disappeared', which is based on a comic novel by Jonas Jonasson. The actress told 'The Tonight Show Starring Jimmy Fallon': "I love a long title. "Actually, I said that when we were thinking of the title. I said 'You know what? You know what's a great title? Did you ever see 'The 100-Year-Old Man Who Climbed Out of the Window and Disappeared?'" Long title, but I love it. It's a great movie, as well. You should watch it." Meanwhile, Margot recently admitted she felt "embarrassed shooting her most raunchy scene in 'The Wolf of Wall Street'. The Australian actress rose to worldwide attention on the back of



her starring role in the Martin Scorsese-directed drama, but Margot confessed to feeling "very weird" during the scene in which she had to seduce her on-screen husband, played by Leonardo DiCaprio. She said: "It doesn't come across when you're watching the movie, but in reality we're in a tiny bedroom with 30 crew crammed in. All men. "For 17 hours I'm pretending to be touching myself. It's just a very weird thing and you have to bury the embarrassment and the absurdity, really deep, and fully commit." — Bang Showbiz



Lifestyle | Music & Movies

# In its 40th year, Havana film fest a far cry from its heyday

In the good old days, Havana came to a near-standstill for 10 days for its annual film festival, with 500 movies screening in dozens of theaters. Today, the 40th edition of the event will open with a vastly reduced budget—a shadow of what it was in the heady days before the Soviet Union collapsed. Oscar-winning actor Benicio del Toro, Serbian director Emir Kusturica and American provocateur Michael Moore are headlining the showcase of Latin American cinema, which runs through December 16. Kusturica will open the festival with “El Pepe: A Supreme Life,” his documentary about former Uruguayan president Jose Mujica, which debuted at the Venice Film Festival in September.

“The festival had expanded a lot, especially at the end of the 1980s,” explains its president, Ivan Giroud, who has taken pains to make the event more manageable. “The schedule was out of proportion with an infrastructure that could not handle it.” Back then, about 500,000 moviegoers packed into 88 theaters in the Cuban capital each year to see hundreds of films. Many Cubans used vacation days so they could attend the screenings. Actors and directors from around the world wandered the colorful streets of Havana, talking

with locals. The festival succeeded thanks to its founder Alfredo Guevara, Cuban leader Fidel Castro and Colombian writer Gabriel Garcia Marquez, who was president of the new Latin American film foundation.

### Filmgoers still flock to festival

But then the economic crisis of the 1990s, sparked by the collapse of the Soviet Union, took its toll. Small neighborhood movie theaters simply vanished. Now, there are only 21 left, and most of them are outdated, lacking air conditioning and digital technology. There is no money to modernize. In 2017, only 2.3 million people bought movie tickets, down from 4.4 million in 2012. But audiences still show up for the film festival, enticed by the bargain admission price — 10 pesos, or about 30 US cents, for seven films, even if this year, screenings will only be held in about 10 theaters.

Giroud said he has worked to “readjust the program to make it more in line with our means.” For Fernando Perez, who at 74 is considered to be the most important Cuban director working today, this rethinking of the festival’s scope is not a dealbreaker. “If there is anything that makes me feel like the Havana film festival is alive and kick-

ing, it’s exactly the fact that it’s not the same,” Perez told AFP. “Some may feel a certain sense of nostalgia for what used to be, but what’s important is to adapt to the times.”

This year, Perez—the three-time winner of festival honors with “Hello, Hemingway” (1990), “Life is to Whistle” (1998) and “Havana Suite” (2003) — will show “Defiant Souls,” about the life of Latin America’s first female surgeon.

### 20 films in competition

Over the 10-day festival, about 300 films will be screened — 20 of them in competition for the Grand Coral, or top prize. Most of those films are from Argentina, Mexico, Brazil and Uruguay. The frontrunners are “Birds of Passage,” a tale of an indigenous family set against Colombia’s nascent drug war from directors Ciro Guerra and Cristina Gallego, and “The Angel” from Argentina’s Luis Ortega, which is based on the true story of a teenage serial killer and thief. After a few glitches last year in screening films in digital format, a team of Spanish technicians will be on hand this year to ensure the festival runs smoothly.

Alfonso Cuaron’s critically acclaimed “Roma,” which was distributed by Netflix and is earning



Oscar buzz, will be shown out of competition, as will “Yuli” from Spanish actress-director Iciar Bollain, which tells the story of Cuban dancer Carlos Acosta. — AFP

View of the official poster of the 40th Havana Film Festival in a street of Havana. — AFP

## US radio stations pull ‘Baby, It’s Cold Outside’ in wake of #MeToo

It’s that time of year when radio stations across the United States are playing Christmas music non-stop. But one classic holiday song is proving too controversial for some stations in the wake of the #MeToo movement. “Baby, It’s Cold Outside” — a duet written in 1944 and performed over the years by scores of artists, including Dean Martin, Dolly Parton, Ray Charles and Lady Gaga — has turned into a hot potato for broadcasters, some of which have yanked the popular song on grounds the lyrics are predatory toward women.

A radio station in the state of Ohio was first to announce it was pulling the song from its playlist last weekend after receiving complaints. Several other stations across the country — and even in Canada — have followed suit. Controversy over the song has existed for years but it has notched up a level this year because of the #MeToo movement that began in the United States more than a year ago in response to accusations of sexual abuse and harassment by powerful men in the entertainment industry and other sectors. Some people have taken issue with the lyrics in the duet where a man is trying to persuade his lady friend to spend the night.

The exchanges include “Say, what’s in this drink?” “Baby, don’t hold out” and “I ought to say no, no, no sir...” — lyrics that some say seem “rapey.” Broadway songwriter Frank Loesser penned the song in 1944 and it won an Academy Award in 1950 for best original song in the film “Neptune’s Daughter,” where it was sung by Esther Williams and Ricardo Montalban. Other artists over the years have performed the song which has become a classic holiday tune.

### ‘Manipulative and wrong’

Critics say while the song may have not sounded offensive when it was written in 1944, it no longer belongs on the airwaves today and was an ode to sexual assault. “Now, I do realize that when the song was written in 1944, it was a different time, but now while reading it, it seems very manipulative and wrong,” Glenn Anderson, one of the hosts of the Ohio radio station WDOI that banned the song, said in a statement. “The world we live in is extra sensitive now, and people get easily offended, but in a world where #MeToo has finally given women the voice they deserve, the song has no place.”

The radio station, which exclusively plays Christmas music during the holiday season, said a poll showed a majority of listeners were in favor of removing the song from the station’s playlist. A similar decision by a radio station in Colorado didn’t sit well with outraged listeners who voted it back on the airwaves. KOSI said Tuesday that the jingle would return to the airwaves after an online poll generated more than 15,000 responses, with 95 percent of them in favor of keeping the song.

“While we are sensitive to those who may be upset by some of the lyrics, the majority of our listeners have expressed their interpretation of the song to be non-offensive,” the station’s program director, Jim Lawson, said in a statement. — AFP



US rapper Cardi B performs onstage during the KIIS FM’s iHeartRadio Jingle Ball 2018 at the Forum Los Angeles in Inglewood. — AFP

## Cardi B announces split from rapper husband Offset

US rapper Cardi B yesterday announced the end of her 15-month marriage to Offset, the rapper and father of her daughter, dropping a video with the news on Instagram. “It’s nobody’s fault it’s just like I guess we grew out of love,” says the 26-year-old, whose real name is Belcalis Almanzar. “We’re not together anymore. I don’t know, it might take time to get a divorce.” Earlier this year, she confirmed reports that the pair had secretly married in September 2017. Their daughter, Kulture, was born in July. The separation revelation comes two days before Cardi B is due to appear in a New York court over assault and reckless endangerment charges. She had been expected to appear Monday, but failed to turn up.

The case stems from an August strip club brawl, which celebrity website TMZ said Cardi B

ordered to target two bartenders — sisters who accuse her of harboring a grudge because one of them slept with Offset. “We’ve got a lot of love for each other but things just haven’t been working out between us for a long time,” says Cardi B in the video. “I’m going to always have a lot of love for him because he is my daughter’s father.”

Cardi B was in the Queens strip club on August 29 while Offset was performing in the hard-living hip hop trio Migos when someone in her group lobbed furniture, bruising an employee in the legs. Cardi B has become one of the biggest new stars in US music since the runaway success last year of her song “Bodak Yellow,” which touches on her former life making ends meet as a stripper.

A Bronx native, she is the first female rapper to have had multiple No. 1 songs on the Billboard Hot 100 chart. She was also involved in a fracas with fellow rapper Nicki Minaj at New York Fashion Week in September, later taking to Instagram to say that the older Minaj had questioned her parenting skills. — AFP



Doctor Who S11



Generation ME - Dana Al Tuwarish



Hell's Kitchen



PAW patrol

## Season finales, festive specials air exclusively on OSN this December

This festive season, OSN, the region’s leading entertainment network, promises yet another spectacular line-up of exciting and exclusive programming for the whole family. OSN subscribers can also watch and catch up on their favorites at anytime, anywhere and on any device with OSN Play.

### New Shows

#### The Cry

The Cry sees young couple Joanna (Jenna Coleman; Doctor Who, Victoria) and Alistair (Ewen Leslie; Top of the Lake: China Girl) forced to face unthinkable circumstances under the white light of public scrutiny, changing their lives and their relationship forever. Premieres Sunday 16 December at 8pm (KSA), exclusively on BBC First.

#### Generation M.E.

In this mini-series, Dana Al Tuwarish, a self-made entrepreneur and social media influencer meets other inspirational women from across the Middle East, including Joelle Mardinian, a Lebanese beauty entrepreneur; Saudi fashion designer, Arwa Al-Banawi and Egypt’s most prominent marathon-runner and mountaineer, Manal Rostom. Premieres Sunday 23 December at 9pm (KSA), exclusively on E! Entertainment.

#### Castaways, season 1

In this brand-new reality show contestants are stranded on remote islands and are forced to survive with only scarce resources. Premieres on Friday 28 December at 7pm (KSA), exclusively on OSN Series First HD.

