

# Friday Times

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## Local



Local Spotlight

By Muna Al-Fuzai  
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## The 39th GCC summit

The 39th Gulf Cooperation Council summit, which was held in Saudi Arabia this week, made headlines. I believe holding the summit under the difficult circumstances the GCC countries are going through is an indicator of the improvement of the future situation and the desire to maintain the cohesion of Gulf states. The summit, which was held in Riyadh, called for strengthening joint GCC work in order to overcome the challenges facing GCC countries.

I think the most prominent decisions of the meeting was the declaration to welcome the establishment of a joint military force and appoint a commander to lead the joint defense system, as well as the establishment of an academy for strategic studies. In a joint press conference with GCC Secretary General Abdullatif Al-Zayani, the Saudi foreign minister said: "We are waiting for Qatar to adopt the policies that are required for them to deal with." That comment I think means the door is still open for Qatar regardless of the complication of the crisis.

HH the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah led Kuwait's delegation to the Gulf summit. He said "the continuation of the Gulf dispute presents a serious threat to unity". He called to stop malicious media campaigns, pointing out that this will "create the atmosphere to resolve the dispute between us". Personally as a Kuwaiti citizen, I believe that this is right, because the dispute with Qatar needs to end soon.

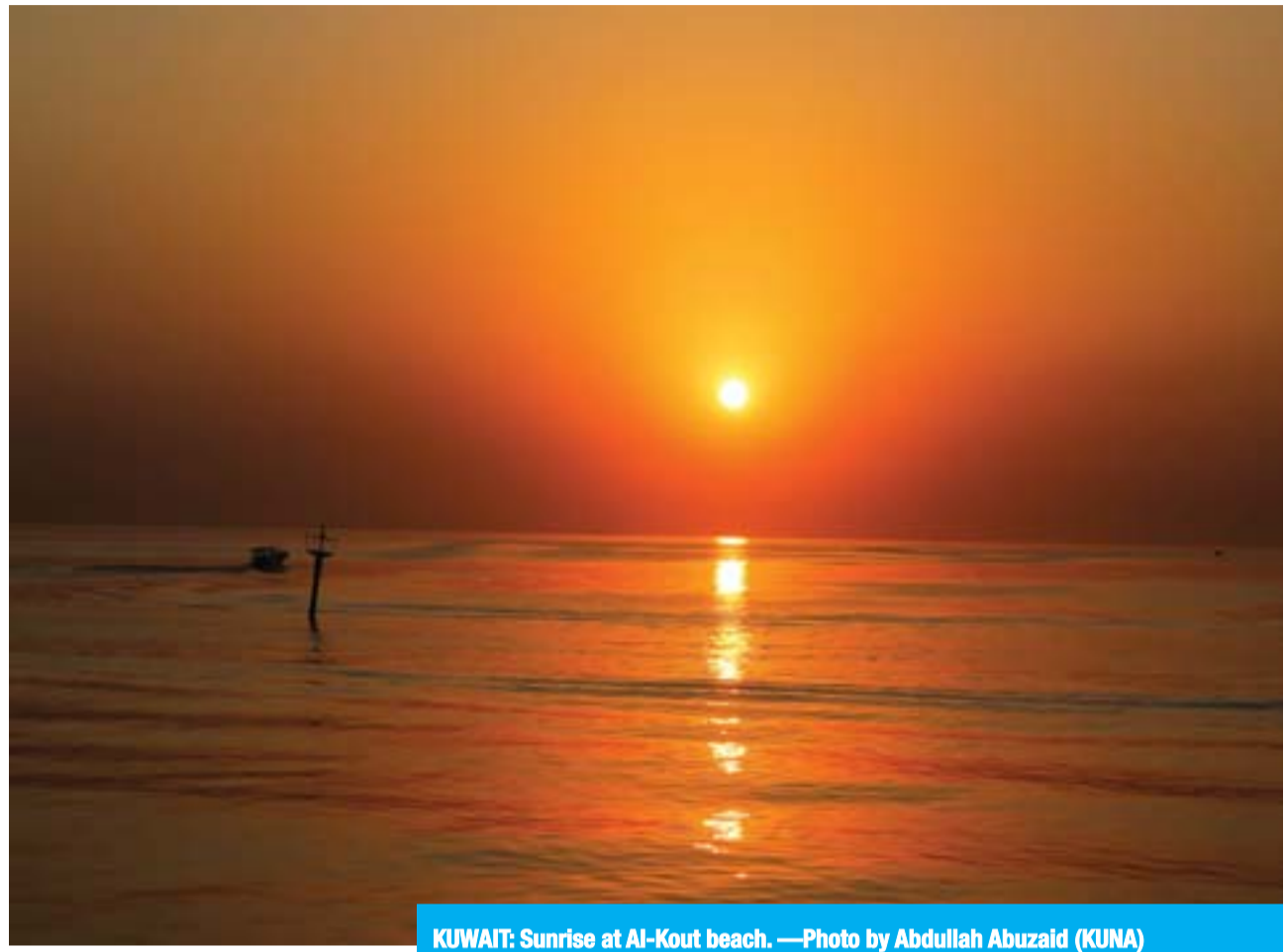
On the Yemeni crisis, the Amir said that the conflict in Yemen "poses a direct threat to all of us". He stressed that "our relations with Iran must be set on the principles adopted by the United Nations, of which the most important is non-interference in our affairs".

The GCC issued a final statement which highlights key points of agreement, starting with a mutual commitment to economic integration among GCC states and the comprehensive application of the provisions of the economic agreement with a view to achieve economic unity in 2025, along with combating terrorist organizations through security integration and countering extremist ideologies.

In an impressive gesture, HH the Amir drew media attention during the official photo with the leaders of the delegations to the summit. As the leaders lined up to take the photo, the Amir went to the Qatari flag and held it to check whether it was visible in the picture.

The boycotting of Qatar since June 5, 2017 undoubtedly has had a clear impact on the image of Gulf cohesion, and the Kuwaiti mediation has not succeeded so far in bringing together the parties. But I think this summit may be a prelude to the return of the brothers to one table. Saudi King Salman concluded the summit and the leaders went back to their countries, leaving behind hope and a heavy agenda to work on.

## PHOTO OF THE DAY



KUWAIT: Sunrise at Al-Kout beach. —Photo by Abdullah Abuzaid (KUNA)

## The fight against public smoking: Universities

By Faten Omar

Smoking was once a public activity that could be seen all over Kuwait - in the airport and hospitals, at the mall and restaurants and in universities and coffeeshops. Over the last few years, however, more and more regulations are being put in place to restrict smoking in public and limit the harmful effects of smoking on public health. Smoking has been banned completely from hospitals and smokers are now confined to small, special glassed in rooms at the airport.

In another step towards limiting smoking in public places, the Deputy Director General for Technical Affairs at the Environment Public Authority (EPA) Mohammad Al-Enezi said the authority will now be checking universities and colleges to implement the executive regulations of the environment protection law that bans smoking inside educational institutions. These include universities, colleges and applied education institutes. Anyone caught smoking on campus or in building annexes will have to pay a fine of KD 50, while the institution will have to pay KD 1,000 for its failure to protect its premises from smokers.

Kuwait Times spoke with students at some universities for their reactions. "The university needs this law, as some students smoke in the classrooms before the start of lectures as well as in the corridors, squares and cafeteria. Such behavior harms both the smokers and the students around them. Many students who do not smoke are bothered by this," Mohammed Al-Assi said. He added that if the new law is applied, it will make smokers smoke less and protect students from passive smoking. "Some of us suffer from allergies and asthma and smoking in the campus causes us harm. The law will protect the health and safety of other students."

Awni Harb, a smoker, said smoking is a personal choice, adding, "I always smoke in open-air places and not inside the building. I make sure that my habit does not hurt any people around me." Harb suggested that smoking rooms should be provided in universities, colleges and other institutions, and

students who smoke outside these rooms should be penalized.

Samar Saleh said female smokers are much worse, as they mostly hide and smoke inside bathrooms and classrooms. "Many female smokers do not want to be judged, so they will smoke inside the women's washroom or an empty classroom. "The cafeteria is the worst - when I go there to spend my spare time, I find students smoking so much that it seems like a coffee shop and not a university," she said.

Salah believes that such laws will not be applied. "There are 'no smoking' signs all over the university, but students smoke anyway. The law will only be ink on paper and there will be no application of the decision. I wonder how the university issues a decision banning smoking and hangs signs in the corridors, but is not committed to it. If this happens within the university, which should teach students a culture of respect for laws and to abide by them, what about other institutions and facilities? I see a lot of students smoking on the campus as well as professors and administrators - this is a wrong behavior that must be stopped," she told Kuwait Times.

In August 2018, prices of tobacco products rose by 13.5 percent compared to the same month last year, according to the Central Statistical Bureau. Meanwhile, 70 percent of students in Kuwait are smokers, according to the most recent health ministry statistics. The figures also show that the smoking rate among the population's males reached 24.5 percent, while it is 1 percent among females. As for shisha (hookah) smoking, its spread is estimated at 2.2 percent among men and 0.2 percent among women.

Kuwait has a high rate of population growth with a young population (55 percent of Kuwaitis are 20 years old or younger). The majority of smokers (68 percent) started smoking regularly when younger than 20 - significantly more men (70 percent) than women (33 percent) began to smoke regularly before they reached the age of 20. The duration of smoking is 15 years for men and 12 years for women.

The World Health Organization estimates that smoking kills seven million smokers every year. The prevention and treatment of tobacco addiction have been targeted by WHO as priorities for intervention in developing countries. It has been estimated that unless immediate steps are taken to reduce smoking rates, the number of deaths due to tobacco use will rise to 10 million per year over the next 30 to 40 years, and 70 percent of these deaths will occur in developing countries. Several reasons have been suggested for this recent and continuing smoking epidemic in the developing countries of Asia and the Middle East.



# Kuwait Times

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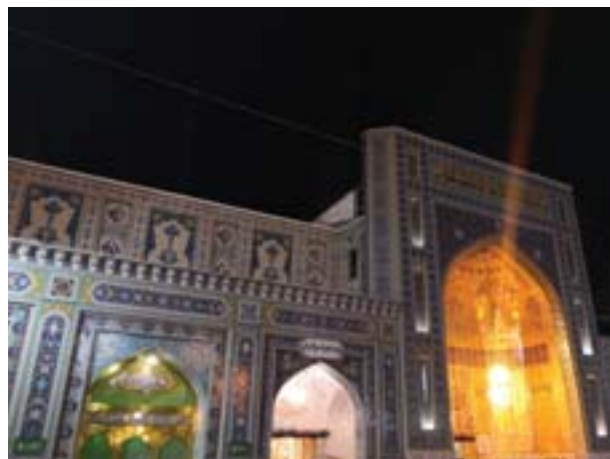
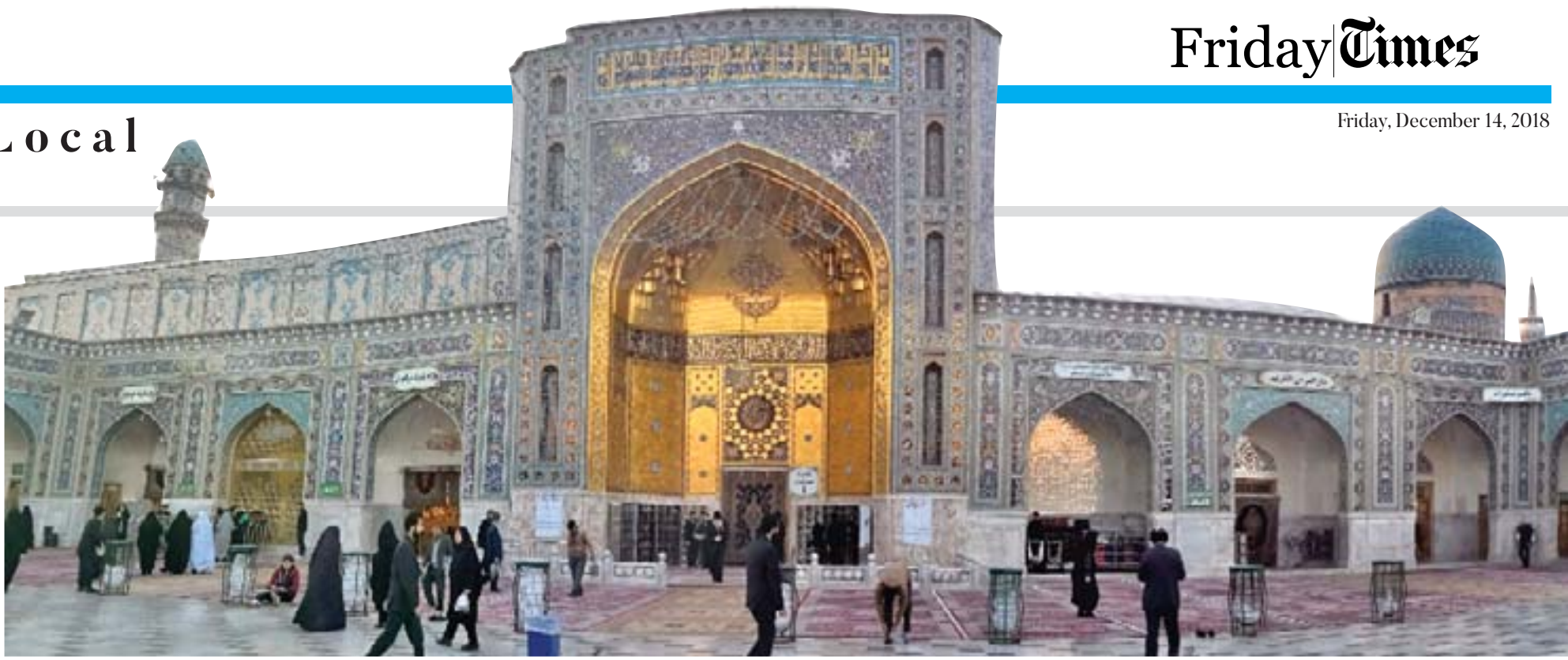
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Local



# A visit to *Mashhad*

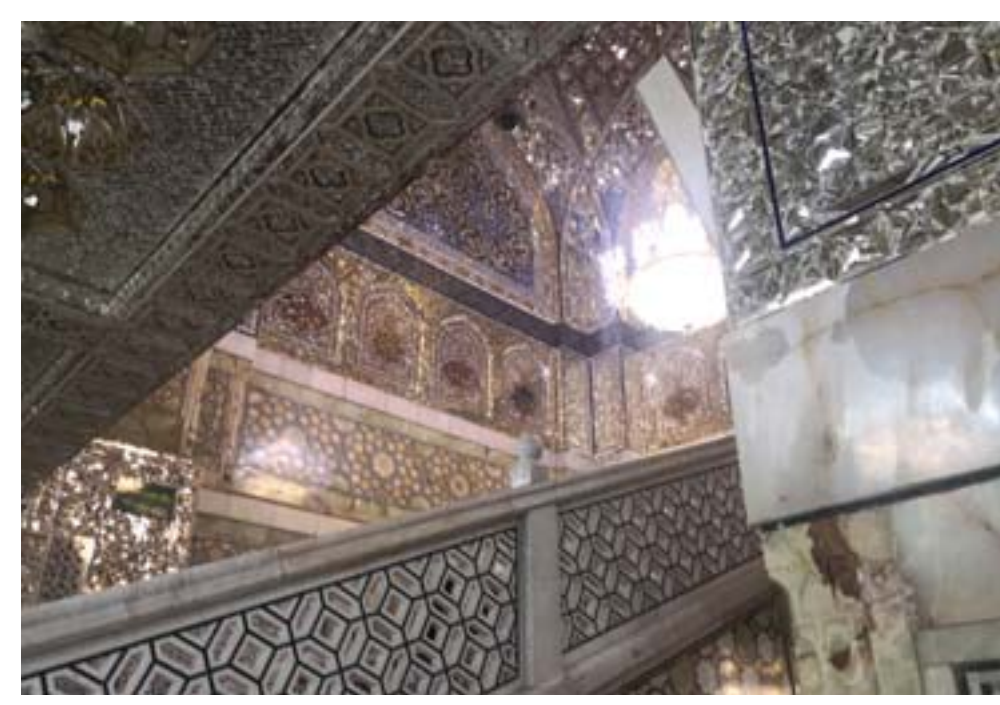
**A**mateur photographer Shaima Marafi visited the historic city of Mashhad, Khorasan, Iran in early December. One of the most famous Iranian cities, Mashhad is a place for religious pilgrimage due to the location of many important mosques, tombs and shrines in-

cluding the Shrine of Imam Reza within the city and has been called Iran's "spiritual city" by the former president, Mahmoud Ahmadinejad. It is home to a vast array of beautiful architecture. — All photos by Shaima Marafi






Local




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condolence on the sad and  
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**Francis William Pais**  
(5/10/1961 - 5/12/2018)  
**(Husband of our colleague Assumpta Pais)**

Memorial Service will be held at  
Holy Family Cathedral on Saturday, 15 December at 2:30pm  
followed by burial at the Sulaibkhat Cemetery

**May his soul Rest in Peace**



# 1st

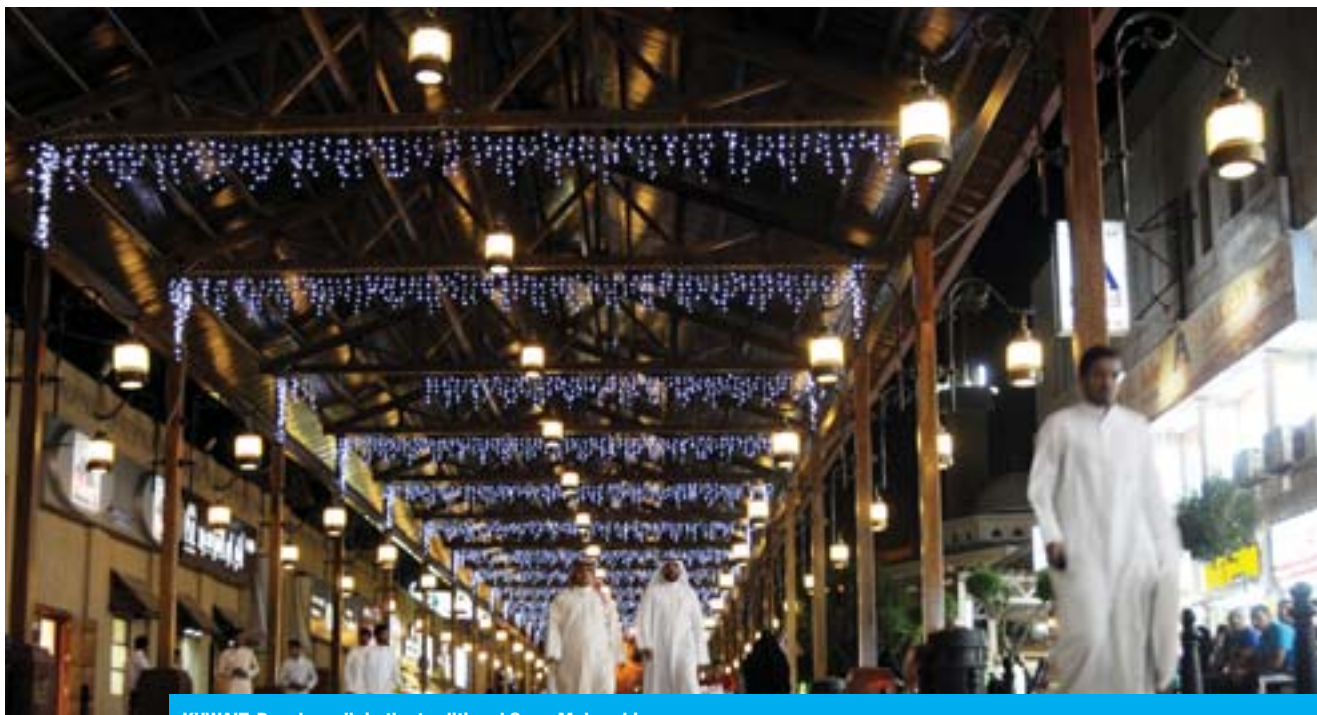


**Kuwait Times**  
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KUWAIT: People walk in the traditional Souq Mubarakiya.

By Ben Garcia

**K**uwait is a rich country and the cost of living here is undoubtedly high. But did you know that there are many places and things in Kuwait that you can enjoy on a budget? Sometimes all you need to worry about is food or transportation - if you are not driving!

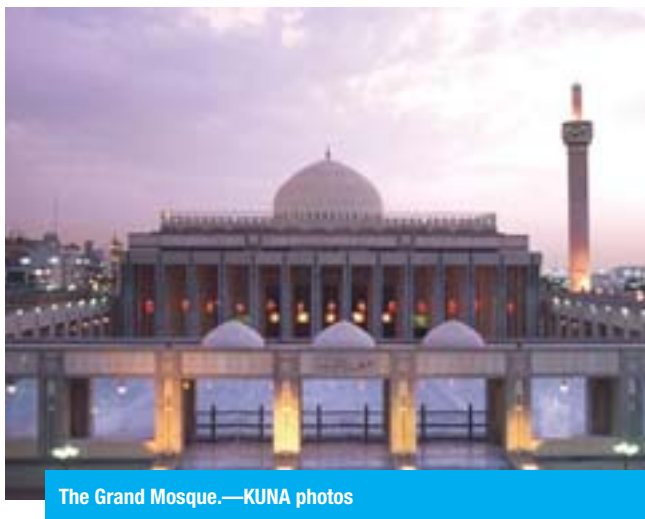
Remember to make a plan before embarking on a journey around Kuwait, so as to stay on budget. Taxi drivers sometimes charge ridiculously high fares, but you can get the right price if you negotiate. The taxis that are negotiable in price are the beige and white roaming taxis. Call taxis traditionally charge higher fares compared to roaming cabs. Buses are cheaper compared to taxis, but it can take ages to reach your destination, as they have limited frequencies. Moreover, most places to visits are not on bus routes.

#### Mubarakiya - children's playground and grilled fish

If you are roaming around Kuwait City, this place is enchanting. Start from the traditional Souq Mubarakiya, where you can enjoy shopping and experience the traditional atmosphere and architecture. In fact, one full day is not enough to roam around Mubarakiya Market. Children can play in the playground outside the fruit and vegetable section of the market.

Some people love to see traditional shops selling traditional stuff. On one side of Mubarakiya are shops selling expensive perfumes, but you can buy them inside the souq for a cheaper price. There are shops that sell abayas and various other clothes and fabrics. The Gold souq is also located in Mubarakiya, including a market for precious stones and metals.

The ground level and basement sections of Mubarakiya have shops selling spices and herbal products, household items, blankets, carpets, ready-to-wear clothing, dates and fresh fruits and vegetables, meat and fish. Restaurants and cafes are plentiful too, and prices are reasonable. Stuff your tummy with delicious grilled fish and shrimp, plus



The Grand Mosque.—KUNA photos

a selection of Arabic, Indian and Iranian cuisine. A budget of KD 5 or even KD 2 is enough for a meal.

#### National Museum, National Library and Grand Mosque

Near Souq Mubarakiya are museums, libraries and the Grand Mosque. You can visit them at no cost, but you need to read about them beforehand as there are no guides available. Artifacts are labeled and explained in both English and Arabic. The National Museum has various sections, including a diorama of life in Kuwait before the discovery of oil. The National Library is a huge building that requires time to explore. You can visit the place and read books inside the spacious and computerized library, but people are not allowed to borrow books from the library and take them out. The four storeys of the building are filled to capacity with thousands of books of various subjects and topics.

The nearby Grand Mosque can be visited for free too. Stroll a bit farther and you'll enjoy the skyline of Sharq, including iconic buildings such as the Kuwait Stock Market (Boursa Kuwait), Central Bank, Al-Babtain Library, Al-Hamra Tower, the under-construction NBK headquarters and others.

#### Al-Shaheed Park

Located in Sharq, Shaheed Park was inaugurated by His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah on March 2015. It is a beautiful oasis frequented by families. This beautiful garden narrates the story of a land, its history and culture featuring greenery and botanical gardens that promote environment awareness and protection. It has two museums - Thekra and Habitat - which you can tour with a headset that explains every section. Shaheed Park has a visitor center, a lake, walkways and jogging tracks, making it the largest urban park in Kuwait.

By visiting the Habitat - a museum dedicated to the environment and bird migration in Kuwait, visitors can learn about different ecosystems, migratory birds and the effects of pollution through interactive learning stations. An aviary outside the Habitat provides a resting area for numerous migratory birds in Kuwait, and for visitors to see the birds of Kuwait. The Martyr's Monument lists the names and images of people who died during the Iraqi invasion for young people to remember Kuwait's past. The park also takes pride in its auditorium, where educational lectures and seminars about culture and science are held. This place too is free of charge to enter.

#### Kuwait Towers

A five minutes' drive from Al-Shaheed Park are the majestic and iconic towers of Kuwait. The view from afar is a testament of pride and bravery for many Kuwaitis. The three towers have been tested by time, and stood witness to Saddam Hussein's aggression during the 1990-1991 Gulf War. If you don't want to pay for entry to the viewing sphere, selfies will do. The view from the corniche is delightful too.

#### Fahaheel, Egaila malls and Kuwait Magic

If you're done strolling around Souq Mubarakiya, head south to Fahaheel. There are fewer places to visit there, but along the way by Road 40 or 30, you will be treated with some desert views and many

# 10 things to do on tight budget



Al-Shaheed Park

malls. A few kilometers before reaching Fahaheel, Egaila is a large area with more than 10 malls side by side. One full day to visit the malls will not be enough.

Apart from the Kout and Yaal malls, there is a traditional bazaar in the heart of Fahaheel, where you can bargain for a selection of products. There are authentic Kuwaiti products too, from fruit baskets to cooking pots to carpets. If you like visiting fish markets, you can observe the early morning auction at the fish market near Kout Mall.

Relatively close by in Abu Halifa is an entertainment and amusement complex called Kuwait Magic. It has a diverse selection of retail shops, restaurants and children's games, fun rides and entertainment. Kuwait Magic was a popular destination for many children in Kuwait before The Avenues and the likes were built. The charges are minimal for the games and rides. The seaside area is also very pleasing and relaxing. You can jog or walk along the corniche and enjoy the weather or a coffee from one of the cafes.

#### Wafra

If you are fond of the countryside, try Wafra. It's a far-flung area, but you will love the sight of camels grazing in the desert. You can see some farm workers displaying fresh produce by the roadside, which they sell at cheap prices. Some Wafra farmers even give their harvest to visitors for free. Arabic and Indian food can be easily found at nearby restaurants, while popular fast food chains also have branches on the highway to Wafra.

Low budget places to visit and things to do in Kuwait are plenty. Kuwait is not as expensive as some perceive it to be.



## Local

# First Deputy PM, UK ambassador discuss New Kuwait 2035 plan

## Sheikh Nasser leaves for China on official visit



**KUWAIT:** Kuwait's First Deputy Prime Minister and Defense Minister Sheikh Nasser Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah speaks with British Ambassador Michael Davenport during their meeting on Wednesday. — KUNA photos



**A group photo of Kuwait's First Deputy Prime Minister and Defense Minister Sheikh Nasser Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, British Ambassador Michael Davenport and other officials who attended the meeting.**

**KUWAIT:** Kuwait's First Deputy Prime Minister and Defense Minister Sheikh Nasser Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah discussed the New Kuwait 2035 development plan and issues of mutual significance with British Ambassador Michael Davenport and the visiting military attache. The plan, which represents His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah's vision, "aims to build the Kuwait of the future on a path that corresponds with the development being witnessed in the outside world," Kuwait's Defense Ministry said in a statement on Wednesday.

During the talks, Sheikh Nasser hailed the UK's deep expertise and capabilities on this matter, particularly its success stories in the creation and management of global economic ex-

panses, such as Hong Kong and Gibraltar. Partnership opportunities with Kuwait aimed at mobilizing its economic activity amid these plans were discussed as ideas and consultations were exchanged, without overlooking the aspects of security and their relevance to these suggestions. Security was mentioned as a prerequisite for enhancing investor confidence, added the statement.

Separately, Sheikh Nasser Sabah Al-Ahmad left yesterday to the People's Republic of China for an official visit. Sheikh Nasser was seen off by Chief of Army General Staff Lieutenant General Mohammad Al-Khudher, Ministry Undersecretary Sheikh Ahmad Mansour Al-Sabah and Deputy Chief of General Staff Colonel General Sheikh Abdullah Nawaf Al-Sabah. — KUNA



**First Deputy Premier and Defense Minister Sheikh Nasser Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah leaves for the People's Republic of China on official visit.**

### News in brief

#### Amir sends condolences to Turkey

**KUWAIT:** His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah cabled Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan yesterday expressing sorrow over fatalities in a train crash accident in the capital Ankara. HH the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah and HH the Prime Minister Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-Hamad Al-Sabah addressed cables of identical content to president Erdogan. — KUNA

#### Kuwait reaffirms solidarity with France

**KUWAIT:** Kuwait's Ministry of Foreign Affairs strongly denounced the deadly shooting attack that took place near the Christmas market in Strasbourg city, east France, on Tuesday evening. The State of Kuwait unequivocally rejects all forms of violence against innocent people and renews the call for the international community to double efforts against this serious phenomenon, an official of the ministry said on Wednesday. Kuwait stands by the government of the friendly French Republic and backs all efforts it might take to protect the security and stability of France, the source said, expressing condolences for the families of the victims and wishing quick recovery for the wounded. — KUNA

## Kuwait underlines importance of UNSC Resolution 2231

**NEW YORK:** Kuwait stressed the importance of following up with implementation of UNSC Resolution 2231 by Iran and other nations as part of their international commitments to non-proliferation of nuclear weapons. Three years ago, Kuwait welcomed the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action and UNSC Resolution 2231 despite its inability to meet all the region's needs, Kuwait's Permanent Representative to the UN Ambassador Mansour Al-Otaibi said in a speech in a Council session late Wednesday.

Security situations in some countries in the region are still instable, Otaibi added, noting some countries continue to deal with outside interferences in their interior affairs. Otaibi also said Iran must shoulder its responsibilities in meeting all its commitments in accordance with the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, the Comprehensive Safeguard Agreement, and the additional Protocol to its IAEA agreement.

Meanwhile, the Kuwaiti senior diplomat affirmed rejection and denouncement of the ongoing hostile actions targeting Saudi Arabia's security and safety of its people through firing scores of ballistic missiles on Saudi-Yemeni border zones, reiterating Kuwait's firm stand in support of the Kingdom's security and stability. Furthermore, Otaibi stressed the importance of committing to non-interference in the internal affairs of states, in addition to respecting their sovereignty in accordance with UN Charter, International Law, and Neighbor Principle Law, resolving disputes peacefully, refraining from use of brute force and threats, and rejecting sectarianism. — KUNA



**Ambassador Mansour Al-Otaibi**

## Jarallah meets departing Mauritanian envoy

**KUWAIT:** Deputy Prime Minister Khaled Al-Jarallah met yesterday with the outgoing Mauritanian ambassador to Kuwait Hamid Hamouni. Ambassador Ayham Al-Omar, the assistant foreign minister, attended the meeting. — KUNA





## Local

# 307 landmine sightings reported in six weeks

## Public warned from approaching foreign objects in desert

By Hanan Al-Saadoun

**KUWAIT:** The Interior Ministry's relations and security media department yesterday repeated earlier warnings to the public from approaching or handling any foreign objects they might find in desert areas, noting that those might be dangerous explosives washed out by the recent heavy rain. The department added that in the period from November 1 to December 13, 2018, it has so far received 307 reports about sighting objects suspected to be military waste, further explaining that when bomb squads arrived to the scenes of the reports, they discovered that the objects were in fact landmines and cluster bombs that were immediately dealt with. The department also urged the public to immediately call the emergency hotline 112 on finding any foreign objects, and to stay off the site until a bomb squad arrives.

### Car fire

A citizen sustained serious hand and neck

burns when his vehicle caught fire at Jaber Al-Ahmad desert area yesterday, said security sources, noting that Doha firemen rushed to the scene and dealt with the blaze. The man was rushed to hospital for treatment and further investigations are in progress to determine the cause of the fire.

Another fire broke out in a first floor apartment in Hadiya, said security sources, noting that firemen from Mangaf and Qurain fire stations rushed to the scene where they had to evacuate the entire house and deal with the blaze. No casualties were reported.

In the meantime, a fire broke out in the basement of a 500-square-meter complex in Hawally. Security sources said that firemen from Hawally brigade rushed to the scene where they evacuated all the complex's visitors and controlled the fire successfully. The basement included food stuff, refrigerators and other inflammable materials, the sources added. No casualties were reported.



**KUWAIT:** This picture released by the Interior Ministry yesterday shows an explosive unearthed by recent heavy rains that hit the country.



**Flames engulf a vehicle at Jaber Al-Ahmad desert area yesterday.**

## Residency Affairs chief chairs high-level meeting

By A Saleh

**KUWAIT:** The Interior Ministry's Assistant Undersecretary for Residency Affairs Maj Gen Talal Maarafi chaired a high-level meeting with officials at the Residency Affairs Departments to discuss ways of improving the process of work at residency affairs and service centers around the country. Meanwhile, the ministry's Relations and Security Department denied reports claiming that Maarafi had held a similar meeting on Wednesday.

A news service had reported on its website that Maj Gen Maarafi met with heads of residency departments and received a detailed report about crowds of people applying to extend one month visit visas for their relatives, which affected work progress in those departments, according to the report. Furthermore, the report suggested that Maarafi announced during the meeting extending the family visit visas for parents and wives' parents to three months instead of one. However, the Interior Ministry denied yesterday that any decision was made, and urged media outlets to avoid re-

porting any news unless it is released by the Relations and Security Media Department.

In other news, statistics issued by the Residency Affairs Department showed that the total number of who visited Kuwait this year reached 2.2 million, including visitors using commercial, touristic and family visit visas.

Meanwhile, Minister of Social Affairs and Labor and Minister of State for Economic Affairs Hind Al-Sabeeh announced that a new decision on expat labor visa transfer in the private sector would be issued soon. She added that the Public Authority for Manpower's new board of directors had already approved some resolutions on regulating the local labor market, adding that those resolutions would be revealed soon. On another concern, the ministry's assistant undersecretary for social development affairs Hana Al-Hajri announced that the ministry offered for public bidding two tenders to maintain, develop and rehabilitate wedding halls in various governorates.

Responding to social media comments about the deteriorated situation of those halls, Hajri added that most of them were in the same condition of lack of maintenance and old furniture when the ministry took over the responsibility for running them. "Special technical teams immediately started making reports about the halls' conditions, and the ministry is currently awaiting the finance ministry's approval to fund the two tenders," she explained.

## Forged degrees' suspect sentenced to five years in jail

By Meshaal Al-Enezi

**KUWAIT:** The criminal court yesterday sentenced an Egyptian man, who works for the Ministry of Higher Education and is identified as the prime suspect in a university degrees' forgery case, and another accomplice to five years in jail. The court also sentenced a citizen who had his degree forged and used it in applying to a public prosecutor job to five years in jail as well.

Notably, the Ministry of Higher Education had announced on July 18, 2018 that they discovered a number of fake university degrees issued in an Arab country, noting that they arrested an expat working for the ministry involved in the matter.

### 34 street vendors arrested

A joint inspection committee yesterday

launched an inspection campaign in Kabd, which resulted in arresting 34 street vendors, said the Public Authority for Manpower's official spokesperson Aseel Al-Mezyad said, noting that 21 of the suspects were in violation of the private sector residency laws, while 13 were absconding domestic helpers. "All suspects were referred to relevant authorities," Mezyad added, noting that the authority receives complaints about peddlers and beggars on a 24/7 basis on its hotline number 66626716, as well as on its social media accounts. The joint inspection committee comprises members from the Public Authority for Manpower and Ministry of Interior.

### KD 17.9 million in subsidies

The Ministry of Commerce and Industry (MOCI) yesterday announced that it had spent KD 17.9 million last November on various types of subsidized foodstuff and construction materials. KD 6.8 million of that amount were spent on basic foodstuff, KD 368,000 on subsidized baby formula and 21 on other nutrients, whereas KD 10.8 million were spent on construction materials, the ministry explained in a statement, adding that the total number of beneficiaries was 2,049,185 citizens.



**KUWAIT:** Maj Gen Talal Maarafi chairs a high-level meeting with officials at the Residency Affairs Department.



**KUWAIT:** Despite authorities' instructions to avoid camping as the risk of landmines unearthed following last month's heavy rains has forced a delay of the camping season, tents continue to be set up illegally in desert areas as Kuwait Times first reported two weeks ago. — KUNA photos





French government urges end to protests after Strasbourg attack

Supreme Court rules against Sri Lanka president, impeachment edges closer

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ANKARA: Firefighters and medics try to rescue victims after a high-speed train crashed into a locomotive in Ankara. — AFP

## Ankara train crash leaves 9 dead

### High-speed train crashes into a locomotive; 86 injured

**ANKARA:** Nine people were killed and nearly 90 injured after a high-speed train crashed into a locomotive in the Turkish capital yesterday, officials said, becoming the latest rail disaster to hit the country. The accident comes less than six months after 24 people were killed in a train crash in northwestern Turkey in a series of several fatal accidents in recent years. Transport Minister Cahit Turhan told reporters that three of those killed were operators of the train. One of the victims died in hospital, he added.

Among those killed was a German citizen, a source in the Ankara governor's office said, confirming reports in German media. The Ankara public prosecutor said 86 people were injured. Health Minister Fahrettin Koca earlier said 34 of those injured were still in hospital for treatment. Two were in a serious condition, Koca added on Twitter. The fast train had been on its way from Ankara's main station to the central province of Konya. According to *Hurriyet* daily, there were

206 passengers on board. Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan said three people had been detained. In a speech in Ankara, he vowed those responsible would be held to account. The three were employees of the Turkish state railways agency who were detained over suspected negligence, according to state news agency Anadolu. Ankara governor Vasip Sahin said the accident happened "after the 6.30 high-speed train to Konya hit a locomotive tasked with checking rails on the same route."

#### Debris scattered on tracks

Turhan said the accident took place six minutes after the train left Ankara as it entered the Marsandiz station. The governor said "technical investigations" were under way to find out exactly what caused the crash in Yenimahalle district. The capital's chief prosecutor launched an investigation into the crash, Anadolu said. Images published by Turkish media showed some wag-

ons had derailed and debris from the train scattered on the track, which was covered in snow.

The windows of one wagon were completely broken while another wagon had been smashed after hitting the footbridge, which also collapsed, an AFP correspondent at the scene said. The correspondent saw at least seven bodies taken away as rescue workers searched the blue and white wagons covered with debris. Turkish Red Crescent relief workers distributed blankets and tea to the survivors, who were gathered on a road near the scene that had been blocked to traffic.

A female witness whose name was not given told NTV broadcaster that the passenger train had not yet increased its speed when the crash happened. A relative of one of those aboard the train told the channel that some passengers had broken windows and then safely exited the wagons. One of those killed was Berahitdin Albayrak, a science lecturer and former vice-chancellor at Ankara University, the institution said on Twitter.

Later trains from Konya to Ankara and vice versa were cancelled.

#### Recent rail disasters

The Ankara to Konya high-speed route was launched in 2011 and was followed in 2014 with a high-speed link between Ankara and Istanbul. In July 24 people were killed and hundreds more injured after a train derailed in Tekirdag province, northwest Turkey, due to ground erosion following heavy rains. In March 2014, a commuter train smashed into a minibus on a railway track in the southern Turkish province of Mersin, which left 10 dead. In January 2008, nine people were killed when a train derailed in the Kutahya region south of Istanbul because of faulty tracks. Turkey's worst rail disaster in recent history was in July 2004 when 41 people were killed and 80 injured after a high-speed train derailed in the northwestern province of Sakarya. — AFP



## International

Friday, December 14, 2018

# Israel locks down Ramallah after two soldiers shot dead

## Baby boy laid to rest in Jerusalem after attack

**RAMALLAH, Palestinian Territories:** A Palestinian shot dead two Israeli soldiers at a bus stop in the occupied West Bank on yesterday, the military said, with the army locking down the city of Ramallah amid a manhunt. The attack came hours after security forces killed two Palestinian murder suspects, with fears of wider unrest. In another incident, a Palestinian stabbed two Israeli border police in Jerusalem's Old City before being shot dead, in the bloodiest 24 hours to hit the West Bank and Jerusalem in months.

The Israeli army said a Palestinian exited his car at a bus stop near the Ofra settlement in the West Bank before opening fire on soldiers and civilians. Two soldiers were killed and at least two other people—including another soldier—were wounded, the army said, with the attacker fleeing. An AFP photographer saw two men who appeared to be soldiers lying on the ground, before their bodies were covered up. “We are searching for the terrorist. We will find him,” the military said on Twitter.

Following the attack, the army circled the nearby city of Ramallah, home to Palestinian president Mahmud Abbas. Entrances and exits to the city were sealed and the army entered multiple neighborhoods, AFP correspondents said. Clashes broke out in multiple spots.

## US-backed Syrian forces smash IS defenses in east

**BEIRUT;** Kurdish-led forces yesterday moved deep into Hajin, the main village in the last pocket still held by the Islamic State group in eastern Syria, a war monitor said. The Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF), with support from air strikes conducted by the US-led coalition, deployed across the Euphrates Valley village. “The SDF managed to break the defenses of the Islamic State group after massing a large number of fighters backed by the international coalition,” the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights said.

“They achieved quick progress inside Hajin, the largest of the villages that were controlled by IS,” Rami Abdel Rahman, the head of the Britain-based monitoring organization, said. The SDF said on social media they had “liberated the city centre of Hajin and the big mosque”. Hajin lies on the east

### Hamas claim

The shooting came only hours after Israeli forces killed two militants allegedly responsible for West Bank attacks that claimed the lives of three Israelis, including a baby. The armed wing of Palestinian Islamist movement Hamas, which has fought three wars with Israel in Gaza since 2008, claimed the two Palestinians as its “fighters.” One of them was Salah Barghouti, a 29-year-old accused of shooting seven Israelis on Sunday, also at a bus stop near the Ofra settlement.

The Shin Bet Israeli internal security service said that other members of Barghouti's group, all of them affiliated with Hamas, had been arrested overnight. A woman who was seven months pregnant was among those wounded in that attack. Doctors

tried to save her baby boy with an emergency caesarean but he died on Wednesday and was laid to rest in Jerusalem.

The mother remains in hospital in a serious condition. The other Palestinian killed by Israeli forces on Wednesday night had been suspected of shooting dead two Israelis in October. Ashraf Naalwa, 23, was killed when forces tried to arrest him near Nablus in the West Bank, Israel's Shin Bet security service said.

### Peppered with bullets

The house near Nablus where Naalwa was found was peppered with bullet holes after the

bank of the Euphrates in the eastern province of Deir Ezzor, about 30 kilometers from the border with Iraq. The area held by IS is sometimes referred to as the “Hajin pocket”, the last rump of a once-sprawling “caliphate” the group proclaimed in 2014 over parts of Syria and Iraq.

The SDF Kurdish-Arab alliance launched an operation in September to flush out IS but their advance has been fraught with obstacles. The push to retake Hajin was delayed by Turkish threats on Kurdish heartlands further north and deadly counter-attacks by die-hard jihadists making a bloody last stand. “Now IS is confined to tunnels and to the edges of town,” Abdel Rahman said. “Fighting on the ground and air strikes are continuing. The mines planted by the jihadists are the main remaining obstacle,” he said.

No casualty toll was immediately available for the latest fighting but according to the Observatory close to 500 SDF fighters have been killed since the start of the operation on September 10. Around 300 civilians have also been killed, many of them in coalition air strikes, and thousands have been forced to flee their homes. —AFP



**JERUSALEM:** Relatives of Israeli couple Amichai and Shira Ish-Ran attend the funeral of their baby, who died after being delivered prematurely due to Shira being wounded in a drive-by shooting attack by a Palestinian man, at the Jewish cemetery on the Mount of Olives in front of Jerusalem's Old City. —AFP

raid, an AFP journalist at the scene said. On October 7, Naalwa allegedly shot and killed 28-year-old Kim Yehezkel and 35-year-old Ziv Hagbi in the Barkan industrial zone settlement. The two Israelis were employees of the recycling company where Naalwa worked. A separate incident on Thursday morning saw a man stab two border police in Jerusalem's Old City before being shot dead.

There were no immediate details on the identity of the assailant. The violence came amid heightened tensions in the West Bank, with a former head of Shin Bet's intelligence and research division saying it appeared to be a “new front” opened by Hamas. “It is a part of the new initiative of (Hamas) that decided to open a new front

in the West Bank after a period of time that they got to the conclusion they will ease down their efforts from the Gaza Strip,” Barak Ben-Zur said.

Since Sunday's attack, Israeli forces have made a series of incursions into central Ramallah, where Abbas's Palestinian Authority is based. Hebrew posters have been pasted in the West Bank over the past week inciting the killing of Abbas. Israel seized control of the West Bank and east Jerusalem in a 1967 war. Around 600,000 Israelis now live in settlements there considered illegal by the international community. Many Palestinians consider violence against Israelis in the West Bank a justified response to the growth of settlements on land they see as theirs. —AFP

## 21 IS militants escape Iraqi jail, most recaptured

**BAGHDAD:** Twenty one prisoners, most of them members of Islamic State jailed on terrorism charges, broke out of a prison in northern Iraq but 15 of them have been recaptured, Kurdish security officials said yesterday. The fortified jail of Sosa is located near the Iraqi Kurdish city of Sulaimaniya and include mainly militants of the hardline Islamist group who were captured during the fight against Islamic State which started in 2014.

Kurdish security officials launched manhunt operations after the break-out late on Wednesday and 15 of the 21

were recaptured, two security officials said. The whereabouts of the other six remains unknown.

Although Sosa jail is located in the semi-autonomous Kurdish region of northern Iraq, the federal government has full control over the prison. “Almost all of the convicted inmates who escaped are from Daesh,” said one Kurdish security source. Daesh is an Arabic acronym for Islamic State.

It was not clear how the inmates managed to escape the highly secured prison. Islamic State, which once occupied a third of Iraq's territory, has been largely defeated in the country but still poses a threat along the border with Syria. The group has resorted to guerrilla tactics since it abandoned its goal of holding territory and creating a self-sufficient caliphate that straddles Iraq and Syria.—Reuters



## International

# Yemen's warring parties agree Hodeida ceasefire at UN talks

## New round of talks scheduled in January

**RIMBO:** UN chief Antonio Guterres announced yesterday a series of breakthroughs in peace talks with the warring parties in Yemen, including a ceasefire for a vital port. In a highly symbolic gesture on the seventh and final day of the UN-brokered peace talks in Sweden, Yemeni Foreign Minister Khaled al-Yamani and rebel negotiator Mohammed Abdelsalam shook hands to loud applause—but both later voiced skepticism in separate press conferences.

If implemented, the deal on the Hodeida port, a key gateway for aid and food imports to a country where 14 million people stand at the brink of famine, would mark a major turning point after four years of devastating war. But a number of key issues remain unresolved. A new round of talks is scheduled for the end of January, with analysts predicting the US will continue to up the pressure on ally Saudi Arabia to end the conflict.

The fighting has triggered what the UN calls the world's worst humanitarian crisis, with one child dying every 10 minutes of preventable causes. International pressure has been mounting to halt the fighting between the Iran-linked Huthis and the government of Abedrabbo Mansour Hadi, backed by Saudi Arabia and its military allies.

### Withdrawal within days

Guterres, who flew in to Sweden late Wednesday, announced that the government and Huthi rebels had agreed a ceasefire in the port of Hodeida. The UN will play a "leading

role" in monitoring the Red Sea port, which is under rebel control, and facilitate aid access for the civilian population. "There is a ceasefire declared for the whole governorate of Hodeida in the agreement and there will be both from the city and the harbor a withdrawal of all forces," Guterres told reporters.

UN special envoy Martin Griffiths, who was due to brief the Security Council on Yemen on Friday, said the pullout should take place "within days". The rivals have also reached a "mutual understanding" on Yemen's third city of Taiz, the scene of some of the most intense battles in the conflict, to facilitate the delivery of aid. But no deal has been reached on the future of the airport in the capital Sanaa or on economic measures needed to spare the population from further hunger.

### More than expected

The January talks will focus on a framework for negotiations in a political process, which Guterres said was the only solution to the conflict. Foreign Minister Khaled al-Yamani told reporters the deals were the biggest step forward since the outbreak of the war but remained "hypothetical". Lead rebel negotiator said the Huthis had made "major concessions" on Hodeida. The rebels hold both Hodeida and the capital Sanaa while the Saudi led-military coalition controls Yemen's maritime borders and airspace.

Sanaa airport has been closed to commercial flights for nearly three years and Griffiths said its fate would be discussed at the next



**RIMBO:** The United Nations' Secretary General Antonio Guterres, center, holds a press conference together with Sweden's Minister for Foreign Affairs Margot Wallstrom, right, and UN special envoy to Yemen Martin Griffiths following peace consultations taking place at Johannesberg Castle in Rimbo, north of Stockholm, Sweden. — AFP

round. Analysts said the Rimbo talks progressed better than anticipated, two years after negotiations collapsed with no breakthrough after three months. "The Sweden talks have achieved more than anyone expected," the International Crisis Group told AFP. "We have heard a different tone from the government of Yemen in these talks, and

US pressure has clearly focused minds in the Gulf." Anger at the human cost of the war, as well as outrage over the October killing of US-based journalist Jamal Khashoggi in the Saudi consulate in Istanbul, has prompted the international community to take a harder line over the Yemen war, and particularly the role of the Saudi-led coalition. — AFP

## Mali says foiled New Year's Eve terror attacks

**BAMAKO:** A four-man "terrorist cell" suspected of planning New Year's Eve attacks in Mali, Ivory Coast and Burkina Faso has been dismantled by Malian intelligence services, a statement said on Wednesday. The suspects, two from Burkina, one from Mali and one from Ivory Coast, who were arrested last week, earlier "took part in the double attack on March 2 in Ouagadougou" as well as the abduction of a Colombian nun in February 2017 in southern Mali, it said.

They were "apprehended as they were preparing to carry out attacks" on the Malian capital Bamako, the Burkina Faso capital Ouagadougou and the Ivory Coast capital Abidjan "during New Year's Eve celebrations", the statement said. Eight soldiers were killed and scores injured in the twin attacks on Ouagadougou on March 2. France helped Malian forces stave off a jihadist insurgency that took control of large parts of northern Mali in 2012, but swathes of the country remain out of the government's control.

The former colonial ruler has deployed the 4,500-member Barkhane force in the region to repel attacks and stem insurgency. In Burkina Faso, bordering Mali and Niger, authorities have been battling jihadist attacks over the last three years. Attacks initially began in the north of the country but have since spread to the east, near the border with Togo and Benin. According to a report in late September, jihadist attacks have claimed 229 lives in the country since 2015. —AFP

## Pentagon cautions Turkey over new operation against Syria Kurds

**ANKARA:** Any unilateral military action in northern Syria would be "unacceptable", the Pentagon said Wednesday after Turkey announced it would launch an operation against a US-backed Kurdish militia. The warning came after President Recep Tayyip Erdogan said Turkey would soon begin a mission targeting the Kurdish People's Protection Units (YPG), which Ankara considers a "terrorist" group. "We will start an operation to free the east of the Euphrates from the separatist terrorist organization in the next few days," Erdogan said during a speech in Ankara, referring to territory held by the Kurdish People's Protection Units (YPG).

American forces have worked closely with the YPG under the Kurdish-led Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF) alliance, which has played a key role in the war against the Islamic State (IS) extremist group. The Pentagon has repeatedly warned that any fighting between the Turks and the SDF is a dangerous distraction from the core US mission in Syria of fighting IS. Pentagon spokesman Commander Sean Robertson said any unilateral military action in northeast Syria would be a "grave concern", as it could potentially jeopardize US troops working with the SDF in the region.

"We would find any such actions unacceptable," he said in a statement. Turkey says the YPG is a "terrorist offshoot" of the outlawed Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK), which has waged an insurgency against the Turkish state since 1984. PKK is black-listed as a terror group by Ankara and its Western allies. "The target is never American soldiers but terrorist organisation members active in the region," Erdogan told the audience at a defence industry summit.

American forces are with the SDF east of the Euphrates as well as in the flashpoint city of Manbij, which is west of the river. "We should not and cannot allow (IS) to breathe at this critical point or we will jeopardize the significant gains we have made alongside our coalition partners and risk allowing (IS) to resurge," Robertson said. The YPG also said a Turkish offensive would be to the benefit of IS.

"The (Turkish) threats coincide with the advance of our forces against the terrorists, this time with the entrance into the town of Hajin," YPG spokesman Nuri Mahmud said. The SDF launched an offensive on September 10 to expel IS from the Hajin pocket, on the eastern bank of the Euphrates River close to the Iraqi border. "Any attack on the north of Syria will have a direct impact on the battle of Hajin. The forces who are fighting (there) will return to defend their areas and their families," Mahmud said.

Washington's relationship with the YPG, seen as a key ally, is one of the main sources of tensions between the United States and NATO member Turkey. Ankara has repeatedly lambasted Washington for providing military support to the Kurdish militia. Erdogan has previously threatened to attack areas held by the YPG. In a bid to avoid any clash, the NATO allies agreed a "roadmap" for Manbij in June. —AFP



International

# Wounded May seeks EU compromise to save Brexit deal

## May to meet EU's Tusk last-minute talks

**BRUSSELS:** Bloodied but not yet beaten, Prime Minister Theresa May holds last-ditch talks with EU leaders yesterday as she battles to save both her Brexit deal and her career. The British leader, who survived a confidence vote staged by her own party's MPs late on Wednesday, needs to turn a narrow victory on home turf into an unlikely away win.

May will meet EU President Donald Tusk for what he called "last-minute talks" before being joined by her 27 counterparts for a European Union summit less than three weeks after they approved the Brexit divorce papers. The other EU members have drawn up a six-paragraph statement they hope will appease concerns about the "Irish backstop" measure in the Brexit withdrawal agreement and help get the deal through the British parliament.

Last month the withdrawal accord was hailed as the end to a 17-month negotiation, and leaders dared hope they had saved Britain from crashing out of the union on March 29 without a deal. But when May brought the hard-fought deal back to Britain she ran into renewed opposition from hardline Brexiteers in her own party and balked at putting it to a vote in parliament on Tuesday, fearing a crushing defeat.

Now, with the vote delayed till January, she

wants Europe to sweeten the offer with "reassurances" that the so-called "backstop" measures to prevent the return of a hard border with Ireland will not last indefinitely. Negotiators said the leaders would listen to May and see what they can offer her in terms of a statement, but insist the 585-page withdrawal agreement itself cannot be renegotiated.

### Two-stage offer

According to European diplomats, the proposed summit statement would declare that any backstop "would only be in place for a short period and only as long as strictly necessary." And it will add: "The union stands ready to examine whether any further assurances can be provided. Such assurances will not change or contradict the withdrawal agreement."

This would not be the legally binding promise, sought by Brexiteers, that the measure to keep the Irish border open would not be used to bind the UK into a customs union indefinitely. "This is incredibly innocent language. Nothing of this is new. There is no end date for the backstop," one European source said. "Not even the wording is different. There is the word temporary, but this is already in the withdrawal agreement," he noted. The diplomat said that, in the likely event that the

statement does not assuage the concerns of May's parliamentary opponents, then a legal "interpretation" of the deal could be produced. But he said this would only be published in January as, if it were released too soon, Brexiteers might immediately seek more concessions, pushing approval of the plan still further back. Brexit will once again dominate an EU summit which had been planned to deal with the thorny issues of migration, budgets and eurozone.

"The discussions in Britain... do not make the situation any easier, but we should nevertheless do everything we can to avoid a hard Brexit," said Austrian Chancellor Sebastian Kurz, who holds the rotating EU presidency.

### Backstop sell-by date?

After May made a desperate three-capital European tour on Tuesday to seek assistance from fellow leaders, Tusk had said he would love to help her, but "the question is how". On Wednesday, Kurz suggested the secret may lie in the question of the backstop, indicating there may be room for compromise. But determined to remain loyal to continuing member Ireland, European officials insist in public and in private that the backstop must stay. "The idea of a sell-by date won't stand," one said.



**BRUSSELS:** Britain's Prime Minister Theresa May gestures as she arrives in Brussels for a European Summit aimed at discussing the Brexit deal, the long-term budget and the single market. — AFP

May was also to meet Irish Prime Minister Leo Varadkar individually yesterday before the summit. Anything May does come away with must convince her own party, its angry Northern Irish allies and a majority of British MPs to back the deal when it returns to Westminster. If the agreement is still found wanting not only would Britain and its main trading partners face economic chaos, but May could be finished off by a parliamentary vote of no confidence. —AFP

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## International

# French government urges end to protests after Strasbourg attack

## Police launch manhunt for suspected killer Cherif Chekatt

**STRASBOURG:** The French government yesterday urged “yellow vest” protesters not to hold another round of demonstrations this weekend as police hunted for a second day for the fugitive gunman who attacked a Christmas market in the eastern city of Strasbourg. Government spokesman Benjamin Griveaux called on the anti-government protesters to be “reasonable”, citing the strain on security forces after the attack in Strasbourg on Tuesday evening.

Police across several European countries have launched a manhunt for the main suspect, a 29-year-old Strasbourg native, who killed two and injured 13 after opening fire on shoppers. The suspected killer, identified as Cherif Chekatt, is thought to have been injured after exchanging fire with soldiers, but managed to escape and has not been seen since. “Our security forces have been deployed extensively these past few weeks,” Griveaux told CNews television.

“It would be better if everyone could go about their business calmly on Saturday, before the year-end celebrations with their families, instead of demonstrating and putting our security forces to work once again,” he added. So-called “yellow vest” protesters, known for their fluorescent high-visibility jackets, had called for a fifth round of protests this Saturday against President Emmanuel Macron. The protests began on November 17 over fuel tax increases, but snowballed into a revolt over living standards as well as Macron’s perceived indifference to the problems of ordi-

nary citizens. The appeal came as authorities announced that a sixth person had died since the start of the protests, after a 23-year-old was hit by a truck in southern France near Avignon. Even before Tuesday’s attack in Strasbourg, the government had scrapped a fuel tax increase slated for January, a core demand of the protesters, who mainly live in rural areas and smaller towns and rely heavily on their cars. Macron also announced a hike in the minimum wage, tax relief on overtime work and a rollback on taxes for many pensioners in a televised address to the nation on Monday night.

Last Saturday nearly 90,000 police were mobilized across the country for the protests, with 8,000 officers and a dozen armored vehicles deployed in the capital, where scores of stores, museums and monuments were closed. While some of the movement’s representatives have said they are open to halting the protests to negotiate with the government, others have said Macron’s concessions are not enough.

### Wide search

Hundreds of police in France are now hunting for Chekatt, whose picture was published late on Wednesday in a bid to track a career criminal who has at least 27 convictions in four European countries. His mother and father, as well as two brothers, were detained for questioning Wednesday. Strasbourg’s location at the crossroads of France, Germany, Switzerland, Belgium and Luxembourg, makes the search more complicated. Chekatt, who



**STRASBOURG:** French gendarmes walk past flowers and candles laid in the street in tribute to the victims of a deadly shooting two days ago, in central Strasbourg. — AFP

lived in a rundown apartment block a short drive from the city centre, was flagged by French security forces in 2015 as a possible Islamic extremist while in prison. Prime Minister Edouard Philippe

announced Wednesday that France’s anti-terror Sentinelle operation, which counts around 7,000 soldiers nationwide, would be boosted by a total of 1,800 troops over the coming days. —AFP

## Migrants cross Strait of Gibraltar despite bad weather

**TARIFA, Spain:** A radio message comes in from a Spanish maritime rescue boat to the service’s command centre in the southern town of Tarifa: “34 migrants rescued”. The onset of autumn, with the cold, storms and fog, has not stopped migrants from crossing the Mediterranean from Morocco to Spain, a journey that has this year claimed the lives of hundreds of youths. From the heights of Tarifa, veteran sailors work in shifts behind radar screens at the rescue service command centre monitoring the Strait of Gibraltar, through which 100,000 ships transit every year.

“When the weather is good we can see homes in North Africa from here,” said its head, Adolfo Serrano. Just 14 kilometers separates northern Morocco from Spain’s southern Andalusia region at the Strait’s narrowest point. “But with a quickly changing sea, strong currents, fogs that can surprise you, it’s a dangerous crossing,” added Serrano.

It is especially perilous because human traffickers put migrants on packed inflatable boats or plastic canoes that can easily overturn, he said.

### ‘Many can’t swim’

“I can’t remember an autumn like this. Boats keep arriving with pregnant women, children,” said Jose Antonio Parra, a mechanic of 25 years experience with the Guardia Civil police force’s maritime unit. The 34 migrants rescued from an inflatable boat—including six females who appeared to be in their teens — were taken to the port of Algeciras, where they were first at-

tended to by the Red Cross before being handed to police.

Small migrant boats are hard to detect by radar. They are often only located when the migrants themselves sound the alarm by telephone. Rescuers did not detect the boat which sunk on November 5 during a storm off the coast of the town of Barbate, an hour’s drive west of Algeciras, killing 23 young Moroccans. Only 21 people on board survived.

“There was a hell of a storm. Many of them did not know how to swim,” said spokesman for the Guardia Civil in Cadiz province, Manuel Gonzalez. Andalusia’s regional government took charge of nine minors who survived, while police jailed two passengers suspected of having steered the boat. The other 10 adults who were on board were ordered back to Morocco under an agreement between Madrid and Rabat.

### Toy-style boat

Since then, more bodies have washed ashore on other beaches. Nine sub-Saharan African migrants drowned after spending a week adrift at sea, according to the only survivor of the ordeal, a Guinean teenager who saw his brother die, said Gonzalez. The migrants had paid 700 euros each for what they had been told would be a trip on board a rigid-hulled inflatable boat with an engine but were instead forced to take a “toy-style boat” with just one oar, he added.

Between January and December 2, 687 migrants died trying to enter Spain by sea, more than three times as many as last year, according to International Organization for Migration (IOM) figures. More migrants have died trying to reach Italy and Malta this year—nearly 1,300 — but Spain has become the main entry point for migrants trying to reach Europe by sea. More than 55,000 migrants have arrived in the country so far this year.

Rescuers describe two types of migrants: Sub-Saharan African migrants, who sing when rescuers arrive to pluck them from the sea, and Moroccans who try at all costs to reach the shore without being detected because they face deportation back to Morocco if caught. —AFP

## Chaos as Hungarian MPs pass laws on overtime and judiciary

**BUDAPEST:** Rare scenes of chaos gripped the Hungarian parliament Wednesday as it passed a controversial judicial reform, as well as labor legislation that critics call a “slave law”. Prime Minister Viktor Orban attended the session during which opposition lawmakers blew whistles, sounded sirens and blocked access to the speaker’s podium in an effort to prevent votes from taking place.