#### New Seasons

##### Stan Lee’s Lucky Man, season 3

From the mind of legendary comics creator, Stan Lee, comes a bold action-crime series about a brilliant but flawed police officer with the power to control luck. Season three premieres on Tuesday 25 December at 7pm (KSA), exclusively on OSN Series First HD.

#### Berlin Station, season 3

This spy-thriller continues with Daniel Miller (Richard

Armitage) infiltrating different organizations in order to extract information in Germany. Premiering on Sunday 9 December at 10pm (KSA), exclusively on OSN First-Home of HBO.

#### Hell’s Kitchen, season 16

Hosted by celebrity chef Gordon Ramsay this cooking competition sees two teams of chefs put under immense pressure as they compete for the ultimate prize: a job as head chef at a top restaurant. Premieres Tuesday 4 December, 8pm (KSA), exclusively on OSN Living HD.

#### Holiday Specials

##### Family Movies on OSN Movies Disney HD

Enjoy a feast of festive family favorites including Frozen (Monday 24 December, 3.15pm KSA), A Christmas Carol starring Jim Carrey (Monday 24 December 5pm KSA), and The Chronicles of Narnia: The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe (Monday 24 December, 6.45pm KSA) amongst others.

##### Star Wars marathon on OSN Movies HD

The force is strong on OSN, as a four-day Star Wars marathon kicks off on OSN Movies HD. From Monday 10 December to Thursday 13 December, a double bill of the classic movies will air from 6pm (KSA), rounding up with a full day of back-to-back movies on Friday 14 December from 9am (KSA).

#### ITV CHOICE: Christmas Specials

Bringing festive cheer to homes across the region, ITV Choice, offers a selection of light-hearted entertainment this month. Including Murdoch Mysteries: Home for the Holidays, Monday 24 December, 9pm (KSA), What Would Your Kid Do?, Tuesday 25 December, 9pm (KSA) and Paul O’Grady: For the Love of Dogs, Tuesday 25 December, 9.55pm (KSA).

#### BBC First:

The festive season comes bearing the gift of simulcast Christmas specials from the BBC, so fans of British soaps and dramas won’t miss out on the big end of year plot lines and twists from long-loved shows such as Eastenders, Casualty, Holby, Doctor Who and Call The Midwife to name a few.

Christmas specials will premier between Tuesday 25 December 2018 and Tuesday 1 January 2019 (please visit the website for times).

#### Arabic

Arabic customers can watch more episodes from the exciting Turkish series lineup, with Hekaytna at 7pm (KSA), Fadila Khanum w Banat’ha S2 at 9pm (KSA) and Al Hob Al Aama S2 at 10pm (KSA) exclusively from Sunday to Thursday, on OSN Yahala Al Oula HD.

Egyptian comedy takes centre stage this month with Raghda Motwahasha. Ramiz Galal works as a makeup artist at a beauty salon in Cairo, and when his life takes an unexpected turn his skills become his savior in a very surprising way.

Premieres Friday 7 December, at 11pm (KSA), on OSN Yahala Cinema HD.

#### Pop-up Channel

##### Nick Jr: Paw Patrol Pop-Up Channel

Paw Patrol is one of the most popular kid’s shows on the network and this month, kids and families, can enjoy every episode from seasons one to four, all in one place - channel 7, from 13-29 December.

#### OSN First HD - Home of HBO

Factual fans can make a date with OSN First HD-Home of HBO every Saturday as we premiere a collection of insightful documentaries at 8pm (KSA).

Check out The Truth About Killer Robots, a searing look at AI in modern society, premiering Saturday 8 December; Nothing like a Dame, featuring Dames Eileen Atkins, Judi Dench, Joan Plowright and Maggie Smith sharing a friendship that spans over 50 years, premiering Saturday 22 December. And finally, premiering Saturday 29 December Cosplay Universe explores the rise of the global Comic Con sub-culture. Be the first to hear about OSN news by following @OSNnewsME on Twitter.

## Cruz joins up with PETA to spread anti-fur message

Penelope Cruz has teamed up PETA to front a new anti-fur campaign. The 44-year-old actress has teamed up with the animal rights organization - known as People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals - for a second time to highlight the cruel way that fur is obtained from animals. Cruz - who first partnered with PETA in 2012 - appears in an advertising campaign in which she is seen holding a cat alongside the message "Make Us Purr, Don't Wear Fur". Speaking about her ultimate ambition for the project and PETA's work, the 'Vicky Cristina Barcelona' star said: "Finally, so many

designers are going fur-free, and I'm looking forward to the day when no animal is caged or trapped and killed for fur."

PETA latest campaign comes in a year when labels such as Burberry, Ralph Lauren, John Galiano, Gucci, Versace, Stella McCartney and Michael Kors have all banned the use of real animal fur in their products. Announcing that the company is ditching fur, Ralph Lauren said in a statement: "Fur has never been an integral part of our design strategy as we had only used it on a limited basis as an accent in some collections. We are publicly

announcing this decision because the use of fur has been under review internally and we feel that the time is right to take this action."

Cruz is just one of many A-list stars, including Pamela Anderson, Charlize Theron and Pink, who have joined forces with PETA to call for the end of the fur industry. The Oscar winner has always been an outspoken advocate of animal rights and she and her husband Javier Bardem have given a home to many rescue cats and dogs. — Bang Showbiz

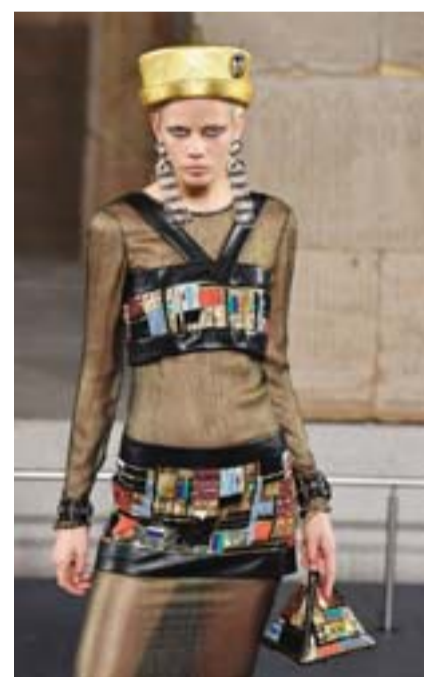


Penelope Cruz in PETA ad

# THE CHANEL METIERS D'ART 2018-19 SHOW



German designer Karl Lagerfeld (center) walks the runway during the Chanel Metiers D'Art 2018/19 Show.



Models walk the runway during the Chanel Metiers D'Art 2018/19 Show at The Metropolitan Museum of Art on December 4, 2018 in New York City. — AFP photos

## Donald Glover named GQ's best-dressed man

Donald Glover has been crowned GQ's best-dressed man of 2019. The 35-year-old musician-and-actor topped the British publication's annual list, climbing from 18th spot last year largely thanks to his colourful red carpet outfits, in particular the purple Gucci suit he donned to pick up four Emmy Awards for his show 'Atlanta' in September. The publication said: "In short, Donald Glover is a new-wave renaissance man - and his style is superbly 'wavy' too, providing all the Seventies-inspired vibes a modern man needs in his wardrobe right now."

"While his array of cheekily unbuttoned silk shirts and soft, striped V-neck knits over the past year get honourable mention, our favourite facet of his personal style has to be his commitment to anything-but-black tuxedos - especially the regal, all-

purple Gucci rig he wore to the Emmys in September. Our king." Dior Homme creative director Kim Jones - who was on the panel compiling the rankings - also heaped praise on the star and said that Donald wears his clothes "with charisma and style" both on and off screen.

Donald beat veteran actor Jeff Goldblum and 'Call Me By Your Name' star Timothee Chalamet into second and third place respectively, while Travis Scott and Richard Madden rounded out the top five. Making up the rest of the top 10 was Prince Charles in sixth spot, David Beckham in seventh, 'All of Me' hit-maker John Legend - who was named Most Stylish Man at the magazine's awards earlier this year - in eighth, former One Direction hunk Harry Styles in ninth, and grime star Skepta in

10th. Last year's number one, 'The Crown' actor Matt Smith, fell to 11th in this year's top 50.

GQ's Best-Dressed Men 2019 - Top 10:

1. Donald Glover
2. Jeff Goldblum
3. Timothee Chalamet
4. Travis Scott
5. Richard Madden
6. Prince Charles
7. David Beckham
8. John Legend
9. Harry Styles
10. Skepta — Bang Showbiz



Donald Glover





WASHINGTON: (From left) US President Donald Trump, First Lady Melania Trump, former US President Barack Obama, former First Lady Michelle Obama, former US President Bill Clinton, former US Secretary of State Hillary Clinton, former US President Jimmy Carter and former First Lady Rosalynn Carter participate in the state funeral of former US President George HW Bush at the National Cathedral yesterday. — AFP

## First baby delivered via uterus transplanted from dead donor

PARIS: In a medical first, a mother who received a uterus transplant from a dead donor gave birth to a healthy baby, researchers reported yesterday. The breakthrough operation, performed in Sept 2016 in Sao Paulo, Brazil, shows that such transplants are feasible and could help thousands of women unable to have children due to uterine problems, according to a study published in *The Lancet*. The baby girl was born in Dec 2017, the medical journal added.

Until recently, the only options available to women with so-called uterine infertility were adoption or the services of a surrogate mother. The first successful childbirth following uterine transplant from a living donor took place in 2014 in Sweden, and there have been 10 others since then. But there are far more women in need of transplants than there are potential live donors, so doctors wanted to find out if the procedure could work using the uterus of a woman who had died.

Ten attempts were made - in the United States, the Czech Republic, and Turkey - before the success reported yesterday. Infertility affects 10 to 15 percent of couples. Of this group, one in 500 women have problems with their uterus - due, for example, to a malformation, hysterectomy, or infection - that prevent them from becoming pregnant and carrying a child to term. "Our results provide a proof-of-concept for a new option for women with uterine infertility," said Dani Ejzenberg, a doctor at the teaching hospital of the University of Sao Paulo. He described the procedure as a "medical milestone".