Orban’s right-wing Fidesz party won a third consecutive two-thirds parliamentary majority at an election in April and habitually steamrollers bills through the assembly. But speaker Laszlo Kover, a loyal Orban ally, had to open Wednesday’s session from the floor rather than the podium with opposition MPs accusing Fidesz counterparts of “unlawful” voting by breaking a series of technical rules.

The opposition’s “attempt at obstruction was unprecedented in 28 years of Hungarian democracy,” Kover said later. Tabled by Fidesz lawmakers, the controversial labour code change hikes the maximum annual overtime hours that employers can demand from 250 to 400 hours. It also triples the time period for calculating overtime payments to three years.

The government argues the changes will benefit both those wanting to work more hours and employers who need more manpower. “We have to remove bureaucratic rules so that those who want to work and earn more can do so,” Orban said Tuesday. —AFP



## International

# Ex-lawyer blames Trump 'dirty deeds' as he gets three years

## Cohen pleads guilty to making false statements to Congress

**NEW YORK:** Donald Trump's former lawyer apologized Wednesday for covering up the "dirty deeds" of his ex-boss as he was sentenced to three years for multiple crimes including hush money payments implicating the US president. Pleading for leniency in a packed Manhattan courtroom before US District Court Judge William H. Pauley III, Michael Cohen said he had been led astray by misplaced admiration for Trump.

An emotional Cohen, 52, Trump's longtime "fixer," told the court he accepted responsibility for his personal crimes and "those involving the President of the United States of America." Cohen's lawyers had argued for no jail time after he admitted charges brought by federal prosecutors in New York of tax evasion, providing false statements to a bank and illegal campaign contributions.

Cohen also pleaded guilty to making false statements to Congress—a charge stemming from Special Counsel Robert Mueller's probe into whether Trump's 2016 presidential campaign colluded with Russia to get him elected. But Pauley said Cohen—as a lawyer—"should have known better" and sentenced him to three years in federal prison, ordering him to surrender to custody by March 6. He was also ordered to pay \$2 million in fines and restitution.

"Each of these crimes standing alone warrant considerable punishment," Pauley said, adding that Cohen was "motivated by personal greed and ambition." "A significant term of imprisonment is fully justified in this highly publicized case to send a message," the judge said. Before Pauley passed sentence, Cohen addressed the court, saying it was his devotion to Trump that caused him to choose "a path of darkness over light."

"Today is the day that I am getting my freedom back," he said. "I have been living in a personal and mental incarceration ever

since the day that I accepted the offer to work for a real estate mogul whose business acumen I deeply admired," Cohen said. "I now realize there was little to admire," he said.

### Dirty deeds

Cohen referred to a recent tweet from Trump calling him "weak," saying his only weakness had been "blind loyalty" to his former boss. "Time and time again I felt it was my duty to cover up his dirty deeds rather than to listen to my own inner voice and my moral compass," he said. Among the charges against Cohen was making secret payments to silence two women threatening to go public during the election campaign with claims they had affairs with Trump.

Cohen told prosecutors the payments totaling \$280,000 to porn actress Stormy Daniels and former Playboy model Karen McDougal were made "in coordination with and at the direction" of Trump—referred to by prosecutors as "Individual-1." Both women have claimed to have had sexual encounters with Trump before he was the Republican candidate for president and prosecutors have characterized the payments as illegal campaign contributions intended to influence the election.

"Cohen deceived the voting public by hiding alleged facts that he believed would have had a substantial effect on the election," prosecutors said. The payment to McDougal was funneled through American Media Inc, publisher of the National Enquirer, and prosecutors announced following Cohen's sentencing that AMI had been granted immunity from prosecution in exchange for its cooperation.

Trump this week sought to minimize the importance of the payments to the two women saying they were a "simple private transaction" and were "wrongly" being called campaign contri-



**WASHINGTON:** This combination of pictures shows Michael Cohen, left, President Trump's personal lawyer and US President Donald Trump. — AFP

butions. "Cohen just trying to get his sentence reduced," Trump tweeted. "WITCH HUNT!" There was no immediate reaction from Trump to Cohen's sentencing.

While federal prosecutors said Cohen's cooperation was limited and selective, the Special Counsel's office said Cohen had "gone to significant lengths" to assist their investigation. Last month, Cohen acknowledged that he had lied to Congress about his contacts with Russia during the election campaign about building a Trump Tower in Moscow and the extent of Trump's own involvement in the negotiations. — AFP

## Brazil 'healer' denies avalanche of sex abuse accusations

**ABADIANIA, Brazil:** A famous Brazilian "spiritual healer" who has been accused of sexual abuse by hundreds of women who sought treatment from him told followers Wednesday he was innocent. Joao Teixeira de Faria, 76, known internationally as "Joao de Deus" or "John of God," told a crowd of white-clad faithful waiting for him "I am not guilty." He left after less than 10 minutes, with volunteer staff saying he was too affected by the allegations to carry out his usual "healing" session.

Police are investigating complaints by more than 450 women in several Brazilian states saying that Faria forced them into sex acts under pretext of curing them. The avalanche of accusations followed allegations made by a dozen women late last week to Brazilian outlets Globo TV and O Globo newspaper. One of the women who spoke to Globo TV, a Dutch choreographer named Zahira Lieneke Mous, said Faria had also raped her.

The appearance was Faria's first in public since the accusations were made. Wednesday is the usual day he receives people believing in his supernatural powers to treat illnesses ranging from depression to cancer. Faria was greeted with cries, applause and tears by his faithful, who were all dressed in white, several of them foreigners. "I think the accusations are false," said Duncan Ryan, a 66-year-old American with skin cancer.

"I know many, many Brazilian women and foreign women who volunteer here at the casa, and who have been in private with John of God many, many times—and even very beautiful women—and they've never had any problem with him," he said. Jose Carlos, a 63-year-old Brazilian seeking cures for his wife, suffering a brain



**ABADIANIA, Brazil:** Brazilian spiritual healer Joao Teixeira de Faria, center, known as 'Joao de Deus' (John of God) is escorted by supporters, upon arrival at his healing center Casa de Dom Inacio de Loyola, in Abadiania, 120 km southwest of Brasilia, state of Goias. —AFP

tumor, and his daughter, in psychological treatment, said: "Up to now I haven't seen any evidence shown against him. They should also talk about the cures he's done."

Around 40 percent of the 10,000 people who flocked to see him each month before the accusations were foreigners, according to the mayor of Abadiania, where Faria's center is located. Some hailed from as far as the United States, Australia and Europe, drawn by reports of Faria's "miracles." His fame rocketed in 2013 when US celebrity Oprah Winfrey broadcast a show on him, based on a visit she had made the previous year. On Wednesday, that episode was removed from Winfrey's YouTube video archive. The steady flow of visitors is an important revenue source for Abadiania, a tiny rural town of 15,000 inhabitants, and there were fears that could dry up if Faria's reputation is irredeemably tarnished. —AFP

## Couple sentenced to US prison for kidnapping grandson

**CHICAGO:** A federal judge in Texas on Wednesday sentenced a Brazilian couple to short prison terms for helping to kidnap their grandson from the US. A Houston jury had convicted Carlos and Jemima Guimaraes in May for helping their daughter relocate their grandson Nico Brann to Brazil five years ago, without his American father's permission. The grandparents faced up to three years in prison, but a federal judge sentenced Carlos Guimaraes to three months and Jemima to one month. They were each also fined \$75,000.

The case generated international headlines after the couple in their 60s were arrested in February while arriving in Miami for vacation. The couple's daughter Marcelle Guimaraes relocated her then-three-year-old child to Brazil in 2013 under allegedly false pretenses and without the permission of his American father Chris Brann, a Houston physician. They divorced in 2012. Brann claims his ex-wife told him the trip would only last a few weeks, but the child was never brought back to the US.

Guimaraes's parents allegedly helped her hide her motives, before the South American country's legal system granted the mother full custody. The grandparents presented evidence during trial that the child's mother was fleeing domestic violence, according to local media. "The world needs to know the truth because I married a monster," Marcelle Guimaraes, who is now a fugitive wanted by the FBI, told Houston TV station KHOU prior to the sentencing. —AFP



## International

# Supreme Court rules against Sri Lanka president, impeachment edges closer

## Wickremesinghe's party welcome verdict as victory for democracy

**COLOMBO:** Sri Lanka's Supreme Court opened the way for potential impeachment proceedings against the president yesterday, ruling that he broke the law by dissolving parliament last month. The verdict is a major blow to Maithripala Sirisena, seven weeks into a political crisis in the Indian Ocean island nation that has sparked alarm abroad and concern over its finances. The seven-judge bench unanimously agreed that Sirisena violated the constitution when he dissolved parliament last month and called a snap election nearly two years ahead of schedule.

"I make order that the November 9 Gazette (decree) sacking parliament... has no force or effect in law and declare its operation illegal," Chief Justice Nalin Perera said as he delivered the landmark judgment to a packed courtroom. Sacked prime minister Ranil Wickremesinghe's party had said it would await the outcome of yesterday's decision before deciding whether to open impeachment proceedings.

Sirisena triggered the unprecedented political crisis on October 26 when he fired Wickremesinghe and appointed contentious former strongman Mahinda Rajapakse in his place. There was no immediate comment from either

Sirisena or Rajapakse. However, Rajapakse's legislator son, Namal, told reporters outside the court house that they did not agree with the verdict. "We do not agree with the decision of the court, but we do not have a higher court to appeal to," he said.

### Coup

The leftist JVP, or the People's Liberation Front, said the sacking of the prime minister in October was a "coup orchestrated by Sirisena and Rajapakse" and called for a resolution in parliament to bring them to justice. "This first thing this (restored) parliament should do is to investigate the coup and bring both the president and his illegal prime minister to justice," JVP leader Anura Kumara Disanayake said. Wickremesinghe's United National Party (UNP) welcomed the verdict as a victory for democracy.

"As a country we have to be joyful that we have an independent judiciary that acted as a check on an errant executive," UNP deputy leader Sajith Premadasa said. Sirisena dissolved parliament on November 9 when Rajapakse, the man he appointed as prime minister, was unable to prove a majority in the 225-member assembly. Constitutional provi-

“  
Coup  
orchestrated  
by Sirisena,  
Rajapakse  
”



**COLOMBO:** A supporter of ousted Sri Lanka's prime minister Ranil Wickremesinghe holds a flare and shouts slogans with other supporters as they celebrate Sri Lanka's Supreme Court ruling outside the Sri Lanka Supreme Court in Colombo. —AFP

sions were clear that he could not dissolve the legislature until it completes four and a half years out of its five-year term, which ends in August 2020.

Four days later after parliament was sacked, the Supreme Court issued an interim ruling suspending Sirisena's decree and restoring parliament, which almost immediately passed a no-confidence motion against Rajapakse, the purported premier. Wickremesinghe's party and their allies command a majority in parliament. On Wednesday, the legislature voted

overwhelmingly to demand the reinstatement of Wickremesinghe with the power struggle just weeks away from a government shutdown.

Members of Wickremesinghe's party and their allies voted 117-0 asking Sirisena to reverse his October 26 dismissal of his former ally. However, Sirisena has vowed he will not reinstate Wickremesinghe. Courts have also prevented Rajapakse and his disputed cabinet exercising power until they can prove their legitimacy. A hearing by the Court of Appeal on Wednesday was put off until January 16. —AFP

## India's ruling party to tackle problems after state poll setbacks

**NEW DELHI:** Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi's ruling party officials gathered yesterday for talks on a general election due by May, with their deliberations overshadowed by the party's defeat at the polls in three heartland rural states. The Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) said the gathering, to be chaired by the party's president, Amit Shah, is a regular quarterly meeting but the losses in its stronghold states of Madhya Pradesh, Chhattisgarh and Rajasthan, confirmed this week, are likely to dominate discussions.

Disgruntled voters blamed the slow pace of job creation and weak farm prices for the Hindu nationalist party's defeat in the states, two of which it ruled for three straight terms. "We realize that rural distress and employment generation are the key issues and we are working on them," said BJP spokesman Gopal Krishna

Agarwal, who will attend the meeting that starts in the afternoon and could be addressed by Modi. "They will have to be tackled, and we will take suggestions from wherever needed."

Senior BJP minister Nitin Gadkari told the ET Now business channel on yesterday that the agriculture sector may have been neglected under their government. Agarwal said the party already had a strategy for the upcoming general election, which must be held by May, and it would hold another big gathering next month. A chartered accountant who is also a director in a state-run bank, Agarwal said increasing lending for job-generating small businesses was a key focus, as was enhancing procurement of grain from farmers by government agencies at state-mandated prices so there are no distress sales.

The government announces so-called minimum support prices for most crops to set a benchmark, but state agencies mainly buy limited quantities of staples such as rice and wheat at those prices, restricting benefits of higher prices to only around 7 percent of the country's 263 million farmers, according to various studies. Following the state election setbacks, Modi's government is expected to announce loan waivers worth billions of dollars to woo farmers, government sources told Reuters this week. —Reuters

## Bangladeshi journalists self-censor as election approaches

**DHAKA:** With less than a month to go to a general election, many journalists in Bangladesh say they are living in fear of ever-tightening media laws and engaging in self-censorship as a result. While Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina's administration has won plaudits globally for welcoming hundreds of thousands of Rohingya refugees fleeing persecution in Myanmar, critics have lashed out at it for cracking down on free speech and an increasingly authoritarian rule.

In interviews Reuters conducted with 32 journalists and editors across print, digital and broadcast media in Bangladesh, the vast majority said the recent strengthening of defamation laws with a new Digital Security Act (DSA) has spread a climate of fear in the industry. Dozens of journalists were arrested for defamation under the earlier law, the Information and Communication Technology (ICT) Act.

The DSA goes further - penalizing obtaining papers, information, or pictures from government offices without official consent, said Asif Nazrul, a professor of Law at the University of Dhaka. "It

would make investigative journalism on corruption, human rights abuses and bad governance very tough, if not impossible," he said. Another piece of legislation, the Broadcast Act 2018, was proposed in October to regulate broadcast news portals.

Both laws restrict bail and allow arrests without a warrant. The government has denied accusations it's trying to curb press freedom and Hasina assured a press briefing in October that "journalists who do not publish false news need not worry" about the DSA. Journalists, however, question the timing of the laws and have staged protests in recent weeks in the capital Dhaka, particularly against the DSA, which they say will thwart their ability to report independently, especially on the upcoming election.

Critics of Hasina, who is seeking a third straight term in power, say the Dec. 30 election will be a litmus test for the strength of democracy in Bangladesh. The last election in 2014 was boycotted by the opposition Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) as unfair and shunned by international observers, with more than half the seats uncontested. Matiur Rahman Chowdhury, editor-in-chief of Manab Zamin, a popular Bengali-language daily, said self-censorship was becoming common. "As an editor, I feel sad when I kill a report that was the outcome of several days of exhaustive work by a reporter. But I take the decision purely to save the reporter, because I know the risks involved in publishing it," he said. "I fight every moment with myself and with my shadow." —Reuters



# The daring China rescues bringing Vietnam's trafficked girls home

## Blue Dragon rescues trafficked women, girls from China

**HANOI:** Two girls sprint from a hair salon into a car that will lead them back to safety in Vietnam—a snapshot of the daring rescues taking place each month to free women and girls from forced marriages or sex slavery in China. Filmed on a shaky camera phone, the successful rescue saved the Vietnamese teenagers from a brothel in China, where a huge surplus of males has fuelled the lucrative trade for brides and sex workers.

Bringing them home is dangerous work, pitting rescuers against vengeful husbands, pimps and organized trafficking networks who spin tens of millions of dollars selling women from poor Mekong countries. “No one wants their business to be broken,” says a rescuer from Blue Dragon, a Hanoi-based non-profit. Blue Dragon has helped bring about 400 trafficked women and girls home from China since 2007.

They are among tens of thousands trafficked into China from impoverished pockets of Vietnam, Cambodia, Myanmar and Laos. They are tricked, lured or kidnapped and sold as wives and prostitutes across the border, some ending up deep inside the tightly-controlled Communist country. Rescues are a complicated and all-consuming job, says the Blue Dragon rescuer whose identity has been concealed for safety reasons. The stress is constant and the phone buzzes

around the clock. “But I couldn’t walk away,” the rescuer says. “Imagine your child didn’t come home at dinner time. What would you do?”

### ‘Please help me’

Victims reach out via Chinese messaging services like WeChat and QQ or call the non-profit—if they can get their hands on a phone. “I was trafficked to China please help me,” reads one text. “I’m praying for a miracle,” says another. But most girls—especially sex workers—are barred from contact with the outside world; an escaped girl means thousands of dollars lost for traffickers. With risks high, each rescue can take months to plan and execute.

One girl faked illness and checked into hospital where she called Blue Dragon rescuers, leading them to a remote corner of China where she had been trafficked as a bride. Another who had been sold into a brothel secretly used customers’ phones to contact rescuers before evading bouncers by escaping via a back door. Blue Dragon helps to bring home up to eight people a month and gets one or two desperate pleas for help each day.

The organization keeps photos and videos of successful missions—weeping mothers reunited with daughters, teenaged girls grinning widely



**HANOI:** This picture shows Le Thi Vu, a Vietnamese woman who was rescued from a brothel in China's Guangxi province, sitting during an interview with Agence France-Presse in Hanoi. — AFP

after being saved—morale-boosting reminders of their work. “If we don’t get her out of there she’s stuck, she’s in slavery,” said Michael Brosowski, the Australian founder of Blue Dragon, which also rescues and rehabilitates street kids, sexual abuse victims and other kids in crisis.

### Alive again

Le Thi Vu knew trying to escape could mean being beaten or even killed by her pimp, who

kept her in a brothel for four months in China’s Guangxi province where she was forced to sleep with up to 12 men a day. Traumatized and fearing pregnancy, she secretly bought a phone and got in touch with her family who connected with Blue Dragon. She had no idea of her location and could not read the Chinese street signs outside, but Vu—whose name has been changed—found a phone number for a hotel across the street and relayed it. —AFP

## Ghana Gandhi statue removed after student protest

**ACCRA:** A statue of Indian independence leader Mahatma Gandhi has been removed from Ghana’s most prestigious university after complaints that he was racist against black Africans. India’s former president Pranab Mukherjee unveiled the statue to the global peace icon at the University of Ghana in Accra two years ago as a symbol of ties between the two nations. But lecturers soon began a petition calling for its removal, citing passages written by Gandhi claiming that Indians were “infinitely superior” to black Africans.

The online protest was one of a number on university campuses in Africa and beyond about the enduring symbols of the continent’s colonial past. The Gandhi statue on the university’s Legon campus in Accra appeared to have been removed overnight Tuesday to Wednesday, students and lecturers said. The head of language, literature and drama at the Institute of African Studies, Obadele Kambon, said the removal was an issue of “self-respect”.

“If we show that we have no respect for ourselves and look down on our own heroes and praise others who had no respect for us, then there is an issue,” he said. “If we indeed don’t show any self respect for our heroes, how can the world respect us? This is victory for black dignity and self-respect. The campaign has paid off.” Student Adelaide Twum said the move was “long overdue”. “I’m so excited. This has nothing to do with diplomatic ties,” she added.

Another student, Benjamin Mensah, said: “It’s a massive win for all Ghanaians because it was constantly reminding us of how inferior we are.” The university authorities refused to comment while an official at Ghana’s foreign affairs ministry said only: “It’s an internal decision by the university.” Ghana’s former government had said the statue would be relocated “to avoid the controversy... becoming a distraction from our strong ties of friendship” with India. — AFP

## Meditating Buddhist monk killed in India leopard attack

**NEW DELHI:** A Buddhist monk has been killed by a leopard while meditating in a protected forest for the big cats, the fifth such attack in the area this month, Indian police said yesterday. Rahul Walke Bodhi was seated beneath a tree in Ramdegi forest in western India for morning prayers on Tuesday when the leopard pounced. The 35-year-old monk was fatally injured, police in Maharashtra state said.

Two other devotees meditating with him at the time escaped unscathed to alert police, who started a search for his body. “His badly mauled body was found further into the forest, indicating the animal tried to drag it along,” Krishna Tiwari, a senior police officer in the region, told AFP. The forest, roughly 825 kilometers west from the state capital Mumbai, falls within a protected reserve for big cats where four other fatal attacks have occurred in recent weeks.

The monks, in the area for an annual prayer conference, had ignored warnings from local officials about venturing too far into the forest, police said. The attack followed a separate fatal incident on Monday, when shopkeeper Sandeep Arjun was killed outside his stall on the outskirts of the forest. It was unclear whether the same leopard was responsible for both attacks. Three more deaths attributed to leopards and tigers have been reported around the reserve in the past month, officials say. Official estimates suggest there are between 12,000 and 14,000 leopards in India. Urban expansion has reduced their numbers as forest habitats shrink, bringing them into closer contact—and conflict—with humans. —AFP

## Doctors operate on child whose shooting in eye sparked Kashmir anger

**SRINAGAR:** Doctors have removed a metal shard from the eye of a toddler shot in Kashmir, whose horrific injuries became symbolic of India’s controversial use of pellet-firing shotguns in the conflict-torn region. Surgeons who operated on Hiba Jan said it was too early to know if the 20-month-old girl would ever use her eye again after being shot with a pump-action gun that discharges high-velocity fragments.

The girl’s parents said they were shot at while trying to escape from clouds of tear gas during clashes between Indian forces and villagers in late November. Her maiming underscored the contentious use of pellet shotguns against civilians in Kashmir, a disputed Muslim-majority region where protests against Indian rule often turn violent. “We have removed the pellet, but her eye was devastated,” said one of the surgeons who operated on Hiba at the Shri Maharaja Hari Singh Hospital in Srinagar on Wednesday.

“It is difficult to say (if surgery was successful) in the case of an infant, who cannot take a vision test or describe what can be perceived by the damaged eye,” said the doctor, who was not permitted to speak to the press and requested anonymity. Hiba’s father Nisar Ahmad, seated by his daughter’s hospital bed, told AFP she was calm following her second surgery.

India introduced the officially “non-lethal” 12-gauge pellet shotgun in Kashmir in 2010 when major anti-India protests and clashes with government forces left over 100 dead. Reliable data is hard to come by in the disputed Himalayan region, which is claimed in full by both India and Pakistan. But government data from 2017 revealed the weapon killed 13 people and injured more than 6,000 in eight months alone—including nearly 800 with eye injuries. “We deal with such devastation every day at the hospital. Hiba is no different,” her surgeon said. An insurgency in Kashmir against Indian rule has left tens of thousands of people dead since 1989 – most of them civilians. —AFP



## International

# China probes two Canadians on suspected national security threat

## Kovrig, Spavor put under compulsory measures

**BEIJING:** China confirmed yesterday two Canadians are under investigation on suspicion of endangering the country's national security, fuelling tensions after Canada's arrest of a top Chinese telecom executive on a US request. Former Canadian diplomat Michael Kovrig and business consultant Michael Spavor were put under "compulsory measures" on Monday, foreign ministry spokesman Lu Kang said, using a term which would usually mean they are in custody.

The two Canadians are "suspected of engaging in activities that threatened China's national security," Lu said at a regular press conference, without explaining if the two cases are related. Kovrig, who works for the International Crisis Group (ICG) think tank, was being investigated by the Beijing bureau of state security, while the agency's office in northeast Liaoning province was handling the probe into Spavor, Lu said.

Spavor is a China-based business consultant who facilitates trips to North Korea, met with its leader Kim Jong Un and arranged some of retired NBA star Dennis Rodman's trips to the country. Their cases will fuel suspicions China is retaliating against Canada's arrest of Meng Wanzhou, the chief financial officer of Chinese telecom giant Huawei, at Washington's request on allegations related to breaking Iran sanctions. Meng was released on Can\$10 million bail by a court in Vancouver on Tuesday pending a US extradition hearing.

Her case has infuriated Beijing and shaken Canada's relations with China, which is itself embroiled in a trade war with the United States. Kovrig's employer, ICG, had reported his arrest earlier this week while Canada's government said on Wednesday that it had not heard from Spavor since he was questioned. Lu said China provided "relevant information" to the Canadian consulate "without delay".

### Kim and Rodman

Spavor is based in northeast China, where he runs the Paektu Cultural Exchange program, an organization that facilitates sport, cultural, tourism and business trips to North Korea. He earned recognition after helping facilitate visits by former Chicago Bulls player Rodman in 2013 and 2014. Spavor is one of only a few Westerners to have met with Kim in recent years. AFP's attempts to call his two mobile telephone numbers were met with messages saying "powered off" or "invalid" and calls to the Paektu Cultural Exchange office went unanswered.

"We have been unable to make contact since he let us know he was being questioned by Chinese authorities," Canadian foreign ministry spokesman Guillaume Berube said. Foreign Minister Chrystia Freeland said the Canadian government had raised his case with Chinese authorities. Canadian officials said they were officially informed of Kovrig's detention via fax early



BEIJING: Chinese police patrol in front of the Canadian embassy in Beijing. — AFP

Wednesday. ICG has said that it has not received any information about Kovrig since his arrest.

China's foreign ministry said ICG was not registered in China and its employees would be "in violation" of the law if they engage in activities in the country. "Canada is deeply concerned about the detention of Mr. Kovrig and Canada has raised the case directly with Chinese officials," Freeland said. Kovrig was based in Hong Kong for

ICG, working on foreign policy and security issues in the region, particularly on the Korean Peninsula. ICG closed its office in the Chinese capital after Beijing passed a law on NGOs, which came into force in 2017, to better control the activities on its soil of foreign organizations. Friends and experts say Kovrig may have become a "hostage" and "pawn" in the feud between China, the US and Canada. —AFP

## Five foreigners arrested in Bali drug sweep

**DENPASAR:** Five foreigners have been arrested in Bali for drug trafficking, authorities said yesterday, with a German and Peruvian possibly facing execution if convicted under Indonesia's strict drug laws. The accused smugglers—also including a Chinese, a Malaysian and a Briton—were arrested separately over the past two weeks, Bali police said. The arrests come less than a month after the first member of the Bali Nine heroin-trafficking gang was released from a prison on the holiday island after serving 13 years.

The Australian gang's accused ringleaders—Myuran Sukumaran and Andrew Chan—were executed by firing squad in 2015, sparking a diplomatic row between Australia and Indonesia, which has some of the world's stiffest drug laws. Bali police said Thursday they ar-

rested 44-year-old Peruvian Jorge Rafael Albornoz Gammara after he arrived at Ngurah Rai international airport from Dubai last week. "Officers found 4.08 kilograms of cocaine that he was hiding inside the interior of his luggage," head of local immigration office Untung Basuki told a press conference yesterday.

German Frank Zeidler, 56, en route from Bangkok, was later arrested after officers said they found 2.1 kilos of hashish inside his luggage—an amount that could also make it a death penalty case. Meanwhile, a 45-year-old British designer, who was not identified, was detained after he received a package from Thailand with some 31 grams of liquid marijuana poured into essential oil bottles.

On Saturday, 29-year-old Chinese national Cui Bao Lin was arrested at the airport with more than 200 ecstasy pills and over 160 grams of ketamine found in his bag, police said. Malaysian Hamdi Izham Hakimi was also arrested the same day with a bag containing nearly 15 grams of marijuana and 11 ecstasy pills, according to authorities. Foreigners are regularly caught trying to bring drugs into Bali, which draws millions of visitors annually. —AFP

## Singapore editor charged with defaming govt

**SINGAPORE:** The editor of a Singaporean website was charged with defamation yesterday for publishing a letter alleging corruption among the city-state's leaders, with rights groups criticizing the "heavy-handed" response from authorities. Singapore has long been criticized for restricting free speech and other political rights, as well as slapping critics with financially ruinous libel suits. The affluent financial hub is regularly ranked among the world's least corrupt countries and its leaders are sensitive about accusations of graft.

Terry Xu was charged in court with defaming government

ministers after his independent media website, The Online Citizen, published a letter stating there was "corruption at the highest echelons" of Singapore's government, according to court documents. Police seized computers and other devices used to operate the website from Xu's residence after receiving a complaint. The website ceased publication temporarily but is now up and running again. Xu faces a maximum jail term of two years and a fine, or both.

The letter's author, Daniel De Costa Augustin, was also charged with defamation and breaking computer crime laws for allegedly sending the piece from another person's email account without their consent. Augustin's letter was published in September under the name "Willy Sum", and did not mention the names of any allegedly corrupt officials or provide any evidence of graft. —AFP

## Floods kill 13 in central Vietnam

**HANOI:** Floods caused by heavy downpours have killed 13 people in central Vietnam, officials said yesterday, as farmers scrambled to save crops and livestock ahead of more bad weather forecast for this week. Torrential rains have lashed six provinces in the centre of the country since Saturday, killing thousands of cows and chickens and flooding several cities—including the coastal resort town of Danang.

More than 50 centimeters of rain hit some areas, with more downpours expected in the coming days, the disaster management office said yesterday. "Thirteen people were killed, while one remains missing in Quang Ngai province," the office said. Around 12,000 hectares of crops were destroyed, and some 160,000 livestock killed, it added. One farmer in Quang Nam province said he lost all his chickens in the flooding, costing him tens of thousands of dollars.

"The water receded but thousands of our chickens were dead. We had to collect them for burial as the smell was so bad," Nguyen Thanh said, quoted by state-run Tuoi Tre newspaper. Several areas in Quang Nam and Quang Ngai provinces were still inundated on Thursday after hydropower plants discharged reservoir waters. Vietnam is frequently hit by heavy downpours during the typhoon season from May to October, but forecasters said the rains arrived late this year. More than 200 people have been killed in weather-related disasters in 2018, down from 389 last year. —AFP



Friday Times

# Lifestyle

FRIDAY, DECEMBER 14, 2018

[www.kuwaittimes.net](http://www.kuwaittimes.net)

This handout photograph shows Reliance Industries chairman Mukesh Ambani's daughter Isha Ambani (left) taking part in traditional marriage ritual with Indian businessman Ajay Piramal's son, Anand Piramal in Mumbai.—AFP

**Beyonce! Hillary! India  
revels in a very big wedding**

See Pages 20-21



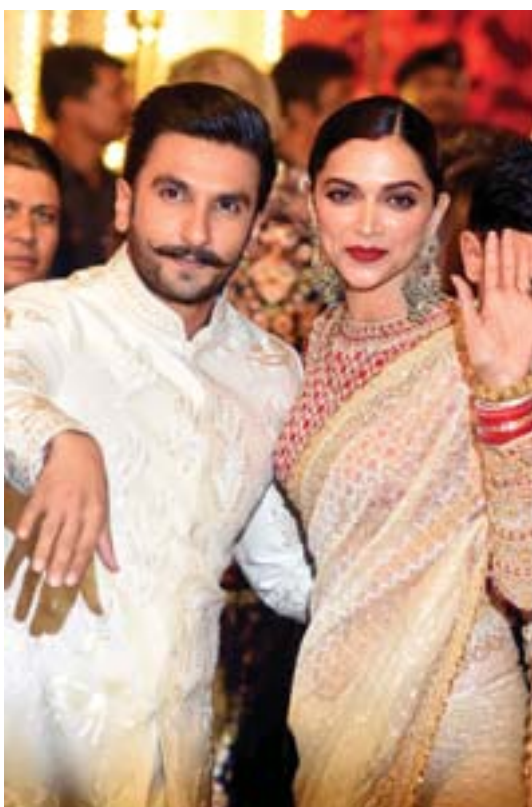
## Lifestyle | Feature



This handout photograph shows Reliance Industries chairman Mukesh Ambani's sons Akash (left) and Anand (right) taking part in a traditional marriage ritual of their sister Isha Ambani (center) to Indian businessman Ajay Piramal's son, Anand Piramal in Mumbai. — AFP photos

This handout photograph shows Reliance Industries chairman Mukesh Ambani's daughter Isha Ambani (right) taking part in traditional marriage ritual with Indian businessman Ajay Piramal's son, Anand Piramal in Mumbai.