"The number of people willing and committed to donate organs upon their own death are far larger than those of live donors, offering a much wider potential donor population," he said in a statement. The 32-year-old recipient was born without a uterus as a result of a rare syndrome. Four months before the

transplant, she had in-vitro fertilization resulting in eight fertilized eggs, which were preserved through freezing. The donor was a 45-year-old woman who died from a stroke. Her uterus was removed and transplanted in surgery that lasted more than 10 hours.

The surgical team had to connect the donor's uterus with the veins, arteries, ligaments, and vaginal canal of the recipient. To prevent her body from rejecting the new organ, the woman was given five different drugs, along with antimicrobials, anti-blood clotting treatments, and aspirin. After five months, the uterus showed no sign of rejection, ultrasound scans were normal, and the woman was menstruating regularly.

The fertilized eggs were implanted after seven months. Ten days later, doctors delivered the good news: she was pregnant. Besides a minor kidney infection - treated with antibiotics - during the 32nd week,

the pregnancy was normal. After nearly 36 weeks a baby girl weighing 2.5 kg was delivered via caesarean section. Mother and baby left the hospital three days later. The transplanted uterus was removed during the C-section, allowing the woman to stop taking the immunosuppressive drugs.

At age seven months and 12 days - when the manuscript reporting the findings was submitted for publication - the baby was breastfeeding and weighed 7.2 kg. "We must congratulate the authors," commented Dr Srdjan Saso, an honorary clinical lecturer in obstetrics and gynaecology at Imperial College London, describing the findings as "extremely exciting". Richard Kennedy, president of the International Federation of Fertility Societies, also welcomed the announcement but sounded a note of caution. "Uterine transplant is a novel technique and should be regarded as experimental," he said. — AFP

## Muwaizri shuns panel meeting...

Continued from Page 1

notifying his house, his office and by phone, but he did not come without stating any reason. Muwaizri did not issue any statement to explain his position, but it appears that he is unlikely to attend the meeting because he objects to the principle of referring the grilling to the panel.

Abul said the committee decided to renew its invitation to Muwaizri for next Monday and it plans today to hear the opinions of constitutional experts as well as the government's viewpoint represented by the justice minister. He said that if Muwaizri attends next Monday's session, the committee will be able to prepare its report in time for the Assembly's regular session on Tuesday. Lawmakers opposed to referring the grilling to the committee insist that the action amounts to amending the constitution because the government can use this tool to prevent grillings.

Head of the Assembly's priority issues committee MP Ahmad Al-Fadhil said yesterday that the government has submitted nine issues to be accorded priority and that none of them call for raising charges or imposing taxes except a bill stipulating to impose excise duty on tobacco and energy drinks. MP Riyadh Al-Adasani warned yesterday that if the health ministry imposes any form of charges for medical services at Sheikh Jaber Al-Ahmad Hospital, designated to treat Kuwaitis only, he will file to grill the concerned minister. He said that medical services at the hospital must continue to be provided free of charge.

MP Abdullah Fahhad said in a series of questions to the justice minister that a stateless man or bedoon was detained for 25 days on accusations that he was a member of the Islamic State (Daesh) group and that he plotted to assassinate the director of the central agency for bedoons. After the man was later released without bail, the lawmaker asked about what charges he was detained on, who filed the complaint against him and whether it was the bedoons agency. He also asked if the man's release meant that the accusation was false and inquired if it was a plot and by whom. Fahhad sent similar questions to the interior minister.

including the end of the Cold War - and in a style dramatically different to the combative current president. Trump's ascendancy to the head of the Republican Party saw him exchange vitriolic attacks with the Bushes, notably slamming the presidential son's 2003 invasion of Iraq as "one of the worst decisions in the history of our country". But he has taken pains to demonstrate unity since Bush's death, and made a low-key visit to the Capitol late Monday with First Lady Melania Trump to salute Bush's casket.

Trump declared yesterday a national day of mourning. Many federal offices are closed along with Wall Street stock markets. Congress also suspended votes - even in the midst of a looming potential shutdown that requires congressional action before midnight Friday. Bush was a decorated World War II aviator who nearly lost his life when he was shot down on a bombing mission. He served as a congressman, envoy to China and ambassador to the United Nations, director of the Central Intelligence Agency, and vice president to Ronald Reagan before winning the White House.

At a time of extraordinary and deep political fissures, Bush was looked to this week as a gracious servant of country who aimed to bridge the political divide. Bush "was America's last great soldier statesman," presidential historian Jon Meacham told the guests. "His life creed, as he said, was tell the truth, don't blame people, be strong, try hard, don't forget, stay the course."

After the Washington service, Bush's casket was to be flown back to Houston. The former head of state will lie in repose at St Martin's Episcopal Church, where the Bushes worshipped for decades, until today's funeral. He will be interred at the George HW Bush Presidential Library Center in College Station, Texas, next to his wife, who died in April, and their daughter Robin who died of leukemia at age three. — Agencies

## Briton says was psychologically tortured in jail

LONDON: British man convicted in the United Arab Emirates for spying said yesterday he was psychologically tortured and that his captors asked him to turn double agent against the British government. Matthew Hedges, a university researcher, was detained at Dubai airport on May 5, held in solitary confinement for months and sentenced to life in prison on Nov 21 before being pardoned by UAE authorities five days later.

In his first broadcast interview since returning last week, Hedges was asked on BBC radio's Today program whether he had been tortured and replied: "Psychologically, correct, yes." Hedges described being put in ankle cuffs whenever he left his cell to go to the bathroom and said he was "blindfolded and handcuffed" when being moved to different premises.

One day when he repeated his denials that he was not spying for the British government, he said his interrogators forced him to stand up for an entire day wearing ankle cuffs.

"It's mentally exhausting. Physically, the adrenaline takes over. It's how it made you feel mentally," he said. Hedges said he suffered depression and anxiety and was given "a cocktail of medication" by his captors. "I asked for the medication to be increased," he said. When his interrogators increased the psychological pressure, he said he confessed to being an MI6 agent. "At that point, I had no other option," he said. He said he told his interrogators he was a "captain" in MI6 - a rank that does not exist in the foreign intelligence service - only because it was suggested by them.

A few days after being detained, he said he also suffered a panic attack after one of his interrogators asked him "to steal official documentation from the Foreign Office". "I said even if I wanted to I couldn't. I don't work for the Foreign Office," he said. He described the sentencing as "an explosion". "I wasn't able to process it right in the court. It was too much," he said. — AFP

## US, foreign leaders gather for Bush...

Continued from Page 1

Since Bush's death, Trump has traded his usual provocative posture for one of respect and solemnity, tweeting before heading to the cathedral about "a day of celebration for a great man". But while the service allowed Washington to hit pause on the toxic rhetoric that has engulfed the country's politics, Trump and his Democratic predecessors appeared locked in an uneasy truce as it got underway.

Trump arrived and promptly shook hands with Obama and former first lady Michelle Obama. But his greetings stopped there, as he failed to acknowledge Hillary Clinton, his defeated Democratic rival in 2016. Clinton sat stone faced, looking straight ahead, and the pair did not make eye contact. Other dignitaries in the cathedral included Britain's Prince Charles, German Chancellor Angela Merkel, former Polish president Lech Walesa, former vice presidents Dan Quayle, Dick Cheney, Al Gore and Joe Biden, and former secretaries of state James Baker, Colin Powell and Condoleezza Rice.

Yesterday was a day of precision, patriotic ritual, and ceremony. George W. Bush and wife Laura stood stoically outside the US Capitol as an honor guard carried his father's flag-draped casket to the hearse. In a show of respect, Pennsylvania Avenue was lined with well-wishers as the cortege proceeded toward the Neo-Gothic cathedral in the first presidential funeral since Gerald Ford died in late 2006.

Earlier, tens of thousands of Americans had quietly filed in to the Capitol to pay their respects to a man who steered the nation through turbulent times

## Dubai rebuffs Kuwait bid to...

Continued from Page 1

A spokeswoman for the Dubai government said: "UAE judicial authorities are awaiting a final judgment from Kuwaiti courts on the funds frozen in Dubai to transfer them back to Kuwait based on international standard laws and procedures." The office of Kuwait's prime minister did not respond to a request for comment on Kuwait's demands and on the

content of the letter sent in September. Kuwait had followed up that letter a month later with a renewed request from the attorney general to his counterpart in Dubai, which detailed how the funds should be distributed to the Kuwaiti government entities, as reported by Reuters last month.

The money was frozen at the behest of the UAE central bank in Nov 2017 to determine if the funds sent from a bank in the Philippines to an account of Port Link, which manages Port Fund, constituted money laundering. US-based law firm Crowell and Moring, which represents Port Fund, told Reuters the money was a legitimate payment after Port Fund sold its investments in the Philippines. — Reuters

## Saudi king invites Amir to GCC...

Continued from Page 1

Qatari Amir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al-Thani also received a written invitation from King Salman to attend the Gulf summit in Riyadh, the Qatar News Agency said on Tuesday. Qatar is locked in a bitter dispute with Saudi Arabia that has fractured the six-nation GCC. Doha has not said what level of representation it will send to the gathering of heads of state seen by analysts as unlikely to bring a diplomatic breakthrough.

Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, Bahrain and non-GCC member Egypt have imposed diplomatic, trade and transport sanctions on Qatar since June 2017, accusing it of supporting terrorism. Doha denies the charge. At last year's GCC summit, held in Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, the UAE and Bahrain sent ministers or deputy prime ministers, rather than heads of state.

The invite from the Saudi king comes a day after Qatar abruptly announced it was quitting OPEC after 57 years to focus on gas in an apparent swipe at the oil-producing bloc's de facto leader Saudi Arabia. Doha's exit from OPEC has deepened the sense among diplomats and analysts that any prospect for a near-term resolution to the Gulf row was unlikely to come at the summit in Riyadh. "I'm sure this summit will not bring any change," said Mahjoob Zweiri, director of the Gulf Studies Center at Qatar University.

Saudi Arabia and the UAE have repeatedly said that the dispute was not a high priority for them, and Qatar's foreign minister said last month he saw no thaw. At an Arab League summit in Riyadh in April, Qatar did not send a senior official and its delegation was headed instead by its permanent representative to the Arab League. The row has defied mediation efforts by Kuwait and the United States which sees Gulf unity as essential to efforts to contain Iran. The GCC was founded in 1980 as a bulwark against bigger neighbors Iran and Iraq, but the protracted row has undermined its role in regional affairs. — Agencies



## Sports

# Streaking Lightning rally to beat Wings in shootout

## Schmidt's two late goals carry Knights past Capitals

**DETROIT:** Nikita Kucherov scored the game-winner during a shootout, and the streaking Tampa Bay Lightning overcame Frans Nielsen's hat trick to edge the host Detroit Red Wings 6-5 on Tuesday. Tampa Bay, which has the NHL's best record, has won four straight and seven of its past eight. The Lightning won the shootout 2-1 after erasing a two-goal, third-period deficit. Mathieu Joseph had two goals and an assist, and Steven Stamkos, J.T. Miller and Cedric Paquette also scored in regulation for Tampa Bay. Edward Pasquale made his NHL debut as the Lightning's goaltender. He made 19 saves and two more during the shootout. Nielsen collected his second career hat trick and the Wings' first since 2016. Gustav Nyquist scored the other two regulation goals for Detroit.

### MAPLE LEAFS 4, SABRES 3 (OT)

Auston Matthews' goal with less than three seconds remaining in overtime gave visiting Toronto the win over Buffalo. Matthews capped off a three-point performance with his second goal of the night, taking a drop pass from Kasper Kapanen and beating Sabres goalie Linus Ullmark to give Toronto its fifth consecutive victory. After missing more than a month with a shoulder injury, Matthews now has five goals in three games since his return to the ice. He has 15 goals in 14 total games this season. Matthews also scored the game's opening goal, and he picked up an assist on Patrick Marleau's game-tying effort in the third.

### JETS 3, ISLANDERS 1

Jacob Trouba and Adam Lowry scored in a 22-second span early in the third period for Winnipeg, which capped a perfect Big Apple road trip by beating host New York. Nikolaj Ehlers scored an empty-netter with 2.1 seconds left for the Jets, who beat the New Jersey Devils 4-3 in overtime Saturday and edged the New York Rangers by the same score in the shootout Sunday. Winnipeg has won four in a row overall. Connor Hellebuyck made 27 saves for the Jets, and Thomas Greiss recorded 21 saves for the Islanders. Anders Lee scored early in the third period for New York to break a scoreless tie before the Islanders scored three times.

### PENGUINS 6, AVALANCHE 3

Patric Hornqvist's third-period natural hat trick on a night when Pittsburgh gave away ballpucks lifted the Penguins to a 6-3 win over visiting Colorado. The Penguins built a 3-0 lead on goals by Jake Guentzel, Evgeni Malkin and Derick Brassard in the first period

before Colorado tied it with second-period goals from Tyson Barrie, Carl Soderberg and Matt Nieto. Hornqvist notched the fastest hat trick in Penguins history, 2:47. He scored on a rebound for a power-play goal at 6:11, on a shot from the left circle at 7:32 and on a shot from the slot at 8:58.

### PANTHERS 5, BRUINS 0

Roberto Luongo returned from the injured list and earned a shutout, and Mike Hoffman scored two goals as host Florida routed Boston at Sunrise, Fla. Panthers winger Jonathan Huberdeau extended his streak to six straight multi-point games. He had one goal and two assists, and he has three goals and 11 assists during his streak. Mike Matheson and Evgenii Dadonov had Florida's other goals. Aleksander Barkov had three assists, and Keith Yandle had two.

### GOLDEN KNIGHTS 5, CAPITALS 3

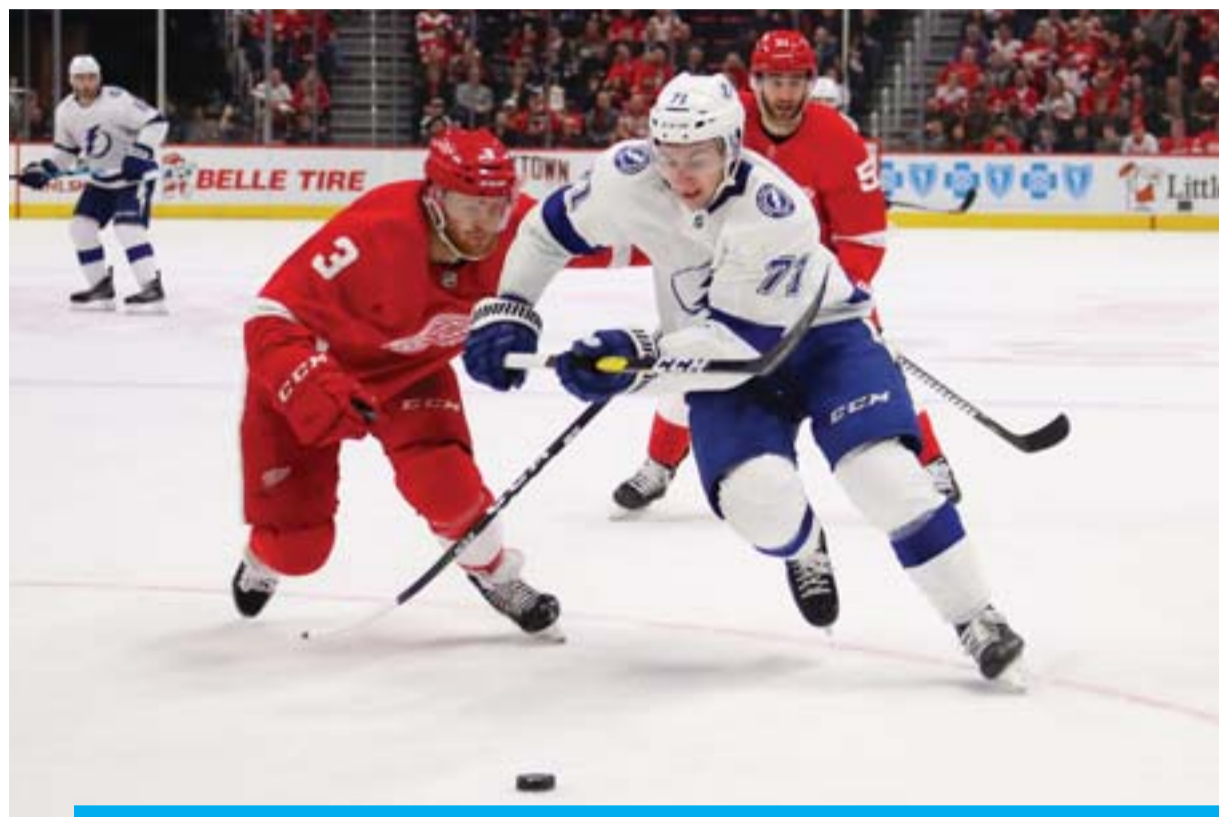
Nate Schmidt scored his first two goals of the season, including the game-winner on a power play with 1:25 remaining, and Vegas defeated Washington in Las Vegas in the first meeting between the teams at T-Mobile Arena since the Caps clinched their first Stanley Cup on June 7. Schmidt fired a wrist shot from the top of the slot past the glove hand of Washington goalie Braden Holtby to break a 3-3 tie, then added an empty-net goal with 6.9 seconds left to seal the victory. Cody Eakin had a goal and an assist and Pierre-Edouard Bellemare and Ryan Reaves also scored goals for Vegas, which won for the sixth time in seven games. Jakub Vrana scored two goals and Alex Ovechkin also scored for Washington, which had a four-game road winning streak snapped.

### FLAMES 9, BLUE JACKETS 6

Calgary's Sean Monahan and Johnny Gaudreau each recorded two goals and two assists as the Flames erased a three-goal deficit by scoring five times in the second period in a wild victory at Columbus. Elias Lindholm, Matthew Tkachuk, Noah Hanifin, T.J. Brodie and Austin Czarnik also had goals for the Flames. Columbus' Cam Atkinson had a hat trick to extend his point streak to 11 games—the league's longest active stretch. Zach Werenski, Josh Anderson and Nick Foligno added goals for the Blue Jackets, who lost their second straight.

### WILD 3, CANUCKS 2

Ryan Suter and Jason Zucker scored power-play goals less than a minute apart in the second period as Minnesota defeated host Vancouver. Zach Parise also



**DETROIT:** Anthony Cirelli #71 of the Tampa Bay Lightning tries to get around Nick Jensen #3 of the Detroit Red Wings during the third period at Little Caesars Arena on Tuesday in Detroit, Michigan. Tampa Bay won the game 6-5 in a shootout. — AFP

scored for the Wild, who went 3-for-3 with the man advantage. Devan Dubnyk made 29 saves for Minnesota, which snapped a season-high three-game losing streak. Josh Leivo and Tyler Motte scored for Vancouver, which has won just once in its past 13 games (1-10-2). The Canucks' Anders Nilsson stopped 25 shots but dropped his sixth consecutive start.

### CANADIENS 5, SENATORS 2

Max Domi scored twice and added an assist, and Jonathan Drouin had a goal and two assists as host Montreal scored three times in the second period to pull away from Ottawa. Artturi Lehkonen and Brendan Gallagher also scored for the Canadiens, whose three-goal burst boosted them to just their second win in the past eight games. Carey Price stopped 28 shots for the Canadiens. Dylan DeMelo and Mark Stone scored for

the Senators, who had won their three previous games. Ottawa goaltender Craig Anderson made 36 saves.

### COYOTES 2, KINGS 1

Rookie Adin Hill made 25 saves and improved to 4-0-0 with a .977 save percentage since he was recalled as Arizona extended its winning streak to four games by edging host Los Angeles. Lawson Crouse scored a short-handed goal in the first period, and Nick Schmaltz added a power-play goal in the second for the Coyotes. Alec Martinez ended Hill's bid for his second shutout in five days when he scored off a backhand feed from Anze Kopitar at 14:15 of the third period. The Kings briefly thought they tied the score with 55.4 seconds left, but it was immediately ruled that Dustin Brown played the puck with a high stick. Jonathan Quick made 18 saves for Los Angeles. — Reuters

## Wilder wants Fury rematch 'ASAP'

**LOS ANGELES:** Deontay Wilder on Tuesday called for an immediate rematch with Tyson Fury, dismissing claims from his British rival he would attempt to avoid a return bout after their epic heavyweight duel in Los Angeles. Wilder retained his World Boxing Council heavyweight crown on Saturday after a thrilling 12-round battle ended in a split decision draw at the Staples Center.