# Beyonce! Hillary! India revels in a very big wedding



Indian Bollywood actors Ranveer Singh (left) and Deepika Padukone attend the wedding of Indian businesswoman Isha Ambani with Indian businessman Anand Piramal in Mumbai.



Indian Bollywood actress Shilpa Shetty.

In a season of big Indian weddings, the Wednesday marriage of the scions of two billionaire families might be the biggest of them all. The bride, Isha Ambani, is the Ivy League-educated daughter of industrialist Mukesh Ambani, thought to be India's richest man. Forbes estimates his net worth at over \$43 billion. The groom, Anand Piramal, is the relative pauper. His father, industrialist Ajay Piramal, is thought to be worth \$10 billion.

The wedding is being held in Mumbai on Wednesday but festivities began weeks ago, starting in September with an engagement party at a lakeside Italian palace. Over the weekend, thousands attended pre-wedding parties at a 16th century palace in the Indian desert city of Udaipur, where videos shot by partiers showed Hillary Clinton dancing with Shah Rukh Khan, one of India's biggest movie stars, as former US Secretary of State John Kerry danced just a few feet away. A highlight was a performance by Beyonce, who sang "Crazy In Love," among other hits, with a band backing her up and a series of costume changes that included at least one India-inspired outfit. "Beyonce Lights Up Udaipur," the Times of India shouted in a Tuesday headline.

Indian weddings are famously elaborate, driving many families into debt with expectations that they invite hundreds or thousands of people, and arranging professional song-and-dance shows. Among India's rich, weddings are displays of almost unimaginable wealth, with

guests flown in on chartered jets from around the world and celebrities paid hundreds of thousands of dollars for brief appearances. In 2004, a daughter of Indian steel baron Lakshmi Mittal held her engagement party at Versailles.

The Indian media noted that the actual Ambani wedding, in Mumbai, was expected to be a relatively small affair, with just 600 or so people in attendance. More parties will follow the marriage ceremony. Antilla, the Ambanis' 27-story Mumbai home, has been strung with lights for the wedding, looking like a small skyscraper at night. The family is said to have reserved hundreds of hotel rooms for their guests. Indian grooms traditionally ride to their weddings on horses, but Piramal arrived at the Ambani home in a classic Rolls Royce, with marching bands playing in the procession and scowling bodyguards scattered through the crowds.

Near the family home, Mumbai resident Kashyap Sompura said he was not bothered by the extravagance. "People, even when they don't have money, they take loans and do lavish weddings," said Sompura, 50. For someone of Ambani's wealth, "I don't think there is anything wrong with him sparing money for that." Mukesh Ambani controls the conglomerate Reliance Industries, which has businesses ranging from petroleum to chemicals to mobile phones. The Piramal family businesses include pharmaceuticals and real estate.

The competitiveness of India's wintertime wedding season is growing more extreme, ac-



Lifestyle | Feature

Friday, December 14, 2018



Indian Bollywood actresses Karishma Kapoor (left) and Kareena Kapoor Khan (right).



Indian Bollywood actor Suniel Shetty (left) with his wife Mana.



Indian politician Chandrababu Naidu.



Indian Bollywood actor Shah Rukh Khan.

According to Archana Dalmia, a social activist in New Delhi. "A farmer might commit suicide because he can't save enough money to get his daughter married," she said. The wedding of Indian actress Priyanka Chopra and American singer Nick Jonas earlier this month - which included palace parties, lots of celebrities, an appearance by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, and fawning coverage - has been quickly overshadowed by the Ambani festivities.

While opulence has always been a feature of Indian weddings, families used to hand down bridal saris as heirlooms. No more, Dalmia said. "This generation is very different. Priyanka Chopra will never be able to wear it again and she won't be able to pass it down," Dalmia said. — AP



Indian Bollywood actor Rajinikanth with his wife Latha.



Indian politician Rajnath Singh attends the wedding of Indian businesswoman Isha Ambani.



Indian Bollywood actress Vidya Balan (right) with her husband Siddharth Roy Kapur.



Indian Bollywood actor Amitabh Bachchan.



Indian Bollywood actress Sonam Kapoor.



Indian Bollywood actress Priyanka Chopra (left) and US musician Nick Jonas.



Indian Bollywood actress Janhvi Kapoor.



Indian Bollywood actress Madhuri Dixit Nene (left) with her husband Shriram Madhav Nene.



Indian Bollywood actors Kareena Kapoor Khan (left) and Saif Ali Khan.



## Lifestyle | Feature

Nominees for the 25th annual  
Screen Actors Guild Awards

## MOVIES

## Actor:

Christian Bale, "Vice"  
Bradley Cooper, "A Star Is Born"  
Rami Malek, "Bohemian Rhapsody"  
Viggo Mortensen, "Green Book"  
John David Washington, "BlacKkKlansman."

## Actress:

Emily Blunt, "Mary Poppins Returns"  
Glenn Close, "The Wife"  
Olivia Colman, "The Favourite"  
Lady Gaga, "A Star is Born"  
Melissa McCarthy, "Can You Ever Forgive Me?"

## Supporting actor:

Mahershala Ali, "Green Book"  
Timothée Chalamet, "Beautiful Boy"  
Adam Driver, "BlacKkKlansman"  
Sam Elliott, "A Star Is Born"  
Richard E. Grant, "Can You Ever Forgive Me?"

## Supporting actress:

Amy Adams, "Vice"  
Emily Blunt, "A Quiet Place"  
Margot Robbie, "Mary, Queen of Scots"  
Emma Stone, "The Favourite"  
Rachel Weisz, "The Favourite"  
Cast: "A Star is Born,"  
"Black Panther," "BlacKkKlansman,"  
"Bohemian Rhapsody,"  
"Crazy Rich Asians."

## TELEVISION

## Actor in a TV movie or miniseries:

Antonio Banderas, "Genius: Picasso"  
Darren Criss, "The Assassination of Gianni Versace: American Crime Story"  
Hugh Grant, "A Very English Scandal"  
Anthony Hopkins, "King Lear"  
Bill Pullman, "The Sinner."

## Actress in a TV movie or miniseries:

Amy Adams, "Sharp Objects"  
Patricia Arquette, "Escape From Dannemora"  
Patricia Clarkson, "Sharp Objects"  
Penelope Cruz, "The Assassination of Gianni Versace: American Crime Story"  
Emma Stone, "Maniac."

## Actor in a drama series:

Jason Bateman, "Ozark"  
Sterling K. Brown, "This Is Us"; Joseph Fiennes, "The Handmaid's Tale"  
John Krasinski, "Tom Clancy's Jack Ryan"  
Bob Odenkirk, "Better Call Saul."

## Actress in a drama series:

Julia Garner, "Ozark"  
Laura Linney, "Ozark"  
Elisabeth Moss, "The Handmaid's Tale"  
Sandra Oh, "Killing Eve"; Robin Wright, "House of Cards."

## Actor in a comedy series:

Alan Arkin, "The Kominsky Method"  
Michael Douglas, "The Kominsky Method"  
Bill Hader, "Barry"  
Tony Shalhoub, "The Marvelous Mrs. Maisel"  
Henry Winkler, "Barry."

## Actress in a comedy series:

Alex Borstein, "The Marvelous Mrs. Maisel"  
Alison Brie, "GLOW"  
Rachel Brosnahan, "The Marvelous Mrs. Maisel"  
Jane Fonda, "Grace and Frankie"  
Lily Tomlin, "Grace and Frankie."



(From left) SAG Awards committee member/actress Elizabeth McLaughlin, SAG Awards Committee chair & ASAG-AFTRA Foundation president JoBeth Williams, SAG-AFTRA Diversity Advisory Committee Chair Jason George, SAG-AFTRA president Gabrielle Carteris, Rapper/actress Awkwafina, actress Laverne Cox, SAG Awards Committee Vice Chair Daryl Anderson and SAG Awards Committee Woody Schultz attend the 25th Annual Screen Actors Guild Awards Nominations announcement at the Pacific Design Center, in West Hollywood, California. — AFP photos

'A Star Is Born' leads US Screen  
Actors Guild nominations

"A Star Is Born" led the pack in the movies category Wednesday at the Screen Actors Guild Awards nominations, seen as a bellwether in the run-up to the Oscars. The music romance reboot earned Bradley Cooper a nod for best actor, Lady Gaga for best actress and Sam Elliott for best supporting actor. The fourth nomination was for best cast.

Spike Lee's "BlacKkKlansman," the true story of a black police officer who infiltrated the Ku Klux Klan with the help of a white partner, came in second with three nominations for best actor (John David Washington), best supporting actor (Adam Driver) and best cast. Other films nominated for best cast—the SAG's top award—are superhero movie "Black Panther," "Bohemian Rhapsody," about Queen frontman Freddie Mercury, and summer rom-com hit "Crazy Rich Asians." On the television side, Amazon's breakout comedy "The Marvelous Mrs. Maisel" and the Netflix drama "Ozark" led the pack with four nominations each.

Other shows nominated include FX's Cold War spy thriller "The Americans," NBC's "This Is Us" and "The Handmaid's Tale," the runaway hit series based on the dystopian 1985 novel by Margaret Atwood. Among the plethora of actors nominated are Antonio Banderas, who received an outstanding performance nod for his portrayal of Pablo Picasso in the National Geographic mini-series "Genius," Patricia Arquette for "Escape at Dannamora," and Anthony Hopkins for "King Lear." Some of the surprising snubs for movies include Alfonso Cuarón's "Roma," seen as an Oscar frontrunner, "First Man," about Neil Armstrong's moon landing, and "Widows," about a group of women who try to pull off a heist after their husbands are killed in a botched robbery.



In this file photo US singer and actress Lady Gaga (left) and US actor and filmmaker Bradley Cooper pose on the red carpet upon arrival for the UK premiere of the film "A Star is Born" in central London.

## 'Great performances ignored'

On the television side, Oscar-winner Julia Roberts came out empty-handed for her role in Amazon drama "Homecoming" as did Donald Glover for "Atlanta." "Look at how many great performances were ignored because their films were not popular," tweeted Sasha Stone, the founder of specialized industry website Awards Daily. "Does it have anything whatsoever to do with the performance? NO. Does it ever? NO. Sorry but no." Last week, "Vice," a biopic about Dick Cheney starring Christian Bale as the former US vice president, earned the most Golden Globe nominations with six, including best comedy film.

The movie—which only opens in US theaters on Christmas Day—bucked some predictions, earning one more nod than "A Star Is Born." This year's awards are taking place after the #MeToo movement—sparked by bombshell sexual assault claims against movie mogul Harvey Weinstein—dominated the prizegiving season last year, as Hollywood dealt with the fallout from the crisis. Although less high-profile than the Golden Globes, the SAG awards are seen as more of an indicator of Oscars glory, since members represent a disproportionately large section of the roughly 8,000 voters for the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences. The 25th Annual Screen Actors Guild Awards will take place on January 27 in Los Angeles.



Laverne Cox (left) and Awkwafina speak onstage during the 25th Annual Screen Actors Guild Awards Nominations Announcement at Pacific Design Center.





In this file photo Ed O'Brien and Thom Yorke of Radiohead perform during the Austin (Texas) City Limits Music Festival at Zilker Park. — AFP photos

In this file photo British rock band The Cure performs at the Arena Monterrey, State of Nuevo Leon, Mexico.

## Radiohead, Janet Jackson, Cure lead 2019 Rock Hall of Fame class

Pop icon Janet Jackson, angst rockers Radiohead and post-punk innovators The Cure yesterday earned spots in the Rock & Roll Hall of Fame, organizers announced. Also joining the Hall in the Class of 2019 is American folk rock legend Stevie Nicks, already an inductee with her band Fleetwood Mac, but now also honored as a solo artist. British heavy metal group Def Leppard, pop experimentalists Roxy Music and English psychedelic rock harmonists The Zombies round out the list of artists entering the shrine to rock culture. The Cleveland-based Hall of Fame—which surveyed more than 1,000 musicians, historians and industry members to choose the winners—will honor the seven acts in a gala concert on March 29 in New York.

The inclusion of Janet Jackson—whose socially conscious, sexually provocative and eminently danceable tracks made her a household name in the 1980s—comes as the Hall of Fame increasingly expands its definition of rock, considering it less of a strict musical genre and more of a certain swagger. Acts can be inducted 25 years after their first commercial music release.

Jackson, the younger sister of pop king Michael, spearheaded the creation of New Jack Swing with her 1986 album “Control,” creating a fusion sound that came to define the cutting edge of New York’s club scene in the late 1980s. During her decades-long career, Jackson gained fame as much for her intricate choreography and bold fashion sense as her forceful synth melodies—and many industry insiders consider her induction long overdue.

The genre-bending British anthem band Radiohead, which was chosen in their second year of eligibility, soared to fame in the 90s thanks to their haunting power ballad “Creep.” Led by singer and lyricist Thom Yorke, the visionary art rock band went on to radically play with their sound, first with their atmospheric, layered album, “OK Computer,” and later with “Kid A” and “Amnesiac.” The band has enjoyed a cocktail of international commercial success, critical love and adoration from indie purists. — AP



In this file photo Stevie Nicks of Fleetwood Mac performs at the Person Of The Year gala at Radio City Music Hall in New York.



In this file photo singer/songwriter Janet Jackson attends her's and Daddy Yankee's single release party for the new song “Made For Now” at Samsung 837 in New York.



British singer Bryan Ferry, lead vocal of Roxy Music performs during the 44th Montreux Jazz Festival in Montreux, Switzerland.



In this file photo British heavy metal rock group ‘Def Leppard’ make their handprints to be put in the Rockwalk on the sidewalk in Hollywood.



# Fashion mogul Berge's radical chic library goes on sale

Revolutionary tomes by Karl Marx and the Russian anarchist Mikhail Bakunin from the library of one of the richest men in fashion go under the hammer today in Paris. The fourth part of the sale of the late style mogul Pierre Berge's collection of rare books—one of the richest in private hands—are expected to make several million euros. It includes a first edition of Bakunin's seminal "Statism and Anarchy" which was secretly printed in Switzerland in 1873, the only one of his books published during his lifetime.

It will be sold alongside a proof of his old rival Karl Marx's "Das Kapital" which includes the communist thinker's corrections. The publisher's contract for the work and letters between Marx and his French editor, his friend Friedrich Engels and the French proto-anarchist Pierre-Joseph Proudhon went for 1.7 million euros (\$1.9 million) at a separate sale by auctioneers Ader Nordmann's in Paris on Tuesday. The star lot in the Berge sale is likely to be the very first numbered print of a rare luxury edition of Marcel Proust's "Swann's Way", the first volume of his masterpiece, "Remembrance of Things Past".

## Proust, Plutarch, Montaigne

With an asking price of between 600,000 and 800,000 euros it leads what auctioneers deemed a treasure trove of French literature bookended by a rare first edition of Jean Genet's sexually ex-

plicit "Funeral Rites" from 1953. Other expensive tomes in the Berge sale are likely to be a series of Renaissance masterpieces led by the first French translation of Plutarch's "Lives of the Noble Greeks and Romans" from 1508. Printed on parchment with 54 large painted illustrations, it is expected to make up to 600,000 euros.

Bidding for a 1580 first edition of French philosopher's Michel de Montaigne's "Essays" could go to around half a million euros. A 1542 copy of the landmark illustrated botanical work "Notable Commentaries on the History of Plants" by the Swiss naturalist Leonhart Fuchs has a similar estimate. "This fourth sale of his books reflects the Pierre Berge that we knew and loved," said antiquarian books expert Benoit Forgeot, who put the sale together with Sotheby's.

"It is the man interested by a thousand things—obviously literature his main passion—but also mythology, botany, gardens and politics," he told AFP. Berge, who founded the Yves Saint Laurent fashion house with the eponymous designer, his longtime lover, was a supporter of left-wing causes and gay rights. He died in September 2017 after making sure that his and Yves Saint Laurent's fortune would go to their philanthropic foundation. The vast art collection the couple put together was sold off in what was dubbed "the sale of the century" in 2009 for 340 million euros (\$409 million at the time). —AFP



In this file photo French businessman Pierre Berge poses at his office in Paris, France. — AFP

## Faulkner marks decade in music with festive song

Newton Faulkner is marking a decade in music with the release of his new festive single 'Wish I Could Wake Up'. The 33-year-old singer/songwriter first came to attention with his hit song 'Dream Catch Me' in 2007 from his double platinum-selling debut LP 'Hand Built By Robots', and to mark 10 years of his signature percussive guitar-playing, the flame-haired star is putting out a romantic acoustic ballad.

Speaking about the inspiration for the track, Newton said: "This song's about wanting to wake up next to someone special at Christmas, and how that person can make any day, Christmas or not, seem so much better just by being there." As well as the single, Newton has also announced a Best Of album, 'The Very Best Of Newton Faulkner...So Far', comprised of his original material and covers including Queen's 'Bohemian Rhapsody'.

On the album, he said: "The Best Of feels like a real milestone, I'm so proud of it as a body of work and the second disc was so much fun to make. "I love the challenge of covering songs, which probably is reflected in my song choices. "For people that have seen me live before, there are some old favorites and there's also some tracks no one has ever heard me do." Newton will also head out on a UK and Ireland tour in support of the double-sided LP, kicking off on April 22 at Bournemouth's O2 Academy, before wrapping at Glasgow's Old Fruitmarket on May 6.

He said: "It's going to be awesome to be doing a tour where the challenge isn't to do as much new stuff as possible, but just to do the best set, with the best songs from any point in my career." 'Wish I Could Wake Up'



is out on Friday when tickets for the tour go on general from 9am from newtonfaulkner.com. 'The Very Best Of Newton Faulkner...So Far' is due to be released in March.

### Newton Faulkner's 2019 tour dates are as follows:

- 22 April, Bournemouth - O2 Academy
- 23 April, Exeter - Great Hall
- 24 April, London - Palladium
- 26 April, Birmingham - O2 Institute
- 27 April, Liverpool - O2 Academy
- 29 April, Gateshead - Sage Gateshead
- 1 May, Leeds - Becketts Student Union
- 2 May, Dublin Academy
- 4 May, Manchester - Albert Hall
- 5 May, Leicester - De Montfort Hall
- 6 May, Glasgow - Old Fruitmarket — Bang Showbiz

## The Fizz's Jay Aston says UK will never win Eurovision again

The Fizz star Jay Aston doesn't believe the UK can ever win the 'Eurovision Song Contest' ever again. Jay and her bandmates - Mike Nolan and Cheryl Baker and former member Bobby G - were crowned the winners of the annual competition back in 1981 when known as Bucks Fizz with their pop classic 'Making Your Mind Up', and their performance will always be remembered due to the skirt ripping dance routine.

Jay, 57, still watches Eurovision every year but she holds out no hope that a British representative will ever take home the prize again because our European cousins just won't give us the points needed for victory. Speaking exclusively to BANG Showbiz, she said: "I'm not sure we can win again, I think it would be miraculous if the UK could win. We have sent some good things over and we've always come in the bottom five. There's no way we would want to do it again, I wouldn't mind reading out the points though."

Although Jay is despondent about the UK's chances of winning again, she would like The Fizz to be part of BBC show 'Eurovision: You Decide' and help select the artist and track which will represent the UK when the competition heads to Israel in

2019. She said: "The Fizz should be on the panel to pick the song, for sure." The Fizz have just released their first ever festive album, 'Christmas With The Fizz', which is made up of covers of classic songs and a couple of original compositions. Jay - who this year overcame her battle with mouth cancer - admits producer Mike Stock was the driving force behind the LP and he encouraged the trio to pick their favorite songs for the album.

She said: "We'd spoken about doing a Christmas album for years and after we did our album last year with Mike Stock he was

the obvious person to do it with. We were recording a new album at the time, which we had got halfway through, and we went from that to record 'Jingle Bells' in May, which was quite fun. It was very hot in the studio but it was fun. "Mike essentially chose the tracks, but we all threw a few ideas in the hat but they were songs we liked and songs we wanted to cover. Mike wanted to do 'Mull of Kintyre' and we wanted to do 'White Christmas', because we'd done it live a few times. I think it's a really good album and I think it's come out great." —Bang Showbiz



Christmas With The Fizz





This handout photo shows 102-year-old great-grandmother Irene O'Shea during her skydive tandem jump over Wellington in South Australia. — AFP photos



This handout shows 102-year-old great-grandmother Irene O'Shea starting her skydive tandem jump from a plane over Wellington in South Australia.

# 102-year-old great-granny becomes 'oldest' skydiver

A 102-year-old great-grandmother is believed to have become the world's oldest skydiver after plunging 14,000 feet (4,300 meters) through the South Australian sky. Centenarian adrenaline junkie Irene O'Shea said she "felt normal" after a 220 kilometer per hour (140 mph) dive that sent her cheeks flapping wildly.

She completed her first skydive to mark her 100th birthday in 2016, but organizers claimed it was Sunday's successful tandem dive at the age of 102 years and 194 days that earned her a place in the history books. "It was very clear up there, and the weather was good but it was very cold," said O'Shea, according to Australian media. O'Shea took the plunge to raise funds for a motor neurone disease charity, after her daughter died from the illness.—AFP



This handout shows Irene O'Shea during her skydive tandem jump over Wellington in South Australia.



Irene O'Shea (center) after she safely landed upon completing her skydive tandem jump.



Irene O'Shea getting ready to do a skydive tandem jump.



Irene O'Shea during her skydive tandem jump.



Irene O'Shea during her skydive tandem jump.



## Lifestyle | Movies &amp; Music

# Cancer, chaos, tragedy... French film legend Trintignant reaches for poetry

He is 88, has cancer and has had to endure the rock star who killed his daughter attempt a very public comeback earlier this year. Now Jean-Louis Trintignant, the French acting legend who at 83 had critics fighting back the tears at his performance in the Oscar-winning "Amour", is quietly staring down the odds yet again. With theatres and museums in Paris shuttered last weekend by the "yellow vest" protest movement that has shaken France, Trintignant has taken to the stage again with something you might think would calm the spirals—a poetry show.

"There are a lot of anarchist poems in it actually, which worries me a bit," Trintignant told AFP. Rousing rebel verse that a few weeks ago he "took great pleasure in reciting now feel a bit like demagoguery," he admitted in the febrile atmosphere of the street revolt

against President Emmanuel Macron. Trintignant—who first made international headlines when Brigitte Bardot left her husband Roger Vadim for him on the set of "And God Created Woman" in 1956, a film Vadim was directing—learned early to fear the madness of the mob. The day his hometown was liberated from the Nazis in 1944, he was paraded through the streets alongside his mother who had her head shaved for "sleeping with the Germans".

### Lost daughters

In a bitter irony, later the same day his father, a Resistance fighter, returned home in triumph with the American army. As a young conscript, Trintignant was later sent to "pacify Algeria" as the former French colony fought for independence. He was sickened by the "violent hypocrisy" of the war. "It is hardly surprising

that the young men sent there are still incapable of talking about it," he said.

Still greater trauma was to follow when his daughter Marie, an actor herself and a mother of four young sons, was beaten to death in 2003 by her boyfriend Bertrand Cantat, the lead singer of the French band Noir Desir, in a hotel room in Lithuania. After serving four years in prison for her murder, Cantat pulled out of a comeback tour this summer following a string of protests by women's groups outside venues. But Trintignant refuses to give in to bitterness. "He doesn't interest me. I wish I had never met him, that my daughter hadn't met him. But she was deeply in love, and he was too, I think. "But I don't want to see him, to become his friend," he added. —AFP

### Forgiveness 'indispensable'



In this file photo French actor Jean-Louis Trintignant attends a press conference for the film 'Happy End' at the 70th edition of the Cannes Film Festival in Cannes, southern France. —AFP

## Anti-junta film 'Ten Years Thailand' aims to fire political debate

With cat-like humans, soldiers infiltrating an art gallery and brainwashed cadets, dystopian "Ten Years Thailand" is the latest in a pan-Asian film series aiming to stir political debate that debuted in the kingdom Thursday. The original in the "Ten Years" series came out in Hong Kong in 2015 on the back of the "Occupy" pro-democracy protests, with versions from Japan and Taiwan exploring nuclear fallout and socioeconomic problems. The premise asks film-makers to wrestle with the subject of what their country will be like 10 years from now, resulting in unsettling visions of bleak futures.

Big guns from Thailand's new wave cinema, including Apichatpong Weerasethakul and Wisit Sasanatieng, worked on the four short, dark satires on army rule, censorship, mob mentality and cramped free expression, that premiered at Cannes in May. The creators of the omnibus movie, which made it past Thailand's unpredictable film censorship board, see it as a clarion call to encourage critical thinking in a nation run by generals since a 2014 coup.

The target audience are "people worried about the direction the country is going and unhappy with the military being so powerful for the next 20 years", director Aditya Assarat told AFP. Aditya's episode, "Sunset", shows soldiers scouring an art gallery for politically incendiary works, inspired by a real-life confrontation last year in which security forces showed up at a show and ordered exhibits to be removed.

Thailand's junta has kept a tight lid on any form of dissent since seizing power, bringing with them a culture of censorship and banning gatherings of more than five people, an order it only lifted this week. Censorship "harms the artists and... it harms the military as well", Aditya told an audience at an early screening this week in Bangkok.

### 'Catopia'

The Hong Kong version made a splash, picking up the top prize at the Hong Kong Film Awards in the aftermath of the massive pro-democracy protests in 2014. The film, which painted a picture of a city under Chinese control, drew condemnation from mainland Chinese au-



In this handout picture a scene from the "Ten Years Thailand" an actor (left) portraying a soldier raiding a photo exhibition in an art gallery to censor the picture showing a laughing woman in front of Bangkok's landmark Democracy Monument.

thorities. The Thai directors hope to reach an audience beyond the arthouse crowd and strike a wider chord at a time when the country is at a turning point. The military has set elections for February 24 but has used its four years in power to dilute the checks and balances of the country's democratic institutions.

The country also remains bitterly divided between pro-junta elites and supporters of the Shinawatra clan—whose political parties have won every election since 2001 but have been hit by military coups and court cases. Director Wisit explores that rift in the ghoulish "Catopia", which imagines a world in which a man has to try and blend in among a society of human-like cats. Dressed in suits with cat heads they represent the groupthink that takes hold among fractured political classes.

"Thailand is divided between pro-democracy and pro-dictatorship people," he said. "Some people think that if you fight for democracy you are a dirty guy." Apichatpong's "Song of the City" focuses on groups milling around a statue of former dictator Field Marshal Sarit Thanarat while using a soporific device that dulls their senses. The most fiercely anti-junta vignette is "Planetarium" by Chulayarnnon Siriphol. —AFP

## 'Mary Poppins' return brings world some magic, cast say

The return of Mary Poppins to the big screen brings some much needed magic to the world in uncertain times, the cast of the new film about the beloved nanny said on Wednesday as they premiered the highly anticipated movie in London. More than 50 years since Julie Andrews won over children - and adults - around the world with her portrayal of the strict but kind nanny, Disney's "Mary Poppins Returns" sees her doing just that, visiting the now-grown up Michael and Jane Banks in their time of need. Despite cold December weather, the film's picturesque Cherry Tree Lane blossomed outside the Royal Albert Hall venue, with plenty of the blooming plants sprouting up the stairs to a replica of the Banks' house.

British actress Emily Blunt led the cast down a blue carpet, just hours after receiving another award nomination for the role based on the books written by P.L. Travers. "She has a lot of relevance for people around the world when things feel rather fragile," Blunt told Reuters of the character. "She's a great unifier." Blunt said she had not spoken recently to Andrews, who won an Oscar for her performance in the 1964 "Mary Poppins" film, but had heard she had seen the sequel. "I hear she's just seen the film and loved it so that means a lot to us," said Blunt, who like Andrews, sings in the movie. "I hope that generations to come will sing these songs... They're catchy and wonderful." The new film is set some 20 years after the first film, with audiences now introduced to Michael Banks' own three children.

Lin-Manuel Miranda, the creator of the award-winning "Hamilton" musical, plays lamp lighter Jack - a similar role to Dick Van Dyke's chimney sweep in the original movie. "Mary Poppins doesn't come along when everything's OK. Mary Poppins comes along when there's trouble," he said. "I feel like the world is in a scary time and so it feels like a movie the world needs right now." As guests arrived for the premiere, a few miles away British Prime Minister Theresa May was facing a confidence vote triggered by lawmakers in her Conservative party - a ballot she later won. "It's incredibly ... ironic somehow that we're having the premiere tonight just as this vote ... is happening," actress Emily Mortimer, who plays Jane Banks, said. "I think we all



(From left) US actor Lin-Manuel Miranda, British actor Emily Mortimer, British-US actor Emily Blunt and British actor Colin Firth pose upon arrival to attend the European premiere of the film 'Mary Poppins Returns' at The Royal Albert Hall in London. —AFP photos



(From left) Child actors Joel Dawson, Pixie Davies and Nathanael Saleh

need a dose of Mary Poppins ... She helps people see things from a new perspective." Last to arrive was Oscar winner Meryl Streep, who also stars in the film. "It could be seen as being a little bit of a joyless moment in time and it's good to remember what's lovely in life," she said. —Reuters



## Film Review

## GREEN BOOK

By Aakash Bakaya

In college, I use to participate in public speaking contests held by the public speaking and elocution club. I didn't win many of those competitions but the one time I did win (that's why I remember it so well) was during an open jam session where the topic was 'time'. Long story short, I made up a story about building a time machine, setting the date and place to 1960's USA and promptly deciding to not go back to the present and stay where I am.

It got laughs; it got applause and it remains one of my fondest college memories. But it didn't come out of nowhere - USA in the 60's and 70's is a time period I'm most fascinated with. It is a time of tremendous cultural upheaval, political strife and of course the golden age of American cinema. It's also the time period 'Green Book' is set in - 1962 to be precise.

Coming from a self-professed enthusiast about the time, place and people that inhabit this film - it does a great job recreating the atmosphere and is an authentic period piece that will effortlessly transport you there. As a film though, it falls slightly short for being a bit too straightforward in the storytelling department and for not really saying anything new about its themes. Minor shortcomings aside the real meat on this movie's bones are the two lead performances by Viggo Mortensen and Mahershala Ali who are such pleasures to see hone their craft on screen.

Mortensen is no stranger to full-blown body transformations after putting his body on the line as Aragon and his great performances for David Cronenberg in 'A History of Violence' and 'Eastern Promises'. On the other end, Ali is an absolute revelation as the iconic pianist Dr Don Shirley. It's a more subdued role compared to Mortensen and I found the small delicate mannerisms he inserts into his character to be captivating. He remains one of the most exciting actors on the scene and watching both of these amazing performers working of each other is worth the



price of admission alone.

Speaking about revelations, praise must be given to director Peter Farrelly who was the last person I thought would be spearheading a period piece revolving around race relations. The Farrelly brothers created my favorite comedies of the 90's and 00's and I was glad to see at least one of them come back strong here. His touches are all over the story as well with some hilariously witty dialogue and sharp comedic timing from even the smallest roles. It's never hysterically funny but his ability to draw out a laugh or a smile even during some of the film's most dramatic moments is breath of fresh air especially in an age where making a joke requires the public's approval.

The plot is as simple as they come. Italian-American Tony Lip (Viggo Mortensen) is a night club bouncer who is temporarily out of work. A well-connected family man, he tries his best to stay clean and far away from the mob circles his job (which involves punching people) regularly pushes him into. Just as desperate measures started to set in - he gets a call from a record label looking for a driver to take their star pianist out on tour.

Dr Don Shirley is that pianist and he is the definition of an enigma at first. Distant, eccentric and extremely intelligent he is the complete opposite of Tony's lovable but rough demeanor. They are perfect foils to each other and I appreciate that the story

doesn't waste time getting to that point where they at least respect each other. There is a mutual admiration right of the bat and even though Lip is shown being bigoted towards African-Americans near the start of the film, he drops that attitude since he understands his final paycheck depends on it.

What follows is your standard road-trip film only this time it's through the most racist and intolerant parts of USA at the tail-end of its segregation laws. Thankfully it doesn't get too bogged down with any particular predicament the duo land up in. The story moves swiftly and covers quite a bit of ground and expect for one run-in with the police - it stays away from unnecessary modern day parallels. But because it is "inspired" by a true story and is based on real characters (it is even co-written by Tony Lip's real life son) the story as a whole plays it much too safe. The themes are solely based around the two leads and any greater implications are simply ignored. This is far from harsh criticism of the film - I would argue that it's actually beneficial to end product. There is a lighthearted tone throughout and the filmmakers seem to understand that the compassion between its characters is often times more compelling than just saying "racist people are bad".

'Green Book' may not win any major awards come the award season but that shouldn't dissuade you from watching it. Fans of great acting should most



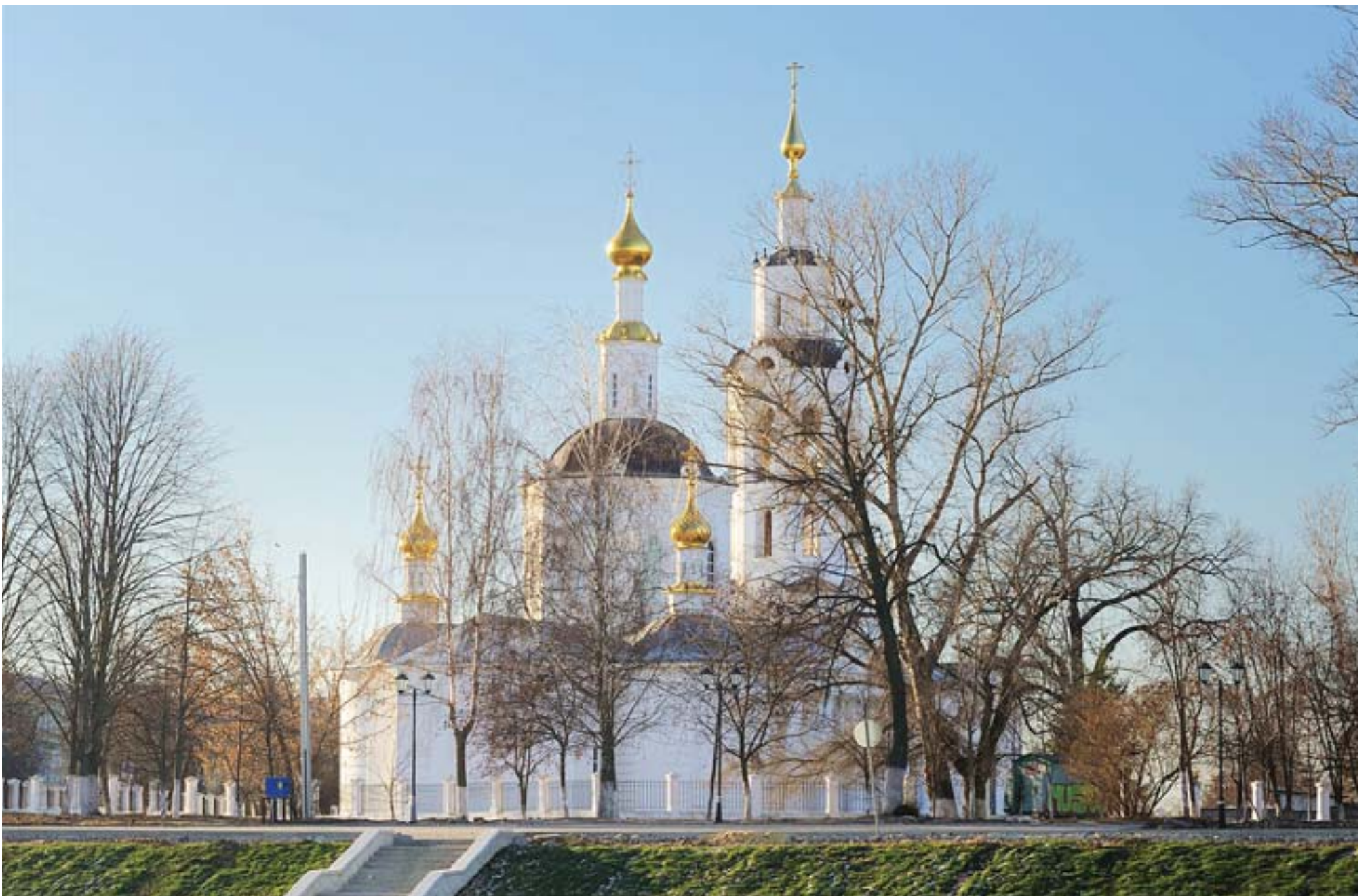
definitely go to watch two absolutely wonderful performances by the leads while those interested in razor-sharp screenwriting will definitely have a favorite quote or two by the end. Lines like "Being genius is not enough, it takes courage to change people's hearts" may not get posted on many Facebook feeds but it is tremendous in the context of the film.

Before going for 'Green Book' I was quite annoyed at the whole cinema "experience". I was either greeted by annoying crowds, blurry screens due to shoddy 3D practices or just a general lack of

quality film screenings at least in cinemas near me. Going to the cinema to watch the next bombastic, explosion-filled movie usually ended up giving me more of headache than a good time. But watching 'Green Book' took me back to the days when I laid back on the couch watching those great middle-of-the-road features you catch randomly on TV. I was filled with a nostalgic comfort I rarely come across in the theatre nowadays and that feeling stayed with me long after the credits.



# *Remedies of the road: Our travel tales of getting sick (and better)*



**G**erm-laden airports, upended sleep patterns and unfamiliar local bugs are just a few of the health risks travelers' face when seeing the world. But sometimes these travel maladies can yield a good story - in the problem solving of travelling companions, the mysterious (and miraculous) local remedies, or the assistance offered by total strangers.

#### **Swept up in Venice**

My friend picked up a nasty bug bite somewhere along the way during a summer spent traversing Europe by train. By the time we got to beautiful Venice, her whole thigh was blotchy, hard and swollen.

Speaking no Italian between us apart from 'please' and 'thanks',

we ventured out to find help. We soon met a lovely dustman, who, upon seeing my friend dragging her leg behind her, taught us the Italian for 'emergency room' while bringing us to the edge of his territory. Once we reached a certain cobbled alley, he gave a whistle and another man appeared pushing a cart with various brushes and shovels sticking out of it. We were then promptly passed





along by the dustmen of Venice repeating 'pronto soccorso', nodding and smiling until we came to the most grand, marble-floored hospital I'd ever seen.

Neither the doctor nor the hospital staff spoke any English, but we all had a bit of French and somehow managed to hobble through the experience with that.

#### A Russian root canal

A friend in St Petersburg once told me that Russia was a good place to have dental work done. I politely nodded, thinking this imparted wisdom would never prove useful to me. And yet there I was, groaning in the railway carriage en route to Smolensk, with a toothache that felt like a constant jackhammer in my jaw.

I was delighted that the staff at the dentist's office in Smolensk spoke some English, then devastated when they could not locate the source of the pain. They prescribed some heavy painkillers and I trudged off miserably to continue my work around the city. A few days later, in the lovely Russian city of Oryol, I sought out my second dentist. Practically in tears, and with my meager Russian, I begged her for help.

With my St Petersburg friend Sascha translating over the phone, the diagnosis was that I needed a root canal, which would be done in two stages over the course of a day. In between procedures, the dentist's husband graciously volunteered to chauffeur me around town so I could finish my research. Sascha was right: I couldn't have asked for better all-round treatment.

#### Flu stricken in Singapore

Stephanie and I had big plans for Singapore, the last leg of our epic, three-week Asia Pacific vacation. I was looking forward to introducing my partner to the bright lights, excellent cuisine and well-ordered pleasures of the Lion City - but the horrible flu we picked up in Brisbane had other plans.

Immediately upon arrival we traded our Hawker Centre crawl for a trip to the medical clinic across from our hotel in Katong, where the doctor prescribed a series of heavy antibiotics, medicated eye drops for conjunctivitis and at least 48 hours of bed rest before boarding our next flight - in exactly two days. 'You run the risk of damaging your eardrums by flying while congested', the doctor cautioned.

We headed straight from the clinic to the plush room I'd booked at the Grand Mercure, where we spent the rest of our trip swallowing pills and applying medicated eye drops, me heading out sporadically for Hainanese chicken rice while Stephanie sought advice on the internet. All queries confirmed the consensus that chewing gum during a flight can help reduce ear pressure. Problem solved: we'd pick up a few packs of gum at the airport.

Alas, the sale of chewing gum is prohibited in Singapore. The leathery dried guava slices were a pale substitute.

#### Big toe remedy, Hong Kong-style

My two children and I had been snorkeling around Malaysia's Perhentian Islands for a week,







the clear waters and swarms of fish lulling us into holiday bliss. Then, on the final night while preparing for our next leg of the journey, I carelessly dropped my laptop like a guillotine onto the big toe of my right foot. To say it hurt more than labor is no exaggeration.

The children nursed me with pillows and ice as my toe turned increasingly blue, the pressure behind the nail mounting. The following day, our itinerary limped us to Hong Kong. On arrival the hotel doctor insisted I go to an outpatient clinic. I questioned his authority, knowing that hospital queues would cut into precious time exploring one of my favorite cities.

Instead I turned the situation into an adventure of sorts, by hauling the kids around in the stifling heat for some rudimentary operation equipment. From a hardware stall in the street market, we bought a packet of nails. From a convenience store, we bought a cigarette lighter. From the hotel mini bar, I retrieved a small bottle of vodka for use as antiseptic. Then I heated the nail and slowly skewered a hole into my throbbing, black-and-blue toenail. My seven-year-old peeked around the corner of the bed, unable to look, while my three-year-old relished seeing the blood slowly bubbling up through the small hole and the evident relief on my face. He lovingly applied a bandage and within the hour we were back on our feet exploring the city.

#### The curative power of kimchi

When I woke to stabbing stomach pains one morning in small-town South Korea, I knew something was awry. My boss at the language academy took me to see the doctor at the only clinic in town. Local farmers awaiting checkups while visiting for market day buzzed at the sight of the English teacher doubled over in pain. My outlook grew grimmer with each wave of cramps.

It darkened more when the clinic's resident, the chief doctor's nephew, barged into the waiting room, holding X-rays and a Korean-to-English dictionary. He and my boss flipped the pages back and forth, talking rapidly, before my boss turned to me saying, 'You need a cut', drawing his finger along his side. He handed me the dictionary, poking at the word 'appendix'.

Reactions swirled through my mind. Are they going to operate on me here? Should I go to Seoul? Should I go home?? Suddenly, in came the chief doctor, waving more X-rays and barking commands. He grabbed the dictionary, flipped some pages and handed it back to me, pointing at a new word: 'constipation'. 'Too much rice,' he said to me. 'Eat more kimchi'. That was the day I realized why my students said 'kimchi is good for health'.



## Comic

### Word Search

#### New York City 1

Find and circle all of the words that are hidden in the grid. The remaining letters spell a secret message.

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

- |                       |                   |                   |                       |
|-----------------------|-------------------|-------------------|-----------------------|
| BASEBALL              | FERRIES           | IMMIGRANTS        | SKYSCRAPERS           |
| BASKETBALL            | FIFTH AVENUE      | LAGUARDIA AIRPORT | SOCCER                |
| BOROUGH               | FINANCE           | MANHATTAN         | SPORTS                |
| BROADWAY              | FOOTBALL          | MEDIA             | STATEN ISLAND         |
| BROOKLYN              | GRAND CENTRAL     | MUSICALS          | ST PATRICKS CATHEDRAL |
| CHINATOWN             | TERMINAL          | NASCAR            | SUBWAY                |
| CONY ISLAND           | GREENWICH VILLAGE | NEW YORK TIMES    | THE BIG APPLE         |
| CULTURAL              | GROUND ZERO       | NYSE              | THE BROOK             |
| EMPIRE STATE BUILDING | HARBOR            | PLAYS             | TIMES SQUARE          |
| ENTERTAINMENT         | HIGHWAYS          | POPULOUS          | UNITED NATIONS        |
| FASHION               | HOCKEY            | QUEENS            | WALL STREET           |
|                       | HUSSON RIVER      |                   |                       |

### Yesterday's Solution

#### Musical Instruments 2

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

- |            |              |           |               |
|------------|--------------|-----------|---------------|
| BASSOON    | FIFE         | HARMONICA | SHOFAR        |
| BONGOS     | FLUGELHORN   | MELOCHEON | SLIDE WHISTLE |
| BOUZOUKI   | GONG         | MOCENO    | STRUMSTICK    |
| BUGLE      | HARMONICA    | NEFER     | TAMBOURINE    |
| CASTANETS  | HARMONIUM    | OCARINA   | TAMBURA       |
| CONCERTINA | HUNTING HORN | PIANO     | TIN WHISTLE   |
| CONCH HORN | JEWS' HARP   | REBEC     | TRUMPET       |
| CUMBUS     | KEYBOARD     | RECORDER  | TUBA          |
| CYMBAL     | LUTE         | SAROO     | VIOLA         |
| DULCIMER   | MANDOLIN     | SAXOPHONE | XYLOPHONE     |

Hidden sentence: MUSIC WITH DINNER IS AN INSULT BOTH TO THE COOK AND THE VIOLINIST

### Crossword 2084



#### ACROSS

- British dominion over India (1757-1947).
- Tag the base runner to get him out.
- A member of a people living in southern Benin and Togo and southeastern Ghana.
- Or or related to the synthetic phase of metabolism.
- An agency of the United Nations affiliated with the World Bank.
- A member of the Taracahitian people of central Mexico.
- Small dark geese that breed in the north and migrate southward.
- A compartment in front of a motor vehicle where driver sits.
- An Arabic speaking person who lives in Arabia or North Africa.
- A fencing sword similar to a foil but with a heavier blade.
- A tricycle (usually propelled by pedalling).
- Harsh or corrosive in tone.
- Any of several small ungulate mammals of Africa and Asia with rodent-like incisors and feet with hooflike toes.
- Secured or held in place by tape.
- American professional baseball player who hit more home runs than Babe Ruth (born in 1934).
- Small terrestrial lizard of warm regions of the Old World.
- English aristocrat who was the first wife of Prince Charles.
- A sock with a separation for the big toe.
- Of a light yellowish-brown color n l.
- A sheath for a sword or dagger or bayonet.
- The 13th letter of the Hebrew alphabet.
- Inherent ability.
- An esoteric or occult matter that is traditionally secret.
- Undergo resorption.
- A basin for washing the hands ('wash-hand basin' is a British expression).
- Hard strong durable yellowish-brown wood of teak trees.
- The mission in San Antonio where in 1836 Mexican forces under Santa Anna besieged and massacred American rebels who were fighting to make Texas independent of Mexico.
- A Chadic language spoken south of Lake Chad.
- An island consisting of a circular coral reef surrounding a lagoon.
- According to the Old Testament he was a pagan king of Israel and husband of Jezebel (9th century BC).
- A loose sleeveless outer garment made from aba cloth.
- A member of the Shoshonean people of Utah and Colorado and New Mexico.
- A federal agency that supervises carriers that transport goods and people between states.
- The mints.
- A widely distributed system consisting of all the cells able to ingest bacteria or colloidal particles etc, except for certain white blood cells.
- Anterior pituitary hormone that stimulates the function of the thyroid gland.
- Plant having a large slender white bulb and flat overlapping dark green leaves.
- A sweetened beverage of diluted fruit juice.

#### DOWN

- A summary that repeats the substance of a longer discussion.
- (sometimes followed by 'of') Having or showing realization or perception.
- A holy war by Muslims against unbelievers.
- Feline mammal usually having thick soft fur and being unable to roar.
- A genus of tropical American plants have sword-shaped leaves and a fleshy compound fruits composed of the fruits of several flowers (such as pineapples).
- A hard gray lustrous metallic element that is highly corrosion-resistant.
- A French abbot.
- A business whose articles of incorporation have been approved in some state.
- On or toward the lee.
- In a straight unbroken line of descent from parent to child.
- A legal document codifying the result of deliberations of a committee or society or legislative body.
- A rechargeable battery with a nickel cathode and a cadmium anode.
- (Old Testament) In Judeo-Christian mythology.
- A small cake leavened with yeast.
- In the same place (used when citing a reference).
- Deciduous South African tree having large odd-pinnate leaves and profuse fragrant orange-yellow flowers.
- A public register showing the details of ownership and value of land.
- A sudden loss of consciousness resulting when the rupture or occlusion of a blood vessel leads to oxygen lack in the brain.
- Someone who works (or provides workers) during a strike.
- A member of an extinct North American Indian people who lived in the Pit river valley in northern California.
- Swedish chemist remembered for his invention of dynamite and for the bequest that created the Nobel prizes (1833-1896).
- (Jungian psychology) The inner self (not the external persona) that is in touch with the unconscious.
- With the mouth wide open as in wonder or awe.
- (usually in the plural) A garment extending from the waist to the knee or ankle, covering each leg separately.
- (Babylonian) God of storms and wind.
- A tort consisting of false and malicious publication printed for the purpose of defaming a living person.
- Avatar of Vishnu.
- Type genus of the family Arcidae.
- A communist state in the Caribbean on the island of Cuba.
- A Chadic language spoken south of Lake Chad.
- A tiny or scarcely detectable amount.
- A cord fastened around the neck with an ornamental clasp and worn as a necktie.
- Pertaining to or associated with agony (especially death agonies).
- A Bantu language spoken by the Kamba people in Kenya.
- (Zoroastrianism) Title for benevolent deities.
- Mated sexually.
- Excessively fat.
- The elementary stages of any subject (usually plural).
- Measuring instrument for indicating speed of rotation.
- Productive work (especially physical work done for wages).
- The basic unit of money in Lesotho.
- The dynasty that ruled much of Manchuria and northeastern China from 947 to 1125.
- Thickening of tissue in the motor tracts of the lateral columns and anterior horns of the spinal cord.
- (British) A waterproof raincoat made of rubberized fabric.
- The habitation of wild animals.

### Yesterday's Solution

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

### Daily SuDoku

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

### Yesterday's Solution

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



## TV Listings



01:30 Iron Man 3  
03:45 Battleship  
06:00 The Fast And The Furious  
07:30 Countdown  
09:05 The Bodyguard  
10:40 Iron Man 3  
12:50 Battleship  
15:00 Shanghai Knights  
16:55 The Tuxedo  
18:35 S.W.A.T.: Under Siege  
20:05 Harsh Times  
22:00 The Big Hit  
23:35 Code Of Honor



00:50 The Crocodile Hunter: Best Of Steve Irwin  
01:45 North Woods Law  
02:40 Monsters Inside Me  
03:35 Great White: The Impossible Shot  
04:25 Running With Wolves  
05:15 North Woods Law  
06:02 Wildest Middle East  
06:49 Pit Bulls & Parolees  
07:36 Vet On The Loose  
08:00 Vet On The Loose  
08:25 Wild Africa: Rivers Of Life  
09:15 Animal Cops Houston  
10:10 Running With Wolves  
11:05 The Crocodile Hunter: Best Of Steve Irwin  
12:00 Wildest Middle East  
12:55 Pit Bulls & Parolees  
13:50 Great White: The Impossible Shot  
14:45 Groomer Has It  
15:40 Big Cat Tales  
16:35 Monsters Inside Me  
17:30 Wild Africa: Rivers Of Life  
18:25 Animal Cops Houston  
19:20 Jaws Comes Home: Return Of The Great Whites  
20:15 Vet Gone Wild  
21:10 Dr. Jeff: Rocky Mountain Vet  
22:05 Wildest Middle East  
23:00 Monsters Inside Me  
23:55 Pit Bulls & Parolees



00:15 Mum  
00:40 Friday Night Dinner  
01:05 Friday Night Dinner  
01:30 Holby City  
02:25 Doctors  
02:55 Doctors  
03:25 Father Brown  
04:15 Death In Paradise  
05:10 Stella  
06:00 Doctors  
06:30 EastEnders  
07:00 Holby City  
07:55 Casualty  
08:50 Father Brown  
09:40 Death In Paradise  
10:35 Casualty  
11:30 Casualty  
12:25 Holby City  
13:20 Father Brown  
14:10 Death In Paradise  
15:05 Casualty  
16:00 Doctors  
16:30 Doctors  
17:00 Doctors  
17:30 Doctors  
18:00 Doctors  
18:30 The Coroner  
19:20 The Coroner  
20:10 Line Of Duty  
21:15 Maigret  
22:55 Father Brown  
23:45 Doctors

03:50 Marcia Clark Investigates  
05:30 Live PD: Police Patrol  
05:55 Live PD: Police Patrol  
06:15 Crimes That Shook Britain  
07:00 Evil Up Close  
08:00 It Takes A Killer  
08:20 Live PD: Police Patrol  
08:45 Live PD: Police Patrol  
09:05 Crimes That Shook Britain  
09:50 Cold Case Files  
10:35 Marcia Clark Investigates  
12:25 Live PD: Police Patrol  
12:55 Live PD: Police Patrol  
13:20 Crimes That Shook Britain  
14:16 Evil Up Close  
15:10 It Takes A Killer  
15:40 It Takes A Killer  
16:05 Homicide Hunter  
17:00 Marcia Clark Investigates  
19:00 Escaping Polygamy  
20:00 Escaping Polygamy  
21:00 Homicide Hunter  
22:00 It Takes A Killer



00:05 South Park (Digital)  
00:30 Broad City  
00:55 The Daily Show With Trevor Noah  
01:20 Takeshis Castle Thailand  
01:45 South Park (Digital)  
02:10 Real Husbands Of Hollywood  
02:35 Broad City  
03:00 The Daily Show With Trevor Noah  
03:25 Broad City  
03:50 Broad City  
04:15 Sweat Inc.  
05:00 House Of Food  
05:50 Ridiculousness Arabia  
06:15 Ridiculousness Arabia  
06:40 Ridiculousness Arabia  
07:05 Friendszone  
07:30 Friendszone  
07:55 Lip Sync Battle  
08:20 Lip Sync Battle  
08:45 Sweat Inc.  
09:30 Takeshis Castle Thailand  
09:55 Takeshis Castle Thailand  
10:20 Takeshis Castle Thailand  
10:45 Friendszone  
11:10 Friendszone  
11:35 Key And Peele  
12:00 Key And Peele  
12:25 Key And Peele  
12:50 Takeshis Castle Thailand  
13:15 Takeshis Castle Thailand  
13:40 Workaholics  
14:05 Workaholics  
14:30 Key And Peele  
14:55 Key And Peele  
15:20 Key And Peele  
15:45 Impractical Jokers  
16:25 Impractical Jokers  
16:50 Impractical Jokers  
17:15 Takeshis Castle Thailand  
17:40 Takeshis Castle Thailand  
18:05 Takeshis Castle Thailand  
18:30 Lip Sync Battle  
18:55 Lip Sync Battle  
19:20 Friends  
19:45 Friends  
20:08 Friends  
20:35 Corporate  
21:00 The Daily Show With Trevor Noah  
21:30 Nick Kroll: Thank You Very Cool  
22:20 Roast Battle UK  
22:45 Tosh.0  
23:10 Tosh.0  
23:35 Nick Swardson: Seriously, Who Farted?



00:30 Weather Top Tens  
01:20 How It's Made  
01:45 How It's Made  
02:10 My Cat From Hell  
03:00 Tanked  
03:50 Ultimate Survival  
04:40 Weather Gone Viral  
05:30 Weather Top Tens  
06:20 How It's Made  
06:40 How It's Made  
07:00 Destroyed In Seconds  
07:25 Kids Do The Craziest Things  
07:50 My Cat From Hell

08:40 How It's Made  
09:05 How It's Made  
09:30 Tanked  
10:20 Ultimate Survival  
11:10 Destroyed In Seconds  
11:35 Kids Do The Craziest Things  
12:00 Mysteries At The Museum  
12:50 Weather Gone Viral  
13:40 Weather Top Tens  
14:30 How It's Made  
14:55 How It's Made  
15:20 My Cat From Hell  
16:10 Xtreme Waterparks  
16:35 Xtreme Waterparks  
17:00 My Cat From Hell  
17:50 Tanked  
18:40 Destroyed In Seconds  
19:05 Kids Do The Craziest Things  
19:30 Penn & Teller Tell A Lie  
20:20 The Carbonaro Effect  
20:45 The Carbonaro Effect  
21:10 How It's Made  
21:35 How It's Made  
22:00 Xtreme Waterparks  
22:25 Xtreme Waterparks  
22:50 Ultimate Survival  
23:40 Penn & Teller Tell A Lie



00:50 Jonestown Massacre: People Magazine Investigates  
01:45 Someone You Thought You Knew  
02:40 American Monster  
03:35 Broken Trust  
04:30 The Perfect Murder  
05:25 Heartbreakers  
06:20 Evil Online  
07:10 I Almost Got Away With It  
08:00 California Investigator  
08:25 On The Case With Paula Zahn  
09:15 Disappeared  
10:10 Grave Secrets  
11:05 Evil Online  
12:00 Blood Relatives  
12:55 On The Case With Paula Zahn  
13:50 I Almost Got Away With It  
14:45 Heartbreakers  
15:40 Evil Online  
16:35 The Perfect Murder  
17:30 On The Case With Paula Zahn  
18:25 Disappeared  
19:20 I Almost Got Away With It  
20:15 Heartbreakers  
21:10 Evil Online  
22:05 Swamp Murders  
23:00 The Devil Speaks  
23:55 American Monster



00:10 Sabrina: Secrets Of A Teenage Witch  
00:35 Binny And The Ghost  
01:00 Alex & Co.  
01:25 Alex & Co.  
01:45 Disney Mickey Mouse  
01:50 Evermoor Chronicles  
02:15 Sabrina: Secrets Of A Teenage Witch  
02:40 Sabrina: Secrets Of A Teenage Witch  
03:05 Binny And The Ghost  
03:30 Binny And The Ghost  
03:55 Hank Zipzer  
04:15 Disney Mickey Mouse  
04:20 Hank Zipzer  
04:45 Alex & Co.  
05:10 Alex & Co.  
05:35 Sabrina: Secrets Of A Teenage Witch  
06:00 Sabrina: Secrets Of A Teenage Witch  
06:25 Binny And The Ghost  
06:45 Disney Mickey Mouse  
06:50 Rolling With The Ronks  
07:00 Miraculous Tales Of Ladybug And Cat Noir  
07:25 Raven's Home  
07:50 Tsum Tsum Shorts  
07:55 Stuck In The Middle  
08:20 Bunk'd  
08:45 K.C. Undercover

09:10 Bizaardvark  
09:35 Miraculous Tales Of Ladybug & Cat Noir  
10:00 Miraculous Tales Of Ladybug & Cat Noir  
10:25 Tangled: The Series  
10:50 Tangled: The Series  
11:15 Bizaardvark  
11:40 Bizaardvark  
12:05 Liv And Maddie  
12:30 Liv And Maddie  
12:55 K.C. Undercover  
13:20 K.C. Undercover  
13:45 Hotel Transylvania: The Series  
14:10 Miraculous Tales Of Ladybug & Cat Noir  
14:35 Miraculous Tales Of Ladybug & Cat Noir  
15:00 Hotel Transylvania: The Series  
15:15 Bunk'd  
15:40 K.C. Undercover  
16:05 Disney Mickey Mouse  
16:10 A.N.T. Farm  
16:35 Bizaardvark  
17:00 Tangled: The Series  
17:25 Miraculous Tales Of Ladybug And Cat Noir  
17:50 Raven's Home  
18:15 Stuck In The Middle  
18:40 Stuck In The Middle  
19:05 K.C. Undercover  
19:30 Bizaardvark  
19:55 Descendants Wicked World  
20:00 Raven's Home  
20:25 Liv And Maddie  
20:50 K.C. Undercover  
21:15 Disney Mickey Mouse  
21:20 A.N.T. Farm  
21:45 Bizaardvark  
22:10 Hotel Transylvania: The Series  
22:35 Stuck In The Middle  
23:00 Miraculous Tales Of Ladybug And Cat Noir  
23:25 Miraculous Tales Of Ladybug And Cat Noir  
23:50 Lolirock



00:00 PJ Masks  
00:25 PJ Masks  
00:50 The Hive  
01:00 Zou  
01:15 Zou  
01:30 Henry Hugglemonster  
01:55 Henry Hugglemonster  
02:20 The Hive  
02:30 The Hive  
02:40 Zou  
03:25 The Hive  
03:35 The Hive  
03:45 Henry Hugglemonster  
04:30 Minnie's Bow-Toons  
04:35 The Hive  
04:45 PJ Masks  
06:00 Disney Muppet Babies  
06:20 Puppy Dog Pals  
06:35 PJ Masks  
06:55 Mickey And The Roadster Racers  
07:29 Vampirina  
07:44 Vampirina  
08:00 Sofia The First  
08:30 Elena Of Avalor  
09:00 Puppy Dog Pals  
10:00 Disney Muppet Babies  
10:20 Paprika  
10:30 Paprika  
10:40 Mickey Mouse Clubhouse  
11:10 Mickey Mouse Clubhouse  
11:40 PJ Masks  
12:40 Paprika  
12:50 Paprika  
13:00 Claude  
13:20 Claude  
13:40 Trulli Tales  
13:55 Trulli Tales  
14:10 Paprika  
14:20 Paprika  
14:30 Vampirina  
15:25 Disney Muppet Babies  
15:40 Paprika  
15:50 Paprika  
16:00 Claude Shorts  
16:25 Vampirina Ghouls Girls Rock!  
16:30 Puppy Dog Pals  
17:00 Mickey And The Roadster Racers  
17:30 Vampirina  
17:45 Vampirina

18:00 PJ Masks  
18:15 PJ Masks  
18:30 The Lion Guard  
19:00 Sofia The First  
19:25 Disney Junior Music Nursery Rhymes  
19:30 Elena Of Avalor  
20:00 Puppy Dog Pals  
20:30 Mickey And The Roadster Racers  
20:45 Mickey And The Roadster Racers  
21:00 Vampirina  
21:40 PJ Masks  
21:55 PJ Masks  
22:15 The Lion Guard  
22:45 Sofia The First  
23:10 Minnie's Bow-Toons  
23:15 Zou  
23:30 Henry Hugglemonster