Fury, who many observers believe did enough to win despite being knocked down twice during the fight, said on Monday he feared Wilder would seek to duck a rematch "at all costs."

However the 33-year-old Wilder on Tuesday rejected that claim in the strongest possible terms, saying a rematch with Fury was his priority rather than a unification bout with WBA, IBF and WBO champion Anthony Joshua.

"I'm ready to do it again," Wilder told reporters on a conference call. "My main goal is Tyson Fury. I'm looking forward to giving him the rematch as soon as possible. This is the biggest fight still in the heavyweight division, this is the most exciting fight in the heavyweight division and we're ready to give the fans what they want to see."

Wilder snatched a draw on Saturday after Fury somehow recovered from a devastating 12th round knockdown by the American champion to finish the fight on his feet. Wilder said Tuesday he would make no mistake in any possible rematch.

"He woke up from hell—I want to put him back there," Wilder said. Fury, who only returned to boxing this year after nearly three years out of the ring as he struggled with depression, drink and drug problems, had said Monday he doubted Wilder would grant him a return. "I've got a funny feeling he's going to get his running shoes out and stay away from me at all costs," Fury said. However Wilder said a rematch was all but inescapable. "Both sides definitely want (a rematch) to happen. I don't



**LOS ANGELES:** File photo shows Deontay Wilder punches Tyson Fury in the ninth round fighting to a draw during the WBC Heavyweight Championship at Staples Center on December 1, 2018 in Los Angeles, California.—AFP

see why we wouldn't. It's a great fight and the build-up has already started. We can't get away from this fight.

"It's only right for us to go back in and do it again. I don't want no other fights to happen between him or I before then. I want to give Tyson Fury the rematch ASAP," Wilder, who on Saturday had spoken enthusiastically about a possible unification fight with Joshua, meanwhile poured cold water on the idea on Tuesday.

Asked where he now saw Joshua's place in the heavyweight pecking order, Wilder replied: "I haven't even thought about Joshua. They're getting what they deserve." Negotiations over a possible Wilder-Joshua showdown stalled earlier this year.

Wilder's camp maintain they offered \$50 million to Joshua to accept a fight, a gambit dismissed by the British

boxer's manager Eddie Hearn as a "wonderful PR move."

"They felt like they were the only people in boxing or the heavyweight division that people cared about," Wilder said of the Joshua camp. "We don't care about him no more. They had their opportunity. They had four months to have their opportunity. But they led people on. Their ego got the best of them. So let them continue to fight the second tier fighters." Wilder also dismissed criticism of the scoring of Saturday's fight, adamant that Fury had not done enough to win. "He was landing some punches but most of them was pitty-patter, they didn't affect me," Wilder said. "When you coming in here fighting the champion, you've got to be dominant. You've got to take the title, and I don't think Fury took the title. I felt like I won that fight, totally." — AFP

## The heat is on: Tokyo 2020 marathon to start earlier

**TOKYO:** The Tokyo 2020 Olympic marathon will start between 5:30am and 6am, organisers announced yesterday, after experts raised concerns over the health of competitors and fans during the city's sweltering summer heat.

An expert medical committee had proposed a start time "between 5:30am and 6am", top Olympic official John Coates said after a series of meetings in the Japanese capital. Organisers had already brought the marathon forward to 7am as Japanese medical groups have warned the event could "lead to deaths" from heatstroke.

Tokyo 2020 organisers still need to agree with the International Association of Athletics Federations before fixing the exact time, said Coates, who is chairman of the Olympic coordination commission.

Rugby sevens matches will also start 90 minutes ahead of schedule and mountain biking an hour later to avoid the

burning sun. The 50-kilometre race walk will also be brought forward.

The Japanese capital sweated through several deadly heatwaves this summer as Japan was also battered by a series of typhoons that caused death, destruction and delay. Coates said a series of anti-heat measures was being planned, including mist sprays along the marathon route and heat-absorbing paint on the roads.

There is also an increase in medical facilities as a precaution and more shade for fans lining up for entry to the venues. "There is a list of about 20 precautions they (the medical commission) think we should take and they are not going to be free," quipped Coates.

Indeed, Tokyo 2020 CEO Toshiko Muto admitted that anti-heat measures had increased pressure on the Tokyo 2020 budget, which is due to be updated on December 21.

Olympic organisers are under huge pressure to keep a lid on costs amid fears that spiralling budgets for the event are sapping public support.

"We can't exceed the level of the previous version of the budget," said Muto, who added that cuts had been found in other areas to compensate for additional spending against the heat. The Olympics are expected to cost around \$12.6 billion, according to the current version of the budget, unveiled last year.



**TOKYO:** International Olympic Committee (IOC) vice president and chairman of the Coordination Commission for Tokyo 2020 John Coates (L) and Tokyo 2020 president Yoshiro Mori attend a joint press conference in Tokyo yesterday. — AFP

The potential for extreme weather conditions has become the major headache for organisers of the event which opens on July 24. The previous time Japan hosted the Olympics, in 1964, the competition were held in October to avoid the hot summer conditions. Organisers have toyed with several ways of beating the heat—even proposing the introduction of daylight saving time, an idea that appears to have fallen by the wayside.—AFP

## Super Bowl winner Browner jailed for eight years

**LOS ANGELES:** Two-time Super Bowl-winner Brandon Browner was jailed for eight years on Tuesday after pleading no contest to attempting to murder his ex-girlfriend in California. Browner, 34, had appeared in court in Pomona, outside Los Angeles, following an attack at his victim's home on July 8.

The former cornerback, who won back-to-back Super Bowls with the Seattle Seahawks and New England Patriots in 2014 and 2015 respectively, was accused of attempting to smother the woman after breaking into her home in La Verne.

He pleaded no contest to one felony count of attempted murder and two misdemeanor counts of cruelty to a child involving the woman's two children. Superior Court Judge Bruce F. Marrs ordered Browner to stay away from the woman and her two children for 10 years, the District Attorney's Office said. Browner's attack occurred with the woman's two children present. The former NFL player was detained by police hours after his attack. He had also stolen the woman's Rolex watch during the attack. As well as the Patriots and the Seahawks, Browner's 11-year NFL career also featured stints with the Denver Broncos and New Orleans Saints. —AFP

## Mauritian official banned for life after corruption charges

**LONDON:** Badminton's world body has banned for life and fined Mauritian former council member Raj Gaya after a hearing over alleged misuse of funds, including money intended for an Olympic athlete.

The Badminton World Federation (BWF) said in a statement on Wednesday that Gaya had been fined \$50,000 by its ethics hearing panel following an investigation that started in June last year.

The charges against Gaya stated that grants or funding intended for the Mauritius Badminton Association (MBA) had been diverted into personal bank accounts and used "for his own benefit".

He was also accused of submitting forged accounting documents and falsifying or exaggerating expenses. The ethics hearing panel also looked into claims that money paid by the Badminton Confederation of Africa (BCA) to help shuttlers qualify for the 2016 Rio de Janeiro Olympics had been siphoned off.

"The BCA allocated \$21,485 to the MBA... and paid \$19,150 (to) Mr Gaya for that purpose, of which about \$18,000 should have been paid to the Mauritian player Kate Foo Kune," it said.—Reuters

## Sports

# New Zealand face uphill battle after Azhar, Shafiq hit hundreds

## Yasir needs one wicket to become fastest to claim 200 wickets

### SCOREBOARD

Scoreboard at stumps on the third day of the third and final Test between Pakistan and New Zealand at Sheikh Zayed Stadium in Abu Dhabi yesterday:

|  |     |
|--|-----|
| <b>New Zealand 1st innings</b> 274 (K. Williamson 89, BJ Watling 77 not out; Bilal Asif 5-65, Yasir Shah 3-75)                                     |     |
| <b>Pakistan 1st innings (overnight 139-3)</b>  |     |
| Imam-ul-Haq c Southee b Boult  | 9   |
| Mohammad Hafeez c Southee b Boult  | 0   |
| Azhar Ali c Patel b Somerville   | 134 |
| Haris Sohail c Watling b Southee   | 34  |
| Asad Shafiq lbw b Patel  | 104 |
| Babar Azam b Somerville  | 14  |
| Sarfraz Ahmed c Raval b Somerville   | 25  |
| Bilal Asif c Taylor b Patel  | 11  |
| Yasir Shah run out   | 1   |
| Hasan Ali b Somerville   | 0   |
| Shaheen Shah Afridi not out  | 0   |
| Extras 16 (b 6, lb 9, nb 1)  | 16  |
| Total: (all out: 135 overs)  | 348 |
| Fall of wickets: 1-0 (Hafeez), 2-17 (Imam), 3-85 (Sohail), 4-286 (Azhar), 5-304 (Shafiq), 6-312 (Azam), 7-333 (Asif), 8-346 (Yasir), 9-347 (Hasan) |     |
| Bowling: Southee 25-5-56-1, Boult 26-7-66-2, Grandhomme 13-2-36-0 (Inb), Patel 35-5-100-2, Somerville 36-8-75-4                                    |     |
| <b>New Zealand 2nd innings</b>   |     |
| J. Raval lbw b Shaheen   | 0   |
| T. Latham c Sohail b Yasir   | 10  |
| K. Williamson not out  | 14  |
| W. Somerville not out  | 1   |
| Extras: (lb 1)   | 1   |
| Total: (for two wks: 14 overs)   | 26  |
| Still to bat: R. Taylor, H. Nicholls, BJ Watling, C. de Grandhomme, Ajaz Patel, T. Southee, T. Boult   |     |
| Fall of wickets: 1-1 (Raval), 2-24 (Latham)  |     |
| Bowling: Hasan 4-3-2-0, Shaheen 3-0-11-1, Yasir 4-1-5-1, Asif 3-0-7-0.   |     |

**ABU DHABI:** Azhar Ali and Asad Shafiq hit centuries to leave Pakistan in command of the third and final Test against New Zealand in Abu Dhabi despite a batting collapse that curtailed their first-innings lead.

Azhar hit an attractive 134 for his 15th Test hundred while Shafiq scored 104, but debutant New Zealand off-spinner Will Somerville took four wickets to restrict Pakistan to 348 all out. Pakistan appeared set to build a huge lead before collapsing from 286-3 to lose their final seven wickets for the addition of just 62 runs.

The 34-year-old Somerville finished with 4-75 while left-arm spinner Ajaz Patel took 2-100 and pace spearhead Trent Boult chipped in with 2-66. That gave Pakistan a 74-run lead—the same they got in the first Test at the same venue before losing by four runs.

New Zealand were then reduced to 26-2 at stumps with Kane Williamson unbeaten on 14 and nightwatchman Somerville on one not out to leave them trailing by 48 runs with eight wickets intact.

Paceman Shaheen Shah Afridi trapped Jeet Raval for nought while leg-spinner Yasir Shah had Tom Latham caught for ten, his 199th wicket in Tests. Yasir needs just one more wicket to become the fastest to 200 wickets, in his 33rd Test, a record currently held by Australian leg-spinner Clarrie Grimmett who reached the milestone in 36 Tests, 82 years ago.

Azhar and Shafiq put on 201 for the fourth wicket, but once they were dismissed only Sarfraz Ahmed (25) and Babar Azam (14) offered some resistance. Azhar edged medium pacer Colin de Grandhomme through the slips to complete his first century since May 2017 against the West Indies in Dominica - and his first hundred against New Zealand.

He took 210 balls to reach the three-figure mark, before being caught sweeping off Somerville, just



**ABU DHABI:** New Zealand captain Kane Williamson (R) plays a shot as Pakistani wicketkeeper captain Sarfraz Ahmed looks on during the third day of the third and final Test cricket match between Pakistan and New Zealand at the Sheikh Zayed International Cricket Stadium in Abu Dhabi yesterday. — AFP

before tea. Shafiq brought up his 12th Test ton with a sharp single off Somerville before falling leg-before to Patel to a straight delivery.

Somerville then had Azam and Hasan Ali (nought) bowled and wrapped up the innings by getting Sarfraz caught at mid-wicket. Earlier, Azhar and Shafiq frustrated New Zealand's search for early wickets as they

took Pakistan to 224-3 at lunch.

New Zealand skipper Williamson took the second new ball in the 81st over with Pakistan comfortably placed at 213-3, but the bowlers struggled to extract much life from a flat pitch at the Sheikh Zayed Stadium. Pakistan levelled the series with an innings and 16-run win in the second Test in Dubai. —AFP

## Australia axe v-captain Marsh

**ADELAIDE:** Australia sprang a surprise by axing vice-captain Mitch Marsh yesterday for the first Test against India, as Usman Khawaja's return was confirmed despite the shock of his brother's arrest.

Batsmen Travis Head and Peter Handscomb were preferred to the all-rounder, piling more pressure on the bowlers in what are forecast to be scorching conditions, while Marcus Harris will make his debut as opener. Captain Tim Paine said the omission of Marsh, one of Australia's two vice-skippers along with Josh Hazlewood, was due to a lack of consistency and he would benefit from returning to Sheffield Shield cricket to find form again.

Handscomb edged him out after two half-centuries last week and a century for Victoria the week before that. "Mitch Marsh has not been as consistent as he would like and we would like," said Paine at his pre-match press conference, after the all-rounder endured lean tours of South Africa and the United Arab Emirates, where they played Pakistan.

"We know the talent that Mitch has and we know that most likely at some stage in this series we will need him. We are taking the opportunity at the moment to go back and play a Shield game and get some cricket under his belt."

In-form debutant Harris will open in a new-look top order alongside Aaron Finch. Paine described Harris as "an aggressive little player" who deserved his chance. "He can play his shots but he's also really improved his defence. He's come a long way as a batsman."

Khawaja, whose brother was arrested on Tuesday for allegedly framing a love-rival with a fake terror plot, will come in at first drop. The Pakistan-born Australian, who is returning after ankle surgery, was not seen in the nets yesterday after his family crisis, although he is known to only take on a light workload the day before a Test.

"We're keeping an eye on Uzzie, obviously it was a little bit of shock for him yesterday," coach Justin Langer told SEN radio. "That said, he's got good support around him. He'll be as cool and calm as usual out on the middle."

His brother Arsalan was released on bail after appearing in a Sydney court on charges of forgery and attempting to pervert justice. Shaun Marsh will bat at four with Handscomb at five and Head at six.

The dumping of Mitch Marsh will add an extra burden for Hazlewood, Mitchell Starc, Pat Cummins and spinner Nathan Lyon, who will have to take on more overs in temperatures forecast to top 30 Celsius. "We obviously have a lot of confidence in Nathan Lyon bowling a lot of overs if we need to," said Paine, adding that Head could also bowl some off-spin on a pitch that is expected to deteriorate as the match wears on.

"And probably the fact that all our three quicks go in real fresh. We have confidence in them, particularly at the start of the series. They are ready to go and have had great preparations."

Given the hot weather, Paine admitted he will bat first if he wins the toss. Langer said he was wary of an Indian side led by the incomparable Virat Kohli, that is aiming to win their first Test series ever in Australia. "They haven't had great success in Australia in the past, as Australia haven't had in India. They'll also be under great pressure, I think."

Australia: Marcus Harris, Aaron Finch, Usman Khawaja, Shaun Marsh, Travis Head, Peter Handscomb, Tim Paine (capt), Josh Hazlewood, Pat Cummins, Nathan Lyon, Mitchell Starc. —AFP

## Windies' Bravo returns for Bangladesh ODIs

**DHAKA:** Middle-order batsman Darren Bravo was recalled yesterday after more than two years away from ODI cricket as the West Indies named a 15-man squad for their three-match series against Bangladesh.

Left-handed Bravo won the last of his 96 one-day international caps against Pakistan in October 2016, but returns after featuring in the West Indies' recent

## Captain Kohli taking nothing for granted against Australia

**Adelaide:** Superstar skipper Virat Kohli yesterday played down suggestions Australia are vulnerable after the ball-tampering scandal, as his India side try to win a series Down Under for the first time.

Australia begin the opening Test in a scorching Adelaide today on a run of poor form and without batting powerhouses Steve Smith and David Warner, who remain banned. Without them, India could have a golden opportunity to break their series drought.

But dangerman Kohli—who electrified viewers with viral footage of a pre-Test batting exhibition in the nets—said he was taking nothing for granted. "I personally don't think any Australian side is vulnerable at home," he said at his pre-match press conference, where a 12-man squad was named that included a recall for veteran opener Murali Vijay. "You cannot take any side for granted. Whatever happened, the skill level is still there. However much you talk or behave, it's your skill that counts. "They still have the skill to dominate at home. We're not taking anything for granted."

Much will depend on how Kohli, who has accumulated 1,063 runs in 18 Test innings this year, performs on a ground he admits is his favourite away from home. "I love coming to this ground, the city in general," he said.

"That's not to say that performances are always guaranteed in a certain place, but at Adelaide I feel different from many other places." If his aggressive net session on Tuesday is anything to go by, Australia's bowlers will have their work cut out. "Wow," was all former Australian wicketkeeper Adam Gilchrist could muster after watching him in action, while ex-England skipper Michael Vaughan tweeted: "I get the sense he is in the mood!"

Vijay, who was dropped following a pair in the second Test against England this year, won back his place after promising young opener Prithvi Shaw was ruled out after suffering ankle ligament damage in a warm-up game.

India opted to hold back the naming of their final XI until the morning of the Test as they mull whether to play all-rounder Hanuma Vihari or hard-hitting batter Rohit Sharma. Ishant Sharma, Mohammad Shami and Jasprit Bumrah will lead their pace attack-ranked among the country's strongest ever—along with off-spinner Ravi Ashwin. Bhuvneshwar Kumar and Umesh Yadav missed out. "The guys (bowlers) feel that they are at the peak of their skill levels at the moment and they are looking forward to this challenge," said Kohli. "The bowlers are of the mindset that whatever the conditions or however hard it might be, they are just looking forward to performing."

But the world's number one Test side are only too aware that away from home, their form is fragile. They went down 2-1 in South Africa and then 4-1 in England

Twenty20 series in India.

Regular T20 skipper Carlos Brathwaite and Roston Chase were also brought back for the ODI series starting in Dhaka on Sunday. Recent debutants Fabian Allen, Chandrapaul Hemraj and Oshane Thomas retained their places after the ODI series against India last month.

In the absence of injured Jason Holder, batsman Rovman Powell was named interim captain as the visitors seek to make amends for their 2-1 home series defeat to Bangladesh in July. "With two more ODI Series before the 2019 World Cup, the Bangladesh series allows us to narrow our search for our final 15-member World Cup squad," chairman of selectors Courtney Browne said in a statement.

"Darren's experience will add value to the batting,

which in turn will place selection pressure for spots in the squad." The second and third matches of the series will be held on December 11 and 14 in Dhaka and Sylhet. Bangladesh swept West Indies 2-0 in the recent Test series, with the second Test wrapping up Sunday inside three days as the Tigers recorded their first-ever victory by an innings margin.

The Caribbean visitors made just 111 runs in their first innings—the lowest Test score ever recorded against their hosts—to become the first side Bangladesh has ever asked to follow-on.

Squad: Rovman Powell (Capt), Marlon Samuels, Devendra Bishoo, Roston Chase, Chandrapaul Hemraj, Shimron Hetmyer, Darren Bravo, Shai Hope, Carlos Brathwaite, Keemo Paul, Kieran Powell, Fabian Allen, Kemar Roach, Sunil Ambris, Oshane Thomas. —AFP



**ADELAIDE:** India cricket captain Virat Kohli (C) attends a press conference ahead of the first Test at the Adelaide Oval in Adelaide yesterday. — AFP

this year. While the bowlers are in a great space, Kohli has so often carried the team and he urged character from his fellow batsmen.