00:15 Fast N' Loud  
01:05 Cooper's Treasure  
01:50 The Island With Bear Grylls  
02:35 Man v Expert  
03:20 Fast N' Loud  
04:05 Alaskan Bush People  
04:50 Deadliest Catch  
05:35 Storage Hunters UK  
06:00 The Caravan Show  
06:23 Dallas Car Sharks  
06:45 Storage Hunters UK  
07:10 How Do They Do It?  
07:35 Alaskan Bush People  
08:20 The Caravan Show  
08:45 Dallas Car Sharks  
09:10 Deadliest Catch  
09:55 Alaskan Bush People  
10:45 Deadliest Catch  
11:30 Fast N' Loud  
12:20 The Caravan Show  
12:43 Dallas Car Sharks  
13:05 Storage Hunters UK  
13:30 How Do They Do It?  
13:55 Deadliest Catch  
14:40 Fast N' Loud  
15:30 Cooper's Treasure  
16:15 The Island With Bear Grylls  
17:05 Man v Expert  
17:50 Abandoned Engineering  
18:40 How Do They Do It?  
19:05 How Do They Do It?  
19:25 Fast N' Loud  
20:15 Fast N' Loud  
21:00 Diesel Brothers  
21:50 Trans Am  
22:40 Race Night At Bowman Gray  
23:30 Gold Rush



00:15 Randy Cunningham: 9th Grade Ninja  
00:35 Boyster  
01:00 Boyster  
01:25 Counterfeit Cat  
01:45 Counterfeit Cat  
02:10 Randy Cunningham: 9th Grade Ninja  
02:35 Randy Cunningham: 9th Grade Ninja  
03:00 Boyster  
03:20 Boyster  
03:45 Dude That's My Ghost  
04:10 Dude That's My Ghost  
04:35 Counterfeit Cat  
05:00 Marvel's Guardians Of The Galaxy  
05:29 Marvel's Avengers Assemble  
06:00 Marvel's Spider-Man  
06:29 Big Hero 6 The Series  
07:00 Milo Murphy's Law  
07:29 Big City Greens  
08:00 Phineas And Ferb  
08:29 Supa Strikas  
09:00 Supa Strikas  
09:29 DuckTales  
10:00 Big City Greens  
10:29 Phineas And Ferb  
11:00 Phineas And Ferb  
11:29 Furiki Wheels  
12:00 Big Hero 6 The Series  
12:29 Big Hero 6 The Series  
13:00 Gravity Falls  
13:29 Phineas And Ferb  
14:00 Phineas And Ferb  
14:29 Star vs The Forces Of Evil  
15:00 Milo Murphy's Law

15:29 Furiki Wheels  
16:00 DuckTales  
16:31 Space Chickens In Space  
16:45 Space Chickens In Space  
17:00 Big City Greens  
17:29 Big Hero 6 The Series  
18:00 Disney 11  
18:29 Lab Rats Elite Force  
20:00 Marvel's Spider-Man  
20:31 Space Chickens In Space  
20:45 Spider-Man: Into The Spider-Vers Special  
21:00 Furiki Wheels  
21:29 Star Wars Resistance  
22:00 Phineas And Ferb  
22:15 Furiki Wheels  
22:30 Big City Greens  
22:45 Phineas And Ferb  
23:00 Dude That's My Ghost  
23:25 Dude That's My Ghost  
23:50 Randy Cunningham: 9th Grade Ninja



00:05 Revenge Body With Khloe Kardashian  
00:55 Revenge Body With Khloe Kardashian  
01:50 E! News  
02:50 WAGs  
05:30 Celebrity Style Story  
06:00 Revenge Body With Khloe Kardashian  
06:55 E! News Middle East  
08:10 E! News: Daily Pop  
09:10 Botched  
10:05 Celebrity Style Story  
10:30 My Fabulous Me  
12:00 E! News Middle East  
12:15 Keeping Up With The Kardashians  
15:00 E! News Middle East  
15:15 E! News: Daily Pop  
16:15 Hollywood Medium With Tyler Henry  
19:00 E! News  
20:00 Very Cavallari  
23:00 E! News Middle East  
23:15 Model Squad



00:10 One Night With My Ex  
01:00 Emmerdale  
01:30 Coronation Street  
02:30 The Chase  
03:25 Paul O'Grady: For The Love Of Dogs  
04:20 Wedding Day Winners  
05:25 One Night With My Ex  
06:15 Guess This House  
07:10 The Chase  
08:05 Paul O'Grady: For The Love Of Dogs  
08:35 Paul O'Grady: For The Love Of Dogs  
09:00 Wedding Day Winners  
10:05 One Night With My Ex  
10:55 Guess This House  
11:50 The Chase  
12:45 Emmerdale  
13:45 Coronation Street  
14:15 Guess This House  
15:10 The Chase  
16:00 The Voice Kids 2018  
18:50 Emmerdale  
19:45 Coronation Street  
20:10 The Chase  
21:00 The Voice Kids 2018  
23:40 Coronation Street



00:00 Clash Of Warriors  
01:00 Modern Marvels  
02:00 Cities Of The Underworld  
03:00 Hangar 1: The UFO Files  
03:50 Ancient Aliens  
04:40 The Universe  
05:30 Clash Of Warriors  
06:20 Modern Marvels  
07:10 Hangar 1: The UFO Files  
08:00 Cities Of The Underworld  
09:00 Hangar 1: The UFO Files  
10:00 Ancient Aliens  
11:00 The Universe  
12:00 Clash Of Warriors  
13:00 Modern Marvels  
14:00 Cities Of The Underworld



00:00 Who Killed Tupac?  
01:00 The Harvey Weinstein Scandal  
02:30 It Takes A Killer  
02:55 Bill Cosby: The Women Speak



## Stars



### Aries (March 21-April 19)

You may find harmony and beauty to be deeply satisfying to you today. You have a deep desire to get along with everyone that crosses your path. You may also find yourself playing mediator to friends that seem to not be able to see eye to eye today. You may find yourself paying much closer attention to your more intimate relationships. You work to find a balance between home and work life. You may be recognized in the work place for the management skills you are exhibiting and find yourself being offered a position in leadership, Aries. Good luck with your career today.



### Taurus (April 20-May 20)

You are focused and very goal oriented today. It is as if you are on a mission and will let nothing stand in your way. You are motivated and determined to fix all that is around you this not just as you think it should be. You want things your way and refuse to settle for less. This day reveals itself to be a perfect time to spend with a lover or someone close to you as you are feeling a desire to be needed and admired. You will find this will fulfill your needs and leave you with a sense of completion. Your most productive time today will be spent at home.



### Gemini (May 21-June 20)

Relationships are the key to your emotional satisfaction now. You find it very satisfying to surround yourself with all things beautiful. Harmony is what you desire in your life. You have zero tolerance for drama and crave peace. You found yourself only wanting to spend your time with those closest to you. This is a great time to pour your attention into your marriage or partnership. You will find your relationship may prosper from the attention.



### Cancer (June 21-July 22)

You may have a strong desire to get out and about. The social scene seems to be calling your name. A live band, a dance floor, and laughter seem to be what you are longing for. Choose your company wisely because the wrong choice could find you involved in confrontation and your night ruined. You are defiantly marching to the beat of your own drum. Not everyone will appreciate this different side of you.



### Leo (July 23-August 22)

You hate to admit you may be obsessing over a problem, but... You may feel as if your head is in the clouds. Foggy thoughts and scrambled ideas make everything seem as if you are living in a dream world. Do not get carried away focusing on a single problem. You can rest assured you have more than one to focus on. You are under a tremendous amount of mental pressure. Problems will not be solved today and to continue to dwell on this is nothing short of mental torture, Leo. Let it go.



### Virgo (August 23-September 22)

You may find yourself booking a flight. You have a strong desire to spend time with someone special who seems to live far away. You may find spending time with this person will greatly benefit you. This may financially beneficial as well as satisfying an emotional need. It seems you have friends from all walks of life. This is the time to surround yourself with the philosophical or religious contacts. The advice and guidance you could receive from them is much needed now. This is a person who could play a big part in making great things happen in your life now.



### Libra (September 23-October 22)

You may feel as if you are being backed against a wall. You may feel pressured as you are thinking more liberally than those who you have surrounded yourself with. This may be a time you find yourself in conflict and bucking others views on major issues. Stand your ground. You may have to agree to disagree on these issues. Listening and understanding why others feel the way they do is always a healthy approach. Be sure to listen to understand rather than to respond. You will find this leaves others more open to hear what you have to say.



### Scorpio (October 23-November 21)

You have set your focus on providing a strong foundation for your family life. You crave security and the one that will be by your side for a lifetime. You find yourself in a serious mood where deep conversation and planning will help to insure the stability you crave. You are serious about your future and who you want to spend it with. The seeds you plant today will develop the roots of the reward you seek. You are focused and determined to lead a healthy, happy life. You make your health a priority now, a gym membership, meal planning, or making plans to exercise as team, is where your focus is. This is great start to making your plans a reality. You know exactly what you want, and you will make it happen.



### Sagittarius (November 22-December 21)

You will make mistakes today. Fortunately, you learn from your mistakes. A small setback will not diminish what you accomplish. You will dwell on the slip-ups just long enough to make sure they don't happen again. Then you will focus on the good you have done. You will be applauded for your work.



### Capricorn (December 22-January 19)

You are a dreamer. Currently the set of dreams that have had your focus are far from your norm. This is a strange feeling as these dreams are far from what normally motivates you. Do not let outside influences lead you in the wrong direction. If it does not feel right, do not to it. You could find yourself pouring energy and effort into something that has a negative effect on your life in the long run. Gather your thoughts, avoid acting in haste, and discuss this situation with someone whose opinion you value. You had much rather be safe than sorry.



### Aquarius (January 20- February 18)

This is a time you are basing your happiness on the success of your relationships. Harmony and beauty are deeply satisfying to you. The lack of these things in your life will leave you extremely unsatisfied and tense. You may be so focused on your marriage or lack there of you find yourself letting your work life suffer. A one-track mind seems to be where you are at. You may seem to need to work on finding a balance between work and home. You need one to have the other. A time of reflection may help you come to realize you need to put more focus on being at peace with yourself.



### Pisces (February 19-March 20)

Romance and surrounding yourself with others seem to mean the world to you now. You truly want to strive for your relationship with your significant other to be as close to perfect as possible. You want to have the relationship others dream of. You can make this happen. You have always been one to treat others as you desire to be treated. This is the key to the perfection you seek. Live, laugh, and love hard.

## Country Codes

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



## Health

## Green thumb spruces up Bangladesh

**JESSORE:** Ohid Sarder prides a rusted nail from a tree and drops it into his bucket, another eyesore scrubbed from the countryside as he embarks on a one-man mission to clean up Bangladesh. The 53-year-old self-professed tree hugger has been riding his bicycle across the country, in a grassroots effort to free trees of the billboards and clutter nailed to their trunks. Trees in Bangladesh are often used as free advertising space, with every available inch of wood plastered with placards until the trunk is barely visible.

The billboards might disintegrate over time but the nails remain embedded deep in the wood-agitating tree-lover Sarder, who has devoted his life to healing these wounds. "Trees have life. They feel pain just as we do," the self-styled conservationist told AFP in Jessore district in the country's southwest. "I have seen how these nails have killed trees, and how they are causing them pain." Sarder grew up idolizing Jagdish Chandra Bose, a prominent Bengali botanist who wrote about the emotions of

plants in the early decades of the 20th century.

Inspired, Sarder began planting trees in Jhenaidah, his home district, and neighboring Jessore, a passion he kept up for decades. But this year it occurred to him that planting trees was not enough—he needed to protect those already under threat. Traversing battered roads with a bicycle, bucket and a metal rod welded with prongs, Sarder began prying thick nails and spikes from abused trees across the country. Since he began his beautification drive in July he has collected more than 80 kilograms (176 pounds) of them. "It looks easy, but it isn't. It takes a lot of effort to pull out a rusted nail that has been there for years," he said.

Seeking to inspire

It is arduous and thankless work. His wife complains that Sarder, a mason by trade, spends more time with his trees doing unpaid volunteer work than earning a wage. Often, he doubles back on a section of road to discover fresh billboards hammered into his beloved trees.—AFP



**JESSORE:** Bangladeshi tree environmentalist Ohid Sarder, 53, removes nails from a tree trunk near a road in Jessore, a western district of Bangladesh. — AFP

# CLINIC PAGE



Kuwait Times  
248 33 199

## DR. FAHAD AL-MUKHAIZEEM

Consultant Pediatrician

Consultant Pediatrician-Canadian & American  
Board in Pediatrics-Canadian  
Board in Pediatric Emergency



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## DR. WALEED S BUHAIMED

Consultant of General Surgery  
Laparoscopic and Bariatric Surgery



### Academic Certificates – Training

- ◆ Kuwait Board of General Surgery.
- ◆ (IFSO) member .
- ◆ Faculty member of (BEST).
- ◆ Member of Kuwait Surgical Association.

### Scope of clinical Practice.

- ◆ Bariatric surgeries.
- ◆ Gallbladder stones surgeries.
- ◆ Abdominal wall and hernia surgeries.
- ◆ G.I. surgeries.
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- ◆ Anal surgeries.

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Fellow of Royal College of Surgeons-Canada  
A rare Subspecialty in Microscopic Ear Surgery, Cochlear implant & Ear diseases

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- ◆ Diagnosis & treatment of snoring & obstructive sleep apnea in clinic without surgery
- ◆ Diagnosis & Treatment of voice and swallowing disorders.
- ◆ Diagnosis & Treatment of Head and Neck benign & malignant tumors.

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**DR. FAHAD S BUHAIMED**  
Consultant Cosmetic Dermatologist & Hair Transplant, NY

**ACADEMIC CERTIFICATES:**

- ◆ Dermatology board certified.
- ◆ Fellowship training program in cosmetic dermatology and hair transplant, New York, USA.
- ◆ Member of American cosmetic dermatology society.
- ◆ Referee reviewer of International Journal of Dermatology.

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- ◆ Body & Face Contouring.
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**DR KHALED ALMERRI**  
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**Academic Certificates, Trainings & Fellowships:**

- ◆ American Board of General Surgery
- ◆ Fellow of American College of Surgery
- ◆ Canadian Board of General Surgery
- ◆ Fellow of the Royal College of Physicians & Surgeons of Canada
- ◆ American Board of Colo – Rectal Surgery
- ◆ American Board of Surgical Critical Care

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Friday, December 14, 2018

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Kuwait Airways	171	FlyDubai	22414400
Jazeera Airways	177	Qatar Airways	22423888
Wataniya Airways	22 066 536	KLM	22425747
American Airlines	22087425	Royal Jordanian	22418064/5/6
	22087426	British Airways	22425635
Jet Airways	22924455	Air France	22430224

## CHANGE OF NAME

I, Roque Pedro Souza, holder of Indian Passport No: H1831444 and Civil ID no. 256022900498, has changed my name to Roque Souza.

12-12-2018

I, YENAMADALA ANANTHA LAKSHMI S/o. SURI BABU hold-

er of Indian Passport No. L3848064 & Civil ID No. 263011008467 has changed my name from YENAMADALA ANANTHA LAKSHMI to GADDAM SURYA KUMARI hereinafter in all my dealings and documents, I will be known by name of GADDAM SURYA KUMARI. (C 5436)

11-12-2018

STATE OF KUWAIT  
DIRECTORATE GENERAL OF CIVIL AVIATION  
METEOROLOGICAL DEPARTMENT



Tel: (+965) 161 Ext: 6819 - 6817  
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[www.met.gov.kw](http://www.met.gov.kw)



## Expected Weather for the Next 24 Hours

**BY NIGHT:** Cool with light variable wind, with speed of 06 - 16 km/h with a chance for mist forming over some areas and some scattered clouds will appear.

**BY DAY:** Mostly Sunny with light variable wind to light to moderate north westerly wind, with speed of 06 - 26 km/h.

WEATHER WARNING			No Current Warnings		
STATION	MAX. REC.	MIN. EXP.	SFC. CHART 13/12/2018 1200 UTC		
KUWAIT CITY	22 °C	14 °C			
KUWAIT AIRPORT	23 °C	11 °C			
ABDALY	25 °C	09 °C			
BUBYAN	--- °C	--- °C			
JAHRA	24 °C	13 °C			
FAILAKA ISLAND	21 °C	14 °C			
SALMIYAH	20 °C	17 °C			
AHMADI	21 °C	16 °C			
NUWAISIB	23 °C	12 °C			
WAFRA	23 °C	10 °C			
SALMY	24 °C	11 °C			

## 4 DAYS FORECAST

DAY	DATE	WEATHER	Temperatures		Wind Direction	Wind Speed
			MAX.	MIN.		
Friday	12/14	Mostly Sunny	24 °C	11 °C	VRB-NW	06 - 26 km/h
Saturday	12/15	Mostly Sunny	22 °C	10 °C	NW-VRB	08 - 32 km/h
Sunday	12/16	Sunny and some scattered clouds will appear later on	22 °C	08 °C	NW-SE	08 - 28 km/h
Monday	12/17	Partly cloudy to cloudy causing rising dust with a chance for rain that might be thundery at times	24 °C	13 °C	SE	12 - 45 km/h

## TOMORROW PRAYER TIMES

Fajr	05:09
Sunrise	06:34
Zuhr	11:43
Asr	14:32
Sunset	16:51
Isha	18:14

## RECORDED YESTERDAY AT KUWAIT AIRPORT

MAX. Temp.	22 °C
MIN. Temp.	10 °C
MAX. RH	99 %
MIN. RH	44 %
MAX. Wind	N 32 km/h
TOTAL RAINFALL IN 24 HR.	0 mm

## Hospitals

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

## Clinics

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



## Business

FRIDAY, DECEMBER 14, 2018

**38** Asian equity markets surge;  
Sino-US trade tensions ease**39** Iran engineers its  
currency recovery**41** US weekly jobless claims  
tumble to a 49-year low

FRANKFURT AM MAIN: The headquarters of the European Central Bank (ECB) is seen yesterday in Frankfurt am Main, western Germany. —AFP

# ECB ends post-crisis asset purchases

## Euro eases as Bank cuts growth forecasts

**FRANKFURT:** The European Central Bank officially ended yesterday its lavish post-crisis asset purchase scheme but promised to keep feeding stimulus into an economy struggling with an unexpected slowdown and political turmoil. Having long flagged the end of quantitative easing, the ECB had little choice but to stop the bond buys. But it signaled it would take its time before tightening policy any further given slower growth, a looming trade war, the prospect of a hard Brexit and budget tensions in Italy and France. “Continuing confidence and increasing caution,” was how ECB President Mario Draghi at his news conference described the Bank’s basis for ending the 2.6 trillion euro (\$2.95 trillion), four-year-long QE scheme.

Asked for an assessment of how effective he thought the unprecedented stimulus package had been in helping the euro zone to emerge from the 2007/08 financial crisis, he said that for some of the last four years QE had “been the

only driver of this recovery”. Hoping to reassure markets, the ECB earlier repeated its promise that rates would be kept at their current record lows at least through next summer and that it would keep open-ended the time horizon for reinvesting cash from maturing bonds.

“The Governing Council intends to continue reinvesting, in full, the principal payments from maturing securities purchased under the APP for an extended period of time past the date when it starts raising the key ECB interest rates,” the ECB said. That was a tweak to its previous guidance that reinvestments would continue for an “extended period” after bond buys end. Draghi said the decision on reinvest-

ments was unanimous. With yesterday’s decision, the ECB’s rate on bank overnight deposits, currently its primary interest rate tool, remains at -0.40 percent, while the main refinancing rate, which determines the cost of credit in the economy, remains at 0.00 percent.



### New economic forecasts seen gloomier on growth

some of the bank’s assumptions about the broader economy. Its latest projections put euro zone growth at 1.9 percent and 1.7 percent for this year and next, respectively, each 10 basis

#### Sweeteners

The ECB’s problem is that growth is weaker than policymakers thought even just weeks ago, while the predicted rise in underlying inflation has failed to materialize, putting in doubt

points lower from the ECB’s last forecasts in September. It put 2018 inflation at 1.8 percent—up from an earlier 1.7 percent estimate—but saw it slightly lower next year than previously, at 1.6 percent.

Overall inflation may be near the ECB’s target of near 2 percent now but falling oil prices suggest a dip in the months ahead and a solid rise in wages is not feeding through to prices, leaving the bank with an unexplained disconnect. The new forecasts, coupled with his comment that the balance of risk was now tilted towards the downside, caused the euro to weaken 0.3 percent against the dollar and German 10-year bond yields to fall more than a basis point. Draghi said the bank would detail in a 1430 GMT news release later how the bank would reinvest cash—about 200 billion euros next year. While most of these decisions are expected to be technical, they should give the ECB enough flexibility to provide support. —Reuters



## Business

# Asian equity markets surge; Sino-US trade tensions ease

## Policy support expectations lift China shares

**SHANGHAI:** Asian equity markets surged yesterday on signs of easing Sino-US trade tensions and expectations that China will step up efforts soon to support its cooling economy. After a quiet start, MSCI's broadest index of Asia-Pacific shares outside Japan was up more than 1 percent by midday, building on early gains made after British Prime Minister Theresa May survived a no-confidence vote.

Regional gains were concentrated in Chinese shares, with Chinese blue-chips up 1.9 percent and Hong Kong's Hang Seng index gaining 1.4 percent. Japan's Nikkei stock index was 1 percent higher, while Australian shares gained 0.4 percent. US stock futures rose 0.5 percent, pointing to a firmer opening on Wall Street. Markets are slowly growing less pessimistic about the chances of a Sino-US trade deal after a slew of news this week pointed to easing tensions between the two powers.

Reuters reported on Wednesday that Chinese state-owned companies have bought more than 1.5 million tons of US soybeans in the first major US soybean purchases in more than six months. The purchases are the most concrete evidence yet that China is making good on pledges made when Presidents Donald Trump and Xi Jinping met on Dec 1 and agreed to a 90-day detente to negotiate a trade deal. But markets have been stung by false signals in the past and Yoshinori Shigemitsu, a global market strategist at JPMorgan Asset Management, cautioned against reading too much into trade headlines.

"US-China trade negotiations are subject to very high uncertainty. So lots of headlines come and go, and markets come and go also," he said. "We

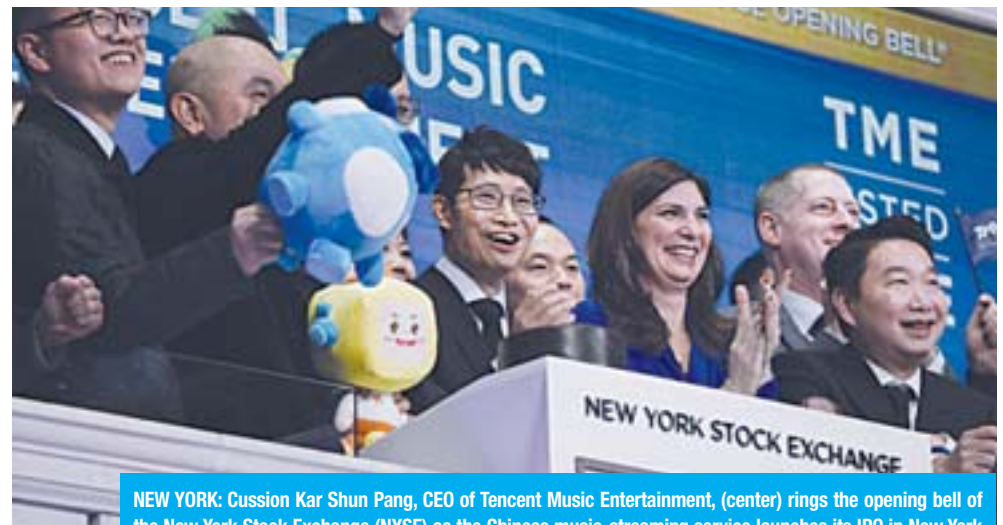
have to see the evolution of this negotiation." China also appears to be toning down its high-tech industrial development push, dubbed "Made in China 2025," which has long irked the United States, according to new guidance to local governments. But it remains to be seen if Beijing will meet Washington's demands for stronger protection for US intellectual property.

"In the scheme of things and were this to prove true, this is far more relevant than China agreeing to restart purchases of American soybeans, or even reducing the tariff on US car imports from 40 percent to 15 percent, as has been indicated in the last 24 hours," analysts at National Australia Bank said in a note. But China's economic woes are deeper rooted than just trade, and global investors are also banking that Beijing will roll out more support measures in coming months to reduce the risk of a sharper slowdown.

Zhang Gang, an analyst at China Central Securities, said investor expectations of further policy support were rising ahead of a key policy meeting. The Central Economic Work Conference (CEWC) is typically held in mid-December. Major economic growth targets and policy goals are discussed but typically not publicly announced until the National People's Congress in March. Some analysts expect China's economic growth could slow to around 6 percent next year, the slowest pace since 1990, from around 6.5 percent in 2018.

### Confidence vote

In the currency market, sterling gave up some gains after rallying from a 20-month low after



**NEW YORK:** Cusion Kar Shun Pang, CEO of Tencent Music Entertainment, (center) rings the opening bell of the New York Stock Exchange (NYSE) as the Chinese music-streaming service launches its IPO in New York City. Tencent Music priced its IPO shares late Tuesday at \$13 per American depository share. —AFP

May survived a party no-confidence vote. It was last trading down 0.04 percent at \$1.2624. But analysts expect gains in the pound will be fleeting, as May appeared no closer to getting her EU divorce agreement through parliament, raising the risk of a chaotic exit in March. "The fact remains that the EU is highly unlikely to offer the reassurance MPs are demanding on the Irish backstop," analysts at ING said, adding there was a risk that a parliamentary vote on the Brexit deal will not take place until later in the first

quarter of 2019.

"In the meantime, the lack of clarity and elevated risk of 'no deal' is set to see economic activity slow further," they said. ING expects UK growth to halve in the fourth quarter from the third. The euro was also higher, up 0.04 percent at \$1.1375 after Italy's government offered to lower its deficit target next year to 2.04 percent of gross domestic product, below the 2.4 percent level that the European Commission had rejected as too high. —Reuters

## Home comforts - and a curfew for Huawei executive on bail

**VANCOUVER:** Accused of sanctions busting and forced to abide by a curfew and wear an ankle bracelet as she awaits possible extradition to the United States, China's "Princess of Huawei" could be said to have fallen spectacularly from grace. But Meng Wanzhou, heiress to her billionaire father's global tech conglomerate, is managing to surround herself with a few home comforts. Huawei's chief financial officer was arrested on December 1 on a US warrant for alleged sanctions-breaking dealings with Iran, while changing planes in Vancouver.

She faces more than 30 years in jail if convicted, but was freed on Can\$10 million bail Tuesday night pending the outcome of an extradition hearing, which could take months, or even years, if appeals are made in the case. The following morning, Meng was spotted by AFP answering the front door of her Vancouver house to three visitors bringing flowers who arrived in a sedan with diplomatic plates. Outside, a handful of local residents walked their dogs past a group of journalists while a security guard watched from a car down the block. Later, Meng stepped out to offer reporters

slices of pizza that she'd had ordered in (they politely declined).

Meng's husband Liu Xiaozong in 2009 bought the six-bedroom house where she must stay in Vancouver's Dunbar neighborhood - a leafy quiet enclave of single-family homes a few blocks from an urban forest. Although valued at a hefty Can\$5.6 million, the house - on a large corner lot with a view of the Pacific coast city's majestic north shore mountains - does not stand out as particularly ostentatious. Colleen McGuinness, who lives in the neighborhood, said the reaction to the executive's arrival has been muted. "I don't think I'll see her at the grocery store," McGuinness told AFP. "She's obviously been here before, she's just another person in the neighborhood, but with a bit of an entourage."

### Chinese-Canadians divided

Meng's husband Liu resided at the 28th Avenue home up until 2012 while working on a Masters degree, and the couple's young son attended a local pre-school. Meng's in-laws have also spent several summers at the house, and her mother and eldest son visited too. "While my work obligations have typically required that I travel extensively, I always try to spend at least 2-3 weeks in Vancouver every summer," she said in court documents. The couple bought a second home in the tony Shaughnessy neighborhood worth an estimated Can\$16.3 million. —AFP

## Vitol, rival oil traders in spotlight of Brazil bribery probe

**SAO PAULO:** Brazil's epic "Car Wash" corruption investigation has taken down presidents and elite businessmen, and led to the largest corporate leniency deal ever signed. But graft allegations lodged by prosecutors last week against four of the world's largest oil trading companies - Vitol SA, Trafigura, Glencore PLC and Mercuria Energy Group - have opened an explosive new phase in the long-running probe. Federal prosecutors allege the European multinationals and some smaller players collectively paid at least \$31 million in bribes over a six-year period to employees at Brazil's state-led oil company Petrobras to sell them oil at sweetheart prices.

They said the firms' top brass had "total and unequivocal" knowledge that they were fleecing Petrobras and that the illicit activity may still be ongoing. More than 600 pages of legal documents reviewed by Reuters portray what prosecutors describe as a bustling criminal enterprise fueled by creativity, competition and greed. Authorities say the trading companies often used freelance middlemen in an effort to cover their tracks, allowing these businessmen to negotiate deals and pay off Petrobras collaborators using bank accounts in several countries.

Emails obtained by investigators show intermediaries hustling to profit from their connections, authorities said. Some shared spreadsheets divvying up

to the last cent their cut of the spoils from deals they allegedly sealed with crooked Petrobras employees. Prosecutors said the messages also show that rings of middlemen knew about one another and battled fiercely for the favor of the big oil-trading firms. Some discussed their attempts to woo top executives with promises of delivering more shady trades and fatter profits than rivals.

One intermediary griped that Vitol was "not at all sentimental" and would choose whomever could secure them the biggest returns. "Now you are the flavor of the month, next month there is a new flavor," the middleman lamented in the email. Brazilian authorities last week searched the Rio de Janeiro-area offices of Vitol, Trafigura and Glencore as well as other entities they allege participated in the scheme. Police said they could not locate a physical office in Brazil for Mercuria. No charges have been filed. Mercuria has denied wrongdoing. Mercuria, Vitol and Glencore said they would cooperate with the Brazilian investigation, while Trafigura said it was reviewing the allegations. Trafigura, Mercuria and Vitol said they have zero-tolerance policies for bribery and corruption. Glencore said it takes ethics and compliance seriously. Petrobras said it was cooperating with authorities and viewed itself as a victim of the alleged corruption. Eight people have been arrested, including two employees of Petrobras whom the oil firm has since fired because of "strong evidence against them that they were involved in irregularities," the company said in a written statement. Interpol alerts have been issued for three other suspects who are outside Brazil, including a Petrobras trader based in Houston. —Reuters



## Business

# Iran engineers rial recovery as it defies US crippling sanctions

## Authorities boost dollar supplies, intimidate speculators

**TEHRAN:** Iran is intervening in the foreign exchange market and threatening speculators to engineer a dramatic recovery of its rial currency, easing pressure on the oil-exporting economy as Tehran defies renewed US sanctions. The rial jumped to 105,500 against the US dollar on Wednesday from 117,000 at the end of last week - and 152,500 at the end of October, according to foreign exchange website Bonbast.com (<https://www.bonbast.com/>). The Financial Tribune and some other Iranian media reported on Tuesday that the rial had risen beyond 100,000 to the dollar. The foreign exchange market, however, has no single, official set of prices and traders often quote slightly different levels.

The rial's rebound, from record lows around 190,000 hit in late September, is good news for a government that is struggling to prevent US sanctions on Iran's oil, banking and other industries from pushing the economy deep into recession. President Donald Trump reimposed US sanctions on Iran earlier this year after pulling out of world powers' 2015 nuclear deal with

Tehran. Washington has vowed "maximum pressure" on Iran's economy to force it to accept tougher limits on its nuclear and missile programs. Iran has ruled this out.