"If the batsmen apply themselves it can be a great place to bat," he said of Adelaide. "But it takes character. And I think the Australia team has great skills, especially their bowlers are really strong."

## Goodbye Daredevils, hello Capitals for Delhi's IPL team

**NEW DELHI:** Indian Premier League Delhi Daredevils have been renamed Delhi Capitals as the franchise's new owners seek a change in fortunes for the 2019 edition of the Twenty20 cricket extravaganza.

The team, who have never won the IPL and finished last this year, retained their old red and blue colours but added three roaring tigers to a new logo unveiled in the national capital. Mumbai-based JSW Sports bought a 50 percent stake early this year and said they would retain Australian coach Ricky Ponting and captain Shreyas Iyer for the 2019 season.

"Delhi is the power centre of the country, it is the capital, therefore the name Delhi Capitals." JSW director Parth Jindal said. "With (Shikhar) Dhawan, we have got more solidity at the top. And the young guys who have been with us (Prithvi Shaw and Rishabh Pant) are doing well for India. The captain and coach are the same, there is continuity there," he added.

Former Indian opener Gautam Gambhir stepped down as the team's captain in April after a string of batting flops. Gambhir, 37, was released by Delhi and announced his retirement from all forms of cricket on Tuesday.

Delhi have \$3.5 million to spend at the IPL auction on December 18 in Jaipur ahead of the tournament in April and May next year.

The 2019 tournament, one of the world's most-watched sporting events attracting the world's top cricket stars, could be held partially or wholly outside India depending on the date of the country's general election. Delhi was one of the original teams in the inaugural IPL edition in 2008. The 2018 champions were Chennai Super Kings. —AFP

## Sports

# City edge Watford to extend lead, Bournemouth climb up to sixth

## West Ham and Brighton enjoy 3-1 home wins

**LONDON:** Manchester City were forced to defend deep in the final stages at Watford on Tuesday but ensured their title-chasing juggernaut kept rolling on with a 2-1 victory that extended their lead at the top of the Premier League to five points.

The defending champions, who are unbeaten in the league, were again without Argentine striker Sergio Agüero but close-season signing Riyad Mahrez showed his worth by setting up Leroy Sané for the first goal before scoring himself.

Bournemouth moved up to sixth with a 2-1 home win over lowly Huddersfield Town, while there were comfortable wins for West Ham United and 10-man Brighton & Hove Albion. City were having trouble finding a way past Watford keeper Ben Foster at Vicarage Road but the Englishman will not want to see the replay of him being beaten by the chest of Sané five minutes before the break after a Mahrez cross.

Algerian Mahrez then fired home himself shortly after halftime to set Pep Guardiola's marauding side on the way to what looked like an easy victory. Watford did not give up though and Abdoulaye Doucoure fired in from close range five minutes from time. The hosts, without a win since October, pushed City deep into their half but could not stop them claiming a 13th win in 15 league games this term.

Spectators have been accustomed to seeing City blowing teams away, particularly last season when they won the title with a record 100 points and scored a record number of goals. It is not often that City resort to clearing the ball high and away from their defence as they did near the end at Watford, but Guardiola said the result was the most important thing.

"For five minutes they were better than us. It is not about breaking records, it's winning games. You cannot

win easily for 38 games, that is impossible," the Spanish coach said. The focus switches to second-placed Liverpool who visit Burnley looking to cut the gap back to two points.

### BOURNEMOUTH RESURGENT

Bournemouth's Callum Wilson and Ryan Fraser notched a goal and an assist each to snap the south-coast side's four-game losing streak with a 2-1 home win over Huddersfield Town.

Wilson gave the hosts the lead after five minutes with a superb header from a free kick that Fraser whipped in. Wilson returned the favour 17 minutes later by passing to the unmarked Fraser who slotted the ball past keeper Jonas Loss. Terence Kongolo pulled one back for the visitors seven minutes before halftime with a header but it was not enough to stop Eddie Howe's side moving up to sixth spot.

Brighton were reduced to 10 men in the 'M23 derby' against Crystal Palace but still ran out comfortable 3-1 winners thanks to goals from Glenn Murray, Leon Balogun and Florin Andone.

Murray converted a 24th minute spot kick for his ninth goal of the season before Shane Duffy was sent off for a clash with Patrick van Aanholt after a penalty appeal was turned down.

The hosts doubled their lead just after the half-hour mark through substitute Balogun before Andone scored the third in first-half stoppage time.

Luka Milivojevic converted a late penalty for Palace after a foul on Wilfried Zaha but it was too late for Roy Hodgson's side who slipped to 15th, three points above the relegation zone.

Three is the magic number for West Ham with the 3-1 victory over Cardiff City at the London Stadium being



**WATFORD:** Manchester City's Algerian midfielder Riyad Mahrez (C) vies with Watford's Northern Irish defender Craig Cathcart (L) during the English Premier League football match between Watford and Manchester City at Vicarage Road Stadium in Watford, north of London on Tuesday. — AFP

their second successive win and they have scored three goals in each. Lucas Perez came off the bench to score twice shortly after halftime before Michail Antonio headed home a third.

Cardiff's Josh Murphy bundled in a consolation but, with the bottom three playing on Wednesday, Neil Warnock's side could be in the drop zone by the time they host Southampton on Saturday. — Reuters

## Hasenhuttl replaces sacked Hughes as Southampton manager

**LONDON:** Southampton have appointed Austrian Ralph Hasenhuttl as manager on a 2-1/2-year contract after firing Welshman Mark Hughes, the struggling Premier League club said in a statement yesterday.

The 51-year-old former RB Leipzig coach will take charge on Thursday, the day after Saints play Tottenham Hotspur in the league at Wembley. Southampton sacked Hughes after a 2-2 draw at home to Manchester United last weekend left the south-coast club in the relegation zone with one win from 14 league matches.

Hasenhuttl guided newly-promoted Leipzig to second place in the Bundesliga in the 2016-17 season before leaving last May after a dispute over a new contract. The former Austria forward will be Saints' fourth manager in two years with Claude Puel and Mauricio Pellegrino also being sacked since Ronald Koeman left for Everton in 2016.

"This manager change offers us a fresh start and,

very quickly, Ralph emerged as our ideal candidate," Southampton chairman Ralph Krueger said in a statement. "As a coach, he embodies the passion, structure, communication skill set, work ethic and appetite for growth that we strive for in our Southampton Way."

Krueger said Hasenhuttl had been on Southampton's radar since he was at FC Ingolstadt and took the German side up to the Bundesliga for the first time in 2015. "As soon as we met, Ralph's enthusiasm for football was contagious and his hunger to take on a new and challenging job in the Premier League was evident," added Krueger. "In our discussions, he very quickly aligned himself with the values and the vision of the club." Southampton said he would be supported by existing first team assistant coach Kelvin Davis, head of goalkeeping Dave Watson and head of sports science Alek Gross.

The change of manager has been welcomed by many Southampton supporters who were frustrated at Hughes' inability to get the most from a talented squad. The Welshman helped Saints narrowly avoid the drop last season by finishing 17th in the table, but this term they sit 18th in the standings after seven defeats. Their only league win this season came against Crystal Palace in September and success-starved fans have seen Southampton win only one league match at home in the past 12 months—a 2-1 victory over Bournemouth in April. — Reuters



**MONACO:** In this file photo taken on November 21, 2017 Leipzig's Austrian head-coach Ralph Hasenhuttl gestures during the UEFA Champions League group G football match between Monaco and Leipzig at the Louis II stadium, in Monaco. — AFP



**AMIENS:** Monaco's Colombian forward Falcao (L) tries to control the ball past Amiens' Swedish defender Emil Krafth during the French L1 football match between Amiens SC and AS Monaco at the Licorne stadium in Amiens on Tuesday. — AFP

## Falcao penalties lift Monaco out of relegation zone

**Paris:** Radamel Falcao scored a pair of penalties as Thierry Henry's Monaco won 2-0 at fellow strugglers Amiens to climb out of the bottom three in Ligue 1 on Tuesday. The Colombian had missed twice from the spot this season but calmly converted on 43 minutes at the Stade de la Licorne after Emil Krafth upended Benoit Badiashile.

Amiens defender Bakaye Dibassy was sent off for catching the Monaco captain with a raised boot in the 90th minute, and Falcao wrapped up a second victory in three games with another penalty deep into stoppage time. Henry said he wasn't getting too carried away with his team's victory. "From our side of things in terms of how we played it wasn't extraordinary but we held on. Fortunately Falcao was there when we needed him," Henry said.

"We must not overreact, we need to continue to

work and use the positive aspects of each match to inspire us," he added. The result provisionally bumped Henry's side up to 17th place above Dijon and Amiens on goal difference, confirming their recent upturn under the former France star in recent weeks.

Nicolas Pepe hit his 10th goal of the season to send Lille back up to second following a 1-0 win over Montpellier, who dropped a spot to third. The Ivory Coast international swept home from a Jonathan Ikone cross with just six minutes gone as Lille snapped a four-match winless run.

Nice extended their unbeaten run under Patrick Vieira to six games with a 0-0 draw at home to Angers, who saw goalkeeper Ludovic Butelle dismissed in the closing stages. Butelle's sending-off forced midfielder Baptiste Santamaría to take over the gloves in injury time with Angers having used all three of their substitutions. Paris Saint-Germain, 13 points clear at the top, will be without Neymar as they look to continue their undefeated record in Ligue 1 this season on today's trip to Strasbourg.

The world's most expensive player came off early in the second half in Sunday's 2-2 draw at Bordeaux after hurting the same groin he injured playing for Brazil against Cameroon last month. — AFP

## Malaysia into Suzuki Cup final after 2-2 draw

**BANGKOK:** Malaysia moved into the final of the 2018 AFF Suzuki Cup yesterday in dramatic fashion, eliminating defending champions Thailand courtesy of away goals after drawing the second leg of the semifinal in Bangkok 2-2.

Four days after a first-leg goalless draw in Kuala Lumpur, a 95th minute penalty miss from Thailand striker Adisak Kraisorn ensured that Norshahrul Idran Talaha's second-half strike was enough to end Thailand's hopes of a third successive Southeast Asian title.

It was a tense night at the Rajamangala Stadium but the majority of the 40,000 fans were celebrating as Thailand broke the deadlock after 21 minutes in somewhat fortuitous circumstances. Goalkeeper Farizal Marlias saved Thitipan Puangchan's header but his clearance bounced off defender Irfan Zakaria and rolled into the net.

The away supporters were soon celebrating as Malaysia drew level before the half-hour. Syahmi Safari was given space outside the area and the 20-year-old back found the top corner with a looping drive to record his first international goal.

Three minutes after the hour, the home fans were in full voice once again. A left-sided free-kick caused havoc in the Malaysian area and Pansa Hemviboon was there to head home from close range. With 20 minutes remaining, Norshahrul collected the ball in the area with his back to goal to turn and shoot into the far corner. Deep into injury time, Syahmi handled a high ball in the area and, red-carded, watched from the sidelines as Adisak-top scorer in the tournament so far with eight goals—ballooned the ball over the bar. Malaysia will face the winner of the other semifinal, with Vietnam taking a 2-1 advantage over the Philippines back to Hanoi for the second leg today. — AFP



**BANGKOK:** Malaysia's midfielder Akhyar Rashid (L) and Thailand's midfielder Pokkhao Anan (R) fight for the ball during the second leg of the AFF Suzuki Cup 2018 semifinal football match between Thailand and Malaysia at the Rajamangala Stadium in Bangkok yesterday. — AFP

## Guardiola would welcome UEFA Fair Play probe clarity to end rumours

**WATFORD:** Manchester City manager Pep Guardiola hopes a swift conclusion to UEFA's investigation over alleged Financial Fair Play (FFP) irregularities committed by the Premier League champions will silence the speculation surrounding the case. UEFA president Aleksander Ceferin said after an Executive Committee meeting of European football's governing body on Monday that an independent body looking into the allegations made by German magazine Der Spiegel as part of their Football Leaks campaign would provide answers "very soon".

Reports on Tuesday claimed City could even be banned from next season's Champions League should they be found guilty. Guardiola insisted the story hasn't been a distraction to his players, as they moved five points clear at the top of the Premier League on Tuesday with a 2-1 win at Watford. However, the Catalan coach is hoping for an end to what he described as "voices" surrounding the club's business. "If UEFA found something the club will make a statement and I'd like to do that because we will know exactly and to finish with these voices," said Guardiola.

"We will know if we did something irregular and if we didn't do something irregular, the people is going to finish talking about it." It is claimed City bypassed UEFA's FFP rules, designed to restrict the losses clubs can make and therefore lavish spending on player transfers and wages, by allowing their Abu Dhabi-based sponsors to make cash injections and backdate sponsorship contracts. A member of the Abu Dhabi ruling family, Sheikh Mansour, has owned City since 2008, transforming the club by investing billions of pounds in players and the club's facilities.

In a repeated statement City said they would not comment on what they described as "out of context materials purportedly hacked or stolen from City Football Group and Manchester City personnel and associated people". — AFP

**25** Wilder wants Fury rematch 'ASAP'



**26** New Zealand face uphill battle after Azhar, Shafiq hit hundreds



**27** City edge Watford to extend lead, Bournemouth climb up to sixth



## Jazz sink 20 treys, rout Spurs

Pacers, Collison halt Bulls' comeback bid



SALT LAKE CITY: Chimezie Metu #7 of the San Antonio Spurs shoots the ball against the Utah Jazz on Tuesday at Vivint, SmartHome Arena in Salt Lake City, Utah. — AFP

**UTAH:** Donovan Mitchell scored 20 points, and the Utah Jazz made a franchise record 20 3-pointers in a 139-105 victory over the visiting San Antonio Spurs on Tuesday night. Rudy Gobert had 18 points and 10 rebounds, and Kyle Korver added 15 points off the bench in his first home game since Utah reacquired the veteran guard in a trade. The Jazz won for the third time in four games since dealing for Korver. Jakob Poeltl contributed a career-best 20 points and seven rebounds off the bench for San Antonio, which lost for the third time in four games. DeMar DeRozan scored 16 points and dished out seven assists, and LaMarcus Aldridge added 16 points. The Jazz went 10 of 17 from long distance over the first two quarters and

opened up a 63-47 lead by halftime. Overall, Utah hit 20 of 33 3-point attempts.

**PACERS 96, BULLS 90**

Darren Collison scored 23 points and grabbed eight rebounds, and Indiana held on for a win over visiting Chicago. Myles Turner added 18 points and 11 rebounds to go along with five blocked shots for the Pacers. Bojan Bogdanovic (14 points) and Tyreke Evans (10) also scored in double digits for Indiana, which snapped a two-game losing streak. Chicago lost its first game since dismissing head coach Fred Hoiberg and replacing him with Jim Boylen on Monday. The Bulls have lost seven in a row and 11 of 12. Lauri Markkanen led the

Bulls with 21 points and 10 rebounds in his second game since returning from a sprained elbow.

**KINGS 122, SUNS 105**

Buddy Hield had a dunk and a pair of 3-pointers in a game-opening 13-2 flurry, and Sacramento went on to lead by as many as 35 points en route to a blowout win at Phoenix. The Kings held the Suns to one field goal in the first 5 1/2 minutes and a total of nine points in the first quarter, taking a 36-9 lead after one period. Hield finished with 20 points in 18 minutes to lead seven players in double figures for the Kings, who were opening a four-game trip. Rookie De'Anthony Melton recorded a sea-

son-best 21 points for the Suns, who played without Devin Booker (strained hamstring) and T.J. Warren (sprained ankle).

**MAVERICKS 111, TRAIL BLAZERS 102**

Rookie Luka Doncic scored 21 points and grabbed nine rebounds as Dallas polished off visiting Portland. Wesley Matthews added 17 points and DeAndre Jordan contributed 12 points and 17 boards for the Mavericks, who have won eight in a row at home and nine of 11 games overall. Damian Lillard collected 33 points, eight rebounds and eight assists for the Trail Blazers, who have lost three in a row and six of their past seven games. CJ McCollum scored 18 points, and Al-Farouq Aminu chipped in 12

points and 13 rebounds for Portland.

**MAGIC 105, HEAT 90**

Orlando's defense shut down Miami in the third quarter, and the Magic overcame poor first-half shooting to earn a road win. The Magic turned the tables on the Heat in the third quarter, outscoring the Heat 30-12. It was Miami's lowest point total in a quarter this season, and Orlando took a 76-62 lead after three quarters. Orlando's Aaron Gordon scored 16 of his 20 points in the critical third quarter. Nikola Vucevic had 19 points and 10 rebounds, and Terrence Ross added 19 points off the bench for the Magic. Justise Winslow led the Heat with 14 points. —Reuters

## Serena, Nadal and Murray all confirmed for Australian Open

**MELBOURNE:** Serena Williams will make her return to the Australian Open for the first time since winning in 2017 when eight-weeks pregnant, it was confirmed yesterday, with virtually all the world's top 100 players due at Melbourne Park.

That includes injury-prone Rafael Nadal and Andy Murray. Williams returned from giving birth to her first child to reach the 2018 Wimbledon and US Open finals, but suffered upset losses in both to leave her stuck on 23 major wins.

Australian Open organisers said she was among the entries for the opening Grand Slam of the year as she attempts to equal Margaret Court's record of 24. Her appearance will mark her first major since her controversial rant at an umpire during the US Open final loss

to Naomi Osaka, which overshadowed the Japanese star's biggest ever win.

In the aftermath, Roger Federer said Williams "went too far". "Serena Williams, currently ranked 16, will make her highly anticipated return to Melbourne for the first time since winning in 2017 when eight-weeks pregnant with baby Alexis Olympia," said tournament organiser Craig Tiley.

The evergreen Federer will be back to defend his title, along with long-time adversary Novak Djokovic. Caroline Wozniacki defends the women's crown. Organisers said the world's top 102 women and top 101 men have all confirmed they will be playing.

The only top-100 absentee from the women's draw is 74th-ranked Agnieszka Radwanska of Poland who recently announced her retirement. "It's always special to see our defending champions—Caroline had her first Grand Slam win here last year so will be keen to start 2019 on a high," said Tiley.

"And of course Roger Federer has special memories of Melbourne, having won here six times, something only Novak (Djokovic) and Roy Emerson have done in the past. "I've been in touch with Rafa and he's back to full fitness after cutting his season short after Paris and can't wait to arrive in Australia," he added. — AFP

## No talks to share WCup with other countries: Qatar

**DOHA:** Qatar has not held talks with any other countries to share football matches at the 2022 World Cup, a senior tournament organiser in Doha said yesterday. Despite coming under pressure from FIFA president Gianni Infantino to expand the World Cup from 32 to 48 teams—which could mean some matches being played elsewhere in the Middle East—Nasser al-Khater said no such negotiations had taken place.

"We haven't had any discussions of sharing," said the assistant secretary general of Qatar's World Cup organising body, the Supreme Committee for Delivery & Legacy. Governing body FIFA is currently carrying out a feasibility study to see if the first World Cup in the region could be expanded.

Infantino has said that if any tournament enlargement is agreed, it would likely mean matches being played in neighbouring countries, as it would increase the total number of tournament games from 64 to 80.

He has even suggested that could help Middle East peace, at a time when Qatar is at the centre of the worst Gulf diplomatic crisis in years. For the past 18 months Doha has been isolated by countries including Saudi Arabia, United Arab Emirates and Bahrain, states which could potentially benefit from any World Cup expansion, in a bitter regional power struggle.

Qatar is accused by its rivals of supporting terrorism and being too close to Iran, charges which it refutes. Khater said that whatever FIFA decides, any changes would have to be agreed by Qatar.

"There will be nothing that is forced upon anybody," he said. "It's a feasibility study, then a consultation process. And based on the feasibility study and based on the discussions an agreement will be made. "There will be nothing that will be decided unilaterally."

The country is being transformed in readiness for the World Cup and is spending some \$500 million each week on major infrastructure projects for football's biggest tournament. — AFP