Rial weakness earlier this year disrupted Iran's foreign trade and helped boost annual inflation fourfold to nearly 40 percent in November. The weak currency has been a complaint of sporadic street protests since late last year. If the government can support the value of the rial in coming months, it may be able to bring down inflation, improving living standards, and reduce capital flight from Iran. "Because of the stronger rial, initial fears among many about the sanctions have eased somewhat, and fewer people are trying to buy dollars," a Tehran-based economist told Reuters, declining to be named because of political sensitivities.

### Supplying market with dollars

Iranian businessmen and economists contacted by Reuters said Iran's central bank was now supplying large amounts of dollars to the market - not only inside Iran but in foreign loca-

tions where the currency is traded, particularly Iraq and Dubai. At the end of last week, state news agency IRNA quoted central bank governor Abdolnaser Hemmati as saying the bank would do everything in its power to obey an order from Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei to strengthen the rial.

Meanwhile, two men charged with economic crimes were executed last month, including Vahid Mazlounin, dubbed the "sultan of coins" by local media. He was accused of manipulating the currency market, according to Mizan, the news site of the Iranian judiciary. Thirty men were jailed this month for up to 20 years for economic crimes, the judiciary said. Iranian economists said the campaign against economic crimes, combined with Khamenei's order to strengthen the rial, had made many traders more wary of bidding the currency lower.

Mehrdad Emadi, an Iranian economist who heads energy risk analysis at London's Betamatrix consultancy, said Tehran had deliberately allowed at least part of the rial's depreciation to occur earlier this year in order to meet its financial needs.

Authorities were able to sell dollars earned from oil exports at ultra-expensive rial rates near 190,000, raising cash to recapitalize state-linked banks and pension funds, he said. Now that the exercise has been completed, they are moving the rial back to levels they consider more comfortable, he added.

Nevertheless, the rial remains 59 percent below its value of 42,890 at the end of last year, and Emadi said the currency could come under fresh pressure to fall in 2019, depending on the impact of the sanctions and oil price levels. In March, the International Monetary Fund estimated Iran was running a current account surplus and had over \$100 billion of gross official reserves. Those numbers suggested Tehran might have enough reserves to defend the rial comfortably. However, the IMF also said Tehran was having difficulty accessing some of its reserves as its relations with foreign banks were constrained by the threat of sanctions. Meanwhile, sanctions could cut the current account surplus sharply. —Reuters

## Chinese fishing deal makes waves ahead of Madagascar polls

**ANAKAO:** The sun glistens on waves lapping against wooden fishing boats as their sails ripple in the breeze coming off the Indian Ocean. Nearby a young man with a diving mask bobs below the water's surface armed with a stick to lure his catch into a net while also trying to snare fish on a nylon line. In Anakao, a traditional fishing community in southwest Madagascar, the community known as Vezo - which means "rowing strength" - has fished for generations.

But the arrival last year of six fishing trawlers off the coast, and a subsequent deal between a local private body that promotes Madagascan businesses and Chinese investors, have stirred anger in recent months, at a time when the country is going to the polls in presidential elections. "If this carries on, we'll be eating sand," warned Fulgence, a fisherman in Anakao. He does not dare venture out when the six Chinese vessels are at sea, claiming that a number of his nets have been cut.

### 'The Chinese take everything'

"The Chinese take everything and chuck the little dead fish back into the sea," complained Marco Randrianjaka, echoing the grievances of many of his fellow seafarers. "Without the small ones, they won't be able to reproduce down the line." But China's Mapro South, the company responsible for the six new vessels, denies the claims. Their nets' mesh is large enough to allow the smaller fish to escape, said Lifu Jun Li, a company manager in Toliara, a port town one hour away from Anakao by boat. Against the backdrop of an already tense situation both locally and nationally due to the presidential poll, a new fisheries deal with Chinese investors has provoked an outcry on the island where malnutrition is widespread.

The deal, which was not publicized, is understood to go much further than the six Chinese-funded trawlers already in operation. The \$2.7-billion (2.4-billion-euro) agreement includes, among other things, 330 modern, refrigerated vessels of up to 14 meters long (up to 46 feet) being delivered to Madagascan fishermen. They will "replace the traditional wooden boats", according to Madagascar's Development and Business Promotion Agency (AMDP), which negotiated the deal with China's Taihe consortium. The ships, supplied to local fishermen



**ANAKAO:** Women rest on a beach in Anakao - a traditional fishing community in southwest Madagascar. —AFP

free of charge, will help them "increase their production capacity", according to an AMDP official, who declined to be named.

### 'Pre-judging'?

A proportion of fish caught by those participating in the scheme will be sold locally. The Chinese will buy the "surplus" at a favourable but undisclosed price, said the AMDP official. According to him, the deal will promote "local development" in Madagascar - one of the world's poorest countries, which is also blighted by corruption. The official blamed the outcry on the fishing community "pre-judging" the project - something they deny. The 330 new boats will eventually produce 130,000 tons of fish annually, according to the AMDP - roughly the equivalent of the country's entire production in 2016. "But we already face over-fishing in some regions," said Rijaso Fanazava, a fisheries expert at the World Wildlife Fund in Madagascar. Fanazava believes that tens of thousands of fishermen risk losing their livelihoods if stocks are diminished.

"How will they live?" he said. A recent round table that brought together the AMDP and 30 affected organizations failed to allay their fears. "The only impact assessments given by the AMDP have been economic in nature, we haven't had anything on the environmental and social impacts of the project," said not-for-profit groups in a joint statement. The AMDP stresses that the deal provides for an environmental initiative to protect the sustainability of marine life off Madagascar's coasts. —AFP

## Berlin treads softly-softly on Macron over deficit

**BERLIN:** Germany is taking a softly-softly approach to French President Emmanuel Macron's use of government largesse to calm violent "yellow vest" protests, government sources say, as Berlin puts European stability above fiscal discipline. A reluctance to criticize publicly contrasts with complaints about France from Italy whose populist coalition government is in a stand-off with Brussels over its own big-spending budget which includes a sharp spike in the deficit. "It's good news that things are calming down. France is Germany's most important partner and we have no interest in seeing it destabilized for the long term," a senior German government source said.

Ministers have been urged not to stoke confrontation with Paris as Macron attempts to end mass demonstrations against his pro-business reforms, promising tax and spending measures for the lowest earners worth billions of euros (dollars). "We don't yet know all the details of the measures and how they'll be paid for, but in principle it's not up to other (EU) member states to judge them," Chancellor Angela Merkel's spokesman Steffen Seibert said Wednesday.

### Damping down fires

Especially since the financial crisis of 2008, Germany under Merkel has prioritized tight budgets, with deficits held to well under the EU three percent of GDP limit. Her governments have also slashed accumulated total debt, bringing it down towards the EU ceiling of 60 percent of GDP. They have not been shy of passing judgment on less stringent fellow EU members - such as Italy - and have opposed reforms to the 19-nation euro single currency that could mean more risk sharing between capitals.

But for now Berlin's larger concern is a political crisis across Europe that has been fired by populist victories, including Britons' 2016 vote to quit the European Union. Italy, too, has been largely spared a wagging Teutonic finger this year despite its deficit-busting budget which the EU, in a first, rejected outright, insisting that Rome try again. "We see it in France, we see it in other countries, we have an urgent responsibility to halt these populist movements in the European elections" next May, another government source said. —AFP



## Business

# 'Ingenious' fix for Japan's empty houses - homes for single moms

## Empty and abandoned homes are a growing problem

**BANGKOK:** A Japanese charity that turns empty homes into housing for single mothers has won a major international award, drawing attention to the stigma and challenges that such women face in the wealthy nation. Little Ones, based in Tokyo, was named a World Habitat Award winner yesterday for converting vacant and abandoned houses into homes for single mothers at subsidized rates.

The non-profit has helped more than 300 single mothers find a home in Tokyo, Osaka and Chiba since its inception in 2008. "Japan has a culture that makes it difficult for women to work after having children, which makes life exceptionally hard for single mothers," said

Little Ones' chief executive Kunihisa Koyama. "Apartment owners often refuse single mothers because they are not considered financially stable. The social stigma, lack of economic opportunities and high costs in cities like Tokyo mean the majority of single mothers live in poverty," he said.

Japan is among the world's wealthiest nations, yet its single mothers are amongst the worst off. Fewer than half receive alimony, and many are often unable to work. The child poverty rate for working single-parent households in Japan is the highest among wealthy nations, according to the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD). Japan's single-mother

households rose by about half to 712,000 between 1992 and 2016, the ministry of health said.

At the same time, empty and abandoned homes are a growing problem in the ageing nation, totaling 9 million homes, or about 14 percent of the housing stock. By 2033, it is estimated that about one-third of Japanese homes will be vacant as the population declines. A 2015 law to promote the reuse of abandoned houses, has enabled Little Ones to work with owners and local authorities to renovate such homes more easily with a government grant. "For a single mother and her children, safe and affordable housing is a starting point, so they can move forward in their lives," Koyama told the Thomson

Reuters Foundation.

Little Ones also provides a support network and other resources to the women, he said. The program is an "ingenious" use of vacant homes to address the "stigmatization and discrimination single mothers experience in access to housing", said Leilani Farha, the United Nations special rapporteur on the right to adequate housing. By renovating abandoned homes and bringing them back into use, the project is "physically improving neighborhoods for the community at large", the World Habitat Awards advisory group said in a statement. The awards, supported by UN Habitat, are presented to 10 innovative housing projects every year. —Reuters

## Japan plans tighter regulation of tech giants

**TOKYO:** Japan is planning to tighten regulation of tech giants like Google and Facebook after an expert panel called for better oversight on competition and privacy, an official said yesterday. Japan has followed in the footsteps of other countries in scrutinizing the dominant role played by the world's largest information technology companies, including Big Four tech firms Google, Apple, Facebook and Amazon. The government has now issued a report based on expert opinion that urges new regulatory oversight plans by next year. Despite bringing benefits, tech giants "tend to monopolize the market through their features such as... low costs and economies of scale," the report said.

It calls for better protection of consumer privacy and for more fairness and transparency from the firms about technologies that control market access. "Based on the report, the government will officially announce principles for new regulations" in the next two weeks, a trade ministry official said. Japan's anti-trust authorities have already said they plan a probe into whether global tech firms are using their market leader positions to exploit contractors or obstruct competition. Japan's decision to tighten regulations comes as European authorities crack down on US tech giants.

Earlier this year, the European Union issued a record 4.34 billion euro (\$5 billion) anti-trust fine to Google, accusing it of using the Android system's huge popularity to promote its Google search engine and shut out rivals. Google has appealed the decision, arguing that the EU's accusations were unfounded, but said last month it would comply with the decision in order to avoid further fines. And the European Parliament in September approved a controversial EU copyright law that hands more power to news and record companies against internet behemoths like Google and Facebook, though the firms have pledged to fight that ruling. —AFP

## Apple to build new \$1 billion campus in Austin, Texas

**TEXAS:** Apple Inc said yesterday it would spend \$1 billion to build a second campus in Austin, Texas that will house as many as 15,000 workers, amid a broader push by many US companies to create more jobs at home. The iPhone maker had announced at the start of the year it would invest \$30 billion in the United States, taking advantage of a tax windfall stemming from US President Donald Trump's sweeping tax reforms. The 133-acre campus in Austin will employ workers across various functions including engineering, R&D, operations and finance. The city is already home to the second largest number of Apple employees outside its headquarters in Cupertino, California.

Apple will also set up sites in Seattle, San Diego and Culver City, California and hire over 1,000 employees each in these locations, while also expanding operations in Pittsburgh, New York and Boulder, Colorado over the next three years. Many American multinationals have been facing political pressure to ramp up investments at home as part of Trump's "America First" policies, which have left the United States embroiled in a bitter trade war with China. The president has also warned of tariffs on iPhones and other Apple products imported from China.

Apple's technology rival Amazon.com Inc last month ended a months-long search for its second headquarters, picking New York City and an area just outside Washington, DC for massive new offices, with plans to create thousands of jobs. The new Austin campus will be located less than a mile away from Apple's existing facilities, and will first house 5,000 new employees with the capacity to expand to 15,000. The company, which last year moved into its sleek "spaceship" campus in Cupertino, said jobs at the new Austin center would include engineering, research and development, finance and sales functions. —Reuters



**CALIFORNIA:** A sign shows the new Apple Park Visitor Center at Apple's new headquarters in Cupertino, California. Apple unveiled plans yesterday, for a \$1 billion campus in Texas that will create jobs for the tech giant outside Silicon Valley, a move made without the fanfare of the recent Amazon headquarters bidding war. —AFP



## Business

# Debt-trapped Czechs excluded as economy grows; debt soars

## Exodus to grey jobs hurts economy, jeopardizes pensions

**USTI NAD LABEM:** Olga Petikova first borrowed a few hundred dollars in the 1990s to furnish her young family's apartment. Later, she turned to payday loans to make ends meet as her husband struggled to make his new business a success. The debt soared. Two decades on, she owes 2 million crowns (\$86,938), 11 times her annual income, and is subject to 15 seizure orders on her property and much of the money reaching her bank account. Her case is not uncommon in the Czech Republic, now the richest of the European Union's ex-communist countries.

People in the same situation often work in the black market to avoid having to declare income that will be forfeited to repay their debts, aggravating a labor shortage cited by nearly two-thirds of companies as an obstacle to growth. Similar "debt traps"—the result of poor financial awareness, years of loose regulation of lenders, costly repossessions and tough laws on bankruptcy—also help fuel support for extremist politicians in poorer areas. Even small debts like

unpaid fines or utility bills can grow into sums many can never repay. "I just tell my children to never do like I did," Petikova said. She now has a stable job but most of her salary goes on debt repayments. She gets by with help from her now-adult children.

At the end of 2017, 863,000 Czechs—nearly 10 percent of the adult population—faced at least one seizure order, meaning their income above a legal minimum can be redirected to cover debts and fees. Half of them faced four or more orders. A total 4.67 million of seizure orders were outstanding, including for companies, for debts with a face value of 239 billion crowns (\$10.8 billion) — nearly 5 percent of GDP. In neighboring Germany, whose population is eight times larger, there were 2.48 million seizure orders, official data shows.

Seizures in Slovakia, with only half the Czech population, were even higher, at 3.76 million in late 2017, but personal bankruptcies had cut that to 2.89 million a year later. A recent survey showed some 60 percent of Czech companies

see lack of skilled workers as an obstacle to growth, compared to a European average of 42 percent. While prospective workers are unwilling to labor for no gain, the paperwork required to employ a person with a seizure order is also a burden on companies, said Eva Velickova, a spokeswoman for the Czech Confederation of Industry. "The indebtedness of people is a problem for both society and the economy," Velickova said.

The tough Czech approach to debtors is rooted in the country's transformation from communism. Laws to encourage private enterprise adopted in the early 2000s made it easier for creditors to get their money back by paying a repossession agent to collect the debt. Agents' fees were once so lucrative that some offered to pay more than 100 percent of nominal value for hard-to-recover small debts, according to Daniel Hule of People in Need, a human rights group that focuses domestically on social exclusion.

"We let the law be bent against society, in favour of various interest groups. That is the

main problem," Hule said. "Rather than (the Czech) population being delinquent, it is a relic of a bad system." Fees are lower now, but a standard seizure procedure can quickly transform a debt of around 1,000 crowns—the fine for riding public transport without a ticket—into about 10,500 crowns, according to a calculator on People in Need's website. In Germany, the equivalent figure would be about 3,900 crowns.

Seizure of income can leave debtors with as little as 6,225 crowns (\$273.23) per month, a quarter of the average net wage for a single person. Half of seizures are for debts of 10,000 crowns or less. This can be boosted by welfare payments but those are lost as income rises—taking away any incentive to earn more. A 2016 study for the human rights minister said tens of thousands of people were working only illegally due to account seizures. "Debtors lose motivation not just to work harder, but to work at all, they often drift to the grey economy," said Ladislav Mincic, chief analyst at the Czech Chamber of Commerce. — Reuters

## US weekly jobless claims tumble to near 49-year low

**WASHINGTON:** The number of Americans filing applications for jobless benefits tumbled to near 49-year lows last week, which could ease concerns about a slowdown in the labor market and economy. Other data yesterday showed import prices dropping by the most in more than three years in November as the cost of petroleum products tumbled and a strong dollar weighed on prices of other goods, pointing to subdued imported inflation.

Tightening labor market conditions bolster expectations that the Federal Reserve will raise interest rates at its Dec. 18-19 policy meeting. With inflation likely to remain tame through the first half of 2019, economists see fewer rate hikes next year. The Fed has increased borrowing costs three times this year.

Initial claims for state unemployment benefits dropped 27,000 to a seasonally adjusted 206,000 for the week ended Dec 8, the Labor Department said yesterday. Last week's decline in claims was the largest since April 2015. Claims hit 202,000 in mid-September, which was the lowest level since December 1969. Data for the prior week was revised to show 2,000 more applications received than previously reported. Economists polled by Reuters had forecast claims falling to 225,000 in the latest week. Claims shot up to an eight-month high of 235,000 during the week ended Nov. 24.

The Labor Department said only claims for Virginia were estimated last week. The four-week moving average of initial claims, considered a better measure of labor market trends as it irons out week-to-week volatility, fell 3,750 to 224,750 last week. While difficulties adjusting the data around holidays likely boosted applications in prior weeks, there were worries the labor market was losing momentum given financial market volatility, the fading stimulus from a \$1.5 trillion tax cut package and the Trump administration's protectionist trade policy.

Last week's sharp drop in claims also suggests a slowdown in job growth in November was likely the result of worker shortages. Nonfarm payrolls increased by 155,000 jobs after surging by 237,000 in October. With the unemployment rate near a 49-year low of 3.7 percent, Fed officials view the labor market as being at



VANCE: An employee works on the doors a Mercedes-Benz C-Class at the Mercedes-Benz US International factory in Vance, Alabama. — AFP

or beyond full employment. US Treasury yields briefly edged up after the data. US stock index futures were trading higher while the dollar was slightly stronger against a basket of currencies.

In a second report yesterday, the Labor Department said import prices dropped 1.6 percent last month, the biggest decline since August 2015, after an unrevised 0.5 percent increase in October. Economists polled by Reuters had forecast import prices decreasing 0.9 percent in November. In the 12 months through November, import prices rose 0.7 percent. That was the smallest annual increase since November 2016 and followed a 3.3 percent rise in October.

The report came on the heels of data showing weak overall producer and consumer inflation readings in November. It supports economists' expectations that inflation could remain moderate through the first half of 2019. The Fed's preferred inflation measure, the core PCE price index excluding food and energy, increased 1.8 percent on a year-on-year basis in October, the smallest gain since February, after rising 1.9 percent in the prior month. It hit the US central bank's 2 percent target in March for the first time since April 2012. Most economists expect the Fed will raise interest rates twice next year, although traders expect no more than one rate increase. Last month, prices for imported fuels and lubricants tumbled 11.0 percent after rising 3.2 percent in October. — Reuters

## Ageing Japan: Dementia puts financial assets of the elderly at risk

**TOKYO:** Yumiko Okubo, 71, had forgotten how to heat up food. "What's a microwave?" she asked her husband, Eiichi. Yumiko was in the early stages of dementia, struggling with vocabulary and unable to teach the kimono-dressing classes she had run for 25 years. The difficulty with everyday tasks has made life challenging for her and Eiichi, who has been caring for her since 2008. But she is also unable to deal with her finances — a situation that experts say is increasingly common in fast-ageing Japan and that puts trillions of yen worth of assets at risk. Rika Kambayashi, a social worker in Kyoto, says she has seen many cases of dementia patients withdrawing large sums without a clear grasp of what they are doing or why.

In one example, she said, a woman in her 90s withdrew 20 million yen (\$266,000) of her savings at a grandson's urging. "She was saying she withdrew nine or ten. It took me a while to realise she was talking about a number of banknote rolls," Kambayashi said. A roll is typically one hundred 10,000 yen notes. "It was clearly a case of abuse." Dementia has been diagnosed in more than 5 million Japanese. The government estimates that number will increase to 7 million to 8 million, or 6 to 7 percent of the total population, by 2030.

The OECD has a somewhat lower estimate that dementia will affect 3.8 percent of Japan's population by 2037, still the highest among the 35 OECD states and far above the average of 2.3 percent predicted for the group. Japanese with dementia will hold about 215 trillion yen (\$2 trillion) in financial assets by 2030, compared with 143 trillion yen now, according to estimates by Dai-ichi Life Research. Many companies now face risks in doing business with people with dementia, whose families may return later to ask that the transaction be cancelled, said Jin Narumoto, professor of psychiatry at Kyoto Prefectural University of Medicine. — AFP



## Sports

# Susie Wolff has more than gender on her agenda

## Encouraging and highlighting female involvement in motorsport

**LONDON:** Susie Wolff can expect plenty of attention when Formula E starts season five this weekend with a first ever race in Saudi Arabia, a country that only this year ended a ban on women driving. The Scot, who served as a Williams development driver in Formula One before hanging up her helmet in 2015, is the first and only female team boss in the all-electric city-based racing series.

The 36-year-old is also active in encouraging and highlighting female involvement in motorsport through her 'Dare to be Different' initiative. But, while happy to stand out by example, Wolff is looking forward to a time when her gender becomes less of a talking point.

"I've never played on my gender. It was a little bit of a shock to me, when I was announced in my role (last June), that it was still all about my gender," the shareholder and principal of the Monaco-based Venturi team told Reuters in an interview.

"Even now still, for every interview I do it's still a massive part talking about my gender and gender issues within the sport. "I'm not doing what I do to prove what a woman is capable of. I'm not doing what I do to make Formula E more diverse. I'm doing what I do to be successful. If that's inspirational, then great."

Wolff does not have to look far for her own inspiration—no further than home, in fact. Husband Toto has led Formula One world champions Mercedes to the last five constructors' and drivers' titles and Wolff said she had learned a lot from how he goes about his job.

"Especially this year when the challenge was even greater, how he builds his team, how he puts the people together and really makes sure that they are motivated in the right way," she said.

"The energy he brings into the team, the energy that you feel when you go to the factory or walk into that team at a race weekend. "They have an absolute trust and belief in each other and when

failures happen, they learn from them. They don't allow cracks to appear. They come out of it even stronger and that takes a lot of mental strength. "He is inspirational how he does it and I'm lucky to watch it first hand."

### STEP UP

Wolff has also had to show plenty of mental strength through her career, chasing a dream of trying to become the first woman to compete in Formula One since 1976. That did not happen but she did take part in two grand prix practice sessions for Williams, a team also with a woman at the helm in Claire Williams.

Venturi, owned by businessman Gillo Pastor, is her debut in team management. "The main job for me right now is getting all the structure in place and making sure that the team is led in the right way," she said. "Because of the step up in competition in Formula E we also need to step up."

The team lineup is Brazilian ex-F1 racer Felipe Massa and Swiss-Italian Edoardo Mortara, while Switzerland's Simona de Silvestro is the test driver. De Silvestro has raced previously in the series, which has attracted increasing manufacturer interest including Mercedes in 2019-20, and will feature in a test session with some seven women drivers on the Ad Diriyah layout on Sunday.

Wolff is supportive of that move, promoted by local organisers, but also wants to see some real substance emerge from it. "I do hope some of those girls can go out and really show what they are capable of and that it can lead to more long-term opportunity, because it shouldn't just be a one-off test day which is window-dressing," said Wolff. "It has to lead to more."

"We need to get more women into sport, whether that's young girls in karting or off the track. The more we get into sport, the more



Susie Wolff

you are going to get rising to the top of the sport," she added. "You need to get female talent which is good enough to compete at the right level because no team is going to compromise on on-track performance just to tick a gender box." — Reuters

## NBK sponsors Flare Sports Festival for third consecutive year

**KUWAIT:** National Bank of Kuwait (NBK) sponsors the Flare sports festival for the third consecutive year. The festival is organized by Flare Fitness starting from January 25th, 2019 until January 27th, 2019 at Gulf University for Science and Technology (GUST).

The sponsorship comes in line with NBK's commitment to support youths' health. This sponsorship aims to spread physical awareness and attract youth to participate in sporting events.

Yousef Al-Shaya, Managing Partner at Flare Fitness visited National Bank of Kuwait Public Relations and highlighted the successful partnership with NBK for the past three years.

In his turn, NBK Public Relations Team Leader, Talal Al Turki welcomed Al Shaya and commented on NBK's sponsorship to this sports event " Our sponsorship comes in line with the bank's customary and on-going spirit of corporate citizenship as well as the vital role it plays in supporting youth and their health. NBK always strives to em-



power youth to realize their potentials, providing different supportive opportunities".

"The competition participants are University students.

NBK's booth will hold various sports challenges and distribute rewards to the winners and participants", added Al Turki. "The purpose of this event is to increase fitness awareness for all Kuwait citizens. This event highlights the potential of youth in regards to fitness and sport awareness".

NBK has always considered supporting

youth an essential part of its social and philanthropic outreach which comes in line with the bank's commitment to encourage a merit-based system in health, education and environment that promotes the best and the brightest the country has to offer.

It's worth mentioning that this is the fifth year Flare Fitness is running the Festival. the Festival is a fitness challenge and a health weekend for sports enthusiasts. This event aims at increasing fitness awareness and elevate Kuwait's Fitness.

## India's Sindhu stuns number one Tai in badminton Tour Finals

**SHANGHAI:** India's P.V. Sindhu pulled off a shock at the badminton World Tour Finals yesterday as she defeated top-ranked Tai Tzu-ying of Taiwan in three thrilling games. Sindhu sank to her knees at the end of an exhausting 14-21, 21-16, 21-18 victory in 61 enthralling minutes in the Chinese city of Guangzhou.

The 23-year-old, a silver medallist at the Rio Olympics in 2016, faces Zhang Beiwen of the United States on Friday looking to make it three wins out of three in Group A.

It was a disappointing day for Taiwan. As well as Tai going down to the sixth-ranked Sindhu, men's world number three Chou Tien-chen also lost, this time in the men's draw. Chou was on the end of an 18-21, 21-11, 21-14 defeat to South Korea's buoyant Son Wan-ho.

There was no such trouble for men's number one and world champion Kento Momota of Japan. He is in ominous form as he looks to put the seal on a breakthrough year and swatted aside Thailand's Kantaphon Wangcharoen 21-15, 21-7 for a second win in a row.

China's Shi Yuqi, one of the main threats to red-hot Momota, was even more emphatic in dismissing Anthony Sinisuka Ginting of Indonesia, 21-8, 21-19 in 37 minutes. — AFP



## Sports

# India, Australia brace for fiery Test at new Perth venue

## Sharma and spin spearhead Ashwin ruled out of Perth Test

**PERTH:** The shiny new Perth Stadium is expected to conjure up nostalgia-tinged memories of its fiery predecessor, offering conditions a desperate Australia hope will spur a series-leveling victory over India in the second Test starting today. The 60,000-seat arena will host its first test after a rich 47-year run at the nearby WACA, located on the opposite bank of the Swan River, and the grassy drop-in wicket unveiled on Thursday has fueled anticipation of a pace bowler's paradise.

Recent results suggest that will be the case as ball has thoroughly dominated matches at the Burswood stadium this season, including Australia's tame dismissal for 152 in a heavy one-day international defeat to South Africa last month. Australia had enjoyed a stranglehold over opponents on the fast and bouncy WACA wicket, losing just four tests in the past two decades. Three of those defeats were to South Africa, who relished the pace-friendly conditions similar to their homeland.

India's famous 72-run victory in 2008 was their sole triumph at the WACA, halting a Ricky Ponting-led Australia's world-record equaling 16-match winning streak.

The tourists were humiliated by an innings and 37 runs four years later, the last time India played a test in Perth. After falling short by 31 runs in Adelaide, captain Tim Paine still has plenty of concerns about an inexperienced lineup, although Australia named an unchanged

side for the test with struggling opener Aaron Finch retaining his place. The absence of the suspended Steve Smith and David Warner was exposed in Adelaide, where Australia made modest scores of 235 and 291 against a disciplined Indian attack as Shaun Marsh and Travis Head were the only home batsmen to hit fifties.

### HUGE CHALLENGE

Australia's woes extend to spearhead Mitchell Starc, who has been under the microscope having taken just 12 wickets in his past five tests, and his major control issues in India's second innings would not have improved his confidence. Paine, on a positive note, is fit to play after he appeared to injure his troubled right index finger on the final day in Adelaide. He said his team was wary of India's momentum after the visitors won their first ever series-opener in Australia. "They have a bit of a sniff of something special," Paine told reporters. "We know it's going to be a highly competitive test and a huge challenge for our whole group."

A confident India have been dealt a double injury blow, however, with batsman Rohit Sharma and spin spearhead Ravichandran Ashwin, who took 6-149 in Adelaide, ruled out on the eve of the Perth test.

In-form pace trio Mohammed Shami, Jasprit Bumrah and Ishant Sharma remain available as India strive for a maiden test series triumph in Australia. "I was pretty happy to see the pitch



**PERTH:** Australia's Aaron Finch (R) takes a catch during a training session in Perth yesterday, 2018, ahead of the second cricket Test match against India. — AFP

the way it is," India captain Virat Kohli said. "I hope that no more grass is taken off the pitch because that will mean the first three days will be, obviously, very lively and we, as a team, are happy with that." Even though the four-Test

series started in nail-biting fashion, ticket sales have reportedly been sluggish with just 20,000 spectators expected on a scorching opening day with temperatures set to hit 38 degrees Celsius. — Reuters

## WI hope to end series drought against B'desh

**SYLHET:** West Indies captain Rovman Powell said yesterday his men were "upbeat and confident" of clinching the deciding one-day international against Bangladesh and sealing their first series win in four years.

The touring side won Tuesday's match in Dhaka by four wickets after losing the opener, levelling the three-match contest 1-1 and setting the stage for a series decider in Sylhet today.

The Caribbean side last won an ODI series in 2014 at home against Bangladesh and are desperate to end the drought. Since then, they have capitulated in 11 series, managing their best result with a draw against minnows Afghanistan last year.

"It is on the tip of everyone's tongue. West Indies haven't won an ODI series for quite some time. This is a grand opportunity to change it," Powell told reporters in Sylhet yesterday. "The guys are upbeat and confident of doing it tomorrow." They came close to defeating Bangladesh in July on home soil, suffering a 2-1 loss. In October, they went down to India 3-1. A win

would remove some sting from West Indies' humiliating drubbing by Bangladesh in the Test series in November and December, when the home side wrapped up both matches inside three days.

Powell said his side had to improve on their winning flair displayed in the second ODI. Opener Shai Hope hit a career best 146 off 144 balls not out, as West Indies toppled Bangladesh's 255-7 with two balls in hand to complete their first win in the tour. "We have to work on all three aspects of the game. One game doesn't change the fact that we are still not batting well as a team. We still need to work on our bowling and fielding," Powell said.

Pace bowler Oshane Thomas worked up some lively pace to leave Bangladeshi batsmen unsettled in both the games. "Bangladeshis don't like fast bowling. We are definitely looking to exploit it. Hopefully tomorrow we can do that," Powell said.

Bangladesh skipper Mashrafe Mortaza played down suggestions the hosts were rattled by Thomas' pace. "In both the matches, his economy rate was close to six. So there is no issue. If they think he is their best bowler we are relaxed," said Mashrafe. This will be first ever ODI hosted in Sylhet, in Bangladesh's northeast. The ground has hosted seven Twenty20 internationals and a Test. The West Indies will wrap up their tour of Bangladesh with three Twenty20 internationals. — AFP



**SYLHET:** West Indies cricketer Kemar Roach delivers a ball during a practice session ahead of the third One Day International (ODI) between Bangladesh and West Indies at the Sylhet International Cricket Stadium in Sylhet yesterday. — AFP

## Pakistan captain calls on squad to play 'without fear' in SA

**KARACHI:** Pakistan skipper Sarfraz Ahmed yesterday urged his fellow teammates to play "without fear" during their tour of South Africa—a country where they have won only two Tests during their past five tours.

The Pakistani side is en route to South Africa to play three Tests, five one-day internationals and three Twenty20 internationals, with the first Test starting in Centurion on December 26. Pakistan head into the series after losing 2-1 to New Zealand in the United Arab Emirates last week. In the wake of the tough loss, Sarfraz said he still had high hopes of earning a good result against the Proteas.

"Conditions in South Africa are tough with bouncy and seaming pitches so anyone who plays without fear and with a big heart will succeed," Sarfraz told AFP. Pakistan's two wins out of 12 Tests in South Africa came in 1998 and 2007, having lost nine with just one draw. On their last tour in 2013, Pakistan were routed 3-0 and bowled out for their lowest Test score of 49 in the first Test in Johannesburg, with both senior batsmen Younis Khan and Misbah-ul-Haq in the line-up.

Now without the two stalwarts, Pakistan will look to Azhar Ali and Asad Shafiq to help guide the squad. "We need big innings from both Azhar and Shafiq and they are capable of doing that, so if we put good totals on board we have a good bowling attack to win the match," said Sarfraz, who also singled out recalled paceman Mohammad Amir as key to any success. — AFP



## Sports

# Chicago Blackhawks blast Penguins, end 8-game skid

## Kase nets hat trick, Ducks rally to top Stars

**CHICAGO:** Marcus Kruger scored the tiebreaking goal in the third period Wednesday, and the Chicago Blackhawks broke an eight-game losing streak with a 6-3 win over the visiting Pittsburgh Penguins. At 3:49 of the third, Kruger was at the lip of the crease when he converted a centering pass from the corner by Andreas Martinsen to give the Blackhawks a 4-3 lead. Jonathan Toews and Brandon Saad added empty-net goals in the last 62 seconds. Toews finished with a goal and two assists while Kruger, Martinsen, Saad and Brent Seabrook each had a goal and an assist for Chicago. Alex DeBrincat also scored for the Blackhawks, who moved out of last place in the NHL, a point ahead of the Los Angeles Kings. Bryan Rust broke a goal slump with a hat trick to account for the goals for Pittsburgh, which had been 3-0-1 in its previous four games. The Penguins fell to 0-6-3 in their past nine games against the Blackhawks.

### FLAMES 6, FLYERS 5 (OT)

Johnny Gaudreau scored the overtime winner to cap a three-point night, and Sean Monahan tallied twice, including a game-tying goal with seven seconds left in regulation, as host Calgary stormed to a comeback over Philadelphia. Trailing 5-3 and with their goalie pulled, the Flames rallied late. After Rasmus Andersson scored his first NHL goal with 68 seconds left on the clock, Monahan netted his 20th of the season as time

was nearly up. Monahan set up Gaudreau on an odd-man rush for the winner 35 seconds into overtime. David Rittich, who took the net at the start of the third period, stopped four of the five shots he faced to record the victory.

### DUCKS 6, STARS 3

Ondrej Kase recorded his first career hat trick and Brandon Montour added the go-ahead goal with eight minutes remaining as Anaheim scored four times in the third period to rally for a victory over visiting Dallas. Kase's third goal and Montour's game-winner came 1:21 apart in the third period as the Ducks earned their seventh win in eight games. Jakob Silfverberg added a quick insurance goal, and Hampus Lindholm sealed the win with an empty-netter as the Ducks matched their season high for goals in a game. Brandon Montour produced a goal and three assists—all four points coming in the third period—for Anaheim. Miro Heiskanen, Blake Comeau and Alexander Radulov scored for the Stars, who lost for just the second time in their last six games.

### GOLDEN KNIGHTS 3, ISLANDERS 2

Tomas Nosek scored the tiebreaking goal early in the third period, and visiting Vegas beat New York. Jonathan Marchessault and William Karlsson also scored the Golden Knights, who earned their first-ever win against the Islanders. New York was the only team Vegas had not



**CHICAGO:** Patrick Kane #88 of the Chicago Blackhawks passes around Riley Sheahan #15 of the Pittsburgh Penguins at the United Center on Wednesday in Chicago, Illinois. —AFP

beaten since joining the NHL last season. Anthony Beauvillier and Adam Pelech scored for

the Islanders, who have lost two straight (0-1-1) and six of eight (2-4-2). —Reuters

## Cowboys, Colts carry momentum into clash

**DALLAS:** The game-winning touchdown catch Amari Cooper made in overtime last week might have been pure luck, but there is no receiver in the NFL currently having a greater impact on his team than the one Cooper is making with the Dallas Cowboys.

Reeling and losing prior to Cooper's acquisition from the Oakland Raiders for a first-round pick, Dallas has rattled off five straight wins since dropping his debut game with the team to Tennessee. A sixth consecutive victory Sunday against the Colts in Indianapolis, coupled with losses by the Philadelphia Eagles (6-7) and the Washington Redskins (6-7), would clinch the NFC East title for the Cowboys (8-5).

In his six games with Dallas, Cooper has 40 catches for 642 yards and six touchdowns. Pro-rate that over a full season and you have more than 100 receptions for more than 1,700 yards. In his last 20 games with the Raiders, Cooper managed just 960 yards.

Cooper registered 10 catches for 217 yards and three scores last week as the Cowboys topped the Eagles 29-23 in overtime. With every catch and every big play, the question comes up: Why did Oakland owner Mark Davis think it was good business to trade his top receiver?

"He was a great, great player," Davis told the Dallas Morning News. "We always had the fastest guy on the field no matter what. It just didn't work out in our system." While few things work out in whatever system the Raiders use these days, business is booming for the Cowboys and the Colts (7-6). Indianapolis earned a 24-21 win at Houston last week, not only snapping the Texans' nine-game winning streak but also keeping the Colts in contention for the AFC's second wild-card spot.

Indianapolis, which is tied with the Baltimore Ravens, Miami Dolphins and Tennessee Titans, may have the NFL's hottest quarterback. Andrew Luck strafed Houston for 399 yards and two touchdowns last week, and outside of an unfathomable clunker two weeks ago in a 6-0 loss at Jacksonville, he has been playing at perhaps the highest level of his career over the past seven games.

In the Colts' six wins in that seven-game span, Luck posted a passer rating of more than 100. His return to health and dominance has led to success for first-year coach Frank Reich. "Really proud of how the guys came out and fought," Reich said of the win in Houston. "Looking forward to keeping that same mindset and approach coming back home against another hot team. It will be a good test for us."

Containing Cooper might determine if the Colts can pass that test. "He's trying to get integrated into our team, and he's done that really quickly," Dallas coach Jason Garrett said. —Reuters

## Djokovic, Halep named 2018 ITF world champions

**LONDON:** Novak Djokovic and Simona Halep were yesterday named as the 2018 ITF world champions by the governing body of global tennis. World number one Djokovic receives the honour from the International Tennis Federation for the sixth time, while it is the first year that Romania's top-ranked Halep has been recognised.

"I am very honoured to be named ITF world champion again," said Serbia's Djokovic, who stormed back to the top of the rankings after injury, winning Wimbledon and the US Open.

"I am particularly proud of this achievement after all that I've been through physically this year, but part of me always believed I could make it back to the top. It is very satisfying to join Pete Sampras by winning my sixth award."

Halep also enjoyed Grand Slam success in 2018, claiming her maiden major title at Roland Garros and reaching the final at the Australian Open. "It's a great honour to be named as ITF world champion for the first time," she said. "I had an incredible year, winning my first Grand Slam at Roland Garros and finishing the year as world number one."



**Simona Halep**

US pair Mike Bryan and Jack Sock won the men's doubles award while the women's doubles world champions are Barbora Krejčíková and Katerina Siniakova. The ITF uses an objective system that considers all results during the year but gives special weight to the Grand Slam tournaments and two ITF international team competitions, the Davis Cup and Fed Cup.

"Congratulations to our 2018 ITF world champions who have demonstrated immense skill, talent and dedication on their way to achieving great success on the court," said ITF president David Haggerty. "They are a credit to our sport and have all contributed to another memorable year for tennis." —AFP



# Raptors rout Warriors to cap season sweep

## Mavericks win 3rd straight by dumping Hawks

**OAKLAND:** Kyle Lowry scored eight of his team-high 23 points in an early runaway Wednesday night as the Toronto Raptors completed a season-series sweep over the Golden State Warriors with a 113-93 romp in Oakland, Calif. Lowry (12 assists) and Serge Ibaka (20 points, 12 rebounds) recorded double-doubles, helping Toronto snap a 13-game losing streak at Golden State that dated back to 2004. Kevin Durant led all scorers with 30 points on 13-for-22 shooting for the Warriors, who were held to their third-lowest output of the season. The Raptors, who beat the Clippers in Los Angeles on Tuesday, improved to 6-0 on the second night of back-to-backs, doing so despite not having Kawhi Leonard, who sat out both games due to a sore right hip. Early in the second quarter, Toronto center Jonas Valanciunas sustained a dislocated left thumb after getting slapped in the hand by Draymond Green. Valanciunas did not return.

### MAVERICKS 114, HAWKS 107

Harrison Barnes scored 25 points as Dallas extended its winning streak to three games with a victory over visiting Atlanta. The win also broke the Mavericks' 10-game losing streak to the Hawks, a stretch that began Oct. 30, 2013. Dallas is now 5-1 in December. The Mavericks also got 24 points from rookie Luka Doncic, who was 12-for-15 from the foul line and added 10 rebounds and six assists. It was the 13th time he scored 20 or more points.

### CELTICS 130, WIZARDS 125 (OT)

Kyrie Irving hit a tiebreaking, 31-foot 3-pointer with 17 seconds remaining in overtime, and visiting Boston held off Washington. Bradley Beal and John Wall missed 3-point attempts to tie the score before Irving closed out the Celtics' victory with two free throws. Irving's 3-pointer with 38.6 seconds left gave the Celtics a two-point lead, but Wall's jumper tied it with 30.7 seconds to go. Irving scored 38 points and Marcus Morris added 27 for Boston, which won its seventh straight.

### PELICANS 118, THUNDER 114

Anthony Davis had his second consecutive 40-plus point game as host New Orleans cooled off Oklahoma City. Davis, who had 41 points in a loss at Boston on Monday, scored a season-high with 44 points and added 18 rebounds as the Pelicans alternated wins and losses for the ninth consecutive game. Julius Randle added 22 points and 12 rebounds, Jrue Holiday had 20 points and 10 assists and Darius Miller came off the bench to score 10 points. Paul George had 25 points and 11 rebounds to lead the Thunder, who had won five of their previous six games, Dennis Schroder came off the bench to score 24 points, and Russell Westbrook and Steven Adams had 20 points each.

### NETS 127, 76ERS 124

Spencer Dinwiddie scored a career-high 39 points to lift visiting Brooklyn past Philadelphia. Allen Crabbe added 20 points



**OAKLAND:** Kevin Durant #35 of the Golden State Warriors shoots the ball against the Toronto Raptors on Wednesday at ORACLE Arena in Oakland, California. — AFP

and Joe Harris had 14 as the Nets handed the Sixers a rare home loss. The Sixers had been 14-1 at home this season with the previous lone defeat to the Cleveland Cavaliers. Joel Embiid paced the Sixers with 33 points and 17 rebounds while Ben Simmons added 22 points. Furkan Korkmaz had 18 points and T.J. McConnell scored 17.

### GRIZZLIES 92, TRAIL BLAZERS 83

Mike Conley collected 23 points, six rebounds and six assists, and Memphis used a late 13-0 run to break open a tight game on the way to a victory over visiting Portland. Marc Gasol contributed nine points, seven rebounds, six blocked shots and five assists for the Grizzlies, who had lost six of their previous nine games, including the previous two. CJ McCollum matched his season high by scoring 40 points for the Trail Blazers, who dropped their sixth consecutive road game. Damian Lillard and Jusuf Nurkic combined for 5-for-33 shooting for Portland, which has lost 10 of its past 15 outings overall.

### KINGS 141, TIMBERWOLVES 130

Nemanja Bjelica poured in 25 points to lead Sacramento to a win over visiting Minnesota. Buddy Hield and Bogdan Bogdanovic each scored 20 points for the Kings. Marvin Bagley gave Sacramento a boost with 17 points and 10 rebounds in 26 minutes off the bench. Reserve Yogi Ferrell added 17 points and six assists in just 16 minutes for the Kings, who have won five of their past six games.

Andrew Wiggins led Minnesota with 25

points, and Derrick Rose scored 20. Karl-Anthony Towns contributed 19 points and 11 rebounds for the Timberwolves, who also got a double-double from Jeff Teague (12 points, 13 assists). Minnesota lost its third game in a row following a stretch of six wins in seven outings.

### HORNETS 108, PISTONS 107

Jeremy Lamb hit a 20-footer with 0.3 seconds remaining, and Charlotte rallied for a bizarre victory over visiting Detroit. Lamb's heroics came after the Hornets stormed back from a 10-point deficit with just over six minutes to play. The Hornets played for one final shot after Detroit's Langston Galloway hit two free throws for a 106-106 tie with 14.7 seconds left, and Lamb took a pass from a driving Kemba Walker as the clock wound down. The Hornets were called for a technical foul for having too many players on the court after Lamb's shot, and Galloway hit a free throw with 0.3 remaining to cut the margin to one. However, the Pistons could not get a final shot off before the buzzer.

### CAVALIERS 113, KNICKS 106

Rodney Hood hit the go-ahead jumper with 23.7 seconds remaining as Cleveland lost a 22-point lead before escaping with a victory over visiting New York. The Cavaliers led by 22 with 6:54 left in the second quarter but gradually let the Knicks rally. New York trailed 106-105 after rookie Kevin Knox finished off a transition play with a left-handed dunk off a bounce pass from Emmanuel Mudiay with 32.5 seconds to go. On the next possession,

Hood released an 11-foot turnaround shot from inside the paint while using a 2-inch size advantage over 6-foot-6 Frank Ntilikina. The Knicks had a chance to regain the lead, but Mudiay missed a contested 14-footer in the paint, and the Cavaliers' Cedi Osman grabbed the rebound. Osman made two free throws to put Cleveland up 109-106.

### PACERS 113, BUCKS 97

Thaddeus Young scored 25 points and Myles Turner added 23 points as Indiana led wire-to-wire in a win over visiting Milwaukee. Young added 11 rebounds, four assists and five steals as Indiana won its fifth straight game and avenged a 118-101 loss in Milwaukee's first game in their new arena in October. Victor Oladipo was back in the Pacers lineup after missing the past 11 games with right knee soreness. Oladipo scored 12 points and had 10 rebounds to go along with six assists.

### JAZZ 111, HEAT 84

Donovan Mitchell scored 21 points to lead a balanced offensive effort that lifted Utah to a victory over visiting Miami. Derrick Favors added 17 points and eight rebounds and Kyle Korver chipped in 16 points for the Jazz. Rudy Gobert added 10 points and 11 rebounds as Utah snapped a two-game losing streak. Rodney McGruder scored 16 points, Kelly Olynyk added 14 points and Josh Richardson chipped in 11 for the Heat. Miami dropped a game to the Jazz for the first time since the 2015-16 season, snapping the team's four-game winning streak over Utah. — Reuters



## Sports

# Sane double secures Champions League top spot for Man City

## 'As newcomers to this competition, we have learnt a lot'

**MANCHESTER:** Manchester City survived a sloppy start to secure top spot in Champions League Group F by coming from behind to beat Hoffenheim 2-1 thanks to Leroy Sane's double on Wednesday.

Andrej Kramaric's penalty put the Germans deservedly in front on 16 minutes as another much-changed City side struggled to get up to speed. However, Pep Guardiola's men found their feet as the first half wore on and were level just before the break courtesy of a brilliant Sane free-kick. Guardiola was frustrated by his side's wastefulness in front of goal in the second period, but Sane did at least secure victory by converting Raheem Sterling's pass on the hour mark. "We started flat because this team is so demanding in terms of how they attack the space, their physicality, they are stronger than us," said Guardiola.

"After that we created an incredible amount of chances, but the result is good. "We are in the best 16, now we are going to see the draw and especially try to arrive in the right moment." City made life difficult for themselves in the group with a flat performance in losing at home to Lyon in their opening group game and were similarly caught cold having already secured their place in the last 16.

Kramaric had fired a warning shot inches over before Ederson produced an incredible finger-tip stop to turn another curling effort from the Croatian behind. However, Kramaric's luck

was in third time round from the penalty spot after Aymeric Laporte was punished for hauling down Benjamin Hubner.

All of City's best efforts before the break came from set-pieces as Gabriel Jesus and Nicolas Otamendi struck the woodwork.

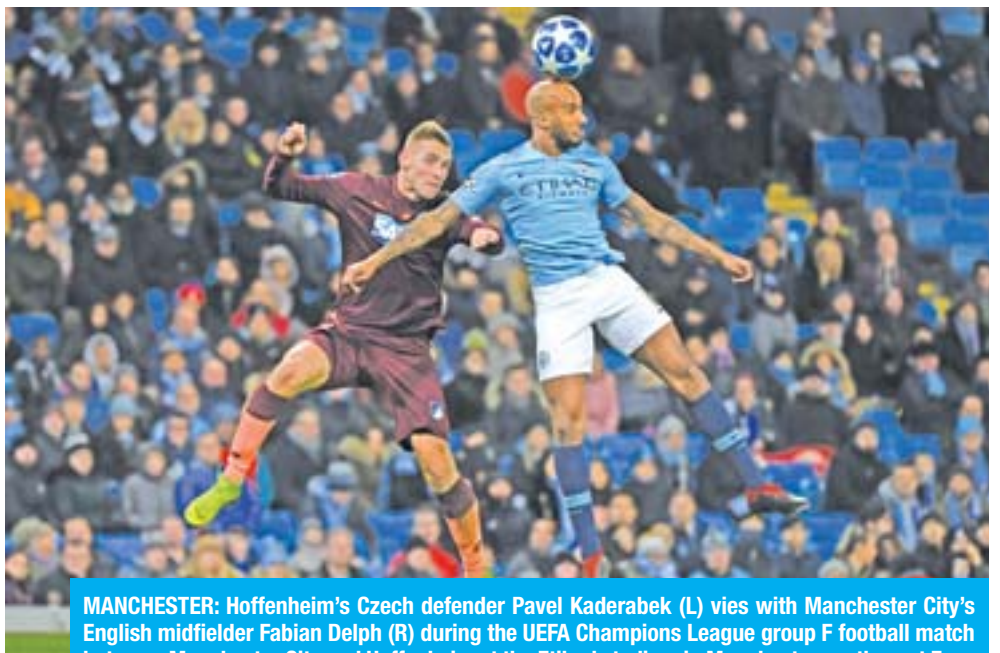
### SANE SCREAMER

But the hosts were finally level in spectacular fashion when Sane curled a free-kick into the top corner from 30 yards out. Hoffenheim needed to win just to have a chance of qualifying for the Europa League knockout stage in third, but in their desperation to chase a winner left themselves hopelessly exposed to the pace of Sane and Sterling after the break.

"I don't think three points sums up our position completely. We would have gone further if we had got the points we should have done," said Hoffenheim boss Julian Nagelsmann, who will leave to join RB Leipzig next season.

"As newcomers to this competition, we have learnt a lot, we have played well in the tournament and come back several times in games. We have done a lot for this club and hope there will be more of this in the future."

Sane was guilty of overplaying as City incredibly spurned a three-against-one when Sterling fed the German, who tried to tee up the surprised Bernardo Silva rather than going for goal himself and Baumann saved the Portuguese's shot.



**MANCHESTER:** Hoffenheim's Czech defender Pavel Kaderabek (L) vies with Manchester City's English midfielder Fabian Delph (R) during the UEFA Champions League group F football match between Manchester City and Hoffenheim at the Etihad stadium in Manchester, north west England on Wednesday. — AFP

"We are young. I have that feeling. The people in front are 21, 22 years old we need to be more calm in these positions," added Guardiola. However, the City boss reserved

special praise for 18-year-old Phil Foden on his first Champions League start of the season just days after signing a new five-and-a-half-year contract. — AFP

## FA chief Martin Glenn to step down

**LONDON:** Martin Glenn has resigned as chief executive of the Football Association and will leave his role at the end of the season, the governing body announced yesterday. The FA said Glenn, who was appointed in 2015, "had delivered much of what he came to do".

"When I accepted the role of CEO at The FA, I was tasked with improving the effectiveness of the organisation and making it financially secure," said Glenn. "I also joined with the strong belief that the England team's performance in tournaments could and should improve, and that the experience of the millions of people who play football could be a better one. "I will leave feeling proud of the success of the performance of all the England teams. I am confident that we have established in St. George's Park, a world-class centre which will ensure that the teams will continue to build on their current successes."

England, under Gareth Southgate, reached the semi-finals of the World Cup in Russia and recently qualified for next year's Nations League Finals. FA chairman Greg Clarke said Glenn's "integrity, commitment, energy and passion for football has underpinned the improvements on and off the pitch".

Glenn has presided over a series of challenging situations in his role, including the appointment and rapid departure of England boss Sam Allardyce. He was criticised for his role in the investigation into the conduct of England women's manager Mark Sampson, who was dismissed in September last year. — AFP

## UEFA Champions League tables

**PARIS:** UEFA Champions League tables after the final round of group stage matches (played, won, drawn, lost, goals for, goals against, points):

Group A					Group E														
Borussia Dortmund	6	4	1	1	10	2	13	-	qualified	Bayern Munich	6	4	2	0	15	5	14	-	qualified
Atletico Madrid	6	4	1	1	9	6	13	-	qualified	Ajax	6	3	3	0	11	5	12	-	qualified
Club Brugge	6	1	3	2	6	5	5			Benfica	6	2	1	3	6	11	7		
Monaco	6	0	1	5	2	14	1			AEK Athens	6	0	0	6	2	13	0		
Group B					Group F														
Barcelona	6	4	2	0	14	5	14	-	qualified	Man City	6	4	1	1	16	6	13	-	qualified
Tottenham	6	2	2	2	9	10	8	-	qualified	Lyon	6	1	5	0	12	11	8	-	qualified
Inter Milan	6	2	2	2	6	7	8			Shakhtar Donetsk	6	1	3	2	8	16	6		
PSV Eindhoven	6	0	2	4	6	13	2			Hoffenheim	6	0	3	3	11	14	3		
Group C					Group G														
Paris SG	6	3	2	1	17	9	11	-	qualified	Real Madrid	6	4	0	2	12	5	12	-	qualified
Liverpool	6	3	0	3	9	7	9	-	qualified	Roma	6	3	0	3	11	8	9	-	qualified
Napoli	6	2	3	1	7	5	9			Viktoria Plzen	6	2	1	3	7	16	7		
Red Star Belgrade	6	1	1	4	5	17	4			CSKA Moscow	6	2	1	3	8	9	7		
Group D					Group H														
Porto	6	5	1	0	15	6	16	-	qualified	Juventus	6	4	0	2	9	4	12	-	qualified
Schalke	6	3	2	1	6	4	11	-	qualified	Man United	6	3	1	2	7	4	10	-	qualified
Galatasaray	6	1	1	4	5	8	4			Valencia	6	2	2	2	6	6	8		
Lokomotiv Moscow	6	1	0	5	4	12	3			Young Boys	6	1	1	4	4	12	4	-	AFP



## Sports

# Lyon reach Champions League last 16, Bayern top group

## Real Madrid suffer record-breaking loss

**PARIS:** Lyon clinched the final Champions League last-16 place as Nabil Fekir's second-half strike grabbed a 1-1 draw against Shakhtar Donetsk in a snowy Kiev on Wednesday, while Bayern Munich pipped Ajax to top spot in Group E.

Bruno Genesio's Lyon needed to avoid defeat against Shakhtar to progress from Group F with Manchester City, and a fifth successive draw in the competition achieved that aim.

"It was hard in difficult conditions. We gave ourselves a fright and it's a pity we didn't kill off the game in the first half," Lyon midfielder Houssem Aouar told RMC Sport. "The main thing is that we've qualified."

Shakhtar forged ahead midway through the opening period with what proved their only shot of the first half, just seconds after Lyon forward Bertrand Traore had been denied by Andriy Pyatov when clean through one-on-one with the goalkeeper. The Burkina Faso international was made to pay for his profligacy, as Junior Moraes slotted home after being picked out by Ismaily. Lyon continued to dominate, though, and finally equalised in the 65th minute as Nabil Fekir hammered a left-footed strike into the top corner following excellent play by Memphis Depay.

Bayern Munich went into their game at Ajax just needing a point to beat their opponents to first place in Group E, and Niko Kovac's men did just that in a thrilling 3-3 draw. The game burst into life in the second half when Dusan Tadic equalised Robert Lewandowski's early opener

just after the hour mark, with Ajax defender Maximilian Woeber sent off in the 67th minute for a dangerous lunge on Leon Goretzka.

But Bayern were also reduced to 10 men only eight minutes later, as Thomas Mueller was given his marching orders for planting his studs into the head of Nicolas Tagliafico. Ajax briefly moved top of the live standings when Jerome Boateng carelessly conceded a penalty, which was dispatched emphatically into the roof of the net by Tadic.

But Tagliafico brought down Thiago Alcantara, with Lewandowski slotting in the spot-kick, before Kingsley Coman looked to have settled matters with a wonderful 90th-minute strike.

Tagliafico went up the other end to equalise again, but Ajax failed to find a winner as Bayern just about held on. "That was an advert for football," smiled Kovac. "The most important thing was to finish top of the group and with 14 from 18 points we are happy."

CSKA Moscow stunned a much-changed Real Madrid with a 3-0 victory at the Santiago Bernabeu, but still finished bottom of Group G as Viktoria Plzen beat Roma. The Russian side, who also downed Real 1-0 in the reverse fixture, had to better Plzen's result to finish third and qualify for the Europa League.

But Plzen edged out Roma 2-1 in the Czech Republic to render CSKA's famous victory ultimately meaningless, despite inflicting the heaviest ever European home loss on the record 13-time



**KIEV:** Shakhtar Donetsk's Ukrainian goalkeeper Andriy Pyatov (R) vies for the ball with Lyon's Dutch forward Memphis Depay (L) during the UEFA Champions League, Groupe F football match FC Shakhtar Donetsk and Olympique Lyonnais on NSK Olimpiyskiy stadium in Kiev on Wednesday. — AFP

champions. "It's sad to say the least to beat Real Madrid, earn seven points, but finish bottom and get eliminated from Europe," said CSKA coach

Viktor Goncharenko. Holders Real had already progressed to the last 16 as group winners, with Roma through in second place. — AFP

## Hoarau brace beats Juventus but Italians take top spot

**BERN:** Guillaume Hoarau scored in either half as Young Boys inflicted a 2-1 defeat on Juventus in their final Champions League group game on Wednesday in Switzerland, but the Italians still took top spot in Group H after Manchester United lost by the same scoreline to Valencia.

The Swiss champions proved too hot to handle for the Cristiano Ronaldo-led Italians whose 26-match unbeaten away run going back to November 2017 ended in freezing temperatures in Bern.

France forward Hoarau slotted in the first after half an hour from the spot at the Stade de Suisse, blasting in the second after 68 minutes to lift the spirits of his already-eliminated side who finished bottom of the group.

Paulo Dybala—who scored a hat-trick in Juve's 3-0 home win in Turin—came off the bench just after the second goal and pulled one back for Massimiliano Allegri's side ten minutes from time and had a sec-

ond disallowed in injury time. Juventus finish top of Group H on 12 points with United on ten, Valencia on eight and Young Boys with four. "We achieved our objective by winning the group, even on a night where everything seemed to go wrong, maybe we weren't focused enough," said Allegri.

"We missed so many opportunities and gifted a penalty, so at the end of the day it was only right that we lost." Ronaldo, the record scorer in the elite European competition with 120 goals, started the final group match despite Juventus already having secured a berth in the knock-out round as Allegri wanted to ensure his side avoided being drawn against Barcelona, Real Madrid, Manchester City or Paris Saint-Germain in the next round.

"Now the best part of the Champions League is coming," said Ronaldo, who has lifted the trophy five times. "Today we're not happy because we wanted to win in the first half. I could have scored several goals and if I did, the result would probably have been different."

"I feel good physically. The fact of playing every match is a decision that I take together with my coach." But veteran defender Giorgio Chiellini was rested ahead of next weekend's Turin derby in Serie A, as Allegri feared a potential injury on the artificial pitch in Switzerland.

Ronaldo had three chances to put Juve-

tus on the scoreboard in the first half, but the visitors were impacted by Juan Cuadrado going off injured after twenty minutes with Alex Sandro coming off the bench.

Minutes later Brazilian Sandro conceded a penalty for bringing down Cameroonian midfielder Moumi Ngamaleu in the box. Hoarau stepped up with Juventus goalkeeper Wojciech Szczesny at full stretch getting his fingers to the ball as it clipped the post and bounced back into the net.

The hosts came close to scoring a second just after the hour mark but Szczesny held Christian Fasnacht's header. Hoarau again broke through after 68 minutes with Ngamaleu crossing to the French attacker who powered forward, cutting past Leonardo Bonucci to beat Szczesny.

Dybala came on after 72 minutes in place of Mattia De Sciglio with Ronaldo setting up the Argentine to pull a goal back eight minutes later. Two minutes into injury time, Dybala thought he had bagged the equaliser with a volley but the goal was disallowed as Ronaldo was offside.

"I saw it, Ronaldo was in the path of the ball and the goal was offside," said Allegri. "The important thing is that we won the group, even if its thanks to Valencia beating Manchester United," said Dybala.

"The defeat hurts, because we came here looking for the win, but it should serve as a lesson for the future." — AFP

## Klopp keeps Liverpool feet firmly on the ground

**LONDON:** Liverpool can count on manager Juergen Klopp to keep their feet firmly on the ground if they begin to believe the hype that has accompanied their unbeaten start to the Premier League season, midfielder Georginio Wijnaldum said. The table-topping Merseyside club are the only remaining unbeaten side in the league after champions Manchester City suffered their first defeat of the season against Chelsea at Stamford Bridge last weekend.

Liverpool's solid defensive displays and steadily improving attack have raised hopes among fans that they might emulate Arsenal's "Invincibles" of 2003-04, who lifted the title after going through the season undefeated.

"I don't really think we are invincible and, if we think that, we have a manager that would put both feet on the ground," Wijnaldum told the British media.

"We know we have to do a lot to not lose games and even more to win it. We know we have to give a good performance every week to continue the run we are in." Liverpool take on a misfiring Manchester United side on Sunday with Jose Mourinho's sixth-placed side looking to keep pace with the teams above them. Wijnaldum said Liverpool would not underestimate United despite their struggles this season. "It is going to be difficult," the Dutch international said. "Things can happen, everyone can have a bad season... last season, with the same players, they finished second. One season goes well, one season a little bit more difficult. "It doesn't mean they have a bad team. They have good players, a good manager, and they know how to manage games and win games-or not to lose games." — Reuters



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**Djokovic, Halep named  
2018 ITF world champions**

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